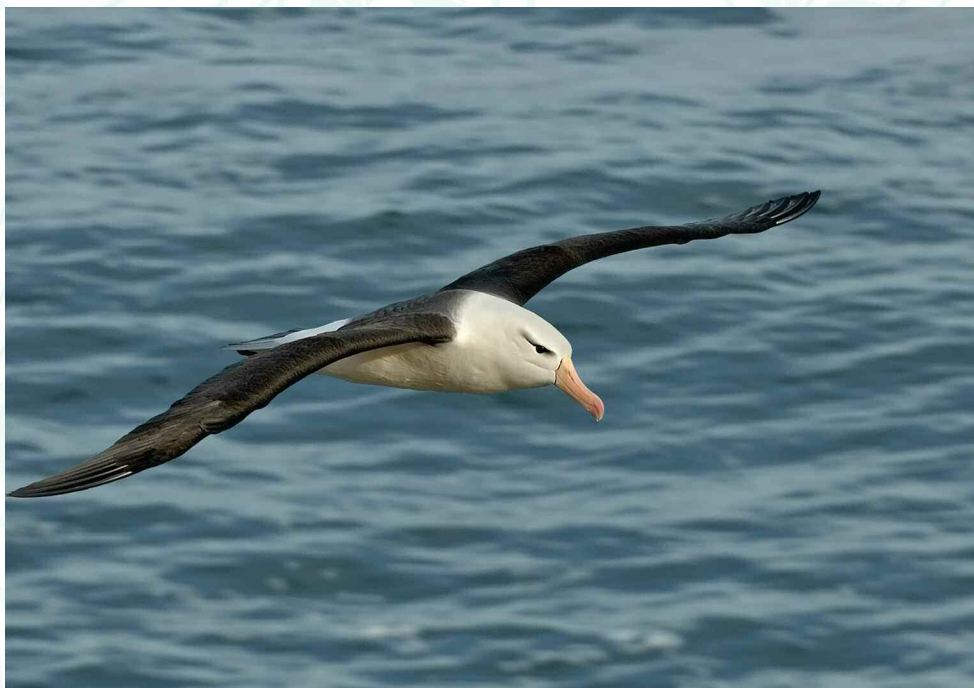


THE IRIS



MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 99
Winter 2007





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All contributions should be submitted to the Editor. Items covering any aspect of nature photography and/or natural history are welcomed, including reviews on equipment and relevant books.

Copy may be sent by email or on disc as .txt or .doc files, or printed using double line spacing on one side of the paper only.

Digitally captured photographic images are preferred supplied as Tiff files on CD. They should be at least 2555 pixels on the longest side. Scanned transparencies are also acceptable providing they are scanned to the same specification. Original slides/transparencies are also acceptable, however, the Editor cannot specify how long they may be away from the author.

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The views expressed within The Iris are solely those of the contributor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Nature Group Committee or the Editor.

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Design & layout

by Dawn Osborn FRPS

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Committee

Officers

Chairman: Geoff Trinder ARPS

The Croft, Carrhouse Road, Belton, Doncaster, DN9 1PG
Tel: 01427 872051

Secretary: Margaret Johnson LRPS

53 Mapperley Orchard, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8AH
Tel: 01159 265893 E-mail: m.jos@btinternet.com

Treasurer: Margery Maskell ARPS

155 Heath Row, Bishop's Stortford, Herts. CM23 5DW

Vice Chairman: Peter Jones ARPS

Manor Barn, Church View, Church Hill, Bilsthorpe, Notts,
NG22 8RU E-mail: pwjonesarps@btconnect.com

Immediate Past Chairman: David Osborn FRPS

19 Mount Street, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 9DB
Tel: 01263 511221 E-mail: poppyland3@aol.com

Committee Members

Editor of The Iris: Dawn Osborn FRPS

5 Crompton Close, Little Haywood, Stafford, ST18 0YS
Tel: 01889 881928 E-mail: iris.editor@ntlworld.com

Exhibition Secretary: Peter Jones ARPS

Manor Barn, Church View, Church Hill, Bilsthorpe, Notts,
NG22 8RU E-mail: pwjonesarps@btconnect.com

NG Rep to Advisory Panel: John Bebbington FRPS

Quantock View, Newtown, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9SE
Tel: 01458 253027 Email: john.bebbingtonfrps@ukonline.co.uk

Programme Co-ordinator: Colin Smith FRPS

3 St Hilda's Close, Chorley, Lancs, PR7 3NU
Tel: 01257 271981 E-mail: colin-smith@foto-wizard.fsnet.co.uk

John Jones ARPS

31 Bridgefields, Kegworth, Derby, DE74 2FW
Tel: 01509 672125

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

5 Ravensdale Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham, NG8 2SL
Tel: 01159 281050

Tony Bond FRPS

9 Beech Drive, Leigh, Lancs WN7 3LJ
Tel: 01942 674773

Nick Jarvis ARPS

31 Meadow Way, Irthlingborough, Northants, NN9 5RS
Tel: 01933 651477 E-mail: Nickjarvis@aol.com

Ex officio Committee members

The President of the Society;
the Vice-President of the Society;
the Director General of the Society;
the Hon. Treasurer of the Society;
the current Chairman of the Nature A & F Distinctions Panel

Nature Group Exhibitions

Copies of Nature Group Exhibitions dating back to 2000, are available to book for camera clubs/photographic societies. If you would like to book one of these or the current or next years' Travelling Exhibition, please contact: Peter Jones ARPS, details above.

Editorial

I can barely believe that it is October. Will someone please tell me what happened to Summer? Did you get any in your part of the country? Apart from my two trips across the Atlantic, my kit has seen precious little use this year, and not all of that was for natural history subjects.

The Winter issue is an important issue - it is the one which contains the Entry Form for our Annual Exhibition. The closing date is not until February, so put a note in your diary for 2008 and keep the entry form somewhere safe. On the subject of the Exhibition, the group is desperately seeking a new Exhibition Secretary to take over from Peter Jones in 2009. Ideally a member will volunteer his services before the selection of the 2008 exhibition so that he/she will have the opportunity to see how it all works. Peter will be able to give you more information - telephone Margaret Johnson for details of how to contact Peter.

Winter is also the time when we appeal to members to host a Field Meeting in their locality during the following year. Please consider doing this in 2008 - it is a rewarding experience and an opportunity to make new acquaintances.

Following my appeal for articles I received some excellent material. Thank you to everyone who responded and if your article is not in this issue, it will be used in a future one. Just keep them coming. This issue contains an account of Barry Mead's visit to the Falkland Islands and Margaret Johnson's cruise in Antarctica while John Woodward puts his 30D through its paces on his home turf. Also in this issue, David Cantrille has kindly allowed us reproduce his successful Fellowship Panel and there are details of a Nature Photographer's Convention, a weekend Residential Field Meeting and two full day seminars. Don't forget Chairman's Day on 3rd November - there are still a few seats available for this, so call Geoff right away.

Finally, I'll take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year full of photo opportunities.



From the chair

When I sat down to write my last 'From the Chair' I had just returned from Arizona and now as I write this at the end of August I am looking forward to returning to the USA in three weeks to explore the area in and around Yellowstone National Park. In between times, I was hoping to enjoy photography at home during the British summer! With the garden under water for nearly a month, most of the time has been spent trying to get it back in some semblance of order once the rain stopped so that it was possible to weed and get the grass cut. Thankfully it was only the garden that was flooded which is of little significance compared with the hundreds who have had their houses inundated.

There have been lulls in the weather and a visit to Millers Dale with the Nature Group was one of those days. Robert Hawkesworth had organised the visit and was rewarded with a good turn out of members who all managed to find something of interest to aim their cameras at. Highlights of the day included two species of butterfly. Dark Green Fritillary was seen briefly in the morning and one member of the group managed to get a picture. Later in the afternoon a very approachable White Letter Hairstreak posed for several members to get pictures, one had been seen earlier in the day but had disappeared before anyone was able to get a picture. There were ample flowers to see and photograph including a group of pure white fragrant orchids which attracted a lot of attention. Thank you Robert for providing such a good day. I know we keep going on about it, but there is always a need to have more field meetings, so please see if you are able to come up with new venues and let Colin Smith have details so that they can be included in next years programme.

As I mentioned in the last 'From the Chair', although I still favour film, I am endeavouring to get my head around digital photography. Having received a legacy from my late mothers estate, I decided to treat myself to a top of the range digital camera, so far so good! Having taken many images to give it a thorough test I downloaded them on to the computer. I shot in raw and to my dismay found that the programme I had would not open the files! I rushed to a friend - an expert on these things - who confirmed the worst, the new camera, which has only been available for six

months, has been upgraded so all the programmes I have are redundant! A new programme costing over a hundred pounds is needed before I can see the files. Who said the advantage of digital photography over film is the amount of money you save?

Having just about got my head round Rawshooter, I now have to learn all the different ways of coping with Lightroom! This may sound like the ranting of a grumpy old man, well it probably is, but it does concern me that companies involved in the new technologies appear to change things so rapidly that you are forced into spending more and more whether you like it or not! Having got that off my chest I must say, after only having had it for four weeks that, I am very impressed with Lightroom. I mentioned it to a friend who is Chairman of the local camera club and he asked if he could come round and take a look at it. Following my 'expert' demonstration he went out and bought it for himself the next day!

As I do a lot of talks during the year I also decided, with the aid of my legacy, to purchase a digital projector to enable me to project all the digital images that are accumulating on my computer, which is getting slower and slower, needs more ram, more expense! Back to the projector, the camera club were in need of a new digital projector and had got an expensive one on trial, the chairman and treasurer said could they see mine, which they did, and decided to let the members compare the two. It was decided the one I had purchased was the better of the two and they have now bought one, saving the club several hundred pounds. One of the members who has been into digital photography for longer than most was so impressed he also went out the next day and bought one. It seems the grumpy old man is in danger of becoming a trend setter! The projector in case you are interested is a BenQ which has a three year guarantee on the bulb!

Enough of my ramblings and, although it is a little early, can I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



CHAIRMAN'S DAY

A full day of Nature Photography hosted by Geoff Trinder ARPS

Saturday 3rd November 2007, 10 a.m.

Smethwick Photographic Society,
The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands

PROGRAMME

10.00 am	Arrival - Coffee/Tea	2.00 pm	Wildlife of the Falkland Islands by Dawn Osborn FRPS
10.30 am	Introduction & presentation from the Chairman, Geoff Trinder ARPS		Dawn's FRPS Panel will also be on display.
11.15 am	Birding in North-west Spain - Susan & Alan Parker ARPS	3.0 pm	John Tinning will show a selection of his work
12.00 noon	Orchids of the Peak District John Jones ARPS	4.00 pm	Coffee/Tea and finish time
12.45 pm	Lunch		

A few tickets are still available. £15 each incl Lunch, Teas and Coffees.

Don't miss this event - we can promise you an excellent day.

Complete the reply slip below and send with your cheque to arrive not later than 30th September 2007.

Please send to: **Geoff Trinder ARPS, The Croft, Carrhouse Road, Belton, Doncaster, DN9 1PG**

Please make cheques payable to: **The RPS Nature Group**

Please send me _____ tickets for Chairman's Day I enclose my cheque for £ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

Book Review

Guide to the Hawkmoths of the British Isles

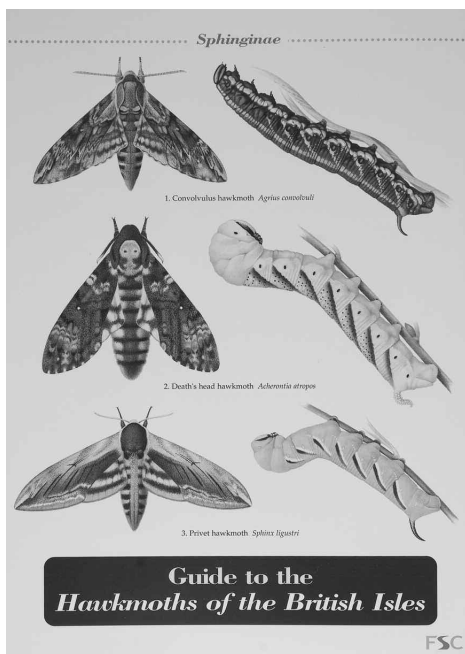
Text: John Bebbington FRPS

Illustrations: Richard Lewington

Publisher: Field Studies Council

ISBN: 978 1 85153 224 7

Price: £2.50



This is one of the excellent AIDGAP publications (Aids to Identification in Difficult Groups of Animals and Plants), which are supported by the FSC, the Royal Entomological Society and the Linnean Society of London. It is a folding chart which illustrates and describes the eighteen hawkmoth species on the British list. The size of the folded chart is 24.6cm. x 17cm. and is well laminated to make it easy to use in the field. Each moth is shown at life size as the adult and also the final instar larva.

As always Richard Lewington's illustrations are exquisite. He seems to be able to capture not only the shape and colour but also the 'jizz' of the moths. He really cannot be faulted and is

undoubtedly one of the finest exponents of this type of art in the world. With those moths of which I have experience, the colours are reproduced very accurately and I can therefore only assume that they all are equally so.

John Bebbington is of course one of our members and as well as being a fine photographer he is also an entomologist. His text is very clear and concise; here he shows his vast experience as a teacher. He notes for each species its status as an immigrant or resident with some of the notable behavioural characteristics as well as its camouflage pattern, where it normally rests and many other salient points as may be appropriate. The distribution of each is given with information on changes in land use that have caused range alterations due to subsequent habitat loss, as well as the increased spread of some species due to our warmer winters. This shows very clearly that here in Britain the Hawkmoth population is a changing one and echoes what is happening to many of our plants and animals.

A short section on attracting Hawkmoths to your garden completes what is a splendid publication and certainly well worth a place in your library especially if you are a 'mother' (to rhyme with moth!). The chart is available from all good booksellers, however it may be more convenient to obtain it direct from the Field Studies Council; address, telephone and e-mail as follows.

FSC Publications,
The Annex, Preston Montford Lane,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 1DU.
Tel: 01743 852140.
E-mail: publications@field-studies-council.org.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Nature Group Residential Field Meeting

Friday 16th to Monday 19th May 2008

The Kingcombe Centre, Toller Porcorum, Dorchester Dorset DT2 0EQ

Set in rural Dorset, the Kingcombe Centre has much to offer the nature photographer. The Centre has its own bird-hide, pond with a dipping platform, paths by the river and direct access to Dorset Wildlife Trust Kingcombe Meadows reserve - traditional meadow farmland with up to 150 plant species.

Powerstock Common reserve is nearby and the coast and Chesil Beach within a short driving distance.

The Centre's cuisine is of a high standard, organically produced from local sources, and deliciously cooked and served.

Staff are friendly and helpful.

A minibus is available for Group use, as is a moth trap, library and a comfortable lounge in Beech Cottage - ideal for relaxing after supper while showing and viewing members' pictures.

John Bebbington FRPS will join the group as our leader, mentor & minibus driver.

Accommodation: - There are 17 bedrooms, including 8 with en-suite facilities..

Charges:- Rooms with en-suite facilities:- £191 per person for 3 nights.

Single or shared rooms:- £165 per person for 3 nights.

Includes full board, packed lunches, accommodation, and VAT at 17.5%.

The Centre will allocate rooms on a first come first served basis, but will not put singles in twin en-suites until they are certain that all en-suites can be fully occupied. If you would like to join the group, request a brochure and booking form, or be added to the waiting list, please write (enclosing a stamped addressed A5 envelope and your full contact details) to:-

Kath Bull ARPS, Segsbury, St John's Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1RT.

Tel: 01892 663751. E-mail: kath.bull@virgin.net .

Completed booking forms and all fees must be sent direct to The Kingcombe Centre.

Apology

It has been drawn to our attention that the names of two members were omitted from the list of acceptances which appeared in the last issue of The Iris. The Exhibition Committee regret that this happened and apologise to the two members concerned. The items which were omitted are as follows:

Kevin Maskell FRPS received a **Highly Commended** award for his Class A Print entitled **Double Crested Cormorant with Yellow Bullhead Catfish**

Monique Vanstone received 6 digital acceptances, including **Marbled White on Scabious**

The Nature Group Website

The Nature Group website went live in Spring 2005 - its architect was Committee Member Nick Jarvis who then became the group's 'Webmaster'. For a number of years prior to this Nick ran an 'E-Noticeboard' for the group, and this was incorporated into the website.

For personal reasons, Nick has found it necessary to step down from the committee and this has caused us to give serious consideration to the way in which the group has a website.

Many of the RPS Special Interest Groups have their own websites now - all are different and all have varying degrees of interaction with their members.

The Nature Group's own site has attracted a disappointing amount of activity from its own members, especially the more experienced ones. By nature, nature photographers are outdoor photographers who make their images in the field, unlike members of say the Digital Group who probably spend a considerable amount of time manipulating or even creating their images in the PC. Now that the number of images we take is unrestricted by the cost of film, digital photography has given us the freedom to experiment, try new techniques and be more creative, so we take many more images - this is wonderful but the downside is the amount of time we are obliged to spend in front of the monitor comparing one image with another, making adjustments, etc. I suspect that we would all rather be out of doors taking pictures than spending more time at the PC.

At our recent committee meeting, we spent a considerable amount of time discussing the options available to us regarding a group website. The existing site costs a considerable amount of money each year and it was felt that it was not giving good value. Less than 25% of the membership has registered as a user of the site and during the six months prior to our meeting, the amount of activity measured was minimal.

As a consequence of this discussion, it was decided not to renew the current subscription when it expires at the end of the year. The site will go off-line at a time anticipated to be early in January.

The committee agreed that the Nature Group should have a website and after much consideration formulated the following:

The website should be the 'showcase' for the group and should contain:

- Images from our annual exhibition.
- Articles on photography/places/species - initially, these will be extracted from back issues of *The Iris*.
- Galleries of members' images and successful Associate and Fellowship panels - initially these will be sourced from files already submitted to the Editor of *The Iris*.
- Information on Events, Field Meetings, Workshops, Exhibitions, etc.
- Downloadable information on how to join the Nature Group.
- E-mail facility for members/non-members to contact the Secretary.
- Links to other nature photography/members websites.

It will not contain a Forum and members will not be able to upload messages or their own images. We would encourage any Nature Group member who wants to participate in a Forum to use the 'Wildlife' section of the RPS Forum www.rpsforum.org

A new site will be constructed during the winter and an announcement made in the Spring issue of *The Iris* published early April.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Nick Jarvis for all his efforts and the considerable amount of time that he has devoted, not only to the Nature Group website, but to all the other roles that he has performed for the Nature Group over the last decade.

The Falkland Islands

by Barry Mead FRPS, AFIAP

I visited the Falkland Islands towards the end of November and early December 2006 by joining David Osborn for his annual trip. The Falklands has to be one of the great places for wildlife photography and a very long way from home!

As far as equipment goes the aim was to keep it simple and not excessively heavy due to several internal flights between islands in the little red FIGAS planes. I took a Nikon D2X, D100, 70-200 f2.8 VR, 300 f2.8 VR and a 17-35 f2.8 lens plus 1.4 and 1.7 converters. My huge Gitzo carbon fibre tripod with fluid head was vital for everything except birds in flight. The lenses were excellent throughout given that they gain from the 1.5 magnification due to sensor size, I was also glad of the D2X high speed crop facility which effectively doubles the focal length of each lens. Using the 300 f2.8 handheld for a few hours each day would have been a lot easier if I had arms like Arnold Schwarzenegger!

I carried 16 x 2GB compact flash cards, which I downloaded each evening onto a 12" laptop, which was immediately backed up onto a 100GB portable hard drive before clearing the cards for the next day. I noticed that David was completing his downloading etc a lot quicker than I was. It transpired he was using a piece of software called BreezeBrowser Pro, which allowed him to do a quick edit and then download only those images he wanted to keep. I was using Nikon Capture - which is a bit slow with huge image/file sizes. The only other technical consideration was exposure to avoid the dreaded burnt out high-lights. I always keep my cameras set to under expose by two thirds of a stop. As light got harsher and the fact that just about everything I photographed was black and white I would compensate down further, even minus 1.3 stops. The high-lights were then fine and the shadows never seem to be a problem with digital capture. Checking the histogram regularly aids precise control.

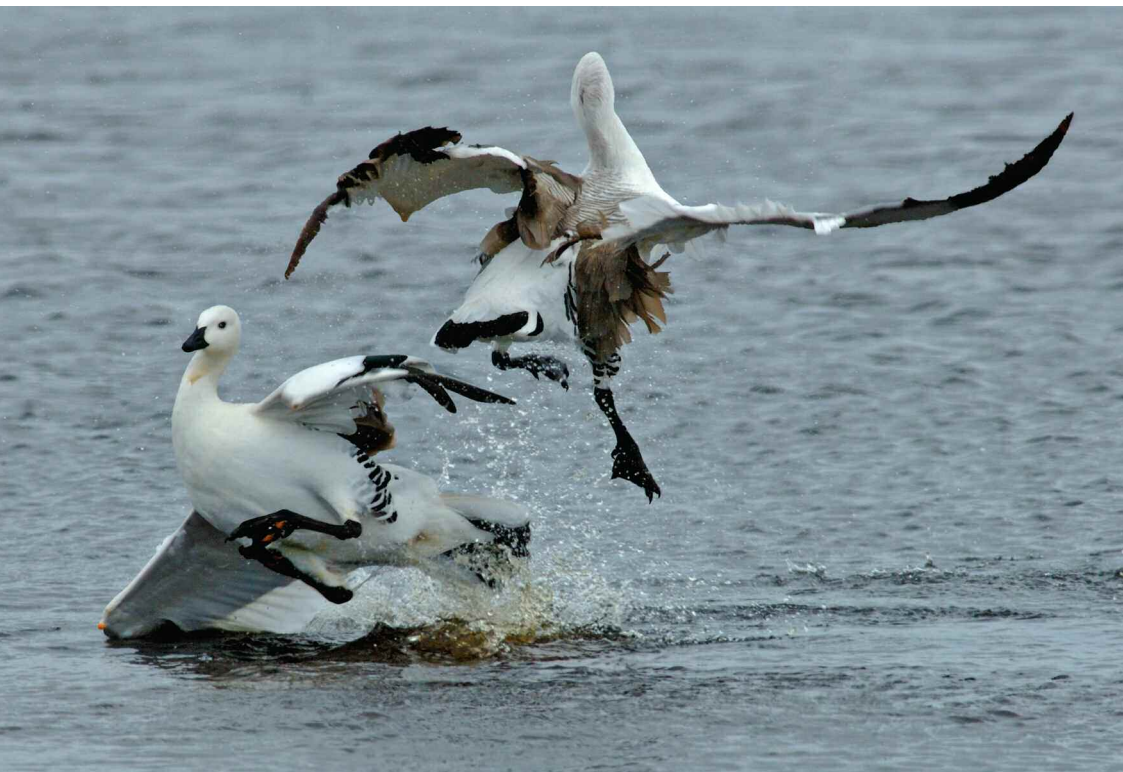
Initial impression of the Falklands is that of a rather bleak and barren area. This is almost inevitable after the best part of twenty hours travelling and a pre-landing welcome from the RAF in tornado fighters.

After, a night's sleep we headed for Bleaker Island, which is down in the south east of the Island group, and nowhere near as bleak as it's name would imply.

Our first day was not without its excitement! On our way to a Rock Shag colony we went through an area of high tussock grass, on a cliff top, heeding David's warning to keep lookout for Sea Lions. Shortly after a good photo opportunity with a Striated Caracara I let David lead the way through the tussock grass; I'm not stupid! There was an almighty roar followed by David coming back towards us 'suggesting' we retreat, fast! David had found himself face to face with a Bull Sea Lion - I only wished I had my camera out to capture the look on his face. We took a different route to the bird colony!

The first few compact flash cards were used on the Rock Shags. Other colonies were Rockhopper Penguins and King Cormorants. The Rockhopper colonies much reduced in numbers from previous years. The location of these has to be seen to appreciate the beauty of the place. We ended each day with, what I called the evening 'shoot out' at the King Cormorant colony. This is a 'birds in flight' event, capturing them as they come back to the colony to roost. This is awesome, as the colony comprises about 10,000 birds. I was well pleased with the images I got in the late evening light, despite the fact that I used so many compact flash cards. I usually just managed to download these before going to bed. I really don't think I would have been so trigger-happy if I had been using film! Plus having the ability to up the ISO whenever the light dictated.

The other memorable event on Bleaker was what we nicknamed 'The Goose Wars', which took place on the large lake on the island. David had driven us to this location mainly for the Gentoo Penguins. As we arrived at the lake a male Upland Goose was attacking a gosling for no apparent reason. The mother goose was trying to get away. David rescued the gosling but within a few minutes all the geese around



the lake were attacking each other; mayhem was an understatement! This is where I got the shot of two male Upland Geese as they came together to 'sort' each other out.

After a few days of this we headed for Sea Lion Island: of the many species we photographed here, Sea Lions were few and far between. Elephant Seals had largely finished the breeding with a lot of 'weaners' and a few large males sleeping off their exertions! As usual the pre-breakfast sortie found me going where nothing was happening while the others saw Killer Whales. After breakfast I took myself off to Elephant Point, where the others had been, and got a complete series of shots of Orca as they rounded up an Elephant seal weaner - the young Orcas 'played' with it for about an hour and a half before it was finally finished off. I assume this behaviour is for hunting practice as the group of Orcas consisted of two female and two young. The Orca group were searching quite close to the rocky coastline. We shared this event with a cameraman who was working for National Geographic. He was from Bath, 11 miles from my home in Bristol - it's a small world!

Sea Lion Island has some fantastic Gentoo Penguin colonies and, as well as getting some great penguin shots, I got some super images of Skua in flight - including the one here harassing the penguin colony. I have to admit the image was a bit of a fluke as I was concentrating on the Skua in flight, of which I got quite few. Some time was spent on all aspects of the Gentoo colony. As well as the Skuas there were plenty of Striated Caracara skulking around looking for an opportunity to get a penguin chick. Most of the penguins had chicks, so plenty of pictures of parent and chick interacting/ feeding were taken. Also Magellanic Penguins were plentiful but unlike the Gentoo they live in burrows, which it would be only too easy to end up falling down. I spent a lot of time photographing the Gentoo penguins arriving back on the beach after their fishing trips. The aim was to get the 'penguin surfing' picture - another way to fill up compact flash cards fast! As with birds in flight, it meant making sure the camera was set to continuous focusing multi-frame rate and a high enough shutter speed. Shutter speeds were rarely a problem as the light was very bright. This is partly due to the absence of pollution in the air and to the fact that the ozone layer is virtually non-existent above the Falklands.







The third island we visited was Carcass, situated in the North west of the island group. This Island is quite dramatic and mountainous. The Dolphin Gull colony near the airstrip provided some excellent picture taking. Time after time Skua were walking into the colony and stealing the eggs. After a couple of days the colony had been reduced by 50%; it was obvious that this colony was not going to rear any young. Another morning produced images of a Striated Caracara feeding its young in the nest as well as Black-crowned Night Heron fishing - all this was taken from the jetty. I think I moved the camera and tripod all of 6ft between the two sets of pictures with patience that was more than well rewarded.

From Carcass we went to Saunders Island for the Black-browed Albatross plus Rockhopper Penguins, Gentoo and a small colony of King Penguins. At the Neck area we bumped into that very endangered species John Chamberlin, who was travelling independently with Mike Deverall. You travel 8,000 miles to see someone who lives about a mile away at home! The Albatross are just awesome, their greeting rituals, nest building and (up at the Rookery) flying within

feet of your head. At the Rookery you get great pictures of them at nest and flying with the sea below as a backdrop. It is the sort of experience that cannot be adequately described and getting pictures at the same time is the icing on the cake. It is worth noting that throughout a trip like this, it is vital to put the cameras down for a bit, and soak up the experience! Also at the Rookery we walked to the large Rockhopper colonies where David said there was one Macaroni Penguin, which he says, looks like a chunkier version of the thousands of Rockhoppers. Fat chance thought I!! Anyway a couple of us went down the cliff to where the Rockhoppers came ashore and had a freshwater shower. There by the shower was the Macaroni Penguin, easy to find when you know how!! On the cliff ledges above were the Black-browed Albatross nests. While photographing the Rockhoppers showering with my back to the sea I got clouted round the back of the head by an Albatross coming in from the sea: I'm sure the bird didn't notice but I did!! If I had to pick just one lasting memory of Saunders Island it has to be that of Albatross flying along the cliffs in the evening light with the sea as a backdrop. Awesome!

The final event of the trip was back on East Falkland and a visit to the King Penguin colony at Volunteer Point. It takes a three hour drive each way to reach, much of it off road, but definitely worth it even though we were not blessed with the best of weather that day. These are serious penguins, getting towards 3ft tall. Watching them interacting and posturing etc. and with their huge brown fluffy chicks. For picture taking, it is best to pick small groups and the relationship they have with each other that becomes the focus of attention.

I arrived back home with thousands of images to trawl through and I am mightily 'chuffed' with the results, despite the hundreds of hours spent sifting since I returned. Only a few can be shown here. There are plenty more on my website. I know many of you have been to the Falklands; if you haven't been yet put it at the top of the list and remember 'life' is not a rehearsal, we come this way but once!

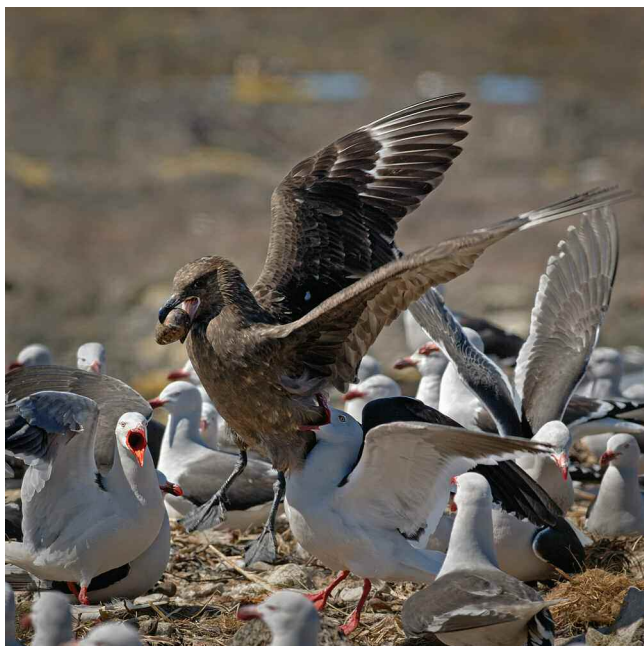
I certainly found David Osborn organises a great trip; shame about the jokes though!

www.barrymead-photography.com



Pictures:

- Page 9: King Cormorant
landing
Male Upland Geese
fighting.
- Page 10: Skua harrying
Gentoos.
- Page 11: Orcas attack Elephant
Seal Pup.
- Page 12: Black-browed
Albatross pair
bonding.
- Page 13: King Penguin and
chick
Skua with Dolphin
Gull Egg.
- Cover: Black-browed
Albatross cruising.





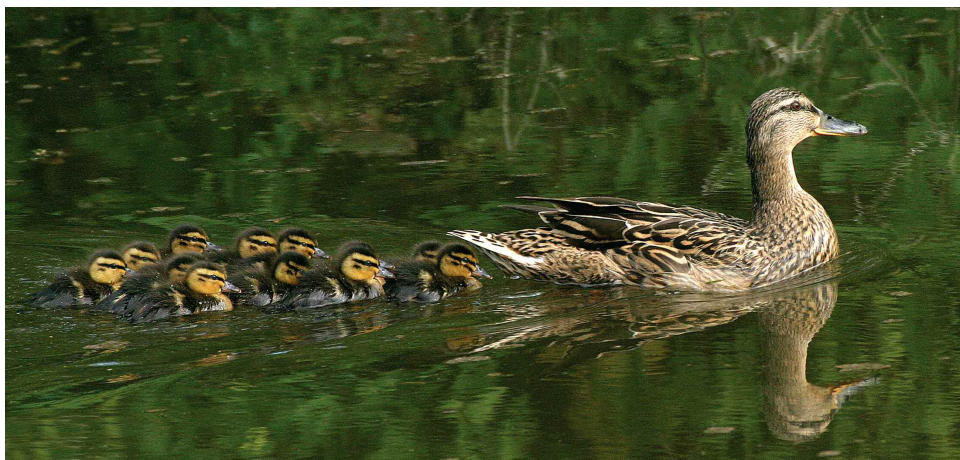
Out and about with my Canon 30D

by John Woodward

For the last eight years my wife and I have looked after an elderly relative at our home. She cannot be left alone in the house and this has seriously affected our ability to travel, especially long-haul. Not for us the long trek to Antarctica, forays into the Everglades or safaris in Kenya. We have had to be content with short trips to the continent or weekends away in the UK when other members of the family have been free to cover our duties at home. But no matter. One can still find wild life in one's home range.

We live on the Kent Coast at Hythe and there is an enormous variety of subjects for a camera either in our garden or nearby. I use a Canon 30D with three lenses: a standard Canon 18-55mm zoom, a 105mm Sigma macro and a Canon 100 – 400 image stabilised lens. The standard and macro do fine for flowers and insects while the long focus zoom (which with the useful x 1.6 magnification factor is actually 640mm at full stretch) is excellent for bird photography.

Our bird table is the first point of focus. Titmice of four species (but sadly not the marsh tit) regularly come to be fed and are quite easy to photograph. We also attract great spotted woodpeckers and an immature bird with smart red crest took a liking for the post of our bird table and would sit on it, often preening, for





ages. It was rather timid and I had to keep very still when photographing it, but managed to get several good images. Another bird that came to our garden was a pheasant that would peck on the conservatory window. This was either in response to his reflection or a reminder that he wanted us to throw him some seed. House sparrows have become so infrequent that the picture I got of one may even prove to be historic one day! Another bird table visitor is the grey squirrel. I know they can be a nuisance, but they are still wild animals even if they did originally come from Carolina.

Butterflies are in decline, but just now and then we get a good year and have an influx of Painted Ladies from the continent. Of course we grow buddleia and ice plants to attract them and their four colourful nymphalid relatives as well. The macro lens is ideal to photograph them with an effective focal length of 160, so one doesn't have to get in too close.

Just across the road is the Royal Military Canal. Dug between Folkestone and Fairlight between 1804 and 1809 to keep out Napoleon it is now a protected site and full of wild life. The mallard with her flotilla of twelve ducklings may be a rather corny 'aaah' photograph, but it illustrates one salient point. A week later she had only seven ducklings and a week after that, four. Herring gulls, rats and the large pike that lurk under the surface take their toll. Several species of dragonfly can be found and perhaps the most obliging is the Migrant Aeshna which has a habit endearing to photographers of hovering absolutely still for several seconds at a time.

In Kent we are proud of our orchids. A few miles away on the downs there is a colony of Late Spider Orchids, one of our county's specialities, and just ten miles along the Canterbury Road is the secluded site where Kent's famous Monkey Orchid can be found. The Lizard Orchid - once quite rare and found only at Sandwich Nature Reserve - has increased its range and to our delight, we found a couple of spikes of this curious plant growing in a grass verge on the hills just above Hythe.



Our son and his family live near Cambridge and he has a moth trap. While we were on a brief stay last year (grandparent duty) he caught four privet hawks. I persuaded one of them to sit on an attractive mossy log and it obligingly opened its wings to show off its rugger jersey abdomen. Moth traps are great for obtaining photogenic species of these interesting creatures and they can usually be persuaded to keep still for the camera.



Dungeness Bird Reserve is only half an hour from our home and it usually comes up with some memorable encounters. Last June we were delighted to see four hobbies hawking over one of the flooded gravel pits catching dragonflies with their feet and transferring them to their beaks. I used the 100 – 400 zoom set on the fastest drive and just kept the shutter down hoping one or two frames might be worth keeping. The birds were too far away for exhibition or club competition shots, but thanks to a little manipulation with Photoshop, such as filling the shadows and changing the sky, I did manage to get several pictures that could be modestly enlarged up to A5 – fine for a greetings card. We also saw a heron wrestling with a large eel that was also too distant for really worthwhile images (I need a 1.4x converter) but were rather fun to have on the flash card and for small record prints.

So if circumstances do confine you to your neighbourhood, don't despair. There is plenty to discover in your locality. After all, Gilbert White didn't do too badly at Selborne did he?



'Birds in Action'

a successful Fellowship Panel by David Cantrille FRPS

Photographing birds has become my main interest in photography. As I improved and became more practiced, I moved on to taking shots of birds in action: flying, preening, fishing and so on. Action photography was more of a challenge! It involved learning about the birds and being able to anticipate their behaviours in order to get the photographs. My collection of bird images grew and it seemed to me that twenty images of bird action or bird behaviour would be a suitable subject for a Fellowship panel.

My aim then was to build up the number so that I had different species all doing different things or seen from different angles. It was essential that all the images should be sharp and well-presented as prints. I considered using commercially made prints but discovered that the paper used by our local print processor was thinner than the Epson paper we used at home

and that when mounted it tended to ripple. So I decided to use our Epson 1290 and do all the prints at home.

When the prints were made, they were all arranged on the floor to how a panel could be made up. The final design allowed for flying birds on the top row, birds with their feet on the ground on the bottom row and a mixture on the middle row. I also had to consider how to use the vertical images so that they would not look odd in the panel. In addition, it seemed good to have all birds, where feasible, looking into the panel rather than out of it. This meant birds facing left at the right hand ends of each row and birds facing right on the left hand ends - this gave a pleasing symmetry. When satisfied with the look of the panel I was ready to put it in for a Fellowship.

David Cantrille Fellowship Application Hanging Plan





Come the day in September 2006, although happy with my work, I had absolutely no idea how it would be viewed as an entry for a Fellowship. My wife and I spent the morning wandering anxiously around Bath and returned to be met with the news that I had passed the first hurdle and my panel would now go to the next stage. A month later I heard with elation that the decision had been ratified and I was now an FRPS.

Since then I have succeeded in obtaining my MFIAP (April 2007), again in Nature. This required a great deal of thought, particularly with regard to preparation, but that's another story!



Pictures:

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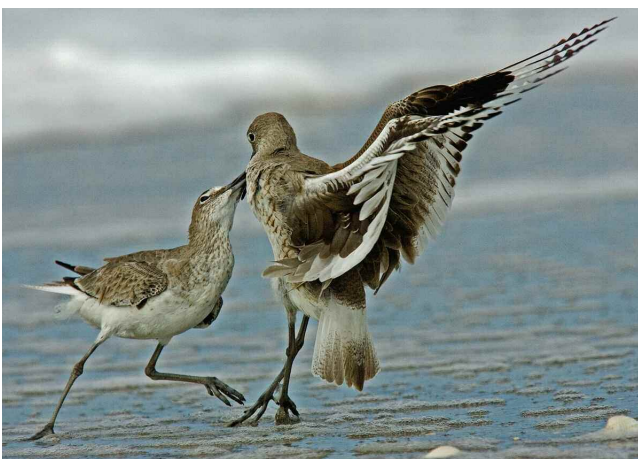
- top: Gannet in flight
- left: Godwits fighting
- right: Brown Pelican in flight

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- top: Plover washing
- centre: Avocets mating
- bottom: Willets fighting

Back Cover

- top: European Spoonbill feeding
- bottom: Yellow-crowned Night Heron with crab



My Journey of a Lifetime

by Margaret Johnson LRPS



Fin del Mundo. The end of the world. And it certainly felt like it when we arrived in Ushuaia at the southernmost tip of South America, following a long journey from London via Madrid and Buenos Aires in November last year. But that was only the start. We were to go even further south and see and experience some wonderful sights. This was just the beginning of a journey to the Falklands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula.

Ushuaia is a pleasant town overlooking the Beagle Channel with the mountains of Patagonia behind. Here we spent a couple of nights before boarding the *Akademie Ioffe*, a Russian scientific research ship, for our nineteen day voyage. We spent half a day in the Tierra del Fuego National Park, which is the only place in Argentina where beach and forest meet. Here we saw our first Upland Goose, Southern Lapwing and Patagonian Swift.

After boarding the ship our adventure really started. There were four of us travelling together - we had two adjacent cabins with en-suite facilities. We set sail at 6.30pm and a pilot took us out of the Beagle Channel which is split between Argentina and Chile. The days we spent at sea were filled with talks about the places we

would be visiting, the wildlife we would see, photography talks and the history of the area. The bridge was open at all times and many hours were spent there scanning the skies for birds and the ocean for whales, dolphins, seals and penguins.

Our first sight of land was the Falkland Islands and we had the experience of kitting ourselves out for a zodiac landing. We had to don waterproofs, Wellingtons and lifejackets - we felt about five times our normal size by the time we'd finished. This procedure in the mud room soon became second nature as we were doing it two or three times each day. We made a wet landing on Carcass Island and saw our first Magellanic Penguins, Tussock Birds and Cobb's Wrens. I was amazed at how much debris there was above the high tide mark: plastic bottles, fishing lines and other signs of man that had been washed in on the tides. Our pollution gets everywhere! Later we feasted on an amazing spread of home-baked foods in the garden of the farmhouse at the settlement - all thoroughly enjoyed with steaming mugs of tea or coffee.

Then to Saunders Island where each zodiac was accompanied in to shore by dolphins. Two and three frolicked around the boat and you could almost touch them. Then on shore came our first experience of penguins in vast quantities. From the beach there looked to be just a few penguins but when you went to the dunes there were circular shaped rookeries everywhere. There was much coming and going between them. I spent a long time just sitting and watching the King and Gentoo penguins.

This was the start of the nesting season and the Gentoo males were finding (or stealing) stones to take to their mates. Some had tiny chicks popping out from underneath and one of the Kings had an egg on its feet. There were Skuas lurking around waiting for an opportunity to steal an egg or a chick but the penguins were vigilant and chased them off.

We spent a day in Port Stanley, the capital of The Falklands, which was very interesting. The museum gave us a great insight into the islanders' lives during the Falklands conflict. We saw Flightless Steamer Ducks with young, Southern Giant Petrels and Southern Sea Lions.

We experienced two full days at sea before we reached South Georgia. During this time we saw our first Wandering Albatross, thousands of White-chinned Sooty Albatross and Black-browed Albatross as well as Orca and our first iceberg. We crossed the Atlantic Convergence which brought cooler temperatures and sighted Shag Rock, a steep black rock jutting sharply out of the blank ocean.

So to South Georgia, with its snow-capped mountains plunging straight into the sea and the Bay of Isles. The zodiac ride to the beach was wild, wet and windy but definitely worth it even though we were not able to land because of the swell. The beach was crowded with fur seals, the smell and noise of which were overwhelming! There was so much going on: males defending territory, females with pups and others just giving birth. What an experience.





Next day we went to Fortuna Bay where the fur seals had to be persuaded to move before we could land. We sailed into Stromness Bay to look at the old whaling station which is an essential part of South Georgia's history and to see where Shackleton arrived after his amazing crossing from Elephant Island. Then to Grytviken Whaling station where Shackleton is buried. Next day we sailed into Gold Harbour - here the shoreline was covered with thousands of King Penguins. A truly remarkable sight with the glaciers and mountains behind. The crew had landed first and made a path for us to get up the beach. There were elephant seals either

side. There were penguins everywhere; mainly Kings but with a few Gentoos as well. I sat down to watch near a large crèche of King Penguin chicks - no one had told the chicks to keep their distance and so they came right up to you. One was particularly interested in my Wellingtons and kept pecking at them. When you walked you became conscious of being followed and on turning round would find a penguin chick about to bump into you.

Elephant Seal bulls are enormous - their harems were scattered all along the shoreline. It was a great privilege to be so close to all these remarkable animals and birds.





On our voyage down to the Antarctic Peninsula we passed Elephant Island where Shackleton was stranded. It was hard to imagine how he and his crew had survived there for four long months.

We sailed into the caldera of Deception Island through Neptune's Bellows, a channel a third of a mile wide, very shallow at one side and with steep walls at either side. The volcano had last erupted in 1970 and as we floated into the caldera an account of the radio transmissions during the last eruption was read out over the intercom! Very impressive and thought-provoking.

At 5am on December 6th we had our first sighting of the Antarctic Continent but it was to be another day before we actually set foot on it. We cruised Wilhelmina Bay in our Zodiac, passing amongst icebergs of quite startling shades of blue contrasting against the brash ice. There Weddel Seals and Leopard Seals on the ice floes and the air was full of Antarctic and Blue-Eyed Shags. It was made even more magical when it started to snow. Such silence and peace! The afternoon saw us on Cuverville Island where there were hundreds of Gentoo penguins; some were very clean and others absolutely filthy. Cruising back to the ship among the icebergs we saw a little flock of Snow petrels; beautiful birds.

Eventually on the 7th Dec we set foot on the Antarctic Peninsula itself. What a tremendous feeling. The snow was deep and just right for sliding down slopes. We could hear tremendous roars as ice calved off the glaciers. Our journey through the Lemaire Channel was spectacular - a narrow fissure between Booth Island and the Antarctic mainland - from the bridge the way ahead seemed impassable as there were icebergs wherever you looked. But the ship was navigated slowly and safely through them all and brought a spontaneous burst of applause for the captain and helmsman.

Our last day before setting sail for Ushuaia was perfect; sunshine, blue skies and three humpbacked whales within metres of the ship. Our final zodiac cruise of the voyage was amongst the brash ice of Fournier Bay. At one point the zodiacs cut their engines and the music of Mozart soared into the air and everyone sat in the ethereal atmosphere reflecting on the incredible beauty of the natural world.

The trip through the Drake Passage and around Cape Horn was quite rough with waves of between three and five metres. It was hard to keep ones' balance and too windy to go out on deck, so everyone gathered on the bridge as we rounded Cape Horn. Once into the Beagle Channel the seas became calmer and we sailed into Ushuaia after an incredible three weeks amongst the peace and tranquillity of the Southern Ocean. Now we were back to the hustle and bustle of normal life but with a store of memories to call on whenever we wished.





Pictures

Top to bottom, left to right:

Chuck Ecclestone ARPS	- Evening Primrose
Mike Middleton LRPS	- Pyramidal Orchid
James Foad	- Emperor Moth Larvae
Ian Pratt LRPS	- Sand Lizard, female
Mike Middleton LRPS	- Silver Studded Blue

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Group picture by Chuck Ecclestone ARPS

Nature Group Residential Field Meeting

by Chuck Eccleston ARPS

Juniper Hall Field Centre 22nd to 25th June 2007

This year the Nature Group met for their annual residential field meeting at Juniper Hall Field Centre, near Dorking in Surrey. Juniper Hall was originally an ale house built in circa 1680, in 1789 it was significantly extended and converted into a private dwelling. Currently owned by the National Trust, it is leased to the Field Studies Council who use its extensive facilities and wonderful grounds to run residential courses, mainly for schools and universities. The group were all housed in an annexe a short walk from the main building with individual rooms and communal showers and toilets, the rooms were comfortable but furnished to a basic standard.

There were fourteen of us in this years group including Kath Bull, who tirelessly organised the event, and Alan Draper, a part time teacher in photography at Juniper Hall who drove the mini-bus and led the excursions. As this was my first Nature Group Residential Meeting I did not know what to expect so decided to set off from home early. I arrived just after lunch on Friday, booked in and quickly unpacked my gear. I spent a couple of hours photographing insects, snails and flowers in the grounds and then made my way to the bar for afternoon tea and a chance to meet the other group members. After a brief health and safety chat by the Head of the Centre, Alan outlined the anticipated programme for the week end, which was dependant on both the weather and the interests of the group and a decision was made to visit Thursley National Nature Reserve the next morning. Prior to dinner we sampled the local brews and then retired to the dining room for a superb repast. After dinner we gathered in the classroom to view presentations by members of the group.

As well as the organised elements of the course the grounds of Juniper Hall and its environs were open to members to roam at will and most mornings people could be seen walking around with tripods and cameras from 5.30 to 6.00am onwards. During the week-end I managed to see a Weasel *Mustela nivalis*, Grey

Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*, Rose-ringed Parakeets *Psittacula krameri*, three different orchids, Meadow Brown butterflies *Maniola jurtina*, Red Admirals *Vanessa atalanta* and of course numerous numbers of the resident Edible Roman Snail population *Helix pomatia*.

Following a substantial cooked breakfast we prepared our own packed lunches and set off for Thursley, south west of Guildford. The weather forecast was 'sunshine and showers' so we crossed our fingers! Thursley is approximately 320Ha of lowland heath, mire and woodland and has recently suffered from a serious fire but is well on the way to re-generation. The site contains bog pools, sphagnum lawns and tracts of sandy soils. We were hoping to encounter Sundew, Bladderwort, Silver-studded Blue butterflies and some of the 26 recorded Dragonfly species. Birds hopefully present would include the Hobby (whose main food source is dragonflies), Woodlark, Curlew and Dartford Warblers.

Upon arrival the group all went their separate ways with varying objectives in mind. I was keen to attempt some dragonfly shots and possibly find some sundews. The number of dragonflies and damselflies present was incredible, including Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum*, Keeled Skimmer *Orthetrum coerulescens*, Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator*, Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata* and Beautiful Demoiselle *Calopteryx virgo*. Two forms of Sundew were present, Common *Drosera rotundifolia* and Oblong-leaved *Drosera intermedia* together with the Silver Studded Butterfly *Plebius argus*, many Common Lizards *Lacerta vivipara* and a few Sand Lizards *Lacerta agilis*. Luckily the forecast of heavy rain did not materialise - we only had a light drizzle at lunch time and most importantly good cloud cover and no wind! We set off back to the Centre at the end of a most successful day, arriving in time for a welcome cup of tea and home made cakes.

During the evening we were once again entertained by members presentations. We all agreed to see what the weather had in store for us before making our plans for the next day.

We woke to intermittent drizzle which had become heavy rain by the time breakfast was over, so we met in the classroom and spent the morning running through the latest Nature Group Interactive CD on how to prepare for your 'A' panel. Needless to say the discussion became quite heated when we were trying to pick our final images for the test panel! After lunch the heavy rain had dissipated so we made our way to a roundabout just outside Guildford which was a mass of wild flowers with verges covered in poppies. To complete the afternoon Alan drove us to the River Wey Navigation Canal, originally opened in 1653 the canal comprises 20 miles of waterway running from the Thames at Weybridge to Godalming. Our main quarry was Banded Demoiselles *Calopteryx splendens* which were very plentiful and accommodating due to the cool temperatures and lack of sunshine. Alan managed to spot a White-legged Damselfly *Platynemis pennipes*, but unfortunately it was too far away to get a decent picture.

The following morning we elected to photograph some of the moths that had been caught over night in the moth trap. Each night the trap had been set and over 30 different species had been recorded. The larger ones of note included the Poplar Hawkmoth, Eyed Hawkmoth, Small Elephant Hawkmoth, Privet

Hawkmoth, Peppered Moth, Snout, Buff Arches etc. A few of the group took their own cars to visit Ranmoor Common to photograph orchids etc. After lunch the rain became torrential so members gradually began to set off home, some facing long drives in poor conditions.

Despite having to dodge showers and adjust the course accordingly (this was the week end of the great summer flood when Sheffield was underwater) Alan and Kath produced an interesting and varied programme over the three days and are to be complimented.

My personal equipment list included a Canon EOS1D MkIII, Canon 100mm macro, Canon 100 – 400mm IS lens, Canon 24/105mm IS lens, 1.4x & 2x Canon converters, 12 & 25mm extension tubes, cable release and a Gitzo tripod, the range and diversity of gear used by the group was amazing and one had lots of opportunity to try other people's equipment.

If you have not been on a Nature Group Residential week end before I urge you to come along to the next one. It is incredibly indulgent to have all the time in the world to practice our wonderful hobby with numerous subjects set out before you and fellow members to guide you with helpful advice should you need it. The company, laughs and camaraderie are second to none.



The Nature Photographers' Joint Convention

October 3rd – 5th, 2008.

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire DE55 1AU

The Nature Group has been invited to join the Nature Photographers' Portfolio (NPP), Nature Photographers' Society (NPS) and the Zoological Photographic Club (ZPC) at their joint Convention in 2008 at The Hayes Conference Centre. The Centre is very close to J28 on the M1 and the amenities are of a very high standard. The package is all-inclusive and non-negotiable. Rooms are of a very high-standard and have en-suite bathrooms. All meals are included (afternoon tea on Friday, October 3rd, to Sunday lunch on Sunday, October 5th). The convention will enjoy exclusive use of a conference hall, with two small attached meeting rooms. The centre is set in its own spacious and beautiful grounds with ample parking adjacent to the accommodation. John Tinning of the NPP and ZPC has agreed to organise the event and if you would like to attend you are advised to book before 30th April 2008.

Nature Group members who are also members of NPP, NPS or ZPC will know that the Joint Conventions are thoroughly enjoyable and well attended. You cannot fail to enjoy this event and it has the full backing of our Chairman, Geoff Trinder, and the Nature Group Committee.

There will be a full programme of events including a Field Trip to a local site on Saturday afternoon to photograph fungi etc., plus an opportunity for delegates to give 5-10 minute presentations of their work in the form of slides or digital images (further details on application).

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS and NPP Member

Booking Form

Name: Email:

Address:
.....

Postcode: Tel:

I wish to book a room for two persons @ £140 per person i.e. £280 all-inclusive. ☐

Name of partner / guest.

I wish to book a place in a shared twin-bedded room @ £140 per person all-inclusive. ☐

I would be willing to share with

I wish to book a room on a single-occupancy basis @ £160 all-inclusive. ☐

I wish to attend as a non-residential delegate @ £85, incl all meals, except breakfast ☐

Special Requirements; Dietary? [] Disabled access/room required? [] Other []

Please specify:

To book, please complete this form and send your cheque for the full amount, made payable to 'The Nature Photographers' Convention', to the following address:

The Convention Organiser, John Tinning, Brockwood House, 21 Ervin Way, Queniborough, LEICESTER, Leicestershire, LE7 3TT as soon as possible.

A confirmation of your reservation and an outline programme will be sent by email or 'snailmail' to the address provided above. Please note: no monies can be refunded for cancellation after June 1st, 2008.

Field Meeting Reports

Oxwich

Sunday 10th June 2007

Leader: Margaret Hodge FRPS

On what turned out to be the hottest day in June, we again met at Oxwich. It was good to meet up again with old friends as well as make new friends.

This year the low tide was not so advantageous as in previous years, but to have delayed the meeting for a lower tide later in the month would not have been good for the flora.

Walking across the large stretch of wet sand toward the rock pools we passed many trails made by molluscs, some weaving interesting and elaborate patterns. Colourful clumps of eggs were found – these were Dog Whelk *Nulella lapillus* and *Nassarius reticulatus*. Coat-of-Mail Chiton *Lepidochitona cinereus*, a primitive mollusc, were photographed. We also found many discarded carapaces of the Common Shore Crab, all in perfect condition and illustrating how the newly enlarged and emerged crab had moved out.

Unfortunately the height of the incoming tide precluded the usual number of varied species. However, this did offer us the opportunity to admire and study in more detail the geology of the surrounding cliffs and the beautiful detail in the strata. The rocks also contained many fossils. When water was poured over a favoured spot, the results often produced stunning images containing black, grey and sparkling white with pink streaks, yellows and deep reds, all glistening in the sunshine.

A recess for lunch was taken in the shade of some trees and then we walked along the strand line and into the dunes area.

The first flower to be seen was the rare Sea Stock *Matthiol sinata* – only one, but in perfect condition. Several years ago this stunning plant began to colonise the dunes, but now there is hardly a sign that it was ever present, apart from this single specimen. On the hot bare sand we found many flowering Sea Bindweed *Calystegia soldanella*, also Rest Harrow, Yellow Sedum acre, Sea Holly, *Euphorbia portlandica*, *Honkenya pepiodes* Sea Sandwort. In the undulating areas

of the Nature Reserve we came across many Pyramidal Orchids as well as even more Early Purples. We also found Common Twayblade and Rugosa roses, the latter much enjoying the sandy habitat. Scottish or Burnet Rose, some with the bright orange rust which attaches the stalks, some displaying purple hips. A group of pristine Ivy Broomrape *Orobancha hederae* were much photographed.

Two Cinabar Moths hovered awhile and one Clouded Yellow butterfly passed us by; we spotted a few Blue Damselfly in a damp shady spot and observed male and female Common Blue butterflies collecting on Birds-foot Trefoil. The Bloody Cranesbill stood out against the Yellow Rattle and Prostrate Willow. Despite the very wet weather preceding the meeting, the dune system was in much need of rain – although the flowers were many they were small.

Everyone seemed to have enjoyed this day beside the sea, in perfect weather and equally good company.

Miller's Dale Area

Tuesday 24th July 2007

Leader: Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

The old Midland Railway line from London St. Pancras to Manchester Central passed through the cities of Leicester and Derby before running through the stunningly beautiful scenery of the Derbyshire Dales. Miller's Dale station was quite large since it was the junction at which passengers desiring to go to Buxton had to change and board a 'push-me-pull-you' which ran the short distance between the two stations. With the closure of the lines the rail beds have become excellent trails and the old limestone quarries that provided stone and indeed quicklime and slaked lime for the building of the lines themselves have now become nature reserves. Miller's Dale railway station is now a centre for the Peak District National Park and has a very good car park and facilities. So, on what was one of the few fine days of July, around 25-30 members from all points of the compass

collected for a day's nature photography. The central platform has now become an area in which many examples of the local limestone flora have been encouraged, helped by a little judicious planting, and in the late July sunshine it was a picture.

Large plants are obviously most noticeable, so Dark Mullein (*Verbascum nigrum*) with its tall spires of yellow flowers bearing purple anthers were obvious targets, as were Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Greater Knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*) and Field Scabious (*Kanutia arvensis*). Amongst the smaller flowers was Marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*) in both its normal and white forms and a real gem Orpine (*Sedum telephium*). Of course it is impractical to list all the flowers, but it really was a beautiful sight. Butterflies were also taking advantage of both the sunshine and the resulting warmth and in addition to the commoner species we recorded Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*) and White-letter Hairstreak (*Strymonidia w-album*). A little further along the line is one of the quarries and here there were still a goodly number of Fragrant Orchids in both the normal form (*Gymnadenia conopsea*) and the dense-flowered form (*G. c. ssp. densiflora*). Whether this is the true dense-flowered form or not I really don't know, but the flower spikes are very densely packed, however it is usually called the Marsh Fragrant Orchid and is most often found in very wet conditions. We also found the white form (*G. c. var. albiflora*), the first time I have seen it outside a book! Another oddity of the area is that Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) grows here - the books tell us that it does not grow on lime! Derbyshire is full of oddities and not all of them are plants either! The River Wye is very attractive here and I was pleased to hear that one or two members had photographed Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cineria*). Altogether a successful day and my thanks are due to all those members who took the time to accompany me.

Field Meetings 2008

The Nature Group Field Meetings are an integral part of the group's activities; they offer you, the members:

- opportunities to visit unknown sites with someone who is already familiar with the venue
- renew acquaintances with other members you may have already met previously and perhaps even forge new friendships.
- learn new techniques from someone more knowledgeable or share your knowledge with someone who wants to learn.
- discuss equipment, techniques, etc. with other interested members.

The Nature Group Committee are appealing to you, the members, to volunteer to lead a Field Meeting at a venue on your local patch or at any place of your choice. Other than a knowledge of the geography of your chosen venue and what the likely subject matter will be, no specialist knowledge is required. We do not expect Leaders to act as instructors.

If there has not been a Field Meeting in your part of the country for some time, or even if there has, why not volunteer to host one? What have you got to lose? The Nature Group will even reimburse your out of pocket expenses if you have to visit the site to do a recce the week before.

Colin Smith, our Programme Coordinator, is waiting to hear from you. Give him a call if you would like to discuss a possible venue or if you have any other concerns about becoming a Field Meeting Leader. Colin's details are overleaf. Alternatively, just complete the form on the following page and mail it to Colin as soon as possible.

Please don't let Field Meetings become a thing of the past!

RPS Nature Group - Field Meetings 2008

Location

Meeting Place

Grid Reference or directions

Leader(s)

Day & date

Cost (eg car parking)

Main subjects of interest :-

Items to bring (tick as applicable and add any other necessary items below).

Stout Shoes ☐ Wellingtons ☐

Waterproofs ☐ Packed Lunch ☐

Additional information:-

Name

Address

Tel No:

E mail:

Please return this form as soon as possible (not later than 28th February 2008) to be included in the Spring edition of The Iris)

Colin Smith FRPS
3 St Hilda's Close
Chorley,
Lancs, PR7 3NU

Tel: 01257 271981

E-mail: colin-smith@foto-wizard.fsnet.co.uk

A Nature Group Day in the South East

A day full of Nature Photography

Saturday 1st March 2008, 10 am - 4.30pm.

Bewl Water, near Lambershurst

Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 8BJ

PROGRAMME

Includes:

Dawn Osborn FRPS 'Wildlife of the Falkland Islands'
Mervyn Seltzer ARPS 'Enchanted Isles - The Galapagos'
Colin Page 'Landscapes, Flora & Flora of Romney Marsh,
Rye and the South Downs'

Members' Lecturettes

A selection of recent successful A & F panels including
Fellowship from Dawn Osborn FRPS and
Associateships from Chuck Eccleston ARPS and John Hunt ARPS

Tea and Coffee are available in the Centre Restaurant.
Lunches are also available or you may bring your own.

Tickets are available now, priced at £15 each

Book now to ensure your place

Complete the reply slip below and send with your cheque to:

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Obituary - Frank Young ARPS

Members of Midlands photographic clubs and groups, this summer mourned the loss of Frank Young ARPS. Frank was well respected and liked for a good many reasons - he was an excellent photographer in many genres and he was a good club member. A member of Tamworth Photographic Society and a selector on the MCPF/PAGB Judges list, Frank was also very involved in the running and organising of The Midland Salon for many years. He was always ready to offer help and advice if it was required. Frank had been a Nature Group member for as long as I can remember and a friend of my Father's for longer still. He ran Fungi Forays for the Nature Group and supported the exhibition every year. He was always pleased to see me on the occasions when I bumped into him. I shall miss the pleasure of bumping into him at Nature Group, Mid-dig and MCPF events as well as airshows like Old Warden; to seeing his name at the end of the acceptance list of the Nature Group exhibition and in many other small ways. He will be missed by many I suspect. Our sympathies and respects go to his wife Monica and son John.

Dawn Osborn FRPS

Ken Simcox, his long standing friend wrote this tribute of Frank, echoing the sentiments of all who had the pleasure to know Frank, and another friend, Terry Bickley ARPS has written a short poem.

We shall miss him.

Frank was a gentleman and a complex character. He had a streak of determination, some would say obstinacy, which was born out of his desire to do what he considered right. This included keeping the promises he made, even if it meant that he had to forego more interesting pursuits. Sometimes he would tell his fellow club members what the next days' tasks were, which would leave us lesser mortals astonished. On some days his work load was immense.

His generosity was legendary of time and effort and I suspect other resources if required. His concern for his friends was always at the forefront of his thoughts. I know from personal experience, or more accurately was later told, that in a dark hour of illness, Frank was at the hospital bedside within minutes of being informed of the problem. Over the next 14 days he visited me and transported my wife and was there when difficult decisions might have had to be taken. This degree of generosity and concern is hard to find these days and was extended to everyone he knew. I believe we were guilty of imposing on Frank's generosity because we knew it was guaranteed.

Frank's passion in life was photography. That we all know. I believe that everyone who went out with him has a story to tell. One of my favourites concerns a trip he and I made to Pystle Ryhder waterfalls. It was a bright, clear and cold day, with an icy wind. We had parked and I was the first to have my gear ready. As I approached the water's edge a good shot came into view. But no, a crisp packet was stuck on a foreground rock in the centre of the river. This

was pre-digital days, so I went on, crossed the river, climbed the left bank and started to take pictures. 20 minutes later I looked down to the river and saw Frank wading out of the water holding the crisp packet. Crikey I thought, he's keen. I later learned that he had been setting up his shots when he'd slipped into the water, got his feet trapped under a boulder and was all but submerged. He managed to keep his camera dry. When he got out of the water he was so wet that he decided to go and remove the crisp packet. He then took his pictures. I didn't have the cheek to take the same shots. On getting back to the car to get drinks and warm up, we couldn't open the it - the central-locking key pad had been in his trouser pocket and was now water logged and did was not functioning correctly. The car door locks were opening and closing like the twin pistons of a steam engine. Lesser men would have called it a day. But not Frank. He was out doing what he loved, taking photographs.

Frank spent most of his working life as a miner. A tough breed. But this gentle man, Frank, made botanical subjects his photographic speciality and became extremely successful. This success came without the benefit of travel to exotic places, because Frank would not travel abroad. This was not due to a fear of flying, as he would happily fly in planes made of paper, string and sealing wax at Old Warden. No, he had a fear of foreign food.

Our memories of Frank will be sharp, clear and colourful and certainly without any of that 'pleasing lack of definition' of which he was so fond. We will certainly miss him.



Of a Friend at their Passing

A poem to the memory of Frank Young ARPS
by Terry Bickley ARPS - a friend of Frank's

A gentle man, he passed this way,
a friend of mine and your's I'd say.
Tall and slim - should I say thin? -
I smile, do you? when I think of him.
His gentle smile, how quiet he talked
both gave pleasure whenever we walked.
When we went 'abroad' as oft' as we could,
we spent our time searching in field and in wood.

His dog, it would walk exceeding slow,
but in the early 'wee' hours, still they would go.
Whatever the weather, come rain or come shine,
the dog got its walk, no matter the time.
Others out early, walking green grasses,
they will not see him, he no longer passes.

We would study the shows and would both agree,
'room for improvement' for him, but especially for me!
Success he had tasted, many a time,
and in his chosen hobby he did real fine!

Patience he gave, most often to me,
maybe also to you, perhaps you'd agree?

Physically gone and not in our vision,
he remains in our minds, our hearts and decisions.
The time that I spent with my best mate,
will stand in good stead, my grief to placate.

We will all remember - and surely all do
bid you, gentle man, our fondest "Adieu"

Pictures by the late Frank Young ARPS:

Above: Banded Demoiselle

Below: Ringlet Butterfly





Pictures by David Cantrille FRPS

above: European Spoonbill feeding

below: Yellow-crowned Night Heron with crab

