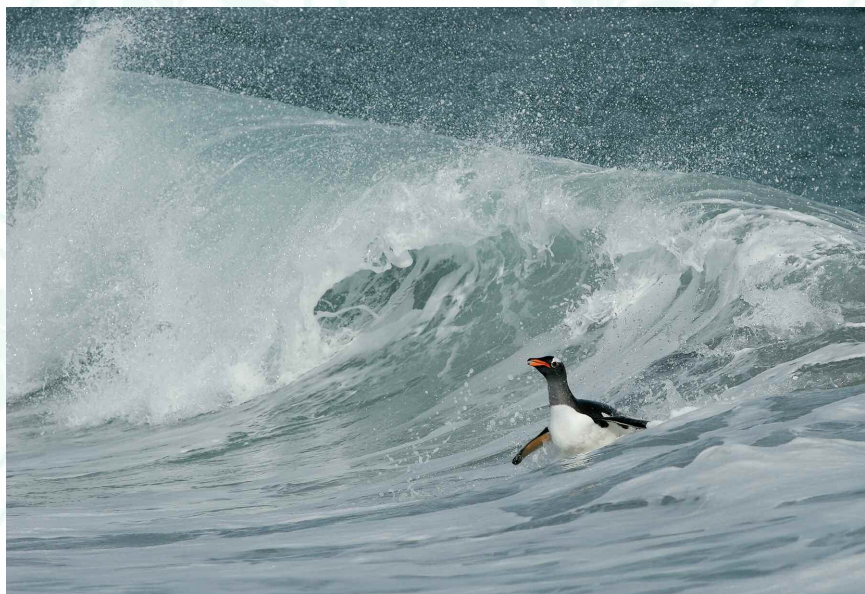




# THE IRIS

MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 97 Spring 2007





## Publication information

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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.

No payment will be made for material used and whilst every care will be taken, neither the Editor, the Nature Group or the Printers can accept liability for any damage that may occur to photographic material submitted.

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.

### Distribution:

'The Iris' is forwarded to members using address labels produced by the RPS Membership Dept in Bath. Any member not receiving their copy should contact that department so that their name appears on a label in the future. However the Secretary will be pleased to post single copies to those members who have failed to receive them.

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## Picture Information

*Cover* **Gentoo Penguin in a heavy sea**  
by Dawn Osborn FRPS

*IFC* **Coyote** by Richard Revels FRPS

*BC* **Raven** by Richard Revels FRPS



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

## 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.

## Field Meeting Reports

Please send these directly to the Editor (address above) by post or email.

# Editorial

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Time seems to pass so quickly these days - is that because we are all so much more busy? I know that I seem to spend an increasing amount of time sitting in front of a monitor and not enough time behind a camera. That said, I do enjoy viewing the images of other nature photographers and regularly browse nature websites including the Nature Group's own website. If you have not yet taken advantage of this aspect of the group, please do so at your earliest opportunity. You can post notices to other members requesting help, advertising photographic items you may have for sale, as well as sharing images via the Members Gallery. Details of how to register are given on page 30.

The response from members to host a field meeting this year was even more disappointing this year than last. Perhaps because the request went out earlier than usual and you forgot to volunteer because you were busy? It is not too late - events for the Autumn can be included in next issue of The Iris and events for the summer can still be announced via the website noticeboard and events page. Even more reason to register as a website member!

Another event which needs your support is the annual Spring Meeting which as usual is combined with the AGM and the opening of the Annual Exhibition. Whether you entered the Exhibition or not, this is your opportunity to view one of the best natural history exhibitions in the UK. On top of that, if you come for the whole day you can enjoy an informative talk on Digital Photography by Mike Lane FRPS. This will be an excellent day and its FREE! It will cost you nothing more than your time, travelling expenses and the price of your lunch.

Please become more actively involved in the group and its activities - you will find that we are much better value if you do.

Finally, I do hope you will all enjoy this issue, there are a selection of successful panels to view, excellent articles from Richard Revels FRPS and John Bebbington FRPS as well as reviews of some new and revised natural history books.



# From the chair

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It is with feelings of both pride and disappointment that I find myself at the PC writing this final copy from the 'Chair'.

I feel immensely proud to have served as your Chairman for the past 2 years - I confess to feeling rather disappointed that having just become accustomed to the role, I now have to hand it on and over.

I truly can't believe where the time has gone and would like to thank you all one last time for your support of the group. The Nature group is one of the strongest and most supported of the RPS' special interest groups. This is due entirely to the membership's support of the group's activities and your committee. I do hope, as always, that it continues to grow and evolves from strength to strength into the future from the solid and strong position that it currently holds.

One of the best ways that the membership can support the group is by entering our annual exhibition and due to the efforts of the entrants and Peter and Suzie, our Exhibition Secretaries, the exhibition has grown in stature and now has the reputation of being one of the best Natural History shows available.

Since writing this the exhibition will have been selected. The digital entry is up by 100% which is excellent news. I'm sure that the images throughout will be of a very high standard and that we'll all be privileged to see another exceptional showing of fine quality natural history images. If you've never managed to take in the exhibition, then it's a must so please continue to show your support for the group by either visiting the opening at Smethwick PS at the AGM or book the travelling exhibition for your local group or society.

On that subject make a date in your diary and don't forget to join us on Saturday 30th March 2007 for our AGM. This year the morning starts with a presentation from Mike Lane FRPS. Mike's work is exemplary and I'm sure we'll be in for a fabulous show. After lunch there will be the formality of the AGM, where not only

do the committee report to the membership on the activities of the previous year, but the membership also get the opportunity to voice their concerns and air suggestions for future group policy and activities. The day will finally be rounded up with the opening of the Annual Exhibition, which even without Mike's presentation, would make the day one well worth the effort of attending. A little publicised fact, but the exhibition opening affords the only opportunity, anywhere, anytime, that anyone will ever get the chance to see the accepted prints mounted and displayed and that certainly is a spectacle well worth viewing. So I look forward to welcoming you all to the 2007 AGM.

Getting involved is what the Nature Group's all about, albeit in organising or attending one of our series of field meetings, supplying an illustrated article for *The Iris* or by just supporting and attending one of our many annual events like the recently held Chairman's Day held at Smethwick PS back in October. There was strong support for the event and 50 members joined me for an excellent day of discussion and a series of first class image lectures, making it one of the most memorable nature group days I've ever had - for those that missed the day, you really did miss a great day with some great lectures.

So I'm afraid that, that's just about all from me and as all good things must come to an end I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for the future; thank you all one last time for your support of the Nature group; and would especially like to wish Geoff every success as Chairman during his period of stewardship.



# **The 31st Annual General Meeting, Spring Meeting and Exhibition Opening**

of the RPS Nature Group will be held at:-

## **Smethwick Photographic Society**

**The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands**

(for directions see below),

**Saturday 31st March 2007**

### **Timetable**

10.30hrs Assemble for 11.00hrs. start

**11.00hrs 'A Digital Lane.' presented by  
Mike Lane FRPS**

**12.30hrs Break for lunch.**

Light lunches will be available in the clubhouse (ploughman's or jacket potatoes). There is also a dining area if you wish to bring sandwiches.

**14.00hrs 31st Annual General Meeting.**

### **Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 30th AGM 2006, printed in issue 95 of 'The Iris'.
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. Secretary's Report.
7. Election of Officers and Committee
8. Proposed changes to Rules & Regulations
9. Any other business
10. Date and venue of the 32nd AGM - Saturday 26th April 2008

**14.45hrs Opening of the 2007 Annual Exhibition**

Presentation of the Awards

followed by a showing of the accepted projected images.

Accepted Prints will be on display. for the duration of the day

### **Directions:-**

Leave the M5 at Junction 2 and get into right hand lane. At roundabout (with traffic lights) approximately 200 yards from motorway take A4034 right towards West Bromwich and immediately get into left hand lane of dual carriageway. At first traffic lights (approx 1/3 mile) turn left into Park Street. After a hundred yards or so turn right into Churchbridge (cul-de-sac). The Old Schoolhouse is last but one building on left.

# Proposed Amendments to the Regulations of the Nature Group of the RPS

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Proposed Amendments shall read as follows:

- 6.1 The Group shall be administered by a Committee comprising Officers and Ordinary Committee Members elected by members of the Group at an Annual General meeting as follows:-  
Three Officers (one Chairman; one Hon. Secretary; one Hon. Treasurer);  
one Vice-Chairman;  
the Editor of the Group Magazine;  
the Exhibition Secretary;  
one Group Representative to the Society Advisory Council;  
a minimum of four Ordinary Members of the Committee
- 6.2 The following shall be ex-officio Members of the Committee:-  
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 and the Immediate Past Group Chairman, all of whom are non-voting
- 6.5 Election shall be by secret ballot. The Hon. Secretary shall prepare voting papers as required and act as returning officer. He or she will nominate three members of the Group not standing for election to act as scrutineers. If the number of vacancies equals the number of nominations received, an election shall be deemed unnecessary.
- 6.8 The Officers and Committee shall be elected for a period of two years and may offer themselves for re-election. No member shall serve a continuous period of more than 8 years, and may only offer themselves for re-election after a minimum period of 2 years not in office. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman may only serve in those offices for a maximum period of 2 years.

## Article 7 - Power of Executive

- 7.1 The Officers and Committee shall be vested with widespread powers of management, administration and direction of the Group and to do and authorise all acts and operatives or purchase and perform all banking operations subject to the articles under 10.9 and 10.10.
- 10.1 The Group's funds shall be held with the Society's bankers and used for day-to-day short-term transactions
- 10.5 Proper accounts, comprising at least an Income and Expenditure account and Balance Sheet, showing the state of Group finances, as at 31st December, shall be prepared each year and a copy of these accounts sent to the Director General of the Society, by the end of January, for preparation of the Society's consolidated annual accounts. The Group accounts shall be audited by a professional auditor and then presented to the next AGM for adoption. A copy of these adopted accounts shall be sent to the Director General as soon as possible after the AGM.
- 10.6 The Hon. Treasurer shall produce an annual budget before the commencement of the Financial Year. If it is planned to use past surpluses in the year in excess of £1000 this will require the confirmation of the Director General of the Society. The budget for the year should clearly identify individual items or events with a gross income of more than £1000. The organisers of any event, with a gross income of more than £1000, must produce a budget estimate for the Group Hon. Treasurer, in sufficient time for him / her to include the details in the annual budget. All events should, in normal circumstances, produce a small surplus or at least break even. Events are required to include VAT in the ticket price though this need not be shown separately.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 4

Prior confirmation of the Director General must be obtained, before such item or events may proceed.

10.7 The Hon. Treasurer shall produce quarterly VAT returns as soon as is reasonably possible after the end of the quarter in question. The totals of Income and Expenditure used must agree with figures in the spread-sheet and ledger records. VAT receipts should be obtained wherever possible and kept for future reference (or as required by Council).

10.9 Signing Arrangements:- The mandate of any account held by the Group shall have as signatories the President of the Society; the Vice-President of the Society; the Hon. Treasurer of the Society; the Director

General of the Society; the Group Chairman; the Group Hon. Treasurer; the Group Hon. Secretary.

11.4 The Society will reimburse the Group for certain Life Members of the Society who have elected to join. This reimbursement will take place each year and a list of those members will be sent to the Group.

In addition, wherever the word 'will' has been used it is changed to 'shall' and reference is made to 'the Director General' throughout.

These Regulations were revised by the Nature Group Committee and accepted by the RPS Council 2006.

If adopted at the AGM, the new regulations will be printed in full in the next issue of The Iris.

# David Osborn Photo-tours

spectacular wildlife photo-tours organised by David Osborn FRPS EFIAP

**The  
Canadian Rockies**

September 2007

**Birds of  
Florida**

March 2008

**Wildlife of the  
Falkland Islands**

November 2008

In order to maintain the exclusivity of photo-opportunities, the group size for all of the above tours is limited.



**For full details on these and other tours  
Tel: 01263 511221 Email [Poppyland3@aol.com](mailto:Poppyland3@aol.com)  
or [www.davidosbornphotography.co.uk](http://www.davidosbornphotography.co.uk)**



# Chairman's Day

by David Osborn FRPS

Keeping with tradition, at some point during their period of office it falls to every group 'Chair' to organise the event known as 'Chairman's Day'. Mine was held on Saturday October 21st 2006 and working with a well tried and tested formula, I organised my day based on travelogues and tutorials given by a number of the group's most eminent workers. The event was held at The Old Schoolhouse, HQ of Smethwick Photographic Society. 50 group members attended, looking forward to some quality presentations and images - they were not to be dissatisfied.

After an arrival meet & greet, tea & coffee, the day was opened with a 'welcome address' from the 'chair' followed by the opening presentation. I chose to show a travelogue on the birds and wild life of 'the sunshine state', Florida. The general impression of Florida is one of glitz and theme parks; a place to visit as a family rather than one for the discerning wildlife photographer, a fact which couldn't be further from the truth. Even away from the Everglades, Florida, with its wealth of accessible birdlife, is a fabulous place and offers quality photo opportunities. It is also an excellent place to get to grips with flight photo-graphy as there are so many opportunities. If you've never visited Florida be sure to join me on my next photo-tour.

The trip to Florida was then followed by a superb practical presentation on flash photography from Richard Revels. This exceptionally interesting and useful. For those of you not familiar with Richard's work, he's certainly one of the finest in his field - invertebrate/insect photography - although he produces quality images throughout. Richard began his presentation by showing his equipment of choice and discussing his flash/fill-flash technique in a Q&A format. This was followed with a selection of fine images from a wide spectrum of wildlife photography.

Colin Smith finished the morning off for us by showing a miscellany of work from just about anywhere and everywhere. I have never seen a presentation like it and commend Colin on his approach. He said it was "like throwing a pack of cards into the air; whatever order they land in is how they're shown." The presentation was accompanied by an informative and interesting commentary and was exceptionally effective,

giving us all a wonderful opportunity to view some quality imaging. Colin's presentation wrapped up the first half of the day and set the standard of expectation for the afternoon.

A superb lunch was served - as always at Smethwick - and a great vote of thanks must be recorded to Judith Parry and her team who always look after the group on our SPS visits.

The dreaded after lunch session was opened by our Immediate-past Chairman and it fell to Robert to ensure that no one dropped off after their hefty lunch!! As a complete change from the morning's showings, Robert's presentation 'Choir boys to Lady's slippers' concentrated on flower photography. talking us gently through his technique and approach, Robert showed a lovely collection of flora images from soft focus to differential focus, macro and in habitat work.

The final presentation of the day was given by John Bebbington, another fine insect photographer and an exceptionally resourceful man who often builds what he needs for a specific purpose! John's presentation gave an honest insight into his personal approach to photography. Having given us his thoughts and theories he then showed us the shots that didn't quite work as well as the 'crown jewels', the ones that did. John gave a lovely talk and highlighted what could be achieved with ingenuity as opposed to a never ending cash flow!!

Following the excellent presentations by our guest lecturers was a presentation of recent A&F successes. I would like to thank all whose panels were shown and in particular Jane Greateorex, Alan Boutel and Chuck Ecclestone for attending to present their 'A' panels and to Dawn and Andrew Gagg for presenting their 'F' panels. This was greatly received by members who enjoyed viewing the work and assessing the standard required to make a successful submission.

The only thing remaining was to thank everyone for attending and close what was an excellent and memorable meeting.

Once again, may I thank everyone who assisted in the organisation of the event, in particular the guest speakers for their time and wonderful presentations, and to everyone who joined me on the day. You all helped to make it one of my most enjoyable Nature group days.

# Rocky Mountain Delight

by Richard Revels FRPS

The Rocky Mountains were one of the regions I had always wanted to visit, and last September I vacationed in the Canadian Rockies with David Osborn FRPS, to photograph the spectacular scenery. Landscape photography is somewhat removed from my main interest of British insects, but nature comes in many shapes and forms, and it is good to try something different for a few weeks. No nature photographer should ever become bored with so many different kinds of nature to photograph.

The new flight hand luggage restrictions in force at that time, meant that a rethink of equipment and size of backpack was needed. My heavy Canon EOS 1D Mk11, great for action photography, was not really required on this trip, so instead I travelled with my Canon EOS 5D for landscapes and EOS 20D for birds and mammals. My lens armoury also needed to be cut down to a minimum and I decided on the Canon EF 17-40mm f4L, EF 24-105mm IS f4L and the EF 400mm IS f4 DO together with a 1.4x extender.

I purchased a small non-photographic backpack that would hold all these items and yet still conform to the smaller hand luggage size limit. The cameras and lenses were all individually wrapped in bubble pack pouches and fitted into the backpack with no problem, although the total weight was above the hand luggage limit. Before reaching the check-in desk, a camera body and a lens went into the pockets of my Domke Photogs jacket, as did my two Epson P2000 hard drives, on which I would be saving all my images. By weighing everything at home I knew that this would reduce my backpack weight to just below the limit. As it happened it did not get weighed and everything went without a hitch at Gatwick Airport.

We touched down at Calgary Airport, Canada some 7 hours after leaving the UK. En-route we had mostly clear conditions enabling us to see and take pictures of Greenland's glaciers and the Canadian tundra as we flew over these remote places.

The formalities at Calgary Airport were completed without complication and soon we had picked up the hire cars and were on our way north to Banff, where we stayed for the first two nights.

The weather the week before arrival had been cold with falls of snow and our first morning started very misty indeed. Some moody shots were taken in several locations before moving on to Lake Minnewanka. As the morning warmed up the mist began to lift revealing a splendid scene of the lake with banks of mist and fog coming and going, with the mountains and blue sky as a backdrop. Along the rocky shore Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus lateralis* and Yellow-pine Chipmunk *Tamias amoenus* were feeding on the grass seed-heads in a desperate rush to fatten up before the winter set in. Various other locations were visited that day, and I soon realised why everyone who visits the Rocky Mountains raves about them. The landscape really is impressive.

The following morning, as we set off for our early morning search for pictures we came across Elk *Cervus elaphus* browsing the trees and shrubs in town. A few shots were taken in poor light, before continuing the search for pictures in the Banff area. At mid morning we began the journey north to Jasper, our destination for the next 6 nights. En-route we saw our only Bear of the trip, a Black Bear *Ursus americanus* which was crossing the road in front of us. I managed a couple of shots through the windscreen of the car before it disappeared into the trees.

During the next few days the weather was mostly cloudy with sunny periods; the snow that had fallen a few days before we arrived began to melt at the lower altitudes. These mostly overcast conditions did not prevent us from visiting and photographing various lakes, rivers and waterfalls in this region, together with any wildlife that presented itself. However, there were no opportunities for any good sunsets or sunrises during our stay in Jasper.



Elk were regularly seen beside the Athabasca River and in several other areas. The rutting season had begun and we were hoping for some good pictures of fighting stags, but with the exception of two immature stags sparring, the Elk rut did not live up to our expectations. Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus* were occasionally found grazing on the road verges, but despite visiting a number of suitable areas we failed to see any of the world's largest deer, the Moose *Alces alces*. As with any photo-tour, it's all about being in the right place at the right time and there is a certain amount of luck involved. A few people we spoke to had recently seen Moose in this area, and we found tracks, but failed to find this impressive animal.

We were fortunate to find a Coyote *Canis latrans* hunting in a grassy area beside a road - I managed to take a few pictures of it before it moved off into woodland. Two other mammals were very obliging, Red Squirrels *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*, which were found at several locations, and a close relative of rabbits and hares, the Pika *Ochotona princeps*. Pika live in rocky areas and posed well for us as they busily gathered up large amounts of grass, which they were storing underground for winter food and bedding.







In most places there was a lack of small birds; no doubt most had already flown south for the winter. However three medium sized birds were very obliging, the Raven *Corvus corax*, a shy bird in the UK but very bold here, sometimes approaching us within a few feet, as did Gray Jays *Perisoreus canadensis* and Clark's Nutcrackers *Nucifraga columbiana*. These birds provided us with much entertainment and some very nice images.

One day we drove west into British Columbia in the hope of finding Moose in the marshy areas beside the rivers. Although we failed to find our main quarry, when we stopped to photograph some Aspen trees *Populus tremuloides* in full autumn colour, Mourning Cloak butterflies (Camberwell Beauty to us in the UK) *Nymphalis antiopa* were seen flying. Walking along the roadside some 300 yards I found seven dead ones which had been killed by traffic. At such a rate, the total road kill of this butterfly along that stretch of road must number thousands each year! Only two other species of butterfly were seen during our stay, the Small White *Pieris rapae* and a Comma (*Polygonia* species), which had slightly different markings to ours in the UK. These were seen in several different locations, but were far from common. No doubt that during the summer many more butterflies inhabit the lower regions of these mountains.

Our stay in Jasper ended as the weather started to improve. We headed south for 3 nights stay around Lake Louise. Again the scenery of this area impressed me and for the first time we had some decent sunrises and sunsets. Mule Deer were seen around Lake Louise train station but did not stay to be photographed. We spent some time in interesting conversation with train drivers who were waiting for a green light to continue on their journey back to the mineral mines with their 135 empty wagons. These trains are huge compared to ours here in the UK, with 130-150 carriages driven by three engines being quite normal. We were told that each of the engines weighed the same as a 747 jumbo jet! The drivers told us that they frequently see Bear and Deer along the tracks, but had only seen one Mountain Lion *Felis concolor* and one Lynx *Lynx canadensis* in the last 15 years.



Our final 3 days were spent in the Banff area. The Aspens were beginning to loose their leaves, but we enjoyed sunshine for much of this time and were treated to excellent sunsets over the Vermillion Lakes. One of these was particularly spectacular with strange layered clouds catching the last rays of sun.

A small flock of Bighorn Sheep *Ovis canadensis* stopped the traffic near Two Jacks Lake as they visited a mineral lick beside the road. These impressive wild sheep are fairly fearless of man, so quite easy to photograph. Mule Deer were seen in Banff, feeding on the flowers and shrubs in gardens just a few feet away from us. None of us had a cameras as we were on our way to have our evening meal, but several other people were taking pictures with their mobile phones.

Other highlights included visits to two rapidly retreating Glaciers. The Athabasca Glacier had retreated about a mile in the past 150 years, whilst the Angel Glacier was calving mini icebergs in the lake beneath it as it thawed. I enjoyed this visit to the Alberta region of the Rockies and look forward to returning to another area in the future.

More images from my trip can be seen at:  
[richard.revels@care4free.net](mailto:richard.revels@care4free.net)

*Pictures:*

*Page 9:*

*Medicine Lake*

*Gray Jay*

*Page 10*

*Ground Squirrel*

*Red Squirrels*

*Pika (related to Rabbits and Hares)*

*Yellow-pine Chipmunk*

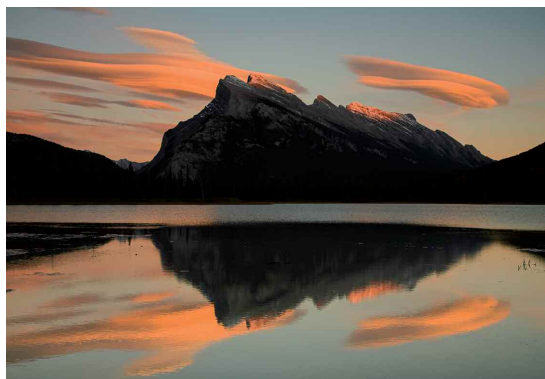
*Page 11*

*Elk stag calling for a mate*

*Sunset at the Vermilion Lakes*

*Inside front cover: Coyote*

*Inside back cover: Raven*





# Taking the 'A' Road

by Chuck Eccleston ARPS



"If you do well this year you will be eligible for membership of the Royal Photographic Society", so said my college tutor as I was embarking on a years advanced City & Guild course. I had already completed the C&G intermediate course and obtained distinctions in both elements, but now had to produce photos and written work for five elements and consequently put any thoughts of the RPS right to the back of my mind. In the event I was lucky enough to pass all the modules with distinctions and was a gold medal nominee.

When the euphoria of passing the course calmed down, thoughts of the RPS crept back into my mind, a phone call to the distinctions department indicated my C&G passes counted for an exemption and as soon as I had received the C&G certificates they were sent to Bath, my LRPS was awarded February 2004.

My next challenge was the ARPS. I discovered it was possible to apply by submitting images on a CD. One of my chosen modules for the C&G was Natural History, this had involved a hectic fortnights photography at Albufera Marsh, an internationally recognised wetland site in northern Mallorca. I decided that fifteen of the

images taken at this time would make a suitable submission for an 'A' panel and I duly submitted thirteen images of birds, one image of a Swallowtail butterfly and one image of a Mole Cricket! The result of this rushed attempt was that in March 2004 I was notified of failure citing 'unbalanced composition, shallow depth of field, burned out highlights, etc.' After my successes in the previous three or four years this was a major blow and I immediately went back to the drawing board and decided to start afresh!

I joined the Nature Group and attended an A&F workshop with a few prints and an idea for a panel theme. The guidance given was excellent, and I returned home with a clear direction in which to take my photography together with advice to purchase the Nature Group Interactive CD (available from Trevor Hyman, the NG Treasurer). The CD was very informative and clearly set out the best approach to meet the daunting task of fulfilling the requirements of the 'Distinctions and Qualifications Criteria'.

Using an EOS 20D and latterly an EOS 5D, over the next couple of years I produced an assortment of images from which to select my panel and was put

in touch with a Fellow of the RPS who acted as my mentor. Two or three draft panels were sent to him for comments, initially it seemed that I was taking one step forward and three back, but eventually I had about twenty or so images that might possibly be of the required standard. Although I work with digital cameras I decided to submit prints - I felt better able to control the presentation of the final images and thus give the assessors a better chance to see what I could produce.

The CD gives clear guidance with regard to assembling a coherent panel with good balance of subjects, colour arrangements, etc., but it is far from easy to translate this advice into reality.

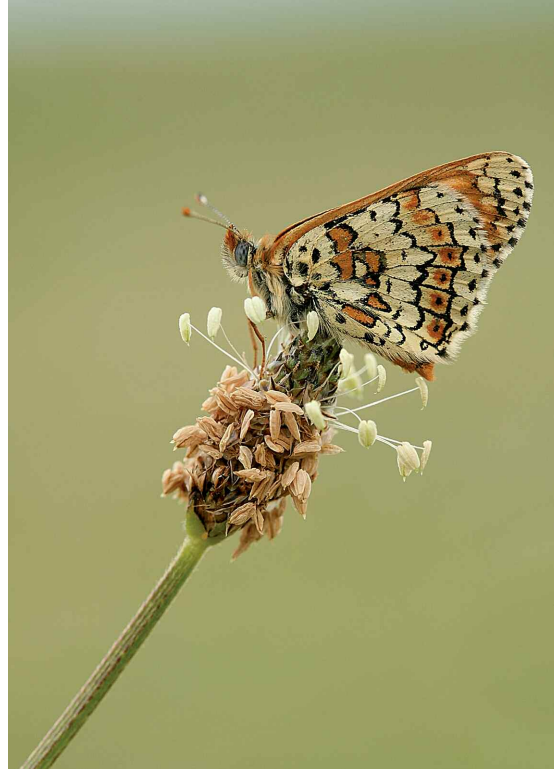
The title of my panel was to be 'Flora and Fauna of the Isle of Wight'. I had been advised by my mentor to ensure all my subjects had room to breathe in the image (close cropping does the subject no favors), this helped me to select the final fifteen from my shortlist of twenty images. I decided on three rows of five photographs comprising of five flowers, five insects and five birds. These were carefully laid out to give a good balance with a mixture of subjects in portrait and landscape orientation in each row. I also ensured



the images at the end of the rows looked 'in' and that there were no colour clashes between adjacent images. I utilised contextual shots, close-ups, flight shots etc. to give a good mix of interest to the panel and to demonstrate varied photographic skills.

My images were printed using an Epson 1290, mounted on to backing card, mounts cut and all carefully assembled with labels showing display positions, subject titles etc. I posted off my application forms, cheque, statement of intent, A4 layout sheet etc. and awaited the panel meeting in September at Bath with bated breath.

On the day of the assessment I was as nervous as a schoolboy sitting his first exams. I sat restlessly in the display room waiting for the procedures to commence. The Chairman Roger Reynolds Hon. FRPS gave a brief explanation of how the panel works and we were straight into the projected images submissions. I think the first three or four were unsuccessful and I thought this did not bode very well for my panel. However a superb panel of underwater shots broke the duck and from then on more panels began to pass. The comments on some of the



failed submissions noted that too many shots were 'cropped too close', some were 'not sharp' or had 'colour casts' whilst others were 'let down by poor printing'.

Eventually my panel was brought in, the twelfth submission to be viewed that day. By this time I was a nervous wreck!! The prints were displayed and the Chairman invited the selection panel to check them out close-up and then asked panel members to give detailed comments. These were quite brief and as far as I can remember included 'some slightly over sharpened,' 'well presented,' 'each one of high quality'!!! I had passed!

Gaining my ARPS involved a lot of hard work and quite a few frustrating hours, including numerous re-visits to sites searching for the best lighting conditions, sun position etc., however the pluses far outweighed the minuses. I learned a great deal and many of the skills I developed are now used on a regular basis for my images but I still have so much more to learn. My advice to anyone contemplating going for an assessment is join the Nature Group, buy the Interactive CD-ROM guide and go for it, you won't regret it.



# Isle of Wight Flora and Fauna

## CHUCK ECCLESTON LRPS ASSOCIATE DISTINCTION PANEL



**Vipers Bugloss**  
*Echium vulgare*



**Cream-spot Ladybird**  
*Calvia 14-guttata*



**Robin**  
*Erithacus rubecula*



**Hawthorn Shield Bug**  
*Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*



**Autumn Gentian**  
*Gentianella amarella*



**Fulmar**  
*Fulmarus glacialis*



**Common Blue**  
*Polyommatus icarus*



**Henbane**  
*Hyoscyamus niger*



**Glanville Fritillary**  
*Melitaea cinxia*



**Song Thrush**  
*Turdus philomelos*



**Hoopoe**  
*Upupa epops*



**Narrow-leaved Lungwort**  
*Pulmonaria longifolia*



**Elephant Hawkmoth**  
*Deilephila elpenor*



**Yellow Horned Poppy**  
*Glaucium flavum*



**Fulmar**  
*Fulmarus glacialis*

### Statement of Intent

#### Isle of Wight Flora and Fauna

This submission shows that it is not necessary to travel great distances to undertake natural history photography; the diverse wildlife that can be found close to home is available to all.

I live on the Isle of Wight and have endeavoured to illustrate some of the diverse Flora and Fauna found within its varied habitats and coastline.

My photographs include rarities mainly specific to the Island and also common species that can be found on the mainland as well as the Island. Together they form part of the Islands seasonal natural history environment.

# Diving for Associateship

by Colin Ackerman ARPS

## Introduction and Equipment

I learned to dive together with my wife in 1996 in the Florida Keys and I am now an Instructor. Subsequently we have been privileged to dive in Bonaire, Saba (Dutch Antilles), Red Sea, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Grand Cayman, Grand Turk, Lembah Straits and Bunaken (Sulawesi), Roatan and of course the UK.

Since the very first time I entered into the under-water world, I had the desire to capture on film the beauty of the coral, creatures and fish that I encountered. After a short instruction course in Grand Cayman with renowned underwater photographer Cathy Church, I became hooked on diving with a camera. Rarely a dive goes by when I do not have my camera with me. In fact when I dive without a camera it feels all wrong, just as if some vital piece of diving equipment is missing.

My first underwater camera was the iconic Nikonos V which stood me in good stead for approximately 4 years. This was later superseded by my current setup which consists of a Nikon F90x film camera in a Subal housing. I use two lenses extensively, the Nikkor 105mm F2.8D for macro and close-up work and a 20mm F2.8D for wide-angle. The vast majority of underwater

photography relies on the use of an artificial light source. I use a single underwater flashgun manufactured in Germany by Subtronic and an Ultralight arm to aid positioning of the flashgun (especially important to avoid backscatter in underwater images). I shoot exclusively using Fuji Velvia 50 and 100 ASA film and have no intention of changing to digital in the foreseeable future even though I own a Nikon D200 digital which I use for land shots.

Since I first started to dive with a camera I have taken well over 10,000 images and have amassed a slide collection of 7,000 catalogued images in my image database. All of the slides have been scanned with a Minolta Dimage Elite 5400 to get them into my image management database. This makes finding the slides that I am interested in much quicker.

At least 90%, of the total number of images that I have taken to date have been taken underwater. Therefore it was only logical when submitting for the LRPS to choose the images from my underwater collection. Selecting just 10 images for the LRPS from my collection was very difficult but eventually I made a selection that demonstrated a broad range of lighting conditions, a variety of subject matter and which







showed marine life that was easily recognisable and hopefully known to the submissions panel.

When the panel met on 5th July 2006 I was delighted to be informed the following day that my submission had been successful. After enjoying my success for a couple of weeks I felt that I needed to keep up the momentum and have another project to work towards.

I decided to focus on working towards the ARPS in the Nature category as my next long term project and goal. Having read the criteria for the Associateship it was clear right from the beginning that making an 'A' submission was going to be much more difficult.

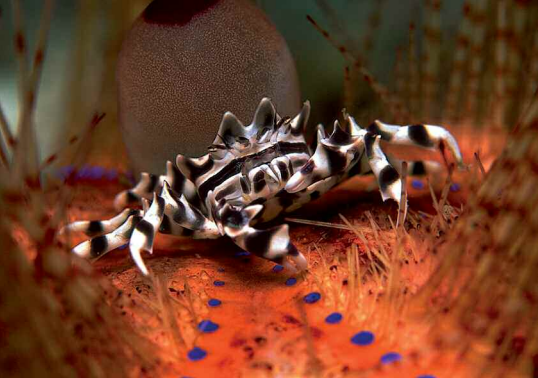
### Research and Feedback

The first task I set for myself was to look through as many of the previous ARPS Nature category submissions that I could find in order to get a feel for the standard. Here the RPS forum and the Nature Group web site were very useful. What made life difficult was the fact that I was unable to find an example of a Nature submission with images of the underwater world. Widening the search to include Google also proved to be fruitless. Looking at the many successful ARPS panel submissions only confirmed the high standard required for success.

One of the more important elements of an ARPS submission is the Statement of Intent. I decided to approach this by reading as many as I could find, so that I had some idea of the requirement. Having read a number of them it was clear that they seemed to vary in length, from a couple of lines to a fairly large paragraph. A quick Post on the RPS forum solicited a response from John Long ARPS. John is a regular contributor on the RPS forum and has read many Statements of Intent at assessments of ARPS submissions. His advice was to keep the Statement short and to the point. I decided to follow his advice and wrote down the following keywords and phrases with the intention of stringing them together into something more meaningful:- vibrant colour, texture, natural behaviour, camouflage and deterrent.

### Planning and Organising

I then set to work looking through all of the 7000 images, in my iMatch Image Management Database, bookmarking those where I had a match against my list of keywords and phrases. I ended up with 255 bookmarked images. This long and tiring exercise brought me to the conclusion that perhaps I was ahead of the



game, in that maybe, I did not need to shoot additional film in order to have enough images to make my submission. It did not mean of course, that the images were of a high enough standard, just that they fitted into a potential Statement of Intent. Of these, I selected 20 images that in some instances embodied more than one of the keywords or phrases in the list and which I felt fitted together as a cohesive panel.

It was then time to sit down with pen and paper to create a readable Statement of Intent (I am still not accustomed to using a PC when I am trying to be creative). A couple of hours latter and with the help of my wife to bounce ideas off, I had a paragraph that I was pleased with. It was concise and too the point, more importantly not too long.

### Verification and Amendments

I then opened an account with pbase.com the photo hosting web site and uploaded my short listed 20 images, along with my Statement of Intent. I Posted the link to my images on both the RPS forum and the Nature Group noticeboard, requesting comments and criticism. I also sent an e-mail to Malcolm Hey FRPS an underwater photographer whose work I was familiar with, inviting him to comment on my possible submission. It was then that I struck lucky. I not only received an e-mail from Malcolm but I was also contacted by Jack Jackson FRPS, FRGS who is a well known adventure, travel and underwater author and photographer. He was the first person to obtain a Fellowship with an underwater submission. Following the advice given to me, I made some changes to my panel. I learned that the distinctions panel were very sensitive to images in which part of the creature was chopped off. I also modified my Statement of Intent to read as follows:

*"It is my intention with this portfolio to show some of the vibrant colours of the marine life of the coral reef. To show how colour and texture can be used by the creatures of the reef to deter potential predators or to effectively camouflage themselves and avoid being preyed upon. Also, by demonstrating the natural behaviour of a number of different species, to hopefully, inspire more people to visit the underwater world".*

The final sentence having replaced *“Also by demonstrating the natural behaviour of a number of different species, to further educate people about the underwater world”*. Jack felt that this final sentence was opening me up to failure as he was of the opinion that my images were not guaranteed to be able to “educate people about the underwater world”. This was a valid point and so I modified the Statement accordingly.

The next stage of the process was to clearly identify and name the marine life in my images. Fortunately, I have an extensive selection of identification books collected over the years, so it was just a case of trawling through them for the common and scientific names and then double checking.

## Finishing Touches

I had every intention of attending a Distinctions Workshop in Bath to obtain advice about my submission, but, a quick post on the RPS forum gave me a response that I was not expecting. The post’s author (rightly or wrongly) was of the opinion, that as my submission was in a very specific and narrow field, I would be unlikely to receive any useful advice if I attended, so I didn’t.

I had originally intended to be ready for a submission in 2007, but, as I almost had the necessary items up together and the ARPS nature category panel was meeting on 5th September I decided to forge ahead. Since time was very short (less than 2 weeks until the Panel met) and I was confident that my colour managed system and workflow must have been acceptable, having successfully gained the LRPS, I decided to submit once again on CD-ROM.

Finally, it was just a case of copying the relevant image TIF files onto CD-ROM along with the Statement Of Intent, the Identification text file and my submission details. Posting my submission by Registered Delivery completed the process. All that was then left to do was wait until 5th Sept to see what my fate would be.

## Result and Conclusions

On the 6th Sept I received an e-mail from the Distinctions Manager Carol Agar (who had been exceptional helpful and patient in answering a stream of questions throughout my submission) congratulating me and informing me that I had sailed through.

In conclusion, there were times when it was stressful, frustrating when things didn’t seem to be going well but enjoyable when I received positive comments about my images. When I heard that I had been successful, I had the greatest sense of achievement which put a huge smile on my face. Would I recommend others to try for it; yes, definitely.

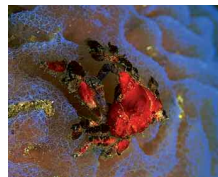
For the future I plan to submit for the Fellowship but with a land based set of nature images. That however, will be sometime in the future, as the Fellowship will almost require me to start from scratch; as I only have a small number of land nature images in my collection.

Both my LRPS and ARPS panels can be viewed at:

[www.pbbase.com/ckajca](http://www.pbbase.com/ckajca)

and my personal web site:

[www.aboveusthewaves.com](http://www.aboveusthewaves.com)





# Wildlife of the Falkland Islands - A Fellowship journey south

by Dawn Osborn FRPS



I have been interested in photography in some degree or another since childhood and certainly for all of my adult life. Observing nature was another keen interest encouraged by my parents. However, it was only during the early 90's that I decided to put the camera on the tripod instead of the spotting scope and try my hand at photographing the things I observed. This all happened during a family vacation to Mallorca - the birds were late migrating for one reason or another, but wildflowers were in abundance and soon my attention was captured and I was hooked. Springtime vacations in Crete followed and before too long my slide catalogue of Mediterranean flora had become quite extensive. Consequently, I decided to make an 'A' submission in nature with a panel of slides of Mediterranean Wild Flowers, which was approved in September 1994.

I was quite pleased having achieved my Associateship and for quite a few years happily pursued wildflowers at a variety of locations both in the UK and Europe. Someone, I forget who, suggested that I should apply for my Fellowship with flora.

Slowly the idea of working towards a Fellowship grew, but not in quite the same direction that others expected it would. Flora is not an easy subject, but having already achieved some successes with my images of Flora, I felt the need for something more demanding! A subject new for me. Something different. Birds! Now there was a challenge!

I was fortunate that my Brother, David, was developing and growing in the photo-tourism business and on several occasions found myself called upon to lead or co-lead groups for trips to the Falkland Islands.. I love the Falkland Islands - I would consider relocating there if I thought I could make a living. The Islands and their wildlife are wonderful. Anyway, I digress.

A new challenge - birds. There are lots of birds in the Falklands and many are nowhere near as concerned about the presence of humans as they are in even the remote parts of Europe. Since I knew the islands well and was already doing a considerable amount of my photography in the Falklands, it seemed reasonable to consider Falklands wildlife as a topic for a Fellowship submission.

I would not want to mislead anyone into the belief that selecting 20 images from some far away place was going to achieve a Fellowship. The successful application you see here was certainly not my first!

I first applied in Spring 2001 with a panel of digital prints (made from slides and negs). Digital imaging was still in its infancy and although many of the images went on to receive major awards in international exhibitions, my application failed. I was advised that it was the print quality which let the application down and I accepted that I would have to upgrade my kit; scanner, printer, etc. Later that year after seeing my presentation on 'Orchids of Europe', a panel member told me, that many of the images I had shown were suitable material for a Fellowship application. However, I was not dissuaded - it was now the challenge rather than the goal which motivated me, even though I was a relative novice in bird photography. I already had several more visits to the Falklands arranged for the years ahead and I would try again. This I did, in 2005.

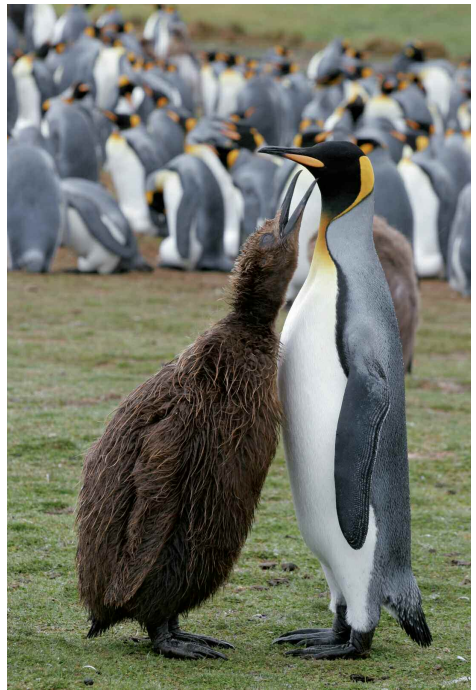
I cannot really offer any sound advice to anyone pursuing a Fellowship in Nature. I did everything that the RPS 'Criteria' suggested at that time: attend a workshop; seek the advice of the panel chairman; etc. The images I sought to submit were shown to the Nature Panel Chairman and

the feedback was sound. I attended a distinctions workshop - three Nature Panel members plus the Chairman were in attendance and the advice given was 'go for it'. So I did.

My panel of prints were submitted and following the assessment in early September, I was advised that I had received the approval of the Nature Distinctions Panel. It was a happy day!

Fellowship applications these days are not so simple though - even a panel deemed to be 'of the required standard' by the Nature Distinctions Panel has to undergo a further assessment by the 'Fellowship Review Board'. The Review Board is made up of the Chairman from each of the Distinctions Panels, plus others, and it is their remit to ensure that there is 'consistency' across the full gamut of categories. Following the Review Board meeting in November 2005 I was advised that my submission was not felt to be of the standard required by the Review Board.

Hurt? Yes! Angry? Very! I requested guidance and was referred back to the Distinctions Panel who felt they were unable to offer further sound advice. My chief complaint was that there was little or no opportunity to see what constituted a successful application and therefore it was near impossible to gauge what was required by the Review Board.







However, I was about to embark upon another trip to the Falklands and I would not allow this setback to spoil my enjoyment of experiencing the Falklands wildlife once again - even without a camera, this would still be a wonderful vacation! Released from my expectations of what type of images constituted a Fellowship panel, I allowed my imagination more freedom and returned home with a more diverse collection of images.



Upon my return, Roger Reynolds FRPS, had been confirmed as the new Nature Panel Chairman, and in January 2006 he offered to be my 'mentor'. It was a tough order, to produce twenty pieces of work before the end of February and I doubt I could have managed it but for the fact that I was 'between jobs'. In any event, I was very much 'up for it'!



I have to say that it is the waiting that is tiresome. The assessment was held at the beginning of March and I was duly advised that (again) I had passed this stage of the process. The Review Board would not meet again until early May and I would have to wait until then to find out if my work would pass this final stage of the assessment process.



Eventually I received a phone call advising me that I had been successful. Another happy day, but it was all anti-climax from there on. Considering the build up, I confess I thought there might be an opportunity to wallow in one's success. I received a letter which offered the opportunity to have my certificate presented by our President at Fenton House. The date was less than two weeks hence and unfortunately conflicted with another equally important and pre-existing commitment. No alternative date was offered and so I requested that my Fellowship Certificate be returned with my prints. It was all rather disappointing!

Of course I am very pleased to have achieved my Fellowship distinction, but some of the enjoyment and sense of achievement which I believed it would have was diminished because of the lack of a formal presentation.

In retrospect, the only advice I would give is this: write your Statement of Intent and then select your images (rather than writing the statement for the images). That and what my



Dad used to say: 'Non illegitimus carborundum' and 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try and try again'!!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following members for their support, guidance and encouragement: Colin Smith FRPS, Martin Withers FRPS, John Bebbington FRPS, Tony Bond FRPS, Tony Wharton FRPS, Malcolm Hey FRPS, Robert Hawkesworth FRPS, Richard Revels FRPS, and Roger Reynolds FRPS. Thanks are also owed to my Mother and Brother, David.



## Fellowship Layout Plan for Dawn Osborn – March 2006





# Photographing Invertebrates in my garden

by John Bebbington FRPS



*Apis mellifera* (Honeybee) worker approaching stamens of  
*Papaver rhoeas* (Corn poppy)



*Dolichovespula vulgaris* (Common wasp) worker, head.



Rose chafer feeding on pollen of *Arctotis* cultivar



*Vanessa atalanta* (Red admiral) on rotting fruit.



*Acronicta aceris* (Sycamore moth) mature larva;

I suppose that I have always been lucky in having access to a decent garden – even as a young child in a ‘not-very-well-off’ family, I had a school friend whose parents owned a large house with several acres of land including a good-sized pond and a large flower garden. I can remember spending many hours catching leeches, dragonfly nymphs etc. and watching a huge variety of insects and spiders in the garden.

By the time I became seriously interested in invertebrate photography I was working as a tutor for the Field Studies Council (FSC) at Rhyd-y-Creuau, the Drapers’ Field Centre, in Betws-y-Coed, North Wales. The large Centre garden was semi-cultivated, and my own garden (shared with my wife-to-be, and fellow tutor) although well cared for was surrounded by mixed woodland.

I began to run a moth trap in the early 1970s, and around the same time met Michael Proctor who became my mentor and provided enormous encouragement as well as (at times) quite severe criticism – always justified and always constructive.

Promotion and a move south to Juniper Hall provided a complete contrast – from acidic rocks in a mountainous landscape to the rolling chalk downs of Surrey. It also provided a mature garden with an enormous range of plants and invertebrates, surrounded by woodland and grassland, managed for wildlife by the National Trust and which I could access at will. Then came the chance to run my own photography courses both at home and overseas.

On retirement I moved to Somerset – another complete change of geology and landscape – and we were fortunate to find a house with a stunning view and a mature garden which had also been managed for wildlife. Over the last 3 years (it seems much less) we have been trying to impose our ‘style’ on the garden without reducing its diversity. So far, so good – this year we have had 25 species of butterfly breeding or passing through and, since the end of May, 250+ species of macro moth in the trap (including 7 of what my wife has christened the ‘macho’ moth – the *Convolvulus* hawk). We’ve also had Striped hawk nectaring on our Honeysuckle and numerous visits by Humming-bird hawks.

Although the garden is only 90 by 30 feet it has an enormous range of nectar and pollen-producing plants and larval foodplants (being married to a botanist has enormous advantages!) and large numbers of insects obviously attract spiders. The moth trap is also very popular with passerine birds!

Perhaps the only group of invertebrates which we could do without is the molluscs – we have relocated several thousand slugs and snails to woodland and hedgerows over a mile away with little apparent effect on the populations!

Although I really enjoy botanical photography my real passion is for insects, spiders and other invertebrates and this is what I tend to focus on. My aim is to illustrate aspects of their biology – predation and its avoidance, parasitism, feeding, mating behaviour for example. During the last year I have been involved in a botanical project which included pollination biology. It has been very enjoyable watching the insects and waiting for photographic opportunities.

I still use Pentax film cameras but I may be tempted to ‘go digital’ in 2007 when the new K10 DSLR is released. I have several excellent macro lenses with focal lengths between 50 and 180mm; the latter is my favourite tool as it allows me to get decent magnification without ‘spooking’ my quarry. I also use a 100mm extension tube (I paid the exorbitant sum of £105 when they were first available) but recently found a couple for £10 each and a 2x converter.

I prefer available light photography but I’m happy to use flash, either a single unit as fill-in or two (balanced 2:1) as the main light source. My gear is quite old-fashioned – Pentax MZ series with dedicated TTL flashguns (from eBay for 99p each!).

I do miss the stimulus of travelling abroad but currently family circumstances prevent this. However there is (still) a great deal to do in and around my garden; the challenge for spring will be to capture more insects in flight.

I think it is a great shame that garden invertebrates are largely ignored – for me they are every bit as fascinating as African big game or birds in Florida! Of course, when circumstances allow me to travel again, I may reconsider!

# Field Meeting Report

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## Beacon Hill Country Park Tuesday October 17th 2006

Leader: Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

*Psathyrella hydrophila* must have been the 'fungus of the year' in 2006 - it seemed to be prolific wherever I went and I found that somewhat odd considering the dry year we had had and that 'hydrophila' refers to the species love of damp conditions. At the Field Meeting we certainly found a number of them - many were most attractive specimens.

There must have been around twenty or so of us from the usual spread of homes, both the East and West Midlands, Sheffield, York, Lancashire as well as the London area - it really is pleasing, and somewhat humbling, to realise the distances some members are prepared to travel, over 200 miles round trip is not at all unusual. I am most grateful to you all.

I was not too hopeful of finding much, since on a previous recce, admittedly some fourteen days earlier, my wife and I had found very little. However within a few yards of the car park many members were soon at work, lots of very photogenic groups of Sulphur Tuft (*Hypholoma fasciculare*), *Mycena* spp. in profusion and several examples of the Many Zoned Polypore, or Turkey Tails whichever you prefer (*Trametes versicolor*).

Honey Fungus is now recognised as a very variable group and I do not always find it easy to identify. It is present in the Beacon Hill Woods, as in many woods of course. There are two main species, *Armillaria melea*, the main form and *A. tabescens* the ringless form, both of which vary in their appearance.

We found nothing particularly rare but, towards the end of the day, two were found which were of interest. Fungi with black pigmentation are not particularly frequent so we were quite pleased to find *Mycena galopus* var. *nigra*, it took some identifying with any certainty I can tell you. My wife must take the credit for finding a tiny fungus which grows on fallen cones, usually pine, *Baeospora myosura*. (On a revisit one week later we found quite a good number of specimens).

All in all the day was much enjoyed by those present and hopefully produced some good photographs, it certainly produced a lot of good crack and laughter.

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### Details for images on Page 24

#### Top (main) image

*Apis mellifera* (Honeybee) worker approaching stamens of Papaver rhoeas (Corn poppy), Langport, Somerset, July 2006.  
Pentax 100mm FA macro, twin TTL flashguns, Kodachrome 64.

#### Centre left

*Dolichovespula vulgaris* (Common wasp) worker, head.  
Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking, Surrey, October 2002  
50mm EL-Nikkor reversed onto Pentax 100mm macro, 2x teleconverter. Twin flash heads. Fuji Provia 100F.

#### Lower left

*Vanessa atalanta* (Red admiral) on rotting fruit, Langport, Somerset, October 2006.  
Sigma 180mm APO macro, Fuji Provia 100F.

#### Centre right

*Cetonia aurata* (Rose chafer) feeding on pollen of Arctotis cultivar, Langport, Somerset, July 2005.  
Pentax 100mm FA macro, twin manual flashguns, Kodachrome 64.

#### Lower right

*Acronicta aceris* (Sycamore moth) mature larva; Langport, Somerset August 2005.  
Tamron 90mm SP macro, Fuji Provia 100F



# Field Meetings 2007

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## **Sunday, 10 June 2007, Time 10.00am. Oxwich, Gower**

Meeting place: Car park  
Grid Ref. 502864 (map 159)  
Leader: Margaret Hodge FRPS  
Cost £2.50 parking  
Interest: Flowers and marine life of seashore.  
Items to bring: packed lunch, waterproofs, hat,  
sun-screen and footwear suitable for paddling  
Contact: Tel 01792 207001

## **Friday 22nd June - Monday 25th June Residential Field Meeting, Juniper Hall, See separate notice on page 29**

## **Tuesday 24th July 2007, 10.30am. Millers Dale and River Wye.**

Meeting Place: Millers Dale Station Car Park.  
Grid Reference: Sheet 119 SK 138 733.  
Leader: Robert Hawkesworth FRPS.  
Cost: £3 approx for Car Parking  
Interest: Summer limestone flowers, dragons,  
damsels and butterflies.  
Items to Bring: Strong footwear, waterproofs,  
packed lunch.  
Additional Info: Toilets in the station buildings.  
To book for this meeting: Tel 0115 928 1050  
Mobile (for use on day only): 07960 177291.

## **Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th October 2007, North Norfolk Fungi Workshop**

See notice on page 29.

## **Tuesday 16th October 2007, 10.30am. Rufford Park.**

Meeting Place: Main Car Park, the entrance is  
off the A614 and is well signposted.  
Grid Reference: Sheet 120 SK 643 647.  
Leader: Robert Hawkesworth FRPS.  
Cost: Car Parking in 2006 was free.  
Interest: Fungi.  
Items to Bring: Strong/Waterproof footwear,  
waterproofs, packed lunch.  
Additional Info: There is a restaurant and a  
snack bar on site as well as toilets.  
To book for this meeting Tel: 0115 928 1050  
Mobile (for use on day only): 07960 177291

For full details on future Field Meetings check  
the Nature Group website regularly and register  
to receive notices.

## **A Date for your Diary**

# **Chairman's Day**

## **Saturday 3rd November 2007**

**At the AGM in March, Geoff Trinder ARPS will become the new Nature Group Chairman. Geoff has decided that he would like to host his Chairman's Day on Saturday 3rd November 2007. The event will once again be held at the excellent facilities offered by The Old Schoolhouse clubrooms of Smethwick PS.**

**Full details will appear in the Summer issue of The Iris, but put it in your diary now - it will be another day crammed full with interesting natural history talks.**

**To register your interest please contact Geoff, details on page 2.**

# **Residential Field Meeting**

organised for members of the

## **Nature Group**

**Friday 22nd to Monday 25th June 2007**

**Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6DA**

A few places are still available for this weekend long event at Juniper Hall. Situated on the North Downs near Box Hill, Juniper Hall has much to offer the nature photographer. The surrounding chalk downland has a high species diversity of flowers and insects, while farther afield the BNR Thursley Common, much affected by fire earlier this year, and the Wey and Arun Canal, provide more specialised habitats for the larger aquatic dragonflies and damselflies. We will also be able to take advantage of the centre's other facilities including the use of a moth trap, laboratory with microscopes, digital and slide projectors, an excellent reference library with a wide range of field guides, and the use of the Centre's own minibus.

Cost: - £133.00. (incl VAT at 17.5%) payable direct to Juniper Hall, (no monies will go through Nature Group's accounts this year). Includes three nights' accommodation, full board, packed lunches, afternoon tea and use of the Centre's facilities

If you would like to join the group and book a place, be added to the waiting list or request further information, please write direct to: -

Sue Brinsden, Centre Secretary, Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6DA  
Tel: 0306 883849. Email: [enquiries.jh@field-studies-council.org](mailto:enquiries.jh@field-studies-council.org).

In addition, please also register your interest / confirm your booking, with:

Kath Bull ARPS, Segsbury, St John's Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1RT  
Tel: 01892 663751. E-mail: [kath.bull@virgin.net](mailto:kath.bull@virgin.net)

## **Weekend Fungi Workshop in North Norfolk**

organised for Nature Group members

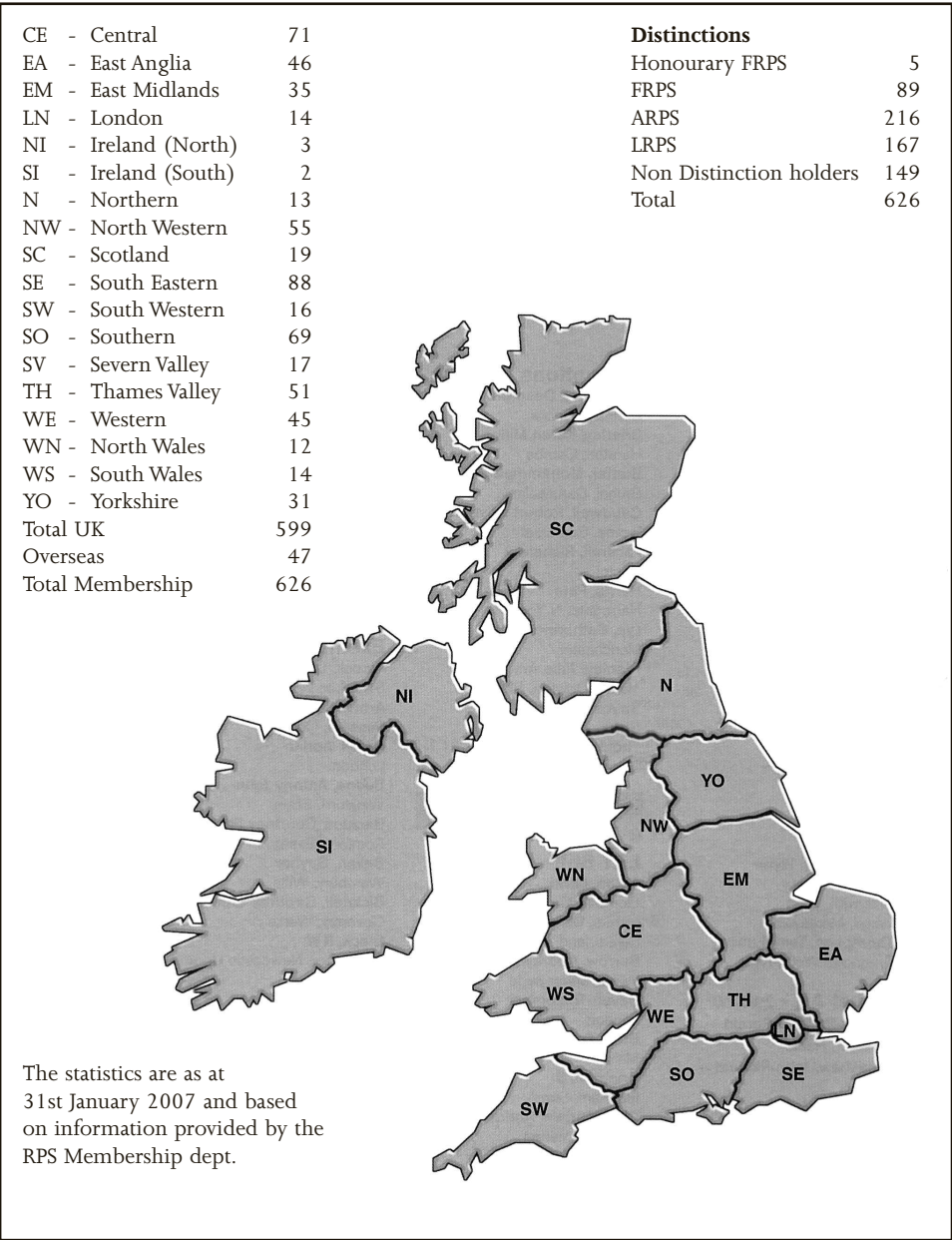
**Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th October 2007**

Contact David Osborn FRPS for further details -

Tel: 01263 511221 or Email [Poppyland3@aol.com](mailto:Poppyland3@aol.com).

# Regions

Shown Below are Nature Group members per RPS region together with regional codes and other statistics





# Book Reviews

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## **Mushrooms**

Roger Phillips

Macmillan 2nd Edition 2006

384pp, colour-illustrated

ISBN 0-330-44287-6 £18.99 pbk

## **The Encyclopedia of Fungi of Britain and Europe**

Michael Jordan

Revised Frances Lincoln Edition 2004

384pp, colour-illustrated

ISBN 0-7112-2379-3 £16.99 pbk

These are two new editions of previously published works, both covering essentially the same ground but in very different ways. Roger Phillips' book was first published in 1981 and was quite different from any previously published guide, with well printed colour photographs of studio specimens at essentially life-size. It was rather weighty for carrying round and was intended to be used at home, bringing specimens to the book. It has become a well-loved reference book. So what of the new edition - well some of the drawbacks have been addressed, more species have been included, some habitat photographs have been used, identifications have been corrected where necessary and the new-fangled English names have been used. Frankly, it does look good and it is good value for money. For me however, it does still have some drawbacks. I am not keen on the smaller format, the full-size pictures have been reduced and the names and reproduction ratios which ran beneath the pictures in the previous edition have been removed. My edition of the original book is one of the first print runs and the colour reproduction is excellent, I am told that the later printings were less satisfactory in that regard and I am pleased to say that the new edition has addressed that issue and is generally accurate. If you have never owned a copy then certainly buy this edition, it is very good. If you have one of the originals you would find this edition complimentary, but I would follow Peter Marren's advice in "British Wildlife" and not throw away my old one.

Michael Jordan's book is quite different in its appearance and approach; it was first published in 1994 by David and Charles, and has retained the look of the original. All the photographs show the specimens in habitat and they are placed three to a page in a column on the outside edge with the text alongside in a column on the inner edge. There is no reproduction ratio mentioned and that is an omission which could have been rectified - you must read the text to check for the dimensions. To my eye the colour reproduction seems pretty accurate; there is a helpful colour chart at the front of the book where the colours referred to in the text may be checked. I do not own the previous edition of this book so I have purchased a copy of this new one. I find it very easy to use, it is instinctive and you can turn quickly to the section you need. All too frequently these days, books entitled 'Encyclopedia' are intended more for the 'coffee-table' and less for use as a serious reference book; this is certainly not so with this book which is directed toward the serious naturalist. Both books are comprehensive and include all the major groups of fungi, Jordan's even includes some Myxomycetes, slime moulds, technically not fungi at all, but often encountered when out on a photographic foray.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

## **www.thenaturegroup.org**

The nature group website is updated regularly. Please participate by sharing your images and short stories.

Latest items to view are recent A&F successes.

Members who have not already registered on the website should do so. To register click the 'new member' link and then enter the new password:

**natur3gr8**

in the 'old password' field, followed by your email address and a new password.

# Book Reviews

## Close-up & Macro: a Photographer's Guide

by Robert Thompson

David & Charles 2005.

ISBN 0 7153 1903 5 hardback (0 7153 1905 1 paperback, USA only).

This beautifully illustrated book is in three parts; 'Photographic hardware', 'Putting it into practice' and 'Photographing the seasons'. 'Photographic hardware' discusses factors affecting choice of a camera system, the pros and cons of film and digital capture (including the hidden costs of digital!), useful camera features and a range of equipment and its use. It ends with a consideration of what is really necessary in the field and an in-depth section on using close-up flash.

'Putting it into practice' includes sections on composition and design, backgrounds, achieving consistency (ah, there's a dream!) finding subjects, learning from others and travelling abroad. there are detailed discussions on photographing flowers, insects, fungi & lichens, patterns & abstracts, garden photography and aquatic life.

'Photographing the seasons' shows us a series of seasonal subjects, excellently portrayed, with plenty of technical information.

Finally there is a section with useful website addresses, contacts etc. - of course by now this may well be slightly out-of-date.

Overall I was very impressed by this book and can recommend it very highly indeed. It is - as I have already said - beautifully illustrated and there is a wealth of information for all levels. Ronald Thompson does not hesitate to share with us his wealth of experience. Although I have been working in close-up and macro for over 30 years I felt that there was plenty of stimulation to improve my photography!

John Bebbington FRPS

## Exposingnature - the Natural History Museum Photography Guide

by Frank Greenaway

Natural History Museum 2006

ISBN 0 565 09193 4

This is book with a much wider scope than 'Close-up & Macro'.

The author worked in the photographic unit of the NHM for 38 years and is well-known for his photography of bats (stunning - personal comment!); he has contributed to over 30 books.

This is a book for anyone who wants to achieve better wildlife images. It begins with what to me is a critical piece of advice - 'know your own motivation' - and continues with 'know your subject;' and 'ethics'. Ethics is currently a major discussion topic and one which it is too easy to sweep under the carpet!

Next is a short section on possible requirements for bird and mammal photography, both when in a hide and stalking, and general close-up photography. This is followed by a discussion of composition, style and image collections.

The meat of the book is a series of sections on birds, mammals (including advice on how to spot signs of stress in the subject), reptiles & amphibians, insects & other invertebrates, water, plants, and habitats. All are beautifully illustrated by a wide range of photographers.

The penultimate section - 'Looking ahead' - discusses the impact of phototourism and economic development and highlights the role of the wildlife photographer in raising awareness. Finally there is a comprehensive glossary.

To me this book distils, in a fairly slim volume, a lifetime's experience in wildlife photography and will be very helpful especially to anyone beginning to travel this rocky road!

John Bebbington



# Photography courses in 2007 with John Bebbington FRPS

suitable for both film and digital users.

## ■ Nature photography in the heart of Dorset

Friday 20th - Sunday 22nd July

The Kingcombe Centre, Toller Porcorum, Dorchester. Dorset.

A weekend designed to build confidence in close-up and macro photography of plants and invertebrates.

For details contact the Kingcombe Centre on 01300 320684.

Email: [kingcombe@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kingcombe@hotmail.co.uk) web: [www.kingcombe-centre.demon.co.uk](http://www.kingcombe-centre.demon.co.uk)

## ■ Insect photography

Monday 13th – Friday 17th August

Preston Montford Field Centre near Shrewsbury.

A course designed to demonstrate techniques and to solve problems for newcomers to Insect Photography whilst giving excellent opportunities for more experienced workers in a region of exceptional species richness.

For details contact Preston Montford Field Centre on 0845 330 7378

Email: [enquiries.pm@field-studies-council](mailto:enquiries.pm@field-studies-council).

Web: [www.field-studies-council.org/prestonmontford](http://www.field-studies-council.org/prestonmontford)

## The NEW 'Interactive Guide to Obtaining your Nature Associateship'

Updated V3.0 CD-ROM now available - for PC only.

Approved by the RPS Council as an official RPS publication.

Over 140 copies sold to date.

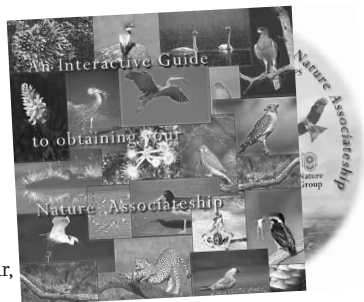
The best advice for anyone considering applying for an Associateship in Nature Photography is to attend a Nature Distinctions Workshop. However for many it is not always possible to attend, and this CD is designed to cater for such applicants.

The guide is the result of collaboration between past panel members and RPS Distinctions Manager, Carol Agar, and produced by John Myring. Benefiting from the authors' extensive experience of viewing numerous applications, both successful and otherwise, the Guide leads the user through all of the aspects that need to be considered. Advice on selection and presentation of both prints and slides as well as the additional requirements needed to make a Digital application.

**The CD-ROM (PC only) is available for only £10 - including p&p.**

To purchase your copy send a cheque for £10 payable to 'RPS Nature Group' to:

Nature Group Treasurer, Trevor Hyman LRPS,  
3 Northcourt Lane, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1QA.





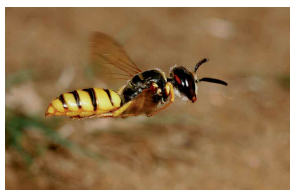


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WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPE  
SCOTLAND AND WALES

[www.orangepebble.com](http://www.orangepebble.com) 01443 228907

# Nature Close up Workshop

**A Close-up Photo Workshop by Richard Revels FRPS**  
**Venue: Bedford Museum, Castle Lane, Bedford, MK40 3XD**  
**Date: Sunday May 20th 2007. 10.00am to 4.00pm.**  
**Cost: £80 which includes tea / coffee and Lunch.**



Learn the techniques used by Richard to take close up pictures, including the use of flash to freeze insects in flight and supplement the ambient light in flat lighting conditions.

A variety of Butterflies, Moths and other creatures will be available to photograph during the afternoon practical session, so bring along your camera, a macro lens and flash units. Digital users may wish to bring along a Laptop so that results can be viewed.

Availability is limited to 10 so early booking is advised. For further information and/or booking form telephone Richard Revels at 01767 313065 or Chris Andrew at Bedford Museum 01234 353323



