

THE IRIS



MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 104
Summer 2009



Gold Medal Slide

Dark Green Fritillary by Tony Bond FRPS

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

Digitally captured photographic images are preferred but scanned transparencies are also acceptable. Images should be supplied on CD as RGB Tiff files, 6" x 4" at 300 ppi (1800 x 1200 pixels, file size approx 6.17MB). Original transparencies may be submitted, 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 members who have failed to receive them.

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2009 Exhibition Gold Medal Slide: Dark Green Fritillary
by Tony Bond FRPS

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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 the Exhibition Secretary, details above.

Editorial

The longest day already, who would believe it! It seems like only a couple of weeks ago I had the pleasure of meeting some of you at the Annual Spring Meeting, Exhibition opening and AGM. Those of you who did not attend missed an opportunity to see some excellent work both on the walls and at the projection of the slides and digital images in the afternoon. The day kicked off with a talk by Dickie Duckett FRPS who took us on a fabulous voyage to Antarctica. The images were first rate nature photographs and the talk was both entertaining and informative. The AGM was conducted in an efficient and speedy fashion - Geoff Trinder thanked the committee for their support during the past two years and handed the proceedings over to our new Chairman, Peter Jones ARPS. Following the AGM, the Annual Exhibition was opened, the awards were presented and the slides and digital images were projected. The prints of course were on the walls for members to peruse during the day. There is no doubt that there is considerable talent amongst the membership of The Nature Group!

At the end of May I was disturbed to learn of incidents regarding the inappropriate behaviour of photographers at the nesting site of a pair of Dipper nr Youlgreave. Apparently, despite requests (from a Nature Group member) to move a little further away, the closeness of the photographers caused the pair to abandon their attempts to build their nest. At least some of these photographers were members of the RPS - I sincerely hope that none of them were members of the Nature Group.

Finally, I am in the process of moving house. This means that both my street address and email addresses will be changing. I cannot tell you when but hopefully by the time this issue drops through your letterbox things will be sorted. Articles are required for the next and future issues of The Iris, but please check the website for up to date information regarding my email address, or send your articles and pictures to our Secretary, Margaret Johnson, who will forward them to me when I am settled and sorted.



From the chair

16th June 2009

My first chairman's report. I feel I have had an interesting and rewarding start to my two year term.

The NG exhibition was handled by a new team this year. The changeover from me to the new team went well, with only one or two minor hiccups. It is my intention to try to implement some improvements to next year's exhibition. Taking on a new task can almost always be daunting and I would like to thank the new team for all their hard work in producing such a good exhibition.

On a sadder note, I was very concerned to hear that some members of the RPS from the Birmingham area (I understand not NG members) have been distressing Dippers in Derbyshire, by moving too close and spending far too much time attempting to take their photographs, thus causing the birds to desert their nest. This sort of behavior is not to be tolerated at any time. Full consideration should always be given to the birds and never to the hoped for award winning photograph. I'm afraid as with all trades, there are cowboys out there who will, if not kept under control, give the Nature Group and the RPS a bad name.

I would like to remind all members that copies of 'The Nature Photographers' Code of Practice' are available from the Nature Group, the RPS and other organisations including the RSPB who will also let you have a full list of which birds should not be photographed without a licence.

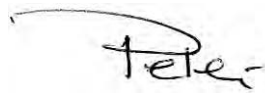
On a happier note I have attended two field meetings so far during my term of office. The first meeting was hosted by Andrew Parsons at Eaton Woods in Nottinghamshire on the 2nd May. Sadly only five members attended but we all enjoyed an excellent day photographing bluebells, orchids, cowslips and other wild flowers. The weather was exceptionally kind to us. Thank you to Andrew for the organization of such a good day.

The next meeting I was able to attend was at Wicken Fen on 13th June and organized by Patricia Kreyer and Ann Miles. This meeting was also extremely well organized. The weather was excellent

and the meeting was very well attended - some 35 members made their way to this National Trust site and spent a full day here photographing flowers, butterflies and dragonflies. Patricia even encouraged three new members to join the NG. Well done Pat and Ann for such a great day out.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind members that Wicken Fen is a National Trust reserve and any photographs taken on the reserve should not be used for publication without first obtaining permission from the National Trust - failure to abide by this rule could result in a heavy fine.

Please try your best to attend as many of the field meetings as you can - they are excellent a way of interacting with other NG members. We can all benefit from sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas with fellow members, learning some new technique and improving our field knowledge and our photography from those with more experience. As for me I'm off to the Arctic again (lucky me) to hopefully photograph my favorite animal - the (sadly declining) Polar Bear, but I hope to meet some of you at the field meetings I am able to attend following my return.



Peter Jones ARPS

Annual General Meeting Report

The 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Royal Photographic Society Nature Group was held at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, on Saturday 25th April 2009 at 2pm. It was chaired by Geoff Trinder and Peter Jones and attended by 61 members.

Apologies

These were received from Gill Cardy, Tremaine Cornish, Bert Crawshaw, Barbara Hawkesworth, Trevor Hyman and Kevin Maskell.

Minutes of the 2008 AGM

The minutes of the 2008 AGM printed in issue 101 of *'The Iris'* were accepted as a true and correct record of what then took place and signed by Geoff Trinder.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

Much of what would normally be covered in this report I covered in my last from The Chair in the latest copy of *The Iris*, I am not going to bore you all by repeating it now as I intend to keep this report as short as possible so that we can all sit back and enjoy looking at the pictures that have been chosen for this year's exhibition.

One of the most important things in life is to acknowledge and thank people for the efforts they make to the successful running of any group or society and as a result the committee has decided to award silver medals to two members who have, over the years, contributed to the success of the group. It gives me great pleasure to award medals to Dawn Osborn FRPS for all the work she has done in producing the new Code of Conduct and the website and for the continuing work she does in producing *The Iris*, and to Robert Hawkesworth FRPS for his time on the committee as Secretary, Chairman and committee member.

Due to Health and Safety regulations the group now has certain legal obligations that we have to abide by, this includes a risk assessment for any field trip. Forms for this are available but I have yet to see one. All accidents, however small, now need reporting and a form for this is now available and

must be sent to HQ if any accident happens. There are several other Regulations and Guidelines for Special Interest Groups that have appeared since the last committee meeting which the committee will need to go through at their next meeting.

One of the best things about the Nature Group is the opportunity it gives you to meet with like minded individuals who are friendly and are prepared to share experiences and advice about all aspects of photography. The photography is always taken seriously but this doesn't stop the experience being both enjoyable and fun.

My two years as your Chairman have flown by and all that remains for me to say in this report is thank you to all the committee and members who have supported me and made the job both easy and enjoyable. I know you will all back Peter in the same way in his period of office and I wish him all the best.

Treasurer's Report

Period 1st. January – 31st December 2008

General Comments:- This year has not seen any major changes to the way our finances have to be recorded and so this report is fairly simple. It aims to expand and explain the Balance Sheet attached. As usual, the Balance Sheet is an overall summary of Receipts and Payments for the year. Because some items "straddle" year ends, it cannot be a detailed Balance Sheet for each item.

Subscriptions:- The Subscription Income shown in the Balance Sheet is that credited monthly to our Cash Book Account during the current Financial year - (which is, of course, the Nature Group Subscriptions paid to the RPS at Bath for December 2007 to November 2008). The Life Members' subscription reimbursements for 2007 are included in the 2008 accounts, (as they were not paid to the Nature Group until 28th January 2008).

Lectures & Workshops:- The South Eastern Region Nature Group event on the 1st March, organised by Kath Bull, was very successful, and raised £193.78. A joint East Anglian / Nature Group meeting arranged by Joy Hancock on the 4th November 2007 was also very successful, and we received £55.87 as our share of the profit.

Interest:- This contributed a most welcome £510.37 to our funds and results from the good Cash Book balance. This interest is likely to be much lower in 2009 due to the current economic situation.

Sundry Income:- This includes VAT refunds and income of £725 from the sale of the 'A' Guidance Interactive CDs, when 73 were sold during the year. My thanks to John Myring for his time and effort in producing these CDs up to the end of October 2008, when I took over. In addition, my thanks to Trevor Hyman for continuing to distribute them.

The Iris:- Three editions of The IRIS were published this year – (#100, #101 & #102), with the 100th issue being a special edition. The cost of production and posting has risen as predicted. In the future, we should be able to offset some of the costs by direct sales of the magazine to people outside the Nature Group.

Annual Exhibition:- The Exhibition was in profit this year to the tune of £521.07, due to the Travelling Exhibition bringing in £560. My thanks to Tremaine Cornish for his time and effort in producing, and selling, the NG Exhibition CDs.

General Administration:- This includes all running costs of the Nature Group (general postage, telephone, stationery and travel to committee meetings, the cost of our web-site and VAT expenditure).

Overall Financial Situation:- The Balance Sheet shows an excess of Expenditure over Income of £66.28. The Cash Book shows a healthy credit balance of £12,301.45 at the end of 2008, as cheques to the total of £23.44 had been written, but were not cleared by the end of 2008. (c.f. £12416.53 at the same time the previous year, as cheques to the total of £72.24 had been written in 2007, but were not cleared until some time in 2008).

Margery Maskell ARPS, Hon. Treasurer
14th February 2009

Secretary's Report

Our current membership according to Bath on the 7th April is 641 which is 30 more than at the last AGM. Members that do leave have issues with the RPS and not the Nature Group; the old, old story.

We now have four subscriptions to the Iris with another in the pipeline. The lists that come through monthly from Bath are now more accurate and there are not so many queries to make. What does take time is the lapsed members as some of these members pay by direct debit and they seem to fail to go through with regular monotony. Many are unaware they have lapsed until I contact them. So check your direct debits!!!! Otherwise the year has been a successful one and I look forward to the challenges of the next.

Some of the members commented on the difficulties they had had with the membership department at Bath. In one instance a direct debit had been taken out by the RPS and cancelled the same day! This member has now opted to pay by cheque. Another member stated that it was Bath's responsibility to retrieve the money from the bank.

Election of Officers and Committee

All the present officers were willing to stand for re-election and were elected without opposition. They are:

Chairman:	Peter Jones ARPS
Secretary:	Margaret Johnson LRPS
Treasurer:	Margery Maskell ARPS
Vice Chairman:	John Bebbington FRPS
Immediate Past Chairman:	Geoff Trinder ARPS

The committee, apart from Tremaine Cornish, were willing to stand for re-election and were elected without opposition. They are:

Editor of the Iris:	Dawn Osborn FRPS
Exhibition Secretary:	Sue McGarrigle LRPS
NG Rep to Advisory Panel:	John Bebbington FRPS
Programme Co-ordinator:	Colin Smith FRPS
John Jones ARPS	Robert Hawkesworth FRPS
Tony Bond FRPS	Andrew Parsons
Martin Dyer	

Dickie Duckett proposed that this be accepted and it was seconded by Norman Prue.

Geoff Trinder then handed the chairmanship over to Peter Jones. Peter thanked Geoff for his service and work for the Nature Group over the past two years. He said that he knew he had a good team to work with him and hoped that he would have a successful tenure as Chairman.

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Any Other Business

John Bebbington said that all the field meetings were now on the main RPS website. The way they needed to be entered on to the site had been changed but it was all working now.

There are still places available for the field meeting weekend at Kingcombe. The meeting for next year, 2010, is being organised in the Lake District so that it will be more easily accessible for Northern members.

Date and Venue for the 34th AGM 2010

This would be Saturday 24th April 2010 at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury at 2.00pm.

The meeting was declared closed at 2.20pm.

Receipts and Payments Accounts for 1st. January 2008 to 31st December 2008

<u>Year 2007</u>		Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bath	<u>Year 2008</u>
<u>Receipts</u>			
5,563.93	Subscriptions		5,818.54
664.24	Life Subs.		697.45
525.00	Lectures & Workshops		785.87
1,432.56	Annual Exhibition		1,651.16
577.59	Interest received (to Cash Book)		510.37
413.99	Sundry Income		835.12
227.87	IRIS Subs, Adverts, etc		127.44
0.00	Pentax sponsorship		500.00
<u>9,405.18</u>	sub totals		<u>10,925.95</u>
<u>Payments</u>			
6,562.67	The Iris incl. postage		6,940.97
864.60	Lectures & Workshops		464.73
1,085.93	Annual Exhibition		1,130.09
3,115.83	General Administration		2,456.44
<u>11,629.03</u>	sub totals		<u>10,992.23</u>
<u>-2,223.85</u>	Receipts minus Payments		<u>-66.28</u>

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2008

Nature Group Cash Book		£
Balance brought forward from 2007		12,416.53
Cleared Cheques from 2007		-72.24
Uncleared Cheques from 2008		23.44
Receipts minus Payments 2008		-66.28
Total		<u>12,301.45</u>
Total Carried Forward To Financial Year 2008		<u>12,301.45</u>

M. J. Maskell

Margery J Maskell (Hon Treasurer)

14th February 2009

Independent Examiner's Report to Members

The statements of account for the period ended 31st December 2008 set out above have been prepared from the books and records of the Nature Group of the Royal Photographic Society and are in accordance therewith.

J. T. Hyman J T Hyman

12 February 2009

Storing Digital Images on the Move

by John Bulpitt FRPS

On a recent trip to Tanzania with Mark Hamblin of Wildshots, I took about 8000 images. Some may find this excessive, but as a photographer whose main interest is action photography in all its manifestations, I tend to hit the motordrive and only stop when the bar opens. In any event it does raise the question of how you back up and store digital images on a 'big' trip.

Over the past five years I have tried four different solutions. If I knew then what I know now my kids would (eventually) be far better off!

One could take a pocket full of CF cards. I use Sandisk Extreme III ,4 GB cards and – shooting in raw on a Canon 1D mark 11 – would need about 20 for the trip described above. At the time of writing (April 1st, appropriately) these would cost about £280 from Amazon. You could argue that fewer are needed because of the facility to edit in camera. But I would counsel against this. You can't really see what you are doing, and it can corrupt the card. However the main drawback with total reliance on CF cards is that you cannot take full advantage of the main benefit of digital: the facility to review a day's shoot and learn any lessons that need to be learned in preparation for the next day. (There are cheap CF cards but I wouldn't go there personally. You could also buy bigger capacity cards but I would be nervous about having too many eggs in a few baskets as it were.)

The second possibility is a photo viewer. I think that today, this is the most expensive solution. The Epson P4000 costs about £390 and holds 80 GB. Other than cost I also believe that this is the worst solution of the four options outlined in this article. You cannot back up and hard drives do fail. You cannot edit, other than delete. And downloading takes about 15 minutes for a 4GB card. Moreover the battery has a relatively small capacity. It will download 2 four GB cards but not three, which can be a problem in places with an intermittent power supply.

Then there is the laptop. This may not involve additional expenditure because many of you may already own one. You can back up onto an external hard drive, DVD's , or a number of 16Gb pen drives. It will also take imaging software. But of course hard drives can fail.... The main drawback is that it takes a big chunk from your carry on baggage allowance, and opportunist thieves can spot them from a thousand paces.

The final option, and the one I have now decided on, is the netbook. Essentially this is a very small laptop. I have bought a Samsung NC10 (£308 from John Lewis with a 2 year warranty) . It has a 160 GB hard drive and comes with a 1GB RAM, but I have upgraded to 2GB (about £20 from Amazon). I back up onto a Seagate portable external hard drive (£75 from PC World a few months ago) but you can buy similar products today at a much lower price. It all fits very easily into the outside pocket of my camera rucksack.

Of course the hard drive can fail you know the story now! And it will not load Canon software because the screen resolution is 1024 x 600 and not 1024 x 768. But it will take Breezebrower pro (free 15 day trial download available). This enables me to review my images quickly but a full edit would be a bit of a fiddle and cuts down on drinking time.

If you are still with me you may have concluded that there is no perfect solution and this is where I have got to. But in my view the best solution at present is a netbook plus a lot of CF cards.

I am most grateful to RPS Nature group member Martin Dyer for his help with my netbook purchase and configuration. Martin co-authors what, in my view, is the best wildlife photography website around. If you know a better one please let me know. www.wildlifeacrossthewater.blogspot.com

john.bulpitt1@btinternet.com

How to prepare an Associate panel in just 48 hours

Bob Johnson ARPS

Ok, so the title is a little tongue in cheek but I did actually prepare my associateship panel from scratch within forty eight hours.

My passion for wildlife photography developed three years ago when I took a newly purchased Canon 350d on a family bush camping trip to Botswana. Having never used an SLR camera before I was extremely pleased with the images that I brought back and of course, I was hooked. Now after three further trips to Africa and many hours spent photographing the wildlife in the Lee Valley Country Park and Epping Forest I have swallowed both the line and the sinker as well.

Through my club, The Lee Valley Nature Photographers, I learned about the RPS Nature Group which I joined in 2008. The distinction process attracted me as I am always keen to be judged by my betters and I am also a firm believer in having goals to aim for. Originally I had planned to enter for the licentiaship but life, as always, had other plans.

In January this year I shared both a room and a safari truck with Mike Wilkes FRPS on one of his excellent trips to Tanzania. This was my second photographic safari with Mike but this time around I was with him twenty four hours per day for two great weeks and I just learned so much. On our return Mike suggested to me that my images were good enough to go directly for the associateship and when a last minute place became available on the March assessment I decided to apply.

Unfortunately a business trip prevented my doing any sort of preparation until the weekend before the assessment which left me with only forty eight hours in which to eat, sleep and prepare the fifteen images required. This presented me with several problems such as deciding what the subject of my panel would be, and as I had chosen to enter a print panel whether I had enough mount board and paper?

I had heard that the judges tended to be quite tough on Africa panels as it is supposed to be easier to get good shots whilst on safari. Perhaps it is, but I think that to take a series of good and consistently sharp shots requires a certain amount of experience, skill and technique regardless of the location or the circumstances. My alternative to an Africa panel was a UK panel, and so I spent the Friday night choosing and preparing the bird and mammal images for two separate panels, Tanzania and Epping Forest. Once the two hanging plans were ready I emailed them both to Mike who suggested that I should go with the Tanzania panel and I agreed. The original Tanzania panel had contained two Tawny Eagle shots but Mike advised against this as he thought it best that the panel featured no more than one image of any particular species, and so I brought in the Banded Mongoose. Printing the panel was a problem as I only had A4 paper at home and I would have preferred to print them on A3. However I settled for the Canon A4 semi gloss paper and printed them all off on my Canon 9000 before going to bed at mid-night.

On the Saturday I spent eight hours mounting the prints using a Logan Compact mounting kit purchased at this years 'Focus On Imaging' show. This was the first time that I had used the Logan in anger but I found it pretty straight forward with my one problem being that I only had enough ivory board to put a two inch mount around the prints when I would have preferred three inches.

On the Sunday morning I was able to meet with Mike who was very positive about the panel but suggested that I change one image. It was a very sharp Kingfisher with an insect in its beak, but Mike thought that the background let it down, suggesting that 'someone had slapped it on with a two inch paint brush'. I decided to take his advice but unfortunately I had finished all the semi gloss paper and had to dash to PC World for some more before





heading home to prepare the Kingfisher's replacement and print off the final hanging plan. I then wrote my statement of intent and the species list just in time for dinner only forty eight hours after I had started choosing the original images.

Statement of intent

The subject of my panel is the bird and mammal life of Tanzania, and my aim is to depict in a clear and simple way some of the creatures that inhabit the Ndotu Plains and the Serengeti National Park.

Action, confrontation, aggression, flight and beauty is all shown in my images which were taken in a variety of light conditions, using a range of different lenses, bodies and supports. Portraits with simple backgrounds and wider angle shots showing habitat are equally important to me, as is getting at eye level with my subject, even if this means lying in the dust and facing down the odd mongoose!



On the big day I was quite nervous but when all five judges recommended my panel I was absolutely delighted. In his summing up, the chairman, Tony Wharton, made the following comments 'this panel shows that it is possible to gain the associateship with A4 prints' and 'that having decided on A4 prints then it would have been better to have had a larger mount around them'. Tony was absolutely correct to make these comments but of course neither he nor the judges had the first idea what I had been doing over the weekend!

For my panel I chose images from all three of my trips to Tanzania. I not only went for images that were sharp and well composed but also for images that went together well as a panel. Another consideration was to pick shots for which I had used a variety of lenses and supports. I am a Canon user and my safari kit includes a 50d, 40d, 400d, 500f4, 70-200 IS f4, 100-400 IS, 24-70 f2.8 a 1.4 converter and a Sigma 10-20. For the majority of my panel shots I used a large bean bag in a safari truck however the Nubian Woodpecker and Banded Mongoose were hand held and I used a tripod for the Black Kite.

I would like to thank all my friends at 'The Lee Valley Nature Photographers Club' for their help and encouragement over the past three years. But a special thank you must go to Mike Wilkes FRPS whose help and advice with my panel was invaluable.

Subject list

- 1) European Roller - *Coracias garrulous*
- 2) Secretary Bird - *Sagittarius serpentarius*
- 3) Black Kite - *Milvus migrans*
- 4) European Bee-eater - *Morops apiaster*
- 5) Ruppell's Griffon Vulture - *Gyps rueppii*
- 6) African Elephant - *Loxodonta africana*
- 7) Impala - *Aepyceros melampus*
- 8) Giraffe - *Giraffa camelopardalis*
- 9) Leopard - *Panthera pardus*
- 10) Cheetah - *Acinonyx jubatus*
- 11) Nubian Woodpecker - *Campethera nubica*
- 12) Isabelline Shrike - *Lanius isabellinus*
- 13) Banded Mongoose - *Mungos mungo*
- 14) Goliath Heron - *Ardea goliath*
- 15) Tawny Eagle - *Aquila rapax*
- Helmeted Guineafowl - *Numida meleagris*



European Insects

A succesful Associate Panel by Ian McLean ARPS

I became a beekeeper more than 35 years ago and in the end my hobby became my job and I was Regional Bee Inspector for the North of England for about 10 years before I retired. I wanted to improve my photography of these insects and so Joined Southport Photographic Society and the RPS Nature Group. John Bebbington has been my mentor since then. I have enjoyed many happy hours marvelling at his ability to see and have been slowly learning.

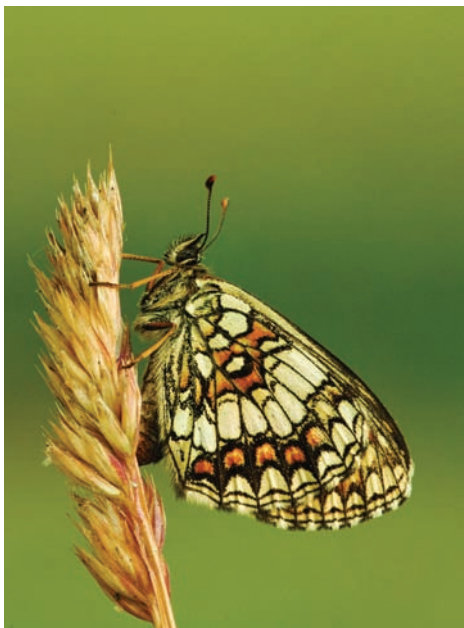
On retirement I volunteered at my local Nature Reserve and recorded the Butterfly Transect data for several years.

I value the opportunity to quietly study the intricate detail of insects and am fascinated by their variety, bright colours of display and their ability to 'disappear' with camouflage or flash a warning colour or eyespot. Some species can be reliably found in small colonies in the same area, year on year. The mating Transparent Burnets were confined to a small area of south facing cliffs on Eigg.

An unsuccessful slide submission about three years ago set me back, but I have always preferred prints. Colin Smith has been a great help in developing my eye for an image and both he and Robert Hawkesworth, seeing some of my later prints, told me to 'get on with it and stop dithering!'

So last Summer I set about sorting out my images and in the end decided on a top row of butterflies, the middle row of moths including examples of both camouflage and warning colouration and the lower row of a miscellany of mainly other insects.

There is no doubt that the discipline of making a panel improves ones techniques, it hones ones critical faculties. I found though that I had to walk away for a while and come back with a fresh eye. Doubtful shades of colour or minor distractions then become more apparent.







The day came, the panel considered and then leapt to their feet for a closer look; they settled down to make notes and I realised I needed to breathe. The Chairman asked for a comment, which was favourable and then an initial indication, any more comments? A final vote and I was delighted to have had universal acceptance.

Many people are interested in birds and animals, especially the big predators but I like to be out in the fresh air, not stuck inside a hide for hours. If the insects are too active in the middle of the day then there are always flowers or a nap in a shady spot. Much successful photography is done before breakfast. Occasionally you will find a cooperative specimen feeding, drying its wings or simply basking in the sun. For example, the Emerald Damselfly was hunting for anything that passed, coming back to perch on a clump of bracken - it took me 45 minutes to get the shot as it was never in the same place twice, and the Marbled White circled the flower feeding for a few seconds on each floret. A successful shot is very satisfying.



The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2009



Above: **Gold Medal Digital Image**

White-throated Bee-eater display by Martin Withers FRPS

Below: **Gold Medal Print**

Swallowtail flying to Thistle by Richard Revels FRPS





1

- 1: Scarce Swallowtail by Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
- 2: Heath Spotted Orchids and Male Yellow Dung Fly by Mike Middleton ARPS
- 3: Fungi *Mycena crocata* by Richard Revels FRPS

Award Winning Prints



2



3

The RPS Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2009

Print Section

Gold Medal

Swallowtail flying to Thistle - Richard Revels FRPS

Bronze Medals

Arctic Tern offering fish - Dickie Duckett FRPS

Fungi *Mycena crocata* - Richard Revels FRPS

Selectors' Awards

Scarce Swallowtail - Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS - John Bebbington Award

Didelta species - Ann Miles FRPS - John Bebbington Award

Scarlet Elf Cap in habitat - Roger Hance FRPS - John Jones Award

Saddle-Billed Stork with Crocodile - Ann Miles FRPS - John Jones Award

Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) - Kevin Elsby ARPS - Tony Hamblin Award

Pulsatilla Vernalis - Ann Miles FRPS - Tony Hamblin Award

Highly Commended

Thin-billed Prion in flight - Dickie Duckett FRPS

Impala (*Aepyceros melampus*) - Michael Huggan ARPS

Great Crested Grebes - Adrian Langdon ARPS

Crabeater Seals on iceflow - Ian MacWhirter ARPS

Hairy Shield Bug (*Dolycoris baccarum*) - Ian McLean ARPS

Baeospora myosura - Mike Middleton ARPS

Grey Seal in Surf - Richard Revels FRPS

Heath Spotted Orchids and Male Yellow Dung Fly - Mike Middleton ARPS

Accepted Prints

Author	Title	Award
Karen Berry ARPS	Yellow-necked Spur Fowl	
Michael Bews LRPS	Lava Heron with Sally Lightfoot Crab	
	Courting Swallow-tailed Gulls	
	<i>Boletus aereus</i>	
John Bulpitt FRPS	Newly emerged Common Darter	
	Grey-headed Flying Fox	
Sandy Cleland FRPS	Striped Kingfisher	
	Weasel	
	Crane fly laying eggs	
	Yellow Dungfly with prey	
	Six-spot Burnet Moths mating	
Roy Dorkins LRPS	Weasel	
	Red Fox	
Dickie Duckett FRPS	Arctic Tern offering fish	Bronze Medal
	King Penguins on snow	
	Thin-billed Prion in flight	HC
	Lenticular Cloud at dawn	

Martin Dyer	Great Bittern (<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>) Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) <i>Armilleria ostoyae</i> <i>Mycena</i> sp.	
Kevin Elsby ARPS	Blue-footed Booby (<i>Sula nebouxii</i>) Four-spotted Chaser (<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>) Lesser Flamingo (<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>) Waxwing (<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>) Arctic Terns fighting (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)	Selectors' Award
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Robin on Pine Cone Male Red Squirrel Scarce Swallowtail	Selectors' Award
Gordon Follows ARPS	Black-winged Stilt Rufous-naped Lark singing Female Fiscal Shrike	
Thomas Hanahoe ARPS	Osprey with a Trout Juvenile Herring Gull with a mussel Flock of Knot on the turn Marsh Harrier with nest material	
Roger Hance FRPS	Badger amongst Bluebells Fieldfare Common Spotted Orchids Scarlet Elf Cap in habitat	Selectors' Award
Michael Huggan ARPS	Leopard in tree (<i>Panthera pardus</i>) Coypu (<i>Myocastor coypus</i>) Impala (<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>)	HC
Bob Johnson ARPS	White-tailed Deer Nubian Woodpecker	
Peter Jones ARPS	Grizzly Bear with Salmon catch Arctic Fox hunting Malachite Kingfisher Warthog and piglets	
Bryan Knox ARPS	Leopardess(<i>Panthera pardus</i>) at sunrise Leopardess(<i>Panthera pardus</i>) drinking Gannet (<i>Sula bassana</i>) trying to land in the colony Contre jour view of Gannet colony, Bass Rock	
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Redshank Great Crested Grebes	HC
Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Crabeater Seals on iceflow Rhododendron Leafhopper excreting honeydew bubble Chinstrap Penguins coming ashore Southern Wood Ants	HC
Jean Manson	Dahlia Anemone Tiger Shark Wolffish	
Maggie Manson ARPS	<i>Hetarixalus madagasgariensis</i>	
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Black-headed Gull in flight	
Margery Maskell ARPS	Magellanic Penguins emerging from the sea <i>Parmelia saxatilis</i> Lichen	

Ron McCombe ARPS	Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>) Waxwing (<i>Bombicilla garrulus</i>)	
Sue McGarrigle LRPS	Red Squirrel feeding <i>Mycena</i> sp.	
Dave McKay ARPS	Oryx fighting Cape Fur Seals Elephants at dusk Black-backed Jackals	
Ian McLean ARPS	Swallowtail (<i>Papilio machaon</i>) Marbled White (<i>Melanargia galathea</i>) Hairy Shield Bug (<i>Dolycoris baccarum</i>) Souslik with cherry (<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>)	HC
Mike Middleton ARPS	Poison Pie <i>Baeospora myosura</i> Heath Spotted Orchids and Male Yellow Dung Fly	HC HC
Ann Miles FRPS	Hazel Hen Gannets diving for fish Saddle-billed Stork with Crocodile <i>Pulsatilla vernalis</i> <i>Didelta</i> species	Selectors' Award Selectors' Award Selectors' Award
Dawn Osborn FRPS	Black-browed Albatross courtship White Ibis catching crab Great Egret carrying twig Gentoo Penguin coming ashore Gentoo Penguin porpoising ashore	
Norman J Prue FRPS	Little Bee-eaters (pair) Chapman's Zebra at waterhole Striated heron hunting, Galapagos African Fish Eagle flight # 4 African Elephants in line	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Raft Spider Shaggy Pholiota Group	
Richard Revels FRPS	White-tailed Eagle with prey Grey Seal in surf Swallowtail flying to Thistle Silver-studded Blue Butterfly Fungi <i>Mycena crocata</i>	HC Gold Medal Bronze Medal
David Robinson ARPS	Red-throated Diver chick begging (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>) Nuthatch (<i>Sitta europaea</i>)	
Steve Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Sleeping Tiger Beach Master Large Cactus Finch feeding Black-backed Jackal scavenging Rhesus Macaque laughing	
Stan Saunders ARPS	Little Owl (<i>Athene noctua</i>) Kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>)	
Ian D Silvester ARPS	Leopard drinking at night Common Eider in flight Cheetah Cubs	

John Weir ARPS

Snowy Egret
Juvenile Cobb's Wren
Laughing Gull bathing
Scaly Stalked Puffball (*Tulostoma melanocyclus*)

Sheila Weir ARPS

Willetts' threat display
Red-winged Blackbird

Digital

Gold Medal

White-throated Bee Eater, display - Martin Withers FRPS

Bronze Medals

Arctic Tern - Peter Basterfield
Fly Agaric in habitat - Gianpiero Ferrari

Selectors' Awards

Sulphur Polypore - John Berry ARPS - John Bebbington Award
Hummingbird Hawkmoth nectaring - Richard Revels FRPS - John Bebbington Award
Turkey Tail Fungus - Jane Rees LRPS - John Jones Award
Gentoo Penguin surfing wave - Kevin Maskell FRPS - John Jones Award
Snail Kite With Snail - Dickie Duckett FRPS - Tony Hamblin Award
Alpine Pasque Flower - Jon Allanson LRPSLRPS - Tony Hamblin Award

Highly Commended

Viola cenisia - Ann Miles FRPS
Spring Gentians - Jon Allanson
Two Badgers - Bob Devine
Roseate Spoonbill in flight - Dawn Osborn FRPS
Nut Weevil - Richard Revels FRPS
Lonely Gentoo in sandstorm - Eric Saul ARPS
Ascocoryne sarcoides - John Scotten ARPS
Brown Bear with Salmon Ian Silvester
Birds Eye Primrose - John Weir ARPS
Rabbit - Martin Withers FRPS

Accepted Digital Images

Author

Title

Award

Jon Allanson LRPS

White Pelicans
Spring Gentians
Alpine Pasque Flower
Alpine Pasque Flowers
Welwitschia Plant

Selectors' Award

Nigel Atkins LRPS

Goshawk

Peter Basterfield ARPS

Arctic Tern
Common Moorhen fighting
Whiskered Screech Owl

Bronze Medal

Karen Berry ARPS

Burchell's Zebra challenge
Reticulated Giraffe

John Berry ARPS

Sulphur Polypore

Selectors' Award

Andy Callow FRPS	Large White Hoverflies	
Sandy Cleland FRPS	Nightjar Fischer's Sparrow Lark Red-tailed Spiny-footed Lizard Banded Mongooses Lilac-breasted Roller	
Tremaine Cornish LRPS	Engrailed	
Elizabeth Cutter ARPS	Swiss Rock Jasmine	
Liz Cutting LRPS	Female Kingfisher with catch	
Bob Devine ARPS	White-eyed Buzzard Royal Bengal Tiger Two Badgers	HC
Roy Dorkins LRPS	Weasel European Otter	
Dickie Duckett FRPS	Mallard landing Coots fighting Snail Kite with Snail Pochard in flight	Selectors' Award
Martin Dyer	Sanderling Male Marsh Harrier Milkcap Fungus	
Kevin Elsby ARPS	Great Crested Grebe Pheasant Southern Hawker	
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Goldfinch feeding in Winter Waxwing feeding Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel Fly Agaric in habitat	Bronze Medal
Marguerite Fewkes ARPS	Rockhopper Penguin Soft Corals Synchronized Zebras King Penguin & juvenile	
Gordon Follows ARPS	Ruppell's Griffon Vulture sunning Snow Goose in flight	
Jane Greatorex ARPS	White Ibis with crab Steamer Ducklings Gentoo Penguins	
Thomas Hanahoe ARPS	Red Squirrel Curlew with a Cockle	
Roger Hance FRPS	Juvenile Male Sparrowhawk bathing in pond	
Margaret Hocking ARPS	Blue-footed Booby displaying, Galapagos Southern Bottlenose Dolphins, New Zealand	
Roy Hodgkiss ARPS	Oystercatcher and chick	
Michael Huggan ARPS	Sacred Ibis Grey Heron	
John Hunt ARPS	White-tailed Eagle Great Grey Owl swooping Juvenile Bateleur Eagle	

Bob Johnson ARPS	Kestrel	
Margaret Johnson LRPS	Giraffes at sunrise	
Peter Jones ARPS	Serval with prey	
Bryan Knox ARPS	Langur Monkeys on lookout	
Patricia Kreyer ARPS	Starlings coming home to roost, Snapwick Somerset	
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Crested Tit	
	Saltings, Northern South Harris	
	Whooper Swan	
	Greylag Geese	
	Black-tailed Godwit	
Fiona Mackay LRPS	<i>Rhagonycha fulva</i>	
Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Black-browed Albatross	
	Four-spotted Chaser Dragonfly	
	Southern Wood Ant with prey	
Maggie Manson ARPS	Mossy Leaf Tail Gecko	
	<i>Boopins viridis</i>	
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Gentoo Penguin surfing wave	Selectors' Award
	Greylag Goose in flight	
	Greenfinch	
	Grass Wren singing on Gorse	
	Female Shelduck in flight	
Margery Maskell ARPS	Cattle Egret in flight	
	Great Egret calling	
Ron McCombe ARPS	Waxwing feeding <i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>	
	Arctic Tern	
Sue McGarrigle LRPS	Red Squirrel	
	Short-eared Owl	
Ann Mead AFIAP	<i>Arion ater</i> mating at night	
Barry Mead FRPS	Yellow-billed Hornbill preening	
	Oryx fighting	
	Pied Crows interacting	
	Pale Chanting Goshawk	
Ann Miles FRPS	Crested Tit	
	Gorgetted Woodstar	
	Gannets in stormlight	
	<i>Viola canisia</i>	
	Amethyst Deceiver	
Philip Mugridge ARPS	European Bee-eater	
	Little Tern	
	Polar Bears	
John Nathan LRPS	Walrus - Spitzbergen	
	Polar Bear on ice floe	
Dawn Osborn FRPS	Great Blue Heron in flight with twig	
	Wood Stork carrying twig	
	Roseate Spoonbill in flight	
	Snowy Egret landing	HC
	Great Egret in flight	

Andrew Parsons ARPS	Robin Blackbird feeding Fieldfare	
Ron Perkins ARPS	Red Kite Osprey	
Norman Prue FRPS	Black-veined Whites clustered Tussock Bird grooming Elephant Seal Pied Kingfisher hovering	
Jane Rees LRPS	Iron Prominent Turkey Tail Fungus	Selectors' Award
Richard Revels FRPS	Brown Hares boxing Hummingbird Hawkmoth nectaring Nut Weevil	Selectors' Award HC
Dave Richards FRPS	Leopard	
Steve Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Startled Cape Hare Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush	
Eric Saul ARPS	Lonely Gentoo in sandstorm King Cormorant family Caracara dust bathing	HC
John Scotten ARPS	Clouded Yellow <i>Ascocoryne sarcoides</i>	HC
Paul Sievers ARPS	Japanese Acacia Cow Parsley	
Ian Silvester ARPS	Flying Puffins Brown Bear with Salmon Brown Bears fighting over Salmon Agami Heron	HC
John Simpson	Tiger Beetle <i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	
Lesley Simpson ARPS	<i>Hagenius brevistylus</i> and prey <i>Misumena vatia</i> feeding on Bee Female Red-breasted Woodpecker	
Rosemary Simpson ARPS	Blue-spotted Ray, close Up Anemone Carrier Hermit Crab	
Colin Smale ARPS	Roe Deer in wheat field Barn Owl Black-tailed Godwit Kestrel Whinchat	
Colin Smith FRPS	Short-eared Owl Emperor Dragonfly Puffin <i>Mycena oortiana</i>	
Diana Tombs LRPS	Grizzly Bear	
Geoff Trinder FRPS	Greater Roadrunner	
John Weir ARPS	Queen of Spain Fritillary Birds Eye Primrose	HC

Sheila Weir	Black-browed Albatross	
Helen Williams ARPS	Redshank	
	Wandering Albatross	
Martin Withers FRPS	Lion	
	Rabbit	HC
	Spanish Festoon	
	White-throated Bee-eater, display	Gold Medal
	Little Grebe	

Slides

Gold Medal Slide

Dark Green Fritillary - Tony Bond FRPS

Bronze Medal

Nacreous Clouds & Sycamore Acer pseudoplatanus - Peter Roworth ARPS

Selectors' Awards

Warthog - Peter Jones ARPS - John Bebbington Award
Rhagionid Flies - Chrysopilus asiliformis - Andy Callow FRPS - John Jones Award
Speckled Wood on Hawthorn - Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS - Tony Hamblin Award

Highly Commended

Yellow Dung Fly *Scatophaga stercoraria* - Tremaine Cornish LRPS
Hanuman Langur - Bob Devine ARPS
Oak Beauty Moth Camouflage in Lichen - Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
Silver Washed Fritillary - Roger Hance FRPS
Sea Thrift - Robert Hawkesworth FRPS
Encrusting Sponge Patterns - Rosemary Simpson ARPS
Puss Moths paired - Eric Wright ARPS

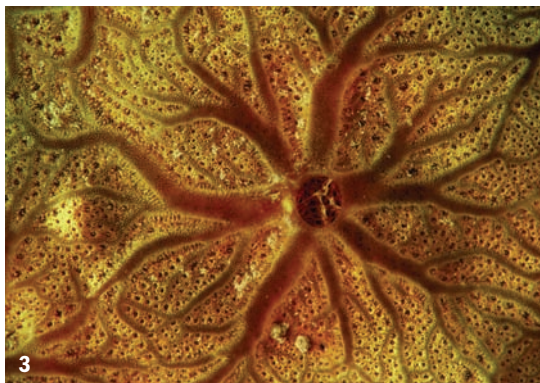
Accepted Slides

Author	Title	Award
Tony Bond FRPS	Black-browed Albatross <i>Hericium erinaceus</i> Birds-eye Primrose Dark Green Fritillary	Gold Medal
Andy Callow FRPS	Weevils paired Rain Fly <i>Anthomyia pluvialis</i> Rhagionid Flies <i>Chrysopilus asiliformis</i>	Selectors' Award
Tremaine Cornish LRPS	Yellow Dung Fly <i>Scatophaga stercoraria</i>	HC
Bob Devine ARPS	African Elephant calf Brown Bear & Salmon Hanuman Langur	HC
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Puss Moth Caterpillar The Lappet Moth Wild Tulips <i>Tulipa aegea</i> Beautiful Agaric Oak Beauty Moth camouflage in Lichen Speckled Wood on Hawthorn	HC Selectors' Award

Roger Hance FRPS	<i>Mycena inclinata</i> Queen of Spain Fritillary Male Adder Basking Common Puffballs Silver Washed Fritillary	HC
Barbara Hawkesworth ARPS	Rosebay Willow <i>Peltigera lactucifolia</i> Butterbur	
Robert Hawkesworth FRPS	Burnished Brass Sallow Kitten Eye-lash Fungus <i>Scutellina scutellata</i> Sea Thrift	HC
Peter Jones ARPS	Grass Snake swimming Warthog	Selectors' Award
Mike Martin ARPS	Golden Plover Arctic Tern Pair of Green Underside Blues Black-veined White attacked by Spider	
Tony McDade FRPS	Cypriot Vineyard	
W Middleton ARPS	Female Yellowhammer on Silver Birch twig Berthelot's Pipit foraging	
Mark Monckton LRPS	<i>Lachnellula subtilissima</i>	
Norman Prue FRPS	Leopard on lookout Secretary Bird on nest Western Carpet Python Kenyan Giraffe & Young Carmine Bee-eaters at nest	
Peter Roworth ARPS	Heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> Nacreous Clouds & Sycamore	Bronze Medal
John Simpson	Alderfly egg laying <i>Mantis religiosa</i> Sedum acre <i>Calopteryx splendens</i> <i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i> in the Alps <i>Bryum capillare</i>	
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Mating <i>Ischnura elegans</i> <i>Ophrys aveyronensis</i> Common Blue Damselfly feeding Male pairing, <i>Ischnura elegans</i> & <i>enallagma</i>	
Rosemary Simpson ARPS	Lettuce Seaslug, Bonaire Cuttlefish, Red Sea Hermit Crab, Indonesia Shrimp on Anenome - <i>Periclimenes tosaensis</i> Encrusting Sponge Patterns	HC
Eric Wright ARPS	Male & Female Brimstones Blue-tailed Damselfly Puss Moths paired	HC

Award Winning Slides





Opposite page

- 1: Speckled Wood on Hawthorn
by Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
- 2: Sea Thrift
by Robert Hawkesworth FRPS
- 3: Nacreous Clouds & Sycamore
Acer pseudoplatanus
by Peter Roworth ARPS
- 4: Silver Washed Fritillary
by Roger Hance FRPS
- 5: Puss Moths Paired
by Eric Wright ARPS

This page:

- 1: Hanuman Langur
by Bob Devine ARPS
- 2: Warthog
by Peter Jones ARPS
- 3: Encrusting Sponge Patterns
by Rosemary Simpson ARPS
- 4: Yellow Dung Fly *Scatophaga stercoraria*
by Tremaine Cornish LRPS
- 5: Rhagionid Flies *Chrysopilus asiliformis*
by Andy Callow FRPS



Award Winning Flora





Award Winning Birds



Award Winning Images



Images pages 28 & 29

- 1: Didelta species
by Ann Miles FRPS
- 2: Spring Gentians
by Jon Allanson
- 3: Alpine Pasque Flower
by Jon Allanson LRPSLRPS
- 4: *Pulsatilla Vernalis*
by Ann Miles FRPS
- 5: Birds Eye Primrose
by John Weir ARPS
- 6: Arctic Tern
by Peter Basterfield
- 7: Roseate Spoonbill in flight
by Dawn Osborn FRPS
- 8: Great Crested Grebes
by Adrian Langdon ARPS



Images pages 30 & 31

- 1 Crabeater Seals on iceflow
by Ian MacWhirter ARPS
- 2: Grey Seal in Surf
by Richard Revels FRPS
- 3: Gentoo Penguin Surfing Wave
by Kevin Maskell FRPS
- 4: Rabbit
by Martin Withers FRPS
- 5: Brown Bear with Salmon
by Ian Silvester
- 6: Impala (*Aepyceros melampus*)
by Michael Huggan ARPS





Pictures

Left: Green-veined White

Bottom left: Cowslip

Below: Mayfly

Bottom right: Red & Black Froghopper



Nature Group Residential Weekend

by Chuck Eccleston ARPS

The Kingcombe Centre is a beautiful, secluded venue nestling in the Dorset countryside and ideally suited for the Nature Group Residential Weekend, held from Friday the 9th May 2009. Surprisingly only six members had enrolled for the weekend led by John Bebbington FRPS, who seems to know the name of every flower and insect in Britain. After introductions and a superb tea with home-made cakes we set off for an initial stroll around the area close to the centre. Kingcombe is surrounded by numerous public access fields owned by the centre itself and the Dorset Wildlife Trust. We photographed Cuckoo Flowers *Cardamine pratensis*, Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, Bugle *Ajuga reptans* and other flowers before adjourning for pre-dinner drinks. The food at Kingcombe is prepared by volunteers, all experienced caterers, so we were treated to a wonderful three-course supper in the conservatory which included produce grown in the Centre's own garden. Following our meal we made our way to the adjoining barn for an illustrated talk by John, who identified the places we were to visit and the species we might hope to encounter during our stay.

The following morning, at about 6 am, the 'early birds' met in a meadow adjoining Beech Cottage (one of the centre's accommodation blocks), where we were delighted to find large numbers of dew covered Green-veined Whites *Pieris napi* roosting on Cuckoo Flowers. Numerous other insects and flowers also attracted our attention until very soggy trousers and full memory cards forced us to retire to the Centre for a full breakfast.

We made our packed lunches with the food provided by the Centre and set off for Rywater Nursery. This privately owned reserve comprises of approximately 100 acres converted from an old nursery and subsequently added to by the present owner, Clive Farrell, over a period of thirty years, entirely for the benefit of butterflies! Our great good fortune was that John was friendly with the owner and was able to gain access to the whole area of meadows, ponds, woods and wet land areas. The morning was spent in a grassland area trying to photograph), Dingy Skippers *Erynnis tages*, Green

Hairstreaks *Callophrys rubi*, Red-and-black Froghoppers *Cercopis vulnerata*, Small Blues *Cupido minimus* and the many flowers growing on the grass banks.

Following a leisurely lunch basking in the sunshine, we took a circular route around the reserve with opportunities to photograph Mayflies *Ephemera danica* and a Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly *Teneral Ischnura pumilio*. There were many sculptures in the grounds including an adult sized gnome house, massive dragons, a three metre tall model of a butterfly egg and a huge blue glass eye visible only from a helicopter. We were not distracted by these pieces of abstract art particularly when we came to a pond with Four-spotted Chasers *Libellula quadrimaculata* climbing up reeds to dry their wings. Despite being difficult to photograph due to their closeness to the pond edges we managed some successful shots. Making our way back to the vehicles by the way of some more ponds and marshy areas gave us opportunities to photograph Drinker Moth Caterpillars *Philudoria potatoria*, Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus aquatilis* and other items of interest. In the evening, after yet another superb supper, we were treated to some excellent prints by Geoff Hughes ARPS from his 'A' panel followed by a selection of the digital images taken by group members during the day and an 'A' panel by Mike Middleton ARPS.

The second morning was again spent in the meadows below Beech Cottage in heavy dew mixed with frost looking for Orange Tips *Anthracis cardamines* roosting on the Cuckoo Flowers, with no success. However, images were made of a female *Agalenatea redii* spider guarding her eggs and a Yellow Dung Fly *Scathophaga stercoraria* roosting in the dew. After breakfast we drove across country to Hardington Moor National Nature Reserve to photograph Green-winged Orchids *Orchis morio*. There were three meadows absolutely overflowing with these orchids, some 11,500, according to John, together with Cowslips *Primula veris*, Early Purple Orchids *Orchis mascula*, Adderstone *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and other meadow flowers. We returned to the Centre for

lunch and then spent the afternoon in the meadows locally where we photographed Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, various beetles and fast moving Orange Tips. In the evening John gave us a talk and demonstration on the use of Helicon Focus software used to 'stack' macro images to give extended depth of field.

The second night of our visit was suitable for setting the moth trap and produced Pebble Hook-tip *Drepana falcata*, Alder Kitten *Furcula bicuspis*, Swallow Prominent *Pheosia tremula*, Brimstone *Opisthagraptis luteolata*, and a Cockchafer *Melolontha melolontha*. These were photographed by some of the group before we set off for Powerstock Common, a Dorset Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve. The main objective of the day was Birds Nest Orchids *Neottia nidus-avis*, fortunately, although these were only just starting to show, a couple of specimens were located before we moved on to see what else was around. Although it was bright and sunny the wind had increased, making plant photography very challenging. John found a clearing in the woods with a good display of Eyelash Fungus *Scutellinia scutellata* which kept us busy until lunchtime.

We adjourned to a disused railway cutting in the reserve to try and find shelter from the wind. Our lunch spot produced a good crop of subjects including Thick-legged Flower Beetles *Oedemera nobilis*, mating Common Blues *Polyommatus icarus*, Milkwort *Polygala vulgaris* in various shades and the occasional chance of a Green Hairstreak which unfortunately would not settle in the wind. Just before returning to the vehicles we managed to find a co-operative Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*, a perfect end to an enjoyable day. A short drive found us back at the Centre once again where we said our farewells and set off home.

If you have not been on a Nature Group Residential week end before, I recommend you make the effort to go on the next one. Not only do you benefit from getting to know the diversity of flora and fauna found in an area of the country with which you may not be familiar but you also have the opportunity to learn from and exchange ideas with your fellow course members.

TANZANIA

Photo Safari

22nd Jan to Feb 8th 2010



For details of this fantastic trip call Bob Johnson ARPS on 07831 247570
or visit the news section at www.bobswildimages.com

Nature Group Field Meetings 2009

Date & time: Wednesday 7th October 2009
Location: Sherwood Pines
Grid Reference: OS Sheet 120 Car Park 611 638
Meeting Place: Main Car Park accessed from B6030, Sherwood Pines is well signposted.
Leader: Robert Hawkesworth FRPS
Contact: Tel 0115 928 1050 Please use this number to book the meeting.
Mobile 07960 177291 for use on the day only.

Main subjects of interest: Fungi.

Additional Information: Charge for car parking, in the region of £2. Bring stout shoes/boots, or wellingtons and usual outdoor clothing suitable for autumn. Small café on site or bring a packed lunch.

Date & time: Saturday October 17th 10.30am
Location: Dunham Massey (National Trust)
Meeting Place: The membership kiosk between the car park and the entrance to the parkland.
Grid Reference: Sheet 109: SJ 735874
Directions: Follow brown signs from M56 jct 7 and A56. M6 jct 19.
Leader: Tony Bond FRPS
Contact: Tel 01942 674773
Main subjects of interest: Fungi & Fallow Deer. If you wish to photograph the deer it is recommended that you do so before the foray.

Additional Information: The car park opens at 9.00am. and costs £4.00 (N.T. members free). Bring stout shoes. Restaurant on site or bring packed lunch.

Date & time Saturday 10th October, 10.00am
Location: Ebernoe Common NNR, W Sussex.
Meeting Place: Car park next to Ebernoe Church.
Grid Reference: 197 SU 976 278.
Leader: Adrian Davies,
Contact: Tel 01372 815653 or Email apdavies@nescot.ac.uk
Main subjects of interest: Ancient woodland with over 600 recorded species of fungi.

Additional information: Directions: From A283 (3 miles North of Petworth, 1.5 miles South of Northchapel) turn into Streels Lane signposted Ebernoe. After 1.5 miles turn right, just past telephone & post boxes into Church & Reserve access road, signposted Ebernoe Church/School House. Please park considerately.

No access problems for disabled. Bring: Packed lunch & stout shoes (reserve paths could be muddy). Cost: £2 contribution to Reserve Funds. Please phone Leader to check that meeting is on.

Date & time: Saturday 21st November, 10.00am
Location: Donna Nook, Lincolnshire
Meeting Place: Car Park
Grid Reference: TF 422998
Leader: Colin Smale ARPS
Contact: Email fotolincs@ntlworld.com
Main subjects of interest: Grey seals, pups, courting and fighting

Additional Information: Car parking free but if full cars may be parked in a nearby field for a £1.00 fee to the farmer. Bring wellingtons, waterproofs and a packed lunch. Leader will email map and details to anyone interested. The main focus will be on the seals out in the surf and basking on the outer sandbanks - you can get very close to the seals playing, courting, fighting in the rolling surf. This involves a 30 minute trek across wet sands and a thin layer of mud, but well worth it. We will be going out on a falling tide so there is no danger from tides.

Members with limited mobility will still be able to enjoy a good photographic day out as seals at the top of the beach may be photographed at close quarters and only two minutes walk from the car park.

Bring out the old

by John Woodward LRPS

I came upon a vintage Optomax 500mm mirror lens while clearing out a cupboard the other day. I remember using it with a succession of film cameras – Praktica LTL, Pentax ME and Nikon F3. It produced some useful images back in the 70s and 80s, long before the microchip revolution changed our lives for ever. How would it perform with my Canon digital SLRs I wondered.

The equipment I use for bird photography is a Canon 30D with a Canon 100 – 400mm image-stabilised zoom lens. Could the old Optomax compete? Well, it wouldn't fit the D30 for a start. The pentaprism housing got in the way of the tripod bracket and I couldn't undo the screws on the attachment. But it did click into a mothballed old 10D. The mirror lens has a fixed aperture at f8 and manual focus with a very narrow depth of field. I set the camera to aperture priority and the ISO to 400. In bright sunlight it showed a shutter speed of 1/350 to 1/750 and tended to overexpose, so I reduced the setting by one stop and that seemed to be just about right.

I do not usually use a tripod for bird photography. I find it too restrictive and clumsy especially when following the movements of small birds. There is usually something to lean against. With the times 1.6 sensor factor however, I was effectively shooting hand-held with 800mm and no image stabilisation, so blurred images were likely to be a problem.

So how did things turn out? I took pictures through the kitchen window of birds and a grey squirrel coming to the feeding station. I know 'real' nature photographers don't like images that include man-made seed holders and bird tables, so forgive me that they feature in the illustrations of my experiment, but aesthetic considerations were not my main concern. The creatures that I photographed in my garden were all wild, so in the true sense this was nature photography even if somewhat domesticated and not very pretty.

The results were mainly as predicted and the majority of images were not sharp enough, probably



because of camera shake. Attempts to increase the shutter speed by putting up the ISO setting to 800 led to a lot of 'noise'. The mirror lens produces softer images than the Canon zoom and it also has an unfortunate tendency to render out of focus parts of the picture as a series of ugly 'doughnuts' and this showed up mostly on lawn shots. The distortion often greatly affected the quality of the outcome. A plain uncluttered background was always best. Small birds are constantly on the move and they usually eluded the narrow depth of field of the mirror lens. Also they needed to be more greatly enlarged to provide a reasonable result. Nevertheless, a few shots were just about acceptable – not for club competitions, but perhaps as illustrations for a powerpoint lecture.

Did the mirror lens have any advantages when compared with the zoom? It was certainly lighter and shorter. One did not have to worry about the aperture – a simple setting on aperture priority was all that was needed. It had a 25% longer focal length.

Will I use it regularly in the future? Probably not very often, but it might help now and then in very good light conditions as a back-up to my usual equipment. The zoom gives better results despite its weight and size and auto-focus and image stabilisation are blessings. I might invest in a converter for it in the future to step it up to nearly 900mm with the conversion factor.



The experiment with the mirror lens was fun, so don't be too eager to discard your antique equipment for a new all singing and dancing outfit without first trying out the old. You could save yourself a lot of money!



Let Nature Come To You

by Russell Edwards

Be very still and nature will come to you. Any movement will reveal the position of the animal or the photographer. Deer and hares are very wary creatures but by keeping very still I have had both, at different times, come up to within touching distance of me.

My method of photographing these animals is to set up my equipment just inside a wood overlooking an arable field which is regularly visited by a variety of birds and animals but especially fallow and muntjac deer, hares, rabbits, foxes, the occasional badger and stoat.

My equipment consists of a D70 Nikon camera with a Sigma 500mm f4.5 lens mounted onto a tripod fitted with a Manfrotto Long Lens Support. This remarkable tripod head allows a long lens to remain in any position that it is placed rather like the gimbal heads, which give perfect balance to the camera and lens but less expensive.

Transferring from film to digital, which I did last year, has been truly amazing. Film quality had become so good that I regularly used Fuji 800 ISO up-rated to 1600. Now the D70 can be set to the same high ISO and gives almost immediate results with as good if not better quality.

I was at first concerned about digital print size as it is recommended to print pictures at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch. With the D70 having an image width of 3000 pixels, the maximum print width would only be 10 inches. Having seen a 'Wild Life Photographer of the Year' exhibition with a print of a Jay 24 inches wide (125 pixels per inch) made from a D70 I was re-assured and had one of my own hare pictures printed to the same size. The result was excellent.

To take my animal pictures I set the D70 to 1600 ISO (unless it is very bright) and adjust the White Balance according to the weather – Cloudy or
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CHAIRMAN'S DAY

A full day of Nature Photography hosted by Peter Jones ARPS

Sunday 8th November 2009, 10 a.m.

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

PROGRAMME

10.00 am	Arrival - Coffee/Tea	12.45 pm	Lunch
10.30 am	Introduction from the Chairman, Peter Jones ARPS	2.00 pm	'A Year of Wildlife' by Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
11.15 am	'Wildlife of Kew Gardens' and 'Wildlife in China' by Heather Angel Hon. FRPS	3.00 pm	'Wildlife from the Highlands and Islands' by Martin Dyer
		4.00 pm	Coffee/Tea and finish time

Tickets are available now, priced at £15 each incl Lunch, Teas and Coffees.

Ensure your place - Book now!

Complete the reply slip below and send with your cheque to arrive not later than 30th September 2009.

Please send to: **Peter Jones ARPS, Manor Barn, 3 Church View, Bilsthorpe, Notts, NG22 8TB**

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 _____

Shade if it is overcast or photographing in a wood. Aperture priority is used with the Long Lenses set at maximum aperture, although as the hares came unusually close a smaller aperture giving greater depth of field covering the hare's face may have been better.

I place a camping chair in front of a tree and my camera and tripod in front of it before wrapping green camouflage material (obtained from a garden centre) round the tripod. The camera lens points away from the likely direction that an animal will appear as its large front piece of glass acts as a reflector. The lens has to be moved into position when the subject is not looking at the camera. All animals when they first come into the field are very cautious and have a good look round before beginning to graze. The deer, especially, send one member ahead of the others to check for potential danger. A reflecting lens or any movement at this stage would spell disaster.

I had been sitting in my secluded position for about an hour counting pigeons to pass the time waiting for something to happen when out of the corner of my eye I noticed a hare sitting in front of me about 3 metres away and to my right sat its offspring – a leveret -almost within touching distance.

Eventually, after we had admired each other, a slight movement of my foot, as I attempted to photograph them sent them scurrying. Although timid, the animals are also curious and at times their curiosity overrules their judgement. I was to be even luckier that evening.

The corn had just been cut and from the distance a pair of hares came gambolling towards me over, under and through the scattered straw. They were quite oblivious of me and I was able to follow their progress towards me through the camera lens. The pair ended up less than 5 metres from my camera just within the minimum focusing distance of the lens and proceeded to have their supper right in front of me. The menu of dry stubble and scattered weeds looked pretty unappetising but they fed while I photographed for about twenty minutes before they went on their way totally unaware of my presence – or were they? Occasionally a hare would disappear from view behind a pile of straw but a slight squeaking noise from my chair had them peering over the top to see what was going on before continuing their meal. Next day I took a disc into town to have an A3 print made (my printer only does up to A4). On handing over my print the shop assistant having complimented me on my work asked if the rabbit was a family pet!



Award Winning Birds

- 1: Saddle-billed Stork with Crocodile
by Ann Miles FRPS
- 2: Waxwing
(*Bombycilla garrulus*)
by Kevin Elsby ARPS
- 3: Arctic Tern offering fish
by Dickie Duckett FRPS





Award Winning Fungus

- 1: Sulphur Polypore by John Berry ARPS
- 2: Turkey Tail Fungus by Jane Rees LRPS
- 3: Ascocoryne sarcoides by John Scotten ARPS
- 4: Fly Agaric in habitat by Gianpiero Ferrari

