



Chalkhill Blue pair

© Dawn Osborn FRPS

Not too many opportunities for getting out in the countryside this summer but at the end of July I ventured out to an isolated site not too far from home to photograph the Chalkhill Blue butterflies. The weather conditions were not ideal and although the light was good there was a strong breeze coming off the North Sea and everything was moving about much too much. It was necessary to use a high ISO to achieve a fast shutter speed but with good depth of field and a diffused background. Canon 5D MkIV, Sigma 180mm lens, f/13, 1/000 sec, ISO 3200, cable release, tripod, etc., buckets of luck!

Contents

- 2 News from the Programme Co-ordinator**
Anne Miles FRPS
- 3 Exhibitions & For Sale**
- 4 Macro Photography and the benefits of Topaz DeNoise**
by John Bulpitt FRPS
- 6 Locked down in West Cambridgeshire**
by Stan Saunders ARPS
- 7 My Lockdown Project**
by Richard Revels FRPS
- 8 Nature Group Website and Dropbox Downloads**
- 9 Nature Group Autumn Residential Weekend**
- 10 Nature Group Information**
Publication details.
Committee Members.

Welcome to Issue 10 of Nature Group eNews.

Sadly, due to Covid19 pandemic, James Foad has to report that the Autumn Residential Weekend which was to have been held in October has been cancelled by the venue. It is hoped that it will be possible to book the venue again for next year.

How has your Summer been? I spent much of mine doing garden chores when the weather was good and when it wasn't I tried to use the time to catch up on image processing. I must confess, that I didn't even come close to fulfilling this ambition.

The Nature Group Committee has been having monthly meetings via Zoom. Its a great idea to meet like this because for one thing there is

no driving involved and you can enjoy a glass of something if you choose. However, it can also be frustrating if you keep losing the signal. Frozen screens, slo-mo speech, sometimes no sound, its hard to follow what's going on. One thing that came over loud and clear is that the Nature Group is in desperate need of a Treasurer. Can you help? If so please contact either Duncan Locke or David O'Neil - details on the last page of this eNews.

Two members share their lock down projects with us in this issue and another has sent in a report about his experience with a new piece of software. Well worth a read.

Please consider contributing to eNews. All members are invited to contribute items of nature photography interest - field meeting reports; reviews of new software, cameras/lenses/etc.; natural history books and field guides; photography books and items of kit for sale.

Please share information with your fellow members through eNews. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dawn Osborn FRPS, eNews Editor

Dawn

News from the Programme Coordinator

Ann Miles FRPS

Although we were unable to run any field meetings between March and the end of July, we have not been idle and have hosted Zoom meetings covering 'Raw Processing' and 'Layers & Masks' (with particular reference to Nature Photography) by Dr Ian Wilson ARPS and a Session on 'Obtaining a Distinction in Natural History' with Mick Durham FRPS.

Videos were made of all the Zoom events:

1. **Raw Conversion for Nature Photographers.**
Dr Ian Wilson ARPS, 13th June 2020
[Raw Conversion for Nature Photographers](#)
2. **Raw Conversion Repeat Session** (different images).
Dr Ian Wilson ARPS, 27th June 2020
[Raw Conversion Repeat Session](#)
3. **Gaining a Distinction in Natural History,**
Mick Durham FRPS 18th July 2020
[Gaining a Distinction in Natural History](#)
4. **Layers and Masks,**
Dr Ian Wilson ARPS, 15th August 2020
[Layers & Masks](#)

At the end of July, we resumed field meetings with an outing to Sharpenhoe Clappers in Bedfordshire and, in August, Snettisham RSPB for the Wader Spectacular (thanks to Nick Bowman for organising this). There are accounts of these outings on the News page of the Nature Group website

Future Outings

We now have two more outings ready for booking:

Sunday 27th September
Paxton Pits, Cambridgeshire.
[Paxton Pits 27-09-20](#)

Wednesday 7th October
Piper's Hill and Fungi
[Piper's Hill 07-10-20](#)

We also have outings planned to Bradgate Park in Leicestershire and Epping Forest, Essex.

Future 'Zoom' Meetings

Chairman's Day
31st October 2020 via Zoom.

This will be an event not to miss! There will be an impressive line up of speakers (exact details of the programme are still being confirmed following the need to switch to using Zoom).

We are still hoping to re-arrange the Nature Distinction Advisory Day for Zoom participation.

Keep your eyes on the Nature Group Events for further details of all these proposed events.





As always, it would be great to have outings in all parts of the UK. The outings will be for a controlled number of members, to an area you know well or to more formal reserves; they can be whole or half day. You do not need to be an expert, just to have an interest in sharing photography with like-minded people. We do all the advertising and booking, so it really isn't very time-consuming.

Please let me know if you are interested in showing Members around one of your favourite spots. Obviously, while any restrictions remain, groups will be limited in number and people will be reminded about observing social distancing.

The Nature Group now has its own gallery web site and we would be very pleased to see more of your nature images there. Instructions for submitting work are on the site. See page 8 for details of the new site.

If you have questions then I would be pleased to answer them. Contact me at: annmiles70@gmail.com

Images:

Previous page, left - Burnett Moth by Jane Moore LRPS
right - Chalkhill Blue pair mating
by Andre Neves LRPS

Above: RPS NG visit to RSPB Snettisham

Dates for your diary

Entries Invited

Forthcoming National and International Exhibitions with Nature sections :*

Shrewsbury Open Photography Exhibition

Closes 4th October 2020

www.shropshire-photographic.org.uk/Exhibition/Index

Smethwick International Exhibition of Photography

Closes 5th November 2020

<https://www.smethwickinternational.co.uk/>

Members are advised to check details of entry requirements, rules and closing dates on Salon websites before preparing their entry.

For Sale

If you have items of photographic equipment that you no longer need or use, why not advertise them for sale in eNews?

The two items for sale in the last issue were sold within days of eNews release. It costs members nothing to advertise and the advert will be read by over 800 members of the Nature Group.

To advertise your items contact the Editor at:
naturegroup_enews_editor@btinternet.com

Macro photography and the benefits of Topaz DeNoise.

by John Bulpitt FRPS

My approach to photographing small insects has been transformed this summer! Until a few months ago my body of choice for macro work was a full-frame Canon 5D MkIII rather than my crop-sensor 7D MkII. I could shoot at ISO's up to 800 and deal with any noise issues in Neat Image or Nik Dfine. But small insects tend to hide in dark places and I often found that I couldn't achieve sufficient depth of field. Moreover, the problems were often exacerbated by the large crops required when photographing very small subjects. But since

buying Topaz DeNoise I have switched to my 7D with the benefits of a crop sensor and a faster motor drive. To date I have shot at ISOs up to 5000. The software has dealt with any noise issues and has also brought out a lot more detail.

I may use a 100-400 lens for dragonflies and larger butterflies, but for most insects I attach an Image-stabilised Canon 100 macro. In addition, an extension tube and a small flash gun set to give fill flash, are usually part of my set-up. The camera is normally set to AI servo/continuous autofocus because there is usually some movement, not least in my hands, and I fire short bursts on the motor drive.

The Verbascum Weevils (opposite) (3/4 mm long) were taken on the Tiffey trail, Wymondham Norfolk. The settings were ISO 1600, 1/250th @ f11. The crop is 18% of the original frame. Basic adjustments were done to the RAW file in Lightroom, but sharpening was switched off.

Image 1 has been converted straight from Lightroom

Image 2 has also been through DeNoise. No further work has been done so that you can see a direct comparison.

Knowing what I know now, I would have shot this at ISO 3200 allowing me to shoot at f16. I needed a relatively high shutter speed because the female continued feeding and so was moving constantly.

The Banchine wasp (see page 6) appeared, uninvited, on our dining room table. These parasitic wasps lay their eggs into the larvae of wood boring moths and this is why their ovipositor is so long. The settings were: 1/125th @ f/10, ISO 3200, Topaz DeNoise and minor tweaks in Photoshop and Nik Viveza.



Image 1



Image 2

The Dark Bush-cricket with Snail, taken in Ashwellthorpe Lower Wood, Norfolk, was shot at 1/125th @ f/20, ISO 5000. Apart from DeNoise, this image has been into PhotoShop and Viveza and is my finished image. The screen grab shows the settings I used in Topaz DN.

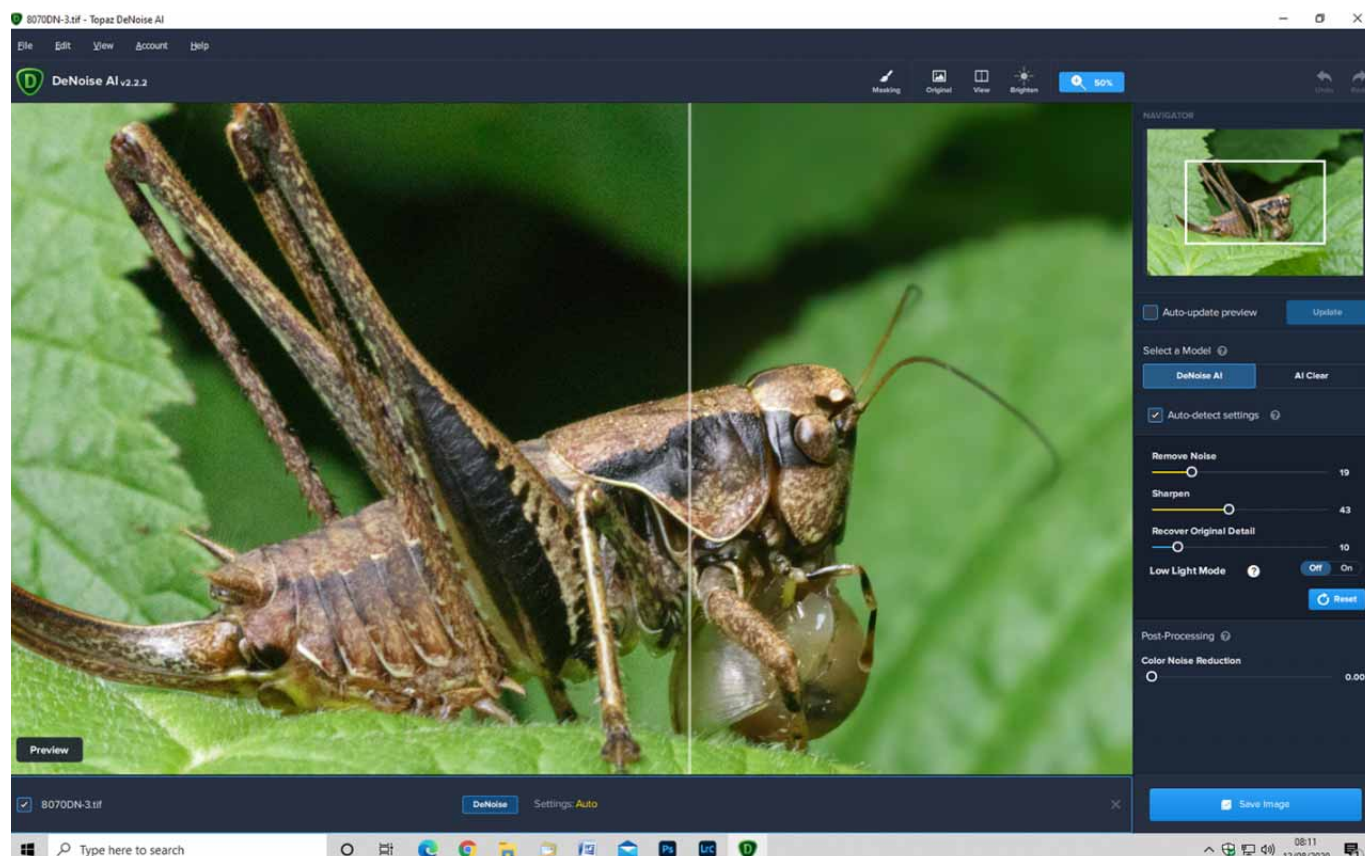
I use DeNoise AI rather than the cut-down version, AI clear. I choose the 'auto-detect' settings and rarely alter the 'Remove noise' and 'Sharpen' sliders. Auto-detect rarely suggests any 'Recover Original Detail' but I usually add 10% to guard against the final image looking too 'plasticky'. I prefer to use the split screen facility. Everything to the left of the vertical line is unprocessed and everything to the right has been processed.



I haven't used 'low light mode' or 'Colour Noise reduction'. They are probably very useful for indoor music events (remember those?) but probably not applicable to nature. However, having said that, my wife sometimes uses these sliders on her bird-in-flight shots taken with Olympus pro-capture.

I am not claiming any great expertise with this software, but thought it might be helpful to share my thoughts. In certain circumstances I understand that focus-stacking will overcome some of the basic issues with macro in low light, but not if the subject is moving, or likely to move, and where a tripod is likely to disturb the insect.

Topaz DeNoise can be downloaded as a free trial and at the moment costs around £60 to buy: one of life's bargains in my view.



Locked-down in West Cambridgeshire

by Stan Saunders ARPS

Images taken during lockdown begin with the Hawthorn in full flower, this is more often called the May after the month. Both images were photographed between 24th April and the 4th May along an old Byway near where I live in West Cambridgeshire. The track was my allowed daily exercise. Moving into June and we were allowed to venture a little further and in nearby Bedfordshire I found tall grasses growing beside a brook. The image shows pollen drifting away on the breeze. Growing in a nearby rough meadow I found masses of Oxeye Daisies to photograph. This was the start of my nature photography this year.



Garden Lockdown Project

by Richard Revels FRPS

In March, when 'LOCKDOWN' began, I decided to spend time in my garden - to get rid of the Ivy invading part of it. So with pickaxe, garden fork and spade, I dug over about 1/4 of my wildflower area and removed the invading Ivy tendrils.

Once that job was completed, I reseeded it with wild Cornfield flowers. Some of the perennial clumps of Knapweed, Scabious and Marjoram were dug and then reset, while other clumps were left growing in place.

The area needed a lot of watering during the drought, as the ground was so dry, but once established the plants have been growing well.

During mid-June to late July my wildflower area has been a blaze of colour attracting many passing insects and recently some seed eating birds, it also attracted some attention from my neighbours. So I am trying to persuade them to convert some of their sterile lawn area into a wild flower area.

All through June to mid July I have had 12 to 15 resident Ringlets and during mid-July they were joined by a similar number of Gatekeeper butterflies. Other insects have been looking in for nectar too. However Bees and Wasps have been in rather low numbers - a very worrying thing!

This just shows that a small area of a garden can attract a wide variety of species. If it's managed for wildlife it will improve the environment and can also look spectacular.



NG Galleries Website and Exhibition Show Downloads

by Ralph Snook ARPS, Exhibition Secretary/Webmaster.

The Nature Group now has two new facilities available for its members. We once again have our own website - this has been created for the benefit of our members due to the new RPS website being unable to provide a similar facility. The Nature Group Galleries website will contain Exhibitions, Distinctions and Member's images. We also now have a Dropbox account that will hold downloadable shows of accepted images from our Annual Exhibitions and other items of interest.

Galleries Website

The gallery can be reached at: www.nggalleries.net
The home page (opposite) briefly describes the content, with a rolling slideshow of selected images plus the menu that gives access to the available galleries.

Galleries are displayed as a rolling slideshow (see lower right) but it is possible to control the show yourself and information on this is provided in the help panel.

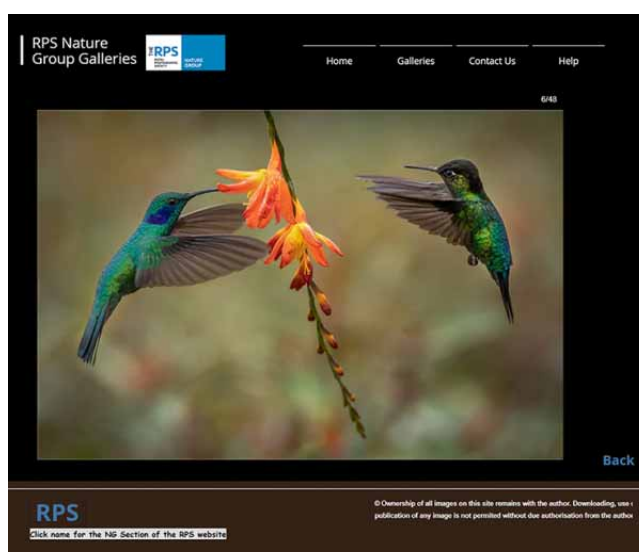
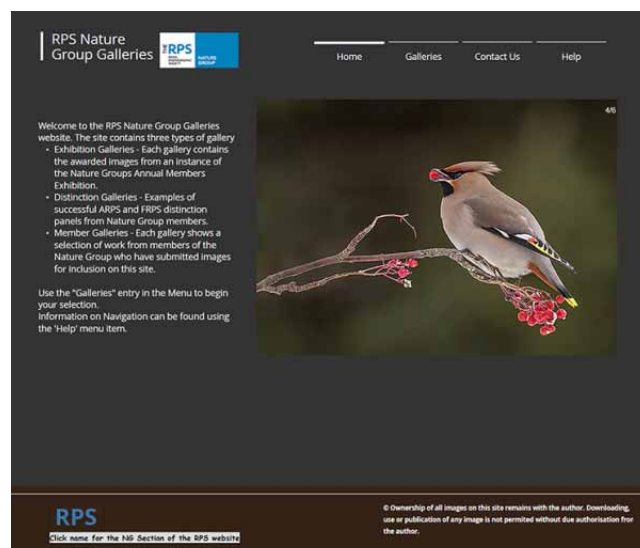
Members are invited to have their Associate or Fellowship Nature Distinctions panel added to the Distinctions Gallery. LRPS panels will be allowed if they consist solely of nature images. Distinctions panels should include an image of the panel's layout. Members may also have 12 of their nature images added to the Members' Gallery.

When displayed a gallery image will appear as shown opposite. If you wish to have 12 of your images, included please follow the instructions below:

- Image files should be named as follows: Image Title by Author.jpg eg 'Blackbird by John Smith ARPS.jpg'. The title is used to create the accreditation/copyright shown when hovering over the image, so it is very important that you follow this instruction.
- All images must be converted to sRGB colour and saved in jpg format. Don't worry about image size, this is adjusted when preparing and adding the gallery to the website.
- Please forward your images to the webmaster at natureweb@rps.org via wetransfer, or a similar application, to avoid issues with email size limits.

This website is a recent creation and it is not unlikely that there may be some modification to its presentation and structure in the future. Feedback from NG members is welcome and will be reviewed to determine if changes should or can be made.

Please make use of the site and help to widen its scope by submitting your own galleries for inclusion.



Dropbox Account

The dropbox account has been created for two reasons: Size limitations prevent us making these available via the RPS website and will now be available to all Nature Group members whereas previously they were only distributed to members who entered the exhibition.

PicturesToExe presentations have been created in both Windows and Mac versions and must be downloaded to your own computer in order to run them. Information on downloading is provided on the Dropbox content page. The 2020 Exhibition is available now and previous years will be added as time allows. Access to the Dropbox account is available to Nature Group Members by requesting the link by email from the webmaster:: natureweb@rps.org

RPS Nature Group Autumn Residential Weekend

Foxlease, New Forest.

Friday 16th - Monday 19th October 2020

Cancelled



2020 Autumn Residential Weekend

**Foxlease Girl Guiding Activities Centre,
Lyndhurst, Hampshire.**

James Foad LRPS, organiser of this event, is sorry to announce that due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, Foxlease Girl Guiding Centre are unable to reopen to groups in the foreseeable future and have therefore cancelled our planned Autumn 2020 Residential Weekend.

James will be contacting all participants individually.

Publication information

Nature Group eNews is published by the RPS
Nature Group three times a year.
Copy and publication dates are as follows:

Late Winter	Copy deadline mid January Published early March..
Late Spring	Copy deadline mid May Published early June.
Late Summer	Copy deadline end August Published late September.

All contributions should be submitted to the Editor at: naturegroup_eneews_editor@btinternet.com. Any item of interest to nature photographers is welcomed, including reviews on equipment and relevant books. Copy should be submitted as .txt or .doc files by email. Please do not send hand written copy.

Digitally captured photographic images should be supplied as flattened 8bit sRGB tif or jpg files, 6" x 4" at 300 pixels per inch. Please do not email larger images.

No payment will be made for material used. Submission of images assumes permission is given for their use in eNews. Authors should hold the copyright for any images submitted for use in eNews.

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

Distribution:

eNews is available to members as a download from the Nature Group Members section of the RPS website. An RPS Bulletin advising members of its availability will be emailed to Members using addresses supplied by them to the RPS Membership Department in Bristol. Please update them if you change your email address.

Copyright:

- © All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright holder
- © Photographs and articles - individual contributors.

All other material the Nature Group of the Royal Photographic Society.

Design & layout

by Dawn Osborn FRPS

Nature Group Committee

Officers:

Chairman: Thomas Hanahoe FRPS
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire
Email: thomhanahoe@gmail.com

Hon. Secretary: Duncan Locke LRPS
Kempsey, Worcester.
E-mail: duncan.locke@btinternet.com

Hon. Treasurer: *
vacant

Committee Members:

Vice Chairman: David O'Neill LRPS
Reading, Berkshire,
Email: david.oneill_nh@outlook.com

Immediate Past Chairman: Kevin Elsby FRPS
Aylsham, Norfolk,
Email: wildlife@greenbee.net

Editor of The Iris: Gerald Griffin ARPS
Penkridge, Staffordshire.
E-mail: iris_editor@griff45.com

eNewsletter Editor: Dawn Osborn FRPS
Dereham, Norfolk.
Email: naturegroup_eneews_editor@btinternet.com

Exhibition Secretary: Ralph Snook ARPS
Bristol
E-mail: rpsngexsec@btinternet.com

NG Rep to SIG Committee: David O'Neill LRPS
Reading, Berkshire,
Email: david.oneill_nh@outlook.com

Programme Co-ordinator: Ann Miles FRPS
Toft, Cambridgeshire,
Email: annmiles70@gmail.com

Webmaster: Ralph Snook ARPS
Bristol
E-mail: rpsngexsec@btinternet.com

Julia Andrew LRPS
Bromley, London
Email: andrew.julia@gmail.com

James Foad LRPS
Ramsgate, Kent
email: jamesfoadlrps@inbox.com

Stan Saunders ARPS
Sandy, SG19 3JF
stan.saunders2@btopenworld.com

Julia Wainwright ARPS
Pinner, Middlesex
Email: julia@julasimagesuk.com

Ex officio Committee members:

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

* Members please note:

David O'Neill is currently acting as Nature Group Hon.Treasurer. He cannot continue in this role beyond the 2021 AGM. If you have the necessary experience, please help the Nature Group by volunteering for this very important role. Please contact David O'Neill for further information.
Email: david.oneill_nh@outlook.com

Nature Group Exhibitions:

CDs/DVDs of Nature Group Exhibitions are available for purchase by camera clubs/photographic societies for use in their programme. Please contact the Exhibition Secretary,
E-mail: rpsngexsec@btinternet.com

