



THE IRIS

MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 92
Summer 2005





▲ Wood Sandpiper



▼ Male African Paradise Bee-eater at nest

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 (up to 1800 words) may be emailed or sent on disc as .txt or .doc files, or printed using double line spacing on one side of the paper only.

Photographic images may be supplied as digital files on CD providing that they are at least 2555 x 1830 pixels in size and accompanied by a printed copy 6" x 4" or larger for colour matching purposes. Original transparencies and A4 glossy prints are also acceptable.

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 are solely those of the contributor.

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by Dawn Osborn ARPS

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IBC Carmine Bee-eater
Black Crake with grass leaf for chick
by Ludi Lochner

Back Common Spotted Orchid at Bonsall Moor -
Dawn Osborn ARPS

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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.

Exhibition/Archive Slides

To book the current or next Travelling Exhibition, contact: Peter Jones ARPS, details above.

To book previous years Exhibition Slides contact:

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Field Meeting Reports

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

Editorial

Sitting in front of my PC on a cold wet July afternoon, I can't help but wonder two things - how can it be July already and when will summer start? If like me, you work full-time and only have weekends plus vacation time to practice your art, you might be asking yourself the same questions.

Fortunately, not all of our field meetings are held on weekends - I recently attended one at Bonsall Moor in Derbyshire - you can read about this and other field meetings in this issue. If you feel like travelling a little further afield, Ludi Lochner has some excellent tips and advice for planning your own visit to Kruger National Park in South Africa. While Robert Hawkesworth tells in his own inimitable style of the joys (and tribulations) he has experienced on his visits to camera clubs (and other societies).

Whether or not you have entered the 'digital age' and now have a digital SLR, or are still using slide film and making prints via a scanner or a darkroom, haven't you ever wondered what else you can do with all the images you take? Well apart from entering them in your local camera club monthly competitions - where, lets face it, the chances of the 'judge' being knowledgeable about natural history are about as rare as hen's teeth - you could enter them in the Nature Group's own Annual Exhibition, which invites not one but three nature photographers as its selectors. You can see the Award Winning entries plus a list of acceptances in this issue. The entry form for next years exhibition will be with the next Iris and will also be available to download from our new website before the end of the year.

Another suggestion for using your images would be to see them reproduced in your own group publication, *The Iris*. Please, please, please share your photographic experiences with your fellow members through these pages. I desperately need articles with images, to fill the next two or three issues. I know you are a well travelled lot, so get your pens out and write about it.



From the chair

Sitting here on a cold, grey, mid-summer's afternoon, watching the rain drops trickle down the window pane, I can't help but wonder at the wisdom of pursuing an outdoor interest when here I am, stuck indoors yet again! Once again, Spring and early Summer in Norfolk have been less than conducive to good Natural History photography. I manage to take thousands of images every year on two fabulous overseas photo-shoots and then struggle to get anything worthwhile back at home - I sometimes find myself wondering why on earth I bother? Well, with more than a little pride at following Dad and Dawn onto the NG committee and the Chair, I can answer my doubts in about 2 seconds flat.

To put it simply, I do it because I love it! I enjoy being out and about, searching for new subject material and, even when the photography doesn't quite work out, Nature offers a fascinating voyage of discovery if we just take the time to look. When everything comes together and things work, it is simply wonderful! I'm still thrilled by quality images and even more amazed when I realise that on occasion they're actually mine (all down to the wonders of modern technology though!!).

I recently enjoyed a lovely day at Pensthorpe with good friends and fellow nature group members, Kevin and Margery. Over the years, I've made some great friends through photography. I'm also fortunate to make regular visits to some of the most wonderful places in the World for wildlife photography - on a day to day basis this gives me an excellent excuse to talk to 'our Dawn'. I often 'bump into' some of the nicest people in some of the nicest places. It really is quite amazing who you can meet up with on remote airstrips thousands of miles from home or even on a little marsh just down the road!

Above and beyond the photography, one thing shines out above all - the companionship of friends. I'm sure that over the years we've all made valuable friendships through our common interests, meeting up with one another as often as possible. Nature photography certainly isn't a spectator sport but the social aspects are as important to us as they are to anyone else and are really what this group is all about. This is your group and the committee can only be

effective with your support. So, in this, my first 'From the Chair' may I appeal to you all to get actively involved wherever and whenever you can; send an article and images for *The Iris*; organise or support a field meeting; enter your images in our Annual Exhibition; come along to the AGM and have your say in the running of the group. We'd love to have you along and invite you all to join in with the group's activities.

On the subject of excellent ideas, one of our most progressive for years has just come to fruition with the introduction of our own web-site. Apart from advice where needed, this project was wholly undertaken and completed by Nick Jarvis, for which we owe him a huge 'thank you'. Nick has put a great deal of time and effort into creating 'our' site. I deliberately place the emphasis on 'our' because it is exactly that. Although in its infancy, with time and your support, it will evolve into an excellent showcase for quality NH photo imaging and an effective communication tool for the group, enabling members to keep in touch and be more involved. Please support us in helping to make this site one of the finest on the net. All members with Internet access will be able to enter the site and once signed on, will be able to upload images, articles and general NH information for the benefit of the group as well as other nature photographers who hopefully will be lured into joining us. Please place up to a maximum of 50 of your best images onto the Gallery site, divided into up to four separate gallery folders/titles. Please change your gallery pages regularly (at least bi-annually) in order to keep the site looking fresh and active. It would be marvellous to see a vibrant set of members images on our site for all to view. Quality photography doesn't need words - the pictures speak for themselves!

Well, its now time to close - the Sun must be out by now and I should crack on with this years local project - photographing Gulls in flight. Thank goodness for Wendy (my wife) and an endless supply of chips!!

Until next time, take care and have a wonderful Summer.

David

Minutes of the RPS Nature Group AGM 2005

The 29th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Photographic Society Nature Group was held at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, on Saturday 29th April 2005 at 2pm. It was chaired by Dawn Osborn and attended by 36 members.

Apologies

These were received from Barbara Hawkesworth, Robert Hawkesworth, Trevor Hyman, Ron Price, Kay Reeve, Colin Smith, Tony Wharton and Martin Withers.

Minutes of the 2004 AGM

The minutes of the 2004 AGM printed in Issue 89 of the Iris were approved and signed by Dawn Osborn as a correct record of what then took place.

Matters Arising

There were none.

Retiring Chairman's Report

I begin with an apology for my absence today; the dates of a long planned trip to the Gargano in Italy in search of orchids and other flowers were changed after the date for the AGM was set and so I crave your understanding.

During the last year we have held a number of successful field meetings in many parts of the country I am very grateful to those members who give of their time and energies in order to lead them. Those who attend always enjoy them and I urge those of you who have never led one to "have a go". It really is worth while and so very much appreciated. I also held a Chairman's Day here at Smethwick with splendid speakers and a first rate lunch provided by Judith Parry and her helpers.

The two years of my Chairmanship have been a wonderful experience for me, made so largely because of the tremendous support that I received from all the membership and especially those who worked closely with me, the Committee. I have personally thanked them all for their efforts and I similarly thank you all for putting up with me. It is now time to hand over the baton so to speak and I am confident that you will continue to support my successor.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Treasurer's Report for Period 1st April - 31st December 2004

General Comments

In August, RPS Bath decided to change the accounting year end from 31st March to the previous 31st December. This means that the Financial returns I have to make cover a 9 month period only this year, making direct comparisons with the previous year a little difficult. Next year's accounts will cover the full calendar (& Financial) year! As previously, I have tried to use a broad-brush approach and to highlight points of special interest in this report. This matter is especially important this year as, owing to another engagement, I am unable to be present at the AGM. My sincere thanks go to John Jones who is presenting the report on my behalf.

Subscriptions

The situation over the Membership database at Bath has, to date, shown NO sign of improving. The information I get each month (who has paid subscriptions - presented in random order and with no membership numbers!) rarely agrees with that the Secretary gives me as to the actual membership count. The Subscription Income shown in the Balance Sheet does NOT include that received by Bath in December 2004 (paid to NG in Jan. '05) NOR that received at the beginning of '04 for Jan. and Feb. or the payment direct from Bath for 'Free Life Members' (these last 3 items were included in last year's accounts). Making allowance for the above, a rough estimate shows that the Nature Group might have lost about 40 members since last year.

Lectures & Workshops

Only one event occurred during the period - The Chairman's Day on 13th November. At the time these Accounts were being prepared, no claims had been received for the speakers' expenses (which will be included in next year's figures). This fact, together with lower than estimated lunch costs, resulted in an apparent large overall profit being made on the event. The Expenditure figures include a £100 confirmation deposit for the forthcoming Nature Group Week-end in Dorset.

The Iris

Only 2 editions of The Iris were published during the 9-month period. This fact, together with lower postage costs (bulk rates offered by the printers), explains why the expenditure was lower than for (the whole of) last year.

Annual Exhibition

Most of the income (entry fees and return postage) for the exhibition comes during the first 2 months of the calendar year (i.e. in the last F/Y), while the majority of the Expenditure (return postage, medals and slide dupes) occurs during April and May (i.e. in the current Accounting period). The large majority of the Income shown in the Balance Sheet relates to hire fees paid by societies to have the Travelling Exhibition (a real bargain at £15!)

Sundry Income

This includes VAT refunds and also that resulting from the sale of the 'A' Guidance Interactive CDs (£210) - these are still selling well (now 134 total). Since John Myring's departure I have taken over the CD sales arrangements, though he still organises their production.

General Administration

Includes all running costs of the Nature Group (general postage, telephone, stationery and travel to committee meetings plus VAT expenditure). These costs go approximately pro rata with time. The Expenditure this year includes the cost of a scoring device for use at the Annual Exhibition and elsewhere - as this is a capital item the item was charged to the General Admin. line.

Overall Financial Situation

Although the Balance Sheet shows a deficit of £1,451 over the period this is in line with previous years at the end of December. Our major source of Income (Subscriptions) occurs in January/February of a New Year. Our current CashBook balance of £17,319.52 compares very favourably with last year's £17,142.31 at 31st December 2003.

My report on the security of our funds was published in the Winter edition of The IRIS.

Trevor Hyman LRPS
Hon. Treasurer
March 2005

Secretary's Report

A new database has been installed at Bath and I wait for the monthly lists to come with a mixture of expectation and dread.

The actual layout is clearer but the mistakes are as abundant as ever. In February 23 current members had been omitted from the list and by the time they had been reinstated the latest copy of The Iris had gone out and I had to send copies to those who had not received them - this took a long time to do. Each month I am assured that it will be better next time but I'm still waiting.

According to the March list we have 616 members which is well down on last year at this time. New members packs continue to be sent out and letters to those who have lapsed. The responses have been interesting and indicate that the majority are leaving because they are dissatisfied with the management of the RPS and have no quarrel with the Nature Group.

Election of Officers and Committee 2005/7

The following Officers have been duly nominated, proposed and seconded:

Chairman	David Osborn FRPS
Vice-chairman	Geoff Trinder ARPS
Treasurer	Trevor Hyman LRPS
Secretary	Margaret Johnson LRPS
RPS Advisory Board Rep	Nick Jarvis ARPS
Committee Members:	John Bebbington FRPS
	John Jones ARPS
	Patricia Seekings ARPS
	Chris Wood LRPS

Ex-Officio members:

Imm. past chairman	Robert Hawkesworth FRPS
Editor of The Iris	Dawn Osborn ARPS
Exhibition Secretary	Peter Jones ARPS
Chairman of the A & F	
Nature Distinctions Panel	Colin Smith FRPS

As you are all aware we were to have held a postal ballot, however since the number of nominations equalled the number of vacancies, then according to Article 6.5 of our Regulations no election was necessary. The Chairmanship was handed over to David Osborn.

David Osborn thanked Richard Revels FRPS for the excellent slide presentation we had seen in the morning. He thanked Dawn Osborn for chairing the first part of the meeting in Robert's

absence. He thanked Robert Hawkesworth for all the hard work that he had done as Chairman and as a member of the committee.

David Osborn said that during his time as Chairman he hoped to move the group forward. We were already doing that with the new website that Nick Jarvis had just set up for us.

He hoped that we would be able to include a digital section in next year's annual competition.

2005 Convention

This will take place on the 12th – 14th August at Brooksby College Leicestershire and should be a stimulating weekend with excellent speakers and good company.

AOB

Patricia Seekings thanked Peter Jones and Sue Wilson for all the work they do for the Annual Exhibition.

It was felt that some younger members were needed in the group and this would be discussed in committee.

Date and Venue for the 30th AGM 2006

This would be Saturday 22nd April 2006 at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury at 2.00pm.

The meeting was declared closed at 2.50 pm.

Nature Group Convention 2005

12th - 14th August 2005

Brooksby College, Leicestershire.

Programme includes A & F Advisory sessions, visits to local nature reserves, lectures from key speakers John Bebbington FRPS, Andy Callow and Malcolm Hey FRPS plus delegates' lecturettes.

Fully inclusive weekend* £120 with full board from Dinner Friday evening to Sunday lunch including Silver Service Dinner on Saturday evening. Saturday only attendance also available.

For more information contact Martin Withers FRPS, Telephone: - 0116 229 6080 or complete the booking form below.

Royal Photographic Society Nature Group Convention Brooksby College, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, August 12th - 14th 2005

Booking Form

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

I will be accompanied by: _____

☐ Special requirements

(i.e. vegetarian meals, ground floor room etc.) _____

☐ Please tick box if you require work to be assessed for Distinctions.

I enclose a deposit of £20 per person. I understand that the balance of £100 (incl VAT) will be due one month prior to the event.

Signed _____

Date _____

Cheques should be made payable to RPS Nature Group and forwarded with this booking form to:
Martin Withers FRPS 93 Cross Lane, Mountsorrel, Lough borough, Leics. LE12 78X

The Nature Group of The Royal Photographic Society

Income and Expenditure Accounts for 1st April 2004 to 31st December 2004

Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bath

Year 03/04		Year 2004
Income		(9 months only)
6,784.45	Subscriptions	3,027.81
4,527.00	Lectures & Workshops	589.00
926.96	Annual Exhibition	317.00
15,000.94	Transfers (from CAF Gold)	
512.95	Interest received (to Cash Book)	541.99
863.80	Sundry Income	520.90
<u>28,616.10</u>	sub totals	<u>4,996.70</u>
Expenditure		
6,148.44	The Iris incl. postage	3,856.26
4,709.85	Lectures & Workshops	427.50
785.82	Annual Exhibition	613.50
1,762.44	General Administration	1,550.55
<u>13,406.55</u>	sub totals	<u>6,447.81</u>
<u>15,209.55</u>	Income minus Expenditure	<u>-1,451.11</u>

CAF Gold Account

Receipts		
121.36	Interest	ACCOUNT
-15,000.94	Transfer to CashBook	CLOSED
<u>-14,879.58</u>	Excess of Withdrawals over Receipts	03/04 F/Y

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2004

Nature Group Cash Book

Balance brought forward from 2003/4	18,728.72
Income minus Expenditure	-1,451.11
Debit from 2003/4	-8.00
Uncleared cheque 2004	49.91
Total	17,319.52
Total Carried Forward To Financial Year 2005	17,319.52



J T Hyman (Hon Treasurer)

Independent Examiner's Report to the Members

The statements of account for the period ended 31st December 2004 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.



C S Wilkinson Chartered Accountants
4th March 2005

The Kruger National Park - a nature photographer's dream

by Ludi Lochner

The Kruger National Park, South Africa, is one of the ten largest nature reserves in the world. It enjoys one of the highest specie-counts in terms of mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and plants. It has something for everyone and, in particular, provides a rich source of subjects for the nature photographer. In short, I can thoroughly recommend it.

A brief history

The Game Reserve, as it is fondly referred to in South Africa, is formed on a foundation of four main geological strata, the oldest of which goes back some 3,500 million years. As the continents drifted apart, the eastern seaboard of Southern Africa dipped thereby exposing all four strata along an east-west traverse of only fifty miles. Each of these strata has its own distinctive fauna and flora. It is this feature which makes the Game Reserve such a gem.

President Paul Kruger, the dour Calvinist minister-turned-president of the Transvaal Republic, is credited with the drive and determination to proclaim the area between the Sabie and Crocodile Rivers as a nature reserve. He had the vision to realise that if nothing was done to stop the slaughter of wild animals in the area, there would be no wildlife left for succeeding generations to enjoy. After battling for nine years, he managed to get the necessary legislation passed in 1898, a year before the start of the second Anglo-Boer War.

Fortunately, the Game Reserve was re-proclaimed on the secession of hostilities and Lt-Col. James Stevenson-Hamilton was appointed first Warden with instructions to manage a piece of land, the approximate size of the Netherlands, as a game reserve. Further additions were made until today the Kruger National Park measures some 275 miles in a north/south direction and 50 miles approximately in an east-west direction – an area the size of Wales.

In 2002 the Governments of South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe entered into an agreement whereby the adjoining Kruger, Limpopo and Gonarezhou National Parks were formally merged to create the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Game Reserve, increasing the size of the Game Reserve by approximately fifty per cent. Although access to Gonarezhou is limited and there is presently no tourist activity in Limpopo, that will change with time.

Planning your holiday

Three airlines offer a number of daily, overnight flights from Heathrow to Johannesburg. With a time difference of only one or two hours, depending on the time of the year, little if any jet lag is experienced.

If nature photography is an objective for visiting the Game Reserve, then don't book in on an organised tour. If you do, you may find yourself packed into a 'safari' vehicle with eight or more co-passengers or, worse still, in an air-conditioned coach with dirty windows that do not open. Inevitably, you will be sitting on the wrong side of the vehicle when a lifetime photographic opportunity occurs. Tour operators also tend to cater for the majority. You will be rushed through the Game Reserve, with short stops to view the 'big 5', which is what today's traveller wants.

A vehicle of your own is a much better proposition. The major car hire firms operate from Johannesburg International Airport. Choose a car that is higher than the normal saloon so that your viewing position is above the height of the tall grass found in the Game Reserve. Select a petrol-driven vehicle because it is quieter than a diesel engine, a major consideration when approaching shy animals. I find an Opel Zafira admirable for the purpose but Toyota Condors are also very popular. Both vehicles have the added advantage that a front seat passenger can move relatively easily into a back seat should this be necessary for a shot on the other side of the vehicle.

It is a comfortable six-hour run, on good tarred roads, from Johannesburg International Airport to one of a number of gates that serve the southern part of the Game Reserve. My preference is to enter through Malelane Gate because this route passes through lovely countryside, with giant outcrops of granite, before the Game Reserve is entered. On the other hand, the road to the gates on the south-western side of the Game Reserve pass through depressed areas that, I feel, are best avoided for safety reasons. The crime rate in South Africa is high though mainly confined to urban or semi-urban areas. You should be perfectly safe in the Game Reserve. Outside the Game Reserve, adopting a policy of not stopping unless it is at a major service station or a town centre, should ensure you avoid any problems.

You can purchase good quality fresh fruit and vegetables from Hall's road side stall on the Johannesburg side of Nelspruit but remember that the Game Reserve gates close at sunset. Therefore don't linger too long on the way.

▼ Bushbuck lamb

There is no unsuitable time to visit the Game Reserve. It is in a summer rainfall area and, from about the end of November to the end of March, the countryside can be expected to be verdant. That reduces visibility – a lion can disappear into the grass within five yards of the road verge. The rain comes mostly in the form of thunderstorms that build up in the afternoon and deposit their life-giving contents during the late afternoon or evening. You would indeed be most unlucky if you were to experience a lengthy period of rain at any time of the year. It is usually very hot during the summer months - temperatures often reaching into the forties. However, your car and accommodation are likely to be air-conditioned. The main advantage of the summer months is the presence of the migrants – storks (8 species), rollers (5 species), bee-eaters (6 species), cuckoos (11 species) and many other exciting birds. There are also far fewer visitors in the hot summer months and disturbance to photographers is therefore less likely during those months.

The flowering season is usually November to January with some species through to March. Most game drop their lambs during December.





Sunrise over the Lower Sabi River

In the winter months it can be chilly at night but during the day the temperatures are likely to be in the twenties. Animals are far more visible during these dry months and are usually concentrated around sources of water. This is also the most popular time for visiting the Game Reserve.

Avoid school holidays when the Game Reserve is generally full to capacity.

If time is a limitation, then consider a circular tour of the southern part of the Game Reserve. There are five main 'camps' in the south. You should think in terms of a visit of no less than a week, giving you time to acclimatise and, more importantly, time to build up your skill at 'seeing' animals in the bush. I find that three nights is the minimum for a camp. That allows time to explore the surrounding countryside in addition to travelling between camps. Skukuza, the 'capital' of the Game Reserve, would be my first choice with Pretoriuskop and Crocodile Bridge the second and third choices. Each of the three camps has something different to offer. Plan on travelling no more than 75 and, preferably, not more than 50 kilometres per day.

If you are lucky enough to be able to spend more time in the Game Reserve, then think in terms of a south-north trip starting at Malelane and ending at Punda Maria. For that, you will need three weeks. Punda Maria and Satara are famous for their birdlife while the Limpopo Valley in the north adds a fifth topographic

dimension to the Game Reserve. North of Skukuza, explore the eastern and western sides of the Game Reserve – the central areas, covered in Mopani, generally have less to offer.

Warning: The Game Reserve is in a malaria area.

Particularly in the north, a very dangerous form of malaria is encountered and anti-malaria prophylactics must be taken. Both Larium and Malarone are currently recommended, the latter generally being regarded as having less side effects. You

must consult a medical advisor before you enter the Game Reserve. It is advisable to purchase the tablets in the UK rather than trying to find a doctor in South Africa who is willing to issue the necessary prescription to you.



Woodland Kingfisher

Accommodation, etc.

Accommodation is mostly in round thatched 'chalets' designed in the local idiom. An en-suite bathroom with bedding and towels, barbeque facilities, cutlery and crockery are included. We usually book standard accommodation which is around £40.00 per couple per night. You should confirm that the chalet includes cooking facilities and air conditioning and seriously consider upgrading to luxury accommodation if it does not. In addition,

there is also a daily rate. For non-South African residents it is approximately £12 pp per day. Booking is through the National Parks Board, Pretoria. Tel: +27 12 4289111

All camps have a shop selling basic food-stuffs and other necessities and except for Crocodile Bridge, all camps have a restaurant that provides a good basic lunch for about £7.50 and dinner for £10.00. My wife and I prefer to prepare our own salads for lunch and have a barbeque in the evening. On occasions when we go on a night drive, we treat ourselves to dinner in the restaurant.

Equipment

If your interest is primarily in fauna, then I believe the most useful lens for the Game Reserve is a 100-400mm zoom with a matching 1.4 extender. This gives you an effective focal range of 100 to 560 mm which is excellent for game and just manageable for small birds. If your interest includes birds, then the lens must be auto-focussing and should, preferably, include an image stabilising function. If, however, your interest is flora and insects, then a macro lens is important. For insects, I prefer a long focal length, i.e. 180mm. But remember, except when inside the camp and a few 'viewing' points, for safety reasons you will not be allowed out of your car. The lions are not fed and a tourist now and then does reduce the risks involved in pulling down a large and dangerous buffalo. In practice, therefore, a macro lens will have limited use. You will probably want to include a standard lens for shooting landscapes and camp scenes. If you are lucky enough to be able to justify the cost, my



Typical Kruger Park accommodation - Letaba Camp

next choice would be a 400mm f2.8 lens with an image stabilising facility. I use mine in conjunction with a matched 1.4 or 2x extender, often in tandem with a 12.5mm spacer ring between the two extenders. This combination gives me a focal length of 1120mm and a maximum aperture of f8. Although there is no automatic focussing and image stabilisation at this focal length, the Canon EOS 1v has a green light which displays in the view finder, in the manual focussing mode, when focus is achieved. This facility is invaluable when rapid and accurate focussing is required at this extreme focal length. There is surprisingly little loss of definition.

Wild animals and birds are naturally shy and are quick to seek cover when a large vehicle, with its air-conditioning roaring, draws up within their comfort zone. I therefore fit the 400 mm zoom lens with a 1.4 extender to one camera body and the 400mm fixed focal length with the 2.0 extender to the other camera. One camera is therefore always set up for animals and the other for birds. This allows me to be ready to shoot immediately when a photo opportunity arises. Having two loaded cameras also makes it possible to swap bodies quickly should one run out of film at a crucial moment. However, this ability to swap camera bodies requires that both cameras are loaded with the same film. Roll on the day when I can use digital and have the ability to change the ISO rating according to the needs of the image! Of course the second body also provides a back-up should I lose the use of one camera, an unthinkable risk on what may be a one-off holiday.



Young male Waterbuck

In my opinion, a bean bag is more satisfactory than a window clamp. Window clamps allow unacceptable movement and can be cumbersome to adjust, particularly with a rapidly changing subject. I prefer an H-shape bean bag which I fill with rice - one of the cheapest cereals available and one which will be welcomed by many when the bag is emptied at the end of the trip. There is little use for a tripod in the Game Reserve because you will either be inside a camp or inside your car. In my experience a monopod and shoulder support are more useful.

The next on my priority list is a powerful flash. I have a Canon 550 EX to which I fit a flash extender that confines the beam of light when using a telephoto lens. The flash may be useful on a night drive but, particularly in the summer months when the South African sunlight can be very sharp from very early in the morning, the flash is used to remove/reduce the depth of the shadows. I set it at 2/3 of a stop less than the correct fill-in exposure, leaving some shadow to give shape to the subject.

I never embark on any serious photographic session without my photographers' waistcoat. The label bears the legend 'Travel Authentic Pro Cam-Fis Natural Adventure'. Make what you like of that! It was given to me by my niece by way of thanks for photographing her wedding. I have provided the details of the label because I can thoroughly recommend the waistcoat. It contains the best and most extensive selection of pockets I have ever come across in such a garment. Into the pockets go exposed and unexposed film, filters incl a polarising filter, a small Maglite torch for use on night drives, a note book with attached pencil, string for tying back foliage, a gadget for determining the approximate positions of sunrise and sunset at any time of the year and much else.

As regards film, I have generally used Fuji Velvia 50 ISO rated at 100 ISO but have come to the conclusion that this film has too much contrast for the harsh lighting conditions encountered in Africa. On my last trip, earlier this year, I changed to Fuji Provia 100 ISO which I rated at 100 ISO. The results appear to have less contrast than Velvia and I will therefore continue to use Provia 100 for the foreseeable future, rating it at 100 ISO. It is certainly fast enough for South African daylight conditions. Take lots of film! You cannot purchase colour slide film in the Game Reserve. For a trip of four weeks in the Southern African game reserves, although I take 100 rolls of film with me, it is never enough!

Lastly, I have a Lowepro Photo Trekker into which I can fit all my equipment and film needs for a day's photography.

Good maps are generally for sale at the entrance gates to the Game Reserve and at camp shops. These usually provide good illustrations of most, in not all, the mammals found in the reserve. Although the maps also illustrate the more common birds, more serious birdwatchers would prefer Robert's 'Birds of Southern Africa' which is regarded as the standard work, or Sasol Birds of Southern Africa which is also well regarded. Both books can usually be purchased at the larger camps such as Skukuza.

Editor: more of Ludi's images on inside front and back cover. Part 2 continues in the winter issue.



Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2005



**Left:
Gold Medal Print**

**Tutsan
Dawn Osborn ARPS**

**Below:
Gold Medal Slide**

**Ice Sculpture
Gordon Follows FRPS**



Bronze Medal Prints

Print section

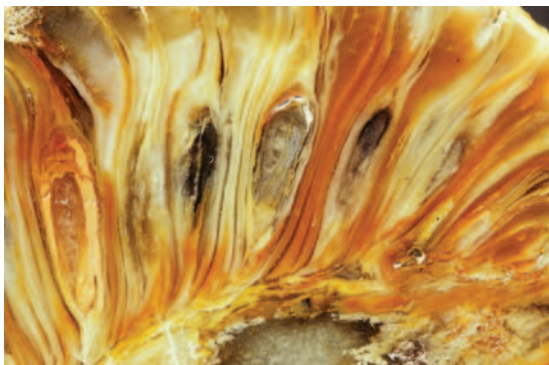


Top left:
Puffin in flight
Richard Revels FRPS

Middle left
Yellow Baboon
Michael Huggan ARPS

Bottom left
Section through silicified jurassic pine
cone *Arouria mirabilis*
John Jones ARPS

Bottom right
Bee Orchid
Roy Hodgkiss ARPS



Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2005

Print Acceptances

Mark Adams LRPS	Reed Warbler	
	Tree Pipit	
Mary Allen LRPS	Mute Swans, Abbotsbury	
	Wild Lupins, Geiranger	
Peter Basterfield ARPS	Harvest Mouse	
	Golden Mantled Ground Squirrel	
	Stellars Jay	
	Black-chinned Hummingbird	
John Berry ARPS	Little Owl	
	Common Blue on Sea Holly	
	Green Carpet Moth	C
	White-faced Darter	
	Green-winged Orchid	
	Slimy Beech Caps	Kay Reeve Award
Jayne Britton LRPS	Caracal Lynx	
	Snow Leopard	
	Snow Leopard Cub	
John Bulpitt FRPS	Jay with Acorn	
	Puffin	
Gill Cardy ARPS	Red Deer Stag in winter	
Sandy Cleland FRPS	Curlew	
	Whooper Swans	
	Migration	
Bert Crawshaw ARPS	Suricates Erdmannchen	
John Cucksey	Brown Pelican, Galapagos	
Kenneth Day ARPS	Male Southern Elephant Seal	
	Shore Crab	HC
	Black-browed Albatross	
	Cobb's Wren	
	King Penguin with chick	
	Striated Caracara	
Dickie Duckett ARPS	Imperial Shag in flight	
	Robin singing	
	Waxwings on twig	
	Magellanic Snipe	
John Fairbank ARPS	Black-veined White	
	Century Plant, Cuba	
Gordon Follows ARPS	Osprey on stump	
	Green Heron fishing	
	Grey Seal pup	
	Grand Prismatic Spring	
Elizabeth Goodchild ARPS	Big Horn Ram digging for food	
	Coyote	
	African Elephant Loxodonta Africana	C
Brian Hatson	Brown Pelican	
	Willow Grouse displaying	
	Common Loon	C
	Bob Cat	
Roy Hodgkiss ARPS	Little Grebe	
	Otter	
	Broad-bodied Chaser	C
	Bee Orchid	Bronze Medal

Selectors
Awards -
Print Section

Kay Reeve Award
Slimy Beech Caps
John Berry ARPS



Patricia Seekings Award
Caloplaca thallincola
John Jones ARPS

Kay Thompson Award
Pholiota adiposa
David Osborn FRPS



George Hodlin LRPS	Tiger Lily	
Michael Huggan ARPS	Great Spotted Woodpecker	
	Red Squirrel	
	Red Deer Stag	C
	Yellow Baboon	Bronze Medal
Colin Jeeves ARPS	Privet Hawkmoth Caterpillar	
	Lobster Moth Caterpillar	
	Neobulgaria pura	
John Jones ARPS	Twisted Panus	
	Rhizocarpon cedgraphicum & Lecidea	
	Caloplaca thallincola	Patricia Seekings Award
	Navelwort Umbilicus rupestris and Sea Ivory	
	Section through silicified jurassic pine cone	Bronze Medal
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Dunlin trio	
	Arctic Terns courtship feeding	
	Arctic Terns aerial display	
	Spotted Owlets	
	White-throated Kingfisher	
Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Black-browed Albatross	
	Juvenile Red-backed Hawk	
	Humpback Whale	
	Rotting Kelp	
	End of an Iceberg	
K.M. Narayanaswamy ARPS	Painted Stork in back light	
	Perching Cattle Egret on a twig	
John Nathan LRPS	Kittiwakes and young	
Dawn Osborn ARPS	Magellanic Oystercatcher displaying	HC
	Striated Caracara with Skua kill	C
	Nemoptera bipennis	HC
	Southern Sealion	C
	Early Purple Orchid	Gold Medal
	Tutsan	
David Osborn FRPS	White Tufted Grebe	
	Male Southern Elephant Seal	HC
	Giant Polypore	
	Pholiota adiposa	Kay Thompson Award
Norman Prue FRPS	Gentoo Penguin and chick	
	African Fish Eagle swooping	
	Cheetah with prey	
	Pair of Black-veined Whites	
	African Wild Dogs, Tanzania	
Jane Rees LRPS	Atlantic Grey Seal	
	Foxgloves	
	Joshua Tree	
Richard Revels FRPS	Upland Geese in flight	HC
	Puffin in flight	Bronze Medal
	Cockchafer Beetle in flight	
	Early Purple Orchids in Peak District	C
Eric Saul ARPS	Gentoos emerging, Falklands	
Naomi Saul ARPS	Gentoos returning in sandstorm	
	White-tufted Grebes, Falklands	
Malcolm Schuyt	Mute Swan taking off	
	Sandhill Crane landing	
	Young Japanese Macaque in hot spring	
	Baby Japanese Macaque	C
	Cheetah on the lookout	
Martin Withers FRPS	White Rhino	
	Leopard	
	Black-browed Albatross	
	African Fish Eagle	C

Bronze Medal Slides



Top left:
Gannet Colony
Adrian Langdon ARPS

Middle left
Hummingbird Hawkmoth feeding
Richard Revels FRPS

Bottom left
Autumn Treetops
Nick Jarvis ARPS



Bottom right
Neneo flowers
Simon Cook ARPS



Slide Acceptances

Mark Adams LRPS	Wheatear No 1	
John Bebbington FRPS	Lily Beetles feeding after mating	
	Robber fly with plant bug prey	
	Great Yellow Rattle	
Andy Callow	Trichodes apiarius paired	
	Centipede <i>Lithobius variegatus</i>	Kay Thompson Award
	Green Shield Bug	
	Ants and Bug Nymph C	
	Fungus <i>Neobulgaria pura</i> HC	
	Slime Mould <i>Fuigo septica</i>	
Gill Cardy ARPS	Corn Bunting singing	
Sandy Cleland FRPS	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries Mating	
	Eyelash Fungus	
	<i>Cladonia floerkeana</i>	
Simon Cook ARPS	Ivory Gull	
	Arctic Fox	
	Polar Bear	
	Neneo Flowers	Class C Bronze Medal
John Cucksey	Grey-crowned Crane,	
	Samburu Ostriches, Masai Mara	
	Mauritian Tohbrats, Lake Manyara	
Bob Devine	Lilac-breasted Roller	
	Cheetah at kill	
	Hippopotamus	
Gordon Follows FRPS	Sandhill Crane with chick	
	Osprey with fish	HC
	Alaskan Brown Bears with cubs	
	Ice Sculpture	Gold Medal
Patrick Halton	Tree Fungus	
Barbara Hawkesworth ARPS	<i>Xanthoria elegans</i> & <i>leganora dispersa</i>	HC
	Stinkhorn	
	<i>Boletus</i> sp	
	Brick Caps <i>Hypholoma laberitium</i>	
Robert Hawkesworth FRPS	Round-leaved Wintergreen	
	Tolpis	
	<i>Psathyrella hydrophita</i>	
	Glistening Ink Caps <i>Coprinus micaceous</i>	
Margaret Hodge FRPS	<i>Cheilymenia granulate</i>	
	<i>Membrainpora membranace</i> Sea mat	
	Pegmatite	
	<i>Halichondria pasasicea</i> Bread comb sponge	
George Hodlin LRPS	Rufous Hummingbird feeding	
	Kittiwakes bonding at nest	
	Hoary Marmot	
	Common Stinkhorn	
	Common Spotted Orchid	
Brian Iddon	Club Tailed Dragonfly	
Nick Jarvis ARPS	Fungus Cap detail	C
	Shaggy Pholiota	
	Autumn Treetops	Class D Bronze Medal
Cohn Jeeves ARPS	Adonis Blue	
	Elephant Hawkmoth	
	Black Bindweed	
	Parasol Mushroom	
Dennis Johnson ARPS	Arctic Skua	
	Red Deer Stag at rut	C
	Preying Mantis devouring prey	



Selectors Awards - Slide section

Kay Reeve Award
Wild Pine Marten
Richard Revels FRPS



Patricia Seekings Award
Surface of Abalone Shell
Dennis Johnson ARPS



Kay Thompson Award
Centipede *Lithobius variegatus*
Andy Callow

Margaret Johnson LRPS	Pyrenean Bell Flower in habitat	Patricia Seekings Award
John Jones ARPS	Surface of Abalone shell	
	Victoria Falls	
	Herald Moth <i>Stoliopteryx libatrix</i>	
	Convolvulus Hawk Moth <i>Agrius convoluti</i>	
	Beech Jelly Disc <i>Neobulgaria pura</i>	
	Black Cave Pearls, Derbyshire	
	Straw Stalactites	
Peter Jones ARPS	Wild Rabbit	
	Purple Saxifrage	
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Pond Heron scratching	
	Arctic Terns mating	
	Gannet Colony	Class A Bronze Medal
	Pnympfhula pair ovipositing	
	Crocodile	
Paul Lund	Brimstone Moth	
Tony McDade FRPS	Swallow feeding young	
	<i>Arcyria incarnata</i>	
	Llareta, Atacama Desert	
	Fungus pattern	
Reg Mellis	Bee-eater	
Alan Millward FRPS	Salt-water Crocodile	
Philip Mugridge ARPS	Red-throated Diver	
	Snipe	
K.M Narayanaswamy ARPS	Barn Owlets	
	Water's action on rocks, Hampi	
Dawn Osborn ARPS	Falkland Skua displaying	
	Magellanic Oystercatcher foraging	
	Man Orchid	
Norman Prue FRPS	Pygmy Falcon female	
	King Penguins feeding chick	
	Lava Heron, Galapagos	
	Great Tree Frog, Australia	
	Alpine Heath	
Richard Revels ARPS	Great Tits in nest	
	Hummingbird Hawkmoth feeding	Class B Bronze Medal
	Glanville Fritillary Butterfly	
	Wild Pine Martin	
	Adder Snake flicking tongue	Kay Reeve Award
Derek Rodway FRPS	Autumn Lady's Tresses	
	Spiders Web	
Malcolm Schuyt	Japanese Macaque shaking off water	
	Portrait of Japanese Macaque	
John Scotten LRPS	Common Blue Damselfly	
Cohn Smith FRPS	Great Spotted Woodpecker	
	Ruff	
	Reddish Egrets	
	<i>Mycena inclinata</i>	
	Fly Agarics	
Lewis Thomas FRPS	Brittle Star	
	<i>Saxifolia oppositifolia</i>	
	Marine Tube Worm casts	
Geoff Trinder ARPS	Purple Heron with frog	
	Red-throated Diver	
Helen Williams ARPS	Sanderling	
	Short-eared Owl	
	Striated Caracara	
	Rockhopper Penguin	
	Elephant Seal	

by Nick Jarvis ARPS

As many of you will already know, the Nature Group now has its own web site. The site has a mixture of pages, some open to the public, and others available to members only.

To access the member pages, you must first register for the site. To do this:

- click the 'new member' link on the home page
- on the registration page, enter 'nature2005' in the 'old password' field, along with your email address and a new password (don't worry if you don't understand all the options on the registration page, as you will be able to change these at any time once you have registered) then click 'register'

Each time you visit the site you will need to login using your email address and password. If you have a computer for your private use, you can use the 'remember me'* option on the home page to save you having to re-enter these every time.

* The 'remember me' option is intended primarily for Internet Explorer users, though it may work with other browsers. Netscape users may find that Netscape's own built-in password manager works better.

Once registered and logged in, you will be able to access the FAQ page. Please take a the time to read through these, hopefully they will answer any questions you have about using the site. If your questions are not answered there, then do please let me know so I can add them to the list.

I would appreciate any feedback about the site, positive or negative. I am already compiling a list of changes for the 'next release', so the more opinions I hear, the more likely I am to get it right next time! My contact details are listed near the front of The Iris, and you can also email me directly from the web site by selecting 'webmaster' on the 'contacts' page.

The registration password, nature2005, should only be given to other Nature Group members.

Please note : The new site is entirely separate from the old AOL-based e-noticeboard; it is anticipated that this latter facility will have been closed down by the end of May 2005. A new noticeboard page is included on the new site amongst the member-only pages.

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Our featured article is "Birds of India" by Nick Jarvis FDPs ARPS

Last year, 2004, I chose to skip Christmas, and instead spent two weeks in Goa. By lucky chance, my hotel was just a few minutes walk from a tidal lagoon, which was teeming with birdlife. The birds in India are generally much more approachable than in the UK. With patience, even Common Kingfishers can be photographed without the need for a hide. My 300mm lens with 2x extender proved quite adequate for the larger birds, though at times I felt that a longer lens would have been useful with the smaller ones.

Goa is generally a very safe place for tourists. I felt quite happy wandering about on my own with expensive camera equipment, which would not sadly be possible in many countries these days. The local children were inquisitive, and took much delight in looking through the telephoto; but they never made a nuisance of themselves,

Code of Practice

There is one hard and fast rule, whose spirit must be observed at all times: **The welfare of the subject is more important than the photograph.** Please read the full [code of practice](#).

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 Common Kingfisher with prawn © Nick Jarvis FDPs ARPS

 Outgroup Birch Hedge, Colbarbour © John Bebbington FRPS

 Cuckoo © John Weir

 Dandelion seedhead detail © John Bebbington FRPS

 Rough Sea © Dawn Orsborn ARPS AFAP BFE*

Site designed by Nick Jarvis FDPs ARPS

Internet

Field Meeting Report

Cressbrook Dale and Tansley Dale Wednesday May 11th 2005

Cressbrook Dale is one of a number of dales that roughly encircle Monsal Dale. All boast a rich flora and the Cressbrook Dale complex well deserves its NNR status. Tansley Dale is a tributary that opens up into Cressbrook. One of the characteristics of the Cressbrook Dale complex is that there is a good show of Early Purple Orchids to be seen in May and Cressbrook probably wears the crown in terms of numbers and scenery.

An advantage is that none of them has easy access, parking is limited and in most cases demands a good walk in. I say advantage because it does limit the number of casual visitors and means that the flowers are largely undisturbed and photography is less affected by others. However it has its downside and arranging a suitable parking spot for a Field Meeting is not easy. The best scheme seems to centre on the village of Litton, which we did. I then filled up about five cars with twenty people and we motored the short distance round to the head of the dale at a small lay-by on the A623. Five of the group decided to enjoy the walk into Tansley Dale from Litton, which helped ease the parking on the main road. Once these logistics had been sorted out we began on the photography!

The day was lovely, blue skies and fluffy clouds and not too much wind (you don't get many like that in the whole of a summer in the Peak District!) and members soon dispersed through-out the area. Early Purple Orchids were found in their thousands, also good shows of Meadow Saxifrage and in Tansley Dale many Cowslips. There are other gems too, but they need a more careful look, Rue-leaved Saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*) is lovely, but so small, you need to be from one half to life-size to show it off as it deserves. Ferns also are worth spending some time on, Brittle Bladder Fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*) and Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) are relatively easy to find, but Derbyshire also hosts Black Spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*) and Green Spleenwort (*Asplenium viride*) and it is always well worth a good search for these two rarities.

It really was a splendid day made all the better by the company. Field meetings are one of our strengths and if you have never tried one you really should.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Oxwich Bay, Sunday 5th June 2005

For the first time in 21 years, the day of the Oxwich field meeting was really wet! The wind had dropped but the light was of little use for photography. Twelve hardy souls ventured out onto the beach, carrying not tripods but very large umbrellas. Lots of tiny shore crabs scuttled to and fro, no doubt unsettled by the reduced salinity of the surface water on the sand. There was some exploration of the beach but no new species were found so we returned to our cars for an early lunch. The rain showed little sign of abating and only four of us set out into the Nature Reserve, minus cameras, to see what might be in flower. The list was quite extensive, but all were limp with rain. Spindleberry bushes were much defoliated by Lackey Moth caterpillars, their webs hanging in dripping masses. Beautifully formed webs of the tunnel-web spider glistened with rain drops in the soaking grass - perfect photographic subjects but alas, no light. Twayblade, Broomrape, Rugosa and Burnet Roses, excellent clumps of Sea Stock and plenty of orchids. The only creatures enjoying the soaking conditions were dozens of banded snails, some mating, some feeding on sea radish. So many superb photographic opportunities lost due to the weather.

I would like to thank all who turned up in such poor weather conditions, many of whom had travelled great distances. Hopefully, Sunday 11th June 2006 will be a fine day. The tide will be low again in the morning and I hope to see you all then, with tripods rather than brollys.

Margaret Hodge FRPS

Field Meeting Reports

Bonsall Moor, Monday June 27th 2005

Bonsall Moor is part of the limestone plateau of the White Peak of Derbyshire, lying above the village of Bonsall and the hamlet of Slaley. It holds the greatest concentration of old lead-mine shafts in the country, something in the order of two hundred, most of them capped but it is wise to watch your step! It has a fine flora including Spring Sandwort (*Minuartia verna*) which, during late May of a good year, can cover the ground like a dusting of snow. Parking is difficult for more than two or three cars, but Leader John Jones ARPS through his mining and caving experience has good relationships with the local farmers and had arranged parking in one of the adjacent fields. A good thing too, for there were 30 of us, around 15 or 16 cars.



The weather was perfect - it is not too often in the Peak that you have a cloudless blue sky, bright sunshine and good flower photography! Amazingly, following John's briefing of the general lie of the land, the 30 members managed to become almost invisible. I have been many times and can honestly say that it ranks with Gait Barrows and Ainsdale Dunes in its ability to cause you to lose your sense of direction - I do hope that there are no members still roaming around!

The flowers were wonderful and it was not long before everyone was photographically engaged. We found the almost white Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera* var. *flavescens*), this has a reduced anthocyanin content so that the pink colour almost disappears and the lip is a variable pale greenish-brown, it is not as clear a white and pale yellow as var. *chlorantha* which is the leucistic variant. We also found an early flowering Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*), of which there will be many more in a few weeks. John had supplied everyone with a list of 70 or so flowering plants so it is not surprising that some members didn't leave until almost six o'clock.

Bonsall is also a good site for Chimney Sweeper Moth (*Odezia atrata*), but can I get near one! Amongst a number of lichens found at the site, the rare yellow coloured *Caloplaca decipiens* proved to be photographically challenging - large limestone boulders are not always shaped in a tripod friendly manner, nor come to that a person friendly manner either.

It was quite simply a wonderful day and our greatest thanks are due to John.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera* var. *flavescens*)
Bonsall Moor, Monday 27th June 2005.
Canon 20D, Sigma 180mm macro
ISO 100 1/125 at f11
Dawn Osborn ARPS

Field Meeting Reports

Ebernoe Common NNR, Saturday 9th. October 2004.

Ebernoe Common is one of Sussex Wildlife Trust's most important reserves, with a variety of habitats and plants and over 900 species of fungi so far recorded. However, it is difficult to select the right date when planning a meeting ten months in advance and in 2004 we should have timed our visit for a week or two earlier as many species were already past their best. However there were still sufficient specimens in a good state to make the trip worthwhile and the day was a good one weather wise with sunny intervals.

12 members attended, some local and others from as far away as London, Buckinghamshire and the Midlands. I first took the group to the far end of the reserve where there is an open area of Beech woods with plenty of space and a variety of photogenic subjects. Here we found Penny Buns (*Boletus edulis*) as well as some rather pale Fly Agarics (*Amanita muscaria*) amongst the fallen leaves. There were plenty of varieties on fallen tree trunks and branches. Six attractive clumps of *Mycena* species were growing in the bottom recesses of an upended Beech tree. Nearby Porcelains (*Oudemansiella radicata*) glistened in the sun on a fallen trunk and a large clump of *Gymnopilus junonius* was found gracing the full width of a living trunk. Searching farther a field on fallen Beeches there were groups of small jelly like *Neobulgaria pura* and some *Lycoperdon pyriforme* on rotting timber.

During lunch we had discussions on equipment and techniques and then made our return around the Eastern part of the Reserve. We found clumps of an attractive Coral like fungus *Ramaria aurea* on a decayed log and also saw Sulphur Tufts (*Hypholoma fasciculare*) and Brick Caps (*Hypholoma sublateritium*).

It was felt that the day had been both successful and useful. The attending members contributed £30 to Reserve funds.

John Fairbank ARPS

Padley Gorge Tuesday 12th October 2004

The weather omens were not good for this meeting at what has become one of the favourite sites for those of our members who feel that it is within striking distance. Heavy grey clouds and a cool easterly, which at this elevation had a definite cutting edge to it, soon had the twenty or so hardy souls who had braved the conditions seeking woodland cover.

We soon found some groups of fungi - *Mycena* spp. and *Laccada*, both *amethystea* and *laccata*, and a small fallen stand of timber proved very productive with one especially photogenic group of Glistening Ink Caps (*Coprinus micaceus*) as well as some young specimens of Dead Man's Fingers (*Xylaria polymorpha*), though whether you can describe those as photogenic I'm not sure! A wider search revealed a much larger stand of very old decayed fallen timber well clad with mosses; some particularly attractive small groups of Clouded Agarics (*Clitocybe nebulads*) were the cause of considerable queuing as well as similarly attractive large groups of *Mycena galericulata*. The previous week when my wife and I had made a recce we had found large numbers of *Russula* spp., but these had largely disappeared. Some members had concentrated on the Burbage Brook side of the road and had had some good opportunities with landscapes, especially since the water level was very high making the waterfalls particularly impressive.

Unfortunately, after lunch, the light, which had improved somewhat during the morning, began to close in once more; so by 2.30 and 3.00 p.m. most of us realised we had had the best of the day; this was reinforced by the onset of the rain which had threatened us all the time but had never actually fallen. We all felt that we had made the best of the conditions and as always there had been lots of laughter and good conversation.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

The Joys, Trials & Tribulations of being a Speaker and Judge

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

It occurred to me the other day, for no reason at all, that I must have been judging and speaking (it never sounds quite right that, and lecturing sounds perhaps a touch too formal, certainly for me) for at least twentyfive years or so. I've thoroughly enjoyed it of course or I certainly would have given it up long ago. Mind you there are times when I have wondered why I bother.

For a start, I am usually setting out at a time when everyone else is going home -this is fine until I have to look for the meeting place. Now bear in mind it is dark and the map is impossible to read at the same time as driving - pulling up is almost certainly impossible or even dangerous. Creeping along looking for the entrance brings hooting, fingers, flashing lights, you name it. The best instructions are simple ones with exact distances e.g. 'from the large Esso Garage keep straight for 1.3 miles, turn right by the White Swan, carry on for 0.4 miles, the entrance to the car park is on the right.' Modern odometers are very accurate and these types of instructions work better than a photocopied or downloaded map of an area covering half the city or a vast tract of countryside. Incidentally whilst talking about how to get to the meeting place, no programme secretary in my experience has ever told me how to get home! In villages it is usually obvious, go back the opposite way, fine. In cities however it may well be impossible, especially if I have arrived via a one-way system. I now know Leicester quite well, but when I first went there it was a nightmare and I got hopelessly lost trying to find my way out. On my second visit a kind soul led me back to the road leading to the M1 and I shall be forever grateful to him.

Interpretation of starting times can be quite interesting; I well remember my first visit to a club a good 90 minute drive from Nottingham. I arrived at 7.20 p.m. for a 7.45 p.m. start. Everywhere was in pitch darkness, so I parked and listened to the radio. 7.30 nothing, 7.45 nothing, 8.00 nothing. Was I at the right place? I got out of the car to investigate just as another

vehicle pulled up and two fellows got out and one asked if I was Mr Hawkesworth. I replied that I was and he told me I was early. I said that I had been told that they started at 7.45. Peals of laughter greeted that remark. "Brian told you that? He's always the optimist. He'll tell you owt he will. No we start when we all get here, with a bit of luck it'll be about 8.30" Absolutely great! I eventually spoke to six people, two years later the club folded.

So far this perhaps sounds rather negative and I must redress the balance, for on the whole I am made very welcome at the vast majority of clubs and societies which I visit. Photographers, naturalists, gardeners and so on all are absolutely splendid and I have had some wonderful times. Some of the most welcoming hosts are ex-miners and their friends from the old coalfields on the Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire border; salt of the earth folk who welcome me as an old friend. I remember, an occasion some years ago, when I visited a club in the area and took along a naturalist friend of mine who was recently out of hospital and who I thought might enjoy a night out. We arrived in good time and were greeted in warm tones. "Eh up Robert, how are you young man?" "I'm not so bad Jack". (Not his real name). "I've brought along a pal of mine, Graham, I hope you don't mind". "Course we don't mind, any pal of yours is welcome. Now let's get us priorities right, what'yer drinking?" Now I have always been quite careful regarding alcohol when out driving and these days I stick to non-alcoholic drinks, but this was some years ago and I asked for a half of bitter for myself and a small whisky for Graham. We began to set up and in a few minutes a pint appeared on the projector table accompanied by a whisky large enough to fell an ox. "I said half Jack" to which he responded "We don't drink in halves here Robert. Gerrit down yer, it'll do yer good". The show proceeded, well received as always and at the interval Jack appeared with another pint and whisky. I said "Thanks Jack, but I've got to drive home after this and I'm not finished with this

one yet". Jack explained "Don't worry Robert, local police are all in here. Chairman's t' Sergeant, him over ther wi the smart sweater, Inspector and t'tall young chap behind yer he's t' Constable." I asked if they had left anyone on duty and was told "Young lad, new Constable, they're brekkin' him in, he's not a photographer yet" I commented that I was more concerned about being stopped back in Nottingham. Jack merely said that he would get the Chairman to give the Nottingham lads a ring and tell them I was on my way. We did get back of course both safely and soberly. In these more enlightened times with regard to drinking and driving, their welcome is just as warm but less alcoholic! (I hope you managed to cope with the dialect.)

These days, when some universities offer degree courses in such academically rigorous subjects as 'Aromatherapy', I feel that there must be some mileage in offering say a Master's degree in researching the mysterious attraction between erected projector stands and human beings. Men and women alike will collect around them chattering and gossiping away, often leaning their elbows on them. I've even had a beaker of coffee placed on top of the projector, the fellow's excuse being that it was keeping his drink warm! At a Women's Institute I well remember a very forthright and earnest lady managing to upset a tray of slides, her only comment being, "How very annoying, your stand is in a very inconvenient place, most inconsiderate". I was about to ask her where she would prefer me to put it but bit my lip instead. The charming and helpful lady who helped me to retrieve the slides told me "she's always the same, we don't bother listening to her". A few moments later I heard the familiar hectoring tones and looked up to see the President's gleaming chain of office shining on her very ample bosom as she addressed the meeting. When it came to introducing me she had forgotten both my name and the title of the talk. So I began by asking the ladies if their President was always like that. A huge "YEEESSS" was their response. I caught the eye of my helper who just winked. Since then, I have always numbered the slides in my presentations and, although time consuming, it is worth the time in such situations.

I enjoy judging, it is such a privilege to see other photographers' work. I make it clear that their view of the pictures is as valid as mine. Becoming

a judge can have a rather unfortunate effect on some people and they can become pompous and egocentric - we've all heard some judges say things like "you should have done ..." which always send the shirt up my back like a window blind. How much kinder to say "Did you consider trying...?" It is always better to encourage people rather than knock them down. I do not know of any lady judges in my region and to my mind that is a shame - you ladies do have a different view from us chaps and I'm sure that you may have a rather kinder way of expressing it. I enjoy selecting Annual Exhibitions at my home which is far more preferable than arriving at the club to be greeted with "Hi Robert, you're going to be busy tonight. You've got 112 prints and 98 slides to look at". In two hours! I'm sure that will have a familiar ring for many of you. When I first started judging pretty well every club or society wanted marks out of 20, but most clubs have now forsaken marks and ask for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places, a few commends and of course comments. Speaking as a judge I feel that comments are more helpful to beginners than marks. I well remember an occasion 30 years ago, when a young woman was given 1 out of 20 by a judge - it took a lot of reassurance to entice her back. She is now quite a well known name in the area and very good too. As I said earlier encouragement is the name of the game.

I have only been late twice, once due to the fact that it took me over an hour to clear the eastern edges of Nottingham, normally no more than fifteen minutes at the most. The other was for a quite different reason. I had been invited to give a talk to a Mothers' Union in the Village Hall of one of the Nottinghamshire Villages. I had been there before to talk to a Garden Group and knew the venue, or thought I did. I duly arrived and pulled in to a fairly full car park, things looked promising. Inside it was bustling, with ladies all over the place. Then I noticed a number of very scantily clad young women tripping about and disappearing from time to time behind folding screens only to re-appear a few moments later in different but equally brief undergarments. For a while I sat mesmerised by the scene, it was quite enjoyable but it didn't seem to have much to do with me so to speak. I eventually found a lady who was momentarily unoccupied and I

continued on the next page

explained that I had come to speak to the Mothers' Union. "Oh dear! That's not us we're the W.I. We're having Marks and Spencer's Fashion Evening. You want the 'Old' Village Hall, this is the Village Hall - people often get them mixed up. I did notice you but I thought you were the M & S Boss", she giggled.

I did eventually find the 'Old' Village Hall and we went on with the show thirty-five minutes late. When I explained what had happened I'm not sure they entirely believed me!

Double bookings are infuriating, but a hazard of the course. It was Alexander Pope who wrote, "to err is human, to forgive divine". Well we are all very human and we all make mistakes, but since not one of us is divine.... I have been double booked on two occasions, on one I received neither explanation or apology, I was simply told by the secretary that he had rung me to cancel - he hadn't of course. On the other occasion the poor organiser was beside himself, insisted that the society should pay me in full and it wasn't until two years later when they tried to re-book me that I found out that he had been burgled, his computer stolen and all his paperwork trashed. He had tried to rely on his memory and of course it had failed him. Poor fellow, I did revisit the club. Very recently I arrived at a venue to find the hall was occupied by a Judo Club. I warmed to the young lady Chairman of the Garden Club who accepted full responsibility, explaining that her club normally met on the first Monday of the month but that since it had been a bank holiday they had moved to the second Monday,"... and I forgot to check whether the hall was available". We moved into a small committee room and with forty members it was very cosy! She told them all it was her fault and why. We all had a laugh and there was a good deal of leg pulling - we had a good evening. A brave young lady, no wonder there was a happy atmosphere in the club.

Happy times. How long will I continue? Well, hopefully a few more years yet.

RPS Nature Group - Field Meetings 2006

Location _____

Meeting Place _____

Grid Reference _____

Leader(s) _____

Day & date _____

Cost (eg car parking) _____

Main subjects of interest :- _____

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

Stout Shoes ☐ Wellingtons ☐

Waterproofs ☐ Packed Lunch ☐

Additional information:- _____

Name _____

Address _____

Tel No: _____

E mail: _____

For publication in the Winter issue please post to arrive not later than 30th September 2005

Nick Jarvis,
31 Meadow Way,
Irthlingborough,
Northants, NN9 5RS

Tel: 01933 651477 or
E-mail details to: Nickjarvis@aol.com

Nature Group Field Meetings 2005

Sunday 02 October 2005 - 10 a.m.

Risley Moss, Warrington

Meet at: Main car park. Grid ref: SJ 667919.

Cost: Nil.

Subjects: Fungi.

Lunch: Bring packed.

Directions: From junction 11 of the M62 turn onto the A574 (Birchwood Way). Turn left onto Moss Gate and straight on at the next two roundabouts. Risley Moss is immediately after the second roundabout.

Leader: Jeremy Malley-Smith LRPS.

Tel: 07940 594628

E-mail: jmall@tiscali.co.uk

Saturday 08 October 2005 - 10.00 a.m.

Ebernoe Common NNR, W.Sussex

Meet at: Car park next to Ebernoe Church

Grid Ref: SU 976 278

Cost: £2 donation

Subjects: Ancient woodland with over 600 recorded species of fungi

Directions: From A283, 3.5m north of Petworth, 1.5m south of Northchapel, turn east into minor road signposted Ebernoe. 1.5 miles along this road turn right, just past telephone & post boxes, into Church & Reserve access road signposted Ebernoe Church/schoolhouse.

Contact leader to confirm before travelling

Lunch: Bring packed

Leader: Sue Rogers

Tel: 01737 554728

E-mail: Sue.Rogers@icr.ac.uk

Sunday 09 October 2005 - 10 a.m./3.00 p.m.

Porton Down

Porton Down, about six miles North East of Salisbury, is well known as a Ministry of Defence establishment. What is not so well known is the space the Estate occupies. In the early years of the twentieth century the War Department took over around 8,000 acres of countryside of which only about 2,000 are in active use today, the remainder having been left virtually untouched, forming one of the largest and finest nature conservation areas in the south of England. Visits by organised groups are permitted but are strictly controlled. John Hankin LRPS has arranged a Field Meeting with the Conservation Officer - the intention being to explore some of the extensive woodland and photograph fungi. Clearly, the normal casual format of meetings will not apply - the group will be supervised by the Conservation team and must keep together throughout the visit. Everyone attending will be asked to supply some personal information and car registration details beforehand for security purposes. This may sound off-putting but from experience I can assure people that the Security is not at all unreasonable. The main point is that we have access to areas of land from which the public have been almost completely excluded for over a hundred years. Numbers are limited and everyone intending to take part should contact the leader, John Hankin before 1st July. The visit is subject to cancellation should it interfere with Service commitments at the last minute, in this event an alternative venue will be set up in the Salisbury area.

Leader: John Hankin LRPS.

Tel: 01249 720917

E-mail: hankin@hotmail.co.uk

Tuesday 18 October 2005 - 10.30 a.m.

Sherwood Pines

Meet at: Main car park.

Grid ref: 616642 (sheet 120).

Cost: £2 approx.

Subjects: Fungi and autumn colour.

Lunch: Packed or café.

Wellies may be needed if wet.

Leader: Robert Hawkesworth FRPS.

Tel: 0115 928 1050

Leaders, and indeed prospective leaders, may care to note that they may claim travelling expenses for the day of the meeting up to a maximum of 100 miles for the round trip. Further details may be obtained from our Treasurer, Trevor Hyman, for contact details please see the front of the magazine.

Book Reviews

Orchids of the British Isles

Michael Foley and Sydney Clarke

Published by Griffin Press in association with the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh
ISBN 0954191617 Hardback £45

This is a sumptuous and authoritative book written largely by Dr Michael Foley of the University of Lancaster with contributions from Dr Crinan Alexander, Dr John Grimshaw, Barry Tattersall and Ian Taylor. It is illustrated with quite magnificent photography by one of our members Sydney Clarke FRPS. Chapters on the biology of orchids, taxonomy, distribution and ecology, and identification are followed by very detailed accounts of each of the 55 species occurring in the British Isles including numerous variants and hybrids.

The taxonomy of orchids is rapidly changing and the book has adopted the most recent nomenclature and classification, however this may soon be changing again as molecular studies advance. Great emphasis is placed on their conservation, managing habitats and populations. One very interesting chapter is concerned with encouraging orchids in our gardens and gives some helpful and practical advice. Sydney Clarke is a master of his art and his photography is really superb from orchids in the landscape to detailed flower structures and anyone contemplating a distinction in flower photography would do well to study this book.

One chapter is devoted to photography and it contains a wealth of good advice not only on equipment but also on the practical approaches to the subject. Aspiring photographers of flora would do well to follow its advice!

This book should certainly be in the library of all naturalists, especially those with a leaning to botany, and certainly all botanical photographers.

R. G. Hawkesworth FRPS

The New

Where to Photograph Wildlife in Britain.

Mike Lane FRPS

£9.95 incl postage and packing

Mike published his first 'Where to Photograph Wildlife in Britain' in 1998, and even if you have a copy of that edition, this re-write contains several sites which were not in the original.

47 sites for photographing a variety of wildlife, from Otters to Pine Martens, Dippers to Divers and Grey Seal to Red Deer are listed in detail. Mike describes the species you can expect to find at each location and advises on the best time of year to plan your trip and time of day for photographing them. He gives maps of the sites, good directions to get you there, a variety of tips and tricks, and sometimes even step by step instructions on the best place to put your tripod! Finally there are telephone numbers, opening times & admission fees (where applicable), to complete the list of everything you need to plan your visit.

All nature photographers will learn something new from this book and it is especially recommended to those new to wildlife photography.

The book can be ordered on line from www.nature-photography.co.uk or by sending a cheque for £9.95 to Mike Lane, 36 Berkeley Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 2HS.

An Interactive Guide to obtaining your Nature Associateship

Available on CD-ROM (pc only)
only £10. including p&p.

to obtain 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

News & What's On

Congratulations

The following members were recently awarded their Associateships in Nature:

Slides

Sue Rogers,	Surrey	British flora, fungi and insects
Reginald John Mellis,	Essex	Birds of Europe and North America
Roger David Waigh	Scotland	Birds of Australia, USA and Europe

Digital

Radha Ramanan	India	Tropical Marine
Kwan C Choo	Canada	Birds

Prints

James Derek Openshaw	Lancashire	European Birds
Katherine Menmuir	Scotland	Geology
Jennette Pamela van Dyk	South Africa	South African Birds and mammals
Guido Bonett	Malta	Maltese wildlife

David Osborn Photo-tours

spectacular wildlife photo-tours organised by David Osborn FRPS EFIAP

Birds of Florida

March 2006

Limited availability.

Falkland Islands

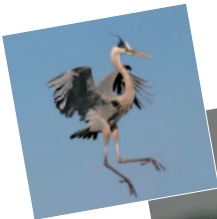
November 2006 & 2007

Limited availability.

For full details on the above tours

tel: 01263 511221 or

email Poppyland3@aol.com



News & What's On

RPS North Wales Regional Event

Natural History Day

Saturday September 24th, 2005

NEWI College, Wrexham

10.30am – 5pm

A day of lectures from four superb
Natural History Photographers:

Andy Harmer Chris Mattison FRPS
Sandy Cleland FRPS Mike Lane FRPS

Subjects covered include: high speed flash,
reptile photography, bird photography and
nature in close-up.

The event is open to all; tickets cost £10.00

Contact: Sigrun Tollerton, Pen y Bont
Cottage, Minera, Wrexham, LL11 3DW,
Tel 01978 758477

Email sigrun.tollerton@virgin.net

Photograph British Snakes

Spend a day with

Mike Lane FRPS

and English Nature's

Tony Phelps,

photographing all three native

British snakes -

adder, grass and smooth snake -

plus slow worm.

For further information contact

Mike Lane FRPS,

Tel 0121 744 7988 or email

mikelane@nature-photography.co.uk

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Tel. 01509 415428



▲ Carmine Bee-eater

▼ Black Crane with grass leaf for chick



