



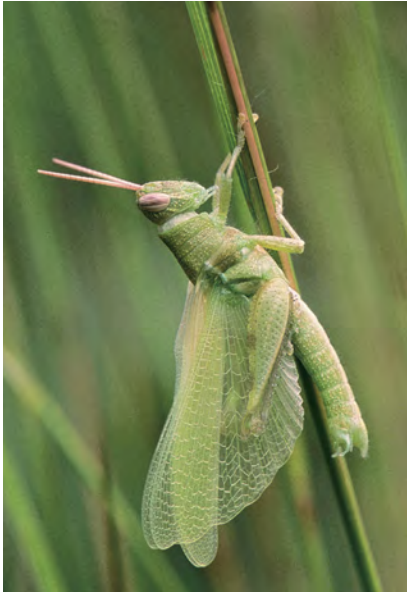
THE IRIS

MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 89
Summer 2004



THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



Annual Exhibition 2004 Bronze Medal Winning Slides

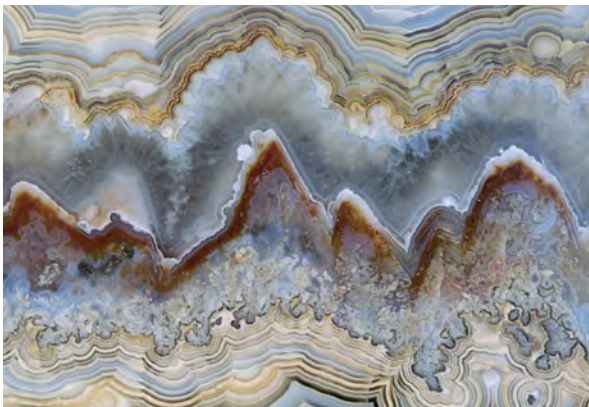
Bronze Medal Slide - Section A

Newly Emerged Grasshopper
by Kay Thompson ARPS.



Bronze Medal Slide - Section B

Soapstone Yuccas, Big Bend
by Alan Millward. ARPS.



Bronze Medal Slide - Section C

Agate overgrown on
Quartz Crystals
by John Jones ARPS.

Publication information

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

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

Photographic images may be supplied as digital files on CD providing that they are at least 2600 x 1850 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.

Distribution:

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

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Award Winners and Acceptances

Congratulations

The following members recently gained their Associateships.

Robert Soames	Marine - slides
Gordon Bramham	Birds - slides
Robert Tong	Fungi, lichens & flowers - slides
Soumen Kumar Ghosh	Indian & East African birds & mammals - prints
S P Mahadev	Indian birds - prints
John Thompson	Fell sandstones of Spittal, Northumbria - prints
Constant Hermanns van Dyk	South African birds & mammals - prints

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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:

Mrs. Kath Bull ARPS,
'Segsbury', St. John's Road, Crowborough, East Sussex,
TN6 1RT Tel: 01892 663751

Editorial

How the time flies! Summer Solstice has passed and by the time you read this the majority of floral subjects will have faded and young birds fledged the nest leaving their parents looking much the worse for wear. I personally managed many less excursions out into the surrounding countryside than I intended to. In April a trip to Barnack offered opportunities to photograph Pasque Flowers and Cowslips; later in May, the Derbyshire Dales produced some excellent Early Purple Orchids; June however has passed by with hardly a picture taken. I hope that by mid July I will have had the opportunity to photograph a number of different floral subjects both in Derbyshire and Lancashire. In the past I ran a Field Meeting at Millers Dale, in Derbyshire, on the first or second weekend in July - Fragrant Orchids being one of the target species. Why don't I do it now? Well, one reason is that *The Iris* takes up quite a lot of my time at this time of year. But what's your excuse for not running a Field Meeting? I'm sure a lot of you have visited suitable venues this year - or maybe you have put off going somewhere because you had no one to go with? Committee Members can't do it all - we need your help, especially with Field Meetings. If you have been somewhere recently, or are looking for like minded people to go out taking pictures with, why not organise a meeting for next year. Email me with the details and I will pass them on to our Programme Secretary.



From the chair

The natural world encompasses a canvas so unimaginably vast that it is little surprising most of us specialise to a greater or lesser extent. Some of you are bird photographers others concentrate on insects; and what a vast spectrum that is for entomologists tell us that there are probably more insects yet to be discovered than are already known, little wonder then that many people focus their attention on moths, or butterflies, dragonflies or damselflies. Then of course there are mammals, large or small, reptiles and amphibians, marine life both on the shore and underwater. I have taken many subjects, but I have probably used more film on the botanical world, especially flowering plants, than any other. These interests we have take us to many parts of the world, for travel can be a very enjoyable part of nature photography, but there are always more places to see than we can probably manage. In my own case I have yet to visit those botanical wonder zones of South Africa and Western Australia; but it is not only world wide venues for there are places in this realm I have not visited - I will be crossing one of those off this year when I visit the Isles of Scilly. Even closer to home I could name a number of sites I have yet to discover, so it was with particular pleasure that early in the spring my wife and I were able to accept an invitation to photograph the Oxlip (*Primula elatior*). Now this flower has quite an interesting distribution; for, apart from a few outliers, it is found only in ancient woodland on the East Anglian Boulder-clay deposits. It should not be confused with the False Oxlip, which is a hybrid between the Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and the Cowslip (*Primula veris*) and has a more general distribution. So on a rather unpromising day in early April we set off, rain on the way which became heavier as we went south but began to lighten when we turned east. By mid-morning we had arrived at our friend's cottage and after coffee the weather began to clear, at least a couple of stops better! Off we went and despite the fact that deer absolutely adore the flower heads and neatly pluck them off if they get half a chance, we found some beautiful specimens; once seen it is impossible to mistake them, delicately,

elegantly, nodding their pale yellow flowers to one side of the stem. But, and this is really the essence of what I have to say, it was not just the flowers which made the weekend, it was the happy companionship of our friends. I remember several years ago on what was probably the first field meeting I ran for the Nature Group, a few of us sat on a limestone outcrop eating our lunch, looking out over the beautiful vista of Miller's Dale, when one of the members turned to me and said, 'You know Robert this is fabulous, it doesn't matter if we don't take a photograph, just look at the view, and as for the friendliness... well, it couldn't be bettered'. When I wrote my report of the meeting I included his comment and I make no apology for repeating it now, for it is very important. I am very much aware that there may be some of you who are unfortunately unable to attend field meetings, or perhaps to get out very easily at all, and would be delighted to have the chance of meeting some fellow members. If so please contact one or other of us on the Committee particularly our Secretary, Margaret, and we may be able to put you in touch with someone fairly local to you who might also welcome a chat and perhaps a visit to see you. Please don't feel lonely or isolated. If you are able to get out but have never attended a field meeting, take the plunge and have a go. You will be surprised at just how far some folk travel to do so; they have even been known to come over from France! It must be worth it. The reason for attending is not simply for the venue; it is to meet like-minded friends and enjoy the company. Have a happy and enjoyable summer.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Minutes of the RPS Nature Group 2004 AGM

The 28th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Photographic Society Nature Group was held at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, on Saturday 24th April 2004 at 2pm. It was chaired by Robert Hawkesworth and was attended by 32 members.

Apologies

These were received from Bill Burns-Begg, Roger Jacques, John Keighley, Ron Price, Malcolm Schuyl, Tony Wharton and Martin Withers.

Minutes of the 2003 AGM

The Minutes of the 2003 AGM printed in issue 86 of *The Iris* were approved and signed by Robert Hawkesworth as a correct record of what then took place.

Matters Arising

There were none.

Chairman's Report

I have had, so far, a most enjoyable year in office with only a few problems to solve. One of the successful events was of course the Convention, which was held last August at Brooksby on what proved to be the hottest weekend of the year. You will all have read the details in the winter edition of *'The Iris'* so there is no need to repeat them here, but it would be very remiss of me not to thank all those who helped to make it such a splendid weekend. The speakers gave of their best and Brooksby College provided us with good food and a very suitable projection room. One person is deserving of Special mention, Martin Withers, who liaised all the arrangements with Brooksby and without him the event would have been almost impossible to organise. My very grateful thanks to you Martin.

There were some excellent Field Meetings last year and I must apologise to all those leaders whose events I did not manage to attend. There is simply a physical restraint on attending them all, much though I would have wished to do so. Nick Jarvis, our programme Co-ordinator, does a sterling job here and he also puts on a pretty good meeting himself as my wife and I

together with Margaret Johnson found out. If you have never attended one of our Field Meetings please do so. They really are excellent. Also we are in great need of leaders for new venues. It really is easy to organise and you do not have to be an expert, I must stress that. If you know of a suitable venue please arrange a meeting for us, I cannot emphasise enough how grateful we all would be. Nick is also arranging a Short Break in the New Forest this autumn, details of which will appear in *'The Iris'*, it is priced at £140 and takes place over the last weekend of October this year.

Dawn Osborn had the unenviable job of taking over from John Myring as the Editor of *'The Iris'*. Hasn't she made a great job of it? Just the right touch of putting her own stamp on it whilst maintaining the essential essence of what must be one of the best RPS publications, if not the best, currently available. Dawn is in need of contributions however, do remember that the magazine is only as good as its contents allow and you, the Group Members, are responsible. Please let Dawn have some articles, travelogues, techniques, equipment, book reviews. It is important to get through the mind set that "no one will be interested in what I can say." Don't you believe it. Have a go. If in doubt, give me a ring and talk it over.

As you will have read in *'The Iris'*, we have felt it necessary to bring the Committee up to strength and I am very grateful to those members who agreed to be co-opted, John Jones ARPS and Patricia Seekings ARPS, we have already felt the benefit of their presence. I am enormously grateful to all those good folk who serve you as Officers and Committee Members, it is entirely voluntary and, if it does not sound trite, we do so for fun as it were. We are not in business, but we try to run the Group in a business-like manner. My very grateful thanks then to our Secretary, Margaret; our Treasurer, Trevor; our Vice Chairman, David; our Programme Coordinator and Representative on the Advisory Panel, Nick; our Editor, Dawn; our Exhibition Secretary, Peter ably assisted by Susie; and all those of you on the Committee.

Finally, a note for your diaries. I am hosting a Chairman's Day on Saturday 13th November this year and full details will appear in the summer edition of 'The Iris'. Suffice it to say that there will be four good speakers, lunches, teas and coffees and a raffle with some very good prizes. The venue is here at Smethwick and the price £15. Please support me in this event, it is all part of attempting to give you, the membership, more contact with one another, the chance of a good natter and an opportunity to see some fine photography.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Treasurer's Report

As a general comment, it is important to remember that the Income and Expenditure Accounts show what happened financially under various headings over the period of the last Financial Year (1st April 2003 – 31st March 2004). It is NOT a full Balance Sheet for each and every heading - because of their timings, certain matters must span two Financial Years. It is my job to make sure that all of the money coming in and going out is properly taken into account and that overall the books balance. It is the job of the Auditor (more properly called the Independent Financial Examiner) to check and certify that this has been done. I believe that members need to have a 'broad brush' appraisal of our finances with a few comparisons with last year and some points of particular interest highlighted. Of course, I'll be very happy to clarify points or to answer any questions you might have.

Subscriptions: Thanks to our Secretary, we now have a fairly accurate list of our members (with Membership Numbers !!). The Financial returns from Bath show that 617 payments were credited to the Nature Group in the F/Y '03/'04 (c.f. 628 in the previous F/Y). The analysis of membership by Regions shown in the Spring edition of The Iris was based on Bath's Membership list of 31st. December 2003 and shows a total of 655 members. This latter figure will not take account of members who did not renew their subscriptions to the Nature Group in the last quarter of the F/Y and further errors (e.g. non deletions of lapsed members).

The Iris: This is our main expenditure and the figures include postage. We now use the printers to 'stuff' copies into envelopes and take advantage of their bulk postage rates. Overall this still saves us money and a lot of tedious effort.

Lectures & Workshops: Two very successful events were held during the year. The Field Week-end in Dorset (2-5 May), organised by Kath Bull and the Brooksby Convention (8-10 August), organised by Martin Withers. It should be noted that the Income and Expenditure figures do NOT take into account the VAT payments/reclaims on the events, which are covered under General Administration, nor the carry over (£380) from last year. Both events made slight profits – enough to cover their Admin. Costs – which are not separated out from the overall General Administration costs.

Account Arrangements: Last year I reported that our 'Current Account' funds were being consolidated with those of the other RPS Groups into a central Cash Book at Bath. In July this year NG was requested to fall in line with all of the other Groups and to transfer all of our CAF Gold funds into the Cash Book - after discussion this move was agreed in Committee. There is NO financial detriment to this arrangement – in fact we gain slightly more interest and the need for inter-account transfers is eliminated. The Balance Sheet reflects the change.

Annual Exhibition: This item includes the Travelling Exhibition, which contributed £345 to our income. As was done last year, the cost of staging the Annual Exhibition (travel, judging, room hire, etc.) has been included under this heading. Return postage of some entries will fall into next year's accounts.

Sundry Income: This includes VAT refunds and also that resulting from the sale of the 'A' Guidance Interactive CDs (£380) - these are still selling well (107 total). Since John Myring's departure I have taken over the CD sales arrangements, though he still organises their production.

Minutes of the RPS Nature Group 2004 continued

General Administration: Includes all running costs of the Nature Group (general postage, telephone, stationery and travel to committee meetings plus VAT expenditure).

Trevor Hyman LRPS Hon. Treasurer April 2004

Secretary's Report

The membership lists do at last seem to be becoming more stable and with fewer mistakes. When the list arrived from Bath in October 2003 I discovered that we were 76 members down. I made a note of them all and phoned Simon who went through them with me. Many were down as lapsed, some whose direct debits had 'failed', some who hadn't renewed and some who had been archived.

I felt that we ought to do something about this and after talking to Robert and Trevor I sent out a letter to all those on my list. The replies were very interesting: some people had no knowledge that their membership had lapsed, some had been trying to get Bath to take their money, some thought it had all been sorted out months before and one was a life member!!

The last couple of lists have not contained as many mistakes but I had one member ring me last week to say that he was still having trouble getting things sorted out. Otherwise it has been fairly straightforward and according to the last list received in April we have 674 members.

Margaret Johnson ARPS

Any Other Business

Members wanted reassurance that Bath would not appropriate the Nature Group's funds for their own purposes now that we no longer have a separate bank account. Trevor Hyman and Robert Hawkesworth discussed the point and assured them that our funds were 'safe'.

Dickie Duckett wanted to know if there were any plans for including digital images in the Annual Exhibition. Robert Hawkesworth said that this would be discussed at the next committee meeting.

A suggestion was made that the prints should be numbered as this would make it easier to identify them in the exhibition. This point was noted.

As we had some funds in reserve it was suggested that the group may be able to purchase a digital projector. Again this would be brought up at the next committee meeting

Date and Venue for the 29th AGM 2005
This would be Saturday 30th April 2005 at
The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury at 2.00pm.

The meeting was declared closed at 2.34 pm.

CD-ROM

'An Interactive Guide to obtaining your Nature Associateship'.

To obtain your copy please send a cheque for £10 (incl p&p) payable to 'The RPS Nature Group' to: John Myring ARPS - 39, Barnetts Close, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 3DG.

Tel: 01562-824356. e-mail: natarpscd@aol.com

NB. Overseas members can request an order form enabling them to pay by credit card as all payments must be in sterling.

THE NATURE GROUP OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the April 2003 to 31st March 2004

Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bank		TAKE OVER
Year 2003		
Income:		
8,090.23	Subscriptions	8,164.40
1,195.00 (350 each)	Lectures & Workshops	4,527.00
307.25	Annual Exhibition	520.00
1,000.00	Transfers (from CAF Gold)	15,000.00
25.26	(to other income received (to Cash Book))	212.05
935.00	Grants Income	555.35
11,524.54	sub totals	28,978.75
Expenditure:		
5,545.80	Floral and postage	5,142.44
1,875.00	Lectures & Workshops	4,700.00
1,160.00	Annual Exhibition	155.00
751.30	General Administration	1,750.00
	Transfers (to CAF Gold)	-
10,841.80	sub totals	19,466.60
682.74	Excess of income over expenditure	15,289.33
CAF Gold Account:		
101.40	Receipts - interest	121.20
	Transfer from CGA	-
-1,000.00	Less withdrawals & charges	-15,000.00
-458.60	Excess of Withdrawals over Receipts	-4,878.80

Balance Sheet at 31st March 2004

Nature Group 'Cash Book'		£
Balance brought forward (April 2003)		5,122.00
Cash from 2003/04		62.00
Debit from 2002/03		200.00
Unrecorded cheques 2003/04		8.00
Excess of income over expenditure		15,289.33
Total		18,781.33
CAF Gold Account		Account is now CLOSED
Balance brought forward		19,875.00
Excess of Withdrawals over receipts		-19,875.00
Total		0.00
Net Assets at 31/03/2004		18,781.33

J.P. Hynes (Hon Treasurer)

Independent Examiner's Report to Members

The statements of account for the period ended 31st March 2004 are true and have been prepared from the books and records of the Nature Group of the Royal Photographic Society and in accordance therewith.

G.C. Williams

Chartered Accountant

South Georgia and The Antarctic - A Digital Journey



by Michael Gore CVO, CBE. FRPS

I have been fortunate to have been able to visit Antarctica three times: in 1973 when I was stationed at the British Embassy in Uruguay I was granted leave to travel down on board the British Antarctic Survey vessel RRS Bransfield to cover for an ornithologist who had literally missed the boat; in 1997 my wife and I took a trip together; and most recently in November-December 2003 I was accompanied by my grandson. Not only was I taking my grandson on this memorable journey but for the first time I was going on a photographic trip equipped only with digital cameras.

I have been using a digital camera, firstly the Canon D30 and subsequently the D60, for the past couple of years. I bought the D30 a month or so before the D60 came out and the D60 just before it was replaced by the D10 and am not prepared to upgrade again for the time being! Last year I made trips to the United States, Cyprus and Australia and carried a film camera in addition to my digitals. But each time I returned home having not exposed a single frame of film. Eventually it sunk in and for my trip to South Georgia and the Antarctic I took only my digital cameras using the D60 myself and letting my 14-year-old grandson use the D30 back-up. The only lenses we needed were Canon zooms (I used the 100-400mm IS and he

had a Canon 100-300mm) and we shared a Canon 20-35mm for scenics. I also used a Canon Powershot G3 compact camera with a wide-angle attachment for many of the scenics which I took. This is a 4.0 megapixel camera which produces outstanding results and which I find a very useful and convenient camera to carry at all times as it weighs very little and is instantly available for scenics and flora.

We flew from London to Miami where we had a couple of days break and where I bought a new laptop computer to replace my 'old' laptop which was all of two and a half years old and therefore quite out of date(!) and then on to Santiago de Chile where we joined up with the rest of the group. I knew several of them from previous trips with Joe Van Os Photo Safaris, an American company which as its name indicates specialises in tours for wildlife photographers. From Santiago we flew to Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands, where we boarded the MV Professor Multanovskiy, the same vessel I had travelled on in 1997. At the dock we were welcomed by the HE the Governor of the Falkland Islands, Howard Pearce, a colleague from my days in HM Diplomatic Service, and he wished us bon voyage as we set off into the Southern Ocean in the late afternoon.

Despite its reputation for ferocious weather, the two days we took travelling from Stanley to South Georgia were calm - indeed we had calm seas throughout the voyage - and we spent much of the time at sea on the stern photographing the many Black-browed Albatrosses *Diomedea melanocaphris* and Cape Petrels *Daption capense* which circled the ship; occasionally we would be joined by a Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*, several of which we came across resting on the water as there was barely enough wind to give them the rise they needed to fly. Each evening we settled into the cabin to fight over who would be first to download our images onto my laptop! How much nicer than having to wait for a month or more to see the results of our efforts on slide film.

The weather in South Georgia was perfect and we were able to land at all the planned locations: Albatross Island, where there is a colony of Wandering Albatrosses (the numbers seemingly reduced as a result of birds being killed taking bait laid by long-line fishing boats); Salisbury Plain and St Andrew's Bay which hold huge colonies of King Penguins; and Cooper Bay with its Macaroni Penguins and the most northerly

colony of Chinstrap Penguins. Indeed most days the weather was so mild that we were able to take off our heavy parker coats and gloves.

No visit to South Georgia is complete without a stop at the now derelict whaling station at Grytviken. On my last visit we were able to walk everywhere through the buildings but now they are so dilapidated that most are off-limits while a team of contractors is working to make them safe again. The South Georgia Museum is also a must to buy sweaters, T-shirts and postcards from the indomitable Tim and Pauline Carr who have been living there and running the Museum for years. Another must is Shackleton's grave in the little cemetery on a hill above the station. This last was particularly important for my grandson as he is a student at Dulwich College in London whose most eminent old boy was Sir Ernest Shackleton and he was given time off school to make the trip on condition that he visited the grave and brought back a photograph of it.



We were taking photographs all the time and I had brought a 20GB external hard-drive on which to store them, to take the pressure off the internal hard-drive; even though we were fairly disciplined in deleting those which were not up to standard we ended up with well over 6000 images. RAW images take up a lot of space so for many of the flight shots I went over to High Quality JPEG which, as far as I can see, when converted immediately to TIFs produce files which are as good as RAW files for making prints up to A3. The ISO rating was kept at 200 throughout and there were a few occasions in snow conditions when I had to adjust the exposure by +1.5 stop though this was not as critical on digital as it is with slide film.

From South Georgia we sailed south across the Scotia Sea towards Elephant Island where Shackleton effected his remarkable rescue of his crew. Here there were many icebergs - and the sea was calm. Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses *Phoebastria palpebrata*, Southern Giant Petrels *Macronectes giganteus* and the occasional Snow Petrel *Pagodroma nivea* joined the other seabirds which circled the ship.

The following day for the first time we encountered bad weather, bitterly cold with snow showers; but the sea remained quite calm and we were able to land at Arctowski Station, a Polish research station, where we came across our first Adelie Penguins *Pygoscelis adeliae* - we were to see many more as we progressed south. And whales started appearing: Orca *Orcinus orca*, Humpback *Megaptera novaeangliae* and Minke *Balaenoptera bonaerensis*.

We made landings at Baily Head where there is a colony of a quarter of a million Chinstrap Penguins *Pygoscelis antarctica*, Petermann Island with colonies of Adelie Penguins and Antarctic (previously called Blue-eyed) Shags *Phalacrocorax georgianus*; sailed through the magnificent Lemaire Channel and finally on to the Antarctic Peninsula at Neko Harbour where a small group of Gentoo Penguins had established a colony at the landing spot. One male was continually collecting stones to bring to his mate to build up the nest, which was sadly doomed as it was on an overhanging ice ledge which would eventually melt and collapse. But we all immortalised the pair on film and digital!





The crossing back across the Drake Passage was the calmest any of the crew could remember and we amused ourselves by photographing even more albatrosses and petrels and spent some time in the company of two Humpback Whales which seemed to enjoy themselves playing and spy hopping right up against the ship. We also had good views of two Sei Whales *Balaenoptera borealis*, the third largest of all the whales. And finally, to cap it all, we cruised slowly beneath the tip of the dreaded Cape Horn - in flat calm water.

It was indeed a trip to remember and from a photographic point of view the one which caused me to sell all my film cameras and equipment immediately I returned home. For me it is digital all the way from now on.



Picture Details:

Page 8 Chinstrap Penguin

Page 9 Part of the huge King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus* colony at St Andrew's Bay, South Georgia. Canon Powershot G3 ISO 200 1/125sec at f11

Page 10 A male Gentoo Penguin *Pygoscelis papua* brings a stone to his mate to build up their nest at Neko Harbour, Antarctic Peninsula. Canon D60, Canon 100-400 IS lens, 200 ISO 1/750sec at f8

Page 11 A male Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans* peers skywards searching for his mate at their breeding ground on Albatross Island, South Georgia. This bird has returned to the site for the past two years but his mate has not - possibly she has been caught on a hook from a long-line fishing boat and died. Canon D60, Canon 100-400 IS lens, 200 ISO 1/500sec at f8

Page 12 A Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanocapris* soars inches above the Southern Ocean between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Canon D60, Canon 100-400 IS lens, 200 ISO 1/3000sec at f5.6

A male Antarctic Shag *Phalacrocorax georgianus* brings seaweed to his mate at their nest on the top of the cliff at Peterman Island, off the Antarctic Peninsula. Canon D60, Canon 100-400 IS lens, 200 ISO 1/750sec at f6.7

A Wide Angle View of Wild Flowers.

by Richard Revels FRPS



Although I am perhaps best known for my macro photographs of butterflies, moths and other insects, I enjoy photographing any and every kind of natural history subject. With each different branch of nature photography comes a new challenge; there is no excuse for one's photography becoming stale and boring.

Over the years I have amassed a range of photographic equipment for dealing with different subjects; photographing an owl in flight requires totally different equipment to that needed to record a beetle eating a caterpillar, or a newt swimming in an aquarium. Producing images of wild flowers is another branch of nature photography that is just as challenging as any other, if more than just record pictures are to be obtained.





During the past couple of decades I have taken thousands of pictures of wild flowers, with lenses ranging from a 500mm telephoto to capture images of plants in ponds and other out of reach places, to the 16mm setting of my wide-angle zoom. My trusty 100mm-macro lens is my firm favourite for standard record shots, but at some time or other I have taken flower pictures with every lens I own.

One of my favourite techniques is to move in close with a wide-angle lens, as these pictures can show the plant's habitat as a back drop, thus giving much more information about the subject, than a straight portrait. For this kind of technique to really work well, you not only need the usual attractive group of flowers, but you also require a suitable habitat backdrop, preferably with an attractive sky to put the icing on the cake. If the surrounding vegetation is too close to the main subject or too messy, the picture is often disappointing. But when everything comes together right, the resulting pictures can have great impact.

For this kind of wide-angle picture I now use the Canon EF 16mm/35mm f2.8L lens. Prior to having this lens I used the Canon EF 20mm f2.8, and before that the Canon FD 24mm f2.8 lens. Both the EF lenses focus down to about 5 inches from the front element, which will enable you to half fill the frame with the flowers. The FD lenses did not focus as close, as will be the case with many zoom lenses. Screwing on to the front of the lens (after taking off any other filter) a + 3 or + 4 diopter close up lens will enable a closer focus, and I find this works quite well. However you may find that some vignetting may occur that darkens the corners of the picture. If this occurs when using a zoom lens, zooming in a little from say 20mm to 22mm, usually eliminates the problem.

Although I use a tripod for most of my flower (and other wildlife) pictures, I don't always do so when taking wide-angle flower photos. When using wide angle lens there should not be a major problem with camera shake, so I sometimes lay on the ground (taking care to avoid squashing other flowers) and rest my camera holding hand on the ground.

When a slightly higher view is required, I may use my camera bag as a support, or bring my tripod into use. Working without a tripod has its advantages, as it enables me to easily vary the angle of view, until I am happy with what I see in the viewfinder.

To isolate the plant well from the background I prefer to take the picture at a modest aperture of about f8 to f11. This usually gives me enough depth of field to render the plant sharp, without bringing up to much background detail in any nearby habitat.

Something that can be a nuisance when moving in really close is the shadow cast by your camera and lens on the plant, or the foreground. Moving around slightly to a different angle may cure the problem, but a reflector or flash may be needed to put more light into the shaded side of the flowers. Alternatively moving back a few inches and zooming in to about the 20mm –24mm setting can get around this problem, without losing too much of the desired wide angle effect.

As with photographing anything, each subject may require a slightly different technique to the last one, so the above advice will need adapting to your own equipment, and the subject. So, if you have not considered photographing flowers with a wide-angle lens, give it a go - you may be pleasantly surprised with the results.

Picture details:

- Page 13 Thrift
Early Purple Orchids, Ravensdale,
Derbyshire.
- Page 14 Sea Cabbage, Falkland Islands
- Page 15 Sea Bindweed



Galápagos

by Trevor Davenport



Galápagos! Now there's a name to conjure with - especially if you happen to be a nature photographer with a love of travel and a deep desire to see at first hand the islands that inspired Darwin to develop his theory of evolution. This magical and mystical series of islands, lying in the Pacific some 1000 kms west of Ecuador, were also christened 'The Enchanted Isles' by early sailors due to the fact that they were often wreathed in soft and swirling mists; but the original name, recorded as early as 1536, is *Islas de Galápagos*, originating from the Spanish word for saddle that was applied to the saddleback tortoises that were found there.

Galápagos was stage two of an Ecuadorian Odyssey following a splendid week in the Ecuadorian Highlands. As we left the rarefied air of Quito, most of us looked forward to the enriched oxygen supply at sea level and we were given this and more during a short stopover at the coastal city of Guayaquil. Guayaquil looks from the air as though it was built across a fertile meandering floodplain intersected with coastal rivers and seas. All we got from our short stay was thick steamy air to replenish the red blood cells with much needed oxygen before setting out immediately on the two hour flight to Baltra - the landing island for the Galápagos.

The Galápagos Archipelago lies directly across the equator with an approximate total land area of 8,000km sq. There are 13 larger islands, six small ones and about 42 islets consisting of little more than large rocks. All the land is of volcanic origin made up of mainly oceanic basalt and represents all that we can see of the tips of enormous sub sea volcanoes sitting on an area of weakness in the earth's crust. None of the islands have ever been connected to a land mass; they exist in isolation away from the mainland and they were all originally created from red hot lava outpourings to provide a sterile environment upon which life could gradually develop and evolve. This means that all life on the Galápagos originally came from the sea or the air and settled on individual islands to evolve dependant upon the environment and the tenacity of the life form. In other words, these islands, which are still very young in geological terms, produced an ideal 'laboratory' for species development.

Although the islands straddle the equator the climate is governed mainly by oceanic currents. The Humboldt Current flowing from the south-east brings cold water that keeps the islands surprising cool and also causes the seasonal mists and fogs, known as *garúas*. The islands rely on the mists for water since, in essence,

they are 'desert islands' with a low annual rainfall. Naturally, we brought some rain with us, and even though it was supposed to be the dry season, we had some rather damp outings - nothing to get worried about but enough to make sure the cameras were well packed away at times. We heard odd mumblings about 'El Nino'. It makes me smile to think this poor innocent child now gets blamed for almost every adverse weather occurrence on the planet. Next time I get wet on the Farnes stay clear while I curse and swear at 'El Nino'!

Our arrival island, Baltra, is indeed a desert island, and this we could clearly see from the air as the plane slowly descended over brick red dust and scrub that looked anything but inviting. The tiny airport - a small huddle of open-sided awkward buildings perched on the edge of a small harbour - seemed to be all that was built on the island except for some small souvenir stalls and a large bus shelter on the edge of the dock where we all congregated to await pick-up for our boat. Then, quite suddenly, the magic began.

As we waited with luggage on the quayside a small convoy of Blue-footed boobies swooped right in front of us and plunged into the still waters of the harbour in typical Gannet fashion. With great speed and swept back wings they speared the water just yards from us in a greeting that shouted to us "Welcome to the Galápagos". Then more arrived - and then more until, after little more than a minute, there must have been eighty or more swirling and clamouring at whatever had been foolish enough to swim into Baltra harbour. Watching these birds as they plunge dive is enormously thrilling but to watch as eighty or more spear the waters just yards away is truly memorable. Our first sights of these comical birds was one to be remembered - mainly because by the time the camera was out, the moment was over, and the birds had departed as quickly as they had arrived. I wonder how they manage to get the birds to greet new arrivals like this? Magic or what?



As the boobies departed we struggled to get into unfamiliar lifejackets for the short trip between the quay and our home for the next week - the lovely motor yacht 'Beluga'. Every trip to and from this beautiful white lady had to be made in an inflatable dingy known as a panga. Riding the pangas soon became quite routine since we went back and forwards to the different islands sometimes three times a day; but that first trip, loaded with luggage, landlubbers and little faith, the journey was fraught and we quickly learned that wet feet and wet bums were no less than we should expect and that later on there would be the dreaded wet landings to contend with.

Picture details:

Page 16 Sea lions (*Zalophus californianus wollebacki*). Sigma 100-300 on Nikon F100

Page 17 Waved Albatrosses at changeover (*Diomedea irrorata*) Sigma 100-300 Ex on Nikon F100

Page 18 Waved Albatross (*Diomedea irrorata*) single bird head detail, Sigma 100-300 Ex on Nikon F100

Page 19 Arid zone vegetation on Santiago Island. Nikon 28-105 on Nikon F100

'Beluga' was perfect. As her name implied she was as white as the whale and so clean we could have eaten from the deck. Every day she was swabbed, swept and scrubbed until she shone in the sun. She was comfortable and had all we needed for the duration of our voyage. We were drilled and informed of all the safety rules and regulations; told why we couldn't wear shoes, and how to get in and out of the pangas. This took a few minutes and then, at last, we adjourned to the well stocked bar before lunch. By now we were under weigh and headed for our first landing, which was, mercifully, to be a dry one.

Lunch arrived. Prepared for us in a galley smaller than most family kitchens, by George, the most youthful chef I have ever seen. But I swear to you, no transatlantic steamer ever put a finer lunch before it's celebrated passengers. We dined like royals on a generous variety of beautiful food - all of it fresh, delicious and beautifully prepared. This set the standard for the rest of the voyage - every meal was good and some were simply outstanding. In retrospect I can't imagine George becoming anything but a top flight chef!



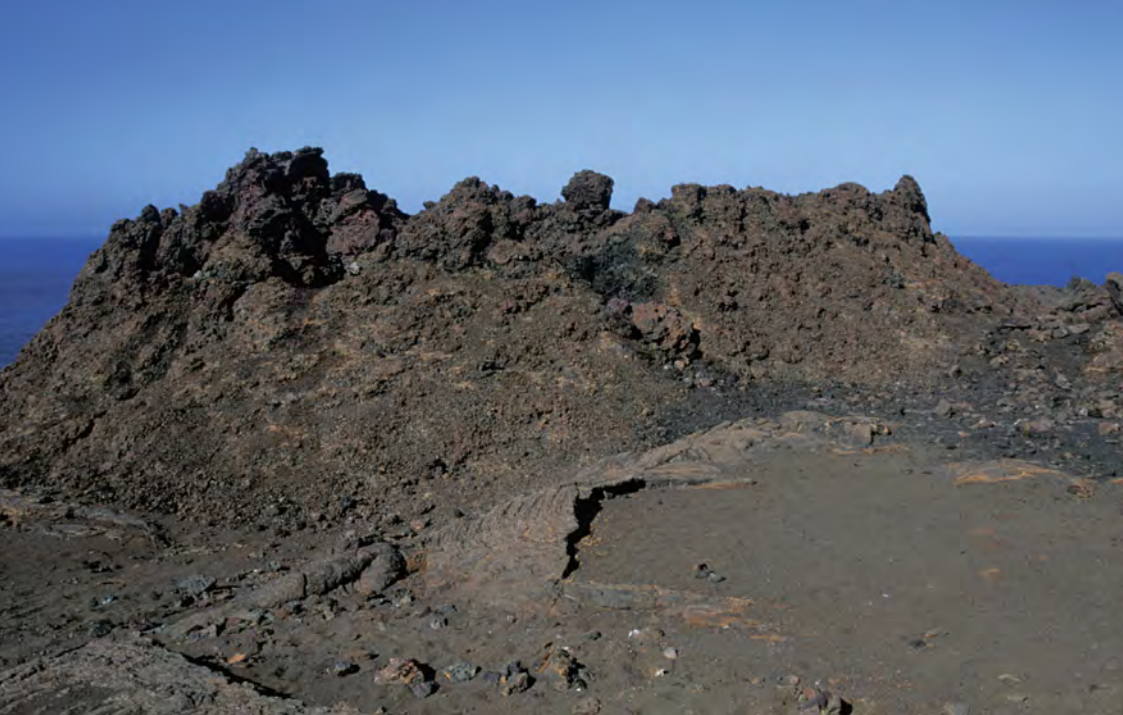


With lunch behind us Beluga arrived at our first island. Shoeless, we gathered on deck to prepare for lifejackets and the moving descent into one of the two pangas. Since we were all keen photographers the panga crew were totally bemused as huge bag after bag of bin-liner covered gear went down the gangway followed by a motley collection of Gitzos, Manfrottos and Benbos, and it is a testament to them and to Messr's Canon, Nikon etc that the gear stayed dry and, in the main, continued to work after being dumped in and out of dinghies several times a day in a mixture of salt water, sand and rolling surf.

On this first excursion ashore we all took the advice of our guide to cover up and wear hats, sunscreen and take water - nothing else. All, that is except for one who shall remain nameless. I still smile when I see in my minds eye the picture of him dressed in a florid Hawaiian shirt, bright yellow shorts and a red hat. In fairness, this was his first attempt at wildlife photography and it is true that Galápagos wildlife is very tame; but even they would have probably been taken aback. He quickly appreciated the situation and changed into something rather more sombre.

If you have ever visited the Farne Islands then you will have a good understanding of what it feels like to land on islands that are simply teeming with wildlife. The obvious difference is the climate, the location and the differing flora and fauna; but otherwise there are many similarities. The wildlife is unafraid of human approach and shows none of the usual fear that most creatures, in their self preservation wisdom, have acquired.

On all of the islands we were escorted by an official, highly trained guide at all times. The guides serve several functions and can explain to visitors all about the different flora and fauna, together with some of the history of the individual islands; they also act as chaperones and take pains to ensure that all visitors obey the strict rules that govern landings and visits to each island. Visits are carefully supervised and guides do not allow their group to stray away from the well signed paths. This strict adherence to visitor control is very necessary since the number of visitors increases annually and it would be all too easy to have erosion, litter and the import of unwanted life forms if the rules were relaxed. Landings are only allowed during the day time between first light and sunset. All trails are well



marked and must be followed, even though wonderful photo opportunities may be just a few yards to the left or right. Often the trails are narrow and at times we were almost shoulder to shoulder with tripods and cameras trying to take pictures. Additionally, most of the time we had to keep moving; our guide was most under-standing and allowed us some freedom when she realised that we were responsible and caring, but there were times when a little more time would have been wonderful. As it was we were escorted gently and slowly around the island circuits and took whatever pictures presented themselves as we passed by. It would have been wonderful to have been ashore in first light, or for the warm sweet light of sundown, but rules are rules and we kept to them. It is a real necessity for the good government of the islands that extreme care is taken to safeguard the pristine environments and unique forms of life that exist there. To this end we were shepherded very carefully on all our landings. Each island has locations where paths weave in and out of typical flora and lead to 'hot-spots' where we could expect to see certain birds, mammals or reptiles. Again, all this is very reminiscent of the Farne Islands and there were many, many photo opportunities.

It is truly magical to be able to visit two or three islands during the day and then to up anchor and sail into the dark Pacific night to be ready for yet another island next morning. For the most part the days were pleasantly warm and the evenings and nights were soft and balmy. Beluga was ladylike and gentle as she moved us from one island to the next, except for one memorable night when she lurched from one high wave crest to another as wind and high swell made sailors of us all.

As we sailed between islands we were often accompanied by seabirds, and on several occasions we were joined by the huge and piratical frigate birds that soar on high with their black iconic silhouettes stamped motionless on deep blue skies. At times they landed on the ship and, close up, they were impressively large with wicked curved beaks and truly cold and evil eyes. These are the birds with the brilliant scarlet throat pouch that inflates during the breeding season and, although we saw them on land, they were too far from the path to get good pictures.

Every island was different: some were so newly formed from volcanic activity that the lava flows were just as though they had been made yesterday. Thick ropes and whirls of molten cinder, frozen in time some hundred years ago, were as stark and sharp as though the earth had poured them out just hours ago. These massive fields of sculptured cinder meandered through the lunar landscape and etched the history of their fiery passage indelibly on our minds. Other islands had spatter cones still pushed high and steep with bare sides after hundreds of thousands of years. In this superb natural laboratory small fragments of life gradually appear and develop in their own evolutionary way. Darwin realised that the islands had given rise to a wide diversity of life that may have developed from a common source; however, what I didn't realise was that he only spent five short weeks in these islands and within this short space of time he was observant enough to see the unique developments that had taken place here.

As a first time visitor to this magical place I was enchanted by so much that time slipped by at double speed. We saw a huge variety of all types of natural history from the geological to the still developing bird and animal life. The plants and flowers were wonderful to see and photograph.

The birds were everywhere and entrancingly tame. I fell in love with a small sea-lion pup that watched me as I took its photo and then came and wanted to play with me. We saw land and marine iguanas in plenty. Marine iguanas are symbolic of these islands and they are unique; but, sadly, their uniqueness did little to endear them to me - they just seem to lie there all day sneezing, sh...ing and smelling to high heaven.

There can be no doubt that these islands are a very special part of our world, but, sadly, there is a fly in the ointment of paradise. In fact there are many flies that trouble these Galápagos Islands. Too many feral goats and pigs have wrought havoc on much of the island vegetation. They now number in the hundreds of thousands and although massive culls are taking place the guardians of these islands are barely keeping pace. Rats and imported wasps are also taking a toll on the endemic life forms. These will be harder to eradicate and will no doubt change the future evolutionary patterns. Man has brought most of these problems to the islands and, whilst, in our belated wisdom, we are trying to do something about it, it is still very saddening to see 'licensed' fishing boats completely de-nuding the coastal waters of sea-slugs for the Asian



aphrodisiac market. These sea-slugs play an important role in the offshore ecology yet they are now so over-fished that the numerous boats have to fish a half mile offshore to find them where twenty years ago they could be picked up in the shallows. I find it sad that the island government keeps draconian reins on ecological and responsible visitors and yet allows her own 'fishermen' to destroy the offshore ecology with such impunity.

These are wonderful islands and I consider myself enormously fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend a short time sailing

between them and seeing their wonderful life forms at first hand. Photographically, they were very, very hard work. It no longer surprises me that transient visitors seldom come away with 'masterpiece' pictures. You have to take what you see when you can. There are no hides or long stays allowed. But for once the camera didn't rule and, for me, the experience was one I shall never forget. If I have a chance to go back I'll be there like a shot.

We left Galápagos to return, with our sea-legs still swaying, to the heady air of Quito - high in the Ecuadorian Andes. Next stop.... The Amazon.



Picture details:

Page 20 Eroding spatter cone, or cinder cone on Bartolome' Island, Nikon F100 fitted with Nikon 28-105

Page 21 Marine iguanas basking (*Amblyrhynchus cristatus*) Sigma 100-300 on Nikon F100

Page 22 Land Iguana (*Conolophus subcristatus*) Sigma 100-300 on Nikon F100

All pictures were taken on Fuji Sensia 100 or Velvia and scanned using a Nikon Coolscan IV

Larval foodplant of the Orange-tip Butterfly

by Tony Wharton, FRPS

I was fascinated by Michael Shiriey's observations in the spring issue of *The Iris* on one of the possible effects of global warming on British wildlife, namely that the Orange-tip butterfly may have changed its favoured larval foodplant from Garlic Mustard to Lady's Smock.

My annual searches for Orange-tip eggs have been going on for as long as Michael's, but with very different results. I have found very many more eggs on Lady's Smock than on Garlic Mustard - probably by a factor of 50 or more -, the reason being, I feel sure, that I have rarely searched assiduously on the latter plant, having become accustomed initially to finding them easily on the former. Garlic Mustard has yielded very few, perhaps because I haven't searched with any great confidence.

Furthermore, the plant is far more widespread and prolific than Lady's Smock, so the search field is very much wider and therefore, doubtless, the distribution of the eggs is much more sparse.

I am not arguing that Michael's interesting hypothesis is wrong, or even only partly right, but that, in making such a supposition, other more prosaic and less dramatic factors should perhaps be considered as well, in order for a reasonably scientific conclusion to be reached. Could it be that, just as I have searched almost exclusively on one foodplant, Michael has concentrated primarily on the other, each of us, therefore, assuming that 'our' foodplant is the favoured one? The fact that, latterly, Garlic Mustard has become much more common than it used to be, may account for Michael's lack of recent success in finding eggs on that plant.

It would be interesting to have Michael's further thoughts on the subject, as well as other people's.

Picture details: photographed at 5x life size using a 100mm macro lens with a 24mm reversed on the front and extension tubes behind, plus a 'dash' of flash.



Field Meeting Report

Kenfig National Nature Reserve 14th June 2003

Sixteen members assembled in the Reserve Car Park to meet leaders Arthur Butler ARPS and John Hankin LRPS.

The first of many flowers found was Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) and large areas of Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) with Small Blue butterfly (*Cupido minimus*) busy amongst it.

Kenfig is famous for its orchids and many were in flower, Pyramidal, (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*), Early Marsh (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*) in the nominate form as well as both the brick red and white sub-species, (*D. i. ssp. coccinea*) and (*D. i. ssp. ochrantha*), Southern Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*) and Common Twayblade (*Listera ovata*). It turned out to be too early for the Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), but Fragrant Orchid was present in both the Common and Marsh forms (*Gymnadenia conopsea* and *G. c. ssp. densiflora*). It was fortunate also to find the nationally rare Broad-leaved Fen Orchid (*Liparis loesehi ssp. ovata*). Amongst the many other flowers Common Wintergreen (*Pyrola minor*) proved particularly photogenic. Lunch was held on the coast where Sea Holly was still in bud (*Eryngium maritimum*), but Sea Stock (*Matthiola sinuata*), Sea Bindweed (*Calystegia soldanella*), Common Broomrape (*Orobanche minor*) and many small vetches and clovers were well in flower.

Many Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) were found in the poor ground beside the road and away from the boggy areas. Dark Mullein (*Verbascum nigrum*), Viper's Bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) were also present in these areas.

In addition to the Small Blue already mentioned other butterflies were Dark Green Fritillary (*Mesoacidalia aglaia*) newly emerged, Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*), Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*), Common Blue (*Cupido icarus*), Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) and Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*), which had probably flown in from France.

White Plume Moth (*Pterophorus pentadactyla*), Six-spot Burnet (*Zygaena filipendulae ssp. stephensi*) and Cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*) comprised the moths. One species of dragonfly, the Four-spotted Chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*) and a few damselflies were on the wing. Birds included Mute Swans, Skylarks, Meadow Pipits and Kestrel.

A good day's photography was enjoyed by all and the Nature Group thanks the leaders for their work.

Putting the right name to it

by Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

I always regard it as both a privilege and honour to be asked to select photographs for an exhibition, or judge at a competition. I get real pleasure from looking at the work of fellow photographers and sense the pride and effort which has gone into the work on show. Often entries are so high that good work does not always gain admission and all of us have no doubt received our fair share of failed entries. As a selector I know only too well the disappointment of returned work, but what is particularly upsetting for me is to have to reject work, not for a lack of photographic merit, but because it is incorrectly titled. I can imagine the horror and embarrassment of receiving my work back with that comment on it. I thought therefore that I would put this article together, entirely in the spirit of giving a helping hand to those who may feel in need of it and certainly not from any judgmental position, I am far too humble for that, having made my fair share of mistakes in the past.

Let's begin with British mammals; we do not have a rich mammal fauna in comparison with many other countries so that should make things easier from a recognition point of view, a case of knowing your Rabbits from your Hares or your Fallow Deer from your Red Deer so to speak. There are other deer I know but those two are the most frequently photographed. Other mammals do not seem to cause any problems. More and more people are travelling world-wide and I begin to think I am the only nature photographer left who has not been on an African Safari! It is a certainty that at least one of the selectors will have done so and consequently do make sure you have the mammals correctly identified. Tour Guides should be correct, but not always your fellow holiday makers! British birds seem to be fairly accurately identified but there are some pitfalls, 'Seagull' is unacceptable so do make sure whether it is a Herring Gull, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull, Kittiwake, Lesser Black-backed Gull or Greater Black-backed Gull. Winter waders are a nightmare for the unwary so if you are unsure do get advice at the time if possible. Raptors can be very photogenic and can also be difficult in

certain lighting conditions, again either check at the time or seek advice later. Foreign birds tend to be fairly accurately identified, probably due to good information from the Tour Guides and other knowledgeable travelling companions. Reptiles and Amphibians, whether British or Foreign, also seem to be well identified (although I have known Adder and Grass Snake to cause problems).

Before we consider other groups let us look at scientific names. I am often asked why we have to use them when there is a perfectly good English name. Well English names are fine but only understood here in Britain and what is more, not always consistent across here! Let me give you an example. There is a strange fungus which looks somewhat like a discoloured cauliflower and not surprisingly it is named the 'Cauliflower Fungus', however in parts of the country it is known as 'Brain Fungus' and to confuse it even further there is another much smaller yellow coloured fungus which grows on trees which is also known as 'Brain Fungus'. The scientific names are *Sparassis crispa* for the Cauliflower/Brain Fungus and *Tremella mesenterica* for the Yellow Brain Fungus, which of course nicely separates them. Zoologists, Botanists, Mycologists and most experienced Naturalists have as it were grown up with these scientific names, but for those who are new to the game they are, I know, difficult. I'm afraid however you just have to bite on the bullet and do your best.

There are two parts to the name, the first is the Generic name, and describes the organism's Genus, and so for example the Bee Orchid belongs to the Genus *Ophrys*. The second part is the specific name and describes the species, so the Bee Orchid is *Ophrys apifera*. Notice that the first letter of the Generic name is always a capital and the specific name is always in lower case throughout. The names are Latinised ones and stem usually from either Latin or Greek but occasionally are entirely invented. Many of my generation probably studied either or both of those languages at school, I know I did, but younger generations may not have done and consequently may find getting used to the names even more difficult. But stick with it!

Incidentally do not ever worry about the pronunciation of the names, there are not too many people around who were there with the Romans and the Ancient Greeks and so pronunciation is essentially an accepted one. Some people do get somewhat toffee-nosed about it, once more don't worry about it is my advice, as I said even though I studied both I probably mispronounce with the best of them.

Now we come to butterflies, moths and dragonflies. These are normally pretty well accurately identified and if you photograph them you either know what they are or are with someone who does. Other invertebrates do give problems for there are not always English names at all and there is no doubt that the subjects can be quite photogenic. Take advice here, see later in this article about suggestions for how to seek this.

The Botanical Kingdom is well furnished with English names, even for foreign flowers! The identification guides are amongst the best of such produced. But do be careful, all gentians are not Spring Gentian (*Gentiana verna*), there are many of them and some Genera are fraught with difficulties. For example, what I will call the 'Dandelion Group' is a minefield, my advice is do not go there unless you really know what you are about. Grasses are rarely photographed and I can't recall ever seeing a mis-identification in an exhibition selection. The lower plants such as ferns, mosses, liverworts and algae obviously are potentially areas of great difficulty and unless you are an expert, advice is almost certainly necessary.

Fungi is probably the area with the greatest number of problems. Identification is often very difficult and even mycologists will not always commit themselves in the field. There really is only a handful of commoner very distinct species so fungi photography is an area where if you can identify the Genus you have done well and it is best left there; so *Mycena* sp. is perfectly acceptable (sp. being the abbreviation for species). If you are not knowledgeable and you are on your own you will have problems and fungi are so variable that identification guides are not always a great deal of use. Seek advice, but remember even mycologists may have difficulty with identification from photographs and some will not attempt to do so, but they should manage the Genus. That has probably put you off but don't dismay there are

still plenty of well-known fungi to give you a sufficient quantity of subjects for your camera and there are some helpful folk around to give you advice.

Lichens include some very beautiful subjects, but there are almost no English named species and many are very similar to another, so advice is vital.

That now brings me to what I will call the 'Advice Section'. You may frequently ask yourself "where can I go to find out what this is?" The identification guides published in this country are amongst the best in the world and if you don't have the one you need perhaps one of your chums does. The Internet is now widely used by many and I am sure it can help if you are able to access the correct site. Should book or Internet searches prove unsuccessful there are those of us in the Nature Group who will always help if possible. The members of the committee may be contacted and if the individual concerned cannot personally help he or she may well know someone who may be able to do so. Please don't hesitate to ask for advice.

I do hope that this has been of help. As your mother told you, 'do your best'. The bottom line however is that if all enquiries fail and identification eludes you, then the photograph, however good it is, should not really be entered for consideration in a Natural History Exhibition. 'Autumn Fungus', 'Birds at Dawn' or 'Meadow Flowers' are not acceptable titles for such an event, appropriate though they may be for a Pictorial Exhibition. I know it sounds tough but a Natural History Exhibition is slightly different from a general one. Don't forget either that the selectors are quite normal people (they are really!) also, if I'm anything to go by, they'll have made mistakes as well, and sometimes you'll get away with it! Remember that the Nature Group Exhibition goes on tour and so we really must be as accurate as possible. Above all keep smiling and enjoy your photography.

Over the years I have collected more identification guides than you could shake a stick at, it may help to list some of the titles which have been of enormous help to me over the years.

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BOOK REVIEW

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland

by Paul Waring and Martin Townsend
Illustrated by Richard Lewington
British Wildlife Publishing 2003
432pp, including 73pp of full colour plates plus
in-text colour illustrations and photographs
ISBN 09531399 13 £29.95 pbk

At last, a moth guide in which all the specimens are shown in their normal resting position giving, for this beginner to moth watching at least, a fighting chance of correctly identifying the insect. Like all the products of British Wildlife Publishing the book is a delight to hold and use and is well thought out in its layout. The sixteen-page introduction manages to be both concise and comprehensive and covers such topics as how to use the guide, moth biology and field techniques. The moth families are grouped into four sections

which have colour coded bands on the page edges, each section contains excellent descriptions of the various species and a page reference to the plate which holds the illustrations. Working the other way you can use the plates to identify the moth and use the page numbers at the top of the sheet to locate the description. It really is very simple to use. The descriptions are written under the following headings, Field characters, Similar species, Flight season, Life cycle, Larval foodplants, Habitat, Status and distribution, and they continue the concise style of the introduction. Richard Lewington is an unparalleled master of his art, the illustrations of the moths are exquisite, it is a pleasure simply to look through the book and one cannot help being in awe of such talent. If you are interested in moths and want a beautiful book to look at and read then don't hesitate, buy it. On a one to five star rating this gets five stars and rosettes as well.

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Some may be out of print, but there will be derivations, no doubt. Please remember that where books are concerned the maxim "one man's meat is another man's poison" is never more true.

A Very Personal Book List

Moths, Butterflies and Dragonflies/Damselflies

There are three very recent publications which are as good as they get. These are:

- *Field Guide to the Moths of GB & I*,
- *Pocket Guide to the Butterflies of GB & I*
- *Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of GB & I*.

Available directly from: British Wildlife Publishing, Lower Barn, Rooks Farm, Rotherwick, Hook, Hampshire RG27 9BG.

Insects

- *Guide to the Insects of Britain & Western Europe*, by Michael Chinery. Published by Collins.

Quite good, however, my copy was published in 1986, so it may no longer be available.

Lichens

The best Lichen guide and the only one of its kind as far as I am aware is:

- *Lichens, an Illustrated Guide to the British and Irish Species* by Frank Dobson.
Obtainable directly from the publisher, Richmond. Tel 01753 643104.

Fungi

I may be among a minority of folk who enjoy using it, but I find it very comprehensive and whilst the diagrams are not very large the information is good, it suits me anyway.

- *Fungi of Britain & Europe*, by Stefan Buczacki, published by Collins

We could almost certainly fill *The Iris* with Bird and Wildflower books so I shall not list any as there are many excellent publications and bookshops are usually well stocked. Select those which suit you, but ensure that they are identification guides and not encyclopaedias.

I hope that this will prove to have been of some use. You are always welcome to call me should you need further advice.

CHAIRMAN'S DAY

A Full Day of Nature Photography hosted by Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Saturday 13th November 2004, 10 a.m.

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

PROGRAMME

10.00 a.m.	Meet for Coffee/Tea	2.00 p.m.	Near at Home and Far Away Geoff Trinder ARPS
10.30 a.m.	Here, There & Everywhere Martin Withers FRPS		
11.15 a.m.	Coffee/Tea Break	3.30 p.m.	Coffee/Tea Break
11.30 a.m.	An Island Experience - Skokholm John Jones ARPS	3.45 p.m.	What My Photography Means to Me Patricia Seekings ARPS
12.15 p.m.	Lunch	4.30 p.m.	Approximate finish time

A Raffle will be held with some good prizes from Fuji, Manfrotto, Speed Graphic and others

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

Ensure your place by booking now!

Please complete reply slip below and send with your cheque (made payable to: The RPS Nature Group) to arrive not later than Monday 1st November 2004 to:
Robert Hawkesworth FRPS, 5 Ravensdale Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham NG8 2SL

Please send me _____ tickets for the Chairman's Day. I enclose £ _____

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS please) _____

Address (BLOCK CAPITALS please) _____

Postcode _____

News & Views

Dear Editor,

I was rather miffed to be stopped by two policemen in a van whilst photographing the upper branches of a London Plane tree on Highbury Fields; my local open space. I was told that it was illegal to take photographs for commercial reasons in any of London's Parks or green spaces without permission, including the Royal Parks. I assured them it was for personal reasons but they looked at my tripod and clearly didn't believe me. I held my ground and after around ten minutes they went away and I continued photographing. I later gained permission to do so from the head of the relevant department of my local council along with an apology.

I then rang the Royal Park's office and was told that photography was allowed as long as it wasn't commercial when a charge is made. Groups are allowed providing people don't bring in too much equipment.

Two years ago on Hampstead Heath I was approached by the Park's Police and told I couldn't use a tripod. They had no objections to me taking photographs, in this case of a backlit Maple leaf, but it was the tripod that bothered them. Apparently it's against the by-laws to use one on the Heath or in any other park, square or garden managed by the Corporation of London. I presume this includes Epping Forest?

I have never been stopped myself but I know of one Nature Group member who, when visiting Kew Gardens, was told not to use a tripod. The garden regulations state that 'special permission is required for commercial photography' so one assumes that as long as it's non-commercial, which it was with the lady concerned, it's ok to take photographs with or without a tripod. If you intend to take photographs in any of the glasshouses written permission is needed. If you're planning a trip to Kew check out 'visitors info' on their website at www.rbgekew.org.uk and run off a copy for your camera bag in case anybody stops you in the gardens.

London and other big cities are full of green oasis; wonderful places for both wildlife and nature photography but visits are now spoilt by the fear of confrontation with

authority. I wonder if other members have had similar difficulties and if so how they have dealt with them?

Best wishes,
Pat Tuson ARPS

Dear Editor,

I recently received my Butterfly Conservation pack and along with it came a brochure from Viva www.savethekangaroo.com

I was horrified to read that Australia is turning its outback into a slaughter-house! They are shooting thousands of kangaroos for their meat and skin - and it isn't just adult animals that are being killed but countless baby 'joeys' who are bludgeoned to death with iron pipes... The killing takes place at night in the Australian outback - well away from the public view and millions of kangaroos are being massacred for money.

I have only been to Australia once in 1996 and loved the kangaroos - I saw several species in the wild - including a beautiful big red kangaroo in the outback...

The current situation will reduce the sizes of the future generations of kangaroos and could also lead to a decrease in the ability of the population to survive.

The industry promotes the idea that kangaroos are at 'plague' proportions despite the fact that they have disappeared from some entire regions in Australia. Already 6 species of kangaroo have been made extinct in greater Australia and 17 other species are classified as endangered or vulnerable.

Would it be possible to mention this in *The Iris*? I did not know about this situation myself until I received this brochure and I wonder whether other Nature Group members may also be interested to know about it?
Please do let me know.

Best regards,

Diana Antonescu

Annual Exhibition Winners 2004

Print Section

Gold Medal - Best Print in the Exhibition
Snow Goose Landing by Malcolm Schuyt

Bronze Medal - Best Print in Section A
Black-browed Albatross in flight by Margery Maskell ARPS

Bronze Medal - Best Print in Section B
Flowering Quiver Tree (no 3) by Norman Prue FRPS

Selectors' Awards

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS
Ring-tailed Lemurs
by Martin Withers FRPS

John Myring ARPS
White Rhino
by Maggie Manson ARPS

David Osborn FRPS
Wild Fox Cubs
by Richard Revels FRPS

Slide Section

Gold Medal - Best Slide in the Exhibition
Kingfisher on Weeping Willow by Dickie Duckett. ARPS.

Bronze Medal - Best Slide in Section A
Newly Emerged Grasshopper by Kay Thompson ARPS.

Bronze Medal - Best Slide in Section B
Soaptree Yuccas Big Bend by Alan Millward. ARPS.

Bronze Medal - Best Slide in Section C
Agate overgrown on Quartz Crystals by John Jones ARPS.

Selectors' Awards

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS
Mayfly
by Kay Thompson ARPS.

John Myring ARPS
Reed Reflections
by Nick Jarvis ARPS.

David Osborn FRPS
Peregrine
by Gordon Follows ARPS

The Medal winning images are printed as follows:

Front cover:	Kingfisher on Weeping Willow by Dickie Duckett. ARPS.
Inside front cover:	Newly Emerged Grasshopper by Kay Thompson ARPS. Soaptree Yuccas Big Bend by Alan Millward. ARPS. Agate overgrown on Quartz Crystals by John Jones ARPS.
Inside back cover:	Black-browed Albatross in flight by Margery Maskell ARPS Flowering Quiver Tree (no 3) by Norman Prue FRPS
Back cover:	Snow Goose Landing by Malcolm Schuyt

Annual Exhibition Acceptances 2004

Accepted Prints:

Mary Allen LRPS	Mute Swan & Cygnets
Clive Bailey LRPS	Early Marsh Orchid
Peter Basterfield ARPS	Drake Pintail
Peter Beasley ARPS	King Penguin
	Muntjac
	Common Buzzard
Joan Bennett LRPS	Silver Sword
John Berry ARPS	Poplar Hawk Moth
	Fly Agaric
	Round-leaved Sundew C
Jayne Britton LRPS	Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>
Iain Byrne	Coyote
John Cucksey ARPS	Fossils in Sandstone (mainly Brachiopods)
Kenneth Day	Upland Goose with Chicks
	Cava Cactus HC
	Iceberg Sculpture
	Rock Patterns
Dickie Duckett ARPS	Red Kite in flight HC
	Great Crested Grebe family
	Common Sandpiper
	Long-tailed Tit C
	Kingfisher on twig HC
Valerie Duncan ARPS	Fox
Gordon Follows ARPS	Great Spotted Woodpecker
	Golden Eagle on Roe Deer HC
	Navelwort and Lichens HC
	Feeding Frenzy
	Algae on Geyser Overflow C
Roy Hodgkiss ARPS	Banded Demoiselle Female
	Robin
	Bee Orchid
	Atlantic Grey Seals
Michael Huggan ARPS	Crowned Crane
Nick Jarvis ARPS	Small Heath
	Autumn Maple C

John Jones ARPS	Brain Fungus <i>Sparassis crispa</i> HC
	<i>Diploicia canescens</i> after rain C
Maggie Manson ARPS	White Rhino <i>Ceratotherium simum</i>
	Selector's Award
	Sliprock Paintbrush <i>Castilleja scabrida</i>
Margery Maskell ARPS	Black-browed Albatross in flight Medal
	Tussock Grass
	Slate Detail C
Ian McLean LRPS	Hoodooos Joint erosion towers of limestone and dolomites
Maxine-Fay Miller	Sun Flowers
Philip Mugridge ARPS	Snow Goose
	Yellowhammer C
	Waxwings
Norman Prue FRPS	Hippo confrontation No2
	Kori Bustard displaying
	Lesser Flamingos' courtship display
	Flowering Quiver Trees No3 Medal
Jane Rees LRPS	Saguaro Cactus
Richard Revels FRPS	Hummingbird Hawkmoth feeding HC
	Black Grouse displaying C
	Barn Owl with Vole prey
	Wild Fox Cubs Selector's Award
	Thrift on Worm's Head Gower C
Malcolm Schuyll	Snow Goose Landing Gold Medal
	Pheasant displaying
I.P. Slee	Sally Lightfoot Crab
Sonja Thompson FRPS	Polar Bear
Ian Vaughan LRPS	Snails Mating
Ruth Walton	Opium Poppy
Martin Withers FRPS	<i>Baophis viridis</i> C
	Ring-tailed Lemurs Selector's Award
	Shield Bugs Madagascar C
	Diademed Sifaka HC

Accepted Slides:

John Bebbington FRPS	Parasitoid Larva emerging from Eyed Hawkmoth Larva HC
	December Moth Larva at rest on twig
	Green-veined White Butterflies paired
Tony Bond FRPS	Goldfinch HC
	Dark Green Fritillary
	Chanterelle
	Frosted Early Purple Orchids
	<i>Hericum erinaceus</i> C
Les Borg ARPS	Water Rail in search of food
	Goldfinch on Teasel seed head
	Dockey Wood nr Ashridge during bluebell time
Kath Bull ARPS	Hoverflies (<i>Syrphus</i> sp) feeding
	Small Elephant Hawkmoth (<i>Deilephila porcellus</i>)
	Cellular detail decaying leaf of Greater Dock HC
John Bulpitt FRPS	Cape Robin Chat
	Wildebeest birth
	Artic Tern with with Sandeel
	Reeds, Lock Gill Chrios, Skye

Andy Callow	Garden Snails mating
	Spider and prey x1.8
	Dung Fly and Prey x2.2
	Rhagionid Fly x2.2
Gill Cardy ARPS	Desert Wheatear
	Cattle Egret with dragonfly
John Chamberlin FRPS	Ring Tailed Lemur with young
	Giraffes drinking
	Tree Frog
	Collared Lizard
John Clark	Dripstone Breccia
Karen Cleland ARPS	Poplar Hawk Moth
	Marbled Carpet Moth
	<i>Psathyrella pennata</i>
	<i>Trichoglossum hirsutum</i>
Sandy Cleland FRPS	Marsh Horsetail C
	<i>Mycena haematopus</i>
	Brown Hare
Sandy Cleland FRPS	Trooping Crumble Cap
	<i>Gymnopicus penetrans</i>

Annual Exhibition Acceptances 2004 continued ...

Accepted Slides	continued:	
Gloria Cotton ARPS	Chital Stag Polar Bears Sparring Gerenuk	Brian Mogford ARPS Sunrise, Bryce Canyon, USA The Arches National Park USA Bryce Canyon Hoodoes USA
John Cucksey ARPS Bob Devine ARPS	Lava Shoreline & Caldera, Bartolome Carmine Bee Eater Albino Badger	Philip Mugridge ARPS Little Owl Lesser Kestrel Red Grouse C Rook Female Reed Bunting
Dickie Duckett ARPS	Bittern in reeds Kingfisher on Weeping Willow Gold Medal Olivaceous Warbler singing	Norman Prue FRPS Fendlers Hedgehog Cactus Mountain Houseleek Burchell's Zebra in lookout posture Black-veined White on Rosebay Willowherb Singing Bush Lark Prismatic spring run-off channel
Gordon Follows ARPS	Peregrine Selector's Award Great Spotted Woodpecker #2 Subantarctic Skua in King Penguin Colony Castle Geyser, Yellowstone	Kay Reeve FRPS Green-veined White paired Newly-emerged 4-Spot Chaser Orange Peel Fungus Kingcups in habitat
Patrick Halton Roy Hodgkiss ARPS	Moss fruiting bodies <i>Coprinus domesticus</i> Stinkhorn Early Purple Orchid	Richard Revels FRPS Wildcat Great Crested Grebe with chick Speckled Wood Butterfly Southern Marsh Orchids Reflections in river C
Ian Hulme FRPS	<i>Mycena haematopus</i> No3 Wax Caps <i>Hygrocybe cantharellus</i> Oyster Mushroom Broad Bodied Chaser Emerging Southern Hawker	Derek Rodway FRPS Sea Squirt Colony <i>Botryllus</i> <i>Scleroderma citrinum</i> <i>Lepiota procera</i> HC
Brian Iddon LRPS Nick Jarvis ARPS	Razorbill Bogbean C Reed Reflections Selector's Award Autumn Tree Tops Alder Drooping Pollen HC	Patricia Seekings ARPS Honey Fungus Trunk of Yew Tree C
C.D. Jeeves ARPS	<i>Neobulgaria pura</i> Water Arises <i>Geum rivale</i> HC	Colin Smith FRPS <i>Mycena inclinata</i> Heath Fritillary Little Owl the Ghost Moth Capercaillie
Margaret Johnson LRPS Dennis Johnson ARPS John Jones ARPS	Honey Fungus Red Deer Stag at rut Striped Hawkmoth Toothwort <i>Lathraea squamaria</i> <i>Caloplaca verruculifera</i> Agate overgrown on Quartz Crystals Medal	Ron Tear LRPS Lewis Thomas FRPS African Elephant Dog Whelk eating Anemone <i>Umbilicus rupestris</i> C
Peter Jones ARPS Georgina Keena LRPS Bryan Knox ARPS Tony McDade FRPS	Meerkat Sandstone Rock Detail C Polar Bear Common Cotton Grass Chantmerle Bird's Nest Orchids Creeping Avens Alpine Pasque Flowers, Granas St Bernard Pass	Kay Thompson ARPS Garden Spider Antlion Newly Emerged Grasshopper Medal Mayfly Selector's Award
Dave McKay ARPS Graham Meaker FRPS	Waved Umbra Wood Ants with Wasp Birds Nest Fungi	Geoff Trinder ARPS Grey-headed Kingfisher Great Blue Heron in flight Yellow-billed Stork Spring Flowers Gdegap N.R. S. Africa
Reg Mellis	Little Owl with Beetle Nuthatch Kingfisher with Frog	Monique Vanstone Black-veined White on Knapweed Broadbodied Chaser
Frank Millington ARPS	Privet Hawkmoth Caterpillar Common Sandpiper Ringlets paired Bearded Tit male	Derek Walton ARPS Large Blue <i>Maculinea ation</i> Thrift <i>Armeria maritima</i> Jurassic Coast, Burton Bradstock Castle Geyser, Yellowstone Park
Alan Millward FRPS	Soaptree Yuccas, Big Bend Medal Porcelain Orchid Patagonia	John Weir High Brown Fritillary Lady's Slipper <i>Cypripedium calceolus</i> Chicken of the Woods
Shirley Mogford	Plums and Custard <i>Tricholomopsis rutilans</i>	Helen Williams ARPS Osprey Great Skua Displaying HC Arctic Skua
		Rosemary Wilman ARPS Dune Pattern, White Sands NP HC Sulphur deposits, Rotorua, NZ
		Derry Wilman ARPS Navelwort <i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>



▲ **Bronze Medal Print - Section A**

Black-browed Albatross in flight
by Margery Maskell ARPS

▼ **Bronze Medal Print - Section B**

Flowering Quiver Tree (no 3)
by Norman Prue FRPS





Annual Exhibition 2004 Gold Medal Print Snow Goose Landing by Malcolm Schuyf