

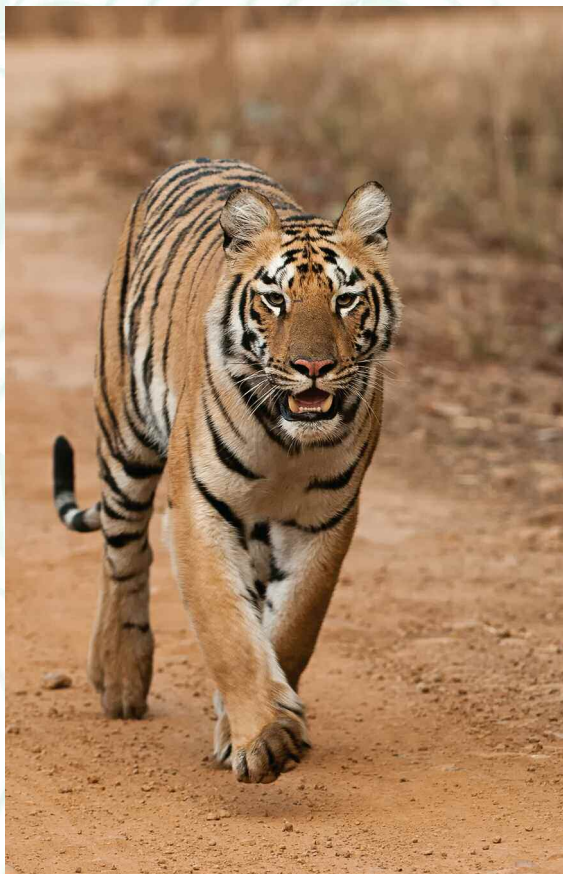
THE IRIS



MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

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Tiger by Geoff Trinder ARPS



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Copy should be sent as .txt or .doc files by email or on CD. Please do not send hand written copy.

Digitally captured photographic images are preferred but scanned transparencies are also acceptable. Images should be supplied on CD as sRGB Tiff files, 6" x 4" at 300 ppi (1800 x 1200 pixels, file size approx 6.17MB). Original transparencies may be submitted, however, the Editor cannot specify how long they may be away from the author.

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The Nature Group Website

www.rpsnaturegroup.com

The Nature Group Committee is sorry to advise members that the RPS Council have instructed all Special Interest Groups, Regions and Chapters to close down their independent websites. We have been offered no choice but to comply with this instruction and therefore our website will be closed once the new RPS website goes live this summer. The exact date that this will happen is still undetermined.

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Nature Group Exhibitions

CDs/DVDs of Nature Group Exhibitions are available for purchase by camera clubs/photographic societies for use in their programme. For more information please contact either the Exhibition Secretary or the Secretary, details above.

Editorial

This column is invariably the last thing I do before sending *The Iris* off to be printed. A week from today it will be July, the Summer Solstice is now behind us and yet there are still no real signs that Summer has begun. A visit to Upton Fen just last week provided us with some nice specimens of Southern Marsh Orchids to photograph plus a few other often overlooked floral subjects; there was a lonesome male Cuckoo calling for a mate and we also heard Sedge Warblers and Chiffchaff singing. Reports from friends in other parts of the UK (as well as those returning from continental destinations) are that the season seems to be running about three weeks late this year. We saw, but were unable to photograph, Swallowtails and Norfolk Hawkers - maybe we'll have better luck next week!

We certainly have been enjoying (perhaps enduring would be a better word) some strange weather, but when you see images from other parts of the world - the damage to peoples' lives and property caused by flooded rivers, landslides and tornadoes - it really puts it into perspective.

Thank you to all who provided articles for this issue. I have a couple of items for the Winter issue, but more are needed, so please get writing. Also, if you have recently been awarded a Distinction in Nature, please consider sharing your success with fellow members, who may themselves be aspiring to an Associateship or Fellowship. Reviews on Books and equipment are also worthy of inclusion. Details for sending articles and images are given on page 1.

This issue contains all the award winning images from this year's exhibition - very attractive images which I hope may provide some inspiration for those of you who did not enter to send an entry next year. If you would like to see all the accepted images from the exhibition, a CD has been produced and is available now. Details of how to obtain a copy are given elsewhere in this issue.

Finally, like many of you I expect, I was sorry to hear the news that Martin Withers had passed away. I have some fond memories of Martin during the years that I knew him. He was a staunch supporter of the Nature Group and his fine contributions to the Nature Group exhibitions will be missed.



From the chair

It was good to see so many members at the AGM. And we were treated to a wonderful variety of wildlife images starting with Dr. Kevin Elsby FRPS who showed us images of birds and mammals from the Arctic to the Antarctic and places in between. The lunch break allowed us to view the accepted prints in our exhibition and after the formalities of our AGM were completed we enjoyed a viewing of the DPI acceptances.

The exhibition has become a huge task and following Sue's resignation due to pressure of work we were extremely fortunate that Kevin and Margery volunteered to take on the task. We must also thank the helpers on selection day and those who hung the prints at the Old Schoolhouse. The committee has been concerned for some time about the losses incurred by the exhibition. We aim to make the exhibition break even overall and the only way we could envision making that possible was to bring production of the exhibition CD in-house. It was also decided to provide a copy of the basic CD free of charge to every entrant as there is no catalogue - although this edition of *The Iris* is largely about the exhibition. Many of you will have seen the first part of this exercise either at the AGM or at home of you were an entrant. I am sure that you agree that it is a very professional production. At the time of writing it is now in the capable hands of Kevin Elsby who is adding the commentary and music. If you did not enter the exhibition you can buy a CD for as little as £5. If you are a member of a local camera club why not suggest that they buy the version with commentary to either go on the programme or as an insurance policy when the visiting lecturer cries off at the last minute due to bad weather or illness.

In the early days of the Group there were field meetings somewhere almost every weekend from Spring to Autumn. There have been far fewer of late for reasons which have been discussed in previous issues of *The Iris*. I was therefore delighted to find in the last edition that field meetings are making something of a comeback. They are an ideal opportunity to discover new places, share ideas and meet fellow members. Please support them - nothing is more disappointing for someone who has spent time organising one only to have a poor attendance. I have often heard the complaint that there are none in my area. If so, why not offer to lead one yourself. And it would be good if someone, not necessarily the organiser, could be asked to write a brief report, with a couple of pictures, for publication in *The Iris*. Hopefully those who did not

attend will regret missing the meeting and Dawn will have lots of content for the next edition of *The Iris*.

The AGM took place during the weirdest spell of allegedly Spring weather that I can remember. At the time of writing the natural world is still weeks behind where it should be. Bird migration has been in turmoil! I can usually find St. George's mushroom at my local country park around the time of England's patron saint's day but not this year. I saw my first butterfly of 2013, a Peacock, on the 15th April. Last year it was a Red Admiral on the 23rd February. Following the dreadful 'Summer' of 2012 I fear for the Fritillaries of North Lancashire/Southern Cumbria which are on the brink, Pearl Bordered, Small Pearl Bordered, Duke of Burgundy and High Brown. Duke of Burgundy is now rare nationally and is being raised in captivity at Gait Barrows NNR in an attempt to boost the population. By the time you read this nature may have caught up as it usually does.

News of Martin Withers' death came as this edition of *The Iris* was being completed. Many of you may know that Martin had been very ill for some time, so although anticipated, his passing still came as a shock. He was a former Chairman of the Nature Group and the Nature Distinctions panel. He will be remembered as a very fine photographer who won many awards, not least in our own exhibition. He and David Hosking ran Hosking tours and some of you will probably have been on their visits to exotic places for nature photographers. Martin will probably be remembered mainly as a photographer of birds and mammals. However his interests were much wider and encompassed the whole of nature. The last occasion when I was out with him was when he asked if I could help him photograph one of Ainsdale's obscure Helleborines, the Pendulous flowered, *Epipactis phyllanthos*. Not only do the flowers hang downwards, they barely open. I sought the help of the staff of the NNR because although I was very familiar with the reserve I had never found it. They did us proud and took us by Land Rover to a remote part of this large reserve where there were several plants and showed us the how to distinguish it from the Dune Helleborine. A full obituary will be published in the next edition of the *Iris*. Meanwhile our thoughts are with Sally.

Tony

Ups and downs on the path to a Nature Associateship.

by Ken Rasmussen ARPS

My Licentiateship went well. I attended an advisory workshop with a large number of natural history images, some from a recent trip to Kenya and some of UK wildlife. The comments were encouraging and, indeed, I was told my images were of Associateship standard. This was confirmed by a member of the Nature Panel who was advising on Associateships. I obtained my 'L' in 2008 with a panel consisting of six images from Kenya and four of UK wildlife. There were no UK birds in it, however. Perhaps this was an omen.

Buoyed by my success, I wanted to take a similar approach for my 'A'. In June 2009 I looked for a suitable workshop, but there were no nearby Natural History days. I therefore contacted Andy Moore at the RPS who suggested that I send a set of twenty images to Tony Wharton. I sent Tony images of UK birds. Tony's response was swift but devastating. He did not think I could make a successful panel from the images. Analysing his comments, there seemed to be about ten images that were up to standard or could be with a little change. I knew I had other images of similar species which would overcome some of Tony's criticisms but of course they may have had other faults. It was clear I had more work to do.

I had two overseas holidays planned for the next twelve months in which I hoped to get some good images of birds. One was to the Galapagos Islands to celebrate my wife's retirement and the other was to Florida, with David Osborn, to photograph the birds there. So I considered the option of a 'birds in action' panel on the assumption that the holidays would produce some good images. However, a comment from Tony had struck a chord. He suggested I should not rule out doing a more varied panel - i.e. not just birds. I have always tried to photograph a range of wildlife and it would be an interesting challenge, I thought, and the 'Birds in action' option would still be there as a backup.

So, I decided to aim for a panel showing a variety of UK wildlife. Having seen panels with images of

five birds, five insects and five wildflowers I decided to follow suit. I also decided that if my panel was to truly show variety it should contain variety within each of the groups. This meant for example, the insects should include no more than one (adult) butterfly or moth and no more than one damselfly or dragonfly; there should be at most one orchid among the wildflowers and, ideally, at least one environmental (wide angle) shot; the birds should have examples from different environments and preferably with different behaviour.

As we had recently moved house from Reading to the East Midlands, I gave myself two years to produce the images - the first year to find and check out the local reserves and hopefully get a few suitable images, and the second year to finish the image taking. The summer of 2010 saw me in local nature reserves looking for the insect and wildflower images I needed as well as looking for new bird images. I also decided to go on David Osborn's annual fungi workshop in October 2010. Having always found fungi photography difficult, I hoped the weekend would not only be interesting and informative, but also that some of the techniques would be useful for wildflowers.

By the end of 2010, I was felt I was making progress. Then Tony Wharton struck again!

I had been reading back issues of the *Iris* to find advice on improving my wildflower and insect pictures when I came across Tony's 2008 article, 'Size does matter'. In the article Tony pointed out the benefits of using long focal length lenses for macro work: depth of field is the same as for shorter lenses but it is easier to get diffuse backgrounds. Getting good backgrounds has been the bane of my (photographic) life - it often seems easier to get a good image of the subject than to get a good background. I had been using a 60mm lens on a 1.6 crop factor camera (like a 100mm lens on a film camera) but decided to buy a longer lens (a Sigma 150mm macro).



Water Avens



Wood Pigeon



Common Frogs paired

By late summer 2011 I thought I had good selection of images and in fact, nine of the images in my final panel were taken that year. I enrolled on David's fungi weekend again and started looking for a suitable workshop. With other commitments preventing attendance at a local workshop, I was expecting I would need a long trip to Newcastle, when I noticed that the East Anglia group was holding a workshop in December. I applied and managed to get a place.

Less than a week before the workshop and after much planning of my proposed panel I had a change of heart. I decided that since it was a workshop I could afford to take a risk and if I was really going for variety in UK wildlife I should broaden the range of the panel. I decided to include fungi images as well as an image of a grass snake that had done well in club competitions. One advantage was that I had not managed to get an environmental flower shot but I did have a wide angle image of some shaggy scalycap fungi.

Richard Revels provided advice at the workshop. He seemed happy with the range of images but suggested that two of the images lacked contrast.



Knapweed Broomrape



Common Blue Butterfly



Grass Snake



Hairy Shieldbug



Fulmar

He also pointed out that there was movement blur on one image of the adult and pupa of a seven spot ladybird. I could not see the blurring but close examination of the digital image at 100% proved he was right. I also showed him an A4 size print of some common frogs I had wanted to include but had not had time to prepare fully (given my late change of mind about the panel). The contrast problems could be solved by better post processing and the ladybird image replaced so Richard suggested that I had a chance.

I finally submitted my panel in September 2012 and passed. None of the original twenty birds shown to Tony Wharton were in the panel and neither of the fungi photos were taken on David's fungi workshops, though I had learned a great deal from them.

I had obtained some pleasing bird images from my Galapagos and Florida holidays and I often wonder if it would have been simpler to submit a 'Birds in Action' panel. However, I know that I have learned more about Natural History and Natural History photography by following the path I did.



Common Spotted Orchid

I would like to thank both Tony and David for their influence on my panel and Richard for his advice at the workshop.

Panel contents

below left to right

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Water avens | <i>Geum rivale</i> |
| Wood pigeon | <i>Columba palumbus</i> |
| Shaggy scalycap | <i>Pholiota squarrosa</i> |
| Common frogs | <i>Rana temporaria</i> |
| Knapweed Broomrape | |
| (on Greater Knapweed) | <i>Orobanche elatior</i> |
| Common Blue butterfly | <i>Polyommatus icarus</i> |
| Grass snake | <i>Natrix natrix</i> |
| Hairy shieldbug | <i>Dolycoris baccarum</i> |
| Whitethroat | <i>Sylvia communis</i> |
| Common blue damselfly | <i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i> |
| Wild mignonette | <i>Reseda lutea</i> |
| Fulmar | <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> |
| Dryads saddle | <i>Polyporus squamosus</i> |
| Mallards | <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> |
| Common spotted orchid | <i>Dactylorhiza fuschii</i> |



Statement of intent

This panel shows a range of UK wildlife. It shows examples from a number of different groups of wildlife and where there is more than one image from a particular group (such as insects or wildflowers) it shows variety within that group. The panel reflects the types of UK natural history images I have taken in recent years.

Panel Layout



My Local Patch

by Fiona Mackay ARPS AFIAP

The magazines are full of them – alluring advertisements for trips to exotic places, with exotic wildlife, shown to you by guides with expert local knowledge. Tempting, very tempting – until I check out the cost and then I can find all sorts of sour grape-ish justifications for ignoring them. Guides, huh! Being shown is not nearly as satisfying as finding and seeing all by yourself. Exotic? Just some local person's local patch and probably as mundane as mundane can be to them. It'll be too hot, too cold, the insects probably bite or sting worse than midges and don't even think about venomous snakes. Airports are hell... And so, laden down with sour grapes and gear, I set off once again to my own personal Local Patch. Possibly someone from overseas would find it exotic. Or possibly not.

This local patch is about three minutes stroll up the road from the house. It's basically a hill, a small basaltic outcrop with some fairly precipitous rock faces. There is a large open, well-kept grass area, part of the grounds of some A-listed institutional

buildings, with a surrounding fringe of trees. Beyond there is a small stretch of council-owned steeply sloping rough grassland, leading down to a narrow strip of wood that ends at a council sports centre complete with boating pond. I've never seen any boats but there are ducks. The whole thing is a small but wonderful green lung, an oasis, right in the city. Part of it used to have a nice 'wild' feeling, as there was no real path through it, just a very muddy track worn by feet and the occasional mountain bike. Now this part has been designated a Local Nature Reserve and the narrow muddy track has been replaced with a broad ash-surfaced path with steps up the steep bits – the sort of steps that are the wrong height and the wrong depth, so that you either go up and down them in a laborious dot-and-carry-one kind of movement, or, more comfortably, walk beside them, so creating a nice muddy path of your own. I half expect street lights to appear. Still, it is now a splendidly accessible dog-walking area and is regularly adorned with little plastic bags hanging from low branches or just lying on the ground. The



squirrels seem to have got fewer, but as they are greys, that is perhaps no bad thing. There is a reasonable collection of birds, but there are too many dogs and too much disturbance to think about serious bird photography. Botanically, it is not very rich, as the tree cover is too dense to allow much to grow underneath. The open grass area is dominated by gorse, brambles, raspberries and willow-herb, with some umbellifers, nettles, thistles and lots of ragwort. At a brisk trot I could walk round the whole thing, door to door, in fifty minutes, though I am getting slower on the steep bits.

Perhaps it doesn't sound very prepossessing, and in a way it isn't. The wooded bits are quite gloomy, and given our weather, very muddy. The open areas are plagued with wind. I admit I have to work very hard to find subjects for photography. A lot of very close looking is required. This is why I rarely make the circuit in fifty minutes and am more likely to spend an hour or so in one small area. I do find things, however, and the effort involved in finding them somehow adds to the satisfaction of the find. The effort sometimes involves literally crawling through the undergrowth. This does attract the attention of various canines but so far these have been, on the whole, friendly. Now and then I wonder about some of the owners, though. This is the city, after all, and



Auricularia auricula-judae



Pleurotus cornucopiae



Xylaria hypoxylon



Conops quadrifasciatus



Pentatoma rufipes



Bibio pamona

all sorts are found here. With time, you learn where the good bits are, and time spent there is usually rewarded. Not with anything exotic – or at least, not to us – but interesting nonetheless. Insects and other invertebrates are the most likely subjects, but other things are found from time to time. And photographically, it is rewarding. This, my own little 'Local Patch', has so far garnered me thirty nine acceptances in international exhibitions including an HM, a BPE Ribbon, a Selector's Award in the RPS Nature Group Exhibition, and a few images for my Associateship Panel. Not bad going for just up the road – and environmentally very friendly, as no fossil fuels were used to get there.

But – there is always a 'but' – the listed buildings and the grounds have now been sold to developers. Listed buildings are a great excuse for developers to claim that there must be 'enabling' new-build to fund the conversion of the listed buildings. Under the proposed plans, most of the well-kept open space will be covered with new-build, many of the trees will be felled and my own favourite invertebrate-rich spot will be covered with what will no doubt be described as 'luxury town houses'. All this will leave the Local Nature Reserve area as a very small island free of buildings. We have fought it, of course we have. Letters have been written, petitions have been signed, meetings have been held, a website has been produced. At the time of writing, we await the Planning Committee's decision. There are reasons, peculiar to this site, to be just a little bit hopeful. For other sites, this would not be true.

So the lesson, if lesson there be, is this: cherish your own personal Local Patch and exploit it (photographically) as much as you can while you can. It may not always be there. Some developers (sic) may be eyeing it up, and while their plans for it may not yet be concrete, in most cases you can be fairly sure that's how it will end up.



Pardosa amentata

The RPS Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2013

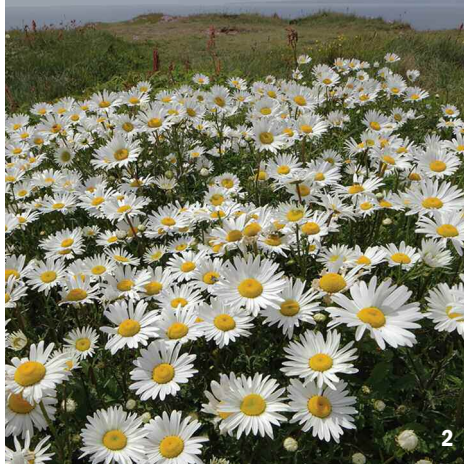
Gold Medals



Gold Medal Print: Sandhill Cranes in flight by Dave McKay ARPS

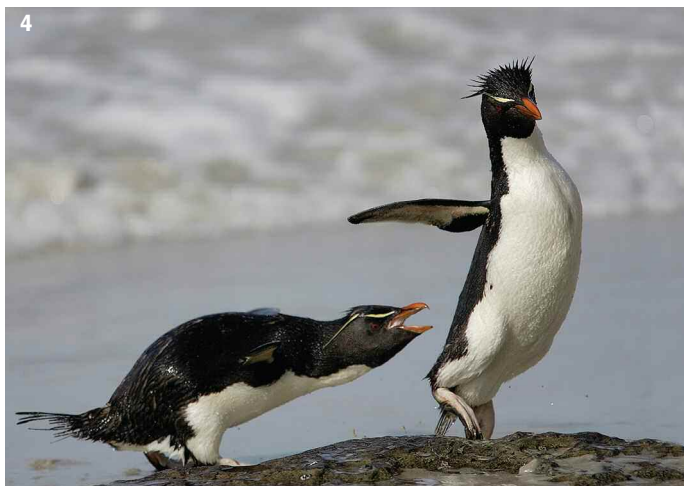
Gold Medal Projected Image: Great Tit in flight by Richard Revels FRPS





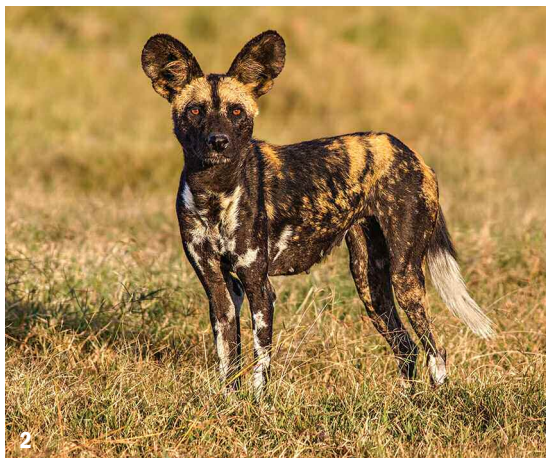
Bronze Medals

- 1: Alpine Pasque Flower,
Sheila Weir ARPS
- 2: Oxeye Daisies,
Richard Revels FRPS
- 3: Red Kite in the rain,
Thomas Hanahoe FRPS
- 4: Rockhopper Penguins
aggression,
Richard Revels FRPS





1



2



3

Selectors' Awards - Digital Section



4

- 1: Arctic Tern in flight
by Ken Wade LRPS
- 2: Wild Dog, alpha female
by Martin Chapman
- 3: Skimmer skimming low
by David Cantrille FRPS
- 4: *Mycena polygramma*
by Roy Hodgkiss ARPS
- 5: Musk Orchid
by Lesley Simpson ARPS
- 6: Dog Stinkhorn by John
Weir ARPS



5

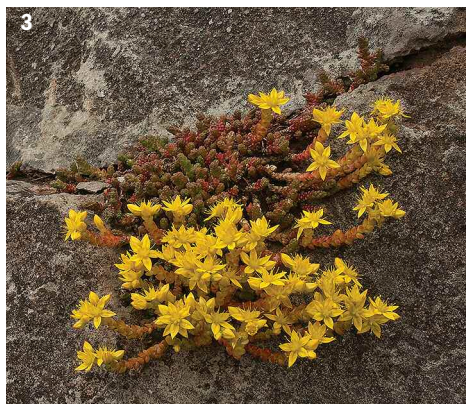


6

Selectors' Awards - Print Section



- 1: *Mycena inclinata*,
Tony Bond FRPS
- 2: Brown Hairstreak Butterfly,
Richard Revels FRPS
- 3: Biting Stonecrop,
Sheila Weir ARPS
- 4: Juvenile Hawfinch,
Gordon Follows ARPS
- 5: Red Grouse taking off,
Gill Cardy ARPS
- 6: Burnt Orchids,
Richard Revels FRPS





Highly Commended Projected Images



- 1: Osprey with nest material
by Kevin Elsby FRPS
- 2: Short-eared Owl hunting
by Martin Chapman
- 3: Leopard adult & cub
by Ralph Snook
- 4: Whooper Swans
by Patricia Kearton LRPS
- 5: Musk Ox scratching
by Adrian Langdon ARPS





Highly Commended Projected Images

- 1: *Aculepeira armida* male by John Simpson
- 2: Pasque Flowers by Stan Saunders ARPS
- 3: *Doronicum grandiflorum* by Ann Miles FRPS
- 4: Quaking Grass by Gill Cardy ARPS
- 5: Bog Asphodel by Lesley Simpson ARPS

RPS Nature Group Exhibition 2013

Projected Image Awards

Gold Medal

Richard Revels FRPS	Great Tit in Flight	Gold
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Bronze Medal

Richard Revels FRPS	Rockhopper Penguins aggression	Bronze
Sheila Weir ARPS	Alpine Pasque Flower	Bronze

Selector's Award

David Cantrille FRPS	Skimmer skimming low	Selector Award – Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
John Weir ARPS	Dog Stinkhorn	Selector Award – Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
Roy Hodgkiss ARPS	<i>Mycena polygramma</i>	Selector Award – Roger Hance FRPS
Ken Wade LRPS	Arctic Tern in flight	Selector Award – Roger Hance FRPS
Martin Chapman	Wild Dog, alpha female	Selector Award – David Osborn FRPS
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Musk Orchid	Selector Award – David Osborn FRPS

Highly Commended

Gill Cardy ARPS	Quaking Grass	Highly Commended
Martin Chapman	Short-eared Owl hunting	Highly Commended
Kevin Elsby FRPS	Osprey with nest material	Highly Commended
Patricia Kearton LRPS	Whooper Swans	Highly Commended
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Musk Ox scratching	Highly Commended
Ann Miles FRPS	<i>Doronicum grandiflorum</i>	Highly Commended
Stan Saunders ARPS	Pasque Flowers	Highly Commended
John Simpson	<i>Aculepeira armida</i> male	Highly Commended
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Bog Asphodel	Highly Commended
Ralph Snook	Leopard adult and cub	Highly Commended
	Cold Rainbow	Highly Commended

Commended

John Chamberlin FRPS	Griffon Vulture feeding	Commended
	Jackal pair scavenging	Commended
	Kildeer reflected	Commended
	Early light Quiver Tree forest	Commended
Philip Mugridge ARPS	Laysan Albatross	Commended
Richard Nicoll ARPS	Brown Hare running in the snow	Commended
Stan Saunders ARPS	Marsh Helleborine	Commended
Ken Wade LRPS	Gannets communicating	Commended
Sheila Weir ARPS	Glacier Buttercup	Commended

Projected Image Acceptances

Author	Title	Award
Peter Basterfield ARPS	European Bee-eater with Swallowtail Butterfly	
	European Roller preening	
	Great Reed Warbler singing	
John Bebbington FRPS	Lobster Moth newly-ecdysed 5th instar larva with exuvium	
Gordon Bramham ARPS	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	
	Indian Pond Heron	
	Chital grazing	
	Fulmar nesting	
David Cantrille FRPS	Willet wing stretch	
	Skimmer skimming low	Selector Award – Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
	Reddish Egret at sunset	
	Great Blue Heron with red flowers	
Gill Cardy ARPS	Jay in snow	
	Golden Eagle on willow grouse	
	Sedge Warbler	
	Quaking Grass	Highly Commended
John Chamberlin FRPS	Griffon Vulture feeding	Commended
	Jackal pair scavenging	Commended
	Kildeer reflected	Commended
	Egyptian Vulture at dawn	
	Early light Quiver Tree forest	Commended
Martin Chapman	Leopard drinking	
	Wild Dog, alpha female	Selector Award – David Osborn FRPS
	Short-eared Owl hunting	Highly Commended
Andrew C M Chu ARPS	Puffin	
	Juvenile Coal Tit	
	Common Blue	
John Cucksey ARPS	Carmine Bee-eater	
	Spotted Hyaenas on prowl	
	Spotted Bush Snake eating frog	
Liz Cutting ARPS	Jay - anting	
	Rook in flight	
	Grey Heron with twig	
Trevor Davenport ARPS	Newly emerged White Satin Moth	
	Cocoon and pupating caterpillar of Six-spot Burnet	
	Basalt Column Formation at Aldeyjarfoss, Iceland	
Bob Devine ARPS	Mating Lions #13	
	Cheetah with kill in Masai	
	Lioness with cub #1	
	Hoopoe with lizard	
Chris Ellison LRPS	Banded Demoiselle	
	Groundbug, Shieldbug and Ants	
	Hoverfly in meadow	
	Orange Tip	
	Shaggy Ink Cap	

Kevin Elsby FRPS	Reddish Egret fishing Osprey with nest material Male Red-backed Shrike	Highly Commended
Peter Farmer	Walrus Arctic Fox Lilian's Lovebirds	
James Foad	<i>Cryptocephalus</i> sp. copulating in yellow composite	
Gordon Follows ARPS	Tree Sparrow bathing Gannet battling updraft Bee-eater Ripples at White Sands	
Graham Goddard ARPS	Kingfisher Roe Deer Seal pup	
Thomas Hanahoe FRPS	Red Deer preparing to rut Red Deer breaking the ice	
Margaret Hocking ARPS	Leopard killing Impala	
Roy Hodgkiss ARPS	Mute Swan bathing Oystercatcher chick wing stretching <i>Mycena polygramma</i>	Selector Award – Roger Hance FRPS
John Hunt ARPS	Little Bee-eater	
Peter Jones ARPS	Cougar crossing river White-tailed Eagle dispute	
Patricia Kearton LRPS	Japanese Macaque Polar Bears White-tailed Eagles Whooper Swans Iceberg	Highly Commended
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Brown Bears sparring Brown Bear Musk Oxen Musk Ox scratching Fly Agaric	Highly Commended
Ludi Lochner ARPS	Brown-veined White Butterfly in wild	
Michael Loizou ARPS	<i>Arenaria interpres</i> <i>Ardea cinerea</i> <i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	
Maggie Manson ARPS	Red Campion seed pod	
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Great Skua in flight Bull Elk calling #2 Many-zoned Polypore	
Margery Maskell ARPS	Great Skua in aggressive stance	
Dave McKay ARPS	Bald Eagle in snowstorm Pied Kingfisher	
Mike Middleton ARPS	Common Morel	
Ann Miles FRPS	Brown Hare Dunlin flock <i>Doronicum grandiflorum</i>	Highly Commended

Gordon Mills ARPS	Cheetah, South Africa	
Helen Mugridge ARPS	Bull Elephant Seal	
	King Penguins	
	Gentoo Penguin	
	Wild Orang-utan	
Philip Mugridge ARPS	Black-browed Albatross	
	Laysan Albatross	Commended
	King Penguin chicks	
Richard Nicoll ARPS	Brown Hare running in the snow	Commended
	Marsh Harrier with nesting material	
	Little Egrets chasing	
	Black-tailed Godwit landing	
Andrew Parsons ARPS	Bank Vole eating	
	Tree Sparrow calling	
Ron Perkins ARPS	Bald Eagle	
	Bald Eagle	
	Bald Eagles	
Norman Prue FRPS	Marine Iguana in mating colours	
	Fendler's Hedgehog Cactus	
Ken Rasmussen ARPS	Shy Mollymawk	
	Whimbrel	
	Glistening Inkcup	
Jane Rees ARPS	Golden-winged Skimmer	
	Bull Moose	
	Eastern Sweetshrub	
	Quaking Aspen	
Richard Revels FRPS	Migrant Hawker Dragonfly hovering	
	Rockhopper Penguins aggression	Bronze
	Great Tit in Flight	Gold
	Grey Squirrel jumping with conker	
	Crested Cow-wheat (<i>Melampyrum cristatum</i>)	
	Golden Samphire in habitat	
David Robinson ARPS	Double-crested Cormorant	
	Dalmation Pelican	
	Black-throated Divers	
	Brambling	
Steve Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Leopard portrait	
	Snowy Owl yawning	
	Drenched Snowy Owl	
	Emerging Polar Bear	
Mike Rowe ARPS	Black Skimmer	
	Bloody Nosed Beetles	
	Double-crested Cormorant	
	<i>Cladonia chlorophaea</i>	
Stan Saunders ARPS	Knapweed Fritillary, Southern France	
	Four-spotted Chaser	
	Turnstone	
	Pasque Flowers	Highly Commended
	Marsh Helleborine	Commended

Graham Saxby	Pheasant	
Brian Sherwin LRPS	Monkey Orchid	
John Simpson	Aculepeira armida male	Highly Commended
	Bupestid Beetles (<i>Anthaxia hungarica</i>)	
	<i>Argiope bruennichi</i> #2	
	<i>Pleurocybella porrigens</i>	
	<i>Dryas octopetala</i> with ant	
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Calosoma feeding	
	Parasitised Shield Bug	
	Bog Asphodel	Highly Commended
	Musk Orchid	Selector Award – David Osborn FRPS
Shelley Skipton-Knight LRPS	Oystercatcher	
	Nuthatch	
	Crested Tit	
Ralph Snook	Cheetah and 6 cubs	
	Leopard adult and cub	Highly Commended
	Cold Rainbow	Highly Commended
	Gulls flight pattern	
Martin Vaughan LRPS	Jay tossing acorn	
	Wild Buzzard eating pigeon	
	Whitebell amongst bluebells	
Ken Wade LRPS	Arctic Tern in flight	Selector Award – Roger Hance FRPS
	Broad Bodied Chaser Dragonfly	
	Gannets communicating	Commended
	Common Spotted Orchid	
Mike Walker	Spoonbill	
	European Bee-eater with Dung Beetle	
Valerie Walker ARPS	Herding instinct	
	<i>Morea fujax</i>	
John Weir ARPS	Clouded Yellow	
	Bee Orchid	
	Ragged Robin	
	Dog Stinkhorn	Selector Award – Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
Sheila Weir ARPS	Semi-palmated Plover	
	Orange Tip	
	Alpine Pasque Flower	Bronze
	Glacier Buttercup	Commended
David Wessely ARPS	Leopard	
	Aurora Borealis	
Rosemary Wilman Hon.FRPS	Little Egret with Pipe Fish	
	Common Starfish and trail	

RPS Nature Group Exhibition 2013

Print Awards

Gold Medal

Dave McKay ARPS

Sandhill Cranes in flight

Gold Medal

Bronze Medals

Thomas Hanahoe FRPS

Red Kite in the rain

Bronze Medal

Richard Revels FRPS

Oxeye Daisies

Bronze Medal

Selector' Awards

Richard Revels FRPS

Brown Hairstreak Butterfly

Selector Award – Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS

Sheila Weir ARPS

Biting Stonecrop

Selector Award – Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS

Gill Cardy ARPS

Red Grouse taking off

Selector Award – Roger Hance FRPS

Richard Revels FRPS

Burnt Orchids

Selector Award – Roger Hance FRPS

Gordon Follows ARPS

Juvenile Hawfinch

Selector Award – David Osborn FRPS

Tony Bond FRPS

Mycena inclinata

Selector Award – David Osborn FRPS

Highly Commended

Kevin Elsby FRPS

Bee-eater landing with ground bee prey

Highly Commended

Creeping Ladies Tresses

Highly Commended

Dave McKay ARPS

Bald Eagle aggression

Highly Commended

Richard Revels FRPS

Common Darter Dragonflies in tandem

Highly Commended

Steve Rogala-Kaluski ARPS

Snowy Owl in last rays of light

Highly Commended

Sheila Weir ARPS

Short-leaved Gentian

Highly Commended

Commended

Tony Bond FRPS

Spore discharge – *Gaeastrum triplex*

Commended

Armillaria mellea in mobile dune habitat

Commended

John Bulpitt FRPS

Azure Damselfly on Lesser Water Pepper

Commended

Peter Jones ARPS

White-tailed Eagle landing

Commended

Richard Revels FRPS

Buzzard with rabbit prey

Commended

David Robinson ARPS

Osprey feeding

Commended

Print Acceptances

Author

Tony Bond FRPS

Title

Spore discharge – *Gaeastrum triplex*

Award

Commended

Armillaria mellea in mobile dune habitat

Commended

Mycena inclinata

Selector Award – David Osborn FRPS

John Bulpitt FRPS

Azure Damselfly on Lesser Water Pepper

Commended

Dark Green Fritillaries paired

Gill Cardy ARPS

Fieldfare swallowing berry

Red Grouse taking off

Selector Award – Roger Hance FRPS

Red Squirrel on bracket fungus

Steller's Eagle

Martin Chapman

Hunting Grass Snake

Winter Starling

Cheetah cub at sunset

John Cucksey ARPS	Brown Hare	
Liz Cutting ARPS	Spotted Hyaenas feeding	
	Male Crossbill at water	
	Nuthatch on birch	
	Chiffchaff with nest material	
	<i>Shaggy Pholiota</i> on beech leaves	
Kevin Elsby FRPS	Bee-eater landing with ground bee prey	Highly Commended
	Blue Tit in flight	
	Royal Tern bathing	
	Creeping Ladies Tresses	Highly Commended
James Foad	Hoverfly (<i>Rhingia campestris</i>) on Water Avenas (<i>Geum rivale</i>)	
Gordon Follows ARPS	European Whitefronts and wind turbines	
	Gannet collecting nest material	
	Hummingbird Hawk-moth Caterpillar	
	Juvenile Hawfinch	Selector Award – David Osborn FRPS
	Travertine Terraces	
	Thrift	
Albert W Gilchrist	Cherry Blossom	
	Red Campion	
Thomas Hanahoe FRPS	Red Kite in the rain	Bronze Medal
	Hen Harrier with prey	
	Short-eared Owl on a post	
	Barn Owl on the hunt	
	Bluebells	
John Jones ARPS	<i>Anaptychia runcinata</i>	
	Montezuma Pine Cones	
	Common Spotted Orchids	
Peter Jones ARPS	Langar Monkey with baby	
	Steller's Eagle Landing	
	White-tailed Eagle landing	Commended
Bryan Knox ARPS	Pair of Hyacinth Macaws	
Ludi Lochner ARPS	Giraffe family group in the wild	
	African Laughing Doves in the wild – sunset	
	<i>Bulbinella latifolia</i> in natural habitat	
Fiona Mackay ARPS	<i>Conops quadrifasciatus</i>	
	<i>Phyllopertha horticola</i>	
	<i>Salmo salar</i> leaping falls	
	<i>Dicranum scoparium</i> and <i>Pseudoscleropodium purum</i>	
	<i>Oudemansiella mucida</i>	
	<i>Sempervivum montanum</i>	
Jean MacWhirter LRPS	Great Spotted Woodpecker chick	
	Polar Bear and cub with seaweed	
	Iceberg with volcanic ash, Iceland	
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Oystercatcher nesting on post	
	Capillary Thread-moss with spore capsules	
Margery Maskell ARPS	Gannet collecting nesting material	
	Black Guillemot calling	
	Female Wheatear with grub	
	Many-zoned Polypore	
Dave McKay ARPS	Bald Eagle aggression	Highly Commended
	Mating Common Blue Damselflies #1	
	Sandhill Cranes in flight	Gold Medal
	Immature Bald eagle with salmon	

Ian McLean ARPS	Griffon Vulture (<i>Gyps fulvus</i>)	
	Scarce Copper (<i>Lycaena virgaureae</i>)	
	Lady's Smock (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>)	
Ann Miles FRPS	Redshank display	
	Drinker Moth laying eggs	
	Grey Heron with perch	
	Wood Anemone	
	<i>Gentiana bavarica</i>	
Gordon Mills ARPS	Green Heron (<i>Butorides virescens</i>) - Costa Rica	
Richard Nicoll ARPS	Kestrel mobbing Short-eared Owl #2	
	Brown Hare	
	Hobby hunting mayfly	
Ken Plumb ARPS	Cicada (<i>Cicadetta montana</i>)	
Ken Rasmussen ARPS	Fulmar	
	Royal Tern bathing	
	Shaggy Scalycaps in environment	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Common Blue Damselfly feeding	
	Hare's Ear Fungi	
	Stinkhorn	
	Pyramidal Orchid trio	
Richard Revels FRPS	Brown Hairstreak Butterfly	Selector Award – Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
	Common Darter Dragonflies in tandem	Highly Commended
	Buzzard with rabbit prey	Commended
	Oxeye Daisies	Bronze Medal
	Burnt Orchids	Selector Award – Roger Hance FRPS
	Parasol Mushrooms in Meadow	
David Robinson ARPS	Black-bellied Plover	
	Osprey feeding	Commended
	Pied Wheatear	
	Great Blue Heron presenting branch	
Steve Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Warthog portrait	
	Snowy Owl in last rays of light	Highly Commended
	On the wing	
	Grizzly Bear sow and cubs	
Mike Rowe ARPS	Red Deer adorned with bracken	
	Minstrel Bugs paired	
	<i>Hoplia coerulea</i>	
	Sanderling feeding on Mussels	
	<i>Cladonia portentosa</i>	
	Wolf's Milk Slime Mould	
Stan Saunders ARPS	Wild Flower Meadow, Switzerland	
	Common Spotted-Southern Marsh Hybrid Orchid	
John Weir ARPS	Female Common Darter	
	King of the Alps	
	<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	
Sheila Weir ARPS	Tricolored Heron	
	Sea Bindweed and Sea Holly	
	Short-leaved Gentian	Highly Commended
	<i>Cladonia chlorophaea</i>	
	Biting Stonecrop	Selector Award – Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS



Highly Commended Prints

- 1: Bald Eagle aggression,
Dave McKay ARPS
- 2: Creeping Ladies Tresses,
Kevin Elsby FRPS
- 3: Bee-eater landing with ground bee prey,
Kevin Elsby FRPS
- 4: Snowy Owl in last rays of light,
Steve Rogala-Kaluski ARPS
- 5: Common Darter Dragonflies in tandem,
Richard Revels FRPS







Commended Projected Images

- 1: Brown Hare running in the snow
by Richard Nicoll ARPS
 - 2: Laysan Albatross by Philip Mugridge ARPS
 - 3: Gannets communicating by Ken Wade LRPS
 - 4: Glacier Buttercup by Sheila Weir ARPS
 - 5: Marsh Helleborine by Stan Saunders ARPS
 - 6: Griffon Vulture feeding
 - 7: Jackal pair scavenging
 - 8: Kildeer reflected
 - 9: Early light Quiver Tree forest
- Above four images by John Chamberlin FRPS





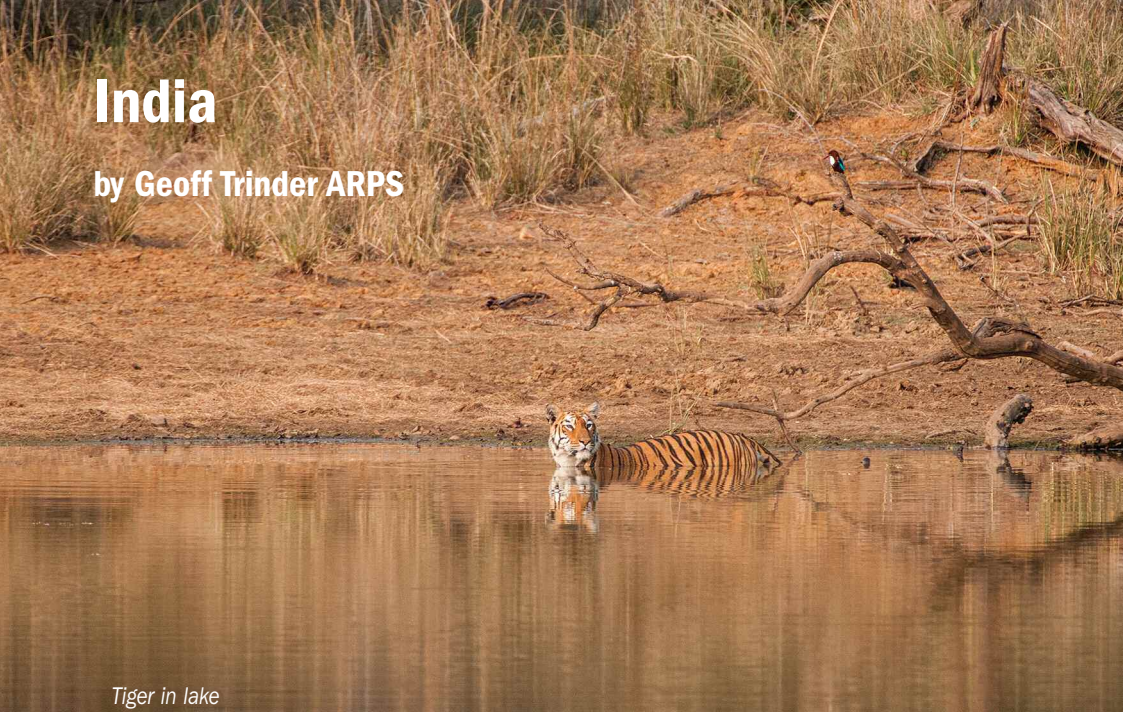
Commended Prints

- 1: Azure Damselfly on Lesser Water Pepper, John Bulpitt FRPS
- 2: Osprey feeding, David Robinson FRPS
- 3: Buzzard with rabbit prey, Richard Revels FRPS
- 4: White-tailed Eagle landing, Peter Jones ARPS
- 5: *Armillaria mellea* in mobile dune habitat, Tony Bond FRPS
- 6: Spore discharge – *Geastrum triplex*, Tony Bond FRPS



India

by Geoff Trinder ARPS



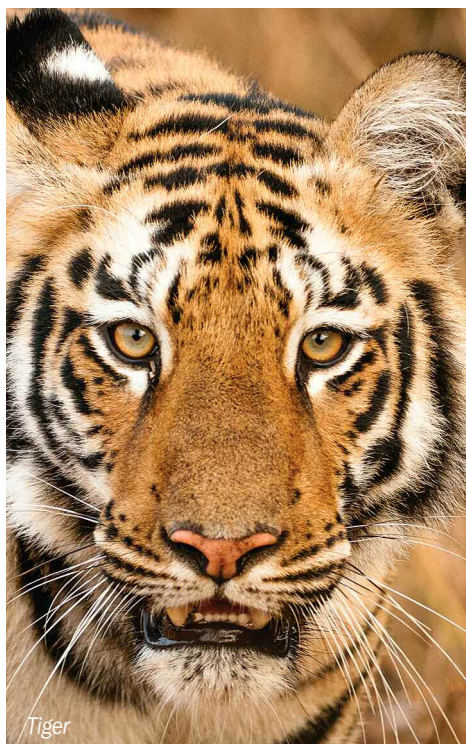
Tiger in lake

I have always had an ambition to see and, if possible, photograph Tigers in the wild. So in 2013 my wife and I arranged a trip to India in late January and early February and, although Tigers were highest on the list of subjects, we went with an open mind aware that we may not even see one!

Having arrived a day late due to snow and ice at Heathrow we went straight to Bharatpur, so missing a day in Delhi, not a particular hardship. Needless to say there were good numbers of bird species to see and photograph, these included Brown Hawk Owl, a Crested Serpent Eagle eating a snake and a Greater Coucal in the process of killing a large lizard which it flew off with. It wasn't just the birds, we were also impressed with some of the mammal species, Nilgai being one of the most interesting. These are regarded as sacred by Hindus as it is thought to be related to domestic cattle. The downside to Bharatpur was its popularity and it was rather crowded at times.

For those who have not been to India, the traffic is unbelievable and those of a nervous disposition would be well advised to take a couple of Prozac before venturing on to the roads!

We moved on to Chambal River where we stayed at the Chambal Safari Lodge. The owners of the lodge



Tiger



Female Gharials



Male Gharial



Greater Coucal

are very environmentally minded and have been responsible for hundreds of trees being planted in the area. There is a good variety of species in the grounds but it is the National Chambal Sanctuary of the river which is the main attraction.

On our first morning there was a thick mist and when we set off in the boat visibility was down to about thirty feet. The mist gradually cleared and Ruddy Duck and Bar-headed Geese were revealed along with River Lapwing, Greenshank and Black Ibis. The stars as far as we were concerned were the Gharial, a rare and endangered fish eating crocodile. Once on the point of extinction, their numbers have increased due to new efforts to protect them. Males can grow to a length of six metres and they develop a large bulbous structure on the end of their snout which is called a Ghara, the function of this is not fully understood but it is thought that it could act as vocal resonator which produces a loud buzzing noise during vocalisation, or a visual signal to females. We also saw the Marsh Crocodile and the River Dolphins along with several other bird species. The Indian Skimmers, which are one of the key species here, flew off when we were a quarter of a kilometre away.

While in India you have to visit other attractions so we went to Agra and had guided tours of Agra Fort and the Taj Mahal which is even better than photographs would suggest. We spent a night at a hotel in Agra and then returned to Delhi. From Delhi we flew to Nagpur where we stayed overnight before being driven to the Tiger Trails Resort which is close to the entrance of Tadoba National Park. Following lunch we had our first visit to the park and within half an hour saw our first Tiger on the far side of the lake about four hundred metres away. The road round the lake is a one way system and when we emerged back onto the main road through the park the Tiger appeared in a ride, only to disappear into the trees and then emerge behind us and cross the road.



Bar-headed Geese

That was an impressive start but it only got better! The next morning on entering the park there was a group of Dhole, wild dogs, in the middle of the road. The light was terrible but we were able to stay with them for about an hour and so got some passable images. Later in the morning we were just too late to see them killing a Chital but could see the deer being torn apart in deep cover. Following lunch we returned to the park and on this occasion saw three Tigers, again at the other side of the lake, a bit too far for photographs but you can't win them all.



Dhole, wild dogs.

The next morning started off badly, we went to the other end of the park and saw nothing. The driver decided that we should return to the lake which was a considerable distance away. We entered the road round the lake and my heart sank, there were about ten or twelve vehicles at the far side with cameras pointing into the long grass. Not going to get any pictures this time with all those vehicles already in a prime position. Just as the driver was about to accelerate the guide in the front seat shouted "Tiger" and one burst out of the long grass at the side of the road thirty metres in front, it stopped and then slowly walked past our vehicle only three metres away. I had dropped my bean bag in the process but managed to get about six photographs and a couple of back views as it continued down the road. Being a one way system we set off and, rounding a bend having travelled no more that forty metres, there twenty metres in front was a another Tiger sitting up in the middle of the road. It decided to lay down for about ten minutes before getting up and, like the previous Tiger, walking slowly past our vehicle. Magical! By now the other vehicles had driven the four miles and were approaching us from behind but the Tigers by now had disappeared into the trees. I was over the moon not really believing my luck but as we set off a third Tiger walked into the road in front of us, moved into the grass at the side of the road then back out again in front of us. Needless to say I took full advantage of the opportunity and managed to get numerous photographs. The Tigers had now disappeared and all was quiet until a Chital came running through the grass behind the vehicle with a Tiger in hot pursuit! The Tiger gave up but it all happened so quickly that I didn't get a picture. Just witnessing some things is more than enough but getting a picture would have been a bonus!



Nilgai



Tiger



Tiger

That afternoon and the following morning before we left we saw a Tiger at a small lake at the other end



Swamp Deer

of the reserve and managed some distant shoots. We then returned to Nagpur before leaving for Kanha National Park the next morning. Kanha is rated for Tiger but we were unlucky. We found the reserve to be very disappointing spending much of our time there driving round trying to find something to photograph! We did eventually manage to get pictures of Swamp Deer and, in very poor early morning light, Gaur, Indian Bison.

There were some minor disappointments but the days spent at Tadoba with the Tigers meant the trip more than lived up to all we had hoped for.



Tiger



Crested Serpent Eagle



Gaur in early morning light.



Brown Hawk Owl

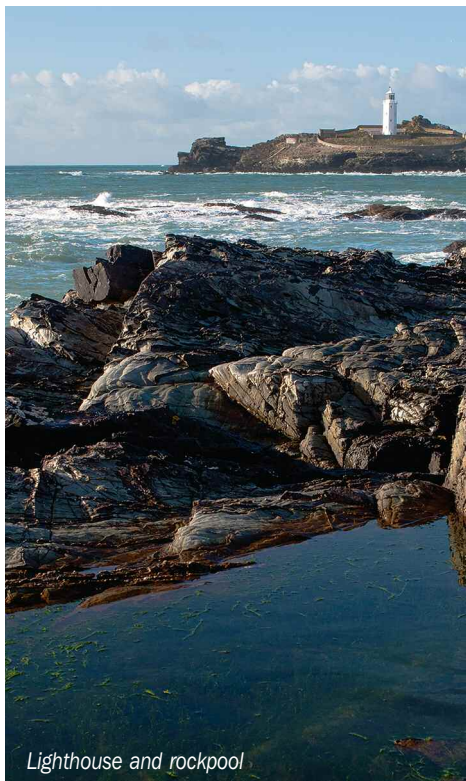
Cornish Rockpools

by Jack Perks

Rockpools are an often-overlooked subject for the natural history photographer but provide great opportunities both above and below the water. Although there are rockpooling opportunities abroad the focus of this piece will be on the British Isles.

Being a wildlife photographer and filmmaker I'm always keen to find unusual and untold stories - hence the reason why rockpools appealed to me so much. Going to Cornwall to study on the BA Hons Marine & Natural History Photography course based in Falmouth gave me the ideal opportunity to do this.

Rockpool hot spots in the UK include the coasts of Kent, Fife and Northumbria, but in my experience Cornwall has always yielded some of my best rockpool photography.



Lighthouse and rockpool

Cornwall has over 300 miles of coastline to choose from with exposed shores bearing the brunt of the Atlantic to sheltered shores harbouring all manner of seaweeds and invertebrate life. One location in particular, the Helford River at low tide, is truly a fantastic place to get photos above and below the water. The mouth of the Helford estuary is a vast expanse of exposed and sheltered shoreline, with weeds and rocks providing habitat for species like Cornish Clingfish; Montague's crabs and Beadlet Anemones. Warmed by the passing Gulf Stream, the waters of the Cornish coast are slightly higher which means that species more at home in the Mediterranean climate can often be found here.

In April 2011 I took part in a three-month photographic study of Cornish Rockpools. The majority of the work involved scientific surveys and recording species numbers along different parts of the tideline as well as taking plenty of images. Having lived in Cornwall for three years I was spoilt for choice on dive locations but it was the rockpools that really interested me. Species in rockpools endure a daily struggle with predators, low oxygen and water level changes.

The cost of diving can be very expensive at times and is also weather dependent. When storms hit, the water clarity makes diving pointless with all the back scatter - another reason why I took to jumping in rockpools, as one only requires strong boots. - rockpools can provide an interesting alternative. Clear water is essential for successful rockpool images so areas near muddy river estuaries are mostly not suitable.

With underwater photography you need to get close to your subject as the water reduces sharpness, contrast and colour so long lens are useless this is why I only use macro and wide angle. Using natural light with the wide angles often gives a nice effect and if the light is right it can really make an image work. Working with a macro strobe (underwater flash) is advised as a lot of the subjects in rockpools really benefit from the flash. Intense sunlight can be a hindrance as most rockpool creatures shun it but flash illuminates the entire rockpool opening up an



Clingfish in rockpool



Clingfish



Velvet Swimming Crab



Purple Sandpiper

unseen world. A compact can be very handy for use in rockpools with small crevices, but shooting with a DSLR leads to more success in the larger rockpools.

Donning a wet suit and getting into larger rockpools means that you can compose the image a lot easier and don't have to lift a heavy housing which can be tiring after an hour or two. If you don't have an underwater housing don't despair there are still a few ways you can get shots.

It's good to have a plan for what on the shoreline you would like to capture and where to find it, as the furthest parts of the shore may only be exposed for a short time.

Wearing polarising sun glasses greatly increases the chances of you being able to spot species lurking in the pools and as with a polarising filter on your lens has the same effect in removing glare.

There's plenty for the macro photography with often ignored species like limpets, barnacles and whelks on a rocky shore which shouldn't be too hard to keep up with! Working with slow moving subjects offers more time to compose the shot and experiment with settings and exposures.

When photographing species above the water, such as birds, you need to be a bit more creative. The first thing you need to think about is that many areas with rockpools have been eroded by the daily passing of tides, meaning they are often low to the ground which means you're an easy target for any birds to see. Getting low helps but climbing over slippery seaweed is difficult at the best of times! If you are planning to photograph shore birds, the best thing to do would be to set up a hide at low tide and let the tide push the birds towards you. In winter you may find visitors such as Purple Sandpiper and during summer Ruddy Turnstone. Peregrines often like to patrol over rockpools due to the abundance of small waders that may be hiding around them. With the recent increase in Little Egret numbers, rockpools have become lifelines for them during winter months when inland lakes can freeze over.

Without a doubt rockpools come alive in the summer with the warm water waking up all kinds of species making it easier for the nature photographer to spot them.

Some areas can get quite busy in the summer so finding those hidden away areas may result in better images rather than including people in your shots (unless of course you want them in your images).

Salt and sand can be an issue, so its always a good idea to give the camera a quick check over and brush away any sand or debris before cleaning away any salt residue.

One particular rockpooling session always sticks out in my mind; a warm summers day in July and I was helping out on a rockpool survey on the south Cornish coast. I began by gently turning over some stones to see what I could find and after about 20 minutes of doing so I saw something unusual. A black shape was crawling away - I quickly grabbed it, I realised it was a crab when it nipped me but unlike any crab I had seen before. I left it with the other surveyors and ran home to get my camera (naturally I had forgot to bring it!). On my return I made a few exposures and then put the crab back where I had found it. I sent the image of to the Natural History Museum who later informed me it was a Marbled Rock Crab, the first ever in Cornwall and only the third in the UK. It was likely to have arrived in the ballast of a ship.

Overall, rockpool habitats hold a diverse range of species and offer photographic opportunities both above and below the water, whether you are looking for small marine species tucked away in crevasses or migratory birds coming to find food and shelter amongst the rocks.

My top five rockpool tips are:

- Wear steady foot gear as the rocks can be incredibly slippery.
- Take a buddy with you or your kids! Its great to get the whole family involved.
- There are hundreds of species living in rockpools so using online ID websites such as www.ispot.com can be helpful for correct identification.
- Avoid damaging your camera equipment on the rocks - carry a towel or gardening mat on which to rest it. Also good for your knees when kneeling on rocks.
- Get a tide table as you don't want to turn up at high tide!

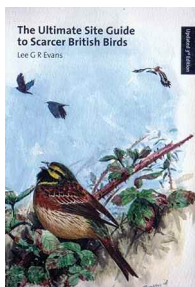


Book Reviews

Ludi Lochner ARPS

The Ultimate Site Guide to Scarcer British Birds Lee G R Evans

Bird Guides
Updated 3rd Edition 2009
326 pages £19.95



The aim of this Guide, according to its Introduction, is “to guide birdwatchers to the most reliable sites in the British Isles in which to see the more sought after species of birds” and to “detail the sites in which there is a high degree of opportunity of finding ...{a}... particular species.” The Contents page lists approximately 140 species though the Introduction states that the book “includes details on how, when and where, to see 109 of the country’s most difficult species”. Whatever the correct figure, one would expect The Ultimate Site Guide to Scarcer British Birds to complement the RSPB British Birdfinder, also reviewed, which sets out the sites where the more common bird species in the UK can be seen.

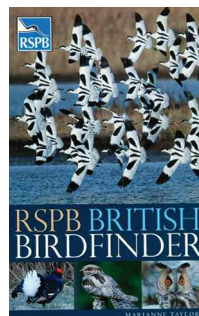
A sample check of twenty birds selected at random from the RSPB Guide revealed that precisely half of them also appeared in Evans’ Guide. Overlaps included Canada Goose that I would have considered to be widespread in England. The RSPB Guide also includes the Rose-coloured Starling and lists it as rare whereas that bird is not referred to in Evans’ Guide. Having said that, Evans’ Guide is aimed at a more discerning birdwatcher, compared to those of the RSPB Guide, and the treatment of the subject is therefore to a much greater depth.

Each species is given a short introduction dealing with its scarcity and the likely habitat in which it is to be found and then follows a list of likely sites with very detailed information as to how to get to a particular site and where precisely to look for the species in question, having arrived at the site.

Evans’ Guide speaks eloquently of a birdwatcher with forty years of serious bird watching behind him and a knowledge so extensive of his subject that he has been able to record no less than 350 species in each of the past 25 years! It is to his great credit that he has refrained from including sites that are sensitive to disturbance and human interference.

RSPB British Bird Finder Marianne Taylor

Bloomsbury 2012
288 pages £12.99



Guides to bird spotting (and photographing!) take two general forms. There are those guides that are based on an area and then set out to inform the reader as to what he or she can expect

to see at particular locations within that area and then, less common, there are those guides that tell you where you may see a particular species. RSPB British Bird Finder falls within the second category.

The guide covers ‘regular breeding and wintering birds, present in significant numbers each year’ and ‘regular passage migrants which neither breed but regularly stop off’. Nearly 300 bird species are covered.

As regards the remaining species, the Guide states that their presence is so infrequent as to make it impossible to anticipate, with a degree of certainty, where they may be found.

A full page is generally devoted to a particular species. At a glance, one can see, on a scale of 1 to 5, how common a species is in the UK, when and where a species is most likely to be seen in the UK as well as providing, in many cases, a list of “Super sites”. The rest of the page is taken up with a photograph, a ‘Where to find’ section divided into three sub-sections – ‘Timing’, ‘Habitat’ and ‘Search Tips’ - and a section headed ‘Watching Tips’.

While, no doubt, there will be some who may quibble with the choices made, this is an accomplished work and will prove an invaluable source of information to those engaged in bird photography. I strongly recommend it!

At the end of the day, it is horses for courses. If bird photography is merely one of your interests, then the RSPB Guide is the one to go for. On the other hand, if you feel that you have photographed the less rare birds and have the experience required to try your hand at photographing the scarcer species, then Evans’ Guide would be a good choice. For my money’s worth, I would not want to be without either guide!

RPS Nature Group AGM 2013

The 37th Annual general Meeting of the Royal Photographic Nature Group was held at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, on Saturday 6th April 2013 at 2pm. It was chaired by Tony Bond FRPS and attended by 59 members.

Apologies

These were received from: Ian Bailey, Dickie Duckett, Barbara Hawkesworth, Peter Jones, Ken Rasmussen and Martin Withers.

Minutes of the 2012 AGM

The minutes of the 2012 AGM printed in issue 1110 of 'The Iris' were accepted as a true and correct record of what then took place. This was proposed by Geoff Trinder and seconded by Robert Hawkesworth.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

John Bebbington said that he was starting on a sad note as he had to mark the passing away during the past year of Tony Hamblin, an outstanding natural history photographer and a stalwart of the Nature Group for many years. He first met Tony soon after joining the Group in the late 1970s and said he was always supportive and encouraging.

He thanked all members of the Committee and said "they had supported him admirably during his two years as Chairman: our Secretary, Margaret Johnson, who had been very efficient at reminding him of things he should be doing; our Newsletter Editor, Dawn Osborn, who as always had provided excellent issues of 'The Iris'; our Treasurer, Margery Maskell; Exhibition Secretary, Kevin Maskell; Vice-chairman, Tony Bond; Richard Revels who had taken on the task of co-ordinating field meetings; John Jones, Peter Jones, Sue McGarrigle, Kevin Elsby and Geoff Trinder."

John also thanked everyone who had organised what is a significantly increased number of field days for this year. He hoped they would be well supported despite the weather (which had been

somewhat discouraging up to now) and the ever increasing cost of fuel.

This year's Residential Field Weekend would take place at Preston Montford centre near Shrewsbury, following on from his 'Insect Photography' course there. It was fully booked within a few days of being announced in 'The Iris'.

As last year John wore two other hats on the Group's behalf: first as our representative on the RPS Advisory Board and the second as the person with access to the RPS website. He reported on the Advisory Board and what is happening to the main RPS website and what is to be demanded of the Nature Group later in the year. John advised that the main RPS website is to be completely redesigned and will be tested later in the year. It is intended that it will meet all the needs and required functionality of groups and regions and the three groups (including ourselves) who have independent websites will be required to close them down as soon as the new site is fully 'live'. This is mandatory. It will not be possible to transfer images from either the current RPS or the Nature Group websites, so we will be asking for new portfolios to show the amazing diversity of Group members' interests.

With regard to the current RPS website, John said he had managed to keep the events section up to date during the past year and was grateful to organisers who had supplied images to go with their field days. The inclusion of an image makes a real difference. Access to what is currently called the 'content management system' is restricted to nominated Group (usually Committee) members. Although John has said in the past that he wished to give up this responsibility he would be willing, if members wish, to carry on this function and facilitate the transition to the new site.

One change which had taken place this year and which has attracted adverse comments is the acceptance of digital images (selected entries to be printed by the RPS) as well as prints for both the Members' and the RPS International Print exhibitions. He raised this topic at the Advisory Board meeting, asking about print quality when this was out of the exhibitors' control and was asked if he had seen the selected images which RPS had had printed, which were of excellent quality. The change to acceptance of digital files had raised entries from around 200 to

over 8,000 – the biggest increase coming from overseas members. This is seen as providing a more inclusive platform. The late withdrawal of funding from Allen & Overy had required a speedy rethink of the RPS International and it had been decided to accept digital entries for this exhibition too.

Finally despite being incapacitated for several months last year, John said he had enjoyed his two years as Chair of what to him is still the friendliest and most supportive group within the RPS. He thanked members for their support at today's event, and on a personal note, for support of his venture into authorship – his recent book has far outsold the publisher's target thanks to Group members.

Treasurer's Report

1st. January – 31st December 2012

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

Subscriptions:- The Subscription Income shown in the Balance Sheet is that credited monthly to our Cash Book Account during the current Financial year (which is, of course, the Nature Group Subscriptions paid to the RPS at Bath for December 2011 through to November 2012). Last year, both the 2010 and 2011 Life Members' subscription reimbursements were paid during the year, but the 2012 reimbursement will not be paid into the Nature Group account until sometime in January/February 2013.

Lectures & Workshops:- The Nature Group Meeting in June raised £20.13.

Interest:- As has been happening for the last few years, the interest is low due to the current economic situation. This interest is likely to stay fairly low in 2013 as well.

Sundry Income:- This includes VAT refunds and income of £110 from the sale of the 'A' Guidance Interactive CDs, when 11 were sold during the year. My thanks to Trevor Hyman for continuing to distribute these CDs.

The Iris - Three editions of The Iris were published this year – (#112, #113 and #114).

The cost of production, and particularly postage, continues to rise, though subscriptions and adverts have helped to offset some of the costs.

Annual Exhibition:- The Exhibition made a considerable loss again this year, of £471.31, most of which is due to the high cost of assembling the Travelling Exhibition. Hence, changes being made this year, to reduce costs.

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

Overall Financial Situation:- The Balance Sheet shows an excess of Expenditure over Income of £2282.67 for this year. As the running costs of the Group has been rising considerably over the last few years, I am proposing that the Group's subscription be raised to £14 in January 2014.

Margery Maskell ARPS, Hon. Treasurer
27th March 2013

Margery Maskell proposed that the subscription to the Nature Group be raised to £14.

Acceptance of this was proposed by John Bebbington and seconded by Robert Hawkesworth.

Secretary's Report

Margaret Johnson said that the current membership according to Bath on the 6th march was 691 which is 18 more than at the last AGM. "We have had a number of new members from overseas, mainly Hong Kong, Singapore and China, as well as within Europe. Many members that leave are doing so for financial reasons or due to ill-health and not because they have any issues with the Group."

"The lists issued monthly from Bath are now more accurate and there are not so many queries to make. The lapsed members still cause the most concern as many do not realise they have lapsed until they receive a letter from me. Quite a lot of this is due to failed direct debit."

Margaret said she always enjoys hearing from members either by phone or e-mail and will try to sort out any problems to the best of her ability. It had been another busy but successful year and she hoped that next year turned out to be as good.

THE NATURE GROUP OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Receipts and Payments Accounts for 1st. January 2012 to 31st December 2012

Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bath

Year 2011

Year 2012

Receipts

6,279.60	Subscriptions	6,566.06
1,351.14	Life Subs.	0.00
1,226.00	Lectures & Workshops	20.13
1,179.09	Annual Exhibition	1,267.52
220.38	Interest received (to Cash Book)	117.80
451.09	Sundry Income	288.94
328.74	IRIS Subs, Adverts, etc	274.40
11,036.04	sub totals	8,534.85

Payments

6,693.58	The Iris incl. postage	7,122.94
820.79	Lectures & Workshops	55.60
1,389.56	Annual Exhibition	1,642.81
2,882.66	General Administration	1,996.17
11,786.59	sub totals	10,817.52
-750.55	Receipts minus Payments	-2,282.67

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2012

**Nature Group Cash
Book**

£

Balance brought forward from 2011	10,663.53
Cleared Cheques from 2011	-70.00
Cleared Credit Card vouchers from 2011	0.00
Uncleared Cheques from 2012	0.00
Credit Card vouchers not cashed in 2012	0.00
Receipts minus Payments 2012	-2,282.67
Total	8,310.86

Total Carried Forward To Financial Year 2012

8,310.86

M. Maskell

15th January 2013

Margery J Maskell (Hon Treasurer)

Election of Officers & Committee

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

Chairman:	Tony Bond FRPS
Secretary:	Margaret Johnson LRPS
Treasurer:	Margery Maskell ARPS
Vice Chairman:	Richard Revels FRPS

The committee were willing to stand for re-election and there were also two nominations. All were elected without opposition as follows:

Immediate Past Chairman:	John Bebbington FRPS
Editor of The Iris:	Dawn Osborn FRPS
Exhibition Secretary:	Kevin Maskell FRPS
Programme Co-ordinator:	Richard Revels FRPS
Advisory Board Representative	David O'Neill LRPS
Other Committee Members	Dr Kevin Elsby FRPS
	John Jones ARPS
	Peter Jones ARPS
	Barbara Lawton FRPS
	Sue McGarrigle LRPS
	Geoff Trinder ARPS

Date & Venue of the 38th AGM

Saturday 5th April 2014 at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands.

Any Other Business

Rosemary Wilman said that there was a system in place at RPS HQ for lapsed members and that it should be working.

Peter Basterfield asked for clarification that the old NG website would disappear completely. There was much discussion among the members and they were not happy that it would be closed.

Thomas Hanahoe said that as there had been a slight loss on the annual exhibition could we consider obtaining some form of sponsorship and it was suggested that Fotospeed or Permajet might be approached. It was agreed that the committee would look into this and contact Bath if anything positive happened.

James Foad enquired if there were any workshops being held for distinctions and was told that there were advisory days organised by regional organisers. There was also the new RPS CD on obtaining an ARPS in the nature category.

Tony Bond thanked John for his two years as Chairman. He said we had come a long way since Heather Angel had been the first chair of the group. He added that we owe a great debt to Dawn Osborn for the quality of 'The Iris' and that we tend to 'hide our light under a bushel'.

The meeting closed at 2.35 pm

Announcements

The committee regrets to announce the loss of the following members:

Mr. E. Meer, Tamworth
Mr Eric Saul, Hitchin
Mr Alan Millward, Solihull
Mr. A. Miller, Wigan
Mr B. Sylvester, Canada
Mr Martin Withers FRPS, Loughborough

Our condolences to their families and friends.

Congratulations

At the Spring Assessment, 17 RPS members were successful in their application for an Associate Distinction in the nature category. Three of these were Nature Group members. Congratulations to:

Pauline Cox ARPS	Gloucestershire
Terence McGhie ARPS	East Sussex
Mallikarju Yallal ARPS	Bangalore

Field Meeting Report

Ainsdale Dunes, June 2013, by Trevor Davenport ARPS

Our day in the Ainsdale Dunes this year was the complete opposite of last year's stormy weather. This year we had wall-to-wall sunshine and a truly benign day. We were a group of eighteen keen photographers and after a short briefing in the meeting room of the Ainsdale Discovery Centre we went straight out.

The slacks have been flooded all winter following the rains of 2012 and many areas still contained standing water; additionally, the late Spring had delayed flowering of target species such as Southern and Northern Marsh Orchid and Bee Orchid although we found just a few individual specimens in flower.

We were able to find and photograph flowers of Round-leaved Pyrola and Hound's Tongue - both nationally very scarce and coastal specialities; Dune Pansy and many other botanic rarities were found and kindly identified by Dr. Phil Smith.

Similar to last year there was an abundance of the beautiful caterpillar of the White Satin Moth; this lovely insect is uncommon elsewhere but we have had three years of huge numbers in this location. The caterpillar is very photogenic. Due to the late Spring

the adult insect had not yet emerged but there were many pupae that appeared ready to open. We found caterpillars of other species and also found the tiny but colourful Asparagus Beetle.

We saw and photographed the iconic Northern Dune Tiger Beetles which are only found in two locations in Britain but are doing well in Sefton; other insects seen included Common Blue, Small Heath and Wall butterflies, and Cinnabar and Common Heath moths. Several Damselflies were on the wing including Azure, Blue-tailed and Common Blue, and we saw a number of Four-spotted Chasers.

We were fortunate to find and photograph several Natterjack Toads - a rare amphibian now in UK but doing reasonably well in this coastal environment. We also photographed a large Common Toad.

The beautiful weather lent itself to landscape work in this lovely environment too, so our day was made complete.

My sincere thanks to Dr Phil Smith and the staff of the Sefton Coast and Countryside Service.



Newly emerged Cinnabar Moth



Group picture by Gary Parker



Natterjack Toad. 1st year.

RPS Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2013



Cold Rainbow by Ralph Snook
Highly Commended Projected Image



Short-leaved Gentian by Sheila Weir ARPS
Highly Commended Print