



Ringed Plover

© Dawn Osborn FRPS

I'm writing this on the first day of the easing of Lockdown. It sure has been a long winter, especially if you haven't had the opportunity to find any use for your camera. I'm heartily sick of staying at home and can hardly wait to get back out there, especially as we seem to have some particularly fine weather on its way! Nevertheless, it's still important to observe the rules - who among us wants to be locked-down again later this year! However, like me, I'm sure you are all looking forward to visiting some of your favourite local wildlife hot spots. If you haven't used your kit for a while though, do remember to check that the batteries are fully charged the night before you head out.

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Welcome to Issue 14 of Nature Group eNews.

On behalf of all readers of Nature Group eNews, I would like to thank all those members who have supported eNews with articles, images, reviews & news during these difficult months of Lockdown. Your contributions have been very much appreciated.

It would be really good to see more of our members sharing their stories and images on the pages of eNews. Please support eNews to ensure its continued success. All offers - trip reports, kit reports, book reviews, observations, lock-down projects, etc, will be welcomed provided that they contain items of interest to photographers.

In this issue of eNews Robert Thompson FRPS offers some advice on the selection of tripods and tripod heads and shares his experiences of using the Novoflex ClassicBall 5 II.

Martin Hancock is another lucky member who has been able to take advantage of visitors to his back garden and achieved some great photographs as a result. I'm probably not on my own in wishing that some of my visitors were like those.

Good news in this issue from our Programme Co-ordinator, Ann Miles FRPS, of Field Meetings that (fingers crossed) will be able to go ahead this summer. There are also details of on-line talks to book.

The next issue of eNews will be in the Summer. I wish you all a very pleasant Spring, rich with nature photography opportunities. Please stick to the rules, exercise caution and stay safe. Bye for now.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn'.

Dawn Osborn FRPS,
eNews Editor

Lockdown Badgers

by Martin Hancock LRPS

Mustelids, particularly Badgers (*Meles meles*), are a passion of mine, some would say an obsession. I have spent over twelve years releasing groups of injured and orphaned badgers back into the wild. This has been done in association with the RSPCA, Wildlife Hospitals and local land owners who wanted them back on their land following persecution in the last century. Some of the releases featured in two BBC Series - 'Nature Detectives' and 'Back to the Wild'. Imagine my delight when badgers suddenly appeared, of their own accord, in my orchard having dug out an old rabbit warren.

I have taken record images of badgers in the past, but it was only when Lockdown came I set myself the task of learning flash photography and spending more time observing them and trying to capture images of their ecology and nocturnal behaviour.

The badgers were accustomed to the floodlights over the garden so that solved the focussing issue. In the past I had tried using the Camtraptions set-up using an infra-red trigger, but this gave me no real control over the composition. I wanted the flexibility to only take images when I felt it was appropriate.

The first step in the project was to get some old tree stumps and put them in the garden to create as natural a set-up as possible. The preliminary work also involved

setting up trail cameras to determine what time the badgers might appear and watching their behaviour. Then came the real challenge - deciding what exposure settings to use. This involved a great deal of trial and lots of error. My preference was for darker 'moody' images, like the chiaroscuro lighting used in the paintings of the Italian Old Master, Caravaggio, which is similar to low key photography.

The relative closeness of the activity meant I needed to reduce the flash power. At first I tried using film gel over the flashes, the sort used on theatre floodlights. I found one called 'moonlight' and had great expectations, but alas that didn't work as it gave too much of a blue tint. In the end it was a simple matter of reducing the flash exposure compensation to about minus 2.5. After much practice my main settings were to take the ISO right down to 100 and use an aperture of f8, to get as much of the badger in focus as possible. Whilst the badgers didn't move too much when feeding I did use a tripod and cable release to minimise vibration at the low shutter speed.

The first images suffered from shadows quite badly. It was then a process using and positioning first one radio controlled flash, then two and finally three. Of course the flash set up was determined on where the badgers might be. Needless to say, they didn't perform to order and no two nights were ever the same.



Single Badger foraging.



Two Badgers feeding.



Badger eating a plum.

It was also important to observe basic fieldcraft skills. Whilst badgers have quite small eyes and can't see very well, they have a keen sense of smell and acute hearing. Staying downwind, non rustling clothing and not wearing aftershave/perfume are important. As nocturnal animals, badgers only need to see in black and white and can't see in colour. So, if you want to watch badgers, you can use a red light.

One thing I learned early on was patience. Quite a few times I would take an image and then something would happen and I would quickly trigger the shutter before the flash had recharged. This would then involve the camera reverting to its maximum shutter speed (30 seconds) and yes, something always more interesting happens in that 30 seconds. I now put the maximum shutter speed much lower.

Initially, there was some supplemental feeding using peanuts and it wasn't long before they were discovered. Badgers are opportunistic omnivores and will eat a wide range of foods, but their prime diet consists of earth-worms (*Lumbricus terrestris*) which are very high in protein - more than steak. They can eat up to 200 a night. Interestingly, during the second world war there was a programme to farm worms and process them to feed the nation!

Badgers live in clans but they tend to forage alone, so getting a portrait was relatively easy (previous page) and occasionally two would appear (top left). One evening, whilst waiting for a badger to appear, three came at once. This is where my patience was really tested as I waited for them to all get in the same focal plane (below).



Three Badgers feeding.

I found that following a rainy period, the badgers would generally turn up much later. My suspicion was that they had been eating worms as the ground was moist. Badgers don't dig for worms, they push their noses into the ground and create what is known as a 'snuffle hole' (opposite) and simply suck up the worms like spaghetti. As worms mate above ground there is always a feast to be had. The image of the badger with a muddy nose indicates worm foraging (below).

Badgers do not hibernate, but go into a state of torpor during the winter months when activity levels are low. In order to survive this they need to fatten up in Autumn and foraging for fallen fruit is a key activity. Luckily I have a variety of fruit trees in my garden - greengage, plum, damson and cherry. This was the time when the badgers were most active. There is no doubt that greengages are their favourite and as you can see they are messy eaters.



A snuffle hole.



Gorging on Greengages.



A Badger with a muddy nose indicates worm foraging.



Badgers are messy eaters



A little altercation

The dentition of a badger's teeth, as shown, is quite strange for an omnivore. As a member of the family Carnivora the incisors, canines and front premolars are typical of a carnivore. The badger's jaw is actually locked into the skull and cannot be prised open, which can result in the worst bite of any British mammal. Treat any injured badger with the greatest respect!

Badgers are territorial and I suspect that there are different groups on either side of my garden. Some evenings a badger would appear and start feeding and suddenly raise its head and run off in one direction only to have another appear from a different direction. Sometimes, when there was sufficient food, they seemed to tolerate each other with just a simple growl. (Image above).



Badger climbing



Badger showing claws

Spending so much time watching the badgers gave me a much greater insight into their behaviour and ideas for possible future images. I knew badgers had the ability to climb and decided to dig an old tree trunk into the ground and set up the trail camera to see what might happen as they searched for food. This led to quite a few interesting images. (Images above and left) and my Trail Camera video.

The claws on the badger (images on the previous page), make them master excavators. The newly excavated sett shown, was recently dug in one night in the field bank next to my home. (Image opposite).

Action shots using flash are obviously restricted to the fastest sync speed available. My main camera has 1/250th sec so it provided an opportunity to try this out. One badger would come into the main area and then dash off elsewhere to eat the fruit before returning for more. I call this one the 'plum run'. (Image below).

I should add that while taking these images there was no observable distress caused to the badgers. Only the sound of the mechanical shutter seemed to occasionally startle them.

It would be remiss not mention some of the threats that badgers currently face. Increased urbanisation and road usage results in some 50,000 deaths as road traffic accidents (RTA's) a year - second only to pheasants. March is a particularly bad month as males leave the setts as the newly born cubs grow. Then there is the issue of bovine TB and the current controversial culling programme which has so far resulted in the deaths of some 141,000 badgers since 2013, 38,600 in 2020 alone. The government is currently planning a consultation on its bTB eradication policy, but don't hold your breath. The badger, one of Britain's most enigmatic and legally protected animals, is now more vulnerable than ever.



Newly excavated sett

You can view the Trail Camera Video by clicking:

['Badger Searching For Peanuts'](#)



The plum run

A Review of the Novoflex Classic Ball 5 II

by Robert Thompson FRPS



Introduction

Every photographer at some point, no matter what their photographic speciality is, will use a tripod in their photography. In order for the tripod to function correctly it requires a head. While it's important to invest in a robust tripod to provide proper stability, it's the head that allows you to position your camera in any direction you choose. All too often photographers place too little emphasis on the tripod head and are happy to use whatever comes with the tripod. It's a common mistake, made by many photographers and it only becomes apparent when a much heavier camera/lens setup is placed on the head and tripod which is totally inadequate for the job. Poor head or tripod performance can seriously compromise your results. This can be frustrating, especially when an opportunity is not easily repeatable.

Selecting a head that matches the type of photography you do is an essential part of the photographic process; it will improve your experience and help you get the best from your photography. It's a lesson we all learn through our mistakes at some point. I have, throughout my photographic career, used a tripod in all of my work except when circumstances prevent me from doing so and then I will normally have additional support in some form.

Investing in a tripod and head should be deemed as important as choosing a camera. It should also be considered as a long-term investment, and if researched properly, will give you many years of service. It is also important to choose your tripod and ball head separately making sure your choice will adequately suit the type of photography you do. If its wildlife and long lens photography then you should select accordingly and ensure that the product will comfortably handle the bulk and additional weight without destabilising your camera setup.

Ball heads are traditionally the most popular choice for nature photography for a number of reasons. They are more compact, highly-versatile and quick to operate and adjust - important factors when you need to react quickly to changing situations. Many tripods these days come with a ball head as standard, most however tend to be rather basic and of average design. There is little point in investing your money in an expensive tripod if the ball head on top is likely to underperform. There are many different models and brands available to choose from so making a large financial investment in one needs careful consideration.

I have, like many photographers, accumulated several ball heads from different manufacturers over the years. While they satisfied most of my main requirements, there were always shortcomings with all of them. Over a period of time, they all developed issues such as loss of friction, stiffness and creep or sag, which in macro photography, especially at higher magnifications, is an annoying problem; this was an issue that I continually found frustrating and frequently found myself over-tightening the knob/lever to prevent this.

I should make it clear from the start that this is not a technical-based review compiled from a desk in my office, but one that is based on using the Classic Ball 5 II over the past months in a range of different situations. If it's a desktop review with facts and figures you require there are plenty on the web to choose from. I tend to value field-based reviews rather than those which are purely technical where little usage of the equipment has been made making it difficult to give a fair assessment of how it performs; this is my own opinion, others may have a different view.

So what are the ideal characteristics we should be looking for in a ball head? It can be a difficult question to answer as some photographers will have their own ideas based on their personal photographic needs. However, there are some requirements that are important and relevant no matter where your photographic interests lie.

Ideal characteristics of a ball head based on my own experience.

1. Compactness and build quality; these are key considerations for those photographers, myself included, who need to carry a tripod around for most of the day.
2. The diameter of the ball is an important consideration. Hanging a DSLR or mirrorless camera and a long focal length lens on a ball head that is too small, or is incapable of supporting such a set-up is likely to compromise not only image quality, but you also risk the setup becoming unstable and, in the worst case scenario, the whole assembly ending up on the ground.
3. It is also important to have precise controls, which are easy to activate (even with gloves on), that lock and secure the ball firmly with no movement. In macro photography this is a crucial consideration as there must be no creep or sag.
4. It should also have independent friction control for regulating the locking mechanism and pre-setting the ball when unlocked.
5. Integrated bubble spirit level to ensure your horizons are level; this is especially important when framing subjects that have little latitude for cropping.
6. Quick Release (Q-R) camera plate system. The Arca Swiss dovetail platform is adopted by many manufacturers and is the most frequently used system by professionals. However, some companies also have their own design.
7. Maximum load capacity. There is no continuity between manufacturers in terms of a standardised measurement. However, it would be more meaningful if it is applied to the maximum load the head can take particularly when positioned off the vertical axis; this is an important factor and especially relevant in macro photography. To be honest, many manufacturers claim all sorts of high load capacities, but how accurate the figures are is difficult to know.

These are some of the main points to consider however, there are others depending on what your requirements are.

Novoflex ClassicBall 5 II

Novoflex has a long history and reputation for producing high-quality equipment for the photographic industry. Their reputation extends well beyond Europe, with many photographers from around the world familiar with their products. Their innovative approach to design is based on practical experience and most importantly, having complete control over the production process right through to completion. My own experience with Novoflex products is one of precision, quality and reliability with attention to detail; these are the points that tick the box for me.

One of the company's major attributes is the ability to develop specialised equipment and important

accessories that the vast majority of leading camera manufacturers just seem to avoid or don't want to do. The photographic industry relies companies like Novoflex since they provide the means to achieve many types of specialised imagery that would be much more challenging to accomplish using conventional equipment; this is more important than ever today in the digital world we operate in. A look at the product range on their website will bear testament to the wide range of photographic accessories that have been developed by the company to overcome many of the challenges photographers face today. Their attention to detail is synonymous with their motto which is,

"Precision for Professionals".

The Novoflex ClassicBall 5 II is the top of the range in their ClassicBall series. The other two in the group consisting of a ClassicBall 3 II; a medium-weight head and the ClassicBall 2, which is a compact version, but never-the-less, constructed to professional standards.

On opening the box, my first impression was one of quality and precision, but I expected no less from a company with a renowned track record. The colour coordination of titanium grey and blue is keeping in line with the companies standard branding, which is synonymous throughout their product range. A visual examination of the head is usually where most people start and every component has the hallmark of being well constructed and cleverly thought out. No part on it was lacking, or cheap in any way. The construction of the ball head is solid with all of the components (except for the blue friction ring) fabricated from machined aluminium. The overall finish is to a very high standard. Novoflex gives a two-year warranty based on regular everyday use. It would be unfair to compare it directly to some of my other ball heads for a number of reasons in that their design and construction is somewhat different. Novoflex has pushed the boundaries with this head and introduced some features which differ from the typical conventional approach of other manufacturers.

One of the major advantages of the revised version of this ball head is the ability to combine two important features into one head. The CB5II is primarily a standard functioning ball head, but it now comes with an integrated levelling base for panoramic photography; this eliminates the need for two. Having a dual-purpose ball head can be a real advantage if you are switching between shooting close-ups and panoramic landscapes. As a natural history photographer, I frequently find myself shooting a wide range of subjects in a single day. Weight is an important factor and this head gives me the flexibility of shooting close-ups while at the same time allowing me to capture panoramic landscapes, which is one of my special interests. Combined the CB5II with the VR III System and one of the panoramic base units, provides the ideal setup for precision panorama photography.



ClassicBall 5 II Technical Specifications

Height	117.5 mm (4.6")
Base diameter	78 mm (3.07")
Camera-mount diameter	59 mm (2.3")
Ball diameter	55 mm (2.1")
Weight	970g (2.1 lbs)
Maximum support	12kg (26 lbs)
Tripod connection	1/4" & 3/8" thread
Camera connection	1/4" & 3/8" thread

Design Overview

Ball Diameter

What makes this ball head so unique are the many features Novoflex have incorporated into its design. The large, 55mm diameter of the ball allows for a very smooth and consistent rotation during movement with precision locking ability. Even with larger focal length lenses attached, there is no sign of creep or sag when angulated off the vertical axis despite the increased weight. The balance between the weight of the camera assembly and the drag when the appropriate friction pre-set is selected, still produces a very smooth rotation making it easy to position my heaviest setup. The lubricant-free design stops the ball and enclosure from attracting dust, dirt, and debris from entering the cradle.

Advanced Friction Adjustment

Another nice and innovative touch is the "Advanced Friction Control". Unlike many other expensive heads which use an additional knob, or screw to change the friction pressure. Novoflex has gone one better by designing a heavy-duty blue knurled plastic ring, which has a series of five built-in pre-set friction levels; five being the level with the greatest resistance. The advantage of this approach is that you can apply the same friction level each time to your different camera/lens combinations. I find this feature extremely useful when working with different camera/lens combinations as I can quickly select the appropriate pre-set level in advance. One of the short-comings of most other ball heads is the inability to replicate the precise friction setting each time.



AFC - Advanced Friction Control

Despite being the only plastic external element, the ring itself is well constructed and rotates between each numbered stop smoothly and precisely with a click-stop between each of the friction settings. Another advantage with this design is you can easily find and adjust the friction without having to take your eye from the viewfinder. Novoflex has a built-in safety precaution in that you can only adjust the friction control setting when the locking lever is engaged this is to prevent the ball with your expensive camera assembly from dropping accidentally.

Locking Lever

Unlike many other ball heads, which generally use a rotating knob to lock and unlock the ball, Novoflex has chosen to use a lever that is large enough to activate with gloves but not excessively prominent to become a problem. Also, the design and size of the lever is enough to grasp to lock and unlock the ball without excessive force. If the friction control is set to its minimum setting (°1) the lever functions a bit like an on/off switch. You need to be mindful here with heavy setups if the pre-set is one of the lower settings. Another advantage is when your eye is to the viewfinder you can quickly tell if the lever is locked or unlocked simply by feeling the lever with your fingers.



Locking Lever



3 Portrait Slots, unique to the ClassicBall 5 II

Portrait Slots

One of the most annoying aspects of conventional ball head design is that most manufacturers provide only one 90° portrait slot; this effectively means having to constantly rotate the panning base to be able to change either the shooting orientation (from horizontal to portrait), or the ability to move the camera assembly up or down. The beauty of the CB5II is the three portrait slots which effectively allow you to utilise these movements without the need to rotate the panning base. The two opposing slots allow 180° of movement (while the other slot allows you to place the camera in portrait or vertical orientation. I have to say that I find this approach extremely useful in the field when I don't have an L-bracket attached. One point worth bearing in mind, if the locking lever is on your left side facing you and you want to utilise the portrait slot it is on the right side, which some photographers might find a little awkward as the shutter button and grip (if you are using one) are now at the bottom as opposed to the top. However, rotating the panning base around and placing the locking lever on the right gets around the problem. It's not a major inconvenience operating the lever with your right hand. Most professional photographers these days tend to use an L bracket which makes the issue somewhat irrelevant.

The Panning Base

Finally, the panning base uses a fairly conventional, knurled metal knob to lock or unlock. It has a smooth action and cannot be completely unscrewed. The base also has 360° engraved scaling at the bottom of the housing. When shooting panoramic images, it is a simple



Inverted ballhead for panoramic photography

and quick procedure to invert the head. Remove the grub securing screw on the Q=Mount and transfer the clamp to the base of the ball head. The support plate is now the base and is secured on to the tripod base providing an accurate horizontal levelling platform to accommodate panoramic shooting. Unlocking the lever will allow you to line up the head accurately with the integrated bubble spirit level without having to make adjustments to your tripod legs.

The Q=Mount

Having used these before from Novoflex, the construction and finish are on par with the ball head. When attached, it is solid and integral with the head. When connected to the Arca Swiss compatible plate on the camera base or tripod collar of a lens the screw clamp is solid and precise with no movement at all. My only comment is the bubble spirit level is obscured when the camera is in place. It's not a major inconvenience, but it requires you to level the head before attaching the camera.



Quick Release platform in the Arca Swiss design

In the Field

For me, the ultimate test for any piece of equipment is how it performs in the field. It takes a little time to acquaint yourself with the settings and the general use of the CB5II head since its components and their positions do not follow the conventional design of other ball heads. However, having said that I found after a short time it was straightforward to use. The rotation of the ball was extremely smooth with no resistance throughout all of the friction settings; even when larger focal length lenses were placed on it, the ball moved effortlessly between positions, holding the camera and lens assembly exactly in the desired position. The lubricant-free design stops the ball and its enclosure from attracting unwanted dirt, and debris. I found this reassuring since my tripod is frequently close to, or on the ground, often among vegetation where dirt small bits of debris could easily find their way into the cradle.

I have been using the CB5II for a while now throughout a range of different conditions and temperatures from the tops of snow-covered mountains to the seashore with no problems at all. It has supported comfortably every lens from a 14mm ultra wideangle to 500mm

telephoto without any issues at all. I have also used it for all of my current panoramic images, quickly inverting the head to shoot the sequence and then reverting it back to a conventional ballhead. I find this feature extremely useful and quick to operate. Being able to work all of the heads functions with gloves on was another advantage when in the mountains and on very cold days. At heights of 3,000ft and in snow and freezing fog all of the components worked perfectly including the AFC pre-set ring.

The key to getting the most from this head is the use of the friction settings which make the process of accommodating heavy setups easier to handle. Unlike other conventional heads, you can accurately apply the exact level of resistance every time to your different combinations; something you can't replicate on other ball heads. Another big plus which I found useful was the double slots which give me 180° versatility when changing the orientation of the camera assembly downwards or backwards without having to rotate the head. You could argue that the double slots would increase the risk of dirt/debris etc. getting lodged between the ball and cradle. However, in 3 months of using the head in woodland, coastal and mountain locations, I have not found this to be the case at all. The benefit of the additional slots in my opinion far outweigh that risk.

I have also been mounting the Novoflex Castel-Micro motorised focusing rail on the CB5II with the Nikon D850 and 200mm micro nikkor lens in combination with the additional MD18 battery drive. I positioned the setup off the vertical axis to about 45° with the locking lever fully engaged. The overall combined setup is heavy and I was impressed by the CB5II performance; even at magnifications beyond life-size, there was no creep or sagging during the shooting process. I also used Live View to test for this as well, but nothing I could detect. For me, this was a real game-changer! I often found with other equally expensive heads some degree of creep; this can cause issues especially if using extended depth of field; accurate framing and stability are critical factors especially when working at magnifications beyond life-size.

Another interesting comparison for me was the excellent damping effect of the head. In macro, it is not always possible to shoot with the mirror locked up for various reasons. I found no discernible difference between images photographed with the mirror lockup engaged or disengaged; this was another shortcoming I often found in other ball heads. The CB5II damping capabilities are really excellent.



ClassicBall 5 in the field with the Novoflex Castel-Micro and camera assembly attached

The durability of the colour anodising on the head itself is impressive. Most manufactures of photographic equipment tend to opt for black or grey, but I usually find within a short period of time scratches begin to appear as a result of use which is an accepted fact. However, I've been using the CB5II for a few months now in the field in a wide range of locations. Not a single scratch has appeared on the head which is remarkable.

A Final Word

There is no doubt the CB5II is an impressive ball head. It easily measures up to the professional standards that you would expect from such a well-designed and crafted product. The solid construction of the head and its component parts indicate that it should give many years of service without any major issues. I should also state that I haven't been polishing or wrapping it in cotton wool. In my opinion, equipment is to be used to get the job done. Having said that I don't abuse or treat it carelessly either. It has a job to do and should be capable of functioning in the conditions it's designed for and in all types of weather.

The uniqueness of the CB5II warrants the price tag in my opinion and surpasses the competitors in its class. The old adage of 'buy cheap buy twice' comes to mind; having made that mistake myself in the past. It is well worth going the extra mile for a quality product. Having purchased several heads over the years this one outperforms all of them for many of the reasons already stated. The extra slots and the controlled friction pre-sets and panoramic capability are what really sets this head in a class of its own.

Novoflex is renowned for creative innovation and doing things their way. Thinking outside the box, not following a conventional approach is what defines innovation in my opinion. The engineers at Novoflex have ventured to be different (as they often do) and the result is a top-of-the-range product that sets it apart from others.

News from the Programme Coordinator

by Ann Miles FRPS

In anticipation of a gradual easing of the lockdown restrictions, we have planned a series of outings over the spring and summer. More events will be added as they are arranged. We will, at all times, adhere to the current Covid regulations so numbers attending will be regulated. If an event is marked as full, please email me and I will arrange another day if this is possible or an extra leader.

The following events are ready for booking. Go to the [Nature Group Events](#) page on the RPS website:

Royston Heath, Hertfordshire Thursday 8th April
Paxton Pits, Cambridgeshire Saturday 17th April
Lake Vyrnwy, Oswestry Wednesday 5th May
Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire Saturday 15th May
Rutland Water, Leicestershire Wednesday 26th May
Prestbury Hill, Gloucestershire Wednesday 26th May
Martin Down, Hampshire Wednesday 9th June
Strumpshaw Fen, Norfolk Monday 14th June
RSPB Snettisham, Norfolk Friday 2nd July
RSPB Titchwell, Norfolk Friday 16th July

As always, we are looking for people to share their local outings with Members. All the advertising would be done by myself so that the information gets to Members in your area. If you have any offers or suggestions, please email Ann Miles: annmiles70@gmail.com



Zoom Meetings

There are two Zoom meetings in the diary at the moment – more to follow

1. Dynamic Wildlife Photography by Gordon & Cathy Illg

Taking your wildlife photos beyond mere documentation. This talk will focus not on the necessary gear, but rather on what to do with that gear and all about the choices you make in the field that provide the best chance of capturing something extraordinary. Gordon and Cathy are top-rate naturalists from New Mexico, USA who have led many trips and written books – not to be missed.

[Dynamic Wildlife Photography](#)

2. Yorkshire Coast by Steve Race.

This talk is part of the Spring/AGM Meeting and is advertised separately on page 14 of this newsletter.

[A Year in the life of a Yorkshire Wildlife Photographer](#)

Most of our talks are recorded and the videos can be found on the Nature Group Event Recordings page in case you missed any of the talks or wish to review the techniques

Previously Held Zoom Meetings

Many of our talks have been recorded and the videos can be found on the Nature Group Event Recordings page. If you missed any of the talks or wish to review the techniques you can catch up by following the link:

[Nature Group Recorded Lectures](#)

Left: *Bearded Tit, Titchwell, by Nick Bowman*

Below: *Pasque Flowers by Ann Miles*



RPS Nature Group Spring Meeting

45th Annual General Meeting

Opening of the Annual Exhibition

Saturday 24th April, 2021 on Zoom

Programme:

10:00hrs Zoom sign-in active

10:30hrs **Welcome and Introduction by Professor Thomas Hanahoe FRPS**

10:40hrs **'A Year in the Life of a Yorkshire Wildlife Photographer',
Steve Race from Yorkshire Coast Nature**

Steve says:

The county of Yorkshire is an incredible place to see a wide variety of our UK wildlife species across an array of different habitats. From deep forests and woodlands to the beautiful landscapes of our National Parks, the rugged wild coastline and the sweeping hills of the Yorkshire Wolds you will be amazed at what you can find. This talk tells the story behind my photography journey through Yorkshire over the years and the incredible wildlife images that I have captured in 'God's Own County'.

Note: there will be a short break at about 11.30hrs

12:30hrs **Break for Lunch**

13:15hrs **45th Annual General Meeting of the RPS Nature Group**

Agenda:

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the 44th AGM 2020 (printed in eNews Issue 12th February 2021)
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Secretary's Report
7. Programme Coordinator's Report
8. Committee 2021 - 2023
9. Any Other Business
10. Date and Venue of the 46th AGM 2022

14:00hrs **Opening of the 2020 Exhibition**

Presentation of the Awards
Projection of the accepted images

16:15hrs **Close**

**For the Zoom link to the Spring Meeting, please see the
Events Page on the RPS Website or click [HERE](#)**

Dates for your diary

Entries Invited*

National Exhibitions with Nature sections:

Rushden Open Photography Exhibition

Closes 10th April 2021

Digital Projection - 5 Classes

www.rushdenopen.co.uk

Neath & District PS Exhibition

Closes 18th April 2021.

Digital Projection - 4 Classes

www.neathphotographicsociety.org

Robin Hood Open Digital Exhibition

Closes 24th April 2021

Digital Projection - 6 Classes

www.robinhoodexhibition.co.uk

Winchester National Exhibition

Digital Projection - 5 Classes

www.winphotosoc.uk

Beyond Group

Closes July 2021 - Digital Projection - 4 Classes

<http://beyondgroup.org.uk>

International Photographic Salons with FIAP patronage and Nature Sections:

Cheltenham International Salon

Closes 05.04.2021.

More information about FIAP (The International Federation of Photographic Art) can be found at:

<https://www.fiap.net/en>

Information for entering individual Salons with FIAP Patronage can be found at:

<https://www.myfiap.net/patronages>

**Members are advised to check Salon websites for rules, closing dates & entry requirements before preparing their entry as image sizes & rules may differ. Covid 19 restrictions may require exhibitions to be selected using software like Zoom.*

Saturday 24th April 2021

The Nature Group Spring Meeting

Steve Race from 'Yorkshire Coast Nature' will be the principal speaker at this year's Spring Meeting. Steve's talk will be:

'A Year in the Life of a Yorkshire Wildlife Photographer'



Steve says "The county of Yorkshire is an incredible place to see a wide variety of our UK wildlife species across an array of different habitats. From deep forests and woodlands to the beautiful landscapes of our National Parks, the rugged wild coastline and the sweeping hills of the Yorkshire Wolds you will be amazed at what you can find. This talk tells the story behind my photographic journey through Yorkshire over the years and the incredible wildlife images that I have captured in 'God's Own County'".



Please note: in line with current Government guidance this meeting will be held via Zoom. Full details of the Spring Meeting, AGM and Annual Exhibition Opening are given on page 13. The link to the Meeting can be found [HERE](#) or go to the Events page of the RPS website.

Publication information

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Copy and publication dates roughly as follows:

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

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

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

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

Distribution:

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

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Chief Executive Officer of the Society;
Hon. Treasurer of the Society;
Chair of the Natural History Distinctions Panel;
Immediate Past Chair of the Nature Group

* Members please note:

The Nature Group needs a new Honorary Treasurer. David O'Neill has been acting Nature Group Hon. Treasurer since our previous Treasurer was forced to retire due to ill health, but David can no longer continue in this role. Therefore, from the AGM in April 2021 the Nature Group will not have a Treasurer.

If you have any experience in this type of role, please consider volunteering for this important role. Please contact David O'Neill for further information.
Email: david.oneill_nh@outlook.com

Nature Group Exhibitions:

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

