

ISSN 1757-2991

**THE RPS**  
ROYAL  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY



*European Brown Bears fighting by Sarah Kelman ARPS*

# THE IRIS



MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 125 / Summer 2016

# RPS Nature Group 40th Anniversary Meeting.

**Sunday 16th October 2016.**

Smethwick Photographic Society Clubrooms,  
The Old Schoolhouse, Churchbridge,  
Oldbury, West Midlands. B69 2AS

**Doors open 9.30 am for 10.00 am start.**

- 10.00 am. Opening the Meeting, followed by **Heather Angel Hon FRPS** who will talk about the formation of the Nature Group and its early years. Heather was the Nature Group's first Chairman back in 1976, and is a former President of the RPS.
- 10.30 am. **Bob Gibbons FRPS - "Wildlife of the World's most Flowery Places"**  
Wild flowers and other wildlife from around the World. Bob is a very successful professional photographer, who has written and illustrated over 40 different books.
- 11.30 am. Comfort break allowing time to view the prints on display and socialise with other members.
- 12.00 noon. Mini shows by various NG members to take us up to lunch time.
- 12.45 pm. Break for lunch. Members should bring their own lunch. The bar will be open for Tea, Coffee and other drinks.
- 2.15 pm. **David Osborn FRPS - "Life between the Groynes".**  
Wildlife of the north and east coastal areas of Norfolk. David is a former Chairman of the Nature Group and is currently Chairman of the RPS Natural History Distinctions Panel.
- 3.15 pm. The official end of the meeting, giving chance to socialise with others, and to view the prints on display. Everyone should vacate the building by 4.00 pm.

Throughout the day there will be prints on display from past Nature Group Chairpersons, together with a selection of recently successful A & F Distinction panels by Nature Group members.

**Cost: £10 per ticket. Maximum number of tickets available is 80. BOOK NOW!**

Please bring your own packed lunch. The bar will be open for drinks etc.

**To obtain your ticket:** Please send your cheque payable to RPS Nature Group plus a stamped addressed envelope to: Richard Revels FRPS, 73 London Road, Biggleswade, Beds. SG18 8EE or download a booking form from the RPS website. Go to:

<http://www.rps.org/events/2016/october/16/nature-group-40th-anniversary-meeting>

## Publication information

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

Spring	Copy deadline 8th December Published mid March.
Summer	Copy deadline 30th April Published early July.
Winter	Copy deadline 31st August Published early November.

All contributions should be submitted to the Editor. Items covering any aspect of nature photography and/or natural history are welcomed, including reviews on equipment and relevant books. The Editor can be contacted at: iris\_editor@btinternet.com

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 (whether vertical or horizontal) should be supplied on CD as flattened 8bit sRGB Tiff files, 6" x 4" at 300 pixels per inch (1800 x 1200 pixels, file size approx 6.17MB). Please do not send larger images. If your image is selected for use on the cover of *The Iris* you will be asked to supply a larger file.

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

## Distribution:

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

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## Printed by

Partridges Limited  
6-8 Bradfield Road, Wellingborough, NN8 4HB

## Design & layout

by Dawn Osborn FRPS

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Cover shot: *European Brown Bears fighting*  
by Sarah Kelman ARPS

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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. Please contact the Exhibition Secretary, details above.

# Editorial

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This little column is invariably the last thing I do when putting together an issue of The Iris. As I sit at my computer typing this, I have just noticed how sunny it has become outside - it's been very overcast and rainy most days this week. As a result I have not been doing anything in the garden which means that the bird feeders get emptied very quickly. Suddenly the garden is full of young birds - we have a plethora of young starlings, blackbirds and sparrows noisily jostling for position on and beneath our seed feeders. A little nest box we put up on the fence was taken over by a pair of Blue Tit - the box is completely hidden now by a climbing rose, but judging by the frequency with which both parents are now going in and out I fancy it will not be too much longer before their brood will fledge. We also have Collared Dove nesting in the clematis growing on our pergola and somewhere in there are Robin and Dunnock too. It's such a busy time - and not just for birds meeting the demands of their young but for gardeners too! Everything in the garden is growing at a fast rate too and despite the time and effort I spend in the garden I am afraid I will have lost the war while preparing this issue of The Iris.

This issue contains all the images that gained awards in our recent Exhibition and a list of all the acceptances. Well done if you had something accepted. If you didn't enter, why not buy a copy of the Exhibition CD? It contains all the accepted images and only costs £6 this year. Details of how to obtain your copy are on page 36.

Thank you to all who have contributed to The Iris, including those of you whose articles I am holding for the next issue, but I need more to fill the next issue. Were you successful with a Distinction this year or are you about to go off on a wonderful overseas trip soon? Share your experiences and your images with your fellow Nature Group members on the pages of The Iris. I look forward to hearing from you if you have something you would like to see in print.

Finally, at the time of writing, (Late May Bank Holiday), James Foad has asked me to mention that there are a couple of places available on the NG Residential Weekend at Flatford Mill Field Centre, East Bergholt, Sussex on 15th - 18th July. If you're interested contact James at: 01843 580295 or email: jamesfoadlrps@inbox.com

That's all from me until next time. Enjoy the summer!



# From the chair

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At the time of writing this edition of 'From the Chair' in late May, spring has arrived in Bedfordshire at long last. The birds are singing well and the wild flowers are in full bloom. During the past few weeks I have been checking my local orchid colonies, and although they are rather late in flowering this year, most species seem to be showing in average numbers. Although the spring flowers are doing well, the insects are rather scarce and I hope that there are enough pollinators around to produce plenty of seeds for replacement plants in the future. Moth trappers are reporting very few and sometimes no moths at all in their traps and Wild Bees are also generally in poor numbers. Bumble Bees are particularly scarce in my garden compared to other years.

Our wild bee population is vital in pollinating fruit trees as well as the wild flowers and of course commercial crops. Many species of Bees seem to be in decline nationally, which is extremely worrying. Some butterfly species such as the Holly Blue and the Orange-tip are in good numbers locally, but species that hibernate as adults like the Vanessids are however in very low numbers.

Most insect species prefer a cold dry winter, as wet mild winters can cause them to become active too early, and once out of hibernation most species cannot go back into proper hibernation again so usually die before spring. Another problem is that mild wet winters can cause hibernating insects to succumb to a fungus infection which will kill them.

The lack of early spring insects is very worrying, as insects are vital food for the survival of many 'higher' life forms such as birds, as well as other species of invertebrates. Without the usual spring abundance of caterpillars and other insects, some species of birds may be unable to find enough food to bring up their broods of youngsters.

## 40th Anniversary

As you will be aware, 2016 is the 40th anniversary of the founding of the RPS Nature Group, and to commemorate this milestone we are holding a special meeting at Smethwick PS clubhouse in mid-October. Full details are published elsewhere in this issue of *The Iris*. At this anniversary event, we have two excellent main guest speakers, Bob Gibbons FRPS and David Osborn FRPS who are both professional wildlife photographers and tour leaders. There will also be several ten minute 'mini' shows, presented by other Nature Group photographers.

It was through the efforts of Heather Angel Hon FRPS, a past President of the RPS, that the Nature Group came into being back in 1976. Heather will give the opening talk about the start and early years of the Nature Group. We also plan to exhibit prints by past Chairs of the Nature Group, as well as showing some recent successful A & F panels by Nature Group members.

There will be an Anniversary cake, which Heather will be invited to cut, and this will be shared between everyone present. There will be plenty of time at this meeting to socialise during the breaks, and I hope to meet and have a chat with many of you on that day.

We have to limit the attendance to 80 ticket holders. Tickets cost only £10 each, and early booking is advised. A ticket application form can be downloaded from the Nature Group website. Anyone without a computer can apply by posting their cheque for £10 made out to the RPS Nature Group, to me, please enclose a SAE for your ticket.

## Environmental issues

During the past few years Nature Group membership numbers have been steadily rising and reached 1038 in mid-May. In one respect it is very good news that we have a growing membership, but of course it can also create problems.

When I first started taking wildlife pictures back in the late 1960's I seldom met other people in the countryside with cameras. Today most people carry around some form of camera, be it on their iPhone or in the form of a compact camera, and of course they want to take pictures. However, with so many people now visiting the countryside, the pressure of large numbers of visitors on some habitats has had adverse effects, in some cases even destroying what they came to see and photograph. Damage to habitat and disturbance to wildlife, has led to restrictions on where we can go and what we can do. Regrettably, further damage to the environment and disturbance to wildlife will result unless restrictions are made. Please ensure that you act responsibly when out in the countryside.

Thank you.



# The Kruger National Park - a photographer's paradise (Pt III).

by Ludi Lochner

*In this, the third of my four articles on the Kruger National Park, I will be making suggestions that, from a photographer's point of view, may contribute to a successful safari!*

## About the roads

The Kruger has a network of roads. A tarred, double carriageway runs, south to north, up the centre of the Park with further tarred roads connecting it to all the Park gates. A network of secondary un-tarred roads provides access to most parts of the Park.

It is very easy to become lost on the secondary roads and to take a wrong turn, adding, perhaps, hours to the journey time. The first thing to do, when arriving at a gate to the Park, is to purchase an atlas. I prefer "A Guide to the Kruger Park" by Andy and Lorraine Tinker. In addition to good maps, it contains a wealth of useful information on recommended drives from each camp, 'hot spots', and other information useful to getting the most from time spent in the Park.

Good directions are given at each junction and show the names and distances of the camps to which the roads lead. I stop at each one and reset the trip meter so that I know precisely where I am along a particular road. This is important, particularly on afternoon drives, when you should plan to arrive back in camp shortly before the gates close. Nocturnal animals like lions and leopards become more active towards sunset and being out as late as possible will improve your chances of photographing them. If you arrive after the gates close there may be a penalty!

I take with me a GPS/SatNav, loaded with maps for South Africa, and make a practice of setting a way-point as soon as I arrive at the reception for each of the camps. The navigator then shows the expected time of arrival back at the camp but, more importantly, enables me to judge the moment at which to head back and, on the way back, judge whether I should be speeding up or slowing down in order to arrive at the camp before the gates close.

I recommend a speed of 15 - 20 kph - that will give you time to look along 'passages' in the vegetation on both sides of the road, and to look up into trees for interesting birds or, perhaps, a leopard and allowing you to stop in time before entering their comfort zone. If allowance is made for stoppages, your average speed may drop to as little as 10 kph and this figure should be used in planning trips.

The tarred roads often have foundations that rise above the level of the surrounding areas and this may cause you to be looking down on your subject. The tarred roads are also used by lots of vehicles going about their business in the Park. They are also used by large numbers of visitors who prefer not to travel on the secondary roads. All this boils down to the tarred roads being best for getting to and from locations but not for wildlife photography. It is along the dirt roads that you will find your subjects and also find the peace necessary to photograph them.

## Plan your day

There are different approaches to game viewing in the Kruger.

### • Secondary roads

As a newcomer to the Park, one is confronted with a mass of secondary roads – which of those roads should one take in order to obtain the best photo opportunities? Help is at hand. Towards the end of 2015, the van der Berg family published "Kruger Self-Drive - Routes, Roads and Ratings", a must for anyone not a regular visitor to the Park. Amongst the useful information provided, routes from every camp are suggested and roads are rated according to the probability of predator and antelope sightings, scenic beauty and birding opportunities. I strongly recommend this book.

The general rule is to have the sun behind you, ie to travel west in the morning and east in the afternoon. Generally, one also wants to travel south, when out photographing game, with the sun behind you and to



have it ahead of you when you return to camp during the hotter period of the day. At that time of the day, in the summer months, the sun is overhead and casts deep, unwanted shadows and animals tend to retire to the shade reducing the chances of getting good photos.

Check the map posted in many camps, either in the area of the reception or the shop. Coloured buttons are provided, each colour denoting a particular species. Visitors are encouraged to place the appropriate button on the map indicating where they have seen something of interest. As animals are constantly on the move, these maps only provide a general indication of areas in which wildlife may be found.

Generally, roads along river courses cross paths that animals follow to and from the water and therefore provide greater viewing opportunities than roads away from such areas. That is particularly true when there has been a lack of rain and water is not widely available.

Be observant – birds and animals are inclined to congregate where the best food is to be had. If you are passing through an area where there are many birds and/or animals, slow down to a crawl. On the other hand, if there appears to be a lack of wildlife, increase your speed! A good indication of the popularity of an area, in terms of wildlife, is the amount of droppings to be seen on the road and how recently they were deposited!

You should aim to leave the camp when the gates open - that is around sunrise - 05.30 hrs in the summer months! Although it is said that this is the best time to see lions and leopards, that has not been my experience. I have seen them at all times of the day though, on hot days, you may find them resting in the shade or, in the case of a leopard, on the bough of a tree.

In the early morning, look for birds warming and drying in the first rays of the sun. Morning is the time to catch larger raptors such as the majestic Martial Eagle or stunning Bateleur. They will be taking the first thermals of the day and soaring into the skies, hardly to be seen again until dusk . Wait for them to go through the usual wing stretching process before taking off.



Golden-tailed Woodpecker



Inquisitive Dwarf Mongooses



Squacco Heron with catch



*Black Crane*



*Water Monitor searching from Crabs*



*Bateleur stretching wings*

### • **Waterholes and Dams**

The second approach is to visit waterholes in the vicinity of your camp.

Most visitors scan the waterhole's perimeter and the surrounding area before deciding whether to move on. Aim to spend at least twenty minutes at a water hole before making a decision. Given time, things happen - perhaps a Water Monitor working its way through foliage in pursuit of frogs; maybe a submerged Crocodile waiting to ambush unsuspecting prey. These photo opportunities are noticed with time but usually missed in a quick scan of a waterhole.

Take note of wildlife – Elephant, Buffalo, Zebra, Wildebeest and Antelope - in the area of a waterhole and whether they are moving towards or away from the water. As herbivores approach the water, they will, at first, be tentative in case predators are around but gradually some will gather the courage to make their way down to drink. Others will follow as they gain confidence. The point here is that those subject to predation spend as little time as possible at a waterhole. Not all animals in a group may drink at the same time. You should grab your shots as the opportunity arises, even if all are not drinking and even if those drinking are not perfectly spread out along the edge of the waterhole.

Waterholes and dams to visit include:

- Shithave Dam (H1-1 Skukuza, all day),
- Transport Dam (H1-1 Skukuza, pm),
- Mpondo Dam (S102 Crocodile Bridge, early morning/late afternoon),
- Duke's Waterhole (Crocodile Bridge S137, am)
- Nhlanganini Dam, (Letaba, H-9, pm),
- Letaba (at junction of S46 with S94, am),
- Sable Dam (Letaba, H-9/S50, am),
- Shingwedzi (S52, SE half of the loop, am), and
- Klopstersfontein (Punda Maria, S61, early morning, late afternoon).

### • **River crossings**

There are a large number of bridges in the Park, both raised and low-level. Many of the bridges cross river beds that are dry for most of the year. The raised bridges are on the tarred roads where they pass over major rivers running through the Park and tend to be too high above the subject to provide a successful photograph unless the subject is large and at a distance suitable for a long-focal length lens.



It is at the low level bridges that cross perennial streams where the fun is to be had! Shallow water flows over the bridge and provides a hunting ground for wading birds to catch fish and other creatures carried across the bridge or making their way upstream.

In pt II, I mentioned the bridge crossing the Tsendze River (S142, am/pm) and the weir across the Biyamiti (S114, am). The low level bridge across the Shingwedzi River just outside the camp (S135, am) has been restored following devastating floods in 2014. Other suitable low-level bridges are to be found on the Sabie River Crossing (H1-2, Skukuza, am/pm), Sabie River Crossing (Lower Sabie, H10, am/pm), Olifants River Crossing (Olifants S90, am/pm) Makhadzi River Crossing (Letaba, S62, am/pm), Nwanedzi River Crossing (Letaba, S47, am), Shingwedzi River Crossing (Shingwedzi, S52, am). The Skukuza and Lower Sabi bridges are subject to heavy traffic.

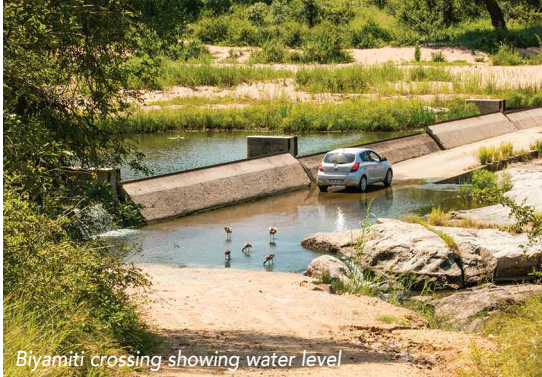
### Good Practice

There is nothing more disappointing than missing a good photo opportunity. Being prepared, having patience and anticipating developments are all at the heart of successful wildlife photography.

### Before leaving camp

- Check your batteries and ensure you have spares.
- Check that you have enough empty memory cards for a long shoot - high capacity cards are most suitable for this purpose.
- Remember to check the camera's settings - it is very easy to overlook re-setting the camera after a night drive resulting in the first of the next mornings pictures being missed when you realise your mistake. Make it a habit to take a photograph on each camera each morning before leaving camp.

My standard settings are: evaluative metering, ISO at 400 for older cameras, 800 for newer cameras, auto white balance, continuous shooting (slower rate), aperture at f8, (or at least one stop smaller than the maximum aperture), auto-focus enabled and continuous (servo) focus set, single focus point with surrounding points selected, lens stabilization system set to 'Off'. These settings are a compromise between what is required for a fast-moving subject and one that is largely stationary. During the first and last hours of the day, I double the ISO rating. If I anticipate fast action, I quickly change the shutter

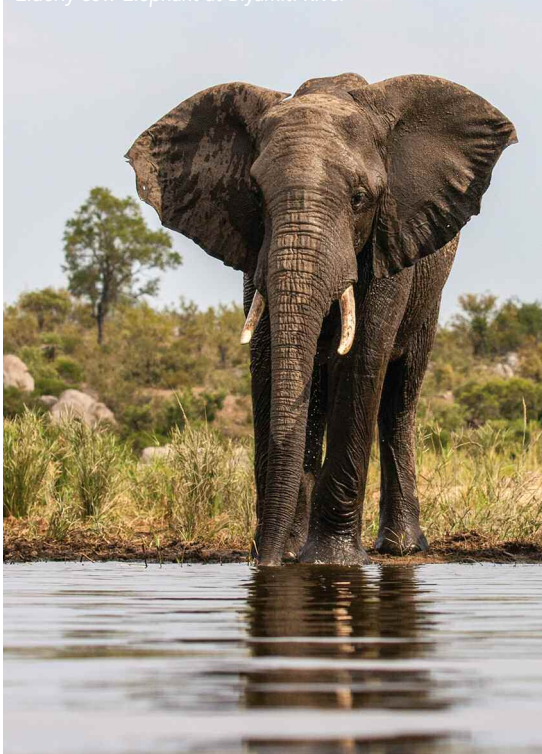


*Biyamiti crossing showing water level*



*Low level bridge at Tsendze River*

*Elderly cow Elephant at Biyamiti River*





*African Openbill searching for freshwater molluscs*



*Pied Kingfisher at Oliphants River low level crossing*



*Crowned Lapwing*



*Egyptian Geese at Biyamiti River Crossing*

rate to the higher setting. Knowing the positions of the buttons required for exposure compensation, movement of the focus point, changing ISO and for low/high multiple exposures will enable you to make changes when under pressure, without the need to move your eye from the viewfinder! Finally, keep everything readily to hand in the vehicle.

#### **Stabilizing the lens against movement.**

There are many devices available that seek to provide a steady support for a camera and lens positioned in a car window. Generally speaking, these devices facilitate smooth panning but are not always sufficiently stable and will still allow movement to occur. They also slow down changing lenses. To my mind, there is nothing to beat a beanbag filled with rice! Why rice? Well, it creates a better dampening affect than polystyrene balls, it is cheap and readily available in local stores, plus, it will be welcomed by a local when you leave!

Ask your passengers to be still when you are taking photographs. I always use a remote release, even when resting the lens on a beanbag.

#### **On returning to camp**

The middle hours of the day can be very hot and are best spent in the chalet with the air-conditioning on! I use this period to download images from the previous 24 hours to a laptop. With images on the laptop and backed up to a portable hard drive, I am reasonably protected against a catastrophe. I also use this time to check through the images to see what I can learn from them. There is a tendency – I am guilty of it – of using too long a lens, resulting in the subject being cropped tighter than may be desirable. If anything, err on the side of a shorter focal length that allows you the luxury of selecting the right crop later! This is also the time to charge batteries, format memory cards and clean dust from cameras and lenses.

**A word of warning.** Never leave your laptop in the chalet. When I am out during the day, the laptop travels with me. When I am having dinner at the restaurant, the laptop is locked in the boot of the car!

*Ludi first visited the Kruger in June 1956 and has been a regular visitor to the Park ever since. He is not sponsored, receives no benefit for promoting the Park or any products mentioned in these articles – he lectures and writes about the Park to share his love for it with other fellow photographers!*



# My Journey to Associateship

by Sarah Kelman ARPS

If you could only take your holidays in the UK winter, where would you go? Do you choose a warm, sunny beach or exotic far-flung shores? I regularly choose the frozen arboreal forests of northern Finland, where the temperature regularly reaches -40C and the snow piles up several metres thick below the conifers. As a wildlife destination, the untrained observer may think the habitat is devoid of life, and indeed it is astonishing that anything can survive these long, harsh winters, but with a little perseverance a great array of fauna can be observed and photographed in a winter wonderland setting.

I have been an avid birder all of my life and, more recently, I've also had the opportunity to stretch my field skills armed with my camera. It is still unusual for women to be seen trekking over inhospitable terrain with a 500mm prime and heavy-duty tripod over their shoulder, but I enjoy the physical challenge of accessing remote areas almost as much as the wildlife encounters themselves.

The transition from bird recorder to bird photographer was a predictable one. I'd owned SLR equipment since the age of 15 but the advent of digital and growing expense of film meant that my

photography gradually fell by the wayside. It was several years before I felt I could afford to trade in my trusty conventional kit and invest in a digital SLR. Of course, my photographic attentions returned to birds and I went through the usual photographic journey of initially taking dubious quality 'record shots' before moving on to the satisfaction of a well-composed but nonetheless conventional species portrait. Soon such shots did not provide enough challenge and I found myself attempting more technical shots, watching for moments of animal behaviour and interaction and of course, having the additional patience to wait for the perfect light. My local camera club also pushed me to improve with several members already having achieved an ARPS in natural history. It was inevitable that my thoughts eventually drifted towards attempting a distinction myself.

My first visit to Finland was as much out of availability as anything else. I had some midweek winter days available, flights were affordable and Finnature promised some great encounters with wild Golden Eagles. Several Finnish operators provide carcasses to supplement their diet through the long winter months at various sites. Despite the bait, these

Golden Eagle





Mountain Hare (winter pelt)



Roe Deer feeding



Red Squirrel (winter pelt)



Willow Grouse calling (winter plumage)

huge birds remain wary and good photographic opportunities are not guaranteed, however, on my first visit to Oulanka, I hit the jackpot. The low winter light was golden and a number of birds descended in front of our hide. I was hooked on what this icy landscape could offer.

I was soon introduced to other unique bird encounters that the frozen arboreal forest of this northern land had to offer. A long bus ride to Kuusamo took me to areas with Black-bellied Dippers on the frozen banks of the forest streams, and exotic species such as Siberian Jay and Siberian Tit. The atmosphere whilst waiting for the perfect moment to press the shutter is almost ethereal. In winter, the area is under the influence of the Siberian High pressure weather system resulting in light winds and incredibly low temperatures. The blanket of snow muffles all sounds and lying in wait for your target species is more akin to visiting a set for Hollywood's Narnia movies.

I soon booked a return visit, this time to target one of my dream species – the Black Grouse at their lek. Unlike their Scottish brothers, Finland's grouse display whilst there is still deep snow lying. When this is kicked up during the scuffles, it adds an extra dynamic element to the images. On this visit we were very fortunate that the guides had also located a Great Grey Owl and we spent two days following

## Fauna of Finland's Taiga in Winter

### Hanging plan



Sub-adult golden eagle in flight



Mountain hare (winter pelt)



Roe deer



Willow grouse calling (winter plumage)



Siberian jays



European brown bear



Great grey owl in flight



Black grouse lek



Golden eagle



## Statement of Intent

### *The Fauna of Finland's Taiga in Winter*

Winter is always the most challenging season for any species, but few environments are as harsh as Finland's taiga. The habitat consists mainly of coniferous forests and rocky swamps with fast flowing streams that drain into the fenland. In winter, temperatures regularly fall to  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  and the snow lies thick for months.

To the casual observer, the landscape appears empty and deserted, but with patience, the wintering species can be located and observed.

This portfolio intends to capture some of these overwintering species and their environment. The images have been obtained from many visits over several years, and after many days and nights in the field.



Great Grey Owl lifting off



Siberian Jays



Red fox



Red squirrel (winter pelt)



Great grey owl lifting off



Two bears fighting



Raven catching food



Willow tit



Red fox



Black grouse displaying



Rock ptarmigan calling (winter plumage)



Willow Tit



Black Grouse lek



*Great Grey Owl in flight*



*Golden Eagle on Red Fox*



*Rock Ptarmigan calling (winter plumage)*



*Black Grouse displaying*

this animal on foot in both heavy blizzards and glorious golden sun. Many guides will use dead voles to 'fish' for these owls and lure them close. Our encounter was special through being entirely unobtrusive and enabled us to watch the owl hunting naturally, its neck bent at an impossible angle to its body to listen for voles scurrying below the snow cover.

Later visits challenged me to try to capture images of Finland's iconic mammal species. These were to prove much harder. Several long, freezing nights in wooden sheds were spent in the hope of wolves but to no avail. Come the spring, I joined a group hoping to photograph Brown Bears at Martinselkonen as they emerge from hibernation. The timing was perfect – on the first night we had several visits and a pair of young males obliged us by play-fighting in the early dawn light. I tried to repeat the opportunity the following year but the winter had been harder and my nights alone in the hide were only rewarded with ravens whilst the bears slept on.

Once back at home, the search for images suitable for a panel began. I am immensely grateful for the advice offered initially by my friends who have also achieved ARPS status, then from a RPS one to one advisory session in London and then finally from various nearby members of the nature group. As a result of this, my panel was finally tweaked and accepted first time.

I have an immense respect for the way Finland's wildlife survives their harsh conditions. Nature photography is never easy, but the rewards for a bit of cold and suffering in this climate are phenomenal. It is possible to photograph many of these species on short visits to heated hides in the daytime, but the biggest rewards are reserved for those who can walk through the deep snows before dawn and stay silent and motionless until after dark, or even stay overnight with nothing but a sleeping bag and a flask of tea for company.



*Raven catching food*



**Gold Medal Print**

*Jokulsarlon at Midnight by Ian Wilson ARPS*



## The RPS Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2016



**Gold Medal PDI**

*European Roller returning to nest by David Wessely ARPS*





## Bronze Medal Prints

Above: Brown Hairstreak  
by Gianpiero Ferrari

Opposite: Glacier calving  
by Duncan Locke



## Bronze Medal PDIs

Above: Zebra amongst the Wildebeest  
by Alan Walker ARPS

Below: Pixie Cup Lichen and  
Angels Bonnet  
by Darron Matthews ARPS

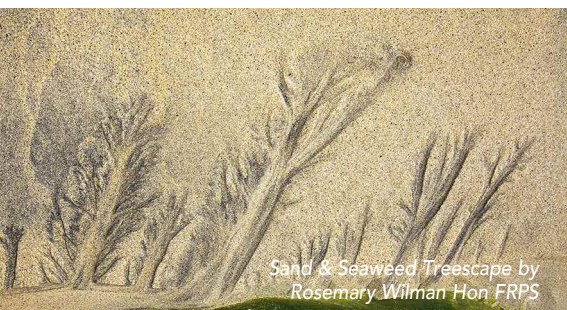






## Selectors' Choices - Prints





Sand & Seaweed Treescape by  
Rosemary Wilman Hon FRPS



Whiskered Tern with prey by Adrian Langdon ARPS



Sulphur Tufts by Dawn Osborn FRPS



White-tailed Sea Eagle by Duncan Locke



Three Small Red Damselflies  
by Darron Matthews ARPS

## Selectors' Choices - Projected Digital Images



Eyebright by Sheila Weir ARPS



# The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2016

## Accepted Prints

<b>Gold Medal</b>	Ian Wilson ARPS	Jokulsarlon at midnight
<b>Bronze Medals</b>	Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Brown Hairstreak
	Duncan Locke	Glacier calving
<b>Selectors' Awards</b>	Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Large Banded Grasshopper
	Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Mountain Hare in Habitat
	Sarah Kelman ARPS	Mountain Hare
	Ian McLean ARPS	Oyster Plant - Iceland
	Richard Revels FRPS	Common Rockrose in the Pyrenees
	Richard Revels FRPS	Group of Green-winged Orchids
<b>Highly Commended</b>	Kevin Elsby FRPS	Autumn Lady's Tresses
	Roger Hance FRPS	<i>Myrica crocata</i>
	Eddy Lane ARPS	Glacier with cloud, Arctic
	Eddy Lane ARPS	Iceberg Wave, Antarctica
	Duncan Locke	Inside an ice cave
	Jean Manson	Ivory Gull
	Richard Nicoll ARPS	Bittern
	Richard Revels FRPS	Lobster Moth Larva
	Richard Revels FRPS	Lady's Slipper Orchid
	Ralph Snook ARPS	Sea Otter family
	Terry Wall ARPS	Robber Fly
<b>Commended</b>	Wendy Eve ARPS	Porcelain Crab
	Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Bullfinch on frosty Teasel
	Roger Hance FRPS	Male Purple Emperor
	Sarah Kelman ARPS	Leopard on Impala kill
	Dawn Osborn FRPS	Silvery Grebe parents and chick

Author	Title	Award
John Bebbington FRPS	Green-veined Orchid flowerhead (focus stack)	
	Mistletoe male flowers (focus stack)	
Malcolm Blackburn	Annas Hummingbird	
	Rufous Hummingbird	
Gill Cardy FRPS	Red Squirrel on Bracket Fungus	
Roger Clark ARPS	Jaguar - Brazil	
Sandie Cox ARPS	Cheetah Cubs honing hunting skills	
Liz Cutting ARPS	Marbled White	
	Red Squirrel	
Roy Dorkins	Grey Seal Pup	
Kevin Elsby FRPS	Black-winged Stilt wading	
	Autumn Lady's Tresses	Highly Commended
Wendy Eve ARPS	Porcelain Crab	Commended
	Feather Duster Worm on Horseshoe Coral	
	Tozeuma Shrimp	
	Tube Dwelling Anemone	

Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Bullfinch on frosty Teasel Large Banded Grasshopper Mountain Hare in habitat Brown Hairstreak Sand Dunes Morning Glory	Commended Selector's Choice Selector's Choice Bronze Medal
Brian Ferry LRPS	Water Avens	
Gordon Follows ARPS	Black-crowned Night-Heron Red Kite Calling	
Richard Hall LRPS	Hippopotamus dispute, Serengeti	
Roger Hance FRPS	Male Purple Emperor Beautiful Demoiselle on reedstem Marbled White Butterfly on Orchid <i>Auricularia Auricula judae</i> Burnt Tip Orchids <i>Mycena crocata</i>	Commended    Highly Commended
Andrew Stuart Hayes LRPS	Peregrine Falcon	
John Jones ARPS	Ringlets paired	
Sarah Kelman ARPS	Leopard on Impala kill Mountain Hare European Brown Bears Red Deer sparring	Commended Selector's Choice
Eddy Lane ARPS	Glacier with cloud, Arctic Iceberg Wave, Antarctica	Highly Commended Highly Commended
Pamela Lane ARPS	Voodoo Spider with mate Zebra family crossing the Mara	
Barbara E. Lawton FRPS	Larva of Eyed Hawkmoth Red and Black Squash Bug and Hairy Shieldbug on seedhead Hips of <i>Rosa rugosa</i> Red Campion, <i>Silene dioica</i> Sulphur Tuft, <i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	
Duncan Locke	Arctic Fox Leopard kill Polar Bear Whooper Swans Glacier calving Inside an ice cave	Bronze Medal Highly Commended
Jean Manson	Ivory Gull	Highly Commended
Maggie Manson ARPS	Gentoo colony	
Michael Marshall	Black-headed Weaver at nest Fallow Deer Shoebill in swamp	
David McKay ARPS	Fighting Zebras Kingfisher with catch	
Ian McLean ARPS	Oyster Plant - Iceland Thrift - Jura	Selector's Choice
Ann Miles FRPS	Fighting Coot Sand and ice patterns, Norway	
Gillian Morgan LRPS	Arctic Fox in summer Elephant Seal pups playfighting Mobbing Arctic Tern Polar Bear approach	



Richard Nicoll ARPS	Emperor Dragonfly Hen Harrier Marsh Harrier Bittern	Highly Commended
Dawn Osborn FRPS	Silvery Grebe parents and chick Black-browed Albatross Parent and chick Coyote hunting in snow Magellanic Oystercatcher feeding	Commended
Srinivasan Periathiruvadi	Deer Zebras	
Ken Rasmussen ARPS	Wood Sandpiper	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Buff Tip Moth Field Grasshopper Beaked Earthstar Common Spotted Orchid - flower detail Man Orchid flower spike	
Richard Revels FRPS	Lobster Moth Larva Common Rockrose in the Pyrenees Group of Green-winged Orchids Heath Spotted Orchids Lady's Slipper Orchid	Highly Commended Selector's Choice Selector's Choice
David Robinson ARPS	Great Spotted Woodpecker feeding juvenile Nuthatch Reddish Egret Willet	Highly Commended
Mike Rowe ARPS	Limpkin with Mussel Snowy Egret fishing	
Stan Saunders ARPS	Puss Moth Caterpillar	
Ralph Snook ARPS	Sea Otter family Wildebeest crossing	Highly Commended
Helena Spinks	Osprey with fish White-tailed Eagle with fish	
Nigel Symington LRPS	Wood White	
Sonja Thompson FRPS	Butterfly mosaic	
Terry Wall ARPS	Goldfinch Starlings bathing Robber Fly Birds Nest Orchid Lizard Orchid	Highly Commended
John Weir ARPS	Yellow Loosestrife	
Sheila Weir ARPS	Nursery Web Spider	
Ian Wilson ARPS	Golden Plover calling, Iceland Puffin in flight, Iceland Whimbrel calling, Iceland Whimbrel in flight, Iceland Fumarole, Hveravellir Lava from the Krafla fires 1975-1984 Jokulsarlon at midnight	Gold medal

# The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2016

## Projected Images

<b>Gold Medal</b>	David Wessely ARPS	European Roller returning to nest
<b>Bronze Medal</b>	Darron Matthews ARPS	Pixie Cup Lichen and Angels Bonnet
	Alan Walker ARPS	Zebra amongst the Wildebeest
<b>Selectors Choice</b>	Adrian Langdon ARPS	Whiskered Tern with prey
	Duncan Locke	White-tailed Sea Eagle
	Darron Matthews ARPS	Three Small Red Damselflies
	Dawn Osborn FRPS	Sulphur Tufts
	Sheila Weir ARPS	Eyebright
	Rosemary Wilman Hon.FRPS	Sand and seaweed treescape
<b>Highly commended</b>	David Cantrille FRPS	Green Hermit
	Peter Farmer	Lenticular Cloud, Antarctica
	Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Bird's-eye Primrose in habitat
	Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Mediterranean Beach Daisy
	Keith Polwin ARPS	Herring Gull with Mackerel
	John Simpson	<i>Ophrys flavomarginata</i>
	John Simpson	<i>Ophrys umbilicata</i>
	Alan Walker ARPS	Cheetah chase
<b>Commended</b>	Johan J Botha ARPS	Dove escape
	Paul Carter LRPS	Blue-eyed Cormorant
	Jane Dagnall LRPS CPAGB	Leopard with Impala
	Stephen Ditch	Grey Heron pursuing Great White Egret
	Adrian Langdon ARPS	Wood Sandpiper
	Darron Matthews ARPS	Male Common Blue and Bug
	Helena Spinks	Red Squirrel taking Hazelnut from husk
	Terry Wall ARPS	Bee Eater catching bee
<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Award</b>
Jon C Allanson LRPS	Globe Flowers	
Jon Ashton	Puffin with nesting material	
	Short-eared Owl	
	Silver-studded Blue with attendant host Black Ant	
John Bebbington FRPS	Large White Butterfly eggs (Focus Stack)	
	Lobster Moth newly-ecdysed larva with exuvium	
	Merveille du Jour Moth camouflage (Focus Stack)	
	Six-spot Burnet Larva with Parasitoid cocoons	
	Bistort in habitat	
	Quaking Grass flowers	
James Black	Amanda's Blues Mating	
	Chequered Skippers Mating	
	Orange-tips and Egg	
Malcolm Blackburn	Annas Hummingbird	
Tony Bond FRPS	Waxwing	
	Fly Agaric	
	Shaggy Scalycap	

Johan J Botha ARPS	Dove escape African Wild Dogs attacking Hyena Cape Fox greeting Sandgrouse escape Antelope Canyon sandstream Organ Pipe Cactus Park Rainbows	Commended
Bob Breach BPE1*	Field Grasshopper ( <i>Chorthippus brunneus</i> ) Parent Shield Bug (Adult and Final Instar Forms) Rhopalid Bug ( <i>Corizus hyoscyami</i> ) Violet-green Swallow with prey	
Bill Brooks LRPS	Marbled White	
David Cantrille FRPS	Caracal Jumping Dalmatian Pelican wing spread Masked Frog in the rain Green Hermit	Highly commended
Paul Carter LRPS	Blue Eyed Cormorant Chinstrap in blizzard Gentoo leaping	Commended
John Chamberlin FRPS	Crow pulling feathers of White-tailed Eagle Hoopoe approaching nest Grand Prismatic Spring , Yellowstone	
Andrew Chislett	Crocodile Kill	
Andrew C M Chu ARPS	Arctic Terns - interactions in flight Puffin call of nature in flight	
Sandie Cox ARPS	Lappet-faced Vulture Three ages of Elephants	
Liz Cutting ARPS	Male Bearded Reedling Water Vole feeding	
Jane Dagnall LRPS CPAGB	Leopard with Impala Hippopotamus	Commended
Gary Dean LRPS	Sea Otter and pup	
Stephen Ditch	Grey Heron pursuing Great Egret	Commended
Tim Downton LRPS DPAGB	Brown Hare Dartford Warbler Short-eared Owl	
Dickie Duckett FRPS	Black Grouse displaying Black Grouse fighting	
Kevin Elsby FRPS	Red-backed Shrike with prey Lesser Butterfly Orchid	
Wendy Eve ARPS	Broadclub Cuttlefish Crescent Tail Big Eyes Sweetlips	
Peter Farmer	Chinstrap Penguin Iceberg, Antarctica Lenticular Cloud, Antarctica	Highly commended
Michael Feeney ARPS AIPF	European Rollers Great Blue Herons Osprey with catch	
Eric Ferbrache ARPS	Bee Orchid	

Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Angle Shades Moth Grey Partridge dispute Small Apollo roosting on Purple Gentian <i>Serapias lingua</i> Spring Crocus Bird's-eye Primrose in habitat Mediterranean Beach Daisy	Highly commended Highly commended
Gordon Follows ARPS	Dunlin Limpkin with young feeding on Apple Snail	
Jane Greateorex ARPS	Gentoo Penguin arrives safely	
Richard Hall LRPS	Olive Baboons Tanzania	
Thomas Hanahoe FRPS	Giraffes Against a Serengeti Sunset	
Roger Hance FRPS	Clouded Yellow Butterflies Common Wave Caterpillars Male Stag Beetle Pasque Flowers Sulphur Tuft Fungi	
Albert Hill AFIAP	Crested Pigeons	
Margaret Hocking ARPS	Cheetah and Cubs feeding Marabou Stork and White-backed Vulture	
Stephen Horsted ARPS	Sandhill Crane at Sunset Sandhill Crane Silhouette	
John Hunt ARPS	Osprey with remains of catch White-tailed Eagles - feathers fly in spat	
Sarah Kelman ARPS	Great Grey Owl Hawksbill Turtle Vervet Monkey	
Eddy Lane ARPS	Grey Seal Pup, Herm Iceberg remnants, Svalbard Kittiwakes sheltering blizzard, Svalbard	
Mike Lane FRPS	Bullfinch Crowned Plover Curlew Sandpiper Kingfisher	
Pamela Lane ARPS	Glacier Flow, Svalbard	
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Whiskered Tern with prey Wood Sandpiper Red Fox White Ibis	Selectors Choice Commended
Andrew Leonard	Hummingbird Hawk Moth Painted Lady	
Duncan Locke	White-tailed Sea Eagle Lion and Lioness Red Crowned Cranes	Selectors Choice
Fiona Mackay ARPS	Marsh Marigolds	
Ken MacLennan-Brown ARPS	Lion Cubs	
Maggie Manson ARPS	Southern Elephant Seals	
Margery Maskell ARPS	Great Egret feeding	



Darron Matthews ARPS	Male Common Blue and bug Three Small Red Damselflies Immature Common Blue Damselfly Pixie Cup Lichen and Angels Bonnet	Commended Selectors Choice  Bronze Medal
Andrew McCarthy ARPS	Eyed Hawkmoth Kingfisher Pearl-bordered Fritillary	
Richard Merritt FRPS	Sweetlips, Squirrelfish & Snappers	
Ann Miles FRPS	Juvenile Red Grouse calling Long-jawed Spider and Damselfly Northern Lights Norway	
Conor Molloy ARPS	Grey Heron drying off Osprey splashing	
Mark Monckton ARPS	Marbled White Butterfly Small Skipper Lady's Slipper Orchid	
John Nash	Buff-Tip Moths mating Yellow Dung Fly on Hogweed	
Sarah Newton	Fallow Deer	
Richard Nicoll ARPS	Little Egret landing	
David M O'Neill LRPS	Greenshank	
Dawn Osborn FRPS	King Cormorant returning to nest with seaweed Magellanic Penguin carrying grass to nest burrow Sulphur Tuft Marsh Helleborine	Selectors Choice
Gill Peachey LRPS	Cardinal Beetle Female Chalkhill Blue Lioness Returning from hunt with Eland Calf	
Ron Perkins	Raven	
Ken Plumb ARPS	Wolf Spider	
Keith Polwin ARPS	Beautiful Demoiselle Bottlenose Dolphin with Salmon Herring Gull with Mackerel	Highly commended
Ken Rasmussen ARPS	Southern Pale Chanting Goshawk <i>Mycena</i> SP Fungi on Pine Cone	
Jane Rees ARPS	Common Blue Butterflies Joshua Trees Pyrenean Saxifrage	
Richard Revels FRPS	Adder Snake attacking Eyed Ladybird taking flight Mottled Umber Moth Larva Wasp, <i>Polistes gallicus</i> , at nest Bee Orchid Fungus, <i>Crepidotus variabilis</i> Lichen, <i>Cladonia fimbriata</i> , with fruiting bodies	
Mike Rowe ARPS	Sandwich Tern shaking dry Sandwich Tern with fish Snowy Egret harassed by Gull	
Stan Saunders ARPS	Red Kite turning Early Purple Orchids - Derbyshire Hearts Tongue Fern	

Shelley Shipton-Knight LRPS	Avocet running Red Grouse in rain	
Paul Frederick Sievers ARPS	Pyramidal Orchids	
John Simpson	Crab Spider ( <i>Runcinia</i> ) with Bee Forest Bug Misumena and Bee <i>Ophrys levantina</i> <i>Ophrys flavomarginata</i> <i>Ophrys umbilicata</i>	Highly commended Highly commended
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Bumble Bee in flight Hummingbird Hawkmoth in flight <i>Thomisus onustus</i> pair and Fly	
Ralph Snook ARPS	Alaskan Fox eating Mussels Iceberg erosion	
Helena Spinks	Red Squirrel taking Hazelnut from husk	Commended
Sonja Thompson FRPS	Wolf confrontation	
Ken Wade LRPS	Sanderling on sea shore	
Julia Wainwright ARPS	Suslik White-tailed Eagle	
Alan Walker ARPS	Brown Bear cub protecting his fish Zebra amongst the Wildebeest Cheetah chase	Bronze Medal Highly commended
Terry Wall ARPS	Bee Eater catching bee	Commended
John Weir ARPS	Clouded Apollo Hogweed unfurling	
Sheila Weir ARPS	Eyebright Bog Cotton Ribwort Plantain	Selectors Choice
David Wessely ARPS	European Bee Eater landing with bee European Rollers Mating European Roller returning to nest	
Michael D White LRPS	Northern Hawk Owl ( <i>Surnia ulula</i> )	Gold Medal
Rosemary Wilman Hon.FRPS	Immature Heron with crab Sand and seaweed treescape Mammoth Hot Spring detail Thermal runoff, Grand Prismatic Spring	Selectors Choice

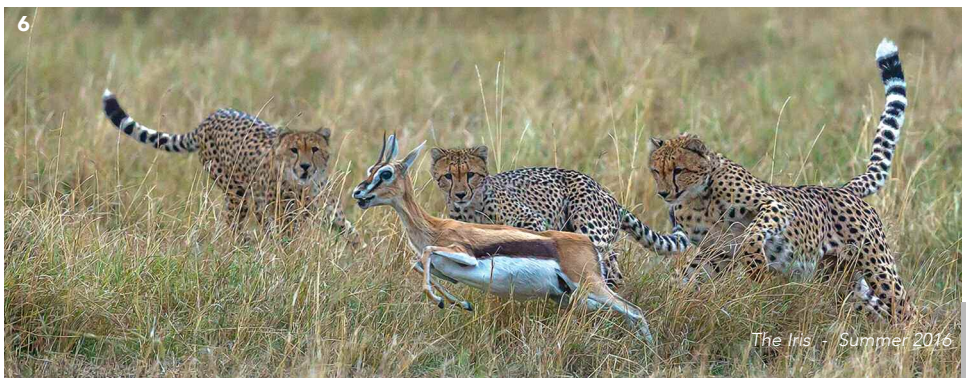
## Opposite page:

## Highly Commended Prints & PDIs

1. Lobster Moth Larva by Richard Revels FRPS
2. Robber Fly by Terry Wall ARPS
3. Green Hermit by David Cantrille FRPS
4. Herring Gull with Mackerel by Keith Polwin ARPS
5. Bittern by Richard Nicoll ARPS
6. Cheetah chase by Alan Walker ARPS



## Highly Commended Prints & PDIs





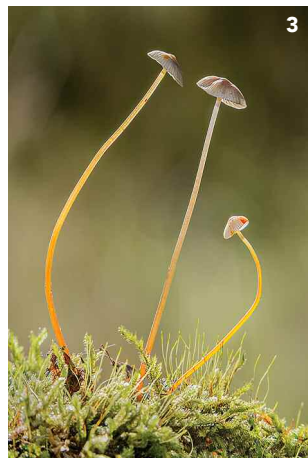


## Highly Commended Prints & PDIs

1. Sea Otter family by Ralph Snook ARPS
2. Lenticular Cloud, Antarctica by Peter Farmer
3. Glacier with cloud, Arctic by Eddy Lane ARPS
4. Ivory Gull by Jean Manson
5. Inside an ice cave by Duncan Locke
6. Iceberg Wave, Antarctic by Eddy Lane ARPS







## Highly Commended Prints & PDIs

1. Lady's Slipper Orchid  
by Richard Revels FRPS
2. Bird's-eye Primrose in habitat  
by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS
3. Mycena crocata  
by Roger Hance FRPS
4. Mediterranean Beach Daisy  
by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS
5. *Ophrys flavomarginata* &  
6. *Ophrys umbilicata*  
by John Simpson
7. Autumn Lady's Tresses  
by Kevin Elsby FRPS





## Commended Prints and PDIs

1. Male Purple Emperor by Roger Hance FRPS
2. Wood Sandpiper by Adrian Langdon ARPS
3. Bullfinch on frosty Teasel by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS
4. Porcelain Crab by Wendy Eve ARPS
5. Male Common Blue and bug by Darron Matthews ARPS
6. Silvery Grebe parents and chick by Dawn Osborn FRPS

More Commended Prints and PDIs on the inside back cover





# Plumley Lime Beds Nature Reserve

by Roland Cooke ARPS

*Emerald Damselfly*



In the early 1990s I joined the RPS Nature Group and in 1996, with the support of the late Colin Smith FRPS, I achieved my Associateship.

I have always been fascinated by the natural world, especially the diverse shapes, incredible colour and interaction of species. It is my intention to do justice to the beauty of nature through the medium of photography. I specialize in close up techniques. Initially I used a Nikon FA with Kodachrome 64 until it was discontinued. These days I use a Nikon DSLR and 105 or 200mm macro lens with a tripod. I use natural light and a reflector when applicable and, wherever possible, try to isolate my subjects from their background using the lowest ISO rating practicable.

Over the past 30 years I have made regular visits to Plumley Lime Beds Nature Reserve, Cheshire to photograph and record the flora and fauna. The reserve lies just south of the A556 (Northwich by-pass) about one mile from the village of Plumley. Grid Ref Sn08751 The southern boundary of the reserve is marked by the Cheshire Manchester railwayline.

The lime beds were owned by ICI Limited who by agreement allowed Cheshire Wildlife Trust to manage the area as a nature reserve. The site, classified as an SSSI, covers 58 acres and prior to 1918 was occupied by a large ammonia soda process factory. After demolition a complex of habitats including woodland and meadow were formed within the lime beds and factory site. Subsequent subsidence has since produced a large lagoon. In recent years Cheshire Wildlife Trust has had no responsibility to maintain it.

*Comfrey*



*Soldier Beetles*



# The Saltee Islands

by Robert Thompson FRPS



**Introduction** - Ireland perhaps better known for its remarkable landscapes rather than its rich and varied wildlife. Each year, thousands of seabirds make the annual journey in Spring to breed on many well known islands around the Irish coast. The Saltee's are Ireland's best known bird islands and one of the most important breeding sites in Europe for many seabirds. They lie in the St George's Channel, approximately 5km off the County Wexford coast in southeast Ireland.

The Islands origins date back some 600 million years in geological time to the pre-Cambrian period and are composed mainly of metamorphic Lewisian Gneiss – one of the oldest rocks in the world, named after the Isle of Lewis in the Hebrides. Archaeological evidence shows that there were Vikings and religious settlements on the islands. Pirates were also present at one point, using the islands as a base for smuggling and plundering the wealthy merchant ships that ran the gauntlet through the channel. The islands also became known as the 'graveyard of a thousand ships', due to the many vessels that met their fate in the turbulent waters surrounding them.

The Saltee's have been uninhabited since the 1940s when all farming ceased after the war. There are no shelters or facilities of any kind on the islands and provisions must be brought with you along with appropriate clothing as weather conditions can change suddenly and frequently do. Camping is also prohibited on Great Saltee except by prior agreement. The wind and rain can make it a pretty uncomfortable place to be – although extreme weather can often produce some exceptional

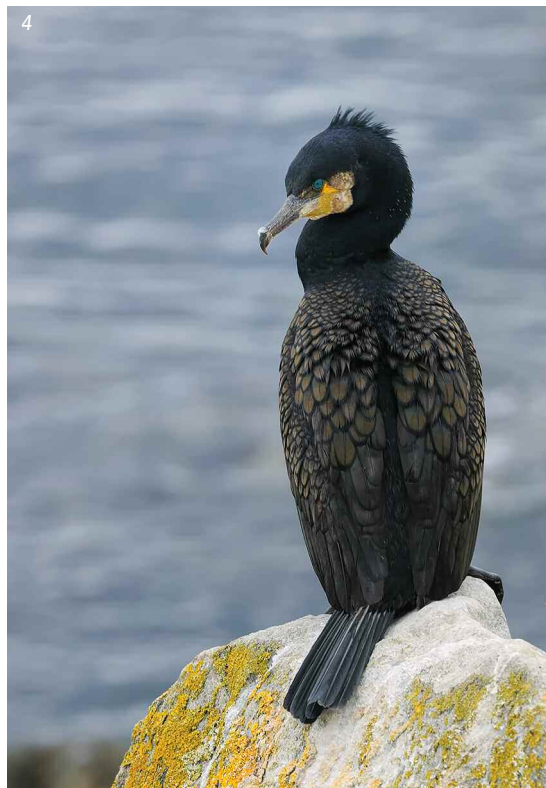
photographs. Having said that, Wexford has a more favorable climate than the rest of the Ireland. It has a lower annual rainfall and longer hours of sunshine than any other county. Great Saltee is the larger of the two islands, about 1.6 km in length and wedge-shaped. The mainland or north side of the island has a low rocky shoreline but rises to around 58m on its southern summit. The large precipitous rocky outcrops along the eastern side, hold the biggest concentration of birds including, the two gannet colonies; the smaller one occupies an offshore islet while the largest encompasses the higher crags at the southern end.

Little Saltee is closest to the mainland and about 0.8km long, gently rising to 30m with a series of small coves mainly towards the south of the island. Erosion by the sea has left the land edges steeply incised, making it difficult to get down to sea level in places. Landing is difficult as there is no suitable place to dock a boat and can only be attempted in calm conditions. Transfer is usually via zodiac and then a paddle for the remaining few yards. The island has the largest population of breeding cormorants and a magnificent sight they are when you first see them. Unfortunately, they no longer appear to breed on Great Saltee. Both islands are in private ownership, although they were initially purchased by the late Prince Michael the First in 1943. Following his death, they passed to his children. Permission to visit Great Saltee is by courtesy of the Neale family and authorisation to land on Little Saltee is required from the new owner in advance.



When you experience Great Saltee for the first time, the memory is forever with you. I have been coming to the islands for nearly 20 years, both as a photographer running workshops and on commissioning contracts from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The sight and smell of over 20,000 seabirds on the cliffs are truly breathtaking and never fail to stir my emotions. Once on the island, you ascend a series of broad stone steps and a path that takes you past the Neale family house and finally to the Prince's throne – a large stone structure where Prince Michael was formally crowned. A short walk from here towards the cliffs provides an excellent view of the Makestone – an islet with a small colony of gannets and some other breeding seabirds. Following the well-defined path west of the throne takes you to the Wherry Hole, which is one of the best bays for photographing puffins. The nesting burrows in this area are among patches of thrift, which provide and an attractive backdrop. Further along the cliffs Guillemots, razorbills, fulmars and Kittiwake's pack the ledges with little or no capacity at times to move or even turn sideways. The noise levels can be overwhelming at times and only as dusk approaches does it drop to a level that is tolerable. Seabirds which breed on a regular basis on the islands include, Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, Shag, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Guillemot, Razorbill and, of course, Atlantic Puffin. However, other birds have bred on the islands, including Oystercatcher, Chough and Peregrine Falcon.

**Planning your trip** - The ideal time to visit the islands is during May and June when activity is at its peak. From mid-May, the island is awash with colour, Bluebells, Campions, and Thrift, provide an attractive backdrop to the nesting burrows of puffins and grassy ledges occupied by Fulmars. There are over 130 species of wildflower recorded on the islands. By June most of the flowers have passed their best and the large, vibrant flushes of pink on the ledges from the Thrift have almost petered out. Bracken now dominates a large part of the island, which intensifies towards the higher, southern summit. The ledges and rocky outcrops along the east and south sides have the greatest concentrations of nesting Razorbills, Guillemots and Kittiwakes. Much of the cliffs and rocky crags allow excellent views of the birds, but generally from an elevated position looking down into the small bays and coves, parts of which are often in shadow, especially in early morning. There are,





however, rocky areas where you can get down to eye level, and these tend to be the most productive spots photographically. Shags are also frequent along here in small numbers – they tend to like the protection of the large rocky outcrops and overhangs. The youngsters frequently perch on the larger angulated rocks and are somewhat tolerant of approaching photographers.

The climb to the Gannet colony along the fringe of the south summit past the now abandoned agricultural fields provides an impressive vista across the island with Little Saltee clearly visible in the distance. The orange and yellow lichen-covered rocks of *Xanthoria aureola* and *X. parietina* form patches of colour in some of the larger bays. There are around three thousand breeding pairs of gannets on the island, which are, without doubt, the biggest attraction for every photographer. Warm evening light and the prevailing southwesterly winds around the south summit provide the ideal conditions for flight photography, and one can be easily become absorbed in the ambience and the sight of countless birds landing and taking off, frequently in a less than graceful fashion. The cliffs and sky here are awash with Gannets – many nesting on the rocky ground virtually in front of you. There are ample opportunities here for a whole range of behavioral images, from territorial squabbles, (which can get nasty), to flight shots and simple portraits of mothers and their offspring. Sitting quietly among the rocks looking towards the colony is a real humbling experience for me, even after twenty years of coming to the islands, I still get choked up and consider myself lucky to have experienced one of nature's incredible scenes.

Nesting gulls are also in evidence but have shown a marked decline in recent years. However, all species still breed throughout most of the island. The Great Black-backed Gulls tend to occupy the higher rocky outcrops on the southern headland near the gannet colony. The chicks are frequently seen among the grassy tussocks between the rocks. The majority of Lesser Black-backed Gulls prefer to nest inland towards



the central part of the island. Although the vast majority of people visit the Saltee's primarily for the seabirds, the islands also support other forms of wildlife. Butterflies and moths are seen on a regular basis, including migrants such as the Red Admiral, Painted Lady and several Hawk-moths. There is also a breeding population of Grey Seal - one of the few rookeries in the east of Ireland. The islands are also regarded as a hot spot for whales and dolphins. Risso's Dolphin is regularly seen during the summer months; Common Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise have also been observed. The marine environment and fauna surrounding the islands are exceptionally rich and is currently being considered for special protection.

**Conservation and the future** - The Saltee Islands are recognised internationally for their large populations of breeding seabirds. Both islands are of high conservation importance are listed in Annex I of EU Habitats Directive, as are two species of bird which are registered on the EU Birds Directive. Both islands have been designated a Special Protection Area (SPA) since the mid-1980s. Ireland's first bird observatory was opened on Great Saltee in 1950. The importance of the islands in terms of the spring and autumn bird migration was established, and the observatory played a significant role in research and ringing programs until its closure in 1963. Many species of bird pass through the islands during these peak times. To date, there have been over two hundred species recorded since the 1960s, which makes it a big attraction for ornithologists and photographers from Britain and Europe.

When I first visited the island, its popularity as a seabird photography destination was less well known outside Ireland. Today that is no longer the case and with an increasing number of day-trippers and photographers from much further afield now coming to Great Saltee, its fragile ecosystem is under more pressure than ever before. The balance between people wanting to engage at a more intimate level with nature and nature itself needing space to function is always a contentious issue, and unfortunately, nature is all too often the loser. Concerns in some quarters have been raised about the number of people now visiting Great Saltee. Despite the increase in daytime tourists and photographers, there appears to be no immediate threat to the gannets and some other species, since numbers have shown a slight, but steady annual increase with the exception of puffins. There is, however, ongoing research and monitoring by BirdWatch Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) which makes the Saltee's the most documented group of islands in terms of bird



9



10

recording in Ireland. However, it is difficult, in the long term to access the impact that increased human traffic will have on the bird populations and the habitat. As photographers, we have a duty of care to put the welfare of the subject first. The islands are unique in many ways, and it would be a pity if future generations were deprived of experiencing nature in such a beautiful and intimate way!

- 1 View along the east shore of Great Saltee Island.
- 2 Northern Gannet coming into land.
- 3 Puffin among the thrift at the Wherry Hole.
- 4 Cormorant. Little Saltee.
- 5 Main Gannet colony Great Saltee Island.
- 6 Nesting space is at a premium. Frequent squabbles are common among nesting birds.
- 7 With so many birds squeezed in to small space individuals frequently find it difficult to land or find their spot- other birds quickly show their disapproval.
- 8 Campions and bluebells in flower on Great Saltee, with Makestone Islet in the distance.
- 9 Oystercatcher - seen in small numbers usually around the northern part of the island near the Princes Throne.
- 10 Sometimes a location can work to your advantage. The bay behind was in deep shadow early in the morning producing an unobtrusive background.



# Nature Distinctions Advisory Day

On Saturday 2nd April 2016 a Nature Distinctions Advisory Day was held at the Village Hall, Foxton Cambridgeshire. The event was jointly organised between the Nature Distinctions Panel and the RPS East Anglia Region under the auspices of the RPS Distinctions Department.

This was the first time an Advisory Day had been organised specifically for RPS members seeking advice on their applications for Associate and Fellowship Distinctions in the Nature category.

The day began with an introduction by David Osborn FRPS, Chairman of the Nature Distinctions Panel. David outlined the requirements - image quality, presentation, etc., as well as the pitfalls that can be experienced when working towards a distinction. He explained how the system of referrals and resubmissions works if a first submission fails. It was also explained how panels will be assessed in the future and how the criteria is evolving. David then went on to introduce the team of 'Fellows' who were on hand to offer advice - Roger Hance FRPS, Deputy Chair of the Nature Distinctions Panel, Kevin Elsby FRPS, also a Nature Distinctions Panel member, and Dawn Osborn FRPS. Although an accomplished photographer, Dawn, who

is David's sister, is prevented from being a panel member due to an RPS rule prohibiting two family members being on the panel at the same time.

Introductions over, David and Roger then proceeded to comment on the print portfolios that members had brought along and offered constructive comments where necessary.

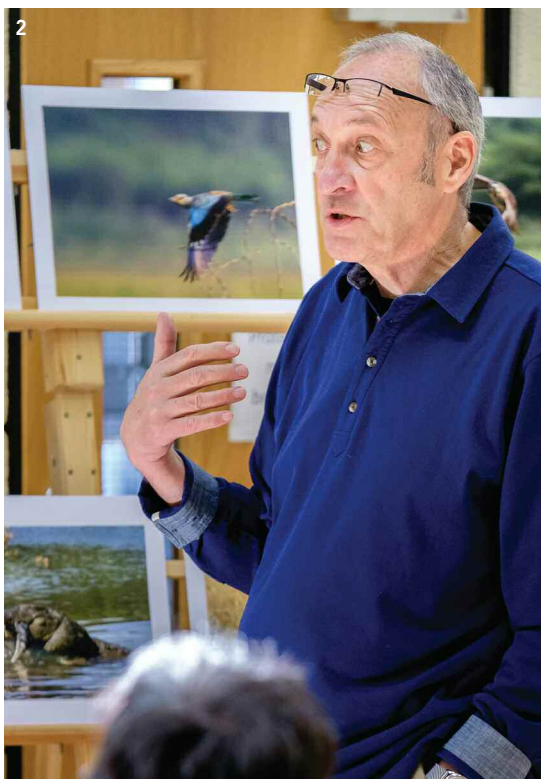
After lunch, those who had requested advice on their Fellowship portfolios received private one-one sessions with David. During this time, Dawn and Kevin talked about their respective Fellowship panels and personal experiences and discussed how the procedure of assessment has evolved and improved. Some recent successful Associate portfolios were then projected and commented on by Kevin.

Feedback from those attending has been very positive and it is hoped that this event will be the first of many Advisory Days focussing solely on Nature.

Thanks must go to the RPS East Anglia Region, Ian Wilson ARPS, Regional Manager, Ann Miles FRPS Deputy Regional Manager, and their team of helpers, for ensuring that the day ran smoothly and for the excellent administrative support both before, during and after the event.



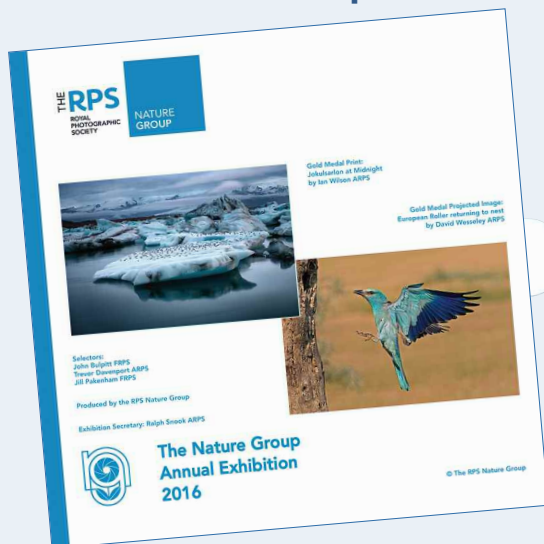




1. Roger Hance FRPS, Deputy Chair of the Nature Distinctions panel talking about one of the print portfolios brought along for advice.
2. David Osborn FRPS, Chairman of the Nature Distinctions Panel, explains the criteria for a successful nature portfolio.
3. Roger Hance and Kevin Elsby FRPS giving a print close scrutiny.
4. Dawn Osborn FRPS talks about her own experiences on her route to Fellowship.
5. Kevin Elsby FRPS shares his experiences with delegates.
6. Kevin and Dawn having a closer look at the portfolios on display.



# The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2016



A CD containing all the accepted images from the 2016 Exhibition will be available to order soon online from the RPS Shop. Priced at only £6\*

See the RPS website for details.

\* Members who entered the 2016 Nature Group Annual Exhibition, will receive their copy of the CD in the post or with their returned prints.

## RPS Nature Group Residential Weekend 2017

Friday 2nd – Monday 5th July 2017

Based at the Cober Hill Hotel, Cloughton, Nr Scarborough, Yorkshire YO13 0AG

**Subjects of interest:** Sea birds, summer flowers and insects.  
**Accommodation cost:** £248. No single room supplement charge.  
**Group size:** Maximum of 16 places available.  
**Deposit:** £60 to be paid by 12th November 2016, payable to Cober Hill Hotel Ltd, to secure your place.  
**Balance:** Payable to the hotel upon arrival.  
**Cancellation:** Participants agree to pay a sliding scale balance if unable to attend unless a substitute is found.  
 When the course is fully booked a waiting list will be operated.  
**Extras:** Possible mini-bus hire – estimated cost £14 each for 2 days.

**Leader:** Leonard Shepherd  
**Contact details:** Beacon View, Ellerclose Road  
 Leyburn, DL8 5EZ  
 Tel 01969 622043, Email shepherdlen@btinternet.com

# RPS Nature Group AGM – 9th April 2016

## Apologies for Absence

The apologies of absence were read out from a list supplied by Margaret and several other apologies were added by members. These were Anne Miles, Richard Nichol, Tony Wharton, Gianpiero Ferarri, Margaret Johnson, Dawn Osborn, Sue McGarrigle, Thomas Hanahoe, Trevor Davenport, Duncan Locke and Terence Laheny.

## Minutes of Previous AGM

These were summarised by the Chairman and were agreed as correct by the membership  
Proposed by John Bebbington and seconded by Barbara Lawton

## Chairman's Report - Richard Revels FRPS.

My first year as your Chairman has seen me kept busy mainly with items from the RPS at Bath, answering members e-mails, and making arrangements for various NG events that took place during 2015. The next major indoor event will be the Nature Group's 40th Anniversary Meeting to be held on Sunday 16th October 2016. This promises to be a very good day. Heather Angel Hon FRPS will be the first guest speaker and will be talk about the formation of the Nature Group back in 1976, and the early years of the Group. The two other main speakers will be Bob Gibbons FRPS and David Osborn FRPS, with several other NG members presenting 'mini shows'. Full details of the event and where to apply for tickets, will be published in the summer issue of The Iris.

So far I have no news from the RPS regarding a revision of the Definition of Nature and Wildlife used by PSA, FIAP and the RPS in the nature sections of photographic exhibitions. Despite what was reported in the RPS Journal in January 2015, the Nature Group Committee was not consulted about the new rules introduced in 2014.

Plans are in progress to introduce a Nature Group Newsletter in the coming year. This will be sent out by e-mail to all Nature Group members. There will probably be two newsletters sent out between each issue of The Iris. The newsletter is not intended to be a rival to, or a replacement of The Iris, but a supplement to it, with items such as reminders of Field and other meetings perhaps containing more information about an event than space allows in The Iris. If details are supplied to the editor we could also publicise Nature / wildlife talks being held at local

Camera and other clubs, where visiting NG members will be welcome. Details of local nature photography workshops and other meetings not arranged by the Nature Group, but where NG members would be welcome to participate, could also be included. An 'Equipment for Sale' section could be included, advertising members' photographic equipment. Also, a list of NG members who would be willing to give talks to various local clubs could be included. I am pleased to report that Dawn Osborn FRPS has shown an interest in being the Newsletter Editor once she has passed on the Editorship of The Iris to the new Editor in waiting Terence Laheny.

Our Secretary Margaret Johnson LRPS will be handing over the secretary's job to Duncan Locke. Both Dawn and Margaret plan to work with their successors in the coming months, to ensure the smooth takeover of their respective jobs. The committee is co-opting both Terence and Duncan onto the committee, so that they can work with Margaret and Dawn in the coming months, ready for their official take-over of these essential jobs at the next AGM.

Tony Bond FRPS, our immediate-past Chairman, has decided to step down from the committee due to health problems. I should like to thank Tony not only for Charing the NG, but also for all the work that he has done for the NG over several decades. Tony has been a NG member since its formation in 1976.

In late October 2015 my good friend Robert Hawkesworth FRPS died. This came as a great shock to me, as less than 24 hours before his death I had a telephone conversation with him and he told me he was very much looking forward to the summer and attending the 40th anniversary meeting in the autumn. Robert, a former Chairman of the NG has done a great deal for the group over the years, and will be greatly missed. The NG was well represented at his funeral.

Two better pieces of news are that membership of the Nature Group is continuing to rise and stood at 1038 earlier in the week. The entry to our annual exhibition has also risen after a slight dip in numbers last year. In February the NG committee agreed to introduce an additional annual award to our annual exhibition, which will be known as the Tony Wharton award. This will be in the form of a small plaque to be awarded to the NG member gaining the most points from accepted images in the annual exhibition.

It is hoped that this will encourage more members to enter all sections of the exhibition as well as high-lighting the most successful exhibitor each year. I should like to thank the Exhibition Secretary Ralph Snook, the selectors, and all those involved in helping to stage our annual exhibition, without which the exhibition could not take place. Also I should like to thank Smethwick P.S. who let us use their excellent facilities for not only this event, but also for other meetings.

I also want to thank all the NG officers and committee members for their work during the past year, and in particular Margaret Johnson our Secretary, Margery Maskell our treasurer, Dawn Osborn who has continued to produce our excellent magazine, Barbara Lawton for arranging Field meetings, and David O'Neill the Nature Group's representative on the RPS Advisory Board.

Following his Chairman's Report, Richard Revels took questions from the floor.

Paul A Charie raised four points/questions

1. He praised Robert Hawksworth for his contribution to the RPS and the Nature Group and spoke highly of tutorial workshops that Robert gave.  
Paul was thanked by Richard
2. He also wanted to question how frequently the proposed e-mail based Newsletter would be issued and felt it should not be more than 6 times per year.
- A. This was taken on board for discussion at the next committee meeting
3. Field Meetings clash with the AGM weekend and it was difficult for members to attend both, especially if there was travelling involved.
- A. The concern was understood, but field meetings are arranged by volunteers for the benefit of fellow members and the committee is reluctant to discourage these efforts.
4. How was the issue with the Nature Definition resolved.
- A. It wasn't and we do not currently have an opportunity to address the issue. FIAP and the PSA are very influential on this matter and there is hope that the definition will be reviewed again.

John Bebbington was concerned that the obituary for the late Robert Hawkesworth FRPS in The Journal reflected the RPS attitude towards its members and wanted to register this concern.

- Discontent from many members was noted and the response regarding the handling of the obituary was attributed to the editor of the RPS Journal, rather than the RPS itself. Richard had contacted the current editor of the RPS Journal regarding this and it is not inappropriate in an obituary to name people in by their surname only. It was suggested that any obituary in The Journal should always include the full name of the deceased and include a link to the website where a more appropriate and complete appreciation of the deceased can be given. The Nature Group however has no influence in what is published in the RPS Journal.

### **Treasurer's Report**

1st January – 31st December 2015

**General Comments** The Balance Sheet (see page 40) is an overall summary of Receipts and Payments for the year. As some items 'straddle' year ends, it cannot be a detailed Balance Sheet for each item.

**Group Cash Book Balance** Finances are in a lot better state now, as the Balance Sheet now shows an excess of Income over Expenditure, giving a Cash Book balance of £14,213.16. The comparison against last year's balance is slightly misleading though, as £1610 in 'free group' subscriptions from last year were not paid into the Group's account until April.

**Subscriptions** The income is that credited monthly to our Cash Book Account during the current Financial year - (Subscriptions paid to the RPS for December 2014 through to November 2015). The Life Members' subscription reimbursements are for 2014, as the 2015 reimbursement will not be paid into the Nature Group account until sometime in January 2016. As some of you may remember, I identified a problem with the process that identifies 'free group' members at the end of 2014. The Finance department looked into this, and confirmed that there was a problem with their software system, but it only seemed to happen when members joined a group online. The issue has still not been fully resolved, but it is being monitored now, and we were not the only group affected. This meant that, in April, we were paid an extra £1610 for missed 'free group' subscriptions for last year, and were paid a further £1050 in July, for the first six months of this year. Due to the above problem, I have been monitoring all subscription payments since January 2015, to ensure that all Group subscriptions have been catered for.

**VAT Returns** Detailed VAT Returns were produced for the first three quarters of 2015 The VAT refunded/paid details show the last quarter of 2014 and the first three quarter of 2015.



**The Iris** Three editions of The Iris were published this year - #121, #122 and #123. The cost of production, and particularly postage, continues to rise, though subscriptions and adverts have helped to offset some of the costs.

**Events** Chairman's Day was held on the 24th October, successfully run by Richard Revels FRPS.

**Annual Exhibition** Even though numbers were down this year, the exhibition was still successful. Earlier this year I got approval for the Exhibition DVD to be put up for sale in the RPS Shop. This was done to try to encourage more overseas members to have access to the DVD, by paying for them online.

Though I only had one overseas sales, this facility has generated most of the sale to date. In addition, to help Ralph Snook (Exhibition Secretary) set up an online exhibition entry system for 2016, I got authorisation from the Finance Manager to set up a PayPal account for the Nature Group, together with its own email address.

**General Administration** This includes all running costs of the Nature Group [general postage, telephone, stationery and travel to committee meetings]. Following the Treasurers Report, Margery Maskell took questions from the floor.

John Bebbington gave thanks to Margery and Ralph for the new online entry system set up to manage the annual exhibition as it was much easier and more practical than the printed forms.

Paul A Charie identified a typo in the Receipts and Payments account and it was agreed that this would be corrected immediately.

There was also a query raised on why the membership fees did not match the numbers receiving The Iris, which was explained as administrative difficulties with central admin. This administration is further complicated by the number of free first year members who then drop out.

The Treasurer's Report was then agreed by members. Proposed by John Bebbington and seconded by Stan Saunders.

### **Secretary's Report**

Margaret Johnson reported that the membership of the group now stood at 1038 members. Those who are leaving the group are doing so because they are leaving the RPS itself, mainly because of cost. They have nothing but praise for the NG. If they do have any issues it is that they would like to see more field meetings. They are very appreciative that they have a letter from me if they are on the lapsed members' list; in many cases, not renewing is due to the direct debit not having gone through.

### **Any Other Business**

Barbara Lawton thanked all the field trip organisers for all their efforts and asked for more volunteers, particularly for Fungi events this Autumn.

- One field trip at Oswestry had no attendees and it was agreed that the field organisers should be encouraged to keep a list of attendees for future events. Please contact the leader" will be the default message for all future events
- Margery also asked field organisers to submit one photo to be supplied for each event, which can be used on the website to promote the event.

James Foad stated that there were still places available for the residential event at Flatford Mill, Suffolk in July. He is also hoping to enlist support from Liz Cutting to help run the event.

Sonja Thompson asked if the annual exhibition could be extended to include a travelling exhibition. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next committee meeting and suggestions from members included:

- The DIGIT group has two fixed venues for consideration
- Regional Organisers may also be able to supply venues and help with the admin and costs
- ROs could forward the exhibition to the next region and cover the postage costs

John Bebbington advised that his Insect Photography workshop would be his last as he would be stepping down from arranging any similar events in the future.

Margery Maskell advised that Outdoor Photography magazine had recently published a link to the RPS Nature Group code of conduct,

Ludi Lochner gave thanks to Richard Revels and the Committee on behalf of the members.

### **Date of 2017 AGM**

The date of the next AGM was agreed as 8th April 2017 and the meeting closed at 2:00pm

David O'Neill

# THE NATURE GROUP OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

## Receipts and Payments Account for 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

### Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bath

#### Year 2014

#### Year 2015

#### Receipts

10,712.16	Subscriptions	14,923.38
1,416.00	Lectures & workshops	612.00
1,784.62	Annual Exhibition	1,358.03
70.61	VAT refunded	21.71
0.00	Miscellaneous	119.00
252.00	IRIS Subs., Adverts, etc.	174.00
<b>£14,235.39</b>	<b>sub totals</b>	<b>£17,208.12</b>

#### Payments

7,465.98	Printing The Iris, incl. postage	8,137.07
1,020.80	Lectures & Workshops	199.20
1,615.62	Annual Exhibition	1,008.76
54.55	VAT paid	16.91
2,564.56	General Administration	2,529.33
<b>£12,721.51</b>	<b>sub totals</b>	<b>£11,891.27</b>

**£1,513.88**

#### Receipts minus Payments

**£5,316.85**

### Balance Sheet at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

#### Nature Group Cash Book

£

Balance brought forward from 2014	8,908.27
Cleared Cheques from 2014	-11.96
Uncleared Cheques from 2015	0.00
Receipts minus Payments 2015	5,316.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,213.16</b>

#### Total Carried Forward to Financial Year 2016

**14,213.16**

*M. Maskell*

4<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Margery J Maskell (Hon. Treasurer)



# Insect Photography Workshop

Preston Montford Field Centre  
8th-12th August 2016

Tutor: John Bebbington FRPS

John will be leading his popular course for the very last time this year and there are still a few vacancies.

Details can be found on the Field Studies Council website at:  
<http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/courses/2016/pm/insect-photography-workshop-59683.aspx>

Or contact Preston Montford Field Centre:  
Tel: 0845 330 7378 Fax: 01743 851066 or  
Email: [enquiries.pm@field-studies-council.org](mailto:enquiries.pm@field-studies-council.org)



## David Osborn FRPS Photo-tours 2017

### January 2017 - Yellowstone Winter Tour

Spectacular winter landscapes

hot springs and geysers

plus an assortment of wildlife in its winter habitat

All travel within the park in our exclusive private snow coach

maximum group size 8 clients

### March 2017 - Birds of Florida

Spectacular Birds in their breeding plumage  
in a variety of habitats.

All travel in air-conditioned people carriers,  
maximum 4 clients per vehicle.

### November 2017 - The Falkland Islands

4 species of Penguin, Southern Elephant Seals, Southern Sealion,  
Striated Caracara, Cobb's Wren and a host of  
other wildlife at prime wildlife locations.

Inter island flights included

For a brochure contact David Osborn FRPS at:

Email: [poppyland3@btinternet.com](mailto:poppyland3@btinternet.com) or  
[www.davidosbornphotography.com](http://www.davidosbornphotography.com)





1. Red Squirrel taking Hazelnut from husk  
by Helena Spinks



2. Dove escape by Johan J Botha ARPS



3. Grey Heron pursuing Great Egret by Stephen Ditch



4. Blue-eyed Cormorant by Paul Carter LRPS

5. Bee Eater catching Bee by Terry Wall ARPS



6. Leopard with Impala by Jane Dagnall ARPS

7. Leopard on Impala kill by Sarah Kelman ARPS



Commended images  
from the 2016 Exhibition