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by Liz Cutting ARPS -
see article on page 29.



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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

The Exhibition has come and gone again for another year - it was an excellent day and if you were unable to attend you do have the opportunity to purchase a CD with commentary by Dr. Kevin Elsyb FRPS. The award winning images are reproduced in this issue along with a full list of the acceptances. Some of the images have been cropped for the purpose of fitting them on the pages and I ask the authors of those images to accept my apologies.

As I was driving from my home to the Exhibition, I found myself counting the amount of badgers I saw dead at the side of the road. I was quite appalled to count 67 on my outward journey, and more on the opposite carriageway on my return home. Added to this were deer and birds. I read recently on the RSPB website that an application to shoot 10 Buzzards has been made to Natural England, because they take young pheasants as prey. I live in North Norfolk where lots of the big estates have weekend events for shooting game birds - of course quite a lot of money has to change hands to do it. A shocking number of these birds also get killed on the roads - does that mean that motorists also run the risk of being shot for killing pheasants?

This issue also contains Mick Durham's successful Fellowship Panel and an account by Liz Cutting ARPS of her recent trip to the Falklands. There's also the follow up issue by Richard Nicoll ARPS regarding the image faking that has been going on. Following Richard's tips, I did some internet browsing of my own and was quite shocked at some of the apparent faking I found. For example, in one exhibition I saw a very nice image of a Kingfisher with a fish sitting on a lichen covered twig, in a different exhibition there is the same Kingfisher but this time a second Kingfisher had been introduced from a different image. If you hadn't seen the first image you might never have come to the conclusion that the second image was a fake. Its despicable!

Thank you to all members who sent articles that have not appeared in this Summer issue. The next issue has articles about The Shetland Islands, Australian Birds, Foxes and The Gambia to look forward to.

Have an enjoyable summer.



From the chair

It was good to see so many members at the AGM. The meeting has a social as well as a photographic purpose and provides an opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones. We saw some wonderful photography and special thanks must go to Margery and Kevin Maskell for their presentations before lunch and organising the exhibition formalities afterwards. The CD, with commentary by Dr. Kevin Elsby, was available and many people took the opportunity to purchase one. There is an advertisement for the CD in the current PAGB e-newsletter so if you are a club member why not point out what an excellent buy this is and cheaper than a visiting lecturer. There will also be an advertisement in The Journal. It is also available when the winter weather is at its worst!

John Bebbington decided to retire from the committee and I am sure that you would like me to thank him for all he has done for the Group. He is writing a book on flower photography and will still be around as a member of the Nature A&F panel where his knowledge of insects is highly valued. Ralph Snook joined the committee with the intention that he will take over as exhibition secretary from Kevin Maskell.

The article *Cheating Nature* by Richard Nicoll in the last edition of The Iris certainly hit the spot. Many people have felt that all was not well in the exhibition world but few could have realised that it is so bad. Some entrants to the 2014 Bristol Salon have been disqualified and medals withdrawn from both the Nature and Travel sections due to cheating. This is the tip of the iceberg but if not stopped will result in the death of these sections when honest entrants realise that they are at a disadvantage - in much the same way that the Tour de France suffered when doping was exposed. One UK international exhibition has already dropped the Travel section as it created too many protests. However the Society has been working with the PSA and FIAP to arrive at an agreed definition of Nature. This may seem a bureaucratic exercise but it makes it possible to rule on what is not allowed and it is hoped that the rules of all exhibitions patronised by the three bodies will be the same, therefore removing any wriggle room. The result of their deliberations can be found in the Group's section of the Society website. The Director General wishes it to be seen that the Society takes this issue seriously and you can look forward to an article by Richard in The Journal - I am certain that it will create a lot of interest and horror. There will also be a follow-up in The Iris.

As we are independent of the PSA and FIAP we can formulate our own rules and I would argue that in one respect we are ahead of the game in that we have said that any entries with inappropriate cute titles will be disqualified. The committee believes that correct identification and titling are all part of being a nature photographer and fortunately we have not needed to implement this change in the rules of our exhibition. Silly titles have spread like a rash and there is no excuse. Although common names vary from country to country scientific names are the same throughout the world and it has never been easier to find them thanks to the internet and literature.

Richard's article dealt with what might be called post-production and the new opportunities brought about by Photoshop. But what about pre-production, i.e. taking the image? The Coordinated Nature Definition as it is known deals with this and draws distinctions between Nature and Wildlife sections particularly with respect to controlled subjects. This caused me to read the Nature Photographers' Code of Practice again. This deals with the ethical and legal (UK) aspects of nature photography. It was last revised in 2007 and I found that it was still an excellent guide to how we should treat our subjects, both wild and controlled. If you cannot find your copy please send a SAE to our secretary, Margaret Johnson, who will be happy to send you one.

My own photography is just emerging from hibernation imposed by the dreadful winter. I have previously done well in winter with the different opportunities it creates, but in my opinion, rain and wind do not encourage good photography. Only a dozen years ago I never would have believed that I would be able to photograph Avocets breeding only 30 miles from home or Black-tailed Godwits on passage. Nor did I think that I would be able to see a glorious sweep of Cowslips on what was the town's landfill site backed by a large area of water resulting from mining subsidence and now the best birding site in Greater Manchester. Nature is a great healer which makes the threats to Kew so depressing.

Tony

Scandal at the heart of International Exhibitions?

by Richard Nicoll ARPS

In October 2013 I wrote an article for the RPS Nature Group's Iris magazine ("Cheating Nature?" Issue No. 118 / Spring 2014) describing the problems I could see in some of the nature images in an international photography exhibition circuit and suggesting a series of measures that, if implemented, would make it much harder for dishonest photographers to gain an advantage. This article is an update on the ongoing investigations.

The circuit referred to in my original article took place in India in 2013. Out of the 52 awards in the Nature Section at least 7 were given to images that I believe broke the rules - over 13% of the total, or to put it another way, 7 awards were denied to honest authors.

Lets be clear, these issues are not simply where someone has cloned out a small distraction or blemish, these are where the author has deliberately misrepresented the original scene by cloning pictorial elements from one place to another and/or from one or more other images not present in the original and in effect created a montage. The rules governing these sections of internationals are very specific:

PSA: "No techniques that add to, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted."

FIAP: "Any manipulation or modification to the original image is limited to minor retouching of blemishes and must not alter the content of the original scene."

The PSA and FIAP have agreed that these two slightly different definitions will now be replaced with a single definition as of 2015-01-01 which should eliminate any confusion over which rule takes precedence. The RPS is also supporting this new definition (see page 7).

Over the following months I continued to investigate these and other images and I became so concerned about the number of dubious entries I could find that

I wrote to the organisers of several exhibitions, including the one in India. The images I pointed out to them were ones that seemed to me to have the most obvious clear cut problems where parts of the scene could not have happened by chance alone. Below is a response that was typical of the sort I received (that is when the organisers bothered to reply):

"The exhibition was judged by three very experienced nature photographers who, I would think, would have been suspicious themselves if anything appeared to be wrong. You can get into very hot water if allegations that prove to be untrue are made. I have no intention of going down that path as my time is extremely full. If you yourself feel there is a case to be made I suggest you complain [to] the PSA and FIAP who may have received similar complaints from other sources."

Reliance on judges to detect these images is misplaced and unfair as they only have a few seconds in which to make their judgement and the image manipulation can be very hard to detect without studying an image for a longer period of time.

As I seemed to be getting no real interest from these exhibition organisers I did indeed contact the PSA directly along with some other international exhibitions.

My investigations continued and following the trail of publicly available evidence has included a much larger number of exhibitions and images.

So lets take just one image and see where it leads us. This image depicts two Oriental Honey Buzzards, one landing on a post with another one already there surrounded by a swarm of insects. At first glance and even after some time it is hard to see anything wrong with this. However on closer inspection it turns out that individual and groups of

bees have been cloned within this image and cloned to or from another image. This image, which has been awarded at least seven Gold medals and numerous other awards, has clearly evaded detection by both judges and any processes exhibitions have in order to detect images that break the rules. The organisers of the Port Talbot International and subsequently the Bristol and Southampton Internationals, disqualified the image and should be praised for doing so.

One of the Gold medals won by this author helped them become 'Best Author' of a prestigious exhibition held on the Malay peninsula each year. In this exhibition the previous year the entrant who became overall winner also had at least one image that broke the rules. The image shows two horned frogs one sitting on a log and the other in mid-air with another smaller frog in its mouth but according to amphibian expert Prof. Tim Halliday these animals are almost certainly the same individual and therefore this image is most likely a composite. So two years in a row this prestigious award has been given to exhibitors who have broken the rules.

The image featuring the Oriental Honey Buzzards also helped the photographer to become the 'Best Author' for one Salon of a circuit held in the eastern Mediterranean during 2014 along with other images which also break the rules. The overall 'Best Author' of this circuit (winning a weeks holiday) seems to have at least 3 out of their 4 nature entries break the rules. One entry depicts three elephants walking together but take a closer look and it becomes clear that the first and last elephant are most probably the same animal. In another image two pelicans are shown flying in front of a flock of flamingos. Once again this seems to be a composite where there is cloning of the flamingos and the tones and focus in the water and splashes around the pelicans abruptly changes indicating that they are probably taken from different shots. Lastly an image which depicts a scene where some elephants are walking across a plain with some large dust devils in the background, the trees in the middle distance are repeated, just above them there are clear lines where the hills seem to have been cloned, the lighting changes abruptly between the first and second elephant and the ground seems to repeat itself just below the elephants. In addition at least one of this authors Travel images also seems to be a composite.

Several more images of 'Oriental Honey Buzzards' with cloned insects were entered into the world exhibition circuit last year one of which helped another author become overall winner of a circuit in France during 2013 (to their credit the exhibition organisers referred the photographer to the FIAP and PSA).

These are just a few of the many images I have investigated over the last few months. These authors come from all over the world and hold many of the top distinctions of FIAP, PSA and RPS including MFIAP, EFIAP/p, MPSA, GMPSA, HonFRPS, FRPS, ARPS. Some are also judges of International exhibitions. The authors who have chosen not to follow the rules and have deliberately entered images into international exhibitions and then gained the acceptances and awards necessary for distinctions provided by the PSA and FIAP have, in effect, made not only their own distinctions worthless but have also tainted anyone else who has gained such a distinction by honest means.

This is not just confined to the Nature sections either. Travel seems to have a similar issue which also needs examining. An investigation of one International Salon's Travel Section showed up at least 3 awarded images and a further 15 acceptances which showed telltale signs of rule breaking.

I have been taken aback and dismayed by the sheer volume of dodgy images doing the rounds of the international exhibition circuit. To date I have found over 120 images by over 80 authors (in both Nature and Travel sections) that appear to be montages and this number grows every time I view the results of an exhibition. The recent Bristol International Salon 2014 reports that they have disqualified 23 Nature images from 6 authors and a further number of Travel images. This resulted in the withdrawal of 4 medals which should have been won by honest entrants. All the results of my investigations have been shared with the FIAP and PSA so that they can take whatever action they believe is appropriate.

It seems clear to me that rule breaking is a serious problem in international exhibitions with legitimate authors being denied acceptances and awards which they deserve to get. Further, it also means that people who have spent the not inconsiderable sums of money to achieve the acceptances and awards they need to gain their distinctions are having to spend more money because of this apparent dishonesty.

The major international organisations who patronize the vast majority of exhibitions need to take decisive action to restore the integrity of these exhibitions, their distinctions and the rights of the honest entrant. Clearly these dodgy images are not being detected at present by exhibition organisers so the processes used and the rules have to be improved. Below are some suggestions that might help to achieve this:

1. Digital entries should have all the meta-data left unchanged from the import, editing and export processes. Images stripped of their meta-data should be disqualified. Print only exhibitions should also require that digital versions are submitted with the meta-data intact.
2. As a minimum entrants should have to provide the unaltered RAW files (or if no raw file is available, the psd or other intermediate files created for processing) for all their accepted entries in that section if one of their images wins an award. I know that some exhibitions already do this and Wildlife Photographer of the Year has proved that this is a useful tool. Original files should be used for validation only and deleted afterwards. Entrants should also be able to provide a "motor-drive" sequence to validate their entry. Failure to provide these files in a timely manner should result in the disqualification of the entrant.
3. Entrants should have the right of appeal if their images are deemed to have broken the rules.
4. Entrants should not be able to withdraw their entries in order to evade scrutiny.
5. There should be a system where all exhibitions are notified of images disqualified automatically in a timely manner.
6. These rules need to be seen to be enforced. Exhibitions should publish statistics providing an overview of not only those images accepted but also of those disqualified and why. Exhibition entry rules should state that the organisers have the right to publish the names of serious rule breakers and strip them of any awards and acceptances.
7. Patronage rules flowing through into exhibition rules should enable the National and International bodies such as the PSA and FIAP to give people warnings and to publish the names of those serious offenders who are given life bans.

Is this only an issue for international exhibitions though? Should the RPS require that applicants for Distinctions where manipulation is limited by the rules provide the original files so that the images can be verified? I believe that they should.

After my original article was published I was contacted by a concerned reader asking if there was any point in entering these exhibitions if there was so much rule breaking going on. Many photographers have spent hours, days, weeks and months patiently studying their subjects, gaining knowledge about their behaviour and finally pressing the shutter in the hope of capturing a magical moment that might thrill exhibition selectors as much as it did them. I have to ask the exhibition organisers and patronisers why should they bother?

One national exhibition organiser expressed the view that if nothing decisive is done then exhibition photography will go the way of professional cycling:

"Some have commented [it] is difficult to police people altering Nature pictures, so why bother. My reply has been that if this attitude were allowed to continue then we risk getting into the same mind set as cyclists during the Lance Armstrong[s] era, cyclists saying that the only way to compete is to take drugs - so we will also do it. This in practice bred a drugs' culture until visible action was taken to stamp it out and name & shame. However not before it had nearly destroyed the credibility of all racing cyclists.

Thus should we just lie back and say this is nothing to do with us, letting images into exhibitions which go against all accepted nature rules, or act as responsible exhibition organisers and take action wherever possible to stop the cheats stealing awards from our other entrants who play by the rules and after all pay entry fees to our exhibitions."

I wholeheartedly agree and I am optimistic that FIAP and PSA are taking this issue very seriously and will act decisively in the near future to restore confidence in the international exhibition circuit.

Postscript:

Since writing the original draft for this article it has become clear that FIAP has been taking action about this issue as can be seen by the new pages detailing the exhibitions patronised for 2014 (<http://patronages.fiap.net/2014-by-months.html>) which lists a number of exhibitions where the previously reported 'Best Author' is now described as being added to the FIAP Red List. My understanding is that anyone placed on this list cannot enter another FIAP patronised exhibition, cannot be a judge at any FIAP patronised exhibition and cannot apply for any future FIAP distinctions. Although FIAP do not name the entrants who are banned, their names still appear on the websites of the exhibitions referred to.

New Definition for Nature and Wildlife Photography

Three of the world's largest international photography organisations have agreed a common definition for nature and wildlife photography. The Photographic Society of America (PSA), the Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique (FIAP) and The Royal Photographic Society (RPS), will all use the same definition for nature and wildlife categories for their respective competitions and exhibitions. The new definition will come in to effect from 1 January 2015.

The introduction of a common definition is primarily intended to provide clarity to competition entrants. In addition, it will support efforts by all three bodies and their affiliated organisations to clamp down on those entering ineligible images or who set out to abuse the rules.

Commenting on the new definition John Davis, President of PSA, Riccardo Busi, President of FIAP and Derek Birch, President of The RPS said:

"The development of a common definition for nature and wildlife photography will be an important step in helping photographers, many of whom enter competitions internationally, know what the rules are. It will also provide organisers with a very clear definition when they need to deal with the problem of ineligible images. We would encourage other competition organisers to adopt the definition.

Nature Photography Definition

"Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation. The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality. Human elements shall not be present, except where those human elements are integral parts of the nature story such as nature subjects, like barn owls or storks, adapted to an environment modified by humans, or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves. Scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible. Photographs of human created hybrid

plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domestic animals, or mounted specimens are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement.

No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning. Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, and film scratches, are allowed. Stitched images are not permitted. All allowed adjustments must appear natural. Color images can be converted to greyscale monochrome. Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed.

Images used in Nature Photography competitions may be divided in two classes: Nature and Wildlife.

Images entered in Nature sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above can have landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, and extant organisms as the primary subject matter. This includes images taken with the subjects in controlled conditions, such as zoos, game farms, botanical gardens, aquariums and any enclosure where the subjects are totally dependent on man for food.

Images entered in Wildlife sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above are further defined as one or more extant zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Landscapes, geologic formations, photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or of any extant zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions are not eligible in Wildlife sections. Wildlife is not limited to animals, birds and insects. Marine subjects and botanical subjects (including fungi and algae) taken in the wild are suitable wildlife subjects, as are carcasses of extant species.

Wildlife images may be entered in Nature sections of Exhibitions.

Cloning in or cloning out?

by Dawn Osborn FRPS

On page 7, the latest 'Definition' of what constitutes a legitimate nature image for entry into exhibitions patronised by PSA, FIAP and RPS (with PAGB certain to follow soon). This may bring to an end a situation where exhibition awards have gone to dishonest nature images - images which have been constructed from subjects either duplicated or moved within the image or imported from one or more other images.

Having now had time to study the new 'Definition', I have reached the conclusion that further clarification is required. The first two sentences of the second paragraph could be seen to contradict each other.

"No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning."

How do you interpret the above? Does it mean that:

- a) cloning to remove what would have been described previously as a 'minor blemish' is now not allowed? For example, an oof coke tin, sheep/goat/goose turd, an oof person/bird, a bright pebble, or indeed any 'blemish' which could not be removed by the photographer before taking the shot even though such elements could hardly be called 'pictorial'.
- or
- b) removing such 'blemishes' via the use of the clone tool is using a technique which will "enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content"?

Surely there needs to be more clarification? Although not mentioned specifically, cloning is a technique which overwrites pixels from one selected point to another thereby replacing the original pixels. None of us wants to be accused of crossing the line of what is allowed but at the same time we want to present our images as well as we can within the rules. Who has never cloned out an intruding branch from the sky of a flight shot or a bright distracting highlight from a background? While

it may be possible (though surely not desirable) to remove what will be oof buttercups from the background before taking a close-up shot of an orchid, for example, it is not possible to eliminate distractions when photographing mobile subjects, like birds, without disturbing them. The 'cloning out' of such 'blemishes' does not change the 'story telling value' whereas 'cloning in' or adding (by whatever means) subject matter from other images, duplicating or moving subject matter around within an image clearly does - as in the examples highlighted by Richard Nicoll.

I find it hard to believe that techniques which involve the combination of several images, i.e. focus stacking and HDR, are permitted. Neither does there seem to be a restriction as to the amount of cropping that is permissible - I cannot agree that allowing all but 1400 x 1050 px of an image to be cropped away is allowed while cloning out of 'minor blemishes' is not.

It seems to me that this new definition is as wide open to misinterpretation as before. Would it not have been simpler to say that 'duplication of any primary or secondary subjects either within the original image or from a second or subsequent image is not allowed, neither is placing subjects into a background which was not present at the time of taking the original image' and 'Award winners will be required to submit the original RAW files for verification of authenticity.'

I am certain that many people will have similar queries and will want to know that they are not breaking rules by cloning out some eye catching highlight, detritus, oof bird/airbus in the sky, etc. In other words, that the use of the clone tool to remove a 'blemish' is merely using a technique to 'enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or pictorial content'. You can be sure that landscape and portrait photographers would not think twice about doing it and would not be penalised for it either!

I would also welcome a move by FIAP and PSA to enforce the correct naming of entries in Nature Sections - I am sick of seeing titles like "The fish is mine", "A Mother's love", etc. and it is getting worse, with some British authors now doing the same.

Aspects of Bird Behaviour – A Fellowship Panel

by Mick Durham FRPS

When I first started to take an interest in wildlife photography as a teenager back in the early 70's I read about people like Eric Hoskins and Heather Angel. These were photographers who were leading the way forward and had the great distinction of being Fellows of the Royal Photographic Society – a world away from my early efforts to photograph birds.

Move forward forty years and my photography had improved somewhat – to the extent that I had become a member of Dumfries Camera Club and managed to gain my MPAGB. This gave me the confidence to think about an RPS distinction and I decided to go for my ARPS. A friend and I had spent six weeks in Arctic Norway in the summer of 2008 and then I had gone back with *Shetland Wildlife* in the winter of 2009. It seemed sensible to put together a panel of Scandinavian birds and I was delighted when it was accepted and I gained my Associateship in September 2011.

Was I content? Well to begin with yes. But I found myself looking at successful FRPS panels on the RPS website and I began to wonder. I contacted a member of the Assessment Board to sound him out and he was very helpful. My passion is photographing otters and I intended to try for my Fellowship with a panel of otter images. I was advised that whilst individual images were well up to standard, there was insufficient variety of behaviour and photographic technique and this would go against me. So I turned to my bird images – and in particular those depicting behaviour.

Slowly a panel began to emerge and in the summer of 2012 I submitted twenty images to the Nature Distinctions Panel and waited for their decision in September. The day came and I was disappointed to hear that they had referred the panel. Not quite as bad as an overall failure but they were not happy with four images. Two were rejected for technical reasons and the other two because they were too similar to images in my ARPS panel.

Aspects of Bird Behaviour – Mick Durham FRPS



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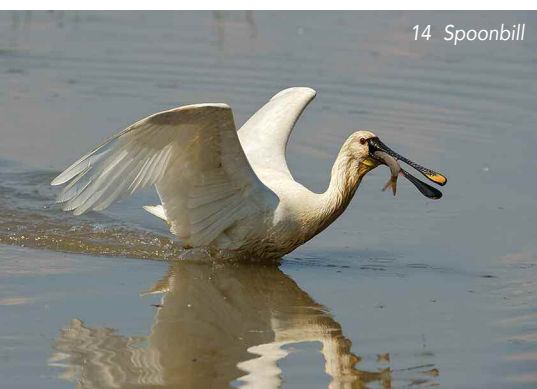
2 Hawfinch



16 Red-footed Falcons



15 White-tailed Eagle



14 Spoonbill

I had been caught by a change in the rules between the submission of my ARPS panel and putting together my FRPS panel. You can no longer use any of the images from an A panel in an F panel. Had I known this was going to be the case I would have not used a couple of the images for my A panel but kept them in reserve. I thought that my alternatives would have been fine but obviously not. This was a problem because one rejected image in particular – one of my all time favourites – was the centrepiece for my panel and not easy to replace. I had until March of the following year to sort things out.

So I began looking at other images. Not only did they need to be up to the required standard individually, they also had to fit in with the existing panel. I had two that I thought would work but I was still two short. I had been considering going to Finland to photograph winter Golden Eagles and this seemed like the time to do it. It was a little bit of a gamble but it paid off and I got some very satisfactory images.



20 Grey Heron

I resubmitted my new panel and in March 2013 the Nature Distinctions Panel passed it. All I needed now was for the Review Board to give it their seal of approval the following May.

You can imagine how I felt when they contacted me to say that they hadn't been able to do this. Two images had some issues. (so close but yet) However I was told that if I could resolve these issues I could resubmit the images and the other eighteen would not need to be judged again. Andy More was extremely helpful and I discovered that one image was considered to have a slight colour cast in the printing and another had a bad highlight. Both issues were easily sorted and I sent Andy two new prints to be assessed. Unfortunately I had to wait another six months until the Review Board met again.

November came and on the day in question I sat by the phone and waited! Finally Andy phoned – I was now Mick Durham FRPS.



5 Long-tailed Tit



11 Hoopoe



13 Herring Gull



19 Greater Black-backed Gull



1 Peregrine



18 Merlin



12 Kestrel



3 Golden Eagles

What a relief. It had been a hard road to go down, but then of course if it was easy it wouldn't be worth doing. I still can't believe that like Eric Hoskins and Heather Angel my wildlife photography has reached this stage and I am now a Fellow.

The images I chose for my panel represent a wide variety of photographic projects. The Golden Eagles were of course taken in a specialist hide in Finland and the Red-footed Falcons in Hungary. The gulls were taken up in northern Norway, standing near a fish factory where they were feeding on scraps. The most pleasing of all though are those taken near to home. The Peregrine, Merlin and Kingfisher were all taken under licence from SNH and within a few miles of where I live. I work with a friend, Edmund Fellowes on these projects so that we can each see each other in to the hides – a necessary requirement when working with protected species. The Long-tailed Tit was also taken locally and again in conjunction with Edmund. At present we are undertaking a study of common garden birds, trying to get some more unusual shots.

So what next. Well I would like to do something special with my otters but I am not sure yet what that is. As they say in the movies – watch this space.

Portfolio Statement of Intent

Aspects of Bird Behaviour

I am submitting a panel of work that illustrates some of the many aspects of bird behaviour. I have naturally included flight shots but also images portraying hunting and feeding, courtship displays and mating.

I have included images taken from a number of trips abroad but also some taken much closer to home – including my garden.

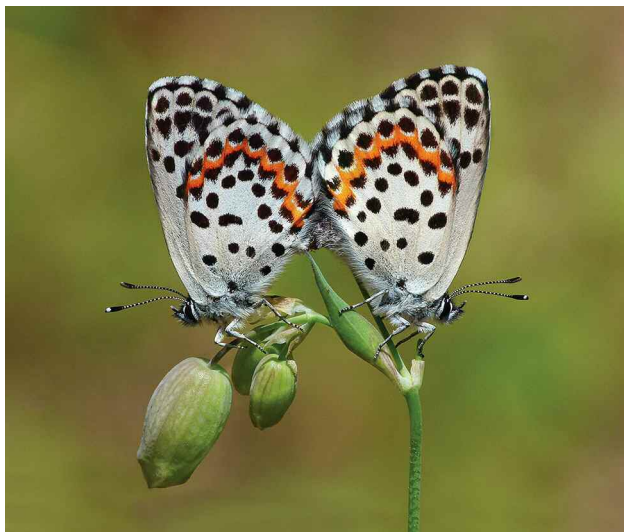
In designing the panel I have tried to move through the different behaviours, choosing images that required a variety of photographic techniques and that also give an overall feeling of harmony and balance.

More of Mick Durham's successful Fellowship panel images on the inside of the back cover

The RPS Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2014



Gold Medals

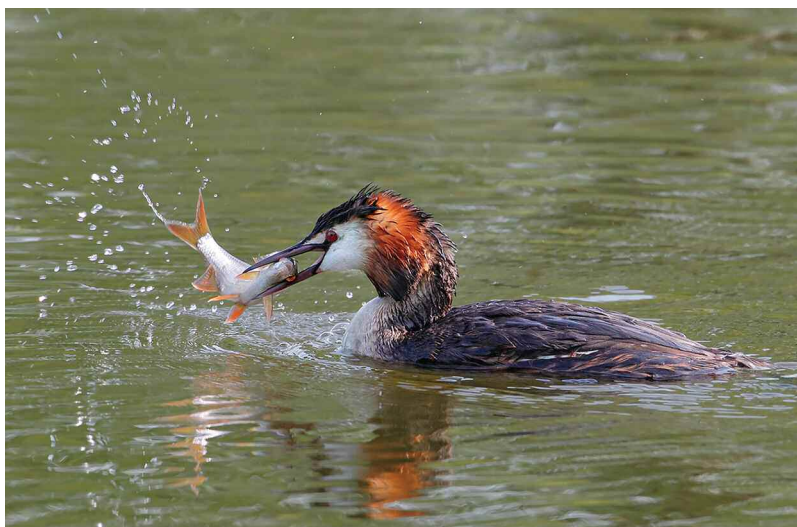


Prints:

Mating Chequered Blue
by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS

Projected Image:

Great Crested Grebe with fish
by Dawn Osborn FRPS





1



3



2

Bronze Medal Prints

1. Brown Pelican head throw
by David Osborn FRPS
2. Glistening Ink Caps
by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS

Bronze Medal Projected Images

3. Red-footed Falcons mating
by Gordon Follows ARPS
4. Dryad's Saddle
by Andrew Parsons ARPS



4



1

Selectors' Awards - Prints

1. Marbled Whites on Field Scabious by John Bulpitt FRPS
2. Bluebell by Kevin Elsby FRPS
3. Lichen, Los Pintos, Cuba by John Bulpitt FRPS
4. Gentoo Penguin at nest by David Osborn FRPS
5. *Pulsatilla vulgaris* by Ann Miles FRPS
6. European Bee Eater with prey by Kevin Elsby FRPS



2



4



3



5



6



Selectors' Awards - PDI

1. Black-chinned Hummingbird
by Gordon Mills ARPS
2. Whooper Swans by
Mike Lane FRPS
3. Reddish Egret courtship
by Trevor Davenport ARPS
4. Lady's Slipper Orchid by Reg Mellis ARPS
5. Snowdrops in habitat
by Mike Middleton ARPS
6. Trumpet Gentian
by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS



RPS Nature Group Exhibition 2014

Print Section

Gold Medal

Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS Mating Chequered Blue

Bronze Medals

Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS Glistening Ink Cap
David Osborn FRPS Brown Pelican - head throw

Selectors Awards

Kevin Elsby FRPS	European Bee Eater with prey	Selector Award - Dickie Duckett FRPS
Kevin Elsby FRPS	Bluebell	Selector Award - Dickie Duckett FRPS
John Bulpitt FRPS	Marbled whites on Field Scabious	Selector Award - Thomas Hanahoe FRPS
Ann Miles FRPS	<i>Pulsatilla vulgaris</i>	Selector Award - Thomas Hanahoe FRPS
David Osborn FRPS	Gentoo Penguin at nest	Selector Award - Roy Hodgkiss ARPS
John Bulpitt FRPS	Lichen, Los Pintos, Cuba	Selector Award - Roy Hodgkiss ARPS

Highly Commended

Tony Bond FRPS	Narrow-bordered 5-spot Burnets	Highly Commended
Tony Bond FRPS	Clustered Bonnet	Highly Commended
Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	<i>Primula farinosa</i>	Highly Commended
Richard Nicoll ARPS	Common Cuckoo flying amongst reeds	Highly Commended
Richard Revels FRPS	Bee Wolf Wasp flying with Honeybee prey	Highly Commended

Commended

Kevin Elsby FRPS	Great Crested Grebes	Commended
Gordon Follows ARPS	Female Red-footed Falcon preening	Commended
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Elegant sunburst lichen on rock	Commended
Ann Miles FRPS	Roach Portland Limestone	Commended
Ken Rasmussen ARPS	Ants milking aphids	Commended
Mike Rowe ARPS	Marbled Godwit in flight	Commended
Ralph Snook ARPS	Little Blue Heron with Snake Eel	Commended

Accepted Prints

Author	Title	Award
Peter Beasley ARPS	Brambling	
	Jay	
	Budgerigars	
	Rainbow Bee-eaters	
Tony Bond FRPS	Greenshank	
	Narrow-bordered 5-spot Burnets	Highly Commended
	Velvet Shank	
	Clustered Bonnet	Highly Commended
	Scarlet Elf Cups	
	<i>Phallus duplicatus</i>	

John Bulpitt FRPS	Brown Hare taking off	
	Marbled whites on Field Scabious	Selector Award - Thomas Hanahoe FRPS
	Mite-infested Red-eyed damselflies	
	Bee Orchid	
	Heath Spotted orchids	
Gill Cardy ARPS	Lichen, Los Pintos, Cuba	Selector Award - Roy Hodgkiss ARPS
	Redshank & Black flies	
	Great Grey Owl hunting	
Martin Chapman ARPS	Dark Mayfly	
	Kori Bustard	
	Wild Dog pups at the den	
John Cucksey ARPS	Eland	
Liz Cutting ARPS	Woodcock with worm	
	Dartford Warbler with caterpillars	
	Male Hawfinch in snow-storm	
Bob Devine ARPS	Cheetah cub learning to hunt	
	Heron and fish #5	
Derek Dewey-Leader LRPS	Little Owl at roost	
	Red Admiral feeding	
Roy Dorkins LRPS	Fishing Osprey	
Kevin Elsby FRPS	Purple-throated Woodstar	
	European Bee Eater with prey	Selector Award - Dickie Duckett FRPS
	Great Crested Grebes	Commended
	Bluebell	Selector Award - Dickie Duckett FRPS
Wendy Eve ARPS	Pink Anemone fish	
Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Mating Chequered Blue	Gold Medal
	Bullfinch in frosty morning	
	Orange Moth roosting on dry bracken	
	Australian Bustard courtship display	
	Desert Pea	
	<i>Primula farinosa</i>	Highly Commended
	Glistening Ink Cap	Bronze Medal
Brian Ferry LRPS	Shaggy pholiota	
Gordon Follows ARPS	Bar-tailed Godwit shaking worm	
	Female Red-footed Falcon preening	Commended
	Wood Sandpiper	
	Black Stork fishing	
Michael Gore FRPS	Hoopoe approaching nest with food	
Roger Hance FRPS	Male Orange Tip Butterfly	
	Coots fighting	
	Monkey - Lady Orchid Hybrid	
	Fly Orchid	
	Violet Helleborine	
Margaret Johnson LRPS	Peruvian Pelicans	
John Jones ARPS	Dyer's Mazegill	
Fiona MacKay ARPS	Grove Snail	
	Thrift and Lichens	
	Stag's Horn fungus	
Maggie Manson ARPS	Elephant herd	
	Thrift	

Kevin Maskell FRPS	Elegant sunburst lichen on rock	Commended
Margery Maskell ARPS	Rock pattern	
Ian McLean ARPS	Apollo - nectaring	
Ann Miles FRPS	Mating Adders	
	Emperor Female Attacked by Black-Tailed Skimmer	
	Mating Hares	
	<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	
	Roach Portland Limestone	Commended
	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	
	<i>Pulsatilla vulgaris</i>	Selector Award - Thomas Hanahoe FRPS
Richard Nicoll ARPS	Common Cuckoo flying amongst reeds	Highly Commended
	Reed Warbler feeding chicks	
	Little Egret eating prawn	
David Osborn FRPS	American Oystercatchers	
	Brown Pelican - head throw	Bronze Medal
	Gentoo Penguin at nest	Selector Award - Roy Hodgkiss ARPS
	King Penguin courtship	
Dawn Osborn FRPS	American Bison, bull following cow with calf	
	Gentoos porpoise ashore	
	Roseate Spoonbill with fish	
John Plant LRPS	Bateleur Eagles	
Ken Rasmussen ARPS	Ants milking aphids	Commended
	Wood Stork feeding	
	Clustered bonnet	
	Yellow Alpine Pasque Flower	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Angle Shades Moth	
	Spectacular Rustgill Fungi	
	Common Ink Caps	
	Wild Garlic Wood	
Richard Revels FRPS	Red Fox cubs playing	
	Bee Wolf Wasp flying with Honeybee prey	Highly Commended
	Smooth Newt	
	Pyramidal Orchids	
	Pasque Flowers,	
	Thrift, on rocky beach	
	Common Spotted Orchid & Bumble Bee	
Steve Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Little Owlet portrait	
	Little Owl portrait	
Mike Rowe ARPS	Marbled Godwit in flight	Commended
	Marbled Godwit	
Stan Saunders ARPS	Red Squirrel	
	Great Tit	
	Fritillary Flowers	
	Pasque Flowers	
Shelley Shipton-Knight LRPS	Glacial journey's end	
Ralph Snook ARPS	Little Blue Heron with Snake Eel	Commended
	Jabiru Stork with fish	
	Great Egret stalking	
Nigel Symington LRPS	Chalkhill Blue	
	Late Spider-orchid	

Ken Wade LRPS

Brown Hare
Damselfly with prey
Mating Six Spotted Burnett Moths
Clouded Yellow Butterfly
Common Birds Foot Trefoil
Carline Thistle
Yellow Flag Iris
Honey Fungus
Glanville Fritillary
Creeping Globularia
Cyclamen persicum
Water Avens

John Weir ARPS

Sheila Weir ARPS

Digital Awards

Gold Medal

Dawn Osborn FRPS

Great Crested Grebe with fish

Bronze Medals

Gordon Follows ARPS

Red-footed Falcons mating

Andrew Parsons ARPS

Dryads Saddle

Selectors Awards

Mike Lane FRPS

Whooper Swan

Selector Award - Dickie Duckett FRPS

Mike Middleton ARPS

Snowdrops in habitat

Selector Award - Dickie Duckett FRPS

Gordon Mills ARPS

Black Chinned Hummingbird

Selector Award - Thomas Hanahoe FRPS

Reg Mellis ARPS

Ladys Slipper Orchid

Selector Award - Thomas Hanahoe FRPS

Trevor Davenport ARPS

Reddish Egret courtship

Selector Award - Roy Hodgkiss ARPS

Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS

Trumpet Gentian

Selector Award - Roy Hodgkiss ARPS

Highly Commended

Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS

Darwins Heath on Bladder Campion

Highly Commended

Gordon Follows ARPS

Grey Heron with fish

Highly Commended

Sue McGarrigle LRPS

Giant Polypore Fungi

Highly Commended

Gordon Mills ARPS

Kestrel

Highly Commended

Richard Nicoll ARPS

Common Cuckoo with caterpillar

Highly Commended

Paul Sievers ARPS

Honey Fungus

Highly Commended

Ralph Snook ARPS

Hyena With Thomson Fawn

Highly Commended

Commended

Trevor Davenport ARPS

Snowy Egret displaying

Commended

Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS

Click Beetle

Commended

Patricia Kearton LRPS

Antarctica Ice

Commended

David Osborn FRPS

Mycena polygramma

Commended

Dawn Osborn FRPS

Mountain Goat Nanny and kid

Commended

Dawn Osborn FRPS

Amanita muscaria in woodland habitat

Commended

Ken Rasmussen ARPS

Northern Marsh Orchid in habitat

Commended

Mike Rowe ARPS

Sandwich Tern harassed by gull

Commended

Ken Wade LRPS

Scleroderma verrucosum

Commended

Digital Acceptances

Author	Title	Award
Jon Ashton ARPS	Broad-bodied Chaser (teneral)	
	Southern hawk in flight	
John Bebbington FRPS	Raft Spider (<i>Dolomedes fimbriatus</i>) with prey	
Gordon Bramham ARPS	Whooper Swan	
	Great Crested Grebe weed dance	
John Bulpitt FRPS	Crane flies paired	
	Migrant Hawker	
David Cantrille FRPS	Mountain Gem Hummingbird	
	Violet Sabrewing	
	Lions mating	
Gill Cardy ARPS	Black Grouse at lek	
	Little Bustard displaying	
Martin Chapman ARPS	Silver Backed Jackal pups at the den	
	Waxwing drinking	
	Clove scented Broomrape	
Andrew Chislett	European Roller	
Andrew Chu ARPS	House Sparrow in flight	
Anthony Cooper	Sawfly larvae	
John Cucksey ARPS	Puku Mother feeding young	
Liz Cutting ARPS	Whitethroat with caterpillar	
	Tit Dispute	
	Stonechat on Reedmace	
Dick Daniell FRPS	<i>Dimorphoteca pluvialis</i>	
Trevor Davenport ARPS	Snowy Egret displaying	Commended
	Reddish Egret courtship	Selector Award - Roy Hodgkiss ARPS
	Calcified Trees in travertine flow, Yellowstone	
	Grand Prismatic spring, Yellowstone	
Bob Devine ARPS	Goshawk 1	
David A Edwards	Common Puffball	
Chris Ellison ARPS	Four-spotted Chaser	
	White Satin Moth	
	Oak Bracket Fungus	
Kevin Elsby FRPS	Collared Inca Hummingbird	
Peter Farmer	Wild Dogs	
Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS	Darwins Heath on Bladder Campion	Highly Commended
	Click Beetle	Commended
	Spinifex Pigeon courtship display	
	Alpine Snowbell in habitat	
	Mule Ears	
	Trumpet Gentian	Selector Award - Roy Hodgkiss ARPS
James Foad LRPS	Marbled White (<i>Melania galathea</i>) on scabious	
Gordon Follows ARPS	Red-footed Falcons mating	Bronze Medal
	Grey Heron with fish	Highly Commended
	Humpback Whale lunge feeding	
Rosemary Gillies ARPS	Nudibranchs - <i>Hypselodoris bullockii</i> - Malaysia	
	Turtle and Batfish - Malaysia	
Jane Greatorex ARPS	Pine Marten	

Godfray Guilbert	Garden Snails mating	
Roger Hance FRPS	Shaggy Ink Cap group	
	Coot running across the water	
	Female Adder flicking tongue	
	Red Grouse in flight	
	Heron with nesting material	
	Military Orchid - full length	
	Pasque Flowers	
Margaret Hocking ARPS	Buzzard taking off	
	Icicles, Antarctic Peninsula	
Sue Howard LRPS	Honey Bee	
	Glistening Inkcup	
John Hunt ARPS	Great Grey Owl hunting for Voles	
	Flamingoes mating	
Patricia Kearton LRPS	Japanese Macaque grooming	
	Polar Bear	
	Polar Bears	
	Antarctica Ice	Commended
	Leaning Tree	
	Namibia Sand	
Mike Lane FRPS	Black Grouse	
	Fieldfare	
	Semipalmated Plover	
	Whooper Swan	Selector Award - Dickie Duckett FRPS
Adrian Langdon ARPS	White-backed Vulture	
	Common Dolphins	
	White Storks copulating	
	Fly Agaric	
	Waves	
Barbara Lawton FRPS	Green Shield Bugs, <i>Palomena prasina</i>	
	Hairy Shieldbug with Nymphs, <i>Dolcoris baccarum</i>	
	Common Spotted Orchid, <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	
	<i>Gymnophilus junonius</i>	
Peter Maguire LRPS	Primrose	
	Dwarf Snowbell	
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Crottle lichen	
Margery Maskell ARPS	Eastern Daddy Longlegs spider	
	Wood Stork with branch	
Sue McGarrigle LRPS	Puffin with nest material	
	Large Skipper Butterfly	
	Giant Polypore Fungi	Highly Commended
	Polypore Fungi	
Reg Mellis ARPS	Sparrowhawk with Starling	
	Stoat stalking	
	Ladys Slipper Orchid	Selector Award - Thomas Hanahoe FRPS
Mike Middleton ARPS	Four Spotted Chaser male	
	Snowdrops in habitat	Selector Award - Dickie Duckett FRPS
	Bee Orchid	
	Common Spotted Orchids	
	Marsh Fragrant Orchid	

Ann Miles FRPS	Male Scorpion Fly	
	Juvenile Red Grouse calling	
	Whooper Swans at sunset	
Gordon Mills ARPS	Gannet	
	Black Chinned Hummingbird	Selector Award - Thomas Hanahoe FRPS
	Kestrel	Highly Commended
Philip Mugridge ARPS	Bottle-Nosed Dolphins	
	Four-Spot Orb-Weaver Spiders	
Richard Nicoll ARPS	Common Cuckoo with caterpillar	Highly Commended
	Great Crested Grebe eating Pike	
	Great Crested Grebe with chick	
David O'Neill, LRPS	Puffin	
David Osborn FRPS	Mycena polygramma	Commended
	Sea Rocket	
Dawn Osborn FRPS	Falkland Skua in flight	
	Fallow Deer buck altercation	
	Great Crested Grebe with fish	Gold Medal
	Mountain Goat Nanny and kid	Commended
	Amanita muscaria in woodland habitat	Commended
	Inflorescence of Lizard Orchid	
Andrew Parsons ARPS	Red Fox	
	Yellow Hammer with Damselfly Nymphs	
	Dryads Saddle	Bronze Medal
	Young Bracken	
Ron Perkins ARPS	House Sparrow	
John Plant LRPS	Green Woodpecker	
Norman Prue FRPS	Little Bee-eater courtship	
Ken Rasmussen ARPS	Great Egret preening	
	Ruddy Turnstone	
	Northern Marsh Orchid in habitat	Commended
	Chicken of the Woods	
Jane Rees ARPS	Giant Green Anemone	
	Pebble Prominent Larva	
	Mammoth Hot Springs	
Richard Revels FRPS	Coots in battle	
	Wood ants attacking Wasp	
	Musk Mallow, <i>Malve moschata</i>	
	Sea Bindweed & Bumble Bee	
David Robinson ARPS	Black winged Stilts	
	Sanderling	
	Wheatear	
Steve Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Little Owl in autumn colours	
Mike Rowe ARPS	Brown Pelicans synchronised diving	
	Osprey with Atlantic Spadefish	
	Royal Tern drops its catch	
	Sandwich Tern harassed by gull	Commended
Stan Saunders ARPS	Red Grouse in flight	
	Meadow of <i>Ranunculus monopeliacus</i> - Pyrenees	
Brian Sherwin LRPS	Heath Spotted Orchid	

Shelley Shipton-Knight LRPS	Red Grouse	
Paul Sievers ARPS	Gannet landing	
	Common Bonnets	
	Honey Fungus	Highly Commended
	Splitgill Fungus	
John Simpson	Back-lit Marbled White on Thistle	
	Scarlet Elf cups	
	Porcelain Fungus	
	<i>Viola cenisia</i> #2	
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Mating Blue-tailed Damselflies	
	Alderfly laying Eggs	
	Broad-bordered Bee Hawkmoth nectaring	
	Emerging Downy Emerald #2	
Ralph Snook ARPS	Hyena With Thomson Fawn	Highly Commended
	Surfing King Penguin	
	Leopards In golden grass	
	Alaskan Brown chasing fish	
Nigel Symington LRPS	White asphodel	
Jim Tarbox LRPS	Azure Damselfly	
	Red Kite over trees	
Ken Wade LRPS	Hen Pheasant with Fox Moth Caterpillar	
	Puffin with Sand Eels	
	Mating Damselflies	
	<i>Scleroderma verrucosum</i>	Commended
John Weir ARPS	Highbrown Fritillary	
	Twig Parachutes	
Sheila Weir ARPS	Sea Kale	
David Wessely ARPS	Monarch Butterfly	
	Polar Bear near Svalbard	
Mike Wilkes FRPS	Caspian Tern catching fish	

Highly Commended Projected Images *(opposite)*

1. Common Cuckoo with caterpillar by Richard Nicholl ARPS
2. Grey Heron with fish by Gordon Follows ARPS
3. Giant Polypore Fungi by Sue McGarrigle LRPS
4. Kestrel by Gordon Mills ARPS
5. Darwin's Heath on Bladder Campion by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS
6. Hyena with Thomson fawn by Ralph Snook ARPS
7. Honey Fungus by Paul Sievers ARPS





Highly Commended Prints

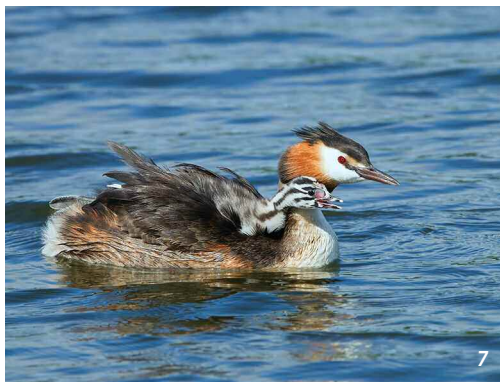
1. Common Cuckoo flying amongst reeds
by Richard Nicholl ARPS
2. Narrow bordered 5 Spot Burnets
by Tony Bond FRPS
3. *Primula farinosa* by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS
4. Clustered Bonnet by Tony Bond FRPS
5. Bee Wolf Wasp flying with Honey Bee
by Richard Revels FRPS



Commended Prints *(opposite)*

6. Female Red-footed Falcon preening
by Gordon Follows ARPS
7. Great Crested Grebes
by Kevin Elsbey FRPS
8. Ants milking Aphids
by Ken Rasmussen ARPS
9. Marbled Godwit in flight
by Mike Rowe ARPS
10. Little Blue Heron with Snake Eel
by Ralph Snook ARPS
11. Elegant Starburst Lichen on rock
by Kevin Maskell FRPS
12. Roach Portland Limestone
by Ann Miles FRPS







Commended Projected images:

1. Click Beetle by Gianpiero Ferrari FRPS
2. Snowy Egret display by Trevor Davenport ARPS
3. Sandwich Tern harassed by gull by Mike Rowe ARPS
4. Mountain Goat Nanny and kid by Dawn Osborn FRPS
5. Northern Marsh Orchid in habitat by Ken Rasmussen ARPS



It's Not Just Penguins!

by Liz Cutting ARPS



In January 2014, I spent two fabulous weeks in the Falkland Islands. There were seven of us in the group (five being members of the Nature Group) including David Osborn, our tour leader. With his skills as a naturalist and photographer plus his knowledge and experience of the Falkland Islands, David is the ideal man for the job. Dawn and Jane had both been to the Falklands several times, but for the rest of us, it was our first visit.

With about 40 species seen, this is not a tour that will appeal to many out and out birders, but for anyone wanting to spend plenty of time in the field, getting really close to and photographing wildlife (mainly birds) at a relaxed pace, it was perfect. Although often windy and not always warm, we had very little rain. I usually got up at or soon after first light and spent an hour or two out with my camera before breakfast; having travelled so far, it seemed wasteful not to be out as much as possible. After breakfast, we were typically out all day, either individually or together (loosely – there was always plenty of space to share) and then back in time for a shower and dinner. There was just about enough time to download our images before it was time for bed again.

We had the sites pretty much to ourselves most of the time or they were large enough to be completely on your own all day if you wished. On three of the four islands there would be the family, maybe an employee or two and sometimes a couple of other

visitors. The fourth island is a National Nature Reserve and this was slightly busier. An occasional cruise ship disgorges some passengers for an hour or two, but this occurred only once on the tour and didn't affect our enjoyment.

Whenever I mentioned to friends or colleagues that I was going to or had just been to the Falkland Islands, the first question or comment was almost always something to do with penguins. Now the penguins were great and we had Rockhoppers, Gentoo and Magellanic at most if not all islands visited and a large number of King Penguins on a day trip from Stanley. I spent many happy hours photographing them, but there is so much more to the Falklands – passerines, waders, raptors and more. There are two endemic species (Flightless Steamer Duck and Cobb's Wren) and most of the passerines are endemic sub-species. Many bird species could be photographed without a long lens. I took a 400 mm which was very useful for passerines and some waders, but the 70-200 mm was plenty long enough for the Albatrosses, penguins and some other birds. I even took some bird shots with a 40 mm 'pancake' lens attached to a Canon 100D. This was a very portable bit of kit that I could always have with me for location shots but I had not really expected to be able to take any birds photos with it. The Falkland Skua (on page 30) is just one example of a shot taken with this combination and is virtually uncropped. If only more birds were as confiding as this!



So how did the trip pan out? After a long (but pretty comfortable) flight from the UK and a few hours in Stanley, the Falklands capital, we flew to Bleaker Island for two nights. The inter-island flights are aboard Islander light aircraft, with good views of the islands from the air. The name Bleaker is a corruption of 'breaker' and it is not a bleak island at all. It had a lovely King Cormorant colony a few hundred metres from the settlement, plus a variety of waders and passerines, in relatively small numbers, and good numbers of gulls, ducks and geese. It would have been nice to have stayed there longer, but by the end of the tour, I was saying that about everywhere!



Next stop was Sea Lion Island, just a short hop away on the little planes. This is the most southerly island in the Falklands and thus closest to Antarctica. On one day it felt like it too, with a strong southerly wind and squally showers. I was certainly glad I had taken a hat and a thin pair of gloves. The locals were complaining about the lack of summer – that has a familiar ring to it doesn't it! I photographed Sea Lions and Elephant Seals and there was a delightful cliff top King Cormorant colony, but I have to say that it was the waders and passerines that gave me most pleasure. Most of the passerines we saw on the trip were present here in good numbers and as our last day on the island came to an end, I was thinking that I really didn't need to photograph any more Black-throated Finches (needless to say though I still kept photographing them anyway). I remember a Tussac bird perching on my back as I leaned forward to take a low shot of another bird. The Common Snipe seemed to be everywhere! I still can't believe how confiding they were – on one occasion I got to about 3 or 4 metres from one and it just went to sleep – can you imagine doing that here? Sea Lion was by far and away the best island for Rufous-chested Dotterel too, although they took a bit more effort to find. On our last full day, I got a lift to the King Cormorant colony at the far end of the island and just spent the day wandering back to the settlement at my own (rather slow) pace, photographing whatever I encountered. I spent a delightful hour in the middle of the day near one of the ponds eating my packed lunch, just sitting at the water's edge beside some tussock grass, and photographing Dotterels and Two-banded Plovers that came to bathe and drink a few metres away. A little further on, I sat quietly and counted about 15 Dotterels, mostly juveniles, well camouflaged in Diddle-dee – a low-growing native shrub. When a Turkey Vulture flew close by, at least 50 birds flew up - I must get my eyes tested.



It was then on to Carcass Island, in the north-west of the Falklands. This was rather different from our first two islands, rather more craggy and hilly with bare rocks. It also differed in having more trees and larger shrubs, especially around the settlement – good cover for smaller birds – and with a small bay a few metres from the settlement, there were good opportunities to photograph waders too. Oh and there was yet another very picturesque King Cormorant colony and more opportunities to photograph elephant seals. This was probably my favourite island; the proximity of some of the smaller species to the settlement was just too good to miss and made pre-breakfast sorties especially worthwhile. I would have liked to have spent a week there.

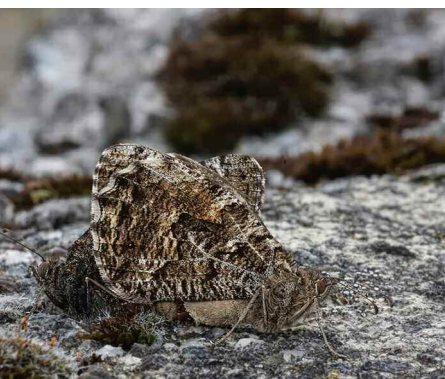
The last island we visited was Saunders, a short hop from Carcass, and again quite craggy. The tracks across the island are a bit bumpy and rutted – you don't get about very quickly! The star species here was Black-browed Albatross. The Falklands is home to about 70% of the global breeding population of this fabulous bird, and it was very special to be able to sit close to adults and chicks in their beautiful cliff-top setting. Passerines were relatively few here, partly due to rat predation, but on a pre-breakfast walk to a small bay I was rewarded with the sight of 100+ Two-banded Plovers and White-rumped Sandpipers. The latter is a trans-equatorial migrant that breeds in the Arctic fringes of North America in our summer, but spends the Northern hemisphere winter in southern South America.

The last location was a day trip from Stanley to Volunteer Point. This was a long drive, much off-road, and goodness knows how the drivers navigated without sat nav, map or signs. The main interest was King Penguins, but I again took a respectable shot with the 40 mm lens, this time of the above-mentioned Plover.

Overall I have to say that this was a fantastic trip. Being able to spend time observing and photographing without having to rush is a great joy. There was no pressure to do anything specific, no regimented timetable (except flights) though breakfast and dinner were at an agreed time of course, so it was all at a very relaxed pace. I took far too many photos but it was the magic of the whole wildlife experience that will stay with me forever.

I am already planning a return visit with David's next tour. Roll on November 2015.





RPS Nature Group Residential Weekend, August 2013, Preston Montford, Shropshire

by Sue McGarrigle LRPS

The Field Studies Council's Preston Montford Field Centre is a large 18th century house, located near Shrewsbury and the Shropshire Hills, in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The Centre is set in 30 acres of grassland and woodland with ponds and has a modern accommodation block. This was the setting for the Nature Group Residential Weekend 2013 and a first for me.

John Bebbington FRPS was our group leader and we visited a variety of sites with an abundance of flora and insects.

Starting each day at around 6am, we visited the moth trap that John had set up the night before and spent an interesting couple of hours before breakfast identifying and photographing a variety of species. I managed to spot a White Ermine moth caterpillar feeding and in a good position. Then, following a cooked breakfast we would pile into the Centre's minibus and head out into the countryside.

Our first day out was to The Bog on the Stiperstones, an ancient quartzite ridge and National Nature Reserve within the Shropshire Hills. This is one of the few areas where the Grayling butterfly are not in decline and can still be photographed, although they are hard to spot when they are resting amongst the stones. Most of the time they have their wings closed towards the sun but occasionally they open to reveal the dark eye spot which is there to confuse predators.

I also saw Emperor Moth caterpillar on flowering heather which is being replanted in the region. There were also grasshoppers and blue damselflies. I haven't quite got the hang of photographing those, they seem to whizz off just as you press the shutter button, so it was a case of more luck than judgment.

On the Sunday we went to an old limestone quarry at Llanymynech near Oswestry, where there were several butterfly species including the Common Blue and Small Copper. We discovered over 30 Peacocks nectaring on Buddleia near the car park. We also found Large and Small Elephant Hawkmoth larvae.

Later we visited Sweeney Fen, where we discovered several more Large Elephant Hawkmoth larvae including two of the green form. We finished the day by calling in at another abandoned quarry at Dolgoch, but this was nowhere near as rewarding as Llanymynech, although there was fine stand of native Goldenrod.

The weekend concluded with a visit to the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre set in 30 acres of meadow by the River Onny with attractive nature trails with a variety of flowers and insects.

The weather during the weekend was kind although the slight breeze on most days saw a lot of clamps, knitting needles and pegs surfacing. Late in the afternoons, back at the Centre, offered us some free time or further opportunities to explore around the fields and pond if we wanted. Following dinner we would gather for the traditional tippie and a review of the day's haul with identification and critique.

It was really great to meet some of my fellow Nature Group members. 'Thank you' to John for sharing his wealth of knowledge with us, for making our weekend such a pleasurable one and for providing us with the opportunity to get some good images. I learned a lot.

Camera Clubs need upgrading?

by Colin Smale ARPS

*Replying to Russell Turner's comments in
'Views & Reviews' The Iris, Spring 2014.*

My comments are all about resuscitating our camera clubs, I so want to try to lift (push) them into the 21st century and I feel the platform of the RPS is the perfect launch pad. I wonder how many of us are satisfied with camera club formats nowadays? (Please take one step forwards!)

Many of them only seem to see one thing; attract as many members as possible. The only problem that happens with this scheme is the club has far more novices than advanced workers with a programme heavily biased toward the needs of novices therefore making the club pretty uninteresting for the advanced worker. They are novice led instead of being experience led. If I were a novice I would want to see and understand new ideas from experienced workers, what is the point of novices leading novices? Much of the thinking seems to be 'keep it simple or the novices may leave'. It quite obviously can't (surely) apply to all UK clubs but I know a few and that format seems common.

Russell says he has "some sympathy" for my views but as he has been a camera club member for only four years he will not be aware of the mass duplication of images over the last forty years. I am sorry he felt I was 'dismissive' of beginner's 'bird on a stick' images, nothing could be further from the truth but someone has to put their head above the parapet and call out loud and clear "all is not well in today's camera clubs" especially regarding wildlife images which I am particularly interested in.

It would be a grave error to imagine that I am dismissive of all bird on stick images, after all, that is where many birds are for most of the time and so capturing them there is perfectly acceptable, it is a matter of how it can be done as opposed to how it is done in many camera clubs where members seem unaware of even marginally improved photographic techniques and field craft.

By examining a bird on stick image from a budding wildlife photographer we can see and evaluate what stage they are at. We can see if it was a random pot shot out of the kitchen window or a genuine attempt to get closer to the bird using stealth. If it is the latter, then I for one will enjoy

seeing the progress of those who learn and improve. After a while I would suggest they look at various wildlife photographer's web sites, this will inevitably open doors for them and show them images they may never have seen before. Hopefully they will recognise what is possible with thought and experience. There is certainly no way anyone should pour cold water on these early attempts.

In the old pioneering days of wildlife photography some, like the Keartons used a plate camera and cow skins as hides (that's real dedication) and not so very long after that when 35 mm film cameras emerged things were easier but those cameras could not compare to today's digital cameras and the image editing programmes that we have and that includes entry level cameras. But look at those old images. Of necessity they were either bird on stick or bird on nest. My gripe is that today's camera clubs have members winning competitions with bird on stick images exactly like those I did see forty years ago and beyond.

Russell mentioned the late Tony Hamblin's little owl pic on the cover of issue 115 spring 2013. I hope it can be seen that this image has a lot going for it. If the owl had been on a smooth boring 'stick' I doubt Tony would have bothered pressing the shutter but it has presented itself not only on a gnarly old perch full of character but the colours of the perch perfectly reflect the colours of the owl. Do you like the plain out of focus background or would you have liked to see trees/branches? That is for the individual photographer to decide, those are the sorts of things that come when you develop your own style.

Many birds such as warblers etc are seen either flying or perching and so, in reality we have very few options but the experienced photographer will have learned to take full advantage of a particular situation. He/she will choose a good perch with character whenever possible, in best light and produce images that camera clubs seem totally unaware of. This should not be so nowadays, where is progress?

I said I would direct budding photographers to some good wildlife photographer's web sites. Well let's take a look at Markus Varesvou's website. Look at his Grasshopper warbler image number 033. Yes, it's a common stem of some kind of hogweed plant but look at the composition. Those leaves



At the time of writing the blackthorn blossom is out. Flies love to feed on this early pollen feast and it happens to coincide with the spring migration, many thousands of warblers are currently moving north to their breeding grounds and... they love to feast on flies. So, instead of searching around 'to see what's about' find a good splash of these blooms and see if you are in luck. As I have said many times in the past "if you are going to use a 'stick' make it a good one".

arching over the head, the bird caught in full song and perhaps most importantly here, the use of contra-jour lighting that shines through the bill and legs. Another of his grasshopper warbler images, number 038, shows the bird on some fantastic curling pine stems. Take a look at his wren shot, number 075. Look at the construction of this image. The left hand side is 'empty' but is important regarding balance. The perch is some kind of spiky foliage and sits perfectly in the bottom right hand corner which is further enhanced by some out of focus foliage giving the bird a 3D effect. The light is also important here; no ghastly bright sun, just a nice subdued light creating that perfect exposure we all like. The jaunty tail is a bonus.

Let's look at John Devrie's web site. His kingfisher perched on an ivy clad 'stick'. Now I don't care if he found this stick and placed it on the flight path of the kingfisher or if it was fortuitously there in situ, these are the sort of 'sticks' we yearn to find our birds on. Now just for a second, remember those camera club images!

Finally let's take a look at Laurie Campbell's web site. Take a look at his pair of waxwings on snow covered berries. Don't we all want to produce images like this?

Study these experts, see what is possible. The lesson is don't just shoot the bird as soon as you find it (unless it really is on a great perch). Look where else it may be perching, watch, observe, good wildlife photography is at least 50% observation, it is not point and shoot as quickly as possible and then dash off somewhere else.

When giving talks to camera club I have often used the following analogy; imagine you are a wildlife painter, would you have drawn and painted a plain boring 'stick' to set your bird on or would you have used that ivy clad kingfisher perch?

Digital Projected Image Competitions

I was disappointed that Russell missed my point regarding DPI competitions. Perhaps I should have been clearer. I guess I'm saying "what's the point of DPI comps that were introduced to replace slide competitions"? DPI's are images normally taken via a digital camera and projected onto a screen. Slides were unlikely to have been manipulated - what was in front of us was what we had and we pressed the shutter even though there may have been a white stone there or an unwanted oof blade of grass that had blown into shot, that was too bad. Today in DPI comps not only are such things photoshopped out (which is ok by me) but sometimes there is the addition of a 'window mount' and I have even seen them further embellished with a photo-shopped picture frame! Surely this cannot be right? Is it me, am I turning into a grumpy old man?

Camera clubs need upgrading. They are a vital jumping off point for anyone entering this exciting art form whether they want to do wildlife photography or any other branch of photography and I firmly believe the RPS could help enormously with suggestions from experienced members, some of which may well have left their local camera club because they too felt their club was still in the 1950s.

I do hope the RPS and its members will consider this situation and come up with some ideas. Perhaps some kind of a questionnaire?

What is your camera club like?

Is it keeping up with modern technology? What changes, if any would you like to see? What are the percentages of novices to advanced workers?

I am going to re-join my local club on the basis that I can do very little 'on the outside'. I have a few more ideas but perhaps that should wait, just in case I am a grumpy lone voice crying in the wilderness.

NEXTODI Digital Storage

by David Robinson ARPS

The Netbook that I had been using for storing my images while on photographic trips suddenly stopped working - fortunately I was at home at the time. I got it checked out only to discover that it needed a new motherboard. Considering the cost of the repair I decided that this was yet another appliance on its way to the Council Recycling facility but this left me with the problem of how to store/back up my images when away from home.

Netbooks seem to be yesterday's technology and are disappearing fast. I did not want a laptop as they are too big and heavy - nowadays I carry an Android Tablet that gives me, amongst other things, access to the internet should I need it. A Digital Wallet seemed to be the answer so I browsed around the American Photographers forums for ideas and found that a Digital Wallet called 'NEXTODI' had some very good reviews. I looked on Amazon and found that they had a British Importer selling through Amazon. Taking into account the reviews and the specification I decided to bite the bullet and buy one.

Imported by Express Pro and available for purchase via Amazon it costs £270 for the 500GB Drive and £296 with a 1TB Drive. It comes with all the necessary cables and a leather case. Compatible with Windows 7/Vista/XP/2000 and Mac OS 10.6 or above, it claims to be the Worlds fastest backup Device. I do not know if this is correct but with 70mbs for Compact Flash and 25mbs for SDX Cards it is very fast. I am sure with the rapid advance of technology that someone will soon make a device that is even faster. On a recent trip it backed up my images quickly and without any problems. If you try to backup a card that you have already backed up it will tell you and give options. There is also an option to backup and automatically verify. This takes a little longer but was still very fast. There is a small colour screen viewer, 1.44" square for previewing images but I have not used it as I cannot imagine a screen of this size being better than the LCD on the camera and therefore I cannot comment on the quality of the image. In any case I never spend much time looking at the images I am taking while on a trip, I usually just do a quick check on the LCD screen of my camera from time to time as I go along to make sure I am

getting the images I want and my exposure is correct and sharpness is OK. Old habits die hard - I come from the film generation and I am still quite happy to wait until I arrive home to view the final results in all their glory on a large screen.

When I arrived home I connected the Wallet to my computer and copied the files to my hard drive. Having checked that the downloads to my computer hard drive were successful I then deleted the folders on the wallet. All very fast and very easy and the wallet is ready for my next trip.

When I first got the device there was something that I could not understand so I sent an email to the importer. Within a day he called me and sorted out my problem on the telephone. Judging from this response it looks as though service will be good if required.

If you want to edit your images while away on a trip this device is not for you, but if you want something that is fast light and efficient to backup your images then I can highly recommend you take a look at the 'NEXTODI'.



Chairman's Day 2014

Sunday 9th November 2014

10.30 hrs - 16.00 hrs

The Old Schoolhouse

Oldbury, West Midlands (nr Junction 2 of the M5)

Speakers:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Trevor Davenport ARPS | - Treasures of the Sefton Coast |
| Geoff Trinder ARPS | - Photography my way |
| Chairman, Tony Bond FRPS | - Fungi - The Hidden Kingdom |

Two recent successful Fellowship panels will be on display -
the authors will be present to answer any questions.

Cost for the day: £16 including lunch, teas/coffees. Please advise of any special dietary requirements.

To obtain your tickets please send your cheque, made payable to 'RPS Nature Group',
plus a stamped self addressed envelope to:

Nature Group Chairman, Tony Bond FRPS, 9 Beech Drive, Leigh, Lancs WN7 3LJ

Book Review

Title: Extreme Close-Up Photography and Focus Stacking

Author: Julian Cremona

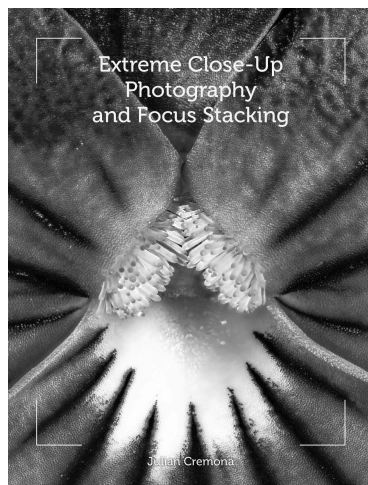
Publisher: Crowood Press ISBN 978 1 84797 719 9

For many years, when using film, I attempted to obtain extreme close-ups of parts of insects and flowers, using cheap secondhand equipment, and although the results were often eye-catching, depth of field and resolution limitations were major distractions. In this excellent book, Julian shows us how to obtain brilliant results using not only both specialised (and often very expensive) equipment but also the sort of kit which might well be lurking in a desk drawer, left over from our film camera days.

The advent of focus stacking has overcome the serious depth of field limitations in single images, and the book gives detailed information on technique, hardware and software. A series of eight projects is illustrated at the end of the book, with emphasis on the importance of understanding the subject.

I have greatly enjoyed reading this book and will return to it again and again for help. I can thoroughly recommend it to anyone thinking of moving into the fascinating world of extreme close-up photography.

John Bebbington FRPS



Minutes of the 2014 AGM of the RPS Nature Group

The 38th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Photographic Nature Group was held at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, on Saturday 5th April 2013 at 2pm. It was chaired by Tony Bond and attended by 59 members.

Apologies

These were received from: John Bebbington, Dickie Duckett, Barbara Hawkesworth, Peter Jones, David Osborn and Susie Wilson

Minutes of the 2013 AGM

The minutes of the 2013 AGM printed in issue 116 of "The Iris" were accepted as a true and correct record of what then took place. This was proposed by Geoff Trinder and seconded by Dawn Osborn.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report - Tony Bond FRPS

Tony gave a brief overview of the challenges and successes of the Group over the past year and left the detail to others. He said the good news was that membership numbers had increased dramatically, some being due to the recent event at the NEC. Our geographical spread of members had also widened. However, the bad news was that we have said farewell to some members including two former chairmen, Gordon Dickson and Martin Withers.

The decision to take the production of the exhibition CD in house to avoid an annual loss of around £500 was amply vindicated. Thanks to our exhibition secretary, Kevin Maskell (and no doubt support from Margery) and the commentary from Dr. Kevin Elsby, we can be proud of the final product. Tony could not understand why every club in the PAGB did not buy the CD as the cost is less than travelling expenses for a visiting lecturer and can either serve as a programme item or be held in reserve for when a visitor cancels with little warning in the depths of winter. Kevin had expressed his wish to retire as exhibition secretary by this time next year and was pleased to report that Ralph Snook will work alongside him and hopefully take over.

Tony reported that last year showed a welcome increase in the number of field meetings. He said

that they serve a social purpose as well as a photographic one and provide an opportunity to meet other members, to share information about common problems, techniques and ideas. The committee often receives complaints that "there are none in my area". If not, Tony suggested why not organise one yourself or get together with another member? It is also good to read accounts of field meetings in *The Iris* so please send in reports of field meetings. Dawn welcomes contributions for *The Iris* and if you have an item with words only and no colour images do not be reluctant as she sometimes has problems filling the black and white only pages.

The Chairman advised that since the last AGM our own website had been closed and we now need to use the Society's new website. Margery Maskell is now our webmaster. We have also had to respond to the Society's corporate rebranding. The 'Brand Guidelines' document consists of 33 sides of A4 and gave the committee quite a few headaches. At one stage it looked as though our logo would have to go but following representations we have been allowed to continue to use it. All correspondence has had to conform and it has affected committee members in different ways. One was the label on the exhibition CD but the most obvious one was the appearance of *The Iris*. This was achieved successfully by the Editor and the latest edition was described as 'outstanding' by the Director General and staff at Fenton House.

Tony then spoke of the award of the Fenton Medal to the editor of *The Iris*, Dawn Osborn. He said that he knew from the number of messages of congratulation received by Dawn that we agreed with him that this was due recognition for the various contributions she had made to the Group over the past 20 years. Tony also thanked his predecessor, John Bebbington, who has decided to retire from the committee. John will continue as a member of the A&F panel where he knows that his knowledge of insects is highly valued.

Finally Tony thanked Smethwick Photographic Society on our behalf and in particular Judith and Roger Parry for facilitating the use of The Old Schoolhouse for meetings such as this and also our committee meetings.

Treasurer's Report - Margery Maskell ARPS

Period 1st January – 31st December 2013

General Comments:- A Treasurers Seminar was held in November 2013, to explain the changes to the way that our VAT Returns reports, sent to the Finance Department in Bath on a quarterly basis, are to be recorded in future. As the RPS is a charity, it is eligible for VAT exemptions on certain things. Our AGM, as it includes a speaker, is now classified as an event. All events are now defined as 'educational', so ticket sales are no longer vatable, but it also means that we can no longer claim vat back from any vatable expenses, like travel and accommodation, from an event. The

Exhibition is, however, still fully vatable. This means we still have to pay VAT on entry fees, but we can claim back the vat on all vatable expenses. Quite complicated, but manageable, and the new structure was used for the 2013 VAT Returns.

Another major change is that all Groups and Regions will have online banking facilities in due course. Our Cash Book structure, however, remains unchanged, which keeps this report fairly simple. The Balance Sheet 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.

Receipts and Payments Accounts for 1st. January 2013 to 31st December 2013

<u>Year 2012</u>		Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bath		<u>Year 2013</u>
<u>Receipts</u>				
6,566.06		Subscriptions		7,434.90
0.00		Life Subs.		679.52
20.13		Lectures & Workshops		630.00
1,267.52		Annual Exhibition		1,399.41
117.80		Interest received (to Cash Book)		165.69
288.94		Sundry Income		106.11
274.40		IRIS Subs, Adverts, etc		318.00
8,534.85	sub totals			10,733.63
<u>Payments</u>				
7,122.94		The Iris incl. postage		7,403.98
55.60		Lectures & Workshops		500.00
1,642.81		Annual Exhibition		1,118.72
1,979.93		General Administration		2,222.96
0.00		Software upgrades		416.40
10,801.28	sub totals			11,662.06
-2,266.43	Receipts minus Payments			-928.43

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2013

Nature Group Cash Book		£
Balance brought forward from 2012		8,310.86
Cleared Cheques from 2012		0.00
Cleared Credit Card vouchers from 2012		0.00
Uncleared Cheques from 2013		0.00
Credit Card vouchers not cashed in 2013		0.00
Receipts minus Payments 2013		-928.43
Total		7,382.43
Total Carried Forward To Financial Year 2014		7,382.43

M. Maskell

Margery J Maskell (Hon Treasurer)
3rd February 2014

Subscriptions:- The income is that credited monthly to our Cash Book Account during the current Financial year - (Subscriptions paid to the RPS for December 2012 through to November 2013). The Life Members' subscription reimbursements for the previous year are normally paid in January. But the 2011 reimbursements were paid in December 2011. Hence the zero against the 2012 figures.

Interest:- The current process, very complicated, incurs charges which Bath absorbs. It is therefore being discontinued at the end of 2013.

Sundry Income:- This is from refunds of bank charges and recoverable VAT from 2012.

The Iris:- Three editions of The Iris were published this year - (#115, #116 and #117). The cost of production, and particularly postage, continues to rise, though subscriptions and adverts have helped to offset some of the costs.

Annual Exhibition:- The Exhibition made a reasonable profit this year.

General Administration:- This includes all running costs of the Nature Group (general postage, telephone, stationery and travel to committee meetings). It also includes the cost of our website, now closed.

Overall Financial Situation:- The Balance Sheet shows an excess of Expenditure over Income for this year. Just under half of which is from Desktop Publishing software upgrades for the production of 'The Iris'. This deficit is still, however, a lot lower than last year, and the increase to the group subscriptions, from £12 to £14 in January 2014, will aid in the recovery of the Group's finances.

Secretary's Report - Margaret Johnson LRPS

The Secretary reported that the current membership according to Bath in March was 768 which is 77 more than at the last AGM with 56 new members joining last month as a result of the RPS having been at the NEC in Birmingham. She said it was quite a marathon to get all these new member packs out and cost a fortune in postage which is her biggest expenditure. Members who leave the group often do so because of ill health or for financial reasons and not because they have an issue with the Nature Group.

The membership lists that are now delivered monthly by e-mail from RPS HQ are more accurate so there are less queries to make. Margaret said she was "grappling" with Excel but "slowly coming to grips with it". Lapsed members still cause the most concern as many do not realise they have lapsed until they receive a letter from Margaret. Much of this was due to failed Direct Debit.

Margaret said she always enjoyed hearing from members either by phone, e-mail or snail mail and would continue to sort out any problems to the best of her ability. She said it had been another busy and successful year and hoped that next year was as good.

Gianpiero Ferrari asked if any of the items that are sent out to members could be sent by email, but Margaret explained that this is not possible as a digital copy of The Iris is not available and also many of our members are more likely to take notice of a letter than an email!

Paul ? enquired as to the age groups of the new members and Margaret said there was no way of knowing as the lists did not give DOB. Age is noted only if a member was under 25. Alex Birch said that junior members were our future and enquired what was being done to recruit junior members. Geoff Trinder pointed out that this could cause difficulties from a Health & Safety point of view. Some members wanted to know where the Health & Safety rules came from and who made them!

Any Other Business

Margery Maskell said that some of the galleries appearing in the Nature Group area of the new website were not appropriate, ie not Nature, and that when uploading galleries to the RPS site members should only select Nature if they were of Nature interest.

Derek Walton asked what had happened with the attempt to obtain sponsorship from Permajet and Margery Maskell said that following numerous emails to Permajet the matter had been passed higher up the chain of command and then all communication ceased. James Foad asked if Fotospeed could be contacted and Sonja Knox said she had an idea and would make some informal approach and then refer them to the committee.

Richard Revels thanked people who had led field meetings and if there was anyone who would like to lead one would they let him know so that it could go in The Iris and on the website.

Tony thanked Judith and Roger Parry again for hosting our AGM and committee meetings and said that we were always made very welcome.

George Lamb thanked the committee for all their hard work.

Date and Venue of the 39th AGM 2015

Saturday 11th April, The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury.

The meeting closed at 14.36 hrs



**More images from
Mick Durham's
successful
Fellowship panel.**





Commended Projected images continued:

1. *Amanita muscaria* in woodland habitat
by Dawn Osborn FRPS
2. Antarctica Ice
by Patricia Kearton LRPS
3. *Scleroderma verrucosum*
by Ken Wade LRPS
4. *Mycena polygramma*
by David Osborn FRPS

