

*Magazine of the Nature Group
of The Royal Photographic Society*

THE



IRIS



No. 77 - Summer 2000



Photo by Peter Evans ARPS - 'Impala' *see article page 21.*

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The President, Secretary and Treasurer of The Royal Photographic Society are also ex-officio members, as is the Chairman of the A & F Nature Distinctions Panel.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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Contributions on all aspects of Nature Photography are welcomed, including reviews on relevant books. Material should be typed, double spaced, on one side of the paper only. Copy can be accepted on floppy disc (preferably RTF or Microsoft ‘Word’) accompanied by printed copy. Please send submissions to The Editor. *No payment is made for material used and whilst every care is taken neither the Editor, nor the Nature Group, nor Printers accept liability for any damage that may occur to photographic material submitted. The views expressed are solely those of the contributor.*

Magazine Distribution:- The IRIS is posted using labels produced by the RPS Membership Dept in Bath. Any Nature Group member who does not receive their copy should contact the Membership Department so that their name appears on a label in the future. However the Editor will be pleased to post single copies to those who have failed to receive them.

CONTENTS

Editorial	5
From the Chair - Martin Withers FRPS	6
‘Omnium Gatherum’	7
‘Bird Photography in the Forests of Eastern Zimbabwe’ by Peter Ginn	8
Associate & Fellowship Distinctions - Application Results	11
Minutes of RPS Nature Group Annual General Meeting 2000	12
Some accepted & winning photographs from our Annual Exhibition 2000	17-20
‘Why Not Ride the Rainbow’ part one by Peter Evans ARPS	21
Members’ Letters	23
‘Have Material for Publication - Where do I send it?’	25
‘Costa Rica 2000’ by Barrie Taylor FRPS	26
Reports of Events & Field Meetings	29
RPS Nature Group Newsletter No. 5 - May 1977	30
Nature Distinctions Workshop - 23rd JULY BOOK NOW!	32
The Iris ‘Five Slide’ Competition	33
Advertisements	33

Front Cover Photo by Peter Mullen ARPS - ‘Elephant Mudbath’.
An accepted slide in Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2000.

Back Cover Photo by David W. Haigh FRPS - ‘Reticulated Giraffes’.
An accepted slide in Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2000.

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EDITORIAL

This issue has a strong overseas flavour which developed on its own rather than by any decision of your Editor. First came the article from Peter Evans; next that from Peter Ginn followed by Barrie Taylor's piece. Then I received another of Anne Owen's excellent underwater articles, but you will have to wait until the next issue for that.

Please though don't let that preceding paragraph stop anyone sending in articles or letters for publication. At one stage I had thought of starting this Editorial with the question '*Is there anyone out there?*' The reason, somewhat surprisingly I thought, was that there had been absolutely no response / reaction to either my last Editorial or Nick Jarvis's letter regarding 'anomalies etc.'. If you revisit page 25 of the last issue you will see that Nick concluded his letter with the question ... 'Perhaps readers would now like to go back to the two questions above. How would you answer them?'

Well nobody attempted to answer them. Whether it was assumed the question was rhetorical, or simply unanswerable is yet another question which may remain unanswered.

As to the points raised in my Editorial I received responses in two forms. Firstly, by practical demonstration, with the excellent news that Kath Bull's day on March 25th had over 100 people attending with requests that it be repeated again in 2001. Also that the Dorset weekend and Scottish Islands trips (both organized by Kath Bull) were both sold out with waiting lists! Then Robert Hawkesworth's Field Meeting, the first this year, had an amazing 38 people (including your Editor). All extremely positive, the best form of response I could have received. Hopefully all future events will be supported as well.

The second response came from Derry Wilman (reproduced in Members Letters) which you will see raises several points. As regards meetings clashing I can understand reluctance to provide members with a legitimate excuse for not attending our AGM. Be honest, which would you have chosen? [*38 people attended our first field meeting this year; one more than attended the AGM*]. Seriously though a practical view is now taken and our Programme Co-ordinator is happy for meetings to take place on the same date. This is subject to the obvious criteria that they are sufficiently far apart to avoid conflict.

Derry also makes the points about time and distance. Both of which I can sympathize with (especially as it took me 2 hours 50 minutes to travel 96 miles to Robert's meeting). Quite apart from time the ever increasing cost of petrol is also bound to have its effect in future.

These points are arguments for having a far greater number of field meetings spread across the country to minimize travelling time and costs. Also the popularity of Kath Bull's day on the 25th March argues that similar meetings could be held. Why not start by having another in the Midlands and one in the North so that with three such meetings each year there is an opportunity for far more members to enjoy them?

*What's that? Why don't we? Well, we are still waiting to hear from those volunteers I suggested in the last editorial. Please start planning for 2001 **now** and contact Roy Place as soon as possible. Don't wait to be reminded in the Winter issue.*

However there is still time to book for the Nature Distinctions Workshop on 23rd July see details on page 32 of this issue and full details on page 13 of the last issue.

To end on a positive note Martin Withers and Robert Hawkesworth are planning something rather special. See 'From the Chair'. Also look on page 7 for a change to our Annual Exhibition which I'm sure will be welcomed by the whole membership ☘

FROM THE CHAIR

Martin Withers FRPS

Some members will be aware that the Nature Group of the RPS was founded in January 1976. Faced with this fact, even a poor mathematician would quickly realise that next year the Group celebrates 25 years in existence. To commemorate this anniversary the Nature Group Committee has decided to

stage a weekend Convention at Brooksby Agricultural College in Leicestershire, commencing with dinner on Friday evening August 12th and ending after lunch on Sunday August 10th. It is envisaged that much of the programme for the weekend will comprise of lectures from prominent UK nature photographers as well as lecturettes on a wide variety of nature subjects from Nature group members. There will also be adequate time to exchange ideas, to show items of photographic interest, to renew old friendships and to forge new ones. The event will be open to all Nature Group members and guests and will be limited to 70 people in residence plus local members who may wish to travel in each day on a meals only basis. A programme of events and a booking form will be circulated to all members in the next issue of the Iris, bookings to be taken on a first come first served basis. In the meantime block off in your diaries the second weekend in August 2001.

The late spring weather has been extremely variable, depending on where in the country you happen to live. Most of Scotland has been bathed in wonderful sunshine for days on end, while in my neck of the woods it has been reminiscent of October, with fog, mist and dull grey days with rarely a sight of the sun. In spite of the vagaries of the weather I hope you have all had at least a few productive days in the field with cameras so far and that we all have plenty yet to come. A selection of Field Meetings has been arranged for the coming year and I hope if there is one in your locality you will do your best to give it your support. If there was not one in your area, make sure that there is one next year - why not contact Roy Place FRPS and offer to organise a day in your region for other members?

Thanks are again due to all Committee members for their continued work behind the scenes to ensure we maintain a lively and varied programme of events for members. Special thanks to Kath Bull ARPS for organising a very successful indoor meeting in Sussex in March, when 115 members and guests attended 'Past, Present & Future' with guest speakers and recent successful Associateship and Fellowship Nature Panels from Nature Group members. Many of us were amazed at the distance some people travelled to attend the day and everyone I spoke to seemed well pleased with the whole event - all very gratifying for the organiser.

Kath has also recently organised another successful Nature Group Residential weekend in Dorset, which was well attended, while still to come in Kath's busy programme of events is a week visiting Scottish Islands, organised with the help of Colin Varndell, which I am sure will be a memorable trip for all Nature Group members attending - again very many thanks Kath ☘

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM OUR ANNUAL EXHIBITION

Regrettably it is financially impossible for us to have a full colour catalogue nor, unfortunately, is there sufficient space in this magazine to reproduce all of the commended and award winning pictures. By way of compromise both Gold Medal photographs have been printed together with a small (editorial) selection of commended and accepted slides.

*All of the accepted pictures deserved reproducing
as did those that just didn't quite make it.*

**NATURE GROUP
ANNUAL EXHIBITION
IN 2001.**

A MAJOR CHANGE!

**All entrants will be
represented in the
Exhibition!**

This will allow a wider range of entrants work to be shown.

For 2001, (due to the uncertainty regarding the availability of exhibition space at The Octagon) the exhibition will be held at Smethwick Photographic Society from Thursday 26th April to Saturday 5th May.

Full details and Entry Forms in the Winter Issue of The Iris.

**PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION
PENSTHORPE WATERFOWL PARK**

Overall Winner's Prize £500!

This excellent competition has been running for many years now. All photographs submitted must have been taken at Pensthorpe. There is a range of attractive prizes. Entry forms from Pensthorpe Waterfowl Park Pensthorpe Fakenham Norfolk or when you visit.

OMNIUM GATHERUM

*A round up of Events
Competitions - Exhibitions
Lectures - Meetings
News - This & That*

**HEATHER ANGEL
FRPS - 'NATURAL
VISIONS'**

A new solo exhibition of wildlife images from around the world.

Traditional images plus innovative digital art images which 'blur the boundaries between reality & art'.

**DORSET
WEEKEND
2001**

**The 4th Nature Group.
Dorset Residential Field
Weekend**

Friday 8th June to Monday
11th June.

At the Burton Cliff Hotel,
Burton Bradstock, Dorset with
Dorset Nature Photographer
Colin Varndell.

*Full details
in Winter Issue.*

**Nature in Art - Wallsworth Hall, Twigworth
Gloucestershire GL2 9PA
Tel 01452-731422**

1st Aug to 10th Sept (closed Mondays).

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL DAY Sunday 8th
October at Bath. Speakers to include Art Wolfe
& Michael Martin.

**The above was a preliminary announcement
made at our AGM.**

*Unfortunately, despite several attempts, it has
not been possible to obtain full details or con-
firmation of the above in time for this issue.*

**Check future issues of the RPS Journal for
correct information.**

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE FORESTS OF EASTERN ZIMBABWE.

BY PETER GINN

While much of Zimbabwe has open woodlands, in the eastern highlands there are isolated patches of tall “mist-belt” forest with a canopy some 30-40m above the ground. There is also a

sub-canopy at about 10 m and finally a certain amount of “ground-cover” about 2 m high.

Being highlands, slopes are generally steep and this can complicate photography!

Many of the birds feed throughout the year in the canopy or sub-canopy and when I first visited these forests I could not imagine how I would be able to photograph the birds flitting overhead. However, investigation of the breeding habits of many species showed that a fair proportion of the birds nested below 3 m above the ground and some like the White-tailed Flycatcher moved from the canopy into the ground cover.

This opened all sorts of possibilities for bird photography and over the years I have been working on a portfolio of the smaller birds of these forests. One of the really interesting things which have come to light during these photographic forays, is that the forest birds are relatively tame & confiding during the nesting season. They will continue to feed chicks if one sits quietly nearby. Nevertheless we always erect hides/blinds well before photography is to start.

The following are some notes on photography of forest species.

Swynnerton's Robin (*Swynnertonia swynnertoni*) is a near endemic — the only other population being a different subspecies in Tanzania. The birds forage on the forest floor and usually nest within a metre of the ground. This bird has nested several times in a hollow in a tree right next to a path through a forest which many birders visit. It has become relatively tame even for a forest bird! However, photography without a hide is impossible. I had to provide a perch for the bird to land on otherwise it flew straight into the nest.

Dusky Flycatcher (*Musicapa adusta*) is a small flycatcher which is found along the forest edge and adapts well to gardens. They build a deep cup-shaped nest covered with lichen & moss to camouflage the nest in the tree which is moss covered. The birds catch insects in flight by darting out from a perch and once the eggs hatch they have to run a shuttle service to the nest. We were photographing on a cool day so one adult was brooding the chicks while the other brought food which was passed to the sitting bird which then fed the chicks.

Robert's Warbler (*Oreophilais robertsi*) is an endemic in these forests. They are fast moving little birds which often stop while calling to one another to keep in contact. They build a small nest in the ground cover, usually near a path in the forest. I found them difficult to photograph because although they did not worry about the hide, they moved about so quickly that I had to estimate when the approaching bird would nip around the nest to feed the sitting bird.

Chirinda Apalis (*Apalis chirindensis*) is another eastern Zimbabwe endemic. This bird forages in the canopy but nests in the under-canopy some 7-10m above the ground. I had to construct a pylon hide on a very steep slope. When I eventually approached the nest height I was amazed to find that the birds continued to feed the chicks while I was trying to build! This initially slowed operations down considerably until I realised that they were effectively “unaware” of my presence! I did initially take a few shots before putting on the cover as a record, but the photograph was taken the next day with the hide complete.



Photo by Peter Ginn - 'Robert's Warbler' (*Oreophilais robertsi*).



Photo by Peter Ginn - 'Dusky Flycatcher' (*Musicapa adusta*).



Photo by Peter Ginn - 'Stripe-cheeked Bulbuls'.



Photo by Peter Ginn - Livingstone's Loerie.

Buff-spotted Flufftail (*Sarothura elegans*) builds a well concealed nest at which photography is almost impossible. However, we found we could call this species out of the thick undergrowth and keep it on the path for a few seconds by putting meal worms in front of it. This is probably the sharpest photo of this species taken by anyone so far!

White-tailed Flycatcher feeds in the canopy but nests within 1 to 2m of the ground. They build the most beautiful wineglass shaped nest in the vertical fork of a small low-growing plant which creates a ground cover in many parts of the forest. Once again they often build right next to a path - we believe that this protects them from predation by the Samango Monkeys which tend to avoid paths used by humans. They seem totally unaware of the photographer's presence and the flash going off.

Stripe-cheeked Bulbuls usually build in the tall ground cover, about 2 or more metres above the ground. They also nest near paths for protection. The birds will even sit on the hide when approaching the nest. Having fed the chicks the birds will often sit above the nest for what seems ages before moving off to find more food. This does sometimes coincide with the approach of the mate to feed.

Livingstone's Loerie is a much larger bird than the others shown here. They move down from the canopy into very thick growth on the edge of the forest, usually about 3 to 6 m above the ground. The thick bush makes it impossible to get the whole bird in! However, the head with its crest is the most attractive part of the bird ☘

ASSOCIATE & FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION DISTINCTION RESULTS

The Associateship and Fellowship Nature Panel met at The Octagon on Tuesday 14th March 2000. Panel Members present were: Martin Withers FRPS (Chairman), Margaret Hodge FRPS, Harold Grenfell FRPS, David Hosking FRPS, Colin Smith FRPS and Tony Wharton FRPS.

Fellowship Print Applications numbered 1. Successes - 1

Hemant Mehta	Bangor	(Animal behaviour)
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Fellowship Slide applications numbered 8. Successes - 2

Malcolm Hey	Romsey	(Marine life)
Dr. Koshy Johnson	Hull	(Birds in flight)

Associateship Print applications numbered 1. Successes - 1

Anthony Pioli	Buxton	(Mixed subjects)
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Associateship Slide applications numbered 18. Successes - 7

Barry Hilling	Surrey	(Mixed subjects)
Nick Jarvis	Milton Keynes	(Fungi)
Sigrun Tollerton	Wrexham	(Birds)
Terry Wall	Redditch	(Birds)
Roger Pinn	Warwickshire	(Fungi)
Elizabeth Goodchild	Surrey	(Mixed subjects)
Lawrence Bland	Solihull	(Mixed subjects)

MINUTES OF THE RPS NATURE GROUP 2000 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The 24th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Photographic Society Nature Group was held at The Octagon, Milsom Street, Bath, on Saturday 15th April 2000 at 2.00 p.m. It was chaired by Dawn Osborn ARPS and was attended by 37 members.

Apologies:-

Apologies for absence were received from:— Martin Withers (Chairman), Bill Burns-Begg, Gill Cardy, Audrey Clark, David Haigh, David Mazey, Cath Mullen, Peter Mullen, Joyce Osborn, Roy Osborn, John Page, Michael Proctor, Richard Revels, Terry Ridgley, Derry Wilman, Rosemary Wilman.

Minutes of the 1999 AGM:-

The minutes of the 1999 AGM printed in issue 74 of The Iris were approved and signed by Dawn Osborn as a correct record of what then took place.

Matters Arising:- There were none.

Chairman's Report:-

Many apologies for my absence from today's AGM, but I am otherwise engaged on a photographic mission in Spain. My sincere thanks to our Vice Chair Dawn Osborn for chairing the meeting on my behalf and for her work throughout the year, not only in her capacity as Vice Chair, but also as Press Officer for the Group ensuring that items of Nature group interest are reported in the RPS Journal.

My thanks to Robert Hawkesworth, our Hon. Secretary, for all his help and gentle prompting over the last twelve months and for the enthusiasm and commitment he has shown in all matters relating to the Nature Group.

The Group also owes a debt of gratitude to John Myring for his work as Hon Treasurer through a difficult period of financial and constitutional change within the Group and the Society. In his capacity as Editor of the Iris, he warrants further praise for maintaining a standard of publication which is the envy of many other groups. Thanks also to John's wife, Margaret, for her help with the publication and distribution of the Iris.

As in previous years the Nature Group Committee has endeavoured to arrange field meetings throughout the country in an effort to bring members together for practical field days. Thanks are due to Roy Place for his continued hard work as field co-ordinator, a thankless task that requires input from the membership for its success. Do please consider leading a field meeting in your area, as Roy is constantly on the look out for additional venues to provide a widespread and varied programme.

Many thanks are due to Kath Bull, who has served as Nature Group Representative on the Society's Advisory Board. Kath has also been responsible for numerous 'special events' throughout the year, all of which were a great success and did much to promote both the Nature Group and the Society.

The Group's Annual Exhibition attracted a high standard of entries and thanks are due to Tony and Doreen Wharton, Barbara Lawton, Roy Place and Dawn Osborn for all their hard work, which ensured the success of this major event in the Nature Group calendar. Thanks also to the selectors, Roger Hance, Mike Lane and Roy Osborn and to the members and committee of Smethwick Photographic Society for the use of their excellent new facilities on the day of the judging.

Many thanks to Peter Basterfield who offered considerable support to the Nature Group and its members as the committee 'man-on-the-spot', often representing and promoting the group single-handedly at RPS events at the Octagon.

Looking to the future, the Nature Group Committee will continue to promote a standard of excellence in nature photography and will attempt to organise a variety of events for members. Plans are already underway for a weekend Convention, with high quality speakers, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Nature Group in 2001. The Convention will be held at Brooksby Agricultural College in Leicestershire on August 10th to 12th 2001. Further details and booking forms will appear in future issues of the Iris.

Treasurer's Report:-

As minuted under 'Any Other Business' it was agreed at our last AGM that, because of time constraints, these accounts could be presented in an unaudited form to this meeting for acceptance. Our books and records are now with our auditor and a copy of the audit report will appear with the accounts when they are published in The Iris. A copy of the audited accounts will be presented at the next committee meeting and also the next AGM for ratification.

Surplus:- As you will see from Note 1 on the accounts the apparent surplus of £1036.26 needs to be adjusted in respect of net deposits held totalling £960 for the forthcoming Dorset Weekend & Scottish Isles trip. I would stress that only deposit monies are received for these events which only pass through our accounts for administrative convenience. Such monies do not form part of our normal income and expenditure.

In this year's figures there is £837 (net after VAT refund) non- recurring capital expenditure for display boards.

Continuing to look at the surplus figure for a moment I would remind members that our accounts merely show monies received and paid out during the financial year. For this accounting year we have yet to receive invoices totalling some £300; so from a 'profit / loss' viewpoint we would have actually made a loss of some £220.

Membership:- As at 31st March we had received subscriptions for 635 members, ten less than last year, and 24 members subscriptions are now overdue. During the year 15 members left the Group but remained in the RPS. Of the 9 who replied to my questionnaire none indicated any dissatisfaction with the Group as the reason for leaving.

General Administration:- The increase here is caused solely by travelling costs. This is due both to an increase in the mileage allowance of an extra 4p per mile (18% increase to 26p) and also various additional travelling that has been necessary. Wherever possible your committee travel together to reduce costs and in some cases do not claim the full amount they are due.

General Comments:- As a rough guide I look to our subscription income and our interest to cover publication of The Iris and administration costs. In the previous year there was a shortfall of some £75 and this year of £167. Over the next month or so there will be a number of items to consider but at this stage I do not see a need to increase our subscription in 2001.

Just after our last AGM I advised the committee that this was the last term I was prepared to serve as Treasurer. By our voting AGM in 2001 I will have been Treasurer for 10 years, five of which I have also been Editor. Enough is enough.

Although my replacement will of course be elected by members in 2001 the committee feel that it would be helpful to both the Group and any prospective Treasurer if an interest could be indicated before then and as soon as possible. For those who wish to know more before committing themselves I would be happy to detail what is involved.

The accounts were proposed by Peter Basterfield, seconded by Barbara Lawton and approved.

THE NATURE GROUP OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
Income and Expenditure Account for 1st April 1999 to 31st March 2000

<u>Expenditure</u>			<u>Income</u>	
	<u>98/99</u>	<u>99/2000</u>	<u>98/99</u>	<u>99/2000</u>
The Iris inc postage	6310.55	5819.83	Subscriptions (98/99-645 //99/2000-635)	7097.29 7002.16
Lectures & Workshops	1359.09	2471.21	Lectures & Workshops	1217.89 3143.00
Annual Exhibition	3324.13	565.65	Annual Exhibition	2400.92 573.78
General Administration	1631.17	1981.65	Interest received	768.11 631.46
			Sundry Income	380.83 524.20
sub total	12624.94	10838.34	sub total	11865.04 11874.60
Surplus see Note 1		1036.26	Deficit	759.90
TOTAL	<u>12624.94</u>	<u>11874.60</u>	TOTAL	<u>12624.94 11874.60</u>

BALANCE as at:-

Year ended 31/3/99	15645.50	1/4/99 brought forward	15645.50
		plus surplus	<u>1036.26</u>
		year ended 31/3/00	<u>16681.76</u>

REPRESENTED by:-

Balances at Bank C/A	430.76	C/A	-59.83
B.PA	2639.22	B.P.A	4568.11
H.I.B.A	3564.21	H.I.B.A	4648.08
Nat Savings Dep Bond	<u>9011.31</u>	Nat Savings Dep Bond	<u>7525.40</u>
TOTAL	<u>15645.50</u>	TOTAL	<u>16681.76</u>

NOTES:-

For some events 'Deposits only' are taken and only these pass through our accounts. For administrative convenience these have been recorded under 'Lectures & Workshops'. To arrive at the correct surplus deposits totalling £960 net must be deducted from the £1036.26 shown to arrive at the corrected figure of £76.26.

[This note is inserted by the Treasurer following the AGM. - As stated in my report the accounts were presented to the meeting prior to audit. Following discussions with our Accountants it was agreed that the deposits referred to should be excluded from the Income & Expenditure section and the net amount held shown separately. The revised accounts are shown at the end of these minutes on page 16.]

Secretary 's Report:-

The year has been perfectly normal inasmuch that I have continued to provide a service for the membership, ensuring that new members are welcomed to our ranks and answering queries from existing members. The numbers have been roughly in balance and as always the main reason for loss of members is due to resignation from the Society rather than dissatisfaction with the Group.

The most frequent request is undoubtedly for more Field Meetings, which seems strange when some leaders have reported a poor turnout at their particular meeting. From my own experience may I encourage those leaders to keep plugging away, when I first led the numbers were low but they steadily increased. I urge all members, especially those in areas where there are few if any Field Meetings, to consider running one. A stretch of river or

canal, a piece of coastline, a local wood, heathland or gravel pit, do have a go. During the last month Martin, John and I have been occupied with redrafting our Constitution which has been necessary due to the requirements of The Charity Commissioners, The Royal Photographic Society being a registered charity. Most of the changes concern the manner in which the Society manages its accounts. The redrafted Constitution is now with the Society for ratification by Council and will be put before you at next year's AGM.

Any Other Business:-

Kath Bull reported on the very successful Nature Group Meeting in the South East, "The Nature Group Past Present and Future". The speakers had included Prof. Heather Angel the first Chairman and Martin Withers the present Chairman. There had been contributions from recent successful 'F' and 'A' recipients as well as Kodak Professional. The day had been attended by 115 people and had realised some £600.

She went on to say that the Dorset Holiday and the Scottish Islands Holiday were both full and all indications were that they would be equally successful. Kath paid tribute to the help she had received from Bill Burns-Begg who was still recovering from surgery. Warm and kind wishes were sent to him from all present.

Dawn Osborn thanked Kath for all her hard work on behalf of the Group.

John Fairbanks then requested that the procedure for sending in Field Meeting reports should be clarified. After some little discussion the following was agreed:- Reports for inclusion in the RPS Journal to go to Dawn Osborn, those for inclusion in The Iris to go to John Myring. Any member who had difficulty in obtaining photocopies should send the report to Robert Hawkesworth who would copy them and forward them to both Dawn Osborn and John Myring.

Roy Place thanked all those members who had agreed to lead Field Meetings this year. Three years ago we ran 25 Field Meetings, this year it was down by almost half. He echoed the pleas made by the Chairman and the Secretary for more leaders to come forward.

The following notices were announced:-

1. Barry Seager gave notice that the Bath/Wilts Pentax Group were meeting on Sunday 11th June at Torr Quarry, N.G members welcome.
2. Barbara Lawton announced the Distinctions' Workshop on 23rd July at Smethwick, all trying for 'A' and 'F' were recommended to attend.
3. Robert Hawkesworth announced that there was to be a SW Regional Day at Bath on Sunday 8th October, Vivian Croucher had invited the N.G to be involved, the speakers were to include Art Wolfe and Michael Martin. Peter Basterfield agreed to liaise with him.

Time, Date and Place of the 2001 AGM:-

The Octagon had been provisionally booked for Saturday 28th April at 2.00 p.m. in the Lecture Theatre. However in view of the move from The Octagon by the RPS it might be prudent to move to another venue, details will be announced later.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2.35pm ☘

Please see following page for revised accounts.

Treasurer - As mentioned in the notes following the accounts on page 13 after discussions with our accountants the accounts were partially revised. This revision was purely to define more clearly the exclusion of 'Deposit monies' from our normal Income & Expenditure. Also to show that net deposits held did not form part of the Group's assets. The total for 'Lectures & Workshops' section under Income has been reduced by deposits totalling £1925 in respect of the Dorset Weekends for 1999 & 2000 and Scottish Islands trip 2000.

The total for 'Lectures & Workshops' section under Expenditure has been reduced by withdrawals of £965 in respect of the same events. This gives a net figure of £960 which is now shown as a deduction at the end of the Balance Sheet.

The true surplus for the year of £76.26 remains unaltered.

THE NATURE GROUP OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
Income and Expenditure Account for 1st April 1999 to 31st March 2000

<u>Expenditure</u>			<u>Income</u>	
	<u>98/99</u>	<u>99/2000</u>	<u>98/99</u>	<u>99/2000</u>
The Iris inc postage	6310.55	5819.83	Subscriptions (98/99-645 //99/2000-635)	7097.29 7002.16
Lectures & Workshops	1359.09	1506.21	Lectures & Workshops	1217.89 1218.00
Annual Exhibition	3324.13	565.65	Annual Exhibition	2400.92 573.78
General Administration	1631.17	1981.65	Interest received	768.11 631.46
			Sundry Income	380.83 524.20
sub total	12624.94	9873.34	sub total	11865.04 9949.60
Surplus see Note 1		76.26	Deficit	759.90
TOTAL	<u>12624.94</u>	<u>9949.60</u>	TOTAL	<u>12624.94</u> <u>9949.60</u>

BALANCE as at:-

Year ended 31/3/99 15645.50

1/4/99 brought forward 15645.50
plus surplus 76.26
year ended 31/3/00 15721.76

REPRESENTED by:-

Balances at Bank C/A 430.76
B.P.A 2639.22
H.I.B.A 3564.21
Nat Savings Dep Bond 9011.31
TOTAL **15645.50**

C/A -59.83
B.P.A 4568.11
H.I.B.A 4648.08
Nat Savings Dep Bond 7525.40
sub total 16681.76
Less Net Deposits held 960.00
TOTAL **15721.76**

AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

We have examined the above Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account and confirm that they have been properly prepared from the accounting records of the Group and are in accordance with the information and explanations presented to us.

26th April 2000

Woodall, Davies & Bache Chartered Certified Accountants
143, High Street, Rowley Regis, West Midlands, B65 0EA.



Photo by Dennis Johnson ARPS - 'Great White Egret'.
This slide was awarded 3rd place in the Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2000.



Photo by Barry Green ARPS - 'African Elephants crossing Uso river'.
This print was commended in the Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2000.



GOLD MEDAL SLIDE in the Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2000.
'Male Grouse in a Rainstorm' by Roy Place FRPS.



GOLD MEDAL PRINT in the Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2000.
'Burchell's Zebra at Waterhole, Namibia', by Cath Mullen FRPS.



Photo by Andy Callow - 'Wasp and Slug eating Earthworm x 1'.
This slide was accepted for the Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2000.



Photo by Nick Jarvis ARPS - 'Bark Beetle Galleries' (*Hylesinus fraxini*).
This slide accepted for the Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2000.

WHY NOT RIDE THE RAINBOW ?

PART ONE

BY PETER EVANS ARPS

Because of its internal politics, South Africa, the “Rainbow Nation”, has been less popular with overseas photographers than its wildlife merits. It is on a par with East Africa in terms of species and much better for ease of travel and

general organization. This means that you can organize your own trip, decide exactly when and where you want to go and who with, drive yourself, stop where you choose for as long as you need and all at relatively low cost. The roads, including those in the reserves, are well sign posted, so you cannot get lost. Try that in Samburu or the Serengeti! As in most of Africa, crime is a problem in urban areas, so avoid them and head straight into the countryside. Hire cars are of good quality, but are a bit expensive; 4WD is not normally needed. There is a comprehensive internal air service. Hotels are abundant and cheap but, better for wildlife photographers, are the “camps” in many of the parks, which provide well-equipped huts with wildlife on the doorstep. The National Park camps and some in KwaZulu-Natal provide meals. Accommodation is booked through the relevant park headquarters (see later) and should be done well in advance. Adjacent to the official reserves are many private ones in which the accommodation and food are splendid, but prices are high and sometimes astronomical. Exploration in them is limited to the camp vehicles and drivers, which is not ideal. You do not need expert game spotters – what you cannot see for yourself you are unlikely to be able to photograph.

For the Kruger NP and KwaZulu-Natal, the southern winter and spring, say June to September, are the best times to go. The animals are easy to see and they will need to visit the waterholes. The weather will be fine and cool by local standards, warm to hot by ours. By November, the countryside will be green, but the animals will be scattered and will have no need of pumped water. December, January and February are hot and wet and malaria is much more of a problem.

South Africa has hundreds of reserves, which are detailed in the reference books listed below. In the following sections, I shall describe only the ones which I have found the best for wildlife photography, grouped geographically: the Kruger National Park, the Cape reserves and those in KwaZulu-Natal.

GENERAL REFERENCES and ADDRESSES:-

‘Guide to Southern African Game and Nature Reserves’ by Chris and Tilde Stuart Publisher. Struik. *‘Wild Places of Southern Africa’* by Tim O’Hagan. Publisher. Southern Books. *Kruger NP booklets*: General Information, Accommodation etc. free from National Parks Board, PO Box 787, Pretoria 0001. Tel: (from the UK) 002712 343 1991 - Fax: 002712 343 0905. e-mail: reservations@parks-sa.co.za. Also at PO Box 4000, Roggebaai 8012 - Tel: 002721 422 2810 (this number is often available when Pretoria is engaged) - Fax: 002721 424 6211.

NB The National Parks website at www.parks-sa.co.za now provides an abundance of information about parks, including prices for the various kinds of accommodation at different camps. The reductions available for pensioners apply only to South African citizens. As a last resort, try the author:- peter@huttonvillage.freeseve.co.uk

THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

The Kruger is likely to be many people’s first choice. It lies about five hours drive from Johannesburg, but you can fly to Skukuza and pick up an Avis car at the airport, which is right at one of the park gates. The park is huge, nearly 400 km from north to south and 80 km wide. Zimbabwe lies to the north, Mozambique to the east, and most of the species which occur in these countries can also be found in the Kruger. The southern half of the

park - up to Letaba or so - is the more productive for photography, but there is plenty in the north as well. You need at least three weeks if you plan to visit the whole area. Except at a few picnic sites and places of historical interest, you may not get out of your car and are fair game for Lions if you do. Refugees from Mozambique sometimes try to enter South Africa at night and have given the Lions a taste for human flesh. Maneaters have to be shot, so please do not put them at risk.

There are over twenty camps and some of them are quite large, but the park is so big that usually the only congregations of vehicles outside them are where prides of Lions are lying close to a road. Many South African visitors spend most of the day in camp. The park holds around 150 species of mammals, but most of them are bats or small rodents. The bulk of your subjects for photography will be the same as they would be in East Africa – Zebra, White Rhino, Warthog, Hippo, Giraffe, Bushbuck, Greater Kudu, Buffalo, Waterbuck, Sable, Blue Wildebeest, Tsessebe (Topi), Klipspringer, Steenbok, Common Duiker and Impala. Lion are common in the central part; Leopard are difficult and Cheetah a bit scarce. Elephant are numerous, but need to be treated with great respect as they are more aggressive than the East African ones. Spotted Hyenas are plentiful and sometimes den in roadside culverts. At night they patrol the camp fences in the hope of food scraps. Striped Hyenas are scarce. Chacma Baboons are common and some visitors are stupid enough to feed them; as a result they may jump on any car which stops for them, with potential damage to vehicle and occupants. In the end, they have to be shot. Baboons and Vervet Monkeys visit some of the camps and it is vital to shut car windows and keep food safely locked away. Food storage outside the huts is not necessarily secure. Among the many other mammals, you may be lucky enough to find Eland, Nyala, Honey Badger, Wild Dog, Black Rhino, Roan and Sharpe's Grysbok. At the reception area in most camps there is a sightings book, which may yield useful information, though some of it should be taken with a pinch of salt.

There are over 500 bird species in the park, but bird photography is limited by the need to stay in the car. Even so, the Red-billed, Yellow-billed and Ground Hornbills, Lilac-breasted Roller, Crowned Guineafowl and several species of francolins, herons and birds of prey are on offer. At the picnic places and around the camps it is worth looking for small birds seeking titbits from the visitors; the glossy starlings can be a pest. Sunset Dam, near Lower Sabie is always worth a visit, because you can drive your car to the water's edge for waterbirds and mammals. The Kruger is sadly ill-equipped with hides. There are some shelters overlooking the big dams, but they are for viewing, not for photography. However, I recently found a brand new photography hide, excellently situated at Nwanetsi, a water-hole near Satara, so perhaps things are changing. Although you cannot drive yourself at night, some of the camps offer night drives in their own vehicles. They are fun and the rangers are informative, but you will not shoot any masterpieces.

Book by telling the National Parks Board the dates and camps and the sort of hut you prefer. They will offer you provisional reservations by post, which you must confirm with a deposit (credit cards are accepted). You will then receive confirmed reservations, which must be shown at the camp reception when you arrive. You will probably be given a bedding ticket, which you hand to the attendant – she will seek you out when she wants it. Credit cards are accepted for meals and for purchases at camp shops, so you do not need to carry much in rands. There is a bank at Skukuza, which will change travellers cheques. Skukuza also has a Post Office. Petrol and diesel are available at most camps; outside the park, garages do not accept credit cards. Fuel is cheap relative to the UK.

READING *'The Kruger National Park'* Wonders of an African Eden by Bob Scholes and Nigel Dennis. Publisher. New Holland ☘ [Part Two will appear in the next issue.]

MEMBERS' LETTERS

*The views expressed by correspondents are not necessarily those of the Editor
nor of The Nature Group Committee*

Dear John,

“Ecce Homo”

On the occasion of the RPS Nature Group Symposium and following Heather Angel's excellent presentation I put to her the question as to whether Anthropology was or was not a subject acceptable as Natural History. To my surprise her answer was that in her opinion it was not, in view of the fact that a more suitable category existed for it ..APPLIED!!! I told her that I could not agree with that.

I think that there is only one published and “official” list of acceptable subjects. This has been issued by the RPS and is to be seen repeated in the Nature Group 2000 Exhibition Entry Form.

The only mention I have seen where Anthropology is categorically stated as being inadmissible is in an article by Ian Platt. Where he obtained this information I have no idea.

Meteorology, Geology and Palaeontology being accepted, why not Anthropology? To deny it, immediately raises strange anomalies. Fossils being definitely acceptable where does one place a photograph of the fossil jawbone of *Homo erectus*. And what of *Homo neanderthalensis*, a species almost certainly coexisting with *Homo sapiens*, and thought to have hastened its extinction by interbreeding with the more recent species?

Homo erectus used to be known as *Pithecanthropus*, an erect hominid coming between *Australopithecus* and *Homo sapiens*. Presumably the change of name is enough to banish poor *Pithecanthropus* from being a bona fide subject for Natural History!! Ridiculous!!

No doubt much of the confusion arises from some definitions of Anthropology, which give it as the study of Man as a species, and *his way of life*. This has to include everything that man does, such as the making of tools and buildings etc., Architecture, Archaeology and others such would seem more appropriate for these, yet very surprisingly Archaeology IS included in the List!!

As for the making of tools another anomaly raises its ugly head. The use of tools by other species has been well documented. Who has not seen the photographs of Galapagos Finches using cactus spines to winkle out grubs from holes and the various ways by which Chimpanzees exploit selected stones, twigs and leaves, “FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE” can apply as equally to Birds' nests and Termite mounds, as to the Canary Wharf Tower!!

One never sees anthropological pictures in NH competitions of course, and fossils, rocks and bolts of lightning etc., only very rarely. Such images are made mainly to give information rather than win prizes, so it is not surprising.

A first class picture showing the facial, or other, characteristics of a pure Capoid Bushman would be most interesting.

Michael Shirley ARPS (Horam)

Dear John

I should like to comment from personal experience, on two of the paragraphs in your Editorial in the Spring 2000 issue of The Iris.

In the fourth paragraph you comment on the fall off in numbers of Field Trips being organised. Having been asked to do so, I set up a field trip in 1997 for spring flowers on the North Downs in conjunction with a much more knowledgeable botanist than myself. We chose a date to suit the subject and our own busy diaries and I submitted the form. I was then told that it could not take place as it was the same date as the Nature Group AGM would be taking place in the Midlands. As you can imagine my enthusiasm for organising field trips on behalf of the Group has been dissipated and I don't anticipate doing so again in the foreseeable future.

This leads on to your fifth paragraph, relating to why will some people travel considerable distances to a field trip whilst others will not attend those on their doorstep. Personally the governing factors are time and subject. Those of us who work, in particular, have little free time available and for many weekends are committed to other organisations in and out of photography. Thus the desire to participate in any event has to be weighed against many other responsibilities.

More importantly perhaps, and what governs the distance one is prepared to travel, is the species on offer. For instance, two or three years ago Rosemary and I went to a field trip at Queendown Warren, because it was somewhere we had wanted to visit for many years. Having learnt something of its layout regrettably we have not had an opportunity to make a further visit in our own time.

Last year we spent a weekend at Kenfig including Derek Rodway's Field Trip, once again because we wished to visit the Reserve and the weekend by chance was otherwise uncommitted. This was a most enjoyable weekend and the field trip was particularly useful, for which we thanked Derek.

Whatever the organisation, those who are willing do, whilst those who are not complain, a situation that is unlikely to change in the short term. In the meantime, the willing should continue to do/organise those events in which they are interested and let the others join in if they can be bothered or stay at home and miss out.

Derry Wilman ARPS (Epsom)

Dear John

"International Photographic Challenge 1999" - Photographic Society of Southern Africa

During last year I was invited to submit an entry from UK photographers, the competition was held during the PSSA Congress in October, subsequently I was delighted to be informed that Andy Callow was awarded the Best Insect Slide Medal for his slide '*Ammophila Wasp with Lava*'.

Andy tells me that it was taken on Kenfig Dunes during a Nature Group meeting, the wasp had already dug a hole for the lava which she had paralysed with a sting. She is now about to put the lava into the hole then lay an egg on it. The egg will hatch and then devour the lava and eventually become another *Ammophila Wasp*. A Pentax Spotmatic camera was used with 50 mm Tesar lens and 18 mm extension tube & Kodachrome.

David Osborn FRPS was awarded a Certificate of Merit for his slide:- '*Magellanic*

Oystercatcher on Nest'. David informed me that his photograph was taken during one of his visits to Carcass Island, one of the Falkland Islands. He used a Canon EOS 1N 28-80 mm lens @ 50 mm f 14, 1/250 sec Kodachrome 200.

Two other members of "my team", Tony Troman ARPS and Dr Jeanne Fisher, were also awarded Certificates. Congratulations to all.

A total of 14 groups/clubs entered with a total of 419 slides, entries were received from South Africa, USA, Canada, Zimbabwe and Israel; 15 Medals and 32 Certificates were awarded.

I have received a CD of the event (which I have not yet seen !!) so if any member of the Nature Group would like to borrow it please drop me a line, and include a book of 1st class stamps.

Kind regards, yours sincerely, Bert Crawshaw ARPS (1, The Linkway, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5SE.)

[Editor - This letter was received too late for our Spring issue, however this gave me time to contact Bert as I suspected members might like more information about the competition. Bert very kindly provided both the CD and several pages of correspondence etc., from which I reproduce the following main points:-

The competition is by invitation only and contains two sections; Natural History & Open. Each team must submit 15 slides for each category with a maximum of 3 slides per author per section. 'It is intended as a friendly competition to encourage communication between photographers from around the world and to showcase different styles from different countries.'

Barrie Wilkins Hon FRPS (the competition organiser, who is to be congratulated for all the work he put into the event and production of the CD) has indicated that they will be hosting the challenge in 2001. I will be writing to him offering space in a future issue of The Iris should he wish to extend the invitation.

N. B. - Andy Callow's winning slide was taken on a Nature Group Field Day as were several of the selected slides in our Annual Exhibition. Photographs taken on Field Days have also done well in other exhibitions. The motto is ?]

Have Material For Publication -WHERE DO I SEND IT?

At our recent AGM it was suggested that it would be helpful to remind members as to whom and where material for publication should send.

Publication in The RPS Journal:- All material relating to the Nature Group must be sent via the appropriate Nature Group official. *Details of forthcoming Field Meetings* are automatically sent by our Programme Co-ordinator, Roy Place FRPS. Any other material for publication in The Journal should be sent to Dawn Osborn ARPS who does an excellent job of collating and presenting it. Unfortunately her reports are subject to the inevitable 'editorial red pen' and space constraints in the magazine.

Publication in The Iris:- Obviously to myself, The Editor of The Iris, (who also wields a red pen and who invariably has too much or too little space!).

FOR MATERIAL THAT YOU WISH TO APPEAR IN BOTH MAGAZINES -To avoid confusion Dawn and I would be most grateful if you could send a separate copy to each of us with a note that you have sent duplicate copies. This will avoid misunderstandings arising and prevent us wasting an awful lot of time cross checking.

Thank you, from Dawn and myself, for past material and in anticipation of more to come.

COSTA RICA 2000

BY

BARRIE TAYLOR FRPS

Costa Rica, which is somewhat roughly the size of Wales, has a bird list of over 200 species mainly because of its great diversity of habitats e.g. cloud forest in the Highlands to deciduous forests in the Lowlands and also the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines.

I visited some new sites this time with a view to organizing a trip next year to photograph the birds and wildlife, especially the Resplendent Quetzal, one of the most beautiful birds in the world.

My first stop was Rancho Naturalista situated at 3000 feet overlooking the Tuis river valley where I stayed for 5 days; most of which was spent in the gardens as plenty of birds came to feed on the bananas and cooked rice which were put out before breakfast each morning. Hummingbird feeders were situated on the balcony and also in the forest to attract some of the 'hummers'. There are also forest trails here but photography is extremely difficult in these areas. Some of the first birds to appear are the Collared Aracaris closely followed by the Montezumas' Oropendolas; Brown Jays; Scarlet-rumped, Blue-grey and Summer Tanagers; Grey-headed Chachalacas; Hoffmann's Woodpecker; Groove-billed Ani; Black headed & Buff-throated Saltators. Although bird activity is at its peak in the early morning birds come into the gardens throughout the day.

The 'hummers' in the forest were very approachable and photographed with 100-300 mm lens with 2 extension tubes using fill-in flash. Species photographed included Violet crowned Woodnymphs; White-necked Jacobin; Green Thorntail; Rufous tailed, Green Hermit and Snowcap. A trip was made to Tapanti National Park which had spectacular scenery but few birds were photographable. I managed some shots of a Black Guan and distant shots of American Dipper.

I then travelled into the Pacific Lowlands and stayed at Tarcol Lodge on the river estuary which provided good opportunities for waders e.g. Spotted Sandpiper, Willet, Whimbrel etc., The adjacent woodland gave good opportunities for Black-headed Trogon, Laughing Falcon, Mangrove Black Hawk, Bare-throated Tiger Heron and the exotic Turquoise browed Motmot. Roosting in a tree by a school swimming pool were a pair of Pacific Screech Owls.

Visits were made to the Carara Biological Reserve where there are two trails; the River Trail gives the best opportunity for bird photography. Species photographed included Anhinga, Boat-billed Heron, American Pygmy Kingfisher. Lineated Woodpecker and Rufous-tailed Jacamars at the nest. The main trail in Carara is through forest but I did manage to take pictures of some good birds e.g. Streak-chested Antpitta, Baird's Trogon and Red-capped and Blue-crowned Manakins bathing in a stream.

On my way to Palo Verde National Park we were lucky to find a roosting site of Black & White Owls which were duly photographed. The accommodation in the Park is very basic but the nearest hotel is 1½ hours away which is not convenient when you need to be in the reserve at 6 am.

The marshes at the mouth of the Rio Tempisque are the main attraction where hundreds of Black-bellied Whistling Duck were feeding and flying around. Limpkin and Least Grebes were fairly common and it was good to see 'wild' Muscovy Duck. The adjacent woodland was productive with Speckled Owl & young; Pale-billed Woodpecker, Red-billed Pigeon, White-faced Capuchin Monkey, Basilisk Lizards and Iguanas which were also seen at Carara. I suppose the highlight for me was to see Jabiru at the nest with three young which were about to fledge. It was a good site but needed a 500 mm lens with 2 x converter to



Photo by Barrie Taylor FRPS
'Resplendant Quetzal' - Male - front/side view.



Photo by Barrie Taylor FRPS
'Resplendant Quetzal' - Male - side/rear view.



Photo by Barrie Taylor FRPS - 'Black & White Owls'.

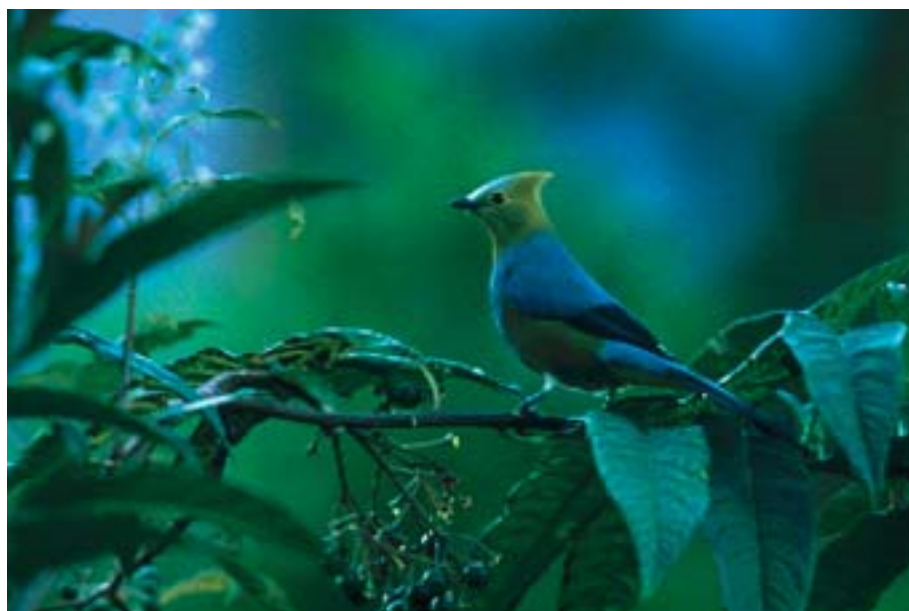


Photo by Barrie Taylor FRPS - 'Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher'.

fill the frame. On my way back I stopped to photograph Common Pauriques which kept landing on the track in front of the vehicle.

My final destination was the Cerro de la Muerte Highlands at 11,000 feet which was 1½ hours drive from San Jose on the Pan American Highway. The lodge I was staying at was situated in a valley at 8,000 feet with forested hillsides and a river adjacent to this providing a range of habitats.

One is first attracted to the hummingbird feeders on a balcony by the restaurant where a variety of 'hummers' can be photographed; Scintillant, Volcano, Green violet-ear, White throated Mountain Gem and Magnificent. Birds around the lodge were very approachable e.g. Black-capped, Tufted and Long-tailed Silky Flycatchers; Dark Pewee; Collared Redstart; Blue & White Swallows and Slaty Flowerpiercer.

It was the forest where my main interest lay and I was rewarded with shots of male & female Resplendent Quetzals. You have to be careful not to cut the streamers off the male Quetzal which can measure 25 inches giving an overall length of 39 inches. At this time they are excavating their nest holes (similar to woodpeckers) so I decided to organize the trips slightly later next year so that they will be nesting and hopefully easier to find!

It was a truly memorable trip and if anyone is interested in joining me next year feel free to contact me on 0121-308-8726 ☘

REPORTS OF MEETINGS & EVENTS

The Nature Group Past, Present and Future - 25th March

Report by Sue Goody LRPS.

Fine weather greeted the arrival of over one hundred nature photographers at Tonbridge, Kent, attending the annual South-east Nature Group meeting, organized by Kath Bull ARPS and supported by Kodak.

As usual, a full supporting cast of local camera club members ensured the day ran smoothly, with essential refreshment breaks served cheerfully and efficiently. One notable absentee was Dr. Bill Burns-Begg ARPS who, as Kath's right hand man, had been intensively involved with the organization of the event; that is, until a day or so before he was whisked off to hospital for a long awaited operation. The good news is that he is recovering well and will soon resume active service to the Nature Group!

The star of the day was Professor Heather Angel Hon FRPS who recounted many pleasant memories of the early days of the Nature Group. The illustrated talk was both interesting and enlightening, not only for its happy memories, but also for its technical content which was delivered in a very easy to understand fashion. The picture quality and diverse locations roused enthusiasm amongst the audience, many of whom had visited the somewhat isolated parts of the globe that Heather seems to visit with such regularity. Personally, the shots of the pandas are always of great interest, especially as my trip to China to see pandas in their natural habitat was cancelled, courtesy of a misguided NATO missile landing on the Chinese embassy during the Balkans conflict last year. Many past and present members of the Nature Group were recognized in the photographs and familiar discussions ensued as to "where are they now?".

continued on page 31

The above heading is as it appeared on the actual issue of that newsletter, which was the first to appear in the A5 format. Totalling twelve pages the front page listed the current committee and recorded that our first AGM had been held on 17th March at 14, South Audley Street, London with 22 members present and Heather Angel FRPS in the Chair. Full minutes were not recorded but it did say that the Rules of the Nature Group were presented for modification and approval. A copy of these together with a copy of the Nature Photographers' Code of Practice was enclosed with the Newsletter.

Details of forthcoming meetings which included three field weekends and six all day field meetings plus a lecture and two A/V presentations by Pat Whitehouse *[a lovely lady who made her own 3D camera including grinding the lenses I believe]*.

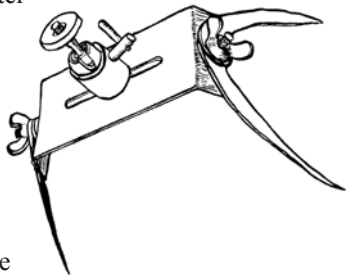
There was a report of the visit to Jarrold Printing Works but unfortunately no explanation as to the phrase 'and alcohol or over excitement' which was included in the earlier notice of this trip *[see page 22 of our last issue for this clipping]*.

An excellent three page article 'What is a Nature Photograph' by Heather Angel FRPS is worthy of reproducing again as most of it is equally relevant today. There is insufficient room in this issue but I hope to so in the next issue.

On the back page was the following short article and diagram. Despite the advance in tripod design this gadget could still have its uses today.

THE GROUND CRAB by Jack Beeson

Although a ground spike is a useful camera support for low level photography, it cannot be used on hard ground. Hence, the birth of the ground crab. It is made from steel, 1/16th thick, to give the necessary rigidity. The top plate is cut to 6in long by 2in wide, with a one inch strip bent down at each end to about 25° from the vertical, and drilled in the centre for 5/16th diameter screws. To facilitate focusing, a central slot is made in the top of the plate by drilling a series of 1/4in diameter holes and filing the edge to make a slot 2 1/2in long. The legs need to be a minimum of 5in long, 9/16in wide at the pivot, and tapering down to the feet. By curving the legs slightly, they act as effective clamps. Be sure to file off all the rough edges. The legs are held with 5/16 diameter screws and wing nuts. A fibre washer fitted between each leg gives sufficient friction to make adjustment very easy. The ball and socket joint is held in position with a camera bracket screw. The ground crab is a versatile low level camera support for worm's eye views! ❀



Dr. Anne Owen FRPS presented her wonderfully colourful “F” panel of vivid underwater creatures, which left the audience marvelling not only at the superb photography, but also at the diving skills required for such work.

Chairman Martin Withers FRPS presented the afternoon lecture. His lively and humorous delivery was well received by an untypically alert after lunch audience, but no one could afford to miss any of the superb photographs taken on his travels of North America. Some of the images evoked personal memories of my recent visit to Texas and I can only aspire to match his photographic skills in the future.

Kodak’s representatives were present and were happy to provide technical data on their range of new products. Their presentation, although obviously biased towards Kodak film, was well received and many questions were expertly answered. Perhaps their greatest contribution, however, was to provide the buffet lunch - ravenously devoured (appropriately!) by Nature Group members.

Generally, a great day was had by all and I can only urge Kath and Bill to repeat the exercise next year - a sentiment echoed by the very grateful members present ✿

Dorset Field Weekend - 5th - 8th MAY 2000

*Report by Lawrence Bland ARPS BPE 1**

I won’t attempt to emulate the extensive report by Nicholas Reuss of last year’s trip but having now experienced the trip his report was something of a rehearsal for the 23 of us who gathered (some of us for the first time) for this year’s event. We met at the Burton Cliff Hotel, Burton Bradstock on the evening of Friday 5th May ably watched over and organised by the course organiser, the one and only Kath Bull ARPS.

We were promised evening lectures and two full days in the field which was duly delivered in spades. What was not promised was the beautiful hazy sunshine and lack of wind (ideal for shooting flowers and stuff) which held out for the duration. GLORIOUS !

Colin Varndell, our guide and leader for the weekend, is a naturalist and photographer who places his own interpretation on the many and varied subjects and locations chosen by him for our entertainment.

Colin’s evening lectures were a delight. The locations he had arranged for us were truly inspiring, especially the meadows at Hardington Moor where we were able to photograph any of the 11,000 Early Purple and Green-winged orchids and many more Cowslips and other meadow plants.

Bluebell woods were also the order of the day; Colin had arranged private locations for us (Hooke Park) and ancient woodlands appeared to be something of a speciality of his as his slides demonstrated. We also visited a local farm where we attempted to photograph Wild Garlic in woodland surroundings.

Having now tried to reproduce the pictorial effects using Colin’s techniques I have to say in all honesty, “Dream on Lawrence” it’s going to take a little longer than one weekend!

Colin is a very focussed naturalist who specialises in his beloved Dorset, he travels further afield as his work dictates but rarely to foreign shores. As a result we were shown locations that were only available to someone with a long and intimate knowledge of the locality and it’s people. His only regret was that the planned landscape sessions around Egerton

Hill were out of the question due to the hazy conditions. There's always next year; thank you Colin.

We extend our grateful thanks to Kath who not only organised this event with great dedication but also orchestrated and fussed over us continually ☘

Field Meeting - Cressbrook Dale - 10th May 2000-

Leader & Report - Robert Hawkesworth ARPS.

Fog in May! A number of us had driven through quite testing conditions to arrive at the lay-by situated at the head of Cressbrook Dale where, if no longer foggy, it was certainly "atmospheric". The response had been tremendous and the number of cars was soon to out-strip the lay-by, fortunately Chris Mattison FRPS had offered to help me and he took twelve cars and occupants off to the village of Litton to walk in through Tansley Dale. The other twelve cars and occupants I took down Cressbrook Dale. There were thousands of Early Purple Orchids (*Orchis mascula*) and members were soon in the "tripods down bottoms up" position, wide-angle, telephoto, close-up, interpretative, double exposure, I should think every possible approach was tried, the main problems being the flat lighting and teasing wind.

The Tansley Dale party found sweeps of Cowslips (*Primula veris*) as well as the orchids and few of them got as far as Cressbrook Dale. The more energetic however did walk further and found Globe flower (*Trollius europeus*), though not quite in full flower, and Water Avens (*Geum rivale*). Eventually we all met up in the car park in Tideswell Dale for lunch.

Afterwards the party again split up, some walking down Tideswell Dale for various early spring flowers including some lovely stands of Forgetmenot (*Myosotis arvensis*) and Snow-in-summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*) decorating the limestone faces. The other group returning to Tansley Dale for the Cowslips and the hope of better light and less wind, but it was still testing. By about three o'clock to three-thirty most people had begun to feel ready for a rest and made their way back to their cars.

38 people had enjoyed a true Nature Group day out full of friendliness, helpfulness and banter. It would be quite remiss of me not to thank especially Chris Mattison without whose help the day would not have been so successful. Imagine me trying to organise over thirty unruly Nature Group members! Many thanks to all for your support ☘

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For application form send a S.A.E to Barbara Lawton FRPS at her address on page 3. Return the form to her with a cheque for the appropriate amount payable to 'The RPS Nature Group'. Please enclose a second S.A.E. for map and confirmation of booking.

See page 13 of the previous issue for full details.

THE IRIS 'FIVE SLIDE' COMPETITION

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Advance notice of this competition was given in Issue No. 76 Spring 2000 and the rules and entry form are enclosed with this issue.

Members are reminded that this is an informal competition the object of which is simply to try to stimulate photography of a wider range of subject matter. Alongside which is the practical point that administration should be kept to a minimum so that your Editor can find volunteers to run the competition each year.

There are no report cards or catalogues, just prizes.

Cath Mullen FRPS, Peter Mullen ARPS and David Haig FRPS
have kindly agreed to organise the competition this year and act as selectors.

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Photo by Peter Evans ARPS - 'Angry Hippo' see article page 21.

