


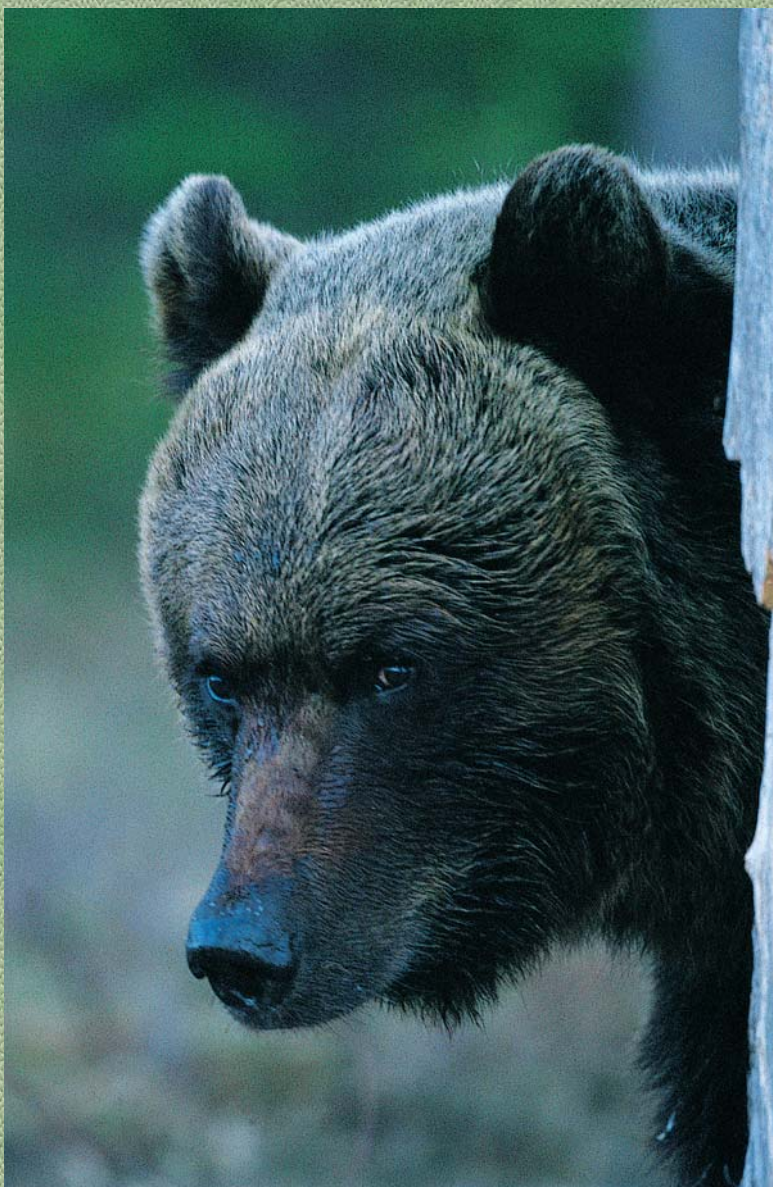


THE IRIS

MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 85
Spring 2003

RPS 
THE ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY





THE 27th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SPRING MEETING

SATURDAY 26th APRIL 2003

The Annual General Meeting 2003 of the RPS Nature Group will be held at Smethwick Photographic Society, The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands.

TIMETABLE

10.30 am.	Assemble for 11 .00 am start.
11.00 am.	A slide presentation by David Osborn FRPS.
12.30 pm.	Break for lunch. No formal arrangements have been made, there are local hostelryes. The clubhouse has a dining area if you wish to bring a packed lunch.
2.00 pm	Annual General Meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
 2. Minutes of the 26th AGM 2002 printed in issue 83 of "The Iris".
 3. Matters arising.
 4. Chairman's report.
 5. Treasurer's report.
 6. Secretary's Report.
 7. Officers and Committee for 2003/2005.*
 8. Any Other Business.
 9. Date and venue for the 28th AGM 2004.
- 2.45pm. Opening of the 2003 Exhibition, followed by a presentation of the accepted slides. The accepted prints will also be on display.

*** NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2003/2005**

The following members have been duly nominated, proposed and seconded.

Chairman	Robert Hawkesworth FRPS
Vice-Chairman	No nomination
Secretary	Margaret Johnson LRPS
Treasurer	Trevor Hyman LRPS
Representative on the RPS Advisory Board	John Myring ARPS

Committee Members:

Nick Jarvis ARPS, David Osborn FRPS, Geoff Trinder ARPS, Chris Wood LRPS.

As you are all aware we were to have held a postal ballot, however since the number of nominations equals the number of vacancies then according to Article 6.5 of our Regulations no election is necessary.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS Hon. Secretary

NATURE GROUP COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

Chairman:- *Ms. Dawn Osborn ARPS*
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Vice Chairman:- *To be advised*

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The Royal Photographic Society's President;
Director General; Hon. Treasurer and Finance
Officer are also ex-officio members, as is the
Chairman of the A & F Nature Distinctions Panel.

For Archival Exhibition Slides contact:-

Mrs. Kath Bull ARPS - "Segsbury", St. John's Road,
Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1RT. Tel:- 01892 663751

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CONTRIBUTIONS on all aspects of
Nature Photography and Natural
History are welcomed, including
reviews on equipment and relevant
books. Copy can be accepted on flop-
py disc (RTF or Microsoft 'Word')
accompanied by printed copy. As an
E-mail (**please not as an attach-
ment**) or simply typed, double
spaced, on one side of the paper only.
Please send submissions to The
Editor.

*No payment is made for material used
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age that may occur to photographic
material submitted.*

*The views expressed are solely those
of the contributor.*

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member not receiving their copy
should contact that 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.

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Front cover photo: 'Brown Bear' by Helen Williams ARPS. Canon EOS 3 with 500mm f4 IS lens on Sensia 400.

Inside front cover photo: 'Giant Humphead (Napoleon) Wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*) 1.5 metres long' by F. Jack Jackson FRPS. Nikon F90x with 14mm Sigma rectilinear lens. 1/125 at F5.6.

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EDITORIAL

Space is again at a premium in this issue, so no pre-amble. Apart from saying that I have no reserve articles and contributions are definitely needed for the summer issue.

‘Should the Nature Group have a Panel of experts?’ (see page 11 of the last issue). Well, the response has been 100% in favour. Having said that only three members (about 0.5% of the membership) replied. It seems that 99.5% are not bothered, or do not think it a good idea.

‘Nominations’. Continuing the theme of non-response there was a marked lack of nominations for the forthcoming election. In the event there were just sufficient to fill committee members’ vacancies so a postal ballot is not required.

‘Photographs in the previous issue’. Readers may remember that I asked if they thought there was any discernible difference between the pictures, some of which came from transparencies, some from traditional darkroom prints, the remainder from inkjet printers. Again little response, though this was more understandable, many of you obviously realising that a poor original, irrespective of media type, will only produce a poor copy. In this instance I, and the photographers involved, were very happy with the results. In the previous issue pictures on pages 2, 18, 19, and 35 were all from 35 mm transparencies. Those on pages 9, 10 and 20 were from darkroom colour prints from colour negatives. Those on front and rear covers, pages 17, 27 and 28 from prints produced on an inkjet printer.

Following this experiment I would be very happy to use high quality darkroom or inkjet prints as source material in future issues with two provisos. Firstly, they must be on glossy paper; secondly they must be no smaller than 12 x 8 inches. As regards digital files however I still feel that, in our circumstances, they will not provide the quality we require. This is for a variety of reasons; unfortunately there is insufficient space in this issue to detail them. Should anyone be interested in my reasoning please contact me, I would be happy to respond.

‘The Iris Five Slide Competition’. *First read Christopher Mylne in ‘Members’ Letters’.* Chris’s observations are interesting. Regarding showing a range of entrants’ pictures, well, this is down to space and cost. Colour space is always at a premium and often insufficient to include all that I would wish. Increased colour space would increase our costs and, as you will see from our accounts in the Summer Issue, we already spend some 80% of subscriptions on the magazine. At our recent Chairman’s Day there was no indication from some 60 members that they were willing for subscriptions to be increased to enlarge the magazine.

I am an admirer of the BBC Wildlife competition (which does have a category ‘Animal Portraits’). I do feel, however, that some are too pictorial / creative to be considered as ‘Nature’ pictures. We are, after all, a specialist group within the RPS so perhaps it is understandable that we follow their definition of a nature picture, which was produced with the help of this groups’ founder members. Having said that, all the subjects Chris mentions are of interest and components of the natural world and personally I would be happy to consider a competition along the lines of the BBC Wildlife competition, albeit in a very minor form. This is with the proviso that administration must be kept to a minimum! As regards pictures appearing in *The Iris* in general I am certainly not averse to considering photographs with a more pictorial approach. I can only, however, make a selection from what is sent to me. *What are members views on Chris’s suggestion for a BBC Wildlife type competition? Please provide some feedback so your committee can ascertain the level of support* ❀

FROM THE CHAIR

DAWN OSBORN ARPS

weekend! Early I know, and I am sure that we have a lot more cold/bad weather to come before Spring really does arrive.

I hope that many more of you volunteered to lead Field Meetings this year, if you were thinking about it but didn't get around to filling in the form, contact Nick Jarvis right away. Details of Spring and Summer events can still be published in the RPS Photographic Journal, or in the Summer Iris for events later than mid July.

I hope that you all sent in an entry for the group's Exhibition. If you didn't, it is much too late now, but do come along to the combined Annual Spring Meeting, AGM and Exhibition Opening on the 26th of April at Smethwick Photographic Society's club rooms (easy to find – just off the M5, Jct 2). You will see some excellent nature photography in both the morning and afternoon sessions. Another enjoyable day; do come along.

Now, news of another exhibition. Nature Group member Diana Elena Antonescu has an exhibition of her work opening in London on Tuesday 1st April, 6.30 to 8.30 p.m.. The venue is the Instituto Cervantes London, 102 Eaton Square, London SW1W 9AN. The exhibition, entitled *'The Web of Life - Visions of Flora and Fauna in Spain'* is part of a series of exhibitions on Natural World Heritage in Spain. Diana is to be congratulated for her courage and resourcefulness and I am sure you will all want to join with me in wishing her good luck. If you are in London in April, do go along and have a look.. If you require more details, Diana can be contacted at: imagesdiana.yahoo.co.uk

As this is my last *'From the Chair'* I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who help and support has enhanced my enjoyment of being in the 'chair'. The success of my 'Chairman's Day' last November was due to the support of the members rather than the time and effort which I put into its organisation. Members travelled from the four corners of the country and judging by the letters of appreciation received since the event, thoroughly enjoyed the day. My sincere apologies to those of you to whom I had to say 'sorry, the event is fully booked'. The good news is that there is still time for you to book for the Nature Group Convention to be held at Brooksby in August 2003 (details announced in the Winter 2002 Iris). The Convention held in August 2001 was a great success so, if you have not yet booked for this event and would like to attend, please contact Martin Withers without delay.

Finally, I wish you all an excellent year of photographic subjects and the time to maximise the opportunities on offer ☘

PS A jacket was left behind on Chairman's Day, please contact Dawn to arrange return.

THE PROBLEM WITH LATE BOOKINGS.

It is quite understood that on occasions circumstances necessitate delaying booking for an event. There does seem, however, to be a trend to for more people to delay booking; which can create problems. If the majority do so it may cause the organisers to cancel the event (believing that it will only be poorly attended) in order to avoid a financial loss. In the case of Dawn's *'Chairman's Day'* it might have been possible to arrange an alternative venue with a larger capacity had everyone booked early; thus avoiding disappointment.

‘BROWN BEAR PHOTOGRAPHY IN FINLAND - - AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE’

BY HELEN WILLIAMS ARPS.

I remember being fascinated by an article in the winter 1997 Edition of The Iris (no 69) by Lassi Rautiainen about how he has established feeding stations and hides to photograph Brown Bears near Kuhmo in Finland. If any of you have access to this copy, it is certainly well worth a read as it is both interesting and funny, as is Lassi himself! At the end of the article, he asks who will be the first Englishman in his hides, well; I was one of the first English Women!

In May 2001, I went on a Wildshots Trip (organised by Pete Cairns) to Finland. We spent four nights with Lassi using his hides to photograph not only the Brown Bears but also Wolverine, Cuckoo and Great Spotted Woodpecker. I have since been back independently in May/June 2002. A trip to photograph bears isn't to be thought of as a holiday but more an expedition, which can play havoc with your body clock, involving, as it does, spending all night in hides.

The bears emerge from hibernation in late April and are most active at the feeding stations during May and June when they need to feed up on meat following their weight loss during the winter. Lassi feeds them up until the end of July so they have dispersed into the forests again by the time the hunting season begins in September. He feeds them carcasses of various animals including Elk, Reindeer and pigs.

My 2001 trip was the most successful for bears with hides set up in the middle of a bog; most nights we had about 8 bears visiting to feed. We also saw and photographed a Wolverine which was quite an achievement as there are only 100 in the whole of Finland. In 2002, Lassi had positioned the hides in different locations; one hide was in a forest setting and the other next to a small lake. This latter site looked superb with mist rising from the water during the night but unfortunately, when a mother and cub visited, the mist was so thick it was difficult to get decent shots!

The hides are very comfortable wooden constructions (plus he also uses a converted caravan) and are transported to the sites during the winter using snow mobiles. The bears are active mostly at night so the normal procedure is to get into the hides during early evening and stay until about 9 am. The bears can appear at any time but the main hours of activity seem to be between about 11 p.m. and 4 am. Summer in Finland means very little true darkness so there isn't actually a lot of time when you cannot be taking pictures. The next morning, it's normally back to the log cabin accommodation for a big breakfast, shower and sleep!

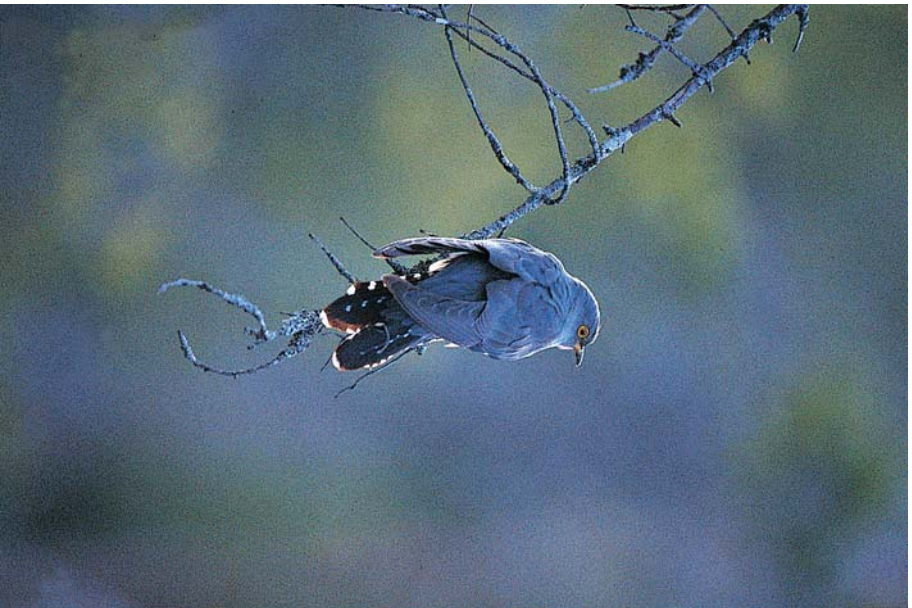
Lassi has the hides very well set up having shelves with bolts through to screw your tripod head onto, the lenses are then pushed through canvas sleeves. We normally have the hide looking like a Canon showroom with a variety of lenses pointing at different angles to make sure we can cover anywhere the bears may appear. The use of flash is not permitted so the trick is to use fast film, fast lenses and hope! Our 2001 trip was my first real experience of uprating fast film, I mostly used 400 ASA Fuji Sensia and did uprate some to 800 and even 1600 ASA with acceptable results, although when the bears came early I did manage some shots with 200 ASA or 400 ASA film, if all depends on them! The lenses I used varied from a 70-200 mm f2.8 to a 500 mm f4 IS. A high focal length lens isn't essential as the bears do come quite close and are big animals, what is more important is to use a fast lens. I hardly used my favourite lens, the Canon 100-400 mm IS as it was too slow



‘Brown Bear’ by Helen Williams ARPS
Canon EOS 3 - Canon 70-200mm F2.8 lens at 200mm. Sensia 400.



‘Wolverine’ by Helen Williams ARPS
Canon EOS 3 - Canon 300mm IS F4 lens. Sensia 400.



'Cuckoo at Midnight' by Helen Williams ARPS
EOS 3 - Canon 300mm IS F4 lens. Sensia 400.



'Mother Bear & Cub' by Helen Williams ARPS
EOS 3 - Canon 500mm IS F4 lens. Sensia 200.

being f5.6 and didn't give me sufficient speed.

Lassi is a superb guide, with very good English and is also an excellent wildlife photographer. He, like most of Finland's Wildlife Photographers, now uses Digital and laughs at us when we run out of film at a crucial moment. Digital also enables him to get the shots when it's too dark for film, so it can be quite frustrating seeing what might have been!

Lassi would welcome visits from other nature photographers and I would thoroughly recommend it. It really is an experience of a lifetime, seeing my first Brown Bear ambling out of the woods is an image that will stay with me forever. Lassi can be contacted by e-mail at: lassi.Rautiainen@nettilinja.fi or contact me at Williams.helenk@virgin.net for more information ❀

REPORTS OF MEETINGS IN 2002

9TH OCTOBER 2002 - BEACON WOOD COUNTRY PARK

This dry, sunny day, after nearly three months of unusually dry weather attracted four members, two from as far away as Suffolk and Bedfordshire. Not unexpectedly the fungal flora was sparse but we were lucky enough to coincide with one of the park's rangers who was recceing for walks he was leading the following weekend. We accepted his offer to show us some Earth Stars, *Geastrum triplex* which were "off piste" deep in the only bit of ancient woodland on the site and which we certainly would not have found by ourselves. I did not take any pictures until after the party left but then found an oak stump covered with what I thought was a most unusual growth form: it has turned out to be a young stage of Dryad's Saddle, *Polyporus squamosus* Leader Eileen Taylor ARPS❀

CHAIRMAN'S DAY SATURDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2002.

This proved to be a really splendid mix of good company, excellent food and some first class presentations. Meeting for coffee at 10 am allowed old acquaintances to be renewed, and new ones forged; it also enabled faces to be put to those who had previously only been an e-mail address or telephone number. Members travelled from afar; one had travelled south from Keswick, a round trip of some 400 miles, whilst another came up from Surrey.

Martin Withers FRPS presentation '*The Weird & Wonderful Wildlife of Australia*' was a fascinating and entertaining lecture. Quality photography, showing a cross section of flora and fauna from varying areas of Australia, was accompanied by an informative commentary punctuated with Martin's dry humour.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS had the unenviable task of following Martin and chose a completely different approach. His '*One Man's Fancy*' showed elements of nature in varying lighting and weather conditions, many transparencies being strongly pictorial. All photographs had been taken purely to record, for his own pleasure, scenes he enjoyed.

Next was what the programme described simply as 'Lunch'. This proved to be an understatement and was in fact a most splendid buffet with cold meats, salmon, quiches and assorted salads. There was sufficient for second helpings but some who availed themselves then found they hadn't room for the various tempting puddings which appeared. The whole being accompanied by wine or soft drinks according to preference.

It was a contented, replete audience which filled a warm room for '*Manipulating Nature*' by Mike Lane FRPS. A lesser man would have blanched at the prospect of keeping such an audience awake, but Mike is made of sterner stuff. His superb slides held our attention

while he demonstrated how he persuaded his subject matter into positions with appropriate surroundings and backgrounds. Numerous helpful tips were freely given, including the benefit of low camera angles.

After a short break Colin Smith FRPS (Chairman of the Nature 'A' & 'F' Distinctions Panel) showed a variety of successful Associateship applications and two successful Fellowship applications. As most of these applicants were present they provided their own commentary on the pictures. It seemed that a few of the audience had failed with their applications and a lively debate ensued on the workings of distinction panels. In particular regarding the feedback given to failed applicants and the assessment of Fellowship applications in private, excluding both applicant and members [see below].

Dawn Osborn ARPS, our Chairman, next held the draw for photographic items kindly donated by various firms which resulted in all those attending returning home with an unexpected gift.

By now it was after the estimated finishing time 5.00 p.m. and your Editor had yet to make his presentation. Consequentially a three-quarter hour slot was reduced to some ten minutes, much, I suspect, to the relief of those who had a long return journey to make. In the morning I had been concerned to find technical difficulties would prevent me from using the on site computer and digital projector, now, however, it seemed quite providential!

The day closed with Robert Hawkesworth giving an extremely well deserved vote of thanks, heartily endorsed by all, to Dawn for a truly enjoyable day. ☘

Distinction applications. *Members should be aware that all Distinction Assessment Panels have to operate under rules (whether panel members agree with them or not) set down by the governing Distinctions Advisory Board. Should applicants have suggestions for improving the way in which Assessments are dealt with they should write to the Chairman of the Distinctions Advisory Board at the RPS.*

Purely as a personal comment I feel that, given the importance in which they are held both by the Society and its members, the Distinctions are completely under resourced. This is not the fault of the RPS staff nor panel members and, given the Society's past financial problems, may be understandable. Hopefully the Society will soon be in a financial position to fully review and properly resource its Distinctions.

MEMBERS' LETTERS

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

Dear John,

re The Nature Group Exhibition

Whilst I appreciate that transparency copies are made of the accepted prints and that these are available as a travelling exhibition I feel it is a great shame that Nature Group members, as well as the general public at large, have almost no opportunity of viewing and admiring the high quality original prints.

With a little initiative, and yes some "arm twisting", surely the Nature Group with a membership of over 700 can arrange suitable venues where the prints can be put on public display.

Since 1987 and each subsequent year the Colour Group have held their exhibition at Fairfield Halls, Croydon for the four weeks of January. Glass fronted frames are hired at a nominal charge from the London Salon and on hanging day a pre-organised team frame and hang the 80 prints.

One of our members makes slide copies of the accepted transparencies which are also on display in custom made cabinets; these copies and slide copies of the prints are then available for circulation to camera clubs.

Following Croydon all the prints are sent to 6 further venues within the UK then to Ireland where they are on display for the month of August before being returned to our Exhibition Secretary in early September.

In all the years that the Colour Group prints have been on public display to my recollection we had 3 very beautiful figure studies stolen from a London gallery and last year we also had 3 prints stolen from Croydon. In each case the photographers accepted their loss with good grace; all prints are suitably mat mounted 40 x 50 cm and it is seldom that any damage has occurred.

The total cost of mailing the three boxes of prints is in the region £25 - £35 per venue. Quite frequently we are not requested for reimbursement.

I hope my letter will generate a wish by our members to have their prints on public display.

Bert Crawshaw ARPS (Sutton, Surrey)

[Editor: Bert has also written direct to our Exhibition Secretary on this matter which I understand will be discussed at the committee meeting on the 8th February. For our exhibition, as my memory serves me, some years ago accepted prints were circulated with the travelling exhibition. Due to problems that arose this practice was discontinued.]

I apologise for pre-empting an official response but personally suspect that nowadays many of the venues taking the travelling exhibition do not have facilities for displaying prints longer than the evening of the meeting. Also, with the number of venues now involved, the schedule would be unworkable if the exhibition were retained to display prints over a period.]

Dear John,

The Winter 2002 issue of The Iris is better than ever with a commendable standard of colour illustrations and so deserves some constructive comments. I am sure many other readers will be, like me, still struggling with digital printing and fascinated by your information that the 19 pictures were scanned by the magazine's printers from three different sources, six of them being from digital ink-jet prints. I found no discernible difference, such as lack of sharpness, but my guess would be that the front cover plus Charles Brown's Cranes at Horboga pictures were the ones which been through a digital stage. But this is not because they are in any way not 'acceptable'. Now that you have raised the issue please give us the sources in the next magazine. Perhaps at this stage when many of us are in transition from a lifetime's experience in traditional photography to the new technology, it would be extremely valuable at least for a year or two to give your readers the data on the technology used for every picture published. You say that almost all previous illustrations have been scanned from transparencies. What happens if you submit pictures on CD which seems to be the preferred route to publishers now? Presumably there is then no need for them to re-scan the images at all? And when you submit transparencies, are

they still printing by means of colour separations, or does scanning them make the whole process thereafter digital?

The 'Five Slide' competition still seems to generate illustrations of high calibre, but you only publish 6 out of 85 slides submitted, 3,2 and 1 from 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. This is hardly likely to offset the downwards trend in submissions. I shall look forward to seeing more of the winning pictures but also, perhaps, a few also-rans, like me, who might hope to see how our efforts compare in print with the best. The competition is of course looking for two key virtues, versatility and consistency, but a few 'Highly commended' results could surely be found from those who don't make the grade in those respects. I suggest that the format be retained but different categories tried, more along the lines used by the Wildlife Photographer of the Year contest run by BBC Wildlife. Surely a Nature Group covers Woodland, Landscape, Wilderness, Weather, Seasons etc. not to mention Conservation or even Pollution? The present categories allow for none of these. Instead they tend to follow the traditional RPS definition of nature photography, looking solely for perfection in detailed studies of species. A quick glance at recent issues will show how restricted an interpretation of 'Nature' this leads to in comparison with more creative wildlife photography giving more credit for atmosphere, habitat, action, behaviour, etc. It is perhaps significant that the BBC Wildlife competition, which attracts an enormous response from nature photographers world-wide, has never had a category for straight portraits of species, which is the category that most Nature Group members seem to favour. Are we being too narrow in our expectations so that the competition has simply become a bit boring? I know from long experience of lecturing to slides, nothing puts an audience to sleep quicker than a succession of bird, plant or animal portraits, however perfect. We need to use our magazine to inspire, as well as to inform. Our magazine's informal competition might do better if it put more emphasis on encouraging members to shine in creative imagery rather than scientific perfection. In this way it would be in line with the annual exhibition but could still fulfil its aim of broadening the range of subjects members photograph.

Yours sincerely, Christopher K. Mylne FRPS (Linlithgow)

[Editor: I have replied, in detail, direct to Christopher regarding all of his letter. Re picture captions; the information printed depends on space and information provided. Some photographers send comprehensive details, others minimal. There is insufficient space in this issue to discuss what type of photographic media publishers prefer. If other members are interested, contact me and I will try to cover it in the next issue. The part regarding The Iris Five Slide Competition I have commented on in my Editorial.]

NATURE GROUP POSTAL PORTFOLIOS

Currently there are two postal portfolios running, Circle A and Circle B. The only difference is that Circle A was formed first. Both circles have a mix of photographic styles and experience. Joining one could be an ideal opportunity to take a leisurely look at the work of your peers in your own home.

Currently Circle A has vacancies. For further information contact the circle secretary.

Circle A:- John Berry ARPS - 3, Ennerdale Close, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 6NW. Tel: 01926-338630. e-mail john@berry63.fsnet.co.uk

‘VISITING THE FARNE ISLANDS’

BY JOHN BULPITT ARPS

The Farne islands are, in my experience, the best location in the UK to photograph seabirds. In the late Spring and early Summer hundreds of thousands of birds breed on these tiny islands located just off the coast of Northumbria. The most populous species are Puffins, Shags, Guillemots, Razorbills, Kittiwakes, Eider ducks, Arctic and Common Terns and a few pairs of Roseate Terns. In addition land birds such as Rock Pipits nest occasionally. The best time to visit is from mid June to mid July.

The islands are owned by The National Trust, who permit morning landings on Staple Island and afternoon landings on Inner Farne. The best way to visit is to book an all day boat trip from Seahouses with Billy Shiels (01665 720308) who will take no-deposit bookings in advance. Bed and Breakfast accommodation is plentiful but for those who wish to book in advance I have found the Ship Hotel (01665 720200) and The Beach House Hotel (01665 720337) both very comfortable.

Because of the weather, landings are by no means guaranteed (this is after all the place where Grace Darling made her name). I have the luxury of being flexible so I wait for a spell of calm weather to be predicted (www.bbc.co.uk/weather and look at the inshore waters forecast and the five day forecast for Berwick). However if you need to book a definite time in advance I would suggest planning to visit for at least a couple of days. In any event one needs a “plan B” because the weather is particularly unpredictable here: fortunately the Northumbrian coast offers wonderful photographic opportunities.

Staple Island is reached after about 30 minutes on the boat. I have found it very good for Puffins, particularly the classic portrait shot with sand eels, as a few birds always seem to be posing at the top of the landing stage. On-the-nest pictures of Shags, Guillemots, Kittiwakes and Razorbills also work well here. The biggest problem is isolating a bird with a reasonably clear background. Staple, like Inner Farne is very small and one could walk round comfortably in 10/15 minutes Staple has no facilities, not even a tree!

Billy Shiels normally allows two hours on the island before setting off at around 12.30 for Inner Farne, another 30 minute boat trip. Inner Farne is blessed with a church, a small museum and a toilet. It also houses a substantial and aggressive tern colony and one goes bareheaded at one’s peril! However this does make flight shots a little easier as the birds tend to hover before they attack. There are also nice portrait shots to be had on the lichen-covered stone walls of the church. On the other side of the island (a five minute stroll) Puffins tend to congregate in groups on the edge of the cliff and if the wind conditions are right flight shots are not impossible. After two hours or so the boat sets off for a 30 minute run back to Seahouses arriving at around 4.00 p.m.

As far as equipment is concerned it is certainly possible to use a tripod although personally I am now a convert to image-stabiliser lenses. A 300/400 mm lens will be long enough for all but the most intimate portraits and there are also good opportunities to use wide angle and macro lenses. At this time of year and with these birds I have found it almost impossible to get a natural catch light in the eye and so I now use fill flash. The light is normally very variable and so I rarely use film slower than ISO 200. And if you experience a totally dry day you will indeed be fortunate so take plenty of protection for both you and your gear!

Finally a word about exposure. If you are in the habit of relying on centre-weighted average metering then you may be disappointed with results from the Farnes. Black and/or white birds taken against the sea or the sky, or guano covered rocks, will probably fool even the most sophisticated camera. Therefore I would recommend spot metering from a mid-tone and setting the values manually. ❀

‘TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF AN UNDERWATER PHOTOJOURNALIST’

BY F. JACK JACKSON FRPS

Underwater photographers are predominantly subject to Murphy's (Sod's) Law - What can go wrong will go wrong; this is bad enough over a two-week trip but when you take 10—12 weeks away from a repair-facility things inevitably get worse. The only way around this is multiple redundancy (backup). I set off on most of my trips with three Nikon land cameras; two Nikonos underwater cameras; two aluminium underwater housings; three underwater flash guns, two Nikon land flash guns and an aluminium housing for taking these underwater. Add a laptop computer, various lenses, base plates, strobe arms, spare synchronization cables, chargers, batteries and battery packs to cover regular power failures, underwater torches, film and diving equipment and I have to arrange for 50kg of checked baggage plus over 20 kilograms of hand baggage with an airline.

Some underwater photojournalists only carry their camera equipment and hire diving equipment locally but being over 6ft tall it is difficult to find diving equipment that fits me, some of the remote areas that I dive do not have any diving equipment available anyway. I also like to dive alone and with two or three cameras and that means that both hands are always full so I prefer to dive with equipment that I trust and am familiar with to be sure that I can locate the correct control in an emergency.

Heavily frowned upon, in several countries the local laws prohibit solo diving - the tourist board or local operators then have to supply me with a buddy, they must get very bored but at least they are useful for carrying extra cameras. Muck diving - diving over a silty, sandy or coral rubble bottom, where concentrated observation locates small and often colourful or weird creatures camouflaged against their environment, is a different situation. I am grateful for a dive guide's local knowledge of where the tiny 0.5-1cm critters can be found.

In rare cases, whoever commissions the trip cannot organize a suitable arrangement with their usual airline to cover journalists' baggage. In these instances I may have to find a more accommodating airline or if the destination can be reached via the United States of America I will go that way with an American airline as these treat checked baggage by size rather than weight.

Carrying all of this equipment can also be a problem, on land I often have to engage porters and once had to resort to a wheelbarrow to travel several miles along a beach.

I always keep the film separate so that it is never left in the sun. I have had slow film ruined by airport X-rays and on a longer trip my film can pass through 30—50 X-ray machines so I ask for hand searches wherever possible. Lead-lined bags are no longer suitable protection, once when I passed through Sharm el Sheikh airport with film in lead-lined bags, the machine operator just turned up the scanning strength and we could clearly see every film on the monitor.

Where possible I get local agents and operators to work ahead of time on organization and

communication so that I can spend the maximum time on diving research and photography and the minimum time on administration and travel, that way I hit the ground running.

There have been many small islands where I had to take an air compressor and diving cylinders from the mainland as there were none on the islands and several cases where I had to arrange refills of diving cylinders en route or carry a compressor on small boats.

Local customs and politics are not always straightforward. I do not bother with photographic-carnets but do carry a list of equipment, with values for the customs. Quite often, although a country has a thriving diving industry, if you arrive through an inland capital city that is well-away from the coastal diving areas, they do not understand diving equipment and may ask for a large monetary-bond - not always returnable where customs officers are corrupt.

My diving off the Southern Philippines' islands around the Sulu Archipelago's Jolo Group started with a bang as we ran into a heavy thunderstorm and the boat was struck by lightning. However, as well as having a military escort we required several different interpreters, as we had to ask for separate permission to dive from the headman on each of the islands. Each island often had a distinct tribal-group and language and some had not seen foreigners since the Japanese occupation during World War II. We found a number of good dives and a recently salvaged Chinese junk with Ming Porcelain but all of my research came to nothing when Al Qaida, backed Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, took hostages from Malaysia's Pulau Sipadan, and held them at the main Island of Jolo two weeks later.

As with Indonesia's Pulau Sangalaki, to reach the Philippines' Club Noah Isabelle via a flight to Sandoval, I had to reduce my equipment to one housed camera, one Nikonos camera, a wetsuit and mask for the 10kg light-aircraft baggage limit. However Club Noah Isabelle's main clients are small Asians not large Caucasians; they had a problem finding fins to fit my feet. When it came to departure time, I was the only client to leave so I had a wet journey in a small open speedboat to the mainland, not a good way to travel when you have to catch a plane to Manila and an onward connecting flight. Fortunately I was the only passenger on the 19-seat aircraft to Manila so my being wet did not annoy anyone else.

On a repeat visit to Coron in the Philippines' Sulu Sea, I had a pleasant time diving on the W.W.II wrecks and spent one night bivouacking on a tiny island. Expecting weather problems, I took all my cameras ashore including two housed cameras that were already connected with waterproof synchronization cables to underwater flash guns. On the first dive the next day one of my flash guns began firing off continuously like a strobe light. I struggled with this unit for several days, double checking all connections and fitting the housing with twin-flash, it worked fine in air but every time I took it into the water it malfunctioned. Eventually I spotted the tiny impression of a rat's teeth on the synchronization cable, £70 of synchronization cable and several dives destroyed by a hungry rodent! Animals often take a liking to the odour of silicone rubber, on a Malaysian island I once found squirrels eating my guide's silicone rubber mask.

From Coron the weather prevented us from getting north to Club Paradise on Dimakya Island by banca (Small outrigger boat) so we returned to Coron and travelled overland to Maricaban Bay. Arriving there at nightfall we managed to get a local banca to Maricaban Bay Resort but it was closed with generator problems. Fortunately one of the directors of Club Paradise passed by with a larger banca heading for Dimakya Island so we jumped aboard. The crossing to Club Paradise was very rough, the coxswain only understood two speeds - full speed ahead and stop; he did not understand how a boat should be manoeuvred to comfortably ride high waves. The result of crashing and banging over the waves

was wet passengers and broken battery chargers. Dimakya Island does not have sheltered anchorage and for ecological reasons Club Paradise do not wish to build one. The weather had been rough for many days when we arrived. The banca hove to about 50m offshore while we transferred our equipment and ourselves from a bouncing banca to an even more bouncing small open speedboat in a 2-metre swell. Disorientated in the dark I was certain that we would end up with a capsized speedboat when crossing the surf but the staff at Club Paradise had obviously encountered this situation before. The coxswain gunned the outboard motor and drove the speedboat full-speed at the beach where, as we hit the beach, 30 or more figures appeared, physically lifted the boat and carried it up the beach, what a welcome! When we came to leave Dimakya Island we had a tricky time boarding the banca by its gangplank in the swell and the light-aircraft that we were booked on from Busuanga back to Manila had crashed with no survivors so we had to find another. When we did find another aircraft, the airline took advantage of the situation and charged the earth for my excess baggage.

While landing at the marine reserve of Apo Island in the Philippines, I stepped off the banca into the water in my usual bare feet and trod on some broken glass - resulting in a deep 5-inch cut across the sole of my foot. Nasty cuts never heal unless you spend several days out of the water but photojournalists have a job to do and limited time to do it in, I had to continue diving with the cut for the next two weeks. I once had a similar problem when diving off a fishing boat in the Sudanese Red Sea where I shredded my hand on the barnacles covering its bottom. This time I was able to continue diving by wearing a rubber glove filled with Dettol while in the water.

Between dives at Southern Leyte my dive guides wanted to take me ashore at San Bernardo on Limasawa Island to visit the village and shrine to the Philippines' first catholic mass. One dive guide had remarked that the new bamboo jetty that had recently been constructed for visiting politicians would not last long but never expected that we would be the ones to prove him right. The jetty collapsed as we crossed onto land and we had to swim back to the banca - in my case, holding a land camera, flash gun and film above my head to keep it dry.

I once travelled back from Leyte to Cebu on a modern 'SuperCat' catamaran ferry through a storm that made most of the passengers seasick and sank another ferry with great loss of life nearby. I immediately transferred to Manila, Singapore and London but rough weather followed me home. Singapore airlines held up the plane for me and London was suffering such a bad storm that the plane had trouble landing but it was the taxi driver who had the last laugh, being late on Christmas Eve he was legally able to charge me four times the normal rate!

Shark feeding is another matter. Situated next to the bait in a melee of more than 50 sharks during a frantic feeding-frenzy is interesting to say the least. Varying in size from two-metre Grey Reef Sharks to three-metre plus Silky and Silvertip sharks, there is always the chance that one of them will have a sore head on the day. In the Sudan one of my worst experiences was when a large battle-scarred male Silky shark attacked every one of us in turn, we decided that discretion was better than valour and got out of the water. Hammerhead Sharks do not respond to feeding but some do venture fairly close anyway. Throughout the 70s and 80s, large shoals of Scalloped Hammerheads were common at

Centre pages photo: 'Grey Reef / Black Sharks
(*Carycharihinus amblyrhynchos*) & Diver'

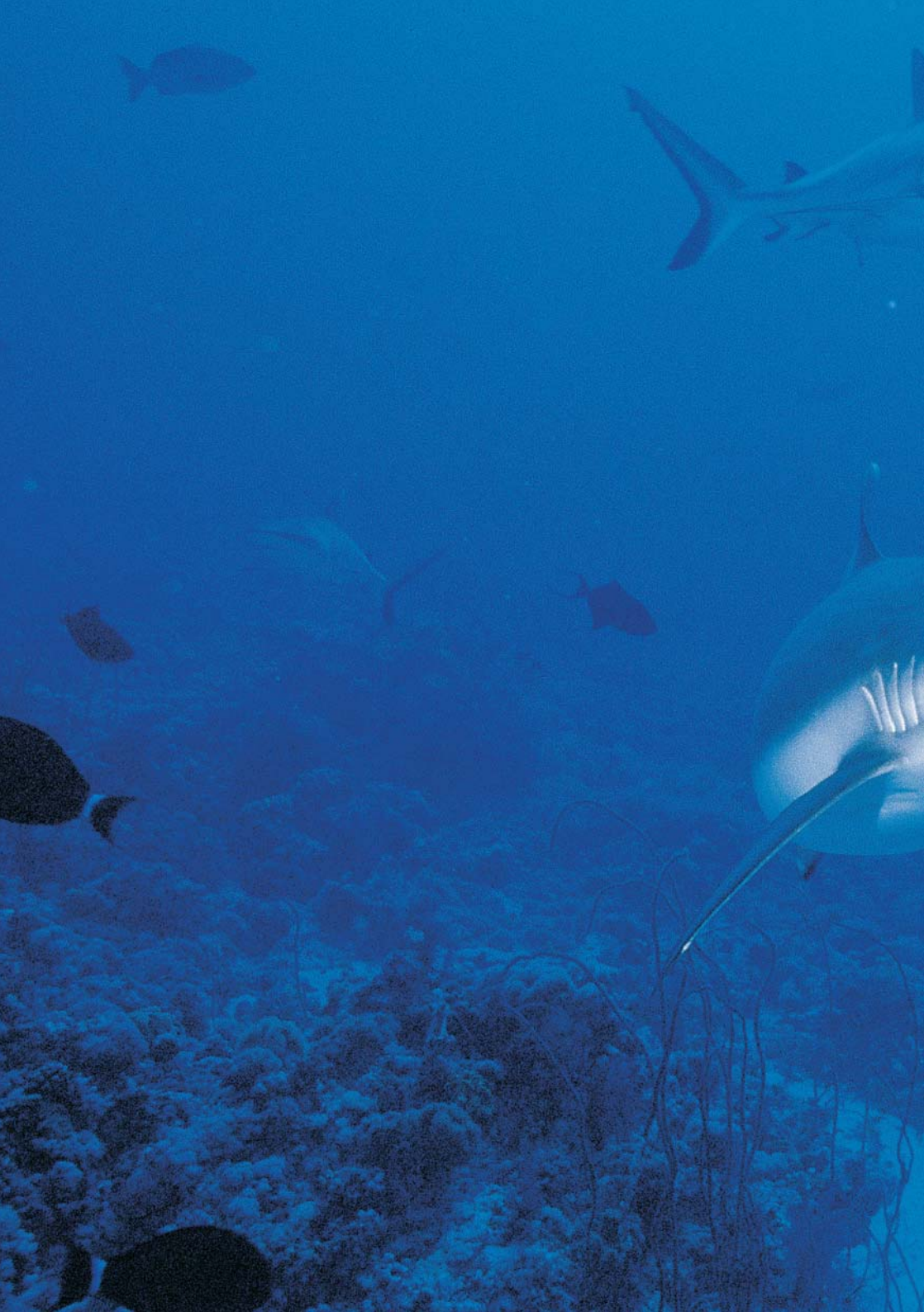
by F. Jack Jackson FRPS. Nikonis V with 15mm Nikonos lens 1/90 at F5.6.



‘Allen’s (Skunk) Clownfish (*Amphiprion sandaraacinos*) in anemone’
by F. Jack Jackson FRPS. Nikon F90x with 55mm Micro-Nikkor lens. 1/125 at F11.



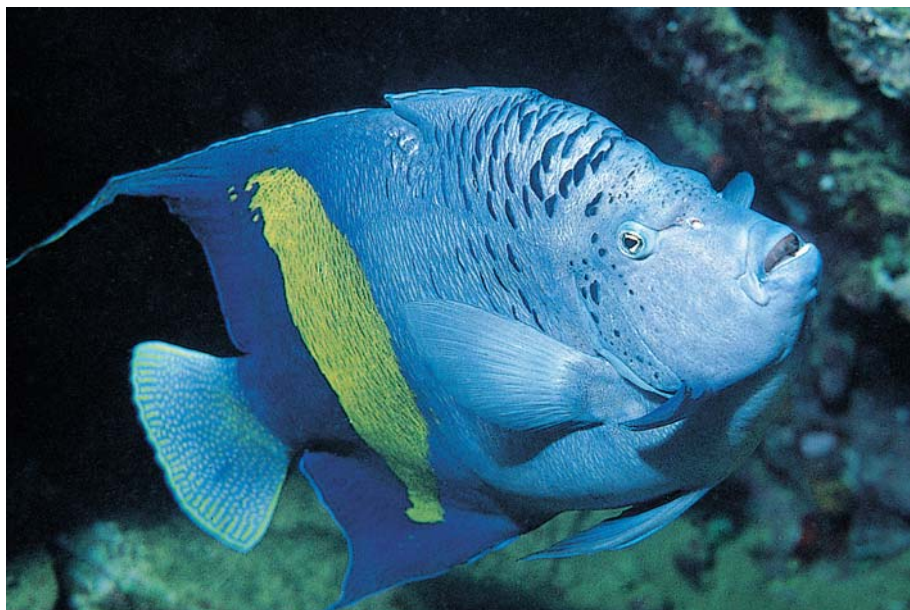
‘Nudibranch (*Notoddoris minor*) 9cm’ by F. Jack Jackson FRPS
Nikon F90x with 55mm Micro-Nikkor lens. 1/125 at F8.







‘Gorgonian Sea Fan (*Subergorgia hicksoni*) with Feather Star and Squirrelfish’
by F. Jack Jackson FRPS. Nikon F90x with 14mm Sigma rectilinear lens. 1/125 at F5.6.



‘Yellowbar Angel Fish (*Pomacanthus maculosus*) 50cm’ by F. Jack Jackson FRPS
Nikon F801s with 55mm Micro-Nikkor lens. 1/125 at F8.

Sanganeb Reef and I was pleased to find that squadrons of over 100 of them were back in July 2002. The depth is such that still pictures are only shadows but the video and digital people get great footage by turning up the contrast. Light-coloured fins are a problem, larger fish think that they are separate, edible-sized small fish, I have had such fins nibbled by both sharks and large groupers.

One of the greatest problems for divers is safe pickup by the chase boat when currents change. Large housed cameras act as a sea anchor, there is no way that you can swim against a strong current with them in tow. I have had a few occasions where I was drifting alone for over an hour with no boat in sight. Another problem is when you get a camera malfunction or housing leak, when many boats put divers into the water the crew then relaxes and turns up the music for the 40-minutes that they expect people to remain in the water. If you surface early because of a camera problem it can be difficult to get their attention even with a whistle operated by compressed air.

For many months, the aftermath of September 11, 2001 was horrendous. Airlines, hotels and resorts ceased trading, many airlines would not carry electrical goods and some airlines would not accept any hand baggage in the cabin, even film; I had to cancel several trips.

Diving photojournalism sounds glamorous but is not always so. You get free accommodation at the world's best resorts and hotels but more often than not you arrive late at night and depart early in the morning so you rarely have time to sample what is on offer other than the diving. Most hotels and all live-aboard boats have dim lighting that make it difficult to put intricate underwater camera equipment together and to write up the dives; often the bathroom is the only place that is reasonably well-lit so I spend an extraordinary amount of time in there. Non-standard electricity supplies, power failures and resorts or live-aboard boats with erratic generators, often produce power surges, which despite special voltage regulators, blow battery chargers and other electrical equipment.

Nowadays I use Fuji Provia 100F or Velvia and when underwater always use manual mode at 1/125 or 1/250 of a second with centre-weighted metering on housed Nikon F90X cameras and 1/90 of a second with the Nikonos V. Lenses used underwater are 14mm rectilinear, 55mm Micro and 105mm Micro on Nikons and 15mm and 28mm Nikonoses. I use single flash for wide-angle shots but twin-flash for macro. When using twin-flash, one flash is at least twice as powerful as the other to give modelling-light. At night I specifically use a weak lamp to avoid scaring the animals.

Bad weather or malfunctioning equipment is no excuse for not producing suitable photographs. I had seven weeks of rain in Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao but if I do not get results it will be that much harder to get further commissions. Despite all of these problems, I enjoy what I do and fully appreciate the help I get from local people and visiting any land attractions, tribal people and animals that are not too far away from the destinations. Most problems can be foreseen but not all. The moral is to cut out the water column, use fast shutter speeds to avoid blur but above all, be there ☸

FIELD MEETINGS IN 2003

IMPORTANT: Please read the following notes which are purely to help with the smooth running and enjoyment of these meetings for both those attending and the leaders.

1. Let the leader know you are coming. This will enable him to judge the size of the party and make any necessary adjustments to arrangements. Should you subsequently find you are not going to attend please advise him; this prevents the party being delayed while they wait for you!
2. *Always* take stout walking shoes/boots and wellingtons, plus a drink and packed lunch.
3. New members will understand that given the vagaries of our climate, and as meetings are planned several months in advance, anticipated subject matter cannot be guaranteed.

MARCH

Sunday 23rd March - Hampstead Heath Extension.

Meet: 10 a.m. Hampstead Heath YHA, 4 Wellgarth Road, Golders Green.

Cost: Nil. *Subjects:* Ancient Trees, Spring fungi.

Information:- Diana has been surveying this area as part of an Ancient Tree Survey.

Leader:- Diana-Elena Antonescu Tel: 0208 4551681. Email: imagesdiana@yahoo.co.uk

MAY

Sunday 11th May 2003 - 'Bellamy's Brow' Derbyshire.

Meet: 11.00 a.m. Study Centre at Ravenstor Youth Hostel, Derbyshire.

Cost: Nil. *Subjects:* Flora and fauna.

Information: Joint event with NW Region. Contact leader for further details.

Lunch: Bring packed lunch. Tea and coffee provided.

Leader: Jon Allanson Tel: 0161 428 5397 Email: jon@jcafoto.freemove.co.uk

Sunday 25th May 2003 - Willen Lake, Milton Keynes.

Meet: 9.30 a.m. - Morning at Nick's place, for details contact leader. Grid ref SP 879413
Afternoon venue to be decided on the day.

Cost: Nil. *Subjects:* Moths.

Information: Moths traps will be set overnight.

Lunch: Bring packed. Drinks provided.

Leader Nick Jarvis ARPS - Hive Cottage, 5 Milton Road, Willen, Milton Keynes, MK15 9AB.
Tel: 01908 607257 Email: nickjarvis@aol.com

JUNE

Sunday 8th June 2003 - Stopham, nr. Pulborough, Sussex.

Meet: 10 a.m. Pub car park by bridge over river. Grid ref Landranger 187: 030184

Cost: Nil. *Subjects:* Dragonflies and damselflies.

Information: After lunch we will share transport to second site at Pallingham Quay Farm.

Lunch: Pub or bring packed.

Leader: Ian Vaughan LRPS Tel: 01444 484216

Saturday 14th June 2003 - Kenfig National Nature Reserve, Mid-Glamorgan.

Meet: 10.30 a.m. Car park. Grid ref: Map 170. 801804

Cost: Nil. *Subjects:* Flora including a number of orchids. Also dragonflies and butterflies.

Information: Strong waterproof footwear essential.

Leaders Arthur G Butler ARPS and John Hankin LRPS Tel: 01344 411126

Sunday 15th June 2003 - Oxwich Bay, Gower.

Meet: 10 a.m. Main car park Grid ref 502 864

Cost: £2.50 parking. *Subjects:* Shorelife at low tide. Flora and fauna in dunes.

Information: Bring wellies or footwear suitable for paddling. Also sunscreen and hat.

Leader: Margaret Hodge FRPS Tel: 01792 207001

JULY

Sunday 6th July 2003 - Morgans Hill Nature Reserve (Wiltshire Wildlife Trust).

Meet: 10.30 a.m. Grid ref Map 173. SU 019671 - Smallgrain Plantation Picnic Site, which is signed from the unclassified road between the A4 (2m SE of Calne) and A361 (5m NE of Devizes).

Cost: Donation to WWT. *Subjects:* Outstanding chalk downland with many plants including several orchids. Also insects.

Information: Please call the leader about two weeks before if attending. Wear stout footwear as paths may be slippery.

Leader: John Hankin LRPS Tel: 01249 720917

Sunday 6th July 2003 Thursley Common.

Meet: 10.30 a.m. Main carpark, off A3. Through Thursley village, then right at bottom of hill, 1.5 miles. Grid ref Landranger 186: 090417.

Cost: Nil. *Subjects:* Dragonflies and damselflies incl. Brilliant Emerald and White-faced Darter.

Leader: Ian Vaughan LRPS Tel: 01444 484216.

Sunday 13th July Bedfont Lakes (Near Heathrow).

Meet: 10am in car park off B3003 Clockhouse lane. From M25 junction 13 take the A30 towards London. Turn right after about 4 miles at Clockhouse roundabout. Landranger 176 076723

Interest: Butterflies, moths, dragonflies. I will try to put a moth trap out. May move to another local venue in the afternoon.

Cost: Small donation. *Information:* Nearer the time I will create an 'RPS Field trip' page on my website www.cjwood.com

Leader: Chris Wood Tel: 01932 711434. E-mail cjwood2000@hotmail.com.

AUGUST

Saturday 20th August 2003 Yair Forest.

Meet: 10 a.m. Forestry car park, Williamhope. Grid ref OS Landranger 73: 359436

Cost: Nil. *Subjects:* Fungi, Late flowers, Landscapes.

Information: Panoramic views over border hills.

Leader: Eric Middleton Tel: 01750 21829

OCTOBER

Tuesday 7th October 2003 Sherwood Pines

Meet: 10.30 a.m. Car park. Grid ref Sheet 120: 616642

Cost: £1 parking. *Subjects:* Fungi and autumn colour

Information: Call Robert after 1st October to confirm venue. There is a small restaurant on site.

Lunch: Packed/cafe

Leader: Robert Hawkesworth FRPS Tel: 0115 928 1050

continued on next page

Saturday 11th October 2003 Ebernoe Common Nature Reserve, West Sussex.

Meet: 10 a.m. Car park next to church. Grid ref Map 197, SU 976278. From A283, 3 ½ miles north of Petworth, 1 ½ miles south of Northchapel, turn east into minor road sign-posted Ebernoe. 1 ½ miles along this road turn right, just past telephone & post boxes, into Church & Reserve access road signposted Ebernoe Church/schoolhouse. Contact leader to confirm before travelling.

Cost: £1 *Subjects:* Ancient woodland with over 600 recorded species of fungi.

Leader: John Fairbank Tel: 01273 732589 Email: jnfairbank@aol.com

Nature Group Residential Field Weekend 2003
at The Kingcombe Centre, Toller Porcorum, Dorchester DT2 0EQ

Friday 2nd May to Monday 5th May 2003

We regret to inform members that there is just one place remaining on this popular field weekend.

However, we are holding a reserve list, which we shall use in the event of cancellations. If you are interested in joining the group, and would like to be put on the reserve list, then will you please contact me, giving your membership details, but without, at this stage, sending a deposit cheque?

Kath Bull ARPS, Segsbury, St John's Road, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1RT.
Tel:- 01892 663751. e-mail:- kath.bull @btopenworld.com

Nature Group Convention
8th - 10th August 2003 Brooksby College

Have you sent in **your** booking form yet? Please do not delay and now that the New Year is well under way it would be a good time to do something about it. It would be most helpful to us if you could let us know by the end of April please if you do intend to book, this is so that we can firm up details with Brooksby.

You can remind yourself of the details of the programme in the last issue of The Iris, suffice it to say that we have some good speakers, opportunities for you to give a short talk also, A & F advice and visits to local nature reserves.

If you have mislaid your booking form don't let that deter you, give either Martin Withers or me a ring and we'll fix you up with another one. (Martin's number is 0116 229 6080 mine 0115 928 1050).

Don't forget that the accommodation at Brooksby varies in quality from rooms with H & C plus showers to rooms with no H & C but of course with nearby bathrooms, Martin allocates the rooms strictly on a first come first served basis. Brooksby is an Agricultural College and the accommodation is in Halls of Residence for the students. I have stayed there quite often and can honestly say that they look after us very well.

Get that booking in without delay.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS.

“The Web of Life: Flora and Fauna from Spain”

AN EXHIBITION OF COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS BY DIANA ANTONESCU

at the Instituto Cervantes Auditorium, 102 Eaton Square, London, SW1W 9AN
from 1st April to 25th April.

The opening night will be on Tuesday April 1st at 6.30 p.m. with a short Lecture.

Admission to the exhibition and lecture is free.

For further information contact Diana by e-mail at imagesdiana@yahoo.co.uk.

‘FASCINATING RHYTHMS’

BY IAN McLEAN BSC NDB LRPS

“Stands the clock at ten to three and is there honey now for tea?” Betjeman was writing of social conventions which have largely disappeared but my thoughts turn to observations a hundred years ago. Forel, a Swiss entomologist, described morning meals on the terrace, honey was on the table and it didn’t take long for his bees to be attracted to the smell! After a day or two, they arrived in droves and became such a nuisance that the professor ordered that no honey was to be put out that day. Still the bees came. Forel documented that the bees could tell the time but took the observation no further. Some 50 years later von Frisch, an Austrian entomologist, and his students worked in detail on this aspect of bee behaviour.

Linnaeus, in Sweden about 250 years ago, had noted that flowers opened and closed at specific times of the day and thought that there must be a flower clock. A few examples are *Ragopogon pratensis*, ‘Jack go to bed at noon’, the common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinalis*) which opens between eight and ten o’clock.; Cranesbill (*Geranium tristeis*) opens in early evening and night scented catchfly (*Silene noctiflorum*) opens at about nine in the evening! About 100 years later, at the same season, an Austrian botanist checked on these times and concluded that Linnaeus’s times were two hours out! The difference, when they considered the possibilities, was that in Austria the sun had risen two hours earlier than in Sweden. The flower clock was timed by hours after sunrise.

Nectar production in flowers is not constant; it is the product of photosynthesis. More sugars are produced when the sun shines, there is moisture in the soil and the temperature is warm. Each species has its’ characteristic pattern; there may be two or even three peaks of nectar production during the day with usually, the majority produced in the morning. So not only do flowers open at different times but their nectar production is staggered! Release of pollen (dehiscence) is not constant either; usually there is a morning peak. The corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) produces copious pollen in the early morning and none later on, other flowers dehiscce at other times.

When flowers open, not only is there a display of petals to attract pollinators but they release scent as well. Wouldn’t it be simpler if the flowers all opened for business at the same time and let the pollinators get on with it? Not so, it would be like the January Sales every day! The interaction between flowers and their pollinators is much more subtle. Pollinators make many foraging trips during the day to provision their nests. From the plants viewpoint, by different species offering food, not only at different times of day, but at different times of year, competitors for a given pollinator keep out of each others way. Thus pollinators are able to co-evolve. with different species, fitting daily or seasonal niches

The observation by Forel I mentioned in the beginning is an example of time-coupling. Von Frisch's student Ingeborg Beling trained bees under controlled conditions to visit artificial nectar sources. Firstly, bees found scented sources more quickly than unscented sources. Feeders were filled at five specific time periods during the day. The bees learned to visit the feeders only during those times and didn't waste their time on fruitless visits. Clearly if bees can remember which flowers secrete nectar at what time, their collecting is organised and efficient. The collectors spend their 'time off' in a quiet corner of the hive, from which they emerge only when their flowers have opened. Just a few bees work, looking for untapped sources of nectar, whilst the others rest. (Does this sound familiar?)

Another example of how bees use time is in their communication dances. A successful forager will return to the nest and 'dance' on the comb to advertise the flow of nectar. Samples provide scent and nectar concentration; the angle of the axis of the dance to the vertical, indicates the direction of the source as an angle to the sun's position; the tempo indicates the distance from the hive. The bee's persistence in dancing, and the interest it engenders in potential recruits, is an indication of the source being a good one. A bee which advertises a source which is poor, in relation to what other bees are advertising, will get few takers and soon become discouraged! Bees that bring above average nectar concentrations in are eagerly followed. The sun, however, appears to move round in the sky! Bees sometimes dance for protracted periods without going outside. Interestingly they alter the angle of dance to compensate for the sun's movement!

Lindauer did some experiments with bees at Kandy in Sri Lanka. He trained them to find food to the north. Overnight he flew them to Poona crossing the path of the sun's rotation around the earth. Feeding stations were placed north, south, east and west of the hives new position. The bees flew south as the sun was now to the south of them! Having demonstrated that the bees used the sun, further experiments followed to discover whether this ability was innate or learned by observing the solar orientation appropriate to their location? Bees live in both the northern and southern hemispheres, so bees living in the different hemispheres must compute for solar movement in opposite directions. In the north, clockwise and in the south, counter clockwise. In short, it has been shown that bees learn the sun's movement in their early days of exploratory flight. However, having learned the direction, that becomes imprinted and bees become confused and unable to communicate if they are suddenly transferred to a place where the sun moves in the opposite direction to that learned.

Further experiments on translocation of colonies elucidated more aspects of the bee's biological clock. Bees were trained to feed between 8:15 and 10:15 in a closed artificially lit flight room in Paris. They were then flown overnight to New York and released in the morning in a similar room. They came to the feeder at 3pm Eastern time, 24 hours after their last feed period in Paris, they had a diurnal rhythm. Attempts to train bees to a rhythm which didn't fit into 24 hours cycle, i.e. 9 hours failed. Further displacement experiments, where the bees flew in natural light, showed that bees moved across the USA, initially flew at the 24 hour interval but over a three day period overcame their 'jet lag' of three and a half hours and corrected their clocks to 'sun time'. The external factor, observation of the sun, is needed to keep their clocks 'on time'. Incidentally in the absence of the sun, bee's biological clocks run about ten minutes fast on average! The early bee is there waiting for the flower to open! The late bee is genetically disadvantaged and their genes are eliminated. Thought provoking!

More observation and experiment was needed to explore how bees work on cloudy days. They do indeed have several methods of navigating. They can sense the sun through cloud, though which part of the spectrum they use is not clear. They learn to use landmarks and

develop a map of the area around their hive. They also make extensive use of polarised light. As photographers we know that light is most strongly polarised at right angles to the sun. So there is a symmetrical pattern of polarised light with its centre as the sun. I visualise it as a patterned umbrella with the sun where the ferule is. So as the earth revolves, bees see this pattern moving. They have polarised light receptors in each segment of their compound eyes and only need to be able to see a very small patch of blue sky to use it for navigating.

Bees learn to forage on small patches of flowers and return to the same area, sometimes even the same bush, every day of their three to six week foraging life. They change patch only when the nectar supply is exhausted. Thus their energies are conserved; little time is spent fruitlessly inspecting empty flowers. The colonies which are most successful in exploiting the flower resources of their area survive and propagate and the flowers that consistently attract and satisfy their pollinators set most seed and are in turn fruitful. Where their biorhythms mesh, evolution has a successful outcome.

References: Insects & Flowers, F.G. Barth.

Communication among social bees, M. Lindauer ☘

Entries are invited for the 6th Wirral Slide Exhibition.

Categories: General and Nature. Closing date: 5th April 2003.

Entry forms from:

Wirral Slide Exhibition - c/o 62, Circular Drive, Greasby, Wirral, CH49 3NB.

Please send SAE.

'A DIGITAL CAMERA FOR NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY?'

BY IAN VAUGHAN LRPS.

With some trepidation I am reporting my findings concerning the Nikon 995 digital camera that I purchased in November 2001.

Besides the camera I have 2x and 3x optical tele converters, a wide angle converter and two 128 Mb compact flash disks that take 89 pictures each in "fine" JPEG mode, giving a 9 Mb file on the computer. I also bought 3 rechargeable Le-ion batteries.

The pros are:

1. There is no film cost. I have shot 2700 frames and kept maybe 2/300. What I retain are put onto CD ROM and will keep for my lifetime. Good photos I convert to TIFF format on the computer before adjusting or saving.

2. The whole outfit weighs only a few pounds, and I can carry it easily in field work using only a light tripod. A great advantage at 75!!

3. The optical zoom is 4x and with 3x tele converter gives 12x. There is further extension digitally 4x but I have found anything more than 1.4x or 1.6x if pushed is enough, or you get degradation to an unacceptable level even with the 'noise reduction' set. Theoretically at 4x optical you get the equivalent of 150 mm on a 35 mm camera but I find with the 3x converter it is not the equivalent of 450 mm, but nearer 300 mm. I have compared it with my Nikon 801s and a 300 mm lens on the same subject and at the same distance.

4. The output into the computer needs little or no colour correction, or removing the dust spots that I used to get scanning 35 mm negs or transparencies. *continued on page 33.*

'WOODLICE (*ISOPODA*)' BY ANDY CALLOW

Of the many species of invertebrates that assist in the process of vegetative decay, perhaps the most well known are the woodlice. They may be first drawn to our attention when they are found wandering around indoors, but these are the exception, being only one of the 42 or so species recorded in the UK. All these species are active in reducing vegetative waste to a state in which it can be used by the next stage of the recycling process. Leaf litter is their favourite pabulum but they can be found anywhere where there is dampness and decaying material.

Different species have different specialisations. Two of our commonest, the Shiny Woodlouse (*Oniscus asellus*) and the Rough Woodlouse (*Porcellio scaber*) are widespread and can be found in compost heaps and in deciduous woodland where they live during the day under logs and stones in company with other invertebrates that shun heat and light and are active mainly at night. The latter species has a tendency to roam for some distance since they are able to withstand dryness better than other woodlice, hence their occurrence in houses. At first glance the two species are quite similar: a hand lens will enable a distinction to be made by looking at the flagellum (the last section of the antennae): this has three segments in the former but only two in the latter species.

Because woodlice, like most arthropods, have external skeletons (exoskeletons) they need to shed these skeletons at intervals in order to grow. Woodlice do this in two stages: first they shed the rear part of their skin and then when the exposed part has hardened after three days, they shed their front part. When searching for woodlice you might occasionally find a partly grey specimen which has recently moulted or even a white section of a discarded exoskeleton.

Breeding takes place throughout the summer. The developing woodlice are contained in a pouch inside the female and after one month they are ready to hatch and become independent. They will moult several times before they become mature and the total life expectancy will be two or three years. During that time they may be attacked by birds, amphibians, the spider *Dysdera crocata* which specialises in woodlice, and by centipedes which will take 40% of all predated woodlice.

Another of our common woodlice is *Philoscia muscorum*. This one is common in hedgerows and grassy areas and can also be found in gardens and woodland. They have a range of colour variations but can be recognised by their smaller size, black heads and dark stripe down the centre of the body.

One of the most attractive woodlice is the much smaller *Androniscus dentiger*. Associated with screes, garden rubble, quarries, etc. it cannot be confused with other species because of its size (6 mm.) and its distinctive rose-red colouring with a double stripe down the centre of its body. It moves quickly when disturbed.

Another curious species is *Platyarthus hoffmannseggii* which is associated with ants and their nests. Its colour is white and often the gut shows up as a darker line running down its body.

As a subject for study and wonder the woodlouse is ideal since there are lots of them about. However they are sensitive to light, heat and desiccation. When studying them in field or woodland always remember to replace them in their original habitat. If searching under logs and stones, replace them as you found them so that their home and micro habitat remain stable ❀



‘Rough woodlouse (*Porcellio scaber*) x 5.1’ by Andy Callow.
Pentax 95mm extn and 28mm lens reversed on Sensia.



‘Shiny woodlouse (*Oniscus asellus*) x 1.9’ by Andy Callow.
Pentax 75mm extn and 50mm macro lens on Sensia.



‘Shiny woodlouse (*Oniscus asellus*) x 1.8 changing skin’ by Andy Callow.
Pentax 68mm extn and 50mm macro lens on Velvia.



‘Woodlouse (*Androniscus dentiger*) x 5.1’ by Andy Callow.
Pentax 86mm extn and 28mm lens reversed on Provia.

continued from page 29.

5. When using the 995 in close up mode the DoF appears much greater than a 35 mm with a macro lens.
6. You can approach insects using the monitor to focus more closely, since your body does not get as near when holding the camera out in front, and the subject is less spooked. The screen can be set to indicate when focus is sharp by showing a pattern of spots over the screen. I have found putting the focus on manual, setting a distance, and then closing in, is the best method for insects. You get to know which distances you require for different size insects at the various levels of zoom used. The best I have found for maximum DoF is half way i.e 2x optical zoom.
7. It is easy to change from ISO 100 to 800 at anytime. I do not recommend 800 but 400 in woodland is fine.
8. There are modes for nearly all lighting conditions that again avoid colour correction later if you use them.
9. You can enlarge, in the field, any frame taken on the monitor to x6 and see if it is sharp and worth keeping. This saves space on the disk so effectively that you can take the shots again or fresh ones.
10. The camera records all settings which saves a notebook in the field.
11. The controls for + or - 2 EV in stages of 1/3rds are easy and the effect can be seen on the monitor. Changing from Aperture, Speed, Normal or Manual modes is also easy and visible on screen.

The cons are:

1. Totally useless with any converter lens and a moving subject, as you can only frame through the monitor. Try it if you do not believe me! Moving subjects are a question of luck (I only take them with the internal zoom lens) but at least the film costs nothing.
 2. The monitor is hard to use in bright light. I have made, in balsa wood painted flat black, a box that helps but is not a final solution; though it works reasonably if using a tripod.
 3. With the monitor in use the life of each battery is about 45 minutes, hence my buying three. They last very much longer when using the eyepiece for framing, and I have never yet used more than 2 batteries in one day's outing.
 4. The delay between taking shots, while the camera processes the frame taken at any respectable level of tiff or jpeg modes, is much too long. There is also a considerable delay between turning the camera on and being ready to take a shot.
 5. The camera takes much learning. When you have done so, however, the controls are easy to hand; though it is easy to forget all the different ones, certainly at 75!
- Finally, I put it this way. Having sold all my Nikon 35 mm equipment while values are still reasonable I rely entirely on my 995. All my darkroom equipment was sold 4 years ago while the items still had a good value, and I have never regretted that. Nor do I regret the move from 35 mm to the Nikon 995 digital either.

PS - a tip. Hood for digital camera viewing screen. For anyone with glare problems using the screen on a digital camera www.hoodman.com is a very useful site. I bought one for under \$25.00 for my Nikon 995 and it is brilliant. It can be fitted by either tiny velco strips set on the camera, or (and I prefer this) a built in elastic strap which goes around the camera and does not interfere with any controls. They certainly make one for the D1 and the Canon I think. This might be the answer to the perennial problem for digital users when wanting to use the screen for framing ☘

'CALLING NEW MEMBERS' by Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Have you joined the Nature Group in the last six months? Have you received a New Member's Pack from me?

As you may know the Membership Department at Bath has been experiencing database problems for some considerable time and whilst things are improving they are by no means back to normal. One of the results of this is that I have not been receiving details of new members as regularly as I should and consequently although you are on the RPS mailing list, and so receiving your copy of *The Iris*, I do not know that you have actually joined us. I should add that these problems are just as frustrating to the Membership Department as to us and they really are trying to do their best.

If you are one such member would you please contact me either by telephone or by post, quoting your RPS Membership Number, the date of your joining, and whether you have taken advantage of the introductory offer of free membership of a group for new RPS members or whether you a paying member. I would prefer not to receive such details by e-mail and I apologise if you find that something of a bind.

May I offer you a very warm welcome and I do hope you gain as much enjoyment from your membership as I have done, we are a very happy and friendly group and I urge you to make every attempt to attend one of the meetings during the year.

NATURE GROUP AUTHORS **& SOME OF THEIR BOOKS**

Although I knew the Nature Group had several authors amongst its members the wealth of material published came as a surprise. Even more so when you consider that for some authors only details of their current books are shown. If all published work was included the details would fill some eight pages.

The details below are distilled from books reviewed in *The Iris* over the last eight years and information sent to me in response to the request in the previous issue. The latter came to me in a variety of layouts, hopefully no errors have occurred whilst re-formatting it. Due to space constraints I have, in some instances, omitted the fuller information provided and titles published in foreign language. The presentation is as uniform as possible given the variety of source information. For any authors not listed please send details for next issue.

Heather Angel Hon. FRPS: e-mail: hangel@naturalvisions.co.uk - fax: 01252 727464
NB Out of print titles not detailed.

'Kew: A World of Plants' Publisher - Collins & Brown (paperback) ISBN 1-84340-112-6 £12.99. The book is available from RBG Kew Enterprises Limited, Tel: 0208 332 5654.

'How to Photograph Flowers' Publisher - Stackpole Books (USA) ISBN 0-8117-2455-7 (paperback) £16.50 plus p&p - copies only available from Heather Angel.

'How to Photograph Water' Publisher Stackpole Books (USA) ISBN 0-8117-2461-1 (paperback) £18.00 plus p&p - copies only available from Heather Angel.

'Natural Visions' Publisher Collins & Brown ISBN 1-85585-760-X (hardback) £17.99 - on special offer at £15 plus p&p - copies only available from Heather Angel.

Peter Evans FRPS:

'Where and How to Photograph Wildlife' Publisher Guild of Master Craftsmen Publications Ltd - ISBN 1 86108 224 X (hardback) £22.95.

John Fairbanks ARPS:

'How to Photograph Butterflies' Publisher Butterfly Conservation, Sussex Branch. Spiral bound, card cover 14 pages.

Dr. Bob Gibbons FRPS: Bob is happy to provide signed copies of his books, please contact him at: 24 Newborough Road, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1RD.

Tel: 01202 849142; Fax: 848419. E mail: bob.gibbons@which.net

'Flowers at my Feet' (with Dave Woodfall). Published by HarperCollins 2002, in conjunction with Plantlife. ISBN 0 00 2202 13 1.

'Hamlyn Photographic Guide to the Wildflowers of Britain and North Europe' with Peter Brough. Publisher Hamlyn - ISBN 0 600 57452 0. 1992; available in subsequent Chancellor Press editions.

'Field Guide to Insects of Britain & North Europe'. Publisher Crowood Press - ISBN 1 85223 895 X. Reprinted 2003.

'Wildflowers of Southern Europe' (with Paul Davies). Publisher Crowood Press. - ISBN 1 85223 659 0.

'Wildflowers of Britain and North Europe' (with Paul Davies). 1994. Publisher Crowood Press. ISBN 1 85223 784 8.

'Wild Guide to Insects' 1999. Publisher Harper Collins. ISBN 0 00220 1348.

Photographs only: -

'The Illustrated Food for Free' by Richard Mabey. Publisher HarperCollins.

Flora Britannica' by Richard Mabey. Publisher Sinclair Stevenson.

'Wild Flowers of Britain & Europe' by Bob Press. Publisher New Holland

'Encyclopedia of Wildflowers' by John Akeroyd. Publisher Dempsey Parr.

'Wildlife Trusts Guide to Mushrooms of Europe' by R. Cortecuisse. Publisher HarperCollins.

'Wildlife Trusts Guide to Wildflowers of Britain and N. Europe'.

'Wild Guide to Wildflowers' by John Akeroyd.

Due out in February 2003: 4 Travellers' Nature Guides describing the best sites to visit and see wildlife and flowers in each country. All published by Oxford University Press:

1. *France*. 2. *Greece*. Both with text and photographs by Bob Gibbons.

3. *Britain*, with Martin Walters et al. 4. *Spain*, text by Teresa Farino, photos by Bob Gibbons.

Peter Ginn ARPS APSSA:

Please note that many of the books out of print are available second-hand through book search like Russell Friedman www.rfbooks.co.za e-mail: rfbooks@iafrica.com

'Birds of the Highveld (of Zimbabwe)' Publisher Longman 1972 - ISBN 0 582 608 90 2.

'Birds Afield' Publisher Longman 1973 - ISBN 0 582 641 14 4. Still in print.

'Birds of the Lowveld (of Zimbabwe)' Publisher Longman 1974 - ISBN 0 582 641 13 6.

'Birds of (Great) Zimbabwe & environs' Publisher Longman 1973 -ISBN 0 582 641 62 4.

'Bird Safari' Publisher Longman 1974 - ISBN 0 582 614 66 7 .

'Birds of Botswana' Publisher Chris van Rensburg 1979 - ISBN 0 908 393 28 8.

'Garden Birds of southern Africa' Publisher - Chris van Rensburg 1980
ISBN 0 908 393 48 2.

'More Garden Birds of Southern Africa' Publisher Chris van Rensburg 1981
ISBN 0 908 393 77 6.

'Waterbirds of Southern Africa' Publisher Chris van Rensburg 1982 - ISBN 0 908 393 95 4.

'The Complete Book of Southern Africa Birds' Struik Publishing 1989, still in print -
ISBN 0 947 430 11 3.

David Hosking FRPS and Martin Withers FRPS:

'Wildlife of East Africa' Traveller's Guides - Publisher Harper Collins - ISBN 0 00 7134185. Price £14.99.

**David Hosking FRPS, Julian and Daniel Fitter with line illustrations
by Martin Withers FRPS:**

'Wildlife of the Galapagos' Traveller's Guides - Publisher Harper Collins - ISBN 0 00 2201372. Price £14.99.

David Hosking FRPS and Dr Jim Flegg: 'Eric Hosking's Classic Birds'

'Eric Hosking's Classic Birds' Publisher Harper Collins - ISBN 0 00 2199750. Specially bound limited edition £25.00.

Classic Birds contains over 190 black and white photographs taken between 1929 and the mid 1960's with Eric's own notes on how and when these photographs were taken. Looking through this book it's easy to see why Eric Hosking OBE Hon FRPS was widely acknowledged as one of the world's most eminent natural history photographers. *A charitable trust was established ten years ago to commemorate Eric's life and work and sales from this book goes towards funding the yearly bursaries, which are paid to people who are doing ornithological research through the media of photography, art and writing. Any one interested in applying for a bursary or buying a copy of the book should contact The Eric Hosking Charitable Trust, Pages Green House, Wetheringsett, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5QA.*

Jack Jackson FRPS, FRGS: web site <http://www.jackjackson.co.uk>

Tel: 01483 723900 fax: 01483 771048 e-mail: jack.jackson@dial.pipex.com / jack@jackjackson.co.uk (* = Coffee Table size). This is only a selection of his titles.

'The Asian Highway' Publisher Angus & Robertson - ISBN: 0207957029. The complete overland guide from Europe to Australia. Currently out of print.

* *'The Off-Road Four Wheel Drive Book'* - 4th Edition, 3 printings. Publisher Haynes ISBN: 1859606067 Choosing, using and maintaining go-anywhere vehicles.

'Globetrotter Dive Guide Malaysia - including Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore' 3rd edition New Holland - ISBN 1843302381

'Globetrotter Dive Guide the Philippines' Publisher New Holland - ISBN 859740545.

'The Dive Sites of the Philippines' Publisher Passport Books - ISBN 0844248630. Won

'The Kalakbay Award for the Top Foreign Travel Publication of the Year 1996'

* *'Top Dive Sites of the World'* Publisher New Holland ISBN 1853687472 - updating 2002. Won 'The Diver Magazine Award for the Top Publication (Book, CD-ROM or Video) of 1997'.

* *'Diving: The World's Best Sites'* Publisher Rizzoli International Publications - ISBN 0847820440.

* *'Top Dive Sites of the Indian Ocean'* Publisher New Holland ISBN 1859740979.

* *'Diving in the Indian Ocean'* Publisher Rizzoli International Publications ISBN 0847822338.

'The Dive Sites of Aruba Bonaire and Curaçao' Publisher Passport Books now (McGraw Hill/Contemporary Books) ISBN 0658003631.

'Scuba Diving - The essential guide to equipment and techniques' Publisher New Holland ISBN: 1859744605 (hard cover) 1859743978 (soft cover).

'Scuba Diving - The essential guide to equipment and techniques' Publisher Stackpole ISBN 0811729273.

* *'Diving with Sharks and other Adventure Dives'* Publisher New Holland ISBN 1 85974 238 6 (hard cover) 1 85974 239 4 (soft cover).

CD-ROM - *'International Diving Locations'*, (UGA Media 1996).

Mike Lane FRPS: 36, Berkely Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 2HS.

Tel: +44(0)121 744 7988 e-mail: mikelane@nature-photography.co.uk

'Where to Photograph Wildlife in Britain' Publisher Mike Lane. A5 paperback £9.75 inc. p & p.

Multimedia CD-ROM 'The Secrets of Wildlife Photography'.

Software programme 'Slide Labelling for Wildlife Photographers'.

Chris Mattison FRPS

'Encyclopedia of Snakes' Publisher Cassell, 1995, 1998 and 2002. ISBN 0-84188-187-2 (latest edition, p/b)

'Rattler!' A natural history of rattlesnakes. Publisher Cassell, 1996. ISBN 0-7137-2534-6 (hardback) and ISBN 0-7137-2731-4 (p/b)

'Snake' Publisher Dorling Kindersley, 1999. ISBN 0-7513-06584 (English edition - American, Canadian and seven foreign language editions have other ISBN numbers).

Also, the Snakes section for 'The New Encyclopedia of Reptiles and Amphibians' edited by Tim Halliday and Craig Adler. Publisher Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-19-852507-9

Constantinos Petrinos FRPS:

'Realm of the Pygmy Seahorse' Publisher Starfish Press - ISBN 960 87016 0 0 (hardback).

Michael Proctor FRPS, Peter Yeo and Andrew Lack:

'The Natural History of Pollination' Publisher Harper Collins 1996 -ISBN 000 219905 X hardback. ISBN 000 219906 8 paperback.

Richard Revels FRPS Photographer. Authors: Bernard Nau, Richard Revels, Bob Winter:

'Wild Bedfordshire - a photographic record'. Publishers The Bedfordshire Natural History Society - ISBN number 0-9506521-6-4. £15 plus £3.50 p & p. Obtainable from Gill Dickens 9 Ullswater Road, Dunstable, Beds. LU6 3PX or contact Richard Revels Tel: 01767 313065.

D. M. Turner Ettingler FRPS:

'Notes on British and Irish Orchids' published by author 1997 (considered one of the leading authorities on European Orchids but now sadly deceased) ISBN 9 953380 0 9 possibly available from specialist natural history bookshops.

Publications from the RPS Nature Group:

'The Nature Photographers' Code of Practise' a card, four page, A5 leaflet. Available from Nature Group Secretary, please send an A5 sae.

CD-ROM 'An Interactive Guide to obtaining your Nature Associateship'. See below.

CD-ROM 'The Iris 2001'. All three issues from 2001 in Adobe Acrobat format together with the colour pictures from all three issues as a slide show. £5 including p & p.

Available from John Myring ARPS, see below for an address.

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NB. Overseas members can request an order form enabling them to pay by credit card as all payments must be in sterling.

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Contact: John Myring ARPS Tel: 01562-824356.

Inside back cover photo: 'Brown Bear' by Helen Williams ARPS. Canon EOS3 with Canon 300mm IS F4 lens on Sensia 400.

Outer back cover photo: 'Turkeyfish' (Lionfish) - *Pterois volitans* by F. Jack Jackson FRPS. Nikon F90x, 55mm Micro-Nikkor lens 1/125 @ F11. Plume like spines are highly venomous.



