

# THE IRIS



MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 103  
Spring 2009



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All contributions should be submitted to the Editor. Items covering any aspect of nature photography and/or natural history are welcomed, including reviews on equipment and relevant books.

Copy should be sent as .txt or .doc files by email or on CD, or printed using double line spacing on one side of the paper only.

Digitally captured photographic images are preferred but scanned transparencies are also acceptable. Images should be supplied on CD as RGB Tiff files, 6" x 4" at 300 ppi (1800 x 1200 pixels, file size approx 6.17MB). Original transparencies may be submitted, however, the Editor cannot specify how long they may be away from the author.

No payment will be made for material used and whilst every care will be taken, neither the Editor, the Nature Group or the Printers can accept liability for any damage that may occur to photographic material submitted.

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

### Distribution:

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

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Cover Picture:

**Sandwich Tern** (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) with fish  
by Dickie Duckett FRPS

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the Vice-President of the Society;  
the Director General of the Society;  
the Hon. Treasurer of the Society;  
the current Chairman of the Nature A & F Distinctions Panel

## Nature Group Exhibitions

Copies of Nature Group Exhibitions dating back to 2000, are available to book for camera clubs/photographic societies. If you would like to book one of these or the current or next years' Travelling Exhibition, please contact the Exhibition Secretary, details above.

# Editorial

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Inevitably the last task I do when putting together an issue of The Iris, is to write this column.

I do hope that this issue will inspire those of you who are still at the 'considering' stage of a distinctions application, to actually make a submission. You will find three successful applications within the pages of this issue - the first a successful Fellowship submission by Dickie Duckett FRPS, followed by two Associateship successes from Ron McCombe ARPS and Geoff Hughes ARPS. These submissions were all successful at the last assessment held during September 2008. The panel sits twice a year - usually in March and again in September. The Criteria is downloadable from the RPS website or by writing to the Distinctions department at Bath. The RPS run workshops around the country and attending an assessment can be most helpful for those aspiring to Associateship. Fellowship panels are assessed without an audience. The Nature Group also produces an interactive CD Guide to obtaining an Associateship in the nature category. Details can be found in this issue on the inside of the front cover.

As I write this, the exhibition selection has just been completed. Congratulations to those of you who have acceptances in the exhibition - do try to attend the opening, especially if you have received an award. The Exhibition opening and the Spring Meeting are combined with the AGM - don't let the AGM put you off as it's usually quite a brief affair. There is no cost for attending the day and you can be sure that you will see some excellent work on the walls and at the projection of the slides and digital images in the afternoon. The morning session will be a talk by Dickie Duckett FRPS and by the look of his recent Fellowship panel I think we can all expect to see some stunning nature photography.

Finally, articles are still required for future issues of The Iris, so keep them coming.



# From the chair

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Another year has passed and my term of office as your chairman is about to end. It has been an interesting two years and I have enjoyed it immensely due to the friendship and support of all the members and in particular members of the committee who make the job of chairman so much easier. There have been one or two hiccups along the way, the muddle over the date of last years AGM and a rather unfortunate incident when a certain 'gentleman', who should know better, burst into a committee meeting and behaved in a rather arrogant and rude manner. This aside, there have been many positive things that I will remember, my Chairman's Day was one and the joint convention last October was another. Both these events provided speakers of a high quality and some stunning images to inspire all those who attended. Although I have only managed to attend some of the field meetings, these have always been most enjoyable, chatting to members and finding interesting images to photograph. We are always looking for new venues to visit so please see if you can find the time to organise a day.

There have been changes to the committee, with new people volunteering to take on the difficult job of organising the annual exhibition which Peter and Susie have run so efficiently over the years. Now in three distinct sections, the committee have made some changes to the rules which it is hoped will simplify the work load of Sue, Andrew and Tremaine who willingly give their time so that our most important event of the year runs smoothly.

All committee members give up their time willingly to ensure that the group is run as efficiently as is possible, for you the members, and while it is always difficult to pick out any individuals for praise I do feel justified in mentioning two in particular. Margaret Johnson, our secretary, is a pillar of strength - always there when needed to give help, support and advice and is the main reason that things run so smoothly for the group. Our most important means of reaching our members is through our highly rated publication, *The Iris*, which has evolved over the years and has gone from strength to strength and for this we have to thank Dawn Osborn for all the hard work she puts in. Somehow, even when contributors miss deadlines, and I am sorry to say I have been guilty of this, Dawn manages to come up with the goods.

By the time you read this we will be well in to the New Year but as I write this it is still 2008 and a time to be planning trips for the future, looking back and reviewing the events of the year that is drawing to a close. My wife and I have had a busy and interesting time fitting in four trips, Africa, The Isle of Mull, Hungary and lastly Trinidad & Tobago. We only returned from the last of these six days before Christmas so I am in the process of sorting through and deleting images! As always there are some you are reasonably pleased with and quite a lot you wonder why you bothered!

While my wife and I enjoy travelling abroad to new and exotic places, getting to the airport, particularly the ones in London, is however a real pain so we are also looking to places nearer to home. The visit we made to Mull last year was both enjoyable and photographically quite productive so as a result we will be visiting North Uist in June inspired by an article by Colin Smith FRPS which appeared in the *Iris* a couple of years ago. I find many of the articles in the magazine both interesting and informative and I know that Dawn is always happy to receive articles so if you haven't contributed one yet why not give it some thought. Back to trips, no we haven't given up on trips abroad and in July we will be visiting Namibia and in September South Africa.

I am pleased to say the book I was working on, 'Wild Lincolnshire', which I mentioned in the last 'From the Chair', has been completed. As an active member of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust the President had suggested to me the idea for the book to celebrate the Trust's Diamond Jubilee which was on the fourth of December 2008. The book, a limited edition A4 hardback of 500, was launched at the Trust's AGM at the end of October and I was delighted that by Christmas only a few copies remained with the Trust being the only financial benefactors.

I am sure you will all join with me in welcoming Peter Jones ARPS as our new Chairman and will give him all the support and help that I have been privileged to receive in my two years in office. All the best Peter.



# **The 33rd Annual General Meeting, Spring Meeting and Exhibition Opening**

of the RPS Nature Group will be held at:-

## **Smethwick Photographic Society**

**The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands**

(for directions see below),

**Saturday 25th April 2009**

### **Timetable**

**10.30hrs** Assemble for 11.00hrs. start

**11.00hrs** A presentation by Dickie Duckett FRPS

**12.30hrs** Break for lunch.

Light lunches will be available in the clubhouse (ploughman's or jacket potatoes).  
There is also a dining area if you wish to bring sandwiches.

**14.00hrs** 33rd Annual General Meeting.

### **Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 32nd AGM 2008, printed in issue 101 of 'The Iris'.
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. Secretary's Report.
7. Election of Officers
8. Any other business
9. Date and venue of the 34th AGM 2010

**14.45hrs** Opening of the 2009 Annual Exhibition

Presentation of the Awards

followed by a showing of the accepted projected images.

Accepted Prints will be on display for the duration of the day

### **Directions:-**

Leave the M5 at Junction 2 and get into right hand lane. At roundabout (with traffic lights) approximately 200 yards from motorway take A4034 right towards West Bromwich and immediately get into left hand lane of dual carriageway. At first traffic lights (approx 1/3 mile) turn left into Park Street. After a hundred yards or so turn right into Churchbridge (cul-de-sac). The Old Schoolhouse is last but one building on left.



# Fugitive Fungus

by Tony Bond FRPS

The last AGM of the North West Fungus Group concluded with a question and answer session, the answers coming from our president, Professor Bruce Ing. we are fortunate in being able to call on the services of such a distinguished academic who is fully up to date with the science and thinking on all topics mycological.

Inevitably, after a poor 2007, the discussion turned to the factors which encourage fungi to fruit. We know of some which deter fruiting, such as trampling the mycelium and a dry autumn. However, it was clear after an interesting discussion that not even the leading mycologists can predict fungal behaviour.

So pity the poor Nature Group member who is tempted to offer to lead a Field Meeting in the autumn when the request is made in the winter edition of *The Iris*. Flowering plants can be guaranteed to bloom in the same place at roughly the same time every year, with the exception of some orchids. The same cannot be said of fungi, which probably accounts for some of their fascination.

At the beginning of 2008, one Nature Group Committee Member (name withheld to avoid embarrassment) was heard to say that 2008 must be better than 2007. It turned out to be worse, with the larger, more photogenic fungi being particularly scarce. For example, I did not see a single example of Lawyer's Wig, *Coprinus comatus*, despite this being a species which can often be seen in large numbers on roadside verges.

Fortunately, the Group's programme included advice to contact the leader a few days before the Field Meeting to confirm whether or not it was worth attending. I found myself advising people not to come to the foray I had volunteered to lead. So once again, the advice is that if you wish to avoid a wasted journey, contact the leader 2-3 days beforehand.

And let us hope for a splendid fungus season in 2009!

Pictures by Tony Bond FRPS

[www.rpsnaturegroup.com](http://www.rpsnaturegroup.com)



*Mycena inclinata*



*Flammulina velutipes*



*Coprinus micaceus*

# Reports on Field Meetings

## Mere Sands Wood, September 27th 2008

by Sheila Weir LRPS

Mere Sands Wood stands on a layer of sand and peat deposited by winds during the Ice Age, which was followed by periods of water-logging. Sand was extracted from 1974 to '82 for use in the local glass industry. Under an agreement with Lancashire County and the Wildlife Trust, worked areas were landscaped into shallow lakes surrounded by marsh and heath and the best of the woodland preserved. In 1982 the site of 105 acres was designated an SSSI and acquired by Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

The reserve is noted for its over-wintering wildfowl population and dragonflies. There is a resident population of Water Vole and an interesting developing aquatic flora in addition to several species of orchid. The woodland is mainly mature Birch and Oak together with an area of Scots Pine and over 200 species of fungi have been recorded.

Unfortunately, after a promising start in late August - early September, the fungus season in much of the north-west has again proved disappointing. Certainly not many of these species were fruiting at the time of our visit. However, around ten of us set off on a pleasantly warm day to see what we could find to photograph.

Many of the best fungi were growing on wood, and we found several groups of young Sulphur Tuft, *Hypholoma fasciculare*, on a moss-covered stump. These fungi are very photogenic when young as the cap is a warm orange-yellow and is still covered in remnants of the white veil. This was the first of several such subjects, though many were rather more mature. Also on wood were collections of the Common Rustgill, *Gymnopilus penetrans*, perhaps the most frequently found species and often in large numbers. Another fungus which grows on wood is Jelly Rot, *Phlebia tremellosa*. Just one colony of this attractive small bracket was noticed on a very rotten log. Unusually for a bracket it is rather

soft in texture. The upper surface covered in silky white hairs while the underside has ochre maze-like pores.

Most people are familiar with the Stink Horn, *Phallus impudicus*. The putrid 'rotten-meat' smell derives from the olive-green slime which envelops the tip and contains the spores. This attracts flies and other insects which disperse the spores by carrying them away in the slime remaining on their legs. Several fine specimens were photographed, some with their attendant populations of flies.

After lunch in the sun at the picnic tables near the bird feeders, we were less successful in our hunt for fungi. We did find a group of *Mycena* in good condition again growing on wood - a dead log. *Mycena arcangeliana*, Angel's Bonnet, is a fairly small, rather delicate fungus which often has a lilac stem when young and, as with quite a few *Mycena*, an iodoform smell.

Many of the other fungi which we found had been eaten by slugs, numerous this year following the wet summer, reducing the number of pictorially attractive subjects. Nevertheless, the group made the most of their opportunities and spent an enjoyable day in the company of friends, old and new.

More information about the Reserve can be found on the Lancashire Wildlife Trust web site. ([www.lancswt.org.uk](http://www.lancswt.org.uk))



Sheathed Woodtuft  
by John Weir ARPS



## Ebernoe Common, Sussex. 11th October, 2008

by Adrian Davies

Despite warnings of a complete dearth of fungi, and thick fog on the drive down, six members enjoyed a superb day at Ebernoe Common in Sussex, one of the finest ancient woods in the whole of the UK. Once the fog had gone we were treated to a gloriously sunny autumnal day.

Although fungi weren't found in great abundance, or quality, there were certainly enough specimens to keep us busy all day. Many of the species were new to some of the participants. Various good clumps of *Mycena*, in particular *M. haematopus*, were photographed as well as good specimens of Funnel Cap, *Clitocybe* sp., and Honey Fungus, *Armillaria mellea*, Artists' Fungus, *Ganoderma applanatum*, and Porcelain Fungus, *Oudemansiella mucida*. A few pieces of rotting wood infected with the Green Staining Fungus, *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*, some with fruiting bodies proved a challenge to some! Other species photographed include Scarlet Elfcup, *Sarcoscypha austriaca* (I think!), Hen of the Woods, *Grifolia frondosa*, Amethyst Deceiver, *Laccaria amethystea*, and my own personal favourite the Magpie Fungus, *Coprinus picaceus*.

There were also some late insects, particularly Brimstone butterflies and a couple of unidentified dragonflies.

It was agreed by all that we should arrange another trip next year. The date for this meeting will be Saturday 10th October at 10.00 am.

*"I was delighted to join Adrian on this outing and benefit from his expertise and knowledge both in finding and identifying species. We were all grateful to him for ignoring the warnings and arriving very early to check the area out. I look forward to another visit next year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Adrian and the other members who make the Group the success it is."*

Rosemary Wilman ARPS, RPS Vice-President.

Porcelain Fungus, *Oudemansiella mucida*, by Adrian Davies

## Padley Gorge, Derbyshire. 16th October 2008

by Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

The Fungus season in the East Midlands in 2008 was very patchy, some places enjoying a good early and then late season, whilst others have done very badly. Padley Gorge could certainly have helped us more than it did; I have certainly seen it better.

Nevertheless most members found enough to occupy them for much of the day. A rather worrying point was that the commonest fungus by far, on the Longshaw Estate side certainly, was the Honey Fungus, *Armillaria mellea*. This is a known tree killer, however healthy trees can show good resistance to the fungus. From a photographic point of view however the fungus can look most attractive, and there were some good stands of it. The *Mycena* genus was well represented, *M. alkalina* showing up well and several other *Mycena* species which were unidentified further, *M. sp.* would have to do for them! On the Padley Gorge side Amethyst Deceiver, *Laccaria amethystea*, was well represented as is usual. Due to heavy rain during the preceding week the waterfalls were quite spectacular giving many opportunities for photography. There was quite a good turnout of members, about fifteen or so, some from quite far afield, including some new faces, which is always good to see. All expressed their thanks and said that they had enjoyed a good day.



# 'Bird Behaviour' - My Fellowship Panel

by Dickie Duckett FRPS

I remember being very pleased to be enrolled as an Associate in 2001 and had no thought of advancing beyond that. Despite enjoying some success in various competitions, it took a while before it occurred to me that some of my best images might perhaps be good enough to justify an attempt at the next level up. In the meantime, I had also joined a couple of postal/online folios and had been encouraged by some generally favourable comments on my entries from experienced critics. However, it is one thing to think you might have a good chance, and quite another to actually put the thought into practice!

The necessary stimulus to go further was provided by Richard Revels FRPS – a member of the RPS Nature Panel – who suggested during the Nature Group Exhibition in 2008 that my work might be up to standard. He was also kind enough to say that he would be happy to offer some advice on what was required – this was especially helpful, as other commitments prevented me attending a Distinction Workshop.

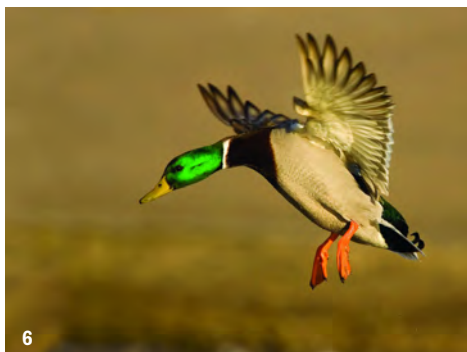
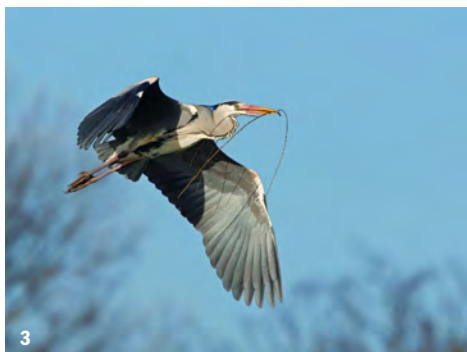
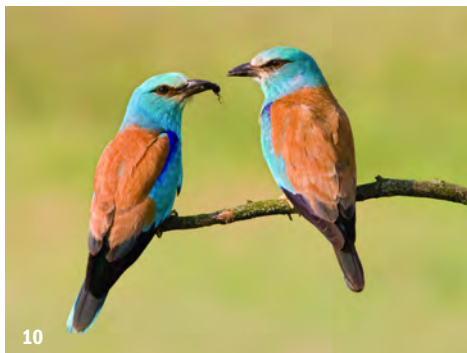
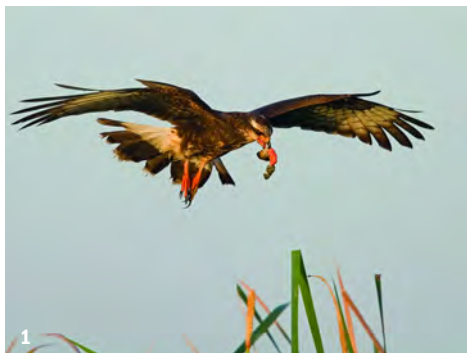
Although there is actually no requirement for a formal theme in a Fellowship submission, it is clearly important to have some linkage between the images. Although I take a variety of Natural History subjects, I am primarily a bird photographer, so it was logical to concentrate on that. Since 'going digital' in 2003, I had taken many hundreds of what I thought were reasonable images. However, with the ever-advancing capability of digital photography, I worried that successful images from only a few years ago might now be seen as 'dated'. Therefore I felt that I had to display a variety of good images near to the 'cutting edge' – simple static poses would probably not impress the judges. Fortunately, I had been concentrating on taking more dynamic images in recent years and had also been on trips to several far-flung places. Initially, I felt that I should show use of every lens in my bag, but eventually I decided that this was a secondary consideration.

After much thought (and frequent changes of mind), I selected about 75 images and emailed them, as small jpegs, to Richard for comment over the telephone. From this selection, Richard felt that there was a good basis for a Fellowship submission, but stressed the importance of producing high quality prints and presenting them as a cohesive panel with each print leading smoothly into the next with no clashing contrasts in tone. I was then left to make my final choice from about 35 images.

I had seen successful submissions that mixed portrait and landscape format prints, but I decided to include only landscape ones as I felt this made a better looking panel overall. Although one can show more than one image of a particular species, I decided not to do so.

I selected and printed off 25 images at A4 and then played around with various combinations of these prints to try and achieve a satisfactory panel. With some advice from my artistic but non-photographer wife, I eventually made the final choice. The images were printed at 40 x 29 cm on Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl paper with an Epson 2400. The paper was profiled remotely by Native Digital (<http://www.nativedigital.co.uk/shop/>). The prints were then mounted using Ivory board, the overall size being 51x40 cm.

I delivered the prints to Bath in good time for the Assessment Panel viewing on 9 September. A few days after that, I was told that I had been recommended to the Fellowship Board which would not be sitting until the end of October! Anyway, the long wait was worthwhile, and I am delighted to have joined the 'F' club. I am also most grateful to Richard for his encouragement and advice, without which I would still only be thinking about it!





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## Titles

- 1 **Snail Kite** (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*)  
carrying Apple Snail (to nest in reeds) - Florida
- 2 **Great Blue Heron** (*Ardea herodias*)  
with Puffer Fish - Florida
- 3 **Grey Heron** (*Ardea cinerea*)  
with nest twig - England
- 4 **Ruddy Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*)  
with sea weed - Florida
- 5 **White-tailed Eagle** (*Haliaeetus albicilla*)  
with fish - Norway
- 6 **Mallard Duck** (*Anas platyrhynchos*)  
landing - England
- 7 **Gentoo Penguins** (*Pygoscelis papua*)  
splashing ashore - Falklands
- 8 **Common Coots** (*Fulica atra*)  
fighting - England
- 9 **Common Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)  
bathing - Hungary
- 10 **European Rollers** (*Coracias garrulus*)  
courtship offering - Hungary
- 11 **Common Pochard** (*Aythya ferina*)  
mating - England
- 12 **Northern Gannets** (*Morus bassanus*)  
interaction - Ireland
- 13 **Arctic Terns** (*Sterna paradisaea*)  
courtship offering - Scotland
- 14 **Sandwich Tern** (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) with  
fish - England
- 15 **Great Egret** (*Casmerodius albus*)  
preening - Florida
- 16 **Brown Pelican** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)  
diving for fish - Florida
- 17 **Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)  
with Trout - Finland
- 18 **Black Grouse** (*Tetrao tetrix*)  
displaying at lek - Scotland
- 19 **Falklands Flightless Steamer Duck** (*Tachyeres  
brachypterus*) wing flapping - Falklands
- 20 **Wandering Albatross** (*Diomedea exulans*)  
wave soaring - South Georgia



# Associateship from 'the cold edge'

by Geoff Hughes ARPS

I bought my first camera and set up a darkroom in 1963 and have retained a keen interest in amateur photography ever since. In early 2007 I sold my Leica SLR and moved from analogue to digital with a Nikon DSLR system. While attending Focus, the same year, I joined the RPS and the Nature group and tried out my new equipment photographing wildfowl at Slimbridge from which I eventually used images to obtain my Licentiate in November 2007.

With an eye to collecting further images suitable for a Nature Associateship I joined a photographic expedition aboard the Vavilov, a Russian built survey vessel, for a 10 day tour around the Svalbard archipelago in June/July 2008 to photograph indigenous animals, birds and flowers taking full advantage of 24 hour daylight. From about 3,000 images taken during the trip 15 were selected and submitted for assessment and I was lucky enough to be awarded my Associateship in September 2008.

The details of the trip follow very close to those outlined in John Nathan's excellent article in the Winter 2008 edition of the Iris. His trip started a

week after mine finished and both of us were lucky to see and photograph Polar Bear which was one of the highlights of the trip. I photographed Polar Bears on sea-ice eating seals on two separate occasions - I found it a very messy and bloody experience. Due to the similarity of our trips I will, therefore, only give an account of my approach to taking and selecting the photographs specifically for my Nature Associateship panel.

I live near Bath so have been very fortunate to be able to attend distinction assessments and workshops both as observer and participant. This was of enormous benefit in gaining an understanding of the criteria involved. This was followed by further participation in the Nature group events at Bewl Water and a weekend at the Kingcombe Centre in Dorset under the excellent leadership and guidance of John Bebbington FRPS. Next, following RPS advice, I studied the "Distinctions and Qualifications Criteria" booklet and the "Interactive Guide to Obtaining your Nature Associateship" CD which gave me reasonable confidence to continue.

## Associate Panel Layout

Geoff Hughes



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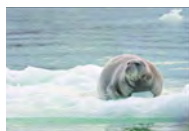
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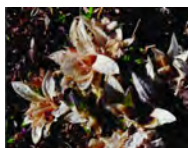
7



8



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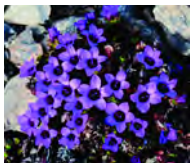
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The cameras I chose for the Svalbard trip were Nikon D3 and D300 with the latter having a 1.4 tele-converter permanently attached. This was useful for changing lenses in the field without introducing dust. My lenses included the 24-70mm f2.8, 70-200mm f2.8, 100mm f2.8 macro and the 200-400mm f4. Carrying 8 x 4Gb Flash cards, 2 storage hard disks, battery chargers and many other essential items meant that I was seriously over the 8 kg limit for hand luggage specified by SAS. I therefore acquired a very lightweight bag (0.7 kg) which was within the specified size and a safari jacket with 11 large pockets which I was able to wear stuffed full of equipment. That way I was able to carry-on just under 17 kg of gear. It was only after the flight that I found out that the carry-on luggage was never weighed and I could have carried all my gear in my backpack.

My main luggage included a monopod and a pair of fisherman's SKEE-TEX Wellies, whose thick woollen linings kept my feet warm and dry during the long trips aboard the Zodiacs and when ashore.

Almost all the photographs were taken either from the Zodiac or during the many trips we made ashore. This meant that protecting my photographic equipment from the vagaries of the weather and sea spray was paramount so it was carried within an Overboard sealable rubber backpack.

One of my biggest problems was that I was virtually the only member of the group interested in taking pictures of flowers and lichen during our excursions ashore. Since nothing grew higher than about 75mm above the ground, getting down to eye level and doing a bit of gardening did not leave much time for taking the photograph and the guides with the guns were insistent that I kept up with the rest of the party. However, being part of a group meant that there were more eyes to seek out potential prey.

An important element in the Associateship assessment is the 'Statement of Intent'. From the various assessments I had attended, I had learned the importance of it being to the point and without waffle. Consequently my statement of intent was:

*"This panel shows subjects of wild fauna and flora photographed within the Svalbard archipelago during the few summer months of 24 hour daylight."*





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*Svalbard is an archipelago in the Arctic Ocean north of mainland Europe, midway between mainland Norway and the North Pole and is the northernmost part of Norway.*

*Svalbard means the land with the cold edge. 'Sval' is a Norwegian name for 'cool', and 'bard' is an old name for 'edge'.*

Upon my return I spent a considerable amount of time sorting and grading the images to meet the requirements of my statement. I worked with a PC and used Nikon View and Capture NX2 for this preparatory phase as I take all digital images in RAW format where any changes I make can be edited or subsequently re-edited and saved within the original RAW data file. These changes were generally limited to removing dust, making small colour adjustments and cropping. The final selection which included about 10 images each of animals, birds and flora were converted to 16 bit Tiff files and stored in a separate working folder.

Using Nikon View and adjusting the thumbnail size it is possible to view all the images in the folder to show 5 images in each line (the same could be done in Lightroom). This enabled me to visualize what the panel would look like in 3 rows of 5. To ensure that my selected images were displayed in the correct location I prefixed their filenames from 1 to 15. This meant that I had only to alter the prefix numbers to rearrange or replace images to finalise my panel layout.

My first pass to include 5 animals, 5 flowers and 5 birds on each line did not look very interesting so using the advice within the "Interactive Guide to Obtaining your Nature Associateship" CD I did my best to interchange them to provide some sort of balance. The next step was to ensure that images on the left looked to the right and images on the right looked to the left. This meant that in some



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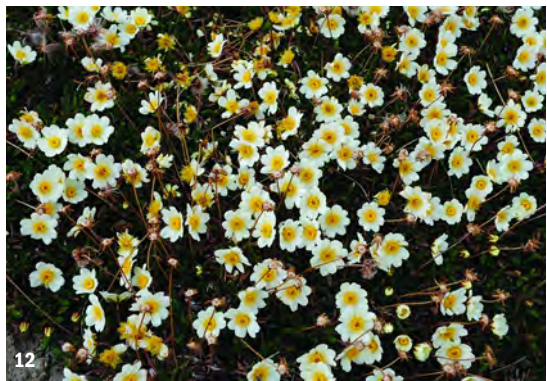
cases I had to reverse them horizontally. After many attempts I decided on the 15 images for the layout and dispensed with the others.

Final small adjustments were made to each image in Photoshop CS4, sized and sharpened in SizeFixer and printed on Lyson Pro Photo Satin on an Epson R2400 with Lyson PhotoChrome R24 Inks. The prints were surface mounted on Ivory mounts.

I attended the nail biting experience of the assessment and was able to hear some of the comments made by the assessors. They were generally favourable however it was said that there was not enough detail in the background within two of the flower shots and that the use of a reflector would have been of benefit. I did carry one but my previous comment about the guide with a gun prevented its use. I was delighted to hear that my panel would be recommended.

The images were titled as follows:

- 1 **Arctic Fox**  
*Vulpes lagopus*
- 2 **Northern Eider**  
*Somateria mollissima borealis*
- 3 **Lichen**  
*Xanthoria elegans*
- 4 **Snow Bunting**  
*Plectrophenax nivalis*
- 5 **Svalbard Reindeer**  
*Rangifer tarandus playrhynchus*
- 6 **Arctic Cinquefoil**  
*Potentilla hyparctica*
- 7 **Walrus**  
*Odobenus rosmarus*
- 8 **Polar Bear**  
*Ursus maritimus*
- 9 **Bearded Seal**  
*Erignathus barbatus*
- 10 **Tufted Saxifrage**  
*Saxifraga cespitosa*
- 11 **Atlantic Puffin**  
*Fratercula arctica*
- 12 **Svalbard Buttercup**  
*Coplidium x spitsbergense*
- 13 **Brunnick's Guillemot**  
*Uria lomvia*
- 14 **Purple Saxifrage**  
*Saxifraga oppositifolia*
- 15 **Glaucus Gull**  
*Larus hyperboreus*



# Damselfs and Dragons

by Colin Smith FRPS



*Four-spotted Chaser*

There is a fascination in watching these beautiful creatures patrolling and defending their territories against all other flying insects daring to use the same air space. Their eyesight is incredibly keen, and well before we mere humans are aware of a winged interloper, they take to the air and battle ensues usually resulting in the resident 'owner' of that piece of water seeing the intruder off.

In the north of England the number of odonata species has increased dramatically over the past few years providing us with new dragonflies previously only found further south. Species such as four spotted and broad bodied chasers, southern hawkers and the emperor dragonflies have all made an appearance in the past ten years or so enriching the variety quite dramatically in our area.

I have often photographed dragonflies and damselflies when found resting on vegetation, where they make splendid subjects, but this year I have tried to photograph them in flight. Not an easy exercise but very challenging and satisfying on the rare occasion when a reasonable result is obtained.

Digital cameras have made, what would have been considered impossible in the past with film

cameras, a viable proposition. For instance we can use a high ISO setting and therefore a faster shutter speed to capture fast moving subjects and still maintain quality. Quicker auto focus is now a common feature on the better digital cameras and lenses. Also there is no restriction as to the number of shots taken in order to obtain a good image, as there is no running cost involved.

I have used a Canon 1D Mk111 for the accompanying pictures set at 800 ISO. The auto focus setting I use is 'the ring of fire', rather than just the centre point focusing as the subjects tend to be quite small and auto focus will hunt if the point of focus wanders off the target. The rapid fire of this camera, which will operate at up to ten frames a second, is also a useful feature as when I 'lock on' to a dragonfly I can take several shots in quick succession and later select the sharp images and the ones where the wings are in the best position. Further more the pond where I have done most of the work is fairly new having been dug out about three years ago to replace another filled in for building development. This means the vegetation has not spread out too far and there is little weed over the areas where the dragonflies patrol. On other more established ponds where there is more

weed growth the auto focus will try to wander off onto the background more readily than if there is mainly water behind the subject.

I found I was getting a shutter speed of around 1/2,500 second in the bright sunlight, which surprisingly, almost stopped the wings of the dragonflies.

I hope this will encourage some of you who have not tried this kind of photography to give it a go. It is very frustrating but can be rewarding in the end – good shooting!



*Emperor Dragonfly*



*Azure Damselflies mating*



*Male Common sympetrum*



*Male Southern Hawker*



# The Path to My Associateship

## Ron McCombe ARPS

I live in the Scottish Borders between Kelso and Coldstream and am a member of Berwick upon Tweed Camera Club in North Northumberland. It's a small club with around 25 members and we have a number of competitions through the year.

I had been doing quite well within the natural history category, winning a few competitions, when one of our senior members and club president Jim Walker who is himself an FRPS suggested that I try for a distinction with the RPS

My passion is for natural history and birds in particular. I am handily placed in the Borders to visit sites like the Farne Island for Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills and Terns etc, and Bass Rock with its vast colonies of Gannets. Sites along the Northumbrian coast at Druridge Bay, Cresswell Pond, Druridge Pools, Hauxley NR, and East Chevington are all good

sites for birds and other wildlife and give me a lot of material to work with. In addition, holidays to the Shetlands in 2008 also provided good material to work with.

It was suggested by people at the RPS that Sandy Cleland FRPS should be my mentor on this excursion as he was some-what local to me in the south of Edinburgh. I think it is important that the right person is chosen to help a candidate and in Sandy I think I got the right man. His advice and guidance was invaluable in helping me select the right combination of pictures for the Associate distinction.

I sent Sandy what I thought was a fine panel of pictures which could not possibly fail. How wrong I was. Sandy looked at them and very diplomatically set me straight and sorted me out.

Ron McCombe

Associate Application - September 2008

Hanging Plan

### British Birds



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The title of the panel is 'British Birds'. My images were both taken and presented digitally. All the images were captured using a Canon 40D fitted with either a 17-85mm, Canon 100-400mm IS USM zoom lens or a Sigma 500mm APO DG USM lens and a 1.4x converter. The software used was Adobe Photoshop CS3.

My aim with the images was to portray the colours, beauty, behaviour, movement, atmosphere and, where possible, the feather structures of the birds. All subjects of course are wild, free and photographed in an environment of their choosing.

The layout and coherence of the images is critical, it is important to get this right, in particular the contrast of the images must be consistent. Inconsistency is a trap that is easy to fall into when your pictures are digital as you deal with them on a one to one basis. It's easy to miss one that stands out like a beacon

#### **1. Guillemot with fish**

The guillemot had just come out of the water with a fish in it's mouth. I particularly like the drops of water dripping off the fish and the overhead lighting. St. Abbs Head, south east Scotland. Canon 40D and Sigma 500mm lens

#### **2. Fulmar in flight**

Taken at Sumburgh Head on Shetland. It was a difficult shot because of the back lighting; I was pleased when I got the exposure right. The fulmar was circling the cliff and turning away from me as I took the shot. Canon 40D Canon 100-400 IS USM lens.

#### **3. Shag wing drying**

Taken on the Farne Islands in Northumberland. The bird was very close and I took the shot with a 17-85mm zoom IS USM lens. I like the detail in the feathers. The light was defused and I think it worked for this particular subject. The shag is sometimes known as the Green Cormorant, the picture illustrates this.

#### **4. Arctic Tern aggression**

The tern was very aggressive as I walked passed its nest at the side of the path. I like the sky on this shot which was taken on the Farne Islands Northumberland, with a 17-85mm IS USM lens.





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## 5. Puffin in flight

Taken on the Treshnish Islands off the Isle of Mull. The puffins were coming and going and I took the opportunity to get the shot as the bird flew across from the left. Canon 100-400mm IS USM zoom lens.



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## 6. Guillemot taking off.

This shot was taken in the harbour at Eyemouth in south east Scotland. I had been watching the bird for some time as it sat on the surface of the water. Eventually after about an hour it started to take off and I made the shot. Canon 40D Canon 100-400mm IS USM zoom lens.



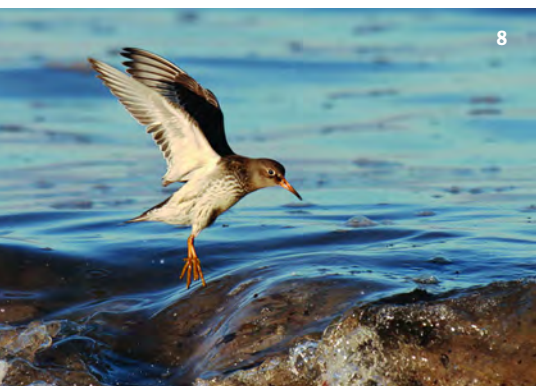
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## 7. Gannets diving

I had been out to Bass Rock to photograph Gannets - during the return trip to Dunbar the skipper of the boat threw fish bits into the water and the gannets dived for them. I was trying for a shot of a Gannet under the water and I got lucky with this shot as the four birds came in together after the same piece of fish.

## 8. Purple Sandpiper

Taken on my 'local patch' - Little Beach at Berwick upon Tweed. I go here when I have an hour to spare. At high tide there are often some nice waders feeding. I watched this bird for about an hour as it moved up with the tide. Eventually it came within 10 metres of me and I got the shot as it hopped the waves. Canon 40D Sigma 500mm lens



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## 9. Bar-tailed Godwit

Another image taken at Little Beach, Berwick upon Tweed. I watched the bird for over an hour before it performed as I wanted it to. Canon 40D Sigma 500mm lens

## 10. Red-necked Phalarope

Loch Funzi (pronounced Finny) on Fetlar, Shetland Islands, was the venue for this picture. Funzie hold the majority of Britain's breeding population of Red-necked Phalaropes. I waited at the edge of the loch for the bird to come to me. It sat on the rock and preened itself and had a stretch, that's when I took the shot. Canon 40D canon 100-400 IS USM lens.

### 11. Sanderling

Also from Little Beach, Berwick upon Tweed. There was a small flock of Sanderling feeding in the shoreline. They were running in and out with the waves and I took the shot. Canon 40D Sigma 500mm lens

### 12. Goldfinch

This is a frequent visitor to my garden. I particularly like the vibrant colours of their feathers. Canon 40D Sigma 500mm lens.

### 13. Northern Wheatear

Taken on Shetland - the bird was collecting food to feed its young at a nearby nest. Canon 40D Sigma 500mm lens.

### 14. Chaffinch

Another frequent visitor to my garden, the bird was coming into land on a small bush, and using manual focusing I got the shot. Canon 40D Sigma 500mm lens

### 15. Nuthatch.

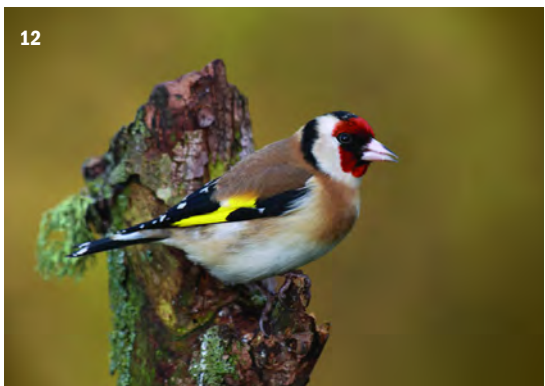
This is my favourite bird and another frequent visitor to my garden which always performs. I like the classic pose of this picture. Canon 40D Sigma 500mm lens

During the year I was taking these picture, I have dangled over cliffs upside down, sat in my little hide in baking heat, in sub zero conditions for hours until I couldn't feel my legs and could hardly walk, I was almost blown to Norway from Shetland and half drowned in torrential rain. However, it has all been worth it and I think I will enjoy the effort of trying to get my Fellowship even more with Sandy Cleland's help.

If you are thinking about going for one of the distinctions, do it, it will make you a better photographer.

Many thanks Sandy

More of Ron McCombe's pictures can be seen at his website: [www.wildlife-photography](http://www.wildlife-photography)





# Aspects of Kenya

by Ken Rasmussen LRPS



"Typical", said my wife. "It always happens when you don't have your camera". A group of aptly named Superb Starlings had just landed on the rock behind us, which was serving as a bird table. Vervet monkeys were scampering through the trees above us waiting for a chance to steal some food, Impala and Waterbuck were quietly grazing on the lawns nearby and less than a hundred yards away a Buffalo was knee deep in water. Overhearing my wife, Peter, the manager of the lodge where we were staying, immediately offered to fetch my camera bag. I said not to bother as we were about to sit down to lunch under a large spreading fig tree. Instead of getting my cameras, Peter fetched a chair and placed it carefully in front of the bird table so that I could photograph the birds later at leisure. Peter's actions were typical of the friendliness and helpfulness we encountered on our first Kenya holiday.

Our holiday, which celebrated both my 60th birthday and my retirement, was focussed on wildlife. Named 'Aspects of Kenya' by our tour operator, it involved visits to four different areas of the country. Our first destination, Amboseli

National Park, lies on the northern foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro. Amboseli has a wide range of wildlife but it is famous for its elephants. Though there has been some conflict with the local Masai tribes the elephants have not been poached and so are relaxed around vehicles. We had a mother and baby within twenty feet but our guide said they would sometimes rub up against the vehicles. In the day during dry months, the animals mostly congregate in the 'swamps', wet areas fed from the melt waters running off Kilimanjaro. This gives the unusual sight of elephant and buffalo standing thigh deep in water and eating the floating vegetation, with the water surface acting as a convenient dinner table.

Although it was often cloudy, our time in Amboseli taught me how fickle the Africa light can be. Game drives normally take place in the early mornings following a 6am wake up call with coffee and biscuits, and in the late afternoon to catch the best light. If the light is right – low warm and gentle, and if it falls nicely on the subject, it can be ideal. All too often, however, the animals are not quite where you would like them and of course, they keep moving altering the angle of the light.

Patience and a great deal of exposure manipulation were often required. It helps if your guide can go off road in order to position the vehicle to get the best angle. This was not possible in Amboseli National Park so we occasionally went to a nearby, Masai owned, 'concession area' where off road travel is allowed. This offered more flexible positioning of the vehicles and the chance to get closer to predators such as lions.

Our second stop was Lewa Wilderness Trails, in the vicinity of Mount Kenya. Wilderness Trails is part of the Lewa Conservancy which is dedicated to wildlife conservation and to helping development of local communities. The area is home to twenty percent of the world population of Grevy's Zebras. Grevy's Zebras have much narrower stripes than the more common plains zebra which we had seen in Amboseli. Here we were able to go on game drives, undertake guided walks and had the unusual sight of a group of three male Cheetah brothers. Although usually solitary, male Cheetah siblings often stay together and by hunting as a group are able to bring down much larger prey than a lone Cheetah.



*White-backed Vulture*



*Elephant*



*Wildebeest migration*





*Cheetah brothers*



*Hippo*



*Lilac-breasted Roller*

Lewa is also a sanctuary for the endangered black rhino. One of the wild female Black Rhino has bred successfully on several occasions. Sadly, however, she is blind and always loses track of her calves shortly after birth. Rather than leaving the babies to be killed by predators, the Conservancy staff aim to rescue them for hand rearing so they can be released back into the wild. This gave us the unusual opportunity to help feed an orphaned four month old Black Rhino.

Amboseli's elephants notwithstanding, telephoto lenses are, of course, a must for safaris. I chose to take a 70-200mm image stabilised lens together with a 1.4x teleconverter. On my 1.6x crop Canon camera the zoom gives the magnification of 112 - 320mm lens on a film camera and with the teleconverter this increases to (roughly) 160 - 450 mm. I had planned to use the teleconverter only occasionally but soon found it best to keep it on all the time. For the most part this worked well, but there were times when an even longer lens would have been useful. I suspect however, that this would have been true no matter how long my lens had been. I also took a second camera body, partly as a backup but also for closer shots. On this second body I used a 24-105 mm lens. This proved wide enough for small group shots, for the occasional landscape and for those times when the animals came really close. (My wife was amazed that lions could come within a few feet of the vehicle and not realise that dinner is a short leap away). I also took a wider lens which was rarely used and a small macro lens which was never used. On previous safaris (in South Africa) I had found many opportunities to photograph insects, this time, however, we saw very few mainly, I think, because it was the wrong season.

We then moved to the Rift valley, the scene of my attempts to photograph the starlings. The main attraction here was in Lake Nakuru National Park. Lake Nakuru is a soda lake, home to huge flocks of Flamingos, which gather to feed on algae in the lake. When we arrived a lone Buffalo was patrolling the water's edge causing panic among the Flamingo flocks. Buffalo usually move in groups. Single Buffalo are rare and are usually old males. These tend to be the most aggressive, so we decided to move further along the lake. Here we could get quite close to the birds with some opportunities for flight shots. Lunch at a lookout point high above the lake allowed us to appreciate



just how many birds there are as they formed a ribbon of pink along the shoreline. Here we were also entertained by a group of Dassies (Rock Hyrax) which scampered among the rocks looking for scraps of food. Dassies are small, rabbit sized mammals and are one of the closest relatives of elephants.

For storage I took six 2GB cards. In addition I had two portable downloaders, the second so that I had a backup. One, the Epson P5000 has a small screen on which the pictures can be viewed. I confess, I like the reassurance of being able to see a picture on the downloader. The message, 'download complete' which appears on my other downloader leaves me wondering if my pictures really are there. Seeing is believing!

For the final leg of our trip we went to the Masai Mara. Here we were fortunate to see the 'shall we, shan't we' antics of the Wildebeest on their annual migration. We were told that the animals often cross back and forth across the Mara River several times before finally moving on to the grasslands of the Serengeti in Tanzania. We were lucky to see a crossing and also saw a few stranded animals which had crossed only to find the bank on the other side too high to climb. One by one they were picked off by the crocodiles. (This was one occasion when a longer lens would have been useful!) Whilst in the Mara we also witnessed the birth of a calf Topi (a large antelope) which was up and running with ten minutes of being born.

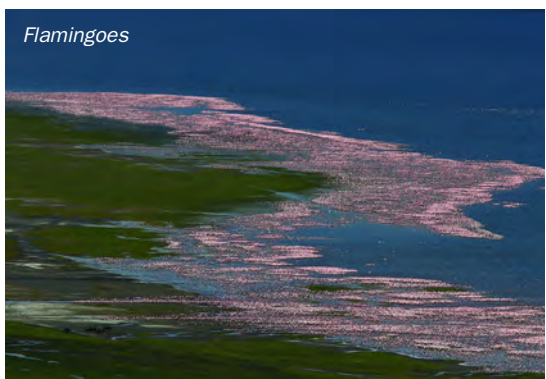
As we were driving back to the airstrip in the Mara for the first leg of our trip home, our driver stopped near a trickling stream. He gave the Swahili name for the place, saying it meant, 'Place of no doubt'. "No doubt you will get stuck if it rains", he added, a twinkle in his eye. I looked around me. Within a hundred yards I could see five species of mammal, several types of bird were flitting among the nearby bushes or flying overhead and the tree dotted plains stretched as far as the eye could see. It is, I thought, a photographer's paradise.

P.S. I never did get a good photo of the superb starlings. A spectacled weaver, however, was more accommodating and I was pleased with one of my photos of it.

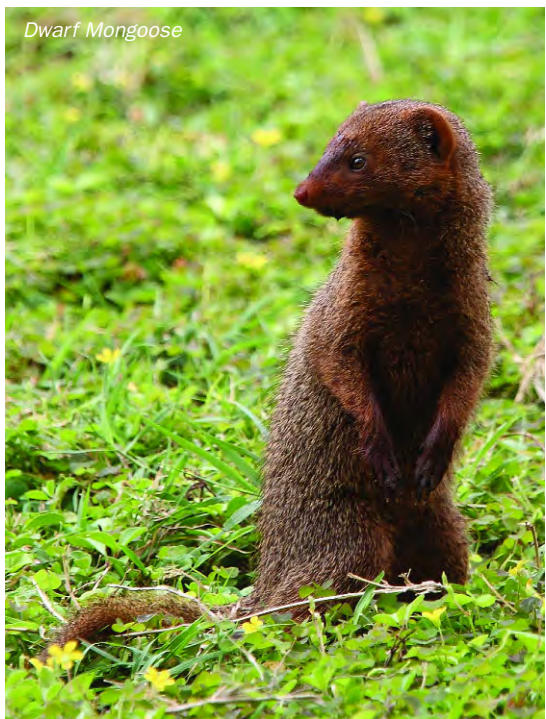
Some of the images used in this article formed part of Ken's successful LRPS panel.



*Lion*



*Flamingoes*



*Dwarf Mongoose*



## Pictures

Left: Four-spotted Chaser  
 Bottom left: Willow Catkin  
 Below: Greengage blossom  
 Bottom right: June Rose



# Wicken Fen

by Patricia Kreyer ARPS

The first tract of wetland at Wicken Fen – which came to the National Trust piecemeal and includes Sedge Fen and Adventurers' Fen, was purchased in 1899, making it Britain's oldest nature Reserve and one of the few surviving remnants of undrained fenland in East Anglia.

The small wooden smock drainage mill, reconstructed on its present site in 1956, is the last surviving working windpump in Cambridgeshire. By pumping water into rather than out of the fen, it helps to maintain water levels and protect the spongy peat from drying out. To retain the traditional balance between the various wetland habitats, the beds and fields are regularly harvested; the reed and sedge for thatching; while the litter (once cut for hay) is gathered and burned. Fen Cottage, built with traditional Fenland materials is furnished as it would have been in the 1930s.

The livelihoods of the original inhabitants of Fen Cottage would have been closely linked to the fen including the harvesting of sedge, reed, litter and buckthorn (used in the manufacture of gunpowder), peat and clay digging and the shooting and trapping of wildfowl and fish. The local inhabitants would have used the local network of lodes and rivers to transport goods and produce to market

Wicken Fen is home to an incredible range of wildlife. The rich, peat soil of the sedge fen and the centuries of management enable hundreds of plant species to thrive. The soil, water and plants create habitats for thousands of animal species. In total over 7800 species of plants, fungi and animals have been recorded making Wicken Fen one of the most species rich nature reserves in Britain.

The birds, dragonflies, butterflies and wild flowers are the most easily seen wildlife when you walk around the Fen. From the Tower Hide there are great views over the Mere (local term for shallow lake) and of its birds such as Herons, cormorants, many ducks and geese, and often a Marsh Harrier. The bright yellow Brimstone butterfly flies at Wicken from March onwards along with 27 other butterfly species. Britain's largest dragonfly, the Emperor, is common, as are 18 other species.

The clear water in the ditches, ponds and river (locally called a 'Lode') attract a lot of the wildlife. You can see Roach, Rudd and Perch in Wicken

Lode, whirligig beetles and pond skaters whizzing around on the water surface and dragonflies will 'hawk' up and down, hunting insects and looking for mates. You might even see a grass snake swimming along a ditch looking for frogs – its favourite food.

Wicken Fen is a special place because it is a surviving fragment of the once huge area of fen wetland that stretched from Cambridge to the Wash. Many of the species that live at Wicken are now very rare in Britain. Sadly some of the species that did occur at Wicken have now become extinct. This is because Wicken Fen is simply too small and too isolated from other fen nature reserves for all these species to survive forever.

However, there are exciting things happening at Wicken which, hopefully, will secure its place as one of our major nature reserves. This year, Wicken Fen is celebrating its 110th anniversary and the 10th anniversary of the Wicken Fen Vision, an ambitious project by the National Trust to create a 56 sq km 'green lung' for Cambridgeshire and the East of England – between Cambridge (East) and Wicken Fen - and will involve the Trust acquiring 5,600 hectares of farmland which will be managed for nature conservation. This will be the biggest project of its kind in lowland England – it won't happen overnight, in fact it will take up to 100 years and will provide local residents and everyone who may visit Wicken Fen in the years to come –

- Space to breathe for people and wildlife
- Space to think about the environment and the future
- Space to explore on foot, bike, horse and boat

On Saturday June 13 2009, Ann Miles FRPS and I will be at Wicken Fen and would be delighted to see any members of the RPS and in particular members of the Nature Group, for a morning, walking around the Fen. We will be there from 9.0 – 12.00 and are starting early in order to see and photograph as many dragonflies etc as possible before they become too active. There are long walks – and short walks (!) plus there is a splendid circular board walk which is highly suitable for pushchairs, wheelchairs or anyone who finds that they're not quite as mobile as they once were.

A Dragonfly Safari is also being held over the weekend of June 13/14. The organisers – not ourselves – have promised that we will be ‘amazed’ at the aeronautical flying displays of the 21 species of dragonfly and damselflies that inhabit the waterways of Wicken Fen.

Close to the Visitors’ Centre is an excellent café which serves home-made cakes, light lunches and hot soup. Parking (Pay and Display) is free for National Trust members. Dogs are welcome but they must be kept on a lead at all times.

Should you want to observe Wicken Fen at night or in the very early morning, why not stay overnight? Another National Trust property in the area is Anglesey Abbey so why not think about combining a visit to both in the same weekend?

I do hope that you will think about joining us on June 13. We’ll have a lot of fun – and that’s a promise!

Local accommodation includes:

Spinney Abbey, Wicken, Cambs. 01353 720971  
Bridge House, Stretham, Cambs. 01353 649212  
Greenways, Prickwillow Road, Queen Adelaide, Ely, Cambs. 01353 666706

Quarterway House, Ely Road, Little Thetford, Cambs. 01353 648964

Heath Court Hotel, Moulton Road, Newmarket, Suffolk 01638 667171

The Lamb Hotel, 2 Lynn Road, Ely, Cambs. 01353 663574

Rosary Country House Hotel, 15 Church Street, Exning, Cambs. 01638 577312

Our contact numbers are:

■ Patricia Kreyer 01353 615623 or  
07774 476723

■ Ann Miles 01223 262637 or  
07710 383586

# RPS Nature Group Residential Field Meeting

**Friday 8th to Monday 11th May 2009**

**The Kingcombe Centre, Toller Porcorum, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 0EQ**

This highly successful Residential Field Weekend will run again in 2009.

Cost: £185 to £199 per person for three nights, depending on type of accommodation.  
Price includes full board, packed lunches, accommodation and VAT at 15%.

Members familiar with Kingcombe Centre, will be pleased to know that with the completed conversion of the Cowshed, 10 additional en-suite and two private rooms are now available.

To apply for a place on the course, please contact:

John Bebbington FRPS, Quantock View, Newtown, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9SE  
Email: [john.bebbingtonfrps@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:john.bebbingtonfrps@ukonline.co.uk)

Members in the Northern counties might be interested to know that next year’s Residential Field Meeting will be held at Blencathra, 28th to 31st May 2010.

# Nature Group Field Meetings 2009

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**Date & time:** Friday 24th April 2009

**Location:** Central Derbyshire

**Leader:** Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

**Contact:** 0115 928 1050

**Main subjects of interest:** possible opportunities to photograph Little Grebe and Water Vole.

**Additional Information:** Booking is essential. This meeting will be strictly limited to only 10 photographers. Because the situation can change from time to time, further details will be given at time of booking. Final details will be communicated to members who have booked during the week before 24th April 2009.

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**Date & time:** Saturday May 2nd, 10.00am

**Location:** Eaton Woods, nr Retford, Notts.

**Meeting Place:** Contact Leader for directions/map

**Leader:** Andrew Parsons ARPS

**Contact:** 01636 821768 or  
andrewparsonarps@aol.com

**Main subjects of interest:** Woodland flowers

**Additional information:** Bring strong footwear, waterproofs, packed lunch, etc.

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**Date & time:** 30th May, 11.30am

**Location:** Kenwood (Hampstead Heath)

**Meeting Place:** West Heath Lodge car park

**Leader:** Diana Elena Antonescu

**Contact:** imagesdiana@gmail.yahoo.co.uk or  
mobile 07910 170308

**Main subjects of interest:** ancient trees, a good range of plants and invertebrates, Green Woodpeckers are possible. Kenwood Gardens has extensive grounds, lake and woodlands.

**Additional Information:** Car parking free. Bring wellingtons, waterproofs, etc. There is also a nice cafe at Kenwood or bring a packed lunch. Access for disabled/members with limited mobility.

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**Date & time:** Saturday 13th June, 9.00am

**Location:** Wicken Fen National Trust Reserve

**Meeting Place:** Visitor Centre, Wicken Fen, Lode Lane, Wicken, Ely, Cambs, CB7 5XP

**Leaders:** Patricia Kreyer and Ann Miles.

**Contact:** Patricia 01353 615623  
or Ann 01223 262637

**Main subjects of interest:** An abundance of wildlife including many species of moth and butterfly, over 200 species of birds plus a spectacular array of dragonflies. Flowering meadows, sedge and reedbeds. Rarities include Hen Harrier, Water Vole and Bittern.

**Additional Information:** Bring stout shoes, waterproofs & wellingtons if wet. Car Parking £2 (Pay & Display) but free to National Trust members. Cafe on site serves light lunches, home made cakes, hot soup and drinks or bring packed lunch. Raised boardwalk from Visitors' centre allows those with limited mobility access to part of the Fen.

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**Date & time:** June 13th & 14th, 10am

**Location:** Ynas Las & Cwm Einon

**Meeting Place:** Ynas Las Visitor Centre  
(Near Borth, Mid Wales)

**Grid Reference:** SN 610941

**Leader:** John Jones ARPS

**Contact:** Tel 01509 672125

**Main subjects of interest:** Orchids, lichens, mosses, Red Kites etc.

**Additional information:** Bring stout shoes, waterproofs and a packed lunch. Meet at the visitor centre 10am both days. Car parking £1.00

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**Date & time:** Saturday 4th July, 10.00am

**Location:** Ryewater Nursery, off the A352  
Sherborne - Dorchester road

**Meeting Place:** car park

**Grid Reference:** ST665106 (OS 1:50 000 sheet 194

**Leader:** John Bebbington FRPS

**Contact:** john.bebbingtonfrps.ukonline.co.uk

**Main subjects of interest:** flowers, butterflies, dragonflies

**Additional Information:** Car parking free, by kind permission of the site owner, Clive Farrell. Bring wellingtons, waterproofs and a packed lunch. Not suitable for disabled/less mobile members.

**Date & time:** Sunday June 28th, 10.00am  
**Location:** Acorn Farm (Meet at address below - not at the farm)  
**Meeting Place:** The Lodge, 43 Main Street, Sutton on Trent, Newark, Notts. NG23 6PF  
Sutton on Trent is a mile from the A1 between Newark & Retford.  
**Leader:** Andrew Parsons ARPS  
**Contact:** Tel 01636 821768 or Email: andrewparsonarps@aol.com  
**Main subjects of interest:** Summer flowers, dragonflies, damselfies and butterflies  
**Other information:** Bring strong footwear, waterproofs and packed lunch. For more details: [www.acornfarmvisits.co.uk](http://www.acornfarmvisits.co.uk)

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**Date & time:** Wednesday 7th October 2009  
**Location:** Sherwood Pines  
**Grid Reference:** OS Sheet 120 Car Park 611 638  
**Meeting Place:** Main Car Park accessed from B6030, Sherwood Pines is well signposted.  
**Leader:** Robert Hawkesworth FRPS  
**Contact:** Tel 0115 928 1050 Please use this number to book the meeting. Mobile 07960 177291 for use on the day only.  
**Main subjects of interest:** Fungi.  
**Additional Information:** Charge for car parking, in the region of £2. Bring stout shoes/boots, or wellingtons and usual outdoor clothing suitable for autumn. Small café on site or bring a packed lunch.

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**Date & time:** Saturday October 17th 10.30am  
**Location:** Dunham Massey (National Trust)  
**Meeting Place:** The membership kiosk between the car park and the entrance to the parkland.  
**Grid Reference:** Sheet 109: SJ 735874  
**Directions:** Follow brown signs from M56 jct 7 and A56. M6 jct 19.  
**Leader:** Tony Bond FRPS  
**Contact:** Tel 01942 674773  
**Main subjects of interest:** Fungi & Fallow Deer. If you wish to photograph the deer it is recommended that you do so before the foray.  
**Additional Information:** The car park opens at 9.00am. and costs £4.00 (N.T. members free). Bring stout shoes. Restaurant on site or bring packed lunch.

**Date & time** Saturday 10th October, 10.00am  
**Location:** Ebernoe Common NNR, W Sussex.  
**Meeting Place:** Car park next to Ebernoe Church.  
**Grid Reference:** 197 SU 976 278.  
**Leader:** Adrian Davies,  
**Contact:** Tel 01372 815653 or Email [apdavies@nescot.ac.uk](mailto:apdavies@nescot.ac.uk)

**Main subjects of interest:** Ancient woodland with over 600 recorded species of fungi.  
**Additional information:** Directions: From A283 (3 miles North of Petworth, 1.5 miles South of Northchapel) turn into Streels Lane signposted Ebernoe. After 1.5 miles turn right, just past telephone & post boxes into Church & Reserve access road, signposted Ebernoe Church/School House. Please park considerately. No access problems for disabled. Bring: Packed lunch & stout shoes (reserve paths could be muddy). Cost: £2 contribution to Reserve Funds. Please phone Leader to check that meeting is on.

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**Date & time:** Saturday 21st November, 10.00am  
**Location:** Donna Nook, Lincolnshire  
**Meeting Place:** Car Park  
**Grid Reference:** TF 422998  
**Leader:** Colin Smale ARPS  
**Contact:** Email [fotolincs@ntlworld.com](mailto:fotolincs@ntlworld.com)  
**Main subjects of interest:** Grey seals, pups, courting and fighting  
**Additional Information:** Car parking free but if full cars may be parked in a nearby field for a £1.00 fee to the farmer. Bring wellingtons, waterproofs and a packed lunch. Leader will email map and details to anyone interested. The main focus will be on the seals out in the surf and basking on the outer sandbanks - you can get very close to the seals playing, courting, fighting in the rolling surf. This involves a 30 minute trek across wet sands and a thin layer of mud, but well worth it. We will be going out on a falling tide so there is no danger from tides. Members with limited mobility will still be able to enjoy a good photographic day out as seals at the top of the beach may be photographed at close quarters and only two minutes walk from the car park.

**Due to the unpredictability of the appearance of fungi it would be wise to contact the leader a couple of days before the meeting.**



# CHAIRMAN'S DAY

A full day of Nature Photography hosted by Peter Jones ARPS

**Sunday 8th November 2009, 10 a.m.**

Smethwick Photographic Society,  
The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands

## PROGRAMME

10.00 am	Arrival - Coffee/Tea	12.45 pm	Lunch
10.30 am	Introduction from the Chairman, Peter Jones ARPS	2.00 pm	'A Year of Wildlife' by Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
11.15 am	'Wildlife of Kew Gardens' and 'Wildlife in China' by Heather Angel Hon. FRPS	3.00 pm	'Wildlife from the Highlands and Islands' by Martin Dyer
		4.00 pm	Coffee/Tea and finish time

**Tickets are available now, priced at £15 each incl Lunch, Teas and Coffees.**

**Ensure your place - Book now!**

Complete the reply slip below and send with your cheque to arrive not later than 30th September 2009.

Please send to: **Peter Jones ARPS, Manor Barn, 3 Church View, Bilsthorpe, Notts, NG22 8TB**

Please make cheques payable to: **The RPS Nature Group**

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets for Chairman's Day I enclose my cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

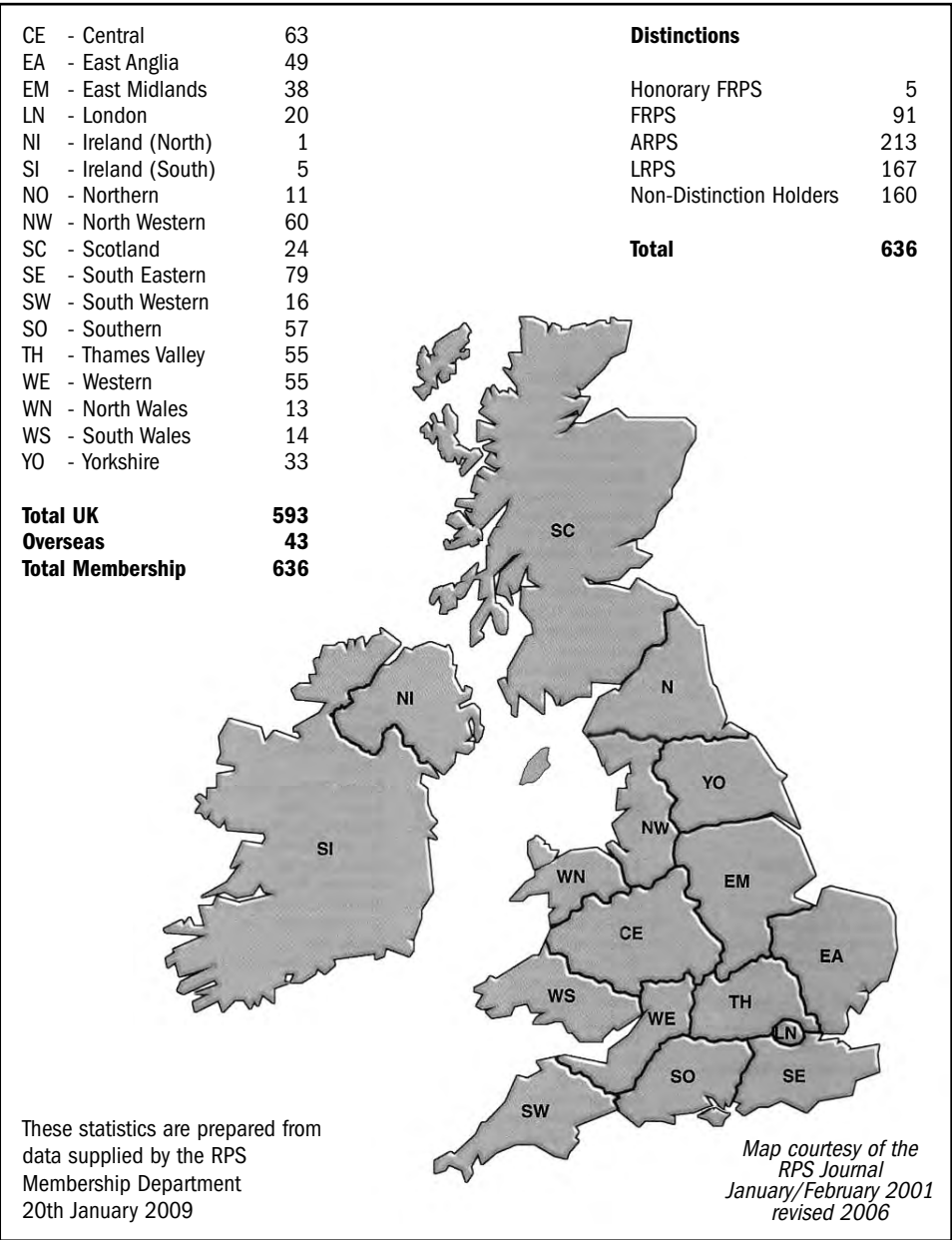
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Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

# Regions

Shown Below are Nature Group members per RPS region together with regional codes and other statistics



# Photography courses with John Bebbington FRPS

*John specialises in close-up photography of flowers and insects and has been leading photography courses in the UK and abroad since 1979. He also lectures to Photographic and Natural History societies. In 1991 he was awarded the FRPS and has served twice as a member of the Nature A&F Panel. He is also Secretary of the Somerset Moth Group.*

**Friday 13 – Sunday 15 March**

## **An introduction to Macro Nature Photography The Folly Farm Centre (Avon Wildlife Trust)**

A course for newcomers to digital close-up and macro photography of flowers and insects.

Course fees: residential, £245; contact the Centre for non-resident fee.

Website: <http://www.follyfarm.org/>

Email: [enquiries@follyfarm.org](mailto:enquiries@follyfarm.org) Tel: 01275 331590



**Monday 6 – Friday 10 July**

## **Macro Nature Photography The Kingcombe Centre, Dorset**

Techniques and problem solving for newcomers to close-up photography of flowers and invertebrates whilst giving excellent opportunities for more experienced workers in an exceptionally species rich region.

Course fees per person: single room with private facilities, £320; Twin/double room with private facilities, £310; single room with ensuite facilities, £350; Twin/double room with ensuite facilities, £320; non-resident, £250.

Website: [www.kingcombecentre.org.uk](http://www.kingcombecentre.org.uk)

Email: [office@kingcombecentre.org.uk](mailto:office@kingcombecentre.org.uk) Tel: 01300 320684



**Friday 7 August–Tuesday 11 August**

## **Insect Photography Workshop Preston Montford Field Centre, nr Shrewsbury**

Techniques to overcome the common problems of insect photography in the field.

Course fees: sole room occupancy £340; shared room £300; non-resident £238.

Web: [www.field-studies-council.org/2009/courseinfo.aspx?id=405](http://www.field-studies-council.org/2009/courseinfo.aspx?id=405) Tel: 0845 330 7378

Email: [enquiries.pm@field-studies-council.org](mailto:enquiries.pm@field-studies-council.org)



**Monday 17th – Friday 21st August**

## **Close-up and Macro Photography in the Field Blencathra Centre, Cumbria**

This course will demonstrate techniques and solve problems for newcomers to close-up photography of flowers and invertebrates whilst giving excellent opportunities for more experienced workers.

Course fees: sole room occupancy £325; shared room £285; non-resident £225.

Website: <http://www.field-studies-council.org/2009/courseinfo.aspx?id=501>

Email: [enquiries.bl@field-studies-council.org](mailto:enquiries.bl@field-studies-council.org)

Tel. 017687 79601



**Pictures from Dickie Duckett's successful F panel:**

**Top left** **Great Egret** (*Casmerodius albus*)  
preening - Florida

**Top right** **Black Grouse** (*Tetrao tetrix*)  
displaying at lek - Scotland

**Opposite** **Brown Pelican** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)  
diving for fish - Florida

**Bottom** **Common Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)  
bathing - Hungary

