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THE **RPS**
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

THE IRIS

MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 124 / Spring 2016



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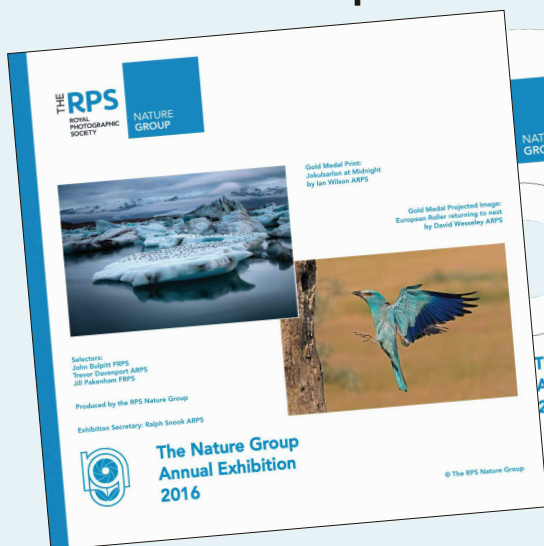
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See the RPS website for details.

The Nature Group
Annual Exhibition
2016

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

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Copy should be sent as .txt or .doc files by email or on CD. Please do not send hand written copy.

Digitally captured photographic images are preferred but scanned transparencies are also acceptable. Images (whether vertical or horizontal) should be supplied on CD as sRGB Tiff files, 6" x 4" at 300 pixels per inch (1800 x 1200 pixels, file size approx 6.17MB). If your image is selected for use on the cover of The Iris you will be requested to supply a file size with dimensions approx 3000 x 2000 pixels.

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Cover shot: Great Spotted Woodpecker
by Bob Connelly ARPS

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Nature Group Exhibitions

CDs/DVDs of Nature Group Exhibitions are available for purchase by camera clubs/photographic societies for use in their programme. Please contact the Exhibition Secretary, details above.

Editorial

I am writing this from a very blustery and (yet again) very wet Norfolk, but fortunately no flooding as serious as those seen in other parts of the country.

I have never been a big fan of the British winter, even more so now than when I was younger. This mild, wet and often very windy weather does not favour photographers. For several years I lived in Vermont, in the north-east corner of the USA, finally returning to the UK in the late 80s. During that time I experienced temperatures down to -40C, snow falls measured in feet and ice storms which left the countryside looking like a set for The Ice Queen but very photogenic! Since then my experiences of winter have mostly been very different indeed.

Norfolk has been in the news too often in recent weeks due to the beaching of whales on our shores and it has been distressing to see the lives of these all too rarely seen creatures end in such a way.

I am sure that many of you will be sorry to learn that our friend Robert Hawkesworth passed away suddenly at the end of October. I know that many of you will have attended his Field Meetings in Derbyshire or Nottinghamshire - they were always so well attended. Robert leaves a big gap in the Nature Photography community and will be missed for many years to come.

This issue sees articles by eight members and covers a mix of subject matter. Three of the articles are from recently successful applicants for the Associate Distinction and offers those of you who may be working towards your own submission an opportunity to see for yourself where the standard is.

This issue also includes details of summer Field Meetings, but please check the Nature Group section of the RPS website regularly for late additions to the programme. We are also planning a special meeting to celebrate the Nature Group's 40th Anniversary - details can be found on page four. The combined Spring Meeting, AGM and Annual Exhibition Opening will take place on 9th April, details on page five.

To everyone who submitted their work following my last request, a big 'Thank You'. If you are not included in this issue you will certainly be included in the Summer issue.

Last but not least, I am pleased to report that we have recruited both a new Editor and a new Secretary. They will be introduced at the AGM and in the next issue of The Iris.

Wishing you all good light and good shooting.



From the chair

As I write 'From the Chair' for this Spring issue of The Iris, the news is all about the terrible flooding across much of northern England and Scotland and Wales. I am sure that all NG members will sympathise with the plight of those affected, and wish everyone a much drier 2016.

The weather here in Bedfordshire during early winter has not been exceptional except for the much higher temperatures than normal, resulting in frogs being active in many gardens. The world's weather seems to becoming much more volatile, which of course can badly affect many kinds of wildlife. Here birds are singing and displaying courtship behaviour, and spring flowers are starting to bloom, which is not good for early January.

In late October I was deeply saddened to hear of the death of my good friend Robert Hawkesworth FRPS. Robert was one of nature's gentlemen, always glad to help others and of course a very fine photographer himself. It must have been back in the late 1990's when I first met Robert and his wife Barbara, and since then we had become very good friends. Over many years Robert has done a great deal for the Nature Group, including leading many field meetings. Robert served on the Nature Group committee for many years, and was a past Chairman, he also served for many years on the RPS Natural History Distinctions Panel. He will be greatly missed.

The article: 'Confused by the Nature Definitions? You are not on your own', by Dawn Osborn FRPS in the Winter 2015 issue of The Iris, highlighted how stupid things have become regarding judging natural history entries in international and national exhibitions. If this kind of judging continues I foresee the Wildlife and Nature sections being dropped from many exhibitions in the near future, as they will be deemed too difficult to judge. What has happened to common sense? For our own Nature Group Annual Exhibition I can assure members that they will be allowed to enter a bird sitting on a post, or on wire, or sitting on a chimney pot, even though these items will have been put there by a human!

From comments made on the day and subsequent communications, it seems that my Chairman's Day event was enjoyed by those attending. As always Mike Lane FRPS gave an excellent show, which was not only full of top quality images but he also gave tips on how he captured them and other useful advice. His range of photographic accessories, which were for sale, also attracted much attention.

Roger Hance FRPS had the unenviable task of following Mike, however Roger's show was also a 'top notch' presentation full of great pictures, often close up photography of insects and flowers that was not covered in Mike's show. Roger's tips on techniques and his humorous remarks finished the morning session on a high.

The afternoon session started with Richard Nicoll ARPS, Jill Packenham FRPS and Gill Cardy FRPS showing their successful Distinctions panels, and they also answered questions put to them by members attending.

The final part of the event was my presentation, with some pictures from the various photographic 'projects' that I have completed over the years.

It is always sad to hear of people who in the past had been active members of the Nature Group but are now suffering from failing health. Kevin Place, the son of Roy Place FRPS informs me that his father is terminally ill. Roy was a Nature Group committee member in the late 1990's to 2001 when he became Vice Chairman of the Nature Group, but before he took up the post as Chairman he retired to live in Spain. He was a fine nature photographer, and if you wish to see some of Roy's pictures you can visit his Website www.500px.com/royplace

Several members have said that they would like to have more Nature Group field trips in their part of the UK. Well, to achieve that we need volunteer leaders. If you know somewhere suitable in your area, please consider sharing it with other Nature Group members. Without people to lead field meetings there can be no field meetings! So please get in touch with Barbara Lawton FRPS and discuss your thoughts with her. It would be good to have some field meetings in the West Country as well as in Wales and Scotland.

Plans are well under way for the Nature Group's 40th anniversary event. This will take place on Sunday October 16th, at Smethwick P.S. Oldbury, West Midlands, so make a note of that date in your diary, as it will be an event not to be missed. Full details will appear in the Summer issue of The Iris, and will also be posted on the Nature Group's Website.



RPS Nature Group 40th Anniversary Meeting.

Sunday 16th October 2016.

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

Doors open 9.30 am for 10.00 am start.

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

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

Cost: £10 per ticket. Maximum number of tickets available is 80.

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

Full details and ticket application details will be given in the summer issue of The Iris.

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

by Ludi Lochner

The options open to you, when considering a safari in the Kruger National Park, depend very much on the amount of time you have available.

In addition to a day's travel, you should allow yourself a further day or two in which to recover from the fatigue of travelling. You should also allow for at least three nights in a camp – one day being taken up in travelling between camps and two further days for game spotting in the area of the camp. On that basis, you should plan for a minimum of six nights but, preferably, nine or more nights!

The Short Stay Option

If you only have time for a short stay, then your best option is to visit the southern Kruger. Enter through either Malelane or Crocodile Bridge Gates. Both entrances are short distances from the main Johannesburg/Pretoria to Maputo (Mozambique) road and connecting roads are short and good. Don't attempt to enter the Park through gates on the southern, west-facing boundary of the Park – the roads to those gates pass through areas that I would not consider safe.

The southern half of the Park is reputed to be richer in game than the northern half. My experience is that game density varies from year-to-year depending on where rain has fallen and that may vary widely across the Park. The larger herbivores will move to better grazing areas and the larger predators - lion and cheetah, will follow them.

The southern Park suffers from the disadvantage that it is within easy reach of Johannesburg and Pretoria and therefore attracts people that visit for a "jolly" and not necessarily to see and enjoy the wildlife. The roads around, particularly Skukuza, can therefore be plagued by crowds many of whom lack consideration for others, particularly photographers. I recommend the following camps in the south - Berg-en-Dal, Skukuza and Crocodile Bridge.

Undoubtedly, my favourite hotspot in the south is Lake Panic Hide, about 5 km's to the west of Skukuza. Leave Skukuza at 05.30 am, when the gates open in the summer, and get to the hide early. Sit at

the junction of the two limbs to the hide. That will give you the best views across the entire water hole. The light is good throughout the day but the sun passes behind the surrounding trees at about 17.30 hrs in the summer causing a shadow to be cast over the water hole. Time for a G&T!

The water hole connects to the Sabi River and changes from year to year depending on flooding in the Sabi. Here you can expect to photograph a wide range of birdlife – African Jacana, Pied, Malachite, Giant, Brown-hooded and Woodland Kingfishers as well as Grey and Green-backed Heron, Black Crike, African Darter, Reed Cormorant, Three-banded Plover, Pied Wagtail and a host of other birds that come down to drink, such as up to seven species of Dove and four of Pigeon.

Keep an eye open for Water Thick-knees sitting camouflaged on the bank opposite the hide. There is often a Hippo in residence and it will sometimes co-operate by yawning - or is it showing aggression! Crocodiles of various sizes are also to be seen and can cause concern to the Jacanas who may be feeding maturing chicks! Dragonflies, within reach of the camera, can be seen sitting on water lilies. You may be lucky to have a herd of Elephant passing in front of the hide and various species of Antelope may come down to drink. A remarkable place and well worth a full day's visit!

Second on my list of hotspots in the south is where the S114 – it starts from near Malelane Gate - passes below a weir that spans the Byamiti River. With a beanbag resting on the car window sill, it is possible to position the camera just above the level of the water – wonderful for photographing animals and birds in the pool upstream of the weir! Elephants drink here and often there is a Hippo in the pool. If you are lucky, you may be able to photograph Pied Kingfishers diving for small fish. Other birds to be photographed include Saddle-billed and Black Stork, Grey Heron, Egyptian Goose, Common Sandpiper, Three-banded Plover, Hamerkop, Reed Cormorant, Blacksmith Lapwing, Common Greenshank and Southern Red Bishop.

There is room for another car to pass but this is not obvious as the road is flooded by water flowing over the weir. You may therefore be forced to give way to passing traffic. Park so that you are facing south. If forced to give way, move forward and, once off the concrete and on the road, turn to face north-west so that you are in a position to photograph birds feeding below the weir. Wait your opportunity to return to your former position! Fortunately, there is little traffic early in the morning and, as traffic builds up, the sun passes to a position where the subject is lit from behind causing its side facing the camera to be in shade. Time to leave!

White Rhinoceros are often to be seen along the S114, to the south of the weir. This area and to the east, along the southern border of the Park, are also the best places in the Park to see the rare Wild Dog.

My third hotspot in the south is the area to the north of Crocodile Bridge, particularly along the Gomondwane Loop (S130). Because of good grazing, there is often a concentration of animals in the area around Crocodile Bridge Camp including lion and Cheetah, Elephant, Rhino, Burchell's Zebra, Blue Wildebeest and Spotted Hyena. Along the Loop, you can also expect to see magpie shrike, European Bee-eater, various Larks, Arrow-marked Babbler and Wattled Lapwing.

Visiting the northern Kruger

If you are lucky enough to be able to spend two weeks or more weeks in the Kruger, then I recommend you go north. For one, there are less people there though, over recent years, various organizations have taken to arranging long weekends for birdwatchers in Punda Maria and Satara, both camps being popular with birdwatchers. The answer is to book early – by June for the next February!

In the northern Park, I recommend Punda Maria, Shingwedzi, Mopane, Letaba and Satara Camps. That leaves out just Olifants! From Johannesburg travel north on the main N1 highway to Polokwane and then east on the R71 to Phalaborwa. Spend the first few nights in Mopane, then proceed to Punda Maria, Shingwedzi, Letaba and Satara, in that order. Leave the Park through Malelane Gate, having travelled south via Skukuza. It is far safer to travel down the Park and to leave through Malelane Gate than leaving the Park through Orpen Gate. There is not much difference in travelling time and, while travelling in the Park, you might have the chance of seeing something interesting! There was a time when I would travel north along the N1 to Makhada and then east to Punda Maria Gate but, recently, there



Leading Impala Ewes, alert to danger



Hippopotamus displaying - Lake Panic



White Rhino on S.114 near Berg-en-Dal



Burchell's Zebra at Nkaya Pan



Malachite Kingfisher



Little Bee-eater, Swemi Road, Satara



Hoopoe

have been inter-tribal disturbances, just outside the Park gate, leading to indiscriminate stoning of cars passing through the area to the Kruger. The issue is still alive and disturbances can erupt at short notice. It is for that reason that I recommend entering the northern part of the Park through Phalaborwa Gate.

My first hotspot, in the North, is the low-level crossing on the Tsendze River, just south of Mopani (S142). Here the river floods over the causeway to bring with it small fish and other food that are taken by birds. If you are visiting in the morning, park on the eastern side of the causeway. If you are visiting in the afternoon, position yourself across the road with the driver's window facing east, over the causeway and towards the road beyond. While so parked, you will have to give way to traffic passing along the road, I find that, by parking the car in this way, I can reverse on the same 'swing', to line the car up with the side of the road and so allow the traffic to pass. It is then a small matter of driving forward again, on the same swing, to re-position the car as it was. Elephants also use this crossing, it being easier for them rather than bashing through the reeds downstream or wading across upstream! Therefore it is necessary to keep a constant watch for elephants approaching from the rear!

Birds I have photographed here include the ubiquitous Three-banded Plover, Laughing and Turtle Doves, Black Crane, Green-backed, Grey, Goliath and Black-crowned Heron, Water Thick-knee, Blacksmith Plover, Common Sandpiper, Hamerkop and Black Stork. Goliath heron are up to 5 feet tall! A Crocodile often keeps watch from a position a little upstream - its nose and eyes just visible. For a long time now I have tried to photograph it, with a Red Basker dragonfly perched on its nose but without success. Perhaps next year!

My second hotspot in the north is the Mahonie Loop (S99). This passes round the base of a pre-historic protrusion. Punda Maria Camp is built partly up its incline. The area enjoys the highest rainfall in the Kruger and therefore has a tropical ecology unique to the Park.

For an early start, the light is best if you go clockwise round the loop. Begin by travelling 3 km's south-east from the camp along the tarred H1-3 road and then turn right onto a dirt road. Immediately after leaving the main road, you enter a rich grazing area. Expect to see Buffalo, Impala, Grysbok and Kudu as well as Elephants. Birdlife includes the African Hoopoe, Grey Go-away, the beautiful but shy Emerald-spotted Wood-dove and Grey Hornbill. Leopards may be seen.

My third hotspot in the northern Kruger is, what I call, the Shingwedzi River Loop (R52). For an early morning start, pass along the loop in an anti-clockwise direction starting at a point on the H1-6 about 3 km's south of where that main tarred road crosses the Shingwedzi River. Proceed southwest along the loop to its furthest point where it crosses the river and then return along the opposite bank to the H1-3. About two-thirds of the way to the turning point is a causeway across the river. It is worthwhile taking a detour onto the causeway. Depending on the state of the river's bed there is a pool upstream where you could see Saddle-billed Stork and other water-loving birds. Baboons and other animals may be seen along the river bed. Halfway, on the return trip, is a waterhole that attracts Impala, Zebra, Giraffe and a variety of birdlife. The light is best in the morning.

The list of birds photographed on this loop is too long to mention but include Red- and Yellow-billed Hornbill, Mocking Cliff-chat (at Red Rocks), Woodland Kingfisher, Crested Francolin, Namaqua Dove, Natal and Swainson's Spurfowl, Lilac-breasted Roller, Blue Quail, Gold-tailed Woodpecker, Jacobin Cuckoo, Martial Eagle, Southern Black Flycatcher, Red-billed Oxpecker, Great Blue-eared Starling, Crested Barbet, White-fronted Bee-eater and others.

Some of South Africa's 650 butterfly species are also to be seen on this loop- keep an eye open for them feeding on bushes close to the road. If you flush them while positioning the car, it is likely to be populated again quickly with a dozen or more species! Leopard are also to be found along the river banks. Look out for them resting on the bough of a tree.

Sable Dam is my fourth hotspot and lies about an hour's drive to the west of Letaba. Take the H9 and then turn left, after 35.4 km's from the gate at Letaba Camp, on to a dirt road that leads through thorn bush frequented by Leopard. Pass the turn-off to the hide and continue for about a kilometre to a point where the road passes close to a tributary flowing into the dam. Park so that you remain in the driver's seat with sufficient space around all sides of the car to allow a large elephant to pass around comfortably! This will keep you back from the edge of the bank, but it may save you if a large herd of elephants suddenly appears from the surrounding bush and one of them decides to investigate your car! If that should happen, remain absolutely still. Unless challenged or separated from a calf, elephants tend to be docile. The exception to this being a male in musth, i.e. with a heightened testosterone level indicated by leakage, from a gland, down the side of the face. In this condition, their behaviour can be erratic!



Crested Francolin in dawn light, Shingwedzi



Blacksmith Lapwing at Tendze River crossing



African Darter displaying heat fatigue



Red Basker on water lily bud



Brown-veined White Butterfly, Shingwedzi



Steenbok ewe, Nwanetsi Road

If the summer rains have filled the dam, you should see a range of waders including African Spoonbill, Common Greenshank, Common Sandpiper and Ruff (unfortunately in winter plumage). Elephants will come to drink from the bank on the opposite side of the tributary providing suitable opportunities for images.

My last hotspot is the Nwanetsi River Road (S100), second only in fame and popularity to the Skukuza to Lower Sabi Road. From Satara Camp, turn right onto the H1-3 main tarred road and then, about 2 km's along that road, turn left onto the Nwanetsi River Road. It takes you along the northern bank of the Nwanetsi River. The best time to travel down this road is afternoon - the sun is in the west and gives good lighting. At this time there are also (usually) fewer visitors compared to the morning when there is a rush to see Lions!

Herds of Elephant, Buffalo, Waterbuck, Zebra, Giraffe, Impala, Steenbok and Warthog, that feed on the savannahs to the north of the river, come down to drink from it. The presence of herds of herbivores attracts the predators - Lion, Leopard and Cheetah are to be found here in addition to raptors such as Bateleurs and members of the stork family including White Storks.

Keep an eye on the clock and ensure that you leave enough time to return through the camp gates before they close for the night, even if an elephant decides to take a walk down the road ahead of you!

If the crowds on the Nwanetsi River Loop are too much for you, travel 17 kms south, from the Satara camp, along the H1-3 to the turnoff to the Nkaya Pan. Lighting is good throughout the day. A host of birds and animals visit the pan - it also provides good photo opportunities.

Unfortunately, space does not permit mention of the many other hotspots at each of the camps. If you would like to follow-up this article with further reading, have a look at Brett Hilton's-Barber's two books - "Best Birding in the Kruger" and "Exploring the Kruger" (Prime Origins Publications). Unfortunately, both appear presently to be out of print but second hand copies may be available.

In the last of this three-part series, I will be looking at techniques and procedure that may enhance your safari in the Kruger National Park!

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

"Northern Wilderness"

a successful Associateship panel in nature

by Nigel Spencer ARPS

A few years ago, I decided that I wanted to work towards gaining an RPS distinction, but did not do anything about this. Then, in June 2014, a few friends invited me to join them at an advisory day for ARPS Distinctions which was being held in London.

I attended the workshop and it proved to be an enjoyable day. I did not take a panel but instead took about 25 mounted prints and a further 30 images on A4 paper. My images seemed to go down well and as a result several people suggested I should submit an entry.

After returning from the ARPS advisory day, I decided to submit a panel of images for consideration for an ARPS for myself and began working on the contents of my panel. Several images were considered, many were changed, and quite a few different panel versions were studied on my computer. I finally

chose my fifteen images. These were all printed and mounted to a high quality, they looked very new, fresh, and hopefully stood out as an original panel with maximum impact.

My ARPS submission was a panel of prints entitled "Northern Wilderness" and was submitted to the RPS during September 2014. The panel was submitted in the hanging plan shown on page 12.

One Wednesday morning a few weeks later, the alarm went off at 4.45 and I got out of bed ready for the drive down to the RPS headquarters in Bath where the assessment was taking place. Applicants do not have to attend the assessment, but I thought it would be worthwhile going along and watching the process for myself. This also has the added benefit that you are not sitting at home for several days wondering how it went and waiting to hear your results.

Red Fox

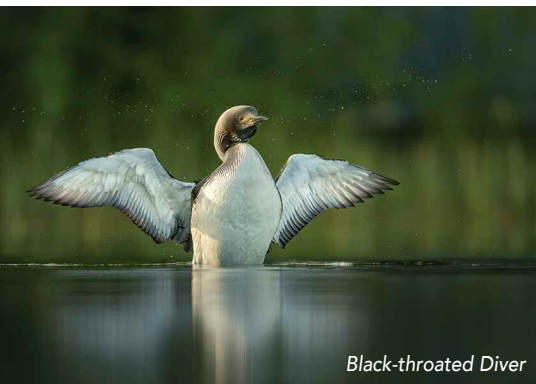




Greater Spotted Woodpecker



Great Reed Warbler



Black-throated Diver

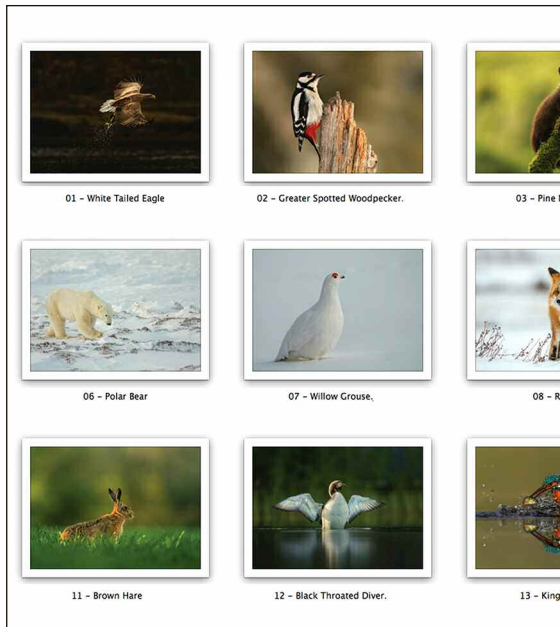


White-tailed Eagle

The Nature Distinctions panel was due to assess 17 submissions that day, each being shown individually to the panel members who sat in a formal line at the front of the room. Each panel of prints was taken out of its box and carefully placed for everyone to view on hanging rails at the front of the room. Each assessment began with the panel Chairman reading out the photographer's "Statement of Intent" (which must be under 150 words).

The panel members adjudicating studied each panel before they voted. The Chairman then invited panel members to give some feedback comments for everyone to hear. Next comes the bit that everyone is waiting for. The panel Chairman announces whether or not the panel was successful, along with any summing up comments he wishes to add on the panel.

My panel was the tenth of the day and the mood in the room was quite low as there had not been a successful panel by the time my panel was shown to the judges. As with all of the panels, everyone in the room is watching what is happening, trying to read the body language of the judges and silently attempting to guess what the outcome will be.



Statement of Intent

The Northern Wilderness

As a wildlife photographer, I enjoy photographing wildlife at a wide range of locations, which vary, from my back garden through to some far away places, which I have been fortunate to visit over the years. I am however increasingly drawn to the wildlife that makes its home in the very beautiful yet harsh environments of our Northern wilderness.

My panel is intended to showcase a wide range of the species to be found in the many differing habitats of the wilderness. This vast region covers Tiaga forest, tundra, with both freshwater, and frozen ice.

It is important to me to showcase a selection of 15 different species, which includes some of the more commonly found through to more rare species, which are less frequently seen.

All the birds and mammals photographed in my panel were wild and free.



Pine Grosbeak



Polar Bear



Red Fox



04 - Great Reed Warbler.



05 - Osprey.



Red Fox



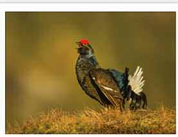
09 - Pine Grosbeak.



10 - Arctic Fox



Black Grouse



14 - Black Grouse.



15 - European Brown Bear.



Willow Grouse



Arctic Fox



Common Kingfisher



Osprey



Pine Marten



Black Grouse



Brown Hare



European Brown Bear

After what seemed like several long minutes, I was very pleased to hear the Chairman announce that my panel was to be recommended for an ARPS. It was a great feeling when this was immediately followed by lots of clapping, cheering, hugging and handshakes and my result really lifted the mood for the rest of the day.

I travelled to the assesment in Bath with Hazel, a friend from the photographic society that I belong to. Hazel had earned her ARPS earlier in the year, and had carefully written down all of the comments that were made. I was also really pleased with some lovely feedback comments made by both the Chairman of the Distinction panel and the panel members. Here are some of the comments made:

"Very, very nice panel"

"Best panel seen for some time"

"Good example of what a Natural History A should be"

Later in the day, I was asked by the Chairman of the Nature Distinctions Panel if the Society could retain my panel for use at future RPS Advisory Days, as an example of a successful Associate Panel in Natural History. The RPS also said that hopefully it will feature in their "Celebration of Distinctions" exhibition. I feel this is a great honour.

Barnack Hills and Holes

by Ken Rasmussen ARPS

Pasque flowers, Man Orchids and Chalk-hill Blue Butterflies are all found at Barnack Hills and Holes. They are just a few of the species that attract nature photographers to this National Nature Reserve. It is home to a wide range of flora and fauna with several uncommon species appearing in late spring and summer. In this article I will list some of the species I have found there, explain when they can be found and will describe some of the challenges I have found in photographing them.

Barnack Hills and Holes is situated in the very north of Cambridgeshire, just south of the Lincolnshire town of Stamford. Its hummocky nature (it would be better called bumps and dips) is the result of limestone quarrying which started in Roman times. Quarrying ended in the 1500s and the site was left to revert to its natural habitat

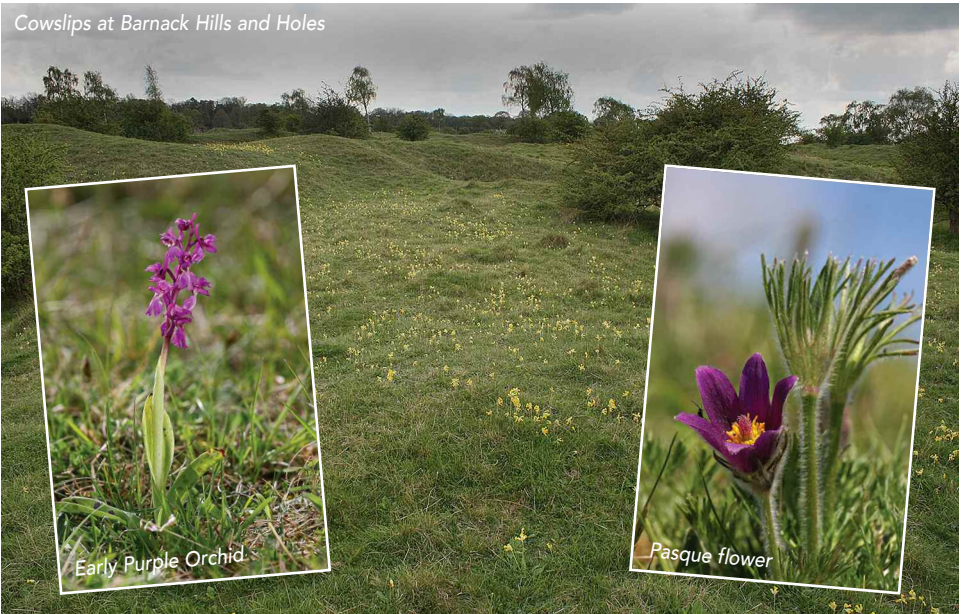
Our story begins in mid to late April when the reserve is carpeted in the yellow of Cowslips. A short walk further into the reserve, however, soon reveals the dark purple and yellow of the much rarer Pasque Flower. This lovely flower, also known as the Easter flower, is increasingly rare in England, occurring in

fewer than twenty sites, with Barnack being one of its strongholds. It grows in quite large groups so there are many specimens to choose from when looking for the best to photograph, but it can be difficult to get a clean background because it is so low growing.

Barnack is also said to be home to eight species of orchids, though I have only found six so far. Late April and early May sees the first of these, the Early Purple Orchid which appears in large numbers. These are easier to photograph than the Pasque Flowers as they stand more upright. It is also possible to take advantage of the hummocky nature of the land by trying to photograph along the side of the hill so that the background is well behind the plant.

In some places three species of wildflower, Cowslips, Early Purple Orchids and Pasque Flowers grow close together. I have tried some environmental images to show this but the images have not been as successful as I would like. I am not sure the site lends itself well to such shots and things are not helped by some of the fences that are put up to protect the flowers (though plenty are outside fenced off areas).

Cowslips at Barnack Hills and Holes





Marbled White



Chalkhill Blues paired



Pyramidal Orchid



Man Orchid

Insects also feature at Barnack. In early May the Green Hairstreak butterflies are on the wing. Finding a small green butterfly at rest on the green leaves of a hawthorn is quite difficult so I look for them flying. The males are very territorial and so often take to the air. If you watch where they land it may be possible to get close enough for a picture. Manoeuvring a tripod into place can be quite tricky though, but if they do fly off they are likely to return to a perch near to where they were before so, with luck, there will be several chances.

By late May the Early Purple Orchids will be past their best but the Pasque Flowers will still be abundant. Now is the time to start looking for Man Orchids. Although numbers have declined over the past decade, counts in 2013 and 2014 found about two hundred flowering spikes. This is well short of the thousands of Pasque Flowers and Early Purple Orchids, but is plenty for photography. Like many orchids, Man Orchid flowers develop from the bottom up so, although they can still be found in early June, it is best to catch them before the lower flowers start to wither.

June and July are said to be the best times to visit. By mid June Fragrant Orchids can be found in their thousands and growing in large groups can be

hard to miss. Much harder to find, but also around in mid June, is the small colony of Frog Orchids. I have only ever found a group of about six plants and have struggled to see the resemblance to a frog, but I have enjoyed photographing them.

From mid June Bee Orchids also appear on the reserve. They are not present in large numbers but make wonderful subjects when they are around. The Hills and Holes is said to be home to Common Spotted and Twayblade orchids which should also be flowering by mid June but I have not yet found any. I have also photographed another speciality of the reserve, Knapweed Broomrape, in mid-June. This deceptive plant looks dead in its rusty brown colours. It lacks the chlorophyll that gives plants their green colour and which allows them to make their food through photosynthesis. Instead, Knapweed Broomrape is parasitic, feeding on the roots of the Greater Knapweed plant which will invariably be found growing nearby. This is a situation when photographing the plant in its environment can be an advantage as the image may also show the Knapweed on which it feeds.

Butterfly counts on the reserve in 2014 identified over twenty different species. The largest numbers occur in late June and July with the most common species being Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Marbled White. Indeed, if you visit the reserve on a sunny warm July day you are likely to see several Marbled White as soon as you enter the reserve. Like most butterflies they can be difficult to photograph during the heat of the day as they are very active, flitting among the Scabious flowers, so early morning or late evening are the best times for photography.

July is also the time to see the pale straw coloured pupa of the Six Spot Burnet Moth. These appear in large numbers near the tops of grass stems. Soon the air will be filled with the adults flying from flower to flower, often landing on, and feeding on, the Pyramidal Orchids that now occupy the slopes where the Pasque Flowers once grew. So common are these day flying moths that I once counted twelve all in flight at once when standing in one spot. There are many other distractions for the photographer at this time of year. Bees and Hoverflies, Rock Rose and Clustered Bellflower, mating Soldier Beetles and large stands of Rosebay Willowherb.

In the last two weeks of July another of Barnack's specialities, the Chalkhill Blue butterfly, appears. It is present in good numbers and is widespread throughout the reserve - easy to see in flight, but difficult to photograph when they are active. Fortunately, the days are getting shorter so arriving near sunrise does



Six-spot Burnet Moth

not require such an early start. This species will still be around in early August along with a number of the flowers including, apparently, Autumn Gentian.

As summer gives way to autumn the reserve is given over to sheep. These are used to manage the reserve by keeping down the coarser grasses which, if left unchecked, would choke the rarer limestone loving plants.

It is said that there are over three hundred species of plant in Barnack Hills and Holes. In this article I have been able to mention only a few of them, along with some of the insects you can find there. If you live nearby or are in the area next spring or summer, do consider paying a visit.

Bee Orchid



My Route to Associateship

by Bob Connelly ARPS

I first received an email from Dawn, Editor of The Iris magazine, asking, as I had recently been awarded my Associateship, would I be interested in showing my pictures by having them included in the Nature Group's magazine The Iris? I thought, that would be nice, my images in print, in a magazine, something that the kids and grandkids can look back on.

After acknowledging this request as in "I would be only too pleased to be included in The Iris" I received a second email from Dawn, By the way Bob, along with your images would you include about 800 – 1000 words, more if possible about your motivation toward the ARPS, image selection, a bit about yourself, etc. So the normal thinking about venturing out and about with my camera, as in have I got my ISO correct, formatted the memory card, is exposure compensation set correctly, enough battery power, sandwiches and tea, etc. in the bag? The scariest thing ever to worry and/or think about now is, I have

to get down and produce 1000 words? Not even sure I know a thousand words of the Queen's English? Well so far so good, the amount down on paper so far, two hundred and four, to my relief I was informed that my work did not have to be ready until January 2016, adding this last sentence got me to, two hundred and thirty four words.

But, getting a little serious, why does one try for a distinction? Only an assumption but I suspect that most households have or at one time have had a camera, one of the family tending to use it more than the rest; the seed is sown, then it's books on photography borrowed from the library, then magazines; joining the local camera club, gathering knowledge from existing members and, slowly but surely, improving their photography over time; entering club competitions, being asked by the club for images to be used in inter-club and county competitions, someone then suggests to show in 'Salons', why hang pictures in a hairdressers? Also being informed by camera club judges that the work shown is of a standard capable of attaining an RPS distinction. Another seed sown and something to ponder on.

The above reminiscence of my route into photography over the years. Slowly but surely I was producing some good images, doing ok in competitions, club and county, prints when finished with were put back in the box. Her indoors 'who must be obeyed' even nagged me as not one of my pictures hung in our house, that proves there isn't a damp patch on the wall. Guys at the club started talking about distinctions during a tea break at our club. I recalled that some judges had commented that I had some 'good work'. So I thought, when time allows, open up the box, take the prints out and see what I've got. Well, after a while I opened the box and pulled out about thirty images. I made arrangements to meet up with a well-respected judge, who agreed to critique my pictures and following his advice I started the process of putting a panel together

The problems arise as soon as one starts to plan for 'The Panel'. Following the advice, I had 7" x 5" pictures produced, then it was a case of laying them out on the floor, in three lines of five, trying to

Barn Owl on post



decide the best layout, following the RPS guidelines to try and achieve a decent looking panel. The other thing that can throw a spanner in the works is venturing out with one's camera; before one's panel is completed, I found that some of the more recent images looked a tad better than some of those in my proposed panel. Therefore changes to started taking place, this happened several times, and the panel took on several different looks over time.

As stated previously, it was at my local camera club, Faversham, many moons back that distinctions were spoken about. Many times I thought, yes I'll have a crack at that, but the main thing to give me the last bit of motivation was unfortunately illness. After a long layoff I thought, I must see what I'm capable of and can I carry on with my hobby? I think we can all look back over our images and remember where they were taken, or a story that can be told along with them, there are several images within my panel which hold very special memories for me, not earth shattering images, but I know what it took for me to get them, even now not 100% fit, the picture taking was the easy part, press the button. Getting to and from the sites was the problem, but going along on some gigs with, as they say, like-minded people, there was that reassurance of there always being help at hand. I'm sure that on some of these occasions some folks were nature group members, so if they are reading this, my thanks again for all your concerns. Thinking back on the above about taking pictures for my panel, putting it all together is bringing a little smile to my face, or is it that I have now realised that I have got to eight hundred and seventy eight words?

Most of the subjects in my panel are quite common, but I endeavoured to ensure they are large enough in the frame to show detail, but enough room around the subjects so as to remain balanced within the picture area, this being the main emphasis of my statement of intent, as in, the subjects are seen fairly frequently, but at a distance, it is hoped that my panel enables the viewer to gain a better insight as to their beauty and detail. It was also my intention to use as my panel subjects, images taken in England, Ireland, Scotland & Wales, I do apologize to Wales. There are no images in my panel from Wales!!! Not my fault, nor really the fault of my guide. When we arrived in Wales we had never experienced fog like it, could not see a hand in front of a face. We managed to get to what seemed like a suitable location, parked up and followed a river. Moving away from the river, we then came across a nice grassy area,



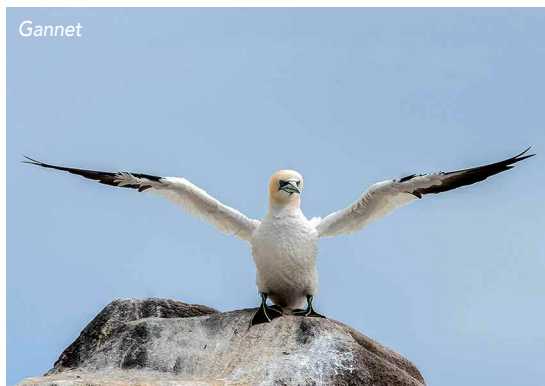
Avocet



Little Egret take off



Little Egret with catch



Gannet



Kestrel



Kingfisher



Sparrowhawk



Red Squirrel

thinking 'if we throw out some chicken bits we may get some Red Kite coming in to take the chicken pieces once the fog clears'. No Red Kites I'm afraid, the river was the Taff and the grassy part being the playing surface of Cardiff Arms Park! Mistakes happen!!

Dawn had also requested my Statement of Intent as submitted to the RPS. The above covers most of it. I'm sure the actual statement has received the delete button treatment, apologies Dawn.

Sitting here at my computer just pondering how to finish this little piece of editorial, and I think back to the images I have taken and the places I visited in order to try and get the said images. Therefore this is the last little piece of the story, I'm pretty sure we have all been there in our picture taking, and the outcome has been the same, or very similar, for many of us.

Starting off at 3.00am on a very blustery and cold morning, to be in the hide and setup before sunrise, and wait for the Grouse to fly in. After a hard climb to the hide with the wind still blowing, which at the time seemed like a force 10, and in complete darkness, we got into the hide. With head torches



on, we set ourselves up, stowed gear away, cameras at the ready. Out of the cold and wind, feeling comfortable, the first treat of the day - how nice does a cup of tea and a doughnut taste in these circumstances? There was a decent sprinkling of snow on the ground, hopefully this adding to the anticipated images. Slowly it started getting a little lighter, then as the sun rose more, in the distance the snow-capped peaks of the mountains took on a pink glow, the scene which one only normally sees in a glossy magazine, absolutely beautiful. Then, without a sound, the Grouse landed. Giving the birds a little time to find their ground, we started taking pictures. Then they departed, just as suddenly as they arrived, no more sparring. It just seemed as though all at once they decided "that's it we're off".

From that session, I put my hand up and honestly state my anticipated images were destined for the re-cycle bin, not one made it to print, but the memory of the day will remain with me. Therefore the moral of the story is, enjoy your time out and about. Should you come back with some images you like, that's your bonus. Perhaps one day I may make it back to the Highlands and try again for those Grouse. Might be the first image toward the FRPS?



Little Owl



Barn Owl flight



Kestrel



Red Stag

Bird Photography in Cyprus

by Michael Gore FRPS

Cyprus is without doubt the island in the Mediterranean which has most to offer a bird photographer. Spring is particularly productive for as well as the resident species, some of which are found no-where else, but mainly because of the huge migration of birds which winter in Africa and breed in eastern Europe and Russia and pass through the island in March-May.

I have been watching and photographing birds in Cyprus for 50 years. And every year I find something new to photograph. The migration through the coastal marshes at Akrotiri and Larnaca is particularly productive. Huge numbers of wader pass through in April and are fairly easily photographed from a car or from one of the hides which are located around the salt lakes. Every year produces something new. Last year I managed to

get close to three Spotted Redshanks, two of them in almost full summer plumage. Not having been able to go to Finland during the breeding season I have long wanted to photograph these splendid birds in summer plumage; last April I succeeded!

I spend most springs from March-May at our house in the foothills of the Troodos Mountains and from here it is a 40 minute drive to Akrotiri salt lake. It would be tedious to list the waders which spend a few days there building up their fat after the long flight across the Sahara desert before setting off for their sub-arctic breeding grounds, but they include several species which are not easily photographed in western Europe: Marsh Sandpipers, Wood Sandpipers and Temminck's Stints are three which immediately come to mind. All are quite easily approached in a car. And there are flocks of Little Stints with Ruffs and Curlew Sandpipers; Greenshanks, Redshanks, Pratincoles and Godwits of both species occur in small numbers. Kentish Plovers nest close to the tracks which criss-cross the borders of the salt lakes. And at Akrotiri, in particular, Glossy Ibises and an assortment of Herons and Egrets are always to be found

Passerines are also quite approachable: huge numbers of Yellow Wagtails in their various forms pass through the island; zitting Cisticolas are everywhere, Spectacled Warblers nest on the borders of the salt lake and until recently the tamarisk bushes provided a nesting site for a small colony of Dead Sea Sparrows which had moved across from Israel. Sadly they disappeared as mysteriously as they arrived.

In the foothills around Platres, where I have my house, there are several species which are quite easily photographed. The two Cyprus specialities nest around my house and can also be found at lower altitudes. Both are endemic, breeding only on Cyprus. The Cyprus Wheatear which is well-known as it nests in gardens throughout the island and is the logo of BirdLife Cyprus, winters south of the red sea in Somalia and the Cyprus Warbler is also widely distributed but is less well-known; typically it is a bird of the maquis and open woodland. Some remain in Cyprus throughout the year but others migrate to Israel and Lebanon in winter. In recent years the



Glossy Ibis

Cyprus Warbler has come under attack from invasive Sardinian Warblers which are spreading through the island from the west and being larger and more aggressive than their Cypriot relatives are in the process of taking over their territories. Simply a case of natural selection about which we cannot, and should not, do anything but it will be sad if the delightful little Cyprus Warbler joins the host of other species which have become extinct in recent years.

Cyprus Wheatears nest in the wall of my driveway nearly every year as do the distinctive local subspecies of our familiar Coal Tit. And Short-toed Treecreepers nest in sites I have created for them in the Aleppo pines in the garden, while the gorgeous Masked Shrike can be seen perched on a lookout branch seeking large insects and the small lizards which abound in these foothills. Another common breeding bird in the foothills nearby is the Ortolan Bunting, a summer visitor which sing their ridiculous little reedy song from the top of the Aleppo pines.

In some years I also visit Cyprus in the autumn when there is an impressive migration, particularly of both species of cranes and many raptors. Flocks of Red-footed Falcons are particularly impressive and can sometimes be approached quite closely in the car. But autumn is a bit hit and miss and of course



Cyprus Warbler



Sardinian Warbler singing



Masked Shrike singing



Short-toed Treecreeper



Cyprus Wheatear (male)

it is the time of the year when Cypriots still trap small migratory passerines to eat as ambellopoulia. This disgraceful practice has been outlawed by both the European Union and the Cyprus government but to date little has been done to stop it. And, most disgraceful from our point of view, is the fact that much of the trapping takes place in the British military base in the east of the island. A new British commander is taking more of an interest in the problem and at last some real efforts are being made to control this appalling situation which Birdlife Cyprus and I have been combating for 20 years. With all the pressures which are facing Europe's birds these days we can but continue our efforts and hope!



Spotted Redshank

Birdlife Cyprus, of which I am Honorary Chairman, evolved from the amalgamation of two ornithological societies and has been doing a remarkable job, with the assistance of the RSPB, in the ten years it has been in existence. As well as working to stop the slaughter of migrating passerines they have put great efforts into educating Cypriots about the wealth of their natural heritage; two marshes have been managed to improve the environment for birds, and two species of ducks, Red-crested Pochards and White-eyed (or ferruginous) Ducks have moved in to these marshes and have become resident breeders in recent years as the marshes which have been created provide ideal breeding grounds. A major project being undertaken by BirdLife Cyprus is the reintroduction of Griffon Vultures which have reduced from thousands when I first went to Cyprus in the 1950s to 24 birds confined to the cliffs on the southern coast of the island.

For the wildlife photographer there are opportunities to take images of many species of butterflies and the hills abound in Lacerta Lizards; Green and Loggerhead Turtles haul up on the beaches to lay their eggs while the botanist can find species, particularly Orchids, which do not occur elsewhere in Europe.

I specialise in birds but in 2015 I could not fail to photograph a species which, fortunately, is rather rare. Having spent the best part of 50 years tramping through the Cypriot maquis I never encountered Europe's most venomous snake, the Blunt-nosed Viper, whose venom is reported to be on a par with the Puff Adder. Leaving my house in the foothills one morning in May I came across a viper slowly crossing the road. I had no intention of moving the snake to a more attractive site so simply took some record shots of it on the road!

All photographs taken with Panasonic GH3 and GH4 cameras and Lumix lenses



Blunt-nosed Viper

A Bird Photographer's visit to South Africa

by Ian Tait

Over the past few years my wife and I have visited South Africa several times and have settled on a routine that works well. Before our departure we firm up our itinerary, and if this includes visits to any of the National parks, we contact the head office in Pretoria and buy what is called a "Wildcard". This gives substantial discounts in National park entries and accommodations. Then we make the park, and also any hotel bookings, by email. We always travel independently and when choosing a rental car try to get one that has rear windows that can be lowered completely allowing for a 500mm lens on a beanbag to rest on the door windowsill and not on a half lowered child protection window. My wife, an experienced bird spotter drives, allowing me to fool around in the rear seat with the complexities of my photo equipment.

When we fly into Cape Town we head directly to Kirstenbosch Gardens, the profusion of flowering protea making it a magnet for Cape Sugarbirds and Orange-breasted Sunbirds.

Short excursions are made to see burrow-nesting African Penguins, which can be approached on a beach near Simon's Town, and the Cape Gannet colonies along the Atlantic coast, giving one an indication of the profusion of sea-life that abounds in the cold waters washing the southern tip of Africa.

If we fly into Johannesburg, we head out towards the several resorts along the Drakensberg escarpment. One of these is Giant's Castle, where African Olive Pigeon are often heard but hard to see in the depths of the montane forest canopy. However, in the early dawn one may catch a group congregating and preening in the treetops as they



Red-crested Korhaan



Marico Sunbird



African Olive Pigeon



African Broadbill



Lilac-breasted Roller



Sociable Weaver nests

greet the sun. We have also been entertained by a Cape Batis, searching for insects around our rental cottage, and there were other interesting birds such as Olive Woodpecker and Bush Blackcap nesting within easy walking distance.

We then make our way to the inland native forest patches of KwaZulu-Natal. The raised forest boardwalk at Eshowe is a must as it can provide eye-to-eye views of hornbills and other treetop inhabitants, and below in the leaf litter, the endangered Spotted Ground-Thrush.

Then on to Bonamanzi, a small reserve nestled in the coastal bush and home to trogons, the peculiar Green Malkoha, and in particular, the African Broadbill. Successful searching in suitable habitat for the broadbill borders on the impossible, unless one is fortunate to hear the unique rattle-like clicking call made by the bird as it springs like a wind-up toy from a perch to perform a circular pirouette.

Visits to South Africa in the spring and summer have the potential of giving one special treats. But for any visitor that crosses the country, the presence of two birds in particular will inevitably be encountered.

One, the Red-chested Cuckoo, has a pervasive three-toned call, heard from tree groves just about anywhere. Diligent searching a tree for the source of the call is often fruitless. But, being a cuckoo, it is driven to find nests of species it can parasitize and then, with luck, may sometimes be seen out in the open as it sits silently looking for a potential host that may have a nest with eggs. The bird is known by its Afrikaans name "Piet-my-vrou" (Piet my wife) a name that describes its seemingly endless call.

The other is the male Long-tailed Widowbird, which can often be seen in open grassland as it performs slow-moving flights with tail spread over his assemblage of females sitting on nests below. In an early spring molt only the males develop long tails, molting again at summer's end to a plumage resembling that of the dun-colored females who, though they molt, have no plumage change.

After Bonamanzi, we often resist the temptation to visit other locations, especially the several excellent parks in KwaZulu-Natal, and negotiate our way through Swaziland to reach Kruger National Park in the northeast of the country.

South African parks generally have easy access by vehicle. Cottage accommodations in the park camps are comfortable but basic. Most have

cooking facilities but there are restaurants if one wants to avoid the effort of preparing meals. Of course there are several private lodges adjoining Kruger that have luxurious accommodations and food, as well as expert guides. We have never stretched our pocketbook that far and prefer our independence anyway.

The Kruger National Park ranks among the worlds best. The attraction for most visitors is the Big 5 and other large beasts, but diligent photographers will be pleased by the wealth of bird species they can work on, despite being confined to their vehicle by park rules.

Lilac-breasted Rollers, usually seen hawking from an elevated perch, could be called the flagship bird of Kruger National Park. The rarely observed "rolling" flight display starts a few months prior to summer nesting activity. Many large animals in the Kruger National Park are serviced by Red-billed Oxpeckers who presumably make a thorough job of ridding them of parasites. The host animals must know this, as they are amazingly tolerant of an oxpecker's attentions.

The distinctive loud clicking of a Red-crested Korhaan is often heard from the roadside as the bird pours forth its distinctive call with open bill. Despite its name however, one has to have more than usual luck to see the red crown exposed. A Kori Bustard, with a reputation of being the heaviest of living animals capable of flight, is often seen pacing with haughty disdain through open scrubland. Of the smaller species, the male Marico Sunbird is always a delight, as is the male Violet-backed Starling.

Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is in the western desert and it is a long stretch to drive from Kruger. We therefore fly to Uppington and drive a rental to the park. The change in bird species as one enters this drier region is interesting. Sandgrouse congregate around waterholes, Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters nest in holes they have dug into flat ground, a Rufous-eared Warbler may occasionally emerge from a thorn thicket with apparent curiosity, and Sociable Weavers build their massive nest colonies, each of which may house up to 500 birds. The Pigmy Falcon, a tiny raptor that finds lizards a favorite food, will also use a nest chamber in the colony for breeding.

At journeys end we return to the airport in Johannesburg, and spend the flight home planning our next visit.



Cape Batis



Violet-backed Starling



Red-billed Oxpecker



Red-chested Cuckoo

Birds of Hampshire

John Wichall ARPS

My fascination with Nature predates my love of photography by several decades. It has its origins in the inspiring wildlife programmes of the 1950's on the "Good Old Beeb". It didn't matter whether it was Armand and Michaela Dennis on the plains of East Arica, Peter Scott telling us to "Look" or Jacques Cousteau who was "Diving to Adventure", I dreamed of doing what they did and, I guess, the wish to capture the experience with a camera must have been buried somewhere in my subconscious.

The journey from my early interest in wildlife to achieve an ARPS distinction has had a few twists and turns. My early attempts at photographing birds with my wife's Praktica SLR and a 135 mm lens were frankly disappointing. The solution was obvious: I needed a longer lens, so when funds permitted I invested in a manual focus 400 mm, f5.6 Sigma. This surely would produce the bird pictures that I wanted to capture. Well no! Even with 3 times the pulling power, those British birds were still reluctant to co-operate. I did manage to capture a few pleasing images, but let's face it, there are only so many images of a robin that can keep one's interest alive, so for a number of

years I turned to butterflies, orchids and fungi. Not that I found these forms of nature photography easy, but at least the latter two subjects don't fly away.

A return to bird photography coincided with the purchase of my first DSLR. Instantaneously, my old 400 mm lens gave me the equivalent of 600 mm and this, coupled with the ability to crop and enhance images, post-capture, opened up new possibilities. At about the same time I decided to hang up my working boots and for the first time in my life I joined a camera club. So without knowing it I found myself back on the path towards ARPS. All of the ingredients were there – a love of birds, more leisure time, the spur of regular club competitions and the advice of fellow enthusiasts.

Initially my competition goals were relatively modest – capture a reasonable portrait that is well exposed, large enough in the frame and reasonably sharp (not ARPS panel sharp you understand, but just reasonably sharp). At the time I had no knowledge of the RPS let alone the levels of distinctions. However, it was not long before I realised that the photographers who consistently achieved the top scores were those who held a RPS distinction.



Being someone with a competitive nature, the idea of sporting the letters LRPS really appealed. Two advisory days and sound advice from club members helped me gain LRPS in 2013, which is where I thought my RPS distinctions journey would end.

A year later the lure of ARPS became an itch that I just had to scratch. But what message did I want to convey with my panel? Having spent forty years birdwatching in and around Hampshire, it was not surprising to find that the majority of my bird pictures have been taken locally. It was therefore a relatively easy decision to adopt as my theme the birds that can be found in my home county. It was also important to me that the pictures in my panel were of birds that I had found myself. I've never been a great "twitcher" and, similarly, feel uneasy when I see stunning bird pictures winning awards that seem to owe as much or more to the professional who set up the shoot than to the author. All of the images that I selected were taken on local nature reserves or open spaces with public access. The Waxwing shot was taken in a Waitrose car park (apparently very popular with waxwings), the female Bearded Tit was stalked from the sea wall at a Hants County Council reserve and the Red-breasted Merganser picture was taken as I dodged cyclists, joggers and dog walkers.

When considering the make-up of my panel, I found it helpful to build a model in Photoshop, with candidate images on separate layers. This facilitated moving images around and promoting or demoting images by switching the layers on or off. I decided that I wanted to have a mix of different families and genera, so aimed for a selection of passerines, waders and





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water birds. I also felt there should be a mix of resident species and migrants and the birds should be doing something of interest, so several are shown feeding, there are two shots that show aspects of mating behaviour and aggression, the Black-tailed Godwits and Red-breasted Merganser, though in the latter case the second drake being threatened is out of shot. I tried to avoid straight portraits unless an image had something extra, for example. the Greenshank with a strong reflection and also the background of the sand martin shot which I think works well with the adjacent image of the Sandwich Tern.

From the point at which I started to think about the panel, it took me several months to decide on

Species Depicted

- 1 Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)
- 2 Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)
- 3 Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)
- 4 Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)
- 5 Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)
- 6 Oyster Catcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)
- 7 Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)
- 8 Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)
- 9 Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)
- 10 Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)
- 11 Waxwing (*Bombicilla garrulus*)
- 12 Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)
- 13 Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)
- 14 Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)
- 15 Bearded Reedling (*Panurus biarmicus*)



1

what I would take to an Advisory Day. In between times I went to a Nature Distinctions Assessment day at Fenton House, which turned out to be somewhat discouraging as none of first ten panels displayed were accepted. However, my confidence was restored somewhat at the Advisory Day, where thankfully most of the images in my draft panel were thought to be of the right standard. From first deciding to try for ARPS it took me approximately nine months before I gained the award in March 2015. I used images that I'd taken over a period of four years. I'm proud to have been awarded an ARPS in Nature and also that my panel was retained to be used as an example for others who are thinking of trying for their Associateship.

Statement of Intent

I've been a keen bird watcher for many years. From the beginning I tried to photograph the birds that I encounter, both as an aid to identification or, simply, to record a wild bird in its chosen habitat.

I'm hooked on capturing the moment, whether with a strong portrait, an action shot showing behaviour, or a rarity that may be difficult to find and probably even more difficult to photograph. However, it's important to me that the images should be of 'my birds' – those I've found personally on 'my patch'.

For my panel I've selected images showing birds, which a birdwatcher might aspire to see most years in my home county of Hampshire. It includes breeding species, passage migrants and winter visitors, ranging from the very common to the decidedly scarce. All images are of wild birds, photographed at local nature reserves or in public open-spaces.





Obituary

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

19.10.1935 - 29.10.2015

Robert Hawkesworth passed away suddenly on 29th October 2015 just a few days after his 80th Birthday.

Robert was as fine a man as you could ever wish to meet. I first met Robert at a Nature Group event in the early 90's - we shared a common interest in photographing wild flowers and got chatting about the best places to visit for certain species. Shortly after, Robert invited me to join him and another friend at a site in Derbyshire to photograph Fragrant Orchids. What a splendid day we enjoyed. Soon after, Robert invited my parents and I to join him at a site near his home to photograph the Green-winged Orchids and suggested that we join him and his wife, Barbara, for tea at their home. After that we became good friends and often visited each other's homes. There were also a couple of vacations to Slovenia and Lesbos, which we all enjoyed. I have many fond memories of those times together. Robert was always so very entertaining and had so many amusing tales to share.

Despite the fact that we had much in common, Robert spoke little about his early life. I have only recently discovered that his father was a designer of steam locomotives and that the family often moved from one railway centre to another - living near the workshops of the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway in Horwich and later at Crewe and Derby. Robert was a chemistry graduate and taught Chemistry for much of his working life, advancing to Deputy Head Teacher. He must have been a wonderful teacher as many of his past pupils kept in touch with him throughout his life. After thirty-six years in the teaching profession he took the opportunity of an early retirement in 1993.

What I do know with absolute certainty is that Robert was an excellent photographer who would try his hand with most natural history subjects. Hardly surprising therefore that he joined the RPS and the Nature Group. His main subjects of interest were flowers and fungus - he achieved his

Fellowship in September 2001 with a slide submission of plants and was invited to sit on the Nature Distinctions Panel in 2005. He was a stalwart member of the Nature Group Committee for many years and served as Secretary from 1998 to 2003 and then as Chairman from 2003 - 2005. He continued to serve as a valued committee member until the AGM in Spring 2011. For many years Robert ran a number of Field Meetings for the group in the Derbyshire Dales during the late Spring and fungi forays in Nottinghamshire in the Autumn - these were always very well supported by members. He was awarded the Nature Group Silver Medal for Service to the Nature Group in 2009.



Robert was also a member of Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers (of which he was a Past-Chairman), Secretary of the Derbyshire Hardy Plants Society, the Nottingham Natural History Society, and the N.P.P. (Nature Photographers Portfolio). Robert joined N.P.P. in 1995 as a member of the slide circle. In 2005 he became its Secretary and ran it efficiently until it ceased in 2013, having been overtaken by the popularity of digital images. Robert never lost his preference for the colour transparency as a medium and did not embrace the digital age. He was a great help at NPP Conventions, leading fungus forays with enthusiasm. With the cessation of the colour slide folios Robert had no way of remaining an active member and was awarded the status of Member Emeritus together with his wife Barbara, the second N.P.P. members to be so honoured.

Robert was an excellent lecturer and gave his talks to photographic societies and wildlife trusts at venues all across the East Midlands as well as further afield. He also organised and ran residential photography workshops at a number of venues including How Hill in Norfolk. His natural history knowledge and photographic skills were also called upon to judge the work of others and he regularly sat as a selector in the Nature category at both National and International Salons.

Robert was one of life's true gentlemen. Generous with both his time and his knowledge - it was a pleasure to spend time in his company. He will be missed by many members of the nature photography fraternity as well as others. I know that all who knew him would want to extend their sympathies to his wife and family.

Dawn Osborn FRPS

Thanks go to all of Robert's friends who contributed towards this appreciation of him. Known and respected by many, here are just a few of the messages that followed the news of his passing.

I was greatly saddened to hear that Robert had died. I had known Robert and Barbara for many years and we were good friends. He served the Nature Group well as a previous Chairman and committee member for many years.

Richard Revels FRPS, Nature Group Chairman.

"I first met Robert when I attended one of his field meetings, more field meetings followed and we soon

realised that we had more in common than our love of nature. We were both chemists by training which meant that we both enjoyed those silly jokes which only chemists can understand. Robert had an understanding and appreciation of the natural world which showed in his photography. He will be sorely missed."
Tony Bond, Past Chairman and Nature Group Committee Member.

"Robert was a gentleman. A very fine photographer who ran the NPP slide folio very successfully for many years, I was delighted to invite him to be the first Member Emeritus of the Folio two years ago. An honour that was also bestowed on his wife, Barbara. He will be sorely missed by all of us."
Michael Gore, CVO, CBE, FRPS, President N.P.P., Nature Group Member

"I knew Robert through the RPS Nature Group for many years and he was very supportive when I was working towards my Fellowship. We will all miss him greatly." John Bebbington FRPS, Past Chairman and Nature Group Committee Member, N.P.P. member.

"Robert and Barbara were a team and my condolences go out to her at this sad time. I shall always remember Robert for the kindness he (and Barbara) gave to me when I first joined and shall miss his sense of humour. He will be very much missed."
Peter Basterfield, Nature Group and N.P.P. Member.

"Such sad news. Robert was a real gentleman and will be sadly missed by all who knew him."
Shaun Boycott Taylor, N.P.P. Member.

"I can only concur with Shaun in regard to Robert being an absolute gentleman. He was always helpful and nothing was too much trouble. I will always remember his strong accent and his voice."
Louis Rumis, Nature Group and N.P.P. Member.

"Very sad news. I well remember how welcome Robert made me feel at my first convention when we spent a lot of time together just chatting."
John Combes, N.P.P. member.

"As many members will know, Robert loved to communicate his love of photography on every possible occasion and he and Barbara delivered the Keynote Lecture at the 2013 Convention. He will be missed by all who knew him and our condolences go to his wife Barbara and his family."
Geoff White, N.P.P. member.

RPS Nature Group Field Meeting in conjunction with RSPB Bempton Cliffs & Steve Race, Director, Yorkshire Coast Nature

Bridlington Harbour, Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th June 2016* 05.30 hrs.

- 05.30 hrs Meet in the car park at Bridlington Harbour, (post code YO15 3AN).
- 06.00 hrs Boat departure - timed to offer the best light conditions and Gannet activity. Harbour Porpoises, Grey Seals, Dolphins, Puffins, Razorbills, Guillemots, Fulmars and Kittiwakes are also possible.
- 10:00hrs The boat will arrive back at Bridlington Harbour at 10.00 approx. Followed by visit to RSPB Bempton Cliffs Reserve joined by Steve Race.



Subjects of Interest:

Diving Gannets (from the boat), Harbour Porpoises, Grey Seals, Dolphin species, Puffins, Razorbills, Guillemots, Fulmars and Kittiwakes are also possible.

Additional information:

- 'Diving Gannet' boat trip is organised by Steve Race from Yorkshire Coast Nature.
- Steve is an accomplished professional and award winning wildlife photographer.
- Booking via the leader is essential as the boat is limited to 11 participants on both days.
- Steve will contact me the evening of the day before to confirm sailing and then I will call you with details. If we are not able to sail due to bad sea conditions, then the following two options will be offered:
Option 1: an alternative date to attend another boat trip, Option 2: a full refund.
- Waterproof/warm clothing. Camera, lenses, battery, memory cards. Monopods for boat but no tripods. We will be chumming for diving gannets so recommend a 70-200mm or 100-400mm lens. The Gannets come very close to the boat so a short zoom such as an 18-55mm or 24-105mm (on a second camera body) is also suggested if you have one.
- There is a chemical camping toilet on board the boat, however as we will be at sea for 4 hours, using the toilet before departure is advisable.
- Parking is available in the harbour car park where we will be meeting. There is a daily parking charge of £5.40. For travel directions to Bridlington Harbour go to: <https://goo.gl/maps/FX6rB>
- In the event of bad weather on the Saturday the first 11 RPS Nature Group members to book will have priority for the Sunday sailing.
- The Visitor Centre at Bempton Cliffs RSPB Reserve offers food, drink and toilet facilities.

Cost: Boat for diving gannets is £70.00 per person. Payment by cheque or postal order payable to: 'Yorkshire Coast Nature SR' and sent to the leader no later than Friday 15th April 2016.
Pre-booking is essential

Leader: James Foad LRPS, **Address:** 24B Queens Road, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 8DZ

Contact: **Tel:** 01843 580295 **Mobile:** 07810 306365 **Email:** jamesfoadlrps@inbox.co

* The trip will run on Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th June providing there is sufficient support and that sea conditions are suitable.

Field Meetings 2016

Sunday April 10th 2016, 10.00 hrs.

Maldon and Maldon Estuary on the Thames Barge 'Kitty' (in conjunction with RPS East Anglia Region).

Meeting Place: Maldon Quay

Additional Information: At this time of year, the Maldon Estuary can be full of wader flocks etc and there is lots to photograph around the Quay, Promenade and Town. Meet at Maldon around 10 am for a morning walk along the Estuary to photograph waders etc feeding on the mud flats and moving around as the tide comes in, or an opportunity to photograph around Maldon Quay and the town. There are lots of cafes and pubs serving food for lunch or bring a picnic. Meet on the Quay at 13.45 for an afternoon sail on Thames Barge 'Kitty' leaving Maldon at 14.00 hours returning at 16.30 for tea/coffee and snacks to set you up for the drive home.

Cost: £27 - a very reasonable price for trip out on a Thames Barge. Partners welcome. Book in advance.

Leader: Ann Miles FRPS

Contact: ann@pin-sharp.co.uk
for a booking form.

Friday 29th April 2016, 10.00 hrs.

Abbots Wood, Caneheath, Arlington, Nr. Hailsham, East Sussex

Meeting Place: Forest Commission Car Park
Grid Ref: TQ557073

Subjects of Interest: Spring Butterflies including Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Green Hairstreaks, Orange Tip and Grizzled Skipper

Additional Information: Car Parking Fee £2.00
Terrain: mostly level gravel roads, grassy rides and footpaths. Distance 5km total. Recommend stout shoes or boots and waterproofs if rain is forecast.

Leader: Douglas Neve

Contact: 01323 507015 or 07802 748785

Wednesday 8th June 2016, 09.30 hrs.

**Knapp and Papermill Nature Reserve
Bridges Stone Near Alfrick, Worcestershire**

Meeting Place: Entrance to the reserve
Grid Ref/Post Code: SO 751 522 / WR6 5HR
Google Maps: 52.167146, -2.365815

Subjects of Interest: Meadow flowers including Green-Winged and Common Spotted Orchids; Damsel and Dragonflies along the Leigh Brook; a wide variety of birds and butterflies.

Additional Information: The Knapp and Papermill Reserve is a Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Flagship Reserve. It contains a wide variety of habitats including grassland, hay meadow, mature woodland and orchard; it is bordered by the Leigh Brook. The Visitor Centre has picnic facilities and toilets.

Cost: Car parking and entry to the Reserve are free, but a donation to Worcestershire Wildlife Trust is suggested.

Leader: Duncan Locke,

Contact: Tel: 01905 821509 / 07989 494232
Email: Duncan.locke@btinternet.com

Saturday 18th June 2016, 09.00 hrs.

**Lackford Lakes, Bury St. Edmunds, IP28 6HX
(in conjunction with RPS East Anglia Region)**

Meeting Place: Lackford Lakes Visitor Centre

Subjects of Interest: Opportunities for landscape, insect, flora and bird photography.

Additional Information: Bring a packed lunch. The Visitor Centre serves tea/coffee/etc. and also offers excellent cakes.

If you plan to arrive later than 09.00 hrs we can supply directions of the route that we will take.

Leader: Ann Miles FRPS

Contact: 07710 383586
ann@pin-sharp.co.uk

Field Meetings continued

Saturday June 25th, 2016, 10:00 hrs.

Ainsdale Dunes, Sefton Coast, Lancashire

Meeting Place: The Ainsdale Discovery Centre,
The Promenade, Shore Road, Ainsdale-on-Sea,
Nr Southport, PR8 2QB

Subjects of interest: Orchids and other dune flora, amphibians, reptiles and rare insects etc. The sand-dunes of the Sefton Coast cover an area of 2100 ha approx and is the largest sand-dune complex in England. It is a forever-changing habitat offering photographic opportunities throughout the seasons. Early summer is a period when the dunes are richly rewarding for both botanic and entomological subjects. This year we should find Pyramidal Orchids, Marsh Helleborines and the endemic Dune Helleborine together with early specimens of Grass of Parnassus and there are many other botanic specialties to be found in the dunes and on the 'Green Beach' at this time of year. If the day is warm we should find the Northern Dune Tiger-beetle - a superbly photogenic insect; and early butterflies and dragonflies should be plentiful. The area is noted for having two increasingly rare species: Sand Lizard and Natterjack Toad. These are not easy to locate, but we will do some prior research into suitable locations. In addition to the flora and fauna, the Sefton Coast is itself very photogenic with sand, sea and dune landscape opportunities.

Dr. Phil Smith, MBE, has kindly agreed to join us again on this field meeting. Phil is a noted expert on the Sefton Coast and author of 'The Sands of Time' and 'The Sands of Time Revisited'.

Items to bring: There are very few natural hazards but the area is exposed so light warm clothing and waterproofs are ideal in case of rain. Stout shoes or wellingtons are required. There are no charges but a packed lunch and something to drink is advisable.

Additional information: This is a popular field trip with a maximum number of fifteen so early booking is important. There is plentiful accommodation in the nearby seaside resort of Southport.

Leader: Trevor Davenport ARPS
Tel 01704 870284
Mobile: 07831 64384
Email: trevor43davenport@gmail.com

Sunday 3rd July, 2016, 10.30 hrs

**Pepperfield Farm, Dalton-on-Tees,
North Yorkshire, DL2 2NS**

(5 miles from Darlington off the A167)

Meeting Place: Pepperfield Farm
Grid Ref/ Post Code: DL2 2NS

Subjects of Interest

Wildlife reserve with lake / woodland on a working Rare Breeds farm.

Additional Information:

Light Refreshments and Lunch will be provided using our own or local produce and will be served in our Holiday Cottage.

The group will have access to a studio to check images etc..

Cost: Donations to RPS Nature Group please

Leader: Terence Laheney ARPS

Contact: Tel: 07849026561 or 01325720575

Email: terencelaheney@hotmail.com

pepperfieldfarm@hotmail.co.uk

Web: <http://www.pepperfieldfarm.co.uk>

Saturday 18th June 2016, 05.30 hrs

Diving Gannets Boat Trip and Bempton Cliffs, Nr. Bridlington, Yorkshire.

Booking essential.

See full details page 34

15th - 18th July 2016

Nature Group Residential Weekend

Flatford Mill Field Centre

East Berholt, Suffolk, CO7 6UL

See full details: inside front cover

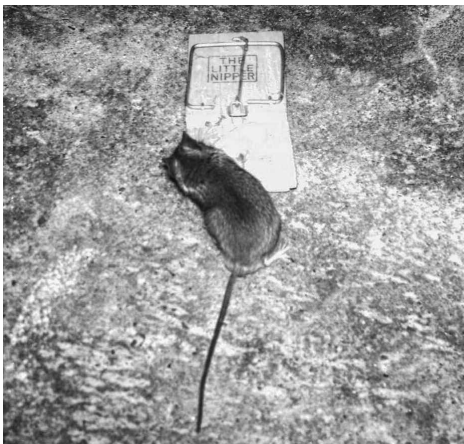
"Of mice and men"

by Rex Haggett ARPS

(with apologies to the late John Steinbeck for plagiarising his title)

Way back in the winter of 1986, nibbled fruit in the garage told me that we had been invaded by a mouse or mice. Straightaway my wife told me to bait a trap, but being a dedicated Natural History enthusiast I decided instead to bring up the big guns and shoot it with my Canon instead.

Back in those days our car was small enough to house in the garage, so I thought to utilise it as a hide. I disabled a mouse trap, baited it with cheese, then put a dedicated flashgun onto my camera, mounted it onto a tripod, focussed on the trap and attached a long cable release. To enable me see what I was photographing I lit the scene with a dim light. I then sat in the driving seat of my car with the wing mirror angled so that I could see the action (if any) and, the cable release in my hand, I sat there and waited, and waited. Finally, at 2 o'clock on that cold February morning I suddenly saw a movement and fired the shutter. I did not have a motorised shutter on the camera so it was my only chance and there was nothing else for it but to pack up and go to bed. Had I managed to photograph a mouse? Once I had finished the film on other subjects, there followed an agonising wait for the slides to be processed. This is what I got - was it worth it? (Fig. 1)



I did not try again until 2010. We are now in the digital age. I had often wondered what creatures inhabit my garden after dark. Any leftover daytime food is gone in the morning - so what takes it? Being an avid watcher

continued on page 38

The Nature Group invites members to host Field Meetings

Dear Members

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have organised a Field Meeting for the Nature Group and I sincerely hope that these will be well supported.

I would like to make a plea for future field meetings, which could be held in the late Summer and Autumn. If you would like to organise a field meeting, please complete the request form on page 38 and return to me no later than 20th May 2016.

Field Meetings have always been an integral part of the Nature Group's activities, offering members the opportunity to meet other natural history photographers, to exchange ideas, as well as opportunities to visit sites of natural history interest, which they would not normally access.

If you know a site which has interesting subjects to photograph, please consider organising a Field Meeting. You will not be expected to instruct others about photographic techniques or to be expert at identifying all the wildlife subjects.

Nature Group members are spread widely all around the country, and many are retired, which means that mid-week meetings are frequently well attended.

Please send details by 20th May 2016, to ensure inclusion in the Summer issue of *The Iris*.

Contact me if you require any further information.

Barbara Lawton, FRPS, DPAGB
78 Leybourne Crescent
Pendeford,
Wolverhampton
WV9 5QG

Tel: 01902 787811
Email: barbara.lawton@talktalk.net

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Barbara Lawton

RPS Nature Group Field Meeting 2016.

Please return this form before 20th May, 2016

Location:

Day and Date:

Time:

Meeting Place:

Grid Ref/Post Code:

Subjects of Interest:

Additional Information:

Items to bring:

Cost: (eg Car Parking Fees)

Leader:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

of BBC's Springwatch and other associated programmes I marvel at the technology they employ to obtain their pictures. I decided to invest in a webcam and find out. I purchased one from a firm called Wingscapes in the USA who offered two versions. As I was planning to take pictures at night I chose the one which incorporated flash. As an experiment I set it up overnight on the smaller of my two Benbos and focussed it on some meat scraps which I had placed on the lawn. Next morning I connected the webcam to my computer and got a surprise when it revealed three neighbourhood cats demolishing my offering.

Soon after I got the webcam I again found evidence of mice in the garage so I decided to try once more to photograph whatever was taking the titbits that I provided. In the intervening years we had replaced the car with a wider version which would not fit comfortably in the garage so it spends its time outside. I placed some food in an egg cup and left it in a photographable position leaving the dimmer of the two garage lights on. Next morning the food was gone, so after a couple of nights doing this I decided that it was time to bring the webcam into play.

I set it up in the same way that I had done on the lawn but I muted the flash by taping a couple of layers of colourless polythene over the lamp to diffuse its intensity. I then went to bed. Next morning I again coupled the webcam to my computer and found to my satisfaction that I had about forty shots of the intruder(s) in various poses. (Figure 2) After this experiment I had to steel my heart and set the trap for real. Night after night it was occupied and I found in the end that the so called mouse turned out to be a mouse on a dozen of them.



P.S. I know the purists among you will say "that is not nature photography" but who cares. At heart I am a natural history lover with a camera rather than a photographer who specialises in taking pictures of wildlife.

Membership Statistics

Shown Below are Nature Group members per RPS region as at January 2016 (and January 2015) together with regional codes and other statistics

Regions	Jan 2016	Jan 2015	Distinctions	Jan 2016	Jan 2015
CE - Central	77	78	Honorary FRPS	04	04
EA - East Anglia	94	79	FRPS	80	86
EM - East Midlands	57	59	ARPS	246	240
IRL - Ireland	09	07	LRPS	221	209
LN - London	72	33	No Distinction	477	413
NI - Ireland (North)	03	04			
NO - Northern	25	28			
NW - North Western	70	56			
SC - Scotland	43	44			
SE - South Eastern	96	111			
SO - Southern	86	85			
SW - South Western	36	32			
TH - Thames Valley	70	79			
WE - Western	83	73			
WN - North Wales	11	14			
WS - South Wales	26	18			
YO - Yorkshire	45	42			
Total UK	903	842	Total	1028	952
Overseas	125	110			
Total Membership	1028	952			

These statistics are prepared from data supplied by the RPS Membership Department January 2016.

Map courtesy of the RPS Journal January/February 2001 revised 2014

The Benbo Tripod

by A. P. Seager ARPS

I was interested in the article by Tony Bond FRPS on page 4 of the Winter 2015 edition of *The Iris*.

I have been told that the original design was by a Chris Hill and Heather Angel. Chris I believe was an employee of The De Havilland Aircraft Company at Bournemouth and it is possible that prototypes were manufactured there. The main manufacture was by Kennett Engineering. However the first production models had a very interesting head (See images right and below) aimed at the 2.25 square camera users such as Hasselblad and Bronica. I found this a very useful feature in my work. Kennet also made a very compact dry mounting press which I still have.



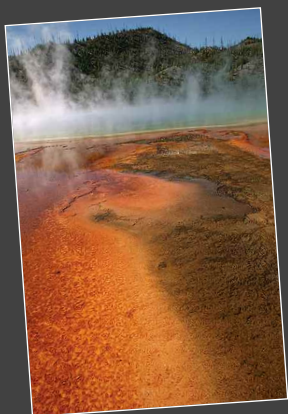
My Benbo has had very considerable use and now show signs of wear and tear. The only other person I met who had a tripod the same as mine was Heather Angel. It would be interesting to know how many were produced and if any are still in use.

During my life I have spent a great deal of money on photographic accessories but I am certain that my Benbo enabled me to obtain sharper images than any other tripod of its time, especially when using Kodachrome 25!

David Osborn FRPS

Photo-tours

**Photograph the amazing sights of
Yellowstone National Park**

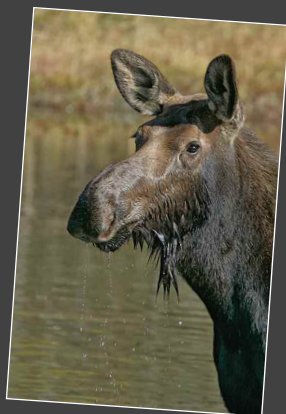


Fall Tour : September 2016

Explore the splendor of
Yellowstone National Park

Spectacular landscapes,
geo-thermal features
and wildlife .

All travel in Yellowstone
in comfortable
air-conditioned vehicles,
(max 4 clients per vehicle).



Winter Tour : January 2017

Spectacular winter landscapes
hot springs and geysers
plus an assortment of
wildlife in its winter habitat.

All travel within the park in
our exclusive private snow coach
(maximum 8 clients)



Contact David Osborn for a brochure -

Email: poppyland3@btinternet.com Web: davidosbornphotography.co.uk

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

