

# THE IRIS



MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 101  
Summer 2008



The  
Royal  
Photographic  
Society

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. Incorporated by Royal Charter



*Pictures by John Nathan LRPS:*

*Left: Marabou Stork - Lake Victoria*

*Above: Warthog family drinking - Masai Mara*

*Below: Zebra dust bathing with lookout - Amboseli*

*Bottom: Wildebeest rushing the Mara River*

*See John's article on Page 7.*



## Publication information

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

Copy should be sent as .txt or .doc files by email or on CD, or printed using double line spacing on one side of the paper only - please do not send hand written copy.

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

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

### Distribution:

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

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### Front Cover:

#### Gold Medal Slide, 2008 Annual Exhibition

Back-lit Black-veined White after rain  
by Lesley Simpson ARPS



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

## Nature Group Exhibitions

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

# Editorial

Since my last editorial I have once again made the Spring migration to Florida. It was a wonderful trip - this year all the members of our group were Nature Group members - and I'm sure we all returned home with some memorable images - I know I did. In early May I usually try to pay a visit to Derbyshire for the Early Purple Orchids - the weather at the weekends this year was not very cooperative and friends who did manage this annual pilgrimage told me that the orchids had been flattened by the heavy rains. My weekends in June have largely been taken up with The Iris but I did take a couple of hours off at the beginning of the month to visit a local site of Southern Marsh Orchids. Mostly they were young - not fully developed - but I managed some very nice pictures. It was fortunate that I went when I did - the weekend weather since has either been too wet or too windy!

Today is Midsummer's Day and its dark and raining, which is why I find myself sitting here typing this editorial - always the very last thing that I do when getting The Iris ready for press.

This issue features images from our Annual Exhibition. Congratulations to all of you who gained acceptances. A CD of the exhibition is available for £10. If you or your club would like a copy please email: [tremaine.cornish@ntlworld.com](mailto:tremaine.cornish@ntlworld.com) for details.

The award winning images are now 'live' on the website - well most of them are. If yours is one of those that is missing it could be because you failed to send a digital copy of your prints on CD - email a copy of your image not more than 600 x 600px to: [info@rpsnaturegroup.com](mailto:info@rpsnaturegroup.com) and we will get it included.

A letter I received prompted me to write a couple of pages for this issue myself - you could call it a 'moan' by the Editor. Other items in this issue include an account of John Nathan's trip to the Masai Mara, an article about the geology of coast of the Vale of Glamorgan by Roger Lewis LRPS and Peter Evans FRPS tells of his visit to Bulgaria. Plus there are reports on the Nature Group Day in the South East organised by Kath Bull ARPS and a Review of a book concerning Digital Colour Printing.

Finally, please keep those articles coming - I need items for the next and future issues. Details on page 1.



# From the chair

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It is the beginning of May and the woodlands are at their best with many of the early spring flowers still carpeting the ground and the young fresh leaves of the trees are unfurling, bird song fills the air and there is a real feeling of renewal and, with a bit of luck, the sun may shine. As more of us travel to exotic and far of places in search of new images of the natural world it is easy to forget what we have here at home. During the last month I have been travelling to many of the nature reserves in Lincolnshire to take images for a proposed book on Wild Lincolnshire to celebrate the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's diamond jubilee this December. It has made me look at the everyday species near to home in the county - from bluebells to primroses and nightingales - and to realise just how diverse and special the wildlife in this country is.

The fact that we still have this wealth is due to the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and other conservation groups who between them, over the years, have managed to save some of our most important habitats still rich in native species of flora and fauna. Like other counties, Lincolnshire has lost species and others are now rare and vulnerable, so I have visited reserves out of the county to acquire some images. One of these was Hills and Holes, the National Nature Reserve at Barnack where the beautiful Pasqueflower still flourishes, it does still occur in Lincolnshire but is only just surviving on one site. Avocets have just started to breed on the newly created Croft Marsh, an extension to the Trust's Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve south of Skegness, so I visited the RSPB Marshside Reserve near Southport where it is possible to photograph them at the nest from the public hide. It was Colin Smith FRPS who drew my attention to the photographic opportunities there, so thank you Colin. Robert Hawkesworth FRPS told me where to photograph Water Voles, and a trip to the Cromford Canal enabled me to get some decent pictures. The previous week I had spent three hours standing in one spot before eventually getting one picture of a nightingale at Whisby Pits Nature Park, the Trust reserve on the outskirts of Lincoln. So having arrived at the water vole site and been told the best place to position myself to see them I was rather disappointed that I had to wait three minutes before taking the first picture! This illustrates to me one of the most important aspects of being a

member of the Nature Group, the friendly and generous sharing of information that is available from other members of the group. As chairman, a job I took on feeling a little nervous and in some ways inadequate, I have to say that it has been a pleasure thanks to the support I have had from committee members and other group members.

The AGM and opening of the Exhibition has come and gone with the usual high standard of entries, details are elsewhere in this issue of the Iris. RPS Vice- Chairman Rosemary Wilman complimented the group by saying we were 'one of the most active groups in the RPS and that the website and the 100th edition of the Iris were excellent and had introduced brand guidelines', she went on to say 'well done' to the group for its achievements. It is always good to be thanked and is maybe something we are inclined to overlook at times.

Returning to the subject of getting out and about to find new images. I may have given the impression that I have gone off trips to exotic places to concentrate on taking pictures in this country, which is not the case. I have recently returned from a trip to Botswana which was excellent in every respect, and in June will be visiting Hungary. Prior to that my wife and I are spending a week on Mull where we hope to not only see Otters but to get some passable images of them as well. An artist friend who is preparing a book of paintings of Otters, most of which were painted on Mull, has given us some good locations and has said he has had otters coming as close to him as three or four feet. There are of course many other things to see and photograph on Mull but it is the Otters that are our main priority.

I hope that wherever you go in search of pictures, at home or abroad, during the summer you are able to come back with some stunning images which all members will be able to enjoy in next years exhibition.

The next AGM and Exhibition will be 25th April 2009 at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury from 2.00 pm.



# Annual General Meeting Report

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The 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Royal Photographic Society Nature Group was held at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, on Saturday 19th April 2008 at 2pm. It was chaired by Geoff Trinder and attended by 42 members.

## Apologies

These were received from Gill Cardy, Peter Jones, Patricia Kreyer, Kevin Maskell, Margery Maskell, Sue McGarrigle, David Osborn, Dawn Osborn, Eric Saul, Naomi Saul, John Sixsmith, Margaret Sixsmith, John Weir, Sheila Weir, Martin Withers and Eric Wright.

## Minutes of the 2007 AGM

The minutes of the 2007 AGM printed in issue 95 of 'The Iris' were accepted as a true and correct record of what then took place and signed by Geoff Trinder.

## Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

## Chairman's Report

It really doesn't feel like a year ago since I became Chairman but having said that, quite a lot has happened in the group. Can I firstly apologise for the change of date of the AGM and Exhibition and all the confusion which that has caused. It was done at the request of the Smethwick Photographic Society and seemed like a good idea at the time - they always look after us when we use their excellent facilities. What we had failed to realise was that the date had already been published in the Iris. As Chairman I should have seen that this would cause a problem and not have agreed to the change. Sorry!

I was pleased that my Chairman's Day was well received and have to thank the members who attended and the speakers who came along and entertained us so well. I think it is fair to say that the programme provided a good variety of subjects as well as ideas for places to visit.

A major cause for the group to celebrate has been the publishing of the one hundredth edition of The Iris. It has become a much respected magazine and we owe a great deal of thanks to the editors who have guided its development over the years. It was good that early members of the group of the status of Heather Angel, Hon FRPS and Tony Wharton FRPS were prepared to contribute to this

special issue, along with the previous editor John Myring. It is always difficult to pick out and thank individuals but I think it is only right that I should, on behalf of the group, thank Dawn Osborn FRPS for the time and effort she devotes to The Iris. We must also thank Dawn for getting the new Nature Group website up and running. The committee had decided that there were one or two problems with the previous website and things needed to be changed so Dawn took on the responsibility of getting everything up and running. The success of the website will depend very much on the support of the members keeping it fresh by providing new images on a regular basis. Please support it!

Thanks are also due to Nick Jarvis ARPS who was the original webmaster and laid the foundations which the group now benefit from.

As chairman I have been amazed how easy the job has been (so far) and for that I have to thank the committee for both their support and guidance. They really have the welfare of the group at heart and make things run remarkably smoothly.

Peter Jones ARPS, ably helped by Susie, has run the Annual Exhibition for several years and is standing down from the post before he takes over the Chair in 2009. It would be wrong not to record the group's thanks for all the work they have put in over the years; they will be a hard act to follow. With the age of digital imaging the nature of the exhibition has changed and Andrew Parsons ARPS has been running this side of the exhibition since it was introduced. With Peter retiring I am pleased to report that two members of the group have stepped forward to take on this important part of the group's activities. Tremaine Cornish LRPS will run the slide section and Sue McGarrigle will be responsible for the print section. Because of the importance of the Annual Exhibition the committee have decided that Andrew, Tremaine and Sue should be co-opted on to the committee as non-voting members.

Thanks must also go to John Jones ARPS who has photographed all the prints for inclusion in the travelling exhibition.

Finally I would like to thank all the members for their continued support without which the group would be a very poor affair.

## Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Margery Maskell, Geoff read through her report as follows.

## **Treasurer's Report for Period 1st. January – 31st December 2007**

**General Comments:-** This year has not seen any major changes to the way our finances have to be recorded and so this report is fairly simple. It's aims to expand and explain the Balance Sheet attached. As usual, the Balance Sheet is an overall summary of Receipts and Payments for the year. Because some items 'straddle' year ends, it cannot be a detailed Balance Sheet for each item.

**Subscriptions:-** The Subscription Income shown in the Balance Sheet is that credited monthly to our Cash Book Account during the current Financial year - which is, of course, Nature Group Subscriptions paid to the RPS at Bath for December 2006 to November 2007. The Life Members' subscription. reimbursements for 2006 are included in the 2007 accounts, as they were not paid to the Nature Group until 31st January 2007.

**Lectures & Workshops:-** One event has taken place this year. The Chairman's Day at Smethwick on the 3rd November, with an attendance of 35 paying attendees. The event was successful as usual, and made a slight overall profit. Note that the expenditure includes £356 from the Chairman's Day event of 2006, as this was not paid until January 2007.

**Interest:-** This contributed a most welcome £577.59 to our funds and results from the good Cash Book balance.

**Sundry Income:-** This includes VAT refunds and income resulting from the sale of the 'A' Guidance Interactive CDs (£250).

**Legacy:-** Michael Shirley's legacy of £500 was received in 2005, and was spent this year. Together with funds from RPS Bath, a revised version of "The Nature Photographers' Code of Practice" has now been issued.

**The Iris:-** Three editions of The Iris were published this year (#97, #98 & #99). The cost of production and posting has risen as predicted. In the future we hope to offset some of the costs by direct sales of the magazine to people outside the Nature Group.

**Annual Exhibition:-** The Exhibition was in profit this year to the tune of £346.63, due to the Travelling Exhibition bringing in £510.

**General Administration:-** Includes all running costs of the Nature Group [general postage, telephone, stationery and travel to committee meetings, the cost of our web-site and VAT expenditure].

**Overall Financial Situation:-** The Balance Sheet shows an excess of Expenditure over Income of £2,223.85. The Cash Book shows a healthy credit balance of £12,416.53 at the end of 2007, as cheques to the total of £72.24 had been written, but not cleared. (c.f. £14,568.14 at the same time the previous year).

Margery Maskell ARPS, Hon. Treasurer  
18th January 2008

Trevor Hyman asked where the Michael Shirley legacy appeared on the balance sheet. Rosemary Wilman ARPS (Vice President RPS) said that it was not seen as an expenditure as it was put in a special fund and Bath contributed £500 to the printing of the new revised version of "The Nature Photographers' Code of Practice". There was also a query about the amount of money in the bank and Geoff said that the Charity Commission do not like there to be too much money in the bank account. John Bebbington proposed that the report be accepted and Trevor Hyman seconded it. This was duly approved.

## **Secretary's Report**

Our current membership according to Bath on 3rd April is 611 which is 3 less than at the last AGM. However there are at least four new member enquiries in the pipeline. There has been an upsurge in people wishing to join after the launch of the new website at the end of March.

Many members are leaving the Society which automatically means they leave the group. Again it's the old, old story of having issues with the RPS at Bath and not with us as a group. Three of these have taken up subscriptions for The Iris.

We have an average of about six new members each month. Newly joined members of the RPS often make contact about how to join the group and they are put in touch with Simon Bibb at Bath.

The Associateship CD Rom is selling very well. Our thanks to John and Trevor for all their hard work. So far we have sold 225 of the old version and 23 of the new version, one going as far as Australia. There has also been a surge in sales of the CD since the launch of the new website.

Being Secretary does have its moments - as when I received an unexpected delivery of 11,000 copies of the new edition of "The Nature Photographers' Code of Practice". Where would I store them? Fortunately other committee members were willing to take some. Likewise our new 'banner', which I hope you have all noticed, arrived out of the blue.

Generally speaking the Nature Group has had a successful year and I look forward to the challenges of the next.

### Any Other Business

Andrew Parsons said that he would be very grateful if members would read the entry forms for the Annual

Exhibition more carefully as there were still a lot of errors in the way they were filled in.

Rosemary Wilman said that the Nature Group was one of the most active groups in the RPS and that the new website and the 100th edition of The Iris were excellent and had introduced the new brand guidelines. She wished to say "well done" to Geoff and his team whom she thought were absolutely brilliant and thanks to all.

Date and Venue for the 33rd AGM 2009  
Saturday 25th April 2009 at The Old Schoolhouse,  
Oldbury at 2.00pm.

The meeting was declared closed at 1.55pm.

## THE NATURE GROUP OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

### Receipts and Payments Accounts for 1st. January 2007 to 31st December 2007

#### Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bath

<u>Year 2006</u>		<u>Year 2007</u>
<b>Income</b>		
5,446.76	Subscriptions	5,563.93
-	Life Subscriptions from 2006	664.24
3,228.00	Lectures & Workshops	525.00
1,022.36	Annual Exhibition	1,432.56
650.17	Interest received (to Cash Book)	577.59
1,170.98	Sundry Income	641.86
-	Legacy	-
<b>11,518.27</b>	<b>sub totals</b>	<b>9,405.18</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
6,952.33	The Iris incl. postage	6,562.67
2,633.00	Lectures & Workshops	864.60
519.45	Annual Exhibition	1,085.93
3,180.53	General Administration	3,115.83
<b>£13,285.31</b>	<b>sub totals</b>	<b>11,629.03</b>
<b>-1,767.04</b>	<b>Income minus Expenditure</b>	<b>-2,223.85</b>

### Balance Sheet at 31st December 2007

Nature Group Cash Book	£
Balance brought forward from 2006	14,568.14
Cleared Credit from 2006	-
Cleared Cheques from 2006	-
Uncleared Cheques from 2007	72.24
Income minus Expenditure 2007	-2,223.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,416.53</b>
<b>Total Carried Forward To Financial Year 2008</b>	<b>12,416.53</b>

Margery J Maskell (Hon Treasurer)



# A Unique Safari

by John Nathan LRPS

We were so lucky to go on safari (in Swahili safari = journey) to Kenya and Tanzania in mid-October 2007. It was very peaceful and we were told that things were much better than a few years earlier - less corruption, more stable. About a month following our departure there was an election followed shortly after by terrible civil unrest. I have read that safari travellers are now down to a trickle and national parks will be at risk if the wildlife is not preserved. Everyone on our safari, from chambermaids to drivers, could not have been more helpful.

My wife and I had already been on safari to South Africa, mainly the Kruger, and Namibia, where we visited the Etosha National park. We decided in 2007 to visit Kenya and Tanzania. Not for us the seven day safari followed by seven days getting sunburned on a beach. It would be all safari! Our plan was to make a huge anti-clockwise circle, first to the Masai Mara in Kenya, then a night at Speke Bay, Lake Victoria, followed by the Serengeti in Tanzania. We would drive the whole bone-shattering length of the Serengeti - risking damage to the camera and lenses from hours of shaking in vehicles on dirt tracks, and then go into the Ngorongoro Crater and Lake Manyara in Tanzania, and finally Amboseli back in Kenya, before returning to Nairobi, and home.

The trip was deliberately timed to try to catch the annual Wildebeest migration. Two million animals follow a large triangular route from the Masai Mara to the Serengeti, then back. The reason for the migration is not fully understood, but it is not just following green grass. We were extremely lucky to catch the tail end of it and indeed see a group of perhaps 20,000 Wildebeest crossing the Mara river. They are visibly frightened about doing this because of the Crocodiles who are often lying in wait for them in the river. Our driver was clearly an expert. One day, we saw them amassing on the other side but our driver said 'They are not ready yet'. We returned an hour later and they were still on the far side. Suddenly our driver headed toward the river without warning- he had noticed two or three animals had crossed to our side and wanted to get us a good vantage point - which he did. The other animals, following the leaders, suddenly rushed across in a panic, presumably terrified of waiting

crocodiles. I was able to take many pictures in the 20 minutes or so it took them to cross the river. It was an astonishing site, and on the day we went, the crocodiles must have been full of food, as there was not one to be seen. In order to 'stop' motion of the crossing, I used 1/1250 sec, and ISO of 800. For me, this unique event was undoubtedly the highlight of my trip.

Like most photographers, I have improved my equipment gradually over the years and I have decided that good lenses are almost more important than the camera body. I took a Canon 300mm f4 lens, Canon 500mm f4, 1.4X and 2.0X converters, Sigma FX 17-35, Canon 35-115, and a Tamron 90mm macro lens. The camera bodies I used were Canon EOS 30D and EOS 10D. I carried flash, cable release and polarising filters, none of which were used much, but no tripod. Far more useful, in fact invaluable, is a bean bag. My bean bag is not the tiny thing you can buy in a camera shop. This is a large strong empty bag, 15 inches by six inches, with a zip at one end (of the type which banks use to carry coins) with a large plastic bag and an elastic band inside. I fill this with rice at our first destination. Resting the bean bag on the wide edge of the sunshine roof works very well - even with a long lens. So unless you are going to take landscapes, you can dispense a tripod. My other innovation this trip was checking in as hold baggage some equipment in a Pelicase. Made for photographers, these cases are very strong and have special adaptors locked with two padlocks. Three layers of foam, custom fit to four lenses, flash, spare batteries and camera body was checked in as hold luggage. I carried one camera body and the 500mm lens as hand luggage which used up all my allowance. My equipment arrived unscathed in both directions; whether it will happen next time I travel I do not know.

We were taken out on two drives every day. We were up for breakfast about 6.00 am, and had to be ready by 7.30. We would return at about midday when some animals are resting in the shade - and then go out again from about 4.00 pm until dusk at 7.00 pm- so near to the equator, twilight only lasts for about half an hour.

I discovered that four things were very important:-

- 1) A keen driver. All our drivers were excellent - as soon as they saw a keen photographer, they all tried very hard to find the best wildlife - often away from other vans. Also, a keen driver can see a sparrow three miles away whereas I can just about see an eagle at 100 yards.
- 2) Other keen photographers in your van. This is crucial. In Kenya they use Toyota Land Cruisers with one (sometimes two) sunshine rooves. In theory they take seven people - in practice, with long lenses, four people is quite sufficient. It would be impossible with seven as there would be nowhere to put your equipment.
- 3) Asking the driver to turn the engine off when stopping for photography - the vibration of the engine is easily seen through a 300mm lens. It is also wise to say that you are not interested solely in lions. Although interesting, some people seem to want the driver to drive from lion to lion. When our drivers realised that small animals and birds were of equal interest, the supply of species rose dramatically.
- 4) Having cameras, lenses and hoods fixed, turned on at all times. Wildlife does not hang about. Apart from lions, who will cheerfully stroll straight toward you, much of the wildlife moves away fairly quickly. If you are not quick, you will get lots of pictures of rumps. The vans throw up a lot of dust, so keep lens changes to a minimum to avoid getting dust on the sensor. It is a good idea to keep the camera covered when you are not using it.

The day is not over when you arrive back at the hotel in the evening, exhausted. Images had to be downloaded onto a portable hard disc (a risk, putting all my eggs in one basket) but you can check visually what you have downloaded. I took about 3 GB of images each day, not difficult using RAW, and these took about an hour to download each night - the last thing I felt like after being shaken about in a washing machine all day. In total I captured about 37Gb of information in ten days.

The results are, I think, the best wildlife shots I have been able to get so far. I used all my lenses apart from the macro lens - and I would have used this if I had seen any Dung Beetles. This became a standing joke, until, right at the end of the safari, our guide said that they only appear in the wet season - you would think the dung was wet enough, but apparently not - some beetles are never satisfied.

The number and range of animals was enormous. The Masai Mara was like the garden of Eden, with animals everywhere. The common herbivores, such as Zebra, Wildebeest and Giraffe were easy to see, but they spend most of their time eating.

This time I was trying to photograph wildlife doing something more interesting than just eating. As they eat for most of the time, this was a lot more difficult. The big cats, apart from lions, are more elusive - they do not have to eat all day long. I saw animals involved in fighting, copulating, taking a dustbath and looking after young, and I tried to film it. We were very lucky to see various animals with young; Elephant, Lion, Warthog, Jackal, Hyena and Giraffe. Another challenge is to take the opportunity to photograph rare species. Cheetahs are now said to be 'vulnerable' according to the list of endangered species - we saw them just once. On our way out of Amboseli we saw Gerenuk. A Gerenuk is a type of antelope with a very long neck. It stands on its hind legs to forage, using the front legs to steady itself, so that it can eat food above the height accessible to most animals. It is the only antelope which does this; we were told it too is now very rare. We also saw Topi, another unusual antelope, only found in East Africa.

My most useful lens was the 300mm F4, with which I took the shots of Wildebeest on the Mara river. To photograph the Cheetah with her cubs, we had a drive of an hour over rough terrain, in a very strong wind, and then saw them for no more than about 30 seconds. My 500mm came in useful for these pictures. The wide angle lens was used for landscapes, which included habitat shots. The only lens I hardly used was the 90mm macro lens. You are rarely allowed to get out of the vehicle during a drive even though most of the time you are stationary. This seemed odd to me, as there were Masai walking about around the edges of the game parks, armed with nothing but a stick. Consequently there was little opportunity for plant photography; in October, although it was green, there were very few plants in flower.

All in all, this was a unique trip. Lest anyone should tell you that the most important part of a camera is the part behind the eyepiece, I can confirm that the quality of camera and lenses makes a huge difference - I got the best wildlife shots I have been able to take without spending weeks out there. I came back exhausted but with enough images to keep me going for a year or two.



*Above: Cheetah and cubs in wind, Amboseli*



*Left: Elephants crossing the road, Amboseli*

*Below: Wildebeest migration across the Mara River.*

*More pictures on the inside front cover.*





# The Heritage Coast of the Vale of Glamorgan



by Roger Lewis LRPS

Southerndown

The Principality of Wales is one of the jewels in the crown when it comes to investigating the geological record of these islands. Wales being situated on the west of the British Isles, the coast suffers the storms and battering of the Atlantic Ocean. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty, from the ruggedness of the Llyn Peninsula to the sweeping sands of Cardigan Bay. The rich limestone cliffs of Pembrokeshire and Gower with their sea birds and flora retain an almost ancient aura of peace and tranquillity.

The Heritage Coast of the Vale of Glamorgan is no exception. Stretching between the estuary of the River Ogmore and the storm beach at Gilestone it comprises some twenty kilometres of spectacular Blue Lias Limestone cliffs punctuated by sandy bays and coves littered with pebbles of all sizes hewn by the sea over millennia. The Glamorgan coast was one of three Heritage Coasts designated in the early 1970s, the others being in Dorset and Suffolk

Prior to industrialisation this coastline extended well into Swansea Bay with the limestone cliffs giving way to an extensive complex of sand dunes. All that remains of the sand dunes today which are of any real interest to the naturalist or photographer are those at Merthyr Mawr and Kenfig Burrows, the rest having been taken up by the vast steelworks at

Port Talbot and the urbanisation of the lower Swansea Valley. The last remnant is that of Swansea Bay as it sweeps across into the Carboniferous Limestone of Gower at Mumbles Head.

The coastal Vale of Glamorgan itself is an area of low, undulating farmland with a history that goes back to the time of the Norman Conquest. It suffered, as did all agricultural land, under enclosure and the denuding of woodland. The landscape today is open punctuated only by wind swept trees and walls made from local limestone.

The geological history of south Wales is almost inextricably linked with that of the coalfield and the consequence of that industry led to a landscape, which is only now being returned to a state where nature can survive. The Heritage Coast was very much overlooked by anyone other than those with a specific interest in it until it was realised that the conservation of our geological and geomorphologic environment was just as important as the conservation of our flora and fauna.

The coastline reveals a fascinating geological succession and illustrates a period when the coastline and environment were completely different to what they are today. Reptiles such as *Ichthyosaurus communis*, a marine predator, swam in a tropical sea as 'South Wales' at that time was



very much closer to the equator than it is now and the Atlantic Ocean was yet to be born. Yet in addition to the extinct ammonites and trilobites that roamed these seas the coast exhibits some of the ancient earth movements and more latterly the scars of the Ice Age. These shaped the land we now live in leaving us with, in the case of the Heritage Coast, hanging valleys and streams occupying valleys that are far too large for their present capacity.

This story begins some 350 million years ago in a land where corals and creatures with shells lived in warm, shallow tropical seas. It was the remains of these creatures that formed the vast beds of Carboniferous Limestone of South Wales. This environment gave way to swamps and estuaries where immense ferns and mosses grew unchecked. These huge plants eventually fell and were compacted layer upon layer resulting in the beds of the Coal Measures and Millstone Grits, which together with the Carboniferous Limestone are the main deposits of the Carboniferous Period

Following the Carboniferous Period was a period of mountain building, the coastline was subjected to a number of earth movements associated with the movements of the continents and the formation of a super continent, 'Pangaea'. 'Wales' together with 'Britain' was situated near the centre of this great landmass which was located near to what is now the Equator, and was subject to desert conditions not dissimilar to those of present day Saharan Africa. The period between Carboniferous times and the present day coastline was one of considerable erosion and destruction of rocks laid down in the intervening periods. There is no evidence of the younger Cretaceous rocks, which are found in the chalk downs, and cliffs of southern England. We are left with a geological record of marine Lias seas of the later, but younger Jurassic Period in the spectacular cliffs and wave cut platforms along the Heritage Coast.

What we now see in the Heritage Coast is evidence of a sea, advancing and cutting into the rocks that were deposited in the marine environment of the lower Lias of Jurassic times. Limestone is a calcareous sedimentary rock formed mainly of calcium carbonate. Shale is formed when fine-grained clay is compressed by extreme weight. The thicknesses of the shale and limestone bands, which can be easily seen, indicate the sea conditions at the time. The limestone would have been laid down in warm shallow seas and the shale in deeper colder seas. When you look at the cliff face, you can see how the sea levels fluctuated in ancient times. There



*Actinerinus pulcher*



*Ichthyosaurus communis*



*Splenophrentis elegans*



*Strata*

are however a number of theories how this banding occurred. The limestone is referred to as 'blue' Lias and the bands of softer shale between the limestones aid their instability. It is this shale, which the sea attacks leaving a 'gap' between the strata resulting in a weakness and subsequent collapse of the cliff face onto the beach below. The erosion is then primarily from the sea i.e. the bottom of the cliffs are 'eaten' away leaving an overhang which eventually becomes so heavy that it collapses onto the beach. It is this instability which makes the coastline dangerous to the unwary. **'This Coastline can be Dangerous - Avoid the Rock Faces'** There are many warning notices, which advise visitors to keep away from the unstable cliff edges and bases - however, with common sense it can provide a feast of photographic opportunities. I would suggest that one restricts oneself to the easily accessible areas.



Nash Point

My favourite area is the storm beach at Southerndown. It is easily reached by car; there is a car park alongside the beach and a tarmac pathway to the headland from where spectacular views of the coast can be seen.

In my experience, the best time of year to photograph the coast is during the Spring and Autumn. Summer tends to be too crowded with holidaymakers and more importantly, the sun is at the wrong angle to allow any really stunning images with the coast being south facing. Similarly, evening will always provide you with the best light as it fills the rock faces and highlights the natural features of the landscape.

The beach consists of pebbles, sand and large angular blocks which have fallen from the cliffs and on the eastern edge there are examples of Hercynian earth movements, some 200 million years ago and some evidence of folding which is contemporary with European Alpine folding of some 50 million years ago. These can be seen from the beach at low tide on the outcrop known as 'Trwyn y Witch' the Witch's Nose. It is obvious where the name comes from when you see it.

From the headland, which can be reached from the car park by following a tarmac path, there are spectacular views of the cliffs, hanging valleys and wave cut platforms. The rocks vary in colour according to the sunlight but if you are lucky, you will see varying hues of yellow, which are rich and saturated. The informal walled garden at Dunraven is a haven for butterflies, in season, and probably the most famous inhabitants of this coastline are the Choughs together with Peregrines, Merlins, hobbies, Buzzards and in the winter, the estuary at Ogmere by Sea holds many winter migrants.

Coastal photography can be hard on equipment but I have moved into the digital era and found no difficulty. I favour two lenses, a 20-35mm f2.8 zoom and a 105mm macro lens. These I find cover most eventualities that come my way. I use a tripod when I can but it is not always possible. I always shoot in raw and like to compose in the camera, so that there is minimal post processing involved.

Living on the coast gives one the opportunity to photograph a wide range of flora and fauna in addition to the rocks and landforms of the landscape itself. The sand dunes are rich in flora and the animals of the coastal Vale include such rarities as the Adder, *Vipera berus*, and the Polecat, *Mustela putorius*, Wales being one of the last strongholds of this fascinating little creature which sadly, I have seen dead on the road more than I have alive.





# The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2008



**Gold Medal Digital Image**

**Stag Beetles fighting by Richard Revels FRPS**



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. Incorporated by Royal Charter



**Above: Selectors' Award:**

Gentoo in rough sea  
by Dawn Osborn FRPS



## Nature Group Annual Exhibition Award Winning Prints

**Top right: Bronze Medal**

White-tufted Grebes  
by Naomi Saul ARPS

**Below: Highly Commended**

Gentoo Penguins on beach  
by Richard Revels FRPS





# Nature Group Annual Exhibition Award Winning Slides



## **Above left: Highly Commended**

Pair of Pink Anemone Fish by Rosemary Simpson ARPS

## **Above right: Highly Commended**

Flying Fish by Marguerite Fewkes ARPS

## **Left: Selectors' Award**

Cladonia diversa by Barbara Hawkesworth ARPS

## **Bottom right: Bronze Medal**

Shrimp on Anemone Yucatanicus  
by Rosemary Simpson ARPS



# Nature Group Annual Exhibition Award Winning Prints



**Above: Gold Medal Print**

Dusky Birch Sawfly Larvae by Richard Revels FRPS

**Below: Selectors' Award**

European Rollers bonding behaviour  
by Dickie Duckett ARPS



**Below: Highly Commended**  
Green-winged Orchid by Mark Monkton LRPS

# The RPS Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2008

## Award Winners

### Gold Medal

#### Best Print in the Exhibition

Richard Revels FRPS  
Dusky Birch Sawfly Larvae

### Gold Medal

#### Best Slide in the Exhibition

Lesley Simpson ARPS  
Back-lit Black-veined White after rain

### Gold Medal

#### Best Digital Image in the Exhibition

Richard Revels FRPS  
Stag Beetles fighting

## Bronze Medals - Print Section

### Category A Print

White-tufted Grebes  
Naomi Saul ARPS

### Category B Print

Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* var. *trolli*  
Richard Revels FRPS

## Bronze Medals - Slide Section

### Category A Slide

Shrimp on Anemone Yucatanicus  
Rosemary Simpson ARPS

### Category B Slide

Shaggy Pholiota group  
Kay Reeve FRPS

## Bronze Medals - Digital Section

### Category A Digital Image

Meadow Grasshopper on bracken  
Andrew Parsons ARPS

### Category B Digital Image

Common Spotted Orchid  
John Berry ARPS

# The RPS Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2008

## Selectors' Awards

### Andy Callow

- Print Category A - Whooper Swan - Roy Dorkins
- Print Category B - Glistening Inkcap - Mike Middleton
- Slide Category A - Pair of Coleman Shrimps on Fire Urchin - Rosemary Simpson
- Slide Category B - *Mycena inclinata* - Tony Bond FRPS
- Digital Category A - Sika and young - Monique Vanstone ARPS
- Digital Category B - *Pleurotus cornucopiae* - Fiona Mackay LRPS

### Mike Wilkes

- Print Category A - European Rollers bonding behaviour - Dickie Duckett ARPS
- Print Category B - Flame Agate - John Jones ARPS
- Slide Category A - Lion mating - John Chamberlain FRPS
- Slide Category B - *Cladonia diversa* - Barbara Hawkesworth ARPS
- Digital Category A - Ruddy Turnstone in flight - Dickie Duckett ARPS
- Digital Category B - *Ranunculus seguieri* - John Weir ARPS

### Rosemary Wilman

- Print Category A - Gentoo in Rough Sea - Dawn Osborn FRPS
- Print Category B - Yellow Antler Fungus *Calocera viscosa* - John Jones ARPS
- Slide Category A - Great-crested Grebe feeding chick - Tony McDade
- Slide Category B - *Pholiota squarrosa* - Tony Bond FRPS
- Digital Category A - Striated Caracara - Richard Revels FRPS
- Digital Category B - Lady's Slipper Orchid - Margery Maskell ARPS

### Highly Commended Prints:

- John Bulpitt FRPS - Chalkhill Blues on Field Scabius
- Dickie Duckett ARPS - Osprey in flight with Trout
- Bryan Knox ARPS - Arctic Tern threatening attack
- Mark Monkton LRPS - Green-winged Orchid

### Highly Commended Slides

- David Cantrille FRPS - Eider taking off
- David Cantrille FRPS - Gannet hovering
- Marguerite Fewkes - Flying Fish
- Rosemary Simpson - Pair of Pink Anemone Fish
- Kay Thompson FRPS - Newly hatched Cricket nymph

### Highly Commended Digital Images

- Dickie Duckett ARPS - Great Blue Heron with Puffer fish
- Adrian McGrath LRPS - Gannets
- Barrie Mead FRPS - Elephant Dustbath (IV)
- Naomi Saul ARPS - Gentoos head down in sand storm
- Colin Smith FRPS - Bearded Tit



## Accepted Prints 2008

Author	Title	Award
Gordon Bramham ARPS	Red Panda Razorbill Griffon approach Snow Leopard	
John Bulpitt FRPS	Chalkhill Blues on Field Scabious Hyena and Cubs Green Tree Lizard displaying	HC
David Cantrille FRPS	Wood Stork landing Red Kite Grey Seals playing Purple Emperor	
Gill Cardy	White-tailed Fish-Eagle Steller's Fish Eagle in flight	
John Chamberlin FRPS	Springbok drinking Two-banded Courser Ring-tailed Lemur suckling young Rufous-breasted Dotterell	
Kenneth Day	Parson's Chameleon	
Roy Dorkins	Snowy Owl Whooper Swan European Wolves	Andy Callow Award
Dickie Duckett ARPS	Magellanic Penguin walking on beach European Rollers bonding behaviour Wandering Albatross over sea Osprey in flight with Trout ' Northern Gannets pair interaction	Mike Wilkes Award
Martin Dyer	Goldfinch on Teasel Knot	HC
Gordon Follows	Snipe Alaskan Brown Bear with cubs	
Michael Huggan ARPS	Timber Wolf Black Rhinoceros	
Colin Jeeves	Privet Hawkmoth Vapour-moth Caterpillar	
Koshy Johnson	Puffin in flight	
John Jones ARPS	Flame Agate Porcelain Fungus Yellow Antler Fungus <i>Calocera viscosa</i>	Mike Wilkes Award
Bryan Knox ARPS	Red and Green Macaws leaving a clay lick Arctic Tern threatening attack Tree climbing Lions	Rosemary Wilman Award
Adrian Langdon	Greenshanks Coyote	HC
Maggie Mason	Pearl-spotted Owl, Luangwa Valley	
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Great Egret reflection Willet in flight Eastern Meadowlark	
Margery Maskell ARPS	<i>Stereocaulon evolutum</i> lichen Gentoo Penguin emerging from sea Great Blue Heron courtship	

Sue McGarrigle	Ruddy Turnstone	
Dave McKay	Red Squirrel	
	Lion kill	
	Wildebeest charge	
Ian McLean	Lobster Moth	
	<i>Ascalaphus sp.</i>	
	<i>Orchis italica</i> flower head	
	Knapweed Fritillary	
	Four-spotted Chaser	
Mike Middleton	Man Orchid	
	Early Purple Orchids in Cressbrook Dale	
	Amethyst deceiver in habitat	
	Stinkhorn in habitat	
	Glistening Inkcaps	<b>Andy Callow Award</b>
Mark Monkton LRPS	Green-winged Orchid	<b>HC</b>
	Heath-spotted Orchid	
Dawn Osborn FRPS	Gentoo in Rough Sea	<b>Rosemary Wilman Award</b>
	Great Blue Heron in flight	
	Immature Brown Pelican preparing to dive	
Andrew Parsons ARPS	Brown Rat leaving hole in brick wall	
	Female Yellow Hammer	
	Banded Demoiselle male	
	Hedge Sparrow	
	Dunlin in summer plumage with prey	
Norman Prue FRPS	Chapman's Zebra quenching thirst	
Kay Reeve FRPS	<i>Hypholoma elongatum</i>	
	Male Broad-bodied Chaser	
	Glistening Inkcaps	
	Dog Rose flower detail	
Richard Revels FRPS	Gentoo Penguins on beach	
	Wood Sandpiper and reflection	
	Common Blue Damselflies mating	
	Dusky Birch Sawfly Larvae	
	Bee Orchid <i>Ophrys apifera</i> var. <i>trolli</i>	<b>Gold Medal</b>
David Robinson	Osprey	<b>Bronze Medal</b>
	Black-throated Diver	
	Coal Tit	
	Goshawk	
	Grey-headed Woodpecker	
Eric Saul ARPS	King Cormorant displaying	
	Gentoo Penguin with chicks	
Naomi Saul ARPS	Gentoos leaving stormy sea	
	Elephant Seal Bull aggression against pup	
	White-tufted Grebes	<b>Bronze Medal</b>
Malcolm Schuyt ARPS	King Penguins	
Diana Walker	Fly Agaric	
	European Brown Bear	
John Weir ARPS	Lichen <i>Cladonia squamosa</i>	
	Black-bellied Plover with worms	
	Sanderling	
Sheila Weir	Great-blue Herons at nest	
	Globe Flowers	
	Mountain Pansy Durness	
	Sulphur Tuft	
	Turkey Tail	

# Slide Acceptances 2008

Name	Title	
John Bebbington FRPS	Predatory Shieldbug with Red Admiral larva prey Spring Pasqueflower, Swiss Alps	
Tony Bond FRPS	<i>Pholiota squarrosa</i> Adder	<b>Rosemary Wilman Award</b>
	<i>Mycena inclinata</i> Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<b>Andy Callow Award</b>
Gordon Bramham ARPS	Arctic Tern Great Grey Owl Bear sparring	
Kath Bull ARPS	<i>Picromerus bidens</i> feeding on Herald Moth larva Porcelain Fungus	
David Cantrille FRPS	Eider taking off Mycena species Gannet hovering	<b>HC</b> <b>HC</b>
John Chamberlain FRPS	Namaqua Flower field Black faced Impala drinking Peregrine wing stretching Lion mating	<b>Mike Wilkes Award</b>
Bob Devine	Brown Bear Lilac-breasted Roller	
Marguerite Fewkes	Macaque & infant Young Macaque climbing Flying Fish	<b>HC</b>
Gordon Follows	Antarctic Fur Seal Redshank calling	
Barbara Hawkesworth ARPS	<i>Iris lutescens</i> Golden Pholiota <i>Cladonia diversa</i>	<b>Mike Wilkes Award</b>
Robert Hawkesworth FRPS	Copper Underwing Porcelain Fungus Elephant Hawkmoth Bleeding Mycena Southern Festoon	
Margaret Hodge FRPS	Hydroids	
Colin Jeeves	Large Copper Butterfly Longhorn Beetle Grey Dagger Moth caterpillar Death-head Hawkmoth Caterpillar	
Dennis Johnson	Red Deer stag rutting Sea Stars & Cloning Anemone	
Koshy Johnson	Green Heron	
John Jones ARPS	<i>Pholiota aurivella</i> New Forest	
Jean MacWhirter	Magellanic Snipe Giant Kelp Sally Lightfoot Crab	



Tony McDade	Great-crested Grebe feeding chick	<b>Rosemary Wilman Award</b>
Reg Mellis ARPS	Black-headed Bunting singing Bittern skypointing Red Grouse Turtle Dove	
William Middleton	<i>Helvella lagundsa</i> Elfin Saddle Dunnock perched on birch twig	
Mark Monkton LRPS	<i>Mycena crocata</i> <i>Clavulinopsis helvola</i> <i>Neobulgaria pura</i>	
Norman Prue FRPS	Rockhopper Penguin and chicks Redlegged Pademelon and Joey Pygmy Falcon male Antarctic Fur Seal charging	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Four Spotted Chaser Golden Samphire in habitat <i>Galerina marginata</i> Shaggy Pholiota group	<b>Bronze Medal</b>
Richard Revels FRPS	Death-head Hawkmoth Larva Dragonfly <i>Libellula depressa</i> Sprawler Moth Larva Gannets	
John Scotten ARPS	Common Coenagrion	
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Back-lit Black-veined white after rain Spotted Fritillary Recently emerged Downy Emerald Mating <i>Strangalia maculate</i> feeding on pollen	<b>Gold Medal</b>
Rosemary Simpson	Pair of Coleman Shrimps on Fire Urchin Pair of Pink Anemone Fish Shrimp on <i>Anemone yucatanicus</i>	<b>Andy Callow Award</b> <b>HC</b> <b>Bronze Medal</b>
John Sixsmith ARPS	Garden Spider	
Margaret Sixsmith ARPS	<i>Sedum obtusatum</i> on volcanic bedrock Lacewing Sand Tufa castles False Chanterelle	
Don Tait FRPS	Southern Gentians	
Kay Thompson FRPS	Robber Fly with Dragonfly prey Newly hatched Cricket nymph	<b>HC</b>

# Digital Acceptances 2008

Author	Title	
John Bebbington FRPS	Banded Snail	
	Female Common Darter roosting	
John Berry ARPS	Pebble Prominent Moth	
	Common Spotted Orchid	<b>Bronze Medal B</b>
	<i>Mycena fagetorum</i>	
Gordon Bramham ARPS	Lammergeier	
	Bald Eagle Dive	
David Cantrille FRPS	Great Eagle in flight	
	Osprey returning with fish	
Gill Cardy	Beautiful Demoiselle	
Joe Curtis LRPS	Grey Heron	
Elizabeth Cutter ARPS	Glacial Buttercup	
	Lady's Slipper Orchid	
Dickie Duckett ARPS	Ruddy Turnstone in flight	<b>Mike Wilkes Award A</b>
	Great Blue Heron with Puffer fish	<b>HC</b>
Martin Dyer	Marsh Harrier	
	Starlings at twilight	
	<i>Mycena</i> group	
Chuck Eccleston ARPS	Auspicious Burnet	
Jane Greateorex ARPS	Black-browed Albatross	
	Greater Spotted Woodpecker	
	Dolphin Gull	
Roy Hodgkiss ARPS	Common Tern fishing	
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Osprey	
Adrian McGrath LRPS	Gannets	<b>HC</b>
Sue McGarrigle	Great Spotted Woodpecker	
Dave McKay ARPS	Hippopotamus and calf	
Fiona Mackay LRPS	<i>Lycoperdon perlatum</i>	
	<i>Oudemansiella mucida</i>	
	<i>Pleurotus comucopiae</i>	<b>Andy Callow Award B</b>
Kevin Maskell FRPS	Starling	
Margery Maskell ARPS	Great Blue Heron Landing	
	Lady's Slipper Orchid	<b>Rosemary Wilman Award B</b>
	Oyster Plant	
Ann Mead	Mating Limax maximus at Night	
	Shaggy pholiota	
	<i>Ascocotyne cyllichnium</i>	
Barrie Mead FRPS	Elephant Dustbath (IV)	<b>HC</b>
Reg Mellis ARPS	Black-winged Stilt courtship dance	
	Nightingale in song	
	Grey Heron with Fish	
	Avocet Landing	
Mark Monkton LRPS	Shieldbug preening	
	<i>Xlaria hypoxylon</i>	
Dawn Osborn FRPS	Cobb's Wren singing at first light	
	Great Blue Heron take off	
	Red-bellied Woodpecker catching Insects	

Andrew Parsons ARPS	Meadow Grasshopper on bracken	<b>Bronze Medal</b>
Mated pair of Common Damselflies	Eyed Hawk Moth Larva	
	Banded Demoiselle female	
Jane Rees LRPS	Angel's Wings	
	Common Spotted Orchid	
	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	
Richard Revels FRPS	Grass Snake	
	Nut Weevil	
	Stag Beetles fighting	<b>Gold Medal</b>
	Striated Caracara	<b>Rosemary Wilman Award</b>
Eric Saul ARPS	Falklands Silvery Grebe	
	Caracara nest raiders	
Naomi Saul ARPS	Skuas attacking Gentoo colony	
	Gentoos head down in sand storm	<b>HC</b>
Malcolm Schuyt	Brown Browed Albatross	
John Shepherd ARPS	Holly Blue Butterfly	
Lesley Simpson ARPS	Cross Spider	
	Chalkhill Blue	
	Black-veined White roosting after rain	
	Red Winged Grasshopper	
John Sixsmith ARPS	Female Marbled White	
	Common Blue Damselfly male	
Margaret Sixsmith ARPS	Wild Red Kite	
	Comma	
	Alpine Poppies	
Colin Smale ARPS	Rainbow Trout	
	Reed Warbler	
Colin Smith FRPS	Clouded Yellow	
	Plain Tiger	
	Green Bee Eater	
	Bearded Tit	<b>HC</b>
	Kingfisher flying to nest	
	Fighting Black-Tailed Godwits	
Don Tait FRPS	Late Spider Orchid	
	Early Purple Orchid	
	Monkey Orchid	
Geoff Trinder ARPS	Trumpeter Swan	
Monique Vanstone ARPS	Sika and Young	<b>Andy Callow Award</b>
Val Walker ARPS	Red and Yellow Barbet	
	Leopard at Nakura	
John Weir ARPS	Reddish Egret	
	Black-veined Whites	
	Wood Cranesbill	
	<i>Ranunculus seguieri</i>	<b>Mike Wilkes Award</b>
Sheila Weir	Double-crested Cormorant	

Colin Smith FRPS was the only member to have all six images accepted.

# Nature Group Annual Exhibition Award Winning Slides



**Above: Bronze Medal Slide**

Shaggy Pholiota group by Kay Reeve FRPS

**Right: Highly Commended**

Newly hatched Cricket Nymphs by Kay Thompson FRPS



**Below: Selectors' Award**

*Mycena inclinata* by Tony Bond FRPS





**Nature Group  
Annual Exhibition  
Award Winning  
Digital Images**



**Above top: Selector's Award**

Striated Caracara - Richard Revels FRPS

**Above: Highly Commended**

Bearded Tit - Colin Smith FRPS

**Opposite: Selector's Award**

Lady's Slipper Orchid - Margery Maskell ARPS

**Bottom right: Selector's Award**

Ranunculus seguieri - John Weir ARPS

**Bottom left: Bronze Medal**

Meadow Grasshopper on bracken -  
Andrew Parsons ARPS





## Nature Group Annual Exhibition Award Winning Digital Images

**Top left: Highly Commended**

Elephant Dustbath by Barry Mead FRPS

**Below: Selectors' Award**

Ruddy Turnstone in flight by Dickie Duckett ARPS



**Above: Bronze Medal**

Common Spotted Orchid by John Berry ARPS



# Nature Group Annual Exhibition Award Winning Digital Images

## Top: Highly Commended

Great Blue Heron with Puffer fish  
by Dickie Duckett ARPS



## Opposite: Selectors' Award

Sika & young  
by Monique Vanstone ARPS



## Below left: Highly Commended

Gannets  
Adrian McGrath LRPS



## Right: Selectors' Award

Pleurotus cornucopiae  
by Fiona Mackay LRPS





# Running a Nature Group Day

by Kath Bull ARPS

On Saturday, 1st March, 2008, members of the RPS Nature Group, the RPS and local Camera Clubs met at Bewl Water Conference Centre in Kent, to attend the 2008 Nature Group Day in the South East. It was last July when I decided that I'd like to hold a NG day in my region, the South East. The last Nature Group event to be held in here was in March 1999. Many NG events now seem to be held at or north of Smethwick, and Smethwick has become increasingly difficult for me to travel there and back to in a day. I approached the NG committee with my proposal; I was given the go ahead, and immediately began planning the day. The venue I chose was The Bewl Water Conference Centre, near Tunbridge Wells. It has a pleasant, well appointed 60 seat lecture theatre, and a restaurant overlooking the reservoir. Finding three interesting and competent speakers was easy. Mervyn Seltzer ARPS had ready a new talk on 'The Galapagos', and agreed to come. Dawn Osborn FRPS would travel from Stafford with her 'Falkland Islands' images, and, to balance the overseas contingent, Colin Page, a local naturalist from Rye agreed to show his local landscape and wild life photography.

I also wanted to encourage NG members to try for their Distinctions, so looked for recent Distinction holders, who would show and discuss their panels. Dawn immediately came to mind, with her recent Fellowship on 'The Falklands', also Andy Callow, who lives nearby and has a superb insect 'F' panel, Chuck Eccleston, who showed his 'A' panel at Juniper Hall last year, and John Hunt, also with a successful 'A' panel, and member of Tonbridge Camera Club. All agreed to come and talk about their work. Finally, NG members of Tonbridge Camera Club kindly agreed to help with preparation and clearing up on the day.

Publicity was set in place in the Winter 'Iris'; tickets were printed and an Estimated Balance Sheet for the NG and RPS Treasurers was produced. I was all set to go. Nothing much happened until about a month before the event. Bookings stood at around 20. Very slowly they increased. By mid February, they were up to 30. I wanted 60 members. With only two weeks to go, I obtained a list of all NG

*Pictures on this page are from Andy Callow's Fellowship panel. The full panel can be viewed on our website.*







members in the South East and e-mailed everyone who hadn't applied for tickets. This yielded 2 more members. The Kent, Surrey and Sussex clubs were re-alerted, and by midnight of 29th February, the bookings were up to 57. I breathed a sigh of relief. The day would go ahead and even make a little profit.

So what of the day itself? Everyone pulled together to make it a great success. The speakers gave fine presentations, were well received and highly applauded. The Distinction panels also attracted interest and questions. Chuck's presentation conveyed the sense of achievement and personal pride that he obtained in working for his 'A'. Dawn, also stressed the importance of the satisfaction of a job well done, and, after two failed attempts, advised that 'if at first you don't succeed to try, try and try again'.

There was a nice atmosphere and buzz among the members in the meeting. For me, the day achieved what I set out to do - to promote the Nature Group and to stimulate and inspire members to try for a Distinction.

*Pictures - Top: Gentoo bursting from a wave*

*Left: Elephant Seal Pup both by Dawn Osborn FRPS*

*Below left: Galapagos Sea Lion,*

*Bottom left: Marine Iguana both by Mervyn Seltzer ARPS*

*Below right: Hawthorn Shield Bug,*

*Bottom right: Elephant Hawkmoth both by Chuck Eccleston ARPS*

*Opposite page: images from Geoff Hughes 'L' panel.*



# A Nature Group Day in the South East

**John Fairbank ARPS**

**Bewl Water, nr Lamberhurst, Kent. 1st March 2008**

The day was organised by former Nature Group Chairman Kath Bull ARPS who decided to take action to rectify the fact that had not been a Nature Group meeting at a location convenient for members in the South East for a number of years.

Mervyn Seltzer ARPS was the first speaker giving a talk 'Enchanted Isles - The Galapagos', illustrating his tour of the Islands in a small charter boat with not only excellent images but also their route and the locations of their landings. His images were captioned with the names of the many strange creatures particular to the islands; animals, birds, and sea mammals. His digital images were all of a very high quality and illustrated an entrancing talk.

Next, Colin Page showed a wonderful selection of moody images entitled 'Landscapes, Flora and Fauna of Romney Marsh, Rye and the South Downs'. This was shown as an attractive AV sequence and included sunrises, sunsets, landscapes, birds, flowers and trees. The images, taken over a lengthy period, provided a fascinating illustration of the seasons as well as a great variety of subjects.

Kath has always been keen to encourage Nature Group members to apply for Distinctions and sought recent Distinction holders to show their successful panels. Andy Callow's superb insect 'F' panel of slides was shown; Chuck Eccleston showed his digital 'A' panel 'Flora & Fauna of the Isle of Wight' and John

Hunt's 'A' panel of prints of birds was shown. Also viewed was Geoff Hughes successful 'L' panel of bird prints which proved he is well on the way to applying for his 'A'.

The afternoon session was by Dawn Osborn FRPS who showed a great range of lovely images of 'Wildlife of the Falkland Islands'. These had been taken over several visits leading photographers around the territory. She had recently been elected to Fellowship and also displayed her successful panel of prints of Falklands subjects. It was clear from all of these that she is very knowledgeable about the many species found there and a very competent photographer with an inherent seeing eye; keeping us spellbound with a great variety of subjects - birds, flying and nesting, penguins, seals, sea lions and the local flora.

We were joined by RPS Vice President Rosemary Wilman ARPS, herself a nature group member. Rosemary announced the good news that the appointment of a South Eastern Regional Organiser was imminent. The long standing vacancy for this post had meant little or no activity for too long and we look forward to good things in the future!

The day went extraordinarily well as a result of Kath's arrangements to make an interesting programme and her chairmanship of the meeting. Appreciation of all she and her helpers had done to make it successful was expressed at the end of the meeting and by E-mail afterwards. We all came away very satisfied with time well spent.



*Pictures from Geoff Hughes successful 'L' panel.*





*Left: Cirl Bunting bathing*



*Right: White Stork*

*Below: Four-lined Snake*



# Two Old Gents in Bulgaria

by Peter Evans FRPS

Getting old is a problem for all of us, but for wildlife photographers it poses some special problems. We may have visited many of the best wildlife areas, become tolerably proficient and acquired as much gear as we can sensibly use, but our bodies have started to rebel at the demands we make of them. Our desires for new and challenging subjects have never been greater, but our ability to tackle them has seriously declined. Commercial tours to the usual destinations are an option (having acquired a degree of patience for airport hassle and minor upsets) and shooting from a vehicle or boat is still within our capabilities - but it is finding something different which poses the problem.

So it was that John Knight and I went to the Birdfair, talking to people and collecting leaflets. Somewhere in Eastern Europe seemed likely to offer the required challenge and, having been to Poland, we decided to try Bulgaria.

Flying to Sofia, our starting point, can be done both quickly and expensively from Heathrow, but we went the cheapie way, via Milan, from Manchester.

We made all the arrangements with Emil Enchev ([www.cometobg.com](http://www.cometobg.com)) Our target species, the itinerary and all the arrangements had been agreed with Emil by e-mail; we discovered that he had already guided Nature Group members to photograph the Red-breasted Geese during the winter. He met us at Sofia airport with his vehicle and was excellent in every way. A local guide is almost essential in Bulgaria, where the people speak a strange language and use an alphabet such that we could not even read the road and shop signs. We thought it was Russian, but Emil pointed out that it was adopted by the Russians but it invented by a Bulgarian. There was even an anniversary celebration of its invention while we were there.

A guide like Emil, who is an experienced wildlife photographer and knows the places to go, is beyond price. When negotiating the trip, we made

it clear that we were poor specimens with limited walking ability, though it emerged later that he had not realised that we would be quite such cripples. We planned a three week visit, which aimed to provide opportunities to photograph our nominated species within a radius of 150 miles around Sofia, mostly to the south and west. We were helped by the abundance of open, lightly farmed land. We were old enough to be familiar with pre-war mixed farming in England - poppies in cornfields, horse-drawn reapers, rotations of clover and the rest of it. Bulgaria, though - at least where we were - was of an earlier age, when populations were sparse and wooden carts were drawn by donkeys. Flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle and some horses ambled along cropping the lush grass and the nutritious wildflowers under a minimum of supervision. There was an abundance of House Sparrows - they were everywhere. Spanish Sparrows were common, too, and there were some Tree Sparrows as well.

Our plans were to photograph some of the raptors and a number of smaller fry. The raptors - a couple of Harriers, Long-legged Buzzard and Levant Sparrowhawk - proved to be impossible. The Harriers were absent from their traditional sites and the back-up ones could not nest because of floods from late rains. The Buzzards were performing to schedule, but reaching the nest was beyond my capability. Flight shots of Common and Long-legged Buzzards hunting were possible, though we got nothing worthwhile, because we had more productive options and did not spend much time on them. The Levant Sparrowhawk nest was inactive - they were probably just laying. Baiting might have worked in winter, but not in June. Instead, we had hides near Wryneck, Isabelline Wheatear (locally common), Syrian Woodpecker, Rock Nuthatch and Stone Curlew nests from which we were able to photograph the birds in the vicinity. We also photographed from Emil's vehicle, using tripods or beanbags. Bulgaria has plenty of little supermarkets, so buying rice for the bags was no problem. The hot, dry climate encouraged birds



to visit any shallow water and hides at some of these places gave us four Buntings – Black-headed, Corn, Ortolan and Cirl – the three Sparrows, two Wheatears, Red-backed Shrike and Crested Lark, plus Barn and Red-rumped Swallows collecting mud for their nests. I have never been to Lesbos, but it was as I imagine Lesbos to be, without the birders. Nowhere did we see any sign of anyone with the slightest interest in birds or photography. Mammals were few, except for Susliks, which were abundant in one area and were, doubtless, the main food of the Common and Long-legged Buzzards. There were literally millions of newly emerged amphibians, probably Green Toads, a few adult Yellow-bellied Toads and Stripe-necked Terrapins and one Four-lined Snake. This was climbing to the Rock Nuthatch nest, doubtless with an eye on the young, when Emil grabbed it and vice versa. The bite was painful, but these snakes are not venomous. It was a very lively creature and did not take kindly to being photographed, but the old treatment of putting a hat on it made it curl up and easy to photograph.

Our accommodation was good, clean and cheap, even though we had a double room apiece. Being possessed of an unreliable memory, I like to have my gear where I can see it, so a double bed for the equipment and a single for sleeping in fitted the bill nicely. Food was cheap, plentiful and healthy. Huge platefuls of salad and cheese were always available. Pork and chicken were the usual meats and we sometimes fed on fresh trout at a trout farm. They also did a good line in egg and chips! We started early each morning and I usually had a large plate of yoghurt for breakfast, either at our hotel or out in the field. I can vouch for the excellence of the fruit juices and was told that the beers were fully up to scratch. The main roads were generally good (the EU is already putting money into them), the country roads were surfaced, though sometimes pot-holed and the farm tracks were easily covered in Emil's VW Combi. One of the reasons the Bulgarians were so keen to join the EU was the problem of criminals and the mafia, because they believed the Government would have to crack down before the country would be admitted. Any problems are almost certainly urban ones – we met nothing but smiles and helpfulness, but we did not leave hides out overnight.

I am a late and reluctant convert to digital, but I bit the bullet and used nothing else. It does make the technical side of photography very easy, though I still miss having an end product to get hold of and look at. The computer screen, however efficient, doesn't give me the same kick. I found that in the dim interior of a hide, I could select and delete most of the inferior shots in the camera as I went along, so the evening's further thinning was not too demanding. I did not take a laptop. Cards were down-loaded to a modest 40 Gb hard drive, but the best shots were also retained on their cards until I got home. Having an effective 1.5x magnification in the D2X gave me 900mm with the 300mm f2.8 and a 2x extender. The 80-200mm zoom gave me up to 600mm with the same extender. A carbon fibre tripod provided support in the hides. We took a hide apiece, but found them not much use as the ground was too hard-baked to be penetrated by poles or pegs. Hides of Emil's own design were better – a framework of jointed plastic pipes rested on the ground, with more of the same supporting the lightweight fabric. They would not be much good on our windy moors, but in the Bulgarian dry, warm weather with little wind, and weighted with stones when necessary, they did the trick.

Away from the Black Sea resorts the Bulgarian countryside is as good as it gets. EU farming subsidies will soon change that, so put Bulgaria on your shopping list!

## **The Nature Photographers' Joint Convention**

**October 3rd - 5th 2008.**

The Hayes Conference Centre  
Swanwick, Derbyshire, DE55 1AU

There are still a few rooms available for this event which promises to be an excellent weekend.

There will be presentations from Laurie Cambell plus many other well known members of Nature Photographers' Portfolio, Nature Photographers' Society, Zoological Photographic Club and your very own Nature Group

The Booking Form can be found in the last issue.

# Book Review

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## **Fine Art Printing for Photographers Exhibition Quality Prints with Inkjet Printers**

Uwe Steinmueler and Juergen Gulbins  
2nd Edition(2008) 299 pages Rocky Nook

The publisher's note states – "Rocky Nook's mission is to publish books on cutting-edge developments in photography, imaging and technology that really matter, and to focus on practical usage that will enhance capabilities. Our ultimate goal is to foster image quality".

In all respects, this publication measures up to that mission statement. It is aimed at the 'ambitious' amateur and the professional photographer and assumes a knowledge of photo-printing. The writing is concise, to the point and aimed at providing practical information. The text flows and the content is readily and easily absorbed.

The book concentrates on inkjet printers using both dye and pigment-based inks. The emphasis is on Photoshop and Lightroom but useful plug-ins are also mentioned.

Chapters 1 and 2 deal with background subjects such as inkjet technology, droplet size, printer resolution, types of ink, print permanence, papers and also the important issue of matching inkjet technology to the subject, paper and inks.

It is in paragraphs 3 to 5 that the book gets down to the nuts and bolts of inkjet printing.

Chapter 3, taking up nearly 40 pages, deals with the all important and difficult subject of colour management. It looks at profiling from camera to monitor to printer. The choice profiling package is X-rite (formerly Gretag Macbeth) Eye-one Display 2.

Interestingly, the authors state a preference for Adobe RGB (1998) over sRGB. With printers from manufacturers such as Canon, Epson and HP extending their colour space and LED monitors for desktops now about to enter the market, the preference makes sense.

Chapter 4 deals with tonality, colour, contrast, resizing and sharpening and these subjects are spread over 40 pages. The section dealing with tonality and contrast is particularly impressive – the impact of various settings on a colour image is well illustrated.

Chapter 5 looks at setting up the printer for printing, including such topics as rendering intent – perhaps better recognised as the 'Perceptual' or 'Relative' tick boxes. The chapter also has sections on printing from Photoshop CS1, CS2 and CS3 as well as from Lightroom software.

Chapter 6 takes the reader into the rarer atmosphere of raster image processing, probably beyond the ambitions of the serious amateur, while Chapter 7 looks at b&w prints.

The last chapter is devoted to critical image assessment and the presentation of the final image while the detailed appendices consider fine art printers – my Canon i965 ranks as "a nice entry level printer" – fine art papers, a lengthy glossary and references to further reading (should that be necessary!), organisations and institutes as well as useful websites, the latter covering five and a half pages.

A reviewer of the first edition stated, "If it means living on beans for a month, buy the book". I agree - this book will be hard to better and should be on every serious photographer's bookshelf.

Ludi Lochner

# Rules or compliance - its a question of time

## The Editor

Following the publication of the last issue of The Iris I received a letter from a member. The gentleman said he wished to support John Myring's views that The Iris should "*stay as it is*". He went on to say that he thought it a shame that  
*"nothing can be sent for publication nowadays without being 'tified up'."* and 0  
*"There are people out here without the computer who can take reasonable pictures but are denied due to your rules from entering anything".*

I read this communication a couple of times - what did this gentleman mean by "*denied due to your rules from entering anything*"? I confess, I was offended and, since his telephone number was printed on his notepaper, I decided to telephone regarding this accusation. I told him that I was deeply offended as it stated quite clearly at the front of The Iris that although digitally captured photographic images are preferred, original transparencies could be submitted and would be scanned. It transpired that the gentleman thought 'tiff' was an expression which meant that the image had been 'tidied-up' using image editing/manipulation software, such as Adobe Photoshop. I explained that 'tif' was a file format preferred by the printing industry and went on to say that if the gentleman had an article he thought was suitable for publication I would be happy to scan his slides - I was told that his images were prints. I explained that the best reproduction resulted from a 1st generation image - ie an image file from a digital camera. Digital files acquired from scanning slides or negs would be 2nd generation results but still give satisfactory reproduction, however, scans from prints or duplicated slides (3rd generation) invariably exhibit poorer quality. I suggested that for the best reproduction he should send the negatives of his prints. It was then that he told me that he used a digital camera.

I confess that I felt rather bemused at this point. Further enquiries revealed that this gentleman's images were printed directly from the memory card or camera to an inkjet colour printer without the use of a PC. In an effort to be helpful I said that I would be happy to receive his images on memory cards or CD if he cared to submit an article.

The publication details on Page 1 of The Iris are not rules, more a request for your compliance, but they are there for a reason and the reason is time. It takes a great deal of time to put together an issue of The Iris. Time is something that I do not have alot of, working, as I do, full time. I request that copy should be sent as .txt or .doc files as email attachment or (preferably) on CD - this saves me the time of having to copy and paste the contents of an email into a word document. If printed articles are sent I must scan them with OCR (Optical Character Recognition) software with sometimes strange results due to the font used or the quality of the print, in such cases the article must be checked carefully or (worst case scenario) I will have the time consuming task of typing the whole article again. Occasionally I still receive hand written copy - time consuming to type and often very difficult to read. I'm pleased to say that the majority of members do send Word .doc files but the image file sizes I receive are often excessively large and more often, much too small.

Digitally captured photographic images are preferred but well scanned transparencies are equally acceptable. I request that images are supplied on CD as RGB Tiff files, and now specify 6" x 4" at 300 ppi or 1800 x 1200 pixels, file size approx 6.17MB which equates to approximately half a page in The Iris. I don't need A3 or larger images - they just take more time to download from the CD, require alot of space on my hard drive, and have to be made smaller before they go to the printers. It all takes lots of valuable time. I sold my Nikon slide scanner some time ago - I hadn't taken a slide myself in over four years - but for the purposes of producing The Iris I purchased a flatbed scanner which does a good job at the file size required for The Iris; so I can and will scan slides (or negatives) for non digital members but they will be only be scanned when I have sufficient spare time available.

The Iris publishes articles of interest supported by images not images with text it would be much less interesting if it just contained pictures with details of how and where they were taken. There is just one exception to this rule - in the summer issue we reproduce a selection of the winning images from the Annual Exhibition.

The Annual Exhibition entry form has 'Conditions of Entry' - nevertheless we find that many of these are not adhered to - no matter how we try to simplify the entry forms they are frequently incorrectly filled out, sent to the wrong address or (in the case of prints or slides) sent without return postage.

This year we decided that we would produce a CD of the exhibition rather than expensively duplicated slides. This was in response to requests from the many clubs who book the travelling exhibition who told us that they now possessed digital projectors. So, this year we requested that print and slide workers send a digital copy of their work on CD in order that their accepted entries could be easily included in the Travelling Exhibition. We believed that this would save the group the expense of having the slides duplicated and the prints copied, and clubs the inconvenience and expense of having to send the exhibition on to the next venue, - since more and more of the work seen in the exhibition is produced digitally, this was not anticipated as a problem. We realised that for genuine slide workers this could prove difficult, so we contacted them and offered to scan their acceptances if they were unable to do it for themselves. I'm sorry to report that very few members complied with the request despite the fact that the majority of prints entered these days are acquired and printed digitally. As a consequence, one of our committee members had to spend a significant amount of time photographing all the accepted prints while another scanned the slides. If you did not take the trouble to include a CD of your prints with your exhibition entry and are not happy with the reproduction in *The Iris*, on the website or on the Exhibition CD, you have no one to blame but yourself!

Committee members are generally speaking a helpful bunch of people who give their time freely but please don't take advantage of that and waste it. We are not salaried employees of the RPS - we are members, who pay our membership fees just like you. Your committee all have different skills - the thing that we all share is an enjoyment of nature photography and I for one would much rather be out somewhere with my camera than staring at this PC monitor.

We cannot please all the members all of the time. So if like the gentleman who wrote to me, you feel that you are being prevented from submitting an article for *The Iris* or from entering work into the exhibition, please contact someone to discuss your problem. If we can help you we will.

Our next committee meeting is in September and it is at this meeting that plans are drawn up for the 2009 exhibition. Please let us have your thoughts, problems and suggestions by letter or email.

You will have read elsewhere in this issue of how Kath Bull ARPS organised a very successful Nature event in her region of the RPS. There had not been a meeting of that kind in Kath's region for a long time, probably not since Kath retired from the committee, so she made it happen. It is just this kind of enthusiasm that we need more of. Members are very quick to ask why there are not more events in their area but extremely slow to volunteer their time to help organise something. Committee members are spread very thinly around the country and we need your help if, as a group, we are going to host more member events next year. Please think about doing as Kath did, and organise an event in your area. It doesn't need to be such an elaborate affair; field meetings are an excellent way to network with other members and make new friends. Larger meetings are usually arranged in conjunction with an RPS Regional Organiser. If you would like to see more Nature Group activity in your region, contact your Regional Organiser who will in turn contact us.

Please support the events which are organised on your behalf - especially if they are in your region. If you feel that your Region isn't doing enough in general, please contact the Membership Department at RPS Headquarters in Bath.

Do you belong to a camera club or photographic society which has items on its programme in the coming year which would be of interest to Nature Group members? If the answer is yes, let us know. We can easily add items of interest to the events page of the website - please use the contact page on the website to advise us of meetings that your club would be happy for Nature Group members to attend.

Finally, to all those of you who do follow the submission instructions and complete your exhibition entry forms correctly - thank you. We really do appreciate it.

Now, please let's have more articles, a bigger entry in next year's exhibition and a few more volunteers to lead field meetings.

**It's your group - get involved!**



# Damn the Judges

by Hazel Grove Hon LRPS, BPEn\* (aka D'Arcy Lever, Mavis Enderby)

It must have happened to most of us. The report card drops through the letterbox, followed by an outpouring of grief and anger. How could those judges be so myopic? After all, the pictures had done so well in the Club's monthly competition! While rejection will always hurt, I believe that nature photographers sometimes have legitimate grounds for believing that their entries have not received fair treatment, simply from the way in which many exhibitions are organised.

Many, but not all, BPE Exhibitions have both Open and Nature sections. Some have separate panels of judges/selectors, but some do not. Those that don't typically have three judges - two pictorialists and a 'token' nature judge. International exhibitions usually have two judging panels - I suspect that this is a condition of PSA or FIAP approval.

Judging is to some extent a matter of personal choice, but in the case of Nature an additional element comes in - significance to the naturalist. The consequences of two out of the three judges having little or no experience of natural history photography can be disastrous. I have had fellow judges sidle up to me before commencing the selection of the Nature section and asking what they should be looking for. A friend of mine found himself in a situation where he was judging a Nature section with two 'pictorialists' and soon realised that events were going from bad to worse. He started giving 5s simply to stop good work from being rejected. When even this was not completely successful he was forced to call a halt to the proceedings until the three of them had held a full and frank discussion to sort themselves out.

Another BPE exhibition that I could name has two judging panels - one for prints and one for slides. I suggested to the exhibition organiser that they should have one panel of selectors for the Open section prints and slides and another panel for the Nature section prints and slides. I was told that the organisation could not cope with handling prints and slides on the same day. I pointed out that another BPE exhibition, The British Open, organised by Solihull Photographic Society did just this and handled it very well.

The result of non-nature judges selecting Nature sections is that there are too many acceptances with little natural history value. One of my pet hates is the callow Grey Seal pup which has a place reserved in every exhibition. I think that seals are wonderful creatures but anyone who can get to Donna Nook can take shedloads of these with any lens in their bag. Judges should be encouraging people to look for more challenging pictures and start dispensing some 2s.

A big part of being a nature photographer is correct identification and titling. So why do we still see images with titles such as 'Fungus' or, worse still 'Love on the beach'? The latter raised my blood pressure to dangerous levels at a recent BPE exhibition. The subject was actually two grey seals - Donna Nook strikes again!

I am the first to accept that organising an open exhibition is a thankless task. Obtaining the services of suitably experienced judges must be very difficult. The main purpose of holding exhibitions must be to raise standards. This will never be achieved if the results are little better than a lottery because the judges do not understand nature even though their credentials for judging other work are impeccable. My own experience shows that there are judges who are happy to judge Open sections but are uncomfortable with nature. Do any, I wonder, turn down invitations to judge because of this?

I should not need to remind members of the Nature Group that the Group's own exhibition is guaranteed to be judged by three experienced nature photographer's.

*Editor's note*

*I have been entering exhibitions, both National (BPE) and International (PSA/FIAP) for many years. If there is no Nature section and you still wish to enter you must do so in the General or Open sections. In such cases, you are lucky if one of the selectors has any experience in nature. However, if the exhibition does have a Nature section, I don't think it unreasonable to expect the organising club to have a selection panel of three experienced Nature photographers. It seems to me that Exhibitions which have both Open and Nature sections but only one panel of selectors are just interested in the extra entry fees. Your views are welcome.*

# Field trip Report

## Ainsdale Local Nature Reserve - July 14th 2008

A total of thirteen people, many from some distance away, turned up on the day.

Last year, when a similar visit was arranged, we chose a wet and windy day wedged between several days of fine sunny weather. This year the opposite was the case, the day starting wet and cool, and then, by the time people arrived there was a significant improvement with sunny spells but a strong breeze making the flowers dance in the most unfriendly way for us photographers. However, we made the best of it, and soon people were dispersed around the area finding a wide variety of interesting plants.

Some of the orchids had gone over but specimens in good condition could still be found with a little effort. Other flowers were blooming nicely providing good subjects, so tripods were erected and bottoms pointed skywards in the traditional manner of all true nature photographers. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day, not least because of meeting up with friends as well as seeing new faces which had only been names previously.

## Species recorded

Evening primrose  
Sea holly  
Sea spurge  
Tuberous pea  
Self heal  
Purple loosestrife  
Common centaury  
Yellowwort  
Rest harrow  
Yellow bartsia  
Dune pansy  
Round-leaved Wintergreen  
Grass of Parnassus  
Marsh helleborine  
Dune helleborine  
Northern marsh orchid  
Early marsh orchid  
Pyramidal orchid

*Olnothera erythrosepala*  
*Eryngium maritimum*  
*Euphorbia paralias*  
*Lethyrus japonicus*  
*Prunella grandiflora*  
*Lythrum salicera*  
*Centaurea erythraea*  
*Blackstonia perfoliata*  
*Ononis repens*  
*Parentucellia viscosa*  
*Viola tricolor*  
*Pyrola rotundiflora*  
*Parnassia palustris*  
*Epipactis palustris*  
*Epipactis dunensis*  
*Dactylorhiza purpurella*  
*Dactylorhiza incarnate*  
*Anacamptis pyramidalis*

The few insects seen included Grayling, Gatekeeper, meadow Brown and Common Blue butterflies.

Colin Smith FRPS

## Wildlife Photo-tours 2009

organised and led by Wildlife Photographer

## David Osborn FRPS EFIAP

Availability limited on all tours.

Bookings now being accepted for:

Birds of Florida - March 2009

Canadian Rockies - September 2009 and

The Falkland Islands - November 2009



For more information or a brochure contact David at

Tel: 01263 511221

Email: [poppyland3@aol.com](mailto:poppyland3@aol.com)

Web: [www.davidosbornphotography.co.uk](http://www.davidosbornphotography.co.uk)

# The Quiz

First I must begin with an apology, in passing from handwriting to my computer 3b made nonsense so I simply discounted it. Another anomaly which occurred was the birth date of "BB", which I had always understood to be 1904, however other sources obviously gave 1905, so I accepted either.

## Answers

- 1 a) Murder,  
b) Exaltation or Flight,  
c) Charm,  
d) Parliament,  
e) Mischief or Tidings  
f) Elk,  
g) Monkeys,  
h) Partridges,  
i) Badgers,  
j) Ferrets.
- 2 Argyll, Foxglove;  
Berkshire, Summer Snowflake;  
Caernarvonshire, Snowdon Lily;  
Cambridgeshire, Pasqueflower;  
Derbyshire, Jacob's Ladder;  
Devon, Primrose;  
Durham, Spring Gentian;  
Kent, Hop;  
Northumberland, Bloody Cranesbill;  
Rutland, Clustered Bellflower.
- 3 a) Nightingale,  
c) Stone Curlew,  
d) Reed Bunting,  
e) Dartford Warbler
- 4 Great Burnet is a Plant.
- 5 a) Moth,  
b) Lichen,  
c) Fungus,  
d) Plant,  
e) Bird,  
f) Plant,  
g) Fungus,  
h) Moth,  
i) Fish,  
j) Fungus,  
k) Fish.
- 6 a) BB,  
b) Purple Emperor,  
c) Manka,  
d) Autumn Road,  
e) Carp Fisher,  
f) Child Alone,  
g) Fields,  
h) 1904, but some sources quote 1905,  
so I accepted either  
i) Rugby.

**The Winner** - Tremaine Cornish.

My thanks to all who took part, I hope that you enjoyed it.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

## Congratulations:

The following Nature Group members achieved a distinction in the Nature Category as follows:

### Associateship

#### September 2007

Mr John H Shepherd ARPS  
Prof Thomas H P Hanahoe ARPS  
plus one other RPS member

#### Associateship April 2008

Mrs Anthea L Golding ARPS  
Mr R Mike Middleton ARPS  
plus 3 other RPS members

### Fellowship

#### April 2008

Mr Alan J Boutel FRPS  
Mr Robert E Pearson FRPS  
plus one other RPS member

There were no Fellowships  
awarded in 09/07.

The next assessment will be at  
Fenton House in September.  
Applications must be received by  
the end of August. Full details can  
be found on the RPS website:  
[www.rps.org/distinctions](http://www.rps.org/distinctions)

Successful A & F panels can be  
viewed on the Nature Group web  
site: [www.rpsnaturegroup.com](http://www.rpsnaturegroup.com)

## Nature Group Annual Exhibition Award Winning Prints



**Above: Highly Commended**

Pair of Chalkhill Blues on Field Scabious  
by John Bulpitt FRPS

**Top right: Bronze Medal**

Bee Orchid, form trolli  
by Richard Revels FRPS



**Below: Highly Commended**

Osprey with Trout  
by Dickie Duckett ARPS





# Nature Group Annual Exhibition Award Winning Slides



**Opposite: Selectors' Award**

Coleman Shrimp on Fire Urchin by Rosemary Simpson ARPS

**Top right: Selectors' Award**

Great-crested Grebe feeding chick by Tony McDade FRPS

**Above: Selectors' Award**

Lions mating by John Chamberlain FRPS

**Below: Selector's Award**

Pholiota squarrosa by Tony Bond FRPS

