

THE IRIS



Magazine of the Nature Group of the RPS

Issue No. 106
Spring 2010





Meadow Brown butterfly (*Maniola jurtina*)
by Harry Worthington ARPS

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Trevor Hyman LRPS, 3 Northcourt Lane, Abingdon, Oxfordshire. OX14 1QA

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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 (no DVDs please) as RGB Tiff files, 6" x 4" at 300 ppi (1800 x 1200 pixels, file size approx 6.17MB). Original transparencies may be submitted, however, the Editor cannot specify how long they may be away from the author.

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

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

Distribution:

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

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Nature Group Exhibitions

Copies of Nature Group Exhibitions dating back to 2000, are available to book for camera clubs/photographic societies. 2000 to 2007 are available in slide format. Since 2008 a CD of the Exhibition has been produced and is available for purchase. For more information please contact the Exhibition Secretary, details above or go to our website: www.rpsnaturegroup.com

Editorial

By the time this edition drops through your letterbox we will have seen the days lengthen considerably. It has been a cold winter and I cannot remember when I last experienced so much snow in this country. This was my first winter in Norfolk. I'm told that the amount of snow we experienced here is not usual - the wind is another matter, but they say you get accustomed to it! Hopefully, by the time you read this the daffodils will be in full bloom and the early migrants will be arriving.

I am sure a great many of you will be saddened, as I was, to hear of the loss of Kath Bull ARPS. Kath was a committee member for many years. When I first joined the committee she wrote the regular Nature Group reports for what used to be known as the Groups & Regions section of The Journal. Later she did a stint as our Programme Secretary before going on to become Chairman. For many years she organised the Residential Field Meetings, enjoyed by so many of you, and more recently had been instrumental in organising RPS events in the Kent area. She was also secretary of two Postal Portfolios - one for the Nature Group and the other for UPP. A full Obituary, by John Bebbington is given in this issue.

There are no less than three successful Associateship panels shown in this issue, each very different. Indeed, the number of Nature Group members holding Distinctions has increased. We now have 94 Fellows, 228 Associates and 160 Licentiates out of a total of 645 members. The Fellowship panel of our newest Fellow, Thomas Hanahoe, is shown starting on page 15. Congratulations Thomas.

I would be very pleased to receive interesting accounts of your photographic adventures whether near or far; reviews of books or equipment you have acquired; indeed anything that you feel would be of interest to your fellow Nature Group members. We are always happy to reproduce recent successful Associate and Fellowship panels.



From the chair

Chairman's day at Smethwick last November was extremely successful; we had three excellent speakers who kept the audience captivated all day

Members mingled and chatted over coffee in the bar at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury; the excellent clubrooms of Smethwick Photographic Society. It was especially gratifying to see so many members who had travelled a considerable distance present.

The meeting commenced on time and the programme for the day was introduced. We began with a talk entitled 'Wildlife of the Islands and Highlands' by Martin Dyer. Martin spoke enthusiastically of his love of the islands and highlands of Scotland, and of the species which can be found there. We saw many species of birds plus seals and otters and enjoyed an interesting talk.

The second speaker of the day was Giannpiero Ferrari ARPS. Giannpiero's talk was "A year of Wildlife". A cornucopia of quality images of various species followed accompanied with an informative talk. Giannpiero's shots of Butterflies and Moths, left many in the audience envious and/or inspired to try to emulate his techniques.

There was a break for lunch; a buzz of friendly conversation filled the room - Nature Group members sharing ideas and discussing photography. Wonderful!

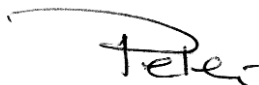
Following lunch, Heather Angel Hon FRPS, completed the day with two talks - 'Wildlife of Kew' and 'Wildlife of China'. Heather has been involved in long-term projects documenting both of these topics with her images. The talk was both informative and interesting and as one would expect, the images of were exceptional quality.

It was an excellent day of nature photography and those of you who were unable to attend missed a first rate event.

I would like to say 'Thank you' not only to those of you who led field meetings in 2009, but also to all who attended. I enjoyed some excellent days out. May I offer some personal advice to anyone who's considering attending a field meeting - my recommendation is that you always contact the leader the night before, especially if the weather looks inclement - if you are to be travelling any great distance, it's a must. If you have contacted a leader to say you are attending always leave your contact number with him/her so that they can get back to you in case the event has to be cancelled or rescheduled. I would also recommend that the leader issues a mobile number (as well as a landline) for use on the day, wherever possible. A list of Field Meeting venues is included in this issue, but if you feel inclined to lead a meeting please contact Colin Smith. Late events can be added to the website. You should also check the website to see if there are new events which missed the publication deadline for The Iris.

I hope that you all supported the Nature Group Exhibition this year. It will have been judged by the time you read this, so congratulations to you if you have images accepted. Please do try to come along to the opening day - Saturday 24th April. The Spring Meeting combines the AGM and opening of our exhibition, plus we have an excellent speaker Mr Hemant Mehta FRPS in the morning. I can promise you another excellent day filled with quality nature photography. Details of the day are given on page 4.

Finally, details of this years Nature Photographers' Conference are attached and an invitation has again been extended to Nature Group members. Places are limited, so don't delay in responding if you feel you would like to attend.



The 34th Annual General Meeting, Spring Meeting and Annual Exhibition Opening of the RPS Nature Group

to be held at:-

Smethwick Photographic Society
The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands (for directions see below)
Saturday 24th April 2010

Timetable

10.30hrs Assemble for 11.00hrs start

11.00hrs A presentation '**In Tune with Nature**' by Hemant Mehta FRPS

12.30hrs Break for lunch. Light lunches will be available* in the clubhouse (ploughman's or jacket potatoes with cheese, beans, chilli or any combination). To facilitate catering arrangements, please advise the Secretary at least 10 days before the AGM if you would like to order a lunch. There is a dining area available if you wish to bring sandwiches.

14.00hrs 33rd Annual General Meeting

- Agenda**
1. Apologies for absence.
 2. Minutes of the 32nd AGM 2009, printed in issue 104 of 'The Iris'.
 3. Matters arising
 4. Chairman's Report
 5. Treasurer's Report.
 6. Secretary's Report
 7. Election of Officers and Committee
 8. Any Other Business
 9. Date and Venue of the 34th AGM 2011

14.45hrs Opening of the 2010 Exhibition.

Presentation of the Awards
followed by a showing of the accepted projected images.
Accepted Prints will be on display for the duration of the day.

Directions:-

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

The Nature Photographer's Joint Convention

October 29th- 31st, 2010.

**The Hayes Conference Centre,
Swanwick, Derbyshire DE55 1AU**

The 2010 Joint Convention for Nature Photographers will be held at the Hayes Conference Centre in the heart of the Derbyshire countryside. All rooms are of a very high-quality with ensuite bathrooms. The cost includes all meals from afternoon tea on Friday, October 29th, to Sunday lunch on Sunday, October 31st, 2010. The convention will enjoy exclusive use of a small conference hall, with two small attached meeting rooms. The centre is set in its own spacious and beautiful grounds with ample parking adjacent to the accommodation. No pets or animals can be taken on to the site. The keynote speaker will be the internationally acclaimed Finnish nature photographer, Markus Varesvuo.

NPP would like to extend a very warm invitation to all members of the Nature Group to join us on what promises to be a most informative and enjoyable occasion. Demand for places is certain to be very high and you are strongly advised to book early, if you wish to guarantee obtaining a place.



THE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHERS' JOINT CONVENTION, OCTOBER 29th- 31st , 2010.

BOOKING FORM

Name:

Address:
.....
.....

Postcode: **Telephone number:**

Email address:

Accommodation Required [Please tick one box only]

- ☐ I wish to book a room for two persons @ £160 per person i.e. £320 all-inclusive.
Name of partner/guest:
- ☐ I wish to book a place in a shared twin-bedded room @ £160 per person all-inclusive.
- ☐ I would be willing to share with:
- ☐ I wish to book a room on a single-occupancy basis @ £175 all-inclusive.
- ☐ I wish to attend as a non-residential delegate @ £100, with all meals, except breakfast, included.



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A confirmation of your reservation and an outline programme will be sent by email or 'snailmail' to the address you have provided overleaf. Please note that no monies can be refunded for cancellation after June 1st, 2010.

Special Requirements

- ☐ **Dietary?** [Please specify]
- ☐ **Disabled access / room required?**
- ☐ **Any other?** [Please specify]
.....

Exhibitors

- ☐ My presentation will be digital images
- ☐ My presentation will be slide images
- ☐ I wish to show 50 images. [10 minutes maximum]
- ☐ I wish to show 25 images. [5 minutes maximum]

To ensure your place, please return this form with a cheque for the full amount due as soon as possible. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Nature Photographers' Joint Convention' and sent to:

The Convention Organiser, John Tinning,
Brockwood House, 21 Ervin Way,
Queniborough,
LEICESTER, Leicestershire,
LE7 3TT

You should have been here yesterday...

by Trevor Davenport ARPS

What is it about yesterday? It seems that all my life I have arrived just twenty-four hours too late. I seem to possess a rare and inordinate ability to always turn up immediately after the main event. This can be vexing, especially when, as a photographer, the picture you were seeking is no longer available.

"Oh, you should have been here yesterday!"

If I have heard that once I've heard it a thousand times. Yesterday was brilliant! The sun shone, the birds sang and the light was fantastic. There was a great influx of:

- a) insects or
- b) birds or
- c) sunsets; celebrities; steam trains; clowns; people giving money away etc...

But today? Nothing! Nada! Zilch!

"I've never known it so quiet - and you've come all this way. What a shame!"

I am not a twitcher. I don't have the temperament for it. Twitching involves dashing off to places far and near to see - and hopefully photograph - some rare bird, insect or anything else that, by rights, should be somewhere else. I learnt long ago that were I to race off and twitch, whatever it was I was twitching would have left for home yesterday. In twitching parlance I would have 'dipped-out'.

I learnt the hard way. As a boy I was a train-spotter. I had to walk to school over a main-line GWR track that had a daily passenger express hauled by a steam loco. Every morning, in a flood of steam, smoke and smuts, it passed beneath us spotters on the bridge above at 8.42 prompt. The train was almost always a 'nameplate' train; often it would be a 'Hall'; sometimes it would be a 'Castle', which was an improvement; and on rare occasions it would be pulled by a 'King', which was the crowning glory as far as we were concerned. Over a period of two or three years we collected lots of names and underlined them neatly in our 'Ian Allen' booklets until there were just a few names missing

from the trains that served our region. (King John was a no-hoper, we heard it hauled freight in the West Country so it was as unlikely as a bird-of-paradise in Dudley;) however, there was a King that we all wanted and it had been seen on that particular line.

When it rained I was given the money for the bus - after all, it was over two miles to walk. And yes; you don't need me to tell you that King Caractacus - or whoever the missing king was - flew through whilst I sat in the smoke-filled upper deck of a Midland Red. I was devastated. I had dipped-out big time. And dipping-out hurt with a sense of loss that I can't explain to this day. What made it worse was the joy of my fellow train-spotters who had toughed out the rain and got a 'big-tick'. Their open schadenfreude

at my misery rubbed salt - lots of it - into my deep and tender wounds. Thereafter, the bridge and the minor league trains that followed, lost their appeal and I moved on to more noble endeavours such as football and girls. I believe this was the point at which the true 'twitcher' in me died (well, almost died), and the curse of 'yesterdayitis' took a hold on my life.

One of my favourite local nature reserves is Mere Sands Wood near Rufford. I visit as often as I can with both hope and expectation that the day will yield something good. Unfortunately, it always seems that the 'something good' likes to get there the day before I do and leave just as my car turns into the car park. It's reached the point now where, as I approach the reserve, I start wondering what was there yesterday rather than what I may find today. Looking at the log of recent sightings invariably shows that Ospreys had been performing mating displays over the lake; Bitterns - those rare and elusively secret birds - had been busking on the boardwalk; Bee Orchids had been in the meadow but the rabbits ate them overnight; the rarest moth in Lancashire - which had been at rest on a piece of bark for days - just flew off; someone just kicked over the most photogenic troop of Fly Agaric ever seen; the Phalarope has faded away and the Goshawk has gone!

"It's ever so quiet today; I can't imagine why; but yesterday! Well! Where were you?"

The New Forest is one of the finest places in Britain for Fungi. My wife and I have been there on several occasions to seek out and photograph these jewels of nature. But fungi is fickle; it only appears when it feels like it and not when the books say it should or when the weather seems right for it. And it is always at its best yesterday! By the time I arrive it has either been eaten by slugs or it's decomposed into a blackened slimy goo! Although we have had some wonderful times in the New Forest, and found some lovely fungi, we always seem to arrive too late.

"Oh!" They say. "Last week it was wonderful; fungi sprouting from every crack and crevice on every fallen tree; a mycologists dream; a fungal fantasy so rich you had to be careful where you trod. But today? Forget it! The forlorn forest is devoid of any form of toadstool whatsoever. A paucity of Porcini; a mushroom mausoleum; not a stipe nor a stiver to be found throughout colourful canyons of the Autumn arboretum."

Why? Because of yesterdayitis, that's why!

For many years I have diligently sought a cure for this miserable condition but - as yet - without success. At one time I felt certain I had found the cure by going to these places a day before I wanted to but it didn't work. I still don't know why. Once I even went several days beforehand only to be told that I was a day too late.

And so it goes on! If anyone knows the cure let me in on it. Please!

In the meantime I have developed a little literary ointment that I rub on my disappointment from time to time and remind myself to: 'only expect what you get - not what you think you're going to get.' And it works - occasionally!

If I never hear *"you should have been here yesterday"* again, it will be too soon; except, of course, when I reach the Pearly Gates. Then, when St Peter says it, I shall smile and reply:

"Yes, but I'm glad I wasn't!"

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Web: www.davidosbornphotography.co.uk



Orchids of South-East England

A successful Associate Panel by Mark Monckton ARPS

I had been interested in photography for many years when, in 2006, I decided it was time to join the Royal Photographic Society. My choice for my free one year membership of a special interest group was Nature.

I applied for, and was successful in obtaining, my LRPS distinction in the same year with a panel of wildlife pictures. At that point I decided to start working towards my Associateship. I knew that I wanted to produce a Nature panel but was not sure what subject to focus on.

During the following year I attended a two day workshop on the 'Wild Orchids of Kent' organised by Kent Wildlife Trust (www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk) and lead by Fred Booth. At this point I realised how interesting it would be to locate and photograph wild orchids around the South East of England (all within a two hour drive from my home). My idea, at this point was to also include fungi in the panel, but I later decided that my orchid pictures were stronger and, at that point, I almost had enough for a single subject panel.

I took the majority of the photographs during the rest of 2007 and throughout 2008. Towards the end of 2008 I arranged a one-to-one with George McCarthy FRPS to show him my panel in progress and obtain advice as to how best complete it. I already knew George as I had attended several of

his workshops over the years (including, co-incidentally, one on orchids) and have always admired his work.

Originally my panel contained a mix of orchids and fungi but it was George who convinced me to go with all orchids. He pointed out that the best of my orchid pictures were far better than the fungi pictures and if I could present a panel with just orchids it would be much stronger. At that point I had twelve good orchid pictures so needed to get at least three more.

Early in 2009 I did a lot of research, mainly on the internet, to identify the best places to look for some of the Orchids I did not already have pictures of. I photographed Early Spider Orchid, Early Marsh Orchid, Bee Orchid, Military Orchid and Burnt Orchid to complete my panel.

My idea for the panel was to take close up portraits of the flower spike of each species of orchid, and therefore needed the minimum distractions in the background. In order to achieve this I used a Canon 180mm f3.5 L macro lens and a Canon 5D & Canon 1Ds Mk III. The 180mm macro lens in combination with the full frame sensor of the 1Ds helped to produce the background I wanted.

By the end of June 2009 I had 19 orchid photographs to choose from. I printed them all out

Layout

1. Early Spider Orchid



2. Burnt Orchid



3. Pyramidal Orchid



4. Monkey Orchid



5. Man Orchid



6. Military Orchid



7. Early Marsh Orchid



8. Bee Orchid



9. Early Purple Orchid



10. Musk Orchid



11. Heath Spotted



12. Man Close-up



13. Common Spotted



14. Fly Orchid



15. Green-veined





1 Early Spider Orchid (*Ophrys sphegodes*)

on Permajet Oyster A3 paper using my Epson R2400 printer, and window mounted them on Antique White Daler-Rowney white core mounting board.

I experimented with several arrangements (using 6" by 4" prints), some with three rows and some with two, and took photographs of each arrangement so that I could directly compare them. In the end I settled on a two row panel with eight pictures on the top row and a bottom row of seven pictures.

On the 9th September 2009 I presented my panel to the RPS in Bath. Mine was the fifth panel to be shown and I was pleased to see that the prints looked good as they were put up. However I was a bit nervous about how the panel members would react to the photographs of just the flower spikes.

I watched while my panel was inspected and noticed one member pointing at a particular print. I later discovered that this image had also been selected for RPS International Projected Image Exhibition 2009. Eventually they sat down for their first vote which was unanimously in favour. I started to celebrate a little prematurely when the chairman reminded me that there was a second vote. The judges made their comments which were favourable and then again voted unanimously that I had met the required standard for ARPS.



2 Burnt Orchid (*Neotinea ustulata*)



5 Man Orchid (*Orchis anthropophora*)

George McCarthy and I will be running Orchid Workshops during 2010. If you are interested please contact George at: www.georgemccarthy.com

You can view my panel on the Nature Group website and also at: www.markmonckton.co.uk/arps.php

Statement of Intent

I want to show the diversity and beauty of wild orchids in the South East of England. All the photographs in this portfolio have been taken in nature reserves that are local to me. These photographs are close-up portraits of the flower spike, showing the detail of the different flower forms.



8 Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*)



9 Early Purple (*Orchid (Orchis mascula)*)



11 Heath Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*)

A Labour of Love - The Path to an ARPS:

by Harry Worthington ARPS

My chemistry teacher at school counselled 'If you want to prosper sell things!'. I made the link from this advice to pharmacy. Part of the pharmacy degree course was the study of animal and plant sources of drugs. This in turn led to a fascination with the structure of plants as revealed by the microscope. This transferred in later life to the detail disclosed by the macro lens in photography.

I began to take photography seriously when, in retirement, I joined the local camera club in Beaminster about eleven years ago. I achieved the LRPS in 2006 with what I would describe as a pastoral print panel. This included a photograph of a Southern Hawker dragonfly, a subject which I had encountered accidentally when bird watching at Weymouth's RSPB Lodmoor reserve. This particular photograph led to a developing interest in insect photography where, of course, there is appeal in the beauty of the colouration and structure of the wide variety of subjects to be found. My home in Dorset is fortunate to have a number of nature reserves

nearby and so in a three year period it was possible to accumulate insect photographs of the likely required quality. I was certainly helped and encouraged in this by participating in two weekend courses at the nearby Kingcombe reserve, tutored by Dr. John Bebbington FRPS. Here, while learning various tips on selecting suitable subjects and how to photograph them, I also learned the importance of a sharp eye, because not all insects are immediately seen. The essential factors in obtaining acceptable insect photographs soon became apparent; first the need for backgrounds to be non-distracting (but not necessarily totally diffuse) and second, for the insect to be in sharp focus (but not digitally over sharpened).

All the images were taken with a Canon 40D digital camera using a Sigma 105mm f2.8 macro lens. Some were taken using a tripod and some with a monopod. I have found the latter to be more helpful when the subject has a tendency to settle only briefly. With respect to obtaining sharp focus throughout the subject, I quickly learned the crucial



3 Meadow Brown butterfly (*Maniola jurtina*)



2 Lime Hawkmoth (*Mimas tiliae*)



15 Marbled White butterfly (*Melanargia galathea*)



11 Small Copper butterfly (*Lycaena phlaeas*)

importance of having effectively the plane of the camera sensor parallel to the plane of the main elements (usually wings and body) of the insect, together with an aperture usually in the f8 to f11 range. All the images were shot in RAW format and converted using Adobe Camera Raw with subsequent handling in Adobe Photoshop Elements 5.0. Manipulation was limited to some cropping, tonal adjustment and sharpening.

Choice of images derived from helpful advice received from John Bebbington who indicated deficiencies in some of a group of about twenty-five candidates. This prompted me to retreat and spend time taking more photographs! In due course after getting critical comments from my camera club colleagues, I selected fifteen images and took them to an RPS advisory day in October 2008. There the digitally projected panel was reviewed favourably by Andy Callow FRPS, who made a couple of suggestions for improvement. One suggestion was to modify an image of a Small Copper butterfly (*Lycaena phlaeas*, Image 11) where the subject was felt to be too central and needed more space as it were to be able 'to fly'. Fortunately, the original image had been cropped slightly and adjustment was possible. Shortly before the advisory day I had made the decision to submit a panel for digital projection purely on grounds of simplicity of preparation. I am still not sure if projection does full justice to the panel as a whole since viewing a screen of thumbnail versions is not, in my opinion, likely to give as good an impression as a

set of A4 prints on a wall. On the other hand two five second viewings of individual projected images allows critical assessment of the subject without the possible influence of printing deficiencies.

Assessment of the panel in March 2009 had its nervous moments. It was the first submission of the morning examined. There was some reservation expressed as to the quality of Image 8 (Lesser Prominent moth, *Pheosa gnoma*) and the distracting background seen in Image 12 (Black Tailed Skimmer dragonfly, *Orthetrum cancellatum*). Despite this the distinction was awarded on a majority vote.

The assessment leads me to believe that I have more to learn and I think with nature photography there is always something more to be assimilated. With the distracting background issue I have decided that, if one cannot diffuse the background by camera technique, it is better to wait for an opportunity to photograph the subject under more favourable conditions, even though the subject may be one which is relatively infrequently seen.

In conclusion I can say that I have enjoyed acquiring the skills needed to reach a demanding photographic standard. I have also greatly enjoyed the time in the field taking the photographs and learning much more about insect behaviour. I am delighted to have achieved a distinction which I had no aspirations to complete when in 1998 I was persuaded to join my local camera club. I shall continue to enjoy nature photography and will seek to expand the scope of subjects tackled.



6 Golden-ringed dragonfly (*Cordulegaster boltonii*)



8 Lesser Swallow Prominent moth (*Pheosia gnoma*)



5 Four-spotted Chaser dragonfly
(*Libellula quadrimaculata*)

Statement of Intent

Following a life spent in scientific research I have in retirement had the opportunity to develop a long held interest in the beauty of the structure and colour detail of plant and insect life. This has led to the joy of revealing these characteristics through the macro lens. I seek to demonstrate this fascination in the 15 images of such wildlife, particularly butterflies, dragonflies and moths (to be found in several nature reserves within a 5 mile radius of my Dorset home), which are presented for the ARPS distinction.

Subject names.

1. Azure Damselflies (*Coenagrion puella*)
2. Lime Hawkmoth (*Mimas tiliae*)
3. Meadow Brown butterfly (*Maniola jurtina*)
4. Alder Kitten moth (*Furcula bicuspis*)
5. Four-spotted Chaser dragonfly (*Libellula quadrimaculata*)
6. Golden-ringed dragonfly (*Cordulegaster boltonii*)
7. Gatekeeper butterfly (*Pyrionia tithonus*)
8. Lesser Swallow Prominent moth (*Pheosia gnoma*)
9. Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrhosoma nymphula*) with predators
10. Six-spot Burnet moths (*Zygaena filipendulae*)
11. Small Copper butterfly (*Lycaena phlaeas*)
12. Black-tailed Skimmer dragonfly (*Orthetrum cancellatum*)
13. Common Blue butterfly (*Polyommatus icarus*)
14. Broad-bodied Chaser dragonfly (*Libellula depressa*)
15. Marbled White butterfly (*Melanargia galathea*)



14 Broad-bodied Chaser dragonfly (*Libellula depressa*)

A Photographic Journey with Birds

Professor Thomas Hanahoe PhD FRPS

I have taken family snaps for many years but my obsession with more serious photography is relatively recent. My initial family pictures were taken with a rangefinder Vivitar 35ES camera and I upgraded to a Canon 1000 SLR in the early 1990s. In 2001 I invested in a 2.1 megapixel digital camera (Canon Ixus,) and I was hooked. The ability to view the image immediately on the back of the camera was addictive and then to print it personally was very gratifying. I loved it. I bought a digital SLR (Canon D60) in 2003 and began to use it to obtain, for the first time, photographs other than family pictures: but invariably, my endeavours were disappointing. I retired from full-time employment in 2005 with a determination to improve my photographic skills.

As a birthday present my family bought for me a place on a photographic workshop at Lakeland Photographic Holidays where inter alia I learned about the distinctions awarded by the Royal Photographic Society. As an ex academic, I believe firmly in the concept of the project as a learning vehicle, where one relatively small element of a subject is studied in depth with the objective of acquiring transferable knowledge and skills.

I determined that I should aim to improve my photography by focusing on the LRPS as a project.

I struggled. My first submission in November 2005 was unsuccessful; and rightly so. The RPS suggested that it might be helpful if I worked with a mentor and Chris Palmer, a member of the Licentiate Panel, agreed to assist me. He was a truly excellent mentor and I resubmitted in March 2006. But, again I failed; one of the judges said they could see banding in some of my prints. I could not see any banding! My third attempt in November 2006 cut the mustard and I was delighted when the RPS asked to keep my prints to use at future LRPS workshops.

After the initial euphoria, I refocused my project and aimed for the ARPS. I enjoyed both landscape and nature photography but, given the context of the RPS categories, it was clear that I would need to submit either to the Visual Art Panel or to the Nature Panel. I chose nature and, because they are ubiquitous and accessible throughout the year, birds. With support from Richard Revels, a member of the Nature Panel, I submitted my ARPS in September 2007 and was delighted when it was successful and the RPS again asked to keep my prints for use at future workshops.

Birds of Great Britain



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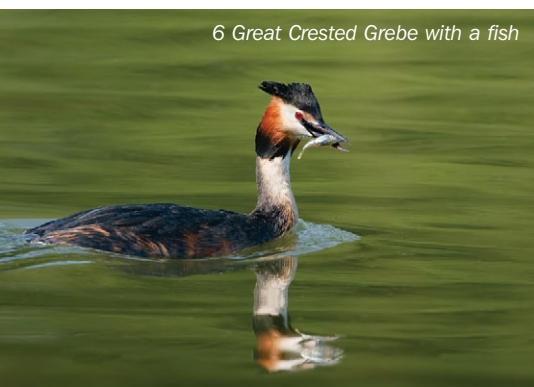
15 Meadow Pipit with insects



2 Heron with nest material



9 Flock of Avocet in flight



6 Great Crested Grebe with a fish

My project progressed with the submission of an FRPS panel in September 2008. It was not successful. However, the advisory letter from the Society was encouraging "the Distinctions Panel would like to encourage you to apply again". I applied again in September 2009 and was successful.

Following acceptance by the Nature Panel and the Fellowship Board, I was invited by the Society to the Fellowship Showing at Fenton House in Bath. My wife and I attended and I had the opportunity to say a few words about my pictures. Both of us thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and especially the opportunity to see beautiful photography from a wide range of categories.

Over the last few years I have been single minded. And although all my photographic efforts have been focused to obtain the appropriate Distinction, this has been but a means to an end. As a result of my journey with birds my photography has undoubtedly improved and I believe that my project has enabled me to acquire skills which I will now be able to apply elsewhere. I am soon to test this assumption by returning to the Lake District to do some landscapes!

www.hanahoephoto.com



www.rpsnaturegroup.com

Statement of Intent

Birds of Great Britain

My intent has been to improve my photographic skills by attaining the standard required for award of the Society's Fellowship Distinction and I have endeavoured to obtain this objective by photographing British birds. In presenting this Nature Panel, I depict a variety of birds displaying behaviours typical of their species. I have shown the birds undertaking a range of activities including hovering, diving, nest building, hunting, carrying prey, such as fish or insects, eating and feeding their young. I have also tried to capture the elegance of their flight activity, as well as the harmony that birds display when they fly together with companions. I obtained the photographs between March 2008 and June 2009 in a wide range of British locations and I thank the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Wildlife Trusts for access to numerous of their locations. In each instance the birds were wild and free.



4 Peregrine Falcon in flight

5 White-tailed Sea Eagle with fish



20 Marsh Harrier with a stick



18 Arctic Tern



10 Bar-tailed Godwits in flight



"Just go for it"

by Ron Evans ARPS

On the day before the September Nature 'A' Panel assessment in Bath, I was on the Hook peninsula in South East Ireland trying (with increasing frustration) to photograph Gannets and other seabirds flying into the teeth of a Force 6 gale.

Which all goes to show that I hadn't really planned my 'A' submission far enough ahead to avoid the assessment clashing with the Ireland trip. C'est la vie.

I've been photographing wildlife for over thirty years, using Pentax cameras and slide film and only went across to digital a few years ago when Pentax eventually brought out a 10 megapixel camera, which gave me similar (if not better) quality images and allowed me to continue using my substantial collection of lenses.

The move to digital also coincided with an early retirement, which allowed me more time to photograph wildlife both locally on Anglesey, where I live, as well as abroad.

Although I'd always intended to submit an 'A' panel at some stage, I prevaricated for a couple of years before actually doing so. Like many photographers, I'm a bit of a perfectionist and always saw the merits of other people's photos rather than my own.

The change in my attitude came about as a result of my wife persuading me that I should celebrate my retirement by going on a 'once in a lifetime' trip. I think she was quite surprised when I decide to go to the Falklands rather than somewhere warm like the Galapagos! My decision actually stemmed from a conversation I'd had with Martin Withers FRPS (whose opinion I much respected) during a photo safari to Kenya some ten years previously, who sold me on the Falklands as a photo destination.

I visited the Falkland Islands during November and December 2008 with a small group, led by Dawn Osborn FRPS and organised by her brother David Osborn FRPS. It was the discussions with other photographers and the encouragement, which I had on that trip which eventually led me to take the plunge.

I'd already considered the advice and criteria set out in the interactive CD, and talked informally to other photographers who'd been through the process. The general advice was to "just go for it".

The first step was to choose a theme for my panel. It came down to a choice between a panel showing the wildlife of Anglesey, the bird life of Florida or a panel based on my recent trip to the Falklands.

Associate Panel Layout

- Ron Evans -

September 2009



I put the three prospective panels, each consisting of about 25 to 30 images on separate CD's as slide shows and played them again and again over a number of weeks, trying to detach myself and view them objectively and critically. I eventually chose the Falklands images because they seemed to have more vitality and movement.

The images I chose were a mixture of portraits and action shots, which I hoped (as my Statement of Intent made clear) would convey "the beauty, vitality and explosion of life" which had so impressed me during my trip to the Falklands in the austral Spring. Whilst the Falklands are well known for their penguin colonies, I wanted to show the variety of other bird life on the islands as well.

When I was choosing images I took into account the 'character' of Pentax images which have a colour rendition markedly different from that of Canon and Nikon. The images are more film like, with dense saturated colours. The clear air and bright skies of the Falklands seemed to exacerbate this inherent character and I was concerned that some of the images might appear unnatural. I therefore chose my images carefully to avoid this potential problem.

When deciding on my layout, I had to accommodate three images which were in a squarer or vertical format. Having decided on three lines of five images, I placed the 'squarer/vertical' shots in the middle of each line, giving the submission balance. I also arranged for the focus of the other images to be directed inwards and for the three lines of images to be graded in terms of colour and contrast. The middle line contained images which were bright and predominantly blue, whilst the bottom line of images were darker and mid tone. I wanted to make a good initial impression, and placed my favourite image, that of the Falklands Flightless Steamer Ducks as my first picture.

My preferred medium was print, as I wanted to see exactly what would be put in front of the Assessment Panel. The photographs were first printed out on A4 paper to check exposure, noise and general image quality. As a result I changed a number of my selections. The biggest problem was noise in shadow areas of plumage, a problem that Pentax now seems to be addressing with its newer cameras.

I used Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl paper on an Epson 1290 at a size of 33 x 22cm, with the addition of a 1cm border. The prints were mounted on white board with Cream Ivory mounts. I was very



10 Southern Giant Petrel in Flight



14 Long-tailed Meadowlark



9 White-rumped Sandpiper



15 Magellanic Penguin

grateful to Dawn Osborn for advising me on this part of my presentation.

Only when I was completely satisfied with the prints did I book a preliminary slot for the September 2009 assessment.

On the day of the assessment, my wife and I were again on the Hook peninsula, but in contrast to the previous day it was bright and sunny. Not only that, but the whole of the area around the lighthouse was alive with hundreds of excited swallows and martins noisily preparing themselves for the sea crossing to South Wales. When I stood still, the birds flew so close to my head that I could feel the wind caused by their passing. It was magical and we both hoped it would augur well for the assessment. Thankfully it did.

As a postscript, my decision to start the panel with the image of the Falklands Flightless Steamer Ducks seemed vindicated when I received an e-mail on my return home advising that it been selected for inclusion in the RPS International Projected Image Exhibition 2009.

Many thanks to everyone who advised and encouraged me, especially my wife and daughter.



8 King Penguin -
face to face behaviour during pair formation

Statement of Intent

The aim of this submission is to illustrate some of the birds of the Falkland Islands which I encountered on a visit to the islands during the Southern Spring of 2008.

I hope that the panel conveys the beauty, vitality and explosion of life which takes place in the Falklands at that time of year.

List of Images

1. Falkland Flightless Steamer Ducks (*Tachyeres brachypterus*) off to the sea
2. Southern Giant Petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*) dominating Crested Caracara (*Polyborus p. plancus*) and Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura falklandica*) at seal carcass
3. Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus sanfordi*) at daytime roost
4. Black-throated Finch (*Melanodera m. melanodera*) singing
5. Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax n. cyanocephalus*) carrying fresh tussock grass stalk
6. King Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax atriceps albiventer*) returning to colony after fishing in kelp beds
7. Gentoo Penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*) exploding out of the sea
8. King Penguins (*Aptenodytes p. patagonica*) face to face behaviour during pair formation
9. White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*) amongst stranded kelp
10. Southern Giant Petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*) in flight
11. Rock Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax magellanicus*) carrying nesting material
12. Falkland Thrush (*Turdus f. falklandii*) bathing in a peaty pool
13. Striated Caracara (*Phalacrocorax australis*) synchronised calling
14. Long-tailed Meadowlark (*Sturnella loyca falklandica*) perching
15. Magellanic Penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) early morning braying

Field Meeting Report - Donna Nook

by Colin Smale ARPS

With only 24 hours to go before the RPS Nature Group was to meet for a seal shoot at Donna Nook, the weather forecast gradually turned against us and I was forced to postpone the event. Heavy overcast skies with a promised 58mph wind were just too much. With members coming from as far away as Kent and another from Poland the spectacle of seals amid wild surf would have been memorable but quality photography would have been rarer than hen's teeth.

I am not a fan of bright sunlight but with seals it does makes or break photographs, good light brings out whatever colours there are in their fur, even soft overcast light is still fine. Added to this 58mph winds, well we all know what happens to our 500mm f4 lenses in these conditions, they vibrate like a two stroke lawn mower engine.

The re-arranged trip two weeks later was in absolutely perfect conditions; with bright skies and very little wind we all got some great photographs.

Although there are hundreds of seals up on the high tide line, they are not as lively and therefore not quite as photogenic as seals in the wild surf and so a longish half hour yomp to the low tide

mark is a must (if you can). I have done this walk almost every year for at least 30 years and I learned very quickly to carry essentials only. For me that's a smallish lightweight rucksack holding a few spare memory cards, a 24mm-85mm lens, Nikon D3 holding two 8gb memory cards, a 1.4TC, 500mm f4 lens, lens cleaning material, mobile phone, compass and of course a flask of tea (well hot water and tea bags really, can't stand ready made flask tea which turns into a ghastly oxtail soup after a couple of hours!! I do not compromise with a tripod. I have a lightish Manfrotto but my old Gitzo cannot be beaten. Yes, it is heavy 7.3 kilos or in old money, 12 lbs and although I have tried to convince myself that the lightweight tripod is ok, my tests have shown that the old Gitzo still has the edge and so, I have to tote the beast over hill and dale and still I need to go on a diet, how does that work! Add to that the D3 with 500mm lens at 7.7kg (12.8lbs) and it comes to, well it just gets heavier each year!

Spring tides in this part of the UK are always around the 6/7 o'clock mark, add to that that the beaches are as near flat as one can imagine, it is





only the spring tides that ever reach what we laughingly call here 'the high tide mark' and in the winter when sunrise is not until about 8 am and sets around 3.30 pm the chances of photographing the seals in water at the high tide mark are at least slim. Because Donna Nook is an MOD bombing range, there are red flags flying from Monday to Friday, therefore Sat & Sun are the only days one can get out to the low tide where the real seal action is. Photography can be done on any day on the 'high tide' mark if you can slip your lens between the shoulders of all the visitors.

Our party finally reached the low water mark and we all went our separate ways, choosing our own various groups of seals to concentrate on. There are seals for about half a mile so plenty to go at. Some have hauled out and can be approached very closely, I have seen a guy attempting to get close up shots of a basking Bull seal with a wide-angle lens but I most certainly would not recommend that. You invade their space as closely as that at your peril, they are lighting quick and have teeth like manic wolves, in any case, do we really need to disturb them to such a degree, just to get a wide angle shot?? Of course it could look dramatic but I'm afraid I am not for disturbing them to such a degree when they give us such great shots through a long lens, playing around in the surf.

On the subject of lenses, I was asked by a couple of members which lenses they might need. A 500mm or longer lets you get super images at respectable distances. A teleconverter is also a very

handy addition. If you only have a 200mm lens I would suggest you can still get great surf shots, once you are set up on the edge of the surf, inevitably seals will swim past you giving you the images you require, you would be very unlucky not to get them.

With the conditions being so good on the day we enjoyed some of the best photography I have seen there. The usual 'bull' fighting, the continual courtship where the males sidle up to the females uttering sweet nothings to them, the rebuffs and resultant indignant responses from the rejected males who of course do not give up so easily, it is a joy to watch, utterly utterly amusing and not a million miles from our own behavior if we are perfectly honest.

I got some great shots but as usual, my favourite was of some action a little too far away even with the 500mm and 1.4 TC. Two bull seals discussing whose wave it was suddenly turned into full blown tooth and claw brawl and with my motor drive collecting all the action, one frame (5266) showed a bull erupting from the surf looking for all the world like a lion crashing through the tall grass but, I have had to crop so hard to get a decent size image. Dammit, I will just have to go again next year. Maybe I will get a second chance. And so it goes on, year after glorious year, always striving but never quite reaching and I guess that's the nature of nature photographers.

Field Meeting Report - Dunham Massey

by Tony Bond FRPS

Dunham Massey, the former seat of the Earls of Stamford, lies on the south-west edge of Greater Manchester. This, plus easy access from the motorway network, makes it very popular with the general public. However, rumours that the National Trust had enlarged the car park when they heard the Nature Group were coming are completely unfounded.

The attraction for the nature photographer is the parkland with its herd of Fallow Deer and, at this time of year, fungi. The rut was underway with bellowing echoing around the park. The majority of the trees are Beech and Oak and the National Trust's policy of leaving fallen timber to rot naturally encourages an interesting variety of fungi in a good year. Unfortunately, 2009 was not a good year. Undeterred, our party of 10 assembled on a pleasant autumn morning with participants from as far afield as Shropshire.

The first fungus found was, for me, the star of the show. It was a large *Pholiota* with a bright orange, viscid cap at the base of a beech tree. The uninitiated might think that such a striking fungus would be easy to identify, but 'old hands' know better. Consultation of the stand work on the genus showed much confusion among the taxonomists (surprise!). The site, gill shape and attachment, spore size and shape all point to *Pholiota jahnii* which has only 74

records on the BNS database. The rest of the pre-lunch session proved frustrating due to the scarcity of fungi. The Honey Fungus which had been spectacular was now over. A small frog proved uncooperative but a Fallow buck posed for portraits.

After lunch we went in our own time along the main ride through the park. Another very obliging buck was more concerned about getting some kip in the sunshine than in the activities of some snappers. Nearby, there was an unusual display of *Armillaria mellea* and *Pholiota squarrosa* growing side by side and apparently in grass. They were almost certainly anchored to tree roots. Two small boys threatened disaster but were successfully deterred. Almost at the end of this ride there was a Beech stump which two weeks previously had been covered in Honey fungus. This was now a brown, skinking mass. Five groups of *Pholiota squarrosa* had managed to force their way through the slime. Three days earlier, I had gardened one – such is my devotion to the Nature Group – and fortunately the slugs had not found it.

In a difficult year for fungi, two excellent *Pholiota* plus the deer was probably as much as we could have hoped for.

And, by the time you read this, Dunham's newly created winter garden will have been wonderful.



Field Meeting Report - Ebernoe Common, Sussex.

by Adrian Davies ARPS

Eight Nature Group members joined me on 10th October, 2009 for a visit to Ebernoe Common - one of the finest tracts of ancient woodland in the country and renowned for its range and quantity of fungi.

We had had no rain in the previous three weeks, so my expectations were not high, and the numbers of fungi we found, both species and quantity were poor. We found enough to keep ourselves busy however, with various *Mycena* and *Coprinus* species being commonest. We found and photographed a few nice Porcelain fungi (*Oudemansiella mucida*), as well as some good specimens of various species of lichen, in particular various *Cladonia* species.

Most of the group had to leave after lunch, so just three of us ventured back into the wood in the afternoon, which was a great pity as we did manage to find a superb specimen of one of Britain's rarest and arguably most beautiful fungi, the Coral Tooth (*Hericium coralloides*), growing on a fallen Beech branch. This species has been known to be present in the wood for some time, though no specimen had been found for several years. The reserve warden was duly informed, though he did already know of its existence.

All in all - a great day!

Right: Bonnet Mould, *Spinellus fusiger*, growing parasitically on *Mycena crocata*.

Below: Coral Tooth Fungus, *Hericium coralloides*

Postscript: I visited the wood again two weeks later, and went to check on the *Hericium*. It had started to go over and was way past its best. I was rather alarmed however to find though that the branch on which it was growing had been moved, into (I assume) a more photogenic spot, with green moss behind it. I only hope this will not damage its chances of fruiting again next year, and will wait anxiously for it to re-appear. With guidance from the warden I was able to move the log back to its original position, using my original photographs for reference.



Field Meetings - 2010

Please check the website for Field Meetings which may be arranged after this issue has gone to press.

Date & Time: 11am Saturday 22nd May

Location: Kenwood

Meeting Place: Kenwood House

Leader: Diana Elena Antonescu

Main subjects of interest:

Kenwood gardens, trees and invertebrates

Other Information: Bring stout shoes and a packed lunch. There is a café at Kenwood House

Tel: 07310 17038 **e-mail:** imagesdiana@gmail.com

Date & Time: 10am Friday 4th June 2010

Location: Parc Slip

Meeting Place: Car park

Grid Ref: Map 151 SS881 841

Leader: Roger Lewis ARPS

Cost for parking: Free

Main subjects of interest: Orchids and Dragonflies

Other Information: Bring stout shoes, a water-proof and a packed lunch.

Website: www.welshwildlife.org

Tel: 01656 890567 **e-mail:** trecastell@yahoo.co.uk

Date & Time: 10am Saturday June 26th

Location: Llanymynech Rocks (Shropshire/Welsh border)

Meeting Place: Pant, car park

Grid Ref.: Map 126 SJ 265220

Leader: Celia Todd

Car parking: Free

Main subjects of interest: Limestone flora and butterflies

Other information: Bring stout shoes, waterproofs and a packed lunch

Tel: 01691 652181

e-mail: celia.todd@btinternet.com

Date & Time: 11am Sunday 27th June

Location: Hampstead Heath extension

Meeting Place: Golders Hill Park using the entrance from North End Road

Leader: Diana Elena Antonescu

Main subjects of interest: Ancient trees, flower meadow, woodpeckers, Lepidoptera and other invertebrates

Other Information: Bring stout shoes and a packed lunch.

Tel: 07310 17038 **e-mail:** imagesdiana@gmail.com

Date & Time: 6am 9th or 10th October depending on weather (confirm by telephone a week in advance)

Location: Newtown Linford Village (Leicestershire)

Meeting Place: Park entrance (in centre of village)

Leader: Gianpiero Ferrari

Car parking: As directed on the day

Main subjects of interest: Deer rutting

Other Information: Bring stout shoes, warm

clothing, a waterproof and a packed lunch.

There is a pub and restaurants in the village.

Lenses of 400-500mm for deer are recommended

and a shorter zoom for autumn colours

Tel: 01509 621489

Date & Time: 10am Saturday October 16th

Location: Off A535 Holmes Chapel – Chelford road – 8 miles from J18 of M6 motorway

Meeting Place: Jodrell Bank Arboretum

Grid Ref.: SJ 796714

Leader: Tony Bond FRPS

Car parking: £2.00 per head

Main subjects of interest: Fungi

Other Information: Bring Stout shoes and a packed lunch. There is also a café on site.

We may move to the nearby Quinta Arboretum at Swettenham after lunch.

Tel: 01942 674773. Please contact leader 2 or 3 days before the meeting

Date & Time: 10.30am Wednesday 6th October

Location: Beacon Hill Woodlands, Charnwood Forest

Meeting Place: Beacon Hill Car Park

Grid Ref: OS Sheet 129 522 148

Leader: Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Directions: Leave M1 at J23 taking A512 towards Loughborough. In ? mile turn right at traffic lights.

Follow the road through one more set of traffic lights. Keep on ahead for c. 2 miles then turn right into the well signed Car Park.

Cost: Car Park Barrier, in 2009 it was £1.00. Coin in slot for entry. No info for 2010.

Main subjects of interest: Mainly Fungi.

Other Information: Waterproofs, stout shoes, boots or wellingtons. Packed Lunch

Tel: 0115 928 1050. Please ring for up to date

information on Monday and Tuesday 4th and 5th

October. Mobile number, (for use on the day only):

07960 177291

RPS Nature Group Residential Weekend

FSC Blencathra Centre, Cumbria.

Friday 28th – Monday 31st May 2010

In response to requests from members in the North of England, the annual Nature Group Residential Field Meeting is to be held at FSC Blencathra Centre in Cumbria in May 2010.

The Blencathra Centre is run by the Field Studies Council in partnership with the Lake District National Park Authority, and occupies a spectacular position overlooking St Johns in the Vale.

John Bebbington FRPS, the organiser of this event, is now accepting bookings for this event. For further details about the Centre or to make a reservation for the weekend, please contact:

John Bebbington FRPS

Email: john.bebbingtonfrps@ukonline.co.uk;

Tel: 01458 253027.

Close-up and Macro Photography courses in 2010 with John Bebbington FRPS

**Digital Close-up and Macro in the Field
The Kingcombe Centre, near Dorchester
Monday 28th June – Friday 2nd July
Level: open to everyone**

The course will begin with an examination of the general problems faced by the close-up photographer and of group members in particular. Points raised will be dealt with in some depth during the week.

We will spend as much time as possible in the field, finding and approaching insects and overcoming movement of flowers. A range of habitats will be visited.

The intention is that everyone will finish the course with practical basic close-up and macro photographic techniques and successfully recording potential subjects, on film or digitally.

Course fees: Single room (En-suite) £360;
Single room (Private bathroom) £360;
Double room (En-suite) £720;
Twin-bedded room (En-suite) £720;
Non-residential £240

**Close-up and Macro Photography
Blencathra, northern Lake District
Friday 16 July-Monday 19 July
Level: open to everyone**

The weekend will begin with an examination of the general problems faced by the close-up photographer in the field and those of group members in particular. Points raised will be dealt with during the weekend.

The intention is that everyone will finish the course with improved techniques of approaching and photographing potential subjects, whether on film or digitally.

We will spend as much time as possible in the field, working on ways of finding and approaching insects and overcoming movement of flowers; a range of habitats will be visited.

Course fees:
Sole occupancy room: £285
shared room: £255
non-resident: £185

**Insect Photography Workshop
Preston Montford, near Shrewsbury
Friday 30 July-Tuesday 3 August
Level: open to everyone**

The course will concentrate on solving the problems of insect photography in the field - finding and approaching subjects, and overcoming the problems of moving subjects.

Course members are encouraged to bring prints, slides or digital work to show. Those with digital cameras should bring their own laptop for downloading images (or the appropriate software CD so that the tutor can download them). Images can be projected using the tutor's equipment. Please note that the course is suitable only for those with SLR cameras (film or digital) - not compact or 'bridge' cameras.

Course fees:
Sole occupancy room: £365
shared room: £325
non-resident: £260

Obituary

Kath Bull ARPS DPAGB EFIAP (1927 – 2010)

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Kath Bull. Kath joined the RPS in 1977 and was a founder-member of the Nature Group. She served on the Nature Group Committee for 10 years, from 1991 to 2001 and during that time held the role of Programme Secretary until becoming Chairman from 1997 to 1999.

Kath also organised a series of annual residential field meeting weekends both at Juniper Hall and Kingcombe, all very much appreciated by the members who attended, plus Nature Photography days both during her term as Chairman and later.

She gained her ARPS in March 1991 with a panel of flowers, insects and fungi; she was a DPAGB and held the Award of Excellence of the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique.

Prevented by WW2 from going to University, Kath later gained a part-time Biology degree at Brighton Polytechnic and her teaching qualifications through the Open University. She then taught at Kent College, an independent girls' school, and became Head of Science, a position she held until her retirement. She was an outstanding teacher, both at school and in photography.

Kath joined United Photographic Postfolios in 1984, becoming secretary of Natural History Circle C2 in 1984, a position she held until her death. A member of Tonbridge Camera Club, she served on the Committee and organised Distinctions days and field days for fellow natural history enthusiasts. She gained an array of Club awards and was still winning nature trophies in December 2009, shortly before her death.



On a personal note, I first met Kath in the late 1970s at Juniper Hall. I was always impressed by her quiet manner, her enormous depth of natural history knowledge, and her tremendous technical expertise in close-up photography. She very soon persuaded me to join UPP and encouraged me to start leading photography courses.

She continued to attend Group residential weekends and to organise events in the South-east until ill-health curtailed her activities – but was always looking forward to the day when she could get out and about with her camera again.

She will be sadly missed by her friends and colleagues in all walks of life.

John Bebbington FRPS,
Nature Group Vice Chairman

Regions

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

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| CE - Central | 54 | Distinctions | |
| EA - East Anglia | 54 | Honorary FRPS | 4 |
| EM - East Midlands | 45 | FRPS | 94 |
| LN - London | 20 | ARPS | 228 |
| NI - Ireland (North) | 0 | LRPS | 160 |
| SI - Ireland (South) | 5 | Non-Distinction Holders | 159 |
| NO - Northern | 11 | | |
| NW - North Western | 58 | | |
| SC - Scotland | 26 | Total | 645 |
| SE - South Eastern | 82 | | |
| SW - South Western | 17 | | |
| SO - Southern | 54 | | |
| TH - Thames Valley | 60 | | |
| WE - Western | 54 | | |
| WN - North Wales | 9 | | |
| WS - South Wales | 20 | | |
| YO - Yorkshire | 31 | | |
| Total UK | 600 | | |
| Overseas | 45 | | |
| Total Membership | 645 | | |

These statistics are prepared from data supplied by the RPS Membership Department 20th January 2010

Map courtesy of the RPS Journal January/February 2001 revised 2006

compiled by Mark Monckton ARPS

| Articles | Author | Page | Issue No. | Year |
|---|-------------------------|------|-----------|------|
| Oliver Pike Hon FRPS, A look back at a past master of Nature Photography | Richard Revels FRPS | 5 | 94 | 2006 |
| The Brown Bears of Finland | David Manners ARPS | 8 | 94 | 2006 |
| Mountain Walking and Photography - Do They Mix? | John Nathan LRPS | 12 | 94 | 2006 |
| Non conformist Nun and Red-necked Footman in Uncertain Cameo under Dark Arches | Tony Bond FRPS | 15 | 94 | 2006 |
| Photographing Butterflies and Dragonflies | John Bulpitt FRPS | 18 | 94 | 2006 |
| Photographing migrating Cranes | Manfred Klindwort | 21 | 94 | 2006 |
| A Different Corner of India | Peter Evans FRPS | 24 | 94 | 2006 |
| Digital Update | David Osborn FRPS | 27 | 94 | 2006 |
| Ascension Island | Dawn Osborn ARPS | 30 | 94 | 2006 |
| Expedition to East Africa | Chuck Eccleston LRPS | 8 | 95 | 2006 |
| Skomer - a jewel on the Pembrokeshire coast | Phil Collier | 30 | 95 | 2006 |
| Digital Workflow | Mike Lane FRPS | 33 | 95 | 2006 |
| The Nature Distinctions Panel | Robert Hawkesworth FRPS | 4 | 96 | 2006 |
| RPS 'Distinctions & Qualifications Criteria' | | 5 | 96 | 2006 |
| Film update - an alternative view | Tony Bond FRPS | 6 | 96 | 2006 |
| Patagonia | John Nathan LRPS | 9 | 96 | 2006 |
| Safari to the Masai Mara | Tremaine Cornish LRPS | 13 | 96 | 2006 |
| Wildlife Encounters in Cathar Country | John Woodward LRPS | 17 | 96 | 2006 |
| The Island of Mull - a nature photographer's paradise | Phil Collier | 20 | 96 | 2006 |
| A Photographic Journey (pt 2) | Stephen Deakin LRPS | 23 | 96 | 2006 |
| Ordnance Survey Maps on the PC | Colin Jeeves | 32 | 96 | 2006 |
| Rocky Mountain Delight | Richard Revels FRPS | 8 | 97 | 2007 |
| Photographing Invertebrates in my Garden | John Bebbington FRPS | 24 | 97 | 2007 |
| North Uist, Outer Hebrides | Colin Smith FRPS | 8 | 98 | 2007 |
| The Mono Lake Filter | Manfred Kindwort ARPS | 30 | 98 | 2007 |
| Moth Trapping and Photogrpahy in a subrban garden | Robert Hawkesworth FRPS | 35 | 98 | 2007 |
| The Falkland Islands | Barry Mead FRPS | 8 | 99 | 2007 |
| Out and about with my EOS 30D | John Woodward LRPS | 14 | 99 | 2007 |
| My 'Journey of a Lifetime' | Margaret Johnson LRPS | 20 | 99 | 2007 |
| The more things change, the more they stay the same | John Myring | 6 | 100 | 2008 |
| The Nature Group | Heather Angel Hon. FRPS | 8 | 100 | 2008 |
| South West USA | Geoff Trinder ARPS | 11 | 100 | 2008 |
| Deserts & Canyons of Arizona | Robert Hawkesworth FRPS | 15 | 100 | 2008 |
| Insect Action Close Ups | Richard Revels FRPS | 19 | 100 | 2008 |
| Rent a Hide | Mike Lane FRPS | 23 | 100 | 2008 |
| Size Does Matter! | Tony Wharton FRPS | 26 | 100 | 2008 |
| The Nature Group and me | Dawn Osborn FRPS | 30 | 100 | 2008 |
| In Praise of Sir Joseph Whitworth | Tony Bond FRPS | 33 | 100 | 2008 |
| A Unique Safari | John Nathan LRPS | 7 | 101 | 2008 |
| The Heritage Coast of the Vale of Glamorgan | Roger Lewis LRPS | 10 | 101 | 2008 |
| Running a Nature Group Day | Kath Bull ARPS | 29 | 101 | 2008 |
| A Nature Group Day in the South East | John Fairbank ARPS | 31 | 101 | 2008 |
| Two Old Gents in Bulgaria | Peter Evans FRPS | 32 | 101 | 2008 |
| 'An Interactive Guide to obtaining your Nature Associateship' | John Myring | 4 | 102 | 2008 |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----|-----|------|
| Orchid Hunting with a Camera | Richard Revels FRPS | 10 | 102 | 2008 |
| No Penguins here | John Nathan LRPS | 17 | 102 | 2008 |
| Chamois, Wolves and Bears of the Nizke Tatry Mountains, Slovakia | Chuck Eccleston ARPS | 21 | 102 | 2008 |
| Review - KOOD Professional Carbon Fiber Tripods | Charles Brown ARPS | 24 | 102 | 2008 |
| Image stacking using Helicon Focus | John Beddington FRPS | 27 | 102 | 2008 |
| Fugitive Fungus | Tony Bond FRPS | 5 | 103 | 2009 |
| Damsels and Dragons | Colin Smith FRPS | 16 | 103 | 2009 |
| Aspects of Kenya | Ken Rasmussen LRPS | 22 | 103 | 2009 |
| Wiken Fen | Patricia Kreyer ARPS | 27 | 103 | 2009 |
| Storing Digital Images on the Move | John Bulpitt FRPS | 7 | 104 | 2009 |
| Nature Group Residential Weekend | Chuck Eccleston ARPS | 33 | 104 | 2009 |
| Bring out the old | John Woodward LRPS | 36 | 104 | 2009 |
| Let Nature Come To You | Russell Edwards | 38 | 104 | 2009 |
| Obituary - Kodachrome | Tony Bond FRPS | 4 | 105 | 2009 |
| Midway - long way from anywhere | Anne Owen FRPS | 5 | 105 | 2009 |
| Pictures from a Garden Pond | Richard Revels FRPS | 9 | 105 | 2009 |
| Equipment Review - Giotto's MTL8361B tripod | John Beddington FRPS | 15 | 105 | 2009 |

FRPS Panels

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----|-----|------|
| If at first you don't succeed - | Dawn Osborn FRPS | 20 | 97 | 2007 |
| Birds in Action | David Cantrille FRPS | 17 | 99 | 2007 |
| The evolution of an 'F' Panel | Bob Pearson FRPS | 6 | 102 | 2008 |
| 'Bird Behaviour' - My Fellowship Panel | Dickie Duckett FRPS | 8 | 103 | 2009 |

ARPS Panels

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----|-----|------|
| Associateship Panel | John Scotten ARPS | 12 | 95 | 2006 |
| Taking the 'A' Road | Chuck Eccleston ARPS | 12 | 97 | 2007 |
| Diving for Associateship | Colin Ackerman ARPS | 16 | 97 | 2007 |
| Associateship from 'the cold edge' | Geoff Hughes ARPS | 12 | 103 | 2009 |
| The Path to My Associateship | Ron McCombe FRPS | 18 | 103 | 2009 |
| How to prepare an Associate panel in just 48 hours | Bob Johnson ARPS | 8 | 104 | 2009 |
| European Insects, A successful Associate Panel | Ian Mclean ARPS | 12 | 104 | 2009 |
| Progress to a successful Digital A Panel | Sheila Weir ARPS | 16 | 105 | 2009 |
| Gaining my Associateship in Nature | Kevin Elsby ARPS | 20 | 105 | 2009 |

The Nature Group Annual Exhibition

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|-----|------|
| Annual Members Exhibition 2006 | 16 | 95 | 2006 |
| Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2007 | 12 | 98 | 2007 |
| Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2008 | 13 | 101 | 2008 |
| Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2009 | 15 | 104 | 2009 |

Book Reviews

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|----|-----|------|
| Roberts 'Birds of Southern Africa' | David Osborn FRPS | 40 | 95 | 2006 |
| Mushrooms by Roger Phillips | Robert Hawkesworth FRPS | 30 | 97 | 2007 |
| The Encyclopedia of Fungi of Britain and Europe by Michael Jordan | Robert Hawkesworth FRPS | 30 | 97 | 2007 |
| Close-up & Macro: a Photographers Guide by Robert Thompson | John Bebbington FRPS | 31 | 97 | 2007 |
| Exposingnature - the Natural History Museum Photography Guide | John Bebbington FRPS | 31 | 97 | 2007 |
| Guide to the Hawkmoths of the British Isles | Robert Hawkesworth FRPS | 5 | 99 | 2007 |
| Guide to Orchids by Richard & Mavis Gulliver | Robert Hawkesworth FRPS | 28 | 102 | 2008 |

'Amazing Insects'

by Jean-Claude Teyssier
with text by Jean-Henri Fabre

I have been passionately interested in insects and other invertebrates from a very early age. By the time I was eight years old I had inveigled my way into the natural history reference section of our local library (children weren't usually allowed in there) and was reading Henri Fabre's work, which I found inspiring and which prompted me to observe insects and their behaviour more closely. By pure coincidence, a friend gave me a first edition of Fabre's 'The Wonders of Instinct', published in 1918, a few weeks before Teyssier's book arrived for review.

While at university in North Wales I obtained a Pentax Spotmatic and began to try to photograph insects. On leaving university I began teaching field ecology at the Field Studies Council's centre in Betws-y-Coed, and took up serious insect photography so that I could show images and share my enthusiasm and wonderment with others.

Nearly 40 years later I am still trying to produce informative and inspiring insect images! I lead insect photography courses and lecture to camera clubs and natural history groups, and occasionally along comes a book which I can wholeheartedly recommend.

Such a book is '*Amazing Insects*' by Jean-Claude Teyssier. It isn't a photography technique book but the combination of his evocative images with text written by Jean-Henri Fabre around 100 years ago should inspire insect photographers to widen their horizons (it's all too easy to concentrate on getting a scientifically accurate image and lose sight of pictorial possibilities) and perhaps tempt other photographers to look more closely at insects and other invertebrates.

Each of the three sections – 'Spring', 'Summer' and 'Autumn' is illustrated with stunning images, often utilising limited depth of field (a Great Green Bush Cricket *Tettigonia viridissima* on a Corn Poppy flower) or unusual wide-angle viewpoints (a female Conehead Mantis *Empusa pinnata* on Ragwort flowers). Some, such as an image of a Wasp Spider (*Argiope bruennichi*) which has just moulted, and a pair of Praying Mantis (*Mantis religiosa*) with the by now headless male still copulating with the female, are more conventional but still outstanding. Each page spread is complemented with Fabre's text.

Perhaps my only criticism of the book is that, although I'm fairly sure that I can guess how most of the photographs were taken, there is no technical information. This would have been very helpful, even as a short appendix.

Once I had picked the book up, I found it hard to put it down – partly because childhood memories came flooding back! This is a book which I can strongly recommend to photographers and naturalists (budding or experienced!). We should be grateful to Teyssier both for his images and for reminding us of the work of the great French naturalist, Jean-Henri Fabre.

John Bebbington FRPS

Review

by John Fairclough

Having been a member of the Nature Group for some time now, I thought my fellow members would be interested in my thoughts about a new style outdoor photographers' suit which I was recently asked to review; a camouflage suit designed by photographers for photographers, especially those with 'Natural History, Wildlife and Outdoor' interests.

Following an initial inspection my reaction was that the suit would offer effective protection from the elements of the natural world - it was well made of hard-wearing material and contained many new features/ideas which we have long been waiting for.

At present the suit package contains 4 pieces: Jacket, Fleece, Trousers and a Waistcoat/Vest. All are manufactured from 100% polyester micro-suede material, heavily treated with Dupont Teflon. There are a number of reinforced areas, particularly the knees and elbows. The end result being a well-made camouflage suit finished in a dark green material which will repel dirt, water and unwanted stains.

I am guessing that a great many of the group's members venture out in all weathers. One such outing being that of the annual visit to Donna Nook, where the wind and chill factors can be exceedingly bitter. As I personally haven't been to Donna Nook for a couple of years now, I now intend to go this year and to wear the suit. I am confident it will keep me as warm as toast, and I will be able to achieve this without looking like an SAS person out on manoeuvres!!

I can almost hear you saying, 'What about in warmer weather?' No worries. The suit is totally breathable and each piece can be worn separately. The photographer's vest/waistcoat is particularly useful for those warmer days.

The trousers feature two side pockets, two rear pockets and two front thigh pockets, all with press-studs; reinforced kneepads and adjustable straps at ankle level; Velcro waistband, adjustable waist straps and belt loops. Oh yes, I almost forgot, at the top of each leg and on the outside there is an 8inch zip with a fine mesh type material inside, these act as air vents for those hot and sweaty days.

The jacket features the majority of new and improved features. Like the rest of the suit, it is substantial and is an excellent addition to anyone's kit. One of the most important features is that the two lower/front pockets are large enough to hold a DSLR or medium format camera. Each of these pockets have a heavy duty zip around the two sides and bottom concealing two strong gussets - when unzipped the pockets expand to accommodate a pro DSLR and lens into each of these pockets. There are two additional large pockets, four breast pockets, inside pockets, and small pockets for SD cards on each sleeve. Fitted into each side seam at the bottom of the jacket is a 9.5 inch zip which provides easy access to your trouser pockets, acts as an air vent, and provides additional manoeuvrability of the jacket when stretching into those very awkward positions. Talking of vents there are also large vents under each armpit.

Going abroad? Having that nagging worry about how you are going to get your gear through check-in? Well the answer is the vest/waistcoat. It is very similar in its design and features to those of the jacket, but is considerably lighter and of course sleeveless. In the not too distant future a MKII version of the vest/waistcoat may be available separately featuring detachable sleeves, detachable but secure Flash/SD card wallet, plus many others.

The fleece is made from an excellent quality material with a very high quality zip and two side pockets. An excellent piece of clothing whether used individually or in conjunction with the jacket.

In addition to the four main pieces of clothing there are also three extras included which I have not yet mentioned. There are three hoods, each of which attach to the jacket or vest/waistcoat with the aid of press-studs. Firstly is a traditionally shaped hood with a largish peak and pull cords on the front. Secondly is a storm hood, which covers the front of the face giving protection from heavy storms. Last, but by no means least, and especially for those of you who usually return from a days shoot bitten to death is an anti-midge/anti mosquito hood.

A fully detailed specification plus reviews from professional photographers and photographs of the suit, please visit www.stealth-gear.com



Monkey Orchid by Mark Monckton ARPS



Common Spotted Orchid by Mark Monckton ARPS



King Cormorant by Ron Evans ARPS

**Additional Images from
Thomas Hanahoe's
successful Fellowship Panel.**



Top: Barn Owl hunting



*Centre: Great Spotted
Woodpecker feeding a
juvenile.*

Bottom: Kingfisher with fish.

