

A very warm welcome to our December Newsletter!

Looking back, I very much hope that you enjoyed reading the Autumn issue of *The Iris*, produced by our new team of Bruce Kendrick and Brian Boyes. As I said in my e-mail to Members in mid-October, the ever increasing cost of postage has forced us to reduce the number of copies of *The Iris* sent out each year from three to two. We plan to produce this Newsletter, with all the latest Group News, in June and December, mid-way between the issues of *The Iris*.

Fiftieth Anniversary Year:

The inaugural meeting of the Nature Group was held on the 29th January 1976 (some of you may have been there – if so we would love to hear from you!). Next year, 2026, will be our Fiftieth Anniversary so we have a Working Party putting together a special edition of *The Iris*, plus other events, to make our Anniversary a real celebration. Watch this space for further information.

Field Meetings, Workshops and Residential Weekends:

Ann Miles continues to run an excellent programme of UK Field Meetings, but is still struggling to cover as much of the country as she would like. Please contact Ann if you are prepared to organise a Field Meeting in your local area.

As I wrote in the last issue of *The Iris*, I am very keen to build up a programme of workshops to help Members develop their nature photography skills. Again, please contact either Ann or myself if you have ideas for topics or possible venues.

Residential Weekend 2026

Juniper Hall Field Studies Centre near Box Hill in Surrey has been booked for the weekend of Friday 29th May to Monday 1st June 2026 as the venue for next year's Residential Weekend. I am very pleased to report that Julia Andrew LRPS, who ran a very successful Weekend at Juniper Hall in 2018, has bravely agreed to return and run the 2026 Weekend. For further details see the advertisement in this Newsletter and to book your place on what promises to be an excellent weekend, go to Forthcoming Events on the Nature Group website: <https://www.rpsnature.org.uk/>

Zoom Talks:

Ann Miles organises Saturday afternoon Zoom talks during the winter months. These talks are given by Nature Photographers for Nature Photographers. Ann is always keen to hear about good quality speakers, so if you have heard a good talk, maybe at your Camera Club, please send details to Ann.

Group Membership:

Our membership continues to hover tantalisingly close, but just under the 1000 mark. As of the 4th December 2025, the Group had 989 Members.

Website:

The Nature Group website remains an excellent place for us to advertise Forthcoming Events, provide Group News, run the Monthly Competition, host Galleries of Members' images and to show the accepted images from our Annual Exhibition. The RPS Distinction process will not change in the immediate future so Greg Lovett is restarting the 'Towards Associate' Critique Group. If you wish to be involved, go to the Group website for further information (link above).

RPS Developments and Update on Distinctions:

Following its move to new offices, there have been a number of staff changes at RPS HQ and it will take time for the new staff to settle in. The RPS recognises that its website plus other aspects of its operation need a major overhaul, but these will take time.

As reported previously, following on from last year's changes to LRPS, the RPS has produced documents detailing proposed changes to both the requirements for ARPS and FRPS and the method by which these Distinctions are assessed.

It is fair to say that these proposals were not well received by the current Assessors, the Regional Organisers and Special Interest Group Chairs. A Distinctions Working Party has been set up and Victoria Humphries, RPS CEO, will be writing to all Members before the end of the year detailing the timescale for developing and implementing changes to the Distinctions system. It is unlikely that any changes to the system will be implemented before the start of 2027 so if you are working towards a Distinction at present, you should still have time to complete it under the present system.

ARPS Advisory Day

Ann Miles is organising a Natural History ARPS Advisory Day on Saturday 7th February 2026. For information on how to book either for advice or to observe go to Forthcoming Events on the Nature Group website (link above).

Congratulations

Congratulations to the following Group Members who achieved Associate Distinctions in Natural History Photography in November 2025:

Brian Carlick, Harvey Grenville, Janette Hill, Mallory Mercer, Louise Moon, Stephen Moon, Carolyn Moore and Leena Roy.

Very many congratulations to Robert Reynolds FRPS who was awarded his Fellowship in November 2025.

We very much hope to feature some if not all of these successful Panels in future issues of *The Iris*.

Last but not least, you will find the Entry Form, Conditions and information for entering the 2026 Nature Group Annual Exhibition. Please support the Exhibition with your printed and digital images. The entry system opens on 2nd January and closes on 22nd February. We look forward to seeing your entry.

Finally, I hope you have a Great Festive Season and continue to enjoy your Nature Photography.



Duncan Locke ARPS
Nature Group Chair

Nature Group Committee:

Officers

Group Chair: Duncan Locke ARPS

E-mail: nature@rps.org

Group Secretary: Greg Lovett ARPS

E-mail: naturesecretary@rps.org

Group Finance Officer: Peter Ward

E-mail: naturetreasurer@rps.org

Group Engagements & Events Officer: Ann Miles FRPS

E-mail: natureprog@rps.org

Group Communications Officer: Ian Wilson ARPS

E-mail: naturecomms@rps.org

Committee

Membership Secretary: Christine Holt ARPS

naturemembership@rps.org

Exhibition Secretary: Ralph Snook ARPS

E-mail: rpsngexsec@btinternet.com

Content Editor of The Iris: Bruce Kendrick ARPS

E-mail: natureeditor@rps.org

Production Editor of The Iris: Brian Boyes LRPS

bjbimages@outlook.com

Newsletter Production: Dawn Osborn FRPS

dawn4rpsng@btinternet.com

Ann Healey FRPS

ann.healey@hotmail.com

André Neves ARPS

a.neves@me.com

Immediate Past Chair: David O'Neill ARPS

E-mail: david.oneill_nh@outlook.com

Publication information

Nature Group eNewsletter is published by the RPS Nature Group twice a year.

A Date For Your Diaries

RPS Nature Group Spring Meeting Annual General Meeting 2026 and Annual Exhibition Opening

Saturday 11th April 2026 we will be holding the Nature Group Spring Meeting

The meeting will incorporate our 50th Annual General Meeting. the opening of the Annual Exhibition and, as in previous years, the venue will be Smethwick Photographic Society.

Further details will be provided in due course. Admission will be free so we hope that as many members as possible will be able to join us and support what should prove to be an excellent day with something to interest and inspire all Nature Photographers.

There will be many great images to view, plus plenty of opportunity to meet old friends and discuss Nature Photography.

Nature Group Summer Residential Weekend 2026

Juniper Hall Field Studies Centre near Box Hill in Surrey

Friday 29th May to Monday 1st June 2026



Located in the North Downs at the edge of Box Hill, Juniper Hall is located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, rich in wildlife with rivers, deciduous woodlands and grasslands all to be found on the doorstep.

The weekend starts with an evening meal on Friday evening and ends after breakfast on Monday.

Packed lunches are included for Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Each evening a programme of evening talks is planned, plus the opportunity to look at Members' images from the day's activities.

Fifteen places are available all based on single room occupancy.

The rooms are located on two floors and although most rooms are not en-suite there are excellent shower and toilet facilities on each floor.

If you wish to share a room or require a disabled access room, please check with the organisers before booking.

The final cost is £350 for single occupancy. A deposit of £150 secures a place.

Bookings will initially only be open to Nature Group Members.

Final payments will be required by Saturday 28th February 2026.

After this date, deposits and final payments cannot be refunded, but can be transferred to another photographer.

In the event of the Weekend being cancelled by Juniper Hall a full refund will be provided.

Most Surrey Nature Reserves provide excellent sites to observe and photograph bird, insect and plant life. A full programme of visits will be planned to sites such as:

Betchworth Quarry, Newdigate Brickworks, Riverside Nature Reserve, Guildford and Thursley Common.

In addition, on at least two nights, Moth Traps will be set up in the grounds of Juniper Hall.

Members will also have the opportunity to explore Box Hill and the excellent chalk grassland and woodlands surrounding the Centre in morning and evening light.

For further information on the photographic opportunities and the Programme for the weekend please contact: Julia Andrew LRPS E-mail: andrew.julia@gmail.com

For further information on Bookings and Payments please contact:
Duncan Locke ARPS E-mail: nature@rps.org

News from the Events Team

The autumn events as usual concentrated on Fungi photography

Fungi Workshop at Brandon Country Park and Santon Downham 18/19th October 2025

We met at Brandon CP at 10am on Saturday and spent the morning in the woods close to the Visitor Centre, photographing False Death Caps, Sulphur Tuft and various species of *Mycena*. We took a short circuit around which included a Beech tree with several large boughs which had dropped and were covered in the delicate Porcelain Fungi. Various lighting aids were used to shine light through the caps.

The main ride leading back to the visitor centre and the woods on either side were covered in Fly Agarics and many other large impressive caps and crusts. Again we experimented with lighting and techniques to add interest to the bokeh when looking into the light.



Parasol by Mary Venables

Our Sunday trip was to Santon Downham - a very large Forestry Commission planted area. Similar fungi but plenty of new species and new situations to photograph. A portable smoke machine, water spray and crystal ball were all experimented with to add a bit of interest to the backgrounds though, in many cases, a wider angle lens was all that was needed for a very attractive shot.



Fly Agaric by Dave McKay

A total of 15 people attended one or both of the workshops and the weather was dry until after lunch on Sunday when we were all ready to leave.

Visit to RSPB Sandy on 9th November 2025

We met at RSPB Sandy at 10 am and armed with our cameras, macro lens, lights, tripods, etc., set off to track down some interesting specimens.

Our first stop was for the Birds Nest Fungus - an unbelievably complex and very small nest like structure attached to a plant stem and with a variable number of eggs.

There were very large numbers of Fly Agarics found in various stages of existence. These were very picturesque with the autumn tones of the bracken and Silver Birch leaves. Andrew demonstrated his home-built Focus-stacking equipment included the screw mechanism to advance the focus point of the camera and the electronics box to control the timing and number of shots

We continued onto the heath where we met members of The Mycological Society who were recording all the species they found. They showed us some rarities such as the nail fungus that grows only on the dung of the Dartmoor ponies that graze the area.

We returned to the Visitor Centre for lunch and in the afternoon most of us went down into the quarry to hunt for more specimens and also Slime Moulds as this area is generally damper.



Birds Nest by Julia Andrew



Slime Mould and Leaf Bug by Mike Harris

Julia found a Slime mould - a *Physarum* species. These are very small indeed - not much bigger than a pin head - a good photographic challenge.

News from the Events Team - continued

A final stop was made at the logs along the roadside. As it was nearly dark by then we used various lighting systems to add light to the caps etc. Ultraviolet torches gave a very spooky feel to the images - fungi will reflect UV light as bright green or purple depending on the species.

In total 12 people attended the day and the weather stayed dry.



Mycaena under UV by Jeremy Schindler



Bonnets by Alison Jenkins

© Alison Jenkins

Future Events

Saturday 10 January 2026 at 19.00 Zoom Talk:
From Scales to Feathers: Photography in the Jungle
by Marvin Biedermann

Saturday 7 February 2026 at 09:30 (Zoom)
Advisory Day for Associate Distinction Level Advice
(Chaired by Mick Durham FRPS)

Saturday 21 February 2026 at 09:30
Burwell Fen and Wicken Fen NT Reserve.

Sunday 22 February 2026 at 09:00
Welney Trust PE14 9TN.

We would love to run more events in more parts of the UK so if you have a favourite reserve that you know well, do offer to share it with others – you do not need to be an expert photographer or naturalist! Contact: natureprog@RPS.org.uk

For more Galleries and Events to attend go to:
[Nature \(rps.org\)](https://www.rps.org)



Member Louise by Liz Cutting ARPS



Camouflage by John McCarthy

John McCarthy

© jolmccarthy

KENYA WILDLIFE PHOTO SAFARIS 2026 & 2027



- Small Groups - max 4 guests per vehicle
- Suitable for photographers of all levels
- Private Conservancies with fewer vehicles
- More exclusive wildlife encounters

Limited Spaces Available:

February & October 2026 & February 2027

CONTACT: WWW.ALISONMEESPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

2026 Members Exhibition of Prints and Digital Images

Exhibition Selectors:

Duncan Lock ARPS, John Chamberlin FRPS and Pete McCluskey FRPS

Exhibition Calendar:

Entry system will open	2nd January 2026
Closing date for entries	22nd February 2026
Selection Day	1st March 2026
Report cards	by 9 th March 2026
Exhibition Opening	11th April 2026

Entry should be made via the online entry system. All Nature Group members will be sent an invitation email that will contain a link to the entry system. Any member that cannot use the online entry system can send a completed entry form along with their images via email to rpsngexsec@btinternet.com.

The Members Exhibition page of the Nature Group section of the RPS Website will contain a link to the entry system, and a copy of the entry form can also be downloaded from there.

Gold Medals will be awarded to the best print and best digital image of the exhibition. In each category a Bronze Medal, plus Selector, and Highly Commended certificates will be awarded. The **'Tony Wharton'** award will be presented to the most successful entrant in the exhibition.

The acceptance list, plus a selection of award-winning images, will be published in the Autumn 2026 issue of 'The Iris'. All exhibition entries and results will be shown on the Nature Group website: <https://www.rpsnature.org.uk/>

Slide shows of all accepted images will be available on request from the Exhibition Secretary.

Digital Entries

The maximum dimensions for digital files are 1600 horizontally and 1200 vertically.

Print Entries - Important

Please read the information on print submissions before you send your entry

This year we are only accepting unmounted prints on A3 paper. Prints will not be returned.

All accepted prints will be mounted and displayed at the Exhibition Opening. They will also be shown at Edinburgh PS later in the year.

Further details of the entry conditions can be viewed in the online entry system, the Nature Group area of the RPS website, and on the manual entry form.

RPS Nature Group Members Exhibition 2026

ENTRY FORM (Manual Entry Only) 1 of 2

ENTRANT DETAILS (Please complete legibly in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name: Honours:

Address:

.....

.....

Post Code:

Tel No:

Email:

I accept the Conditions of Entry and confirm I am a member of the RPS Nature Group

Signed:

The fee for entering the exhibition is £10

Please note, prints must be unmounted on A3 paper and will not be returned.

Payment to be made via the NG Exhibition Event on the RPS website. A link to the payment event will be provided to all members at the time the entry opens.

Please do not send cheques with your entry.

Please send your print entry to:

RPS Nature Group Exhibition

c/o Ralph Snook ARPS

8 Knole Close

Almondsbury

Bristol

BS32 4EJ

Email: rpsngexsec@btinternet.com

RPS Nature Group Members Exhibition 2026
ENTRY FORM (Manual Entry Only)
IMAGE ENTRY DETAILS (Please complete legibly in Block Capitals)

Prints – Category A

All creatures – birds, mammals, reptiles, marine life, insects, etc.

Cat Id	Image Title
PA1	
PA2	
PA3	
PA4	

Prints – Category B

All plant life (including flora, fungi, lichens) and all other subjects including geological and microscopy, plus patterns, (design and form found in nature).

Cat Id	Image Title
PB1	
PB2	
PB3	
PB4	

Digital Images – Category A

All creatures – birds, mammals, reptiles, marine life, insects, etc.

Cat Id	Image Title
DA1	
DA2	
DA3	
DA4	

Digital Images – Category B

All plant life (including flora, fungi, lichens) and all other subjects including geological and microscopy, plus patterns, (design and form found in nature).

Cat Id	Image Title
DB1	
DB2	
DB3	
DB4	

RPS Nature Group Members Exhibition 2026

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Entry is restricted to members of the Nature Group of the Royal Photographic Society.

General Conditions

- All entries must be titled with the correct English name. Only use the scientific name where there is no English name. **Trivial and/or cute titles are not acceptable and will result in disqualification.**
- All images must convey the truth of what the author saw at the time of taking. **Any manipulation must be confined to exposure adjustments and the removal of minor blemishes or distractions.** The final image must have been produced from a single negative, transparency or digital recording and must not be a combination of images. The only exception is focus stacking. **Nothing may be added to the original image by any means.**
- Images of captive subjects or those captured using live bait are not permitted.
- Work accepted in previous Nature Group Exhibitions is not eligible regardless of which section it was entered into, ie prints cannot have been accepted as slides/digital images, and vice versa. **This also applies to near duplicates of previous acceptances.**
- Entering this Exhibition assumes that entrants agree to their entries being used to promote the Nature Group by inclusion in for example, the Exhibition 'slide shows', the 'Iris', the RPS Journal, and the Nature Group's Website. Copyright of all images remains with the author.
- Acceptance of entries will be notified by a report card which will be emailed to all entrants.
- Whilst every care will be taken of all entries submitted, the Nature Group cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage, however caused.
- Submission of work implies acceptance of the above conditions.
- **Failure to comply with the Conditions of Entry will result in your entry being rejected.**

PRINT Conditions

- Prints must be submitted unmounted on A3 paper. The image may be any size within the paper. DO NOT trim the paper to match the image but leave the paper as A3.
- The back of each print must bear the title and name of the author. The title should correspond to the title entered in the online system or the manual entry form. The author's name must not appear on the front. Please include a copy of your entry confirmation or entry form with the prints.
- If NOT entering via the on-line entry system then you must send digital copies of your prints to the exhibition secretary. See the notes below relating to this.
- Prints will NOT be returned

Production of DIGITAL files.

- Maximum size is 1600 pixels horizontally x 1200 pixels vertically. Files to be in **jpg** format, in the **sRGB** colour space, and **300dpi**. **Please do not add a background fill as the projection software will do this automatically.**
- For manual entries digital files can be sent by email/memory Stick or by electronic means using Wettransfer or Dropbox. File naming protocol: - Category and number corresponding to the details on the entry form, space, and Title. (e.g. **PA1 Common Seal DB1 Oxeye Daisies**). Please use both upper and lower case, as in these examples. **Please do not use this method of entry unless you cannot use the online entry system.**