



Chairman's Report for AGM 2021

Thomas Hanahoe FRPS

My term of office as Chairman of the Nature Group Committee is now complete. It is a sign of the times that during that two year period the Committee has become expert in on-line meetings. Previous practice was for the Committee, three times each year to gather round a table at Smethwick Photographic Society, but in 2020, as a result of the Covid 19 viral pandemic lockdown of society, the Committee held eight virtual meetings and also provided numerous other computer-based activities for Members. In the process we learned a lot and it is likely that the Committee will continue with on-line meetings, which have removed the need for long journeys and the associated travel expenses, and may enable Members from distant parts of the United Kingdom to join the Committee.

Despite the lockdown the Group continues to flourish with 913 members In January 2021 compared with 905 in January 2020 (Iris Magazine 139 Spring 2021 p37).

National lockdown impaired our programme of Field Meetings. During 2020, 17 Field Meetings were planned with more in the pipeline, but regrettably in May and June, eight had to be cancelled because of Covid-19 restrictions. I am pleased that Field Meetings are now back on track, albeit limited to individual groups of five participants for each leader, and ten trips are scheduled to be held between April and July 2021. These numbers are most impressive compared to those of yore. I extend my congratulations to all those concerned.

The Chairman's Day meeting at the end of October was also on-line with over 90 people taking part in the event, including Dr Alan Hodgson, the President of the Royal Photographic Society. I was honoured to be joined on the virtual stage by Dr Daniel Hayhow, Environmental Scientist at Earthwatch Europe, who presented a lecture on 'The State of Nature 2019' and by Dr Mike Daniels, Head of Land Management at the John Muir Trust, who spoke on 'Rewilding in Britain'. Following the Chairman's Day, the virtual Annual General Meeting of the Nature Group agreed the revised Regulations of the Nature Group, which were updated to reflect changes in practice and also agreed that the Annual Exhibition will in future include a new separate section to accommodate Nature Photographers aged 18 years or younger.

The Committee is comprised of volunteers who give their time and expertise freely, investing substantial amounts of time on behalf of the Nature Group and I thank each of them for their support during my term of office.

Thomas Hanahoe FRPS

6th April 2021