



THE IRIS

Issue No. 82 Spring 2002

MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS



RPS 

THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



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CONTENTS

Editorial	5
Members' Photographs	5
Notice of 26th Annual General Meeting & Spring Meeting	6
"From the Chair" by Dawn Osborn ARPS	7
"Namibia - 2001" by Margaret Johnson LRPS	8
"The Oleander Hawk Moth" by Michael Shirley ARPS	11
Field and other Meetings in 2002	13
Omnium Gatherum	16
"What is a Nature Photographer" by Heather Angel Hon. FRPS	21
Reports of Meetings in 2001	24
The Iris 2001 on CD-ROM	25
"The Svalbard Experience" by Michael Gore CVO, CBE, FRPS	26
A Natural History Quiz	30
An Interactive CD Guide to obtaining your ARPS in Nature Photography	30
"Never Mind the AGM - Come for the Photography"	31
Members' Lectures	32
Advertisements	33

Front Cover Photo by Michael Gore FRPS - "Old Male Walrus, Svalbard".

Photo page 2 by John Hill ARPS - "Great Blue Heron" (*Ardea herodias*).

Back Cover Photo by John Hill ARPS - "Great Blue Heron at Lift off".

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EDITORIAL

Although you will not be reading this until early March it still seems appropriate, as I am typing it in January, to wish all a happy and enjoyable New Year. May it be successful in whichever virtuous way you choose.

Is this a record? A foolish question because as soon as you ask it you know someone, somewhere, will contend that it is not. My record (?) is seeing, in late November, a group of eleven Red Admiral butterflies sunning themselves low down on an oak* in the Wyre Forest. Apart from the sunshine they appeared to be attracted to a sap-like excretion on the bark although none were feeding on it. A further seven were counted sunning on the earth around the tree base. Whilst sunny the day was 'fresh'. This may not be so unusual in the warmer south of England but I cannot recall seeing butterflies flying that late in the year.

It would be interesting to hear from other members of instances they feel are unusual occurrences which may, or may not, be an indication of changing weather patterns. I look forward to being able to print a good selection under "Members' Letters" in the Summer Issue.

New Material:- It is very pleasing to see in this issue work from a new contributor, Margaret Johnson LRPS. Also from Michael Gore FRPS (a previous contributor) an article on an area which has not previously appeared, to my knowledge, in The Iris.

Following my appeal at the 25th Anniversary Convention last August for more material for our magazine I received several 'half' promises. Add to those the one or two offers I'd received during the year and it seemed that you would all be reading some interesting pieces on a variety of subject matter in future issues. However it appears that there must have been an epidemic of particularly virulent 'writers block' as none have materialised yet. I hope it is not too contagious; if it is the next issue could be down to twelve pages! I seem to remember a possible piece about buzzards; another member, who stayed at a wildlife resort on Scotland offered a piece and there were various others ...

Material can be on any aspect of natural history and needn't be accompanied by transparencies. In fact I'm constantly looking for pieces without photographs for picture space is limited but there are twice as many text pages ☘

[*Have you read "*The Natural History of The Oak Tree*" ISBN 0-7513-0048-9 published in 1993 by Dorling Kindersley in conjunction with the National Trust? Whilst not comprehensive it covers all aspects of natural history in and around an oak tree and is extremely interesting, especially the two sections on galls.]

MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHS

Occasionally I like to feature a small portfolio of individual members work without any related text. This issue contains pictures from two members.

Sandy Cleland FRPS. Sandy is well known as both a successful exhibitor and popular judge. Currently a member of the Nature Distinctions Panel his work covers a wide spectrum of subject matter

John Hill ARPS. By comparison John has turned to nature photography in the last few years. Showing a very successful flair for bird photography he gained his Associateship with a set of transparencies purely of birds.

THE 26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SPRING MEETING

The Annual General Meeting 2002 of the RPS Nature Group
will be held at Smethwick Photographic Society,
The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands

SATURDAY 27TH APRIL 2002

TIMETABLE

10.30 am. Assemble for 11.00 am. start.

11.00 am. An audio-visual presentation by Colin Smith FRPS who is the new Chairman of the A & F Nature Distinctions Panel.

12.30 p.m. Break for lunch. No formal arrangements have been made, there are local hostelries. The clubhouse has a dining area if you wish to bring sandwiches.

2.00 p.m. Annual General Meeting

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 25th AGM 2001, printed in issue 80 of "The Iris".
3. Matters arising.
4. Chairman's report.
5. Treasurer's report.
6. Secretary's report.
7. In order to facilitate a postal ballot for Officers and Committee Members so those members unable to attend the AGM may register a vote, the following change to the Regulations will be necessary. Paragraph 6.3 shall be amended to read as follows:- "6.3 Nomination of candidates etc., by the Secretary at least four months (normally 31st December) prior to a General Meeting etc.,
8. Any other business.
9. Date and venue of the 27th AGM 2003

OPENING OF THE 2002 EXHIBITION

2.45 p.m. Presentation of the accepted slides. Exhibition Prints will be on display.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS Group Hon. Secretary

FOR DIRECTIONS TO VENUE AND MAP PLEASE LOOK ON PAGE 31

FROM THE CHAIR

DAWN OSBORN ARPS

Welcome to 2002 - a new and, hopefully, better year for us all than 2001. So far this winter, we have escaped the gales and floods that devastated many parts of the country early last winter. Added to this, we are now officially free of the foot and

mouth epidemic that effectively closed off vast swathes of the British countryside for a substantial part of last year.

By the time you receive this issue of *The Iris*, those of you with an interest in flora will already have ventured out to photograph Winter Aconite and Snowdrops. In a few more weeks there will be Lesser Celandine, Pasque Flower and Snake's-head Fritillary, followed hard on their heels by Cowslips, Bluebells and Early Purple Orchids. If the mild weather continues, we may see the early departure of those birds that over-winter along our coast-line, estuaries and wetlands. I look forward to hearing the chirring sound of the Greenfinch, announcing that spring, and the arrival of early spring migrants such as the Sand Martin, is imminent.

Soon too, the first of the 2002 crop of field meetings, organised for your enjoyment by fellow members who have generously given of their time to support the Nature Group. On offer this year are some favourite venues like Oxwich Bay, and some new venues including Bedford Lakes on 23rd June, Ainsdale Nature Reserve on 6th July.

While I wish to thank all of those members who have volunteered to host a field meeting in their region, I must also express my disappointment that, with over 700 members, the percentage who offer their services each year is less than 2%. Our Editor and Secretary are often asked 'why is nothing organised in my region?' The simple answer is that no one in your area volunteered. Every year we send out a request for volunteers to host a meeting at a venue, date and time of their choosing, and yet, as I have already stated, the response is most disappointing. If, when looking at the list of meetings for 2002, you find that there is nothing on offer in your region, please consider hosting one. It is not too late for us to publish dates in *The Photographic Journal* and our Notice Board on the Web. Later meetings can still be notified in our summer issue of *The Iris*. Finally, if there is a meeting organised in your region, please do support it. There is nothing worse for a volunteer field meeting leader, than to be waiting anxiously for fellow members who do not materialise. Please make an effort to support those members who have so unselfishly offered to support the Nature Group.

Plans are underway with organisation of a Chairman's Day. The date for your diaries is Saturday, 3rd August 2002. The venue, located in the historic Cathedral City of Lichfield in Staffordshire, is easy to commute to, being near to the A38/A5/M42/M6, and has ample private parking facilities. A full day's programme of events is being organised for your enjoyment and will be published in the next issue of *The Iris*, but interested members can contact me and details can be sent out as soon as arrangements are finalised. There isn't too much happening at the beginning of August, so please join me. I look forward to hearing from you.

This is also the time of year when many of you will be making or finalising plans for travel to far away destinations in your quest for interesting natural history subjects. Hopefully, increased security at airports will have minimised the possibility of acts of terrorism without causing too much inconvenience for nature photographers who do not wish to be separated from their expensive and often heavy kit. I am told that some airlines are now insisting that you remove your shoes prior to boarding! Whatever, please remember that these security restrictions are for the safety and protection of all travellers, and if you are in any

doubt about current restrictions regarding security/hand luggage etc. you are advised to check with your airline before travelling.

That is all from me – I look forward to seeing many of you at the combined Spring Meeting, AGM and Annual Exhibition Opening, as well as during the Spring and Summer at our Field Meetings ❀

“NAMIBIA - 2001”

BY MARGARET JOHNSON LRPS

“Namibia 2001” - stark and to the point, but it doesn’t convey the planning, anticipation, excitement and pure delight of the trip.

Three of us (‘the three ladies’ as we were known in Namibia) enjoy taking independent, self-drive holidays. Namibia had been a long time in the planning as we wanted to stay *in* Etosha National Park at one point and it took eighteen months to get bookings there. Fortunately we chose Nomad African Travel to do our booking and on the 30th July we set out on our much-awaited trip.

Namibia was all we expected, and more. A couple of days were spent in the capital, Windhoek, a bustling, pleasant city. before picking up a Toyota 4x4 from ASCO Car Hire. They were excellent, spending a couple of hours with us (as they do with all their customers) making sure that we knew the ‘van’ inside out before we set off.

The next three weeks were a feast of photography, not all successful as there were places we couldn’t be at dawn or dusk to get the best light. However everything was tackled, from landscape through to close-up work.

Namibia is an incredible country with a relatively small population. (The population of London is bigger than the whole of Namibia). We were able to stop in many places on the roadside and ‘hear the silence’. Our route took in many of the ‘sights’ of the country, the dunes at Sossusvlei, the *Welwitschia* drive at Swakopmund, Cape Cross Seal Colony, Etosha National Park, the Waterberg Plateau, Okonjima (the Africat Foundation) and Daan Viljoen Game Park.

One of the greatest thrills was finding the *Welwitschia Mirabilis* plant which only grows in one part of the Namib Desert. A 130 km round trip took us on some of the worst roads we encountered to find this remarkable plant which can live for over 1,500 years and only has two leaves. It appears to have more as the desert winds tear them to shreds. It survives on the moisture from the fogs that come off the Skeleton Coast. The moisture trickles down the leaves to the roots just below the surface.

The mammals and birds afforded many photo opportunities. In Etosha we sat for many hours at the water holes watching the social interaction of the animals and hoping the light would be right! The enduring memory of Cape Cross, apart from the thousands of Cape Fur Seals, was the smell!! It hit you as you stepped out of the car and remained with you for hours afterwards!

Being able to come fairly close to Lion, Cheetah, Leopard and Caracal at Okonjima was a great privilege and to learn at first hand of the conservation work that was going on with the local farmers. The memories and photographs will be with us for years to come and Namibia has ‘burnt itself into our hearts’! We shall, I am sure, be returning to this remarkable country ❀



Photo by Margaret Johnson LRPS - “*Welwitschia mirabilis*”

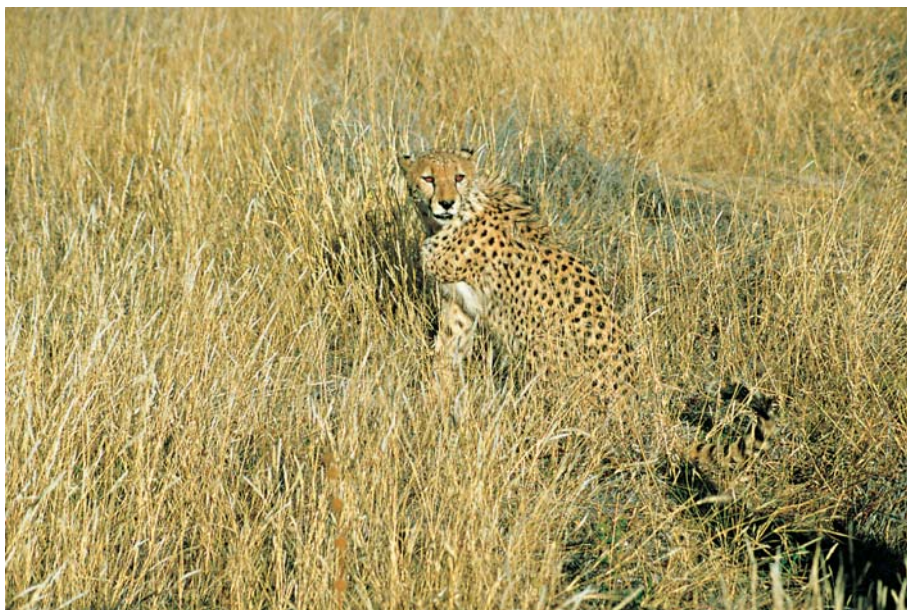


Photo by Margaret Johnson LRPS - “Cheetah - Okonjima”



“THE OLEANDER HAWK MOTH”

BY MICHAEL SHIRLEY ARPS

Most of the Hawk-moths from around the world are of extreme beauty. The elegance of the delta shape of their wings, indicative of their strength and speed in flight, and often the subtlety of their colour pattern are enough to make them distinctive at any time. They are among moths as the Orchids are in plants.

In America they are known as Sphinx Moths from the Order *Sphingidae* to which they belong, but in Europe they go by the name of Hawk-moths, a name derived obviously from their habit of strong purposeful flight and their ability, pronounced in some species, of being able to hover almost motionless while feeding. Some, such as the Convolvulus Hawk, have incredibly long tongues designed specifically for delving deeply into tubular flowers. In others, such as the Poplar Hawk, the tongue has atrophied to a useless little twist. Of all the Hawk-moths the Oleander Hawk must surely be the most beautiful. Large, and decked all over in marbled shades of green with hints of pink and cream it cannot escape wonder and appreciation.

This moth is a very rare natural visitor to Britain favouring, as it does, more tropical climes, but when conditions are favourable (perhaps in concert with a population explosion in N.Africa or the South of France) we are favoured with the occasional visit. Nowadays of course they may be purchased from specialised Companies, reared on Periwinkle, and then the mature moths finally released into the summer garden. There late broods may materialise as a result although it is doubtful whether they could overwinter at any stage. It is possible that some moths could find their way down to the South of France and its supply of Oleander bushes. The Oleander, as the name of the moth indicates, being the principal food plant.

The moth has an extensive range in the Old World, as far East as India and perhaps beyond, and South into Africa; anywhere in fact where conditions are suitable for the growth of its food plant. My first encounter with this lovely insect was in Lake Province, Tanganyika, as it then was. It was settled upon the fly-screen of the front door of my bungalow. I then found larvae on Oleanders growing in people's gardens, where because of their size when fully grown, they scared the daylights out of the members of the household, especially those recently arrived from Britain. The Africans, who generally ascribed the nature of something living by the way that it looked, were terrified of all Hawk-moth larvae merely because of the anterior horn with which most of them are adorned. A certain indicator in their minds of the work of SHITANI, the Devil himself. Unlike Westerners who tend to destroy that which they do not understand and consider harmful, the Africans adopt the more environmentally friendly, (albeit unintentional) habit of keeping a safe distance, lest the Devil have cause to visit upon them some vile affliction.

Upon moving to Kuwait first, and later to S.Iran, where in both locations the Oleander Hawk was more common, I had opportunity to study them more closely and every year bred them from the egg to maturity. It was normally in November that the first eggs could be found on the terminal shoots of the Oleanders and March/April when all activity ceased, as temperatures began to soar.

Photo opposite by John Hill ARPS - “Great Egret displaying (*Casmerodius albus*)”

Upon hatching the young larvae would feed upon the surface tissues of the young leaves, fenestrating them. Very pale green and with a disproportionately long shiny black anterior horn they would rest during the day along the edge of the midrib of the leaf with the horn depressed so that they blended completely into their immediate environment. At this stage they were at risk from predation from birds and other insects, not having had time to absorb through feeding the toxins of their food plant. With successive moults and rapid growth the ground colour of green darkens and dorsal black spots flanked either side with a white stripe become more prominent. Blue ringed spiracles on the side of each segment and a large blue defensive eye-spot on the second segment behind the green head complete the colour pattern. Also with each successive moult, usually five in all, the horn changes from the original long black moveable spine to a curved carunculated immovable horn.

When fully grown and up to 15cms in length a new colour change occurs. Quite quickly the green disappears to be replaced by a dark slatey-grey. The reason for this is because the now fully grown larvae are ready to descend to the ground and search out a shady relatively cool position into which they can burrow to spin a rough silken mesh around themselves ready for pupation. If still green when on the ground they would be distinctly visible and liable to be attacked by rodents, birds and even parasitic wasps seeking a depository for their eggs. After a short period of about two weeks the moths emerge to renew the cycle. Often upon finding a larva wandering apparently aimlessly around in the searing heat I would attempt to think like a caterpillar and move it to what to me appeared to be just the place it was seeking. It never worked. Thought and instinct it seems, are totally incompatible.!

There were questions for which I found no real answers.

Under ideal conditions the Oleander Hawk Moth may have a succession of broods. This occurs, I know, around the Mediterranean where suitable temperatures might exist from April or earlier and continue until the autumn rains. Presumably the pupae arising from the final brood would over-winter.

What I could not fathom was what occurred in the Middle East where from April until November there is no rain and surface temperatures may well attain 60°C or higher. Granted that the shade offered by a shrub such as an Oleander plus the added insulation of fallen leaves around the base would serve to modify the surface temperature considerably. There is the added matter of the daily air temperatures from 35°C - 40°C and the extreme dryness of the air. My own theory is that the adult insects migrated into those areas where the short cool season limited the number of complete broods, from cooler areas to the north and particularly the west. I have found all stages of the larvae in August in Beirut, Lebanon, and since the prevailing wind at the head of The Persian Gulf is westerly, this could be the case. Even Iraq though very much hotter and drier than the Lebanon could have supported vast numbers of moths due to the availability of water provided by the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

It is doubtful whether, before the discovery of oil, any Oleander bushes existed in Kuwait and W. Saudi Arabia. It needed the influx of oil personnel from Britain and the creation of gardens attached to their houses to account for the introduction of suitable plants and shrubs in sufficient numbers before these areas could become attractive to the species.

Bahrain Island, with its supply of natural spring water from the catchment area of the Zagros Mountains in Iran to the north, remained an oasis in all this surrounding desert but again would depend upon the influx of westerners to provide much in the way of gardens as such, the pragmatic Arab being more likely to take advantage of the water by growing dates.

To the north a natural route for the spread eastward of the species already existed, the Oleander being native to the Mediterranean area, Iran and other countries on that side of the Gulf and Indian Ocean through to India, and, in the case of one of the three species as far east as China.

If the present trend toward hotter summers and mild wetter winters continues perhaps this jewel of a creature, *Daphnis nerii*, the Oleander Hawk Moth, will become a more familiar sight in this part of the world ☘

FIELD MEETINGS IN 2002

Please assume, unless specifically stated otherwise, that it will be an all day meeting. ALWAYS take stout walking shoes and wellingtons, also a packed lunch and drink. Check individual meeting details for any other requirements. New members will appreciate that as meetings are planned months in advance, and given the vagaries of our climate, anticipated subject matter cannot be guaranteed.

It is recommended, in some cases essential, that you contact the leader a few days before the meeting in case the venue is changed.

JUNE

SUNDAY 2ND JUNE - CLATTINGER FARM RESERVE.

Meet:- 10.30 am. Neigh Bridge car park (Grid ref: SU 017 946) sign posted just off the Spine Road West through the Cotswold Water Park near Somerford Keynes. From the A419 linking Swindon to Cirencester join the Spine Road East -B4696- this leads to the west section which starts at Ashton Keynes crossroads where the B4696 turns south.

Cost:- Modest donation to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

Interest:- The reserve is approximately 150 acres of preserved unimproved hay meadows; excellent for orchids (typically Burnt-tip, Bee and Green-winged) and a wide range of meadow / hedgerow flowers and butterflies.

Leader:- John Hankin LRPS Tel:- 01249-720917.

SUNDAY 9TH JUNE - OXWICH NATURE RESERVE, SOUTH GOWER, WEST GLAMORGAN.

Meet:- 10 am. Oxwich car park Grid ref OS 1:50,000 - 502 864.

Cost:- £2.50 Car Park fee.

Interest:- Shore marine life, orchids, maritime flowers, insects etc., Low tide midday pictorial patterns. Bring footwear suitable for paddling and sun cream.

Leader:- Margaret Hodge FRPS Tel:- 01792-207001.

SATURDAY 15TH JUNE - WAKEHURST PLACE AND MILLENNIUM SEED BANK. ARDINGLY, HAYWARDS HEATH, WEST SUSSEX.

Meet:- 10.15 am at Wakehurst car park on B2028 1½ miles NW of Ardingly. Grid ref 187 TQ 339 314.

Cost:- £5 - seniors £3.50 - National Trust members free, but bring your NT card!

Interest:- Insects and flowers; secluded valley; lake; woodlands; informal arboretum, ornamental features.

Joint meeting with South Eastern Region. Day includes tour of Wakehurst Place with 'official guide' to point out special areas of interest for photography. Light lunches from restaurant or bring own lunch.

Leader:- Kath Bull ARPS Tel:- 01892-663751

SUNDAY 23RD JUNE - BEDFORD LAKES COUNTRY PARK (NR. HEATHROW).

Meet:- 10 am in car park off B3003 Clockhouse Lane, opposite Princes Club. Park in overflow car park immediately on left on entering park. Grid ref LRanger 176 076 723

Interest:- 150 acres of former gravel pits. Good for butterflies, moths and dragonflies (Emperor, Black-tailed Skimmer, Red-eyed Damselfly).

Leader:- Chris Wood Tel:- 01932-711434.

SATURDAY 29TH JUNE - WOLFSCOTE DALE, MILLDALE AND TISSINGTON TRAIL.

Meet:- 10 am car park at Alsop-en-le-Dale on A515. Grid ref 119 - 156 548.

Cost:- Car park fee.

Interest:- Early summer wildflowers including Jacob's Ladder and Common Spotted Orchid. This will be a four mile walk in order to see best of area.

Leaders:- Dawn Osborn ARPS Tel:- 01889-881928

and Robert Hawkesworth FRPS Tel:- 0115-928-1050.

JULY

SATURDAY 6TH JULY - AINSDALE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE.

Meet:- 10.30 am. Follow signs to Ainsdale Beach, pay the parking fee at the kiosk. Turn left and drive along the beach for approximately ½ mile to Finger Post on edge of dunes. The Finger Post is capped by 'Yellow & Orange' and points to the "Dune Trail". There is also a sign nearby proclaiming "Ainsdale Sandhills Dune Trail".

Cost:- Car park fee £2.

Interest:- Dune flora, particularly orchids, Marsh and Dune Helleborines also Pyramidal Orchids are possibilities. Bring Wellingtons.

Leaders:- Colin Smith FRPS and Tony Bond FRPS Tel 01942-674773.

OCTOBER

SUNDAY 6TH OCTOBER - WILDERNESS WOOD, HADLOW DOWN, EAST SUSSEX.

Meet:- 10 am in car park of Wilderness Wood on south side of A272, twelve miles from Tunbridge Wells, between Mayfield and Uckfield. Grid ref 188 - TQ 535 241.

Cost:- £2

Interest:- A 250 year old chestnut and conifer wood, now a working wood, on the Sussex Weald.; wide variety of seasonal fungi.

Leader:- Kath Bull ARPS Tel:- 01892-663751 Joint meeting with South Eastern Region.

WEDNESDAY 9TH OCTOBER - BEACON WOOD COUNTRY PARK, BEAN, KENT.

Meet:- 10.30 am in car park at Country Park. Grid ref - Landranger 177 GR 593 716.

Leave M25 at Junction 2 which is about 3 miles south of Dartford Tunnel. Take the A2 eastwards for 1½ miles to the junction signed 'Bean Interchange'. Slip off left keeping to the right hand lane and at the roundabout turn right onto B235 for Bean. About 1 mile from Bean interchange there is a green sign stating 'Country Park Entrance 100 yards'.

Cost:- £1 car park fee.

Interest:- Old clay pits colonised by birch and hundreds of Fly Agaric, many other species of fungi present.

Leader:- Eileen Taylor ARPS Tel:- 020 8393-2120.

SATURDAY 12TH OCTOBER - EBERNOE COMMON NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE, WEST SUSSEX.

Meet:- 10 am in car park next to Ebernoe Church. Grid ref 197 SU 976 278. Take A283 and 3½ miles north of Petworth (1½ miles south of Northchapel) turn east into minor road sign posted Ebernoe. 1½ miles along this road turn right just past telephone and post boxes into church and reserve. Access road signpost 'Ebernoe Church / Schoolhouse'.

Cost:- £1 contribution to reserve funds.

Interest:- Ancient woodland with over six hundred recorded species of fungi.

Leader:- John Fairbank ARPS Tel:- 01273-732589.

SUNDAY 13TH OCTOBER - STOCKGROVE PARK AND KING'S WOOD NEAR MILTON KEYNES.

Meet:- 10 am. Main car park. Grid ref SP 920 293.

Cost:- £1. - *Interest:-* Fungi. (cafe on site).

Leader:- Nick Jarvis ARPS Tel:- 01908-607257.

TUESDAY 15TH OCTOBER - SHERWOOD PINES, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

Meet:- 10 am on car park B6030. Grid ref 120 - 614 644.

Cost:- Car park fee.

Interest:- Fungi and autumn interest.

Leader:- Robert Hawkesworth FRPS Tel:- 0115 928-1050. *It is essential to contact Robert from 8th October onwards in case venue is changed.*

**AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS, THERE ARE FEWER FIELD MEETINGS
ARRANGED THAN LAST YEAR.**

However, it is still not too late for this year! You can still volunteer to lead a meeting!

Dates for late summer / autumn meetings can be published in our Summer Issue which members will receive by 15th July. Dates prior to that can be published on the Nature Group Web Notice Board requesting that members accessing it pass on details to others.

**CHAIRMAN'S DAY
SATURDAY 3RD AUGUST**

RESERVE THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW

FULL DETAILS IN THE SUMMER ISSUE

IF THEY WISH INTERESTED MEMBERS CAN CONTACT DAWN OSBORN ARPS NOW
AND DETAILS CAN BE SENT OUT AS SOON AS ARRANGEMENTS ARE FINALISED.

BOOK NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE !!

**NATURE GROUP FIELD WEEKEND
FRIDAY 31ST MAY TO TUESDAY 4TH JUNE 2002**

PLEASE NOTE THIS TAKES THE PLACE OF THE 'BURTON BRADSTOCK' WEEKEND.
VENUE FOR THE ABOVE EVENT IS JUNIPER HALL FIELD CENTRE DORKING, SURREY, RH5 6DA.

PLEASE CONTACT JOHN BEBBINGTON FRPS AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS
OR TEL:- 0845-458-3507.

FAX:- 0845-458-9219. E-MAIL:- FSC.JUNIPER@UKONLINE.CO.UK

OMNIUM GATHERUM
A Round-up of Events
Competitions - Exhibitions
Lectures - Meetings
News - This & That.

“NATUREPHOTO”

Some members will have heard of “NaturFoto”, a commercial German language magazine which has been in existence (under various titles) for thirty years. In November its Editor contacted me with the news that an English language version under the

title “NaturePhoto” was to be produced and I subsequently received the draft version. Overall the quality is excellent with priority given to photographs, not only from quality of reproduction but also allowing ample space to allow for optimum layout.

At the time of writing I understand it will not be available on the news stands, but by subscription only. With the help of Sally Powell, Marketing Manager at the RPS, I am currently endeavouring to see if some agreement can be reached with the German publishers for each Nature Group member to receive direct a free trial copy. Although this is by no means definite thank Sally if a free copy drops through your letter box.

Don't worry it would be posted through an independent mailing house so that the German publishers do not have access to members addresses.✿

RECOGNITION BY THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The Photographic Society of America (PSA) has awarded Terry Ridgley LRPS a ‘Certificate of Appreciation’ in recognition of his work in furthering understanding between the PSA and the Nature Group of the RPS.

Terry runs the PSA UK Nature postfolio and was also instrumental in bringing about the excellent article in our Jubilee Issue from Rick Cloran FPSA, immediate Past Chairman of the PSA Nature Division.

Besides being the immediate past secretary of our Circle B postal portfolio Terry has, for some time, worked quietly and unselfishly behind the scenes as a ‘bridge’ for information between the two organisations.

Congratulations Terry on a well deserved award ✿

ENTRIES ARE INVITED
FOR THE 5TH WIRRAL SLIDE EXHIBITION

PLEASE SEND A SAE TO:-
MRS. M. SIXSMITH ARPS BPE3*
62, CIRCULAR DRIVE, GREASBY, WIRRAL, CH49 3NB.

CATEGORIES:- GENERAL & NATURE

CLOSING DATE:- 6TH APRIL 2002

Photo opposite by Sandy Cleland FRPS - “Alderfly laying eggs”





Photo by Sandy Cleland FRPS - “Flies (*Muscidae* sp) attacking Leaf Miner”



Photo by Sandy Cleland FRPS - “Adder”



Photo by Sandy Cleland FRPS - “Slow Worm”



Photo by Sandy Cleland FRPS - “Yellow Dung Fly with prey”



Photo by John Hill ARPS - “Snowy Egret in flight (*Egretta thula*)”



Photo by John Hill ARPS - “Ring-billed Gull calling (*Larus delawarensis*)”

“WHAT IS A NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER?”

by Heather Angel HON FRPS

[Editor - When browsing through back issues of our magazine last year I came across this article, originally published in the British Journal of Photography 21st December 1973. Subsequently, with kind permission of the editor and author, it was printed in our Newsletter No. 5 dated May 1977.

When I approached Heather a little while ago to see if I could reproduce it in a future issue she kindly agreed, offering to update the piece. However I asked that we use it verbatim to show how much of what was pertinent twenty five years ago still applies. Yes, I am certain that with the passage of time some sections could be re-phrased. However the whole still holds true and I make no apologies for reproducing it again to give those members who joined after it's earlier publication the opportunity of reading it.

Some of you will recall that on several occasions I have referred to the Nature Group as being a catholic group and I suggest that many of the sub-species of nature photographer described below can be found amongst us in varying degrees.]

The single common factor which all nature pictures share is that the subject, be it plant or animal, is, or has been, living. Thereafter the subject itself, the composition of the picture within the field of view, the lighting, the colour rendering and the magnification are all variables which are under the control of the photographer. It is his skill in mixing these ingredients into the right recipe which produces a prize winning or best selling picture. In addition, a co-operative subject or an exceptional event are both lucky bonuses.

A nature photograph can mean quite different things to the photographer, a competition judge, a picture editor or the viewing public.

When a scientist takes a photograph he is motivated in a different way from a naturalist or artistic photographer taking an identical subject; therefore his approach and technique are poles apart. The scientist focuses his attention on the subject. Consideration of composition, lighting and background are minimal, and are only important in making certain all the information he requires are registered on the film. His aim is to record information which will be of scientific value. The camera is used as a tool. It may be used as an ecological tool in making census counts of migrating big game or nesting sea bird colonies. The percentage ground cover of different plant species can be estimated from photographic prints. Behavioural patterns of birds and mammals can be analysed in detail by the ethologist studying each consecutive frame taken with a motorised camera.

The biologist uses photography to record phenomena which are undetectable to the naked eye. By means of high speed flash or stroboscopic lighting, continuous animal movement can be broken down into a series of separate motions. A classic example of this was the proof that a galloping horse has often only a single hoof in contact with the ground. Time lapse photography on the other hand, can speed up the slow pace of an opening flower or the growth of a coral. Photomicrographs can explore the minute detail of cells or microscopic organisms. More recently, the three-dimensional pictures taken with the Scanning Electron Microscope, have revealed the unexpected beauty of the sculpturing of quite simple objects such as a rose petal or an insect egg.

Infra-red photography is used to detect diseased foliage before it becomes apparent to the

unaided eye. Aerial infra-red pictures are used to calculate the proportion of broad leaved to coniferous trees in impenetrable forests. While photography by means of ultra violet radiation has revealed previously unseen patterns on flower petals and insect wings.

The scientist also uses a camera to record in situations where he cannot make direct observations himself - such as the underwater environment. Deep sea cameras are used by oceanographers to study both the bottom formations and the animals associated with them. Such cameras are triggered either when they come into contact with the bottom, or by fish attacking bait. Fishery scientists use cameras mounted in trawl mouths to observe the behaviour of fish when they approach the trawl and they either become caught or else manage to escape.

The camera is a tool for recording scientific data that is too complex, too fast, or too remote to be perceived, analysed and understood without careful study. Taken with this aim the pictures usually lack any artistic merit. They are functional and only in exceptional cases are they seen by the general public.

In contrast, the artistic photographer uses his natural subjects only to exploit their attributes such as shape and texture. Patterns of light and shadow can be produced by lighting techniques or by manipulation in the dark room. Shapes can be emphasised and distorted by using eccentric perspective lenses. The subject's colour may be modified to yield colour essays which have no resemblance to reality, or to be more precise, within the reality of our perception. Thus the artistic photographer extracts some attribute and manipulates it by techniques of camera use, lighting or dark room methods. The resultant picture is the product of both his technical and his perceptual skills. It becomes a super-image exploring the subject in new and often unexpected ways.

Clearly most people's concept of nature photography lies somewhere in-between these two extremes; the scientist recording accurate data and the artistic photographer producing an essay of light, colour and pattern. The nature photographer compromises between a stark presentation with accidental aesthetic appeal and a purely artistic view that distorts the biological accuracy. It is in the balance of this compromise that the argument begins. Only by careful consideration of why one is taking the picture, can one begin to attempt to get the balance right.

The amateur photographer, who aspires only to please himself, can be as rushed or as unhurried as he wishes. He may 'collect' subjects, wild orchids are a good example. His technique may cause him few worries, the pleasures are in the thrill of the hunt. So his greatest pleasure might be in the biggest or the rarest orchid he has photographed, even though the picture may be slightly out of focus or incorrectly exposed. The rest of his collection might be technically far superior, but none the less fail to evoke the pride of his achievement.

Aspiring exhibitors, and more especially professional nature photographers, cannot afford this pride in merely achieving an exposure of some faded rarity. It is essential that they get to know their subjects, so that they will be in the right place at the right time. Anticipation is often essential in animal photography. Basic photographic procedure must be sufficiently second nature, so that time is not wasted fiddling about getting the correct exposure when the action happens. Concentration can then be centred on the composition - the position of the subject in the frame and in relation to both foreground and background.

Professionals compete with other photographers. Nature is red in tooth and claw; so is nature photography! Only by striving to produce something new and exciting, can an individual style be developed - never by mimicking others. A picture is often very personal to

a photographer; never should it be so emotive that it blunts his own critical assessments of its qualities. Nor should it be so personal that it stirs no emotive response in others. If a picture was achieved only by great sweat and toil, maybe after hours, days or even weeks of fruitless toil and frustration, if the subject is a great rarity, it would take a particularly cold-blooded photographer not to be especially proud of it, almost regardless of its qualities. However, it is the quality which is apparent to the viewer, be he a judge or a picture editor.

Professional natural history photographers none the less still share with the amateur a great love coupled with considerable knowledge of their subjects. Still nature photographs are seldom taken on a commission basis. Pressures to get the picture or bust are rare. The professional patiently builds up a library, learning what types of picture sell, what subjects are likely to be in demand.

So the nature photographer has time to consider carefully the ethics of his photograph. Is there any likelihood of the bird deserting its nest? Does photographing this rare flower necessitate trampling on insignificant seedlings of other rarities? Is it ethical to photograph dead specimens and pass them off as alive? Is it cheating to narcotise or chill?

A critical judge should look for many things in a nature photograph. He should be aware of the ethical problems. Has a species of bird listed on Schedule I of the Protection of Birds Acts been photographed in Britain at or near its nest without obtaining approval from the Nature Conservancy Council? Is there evidence in the picture of unreasonable damage to the environment caused by the photographer, such as excessive pruning or gardening? Is the picture authentic or is there evidence of the subject having been moved out of its ecological context to make a more pretty, pretty picture? There should be no distortion in texture, shape or colour. Action pictures of animals wild and free will always impress, in contrast to immaculate portraits of caged animals. However, pictures taken under controlled conditions are not necessarily to be condemned, for example high quality macrophotographs of aquatic life can rarely be taken in the field. Most judges are primarily photographers, rather than naturalists, therefore the major emphasis is more often on the technical quality than the subject content.

The selection of pictures for publication is often a rather chancy business. Picture editors are all too rarely concerned with the accuracy of the biological content. Colourful and/or dramatic pictures are repeatedly selected. Yet another double page spread of blurred silhouettes of big game seen against a setting sun is chosen. A vertical picture may fit the page's format better than a horizontal one. Selection may be made quite oblivious of the picture's biological accuracy. Hence the responsibility of the nature photographer is clear in submitting biologically accurate pictures.

When the public view a nature exhibition they like to be able to recognise the subject without referring to the caption. Any photograph which cannot be recognised on sight or at least understood is passed by for something they can identify. Simple design or pattern is appreciated as well as action and humour. Close-ups, more than any other branch of nature photography, are arresting because they concentrate attention on detail. They can reveal unseen beauty or a facet of behaviour which is not apparent to the untrained eye.

While each new technique which enables man to view hitherto unseen parts of nature will always be a source of marvel, it is often the simplest nature pictures taken with a basic camera, without any additional light source, which are the most effective and long lasting. To my mind, one of the classic monochrome nature photographs is of a gannet braking as it alights taken in 1934 by Niall Rankin ☘

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

6TH OCTOBER 2001 - EBERNOE COMMON - LEADER JOHN FAIRBANK ARPS

Regrettably my nine months old plans to visit this Sussex Wildlife Trust National Nature Reserve went awry. Fungal growth was again unusually early in 2001 - perhaps due to the very wet winter - so my chosen date was too late for the great range of species native to the site. Recent rains had spoilt those that had been in their prime and gales and storms were forecast for the day.

My recce earlier in the week, aided by the Reserve Manager, showed me that there was little worth photographing as most of the surviving species were wet, bedraggled and well past their best. I put off a number of members who 'phoned me as well as friends I thought likely to attend but five hardy souls, some who had seen the Reserve at its best two years before, gathered with me in the rain. It was agreed that a tour would be made at least until lunchtime and we set off to see a rare Polypore (*Podoscypha multizonata*) that was past its best but attractive enough in a mossy setting to be worth taking. Also close to the car park was a large bank of Giant Polypore (*Meripilus giganteus*). Another rarity an Oak Polypore (*Piptoporus quercus*), a red Bracket high up in an old Oak, presented a frustrating sight beyond lens range!

The main area of interest in a Beech wood at the South end of the Reserve provided some tree shelter for lunch but then an hour or so of sunny intervals gave opportunities for some serious photography putting Benbo Trekkers to good use. Species shot included Sulphur Tufts (*Hypholoma fasciculare*), a Many-zoned Polypore (*Coriolus versicolor*) and groups of tiny *Mycena* species, on fallen tree trunks.

Heavy rain then set in and we sped back to the Car Park departing for home soon after 2 p.m. We had had a reasonable morning after all and showed our appreciation to the Trust by a small contribution to the Reserve Equipment Fund. ❀

14TH OCTOBER 2001 - BEACON WOOD COUNTRY PARK - LEADER EILEEN TAYLOR ARPS

On a mild and occasionally sunny Sunday, eight of us met in Beacon Wood's car park. The park has been developed after clay extraction stopped about 40 years ago and is now an interesting mix of colonising birch, ancient wood and ponds. Although it has become a mycological hot-spot, with over 400 higher fungi, it was the incredible numbers of Fly Agarics that impressed the group, as I had hoped. Many were past their best but there were still enough in prime condition to frame small groups. One creative photographer found inspiration in the decaying ones!

This was my first try at leading a group and I was relieved that they liked the site; several said that they would return next year. ❀

Editor:- Many thanks to Eileen for 'grasping the nettle' and leading her first Field Meeting. Hopefully others will now feel more confident. Remember there is still time to arrange meetings for August onwards whose venues can be announced in our summer issue received by members late July.

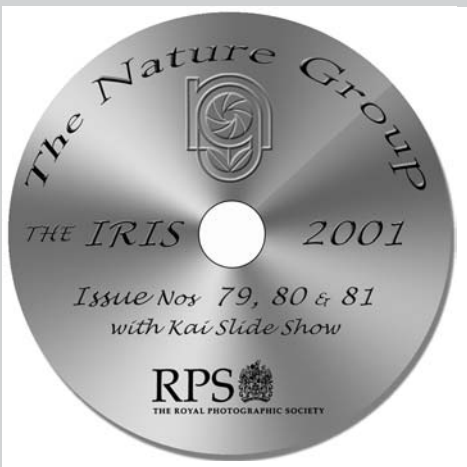
16TH OCTOBER 2001 - RUFFORD PARK - LEADER ROBERT HAWKESWORTH FRPS

"The best laid schemes ...", despite my notice in the summer edition of "The Iris" the Editor of "The Photographic Journal" failed to pick up on the change and continued to pub-

lish the venue as Clumber Park, fortunately many members rang me but it did mean fielding a long-on at Clumber to pick up those who had failed to do so. *It is always wise, indeed essential, to ring the organiser before attending any field meeting to check the details.*

When all were safely gathered in we had thirty-five members from as far afield as Wigan, York, the West Midlands as well as a good number from nearer at hand. If there were few eye-catching clumps of the larger cap fungi there were many smaller ones as well as lots of brackets and earth-balls and the presence of many eyes paid dividends. There are large numbers of birch trees in this part of the world and Razor Strop Fungus (*Piptoporus betulinus*) is very common as well as the Hoof Fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*) which on some dead stumps could reach as many as thirty or forty specimens. Rather strangely we found very few Fly Agarics (*Amanita muscaria*) normally to be seen in their hundreds, you would have thought everything was in favour of a huge display of them with mild damp conditions, but they don't read the books! One of the less common fungi to be found was the Verdigris Agaric (*Stropharia aeruginosa*) the blue-green cap being a little washed out but still quite photogenic. Stinkhorns (*Phallus impudicus*) made their presence felt in more ways than one and one older specimen had fallen across two emerging ones, which were fused together, presenting a curious sight, I have certainly never seen two fused Stinkhorns before. We also found a Dog Stinkhorn (*Mutinus caninus*) certainly uncommon here, the green glebal mass had been removed by flies but of course leaving the orange-red narrow conical head. Amongst the earth-ball/puff-ball fungi two were commonest, Common Earth-ball (*Scleroderma citrinum*) and one with no English name *Lycoperdon perlatum*, these are very often photogenic, but not when heavily gardened! Chris Mattison and I spent some time scattering leaves back around some groups that we found in the middle of circles of bare earth. It is all a matter of personal choice of course, but leaf litter is usual in woodland in autumn! After lunch at least one member walked to the far side of the lake and spent the afternoon photographing small birds and a family of young rats, which just goes to show that it doesn't have to be fungi on autumn field meetings.

It was, from the response of those attending, a most successful day not just for the photography but for the chance to meet lots of our colleagues. May I thank all of you for supporting me so well ❀



THE IRIS 2001 ON CD-ROM.

This CD (as described in the last issue) is now available to Nature Group members. As well as containing all three issues from last year there are also two slide shows.

Each show contains all colour pictures from the three issues. One is auto-play with varied transitions whilst the other is viewer controlled with straight changes.

Order from The Editor quoting RPS membership number.

COST (INCLUDES P & P AND VAT) £5

“THE SVALBARD EXPERIENCE”

BY MICHAEL GORE CVO, CBE, FRPS

Having spent most of my working life in the tropics, since I retired from HM Diplomatic Service in 1995 my wife and I have made an effort to visit the colder parts of the world. In 1996 we went to Churchill to see the Polar Bears, described by Martin Withers in his excellent feature in the Spring 2001 issue of *The Iris*, and the following year to Antarctica, again so well described in the same issue by Tony Wharton.

Last summer we decided to go to Arctic Europe and we spent two weeks travelling by boat around Svalbard and into the pack-ice, going as far north as latitude 80°. We knew what to expect in the Antarctic, indeed I had visited there with British Antarctic Survey in 1973, but we did not have a picture in our minds of the frozen north and in particular travelling through the pack-ice and how spectacular it would be; nor did we expect to see so much wildlife. Svalbard exceeded our wildest dreams on both counts.

With craggy mountains rearing out of the sea amidst the pack-ice and the ice itself broken up and floating on a deep blue sea the scenery matched the Antarctic; and the sea was calm, much to the relief of my wife who suffered en route to and from the Antarctic! As for the wildlife, there were not the huge penguin colonies of the southern hemisphere but there were colonies of auks and gulls and, most exciting of all, Svalbard has the largest concentration of Polar Bears in the world - perhaps 15,000 of them hunt seals on the pack ice through the summer months. They are spread out over a vast area but we got within photographic range of 24 of them, including one large male which was so intent on devouring its meal of a Ringed Seal that it stayed feeding less than 50 yards from the boat for four hours, so we enjoyed our barbeque on board in its company. I cannot estimate the number of rolls of film shot by our group during this time but it was well over a hundred.

We were a photographic group of 42 on a tour organised by Joseph Van Os Photo Safaris, an American company with whom we have travelled before. On board there were five “leaders” including Joe himself and John Shaw, probably America’s best-known wildlife photographer, whose books most members of the Nature Group will have read.

Although there were similarities with the Antarctic trip there was one major difference. In the Antarctic there are no dangerous creatures; Polar Bears however are among the most dangerous predators on earth and whenever we went ashore to one of the rocky islands to photograph birds, as in the Antarctic travelling from the boat in rubber inflatable Zodiacs, we were accompanied by one of the leaders armed with a rifle. We did not encounter a Polar Bear on shore as a careful check was made before we boarded the Zodiacs but a Polar Bear can make itself invisible in a hollow in the snow or rocks and no-one took any chances.

We started our tour in Oslo and then flew across the Arctic Circle to Tromsø and on to Longyearbyen on Spitsbergen, the largest island in the Svalbard group. At 71°N, Longyearbyen is the most northerly township in the world inhabited throughout the year. I cannot pretend that it is even a great place to visit! It is the centre of what remains of the coal mining industry and cannot be described as attractive in any way. However, here we saw our first Glaucous and Ivory Gulls and I managed to photograph a Red (or as it used to be called, Grey) Phalarope with young just out of the nest on a small pool near the airport. Also Snow Buntings, which are abundant, nest in the buildings like sparrows. How different from having to search for them in the Cairngorms. Purple Sandpipers nest on the



Photo by Michael Gore FRPS - “Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)
feeding frenzy beneath glacier - Spitsbergen”



Photo by Michael Gore FRPS - “Polar Bear (*Ursus maritimus*)
feeding on seal with Glaucous and Ivory Gulls , Svalbard”



coal waste and Ringed Plovers were nesting on the shingle beach. Most abundant were Arctic Terns which we saw on every island we visited and which, like all terns, attacked ferociously whenever we approached a nest. The only way to avoid a nasty cut on the head was to hold your camera on its tripod above your head.

From Longyearbyen we sailed north in a converted Russian research vessel (spy ship in the days of the Soviet Union!) the *Professor Molcanov*, sister ship of the one on which we travelled to the Antarctic. As we sailed along the coast of Spitsbergen we entered a number of fjords and stopped at several sites before we entered the pack-ice. We photographed Arctic Skuas nesting amidst a carpet of glorious arctic flowers, none more than three inches high. We visited a colony of Little Auks (or Dovekies, as they are known to the Americans). The Little Auk is certainly the most abundant bird in the Arctic and may be one of the most abundant of all bird species. The size of a Starling, like Puffins they nest in holes in the ground, usually on steep scree slopes. They are heavily predated by Glaucous Gulls which can swallow an Auk whole! The Gulls quarter the cliffs above the breeding colonies and as they approach each sector the Auks take off in panic. Flocks wheel out over the sea reminding one of a huge flock of Starlings as they wheel above an English city preparing to settle into a roost.

The other abundant auk is Brunnich's Guillemot. Similar to our Guillemot but with a white "smile" at the base of the bill and a little darker, like a Razorbill. One huge cliff contained about 100,000 nesting birds. Beneath in a frozen gully the remains of an Arctic Fox was encased in ice. Presumably it fell off while trying to reach the Guillemots. On the top of an exposed offshore rock a Barnacle Goose stood guard over its mate which was incubating a clutch of eggs in a seaweed nest lined with feathers; a very strange site for a goose. Common Eiders were everywhere as were Fulmars - the northern race much darker than those we see in Britain - and flocks of Kittiwakes followed the boat throughout our trip, sometimes accompanied by Glaucous and Ivory Gulls. To my surprise Black Guillemots were nearly always in view even as far as 81° N which was the furthest we reached.

We started seeing Polar Bears at around 75° N and came across individuals and occasionally mothers with cubs on the ice thereafter. Some took off, swimming or jumping from one ice-floe to another sometimes dragging their seal prey with them, as soon as the boat approached, but others were more curious and came up to have a look at us. Churchill is great for Polar Bears but in Svalbard you see them in a totally different environment when they are actively hunting. Here too we photographed Bearded Seals resting on ice-floes, keeping a wary look out for Polar Bears and twice we came across herds of Walruses lying out on shingle beaches from which the ice had retreated. They spend most of the time sleeping in a great huddle of blubber but a few came out to greet us as we approached in our Zodiacs.

The whole trip was memorable, in many ways on a par with our trip to the Antarctic, but the most spectacular sight of all came as we were sailing back south towards Longyearbyen. We diverted up a fjord at the head of which a huge glacier over a mile wide entered the sea. The ice cliff, which was perhaps 400 feet high, was bright blue from the pressure built up during its slow progress to the sea. And beneath the glacier, 10,000 Kittiwakes were feeding on the nutrients in the melting waters in one huge flock. It was as spectacular as anything I have encountered in nature and made a great finale to a most memorable trip ❀

Photo opposite by Michael Gore FRPS - "Grey (or Red) Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) swimming near Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen"

A NATURAL HISTORY QUIZ - HOW GOOD ARE YOU?

- 1/. Blair's Shoulder-knot, Nonconformist and Cousin German are all?
- 2/. What does the South American male Arrow Poison Frog sometimes carry on his back?
- 3/. FADWLROA is an anagram for what and what is it?
- 4/. Where can a Knopper Gall be found?
- 5/. "Wart Biter" is a country name for?
- 6/. A Storm-cock is?
- 7/. Where can the Swallow-tailed Gull mainly be found?
- 8/. The Sooty Grassquit is :- A/ fungi. B/ a bird. C/ a butterfly?
- 9/. Would the gourmet drink A/ a light red wine B/ a dry white wine C/ water when eating a mushroom omelette containing Common Ink Caps?
- 10/. It is not the highest, nor does it have the greatest diameter, but it does have the largest volume of timber. Which tree is it?

Answers on page 32

"AN INTERACTIVE CD-ROM GUIDE TO OBTAINING YOUR ASSOCIATESHIP IN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY"

Although this CD-ROM is still in the development stage I felt members would be interested in what is going on 'behind the scenes'.

I've attended, as an interested observer, most of the half-yearly assessment days for Associate and Fellowship distinctions over the last twelve years. Usually there is at least one applicant who obviously doesn't have much idea as to how to put an application together, yet alone what standard of quality is expected.

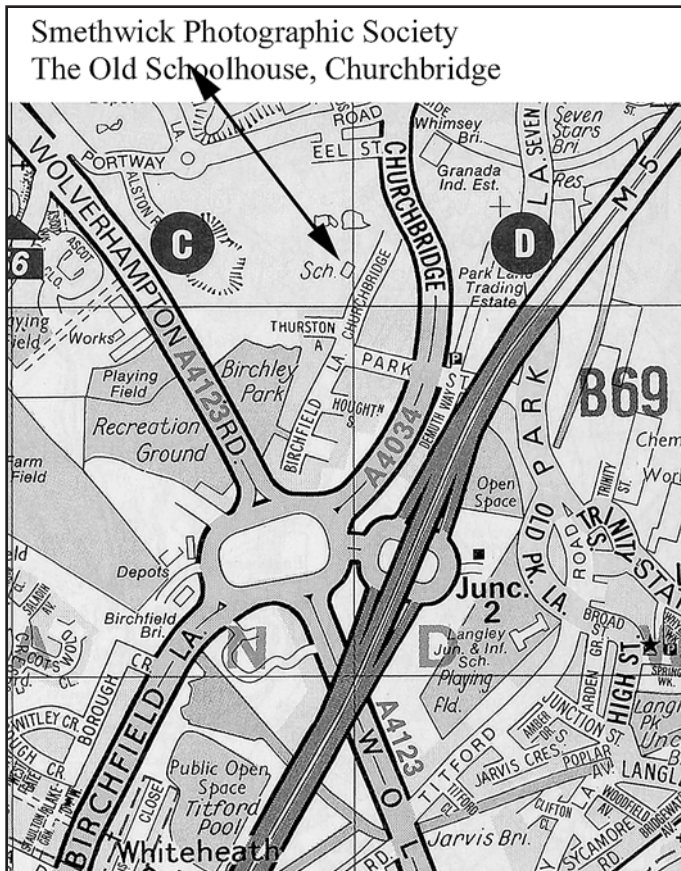
The RPS produce a set of helpful written guidelines and from time to time a successful Nature panel is reproduced in The Photographic Journal. However it can still be very difficult for those unable to attend a distinctions workshop, or a distinctions assessment day, to fully grasp what is required. Regretfully The Iris does not have sufficient colour space to reproduce successful panels.

So, at the back end of last year, I discussed with appropriate individuals within the RPS the possibility of producing a CD-ROM to provide basic guidance in all aspects. Receiving encouragement I bought the appropriate software, started experimenting and in due course produced a demo CD. This was sent to Colin Smith FRPS, Chairman of the Nature Distinction Panel, who has approved the concept and will be involved with the contents.

It must be stressed that attending a distinction workshop or an application assessment day is by far the preferred option. The CD is intended for those unable to obtain such guidance. It will try to cover all basic items as well as containing some successful applications.

Using the current timetable it is hoped that the CD will be finished around the end of June and fuller information as to availability, cost etc., will be provided in our Summer Issue ❀

DIRECTIONS TO VENUE FOR AGM 27TH APRIL 2002



Leave the M5 at Jct 2 and get into the right hand lane. At roundabout (with traffic lights) some 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 ½ mile) turn left into Park Street. After approximately 100 yards turn right at T-junction into Churchbridge (cul-de-sac). The Old Schoolhouse is last but one building on left hand side.

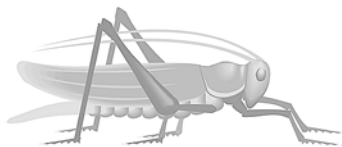
NEVER MIND THE AGM - COME FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHY!

Let's face it AGM's can be just plain boring. Some may even find our AGM boring, but don't worry you can go to sleep for the short time it occupies (sorry committee). *Just come on the 27th April to see some superb photography.*

Firstly an audio visual by Colin Smith FRPS. Those of you who have previously enjoyed one know they are not to be missed. Then there is the Nature Group Annual Exhibition. Colour prints on the walls and slides on the screen (we hope its that way round). Seriously there are always excellent pictures to be seen.

Look at the time table on page 6. Some 3 hours of photography (plus the chance to chat with old friends, renew acquaintances, make new ones) against an AGM of only 45 minutes. Seems the committee have got it right.

ANSWERS TO THE NATURAL HISTORY QUIZ



- 10/ The Giant Sequoia. Other names are Big Tree, Mammoth Tree, or Sierra Redwood.
- 9/ C/ Water. The fungi reacts with alcohol to cause nausea and palpitations. It is a source of antabuse, the drug used to cure alcoholics.
- 8/ Bird, a small finch - Neotropical i.e found in Latin & South America also West Indies.
- 7/ Galapagos Islands.
- 6/ A Mistle Thrush. The name was derived from its habit of singing from tree tops even in gale force winds.
- 5/ It is a type of Bush Cricket, *Decticus verrucivorus*, found in southern England but becoming scarce. According to country folk-lore people used this cricket to bite off their warts, cauterising them with the secretion it produced.
- 4/ The gall is caused by the gall wasp *Andricus quercuscalicis* on the acorns of Oak. It is thought that it may alternate in successive years between the Turkish Oak and our native oaks.
- 3/ An Aardwolf, a type of hyena.
- 2/ His newly hatched tadpoles whilst taking them to water.
- 1/ All are British moths.

MEMBERS' LECTURES

A selection of venues and lectures. Information is as provided by the Lecturer prior to printing and members are advised to check for any variation.

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS BY MIKE LANE FRPS

Sunday 7th April 2002. Talk called "*Manipulating Nature*" RPS Central Region Day. Smethwick P.S Clubhouse, The Old School House, Churchbridge, Oldbury, West Midlands. Tel:0121 742 2065

Thursday 11th April 2002. 1930 hours - Talk called "*A Lane in a Polish Marsh*" (*Polands wildlife*) - Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Kidderminster Town Hall, Kidderminster.

Saturday 13th April 2002. 1030 hours - *Wildlife and Nature Photography workshop.* Jessops School of Photography, Hinckley Road shop, Leicester. Tel: 01162 320033

ADVERTISEMENTS

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HOSKING TOURS - NATURE PHOTOGRAPHIC HOLIDAYS

Photographic Holidays organized and led by David Hosking FRPS, Martin Withers FRPS and Chris Mattison FRPS. All of the tours are researched with nature photography in mind and aim to maximize the photographic opportunities that each location has to offer. All the tours are equally suitable for experts and beginners alike. Outlined below is the current programme of tours.

NEW BROCHURE NOW AVAILABLE.

Year 2002

NAMIBIA, June - **GRAN PARADISO, ITALIAN ALPS**, July
KENYA, July - **YELLOWSTONE & GRAND TETONS**, Sept - **UTAH**, Oct -
FALKLAND ISLANDS, Nov/Dec -

Year 2003

TANZANIA, Jan/Feb - **CYPRUS**, March - **MADAGASCAR**, May
GALAPAGOS, May.

For brochures and detailed itineraries contact:-

David Hosking FRPS, Hosking Tours, Pages Green House, Wetheringsett,
Stowmarket, Suffolk. IP14 5QA.

Tel: 01728 861113 - Fax: 01728 860222 - E-mail: david@hosking-tours.co.uk.
Website: www.hosking-tours.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY COURSES AND EVENTS 2002 ***FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL AT JUNIPER HALL FIELD CENTRE*** **COURSES LED BY JOHN BEBBINGTON FRPS**

Photographing the Patterns of Nature: Friday 19th – Sunday 21st April 2002

Close-up and Macro Flash in the Field; Friday 24th – Sunday 26th May 2002

Photographing Wild Flowers: Friday 14th – Sunday 16th June 2002

Insect Photography Week: Friday 23rd – Friday 30th August 2002

Autumn Nature Photography: Friday 18th – Friday 25th October 2002

For details of these and all other Field Studies Council Courses in 2002 look in the Field Studies Council web site:- www.field-studies-council.org

For availability of places and further information contact John Bebbington FRPS
at Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6DA.

Tel 0845 458 3507, fax 0845 458 9219. email:- fsc.juniper@ukonline.co.uk

Crane Spectacular (Mid April 02)

Four places remain with small group making a 5 day visit to **West Sweden** to photograph the mass annual gathering of cranes. Up to 10,000 birds gather to feed and display on marshland fields where special (2 person) permanent photographic hides are reserved in prime photographic positions. The trip is also suitable for non photographic partners.

DETAILS FROM CHARLES BROWN ARPS TEL 01543 472280 FAX: 01543 473659

BARRIE TAYLOR FRPS IN CONJUNCTION WITH AVIAN ADVENTURES

**OFFER EXCELLENT PHOTOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITIES
TO**

Brazil, including the Pantanal from 24th August to 6th September.
Churchill for Polar Bears from 20th to 28th October
Galapagos Islands from 15th to 29th November.

*CONTACT BARRIE TAYLOR FRPS ON 0121-308-8726.
FOR A BROCHURE CONTACT GERRY GRIFFITHS ON 01384-372-013.*

PHOTOGRAPHY COURSES AT SLAPTON LEY FIELD CENTRE IN SOUTH DEVON

**LED BY
ADRIAN DAVIES MSc, FBIPP, ARPS.**

These courses can be followed independently or booked together to attract a discount.

IMAGES OF NATURE: SILVER TO PIXELS - Friday 26th - Sunday 28th July 2002

- Image capture with digital cameras and scanners.
- Image processing techniques to prepare images for printing
- Image output - concentrating on ink jet printing.

Field sessions take advantage of the Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve.
Residential fee £130

NATURAL HISTORY PHOTOGRAPHY - Sunday 28th July - Friday 2nd August 2002
The course embraces a very wide range of subject matter and photographic technique. As much time as possible will be spent on practical photography in the field, with visits to a variety of locations and habitats including seashore, freshwater, woodland, and Dartmoor.
Residential fee £220

*A discount of £30 if both courses are booked.
The fee includes full board accommodation and tuition.*

For full details of these, and all other FSC courses at Slapton, contact:-

Slapton Ley Field Centre, Slapton, KINGSBRIDGE, Devon, TQ7 2QP
Tel:- 01548 580466 - Fax:- 01548 580123 - e mail:- fsc.slapton@ukonline.co.uk

Photo opposite by Michael Gore FRPS - "Polar Bear (*Ursus maritimus*)
on ice-floe, Svalbard"



