

THE IRIS



MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS

Issue No. 113
Summer 2012

ISSN 1757-2991



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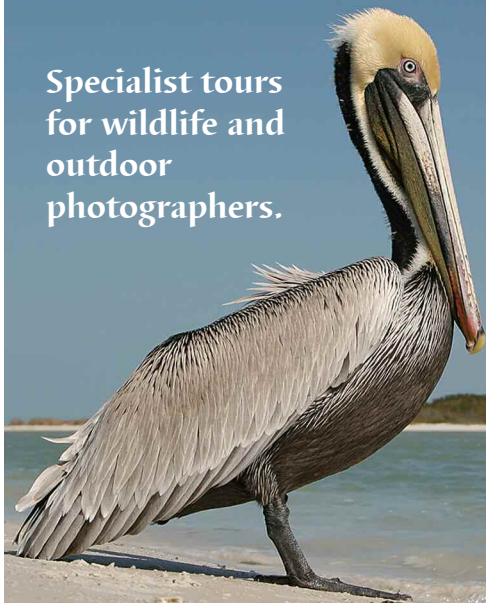
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Publication information

'The Iris' is published by the Nature Group of the RPS three times a year. Copy and publication dates are as follows:

Spring Copy deadline 20th December
Published early March.

Summer Copy deadline 30th April
Published early July.

Winter Copy deadline 31st August
Published early November.

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. The Editor can be contacted at: iris_editor@btinternet.com

Copy should be sent as .txt or .doc files by email or on CD. Please do not send hand written copy.

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

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

Distribution:

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

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Printed by

Stanley L Hunt (Printers) Limited
Midland Road, Rushden.

Design & layout

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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

Well Spring has finally sprung, albeit rather late and after a very wet start. Temperatures here just a week ago were only 5°C but had rocketed up to 25°C before the weekend. Now everything seems to be growing at full speed ahead.

This issue of The Iris contains the award winning images from our recent Exhibition. A CD or DVD containing all the accepted images is now available - details of how to purchase a copy are available on page 29. Congratulations to everyone who had images accepted. If you were unlucky this year, please don't be disheartened - try again next year. If you are new to entering images into exhibitions, viewing the images on the CD will give you an excellent insight into the type of images that are successful and may help you when you select your entry next time.

The article by Fiona Mackay ARPS in the last issue prompted more than a few responses - its good to know that many of us are of a like mind.

Congratulations too to members who achieved their Associateships recently. Three of these successful panels are included in this issue and will soon be viewable on the Nature Group website.

Our Chairman John Bebbington FRPS has had a new book published recently. Robert Hawkesworth gives it a thumbs up. Also, member Ludi Lochner recommends a book with the title 'Where to go wild in Britain'. Details of both of these publications are included within these pages.

Finally, although I do hold a few articles in store for the Winter issue, more are always welcome. I know that a good many of you will have travelled to places near and far in search of nature images covering a wide diversity of subject matter. Why not share your experiences with your fellow members and enjoy seeing your images in print in The Iris. Please contact me by email if you have an idea for an article, or book / kit review.

Have an excellent summer of photography.



From the chair

We had a very successful AGM and Spring meeting at Oldbury on March 31st – my thanks to everyone at the Smethwick P.S. clubhouse for looking after us so well.

I have to apologise, though, for simply forgetting to raise the issue of image/focus stacking at the AGM. To quote from my previous 'From the Chair':

"This was discussed in depth at the January Committee meeting and the general feeling was that stacked images are different from photo-montages in that they consist of multiple exposures of the same subject taken (more or less) at the same time."

It was felt that, provided the photographer was honest and stated that the image was a stack, we should accept such images. I was certain (at the time) that it would be possible to distinguish stacked images using the file EXIF data, but this appears not to be the case! So, it would depend upon the honesty and integrity of the photographer to state that their image is created from a stack.

Should we accept stacked images or not? It is up to you, the members, to tell us how you feel so that we can make an informed decision at our next Committee meeting in September when we set the parameters for the 2013 exhibition. Silence means assent in this case – so please let me know your thoughts! This should be of special importance to you if you enter the exhibition. You can email me or write (details in 'The Iris').

The presentation by Richard Revels FRPS was excellent – superb images, lots of information on technique, and a wonderful illustration of what can be achieved close to home. Many thanks to Richard for an excellent talk and for stepping in at short notice.

Once again, our Group Exhibition was a great success – a wide range of subjects, beautifully photographed and presented, both in the print and the projected image sections. My thanks to everyone who entered images and to the selectors – Dawn Osborn FRPS, Mike Lane FRPS and Robert Hawkesworth FRPS – for their time and hard work in

selecting an outstanding set of images and choosing the awards. Commiserations to any of you who had no images selected – but please continue to enter!

I'm looking forward to showing the Exhibition images at Taunton C.C. in January. If you would like to show the exhibition at your club, a CD/DVD with commentary is available. Please contact the Secretary, Margaret Johnson LRPS.

The weather so far this year has been mixed – to say the least – and certainly here in deepest Somerset everything is well behind schedule after the false start in the latter part of March! There is still widespread flooding on the levels – frequent in Winter but unusual for Spring – and there is much concern for ground-nesting birds and invertebrates which just aren't adapted to these conditions. I can't remember a Spring when it has been so cold and wet for such a long period – we are expecting some new butterflies here – 'Meadow Drown', 'Wringlet' and 'Grizzled Dripper' for example. Let's hope that by the time you read this the weather has dramatically improved.

Finally – as always – my thanks to my Committee for their hard work – particularly to our Editor, Dawn, for yet another superb issue of 'The Iris'; to Margaret Johnson, our Secretary, for keeping me up to scratch and to Margery Maskell, our Treasurer, who is unwell at the moment. I'm sure that you will join me in sending her our very best wishes. Unfortunately, Sue McGarrigle has found it necessary to resign from her role as Exhibition Secretary, owing to pressure of work. I am very grateful to her for everything she has done to ensure the continued success of the Exhibition.



John Bebbington FRPS
May 2012

'Damn the Judges' revisited

by Tony Bond FRPS

They say that confession is good for the soul, so here is mine. I was the author of the article in the Summer 2008 edition of the Iris. I adopted an alias to protect the innocent, or specifically Southport Photographic Society. I am delighted to say that they have revised the selection panels for their Open Exhibition and now have an Open panel and a Nature, rather than Prints and Projected Image. So please give them your support.

When the editor told me that she had received an article which referred to mine I hastily re-read what I had written. I remembered what one of my university lecturers used to say – that no scientist should be held to account for anything written 5 years ago. Fortunately, there was nothing which I regretted, indeed the situation has only become worse in the interim. And when I read the excellent contribution by Fiona Mackay ARPS in the Spring 2012 edition I found myself agreeing with everything she had written. Also, there was a very full discussion of the problem at the last committee meeting.

So what exactly is happening out there? There can be no doubt that the actual recording of nature has become easier due to advances in camera design. Whereas at one time it was considered risky to rely on automatic functions such as exposure and focusing we can now rely on the camera to deliver the goods with minimal intervention by ourselves, unless you are unfortunate to have any of the rogue kit described in the Iris. We can get a good impression of whether we have succeeded within seconds of making the exposure and subjects with a high failure rate do not lead to poverty. The ISO rating can be changed on the run to suit the subject and the only limitation on the lenses we use is cost.

My belief is that in the relentless trawl for exhibition success and the gongs which come with it many people have seen an opportunity. Whereas their submissions were once restricted to the Open section they believe that by spending lots of money on 500mm lenses and the like they will be able to gain acceptances in the Nature section as well and get their gongs faster. Also, submitting your entry to an international exhibition and paying the entry fee has never been easier.

The snag is that many of these folk have little interest in natural history and do not know what they are doing. The late Colin Smith and I were in a hide at the RSPB Marshside Reserve. There was also a chap with a 500mm lens making lots of exposures. His delete button must have been very busy later - we could not see what had attracted his attention even when we trained our own lenses in the same direction.

The net result is that the number of entries into exhibitions, particularly internationals, has increased dramatically. Entries are now coming from countries we had hardly heard of before. And they are coming from people whose first language is not English. Couple this with no real interest in nature and you have a recipe for silly titles. I do not accept the argument that language difficulties prevent a proper title being given as, thanks to Carl Linnaeus, the scientific name of every species known to science is the same worldwide. Of course, it may take a bit of effort to identify the species, but this is all part and parcel of being a nature photographer.

And what about the images themselves? You can be certain that the best entries in open or international exhibitions will be very, very good. But anyone who has judged a major exhibition recently will tell you that although the number of entries is at an all-time high many of these are no hoppers. The main reasons for rejection are basic failures such as poor framing and focusing, poor lighting, bad backgrounds and poor or inappropriate processing. The 2 button has never been so busy. While it is easy for the selectors to weed out those images with such basic deficiencies it is not so easy when it comes to good pictures with cute titles.

I dread to think what academics and natural history professionals would think if they were exposed to them. At one time the main criterion was significance to the naturalist but this now comes well down the list below pictorial and other considerations. And I am fed up with those who say that for a successful nature picture the subject must be "doing something". If we were to follow this line we would rule out most of the natural world as Fiona Mackay's analysis shows.

Continued on page 36

Seabirds of Fair Isle

by Rebecca Nason ARPS

I started taking bird photographs in the late eighties. I would borrow my Dad's Nikon F4 and 300mm lens and pursue various species on family holidays. These annual holiday's always involved a good amount of birding being from a family of keen birdwatchers and naturalists. As with 'My Family & Other Animals', throughout my childhood, any living thing was of interest and deserved admiration.

My first memorable images were of a full frame Green-backed Heron in Florida which stayed poised and still as I approached a small pond and again in Israel when I carefully stalked a female Palestine Sunbird as it fed on huge yellow flower heads back in 1989! I had to wait weeks of course, for the slides to arrive, I remember the excitement as the small long parcels were crammed through the letterbox and hit the floor, and on these particular occasions I was not to be disappointed with a few of the slides! I entered my images in the Young BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition and reached the finals, receiving a letter of my achievement which really increased my drive and motivation.

It was however another 10 years before I had equipment of my own and a more serious interest. I began spending a great deal of time out in the field trying to capture wildlife on film and to achieve the standard of results I was seeing elsewhere and admiring. My UK bird photography really took off after being further inspired by Autumn visits to the Isles of Scilly in the late 1990's where I became friends with a couple of pro-photographers (Steve Young in particular) who were photographing rarities and were really driven to get 'the shot' which they would then sell hundreds of times over at the evening log call in the Porthcressa and then the Scillonian Club (pre digital revolution when this set up all but collapsed). These guys had serious photo-graphic equipment, I had not seen such huge lenses before and on seeing the results, I wanted one too! The following year I bought an old manual Nikon 600mm lens which, when my tripod wasn't falling apart, was capable of producing some fine results! The next year I was also in the Scillies taking rare bird shots 'paparazzi' style and selling them in the evenings.

RPS Associateship Hanging Plan for Rebecca Nason September 2011





Soon after this I took several ecologically-based contracts on UK Islands, including Skomer Island, West Wales, where along with Isles of Scilly, a true Island passion developed. I found seabird photography very enjoyable and engaging in these stunning locations and started to develop my self-taught photography further. However it was taking the post as Assistant Warden/Seabird monitoring Officer on Fair Isle, Shetland in 2003 coupled with the change to digital, which happened at the same time, that my photography really took off and I really developed my own style. I fell in love with Shetland and Fair Isle as Islands and certainly fell in love with the bumper natural history photographic opportunities which the Islands are known for and have in abundance. After two years working on Fair Isle I started my own freelance semi-professional photography business and this is something I continue to do and enjoy today along with other ecological contracts and wildlife tour leading, with Seabird and coastal wildlife photography being my main focus and passion.

Having been quite a lone photographer with no involvement with other photographers or groups since my University days, it was being a member of the NPP 'Nature Photographers Portfolio' online which started to bring me round to the benefits of being part of a group and sharing ideas and imagery with others which I found very rewarding and wanted to take a step further. I joined the RPS after looking through the website, deciding it would be interesting to be part of such a well known UK photographic organisation and to 'come in from the cold' a little from my isolated photographic activities. It was after I joined that I became aware of the distinction possibilities and a few months later, with nervous trepidation, I applied for my Associateship, feeling this level was a good one for me to try and achieve. After much deliberation over my print selection, I found myself up at 4am and driving from the Suffolk coast to Bath on distinction day. For me, a broad range of my seabird imagery was the obvious choice to make and one which reflected my style of work.

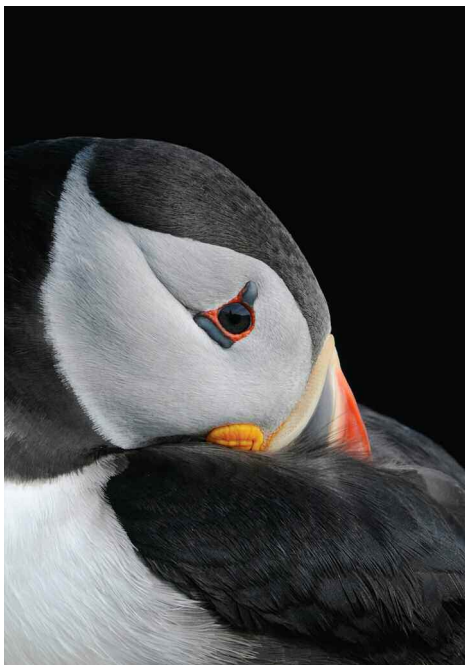
I found the distinction day a real eye-opener, it was so different to listen to the panel discussing my work and getting that level of feedback, I was hanging on every word! Being there I felt was invaluable and I was relieved that I had chosen to attend with my mounted prints rather than sending my work in on a CD. I learned so much and not just about my own work, but about numerous other candidates' portfolio selections too and what the panel did and didn't find acceptable. The day was an experience I will never forget and a long one too

as I drove alone to Bath and back, a mammoth 10 hour journey with the scrutiny of my portfolio in-between! However, as a successful candidate and with my RPS Associateship under my belt, the drive home wasn't so bad. I was so delighted with how the day had gone and my mind was racing with ideas of what I now needed to enter into the next level, the Fellowship

Mission Statement:

"The panel of images I have chosen here are all of Seabirds taken on the magic Isle of Fair Isle, one of the Scottish Shetland Islands, during the height of the breeding season in July. Fair Isle holds internationally important numbers of many seabirds that dominate the small Island in there thousands throughout the short breeding season. I have often felt an intimate connection with these birds having lived and worked as a Seabird Officer on the Island in the recent past.

The aim of my seabird image selection is to show the beauty, character and spirit of several seabird species, from close-up and personal through to more behavioural activities and flight, all in keeping with my preferred individual style of bird photography, that of clean, uncomplicated images with a strong artistic slant and modern design quality."



Birds of Northern Oman

by Andrew Adams ARPS

I've have been fortunate to have lived and worked in Muscat, sultanate of Oman, for nearly five years now. Despite the often harsh and hostile environment, particularly during the peak of the summer months, Oman can boast a bird list which currently sits at 501 recorded species.

The cooler months of October through to the end of March are by far the most productive for bird photography with certain areas, notably the Barr Al Hickman shallow water salt pans boasting migrant wader species in their tens of thousands each year. Whilst the coastal waters and shallow lagoons of Muscat and the Al Batina coastal plain can't match the spectacle of Barr Al Hickman they are none the less very productive areas for a host of migrant Waders, Heron, Gulls, Terns and Passerines and can keep any bird watcher or photographer more than happy.

Having joined the Royal Photographic Society and RPS Nature Group in early 2011 I set myself the goal of working towards my Associateship Distinction in Nature. I was happy I had enough

material to put together a convincing panel but from the 18,000 pictures I've managed to ferret away in the Lightroom catalog which would I chose? My task would have been much simpler had I made earlier use of the 'X' key when uploading and reviewing my images from a day's shooting. Fortunately, for the past two years I've been slowly putting together a website of my better images and it was to this I turned in helping me decide which pictures could best represent my panel.

Having read and re-read the various submission guidelines, reviewed past successful panels and general guidance notes from the RPS website I was confident I knew what was required and set about putting together a panel of a representative set of what, I considered, my 'better pictures'. That was my first mistake.

So, there I sat, proudly looking at my 15 pictures. An eclectic mix of birds with no theme, common link or sense of presentation. It was then I realised this wasn't going to be easy at all. In effect I'd reached



an answer before I even knew the question. What did I mean by this? Well, how would I word my 'Statement of Intent' around my chosen 15 pictures? "An eclectic mix of birds from Oman with no common theme, thought with respect to flow or presentation". No, obviously that would not work as a 'Statement of Intent'. So, what was my 'Statement of Intent'? The answer was I simply didn't know. No matter how good or bad the images in my final panel might be, without a coherent 'Statement of Intent' I simply couldn't begin to put together a meaningful panel.

My main interest has always been in photographing the various waders, herons and seabirds in and around the coast and shallow lagoons of Muscat and it was around these birds, and their migratory nature, that I began to formulate my 'Statement of Intent' and first pass of possible pictures. I was now feeling happier and more confident. Or so I thought!

One of the downsides of being so remote here in Oman was not being able to take advantage of attending advisory days or actual assessment days. Despite having reviewed successful panels from the RPS website I was still very much alone when it came to any impartial review or advice concerning my proposed panel. I was also becoming concerned that, whilst I may have been happy with the technical quality and composition of my photographs, some of them were, well to put it bluntly, a bit 'boring' really. They may have looked OK in a field identification guide but surely I could come up with something more imaginative, emotive or behavioural.

I knew my panel had some definite 'keepers' but I also felt I knew where it required a little added punch within the confines of my 'Statement of Intent'. I knew what I wanted, took a week off work and headed for the beach. I found this exercise a very liberating and educational experience. It was now photography with a purpose, the first time I'd ever set off with a single goal in mind for what I wanted to achieve. I wanted birds in flight and specifically the smaller wading birds that patrol the shoreline during the rise and fall of the tides. A week later I had them and set about reforming my panel.

Being remote I'd opted for my panel to be displayed digitally which required me to use the FTP option to upload my pictures to the RPS server. I downloaded the instructions, downloaded the FTP program, and collated my images into the single upload folder on my desktop and hit upload. The upload instructions stated an approximate upload time of 20 minutes for the 15 files totaling some 100 Mb of data. Well, they've never tried it in Oman have they! Five, yes five hours later my pictures had





finally all uploaded. A quick e-mail to the RPS in Bath confirmed they had arrived. This was at the beginning of February, some 6 to 7 weeks before the assessment date of the 28th March.

At this point I should have locked the cameras away and banned myself from looking further at my submission any further. Of course, I didn't do any of this. I continued to take pictures - well you have to when the window of opportunity only lasts a few short months - and I continued to look at and question my uploaded panel. I would come home from a day out with the camera and think "Oh, that new picture would have maybe looked better here in my panel than this one" Very soon, the new panel on my computer at home bore no relation to the one that was currently sitting on the RPS server in Bath. Through all of this my 'Statement of Intent' stood firm but my pictorial theme behind it was anything but fixed.

I needed help now. I was becoming far too self critical and the more I re-jigged my panel the more confused I was becoming.

I'd previously e-mailed Dawn Osborn FRPS on an unrelated issue concerning the Nature Group website. I took the plunge and e-mailed Dawn asking if she could possibly take a look at my panel and offer any advice. Dawn couldn't have been more helpful.

Encouragingly, Dawn's initial assessment of my panel was very positive. One or two pictures lacked impact, the colour and brightness variation between some images was a little harsh (important to consider when the images are reviewed digitally in a darkened room) and the running order could be tweaked here and there. I set about some changes and after three or four iterations of new pictures and running order change I had it. A panel I was happy with and more importantly a panel for which I had received some impartial advice. I was feeling far more positive.

Five hours later and about two weeks before the assessment my new panel was uploaded to the RPS.

The two weeks to the assessment date seemed to pass very slowly but as with all things the day finally arrived. My one regret is that I couldn't actually attend the assessment day. I would like to have seen the other panels presented and to have felt part of the day and the experience.

Wednesday 28th March was indeed a long day. With Oman currently three hours ahead of UK time it was 1:30 PM here before the assessment began in the UK, by the time they probably stopped for lunch it was 4 PM here and it would be 7 PM here in Oman before the assessment day was over.

"I wonder what time the RPS closes?" I think I asked myself that question for the first time at about

7:30 PM here in Oman. I doubt its before 5pm but by 6pm I felt sure they would have finished for the day and I would have until at least tomorrow before knowing if I'd been successful or not. Then at 9:30pm in Oman I received an e-mail from the RPS informing me that my application had been recommended for the Associateship Distinction.

Would I do it again? Of course I would. Would I recommend others do it? Of course. My advice: just make sure you start with a plan, know what it is you want to try to convey with your pictures through your 'Statement of Intent' and above all, ask for advice.

Statement of Intent

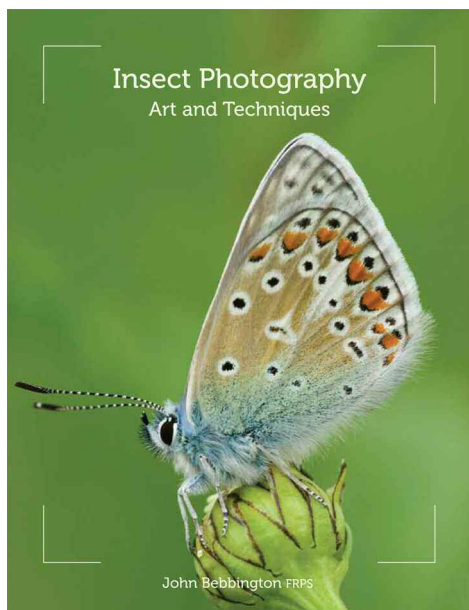
The coastline and shallow tidal lagoons of the Southernmost tip of the Al Batina coastal plain of Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, attracts a diverse range of both passage migrant and migrant Herons, Waders and Coastal Seabirds during the cooler winter months of the year.

The object of my panel is to document some of the birds that many make this area of tidal lagoons and shallow coastal beaches their temporary home here in Northern Oman.

My personal style is to get as up-close and personal with the subjects I photograph and I hope my panel portrays this. All of the images contained in my submission are wild birds.



Book Review



Insect Photography Art and Techniques

by John Bebbington FRPS

Publisher: Crowood Press Ltd.
ISBN 978 1 84797 378 8
Marked Price £16.99

Let me say, right at the outset, that it has been a delight to review this book. John is a professionally qualified Entomologist and Teacher, and of course holds our Fellowship, and it shows.

A comfortable size in the hand, the book measures a little over 9½" by 7¼" (or 246mm x 188mm) and is published in soft covers.

The book is very sensibly divided up with an Introduction on "Your reasons for Photographing Insects" and "What are you Trying to Show?" Then, of course, describing different types of equipment, sensibly not mentioning specific models and/or makes. (Given the rate at which manufacturers bring out new models by the time any book is printed there will be newer models on the market). It then moves on to "Knowing the Subject" and "Fieldcraft".

It is essential to add here that the text is profusely illustrated with beautifully reproduced and appropriately chosen photographs and this continues throughout the whole book.

John must have been asked many times, as have I, "but how do you know where to go or when?" Well he has gone a considerable way to answer that very question. Following this come sections in which "Composition", "Lighting" and "Capturing the Moment" are discussed followed by "Advanced Techniques" where you can learn about "Flight Photography", photographing insects in water and going beyond life size, including "Photomicrography", and "Image Stacking".

John then moves you on to "Processing the Images", and by showing illustrations of various editing windows, takes the reader through many of the basic processing techniques. I feel it was also very sensible to use "Elements 9" as the choice for these illustrations". (Advanced digital photographers could choose to bypass this section of course). Very sensibly John then discusses the importance of cataloguing your images and of course backing them up.

Finally he considers that you may wish to expand your horizons and talks about "Different Habitats", "Pollination", "Parasites" and "Life Cycles"; and then concludes by challenging you to rise up and expand your photography onwards and upwards. Should you wish to sell your images and/or work towards a Qualification there is advice too about that.

I can thoroughly recommend this book to everyone who wishes to start a new area of nature photography and although I have met very few people indeed in nature photography who feel they "know it all" I can honestly say that even they will certainly learn something from this book.
Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Editor's Note

This book can currently be purchased online from the publishers for £13.59 - a saving of £3.40 off the cover price.

Purchase on-line at:

<http://www.crowood.com/details.asp?isbn=9781847973788&t=Insect-Photography---Art-and-Techniques>

The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2012



Bronze Medal Prints

Opposite:
Brown Hare running
by Martin Withers FRPS

Below:
Alpine Mouse ear
by Sheila Weir ARPS





1

Selectors' Awards - Prints

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1: Yellow-tail Moth on Poppy Bud | Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS |
| 2: Grey Partridge | Martin Withers FRPS |
| 3: Male Tiger | Martin Chapman |
| 4: Honey Fungus | John Weir ARPS |
| 5: Scarlet Elf Cups | Kay Reeve FRPS |
| 6: Heartsease | John Weir ARPS |



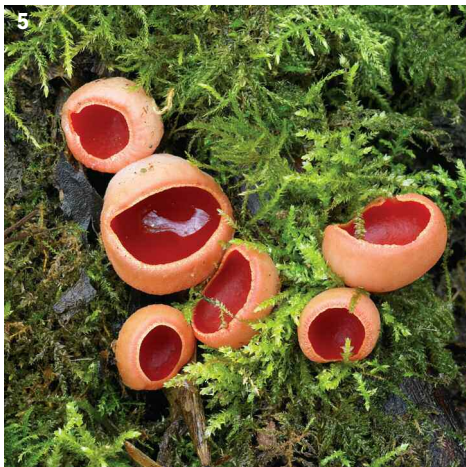
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Highly Commended Prints

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1: Cheetah Close Up | Stephen Rogala-Kaluski |
| 2: Fragrant Agrimony | James Foad |
| 3: Common Buzzard | Peter Beasley ARPS |
| 4: Polar Bear on ridge | Dickie Duckett FRPS |
| 5: Barn Owl | Martin Withers FRPS |
| 6: Common Cockchafer | Martin Withers FRPS |





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Commended Prints:

- 1: Brunnich's Guillemots
Dickie Duckett FRPS on icy sea
- 2: Shelduck lift off
Dickie Duckett FRPS
- 3: Fox Cubs
Martin Withers FRPS
- 4: Verticordia chrisanthella in habitat
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
- 5: Oyster Fungi
Kay Reeve FRPS6:
- 6: Jabiru
Jean MacWhirter LRPS



3



6

The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2012

Print Section

Gold Medal

Bronze Medals

Selectors' Awards

Highly Commended

Commended

Ringlet on Field Scabious

Brown Hare running

Alpine Mouse-ear

Male Tiger

Grey Partridge

Yellow-tail Moth on Poppy Bud

Scarlet Elf Cups

Honey Fungus

Heartsease

Common Buzzard

Polar Bear on ridge

Common Cockchafer

Barn Owl

Cheetah Close Up

Fragrant Agrimony

Brunnich's Guillemots on icy sea

Shelduck lift off

Garden Tiger on Vipers Bugloss

Fox Cubs

Jabiru

Verticordia chrisanthella in Habitat

Oyster Fungi

Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS

Martin Withers FRPS

Sheila Weir ARPS

Martin Chapman

Martin Withers FRPS

Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS

Kay Reeve FRPS

John Weir ARPS

John Weir ARPS

Peter Beasley ARPS

Dickie Duckett FRPS

Martin Withers FRPS

Martin Withers FRPS

Stephen Rogala-Kaluski ARPS

James Foad

Dickie Duckett FRPS

Dickie Duckett FRPS

Gordon Follows FRPS

Martin Withers FRPS

Jean MacWhirter LRPS

Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS

Kay Reeve FRPS

Print Acceptances Category A:

Peter Beasley ARPS

Eric Begbie

Shaun Boycott-Taylor ARPS

Norman Carmichael ARPS

Martin Chapman

John Cucksey ARPS

Dickie Duckett FRPS

Common Buzzard

Long-tailed Tit

Sparrowhawk

Yellow-billed Spoonbill

Gannet in Flight

Female Ptarmigan calling

Kingfisher and prey

Female Golden Eye

High Brown Fritillaries

Male Tiger

Two Cheetah cubs

Ascension Land crab

Hyena breakfast

Caracal, Masai Mara

Leopard, Masai Mara

Polar Bear on ridge

Brunnich's Guillemots on icy sea

Shelduck lift off

Kittiwake landing by iceberg

Black-browed Albatross over waves

Short-eared Owl hunting

Highly Commended

Barbara Lawton Selector's Award

Highly Commended

Commended

Commended

Alan Edwards ARPS	Red-bellied Woodpecker Laughing Gulls White Ibis	
Dr Geoff Einon ARPS	Blue Wildebeest White-tailed Sea Eagle Red Squirrel	
Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS	Kingfisher landing with prey Sedge Warbler in song Elephant Hawk Moth on <i>Xanthoria</i> sp Male Green-breasted Mango Hummingbird in flight	
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Ringlet on Field Scabious Yellow-tail Moth on Poppy Bud Harvest Mouse	Gold Medal Robert Hawkesworth Selector's Award
James Foad	Emperor Moth Larvae	
Gordon Follows FRPS	Garden Tiger on Vipers Bugloss Reddish Egret chasing fish Black-crowned Night-heron in flight Green Heron fishing Anhinga with nest material	Commended
Dr Thomas Hanahoe FRPS	Knot roost with movement and flow Puffin in flight Otter Barn Owl at dawn Black-tailed Godwit and Knot	
Bryan Knox ARPS	White Pelicans in flight Polar Bear about to jump Carmine Bee-eaters	
Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Polar Bear on melting pack ice South American Black Skimmer Polar Bear & Cub Southern Crested Caracara	
Jean MacWhirter LRPS	Jabiru Buff-necked Ibis with grub	Commended
Ian McLean ARPS	Black-tailed Skimmer Azure Damselfly Marsh Frog	
Ken Plumb LRPS	Painted Lady Praying Mantis Hermit Crab	
Norman Prue FRPS	Leaf Tailed Gecko -Australia	
Ken Rasmussen LRPS	Common Blue Damselfly	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Marmalade Hoverfly Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary on Bracken Frond	
Richard Revels FRPS	Stag Beetles in combat Four-spotted Chaser Dragonfly Snow Bunting hovering Silver-washed Fritillary Butterfly	
David Robinson ARPS	Limpkin preening Willet feeding Double-crested Cormorant Great Blue Heron with nesting material	

Stephen Rogala-Kaluski ARPS	Cheetah Close Up Ground Hornbill with Frog Stalking Tiger	Highly Commended
Mike Rowe ARPS	Fighting Willets Bananaquit Stealing Nectar from Hibiscus Yellow Rat Snake with Rat Black-crowned Night Heron with fish Bald Eagle with Cormorant	
Brian Sherwin LRPS	Dotted Chestnut Moth	
Sonja Thompson FRPS	Bearded Seal on Iceflow Mountain Gorillas grooming	
Sheila Weir ARPS	Dark Green Fritillary	
Martin Withers FRPS	Brown Hare running Grey Partridge Common Cockchafer Barn Owl Fox Cubs	Bronze Medal Mike Lane Selector's Award Highly Commended Highly Commended Commended

Print Acceptances Category B:

Tony Bond FRPS	Velvet Shank	
Shaun Boycott-Taylor ARPS	Common Broomrape	
Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS	Yellow Horned-poppy in environment	
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	<i>Verticordia chrisanthella</i> in habitat Black Kangaroo Paw	Commended
James Foad	Fragrant Agrimony	Highly Commended
John Jones ARPS	<i>Flavoparmelia caperata</i> with red pigmented algae Redfoot Boletus Silurian Pedestal Glacial Erratic	
Ludi Lochner	Fritillary King Protea	
Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Icelandic Icebergs with volcanic ash	
Ken Rasmussen LRPS	Knapweed broomrape on Greater Knapweed Shaggy Scalycap	
Kay Reeve FRPS	Scarlet Elf Cups Oyster Fungi Trooping Funnel Caps Clustered Brittlestems, with fly	Barbara Lawton Selector's Award Commended
Richard Revels FRPS	Turban Buttercups in Cyprus <i>Mycena galericulata</i> Fungi	
Mike Rowe ARPS	Stunted Oaks - Wistman's Wood - Dartmoor	
Stan Saunders ARPS	Woolly Thistle	
John Weir ARPS	Honey Fungus Heartsease Shaggy Scalycap Rough Saxifrage Pine Boletus Moccasin Orchid	Mike Lane Selector's Award Robert Hawkesworth Selector's Award
Sheila Weir ARPS	Alpine Mouse-ear Giant Fennel <i>Ramaria flava</i> Scurfy Deceiver	Bronze Medal

Projected Image Awards:

Gold Medal	White Satin Moth on Horsetail	Trevor Davenport ARPS
Bronze Medals	Jay with acorn	Mike Wilkes FRPS
	Australian Morning Glory	Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
Selectors' Awards	Four-spotted Chaser	Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
	Great-crested Grebe taking off	Dickie Duckett FRPS
	Late Spring Hoverfly	Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
	Sea Bindweed	John Weir ARPS
	European Larch	James Foad
	Alpine Stonecrop	Sheila Weir ARPS
Highly Commended	Grey Phalaropes copulating	Dickie Duckett FRPS
	High Brown Fritillary on Betony	Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
	Eyed Hawk-moth caterpillar	Gordon Follows ARPS
	Snow Goose dark phase in flight	John Chamberlin FRPS
	Red-footed Falcons	Stephen Street ARPS
	Male Sparrowhawk	Tony Hamblin FRPS
	Globe flowers	Jon Allanson LRPS
	Contracted Bubble Coral	Richard Merritt FRPS
	Alpine Toadflax	Sheila Weir ARPS
Commended	Snowy Egret running on water	David Cantrille FRPS
	European Bee-eaters	David Wessely ARPS
	Polar Bear courtship	Ian MacWhirter ARPS
	<i>Fom es fom entarius</i>	Fiona MacKay ARPS
	Angels' Wings	Sheila Weir ARPS

Projected Image Acceptances Category A:

Nigel Atkins LRPS	Humpback Whale	
	Black Rhinoceros	
John Bebbington FRPS	Emerald Damselfly roosting	
Robert Blandford LRPS	Wolf Spider	
David Cantrille FRPS	Roseate Spoonbill and Snowy Egret confrontation	
	Reddish Egret jumping	
	Snowy Egret running on water	Commended
John Chamberlin FRPS	Snow Goose dark phase in flight	Highly Commended
	Alert Ground Squirrels	
	Sandhill Crane landing	
	Dark Chanting Goshawk taking off	
	Snow Goose flying	
Trevor Davenport ARPS	White Satin Moth on Horsetail	Gold Medal
	Black Guillemot with Butterfish	
	Northern Dune Tiger Beetles paired	
	Cicada	
Bob Devine ARPS	Lion cub in tree	
Dickie Duckett FRPS	Great-crested Grebe taking off	Mike Lane Selector's Award
	Grey Phalaropes copulating	Highly Commended
	Snow Goose landing	
	Polar Bear on ice	
Brian Eacock ARPS	Goldfinch	
Dr Geoff Einon ARPS	Red Squirrel	
	White-tailed Sea Eagle	

Chris Ellison LRPS	Male Banded Demoiselle	
Dr Kevin Elsby ARPS	Female Bog Bush Cricket on Cross-leaved Heath	
	Gannet with nest offering	
	White-necked Jacobin Hummingbird in flight	
	Pink-baked Pelican	
	Lilac-breasted Roller perched	
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Four-spotted Chaser	Dawn Osborn Selector's Award
	Late Spring Hoverfly	Robert Hawkesworth Selector's Award
	High Brown Fritillary on Betony	Highly Commended
	Crested Tern calling	
	Nettle-tree Butterfly camouflage	
Gordon Follows ARPS	Eyed Hawk-moth caterpillar	Highly Commended
	Storm Petrel	
Graham Goddard ARPS	Teal	
	Pheasant	
Tony Hamblin FRPS	Male Sparrowhawk	Highly Commended
	Coyote	
	Great Spotted Woodpecker	
Dr Thomas Hanahoe FRPS	Barn Owl	
	Marsh Harrier with nest material	
	Cuckoo	
Douglas Hands ARPS	<i>Metellina segmentata</i> exhibiting cannibalism	
Margaret Johnson LRPS	Elephant at Nxai Pan	
Peter Jones ARPS	Humpback Whale breaching	
	Golden Eagle with Fox kill	
	Polar Bear and Cub	
Patricia Kearton LRPS	Polar Bear	
	Polar Bear with Cub	
Eddy Lane ARPS	Olive Ridley Turtle, Galapagos	
Pam Lane ARPS	King Penguin Rookery, S Georgia	
	Springbok, Etosha	
Adrian Langdon ARPS	Black-tailed Godwit	
	Bittern in flight	
Fiona MacKay ARPS	<i>Pentatoma rufipes</i>	
Ian MacWhirter ARPS	Polar Bear courtship	Commended
	Ringed Kingfisher diving	
Richard Merritt FRPS	Saron Shrimp	
Mark Monkton ARPS	Red Deer in mist	
	Marbled White	
Helen Mugridge ARPS	Mountain Gorilla	
	Great Northern Diver	
Philip Mugridge ARPS	Spruce Grouse	
Andrew Parsons ARPS	Hedge Sparrow singing	
	Female Chaffinch	
	Juvenile Great Tits	
Ron Perkins ARPS	Sika Stag	
	Rock Pipit	
	Sandwich Tern	
Jane Rees LRPS	American Red Fox	

Richard Revels FRPS	Coots Fighting	
	Wasp Spider	
	Brimstone Butterfly backlit in woodland	
Bob Sharples LRPS	Kestrel	
Colin Smale ARPS	Yellow Wagtail	
	Gannet	
	Pintail	
Judy Smith LRPS	Lilac-breasted Roller	
Stephen Street ARPS	Red-footed Falcons	Highly Commended
	Common Snipe	
	Marbled White	
	Pygmy Cormorant	
Joyce Streets	Stoat	
	Kittiwake and Chick	
Nigel Symington LRPS	Black Guillemot	
Ian Tait ARPS	Gurney's Sugarbird	
Valerie Walker ARPS	Alligator and Snake	
	Giant Kingfisher with prey	
	Ringed Plover running	
	Fish Eagle approach	
David Wessely ARPS	European Bee-eaters	Commended
	European Bee-eater	
Mike Wilkes FRPS	Jay with acorn	Bronze Medal
Martin Withers FRPS	Short-eared Owl	
	Galah	
	Lesser Jacana	
	Barn Owl hunting	
	Brown Hare	
	Little Owl	

Projected Image Acceptances Category B:

Jon Allanson LRPS	Globe flowers	Highly Commended
	Spotted Gentians	
Robert Blandford LRPS	White Campion	
Joe Curtis ARPS	Tulip Stamens	
Alan Edwards ARPS	<i>Pholiota adiposa</i>	
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS	Australian Morning Glory	Bronze Medal
James Foad	European Larch	Mike Lane Selector's Award
Ludi Lochner	<i>Watsonia meriana</i>	
Fiona MacKay ARPS	<i>Fomes fomentarius</i>	Commended
	<i>Laetiporus sulphureus</i>	
Sue McGarrigle LRPS	Birch Polypore fungi	
	Honey Fungi	
	Porcelain Fungus	
	Branching Oyster fungus	
Richard Merritt FRPS	Contracted Bubble Coral	Highly Commended
Mark Monkton ARPS	Early Spider Orchid	
	Porcelain Fungus	
	<i>Hericium coralloide</i>	

Philip Mugridge ARPS
Andrew Parsons ARPS
Ken Rasmussen LRPS

Jane Rees LRPS
Richard Revels FRPS

Stan Saunders ARPS

Dr Paul Sievers ARPS
Judy Smith LRPS
John Weir ARPS

Sheila Weir ARPS

Northern Lights Glacier Lagoon Iceland
Stinkhorn
Wild Mignonette
Fungus *Mycena* sp
Dryads Saddle
Snowbells in Swiss Alps
Alpine Pansy's in Swiss valley
Alpine Mountain Avens
Red Campion
Mycena galericulata
Giant Polypore
Sea Bindweed
Sheathed Woodtuft
Alpine Stonecrop
Alpine Toadflax
Angels' Wings
Wild Tulip
Solorina crocea

Dawn Osborn Selector's Award

Robert Hawkesworth Selector's Award
Highly Commended
Commended

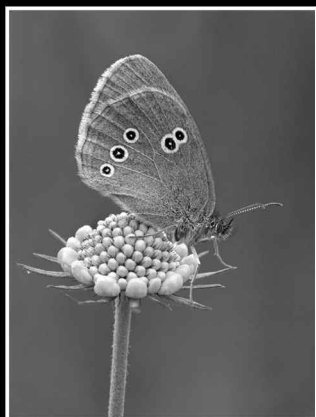


The
Royal
Photographic
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The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2012



Gold Medal Print:
Ringlet on Field Scabious
by Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS



Gold Medal Projected Image:
White Satin on Horsetail
by Trevor Davenport ARPS

Selectors: Dawn Osborn FRPS, Barbara Lawton FRPS, Robert Hawkesworth FRPS & Mike Lane FRPS

Exhibition Secretary: Sue McGarrigle LRPS

CD/DVD production: Ashley Franklin ARPS & Jim Hatje ARPS

Selectors' comments

Prints

Overall there was a good diversity of subject matter to select the exhibition from, with a good range of British species in particular, although the number of botanical species was disappointing.

Print quality has improved in recent years but there still needs to be more awareness of the treatment of backgrounds, which in some cases were distracting with bright highlights and/or clutter.

Gold Medal – Ringlet butterfly

The print quality was very high making this picture stand out and the exposure and overall composition very pleasing.

Bronze Medal – Hare running

Technically a very difficult shot to get sharp as the hare is running towards the camera. The picture is much improved by having the appearance of being taken from a low viewpoint.

Bronze Medal – Alpine Mouse Ear

This was a successful picture of a particularly difficult subject. The photographer has dealt with exposure, depth of field and composition admirably.

Barbara Lawton FRPS

Male Tiger - I like the overlay of pictorialism and showing the animal in its natural habitat. Lovely use of lighting and good image size.

Scarlet Elfcups - A vivid picture with an attractive composition; exposure and depth of field very well handled.

Mike Lane FRPS:

Grey Partridge - It is the setting that makes this picture – a very typical habitat for a Grey Partridge and the wintry conditions provide an added bonus.

Honey Fungus - A common species but the photographer has found an excellent example, out in the open and well lit, and has made an attractive picture.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS:

Yellow tail moth on Poppy - Lovely image of this moth on a most attractive perch. Nicely isolated from background and the small image size helps to contribute to the natural impact of the picture.

Heartsease - The photographer has shown the unusual composition of the way the plant had grown to great advantage so the photograph has a great deal of impact.

Projected Images

A good range of subject matter with many images from the UK and Europe rather than further afield. The continuing trend for action pictures, rather than portraits was noticeable.

There was a significant difference in processing quality across the entries. Some images appeared muddy and thin with a lack of sharpness and clarity, many with messy back-grounds. Too many species were shown overly large within the frame and it was disappointing to see this creeping back into nature photography.

Gold Medal - White Satin Moth

The quality of this image shone above the rest. An excellent composition with all the technical details expertly handled. A great deal of care was put into the taking of this image

Bronze - Jay with acorn

While not a difficult bird to attract to a feeding station, catching it at precisely at the moment it flips an acorn takes a lot of skill and patience.

Bronze - Australian Morning Glory

A colourful and eye catching image with instant appeal - a sunny beach habitat with the ocean in the background and these beautifully coloured flowers perfectly placed within the frame - a simple and most attractive composition.

Robert Hawkesworth FRPS

Late Spring Hoverfly - An insect image with impact giving it immediate eye appeal.

Stonecrop - A good natural striking design, very well seen and photographed

Dawn Osborn FRPS

Four spotted Chaser - All the important elements are in sharp focus and the background is without distractions. Images like this don't happen by accident – a lot of care was exercised at the time of taking the image.

Sea Bindweed - A simple but most effective composition.

Mike Lane FRPS

Great-crested Grebe - A razor sharp image caught at the peak of the action as the bird takes off or possibly chases another grebe.

European Larch - A common enough sight in the countryside, but very well photographed with complimentary colours, red against the green.

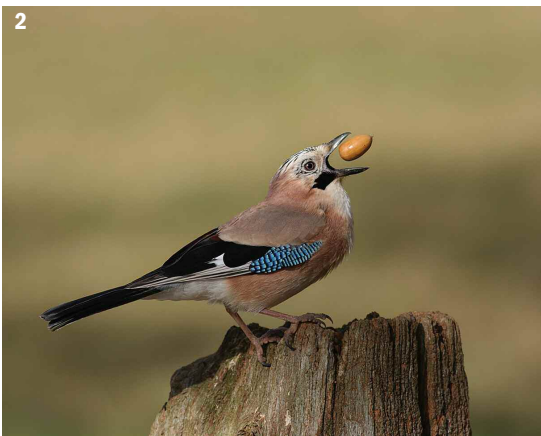


Gold Medal

1: White Satin Moth on Horsetail
Trevor Davenport ARPS

Bronze Medals

- 2: Jay with acorn**
Mike Wilkes FRPS
- 3: Australian Morning Glory**
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS





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Selectors' Awards - Projected Images

- 1: Four-spotted Chaser
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
- 2: Late Spring Hoverfly
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
- 3: Sea Bindweed
John Weir ARPS
- 4: European Larch
James Foad
- 5: Great-crested Grebe taking off
Dickie Duckett FRPS
- 6: Alpine Stonecrop
Sheila Weir ARPS

Highly Commended Projected Images

- 1: Snow Goose dark phase in flight
John Chamberlin FRPS
- 2: Contracted Bubble Coral
Richard Merritt FRPS
- 3: Grey Phalaropes copulating
Dickie Duckett FRPS
- 4: Red-footed Falcons
Stephen Street ARPS
- 5: Globe flowers
Jon Allanson LRPS
- 6: Alpine Toadflax
Sheila Weir ARPS





Commended Projected Images

- 1: Snowy Egret running on water
David Cantrille FRPS
- 2: European Bee-eaters
David Wessely ARPS
- 3: Polar Bear courtship
Ian MacWhirter ARPS
- 4: Fomes fomentarius
Fiona MacKay ARPS
- 5: Angels' Wings
Sheila Weir ARPS



Applying for my Associateship

by Mick Durham ARPS

I had been considering applying for an RPS distinction for sometime but wasn't sure what standard I was at. Following a successful application for my MPAGB I decided I would make a submission for the Associate Distinction.

Choosing the subject for my panel of work was, to a certain extent, easy. I had recently undertaken two photographic trips to Scandinavia and had achieved a number of pleasing images. One trip, a six week long camper van excursion gave me a range of summer images and a winter visit with Shetland Wildlife meant I could balance them with some different species in new settings. Selecting the actual images was not so easy.

I had a few which I considered were 'bankers' – the Ruff, Great Grey Owl and the Siberian Tit had all done well for me in camera club competitions – but then it was a case of choosing others that would complement them.

After whittling my selection down to about 20 images I invited a couple of friends over to get their opinion. Inevitably they didn't agree! So eventually I had to go with my instincts and select the 15 images myself.

My criteria for selection was:

- Technically sound
- Pleasing compositions
- Do they fit together as a panel.

I printed them at home on an Epson 3800 printer using Permaget Oyster paper, finishing them off by mounting them on white mountboard with window cut outs.

I sent them off with fingers crossed and was delighted when it was announced that I had been successful.

Birdlife of Scandinavia



Long-tailed Duck
Clangula hyemalis



Iceland Gull
Larus glaucoideus



White-tailed Eagle
Haliaeetus albicilla



King Eider
Somateria spectabilis



Common Eider
Somateria mollissima



Long-tailed Skua
Stercorarius longicaudus



Great Grey Owl
Strix nebulosa



Bluethroat
Luscinia svecica



Redshank
Tringa totanus



Golden Plover
Pluvialis apricaria



Pine Grosbeak
Pinicola enucleator



Red-throated Diver
Gavia stellata



Ruff
Philomachus pugnax



Siberian Jay
Perisoreus infaustus



Siberian Tit
Parus cinctus



Statement of Intent

Birdlife of Scandinavia

I first visited Norway as a student in the late 1970's and always wanted to return. I got my chance a few years ago and have now made three visits specifically to photograph the wildlife of northern Scandinavia. Two of these were extended visits of three and six weeks in the summer and the third was for a week in the winter. A talk based on these trips has been well received at a number of camera clubs and natural history societies.

Long lenses and the judicious use of a hide meant my photography caused little disturbance to the wildlife. No birds needing special permission were photographed.

The aim of my panel is to illustrate the variety of birdlife in this region and I have chosen images to show a range of different behaviours and habitats and to give a balance between winter and summer.





Image List

- 1 Long-tailed Duck -
Clangula hyemalis
- 2 Iceland Gull -
Larus glaucoides
- 3 White-tailed Eagle -
Haliaeetus albicilla
- 4 King Eider -
Somateria spectabilis
- 5 Common Eider -
Somateria mollissima
- 6 Long-tailed Skua -
Stercorarius lomgicaudus
- 7 Great Grey Owl -
Strix nebulosa
- 8 Bluethroat -
Luscinia svecica
- 9 Redshank -
Tringa totanus
- 10 Golden Plover -
Pluvialis apricaria
- 11 Pine Grosebeak -
Pinicola enucleator
- 12 Red-throated Diver -
Gavia stellata
- 13 Ruff -
Philomachus pugnax
- 14 Siberian Jay -
Perisoreus infaustus
- 15 Siberian Tit -
Parus cinctus



Canaries and Callistemons

by John Woodward LRPS

Escaping from a grey English November to Madeira for a week was a memorable experience. Madeira has only just over double the land area of the Isle of Wight, but it is totally different. Volcanic in origin, the interior is remote with mountains rising to more than 6000 feet. It is on the same latitude as the Straits of Gibraltar and has a sub-tropical climate, so the first thing that strikes you as you land is the exotic flora. Bouganvillias cascade from balconies, orange and blue Strelitzias and crimson Poinsettias grow wild and Morning Glory climbs for more than fifty feet up some of the sea cliffs. Bananas cluster on terraces in the hillsides as well as sugar cane and you also find Avocados, Yams and of course the vineyards for the famous Madeira wine.

Insects were a trifle disappointing on Madeira, with the exception of the Monarch butterflies that floated and soared around the gardens. In the USA,

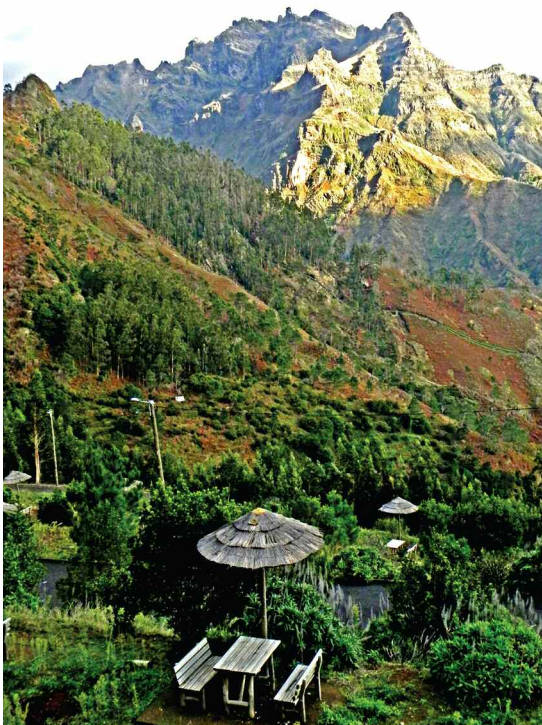
the incredible migrations of these amazing creatures are legendary, but it appears that on Madeira the insect is resident. The Monarchs were a delight to observe on the wing, but almost impossible to photograph as they rarely perched for long. I did get a record shot, but butterflies are best photographed either with their wings folded or out flat and this eluded me completely. There were other butterflies around, including a swarm of *Lycaenids* that were so frisky that they wouldn't allow a lens anywhere near them. I did think one of them was in the short-tailed blue group, but couldn't be sure. The hotel lights were kept on all night on the passageways, but although I scanned the walls and trees near them in daylight I did not see a single moth. Madeira has its own sub-species of the Spurge Hawk, but perhaps November was just the wrong time of the year.

Madeira lizards *Lacerta dugesii* were everywhere. The young are only two or three inches long with stripes and are as slim as blades of grass. The older members of the same species have spots rather than stripes. There is another lizard species on the island – the Tenerife Lizard *Gallotia galloti*, but we did not see one during our stay. This species was introduced to the Funchal Botanical Garden and it is nearly twice the size of the native lizard. Madeira has no snakes, but it does have its own frog. This is the Iberian Water Frog *Rana perezi* that bears the name of the wealthy nobleman who introduced the amphibian to the island in 1834 because he enjoyed eating them. They have prospered and I found a colony at a stream outlet on the south coast of the island.



Madeira has three bird specialities. These are the Trocaz Pigeon, Zino's Petrel and a sub-species of the Firecrest. Of the first two we saw not a trace, but our taxi driver who took us on an extended tour of the island stopped at a picnic place high up in the forests of the north and said we would find a Firecrest there. And we did! A good view eluded us, but I did see a minute, dumpy, intensely active little bird with a prominent wing bar in the shadow of the trees and there was no doubt about the identification although no photograph was possible. Madeira also has the plain swift, smaller and slimmer than our species and as many of these birds overwinter on the island we saw several of them during our stay. The Rose-ringed Parakeet, now common throughout Europe, has also been introduced on Madeira and we saw a fine male feeding on palm tree seeds close to where we stayed.

The Yellow-legged Gull is the most prominent member of the gull family in Madeira and the one I photographed had black on the bill which I learned means it is a sub-species bred in Turkey and the eastern Mediterranean. Near the same river outlet was a diving duck that looked like a female Scaup because of the large patch of white at the top of the bill, but the head shape and the bill markings near the tip confirmed it was actually a Tufted Duck. On the south coast there is a lagoon, Lugar de Baixo, that sometimes attracts unusual waders. When we visited the site, a team of noisy workmen were busy repairing a wall, but despite this I found a small group of Turnstones and several Grey Wagtails. We were puzzled by a small striped bird feeding on the nectar from bottlebrush plants, (Callistemon). It looked a bit like a Bunting, but had a deeply forked tail and a yellow rump rather like a larger version of the Serin. It was, as we soon realised, the original version of the Canary, but was much less yellow and more striated than the popular cage bird.

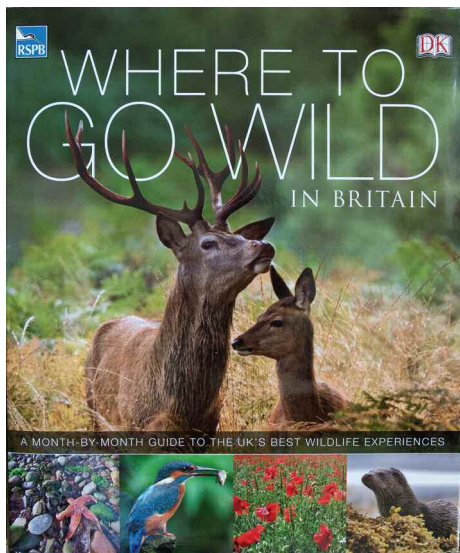




And my camera equipment for Madeira? Well, I have a couple of Canon DSLRs with a selection of lenses suitable for nature photography. I left them all at home. Following an enjoyable correspondence with Russell Edwards, who writes regularly for both the RPS Journal and The Iris, I acquired a Nikon P100 'bridge camera' a year ago. It is less than a quarter of the weight of my Canon kit - significant as one advances through the eighth decade, especially when on air travel. Yes, it has its drawbacks. The shutter delay makes it difficult at times to capture Cartier-Bresson's 'decisive moment' which is so important in nature photography and I do not like the electronic viewfinder. 'Noise' at high ISO settings is also a problem, but it performs very well at ISO 200-400. To have the equivalent of a 650mm long focus lens and a reliable macro facility in one highly portable camera body as well as image stabilisation across the whole range and an adjustable monitor screen are telling factors. All the images in this article were taken without a tripod on my P100.



Book Review



Where to Go Wild in Britain
David Tipling and others
Dorling Kindersley, 2009. 336 pages £25

One soon outgrows one's patch and seeks suitable places further afield to photograph nature. Finding those places can be difficult

Until recently, the only sources of information available were from other naturalists, who often keep this information to themselves, and guides on where to watch birds etc.

Now the Web provides, more and more, a source for such information and some of the Wildlife Trusts in each of our counties can also be very effective in directing one to suitable sites within their territories. Nevertheless, those newer sources do not always provide the complete answer.

It was with a sense of caution that I picked up "Where to Go Wild in Great Britain". The title suggested that it was a guide to the greatest raves in the Kingdom! It was only the cover page that prompted me to look further.

A quick glance at the contributors – Jonathan Elphick, Chris Gibson, Rob Hume, David Tipling, and John Woodward with a foreword by Mike Digler and an endorsement from the RSPB – suggested that this book would be authoritative and thorough in its treatment of the subject. And so it is.

The book is divided into twelve chapters, each dealing with a month, a regional directory and a detailed and comprehensive index, a very important feature in a reference work such as this.

Each chapter commences with an introduction and a general overview followed by six columns, each with a heading identifying a different habitat. Below each heading is a list of sites described by that heading. Thus, for January, the six headings are – Inlets and Estuaries, Wetlands, Wild in the City, Coast, Heath and Moor, Islands. The headings are not the same for each month.

Below "Inlets and Estuaries", for January, there is listed the Dee, Fal, Burry and Exe Estuaries, and Chichester Harbour.

Each chapter is spread over between 18 and 32 pages and contains a huge amount of information for the month. A particular site is featured in detail across two adjacent pages and the outer "wings" of the pages are taken up with useful information including "Where else to See", "Through the Year" and general notes.

The content of this book is more than you would expect to find on the Web or from a local Wildlife Trust, certainly not without a huge amount of time spent on research. Used in conjunction with Ordnance Survey maps, it should open up many more opportunities for serious wildlife photographers.

I have no hesitation in recommending this work – it should be on the bookshelf of everyone serious about wildlife photography!

Ludi Lochner

Letter to the Editor

Subject: Nomenclature

Dear Editor

I joined the Nature Group just after its formation and I have in turn been Editor and then Chairman. Now, at the age of 92 years I am unable to take an active part but I have had concern that the Group was losing its way and I am sure that the founder members would agree. Accordingly I was really thrilled by Fiona Mackay's article "Unnatural Selection".

At one time our Exhibition rules specifically banned 'cute' and uninformative titles. I thought that we had reached the bottom when (in *The Iris*, I'm afraid) I saw a photograph with the title "Fungus on wood". What about "Bird in tree" or "Plant on ground"? When I take a photograph I like to know what it is that I'm taking; if I don't know at the time I set it aside until I can find out; if I can't it goes in the bin. no matter how good I think it is.

Some animal and plants have long established English names; some do not but all have scientific names. Because these are used internationally they have to be in Latin. Each has a generic name which starts with a capital letter. This is followed by a specific name starting with a small (lower case) letter. This much should be known and used by anyone who is, or aspires to be, a Nature photographer. In the garden we use Latin names all the time (*Rhododendron*, *Primula*, *Lobelia*, etc.) Most schoolboys would, if shown a picture, be able to name *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

In my opinion the title should include the common name (if it has one) followed by the scientific name in brackets. The latter can be omitted if the common name leaves no doubt (eg. Robin) but beware of names like Buttercup (where there are at least half a dozen species). This, surely, is what defines a Nature Photographer - or am I being too old-fashioned?

I might add that it is 'The Iris' which makes me continue my membership. Many thanks to you for that.

Best wishes

Gordon Dickson

Continued from page 4

Exhibition organisers are reluctant to reject the entries with trivial titles or transfer them to the Open section where they belong, fearing that next year's entry will be affected. There is also some evidence that people who 'ought to know better' are seeing others getting away with it and taking advantage. Selectors can take unilateral action but are obliged to follow the organisers' guidelines.

So how can this dumbing down be arrested? The PSA and FIAP could put a stop to cute titles

overnight by reminding organisers of their rules and removing patronage from those who do not comply. It is less easy to see what the RPS could do as the Society's Distinctions are not based on exhibition success. Perhaps the best course of action would be for the Society to use its considerable prestige to draw attention to this race to the bottom.

However, you can be certain that our own exhibition will never succumb to these practices. If we do not maintain standards who will?

It makes you smile

by Colin Smale ARPS.

Many years ago I worked in a camera shop. The scrapes some folk get into with their cameras is legion. Almost all problems are a lack of intimate knowledge of equipment and even more so nowadays because today's cameras are so complex.

Handbooks

Handbooks have always been 'quite a read' but today's handbooks are like war and peace. The temptation to just grasp the basics and hope that will do are not only likely to effect the quality of your images but restrict creativity because you didn't realise your camera could do that.

I happened to be discussing digital cameras and lens micro-adjustment to one of the members of my camera club and as others joined in the conversation (as they do) I quickly realised how very few photo-graphers had ever heard of the subject! (It's in the handbook). It horrified some to discover that it is quite possible to take a brand new digital camera out of its box and a brand new lens out of its box, marry them up and get soft focus images. Camera manufacturers are reluctant to discuss the subject.

I am currently writing a book (my first) on wildlife photography and I asked Arthur Morris (Birds as Art) how often he calibrated his lenses. He said

"every three months or whenever my gear comes back from the service/repair dept".

Just Google the subject for more in depth information.

How bad can it get?

Last year I was in one of those wooden communal reserve hides and there was another chap there using a digital SLR. He said he always had problems with his camera and was seriously considering changing it for some other model.

Nothing much was happening outside bird wise and so the conversation moved right along as these things do. More than anything, he said, he was having focusing problems. He showed me some flight shots he had taken that morning on his LCD screen. The birds were not sharp and what's more the images were under exposed. I agreed that the images could have been sharper but said that the

birds in flight were a tad underexposed too. He absolutely couldn't agree that the birds were under exposed because, he said, "I'm using aperture priority, therefore the exposure must be correct!" (Yipes). Not many minutes later a flock of waders flew in and we both got onto them. As he pressed the shutter I heard his camera go "peep peep"!!

Reviews

If I had acted on the so called reviews of the Canon 7D I would never have dared buy one. (I have just moved over to Canon from Nikon after 40+ years). Luckily a friend of mine is a Canon user and bird photographer and I got great information from him. Now I wouldn't be without a 7D. He knew the handbooks inside out and it showed.

Test yourself

As a test, how many of you have ever heard of 'Trap Focus'? Not even the staff at one of my local photo retailers had ever heard of it. Reading handbooks these days is a real pain, I still haven't waded through all of mine yet if I am honest but we have to. Today's cameras are jam packed with all kinds of tools, they are in the menu, they are there to assist you in your creativity and what is more, if you do have a high spec SLR, these various technological tools have cost you a lot of money.

And finally

Just a little bit of humour from those far off days when I worked in that photo retailer's.

A lady and her daughter were about to go on a cruise and really fancied a Polaroid camera. They looked so puzzled about it and so I asked them what their worry was about the camera. The lady said:

"It says Polaroid 'Land' camera, will it still work at sea?"!

Happy days.

RPS Nature Group 2012 AGM

The 36th Annual general Meeting of the RPS Nature Group was held at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, on Saturday 31st March 2012. It was chaired by John Bebbington FRPS and attended by 48 members.

Apologies

These were received from Peter Basterfield, Bill Burns- Begg, Trevor Davenport, Kevin Elsby, Jean-Pierre Ferrari, Barbara Hawkesworth, Trevor Hyman, Kevin Maskell, Margery Maskell, Kay Reeve

Minutes of the 2011 AGM

The minutes of the 2011 AGM printed in issue 110 of 'The Iris' were accepted as a true and correct record of what took place and signed by John Bebbington.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

Starting on a sad note I have to mark the passing away of Colin Smith, an outstanding Natural History Photographer and a Committee member for many years. He will be greatly missed. I would like take this opportunity to present the Nature Group Silver Medal to his widow, Joan, as a measure of the Committee's heartfelt thanks for all of Colin's contributions to both the Group and the Society, and to responsible Natural History photography over many years.

Firstly I would like to thank all members of the Committee who have supported me during my first year as Chairman; our Secretary, Margaret Johnson, who has been very efficient at reminding me of things I should be doing; our Magazine Editor, Dawn Osborn, who again has produced excellent issues of 'The Iris' (I should mention here that on Wednesday two members of the Distinctions Advisory Board commented that 'The Iris' still sets the standard for Group publications); our Treasurer, Margery Maskell, sadly can't be with us today as she is recuperating from surgery – I am sure that you will all join me in wishing her a speedy recovery. I would specially like to thank our vice-chairman, Tony Bond, for assisting me in organising a survey of Members' opinions on field days (sadly very few responses – details later) and Richard Revels for agreeing to give today's presentation at quite short notice, owing to our original speaker being ill.

I'm also grateful to James Foad for organising the very successful (bit rather undersubscribed) 2011 residential weekend at Kingcombe and to Len Shepherd for organising this year's weekend at Malham Tarn, which has been fully booked for some time.

Thanks are due too, to everyone who has organised field days for this year; I hope that they will be supported despite the high cost (and, currently, problematic availability) of fuel.

My request for feedback on field days produced only four direct responses from Group members. Two found that most days were too far from home; two discovered that they were the only ones interested in a particular outing (disappointing for the organisers) and one found that the vent had been cancelled at short notice. Obviously travel is a concern, but I hope that as many of us as possible will support the six days which have so far been organised for this year, and which have been advertised in 'The Iris'; there will also be a trip to Ryewater, Dorset in July, this will be announced in the next issue of 'The Iris'.

I wear two other hats; the first is as representative of the Group on the RPS Advisory Board (I cannot attend its Spring meeting as it is taking place today!) and the second is as the person with access to the RPS website. I have to confess that this has not been updated recently – my only excuse is that, as macro moth recorder for Somerset, I have been overwhelmed by the mammoth task of producing a county moth atlas.

Finally, I am looking forward to my second year as Chair of what to me is the most friendly and supportive Group within the RPS. However, at the end of my term, I will be standing down as AB rep and web site link, so we will need a member who lives reasonably close to Bath to take over the former role and someone with reasonable computer skills for the latter.

Thank you for your support for today's event.

Treasurer's Report

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

Subscriptions: The Subscription Income shown in the Balance Sheet is that credited monthly to our Cash Book Account during the current Financial year (which is, of course, the Nature Group Subscriptions paid to the RPS at Bath for December 2010 through to November 2011). The Life Members' subscription reimbursements for both 2010 and 2011 are included in the 2011 accounts, as the 2010 subscriptions were not paid into the Nature Group account until February 2011.

Lectures & Workshops: The Chairman's Day event on the 6th November, organised by John Bebbington, was very successful, and raised £84.62. In addition, John was at the 'Think Photography' event in November 2010, but his expenses were not reimbursed by Bath until January 2011.

Interest: As has been happening for the last few years, the interest is low due to the current economic situation. This interest is likely to stay fairly low in 2012 as well.

Sundry Income: This includes VAT refunds and income of £280 from the sale of the '*Interactive Guide to Obtaining your Nature Associateship*' CDs. 28 were sold during the year. My thanks to Trevor Hyman for continuing to distribute these CDs.

The Iris: Three editions of 'The Iris' were published this year - (#109, #110 and #111). The cost of production, and particularly postage, continues to rise, though subscriptions and adverts have helped to offset some of the costs.

Annual Exhibition: The Exhibition made a loss this year, mainly because the music used for the DVDs and CDs needed to be recreated.

General Administration: This includes all running costs of the Nature Group (general postage, telephone, stationery and travel to committee meetings, the cost of our web-site and VAT expenditure).

Overall Financial Situation: The Balance Sheet shows an excess of Expenditure over Income of £750.55. Even so, the Cash Book still shows a healthy credit balance at the end of 2011.

Secretary's Report

It has been a good year for the Nature Group. Our membership at 1st March was 673, 25 more than at the AGM last year. We continue to lose a few members each year, mainly because of illness, age and/or financial reasons. Some who leave the RPS itself for financial reasons still wish to have contact with the Nature Group and take out a subscription to 'The Iris'. We had 12 such subscriptions last year.

There have been fewer instances where I have had the need to contact Bath with queries. Most of the time the membership lists are well up to date.

I received a letter from a South African member who had some quite strong criticisms about the Society. I passed this on to Bath and it was taken up by the Director-General. So there is a positive response from headquarters.

We have a new member who is willing to lead a field trip.

Postage still remains the highest cost.

AOB

One member asked about the possibility of having an electronic edition of the Iris. This provoked quite a discussion with the issue of copyright being raised and members saying that they much appreciated the paper copy which could be stored and revisited at will. Members were asked for a show of hands on this and there were only two people in favour.

Sheila Weir brought up the issue of married couples having two copies of The Journal and two of the Iris where one would suffice but as Bath send out the address labels it did not seem possible to have one copy per couple. It would save very little money if this was done.

James Foad asked if field trips could be put in each issue. It was stated that they were also on the NG website. If anyone was going to run a field trip they should inform John Bebbington asap.

Dickie Duckett asked if exhibition prints could be mounted straight onto the card and not in a window. Tony Bond said that mounting was a matter of taste and that the quality of the photograph was paramount. As long as the size was 500mm by 400mm presentation was up to the individual. All prints had been mounted correctly this year.

Date and Venue of the 36th AGM 2012

6th April 2013 at The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury.

The meeting closed at 1.35 pm

The Nature Group of The Royal Photographic Society

Receipts and Payments Accounts for 1st. January 2010 to 31st December 2011

Nature Group 'Cash Book' at RPS Bath

Year 2010		Year 2011
Receipts		
6,573.50	Subscriptions	6,279.60
0.00	Life Subs	1,351.14
0.00	Lectures & Workshops	1,226.00
1,380.25	Annual Exhibition	1,179.09
79.15	Interest received (to Cash Book)	220.38
694.15	Sundry Income	451.09
217.37	IRIS Subs, Adverts, etc	328.74
8,944.42	sub totals	11,036.04
Payments		
6,328.19	The Iris incl. postage	6,693.58
233.20	Lectures & Workshops	820.79
1,741.38	Annual Exhibition	1,389.56
2,243.11	General Administration	2,882.66
10,545.88	Sub totals	11,786.59
-1,601.46	Receipts minus Payments	-750.55

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2011

Nature Group Cash Book	£
Balance brought forward from 2010	11,435.50
Cleared Cheques from 2010	-139.42
Cleared Credit Card vouchers from 2010	30.00
Uncleared Cheques from 2011	88.00
Credit Card vouchers not cashed in 2011	0.00
Receipts minus Payments 2011	-750.55
Total	10,663.53
Total Carried Forward To Financial Year 2012	10,663.53

15th January 2012



Margery J Maskell (Hon Treasurer)

The Nature Group Annual Exhibition 2012

Order your copy of the 2012 Exhibition CD/DVD now.
Priced at £10 for the CD and
£12.50 for the DVD including postage & packing.

Send your cheque, made payable to 'RPS Nature Group' to:
Nature Group Secretary,
Margaret Johnson LRPS,
53 Mapperley Orchard,
Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8AH



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. Incorporated by Royal Charter



Field Meeting Announcements

Ryewater Nursery, Sherborne, Dorset (by kind permission of Clive Farrell)

Date: 21st July 2012, **Time:** 9.00am - 5:00pm

Venue: Ryewater Nursery, Bishops Down, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5PL

Leader: John Bebbington FRPS **Email:** john.bebbingtonfrps@btinternet.com **Tel:** 01458 253027

Access: Unfortunately this venue is not suitable for wheelchairs, but the ground is level.

Details: Ryewater Nursery is a very large reserve with a wide range of habitats, flowers and insects, all easily accessible. Originally a plant nursery, it has been turned into a nature reserve, with the emphasis on butterflies and dragonflies, and the range of habitats and plants is exceptionally rich. **Cost:** Free

Directions: Ryewater is at ST665106 (OS 1:50 000 sheet 194, Dorchester & Weymouth)

From north A352 Dorchester road south from Sherborne. After passing through the village of Longburton take the first left signposted Boyshill. Take the next left turn and after about ¼ mile turn right into Ryewater Nursery. There will be an 'RPSNG' sign with arrow.

From south A352 Sherborne road north from Dorchester. After passing through the village of Middlemarsh, go past the B3146 turning (on the right) and take the next right signposted Boyshill. Take the next left turn and after about ¼ mile turn right into Ryewater Nursery. There will be 'RPSNG' signs with arrows.

By satnav: The address is Ryewater Nursery, Bishops Down, SHERBORNE, Dorset DT95PL

Other: Stout footwear or wellies if it is damp, waterproofs if needed, a packed lunch. There are toilets on site, next to the car park. Sorry but no dogs.

Birds of Prey event

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the event has been cancelled

Brandon Marsh, 23rd June 2012

Please note, this meeting has been cancelled due to a lack of response.



1

Highly Commended DPI

1. High Brown Fritillary on Betony - HC
Gianpiero Ferrari ARPS
- 3: Eyed Hawk-moth caterpillar - HC
Gordon Follows ARPS



3



2

- 2: Male Sparrowhawk - HC
Tony Hamblin FRPS

Commended Print:

- 4: Garden Tiger on Vipers Bugloss
Gordon Follows ARPS



4