

Nigel Hicks 'Wild Southwest' our monthly speaker for November 2019

At Nigel's talk it was wonderful to see an audience of approx. 200 with 20 visitors and 16 new members. Nigel started with an outline of his work as a professional photographer over the last 30 years, initially in Hong Kong but now in South Devon. His work for publishers, agencies and commercial clients has taken him all over the world. His presentation for our monthly meeting however, centred on south west England.

Members could see that Nigel was dedicated to his photography as he was prepared to go out in stormy weather, sheltering from hail storms, on cold days with minus temperatures for scenes over Dartmoor and that he was prepared to lay down on soggy bog to get those low level shots. All for those definitive shots!

For nature lovers, walkers and photographers in the audience there was information about places to visit. So dawn in May at Blackberry Camp, Southleigh was well worth a visit for bluebells, the Goonhilly Downs in the central western area of the Lizard peninsular to see quite a remarkable display of different species of heather, otters at the Tamar Otter and Wildlife Centre near Launceston and even dippers viewed from the National Trust café at Watersmeet, east of Lynmouth.

Nigel showed us the beauty of the star like flowers of the 'Bog Asphodel' brightening up damp heaths and moors in early summer, the wonderful colours and patterns of Fritillary butterflies at Kynance Cove in Cornwall and the 'Bee Orchid' with its velvety lips deceptively looking like a female bee.

Working without notes, Nigel gave us a lot of useful information, ending by responding very well to a variety of questions from the audience. Thank you Nigel.

So now the challenge is for our members to get out and explore our magnificent coast and rural habitats just as Nigel has done at all times of day, through all types of weather and every month of the year. So that we too can glimpse the beauty of the south west. Fortunately we have plenty to see in Exmouth and our surroundings.

Christine Chittock, Speakers' Organiser