

## News from Council

AAB Council met on 16<sup>th</sup> March at Rothamsted. Council received reports from specialist groups and would like to highlight the excellent work of the Biological Control Group in developing their position paper: "Policy Briefing: towards sustainable crop protection in Europe". This paper now forms part of the policy output of the AAB and is held on the website. Council looks forward to the work of other specialist groups in developing policy papers in the future. Separately Graham Russell receives policy information requests and consultations through the Society of Biology - he then collates response from specialist groups and/or members before responding on behalf of the AAB. These often come out at short notice - so keep your eyes open for requests for information. To date, Graham (with your help) has done an excellent job in providing appropriate and timely responses and the AAB has a good reputation for action in regard to providing responses to the Society of Biology. Council approved applications for membership from 32 new applicants and noted the breadth of interest amongst applications for membership. We look forward to working with these new members in the months and

years to come.

Council received reports on publications. *Annals of Applied Biology* is currently in 4<sup>th</sup> place within its subject area. The journal has an average turnaround time from submission to final decision of 33 days. Also, we have brought publication of each issue forward by a month and are current publishing papers for the July 2011 issue accepted in March/April 2011. *Plant Biotechnology Journal* (a joint venture with SEB and Wiley-Blackwell) is in a strong position. The impact factor is solid and predicted to increase further. In house publication of the *Aspects of Applied Biology* continues effectively and the AAB is considering further development of *Aspects* as a special edition seminar series. The letter from the president provides an update on the progress with the new journal.

Council received the annual review of staff performance and development. We were pleased to see that all staff had met their objectives in 2010 and in some cases exceeded the targets expected. The Office has welcomed new staff to its team and we look forward to another good year of working together during 2011.

A major part of the meeting was concerned with further discussion and approval of the Association's

Strategy for 2011-12 i.e. during Trevor's presidency. The completed "Strategic Overview and Targets for 2011-12" will be made available to all members through the website.

Council briefly discussed the development of new specialist group / cross-cutting interest area for the Association in Education and Training. This will be discussed more fully at the July meeting. All members are invited to contribute to the shaping of the AAB's work in this new area of focus - please contact Elizabeth Stockdale (e.a.stockdale@ncl.ac.uk) before the end of June with any thoughts on how this work could be developed within the AAB. We have not determined the shape of this group in any sense and so we would welcome information on what is already covered well elsewhere, as well as gaps/opportunities for the AAB to provide support. This area will include work to raise the profile of the AAB with postgraduate research students.

Council highlighted the need to strengthen engagement with members and the wider community and would be delighted to see the vacant *Membership Officer* Council post filled - It's your Association, do get involved.

-Elizabeth Stockdale

# Ben Freer Photography

[www.benfreer.foliopic.com](http://www.benfreer.foliopic.com)

**A** AB member Ben Freer has kindly given the Association permission to use his photographs on our new website and newsletter. Here he introduces some of his work and how he developed an eye for stunning photography.

'I started taking pictures with a Kodak Brownie but only really got into it more seriously in the early 1980's. My enthusiasm increased another notch with the digital age as you can now tell instantly whether you have got the shot or not. Waiting for a film to be developed only to find

that most were awful was a tad dispiriting! Having said that I think my favourite camera was my old Zenith EM c. 1980 as I learnt most about how to take pictures with it; but I wouldn't be without my current Nikon D300!

'My best photographic experience to date is split between my recent trip to Greece to photograph wild flowers in the Taygotos mountains and the witnessing and recording of the QE2's last



visit to Southampton when I was one of the few photographers to capture her run aground as she sailed up the Solent for the final time!

And finally he told us about his best work. 'My favourite photograph has to be this one <http://benfreer.foliopic.com/gallery/early-morning-in-the-new-forest-1811/photo/long-pond-sunrise-134311/> large everything was right, the light, the lack of wind so the water was still and for once I managed to get the shot!' Visit his site to see more.