

## Roosting Starlings

Every so often I come across a photo opportunity when speed is of the essence. And so it was as I was making a short cut homewards down a narrow lane near Temple Sowerby. It followed an unproductive afternoon but, as I rounded a corner, the sight of these roosting starlings met me.



There wasn't time to dig out the tripod, but I needed to use my long lens (Nikkor Zoom 80-400mm). I have always had problems keeping this heavy beast steady even though it's posh and has vibration reduction. But this was a moment to make use of my magic beanbag, placed on the car roof. My beanbag is an ancient home made affair, just a polythene bag of lentils with slits to let the air out, then covered with material from of an old pair of tracksuit bottoms. I dare say you can buy posh versions of this but, trust me, it works.

The camera's ISO was set at 400 and the aperture at  $f/2.8$ . That was a wide aperture, but then depth of field wasn't a factor I needed to consider in this instance – everything was distant. The resultant speed of  $1/1500$  sec was good for catching the starlings in flight – and absolutely ensuring that there was no camera shake!