

The Little Man



The Official Magazine of
**THE UNITED PHOTOGRAPHIC
POSTFOLIOS**
OF GREAT BRITAIN

WINTER 1987

Council Members 1987-88

| | | |
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PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

At the start of another year, let us reflect on the changes and achievements of the past 12 months.

Under the guiding hand of our worthy Treasurer, and without any increase in subscriptions, we have consolidated our financial position so accurately predicted in his forecast. In a word, we have no money worries and how many organisations can say the same!

Numerically, our membership is slightly up over the year and with a concerted effort by our Publicity Sec. and each and every one of you during the coming year, we hope to reach our target of 450.

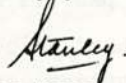
A change in the format of judging our A.G.M. competition and dispersal of awards was presented to the membership and approved in a postal vote and will be introduced in 1988.

After 13 years valiant service, Christine Jones has relinquished the reins of Hon. Gen. Sec. for a well-deserved rest. Her immense popularity will present our new Secretary, John Murdoch, with a great challenge to compete with but, as we all know from his regular "Little Man" articles, he has a mighty powerful pen; so 'Good Luck' John, and we all thank you for undertaking this unenviable and important task. Thank you also Christine for your past services so willingly given.

Finally, after 9 years Ralph Couchman has handed the editorship of the "Little Man" into the safe hands of a long-standing member and previous editor of the L.M., Bill Armstrong. Ralph has done an excellent job during his term as Editor, coaxing articles out of members and achieving just the right mixture of information and light-hearted reading that fosters the esprit-de-corps endemic of U.P.P. Ralph has always been an enthusiastic and invaluable member of Council, taking his responsibilities as Vice President just as seriously as his duties as a Circle Sec. Therefore, whilst expressing the gratitude of all the members to Ralph for the pleasure he has given us over the years as Editor, I do so in the knowledge that I shall personally have the continued benefit of his experience on the team. To Bill Armstrong may I say "it's nice to have you back" and we look forward to the continuing popularity of our magazine in your capable hands.

To all of you, members and Circle Secs. alike, may I request your fullest support and give Bill enough material to enable him to be selective in what he presents for our edification.

sincerely yours



Stanley Berg
President

EDITORIAL

As the president has just told you, Ralph Couchman is having a well earned rest and a new or rather second hand editor has been appointed. I am having another go. I have been instructed that I must keep the LITTLE MAN, bright, lively and informative. As you write it and I simply !!? put it together, I am relying on you. So don't let me down.

Circle secretaries, do remember CIRCLE NEWS. We are all looking for ideas and inspiration not to mention hints, tips and gadgets. Now is your big chance to get into print. Please try your hand.

Our membership needs topping up occasionally. Personal recommendation works wonders. The Folio Circulation Sec. has leaflets that you can pin on your or indeed any other club noticeboard. Please advertise UPP.

Next September is a long way off, but this is when we have our get-together. Its good fun and we call it the AGM. There is a report in this issue about the last one. There is an exhibition of the Gold Label winners, a first class dinner and a VIP lecture. There is to be another morning lecture this year. And there should be about a hundred, maybe a lot more after this request, UPPites to chat to. Meet some of those faces behind the pens, not to mention the fine photographs.

So tie a knot in your cable release, I am relying on you!

1987 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 19th September 1987

Part One

"Furthering your photographic ambition"
or "Three Steps to Heaven"

The A.G.M. is the purpose for coming to London at least one Saturday each year, but the real reason is pictures - and what better start is there then for 3 R.P.S. distinction holders (2 "A"s and an "F") to show the prints and slides that brought them their honours ?

Margaret Hodge F.R.P.S. professed to be ashamed of her "A" panel - goodness knows why, apart from the colour shift with age of some of the slides (speaking as a Kodak user, is this a feature of Agfa ?), and there was not a sea-weed in sight! There was, however, a series of slides (still 18 at that time) using a theme of colour and shape but with a number of subjects providing the variety. The "F" panel entered is the Nature Section, is the result of a long term love affair with the sea-shore and a macro-lens. There is no tripod, no flash, no polarising filter, just natural lighting and an eye for composition and a picture to please N.H. and pictorial workers.

R.P.S. members will remember BRIAN RIDDY'S successful "A" panel being reproduced in the Journal. It was a treat therefore to see the originals and appreciate fully the quality of the printing. Entered in the applied section illustrating 'emotions', 12 candid studies of the characters at Speakers Corner had been identically mounted and carefully selected for the panel. The overall impression of the panel is important, and there was clear evidence of the planning that had been used to create a balanced presentation.

Ralph Couchman's aim for his "A" had been to beat the Royal at their own game, and his message was not to give up but be bloody-minded. After 2 trial runs the third attempt was entirely "his own thing" - proving that really there is no set formula which can be slavishly followed. His favourite film for slides is lith, and his excellent imagination and creative pictures (entered in the applied section) were the results of infinite trouble and pain (print workers who accuse slide-workers of being lazy. please note). What a great morning !

Part 2

The A.G.M. - or "Dry Rot in the Council". The Council's prayers have been answered : Christine Jones has carried through her promise not to continue to be Secretary, but who was to succeed her ? The formal A.G.M. finished with the question unanswered, and no doubt there was much lobbying before it was eventually announced - the new Secretary is John "Dry Rot" Murdoch.

Circle 11 shared the attendance honours this year with Circle 21 (12 members each), and several this year had tendered their apologies - a courtesy welcomed by The President.

Stan Berg had intended to say that it had been a steady unspectacular year - on the previous wednesday he had to re-write his speech. That was when he came home to find a letter saying there would be no screens for the A.G.M. Exhibition. Blood, sweat, tears, velcro and pins, black paper and a lot of improvisation eventually ensured that the exhibition was shown, and all our thanks are particularly due to Jim O'Brien, the Centre Manager, Mervyn Williams and Bill Malcolm as well as to Stan himself.

Membership is now around the 400 level (386 to be precise): Stan asked that we aim for 500 - can everyone try to produce half a new member ? Also, what about N.H.C.C.2 ?

The change of rules for the Leighton Herdson and Roland Jonas trophies had been approved in the postal ballot almost unanimously (but what happened to the other 324 who didn't bother to vote ?) That will not be Christine Jones' worry now - after 13 years as Secretary during which time she progressed from the equipment-carrying photographer's wife to a Circle Certificate winner she is long overdue a well-earned break, though I suspect she would have continued had family circumstances allowed. With husband Roy also leaving the Council (to be replaced by Len Holman of Circle 10) Stan expressed thanks on behalf of U.P.P. to both for their efforts. A proposal of honorary membership for Christine will be debated by the Council but in the meantime a (very) suitably inscribed carriage clock was presented to her.

Another change on the Council will be the Editor of the Little Man: Ralph Couchman is continuing as Vice-President but a former editor, Bill Armstrong, will be picking up his blue pencil again. Thanks, Ralph, for your excellent work as Editor.

Stan finished with a thank you to the Circle Secretaries and a plea to all members to help their Secretaries, especially with keeping the boxes on the move.

Christine Jones is now looking forward to having time for photography - and to think when she started she didn't even have a camera ! But if you can't beat 'em, join 'em - so she joined 'em and then beat 'em. Her work as Secretary though had given her great pleasure, and she thanked her friends in U.P.P. for their help and support.

Brian Hirschfield's financial report showed a healthy surplus for the year, thanks largely to a substantial saving in the Little Man printing costs. The cost of sending subscription invoices separately seems to have been justified with a much quicker in-flow of subs meaning no withdrawal needed from deposit account and so more interest to be earned - and less chasing (are YOU one of the 93 not yet paid ?) Last year's proposer of the separate mail shot had returned his sub by return of post ! With such healthy balances in the Bank, no subscription increase for next year was forecast.

After a complaint about the size of print in the L.M., and an apology that a printing delay caused the ballotpapers to be sent later than intended, the A.G.M. closed painlessly, though not before Ralph Couchman, enthusiastically receiving the Leighton Herdson trophy, knocked the top off !

Part Three

The dinner (the one time when the Secretary can take her shoes off !). An excellent meal - by private enterprise this year was loudly concluded by Ralph Couchman's gavel as he introduced "the two best judges we've had" (could he have been biased ?).

Both Messrs Wigmore and Todhunter praised the quality of the photographs they had judged and the excellence of the organisation for the judging. Referring to the luck of winning photographer John Wigmore borrowed Gary Player's saying to suggest that the more photographs we take the luckier we become ! Charles Todhunter reckoned that Ralph's Leighton Herdson slide was the best he'd seen in 27000R.P.S. "A" and "F" applications - if he hadn't said that, Ralph would probably have clocked him with the gavel (no, seriously it was a great slide).

John Murdoch, making his maiden speech as Secretary, defined U.P.P. as the thinking person's version of the R.P.S.. He thanked the Polytechnic staff, the catering staff, the competition secretaries and Stan Berg (on loan from the Manpower Services Commission !), and the members of U.P.P. who for 37 years have shot down his prints in a friendly manner !

Part Four

"Fighting crime with a camera" ("though what the hell it has to do with us I can't imagine") by Ken Creer F.B.I.P.P., F.R.P.S. or (with apologies to W S Gilbert)

"A wandering Mairgret I, a thing of lasers and snatches".

How would you photograph a fingerprint on the underneath of a bath hand-rail ? Or a car smashed into a tree in thick fog ? Or part of a woman's body washed up at Wapping in pouring rain ? Or how would you like to spend 23 hours continuously searching a building with a laser ?

Photographing the impossible is Ken Creer's daily job in one of the country's major growth industries. When he joined New Scotland Yard in 1961 he was one of 6 photographers - now there are 76 and last year they produced 2½ million colour prints ! From straight record to macro and micro photography, from infra-red to ultra violet the whole spectrum is covered, and round corners too with a periphery camera (produces a single strip picture of the circumference of a round object). In 1980 lasers were introduced from the U.S.A. and laser techniques have been developed so successfully in the U.K. we now advise the Americans !

Lasers cause objects to glow, and do so without damaging or disturbing the object, revealing for example toe prints in a shoe to identify a headless murder victim or a message written on a hand days earlier which captured a lorry hi-jacker.

Photography can be used to identify suspects with time lapse cameras, to match a knife with a tip of a blade found in a body, to prove that a robber was at the scene of the crime because he ate a sandwich made from a particular loaf of bread and can of meat (identical cut marks from the knife), or to show the deposits emitted when a gun is fired (using a 2 micro-second flash exposure - you then find similar deposits on the suspect to prove he did fire the gun). It can be proved which camera took which picture (marks on the masking-frame will reproduce on the edge of the film) - useful in spy cases, pornography cases and to prove ownership of a stolen camera. Sometimes it's the expert evidence of the police photographer himself that is required, as in the well-publicised recent case of the forged picture alleging to show Ted Heath with the suspect's wife - shown to be a photocopy of a paste-up of a genuine picture and one cut from a newspaper !

There is even a computer-enhancement machine to sharpen up un-sharp pictures ! The bad news is that it costs £150,000 !

With better and more portable equipment and improvements in technique, the prospects for the future are exciting with savings in time and increased efficiency.

Cocooned in contre jour landscapes few of us are aware of the problems of the police photographer who often has to work with almost no information evident, and we were given a fascinating insight into Ken Creer's world.

Oh yes, the bath rail - hand held, 5" x 4", and it secured 30 years for one of the Great Train Robbers !

*F.A.H. Overy LRPS
Circle 28.*

ANNUAL COMPETITION

JUDGES Charles Todhunter FRPS
John Wigmore FRPS
Gordon Lycett FRPS (Natural History)

AWARDSLEIGHTON HERDSON TROPHY and PLAQUE

Ralph Couchman ARPS A.FIAP, Circle 36 "Hot Rhythm"

Roland Jonas (Landscape) Trophy and Plaque

K A Rothery, Circle 3 "Glass Fence"

Glen Vase (Natural History) and Plaque

Fiona G Lea, CircleNH. "Porcelain Fungus"

Plaque for the Best Small Print.

Tom Richardson ARPS, Circle 7 "High Dam"

Plaque for the Best Large Print

K A Rothery, Circle 3 "Glass Fence"

Plaque for the Best Transparency

Ralph Couchman, ARPS A.FIAP, Circle 36 "Hot Rhythm"

Best Print Panel

Circle 11

Best Transparency Panel

Circle 36

CERTIFICATES and COMMENDATIONS

Small print circles:-

| | | | |
|----|--|---|------------------|
| 7 | Tom Richardson ARPS Martin Snape | 'High dam' 'Towpath' | CERT HC |
| 9 | J R Stanforth J R Stanforth | 'City - Early morning' 'Carol' | CERT HC |
| 17 | Dave Bennett Eric Littlewood Fred Hill | 'The gully' 'Sunday best' 'Mandy' | CERT HC HC |
| 21 | A Gocke | 'Beech leaves & fence' | CERT |
| 29 | J T Walker ARPS J T Walker ARPS | 'The Wave' 'Ben Hope' | CERT HC |
| 30 | Gene Moss L Loveless | 'Sky drama' 'I wonder' | CERT HC |

Large print circles:

| | | | |
|------|--|---|------------------------|
| 2/25 | R Hall B Riddy ARPS | 'Fish lumper' 'The bishop' | CERT HC |
| 3 | K A Rothery C Grinnell C Grinnell F Seale | 'Glass fence' 'In with the new' 'In loving memory' 'Guildford Cathedral' | CERT HC HC HC |
| 4 | Jack Watkins | 'Evening sunburst' | CERT |
| 6 | W F Browne LRPS | 'Thoughts of things gone by' | CERT |
| 8 | G Stephenson ARPS A Hubbard ARPS | 'Holy Island castle' 'Moorland cottage' | CERT HC |
| 10 | K Breare FRPS K Breare FRPS K Breare FRPS | 'Tree, clouds & grasses' 'Head in the clouds' 'The black horse' | CERT HC HC |
| 11 | Tony Dakin Colin Westgate FRPS Bill Trigg | 'Man smoking clay pipe' 'Haven brow' 'One green bottle' | CERT HC HC |
| 12 | G James A M Airnes | 'Linda' 'Hillside barn' | CERT HC |
| 14 | Peter Trenchard | 'Turner's boat' | CERT |
| 16 | David Hewitson Danny Brannigan | 'Water sports' 'The final hurdle' | CERT HC |
| 18 | Lawrence Sheard | 'Liathach' | CERT |
| 19 | P M Antrobus ARPS Stuart Noble | 'Lectern eagle' 'Shibden Hall' | CERT HC |
| 20 | J Bamford H Buck | 'High rider' 'Misty evening' | CERT HC |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|------------------------|
| 22 | John H Grainger Charles R Mohun | 'Reredos-St Oswalds chapel' 'Paris silhouettes' | CERT HC |
| 26 | Jo Hartnell John Rundle Brian Steptoe ARPS | 'Nimrod' 'Backlit in Burnsall' 'Stormy beach' | CERT HC HC |
| A/A | John Round ARPS P A Blow Bert Elliott AAPS | 'Thirsty work' 'Sez who' 'Beach plodding' | CERT HC HC |
| Transparency circles: | | | |
| 23 | Alf Towells Derek Larkin EFIAP Jean Crosbie | 'Captain Flint' 'Backlit smalls' 'Wind surfing' | CERT HC HC |
| 27 | Mona Chedzoy | 'Quiet meadow' | CERT |
| 28 | R J Smith B L Underwood B L Underwood | 'Scottish sunset' 'Be careful' 'Evening light' | CERT HC HC |
| 31 | Alison Baker Alison Baker | 'Belt, buckles & buttons' 'River reflections' | CERT HC |
| 32 | Neil Humphries Neil Humphries Neil Humphries | 'Lily' 'Cut flowers' 'Poplars' | CERT HC HC |
| 33 | Louise Worley | 'Summer fantasy' | CERT |
| 34 | Hazel Bird Les Upton Bob Cooper ARPS | 'Frozen seaweed' 'Double act' 'Loch Nevis' | CERT HC HC |
| 35 | Arfon Thomas Aubrey Greenslade Arfon Thomas Ritchie Palgrave | 'Beach stream' 'Summit of Hard knott' 'Fantasy' 'November afternoon' | CERT HC HC HC |
| 36 | Ralph Couchman ARPS A.FIAP Dr Brian Most FRPS Leigh Preston ARPS Bill Armstrong | 'Hot rhythm' 'Droplet on bracken' 'Above Loch Avich' 'Autumn reflections' | CERT HC HC HC |
| NH | Fiona G Lea Arthur G Butler Peter T Chadd Fiona G Lea | 'Porcelain fungus' 'Common Ischnura' 'Gomphus vulgatissimus' 'Tunnel spider' | CERT HC HC HC |

MEET THE WINNERS

Ralph Couchman

ARPS A.FIAP

Winner

THE LEIGHTON HERDSON TROPHY

1976 & 1987



Back in 1970 my good friend and neighbour, Syd Champion a member of Circle 31, suggested I should join U.P.P. I took up his suggestion and applied for membership. Sydney also kindly sent a letter recommending me as a suitable applicant. I am happy to say I was accepted and by a stroke of good fortune was placed in Circle 36.

I well remember my feeling of shock when I examined the 34 or so slides in my first Collecting/Withdraw and Voting boxes. Many were way above my aspirations; here were a number of photographers who were not satisfied just to take photographs, but set out to make pictures. I, as a member of a small Work's Club, had no idea such work was possible by amateurs. As I saw it I had two choices; a. To resign immediately or b. To try to learn this new approach to photography. I am now glad that I chose the latter course, although several times during my apprenticeship I wished I had chosen Choice "a", but the members were kind in their criticisms - although truthful - and encouraged me to persevere. I was rewarded in December 1971 with the Cup and a Kent Certificate of Merit in my Club's Annual Competition with a contemporary type of picture. In 1972 I won my first Gold Label for a 'different' picture in U.P.P.

During this period I read of Exhibitions, both National and International, in the Note Books, and one member sent me a spare Entry Form for the Alassio International, which I duly completed and sent off with four slides. To my amazement one was selected. I was now well and truly hooked. But I had a long wait before I received my second Certificate.

The culmination came in 1976 when I was fortunate enough to win the Leighton Herdson Trophy, the third member of Circle 36 to achieve this honour. Naturally I was delighted and very proud to step up and receive the Award from Glen Robson. I little thought I would ever reach this pinnacle again. But as most of you will know I have been lucky for the second time and my picture, 'Hot Rhythm' was awarded the Leighton Herdson Trophy.

It is interesting to note that over the years many holidays have been spent abroad and in the photographic high-spots of Great Britain and Ireland. Yet my two winning pictures were 'taken' in our lounge which doubles as a make-do studio.

I can say U.P.P. has served me very well and has given me many happy times and memories. In my turn I have been delighted to have had the good fortune to be able to serve U.P.P. and pay back some of my debts; a task I hope I will be enabled to carry out for a few more years yet to come.



The President, Stanley Berg, ARPS., presents Christine Jones with a Carriage clock on her resignation as Hon. Secretary.



The President presents the Best Print Circle Trophy to Jim Dolan, Secretary of Circle 11.

DRY ROT

By John Murdoch

(This article is free from all artificial preservatives.)

However good we may be at some things, all of us have a kind of blind spot when it comes to others (see The Book of Heroic Failures). My own particular deficiencies lie on the one hand in the total inability to grasp any of the fundamentals of history (why do I think that John of Gaunt was thin?) and on the other to draw a reasonable representation of any object however simple. Given these two interesting facts, it will come as no surprise that the authorities of my schooldays provided each of us for a time with a book called a History Drawing Book. In this we were supposed to depict freehand a selection of things of outstanding historical interest. It was tacitly accepted that Lady Godiva was excluded from this collection much to the disappointment of the more accomplished and progressive artists amongst us. On safer ground, I managed with considerable effort to draw something resembling the interior of a crannog though a discerning observer would have spotted the electric light. Again a sketch of Persian cuneiform writing could be seen to carry a promotion for a beef cube which did not make its appearance until quite a number of centuries later. Still a certain amount of licence is permissible in such circumstances. Undoubtedly however, the masterpiece of this contribution to the world of art was my Crusader. I confess that I did not know at that time what Crusaders actually did and to be honest I still don't except that they were involved with someone apparently called Richard Gare de Lyon. However I did have a vague idea of what they looked like from the works of others of greater competence. My finished effort was the subject of much admiration from my classmates though not from my history mistress who in any case showed an overall lack of appreciation of my attempts to introduce a certain amount of well-intentioned lunacy into an otherwise dull subject. My Crusader was not cast in the traditional mould, being for one thing immediately and for obvious reasons christened Isaiah by my contemporaries. One of the displaced optics was moreover an unseemly black while his chain mail exhibited more ladders as a pair of market tights. His armour which had obviously seen better days bore a number of unskillfully applied patches in odd places while his sword had an edge like a Moulinex freezer knife. It was generally conceded that while there were better Crusaders about, even in the pages of the history drawing books of my contemporaries, Isaiah had a kind of indefinable appeal.

I was to become quite fond of my Crusader perhaps because of rather than in spite of his deficiencies. He was after all my own unaided work : the technique of drawing leaves by putting them on the drawing paper and running the pencil round them when the art master was not looking could clearly not have been used in this instance. There was thus a certain satisfaction from that and the additional fact that he looked as if he had been overindulging in unChristian-like activities added just the right balancing touch of credibility so lacking in the perfectionism seen elsewhere.

In later years it seemed that this principle of obtaining satisfaction from the less-than-perfect could equally well be applied to other creative pastimes such as photography. There is perhaps an even greater feeling of achievement in producing something which provides amusement and above all relaxation than there is in striving for a perfection which is never really attainable. This argument is not an excuse for mediocrity but rather to lay emphasis on the fact that we are pursuing a hobby and not a kind of war of attrition. Let us admire the masterpieces but not be despondent if we cannot emulate them.

Speaking of masterpieces, it will soon if not immediately be apparent that there are differences in the customs and practices associated with different art forms. For instance, the old masters for the most part used to either sign their works or otherwise add some readily recognised symbol so that in later years it was not too difficult to authenticate their efforts. This could make in today's world of distorted values a difference of perhaps several million pounds in their worth. So why don't photographers sign their work on the face? Have we so little faith in our worth that we don't think it of any future value? Or do we consider that a Gold Label is the limit of the bromides of 'Autumn', 'Winter's Mantle' 'Beach Scene, Cleethorpes' and the like and thereafter they lose value quicker than a second-hand car? What, incidentally, DOES happen to old prints?

More than enough has been said here and elsewhere both for and against design trends particularly in regard to cameras and perhaps it should be sufficient to recall Hutber's law which states that improvement means deterioration. (For example : In order to ensure a better service to customers, this store will not open until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesdays) Whatever else it has done to photography it has taken away some of the magic without any significant or even any improvement in the end product.

These little compacts are all very well in their way but can't compare for sheer entertainment value with the equipment of yesteryear. Many years ago in the local club we had a photographer of the old school of thought and action who regarded anything less than a half-plate field camera as a miniature. The fact that some of his work received royal recognition was beside the point. What sticks in the memory was the club night at the Y.W.C.A. when as a club exercise we photographed the Drama Section of that august body. There were of course the usual Rolleiflex and Leica owners but the star of the evening was the Old Man with his favourite half-plate and a fiendish contraption rather like a sawn off biscuit tin on one end of a pole and a sort of trigger mechanism at the other. The group, somewhat apprehensive and not without good cause, were assembled, the camera and tripod set up and then the interesting bit began. A quantity of No.1 Smokeless Flash Powder (what price the Trade Descriptions Act?) was added to the biscuit tin and something like an outsize 'cap' of the kind used in toy guns but about ten times the size was inserted under the trigger mechanism.

When the group had been beaten into submission the Old Man raised the contraption at arm's length above his head, the arm incidentally being wound around with a white cloth probably as a protection against blow-back. It wasn't white samite but it was mystic, wonderful especially when the trigger was pulled giving rise to an ear-shattering crack and a blinding white flash. The slide holder was turned round and the process repeated with incredible speed which seemed out of place until someone happened to glance at the ceiling. Two atom-bomb like clouds of magnesium oxide slightly phase displaced were curling up to the ceiling, spreading and as they cooled, descending. The 100w lamp in the centre of the room dimmed firstly to yellow and then to a dull red and the entire occupants of the room fled to a more breathable atmosphere. Passers-by, observing the smoke now pouring from the building, like good citizens called the Fire Brigade and a good time was had by all. In modern idiom it was the Club Night of the Year.

You can keep your built-in flashes. THAT was photography and we shall not see its like again.

(Next: How to convert your old greenhouse into a set of creative filters or vice-versa)

AUTOMANIA (NOTHING TO DO WITH MOTOR CARS) by IAN PLATT

Some years ago, when I was Editor of Little Man, and more in desperation than anything else due to lack of copy for the next issue, I wrote a tongue-in-cheek story about the 'ultimate camera'. It had auto-everything, including a revolutionary feature called through-the-lens judging, whereby the camera refused to operate until the picture composed within the viewfinder would score at least 7 out of 10 marks in a camera club competition!

I was reminded of this when looking at current trends in camera design, where I find myself on the one hand fully in agreement with most of the automation that allows the complete tyro snapshotter to produce better holiday record pictures - as is exemplified in the latest crop of compact cameras, and on the other hand utterly depressed at the way the 35mm SLR camera design appears to be going. In the latter, I see auto exposure, auto wind-on, auto wind-back, auto filmspeed setting, auto TTL flash, and autofocus leading almost inevitably to autovacuousness on the part of the operator.

It has been argued that the major Japanese camera manufacturers do not produce their latest brainchildren with you or I in mind. We have been told that they anticipate attracting the pennies (what am I saying?, they cost the best part of half a grand!) of the holiday snapshotter who wants the use of a range of lenses. Time alone will tell if this assessment is correct, however I note with a certain cynical interest that my own chosen marque, Pentax, currently provide 8 different 35mm SLR models, of which, if one excludes the professionally-orientated LX model, only one operates as a fully functioning camera (all shutter speeds and lens apertures) in the event of a flat battery. And that one is a quite long in the tooth model that found little favour when it was introduced, and even less nowadays. A later, much more sophisticated version, that took interchangeable focussing screens and many other useful optional extras for the enthusiast hobby-photographer, has been discontinued. It makes me wonder how long it will be before they cease to provide any sort of model that will function properly without a battery. It would not surprise me in the least to hear that this trend is common to most of the other leading makes.

"What is all the fuss about" I can hear someone saying, " if it means better pictures?". I agree entirely - IF! Because this gentle fuss I am making directly results from the firm conviction that we are seeing far more dud pictures in Club competitions, whose

defects can be put down to exposure errors, than we ever did 10 to 15 years ago. I have taken to asking the authors of the numerous grossly underexposed backlit or sunset pictures if they used 'auto-exposure' and the answer is invariably yes. And yet, in the 'good old days' of all-manual exposure determination, when offering up, say, a Weston meter to a potentially tricky lighting situation, invariably meant that the operators had taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with the pitfalls, and generally a suitable adjustment to the reading was made. Can you imagine actually setting 1/1000 sec at f/22 (ISO 100) on a camera manually in the anticipation of a well exposed picture? It seems to me that parallel with the advent of more automation in exposures, has come a notable ^eduction in the use of the Mark 1 computer (the brain), if today's competition entries are anything to go by.

I do recognise that it is probable that some of these poor pictures are being entered by people who would not have entertained the idea of competitive photography a few years ago, for fear of having to master a tedious technical problem. But I am also equally sure, from my probing among more experienced photographers, that a laziness is creeping in that frequently results in certain critical faculties failing to come into play. For, not only are basic mistakes being made in the first place, but equally if not more sadly, these badly exposed images are "selected" for entry into competitions. I put the word "selected" into inverted commas purposely because I suspect that these pictures are seldom, if ever, viewed properly by their owners before being picked out for entry.

On one unhappy occasion, following an unusually large batch of thus afflicted underexposed images, culminating in one that was so dark that I could not even see what the picture was, (for a moment I thought the projector lamp was failing, but alas no) I talked about the advisability of bracketing exposures in such circumstances, especially the 2X and 4X facility. A wag in the audience called out for all to hear " Ansel Adams never used to bracket exposures, so why should I? " But A.A., knew EXACTLY what he wanted the final print (and negative) to look like; he knew EXACTLY where he wanted his tonal emphasis (highlight or shadow) and to facilitate its realisation, he invented the Zone system of exposure. In other words HE was in control of the camera, not vice-versa, I replied.

I use his method of exposure myself for monochrome work. Furthermore there are no batteries in the camera body I use for this, and the TTL exposure function lies dormant. I use a hand-held meter -

usually a spotmeter, and it is noteworthy that just a few models of 35mm SLR are making a serious attempt to improve their auto-exposure by using spot (multi or single) metering. But before you all rush out and spend a lot of money buying one, it is worth pointing out that they require just as much skill to get the best out of them, as any other system. As an example of a potential hazard; if you spotmeter a piece of black card and take a picture of it (using the settings indicated) the resulting transparency will turn out to be a pale grey colour! If you now spotmeter a piece of white card and adopt the same procedure, it too will come out a pale grey colour - in fact it should be exactly the same shade of grey as from the black card!! Why? Exposure meters cannot think for themselves, all they can do is give a reading that in average conditions will produce an acceptable result. Thus it was, in the 1950's and 60's that the discerning colour photographer was usually to be seen measuring incident rather than reflected light, because it was recognised that the brightness of light falling on the subject was usually a more reliable parameter than the vagaries of that reflected from it. A reflected reading from an 18% grey card will give similar results to an incident reading - or you could take a reading from the palm of one hand and then compensate, as it will probably overread by one stop - but who can be bothered nowadays ? Very few it seems.

My own feelings of disquiet about auto mania are not improved by the nagging thought that soon we will have the doubtful privilege of seeing increasing numbers of auto-focussed pictures where the plane of precise sharpness is not where it should be to serve the picture best. These, too, no doubt, will be subjected to the same degree of selectivity that has hitherto been lavished on the wonky exposure shots! Oh well, they usually serve quite a nice cup of tea at the XXXXXX Club!!

What comes after auto-focussing and auto film speed setting ? Could it possibly be that my apocryphal story of a few years ago, might, just might turn out to be not so far-fetched after all ? Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh.

Going Round in Circles

CIRCLE 20 RETURN TO WALES.

October 9th. saw us return to Dolgoth and hoping for a touch of Indian Summer. Whilst we didn't enjoy any real warmth in the weather we basked in the warmth of Terry and Pauline Hale's welcome at The Dolgoth Falls Hotel, where we last gathered in April 1985.



We did manage a run up the coastline of Wales, through Barmouth and Harlech to Portmadoc and a quick visit to Fortmeirion, so, despite the vagaries of the weather we managed to capture some of the photogenic beauty of Wales.

Three of our new circle members were with us. Anne Hill, George Beaumont and Bill Duddle, and we also delighted to welcome Mervyn Williams and his dog. I am sure they all enjoyed the convivial company of our annual Get-Together.

Bill Malcolm entertained the assembled company on the Saturday evening with an audio-visual show of his trip to South Africa, last October, Harry Buck our dought Circle Secretary replayed our antics of the day through the wonders of his video camera.

It was great to see Mamie Berg looking so well and obviously enjoying every minute of our brief week-end. Needless to say Stanley Berg enhanced the proceedings by his presence and looked equally delighted by Mamie's well being.

We all agreed that we had enjoyed meeting up again and despite the fact that this is an annual event, we met as old friends and quickly regained the usual repartee which characterises CIRCLE 20.

CIRCLE 27

Six of our members were present at this years AGM. where they took the opportunity to catch up on all the latest circle news. They also enjoyed meeting friends old and new, from many othre circles and found the whole experience both exciting and interesting. All our mambbers would like to add a vote of thanks to Council and Exhibition Secretaries for their splendid work. Our thanks are also due Bernard Dandridge who kindly offered the use of his medium format projector and assisted Bob Scott during theG.L. slide presentation.

Our membership now stands at 13 - Lucky for us if no-one else . Our latest recruit is Alex Garden who hails from Bonny Scotland- from Aberdeen in fact, so we are now waiting to see some shots of those famous Northern Lights. Welcome Alex !

In all other matters it's business as usual. The boxes are circulating smoothly and contain a regular high standard of work. The notebooks remain our most important feature and if anything, are becoming even more popular.

We are still looking for new members, so anyone using 35mm 6 x 4.5cm or 6x6cm slides (of any subject) is assured of a warm welcome in C27.

CIRCLE 28

How do you follow a Secretary who founded the Circle and ran it so well for 33 years ? John Bullen started his life as Eric Haycock's successor by collecting the Best Slide Circle Trophy at the 1985 AGM, a feat not achieved during Eric's reign although various individual awards had been gained. John's early high however was then followed by every Secretary's nightmare - a missing box, subsequently followed by 2 more which did eventually arrive after four weeks' delay (all 3 had been sent to Wallington, Surrey).

Ray Smith, currently our most prolific Gold Label winner, showed how to make the most of a disastrous holiday. The Scottish weather was terrible, but from that holiday has come a series of Gold Label slides (total 5 to date) and the 1987 Circle Certificate -atmospheric" we told him.

Retirements and a new baby have variously caused slight reduction in the ranks, most notable being the loss of the veteran George 'Toot' Tootell (because of retirement, not the baby!). Any new members can be assured of a warm welcome, particularly at Circle Rallies which are becoming almost a regular feature. In the last few years three have been held in the well-known win producing area of Petersfield in Hampshire where Betty Underwood is the generous hostess with a seemingly unlimited supply of "Chateau Sous-Bois".

On a sadder note the most recent meeting was at the funeral of Vic Davies' wife. Many know Vic as one of the longest serving members of UPP and Circle 28 (as well as Secretary of Circle 30) now 87 years young, and our sincere sympathies go to him.

CIRCLE 31

Regretfully we have very recently lost two of our longer standing members, Ada Tyler, who has most unfortunately had to retire because of failing eyesight, and Will Pridie because of the pressures on his time for the next three years, of a course of advanced studies. We shall miss their lively contributions and wish them well in the future.

We have a new member, Cyril Price, about to receive his first box in November, who has been introduced by our Brian Davies and who we understand is a very keen worker.

With these changes our membership is twelve. We could do with one or two more for optimum working but we compensate for lack of numbers by taking it in turns to make double slide entries. This works well and helps to maintain interest and "value for money".

Circulations and activities have continued normally with many good slides and notes. We are not heavily into discussions on equipment as a rule but it looks as though one may be starting on AF cameras, with arguments for and against.

Unfortunately we had to drop the idea of a circle rally inYorkshire for the time being, as being too far and too costly for our members.

In answer to a comment in the last Little Man our members do favour an occasional set subject round, finding the challenge stimulating, but once or twice a year is enough.

Circle 36 was founded in 1964 mainly by the efforts of Ian Platt who was also Secretary for the first five years of its existence. Progress was steady rather than spectacular for the first few years, as it was not until 1966 that a member was awarded an Honourable Mention in the Annual Gold Label Competition.

However in 1973 Ian Platt won the Leighton Herdson Trophy - the first member in the Circle to do so - and in 1974 Circle 36 was judged to be the "Best Colour Circle" and Cliff Steer won the L.H. Trophy for the first time.

Progress in the Circle continued to improve and Ralph Couchman was awarded the L.H. Trophy in 1976 and the Circle was judged to be the "Best Colour Circle" in 1978, 1983, 1984, 1986 and 1987; with Cliff Steer winning the Leighton Herdson Trophy twice more in 1984 and 1986, finally Ralph Couchman won it again in 1987. In its history of 23 years eight members have been judged to have supplied the Best Transparency and 34 Honourable Mentions awarded. A surprise win - for a transparency - was in 1985 when Bill Armstrong supplied the "Best Landscape".

With 13 members of the Circle holding Photographic Honours (most earned while in the Circle) the future is faced with confidence; especially as a great spirit of camaraderie is evident at all times.

MOTIVATION

by John Dawkins FRPS.

When starting Note Book entries I often wonder what it must be like to be a parson and have to think of something new and interesting every week instead of once a quarter or so. Of course parsons have flocks to look after, so that may make it easier. Though I sometimes wonder how sheep-like some of us get in this circle; somebody makes a certain comment, and several follow, then someone else has another idea and the rest decide which sheep to follow. Does not always happen of course, nor often even but it does sometimes. Human nature I suppose.

Cliff Steer wonders about motivation among (amateur) non-exhibitors. I think there are several motivations, and two in our context would be the urges to achieve (or consummate an idea), and to excel. Anyone with an urge to create will be motivated to do so, whatever his artistic medium, be it painting etc. or photography, whether the creativity be pre or post exposure. And they will do so for self-satisfaction, to achieve, even if there is no complementary urge to communicate (e.g. via exhibitions) or to compete or to sell for money in an amateur way.

The other category is people with manual and technical dexterity and inventiveness, and their motivating urge is to improve on previous performance, and to improve on other people's performances; to excel. This category includes the same range of media as the other, but originality and artistry need not be present. The category would include imitators, innovators for innovation's sake and people who are more concerned with quantity and technical quality than with artistry or personal interpretation. They will be more easily influenced by other people's opinions than the first category who would tend to back themselves and let criticism ride over.

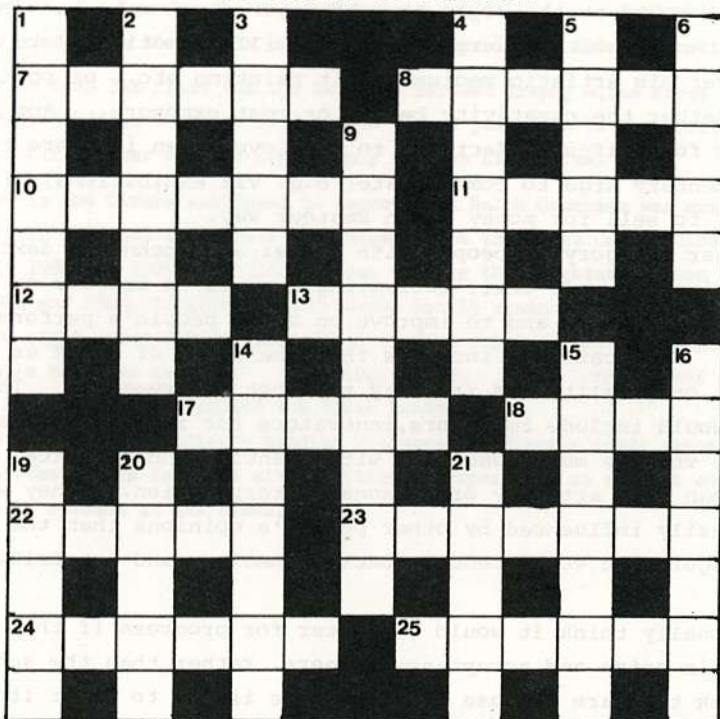
I personally think it would be better for progress if they were not the main prize and acceptance winners, rather than the achievers but I think they are because they are more likely to enter items they think might win, which is the same as following judges known fads (horses for courses), which probably means sitting on their avant-garde work, which could well contain seeds of potential future development. If everyone did this, artistic development would be channelled along pre-explored tracks, the whims of judges. Potential development would remain underground and undissemated because press publicity goes to the winners--and the sheep follow! Testing opinion is quite different from seeking acclamation.

The same probably applies to the RPS awards system. I wonder how many candidates for distinctions similarly know-tow? And therefore how much the evolution in photography has been channelled over the decades by the distinguished panels for the time being in office? I know that I did (know-tow)! I was one of the numerous aspirants who sought advice from a distinguished Panellist. At least for the "A"; but perhaps the individualism for the "F" is the let out. Still channelled I expect. Some would say "The more so the better", because the panels are very carefully appointed from the leaders of the Society. Or let us hope so!!!

(Gratefully borrowed from the one time "Contemporary Circle")

CROSSWORD

COMPILED BY JOHN MURDOCH



CLUES

Across

7. A distraught maid, Olive, after I've left develops well.
 8. Brief competition in front of the old city for a shutter.
 10. Somewhat neater cutter from an Antrim merchant.
 11. Fraction where the interest is said to be greatest.
 12. Iago in retreat for instance and may also be dark.
 13. Camera worth it's weight in gold.
 17. Even I am in the design.
 18. Break s novice's photograph.
 22. Small measure whichever way you look at it.
 23. Tessar is one of these.
 24. Excise for this kind of mount.
 25. Outcome after a short time used for mounting operations.

Down

1. Source of power sometimes following assault.
 2. Colin is upset about the kind of cell he's in.
 3. Kodak's version of 7.
 4. Left beam to take a portrait.
 5. Ruin. Photography's leader buried in earth.
 6. Measure of paper hardness.
 9. Annoyed about arid changes to shed light on.
 14. Camera mount ?
 15. Subject to investigation.
 16. Viewed as print should be.
 19. Rustic garment - a point to ridicule.
 20. One is one of these.
 21. Stiff as a large number under a Swiss mountain.

CIRCLE SECRETARIES

- 002 C Naylor, 72 Burman Rd. Wath-on-Dearne, Rotherham, S63 7NA 0709-872734
 003 F Seale, 94 Hawthorn Grove, Combe Down, Bath, Avon BA2 5QG 0225-835017
 C04 H Choretz, 1 Woodhouse Rd, Hove, E Sussex. BN3 5NA
 006 F Challinor, 171 Lansdowne Rd, Crewe, Cheshire. CW1 1LR 0270-589087
 C07 A Greenslade, Eiger, Chestnut Walk, Little Baddow, Chelmsford CM3 4SP 0245-412775
 C08 F James, Frogmarsh Cottage, Eldersfield, Glos. GL19 4TW 0452-84419
 C09 A Treweek, 95 Sutton Rd., Barking, Essex
 C10 L Holman, 14 Littlecoates Rd., Grimsby, Sth Humberside DN34 4LY 0472-53453
 C11 J Dolan, 17 Havers Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Herts. CM23 3PA 0279-506943
 C12 Mrs J Rooker, 4 Otley Close, Eastfield Green, Cramlington, NE23 9YP 0670-713833
 C14 R Jones, 21 Madeira Rd., Palmers Green, London N13 5SR 01-886-7071
 C16 C Thompson, 38 Foxdale Ave., Thorpe Willoughby, Nth Yorks 0757-705394
 C17 H Thompson, 2 Ellesmere Rise, Grimsby, S. Humberside DN34 5PE 0472-79497
 C18 B Sanderson, 11 Greenlands Close, Newport Pagnall, Milton Keynes, MK16 8JJ 0908-610443
 C19 P M Antrobus, 2 Grain Mill House, The Maltings, Lillington Ave., Leamington Spa CV22 5FF 0926-34228
 C20 H Buck, 2 Linkside, Seascale, Cumbria CA20 1QQ 094-02-630
 C21 B Hirschfield, 75 Wheatcroft Grove, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 9JE 0634-388192
 C22 Mrs I Bainbridge, 158 Liverpool Rd South, Maghull, Merseyside L31 7AJ 051-526-2162
 C23 Miss J Crosbie, 1 Glebe Place, Hawick, Roxburghshire TD9 9JG
 C24 J Marsden, 34 Aldercombe Rd., Bristol, Avon BS9 2QL 0272-684498
 C25 C Naylor, 72 Burman Rd., Wath-on-Dearne, Rotherham S63 7NA 0709-872734
 C26 P Antrobus, 2 Grain Mill House, The Maltings, Lillington Ave., Leamington Spa CV22 5FF 0926-34228
 C27 R Beaumont, 16 Ninian St., Treherbert, Y Rhondda, Mid-Glamorgan, CF42 5RD 0443-771815
 C28 J Bullen, 13 Luard Court, Warblington, Havant, Hants PO9 2TN 0705-476978
 C29 B Hirschfield, 75 Wheatcroft Grove, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 9JE 0634-388192
 C30 V Davies, Blue Cedar, Love Lane, Petersfield, Hants GU31 4BW 0634-388192
 C31 C Johnson, Wheatstone Cottage, Moatbrook Lane, Codsall Wood, Nr Wolverhampton, W Midlands WV8 1QD 090-74-7235
 C32 Dr P Johnson LMPA, Flat 1, 54 Station Rd, Acocks Green, Birmingham, W Midlands B27 6DN 021-707-5113
 C33 J Williamson, 1 Priory Cresc., Kents Bank, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 7BL 04484-2675
 C34 Dr P Wainwright, 5 Spring Pool, Winstanley, Wigan, Lancs WN3 6DE 0942-82554
 C35 A Greenslade, 'Eiger', Chestnut Walk, Little Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 4SP 0245-412775
 C36 R Couchman, 179 Wilson Ave., Rochester, Kent ME1 2SL 0634-45769
 CAA P Blow, 39 Cogdeane Rd., West Canford Heath, Poole, Dorset, BH17 9AS 0202-603279
 CN1 G T Janes, 21 Harlech Court, Curlew Close, Manor Way, Whitchurch, Cardiff, S Glamorgan 0222-610279

Once again we will award a small prize, a club tie (or a badge for a lady) to the first correct solution to be drawn from a hat from the all correct solutions received