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If this whets your appetite to learn more of this progressive society, contact our membership secretary

NOEL FRITH, LRPS,
10, LIME GROVE, HOOLE, CHESHIRE CH2 3HW
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THE UNITED PHOTOGRAPHIC POSTFOLIOS OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Little Man

SUMMER 1990



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PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

As this is probably the last time that I shall be writing this item in the "LITTLE MAN", I trust you will allow me the luxury of a little self-indulgence.

My 8 years as President have been very enjoyable and rewarding, both on a personal as well as an official basis. As I have said at many A.G.M's, I have been extremely fortunate in having such an outstanding Council team to work with, every one of whom has filled their office in an exemplary fashion and have often volunteered for duties outside their own sphere. This has made for a very happy working relationship and has resulted in the satisfactory conclusion to every task that Council set itself, including several major changes that affected the Constitution and working practices. Circle secretaries too have in the main, responded to the requests from the Council to maintain close communication with the Treasurer and Membership Secretary and particularly now, the all important appointment of a Deputy Secretary for every circle. This co-operation is largely due to the valiant efforts of the two Circle Secretaries representatives who have maintained closer personal contact than ever before in the history of the Club.

The Editor of the "LITTLE MAN" has beavered away not merely on the "copy" for the magazine but by great endeavour has cajoled advertisers into taking space so that the production costs are no longer the considerable drain on resources they used to be and the standard is as high as we have ever had for very many years. We can all show our appreciation to Bill Armstrong, members and secretaries alike, by supporting him with articles and circle notes. And on the subject of finance, may I draw your attention to the efficiency of our Treasurer who not only keeps the accounts immaculately and right up to date but has devised his own computer records on membership that would be the envy of many larger and professional bodies. This has not been achieved without considerable sacrifice of his personal leisure time which is the reason why Brian has felt it necessary, for the time being, to relinquish his additional office of Vice President. I know that like myself, with the interest of the Club in mind, you would all hope that it will not be too long before he is available to accept the highest honour the Club has to offer.

Regrettably over the past year, the Club has experienced the tragic loss of too many of our old and valued companions- Vic Davies, Eric Haycock, John Murdoch and very recently, our immediate Past President Glen Robson. Also on a 'personal' basis both Len and Jean Holman, and myself, have lost someone very precious to our respective families, with all the heart-ache and despair that these situations bring. But even these traumatic experiences have proven the value of the bond that develops between kindred spirits who share a mutual interest and I know that I speak for both the Holmans and myself when I say how much the companionship, sympathy and condolences that flooded in helped us through our darkest hours. Thank you U.P.P.

In closing, may I thank you all for the honour in having elected me President and putting up with me over the past few years. I shall be happy to continue serving you in my capacity on Council as Immediate Past President.

Council was unanimous in its nomination for the President Elect and I trust you will afford him the same loyal support that you have extended to me and which he so rightly deserves

Yours fraternally
Stanley Berg, President.

EDITORIAL

I must apologise. Your LITTLE MAN has appeared a bit later this summer --in case you had noticed--due to my holidays and the printers' coming in sequence. As usual I am grateful to several members for several excellent articles which I hope you will find both interesting and entertaining. I have also published two by John Murdoch, our late Hon.Gen. Secretary, which brings me to the sad fact that this issue contains three obituaries. As we have passed our 45th birthday as an organisation, I suppose we must expect this sort of entry.. Anyway I think John would have liked his articles to be published.

Our Publicity Secretary has produced a new UPP poster that could well go on your club noticeboard or indeed any other club noticeboard you may gain access to. If you do a bit of judging or lecturing why not drop him a line and get a small supply a few months before each issue I usually drop a line to several circle secretaries, jogging their memories that articles, circle news and more recently illustrations and possible cover shots are welcome. Most of my requests seem to fall on stoney ground. We have 35 active circles but only 6 have supplied any news for this issue.. And only one photograph! This raises a major issue. Do you want Circle News? Do you want to see illustrations of members' work? Should we put an advert on the cover instead of one of our pictures?

While bringing my membership lists up to date- a tedious task- I was struck by the large number of members holding "distinctions". At the time we seemed to be in the middle of a monsoon of wind and rain so I amused myself by investigating further. Interesting, surprising and even illuminating. It showed that we are quite a "distinguished" lot and much more than I had expected. Much more, I feel sure, than the average club. Maybe we collect the keen types! The percentages are as follows,
LRPS 4.9%, ARPS 12%, FRPS 5.6%, AFIAP 2.8%, EFIAP 0.5%, MFIAP 0.2% and APAGB 1.1%

On the enthusiasm and stickability scales, while 63% joined in the 1980's we still have 2.5% of pre 1945ers, 3% pre 1950, 6.3% pre 1960, 19.7% pre 1970 and 40% pre 1980. 9.9% joined in 1988 and 8.9% in 1989. All somewhat approximate as we do have a changing membership --and I ran out of fingers and toes once or twice!

The main piece of useful information so far as I can see is that we need to recruit about 45 new members a year just to maintain the status quo. Why not make a personal resolution to recruit one new member yourself. Let try to make it at least 100 this year. Stanley Berg would dearly like to see our total reach 500!!

Under separate cover you will be receiving your AGM information and booking forms. Do try to attend. Its great fun to meet those horrible critics with the vitriolic pens. They are really very nice, believe it or not. And there are first class lectures and of course a good meal. And last but not least, all the Gold Label prints and slides will be displayed

H.G. (Glen) ROBSON

With the passing of Glen Robson U.P.P. has lost its last founder-member. The records show his continuous membership from September 1931, that being the date of the founding of PMPP (Postal Miniature Postal Portfolios), one of the original societies which amalgamated to form U.P.P. in 1945.

Glen was, at one time, secretary of Circle 1 of PMPP which became Circle 1 of U.P.P. He explained the origin of PMPP in one of the note-book entries in the following way: "C Rae Griffin was just an ordinary amateur photographer who got the idea that it was more difficult to make, mount and spot a small print than to do the same for a large one, so he inserted an advert. in the A.P. asking people with similar ideas to get in touch with him with idea of forming a postal portfolio for prints not greater than 12 square inches either contact or enlargement. He got 18 replies (he may have got more, he never said) and we started off PMPP with those 18 members."

After this small beginning, many applications for membership were received and other aspects and interests became evident. These led to the separate formation of the Half-Plate Postal Club and the Leica Postal Portfolios whilst U.P.P. itself rose to 60 circles covering large and small prints, transparencies and natural history.

After serving on Council as Ordinary Members' Representative, Glen became Vice-President in 1957 and four years later was elected President. He held this office until 1982. He remained an active member of Circle 1 until its amalgamation with Circle 5. Although prints up to 5x7 inches were accepted, Glen remained true to the pioneering 12 square inches.

Inevitably with a postal club, most members are known only through the folios and the Officers are seen only occasionally. Glen will be known to those who attended the AGM's during his presidency for his kindly and welcoming manner. He did not seek distinctions in photography but enjoyed the special form of companionship provided by postal portfolios. He would probably have best wished to be remembered as one of the ordinary amateur photographers' who inspired our founders. Our sympathy goes out to his family and particularly to Florence Robson who looked after him devotedly during his last years.

JOHN MURDOCH FRSA., MInst.M.C.

I first encountered John when I was asked to become Editor of Little Man. A contribution arrived for insertion in the Circle Notes section. It was accompanied by an amusing letter on the pitfalls of becoming the editor of a house magazine. It was so diverting that I rang John for permission to include it in my first editorial.

From this small beginning a friendship grew by phone and letter and the delightful series of "Dry Rot" was established. On one occasion I telephoned John for an article which he immediately promised, but said some delay would be experienced as he was off to Yugoslavia at the week-end. "So am I" I exclaimed, "Wouldn't it be strange if we met?" Astonishingly we did - on the plane going over!!! Also we stayed at the same hotel. And so our friendship flourished.

John was then working for British Steel in the Creative Engineering Dept. but his interests were boundless. A confirmed bachelor, attending to all his own wants, a linguist able to undertake professional translations, a photographer, a tape enthusiast and an amateur cartoonist. Finally his religion -- walking and appreciation of his beloved Lakeland. A passion he shared with Gwen and I on our visits to the Lakes. Partly due to our friendship he became Hon. Secretary of U.P.P. until his untimely death cut short this service.

He died alone at 70 years of age in his home at Workington from a stroke and lay alone for several days before being discovered. So sadly, the U.P.P. and I have lost a kindly and loyal friend.

Ralph Couchman ARPS., A.FIAP.

ERIC HAYCOCK

U.P.P. lost one of its most sincere and loyal members when Eric Haycock died early in 1990. Eric joined U.P.P. in April 1945 and his passing in April 1990 meant that he was a member for 45 years. During this time he was active both in his circles and on the Council of U.P.P.

He was a founder member of Circle 28 and officiated as its Secretary for 33 years. On resigning as Secretary in 1985 his loyalty and labours were rewarded when he was made an Honourary Member. He continued as an active member until his death. On Council he held office as Representative of Circle Secretaries. On his retirement as Secretary he had to relinquish his post, but was quickly co-opted as Ordinary Members Representative, so his experience was not lost.

Eric was not only interested in photography in the pictorial sense, he was also an avid collector of old cameras, Leicas being his speciality. He was an active member of the Leica Historical Society. Recently his collection was sold at Christies.

SOME THOUGHTS ON FOLIO MARKING

by E.G. Bowley, ARPS

Should individual marks be published or remain confidential to the Circle Secretary? This was aired in depth in relation to Circle N.H.1 in the "L.M." of Summer 1989. My own preference is to publish - gains outweigh losses. It can be helpful to see who has given what. But marking at all is an area the rationale for which does not seem completely clear. Is it fundamentally to help the author evaluate his work or to conform to the mechanics of the mandatory monthly competition it being tacitly assumed that quantification is a normal feature of current life, two aspects that are not necessarily mutually exclusive?

How did it come about? I can speak only from experience over a mere forty-one years of folio life in UPP and elsewhere. Folio life gained momentum with the desire for workers to widen their experience beyond the local club and to add interest everybody could choose his own preferred 1st, 2nd and 3rd entry per box to carry respectively 3, 2 and 1 points, which plan prevails here and there even today. Undue thunder, however, became stolen by the more favoured while the also-rans got insufficient of a look-in. Better, then, to award marks?

Evolution involves trial and error. Interesting to recall in passing and in keeping with the habits of thought of yesteryear was the quaint tripartite method, up to 10 marks from everybody for each of the three equally important essentials for a print, composition, technique and appeal, 30 in all. Another way I met was when the 3,2,1 plan was extended to 6,5,4,3,2,1 but the upshot proved unduly top-heavy and unflattering to those in the lower half. Attempts to correct one snag can lead to others all waiting ready to surface.

Competitions need judges but while local clubs favour individuals in person, frequently visitors, folios normally fall back on an internal popular vote in which everybody marks everybody else. The popular vote is a consensus vote, the shortcomings of which for salon purposes are well known, the classical example being where the three selectors, one outright modernist, one hidebound traditionalist and a middle-of-the-road type. Their votes tend to cancel out and in the absence of any provision to forestall, the outcome can incur mediocrity. Folios, plainly, carry the same objection.

| | Ed | Ted | Ned | Fred |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Springtime | 10 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| In Winter's Grip | 6 | 8 | 6½ | 5 |
| Tranquillity | 8 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| Grandpa | 3 | 7 | 4½ | 4½ |
| Homeward Bound | 4 | 7 | 3½ | 4 |
| Puss Napping | 2 | 6 | 2½ | 4½ |
| Range | 10 - 2 = 8 | 9 - 6 = 3 | 7 - 2½ = 4½ | 6 - 4 = 2 |
| Average | 5.5 | 7.7 | 4.7 | 4.7 |

Just as significant is the degree to which each member spreads his marks. The 3,2,1 method at least ensured one man one vote seldom met with in uncontrolled marking. If, as generally happens, the marks for every print/slide are to be averaged or at least totted up, no member should contribute to the composite end-product more than his fair share - a situation difficult to maintain in practice.

In the foregoing mini-table for the marks for four characters marking six prints, Ed is a culprit in this respect compared with the others since he spreads over a far greater range. Fred is much more cautious. Ted is harsh to nobody. His narrow range will affect the final placings less than Ed or Ned.

Ted gives more than he receives and so will tend to come out a trifle lower in the monthly form order in consequence - Ned and Fred a little higher. In an ideal world everybody should mark to pretty well the same average and range, whence the Secretary would be provided with reasonably homogeneous data so desirable in estimating averages. You do not have to be an Einstein to realise that the average street number of the houses of the members of a circle would be meaningless, as would the average weight of the animals in a zoo. Non-homogeneous data arise.

A good craftsman welcomes good materials with which to work and while processing folio marks can hardly be regarded as an act of skilful craftsmanship, few will be the Secs. to whom a more generally related approach than that shown by Ted and Co. would be unwelcome. At least our characters here are reasonably in step and include no wildcat marker like Cedric who treats his Sec's advice card rather like a football pool and who submits a set of figures of which he merely likes the look.

The notion that entries in any round should be shuffled into some sort of order with marks separated from one another as far as possible, is erroneous. Ted and Fred realise this. Unlike the other two Ed and Ted reckon that they can dispense with halves.

10 is the most natural and commonest maximum out of which to mark. Some judges shy off halves and for some reason unclear to me are therefore happier marking out of 20. Some years ago I was in a circle whose warm-hearted Secretary told his flock to mark out of whatever total they liked, for him to reduce to percentages for the monthly form order. One or two who enjoyed a good wallow opted for 100 to be able to achieve the greatest "accuracy". Some time later in an experiment to test the consistency of members' marking, one such individual who had awarded 100 earlier gave 50 on the second occasion, but it must be said that his not inconsiderable experience was with clubs rather than folios.

Consistency in marking is highly desirable. A print that gets 6, say, in a weak round should get 6 in a strong round, particularly if the whole year's output is to be ultimately integrated in one big final table - the outcome, hopefully, of teamwork among the members.

"Thoughts on Judging" by Arthur Downes in the Summer '89 "L.M." carried the advice "Always give a top mark" but this appeared to relate to club competitions and not to folio rounds. Visiting judges can hardly be expected to conform all to the same standard. The Downes dictum was, I believe, aimed at encouragement to the rank and file. Against this one sometimes hears that the (alleged) general mediocrity in club photog-

raphy stems from the disinclination by some judges to donate low marks and incur unpopularity, and run the risk of not being invited for further visits.

The presence of some individualistic markers notwithstanding, each folio seems to tend, by recommendation from a Secretary, past or present, or otherwise to settle down into some overall pattern of its own. Just as chaffinch song is said to vary from locality to locality, so do such patterns from folio to folio. In N.H.1, for instance there seems evidence ("L.M." Summer '89) that they are generous to one another - indeed much much more so than in another folio within my knowledge, which is of little consequence if, within each circle, reasonable consistency in the overall pattern is maintained.

For sheer efficiency in the sense of the ratio of results got out to effort put in 5 could be the best notional maximum, with the following scheme or some agreed variant of it. 5 (very rarely) for a really outstanding print, 4 for a top-bracket folio shot probably worthy of a Gold Label, 3 for a good folio shot, 2 for one barely up to acceptable folio standards and 1 for simply making an entry. This is if you must indulge in marking. Otherwise, of course, the ancient 3,2,1 plan serves well. Some years ago I was in a circle in which we not only used this but also appended a mark, not followed up in any scheme, on the crit sheet itself.

If marking has to be done I favour this procedure which tells the author what one thinks at the outset, rather than keeping him in suspense till the second time round.

With a needlessly high maximum not only do the markers tend to flounder but the end-product produced at the hands of a patient Secretary becomes a tabled dense tropical jungle of figures in which it becomes hard to see the wood for the trees.

Marks can be a good servant but a bad master. Unlike in one of my current circles which is non-voting - my favourite way - the other goes to great lengths to pick out the best twelve for the A.G.M. show, but recently the highest marked items in the year's boxes did not make the best panel. Four from a particular member with an individual style gave the set a lopsided look, not well representative of the work of the circle as a whole.

Can photography claim a place among the arts? To this oft-repeated question I would add the supplementary one - can U.P.P. be regarded as a cultural society? I would put it in a grey area. While, traditionally, bad grammar and spelling or a poor style of writing have been frowned upon, crass arithmetic, though necessary, has always been rated at a lower level. The later twentieth century wind of change relevant to it does not seem yet to have gathered much strength. Numeracy has some way to go if it is to approach the cultural standing of literacy. To the assertion that irrespective of the method used to assemble a set of marks the cream will always rise to the top, I contend that it should not be clotted cream.

What is sauce for the goose is not necessarily sauce for the gander. The requirements for marks in clubs fail to match exactly those for folios. In the former there has been a surge in recent decades in the number of competitions, both internal and otherwise, wherein many bods who later

join folios gain their first sight of marking, in which they, themselves, now have to indulge. That a majority are not averse to it probably hastened the near demise of the old 3,2,1 ranking method. How can the apparent fondness for it be explained? A psychological throwback to their own schooldays when they were always at the receiving end and/or more recent treatment at the hands of club judges?

A key role is that of the Circle Secretary to whom falls the task of receiving, recording, averaging and tabulating the sundry offerings from his herd for the eventual notebook proclamation, and whose attitude warrants consideration. If he enjoys it, good for him. If he finds it an irksome chore it's too bad. In the former class I once came across one who issued his results all to an uncultural six decimal places. Another, and a highly numerate one this time, stooped stoically on for years after being compelled to admit defeat after throwing out many hints on the desirability of a rather more unified approach. This was in a group using "closed" marking, and in fear of beautiful friendships being wrecked were they to see what they had awarded one another.

To what extent a home computer will ease secretarial labours I do not know. Small calculators may have helped a little, but in earlier years, apart from the occasional use of a slide rule it all had to be done "by hand". Let us not overlook the time and effort put in by the Secretary on our behalf and try to make his job as congenial as possible.

All this was triggered off by whether marking should be open or otherwise. Let us conclude in the same vein with a recently reported extraordinary rumour. "Suspicious are not unknown of vote-rigging where there is a secret poll". No further comment!!

DECEMBER THOUGHTS

The year has flown by
And I have hardly been aware of it
Nothing of consequence have I done.

No pictures have I taken that I can look at
And think "Well, that's not a bad'un"

I have not cycled around great mountains,
Or freewheeled down lush valleys.

Even the trout that I have caught this year,
Although plentiful and big enough,
Have not needed the use of both hands and arms
to describe them.

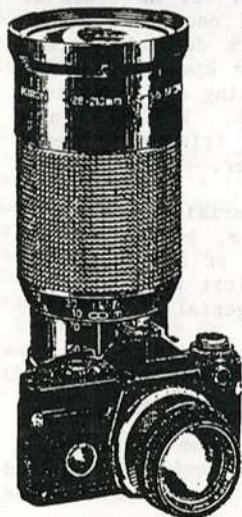
BUT I am not dismayed,
Because next year - by George, next year-

Better pictures I shall see,
New pastures I will cycle through,
And the trout will be so big
That even I will blush to describe them.

Victor Horton Circle 6

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TO FLASH or NOT TO FLASH ... That is the question

Ted Palmer, ABIPP Circle 14

I was once very forcibly struck by the total illogicality of a statement overheard in a restaurant: "No, I've never eaten lobster because I don't like it". The more I realised that this kind of blinkered thinking and illogical reasoning can be found in all walks of life - not least in photography. The surprising thing is that people who are otherwise possessed of common sense and are broadminded in most things, exhibit tunnel vision when it comes to ...well, flash photography, as an example. You might well ask what it was that prompted to link flash photography with narrowmindedness. The answer is not at all obvious but it lies in another overheard statement, made by a photographer noted for his much admired approach to pictorialism. In an emphatically delivered oration to a wide-eyed group of photographic innocents he claimed to be the Purist. He would never stoop so low as to use artificial aids. No, only light provided by Nature was good enough. Even to think of names such as Atlas, Thorn, or Bowens was some kind of photographic heresy, not really quite the done thing, was it, old boy?

Tunnel vision? I'd say so. But why are these ideas born in the minds of some people? Some or many? A lot more than we might imagine. The attitude I have described above is one that I have encountered on several occasions and in people who - I would have thought - ought to know better. I think that maybe I have an answer to why these attitudes arise. It may not be the answer, but it might apply in some cases

I shall call only one witness. Myself. My first "serious" camera, not counting the usual proverbial Brownie, had most of the facilities one expected for the rather high price of £18, but that was some 35 years ago. Including a flash synchronising socket! Flash? Flash was some arcane art to which only the most highly qualified would aspire. It was not for the tyro like me. Forget about it, ignore it. And so it continued. In time I became fairly adept at producing pictures that pleased me and felt no need of complicating matters by introducing further variables into my established routine of picture taking. From time to time occasions arose when the film speed was too low for the available light, or the light was too low as to be almost non-existent. Well, hard luck. There are plenty other pictures waiting to be taken when light is better. But then the inevitable happened. Christmas party, family want pictures - go out and buy a flash gun and a supply of bulbs. Great party, bulbs go off pop, pop, pop. Off to Boots, red eyes everywhere. Think again. Reason for red eyes explained, but inwardly a feeling of resistance to flash begins to build up. Next thing is to join a local Camera Club. Somebody brings a pretty girl and we are having a Portrait Session! The Advanced members get the lights out and start setting them up. The talk is of main light, fill in, softening shadows - to me it's all so much gibberish. Don't know what they are all talking about. It's obviously a very complicated business, this lighting lark, much too involved for anyone other than the very experienced photo veterans. I would never be able to set up lights to achieve just the effect wanted. And I wouldn't dare show up my ignorance in front of others and in front of the model, by setting up all the lights in the wrong places. And this was my thinking for quite a long time until the day when one of the Club members said that he had booked a studio and a model, and would I like to join him. With a certain amount of trepidation I said I would. I consider this decision to have been the turning point in my career. Geoff had the knack of imparting his considerable knowledge and experience to others in an easy to absorb manner, and before the session was finished I was moving the light stands and making decisions where best to place the hair light. After that there was no holding me.

I was discovering a totally new world. One in which I wasn't just using what was there, but one in which I was creating a new environment, one of entirely my own making, one which was under my control. Whether the lights were in the 'right' place or not didn't matter. What was 'right' anyway? I could please myself. And please myself I did. Some of the effects achieved were pretty awful, some were quite acceptable, a few were fine. Bit by bit I was acquiring experience. Tungsten lighting was easy to use to get this kind of experience. You could see immediately what you were getting. It was what in today's computer language is referred to as WYSIWYG - what you see is what you get. But lamps used to burn out at the most crucial moments, they generated a lot of heat and models would fry and have to repair their make-up every 10 minutes and generally screw up their eyes against the hundreds of watts. It was a blessed day when studios started equipping with electronic flash units.

A new era had arrived, but brought with it a new set of problems. One was the cost. Clip-on units for sliding into the camera accessory shoes were - and still are - fairly reasonably priced, but big and powerful studio units were a heavy investment. For busier studios they were worth it, for amateurs they were a luxury. The other problem was that you were no longer in a WYSIWYG situation. Modelling lights were some help, but now you had to know a little about power outputs and a lot about things like lighting ratios. Things were going high-tech in the studio, or you could learn by trial and error, waste a lot of time and materials and still not know why things happened the way they did. It is at this point, I think, that many photographers may have fallen by the wayside. Technical difficulties, lack of immediately excellent results coupled with the cost of a decent unit put the idea out of court. Now was the time to make a virtue out of necessity. Flash? Oh! no. Wouldn't touch it, old boy. Not natural, etc., etc. Every excuse under the sun, except the real one: can't handle it and can't get to grips with the technique.

It's all a great pity. The techniques involved are not beyond the comprehension of even mediocre brains. A few evenings to put into practice what one has read, heard or been told will establish the basic technique to serve as a foundation for further development of this newly acquired art - or craft, if you prefer. A whole new vista of wondrous photographic opportunities will now unfold before the unbelieving eyes of our embryo Bailey, Donovan or O'Neill.

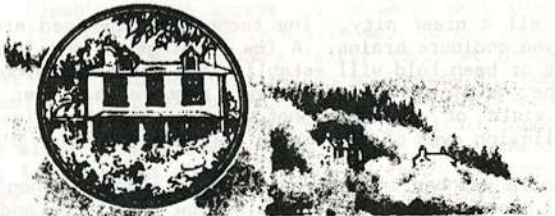
The more weapons in our photographic armoury, then surely the more versatile we shall become. In turn it must follow that our standards must rise, our scope must extend and our horizons widen. As things to aim for - it can't be bad. But it isn't necessary to equip yourself with all the trappings of a professional studio, with brollies, snoots, honeycombs, reflectors, gels, gobos, etc. Far from it. A good, reliable, gun, preferably of the hammerhead type, with a fair whack of light output can do wonders for your photography. As long, that is, as you accept the fact that it does not replace but only supplements the light given us by Nature. Sometimes it may replace it, but as often as not it acts as an additional source to help Nature along. There is nothing wrong with that. What virtue is there in not using a bit of fill-in light and then facing an impossible task in the darkroom, trying to dodge heavily underexposed areas? Or trying to catch a bird as it swoops onto the feeding table in the gathering gloom and finding it just a blur on the negative, instead of a sharply defined and fully lit feathered friend? One could quote one example after another, but I'm sure my point has been made.

Broadly speaking my point is this. In photography, as in other walks of life, it seems foolish to reject new developments, or aids or additions to the established order of things if their application is intended to make life easier, or the carrying of certain tasks more efficient.

If after a thorough evaluation we would find that some new ways are not as good as the old ones - then O.K. Rejection must follow. But to reject - as an example - flash facilities, pretending to be a 'purist' who only recognises the old ways and would have nothing to do with the new ones, that is being pretentious in the extreme. An open mind never hurt anybody. My friend, Geoff, who introduced me to the use of artificial light did me a great service and my subsequent conversion to electronic studio flash was but an extension of my tungsten experience. Without it my professional life might - no - would have taken a different course.

We've been given wondrous, new tools. We have automatic exposures, in hundreds of different modes, automatic focussing, soon we'll have automatic framing and composition and the moment of exposure chosen for us automatically. Computer controlled flash? Old stuff. But still how useful. Let's get these old, musty, photo books out of the attic and find out what the non-automatic unit can do for us. You may have to find out about guide numbers, do a bit of reading up, but in the end that flash gun will prove to be a better friend than you ever gave it credit for. As the old saying goes: if you've got it - flash it!

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IN SEARCH OF SPEED, Part I - Light-Gobbler Lenses by Ian Platt, MFIAP, FRPS

What is it about ultra-fast lenses of any focal length that makes them (apparently) such an attraction to us amateur photographers? Is it another example of 'male jewellery', or more basically the eye-catching and sometimes phallic status symbolism of it all? At a public exhibition of Club photography recently several people wandered in toting cameras, but the local Club members riding shotgun on their pictures took little notice until someone strode in sporting a 300mm f/2.8 light-gobbler of a lens. As if mesmerised eyes swivelled towards its dinner-plate sized front element and many mouths gaped open in awe. One must assume that the owner had a good use for that particular focal length lens, but I did cynically wonder at the time whether the f/4 version - available at some two thousand pounds less was totally unsuitable for his needs!!

The sheer cost of these ultra long light-gobbler (LG) lenses means that one sees very few of them, but it is quite common to see the 'big glass' standard lenses on SLR cameras being toted around by happy snappers. Admittedly a newcomer to 35mm SLR photography might be forgiven for being more than a little bemused over the sheer choice of standard lenses available to him or her - anything up to four in number. However one of these will be a macro lens of fairly modest aperture, followed by the more usual f/1.8, f/1.4 and f/1.2 versions. Prices vary somewhat depending upon make, but generally speaking if £x buys an f/1.8 lens, they will have to pay ca.£100 more for the f/1.4 and ca.£200 more for the f/1.2 lenses. Logic says that most amateurs will be perfectly served by the least expensive of these, but it seems to be comparatively easy for potential buyers to be persuaded or to persuade themselves that the LG version must be a better lens. But is it better?

Before attempting to answer the question it is interesting to look back in time at other versions of LG's because it appears they have always fascinated camera buyers. Apparently not long after Leitz introduced their epoch-making camera in the early 1920's, some enterprising independent lens designer was offering a monster bit

of glass to fit on it. By all accounts it looked very impressive but was about as useful at full aperture as trying to take pictures through a Guinness bottle-bottom! Which accounts for the fact that Leitz hadn't tried to make one that fast themselves. f/2 was about as fast as could be relied upon in those early years of 35mm camera optics, but not only were frontiers being inexorably pushed back, but also rival manufacturers were looking for the competitive edge and when the Zeiss Contax was introduced in 1932 one of its options was an f/1.5 lens made by Zeiss themselves. This should have been a great lens but was it better than the f/2 version? By most authoritative accounts it was not. Indeed some assert that it was inferior at all comparable apertures. I have one of these f/1.5 LG's on a 1936 Contax II and while it was good fun to take Oxford Street Christmas decorations at full aperture, in more orthodox conditions its smallest stop limitation of f/11 is a distinct handicap. Apparently this lens design suffered quite badly from flare at small f stops (in those uncoated lens days) and was thus restricted to avoid complaints. Unsurprisingly Leitz replied with an f/1.5 Xenon LG themselves soon after. Both Leitz and Zeiss offered a choice of standard lenses, and pre-war prices were not that dissimilar from today in terms of their relationships to each other. For example, taking the f/3.5 basic lens as a starting point, the f/2 fast lenses cost over 100% more, and the f/1.5 LG's around 300% more. Staying with rangefinder camera evolution for the moment, Voigtlander joined the f/1.5 LG's with a lens for their post-war Prominent. It was a coated lens and much better quality than those earlier efforts, but it must have presented the designers with additional headaches in those pre-computer days because the camera was fitted with a behind-the-lens leaf (Compur Rapid) shutter and this severely restricted the size and depth of the rear element of all its lenses.

The 35mm camera LG did not move up to the full stop increase over f/2 until the early 1950's. Nikon were among the earliest in bringing out an f/1.4 lens; Leitz not introducing their Summilux until ca. 1959. By now the Japanese had become heavily involved and the two leading rangefinder manufacturers Nikon and Canon joined the competition for LG supremacy. Nikon had the advantage of being a

lens manufacturer for many more years than Canon (the former used to make all Canon's early lenses for them) and this expertise resulted in the next quantum jump in LG design appearing in 1955 with their f/1.1 lens, Canon being unable to reply with their f/1.2 until about a year later. But then Canon came up with the ultimate in 'Beat THAT if you can' in 1963 with their huge and hypnotically fascinating f/0.95 "Dream" lens. Over a quarter of a century later it remains the fastest lens ever made for a 35mm camera.

With the 35mm rangefinder being increasingly used by professional photojournalists during this period, the advantage of a fast f/1.4 lens was unquestioned since they were, without doubt, excellent quality. But were the super-fast lenses really better? Informed opinion was an unequivocal 'No', and in the main it was the well-heeled amateur that toted the huge LG's on the front of their cameras. The only comparison I can make for myself is with my Canon VT rangefinder for which I have both the f/2.8 and f/1.2 lenses. It is interesting to compare their performance, and I have done this with a chart graduated in lines per millimetre. I don't propose quoting figures at you; suffice to say that the LG was very soft wide open, and only achieved respectability at apertures of f/4 to f/8, but that quite significantly the modest f/2.8 lens was better at full aperture than the LG version at f/4, and the simpler Tessar-type lens continued to improve and considerably outperform the LG at smaller stops.

Returning to 35mm SLR's, f/1.2 is the fastest LG standard lens that can be made for these cameras because of the restrictions in space between lens mount and mirror. Although SLR design did not really accelerate until the mid 1960's, the LG had appeared as early as 1958 when Zunow offered an f/1.2 option. To return to the original question "are they better lenses?", the consensus among those in a position to test and use these optics is that the f/1.4 lenses of today are better than their f/1.8 brethren, but only by a very small margin. With computer-aided technology, the same should be true of the f/1.2 LG's, but very few are tested and it is a rash person who offers strong opinion. What can be said with a certain degree of confidence is that the days when lenses were 'stretched' beyond their true capabilities (the f/3.5 to f/2.8 Tessar is a good pre-

war example; the smaller aperture version being by far the better lens) are over, since new lens computation, once an activity of several months duration involving whole teams of mathematicians, is now comparatively rapid, and in general the public can have confidence in all leading lenses manufactured today.

A few years ago one of the main arguments advanced in favour of faster apertures was the brighter image in SLR viewfinders and this, together with the shallower Depth of Field, made them easier to focus with precision. Nowadays big improvements have been made in screen brightnesses from other technical advances, and my standard lens on a Nikon F801 is an f/2.8 Micro which snaps in and out of focus in an equally positive way to older SLR's in my collection equipped with f/1.4's.

In the final analysis if you feel that an LG of any given focal length will give you better pictures than a lens of more modest aperture you are probably correct, since your confidence in your chosen lens will enable you to concentrate on taking pictures rather than worrying about the equipment. Think too of the happiness you will give the retailer as you count out all that money into his trembling hands!

THE HEAVENLY CAMERA CLUB

As you will be aware, all good photographers go to heaven. But even heaven gets a bit boring without photography, Peter was persuaded to let them have camera clubs as a change from eternal singing and harping. Inter club competitions soon became rather tedious. Everthing was too good as you would expect. So they looked round for a real challenge. What about the other place "downstairs?". Peter had a word with "you know who" and a date was fixed. There were some heavenly prints on display and also some "H-----ish" ones. The H.A. (heavenly Association) lost. They forgot that all judges come from the other place.

C.L.Hildreth LRPS

(this could make a useful opening gambit for earth-bound judges and even extended into a shaggy-dog story.)

SOME OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF TWO MEDIUM SPEED FILMS

by John Murdoch

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (SUMMARY)

The co-operation of the following persons, organisations or publications in not providing information for this paper is duly acknowledged --

The Bishop of Durham, Brian Clough, Salman Rushdie, Old Moore's Almanac, News of the World and Hugo First (Leader, Irish Mountaineering Expedition to the Netherlands) and many others too irritating to mention.

INTRODUCTION

The appearance on the British market of ORWO 35mm black/white film some time ago at a very competitive price raised the question as to whether this represented a considerable bargain or whether such a large price difference reflected similar variations in quality. ORWO film is made in East Germany at the VEB Film Factory in Wolfen and the price is presumably subsidised.

At the same time, in view of the considerable support for the giving of technical details of exposure and development as an additional aid in the assessment of print quality, observations were carried out on both FP4 which is virtually the standard film and compared with those obtained using ORWO NP22 film exposed under similar controlled conditions.

LIMITATIONS

In carrying out these trials, it should be borne in mind that -

a) accuracies of measurement in domestic conditions do not achieve those levels attained in the laboratory. However errors arising from working in rather less stringent conditions are not likely to affect any conclusions in this particular instance.

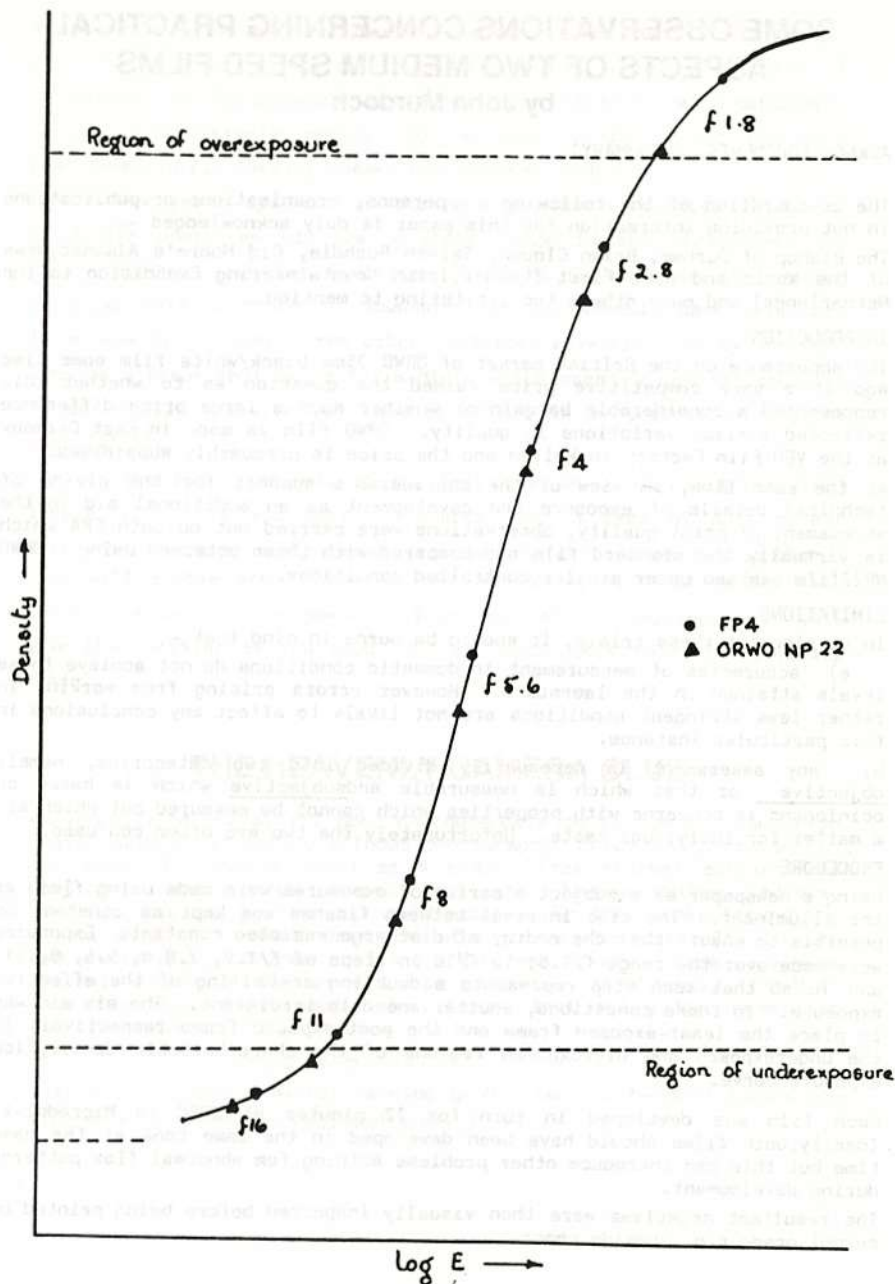
b) any assessment is necessarily divided into two categories, namely objective or that which is measurable and subjective which is based on opinion and is concerned with properties which cannot be measured but which are a matter for individual taste. Unfortunately the two are often confused.

PROCEDURE

Using a newspaper as a subject a series of exposures were made using flash as the illuminant. The time interval between flashes was kept as constant as possible to ensure that the energy of discharge was also constant. Exposures were made over the range f/1.8, to f/16 in steps of f/1.8, 2.8, 4, 5.6, 8, 11, and 16 so that each step represents a doubling or halving of the effective exposure. In these conditions, shutter speed is irrelevant. The aim was to place the least-exposed frame and the most-exposed frame respectively in the underexposed and overexposed regions of the characteristic density/log exposure curve.

Each film was developed in turn for 12 minutes at 20°C in Microdol-X. Ideally, both films should have been developed in the same tank at the same time but this can introduce other problems arising from abnormal flow patterns during development.

The resultant negatives were then visually inspected before being printed on normal grade r.c. bromide paper.



Subjective placing of FP4 & ORWO NP22 negatives on notional characteristic curve.

OBSERVATIONS

Visually, there was very little to choose between the two films. The impression is that the ORWO film is more contrasty for the same conditions of development and has a more sharply defined 'toe' and less acute 'shoulder'. This means that at the extreme ends of the range, ORWO is marginally slower than FP4 but this is of little practical consequence as normal exposure techniques would place the exposure in the straight-line portion of the characteristic curve. However there was a greater loss of detail in the ORWO neg. compared with that of FP4 as the region of underexposure is approached while at the other end of the scale, ORWO negatives exhibited a greater degree of contrast than those of FP4.

Both films show a large degree of exposure tolerance producing acceptable negatives over an exposure range of at least 8:1 on the linear portion of the characteristic curve for this particular subject. There is slight but noticeable loss of contrast in each case as the shoulder and toe of the curve are approached but with some minor modification of the printing technique, virtually identical prints can be obtained over an exposure range of 16:1. Note however that the subject had a small contrast range.

Enlargements of approximately 12x from negatives taken with a 90mm. lens show similar characteristics of definition, those from FP4 being marginally better.

CONCLUSIONS

ORWO NP22 film within the framework of these relatively simple tests showed itself to be a clean working medium speed film which can be used with confidence. It represents very good value indeed. Its characteristics are such that it can be used as a substitute for FP4 without major changes to existing exposure and processing techniques though a 20% reduction in development time is suggested. Without resorting to densitometry, it appears to be very slightly slower than FP4 but this observation should be treated with caution.

The wide range of exposures over which virtually identical prints may be obtained adds weight to the notion that the giving of 'technical' information relating to exposure, while being of interest, is of little practical value. As a corollary to this, it also re-inforces the belief that, taking into account the known characteristics of photoelectric cells, much of the complexity of modern exposure measuring systems is quite unnecessary.

ORWO film is supplied by BYMAIL Ltd., P.O. Box 25, 29 Cavendish Road, Redhill Surrey. RH1 4AH.

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DRY ROT AESOP'S FOIBLES - 2

by John Murdoch

Once upon a time, there lived in a far-off land many miles across the water from the milieu of Bognor Regius, a wonderous designer of chariots by the name of Augustus Boreas Maximus, known as windy for short (work it out) or so the legend goes and one day, just intime for the Annual Chariot Show in Ludicolum he produced his latest masterpiece. Pulled by a single four-stroke horse running on lead free hay and possessing many other meritorious features as well as optional knives on the wheels, it was the talk of the industry. The snag was A.B.M. had great difficulty in finding a name for the creation. To call it Strada which in his language simply meant 'street' or even 'Sirocco' which to him was something unpleasant, seemed inappropriate until one day he had an inspiration. Why not go to the land of Albion noted, if for nothing else, for its perfidy and borrow a name or two there? And so the one-horse innovation was christened the 'Scunthorpe'. Sales were of course abysmal for he had failed to realise that then as now products sell on their image and not their merits. There is not much wrong with Scunthorpe as a town, it just lacks the necessary touch of glamour. The moral of the story is that success does not depend on quality but on the way that the product is sold. By extension, a mediocre photograph which is different stands a better chance of success than one which is good but conventional.

It soon becomes obvious that in the race to sell goods of dubious value, quite ordinary things take on a new and colourful aspect and in its highest form, the art of salesmanship is capable of turning a disadvantage into something that is eminently desirable. A plain straightforward description is becoming as rare as glass free baked beans and as competition hots up, things tend to get worse. Cosmetics, for instance started as scent, progressed to perfume and finished with fragrance on the unwarrantable assumption that one is somehow better than the other. Just recently there was an advertisement for a lady's wallet which was available in 'nail-biting colours' of black, red and grey. Why these quite ordinary shades should result in an epidemic of nail chewing is not clear but it could open up a lot of possibilities in the field of medical research once the listeria/salmonella phase loses its novelty.

Currently there are advertisements inviting us to part with about £13 for a bottle of magic fluid which will 'restore silver-plated articles like new'. It is according to the blurb, 'the result of years of research in the U.S.A. If this is true, it seems as if the U.S.A. is hopelessly behind in some fields of discovery, as the same result has long been achieved with a silver nitrate solution mixed with a bit of whitinf. Ask any pre-decimal schoolboy who has halfpennies into shillings in the chemistry lab. Even a well used hypo bath will do it and give the same impermanent results, the layer of deposited silver being only one molecule thick and consequently hardly wear-resistant.

Unfortunately this type of writing seems to be infiltrating our own particular sphere and some early symptoms of the disease have been appearing in the photographic press. For instance, whereas we used to have 'fixed focus' lenses, we are now starting to have ones that are 'focus free' and instead of 'auto-everything' we 'decision-free' cameras. Now an object which is free from something doesn't have it, such as 'fat-free', 'tax-free', 'dutyfree' and so on, so a focus-free lens is not as might be imagined, one set at the hyperfocal distance but one which doesn't have a focus at all.

Not much good if the aim is to form an image of an object. Far better to settle for a pin-hole. Like the square root of minus one, a focus-free lens is simply an interesting concept of academic interest but having no practical value. Similarly, a decision-free camera is not one which relieves its owner of the necessity of thought but which cannot come to any definite conclusion from the input information given to it. Life is complicated and uncertain enough without being confronted with statements like - 'with this camera, it is almost impossible not to take a perfect picture'. Although there is gratitude due for the 'almost', there is to a certain extent, a hidden challenge to get hold of the wretched thing and actually take a photograph which is absolutely appalling. By the way, what used to be 'second-hand' is now 'pre-used'. Do join in. Anyone can play.

Of course, not all the mythinformation comes from the advertisement copy writers. In not a few cases, people who should know better are guilty of much the same thing.

From the dawn of history, every civilisation has produced a rich storehouse of legends whose themes range from the the story of creation to much more mundane things like the ticking clock and the broken half-shaft of the Rolls Royce, the exploding poodle-cat in the microwave and the amorous couple locked in the Mini. All have one thing in common. There is in each a strong element of credibility so that whatever their theme, they could all be possible, to the extent that many of them have been seen in the press as being actual events like the artist who lived in Penury, near London.

Not surprisingly, in our own little world of photography there are also myths and legends. It isn't so long ago that there was a dire warning about carrying expendible flashbulbs on air journeys as 'the aircraft's radar could cause the bulbs to ignite'. It was honestly believed by many travellers just as is today's version about the damage done to films by security checks involving X-rays. How many AUTHENTIC cases of this much-publicised hazard have been recorded? But such stories no doubt do help to sell lead-lined bags to guard against this menace, failing to mention that suspicious security people simply turn up the power the better to see inside them.

When coating first came out, it was widely reported that this process increased the speed of a lens. What it does, of course, is to destroy by interference the unwanted light which does not go to the making of the image but bounces about and causes flare. By no stretch of the imagination can it increase the amount of image-forming light.

We are still being solemnly assured that the use of a U.V. filter will correct excessive blue tones in colour photographs taken at high altitudes, the oracles apparently being unaware that glass is not transparent to U.V. rays anyway. Ever tried to get sunburnt in a greenhouse? If U.V. cannot readily penetrate thin window glass, what are the chances of it getting throughout an inch of solid lens? Some U.V. filters are, of course, very slightly tinted which could be the origin of this particular legend but it isn't the U.V. which is to blame. Infra red is said to penetrate haze and mist. It doesn't. Particulate or dust haze, yes. Mist, no, for if it did penetrate water haze, there would be no clouds in i.r. photographs. Q.E.D. yet the legend persists.

Finally there is another phenomenon known as 'silver rich' bromide paper. Well, if you come to think about it, there is a minimum amount of silver halide in an emulsion necessary to produce a satisfactory black in optimum

conditions. However, as conditions in this world are seldom optimum, it is logical to add a little bit more silver, say 5 or 10% to take this into account. Over and above that, it is definitely not logical and certainly expensive to add extra silver halide which would simply vanish down the sink on fixation. So, as (minimum + x%) is really that which is essential for good results in average conditions. It is not that it is 'silver rich' but rather that anything less is 'silver poor'. Try that reasoning on the admen! If designers are all that clever, why do we have jam jars which are tall and thin instead of short and squat so that when you dig out the bottom bit you get jam all up the spoon handle? What are you to believe?

BEWARE therefore of glamour words like 'dynamic', 'professional', 'stylish', 'revolutionary', 'stunning' and similar exaggerations and above all 'compact' which now means something slightly bigger than a 3½" x 2½" plate camera. Remember instead what might have happened if the chariot had not been as good but had been called 'Monaco' instead.

THIS SORT OF THING NEVER HAPPENED TO RUBENS

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>She sat alone in Holland Park, I knew she was the one, Brown as toast and buttered by The early morning sun I told her she was as pretty a sight, As man had ever seen, And so I took her there and then, 1/ 250 at f 16</p> | <p>We met in a Hampstead restaurant As used by the trendy group Where "Potage de Jour" is French For Knorr Swiss onion soup We wined and dined and planned the night Romantically "a deux", Her hair flowed in the candlelight, 1 second at f 2</p> |
|---|---|

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>I talked of this and other things While I mostly thought of that, I coaxed and teased and flattered her, With the old persuasive chat. At last she was persuaded, We agreed upon a date, The sun had clouded over now, 1/100 at f 8</p> | <p>Alone at last, I coaxed and chided Bullied and suborned, Till finally she stood revealed, Her beauty unadorned. I set the lights and focussed While I softly blessed my luck, I squeezed the button... "Damn and blast!" The flaming shutter's stuck.</p> |
|--|--|

Author unknown, but believed to have originated from Islington P.S.

PANEL (AGM 1989) by CIRCLE 14



GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES

CIRCLE 6

The year has passed without any problems, and I must praise the members for being so prompt with their posting dates. This has gone on for the last couple of years, the boxes getting back to me on time or maybe just a week late. I can't grumble at that, now and then, or have I just tempted providence?

We had only one resignation during the year. John Bently left us due to pressure of work. This leaves us with 16 members, just room for one more. Any takers? An attempt to get a circle rally off the ground met with failure. Maybe next year, hopefully.

The POTY has been won again by Joan Warren and the league trophy was retained by Andrew Rothery. Gold Labels have been spread around this year with eight members sharing them.

One of our longer serving members with 23 tears celebrated his 80th birthday in November. We got a large card and everyone signed it, with a message of course. His wife Gwen says that it was the first time she remembers him being speechless. Carry on Lou Baker and here's hoping for many more birthdays.

I am beginning to think that someone in the circle has killed a cat. In the space of four months, three members have suffered heart attacks. Fortunately all is well, two are fully recovered and the third is well on the mend.

Congratulations to Glyn Jones on gaining his Fellowship.

CIRCLE 10

Since the Secretary of Circle 22 joined Circle 10 as well a year or two ago, it has often been suggested that a "battle" between the two circles would be a good idea, and this has at last taken place. One complete round from each Circle was sent to a respected judge (ex UPP and a one time judge of UPP's "Annual") who marked each print out of twenty. Since there were a different number of prints from each Circle the winner was decided on the average mark per print. The result was Circle 22, Circle 10, 16.17

A southern venue was chosen for this year's Rally -Salisbury- and was not so well attended as usual, but the eight plus spouses who did go had a very enjoyable time during the early heatwave. Dinner at the hotel was excellent, but when the words "FP4" rose above the conversation, there a shout down. Fancy anyone discussing photography at dinner!

"Contemporary photography" has been much discussed in the note book. This admittedly traditional Circle wonders what it is. There seems to be a view that if it is traditional it is done to please the judge but if it is done to please oneself it is "Contemporary". We have yet to see an answer to the question "What if one does something traditional to please oneself?"

CIRCLE 18

From a circle well nigh bursting at the seams we have lost several members in a short space of time. Allen Bignell had to call it a day, so far as active membership is concerned. Two members had to resign with health problems. Also we suffered the loss of John Murdoch, with his untimely death. As well as being secretary of UPP, John was I believe our longest serving member. His well informed comments on almost all subjects are sorely missed in the notebook.

On a happier note, the weekend Spring Get-together was spent at Shrewsbury. We were blessed with quite favourable weather yet again. After meeting at noon on Saturday, some of the local countryside was explored with a gentle stroll. Saturday evening was spent enjoying a pleasant dinner. Sunday morning saw us photographing a civic procession. An unexpected bonus. After a tour of some interesting churches it was time to say farewell.

It says a great deal for the friendship that exists in UPP that two members undertook very long journeys to be present. Allen Bignell, who now resides in a home for the elderly, made the trip by coach. It was good to see him looking so well. Grateful thanks to Lawrence and Margaret Sheard for the arrangements. We look forward to next year's rally which will, we hope, be at Durham.

CIRCLE 20

Once again we met at Dolgoch Falls Hotel in Wales and received a hearty greeting from Terry and Pauline Hale. As usual the accommodation and food was superb. Pauline's sweets selection should be labelled 'hazardous to weight watchers'. The weather was more than kind to us and I am sure the circle boxes are going to be well supplied with FRPS type pictorials. It was grand to see our worthy President Stanley Berg with us and we all expressed personally our sincere sympathy to him on Mamie's sad demise..

Already, at the excellent initiative of Tony Potter and Harry Buck we have decided on next year's venue. I know that Tony has already made a provisional enquiry at the Stakis Hotel, Bradford. Our main intention is to visit the Kodak Film Museum. For the first time we held a formal circle meeting and ALL members of the circle were present. Quite a welcome happening and one which I feel sure will become a permanent feature of future get-togethers.



CIRCLE 22

During the last year unfortunately we have lost two members - Cledwyn Davies and Philip Davies (not related). This loss has been balanced by the return of Hon. Sec. Iris Bainbridge and her husband Brian, both of whom we are delighted to welcome back to the fold.

A rally is planned for September and will be held in the Lake District. All we need is some good weather to bless the event.

Recently we have won a battle with Circle 10. This was judged by Peter Greenwood FRPS. Circle 10 won the contest but the results were quite close which goes to show that our standards are improving all the time. This is a very heartening feature of our operation for which all members can be justly proud - one good reason for UPP membership!!!

NHCC2

All is well in NHCC2, our successes at last years' annual competitions brought us quite a few new members which included two more ladies, so the fairer sex is now quite well represented in our group and also giving the men rather a hard time as they usually achieve high marks (and often top marks) in the monthly folio results. Unfortunately one member, Bill Malcolm, has decided to leave our circle and he will be much missed by all. So that leaves a VACANCY or TWO in our midst.

Following last year's successful "Circle Day Out" and get -together we decided to repeat the the event this year. We held our day out at Snesmore Common country park near Newbury. Not convenient fo all our members I must admit, as for some it was too far to travel for a day trip but the location was central for the majority five members of NHCC2 were able to attend and the enjoyment of the day was increased by the fact that Geraint James (Hon. Sec. NHCC1) was able to bring



three of his circle members with him to the meeting. We all had great fun chasing butterflies and other insects around the boggy area with our cameras and finding unusual plants to photograph. Though the lizards, grass snakes and adders proved to be too wary and agile for us to get any pictures. Geraint and I have arranged a "friendly" inter-circle battle folio between NHCC 1 and 2. This has enabled ALL members to participate in a competition against another circle and not just the two or three members who get into the top 12 slides for the annual competition. These folios are at present going round the circles and should prove most interesting and who knows, it might catch on and become an annual event.

GREAT SOUTHERN LAND by Leigh Preston

Sydney, Australia, is 23 hours away by 747. It's two hundred years since Captain Arthur Philip landed a thousand undesirables at Sydney Cove, so 'European' Australia is 200 years old. When you land at Kingsford-South Airport you feel about that old yourself. 23 hours!

The Customs man hammers your passport with a rubber stamp, eyes the camera gear very suspiciously and smiles like a fridge door opening. "Welcome to OZ mate". 7½ million square kilometres, 16 million people, modern cities, beaches, sunshine, barbecues, and for the camera man lots of snaps

The insistence of travel, caused by looking at too many of other people's Australian sunset pictures, and a desire to answer one of the great unsolved mysteries - which way does the bath water flow down Australian plugholes! - has brought me and my battered old Canon Ftb 12,000 miles.

SYDNEY

First glance at a map here and you wonder if you're still on the London Underground - place names like Paddington, Lewisham, King's Cross, Stanmore, and not to be outdone, Mortlake, convince you that you've never left Heathrow.

Sydney is a breathtaking sight. Familiar, too, with its waterfront architecture clustered round Circular Quay (it's square!) below the massive Harbour Bridge. The 'Old Coathanger' was built in 1932 from bits made in Middlesborough, and the Opera House bears a passing resemblance to a group of Nuns in a rugby scrum. It's painfully difficult to get a good photograph of; best way to see it is from the water - this is best accomplished in a boat! The cruise round the harbour can last all day and eat quite quickly into the stock of K64.

I made some interesting discoveries:

- i) Pollution control at Bondi Beach, for swimmers, is simple - just keep your mouth closed.
- ii) Libel in OZ is something stuck on the side of a wine bottle, and
- iii) Despite Australia's up and coming film industry, Garbo is a person who collects the rubbish.

Well, what can you expect from a country where gold false teeth are called 'Stake of the art gob crockery'.

PERTH

After flying over all that emptiness, it's nice to know the human race is in control again - Perth is a modern mirror image of Sydney and has much better camera shops, a high standard of living, quick turn round E6 processing, close proximity to the beaches, and abundant sunshine.

My over-riding memory of Perth is one of self-induced inertia and laziness - so I watched cricket at the WACA, gave the Lager a thorough tasting, and stretched out in the sun. I took my snaps at sunrise and sunset.

KALGOORLIE

Australia's economy is all dug out of the ground. Most of it gets sold to Japan - iron ore is turned into Toyotas, and Aluminium finds its way into millions of Nikons (as does its dust!). Gold, too, comes out of the ground at Kalgoorlie.

The Gold Rush in Western Australia was started by an Irishman, Paddy Hannan, who tripped over a large chunk of it in Kalgoorlie in 1853. It's been prosperous ever since - below ground; above ground decay has set in.

The Exchange Hotel comes straight off the Hollywood movie sets - very photogenic. Two wooden storeys, cast-iron balconies - not seen a paintbrush for 30 years. The fan I had for company in my room spun round so slowly that the flies (take note Nat. Hist. fans) rode 'hobo' on it. Facilities could be described as basic - the only evidence of a loo in the adjoining cupboard was a hole in the floor! I had a nasty experience in this self same cupboard trying to unload a roll of infra-red film!

I hired a car and drove in my own personal dust cloud around the Goldfields and beyond into the legendary 'Bush'. This was what I really came to see and take pictures of - the real Outback - dusty, deserted townships - Coolgarlie, Boulder, Ora Banda and Broad Arrow - silent, wooden buildings, roads stretching to infinity, deserted farms and laconic Aussie characters who'd talk for hours, hardly noticing the camera. It's all khaki hats above stubbled chins and dusty Holden pick-ups out here.

I came close to the 'real' Australia here - the past has had its say among the red dust, spinifex and the eucalyptus trees, abandoned wind pumps, and silhouetted pit head machinery sulking in the heat haze.

I travelled back to Perth by railway on the celebrated Indian Pacific with its wiggly teak corridors and fold down plumbing, starched linen and silver service menus.

NORTHERN TERRITORIES

The motion sickness bag on the plane offered a 60% discount on Holiday Snaps! I landed at Yurara, a new development for people like me who come to 'gawp' at a huge red monolith, sitting in the middle of a great expanse of uncompromisingly raw flat nothing - Ayres Rock.

Its most endearing property is it changes colour with the light. Sunset was quite sensational, but noisy - for 3 nights in a row I witnessed 4000 camera shutters all going off at once.

At night the desert whistles with crickets and frogs - quite good company when you are doing 6-minute long exposures to catch star-streaks and moon rises!

Australia has some unique wildlife: bats that look like teabags with tails; spiders that live under loo seats (ouch!); frogs that sleep for up to five years during droughts, imprisoned in their own personal polythene bags; Koalas permanently 'stoned' on marijuana from eucalyptus leaves, and grasshoppers that can leap 7 foot fences carrying their young in their pockets.

Another day, another trip - this time by coach, racing with total disregard for suspension, along dirt roads to the Olga's, a group of odd looking, rounded sandstone rocks up to 1000 metres high.

I went by coach to Alice Springs. Some go by camel - I didn't fancy that. It takes six hours by coach, maybe three days by camel.

ALICE SPRINGS

Alice, of Nevil Shute fame, sits on the Tropic of Capricorn at least 2000 kilometres from anywhere. It has swimming pools, casinos, cold drinks, Sheraton Hotels - only the signposts tell of the isolation.

In 1929 it had a population of 40 - it is now about 25,000, all in the cattle or tourist trade - there's nothing much left of the old Alice, a green oasis sheltered in the geological folds of the McDonnell Ranges in Australia's Red Heart.

HOME

Britain seems remarkably crowded when you get back, and very, very green.

AND WHY NOT ...?

I see that the R.P.S. have recently added a Travel Group to their long list of specialist interests. Are we a bit restricted in our thinking? Apart from natural history and sport we are all much of a muchness. Or wouldn't you agree? A travel group could at least have a well filled notebook, considered by some as the sign of a lively circle.

MAIL BAG awaits with interest!

HOW MANY TIMES?

It looked a perfect view to shoot,
out came camera, tripod from boot,
carefully aligned, correct film selected,
filter for sky, verticals corrected,
horizon at third, exposure dialled in,
to miss this "gold" would be a sin.

That's it! Its in the can, the best of all,
forget the rest. Home and have a ball.
Special developer foe this one, the supreme,
not grainy or heavy, but nice and clean,
filter solutions, wash with care,
for not a blemish, not a hair.

Right, its dry. Now a close look;
what's that doing there by that brook?
It wasn't in my viewfinder at all,
nor that dustbin by the wall.
How did that TV aerial get in there?
Why with lenshood is there so much flare?

I must admit it looks too thick,
overdeveloped by quite a bit.
A trifle flat, overexposed no doubt,
a few marks and scratches to spot out,
in fact the neg looks just like the rest,
when really it should have been the best;
I'll not bother to print it, not worth a boot,
but it looked a perfect view to shoot.

B.H.

CIRCLE SECRETARIES

* Small Print : ** Large Print : *** Colour Slide

| | | |
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| ** C.2 | Mrs L Bond, Barnjet, Cuttinglye Rd, Crawley Down, W.Sussex, RH10 4LR | 0342-717318 |
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| * C.7 | A. Greenslade, Eiger, Chestnut Walk, Little Baddow, Chelmsford CM3 4SP | 0245-412775 |
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| * C.17 | H. Thompson, 2 Ellesmere Rise, Grimsby, Sth Humberside, DN34 5PE | 0472-79497 |
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| * C. 30. | J.F.R Fort, 11 Longdown, Petersfield, Hants. GU 31 4PD | 0730-68693 |
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