

UPP JOURNAL



February 2024
Issue 162

The official publication of United Photographic Postfolios

www.uppofgb.com

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Front Cover: European Bee-eater with Dragonfly
By: Alan Cork LRPS DPAGB AFIAP BPE2* QPSA

Printed by: Scantec Group www.scan-tec.co.uk

The Editor's View



Welcome to the UPP Journal February edition. You will note that we are a few weeks later than our normal January edition and for this I must apologise.

Just before Christmas our website crashed, this entailed a complete rebuild which enabled me to reduce the amount of web space we were using. The site has been active for 3 years, so it was time for a new look anyway. Over the Christmas and New Year period I started to rebuild from scratch and uploaded the new site in early January. I have now made it much easier to navigate, with a completely new navigation system which does not include the dropdown boxes as previously. It has a cleaner, easy navigation system via tabs on the lefthand of the screen. My hope is that you will all use and enjoy the UPP website frequently.

Thanks to Ken Payne, who's tutorials we are continuing to include within our website's tutorial pages. Those covered are for the following: Photoshop, Lightroom, Elements and Capture One, plus Affinity Photo One and Two, these are all in-depth and very informative. Links for all these can be found on the website. www.uppofgb.com

You should all have received and (hopefully) enjoyed the Exhibition brochure sent out in early November. We hope to continue showing the members work in this way in the years to come.

As always, I'm looking for you, the members, to write articles for the Journal, just a few words supported with pictures is fine, though I hear from some of you that you would like more images than words, so now is the chance to show off some of your work. Please send anything you think would be of interest to the membership.

A big thank you to those that have taken the time to put pen to paper.

I hope you will enjoy a few hours of reading about what some of you get up to over the year.

Arnold Phipps-Jones

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The President's Focal Point



I would like to wish you all a rather belated 'Happy New Year' and I hope that 2024 will be good to you all.

I am writing this pre-Christmas having planned to be in Venice for New Years Eve and my birthday (a rather big one), that follows a few days later.

The AGM/Convention Weekend

I am pleased to report that our 2023 AGM/Convention returned to our usual venue of 'Hillscourt' last September, Thanks to Francis Ouvry who organises the bookings. It was an enjoyable occasion which was well attended, it was lovely to meet up in person with friends old and new.

On the Friday evening we enjoyed a presentation of Monochrome prints by Circle 5, introduced by their Circle Secretary Nick Bodle and other members of his Circle. We were treated to an entertaining evening of first-class photography showing a variety of subjects and individuality in their prints. A super start to the weekend.

On the Saturday morning we had the pleasure of Annie Healey FRPS DPAGB EFIAP/s BPE4 taking us on a trip to Costa Rica, guiding us through the wonderful wildlife to be found there with projected images. She brought along her successful ARPS and FRPS panels of superb prints which we were able to have on display.

Our own Exhibition compiled from all the Circles Gold and Non-Gold prints (Ray had printed A2 panels of entries from the digital Circles) was once again expertly hung by Ray Grace and his partner Helen Heyes, so a huge thank you to them. The Exhibition was available for us to view throughout the weekend. Andy Mills compiled a video which was shown on the Saturday of all the images that gained a Circle Certificate, Highly Commended and Trophy winner's images along with the winning AV of 2023 also the images from the two Gold Star Circles 29 and 46.

Will Cheung FRPS entertained us before dinner with his presentation 'My Passion for Photography' which was an inspirational walk through the many photographic styles he enjoys and the variety of projects he has ongoing at once, never going anywhere without his camera. It was a presentation packed with super images and anecdotes.

The weekend was also a celebration marking 60 years membership for Colin Westgate FRPS MFIAP MPAGB APAGB, he set up a small display of his prints taken during those years, going back to his darkroom days.

Colin Joined UPP in August 1963 which makes him currently the longest serving member of UPP (Second of all time only to Stanley Berg).

During this time Colin has started and been secretary of several Circles and a member of even more! He is an enthusiastic ambassador for UPP and has recruited many new members over the years, he was publicity secretary for many years. In 2021 he was honoured with Life Membership. Due to his valuable knowledge of UPP and his well-considered advice he was asked to become a life member of Council in 2022.

Fittingly Colin's Circle 29 won the Gold Star print Circle again in 2023.

The PAGB e-news recently published an article featuring Colin's achievements during his time in UPP.

Publicity. Through 'She Clicks' (a group on Facebook) the Features Editor of Amateur Photographer asked for Club profiles to feature in a double page spread over the next few months, I applied. They required 15 high-res images, out of which they would choose 7-8. As this was just after our exhibition, I asked the trophy winners and Circle certificate holders for their images. We were featured in the Amateur Photographer magazine edition of 28th November 2023.

Our membership has been slightly down over recent years so, if anyone hears of or can suggest possible ways to promote UPP please contact our publicity secretary Ed Campbell publicity@uppofgb.com or myself president@uppofgb.com

The best form of publicity is word of mouth so don't forget to tell your photography friends about UPP!

Council members, after the AGM we have welcomed two new co-opted members; Mary Davies and Richard Burn as members without portfolio on Council, until their positions can be ratified at the next AGM.

It was extremely disappointing that no one came forward to fill the role of Exhibition Secretary. It was suggested that the role could be managed by forming a sub-committee to split it into several smaller roles. We did receive offers from Mary Davies and Annie Ringland to hang the Exhibition but with no Exhibition Secretary to run the annual competition we would not have an exhibition.

This, I feel, would be an unacceptable loss to UPP. We would not have the chance to see the work from circles other than our own and, besides losing an enjoyable part of the AGM/Convention weekend, there would be no exhibition catalogue (something that has been well received).

I am not prepared to see this happen and although I already have more than enough to do, I have offered to run the annual competition by accepting the entries, engage the judges and organise a judging day.

Ray Grace and Helen Heyes have agreed to print all the certificates and Ray will print the A2 panels once again.

Mary Davies has agreed to deal with the trophies.

So, we will still have a competition and exhibition for now.

As with all clubs and societies we cannot survive without new members and volunteers to fill the council roles. There is a need for new circle secretaries and deputies if the circles are to continue and new ones to start, if that is something that interests you, please let us know.

AGM/Convention 2024, Organisation is already underway for this to be held at 'Hillscourt' once again, Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd September with the AGM being on the 21st of September, **put these dates in your diaries now!**

A warm welcome to new members that have joined since July 2023, I hope that you are all enjoying your chosen circles and that your membership with UPP will be a long and happy one.

Peter Paterson FRPS, MPAGB, MFIAP – Circles 4/26 and C5

Christine Pugh CPAGB – Circle 60

Martin Senior – Circle Z6

Guy Davies ARPS, EFIAP, EPSA – Circle 36

Stuart Brook – Circle 7/17/21

Steve Simmonds – Circle Z7

Richard Milton-Worsell – Circle Z5

Clifford Threadgold FPSNZ, ARPS – Circles 60 and Z1 (Welcome back – Clifford was previously a Circle Secretary for the Anglo Australian Circle – postal UK AUS & NZ)

Steve Kennedy – Circle 73

Janice Payne ARPS

Congratulations to

David Venables DPAGB BPE 4*

MCPF Roll of Honour 2023



Over the years David has been an active and valued member of Wythall Photographic Society and later Shirley Photographic Society where he is still very active. He was involved on the committees and has been President on two occasions. He is currently a member of Solihull Photographic Society.

David joined UPP in October 2000, he is currently in Circles 5 and 9 also Zoom Circle 8 (Panels)

Mike Sharples MFIAP MPAGB
FBPE ARPS EFIAP - MCPF
President

Presenting David with his award.

David is a very well-respected photographer in his own right, entering many local and national competitions and has been awarded many awards.

At the 2023 UPP Exhibition he won the AQS Natural History print trophy for his print in Circle 9, 'Red Squirrel'.

He has served for well over 10 years as an MCPF A list approved Judge.

Judging many club and national competitions, he is highly respected.

He served on the MCPF Council continuously for more than 10 years as a MCPF council member and from 2011 to 2017 in the role of Awards for Photographic Merit Secretary. For all the work and dedication that he has given to Federation Clubs and his loyal service to the MCPF and Midlands Photography in general

The MCPF Council has no hesitation in presenting this award to David Venables DPAGB BPE4* for his continuous service of more than 10 years as a MCPF council member and placing him on the MCPF Roll of Honour.

Jim Haydock

We recently received the sad news that Jim Haydock passed away over the weekend of 19/20 August 2023. As far as we know Jim had no immediate family, his wife having died many years ago, he lived on his own and was very independent. Little is known about him, but it is believed that he used to work at Leyland Motors.

Jim was an active member of small print Circle 7/17/21 (Formerly a member of Circle 7). He joined UPP in June 1974 and was therefore a member for 49 years, sadly just missing out on his 50-year certificate.

He won the Small Print Trophy in 1988 for Circle 7 with his print 'Stepping Stones'



1988 C7 – J Haydock – 'Stepping Stones'

As Jim's health deteriorated another circle member used to collect the Folio from him; we understand that he enjoyed taking part in the Circle and was a keen gardener, often entering images of flowers from his garden in the Folio, as he found it hard to get out much, he found driving difficult due to his bad knees.



Colin Westgate FRPS MFIAP MPAGB APAGB Celebrating 60 years membership of UPP

Colin joined UPP in August 1963 which makes him currently the longest serving member of UPP (Second of all time only to Stanley Berg).

Within weeks of joining, he re-started Circle 11 which at that time was for whole plate prints it is now 10x8in and he served as secretary for 16 years.

When he took early retirement in 1994 and started his Quest Photography business, he also joined Council as Publicity Officer for two years and took that role on again in 2011 - 2021.

In 2002 he became Secretary of Circle 29 which at 12sq in, retained the original size of quarter plate prints, the size of all prints when UPP first started out as PMPP - Photographic Miniature Postal Portfolios.

In February 2017 he re-started Circle 30 (again, at the 12sq in size). He handed over Secretaryship of that Circle in October 2018, whilst retaining circle membership. Then, in 2020, he formed and became Secretary of one of the new Zoom Circles, to be known as Z2. He also became secretary of Z4 in 2022 following the registration of the then Circle Secretary.

Over the years Colin has been a member of numerous Circles, he currently belongs to C29, C30, C81, C9, Z2 and Z4.

Representing his various Circles, since 1968 he has won the Leighton Herdson print trophy once, the Best Small Print five times, the Roland Jonas Landscape trophy three times, the Circle Certificate 18 times, and Highly Commended 28 times. As far as I know this information is correct but there could be more that we have missed!

His Circle 29 has won the Gold Star Circle on countless occasions!

Colin is an enthusiastic ambassador for UPP and has recruited many new members over the years.

In 2021 he was honoured with Life Membership. Due to his valuable knowledge of UPP and his well-considered advice he was asked to become a life member of Council in 2022.



Fix Dark Prints

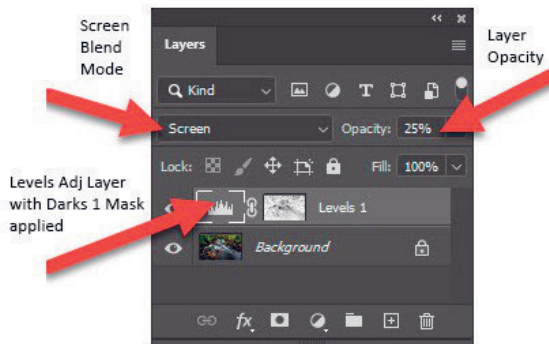
I have found that when printing on matt papers my images appear darker than they do on screen. The colours are accurate as I use a bespoke profile but the darks often appear blocked up where I know there is detail. This does not appear to happen when I am printing on lustre-type paper, only matt art-type papers.

In conversation with one or two members of my local camera club it would appear that I am not alone. Others have the same issue. I found a solution to this problem courtesy of Tony Kuyper, the developer of the TK Luminosity Masking panel, who also had the same issue. He produced a method to resolve the issue by creating a (Darks 1) luminosity mask applied to a Levels (or Curves) adjustment layer set to Screen blend mode. I tried it and it did indeed resolve the problem. The procedure for doing this is shown below. For those of you who do not use Tony's TK panel, the same process can be carried out using Apply Image. The procedure for using the Apply Image method is shown after the TK method.

Method using the TK8 Luminosity Masking Panel

1. If you have a multi-layered image, create a 'stamp visible' layer (Ctrl+Shift+Alt+E/Cmd+Shift+Opt+E) or flatten the image.
2. Create a Darks 1 luminosity mask.
3. Create a Levels (or Curves) adjustment layer at the top of the layer stack.
4. Set the adjustment layer's blend mode to Screen.
5. Apply the Darks 1 luminosity mask created in Step 1 as a layer mask to the adjustment layer.
6. Lower the layer's opacity to between 25 and 50%.

The image below shows the final layer stack with the print adjustment layer on top.



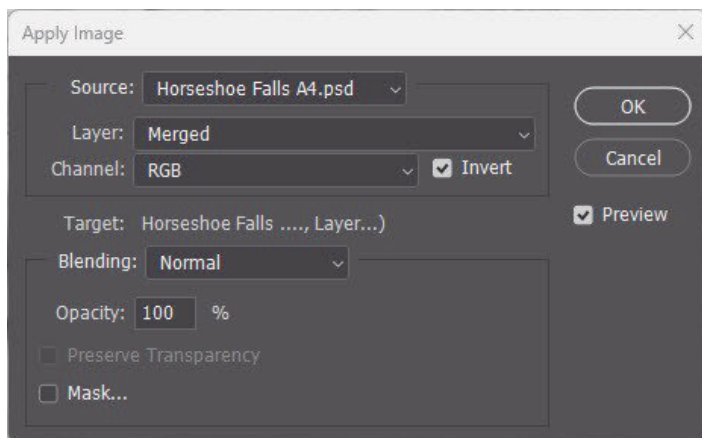
The darks are now blocked by the Darks 1 luminosity mask. Screen blend mode provides an automatic, consistent lightening adjustment that keeps 100% black pixels 100% black, so there is a bit of a black anchor to the blackest blacks in the image. Screen blend mode also seems to lighten with less contrast and/or saturation shift that can occur using Curves or Levels adjustment layers.

So, the overall effect is to create an automatic lightening effect restricted to just the dark, blocked tones in the image.

The required reduction of opacity of the adjustment layer will depend on the amount of blacks within the image. A darker image will usually require a higher opacity. For images where this is plenty of dark colours, but still excellent detail in these dark colours, an opacity of about 25% should suffice.

Method using Apply Image

1. Create a Levels (or Curves) adjustment layer.
2. Alt+click/Opt+click on the layer mask to activate it.
3. From the Image menu in Photoshop select "Apply Image"
4. Use the settings shown below. Be sure to check the Invert box to get a Darks 1 mask and not a Lights 1 mask. Click OK to accept the settings.
5. Change the Blend mode of the adjustment layer to Screen.
6. Adjust the layer opacity as described in the previous section.



Using the "Apply Image" method you could create a Photoshop action so the procedure can be carried out with 1 click.

If you don't have the TK panel but would like to try it out, there is a free Basic version that is available. Go to <https://goodlight.us/panels-and-videos.html> and look for 'TK Lum-Mask and Basic V6'. The procedure shown previously will work with the Basic panel.

If you then decide to buy the TK8 plugin for Photoshop, it is only \$29; excellent value (in my opinion). I should mention here that I am not associated with Tony Kuyper in any way and do not receive a commission for making this recommendation. I just happen to believe that this is an excellent luminosity masking panel and more than worth the cost, particularly with the additional panels that are included with it. The package does also come with a number of demonstration videos.

Dave Kelly does a lot of YouTube videos on the TK8 panel. There is a new one every Friday. He is affiliated to Tony Kuyper and if you use his promo code DK15, you will receive a 15% discount on the purchase price. Even better value. I should say here that other luminosity masking panels available and you should check out the other options.

Article by Ray Grace ARPS



2023 Convention Attendees

A Grand Weekend, Circle 4/26



From left to right'
(Standing) Pat Johnston, Miles Langthorne*, John Hacket (Sec)*,
Dawn Hacket, John Heningham*, Val Johnston.

(Seated) Phil Davies*, Julie Graham*, John Stokes*, Grahame Rowling,
Anne Rowling*.

- Indicates members of Circle 4/26

On Friday 9th June 2023 all eight members and three spouses of Circle 4/26 met in Hexham, Northumberland at the home of Val and Pat Johnston for a BBQ. It was good to meet new members and old friends some of whom we hadn't seen for many years but it was soon as if we had never been parted. The weather stayed fine but cool later on when members went inside to watch some Audio Visual sequences about the area.

Next day some of the party went to a Steam Fair at Corbridge.



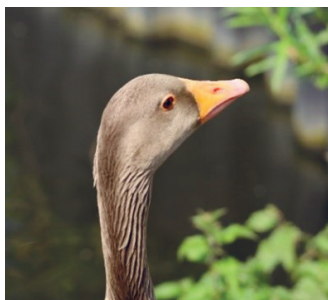
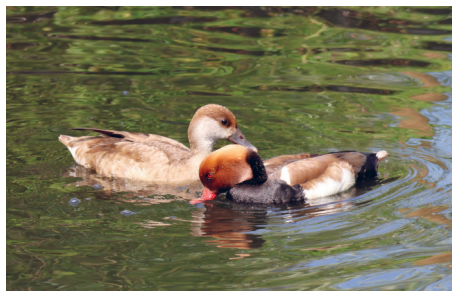
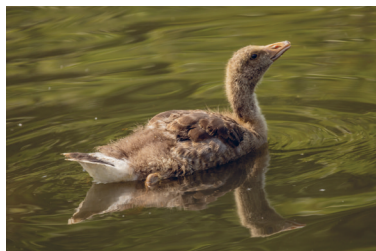
The rest went to Washington Wetlands Centre (Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust). Anne spotted a bee orchid as soon as she got out of the car but I think I was the only one to photograph it but as I didn't have a backing card or my macro lens it is just a record.



There were ducks and geese galore but the main attractions were probably the Flamingos and the Asian Short Clawed Otters.

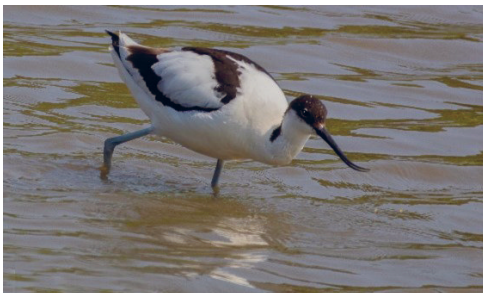


Members then went on to the bird hides where they were able to photograph Black headed Gulls, Terns and Avocets. The Herons were a little distant for the 400 lens, even with a X2 converter.

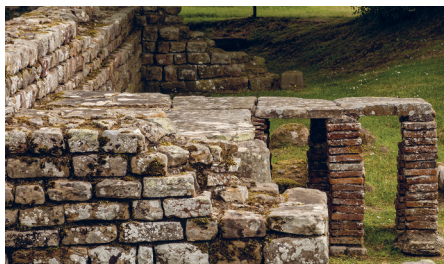




It was not coincidental that 5 members of this group had bought a mirrorless Canon EOS RP as discussions had taken place in the notebook. Everyone seemed happy with the results. I kept some of my old Canon lens to use with a converter on mine. However Pat, my husband bought a 100-400 mm specifically for the camera and when I felt the weight of it and saw the results I traded in my very good but heavy Canon 100-400 and bought one the same. I almost broke even and no regrets even if the F stop isn't very low.



On Sunday as we are so near Hadrian's Wall we all did some exploration. First we went to the Chesters Roman Fort. This showed the remains of a 2,000 year old fort for Cavalry. It housed 200 men and their horses. The bath house is particularly well preserved. It afforded fine views over the North Tyne. We looked round the very fine museum which houses many Roman artefacts especially in stone, coins and personal effects.



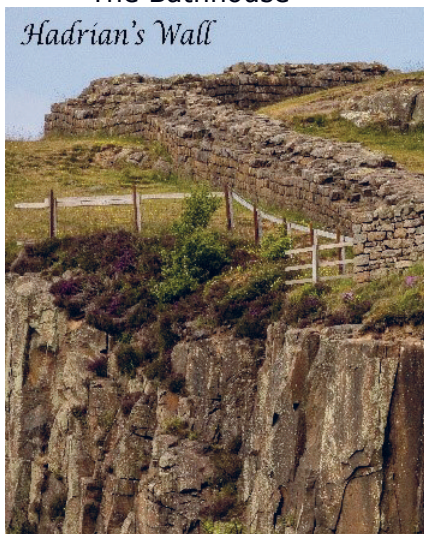
The Barracks



The Bathhouse



View from Sill rooftop



Hadrian's Wall



Then on to the National parks centre 'The Sill' situated on the military road for lunch. This is very near to Hadrian's wall which in this area runs along the whin sill, which forms a natural barrier. The wall built by the Romans runs from Wallsend (Newcastle) to the Solway Firth on the West coast. It is a World Heritage site but of course much of it is now non existent or only ruins remain. The Sill building has been designed to fit into the landscape.



Early Marsh Orchid



Ragged Robin

There were exhibitions and interactive displays but one disappointment was the roof top walk which was meant to show different habitats of all the wildflowers and grasses which grow in the National Park but because of the June drought everything was reduced to brown withered hay. There was however a view across the valley. Next stop was Walltown nature reserve where we had a short walk and some members photographed the flowers.



To sum up the weekend, lovely weather, superb company and good food. Photography? I'll let you be the judge of that.

Compiled by Val Johnston with photographs from the members of the group.



Lynn Hyde LRPS

This article appeared in the RPS Journal Vol159. November 2019, but did not show all the images in the panel.

There have always been keen photographers in the family: Firstly my grandfather and then my husband. So, for as long as I can remember I have been requested to provide foreground interest in many pictures! Having been a teacher all my working life, about 6 years ago I reduced my full time teaching commitment, which meant I had more time to explore my growing interest in photography. I began to view places from the other side of the lens and found a passion for imagery. To paraphrase Dorothea Lange I have discovered that the process of looking for pictures has taught me to see without a camera.

I joined Bookham Camera Club and was encouraged by members who had already been on the distinctions journey to have a go. I studied their successful panels and those published on the RPS website to build an understanding of what constitutes a good panel and the quality required in each image.

The images I used are mainly from my travels and feature Burma, Botswana, Dubai, Cornwall, Bushy Park and finally at home in Bookham. After selecting about 20 images that hopefully demonstrated the range of skills required I then spent many hours shuffling prints to achieve what I hoped would be viewed as a strong harmonious '11th' image.

Thirteen years ago, aged 48, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease but thanks to my amazing family and friends life has carried on as near to normal as possible with support when I need it. The loss of fine motor control associated with a tremor is the most difficult symptom to treat and therefore, has the greatest impact on my photography. So heavy cameras with awkward controls are impossible to use. I have found touch screen cameras that enable me to pinpoint the focus and release the shutter via the screen a big help. All my panel images were taken on a Canon EOS M3 or M10 without a tripod. I can carry limited equipment but anything extra ends up in my husband's rucksack.

When my panel was displayed at the assessment day I was a nervous wreck but then began to hear positive comments and that I had passed!







I feel that the main creative challenge in my journey to LRPS was to be able to capture the images I visualised within the limitations of the simpler cameras I can easily use. Having found a way around physical limitations my final images were judged on their merit, independent of the condition that could otherwise define me.

In the future I would love to continue photographing the outdoors but also to develop a style based around artistic floral photography under controlled conditions. Maybe one day I'll get over trauma of the LRPS assessment and go for an ARPS.



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Ramblings with the Idle Rich

Part Two (Continued from Summer 2022)

During the Judges workshop (aka The Judges Assessment Day) those of us who were successful were advised not to expect to be inundated with requests for our services (I hesitate to use the word 'talents') We were told most Program/Competition Secs. worth their salt would have already booked their judges for the season/year ahead.

This suited me as I was still holding down a full time job which, not only entailed working 9 to 5 but also to make evening visits to those clients not available during normal working hours. One case springs to mind of a farmer who, having milked his herd of cows - starting at 5.30am - then took some animals to market, waited until they were sold, had a pint or three and then returned home only to do the milking once again. I had to call at 8pm - after his supper - to conclude our business.

As always, I have digressed but, given these constraints, I was ready to "strut my stuff" at local clubs. One of the first to contact me was the very club who contacted me to help them out in their emergency. The competition secretary congratulated me on becoming 'legal' having read it in a Federation bulletin which listed all the newly appointed judges. He also told me he was reprimanded for using me before because I was not listed and, even having explained why, still met with the judges committee disapproval. In those days clubs were pressured into only booking listed judges on the pretext that an unlisted one could charge what they liked whereas one who was approved could only charge the Federation rate!

Gradually the number of bookings grew and, like other judges, I soon learned the foibles of our local clubs. One, quite close to home, I was warned about in that, if the Secretary was not well placed in a competition he would write a letter of complaint (on behalf of the club) about the poor standard of judging. Fortunately the Federation Secretary was well aware and chose to ignore. Often the complainant would raise the issue at the following Federation meeting. Each time he received the same response "no other club has complained about this judge and no further action was considered necessary"

Shortly into my 'career' I visited Fordingbridge CC. Prints were to be judged first and I was about six images in when a "clackety clack" noise became apparent and seemed to grow in volume as the evening progressed. On a couple of occasions I became completely distracted and lost the thread of what I was saying. I made it through to the interval and, as the lights went up, saw the cause. An old lady, sat close to the front, was frantically knitting. Over the cup of tea the Chairman, having noticed I was a little shaken said sorry I should have been warned. The lady is not a good photographer herself and when her work came up to be judged the intensity of her knitting (and volume) rose. They have grown used to it over the years and I had given her a low score. She is nicknamed in the club as Madame Guillotine.

On subsequent visits to the club I made a point of having a little chat with her before we got underway and she seemed so pleased that someone paid her attention she did not knit all evening.

At another club, over the years, I became aware that in every competition I judges there would be a photograph of a cat - the same cat each time. Putting aside my dislike of domestic cats I found them difficult to judge as they were not competition images - merely snaps - and it taught me how to use tact and discretion even when dispensing a low mark. But, one evening I had to draw the line. This lady's cat was photographed sitting on a human loo seat in a very ungainly pose in what I took to be her house which was a bit of a shambles. I tried as hard as possible to be tactful but the audience was extremely restless and comments like "it shouldn't be allowed" and "disgraceful" boomed round the hall. The lady left before I had even finished judging her image and I never found out if it was a serious entry or put in for a joke.

At another club I had the honour to judge their Annual Print and Slide (remember those?) of the Year. The top three images from each of their competitions throughout the season were eligible. For the size of the club the standard of slides was commendable but, every now and again, a rather mediocre image appeared. A slide of behind the TV, behind a row of beach huts, a horse rising up on its hind legs etc. Fortunately no marking was involved so that I could, discreetly, pass these over. However one image did take me by surprise. A reasonably close up of the backside of a rather large pig. It had obviously been 'adjusted' by the photographer and re-photographed as there appeared to be some "vapor" being expelled from the said Pig. Not only was it extremely humorous when projected large but it was a skillful piece of work that deserved to be recognized and I gave it an HC (Highly commended) When it came to the presentations at the end of the evening all was revealed. The club has three set subjects each year and one of those for the season was "Rear or Rears". The Pig photo won this and the club, deliberately did not tell me though I was informed about the other two. They wished to see how I (a relative newcomer to judging) would cope. Suffice to say I have visited this club at least twenty times since.

Judge baiting seems to be a trait amongst some photographers (and even clubs) and I am as susceptible as any. It is a slight shame that they fail to realise that we are all volunteers giving our time freely and those with less thick skin than my own might be discouraged from continuing if they are made a fool of too many times.

To be continued in the next issue.

2023 - The Year Gone By.

When I agreed to provide a piece for the magazine I was stuck for a subject. My wife suggested a review of 2023 and my first reaction was completely negative because I believed that I had done no photography during the year.

In fact I had done no photography because of pressing family issues and because, for the first time in decades, I had allowed my membership of the local camera club to lapse. I just didn't have the time or motivation to get out on Thursday evenings.

I had been on one short holiday but forgot to put the prepared camera case into the car. I only have a couple of pictures taken on my phone as a memory. This is of Dunwich beach.

I also have the memory of taking some rather silly chances driving through quite severe floods. It was at the time of storm Babet and East Anglia, our destination, had not appeared in any of the warnings. Eventually, a few miles short of our destination, we were stuck. It looked just too deep and a van driver coming the other way issued dire warnings. While pondering our next move a young local couple turned up in a farm wagon. To cut a long story short they guided us along crazy farm tracks that were on slightly higher ground and got us to our destination. What a delightful and kind couple. They wouldn't even accept a gift that I offered in gratitude.

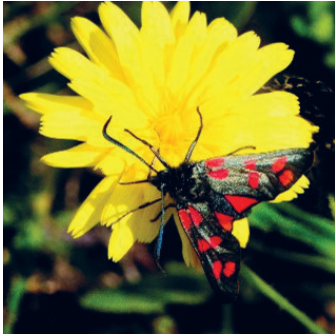


Then I reviewed the photography that I had managed. As I thought, quite negligible with a vital exception that I'll come to later.

Every year I grow a few nasturtiums for the larvae of the large white butterfly. They are obviously very common but it's possible to get some pleasing pictures. My Daughter-in-Law calls them Dad's pets!!



This one was taken this year and was entered into one of the UPP monthly folios. I offer it because it won that month (by a very short head) . One of the reasons that I 'grow my own' is that one, usually, has a choice of subject, and, within limits, can wait until you get the image that you want. You also have the option of dashing out quickly if the light seems right. It's more difficult in the field but in terms of the competition rules the subject is still 'wild and free' so 'grow your own' seems OK to me.



I also made a trip to Ainsdale dunes near Southport. I was visiting my son who lives near there. I was hoping to get the White Satin Moth, but I was too late, and their emergence had finished.



-I remember that I had a very relaxing time. I was alone, and the weather was very pleasant. I failed to get any pictures worth entering but a couple to provide a reminder. The two I've chosen to include here are a six spot Burnet moth and a Harebell.

The day was marred when I made my way to a beach side refreshment hut and walked into a medical emergency. Some poor fellow had collapsed and was being 'rescued' by all sorts of agencies. I think I counted at least four. The coastguard, helicopter ambulance, regular ambulance and police. It reminded me how well served we are in the UK should we need help.

Now, at last, I come to the activity that really prompted me to stick with 2023 as my subject.

I have a 14-year-old grandson who lives with us. For many years he has known of my interest in NH photography and, many years ago, I published a photobook aimed at my grandchildren. The book was prompted by the death of Kath Bull who many of you will remember – but that's another story.

From this point on all the pictures, except the crow/buzzard one, were taken by my grandson.

Much to my surprise and delight he expressed an interest in joining me on one of my trips. Our first trip was to a local bird sanctuary where we spent a long-time photographing wood ants – but no birds. I have two identical camera bodies and a couple of lenses that we decide to share. I avoided burdening him with too many technicalities although I did explain the basics of depth of field. In my opinion good use of DoF is important to get decent NH pictures. Obviously, I also explained which camera buttons were important to getting a picture.

To get birds we decided that it would be good to begin at a place where subjects wouldn't be too hard to find. Our second trip was therefore a 'boy's day out' to Hastings to have a go at some of the birds.



This is when I realised that he had understood my explanation of aperture, and he was displaying great enthusiasm and handling the camera beautifully despite the very heavy 200-500 lens.

This Jackdaw is one of this first efforts and technically is as good as anything I could do. The feather detail in the larger picture is amazing. We were both

delighted with the outcome.



The third trip was also slated for Hastings, but it was too crowded and we ended in St. Leonard's and there got a sequence that he captured and I didn't.

We noticed a gull on the beach pecking at what seemed to be a dogfish. Then we were amazed that the bird picked up the fish, flew off and then dropped the fish onto the stones. Maybe trying to kill it. My grandson had the camera, fitted with the 200-500mm zoom, and had the presence of mind and the strength and skill to begin photographing the action. He did remarkably well, in my opinion, to get the moment and the focus.

The picture on the left is my favourite but he prefers to the one on the right – maybe because the sea gives a better sense of location.



The action wasn't finished. After 'performing' for us the gull decided that enough was enough and swallowed the fish whole. An extraordinary episode to see and one which might have tested the skill of an experienced photographer but was taken in the stride of this youngster.



Finally, as many of you will be aware, my passion is Odonata and so it would have been quite impossible to avoid taking him to 'my' lake. We had a most interesting day including seeing crows mobbing a buzzard.

This time I had the camera and lens and so it was my turn to get the picture.

Then we changed lenses to test his close-up skills. We were both delighted with the results.



To the left is an azure damsel and to the right a female blue tailed damsel of the form violacea. He took it handheld and seemed to naturally get the body aligned to maximise the plane of focus.



Then, finally, a dragonfly. A broad bodied chaser. He did well to both spot it and photograph it without spooking it.



To conclude, my trips with 'the boy' have made 2023 memorable for me. To see his interest and enthusiasm has been a delight. To have a companion on my days in the field has been a further delight and to think that maybe, just maybe, I've introduced a youngster to what, in my case, has been a lifelong interest is very satisfying.

Article by Douglas Hands

Some Brain Teasers

1. Which Camera Manufacturer Introduced the first full-frame mirrorless Camera?
a) Sony b) Olympus c) Panasonic d) Canon
2. When is the best time to photograph the Milky Way?
a) Solstice b) Equinox c) Full Moon d) New Moon
3. How many stops faster is f/1 than f/16?
a) 4 b) 8 c) 15 d) 16
4. In which decade did the Nikon 1. Nikons' first camera, go on sale?
a) 1920's b) 1930's c) 1940's d) 1950's
5. Which of these is not an aspect ratio found on modern DSLRs?
a) 3:2 b) 4:5 c) 7:9 d) 16:9
6. Which famous camera brand changed ownership and name in 2021?
a) Rollei b) Ricoh c) Pentax d) Olympus
6. In which year did the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Photographic course?
a) 1985 b) 1995 c) 2005 d) 2015
7. What is the colour temperature of tungsten lighting?
a) 1.000k b) 3.000k c) 5.000k d) 7.000k
8. Which company owns the Pentax brand?
a) Ricoh b) Canon c) Nortitsu d) Yashica
9. What would you use the Scheimpflug principle to determine?
a) Studio lighting b) Lens element grouping c) Sensor arrays
d) Depth of field
10. ISO 6.400 is how many stops more sensitive than ISO 200?
a) Four b) Five c) Six d) Seven

Answers on page 33.

IMAGE & CONTEXT.



My photograph 'Bridge Steps' (above) is the subject of this article that comprises extracts from an essay that I wrote in 1984 as part of my studies for a degree in Photographic Media Studies at Harrow College of Higher Education.

ORIGINATION OF THE IMAGE

A visit to the Hayward Gallery, London on the 23rd November 1978, to view the work of French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. His pictures prompted me to investigate his method of image making and attempt to experience the much discussed 'decisive moment' seen in his photographs.

My location was at London's Hungerford Bridge where the footbridge steps lead down to the south bank of the Thames outside the Royal Festival Hall. At the time I was concerned with capturing a moment in time when the moving people created a juxtaposition which held interesting design relationships.

'For me, the camera is a sketch book, an instrument of intuition and spontaneity, the master of the instant which - in visual terms - questions and decides simultaneously. In order to 'give a meaning' to the world, one has to feel oneself involved in what he frames in the view finder. This attitude requires concentration, a discipline of mind, sensitivity, and a sense of geometry.'

H.C-B. (Quoted in DELPIRE p7)



Behind the Saint-Lazare station, Paris, 1932' – H. Cartier-Bresson

MEANING AND INTERPRETATION

There are other technical ways in which my picture follows the style of Bresson. For example, in the miniature film format and uncropped printing. However, whilst he shows concern for 'giving a meaning to the world', there are many ways in which the context of a photograph may be interpreted and 'meanings' will be there whether or not the photographer was conscious of them. Whilst Bresson is concerned that no-one should crop his images in reproduction, he has been very careful to select his composition in the first place thus limiting our awareness of the broader context in which the subjects existed. This active selection of imagery for record and visual communication compares with other documentation media.

'Our picture has been preselected and predetermined for us, not so much by accident as by people who were consciously or unconsciously imbued with a particular view worth preserving.' E.H.Carr on the subject of historical records. (CARR p13)

The significance of information will vary with time of its consideration and with the interpretation of the person reviewing it.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

'There are the 'formal' properties of an image; the use of lighting, focus, depth of field, composition, atmosphere and so on. On the other hand, there are the social relationships implicit within the photographs its intended use and its value in the context for which it was intended.'
Su Braden (BRADEN p89)

We cannot assume that the people in my picture are unsociable although there is a distinct lack of communication at this point in time despite their close encounter on the steps. (My assumption - I was not aware of any verbal communication although there was the sound of the mouth-organ player obviously trying to draw attention to himself). However, it is common for people in our urban society to be uncommunicative as they pass by, going about their daily business. In smaller rural communities inhabitants will know a larger proportion of the population and presumably develop the habit of greeting others, including strangers. Yet the towns will influence their behaviour, away from home they will be more guarded and less likely to acknowledge strangers.

SHRINKING THE COUNTRY AND STANDARDISATION

'The dominant economic fact of our age is the development, not of manufacturing, but of transport industries.' Leading Victorian economist, Alfred Marshall (1890). (Quoted in HENNESSEY p5)

Transport industries of the nineteenth century speeded up the movement of goods, gave more potential for trade, and the facility for people to travel more widely. Personal mobility was the key to the 'social revolution' brought about by the railways. Inter-city journeys had previously lasted days or weeks.

A horse-drawn stage might cover 20-30 miles in a day at a cost of one shilling (5p, about a day's wages in the early nineteenth century). By the 1850's the railway could link the north of England with London within the day for the sum of five shillings return fare (Then a day's wages for a skilled artisan). Hungerford Bridge carries the railway from the south-east corner of England across the Thames into Charing Cross station.

Railways fed and fuelled the towns, enabling them to grow. They also supported industries upon which many towns depended, they carried newspapers and post, keeping social and commercial life at a more elevated level than previous eras had known. Towns began to look alike, factory-produced foods like canned soups and baked beans began to erode the marked variations in regional food dishes. Standardisation of products, verbal and written communication gave rise to the possibility of a 'national opinion' on matters of common concern to people across the country. This process was to be much intensified by radio, cinema and television in later years.

Standards were raised and 'improved', but only by paying the price of mass-production and uniformity.

In my picture there are similarities in the clothes worn by the people. Even the harmonica player, presumably of lower social status than the others, is dressed in similar style. The bridge construction is typical of late nineteenth century railway bridges.

The cool, clinical, undecorated style in concrete construction has probably contributed to the coldness of social relationships outside a close circle of family and friends. The endless repetition of angular designs and the rough, harsh textures are alien to human comfort. To have one's home in the midst of this 'concrete jungle' must become depressing after the initial novelty of the situation has worn off. Personal freedom is restricted for those living on the upper levels of high-rise blocks. With no direct access to the street it is easy for one to feel isolated from the rest of society, especially for the elderly or infirm.



Glasgow School of Architecture



'Bridge Steps' detail.

The typography on the notice board is a 'sans-serif' type which has also developed from the 50's and 60's. The undecorative design reflects the plain architectural styles, together they present a cold, austere environment which can be particularly depressing on a dull, gloomy day. The notice itself is a symbol of modern society where the freedom of the individual is being increasingly restricted.

'One must always take photos with the greatest respect for the subject and for oneself.' - Henri Cartier-Bresson.

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Article by Paul Damen BA



“Well, you don't get to be Sports Photographer of the Year by just hanging around on the touchline, you know!”



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