

# DIGIT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP  
Number 76 2018 Issue 1



# Upcoming DIG events



Details of all DIG events are available on the Group's website at [www.rps.org/special-interest-groups/digital-imaging/events](http://www.rps.org/special-interest-groups/digital-imaging/events)



THAMES VALLEY CENTRE  
**PRESENTATIONS  
& LEN DEELEY  
MEMORIAL TROPHY  
PDI COMPETITION**  
Judge Jim Pascoe ARPS

Sunday 22 April 2018 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire



EASTERN CENTRE  
**Michael  
Eleftheriades**  
**HOW TO CREATE  
YOUR OWN  
DIGITAL BOOKS**

Sunday 29 April 2018 ~ Foxton, Cambridgeshire



North West Centre  
**Viveca Koh FRPS**  
**URBAN EXPLORATION  
TO FINE ART  
&  
FROM IPHONOGRAPHY  
TO FELLOWSHIP**

Sunday 6th May 2018 ~ Hough End Centre, Manchester



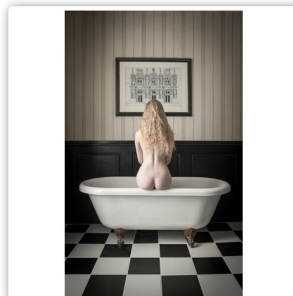
THAMES VALLEY CENTRE  
**Matt Parry**  
**TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY**  
Building a portfolio,  
technique, ethics  
and workflow

Sunday 20 May 2018 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire



WESTERN CENTRE  
**Passionate About  
Photography**  
Continuing the journey  
Part II with  
Jane Kearney CPAGB

Sunday 3 June 2018 Ilton Village Hall, Somerset TA19 9HG



SOUTH EAST CENTRE  
**AGM  
&  
Tim Pile**  
**ART NUDES**

Sunday 10 June 2018 ~ Sevenoaks, Kent

#### DIG Committee

Janet Haines ARPS (Chair)  
*digchair@rps.org*

Janet Davies ARPS (Secretary)  
*digsecretary@rps.org*

Lynda Simpson LRPS (Treasurer)  
*digtreasurer@rps.org*

Chas Hockin LRPS (Web content manager)  
*digweb@rps.org*

Marilyn Taylor ARPS (Exhibitions)  
*digexhibitions@rps.org*

Rex Waygood  
*rex\_waygood@mac.com*

David Taylor LRPS (PI Comp)  
*DIGPIcomp@rps.org*

Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS (Centres)  
*barrysnr633@gmail.com*

Simon Street LRPS (Distinctions handbook)  
*sjstreet1@icloud.com*

Alan Bousefield ARPS (New members)  
*alan.bousefield@ukgateway.net*

Dennis Knowles (Membership)  
*dennisknowles123@btinternet.com*

Dr Barrie Brown LRPS (DIGIT Assistant Editor)  
*digitased@rps.org*

#### Co-opted

Gary Beaton (DIGIT Editor)  
*digitator@rps.org*

#### DIG Centre Organisers

##### South Eastern

Bruce Broughton  
07482 275811  
*bruce-broughton@hotmail.com*

##### Eastern

Mark Gillett  
*mark\_gillett@icloud.com*

##### Scotland

Dave Hunt  
0131 445 3004  
*digscotland@rps.org*

##### Southern

Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS  
01425 471489  
*digsouthern@rps.org*

##### Thames Valley

Alan Bousefield ARPS  
01494 764975  
*digthamesvalley@rps.org*

##### Western

Sheila Haycox  
*sah2@live.co.uk*

##### North West

Malcolm Blackburn  
01298 812233  
*mblackburn@redseats.net*

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## From the chair

### Janet Haines ARPS



This issue of DIGIT will come out shortly after our AGM so I thought it would be useful to give you a little overview of what will be reported to the meeting as not all of our members can be there.

As normal with any AGM there is good news and bad news. In the last year we have achieved a small increase in membership and established a new DIG South East Centre. DIGIT continues to, justifiably, get good feedback from our members. DIG News is read every month by a surprisingly large number of you, which is encouraging. Some members even tell us that if it weren't for DIG then they would likely cancel their Society membership. A compliment indeed - thank you.

The DIG Committee are continually reviewing member benefits and trying to find new ways to increase the value for money to the benefit of all members, not just those living in the UK. In line with that philosophy we will not be organising another DI Expo in the near future because too few members are able to take advantage of it easily. However, producing the individual competition and exhibition catalogues does benefit all members, and we anticipate introducing a further publication in 2018 that will celebrate distinctions gained by DIG members.

Things that went wrong for us in 2017 and early 2018 were not within our control. First the RPS Trustees decided to stop offering new Society members a free first year SIG membership. As 25% of our entire DIG membership originated from that source you will understand that this is a major blow for the group. Despite presenting a paper to the Trustees explaining the likely impact of the change we were unable to get the decision reversed.

Another blow was that the Trustees chose to close down the entire RPS Forum. Whilst I can appreciate their reasons, as one contributor was very out of line with their comments on a public facing area of the Forum, it is impossible to understand why they will not agree to reopen it as a closed user group internally, with strengthened moderation and rules. The demise of the Forum hit DIG more than any other group as we used it far more than other groups. As I write this report we are still appealing against the decision and hope that we can get a change of heart.

Financially, DIG is running slightly on empty. That is not to say we do not have money in the bank, but we do not have sufficient to meet our needs year on year. So there will be a proposal at the AGM to increase the DIG membership from £15 p.a. to £16 p.a. This is necessary primarily due to the increase costs of postage and paper for DIGIT. The DI Online membership will remain at £8.

We hope that following the AGM we will be able to post the minutes and the Chair and Treasurers reports online - normally they would have been within the Forum area, so yet again another challenge.

DIG Committee would like to assure you that we will continue to do our very best for you and to continue to make DIG the very best experience possible for all our members.

Onwards and upwards.

## Editorial

### Gary Beaton



This issue of DIGIT brings together a variety of different styles of photography, demonstrating once again, the breadth of techniques used by, or of interest to, DIG members. As I spent my formative years in London, I was particularly interested in Colin Hutton's article about his photography of the North Circular Road, a major route around London; it is not only a fascinating glimpse of what it is now like in the area in which I was brought up, it has certainly made me take a closer look at what is around me on the roads I currently drive along.

We also have amongst the pages the final part of Ian Thompson's inspiring series on shooting after dark, some beautiful creations drawn from the imagination of Barry Mead, work from one of the next generation of artists, Rosemary Després, and learn about Irene Froy's early work and life. In addition, we find out about the work of the Archaeology and Heritage Group and, as usual, see the challenges behind some of our members' images.

As ever, I hope you enjoy reading this issue just as I have enjoyed putting it together.



# A406 - Or Knock Very Loudly Please



A four-year project, culminating in an exhibition, started for COLIN HUTTON when he found himself in a traffic jam on London's North Circular Road.

My first memory of the A406 North Circular Road is a bad one. I was 11 and my parents, brother and I were driving from Edinburgh to Germany. As we entered the fringes of London the A406 assaulted my senses. I was horrified. I'd never seen a road like this before. It was huge, filthy and incredibly busy. I presumed that this was what all of London was like and I vowed that I would never live there.

But of course I have, and London has been my

home for most of the last 25 years. And I, like many others use the A406 regularly. I know its landmarks well, its road works even better. It is under constant stress and strain, used and abused by millions of motorists.

It ranges from a single lane to an eight lane motorway. Thousands of people live on it, at some points literally just feet from the deafening thunder of traffic. It's home to hundreds of businesses. It straddles parks,



rivers and canals. It traverses and connects one of the biggest cities in the world, yet I've rarely seen anyone walking beside this road.

This project started by accident. One day back in 2009 I was returning from a photo shoot in Wales when I joined the A406 at Chiswick roundabout to find it gridlocked. It was not the first time and I knew it wouldn't be the last, but for some reason on this particular day I decided to park up, get out and walk. I had my camera with me. It was the beginning of a journey that lasted nearly four years.

I found myself drawn not so much to the road or the cars, or even the people but to the small things, the things people drop, the things we neglect and leave behind; a broken credit card emblazoned with a speeding horse that's going nowhere. A Barbie doll's head whose weathered hair has virtually merged with its new pavement home. These are stories with no

beginning or ending, yet they shed light on our lives and society.

Many of my family and friends thought I was mad to want to spend time on this polluted and blocked artery, but the more journeys I made the more I wanted to spend time on it, with it. I was out in all weathers, at all times. Section by section I got to know the road. Hanger Lane, Bounds Green, Redbridge, Crooked Billet; names that suggested that lush countryside once stood where tarmac stands today.

The North Circular is a patched up artery that pumps life around London yet few ever stop to look. Cars pass like ghosts, glimpsed, but never featured. The road is etched with rubber. Discarded objects deform and decay as shadows fall on the tarmac like prison bars. Cracks form beautiful patterns in the ever changing light. Road markings are so over-painted that they literally have depth.



### Technical Stuff

I shot this project on a Canon 5D MkII. The lens I favoured was a Canon EF 85mm *f*/1.8 but I also used a Canon EF 24-70mm *f*/2.8L and Canon EF 70-200mm *f*/2.8L. Most of it was shot hand held but for some of the night shots I used a Giotto Vitruvian VGR 8255 Tripod. Images were graded using Adobe Lightroom.

## A406 - OR KNOCK VERY LOUDLY PLEASE

When I was walking I was anonymous much like the cars that sped by. Roads are places of transition, constantly in motion, transporting rich and poor alike. I started to realise that the images I'd captured could be from any road, anywhere.

Steps that lead up to a house that no longer exists; a lamp post suffocated by ivy; a vandalized bus shelter; a montage of abandoned gloves; a cracked wall held together by metal. Evidence of fractured lives was everywhere.

But many images are laced through with humour and irony; a worn out welcome mat; the Bermuda triangle of no parking; a door with two doorbells that also requested you knock. These are signs of resistance, signs of life. This road lives and breathes despite the smog.

Nature is in abeyance: storm clouds gather beyond the street lights, other objects are trapped in a state of terminal decay but the fate of unregulated life is epitomised by the fox pressed into the tarmac like a dried flower.

The one thing my images struggle to convey is the incredible noise. This road is in use 24/7.

On some sections people live, eat and work just a few feet from it. You can feel yourself literally vibrate as yet another truck thunders by.

On one occasion an elderly Indian man stopped me and asked what the 'hell I was doing'. I tried to explain that I was documenting the road. He laughed, presuming I was a 'student' and dismissed me as mad. I then asked him where he lived and he pointed to a well kept house some 30 yards away, barely 12 feet from a six lane wide section, more motorway than road. Was I the one who was mad?

Mad, maybe; obsessed, yes. Even though this is one of the dirtiest and most polluted roads in the country I was captivated by its beauty. One of my favourite images is taken at Staples Corner of a bus passing under a concrete flyover. The long exposure turns the lights into a kind of swirling urban fairground.

It became street photography in its purest form. I was on the streets, often literally. I remember one time lying on a filthy narrow walkway on the edge of a busy flyover. I was taking the shot of the Barbie head. A police car







passed by slowly, the officer looked at me like I was nuts, considered stopping, then thought better of it. The road has too many traffic jams as it is.

Nearly four years on from when I started I finally completed my 29-mile journey. The unremarkable road ends at water. A ferry awaits you if you want to continue on. I was expecting to feel elated, but in reality I was disappointed, sad even. Why? I think now looking back it's because I wanted to keep walking, to keep discovering. It had become my commute.

It made me reflect on my photo of a tree covered in multi-coloured blobs of chewing gum. Who did this and why did they do it? I'd thought about it a lot especially on cold wet nights.

I think someone was marking time like a prisoner scratching the remaining days of his sentence on the cell wall. I had stuck on my last piece of gum. I had served my time and was now free to get back in my car and drive, just like everyone else.

### **A little bit about me**

I was born in Glasgow, the son of a soldier. After flirting with the idea of a military career I quickly ditched that thought, and instead trained as a photographer and film-maker at Bournemouth College of Art and Design.

After graduating I worked as a set builder and assistant art director before winning a Fulbright Fellowship in Screenwriting. I spent a year in the USA under the mentorship of William Goldman and John Cleese. I then worked for over a decade as a screenwriter for some of the UK's leading film and TV companies.

Since 2007 I've established myself as a versatile photographer, predominantly in the world of film and TV publicity. Credits include Sherlock, Broadchurch, Outnumbered, Humans, Houdini, The End of the F\*\*\*ing World, and Maigret starring Rowan Atkinson.

My work has been exhibited: The Royal Photographic Society's International Print Exhibition (2004, 2009 and 2012), the association of Photographers Open Exhibition (2005, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014 and 2017) and the Renaissance Photography Prize Exhibition (2009, 2010 and 2012).

I have had two exhibitions of personal work: Human Views at Gallery 5, Notting Hill in October 2008 and A406 - Or Knock Very Loudly Please at the Strand Gallery, Charing Cross in March 2015.

See more of Colin's work at [www.huttonimages.com](http://www.huttonimages.com). You can follow Colin on Instagram @huttonimages.



*Smokedrift*

## It started with a Box Brownie



**IRENE FROY** is rightly well known for her atmospheric pastel printed images. However, her photographic style and tools have changed significantly over the years. Here she shares some of the journey with us.

Pastels have become my signature image but it was not always so.

I started my photography more than 60 years ago as a school girl with the family Box Brownie, making contact prints in the garden shed and hand colouring them. Aged seventeen I got my first 35mm camera and so was able to start taking colour slides. And my move to work in Dundee meant I could join my first camera club. I was a member of Dundee PS at what these days would be considered a very young age, although it was common then. It was when I went on holiday to

Dubrovnik in 1965 that I realised that I needed an SLR so that I could get longer lenses. As soon as I returned home I bought myself a Praktica outfit. That was also the holiday where I met Gerry and I always kid him that I had to marry him to carry the much heavier camera gear! We did marry a year later, after being together for only 5 weeks, as I was in Dundee and Gerry was in Hertfordshire! So it was all writing letters, there was no internet in those days and we didn't even have a phone. As you can imagine we caused a bit of a panic in the family as not only was I marrying a man they

barely knew but I was moving 400 miles away to be with him in Hertfordshire. In those days it was a long journey and we only managed to get to Scotland once a year. But, of course, it was easy to travel to London by rail, and in those days the RPS was in South Audley Street, so I was able to attend Colour Group and Pictorial Group meetings each month. That aside, we joined Shillington Camera Club and started printing, at first in monochrome in the bathroom, but I really wanted to print in colour. The blackout in the bathroom wasn't good enough for colour so Gerry built me a darkroom in the loft and I was able to print from slides on to Fujichrome papers. With colour darkroom printing you had to follow the directions precisely to avoid a colour shift and this soon became tedious, but I persevered as I always felt that real photographers print. So digital printing was a great step forward - I no longer needed to be shut away in the dark, and I found I could make adjustments! With slides I had used strong sunlight especially early morning and contre-jour lighting to achieve my landscape images, but on one of the Shillington November weekends in Derbyshire with Ken Bryan I was persuaded by Ken that sunlight was not always necessary and that Kodachrome 25 worked really

well in the rain provided I used a tripod. Softer lighting is of course a good basis for making pastels and I was slowly getting there. But digital printing was a total release from the constraints of the colour darkroom and I loved it.

I was very fortunate that in 1998 I was invited to join the Eyecon Group, set up by Eddie Sethna to discuss our images. Eddie told me at the first meeting I attended that he had felt the group was getting too digital and so they had invited a couple of darkroom printers to widen the scope. I replied that I had bought a computer last week! The group was a great basis for learning the techniques I needed, and Eddie was a huge help in both encouragement and instruction to help my move into digital printing. At first I printed from slides and it took a few more years for me to make the change to a digital camera.

Meanwhile Eddie had given me a sheet of paper to try and when I rang him to say it was great and where can I buy it, he told me to ring Robin Whetton and so started the PermaJet support I have enjoyed since 2000. Obviously this has allowed me to be a prolific printer and to produce lectures which enable me to keep visiting the many camera clubs which have enjoyed my talks



*Shifting Sands*

## IT STARTED WITH A BOX BROWNIE

over the years. And with more paper to freely use, I gradually became more and more pastel in my approach. When PermaJet introduced Portrait White I really loved it, and it is still my paper of choice for pastel images as the white base helps to prevent the paper from dulling the image I see on the screen. By now I was confident enough to experiment and found that white layers gave me

the effect that I wanted. It is just a case of making the image as pale as possible, using levels or curves as you prefer, and painting back on a mask any highlight detail which might be lost. Then I add an empty layer and fill it with white, change the mode from Normal to Soft Light and reduce the opacity below 50%. At first I just added one white layer, although you can have any number

### Evolution of Irene's images

Here you can see how Irene uses Photoshop layers to produce the effect she desires and, on occasion, to completely change the mood of the original image.

Original image



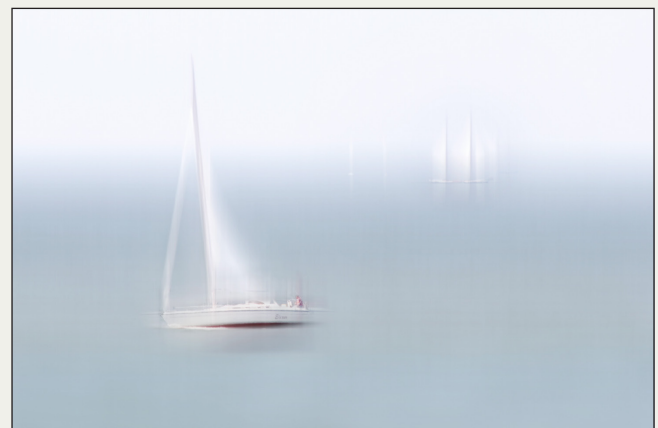
Final version



*Storm Brewing*



*Cycling by the Canal*



*Race Leader*



Shop Front Talmont

## IT STARTED WITH A BOX BROWNIE

of white layers till you reach the effect you desire. And even now looking back over earlier images I am inclined to add more white layers to get a really pastel effect.

Another leap forward came when Rikki O'Neil stayed with us while he was speaking at Wrekin Arts PC, our new club after our move to Wellington. Rikki showed me airbrushing! I loved it and the effects I could achieve with it. I went to judge in Guernsey and Steve le Provost was another inspiration - it was an eye-opener to watch Steve at work on his computer. I also use blur layers for effect as well colour correction, graduated selections and colour range. I find that these techniques work not just on landscapes but on many types of images.

Meanwhile Wrekin Arts PC had the lead stolen off the roof of the clubroom and the cost of the subsequent repairs meant that all of the financial reserves were used. So I suggested to Tony Thomas that I run an all day workshop to replace some of the funds. To my amazement this sold out in a fortnight and we had to set up another one! At first I was doing three a year but have gradually expanded to doing them for more distant clubs such as Dorchester, Dublin, Belfast, Drogheda, Dundalk, Inverness, the RPS in Devon and now for PermaJet as well. I have tried to limit the Wrekin ones to once a year although I have done two in the last year as the first one was sold out four months before the date! These are a very popular way of showing how I achieve my images

and I have called them Photoshop My Way. I have one planned at Nottingham this year as well as at Wrekin Arts and PermaJet, but really must try to cut back as age is catching up and it would be a disaster to have to cancel. I have been surprised how far people are prepared to travel to Wrekin as we have had participants from Inverness to Cornwall and from Dublin to Lincoln. With Blists Hill and Ironbridge close by, many choose to make a weekend of it.

All our holiday destinations are chosen with photography in mind. Although we have loved journeying to France over the years and have visited many parts, we feel less able to make the journey there now and are having to restrict ourselves closer to home. I find that Ireland is actually an easier journey than Scotland as the ferry does some of the driving! I loved running holiday workshops in the Pyrenees during the 90s but they had to stop when I got polymyalgia and could no longer stand around in the landscape helping the clients. And the continued need for steroids has limited my walking now too. This year will see our last lecture tours of Ireland and Scotland but it will be good to have a farewell tour of each.

I still love to show prints at my talks as I feel that an image is not finished until it is printed. I will continue to print even beyond my lecturing days as it is still a compulsion I have had virtually all my life. To be able to hold the print in your hand is the ultimate joy of photography.



Emerging from the Mist



# Just my imagination



**BARRY MEAD FRPS** has the imagination and skills to take a fleeting idea and a collection of photographic elements, and turn them into a fascinating image.

I will start with something of my background, as it is directly relevant. Right from an early age I was good at art. I studied Fine Art and went into teaching, spending most of my career as Head of Creative Studies in a large comprehensive school. I had learned the basics of black and white film processing and printing while at art college. My own photography started in the early 1970s, when I introduced it as an exam subject, and from then on was hooked. I took early retirement at the age of 50 and have devoted my time to photography. I had done my ARPS and FRPS long before I retired and was one of a few who did these six months apart. My Fellowship panel was creative-studio based, and like nothing the Pictorial panel had seen before. In 1992 I was awarded the RPS Fenton Medal and Honorary life membership.

The computer images started in 2001 from the stand-point of no knowledge of computers prior to this. I collect images for my composites from a variety of sources, including re-enactments, and the Venice Carnival which I have now been to four times. I also collect images of pavements, buildings, old vehicles and a huge selection of textures of mostly stone, rust and peeling paint. Studio-based images of figures have also become a useful source of material to use. Anything which catches my eye is fair game.

When I start out I usually select images that I want to use and then get on with cutting them out in the hope that ideas for final images will come while I'm doing this. I cut out by loosely selecting the subject, dragging it onto a green background, save as Cut file number. I use the eraser and a

## JUST MY IMAGINATION

very fine slightly feathered, brush with my Wacom Pro Large tablet. Backgrounds are very variable with duplicated layers and one, or, two texture layers in between. I lower the opacity of the top layer and go from there. I have no formula, and everything is done by eye as I go along. Main Photoshop CC tools are Layers, Transform options and colour change. I vary the opacities of the parts as I go, plus lightly rubbing out parts and burning/dodging as required. I save at every step where I think I might go over the top, then I can go back to where it was going well and try something else. Knowing when to stop is key to everything I do.

Ideas come from a variety of sources. Sometimes a figure in Venice will give me the title and from that the image is worked. I never know what the final image will look like at the start; it evolves like a painting would, with changes, additions etc, as I go along. I always get to a point where the final image will take shape. In response to questions on this I always say that virtually all great paintings have been x-rayed revealing under-painted variations and changes.

I am a great fan of films and stories like Lord of the Rings, Star Wars and Harry Potter. A few times

an idea has been triggered while watching a film. I do not try to copy anything - I just go with ideas as they come to me. Often I get an idea which has some kind of story that I invent as I go along. My image *Harvest Time* (below) is one such where I have used the imagery to get the idea which in this case is harvesting clocks. Other times I get the idea for a background setting which sets me off on a particular path. My image *Forbidden Fruit* (next page, top) was one that fits this starting point. The title came when I decided to include the cardinal.

The *Mad Hatter* (previous page) started with the Hatter figure at the Venice Carnival plus I was already familiar with the Jonny Depp interpretation in the film *Alice in Wonderland*. I then set about collecting crockery images, plus cakes and broccoli from Tesco. This was one image where I had a fairly clear idea of the final image early on. The image *Alice* (next page, bottom) was prompted partly due to a scene in the second *Alice in Wonderland* film. I often get ideas for effects and backgrounds from the visual effects used in opening credits of films and TV dramas. Again these will become a basis to work my own up from.



*Harvest Time*





Forbidden Fruit



Alice



Boarding Now

*Zebra Dance*

I am very fortunate to have a vivid visual imagination, with many ideas just cropping up as I'm cutting out a figure or object. I often say the only thing I can't imagine is not having an imagination. Having said that, playing with ideas (image parts) directly on the monitor screen can help.

Bringing things that are out of scale or context can trigger ideas. Having a look at Surrealist artists Dali and Rene Magritte can be a great source of ideas. The idea of dreams can be open to almost any interpretation. Look at the vast amount of excellent creative photography there is out there. Try entering salons where there is a Creative section - you might not do well initially but you get a catalogue full of winning images and they are often stunning. This should goad you onwards to try and improve; giving up is not an option!! The excuse that 'it's alright for you you're an artist' won't wash either. It helps but is not a given.

The image *Boarding Now* started with a trip to Iceland and some images of the crashed Dakota that is visited by a lot of photographers. The idea of the penguins came some weeks after cutting out the plane. The snow all came from Yellowstone; when I was there I took images of snow on logs for future use. The falling snow is a

filter action created by a friend which allows for anything from light fall to full-on blizzard. The addition of the hand luggage was the little detail that I like to add which can be vital for part of the overall effect.

Another example of this is the Zebra poking its head around the column in *Zebra Dance* which just adds that extra something. The 'figures' in this are many views of one person and the title came while cutting them out. The use of textures is an important element of many of my images. They help create an atmosphere or whatever.

Above all else I spend a great deal of time getting it right and making sure there are no technical issues with the final result. There is no excuse for sloppy work with poorly selected parts. As with all skill-based activities you get better with constant practice. It will not happen if you only have a go every six months. I have to admit to being obsessive in what I do. I just love doing it. I can't claim everything always works out well; you learn from your mistakes. It takes time to get skills up to speed but it then becomes hugely satisfying as does all aspects of photography. You have to keep at it. I believe the more you put in the more you will get out.

Now it's your turn!!



Waning Crescent

# Look to the heavens



**ROSEMARY DESPRÉS** took inspiration from the moon and stars when asked to shoot some images to promote her cousin's yoga business.

I am a photographer, artist and writer originally from the small island of Guernsey, studying a BA (Hons) in Fine Art at Bath Spa University. Now in my last year of the course, embroidery and sculpture are mainly my mediums of choice. Outside university, I do freelance photography; this is mainly documentary work for natural healing or nature conservation organisations. Though I do some nature, fashion and personal portrait work in addition to this. Heavily influenced by my island upbringing next to a beautiful reservoir, valley and small woodlands, I am captivated by the cyclical aspects of the wild: such as the planets orbiting, the seasons, and the

cyclical nature of women. So my photography strives to conserve this bond we have to the natural world. One photographer whose work I truly admire is Gregory Colbert; a fine art photographer whose non-hierarchical vision of the natural world helps him to produce portraits of humans alongside and collaborating with animals.

These solar system themed shoots all began with me being asked by my cousin, Emma Després, to take more fine art based photos for her yoga business, Beinspired Yoga. She specifically likes to do yoga classes for women based on the moon cycle, and needed some photos to illustrate her New Moon Yoga classes. I thought this is the time

to experiment more than I normally do, such as stepping away from my usual bright, high key photographs, and create something darker in tone. I also planned on using some of my artistic skills to hand - make some moon props for my sister, Fern (who dances and models sometimes for me) to hold. The *Waning Crescent* photo (left) was taken when the day was fading slowly into dusk, in late Summer when all of St. Saviours' Reservoir in Guernsey was like a green oasis, with wild onions and towering ferns. I thought the yogic 'tree pose' was ideal for the shoot as it would look like Fern is holding the moon up in the air.

This shoot went really well, and I was content with the out of focus foliage in the background like the holly tree softly catching the light, glimmering as if stars are behind her. It made me think it would look stunning if there were, say many dancers, each holding solar system themed props in a similar manner to the *Waning Crescent* photo. I say dancers as when I have previously worked with models, I personally feel that the models that have had had prior dance experience model



*Waning Crescent 3*

so much more poetically and thoughtfully in the poses than non-dancing models, and this lyrical nature is what I want my work to emulate. Thus I sketched out many ideas as usual before a shoot, and decided I would store them away for a few years' time when I have the time and resources to get so many models involved in a shoot. Then it occurred to me - a multiple exposure photograph! I would have preferred to wait to see if I could get many models involved in the future as I do not normally use Photoshop in my photos as I prefer to do everything 'in camera' to make it as natural as possible. However, I did not like the thought of waiting so long to try and carry out some of my best shoot ideas, therefore a multiple exposure would be perfect.

'We undressed, then dressed again in the gowns of the moon' is a visually inspiring line from Carol Ann Duffy's poem *Forest*. If I was to personify the moon, I would say she is ghostly, direct, and glowing among the dark embers of the night sky, usually surrounded by a tableaux of stars. Hence the idea for Moon and Stars began. Those of you that have been to Guernsey, will know there are not many wide, semi-natural places that provide a woodland for a backdrop, with space for me to stand far enough back with an 85mm lens. We ended up placing ourselves on the edge of my neighbour's field before it backs onto the reservoir path. Styling and design is one of my strong points, so I spent a while plotting what colour theme and clothes I wanted Fern to wear; settling on fishing out a silver silken dress for the stars, and a deeper black one for the moon, previously bought from a charity shop. A dress that showed her arms I thought was best suited, so you have got the continuous white lines of her arms echoed throughout the photo. Also if she is glowing she is more separate from the background. I made the moon from white card, and stole the star from on top of the Christmas tree (I am sure no-one noticed).

Firstly, I set the camera on a tripod, and used my remote release instead of manually clicking the shutter so as not to disturb and induce any movement into the photo without intending to. It is challenging to judge exactly where your model should stand; some places where Fern stood overlapped with other Ferns from different shots when I checked the back of the camera. So I decided to mime behind the camera as she could not hear me from so far away: take two steps, do the tree pose, one step, side bend,

## LOOK TO THE HEAVENS



*Moon and Stars*

one step, slightly kneel and hold the star up, so it continued... Post-production wise, I first put all nine photos in Lightroom and increased the contrast, highlights minimally, and lowered the temperature for a cooler evening feel tone. Next they went into Photoshop, where I placed the

moon photo in first, then pasted a star photo on top on a different layer, and masked out the background with the brush tool so that it revealed the moon underneath. I continued this until the whole photo was complete.

Though I love the wild, vicious element of Winter



*Little Dipper Star Constellation*



*Setting up the shots*

storms in Guernsey, it is not the ideal weather for these quiet photos I had planned... The second shoot all the weather allowed me to do was the Little Dipper Star Constellation. The Little Dipper is the smaller form of the Big Dipper, otherwise known as the Plough. This shoot was more complex to plan. Where exactly would Fern stand so that she would not overlap with the rest of the figures? Would I be able to have the line of the wool occur naturally 'in camera?' What aperture would I use? I settled on using an aperture of f5 so that the depth of field covered all of the figures, and the whereabouts of Fern's positions I visually measured. I was going to give up placing the wool 'in camera' until I had a brainwave: for every position Fern is in, I could get her to hold the wool up, and I myself would hold the other end and stretch it to the next position she was in, also setting the self-timer on the camera. Then for the next photo in the sequence, Fern would come forth to my position, being careful to hold the wool exactly where I was, then I would move to the next one. This way the wool stays in the correct height, place and in addition saves me from more editing.

The self - timer on my Nikon D750 camera only goes up to 20 seconds, so one thing is for sure if

the camera is far away: it is good exercise! Here is me - looking distinctly less balletic and staring bewildered at the camera, unsure whether I had been too slow and missed the flashing of the self-timer of the camera when I ran into position.

I am planning more shoots on these same themes currently, such as composing The Solar System with all the handmade planets, and the Sun as beautiful, fiery, molten, everything rotating around her. The Orbit Dance is another idea that will have someone dressed in blue standing in the centre, cradling the Earth in her arms. There will be 30 different dancers each holding a different moon phase representing the lunar cycle, dancing around her in a circle. They will be reaching towards her, as if they are feeding the Earth their light and gravitational pull. So far I have made the Earth prop using some glass paint for the first coat as it gives a lovely shine, then layering tissue papers and adding detail with pens and coloured pencils. I am hoping one of my model/ dancer friends will be free from university work soon for a shoot, or waiting until I get back to Guernsey over the Easter break to take some of these ideas into fruition with my sister again as my model. But for now, I shall fall back into my solar system themed daydreams.



*Lightning over Rhodes*

# Night moves



In the final part of his series on shooting after dark, IAN THOMPSON ARPS looks at capturing images of lightning, the moon and moonlit and urban landscapes.

Nothing communicates the raw power of nature like thunder and lightning! And if the event happens at night, the theatre for a photographer is heaven sent. With luck, lightning shots can be captured during daylight but they never seem to convey the drama of a strike at night.

When out in these conditions, it is fairly certain that it will rain on you and lightning can be dangerous of course, so the first rule is to stay dry and safe. Find a place under shelter which still has a good view of the sky where the lightning is being displayed. Set up a gazebo, big umbrella or some-such if it's not too windy, but DON'T make yourself a target for a lightning discharge by presenting yourself as a high spot in a flat area.

DON'T park yourself and your kit under a tree - if lightning does strike it, you don't have to be very near the tree or hit by the strike to get seriously injured! There is plenty of advice available on the internet, so do take precautions.

To capture your images, you need settings that you might use with a flashgun, simply because the lightning flash is so similar to that method of illumination, though many, many times brighter. Typically, you should employ ISO 100,  $f/8$  to  $f/16$  with a wide-angle lens. A wide-angle lens is best because you don't know where the lightning will strike. Use manual shutter and aperture settings - auto is not going to work here - set your shutter control to 'M' for manual or 'B' for bulb. Taking





*Lightning over the Severn vale*

account of the ambient illumination, decide on (or discover by test) a shutter speed which maintains a dark-ish image when there isn't a flash of lightning - this is likely to need to be of the order of 5 seconds during daylight (forcing the need for a small aperture and/or a neutral density filter). After dark, you can increase this to, say, 30 seconds, which will give your shutter-button finger less work to do. When the storm is in progress, trip the shutter using your cable release for your chosen shutter-open time. When it closes, trip it again immediately, repeating this until the storm has passed, or when you get fed up, whichever is the longer.

Most of the shots will not contain a record of a lightning flash but when you do get one, the sensor will capture it. When this happens, you should close the shutter straight away because two flashes in one frame will probably not work well. If you have chosen a suitable aperture, your image should show a very bright lightning strike which has illuminated the landscape. Err on the side of under-exposure and you will be able pull detail out of the surroundings in post-processing.

The lightning streak will be burnt out to white and you will probably notice that the light captured in your image appears purple. This is because the electrical discharge colours of nitrogen and oxygen are rich in red and blue but when you witness the strike with your naked eye in the dark, it is so bright and sudden that the pupils of your eyes can't accommodate quickly enough, and everything appears burnt out to white. Catching a flash which is both photographically and aesthetically pleasing is like winning the lottery, but when it happens....

### **The Moon**

The moon is an object brightly lit by the sun and if we wish to photograph its surface without it appearing as a solid white disc, the camera settings we use should reflect that fact. As before, it is pointless to ask our camera's automatic settings to work out what to do: it will fail because the moon occupies a small part of the frame against a very dark background and the camera will over-expose it by a mile in an attempt to get a medium-density result. Treat it like a sunlit

## NIGHT MOVES

landscape and you will get the result you want!

If you are attempting to fill the frame of your sensor with an image of the moon, you will need a fairly long focal length lens. The moon's disc is quite small in the sky and even a 1500mm lens will only produce an image which is half the height of a full-frame sensor. You may well need to use a shorter focal length than that, so your best, sharpest 200 or 400mm lens might just provide you with a good enough result after cropping the resultant image. You will benefit from the fact that only a very short exposure will be necessary, reducing the possibility of image defects due to camera and/or moon movement. It is possible to take hand-held shots of the moon's surface, though it is preferable to use a sturdy tripod.

Whilst a full moon might appear most dramatic to the eye, that is not the best time to take its portrait as it will appear flat and lacking in detail. Try instead to capture a half or crescent moon, for at that time you will observe the shadows cast by its mountains upon the surface. Even better is to catch the moon's phase when the dark area of the shadowed crescent moon is dimly illuminated by 'earthlight', as in this image. The phases of the moon are easy to discover: most pocket diaries have them annotated but [www.earthsky.org](http://www.earthsky.org) can be a wonderful resource in this respect.

### **Moonlit Landscapes**

Being such a brightly-lit satellite, the moon when full or nearly so does a good job of illuminating our planet at night. Photographs by moonlight are relatively easy to procure in that everything



is pretty much as it might be for a sunlit shot with the proviso that a longer exposure becomes necessary. Moonlit photographs can look very similar to those taken in sunlight but there is a strange, ethereal difference which sets them apart. Images taken over water, and which might include buildings and other light sources, offer an enigmatic view of the scene, due to the longer exposure altering the surface texture of water, complete with reflections from light sources. Shadows appear darker and everything has a sombre feel which is not apparent in a sunlit variant of the same image.

The only other natural source of light at night which might be enough to offer a view of the landscape is a bright aurora. This is not a



*Hamnøy by Moonlight*

frequent occurrence - especially in the UK! - but at the latitudes discussed in a previous article, there can be occasions when one is fortunate enough to capture enough light to portray the surrounding landscape in a most eerie light.

### Urban Nightscapes

These demand much the same techniques as moonlit landscapes. The trick here is to take your photographs when there is still a little light left in the sky. A totally black and probably light-polluted sky will not show off the subject matter at its best. A tripod-mounted long exposure will almost certainly be necessary and you should attempt to ensure that the ubiquitous lights in the scene do not become too burnt out. Commonly, a set of three bracketed shots (i.e. -1,0,+1 stops for each) will provide you with enough well-exposed segments to allow merging and blending in post-processing, culminating in a nicely balanced overall exposure. Use of a small aperture can produce some interesting 'starburst' effects around bright lights due to diffraction at the edges of the diaphragm blades in your lens. You may or may not be keen on these, but there's little you can do to remove them!



*The Severn Bridge*

### Post-processing night-time images

In general, there is not much of a problem in processing your night-time shots, especially where exposures have been relatively short. However, where longer exposures have been used on the night sky and particularly where there has been light pollution of the orange (sodium discharge lamp) variety, we need to apply a little more effort to tidy up our work. Fortunately, because of the very narrow

spectral distribution of sodium light, this is not too hard to accomplish by using a colour balance adjustment layer in Photoshop, perhaps combined with the 'colourize' feature in a hue/saturation adjustment layer. The results can be very acceptable, as shown in the example below.



*Original shot*



*Adjusted image*

You will never completely eliminate the light pollution in an image because the brightness of that light will simply be translated into another colour but it can be made to be more acceptable to the eye. Using a masked 'levels' or 'curves' adjustment layer on the Milky Way will allow you to make it more visible and convey the drama of the galactic spectacle.

### Summary

I doubt that anyone would argue against the statement that night photography is more demanding upon the photographer's skill than daytime work. It requires perhaps more patience, thought and experimentation but the results that accrue thereto can be spectacular. So, pull on your hat, mitts and warm jacket and take a trip over to the dark side!



More Abbey. A Kallitype/ferric silver salt print by Ken Keen.

# The Archaeology and Heritage Group

As is fitting, the Archaeology and Heritage Group itself has a long history, but its members' interests are many and varied.

The Archaeology and Heritage group was formed in April 1974 as the Archaeology Group. Its aim was to promote photographic excellence within the archaeological community, and of course to bring archeology to the notice of the wider band of photographers represented by the RPS. Bear in mind that at that time photography in academic spheres was the preserve of professionals, or dedicated enthusiasts with the time and resources to overcome the technical difficulties of acquiring

an image and subsequently producing hard copy.

By the end of the 1980s automated 35mm cameras had opened the way for most to be able to get an image into a camera; and with the advent of digital techniques and high quality printers, too, has become easy to fit into a normal home life.

Progress of this nature opened up to the general amateur photographer not just archaeological photography but also the wider world of past



*Carnelian frog. Tell el Amarna, Egypt by Gwil Owen.*

cultures. Therefore 'Heritage' was added to the group's remit in recent years as it became apparent that archaeology is but one way into other cultural phenomena. In fact there has been from the outset a keen band of members devoted to architecture, especially ecclesiastical, so the Heritage moniker was a no brainer

The group holds two formal meeting each year; the AGM is usually around the beginning of May, and is tied to a members' print day, where work can be presented and discussed in a generally informal context. The other is in October. It used to be called our annual conference; now it has become the Members' Showcase, which sounds less pompous. Here the presentations are a bit more formal; mainly talks of half an hour with audio-visual presentations. It's not all formal - there is usually lunch in a local hostelry!

Both these events bring out the diversity of interests that are subsumed into a general framework of archaeology and heritage. In recent times we have heard about archaeological landscapes, Art Deco English buildings, focus stacking, the spirituality of church interiors, the



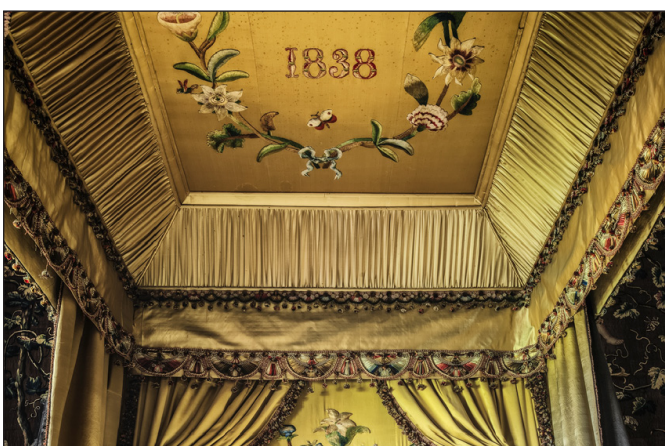
*Collapsed roof beams of a bronze age house. Must Farm, Cambridgeshire by Gwil Owen.*



*The iron age landscape of Maiden Castle, Dorset by Mike Sasse.*

Sutton Hoo burial grounds, Dracula in Whitby, Australian aboriginal art, and military forts in Egypt. In addition, individual members take it upon themselves to organise small group outings to particular sites. For example, coming up there is a visit to 'prehistoric' Dartmoor. We have also a strong commitment to the printed image. Our biannual magazine, Heritage Photography, soon to become triannual, reflects the group's fascination with cultural remains, national and foreign, ancient and modern.

We are one of the smallest RPS' special interest groups. Membership at it's height in the early 1990s rarely exceeded 400; now it remains well below 200, spread widely over the UK. This widespread demographic has led to the general difficulty in getting enough takers for many of the group outings - and indeed to our two formal meetings. So.....may I unashamedly try to interest the DIG members in our activities. Members of the RPS are always welcome to join in with our events, especially the print day and the members' showcase day. For more information please get in touch by email to [heritageweb@rps.org](mailto:heritageweb@rps.org).



*Burghley House. The Black and Yellow bedroom by Keith Lynch.*



## KINGFISHERS - A CHALLENGING SUBJECT

**Graham Whistler FRPS**

In September 2016 Malcolm Sowdon an RPS friend (also a retired professional photographer) and I had just obtained the then new Nikon D500 DSLR. We wanted to put them to the test photographing kingfishers. Another local photographer hires out his hide by a small dam, on a feeder stream to the River Itchen, a few miles north of Southampton. He has been stocking the pond with minnows for some years so wild kingfishers are regular visitors. If you would like to do this here is the website: [www.petewhieldonphotography.co.uk](http://www.petewhieldonphotography.co.uk). Pete is a very skilled bird photographer and can also arrange owl photography.

The kingfisher is slightly smaller than a starling so a very long lens and a tripod is the order of the day. Malcolm was armed with his Nikon 80-400mm AF-S VR lens with a Nikon x1.4 extender, giving him a 560mm; I had my Nikon 500mm f4 AF-S VR. The D500 is DX format with a CMOS image sensor of 23.5x15.7 mm, equivalent to approx. x1.5 focal length standard FX (35mm) DSLRs. With a DX camera a 100mm lens frames an area like a 150mm lens on an FX camera. The D500's all new sensor is 20.9 million effective pixels with greatly improved noise at very high ISO settings. We used ISO 3200 most of the day and a shutter speed of 1/3200 sec; even some at 5000 ISO proved to produce good usable images. The D500 also uses the new XQD 440 MB/s memory cards that give a very fast write and transfer speed.

We had just set up our equipment in the comfortable hide when the first kingfisher, a female landed on the perch (the male has a completely black bill but the lower mandible of the female is reddish or orange). My camera was set on spot single point and AF-C continuous auto focusing and shutter

priority for all stationary shots of bird on perch. Matrix metering produced good exposure for the whole day as did the camera white balance set on auto.

Our first few shots were spot on with exposure and focus. As we were checking our histograms on the rear LCD monitor we missed the Kingfisher's first dive but got good pictures of her smacking the minnow on the perch before swallowing it head first. The speed of the dive and return to perch with the fish must have been less than 2 seconds. How can you pan down quickly enough to capture the whole story? Malcolm and I had a quick technical discussion and we both agreed that the best plan was to set up the camera on a set point below the perch where the minnows were swimming. Set auto focus CF-C active 25 focus points, and D500's camera maximum shutter frame rate of 10 frames per second. ISO at 3200 and shutter speed 1/3200 sec (shutter priority auto).

Shortly after she had swallowed the fish, the Kingfisher flew off over the hide. We locked down our cameras focused on the water below, all set for action. We did not have long to wait for the same or another female to land on the perch. As agreed we held finger ready on shutter release. After just a few seconds she looked down at the water. With a flash of blue she dived as we fired our cameras at maximum frame rate. She returned to the perch after less than 12 frames had been taken! We quickly reframed and took more pictures as she killed and ate her catch before flying away.



We had time to check our results and were happy with our camera settings and we both had at least two usable frames in the burst we had fired. Over the next 8 hours we had either the same or several females returning, gifting us least 12 more sets of diving action pictures. Only once did the kingfisher return from a dive without a fish. We both took over 500 images during our stay in the hide, very few were not pin sharp, the new focus system on the D500 is quite remarkable.

The perch was about 35 feet from our cameras so even with my 500mm lens the image of the kingfisher was filling no more than a third of the picture, (see the full frame picture). Pete told me he uses an 800mm lens on his camera some of the time, but Malcolm and I were still able to enlarge our images up and get high quality A3 prints. The D500 produces very little noise at ISO 3200. The noise cleans up well in Photoshop CC.

We had a great day out and our pictures have done well in our local Gosport Camera Club. We hope to go there again soon and photograph some of Pete's owls in flight.





## KOCHI FISHING

**Lynda Morris LRPS**

I took these photos on holiday in India in 2015 at Cochin. The Chinese nets at the harbour have been well photographed and they do make a good photo on their own, but it is hard to isolate them and get them into a good composition. There were a number of fishermen selling small amount of fish that were laid out on the beach shore and this one woman with a plate of fish for sale. She was surrounded by people and the shot did not make a good composition.

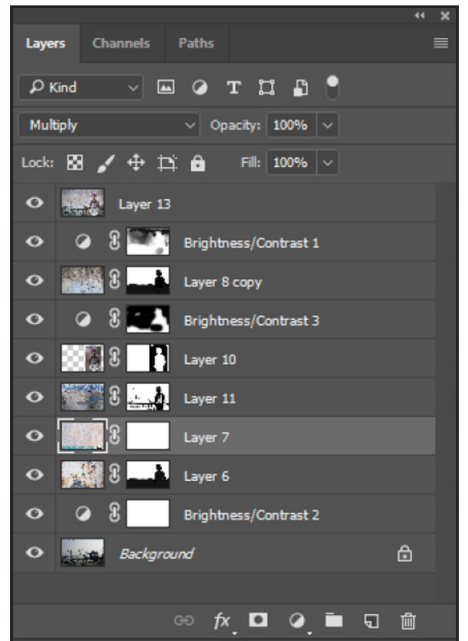
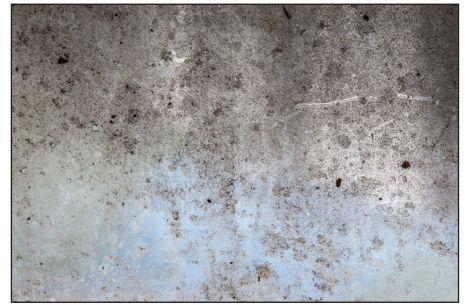
Our camera club had a talk from Viveca Koh who does a lot of iPhone photography and photos with textures. Her talk inspired me to do something different. In Photoshop I selected and cut out the figure of the lady holding the fish and pasted it onto a photo of the Chinese nets. The cut out was made easier in that the hair was covered.

This net photo was quite blocked out and a bit of a muddle so it lent itself very nicely to be used for a backdrop to the main focus of the final photo which was always going to be the fish seller. At my first attempt at finalising the photos I used other people's textures which I found on flickr web site but I realised that if I was to enter this photo into competitions I needed it to be all my own work so I set about getting some textures.

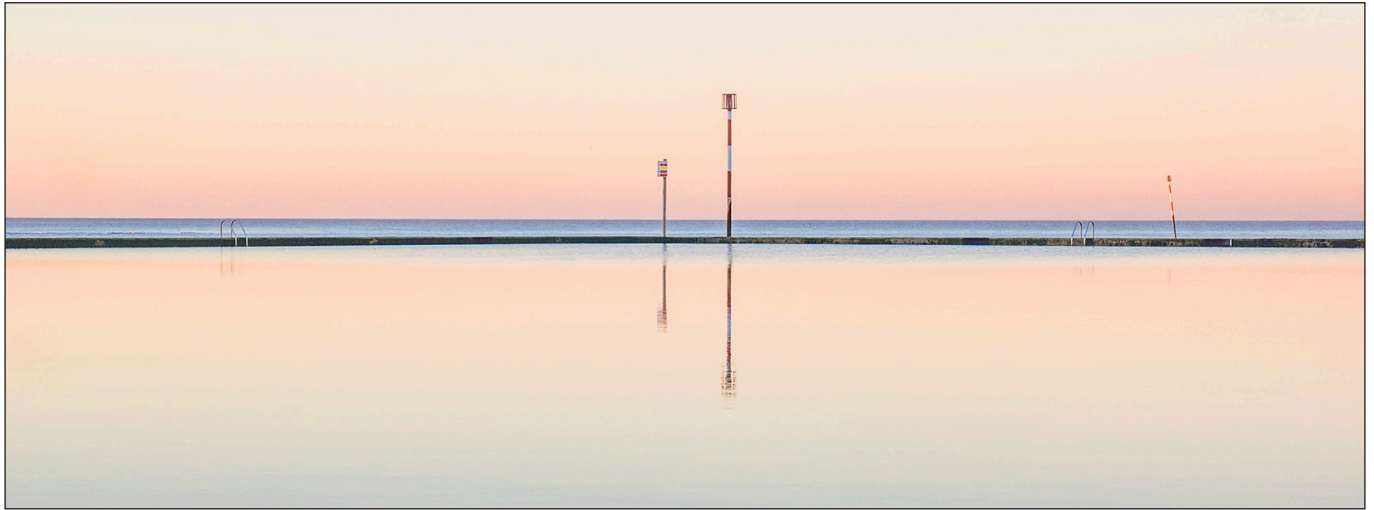
I used 4 textures in the end at varying opacities from 11-20%. There were a number of false starts adding layers that did not really work and I ended up by deleting quite a few. Where necessary, the layer mask for each texture was brushed through to reveal the fish seller and the outline of the pier, people and nets behind. Two of the textures came from Dungeness. I also added some Brightness and Contrast adjustment layers.

The components of the final image and the layers It was a very iterative process and if I did it again I would be more systematic adding the figure last probably. I always save the file processed in layers in TIFF format. That way I can see what I have done and come back to it if my technique improves.





Clockwise from top-left, the fishing nets, two of the background textures, the layers used to create the final image, and the woman selling fish.



### TURNER COLOURS IN MARGATE

**Avril Christensen**

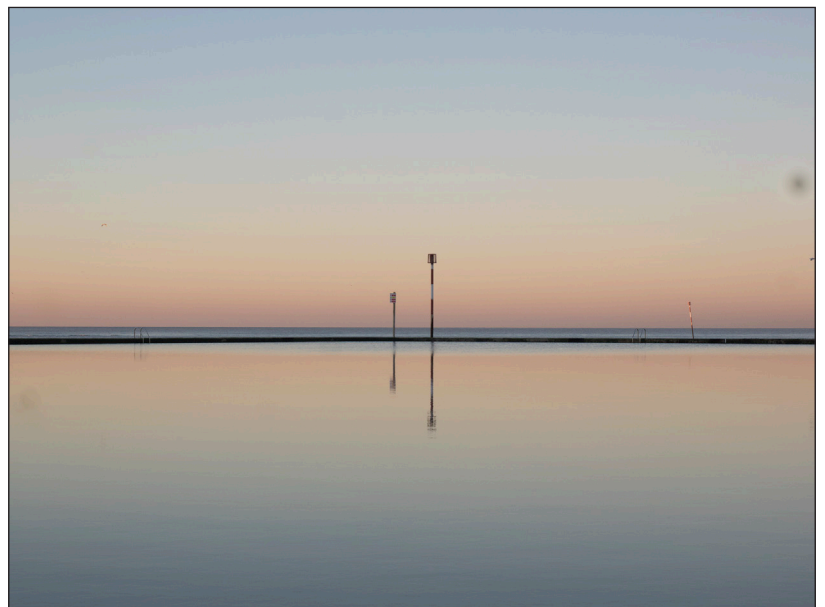
When I turned up for a photo walk in Margate on a frosty December morning, I wasn't expecting to capture this minimalistic sunset image. However, the day turned out bright and sunny and as the light started to fade I experienced the tranquil hues that may have influenced Turner to paint here. Around 4.30 in the afternoon many of my fellow photographers headed home for a warm bath, but myself and another crazy person decided to freeze a bit more and see how the light might develop. I set my camera on my tripod, I'd brought it along but hadn't used it so far - I need to use it more and the image I captured has encouraged me.

I thought my raw image (bottom right) was too dark, but I loved the simplicity and the colours.

Firstly, I made sure the horizon was straight. In Lightroom, I drew along the horizon with the angle tool. I thought the image would look good in a letterbox format so I used the crop tool to remove a section from the top and the bottom, breaking the rules and leaving the horizon right in the centre.

Next, I checked the white balance was ok by selecting an area of grey with the colour picker tool. I then gently increased the exposure and the shadows to reveal detail in the wall. Whites were increased to reveal detail in the posts. Clarity and dehaze were moved up slightly to make straight lines crisp. The image was slightly bright at the top so I adjusted the colour sliders to tone this down. Finally, the image was moved to Photoshop where I used the healing tool to remove a dust spot and bird on the right of the image.

The image has been successful winning the landscape trophy at my club, and being highly commended in its annual exhibition. The icing on the cake was getting a first acceptance in last year's DIG Projected Image Competition.



A searchable, cumulative contents list of previous issues is available from the Digital Imaging Group magazine page of the Group's website at: [www.rps.org/DIGIT](http://www.rps.org/DIGIT)



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