

**Peter Gawthrop ARPS
Landscape Perspectives**



**Inside - Members' Print Exhibition DVD with all your Images and a commentary
by Clive Haynes FRPS**

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Clive Haynes FRPS
Chairman



Committee for 2008/09

See opposite page for DIGRO contact details.

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DIGIT is the magazine of the RPS Digital Imaging Group and is provided as part of the annual subscription to the Group. Copyright of the entire contents is strictly reserved in all countries and remains with the authors who have asserted their intellectual property rights.

Once again it is with pleasure that we're able to bring to you the content of our Print Exhibition this year on DVD. Our grateful thanks go to our colleagues Graham Whistler FRPS and Gordon Rushton who have made the production possible.

As many of you know, my response to an image is reactive and interpretive rather than criteria-led. After all pictures, especially those aspiring towards the artistic genre are meant to be read, and surely that's one of the reasons why we take and make pictures in the first place.

What the author intends is not always what is understood or, shall we say, received by the viewer but, frankly, that doesn't always matter – what is important is that we do a little work, enjoy ourselves, go on a visual journey, explore the picture and the associations that it generates and respond to what we see. There are no wrong answers.

We hope that you'll enjoy viewing the DVD and that you'll also be able to share it with colleagues, perhaps at a meeting of a camera club or photographic society. This is one way in which we can spread the word about the RPS DI Group and simultaneously provide an entertaining evening which is also informative.

Early autumn is the time of year when many photo clubs begin their season. A regular part of the programme will be the inevitable diet of club competitions. Club competitions run from year to year on fairly traditional lines with a tendency to perpetuate the same old styles of imagery – which tend to encourage a mind-set which inevitably leads people to submit pictures that will please the judge. Winning cups and gaining awards is one thing – indeed for some club members it's their sole objective. But from time to time we should stop to consider and ask the question: Why am I taking pictures to please a particular judge for a single competition? It's all very fine having an objective such as winning but from time to time we should consider its validity. Why not try something new at your club? Instead of the time-honoured competition where there are distinct winners and losers, why not organise an 'image appreciation' event, where a knowledgeable and respected photographer with the ability to 'read and interpret pictures' can take time to understand, appreciate and interpret the meaning and

significance of the images. Alternatively, invite a panel of three or four photographers to give their views and interpretations. This style of event should encourage audience participation and the opportunity for the

author of the work to have an input and broaden the discussion. An event such as this, if supported with a spirit of openness and adventure, should lead the way to a better understanding of those stimulating, risk-taking and non-predictable formulaic images that so often are not entered into competitions through fear of failure. Art should be about taking risks – let's do it, and eventually we'll give the judges, who expect predictability, something to think about! And, yes, *think* is the operative word.

By the time this edition of DIGIT reaches you, more information will have become available about *Think Photography 08* at which the RPS will have a strong presence. The Digital Imaging Group will be at the event so do get along to the National Motorcycle Museum, which is close by the NEC, Birmingham and enjoy both the exhibits by numerous leading photographic manufacturers and companies and the events organised by the RPS.

The event takes place over the weekend of 15-16 November, in two exhibition halls with a trade show, L Panel assessments, advice on portfolios, lectures and much else.

Tickets are £7.50 in advance £9 at the show so get in early and join us there.

For more information, visit the RPS website.

**Love it or loathe it?
Please let me know.**

Well that's what I asked in the summer issue but it seems the answer may be: *Don't really care!* The redesigned DIGIT doesn't seem to have made much impact judging by the deafening silence. The few who did were pleased with the new style so I'll stay with it.

Jim Buckley LRPS Editor
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Weybridge
Surrey KT13 0JF UK

DIGIT relies on the contributions of members. So, when will you send me an article for DIGIT? Remember that everyone is learning and that all experience is valuable. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Jim Buckley LRPS Editor

**LATEST DISTINCTIONS
FOR DI GROUP MEMBERS**

We are delighted to congratulate the following DI Group members who have recently gained distinctions:

- Fellow:** Alan Boutel, Bob Pearson
- Associate:** Peter Gawthrop, Ben Gorman, Anne Mahany
- Licentiate:** Brian Collins

Committee Report for Members from Secretary Bob Pearson FRPS

Meeting held on 27 May 2008

• **Finance** The increase of £3 in subscription had come up spontaneously at the AGM. The change will be implemented from 1 January 2009 and a reminder will appear in the Autumn edition of DIGIT. The Group had £7,491 in the bank, £1,000 more than the same time last year.

• **Website** Barry Senior and Maureen Albright had met OMNI about a new website and OMNI had agreed to provide an estimate against the criteria provided by John Long.

The Forum site the Group is now using is hosted by the RPS, Maureen Albright set it up and it is totally free to the Group. The current website and forum is now a working alternative to the corrupted site.

It has been made clear to the Committee that there is no guarantee that the old web-site would not be hacked again in the future and so even if the Committee spent £2,000 plus to resurrect the site, the same thing could happen again. It was therefore decided to terminate the old site. The Secretary was asked to write to Bill Henley to let him know of this decision and to ask him to close the site with immediate effect. DIG's representative for contact with OMNI will be Maureen Albright.

For the current website Maureen Albright, John Long and Tony Mant from the Society are administrators and John Long and Jim Buckley are moderators of the forum.

It was agreed that DIG's final website should be commercially supported and not rely on one individual.

• **Future DIG Events** Steve Caplin (How to Cheat in Photoshop) was suggested as a keynote speaker for DIG's contribution to the RPS theme of *The Real Thing*.

The Chairman is also investigating the possibility of a bi-annual RPS Convention at a hotel or university, with a main lecture area for

keynote speakers and smaller rooms for exhibits/discussions organised by the various SIGs.

• Group Regional Affairs

Chris Haydon will be producing a Regional Affairs document for discussion with DIGROs to cover the following:

Currently DIGROs operate independently of the DIG Committee so how can a closer link be created?

Should conference calls between DIGROs/Committee be instigated?

As the DIG Committee offers a payment to cover start-up costs even though the DIGRO accounts are independent, should these account be more closely linked to the DIG account?

To raise DIGRO visibility, should DIGROs be named formally at the AGM?

DIGROs to be asked to provide a Calendar of Events and a list of good speakers in their areas which will be collated into a central database;

Are DIGROs prepared to support a DIGRO page in DIGIT for events and other announcements?

• **Photoshop4Photographers** Three were run by DIGROs, three were as RPS Regional Events. The feed-back was excellent.

• **Workshops** The Darjeeling trip has sufficient support to proceed.

The series of Workshops at West Dean College has now finished and Clive Haynes and Graham Whistler will investigate other venues with more space for other attractions for other studio workshops.

• **IRIS-25** Maureen Albright reported she had received 79 entries for this event with a number of entries from abroad.

• **Exhibition 2009** Because of difficulty in stewarding and hire cost it was agreed that Bath would not be used as a venue. Instead, Taunton Library will be used for two weeks in June, followed by Swindon in July and Smethwick in August.

There is a shortage of northern venues so northern DIGROs will be approached for support.



DIGITAL REGIONAL ORGANISERS

Contact the organisers listed below for full details

Central Southern
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cs_dig@tiscali.co.uk

East Anglia
Vacant

East Midlands
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*Maureen Albright ARPS presents Bill Henley with a special hamper as a token of the thanks and appreciation of the Digital Imaging Group for all his work as Editor of DIGIT (1997-2003), inaugurating the original Listserver which first enabled members to exchange views and information via the web, and producing and running the highly popular DIGIT web site which he developed with his son Iain. Bill served on the Di Group committee for a decade from 1997 until 2007.
Photo by Robert Albright FRPS.*



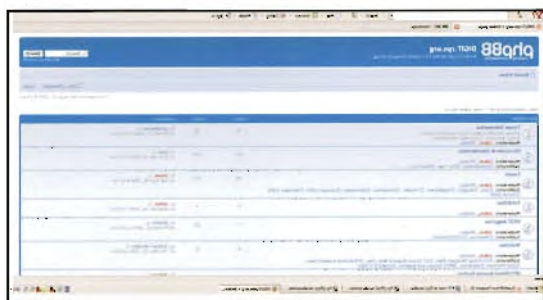
Maureen Albright ARPS reports:

Following the attack on the previous web site by a hacker and a malicious virus, the site at www.digit.org.uk was rapidly closed down to prevent members receiving any virus infection. To quickly update the membership, the DI Group page on the main RPS web site was used to convey information and several new pages were added there.

Meanwhile I had arranged that the RPS would host and supply the DI Group with a new domain www.digit.rps.org and I set about creating a few simple pages. Members accessing the old web site were automatically forwarded to the DIG page on the RPS site so they were informed of developments.

As I had some experience creating web sites, I was asked by the committee to attend a meeting at the Society's offices in Bath with President Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS and Omni, the RPS site developers. We discussed our options for a new website. A number of ideas were discussed to create a new DIGIT web site but this would be a lengthy and expensive undertaking. Based on my experience of using a variety of web Forums I suggested to Omni that we could cover the main requirements of the old DIGIT site by creating a simple online Forum. Omni were very helpful and suggested a free Forum which I downloaded and, over some time, set up with a variety of interactive pages for members to contribute ideas, hold discussions, share information etc.

This was initially tested by the DI Group committee before the site was opened on 12 May. Since then we have had over 2,000 postings in almost 250 topics. Currently there are 85 members but no doubt more DIG members will soon join.



Anyone can view the main information part of the Forum but you must join to post any message. In response to the requests of the previous web site regular users I created a specific section which is private and accessible only by DI Group members. This section is devoted to images for discussion like the old Folio, plus the monthly competition. To access this part of the Forum members must request a special extra password. This is sent out only to DIG members by John Long ARPS. Due to the nature of search engines on the web it has been necessary to allocate the password request to most parts of images section. I know it can be very irksome to type the



The DI Group area on the main Society website showing all your exhibition images.

How to access the Forum
Go to www.digit.rps.org click on the welcome page, and then the large Forum button. Most of the information you need to get started is in the Forum Information section.

To join and post comments click the register button (top right) but remember that the password you choose for your personal use is not the special DI Group password needed to access the Images for Discussion section. That password is only available from John Long. Contact details on Page 2.

The new DI Group Forum

password several times for these sections: Sorry, but I feel it is a necessary security precaution at present.

I am now liaising with Omni to obtain a quotation for a future website. Once we have news it will be posted on the current site and of course published in DIGIT.

Meanwhile I hope that DIGROs will add information about their meetings and announcements to the new site - pages have been created for them - and organisers will add events, and members will access and use the Forum site as much as possible to keep the group active. Happy Surfing!

See page 10 for the first winner of re-launched monthly Folio competition.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

A request from Mike Birbeck FRPS

For the past four years or so I have been the member of the RPS Advisory Board with special responsibilities for members with a disability. To that end, I instigated the scheme for Groups and Regions to put the disabled symbol alongside accessible events and venues, and encouraged you all to use it. This has largely been a success and most of you are using the scheme, for which I thank you.

After consultation with, and encouragement from, our President Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS and the Council I am about to ask you to go that little bit further. What would be very much appreciated would be if you could ask those who organise field trips etc, to offer at least one event a year that specifically caters for physically disadvantaged members. Please also remember that our membership average age is increasing, and any such event would also assist those with age related frailties. I am not asking for it to be exclusively for disabled and elderly members, but that you consider their needs when planning events. Additionally, I would be more than happy to promote any such event within the Disabled Photographers' Society and elsewhere.

It might encourage you to think that your Group/Region attendances might improve, and membership of the Society as a whole might increase if we show that we are a caring body. Remember, you could be disabled by illness or accident at any time, and with luck you might grow old, so it could be in your own interest to act on this request.

I would appreciate a response to this memorandum which can be sent to me by email or to the address below.

Many thanks,

Mike Birbeck FRPS

Advisory Board Member

Devonia, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, TA2 6QS

Email: mike@birbeck.demon.co.uk

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

Alex Dufty LRPS, Exhibition Organiser, reports on this year's events

This year the exhibition was mounted at three venues: Bath in June, Swindon in July and the Smethwick Photo Soc at Oldbury in August.

As ever, with my small band of helpers - John Long ARPS, Tony Poole ARPS, Ron Morgan LRPS and Geoff Hughes LRPS, seen hard at work in the photos here - I arrived early before the Bath Library opened to assemble the screens and put up the prints ready for the opening. The formal ceremony that evening was distinguished by the presence of Society President Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS and Sir George Pollock Hon FRPS.

It turned out to be a good run for the showing at the Podium, with a steady flow of members and the general public. However, as explained in the Secretary's report on page 3, difficulties with stewarding at this venue mean this was the final year at Bath. Taunton will host a week of the exhibition next year but the Group is always seeking new venues - and of course that vital help on the ground at local showings. If you can assist or have ideas please contact me - details on page 2.

The exhibition was really enjoyed at Swindon, and as usual they had a high footfall even though there were a number of day closures as a result of industrial action.

The Exhibition is always appreciated at Smethwick and welcomed by the Photo Society to whom we are very grateful.

Thoughts for the future? Well, I have had to do the usual repairs on prints, replacing masking tape and re-gluing prints. Several months on display in public galleries is a harsh environment so do make sure that your prints are properly



Above: Alex Dufty LRPS with Society President Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS



Photos by David Britton LRPS



prepared and well stuck. And for 2009 we will be reviewing - and looking for a much closer reading from members of - the published requirements for the CD which accompanies your prints. No more huge layered files, incorrect sizes (too small or too big) and funny formats please! Preparing the images in what is now the three different formats for printing in DIGIT, showing on the website and for the exhibition DVD is a big task, which becomes bigger when we have to come back to members to get hold of the file.

But above all, keep those prints coming in. It's not too early to start planning your entries for 2009!

Yorkshire DI Group Exhibition

In a new venture the Yorkshire Group held its first exhibition. Thanks to all of our members who entered their super work which made a fantastic

Next Yorkshire Meeting

1000 to 1600 on Sunday 23 November 2008 at Selby Community Centre, Scott Road, Selby YO8 4BL. Ample free car parking. Creative Images with PhotoShop: giving your Colour & Mono images the WOW factor! with Margaret & David Watson. Tickets £5 DI Group members, £6 others. Robert Croft LRPS, page 3 for contact details.

and very successful print exhibition. We received praise and excellent comments about the high standard of our work from over 1,100 people who visited the exhibition.

Thanks to the Committee and especially Phil Hack, who was in attendance at the exhibition for the full seven days and was kept very busy not only showing visitors around our exhibition but also showing the visitors into the YPU Exhibition. Workshops, lectures and demonstrations organised by Phil and the Holmfirth Camera Club helped to keep people coming through the doors. We are now planning a second RPS Yorkshire DI Members Print Exhibition in 2009, hopefully again at The North Light Gallery, Huddersfield.

Ann Mahany ARPS writes to thank all who supported Fordingbridge Camera Club's Jubilee celebrations:

It was a spectacular success with 1,725 images sent by 185 photographers from the UK and abroad. Only 25% were accepted so it made an exhibition of very high standard. If you had a picture accepted you did well! The exhibition was shown at our 50th birthday party when we met former members, some from the start of the club. Their enthusiasm is responsible for today's thriving club. All entrants will have a CD of the exhibition; more are available from geoff@munsey.fsworld.co.uk. Award winners' pictures and acceptances: www.fordingbridgecameraclub.org.uk

International Review of Images with Soundtrack for Under 25 year olds

It is strange how fate plays a part in our lives. In 2006 I attended a meeting of The Society when it announced grants for Special Projects. I had been thinking about organising an event to encourage young people to show their talents in the digital field and successfully applied for the special grant to organise a Digital AV competition for young people under 25.

Adult Audio Visual competitions have a long history of creating AVs to a set form for judging. Since the advent of digital AV competitions most of these competitions accept only executable files, making it difficult for Mac users to participate. I realised that many colleges used Macs with their students and if we were to encourage the young to take part we would have to open our minds a little more and accept differing file formats. Hopefully, in due course, there will be a Mac version of the software.

I decided that we should set only a few very simple rules as guidelines, letting the young people's creativity take the lead and discover what they would produce if we gave them the chance.

Once the main framework and dates were established, there lay ahead the long and difficult task of publicity. I had spent several months working with Google finding establishments with photographic departments when Vice President Rosemary Wilman ARPS suggested I use the Society's public relations company, MAX PR (now PilotMax). I was amazed how quickly word spread and details appeared in newspapers, magazines and web sites worldwide.

We added an extra AV day with useful talks and tuition and so the initial simple competition turned into a two day International Festival.

The dates were carefully planned, around the school and college calendars and a panel of eminent judges was invited. Igor Kokarev, the creator of Pictures to Exe AV software, travelled from Kirov, Russia - not the easiest journey, as outlined in the middle column - especially to judge the competition. He had been very supportive of our plans and made free downloads of PTE available to any young person, school or college who wished to take part.

The other judges were all very experienced AV workers: Robert Albright FRPS, Chairman of the RPS AV Distinctions Panel, Richard Brown FRPS, Peter Coles FRPS (who unfortunately was not well enough to make the journey to judge on the day), and Gerard Desroches EFIAP of Luxembourg, another International award winning AV worker and the creator of the French AV Forum web site, *Diaporamaforum* which circulated the information among the large French AV community.



Jake Pursey receives his award from IRIS organiser Maureen Albright ARPS

Maureen reports: Igor Kokarev made his first trip outside Russia to help judge the competition. To apply for a visa he had an 18 hour train journey from Kirov to Moscow, staying overnight before the 18 hours home. When he and his mother travelled to the UK they had the 18 hour journey again and the 5 hours flight to London. In the UK they enjoyed visits to London, Bath and Oxford, and of course some time in Wales!

Entries began to arrive by post on CD or by e-mail in a wide range of formats. The sequences were, as I had expected, not the usual AV work but they illustrated what young people could produce and I was pleased that entries came in from many countries. The ages varied from nine years old to twenty two. At one stage I did not think we would receive any entries in the 16 to 24 year old section but eventually six did arrive.

My biggest disappointment was the lack of entries from schools and colleges who had downloaded PTE and planned to take part. We were able to award the prize for the school with the largest number of entries, but I had hoped that there would be more support from colleges and schools. There were 79 individual entries in total.

I made the decision not to pre-select the entries, so that all the children's work would be shown and each child and young adult would receive a Certificate of Participation. Having ignited the spark of enthusiasm and interest, I felt strongly it was very important that all the young people should feel their contribution was valued, and they should all take part.

June 2008 finally arrived. It had been a long two year journey. I was very anxious about how the audience would react. Would they expect an adult-type AV competition? Or would they realise this was a very new experience, young people given the freedom to show what they could produce with PCs and Macs, using a much wider variety of software and presentation methods but all using still images with a soundtrack, the first tentative steps in a long journey to some future polished sequences?

Only one of the young entrants, Jake Pursey, was able to attend judging on the day and both his entries were awarded highly commended prizes. I hope we see lots more work in the future from all the prize winners and also some of the other entrants too.

The audience did appreciate that the work was produced by children, and the warm and jovial atmosphere continued into the evening, when all those staying for the weekend shared a meal at the local pub in the village. I must admit that at the end of the first day I felt very drained so it was good to relax and hear the audience comments in the evening.



The Judges on the day. Left to right: Gerard Desroches, Robert Albright FRPS, Richard Brown FRPS and Igor Kokarev

Sunday produced a larger audience as many people had travelled long distances to hear the judges' lectures about different aspects of Audio Visual production - including Richard Brown FRPS demonstrating how he had first become interested in scripts and projecting images using his Chad Valley *Thunderbirds Give-a-Show Projector* as a young boy!

Igor Kokarev gave a lecture about the development of his Wnsoft company, the Pictures to Exe software and a special demonstration of the newly released PTE 5.5. Igor then went on to show some of the future developments of the next version 5.6, which is still being developed with many new impressive features.



Richard Brown FRPS reliving his childhood

The weekend finished with lots of positive comments. Many hoped that the RPS IRIS-25 would happen again, while I just hoped I would get lots of sleep and more time to create my own work. Many of the young entrants had expressed the wish to take part again. I hope they will all continue to make sequences.

The 2008 RPS IRIS-25 was able to be held thanks to The Royal Photographic Society. It is hard to conceive of any other photographic organisation in the UK willing and able to fund such an event. AV makers who are not members should think about who is safeguarding the future of their hobby. The future? Well we all know it belongs to the young.

RPS AUDIO VISUAL NEWS

East Midlands Audio Visual Day
1000 - 1700 Sunday 26 October 2008
 Narborough Parish Centre, Narborough,
 Leicester LE19 2EL
 3 miles south of Junction 21 M1 / M69
 Lecturers: Ken Biggs FRPS; Bryan Stubbs
 LRPS plus Attenders Sequences
 RPS AV/DI Group members £7.50. All others
 £10.50 Optional lunch £5.50
 Contact: Beth Elston, 01530 224206,
 beth.elston@btinternet.com

IRIS Results Summary
George & Doraen Pollock Medal and under 16 prize with Student RPS membership: Camille Simon of France. 13. Une Chambre Extraordinaire Second: Christopher Ware. 13: Here Come the Girls Highly Commended: Sam Hilton. 11; Jake Pursey. 13; Hannah Greenstreet. 14 16-24 years Laura Bateman, 21: Waiting For Tomorrow. First prize with RPS Student membership for a year.

Royal Photographic Society
18th International AV Festival
 19th to 21st September 2008
 The Royal Agricultural College
 Cirencester
 www.rps-international-av.co.uk

Good Picture - 2008
 "Digital Opportunities"
 An RPS Symposium

Following the success of the previous five Good Picture Symposia, the Imaging Science Group of the Royal Photographic Society is organising another of its successful technical seminars, open to all, on selected technical aspects of Digital Imaging. The aim of these lectures and discussions is to provide imaging practitioners, keen amateurs and students with insights into Digital Imaging and provide some tools and guidelines for assessing cameras and output.

Location: University of Westminster, Regent Street, London
Date: Tuesday 16th December 2008, 10am - 4pm

Charges: £58.00 Concessions: £32.00 (Students, Retired, Unemployed)
 Includes buffet lunch plus morning and afternoon coffee & biscuits
(Notes: There is no alcohol served at this meeting.)

Contact: Dr. Mike Christianson: 01753 890 480
 Application form and address: www.rps-uk.org

Programme

Prof. Geoff Attridge University of Westminster	Digital and Analogue Imaging Parallels
<small>Over the past century, digital photography has revolutionised the way we capture and share images. This seminar will explore the technical and artistic implications of this revolution, from the early days of digital photography to the current state of the art.</small>	
Dr. Graeme Awwcock University of Brighton	Fantastic Photosites III - Are Photons Coloured?
<small>This seminar looks at the most recent developments in digital photography, focusing on the use of colour in digital photography. It will explore the technical and artistic implications of this revolution, from the early days of digital photography to the current state of the art.</small>	
John Smith University of Westminster	Digital Infrared Photography
<small>The seminar will explore the use of digital infrared photography in a variety of applications, from scientific research to security and surveillance. It will explore the technical and artistic implications of this revolution, from the early days of digital photography to the current state of the art.</small>	
Tom Williams Imaging Consultant	Image Stabilisation
<small>Recent advances in digital cameras have made it possible to capture sharp images even in low light conditions. This seminar will explore the technical and artistic implications of this revolution, from the early days of digital photography to the current state of the art.</small>	
Andy Gilding University of Westminster	Digital Imaging and its Implications for Lighting
<small>This seminar will explore the use of digital imaging in a variety of applications, from scientific research to security and surveillance. It will explore the technical and artistic implications of this revolution, from the early days of digital photography to the current state of the art.</small>	
Jeff Maynard IT Entrepreneur	Protecting and Managing Your Digital Assets
<small>The digital revolution has brought with it a host of new challenges, particularly in the area of digital rights management and data protection. This seminar will explore the technical and artistic implications of this revolution, from the early days of digital photography to the current state of the art.</small>	
Mike Stroud Imaging Consultant	Online Photofinishing - The 21 st Century Sausage Machine?
<small>This seminar will explore the use of digital imaging in a variety of applications, from scientific research to security and surveillance. It will explore the technical and artistic implications of this revolution, from the early days of digital photography to the current state of the art.</small>	

Medal man

It arrived yesterday, writes Ray Wallace Thompson ARPS, and sends me a picture to prove it! My request for a mug shot with the



medal was however declined: It would only be a decrepit Ancient Briton, Ray replied.

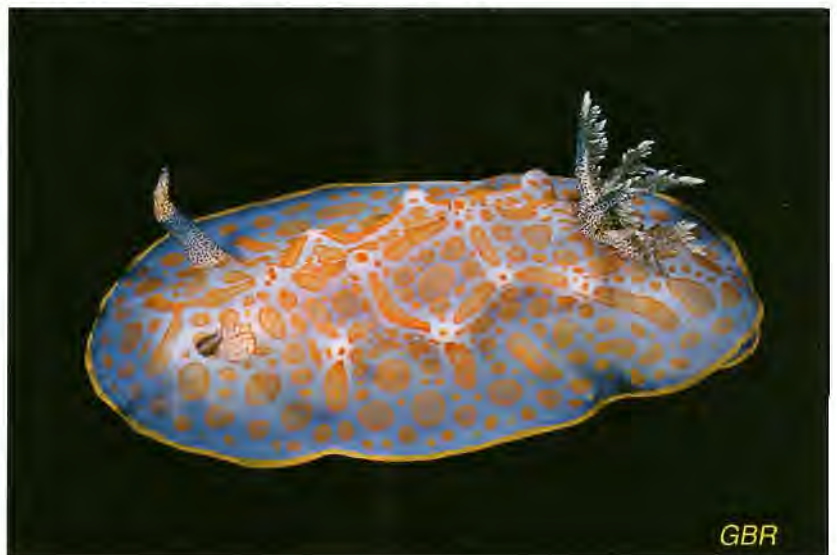
Ray won the PSA Travel Division's 2008 Travelette Competition but the gold medal was for winning last year's Electronic Division's Digital Essay. With two previous Golds, one for an AV using Stockton on Tees as a tourist centre and another for top picture in an Exhibition, Ray is still prone to ask: Was it all worthwhile? Did we bore our audiences? Well, three gold medals prove something and at least we shared our pictures. Contact Ray if you would like to see his sequences on loan.

THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE

Tony Healy has been interested in natural history for as long as he can remember. In the beginning, he says, he was an un-academic, un-financed, poorly resourced, impoverished David Attenborough! The only thing in abundance was enthusiasm. Whether it was flora or fauna or geology it has all appealed to Tony who has readily answered questions put to him on various of his Follo submissions. Apart from the Nature Group, most members will not know of these animals let alone have seen them. Some are quite small and need unusual containers in which to photograph them. There is, Tony explains, a great variety of subjects available: slugs, worms flat and round, spiders, corals, crab shells, shrimps, molluscs and even stinging cells, which make interesting and colourful alternatives to traditional English scenes. Colour variations in the slugs and flatworms are amazing and dear old Mother Nature leaves some interior decorators for dead! It does take a bit of practice says Tony but here he shows us how he got to grips with macro marine life.

On more than one occasion Sir David Attenborough has shown us that life exists in the hottest, the coldest, the driest, and the wettest places on Earth. It is fascinating to find how life finds its ecological niche in these places and what it has to do to survive. Survive is the operative word here. When one can find yourself on the menu of other animals you have to be so distasteful or toxic that you are left alone, or to be as inconspicuous as possible. Many animals use both methods of survival no matter where they live.

Most people are familiar with the more obvious forms of nature where the animals start off about the size of a squirrel but there is a wondrous world of small life that exists all around us. One place that caught my attention



GBR

Above: Colourful sea slugs (nudibranchs) that can be found on the sea shore. Others are below left and opposite bottom right whilst more can be seen at: <http://www.divegallery.com/>



Right: Various glassware and perspex containers for holding specimens in position. The red in the little tall container is sand from a particular location in Sydney. It was very characteristic of the beach.

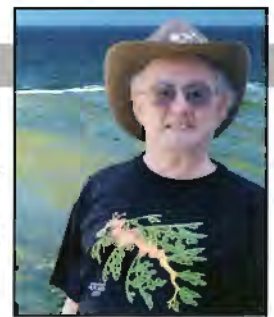


Right: A more opaque flatworm from the Great Barrier Reef. Flatworms are almost unbelievable in their colour and patterns



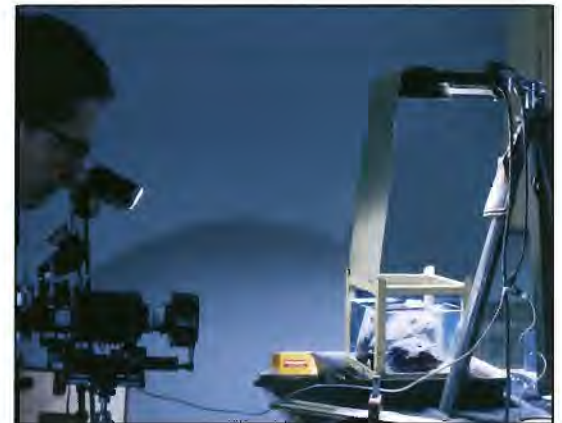


Left: Male Seahorse. Note the tail of a baby sticking out of the brood pouch on its "stomach". Males carry the eggs and hatched young.



anemones would have to be photographed in the field in situ while trying not to get swamped by a wave. I had one camera body written off that way. Petri dishes served well for the flatworms and some nudibranchs but the smaller animals had to be in a position where one could photograph their best profiles. There was also the need for a black background that could be used over and over and it didn't matter if it got wet. Shop front glass black tiles filled the bill nicely.

Right: One thing you have to do is make sure you don't get reflected in the front of the aquarium glass. The cardboard prop stops that light from falling on the front of the camera.



was the seashore, the area known as the littoral zone, located between the high tide and low tide mark. In this relatively small area can be found a huge biodiversity of marine life. Having found an extensive rock platform in Sydney I set about seeing what life existed there. Two groups of animals that were particularly fascinating for me were the sea slugs (Nudibranchia) and the flatworms (Polycladida).

Collecting specimens of these two species and taking them to the Australian Museum for identification produced a couple of problems. Firstly the animals were difficult if not impossible to preserve and secondly as one curator said to me, 'We don't have anyone working on these animals at the moment so the best idea is to take a photograph of them, leave a copy with us, and one day someone specialising in them, will walk in the door and tell you all about them.' Well that was easier said than done. These were quite small animals and up until then my first and most recent close up picture was taken using my mother's No.2 Folding Brownie camera and a dioptr lens to photograph a newly hatched chicken, not a technique that was going to work with nudibranchs and flatworms. Besides you really needed colour to do them justice.

These were the days before scuba gear and the Nikonos underwater camera, which even if they had been around then I would not have had the money to buy them. Photography was keeping me poor as it was. I was forced to look at other ways to overcome my lack of equipment and start teaching myself about close up photography.

The first thing was to get a small aquarium. This could be used for animals that were a few inches in size but there was also the need to confine smaller animals so they could be readily photographed. Animals like barnacles and

Below: In photographing crab shells or carapaces for identification the edge of the carapace has to be parallel to the focal plane of the camera. All knobs and bumps contribute to the identity of the animal. This one, taken as an exercise in lighting, is 65mm long and at the time it was photographed only one other rare 100 year old illustration of it existed since it was first described together with a hand painting in 1804.



Pictures taken for identification purposes have some special requirements. Some animals blend in with their backgrounds and are difficult to see where they start and finish, therefore scientists prefer a clean outline of the animal for identification. Black and sandy backgrounds met most of these requirements. Also in the case of crabs (Decapods) in photographing the top (dorsal) view of the crab's shell (carapace) the edges of the carapace have to be parallel with the focal plane of the camera.

Digital photography has overcome one of the great problems with film, that of having to wait for your slides to come back and see if you captured what you were after. In the case of animals that would end up in the Museum, one had to keep them alive until the slides returned. Now, thankfully, one knows immediately if there is a need to re-shoot the subject. →

Below: Seaslug. Two websites which show a vast range of nudibranchs and polycladidia are: <http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~bu6/index.html> and <http://www.downbelow.co.uk/nudibranch.html>



→ There are many sites now on the Internet that display some of these animals, photographed in their natural habitat with modern underwater equipment. The brilliant colours, patterns and colour combinations of the nudibranchs and flatworms should be inspirations to designers and decorators everywhere. Most tropical species of these animals are more flamboyant than temperate species but for those who may think my proximity to the Great Barrier Reef has allowed me to capture such subjects, all but that labelled GBR are from Sydney waters.

Most of my shooting has been on land but to view one of the most elaborate and bizarre studios for this work have a look at the video at <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/video/player?titleID=1531204600>



*This small pink shrimp was found in a muddy burrow in mangroves near Sydney in 1972. Scientifically unknown it was given the name *Laomedea healyi*. Now there's a most interesting name!*

This montage was made up of five individual images, sometimes used in part or repeated on other layers. Some have been previously manipulated using the methods describe below, while others come straight from the camera. The images used for this particular composite were:

- A wooden bridge.
- A pile of bones.
- Plastic bottles and tin cans.
- Undergrowth
- Male standing in mouth of cave

With so many elements to a finished composite, it is impossible to think back to all steps taken and I don't keep notes. The process is variable and evolves as I go and so most of the information is general.

Here the wooden bridge was used as the base image/starting point and once opened in Photoshop, the image layer named Background was renamed to make it editable, important as it allowed me to layer images beneath as well as above the start image.

I like to find at least one image that I can blend in to add texture and I find images of old rusty metal, rotting wood or vegetation work well. In this instance the texture was created by blending in the bones image and also some vegetation. I keep a file of interesting textures especially for this purpose.

I start by layering one image over another and then in the *Layers Palette* drop down menu I may select *Multiply*, *Overlay* or *Soft Light* etc and will vary the opacity to suit. I may colourise a layer so that it is a uniform colour; I may change saturation levels or even apply an effect from the Photoshop filters menu. Sometimes I will move the position of an image in the layer stack for differing effects and, if I find a whole image isn't working layered over

Jean Whitewood took first place when the Folio competition re-opened on the new website with *I Walk Alone*. DIGIT asked Jean to explain her approach to the image

another, I will often create a layer mask and use parts of the image or maybe remove the layer or replace it.

With the mask selected, I can rub away or paint back in with the Paintbrush and keep just the bits that work for me; for example, the figure in this image was masked from the surrounding cave and used on the final layer.

I will also move images around on their separate layers until I am happy with composition. When I have two or three layers (at most) that I think are working together, I use the *Flatten Image* command in the *Layers Palette*; this helps keep working file sizes down. I use the flattened image as the base for the next step, which is to repeat the process, one layer at a time.

I will often fill gaps in an image by cloning in appropriate sections from other parts of the image, checking to ensure that they are not obviously repetitive by maybe changing opacity, size, orientation, colour and maybe masking parts out again.

Once I am happy with the overall composition I will flatten one last time. At this point I check for areas that are particularly dark or light and use the *Dodge* or *Burn* tool, with a large soft edged brush at 15-20% opacity, and brush over as many times as is necessary to get the right tone.

Occasionally I may sharpen the image at this point, no more than 20%, if I think it works. Some images will have already been sharpened in previous manipulations before inclusion in the montage.

It really is a case of trial and error and seeing what works and what doesn't - and, of course, making one final judgement of when to stop.



PROTECT YOUR IMAGES

With the increasing use of larger images on websites and the ease of downloading pictures you need to take care that your photographs are not stolen or used inappropriately. Gitta Lim LRPS shows us how to create a copyright watermark for your web.



When uploading images on web it is useful to add a visible copyright watermark. Naturally large watermarks can look distracting but a fairly transparent one can be placed anywhere on the image and at any size. For a copyright watermark you first need to create a new document in Photoshop in File>New. The size could be, for instance, 1200 x 1200 pixels at 72 ppi resolution. The screen grab on the right shows the three next steps. For the copyright symbol pick Custom Shape Tool (1) from your Tool Palette. Ensure your foreground colour is black (hit X + D keys) and that the Shape Layers radio button is turned on (2). Locate, from the Shape Picker (3) at the top tool bar, the copyright symbol then click to activate the symbol. Hold down the Shift key, click in your new document and drag the © symbol to fill the space.

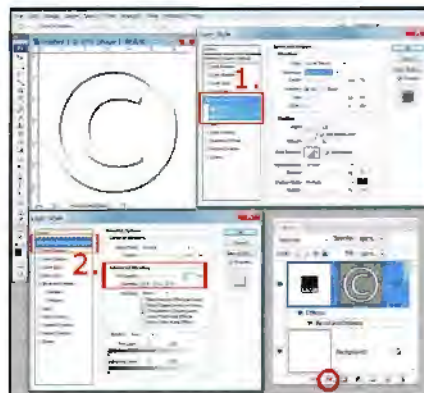
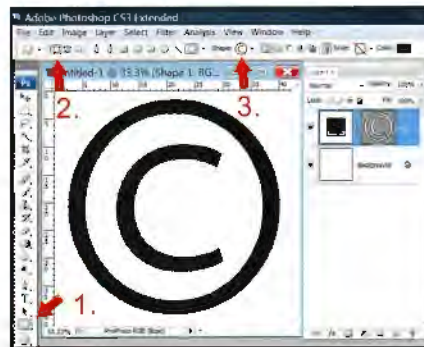
Now you need to add Layer Style effects for the symbol. Following the screen grab alongside, from Layer menu pick Layer Style>Bevel & Emboss (1) or use the fx icon (red circle on screen grab) at the bottom of the Layers Palette to open the Layer Style Bevel & Emboss dialogue box. Emboss the symbol at Structure>Size by 15 - 20 pixels. Then click at the top of the Layer Style list (2) Blending Options and in Advanced Blending drag the Fill Opacity slider all the way down to 0%. This will give you a transparent embossed effect.

Next delete the white background layer on the Layers Palette as your watermark needs to remain transparent and save it as a tiff or psd file.

If you wish to add your name on the watermark create a new text layer with Text Tool and ensure the Text Layer is above your watermark on the Layers Palette. Pick a suitable font and add suitable Layer Style effects as above for the watermark. Then merge the two layers – go to Layer>Merge Visible.

You can use the same method to create a copyright text file with your name, that is: ©Gitta Lim. This screengrab on the right shows the text file details. Pick the Text Tool (1) then a suitable font (2) and font size (3) and type © followed by your name. To type © ensure your keyboard Num Lock is on and while holding down Alt key use the right hand-side numeric keypad and hit 184. Works with most fonts. Personal Message me through the Dig website www.digit.rps.org if you need instructions for a laptop as the method is slightly different. To finish it add effects according to the above watermark Layer Style instructions.

*Right: Contra Jour
Cordyline with subtle
copyright.*



*Right: Poppy in the wind
with copyright symbol.*



Finally to add the copyright watermark on your image open the file you created above and drag the copyright layer onto your image file. Ensure it will end up as the topmost layer on the Layers Palette. To resize the watermark go to Edit>Transform>Scale and holding down the Shift Key drag from a corner to a suitable size; and drag it to a correct position on your image. You may need to adjust the layer opacity to suit your particular image. Activate your watermark layer on the Layers Palette and go to Opacity and move the slider down from 100% until your copyright watermark looks suitably transparent.



AUTOMANIA POSTERS

With an L panel composed of mono shots of early American cars which DIGIT featured in the spring issue of 2006, it's not too much of a surprise to learn that Cliff Marsh LRPS also has quite a passion for car posters. And, yes, they are of course gleaming American cars

My main interest in photography is cars, and in particular early American cars. I have many hundreds of car images, so I set about designing my very own first poster. This proved much more difficult than I imagined, with my limited Photoshop skills. I began with a blank canvas and chose a suitable image to begin as shown below and cut



out my first car. This is most time consuming and I have to say, I don't think I would have even attempted it without my Wacom pad, as this makes selections so much easier. Nevertheless it still takes forever to do using the pen tool, very slowly going round each section at over 100% magnification and checking to make certain I have not missed anything (I have to admit I made a few mistakes here) and then going back and forth time and time again. Finally my selection was complete and it was ready to be put onto my clean canvas. I laid on a background colour to the canvas and then, using the move tool, I was able to position the car in the correct place on the canvas.



This was my first attempt (left) but I was not at all happy with this set-up and decided to scrap it and start all over again, repeating the above procedure. This time I flipped the car image and included an image of a pretty girl that I had taken at a music concert a year before.

I 'posterized' both images to give them the painted look. It was now time to add the text (see right) after a little trial and more errors. I now added a little more black to the background using the airbrush tool at a low opacity, just rapidly



passing over the entire poster from left to right until I achieved the desired effect.

One thing I must mention is reflections. After I had almost finished I noticed the many reflections in the shiny car paintwork so I had to remove all of these using the clone tool and the healing brush tool. I used these two more than anything else throughout the making of these posters.

After I had completed the first poster I felt more confident to tackle the second as I had learned so much over a space of about four weekends. If nothing else, I have taught myself new Photoshop skills just by attempting new things and I feel a whole lot more confident for it. As we all know, Photoshop is truly a wonderful tool, it's just understanding it!!

I had both poster's printed at 30 x 20 inches and framed and they now hang in my photo room. That sounds very posh but in fact it's my converted garage. Well how many of us actually put a car in the garage? Maybe I would if I could afford a classic car!!



Above: 1932
Duesenburg
Right: Hispano Suiza

Cliff took these shots
when he visited the
2008 Amelia Island
Concourse d'Elegance
show in Florida.



LANDSCAPE PERSPECTIVES

In less than four years since joining the Society, Peter Gawthrop has moved rapidly through L to Associate this year with his special brand of panoramic images. Here Peter describes his route to a successful ARPS Visual Art panel. The panel can be viewed online at www.lightspacewater.net



The successful Associateship Panel

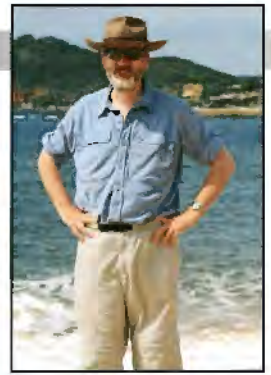
One of the Tunnel images

I joined the RPS in December 2004 and achieved an LRPS in July 2005. This gave me the confidence to develop my own photographic style. At this time, I had the vague idea that I wanted to produce images that gave

the feeling of being inside the landscape. I was frustrated that my photographs gave the impression of viewing the landscape through a window, through a letterbox or through a telescope. Early on, I decided that the way

forward was to expand the camera field of view by stitching together multiple images. I tried various approaches, and by 2006 has settled on equipment (Canon 5D with 15mm fisheye lens) and Hugin software - hugin.sf.net. The techniques are described in detail in my article in the Autumn 2007 number of DIGIT. I also decided that it was about time I learned more about photography and so signed up for a correspondence course *Art of Photography* at the Open College of the Arts which I completed last year. I would recommend this course





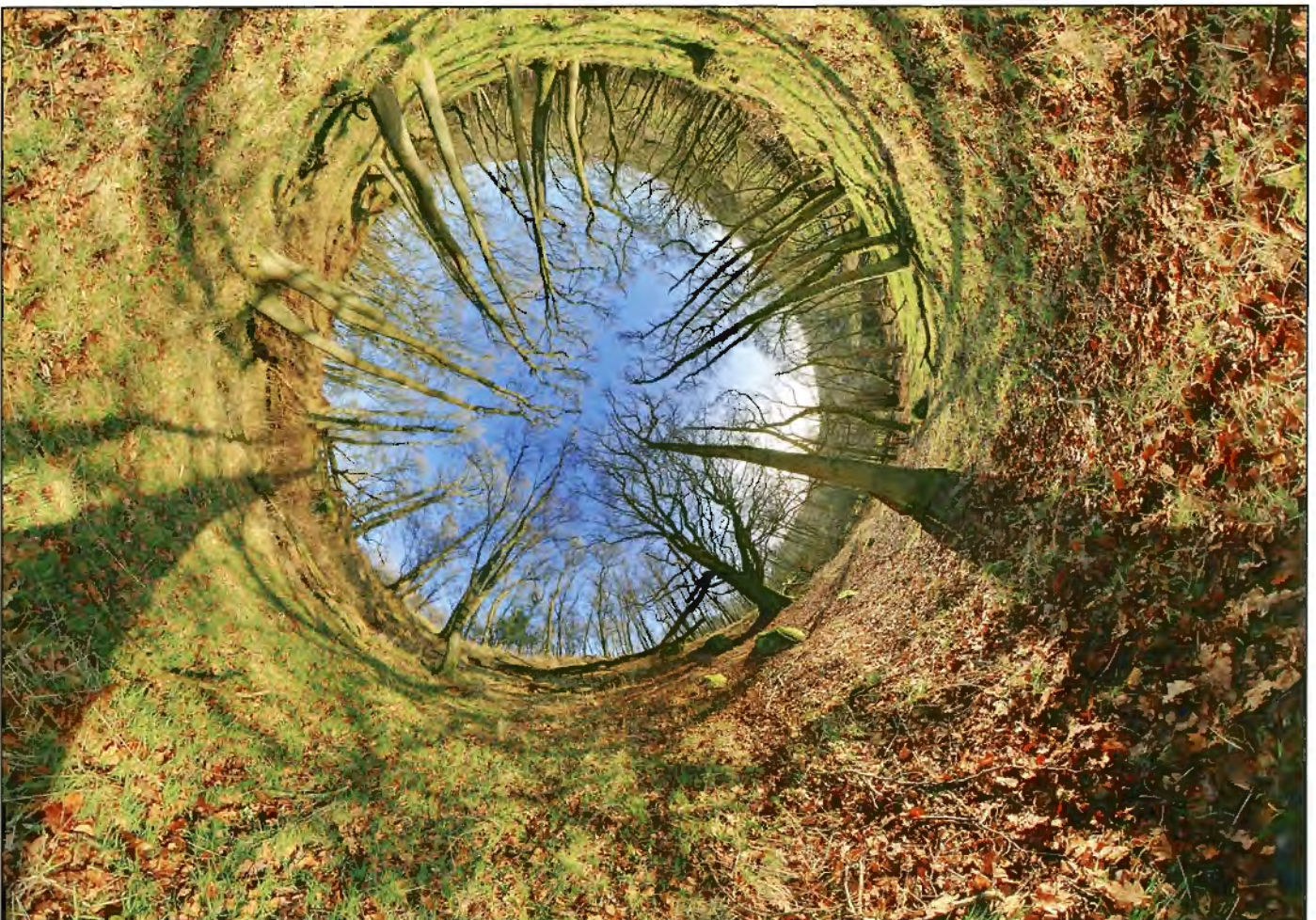
to others who, like me, have not had any formal photographic training and are not able to attend a fulltime course.

By the end of 2007, I felt that I had enough material to put together 15 images and I submitted on CD to the March Assessment in Bath – and failed to get my ARPS. However, it is

at just this point that the support system of the RPS swings into action. The chairman of the panel, John Chamberlin FRPS, contacted me and kindly offered to look at my proposed revised panel and then put me in touch with a local panel member Rikki O’Neil FRPS who gave me further advice and encouragement.

Open College of the Arts courses can be seen at: <http://www.oa-uk.com/courses/photography/>

One of the Hole images





Finally, I attended a workshop organised by the RPS Scottish Region in Stirling.

There were three main changes which led to the final successful panel shown on page 14:

1. I submitted prints in place of the CD;
2. I paid more attention to colour saturation and tone; and
3. I replaced those images identified as weak with stronger compositions.

All of these changes were important but I would emphasise my experience that the CD route is definitely to be avoided; the main reason being that, when using a CD, the 15 images are viewed sequentially as a slide show whereas a print panel is viewed as one entity. In my case, the panel has a symmetry in shape and colour which is lost in a slide show.

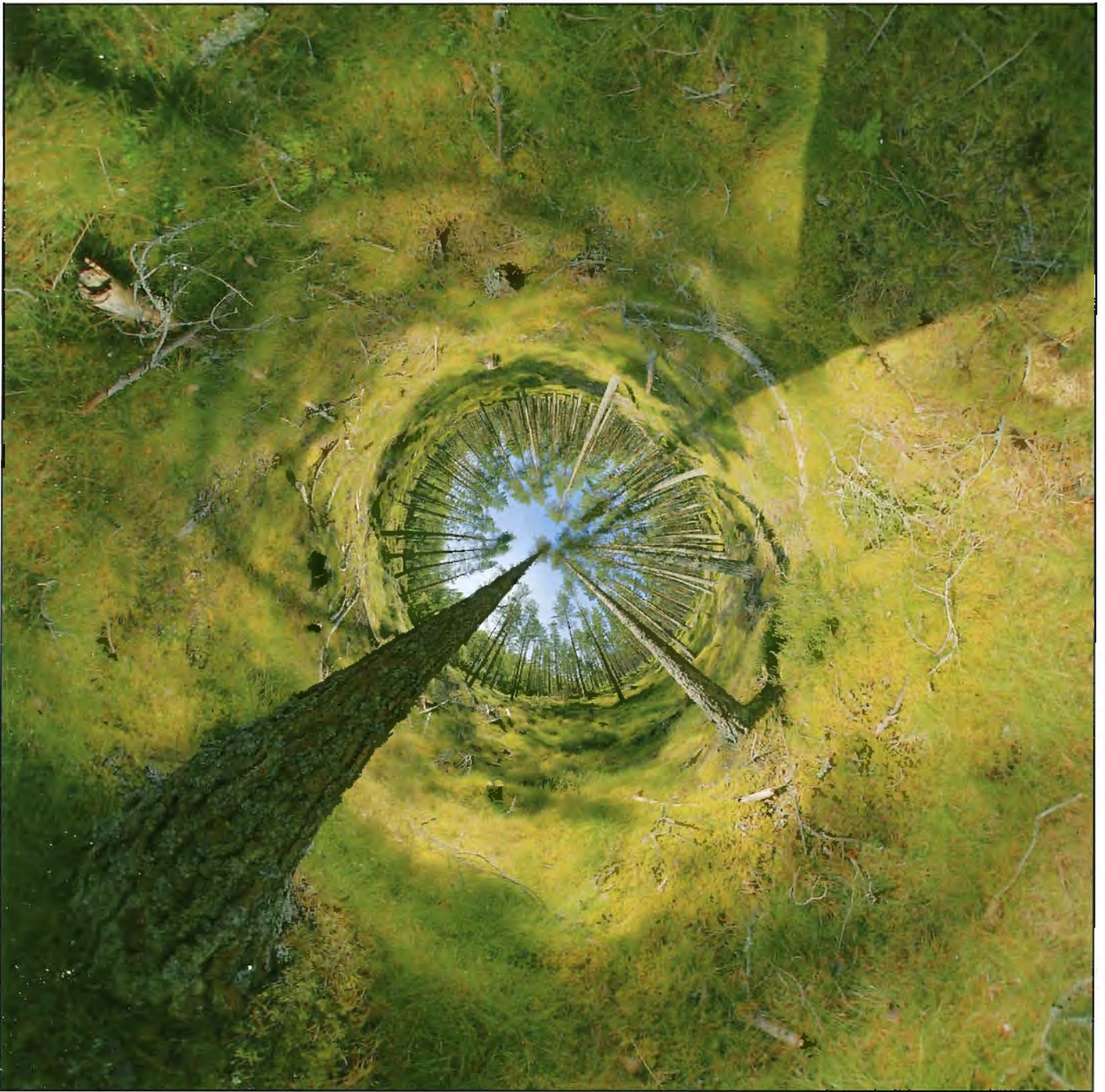
Did I achieve what I set out to do? I feel that the image shown opposite and on the previous pages (which I have called Tunnel and Hole images respectively) really do give a feeling of being inside the landscape.

On the other hand, my experiments with panoramas also revealed that the opposite – or outside – view also had artistic possibilities. The two photographs here have 'Planet' projections.

Planet projections



My final thoughts on this panel are summarised by the following Statement of Intent which was read out at the assessment: *This panel explores the visual possibilities released by discarding conventional perspective in landscape photography. Each image is composed from 24 photographs taken using a conventional digital camera mounted on a tripod fitted with panoramic head. The choice of location, time of day and lighting is particularly important as a photograph is taken in every direction. I believe that these images provide dramatic alternative perspectives on landscape photography.*



THE EVOLUTION OF AN F PANEL

Bob Pearson, Secretary of the DI Group, outlines his path to his recent successful Fellowship nature panel which he titled: Wildlife of the Galapagos Archipelago. It was photographed and printed digitally. All the images from Bob's panel can be seen on his website: bobpearsonphotography.com And many congratulations to Bob on the award of a Bronze in this year's Society International Print Exhibition for his print of a Red Crowned Crane In Japan, as seen on page 289 of the Journal.



The story starts several years ago when I attended a workshop on panel submission.

My photography is very much split between what is classed as Visual Art and Nature. I had taken along what I had expected to be the start of a Visual Art submission with, as almost an afterthought, some straight prints I had made from images taken on the Galapagos Islands. To my surprise the visual art images were rapidly passed over and the Galapagos images greeted enthusiastically being described as 'Pictorial Nature'. The reviewers were not nature specialists and recommended I discuss the images with someone who was. The selection of whom to use as your mentor and guru is clearly a critical one, as is the decision to use one or many. The reviewers at the workshop suggested John Chamberlin FRPS. I knew John and it proved to be a happy and successful choice and I must thank John for sharing his expertise, his time and helpful advice that he gave me. At my first meeting to discuss my prints I was brought down to earth with a bump: many many were rejected as not even approaching the necessary standard.

Above: The successful Nature Panel presentation

Right: This Galapagos Giant Tortoise was photographed in a drying lake which forms in a caldera situated about 5 miles inland from the coast of the island of San Cristobal. Although setting off just after dawn it's past 1000 by the time of arrival and the temperature is rising rapidly. Bob took this shot with the 12-24 mm lens with the camera set up on a ground pod.

My interest in the Galapagos goes back to my junior school days where I read a shortened version of the *Voyage of the Beagle* and became fascinated with the concept of Evolution. This isolated island archipelago became a dream destination and I have now been fortunate to make several visits. With the increasing numbers of visitors, the National Park authority has quite rightly imposed more and more access restrictions. Unfortunately, the decrease in access significantly reduces the opportunity for good wildlife photography. For example, individual visits to a landing site are





now restricted to once a fortnight; there is no opportunity to return to make use of knowledge gained.

All the images were taken on a Nikon D2x DSLR with lenses ranging from 12 to 400mm (18 to 600mm 35mm equivalent). I initially used compressed RAW format but had to reject otherwise successful shots because the compression had lost all highlight detail. Later images used uncompressed RAW. All images were developed in Lightroom. I used a *WhiBal* card as a colour temperature reference when taking a series of images but found necessary adjustment in colour temperature to be small. On putting the panel together the one area that was visually unacceptable was the vast variation in the tone of the sky. A wide-angle lens tends to produce a more colour saturated image; the equatorial sky at certain angles appeared as if fully polarised. The blue saturation was adjusted during development in Lightroom.

It is of course the final print of the image that will be judged. Pre-digital I had always made my own prints on to Cibachrome and loved the high gloss that this material produced. It is possible to get digital files commercially printed on to what is now called Ifrachrome but I rejected this approach as I wanted full control of the final image. When I first started digital inkjet printing dye based prints on high gloss paper produced a very acceptable result that unfortunately was

*Below: Galapagos Hawk
Punta Tortuga Negra,
Isabella. Nikon D2x ISO 400
200-400mm f/4 at 360mm
(540mm equiv)
f/6.3 at 1/640 sec*

made pointless by the instability of the image. Stable pigment based prints seemed unable to match the initial quality of a dye print. By the time I had started to think about printing the panel I had moved to an Epson 2400 pigment printer so I searched the web for the highest gloss material that I could find. I discovered Pictorico Photo Gallery Hi Gloss White Film made by Mitsubishi Imaging in Japan. I could find no UK supplier and had to import it from the States. On getting a personal profile made the profiler reported back that the material had the highest D-max of any material they had measured. Tests showed a wonderfully detailed image of the highest resolution that I had seen and the profile was perfectly neutral introducing no colour cast. I always print using the native resolution of the original capture.

The layout of the panel is clearly critical and needs to appear well balanced with lighter images at the top, darker at the bottom, side prints looking inward and some degree of symmetry around the centre image. In a general panel such as this images need to demonstrate a wide variety in choice of lens and viewpoint and subjects in non-static poses.

I have included three main images from the panel. I had been focused on the Galapagos Hawk sitting on its perch for some 45 minutes. It was now 1730 with sunset at 1800, the time





*Above: Male Great Frigatebird attracting female to nest. Darwin Bay, Genovesa
Nikon D2x ISO 400. 24-120mm f/3.5-f/5.6 at 24mm (26mm equivalent) f/8 at 1/1250 sec
Left: Galapagos Penguins courtship
Bartolome, Santiago. Nikon D2x ISO 400. 200-400mm f/4 at 260mm (390mm equivalent) f/8 at 1/2000 sec*



we had to be off the beach. At last it left its perch. The second image (above) was also the result of seeing the possibility, setting up for the shot and waiting. The male frigate bird tries to attract a mate to its nest by this display, inflating its courting pouch and shaking its wings. A female was eventually attracted to the nest and I got the shot. I am very pleased with the shot of the Galapagos penguins (left) showing human-like behaviour. It was taken with the 400mm lens, hand held in a panga (a small inflatable with an outboard motor) rising and falling some 3 feet in the surf by the rocks. The black and white penguins were on the black lava typical of the Galapagos; they had just mated when the male embraced the female. I was asked by the RPS if the panel could form the start of a library of F panels they hope to build for use as a reference and for display at workshops. I readily consented. This meant that I had to re-print the panel for my own use. I found that the original Pictorico material had been discontinued, its replacement, PictoricoPro Hi-Gloss White Film, has proved easier to use as it is thicker and does not kink so easily.

WEBWISE 2

with Dr David Cooke LRPS



As promised in the previous article in the Summer 2008 issue of DIGIT (No 38), a new topic on the DIGIT Forum has been created. This currently gives instructions on how to subscribe to podcasts using iTunes as well as the links given in the previous *Webwise* and in this one. If you've looked at any of these, please do make a comment on the Forum to let me know how useful (or not) you found them and let me have any suggestions for future links you'd like to see. You can currently find the Forum at:

<http://www.digit.rps.org/phpBB-3.0.1/phpBB3/>

The *Webwise* material is in the DIGIT Magazine area under Webwise. You'll need to register on the Forum to make comments and to contribute and you can do this by clicking on the Register button on the top right of the main Forum screen.

This time, I'd like to recommend two websites and a podcast:

Cambridge in colour

<http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/>

This site, run by Sean McHugh, contains some excellent low light and night images of Cambridge, taken whilst he was studying at the university, together with a number of very good tutorials covering the basics (cameras and imaging), tips and techniques (including colour management) and advanced topics (including understanding diffraction, camera sensors, HDR, tilt/shift lenses and photo stitching). It's well worth a look and hopefully you'll enjoy the images as well as learning something new about photography.

Another recommended Website is:

Photoeye <http://www.photoeye.com>

This is an American site based in Santa Fe, where there is a bookstore and gallery. The website has a number of interesting features including an on-line bookstore but I'm recommending it mainly for its on-line galleries. These are well worth exploring to see different types of images that you may find both interesting and inspiring. These include images from the current exhibition at the Santa Fe gallery and a photographers' showcase. Within the main gallery there is also a link to the Bistro

which is a sister site containing images from photographers throughout the world. 'To keep quality high', the site states that 'acceptance is based on a photographer's résumé or the power of their imagery.'

Focus Ring -<http://www.photocastnetwork.com/> or subscribe through iTunes

This podcast is a round table discussion between a varying group of three or four members of the Photocast Network who all run their own photography podcasts. It lasts for about an hour and covers topics chosen by each of the participants. The discussions are lively and informative covering the technical and artistic side of photography as well as discussing gear. I've found them interesting and I've learned a lot from them. I think they are well worth a listen.

They are also audio only so you can listen to them on an MP3 player. You can download MP3 versions of each episode directly from the Photocast Network site or subscribe using, for example, iTunes as described in the previous *Webwise* and on the DIGIT Forum.

Please let me know if you like the sites I've recommended here by commenting on the Forum or by email at d.f.cooke@open.ac.uk and please do recommend sites you've found interesting yourself so other members can share them.



Two further pictures from Bob Pearson's F Panel:
Left: Galapagos Sea Lions Surfing
Right: Land Iguana feeding



FROM WET NOVICE TO DIGITAL FELLOW

After a long while away from photography, rejoining a photo club and digital photography rekindled Phil Drake's enthusiasm and led to a Fellowship. Working mainly in monochrome he enjoys the control possible with the digital process to produce outstanding prints.



© 2005 Phil Drake

In the early 80s I decided that I would like to take better holiday snaps. The way to learn how was by joining a photographic club - that was what I thought clubs were for. Not knowing which club to join I luckily came across an article about a photographic exhibition by Richmond & Twickenham Photographic Society (R&TPS). I duly went to the exhibition and was amazed by what I saw; I didn't realise amateurs could produce work of such quality. I joined straightaway and my photographic adventures started.

To my eyes the best photographer in the club was Nobby Fry FRPS who was a well respected photographer. I went to Nobby whenever I wanted advice and he was a tremendous help; sadly he is no longer with us.

After two or three years Nobby said I should try for an ARPS, which I did - who am I to argue with him! The requirements for an Associate Panel were different in those days; not quite sure what they were but Nobby advised me on what my panel should be. I was mainly into

*Toned Monochrome:
Metal*

landscapes at that time so that's what over half of my images were. I should say that I was purely a monochrome worker and that the category was Pictorial, now called Visual Art. I was fortunate enough to be awarded my ARPS in 1984.

Shortly after this I began losing interest in photography and at the end of the 80s I left the club and didn't take another serious photograph for over twelve years.

It was New Year's Day 2001 and I was in our local garden centre and I bumped into a member of R&TPS, we got talking and he convinced me to re-join the club; he said they had a digital group, which seemed interesting. The club was not as big as when I left it but it still had over a hundred members and in the twelve years little else had changed.

Digital photography, especially the creation of a print, fascinated me. I had worked in the computer industry most of my life so I considered myself to be computer literate which helped but I knew nothing of Photoshop.



Cobbles

Adobe Bridge (a browser) and Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) but you can do more with it. I am told that there is somewhere in the region of a hundred ways to convert a colour image to B&W. I tend to use only two: Channel Mixer or Grayscale which is a feature within Lightroom.



As far as manipulation goes I have to confess that I do take minor things out, like litter on the street or the odd post. I have nothing against the highly manipulated image but it's not for me, probably because I don't have the imagination!

A golden rule, in photography, is you can do what you want but don't get caught. A good example of what I mean is the craze of over sharpening. I can never be accused of that because mostly I forget to sharpen at all! In all the adjustments I do, I try not to go over the top and therefore make it obvious as to what I've done. This also applies to the wet process, where over burning or dodging is obvious.

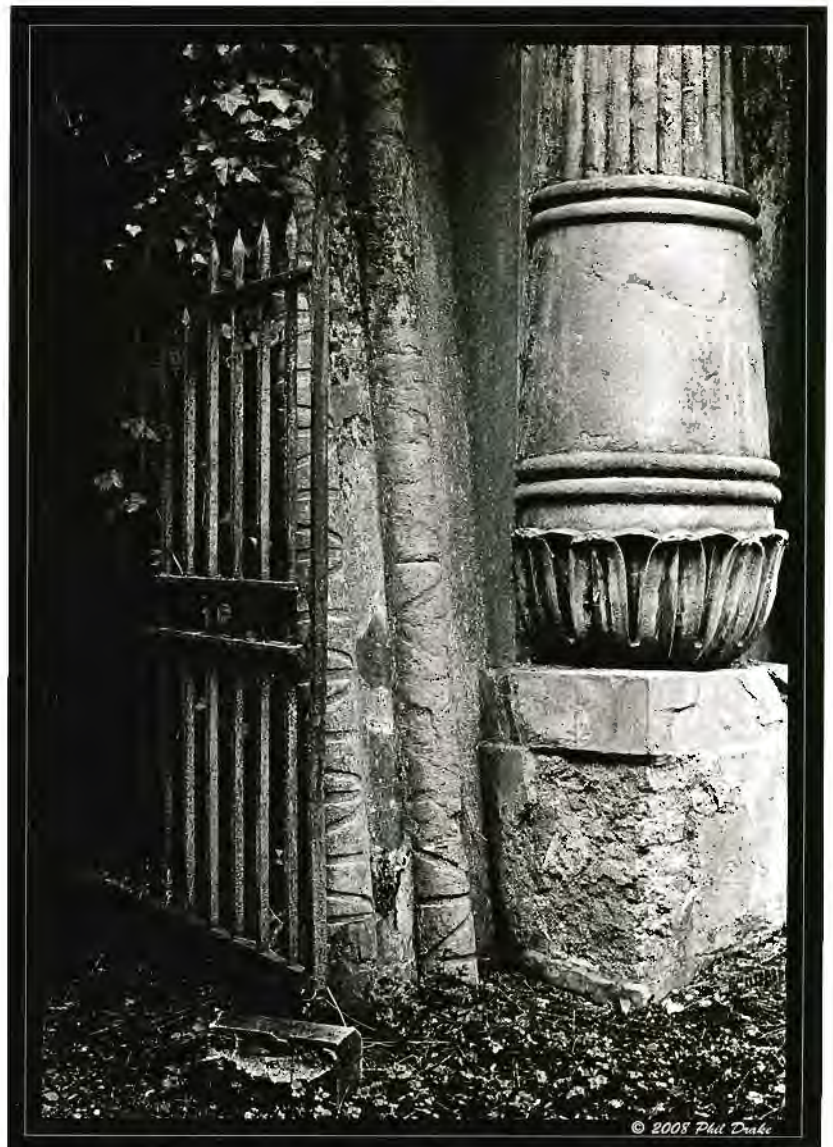
Gate

In my second stint, in photography, my interests

I decided to teach myself, and bought two books, one by the guru Bruce Fraser of Bruce RGB fame, and the other by the Greenbergs. I had retired from work so I decided to devote one hour a day, gradually working through the books, to teach myself Photoshop. This never happened. It wasn't one hour a day: I got so hooked on it, that I was spending seven hours a day on it! I am still spending a lot of time (too much) working with Photoshop, learning all the time but I don't consider myself an expert, far from it - in fact I have yet to meet an expert. Photoshop is such a huge subject that, as Bruce Fraser says in his book: 'There is nobody that knows everything about Photoshop, and that includes the people who wrote it.'

Initially, I stuck with film and scanned the negatives using a Nikon Coolscan but then went on to use a Digital SLR abandoning film forever; I could never go back to the darkroom. Although I enjoyed my years with the wet process, the bit I didn't enjoy was setting it all up and clearing it all away. Now you can work on the image and when you get tired you simply save it and continue when you feel like it - fantastic! The quality of equipment available today is unbelievable; there should be no excuse for work that is technically not up to scratch. People argue that a digital print is not up to the standard of the wet process but I can't see any difference and in fact the control you have with the digital process makes it possible, in many cases, to produce better prints.

My method of working is simple. I Import the images into Lightroom, work on the image to get it as good as I can and then continue in Photoshop. Lightroom is both a database and a Raw converter. It is a fantastic tool, similar to



PHIL DRAKE FRPS

changed. I no longer take mostly landscapes. Now I tend to take urban landscapes, still in B&W. They tend to be graphical images with lines, curves and shadows but looking back at my landscapes they also had the same features so maybe I haven't changed that much.

I didn't actually set out to get a Fellowship, it happened following a lecture given by Roger Reynolds at the club. I knew Roger from old, he was a member of R&TPS when I was first there and is an honorary member to this day. I asked him during the break if he would look at some of my pictures to see if they would be up to the required standard for a Fellowship. He agreed and so I took about thirty pictures to his house; he selected about fifteen as a basis of a panel and I had to produce another five.

Has digital made me a better photographer? The upside of digital is that I take and print many more photographs than I ever did with film and the old adage is true, the more you practice



© 2008 Phil Drake

*From Phil Drake's F Panel:
Above: 21st Century -
Shadows and Light
Below: Wood and Metal*

the better you get. The downside is that you get careless; I don't think I always put as much thought into taking a shot as I did with film but it's something I am working on to try and correct.

It took nine years for me to lose interest and my second stint of nine years is coming up soon, but I feel that this time I will still be taking pictures.



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MAXIMUM EXPOSURE! SHARING AV SEQUENCES

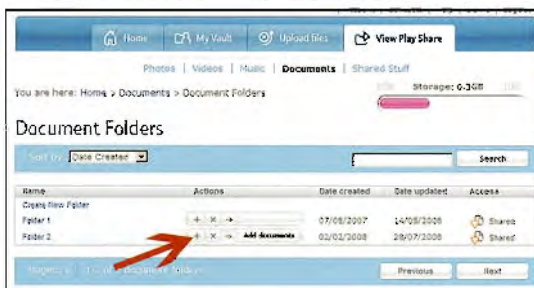
It's fun to make AV sequences - and even more fun to share them with family and friends whether to keep in touch or to receive the undoubted critical acclaim that you will enjoy for your masterpieces. But that usually means burning a CD and postage since most internet service providers do not allow large files to be sent as attachments. Whilst John Long ARPS, holder of the Society's prestigious Fenton Medal, has only been into Audio Visual presentations for about two years, it's no surprise that he has found a neat way of sharing his shows. Of course you can also send large photo files in just the same way. So here's how to get sharing - and it can be free!

Do you ever wish you could send an Audio Visual (AV) sequence or your holiday snaps to friends, but just can't go to the bother of creating a CD and mailing it to them? There is a range of easy solutions: for example, go to <http://digitalvault.bt.com>, a BT site where you can have space to store your photographs or AV sequences, create albums of pictures from your recent overseas trips, and share them with relatives and friends. Originally free there is now going to be a charge for this site but don't despair, there are free facilities available like www.mediafire.com although you have to put up with adverts.

For BT's Digital Vault click on *See how it works* where there are several how to videos to watch. Some people find the procedure a bit daunting at first but I am hopeful that by following the steps below you should be ready to go within a very short time with this site, or any other.

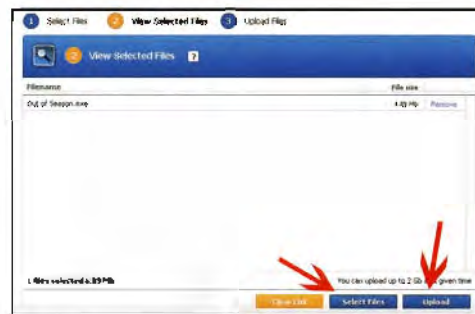
I am mainly concerned here with audio visual but all of the details apply equally for single or multiple picture albums.

After you've completed the registration process log in and create and name your first Folder where your files will be stored. Click on *DOCUMENTS*. This will take you to your personal Vault. Don't be tempted to click on *VIDEOS*, thinking this would be appropriate for AVs.



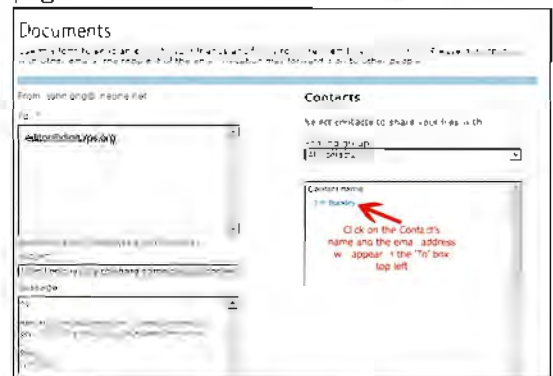
To upload a sequence, click on the plus sign(+) under *Actions*. The words *Add documents* will appear and you will move to the Add Documents page shown at the top of the next column. Now put a bullet in *Documents from this computer* = click *Next* and this will take you to

Upload Files to Document Folder. Click on *Select Files* AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MAIN WINDOW,



scrolling down if necessary. This will take you to your own computer and you can choose the sequence or files you wish to upload. Click on *UPLOAD* again at the bottom of the main window as shown in this screengrab to the left. It will upload and tell you when complete.

After your sequence has uploaded, you can return to your personal page using the back button. Now click on the arrow under *Actions*. The word *share* will appear and you will move to a page called *Documents* as shown below.



Type in the email address - here I've used the Editor's address. You can use the standard email message which is there, bottom left, for speed or insert your own. Finally, click on *Send invitations* which is at the bottom of the page.

You can also create lists of contacts to whom you wish to send your sequence by clicking on *Contacts* - which is in very small type at the very top of the page, above *View Play Share*. Follow the instructions to set this up then return to the *Documents* page, click on your contact's name, which will have appeared in the box on the right hand side. If it doesn't appear immediately, use your *Refresh Button*.

Several other websites offer the same facilities without a fee like www.mediafire.com so check out what's available.



WHAT IF?

**asks Gwynn Robinson FRPS as he argues that the Image is everything and urges us
Onward to New Heights – with the New Technologies.**

*Above:
Grand Canyon – Lytham
St Annes – A new Dawn*

Imagine that to capture a photograph all you had to do was aim a thin screen towards a scene and snap. It wouldn't matter about the composition or the focus or the depth of field or the exposure. All of that would be dealt with on the PC later on. Yes, every single aspect including final composition would be done later. Except for actually turning up, very little technical or artistic thought would be required. Could this 'snap and adjust later' approach be considered photography? Would this satisfy? Could it be worthwhile? Is it to be embraced or feared?

*Opposite below:
Guardian at the gate to
Heaven and Hell - To
Embrace the New?*

*Below: New Life - New
Thoughts.*

In some ways we are well down that track. Modern cameras of all types help the photographer far more than in the past. Greater dynamic range, autofocus, huge sensors, auto exposure. It may be at present possible to get

better results from using manual mode and knowing what you are doing but the gap in image quality between auto and manual use is closing rapidly. New software tools can recapture focus, sharpen, and all allow easier manipulation. It won't be long before aspects like depth of field will be added.

Real artists use paint brushes. It's messy - paint everywhere, water, thinners, canvasses, brushes, overalls etc. But what is it that drives them? Would they create their wonderful (sometimes) pieces of art if all they had to do was point their canvass towards a scene and it somehow magically appeared, but could be adjusted to suit later? Would that be art?

I have yet to meet an artist who had nothing to say about their world. Art IS about communication, expression and passion. It is also about seeing and vision. Seeing what is there and vision for what is not.

Some artists have broken free of the traditional confines of paint, clay, bronze, etc and will use anything to express themselves. For them the camera of the future would be a wonderful tool - freeing them to more easily create what they can see in their minds.

But of course there is a danger. If anyone can capture a 'scene' so easily so then everyone will start to do just that. Worse, many more will think that they are artists and professionals and bore us all to death. In an instant things will



have changed and the world will become flooded with dull, banal, lifeless, soulless, worthless, skill-less pictures. Is this good change or bad?

But what of the reverse? Imagine if Beethoven had never been given access to a piano (high tech for their day) or Mozart had never been given access to a violin? What if they had never been given the time and space to practice and learn the skills required? The world would have lost some incredible works of art.

Imagine the countless numbers of people who are not technically minded but who are artistically alive (but perhaps not aware). I believe that everyone is a form of artist, some more expressive than others. Some people are able to communicate, others are not so able. Some may be stuck because they cannot express themselves using the presently available tools. Perhaps too much skill (or the wrong type of skill) is required. Given a tool that can allow freedom from the technical minefield and allow easier expression, such people may find the door to their creativity opened wide. More decent works of art will result.

But what of the casual painters, photographers, artists? The ones who are not skilled, not aware and don't care. The ones who snap and click and use paint by numbers? Well, what of them? If our great new futuristic camera can free them to enjoy their creativity more, meagre as it might be, then so much the better.

There is no cure or help for the gadget freaks amongst us. The ones who just love the technical aspects. The ones who need the latest equipment and who are not too interested in the actual images. The ones who love to play and feel and caress the metal, plastic, leather, circuits, buttons, screens, etc. They may never delve into the art within them and may never create or appreciate great images that might be. Is it a loss? Perhaps not, if they are happy.

So our hyper-futuristic-camera seems to help all sides of our community and increase real works of art, let alone oil the gears of the economy. So why then do we seem to love the technology advances and hate what it does for us? We put down those who use modern technologies to express themselves more easily. It seems a complete contradiction of purpose. Is using a digital camera cheating? Does using a digital camera make me a fake?

Paint and canvasses are easily available now, in any colour or type that you could imagine. Do we decry the old egg based, hard to create and obtain paints? Are artists who use such modern paint technologies to be considered as fakes and their works as worthless? Modern paints last almost forever, whereas the older paints lose their colour and adhesion. Modern paints have a depth, vibrance and texture, whereas the older paints were weaker. Modern paints are far

easier to use – buy, thin, apply. In years gone by (and not that long ago either) artists would have to go and collect soft rocks, crush them, create an oil or egg emulsion, and apply immediately. To paint the next day they would have to go and make up some more paint.

In times gone past photographers (who were really experimentalists) would have had to make their own photographic plates and emulsions. The equipment was cumbersome and heavy. They would have had one shot at capturing an image per expensive 'memory card'/plate. They had to develop and 'print' the images by hand using some pretty dangerous chemicals. So it was expensive, difficult, time consuming and required a plethora of skills. Modern technology has stripped away the need for many of the older skills. The skills that got in the way of expressing the artists vision. The skills required to simply use the older, more primitive technology. But although capturing an image has been made far easier, other skills (like computer skills) are now required and, far more importantly, the skill of being able to see and vision – the skill of the artist – remains.

However, listen to the discussions, arguments, attitudes in your own photographic society, even in your own mind perhaps. Digital is the death of real photography! Digital has flooded society with watered down, pointless, brainless, drivel. Digital cameras have made photography available to anyone and everyone. Modern software allows ever more sophisticated post capture changes. The boundaries between pure photography and computer generated imagery blurs. I couldn't care less for such thoughts.

It doesn't matter what equipment or technology that you use or how much or how little you change an image on a computer. What matters is what you finally present and that it communicates your vision. It may require real skills, vision, thought and definitely technology of some sort (old or new). But in the end they dwindle into insignificance as it is the final image that counts. It is what you present and not how you got there that matters. The image will either fade or last, bore or inspire, say nothing or touch people. The expression is everything. Or as we photographers should say - The image is everything. **Onward to New Heights - with the New Technologies!**



Above: Ghosts - Photographers of old



Below: Onwards to New Heights - with the New Technologies



SHOOTING THE INVISIBLE

Chairman Clive Haynes FRPS on going the whole hog with digital IR capture



Abandoned Farm

In common with many photographers in this digital age, I spent my formative years using black & white film and darkroom-based techniques whilst also enjoying parallel activities with colour transparencies and audio-visual work.

My darkroom-based work caused me to experiment with infra-red film, notably Kodak High-Speed IR. I found the medium to be risky, wayward, constantly exciting and hugely unpredictable. There was all the business of loading the camera in the dark (using a changing bag on location), focussing, then, re-focussing to the red spot on the lens, fitting the opaque filter to the lens and guessing the exposure. Then back in the darkroom the film was processed using one's preferred developer and, subject to the usual oddities encountered with IR, a number of useable negatives resulted. All this gave a certain mystique to the adventure of capturing images in IR.

Infra-Red film has been around since about the 1930s – indeed, television pioneer John Logie Baird carried out experiments with an IR video system. The movie industry used IR to shoot 'day for night' to simulate moonlit scenes in black and white films. IR therefore has a long pedigree. The scientific community has long known of its properties for thermal imaging and 'serious photographers' have enjoyed its eerie and lyrical attributes, especially for landscape work.

When making the change to a digital camera system I realised that this was one aspect of film-based photography that I would indeed miss.

What is Infra-Red?

More detail is available on the Internet but in brief, visible light is a small part of the very wide electro-magnetic spectrum. As the words suggest, it's the part that human vision is able to

detect, and is further broken down into the spectrum of colours that we can readily identify from red, through orange and yellow, to green and so through blue, indigo and violet. Red is at the low-frequency end with corresponding longer wavelengths of light and blue at the high-frequency end with shorter wavelengths. Infra-red falls in the low-frequency section just beyond visible red. The wavelengths are measured in nanometres (nm) and for IR photography we're looking at something in the region of 700nm and longer.

When we record the world using IR we reveal how reflectivity from a variety of surfaces and objects differs from what we normally expect. For example, foliage and grasses become radiant and effervescent in appearance, whilst blue skies become near black and these special qualities lend themselves to pictorial expression. Naturally camera and lens manufacturers produce products to record visible light; however, in the good old days there was a recognition by lens makers that an indicator of the focus point for IR would be useful and the red dot appeared on lenses. Look for it on modern lenses and you'll be disappointed. The red dot was necessary as IR light, being at a longer wavelength, focussed beyond the focal-plane of the camera and the lens required a tweak to bring the scene back into sharpness.

Digital Cameras

Digital cameras using CCD and CMOS chips are sensitive to the near infra-red. To avoid corrupting the image an IR blocking filter is built into the camera body. The strength of the filter varies from make to make and model to model. It's possible to shoot IR on many cameras with such a filter by using a method similar to film. It's achieved by fitting an opaque filter and using a long exposure. Indeed I have done this but it lacks the speed and spontaneity of straight shooting, plus there are risks of fogging and flare.

Camera Conversion

I could have sought one of the few IR cameras available (at a price) which offer direct-viewing IR. However, I preferred to buy a DSLR camera and have it converted to dedicated IR use. I chose the Nikon D70 as both affordable and readily convertible. Kits are available for DIY conversion but I sent the body to a specialist, Advanced Camera Services of Watton, Norfolk for the task. They were efficient, friendly and helpful. In addition, the camera is both serviced and guaranteed. What does the conversion cost? Presently, around £200. What's also really useful is that the camera is carefully adjusted in such a way so that whilst IR is focussed upon the array, the viewfinder remains sharp. No refocussing is necessary: you can rely on what

Making a pre-set White Balance

Set the camera to measure the White Balance. In sunlight, point the camera to a patch of grass so that it completely fills the viewfinder. Defocus the image. Measure/set the white balance (Tip: You may need to under or over expose for this test to gain a setting) Save as a Custom Setting. Make the Custom Setting your normal White Balance I prefer to shoot with RAW files as they offer greater flexibility and control. However, if your camera permits simultaneous jpeg images to be recorded, then use the facility as the standard rendering of the IR image by jpeg often gives a pleasing split-tone result. This is visible both when inspecting the image in-camera and as a thumbnail via the computer file-browser and of course, in Bridge. It gives a useful indication about how the image could appear as a split-tone without Channel-Sw. pping.

you see and use auto-focus with no problem. One of the great things about the converted camera is the ability to see the IR result immediately after shooting, check the histogram and feel confident.

White Balance

I found that the key to success is to make a pre-set white balance for IR. The simple basic procedure is set out in the centre column on the facing page. You may need to adapt it for your own camera.

Channel-Swapping

This option will frequently give pleasing results and, as it's simple to do, it's worth using the option as part of the workflow. See the centre column alongside right for the details.

Image Noise

One of the attributes of IR film was its gritty, granular appearance and many considered this to be part of its attraction. DI IR will tend to be less granular; however, those seeking a noise-free result are likely, at the present stage of technology, to be disappointed. Some noise will be present. Cameras fitted with large sensors will exhibit less noise than those with smaller ones at the same pixel-count. Noise can be reduced by choosing a low ISO setting and reduced still further by a noise reduction filter at the RAW stage. Noise can



Channel Swapping

Open the selected image and go to Image> Adjustments>Channel Mixer. In the Channel Mixer dialogue box: with the Output Channel set RED, change the Red Source Channel to 0% and set the Blue Source Channel to 100%

Go to the BLUE Output Channel and change the Blue Source Channel to 0% and set the Red Source Channel to 100%. Click OK. At this stage the image may display a range of muted colours, depending upon the content of the scene.

Next, go to the image layer, Image> Adjustments>Auto-Levels (Yes, not something most of us would normally do I know but have faith; the purpose is to give a really useful boost in contrast.) Following Auto-Levels, the result is frequently of a pleasing tonal range, however, it is, of course, image-dependent: for example a scene including a blue sky and some clouds where Channel-Swapping will tend to give a result which offers a blue-shaded sky with the remaining areas represented by tones of peach, apricot, magenta and cool slate blues mapped over the grey-scale content.

At this point you can decide to work with the partially toned result or convert to monochrome, apply Curves, tone, whatever. However for some images the following additional tweaks may prove of service. Try Image> Adjustments>Auto Colour Image> Adjust>Auto Contrast. The above are naturally content and contrast dependent but sometimes they give that little extra. And such factors do inject an element of serendipity into the process – just like the old days really! It's an advantage to make an Action for the Channel Swap and Auto-Levels procedure as this will probably become the most frequent quick-process route for pleasing results for many subjects. Should you wish to view the image without the Channel-Swap then simply switch off the Channel Mixer Adjustment Layer. The image will now equate to the jpeg impression referred to earlier.

also be tackled in Photoshop or by using a separate noise-reduction program such as Neat Image. Conversely, for those wishing to emulate IR film, increase the ISO and, with care, underexpose slightly so that the image histogram is pushed a little to compensate during the workflow by adjusting Levels or Curves.

IR film also displayed a sometimes interesting (though at other times annoying) halation effect as light bounced off the film pressure-plate. This can be added to the DI IR image by careful application of blur and/or glow filters.

Hopefully I have whetted your appetite and that these few images will indicate the riches that are out there - awaiting discovery in the invisible spectrum. And for those who enjoy an element of uncertainty in their photography, the serendipity factor hasn't been entirely eliminated by DI Camera IR - and something of the excitement the old days remains.

More information about Advanced Camera Services can be found at: www.advancedcameraservices.co.uk or phone: 01953 889324. My website offers more information about IR so visit: www.crhfoto.co.uk and in the next issue of DIGIT I'll go into more detail on channel swapping with examples.



Clockwise: Dark Monolith; Summer Meadow; Mellie Cascade; Llangorse and the Black Mountains; and Worcester Cathedral

NEW ZEALAND WITH A NIKON D300

Wendy and Graham Whistler enjoyed an extended trip to New Zealand at the start of the year spending January in the North Island and February in the South Island. On the way out from the UK they also spent two weeks over Christmas in Australia where they spent a day photographing the delights of Sydney with fellow DI committee member Tony Healy ARPS.



*The Kingston Flyer
Dr Wendy Whistler
S End of Lake Wakatipu,
S Island. Nikon D70S*



*The Maui Motor Home
at Mt Cook, South Island*

We flew into Auckland in North Island New Zealand and picked up our motor home from Maui. We booked a 4 berth giving us more room for a two month stay, well worth the modest extra cost. We hoped the motor home would give flexibility to see the country and not tie us down to a series of fixed hotel bookings. Camp sites were first class and easy to book ahead, almost on a day by day basis. We used *Top 10 Holiday Parks* who have a great network of good sites all over NZ. All parks are to a known high standard with fully contained self-catering units and cabins, to motor-home and tent sites. January is the main holiday season so it can be busy with NZ families. Some sites were busy but there was plenty of room for all.

Flying out over Christmas means top rates for air fares. February-March would give savings in cost and still plenty of good weather. Main roads are good between major centres and traffic remarkably low. Remote areas have little or no traffic and some dirt roads. The motor home

has major advantages, with all you need on board, so wilderness areas are not out of bounds. Our 2.2 VW diesel powered motor home was slow on the roads but, with a national speed limit of 60 mph, was well able to keep up with the modest traffic. We drove nearly 4000 miles in our two months. Fuel cost compared with the UK were low and filling up every 400 miles cost about £25! In more remote areas fuel stops can be over 100 miles apart. Food is good quality and local with modern supermarkets in most towns. NZ wine is great: we drank the odd bottle or two!

My choice of equipment was easy having used the Nikon D200 with the amazing 18-200mm lens on my trip to India. Wendy also has Nikon's 18-200mm lens on her Nikon 70S. With the HD V1 Sony Camera for filming railways I only had room for one SLR plus lens. The D300 proved to be a good upgrade from the D200. Focusing is much improved, even in low light. High ISO, even 1000 plus, give remarkably little noise. Most of the time light was good so 200 ISO was set as



standard with *cloudy white balance*. I tend to work with shutter priority and matrix metering. After tests I found exposure to be very consistent but a minus 0.3 exposure factor was used most of the time. I worry about burnt out highlights with mountains, lakes and snow but this proved to be another area of improvement comparing results from older Nikon DSLRs. With nearly 1500 RAW NEF images taken on the trip few needed exposure correction in Nikon Capture NX. I had my laptop on board so was able to download images most nights. I also used a portable 120gig USB mini drive so backed up all images to that before formatting my CF cards. The mini drive stayed in my pocket with my passport while travelling so even if the laptop was stolen or damaged my images were safe.

I find the enlarged rear LCD a big improvement over the D200 but it is still hard to see images in very bright sun. By keeping the 18-200mm lens on camera all the time I had no dust problems and to date still have not tried the built in cleaner. The D300 build quality is robust and sealing is of a high order against dust and water. Even with rain and dirt roads the camera survived.

New Zealand is famous for its outstanding

scenery, friendly people and uncrowded roads, with a total population of under 4 million -2.7 million in North Island and less than 1 million in South Island. We flew into Auckland, picked up our pre-booked motor home from a site near the airport and set off to explore. We found the forest areas amazing with the giant Kauri Trees, night walks, and even seeing a wild Kiwi. Unlike Australia there are no poisonous snakes or animals but watch out for midges! The Kauri gum diggers museum at Matakohē gives a good insight into the early days of settlement. We enjoyed the many bays and inlets. 90 Mile Beach and Cape Reinga in the extreme North are worth seeing. A day by boat exploring The Bay of Islands was well worth while.

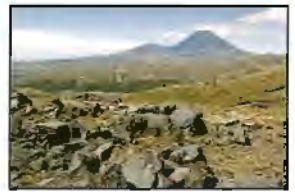
Further South are the thermal areas but we thought Rotorua was one of the few places in New Zealand that was over developed and packed with tourists. South of Rotorua is the Central Plateau and volcanic region, including Mt Ngauruhoe, 'Mt Doom' from the Lord of the Rings film. Many of the film locations are marked on the NZ road atlas and there are plenty all over both islands.

We found Wellington an interesting city and enjoyed a few days there before our ferry crossed the Cook Straits to Picton in South Island. The crossing can be rough but we were lucky and had a fine day. The long sound into Picton is beautiful.

South Island has far less people and by February the school holidays were over so we often had nearly deserted roads. South Island also has amazing beaches but is dominated by the dramatic Southern Alps running from North to South in the West. The plains to the East are mainly farming with cattle starting to overtake sheep farming. We drove to Greymouth in the West and the rain came in hard!



Left: Moeraki Boulders (East Coast S Island)



Above: Mt Ngauruhoe, Central Volcanic Plateau N Island. In the film Lord of the Rings this was Mt Doom.



Mt Cook Region, rain storms!

GRAHAM WHISTLER FRPS AND DR WENDY WHISTLER

We did the Trans Alpine Rail Trip from Greymouth to Christchurch and return, a highlight for my railway filming. It was a rain out both ways! We saw little of the dramatic views. Locals said: *Great to see the rain; first we've had for weeks!* Rain continued all the way down the West Coast hiding many of the famous mountain views and glaciers. Crossing the Alps via Haast Pass to Wanaka bought much improved weather.

We had several very rewarding days in Omarama but Mt Cook only showed itself from heavy cloud for two hours. The Fiordland region in the South West of the island is dramatic and our trip to Milford Sound gave us some of our best weather. The Kingston Flyer steam railway at the South end of lake Wakatipu gave me some super HD footage that will go in my next railway DVD - steam and mountains in super weather with a high speed 'chase the train' in a laden motor home!

Clean rivers coloured by glacial melt-water flow in all directions from the alps with some of the finest trout fishing in the world. South Island is a dramatic place and the coastal towns in the east are interesting. The Blue Penguin Colony at Oamaru with night viewing as they come home is a great experience. Regrettably no photography is allowed as flash would upset them.

There is much to see and do and we think a month for each island is about right. I could have done better with my photography since we were unlucky with the weather some of the time but it was a super trip and we would go again. We returned our motor home to Christchurch and flew home after an eventful and worthwhile holiday.



*Mount Cook, Southern Alps
South Island*



*Sand Dunes,
North Island near
90 mile Beach*



*Huka Falls near Lake
Taupo, North Island.*