

DIGIT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP
Number 75 2017 Issue 4

Upcoming DIG events



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



SOUTH EAST CENTRE

Pat Broad & Hugh Milsom
MOSTLY LANDSCAPES

Polina Plotnikova
FLOWER PORTRAITS and
STILL LIFE

Sunday 14 January 2018 ~ Halland, East Sussex



THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Tony Worobiec FRPS
LANDSCAPE WHATEVER
THE WEATHER +
NIGHT & LOW LIGHT
PHOTOGRAPHY

Sunday 21 January 2018 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire



THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Vanda Ralevska
THE EXPERIENCE OF
CREATING IMAGES
& TIME TO STAND
AND STARE

Sunday 18 February 2018 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire



THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Tim Pile FIPF MPAGB EFIAP/g
HAVE I GOT
NUDES FOR YOU
& JOURNEY TO MY
FELLOWSHIP

Sunday 25 March 2018 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire



SOUTH EAST CENTRE

Margaret Salisbury FRPS
&
John Herlinger~Fotospeed

CAPTURE TO PRINT

Sunday 8 April 2018 ~ Maidstone, Kent



THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

PRESENTATIONS
& LEN DEELEY
MEMORIAL TROPHY
PDI COMPETITION
Judge Jim Pascoe ARPS

Sunday 22 April 2018 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire



THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Matt Parry
TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY
Building a portfolio,
technique, ethics
and workflow

Sunday 20 May 2018 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire



WESTERN CENTRE

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

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

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DIG Committee

Janet Haines ARPS (Chair)
digchair@rps.org

Janet Davies ARPS (Secretary)
digsecretary@rps.org

Lynda Simpson LRPS (Treasurer)
digtreasurer@rps.org

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

Marilyn Taylor ARPS (Exhibitions)
digexhibitions@rps.org

Rex Waygood (Membership)
rex_waygood@mac.com

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

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

Mike Oakes (External Events)
DIGevents@rps.org

Co-opted

Gary Beaton (DIGIT Editor)
digiteditor@rps.org

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

Eric Begbie LRPS

DIG Centre Organisers

South Eastern
Bruce Broughton
07482 275811
digse@rps.org

Eastern
Mark Gillett
mark_gillett@icloud.com

Scotland
Dave Hunt
0131 445 3004
digscotland@rps.org

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

Thames Valley
Alan Bousefield ARPS
01494 764 975
digthamesvalley@rps.org

Western
Sheila Haycox
sah2@live.co.uk

North West
Malcolm Blackburn
01298 812 233
mblackburn@redseats.net

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From the chair

Janet Haines ARPS



It struck me the other day that we live in the 'now' but one second later that 'now' is the past. We can look backwards, and seem to often do so; we can plan forward, but without the surety that it will transpire exactly as we envisage. Relating that to our photography, we take our shots in the 'now' but they instantly become our past, even before we have processed them. However well we plan a shot it is highly unlikely to be precisely as we planned - the light changes or the model doesn't stand quite as you wished, any number of slight modifications. So photography echoes our life situation with the one difference - someone else can experience our 'now' moment again when they view our image for the first time.

Viewing other peoples' work is therefore important in more ways than one. It allows us to see a 'now' moment with fresh eyes, but bringing to that moment our personal life experiences and interpretations. No two people will ever see the same image in the same way. Therefore, however well panels of assessors, selectors or a judge have been briefed there will and can never be uniformity of opinion. So next time you feel critical of a judge just remember what they see and comment on will naturally be different from your experience.

Another reason to view other people's work is to take your 'life view' and consider each image and how it impacts on you. Whether good or bad, you learn from viewing others' work. Maybe it will inspire you emotionally, challenge you technically, or even leave you cold - you will learn. You learn what works for you and what doesn't. All those little moments start to help you to develop your own style.

So do take time and enjoy a few 'now' moments by enjoying this latest issue of DIGIT and the accompanying Projected Image Competition catalogue that is packed full of members work. Like or loathe an image, you are constantly learning from that exposure to the work of others and, given an open mind, your own work will grow and develop.

Do give others the opportunity to view your work at every opportunity you can. This is mutually beneficial as they get to test their opinions by what you produce and you get to gain in confidence in having others view your work. With the annual DIG Print Exhibition now open for entries you would be guaranteed getting one of your prints into our travelling exhibition. How good would that feel to not only have your 'now' moment on the wall but to know others can view and appreciate your work, possibly even influencing their own?

Editorial

Gary Beaton



As Janet has mentioned, when we look at other peoples' work we gain an opportunity to try to understand the photographer's intent - to see his or her 'now' moment. Sometimes we may be able to discuss the image with the photographer, but more often not. As I compile each issue of DIGIT I also get the opportunity to view a wide variety different images, and often to discuss their work directly with the photographer. This is, perhaps, the most rewarding aspect of my role as editor. In this issue I have drawn together an eclectic selection of work and, as ever, learned a great deal along the way from our varied contributors. I hope you enjoy and are equally inspired by this issue's reading.



Pastel Moments



Pictorial photographer IRENE FROY will be sharing some of her experiences and photographs at the AGM in March. Here is a quick glimpse at some of the images that she has created during her travels.

We are delighted, and very fortunate, to announce that Irene Froy will be joining us at our AGM on Sunday 4th March 2018 to make a one-off special presentation to the Group and will also be part of the selection panel for the annual Print Exhibition. Irene describes herself as a pictorial photographer, with a leaning towards landscape, but has an interest in all types of photography. Although she claims that 'age is catching her up' she continues to lecture occasionally at local clubs and societies (a professional driver takes her to and from the venue as her previous driver, husband Gerry, at 86 no longer enjoys driving

in the dark). Irene also offers popular all-day Photoshop workshops based at her local club Wrekin Arts Photographic Club in Wellington, Telford. And amid all of this she manages to fit in travels during which she captures images to illustrate her lectures.

For many years she has concentrated on interpreting the landscape and villages of France, using delicate colour and soft images to convey the mood. In the last year Irene has been collecting images of autumn in the Pennines and Scotland, a few from the Lakes in February and

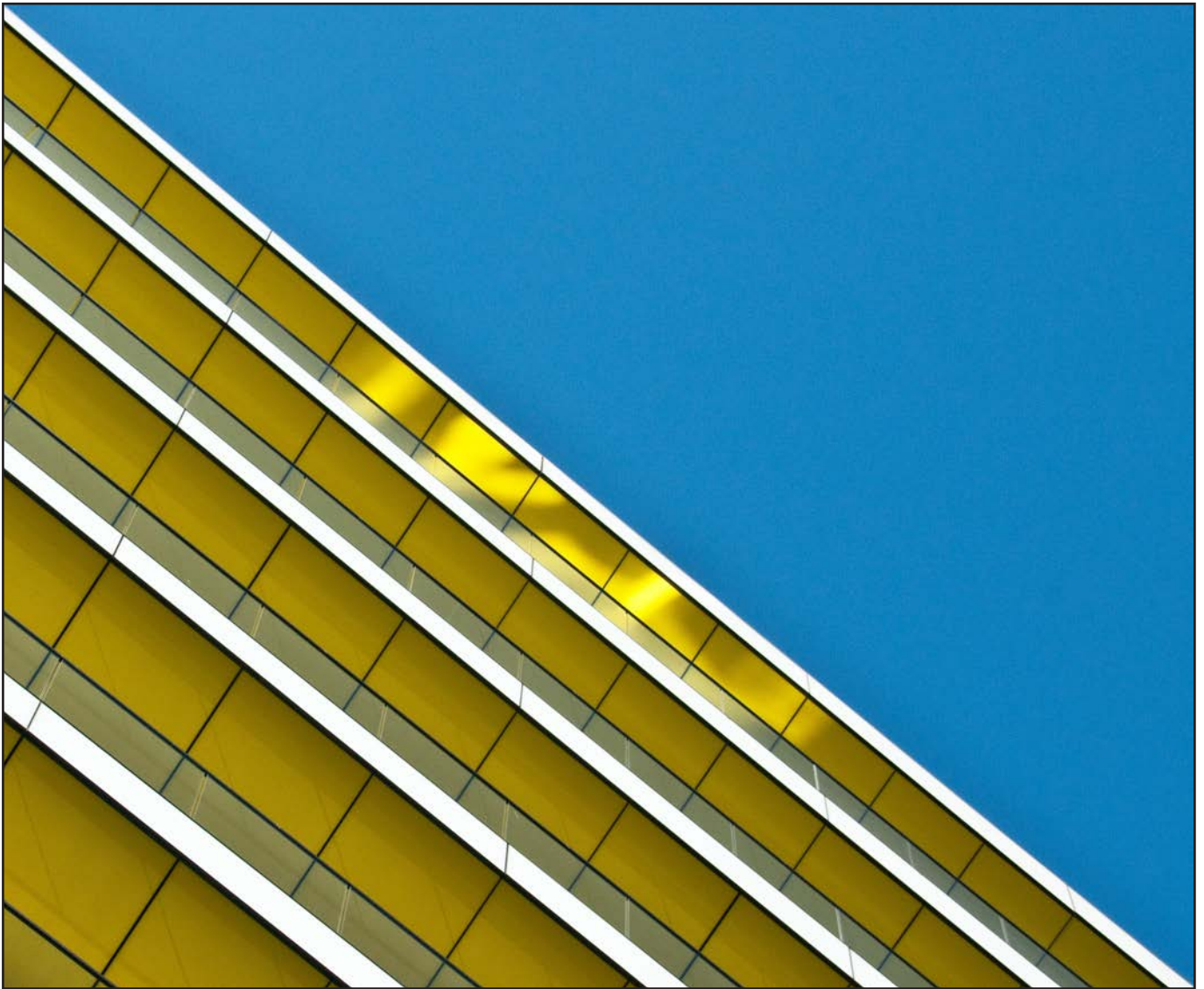


early summer in Donegal, Ireland.

Irene cannot imagine a life without photography - it is a passion which is as strong today as when she first started aged 12. She says that she has a compulsion to take and show pictures and although she appreciates all types of photography, her main interest is in landscape and the seashore, and corners of villages in France. Irene is definitely not a city girl, being at her happiest in the countryside with her camera on her tripod. Her enthusiasm for photography is

still infectious.

Join Irene and other DIG members at the AGM to be held on Sunday 4th March 2018 at The Old School House, Smethwick Photographic Society Club Rooms, Oldbury, West Midlands and enjoy a very special presentation where Irene will combine her latest work with some from previous years to share with us and discuss how she achieves them. She will call this special compilation *Pastel Moments*.



Just add colour and form



JACK BOLTON ARPS gets back to basics when he thinks about the inspiration for his photographic style.

When I was asked to write an article for DIGIT, it was only after I'd got over the initial question - why me? - that panic really set in. What on earth was I going to write about? Clearly, I was going to have to say something about my photographs, but what?

Well, people sometimes tell me that they can spot my photos a mile off: as well as featuring recurring subjects - architecture mostly - there's a certain

style to them. So, I thought that maybe I should write about that: what is this style; what were my influences, if any; is there an underlying aim; do I have any techniques that I use repeatedly?

All right, let me begin by asking which, if any, photographers have influenced you?

A few years ago, I attended an introductory digital photography course at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and this question was

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put to the participants in the opening session. What surprised me was that most of my fellow participants could reel off a list of names, whereas I struggled a bit. It wasn't that I didn't admire the work of any number of photographers: rather that I wasn't conscious of their having had any clear influence on the kind of photography that I do.

Then again, when forced to think about it, I'd say that I've been influenced by painters rather than photographers - specifically these four:

Piet Mondrian, Dutch pioneer of abstract art 1872-1944;

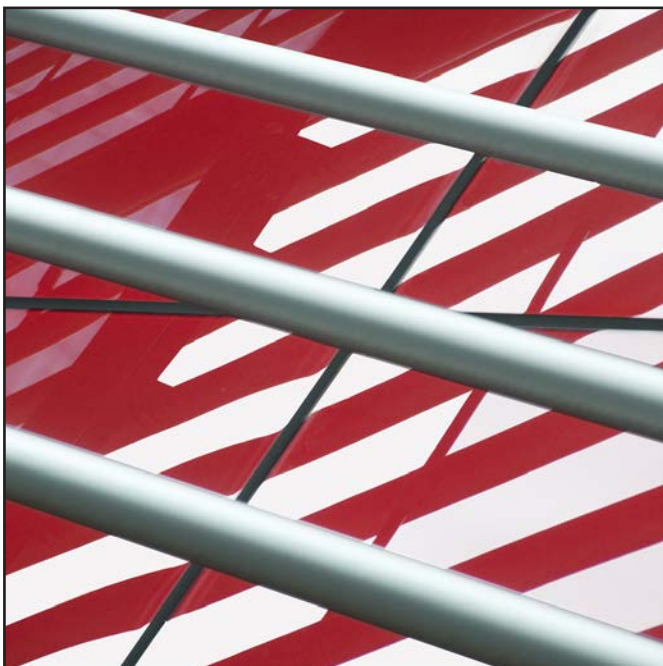
M. C. Escher, another Dutch artist, specialist in impossible geometric creations, 1898-1972;

David Hockney, perhaps the greatest living British artist, 1937-; and

Edward Hopper, American realist painter 1882-1967.

How have they influenced me? Well, Mondrian was interested in pure composition. He started out with, say, a street scene, and then took out all the elements that were representational: a house became a two-dimensional block of colour; the tree behind the house, and the sky behind that became further blocks of colour - and so on. In this way, he ended up with the familiar grids enclosing brightly coloured squares and rectangles.

I'm interested in abstract compositions in which the representational element is minimised. I'm also drawn to strong lines and vibrant blocks of colour. So far, so Mondrian - maybe.



As to Escher, I'm drawn to geometry in art, and to ambiguity. Escher combined these elements brilliantly - a staircase that continued to climb around the four sides of a square, but ended up at the level at which it started.

And then I love the light, the colour and the simple graphic quality of many of David Hockney's paintings - particularly some he did in, and of, California - 'A Bigger Splash' etc.

Finally, Edward Hopper: his best-known work is both representational and figurative, but there is often a pared-down quality, emphasising composition and, especially, light. In fact, some of his architectural pictures consist largely of a building - or just a wall - with a shaft of light on it, the detail of the subject being secondary to the light. I often try to get a similar effect.

Having said all that, I should be clear that I didn't set out to copy any of the artists mentioned, and it's only when I force myself to think about influences that I start to detect them.

So, on to aims. The only time I really set out with a photographic aim was when I was trying to put together an Associateship panel. Grappling with my 'statement of intent', I managed to come up with a whole sentence; here's what I wrote:

For these shots - all taken close to the centre of London - I have ignored some of the city's more obvious features and looked instead for simple geometry and blocks of colour, with the aim of producing poster-like, often largely abstract, images.

Even this was probably overstating things. The truth is that it was only after taking most of the photographs in my panel that I thought about what I was trying to achieve. I know that many people would prefer to start with a clear aim - and I think this is probably a good idea - but, so far at least, it isn't how I've worked.

Hmm, how about techniques? I'm sure I must have some.

It maybe isn't a 'technique' exactly, but I use - mostly - a telephoto lens (Nikon 18-200mm). I can't get close to a lot of the architectural details that I like to photograph (often close to the roofline), so I need to be able to zoom in. Also, I can't really see some of my subjects properly with the naked eye, so I do a lot of my looking through the lens, zoomed in at 200mm, or thereabouts. Does everyone do this? I don't know. (Incidentally, I've tried longer focal lengths, but I don't think they give me much more for my purposes.)

Of course, I try to find interesting angles, although, for some subjects, I find I have a preference for shooting absolutely square-on - producing, essentially a flat image, with little or no perspective (shades of Mondrian again, perhaps).

But I confess to doing a lot of manipulation in Photoshop. I have CS4 (bought outright at a time when you still could), and I have Topaz and Vertus Fluid Mask plug-ins.

I use Topaz both to bring out details (I haven't used any other sharpening for years) and to simplify, and Vertus makes masking easier compared to CS4's built-in tools.

But, using the before and after shots of Overhang

2 (see below) as an illustration, you'll see the kind of shots I take, the sorts of adjustments I make, and just how liberally I've used Photoshop in this instance.

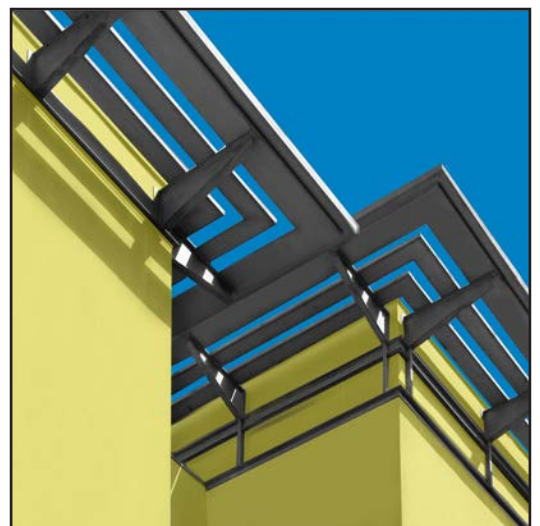
With Overhang 2, I was attracted to the zig-zag of the overhang itself and the light and shadows, but felt that the colours were rather dull, and I didn't want the window. So, I set about trying to cut out the dull bits, adding some brighter colours, and generally tidying it up. I won't attempt to explain everything I did (I can't remember all of it, in any case), but I will mention two things that were critical in achieving the final result.

The first was the creation of solid colours that could be added as a layer, but also re-sized and partially masked or cut out. Solid colour layers added in the normal way in Photoshop can't be edited like this (as far as I know). So, when I need a block of colour that I can edit, I create a new, blank image in Photoshop (File\New), add a solid colour layer (in the usual way), flatten the layers and save the result to a file. For some time now, I have, for instance, had a file called Tuscan Blue that I created in this way (the colour was sampled originally from a shot of Tuscan sky). The resulting file can be added as a layer to another image (I open both files, select Window\Float all in Windows, and then use the move tool to overlay my colour file), and this layer - unlike a regular solid colour layer - can be edited as if it were a normal image.

The second crucial 'trick' in this example was the use of the Polygonal Lasso Tool, both to cut the sections of solid colour to shape and to remove sections of the original image to reveal those colours. Although I frequently use masking -

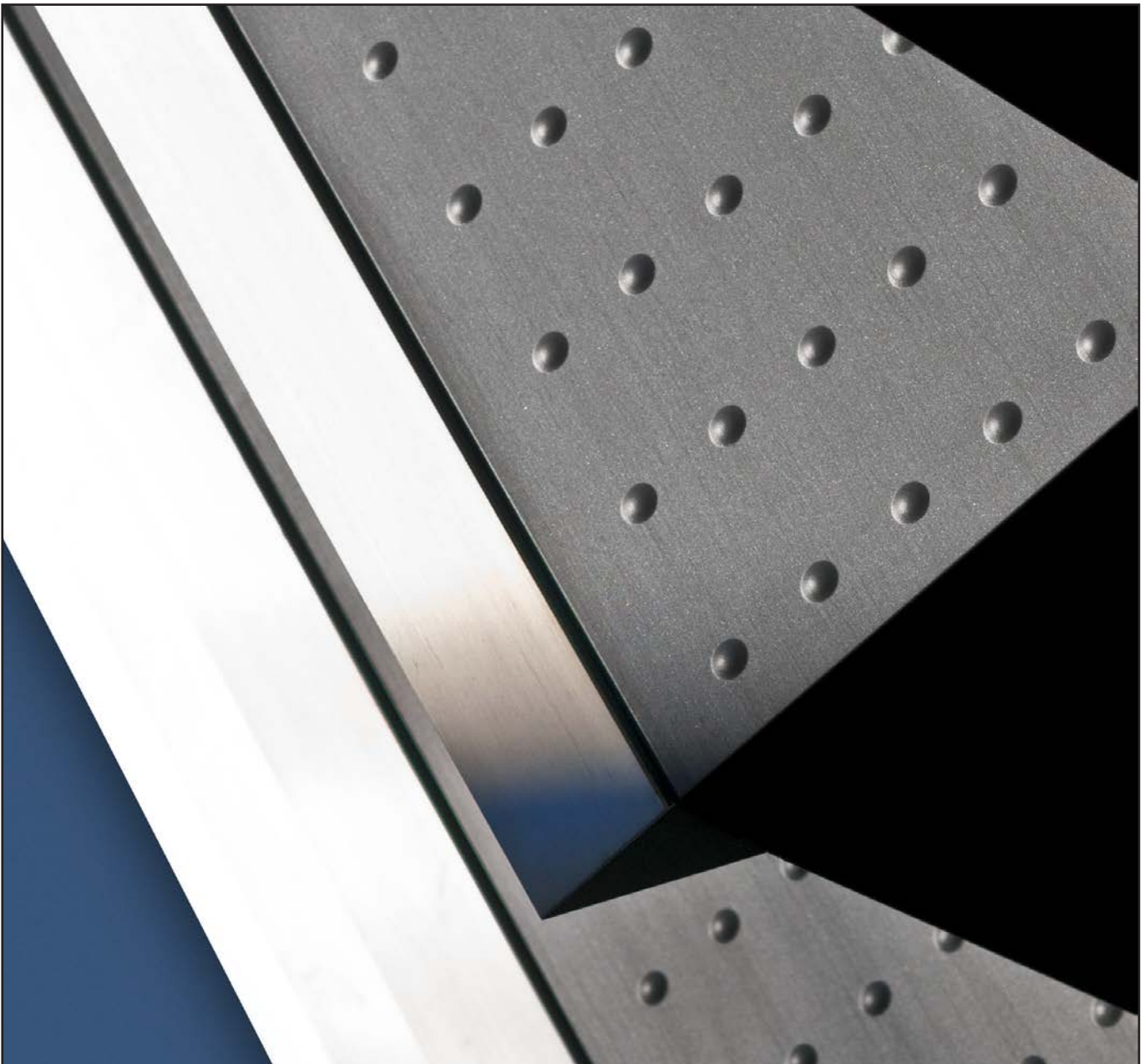
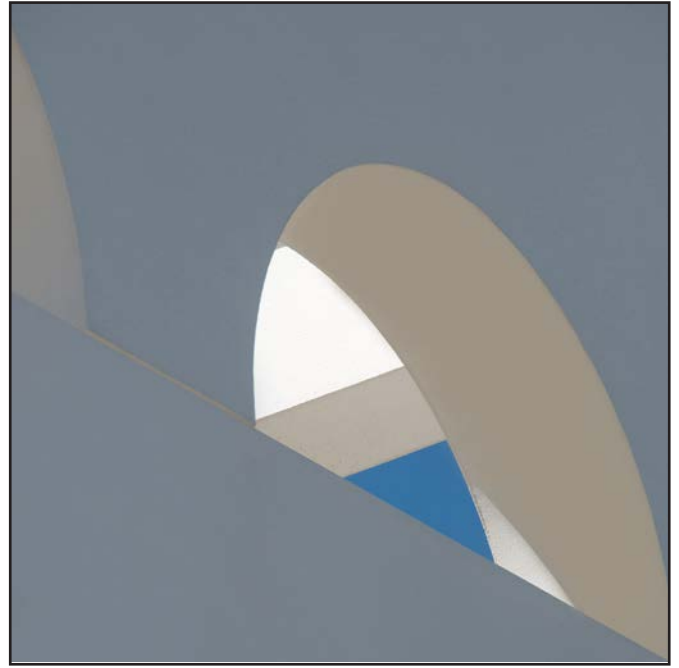


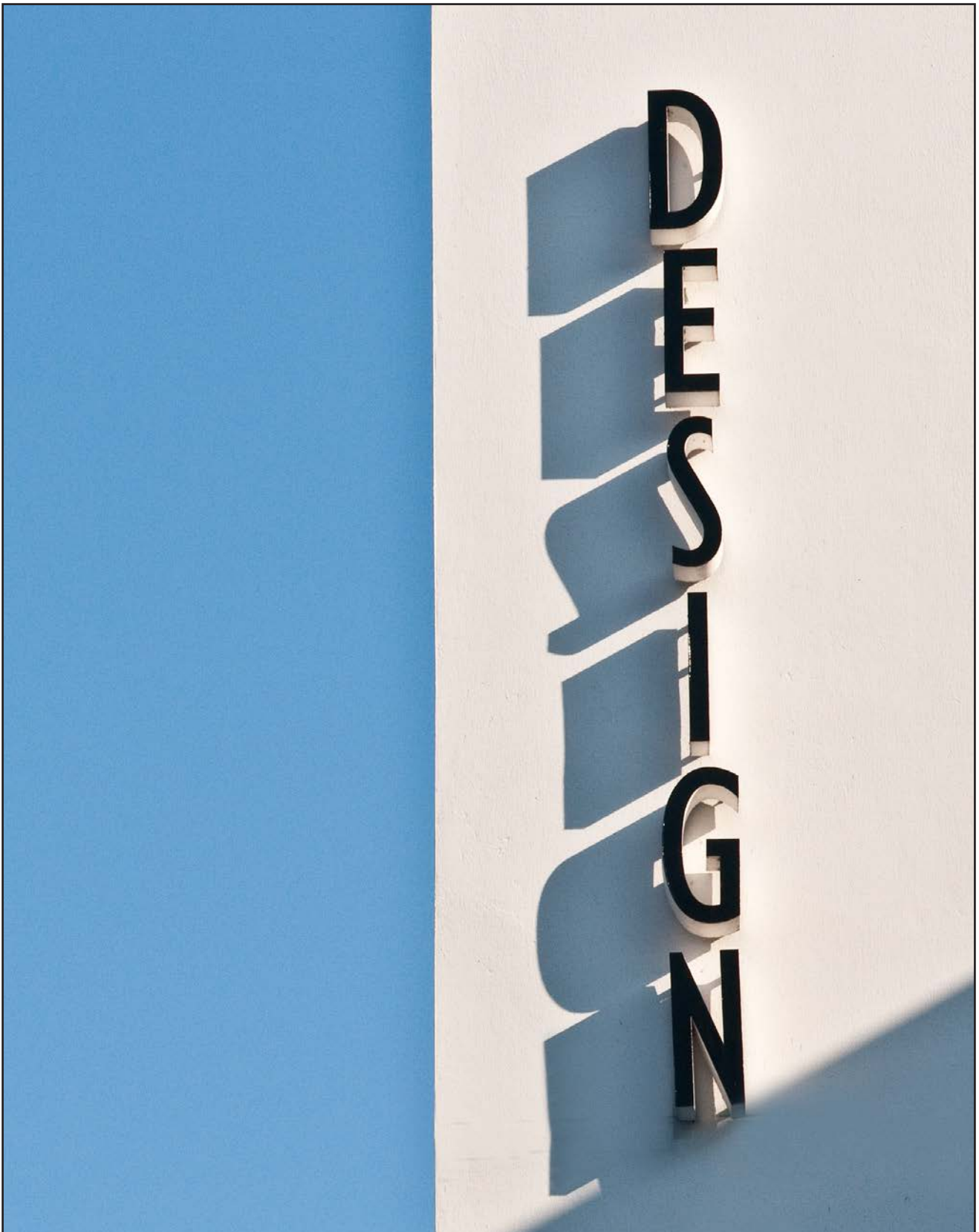
Overhang 2 - as shot



Overhang 2 - final image

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including the Vertus plug-in, I like the fact that the lasso tool can give me a very precise cut with clean lines - useful if I'm trying to emphasise geometry, and vital in this case to cut along the lines of the overhang itself.

My other favourite Photoshop feature is Edit\ Transform\Skew. If I can't get the geometry right in camera, I can sometimes correct with a crop,

but, if not, skewing is usually the answer (or, very occasionally, warping). I might skew the whole image, or just a part of it, selected using the lasso tool (again); I know I did a partial correction like this on Overhang 2, following comments when I showed this shot on the Digital Imaging Forum.

Does all this add up to a distinctive approach? Well, I'll let you judge.



Adventures with pipe organ and camera



GWYNN T ROBINSON FRPS shows us that perseverance pays off, whether it's photography or playing a pipe organ.

I am a composer, self-taught, using my own methodology. Composing brings me great joy. I have managed to move from knowing nothing at all to playing keyboard in a local worship group and on, to my great joy, also playing the pipe organ at a local church – St Annes-on-Sea Baptist Church. The pipe organ that I play (pictured above) is called 'The Peace Organ'

How did this all come about and what has it to do with photography?

Both are a passion for me but from different perspectives. My passion with the pipe organ is its wonderful layered sounds and the hymns. My passion with photography is the wonderful light, contrasts, colours and scenes. But the most important aspect for me in both is the story they can tell and emotions that they can stir. Both can transform me (and others) to completely different worlds. Worlds of inspiration, delight, wonder,

beauty, awe, sadness, pain, desolation. Worlds of deep meaning and feeling. It is 'the story' that I need to create (or appreciate).

Let's start at the beginning. I began my photographic journey knowing pretty much nothing. I did plenty of research but the best advice I received was from a local camera store. I had a long chat to the store expert (they existed then) and purchased my first camera system. A Nikon D1H, a general Nikon 24-120 lens, a sturdy Manfrotto tripod, a flash gun and some IBM Microdrives - memory.

Why such a top end camera to start with? I have discovered over the years that better equipment generally makes everything much easier to achieve. But there is a price to pay, the learning curve can be very steep. Now, I use a Nikon D4 and it has enabled me to capture excellent images from the most demanding of

ADVENTURES WITH PIPE ORGAN AND CAMERA



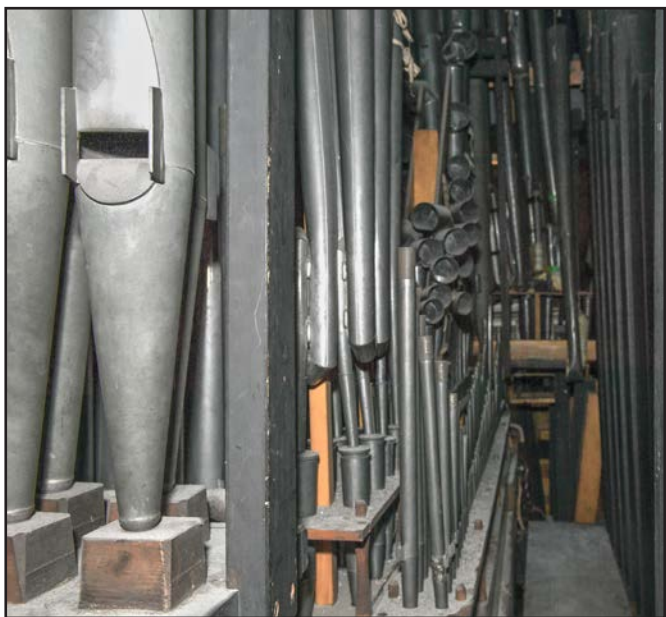
The three manual organ that I play

circumstances. All of the organ images in this article were taken using the D4.

I joined a local camera club and started to learn about photography. I also turned my attention to the RPS accreditations as a way of improvement, recognition and enjoyment.

Many years ago (when I was about 8 years old) I often watched in awe our music teacher playing the most beautiful music on the school church pipe organ and eventually I asked him if I could learn to play it. His response was "No, it would be too difficult" and from that one response my dream was quashed - until recently, some fifty-ish years later.

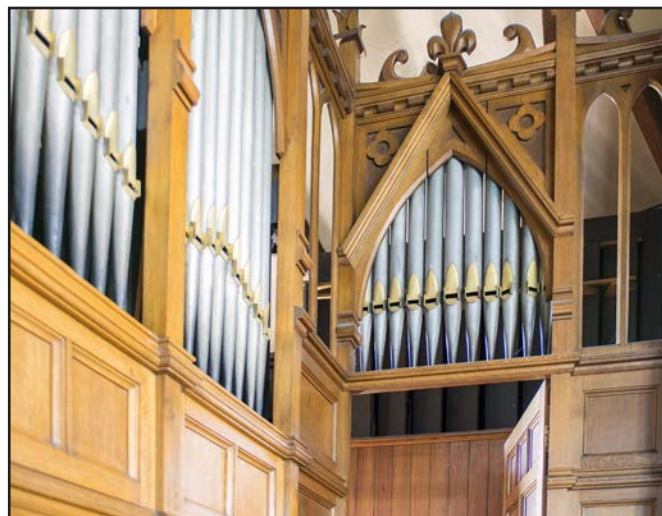
My dream was rekindled at first on a digital keyboard. There I was at a church service and I watched the keyboard player. What he did seemed so simple and yet so effective. So I asked him if he would teach me. He said "Yes", a lifelong friendship ensued, and I started on a wonderful new journey of learning. I wasn't very good at



The deep, dark insides of part of the pipe organ

first, far from it. In fact the first chords that I tried I found so difficult it was impossible to recognise any tune I tried to play. Was I put off? No. I just tried harder, practicing for hours and hours each day.

My first attempt at an RPS accreditation, the LRPS, was almost killed in its tracks. A so called expert from the camera club told me that I was nowhere near good enough to succeed. It was very discouraging. I talked to some very helpful people at the RPS and got a good idea of what was required, and then tried to aim higher. My entry passed and I was delighted.



The public face of the organ pipes

I practiced songs on the keyboard for hours and hours every single day. Eventually I became reasonably skilful and was invited to join a local worship group. I was so nervous at first, but the experience made me grow and I enjoyed every part of it. If I had said "No" then that journey would have come to a grinding halt there and then. 'Yes' is a powerful word and the journey that can ensue can lead to unexpected and wonderful places.

The only rule that I apply to everything is to say 'yes' and to try and ensure that all that I do is artistic, personal, full of feeling, harms no one, and helps others where possible.

My lack of keeping to the photographic 'rules' brought me into direct conflict at the camera club. Digital was in its infancy and the fight between film and digital was centre stage. And there I was, a newish member, breaking all the rules and worse, manipulating images. However, I used my unique position and understanding to teach as many as I could the joy and freedom of using Photoshop.

ADVENTURES WITH PIPE ORGAN AND CAMERA



Some of the inner wooden pipes

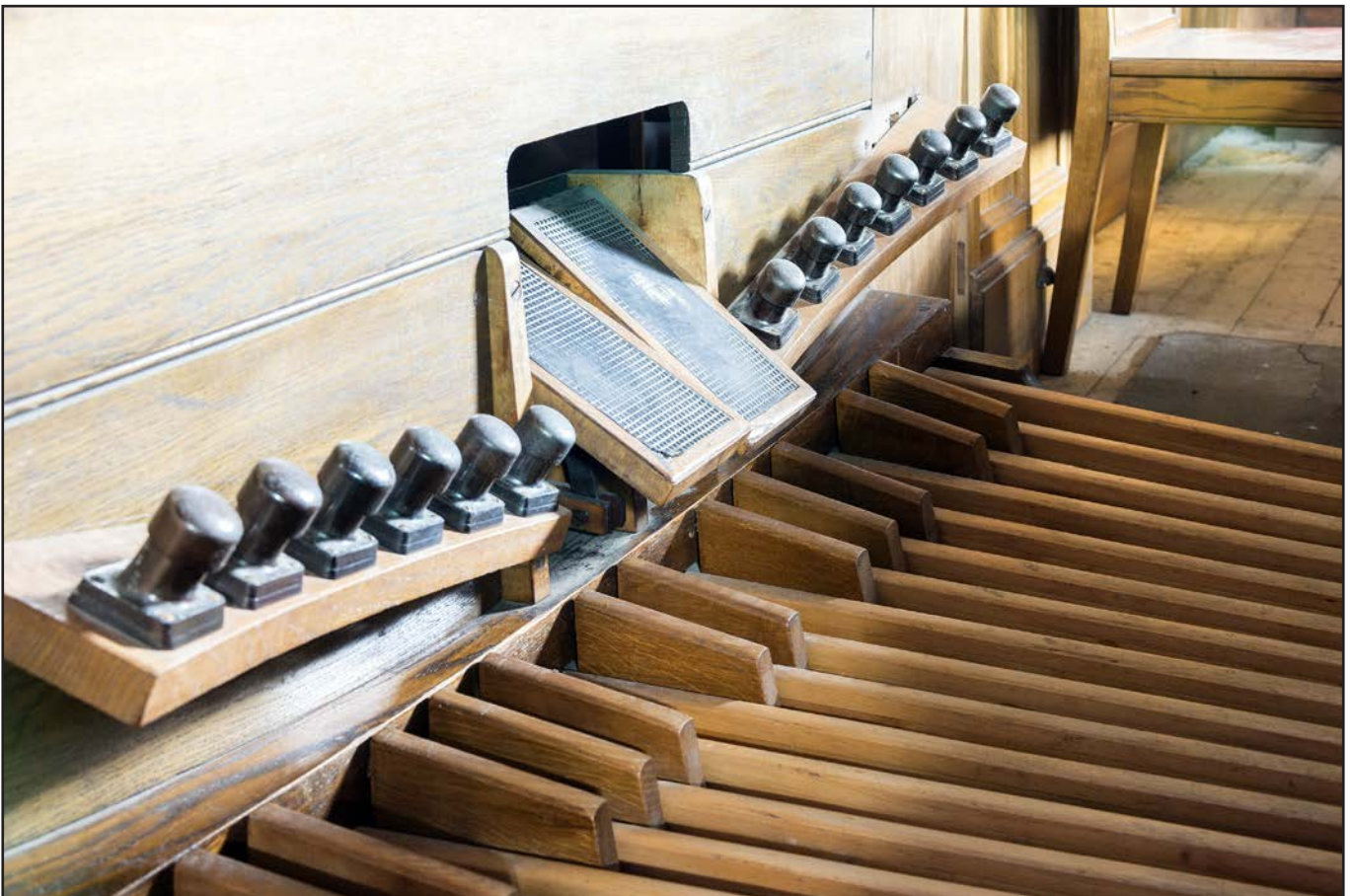
Photoshop was a real blessing for me because it forced me to aim for the highest quality that I could at all stages of adjustment and manipulation, and it was so much fun. But again the learning curve for Photoshop is quite steep. Eventually I became skilful enough to be able to do almost anything with an image.

I decided to go for the ARPS accreditation and was again told I was nowhere near ready. I decided to try anyway. I noticed that a local mansion was being demolished and there were no boards or fences to keep me out so I had pretty much free reign on the site as they battered the

beautiful old building to death. In fact, that was the theme of my entry 'Death of a Princess'. I spent weeks, in all weathers and lighting conditions, photographing all aspects of the demolition, and it was there that I really learned how to use my camera and how to tell a story through the compositions. My ARPS entry passed. My panel was liked so much by the RPS that they kept it back as an example for their tuition days.

More recently I joined a local church and immediately asked the minister if I could play their pipe organ (the one illustrated here). Of course, I had no clue how to play it but I knew that it must be possible. Others have managed it. He said "Yes" without hesitation. And so I launched into a new journey. I had to work out how to play the instrument. It is not the same as a keyboard. There is no sustain pedal for one thing, requiring a completely different playing technique - legato. There are foot pedals too, lots of stops and couplers, adding more layers of complexity and beauty. As if that isn't enough there are two volume pedals too; one for the swell box and one for the choir box.

My first efforts were not so good, but I enjoyed it anyway, but, after many years of neglect, and



The wooden pedal-board and volume 'pedals'

ADVENTURES WITH PIPE ORGAN AND CAMERA

then suddenly being played, the organ blew up. Well, rather, it petered out and died. I called the organ restorers in to repair it, and from that encounter I learned so much and made new friends. Together we fixed it.

ARPS over, I turned my attention to the seemingly impossible, the FRPS. Yet, again I was discouraged from attempting it. And again, not deterred, I succeeded. This time going all out with abstracted concepts and manipulation.

So it is easy, yes? No. A huge amount of effort and practice, recognising the requirements and learning the required skills was required.

The secret to making the pipe organ sound interesting is to use many of its different sounds, to vary the volume and to use the foot pedals. The pedals add a completely new dimension.

I practice the pipe organ at least two hours a day. However I have progressed to an acceptable level and I have recently been asked to play at a church service. A real privilege and a surprise after only a few weeks of learning from scratch. This was only possible because someone said "Yes", I then worked out what was required, did huge amounts

of practice, believed that I could do what was required and I was blessed with the skills needed. As my photographic adventure progressed I became a photographic judge, travelling the country and developing a better, more consistent method of judging. I took every opportunity to encourage entrants and club members to develop their skills and to become able to say 'yes' to new challenges. I met some really great characters along the way too.

What is the point of all of this. My most important word for anyone to carry with them is the word 'Yet'. I cannot do it 'YET', whether it is photography, playing a keyboard, or a pipe organ, or any other new challenge, or even an old challenge dropped because of discouragement. 'Yet' means I will master the skills required, with practice, and learning. It means I have the desire and determination. It means I will find the way even if it means ignoring the accepted rules and creating my own. It means expressing my inner self. It means freedom. It means joy.

Don't believe the detractors and discouragers. See your own potential.





Crafton Underwood, Northants.

Max Green

My Digital Journey



MAX GREEN LRPS uses software to produce timeless images of our surroundings or to push the boundaries of what digital imaging can offer.

Photography is like life, a journey; like life it has its good and bad times. I was a confirmed slide user for many years and then went on an evening photography course at Northampton College. I found out I liked darkroom work, which I thought I would hate, bought my own enlarger, built a darkroom in a cloakroom in our cottage, joined the local camera club and learned a lot. I then went on a City and Guilds course at Northampton College and gained my LRPS.

I was a subscriber to *Mono Magazine* and *Digital Photo Art*, which I took for many years. They were both superb magazines that had a big influence on my photographic thinking.

We bought an old refurbished computer to produce and run a local art festival for our village church. I had not got a clue about computers and it was a steep learning curve even to produce a catalogue for an exhibition.

Anyway I bought my first digital camera, a little

Fuji with a fixed focus lens - £200, a high price in the 90s - to find out what it was all about. In the meantime I had learnt how to print my pictures from film by having them put on a CD and also acquired a scanning accessory for my Canon printer.

I retired in 2002, bought a better digital camera, a 4MP Olympus zoom, and started my digital journey. When *Digital Photo Art Magazine* sadly came to an end, a website and forum was set up for all those that had been a part of it or in my case took the magazine on a subscription basis.

This was where I gained a lot of help when I first tried producing digital photo art pictures; I call them that to differentiate between a straight image only given the usual editing, and what I produce.

I started on a project to record the villages of Northamptonshire and others close by. I added a little digital enhancement to many of these which

I enjoyed doing and it met with approval from the many who came to view two of the one-man exhibitions I have held at a local art gallery.

Software

The software I used then was buZZ, which I liked very much, but it won't work on more modern computers. Topaz do a version of it in Simplify but you have to spend some time getting the effect near to the original.

I also remove all yellow lines, TV aerials and modern day clutter, to try and create a timeless quality to my images of local scenes.

The arrival of Topaz Impressions further enhanced my software armoury. It's quite graphics hungry and works on my Mac, but not in Bootcamp Windows 7 on the same computer. My favourites in Topaz software are Simplify, Detail, Clarity, Impressions, and Adjust.

Recently I have been experimenting with



Lady's Lane, Mears Ashby, Northants.

Max Green

Lady's Lane, Mears Ashby, Northampton, Northamptonshire



Safe Moorings, Stoke Bruerne.

Max Green LRPS

Stoke Bruerne, Northants. Topaz Impressions, Pencil sketch and then some of the detail brought back

different mixes of Topaz software, perhaps using the simplifier before opening in Impressions.

The permutations are endless and no specific group of settings work in the same way on another file, so I cannot say "I do this and then that" because it's pure experimentation. I always start off in Lightroom and then Open a copy in Elements 11, I then do all my cloning and tidy up the image and save it in Lightroom. I then open a new TIFF file in my Topaz Software so I can always go back to the fully sorted straight copy if I need to, which can be quite common if I don't like where I am going with the image. You can always use the straight copy to add more detail, I think I did this in the window boxes on the image Lady's Lane (bottom of previous page) by copying and pasting and using a layer mask to remove surplus parts.

Hardware

Over the years I have used a variety of computers, a Sony VAIO with Windows XP was super and I used an old version of Photoshop on it. Then an upgrade to a Mac mini with an HP

monitor, Lightroom and Elements Eleven.

I've used most of Topaz's software, the free download of Silver Efex and a lesser known program called Fotosketcher (try it, it's good fun and might get you hooked).

I have not upgraded my Mac from Mountain Lion, which works with all my software and Printers Canon A4 and A3. But instead I run Sierra on a separate external drive. I make my own Printer Profiles with Color Munki Photo.

I use the painting options in Topaz Impressions but find they do not show up well in small prints. Something that can look good in an A3 print is very difficult to see on a tablet or phone, and I have to enlarge it on my monitor sometimes to see the full effect. This is why my recent pictures have been a bit more radical in my software deployment as I think the point was often missed before.

Cameras

Back to cameras. My next purchase after the Olympus was a Sony H1. Which I loved and still



Waiting for the sales.

Max Green LRPS

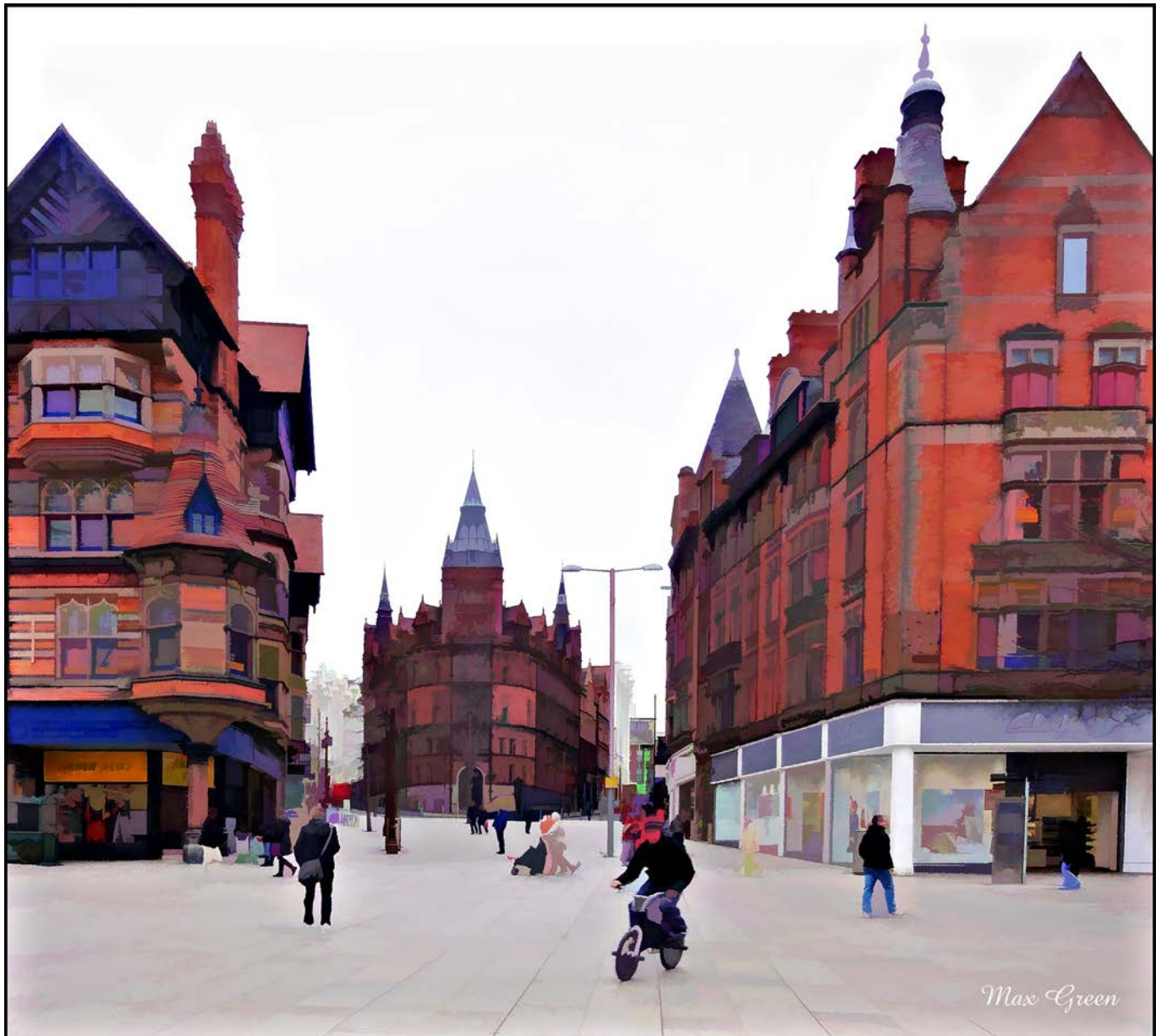
MY DIGITAL JOURNEY

own - superzoom and, I think, almost the ideal camera certainly at the time of purchase.

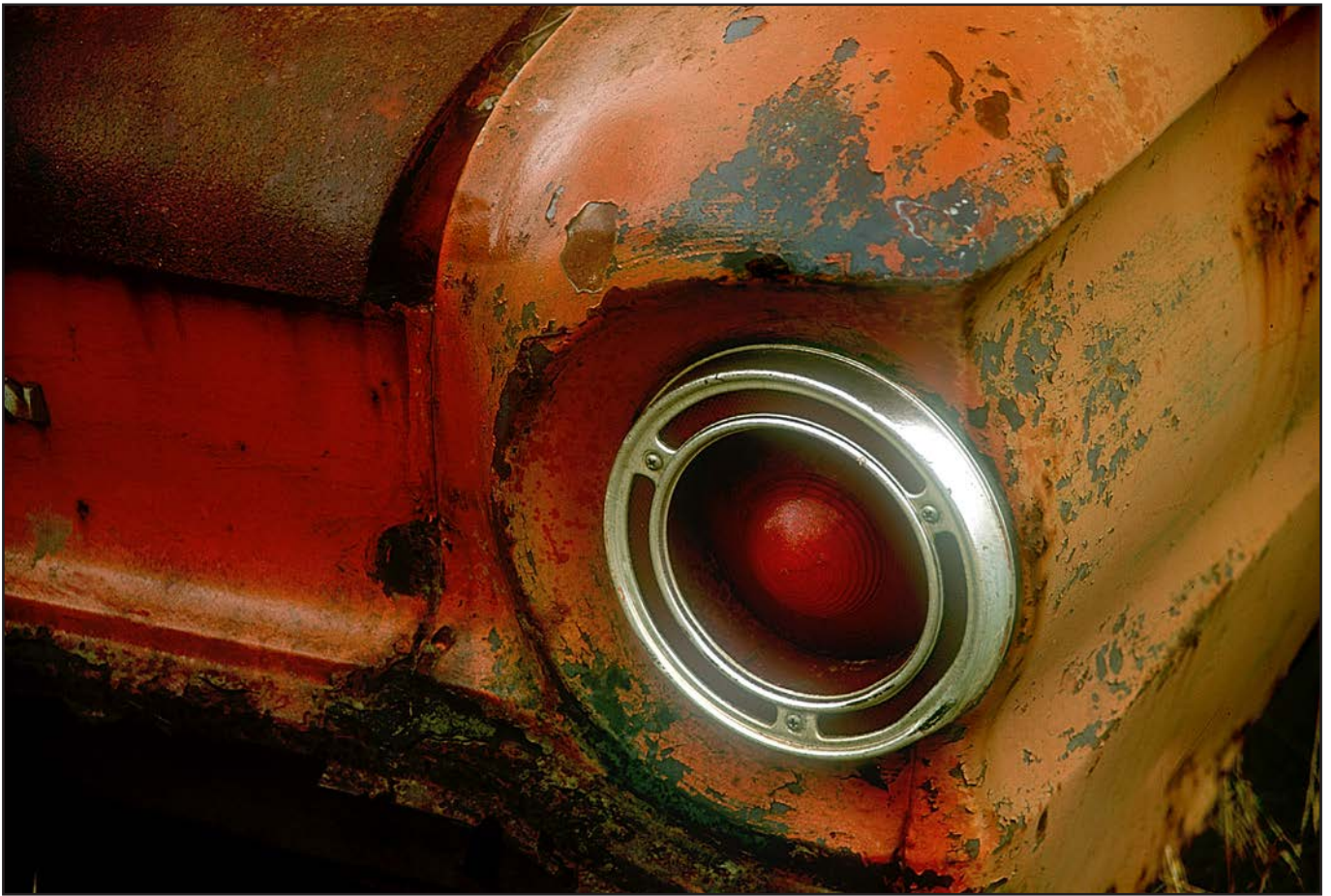
I then bought an Olympus digital SLR, got the lenses I required, loved using it, and still continued to use the Sony at times. The Olympus was great but tended to blow highlights, something I learnt to cope with in RAW. I was about to update the body when I heard Olympus were changing direction and lens mount, so very quickly traded in before this was common knowledge, and acquired a new Nikon D5000. It's a super camera and I still use it, mainly for my flower pictures (another of my favourite subjects), but I have a love of small, light cameras. I was on the point of upgrading to a new body for my Nikon, or a new Fuji; it's not easy now, like it used

to be, to pop into your local camera shop and look at a prospective purchase and to handle what you fancy. Anyway a trip to Milton Keynes to look at what, on paper, were my two ideals, ended with the purchase of a Sony α 6000, two lenses, now joined by a wide angle purchased at the Photo Show. Sony once again has provided my ideal camera, small and compact, but not so small as to be fiddly, and it offers stunning definition for ordinary images.

I hope you enjoy reading this, digital imaging offers many alternative ways of enjoying your images. Whilst I enjoy making these manipulations, others, I know, prefer a straight photograph. But the Digital Imaging Group is also here to push the boundaries, and why not!



Something that reminded me of L.S.Lowry but in a modern context, this was done in Simplify, the building were stretched upwards slightly to heighten the bizarre appearance.



Any Old Iron



MIKE FELDMAN FRPS has been taking photographs for over 65 years. Here he shows us the photographic treasures in what many of us would dismiss as a junkyard.

I am a retired optometrist who has always had a keen interest in photography. I joined the Camera Club of Johannesburg which was founded in 1935 to advance the art of photography, which it still does to this day.

I achieved my Fellowship in 1970 and remain active in photography. I am a Fellow of the Photographic Society of South Africa, an Honorary Life Member of the Camera Club of Johannesburg and a former Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Bensusan Museum of Photography. I am also a 5 Star Exhibitor with the Photographic Society of America. I have had numerous one-man exhibitions and I have participated in many group exhibitions.

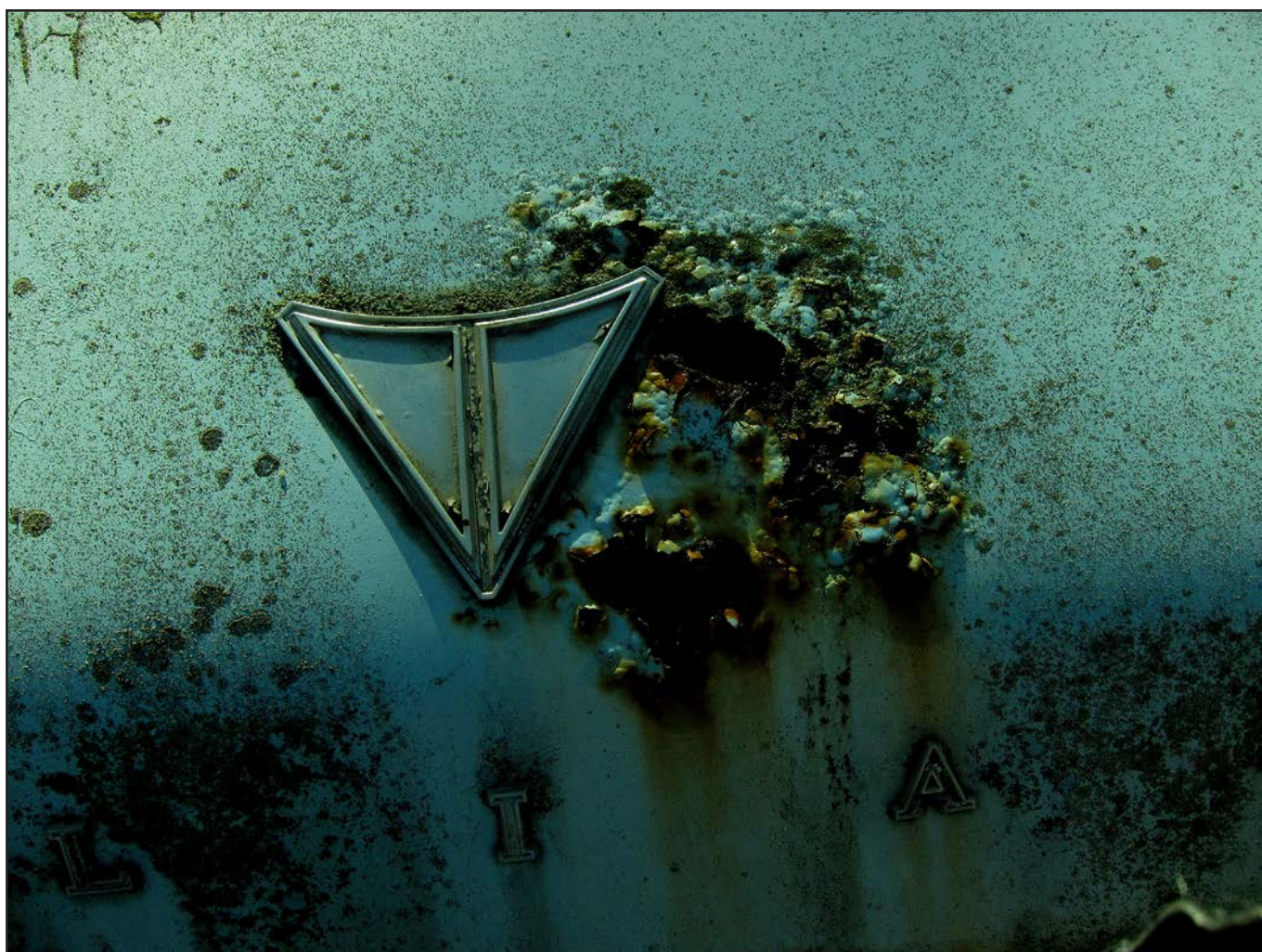
My best photography has been when I have found

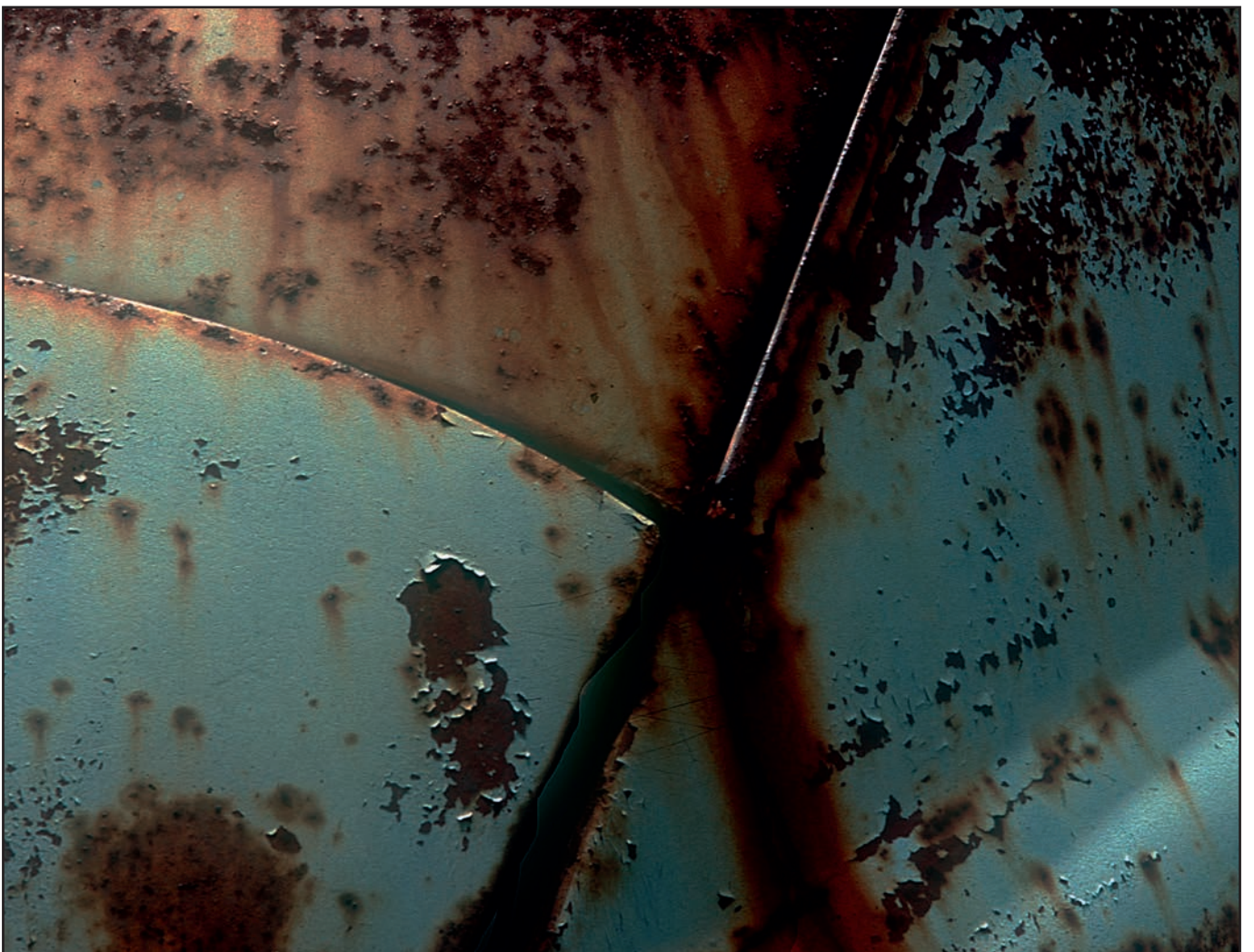
a subject to explore fully. For instance, in 1980 I had an exhibition of blurred photographs, utilising Vaseline and a cylinder.

A few years ago I came across a motor car museum outside Cape Town. They had cars under cover for hire, and in the open a graveyard of old cars that had been subjected to some 70 years of weathering. I took a number of close up photographs and a few combinations which were successful. A few years ago the Visual Arts section published a number of these images.

On a subsequent visit I realised there were more photographic possibilities and the rust and disintegration of the paint resulted in many abstract images. There was colour, texture, composition and patina. On my third visit I

ANY OLD IRON







looked for possibilities to create multiples. This was a very exciting period, and many of the combinations seemed to belong together. Many others were frustrating and I discarded them.

In September 2017 I had an exhibition of these straight and multiple images which were well received. These photographs indicate an inherent industrial decay and an impermanence.

The advent of digital photography released me from the darkroom and enabled me to work on the computer at my convenience. It was now easier to review and enhance when necessary and I am also able to experiment more creatively.

I am now 92 years old and my mobility is somewhat restricted. Consequently I tend to work with images from my collection.



Aurora over Lake Myvatn, northern Iceland

Shooting stars



IAN THOMPSON ARPS continues his guide to shooting after dark. In this issue he focuses on capturing celestial bodies and phenomena above us.

Following on from the last issue, I'm hoping that you've been experimenting with the possibilities offered by photography on the dark side. This time, I'll concentrate on stars and aurorae and explain some of the techniques you might like to try. We'll start with some generalities ...

Without wishing to over-state the obvious, the main consideration with night sky photography is that there isn't so much light flying about. This demands that we take more control over our cameras and some of the things that can help achieve good results are:

- Use fully manual settings for everything: ISO, focusing, shutter speed and aperture. Your camera in auto-anything mode will likely make a mess of something - or even everything - in these 'off-piste' conditions.
- Always shoot in RAW to take advantage of the best image quality available from your sensor: this is important so as to be able to retain maximum detail in the shadows which will dominate your pictures.
- Disregard white balance settings which, because you are working with RAW images, can be set appropriately in post-processing.
- Go for the lowest ISO number you can afford in order to gain the best possible performance from your sensor, having regard to the maximum shutter speed you have chosen for your subject matter.

SHOOTING STARS

- Take test shots and view them on your camera: this will allow you to home-in on the best settings for a particular subject.
- For your shutter speeds, you are likely to find that most cameras will offer a maximum of 30 secs in manual mode. This may well be long enough for a lot of your work but if you need a longer shutter-open period, you will need to use 'B' or 'Bulb' mode, having attached a remote shutter release to your camera, either direct-wired or radio based.
- If you are 'star- or aurora-snapping' allow at least 20 minutes for your eyes to acclimatise to the darkness, and avoid looking at bright things like a smartphone! If you need a light to see what you're doing, use a low-power red source. I use a smartphone to display a screen of 'red' created in my image editor.

Now that you are fully prepared, on to the practical stuff ...

Stars

If you wish to capture, say, a sharp image of the Milky Way as it rises above some interesting artefact in a landscape (a tree, building, bridge, etc.) this requires that the camera remains stock-still otherwise the landscape elements will be blurred. However, the stars are moving in the sky at the rate of a quarter of a degree per minute, which is a very large amount compared with the infinitesimally small size of the points of light by

Bulb

The 'bulb' setting is named after the pneumatic squeeze-bulb that was used in the non-electronic period of photography: it really was a rubber bulb that held the shutter open for as long as it was squeezed. These days, the 'Bulb' is a lockable push-button or timer control that has the same effect.

which you see them. You need as much light as possible to reach your sensor's pixels and this leads you to use a slow shutter speed. However, a too-slow shutter speed will result in you recording the track of the stars as they move through the sky. Of course, this might be your desire and there are tools to help with this.

Focusing on stars

Perhaps contrary to intuition, focusing on stars is not easy. Your camera's 'live view' function at extremely high ISO might just do the job but this demands that you have some bright stars - or the moon - on which to focus. My experience is that attempting to focus using dimmer stars with live view is not a practical option. Using the moon as a focus point is good, but if you have the moon visible in your sky your chances of getting good star pictures are much reduced due to the glare it causes! A trick I use is to focus my lens on a very distant subject during daylight hours and note very precisely where the infinity symbol on the lens lines up with the mark on the lens body. You

Star trails

To capture star trails which create a circular display (and if you reside in the northern hemisphere), ideally you need to include the north or Pole Star in the shot. You shouldn't have too much trouble identifying this spot in the sky but if so, there are many free applications and software programs which can assist with this such as SkyView, a good augmented-reality phone/tablet app, or www.stellarium.org. All the other stars appear to rotate about this point in the sky and the photographic results can be spectacular. However, you need to be aware that it takes 12 hours for a 180° movement through the sky, so this kind of shot is only really practical in far northerly (or southerly) latitudes where there are long night-time hours. Unfortunately, there is no single star in the southern sky which offers a similar reference point, but you can still get your camera pointed in the right direction using SkyView or a similar application. Then, you have two options: (1) you can open your shutter for a very long period: 1 hour for every 15° of rotation or (2) take many (say) 30 sec. exposures at short intervals and merge them later using free software such as Startrails (www.startrails.de). When taking pictures like this, your major problem will be light pollution from street lamps in urban areas, especially those (ugh!) yellow sodium types. There are very few places in the UK where you can be assured of no or only limited light pollution (see www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk for a guide to the best places) and if you leave your shutter open for a long time in a light-polluted area, you will find that your image is overwhelmed with a bright orange colour cast near the horizon. A small amount can be dealt with in post-processing but ideally it's best avoided from the outset.

can stick a small piece of tape cut to form a pointer, or on certain lenses with manual-only focus, pieces of tape on the focus ring and lens body can have similar alignment marks placed on them to make easier to see in the dark. This kind of approach



is necessary because most lenses do not focus on infinity when the centre of the infinity mark is at the guide line on the lens body! The true infinity setting is critical if you are to use your lens anywhere near wide open. Even this is only a rough guide and when in the dark, you will still need to take some test shots and zoom in on the result to assess sharpness. Remember always to use your camera in manual focus mode with any stabiliser turned off.

As a general guide, to be able to capture stars as points of light in a wide-angle view using, for example, a 16mm lens on a full-frame camera (10mm on a crop-sensor camera), the maximum setting for your shutter speed should be

considered as 15 seconds. The table below might be useful:

ISO800	f/ 1.4	f/ 2	f/ 2.8	f/ 4
Shutter open (s)	4-5	8	15	30

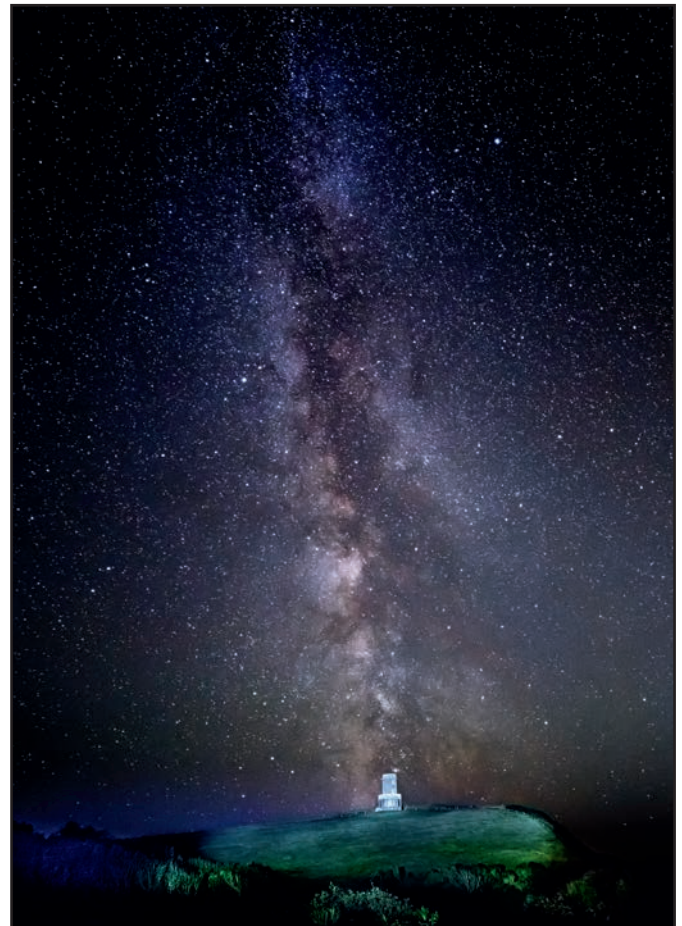
If your camera has good noise performance at higher ISOs you can divide these time values by 2 for every doubling of the ISO value. If you are concentrating on a small portion of the sky using a longer focal length lens, you will need to use a faster shutter speed. This is because the stars will move apparently more quickly across the field of view given by a longer focal length lens.

The Milky Way

For the casual, 'naked eye' observer of the night sky, the Milky Way (MW) is easily missed as the light it emits is quite dim and unless you know what to look for and when/where to look for it, it can escape notice. For a photographer, though, the MW offers exciting possibilities because we are 'photon accumulators' and what we get to see after enhancing it is so much more amazing! If you didn't know it already, the MW is the galaxy in which our solar system resides and it contains around 200 billion stars orbiting in a



Corfe Castle, Dorset, torch-lit against the Milky Way



Clavell Tower, Kimmeridge Bay, Dorset

SHOOTING STARS

150,000 light-year diameter spiral around its centre. At our latitude here in the UK, most of the time we see only half of it because a lot of it is below our horizon. In our winter (November to March) we see the outer arm of the galaxy at night which, though partially interesting, is not as dramatic as seeing the galactic hub. In our summer (April to September) we look into the centre of the galaxy, which is the best time to get good pictures. Or at least it would be, but of course our summer evenings are light until late which restricts our chances. I've found that September after midnight is the best time to go MW hunting, as the nights are getting darker and the galactic centre can still be seen above the horizon. It's good to consult a MW predictor to be sure that you are gazing upward at the right time of night when the MW is aloft – I use some fabulous, completely free software which does this and an awful lot more, from www.stellarium.org. Incidentally, I often muse with envy over the fact that our antipodean cousins get the best end of the deal, because they see the galactic centre in their winter when skies are very dark.

Whilst the MW is an awesome spectacle in its own right, it can appear a bit boring if pictured as a flat, stand-alone subject with nothing else in the frame. In my view, it has much wider appeal if it is portrayed in juxtaposition to some earthly feature such as a tree, or a building so as to add scale to the grandeur of the starfield. Of course, the difficulty here is that we are working in the dark, miles away from other sources of light (by desire and definition!) and the likelihood of a tree or castle being illuminated to the low level we desire is pretty remote. This is where your hand-torch comes in, for you can use this to paint light on the foreground during your exposure and make it visible in your shot.

It doesn't need much light to gain the desired effect, so keep it short and keep waving it around: this will blur the edges of the pool of light you project. Also, don't shine the light from the position of your camera – you'll get a strange effect if the air around you is slightly misty due to the tiny droplets of water in the air reflecting the light back to its source, in the same way as cat's eyes in the road. (see picture above right). Your best bet is to move off some way to the side but stay behind the camera lens. Frustratingly and certainly, it will take quite a few attempts to achieve the desired light pool and brightness - you will always need to experiment



Light painting with torch close to the camera produces strange effects

with a few shots to get it right, and you might even blend a few of them together in post-processing to get the end result that pleases you.

The main consideration when processing your MW images is how much light pollution is there and what colour is it? As long as you have a clear sky, you will likely have achieved a reasonable starting point but you will probably need to remove some amount of orange light pollution from the area near the horizon. My method of doing this is to use Adobe Lightroom's colour saturation controls (on the 'Develop' screen) and using the HSL (Hue, Saturation, Luminance) sliders to reduce the saturation of both the orange and yellow components of the image until a more natural sky is achieved. Thereafter, processing will consist of enhancing contrast, adjusting 'levels' and 'curves' perhaps by selective masking, and applying a small amount of sharpening.

Aurorae

Photographing aurorae is very similar to photographing stars. For an aurora to be seen, the sky has to be clear and this implies that

there will be stars visible which are likely to form part of the charm of your image. The curtains of light typified by aurorae are quite, or even very, bright by comparison to starlight and will command a faster shutter speed. This is good because another feature of aurorae is that they move, and occasionally do so very quickly. The beauty of an aurora viewed 'in the flesh' is the result of your eyes perceiving a moving image. Conversely, taking a picture of it does demand a slow-ish shutter speed which has the effect of accumulating the light from wherever it emanates. This will blur the moving curtains of aurora light and lose some of the definition they possess. Therefore, your goal will be achieved by using the fastest shutter speed possible commensurate with your camera's highest, good-noise-quality ISO. The aurora image on page 25 was taken in Iceland using a 16mm f/4 lens wide open, ISO 3200 at 5 to 10 seconds shutter speed.

Aurorae occur only at extreme northern and southern latitudes and are quite unpredictable - there is a quite good aurora forecasting site at www.aurora-service.eu but the terminology and numbers need some study to be understood!

You are best served by moving to a latitude close to the pole (Arctic or Antarctic), near to 66° north or south of the equator. For us Brits, access to this is relatively easy and means somewhere like the north of Scotland (sometimes), Iceland, Norway, Finland, etc., and therefore the word 'cold' will be involved! In the southern hemisphere, choice is very limited as even the southern end of New Zealand is at an equivalent latitude to France.

There are disciplines which need to be observed when working your magic in such northern climates: make sure that your camera is acclimatised properly when moving from warm to cold areas and avoid changing lenses until you're sure that this is the case, or your lens and sensor will become misted up and take ages to clear; keep spare batteries warm because battery power declines more quickly when they are cold; wear gloves with 'exposable' fingers to make adjusting your camera easy; take a flask of hot drink with you, etc..

Meteor Showers

Meteor showers can be quite striking when they are 'busy' but they enter a new realm altogether when photographed. There are a few times in the year (see www.earthsky.org for where and

when) when the earth passes through the dust left behind from the passage of a comet. The dust burns up in the earth's atmosphere and the visible trail of this is what we see as a 'shooting star', or meteor. At best, you might see 3 or 4 trails per minute but with your camera you can accumulate many in one frame. You should use the same settings as described above for photographing stars and take a series of 10 to 15 second shots in rapid succession. If you have aimed your camera at the right place in the sky on the right night you will undoubtedly capture many trails which can be stacked together in one image for dramatic effect if you wish. The picture below shows a narrow-field view of a Perseid meteor against a backdrop of the Milky Way. You may be able to



see the elongation of the stars due to the long-ish exposure and also the constant stripe of light at the top of the image which is a trail of a satellite high enough to be illuminated by the sun.

That's all for this issue - next time we'll explore lightning, moonscapes and urban night scenes.



All images from David Fletcher LRPS, 2017 RPS Documentary Photographer of the Year, taken from a panel titled 'Losing a calf'

The Documentary Group

The Documentary Group comprises a dynamic and diverse group of photographers drawn from all over the world. They all share a common interest which is documentary, urban and street photography.

Wikipedia includes the following entry
"Documentary photography usually refers to a popular form of photography used to chronicle events or environments both significant and relevant to history and historical events as well as everyday life."

Nothing creates more discussion amongst documentary photographers than the definition of what the genre actually is. Decisive Moment (the Group's online quarterly journal) will be revisiting this debate in a forthcoming issue.

Whether you take individual documentary photographs (photojournalism, street or urban photography) or photographic essays (a group of images that hold together as a story), all

documentary photography tells a story, with or without text.

The Documentary Group's aim is twofold: firstly to promote documentary photography and, secondly, to provide a forum for our members. We do this through Decisive Moment, which is available to all RPS members (although you have to be a Group member to have your images published); a bi-monthly competition for Group members for single images, and Facebook and Flickr accounts for Group members to join in with images and discussion. We also organise workshops throughout the country wherever there is interest. These workshops are open to all, although as you might expect, Group members do get discounts, and simply being a member



of the Group gets one a £25 discount on one organised event each year.

We hold an annual documentary *Photographer of the Year* competition - open and free to all RPS members to enter for the first time this year - aimed at promoting documentary photography. Our focus in 2018 will be in promoting Documentary sub-groups in the RPS Regions so keep an eye out for our events in your area!

No RPS Special Interest Group can provide relevant services to everyone in all parts of the country. Our sub-groups bring together small groups of members who have a common interest and enables them to meet and discuss their photography, share images and take part in joint projects, with each member making their own interpretation of a particular subject. For example, in Documentary South some of our members are currently working on a project to document the coast in the Southern region. This is generating some remarkably diverse interpretations of 'Coast' as a subject, and the Southampton Art Gallery has invited us to mount a two month exhibition of this work during 2018.

The Group's committee believe that the future for documentary photography is based around sub-groups which allows members to come



together, and to discuss their ideas and to seek advice from like minded photographers in a non-threatening environment. Camera clubs are an important part of British photography, but most have little interest in documentary photography and are often very competitive. We wish to add to photographers' options rather than to replace anything else that is on offer.

Nationally, the formation of regional sub-groups is gathering momentum. Groups are now established in the Northern, South East, Central, Southern, East Anglia, Thames Valley and East Midlands RPS Regions.

Gordon Bates and Mo Connelly, both Committee Members, are the central focal points supporting the set up of sub-groups. Sub-groups then define their own agenda. Our sub-groups tend to be small (10-20 regular members) and where possible we work with the existing RPS regional structure and on the whole this works well.

We collaborate with other SIGs in areas of mutual interest. For example, we work with the Travel Group, where the two Group's committees recognise that the genres overlap.

Interested in learning more? Contact Mo Connelly at doc@rps.org.



BRIAN'S RECIPE FOR 'SOFT SPANNERS'

Brian John McCarthy ARPS

Ingredients required:-

- 1 Wooden table, (shabby chic is good).
- 1 Vase.
- Spanners, a number of various sizes and types.
- A Light source.
- Fine strong thread.
- Kitchen foil (To make a slightly smaller replica of the large broken spanner)
- Digital Camera

Photoshop Tools required:-

- Puppet warp (CS5 or above)
If you do not have a version with Puppet Warp you can use the Warp function in the Transform Tool
- Smudge Tool
- Selection Tool
- Masks
- Brush Tool
- Clone Tool

Method

1. Using a dark background photograph the vase on the table, with the foil spanner in place bent to shape over the edge of the table. So as to ensure correct lighting and shadow when superimposing the the real spanner in the final image (top image on this page).
2. Photograph each spanner in turn, by hanging them by a thread and using the same lighting source and direction.
3. Now in Photoshop. Create cutout versions of all the spanners, I use the polygonal lasso combined with a Layer Mask to refine the edges, then apply the mask.
4. With the Vase as the background layer, add the spanners as a new layers, one for each spanner image.
5. To bend a spanner, hold Cmd or Ctrl and click on a thumbnail to Re-Select (Marching Ants) on a spanner layer and then apply Puppet Warp (Edit>Puppet Warp). Place at least 3 anchor points by clicking on the top, middle and bottom of the mesh which is covering the spanner. Click and drag an anchor point to achieve a smooth curve. This is the hardest technique, of the recipe and requires a bit of practice (middle image on this page).
6. Add a Layer Mask to each of the spanner Layers, to remove parts of the spanners that should be invisible, i.e. Inside the vase and behind other spanners.
7. For the large snapped spanner, make a selection of the handle part of the spanner then using the Transform tool stretch and re-align the two halves over the foil replica. This bit is quite tricky, so take your time (bottom image on this page)
8. Using the paint brush add the cracks and metal stress marks to the snapped spanner on a separate New Layer.
9. The melting tips are done with the Smudge tool and the drips are created on a New Layer, by making a selections in the shape of drips, then filling by cloning colour and texture from the main body of the spanner. Finish them off with the Spherize filter Filter>Distort>Spherize, and paint in a little light and shade using a soft brush to make look more 3D.
10. Finally add a mix of your favourite Adjustments to taste, then your dish is ready to be served.







TRANSLUCENCE

Pauline Pentony ARPS

I am a dance photographer and I like to experiment when in the studio and out on location shoots. Adding different elements to subjects and photography can be quite exhilarating, adding a twist to the final image.

'Translucence' is a composition of four separate images taken in the studio then combined in Photoshop CC. An illustration of the way I built up the final image is shown on the next page. I wanted to experiment with different fabrics. The effect of the picture was to resemble statuesque like formations made by combining the movement of dance with the dancer free to form shapes within a very stretchy fabric bag, using different fabrics can create a variety of effects, combine that with high speed strobe flash to 'freeze' the action then the possibilities are endless. The dancer can be choreographed to produce shape and form through their movements or posed to obtain a desired effect.

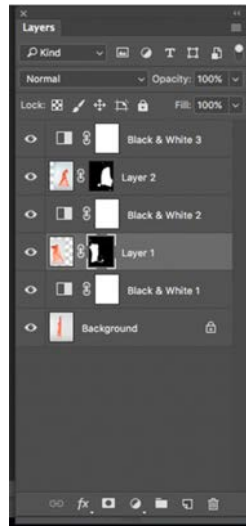
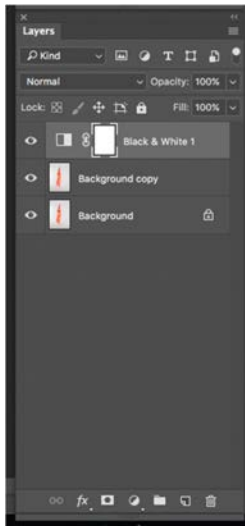
First image



Second image



Final image



Timing is paramount in capturing that 'peak' moment in a fraction of a second, persistence pays off. I may think I have a good image but the dancers can be critical of their own performance which leads to a 'take two' scenario, sometimes a certain movement can be shot up to five or six times before the dancer is happy. I have found that keeping the dancer happy can culminate in some very successful and creative images. A lot of my inspiration comes from famous American dance photographers like Lois Greenfield, Jordan Matter and Barbara Morgan.

For the set up I use a large white backdrop, soft boxes mounted onto Bowen strobes to light the set and a Lencarta high speed pro strobe for freezing the action, a range of reflectors, a Nikon D800 with 28-80mm Nikkor lens and Pocket Wizard wireless trigger completes the setup. I always shoot in RAW format so I can easily adjust the colour and tones in Photoshop CC.

Having been a dancer and choreographer for many years, I feel I have a great eye for movement, timing and beauty. So, as a dance photographer, I have a clear understanding of my subject, whilst being a little different from other photographers this path for me seems to be a natural one. I am overwhelmed to have gained recognition locally and internationally for my dance photography. I have been associated with dance and worked with dancers in and around the North East of England for the last decade, photographing them, primarily working out on location and in various dance studios in and around my native Darlington.



THE GONDOLIER

Susan Ashford LRPS

Having seen so many spectacular photos of Venice, I decided to try a Creative approach, and, being quite a novice in Photoshop skills, surprised myself by trying a 'play and paint' method. The main approach used in this method is, first to build the basic photograph (image 1), and then play with brushes, layers, blending modes and opacity in a series of stages (illustrated by images 2-5) to achieve

the end result (left).

Here's the work flow I used, and you can see the way that the image evolved on the right:

I opened the original image and made a duplicate layer, naming it BLUR. Then I went to Filter/Blur/Smart Blur (I used radius 1 - threshold 30). See image 1.

Next, I duplicated the background layer again - naming it OUTLINES - and dragged it to the top of the layer stack. I went to Filter/Gallery/Stylize and chose Glowing Edges. (I used width 1, brightness 12, smoothness 15). The top of the 3 layers now shows an image with dark background and coloured lines. I then went to Image Adjustments/Desaturate and choose Blending Mode/ Multiply. I used opacity at 80%. See image 2.

I then duplicated the BLUR layer, naming it PAINTING. I went to Image/ Adjustments/Invert and choose Blend Mode/Colour Dodge. These layers were my basic building blocks, so now I could paint colour back in with whatever Brushes I wanted. (Please note - make sure your foreground colour picker is on Black . Also, it is advisable to save these layers before continuing, as well as saving your work regularly at various stages).

At the Brush preset fly out menu, I selected Small list simply because it's easier to search for the named brushes, such as Wet Media and Watercolour Texture Brush and so on. See images 3 and 4.

Next, I duplicated the original background, naming it DETAILS and dragging to the top of the layer stack. I went to Filter/Filter Gallery/Artistic/ Watercolour. (I chose Brush Size 12 , Shadow 1, Texture 3, Blend Mode Luminosity at 25%.) As I progressed I made new layers to add colours, using the soft round brush. For example, I added some red to replicate sun glow (opacity at 45%) and then Blend Mode/Colour Burn, using the layer mask as well.

I always make new layers for each Watercolour Brushes I use. This allows you freely to edit and transform them. Brushwork itself creates illusions, I particularly enjoy this aspect of the 'play and paint' approach because the shapes you create can be highly suggestive. My friend asked about the castle in the top right background. There wasn't any castle there - it was created simply with wet wash brush and splatters. To build up the sky I used French Kiss Watercolour Brushes; continually stamping the brush gives depth and darkness. A white fill layer was masked to fade the edges, for a line and wash effect I added pencil stroke and squiggle brushes and I went to Filter/Filter Gallery and chose Sandstone. There are also oil paint and various other filters there. New layers were added for brown and cream wet wash brushwork at varying Blend Mode and Opacity settings. See image 5.

Lastly, a new layer was needed as I like to add the black washes so that they look like water runs. Using Edit/Transform, I was able to rotate, skew, etc to make my desired shapes and reduce opacity too. I then add a few splatters, and arrived at the final image.

In the limited space available here, I have been able to provide only a very broad overview of how this final image was created and, as written here, it all looks like a straight forward process. In reality, however, I spent a few hours daily over a period of weeks going back and forth over my work until I'd got it just the way I wanted. There is a lot of trial and error as you never get the same effect twice, only a similarity. And that's yet another reason why I enjoy this 'play and paint' method - its uniqueness.



Image 1



Image 2



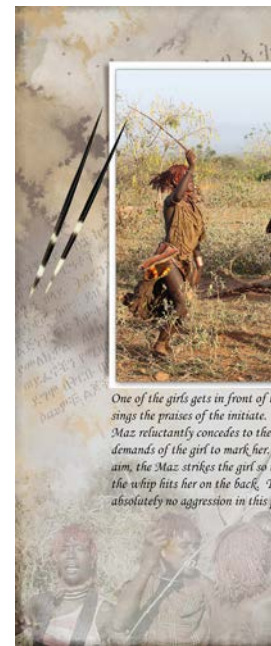
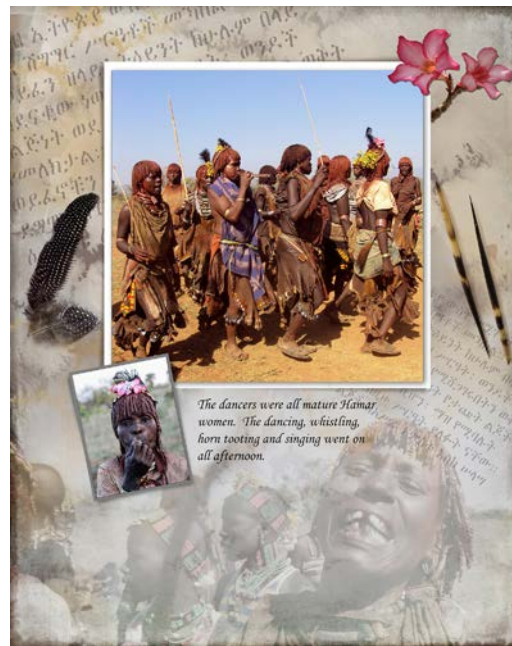
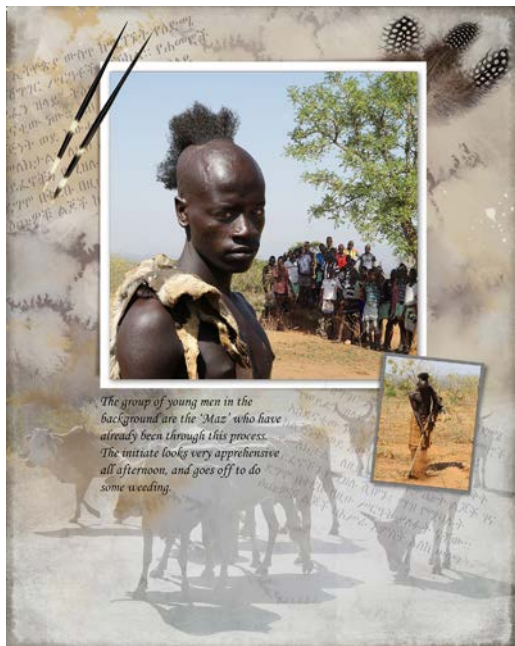
Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



HAMAR BULL JUMPING

Marilyn Taylor ARPS

I've been looking for a different way to present panels of images for a while now, and have been experimenting with digital 'scrapbooking'. This allows me to put more than one element into an image, without using the standard compositing technique I've been using for the last few years.

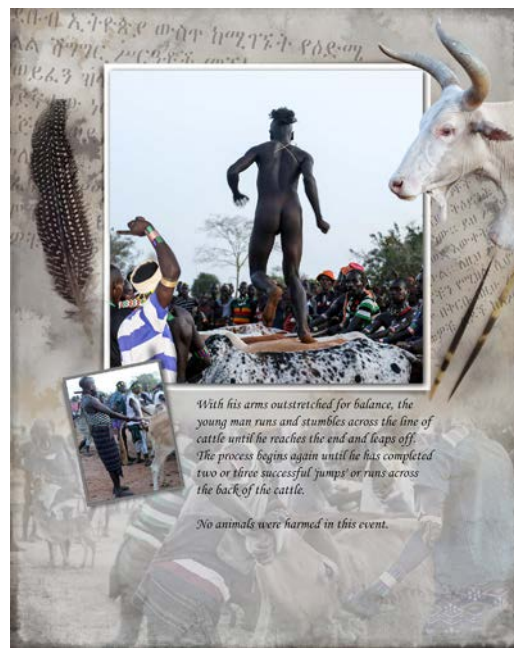
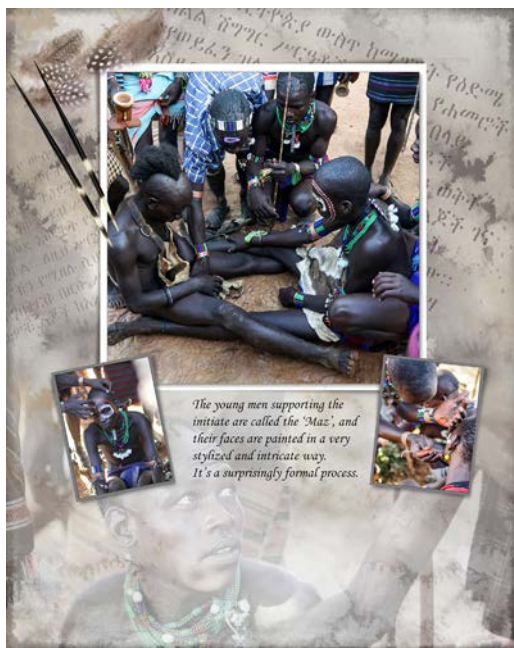
I needed to put a panel of five images together for a competition at my photo club, Windlesham and Camberley Camera Club. I decided to use some of the many photos from a ceremony I was fortunate to be able to watch in Turmi, in southern Ethiopia, where the young men of the Omo Valley tribes have to jump the bulls before they can marry.

This ceremony is the most spectacular rite of passage for the young men and marks their initiation into adulthood. It takes place either side of the long summer rains, and communities across the Omo Valley gather for the event. The initiate boys are required to jump onto the backs of a line of fifteen to thirty cattle, run the whole length of this formidable obstacle, jump down onto the other side and then repeat the entire procedure two or three more times without falling. If he completes this successfully, he becomes known as a Maz. If he fails, he must return to his village and wait a year to try again.

When we were there in November 2016, there was just one young man being prepared but it still took 5 hours!

I had wanted to attend such an event for over two years, and it's thanks to my local guide, Tsega, that we found it and were able to attend. It was an absolute privilege and the local people were very welcoming. There were hardly any tourists, and about half the Europeans were medical staff from the local hospital. So the whole event was genuinely for themselves, not for us.

I've been playing with composite images for several years now, certainly before they became fashionable. Woody Walters has an excellent set of teaching videos available, and whilst his style is probably more suited to the American market, he's certainly got a lot of excellent techniques. Aaron Nace from Phlearn also has a lot of short videos that are free to view, but more technical and longer videos are available on subscription. Since then the style of my final composites has changed quite a lot, and the current style of using textures to enable the different elements to blend well is certainly attractive. I've subscribed to several digital artistry websites, both to better understand the process as well as to be inspired. Photoshop Artistry, fine art 'grunge', with Sebastian Michaels, has a wide range of subscription options to suit every level. Kim Klaasen has some very good videos about creating your own textures from normal grungy photos of peeling paint, and damp patches, but I try to use textures



that I've photographed on the same trip, such as mud hut walls in Ethiopia.

I've also been a subscriber to several local magazines for years, mostly publications like Photoshop Creative, and sometimes just one image can give you a really good idea for a new image.

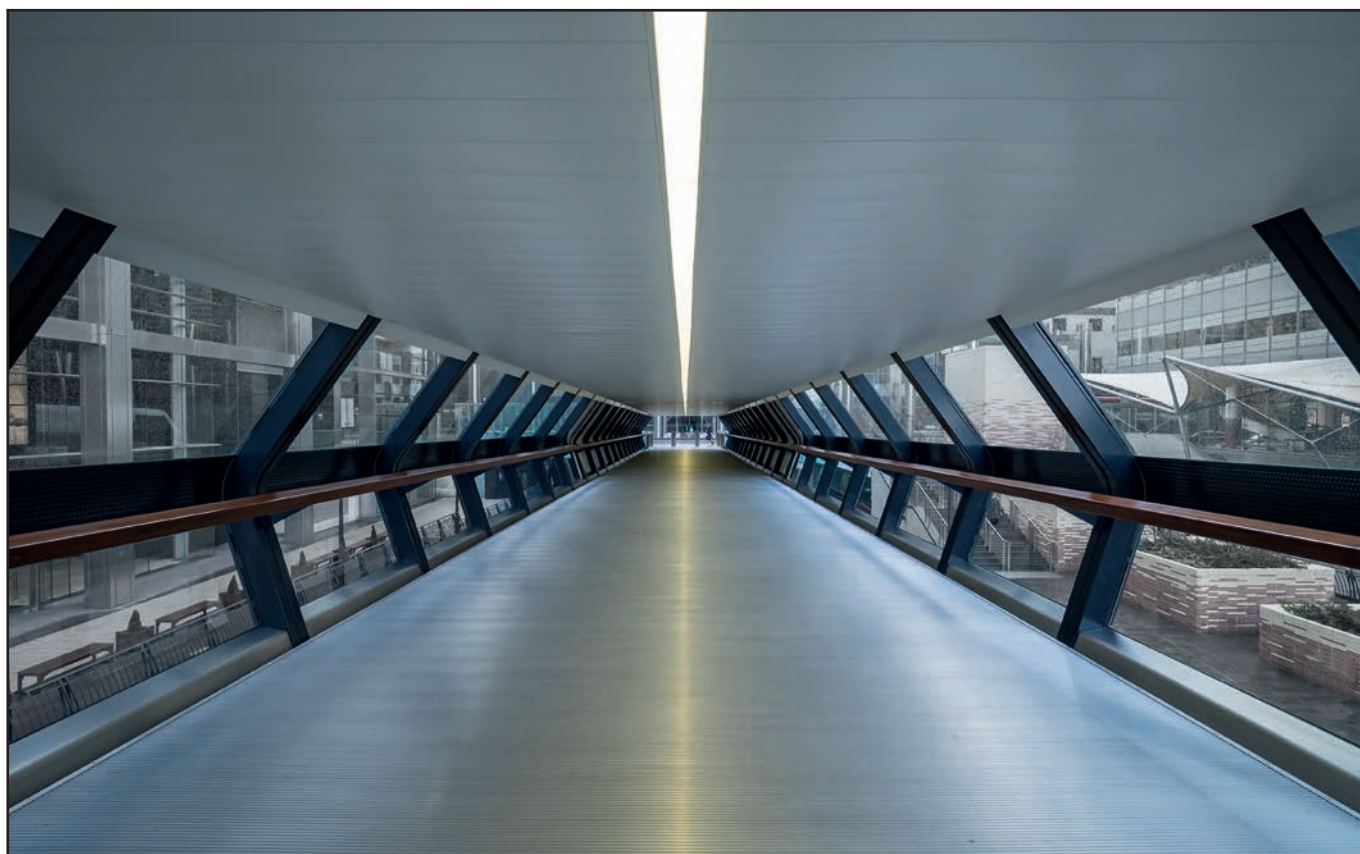
Choosing just five photos to explain this particular story was very difficult. I decided to use a photo of a simple white picture frame for framing of the main image, but I thought several other images needed to be included and I decided to use other parts of the scene in the background, with lower opacities. I happen to have some feathers and quills at home (doesn't everyone?) and photographed them, but by selecting a few other headdresses and beads (mostly from the men's photos), I gradually built up each image. As it was going to be shown as a panel of 5, I tried to make sure the images were balanced. I used some textures over the top of the background image as I find that helps to bring an image together.

All the composite webinars talk about making sure shadows are correctly aligned, and it's that level of detail that can make the difference between a good image and an excellent one so I used the normal drop shadow in PS to give a better feel of 3D.

I decided to break with tradition (in club photography terms) and put some appropriate text on the final images, so that the viewer could better understand what was going on. For a so-called primitive tribe, the whole ceremony was incredibly intricate, and remarkably sophisticated.

Putting together montages/composites can be a painstaking process, with lots of adjustment layers, and masks. But once I had worked out what I was going to do with the middle image, the rest was straightforward. Unfortunately, after I had made all five, I decided I had to tweak a few layers, which was really annoying, but having used a non-destructive approach (using additional layers for cloning adjustments, for example), it came together quite quickly. I also took out some of the extra selections, less is more, they say. Sadly, I didn't win the panel competition, but the judge was impressed with the level of work that went into the construction.

I haven't used these images in any other competitions, as I think they really only work as a panel. I do have lots of other images from this very interesting part of the world, so I could perhaps make another 'A' panel of 15, but for the moment, I think I will just put them on my wall at home; I think they'd look good as acrylic, or canvases.



ADAMS PLAZA BRIDGE

Rex Waygood

I bet I am not alone in having days where carrying a camera around is unfruitful. Nothing fires the imagination or gets the ball rolling. However sometimes I can get on a roll and one shot inspires the next. That is what happened when I went to Canary Wharf. Everywhere I pointed the camera seemed to invite me to capture something I enjoyed. In the days of film I would have been running out of rolls!

As soon as I saw this I yelled "STOP!", not as a self-instruction but as an instruction to my family that were walking round Canary Wharf with me! I did not want them messing up the symmetry that had excited me. Being an obedient family they stayed behind me whilst I moved about with most of my images concentrating on the symmetry.

The original image was in a 4:3 format so lots of the floor and ceiling were redundant. When it came to processing I knew I'd be changing the format.

After picking this frame from Bridge I used Adobe Camera Raw to set the blacks, whites and to control the highlights, and used Clarity, Vibrance and Saturation to boost the image slightly. I didn't realise at this point that there was a man in a fluorescent jacket on the right however I posted the image on the DI Group Forum and rapidly got feedback about the jacket and the other distractions out of the windows. One member posted a mod and another posted his version (Thanks). These suggestions led me to alter my post processing and produce a new version. The alterations were to clone out the fluorescent man and the shiny bin and then to desaturate all the view out of the windows.

The image has done quite well so I'd like to thank those on the forum that offered advice. I have also produced various versions with slightly different formats where the applications required.

For those that are interested in the info, the camera was an E-M1 with a 7-14mm lens at 7mm and $f/2.8$ @ 1/80s, ISO 200.



FEEDING STATION

Kenneth Ness ARPS

I had been to Harris the previous year, saw the crofter working a small potato patch and was taken by the obvious photo opportunity. Keen to try and use this figure, I had taken several shots of a derelict house on the road between Helmsdale and Kinbrace in the Highlands and felt that there was a story there. I also had come across a sheep's skeleton behind a ruined Black House on Eriskay and the skull was an obvious acquisition.

These images were combined with parts of others in my library. I used a combination of Photoshop and ON1 Photo 10 to merge and adjust the various elements into a cohesive final image.

Each part, except for the man, was added to the background and adjusted until I was happy with their position. I then added a blue/yellow brushed steel texture layer at 50% with 'Multiply' as a blend. I darkened the sky, taking away some of the blue and reducing the Lightness. In ON1 Photo, I added a Graduated Filter and a Vignette to enhance to sky. A smoke brush was used to give a sense of habitation to the house. Finally, I added the figure as I did not want the figure to be obscured by the layers.

As usual, with these type of images, they evolve from an initial concept and don't always end up as you planned, however this final image did go some way to achieving what I set out to accomplish.

With apologies to Kenneth, due to an error in the last issue, the final image of 'Feeding Station' was not included. The final image is reproduced above - the original images and further details of how the image was produced can be found in DIGIT issue 74.

Notice of AGM and Exhibition Print Selection

with a talk by Irene Froy

The Annual General Meeting of the RPS Digital Imaging Group will be held at
10:30 on Sunday 4th March 2018.

at The Old School House, Smethwick Photographic Society Club Rooms,
Churchbridge, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 2AS

Easy access from M5, Junction 2 or train to Sandwell and Dudley

See www.smethwickphotographic.co.uk for club details and map

Coffee available from 10:00

10.30 AGM. AGENDA:

1. Notice of Meeting and Apologies for Absence
2. Formal adoption of the Minutes of the 2017 AGM
3. Matters arising from the previous Minutes
4. Annual Reports and Accounts: Chair and Treasurer
5. Acceptance of the proposed change in the DIG Constitution.
6. Election of Officers and Committee
7. Any other relevant business
8. Date of next AGM



- 11:30 Selection of Prints for the Exhibition
(Selectors: Irene Froy EFIAP MPAGB HonPAGB BPE4*, Maureen Connelly LRPS and Roger Parry MPAGB ARPS EFIAP HonPAGB ESFIAP)
- 12:30 Lunch - Soup and a roll, and/or baked potatoes will be available on the day but need to be ordered beforehand and paid for on the day, or please bring your own packed lunch. Hot drinks and a licensed bar.
- 13:30 Selection of Prints for the Exhibition continued
- 14:30 Tea Break
- 14:50 Announcement of Gold Medal Winner and the winners of the Selectors' Ribbons
- 15:00 **"Pastel Moments" - an insight into how Irene Froy creates her famous pastel images**
Free for Group members - tickets for others £5.00 on the door

2018 DIG Print Exhibition

DIG Members only – free to enter.

Submit 3 prints and you are guaranteed of having one accepted in to the travelling Exhibition.

Open class - so anything goes whether colour or mono, straight work or creative.

Overall trophy and gold medal winner + 6 selectors ribbons to be awarded.

All images will be printed in the exhibition catalogue and will accompany DIGIT.

Full information on the DIG web site at www.rps.org/DIG follow link on the RHS.

For more information about the AGM please email digsecretary@rps.org

For information about the Print Exhibition email digexhibitions@rps.org

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



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