

**Members' Print Exhibition 2008
Gold Medal and Chairman's Cup
Dressmakers' Dummies
by Geoff Lea LRPS**

**All your selected images
pages 11 - 31
Official Opening by the President
at 1830 on 9 June 2008
Podlun Library, Bath**



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AGM 2008 REPORT

Minutes of The Digital Imaging Group's 12th Annual General Meeting at The Smethwck Photographic Society Clubrooms 1030 Sunday 20 April 2008 from Secretary Bob Pearson ARPS



Digital Imaging Group

Committee for 2008/09

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Opening the meeting, Chairman Clive Haynes welcomed the 55 members present and thanked them for attending.

Apologies were received from Committee members Maureen Albright and Jim Buckley and from members Roger Norton, Paula and Guy Davies, Ralph Bennett, Bert Houseley, Ian Ledgard and Dr Arthur Morgan.

Minutes of the Previous AGM held on 22 April 2007 were accepted as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

Clive Haynes made the following points in his report:

The group remains in excellent health and continues to grow, now with 10% of the total Society membership. The Committee is very focused upon the needs of the membership who enthusiastically follow the increasingly complex developments in digital imaging.

DIGIT, edited by Jim Buckley, is held in high regard as a high-quality publication that many people join the Group to receive on a regular basis. Publication of DIGIT is the single most expensive thing that the Group undertakes. Jim Buckley is standing down from the Committee at the moment but will continue as editor.

The Website remains both active and stimulating. It is an excellent front window for the Group and for the RPS in general. It showcases members' images with opportunity for feedback and the forum provides for lively and informed discussion. Long-serving



Heads Down! Secretary Bob Pearson ARPS, Chairman Clive Haynes FRPS and Treasurer Dr David Naylor LRPS at the AGM Photo: Roy Brown ARPS

Committee member and Fenton Medal holder, John Long, maintains the day-to-day bulletins and features, constantly watching and guiding the Folio and managing the monthly competition.

The long-term future of the Group's website continues to exercise the Committee as inevitably developments in technology and changes in the Group's requirements will one day force the need to establish a fresh site incorporating changes to the hosting and design of the site's features. In recognition of the establishment and long-term success of the Group Website the Committee, on behalf of the membership, will be making a presentation to Bill Henley as a mark of appreciation. The Committee also recognises the key role that his son, Iain Henley, made in the software design and performance of the site. Clive Haynes expressed the Group's grateful thanks to them both.

Recognition was given to the hard work of enthusiastic Digital Imaging Group Regional Organisers (DIGROs for short). As a result, the widespread membership can attend regional



Let me get a better look at that one! Members watch during the print selection. Photo Dr David Naylor LRPS

LATEST DISTINCTIONS FOR DI GROUP MEMBERS

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

Associate: David Lewis, Paul McCullagh, Jill Reynolds, Ian Silvester

Licentiate: Mahendra Bhatia, Cecile Broderick, Ruth Brown, Clive Burnage, Dr David Cooke, Brian Hopkins

meetings throughout most of the UK. This year the regional group structure has been consolidated with Southern Scotland, South Wales, Yorkshire and the North West all firmly establishing themselves, whilst the Central-Southern Group has been maintained. Chris Haydon, as DIGRO and Regional Co-ordinator, has maintained contact with the regional structure. DIGROs are invited to attend Committee meetings and Clive encouraged them to do so and also to send in reports of their Regional activities.



*A chat with the President Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS
Photo Dr David Naylor LRPS*

Thanks to Alex Dufty's skilful management last year's annual print exhibition enjoyed a successful tour of the UK and was well-supported wherever it was shown. The exhibition was once again distributed to members on DVD. In view of the difficulty of obtaining support for local venues and stewarding and the fact that the number of print entries for the current exhibition were reduced, members present were asked to consider whether an on-line exhibition was an acceptable alternative.

With the support of six DIG regions, a touring roadshow of seminars, *Photoshop 4 Photographers* presented by Terry Steeley, was organised and managed by Chris Haydon. Each DIG region, led by its DIGRO, made its own arrangements. In addition, Clive Haynes thanked several RPS Regional Organisers for



*John Long ARPS takes a closer look at a print
Photo: June Cook FRPS*

their valuable support. Dr. Afzal Ansary, RO North West; Roy Robertson, RO Scotland; Joy Hancock, RO East Anglia; and Ray Grace from the Western Region.

This year once again Graham Whistler, assisted by Clive Haynes, organised a very successful weekend portraiture workshop at West Dean College.

Thanks also went to two Committee members who had served the Group well but who were now leaving. Firstly, Dr David Naylor whose business-orientated approach to the Group's finances has proved of great benefit and the systems now in place will greatly assist his successor. Secondly, Jim Buckley, a very capable and reliable Vice-chairman is stepping down from the Committee and Clive thanked him for his sage-like wisdom and providing a reliable listening post. Other members of the Committee were mentioned for their continuing support: Bob Pearson as Secretary for the day to day running of the Group; Graham Whistler, with his colleague Gordon Rushton, provides the DVD of the exhibition and Maureen Albright who has a full work-load as a DIGRO for two regions and the demands of the AV Group. Tony Healy in Australia maintains contact and provides specialist knowledge from another part of the globe. Dr Barry Senior, a past chairman of the Group and current President of the Society, was thanked for his much appreciated support and sound advice. Two Committee members also play an important part in Society activity: John Long continues to be the DI Group representative and Jim Buckley is an elected member on the RPS Advisory Board.

In closing Clive Haynes thanked everyone for their continuing enthusiastic support for this the largest special interest Group within the RPS. At this point he raised two important questions for members to consider for later general discussion. First, to consider where the Group is going, what is its future, what it can be doing for members and what members can be doing for the Group and secondly - prompted by the Sunset Clause in the Group's constitution - Has the Digital Imaging Group served its purpose?

Treasurer's Report

Dr David Naylor reported a total income of £12,589 of which £10,350 was from subscriptions and a total expenditure of £15,564 of which £10,637 was for the publication of DIGIT. Specifically, David Naylor explained that in regard to the Exhibition the expenditure of £825 was covered by the entry fees totalling £882. The exhibition DVD had been produced at no cost but distribution and printing costs came to £805. The website cost for the year was £400. Regarding the Balance Sheet, the Treasurer pointed out that the Group's balance had fallen from £6,397 to £3,422. He said that clearly the Group needed



*Clive Haynes FRPS
Chairman*

DIGITAL REGIONAL ORGANISERS

Contact the organisers listed below for full details

Central Southern

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East Anglia

Vacant

East Midlands

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Midlands

Clive Haynes FRPS
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Wessex

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Western

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to be managing its budget better. He also said there was now a formal procedure in place to reclaim VAT. For information, he itemised the Regional Groups' income and expenditure and all were operating in the black.

Members present then asked several questions. In response to these, Dr Naylor explained why the item 'unpresented cheques' appeared on the accounts and the fact that Terry Steeley lecture receipts were merely passed through the accounts on behalf of the Midland DIG.

It was also suggested from the floor that in view of the overall benefit to members from the Group that maybe subscriptions should be increased.

Adoption of Accounts: Proposed - Graham Wheeler; Seconded - Glenys Taylor.

The Treasurer then moved on to the Income Plan and Expenditure Budget for 2008. The various headings were explained and the fact that the Committee member who 'owned' the particular event would need to work to the estimated budget. He had assumed non-AGM events would be self-funded and exhibition fees included the increase to £5. Currently he had allowed for three editions of DIGIT at a total annual cost of £6,600, but an increase in member fees by £2 would allow, for example, another issue of DIGIT per year. Mindful of Committee expenses, these were being kept as low as practical (for example by conference calls using Skype). With regard to the website, the allocation of £1000 was intended to cover an estimated running cost of £450 pa although there could be additional costs relating to any bandwidth increase or storage requirements. The remaining £550 would not in one year cover the cost of a new site.

From the floor it was suggested that maybe copies of DIGIT could be sold to non-members but this was thought to be impractical. The possibility of another Rugby-type event run at a profit was raised but it was pointed out that support from Jessops was no longer available and there were now some similar free of charge commercially run events which would compete. It was also suggested that the Exhibition DVD might be promoted to camera clubs for their programme for a charge. Clive Haynes said that the Committee would be considering a range of possibilities at the next Committee meeting.

Discussion turned to the annual subscription and finally a value of £15 was suggested on the basis that there had not been an increase for some years, that a smaller increase would only keep the Group where it has been with no further flexibility and that fees might then have to be increased further. A show of hands by those present indicated overwhelming support for a £3 increase and this will now be pursued by the Committee and put to the Council for their approval for implementation in 2009.



*The Judges ponder
Photo: Dr David Naylor LRPS*

Election of Committee

Those proposed for the Committee with the addition of Cesi Jennings were elected by the meeting. The new Committee list is shown on page 2.

Any Other Business

Print versus Digital Exhibition: It was the overwhelming opinion of those present that the Exhibition should continue to be a Print Exhibition.

Sunset Clause: Dr Barry Senior suggested that as the Digital Imaging Group was currently the largest of all the RPS Special Interest Groups and continuing to increase in size it should continue in its current form. No counter-arguments were raised and it was agreed unanimously by those present that the Group should continue.

The **Next AGM** would be held on Sunday 19 April 2009 at The Smethwick Photographic Society Club Rooms.

The meeting closed at 1130.

Members' Exhibition

Immediately after the end of the official meeting, Clive introduced the selectors for the Members' Exhibition: Brian Beaney FRPS, June Cook FRPS, Bob Rowe ARPS. An enjoyable time prior to lunch was spent by everyone looking at



*New DI Group Treasurer
Elizabeth Restall LRPS*



*New committee member
Cesi Jennings LRPS
on location!*



*Above: Chris Haydon
receives his Ribbon from
Brian Beaney FRPS.
Photo: June Cook FRPS*

*Right: Let there be light!
Bob Rowe ARPS
demonstrating Adobe's
Lightroom at the AGM
lecture.*

Photo: Roy Brown ARPS





Left: Men in white gloves. Displaying the prints for selection
Below: A closer look
Photos: Dr David Naylor LRPS



Bob Rowe ARPS presents a Ribbon to Adrian Herring ARPS
Photo: June Cook FRPS

members' prints as the selection was made. All the selected images are shown on pages 11 - 31 of this issue of DIGIT.

The Chairman's Cup and Gold Medal were awarded to Geoffrey Lea LRPS. Brian Beaney's two ribbons were awarded to Bryn Richards LRPS and Chris Haydon. June Cook's ribbons were awarded to Shelagh Roberts FRPS and Len Deeley FRPS. Bob Rowe's two ribbons were awarded to Adrian Herring ARPS and Chris Thurston LRPS.

Presentation.



in the afternoon, Bob Rowe - shown here in full flight - gave a well-received lecture and demonstration on Adobe's Lightroom and showed a selection of his AV sequences.

| 1. Income and Expenditure | | EXPENDITURE | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| INCOME | | | |
| Subscriptions | £ 10,390.11 | Committee Expenses | £ 1,100.00 |
| AGM07 | £ 245.00 | AGM07 | £ 458.00 |
| DIGIT | £ 20.90 | DIGIT | £ 10,837.62 |
| Exhibition | £ 862.37 | Exhibition | £ 829.29 |
| Bank Interest | £ 253.81 | Exhibition DVD | £ 805.26 |
| Terry Slesley Lecture | £ 607.50 | Other expenses | £ 448.27 |
| | | Alwaka | £ 400.74 |
| | | Terry Slesley Lecture | £ 337.50 |
| TOTAL | £ 12,588.89 | | £ 19,563.94 |

| 2. Balance Sheet | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Brought forward previous year | £ 12,474.23 | £ 13,107.59 | £ 8,396.72 |
| Income | £ 13,846.86 | £ 13,821.95 | £ 12,588.89 |
| Total | £ 26,321.09 | £ 26,929.55 | £ 20,985.61 |
| Expenditure | £ 13,215.56 | £ 20,532.83 | £ 15,563.94 |
| Balance | £ 13,107.59 | £ 6,396.72 | £ 5,421.67 |

| Balance made up of: | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| RPS Account | £ 12,649.26 | £ 6,934.82 | £ 4,465.27 |
| Life Memberships | £ 952.07 | £ - | £ - |
| Cash in hand | £ - | £ - | £ - |
| Unpresented cheques | £ 483.74 | £ 536.16 | £ 1,053.80 |
| Total | £ 13,107.59 | £ 6,966.72 | £ 5,421.67 |

Notes

- 1) Other Expenses include publicity and postage
- 2) Terry Slesley lecture income & expenses 'passed through' to extend DIG
- 3) AGM was subsidised by £214
- 4) Expenditure was subsidised by £57.12 (excluding DVD income)
- 5) Subscription revenue based on actual received - Dec 2006 to Nov 2007
- 6) VAT reclaim for 2007 is £411.83 (created in 2008)

| 3. Regional Account Activity | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Region | Income | Expense | Comments |
| Wessex | £ 2,432.57 | £ 217.02 | |
| Yorkshire | £ 1,539.14 | £ 938.57 | |
| South West | £ 143.00 | £ 79.00 | |
| Central Southern | £ 2,135.30 | £ 1,740.09 | |
| West Midlands | £ 2,648.02 | £ 2,316.84 | |
| North West | £ 1,158.55 | £ 328.07 | |
| East Midlands | £ 484.56 | £ 245.00 | |
| Scotland | n/a | n/a | Reported with Scottish RPS account |
| Wales | n/a | n/a | Handled directly by RPS |

David Nevins
Treasurer, Digital Imaging Group

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Tel: 01225 462841 www.rps.org Registered Charity No 212884 Registered VAT No GB 763 3257 43

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

Every once in a while we all need a make over. DIGIT was first to seek to conform with the new house style of the Society, although I did take a few issues to get it spot on I recall! Now I've been guided by the professional staff of The Journal who felt I could use a rather fresher and modern layout with advantage. I'm grateful for their help. Of course I haven't got it all right but this is the first try so let me know how you find it.

Jim Buckley Editor
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And finally, when will you send us 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

RPS Audio Visual News

RPS Wessex DI Group
1000 Saturday 21 June 2008
Judging of RPS IRIS -25
Aldbourne Memorial Hall,
Aldbourne, Wiltshire SN8 2DQ
Followed on Sunday 22 June



2008 by showings from the international panel of judges led by Robert Albright FRPS
Full details at: www.iris-25.rps.org
Tickets in advance: DI Group members £5
All others £8. All tickets on the day £10
Tickets available from Rodney Deval ARPS,
28 Haywards Close, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7AT
Cheques to RPS Wessex DI Group with SAE

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

Royal Photographic Society
18th International AV Festival

19th to 21th September 2008
The Royal Agricultural College
Cirencester

www.rps-international-av.co.uk

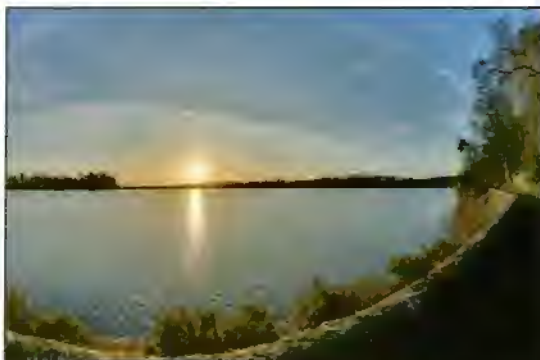
OPEN-SOURCE PHOTOGRAPHY

Peter Gawthrop LRPS joined the RPS and the DI Group in 2004 and obtained his LRPS in 2005. He has used Linux since the mid '90s. Although arising from the Linux operating system, much open-source software is also available to Apple and Microsoft users. This article looks at recently developed open-source software for merging multiple images of the same scene to enhance exposure and depth of field. Cameras are not perfect, says Peter: two defects are an inability to capture a high-contrast scene without losing highlights and shadows, and limited depth of field. Here Peter shows us how to blend images using free software. And how to gain depth of field.

As discussed in earlier DIGIT articles, one approach to the first problem is to take a sequence of bracketed exposures and use HDR (High Dynamic Range) methods and tone-mapping to give a single well exposed image from the bracketed images. An alternative approach when only three images are used is exposure blending using grey-scale masks.

A recent paper by Tom Mertens, Jan Kautz and Frank Van Reeth *Exposure Fusion* (see the link under *enfuse* below) describes a new method which solves both problems. In brief, the method selects 'good' pixels from each image according to three factors: good exposure, saturation and contrast.

The images are then blended to produce a composite image containing the best pixels. The theory has been turned into the *enfuse* software. The six bracketed images shown alongside were taken with a Canon EOS 5D with 15mm Fisheye lens at f/16 and shutter speeds of 1/4000, 1/1000, 1/250, 1/60, 1/15, and 1/4 using a tripod. None of the images is any good by itself. Putting them through *enfuse* gives this image.



This result is as good as any I have obtained using HDR methods and is much faster - just a few seconds of processing. I used a tripod, so the images were well aligned; however handheld images should first be aligned. *align_image_stack* from the *hugin* toolset does the job.

As discussed in my previous article (Digit 36) the creation of spherical panoramas requires exposure blending; for this reason the panoramic software *hugin* now incorporates *enfuse*. Because *hugin* can also align images, it can be used to fuse handheld bracketed shots. Here are



three bracketed exposures taken with a handheld Canon 5D with a EF24-105mm f/4L IS USM lens used at 105mm.

The first (average) exposure lacks detail in the white cloud and in the dark shadow. The second (2 stops under) exposure has a nice cloud; and the third (2 stops over) has detail in the shadow.



They can be aligned and fused within *hugin* by using the following steps:

1. Start *hugin* and click on the *Images* tab and then click on the *Add individual images* button and select the three images. Click on the disk icon and save your work so far.

2. In this case, a standard lens was used so go straight to the **Control points** tab.

3. In the **Control points** window there are two windows which will both initially show the first image. Use the pull down menu on the second window to select the second (darker) image. Click onto a well-defined point (for example a house window) in the left-hand image and then onto the corresponding point in the right-hand window; use the right-hand mouse button to save the point. Repeat for a further two or three well-spaced points.

4. Repeat step 3 with the dark and light and then with the light and normal images.

5. Click on the **Optimizer** tab and click **Optimize now!** This aligns the three images ready for fusing.

6. Click on the **Stitcher** tab. As a normal lens was used, select **Rectilinear** as the projection. Click **Calculate optimal size** to get the full resolution result. Under **Output** select **Blended panorama (enfuse)** and deselect everything else.

7. Click on **Save project and stitch**, choose an appropriate name for the result - **hugin** then uses **enfuse** to create this final result from the aligned images.



The image has ragged edges where the three images do not line up. Use your favourite image editor to crop.

But **enfuse** can do more than exposure blending; the fact that it uses contrast as a fusion criterion means that images can be blended to achieve enhanced depth of field. In the next column are two images taken in natural lighting with a Canon EOS 5D with a 100mm macro lens at f20 and a shutter speed of 0.3 sec. The first image was manually focused on the petal tip and the second on the inside. Thus the first image (at the top) is sharp at the tip but the stamen is blurred whereas the second image is blurred at the tip but the stamen is sharp.

These images can be fused using **hugin** in the same way as before; but with two differences

Further information is available on the web:

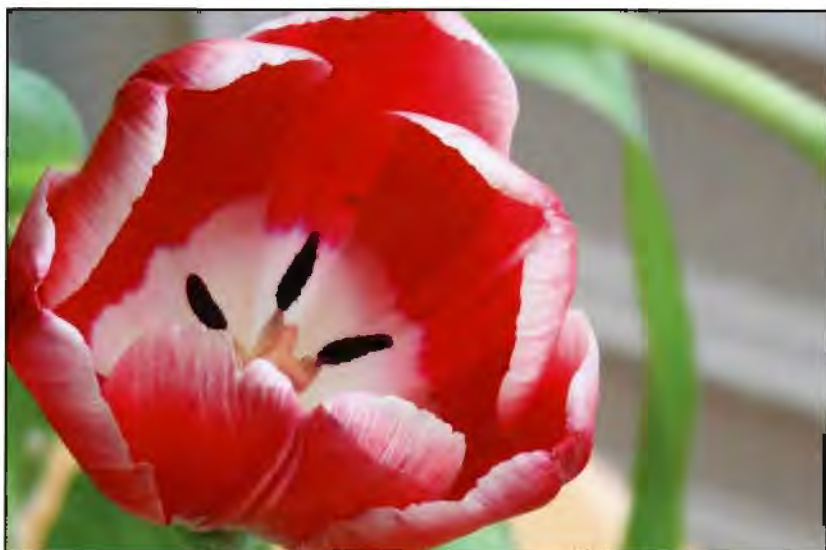
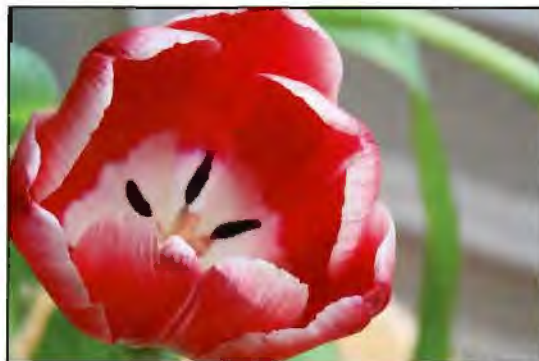
- enfuse: wiki.panotools.org/Enfuse
- Linux, Windows and Mac downloads: panospace.wordpress.com/downloads/
- align image stack: wiki.panotools.org/Align_image_stack
- Hugin (hugin.sf.net)
- Open-source photography: osp.wikidot.com
- Open-source photography examples: www.flickr.com/groups/83823859@N00

arising from the differing fields of view:

1. Before optimisation, choose the **Camera and lens** tab. Click on the second image, select new lens and click on **Load EXIF**, repeat for the third image.

2. In the optimisation stage, select **Positions and view** on the pull-down **Optimize** menu. Clicking **Optimize now!** now works out the field of view of each image. The result of applying this method to aligned images is shown below; the image appears to have a larger depth of field in that all parts of the petal and stamen are now in focus.

Peter's photos can be found on his website at:
www.lightspacewater.net
and some tutorials at:
www.lightspacewater.net/Tutorials





MY WAY WITH TREES

Peter Rawson ARPS has long been photographing trees on film and digitally. Here he explains how he creates delicate and ethereal images on a large scale and prints them on an inkjet printer.

Above: A Line of Trees with a Gap. Multiple images from a Canon 5D. File size 94 Mb as grey scale.

For as long as I can remember, I have been struck by the beauty of trees, in particular a contrasty winter skeleton against a clear sky after sunset, but also sunlight on the smooth bark of a bare beech, fresh spring leaves still small enough to allow the structure of the tree to be visible and, of course, brilliant autumn leaf colour. Of these, winter skeletons are the ones I have most wanted to photograph. But they must be sharp; not for me the fuzzy twigs of most tree photos, nor the confusion of adjacent trees or distracting backgrounds. I like my trees isolated so they can speak for themselves. What I look for is a calm day, a single tree or group of trees of character against an evenly illuminated sky, separate from adjacent distractions. Ridges and hilltops are ideal. Snow can be useful to eliminate distracting detail on the ground, otherwise the base can be washed away to remove detail and an unsightly straight edge. Sometimes only one side of a promising tree or wood is separated from distractions; in such cases I use part of the tree or wood and join it to its mirror image so both sides are clear. Also the print must be large: say 18"x24" for a single tree, up to 24"x48" or more for a wood.

Digital image manipulation and printing allow a large sharp print to be produced even from a scanned conventional negative. The ability to sharpen the image, and the ability of the inkjet printer to produce prints as sharp at the edges as at the centre (unlike an enlarging lens), are both crucial. Digital manipulation also allows

the joining of images to make a single large image from several small ones, with a useful increase in resolution. If the source images, whether from conventional negatives or from a digital camera, can produce sharp A4 prints, then 10 or 12 such images put together (with a little overlap) can produce an A1 print equally sharp. Digital capture has so many advantages that I now use it exclusively.

The real advantage in terms of improved resolution brought about by the joining of multiple images does not come without a price. In order to be able to join the images perfectly, each must match the others in terms of hue, saturation, density and contrast; there must be no movement of the subject or the camera nor any change of light or camera settings between successive exposures; the camera must be swung about a truly vertical axis, which itself must pass through the rear nodal point of the lens (to avoid parallax errors in a scene which has depth) and there must be no lens distortion (barrel or pincushion). Any converging verticals, due to tilting the camera upwards, must be corrected before or at the same time as the images are joined; not straightforward when there are no straight vertical lines to give a reference. In my experience it is impossible to meet all these conditions, so perfect joints are impossible, but by taking precautions during the capture stage and by subterfuges when joining the images, it is possible to make the joints invisible.

Changes of camera settings between exposures

can be avoided by choosing an appropriate non auto colour balance, and manual exposure. Usually a small stop is needed to give adequate depth of field, say f/11 or f/16 as is a high shutter speed to reduce the effects of subject movement or camera shake during exposure. This means choosing a high ISO setting, risking noise in the darker parts of the image. As always a compromise is needed depending on the strength of the wind gusts and the brightness of the scene. If the contrast between the brightest part of the sky behind fine twigs and the darkest shadow in which you want some detail is high, it may be necessary to use different exposures on different parts of the complete scene and match the individual images at the joining stage. It is essential to avoid over exposing the sky behind fine twigs or detail will be lost. To minimise camera shake, I always select the mirror up option and use the remote release, stand on the windward side of the camera and chose a gust free moment to make the exposure. Similarly I use manual focus, using a magnifying finder and choose a setting which gives the best compromise for the whole group of trees, so that there is no need to refocus between exposures. Usually I chose a focal length and camera position so that the height of the tree or wood can be accommodated comfortably within two frames in the portrait format. The width of a wood may need 6 or 8 exposures giving a combined image of 140Mpx or so. I always use jpeg large/fine for simplicity and to avoid excessive and unnecessary memory use. Lens distortion may be avoided by using a non-distorting prime lens or choosing the particular focal length at which a variable focal length lens changes from barrel to pin cushion distortion, but it is usually better to choose the focal length to suit the chosen viewpoint and the size of subject and accept the distortion at the taking stage. I use an in camera sharpening setting of 1 out of 7 since with the Canon EOS 5D, no sharpening at all gives a very soft image.

With trees or woods at a distance from the camera, approximating to a flat plane, parallax errors may well be lost within the lens distortion and subject movement errors, but in cases where the subject has depth, it is necessary to ensure, at the taking stage, that the camera is rotated about the lens rear nodal point. (This is fixed relative to the lens mount in simple lenses but with variable focal length lenses or with lenses having internal focusing, the nodal point moves relative to the mount.) If the camera, as opposed to the lens, is mounted on the tripod, it is necessary to adjust its fore and aft position, (to bring the nodal point on the axis of rotation), after focusing, and theoretically, in the case of a variable focus lens, after the focal length has been selected. In practice I have found that (in



the case of the Canon EOS 70 to 200 f4 lens I use) changes of focal length and position of focus make a negligible difference. (It would be necessary to check this for other lenses.) In order to adjust the position of the nodal point so that it lies on both the vertical and horizontal axes of rotation, a device is required between the tripod and the camera to allow this adjustment. I use the Panosaurus Tripod Head (about \$94 from the maker) which can just about cope with the weight of the camera and lens. Using this device in conjunction with a pan and tilt head makes much easier the job of ensuring the vertical axis of rotation is truly vertical.

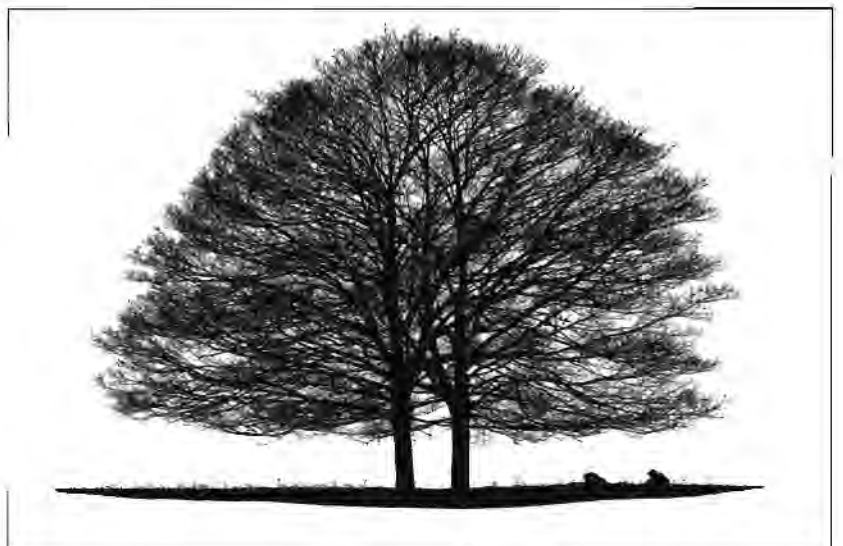
There are software programs which purport to join images to make a panorama, and they can join undemanding subjects in small prints adequately. Really clever programs could cope with differences of hue, saturation etc. and even with lens distortion, but can never cope with subject movement or parallax errors. (Even in a light wind twigs can be moved several times their diameter.) However, with a lot of time-consuming care and effort, it is possible to make joints which cannot be seen. The most serious problems are lens distortion, wind movement and convergence of verticals, as there is usually the need to point the camera upwards.

My method of joining images is to drag each one to form its own layer above a white background, sized to give ample room for the whole



Left: Millfield Clump (OS SP 729 994) was the first composite I made. It is composed of 12 separate digital images from a Canon 10D and yields a sharp print 24"x48". I have subsequently photographed this clump in spring, summer and autumn. File size 91.6 Mb as grey scale.

Below: Perfect Marriage is a print from a medium format negative of a pair of Norway Maples I used to pass every day on the way to work. I was struck by how well these two trees, having been planted close together, had grown to form the shape of a single tree; hence the title. As one tree has now been blown down, it is impossible to re-photograph the pair. File size 106 Mb as grey scale.





Above: Wood on a Hillock is also made of multiple images from a Canon 10D jointed together and then the mirror image of one half being joined to the original to improve the appearance of the left hand end. Some sheep were also digitally culled! The result is a print 24"x48", sharp throughout. For this wood, I think the retention of colour gives a more pleasing result than would a pure silhouette. File size 312 Mb as RGB.

composite image. Six images along the bottom and six along the top, would be normal for a wood, each image being trimmed to give only a small overlap. Starting with an image at the centre, I drag an adjacent image so that it registers with the first at the bottom corner. Then, at a large scale, I scroll to the top of these images to check the register there. If there is an error (most likely), I apply the perspective command (which in Photoshop is *edit>transform>perspective*) equally to both images until there is a match, using also the scale and distort commands if necessary. (Clicking the right mouse button allows quick changes between commands). If the top and bottom of the two images have been brought into register, it is likely that there will be a poor match half way up. A compromise is needed, again using the size and distort commands. (There is no point in pursuing perfection at this stage as this will waste a lot of time, cause a lot of frustration and perfection will not in any case be achieved.) All the other images on the bottom row are dealt with in the same manner. The top row follows the same procedure but is more difficult since there are now two sides to bring into register instead of only one.

The next step is to match the hue, saturation, density and contrast of each layer (image) so that there are no visible discontinuities. This can be done by putting an adjustment layer on each image and tying it to that image by clicking on the line between them whilst holding down the Alt key. I find *Curves* and *Hue and Saturation* the most useful. If the AWB and auto exposure were turned off during exposure, these adjustments may be small or even unnecessary. Next, a mask is put on each layer and with a suitably sized brush and the foreground colour black, mismatches at the

joints are washed away at a scale of 200%. Errors can be corrected by changing the foreground colour to white and brushing away the error. This is a laborious and time-consuming business but is necessary to ensure that the joints cannot be seen in the final print. By this time the file size is likely to be 500 Mb or so in RGB and is worth saving before flattening in case some errors, needing correction on an individual layer, are noticed later.

Once flattened, the overall density can be adjusted (usually a gradient is needed top to bottom) and the sky made white (for my style) without losing definition in the fine twigs at the edges of the trees. Some compromise is usually required here. If it has not been possible to isolate all of the twigs from a background distraction at the taking stage, it will be necessary to wash away the distraction from around each twig at 400%. This can be very time-consuming so should be done only after it is certain that the joining process is perfect. The type and extent of sharpening needs to be selected to give the best effect at 100%. *Filter>other>custom* can be useful. Finally it is necessary to wash away unwanted foreground and adjust the canvas size so that the image is the appropriate size within the canvas and in the required position. The image may be re-sized but should never be re-sampled as this adversely affects the definition. I leave the file at the size it turns out, and adjust to suit the print size required when setting the print instructions. Printing is at 1440 dpi using all inks even for black images, as using black ink only gives a paler black with my printer.

I derive considerable satisfaction from producing large sharp tree prints and am doubly pleased when they are appreciated by other people. More of my images can be seen on my web site: www.peterrawson.co.uk



Above: Beeches on a Barrow Multiple images from a Canon 5D. File size 148 Mb as grey scale.

RPS DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP 2008 MEMBERS' EXHIBITION

Selected by June Cook FRPS, Brian Beaney FRPS and Bob Rowe ARPS

Gold Medal and Chairman's Cup: Geoff Lea LRPS - Front Cover and page 31

Ribbons awarded by June Cook FRPS to: Shelagh Roberts FRPS and Len Deeley FRPS

Ribbons awarded by Brian Beaney FRPS to: Bryn Richards LRPS and Chris Haydon

Ribbons awarded by Bob Rowe ARPS to: Adrian Herring ARPS and Chris Thurston LRPS

Gold Medal page 31 and Ribbon winners' photographs on pages 22 and 23

The 2008 print exhibition will be shown at the following locations:

The Podium Library, Bath

Monday 9 June to Sunday 15 June

Official Opening at 1830 on 9 June by the President Dr Barry Senior HonFRPS

The Link Centre, Swindon Library

Tuesday 1 July to Saturday 26 July

The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands

Friday 1 August to Saturday 30 August

Any changes or additions will be displayed on the DI Group Website. If you have a suggestion for a showing of the exhibition this year or next or are able to give a little time to help man the venues please contact Alex Dufty LRPS 127 Bradley Avenue, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1HW Tel: 01454 778485 Email: exhibition@digit.rps.org



Two by Two

Brian Cooke LRPS



Acer Leaves

Cesi Jennings LRPS



Coogee

Peter Gawthrop LRPS



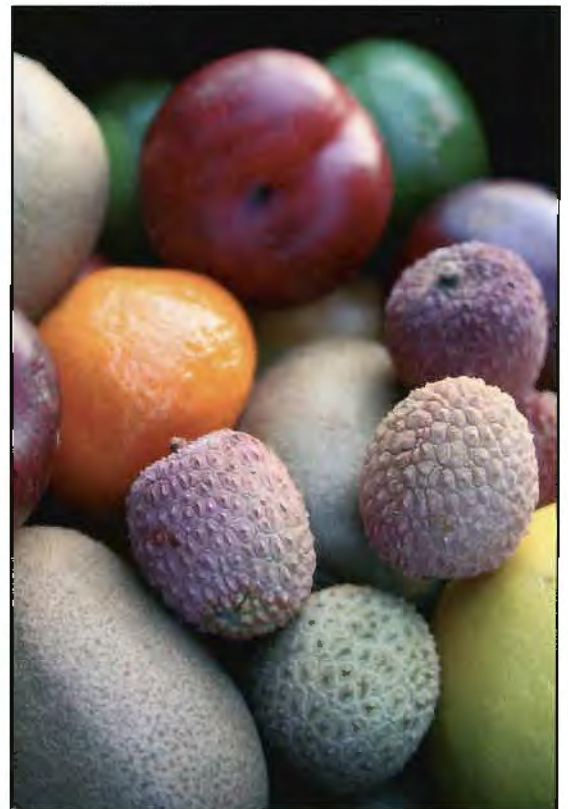
Trunks and Branches 3

Peter Rawson ARPS



Autumn Steam

Rosemary Wilman ARPS



Cezanne's Lychees

Tony Carter ARPS



Exclusive

Ray Wallace Thompson ARPS



Woman Washing Clothes

Ashwin Chauhan ARPS



Blue Sails No 1

Jean Pain LRPS



Beach in Montenegro

Ron Morgan LRPS



The Old Bike

Jeanne Bradban LRPS



Clematis Proteus

Ray Grace ARPS



Chipmunk

Dr Ria Cooke LRPS



The Pier Hotel

Bill Wisden HonFRPS



Angel Sunset 3

Guy Davies LRPS



The Game

Sue Moore FRPS



Urban

Robert Albright FRPS



Guggenheim

Janet Haines LRPS



Decima at Speed

Anne Mahany



Malachite Kingfisher 2

Jim Marsden FRPS



Early Morning Stroll

John Scotten ARPS



Katrina Pop

Herbert Housley ARPS



Equestrian Fantasy

Les Summers



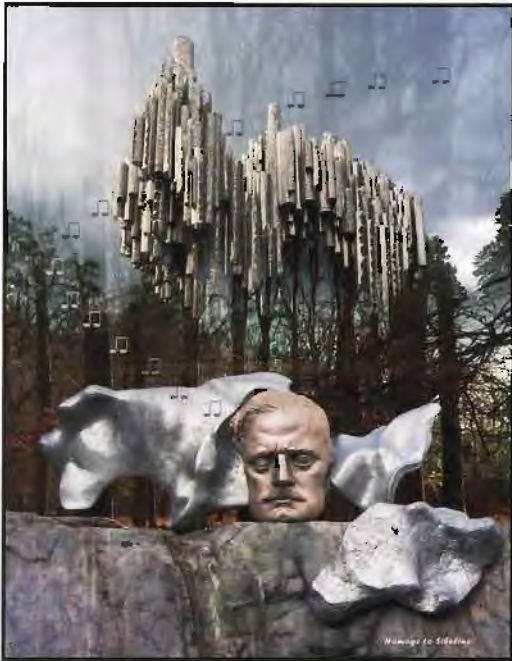
The Face

John Lacey ARPS



Seven Sisters

Steve Reynolds ARPS



Homage to Sibelius Geoffrey Hands LRPS



Rock Bird

Eileen Bennett ARPS

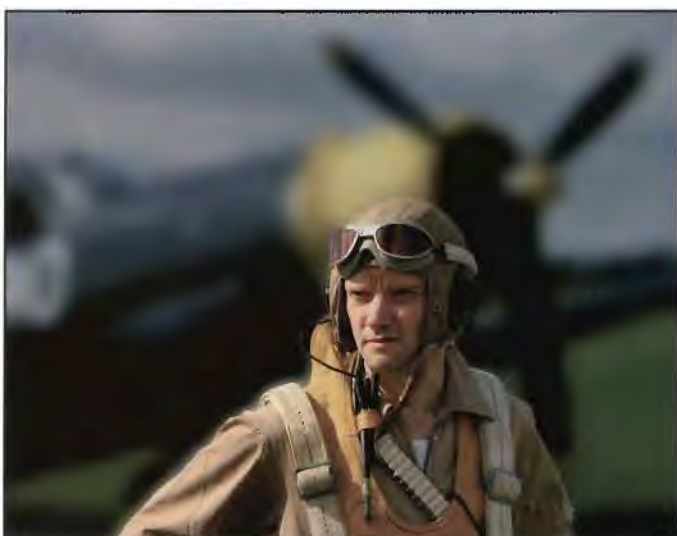


Farley Church Hampshire Peter Read LRPS



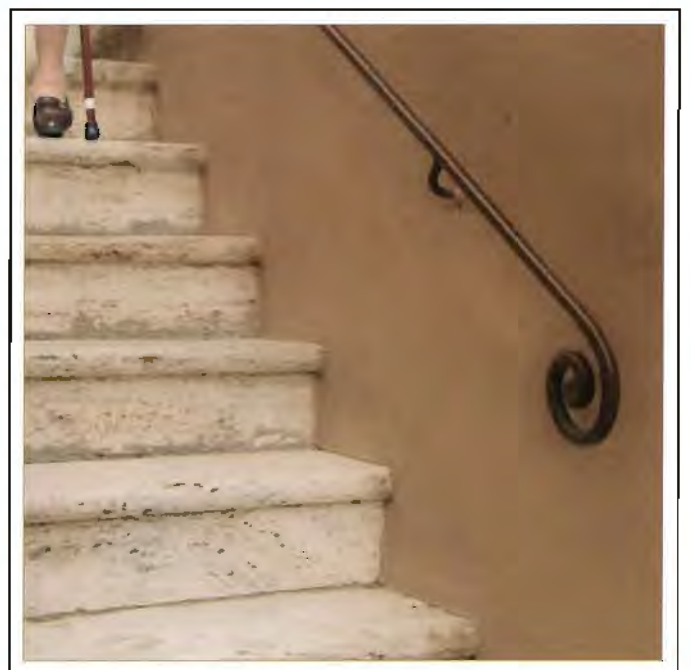
Man and Dog

Margaret Collis ARPS



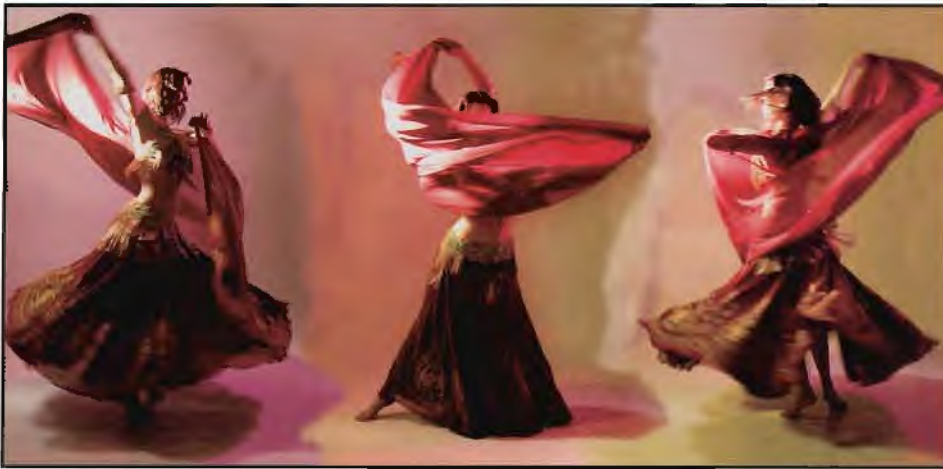
Flying Legends

Ron Gafney LRPS



Descent

Paula Davies FRPS



Turn, Turn, Turn

Leonard Viner-Caudrey



Autumn Beeches

Ian Ledgard LRPS



Paddington

Dr David Cooke LRPS



People in the Garden

Edwina Dickinson ARPS



Our Playground

Fiona Senior FRPS



Autumn Beeches

Ron Pain LRPS



Confrontation

Derek Dorsett FRPS



Venetian Mask 2

David Britton



Night Seller

Derek Britton LRPS



The Flirt

Norma Phillips LRPS



Venice 1

Nick Ayers ARPS



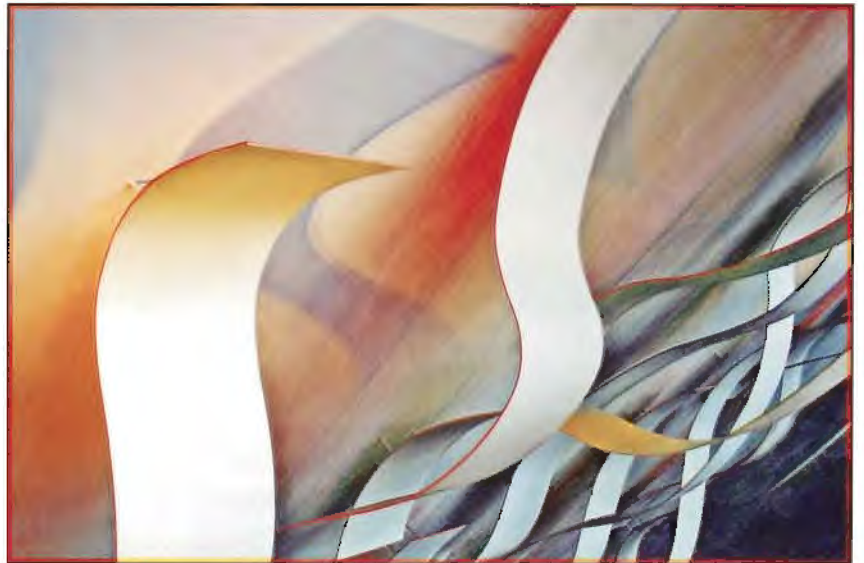
Creepy

Robert Croft LRPS



Autumn Burst

Bob Pearson ARPS



Decor- Bridgewater Hall

Jean Ashton ARPS



Winter Blues

Anne Gilmore LRPS



The Crucifixion

James Foad



Tulipia

Clive Haynes FRPS



Tree Trunk in Winter

George Iley ARPS



Backing Song

Helen Sheppard LRPS



Evening

Tony Healy ARPS



Minervois Roof Tops

Roger Norton LRPS



Redline

Brian Crawford



Rowing Boat Derwent Water Derrick Holder LRPS



Starlings Before Roosting

Elizabeth Restall LRPS



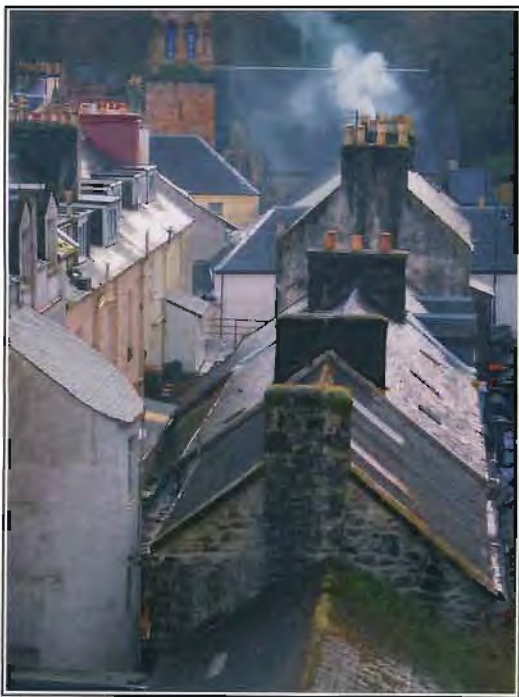
Windmill and Poppies

Norman Wiles LRPS



In My Backyard

Dr Barry Senior HonFRPS



The Back of Tobermory

Baron Woods FRPS



Nine Green Bottles Standing on the Wall

Maureen Albright ARPS



Pathway Patterns

Dennis Hancock LRPS



Shadows

Tony Poole ARPS



Clearing Storm

Bryn Richards LRPS



Watery Reflections

Chris Haydon



Stained Glass Reflection - Normandy Adrian Herring ARPS



Potato Grouper and Snappers

Len Deeley FRPS



Peach Roses

Shelagh Roberts FRPS



Sunset at Sheringham

Chris Thurston LRPS



Chinese Lantern Sheila Read FRPS



Pincushion Protea Bert Crawshaw ARPS



Memories, Arrivals and Departures Vanessa Herring LRPS



Jacey Coffee House Brian Beaney FRPS



Storm Clouds over Rannoch John Long ARPS



Watchtower Tony Byram LRPS



Guess who lives at No 2

Doreen Haines LRPS



Hey, I'm in here Charles Minchell ARPS



High and Dry

Alex Dufty LRPS



Hoar Frost - Sedgemoor

Ann Cook FRPS



Interaction No 2

Garry James LRPS



Museum

Mike Feldman FRPS



Clematis

Martin Addison FRPS



Cowslip

Sara Bunn ARPS



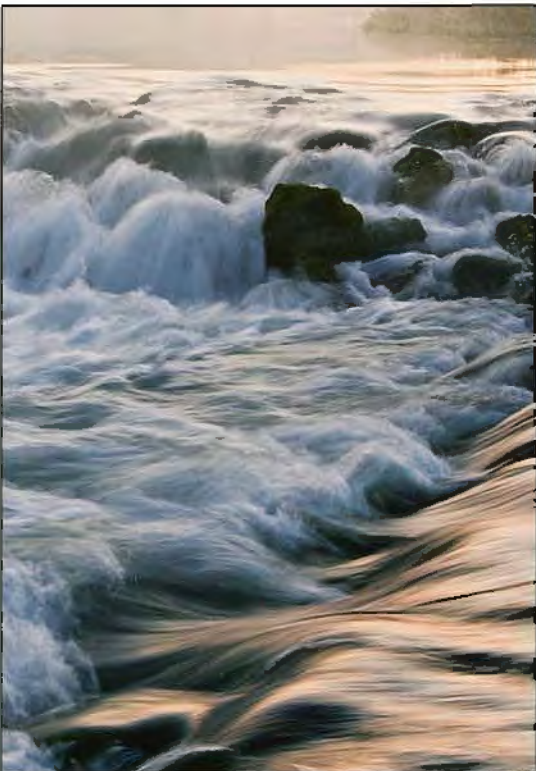
The Winter Shed

Alan Dedman LRPS



Thermal Grotto, Myvatn

John Mahany



Stour Weir at Dawn

Charles Frewin FRPS



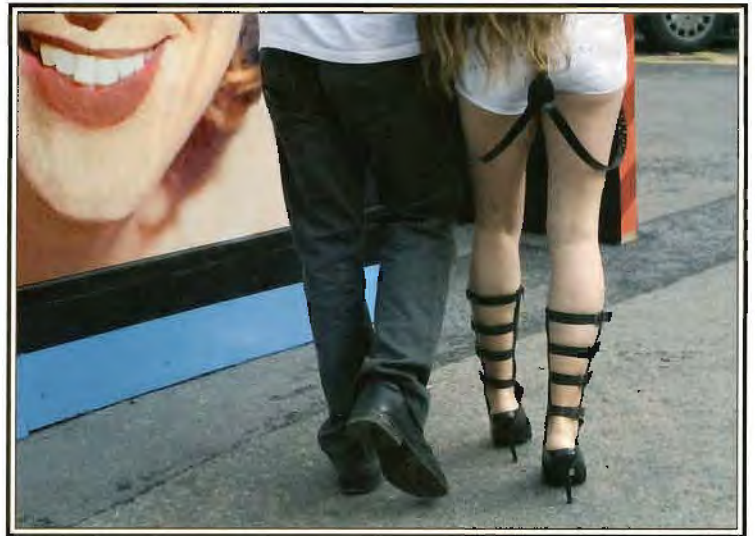
Shipwreck

Peter Stickler



Waiting for the Bus

Monique Vanstone LRPS



Smile

Margaret Salisbury FRPS



Wall Street, New York City David Pollard LRPS



What is it?

Ron Holmes ARPS



Sorrento Bridesmaids

Ray Reeves



Old Man Georgia

Dr Denise Kinch ARPS



Millennium Bridge

David Sherwill ARPS



The Cove Harbour

Martin Elder ARPS



Knightstone Island

Andy Beel FRPS



Mud Bath

Bob Moore Hon FRPS



The Kymin NT

Alan Lewis LRPS



The Moat - Little Moreton Hall

Jane Lightfoot LRPS



Winter Trees

Peter Chance LRPS



Patterns in a Rock Pool

Gaston Alziary ARPS



Frosted Leaves

Roger Holman ARPS

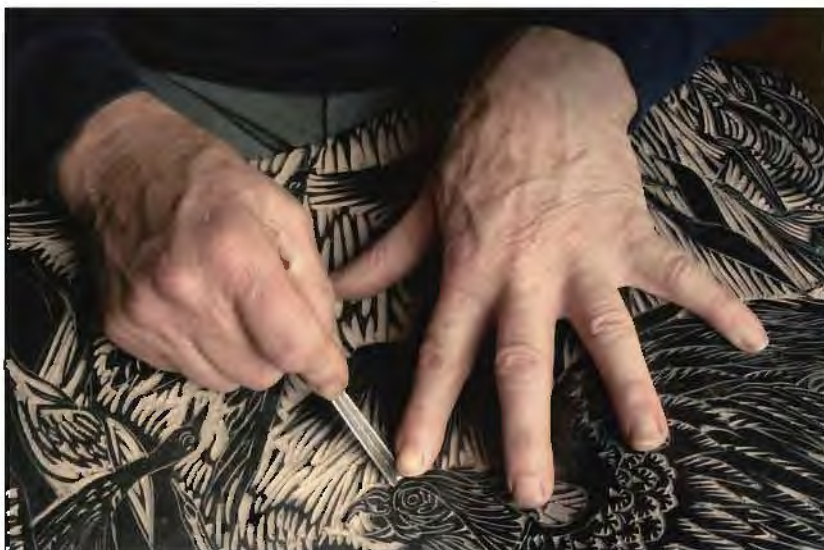


Surprised

Jim Buckley LRPS



The WEEE-Man (Eden) Peter Keverne ARPS



Hands

Graham Whistler FRPS



Waterfall Magic June Cook FRPS



Ice design 1

Eric Cleavelly LRPS



Psychedelic Fly

John Berry ARPS



Rose Margaret Merrill

Jeff Lawrence



Sweet Peas

Mei Stallworthy LRPS



The Designer Collection Cheryl Miller ARPS



The Birch Tree

Carol Wiles ARPS



Dressmakers' Dummies

Geoff Lea LRPS

YELLOWSTONE IN WINTER WITH A D3

Bob Pearson ARPS reports on how he tried out his new Nikon D3 under the adverse conditions of a winter trip to Yellowstone, USA.



My wife and I went on a winter trip to Yellowstone at the end of January with a small group of other photographers on a trip organised by *Spirit and Vision*. I received my D3 just before Christmas. Unfortunately I then got the infection that was doing the rounds so spent the time reading the manual and making the tests that I reported on in the last edition of DIGIT. I managed only a few hours of real use of the camera at Slimbridge before leaving for the States.

The D3 clearly shows its heritage from the F5 and D2x, my previous cameras. The similarity is such that one can just pick it up and use it. On studying the manual I decided to set up three shooting/custom banks: Bank A for landscape on tripod shots; bank B for wildlife shots; and C for handheld landscape shots. The differences are in the table on the right.

The disappointment here is that on auto ISO sensitivity it is not possible to choose a higher minimum shutter speed for wildlife, 1/1000 would be nice. Its possible to switch to shutter priority of course but the aperture is then automatically set to its widest position. (A firmware upgrade now allows 1/4000 of a second.) The self timer delay was set to 2 sec

Bison Yellowstone Park USA. Tripod, ISO 200, 220mm, f/13, 1/80 sec

to use on the tripod when not using a cable release. Note that for wildlife I use the AF-On button to instigate focus track, not the shutter release button. An important setting for all banks was to set the quality to lossless compressed 14-bit, this typically gave 215 images per 4Gbyte card. After using these settings for the few hours at Slimbridge I left them unchanged while in Yellowstone.

| | Bank A | Bank B | Bank C |
|--|--------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Long Exposure noise reduction | On | Off | Off |
| ISO Sensitivity - range - min shutter speed | Off | 320 - 6400 1/250 | 200 - 3200 1/160* |
| Dynamic area AF | 51 | 21 | 21 |
| Focus tracking with lock on | Normal | Off | Off |
| AF Activation | On | Off | On |
| Self timer delay | 2 sec | 10 sec | 10 sec |

*Set according to lens: 1/30 for wide angle, 1/160 for longer lens.

Packing kit for a trip to Yellowstone at this time of year is always a problem. Clearly warm clothing is a priority and a tripod and spare battery essential. My lenses and storage are listed on the next page. My wife was taking two

D300s and one was regarded as a backup should I have any problems with the D3. I purchased a Sandisk Extreme 4 for each of us prior to the trip in case we had problems in the cold with the Extreme 3 cards.

We flew to Jackson Hole and photographed along the base of the Teton ridge, and drove to West Yellowstone where we spent a week with snow coaches to take us round the park. We then drove to Gardiner, where the snow is less deep and its possible to drive into the park, and returned from Jackson Hole.

We arrived at Jackson Hole to find that the Yellowstone area already had a near all time record depth of snow, 5 feet. The first day out, with the wind chill, the temperature was -20° C. Standing around in this temperature the clothing I had decided to wear for this first day was insufficient. The following day I added an additional thermal vest and was comfortable for the rest of the trip. I wore two pairs of gloves, the inner glove was silk and the outer a thinsulate material; this was fine for operating the camera but a third pair would have been necessary if I didn't have a warm vehicle to get back into after each photo stop.

The first day also showed up equipment problems. The cable release became rigid and I decided to abandon using it and use the self timer for tripod shots. Tripods were difficult to use in snow, legs would disappear into unforeseen depth, and ice could form on the legs locking them solid.

It soon became clear that for snowy landscapes the contrast range is low and that the camera exposure metering was correctly 'exposing to the right' and producing a near ideal histogram. I decided that under these difficult operating conditions I would not compensate the exposure at all: it's all too easy to forget that compensation is on and blow highlights on the next shot. It is also too easy to miss shots while 'chimping' the image or the histogram. Throughout the whole trip I used very little exposure compensation.

It also became clear that with the snow reflecting light everywhere and the D3 set to its optimum ISO of 200, typical exposures were shorter than 1/250 second. Although a tripod is an invaluable aid to composition it was clearly not necessary from a shutter speed point of view. Frequently the light, mist and blown falling snow were changing so rapidly that I decided on a number of occasions that the tripod just got in the way and I shot hand held.

The main subject of the trip was the landscape and such images benefit from large size prints. Clearly images reproduced in this magazine are not going to do justice to the quality that this camera produces so I have chosen images to demonstrate particular points.

DI Group Secretary Bob Pearson ARPS kitted out for the Yellowstone weather.



The first picture I have chosen to include is one taken the evening after we arrived. Walking back from the evening meal took me past the small park that is the centre of Jackson Hole. I had the wide angle attached, setting my camera to Bank C and the aperture around f8 the camera selected ISO 3200. With the lens zoom at 16mm I took this shot of a pedestrian silhouetted in between the arch of elk antlers lit by LEDs. The image has had no noise reduction applied.



The shot below was taken walking back from breakfast in West Yellowstone and is

Jackson Hole. Handheld, ISO 3200, 16mm f/8, 1/30 sec

included to show the depth of snow. We were very lucky, getting fresh snow most days making for pristine conditions in the Park.



West Yellowstone. Handheld, ISO 200, 24mm f/8, 1/90 sec

The Trumpeter Swan

required a quick change of mode, which is always the problem when concentrating on landscape photography with some occasional wildlife. Fortunately I already had the



200-400mm lens attached. Using this lens hand held I had manually increased the ISO to 320. On changing from Bank C to Bank B the auto ISO function left the ISO setting unchanged. It was also necessary to set the focus mode to continuous servo, the AF-area mode to Dynamic area and to set the release mode to continuous, high speed.

Taking images in falling snow always posed the problem of what shutter speed to best capture the snow. There was certainly no fixed rule, it varied considerable with both focal length of the lens and wind speed. For gently falling snow in the UK shutter speeds around 1/20 second are usually satisfactory. The two images of Bison - the single animal on the previous page and the pair here - show the range of effect. It was necessary to use Bank A, no auto ISO on a tripod, to achieve these results. Even with a shutter speed of 1/80 second

*Bob took with him the following lenses:
200-400 mm f4
70-200 mm f2.8
24-120 mm f4-5.6
105 mm macro
14 - 24 mm f2.8*

*Shared between two photographers the storage was:
6 x 4Gb cards, Sandisk Extreme 3&4
Jobo Evolution 120 Gb DVD Burner, 30 DVDs*



Two Bison. Tripod, ISO 200, 400mm, f/11, 1/200 sec

the snow is rendered as long streaks, it's necessary to use 1/200 second to get a more blobby effect.

The image below is something I would not have seriously attempted with my previous camera. Driving back in the low light at the end of the day we came across a small herd of Pronghorn. The shot was taken hand held with the 400mm plus 1.4 tele-converter and vibration reduction turned on, Auto-ISO 800 and no noise reduction has been made.

The camera worked faultlessly during the trip, as did the two D300s. On return I loaded the images into Bridge to apply the meta data and keywords, I find Bridge much more efficient than Lightroom for this purpose. I converted to DNG format and imported into Lightroom. Examining the images, none had burnt out and the majority were within 1/3 stop of the right hand side of the histogram, an accurate exposure as one could wish to make. Close examination of the later images showed small marks from the sensor - very fine spray marks that had dried onto the sensor, a result of changing lenses under very difficult conditions. A brush could not remove them so neither would any vibration cleaning system but it cleaned up perfectly with sensor cleaning fluid but with an Indium Titanium Oxide (ITO) anti-static coating do not use a cleaning fluid containing methanol. Since my return from Yellowstone I have used the D3 for a wide range of tasks: it seems to handle every one with ease, its rapid response and sure footedness makes it a joy to use: a leap forward in camera technology.

Pronghorn. Handheld, ISO 800, 550mm, f/5.6, 1/250 sec



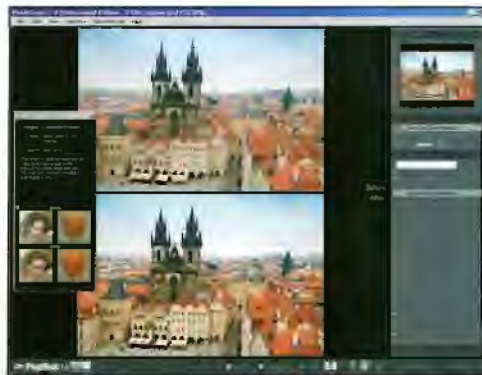
ONONE PHOTOTOOLS PROFESSIONAL FOR PHOTOSHOP

Reviewed by Sid Pearce FRPS

The Professional edition of PhotoTools has over 250 effects. The Standard edition PhotoTools 1 has 100 less. The range of filters mimics many traditional darkroom techniques. PhotoTools is an automated plug-in and only works with Photoshop CS2 and 3. It is not a standalone program and does not work with other software.

Installation is simple and support is given in most cases to both 8 and 16 bit files. Files can be JPEG, PSD, TIFF and Raw, providing your digital camera is supported.

Load your image into Photoshop and launch PhotoTools from any of three Interface sites. When loaded the interface as seen here has a before and after image in the screen centre. This can be changed, Left to Right or Top to Bottom. To the right is a navigator panel, Stack options, opacity fade slider and the full library of filters are available underneath on drop down panels.



The filters provide a very wide range of tools including Image Enhance, Photo Filters, Tinting, Black and White and Frames. The Description Inspector panel clarifies the effect of each of the filters. You can preview the effects in either single or multi-layered configurations, and then if the combination of filters appeal, save as a preset for later use. There are one or two filters that are somewhat esoteric but overall this is a very worthwhile set that will cover almost all the needs of photographers. Remember: before purchase it is always wise to try a demo.

Requirements: Windows XP SP2, Vista or Mac OS X 10.4.8 or later. Photoshop CS2 (v9.0.2), CS3. 512MB RAM (1GB recommended). 100MB hard drive space. PhotoTools 1 £105. PhotoTools Pro £157.



WEBWISE

with Dr David Cooke LRPS

Stuck with developing your photographic and digital imaging skills and feel you are not progressing?

There are now a lot of photographic resources on the internet, from tutorials covering the technical aspects of photography, including how to use Photoshop and Lightroom, to those dealing with the more artistic side. Many are in the form of podcasts which can be downloaded automatically to your computer when a new episode is published. Some are in video format but others are audio files for listening to on the move using an mp3 player.

To download and watch or listen to the programmes, you'll need to have software such as iTunes, Flash Player, QuickTime, RealPlayer, Windows Media Player or similar applications but these are easily available and free of charge both to download and to use. An easy way to subscribe to podcasts is through iTunes and details are given below.

The quality and usefulness of material on the web is very variable so some sort of guide to what's worth looking at and listening to is invaluable. To help DIG members who are interested in learning more about photography in this way, it is planned to have regular short features in DIGIT which will review a few sites and give details on how to access each site or obtain the podcasts. Each feature will try to cover both the technical and artistic side of photography, or feature the websites of photographers who members feel may be of particular interest to others. The first of the features starts below.

A new topic on the DIG Forum is also being created so that those who wish to use it can exchange ideas and the details of sites and tutorials of interest. You can find this on the DIG website <http://www.digit.rps.org>.

By no means all members of DIG are active on the Forum so if you know of any sites which you would like to recommend to the whole group (there are over 1000 of us) then please let me have details at d.f.cooke@open.ac.uk, together with a short review and I will try include it in future editions.

Photographic resources on the web Some interesting sites

The Candid Frame:

<http://www.thecandidframe.com>

This is a photographic podcast where well established and emerging photographers talk about their work. The interviews by Ibarionex R Perello are thoughtful, entertaining and informative and I would highly recommend them if you are interested in finding out how other photographers work and who and what have influenced the development of their photography. Each interview lasts about 40 minutes and, at the end, the interviewee is asked to name a photographer whom listeners should investigate.

These are audio podcasts so you can listen to them on the move using a mp3 player having downloaded them to a program such as iTunes. You can also listen to them from the main website.

Adobe Design Center:

http://www.adobe.com/designcenter/video_workshop/

This is a good place to start viewing video tutorials on Adobe products. There are separate sections for Photoshop, Bridge and Lightroom etc. Several video tutorials are listed for each. The length of each video is also stated. You view them directly on-line. However expect some delay before each video downloads and opens up. Videos can be paused if you wish to do exercises simultaneously for instance in Photoshop. You can also forward and rewind if you have missed out something. It's easy to move to the next tutorial too using the forward arrow directly on the video player.

The Radiant Vista

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

The Radiant Vista is an extremely good resource on photography and the main site is well worth investigating for The *Daily Critique* and The *Photoshop Workbench*. In the *Daily Critique*, images are reviewed by Craig Tanner. In the review, which generally lasts about 20 minutes, he discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the image and makes suggestions for improvement. You can also read comments made by others. You don't need to subscribe to the Radiant Vista site to download the podcasts or read the comments. New additions of the *Daily Critique* are generally posted every few days rather than daily.

I've found the *Daily Critique* podcasts very useful but if you want comments on your own images you should join the DIG Folio where you can post up to one image a week and get comments from

other members, as well as give your comments on images posted by others. I've found the Folio to be very helpful in the development of my photography since I joined last year. And of course the main Society website Forum and Portfolio are available.

The *Photoshop Workbench* also discusses images but it is more of a Photoshop tutorial. The programmes last between 15 and 20 minutes and are well worth watching for picking up Photoshop tips.

Both these programmes can be watched or downloaded from the main site or you can subscribe to them and have them delivered to your computer automatically when new editions are published. You may find that these podcasts do not play correctly from iTunes. If this is the case you can move it to another folder on your computer and use a different video player.

Please send suggestions for useful internet sites and resources which you would like to see included in future editions of this feature, together with a short review, to David Cooke at d.f.cooke@open.ac.uk.

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<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>

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If you want previous editions you will find these listed on the podcast page, which you can get to by clicking on the podcast icon next to the subscribe button. You can then download them by clicking on the 'get episode' button.

Acknowledgement: Thanks to Gitta Lim LRPS for her help with this new column.



Cooke by Cooke!
Dr David Cooke LRPS photographed in Cuba by his daughter and fellow DIG member Dr Ria Mishaal Cooke LRPS

GET ALONG TO A WORKSHOP

says Janet Haines LRPS

I woke up to the fact that there was a RPS Distinctions Workshop Day just a few days prior to the event, but rather than missing the opportunity to go along I made some hasty phone calls. Too late to submit my A Panel I was working on but the Southern Group organisers were more than happy to welcome me along.

This was a strange decision for me to make as when I did my L panel I had poo-pooed such Advisory Days, simply choosing to do it 'my way' – trusting to luck and my personal self confidence, other than a brief call with John Long ARPS for a bit of a steer. It paid off that time but an A panel seems a somehow more serious affair.

People had come from far and wide to attend this Advisory day in Bournemouth. And there were plenty of them. So obviously these events are thought of highly by astute members, even if I was more circumspect.

The day was led by Mike Jones LRPS (Southern Regional Organiser) with three eminent RPS panel members led by Nick Scott FRPS, with Vanessa Slawson FRPS advising on L panels and specialist George McCarthy FRPS for the Nature category.

Many photographers had come along with their work and each in turn faced the daunting task of putting their images up on the stands and then stood back awaiting the experts comments. Interestingly for me many were not in anything like a finished state but were printed on paper or printed in draft form on A4 photopaper. Some had taken the trouble to mount their work, and most had more work than was required for whichever level of distinction they aspired to.

Panel members were good. They really advised on what makes a good panel, how to sort out images that work together to the overall look and feel of a cohesive panel. They talked about printing, sizes and mounting. We were told how the various Distinctions committees operate, the levelling techniques used across the various disciplines. They helped nervous photographers with positive suggestions and you witnessed



*Nature Panel
All photos at the workshop by
Peter Read LRPS*



these individuals growing in confidence under their stewardship.

We saw some superb work, especially some from a member from the Isle of Wight who put up a beautiful panel of butterflies which he will submit for his F. Another younger member had an interesting prospective L panel, which was mono, darkroom work. 50% of his panel was felt to be of A standard, the remainder good enough for a healthy L. He, and other photographers with a similar dilemma, were advised to hold back their stronger images for the next grade distinction, or find others of comparable standards. Speaking to the other photographers it was interesting to see how, over a period as short as twelve months, their work had noticeably improved, this being demonstrated by the disparity within the panels they were displaying. I truly do believe that by working towards RPS Distinctions we all push our boundaries, striving for better work and being critical of our own weaker images. Going for Distinctions is a very worthwhile endeavour.

It was noticeable how the audience were so supportive of one another. The environment was non-threatening, friendly and open. When one young lady put up her images, mainly stunningly different portraits, she was given spontaneous applause from the audience – the only one of the day. She was sweetly reserved



*Right: A young portrait
photographer displays
her unique style.*

Left: Exchanging ideas

about getting out her work, but encouraged by Nick do to so, she displayed image after image that was refreshingly different, vibrant and each demonstrating her own unique style. Nick was quite obviously stunned and delighted as all he



Vanessa Slawson FRPS advises on a potential L Panel

would say to her was: 'You don't need our help – you're there'. His comment was that any photographer should always seek to develop their own style, and this young professional photographer from Richmond-on-Thames certainly has that in abundance. His throwaway line of 'Don't take a picture – make a picture' struck a real chord with me and a mantra I find myself repeating as I frame up to take images now.

Having commented on the work, and used images as examples to us all, most of the work shown was then taken to the tables at the rear of the room and Panel specialists worked on a one-to-one with the photographers discussing how best to select and place images into a cohesive panel.

By the end of the day I felt invigorated and full of enthusiasm for getting on with my A panel. Despite not being able to put up my own work I truly had learnt a lot about how the RPS Distinctions work, debated the pros and cons of presenting my panel as prints or on a CD, and how to put together a balanced panel of work. Generously Nick Scott made the offer that

Superb portraits



Janet Haines LRPS by herself

- A big kid enjoying the playground!

anyone could contact him anytime to discuss their work so as he lives conveniently close for me I decided to take him up on the offer. A week or so later I was knocking on his door.

His opinion was that I had some really strong images that were definitely A grade but perhaps 4 or 5 that weren't quite so strong. We jointly came to the conclusion that I had to go off and take some more to match the higher standard, and this bouncy exuberant man was encouraging me to waste no time but to simply 'Go and make it happen'.

So, barely six weeks after attending the Distinctions Workshop, here I am on the eve of presenting my A panel to the RPS Visual Arts group at Bath tomorrow. Have I learnt enough from my exposure to the efforts of these hard working folks who made the Workshop day and the private audience available to me? I do hope so as I genuinely feel the folks who have given so freely of their time and expert opinions have contributed to my ability to present a worthy A panel. Let's hope so!

Thanks to Mike Jones LRPS and his team from Southern Region for putting the effort in to organising the event. To Nick, Vanessa, and Graham for their major contribution to making it all so worthwhile. Nick for allowing me some private time to discuss my potential panel. And for photos of the event from Peter Read LRPS, who has kindly allowed us to reproduce them here.

Post Script: Unfortunately I didn't get my A this time round. In all honesty when I saw the standard I didn't deserve it. Hats off to you for those who have attained it. But I will be back and I will get there. Just needs a bit more work to do it.

For information on Distinctions and Workshop dates consult the Society website at www.rps.org. And, at <http://www.rps.org/licentiateSHIP/home> you can download a new interactive guide - a must for anyone wanting to apply for the LRPS. This download will show you:

- Successful Submissions
- How to Present your submission
- Examples of layouts
- Common Picture Faults

VISION STARTS WITH LEARNING TO SEE

explains Gwynn Robinson FRPS with a selection of his images



New Life

I purposefully chose Vision as a title as it can mean many different things – all of which are relevant to our image making. Image making, or image creation, is what we photographers are all about – regardless of the medium, format, presentation – it is the image that matters. It is not the type of camera, manipulation technique, or even the amount of difficulty obtaining an image that is seen that is of any importance – it is the final image, and nothing else.



Terror in the Wood
– *The Fear in our Lives*

It is true that equipment of a certain standard needs to be used and it is also true that the photographer needs to learn how to use his or her equipment to best advantage. But simply owning a good camera and knowing how to capture an image with it is nowhere near enough to be able to create a good image.

Using the latest technology or the highest spec computers with amazing filters and applications is no guarantee of being able to create a good image either.

Going to the farthest reaches of the earth to remote, even dangerous, places or staggeringly beautiful locations is no guarantee of being able to capture good images too.

As we all know, there is a lot more to it than that. Vision starts with learning to see. It sounds like a very odd thing to say but, excluding the naturally gifted, most people start their journey without the ability to see. Many people learn to

see by either watching other people's images being critiqued in competitions or, more painfully (and maybe more effectively), having their own images critiqued and compared with other people's images in photographic competitions.

There is a lot to learn about seeing too: composition; lighting; image quality; camera technicalities; photographic technique; levelling; cropping; sharpening; seeing the actual objects in the image; communication etc.

Many years ago, at the age of ..., well, many years ago, I had my first camera, a Kodak Brownie box camera. (Why Brownie? It was black). I don't have any of the images captured with that camera now but I remember a fair share of them providing remarkable and unintended amputation of some limb or head of the subject. But why? Could I not see what image I was taking? Actually that's almost true. Today, many people starting on their photographic journeys make elementary mistakes. Simply pointing out those mistakes doesn't always help either. We, as more mature and more accomplished photographers, have a duty to show how the images could be improved and so help those who are learning.



Opposite:
Antarctic Storm
– *Difficulties*

Once the technicalities have been learned, the basic photographic rules mastered and the ability to see gained, then it is time for a new journey – a journey into vision.

The Fun-side of Life. An image without vision lacks a soul. It will have no spirit and no purpose. It will be rather boring and uninteresting. It will be pointless and lifeless.

Hands up everyone who has captured a pointless image. Well, that's most of us then. It's guaranteed at the start of our journey. But it can happen later on too.

Vision requires the combined working of the eyes, mind and soul, to be effective. But what is it? Vision is all about communication. Communication of the scene with you, the photographer, and more importantly your skill as a photographer to communicate that scene to others in the form of a image. You are communicating a view, a feeling, a concept, an experience.



What most 'early learners' start to realise is that the experience of the moment can be quite difficult to capture as a moment of time in an image. This experience involves relationships between the participants and the place. It involves all of the senses. It even involves personal history. How can a single still image ever come close to matching that?

The most successful images capture and show that experience by being able to communicate with the viewer in a manner that can be recognised and appreciated.

Vision plays its part here as the photographer needs to be able to visualise the final image, knowing that what the eyes see (which includes the experience of the moment) is not the same as the image in the viewfinder.

Vision also plays a part for the viewer too. Viewing an image is not a passive or uninvolved process. Not only does the viewer have to understand what the photographer intended and was communicating, but the viewer brings their own life experience and knowledge into the image. This is why an image can mean so much to one person and nothing to another.

But there is the catch: without a common understanding an image is likely to mean little to most people. So a good image needs to relate the experience in a manner that we all can

appreciate. This requires another aspect of vision – a common understanding of the human condition. This may explain why our photographs can significantly improve as we mature in life.

Vision is mostly conceptual. It cannot be grasped and it cannot be directly seen. Yet, it plays the most important part in any photograph. Your vision to express and communicate and the viewer's vision in seeing and understanding.



The Battle of Life

There is another important aspect to vision, that of capturing the future of our photography. Without a vision of the desired future then it is impossible to progress with any purpose at all. This is where competitions, accreditations (like LRPS, ARPS, CPAGB), writing and teaching come in. This is where our photographic societies can take a leading role in providing the means for our visions to flourish. Most photographic societies that I know already hold competitions. How many societies hold 'teach ins' or accreditation lectures? How many societies hold practical meetings?

Our photographic societies can play a leading role in helping us all to develop and engage our visions. I urge all photographic societies to embrace this vision that I have of actively helping their members to form and fulfil their personal visions - visions that may not be apparent yet but may flourish given the chance.

*Opposite:
Entrance or Exit?
Beginning or End?*



Bob Pearson ARPS: Lone Tree won the Bristol Salon Gold Medal for best landscape in 2008. See Bob's article on the Nikon D3 on pages 32 - 34.

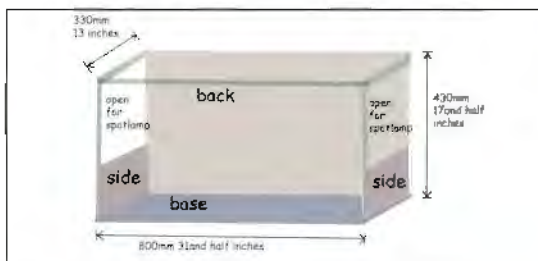
STILL LIFE IN BOX ON A BUDGET

With a bit of ingenuity and practical skills Peter Stickler tried his hand at studio shots on a small scale. And he didn't spend lots of money! This is how to do it for those who want to give it a go



Still Life has never been a real passion of mine, but in the wet, damp winter of 2007/08 when I could not get out with my camera, for the first time I turned my attention and camera to the subject of still life.

During my first posting of a still life on the DI Group Folio, Paula Davies FRPS and John Long ARPS directed me to Sergei Sogokon whose website shows truly inspirational work, even with the large areas of black. I belong to a long standing mono group (many of whom use large format film) and to present the group with an image that has no detail in the blacks is nothing less than a 'hanging offence'. Nevertheless Sergei Sogokon gave me the idea for a table top studio. In its most basic form it is an open sided box as shown in this drawing below. It is made



Spots can be positioned to illuminate the subject from both sides or just one side

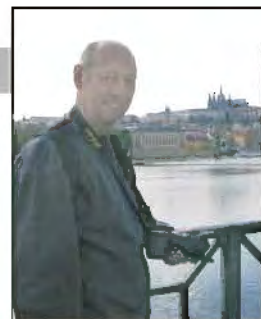


A simple arrangement of two flashguns which can be moved around inside the box and are triggered by a slave unit.

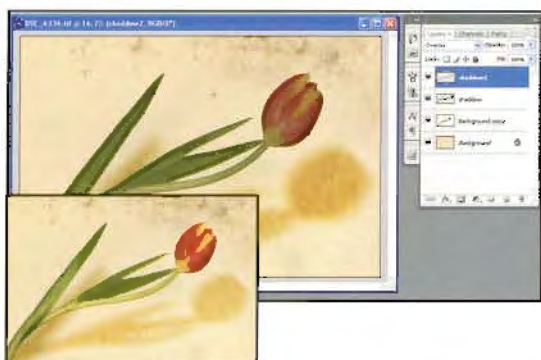
up from a solid block board base which is screwed to a block board back. Soft wood timber framing makes up the sides. With this layout it is possible to use an additional slide-in base and back. In the illustration shown on the left interlocking flooring boards from the local Wickes building supplies store have been used. Some of the images shown have paper or fabric backs, which were simply laid in position.

For lighting, holders are fitted with spot lamps. They can be positioned either side of the box, or it is possible to place both spot lamps on one side when it is best to use a silver foil reflector to direct some light into the opposite side of the image. Additional lighting from the top of the studio box is also an option. I used six spot lamps, purchased from Lidl at the great expense of £7.99.

A third option for lighting is two or more flashguns fitted with slave units. Suitable slave units can be purchased from Jessops at £4.99 each. One of my flash guns is a modern SB600 but the other is a very old Vivitar 285. I find manual mode the best. It requires some trial and error, but in the world of digital we do not



have to wait long for the results. The on-camera flash is used to trigger the two slave units which are attached to the remote flash guns. These in turn release their power into silver reflectors on either side of the box as shown on the previous page. A silver sheet on top of the box will further diffuse the light. I used this method for the tulip image. The drop shadow was then added in Photoshop as illustrated in this screen grab.



Where goes Photography?

asks Ray Wallace Thompson ARPS at 91

I've seen, experienced and taken part in photographic developments for a long time. Way back in 1934 I shot my first black and whites; in 1939 a first colour transparency (Dufay). War came and picture making had to wait until 1954 to restart with 35mm and enlarger and in 1960 to slides (Kodachrome ASA 8) followed by taped A/Vs. 1962 brought stereo also dual projection with synchroniser. And then into Digitology with SC2 + P2E + Audacity.

As Ken Biggs said recently in a lecture up here: Digital has entirely changed Photography. How true! In Digitology there is now a wide band from those folks who are delighted and excited with the first results from a new digital camera bought for under £100 and those using image editing programs like PS. This is the threshold where serious work is beginning with minor alterations of correction, then more radical extractions or additions, moving into the Creative field to produce results seemingly far removed from the original.

In my early days in Digitology I was smitten by the ability to change just about everything and, of course 'created' pictures and had a few accepted internationally. There is no doubt that at this stage technique is at a high level and there is a danger that 'images' so produced are judged on technical rather than picture quality.

And so I realised that I was becoming out of touch with real picture making and getting too excited with distortions. So eventually I returned to real picture making, using 'images' as part of the picture and sometimes regarding some way out results as rather childish. In the techniques field I find that my architectural pictures frequently take many hours of adjustment to get what I am seeking. However in many exhibitions I am quite aware that judges are dedicated to Creativity and reject 'normal work'. Nevertheless there are fields such as PSA Nature Division where there is a rule of 'Nothing added and Nothing taken out'.

Last June I entered a ten minute Digital Essay of pictures and sound in the PSA Electronic Imaging Division's 2007 Essay Competition. It was of the Lake District and every picture was digitally adjusted and the sound levels digitally controlled. It won but the judges said that the second place - which was a created set - would also have won had there been a separate Creative Section.

The Judges' comments on mine were very kind so there's room for us all.

Where has all this got me? In my 92nd year I am still trying to make pictures - and I still enjoy looking at all kinds of pictures!



Frosty Twirl
by Ray Wallace Thompson ARPS



Shelley by
Ray Wallace Thompson ARPS

ROY BROWN ARPS WRITES:

About five months ago I persuaded my cousin to buy her very first digital camera. I showed her how to use it and took a couple of shots so she could see the results on the camera screen. She didn't have a printer or computer so the neighbours printed the pictures for her.

The bug soon took hold when she saw the immediate results so they persuaded her to buy a printer which didn't need a computer: memory card straight into the printer and instant results in a variety of styles. I gave her my tripod to help keep a steady hand.

She now says that taking up this new hobby is better than sliced bread. She goes out in her car with the camera looking for subjects to photograph and takes great delight in showing them to her friends and me when I travel the 40 miles to see her. She has a good eye for subjects - it must be in the family as my grandfather was keen too, taking quarter plate and lantern slides in the 1920s.

I nearly forgot to mention : Aunt Edna is 86 years young!



Temples, palaces and trains, wildlife, people, landscapes and markets...something for everyone!

Our second charter train on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway climbs through the forests to Tindharia, then on up the mountainside to the market town of Kurseong. Road and railway run close together, and we will have a bus running just in front of the train for the photographers. We'll return to Siliguri for the night. After breakfast, the bus leaves for Kurseong, where we'll pick up our charter train climbing through Kurseong for the ride up to Darjeeling. We should arrive in Darjeeling in time for the famous Afternoon Tea served at the Windamere Hotel, little changed since the days of the Raj. If the weather's clear, there is an optional excursion early next morning up Tiger Hill to watch sunrise over the Himalayas. We'll arrange a road excursion up to Ghum to see one of the Buddhist monasteries, full of interest. There will also be time to wander round the town: there's plenty to see – the Mountaineering Institute, the Tibetan Refugee Self-help Centre and, of course, the scenery.

The following day, we'll catch the day train to Calcutta. One of the joys of rail travel in India is sitting in the carriage doorway with a camera in your lap, recording the colourful pageant that you'll be passing. In Calcutta we'll have a chartered tram ride – it's a great way to photograph the teeming streets and then we'll take a cruise down the Hooghly river (one of the branches of the Ganges) with its impressive bridges and Raj-era waterfront buildings. On our last day we'll have a walking tour of the city, see some of the markets and visit the Kumartali idol makers - fascinating!

For more information and how to book

A full itinerary and booking form can be downloaded from the Darjeeling Tours website at www.darjeelingtours.co.uk.

The fully inclusive price for the tour (ex-London) is £2,495 per person for RPS members/partners (based on two people sharing), with a single supplement of £495. If you are happy to share with another tour participant and so avoid the single supplement, please let us know on the booking form. If you prefer to arrange your own international flights the 'ground only' price is £1,995 per person.

For a full Darjeeling Tours brochure or more information, please contact Darjeeling Tours at:

Lime Tree Lodge
Thorpe Road, Mathersey,
Doncaster DN10 5ED

Tel: 01777 817798

email: tours@darjeelingtours.co.uk

web: www.darjeelingtours.co.uk

Special Offer for RPS Members!
FREE copy of Graham Whistler's
DVD on the Darjeeling Himalayan
Railway for every confirmed
booking on the tour!



Join us for a spectacular 17-day tour of Incredible India

The Royal Photographic Society, in conjunction with Darjeeling Tours – recognised experts in specialist Indian tourism – is delighted to offer its members the chance to sample some of the photographic delights that make India such a fascinating country.

The tour, scheduled for January 2009, will be accompanied by Graham Whistler, FBIPP FRPS, RPS DI Group Committee Member, as well as one of Darjeeling Tours' experienced tour managers. We can promise you the journey of a lifetime. From palaces and temples to steam engines, the breathtaking Taj Mahal, Amber Palace in Jaipur, bustling bazaars, wildlife, dazzling landscapes and fragrant tea gardens, there's something for everyone on this tour!

Day by day itinerary...

We start our journey at Heathrow on 9 January 2009 to check in for our Jet Airways flight to Delhi. We'll be met and taken by coach to Jaipur, with a stop on the way at an Indian village for photography. Next morning we'll have a gentle walking tour of the centre of Jaipur, the Pink City. There are colourful bazaars, impressive buildings in the local pink sandstone, an amazing Observatory, the famous Palace of the Winds, and museums and palaces to see. The following day we'll visit the Amber Palace built high on one of the surrounding hills. We may even be able to take an elephant ride to the Palace entrance. Our next stop is Agra where we hope to arrive in time to see the Taj Mahal at sunset.



The next day there's a visit to the Taj Mahal so you can experience its moods and apparent colour changes through the day. Agra's Red Fort is also well worth a visit, and is full of history – and fantastic views. We then make our way to Delhi, calling at the fortified deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri, and the sacred Krishna temples at Vrindavan. We'll have a city tour including Chandni Chowk bazaar, India Gate, Q'tub Minar tower and Humayan's Tomb. The following day we fly to Bagdogra and after lunch, we'll have a two hour drive to Jaldapara Wildlife Reserve. An early breakfast will be followed by elephant rides to spot the elusive one-horned rhino, as well as wild elephant and deer. In the late morning, we'll make our way back to Siliguri, and visit a typical Bengali market. In the evening, there will be a steam-hauled dining special on the UNESCO World Heritage Darjeeling Himalayan Railway from Siliguri up to Rangtong, with a 100-year-old two-foot gauge steam locomotive blasting its way up through the forest as you enjoy a three-course dinner in the line's private dining car.

