THE **RPS**
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

Upcoming DIG events

Details of all DIG events are available on the Group's website at
tinyurl.com/sxzl487

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Peter Dazeley BEM FRPS

UNSEEN LONDON,
PLATINUM PRINTING
& ADVERTISING
PHOTOGRAPHY

Sunday 19 January 2020 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

WESTERN CENTRE

Jane Kearney CPAGB
Presents a trip to
The Falkland Islands
plus demos and processing skills

Sunday 2 February 2020 Merryfield Village Hall, Ilton, TA19 9HG

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

YORKSHIRE & NE CENTRE

Steve Race

"Wild Shetland"

Saturday 15th February 2020 ~ Clements Hall, York, YO23 1BW

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

⭐ STAR EVENT

Tony Harmer
MAKING IT ...
... on mobile
... in Photoshop
... move!

Sunday 16 February 2020 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Colin Westgate FRPS
MFIAP MPAGB APAGB
THE EXPRESSIVE
LANDSCAPE
Chrissie Westgate FRPS
MIXED BLESSINGS

Sunday 22 March 2020 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Jo Teasdale FRPS
'THE FACTORY'
(Jo's FRPS panel)
'MY ADOPTED FAMILY'
+ PDI COMPETITION

Sunday 19 April 2020 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

YORKSHIRE & NE CENTRE

Diane Seddon

"Odd things, and
Multiple Exposures"

Saturday 25th April 2020 ~ Clements Hall, York, YO23 1BW

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP

THAMES VALLEY CENTRE

Sam Gregory
MORE THAN AN IMAGE
A JOURNEY INTO
LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY
& BEYOND

Sunday 17 May 2020 ~ Wokingham, Berkshire

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Cover image: Fake News by Seshi M LRPS

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From the chair

Janet Haines ARPS

In the modern world change is a given, but in a long-established organisation such as the Royal Photographic Society it has to be managed. (Peter Hayes FRPS 2019)

When I read this recently I felt it to be a very accurate statement and one worth repeating. Perhaps our new web site is an example of just this. We all automatically resist the change and think what we were used to was 'better'. But I do recall the same sentiments when the earlier web site was replaced with the one just outgoing.

The same applies regularly in our every day lives when we start to mutter "it was never like this a few years back….".

Do we really want to go back to 'the good old days' and if so how far back? How about a plate camera, or even an analogue film camera, or the vagaries of slide work and waiting for your box of latest work to plop on the door mat? How many of us resisted the change to digital cameras and now couldn't conceive of going back to the darkroom and dark days. For one thing we aren't patient enough and want to see instant results and be able to process our own work; to print on beautiful papers on affordable quality home printers.

DIG started out as a self help group when the first digital cameras came on to the market and there was little help or support out there. I take my hat off to those early pioneers who eagerly embraced the change. From their initial enthusiasm the group has continued from strength to strength, quietly updating itself along the Kaizen* principle. The loyal, hardworking DIG committee are forever coming up with little ways to give our members more ways to engage, easy methods of access, experimenting with things like online access to meetings. However in February 2020 I will be standing down as DIG Chair and we desperately need to find a DIG member who will take over that role to lead the group to the next phase of its development. It doesn't need that person to be fully conversant with the ways the Society works, it just needs someone with a bit of organisational skill and enthusiasm to lead the team. The remaining committee members can easily support you whilst you find your feet and if you can volunteer sooner rather than later then there are still a full 2 months on which you can shadow me to ensure a smooth hand over. If you value DIG and want to see it continue we do appeal to you to put your hand up and volunteer. It is your chance to give back to the group and to lead. It really is a pleasure not a grind.

It is essential in this world that we embrace change and do not resist it.

* Kaizen is a Japanese word that can be translated to mean 'continuous improvement' or 'change for the better'.

Editorial

Gary Beaton

It's surprising how quickly the next issue of DIGIT comes around! And in this issue we have a variety of images and articles which I hope will inform and inspire. We have been lucky and managed to take some time out of the busy diary of the newly installed President of the Society, Dr Alan Hodgson, who writes about some of the history of digital imaging. We also learn from Eric Begbie how sometimes limiting what goes into a final image can give a more powerful result, and Dianne Owen shows us how mini-panels of images can be so much more than the sum of their parts. Seshi tells us how his long-held view of graffiti changed over just a couple of days in Vienna and we can enjoy some of the potraits, and their stories, gathered over 40 years by Boleslaw Lutoslawski.

Add in a selection of 'DIGIT Challenges' and I hope there is something for everyone in these pages. I wish you happy reading and a happy holiday season.

The Girl on the Train

When less is more
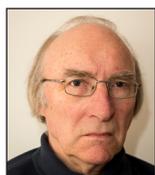
ERIC BEGBIE LRPS decides that taking some content out of a photograph can lead to a more successful image.

Often, when processing an image file, one has an idea of where the resultant photograph might be successful. Some may be suited to the careful consideration of a Camera Club judge; others might have the immediate impact demanded by exhibition selectors; a few – perish the thought

WHEN LESS IS MORE

The original shot

– might only garner one or two 'likes' on Facebook. In my experience, at least, it is fairly unusual for a photograph to be successful in all of those situations. 'The Girl on the Train' is one of very few pictures I have produced that has won both a club trophy and several international salon gold medals.

So, what is the secret of this image? Oddly, it seems to meet the epithet 'less is more'. The final photograph resulted from progressively removing elements from the original picture captured by the sensor of my camera.

I am rarely a deliberately considered photographer. I don't often have a sense of the final result when I squeeze the shutter release. More often, I happily snap away and, when I download the files from my memory card into Lightroom, I look to see if I might have captured anything that is worth working on.

That is exactly what I did on a recent trip to Sri Lanka. On a railway journey from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya, I positioned myself on the observation platform of my carriage and shot a couple of hundred images of rice paddies,

townships, tea plantations and mountainous landscapes.

When our train drew into Kotagala station, another, travelling in the opposite direction, pulled in alongside. I busied myself taking photos of the other train – mainly concentrating upon the clusters of passengers hanging off the rolling stock, as is common throughout the Indian sub-continent. It was only once I was home and reviewed my holiday snaps on the screen, that I discovered this particular image (above). Possibly because the girl appeared to be looking right down my lens, the idea of doing something creative with the photograph occurred.

The first step was to focus in on the girl by summarily discarding over 80% of the original image and cropping down from 36Mp to around 7Mp. This is perhaps the time to dispense with the objections of two groups of would-be-gurus, from either end of the photography spectrum. First of all, there are those who ask (usually with a sneer), why anyone 'needs' 24...36...48

The crop

The cropped image converted to monochrome

megapixels? My answer to this put-down is that, when one wants to crop down to less than 20% of the original frame, then a few spare megapixels can be quite handy. Then, of course, there are those who do not know their DPIs from their PPIs and aver that unbelievably high file resolutions are necessary to produce good prints. Once again, utter garbage. The final image file in this case measures only 2600 pixels square, or thereabouts, and it is perfectly capable of producing 40cm x 40cm exhibition quality prints. Maybe much larger; I haven't tried!

So, that was the first task – cut down the image so that it was almost filled by the subject (above left). But there was still an awful lot of distracting stuff drawing attention away from the girl. Probably every image I have converted to monochrome was given that treatment to avoid the distraction that colour often imposes. In this case, the red metalwork of the railway carriage simply had to go. Mono also gives the opportunity to 'warm' an image without producing unreal colour casts. I used to use Nik Silver Efex to produce mono conversions but, nowadays, Lightroom has become so powerful that supplementary software is rarely required. My first conversion of 'The Girl on the Train' still

had too much distraction, though (above right). The final step was to darken the interior of the carriage to such an extent that all of the detail behind the girl was obscured, to adjust the tones of the carriage metalwork and window surround and slightly re-align the image to produce a more pleasing orientation (see page 5).

If I am using this photograph in a projected digital image competition, then I give the whole a slightly sepia treatment just to warm it up a bit. When producing a print, I use the 'warm' setting on Epson's 'Advanced Black and White' profile and often mount in a dark brown board. It is a photo that can look good on both Fotospeed Platinum Baryta paper or on a matt surface such as Platinum Etching. A nice characteristic of both those papers is that, on my Epson P600 machine, I don't have to bother with 'custom profiles' as the bog-standard Epson software does the job very nicely.

So, maybe next time you are wondering what you can add to provide impact in one of your images, it may be worthwhile considering whether 'less could be more' and look at what you might remove.

The PDS 1010 microdensitometer. (Flatbed scan of a silver halide monochrome print on an Epson Perfection 4870.)

Long road to digital

Before taking up the reins as President of the RPS, DR ALAN HODGSON ASIS FRPS had a long, distinguished and varied career as an imaging scientist. He tells us of some of the milestones he has witnessed over the years, starting with his first digital 'camera'.

I list myself as one of those lucky people who has made a career out of digital imaging. It has been an interesting ride, if a little bumpy in parts, starting as a teenage amateur photographer moving first into photographic manufacturing and then passport image printing.

Over the years I have shared the experience across RPS events, international conferences and camera clubs. It is time to pull the threads together and tell the story. And like most journeys of discovery, it never really ends.

My first digital 'camera'

I can put a date on the start of the journey - 28th June 1982. On that day I started my first full time job, with Ilford Photo, then a manufacturer of monochrome photographic materials. My job

was in the Image Physics section of their R&D group and a large part of the role was coaxing the best out of a floor-standing device called a microdensitometer.

A child of the spy satellite industry, the role of the microdensitometer was to digitise photographic negatives. In terms of throughput the downside to the technology was it did it pixel by pixel, moving the negative step by step under a microscope. So while it could do the job with the resolution of a modern DSLR it might take a full day to digitise one 35mm negative.

The major learning point from this period was the consequences of data storage. The best we had available was a pair of 8-inch diameter floppy disc drives with a capacity of 256Kbytes per disc. That is 4 discs per megabyte or about 100 discs per modern DSLR image.

About 25 years later I was taking this story out to an RPS Digital Futures event and a printing conference in the US. The learning point I was presenting was to only generate as much image data as you can usefully store, which is just as valid now as then. It had also set me on the next stage of my journey - digital image storage.

Digital image storage

Around 1984 Ilford had a major research focus on silver halide holography, probably the most analogue application possible. However, the same photographic emulsions were being employed for digital data storage, using lasers or contact printing to write onto film formats from large optical discs to credit card stripes. I got involved in all these projects as Image Physicist and it was my first project in hybrid workflows; combining analogue photography and digital images.

Shown on the right are a couple of the actual cards produced - the maximum data held was a ground-breaking 4Mbytes of images per card. I still have the cards but the readers have long since passed into obscurity; another lesson for the future. Plan migration of format into your data storage strategy.

While we can no longer read the images we can still admire the regularity of the recorded data.

Hybrid workflows

Over the next 15 years these hybrid workflows became a large part of my project work. The

emergence of digital medical imaging still required analogue hard copy, at the time written onto silver halide photographic media using cathode ray tubes, rather like taking a contact print of an old-fashioned television screen.

At the turn of the century there was a lot of interest in old photographic processes that were celebrating their centenary. One of these was the Orotone process; prints on glass plates made visible by reflection from a gold paint
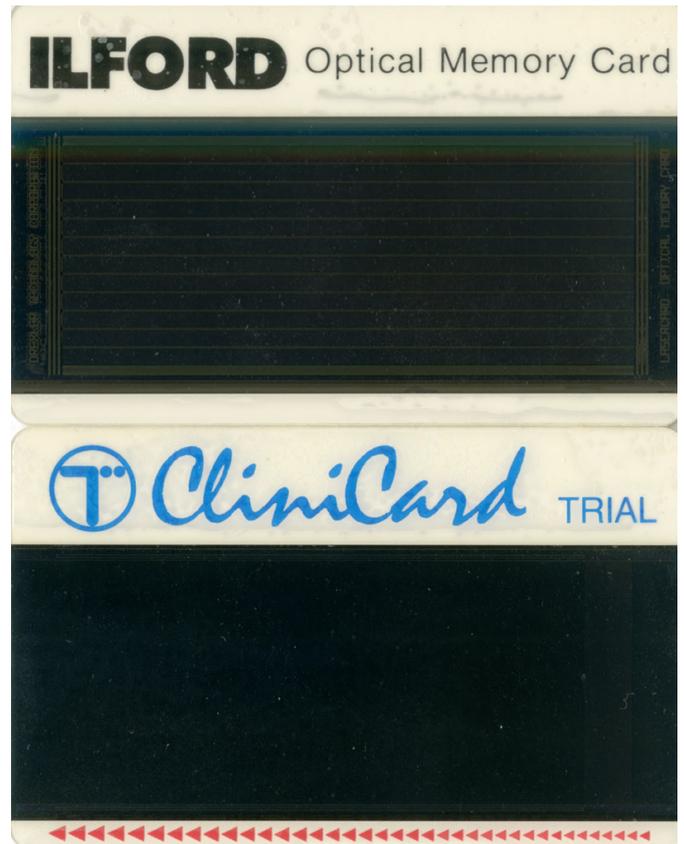
LaserCards. (Flatbed scan of the original cards on an Epson Perfection 4870.)
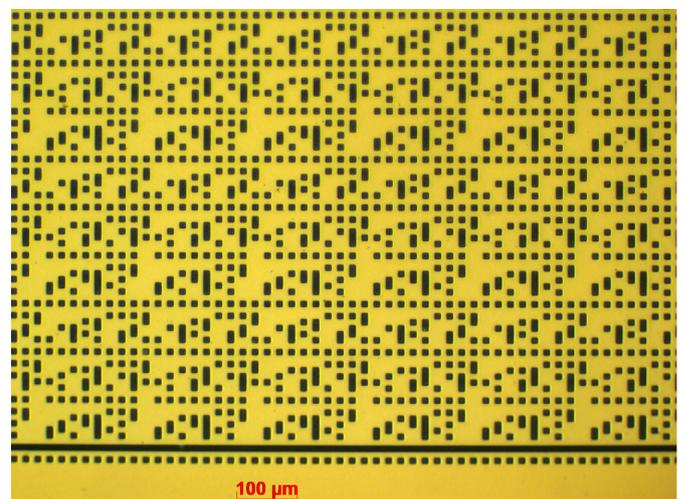
Digitised images contact printed on the cards. Image taken with a scientific grade CCD camera through a reflection microscope in 2019.

backing. The Curtis Centennial Collection was a reproduction of the original Edward Sheriff Curtis Orotones made on specially produced Ilford glass plates.

The workflow we developed is shown at the bottom of the page. There is still a lot of interest in these hybrid systems and I plan to explore this more in the future. You can find more on this in the October edition of The RPS Journal.

Inkjet ate my working life

Only two years into my silver halide photo career, the HP Thinkjet desktop printer appeared on the market. Single colour (black) and with a native resolution of only 96dpi but the writing was on the wall for photo output, often literally with some of the early systems. From 1984 I was into inkjet, first in the image physics and later in ink, media and printer evaluation within Ilford, often in collaboration with Swiss colleagues and HP. Microscope images such as the one below became a staple part of the working life.

Inkjet print circa 2006. Reflection microscope and Nikon E995 (3MPixel) camera.

It was when I left Ilford in 2004 that it dominated my work as a consultant, often working with HP and their print engines in various guises. The highlight of this was identity document printing, installing and troubleshooting systems across continents. This was probably my peak digital moment, around 2010.

Inkjet also featured strongly in my public engagement work around this time. It went out in presentations at the RPS Imaging Science Group Good Picture events in 2009 and 2011 and around the local camera club circuit. But it also intruded into one of my other interests - the issue of photographic image permanence.

The issues around the fading of silver halide prints and colour transparencies were well known by this time, if not thoroughly understood. But the emergence of inkjet prints into photographic printing raised these to a new level and took us in some unexpected directions. It took me onto the international conference circuit, organising and presenting at meetings exploring these issues.

The image permanence work also started a longer-term association with academic projects, continuing to this day in inkjet work with the University of Manchester. The most fruitful was a 3-year project with University of the Arts London which in 2012 resulted in the HP Image Permanence award for me and the RPS Selwyn award for the lead researcher, Anna Fricker.

Are we there yet?

The short answer is not quite. I now reside in a hybrid world that is all the richer for the combination of digital and analogue. And sometimes this works out in some odd ways.
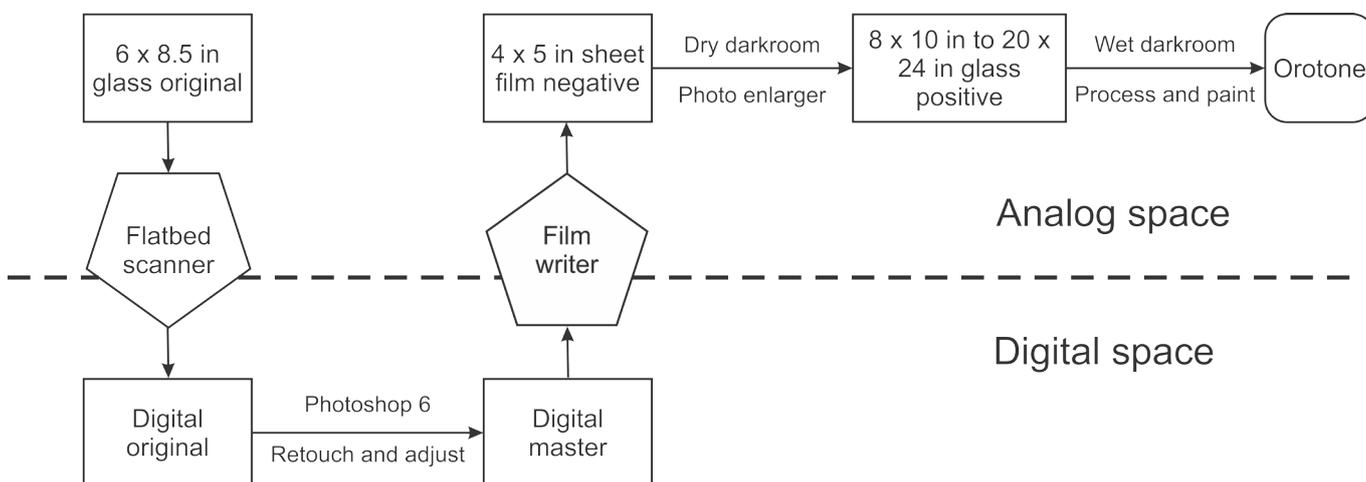
*Curtis Centennial Edition hybrid workflow*

Anna Fricker receiving the 2012 Selwyn award from RPS President Roy Robertson.

Let's take the camera side. I travel with a Nikon D750 but most of my work images are taken with smartphones as I lecture on this topic at security print conferences around the world. This work also featured at the RPS Imaging Science Group Good Picture event 2018. But on the analogue side I am currently rebuilding some scientific grade analogue CCD cameras - long journey but lots of fun.

Did you know there are ISO standards for photography? For over 10 years I have led the UK contribution to these, working on technologies as deeply analogue as photographic glass plates to the performance of digital cameras (where do you think the term ISO on your camera came from?). This ISO Technical Committee is where we also work on image permanence standards, from analogue to digital prints and from scratch testing to fading in museum conditions. With this comes a lot of public engagement as we run this knowledge out across international conferences.

And finally, to the weird stuff. My latest hybrid photos were taken with my D750 through a prism but with the light first flowing through the optics and body of a Zenit B 35mm film camera. The images have some interesting content and tell their own story.
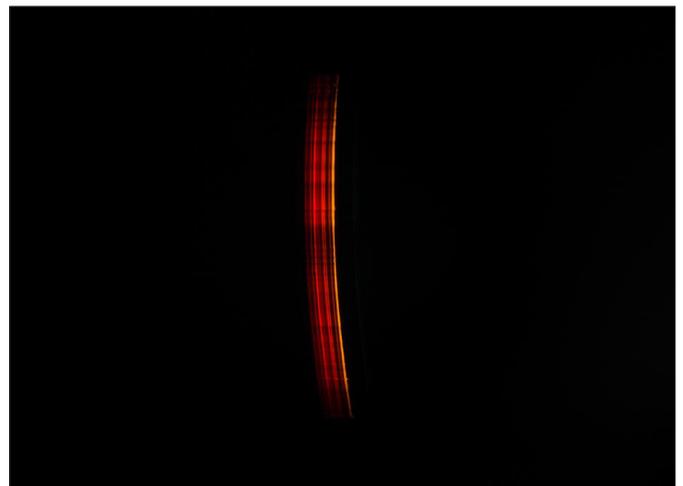

Neon lamp through Zenit B and Nikon D750

So in summary, not there yet. At 62 I still have around 30 years' worth of projects planned so had better get going. Running for RPS President Elect was but a step on the road. I have another academic collaboration planned and some more camera optics to build; from teaspoon scale to bigger-than-my-car. Watch this space!
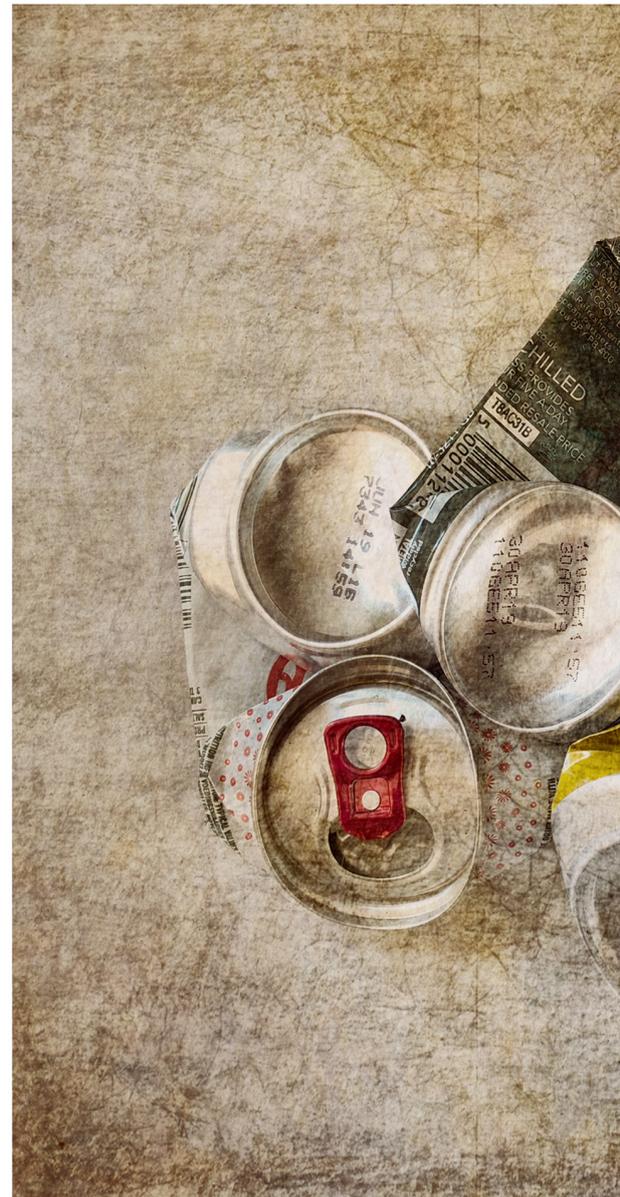
Creativity and mini-panels

DIANNE OWEN FRPS takes us on a journey to see and present not just a single image but a triptych.

I consider myself to be a Photographic Artist.

Being an inquisitive child, I was encouraged to think about what happens next and work things out rather than simply being told the answers, there was no YouTube or Google. I value the ability to be an individual and work hard to be original and different in my photography. I strive to add a feeling of place, event or emotion to the work. I'm completely self-taught and learn from every mistake. Some even work in my favour and get awards. The images are all processed individually. In the instant world of today, it takes time to produce something new that stands out from the crowd but then seems to be instantly

Squashed Cans

copied.

Triptychs

Step One - As a photographer, I love taking images but only process a small number, but more than most. Often three images can tell a story better than one, but I don't take images consciously to create single images or triptychs. It's just about enjoying the experience, the people and the environment. Recording a moment in time, often on my iPhone.

Step Two - Post processing is just as important. Working visually in sets, I use Photoshop as a creative tool not a technical one. It's important to have complete ownership of the work produced by photographing all textures and images that are in the final print. Working on sets of images

gives more of a taste of the day. There's no preplanning, story boarding or thought of the final images. I open an image from the set and play and see what happens next, adding similar textures as I work. The textures used are often from the same day's shoot. Once I have a feel for the set, the process becomes easier and often more fluid.

Step Three - The Print. My chosen medium is print and always has been, from the darkroom to the digital Lightroom today. Of course, the right choice of paper is the final step of any print. I'm lucky to have the opportunity to use Hahnemühle FineArts Paper as one of only two Brand Creatives in the UK. My favourite paper is Bamboo as it adds not only texture but also a beautiful softness to the print, but I have six papers to choose from

CREATIVITY AND MINI PANELS

Cream Walls

and I mix and match my work too.

But what is a triptych?

A triptych is a set of three images, which have a common thread, story or emotion. Personally, I feel the triptych should have a flow from one image to the next, and be three individual images not one cut into three images. The images don't have to be the same size or shape but simply work together. I like to bring out emotion in the final set.

Why triptychs?

Historically three images have been used for many years originally in religious imagery. I was introduced to the triptych, many years ago at the start of my photographic journey at Southport Photographic Society. One of the competition themes was triptychs. Immediately, I fell in love with triptychs because, after all, it's simply a mini panel. I like finding the balance and commonality of the images to create a flow or story.

How do I choose the images for my panel?

Firstly, add a new a folder on the desktop. This folder will be my collection point for the images required for the panel. The first thing is subject matter. Next, how do they link together? Do the shapes and lines work compositionally? At this point there may be more than three images in the folder as it gives more choices. I process the images individually before creating the triptych.

The majority of my work is printed at A3 so I tend to do the triptych on an A3. I open a new file with a suitable background colour and turn on the grid option to line up the three images.

Concentrating on the centre image first I add it to the middle, resizing if needed. Then I create a balance with the side images. If necessary I may change these during the process. Remember, adding a background image/texture to the panel adds an image therefore isn't a triptych, as you'll have four images not three. Images with an image background may be disqualified from a competition.

Something simple - 'Cream Walls'

Looking Close Up. Taking small parts of the environment; inspired by the late great John Wells. A walk round the local seafront produced this panel (see above). The thinking behind it, small intrusions into the big picture which all create a triangle in the triptych.

Image 1 - lines go horizontal and the dried branches face down and inward.

Image 2 - lines go vertically and the weed faces upward and central.

Image 3 - a mix of horizontal and vertically lines with a blob of purple paint.

I printed this on Photo Rag Satin to give it a more photographic feel.

Directional changes in the 'Cambridge Bikes'

Cambridge is a stunning city. The beautiful architecture and the bikes are the obvious photographic focus. We'd been to look at a museum that we passed while exploring the busy streets. Turned left and there they are, arched shaped windows and bikes securely attached. I processed seven, using similar textures. They
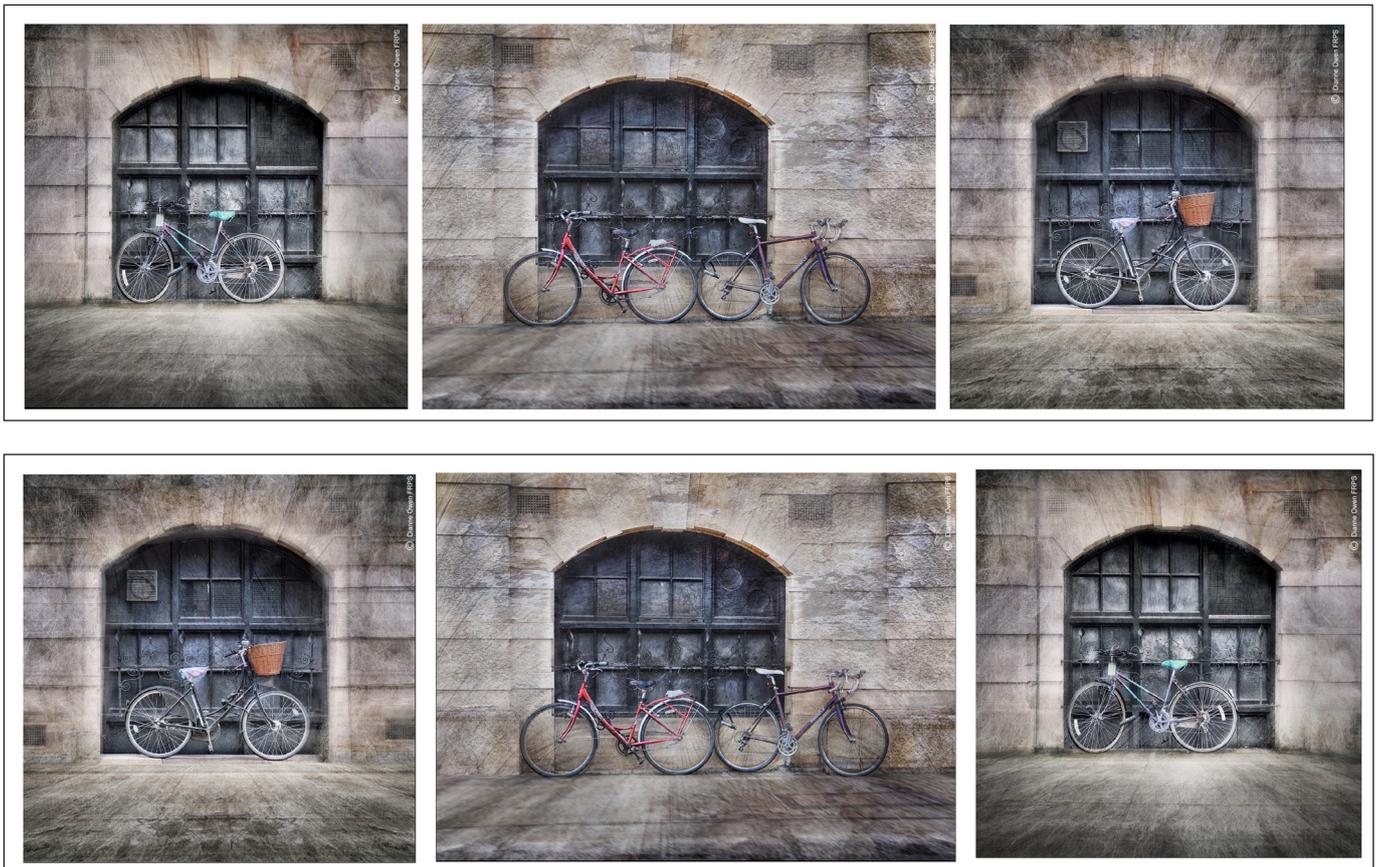
Cambridge Bikes. Which works better - the choice is yours?

weren't processed with a triptych in mind but simply because I enjoyed the compositional shapes and diversity of the bikes. There's no real answer for the composition apart from it just felt right. During a talk at a club, I was told, "reversing them is understandable but the bike chains are now on the wrong side and is incorrect". Does it matter or does it compositionally work better? Is it stronger to have two in the centre? Above you can see both the original and the reversed version with the bicycles facing in. Now, you can choose.

Choosing size and shape of the images - a still life - Squashed Cans

I was out squashing cans to put in the recycling bin and noticed the shape and distortion of the cans, so photographed them. I added a textured background to create something gritty but neutral and the yard's a bit boring. The set of 'Squashed Cans' came before the triptych. This triptych (see pages 12/13) was made for Section of the SRGB Exhibition.

Image One - yellow and green cans, facing inward.

Image Two - addition of the can which is in opposition to the first image.

Image Three - removed green can and has the cans facing in.

You have all the cans on facing toward the centre, which creates a flow though the three images.

Telling a story - The Light Watchers

This is a set that came together as part of my talk, 'The Next Step'. The chosen images had been processed as individual images.

The Gormley Sculptures at Another Place, Crosby, have been an inspiration for many years and after each visit I still find that emotional connection. There are no lighthouses at Crosby but there are some not too far away. I selected from several images in the set about beach and sea. You can make many combinations and sets mixing and matching the images as the set had the same colours and shapes involved. See the next page for two triptychs of 'The Light Watchers'.

The Next Step

My talk 'The Next Step (Creative Photography)' consists of set of images between three and six prints in each. As part of the talk, I pass prints round so the detail can be seen and Hahnemühle FineArts paper (labelled on the back) choices

CREATIVITY AND MINI PANELS
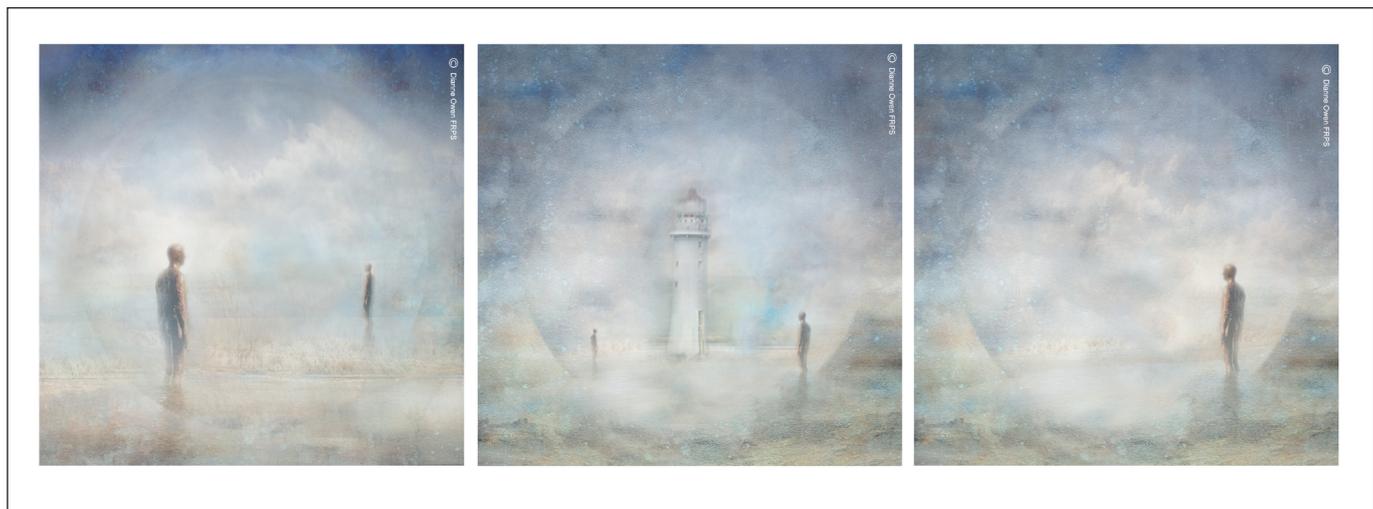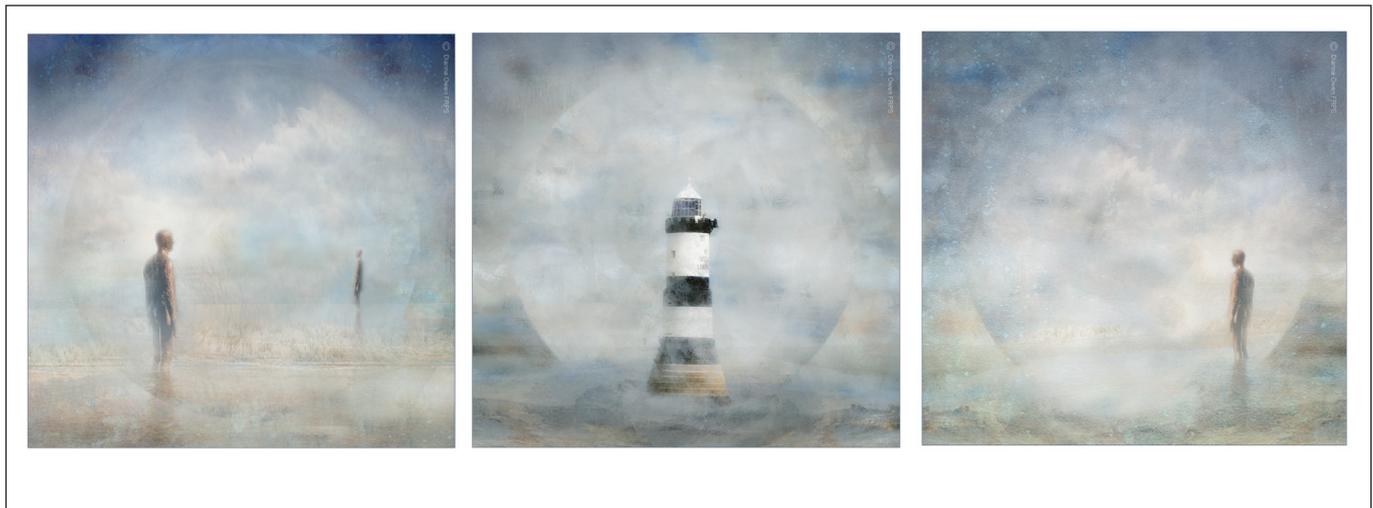
Two variations of The Light Watchers

observed. I find that making Triptychs helps this process and the audience can see more work by passing some of the prints round as triptychs.

And finally...

Although triptychs are traditionally and commonly presented horizontally, other formats may suit particular subjects. To illustrate the flexibility and variations that can be achieved with triptychs, I present 'Taxi'. I loved the taxi graveyard which fitted in well with the derelict environment of the docks.

The layout came about because of the opposition in the landscape image and managing to get both taxi's in the third.

The different shapes gave a way of illustrating the original positioning of the taxis, adding to the story.

Taxi

Landscape photography with a twist

SESHI M LRPS takes some time out of a business trip to Vienna to photograph the city streets and finds a hidden world of art.

Graffiti is defined by the oxford dictionary as 'writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place'. I have never understood graffiti and was not a fan of it either. Personally, I grew up with an understanding that it's a kind of defacement, noticed especially everywhere at the time of elections where I was brought up in India. Political parties traditionally smear the walls of home of ordinary citizens with their election slogans and advertising of candidates running for the positions. You can perhaps understand my prejudice; I was bought up seeing my neighbours clean up their compound walls after every election campaign.

My work took me to Vienna, where I had the opportunity to take a couple of days off to explore the place before my work started. I spent one whole morning trying to get my head around Austrian trams and the public transport maps. As a traditional tourist, I snapped all the popular destinations. I was a typical tourist getting my holiday snaps before the weather changed the following morning. Next day, due to the heavy downpour, I decided to photograph indoors and ended up in various cathedrals. Once you have seen one interior, the rest look the same unless you have the time, the eye, the inclination, the passion and the patience to photograph the unusual. I had the expensive Vienna pass, which regrettably was not well used due to the weather and the lack of time. The weather did not change and I decided to use the pass for a Donau Kanal

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY WITH A TWIST

Confusion and colour

Horrified

(Danube Canal) cruise. Little did I realise that this rainy afternoon would change my outlook and open my mind.

All of the canal walls were doused with colour. The colours of the graffiti stood out on that gloomy and murky afternoon. I had seen some graffiti on the walls of the city, but it was only words, this was something different. It certainly got my shutter firing and made my afternoon very pleasant.

At this point my intent was still purely photographic - colourful bright backgrounds amidst dark rainy surroundings. What followed, after the canal cruise, was a ramble along the canal trying to understand what the images actually were trying to convey. The heart of Vienna itself is relatively graffiti-free but this place is just graffiti-land. Suddenly, as a tourist and a photographer, it started to nag me and annoy me to a point where I was thinking of how to make this colourful background interesting as it stood. It did not make any sense what they were trying to convey, though occasionally there was some social messages etched in between the lines. I found my curiosity was aroused and interest

spurred - this is a subject which generally has been considered as a taboo in my upbringing, yet, forty years later, I found it suddenly alluring. It was out of order, what I was seeing and experiencing! The evening quickly came and I decided on exploratory photography of the whole canal the next day.

I embarked on photographing the graffiti the following day, which turned out to be surprisingly good weather. Being a landscape photographer, initially I found something different about shooting urban landscapes. Photographing graffiti on its own was documentary in nature, and a boring chore as I was photographing others' work with no meaning. As it was shooting pictures of someone else's work, graffiti seem to have lost its appeal and charm. Moreover, I found it difficult to isolate a single graffiti amongst the myriad of colours which stood out. The colours added confusion to the existing chaos.

The important question we constantly ask ourselves as we seek to improve and evolve is 'what can I do differently?'. Certainly, images of graffiti is not my personal work and often at times what was in front of me did not make any sense,
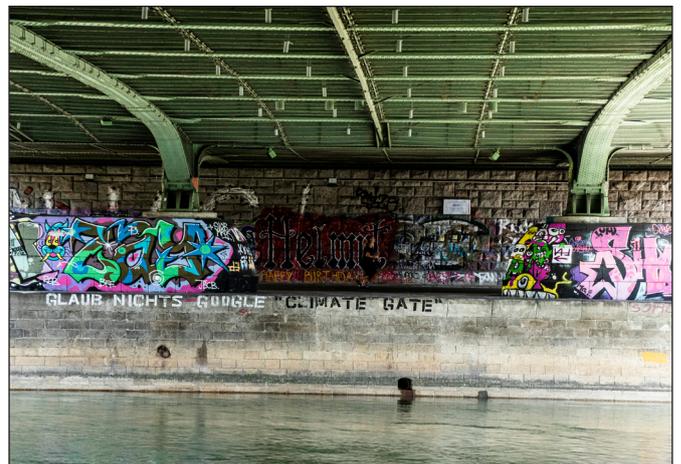
Social messages

The fit and the feeble

Big brother watching

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY WITH A TWIST

Initially, totally out of order...........by the end smiling

at least to me. To convey some authenticity, I decided to modify the landscape. By doing so I desperately wanted to attach some meaning to the landscape or bring it to life. How about incorporating humans against the background, which in landscape photography is the vogue now, but in what way? Then again, if do, will I be turning landscape into the travel genre? Or documentary, landscape, or street photography?

I decided to document the various activities of the people against the graffiti background as a street photographer, yet I was convinced in my mind that it is still landscape photography. I would like to call it urban landscapes with a twist. I still do not know what each graffiti meant. All I could see was a colourful backdrop for the activities that I would document. Certainly, the humans cannot be working or having meetings against the backdrops of graffiti hence I have tried to cover the routine and mundane activities which take place along the canal.

Graffiti is still underground but there seems to some evolving openness about it. I witnessed local police speaking to some street artists and then driving away. Subsequently I managed to have a little chat with the two artists. The city has given the various graffiti artists the length of Danube canal to express their ideas, thoughts and creativity. To protect the inner city from defacement, the government has provided the people who would like to indulge in graffiti, loosely described as graffiti artists, with the canal landscape as a massive canvas, thereby differentiating art and vandalism by providing an outlet for expressionism and creativity. In other words, it is effectively legalised in certain parts of the city. During our discussions they made a point which opened my eyes about a previously photographed subject. 'So what if

someone painted in this spot before; what I create today will be unique to me and no one can replicate that' roughly translating in my mind to 'you photograph a previously photographed landscape and what I create is unique to me yet may have already been seen by many.

There is no ownership about the murals, and anybody can paint over an existing mural with their own creative idea which apparently has got a message somewhere amongst the finished mural. The good thing about multiple layering is that it creates ever changing landscapes, canvas and murals. It can't be boring as it is forever evolving, and will be unique for a certain period of time until someone paints all over it. It's like a familiar landscape but viewed in different weather conditions, unique to that particular point in time. I am sure when I visit the same spot there will be a different painting. I walked away thinking about painting of the Forth Bridge.

After the day's work, I had a chance encounter with a young man who described himself and used the expression 'ex-graffiti artist'. I was having a quick look at the pictures on my camera LCD when he had a peek whilst serving me and asked me in very fluent English about my interest in graffiti. The conversation began…. he initially gave his name as Martin H. We had a conversation over a beer and coffee. He talked about how he and his friends used go around graffiting (I am not sure whether that word exists) the streets and even the autobahn. They used to speed in their cars in the early hours when much of the world used to be asleep. They would go back and finish it in stages if it was a very big canvas. They used to work as a group, one drawing the outline and the other filling it in. But as a group they had a common signature, which

was their identity. It was this signature which led to the arrest of their leader and the consequent split of the group. Martin escaped with a lighter sentence, the reason for which he would not divulge and I did not persist with. They would graffiti a train in the early hours and go back to stations later to watch their own art go by. Evoking a reaction amongst the crowd bought laughter and prompted thinking about their next artwork. Is this what probably spurs Banksy and his provocative art?

It is so popular in Vienna that there is even a guidebook about it (which was unfortunately sold out and so I did not get my own copy). In the first district, he mentioned an X club, which is exclusively members only and which would require a key to get in. Here, in an exhibition hall, various artists, mainly the popular and the influential get a chance to display their work and see it auctioned off. He mentioned the names of some of the commissioned artists who are actually working with big multinationals. That's when I realised graffiti is here to stay. I learnt Martin's surname and also that the beer was on the house. Yet the graffiti still did not make sense to me probably because I am a generation behind.

Later that night, back in my room browsing the pictures on my laptop, the graffiti alone did not make sense, and the addition of a human being at first did not seem to add anything else except some authenticity, albeit very little. Ethically, could I claim that the picture is mine? It is graffiti, meaning it is illegal with no ownership, but it is created by an artist and I have not altered the composition a lot to put my claim on it. Deeply pondering, I hit upon a realisation that putting a human activity and the graffiti together can be interpretative. I can now interpret the picture the way my mind thinks, and then possibly I have created my own work. This is street photography with a landscape background.

I have titled some of my images, yet many of us can make our own interpretation. So, graffiti is photogenic, colourful and meaningful, though may be slightly altered in reality. What Monet thought and painted may not be the same as we interpret. By addition or deletion of a human or even, in fact, by shooting from a different angle, the interpretation can be changed against the backdrop of the isolated image or the message. For example, the use of a mobile phone against

Work in progress

a message or an image itself can be interpreted differently. Applying the definition of graffiti, it can be safely argued that the ancient cave drawings are a form of graffiti. Analogically we can also say that it is one of the primitive ways of communication as some old evolved writings and poetry can be seen etched on the walls in some countries. Again, by definition, it is illegal, but if the government has given you the permission then surely it cannot be classed as graffiti; it becomes a street art. Graffiti or street art, in essence is a form of communication and also can be viewed as an art, whether I would prefer it on my wall is another dimension (except Banksy's).

By adding a human element I have made my own picture, with my interpretation, not to mention that I have some non-specific landscapes. Certainly graffiti seems to be a part of the normal life in Vienna. Who knows, graffiti may become a feature wall in our living rooms and working environments. The graffiti backdrop has no relation to the activities that I saw and photographed but, by the end of the day, made me appreciate it as an art and a form of communication.

Glenda Jackson – an actress

Relax, you are being photographed

For over 40 years BOLESLAW LUTOSLAWSKI has been photographing some of the greatest figures in the arts in Europe. He tells us the stories behind some of his captivating portraits.

Portraits have been created since the dawn of human society. Many thousands of years ago people painted them in caves, ancient sculptors curved marble statues to dominate town squares, and rulers decorated even ordinary coins with their profiles. In modern times photographic portraits are seen everywhere: on posters, on magazine covers, newspapers and books. We use family photos as screensavers and when going on a journey we keep portraits of our loved ones next to a passport with our own portrait inside it.

On these portraits, faces are beautiful, serious, sad, funny, comic, tired, playful, tragic, thoughtful, disinterested in things around them or a picture of subconscious dreams, spontaneous feelings, inner thoughts and desires. We hold onto these portraits forever,

immersing ourselves in these past impressions of another person.

Portrait photography is created in a fraction of a second by at least two people, two different personalities, a model and a photographer, in a moment of special affinity, a kind of spiritual kinship. This is so unique to photography, so intense, so refreshing that I feel like I am starting all over again every time I meet up with someone for a session.

On the day when I photographed Bem Le Hunte she was maybe nineteen or twenty years old, and she was in London, where she'd grown up after leaving India. The room in my house was filled with daylight. The session evolved in a natural, trusting rhythm of responding to each other.

At one point I asked Bem to stand on the edge between the diffused light coming from the window and the dark hallway in the background.

We both became silent.

I came closer, closer, very close and, looking through the lens, I noticed in her eyes a

Bem Le Hunte - writer

glimmer of concern. I asked her to readjust her richly decorated cap and she raised her hand to do so.

Yet, before this happened, I instinctively pressed the shutter button, because in that split second Bem was totally herself, safely submerged in the security of who she really was.

We walked up the stairs of St Paul's Cathedral with the afternoon sun on our backs. A diffused, warm light permeated the space, while sharper shafts of sunlight shone between the columns. This complex duality of light suited our 'stage' perfectly.

I loaded a film Neopan 400 Professional into my Canon A1.

Albert paced about like a tiger checking its territory.

I nodded my head and pointed with a hand towards the area where I wanted him to be.

Albert van Nierop with a shadow

Albert took off and I watched a professional dancer at the peak of his sublime abilities flying effortlessly against the backdrop of a wall made of soft Portland stone. I asked him to jump again and again, and only then did I take the first photograph.

Now I rested against the end wall and told Albert to jump towards me.

Guided by his dynamic movement I instinctively released the shutter.

Instantly we knew that the image was created, but it was only later, as I was developing the

RELAX, YOU ARE BEING PHOTOGRAPHED

prints in the darkroom, that I saw the intricacy and depth of its story. On this photograph I saw a portrait of Albert at his most expansive, powerful self, but I also saw a shadowy figure kneeling by the door framed by four bolts. I realised that this was just as important; that this also was a portrait of a friend of mine, of his soulful side.

Years ago, while I was still a citizen of communist Poland, still behind the Iron Curtain, I received a letter from faraway Primrose Hill in London. In response to my photographs, David Bailey had written to encourage me to study Bill Brandt, Irving Penn and Richard Avedon. Needless to say, I took his advice right away and for the next few months spent many hours gazing at deeply moving, beautiful, perfect images by those amazing photographers.

Five years later I arrived in a black taxi at Bill Brandt's London apartment and was ushered into a large room with a dark floor and a view over Holland Park. I knew this space from his photographs of nudes and portraits, all those nuances of light and shadow, tall windows,

furniture, and I could with the greatest of ease imagine the physical presence of the models who posed for Bill Brandt there.

After a short while Bill Brandt emerged from his darkroom and without much preamble examined my photographs, choosing those he liked. I asked him then if I could take portraits of him. He accepted, so I set up my Canon A1, put the camera in front of my face and realized that his deep, observant eyes were piercing into mine, while I was focusing on them through the lens.

Soon after I was looking at Bill Brandt again, but this time it was in my darkroom and the same eyes were emerging from a print still immersed in a developer.

A week later I visited Bill Brandt with those portraits. They were my homage to him.

Our bodies are governed by intimate feelings, unconscious dreams, innate instincts and secret desires. While we are talking, explaining complex things, our words are reinforced – sometimes even replaced – by gestures and movements of the hands and fingers.

*Sir Peter Hall – a theatre, film and opera director*

It is not so difficult to photograph gestures, because they happen in harmony with our minds and the events around us. By observing the feelings and thoughts of the people who pose for me, I can often predict their flow. Then I shoot, so their spontaneous movements place their characters within naturally

Bill Brandt - photographer

embraced situations.

A number of times I've photographed people who have attempted to instruct me on how I should take their portraits. Most, if not all of them, haven't the faintest idea about portrait photography, but this doesn't prevent them from striking a pose and, with a gesture worthy of a great composer, indicating when to snap a picture. Of course, I never pay attention to their commands: how their personality will be revealed in an image is something I decide alone.

When I came to the BBC at the appointed hour, Robert Kee was still in a meeting. I was ushered to his office, which was lit by a fluorescent tube. After twenty minutes or so he walked in quickly and, without apologizing for being late, sat in a chair, with his back to the window.

I was already prepared for the session, so I looked at him in an observant manner, nesting a camera in my hand. Robert Kee sat

Robert Kee - journalist

up straight and said something, but I do not remember what, because I interrupted him in mid-sentence, saying that the lighting in his room was terrible. Then there was silence while I checked the intensity of light reflected of his face. After a short while, I focused the lens on him and with a camera in front of my face slowly moved around the desk towards the window, because I needed daylight.

'Oh, when will the photo be taken?!', Robert Kee snapped and turned towards me.

It was exactly at that moment that I pressed the shutter button.

One could say that it was Robert Kee, after all, who inspired this image, yet perhaps not in the way he envisaged it.

I photographed the famous and truly great actress Glenda Jackson in her dressing room at the theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue, London, during a break between performances (see page 22). At some point I asked her to sit in front of the mirror. A moment later she glanced at her reflection, while I watched her through the lens. Her body, her face, her eyes were so touchingly natural, because she never loses the truth of her inner soul, which dwells inside an amazing woman.

This was a wonderful gift that I wasn't going to miss.

Today I was going to print large photographs taken five days previously at the Royal Festival Hall in London. I placed the film inside an enlarger, set the focus, arranged the Agfa Record Rapid paper underneath, exposed and gently slipped it into the developer. It takes one hundred and eighty seconds for an image to reach its depth and contrast. During that time, out of nothingness, out of a rectangular, blank sheet, shapes slowly emerge, transformed by a chemical process into the intricate scene that I'd captured some time before in a fraction of a second.

I leaned over the image, still submerged in the developer, and watched as the musicians with their instruments became clearer and clearer, the velvety blackness of space getting

RELAX, YOU ARE BEING PHOTOGRAPHED

Symphony orchestra

darker and darker. Above all I was observing the figure of the conductor, who was leading a large orchestra with his gesture.

It is amazing to see how influential and powerful our hands are.

The conclusion

On the 25th of May 2013 I walked into MOS, an art centre built only a year ago close to the heart of the Old City of Krakow, Poland, my home town. I came to have a conversation with my readers about a profession which is the foundation of my personality, about being a portrait photographer.

While showing portraits of people from all walks of life, who shared with me the intensity of their eyes, lips, gestures, beings for the duration of a session, I touched on guiding principles of my work: Observe, listen, stay honest, truthful, instinctive and above all - fearlessly creative.

Bo at RADA

NON, JE NE REGRETTE RIEN

Janet Haines ARPS

You may well know the Edith Piaf song that inspired this piece of work, one of the 20 images from my Irish Photographic Federation successful Fellowship panel. A strong powerful song that has personal resonance for me; but how to portray it, that was my challenge.

I knew I wanted a model shot where she is showing a certain aloofness and strength. This proved to be more difficult to achieve than I had thought as I had three models prior to this one who had tried but not quite given me the 'look and feel' that I wanted. Then Ivory Flame came to stay, for a session together in my home studio. Immediately I told her what I wanted to achieve she got the idea. Despite being a model more renowned for her soft pre-Raphalite themed work we decided on slightly heavier makeup, and her black distinctive outfit would work well. We played the music on loop whilst we worked, to get us both 'in the mood'. I shot from below the normal head height to get her looking down at me, to increase the feeling of power. And lit the face more heavily knowing I was going to put her into a dark heavy background.

The background was already in my library and I knew before I started this piece it was the one I would use. I had the vision in my head so just had to get all the elements to come together.

You will see from the screen grab (next page, top) that Ivory Flame had given me plenty to choose from, far more than is shown here, but I liked one pose in particular, however it unfortunately had one hand partially hidden behind the skirt and I felt it important to the strength of the pose that an exposed hand increased the feeling of defiance I was seeking. So a hand was imported from one of the other shots and because they were all taken at the same time this represented no problem in terms of

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★ ★ ★ ★
No regrets.tif
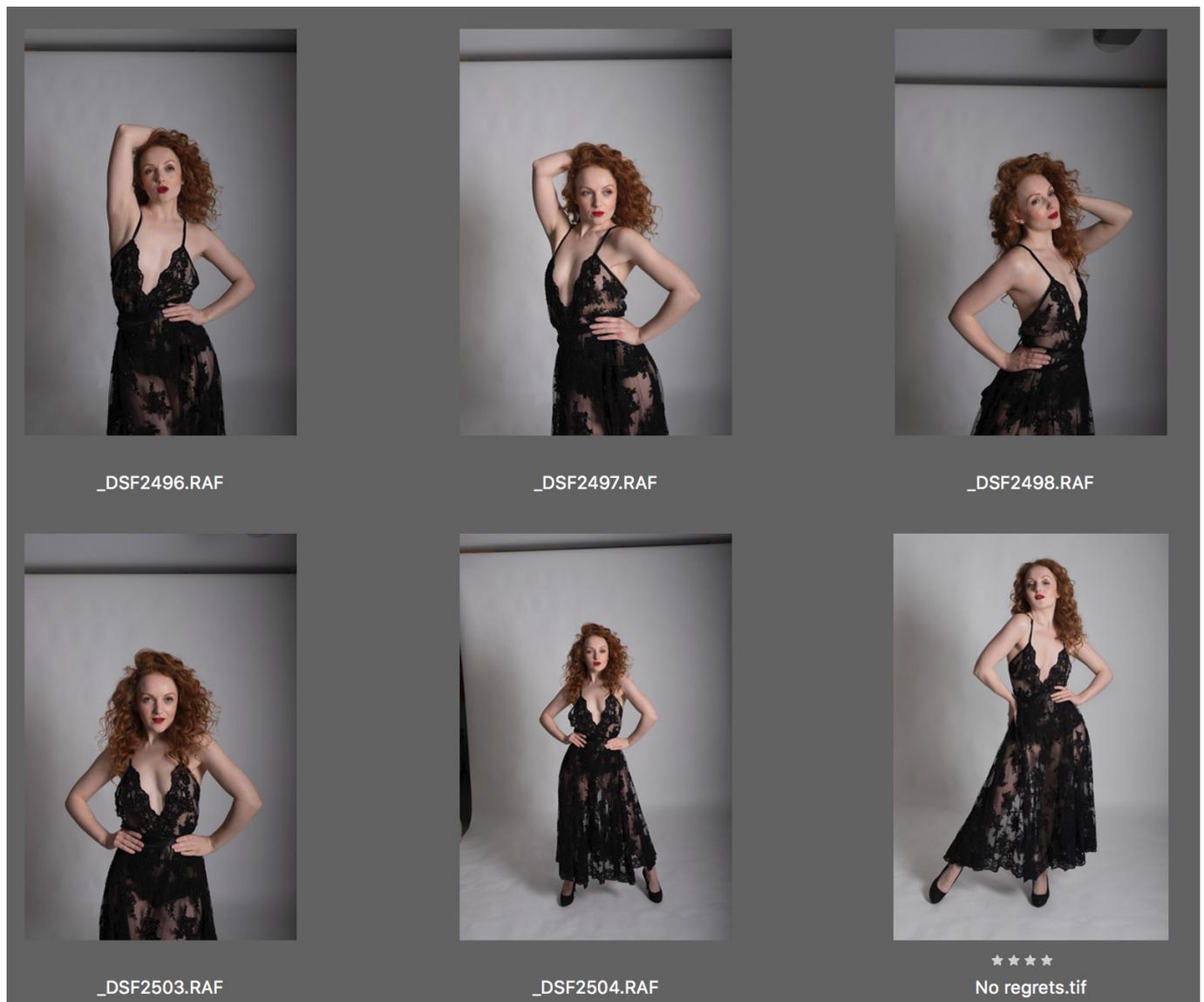
A selection from the shoot with Ivory Flame

the lighting. Sometimes if you have to import a body part from a different series toning them together is essential to make them look believable.

I also shot the fabric of the skirt (opposite, top). This is a trick I often adopt as it often makes a great co-ordinated texture for the image it is associated with, but at the very least gets added to the library of 1000+ textures.

Now to prepare the background. As the entire panel all needed to be precisely the same dimensions and in landscape mode, I simply selected the entire background image and using the edit tools adjusted the dimensions of the original portrait mode background (opposite, bottom) to fit the landscape dimensions. It also added to the grandeur of the hallway in a way that suited my vision. You will notice that this black hallway was shot in a furniture shop so had openings in to the various 'rooms' along the corridor. These had to be dealt with so on the left hand side I placed the model to over shadow the entrance and on the right hand side I found an image of the Eiffel Tower, which again fitted with my vision rather nicely, providing the French link I felt I wanted. Things were coming together well.

Producing montage work such as this often requires the final touches to bring the disparate elements together in an artful way. I always say that when producing fantasy works like this that they have to be believable - i.e., it is important to look at all the elements and ensure that the lighting is not different. One thing I often do though is mess around with scale. Ask yourself with this one - is the model possibly out of scale with the height of the hallway? Possibly she is - but is it important for this work to have her out of scale and dominant? I think so.

The final touches here are the use of a smoke image (produced from a cloud shot) and the fabric texture. The latter can be seen most dominantly on the right-hand side wall where the pattern breaks up the matt black wall to advantage, and corresponds to the weird candle dripping light shades. Both smoke and texture are applied as separate layers and masked through, with adjustments to the opacity until I felt they blended well together. I do not cut the model out hard against the textures but allow the smoke to overlap her a little, albeit at a very soft low opacity level. This helps to stop the model looking 'cut out', which of course she had to be from her original white studio background.

Rather like a hairdresser cutting hair, it is always difficult to know when to stop. I find myself twiddling around moderating the various elements until I am finally happy. The PSD file can often have many adjustment levels, as well as one for each element of the work. Once the PSD is flattened, I will still perhaps do some additional dodging and burning or levels adjustments to make it as good as I can prior to printing. For me printing is the ultimate finish to any piece of work and for this panel it went on the Permajet Portrait White, one of my all time favourite papers.

Non, je ne regrette rien ……. No, I do not regret anything.
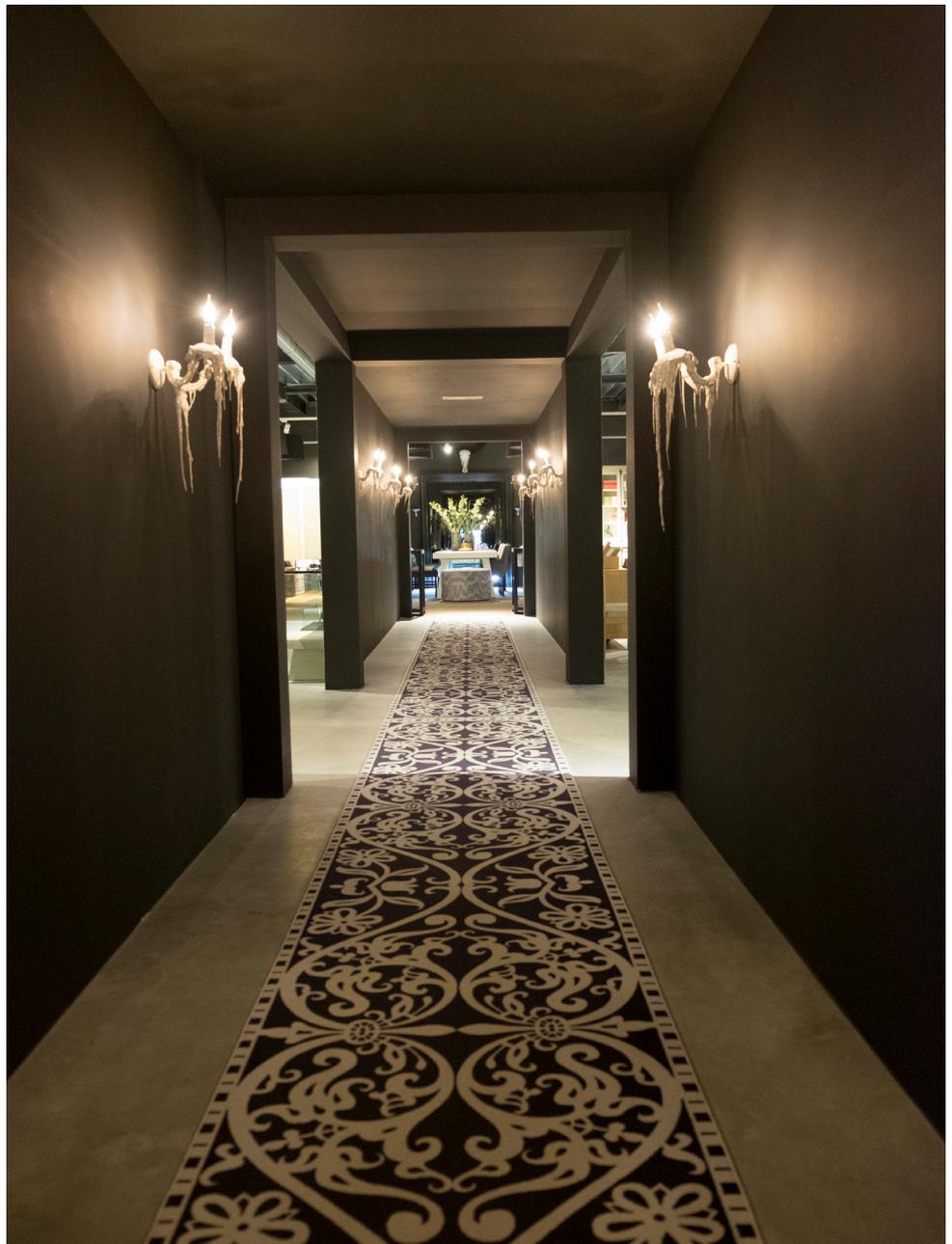
STAND AND STARE

Simon Street ARPS

'Stand and Stare' was to be in a central position in my ARPS panel. What follows was my attempt at 'disaster recovery' of a technically poor image that still had emotional merit. I had chosen a Conceptual and Contemporary theme I called, 'All the Lonely People.' I wanted elderly people lost in thought and I was looking for a dark and stormy backdrop sympathetic to the theme. Unfortunately, Worthing on a grey freezing-cold January day was not playing ball. I ran towards this tall man at a bus stop taking pictures as I moved and shooting from the waist for a dramatic composition. The original RAW file sequence (next page, top) was of a near silhouetted man. I selected the fourth image.

My early Lightroom version (next page) was still littered with technical problems: little facial detail, no sky detail, no clothing detail and distracting signage on the bus. In Lightroom, I tried to recover a little. Firstly, I pushed the Shadow to +64 and exposure by 0.5 stop to recover body detail. A square crop
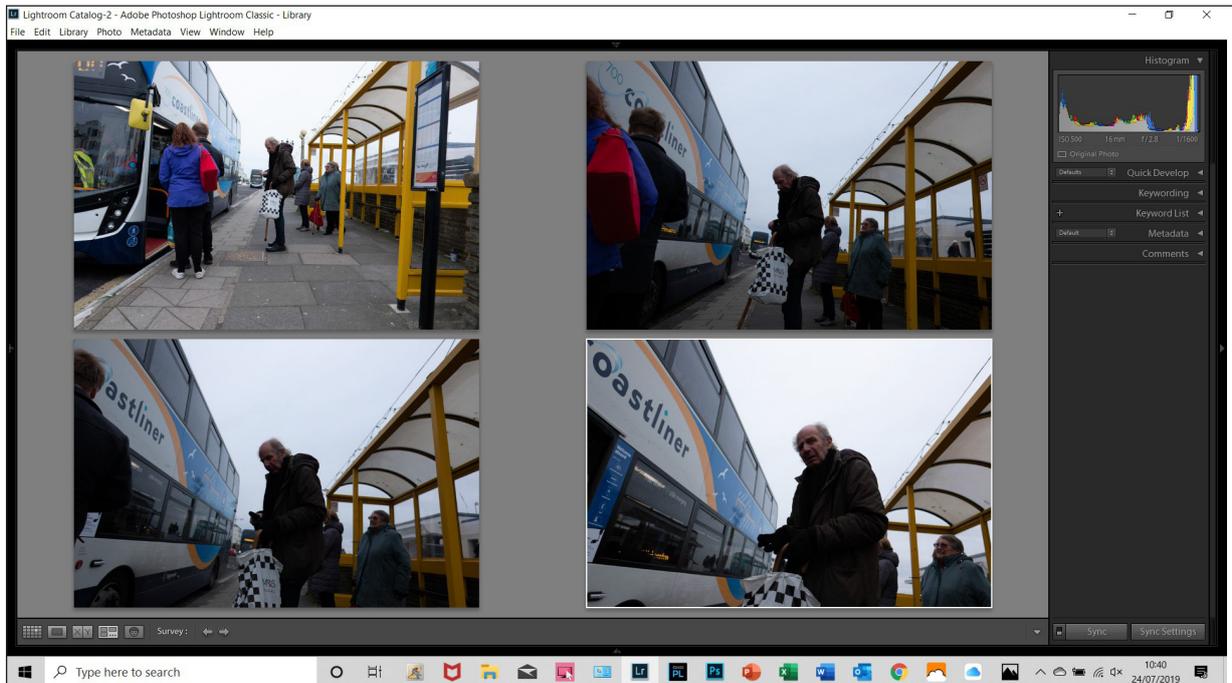
The original RAW file sequence

(as all of the panel) gave a high latitude to remove the unwanted people and most of the bus. Taking the Blue mix down dramatically to -60 and Sharpness up to 27 allowed a little sky detail but it was still weak. I tried Silver EfexPro (Option 5) which has a strong capability to boost sky mid-tones but alas the detail was still too flat to provide the mood I wanted.

Time for more draconian steps. In Photoshop, I created a new layer, marked all of the sky carefully with the Quick Selection tool then cloned in an alternative sky - a desperate measure. Next, I used the Clone Stamp tool to over-write the bus signage that was too distracting. I then added a further layer to allow blurring of the peripheral areas around the old man to hold our attention on him. I selected 'Motion Blur' from the Photoshop Filters menu and set the Opacity of the Blur Layer to 50%. Finally, to re-enforce the Blurring I added vignetting of the corners. Both blurring and vignetting seemed consistent with the dream-like stare I was looking to enhance. The New Sky image (lower right) was the outcome just 2 days before my Advisory Day.

The good news was that the advisory feedback liked the composition, posture and mood. However, there were still technical problems: insufficient detail from the scarf or gloves; the detail of the face was still poor; the blur and vignetting was too 'heavy handed'. Another drastic step: I created a scarf and gloves using myself as the model, taken in similar lighting conditions.

The final image is far from perfect, but the harsh and grainy mood I was looking for allowed some margin to cover over the imperfections. The peril of street photography is that you rarely get a second chance at the same shot. Whatever its failings, I was not prepared to let this one get away.

An early Lightroom version

The image including the 'new' sky

WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WITH A LITTLE TRAINING

David Morement

I was new to Lightroom and struggled with the development module, also colour management of my prints. I enrolled for an excellent two-day Lightroom workshop at Fenton House. The first day was an introduction to Lightroom and the second day was printing with Lightroom. This knowledge gave me a thirst to produce a decent image to enter various competitions. So, what was I going to do about it?

I had been on a WEX workshop to Richmond Park with photographer Tom Mason learning field craft, lighting conditions and some guidance on camera use. I thought this experience could be used to visit again and get an iconic shot of a magnificent stag. Two camera club colleges were up for the challenge also, so we arrived at Richmond Park for opening time at 07:00 hrs.

We had not seen any deer on our arrival and there were no Rangers to ask. Fortunately we noticed in the car park next to us there were three photographers with a heap of gear, and on speaking to them we were guided to where they had seen deer on their arrival.

The day did not go to plan, but this is often the case when trying to photograph wildlife. It was a warm mid-August day and most of the deer just wanted to lay in the long grass and chill out! The stags occasionally herded the hinds into a group, but the action was not worthy of an image. Then, as luck would have it, three Fallow deer ran across the park and suddenly stopped near a Red Deer and froze. They looked a little unsure and timid the way they were standing, and I thought this may have to do

as my shot of the day. I used a tripod and 80-400mm lens set to 280mm. My camera settings were 1/500 sec shutter speed, aperture at *f*/5.6 and ISO of 640.

Once imported into Lightroom I set about using my training to turn a plain RAW image into something usable. The first stage involved cropping the image and using the spot removal tool to clone out part of the Red Deer before further cropping to the size I required

Next I made some adjustments to the highlights, shadows, temperature and black and white clipping points, added a little contrast and adjusted the exposure and of course enabled the lens profile adjustment and eliminated chromatic aberrations using Lightroom tools.

I then needed to deal with the changes caused by adjustments made to the black and white points. This involved adjusting the yellow saturation and luminance sliders, adding some local exposure adjustments using the brush tool, highlights and shadows adjustments, again using the brush tool to bring the image nearer to my requirements. Clarity, sharpening, vibrance and further cropping were carried out, then a post crop vignette was added to bring the viewer's attention more to the subject matter.

It was clear that further work was needed before printing could be undertaken. Some tidying up using the spot removal tool eliminated odd blemishes, further temperature adjustment, yellow saturation and luminance adjustment, orange saturation and luminance adjustment, and final highlights, shadows, vignette and temperature adjustments were made prior to printing.

My monitor is calibrated once a month or before doing any major editing for competitions. I use Permajet paper and ink and Permajet profiles in Lightroom for the paper chosen, in this case, Omega Rag 310.

The original RAW image
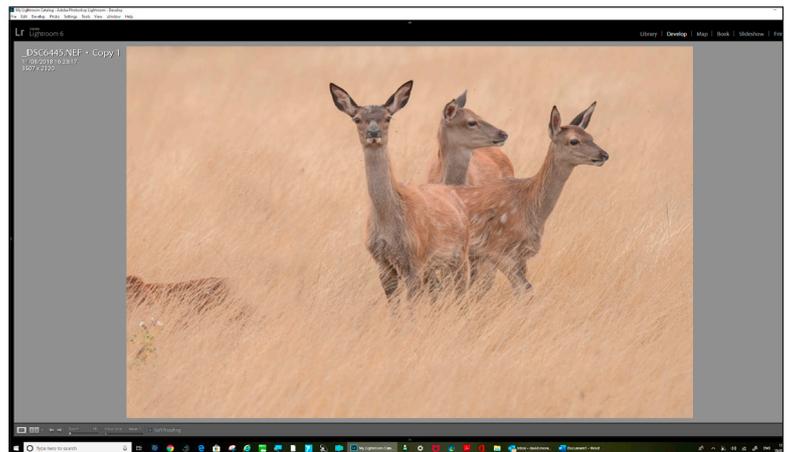
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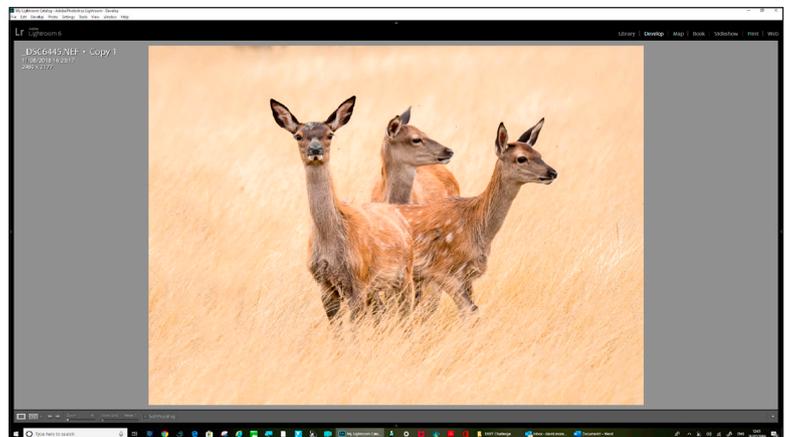
Stage 2

Stage 3

AGM, PRINT EXHIBITION SELECTION AND GUEST SPEAKER

23 February 2020 - 10.30 to 16.00
Smethwick PS, Old School House, Oldbury B69 2AS

AGM business is reserved to the first hour

Print Exhibition selection - our selectors are
Susan Brown, Barry Senior and Caroline Colegate

for full information on how to enter your 3 prints
www.rps.org/DIGAGMPrintEx

Guest speaker is Susan Brown FRPS
with her talk
'A potted history leading to Pairs, Panels and Projects'
A brief look at where it all began right up to the modern day
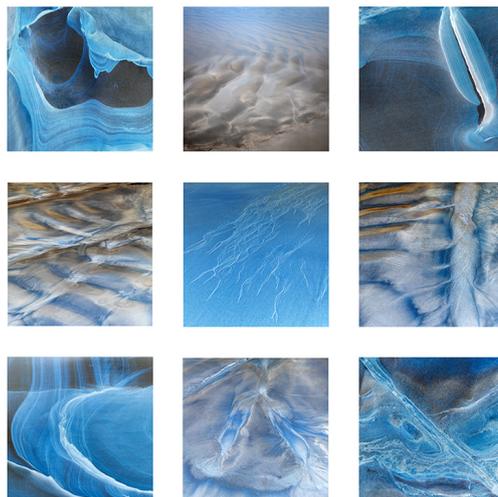
A light snack lunch is available and can be booked online at
RPS Events page - DIG AGM
The meeting is open to nonRPS members who can book via Events

PermaJet will be at our meeting
with special offers on papers

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

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