DIGIT

March 2000 Issue 11

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Contents:

The Royal Photographic Society
Digital Imaging Group

The Royal Photographic Society and Digital Imaging

(a message from the President at the Rugby Digital Meeting in October 1999)

RPS President Professor Raymond Clark in his welcoming address began by saying how wonderful it was to see so many people attending this first major event of the Group. He said that the DI Group is the fastest-growing group within the Society and had recently become the second largest of the special interest groups. The President went on to say that the Council is fully committed to embracing all appropriate forms of digital art, science & technology. Although the planning and implementation in some areas was taking longer than anticipated matters were now moving along well.

Professor Clark then went on to list the achievements and plans for "Digital":

- The new web-site had been averaging more than 1000 visitors a week
- During the last year over 90 members had been recruited to the Society following an initial contact with the web-site
- A bulletin board for members would be available by Christmas 1999
- Digital submissions for the Licentiate Distinction had been agreed in principle and trials were now under way to determine the guidelines under which such submissions could be received and judged.
- In collaboration with FUJI there is to be a free CD of successful Licentiate work in the spring of 2000.
- In general, a wider variety of submissions for distinctions was now possible, for example books and other published works, so that although Council has decided not offer Distinctions exclusively for web-site design itself (that is the interactive image and text) publication of a web-site could be the basis of a submission and would be judged on content by the relevant Panel. As with other submissions, website presentation and design would be a small component in the judging..
- By January 2000 an on-line directory of members work is planned (with 4 pictures plus text per member).
- A formal approach will be made to the Digital Imaging Group to help with the wide range of protocols, guidelines etc needed for these digital initiatives.
- The Society is investigating publishing an annual CD of the contents of the RPS Journal
- As each issue of the Journal is now held on CD there is the possibility of putting sample articles etc. quickly on to the RPS web-site.
- Before Christmas 1999 it will be possible to join the Society via the web-site and also to buy members items, including prints from the collection later in 2000.
- One of the Society's technical journals, Imaging Abstracts, will form part of an on-line database during the year 2000.

The President emphasised that he wanted the Digital Imaging Group to play a very full part in all these activities and to bring forward concepts and ideas for discussion and debate at the Advisory Board, the DAB, Council etc. This could be done through the DI Group Representative on the Advisory Board or indeed directly to the President or the Secretary General. Whatever method was used to it was vital to do it NOW.

Professor Clark said that there had been much debate in recent times about the nature of digital imaging in relation to other imaging modalities. He recounted that in the Science Committee, which he chaired for some years, he allowed a 10 minute period (rather like morning prayers) at the beginning of each meeting so that matters of philosophy etc. could be debated (e.g. as to whether, for example, a set of numbers within a computer memory constituted an image) before getting on with a practical business of the day.

The President described how his own professional work as a medical scientist had involved digital imaging for many years. His early work with infra-red imaging for clinical diagnosis was concerned with being able to extract information from images which was both quantitative and qualitative. Images then were 128 x 128 pixels which gave a file size of about 16K and produced wonderful definition for those days and spectacular false colour images which laid the foundation for diagnostic and clinical management systems in a wide range of illnesses. The original computer used for this work was designed for satellite resource analysis and in those days cost £108K !!. How fast things have changed.

Professor Raymond Clark FRPS

Real Photographs from your Computer
Desktop Inkjet
Photographic Permanence

Affordable professional quality digital photographic prints that you can sell - We have all been chasing this ideal for as many years as computer imaging has been in existence.

Up to two years ago, one of the best answers to this problem was to use a digital paper writer which transferred the digital image file directly on to photographic paper, then send it through a conventional RA4 desktop paper processor. The result - a photographically permanent print which could be sold; a first generation digital photograph, produced at an economical cost. One of the main drawbacks was the price of the equipment: £35,000 for a printer which could produce an A4 colour print every four minutes!

Since that time, we have all been aware of the improving image quality produced by desktop inkjet printers, with the very latest generation capable of delivering a 3 pico-litre ink dot at 1440 dpi - Continuous tone colour even when viewed at extremely close range. These printers are affordable, due to the intense competition within the desktop computer market, and the speed of printing is constantly improving, certainly faster that the example above - Surely, is this not the low cost answer we have all been waiting for?

Well, yes and no. The new generation of desktop inkjet printers produce excellent print quality, but the current ink and media combinations tend to produce an image which is not 'fixed'

as in an photographic print - The colour dyes may shift and bleed, the media may discolour, and most importantly, the colours may fade eight times faster than a photograph in normal indoor display conditions. The prints produced do not feel like a conventional darkroom produced photograph. - The prints are fine for proofs and personal use, but not suitable as a method for producing prints which may be distributed as photographs. A vastly improved set of inks and media was required.

Lyson Limited, a large UK high-end graphics Inks manufacturing company, are producing over 90% of all Scitex Iris Inkjet archival materials world-wide. They modified this tried and tested formulation for Epson printers to produce long-life colour and archival monochrome inksets. Exhaustive internal testing followed, with every Epson printer in the range, for print quality, reliability and indoor display permanence, followed up by submission to the world's main independent testing authority.

Compatible Media

To achieve true photographic permanence with minimal colour shift, bleed and fade requires a range of media which has a coating which 'fixes' the image at the point of production. Independent tests have shown a very wide variation in indoor display permanence for long-life inksets, depending on which brand of media is employed. Lyson have tested every coated media type in the range to guarantee longevity. The papers closely mimic the weight and feel of conventional photographic prints, with a remarkably durable surface which is resistant to sweaty thumbprints, scratching and rough handling. Hold the print up to the light - you will not see any evidence of ink layering: The print looks and feels like a normal darkroom produced photograph.....

Fotonic Professional long-life colour Inksets

By enhancing the colour gamut achievable, Lyson have achieved an indoor display lifespan of 25-30 years

for colour inkjet prints, without compromising the traditional inkjet's ability to delivery superb colour vibrancy, with professional photographic colour range. Fotonic inksets are available for all modern Epson desktop photo-quality inkjet printers. ICC colour profiles are available free of charge to guarantee accurate colour management.

Archival Monochrome Inksets

It is almost impossible to produce a perfectly neutral monochrome print from a colour inkjet printer due to the way the printer driver translates the RGB desaturated image file into CMYK instructions that the printer obeys. - The driver introduces slight magenta and cyan casts within the greyscale output range which are all but impossible to compensate for. Also, subtle light tones are usually rendered by wider spaced black dots, which contribute to a 'newsprint' feel to the image - light tones made up of visible dots.

By replacing the usual CMYK colour inkset with all black inks, Lyson get around the problem of colour casts within monochrome images. Setting each black channel at different densities (light grey, mid grey, dark grey and black) enables you to render each quarter tone with it's own channel of ink. As a bonus, the monochrome print has an indoor display lifespan of over 100 years - Genuine archival performance.

Lyson User Guide

A vital part of quality digital printing is knowing that your equipment is set up correctly, and that you are using the correct procedures. To ensure that you achieve superb professional print quality in colour and monochrome, Marrutt Digital provide a comprehensive Lyson User Guide, a 28 page illustrated leaflet, which is available free of charge in PDF format, downloadable from the web site: www.marrutt.com - A free printed copy is available on request. This sets out simple procedures for installing Lyson Inksets in your printer, colour management set-ups including a simple workflow for installing ICC profiles,

which are provided by Marrutt Digital free of charge, turning your printer into an accurate, calibrated colour device. Also included are instructions for multi-channel monochrome printing, frequently asked questions, and a valuable tips and techniques section.

Summary:

The ability to produce a commercially viable photographic digital print from a reasonably priced printer at low cost per copy is inevitably going to affect traditional photographic methods. This important step in the digital revolution should prompt many more photographers to question whether to take their film to the enlarger - or to the scanner (or film to the lab or keep in in-house). The image control, convenience, speed and ever lower cost of the digital route may tip the balance for many - even those who thought digital would never be suitable (photographers who produce many small individual prints, such as social or industrial). We have seen almost every application satisfied at sensible cost in our digital workshop at Uckfield. We invite photographers to take time out to visit us, use our equipment and materials - and exchange ideas.

One important thing to remember: Nothing stays the same. These innovations coming to fruition are being improved upon even as you read this. It is no longer a question of whether digital methods can match conventional - It is how far they can evolve, and how quickly.

For further information, sample colour or monochrome prints, Lyson User Guide, media swatch etc, please contact Marrutt Digital on 01825 764 057 or Fax 01825 768 841 e-mail digital@marrutt.com Web Site: www.marrutt.com

The trademarks Epson, Lyson, Marrutt, Scitex are acknowledged with thanks.

(sample picture on page 8)

**John Read
MD of Marrutt Digital**

Backgrounds and Logos

It is always useful to be able to make interesting and colourful backgrounds to be used with various applications, one use being a logo or pattern you would like to have as part of your picture. Any size file can be used but I will give instructions for an 9" x 6" file. FILE -New 900 x 600 pixels - resolution 100 in RGB with the background box ticked call the file Background

Make new layer (Middle button bottom of the layers palette.) Select bright foreground and background colours

Go to FILTER- render - clouds

Go to FILTER - blur - motion blur about 180 with the direction set at 10 past 8 Make new layer

Select new bright foreground and background colours

Go to FILTER- render - clouds

Go to FILTER - blur - motion blur about 180 with the direction set at 10 to 4

Make new layer

Select new bright foreground and background colours

Go to FILTER- render - clouds

Go to FILTER - blur - motion blur about 180 with the direction set at 6 o clock Now the real fun begins

Turn off the eye icons on the top two layers,

Activate and put a layer mask on the second layer from bottom (left button on bottom of layer palette) - use the gradient tool set at foreground to transparent - drag across part of the picture

Activate and put a layer mask on the third layer from bottom - use the gradient tool set at foreground to transparent - drag across part of the picture include some of the area used in the layer below

Activate the top layer and put a layer mask on - use the gradient tool set at foreground to transparent - drag across part of the picture include some of the area used in the layer below

You can now play with the blending modes on the layers menu, each mode will effect either the layer above or below the active layer- try dissolve set at about 50% . You can invert a layer and see if you like the effect.

When you have the background just as you want it flatten layers Logo Press D to default colours to black and white

Make a new file the same size at your background file

FILE - New- ignore the pop up menu go to the Window drop down menu click background (last item at bottom) onthe pop up menu. This will make a new file the same size as your last file click OK

Draw or type your logo in black with a hard edge brush

FILE SAVE AS logo

CLOSE logo

In background file

FILTER - texture - texturiser - load texture - click on logo

Alter relief and light direction to suit.

That's it.

Glenys Taylor ARPS

"Bike" a first contribution to DIGIT

With great trepidation I am doing as entreated in Digit magazine - offering an image. Fired up by a lecture from Barrie Thomas, I have eventually stirred my Pentium 90 to grind away. It's first effort is a manipulation of an old bike in Amsterdam, complete with cobweb, which was just too uninteresting. I used PaintShop Pro which just about fits into my machine and really is versatile. Well, now I've done it and made a submission. By the way, I've used jpeg format to transmit it: is that right? Good luck with the group which I very much enjoy.

Jim Buckley

A Regional Meeting

The Digital Imaging Group (South Central Region)

Exhibition as part of the Wokingham Arts Festival '99.

It was an opportunity too good to miss. The DIG South Central Region, which meets in Bracknell, were looking for an exhibition opportunity locally. At the same time the Wokingham District was planning its Arts Festival '99 for staging in October, which naturally included photographic exhibitions and events. As I happen to be both a member of the DIG and also seconded to the Wokingham District Arts Council, I was able to persuade both sides that our participation would be worthwhile. Not that they took much persuading - both the DIG and the WDAC were very enthusiastic!

The event was a three-way exhibition between us, Woodley Photographic Club (which is within the Wokingham District), and Wokingham Photographic Society. **This created an excellent mixed input of work, from both conventional and digital practitioners.**

The show was staged for two weeks (18 - 29 October) in the spacious Reception area of the Wokingham District Council offices, in Shute End, Wokingham, which had been home to an exhibition of paintings from all the local Art Groups during the previous two weeks, again as part of Festival '99. In all, 144 prints were on show, and exactly one third - 48 of them - were from the DIG, with 19 of our members represented. Space allowed us to show all of the prints submitted, but only just!

Across the three groups represented, it was clear that we were just a little different! I would say that our predominance was in colour images; I would guess that the creative freedom of DI leads us to want to explore colour in more ways than is possible for conventional workers. It must also be said that we had some excellent examples of mono and toned works as well. All of our work sat very comfortably in the company of the excellent submissions from the other two clubs.

What was a delight to see, putting to one side the sometimes surreal content, was that there was certainly no loss of image quality compared with our conventional fellows. With the current crop of digital products (scanners, software, and printers) in the hands of accomplished photographers (most of our entrants were RPS-qualified), the results were nothing short of stunning.

Wokingham District will be staging their Millennium Arts Festival at about the same time next year, so perhaps we can look to a repeat. If our digital membership takes off the way it is expected to, we may have to find a more spacious venue!

I'd like to thank all of our members for contributing to an excellent showing, which of course is indirectly an advertisement for the RPS. I'd also like, on behalf of the DIG, to thank Sue Milton, the photography representative on the Arts Council and a member of Woodley Photographic Club, for her hard work in putting together such a successful exhibition.

Alan F Cross　　　　mail: alanx@proaxis.demon.co.uk

It's a new generation and any photographic club that's feeling the drought of a reducing membership list had better take note and gather in the harvest that is becoming available.

In these halycon days children as young as five, maybe younger, are being weaned onto computers and if you want sound instructions on associated problems just ask ten year olds, they'll put you right.

My own days with a Box Brownieare now a precious memory. But children still love getting pictures. Where can we take these interested young people? By careful handling it should be possible to clone a new breed of club which brings the new and old together and continue the tremendous pleasure of picture making.

Ray Wallace Thompson ARPS   FPSA

To join the DIGIT list server just send an email to:

requests@lists.wycliffecollege.com

with the message:

subscribe digit

When you join the list server your email address is added to the list which will receive all contributions from other members. You may then join in yourself by sending your own messages to:

digit@lists.wycliffecollege.com

The list server puts you in touch with other members and keeps you up to date with debates and news. You are welcome!

Congratulations to Ray

The Honorary Membership PSA (USA) is awarded for outstanding service to photography. It has been presented to **Ray Wallace Thompson FPSA** for his personal accomplishements in photography, his enthusiatic and continuing service and leadership to many photographic organisations in his native England, and his services through journal contributions, as Country Representative, Travel Aid and membership activities.

Tutorial Video

Barrie Thomas FRPS has teamed up with Richard Brown FRPS to produce "Getting Started in Digital Imaging". A 110 minute VHS video aimed at photographers who want to get to grips with manipulating pictures on a computer. Topics covered include equipment and terminology explained; how digital imaging works; getting pictures into a computer; Photo CD; digital cameras; image editing; file storage; and image output. Contact Richard Brown on 0121 350 4629 or 0777 571 3253.

Light in Church Buildings

As a retired architect I am always conscious of the way light helps to Interpret church buildings. I have not identified the various churches or cathedrals in this series for I was moved by the following observation made by Frederick Evans in the Amateur Photographer of the 12th May 1904

"Try for a record of emotion rather than a piece of topography. Wait until the building makes you feel intensely, in some part of it or other, then try to analyse what gives you that feeling and then see what your camera can do towards reproducing that effect, that subject. This will be 'cathedral picture making', something beyond mere photography, the result to the critic shall be, not merely, 'what a clever bit of photography!' but 'what a noble, beautiful and fascinating building that must be

It is not the particular church or cathedral which is important to me but the vistas which with quiet observation bring one close to craftsmen whose work one is about to photograph. To make not a record but a work that relays something deeper.

Using digital technology one can modify colours, correct verticals, suppress unwanted details like loudspeakers, and notices so that the fundamental beauty and serenity of the old building can better be conveyed to print. I found the effort in taking these photographs greatly rewarding.

Peter Oakley Clarke ARPS

The Spirit of John Piper

John Piper created images which conveyed the quality of the light and its effect on the colour and texture of weathered brick and stone. Evident in his work is the wholeness and oneness of architecture in the landscape together with the overpowering influence of the sky in creating the ambience of the scene. The abstract structural form is highlighted by the simplification of the palette and an emphasis on the pattern of light and shadows. There is a limited pallete with a preponderance of umbres and ochres enriched by patches of brilliant colour. Each image has an overall topographical subject with the meaningful detail shining through. Occasionally the sky encroaches upon the architectural form leaving just an outline sketch to indicate the original structure. At times the monumental status of the building is echoed by clouds dominating the sky. His work is romantic but non classical.

His passion ranged for buildings extended from the palladian country house to the cottage built in the venacular, from the ornate Somerset church tower to the clutter of the vestry. He was co-editor of the Shell Guides with Sir John Betjeman.

(John Piper was born in 1903 and died in 1992 He turned from abstract art to romantic naturalism and is best known for his aquatints and watercolours of buildings. He is also known as a stage designer at Glyndebourne and other theatres, and for stained glass windows at Coventry and Llandaff Cathedrals and elsewhere.)

I have endeavoured to convey something of the Piper style by the use of photographic techniques. As with Piper there is a wide range of subjects from the humble cottage to the mighty castle; the ruin to the magnificently maintained.

My aim was to produce photographs which revealed the Piper influence without recourse to paint techniques. My early images included the stylised skies of Piper but I later changed to dramatic photographically real images which I hoped would have a similar powerful presence.

Each area of the photographic images required individual manipulation in order to achieve the necessary tone and level of detail. The eye is guided to that detail by the overall simplification of the image. Whilst the pictures may at first sight appear dark and foreboding closer inspection of the full size pictures should reveal a rich texture of form and colour.

There is a beauty unique to that light which exists before full dawn or just after sunset. It is inherently difficult to capture with a camera the low light and the great contrast between the sky and the landscape. I hope that these manipulations may convey some indication of that beauty.
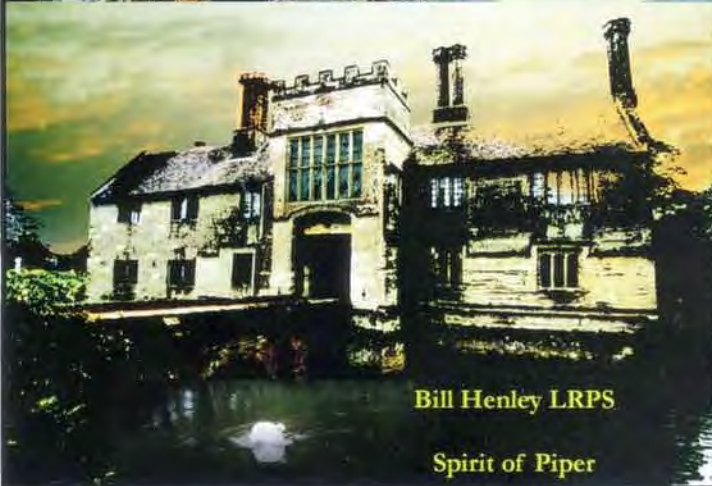
I suspect that any development of these pictures would require more graphic intervention to imitate the pen lines of the artist and his stylised coloured skies. The problem is where does the photography stop and the painting begin. My efforts have confirmed my admiration for the work of John Piper and have shown me how much is conveyed by his apparently simple strokes of pen and brush. When placed besides his work I hope my pictures reflect something of his style but I am only too aware that it is a poor comparison.

Whether or not I continue with this theme, it has had a positive influence on the way I see buildings in the context of the landscape.

In the top left corner of the compilation opposite are details from some of Piper's work. For any interested I would recommend the book "Piper's Landscapes" by Richard Ingrams.
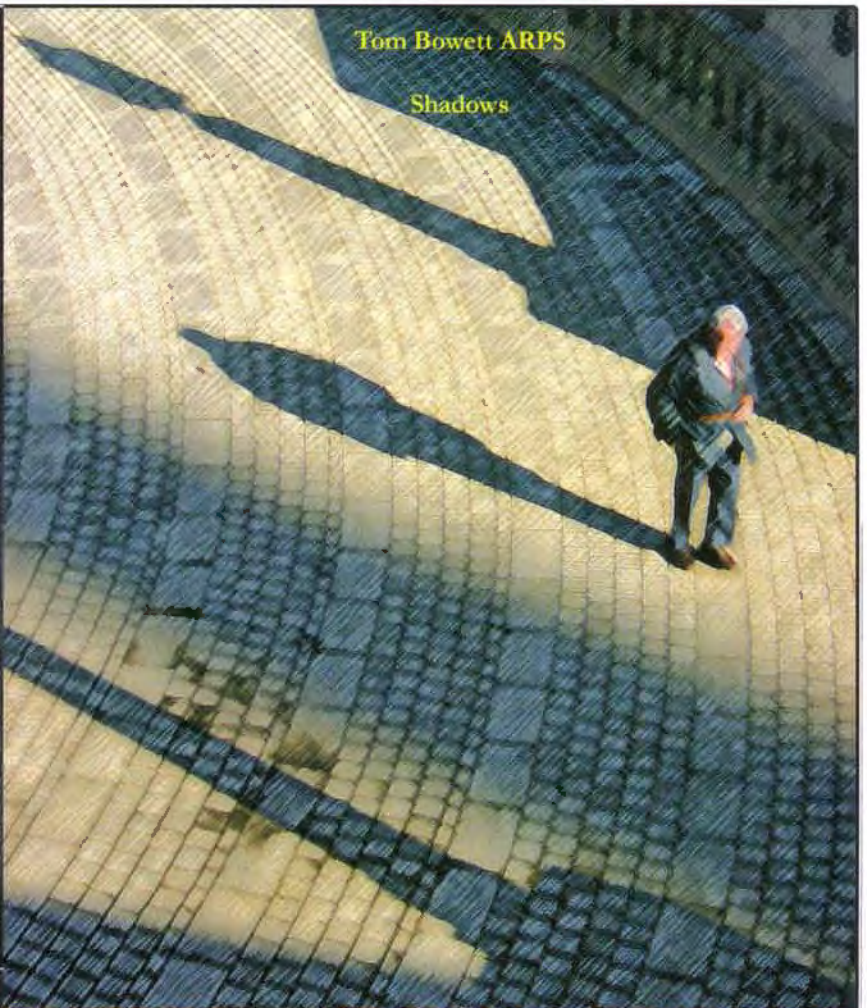
Bill Henley LRPS

Bill Henley LRPS

Spirit of Piper
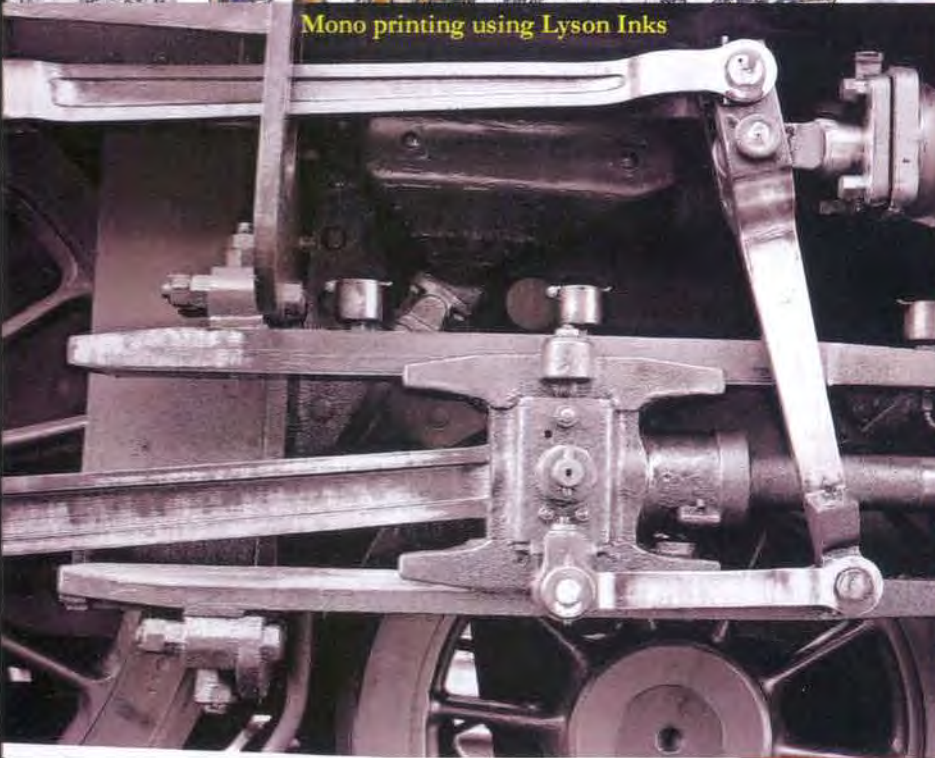
Peter Oakley ARPS

Church Light

Tom Bowett ARPS

Shadows

John West FRPS

Pevensey

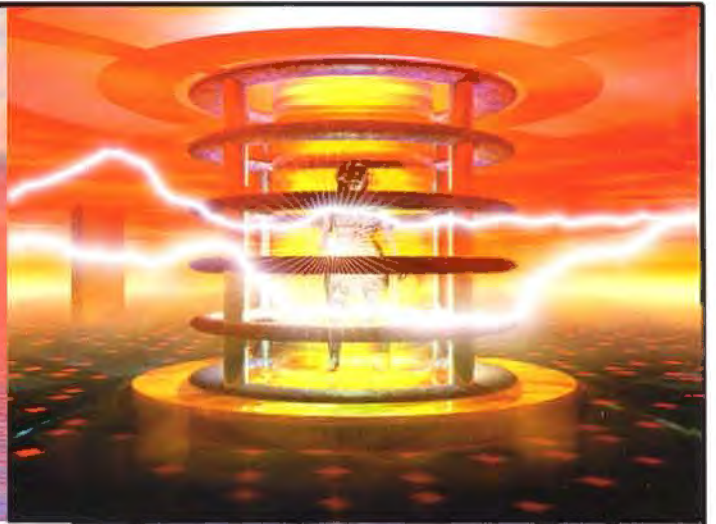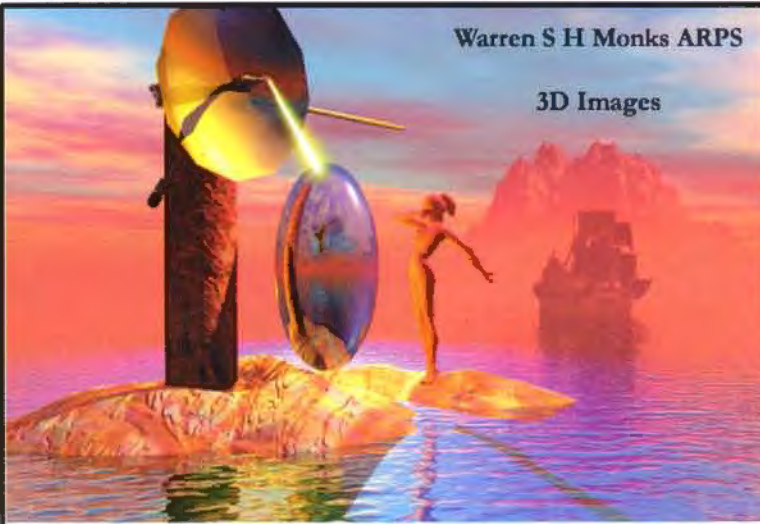Mono printing using Lyson Inks

Tom Bowett ARPS
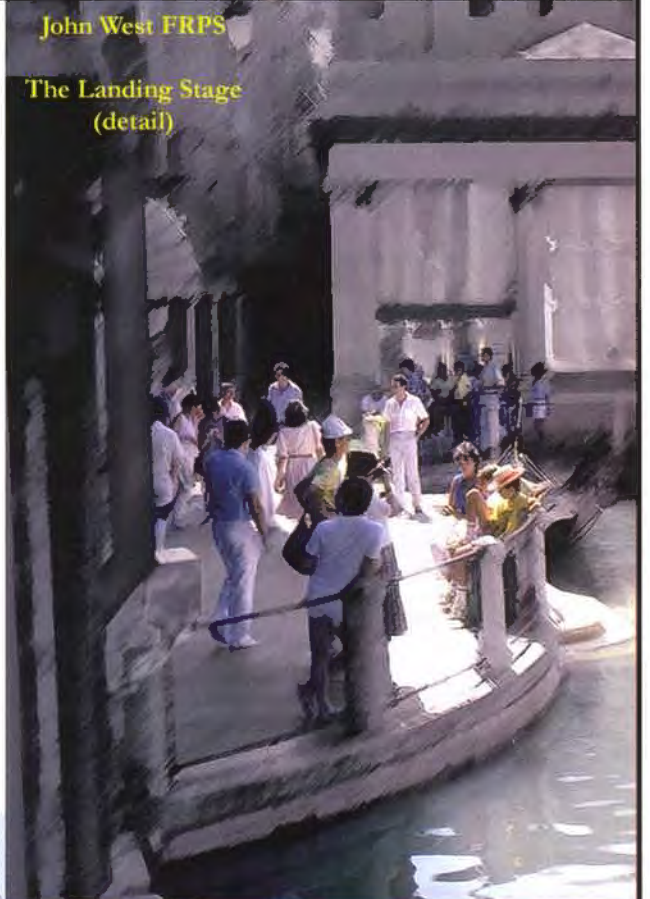
Shadows

Tom Bowett ARPS

Cemetry

Warren S H Monks ARPS

3D Images
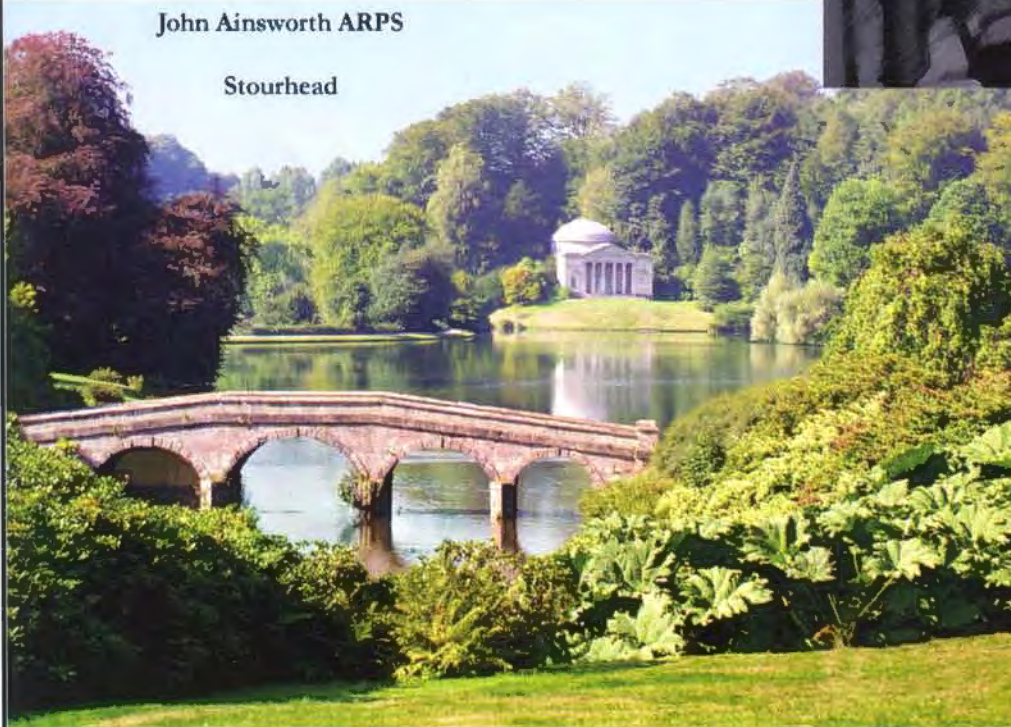
John West FRPS

The Landing Stage
(detail)

Jim Buckley

Bike

John Ainsworth ARPS

Stourhead

Warren SH Monks ARPS

3D Images

Can there be life beyond Photoshop?
"Unlike Photoshop users, the 3D imager starts with a completely blank screen."

(Pictures on pages 9 & 10)

Death Valley Hitchiker

Imagine you had bought a new car back in '32. Conked out in the desert. No-one wants to give you a lift?

Geordie's Angel

A superb example of metal sculpture. Alongside a motorway is the wrong place for me though, so I've moved it.

Golden Girl

Keep it simple, as I always tell aspiring young (and not so young) photographers. 'Bye now, I'm off to the beach!

Jet Watching

A simple Sunday afternoon stroll for the family. Just watching the freighter leaving for the next planet.

Marine Incident

Nobody I know has seen a sea monster, so I had to make my own.

Naiad

I was going to call this 'Double Helix' till my wife said helixes look like springs. Anyway, who cares when images like this can be made!

Souvenirs

Even aliens can bring momento's back from their holidays!

The Oracle

The lady is just checking out her lottery numbers!

Time Traveller

Is it a man? Is it an animal? Does it much matter? As to where it's been to, or just going to, I was lucky just to catch a glimpse! (Had to put the 2001 Space Odyssey reference in for a bit of atmosphere.)

You know, whenever I talk to people about digital imaging during my frequent lecture and judging visits to the various photographic clubs and societies of the frozen North where I live, you can bet your sweet bippy the the very first question I get asked is - "I suppose you always use Photoshop then?"

This hoary old question merely reinforces a thought I have harboured for some time. It seems that most photographers who are contemplating the digital way of life are of the opinion that only one really manipulative imaging programme exists - and that's Photoshop.

Make no mistake, Photoshop is still the one to have on your programme file. It's a real heavyweight and you can grow very, very, old learning it properly. However, it is still only a 2D programme, capable of modifying your 2D photographs into other 2D images, which, depending on how good you are at altering (I nearly said "faking") should finish up looking a weeny bit different from what you started with.

I say to people," Look around you, is everything flat?" "Of course not" they answer," that's why are there so many dieting programmes!" Seriously though, the whole world is actually made up of three dimensional objects. The 2D pictures from your camera only look like that because the 3D variety haven't really been sorted out yet. (Secret Note: With a brilliant new development called Metastream and Metaflash, that could change before much longer!) Just imagine dreaming up a scenario where three-dimensional objects could be twiddled about inside a three dimensional world - all on your computer screen. Wouldn't that be nice? Then when you were happy with the result you could produce a hard copy in the form of a 2D print! (Did you ever watch 'The Making of Jurassic Park'? - 3D on the computers- 2D on your TV screen?)

I noticed that when talking 3D imaging

to most photoggers, they immediately get a glazed look in their eyes as they start thinking in terms of red and green spectacles and fuzzy images that make your head ache. They seem a bit disappointed when I mention items such as object meshes, rotating, sizing, positioning and component rendering to make the scenes come to life.

However, when I follow up by pointing out that they will need all their carefully acquired photographic skills to get even average results they seem to perk up right away! You know what I mean - lenses, cameras, depths of field, lighting effects and all that stuff. Seems elementary, but it's still absolutely essential to the budding 3D imager.

Unlike Photoshop users, the 3D imager starts with a completely blank screen. Thus leading to the invariable comment, that this cannot be discussed in the same terms as photography, as there is no starting image and that makes me a graphic artist! I foresee lots of conflict ahead! However, all 3D programmes start with a choice of camera position! When I have dreamed up something totally over the top, which, like it or not, looks authentic and apparently photographic, your club photographer is usually the first to want to know how it was done. Not all the pictures come out ready-to-wear. Most have to have a little trip into another programme, sometimes Photoshop, sometimes not, just for a bit of final tweaking. I personally regard Photoshop as what it was originally designed to be - merely another tool in my imaging armoury.

You can, of course, include your own photographic prints into a 3D programme and use them as part of the act. The trick is to remember that yours are actually 2D not 3D and that those shadows leaning on your fancy sunsets can look just a shade weird!

It so happens that as a regular competition judge, I find it very rare indeed that something is offered to me, which

I have never before encountered. Currently, pure 3D imaging is frowned upon by the powers-that-be, but I feel sure that this will eventually change, merely because, the boundaries are already becoming somewhat blurred, by the massive influx of digital images into today's competition work. However, if, in the future, someone were to place a well executed 3D job before me, I would certainly have to stop and look deeper into things before making a final judgement. Particularly if there was a lot of photographic input. That's where the excitement level starts to climb. 3D imaging is the very epitome of creative thinking, (and I really believe that this could well be the reason that some people start to feel just a wee touch inadequate when confronted with something obviously well thought -out and executed and yet totally original).

We judges love excitement, but honestly, and I kid you not, it's extremely rare in today's photographic world.

Enter 3D imaging on to the scene. This is where all your artistic and creative talent can have its fling. The world becomes your oyster. You become God! You can make absolutely anything you like, given the skill, time and talent. (Did I hear someone mention RAM?)

Try it, and I'm sure you'll never regret it. **Ignore those who will devoutly tell you that ' it's not really photographic, is it?'** Make 3D images in addition to your normal photographic pursuits. You will be the one will be getting all the thrills and mental reward. And guess what? Your fearless leader can have the spare bedroom back because you won't be needing it any more. Computers live where you do!

For the technically inclined, the programmes used in my pics include Bryce 3 and 4, Poser 3, 3D Max, Raydream Studio, Painter 3D, not forgetting our old friend PSP and all its little plug-in friends.

My magic box has 200 MHz, 128Mb Ram, big screen, pen - (mice are for

cats) and all the usual bits including an EX printer. (By the way, if you do graduate to a pen, keep the pad size down, otherwise you'll wear your hand out. I use a 5" x 4" pad , all cursor movements are then like lightning across the screen)

In my personal imaging world, things move at quite a pace - especially when one tries to stay on the sharp end! As the doyen of 3D imaging, Mr Kai Krause of Metacreations Inc. said recently at a Royal Photographic Conference, after he had dazzled them with his brilliant display of 3D imaging - " Digital is now at the stage where photography was, when wet plates were all the rage!"

I am certain that he was 100% right.

For more of my pics see my website at: http:// www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~ratfugel

mail: ratfugel@globalnet.co.uk

Warren S.H.Monks ARPS

Dreaming of Bessa

Bessa 66 Camera and Neville's first Photograph

My right hand guided the mouse pointer to the 'PRINT' button and my forefinger pressed down until a slight tactile click was felt. At first nothing seemed to be happening, then at the bottom of the monitor screen small blue segments slowly began to fill the long box on which a percentage indicator revealed how much of the work in hand had been completed. From experience I knew this was going take at least fifteen minutes, the picture on the monitor contained over 30 million pixels, all of which had to be recorded and printed. I leaned back in my chair and if this had been one of those early films I used to watch there would have been a shimmering scene above my head as my mind went back some fifty years.

The ubiquitous 'Box Brownie' was my first introduction to photography but it was a school friend, Skinny Wilkinson, who told me that he developed and printed his own films. Skinny was already in the fifth form and well known as being brainy. He had recently written an article in the school magazine about the year 2000 and amongst other things predicted that we would be wearing radios on our wrists which would be able to pick up the 'home service'.

We discussed photography, 'It's easy' he said and then he went on to describe the procedure. 'But how do I get all the chemicals?' I asked, thinking I might have to organise a raid on the school chemmy lab. 'The chemist in town' he replied, 'he is a photographer and he will weigh them all out in the correct quantities and all you have to do is mix them and desolve them in water!' Skinny kindly wrote down what I needed and how I should proceed at each stage of the development.

At lunchtime I ran into town to the chemists, good fortune was on my

side as one of the assistance was the mother of my friend Sammy Nichols. She spoke to Mr Judge (later I was allowed to call him Edgar) who came out from his dispensary and weighed out all the chemicals, handed me a packet of daylight exposure paper and a holder in which to sandwich the negative and paper. 'You will have to experiment with the printing and exposure times to get the best results' he said and off I went all excited at the thought of all this wizardry which was about to happen. When the bell rang announcing the end of the last lesson I thanked my lucky stars for not getting a detention that day and I couldn't wait to get home, which took me half an hour on the bus to get to the small Lincolnshire village pub where I lived. My dad was very interested in my knew project and we decided that to develop the film was best done in the coal cellar, it was almost dark in there and after supper it would be dark anyway!

The first problem was that there was no light down in the cellar to set up my developing tanks which were three open tin trays my mother had kindly lent to me on the understanding that I returned them in pristine condition! No problem I assured her. I decided to make an extension to the electric light hanging in the pantry adjacent to the coal cellar. After a short time I had wired up a bulb holder and connected the other ends to the pantry light, switched on □.. **BANG**□. and the whole house went into darkness. There was uproar in the bar where my dad was serving customers, he came running down to the cellar to see what had happened and found me groping around in the dark, slightly shocked, not electrically but mentally. Dad soon showed me where I had gone wrong with the wiring, he mended the fuse and I got back into the cellar to develop my first film.

Three trays sat on a table before me, the first contained the developer, the second an acid stop bath, it was really a weak solution of vinegar (Skinny Wilkinson said that would be OK) the third was the fixer. I first of all practised the procedure in the light then came the great moment when the

light was switched off. I carefully unrolled the film and removed the paper backing. Holding each end of the film to form a loop I lowered it carefully into the developing tray. First my left hand was lowered gently and at the same time my right hand was raised, hopefully in the same proportion. I felt my left hand reach the wet developer, now it was time to reverse the procedure so I raised my left hand and started to lower my right hand being careful to keep the film in the developer at all times. This procedure had to be carefully timed so that no part of the film was in the developer longer than any other part. My mother had offered to keep her eye on the clock and tell me when ten minutes had passed from my signal that I had started. Skinny hadn't said anything about temperature control so I guess the developer was about 90 degrees when I started and near to freezing when I had finished, after all I was in the coal cellar in winter. After mother had called out that 10 minutes had elapsed I guessed where the 'stop bath' tray was and gave the film the same treatment for a few minutes by counting 180 'KODAKS' (for the uninitiated counting KODAK one, KODAK two etc is a reasonably accurate way of counting in seconds).

Finally I found the fixing tray and proceeded to fix the film for 5 minutes but by now I was able to have a light on. Skinny said 'keep fixing until the film is clear and then continue for the same amount of time.' Washing the film was a much more pleasant procedure, I went back into the warmth of the kitchen and washed the film in a bowl. After a few minutes of washing it was time to dry the film off. Using two clothes pegs I hung the dangling wet film on the clothes line which straddled the fire hearth, it was dry in no time at all. I had never heard of reticulation in those early days, in any case the film didn't suffer from it this time! Miraculously the film contained recognisable images and I took it into the pub bar to show my Dad and the customers. I felt very excited and proud, everyone forgot about the inconvenience of the electricity failure earlier in the evening. On the following Saturday I quickly

completed my weekend tasks, one of which was to chop up wood for kindling, a chore I really liked doing. I loved to see the sticks falling one after the other into the carefully positioned basket as I chopped away at the slices of wood.

My next big task was to make contact prints. Because I had to use daylight as the light source and develop the paper in complete darkness I needed to black out the coal cellar. This proved to be quite difficult, but again with the encouragement from my parents I was able to utilise one corner of the cellar, which to all appearances looked light proof. I once again set up my developing dishes, by now I had to admit that the developer dish was no longer in pristine condition. In the dark I assembled the sandwich of paper and negative and secured the top wooden cover. Took the complete assembly outside and opened it up .. KODAK one, KODAK two, KODAK three close. Down in the cellar I removed the paper and dunked it into the developer   After I had estimated two minutes I 'stopped' it and then 'fixed' it. On went the light and   nothing .. no wait   . there was a very faint image but it was wrong way round. **Yes I had put the paper in upside down.** The second attempt was better but the print was very very dark After several attempts I had what I recall a good print_ all my own work.

Monday lunchtime I went into town and called in at the chemist's shop to show Edgar Judge. He was encouraging and talked about the finer points of photographic chemistry and film developing. After this we formed a long friendship and I spent many a lunchtime break in his shop picking up knowledge of photography. I progressed to a film developing tank and an enlarger which by our local village standards made me a professional photographer! My next big buy was a Voigtlander Bessa 66 camera. When I look back on that particular purchase I can't quite believe how naïve I had been. Scanning through the Amateur Photographer I saw the Bessa 66 for sale at £5..10s.. 6d from a man living in Lincoln. I duly sent off a postal order and a covering letter and waited.

Needless to say my Dad was not aware of this transaction as I'm sure he would have had something to say about my rashness. You see for a start I didn't really know what a Bessa 66 was and just sending cash to a stranger without even seeing the goods was a bit rash. However, a few days later the postman knocked on the door with a parcel addressed to Master Neville Whitney. I ripped open the package which revealed a black leather bound folding camera. After I had finally discovered how it opened I was amazed to see so many knobs and dials. Some of the engraving was obvious, like the focussing distance but what were those funny numbers which started at 16 and descended in a funny sequence at 3.5? The lens looked enormous and the shutter speeds ranged from 1 second to 1/500. I discovered it had to be cocked before it could be released and I noticed that when you set it the highest speed there was an extra tension in the cocking lever. I liked the sound of the long shutter speeds and after an hour or two began to understand the mechanics of it. There was a funny looking dial on the top of the case which I later discovered that it showed the depth of field for different apertures. One facility I quickly appreciated was the direct viewfinder, no more looking into a small square hole where the image moved the wrong way when you shifted the camera !! There was no operating book with the camera so it all had to be trial and error. When I showed the Bessa 66 to Edgar he said it was a good camera but asked how was I going to determine the exposure? He then gave me a quick lesson on film speeds and exposures and sold me a little exposure guide made by Patersons. You pointed it to the subject and read off a number which appeared along a wedge of dark plastic, the highest number you could clearly read was noted and then, using a table provided you could calculate the exposure required.

Needless to say my first film through the camera was a bit of a disaster, I either forgot the focussing facility or the wrong speed had been set or hadn't

wound the film on and so on. Eventually I mastered the mechanics and was soon taking pictures for friends, the local football teams and even participated at a wedding!

Of course later as I became more familiar with cameras I aspired to a Leica, but that's another story.
I felt a shimmering above my head and I was aware that the printer had stopped its familiar reciprocating noise and my eyes now focussed on a 16" x 12" colour print which rested on the extended tray. I picked it up, it was

> **Suddenly I had a great idea, I connected to the web site and typed *"Vintage cameras"* into the search bar and requested a search.**

perfectly dry and I marvelled at the image before me. Even after all these years the same excitement of seeing a final print is still there. The procedures have changed out of all recognition and I don't think that even Skinny Wilkinson could have predicted the revolution in photography that Digital Imaging has caused.

As for my parents, well sadly Dad died many years ago but I am ever grateful for all the help and encouragement he gave me. Mother, now in her 98th.year still loves to see my photographs, especially the DI manipulated ones and is particularly pleased to receive the special cards I make for her, they are passed round the nursing home with such pride it is embarrassing for me when I visit her.

Suddenly I had a great idea, I connected to the web site and typed *Vintage camera* into the search bar and requested a search. In less than 20 seconds I had located a host of outlets that traded in vintage cameras. The very first one I looked at had a Voigtlander Bessa 66 for sale, rated in good working condition at £69.00. I immediately emailed the company asking for more details. Back came the reply that the camera was in good working order and was available. I ordered it and gave my credit card details to make the purchase. The very

next day it arrived! The memories flowed back and I found myself ripping the packing apart, just as I had done all those years ago. After what seemed to be an age I held the Bessa 66, it was in a brown leather case which had signs of wear but not excessive. The camera looked good and I tested the shutter and examined the lens, this time, I thought I had a bit more knowledge of cameras. The whole shutter speed range was tested and the Compur -Rapid behaved impeccably. I even discovered a fitting for a cable release which was unknown to me in those early days. The next test was to run a film through it. Using my Weston Master V I was able to make an accurate setting for the 400 ASA film I had chosen. Within a few minutes I had exposed 12 frames of the 120 film and rushed upstairs to my comfortable darkroom to develop the print. All done in the comfort of a warm room and in the light. After 20 minutes I was looking at the negatives feeling elated at the sight of 12 very well exposed frames and they were all in focus. **A complete triumph.** I speeded up the drying with a hair dryer (shock horror) and very soon had the negs scanned into my computer. The very first print was the first exposure on the film a copy of which is reproduced with this story. My 7 year old grand-daughter had been witnessing all this excitement and she looked at me and said 'Grandpa, wouldn't it be nice if that was the very same camera you had bought all those years ago.' 'Yes' I said and wondered, but that would have been too much of a coincidence.

Footnote.

Voigtlander Bessa66 is folding bellows 6cm x 6cm format taking 12 pictures on a standard 120 film. The lens is a Skopar 1:3.5 F = 7.5 cm .
The shutter is Compur-Rapid from 1 second to 1/500 with B The focussing range is from 3.5 feet to infinity.
The direct viewfinder is a flip up device on the top of the case with two lenses. The shutter release is on the left side which protrudes through the flap when the camera is opened.

Neville Whitney

Contemplation

This is a Photoshop montage comprising of a Background which is a Bible scanned on a flat bed scanner, Layer 1 which comes from a colour slide of a cross and sky and Layer 2 which is a photograph of a girl taken at a camera club portrait night. Difference and Hard Light blending modes were used to produce the end result

Shadows of Time

see page 8

This photograph was taken in Stockport Town centre using my Minolta Dimage EX1500 Zoom digicam. On returning home the digital file was downloaded to my Applemac 4400 computer from the compact flash card using a USB card reader. The file was then copied to a new layer in Photoshop and the Colored Pencil filter was used, followed by the Luminosity blending mode at 70% opacity with the addition of an adjustment for Levels to enable a few further tweeks to be made. Finally a Gradient Mask was added using the Quick Mask mode to darken down the top left corner of the picture.

Have you a contribution for DIGIT?

Dr E R Sethna FRPS

Southern Cemetry

see page 8

This picture started out as a Fujichrome Sensia 100 colour slide taken using my Minolta 600si SLR with a 100-300 zoom lens in a local cemetry on the way to work. The slide was then scanned into my Applemac computer and the Photoshop Dry Brush filter was used followed by the Lighting Effects filter to achieve the appearance of a painting.

Tom Bowett FRPS

Web site address: **http://www.digit.org uk**
List server address: **digit@lists.wycliffecollege.com**

The committee:
Chairman: Mr Barrie Thomas FBIPP FRPS
Vice Chairman: Dr Eddy Sethna FRPS
Treasurer: Mr Geoffrey Carver LRPS
Secretary: Mrs Glenys Taylor ARPS
Editor DIGIT: Mr Bill Henley LRPS
Regional co-ordinator: Mr Bob Rowe ARPS
Folio co-ordinator: Mr Ray Grace LRPS
Web Page Updates: Mr John Long ARPS
Dr Barry Senior ARPS
Mr David Coombes ARPS

Digital Imaging Group

Contact details:

Barrie Thomas FBIPP FRPS
85 Beech Gardens
Rainford
WA11 8EB

01744 883541

barrie@fotografx.demon.co.uk

Glenys Taylor ARPS
10 Shoreditch Road
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 3BU

01823 323986 (tel & fax)
01823 282516

106503.647@compuserve.com

Bill Henley LRPS
Old Manse
Middleyard
King's Stanley
Stonehouse
Gloucestershire
GL10 3QD

01453 825068

weh@wycliffe.co.uk

Bob Rowe ARPS
2 Fleming Drive
Carlton
Nottingham
NG4 1FG

0115 940 0733

bob.rowe@btinternet.com

The Octagon.
Milsom Street. Bath
10am 8th April 2000
Agenda

1 Introduction and apologies
2 Minutes of the last AGM
3 Matters arising
4 Officers Reports:
4.1 Chairman Mr Barrie Thomas FRPS FBIPP MFIAP
4.2 Treasurer Mr Geoffrey Carver LRPS
4.3 DIGIT Editor. Mr Bill Henley LRPS
5 Election of Officers and Committee Members
6 Any other Business
7 Date & Time of Next AGM

The AGM will be followed by the selection of prints for the ANNUAL EXHIBITION.
Starting at 2pm there will be MINI TALKS by some members of the committee who will show a sample of their work.

Exhibition
and
National Meeting

This years Digital Imaging Group's Exhibition will be held at the Octagon, BATH between the 22nd June and the 6th July 2000.

There will be a National meeting on Saturday the 1st July 2000 commencing at 2p.m.

This meeting has been arranged so that Group members can view the exhibition and attend the meeting. We would like group members to bring some of their work to show and briefly talk about.

This is an excellent way of seeing the tremendous variety of work that is being produced by group members, and always proves an extremely interesting and informative day.

Send web page updates to:

Owing to the great success of last years event SPECTACULAR 2000 will take place in October.

Details of the date, venue, tickets etc., will be announced in the next issue of DIGIT

John A Long ARPS APAGB
3 The Reddings
Kingswood
Bristol, BS15 4SB
0117 967 2231
johnlong@lineone.net