DIGIT

UPCOMING DI GROUP EVENTS

Details of all DIG events are available on the Group's website at:

http://www.rps.org/special-interest-groups/digital-imaging/events

Martin Addison FRPS
&
Clive Haynes FRPS
Photoshop for Mood and Expression

Digital Imaging Group
Thames Valley Centre

Sunday 11 January 2015
Woosehill Comm. Hall, Emmview Close, Wokingham, RG41 3DA

A Personal Response
Print Lecture
Chris Palmer FRPS

**Digital Imaging Group
Southern Centre**

Sunday 18 January 2015
Greyfriars Comm.Centre, Ringwood, BH24 1DW

David Mallows
**Adobe Lightroom
Workshop**

Joint Meeting with
Northern Region

Sunday 1 February 2015
Backworth Hall , Backworth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE27 0AH

Also see page 4 for more details of these events

Planning your holiday for 2015? - well don't be away on Sunday 20 September as you won't want to miss out on what DIG has got planned for that date.
More information soon ....

7

14

16

DIGIT

No 63: (2014 ISSUE 4)

COVER IMAGE: Frozen Trees by Peter Clark FRPS

CONTENTS

EVENTS

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

Some future events include:

Sunday 11 January 2015
DI Group Thames Valley: Clive Haynes
FRPS and Martin Addison FRPS:
'Photoshop for Mood and Expression and
more!'
Woosehill Community Hall, Emmview
Close, Wokingham RG41 3DA
Time: 10:00 – 15:30
Contact: Laurie Pate
Email: *digthamesvalley@rps.org*
Cost: Digital Imaging Group Member £8,
RPS Member £12, Non RPS Member £12 for
'prepaid' tickets.

How to use Photoshop to 'improve' and
change the weather and how to make
inventive, artistic pictures, including Topaz
plug-ins. How to use Lightroom to improve
images using the Develop module and the
Local Adjustment tools.

Plus - 'Foto-Synthesis - On-Screen'
The electronic, up-dated version of Clive
and Martin's acclaimed Foto-Synthesis print-
talk.

The duo will explore many and varied forms
of photographic expression. Through a
plethora of examples they will encourage
you to seek self-expression, to think
beyond the limitations of club competition
photography and to be both innovative and
experimental.
– See more on the Group's website.

Sunday 18 January 2015 DI Group
Southern Centre: 'A Personal Response'.
Print lecture by Chris Palmer FRPS.
Greyfriars Community Centre
44 Christchurch Road
Ringwood BH24 1DW
Time: 10:30 – 16:00
Contact: Barry Senior HonFRPS
Email: *digsouthern@rps.org*
Cost: Digital Imaging Group Member £6,
RPS Member £8, Non RPS Member £8.
In his lecture Chris will discuss the
creative process that he uses, both when
out shooting, and subsequently when
producing his prints. The lecture features
many of his latest prints, and culminates in
the work that he produced to gain his recent
RPS Fellowship.

Chris Palmer:
Actively involved in club photography as a

lecturer and judge since 1979, a PAGB judge
and lecturer who currently serves on the
Visual Art A & F and Licentiateship panels.
Also involved with Paul Foley FRPS
in running Spirit & Vision Landscape
Photographic Workshops and together
with Leigh Preston FRPS provides tuition to
camera clubs with Photo Knowledge.
Now retired from working as an air traffic
controller, I am a member of Amersham
Photographic Society. He is sponsored by
Fotospeed.

Be Famous for Five Minutes
An opportunity to show your prints and
invite comments from our speaker. Chris will
discuss informally the suitability of prints for
a Distinction but this is NOT an alternative to
attending a Distinctions Advisory Day.

Bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee
available.
– See more on the Group's website.

Sunday 1 February 2015
DIG Joint Meeting with RPS Northern
Region: Adobe Lightroom Workshop with
David Mallows
Backworth Hall , Backworth, Nr. Newcastle,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE27 0AH
Time: 10:30 – 16:00
Contact: Brian Pearson ARPS
Email: *brianpearson41@btinternet.com*
Cost: RPS Member £15, Non RPS Member
£20.
Tea and Coffee on arrival, Buffet lunch £7.
(pre-booking essential)
Cheques should be made out to 'RPS
Northern Region' and sent to –
Mr B Pearson ARPS, 2 Waterloo Place, North
Shields, Tyne & Wear NE29 ONA

Lightroom Introduction –
The Fundamentals
How to start a new catalogue
Importing your picture
Applying metadata and Keywords
Managing your files – key-wording and file
renaming
How to avoid the ?
Folders v Collections - what they are and
when to use them
Using the Develop Tools
Why Raw – Harnessing the power of Raw
Cropping, white balance, exposure
adjustment

Using develop pre-sets, tethered shooting
and auto import
How to export to Photoshop and Photoshop
Elements
How to export for email, print and book

Sunday 22 February 2015
DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP
2015 MEMBERS' AGM AND EXHIBITION
PRINT SELECTION
followed by a talk by Adrian Lines MPAGB
FBPE EFIAP ARPS
at The Old School House, Smethwick
Photographic Society Club Rooms,
Churchbridge, Oldbury, West Midlands B69
2AX
Easy access from M5, Junction 2 or train to
Sandwell and Dudley.
See *www.theoldschoolhouse.com* for club
details and map.

Closing date for postal entries:
Monday 9th February 2015

Exhibition Selectors: Bob Moore HonFRPS
Hon PAGB MPAGB FIPF FBIPP, Fiona Senior
FRPS, Adrian Lines MPAGB FBPE EFIAP ARPS

Time: 10:30 AGM
Time: 11:30 Print Selection
Time: 15:00 Adrian Lines talk 'Altered reality
– better than the real thing?'
Contact: Janet Davies ARPS (Hon Sec)
Email: *digsecretary@rps.org*
Cost: Free for Digital Imaging Group
Member - tickets for others £5 on the door.

Two course lunch available at £8.50
per head. Vegetarian and other dietary
requirements by prior arrangement.
Booking and payment to be made by 9th
February 2015. Tickets will be sent out in the
first week of February 2015.

See the DIG website:
www.rps.org/dig for the AGM Agenda,
Lunch Booking Form and the Entry Form for
the 2015 Members' Exhibition.

> **KEEP THIS DATE FREE:**
> **Sunday 20 September 2015**
> You won't want to miss out on what DIG
> has got planned for that date.
> More information soon ....

EDITORIAL

As I mentioned in the last issue of DIGIT, we had far more entries in the Open section than in the Creative section in our recent Projected Image Competition, confirming that our interests are diverse. In this issue of our magazine you can see all of the successful images that were accepted by our selectors. 109 Open images were accepted compared with 47 Creative images.

But I understand that there still seems to be a misconception that DIG is just about montaged images. As I said last time, that is certainly not true – we all aim to improve our digital techniques regardless of whether we produce 'straight' images or manipulated ones. I hope this issue of DIGIT will help to dispel that misconception.

I have said before that we embrace all forms of photography and, to illustrate the point, we have an article this time about landscape photography, one about producing images with bokeh and also an account of a member's journey to distinctions success.

In the 'Back to Basics' series, there is an article entitled 'Perfect Capture' suggesting a few areas where we might improve our picture taking.

There are four DIGIT Challenges to explain various techniques: one offers advice on nature photography, one uses a digital technique to enhance a 'bland' image, another explores the use of neutral density filters and another one explains how to create a kaleidoscope image.

I hope readers will see that I am still trying to keep the content of DIGIT as varied as possible. If there is a topic that hasn't been covered about which you would like to write, please send me an email.

I hope to see many of you on Sunday 22 February 2015 for the Digital Imaging Group 2015 Members' AGM and Exhibition Print Selection followed by a talk given by Adrian Lines MPAGB FBPE EFIAP ARPS. If you can't attend, don't forget that the closing date for postal entries is Monday 9 February 2015 – further details on the website.

Finally, remember, if you are planning your holiday for 2015, don't be away on Sunday 20 September as you won't want to miss out on what DIG have got planned for that date.

More info coming your way soon, so keep an eye on the website and DIG eNews.....

Carole Lewis   *digiteditor@rps.org*

FROM THE CHAIR

How important are the letters? You know, the ones that follow our names and say LRPS, ARPS or maybe even FRPS. Then there are the PAGB (UK) Distinctions, FIAP, PSA, BPE and others to consider. I like collecting them, but is it just vanity? For example: Janet Haines ARPS, DPAGB, EFIAP, PSA4* (not that they matter you understand).

For me it is absolutely not a vanity tag but a genuine way that I have set about improving my work and one I would recommend to you.

Let's just take the Royal Photographic Society Distinctions, as that is the organisation to which we all belong. Starting out at the L (Licentiateship). This may be the starting point but it does us all good to take this test and jump the hurdle. We need to put together a cohesive panel that demonstrates a cross section of skills and technical ability. Even if you do not have a local mentor to help and advise you there are plenty of good examples on the RPS web site and Advisory days to go along to that the Regions put on; even some online help and support. And how can you deny that, when you get that piece of paper with LRPS on it, that you don't glow with the success and achievement. Just attempting your Distinctions will help your photographic development; passing will boost your confidence and give you the appetite for more.

On up to ARPS (Associateship); now you start to specialise and to find that elusive and oh so difficult thing to grasp – 'your own style'. This perplexed me for ages and I tried hard to force myself, but it just didn't happen. But slowly over a few years, as I pushed myself to go for other Award schemes and immersed myself in seeing fantastic work from other gifted photographers, I found that my 'style'

just emerged; unbidden it 'arrived'. Yours will too, given enough experimentation and inspiration. You cannot force it. Roll with it. Make the images that you like, never mind what the club judges say. If you know in your heart of hearts it is good then believe in yourself.

Month on month I see the list of new RPS Distinction holders and I congratulate those of you who are pushing your own boundaries and jumping the Distinction hurdles. I bet if you look back you will see the improvement that your work has made in going for your L, A or F. So keep pushing – the sky is the limit. And to those of you yet to start down this road - do seriously think about having a go. I can assure you that you won't regret it. Getting the letters is the icing on the cake – improving your work is what it is really all about.

Janet Haines ARPS *digchair@rps.org*

MY PHOTOGRAPHY (MUSINGS OF A LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER)

Peter Clark is a landscape photographer who started as a darkroom worker but he has found that in the digital age he can capture images that were impossible or unsatisfactory on film. He is very successful in International Exhibitions. He considers that the prerequisites of a successful landscape photographer are: Passion, Previsualisation, Patience, Perseverance and Practice.

Moon Over Half Dome

My interest in photography was kindled over 35 years ago when I first handled an SLR camera and was fascinated – and befuddled – by its complexity and by the 'strange' markings around the lens. Along with a work colleague I joined Cannock PS, of which I am still an active member, and together we bought a second hand darkroom and immersed ourselves in monochrome printing – the rest is history!

I am purely a Landscape photographer and, when analysing why that is the case, I always come to the same conclusion – escape and isolation from the noisy working environment of the foundries and casting shops in which I spent most of my working life. In my formative years I took part in several landscape workshops, mainly in the Lake District, where I learnt for the first time the importance of lighting and the basics of composition. In common with many Midlands' photographers I plied my 'trade' in the mountains and abandoned quarries of North Wales, in Derbyshire, Yorkshire and in Scotland and developed an image style, which led eventually to the award of the Fellowship of the RPS in 1992.

My inspiration for locations comes from a number of sources ranging from guidebooks to images seen in exhibitions and more latterly the Internet. The photographer who influenced me most was Ansel Adams and it became my dream to visit Yosemite and to see what the 'master' saw and to record my own images. That dream was realised in 1996 and I immediately became hooked on the SW United States and have subsequently travelled extensively from California in the West to Colorado in the East and from Wyoming in the North to Arizona and New Mexico in the South.

Winter Isolation

Yellowstone Mists

Storm Over Glencoe

From the very beginning I wanted more from an image than simply entering it in a Club monthly competition and then resigning it to storage and so I soon started entering National Exhibitions and can remember to this day the elation of seeing my first print acceptance on display at the Handsworth Exhibition in 1986 – I was hooked! Success in National exhibitions spurred me to enter International Exhibitions, which I now enter exclusively, amassing in excess of 2,350 acceptances with numerous awards. There are three distinct phases in my photography, each of which I enjoy immensely – image capture,

image processing and exhibiting the final image and although my first love will always be for a monochrome image I have worked extensively in colour slide and projected colour digital images for many years.

My philosophy of Landscape Photography may be summarized as follows: 'A successful landscape will stand on its own without the need for title or explanation and should include one or more of the following elements: impact, drama, mood and atmosphere. I endeavour to meet these criteria by the careful choice of location, subject matter and composition, by the use

of dramatic lighting conditions coupled where possible with heavy skies and, in Seascapes, by the use of an appropriate shutter speed. In the digital darkroom these elements are enhanced through creative processing techniques.' But there is much more to being a successful landscape photographer than a 'mission statement'.

To be a successful landscape photographer there are a number of prerequisites, all of which need to be present in the photographer, the most important of which is Passion. Without a passion for landscape photography the chances of success are slim

Lindisfarne

to non-existent – the best images are often captured when lesser mortals are nicely tucked up their warm beds. A well-known saying states that "in order to succeed we must suffer for our art", whether that means standing around for a couple of hours or so at -30°C in Yellowstone in the Winter waiting for the fog to lift or lying on a deserted and inaccessible beach in North Wales for 24hrs with a broken leg and hip' – I have done both in the interests of photography!

Of equal importance is Previsualisation; the image that we see through the viewfinder or on the LCD screen is merely an average replication of what we see before us and will bear little resemblance to the final processed image. When I look through the viewfinder on what I feel is a good composition with dramatic lighting I am processing that image in my mind's eye before even pressing the shutter button and maybe even converting it to monochrome! **'Lindisfarne'**, on page 8, is a prime example of previsualisation. On seeing the boat houses on Holy Island for the first time I immediately saw the potential for a dramatic image with heavy skies and strong side lighting, but after several visits such lighting conditions unsurprisingly failed to prevail. However, following the acquisition of a DSLR, I returned to the location one November afternoon when the lighting was almost perfect, but the sky was completely devoid of any clouds as it had been on previous visits. Undeterred I captured a heavy sky a few days later at Bamburgh Castle looking in the same direction and at the same time of day and blended the two images together to produce my previsualised image.

It almost goes without saying that without Patience and Perseverance you are unlikely to succeed in capturing an image in the best light; being in the right place at the right time does not guarantee great lighting, which rarely occurs on a regular basis. If you believe passionately in a particular image, then put in the effort to capture it. I recall a visit to the Cuillins on Skye when I saw a brief shaft of sunlight highlighting a little white bothy while searching for locations. Making a note of the location and the time of day I returned the next day in torrential rain and on subsequent days and finally, after sitting in the car for 4 days, captured the image which was included in my Fellowship panel. There is a lot of truth in the old adage: 'persistence pays off'!

It is said that Practice makes perfect and this certainly has a bearing in photography, but, of course, the perfect or ultimate image does not exist except in the photographer's eye. The most important aspect of photography is the original image and

Saltburn Pier

Rannoch Tree

the ability of the photographer to capture it at the optimum moment. This implies a complete knowledge of the camera so that it can be used effectively on autopilot with the knowledge that it will capture the image satisfactorily. Composition should be instinctive and based on experience and it is generally beneficial to shoot a little wider for subsequent cropping rather than trying to finalize the composition in the viewfinder as in the days of slide film. One of the joys of the Micro Four Thirds System is the ability to change format and put a completely different perspective on the composition.

Despite the flexibility of RAW capture there is no substitute for 'getting it right in the camera' or as right as it can be. I rarely take a handheld shot unless conditions dictate it – the use of a tripod slows you down and gives the opportunity to carefully consider the composition and framing and should

ensure optimum sharpness. There can be nothing worse that returning from a trip to discover that your prime image is not sharp.

We should all be aware of the Rule of Thirds in terms of composition and for the most part it works well, but rules are there to be broken and indeed many say that there are no rules, so be bold and express yourself and hopefully create a more dynamic image. **'Saltburn Pier'**, above top, is an example of breaking the rules; it is a composite image in which all three elements were captured from the same spot on the pier at different times of the day. The horizon was deliberately placed just off centre and coincides precisely with the top of the railings at the end of the pier, the sky is an HDR image and the figure added plumb centre to connect the sky to the foreground. **'Rannoch Tree'**, above, is another example of breaking the rules.

PETER CLARK FRPS

I was a late convert to full digital imaging initially scanning negatives and slides to process in Photoshop 5.5 even though I was far from convinced by the quality of digital prints obtainable using black ink only. Today with printers using multiple black inks the quality of the output has improved immeasurably although comparison with wet prints remains a moot point for some, but it must be borne in mind that the two processes are completely different. I was privileged to count the late Eddy Sethna FRPS as a close friend and he guided me through the intricacies of Photoshop 5.5 and through the years prior to his death we collaborated closely on techniques, image critique, etc. and this collaboration led to the publication of two electronic books on Photoshop which enjoyed considerable success. I now have the honour of chairing the Eyecon Group that Eddy set up in the mid 90's to provide a forum for the discussion of images, a facility which rarely exists at Club level.

The digital age has given me the opportunity to expand my photography, fine-tune my processing techniques and to capture images that were impossible or unsatisfactory on film. In the film days I would often refrain from taking an image which I knew would need a lot of work on the final print to produce a satisfactory image – not an issue with a single print, but when printing batches of the same image to send out to exhibitions it was a major problem. As a darkroom veteran I use precisely the same techniques to process an image in Photoshop (CS6) burning and dodging on multiple Curves adjustment layers with layer masks. Cloning has replaced spotting and eased the removal of distracting objects, and identical copies of an image are available at the press of a button. I am not averse to replacing the sky in an image providing that the end result looks natural and improves the image in terms of drama, atmosphere, etc.

Rhythms in the Dunes', below, is an example in which not only has the sky been replaced, but also the mountains in the background. Purists may disagree with this approach, but I want to create images that please me first and others later and there is nothing in the image that cries out Death Valley!

Photography, whatever genre you follow, is an ongoing challenge to 'maintain the standard' and the day you lose the desire and interest and cease to enjoy it is the day to give it all up!

Rhythms in the Dunes

PERFECT CAPTURE
Taking Control in Three Easy Steps

Besides good composition, how else can we improve taking photographs? In this article Richard West gives us three other areas to look out for.

Step 1 - The White is White... isn't it?

One of the oldest problems with photography is getting the lighting conditions, in which you capture your images under control. Today stand-alone light meters are less frequently used to gather your exposure and capture information because digital cameras have evolved to have good metering capabilities in themselves. Whether you choose to use an external meter, which can add extra control and accuracy to the process (but also additional complexity and weight to your camera bag), or want to work 'in camera' or maybe just 'sort it out' in post-process, two key elements to capture and control at the point of pressing the shutter are the contrast range of your shots and also the white point (i.e. a known white for the shots that can allow you to remove major casts). Find a way of recording this accurately and you won't need to guess what the conditions were like in hindsight when you retouch your images; you'll have a point of reference with which to compare.

In its simplest form, to achieve this over the years, a succession of paper or cloth cards have been employed to give you known targets with which to set your capture parameters. If you know the colour value of the piece of white card and photograph it in the relevant photo shoot's lighting conditions, you then have a reference point, which you can use to set your capture parameters. In particular with post-process software like Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, shooting and setting your white point for one shot can subsequently be applied to all other shots in the same lighting conditions in a 'batch process'.

As a basic starting point then for taking control of the colours in your shoots you need a 'Grey Card'. Placed in your shoots at some point, perhaps at the end or beginning of a session, as long as they're photographed in the lighting conditions of the shoot, you now have a frame of reference. With cards that have more than one flat grey face though, there is also the ability to set contrast ranges as well.

One problem with pieces of card though, is that they are pretty bulky and can easily get marked and creased. A solution that came along was the expanding, cloth, foldout cards but these too, proved highly susceptible to fading and marking over time.

One further problem with flat cards is the need to angle them correctly. To get accurate readings the recommendation is to place the card at 45 degrees to the prevailing light. If the direction of lighting is changing or you simply don't have the time to get this angling correct then a solution needs to be found.

To this end, nowadays we have three-dimensional 'Grey Targets' or Cubes emerging (e.g. Datacolor's SpyderCUBE). As their names suggest, these tend to be cubic in shape and have the advantage of being small enough to drop into a pocket (about 4cm or a couple of inches to a side). Despite this compact nature they give you larger areas of grey or white (usually 18% and 96% respectively) to use as targets than many conventional flat Grey Cards. Also easier to drop into a photo shoot compared to a standard grey card, this small device can be hung on a tripod or lighting rig, mounted via its standard spindle mount at its base.

When using them in a shoot, provided you take one shot where you can see both of the two-toned sides, you have a perfect target to set grey balance, irrespective of the direction of any lighting or even if it's changing. As long as the hole on the black face of the Cube is pointing roughly towards you, one of the grey and white sides should be around 45 degrees to the prevailing light. Once you've shot the Target, simply choose the lighter one of these two-tone, split sides to use in setting the grey balance (white point). The lighter face (only appearing so, as the other face is in shade) will have the light hitting it at about the correct angle. You can then use the black face and lighter white triangle to set your shadow and highlight values to their known 4% black and 96% white readings respectively.

Any out of gamut scintillation (100% white and over) or 100% shadows should only appear on the ball atop the Cube or in the hole at the centre of the black face respectively. The 'pocketability' of these 3D Targets mean they should always be available to shoot and are quicker to fit into a shoot, not requiring the major feat of positioning to get the angle correct that conventional cards do. Simply pull it out of its bag, hang it in the scene or use a mini-tripod, shoot and away you go.

Top Tip: As clothing detergents often contain a bleaching agent to lighten your clothes colours, make sure you keep your CUBE in its bag to protect it.

Step 2 - Stay Focussed!

Despite what you might think, many camera and lens combinations, albeit replete with highly sophisticated auto-focus solutions, are not always in true focus when you release the shutter. A survey of around 1500 people conducted at the 2012 Photokina showed around 60% of their camera and lens combinations were actually auto-focusing incorrectly. Ironically, whilst this was patently evident in some cases, it was the combinations that were only marginally out of focus that proved the biggest issue. Where people could see that their newly acquired systems were incorrectly focusing they were quick to get them recalibrated. It was those that were shown to be marginally inaccurate that caused a frequent 'light-bulb' moment of realization as to why, "those portraits had always been a bit soft" or "those sports shots" that you knew you'd got spot on were never quite right.

Fortunately most SLRs over the past few years have introduced a micro-adjustment function to their menus that allows you to adjust the auto-focus for specific camera / lens combinations. All you need is a targeting solution to use to check this and there are now a few solutions on the market to use to enable this correction.

Ranging from Apps for smart phones and tablets to rather ethereal, and flimsy card and paper based devices that seem more fitting as a mobile above a cot than for use by a photographer, more professional devices are now available (e.g. the SpyderLENSCAL). These new breeds are robust enough to carry around if needed for use with hired lenses or backs, but also easy enough to pop up and very simply allow you to shoot and discover and focus imperfections. Simply snap it open and either table or tripod mount and you can swiftly correct your situation.

Top Tip: For those of us working heavily in portraiture or sports photography, the same solution can also be used to set a false focus point slightly ahead of what would be the true focus. By so doing, focusing on the eyes of your model can mean that the tip of the nose is also in focus as the actual focus point is somewhere between the two as opposed to having the focus accurately set and getting a fuzzy nose captured but ears crisp in all their glory.

SpyderLENSCAL

Step 3 - Colour Accuracy

Photographers are generally not granted the same latitude that, for instance, painters are allowed. When capturing images, whilst artistic license sometimes is allowed, when shooting places and people as photographers, we are frequently berated if the subjects appear somewhat 'off colour'. Never more so is this an issue than for Weddings, Sports and Product Photography. Be inaccurate with the hue of the bride's gown, the team's expensive livery or the specific colours of the food you're shooting and trouble will ensue. More troublesome still is the need to get the same subject looking the same in multiple lighting situations (e.g. in the church, the reception and external shots) or when using multiple cameras.

With this in mind, and extending the remit of grey cards to cover more than just white point / grey balance and contrast range, we reach the need for a larger range of known colours to capture. This is delivered in the form of a colour card such as the Datacolor SpyderCHECKR.

Allowing you to get the dress, skin tones and any other important hues just right, a good colour target should preferably be big enough to shoot from a distance, in particular for group scenes (e.g. about the same size as a tablet computer). Even better is if the Target can be Tripod (or lighting rig) mountable rather than simply held or leant into your location at some point in the shoot. The target should come with plugin software for image capture solutions (e.g. Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, Adobe Photoshop or Hasselblad Phocus) and enable you to set up a calibration preset with the touch of a button to linearise all your shots.

The related software should know how each colour swatch should read on the target, allowing it to instantly calculate a calibration across the whole colour spectrum of your camera's capabilities to remove casts and bring all colours into alignment in any lighting condition. Don't worry though, you shouldn't need to ask your brides, grooms or models to hold the target – as long as you shoot it at some point in the same lighting conditions in which any group of shots is taken, you can apply the calibration to the whole group later on. Just make sure you do shoot it in each and every lighting set-up and with each camera you're using.

So there we have it - three lesser-known areas to look out for to help you capture images more accurately.
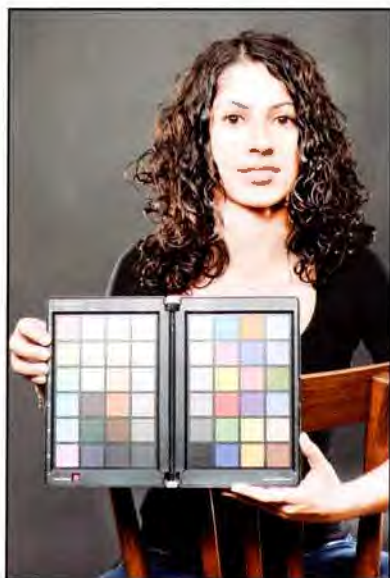

Before colour target

After colour target

Richard's career has spanned more than 20 years in the photographic, print and design markets. Originally working in a technical support role for what is today one of Kodak's subsidiaries in the graphic arts market, he went on to spend almost ten years working in Business Development for Apple where he helped in the launch and roll-out of many products including Apple's photographic offerings.

Further to this, Richard ran Nik Software in the UK, taking the company's professional plugin products and Smart Device App, Snapseed, to market, culminating in Nik's purchase by Google.

Now Richard heads up Datacolor in the UK introducing professionals and hobbyists olike to Colour Management.

Richard has trained and presented to many of the largest professional publishing and broadcasting companies worldwide (including Publicis, Bauer, the BBC and Sky). He has a particular passion for promoting and encouraging creative skills in the classrooms of colleges and universities across Europe. During his time at Apple he played an instigatary role in their 'Young Creative' initiative, a program devised to help budding digital artists be inspired to enter today's diverse world of media.

BEAUTIFUL BOKEH

Gavin Hoey shows us how to capture some amazing bokeh images without necessarily having to leave the house. He explains how easy it is to produce these images with points of light that expand into beautiful circles with the exact size and shape varying, depending on the lens and aperture, and he encourages us to experiment.

I love a bit of bokeh in my images. It's an easy technique to master and at this time of year there's loads of opportunities to capture some amazing bokeh photos. And here's the best bit… You don't even have to leave the house to do it!

If the word 'bokeh' is alien to you don't worry, it's a relatively new word in the photographers dictionary to describe a technique that's been used by photographers for a very long time. It's an effect that's invisible to our eyes so, when it's captured by a camera, the photo can have real power and interest.

Bokeh, or background blur as I grew up calling it, happens when you point your camera towards small points of light, which are then defocused. Rather than simply blurring, the points of light expand into beautiful circles with the exact size and shape varying, depending on your lens and aperture. Usually the bokeh is seen as round circles of light but they can also appear as hexagons or other shapes depending on the lens used.

Potential subjects for bokeh are everywhere but a few popular examples where you can find it include the sun sparkling on water,

streetlights at night, light shining through trees and Christmas lights. Whatever the source of your bokeh, the photography technique is always the same.

How do you capture bokeh?
Let's start with your camera or more specifically the camera's sensor. Phones and compact cameras have small sensors which are great for getting big depth of field but that's bad for capturing bokeh. This is a time where you'll really need a DSLR or a camera that has the larger sized sensors found in DLSR cameras. Shallow depth of field is the name of the game when it comes to bokeh.

Your choice of lens matters and in this case bigger is generally better. You can leave the wide angle at home; a 50mm lens or longer is the way to go especially if it has a large maximum aperture like f/4 or, if you're rich, f/1.4. My favourite lens is the Canon 24 -105mm and it was used to take all the photos you can see with this article.

Capturing bokeh is as easy as switching off autofocus and deliberately blurring points of light. In the real world we do this by having the points of light in the background whilst focusing on something in the foreground. The blurrier the background becomes, the bigger the bokeh you see.

What aperture is best?

I generally shoot in aperture priority, so I'm controlling the f-stop number at all times. Choosing the best aperture for bokeh should be easy, the bigger the aperture (small f number) the bigger the bokeh circles. So you might want to start by choosing the biggest aperture you can get and whilst that's fine do remember that you still need to get your main subject in focus too.

Bokeh is present in all apertures so don't be afraid to stop down a little to ensure your subject has front to back focus. You can also use this knowledge to control the size of the bokeh circles; whilst large circles look good there are times when what you really want are slightly smaller circles of bokeh, or even hexagon shaped bokeh.

As with everything photographic, experimentation is the key to getting it right. So don't wait any longer, go find your camera, switch to manual focus and set it as close as possible. Point it at some Christmas lights and take a photo. Congratulations you've just entered the wonderful world of bokeh.

You can discover more photography and Photoshop tips on my website: www.gavtrain.com

f/4　　　f/8　　　f/16
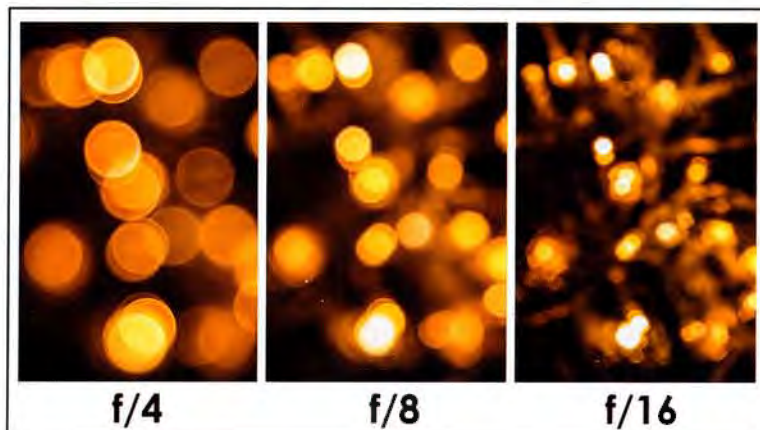
MY JOURNEY TO DISTINCTIONS

Hazel Manning decribes her photographic journey over the years and explains the process used to produce her creative composite work, both surreal and believable reality. She tells us how she enjoyed her progression from her LRPS to her imaginative ARPS panel. This article is illustrated using some of the images from her successful ARPS panel.

That Will Not be Drowned

A Bit of Background

My photographic journey began backwards with an interest in the mechanics of photo manipulation. Photoshop has been part of my world since its conception but photography came later when seeking a source of images for my composites. Both interests now sit side by side, both equally important.

I'm a Canon girl and have progressed over the years from a 350 to a 40D and now own a 7D which I have no plans to change in the near future. I also work with a second body that's been converted for infrared.

Club life is important and I'm an active member of Leicester Forest PS, Market Harborough PS and also Circle 4-26 of the United Photographic Portfolios.

Judging for the PAGB is an enjoyable and rewarding part of my photography life, as is mentoring some of the people I meet to give advice and guidance on their proposed panels.

Technical Stuff

I don't have any laid down formula that I follow; each image is processed in its own way and often my more successful images are the result of extensive 'playing'. Lightroom is the hub of my digital life and

is used for all my RAW processing. I always shoot in RAW; it does require a little more processing time, but the results make it worthwhile.

Again in Lightroom, I use folders within collections extensively for a current project or just ideas for the future. Some may sit and gather dust for extended periods until they wander easily into an image I'm working on. Some never see the light of day.

From here I move into Photoshop (usually opening as a smart object) for things such as selections and layer masks. Blend modes and layer opacities play an important part

Mind's Eye

in pulling the separate elements together. I try to work non destructively allowing me to return to images at a later date.

Textures can play a part in forming a cohesive composite although they should come with a health warning – only to be used selectively and gently!

Nik, Topaz or OnOne are used to harmonise colours etc, but for the most part I rely on the RAW conversion to take me where I want to go.

The final step of printing and mounting is key to pulling everything else together.

Finding a printer that enables you to bring your ideas to life is at times frustrating. I print all my own work, using an Epson 3880 and my papers are Permajet. For my panels I used Fibre Based Distinction but for normal day-to-day work, Oyster is my go-to product.

My Work
I am best known for my creative composite work, both surreal and believable reality, but also work in more traditional genres and love mono, especially portraits.

Through a deep fascination with people, the majority of images come from observing

folk going about their daily lives. I rarely use models or intentional 'set ups', preferring to capture the essence of the 'real' person through their stance, clothing etc. A fascination for umbrellas has recently changed to hats in my images! Watch this space!

I travel around during the summer months, enjoying the freedom of our caravan and am never to be found without my camera! Historical re-enactments, steam fairs, county shows are all favourite venues.

Most of my images include people (often the sum of several individuals) but they seem to prefer facing into the scene,

Don't Look Back

Umbrella Man

Fairy Tale Dreaming

Crusade

allowing the viewer to journey with them rather than being the focus.

No images are taken with a specific result in mind, although some characters weave their story way before their digital souls hit my screen. An image may start with an idea as to destination but may then lose its way en route or take unexpected twists and turns and end up somewhere completely unplanned.

My hope is that each viewer weaves their own story when looking at my images. Rarely is there a deliberate tale to be told. The most exciting and rewarding part comes when someone interacts with my work and 'sees' their own version.

Tragedy

Strange Time

Four Square

Journey To Distinction

Having a 'target' is important and my RPS journey has spanned a couple of years. The L panel showed a broad spectrum of my work, with only one composite, but for my A, I never questioned the decision to apply in the Visual Art category,

All images come together at their own pace and my output is sporadic, so the decision to apply for an ARPS was not made until I had a sufficient number from which to select. For me, producing images for a purpose just doesn't work.

Attention to detail is the most important part of any distinction panel – sharp (but not over sharpened), absolutely no blown highlights and good use of lighting and colour. But that's the easy part ……..

Putting together a cohesive A panel was the most daunting and difficult part of the whole process. Fifteen good images does not a panel make – a fact that is easily overlooked. Some favourite images didn't make the final cut – they just did not fit and it took some time for me to accept their exclusion.

Seeking advice and feedback on your work and your panel is essential. Lots of lovely people gave me their input but in the end it was down to me to select what I believed to be my best work.

Watching the panel view your work on the Day of Judgment is both exciting and terrifying. Nothing beats hearing the announcement that the panel is to be recommended for acceptance.

Achieving my target was important, but the journey itself was enjoyable and rewarding. I've met lots of great people along the way and learnt lots too. I'd gladly do it all again and would encourage anyone to have a go.

If I had words of advice to give to anyone thinking of going down any distinction route, it would be to get to see the work of others as often as you can. Visit exhibitions, seek out BPE catalogues and watch their CDs, attend distinction days, both advisory and assessment. Anything, rather than work in a vacuum. As a PAGB judge I'm lucky; I get to see the work of hundreds of people each year and always learn something at every visit.

And now – what about my F?……………
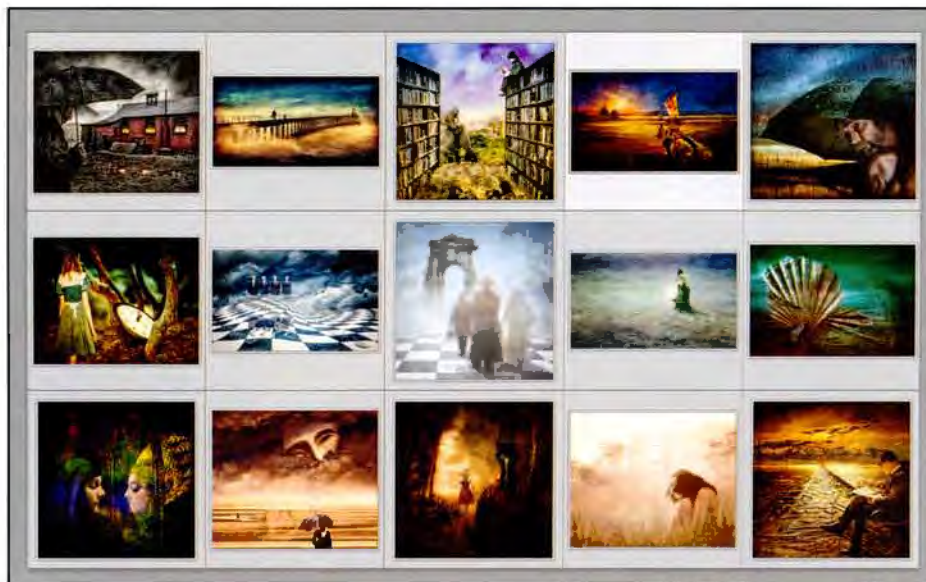
ARPS Panel

DIGIT CHALLENGE: SPOONBILL WITH CATCH

There are four 'DIGIT challenges' this time from DIG members who share their techniques with us. More challenges will be featured in future editions, so if you have any images that you would like to show us and explain how they were created, please send them to me at DIGITeditor@rps.org

With the advent of digital imaging, the ready availability of long telephoto lenses and the development of cameras capable of rapid fire, it is now possible to capture images that one could only dream of a decade or so ago. The Spoonbill in question was captured using such equipment as it fed avidly in a shallow lake containing a good stock of fish. This was in eastern Hungary on the edge of the Hortobagy National Park where there are numerous commercial fresh water fishponds that attract storks, herons and egrets of many species, plus of course Spoonbills.

The photograph was taken during a visit in late April when birds were preparing to breed. As with most wildlife photography, images are often improved if taken at eye level and this was achieved using a low hide placed at the water's edge. In order to minimise disturbance, the hide was equipped with a glass front through which the birds could not see and thus did not show any fear of approaching. The only drawback to this is that the glass absorbs light equivalent to about two stops and so it was necessary to use high ISO settings in order to be able to employ the high shutter speeds necessary to capture the action.

The image shown is one from a series taken as the bird waded rapidly through the shallows searching for fish. With many birds present, it was often difficult to isolate a particular bird that was well illuminated and was the right size in the frame. However, persistence pays!

Details were:
A Nikon D3s camera coupled to a 500 f4 lens, mounted on a Gitzo tripod, which was fitted with a Wimberley head. Settings were 1/2000 second at f8 using ISO 800.

The image was captured in RAW and is shown virtually full frame with minimal cropping and nothing either removed from or added to the image. Post processing in Photoshop was basic but included removing high ISO noise with the aid of a Neat Image plug-in followed by a little sharpening using the unsharp mask filter.

DIGIT CHALLENGE: WHITE TREES

White Trees

Post processing 'White Trees' from the original RAW file was fairly simple; the real challenge came in taking the photograph in the first place from a moving boat in the middle of the River Dart.

Together with members of my camera club, I was on a trip from Totnes to Dartmouth in April 2013. The day was fairly bright but just before the boat arrived we were driven to take shelter from a short, sharp shower;

the last rain of the morning fortunately. A weak sun appeared at the same time as the rather small boat. All photographers rushed to the top deck to find the best viewpoints and to settle in place for the next two hours.

Once away from the shelter of the town we realised how very windy it was going to be on the open water. My full frame camera had to be hand held, of course, and I was using the 300mm end of a zoom lens in order to photograph anything meaningful on the far banks. To cope with the boat's movement and the strong wind, it was essential to use a fast shutter speed.

'White Trees' was amongst a number of photographs of groups of interesting trees and patterns of trees along the shoreline that I glimpsed and photographed quickly in case something could be made of them later. The boat was travelling surprisingly quickly as well as adjusting frequently to the direction of the river, so it was a question of seeing and pressing the shutter immediately, leaving little time for accurate composition.

Looking at the original frame in Lightroom (**Figure 1**), I was not impressed. The four dominant white trunks caught my eye originally, but there was so much else in the picture that I wondered how to isolate the trees sufficiently to make them stand out. Cropping was the first step and then three spindly young trees were removed (**Figure 2**). The dense tree in the background was disturbing; the only way to lose this was to crop even more, cutting off the tips of the white trees and reducing the trunks to three. Having just three trees gave me a much better composition and I liked the shape of the tree on the right, but even so it lacked impact.

Still not wanting to give up on the photograph completely, I resorted to using a Photoshop plug-in called Redfield Fractalius, simply trying each preset in turn until I found one which made my eyes light up with excitement: the messy background had been obliterated and the image had come alive. Back in Photoshop, the whites were highlighted even more to make the trunks glow.

I am pleased that I persisted with this photograph; a very bland image has been turned into a striking one. Almost certainly it is not to everyone's taste but, having it hanging on my dining room wall, I am able to enjoy looking at it many times every day.
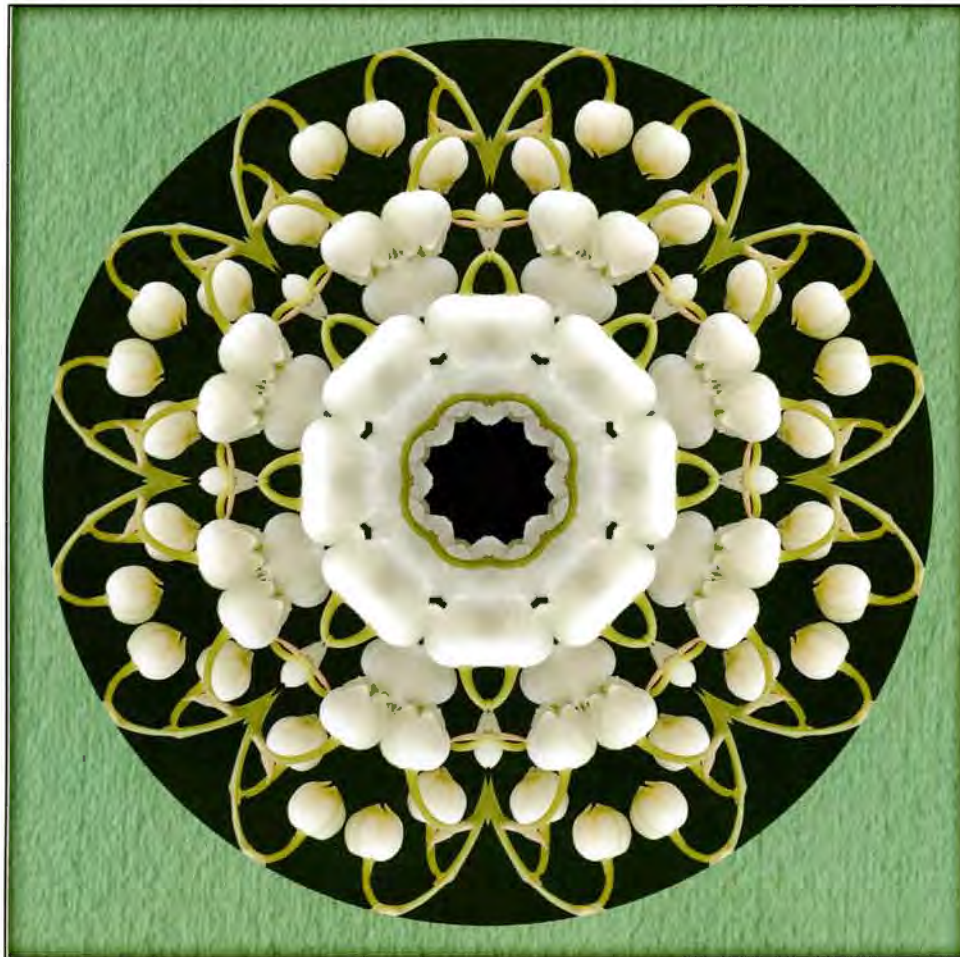

Figure 1

Figure 2

DIGIT CHALLENGE: LILY OF THE VALLEY KALEIDOSCOPE

Lily of the Valley Kaleidoscope

This technique produces a circular pattern, reminiscent of a kaleidoscope, from a rectangular selection. Most images are suitable for making a kaleidoscope and I have found flowers to be particularly suitable subjects. The complexity of the pattern will depend on the initial selection and the number of segments made from it. Theoretically, this could be any number greater than 1 but I have found that between 8 and 12 are realistic numbers, giving the best results.

The basic idea is to take a wedge-shaped selection from a photograph, ensuring that the angle of the wedge is (as near as possible) an exact sub-multiple of 180°. For example, to make an eight-segment pattern, the chosen angle would be 22.5° (180/8). The wedge is then duplicated, flipped and positioned back-to-back with the original wedge to make the first segment.

This segment is then duplicated, rotated and attached to the first segment. This duplication is repeated until the pattern is complete. Since two wedges make one segment the resultant pattern has as many sides as the original segment – eight in this case. It sounds complicated but it is actually a very easy process to complete.

The key to using the technique successfully is in creating a correctly proportioned wedge. It is important that the initial wedge is made accurately as any mistake made here will be multiplied by however many segments are in the pattern.

The question that will spring to mind is: "How is the exact ratio of the selection determined?" It is, quite simply, a matter of basic trigonometry. Although this is a 'how I did it' article, just in case you would like to try the technique for yourself, the table

in **Fig 1** gives you the information needed. My pattern was made from 8 segments, as highlighted in blue.

The original image is shown on page 25, in **Fig 2**, with the selection outlined in red.

The Rectangular Marquee tool was selected from the Toolbox. Then, on the Options Bar, the Style was set to Fixed Ratio with 0.414 and 1 being set in the Width and Height boxes.

I then copied the selection to a new layer: (Ctrl+J on PC, Cmd+J on Mac) and switched the Background layer off. This meant that the boundaries of the selection could be seen clearly thus making it easier to make the wedge.

Using the Pen Tool (you could use the Polygonal Lasso) I created a wedge of the

half that was to be deleted. The resultant wedge-shape is shown in **Fig 3**.

The wedge layer was duplicated (Ctrl+J on PC, Cmd+J on Mac), flipped horizontally and placed back-to-back with the original wedge to make the first segment, as shown in **Fig 4**.

Figure 5, on the right, shows the progress of the shape development:

The two wedge layers were merged (Ctrl+E on PC, Cmd+E on Mac) to form the first segment layer (top left). The original wedge, which had an apex angle of 22.5°, now, as a segment, had an apex angle of 45°. The segment layer was duplicated, rotated 45°, then moved to adjoin the first segment (top right).

The layers were, once again, merged and duplicated. The upper layer was then rotated 90° and adjoined to the second segment. The pattern was now half completed (bottom right).

Once again, the layers were merged and duplicated. The upper layer was then rotated 180° and moved to adjoin the straight edges to make the final octagonal shape (Bottom left).

To create the circular pattern, I selected the Elliptical Marquee tool, found the centre of the image then, whilst drawing the elliptical selection from that centre point, I held down the Shift and Alt keys. The shift key constrained the shape to a perfect circle and the Alt key drew the selection from the centre outwards.

The selection was inverted (Ctrl+Shift+I on PC, Cmd+Shift+I on Mac) and then deleted. This left the circular pattern wanted.

I then created a layer underneath the Kaleidoscope layer, filled it with a complimentary colour then, on top of that layer, I inserted a suitable texture, which was blended to Soft Light. The layer opacities were adjusted to give the effect I wanted and, finally, a Layer Style was added to create an inner glow to the outer edge. The final kaleidoscope is shown on page 24.

A pattern with eight segments is quite simple to do as each segment can be duplicated and rotated as required. With other sized segments this may not be possible and, in that case, each individual segment will need to be copied, rotated and adjoined as required.

Segments	Angle	Rotation	Tangent
6	36	60	0.7265
8	**22.5**	**45**	**0.414**
9	20	40	0.364
10	18	36	0.325
12	15	30	0.268
15	12	24	0.213
20	9	18	0.159

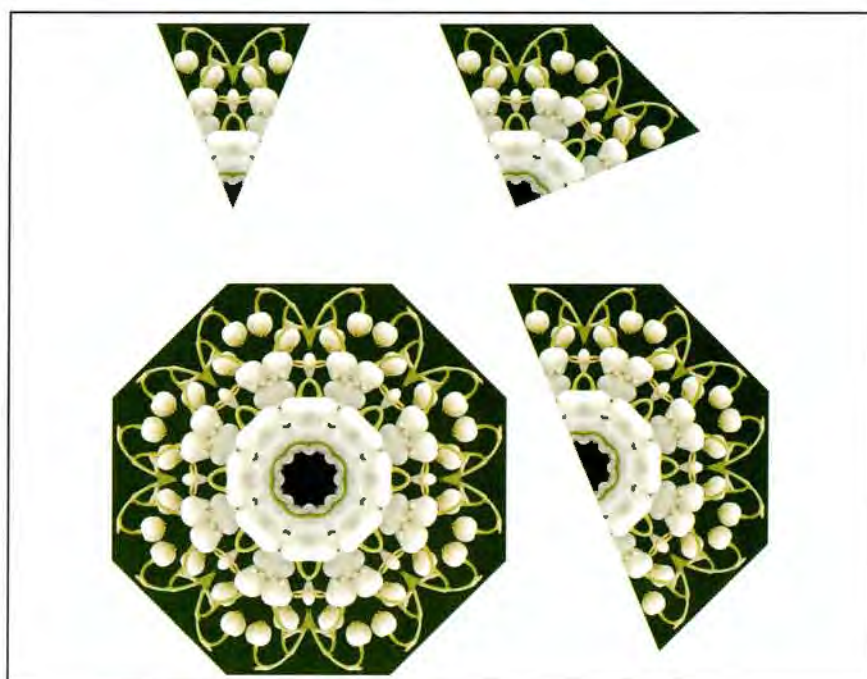Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4


Fig 5

DIGIT CHALLENGE: PORLOCK POSTS

Porlock Posts

This image was created 'in-camera' by the use of a long exposure. The technique has become more widespread of late, and many images of this kind can be found on the web – just do a 'Google' search for images using the search term 'Big Stopper'. The latter refers to the 10-stop neutral density (ND) filter, which is used for many of these images. Such a filter is necessary to reduce the light reaching the sensor to a level that allows exposures from 1 second to several minutes. This is not as easy as it sounds as, in bright daylight conditions with a 10 stop ND filter, exposures are typically 1 to 10 seconds even with apertures smaller than f20 and the lowest ISO setting, which is usually 100 though some cameras have

a minimum of 50. Lenses often have an inferior performance at very small apertures such as f22 to f32 and it is better to use f20 or f16, which then requires a second ND filter. Hence, in full daylight, I usually use a 10-stop, circular ND filter plus a 3-stop square ND in a separate holder. This allows typical exposures of up to 5 minutes at ISO 100 and f20. At dawn and dusk, the 10-stop filter alone is usually sufficient. As a guide, a flat milky appearance of lake or sea needs exposures of 1 to 5 minutes, sometimes longer. Exposures of 5 to 20 seconds will leave some texture in the water, which can be effective showing swirl and flow. Exposures of 1 to 5 seconds can be useful for waterfalls where longer exposures can result in washed out detail.

The main 'Porlock Posts' image above used an exposure of 120 seconds (for comparison, two other images show exposures of 1/6 second and 13 seconds). The images were taken on the stony beach at Porlock Weir, Somerset. As indicated, two ND filters were used: a 10-stop plus a 3-stop. The camera was set up on a tripod, the image composed and the lens focussed and then set to manual focus. The ND filters were then attached (once this has been done the viewfinder goes black so composing and focussing have to be done beforehand). An exposure reading taken before the ND filters are attached allows a calculation to be made of exposure with the ND. A useful number to remember is that a normal exposure of 1/1000 is 1 second using a 10-stop filter
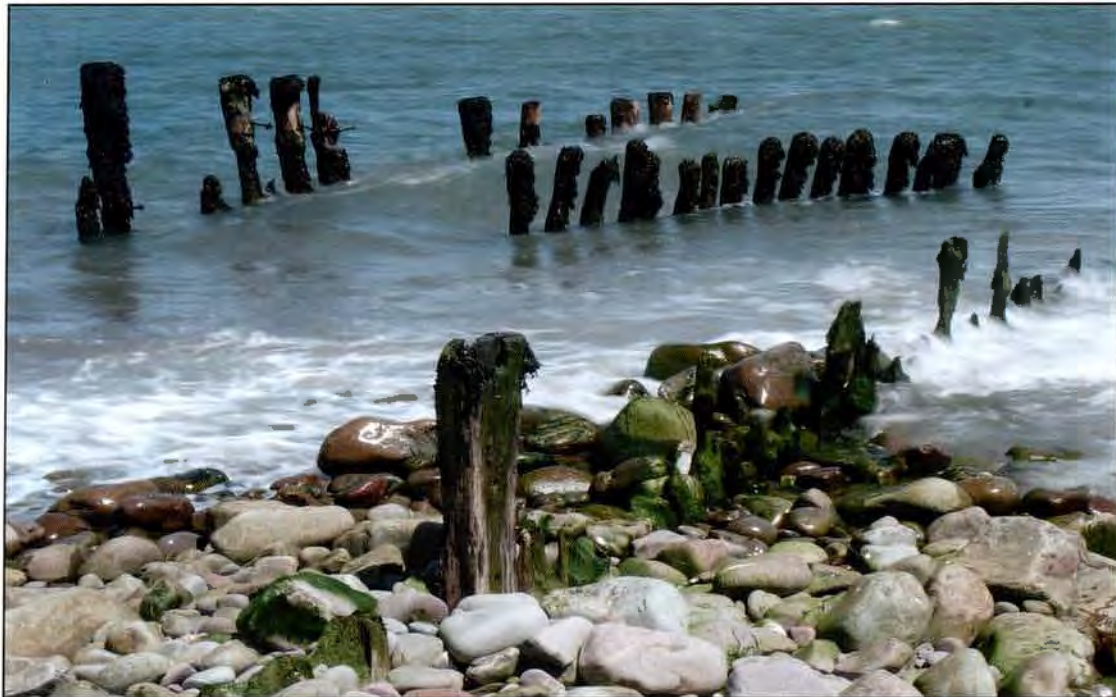
Exposure of 1/6 second

Exposure of 13 seconds

or approximately 10 seconds with the additional 3 stop ND.

Exposure settings on most cameras can be set up to 30 seconds. Anything more than this requires the 'bulb' setting which opens the shutter when the shutter release is pressed and closes it when you take your finger off the button. Old cameras used to have a 'time' setting which opened the shutter on first press and closed it on a second press but this feature is not present on most modern cameras and a lockable remote release is needed for exposures over 30 seconds. Alternatively, an intervalometer can be used with the camera set on 'bulb' and the intervalometer set for one exposure of (say) 2 minutes. This also allows a delay of several seconds to be set before the exposure starts – always useful to allow the camera to settle down from any inadvertent movement. Watch out for sensor dust marks on your images – small apertures really show these up.

Find a suitable subject and have a go!

MEMBERS' PROJECTED IMAGE COMPETITION 2014

OUR SELECTORS THIS YEAR WERE:

Martin Addison FRPS:

Photography has played an important part in my life ever since I was a teenager and I have been an active member of the Worcestershire Camera Club for over 40 years. I run the WCC Digital Imaging group and organise monthly meetings, practical workshops and photographic trips to various locations throughout the UK.

I enjoy sharing my photographs and also helping other photographers through lecturing in Prints, Projected Images and Audio-Visual. I also run courses on Adobe Lightroom for Permajet. My fourth book, 'Painter 12 for Photographers', was published in 2011 by Focal Press.

Most of all I enjoy taking photographs. My inspiration comes from the world around me and I particularly enjoy creating pictures that intrigue. In the camera I often use multiple exposures to add texture, and camera movement to create impressions rather than reality. I am currently a panel member for the RPS Licentiateship awards.

Outside of photography I have a great love of music (listening to music - I cannot play it!) I enjoy a wide range from Classical to Blues, Indian to Rock, but my especial love is Opera, which I watch and listen to on a regular basis.

Web site: *www.martinanddoreen.co.uk*
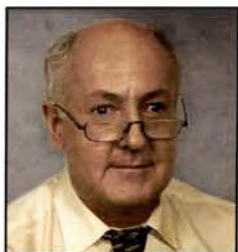
Colin Harrison FRPS:

I am a prolific picture taker and will photograph anything if given the chance. I have been collecting qualifications since 1988 (FRPS MPAGB EFIAP/p PPSA MPAGB FBPE FIPF) and it is still an ongoing project.

I really enjoy judging and lecturing at all levels but especially looking at people's work. In particularly I enjoy advising and assessing entrants' panels for the RPS and images for the PAGB distinctions. Being

Chairman of the Cheltenham International Salon of Photography has given me insight to what goes on behind the scenes in an exhibition.

I am always trying to produce new images and experimenting with new image manipulation software. At the moment I am into producing grungy images.

You can see some of my images on: *www.colinharrisonphotographer.co.uk*

Linda Wevill FRPS:

I have been passionate about photography for the past twelve years. Although my main photographic interest is the landscape, I also enjoy capturing a diverse range of images, from still life to travel photography. I have had several exhibitions of my work over the last couple of years.

In May 2013 I was awarded my Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society in the Visual Art category. In May 2014 I gained my EFIAP Bronze distinction and in April 2010 my DPAGB.

I enjoy entering the international salons and have gained awards and medals in many of these. I have had work accepted in many other salons, including

the London Salon and the RPS International Print Exhibition. I have had an image Commended in the Landscape Photographer of the Year 2013. The exhibition toured around the country and my image is published in the book of the same name as well as being selected as a Christmas card by Camden Graphics.

I am an active member of the Royal Photographic Society. I am on the national Visual Art Group committee as Webmaster/Publicity Officer and on the South West Region Committee, as well as organising the South West Region Visual Art Group.

To see some of my work, please see my website: *www.lindawevillphotography.com*

MEMBERS' PROJECTED IMAGE COMPETITION 2014

FROZEN TREES

PETER CLARK FRPS

Martin Addison FRPS:

This is a beautiful image in which the author has captured the wonderful atmosphere of this day and place; I can almost feel the bitter cold, the frost on the trees is so crisp. I love the way that the snow-covered ground encloses the water in the front of the photograph and the snowflakes, which show up so beautifully against the black water.

The arrangement of the trees is ideal and the delicate sky is the perfect backdrop. An outstanding winner.

Colin Harrison FRPS:

I think quality is the key word in describing this picture. The extreme cold and fantastic light has created this magical image. The image appears three-dimensional due to the crispness of the geyser-produced ice on the trees and softness of the misty background. The delicate tones of the snow and ice have been extremely well captured.

Linda Wevill FRPS:

This image has really captured the atmosphere of the beautiful, tranquil scene and yet the freezing temperature comes across to the viewer. The frozen snow on the branches gives a crisp feeling to the scene. The composition is well balanced with the detail in the sky complementing the positioning of the trees in the frame. A truly elegant and atmospheric image, and a worthy winner of the Raymond Wallace Thompson Trophy.

TURNED OUT NICE AGAIN

NEIL HARRIS ARPS

Martin Addison FRPS:

What a great title to a superb picture. The falling snow creates a fabulous atmosphere and the penguins on the top of the rock surveying the scene are perfect. I particularly like the snow-covered rocks with the tops fairly clear, which indicates the wind is very strong. A beautiful day indeed! The muted colours of the photograph are excellent and I give the photographer full marks for braving the elements and bringing back such an outstanding image.

Neil Harris ARPS:

The photograph was taken at Port Lockroy in Antarctica. The recent BBC 2 documentary called 'Penguin Post Office' was being shot whilst I was there. A mini blizzard and strong winds meant the zodiac ride from our ship was 'interesting', this though is normal weather for penguins and they just sit it out. I hope the photograph conveys the stoic nature of penguins, the swirling snow enhancing the bleakness of their environment.

Keeping the lens dry was not easy, though sub-zero temperatures helped. It was shot on a Canon 5D MkII plus Canon 24 - 105mm f4 lens, set on 1600 ISO, f10 at 1/640sec, shot in RAW, then post processed in Lightroom 5, mainly limited noise reduction with touch of clarity and vibrance.

SIBLINGS

ANN COLE LRPS

Martin Addison FRPS:

A lovely image of harvest mice, beautifully photographed against an ideal background. It is of course very easy to attribute human emotions onto creatures such as this as they interact and this adds a lot of the charm to the picture. The two on the top left are obviously exchanging gossip while hanging onto the tail of another mouse, while the others are set upon exploring their surroundings. Very well photographed and a delightful image.

Ann Cole LRPS:

Having been a keen photographer for over 60 years, I so appreciate the advance of technology that has expanded enormously the possibilities for the ordinary amateur. I remember the excitement when my colour film went from 10 to 25 ISO! I am no wildlife photographer but who could resist the opportunity to capture images of these endearing little animals. I took 264 shots during my mice studio session. This would have been unthinkable, for me, before digital and suitable ISO.

The mice owner has options for background, lighting and perches. Like young children taken on an outing to the park, they scampered excitedly up and down the corn stalks. An altogether delightful experience.

To get a ribbon last year for two mice looking good was lucky, to get another ribbon this year for six of the same family of mice all looking good, how lucky is that?

PASSING STORM
YOSEMITE VALLEY

PETER CLARK FRPS

Colin Harrison FRPS:

A very traditional viewpoint taken from this Yosemite car park, but once again Peter has created a masterpiece of photography depicting this dramatic mood, with a limited amount of colour in his image. The inclusion of the trees at the bottom of the picture and the waterfall give a scale to the image. A fantastic moment in time.

Peter Clark FRPS:

Inspired by the work of Ansel Adams, I first visited Tunnel View in Yosemite in 1996 when, by chance, the lighting was highly pictorial with heavy clouds hanging over the Valley and streams of light illuminating either Cathedral Rocks and Bridal Veil Fall or El Capitan, conditions which echoed in part the mood of Adams' 'Clearing Winter Storm'. Several subsequent visits both in winter and in fall failed to produce any atmospheric lighting conditions and I yearned to see the

Valley full of wreathing mist. Fast forward to February 2014 – arriving at Tunnel View shortly before sunrise, I was encouraged to see a complete white-out in the Valley below, conditions which could clearly develop into some real atmospherics as the sun rose. I was not disappointed and the image shown here is one of a series captured over a period of about 1 hour until the sun finally burnt off all the mist.

WHALE SHARK WITH PILOT FISHES AND REMORAS

LEN DEELEY FRPS

Colin Harrison FRPS:

Once again Len has made his image look so simple. None of us will know probably know how difficult it was to actually take the picture, but the Whale Shark has been beautifully lit and the size of the shark has been scaled by the inclusion of the Pilot Fish.

Len Deeley FRPS:

In January 2014 I accompanied a group of divers to Djibouti, which is strategically located in the Gulf of Aden at the entrance to the Red Sea. Our aim was to dive the Gulf of Tadjoura and, more importantly, to locate, snorkel and photograph whale sharks. Whale sharks are the largest fish in the sea, reaching lengths in excess of 50 ft. They congregate in the Gulf of Tadjoura between October and February in large numbers to feed on microscopic plankton and small fishes.

The whale sharks swim close to the surface (although they are known to dive down to great depths, no doubt for food). Therefore snorkelling is the best means of encountering them and at shallow depths there is no need for flashguns, relying on the natural light from the surface.

I had many encounters and took a large number of images but was particularly pleased with this one, which shows its beautiful body patterns and also the pilot fishes and remoras that frequently accompany them.

SNOWBIRDS

MALCOLM McBEATH ARPS

Linda Wevill FRPS:

This image has immediate impact and great appeal with its soft colours and the atmospheric movement of the falling snow. The bird in the front is sharp on its head and body, but has wonderful movement in its wings. Being able to see through the falling snow to the bird in the background completes the composition. An excellent image.

Malcolm McBeath ARPS:

A straightforward nature image, this was taken during the feeding frenzy around the birds' feeding station during a heavy snow shower. In these conditions high ISO and a shallow depth of field was necessary to get a degree of sharpness, as well as the action blur expected in the chaos of birds and snow. The second bird and the position of it was a happy bonus, the image only requiring a slight crop and very minimal processing.

Camera used – Nikon D300 plus Nikon 70-300mm AF-S VR lens.

MAMMOTH SPRINGS 2

NICK AYERS ARPS

Linda Wevill FRPS

A very atmospheric image, with great detail throughout. All the elements lead the viewer from the lines in the foreground, through to the steamy and misty atmosphere in the distance, on to the mountains beyond and then back down the steps in the rocks.

There is a lot of detail and the viewer is led round and round the image. The colours are very soft and subtle and this makes a very pleasing image.

Nick Ayers ARPS

I took this image a few years ago when I was on a trip to Yellowstone with three fellow members of Bristol Photographic Society. It was quite an eventful trip for me as a couple of days before I had tripped and smashed my usual lens and damaged my Nikon D200. I was left to take landscapes with an 80-400mm lens or a 12-24mm lens.

Mammoth Hot Spring Terraces are in the north of the Yellowstone National Park. The step-like terraces are formed of traventine produced when the thermal activity

combines with calcium. They are constantly changing shape and colour. This particular picture was taken with a Nikon D70 and a 12-24mm lens. It was simply a question of finding a reasonable composition and waiting for the thermal activity to provide the right atmosphere. I processed the image in Aperture 3 but had to do very little to it.

That night the temperature dropped well below freezing and heavy snow forced us to leave Yellowstone a day early.

9 -10 You are Out, Roger Hance FRPS

Amazing Sky at Wells, Judy Knights LRPS

August in Cromer, Tim Harris ARPS

Aurora Borealis, Alaska, Veronica Barrett FRPS

Bad Hair Day, Brian Cooke ARPS

Battling the Elements, Nick Duncan ARPS

Beach Walkers Luskentyre, Frank Reeder LRPS

Caterpillar of the Swallowtail Butterfly on Fennel, Matthew Clarke

Cherese and Joshua, Marilyn Taylor ARPS

Chinese Fishing Net, Ramesh Patel

Choristers, Moira Ellice ARPS

Companions v2, Adrian Lines ARPS

Cool Air, Roderick Orrell LRPS

Corfe Castle, Moonlight, Mervyn Edwards LRPS

Crossing the Line, Godfray Guilbert

Cumbrian Cottage, Debbie Degge LRPS

Cwm Idwal, Ian O'Neill LRPS

Dance, Dance Lady in Red, Peter Hemment LRPS
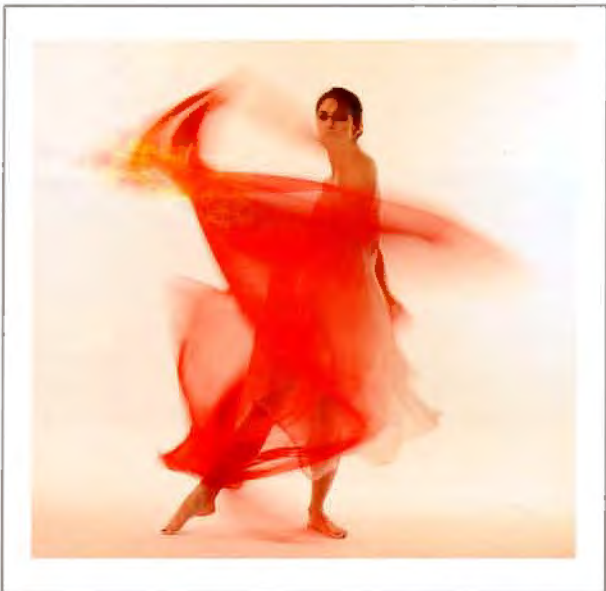
Dancer in Red, William Campbell ARPS
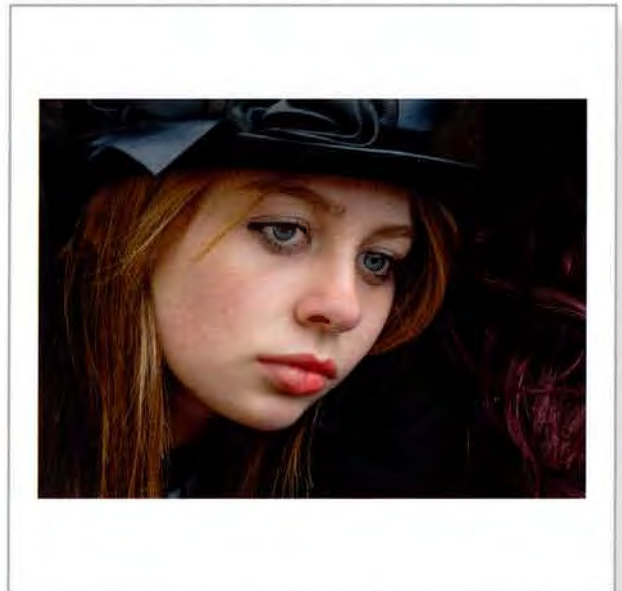
Deep in Thought, Tom Bowett FRPS

Derwent Water from Crow Park, Keswick, Peter Phillips LRPS

Distant Storm, Rosemary Wilman Hon FRPS

Early Morning, Malcolm Bishop

Early Morning Fishing, Lake Orta, John McDowall

Early Morning Walker, Susan McDowall

Early One Morning, Frank Reeder LRPS

End of the Day, Paula Davies FRPS

Ethereal, Brian Cooke ARPS

Fog over Kilchurn Castle, Ian Tully ARPS

Frosty Morning, Susan McDowall

Grain Silo at Gouts, Don McCrae ARPS

Gull Invading Guillemots, Graham Johnston ARPS

Gypsy Bob, John Boyd LRPS

Hard Winter, Malcolm McBeath ARPS

HMS Cumberland, Michael Gower ARPS

Ice and Mist, Bruce Gray ARPS

In the Snow at Mammoth Hot Springs, Carole Lewis ARPS

Jade, Robert Bracher ARPS

Kintamani Dawn, Robert Morgan ARPS

Late Again, Valerie Duncan ARPS
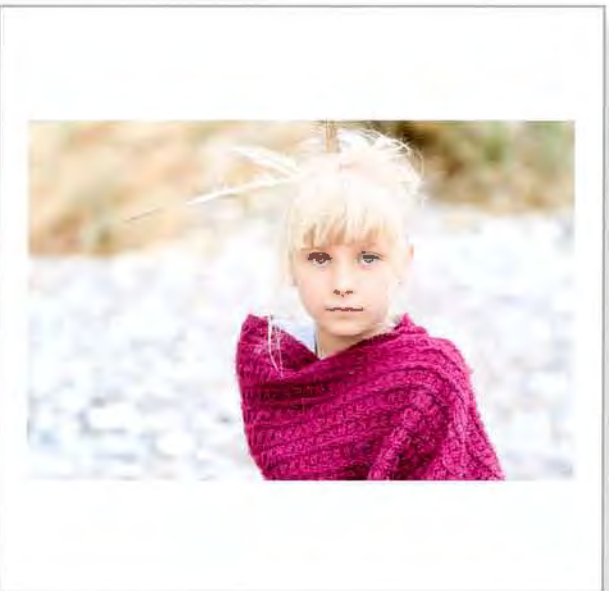
Little Indian Girl, Antanas Sidabras

Longing, Bob Bishop LRPS

Male Kingfisher with Catch, Len Deeley FRPS

Mesquite Dunes, Mark Kemp LRPS

Minus 10, John Holt ARPS

Mischievous, Bob Bishop LRPS

Misty Mentieth, Dave Whenham

Modern Librarian, Valentina Kulagina ARPS

Moody Mountains, John Wigmore FRPS

Morning Mist, Ramesh Patel

Morning Walk, River Thames at Wallingford, Andrew Barrow LRPS

Mycena Galericulata, John Hankin LRPS

Old Apocethary, Matthew Clarke

Only One Winner, John Boyd LRPS

Oops!, Graham Johnston ARPS

Osprey EJ, Andrew Hayes LRPS

Paddling, Jean Evans ARPS

Paint Sculpture 59, Richard Lodge LRPS

Peacock Dancers, Dick Prior ARPS

Pelican Melee, Sheila Haycox ARPS

Pelican Reflection, Sheila Haycox ARPS

Pier Through the Fog, Tony Luxton LRPS

Porlock Posts, David Eaves ARPS

Porth Nanven Sunset, Malcolm Bishop

Portrait of a Labrador, Charlotte Nadin LRPS

Race with No Wind, Jim Marsden FRPS

Red-Footed Falcons Mating, Gordon Follows ARPS

Scarlet Lily Beetle Lilioceris Lilii, Cherry Larcombe ARPS

Setting Off on the Train, Jon C Allanson LRPS

Shanghai Reflections, Richard Littlefair LRPS

Skye from Applecross, Paul Johnson LRPS

Solitude, Barry Senior Hon FRPS

Something Happened to the Sunrise, Judy Knights LRPS

Spinning Spider, John Bishop

Spoonbill with Catch, Gordon Follows ARPS

Sprinters in the Rain, Roger Hance FRPS

Staircase at County Hall London, John Childs ARPS

Strathyre Morning, Eric Begbie LRPS

Study Time, Valerie Duncan ARPS

Summer, Veronica Barrett FRPS

Sun Voyager Sculpture in Reykjavik, John Mobbs

Sunset from Overstrand, Tony Luxton LRPS

That'll Do Nicely, Barry Senior Hon FRPS

The Girl at the Window, Douglas Berndt ARPS

The Iron Lady, Tony Lloyd-Davies

The Jogger, Peter Humphrey ARPS

The Railing, David Eaves ARPS

Therfield Landscape, Susan McDowall

Tower Bridge at Twilight, Paula Davies FRPS

Tree of Life, Sarah L Davies

Yellow Golden Orb Spider Female with Male, Clive Rathband FRPS

Washer-Woman, Margaret Salisbury FRPS

Water Splash, Antanas Sidabras

Wet Trials, Terry Railley LRPS
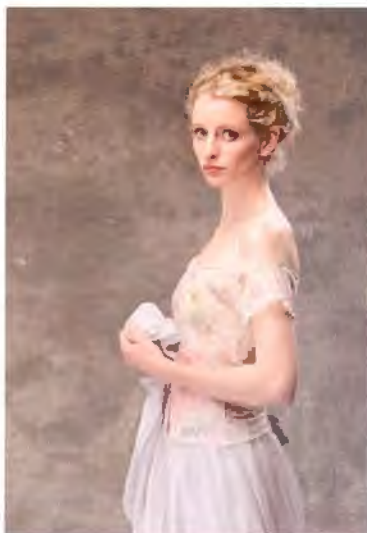
With, Janet Haines ARPS

Wrecked, Volcano, Rabaul, Eddy Lane ARPS

Tuscan Mist, Janice Payne LRPS
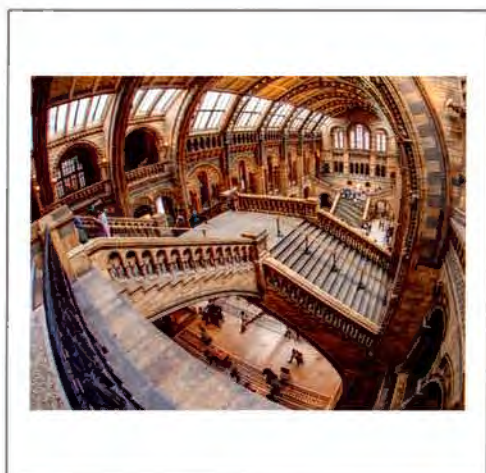
Up and Down at the Museum, Maurice Ford LRPS
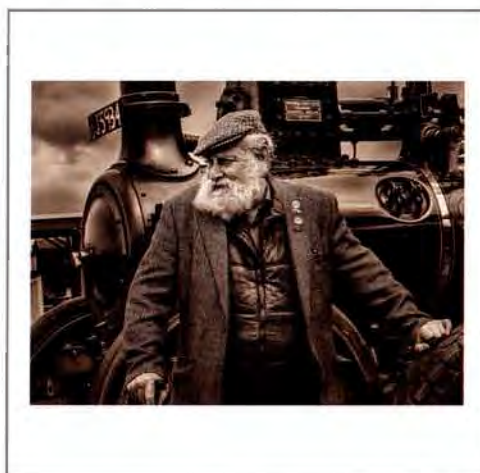
Vintage, Martin McCormack LRPS

Well Heeled, Tony Hill LRPS

White on White, Clifford Banks LRPS

Winter Dawn, Eric Begbie LRPS

Winter Landscape, John McDowall

OLIVE TREES AND POPPIES IN THE MIST

CHRIS THURSTON LRPS

Martin Addison FRPS:

This is a very delicate image, simple in composition yet still very creative. The strength and relative permanence of the olive trees contrast well with the delicate but short-lived poppies. The toning is gentle and creates a restful atmosphere with the red of the poppies providing the focal points. I also like the way that differential focus has made the background very soft which allows the olive trees and poppies to stand out.

Colin Harrison FRPS:

This image has three elements that compliment one another superbly: the soft mono looking light green tones have produced a perfect backdrop and the warmer toned tree is in a perfect position to display the four red coloured poppies in two groups.

Linda Wevill FRPS:

The light mist gives a soft atmospheric feel to the image. The textures of the bark on the tree and the grasses in the foreground contrasting with the softly focussed tree in the background, give the image depth and make it a well-balanced composition. The toning enhances the image and bringing through the red poppies adds the final touch. An excellent image.

RHAPSODY

JANET HAINES ARPS

Martin Addison FRPS:

This is quite delightful; the portrait of the girl is lovely with her strong features captured very well. Her pose is just right with the eyes looking down and the delicate fabric of her dress detailed but still soft. The background and textural overlays have been skilfully handled while the colouring and tonal control is exceptional and fully justifies the title of 'Rhapsody'. The author has created an extremely elegant and lyrical photograph to which I am delighted to award my ribbon.

Janet Haines ARPS:

This beautiful model, Fredau, is such a dream to shoot. Working with her in the studio was a true treat. She is very professional, but easygoing too. I had so many good shots from that session but as soon as I saw this one I knew it was a winner.

Shot against a tie dyed backdrop, it was good to have a textural element but I wanted to create a dreamy feel, so I added the drifting smoke (joss sticks shot in the utility room) and a gentle grad of pink hues.

Added masks to the layers enabled me to blend the four together to achieve the final result.

Whilst she looks good projected, she definitely looks even better printed on my favourite textured Permajet paper: Smooth Art Silk.

THE REAL THING

ADRIAN LINES ARPS

Martin Addison FRPS:

I love the sense of wonder in this image; the expression of the child as he approaches the huge elephant is just delightful and captures that special moment which often happens when a child encounters an animal such as this. The inclusion of the toy elephant on wheels adds to the back story: here is a child who after playing with his toy, suddenly encounters the real thing. Technically the image has been expertly assembled with very careful tonal control and the use of subtle overlays. This is an image that gave me a lot of enjoyment.

Adrian Lines ARPS:

The 'real thing' was the 1st image in a series of over 30 images themed on the whimsical interaction of elephants with humans (created as a basis for another attempt at a fellowship). I became fascinated in the altruism displayed by elephants, and so I tried to express this in a lot of the images I subsequently created.

The elephant project involved photographing mainly Asian elephants at various locations around the UK and then making small individual stories using a basic theme for each image. I found that I preferred the Asian elephant, as it seemed to exhibit calmer and more regal characteristics than the lively African elephant.

With the 'real thing' image I found that the narrative created by the combination of the elephant, child and toy didn't really need a strong background, so I just used a sky and a base image softly blended together. I enjoy making composites with my photography so have collected an array of skies, mainly taken from my upstairs bedroom window, and other backgrounds and textures. The base image was actually a concrete floor from the entrance to a garden centre in Cornwall.

Although my fellowship attempt failed, I am finding that the first few images I have used in competition have been very well received … every cloud etc.

EXPLOSIVE BEAUTY

RIKKI O'NEILL FRPS

Colin Harrison FRPS:

For me this image works so well, for once you have moved away from the beautiful eyes on this beautiful model, her mauve looking make-up has been reproduced into the almost star looking backdrop.

Rikki O'Neill FRPS:

All images I create are done so to try and evoke an emotion with the viewer.

This image of the model was taken at a photo shoot in Smethwick. The girl had been draped in a black veil, holding the flowers but I really wanted to show a closer facial image focusing on her eyes.

I started with a black background and having created brushes from paint splatters I produced the textured background. The model was placed appropriately into the image, erasing the areas not required. I then inverted her to monochrome, added blue to her eyes and a matching lilac colour as eye shadow and lips.

IN THE WOOD

RIKKI O'NEILL FRPS

Colin Harrison FRPS:

As a digital image group I feel that we should push the boundaries in all forms of creative photography, and in so, doing certain images may not appeal to everybody.

This square format image to me creates a wonderful 'children's fairy tale book' looking image.

Rikki O'Neill FRPS:

The image started with a texture background; this is something I do with the majority of my images. The trees were created using the same background and drawing their shape with the marquee tool and increasing density by using Levels. Further additions of leaf, grass and flowers were included to help create a soft fantasy feel.

The body of the girl is part of a model studio shoot but the head has been reshaped

using warp and transform tools. The eyes have been enlarged, enhanced and glazed using Photoshop tools, the mouth has been reshaped again using similar tools and all proportionally placed within the face for the required impact.

The final addition of butterflies, photographed in a museum, again altered using the Difference blending mode and reduced in opacity finishes off this fantasy image of 'In the Wood'.

AWAITING THE KISS

RIKKI O'NEILL FRPS

Linda Wevill FRPS:

A very creative and, at first glance, quite a mysterious image. On being informed of the title, however, the viewer instantly recognises a Sleeping Beauty scenario, with the princess laying sleeping waiting for the handsome prince to come along and kiss her. The colours are soft and muted and the red roses, symbolising love, are important in the image balancing the composition. A very well thought out creation.

Rikki O'Neill FRPS:

I have used the same model as in the image 'Explosive Beauty'. She was still draped in the black veil. I decided to have her lying on the ground and photographed her in the 'deathly' pose. The final image produced had a texture and a metal picture frame as composites.

I wanted to show the feeling of someone passing over, hence the colder top to the image. Keeping the warmth in the lower part of the image has helped also and removing the colour from the girls face, using the darkroom tools in Photoshop to burn in the darkness around he eyes and mouth added to the coldness associated with death.

The final touch was creating an arty border using Nik filters.

HEADS IN THE CLOUDS

LEN CLAYDON LRPS

Linda Wevill FRPS:

A very amusing, original and creative image. The expression on the face of the subject and, what I presume to be, a hat made of sewn up worms, shows the photographer's real sense of humour.

The soft grey tones through most of the image, emphasise the redness of the eyes, adding to the humour. The square format suits the diagonal composition. A very well created image.

Len Claydon LRPS:

Portrait photography with a creative element is my main interest. The original image was taken in Barcelona with a Fuji bridge camera, one of a number of images taken that day. I try to be original in every image that I create as I feel that there are far too many images that just follow the latest trend.

I very rarely have any idea of how the final image will end up when taking a picture

or when the image will be finished. In this case it was a considerable time before I decided on what to do with it. Like most photographers that do creative works, I have a stock of backgrounds that may fit the bill. I decided to use clouds as a backdrop and recreate the portrait three times but reducing each in size and then blending them into the clouds. The process involved only about four or five layers with a little noise added at the end.

A Lonely Duck, Valentina Kulagina ARPS

Dawn Flight, David Kershaw ARPS

Death Will Find You, Kevin Jarratt

Distant Light, Chris Wilkes-Ciudad ARPS

Elegance, Janet Russell LRPS

Embedded in Ice, Clive Rathband FRPS

Faded Melodies, Janet Russell LRPS

Ghosts from the Past, Pam Sherren ARPS

Grease and Grime, Janet Russell LRPS

Horse Rider, Sheila Haycox ARPS

Il Gesuati, Venice, Douglas Berndt ARPS

Impression of Spring, Barry Senior Hon FRPS

Incipient Dryad, Reginald Clark LRPS

Joceline, Norma Phillips LRPS

Lest We Forget the Final Mission, Andrew Hayes LRPS

Lifes a Game, Len Claydon LRPS

Llyn Idwal, Chris Wilkes-Ciudad ARPS

Lone Acer, Ken Ness LRPS

Manga Style, Jim Duncan ARPS

Memories, Alan D. Young FRPS

Monalisa in White, Janet Haines ARPS
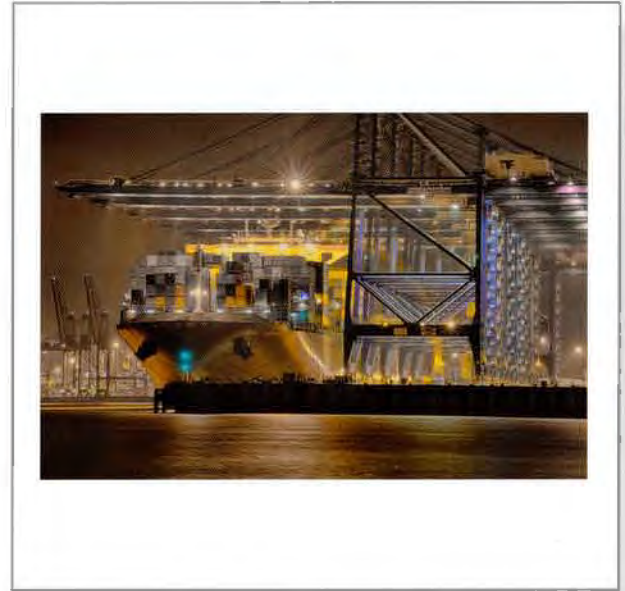
MSC Fabiola, Felixstowe Dock, Matthew Clarke

Natures Powerhouse, John Wigmore FRPS

Nomed, Kevin Jarratt

Not All There, Jim Duncan ARPS

Puppet Master, Tony Hill LRPS
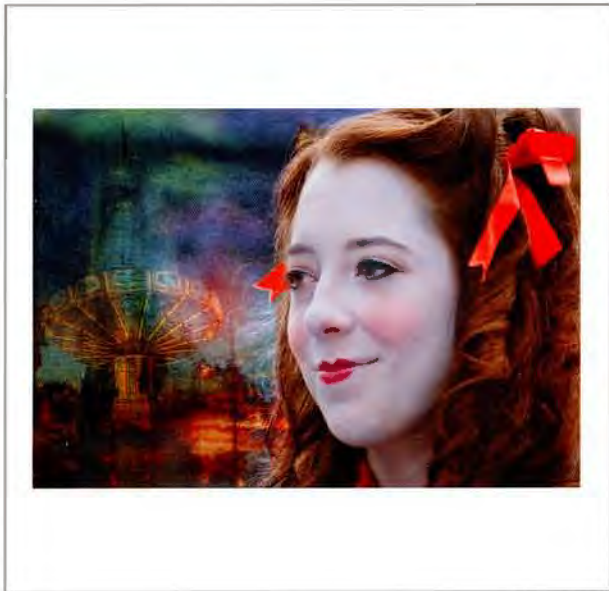
Red Ribbons, Len Claydon LRPS

Something of the Night, Frank Reeder LRPS

Taking Flight, Pam Sherren ARPS

The Arena, Paul Holroyd LRPS

The Bank Manager, Chris Thurston LRPS

The Furies, Tony Hill LRPS

The Magic Circle, Paul Holroyd LRPS

The Messenger, Debbie Degge LRPS

The Sorceress, Paul Holroyd LRPS

The Tireless Wait, Don McCrae ARPS

Time Travel, Reginald Clark LRPS

Victoriana, Clifford Brown LRPS
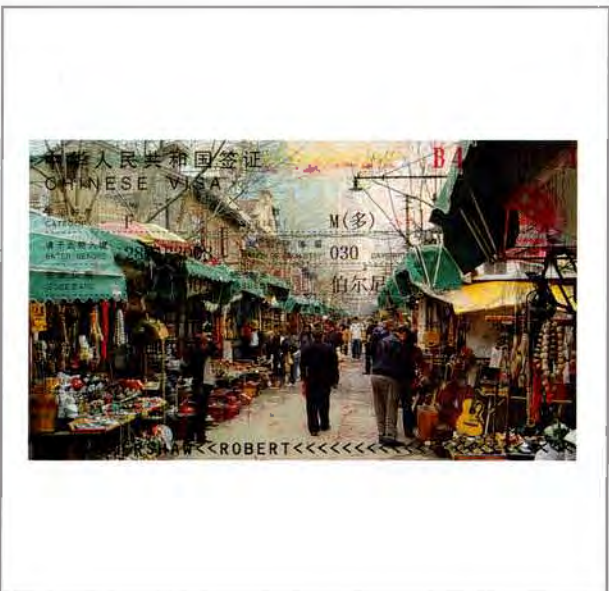
Visa Required, Rob Kershaw ARPS

Xi Legion in Britannia, Ian Wilkinson LRPS

Year 3000, Allan Mason-Jones

IN PREVIOUS ISSUES

A searchable, cumulative contents list of previous issues is available from the DIGIT Group Magazine page of the Group's website at:

http://www.rps.org/special-interest-groups/digital-imaging/about/030-digit-group-magazine