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# DIGIT

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The Digital Imaging Group

[www.digit.org.uk](http://www.digit.org.uk)

The Royal Photographic Society



## My Pathway to Digital Photography

Sunday evening, August Bank Holiday 1993. The phone went late at night; it was a relative telling us that on their way home they had seen emergency services with the wreckage of a light plane that had crashed on moorland above Bolton. Although I had been doing press photography of a sort for years, I had turned to wedding photography for my part time income. As a result, my 35mm Pentax kit was pretty much mothballed. There was a scramble for working cameras, the Metz 45 was in its usual flattened state, and the Metz 402 had a faulty synch lead, but it was better than nothing in the dark.

By the time we arrived at the scene it was pitch dark, and the rain was driving horizontally across the moors. Thankfully I was the first photographer on the scene. The only illumination was provided by the fire brigade's generator powered floodlight. I set about shooting my 'exclusive' by open flash, firing the shutter for a half second, and manually firing the Metz 402. I felt a tap on my shoulder, it was Derek Ralphs, staffer for the Bolton Evening News, who kindly promised not to use the paper's wire machine and leave the rest of the sales to me.

I knew it would be a late night darkroom session, producing prints for a variety of newspapers throughout the North West. For speed, we opted to soak the film in meths, and hair dryer it. The prints would have to dry on the parcel shelf as we drove round to assorted offices. The plane had come down in the middle of an area covered by several local papers, and the prints were driven round and dropped through letterboxes in the middle of the night, including the Manchester office of the Press Association. Each caption was manually typed and Sellotaped to the back of the print. After an 80 mile round trip, we had all the prints delivered, and collapsed into bed at 2:30AM.

By the morning we heard all the details of the plane's passengers, and that they had all survived the crash, and that they came from Rochdale on the other side of Manchester. We then had to ring the Rochdale Observer, and make a mad dash over with the negatives, as they were going to press shortly. Whilst we were away, Press Association had phoned to say they wanted pictures, and that the Manchester Evening News had wired them to London,

so that they could circulate them nationally. Finally the Blackpool papers wanted the pictures, as the plane was due to end its journey there.

At the end of the day it was a highly profitable story, but it showed up a number of failings in the way that part time photographers working from home were able to handle a news story in the middle of the night, working against the clock. Film processing and producing large numbers of prints was time consuming. Captioning could only be speeded up using carbon paper. The only rapid economical method of distribution was to take it there by car. We didn't have access to wiring facilities, and the prints that PA sent out looked as if they had gone through several passes of the 'blur more' filter in PhotoShop.

That was to be me last foray into press photography for many years. As the 90's moved on I concentrated more on my wedding work. Each time I visited Focus on Imaging in Birmingham, more and more digital influences started to appear. By 1996 I felt that the time was right to invest in my first PC, and to begin to learn about how digital imaging was going to work in the future. PhotoShop 3.0 was a



**Plane crash in Belmont, Bolton in 1993. The pictures had to be processed overnight working till 2:30 AM, followed by a long distance overnight delivery run of 80 miles or so. With digital working, we would have made the deadlines for the national papers, and been in bed much earlier. Used by several papers and Press Association Captions in Fotostation IPCT format embedded in JPEG**

powerful tool, and accessible, although at a price. My first Agfa scanner was £275 and died just outside the warranty period. The quality of prints on glossy paper was laughable. The Internet was just starting to become available for consumers, but was

too slow and expensive to routinely move large picture files. At that point professional digital cameras were running into tens of thousands of pounds, and only suitable for press use where time was more important than quality or designed for studio still life work. For me at that time, the computer was worth the expense in terms of producing correspondence, and as a digital photography learning tool. Getting work output off floppy disk onto photographic paper at a laboratory was prohibitively expensive. Digital photography just wasn't ready for the enthusiast market despite all the hype. Some day it would all be possible- but when?

By 1999 I had become a regular Internet user, as modem speeds had increased. More people were getting connected, and I set up my own web page to publicise my wedding photography business [www.philtaylorphoto.f9.co.uk](http://www.philtaylorphoto.f9.co.uk). My first sales enquiry was from a couple that had met on the Internet. She was from Edinburgh and he was from Manchester. They had conducted their courtship by e-mail, having met in a chat room, and had bought their house using the web, and were in the process of buying all their wedding suppliers off the web, including their photographer. I felt there was a good news story in there, as it was full of human interest, as back then it was an unusual event.

By the time of their wedding in April 2000, I had a news story that needed wide circulation, fast, and at last the tools were there for the part timer. We had approached the Sunday Post in Scotland, as well as the Edinburgh locals, and our own local papers who all agreed to take copy. I realised that time had moved on when Tom McKay at the Sunday Post, famous for his quaint approach said, "Could ye no wire, yer pictures from the street, with yer wee laptop?" All our research had been done over the web, and the approaches to several picture desks at once had been done by e-mail with pre-publicity pics sent out as e-mailed JPEGs. Since the wedding was an afternoon event, we were able to shoot some 35mm

press pictures showing the couple posing with a laptop and champagne glasses. Whilst I went on to photograph the rest of the wedding on 120, the prints were being made at Jessops local minilab. My wife then ferried me back home to the PC, and



we e-mailed the pics to Scotland, making the deadline with just a few minutes to spare. At last, we had the ability to transmit pictures anywhere in the world, and it was working for me.

The following day we had calls from the Daily Telegraph asking for pictures, and it went on to run as a feature article in the Sunday People. Selling work that had been acquired conventionally over e-mail was easy. We still had the problem of processing film fast, as consumer digital cameras just didn't seem right for the job. £700 would buy a glorified compact camera, where the button was pressed, and a while later the shutter would fire. The type of money being asked for amateur digital cameras would have bought a professional SLR, and the quality and versatility just wasn't there. Film scanners were an option, but I was of the opinion that if you needed to find a minilab, you might as well get prints done. The type of camera that would couple to a 'wee laptop' just wasn't in my budget, costing about a year's salary to buy.

Following my success with this story I was invited to become one of the freelance contributors to the Bolton Evening News. My first visit to the paper's office was a revelation. The darkroom was in the process of being demolished, and all the processing was done using a Fuji roller transport machine. After processing, everything was scanned using a Nikon Coolscan. The world of newspapers had changed radically since my last contact with them; picture departments didn't smell of fixer anymore. Apart from taking the picture and processing the film, the Mac had taken over.



**The D30, unlike consumer compact digital cameras has the ability to capture action as it happens. on an assignment for the Red Consultancy/Kellogg's Fruit and Fibre. At the World Black Pudding Throwing Championships in Ramsbottom, Lancashire, contestants stand on the 'Golden Grid' and aim to dislodge a pile of Yorkshire Puddings 20 feet up on a pub wall with a well aimed Black Pudding. 17mm Tokina lens**

Soon after this I bought what I am sure will be my last 35mm SLR, a Canon EOS1n. It's been used in all weathers at all times of the day and night on everything from funerals to pop festivals. The Nikon D1 had just been launched, but was the wrong brand and well beyond my budget. It looked as if someone had at last built the right tool for me, but at the wrong price!

During summer 2000 I took the opportunity to visit the Down Recorder, a newspaper in a small Northern Irish town that had moved over to using the Nikon D1. They enthused about their ability to meet tight deadlines, reduction in film expenditure, the ability to sell quality inkjet reprints, and the fact that it behaved like a real SLR. The only drawbacks were the focal length multiplier that made a 17mm lens behave like a 28mm, and the consequences of overexposure. At last digital imaging had come of age if you had the budget.

By now I was working every weekend at the Bolton Evening News, as well as several evenings each week. So that I could spend more time at home, I bought my own Nikon negative scanner, processed the film at the paper, and returned home to what became my own outstationed picture desk. I found out that there was a local freelance culture built around late night chemists and supermarkets that could process film at odd hours- if news broke after hours on a Sunday, nothing much could be done till Monday morning. We would rush in with instructions to process film NOW, not to cut it, and prices had to be sensible.

The Coolscan came with a copy of Fotostation 4.0, the indexing and captioning software for Pc and Mac. This had the facility to embed captions in IPTC format, as used by all picture desks. I can honestly say it is the best piece of photographic software that I've ever used. Whole folders of images can be browsed as thumbnails, I've seen a single image plucked from a 40Gigabyte hard drive in seconds, there's no longer a need to send captions by e-mail along with my submissions as they travel embedded in the file. It's not a replacement for PhotoShop, but a tool that works well alongside it. Get a trial copy from [www.fotoware.com](http://www.fotoware.com), and see if it can help your workflow.

By late 2000 the first reviews of the Canon D30 were appearing, there were favourable comments being made by American photojournalists, and the sample images on the web looked impressive. Perhaps this would be the answer to all those part time professionals? The image quality was there, it took real Canon lenses, it was rumoured to behave like a 'real' SLR, and above all it took the picture at the moment the button was pressed. The samples in the RPS Journal looked convincing, the £2000+ price was a bit steep, but more sensible than other cameras.

I carried on until Focus 2001, with my quasi-digital working. I knew that at some point I was going to have to make the jump to digital. A friend at the Manchester Evening News reckoned that if you were not able to work digitally and wire pictures into the office by the end of the year, you would no longer be competitive as a freelance. I looked at a number of cameras that might have done the job, the Nikon 950, the Canon G1 and other compacts with professional aspirations. They all had the press the shutter and wait problem! There was no way that I would be able to use them. If I went out to get a picture of a celebrity getting in a car with one of those, they would be driving down the street by the time the camera was ready. Sport- forget it!

The D30 was hard to find, generally locked in glass cases. It was a strange beast, the body wasn't in the pro class, the price was, the autofocus seemed antiquated, there were bits missing such as the light up focus points in the finder, and it didn't feel right. After 3 months deliberating and reading reviews I went for it.

The first day was a mixture of jobs, cricket for the Bolton Evening News, followed by a restaurant review for the Manchester Evening News, then an evening staking out Manchester United players at a party. The cricket made good use of the 1.6X multiplier caused by the small chip, and the autofocus coped well with the rather poor 75-300 f4-5.6 Canon lens. Only small pictures were needed, and small, normal JPEGs were ideal for the task. The paper was somewhat surprised to find pictures landing in the e-mail mid afternoon. The Marco Pierre White River Room at the Lowry Hotel was something of an eye opener. I had forgotten the tripod plate for my Manfrotto, and had to do all the pictures by available light hand held and flash. The restaurant is largely white, and I started out taking meter readings using a



## Digit

Minolta V flashmeter. I eventually gave up on the meter, and worked using what has become my standard technique of metering using the camera in evaluative mode. If the shot doesn't look right on the LCD I just shoot again, having guessed the compensation. The quality on these shots was just amazing; the camera would pick up the tiniest of details in large normal mode. For press use, large fine was overdoing it. I bottled out for the party, I hadn't enough card space, and the paper was not confident of being able to read the card at a looming deadline.

Since then, I've become very attached to my D30. I now have a regular spot digitally illustrating the restaurant reviews in the Manchester Evening News. The D30 has proved ideal for this, as the auto white balance copes well with the mixed lighting found in restaurant interiors. I've become an expert at slow synch speed shutter work as the LCD allows me to review the effect, and then direct the picture participants. The Bolton Evening News likes the fact that work can be requested overnight, and high quality images will be there in the morning. At first, there was a reluctance to take digital work due to the newness of it all, but nowadays it's film that is unpopular.

Transmission methods have moved on. After e-mail we changed to direct modem-to-modem, as we found out that e-mail was doubling file sizes. The trend is towards FTP, as pictures can be sent from mobile phones, ISDN or landline over the Internet whilst keeping transmission times down. I found that once I had large amounts of wiring, that whole afternoons would be spent on the phone due to aggravation with poor connections and dropped lines. Finally I gave in, and had a Home Highway line installed. This gives me the option of 2 ISDN channels or 2 voice lines or one of each at any one time. ISDN is the preferred method of picture transmission, but finding a system that will work with a PC has been a nightmare. Mac users have plenty of cheap or free software to do this. The only solution was to use Hermstedt's Leonardo Express software that couples to the industry standard ISDN Manager protocol.

The ability to work digitally has brought new pressures, such as being woken at 6:45 AM to photograph snow scenes, then being asked to wire at 8:15 to meet an 8:25 deadline whilst you are 5 minutes drive from home. The expectation is now that

anything can be photographed anywhere, anytime, and delivered in minutes.

I've recently bought a 'wee laptop' but it's used as a backup and location editing/captioning device, so far I have resisted the mobile phone link, but it can't be far off.



**After finishing a wedding on film, I was relaxing in my suit. I heard sirens, and looked out of the window, and saw smoke pouring from a neighbouring street. I dashed out with the D30, recording whatever I could see. Tragically one person died in the blaze, but with digital technology the pictures were on the news desks before the fire brigade had finished fighting the blaze. Pics show fire brigade entering the building, and face of fireman leaving the building, having discovered the body. The image of the fireman is not pin sharp, but it's one of those photojournalism moments that tells the story better than words can.**

Within two months of my D30 arriving, three other freelancers in the town bought one, and other freelance sold all his Canon gear and bought a Fuji S1. We have all found the transition to digital to be an easy one, as our experience with PhotoShop over the years has served us well. The D30 is far from perfect, for sports use the autofocus is awful, you need to buy new flash equipment, a 17mm lens or shorter is a must, the body is too light requiring a battery grip to add weight. The camera is very slow to download using the Canon software when attached directly to a PC, everyone having moved over to a card reader.

For the benefit of Digit readers, this is the workflow we have all settled on.

1. The Compact Flash Card is removed from the camera and placed in a card reader.
2. The contents of the card are copied to a folder called 'Card Backup'
3. A new folder is created for each job that has been covered
4. The card backup folder is then browsed in Fotostation, and the good pictures are copied to folders relating to each job.
5. All the pictures in each folder then receive a generic caption.
6. Specific caption details are then added, such as names L-R etc.
7. The final selection pictures are then dragged to a folder called uploads
8. Pictures are then transmitted using a selection of methods according to the publication.

**The D30 has a number of failings in my opinion compared to film. The autofocus is not accurate enough to track objects coming towards the camera. If you are in a position such as waiting for people at an airport barrier requiring flash and servo focus, I would opt for film unless there was a deadline.**

1. The TTL flash seems to get it 'wrong' with light or dark subjects, as transparency film would.
2. The lack of real wide angles upsets those addicted to 20mm or wider lenses.
3. There's still a 'lag' at those moments you least expect it in sports photography- but I have covered Premier Division football with it, with reservations.

**On the other hand I can't think of any other Canon camera that will help you meet the deadline at a lower price.**

**You can work whenever you want without being tethered to processing facilities**

**Pictures usually require no after work. At the price there's nothing to touch it apart from the Fuji S1 for Nikon users.**

**It's the only way to shoot 200 press ready pictures at no cost.**

**Phil Taylor ARPS**

*an applied photographer*



I asked the picture editor at the Bolton Evening News- Richard Rollon to give me a comment on the difference it makes having a freelance working digitally?

“The standard of photographs supplied by freelances has improved since they have turned to digital. Because the freelances are able to preview their image at the taking stage they are able to reshoot the image if they feel they have not shot the desired image first time. The main advantage of digital is the speed the freelance can have the photos available for picture desks, with no developing of films and scanning in of negatives required by the newspaper office, greatly speeding production.”

Phil Taylor ARPS

see the colour images referred to below on pages 9 & 10



**Cuba Cafe, Salsa Bar in Manchester**

The D30 has made slow synch flash techniques possible that would have required much trial and error with film.

For some of the shots, the dancer was being spun round and round whilst the camera was fired repeatedly at low shutter speeds with flash. Tough job, but someone's got to do it!

It could be done in PhotoShop, but it's easier to work live.

**Ballet Dancers**

Digital cameras are said to be too 'noisy' at high ISO speeds. This image of ballet dancers for the Bolton Evening News was taken with a 17mm Tokina lens at f3.5 at 1600 ISO. I could have used a tripod, but I felt that the 'grain' that the D30 produces actually enhanced the image.

**Halle At Tatton Park**

Each year the Halle Orchestra holds a spectacular fireworks concert at Tatton Park in Cheshire. I had never covered fireworks before, and was worried about measuring the exposure. As it was, I settled on my meter, view, change, shoot, then check again method. There is very little noise as the images were shot at 400 ASA around 1 second.

I was rewarded with a full page spread on the event in colour. The traffic queue on the way out was so bad that I arrived home at 2:30 AM, then had to wire my work into the office for a 6:00 AM deadline. You might get to concerts for free some times, but it has its drawbacks.

The Halle and Cuba Bar Images are courtesy of the Manchester Evening News.

**Thanks**  
are due to all the contributors for this issue of DIGIT

Without your articles and pictures this journal would not be possible.

Please send your text and images to the editor by email, floppy disk or CD ROM.

Please do not ZIP or otherwise compress text. WORD documents are ideal but plain text email files are acceptable.

Images should separate from the text and be 200 dpi JPEGs at about 6 x 4 ins.

Data may be on either PC or Mac disks.

[weh@wycliffe.co.uk](mailto:weh@wycliffe.co.uk)

**Arrivals from New York following September 11th**

The D30 isn't the best camera when images are required where the subject is moving, in low light, or plain awkward to focus on.

The focus will hunt frantically, the flash will either under or overexpose and the moment is lost.

Lens focal lengths just aren't right for some conditions.

There is no 28-105 mm equivalent for example.

These pictures show the emotional reunions at Manchester Airport of tourists returning from New York after September 11th.

Shot with a Canon EOS1n with a 28-105 lens and 550 EX flash. Fuji 400 ASA Superia via a Nikon Coolscan 3.

These pictures are courtesy of the Manchester Evening News.





## Portable Storage

When the first digital cameras with acceptable quality came out they produced 800kb JPEG image files and owning two 80mb CF cards was a luxury which might enable you to take 200 images and last out a trip without worrying about getting to a computer to transfer the images and re-use the card. However photography is one long search for perfection and the currently available 10MB TIFF files even with a 1GB IBM MicroDrive, holding 100 such images and selective deletion of obviously unwanted images in the camera, one can rarely last out for a week's trip.

The price of the **1GB IBM MicroDrive** has come down, as all electronic devices do given enough time, but it is still difficult to justify buying another storage device holding only another 100 images at a cost of more than £300. Why not look at the new devices costing not much more, all describing themselves differently but which are in effect what the computer regards as removable storage devices to which as many as 2000 10MB images can be transferred from the camera's storage cards in the field?

The first to arrive on the scene were the **'Digital Wallet'** from Minds@work of the US and the 'Image Tank' from Level of Taiwan followed by the 'Digital Album' from Nixvue of Singapore and soon (Sept 2001?) the 'Mine' from Terapin also of Singapore. These devices all contain a 2.5" Hard Disk Drive such as the ones used in Laptop computers. They all enable a variety of camera storage cards, CF types I & II, Smart Media, IBM MicroDrive etc to be inserted either directly or via PCMCIA adapters and the image files transferred across to their built-in HDD.

All of these devices meet the basic need to accept camera storage cards, transfer your images to their own HDD which normally comes in either 10GB or 20GB capacity and subsequently pass these images to your computer's C:, D: or other built in Hard Drive or, for that matter, to any other computer or any other fixed or removable storage device connected to your computer including ZIP drives and, I see no reason why not, to a writable CDROM disc. The image files on your card are not deleted they remain there for you to delete when the media card is returned to the camera for re-use. The 10GB and 20GB units will hold about

1000 and 2000 10MB images respectively before they need emptying!

They are connected to the computer, the 'Image Tank' directly via a USB cable and the others indirectly also with USB cables through their own portable Docking cradles etc. They can even be used as a back-up for your entire computer's data or selected files. or as an intermediary to transfer files from your computer to another one. Where they differ, apart from price, is in the add-on frills that they offer some of which you might like and some of which you might not need to have or pay for!

The **'Digital Wallet'**, £499 for 10GB, for example in addition to CompactFlash cards types I & II, SmartMedia and the IBM MicroDrive, will allow you to transfer image files from the Sony Memory Stick and MP3 Multimedia Flash cards. It can also transfer files from its built in Hard Drive to storage cards inserted into its own PCMCIA slot. It has a Carry Dock, which when plugged into the bottom of the unit, connects the unit to the computer via a USB cable and the AC adapter/battery charger unit. There is also an optional (ie extra charge) car adapter cable. The NiMH batteries are claimed to run the device for 120-140 minutes at full charge. To save battery power it switches off after 30 seconds of non-activity - the blurb doesn't say whether this can be varied. The unit is menu-driven and operated by buttons by which you make your selection of activities which also include the ability to 'verify' the transfer of images from the media cards.

The **'Digital Album'**, also £499 for 10GB, goes a stage further and offers the facility of viewing your pictures on TV and of printing your images directly, without the need to connect to a computer, via its external Docking Cradle.

The **Terapin 'Mine'** is not available at time of writing (early September 2001) and the only information is that obtained from a US cutting-edge review. which indicates that, in addition to the facilities offered by its competitors, it is a multi-use storage device offering "a powerful, handheld, internet enabled, personal data storage device ready to meet all your digital information needs at work and play - is a full function digital audio player/recorder - bridging the gap between portable MP3 player and a laptop - with 10Mbps Ethernet connectivity".

The **"Image Tank"**, sold in the US as "Image Bank" and by one UK vendor as "Digi-Bank", is by contrast a simple device which offers the basic facilities to accept CF Type I or II, Smart Media and IBM MicroDrive cards directly into the unit without the need for any card adapter, transfer files to its Hard Drive and subsequently, when connected directly to a computer via USB cable, transfer those files to that computer.

It does not have a built in battery and needs to be connected by the 12v DC car adapter supplied or, by plugging this adapter into the combined plug/transformer, also supplied, into the mains. It can also be powered by a battery pack of the type used for extended use of digital cameras themselves. The UK distributor of the Image Tank includes such a pack in its price for the complete unit which is supplied by them with either 10GB at £399 or 20GB HDD fitted at £499. The device can also be purchased from other suppliers in the UK, Europe and the US with or without a built-in Hard Drive fitted, at around £156, so that the purchaser can fit either one which they have left over from updating their old laptop or one purchased specially from a computer component supplier. A 10GB 2.5" HDD typically costs from £93 upwards depending upon the make. This route, followed by me gave a 10GB unit at a total cost on only £260 plus Battery Pack (which can also be used for the camera) at £59.

No doubt by the time you read this there will be other devices available but my own liking is for the Image Tank for a number of reasons. Not only is it much cheaper it is simple in concept and simple to operate. You only need to take the unit and its car/mains power cable or a camera type battery unit into the field. Past experience indicates that simplicity often equates with reliability. While it is feasible that, as with all such devices, at some time the unit's motherboard itself could fail there is a distinct advantage in being able to replace the HDD for yourself with only the knowledge of how to undo four screws, push the HDD into place, screw it into position and screw the lid back on the unit. Also you can create up to 5 partitions on the Hard Drive if this takes your fancy!

While at first sight the absence of built-in batteries might seem a disadvantage, using the car cigarette lighter socket adapter or the mains power means that



you don't need to know how much power there is left or be worried that it might not be enough to enable you to finish the transfer before it crashes due to the battery running out. True that using the external camera type battery pack you can also experience this problem but since they usually have around 2000 mAh capacity it is unlikely if you keep it topped up at the end of each day. There is also the advantage that you could use it to power your camera but before using any of these packs be sure to establish that the output is the right voltage and polarity for your model. In this respect the unit sold as the "Digital Power Kit" contains a variety of connector plugs including one which reduces the 7 volt battery output to 5 volt for use on those cameras, such as the Ricoh, which operate at this voltage.

Finally, there is the distinct advantage that if you are looking for a unit to deal simply with your photographic image field storage requirements, with the computer back-up/file transfer facilities thrown in, the 'Image Tank' unit is by far the cheapest available whether you buy it at the UK list or discounted price or from any of the European EEC vendors by post or UK and European website suppliers all of whom charge significantly less.

There is nothing difficult about buying your requirements outside the UK. Admittedly buying from the US is a little more complicated since it is further away and the products imported will be assessed for a small duty and VAT at 17.5%. However there is a wide choice of reputable photographic suppliers in the EEC who supply these units VAT paid (no duty is payable between EEC countries) at very favourable prices including one internet supplier based in London.

**(see the website list on page 18)**

**Dennis Toff ARPS**

## **An MA in Photography**

Some of the readers of this Newsletter may remember a series of articles that I wrote about my experiences whilst doing an MA in photography at Derby. At that time there were, to my knowledge, about three places where it was possible to do such a degree. The best known at the time was the RCA. At the present time Goldsmiths is the place to be although I

am not sure you can do the MA in photography there.

The course that I did was excellent. The total course fees for the two years came to about £700. We had lots of visiting artists such as the late Helene Chadwick, Willy Doherty from Co. Cork and our own John Blakemore. Our course leader was Olivier Richon who is now in charge of the RCA photography MA course. Many of the visiting artists were "using" photography. I had little experience of this approach before coming on the course, but listening to the way they approached the making of their work was immensely helpful and revelatory.

A theoretical underpinning in MA courses does not guarantee better work, it certainly was of benefit to me. I took the opportunity to read everything that Victor Burgin ever wrote and in spite of his over reliance on the writings of Freud, Lacan and Marx, plus the effort of overcoming the well trodden path of the 'academic' style of writing, I did find some really excellent ideas contained in some of his essays. It was, for me, a kind of archaeological reconstruction of what was buried in the scripts, but rewarding none the less. While doing this MA I did have the opportunity of seeing what the BA students were doing. They had a much more technical course of study, although our Group Chairman, Richard Sadler, can tell you more about that as he was the course leader.

It did seem to make sense to have the MA as a broader and more reflective study ending up in the production of an exhibited work. The overall standard was far more demanding than an RPS Fellowship and it is comforting to know that both in the Contemporary group and in LIP there are quite a significant number of members who have at least one MA and some with multiple MA's.

It is a pity, in my opinion, that in the RPS as a whole there is a dearth of theoretical underpinning to work and although things are improving with the advent of the Contemporary group. It is amusing to note that in the RPS there is no exemptions for MA degrees for the Society's Distinctions. The fact is that imagery of all kinds is indivisible. Photographic practice does require an understanding of all the visual arts and that looking at artwork of all kinds is immeasurably helpful for all of us. As a student, I looked at the workbooks of Marcel Duchamp, arguably the most influential artist of the last century whose quite fantastic ideas have permeated throughout the current art movement here and in the U.S. It helped me to understand

a great deal of modern work and new ways of using photography. There are assumptions that a lot of conceptual work is theory laden and aimed at the "Art World" and Charles Saatchi.

My practice was just opposite his now famous gallery in Boundary Road St John's Wood. I went to the opening show and he has a wonderful eye. He has dozens of Dieberkorn's, Keifers Twomblys and Rothenbergs, -any of these works I would just love to have. When he bought them they were bought for little money. His collection is far better than the national collection at Tate Modern.

It is true that there are phoney's about producing this theory laden stuff and only a few are real artists whose work will last, but I bet that in time we will love the very best as much as we now love the "unfinished" works of the impressionists or the beautiful cubist works of Braque and Picasso.

When I did the MA in Design and media Arts I drifted into digital work and was doing that work long before the inception of the Digital group or even the Epson inkjet printer.

For those who have not the inclination to move into this field I can only say that it gives one a great deal more control over the final image. On the one hand this can be of great advantage, on the other hand it can lead to the production of deeply horrendous work.

Those who venture into this field without any theoretical underpinning, or with little understanding of the fine arts will risk producing this sort of work which even to the lay person will look incomprehensible or just plain daft.

The Sirens for this potential disaster (if I can mix my metaphors) may be found in the "Filter" menu of Photoshop where by pressing a letter on the computer keyboard, a perfectly acceptable image can be turned into a horror comic. The results may sometimes be seen within the RPS, but I will not dare go further down that road in this article.

**The greatest benefit of any MA course is the interactions between students. It is often more helpful for photographers to get feedback from artists in other fields who are visually literate rather than other photographers. There may be less of an agenda and their reactions are often spontaneous and extremely helpful**

**Edward Bowman FRPS**



## MonacoEzcolor 2

At every photographic club, evening talk or seminar where I happen to be a speaker, I am inevitably asked by several people, "how can I get the same image I see on my monitor out of my printer?" In general it is almost impossible to give a straight answer unless you see and physically go through the settings of the questioners set-up itself. The problem is each piece of hardware on a system interprets color in its own way. I have tried out many types of software that are supposed to solve this problem, but none has worked as well as this one. **Monaco Systems EZcolor 2** software is the first reasonably priced program that can and does provide a solution. The program builds custom ICC profiles for your scanner, camera, monitor and printer. Profiles for a printer can be created in both RGB and CMYK, with the added bonus that it works with the Epson 2000 pigment ink printer. Minimum System requirements:::---

Power Mac 8.6 or later 32MB

RAM, 50MB free disc space.

PC Pentium, Win 98, ME, or 2000, 32MB

RAM, 50MB free disc space.

Price £235 inc VAT plus Sens

or £423 inc Vat

UK Supplier Visualey 020 7836 3004

Web Site [www.monacosys.com](http://www.monacosys.com)

The **EZcolor 2** package comes with a CD, User guide, Quick Start Guide and IT8 Reflective 5 by 7 target. As supplied, the producers assume you are using a flatbed scanner. If you wish to profile a transparency or negative scanner (Nikon Coolscan etc) you need to obtain a transparency IT8 target from the developers before commencing to use the application. You can also purchase, at further cost, the **MonacoSENSOR Colorimeter** to automatically give you a much more accurate profile than the software, though I doubt that the average amateur could justify this additional expense

The instruction manual has a quick start chapter at the beginning for those who have a knowledge of color management, and then chapters that take you step by step through understanding color management, to building profiles for all your hardware, editing the profiles, using them and a FAQ section. The 'easy to understand' way that the instructions are written should be required reading for other software producers.

Loading the program is simplicity itself.

Insert the CD into the disc drive.

Navigate to the drive and double click

Monaco Ezcolor.exe

The set-up program runs and the installer wizard appears. After installation you must restart your computer.

### 2

On opening the program you are faced with a screen that gives you the option of building a profile for your monitor, scanner, printer or edit your printer profile.

Select monitor and instructions appears suggesting your monitor should be switched on for at least 30 minutes before profiling. Then set contrast and brightness, correct room viewing light etc etc. Then a wizard appears and tells you to set the monitors phosphors type and to measure the phosphors RGB output. This is much the same as the Photoshop method of setting up Gamma through the Desktop Control Panel. The big difference for me was that making the centres of the Red, Green and Blue squares merge with their surrounds was much easier.

If you are really flush and have purchased the **MonacoSENSOR** this step will be done automatically. You then follow the onscreen instructions to name and save your monitor profile. The software will default to the correct location for profile storage.

Each time in future that you boot up your computer an information screen comes up to inform you that your monitor profile has been loaded.

Before building a scanner (or other input device) profile you are advised to turn all automatic settings off. You are then asked to select a target type, Reflective, or if using a film scanner the type of transparency (35mm or 4 by 5). Click Select Reference, locate and select the file that matches the code at the bottom left of your target. If using a flatbed in reflective mode, place the IT8 target provided in the scanner and click next. You then scan the target using your twain or acquire module. It is important to remember to disable all automatic correction and color management. Whatever your settings are, remember to use them exactly the same when doing future scans using the profile.

Whilst you can create a profile while shooting the IT8 target, together with images for a digital camera under controlled lighting in a studio, it is imprac-

tical to attempt to make a profile for a digital camera away from the studio in an uncontrolled environment.

When creating a printer profile, that profile is only for that paper and resolution combination. You must create a separate profile for all other paper and resolution combinations. This is perhaps the longest but the most worthwhile of all the profiles you will make with the system.

**MonacoEZcolor 2** looks after all your color management and settings in this process so you must ensure that the printers own setting are OFF. First you make a print of the Target tiff in the program. It is recommended that you leave it to dry for 30 minutes. Erring on the right side I left mine for a day as I find that there can be many small changes in tonality with ink jet prints no matter what make of paper or printer you use. The next step is to attach the IT8 target to the bottom of your Tiff Target and scan this combination to finally create your profile. The program then suggests that you save the created profile with a unique title.

If the printer profile you have created is not quite to your liking you can use the Edit Printer Profile option. This gives you the opportunity get a better match between monitor

### 3

and printed image, a better match between the original and the printed image or tweak the color and/or tones.

At the end of the instruction manual are six pages of very helpful information on how to use profiles and FAQs.

**Nothing in this world is perfect but MonacoEZcolor 2 comes pretty well near to it as far as color management is concerned. I always approach with some trepidation altering color settings in my systems and always have a fall-back arrangement so that I can retrieve the situation.**

**Having seen the first class results obtained with this program I will certainly not be returning to my old settings.**

**Sid Pearce FRPS EFIAP**  
please see  
the colour images opposite



**MonacoEZcolor 2.0**

# MonacoEZcolor

**Welcome to MonacoEZcolor!**

*MonacoEZcolor enables you build profiles for your color devices and allows you to edit monitor and printer profiles. To begin, click on one of the icons below.*

 **Create Monitor Profile**    
  **Create Printer Profile**

 **Create Input Profile**    
  **Edit Printer Profile**

**Select a Preview Image**

While editing, you will be comparing an image displayed on your monitor to the same image printed on your printer. If you would like to use your own image as a reference while editing, click **Load Image** and select a TIFF file. If you have not already printed your image, click **Print Image** and the selected image will be printed using the profile you selected earlier. Turn off all color profiles in your printer driver. MonacoEZcolor will automatically color manage the image.

Image File:  
**TweakImage.tif**  
 Source Profile:  
**Generic Lab Profile**  
 Printer Profile:  
**Monaco Working Space.icc**

**STEP 3: Adjust the Phosphors**

Adjust the Red, Green, and Blue sliders until each M matches its surrounding shade as closely as possible.

**STEP 3: Attach IT8 to Printed Target**

Attach your original IT8 target to your printer target. If you are using tape, take care not to cover any of the color patches on the IT8.

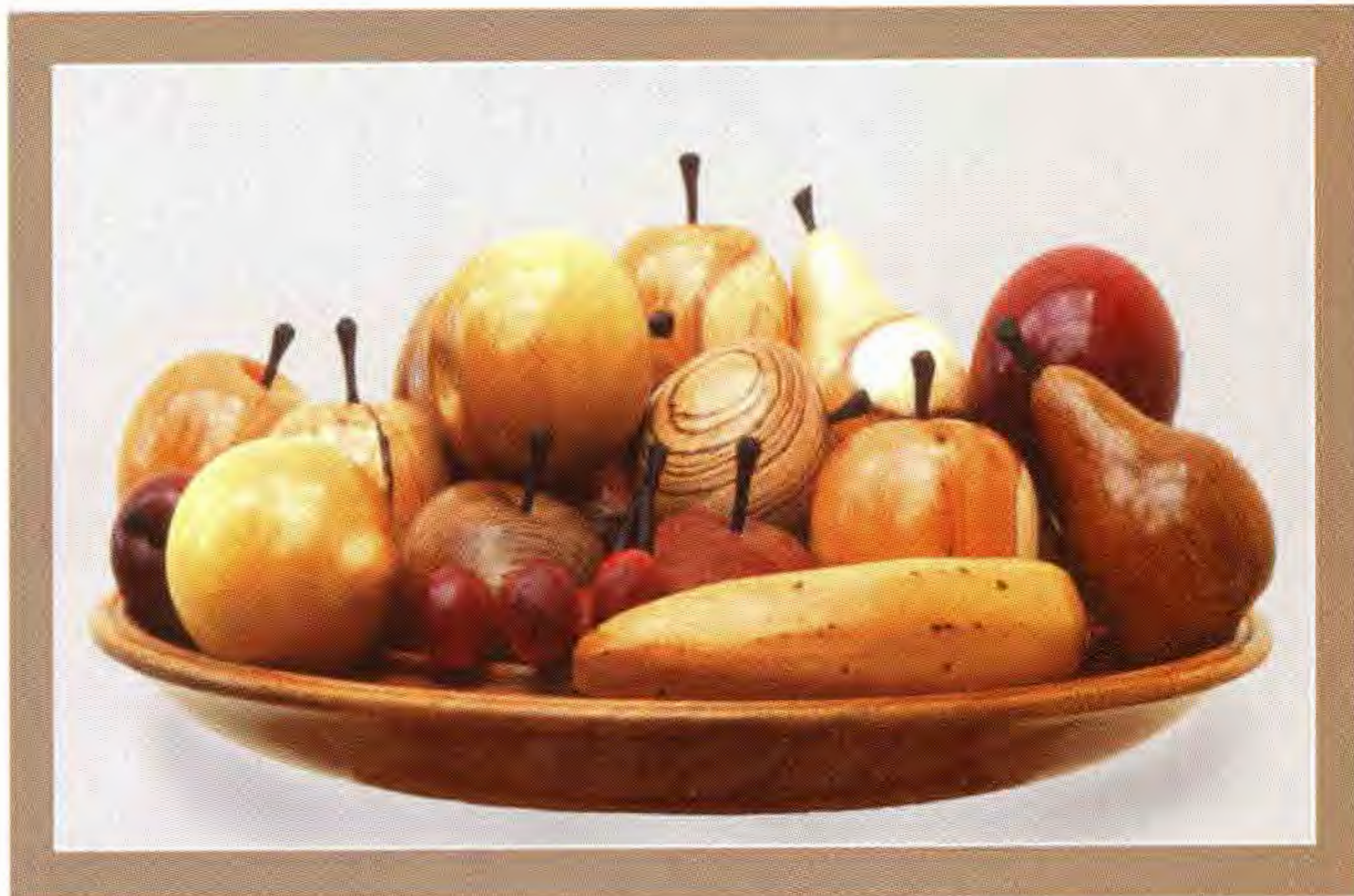
**Note to ink jet printer users:**  
 Before you measure your patches, make sure the ink has completely dried on your printer target. This may require a minimum of one half an hour depending on your ink and paper combination.




Phil Taylor ARPS



Sid Pearce FRPS

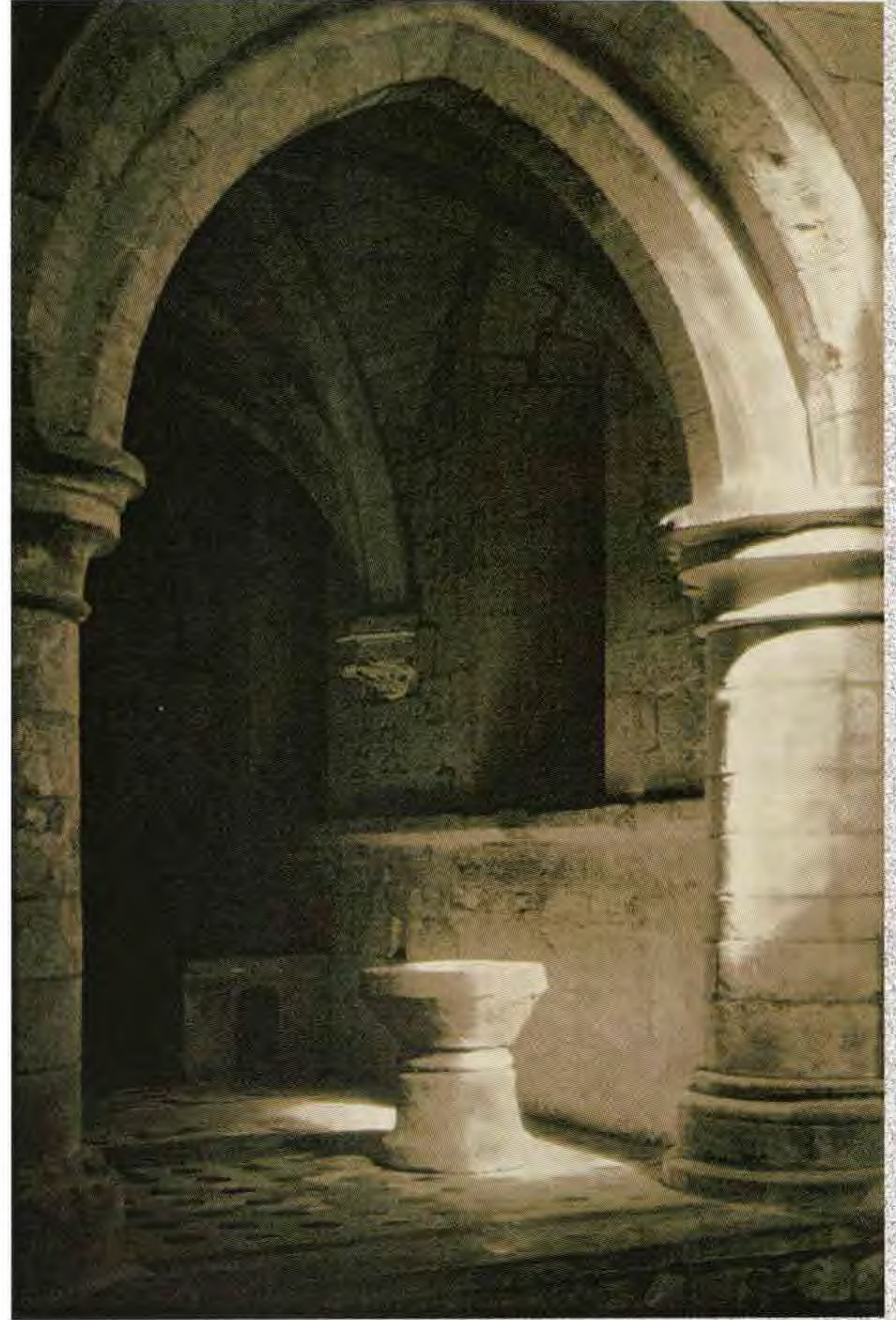






Night Stair

Robin Mellor ARPS



Font

Peter Clarke LRPS



Phil Taylor ARPS





Rye

David Bebbington ARPS







## PhotoArtMaster – The Artist's New Partner

to give a stronger wash, and more paint was applied to pull the centre of the picture together.

### Step Four (see opposite)

A different Source from the Pure Colour Tab was then chosen and with one click applied to the whole Canvas.

### Step Five (see opposite)

As part of the 'disassembling' of the original photograph PhotoArtMaster retains all the highlights and small dark scale detail on the Sources under the Tab called Fine Detail. So to bring out the flecks of light on the central part of the picture where the diners are as well as the reflected light on the water the highlights were selected and gently blended into the middle of the picture. This is subtle stuff!

### Step Six (see opposite)

The last but one step is slightly different. At any point whilst making your picture you are able to save your work, by clicking the Keep button, and bring your saved work back into Palette as if it were a Source. And this is what was done here: the picture in Step Five was saved and then brought back into the Palette so that the overall contrast could be adjusted via the Contrast Picker. The picture now looks brighter and ready for the final step.

### Step Six-Plus-A-Bit (see opposite)

Using some artistic licence and to help promote some interest to the foreground, in this final step, PhotoArtMaster's Offset Clone function was used to add-in another swan. Here's the finished version – and one you can see on the reverse of the boxed version of PhotoArtMaster.

By the end of Step Six-Plus-A-Bit, a super, quality watercolour had been created, which was then printed out on watercolour paper, framed, and hung on the wall as a reminder of a very memorable lunch whilst on holiday.

This demonstration shows how quick and easy it is to transform a quite ordinary holiday snap into an acceptable piece of artwork. It has shown some of the main features of PhotoArtMaster but there is also other functionality such as, levelling the horizon, cropping images, or painting/washing/tinting with your own selected colours via the Palette onto the Canvas. These and many more features offer you

Many other picture-making programs offer a very limited range of artistic styles or effects, largely dictated by the click of a few buttons. **PhotoArtMaster** however, lets you decide on your own style: from pencil sketches, through chalk drawings on a tinted ground, to pen and ink washes, to watercolours, and oil paintings. And throughout the whole process, you are in charge. To illustrate the point, what follows is a short six-and-bit-step demonstration.

Opposite is an original holiday photograph of some people having lunch on a sunny day in Brantôme, an old and delightful town in the North part of the Dordogne. Not a great photo, but a good starting point for these purposes

Note there is... er... only one swan...

### Step One

Fire-up PhotoArtMaster, open the photograph and click on the icon that takes you into the main Studio Editor. (See the screen grab on page 15)

The first thing you see at the foot of the Studio Editor screen are seven colour images, or Sources, reflecting seven degrees of segmentation and simplification of the original photograph. These Sources are under the Tab labelled Main Colour. You will also see 12 other Tabs under which are a total of 150+ other Sources, or variants of the original photograph. These 'Sources' are what arguably make PhotoArtMaster the artist's new partner.

To work on a picture, click on a Tab and then click on one of the Sources and wait as it appears in the smaller white area in the left of the screen called the Palette.

Select a Brush from the range of brushes that are located just above the Tabs. And as you move the brush over the large white area on the right of the screen, called the Canvas, so the corresponding part of the Palette will appear on the canvas. The first time you see this happening you will be amazed at the magic and beautiful simplicity of it all!

The pink coloured area is the Contrast Picker, which controls the brightness, darkness, and contrast of the Palette; and the light blue area is the Mixer, through

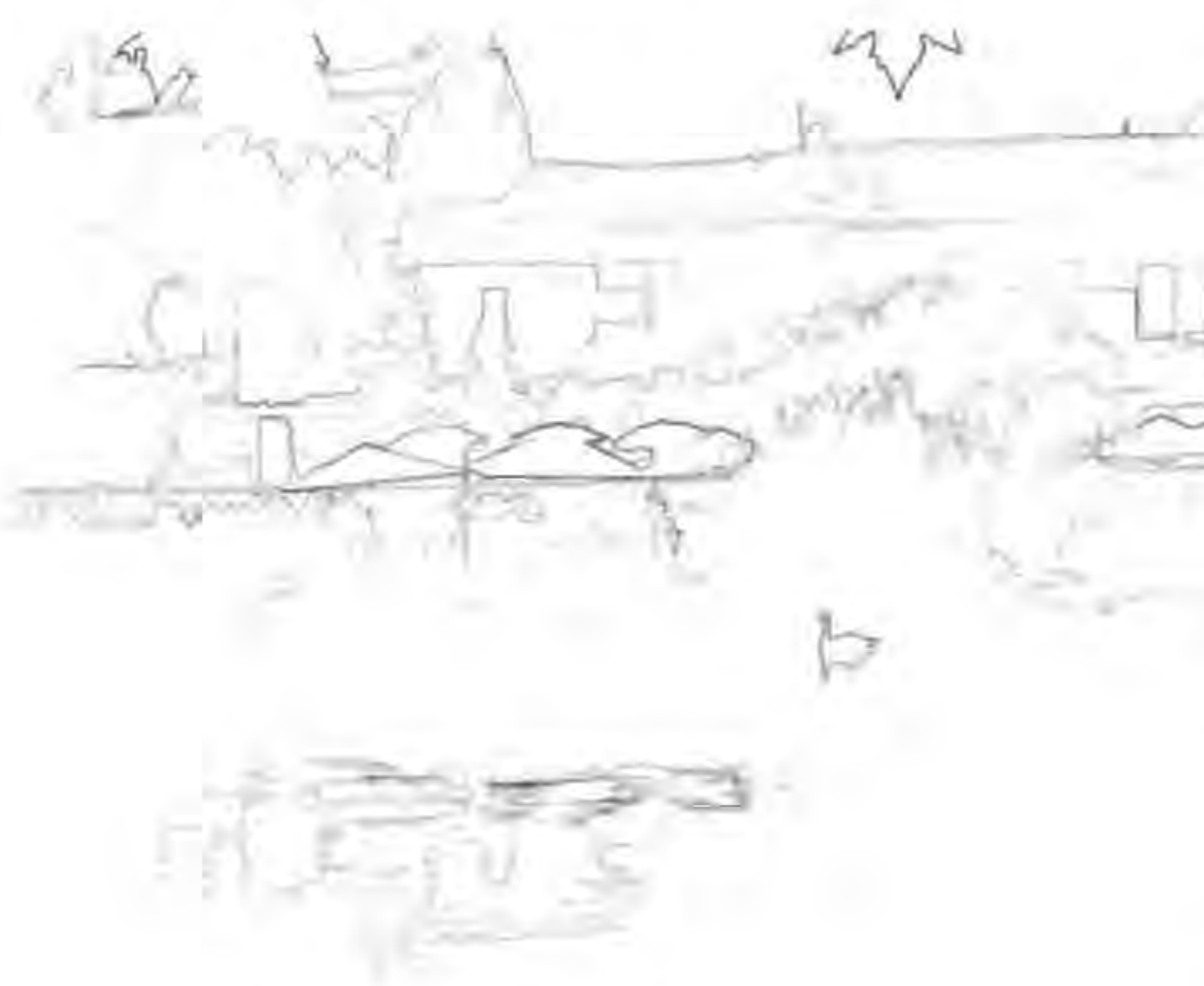
which you can control how your Palette is blended on to the Canvas.

The important point about the Studio Editor is that everything you need to make great pictures is all laid out: there are no hidden pull-downs, buttons or important functionality buried four clicks deep behind an obscure icon.

And so to work ...and some creative fun.

This picture began as an outline drawing by selecting a greatly simplified Source from the Main Edges Tab. Once you click on a Source you wait a few seconds and it then renders in the Palette area. A broad brush was then selected and being careful not to paint/draw all the way to the edges on the Canvas, the Source was transferred to the Canvas.

To strengthen the centre of the picture, a less simplified Source was selected next and it rendered in the Palette. Using the same brush this second Source was selectively applied to the Canvas, i.e. over the top of the first pencil sketch, to help define some of the more important edges, such as the rooflines, the outlines of the leaves at the top of the picture, the umbrellas, and the swan.



### Step Two (see opposite)

To add a light colour wash, a Source from the Tab labelled Main Colour was selected next; and with one click its brightness and contrast was adjusted via the Contrast Picker. Then, having selected a brush and tweaked the Mixer, the Palette containing the colour Source paint was applied over the sketch made in Step One.

### Step Three (see opposite)

In Step Three the same colour Source was used, but with the Mixer settings changed



## Digit

endless opportunities for developing your own artistic vision and styles you are not hidebound to a given set of effects – and all at a cost not much greater than a medium sized quality watercolour paint-brush! Remember that PhotoArtMaster is a PC-based standalone application, so it does not require any other image-editing software.

On page 12 there is a spilt picture of a snowy street as a photograph and as an oil painting. On page 15 is Victoria as a pencil and chalk drawing (originally in colour).

### For Photoshop and other Image-Editor Users

For all those that have invested money and time in Photoshop, you are able to achieve similar results to those created by PhotoArtMaster if you use one of the Fo2PiX range of plug-ins as noted earlier.

There are four products in this range. Starting at £29.99 for buZZ.Simplifier 1.0, which has three filters included in it, the plug-ins get progressively feature-rich and culminate in buZZ.Pro 2.0 which has 19 filters and costs £89.99.

All four buZZ plug-ins have at least three 'simplifier' filters, which, through finger-tip control, allow you to strip unwanted detail out of digital photographs and create individual layers and/or masks for later blending. The latest and most important 'simplifier' filter that has been recently added to all the buZZ plug-ins is the one called Simplifier Three.

The Simplifier Three filter combines automatic segmentation and simplification at the same time, and allows simultaneous user control over the areas to be segmented and the degree of simplification. In the screen-grab below you can see the preview screen and how the image has been segmented into:

- a) the Inner region of the picture, coloured red, to which a little simplification will be applied;
- b) the Middle area, coloured green, to which more simplification will be applied; and lastly
- c) the Outer region of the picture, coloured blue, which will be simplified to an even greater extent.

## 'The Hand Inside the Camera'

Don McCrae,  
CEO,

Fo2PiX – the creative division of Segmentis Ltd.

### The Old Masters and their 15th Century Technologies

In his latest book, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters*, Thames & Hudson 2001, David Hockney convincingly argues that, since concave mirrors and lenses first became available in the fifteenth century, many of the great painters such as van Eyck, Caravaggio, Holbein and Vermeer had a 'hand inside the camera'. Far from diminishing these greats he suggests that, by using such devices as the camera obscura, they demonstrated the pragmatism of professionals in using the best available tools and technologies of the time to create masterpieces.

The Impact of 21st Century Technologies Now, over 500 years later, four technologies have converged to offer a fresh approach to the process of interpreting the visual image for the canvas. And they are good enough for a new generation of people to get their 'hands inside the camera'. But this time around it will not be a select, dedicated few who use the technologies, but you, me and everyone.

There is a new Picture-Making revolution afoot and it will do to art what the desktop publishing revolution did to printing: for the first time everyone will have the opportunity to create, frame, exhibit and even sell their own art work. Family snapshots pinned to a cork board in the kitchen will soon be replaced by family portraits, hanging in the sitting room. And this convergence is the next chapter in the story of the partnership between art and technology.

### Which Four Technologies?

The first of the four technologies is the digital camera. With prices falling and quality improving, there is a real sense of the impending ubiquity of the digital photograph. Ten years ago you could not buy a digital camera for love nor money, now it is expected that over 200 million will be sold by Canon, Kodak, Pentax, Nikon etc in the next few years. You only have to walk into Jessops, PC World or Dixons to see that the Revolution is well underway.

The second element is the personal computer. With the cost of memory and disc space at their lowest and fastest, to the point that 256 Mbytes RAM and 10 Gbytes of disc space is now de rigueur, the ability to store and manipulate photographs has never been easier for the PC or Mac home computer user.

The third ingredient is the quite stunning permanent colours that can be produced from the ink-jet printer manufacturers, such as Epson and Hewlett Packard. From the domestic desk-jet, to the higher-end printers delivering 1200 dots per inch, the quality of the images they generate are truly awesome.

The fourth technology, and the stuff that glues the three other technologies together, is the huge advances in image manipulation software. Since 1990, Corel's PhotoPaint, Microsoft's Photo Editor, Paint Shop Pro and the market leader Adobe's Photoshop have been quietly evolving into sophisticated tools for managing and editing digital images.

These packages have not always been easy to master but they have been good enough for many people to build careers around them.

### Limits and Frustrations

Whilst Photoshop et al provide some key steps in this final ingredient, and indeed they continue to be brilliant tools for the graphic and website designers, they tend not to make convincing pictures from digital pix. Why is this?

Artists start with a blank piece of paper or canvas and apply lines and colour in a way they choose and the more experienced know when to stop. Their representation of a scene is further characterised by the materials they use, the interaction of those materials, and the way in which they move their brushes around the canvas. But key to this process is choice - it is their selection of what goes into a painting and equally what stays out, that makes a picture a picture and not a photograph. Leaving artistic choice aside, the simple fact is that for most of us we find it very



difficult to create a three-dimensional representation of a scene on a two-dimensional surface. And so all those hours we spent, and all that fun we had as children drawing and painting came to a juddering halt as our ability to 'get it right' blocked further progress.

### The Solution

But help is now at hand courtesy of some recently developed image-processing algorithms that give everyone the opportunity to turn their digital photographs into wonderful high-quality pictures – ones worth framing. In a nutshell these algorithms do two things simultaneously and automatically. Firstly, they analyse the original digital photograph and separate features according to size, shape and brightness, (called 'segmentation'); and secondly, they decompose the objects in the photograph with reference to their scale, (called 'simplification').

The combination of object-based analysis and image simplification, (both world-firsts), can now to be found in a newly released PC-based standalone application, called **PhotoArtMaster**. PhotoArtMaster has been specifically designed to make the process of producing pictures from digital photographs a fun, easy, and highly creative process. In these and many other respects this application is a very different proposition to its predecessors and is proving to be the simplest, fastest and most economical way for many of us to regain and retain the picture-making bug.

The same algorithms can also be found in a range of four Mac and PC-based Photoshop/image-editor plug-ins, whose flagship title is called **buZZ.Pro 2.0**.

### Art and Technology - Hand in Hand

The arrival of PhotoArtMaster and the buZZ range of plug-ins are yet another step in the story of art and technology; which according to Hockney go hand in hand since the lens was first invented. Some of the greatest artists that ever lived used cameras and all the latest available technologies at their disposal to create their masterpieces – why shouldn't you?

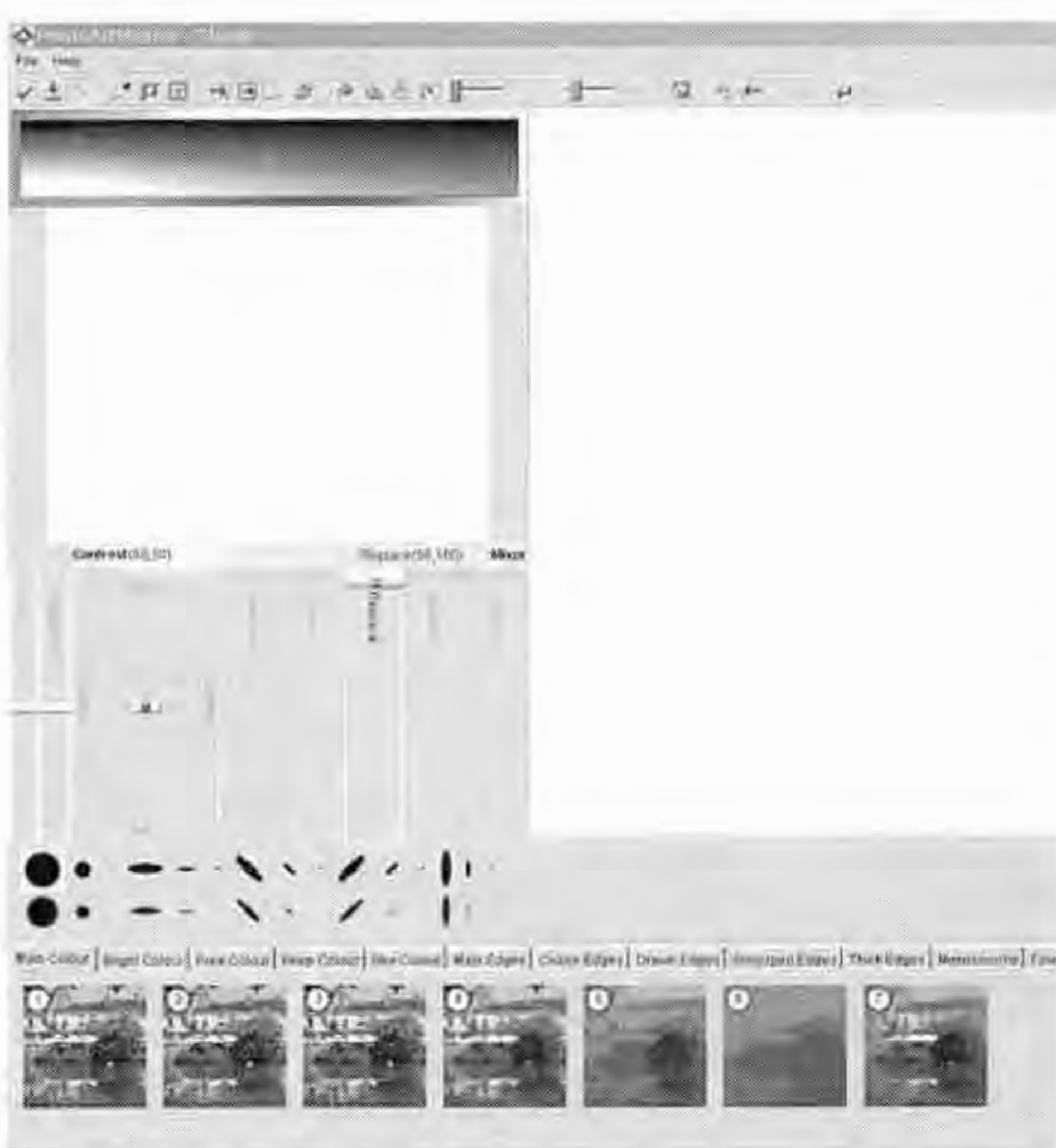
The boxed version of PhotoArtMaster, together with its Guide and Art Classes is priced £38.26; and the CD version of buZZ.Pro 2.0 is priced at £89.99.

Both products are available from [www.fo2pix.com](http://www.fo2pix.com) and all prices exclude VAT and postage and packaging.

**Fo2PiX are based at  
10 St. Barnabas Road,  
Cambridge, CB1 2BY.  
Phone 01223 701700  
or fax 01223 701702.  
Email: [info@fo2pix.com](mailto:info@fo2pix.com)**



pencil and chalk drawing



screengrab of the interface

## Digital Notes

Analogue clocks did not exist before digital clocks were invented. Well actually they did but no-one called them analogue. It became necessary to invent the name to distinguish the clocks with hands from the new ones showing numbers. What is more many of the watches with hands are not truly analogue anyway because the hands do not do a continuous smooth sweep but jerk around the face. To be truly analogue the clock must show an infinite number of time displays down to millionths of a second and then smaller (and smaller again and so on..). Both jerking hand clocks and "digital" clocks show only a limited number of time intervals. It would be possible to list every single possible time that a non analogue clock could indicate during a day. (A clock showing tenths of a second will have a shorter list than one showing hundredths of a second.)

However, an analogue clock may be accurately showing 11.08598365442383941 hours but can I read it? I will be fortunate if I can read to just a tenth of a second. But in the course of normal everyday life, I rarely need to know the time to any more accuracy and it may quicker for my brain to interpret the time from an analogue clock face than from a digital.

So why the so called "digital revolution" when analogue instruments provide an infinite range of data and digital devices are more limited?

Well provided the instrument shows the information to an accuracy which matches my ability to read and use the data then there is no disadvantage. So with all digital data it is necessary to match the precision of the data to the job in hand. Audio CDs only need have a numerical range which matches or exceeds our hearing abilities.

In computers the data is held in "words" which have a length measured in binary bits of zero or one. An eight bit file has 256 different possible values and is suitable for greyscale images or limited colour. Sixteen and thirty two bit files may store a very large range of colour values but can your printer print them all and could your eyes distinguish them all? More bits mean more memory and more processing so choose the lowest range that works.

**Bill Henley LRPS**



## Permaflow

I have been using the Permajet continuous ink system for quite a while now and it works a treat. I'm using the dye based version although there is now a pigment version available. The Permajet system is called Permaflow (Logical, I suppose) and basically it is the MIS system as bought from the US but now marketed by Permajet.

I find the ink profile (for the dyes) to be the same as for Epson. I have not had to change any settings for any of my old image files.

If you ring 01926 493632, the Warwick HQ, someone there will give you all the gen you need Or Ring 01225 810596 and speak to John Herlinger (Fotospeed) and he will give you any info.

Alternatively email: [info@permajet.com](mailto:info@permajet.com) <<mailto:info@permajet.com>> or visit their website [www.permajet.com](http://www.permajet.com). (from the list server)

## Ray Grace LRPS

The next Mids RPS DI Group meeting is on Sunday, 3rd February and will focus upon **'Painterly Techniques'** this will include numerous methods and a demonstration by FO2Pix of the **buZZ' program**.

(see page 14)

Meetings begin at 11.00am  
(bring a packed lunch)

**Address:** The Old Schoolhouse,  
Churchbridge, Oldbury, West Midlands  
(close by Junct 2 of the M5).

For more details and map, visit  
[www.Midig.org](http://www.Midig.org)

Cash prizes for  
**Digital Transformations**

The regional culture centre of  
Czestochowa. Poland invites entries for  
**Cyberfoto 2002**

Artwork of min size 21 x 30 cm plus fee  
of PLN 30 should be sent to:

Mr Slawomir Jodlowski,  
Regionalny Osrodek Kultury,  
Czestochowa, ul. Oginskiego 13a, Poland  
by 28th February 2002

Check the rules at:

[www.rok.cz.pl](http://www.rok.cz.pl)  
[rok@icz.com.pl](mailto:rok@icz.com.pl)

## Mounting

When your prints are dry they can be mounted. Go to an Artists' supplies shop and ask about 'mounting board'. You can buy suitable materials and equipment from artists' suppliers, or shops selling things for draughtsmen, or sometimes from good stationers or shops offering framing services.

I find that Rowneys boards are very good and are easily obtainable in the UK. A mounted print is much easier to handle and to view than an unmounted one. The mount also protects the print to some extent. It looks good in a frame, too. Mounting boards are usually sold in the UK as A1 sheets (420mm by 594mm) in a variety of colours. An A1 sheet can be halved and further cut down with a trimmer - I make mine EXACTLY 40cm by 50cm, since this is an international standard acceptable in many exhibitions. (You can buy frames this size.) This size can accommodate prints up to 329mm by 483mm, which is called 'A3+' or 'Super A3' or 'Super B'. It's also perfect for ordinary A3 (297 x 420mm = 11.7" x 16.5") and good for A4 (297 x 210mm).

Choose a SUBDUED colour for the mount - white, off-white, light grey or grey will show off any print well. Avoid strong colours like the plague - they only distract the viewer from the image. Buy a matt cutter to cut a rectangular aperture in the mounting board. The aperture should have bevelled edges which shows off the print well.

I use a **MAPED** cutter (made in France) which I find excellent, but remember to use the 45-degree blades (NOT 90-degree) and change them every four or five matts that you cut - this will keep the apertures neat and precise. Cut the aperture to be about 2mm or 3mm smaller each way than the image - this leaves a tolerance for less-than-perfect mounting. The board with aperture is often called a 'matt'. It leaves the print recessed into the mount, providing more protection than if the print were stuck onto the surface of the board. Trim the print so that it is about 10mm larger each way than the aperture. Fix it to the back of the matt all round with 3M adhesive tape (which can easily be removed).

This assumes that the print is on a reasonably heavy gauge of paper, say at least 190gsm (grammes per square metre) -

lighter paper could usefully be stuck onto a backing sheet before being offered to the matt.

When the print has been mounted in this way affix a sheet of thin cardboard or cartridge paper to cover the back of the mount - this is important to make the whole thing stiffer, otherwise it will wobble unacceptably. I start by cutting the backing sheet to the same size as the mounting board and put double-sided sticky 3M tape all around the edges (of the backing sheet). Then trim it down to a little smaller than the mount, peel off the protective release paper from the sticky tape and fix the backing sheet to the mount. A good rotary trimmer makes mounting easy.

On the back of the mount write your name and address, and make sure the title of the print is clear (write 'Title:' in front of it!). It's also helpful to write the word 'TOP' in the centre of the top edge - speeds up the display operation when a print is put up on an easel for viewing in the company of many others. Consider writing the title in pencil just below the FRONT of the aperture, if this is important to you. (from the list server)

## George Felton FRPS

## est la vie

It was only two days ago that I set my alarm for the first time since moving to France. Previously, its insistently irritating chirruping would have meant another day of moving mountains of paper, and an uncertain rendezvous with the road and rail networks. Now I am freed from that, I can, well.... indulge myself. Getting to this happy state was not without its strains. Two plus years of planning included a full range of troughs and peaks. With retirement in mind, my first thoughts were to buy a holiday property somewhere warm, scenic and affordable. Reality has that dreadful habit of forcing itself into ones thoughts, and in this case, the reality was that the Costa Brava was warm, scenic, but expensive and totally reliant on charter airlines for UK access. I worked steadily northwards. There were plenty of properties at affordable prices in rural France; charming views, charming disrepair, a wilderness for a garden, but with even the nearest shops up to 30km distant, they lacked, for me,



practicality. Although Normandy is certainly not tropical, it has a climate similar to that of south west England, and many advantages: easy access to the UK; a good and thriving cultural life; excellent food; good communications with the rest of the country; varied and attractive scenery and so on. Its quite a long list, but particularly it is tranquil as a retired French engineer said to me recently.

By the time I was searching in northern France, I was becoming a little depressed. It was winter, with all its attendant charms frost, fog, rain and short days. Oh for the summer! My first visit to Hameau Tranquille was on one of those days when the clouds had a greyscale appearance, and the fiercely driven drizzle probed for all the weaknesses in outer clothing. But this place was a bit different. The proposition of a newly built property, separated from a magnificent beach by 300m of protected sand dunes was attractive. Supporting that view was the nearby location of two small towns with a good range of amenities, and the slightly more distant town of Cherbourg with just about everything else. The builder promised completion in a convenient six months. The contract was signed and then.....yet another reality. The builder, it turned out, was an Olympic level 'promiser'. I was given six (failed) completion dates. The house was eventually for occupation eight months late at the end of May 2001. I walked into the house to find the kitchen units unassembled; the garage, promised (there's that word again) for the end of the month, has just been started in late November. Other minor irritations along the way have included, a tornado, precision attack mosquitoes and those heavy-footed mice.

From my study window the sky is often criss crossed by the vapour trails of airliners heading to the Americas, and with holiday flights bound for the Canaries and Costas. Should I have gone for the lotus eating and the tapas bars, for the concrete canyons and the arid but dramatic back country? I don't think so.

There is great subtlety in the attractiveness of this gentle landscape. There is no smack you in the gob beauty, but great variety. To the south are the marais or marshes, to the north are undulating and wooded hills that end abruptly with sudden views of the channel. The eastern side of the peninsula has the long low beach areas that were so attractive to the D Day planners. The west has a series of headlands interspersed with sandy beaches

that offer repeating views of the Channel Islands. The manmade attractions too offer a range for many tastes. Attractively gardened Chateaux and dramatically situated Cathedrals. Museums, theatres, cinemas are widely available. Sporting activities too, are well catered for. I set myself various desiderata for my retirement home and included access to cultural activities. I haven't been disappointed. I have a season ticket to the Theatre in Cherbourg, which in a sense is unremarkable; what is more remarkable is the way culture comes to the people in France. Only last Friday, a wind quintet made up of players from the regional orchestra, performed in the village hall. While I shall certainly miss the magnificence of Symphony Hall in Birmingham, I can't there look over the musician's shoulder at their music.

#### **Photography here has lots of potential.**

The views from my house face east and west and I have enjoyed some gorgeous sunrises and sunsets. The vertes fosses, the protected sand dunes, support a remarkable range of animal and plant life;



I intend spending some time recording the plant life over the coming year. I can see another project too this time, a human one. A small group of us is attempting to start a photo club in nearby Les Pieux. I think that it will be a struggle, but we have to start somewhere and in this case in the disused unit of a nursery. The shin high toilet bowls do lend it a certain charm. **One encouraging feature for me is that the majority of those who are interested are women. It makes such a change from my experience in England.** Photography as an art form is widely appreciated here. We shall certainly try to make our contribution. Wish us luck.

My confessions that I am interested in digital imaging (roughly translates as photo numerique) are apt to result in rapid intakes of breath. I think that there is a lot of potential here for those who would

like to come and proselytise. The one serious problem they might face is the language. There are many people here who have been taught English at school, but probably like most British people who were taught French, they are rather reticent about revealing the fact. Perhaps it is a fear of failure. I must speak and read French to survive, and I do. Slowly, oh so slowly, I am getting better. I think the major problem is listening. Speaking speeds do vary from the perfectly tolerable to Gatling gun delivery. I have listened dazed, while weather girls deliver the national forecast at the upper limits of human jaw movement. My desperate pleas for the speaker to "parlez doucement", perfectly correct language, are at times met with a look of incomprehension that suggests a genetic inability to slow delivery below a speed that any existing modem could not hope to emulate. France contains many interesting contrasts. Speed is one of them. One the one hand, there is always time to pass many minutes in conversation, but place a French national (no gender distinction here) behind a steering wheel and time, hence speed, becomes seemingly very precious. The rate at which overtaking cars disappear to distant horizons is awesome. So is the accident rate. My local paper, always deals on page two with road accidents, and their depressing outcomes. There is a desire to emulate the great French racing drivers, but sadly, without coming within striking distance of their skills.

Speaking of striking, we are currently enjoying a veritable feast of industrial action. The Police (though technically it was not a strike they were just not working), the air traffic controllers and even doctors. 'est la vie like it or not, that is the reality, and that is what I have to live with. I chose to come here. **Like other expatriates, I have to remind myself that what I see and experience is different not wrong.** I like living here. I recommend it to you. Oh, and by the way, please don't all of you come and live in Normandy. Try somewhere down market. They tell me that the Cote d'Azur is quite pleasant.....in a particularly French way.

**Geoffrey Carver LRPS  
with his image**

**"Timeless"**



## Sara's Story

In previous DIGIT Newsletters I have advertised for willing volunteers to become organizers in those regions where the DIG is currently without. We are still without organizers in a number of regions but there was one brave person who put her head above the parapet and has now started a new region in North London. This is her account of how it happened.

**When I saw a note in "DIGIT" asking for regional organisers I decided to have a go.** I am on the borders of Middlesex and London and very close to the M25 so I knew I was in a good position for London and the Home Counties.

The first thing I did was hire a hall. I sent out a mailshot to about 90 DIG members and a number of local camera clubs. The initial response was disappointing but after a few weeks the people started booking in and eventually I knew I had a viable proposition. I put a questionnaire on the bottom of the invitation asking:

**Could anyone give me a hand setting up the meeting?  
Could anyone give a talk?**

I had a reply from one person saying he would give a talk and 5 people saying they would help and who, indeed, were a great help on the day.

I knew I needed another speaker for the second half of the meeting so wrote to Epson, Canon, Nikon and KJP. The only firm to reply was Epson who sent me some literature.

About a month before the meeting I received the RPS Journal containing some advertising matter regarding Lysonic inks. I phoned up the marketing manager and he put me in touch with Mr Read of Marrutt Ltd (their agents) who said he would give a presentation at my inaugural meeting.

The day dawned and everything ran smoothly. A total of 33 people attended.

The first speaker, Alan Gore ARPS was excellent. The John Read of Marrutt gave his presentation and at the end of the day the audience were still bombarding him with questions and would not let him go!

During the meeting people were give a questionnaire and I discovered:

1. Everyone would like to have an exhibition.
2. Meetings should be every 3 or 4 months.
3. Trade talks and demonstration of Photoshop would be of interest.

**My next meeting is on 16th March at the St Mary Magdalene Church Hall, Windmill Hill, Enfield from 10am to 3pm. It will commence with a presentation by Ed Bowman FRPS and will be followed by a talk from another of our members Dr Chris Evans."**

If anyone would like details on the second meeting then please ring:  
**Sara Davis on 020 8366 5534.**

I would like to thank Sara for volunteering to set up this new group. I know that she felt quite apprehensive in the early stages but I was also certain that she would be successful. That has proved to be the case and I'm certain that her membership will grow once word spreads that the first meeting was successful.

We still need organizers in other regions. If you fancy giving it a go and live in a region that does not have a Regional Organizer, or you live in Scotland too far away from Edinburgh and are unable to attend Pauline Johnson's meetings, then please get in touch with me. I'm sure that the success that Sara had can be repeated elsewhere.

### Ray Grace LRPS

01225 813146 (day)  
01249 716165 (Evening)  
ray.grace@lineone.net

**Some websites worth looking at are:**  
**www.minds@work.com** - 'Digital Wallet'  
**www.nixvue.com** - 'Digital Album'  
**www.levelchen.com.tw** - 'Image Tank'  
**www.mineterapin.com** - 'Mine'  
**www.card-media.co.uk** - UK vendor of 'Digi-Bank', battery units, memory cards etc  
**www.vdhphoto.be** - Belgian vendors of 'Image Tank' & 'Digital Power' Kit etc  
**www.nomatica.com** - French vendor of 'Digital Album', 'Digital Wallet' and many more digital items  
The product names are Trade Marks of the manufacturers concerned.  
**(see page 6) Dennis Toff ARPS**

## Shadows

In DIGIT (15) there are two references to 'Coming out of the shadows'. Details of the technique are given by David Burgess on p.4, and in a comment on p.2, John Long says "I certainly cannot repeat the effect with Curves."

However, I find that a curves adjustment layer can be as good as, and sometimes better than, the procedure described. My method is:-

1. Open an adjustment layer: in Photoshop 4 CTRL + click on the new layer icon; in Photoshop 6 click on the adjustment layer icon.
2. Select 'Curves' as the Type and click 'OK'.
3. Click on points on the curve at 77/77, 102/102 and 128/128 to anchor them.
4. Click twice on the lower part of the curve to make two new points at 50/62 and 15/33-- or at any other position of your choice.
5. Save the file in an appropriate folder. (NB I called my first such file "Shadows AL vi [date]" (where 'vi' means 'version 1').

When I subsequently modified the curve, I saved it as "Shadows AL v2 [date]". Each such saving occupies a massive 1kb on my hard drive, and I can at any time substitute an earlier curve if I think it might be more suitable than the current one.)

6. Click 'OK' to apply.
7. Try an initial Opacity of, say, 60%. This scheme has, I suggest, a number of advantages over the 'Coming out of the shadows' procedure:-

1. Toggling the adjustment layer on and off by clicking on the eye symbol gives a rapid 'Before' and 'After' comparison
2. Altering the adjustment layer opacity instantly varies the effect over the entire image
3. Painting in the adjustment layer mask with black (or grey) prevents (or reduces) the adjustment layer from having its effect on that part of the image -- extremely useful sometimes, especially if used in conjunction with the opacity setting
4. Modif~ing, saving, loading and using such an adjustment layer is very easily carried out.

**John Tyler ARPS**



## Rugby Spectacular

*Where were YOU on October 14th, 2001? Several hundred discerning people were at the second Digital Spectacular, held again at the Benn Hall, Rugby. This excellent venue is centrally located and easily accessible from the motorways, and people came from all directions, including Scotland, to enjoy a day of browsing round the trade stands, listening to absorbing lectures and chatting with friends.*

*Our eminent speakers this year were: Adi Sethna, Barry Beckham, Bob Moore, Mike McNamee, Clive Haynes and Barrie Thomas. All the sessions were packed out with people eager to pick up tips and learn new techniques.*

*Exhibitors included Jessops, Explore Digital, Digital Photo Art, Permajet, Kentmere, Marrutt, Nikon, On-Line Pater, Umax, Fo2Pix and New Pro Ltd. There were interesting demonstrations to watch, questions answered - and quite a lot of people were seen gleefully bearing boxes to their cars.*

*There was the usual print competition, with two prizes of £50.00 cheques. One winner was chosen by the (then) prospective president of the RPS, John Page, and the other by popular vote. Surprisingly, for the second time, the same print was chosen by both the judge and the assembled photographers. This year, the successful photographer was Alan Thompson.*

*The day at Rugby ends with a free draw, based on ticket numbers, for an impressive array of prizes donated by the exhibitors. This year there were books, CDs, top quality paper, various software, a continuous ink flow system and a Nikon digital camera, all borne away by delighted winners. The prize for a member of the Digital Group, not necessarily present, a cheque for £50, went to Geoffrey Carver, ex-treasurer of the Group, who certainly wasn't present, as he now lives in France.*

*Plans are already well underway for the third Digital Spectacular to be held at Rugby on November 10th, 2002. The format will be slightly different, in that there will be two very illustrious, unmissable speakers (identity a secret for now). Each will give their presentation twice, so that everyone will have the opportunity to see both of them. There will also be an extended and even more comprehensive and relevant line-up of trade stands.*

*You can't afford to miss it, so put the date in your diary NOW!*

**Hilary Roberts FRPS**  
event organiser

## Exhibitions

I've been entering exhibitions for some years now, and I am getting quite organised about it. When you entered last year, they send you this year's entry form, so I tend to begin season with a big pile, which I carefully put in date order.

Then it's to work, deciding what to enter in which, getting slides made, producing prints and mounting them. After that it's a question of filling in the entry form and writing the cheque. I had reached this stage the other day, and was getting an entry ready to post. I had four slides and four prints to enter, and I fished out the entry form and checked the rules.

To my horror I read that the sections had been changed from the previous year, and there were now Open Standard, Open Digital and Natural History. The definition of anything digital is: "an image which originates from a photographic process that has at any stage of its production been stored, altered or manipulated by a computer process". That seems to me to confine quite a lot of people to the digital section. There's the nature photographer, who prints his images on a computer, or, even worse, tones down a highlight on screen. There's the landscape photographer who hasn't got a darkroom, and gets her images trade printed (they all use computers these days).

And then of course there's anyone who has bought a new camera in the last ten years or so, because they all have computers in them.....

This particular exhibition is awarding PAGB medals - but I understand it is against the policy of the PAGB to discriminate in this way.

I have absolutely no objection to separate sections, such as Contemporary, where one may choose to enter more 'way out' images, or to specific awards for digital work. But I do not find being forbidden to enter an Open section acceptable. There is a huge range of work being produced digitally, and I do not imagine that people who specialise in delicate landscapes, flowers or portraits will take kindly to being forcibly thrust into one class alongside some of the more extreme examples of the digital photographer's art.

This is the third exhibition this year which I have seen to have opted for segregating digital workers. I feel this is a very retrograde step, which if widely accepted, will result in the end of exhibitions as we know them.

You may feel 'Do we care - exhibitions will be entirely on the Net soon' Or you may agree with my friend, who said to me, when I told him of my decision to tell the organisers of the exhibition that I will not be entering, 'Good - that means I have a better chance of winning'.

But as far as I'm concerned, photography is photography, whether produced in a darkroom or a lightroom. The RPS evidently thinks digital is as good as any other sort of photography, or they wouldn't have given me an FRPS for it. And thankfully, most exhibitions don't attempt to discriminate. I find it patronising and offensive to be shoved into a separate class, so, if there are any exhibition organisers out there who plan to follow this route - don't bother to send me an entry form, thanks.

**Hilary Roberts FRPS**





**The Annual General Meeting of the Royal Photographic Digital Imaging Group will be held at the Benn Hall Rugby on Sunday 21st April 2002.**

**The AGM will start at 10a.m. followed by the selection of prints for the exhibition.**

**Nominations for office (approved by the nominee and seconded) and items for the AGM agenda should be sent to the secretary:**

**Glenys Taylor ARPS, 10 Shoreditch Road,  
Taunton, TA1 3BU  
glenys.taylor@tiscali.co.uk  
Telephone: 01823 323986 (day )**

**The highlight of the day will be a lecture at 2 p.m. by Martin Evening. Martin is one of the worlds leading authorities in the use of PhotoShop and his book "Adobe PhotoShop 6 for Photographers " is a best seller**

**This meeting will be a sell out and you are advised to get your tickets in advance. Make sure of your seats by booking early. This is an event that you should not miss.**

**Tickets for Martin's Lecture £3 for Digital Imaging Group Members and Partners and £5 for non-members are obtainable in advance from the secretary SAE please.**

**For the lecture, please note that entry on the door will be £5 for all comers (No charge for the morning AGM)**

## **Spectacular**

**While you have your diaries out make sure that you keep**

**10th November 2002**

**clear for the Digital Spectacular.**

**This is going to be a very, very special occasion.**

**The venue will be the Benn Hall in Rugby**

## **Current Digital Group Officers:**

**Chairman:** Dr Barry Senior ARPS  
barry@littlepics.freemove.co.uk

**Vice Chairman:** Mr Ray Grace LRPS

**Treasurer:** Mr Peter Roberts ARPS

**Secretary:** Mrs Glenys Taylor ARPS  
glenys.taylor@tiscali.co.uk  
01823 323986 (tel&fax)  
01823 282516 (tel)

**Editor DIGIT:** Mr Bill Henley LRPS  
weh@wycliffe.co.uk  
01453 825068 (tel)

**Exhibition Secretary:** Mr John Long ARPS  
johnlong@lineone.net

**Regional co-ordinator:** Mr Ray Grace LRPS

**Events co-ordinator:** Mrs Hilary Roberts FRPS

**Web site updates:** Mr John Long ARPS

Mr Barrie Thomas FBIPP FRPS  
Mr David Coombes ARPS  
Mr Clive Bailey LRPS

The Digital Imaging Group consists of members of the Royal Photographic Society who have elected to pay an extra subscription to receive the group's journal DIGIT and to work together via meetings and circulated portfolios to promote digital imaging. Submissions for inclusion in DIGIT are very welcome. Please note that the editor will assume that all persons submitting material have ensured that they own full copyright of all the images and text submitted., and that any legal infringements are the responsibility of the submitter. Copyright of all the material published is reserved in all countries on behalf of the RPS and the authors. Any views expressed are not necessarily those of the Royal Photographic Society nor of the Digital Imaging Group.

**To join the DIGIT & FOLIO listservers DIG members should send an email to Glenys Taylor:**

**glenys.taylor@tiscali.co.uk**





# The Royal Photographic Society



Digital Imaging Group

## **2002 MEMBERS' EXHIBITION**

**The Harrow Arts Centre, Hatch End, London NW  
June 3<sup>rd</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>**

**The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands  
(Clubroom of the Smethwick Photographic Society)  
July 15<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>**

Other venues currently under negotiation - when finalised, details will be posted on the DIGIT Website and on the DIGIT Listserv

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**Closing date for postal entries - Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2002**

Selection of Exhibition, Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2002

You may bring your entry to the Annual General Meeting of the Digital Imaging Group, being held at the Benn Hall, Rugby on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2002 - if doing so, please send the Entry Form and cheque to John Long in advance

\*\*\*

Please read the rules carefully  
and complete the Entry Form overleaf

\*\*\*

Any queries, please contact the Exhibition co-ordinator

**John A. Long ARPS**

**3 The Reddings, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 4SB**

**Tel: 0117 967 2231**

**E-mail: johnlong@lineone.net**



# RULES

1. A **minimum** of two prints and a **maximum** of three prints may be entered. They should be posted or delivered to the address on the reverse side of this entry form **OR** brought on the day if you are attending the AGM. **In which case, the Entry Form and cheque should be sent to John Long in advance.**
2. Each print must be marked with the entrant's name, address and title as shown on the entry form. Mount size must be 40 x 50 cm
3. Prints accepted for previous DIG Exhibitions are not eligible for entry.
4. Packing must be suitable for use in return posting of the prints unless arrangements have been previously agreed with the Exhibition co-ordinator.
5. There is an entry fee of £3 per set of prints, cheques made payable to RPS DI GROUP
6. A floppy disk or CD must accompany the entry with the images in JPEG format, image size approx. 6" x 4" at 200 dpi. The file name **MUST** be the same as the print title. This is to allow for possible publication of your image in DIGIT or on our Web Site.
7. Please indicate if your images are for sale, and if so, the price required. Copyright of all work entered must be at the disposal of the entrant
8. Judging will take place following the AGM in Rugby and will be carried out by selected judges. Each entrant will have one print accepted
9. Due to constraints on hanging space, it may not be possible to display all the accepted prints.
10. The utmost care will be taken of all prints, but the Digital Imaging Group cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage during the exhibition or whilst in transit.



## ENTRY FORM

Name:	RPS Distinction:
Address:	
Tel:	E-mail: (write carefully please)
Entry fee of £3 enclosed:	
Return postage enclosed:	
Indicate whether prints for sale: YES : NO	
<b>PRINTS</b> (Please give titles and sale price)	
1.	
2.	
3.	