



The
Royal
Photographic
Society

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. Incorporated by Royal Charter



DIGIT

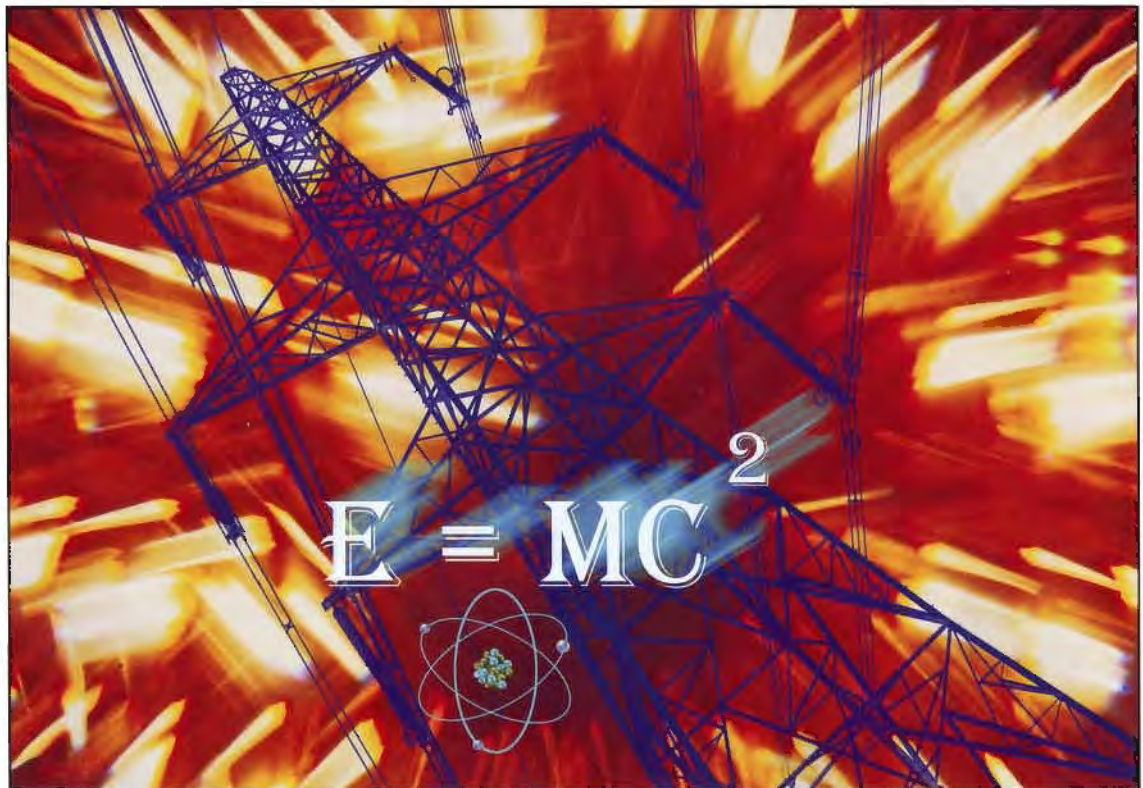
Autumn 2007 No 36



**Contrasting images
from the
Yorkshire DI Group**

*Frosty Morning
Rydal Water
Norma Phillips LRPS*

*Einstein - Nuclear Power
Mike Brown ARPS*



DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP 2007 MEMBERS PRINT EXHIBITION DVD

Exhibition DVD with commentary by Clive Haynes FRPS, Chairman DI Group inside this issue

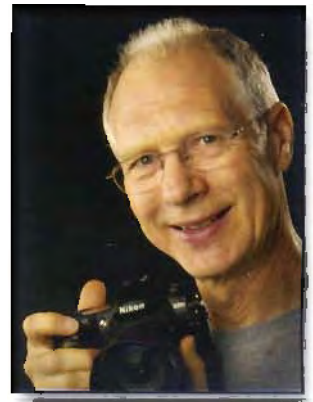
Get right up-to-date - Log on to www.digit.org.uk
for News, Information, Folio, Forum, Competition and much more

DI Group Seminars
Photoshop4Photographers
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From the Chairman

Welcome to the Autumn edition of DIGIT.

No doubt many members will have returned from holidays with memory cards and storage systems full to bursting with great pictures and, with the club season underway, there will be many opportunities to share the images with fellow photographers and digital enthusiasts. May I also encourage you to share the advantages of belonging to the RPS and to the DI Group in particular? Please ask the Secretary for leaflets that describe what our group offers and distribute them at your local club.



Photoshop4Photographers Roadshow Tour To replace the DI Spectacular event this year we have organised a major touring, presentation - the acclaimed *Photoshop4Photographers* series of seminars with renowned Photoshop expert, Terry Steeley. The tour will enable us to reach a wide cross-section of our membership as it goes to all DIG Regions where the local group has been able to provide support and a venue. The first in this series will be on Sunday, 9 December 2007 at The Old School House, Oldbury, near Birmingham. Tickets are available by post directly from the Old School House, or from the RPS at Fenton House, Bath. See full details about this important series of events on page 12.

Regional Groups

At the heart of our group lies the treasure-house of DI Regional Groups and meetings. These are only made possible by an enthusiastic team of Digital Imaging Group Regional Organisers (DIGROs). It's always a pleasure to start a fresh group and in this respect we welcome the resurgence of the Group in Scotland. We all thank Joe Dodgson ARPS for taking the initiative. Please support this new and energetic fresh start. To discover more, see Regional details on the back page.

I've mentioned previously that, curiously, the London area remains in need of a DI Group. The situation could become more acute, as the Central Southern DI Group (based in Bracknell) stands in danger of closing unless members come forward to help ensure its future. And we still have a vacancy in East Anglia. The answer to this problem lies within the membership - offers please.

2007 Exhibition DVD

You will have received the DVD of our 2007 Exhibition with this edition of DIGIT. The DVD is the result of much hard work by a team of people including Graham Whistler FRPS who with his colleague, Gordon Rushton, contributed a great deal of skill, knowledge and time to the production. This included arriving at my home complete with video camera and all the gear to record a 'piece to camera' by yours truly. That was an experience! However, the video movie opening does contribute greatly to the sense of spontaneity of the presentation.

Once again it was my pleasure to view the images and give my thoughts about each one. In my comments I try to be open in my response to the picture. I seek to discover values beyond the somewhat formulaic responses often offered by many camera club judges. I realise this is dangerous ground upon which to tread so let me explain.

Judges frequently have very little time in which to evaluate a picture. Regrettably the simple, mechanical response to a picture will frequently fail to discover subtleties that lie beyond the superficial. Sometimes it appears that the judge is going through a sort of 'tick list' - does an image conform to this or that criteria? Is there a centre of interest? Does the composition obey the so-called rules? For example, is the subject too close to frame, are bits chopped off, is the subject on a so-called 'third', is the subject heading out of the frame etc, etc? Unfortunately many less-enlightened judges continue to limit themselves to these sorts of criteria when visiting clubs on competition nights. Sometimes pictures receive over-close scrutiny in an attempt to discover grain, noise, manipulation or some digital trickery. One can do all of these things - and, yes, some advice can be helpful, but to over-indulge in this mechanical approach is to miss the point, which is: does the picture communicate? Whilst we all accept that certain conventions of fidelity must be observed in natural history, scientific and record genres, once we move into the more open realm of pictorial and imaginative work, then the all-important aspect of interpretation and image analysis must play an important role.

When you play the DVD and listen to my commentary, you'll notice that I care about the picture - its expression, its content, its value and meaning - and above all, its ability to communicate.

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Latest Distinctions for DI Group Members

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

Fellowship: Dennis Toff, Andrew Wharton

Associate: Philip Barker, Marguerite Fewkes, Cathy Roberts,

Licentiate: Marie-Ange Bouchard, Natelle Buklanov,

Michael Crutchley, Scott Deans, Gordon Mills,

Richard Prior, M Wilkinson

Necessarily, for any picture there will be a range of individual responses and interpretations and there will be no right answer. It's important that we recognise the existence of this range of opinion and that we should seek to encourage a lively and informed response.

When viewing the images I hope that you'll discover that there is much common ground about how we respond to a picture and I'm equally certain there will also be some divergence of opinion – indeed I hope there will be, for such divergence is very important. Through exploring our differing responses, we each discover that our opinion is valid and an essential component of the two-way flow and interchange that is image appreciation.

I hope that the exhibition DVD will reach beyond your home and be viewed by a wider audience. It could form the basis for an interesting club evening or group event, especially if the presentation is paused from time to time and the audience invited to make comments about the picture on the screen before hearing my thoughts. It's important to encourage people to get involved and share the experience. Everyone should have their own response, conclusions and ideas – and this is exactly as it should be, a personal response: for this, after all, is art we're talking about!

Enjoy the DVD!

Clive Haynes FRPS

Central Southern DI Group: 28 October 2007:
Digital Imaging tips and techniques with Gavin Hoey
Coopers Hill Community Centre, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 7QS.

Audio Visual Group - East Midlands
Sunday 28 October 2007 1000 to 1700 at Narborough Parish Centre, Narborough, Leicester, LE19 2EL 3 miles south of J21 M1/M69.
Lecturers: *Eddie Spence FRPS, Valerie Rawlins FRPS, plus Attendees' Sequences.* Cost: RPS AV Group/DI Group £8.50; all others £10.50. Optional lunch £5.25
Contact: Beth Elston on 01530 224206
or Email: beth.elston@btinternet.com

Yorkshire DI Group: 25 November 2007:
National Media Museum at Bradford.
PhotoShop Live with David Roley.

DI Group Residential Workshop
Digital Portraiture and Photoshop
30 March - 1 April 2008
West Dean College, Chichester. Limited to just eight photographers for maximum time with models and tutors.
Contact Graham Whistler FRPS 01329 847944
Email: graham@gwpmultimedia.com

International Review of Images with Soundtrack for under 25s - IRIS -25
Organised by the Wessex DI Group, a new competition to promote and encourage the interest and growth of digital Audio Visual photography among young people, as a creative discipline using still photographic images.

Categories:

1. Single author under 16 years old
 2. Single author 16 to 24 years old
 3. Group entry by young people under 16 years
 4. Group entry by young people 16 - 24 years
- Schools or colleges are encouraged to submit group and/or individual entries from their students. Cash prizes for each category.

A Special Prize will be awarded to the school or college with the maximum number of entries.
Closing date for submissions: April 21 2008.
Judging: June 21 2008 Aldbourne, Wiltshire.
Details and application forms www.iris-25.rps.org
or Maureen Albright ARPS, Treneer House, 6 Turnpike, Aldbourne, Wilts, SN8 2BZ, England
Tel: +44(0)1672 540754 Maureen@maureenalbright.com



Following the success of the previous four Good Picture Symposia, the Imaging Science Group of the Royal Photographic Society is organising another in its series of tutorial seminars, open to all, on selected technical aspects of Digital Imaging. The aim of these lectures and discussions is to provide imaging practitioners, keen amateurs and students with insights into Digital Imaging and provide some tools and guidelines for assessing cameras and output.

Location: University of Westminster, Regent Street, London
Date: Tuesday 18th December 2007, 10am – 4pm

Charges: £54.00 Concessions: £30.00 (Students, Retired, Unemployed)
Includes buffet lunch plus morning and afternoon coffee & biscuits
(Note: There is full disabled access to this meeting)
Contact: Dr. Mike Christianson: 01753 690 480
Application form and address: www.rps-isg.org

Congratulations!

Several DI members were elected at the Society's AGM on 13 October 2007:
Dr Barry Senior FRPS - President
Rosemary Wilman ARPS - V Pres
Bob Moore FRPS - Council
Mike Birbeck FRPS & Jim Buckley LRPS - Advisory Board.



Here Barry accepts the President's badge from retiring President Prof Ralph Jacobson FRPS. Photo by John Long ARPS, DI Group Representative, Advisory Board.
Contact any of them to make your views known to the Society.

Committee Report 2007: Key action points from Bob Pearson ARPS, Secretary

During 2007 the Committee met a number of times and also used telephone conferencing to reduce travelling costs. Here are some brief notes to keep members informed of the action.

Administration:

- Post 2007 AGM minutes on DIG website;
- Start 2008 AGM earlier at 1030 and provide attendees with name badge labels;
- Strengthen links with DIGROs by continuing to encourage them to attend DIG Committee meetings, publicise regional events in DIGIT. Encourage RPS members who are not DIG members to join the group.

Events:

- Arrange repeat of successful Digital Portraiture Workshop for spring 2008;
- Hold series of DIG Regional Touring Presentations, *Photoshop4Photographers* with Terry Steeley in collaboration with Adobe/RPS and hosted by DIGROs;
- Midlands Roadshow will be held in December, NW Region in January followed by Western/Wessex and Southern. Scotland will hopefully also participate.

Website:

- Investigate feasibility of transfer of existing DIG website to within the main RPS site/contract. There are significant advantages in moving the existing website under the umbrella of the RPS contract where management, hosting and bandwidth would be at no cost to DIG. Discussions continue.

Budget:

- Improve budget monitoring by setting up cost centres

and budgetary targets;

- without action to modify income/expenditure the Group would be insolvent in two years;
- the membership fee of £12 for the Group should not be increased so savings were needed;
- production of DIGIT is a major cost. The autumn edition of DIGIT would be published as usual, but spreading seven rather than eight editions over 2007/2008 would make part of the necessary saving over the years;
- although self-funding has been assumed for the Terry Steeley presentations, the series of events could generate some income. Any profit from the Southern and Midland Roadshows will come back to DIG;
- Pie-charts of income and expenditure will be produced for DIGIT and the AGM.

Exhibition:

- Organise 2007 Exhibition DVD production, distribution and funding;
- Exhibition costs are £1,000 and the DVD is subsidised by some £600. The entry fee for the Exhibition should increase by £1 to £5.

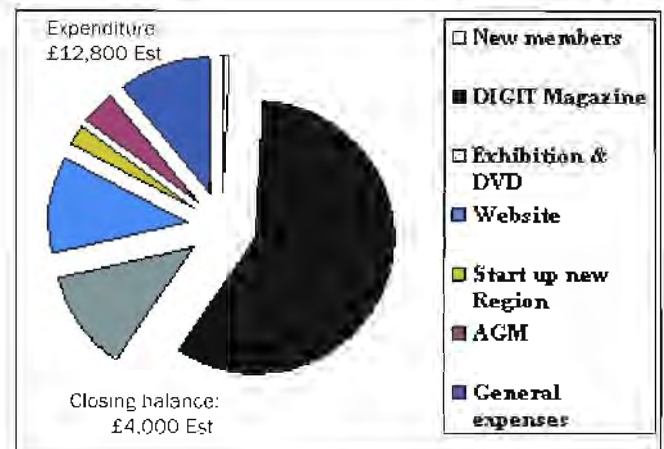
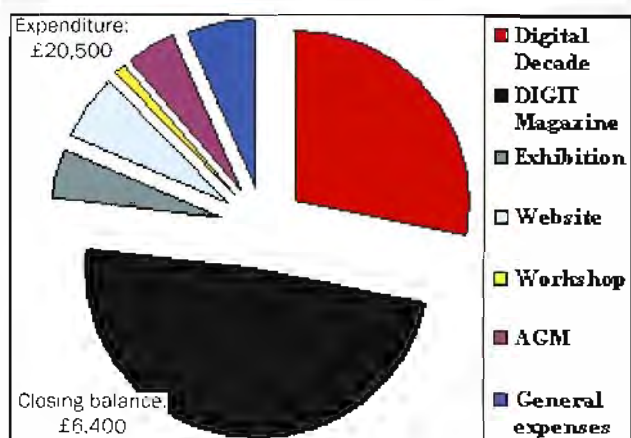
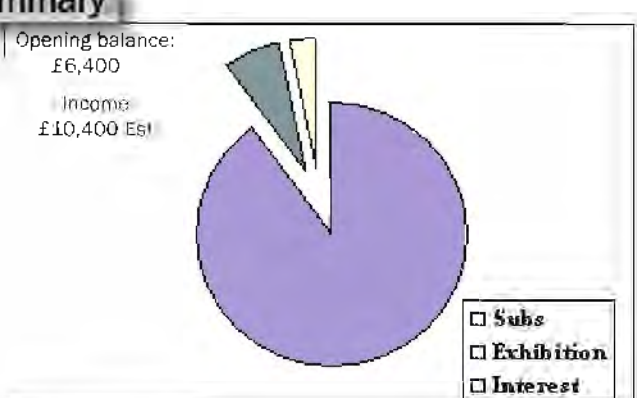
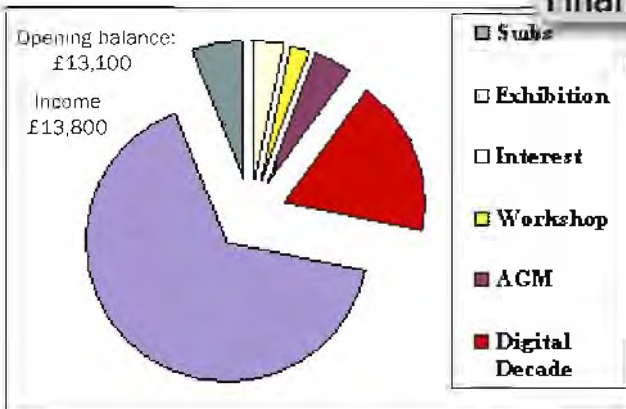
DIGIT:

- Seek volunteers to help with sourcing material;
- Obtain three additional quotes for printing of DIGIT to compare with present company. One new quotation for the cost of printing is being investigated further;
- Autumn 2007 edition of DIGIT will include a copy of the Exhibition DVD;
- Autumn edition will seek interest from members to fill vacant DIGRO positions;
- Exhibition and AGM information will go out with the January 2008 edition.

Year to 31 December 2006

Financial Summary

Year to 31 December 2007 - estimated



Sheila Read FRPS takes us on a Scanning Adventure

Sheila has been using her flatbed scanner (Epson Perfection 2450) for a number of years with some success and as a result was asked to give a talk at a local camera club. She would be demonstrating the different ways to scan natural objects and how the scanner acts as a macro lens. Using the scanner with the lid up gives a black background and so Sheila covers objects with boxes lined with different paper or lays fabric or tissue paper directly on the items to be scanned.



Whilst planning my talk for the Club my copy of Digital Photo arrived and, glancing through, I saw a reader's article in which he stated he used the transparency setting when scanning.

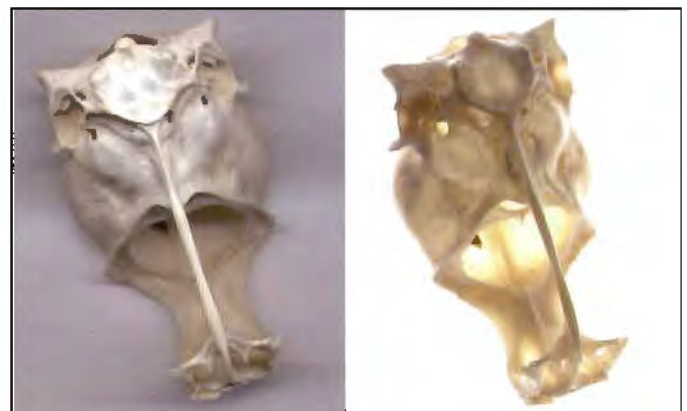
I do not have this setting on my scanner but I do scan my transparencies. To do this I remove the reflective document mat in the lid revealing a long slot. Normally having placed the frame for slides on the document table and closed the lid, a bright light in this slot comes on directly over the slides as they are scanned.

The slot is narrow but would take the small objects that I usually wish to scan. I had a go and set the scanner up for slides with amazing results. As long as the object was not solid (as in a coin) the light from above gave a transparent look and details such as seeds inside a Harebell (above) could be seen.

The skull of a Kittiwake (right) became much more interesting when the light glows through.

Before leaving to give the talk I thought I had better check the article in the magazine and found the author left the lid up to scan, so did not use it as I have described. On the setting for transparencies my scanner just will not work at all if the lid is not down. I have to use foam pads to hold the lid above the subject.

It is worth trying both methods: you may be surprised! Have I found, by default, another method of scanning that can produce some interesting results? I am sure someone will tell me the answer!



Nick Ayers ARPS on Reflections in a Shop

When preparing a panel the photographer compiles a Statement of Intent against which the photographs will be assessed. Nick's Statement for his Associateship panel - shown opposite - read: The images were taken on a number of visits over many months in a shop that has a number of distorting mirrors. The results varied according to position, lens and focal length. By experimenting I was able to produce a range of graphic images some of which have overtones of the shapes found in Picasso's paintings, particularly his paintings of magicians and dancers. They are also reminiscent of some of the shapes in late works on paper by Matisse. At first glance the panel may appear to be composed entirely of abstracts but closer examination often reveals tantalising glimpses of reality in the shape of staff, customers and the shop interior. The undulating nature of the reflections adds to their mystery through the varying focus that becomes an inevitable part of the images. It is the combination of the abstract with the glimpses of reality that I found intriguing.

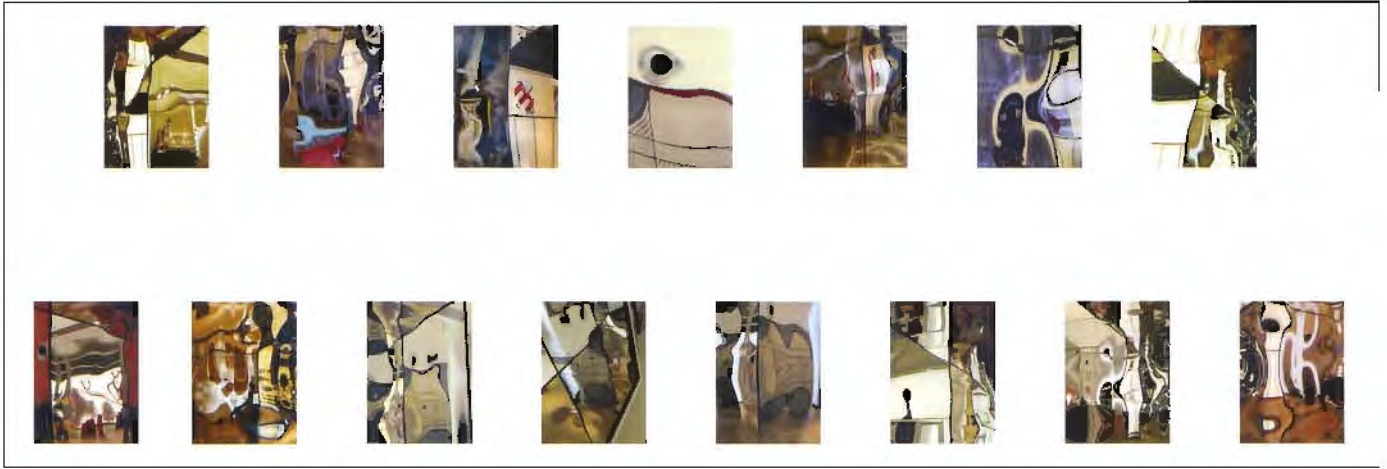
My first attempt at the Associateship consisted of a panel of pictures taken at various seashore locations over several years. The aim was to show the relationship between the various elements such as the texture of the rocks, and the cracks and fissures caused by time and weather and contrast this with the shapes of shells, pebbles and water. This was highly praised locally but received a unanimous thumbs down from the panel of assessors who gave no encouragement whatsoever. In spite of this I continued to try to improve this set of pictures.

I then became Chairman of the Bristol Photographic Society and traditionally the Chairman gives the opening lecture of the season each September. During my talk I showed some fairly abstract images of reflections in a shop and several members encouraged me to try for a panel using these and similar images. After several visits to the site I printed about thirty pictures and from these made the final selection.

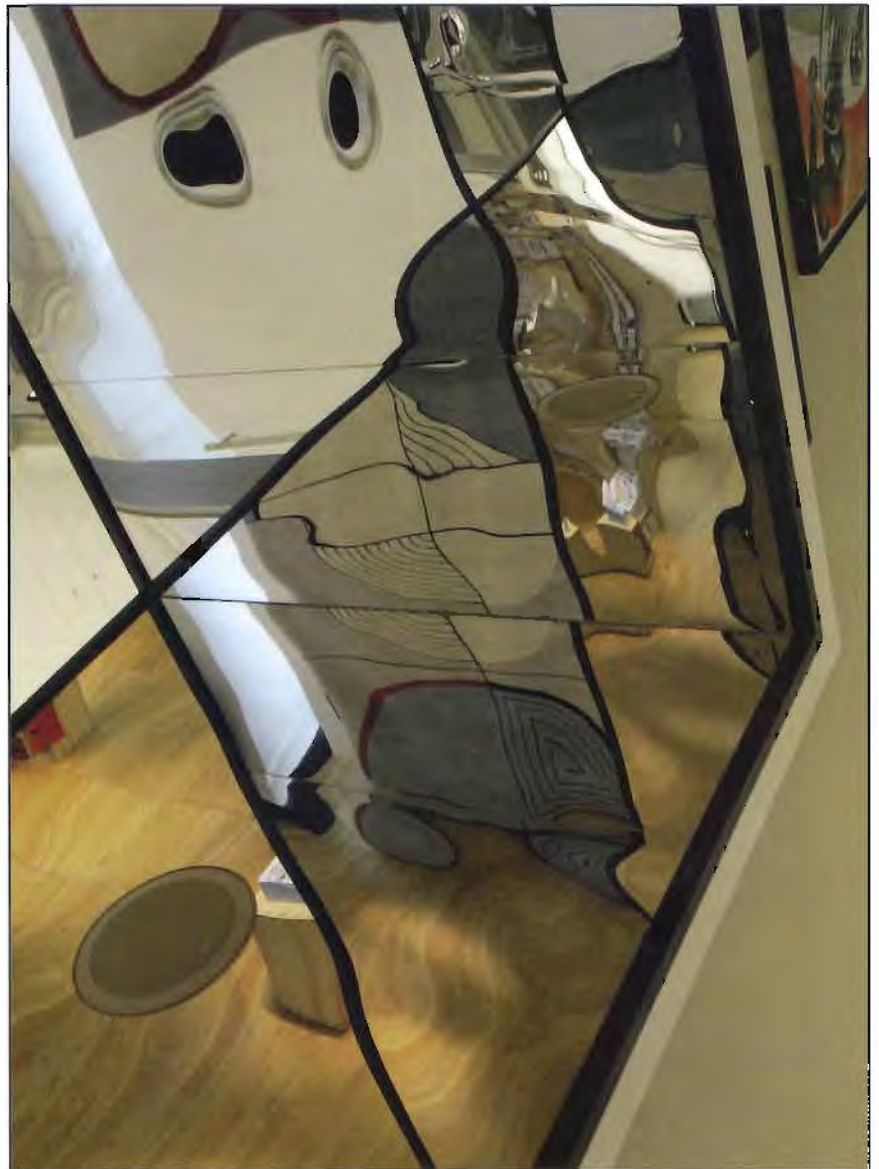
The first photographs were taken with a three megapixel point and shoot compact. Subsequently I used a Nikon D70 although the final panel included a number of pictures taken with the smaller, simpler camera. I always envisaged the pictures as being in portrait format. I also thought they would be better presented if they were not in the normal 35 mm format and cropped them so that they were all 24 cm by 33 cm. I did the usual adjustments with Levels and Curves. In a very few cases where there was a light, almost white area that attracted the eye I introduced a little colour using the Selective Colour command so that the overall picture was better balanced.

Fortunately on this occasion the assessors liked what they saw and were unanimous in their decision that the panel was up to the expected standard.





Above: Associateship Panel Layout



Central Southern DI Group Danger of Closure

An appeal from Roger Norton LRPS, Publicity Officer

The Central Southern DI Group which meets eight or nine times per year in Bracknell was one of the first groups to be set up following the creation of the parent RPS Digital Group. In its early days, the format for meetings was that of a self-help group with members exchanging information and showing their work. In recent years, the emphasis has been more on lectures and informal tuition by experienced guest speakers. The programme for 2007 included speakers sponsored by Nikon (David Robbins ARPS) and Permajet (Robin Whetton), together with presentations from Mike Jones LRPS, Steve and Sylvia Wilbur and Bob Rowe ARPS. Generally, the Group has been attracting an audience of about 40. This is a little disappointing as publicity extends to RPS DI Group members in the Central Southern area as well as most camera club secretaries within three local federations. Nevertheless, the Group has remained financially stable. Furthermore, those who have supported its meetings have expressed their enjoyment and made many favourable comments.

The most recent Sunday meeting with Roger Maile ARPS was a great success. Roger's presentation was lively and interactive, and he encouraged much audience participation and there were many favourable comments. Those who couldn't make it missed a very enjoyable and informative day. For our all-day meeting on 28 October the speaker is the well known photographer and photographic writer Gavin Hoey. I am sure that you will have seen his articles in several digital photography magazines. Further details at www.csdigital.co.uk

Why, then, is the Group in danger of closure? Quite simply because several of the officers wish to stand down after several years of valuable service. Unfortunately, no one can be persuaded, cajoled or shamed into taking over. And if no one comes forward to fill the vacant committee posts, particularly that of treasurer, within the next few weeks the Central Southern DI Group will no longer run.

Please contact Roger on rl.norton@tiscali.co.uk

Larger Images for the Folio

Gitta Lim LRPS explains how to get the big picture

First create a larger jpeg of your intended folio image - say 750 pixels longest side and save it. You then need to sign up to Photobucket at:

<http://photobucket.com/register.php?ref=login>

Create a username and a password and log in. Write them down for future reference. Once logged in on Photobucket you get a page that you use for uploading your images to the Photobucket from your computer. Click where it says Browse and that opens your computer files. Navigate to where you store your images - for instance My Documents/My Pictures and open the folder. Pick your image by clicking it and its title will show up on the Photobucket upload page. Hit Upload and your picture will be uploaded.

Once uploaded you see a thumbnail of your picture and below it are three codes. You need to copy the middle one - HTML Tag - for the Folio. Click your mouse over the text box and a yellow flag appears saying Copied.

Then go on Folio - upload your Folio image in the usual manner - you can use a slightly smaller image there, say 3 - 400 pixels longest side. Once your image is uploaded on Folio go to the Comments box below your image - you must still be logged in - and paste the Photobucket HTML tag there. You can use the right hand button on your mouse to paste or go to the top toolbar and choose Edit/Paste. Your image should then appear on the folio page. If you have lost the paste option for some reason, open your Photobucket page again and copy the HTML tag and then paste onto the Folio.

It's useful to create a shortcut for your personal Photobucket page on the desktop taking you direct to your own uploads so you can easily paste them in to a website like the Folio. To create the shortcut, log in to your Photobucket page and then in Internet Explorer go to File/Send/Shortcut to Desktop.

*Bassingthwaite-
Early Morning by
John Scotten ARPS
of the CS DI
Group images
page 13.*



Peter Rawson ARPS Introduces us to his WAY WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC ABSTRACTS

A true abstract shows no recognisable object, as in the later works of Marc Rothko or Jackson Pollock or in the patterns of Bridget Riley. So how can a photograph, which is essentially an image of an object, ever become abstract? The answer is that by choosing an unusual angle or an extreme close up or by some sort of distortion the object can be made unrecognisable. Why do this? To produce a work of art which hopefully has lasting appeal to connoisseurs: one which has a satisfying combination of shape, arrangement, colour and texture, is of suitable size and is comfortable within the picture frame. A heavy paper can add a tactile appeal. This contrasts with so many straight photos

which have irrelevant detail, clashing colours, incongruous objects, obscure agendas and are printed on boring paper.

An abstract can be likened to music in that the appeal and emotional response rely on tune (pattern), tonal colour and sensitivity of execution, rather than on the recognition of actual sounds.

Digital manipulation of images allows one to do anything, limited only by one's skill and imagination. I believe that the future of works on paper lies with the inkjet print produced from a file created either from photo elements or from drawing/painting carried out directly in the computer. Once students of printing have mastered the use of computer drawing/painting programs, they will value the ease and economy afforded by the use of the inkjet printer in allowing experimentation and rapid proofing. A complete limited edition need not be printed at one time since prints can be reliably

printed at a later date. In future, very few print makers will use 'art' lithography, the various forms of etching, engraving, silk screen printing or wood cuts etc because of their messiness, slowness and expense.



Suitable photographic starting images could be close ups, part of an object chosen for its interesting shape or pattern, or reflections in uneven shiny surfaces. Unwanted detail can be reduced or eliminated by increasing contrast (in Levels or Curves), by posterisation or selection with the Magic Wand, followed by reducing the selection (Select>modify>reduce) by an amount which will eliminate

the fineness of detail not wanted. The above and following references to tools and commands are the names used in Photoshop. Other programs have similar facilities though they may be differently named. The important thing is to experiment with a number of different techniques and combinations of techniques until you achieve the result you want. Sometimes a good result can appear unexpectedly; the 'happy accident'. It is best to avoid a result too obviously achieved by filters or commands easily recognised by those practised in digital manipulation.

Selecting an object, then copying onto a separate layer where it can be changed in size, inverted, blurred, distorted or moved relative the original etc, allows a composition to be built up. Often it is useful to have a separate background layer which can be independently textured, shaded, coloured etc. What is important is the result, not the method: in this case, the end justifies the means,

which could be trivial, profound or crude and vulgar (as can music), depending on your intent, knowledge, cultural experience, imagination and expertise.

The colours of the original object can be changed individually or as a whole (in Hue and Saturation), or can be desaturated ready for the introduction of new colours. These can be introduced by selecting an area with the Magic Wand or Lasso tool or otherwise, and changing the RGB values in Curves or by using Edit>Fill>Foreground colour, having chosen a suitable colour for the foreground with the Colour Picker, or by using Selective Colour. The colour picker window can be brought up by clicking one of the small squares near the bottom of the tool bar; left hand square for the foreground. You need to try different approaches to find what suits a particular image.

Colours can look very different depending on the size of the patch and on the colour of adjacent patches, so many trials may be needed. The predominant colour, its density and saturation, will dictate the mood of the print, and the colour variations and harmonies or contrasts, the subtlety or liveliness. The final effect can only be judged by using the actual ink on the chosen paper for, even with a calibrated system, the colours, contrast and brightness on the screen never quite match those on the print. A closer approximation can be obtained by ticking Proof colours in View, or by using only those colours which are in gamut. In the Colour Picker window, a small exclamation mark appears to the right of the box illustrating the selected colour when that colour is out of gamut.

Texture can be added to a selected part or to the whole of one or more layers by using Filters>Artistic>Film Grain or Noise>Add Noise or by using texture from another image. The last is preferable as it can be more varied and is individual. Again much experiment may be needed to obtain a result appropriate to the image.

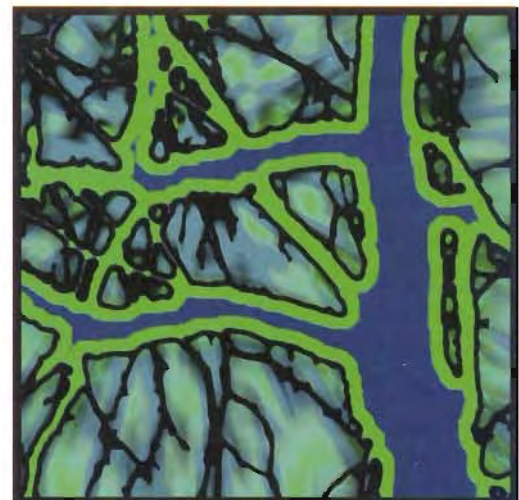
The size of the paper, the size of the image within the paper, the choice of colour and width of border, the surface and weight of paper, all have an influence on the visual and tactile impact of the work. These are partly the equivalent of the sensitivity of performance of a piece of music. Once the print is framed behind glass or plastic, the immediacy

is lost, as it is in recorded music as opposed to a live performance.

For protection, I use 2 or 3mm acrylic sheet in thin metal frames whose width matches that of the border around the image; black for prints with a black border and silver for those prints with a coloured one. For 24" prints I do not use a mask as it is very difficult to match its white with that of the paper and it is likely that mask and paper will yellow differently. For 36" prints I do use a mask, cut to reveal only the border of the 24" printed area (limited by my printer), except for a small strip at the bottom for the title and signature. Larger prints have to be printed commercially and can look effective if flush mounted onto stiff board with battens at the back so there is a gap between print and wall.

For my first abstract, shown on the previous page, I decided on a square format, the image size only two thirds the size of the paper, a wide black border to match the heavy black outline of the larger shapes, and a paper size of 24" to suit my printer. It is descriptively entitled *Pollarded Chestnut 1*, but has been said to be 'angry' and like 'jangling nerve ends'.

Lime Branches and Trunk (below) has colours inspired by the memory of those of a Japanese kimono. Both these images have a background layer derived from the image itself.





The pair of images above are of different selections and treatments of the same tree, but give very different moods due to their different colours and density. Initially for the righthand one I used a black border but found this too brutal, so substituted the pale mauve one.

The original object for my image below was reduced in height, flipped horizontally and rotated anticlockwise before having colour added by means of an Adjustment Layer (Selective colour), plus four Adjustment Layers (Curves), three of which had different Magic Wand selections. These three prints have a single layer (no separate background layer).

The image in the next column has layers plus a background layer. The original object is of trunks and branches from part of a wood, transformed in



Distort>Polar coordinates>Polar to Rectangular. The middle layer is the same as the front layer but flipped vertically and with a changed colour.

The abstract below right is derived from the same wood as used above but treated differently, and uses three layers of image variously flipped, stretched and moved relative to each other, on the background (hardly visible) on the right. This background (shown below) is composed of 64 squares cut from a leaf skeleton,

coloured to look gold, and deliberately varied slightly in hue and density. It was inspired by the gold leaf squares used as a background on some of those exquisite Japanese screens.



More of my images can be seen on my website: www.peterrawson.co.uk

I hope that whether you consider my images profound or crude and vulgar, or something between, they will encourage you to have a go to produce interesting images, combining and modifying parts of an original subject, whether recognisable or not, to produce something unique and personal.



Photoshop4Photographers Seminar 2007/2008

The RPS Digital Imaging Group presents a series of Photoshop events featuring Adobe senior freelancer Terry Steeley.

The highly-acclaimed **Photoshop4Photographers** seminar series returns exclusively for the Royal Photographic Society to deliver an entire day of Adobe Photoshop and Photoshop Lightroom tips and tricks.

Ask yourself:

- Are you spending too much time editing your images?
- Do you fully understand the benefits of the Camera RAW?
- Do your techniques always produce the results you expect?
- Are your colour prints an accurate match to your monitor?
- Are you confused whether you should be using Photoshop or Lightroom?

If these are just a few of the questions that you have, please come along and join the fun with Adobe's digital-imaging expert Terry Steeley, as he shares with you the secrets of Adobe Photoshop CS3 and the new Adobe Photoshop Lightroom covering key topics from camera capture through to final print. **Don't worry if you don't have CS3 – All these topics will be relevant to earlier versions.**

What you'll learn:

- Colour management set-up
 - What Adobe Bridge does
 - Applying 'File Info' metadata
 - About Digital Negative format .DNG
 - Camera RAW vs JPG
 - The benefits of working with 16-bit images
 - Conversion to black and white
 - Working with Layers
 - Non destructive Smart Filters
 - Quick and advanced masking techniques
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 - Sharpening
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 - Working with the Wacom tablet
- plus many more invaluable time-saving techniques for simplifying everyday tasks...

Still need to be convinced? Visit the feedback page on www.iridius.co.uk/about/comments.html

Terry Steeley Since graduating from DeMontfort University in 1992, Terry Steeley has worked passionately within the design and photographic

industries both in the UK and overseas.

In 1999, he founded **iridius**, a full-service design and training company based in Oxfordshire delivering award-winning creative solutions, bespoke customer focused training and the highly-acclaimed iridius seminars to a varied list of prestigious clients.

More recently, Terry has developed the popular *Capture Edit Print*, *Creative Suite Essentials* and *Totally Colour Managed* seminars, working with photographers, designers and print production professionals of all levels, providing easy to follow answers to common everyday problems.

Terry Steeley is Adobe's Senior Freelancer for Creative Suite, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, an HP industry influencer and an Apple Solutions Expert.

TICKETS AND VENUE DETAILS

Tickets from RPS at Fenton House (marked Reception) or from venues. Application form on website. Cost £12.50 except Wessex. Enclose stamped addressed envelope. Food available at most venues or bring packed lunch.

Midlands DIG Sunday 9 December 2007

1000-1600 The Old School House, Churchbridge, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 2AS

North West Region Sunday 20 January 2008

1015-1615 The Hough End Centre, Mauldeth Road West, Chorlton, Manchester M217SX. Contact Sylvia Jones, 3 Newlands Avenue, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 2J Tel: 0161 439 3546
[Email: sbj.sylvanimage@btinternet.com](mailto:sbj.sylvanimage@btinternet.com)

Wessex DIG/Western Region Sunday 9 March 2008

1030-1530 The Selwyn Hall, Valens Terrace, Box, Nr Chippenham, Wilts, SN13 8NT. Contact Maureen Albright maureen@maureenalbright.com or Ray Grace ray.grace@btopenworld.com
£10 in advance or £15 on the door.

www.western.rps.org/www.digwessex.rps.org

Southern DIG Saturday 5 April 2008

1000-1630 The Verwood Hub, Brock Way, Verwood, Dorset BH31 6WW.



Ben by Roger Norton LRPS



Glistening Ink Caps by John Scotten ARPS

Fifty Years Young

Fordingbridge Camera Club is a thriving club in a small town, justly proud and grateful to those intrepid photographers who founded the club 50 years ago. I'm sure those people whose names live in the inscriptions on the club's trophies would be proud too of this forward looking band of present members who have wholeheartedly embraced the new technologies.

We intend to celebrate this jubilee with an exhibition and party, and invite all DI Group members to join in by entering our digital projection competitive exhibition. Thanks to *Awards for All* we are the owners of a Canon XEED ICOS technology projector, which gives a high quality image, and have a team of keen young members to run it. We can ensure projection of excellent quality, so help us celebrate by sending your images for selection on 11 May 2008, ready for projection on 14 June .

All the information and downloadable entry forms on the club's website:

www.fordingbridgecameraclub.org.uk

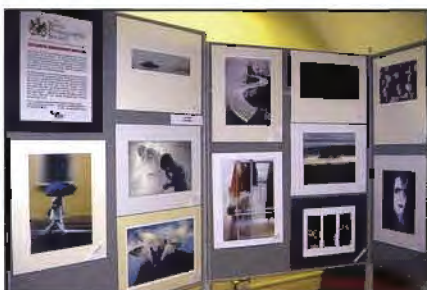
Just click the yellow button.

Entries should be received by 18 April 2008 or I will collect at Digit AGM on Sunday 20 April 2008.

See you there

RPS DI Group 2007 Exhibition

Once again many thanks to Alex Dufty LRPS for master-minding the exhibition this year. The venues provided a steady stream of people throughout the day. Visitors enjoyed prints and asked questions and were impressed by the overall quality of the work on show. Several hundred magazines were handed out to interested visitors to promote the Group's work. At Swindon, shown here, we guessed that up to 5,000 may have had a look at the prints - it was certainly worthwhile. Thank you to members who submitted prints.





It is well known that a photograph may not be all that it first appears. What may look like a mountainous landscape could, in fact, be drips of paint on a building which have been weathered by the wind and rain.

When I became seriously interested in photography people would ask me what type of pictures I liked to take. The standard answer was landscapes. But over the years I seem to have been moving more and more towards taking a closer look at things through a macro lens. I now find it fascinating to select small parts of man made or natural objects and take close-up photographs which give the impression that they are something else entirely.

same thing with a couple more of the pictures, cropping them all to a letterbox format. It crossed my mind that the resulting pictures might make an A panel, but I only had five suitable images. However, I had previously taken some pictures of slate on which oil had dripped and had become weathered, and thought they resembled a coastal landscape. I then had two rows of five pictures so I added five close-ups of weathered sandstone as the bottom row.

To get some feedback on my proposed A panel I booked a place on a distinctions workshop to be held in Stirling. In the meantime the opportunity arose to re-visit the area where I had found the paint drips. This time I took a lot more photographs,



The basis of my Fellowship panel began in 2005, before I had even considered trying for an A, when I took a few macro photographs of some weathered paint drips on corrugated iron. By this time I was shooting digitally and, after I had downloaded the pictures onto my computer, I discovered that if I rotated one of the pictures 180° I could see an impression of a mountainous landscape. I did the

some with the macro lens and others using the long end of a 70–300 mm zoom. I took my proposed A panel, plus more paint drip pictures as spares, up to Stirling where Rikki O'Neill FRPS suggested that I replaced the row of sandstone images with more of the paint drips. I was also encouraged not only to submit a panel in the Visual Art category for an Associateship but, if



with those magic letters FRPS after my name. Since then I have to keep pinching myself to see if it's true.

On a technical note the

successful, to add more pictures and apply for a Fellowship.

I was thrilled to be awarded an ARPS in June 2006 so in the spring of 2007 submitted a panel of 20 paint drip pictures to the Visual Arts Distinction Panel in the hope of attaining a Fellowship. After what seemed a very long wait I received a letter saying that my panel had been recommended and then had a second wait before hearing that the Distinctions Advisory Board had approved the panel. As you can imagine I was overjoyed when a letter came through the post

photographs were all taken with either a Nikon D70 or Nikon D200 with a Sigma 105mm macro lens or a Nikkor 70-300mm zoom. The pictures were processed using Photoshop CS with the only manipulation being normal colour adjustments followed by rotating and cropping the images to a letter-box format with each picture being exactly the same size. The prints were all made on Fotospeed Natural Soft Textured paper which suited the weathered texture of the subject matter. The panel (above) was presented with 9 pictures on the bottom row, 7 on the middle and 4 on the top in order to make a mountain-like shape.



Choosing a Projector and Computer for a Camera Club

Keith Smith LRPS, Chairman Wimborne Camera Club, on this increasingly topical subject.

The Club recently won funding from The National Lottery **Awards for All** scheme (<http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/index.html>) for a digital projector and computer system for the club to run digital image competitions, and provide teaching within the club and local community. The choice of equipment that we made and the way it will be used may be of interest to others considering a similar purchase.

System Elements

Projector The main factor was getting the best image quality possible within a sensible budget. The majority of projectors on the market are 1024 x 768 pixel resolution, and there are some at 1280 x 768 pixel. The best resolution that we could find however, was the **Canon XEED** range at

1400 x 1050. When we started looking, the cost of these units was too high, but Canon dropped the XEED 60 price to around £2800 and we decided to go for this one.



Computer system First decision – PC or MAC? The latest Apple Macs have a lot going for them, but for us this decision was easy. First, no one in the club has a Mac, so there was no experience to draw on, and teaching would not be as effective as the interfaces are significantly different. Second, some of the software we wanted to use is not available for the Mac. So PC it was.

Graphics Performance We show Audio Visuals generated with software such as Proshow Gold or Pictures2Exe, and also give tuition and demonstrations of these packages. The graphics card needs to be of sufficiently high performance to allow the shows to use fade effects and movements without causing judder. Experiments with a number of portables showed that the simple graphics on low-end portables were not adequate, Experiments with some members' desktop systems showed that the latest mid-range cards were adequate.

We also wanted to be able to drive two displays at the same time so that we could have the projector

showing an image, and a control screen for the operator. The card we eventually chose had dual DVI outputs which allow us to use a digital connection to the projector. This keeps picture quality to a maximum even when using quite long cables between the computer and the projector.

Screen resolution The system had to be capable of operating in two modes – Teaching mode where the screen and projector operate in parallel, or Clone mode, with both displays showing the same image at the same time, and Competition mode where the projector would show the image while the screen is used as a control screen. We had chosen a 1400 x 1050 projector so, for the Teaching mode, we wanted a screen with the same resolution to avoid the complications of having to set different resolutions for each mode.

System performance Whilst the performance of the computer system would not be stretched whilst showing AVs or competitions, when doing teaching, particularly Photoshop, system performance becomes more of an issue. Photoshop likes plenty of memory, 2Gb if possible. There were two possible routes to follow for the computer system – either a laptop system or a small footprint desktop system.

Laptop The obvious choice appeared to be a laptop, which has a major advantage of combining the computer and screen into a small easily portable package. However, a laptop has some severe disadvantages. Firstly a suitable laptop is relatively costly, especially those with better graphics. Secondly, it proved difficult to find a laptop with a 1400 x 1050 screen. Thirdly, Photoshop needs a reasonably high performance system with plenty of memory, driving the cost of a suitable laptop higher. Fourthly, a major issue with laptops is that they are difficult, expensive or even impossible to repair. We needed the system to have as long an operational life as possible. And finally, laptops are very stealable.

Desktop The other route was to use a small footprint desktop system. These systems are fairly small - the computer box is around 8in x 8in x 10in. They can be configured with any graphics card, have plenty of memory and they can be repaired fairly easily as power supply, motherboards etc. are all replaceable. A major downside of using

this type of system is that an external monitor, keyboard and mouse are required which makes portability more difficult.

We eventually chose this type of system, configured with a high performance dual output graphics card, 2MB memory, a large hard disk, together with a 21in LCD monitor of 1400 x 1050 resolution to match the projector, and a wireless keyboard and mouse. The whole system fits into three cases for transport. Not exactly easily portable, but manageable.

Audio Since we are showing Audio Visual sequences, a sound system that could drive properly into a small hall was essential. This proved to be the most difficult element to find. One common solution is to use a combination of an audio amplifier and a pair of speakers. The major problem with this, however, is wiring the amplifier to the speakers. To obtain decent quality and performance, quite heavy cable is needed for the speakers and the usual connections are simple clamp terminals.

We decided on a pair of active speakers, with amplifiers built in, and standard audio signal cables to connect them to the computer using professional quality XLR connectors. It is inadvisable to run the audio output from the computer through long cables as this will lead to poor quality audio and the potential for hum breakthrough. This was solved using an 'unbalanced to balanced' coupling transformer for the technically-minded. This system is not, however, ideal as these speakers are not really designed for portable PA use. Proper PA speakers would have cost considerably more and were outside of the budget that we had set.

Colour Calibration It is essential that the system be colour calibrated for competitions. We chose the Gretag-MacbethEye-One Photo as this is probably the leading product in this market. This calibrates projectors but the stand for the sensor, must be purchased separately.

Software In order to teach image editing, we included both Adobe Photoshop CS3 and Elements in the system, plus a copy of the Proshow Gold AV package. There are a number of

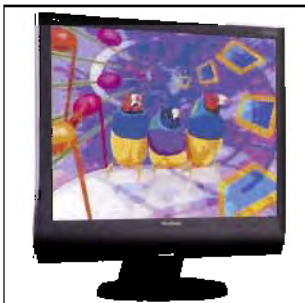
packages around that run digital image competitions, but we were not too impressed with any of them. We eventually decided to use FastStone Image viewer, which can be configured to support dual displays, and so can show the image on the projector at the same time as showing the control screen on the display. This allows the operator to control things without the audience seeing what's happening. FastStone can also be configured to be colour managed; and it's free.

Packaging We cannot keep this much expensive equipment in the hall where we meet, and need to carry it to other venues, so it must be stored and then carried in a car without damage. If we had chosen to use a laptop system, this would have meant that we would have had to carry: Projector, Speakers and cables, Computer and cables, Calibrator.

Having chosen a desktop however we had to add: Screen and cables, Keyboard and Mouse, plus the computer box is bigger than a laptop would have been.

The projector was easy; it comes in a nice carry case. The computer etc was more of a problem. We eventually found that Maplin supply two types of aluminium flight cases. The computer fitted nicely into one, with the keyboard, mouse and cables fitting into another. We found, by luck, that the screen just fitted into another case, and the speakers and cables would fit into a fourth. Not quite as portable as we would have liked, but manageable, and at least things should not get damaged.

The four Flight Cases all loaded up



Spherical Panoramas: Professor Peter Gawthrop LRPCS explains the what, how and why

You will find a more comprehensive version of this article on Peter's website at: <http://www.lightspacewater.net/underTutorials> where there is a lot more information - as well as Peter's own gallery.

Imagine standing at a viewpoint on a fine day and looking all around the horizon, up to the point above your head and down to your feet - you are viewing a spherical panorama. Imagine a transparent sphere centred on your head; the scene then seems to be painted onto this sphere - the spherical panorama. If this transparent sphere is imagined as the earth with lines of longitude (numbered from 0 - 360) and latitude (numbered as 0 at the equator, 90 at the north pole and -90 at the south pole) then every point that we see can (like places on the earth) be assigned a unique latitude and longitude.

The problem of representing a spherical panorama on a flat surface is the same as creating maps to represent the surface of the earth. There are many names and concepts. In particular, the idea of a projection, for example the familiar Mercator's projection, is much used. Any projection from a sphere to a flat surface must lead to distortion. As an example, here is an Equirectangular projection of a spherical panorama. Lines of latitude at 45 south, 0 (the equator) and 45 north as well as lines of longitude at 0, 90 west and 90 east have been drawn on.



Lines of latitude and longitude are equally spaced; north corresponds to the top, south to the bottom. Because there are 360 horizontally and 180 vertically, the image is twice as wide as it is high. Because points representing the north and south poles are spread over the top and bottom respectively, there is considerable distortion towards the top and bottom. Look carefully to see that the tripod mount is spread out over the entire bottom of the picture. This projection is easy for a computer program to extract pixels for any latitude and longitude: thus it can be used as the basis of panoramic movies. See my website at:

<http://www.lightspacewater.net/Panoramas/PanoAlbum/2006/ShoalBay/> for this example, and others, as a spherical panorama.

Now let's look at how to create and project spherical panoramas using a digital camera with a special mount together with some free software.

Equipment and Software

The lens/camera field of view is the main issue. I use a Canon EOS 5D full frame (35mm) digital camera with 12.8 Mpixel resolution and Canon EF 15mm f/2.8 Fisheye, a full-frame fisheye lens with a wide angle-of-view so fewer photos are needed to cover the sphere as compared with a normal lens. The fisheye distortion is taken care of using software.

The Manfrotto 303SPH Virtual Reality Head (about £380) parallax-free adjustable tripod head with "click" to position horizontally and adjustable vertical angle is an excellent robust device but it is heavy - weighing in at about 2Kg. A Manfrotto 438 Ball Camera Leveller (about £60) allows leveling of the panoramic head without needing to adjust the tripod legs. It has a built-in level indicator. This is not compatible with the Nodal Ninja (below).

A remote switch completes the kit with a rigid and lightweight 190MF3 Mag Fibre Tripod (about £190) to support it all. My Lowepro Compu Trekker backpack carries the lot, and a laptop.

With the Leveller, the Virtual Reality Head weighs 2.6Kg. A lighter and cheaper alternative to these two items is the Nodal Ninja weighing 474g (and costing about £180); this also has the essential click to position feature. I fit this to my standard head using spare quick-release plate (Manfrotto 323). Clearly the lighter setup means that it is more prone to vibration, so care has to be taken when moving between stops to let the camera settle down.

Following all that expense, it is good to learn that the software *hugin* (hugin.sf.net) is free for download.

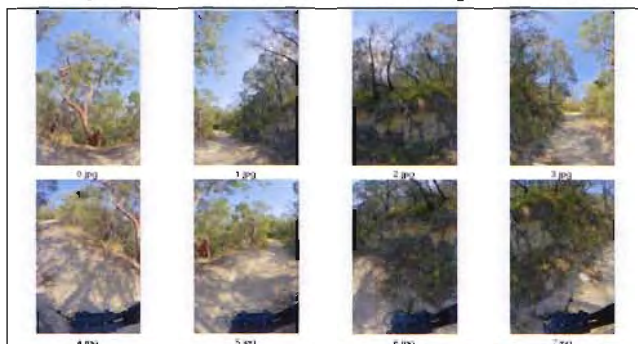
Setting up the Camera It's critical to have nothing set automatically so that each picture in the

panorama has the same settings. The Automatic Exposure Bracketing (AEB) facility on the camera is used to give over- and under-exposed panoramas; see my website for more details. I use Jpegs for simplicity and reduced space; this gives plenty of range with the three exposures. Set the camera mode dial to M (manual); set the AEB to the maximum of 2 stops; ISO to 200; and white balance to 'daylight'. An aperture of f/16 gives a good depth of field. Set the highest quality Jpeg and use the menu to 'Save camera settings' and you can now use the C mode on the dial whenever you take a panorama.

On location, set the lens to manual focus (MF). The 5D has a useful 'select folder' feature. Use the menu to create a new folder each time you take a panorama.

Panoramic Head Ensure you set up the head once and for all such that the camera rotates about the nodal point to give no parallax. Fix the Ball Camera Leveller to the tripod permanently. Fix the Virtual Reality Head to the Leveller. Tighten at least one screw so that it can't move. Use the Leveller to level the Virtual Reality Head. Follow the Manfrotto-supplied instructions to set up the Virtual Reality Head. Accuracy is important. Stick coloured insulation tape to each plate to mark positions; this saves later recalibration. Select the $n=8$ (45 degrees) rotation angle. Remove the camera plate from the head, but leave attached to the camera. Remove the head from the leveller, it will fit in the backpack without folding or disassembly, when the vertical rotation is set appropriately.

Taking the Pictures It is possible to cover the panoramic sphere with 8 pictures. I don't use zenith and nadir shots which are difficult to stitch; I find a 4+4 pattern works well. The top row of pictures are 30 degrees up at 0, 90, 180, 270; the bottom row are 30 degrees down at -45, 45, 135, 225. Because spherical panoramas inevitably include features in direct sunlight and shadow as well as the sky, it is often not possible to get a satisfactory



exposure to cover the sphere. The AEB feature gives me three exposures, giving a satisfactory range when the three exposures are combined using High Dynamic Range techniques.

When choosing a location for the tripod, consider: artistic merit, firm footing for the tripod (safety - you must be able to walk around the tripod whilst concentrating on the camera) and keeping the camera in shadow. After carefully setting up the camera as described, swing it towards 'average' lighting and, since you are on Manual exposure, use the viewfinder display to set the correct shutter speed. Now swing the camera towards bright and dark areas and check that the exposure is within the bracketed range. Set the camera pointing up at 30 degrees to the horizontal, with the horizontal position at zero and pointing towards the central feature of your panorama.

Use the remote to take the three bracketed exposures and rotate the camera though 90 degrees horizontally (2 clicks). Repeat to give three further sets of pictures. You now have the top row of the images shown in the previous column. Repeat so you have 24 pictures (3 exposures each of 8 shots) all neatly in their own folder.

Processing The basic idea is to stitch the panorama from the eight photographs. I prefer to choose my own control points. I use what I call 'cross-stitching': each top row photo has control points to the two adjacent photos in the bottom row.

For those enlightened ones using Linux, the shell-script `pano init` (www.lightspacewater.net/Tutorials/) does some of the preprocessing. The following steps can, however, be done by hand.

1. Rotate the 24 photos by 90 degrees:
2. Rearrange into 3 sets of 8 in separate directories; one set for each of the three exposures. Call the files (in order 0.jpg - 7.jpg) in each directory; I call the directories 'Exposure 0', 'Exposure over' and 'Exposure under'.

Stitching

1. In the directory corresponding to the nominal exposure, invoke Hugin (hugin.sf.net) to create `mypano.pto`. 'mypano' can be replaced by any other name.
2. Load in the 8 files using the *Load time series of Images* button.
3. Choose image 0 (for example) as anchor and

set the pitch to 30 degrees.

4. Click the Camera and lens tab. Select Full-frame fisheye. Click on the first image and press the Load exif data button. This gives a field of view of about 91.4 degrees.

5. Make sure that the Enable rotation box is ticked in the File - Preferences - Finetune tab. This is needed for fisheye images.

6. Click the Control points tab.

7. Choose picture 0 and picture 4 and select three well-spaced control points on non-moving objects. Repeat for: (a) 0 and 5 (b) 1 and 5 (c) 1 and 6 (d) 2 and 6 (e) 2 and 7 (f) 3 and 7 (g) 3 and 0.

8. Click the Optimizer tab. Select Incremental from anchor and optimize. Reoptimise using Positions and barrel distortion. This should give quite accurate stitching.

9. Click the Stitcher tab. The field of view should be 360x180. Choose the pixel dimensions of the panorama; up to 11470x5735 is possible but choose 3000x1500 to start with. Choose bicubic interpolation. Stitch a Tiff using enblend to get the panorama shown on page 18, without the grid of course

10. Repeat for the other two exposures and blend.

Projections As discussed at the start, there are many projections available to represent a spherical panorama on a flat sheet of paper. This article

just discusses the technical aspects of projections; aesthetic considerations are left to the reader. One projection I quite like is shown below; the tripod could be easily removed using the clone tool if necessary. Hugin has a nice interactive feature for generating views of projections which I used for generating the pictures here. It is worth noting that, to achieve the best quality, the final image should be generated using the original pictures rather than a previously generated equirectangular projection.

Conclusion Spherical panoramas provide new opportunities for digital photography. Apart from the obvious application of generating 'virtual tours' for estate agents and on-line advertising, I believe that new artistic opportunities are opened up. The development of perspective was one of the triumphs of the Renaissance art; and the renunciation of perspective has been the hallmark of 20th century art. However, perhaps because cameras make it so easy, perspective is often not a central concern of photographers. David Hockney, in his book *That's the way I see it*, has interesting photo-collages which challenge conventional perspective. I believe that digital photography and perspective software such as hugin give us an opportunity to follow Hockney's seminal *Pearblossom Hwy* photo-collage in 'a panoramic assault on Renaissance one-point perspective'.



Sid Pearce FRPS looks at Photoshop plug-ins from Phototune

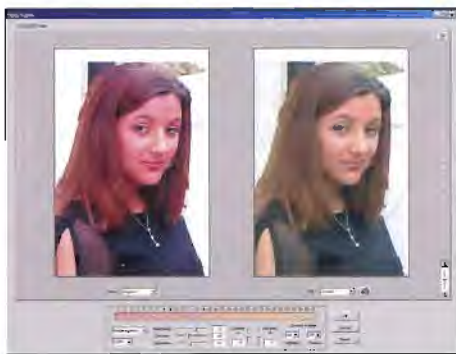
One of the most time consuming tasks for Photographers is getting colours correct. Very few of us see colour the same. Is a purplish landscape more accurate than a reddish one? Is the leaf green in an image the right shade? Perhaps this is even more critical when skin tones are being corrected in a portrait as our eyes are a good deal more discerning when it comes to facial recognition. Even a slight change in facial tonality can make a portrait better or much worse.

The *SkinTune* plug-in has been specifically developed to address this problem for portrait photographers. I must say that, if you have the know how, Photoshop will make corrections equally as well but nothing like as fast. *SkinTune* has a very simple interface and allows you to quickly correct a lot of portraits (particularly those taken in mixed lighting) in no time at all.

SkinTune 2.0 is compatible with Photoshop 7 through to CS3 and Elements versions 2 to 5 and installs into the plug-ins file. It will work with either 8 or 16 bit images. When you open *SkinTune* the image for correction opens on the left side of your screen and you are invited to click on an area of skin with an ink dropper. A drop down menu asks you to identify the racial origin of your subject. Included with *SkinTune* is an internal database of over 120,000 colour swatches for each of the program's race tones. These databases help the program to identify more precisely the exact skin tone that you require for your image.

After clicking on the left hand image a corrected image appears on the right hand side of your screen. If this image is not to your liking you can click on a different skin tone to give you a new corrected image on the right. You can fine

tune the image with a number of self-explanatory controls and sliders. At the top of these controls is a skin tone ramp which gives 31 different tone corrections. Clicking on any of these tones gives you that correction. *SkinTune* supports Photoshop Actions and Batch Processing.



The controls for *SkinTune* have been well thought out, are clear and produce first class results. If you do very little portrait work the cost of \$79.95 from www.phototune.com for this plug-in is hard to justify. However, if portrait work is your bag, and in today's changing society, the cost could be a very good investment.

20/20 Color MD is a wizard-led colour correction plug-in for Photoshop. For the average user, colour correction is one of the biggest and most complicated chores in imaging.



20/20 Color MD takes a completely different approach to colour correction. The software works out what is wrong with the colours in the presented image and how to correct them. The program's wizard takes you step-by-step through the complete process. You start with two images on the screen. You select what you think is the best and click on it. In about 15 seconds the program analyses what you require and provides a corrected image which you can fine tune in 1% increments. Colour casts, wrong film or wrong light setting, all are corrected by *20/20 Color MD*.

Whether you have many images or you are a relative novice at colour correction this is a very clever plug-in that will save much heartache and time and give you a quality corrected image at the end. Download at www.phototune.com at a cost of \$49.95. NB Phototune has now been acquired by onOne. <http://www.ononesoftware.com/> for a free trial.



Winter Harbour

by Rod Gunn LRPS Yorkshire DI Group
More Yorkshire DI Group images on the cover

Seagulls and Sandcastles

When an eagle-eyed committee member spotted Mike Crouch's imaginative image on the DI website Follo he thought it was just right for a DIGIT article and persuaded Mike to write it up. Mike says : I am only just getting to grips with Photoshop. I feel very flattered to be sked to do this as there seem to be so many experts out there



I have never written a 'how I did it' before and feel quite flattered to be asked to do so. My methods with PS are not always by the book as a lot has been by trial and error. So if you have any comments on this, they will be valued and gratefully received.

The idea for *Seagulls & Sandcastles* came to me after I visited www.thomasbarbey.com where there are many galleries to view. Once I had done this and decided on my picture content, I decided the first thing to do was to find the elements of the picture and assemble them with Photoshop CS2.

The elements were:

- A beach
- A new sky
- Some castles
- Some hill and mountain shots
- Seagulls

The shot of the beach I chose from a visit to St

Anne's beach near Blackpool about an hour before sunset. The sky was a little bland so I chose a replacement sky from my files. For the castles, I visited the internet and found some travel photos that fitted the bill and did the same for the Hill and Mountain tops. Seagulls were easy: I live in Blackpool and we have thousands of them!



Background Beach layer

My first task was to replace the sky. I realise there are many ways of achieving this with PS but seeing the horizon was fairly straight forward and simple I opted for the Magic Eraser tool.



This automatically erases all similar tones and is very quick. I then used the ordinary Eraser tool to clean up any variations that might have been

missed. Opening my 'sky' file, I cropped the section of sky that I needed and dragged this across and sized the selection to cover all the sky and just below the lowest part of the horizon. A further adjustment with Transform Tools/Perspective improved the sky by dragging out the top corners a little.

This put a new layer above my background (beach) layer. I then unlocked my background and slid the sky layer below the background. This placed my new sky behind my background layer and gave the effect I required. Next I flattened these two layers to give me my new Beach background and saved the file as Beach.

Now to assemble the Flying Castles. The Flying Castles are made up of two images, an extracted portion of a castle and an extracted portion of a hill or mountain top. I extracted the images that I wanted using the Extract tool in Filters. This enables you to remove exactly what you need and saves it to a transparent background.

I did this with a castle and a hilltop and saved the two images - Castle and Hilltop. I then opened Castle and extended the canvas size in Image/Canvas Size to double the original height. I then opened Hilltop and slid the image across to Castle, pressed Ctrl/T to obtain Transform Tools, right clicked to see the tool list and chose the Flip Vertical command to invert the image.



While the bounding box was still with Hilltop I aligned and sized the image so the two images could merge together, then flattened the image and saved as Castlefly1, shown above on the right. Two more castles were made and saved as Castlefly2 and 3.

Flocks of seagulls

From my files I was able to find some pictures of seagulls feeding, flying and swooping. With the



Magic Eraser tool I was able to isolate appropriate groups to build up the picture.

Assembly My first task was to open Beach and clean up the natural debris left on the sand by the outgoing tide. Then I made a final adjustment with Levels. Files Castlefly1, 2 & 3 were opened and adjustments were made to blend the top and bottom sections. This was done on an adjustment layer with the Smudge tool. I used this because I found I could smear small areas and create a more natural look, ie making grass flow over the cliff edge around a castle. When this was done the layers were flattened and the flying castles were dragged across to the Beach image. Each castle was placed and adjusted with the Transform tools for size and perspective and each layer was adjusted for levels and opacity to give the final result.

I had a lot of fun playing with the Seagull layers to obtain the result I wanted. Each group was adjusted with Transform tools using Size, Perspective, Distort, Skew and in some cases, Flip. After flattening the layers I selected the whole image and applied a little perspective with the Transform tools.

My original was in colour, but I decided on the monotone version to fall in line with Thomas Barbey images. The addition of the seagull in the bottom left corner was an afterthought!



I had many failures to start, but that is part of the game. I am afraid I do not follow 'rules' very well and I tend to go for what is pleasing to my eye at the time. This is why I value your comments on the Folio and try to learn from them. Thank you.

Getting an A the Aussie Way

Pam Thomas AAPS, LRPS now lives in Queensland but was born in Salisbury UK, as was the late Barrie.Thomas FRPS. In fact, as Pam explains to DIGIT: We were at Infant School together, and grew up as teenagers. One of the occasions we both recalled was being at a Victory Party held in the local bus station just after the war. We were little kids then. Meeting up with Barrie after 50 years was extraordinary and on a visit to Australia he fell in love with the country and, luckily, me. Although we only had a few years together they were spent well. Barrie and I organised lectures to clubs in the outback, raised money for local clubs and, with the help of friends, set up a club here in Hervey Bay that has grown and prospered.



My life was changed completely and I now am involved with photography in ways I never imagined. I realised the wonderful world of creativity through the lens of a camera. I see another form of art, not just a recording of events. I heard one of our renowned photographers say that when we produce a print we put part of ourselves on that piece of paper and for me that is photography.

I would have liked to say that I am a photographer from way back; and that I had been clicking away since I was eleven; and that I know all about darkrooms and the magic of film. Not true, of course. My introduction to the camera was when Barrie placed a Cannon D10 in my hands and told me to go away and take photographs. Within days I was totally hooked.

Naturally he was a hard task master but what a wealth of knowledge he passed on in such a short time. Enough for me to gain my RPS and APS

Licentiateships in 2004 and my Associateship with the Australian Photographic Society this year. Photoshop was a challenge and thousands of hours were spent sitting next to the Guru. 'Rubbish' was not an unusual remark as he looked over my shoulder!

Here in Australia the Honour system is quite different but nonetheless very challenging. The majority of applicants for an Associateship use the Points System by entering National and International Exhibitions and gaining points for





acceptances and awards. As the standard for an Associateship application is that prints should be of exhibition standard this is an obvious way to go. But time can be of the essence and after a few months of some success in National Exhibitions I just couldn't wait any longer and decided to submit a Panel.

Unlike the RPS there was no criteria as to the Panel hanging in its entirety as each image was



judged on its own merits. In some respects this made it easier for me as a Social Documentary/People photographer in that the range of images did not have to balance or coordinate.

Cuba was my inspiration. I had visited several times and had a feast of images to draw upon. What a wonderful country for the photographer, and for many Australians a pretty exotic destination. I guess my favourite subjects are children and they feature largely in the panel.

Before Barrie died he made me promise that I would go for my Associateship and with his confidence in me I realised he might just be right: without him changing my life, I would still be clicking knitting needles not the camera.

2008 Royal Photographic Society

International Review of Images with Sound Under 25s

This new RPS International Digital AV Competition scheduled for early 2008 will be web based and specifically for young people under 25. Cash prizes for the students and a prize for the institution should encourage colleges and schools all over the world who have a photography department to take part. Please spread the word. Details on page 3. For rules and information see: www.iris-25.rps.org

**Photographic tour of Northern India
Royal Photographic Society DI Group
Leader: Graham Whistler FRPS**

This new offer to RPS members is based on a well-established tour escorted by experts. Although designed primarily for photographers it is structured to enable partners to enjoy the huge variety of this amazing region. And there is a special interest section for those who love mountain railways. **Planned for early 2009**, this 17 day tour includes a number of masterclasses in the evenings with Graham. Here is the outline.

Fly from Heathrow to Delhi and on to **Jaipur**, the Pink City with colourful bazaars, impressive buildings in local pink sandstone. **Amber**, a palace built high in the surrounding hills. Elephant ride to Palace entrance. Hall of Public Audience, Hall of Mirrors. **Agra**, for the **Taj Mahal** at sunset, **Red Fort**, Jehangir's Palace. Deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri, sacred Krishna temples at Vrindavan.

Delhi's bazaars, government buildings and Rajpath, India Gate and Humayan's Tomb. Flight to Bagdogra, at the foot of the **Darjeeling Himalayan Railway**. Elephant rides to spot one-horned rhino, wild elephant and deer. Steam-hauled dining special from Siliguri up to Rangtong, and to Tindharia. Market town of Kurseong. Road and railway run close together, and a bus will run ahead of the train for photographers. Charter train to Sonada and summit at Ghum, to **Darjeeling**. Opportunity for shots of the steam train with **Kanchenjunga** (the third highest mountain in the world) in the background. Bus runs with train for the photographers. Optional excursion to Tiger Hill for sunrise over **Himalayas**. Ghum for Buddhist monasteries and marvellous scenery. Das Studios with treasure store of historic Darjeeling photos. **Darjeeling Tea Estate** to see tea growing.

Calcutta. Sit in the carriage doorway with a camera in your lap, recording the colourful pageant. Chartered tram for sightseeing. Cruise up the **River Hooghly**. Colourful markets.

Costs likely to be about £2,500 each. Interested? Contact Graham Whistler FRPS on: 01329 847944 or graham@gwpmultimedia.com



**Dave Pollard LRPS
shares his
Digital Odyssey**

I became interested in digital imaging some five years ago, not because I was mad-keen to change from film photography, which I have been an enthusiastic user of for more than forty years, but as a means to edit and finish the thousands of photographs taken over the years and never collated or properly printed. In retirement, I wanted to start again taking new images in my preferred style, photojournalistic, but knew that doing so before sorting the decades of back-log would mean that those negatives lying in drawers would never see the light of day again. I had, I suppose, always promised myself that when I had the time and money, I'd dive back into the dark-room and print those images just as I wanted them, but the digital revolution offered a way of achieving this without long hours in the dark.



The starting point was a PC, with sufficient capacity, an image processing program, and a Nikon Coolscan 35mm scanner. Getting these two to communicate wasn't a problem, but getting to understand and use the scanner's controls was. Many times I set out determined to master the wretched thing and get on with archiving my scans, but somehow I always had to give up in frustration, go away and do something useful for a month or two and then return, only to make the same mistakes, scream, and surrender again.

The first breakthrough came when I ditched the Coolscan and bought a Minolta Dimage Elite 5400 scanner which promised higher quality and proved much easier to use. At the same time, picking up on a pointer in *Amateur Photographer*, I bought Ed Hamrick's Vuescan program, working

on the principle that if I had to learn new tricks with new scanner, I might as well learn the tricks of a program that was usable with a variety of hardware. Progress, at last!

Having achieved some scanning potential, I took more interest in the imaging programs and progressed through various versions of Photoshop Elements and acquired a Sony compact digital camera, not as a main tool but to achieve more understanding of the digital process as a whole. I resisted the faint temptation to splash out on the full-blown Photoshop, not wanting to spend hundreds of pounds on manipulation tools that I was never likely to use.

Like most photographers, I see a quality print as the end product and so a decent printer, an Epson 1290, was bought. Most of my old pictures are monochrome and so black-and-white printing was a priority. Producing decent-looking monochrome prints on the Epson was satisfying and not difficult, but there were real doubts in my mind about the permanence of these prints. Again prompted by *Amateur Photographer* (this magazine has been invaluable in my re-education, but what have they done with Victor Blackman?) I bought in to the Permajet Monochrome Pro pigment ink-based system but here began a further period of frustration. I like fairly contrasty prints with deep blacks and, whilst I could obtain satisfactory tones, the black areas of the prints - quite extensive in a lot of my images - were caked in ink and, to me, unacceptable. After a lot of experimentation I binned Monochrome Pro and looked for an alternative system, finally buying an Epson RS2400 recently because its Ultrachrome inks apparently offer some permanence.

Printing, however, is on the back-burner for the time being. Inevitably, I have bought a Nikon D200 digital SLR, finding the shutter-lag on compacts a real disadvantage. I take some photographs for enthusiast magazines and, as they accept email and CD offerings, I'm able to keep that side of my hobby ticking over. Apart from the expense, though, digital SLR-toting has brought its own conundrums. I need a wide range of focal lengths and fast lenses suitable for available light. My



first was the Nikkor 17-55mm f2.8 (which weighs a ton) and, as Nikon didn't offer an equivalent, I bought a Sigma 50-150mm f2.8, giving me f2.8 through the full range (important to me). Doubts about the advisability of swapping lenses on the body frequently have led me to buy a second D200. No worries on the dust front now, but how on earth do I carry the whole kit around without ending up with one shoulder six inches lower than the other? Whatever happened to the miniature camera?

So, where am I now on the digital trail? I still haven't started on scanning the old stuff, but think I now have the means and method to do so once I can discipline myself to find the time needed. I'm really impressed by the performance of the D200, but am I ready to put my film cameras into hibernation? I still think that a good lab print from a colour negative has a definite edge over one from a digital image. Later this year, I'm having a week in New York, a favourite hunting ground, but will I be depending on digital there? The jury is still out on that one, but my instinct at the moment is to take a Leica and scan the (mono) negatives.



Hugh Thompson LRPS looks at Restoring Monochrome Half-Tone Prints

I have recently needed to produce for the walls of my local Club, sets of pictures of the locality, these taken from old postcards and other half-tone prints. The problem is to turn the dots of the half-tones into continuous and graded tones, but without losing too much detail. The accepted means of doing this is by applying a measure of Gaussian Blur to a duplicate layer and merging this with an appropriate mode and opacity. This is then sharpened but in the process the image becomes rather blobby - many details, particularly highlights, are lost or diminished.



Figure 1 is an old half-tone monochrome picture of a bonfire under construction and in preparation for Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations. On the printed page at postcard size it looks reasonably sharp and contains much detail. To clean it up however and

present it at A4 or A3, the blurring procedure mentioned above would be inadequate. Let's look at a small section of the image, first the original (Figure 2) and then (Figure 3) the result of a Gaussian Blur (slider at around 5, sufficient to hide the dots) with some subsequent sharpening (I have used the High Pass method).

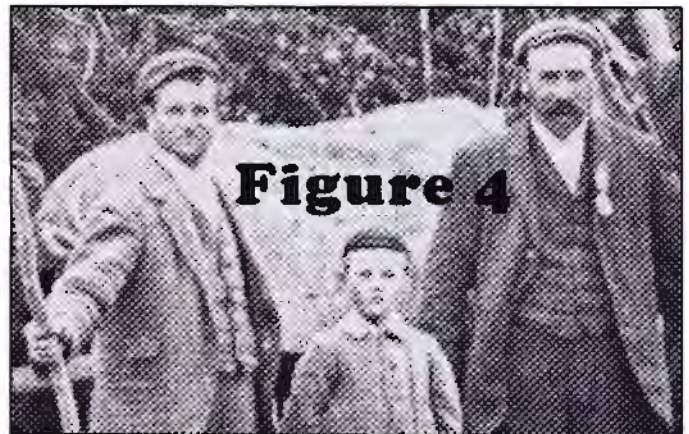


The original half-tone, when scanned, produces a black and white pixel pattern (with moiré) and the blurring just smudges this to produce an indistinct greyscale effect. It would be better if we could start from an initial greyscale which still preserves the features.

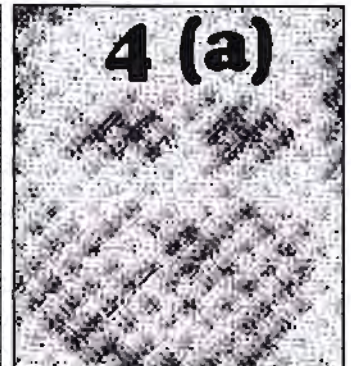
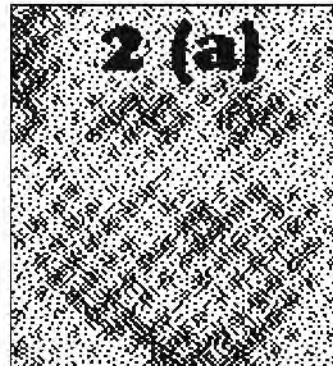
Experimenting, I've adopted a preliminary stage before the blurring, by nudging the picture in all directions to widen the areas of dark/light dots. The procedure (in Windows/Photoshop CS2) is this:

1. Replicate the original layer (Ctrl-J) four times and identify the new layers as: 'up', 'down', 'left' and 'right'.
2. Click on the Move Tool.
3. Select the 'up' layer to work on and press the Up Arrow key twice. This will nudge the image upwards by two pixels (but you will only see this if layers above are switched off).
4. Repeat this for the three other new layers using the appropriate direction Arrow keys.
5. Choose merge modes:
 - a. 'Up' - Screen;
 - b. 'Down' - Multiply;
 - c. 'Left' - Screen;
 - d. 'Right' - Multiply.
6. Now reduce the opacity on all of the four new layers. I have used around 50% for each but one can experiment for best effect.
7. Flatten the image.

The result may be seen in Figure 4 below.



At the size shown, it may not look much different, from that seen in Figure 2, but in fact it is significantly so. Basically, we have preserved most of the black and white pixels, but these are surrounded by greyscale. This can be appreciated if we look at the close-ups below (Figures 2a and 4a).



8. Duplicate the layer and apply Gaussian Blur, sufficient just to remove most of the remaining dot patterning. The slider adjustment should be

found to be much less than that needed to produce the image shown in Figure 3, in the region of just 3 should suffice.

9. Apply a measure of sharpening (I prefer the High Pass method for this stage of sharpening).

10. Flatten the image, after tweaking the opacity if needed.

This seems to work reasonably well with images of dimensions on each side of around 4-5000 pixels and the result may be seen at Figure 5, which may be contrasted to that in Figure 3. It gives the impression of the image having been printed on canvas.



Figure 5

This provides a workable foundation for further enhancement and repair so that we can eventually produce a final image such as that shown in Figure 6, which may more confidently be enlarged even to A3 dimensions.



Figure 6

Graham Whistler FRPS reports on two new professional Nikon digital SLRs: D3 Full Frame and D300

The revolutionary all new D3 is Nikon's first full frame digital SLR with FX format 36x24mm CMOS 12.2 megapixels sensor. Full frame digital SLRs can suffer from peripheral chromatic aberration and vignetting but Nikon's new processor has solved these major problems. The new large pixel size will give very low noise levels at high ISO settings with (Nikon claim) amazing fine image detail and smooth colour gradation.

The D3 is the most responsive Nikon yet with a start up time of just 0.12 sec (D300 is 0.13 sec!) and buffer holding up to 20 NEFs at 9fps. In crop mode for DX lenses 11fps is possible. Digital signal processing speeds are four times faster than the D2X's.

New ultra fast auto focus with image tracking will aid press, sport and wild life photographers. The camera holds two CF cards for flexible shooting or secures back-up by writing to both cards. The large new very high definition 3 inch wide angle rear LCD can also be switched to 'live viewing' through lens mode with auto focus retained. There are also several new top of range lenses for the new camera due out shortly. The D3 camera will retail in UK at about £3300 body only.

The D300 is following on from the similar robust compact sized D200, retaining the DX format but now with a new CMOS 12.3 megapixels self cleaning sensor. Greatly improved noise reduction and image quality is claimed compared with the D200's CCD. CMOS sensors also use far less power than CCDs. Like the D3 there is 100% viewfinder coverage and the 3 inch LCD with 'live viewing' is fitted, as is a greatly improved auto focus system. Poor auto focus in action photography was my major criticism of the D200. This new semi-pro D300 body will retail at £1300.

The two new cameras are due out in November 2007. I hope to take a D300 on a two month trip to New Zealand in the new year. As I have quite a few DX Nikon lens and am very happy with my D2X I will hold fire on the D3!

Creative Photography with Dr Gwynn Robinson FRPS



What is creative photography? Gwynn's view is that it is the use of photographic images and manipulations to create new photographic works of art. It is the application of creativity to the capture, formation, and presentation of an image. Creative photography can be as basic as removing blemishes from an image to the creation of a completely abstracted work.

I took up photography when I seemed to be going blind in 2002. I have to say 'seemed' as it turned out that I actually had a brain tumour that was destroying my optic nerves amongst other things. The resulting major surgery was very successful and to the astonishment of the medical profession and to my total delight I regained my vision completely – with the threat that I might lose it again at any time due to the radio therapy that I had received! It certainly wiped away any complacency I might have had towards sight, images and life. I had radio therapy which made me very ill and I am now on an interesting mixture of medications for the rest of my life. Am I downhearted? Not a bit of it. I love being able to discover new things and especially I love waking up every morning and being able to see everything around me.

My Creative Photography philosophy:

- Communicate, have something to say.
- Keep it simple – both the image and the manipulations used.
- Capture is not finality - the captured image does not have to be the final presented image.
- Experiment and change things.
- Good work requires Hard work.
- Perfection is only just good enough.
- Enjoy creating the image and a sense of humour is allowed.

The important part of my philosophy is that I use the simplest manipulations that I can. If I can create such works of art using simple techniques and I can teach those to others, then many more people will be able to do so. This article is a glimpse into my work and the simple steps that I take to create an original work of art/photography.

My basic method is:

- Think of a concept (or be inspired by something that leads to a concept).
- Take separate photographs of the different parts that I want in the image, with one main image that has most (if not all) of the elements in place.
- Combine, blend and adjust the parts

together into the main image to create one new final image.

There are five keys to success:

- Have a clear vision of what is to be communicated and created.
- Have permanent but separated spaces. One for photographic setups and one for computing.
- Learn how to use simple manipulation tools and methods to a high standard.
- Have a lot of patience and time to ensure every aspect affecting the image is completed to the highest standard.
- Have the courage to rework an image if it is not working out. Experiment with new ideas.

How do I go about creating my images? Here's my small Studio – our dining room – permanently set up as a studio.



My creative photographic work has revealed a number of 'secrets':

1. Get the idea for an image and then understand roughly how that will be translated into the final result. Knowing where you are going and what you want to express is important. Gaining a real understanding of the concept is vital.
2. Do lots of experimentation. Try things out. Photograph the models from many angles, in different arrangements, with different lighting setups. Experiment on the computer later on. Probably the exact opposite of Ansel Adams approach.
3. Extract image parts well. Select image areas very carefully on the PC, ensuring the separate parts on the final image blend well and have no jagged edges. I usually work at a magnification of 800 times for accuracy. Feathering selections is vital to avoid rough edges. Finally blend edges on the final image using the clone tool at a low opacity.
4. Use the simplest tools and methods possible. Keep all manipulations/changes simple: sharpening, blurring, selection, feathering, copy, paste, layers,

transparency, moving, erasing, cloning, rotating, flipping, resizing, simple filters (sky, fire, water, lightning, etc).

5. Use layers for each part and aspect. That way they can be individually moved and adjusted.

6. Save regularly ensuring that the image is in separated layers and use a new file name each time. This is to guard against a PC crash losing all the work. It also ensures that it is easy to return to a previous state of the image some days later if the computer has been switched off.

7. Remove all rubbish and distractions with the clone tool

8. Ensure that all the separate elements of the image relate to each other to reinforce the concept.

9. Ensure the backgrounds suit the image. Replace the background if it does not suit.

10. Mimic real life lighting, shadows, texture, reflections, relationships in all parts of the created image. Make it believable.

An example. When out and about and looking around, ideas for images can 'appear'. On one occasion I was in a gift shop and saw an elf - no, really. It was lying down and looking up at something. I immediately knew what that something was and I just had to capture that image. I had the concept - *Dreams*.

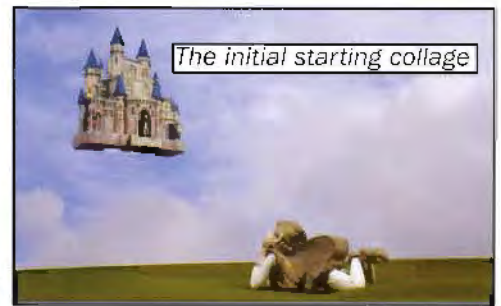
The setup and capture was very straightforward.



Useful Tip: I photographed the fairy against the same sky backdrop so that when I selected and cut her from the background the edges

would already have the right tones, making it easier to blend into the final image.

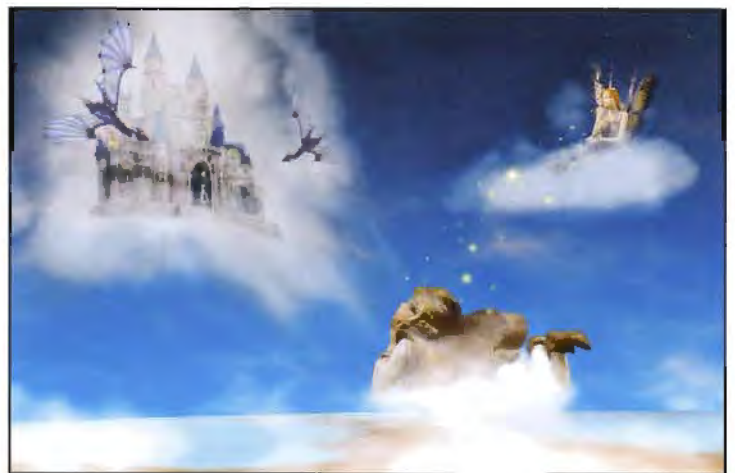
All that had to be done was to select and cut out the various image parts and then collage them together.



Adding some thin (transparent) clouds together with the fairy on more clouds, with a sprinkling of star dust was supposed to complete the final image.



The first final image was disappointing. This just didn't seem to be an interesting image that related well. It appeared to be a collection of separate parts inside one frame. I replaced the grass, changed the backdrop to a deeper graduated blue sky, and made the elf float. The second final image was much improved but seemed to lack that something. I added two dragons. The result worked well.



The final image - Dreams

My work with explanations and tutorials on the techniques that I use can be found on my web site: www.good-image.co.uk

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And finally, when will you send us an article for DIGIT? Remember that everyone is learning and that all experience is valuable. We look forward to hearing from you. Email to editor@digit.org.uk. Thank you.

Jim Buckley FRPS Editor