

Hi folks

Welcome to this issue of Concept and to Ken Holland who has taken on the task of design and layout for the future. The AGM this year heralded a period of change with a number of people standing down from their positions on the committee.

- At the AGM our thanks were given to the previous editorial team of Lyn Watson and Christine Pinnington. I am standing in as Editor until we find a replacement – hint....

- We were also glad to welcome our new Treasurer David Grimshaw and offered thanks to his predecessor Greg Holba for a job well done over his tenure.

- The group secretary, Kate Wentworth stood down and being unable to attend Rod Fry took on the role at the AGM for which we were very grateful.

- Both Avril and myself gave notice of our intention to stand down at the next (2019...) AGM... Avril from her roles of Chair and events Organiser and me as Deputy Chair.

This means that we are looking for volunteers to fill these positions, Secretary and Concept Editor immediately and Chair, Deputy Chair and Event Organiser by next year... without which the Group will find it difficult to continue. My thanks to those who have expressed an interest in helping, you know who you are...

Another main issue that was discussed was the poor attendance at events organised by the Group with the resultant financial loss. This is not to say that the events have not been successful in their planning and quality of speakers. In fact this year's event speakers – Bill Jackson, Chloe Dewe-Mathews and Paola Leonardi – all excellent presentations – have shown us the benefits of our particular approach to working on series and projects to achieve a meaningful body of work...

In light of this I have suggested that we ask the Contemporary Group regional organisers to take on the role of organising local events, the cost of speakers to be supported by the Committee to help engender greater attendance. Another initiative, taken on by Paul Ashley and Tom Owens, is becoming involved with independent regional Photo-festivals. Tom's efforts have been rewarded with a Contemporary East Anglia Exhibition included as a fringe event at the prestigious PhotoEast Festival. Paul is actively engaged in talks with another major festival of which more anon...

Brian Steptoe in his role of our Photobook Ambassador is in discussion with the Distinction Committee promoting the inclusion of modern Photobook practice in the Distinction process, progress indeed, well done and many thanks to Brian...

If you are interested in helping furthering the progress of the Contemporary Group either locally or nationally then please contact any of the Committee members with your details and how you can contribute – don't forget, it's your Group...

Peter Ellis
Deputy Chair

e-newsletter

October 2018

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The news of the passing of Ian Maxwell was met with great sadness within the group. Ian was a valued member of both the NW Group and the Committee. His thoughts and contributions to the group were always well considered and gratefully received.

Peter Ellis, Deputy Chair.

Our thanks to Alan Cameron for the memoire on the next page.



Ian Maxwell

Ian Maxwell, who died on Saturday 5th October, was a founder of Contemporary North West (CNW) and was the driving force behind it until only a couple of years ago. I have had universally admiring e-mails concerning Ian and from these and my own knowledge I have created this memoir of him and his involvement with CNW. I'd like to thank particularly Derek Trillo ARPS and Keith Launchbury FRPS for their detailed contributions and also the other members of CNW who shared their thoughts with me.

In September 2008 Keith was contacted by the RPS Contemporary Group to ask whether he would be willing to help someone with their photography with a slant towards the contemporary genre. Keith continued; "Naturally I was delighted to oblige and a little while later I received a call from Ian. We arranged to meet at my home and I asked him to bring some prints to enable us to have a discussion about how these came into being and where he would like to take that kind of image-making within the context of the RPS Contemporary genre. I was enthusiastic about what Ian showed me, which was a sequence of prints captured along a three mile walk near his home while walking his dog. These gave me a strong sense of having the kind of expressive coherence I identified with in my own following of RPS CG thinking. We met Andy Biggs, another sympathetic ear, who lived locally, in April 2009 after Ian returned from wintering in Spain. We enjoyed the session and agreed to meet again, and in the meantime Ian contacted the RPS to see if more NW members would be willing to meet."

Derek first met Ian at the Cheltenham weekend in 2009. "As a fellow northerner, I told him about how I'd been asking the group to do something 'up north.' I counted 12 who were attending from the NW, despite us being in Cheltenham. Ian was keen to organise the first meeting and I was equally keen to let him. From that first discussion I could see a twinkle in his eye of the possibility of getting something done, something interesting: it indicated his spark of enthusiasm that I saw many times over the years." The first meeting was at the Day's Inn, Charnock Richard Services on 19th October, 2009, and the group has continued to meet ever since. As NW organiser, Ian spent a number of years on the CG Committee.

In autumn 2010 Ian pulled off a considerable coup by organising Ian RPS Day of Contemporary Photography at St Martin's College in Lancaster. Star attraction was Martin Parr HonFRPS ably supported by John Darwell from Carlisle. This was my first interaction with contemporary photography and it sowed the seeds for my later involvement with the group.

Other comments I have received include:

"Ian was always keen to have a go and never fazed by the thought that it might not work out: always positive and pragmatic. If I've learnt anything from him then it's that: which is not a bad legacy to pass on." Derek Trillo ARPS.

"So sorry to hear about Ian, my first contact with him was in 2009 I think at the RPS Contemporary Group meeting at Cheltenham, our first CNW meeting was in the October of that year. Ian did an excellent job of getting the group going and he will be missed." Nigel Richards ARPS

"I will always remember Ian and miss him attending the CNW group meetings he was a great inspiration to me, and it will not be the same without him." Arnie Whittle.

"He was always very enthusiastic, supportive & welcoming, and very eager to promote the idea of the contemporary approach to photography. As well as an excellent photographer in his own right he was also very knowledgeable about other photographers and their work. He ensured that our group "kept going". I'm sure that he would want our group to continue to thrive, and this would be the best legacy for Ian." John Corbett ARPS.

I first met Ian when I attended a meeting at Charnock Richard about four years ago and I immediately was taken by the warmth and enthusiasm of his welcome. As I came to know him I appreciated how he would lead really interesting discussions on the psychology and philosophy of Contemporary Photography. We may not have agreed on some things, but that was the essence of the group which he fostered. Debate was as important as looking at images.

Ian finally withdrew from organising the group in so that he could spend more time in Spain where he had a house. In 2016 he had the considerable challenge of having to deal with having his house flooded in the disasters of December 2015. About a year ago he informed me that he had been diagnosed with an incurable form of lung cancer and though remaining interested in our activities he could no longer attend meetings.

As has been mentioned, Ian's most tangible legacy is the continued group and I hope we continue in the spirit that Ian brought to his photography and his unfailing encouragement of all of us interested in Contemporary Photography. We shall all miss that twinkle in his eye so rightly mentioned by Derek.

Our condolences go to Ian's wife Elaine and his extended family.

Alan Cameron LRPS Organiser Contemporary NW. 11th October 2018

An Exhibition Experience Kate Ferris

Panicked, surprised (to put it mildly) flustered and frantic. This was me when I heard that a jury had selected an image of mine for an Exhibition of multi-media Fine Art in Tyler, Texas.

The Show is the Annual International juried [Arcadia Art Show](#) in Tyler, Texas

This started with a long time photography friend over there twisting my arm to enter an image. Since this was at the last minute, I quickly searched out three images and emailed them off for the judges to look at. Much to my surprise one was selected for the Show, which opens today, as I write.

My panic was how to get it printed up and framed - and delivered on time. I searched online and found a Fine Art printer nearby then spent about two hours selecting paper, mount, matt, border and frame. Since my print was a colourful one, my senses rebelled against playing safe. I chose complementary colours and picked up on an orange shade for a narrow outer frame. I thought since the print itself would probably be slated if I had submitted it for critique - I might as well compound the eccentricity by getting it framed to end up with a fun presentation. Apparently it looks good, according to the curator, so I am happy.

So often, I have, when entering a Salon competition (haven't done so for years now), I did what many others probably do and entered what I thought was expected. This time it is all me - and the result, albeit in a relatively small way has reinforced my belief in my work and encouraged me to carry on! I'm also happy to report that it looks great in the Gallery and got a highly commended in the final prize selection.

For many years I used a bus service to and from work, here on my Island. I got to know everyone and they got used to me and my camera. It grew to be a favourite place for me to take glimpses of the people there and what was happening around me.



Waiting for the bus. Kate Ferris

Repeating Calatrava Sean Goodhart ARPS

I came to the Contemporary Group on joining the RPS in 2013. I've really enjoyed the opportunities to learn from the group – the emphasis on good speakers at events, on reading and making photobooks and generally encouraging work that has meaning has helped improve my "eye" for an image.

I enjoy shooting series or making repeated visits to capture images at different times of the year, with architecture being a principal subject matter. As an Engineer I love structure – and good architecture combines engineering with art which creates opportunity for making great images. The images in my ARPS panel are part of a project that I've been working on now for more than 5 years, looking at Santiago Calatrava's architecture.

It could be argued that my work is not "hard core" contemporary, perhaps the subjects are not about "issues" and closer to fine art. My panel was assessed in the Fine Art category; I'd imagined it as a possible Contemporary panel but was advised by the Distinctions team that the Fine Art route was more likely to get me the A. For me it's a Contemporary panel because of its project basis – perhaps that definition of contemporary work needs a little more re-emphasis for the assessment team?

I've been looking at Calatrava's architectural toolkit of geometric forms. The images in the panel are made at his City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia, Spain, at Milwaukee Art Museum's Quadracci Pavilion, USA, and the Liège-Guillemins Railway Station in Belgium. Shapes, lines, symmetry, repetition of form and exposed structural elements are a typical feature used in all these buildings. Using hard shadows from bright oblique sun or soft shadows from cloudy days it is possible to discover that surface textures are also a recurring theme in these structures.

Congratulations to Sean on gaining his Associateship with this panel. Some were shown in the CG Journal this summer. Here are a few more.





From the Regional Groups

South West

The South West Contemporary Sub Group was formed back in 2007. I think we were the first sub group in the Society. The idea behind this was to enable Contemporary workers living in the South West, to meet locally in between national events put on by the main Contemporary Group. Over the years we have held exhibitions, and produced joint books. However the main and most enjoyable part of the group is looking at each other's work at our regular meetings.

The range and quality of work is at times quite breathtaking. Ken Holland for example showed his photobooks made on a trip to India to attend his son's wedding, while John Evans Jones has been buying up old kitsch photo-frames from charity shops and the like. He then sets about making a photograph to fit the style of the frame. His highly individual approach had the audience enthralled.

The work shown can be in the form of prints, books or digital projected images. Because our region is so elongated we alternate our meetings between Devon and Cornwall. Our next meeting is at Dartington, South Devon on the 28th October. Why not come along: you will be made most welcome.

Rod Fry ARPS



From Reading series. Rod Fry ARPS

East Anglia

It has been a particularly active, in relative terms, year for this small group from the easternmost edges of the East Anglia Group. I conducted an email survey of all the contactable members in the region earlier in the year and had a few responses that were favourable. Mostly, it seems that members prefer to plough their own furrows and are happy to get their Contemporary Journal and be left alone.

We ran two exhibitions of MEUS here in Ipswich with the May showing being an official Fringe event of the International Festival – PhotoEast 2018. That show was in Ipswich Town Hall. We showed again for the month of July in a local gallery.

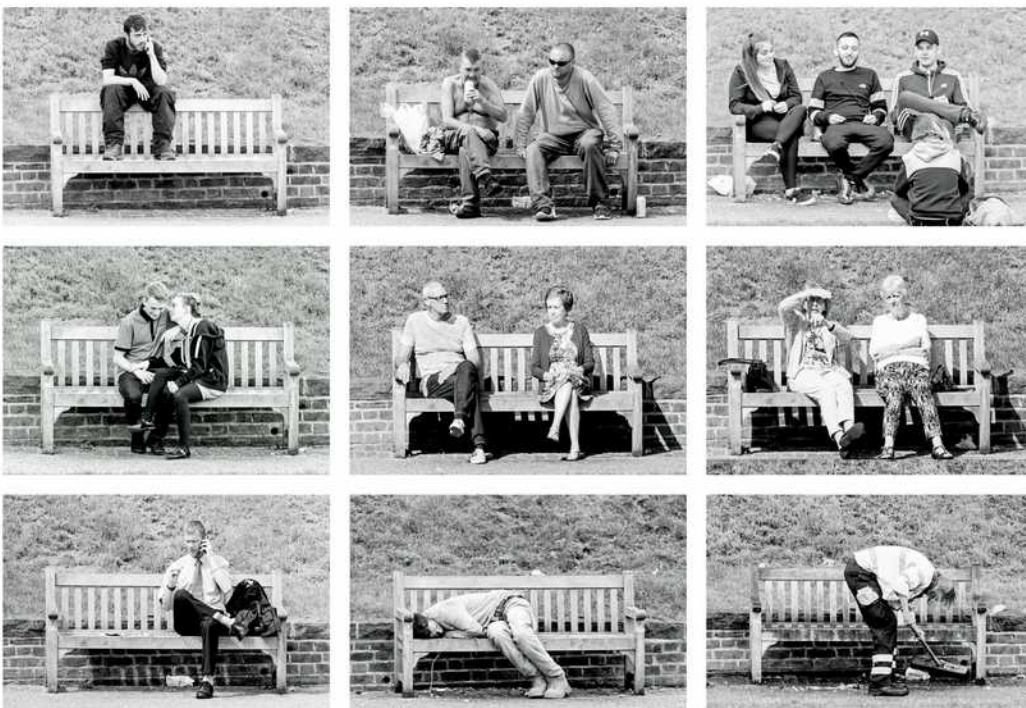
As the days shorten my desire to make images grows so we will gather again very shortly to debate our strategies for moving towards PhotoEast 2020 – some might say we have perfect vision.

Tom Owens ARPS

North West

Since the last AGM the group has met only 4 times - there were no meetings in May or July because of holidays (May) and lack of attendees (July). This was disappointing to say the least, but we have at least had two new members but at the same time Ian Maxwell withdrew from the group due to ill health and Keith Launchbury FRPS has moved to a part of the Lake District which makes it very difficult to come to our meetings. We are getting between 5 and 8 attendees and I would welcome suggestions on getting more members. We will continue to meet for as long as there are members who wish to join us.

Richard Barrett, one of our new members has brought some fresh thinking in the door and one of his sets of images was of a park bench visible from his home showing how it was used during a typical day.



We have had to find a new venue as the Days Inn we used at Charnock Richard Services closed its meeting room for renovation. We have however found a local venue at Samlesbury War Memorial Hall just a few miles away from the hotel and considerably cheaper. It has a screen and AV system, though we prefer to use my equipment. We feel that the surroundings are more congenial. Meetings are now held on a Saturday afternoon which makes it easier in the darker months for those of our members who travel some distance to attend.

Highlight of the year was our well attended exhibition in Lytham Heritage Centre. Seven members took part under the banner of "Revealing.." We had originally planned to focus on the landscape, but we felt this to be limiting, so invited a broader range of images with a looser theme. Keith provided us with a large number of his images from Lewis, thus helping us to fill the space very well.

A set of Ken Rowlatt's images (below) combined photographs from the First World War of training areas for troops from Lancashire who trained on farmland in the hills of the county combined with modern images of the same areas to try to show as exact a match in viewpoint as possible. These combined images were so successful that Ken has been asked to lend them again for an exhibition later in the year marking the centenary of the end of hostilities.



I end this report on a sad note. One of founder members, Ian Maxwell, died last Saturday (5th October) from a form of lung cancer which was not treatable. He was one of our main movers and shapers over the years and he would lead really interesting discussions on the psychology and philosophy of Contemporary Photography. He was really kind man and we will miss his input to the group.

Alan Cameron LRPS

North East

The Contemporary Group North East met on Sat 8th September at their new venue in York. Before sharing their work, Patricia Ruddle led a discussion on what members felt were the key factors in giving our group its strength. A 'safe' environment in which to discuss work and share ideas honestly and openly in a positive and helpful way was seen by all as a major strength.

Patricia also gave us a copy of the first Contemporary Group Newsletter, April 1990.

Peter Bartlett kicked off the meeting with *Shards of West Yorkshire*, a project looking at the post-industrial impact on 30 towns in the region. The title had arisen because he hoped that the images collectively would provide a picture of the whole. Peter had already visited 10 towns and showed some of the quirky images he had taken, showing life in the towns. Eventually he expects they will take the form of a book.

Janet Cook brought digital images of her Associateship panel. Many were large scale and used window frames with the theme of inside looking out/outside looking in. Members asked how she had constructed the frames and overcome the difficulties of printing on rice paper. Janet explained she used rice paper because of its fragility, which reflected the fragility of the people whose portraits she had taken. Janet explained she was influenced by the work of Frida Kahlo and Dyanita Singh and now plans to explore the work of Dyanita Singh further, particularly regarding different ways to present images.

Christine Carr highly recommended Lee Miller's Surrealism photography on show at the Hepworth Gallery in Wakefield which she had seen recently. It finishes on 7th October.

Several members had brought books with them.

Robert Harris started by showing his book – *My Uncertain Future*, explaining that his joint passions were photography and bowling. Following hand surgery his bowling career was at risk of being curtailed. This came at the same time as he was looking for a project to submit for the Context and Narrative module of his OCA degree course. He decided to produce a book showing his deep connection with bowling, finishing with a poignant last image of his empty bowling locker.

Members discussed the making of books. Jim Souper mentioned *Making Books – A Guide to Creating Handcrafted Books* by Simon Goode and Ira Yonemura.

Christine Pinnington also brought her innovative take on book making. She is working on an OCA degree in Visual Communication and her current module is Printing and Production in the

Book Design element. In Christine's very imaginative way, she has created a circular book. She brought along a mock up on the theme of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, using a variety of lenses including fish eye, infra-red, pinhole and plastic. The group were interested to learn how Christine overcame the difficulties of producing perfect circles and finding a way to bind the book without compromising the image space. Christine said she used In Design which allowed her to curve text to suit the shape. She particularly liked the work of David Carson, graphic designer.

Continuing the book theme, Avijit Datta showed the group his book inspired by the work of Frida Kahlo whose illness led to times in her life when, confined to bed, her viewpoint was restricted to looking up. This, together with Avijit experiences with paralysed patients in iron lungs who shared the same limited vertical view had encouraged him to explore vertical viewpoints further. In a number of locations in Yorkshire, London and Kent Avijit used this vertical 'up and down' view to create a range of images which he incorporated into a book. Members agreed that this 'dystopian' view made familiar places look very different.

Lyn Newton then showed her book *Seeing Birmingham*, explaining that this was her first attempt at showing her work in book form. She asked the group for constructive help as she recognised some layouts did not work well. The group discussed the importance of white space around photos, the use of dominant images on the right-hand side and the balancing of image sizes across two pages. One of the main lessons was that less was more! Lyn also showed some digital black and white images taken at the Riverside Festival in Stockton. One sequence of 5 photos showed moments within a poignant dance performed by a disabled dancer.

Jim Souter showed the group Alex Boyd's book featuring St Kilda which he had bought after visiting the area. Alex is a photographer based in the Outer Hebrides. He uses a wet plate collodion method taking his chemicals with him and developing his photos while out on a shoot.

Graham Low then showed a set of digital images he had taken around Gormley's *Another Place*, a piece of modern sculpture consisting of 100 cast iron figures facing towards the sea at Crosby Beach. Graham looked at what goes on at the beach and particularly the way people reacted around the statues.

Celine Alexander Brown presented a set of wall art images taken around the Brick Lane area of London. She had been particularly intrigued by the way women were represented in this wall art and she had collected a group of images together which showed different emotions in the women.

Patricia Ruddle shared images she had taken in Bridlington based on a clothes shop no longer occupied but still retaining much of its stock. The images were taken through the window and Patricia expressed the desire to go back but this time gain access to the shop. She also showed a few images taken at the RA Summer Show which were quirky and amusing.

Robert Harris closed the afternoon with a selection of digital images he had manipulated by superimposing images of himself in different poses encased in a sleeping bag onto a dry flood area.

The next meeting will be on 17th November 2018.

Lyn Newton



Avijit Datta



Christine Pinnington



Peter Bartlett



Janet Cook



Robert Harris



Graham Low

The AGM

The AGM was followed by a superb presentation by **Paola Leonardi**, Senior Lecturer, London Metropolitan University, speaking on her Hasselblad shot project "Borderlands - The edges of Europe". Whilst walking the eastern borders of the EU the images were shot with a Hasselblad and a bag of film and is a continuing project. A selection of comments from a few of those who attended this excellent day...

Avijit Myoshin Datta:

Her work is concerned with the representation of cultural identity, its shifts and states of transition and how these relate to the territories we inhabit. Her practice is rooted in concepts of human geography and uses a straight visual approach combining landscape and portraiture.

Bob Farrer:

Great day at Contemporary AGM efficient business done and dusted in quick time then on to our excellent speaker and thought provoking contributions from members, well done the committee, the weather was even good.

Romney Tansley:

What strange places those borders must be, an unsettling or even dangerous presence in the lives of those who happen to live close by them. I thought Paola did a brilliant job illuminating this effect as she recounted their stories and experiences.



<http://leonardiphoto.com/borderlands/>

AGM Minutes

[Click here for the link to the Minutes](#)