



Newsletter

**BRACKNELL
CAMERA
CLUB**

Issue
Number

55

September
2006



Editorial

By Ruari Cumming

Well, what a cracking good season we have got off to. Not only winning our Lottery grant of £4,000 but also seeing a lot of new faces. You are all welcomed & I am sure you will find our club both friendly and stimulating. Should you have any queries then please don't hesitate to ask any Committee or club member who will be only too happy to help.

Just in case any of you are wondering what decision I came to regarding my 60th birthday present (see issue 53), then the answer was a Canon EOS 5D. Whilst still going through a steep learning curve - see elsewhere in this issue - and a trial run along the Northumbrian coast snapping away at castles & beaches, all seems to be going well. As they say on Blue Peter, here's one I made earlier.

The 10 rolls of Fujichrome Velvia 50, bought as a back stop, continue to languish in my freezer!

We have, yet again, interesting and diverse articles in this issue, ranging from cats to maidens - must be a link there somewhere! Anyway, do enjoy reading this. For the benefit of our newer members, we have a limited supply, in the clubroom, of previous issues back as far as issue 41. If the issue you are looking for is missing, then you will find it on our website. Alternatively, if you need a hard copy then do ask me to reprint one for you. We are always needing articles to publish and the website explains what is required. Alternatively ask me for guidance.

I read that 50% of the 94 clubs in the Western Counties Photographic Federation have less than 25 members. We are luckier here than many so do continue to support your club and enlist new members.



Bamburgh Castle



Annual Exhibition Print Display

By Brian Steptoe

When Bruce Collins told me he had arranged for the club to hold its annual exhibition at South Hill Park Gallery, I was pleased to offer advice and help with the display of the club's print work. As some may know, in recent years I have become very keen to widen the way in which RPS print distinction submissions can be presented, particularly to avoid the constraints of rows of prints & to allow more freely arranged work. My involvement in the design of illustrated books has also played a part in seeing relationships between images, as well as individual images, as important.

So applying these approaches to arrangement of the club member's prints to enhance the display achievable from a disparate set of individual entries on individual sizes and colours of mounts, to better match a standard for an Art Centre Gallery, was an opportunity not to be missed. The idea was to divide the total of over 220 prints into groups with similar themes or styles, each group suitable for display on about 3 metres length of exhibition wall. The aim was then to be able to see each group laid out to an oval shape, with 3 rows of something like 3, 5 and 3 prints set out like a large "bead of a necklace". Strings of these "beads" would then be set along the gallery walls.



Caroline Colegate, Bruce Collins & I set a day in June to look through the entire print entry, without any strict adherence to the class of entries. We found that the print grouping idea could be achieved, with some modifications of sizes of some of the print groups.

..../contd.

From that point on the prints were stored in the groups selected, each with a known hanging position for the group to appear on the gallery walls.

Before the hanging days, the three rows of prints for each group were planned to be at preset heights of 0.9, 1.5 & 2.1 metres from the floor, with prints within the rows centred on these height lines, rather than mounts based to the lines.



This, and the generous use of the “white space” on the gallery walls, emphasised the planned bead-like arrangement. Setting a single titling label for each

group was a final touch.

I hope that viewers appreciated the approach, emphasising the theming/grouping instead of the individual prints themselves.



Big Cat Outing

By Caroline Colegate

Eyeball to eyeball, cheek-to-cheek with a magnificent lion, that's how I found myself one hot sunny summer Saturday afternoon in

June ! OK, there were bars separating us but I could have reached out and stroked its nose if I had felt stupid enough.

I am describing the club outing to the Wildlife Heritage Foundation in Smarden, Kent to photograph



Me Caroline - you “Lion King” !

big cats. When Alan first announced the event I was hesitant in putting my name down, would we actually get some good opportunities for photographs or would we just see some fur peeping

out from the grass? My previous attempts at places like Marwell Zoo had resulted in some very disappointing photographs but I was assured that this would be different.

The Big Cat Sanctuary is not open to the general public but organises special events for small groups of people. It's not a zoo but forms part of a vital programme to breed endangered big cats. It was therefore gratifying that my money was going towards preserving such noble animals. Indeed whilst photographing Sumatran tigers we were told that if numbers continue to dwindle at current rates then they would be extinct by 2012. Only 6 years away, how very sad.



Sandy shoots the shooters

Our first session was the lions, the organisation had waited for us to arrive before feeding them, this



Fangs aren't what they used to be !

enabled some action shots as their powerful jaws crunched into a rack of ribs.

Sessions with tiger and snow leopard followed before we were treated to a nice luncheon in lovely

outdoor surroundings. We did all comment that the weather couldn't be more different to the club outing to Stonehenge ! (Sorry Martin). More tigers followed after lunch and poor Korn (Alan's wife) got on the wrong end of one tiger that obviously took a fancy to her and unceremoniously sprayed her (I do hope the journey home in the car wasn't too smelly !)

Many of the big cats came and sat so close to the bars that we were often scrabbling for macro lenses instead of telephotos. Towards the end of the day there was a row of us waiting for a tiger to yawn and as Debbie came up to join us she knew she had missed that moment because she was greeted by a cacophony of umpteen shutters all being released at the same time. I wonder therefore how many of us have exactly the same shot ? So how did my photos turn out ? Well, I was very pleased with my results, OK my close ups weren't taken in the wild



Visitors pray when a gate is found left open !

and are not Andy Rouse standard but I cannot see how I would get such good studies of these animals by going on a safari holiday (indeed you would need to be very lucky to see a tiger in the wild...../contd.

let alone get a close up of its stripes). My advice? If there is another opportunity to go to the Big Cat Sanctuary, take it, you will have an excellent day out.

Thank you Alan for organising such a successful and enjoyable event. And finally, my favourite big cat, well it's got to be the tiger.



You won't find me in any old car's fuel tank !

All Photos © Debbie Bradley,
Caroline Colegate & Charles Minchell



A Tale from the Other Side

By Pamela Cumming

For those who do not know me, I work in a local comprehensive school with teenagers who have Special Educational Needs. They are mainly boys who struggle to concentrate on anything that does not interest them and what does interest them can be a little odd, e.g. The Simpsons, concept cars, rodents and, my personal favourite, nails. Yes, nails ! That's not screws you understand, they are a totally different beast, they screw. My job requires tolerance, patience and calm which, you would think, would make me ideally qualified to be the wife of a photographer. Apparently not.

My other half had been pondering going fully digital for many, many months. The only digital camera that came close to his beloved EOS IV cost a fortune. Negotiations began. In a generous moment, and to mark his 60th birthday whilst he was away on holiday, without me as I was still working, I enclosed a voucher in his birthday card for a "very expensive digital SLR camera". This was a good thing surely? No !

On his return he went back to reading all his literature & I said, naively, surely this is a one horse race. Ah !, but he'd heard a rumour of another horse which may or may not be available in August. Then wait, I suggested. He waited, he changed his mind, he changed it back again, and finally he bought his new best friend, the EOS 5D. The end surely ? No !

Now he had to make numerous decisions, all of which I was consulted on. How many cards ? What PSD (Portable Storage Device) to buy ? It was readers May, the month of the declared drought, when it poured with rain, including most of half term. During a drier interlude I decided to go for a walk, did he want to come ? Yes, so coats & boots were donned and his new camera was picked up. The nightmare began. He told me how much he adored his old EOS IV, how this

one did not fit in his hand like it had. He constantly asked what does this button do ? (like Manuel in Fawlty Towers, "I know nothing"), so I assumed the questions were rhetorical. It was like taking a large incontinent dog, of indeterminate breed, out for a walk. We kept stopping whilst he fiddled. On occasion he became like a piece of street theatre, standing stock still for ages peering over his glasses at the screen. Other people who had a different concept of going for a walk, which involved moving, treated him as a roundabout.

He decided to try firing off a few shots of moving objects just to see how it coped. He tried capturing an old Astra, which suddenly applied its brakes, fearful no doubt of a new speed trap. Then there was "surprised horsewoman" complete with "embarrassed wife", in the background. However, my personal favourite was the "woman walking with wolfhound" who decided, just to annoy him, to turn into her driveway just before he had completed his shots. That produced a lot of dark mutterings.

Reader, you have to understand, I walk to relieve stress & release feel-good hormones. By this point my stress was not going down, I'll leave the rest of that sentence to you. My walk had become a stagger, with stops.

He then asked a question which I felt qualified to answer - "Was it sunny, cloudy or overcast ?" I had a one in three chance of getting this one right. I turned to a handy device I keep for answering such technical questions, my own personal LSDs (Light Seeing Devices, known as eyes.) There was no sign of the sun, so I deduced definitely not sunny. My chances of correctly answering increased to 50:50. Overcast means about to rain, dull, dismal. The day was not overcast. Decision made. "Well", I announced confidently, "cloudy". Wrong ! He decided it was the sunny side of cloudy, and on and on he rambled. It was at this point I noticed a function of his chunky digital camera he had missed. The manufacturers had provided me with a handy murder weapon - but unfortunately your Editor ducked !

Photoshop Hints & Tips

From our Adobe Photoshop "Helpdesk"

- Are you fed up with just the standard 4x4 grid in the Curves dialogue box ? If so, try **CTRL-ALT-CLICK** anywhere on the grid and you will get a 10x10 grid. If you don't like that, then just **CTRL-ALT-CLICK** again and it will revert to 4x4.

Thanks to Bruce Little (an ex BCC member) for this tip. Do you have any ? Then do tell us.



...and now for something completely different !

By Peter Handford

The other day I met a poet. We were on a course which has nothing to do with poetry or photography. I had met Graham before and knew his work. As usual at the beginning of the course we all introduced ourselves to the group. In the process Graham apologised for being a poet ! I tackled him on his apology during the break and commented that I do not apologise for being a photographer, no matter what people may think of my photographs !

We got talking and I was struck by how similar we were in our comments about our respective interests. Graham talked about his poetry like I talk about my photographs ! Our comments on judges and publishing/exhibiting, popular fashion, style and so on also bore remarkable similarities. I sent him some samples of my work and he responded by telling me he had just completed his latest collection of poems and was looking for someone to illustrate some of them and was I interested ? PANIC !!

Absolutely no payment - guaranteed !

The idea of poetry being combined with photography is not new of course but I have only known examples where the photographs inspired the poems and not the other way around. The fact that the poems were written and selected for publication before the photographs were taken did not really seem significant, initially. I read the selected poems, saw strong images coming up for me and produced photographs. When I passed them on to Graham we began to encounter the difficulties ! The problem was that I was reproducing my images, not Graham's !

His poetry was written from **his** life experiences, some going back to childhood, whereas mine came from **my** childhood. We got together and had a fascinating two hours in which we got to know a lot about each other, past and present, not what I had expected when we agreed to work together. I was in a new world, exciting, different and challenging. It was/is a very new way of working and very stimulating.

There follows an example of what we are doing.

Tea Without

She was only a girl in a tea shop
And he a bearded patrician,
But they looked at each other
With love and delight
And bother their social position !

She was only a girl in a tea shop
With intellect nothing at all,
But she knew how to woo
As most women do
And that is no mean thing at all !

She was only a girl in a tea shop
But she knew how to brew a strong draught,
She brewed her bold way
To his heart so they say
She certainly wasn't so daft !

She was only a girl in a tea shop
But she cut currant bread with a dash,
She sliced half her way
Through his fortune they say
Old fool now, without any cash !

The moral is there: now men be aware
If into a tea shop you go,
Show no concern
For the girl with the urn
Or your riches may suddenly flow !

(© Graham K.A. Walker)

