

# Newsletter

**BRACKNELL  
CAMERA  
CLUB**

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## Editorial

By Ruari Cumming

Hope you like my new 'mugshot' taken whilst we were in Cyprus last month. Some might say it should have been expunged at the time but once deleted from the card it's gone forever, or has it? I was interested in Brian Steptoe's encounter with quasi officialdom (see

page 3) & becoming more concerned that some "busy body" in the street might tell me to delete snaps, I decided to test out image recovery. SanDisk supply, with their top quality memory cards, software on a mini disc called "RescuePRO".

I put a "used" 4gb SanDisk Extreme III card (any card will do) in my EOS 5D and formatted it in camera, as one does every time you want a "clean" card. I took a few random shots around the house & garden in both JPG, RAW & RAW+JPG - about a dozen shots in all. Then, whilst the card was still in camera, deleted each one, simulating what might happen in the street. Card was then placed in my reader and windows explorer confirmed no files existed on the flash card. Launching "RescuePRO" & selecting the drive with the flash card in showed that indeed the deleted images were still on the card. JPGs displayed a thumbnail and RAWs would open in Photoshop CS2. But what astounded me was that, despite formatting the card at the start of this trial, all images previously recorded on that card, before the dozen taken in the trial, were also still there!

I presume that at sometime in the future the card decides to shed some of the older images in order to accommodate newer ones. Be nice to hear from anyone who has in depth knowledge of this.

The last article, whilst for the puritans amongst you is not strictly about photography, may make you smile. It is the account of a situation Bruce Collins & I encountered during our photographic holiday to the coastal castles of Northumbria in September 2006. We had a good time, real champion it was, & many a laugh along the way. I hope you all have a good summer, with lots of laughs, fine weather and many photographs to show us next season.

## Themes Workshops

By Peter Handford

When Brian Steptoe proposed running a series of workshops on working to a theme, rather than on individual pictures, I was immediately attracted by the idea of trying something new.

Brian introduced some basic ideas on working to a theme and then encouraged us to develop our own ideas for creating a theme during the workshop sessions.

Ideas and styles of themes were as varied as the number of people on the workshop and the Members Evening gave us an opportunity to show the results to club members.

I am always amazed and delighted by the creativity of club members and the workshops gave us a rich source of ideas to work with.

Another aspect of the sessions was that we all had the opportunity to give and receive feedback, with no suggestion of competition or judging. I found this very useful in developing my own ideas. Certainly I found that starting from one point (Face in the Window) led me on to new aspects of "being watched". As I take more photographs so I find new directions to develop the theme. I wonder where it will all end! (insanity in all probability!)

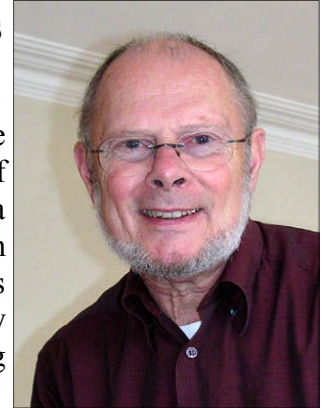
Other members of the group ventured into taking different types of photographs as their themes developed (which will affect their future photography), revisiting and reinterpreting old themes, developing ideas from single pictures and so on.

It gave us the opportunity to get to know each other better and boosted my enthusiasm for taking pictures.

My thanks to Brian for providing this opportunity and for the work he put into structuring and running the sessions.

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Brian Steptoe will be running these workshops again next season. If you want to join in, then look out for them in next years Programme, which will be delivered to your home in August. ....Ed



## SPF Finals Day April 2008

By Sandy Pullar



The finals of the Southern Photographic Federation (SPF) League Competition were held in Crosfield Hall in Romsey. As Bracknell Camera Club had reached the finals in both the prints and slides, Sue Matthews, Bruce Collins and I decided to

accompany our External Competition Secretary, Jeff Lawrence, to see whether the club could pull off a first and win either or both categories.

We travelled down in Jeff's car, in sunny weather, arriving in good time for the start of the day's events. After the opening remarks by the SPF President, Ian Bigg, the first final, the prints, got under way. In this we were up against strong opposition, namely Southampton Camera Club, but our prints had scored well in all the previous rounds so we had high hopes. The judge was John Chamberlin FRPS who is a well known Natural History photographer and who had managed to drag himself out of his sick-bed to attend the function. From the titles of the Southampton prints it was obvious that a number of them were natural history & we had a concern that these may do well given the judge's area of interest. We need not have worried as, having commented on the first of the wildlife prints, he explained that wildlife photography had moved on from the days of pictures of static animals and that in order to obtain good marks the animal would have to be depicted in its environment displaying some sort of behaviour. Southampton's images tended to be of the 'static' variety. It was also clear, early on, that the judge was going to use a wider range of marks than we had seen in earlier rounds. After seven prints from each side had been marked, the scores were level at 55 apiece. However, they got a 9 for their final print whilst we obtained a 6 so they pipped us at the post, 64 to 61. We did, however get two perfect 10s to Southampton's one. There was also a good illustration of how subjective judging can be. One of our prints, which had consistently obtained very high marks in all previous rounds, only obtained a 6 in the final.

This final was followed by the 'Best Individual Print' competition in which the 16 prints in the League final were judged alongside other entries from SPF affiliated clubs. John Chamberlin had to choose a first, second and third as well as a number of 'Highly Commended'. I am pleased to say that Alan Fretten obtained a 'Highly Commended' for his "Temple Monkeys".

After a short coffee break we had the slide competitions. In the League we were again up against Southampton but this time there was a third club, Spectrum, from the Isle of Wight. The reason for the three clubs was that, in the semi finals, BCC had drawn with Spectrum (61 points) and instead of the club with the greatest number of 10s going through (BCC) they decided to include both clubs in the final. John Chamberlin said that, having run through the slides, he thought they were not of such a high standard as the prints and he showed this by giving a number of them a mark of 4. This event was also won by Southampton with a score of 61. Spectrum came a close second with 60 and BCC, I am sorry to say, came third with only 48. Again it was interesting to note the difference between judges. Having drawn with Spectrum in the semi-finals, the same two sets of slides were marked 12 points apart in the finals.

Over our picnic lunch in the grounds of Romsey Abbey, Sue, Jeff, Bruce and I tried to console ourselves with flippant comments such as "The judge was probably feeling unwell". However, we really felt that, in the majority of cases, the judging had been fair and the comments well justified.

Lunch was followed by the individual slide competition and a talk by John Chamberlin entitled "Images from Around the World". The talk was most enjoyable and showed that John Chamberlin 'practised what he preached' in that his wildlife photographs were not just static depictions of animals.

And so we came to the end of a very enjoyable day. The message I took home from it was that we are perfectly capable of winning the SPF print and slide league competitions provided that the selected images are more than just pretty pictures. In addition to being of high pictorial and technical quality (something we - and most other clubs - are good at) they need to stand out in terms of the 'story' they tell or the information they provide. Not all judges take much account of this but it only takes one!

I look forward to attending the finals next year and seeing us win.





## Adventures at the London Olympics site

By Brian Steptoe

One of the advantages of choosing a photographic project close to home is that it can be followed through with one-day visits. Air travel to

exotic locations is not a requirement. Another is that this site is continually changing and any photographs are less likely to be repeats of what has already been done before. My first visit was in February 2007 at the time when publicity about the escalating cost of the games was at its height. The effect of this was that security staff seemed to have been briefed to 'stop and search' - well almost, anyone wielding a camera, especially if it looked to be of professional calibre. Although all my photos had been taken from public roads or footpaths, I was accosted by two security guards who examined all the images on the camera & specified which had to be deleted then and there. I never could see the logic as to which were chosen for this and afterwards attempted to recover the deletions, with some but not total success.

Subsequent site visits have been made at about 6-week intervals and access to most of the site was possible until July 2007. But then the security fences really went up and more recent visits have been limited to areas around the perimeter of the actual Olympics building site. But this still gives plenty of scope, with over 6 miles of fencing to be explored. In October last year a guided tour led by professional local art photographer Stephen Gill was a highlight. Stephen explained that even he was no longer allowed access; only the photographic team under contract to the Olympic Delivery Authority had permits. It is reported in the photographic press that all such official photography has to be approved before release to the media. Stephen Gill is best known for having

purchased a compact camera for 50p at a Hackney street market, used it to photograph around Hackney Wick, which borders the western side of the site, and then published the photographs.-

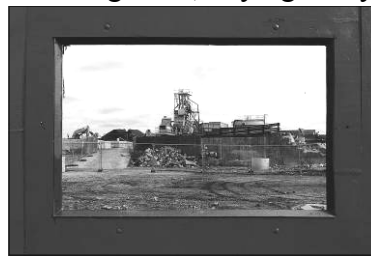


Another benefit of choosing such a high-profile activity is the extensive coverage given on the web by official sites & individual blogs, and in the press, particularly *The Guardian*. So there is no lack of sources for text to support the photography. By April 2008 most of the 250 industrial buildings on the site

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have been demolished, the first of the two council travellers sites have been relocated & one of the three London bus garages has been moved outside the northern boundary. The area which will contain the main Olympic stadium has had the site earthwork completed & is to be handed over for stadium construction in May, 3 months ahead of schedule. This is on the south-west side of the site, an area which is visible to the public from the Greenway, a public path and cycle track built up on an embankment which allows a wide view over that security fencing.

Local residents have complained about the lack of any other viewing windows through the security fence, as commonly used with smaller building sites, saying 'they don't want us to see



what's going on'. Perhaps in response, two small viewing windows have been opened up in the security fence which borders the towpath

of the Lee Navigation canal in February & a further one in March 2008.

An exhibition of my photographs on this project will take place at the RPS HQ at Fenton House, Bath from 3-28 November 2008.



## "A brush with the Loo (Law?)"

By Ruari Cumming

Our arrival in Berwick-upon-Tweed was uneventful & despite the rain we found what we thought was a most centrally placed car park for the town shops which

Bruce Collins wanted to visit, as the weather was quite foul for photography.

Bruce had been asked by Carole, his wife, to bring back a suitable birthday present for her brother, whom they were to visit shortly after he returned home. When I say "asked" I got the distinct impression his instructions were more severe than that. From the vast amount of mutterings & comments he was making it appeared to me that he would not be allowed home unless he had successfully procured said birthday present and that the item would undoubtedly meet with Carole's full approval. We had been through a long list of likely contenders. Books were favourite but must be of the North East or Northumberland, china ./.contd

in the form of ornaments or mugs were also contenders. Unusual gifts of various descriptions & possible permutations were aired but rejected as he couldn't come up with anything tangible or specific.

Of course, I tried to help as much as one could with ideas but not knowing the future recipient's likes and dislikes did make this task more difficult. In the end he continued to steer towards a good book with pictures of Northumbria as the ideal. At first I thought all this was going to deviate us from the main task - photography. But he was careful not to impose a daily objective of "gift first, picture taking later".

The parking of the car, or should I say the payment of the parking fee, did take some time. It appeared, through examination of the two, yes two parking meter machines, that we were in a private car park for shoppers using the adjacent freezer food store which, unfortunately, was obliterated from view by its rear façade. One machine indicated you got your fee back if you bought goods to a certain value or more in the said store. The other machine made no mention of this but was quiet happy to gobble up any coins offered to it. So be it, we got a ticket for what appeared to be the cost of a second mortgage and started our walkabout.

Emerging from the side street where we had parked I asked a poor, wet & bedraggled local if he knew where the nearest public toilets were. "Oh yes" he replied, pointing westward. "Just up the street on the right, by the entrance to the large public car park". I was tempted to ask him whether the car park charges were cheaper than that which I had just paid but refrained on the basis that I had now paid for 4 hours and had no intention of buying £20 worth of frozen chicken thighs to redeem the cost of our ticket. Besides it was raining & the loo was now my immediate priority.

A few yards up the street we found the entrance to a massive short stay public car park. At first I missed the toilet building but Bruce soon pointed the way up some entrance steps. A small gathering of people, sheltering from the rain, occupied the doorway. Once through them a sign indicated the gents loo was to the left and in my usual commanding aplomb I headed that way with Bruce bringing up the rear, so to speak.

Not two paces had I gone when a voice of local accent was heard behind me.

"Where's your ticket?" it bellowed.

Turning round I saw from whom the voice emanated. It was a large person, no !, body, of indeterminate gender, in a grimy white overall. It was clearly directing it's question towards us. "I beg your pardon" I replied, turning back to face my accuser. "Where's your ticket?" it said again. "What ticket?" I enquired. "Ticket to come in here" it said. "You mean I have to have a ticket to have a pee?!" I responded, incredulously. "Aye, you do!" it said. Now excuse me for not using "he" or "she" but quite frankly I had

no idea which would be the most appropriate to use. "And where do I get this ticket from?" I asked, irritation bubbling up in my voice. "From the machine" was the reply and a hand, donned in fingerless mittens, was waived vaguely towards the entrance. By this time we had amassed a small but discreet audience of onlookers, who were clearly enjoying the spectacle of two Southerners attempting to gain access to a facility in order to relieve themselves at what must be the most northerly public toilet in England.

Reluctantly we went back outside and found an ordinary car parking ticket machine affixed to the external wall. A coin of 20p was required and for that it would, I presumed, issue the required ticket giving us permission to use the facilities therein. I looked at the machine, then back to the overall clad body who, by this time, had advanced to the entrance porch & stood defiant, ready to repel boarders or those who had "nay" ticket. "You're telling me I have to pay 20p to buy a ticket to come in there to have a pee?" I bawled at this likeness of a human being. "Aye" was the retort. By this time my blood pressure was up to bursting point, as were other parts of my anatomical plumbing & I had to resort to finding 20p in order to avoid a severe situation of total embarrassment.

Now don't get me wrong. Unfortunately, it's common practice these days to have to pay to enter a public toilet. I consider this a perverse method of extracting yet more money to fuel the coffers of the local authorities who fail in controlling their own finances. After all, aren't the local residents paying enough already for such conveniences without the tourists having to fork out also. Most if not all of the public loos I have been in of late, and that's a tidy few, where an entry charge is made, use a coin operated turnstile to gain access. What really incensed me was the fact that I had to purchase a ticket to get in. Why not do away with the "guard" & install a turnstile too. Saves on cost of said body's wages and on the provision of costly tickets, destined to become litter.

With our tickets purchased we again attempted an assault on the facilities of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Brandishing my entry permit in my hand I stopped and faced my adversary. Peering straight into a pair of watery lifeless eyes I said, for all to hear, "Here's my ticket! Where would you like me to stick it?"

I am only glad that for her sake, as we later decided it had been of the female gender, she didn't respond but turned away to deal with the next assault party of octogenarians who were climbing her battlements.

"Well at least we can use the ticket all day" said Bruce, naïvely. Looking at the ticket I was shocked. "Not much luck there" I replied. "The ticket says it's only valid for one person for one visit." "Oh shit!" said Bruce. "Hang on" I replied "that'll cost us more money!" Don't believe me? Well the ticket is pinned above my desk, a constant reminder of our welcome to England's most northerly town of Berwick-upon-Tweed.