



Newsletter

**BRACKNELL
CAMERA
CLUB**

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Editorial

By Ruari Cumming

As my family holiday in Malta looms nearer, I am reminded of events which we will all enjoy in both the near and distant future. Some of you know that in a previous life I was a Purser on a cruise liner, visiting many places throughout the world & recording those visits on slide film. A few years back I gave a presentation at our club, entitled "Around the World in 80 Minutes", of those places accompanied by some information about them.

My annual tours to the Hebrides have resulted in thousands of images residing in my photo stock library, for which modest sales are enjoyed. Caroline thought it was about time I did another evening's presentation & so a year ago I was very pleased & proud to show you all my talk entitled "An Eye on the Hebrides", billed as '*...His personal view, aided by the latest AV technology, to bring us the sights, sounds and magic of this unique place....*'.

Well I have to say you all enjoyed it, so much so that it was shown to three local clubs who also revelled in its magic. So next winter it goes to a further eight clubs. If you didn't see it first time around then just ask me when & where it shows this Autumn & you could come as my guest. Now they say that success breeds success, and in a moment of weakness, I agreed to Caroline's request to put on a new show next March. This means that, unlike last time when I could draw from a library of images, I need to gather new photos more suited to the theme of the presentation. So story boards are being created as are lists of images required. New music is being sought and a 24 day visit to a Hebridean island is required to meet the demands of the new show. Then all that will be followed by weeks of creating the AV sequences, titles and script - hard work, but fun !

But what really bugs me is that I will be on this remote Hebridean island, with no "instant links" with habitation, just at the time that Alan Fretten will give you all an evening of outstanding images from his recent great train journey from Moscow, through Siberia and Mongolia, to Beijing - an evening not to be missed. Afraid I will, so just "*enjoy*" !



Submitting Your Exhibition Entries

By Bruce Collins

Our Annual Exhibition gives you the chance to put your best pictures on show to the public & fellow members for a few days during the summer. You can submit a maximum of ten images this year (made up of a mixture of prints, digital or slides as you wish) - the final date for handing them in is 2nd April. The judge, Peter Jackman, will reveal the winners and award trophies and certificates at the Club on 7th May.

My job is to match some 400 prints & digital files received against the details on the entry forms, separate them into their Classes, get them to the judge, and compile the Catalogue from the entry forms (mostly sent by e-mail). This needs to be done in a couple of days but can be accomplished if everyone compiles their entries and the entry form with care.

Recently the job has been complicated by a few members whose submissions have been made carelessly; and under pressure of time I have found this *so* frustrating! So please make sure the form is properly completed & exactly matches the pictures you have actually submitted. Prints should be correctly labelled and presented in some kind of print or portfolio case bearing your name (not a Tesco carrier bag!), otherwise handling & returning your prints becomes a nightmare.

I look forward to remembering you because of the trophy you have won, not because I took the ultimate course of eliminating your entry!

This Newsletter.....

is published six times a season, from August to May. Contributions are always welcome and needed. Articles, with pictures, should ideally be of a photographic nature, but not necessarily if you have a particular story to tell or a scene to set. If you have a contribution to make, however large or small, then please see the Editor for more details. Without articles from members, this "much enjoyed" newsletter can't continue. Thank you !



Arthur Howlett LRPS 1917 - 2009

Long-serving members of the club will remember Arthur Howlett for his many years at Bracknell Camera club. Arthur died suddenly at his home in Crown Wood in February 2009. He was 92 and had been a Bracknell club

member since 1969 until he left us in 2001. Those of us who have heard Minch talk on the history of the club will recall mentions of himself, Arthur Howlett, Jack Price and the late Joe Hanson making photographic outings into London Docks and incidents with Dock Police, normally after they had already captured their photographs. Arthur's own photography was in black & white, as was virtually all work at that time, and his main interest was in portraiture. He achieved his LRPS distinction in 1986. In the early 1990s Arthur visited India and Goa, which led to some of his most admired prints at the club and used in the Southern Federation league.

Chris Wainwright FRPS became one of Arthur's most-admired photographers when he joined the club in the mid-1980s. Chris moved to Wokingham from the north where he was a member of the Gamma photographic group in Yorkshire. I recall the enthusiasm Arthur showed in joining several outings to Gamma meetings in Knaresborough in the company of Chris, the late Clive Harrison and myself. One that particularly stays in my mind is a talk at Gamma by John Blakemore.

Arthur Howlett served on the committee in the 1970s and was our club programme secretary for 17 years until 1997, when Caroline Colegate took over this role. He then became our club President from 1997/8 until 1999/2000. Arthur began the tradition of having high profile speakers as occasional visitors. His major successes here were to arrange for ex-Picture Post photographers Bert Hardy and, later, Grace Robertson to visit the club.

Another achievement was the holding of RPS distinction workshops at Coopers Hill, entirely at Arthur's own initiative, as he felt too few of these took place in our area. Held once and later twice a year, these attracted 30 or more attendees seeking advice on submitting prints or slides (no digital in those days) for



Indian childminder

Licentiate, Associate or Fellowship distinctions. And they did not only come from the Thames Valley, some came from as far away as Kent and South Wales!



RPS distinctions workshop at Coopers Hill. Dave Tuffs and John Tyler in front row

Arthur also organised for previously successful distinction submissions to be sent from the RPS in Bath and arranged for two or three assessment panel members in the categories to be covered to review the attendee's sets of prints and slides.

All in all, Arthur's major contributions to building the reputation of our club during these years have been a substantial legacy for all. Many of us were saddened when he decided to step down in recent years. His 2008 Christmas card, still written in his firm regular hand, carried the poignant message 'Am finding things a bit of a struggle and am wearing out rapidly'.

© Brian Steptoe FRPS - March 2009

Street Photography

By Brian Steptoe



Generally taken to mean un-posed photography in the public street featuring people going about their business, this style of documentary photography was stimulated by the publication of Robert Frank's book *The Americans* in 1959. Paul Graham, one of the nominees for the £30,000 Deutsche Börse photography prize this year refers to it as '*this fertile territory opened up where photographers operate with the world as it happens, to make comments on the state of their country and society*'. I would not suggest that our club members are operating at that level, but the opportunity is there to make our own contribution. Taking photos on the street is now much more unobtrusive, with mobile phone and compact digital cameras.

I feel that impressions from media reports of celebrities suing paparazzi and of police arresting photographers under the terrorism laws need to be resisted.

...../contd

Photography in public places is still lawful and individuals do not “own” their own image as seen by others. Deciding what and where to photograph in my experience is a matter of sensible judgement of the situation – the gut feel at the time, plus of course responding to any gestures that indicate someone does not want their photo to be taken. Engaging in conversation with someone can tilt the balance between feeling the time is, or is not right to press the button. This is where coming up with a phrase ‘I am working on a photo project about ...’ is a good introduction and often little more is needed. Those that know me will appreciate that I would also be asking myself consciously or subconsciously ‘Why am I taking this photograph?’ on each occasion and images with a degree of being nearer to the boundary of what might be acceptable do tend to carry a greater degree of purpose with them.

Just as with many other types of photography, the relative success factor comes into play, not that the number of exposures used is such an issue with digital work. Tony Ray Jones, one of the English photographers working in the street in the days of film was reported to come back from a trip with hundreds of rolls of exposed film, saying ‘*It was really good. I think I have got six new pictures*’. So what makes such a picture successful? I suggest the main factors are the interesting arrangements of people and objects in the image, both in the main part and around the edges. Interesting here means that viewers are able to make interpretations of meaning and purpose (here I go again), not that the content is beautiful, not that there is a single centre of interest, not that there may be distracting highlights. In short, images carrying purpose and value, not images for club judges.



I illustrate this article with two images taken on the South Bank near Westminster Bridge. The first has some elements of the hoody culture, although the group seemed friendly, taking photos themselves. The second is a snatched image of a Muslim school group, who I suspect had just come from a trip on the London Eye. In my books this image is much more successful, having both a comment on multicultural society and a degree of edginess with the figure half out of the frame – is he the leader of the group or just a passer-by?



Snap Happy

Tony Moussalli

Exiled to my inner sanctum and declared persona non-grata while the all female gathering dutifully depletes my carefully selected stock of vino’s guaranteed to satisfy the non-chardonnay, non-rosé, non-merlot, supermarket flavour of the day on sale, brigade; instead of just thinking about it, I decided to put finger to keyboard, and philosophise on me behind a camera.

After a year at the club and an improvement to my theoretical photographic techniques both with the camera and the PC (I can now sort of use Photoshop after banging my head against a brick wall for four years), I still feel happiest walking around with a camera and snapping away at the world going by. No patient tracking the elusive woodpecker or spending hours waiting for just the right colour sunset. I am just snap happy.



I blame North Africa for that. I spent a number of years (a long time ago) along its northern coast seeking to enhance the hydro-carbon reserves, where photo phobia prevailed for a variety of cultural, religious and political reasons. A series of insults, threats and confiscation of films did a lot to dampen my enthusiasm for this outdoor pursuit, so covert photography became sort of second nature. Unfortunately, as might be expected the results left a lot to be desired. A bit like Maria Sharapova’s tennis; the results are rarely brilliant, frequently uninspiring, and occasionally disastrous. Very few of the hundreds of slides I took in the Sahara have survived. The slides processed abroad and posted, never made their destination addresses in Algeria. Films brought in and caught by customs (along with virtually anything on the long list of items not readily available in shops) came into the ‘brought into the country without an import licence’ category and confiscated (naturally without receipt). It was not unusual for them to re-appear at the next Saturday market at exorbitant prices.

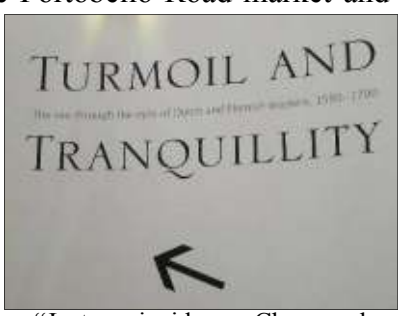
The only available 35mm films were the East German Orwo. Over three decades both negative & positive films have deteriorated to beyond salvation, while the Kodak & Agfa ones are still in pristine condition./contd

So here's my light-hearted contribution. Hopefully it will raise a smile, and if it raises an eyebrow too, no offence is intended.

Armed with my new Lumix camera (only 73 functions left to master) & spurred on by a visiting procession of my wife's Antipodean relatives, I went forth to pictorially record my outings to the Portobello Road market and Royal Ascot Races.



Portobello Road is one of my favourite places in London, not only because it is easy for me to get to (bless the over 60s free bus travel pass & the Green Line coach), but also for its atmosphere, characters and colour.



"Just a coincidence, Chaos and Serenity all in one – just to get it out of the way ..."



There's also an excellent falafel sandwich shop.

Most importantly the antiques keep my wife sufficiently busy and I can concentrate on my snapping away. The part blood emanating from the island off the tip of the Italian boot does little for my better half's

patience with photography & a certain amateur photographer in particular. Here are two of my favourites, when seen in conjunction. Though far from spectacular, I feel that they are so representative of the cultural diversity, and unfortunate division that permeates our society nowadays. The first picture was taken at what must have been the only quiet (or avoided) spot in the two mile stretch of total chaos. Just happened to be at the right spot at the right time. On the other hand, the next shot is nothing more than the result of an accidental shove in a very crowded street. Lastly an irreverent peak at one of Britain's most revered day out - Ladies' Day 2008 at Royal Ascot. Well the other side of the tracks where the plebs concentrate.



All photographs at the races were taken with the subjects' approval & willing participation.

A very helpful aide was flashing the club membership card, which sort of immediately transformed me from an ageing initially perceive pervert to a bona fide professional.



"The sun was shining..."



flowing.."

"and the champagne



"the wind blowing ... the nose itching ..."



"legs & bums showing....."



"...and men were ... well ... drinking"

How about this one for the 'Match an Image' competition at Alton?

"??? Thinking ???"

