



Newsletter

**BRACKNELL
CAMERA
CLUB**

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Editorial

By Ruari Cumming

Now well into our current season, we have enjoyed guest speakers and competitions as well as giving a warm welcome to our new members. Could I draw your attention to the information printed on the inside

front cover of your programme booklet - thank you.

We have very quickly reached our maximum membership of 110 and whilst I was initially wary of imposing a limit too early in the season, it is evident that with some 90 odd members attending meetings that was the sensible approach. I now maintain the official waiting list. Should any prospective new members turn up on an evening, please direct them to me so that I can apprise them of the situation, adding them to our waiting list.

Unfortunately I will be missing from some meetings this season. It is often unavoidable as I will be presenting "An Eye on the Hebrides" at local clubs, for which I have ten evenings booked. Additionally my commitments on the judging circuit can also impinge on our meetings. But then you have to suffer for your art! But it will soon be June again and I can magic myself up to the Hebrides for four weeks! Oh! that reminds me, the Piranha has an interesting little article on the back page - but do read all the other articles first.

Thanks to the excellent organisation by Neil, our Vice Chairman, the Workshops go from strength to strength and with such variety of themes they are not to be missed. Do look at them - page 16 in your programme booklet. The sign up book, always on the table at the back of the hall, provides more details. They tend to get filled quickly, so don't delay!

And finally, I would like to congratulate Anne Eckersley on achieving her Licentiate of the RPS, which she so richly deserved following her success with her C & G course. Anne joined us less than three years ago and has developed her skills noticeably since then. She has demonstrated this so well in both competitions and projects. This club, third largest in the Southern Fed, have 22% of members with photographic distinctions. Could you be the one to take it up to 23%? Why not try?



Libraries

By Jeff Lawrence

My association with libraries goes back some sixty years to the splendid Hutchesontown Public Library in Glasgow's famous (or, for many, notorious) Gorbals district. Many more

libraries have played their part in my education and development as I moved around Glasgow & finally abandoned it for the heady attractions of

Manchester & Merseyside. Interest got really high when I found my future wife behind the counter of the Ellesmere Port Public Library, where I chatted her



Hutchesontown - Glasgow

up over the returning LPs (remember them?) while she examined them minutely for scratches. The association was maintained at a more modest level, courtesy of ICI & numerous college libraries, as well as the public ones, until Lesley continued her career by returning to work at Crowthorne Library. This, for many years, was based in the Morgan Rec car park until it was granted a splendid new premises on the High



Ellesmere Port

Street, with the Old Library being sold off to an unsuspecting dentist.

Over the years I've learned much about libraries - their history, as touched on below, their cultural aspirations and social function, not to mention their funding and staffing problems - and had privileged access to their contents. In return, I support my local library by borrowing specialist books for long periods, by buying up its discarded books & by joining the

...../contd

Staff Outings as frequently as possible. I also make a point of visiting other libraries whenever the occasion arises, ostensibly looking for things to suggest as additions to the many services on offer at Crowthorne. Sadly, these suggestions aren't always appreciated, mutters of staff being overworked already being a typical response.



Crowthorne - Old Library

The earliest known libraries were collections of clay tablets found in the Sumerian city-states of Mesopotamia which date from the 4th millennium BC. By the 3rd century BC, the Library of Alexandria had been established containing hundreds of thousands of papyrus scrolls as well as clay tablets, wood blocks and parchment scrolls. Modern reference libraries such as the British Library now contain sound and visual archives as well as many millions of books. Lending libraries began in England in the 19th century as Chained Libraries (where the books were chained to the walls to prevent their removal), and became countrywide thanks to Andrew



Crowthorne - New Library

Carnegie, a Scot who turned philanthropist after making a fortune in the American steel industry.

I proposed that we join this fine tradition by setting up a Bracknell Camera Club Image Library and with Carnegie as my rôle model, I was moved to donate my entire collection of eleven Photographic Exhibition CDs and DVDs to the club to form its stock. After due consideration, as I hadn't made a fortune in America (or anywhere else, for that matter), I thought better of donating them and am loaning them instead, but if you add to these the three DVDs donated by Ruari, four discs from exhibitions the club has entered recently and the four DVDs of our own exhibitions you can see that we have a good nucleus for our Library. Any member with material they are willing to add to that should contact me. The rules for borrowing from the library and a catalogue of its contents will be put on the Notice Board and on the website before Opening Day.

With our own Image Library, you will have the opportunity of looking at some of the finest and most successful images in the country exhibited over the last few years – whether to judge your own efforts against, to use as a source of fresh ideas or for the sheer pleasure of seeing good pictures. Enjoy.



A Valuable Experience

By Caroline Colegate

In my 2008 Christmas/New Year message to you all I bravely told you that I was about to embark on one of those daft projects that require me to take a Picture a Day for the entire year. As I sit here writing this, I am four days away from the halfway point and I am delighted and unashamedly proud to say that I've not (yet) missed a single day. I know there are critics for this type of project and I also know that there are many examples of some very bad 365 Projects out there in the ether. Indeed some of you may believe mine is one such example! Others say, "why do it?" Let me try to explain.

The greatest influence was Ken Scott (hopefully you will remember the talk he gave on 30th March). I followed his progress throughout 2008 and was



365-001 - D Day

impressed and amazed how interesting & stunning he made pictures of everyday objects look. Over the years we have, on numerous occasions, heard so many lecturers say there are good pictures on our doorsteps but do we really believe this? I suspect for most of us, and I include myself in this, that we've made feeble attempts to put this into practice. It's an easy cop out to say "I'll get my good pictures on holiday" or "I don't have the time when I am at home".



365-198 - Welcome Lunch

Another influence was a desire to change my style of photography and to make it fit in better with my lifestyle. For years I've been chasing landscape photography but have finally come to terms with the fact that my lifestyle doesn't sit neatly alongside trips to suitable destinations (whether UK or abroad) at the right time of year and at the best time of the day.

Having seen so many interesting pictures at other clubs whilst judging I realised that lots of subjects other than landscapes "talked to me" and I was keen to try something different./contd

Being actively involved with Brian Steptoe's "Working to a Theme" group in 2007 and seeing the results that the other group members achieved, I was keen to embark on some sort of project based activity. I was no longer satisfied with producing one off images for club competitions where a judge will come along and either totally miss the point or reward it with a high mark because it fits their idea of what a winning image ought to be like. I often wonder what club competition evenings would be like if we asked our "judges" for comments only and no marks but here I digress onto a very different and controversial topic.

I therefore thought a 365 Project would be a suitable challenge. Okay, I could try all of this without forcing myself down the tortuous route of taking a picture everyday. I also know myself well enough to realise that without a reason for doing something I won't do it. I am inherently lazy! I was therefore delighted when Ken Scott invited me to join a small Flickr group (if you don't know what Flickr is all about see Newsletter No 69) of like-minded people and although I didn't personally know any of them except Ken, I knew they were expecting me to pull my weight.

So, given the fact that I am half way through, how it is all going? Like most people I want to try my best everyday and I am disappointed when lack of time or motivation forces me to produce a mediocre image but overall I am delighted with where this project is taking me. Indeed there have been many images that ***I think*** are absolutely brilliant! Images that I never believed I would have had the idea or motivation to take. It amazes me and to some extent unnerves me



365-101 - Chilling

sometimes as to where the ideas originate. I can be going about my daily routine not thinking about picture taking when out the blue an idea will hit me and bingo I have image for the day. In fact on occasions when I try hard to *find* a picture they don't come. I have learnt the art of letting pictures come to me. This project is making me very aware of how powerful our subconscious is and it's something that I am trying to tap into more often. As Ken said, practising our hobby on a daily basis raises our awareness of our surroundings and makes it easier for our minds to be continuously "switched on" with regard to seeing pictures. Of course there are days when motivation is low and one starts to get desperate



365-108 - Bird Spotting

and trawl the Photoshop filters to make a bad picture look better but even this has yielded surprising rewards and I have discovered techniques that work really well for certain images. Again I could have discovered these techniques without this project but you already know I'm inherently lazy and need a reason for doing something!

So far, one of my proudest moments came when selecting images for the BCC Exhibition. Of the 10 images we could enter, 6 were directly from my 365 Project, 2 were taken on days when I was trying things for the set subject and only 2 came from my holidays. I was therefore delighted that the 3 awards I achieved came from 6 of those 365 candidates. I therefore feel that this project is pay dividends and I am taking my photography forward. In previous years I would have sat



365-039 - Arachnid or Pterodactyl

despondently trying to find some holiday images that would do, this year I had so much more choice, I have been released from all my previous baggage. Of course I am not suggesting a 365 Project is suitable to everybody and that you should all try it, all I am saying is that I have found a most satisfying photographic project that releases me from just taking pictures for judges and what a euphoric sense of freedom that is.

Who knows where this project will take me, I know of at least one club member who fears for



365-224

Time to light the lamp

my sanity (!) but I also know that psychologically it's put me closer to my inner self and this may lead to something very special and exciting..... watch this space.

Before I close this article, I'd also like to congratulate other club members who are doing a similar project - keep up the good work.

Note: Since writing this article this project became very challenging over the summer and my reason for taking certain pictures became very special and revealing to me. I have therefore written an extension to this article that will be published in the next Newsletter.

Novices loose in Florence

By Pamela Cumming



Every August my best friend & I spend a few days without husbands and children for some “me” time. Usually we go to a spa and indulge in activities the

“Rottweiler”, aka Ruari, does not envy at all (massages, saunas and exercise). This year we decided to do something different, something more adventurous - a city break in Florence. Normally I do not bother taking a camera as the activities are “sensitive” at the spa (half naked older ladies) and will admit that the last time I handled a camera was when Brownie invented his box. It has hardly been necessary since I met the Rottweiler - 32 years ago ! However, with envy in his eyes, he told me I had to take pictures in Florence.

The first hurdle was receiving **the lesson** on how to use the small digital camera as I would not take his big one ! I survived the lesson but only just, I was given a thorough going over and introduced, formally to the camera’s “tools”. The camera was set onto



“P” (for Pamela/idiot mode) and I practised by taking pictures of the lounge and rapidly deleted them. The lounge looked more as if it was sinking, I just needed Leonardo DiCaprio and we would have remade “Titanic”! I practised getting things straight and level and most importantly - how to delete.

Florence was definitely Italian, bright, lively and hot - we thought it was “our age” but found out later it peaked at 41°C. I love old cities & everywhere I looked there were pictures I knew Ruari would like. I tried really hard to capture the city on “film” knowing he’d go through every one with his eagle eye for detail. Florence was very busy, filled with Americans, Germans, some Italians from other areas and loads of Japanese

and indulge in activities the



We walked around slowly in the heat, stopping to take the picture postcard views with the rest of the tourists. At Piazza del Michelangelo, we counted six Japanese wedding parties having their wedding photos taken with Florence in the background, shimmering in the heat haze.



Going around on our “culture” day admiring the Duomo and the various piazzas, I tried to take pictures to indicate the scale of these breathtaking marble inlaid buildings. We set out early, firstly because it was cooler and secondly to try and beat the day trippers. By 10 a.m. each morning the important monuments were surrounded by coach loads of tourists being told, in many different languages, about the history. Ruari would have moaned about the tourists being in the way & the sun being in the wrong place - he’d have had to visit everywhere at least 4 times, both early morning and late afternoon to get the light right. I came back with far more photos than he expected. He had low expectations of around 20 but I produced a card containing 219! I had already deleted the really rubbish ones - I’d got one of the St. Giovanni Baptistery which goes straight up but I’d managed to make it look like a stumpy leaning tower of Pisa! I hadn’t noticed that I’d knocked the camera setting off “P” mode but still managed to produce the odd picture worthy of the Rottweiler - I am allowing him to choose his favourite ones for this article !



Florence did not disappoint, it is a photographers dream, do go but perhaps not in July/August unless you like crowds and heat. Yes, one day I will take Ruari to Florence together with a good book because I think I will spend a lot of time sitting waiting for him to finish capturing this glorious city.

Oh! and by the way we are, all four of us, going to another Italian city in May/June next year - Venice - I’ll let you know if we survive!

