



# Newsletter

**BRACKNELL  
CAMERA  
CLUB**

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## Editorial

By Ruari Cumming

Now we seem to be having longer lit days and the snow has receded, like my hairline, one starts to think of new days and new adventures. No, I have no intention of boring you on the four holidays I have booked for this year, but one does wonder whether we need so much time off. I know, from bitter experience when working for the corporate machinery, just how valuable R&R time was. And how much extra work was dumped on one when the going got tough, when sales figures were declining and profit was dragging its feet on the factory floor. But I thought all that would be history when I retired. I recall saying to a retired and esteemed club member, back in the 1990's, when he said he wouldn't be at a couple of meetings because he was on holiday "Holiday ?!" I replied with astonishment ringing in my voice "You're retired, you don't need a holiday !" Little did I realise then how wrong I was.

We all need time away from our normal daily routine, whether retired or not. That may be a week sunning oneself & sipping mint juleps in Sharm el-Sheikh or taking a walk along the Jurassic coastline of Dorset. You don't need long holidays either, just a week or two, now and again is enough to recharge flagging batteries and put a spark back in you and your photography. I am reminded that at least four members are, or soon will be, enjoying the delights of India. Whilst a place I would like to visit, the recent exposé documentary entitled "Kevin McCloud: Slumming It" on Channel 4 has made me wary. As long as, for next year's external competitions, these four intrepid snappers provide us with oodles of images of street urchins, beggars and sacred temples in the moonlight, then our selection committee will be overjoyed.

Meanwhile, why not take your camera to St Malo for just £5 per person (plus small extras for car & overnight sleeping berths on the ferry) & snap for 24 hours in this delightful little French port. Go to :- <http://www.brittany-ferries.co.uk/pn1e10>  
Offer lasts till late March - go on - spoil yourself !



## Back to Nature or Getting Up Close and Personal !

By Debbie Bradley

After providing us all with an amazing and delicious meal to celebrate at our summer supper, Michael Sloane decided the Club should walk off some of the calories by organising a trip to The Abbey Gardens in Malmesbury.

The days before the proposed trip were absolutely dire weather-wise and Michael had decided the only option was to cancel it, so his intention was to turn up at the appointed meeting place merely to inform everyone that the trip was cancelled. However, the weather was as unpredictable as ever and we awoke to a warmish day without rain, so our little party met up and set off for the Cotswolds.

Michael told us on the journey that during the preceding week he had checked the Abbey Gardens site not only for the weather forecast but the opening hours and prices but had inadvertently put in the 11<sup>th</sup> July not the 12<sup>th</sup>. To his horror he discovered it was one of the days that the Garden was open to naturists and visitors were encouraged to turn up in the buff ! After double-checking he realised he had entered the wrong date and to his relief visitors were allowed to wear more than a fig leaf. Abbey House had been the subject of a recent TV programme "Countryfile" where both the owners were actually being interviewed naked albeit the clever camera work shot them between strategically placed shrubs and plants to allow them a degree of modesty !

We went through one shower and assumed it was set in for the day, but out came the sun and our time at Abbey Gardens was hot, warm and sunny, in fact most of us had turned up without any sun-cream or hats, which was a mistake, however, one or two were obviously boy-scouts or guides in their youth and had come prepared for the complete change in the weather.

...../contd

We travelled through some breathtakingly beautiful Cotswold countryside and some quaint old fashioned villages which were very picturesque with their thatched roofs and village squares. Malmesbury itself was quite stunning - and it sort of put you in a time warp - with its market square and thatched and Elizabethan style houses and cobbled stones. Abbey Gardens is set in five acres beside the historic Abbey ruins and encompasses formal and informal gardens, featuring a setting shaped like a Celtic cross, an area of historic trees which apparently prospered in the age of dinosaurs, as well as water features, extensive rose and herbaceous gardens.

As you must, first things first - we decided it was time for cake and coffee before exploring the grounds, so our enthusiastic group of photographers relaxed in an arbour of flowers drinking our coffee in the warm sunshine, bliss!

As we were enjoying our refreshments, we watched very large and colourful fish playing with a dozen or more silver balls in a massive rectangular water pool, these apparently were provided not merely as ornaments but acted as occupational therapy for the fish. Janice Bradley's son Alex also had hours of amusement too, rearranging the balls and keeping the fish and himself happy ! It was mesmerising watching the balls bobbing about and being moved around by the fish and Alex.



After we had been suitably refreshed, we set off in different directions hoping to get a new slant on taking flower pictures. There was a lot to explore, a shaded walk through woods down a hill to a river which was completely different from the more manicured lawns and herbaceous gardens nearer the house. There were more water features & sculptures. It was all very peaceful; tranquil to walk in, to discover more nooks & crannies of unusual plants or statues. The rose garden was magnificent as were the herbaceous & fuchsia beds so there was plenty of opportunity for photography. Jeff Lawrence must have thought he'd died & gone to heaven with so many species to capture for his stunning remarkable flower portraits.

But – there were some more very interesting specimens lurking about and I couldn't resist capturing some of them, they were all shapes and sizes and some in the most amazing positions.



We had the most interesting and pleasant day in Abbey Gardens, it was a wonderful place to spend a sunny afternoon with like-minded friends. I suppose you could say our day was made complete as we stumbled upon the most rare and unusual species of the day on our way out – yes our host and hostess.



Stella looked on in shock as she watched Michael getting close up and personal with Ian & Barbara .....and then decided to take a picture of the two of them herself.....



Just one more photo before we headed off feeling thankful that we hadn't chosen the day before and were all fully clothed

.....well almost!





## Research for a photo project

By Brian Steptoe

Coming to project oriented photography from an amateur and camera club background, the concept of researching a topic was just not an aspect given much or indeed any consideration. What would I want to do this for? And anyway, what does ‘research’ actually mean – it can hardly be scientific in nature? Probably at best it is a diversion and more likely a complete waste of time. Why not just get on and take some pictures.

But think – why am I taking this or that image, what is it for, how does it tie in with the entirety of the project? And anyway, how do I try to understand the breadth of the project topic and give it balanced coverage in imagery? Then there is the issue of text and captioning. Research gives a firm basis for accompanying text, a strengthening of commitment, a better understanding of a topic and an appreciation of what has already been done before. And it generates further ideas for progressing a project. At the very minimum it lessens the chances of just repeating work that has already been undertaken, often by more well-established and ‘better’ photographers.

Simon Roberts, in his article in Digital Photography about *We English*, lists researching a subject as one of his pieces of advice. In recent years research on a topic has become much, much easier though use of search facilities on the world wide web. My 2007-8 *Olympic Blue* project about the London 2012 Olympic site was underpinned by numerous web articles, both on the official Olympic Delivery Authority website, various on-line national press and BBC websites, East London artist’s exhibitions and events and others. Nearly all of these were found via Google.

The recent club group project was about *Britishness*. My own research on the topic was again started from Google searches, both of text and images. Plus there were the frequent press articles on this topical subject, with tear sheets from magazines and the news pages which went into a growing research folder. There were several books which seem relevant, and I was



sure there were more to be discovered.

Two found by pure chance were *Welcome to Britain* in Waterstones, Bath and *This Little Britain* found in a bookshop in Broadway, Gloucestershire. I took the opportunity to ask for other ideas when paying my first visit to the Photographers Gallery at their new location in London and was given many more photographic book titles to explore. BBC Radio 4 broadcasts on the subject in March 2009 led to yet further ideas.

Looking back over these and earlier projects I have realised that the depth of my research and its purpose have increased at each stage. This season we have another club group project on *Hidden London* underway and several of the members have got the bit between their teeth with research, helping to identify locations to visit to seek new images. I feel sure this will lead to improved coverage for the project. I am really looking forward to seeing what *Hidden London* finds the group will uncover.

Visit [www.flickr.com/photos/bjslondon](http://www.flickr.com/photos/bjslondon) to keep posted on progress.



## Photo Visit to Eagle House

By Anne Eckersley

As Autumn settled over Berkshire, as the days shortened, as children returned to school after their summer vacation, so did Bracknell Camera Club. Or at least as did the eight members who took Doug Buchanan up on his kind offer to spend an afternoon photographing Eagle House School. Not only were we given a free rein to photograph any part of the school we



liked, but refreshments were also provided - a must for any photographer! Described as a “mainstream independent school for girls and boys aged from 3 to 13”, Eagle House nestles between Sandhurst and Crowthorne. The original school founded in the 1820s, was based in Wimbledon. ....../contd

It moved to Sandhurst in 1886, to the premises it currently occupies, which at the time were leased to the school by Dr James Russell, Sandhurst's first resident GP.



Sandwiched between the Lower Sandhurst Road and Wellington College, trees hide from view the impressive range of buildings. Apart from the "house" itself there is a chapel in the grounds which dates back to around the turn of previous century, with stained glass windows to test most photographers. And tucked behind a lake we found an authentic, replica Tudor house built over a three year period by staff, parents and pupils which was opened by Prince Charles six years ago.



And tucked behind a lake we found an authentic, replica Tudor house built over a three year period by staff, parents and pupils which was opened by Prince Charles six years ago.

It was a great afternoon and thank you Doug for organising it. (All photos © Janice Bradley)

Delete the unwanted border layers and merge down.

If your image is so tightly composed that an inside border obscures important detail, try the Canvas Size method. However, this approach has the disadvantage that it applies the border directly to the Background layer; this is only reversible using e.g. Crop or History, thus making direct comparison of alternative colours difficult. Accordingly, ensure that you choose the right border colour first time.

To proceed, re-size to no larger than 1380 x 1030px (for a 10px border) i.e. 20px smaller than the final image. Choose a colour as above; when you see it as the foreground colour, key in 'X' to make it the background colour -- this is vital. In the Image menu, select Canvas Size; click on 'Relative' but leave 'Anchor' as central. Key in 20px for both width & height; click OK. On the screen you will see your border on the Background layer.

Now continue with preparing your image.

These notes have been compiled using PS7; uses of other versions may need to experiment a little.



## Adding a border to an image

by John Tyler

The addition of a border of lighter tone around a digital projected image is easily accomplished in Photoshop. Either Stroke or Canvas Size can be used (there may be other ways also).

First, carry out any manipulation and editing, and merge down to a single layer.

For Stroke, re-size as usual to no larger than 1400 x 1050px. Next, select the Eye dropper tool by keying in 'I' (this is Adobe's little joke) and go to the Colour palette and choose Swatches. Click on your chosen colour; it will appear as the foreground colour in the Tools palette. Next create a new layer and select all of it -- I key in Ctrl A for this. (NB: Stroke must have an active selection to work at all.) In the Edit menu select Stroke; key in 10px (say) as the width and click 'Inside' for the location; click OK and then key in Ctrl D to remove the selection. On the screen you will see your image with the border in place.

If you are not certain at this stage that you have chosen the right colour for your border, choose an alternative colour, make another new layer and so on. By switching on each border layer in turn (and switching the others off), make your final choice.

## This Newsletter.....

.....is published six times a season, from August to May. Contributions are always welcome & in fact 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 or view requirements on our website at [www.bracknell-camera-club.co.uk](http://www.bracknell-camera-club.co.uk). Without articles from members, this "much enjoyed" newsletter won't continue and will fold (pun intended) like many other club's who couldn't sustain contributions. Besides, the last thing you want to see is all the articles written by our ghost writer - Hortencia Trubshaw ! Thanks !

## PORTFOLIO COMPETITION

I am told only two entries received so far. Come on members, we need more entries NOW !!

See last Newsletter (Issue 74 on-line at Bracknell Camera Club website) for details.

Simply submit your digital image on any subject, make it well exposed and sharp. Give it a title too, else the organiser will think up one for you !

Make it different or a real bit of fun !

Big prizes to be won !!

**Closing date is Easter 2010.**

Please hand your entries to Chris Bradley on a USB memory stick, CD or better still send it to [chrisandeb@tesco.net](mailto:chrisandeb@tesco.net)