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Pippa at Saltash

by Peter McMullin : Plymstock Camera Club



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Peter Morss ARPS, DPAGB

It is with deep regret that we have to pass on the news that Peter Morss passed away on the night of Saturday 14th March after a short battle with cancer. He was due to judge our DPIC last month but had to cancel because of health problems. Peter was a fantastic photographer, well liked by all, and will be greatly missed by the photographic community. He was also the speaker at our 2008 AGM showing his fine prints.

The WCPF Executive

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A big thank you to everyone who responded to my plea for more input!

The Judging letter from John Burles certainly had a few of you dashing to the computer to respond. See pages 5 & 6 some responses

Another 'Hot Topic' has been raised by by John Holman on page 8. I am braced for more reactions to this!

*Now you've found out how easy it is to have your say - please don't stop!
I love a good "yap"!*

**BE AWARE, THOUGH, OF THE FACT THAT VIEWS EXPRESSED BY
INDIVIDUALS IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY
THOSE OF THE WCPF.**

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WHAT'S ON IN THE WEST

Event	Date
<p>RPS Distinctions Advisory Day at Bovey Tracey Golf Cluyb, Monks Way, Bovey Tracey TQ13 9NG Contact - jennyleathes@btinternet.com</p>	<p>Saturday 10th April. Fully subscribed for assessments - but visitors welcome - £10 to watch.</p>
<p>SOUTH DEVON DPI Competition hosted by Newton Abbott Photographic Club. Details contact - www.newtonabbot-photoclub.org.uk</p>	<p>20th April.</p>
<p>WCPF Members' Exhibition at the Burton Art Gallery & Museum, Kingsley Road, Bideford.</p>	<p>Official Opening on Saturday 24th April then from Thursday 22nd April - Friday 21st May. 10am - 4pm. Sunday 11pm - 4pm.</p>
<p>RPS Visual Arts Meeting at The Community Hall, Tregadillet, Launceston PL15 7EY. Contact - susanibrown@btinternet.com</p>	<p>24th April. Costs £2 - £6 depending on membership status. Bring 10 prints each for discussion.</p>
<p>PAGB Awards for Photographic Merit in Prints & DPs, Adjudications staged in East Anglian Federation.</p>	<p>April 24th/25th</p>
<p>TAVISTOCK CAMERA CLUB hosts speaker Steve Gosling lecture "TBC" contact www.tavistockcameraclub.org.uk</p>	<p>May 5th. 7.30pm Tickets : Members £4 Non Members £5</p>
<p>WAVES AGM at St Thomas Church Hall, York Buildings, Trowbridge, Wilts. BA14 8PT followed by application sequences submitted by three successful RPS distinctions. www.waves-avggroup.co.uk/events</p>	<p>8th May. 10am - 4.30pm</p>
<p>DEVON CLUBS BATTLE hosted by Newton Abbot Photographic Club at Kingsteignton. Details contact www.newtonabbot-photoclub.org.uk</p>	<p>Saturday 8th May . All Day.</p>
<p>WAVES - Another popular workshop. Details to later. At St Thomas Church Hall, York Buildings, Trowbridge, Wilts. BA14 8PT www.waves-avggroup.co.uk/events</p>	<p>14th August 10am - 4.30pm</p>
<p>RPS Visual Arts Group. At The Dolphin Hotel, Bovey Tracey, Devon. Lecture by Irene Froy FRPS. Contact - susanibrown@btinternet.com</p>	<p>12th September. 10am - 5pm.</p>

Tom Borg responds to John Burles' Letter on Judging (see issue 176)



As one of the new members John Burles wishes to encourage, I offer comments and suggestions on his 'Judging' article which was thought provoking, but did not fit with my experience.

First - the pluses:

We usually have a mix of prints and projections on the night, and can enter up to 4 images in each class, though the committee reserve the right to cut this if necessary. Admittedly it's sometimes a struggle to get through them all, with at least 40 images in each of the two classes, but somehow it works out very well.

Our club always has entries judged in advance. I admire and respect the time put in by those members who collate the entries, and then by the judges who invariably spend several hours in advance; they come well prepared so their commentary is invariably insightful and helpful for a new member like myself.

So John's concerns are not an issue in this club, in my opinion.

Second, 'Judging' from a new member perspective - the minuses:

I have the impression that judges are most comfortable scoring 'traditional' subjects. Technical quality supersedes artistic merit. This can mean that 'grab shots', photojournalism, and pictures with a message are rarely encouraged or seen. Strangely, the higher up the ladder a competition e.g. national level, the more non-traditional images seem to be valued. Why the difference?

Images that score very high, with excellent technical skill on display, can display little or no artistic merit. We can perhaps compare these to some of Bach's music - technically stunning, but how many listen to it? Other images scoring high can be over-produced with an excess of 'wow'. I suppose we can compare these to the monstrous dahlias and carrots in horticultural exhibitions - impressive, prize winning, but overblown.

I do not wish to sound critical of judges, rather I am questioning whether a mind set has developed that constrains what is meant by a winning photograph. I have a lot to learn, and my mind is being conditioned to take pictures for judges' approval ... but for better or for worse?

So, suggestions for change:

1. Encourage clubs to widen the range of subjects beyond the conventional.
2. Try appending entries with a few words of what was in the photographer's mind when they produced the shot (more useful than a title)
3. Score entries separately for artistic and technical merit; the combined score is a measure of a 'good image'.

Thanks for the opportunity to feedback,

*Tom Borg
Wellington, Somerset.*

MORE THOUGHTS ON 'THAT' LETTER

I do not agree, with John Burles' judging letter. I think competitions should be judged on the night. You immediately see the one that really sticks out with the initial 'wow' factor, without pulling them apart too much! Judging is always a personal decision in the long run anyway, and it is, after all, just ONE persons opinion.

We do not have to take any notice of that one person's opinion anyway, although we can, of course, take on board constructive criticism and any praise of ones own or others, learning and progressing, rather than being disheartened. Judges, who are human after all, have their personal likes and dislikes of subject matter and this will have a bearing on the actual winner. I love landscapes, especially seascapes, closely followed by portraits, so these will always stick out for me. But I do like images to be technically perfect, and this can be immediately seen on the night. No one needs a week or two to see this.

The majority of people enjoy competitions of all sorts. If not, they don't enter, simple!) There does have to be a winner, otherwise it would not be a competition, it would be an exhibition or a show, whatever you want to call it, but not a competition. People love winning. The thought that you might just have a chance is worth entering, in the first place. I love taking part as well, but winning is the icing on the cake! To have a winner, there does have to be some form of marking.

That said, I would certainly say that there should be a rethink and some uniformity of marking between judges. Some images are always going to be better than others, that's life. If I were to mark, I would allot a certain amount of marks to different criteria within each image. For instance, if marking out of 20 I'd have 4 sets of criteria; technical competency, composition, how well does it fill the brief, (if there was one), and personal likes, taking into consideration the feel, emotion, atmosphere, novelty, subject matter etc.

Above all we must be 100% fair.

Things that annoy me about judges comments, are; "if only you stepped to the right or to the left" or "threw a stone in to make ripples" or "whistled to make a sheep raise it's head" HA!! If only you had stood on your head and taken it with your toes? Don't judges think that the said photographer would have done these things if they could have and wanted to?

Without doubt, it's important to encourage beginners but I think it is pointless lumping beginners in with more seasoned competition winners. Ridiculous! I believe that would put off anybody. This could easily be overcome by having 2 or 3 groups, if the size of the club allows. Beginners, intermediate and advance and forget political correctness! If that is what they are, call them such. People really don't mind being called beginners if that is what they are.

More advanced Club photographers should take a step back thereby allowing someone else the chance to have their name added to the 'Photographer of the Year' trophy. These consistent winners could then try their luck at a national or international competition - a good way to test their skills?

Competitions are great fun and they make you get out there and take the images which what it is all about! It also makes you try harder to improve your photography.

by Maggie McCall



EXMOUTH PHOTO GROUP GOES SHOPPING

Following a suggestion from long-standing members, David Potter, we approached the local council about displaying our members' photographs in local shops that are lying empty. The argument we put forward was that everyone would benefit and nobody would incur expenses because of us. Exmouth would benefit from having its drab, empty shops look more cheerful, the residents and visitors would benefit from having something more pleasant to look at and, of course, we would benefit from the chance to advertise our club in the town as well as having a free exhibition of photos.

I'm pleased to say that Exmouth's Town Manager, Tony Collins, has been in complete support of the idea since we took it to him. The first shop window Tony found for us was a success, with the town council and the property owner both being very pleased with what we did. There was even a short television news article about it! However, our use of the shop was short-lived as the property was soon rented out again. That, apparently, is another benefit, though not to us! Studies have shown that where this sort of window-dressing is done, the properties are likely to be occupied again sooner than if they are simply left empty. It's a good selling point for the idea and even though our "tenancy" was short, we gained the trust and respect of all those involved.

Tony was keen to have us do it again, so when the Thomas Tucker shop became vacant, he kindly spoke with the building's owner and was able to offer us the chance to fill its windows. This was a larger undertaking as Thomas Tucker is an old apartment store and has lots of window space. However, our members were up to it and in little more than a morning we had cleaned the windows, prepared our hanging system, and hung about 100 prints. They include some from our "millennium project" which created a photographic record of Exmouth at the turn of the millennium to pass on to future generations.

With our photographs now displayed prominently in Exmouth, we hope that residents of the town with an interest in photography will see them and be tempted to join us. Many people have already stopped to study our work - even as we were hanging them - so we are sure we will attract a fair bit of attention, not just to our club but to the millennium collection, now 10 years old of course.

We know that this use of empty shops is not a new idea and that other clubs had done it long before we started. However, we would urge you to consider it if you have not already, as everyone wins. With a small effort you could gain much.

Dave McHutchison, Exmouth Photo Group.



A DISTURBING TREND?



Know Your Rights

Says John Holman of Ivybridge Camera Club

As amateur photographers, we all like to pick up our camera and head out for the day to photograph our favourite subjects. This used to be virtually everything, but with the advent of the anti-terrorist laws, this is now very difficult. We read in the press quite regularly of photographers being stopped and questioned and some being given a really hard time by security personnel, while taking photos in streets and urban places. I do not believe we are stupid enough to trespass on private property but sometimes this is not obvious and we may make mistakes. It happens. Once upon time, you could stroll around your local park and get some good action shots of youngsters playing different sports. But now you would probably be reported and end up the subject of an inquiry. People have very suspicious minds and it is now up to you to prove your innocence. I think it is because of all this that we just look to recording landscapes and subjects associated with them so as to avoid the hassle we might get from these too officious people. I am sure that anyone intent on terrorism would do his or her picture taking with a compact or mobile phone camera. They would be drawing attention with an SLR. If you do have the misfortune to get stopped, above all be polite and if you believe you are in the right don't be intimidated into searches without a police officer being there. Community Police will need a police officer present to be able to search your camera bag etc. Only the police can stop and search. If you want further information on this subject all the details are available on the internet at <http://www.sirimo.co.uk/2009/05/14/uk-photographers-rights-v2/>

I hope my sound-off will be of some use to you all? Happy Snapping!

Co-incidentally, the following link was sent to me by Kingswood Photographic Society. Makes quite worrying viewing.

-oo0oo-

It's a story from the Guardian on one photographer's brush with the Police who felt street photography could constitute anti-social behaviour. This brave photographer actually filmed the entire experience. Disturbing viewing.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/feb/21/photographer-films-anti-terror-arrest>

The WCPF website - see Useful Information - actually has a link to an official site offering help and guidance on this topic.

The Pic' v The Pooch.

This article is the brain child of our own Ann Owens, who has asked me to explain the similarities or differences of judging photographs and/or dogs. A comedian used to say "I've arrived and to prove it, I'm here!" That's how I felt stepping into the ring at Crufts. I've been here many times before as an exhibitor but this time I was here as a judge. This is the greatest dog show in the world and with the advent of the pet passport scheme there were entries from Europe and Scandinavia. You didn't need a macro lens to photograph the butterflies in my stomach! Some of the U.K entries travelled through the night to be there for the 9am start, and all had to qualify to be there by being placed at other championship shows so all are of a high standard.

Difference no1

Each breed has a concise standard set by the relevant breed club/s and the Kennel Club and the role of the judge is to find the animals which most adhere to that standard. At championship shows there is an unknown assessor, who won't reverse the placings but who may make the difference to that judge being given another appointment. There is room for personal preferences, and as long as these are consistent class-to-class and show-to-show, exhibitors will accept them and know what to expect from you. As in photographic judging, you whittle each class down to your final five and then make your placings. All class winners are then brought back into the ring to compete for Best of Sex. Then the best bitch and best dog return for you to choose your Best of Breed. The whole process takes four to five hours including a lunch break. There are at least two ring stewards to assemble each class and check their ring numbers. The judge does not do a verbal assessment but is required to send a written critique on the first three placings in each class to the two weekly national dog papers. This will extend the discussions on your performance by another two or three

weeks. Usually only positive comments are used. The negatives are apparent by omission.

Difference no 2

The photography judge assesses the entries with the photographers sitting unknown to him in the audience. In the show ring, the exhibitors are on the other end of the exhibit's lead, and most are highly skilled at presenting their dogs to their best advantage. As an exhibitor yourself you've done exactly the same and acknowledge it as part of the game. You are also aware that each of your chosen five is an extremely bad loser. They pay a lot of money in entry fees and travel expenses so none of them are there to come second. When I started showing someone said to me "the meek may inherit the earth but they win zilch at dog shows"!

There's an audience gathered round the ring, mostly knowledgeable and well behaved. They have their favourites and are apt to applaud your lower placings much louder than your first place if they think that you have gone too far astray! Afterwards the competitors get together, all friends again, and discuss the next show and the next judge and possibly the parentage of the last one!

The road to Crufts.

Like the majority of the judges here, I started in a muddy field at the local village show-judging such glamorous classes as the dog with the waggiest tail and the owner who looks most like their dog! After enough wins to get you noticed you will be placed on various clubs/societies judging lists. With that comes the requirement to attend a number of judging seminars and you are marked as to your proficiency. So now you are an Open Show Judge. To be considered for the next level - the Championship Show, you need to have judged the required number of dogs and classes in your breed. So you accept appointments anywhere to achieve this. No expenses offered! I once drove through the night from my home in Somerset to Fleetwood in Lanc's for four classes and thirty-two dogs. The hospitality

was a curly cheese sandwich and a few coffees of dubious origin served in polystyrene cups. This was not unusual but to get those additions to my c.v it was worth it. The club secretary did give me a box of kippers but it was a very hot day so I had to get rid of them on the M5 on the way home!

Once a society offers you a Championship appointment and your c.v is approved by the Kennel club things change. Good hotels, travel expenses and usually a night out with the hosts are yours. I've been lucky enough to judge all over England, Scotland and Wales and I must have done something right in the Irish Republic as they asked me back twice and these are the most hospitable people in the world. However, as dog shows are expensive to run, the bottom line is - will you draw a good entry?

So - now I'm at Crufts. I'm still stunned that I got there. Lots of people don't. It's been a long and mostly very enjoyable journey from the village green to the green carpet.

*Don Cristofoli.
of "Semsox" American Cocker Spaniels
and member of Syddenham Camera Club.*

Addendum: Sunday 14th March 2010 was truly a day to remember. Catching up with old friends, meeting some Chelsea pensioners, who were guests of the Kennel Club, being pampered in a top class hotel, going over some superb exhibits!

Then, I had such a wonderful surprise when my wife unexpectedly joined me! Initially, she said she wouldn't be able to cope with the journey, as she is an invalid. This took the gloss off the occasion for me, as she was the dominant force

behind our success in the show-ring. I just showed the dogs, did the driving and signed the cheques! She bathed, trimmed and groomed our show dogs - such hard work. So I was quite emotional to see her at the ringside after all! Not only that, but our son had flown over from Germany to be with us for the day!

Just to make a wonderful day even better- my Best of Breed bitch went on to get third place in the Gundog Group!

I don't think I'll judge again! How could I possibly cap that?



Don Cristofoli (centre) and his winning Crufts Line-up.



Don's Best of Breed winner was Afterglow Veronica Mars

EDITORIAL BACK-CHAT



DPIC was a roaring success. The new venue at The Corn Exchange, in Exeter, with comfortable, raked seating gave everyone had a clear view of the images shown. A few comments were made regarding the small screen size, especially when viewed from the back of the auditorium. The Executive is aware of this. -A bigger screen, would cost £1,000 (and then there is the problem of storage). Would rental be the answer? Rest assured, this dilemma will feature on an agenda at a future Executive Meeting, and you will be kept up to date with any decisions made.

The website shows the results of this competition in full - and makes interesting reading.

Listening to some general comments, it seemed the feeling was the judging was a bit tough this year. Judges will never please everyone - but maybe we should take stock, and try to work out why our marks were not what we would have liked?

"Digital projection is wonderful." Well - that's the official view! However, DP is not a

direct transfer over from traditional slide projection. In those days, that slides which came out of your camera, and popped through your letterbox in a little green box, was exactly what you took, and looked pretty much the same when projected down at the jolly old club. The only anomaly was an occasional yellow colour caste as the projector bulb got "tired".

Today, we have to be experts at colour management! Cameras need to be set up correctly; ditto our monitors. What about the club projector? Some camera clubs asked for a bit more cash when they applied for an Awards For All lottery grant to buy a projector. Calibration devices, such as an Eye-One, a Spyder etc, was bought, to enable projectors to be calibrate. Loaned to club members, monitors are also calibrated to the same standard. Thus a metaphorical level playing field begins to emerge. It doesn't stop there, sadly! Ideally, monitors need to be calibrated once a month - and a projector, each time it's used!

And then there's print profiles!

No - not easy! Have we all been lulled into believing that Digital is the answer to photographers' prayers? After all, don't you just press the button - and the resulting image may be used as a colour print, a "slide" or converted to a black and white?

Oh - that life was that simple?



The Judging Seminar, hosted by the A1 Camera Club of Western super Mare and organised by Barrie Castle, took place on Saturday 20th February. After the judging process was explained, attendees were divided into three groups, led by John Tilsley, Ken Holland and Bill Aven. These smaller groups had an opportunity to learn what would be expected of them. By the end of the day, they had the confidence to display their skills with some practical 'judging' in front of the audience. Of 28 attendees - 16 are interested in becoming Photographic Judges.

On Saturday 6th March, the "best ever Council Meeting" took place! No - not my words - but overheard at the end of the day!

The meeting itself was precise and business-like owing to the new tactic of pre-publishing the Executive Members' reports. This left time to discuss an important issue, newly raised by the PAGB, about Trustee Insurance. Far too complex for me to go into details here. Please go to www.wcpf.org.uk then navigate to the PAGB Newsletter tab and look for Issue 24

February 2010. Page 5 gives more details.

Brian Galbraith, acting President, judged the large entry for the Knightshayes Trophy competition. 'Ground Level' was this year's theme. Brian's choice of winners are on the website, together with some of his comments. Next year's theme is "MISSING".

Denzil Ellis collected entries for the forthcoming Members' Exhibition - highlight of the Federations' competition calendar. Den made a plea for all entrants to read the requirements BEFORE entering a competition. These may have changed since you last entered. The logistics of organising this competition are huge. Anything which eases the team's heavy workload is important. Sizing your digital images correctly is the first step. Most entrants are now conversant with the need to mount their prints on 40cmx50cm board, so that the frames will fit, which gives the exhibition a professional, uniform appearance.

How many of you omitted to include a digital file of your print when you entered this year? There were a few!!

Why the need for a digital file? It saves work on the day. Over 1,000 images have to be assessed in a few hours. Acceptances are then featured on the website within 24 hours, and are also needed for the CD which Michael Wheatley creates for each year's exhibition.

Until last year, this meant someone had to photograph some 150 prints. After comments about the poor quality this inevitably produced, it was decided to ask entrants to provide a correctly sized digital file. As these files already existed - the quality could be assured.

Please - check entry requirements for every competition when you decide to enter? This will save work and possible disappointment in future. While no entries will be refused this year because of omissions or errors, this may not be the case in future.



Finally, the Council Meeting ended with a wonderful new double-act! The vacancy left by

Morecambe and Wise, may very well have been filled by Chapman and Langdon!

Two enthusiastic natural history photographers from the depths of Cornwall kept the audience amused and entranced by their repartee and superb photography!



David (C) was very forthcoming with his "how to" photography - freely divulging his

tricks and techniques for enticing wildlife to him - rather than wandering around trying to find his subjects.

Adrian (L) on the other hand, has been known to paddle around up to his thighs in boggy places, clad only in his underpants! We saw the photographic evidence!

Two hours of breathtaking photography and some droll commentary - with a welcome tea break allowing the audience to assimilate what they'd learned - came to an all-too-soon end just after 4.00pm.

If you didn't manage to attend - what a great pity? You missed a treat! Catch up with a few of the missed images by going to -

www.davidchapman.org.uk and www.adrianlangdon.com

Finally, I think Spring may have arrived at long last!

Guess what this pair were up to in my pond last week?



Ann Owens
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