
wcpf WESTERN COUNTIES
photographic federation

www.wcpf.org.uk



Storm Clouds Over Dawlish Warren

*by Ken Holland, ARPS
Dawlish & Teignmouth Camera Club*

E-NEWSLETTER - 191



FEBRUARY 2012



THE WCPF EXECUTIVE

Because of concerns about publishing details of the Executive Members addresses, phone numbers and email addresses in this electronic newsletter, which is now being seen by a far wider audience, it has been decided not to publish these details in this newsletter in future. A Who's Who is appended, and if you need to contact any individual, please consult the latest Directory, or fill in the Contact Us form at www.wcpf.org.uk where your query will be forwarded to the relevant person.

President - Brian Galbraith CPAGB.
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& Knightshayes Trophy Sec** - Carol Wilson
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John Tilsley ARPS, DPAGB, APAGB
PAGB Awards Officer - Di Tilsley CPAGB
Assistant to DPIC Sec: Paula Graham ARPS
WCPF Rep to PAGB - Barrie Castle LRPS
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Peter Fry ARPS, DPAGB, BPE1*

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

DIARY DATES

Event	Details
3rd March JUDGING SEMINAR See pages 6/7 for details. Tickets - £5	At the Pollyfield Centre, Avon Road, East of the Water, Bideford 9.30-5.00. Apply to John Tilsley, 2 Grove Barn, Martinstown, Dorchester, DT2 9JP. to attend.
The Holburne Museum Exhibition. The Art of Arrangement : Photography and the Still Life Tradition. More details at http://holburne.org/art-of-arrangement/	At Holburne Museum, Bath. BA2 4DB until 7th May 2012. Entrance £6.50
10th March WCPF Council Meeting Also closing date for Members' Print and DPI Exhibitions	10th March at Clyst St Mary, Exeter EX5 1BG
10th March WCPF Knightshayes Trophy Subject 'Co-operation'	This free competition to be judged by Brian Galbraith on the morning of the Council Meeting
10th March Entries close for AV Competition	See www.wcpf.org.uk for entry details and entry form.
10th March Entries close for BRISTOL SALON	3 categories. More details at www.bristolphoto.org.uk
11th March 2nd WORKSHOP for PAGB Photographic Merit.	More details on page ... Also see the website - www.wcpf.org.uk
11th March Jason Bell lecture , supported by the RPS. Free entry - but tickets must be booked beforehand. Email jennyleathes@btinternet.com	at The Lecture Theatre, 2 Roland Levinsk Building, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA 2.00pm - 5.00pm.
14th April AV competition	at Clyst At Mary, Exeter. Further details at www.wcpf.org.uk
29th April Annual Memorial Lecture with wildlife photographer Mark Carwardine.	More details from Colin English - email: events@southamptoncameraclub.co.uk
14th April AV COMPETITION	At Clyst St Mary Village Hall, Nr Exeter. EX5 1BG between 10.00 - 4.30. Details at www.wcpf.org.uk

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

There are some major events of the WCPF season coming up soon. I'm busy getting together my own entries for the Members Exhibition at the moment. This is a major source of pictures for the WCPF entry into the PAGB Interfederation competitions, held later in the year. The number of pictures that WCPF is required to submit has risen a lot this year, so please let's have some real crackers for your federation selectors to choose from.

I attended a PAGB meeting in London recently, standing in for Barrie Castle, and I must say that I was very impressed by the hard work put in by all the officers and the federation representatives. So many decisions which directly effect our photographic world are made by PAGB. The feedback we receive from your club representatives at the Council Meeting, and at other events is vital, to enable us to present your views clearly to the PAGB.

Interclub DPIC in Exeter is coming up soon, on 19th February, and should be a great day. More than half of all WCPF clubs are taking part this year, a marvellous success story.

It may still be possible for interested photographers to take part in the Judging Seminar at Bideford on 3rd March, and we hope this will enable some more judges to be added to the WCPF list. The Executive are frequently told there are still not enough judges available, so why not "twist the arm" of suitable club members, and get them to consider it? I hope the Judges Profiles on the website are helping with that element of your club programme.

The PAGB Awards day on 11th March is the second that Di Tilsley has arranged, and there may just be a little room left for late applicants. These events can help enormously when considering going for a distinction. There is a new CD available from the PAGB Recorded Lecture Service, which gives lots of examples of successful pictures at CPAGB and DPAGB level. Contact details for the RLS are in the PAGB Handbook sent to all clubs.

At the Council Meeting, we will see all the entries for the Knightshayes Trophy. Lots of prints on the subject of "Co-operation". In the afternoon, a talk from intrepid Wildlife photographer Tracey Rich at the Council Meeting on 10th March will be well worth seeing.



A snowy London - scene of the recent PAGB Meeting!

*Brian Galbraith CPAGB
President*

OLD MASTERS OF THE IMAGE

It is difficult to imagine a world without photography. For everyone alive today it has always been part of life and we don't think much about how things were without it. Newspapers had to depend upon the swift and skilful work of artists to illustrate events with pen and ink, often employing more imagination than fact. Until photography became well established artists maintained a special place in society, recording the events and ethos of the time. Ask anyone to name some famous painters and two are almost certain to be mentioned; John Constable and J.M.W. Turner. Constable died in 1837 when Fox Talbot was struggling at Lacock to perfect his calotype negatives but Turner may have seen more of early photographic efforts by the time he died in 1851, the very year in which Scott Archer announced his collodion process.

Constable's pictures graced biscuit tins and chocolate boxes long after he was gone and almost to the present day. Now we can find his best known work on the internet – go to The Web Gallery of Art at www.wga.hu/html. Try downloading 'The Hay Wain' or 'Boat Building Near Flatford Mill' and open one of them as a jpeg in Photoshop. On your screen or in the art gallery these paintings seem rather dark for present day taste, enlivened only by the principal foreground subjects and towering clouds. Try some editing and by adjusting brightness, contrast and saturation and all sorts of detail emerges from the darkest areas, rather as it would if you were correcting under-exposure in a RAW file. Constable was a master of composition and would have revelled in the ability we now have with our editing to move or delete features so as to improve the picture.

With the help of the Web Gallery, take a look at Turner's 'The Fighting Temeraire' and 'Rain Steam and Speed'. Where Constable shows us how to compose a picture, Turner teaches us about atmosphere. Not simply in terms of the weather but as a way of dramatising an event. No increase in brightness or contrast necessary here and in places the levels histogram is hitting the top of the chart. Sharp focus was not a big thing for Turner and he shows us how to suggest objects by concentrating on essentials rather than fine details.

Before we close the door on the Web Gallery there is one other painter whose work we should take a look at. We must go back to circa 1600 to find Michelangelo Merisi de Carravaggio listed simply as Carravaggio. This brutal man was a bad-tempered street fighter and a killer but what a painter! His rendering of light and shade on material and objects was outstanding and he made human skin glow almost with incandescence. His technique inspired contemporaries and set new standards in subjective art. Living today he would most certainly be a photographer and an outstanding one at that. Open any of his paintings in Photoshop and you will not want to change anything. The detail shown here is a hint of what else you might find to enjoy.



Carravaggio Detail

CLUBMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT AT LANHYDROCK HOUSE

In the December Newsletter our President Brian wrote about being involved in the local community. I would like to tell you about a project at Lanhydrock House, the National Trust property in Bodmin.

In November last year an e-mail was sent to all local camera clubs asking for volunteers to take part in a project to digitally photograph the Agar-Robartes family's collection in the archive at Lanhydrock House; recording the photographs digitally will help with their conservation, make research easier and preserve them for future generations. Seven members of Wadebridge and St Austell Clubs volunteered for the project and they have been trained together with five of the existing room guides at the house; there has also been some interest recently from Liskeard Club and hopefully they will be trained to join the team shortly. Anyone else interested in volunteering should contact dawn.todd@nationaltrust.org.uk for more details.

We are now working through over 5000 photographs in the collection including boxes of loose photographs and some wonderful albums; all of them must of course be handled to conservation standards. Two people work together for an average of one day per week, in a somewhat basic 'studio' set-up in the school room of Lanhydrock House. It has been a bit of a challenge working with rather out-dated equipment due to the Trust's budget restraints but with the help of a projector on loan from Wadebridge Club, we have improvised and adapted the process to produce the 'catalogue standard' images required. It is tempting to think how some of them could be enhanced to repair the blemishes and bring out more detail, but this is not in our brief at the moment. The second part of the process at the end of each session is to record the data on the computer and cross-reference it to the original catalogue system.

The house will re-open on 1st March after the winter closure, and we will then carry out some of the work in front of the visitors and talk to them about the project. The final stage is to upload the images onto the National Trust's Collections Management System, www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk; this system can then be accessed by the public for the first time, for research or further information on the family, about Lanhydrock, or the Victorian period in general.

I had assumed before we started the project that we would be seeing just photographs of the Agar-Robartes family and Lanhydrock. In fact it is all the photographs which were in their possession over the years; so there is a wide variety from ladies playing tennis in their elegant dresses, to fascinating buildings all round the country, grand family picnics, or maybe just the favourite family pets. We have seen rare photographs of the restoration work at Stonehenge, historical events such as Queen Victoria's funeral and the building of the Tamar Bridge. It is striking how all the people, from the Governess to the Lords, look so proud and grand. The children are formally posed and hardly dare to smile; how different from today's portraits.

I am indebted to the National Trust for kindly agreeing to let me use the image of Queen Victoria's funeral at St George's Chapel, Windsor (see the following page.)



© National Trust at Lanhydrock House

It is also very interesting how much information there is in each photograph – the architecture, the engineering, the transport, the fashion, the way of life etc; we are learning something new every week. It is perhaps a reminder to us to take photographs of our present and of everyday things which will one day be of historical interest.

Anne Chapman Wadebridge CC

Thank you so much, Anne. A really interesting article - and I'm hopeful of a follow-up in due course!

What is particularly refreshing, though, is the fact that there *are* other activities we can indulge in through our camera clubs - other than eternal competitions.

A veritable plethora of new skills have been acquired through this co-operation, not to mention the opportunity to admire the talents of those earlier exponents of our hobby. And how true the reminder to take "ordinary, everyday" pictures for future generations to enjoy?

Any more exciting little projects like this out there? Or maybe you've been inspired to offer your skills to an organisation such as the National Trust?

Do tell?

The Judging theme continues! No less than two responses to last issues. The first, from highly respected judge Ken Holland DPAGB, who wrote to let me know he has written a book on the art and craft of judging. Ken kindly wrote a few lines for me for inclusion in the newsletter - but a better bet would be to invest in his book on the topic. You don't necessarily need the book if you aspire to being a judge, or indeed, already are a judge! But competitors may find it demystifies the whole subject a bit!

JUDGING CHECKLIST

Many of us have spent years listening to judges in Camera Clubs, and have our own views on it. I have judged for years and been involved with seminars to encourage new judges. Nowhere have I found any useful published guidelines for judging.

We all have our own views on judging. I hope this brief checklist might be useful.

DO

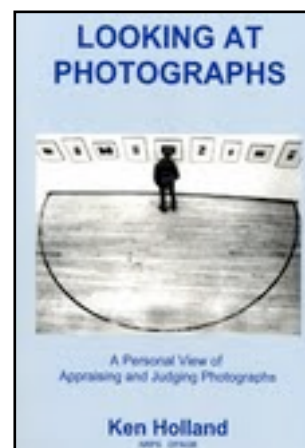
- Watch good judges at work
- Ask **why** a picture was made, not **how**
- Appraise, assess and analyse
- Evaluate the whole image
- Talk about emotional aspects as well as technical
- Manage your time
- Make three positive comments about each image
- Smile often
- Suggest ways an image might be improved
- Assess the quality of the photography
- Remember it's not an exact science

DON'T

- Pass judgement
- Repeat yourself
- Lecture
- Explain **how** a picture was taken, or what Photoshop feature was used
- Display your personal prejudices
- Criticise
- Insist on the "rules"
- Try to crop every image
- Display too many irritating mannerisms
- Touch the image with your fingers
- Dissect an image into small pieces
- Praise mediocre work too highly

PLEASE

- Be confident and enjoy it
- Be brief and concise
- Be honest
- Be a "critical friend"
- Be modest
- Be open minded
- Be punctual
- Be helpful and encourage high standards
- Be fair
- Be informed and unbiased
- Be friendly, humorous, light-hearted and respectful
- Be entertaining and interesting
- Be enthusiastic



I have recently written a handbook on the subject.
More details at : <http://www.blurb.com/my/book/detail/2932165>

Ken Holland ARPS DPAGB

www.lowenna.co.uk

WHY TAKE PHOTOS?

Your constant plea for 'news' from around the regions made me wonder. What kind of news are you expecting, or hoping for?

I offer you some of my musings for what they are worth! Maybe this will start a debate?

Why take photographs?

For me personally, it is quite simple. I feel/see scenes for photo content in my mind and then try to create, for real with the aid of my camera and only essential Photoshop work, what I saw in my mind's eye. That is the challenge for me and one which takes all my spare time!!

So; not sure what others do, and what 'news' there is in all this!

What does one do with the resulting photos and why?

My club, Newton Abbot Photographic Club, is competition-obsessed and I am getting bored with the futility of all these data tables with points and rankings. My life, as a competitive horsewoman, has led me to understand the lack of virtue in FAME and I now know it is like smoke and smoking!! In other words, fame has little substance apart from possibly temporarily making you feel better about yourself. The aforementioned frame of mind soon starts all over again in an ever repeating pattern of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and being driven on and on for more and better.

All very tiring but that may well be a sign of me getting older?! I know many like competitions, like I did at one time, but just as many do not. For a club it is, I presume, difficult to know how else to fill the club evenings, although I feel that there must be a lot of our own members' work that never gets an airing and we have had several interesting club evenings with various members showing work, even old work.

I cannot feel excited by the much beloved solution of teaching to keep everyone occupied for the evening, forming 'little' groups. Yuk! Again, just my own reaction but many seem to think the same way.

For me I am searching for more meaning in and with the photos I create. I seek more than being a prize winner in my club or photo salon. For me, I suppose sharing my work with others does, with the right feedback, produce a lasting feeling of achievement and spurs me on for more of the same or better!

Am I a lone voice - or do others think like this?



Smoking
by Paula Graham

Paula Graham

HOWZAT?

Thank you so much Ken, Paula and Anne, who each rose to my sniveling requests for “input”. Not forgetting ‘Clubman’, of course! Who is he - or she? A lot of curiosity has been aroused, but my lips are sealed! Very pertinent article, though, isn't it?

Ken, of course, we all know, having about 150 years experience of judging, and is highly respected on the circuit. In fact, he is a regular contributor to the Judging Seminars - and in fact, will be at the forthcoming event at The Pollyfield Centre, Avon Road, East of the Water, Bideford EX39 4BL on 3rd March. If you're booked in, you'd know the event starts at 9.30am for a prompt start at 10.00am. If you haven't booked in - you may be too late! However, the WCPF tries to organise these Seminars on an annual basis - so have a go next time? And don't think because you've “done” one - that's it, you're ‘qualified’! I've tried to attend every one such event for the last ten years, and have learned something new at each one!

After judging, Distinctions seem to be “flavour of the year”. A big thank you must go to Di Tilsley for organising the second Advisory Day for our Federation. It will be held on 11th March at Monkton Heathfield Village Hall, Taunton from 10.00am - 4.00pm. Just £20 to have your work assessed, or £10 if you simply wish to watch. Wildly popular, so if you haven't applied to go along, you may once again be too late.

Will Di organise another? It really is up in the air. The assessors have to travel from as far afield as Scotland - so not easy (or cheap) to do. But we can keep our fingers crossed, and if there's enough demand - who knows?

We've banged on about judges/judging and all the pros and cons associated with this ‘favourite’ topic for a couple of issues - and this Newsletter is no stranger to this subject!

I was, therefore, delighted to get Anne Chapman's article on the activities within her club in darkest Cornwall, involving photography - and not a competition in sight! I KNEW there had to be a life beyond competitions! Thank you for giving me hope, Anne!

I can't help wondering whether there are other Clubs ‘out there’ similarly quietly doing something like this - and probably thinking it's not worth commenting on! But we ARE interested - aren't we? So please, don't hide your light? We'd LOVE to know. Honestly!

Flickr is a great site for photographic inspiration. Not only are you able to post your own images for the wide, wide world to be amazed at - you can also join Groups where your endeavor with a camera can be stretched. There are loads to choose from - but one that seems very popular at the moment is the 365 Group. The test here is for you to take a meaningful photograph every single day for a year. Not too hard, you may think! Well, how about joining the 365 Group which wants you to take a self portrait every single day of the year? A little more challenging?

There have been articles in the camera press lately on this very subject - and those who have taken up the challenge avow that their skills have been enormously expanded as a result.

So - feeling fed up with the eternal rain of this winter, and looking for a challenge? Think about it?

Happy snapping!

Ann Owens