

British Photography since 1972: a conference Commemorating fifty years of the RPS Historical Group

Abstracts and speaker biographies (in order of appearance)

Friday, 1 July 2022

Simon Hill FBIPP, HonFRPS, RPS President and Chair of Trustees

Conference Welcome

Simon Hill joined the RPS as a schoolboy, gaining Licentiate in 1982, Associateship in 1985 and Fellowship in 1991. He studied photography at Blackpool College (HND), the University for the Creative Arts (BA) and Central Saint Martins (MA). He has over 30 years experience as a professional editorial photographer and has been published in National Geographic Magazine, The Observer, The Sunday Times and many UK and European newspapers, magazines and journals. Simon is the first British winner of the Longford International Art Portrait Award, a former Kodak 'Showcase' Professional Photographer of the Year and, in 2019, was named BIPP Professional Photographer of the Year.

In addition to his photographic work, Simon is the founder and Group Managing Director of VIDAR Media Group, a practice specialising in the design-and-build of interpretative exhibitions for museums and galleries in the UK and internationally. Simon has won many awards for his design projects including Museum of the Year, Best New Heritage Project, several HLF Arts and Heritage Renaissance Awards, RHS Bronze and Silver medals, and most recently European Attraction of the Year and Best Global Attraction of the Year.

Beyond his commercial activities, Simon has over 25 years experience as a not-for-profit and charity Trustee, including three years as Trustee of the Open College of the Arts (an RPS education partner organisation). He has held board positions with more than a dozen UK and European companies, including five years as Chairman of one of Scandinavia's leading cultural heritage design companies. He also has over 16 years experience as a Special Adviser to the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Simon was elected RPS Trustee in 2019, President Elect in 2020 and President (and Honorary Fellow) in 2021.

Dr Michael Pritchard FRPS

Setting the scene for 1972

This introduction to the conference is intended to provide a short overview of where photography was in 1972 and some of the history behind the formation of the RPS's Historical Group. It is intended to provide some wider context for the conference rather than be a full paper and will look at the equipment available, the general British scene and the RPS and Historical Group. The Winter 2022 number of *The PhotoHistorian* will give a fuller history of the Group and its activities, including its formation.

Dr Michael Pritchard has been involved in photography for his entire career. He became involved in photography and photographic history aged 11 years. After studying Geography at University of Hull he started as a photography specialist at Christie's auction house where he curated auctions becoming a Director and auctioneer. He left to undertake a PhD which he completed in 2010. He has taught at MA level at De Montfort University and worked on making the Kodak Historical Collection available for public access at the British Library before joining the RPS in 2011. He has written and lectured on many aspects of the history of photography in the UK and abroad. He has a particular knowledge of British photography but his interests extend across Western, Asian and African historical and contemporary photography.

He has worked in a photographic studio and brings a practical and working knowledge of photography, along with darkroom work and alternative processes. He has been a guest selector for many exhibitions and awards. He also been a selector and curator of festival exhibitions and exhibitions in China and in 2021 for Photo Oxford.

His most recent book is *A History of Photography in 50 Cameras* (Bloomsbury). He edits the RPS Historical Group's *The PhotoHistorian*. He is currently researching a history of the RPS and British photography. Michael leads the RPS's education and public programmes.

Jayne Knight

Telling the Story of Popular Photography: The Kodak Collection at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television

In 1985, the Kodak Museum, a company museum that had represented the history of photography at the Kodak Works in Harrow since 1927, was transferred to the newly established National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford. This paper explores the significance of this transfer and how the Kodak Museum's broad spectrum of material, collected over fifty-seven years at Kodak was interpreted by the NMPFT to tell the story of popular photography. Opening in 1989, to coincide with 150 years of photography, the Kodak Museum in the NMPFT's newly designed permanent gallery space offered different perspectives on photography. It focused on photographic practices, utilising the Kodak Museum's expansive technological, ephemera and advertising collections and connected these to audiences through social and cultural contexts, telling the story of popular photography.

Forming an important part of the NMPFT, now the National Science and Media Museum, the Kodak Gallery has shaped audiences understanding of photography for over thirty years, its longevity indicative of the continued role in offering important historical perspectives, despite the decline of analogue photography and industry leaders such as Kodak. This talk examines the ideas underpinning the Kodak Museum at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television and considers how, by representing popular photography and industry leaders such as Kodak in the museum, audiences' knowledge of photographic history was shaped.

Jayne Knight is a PhD candidate at the University of Brighton in collaboration with the National Science and Media Museum (NSMM), Bradford. Researching photography and its place at the NSMM, Jayne's project is examining popular photography in the museum with the Kodak Collection at the core of the project. Jayne's interests and areas of research focus on the history of photography and popular photography, which has included research on photographic advertising, ephemera and the utilisation of her own family photographic collection.

Pamela Glasson Roberts

'The Octagon Years', 1982-2001. The RPS Print Collection: acquisitions, exhibitions and publications.

During my 19 years working in the RPS Print Collection, the last 13 as Curator, I tried to emphasise, accentuate, enhance and publicise the Collection by curating exhibitions from it at the Octagon in Bath, many of which then travelled internationally, by loaning many items to exhibitions in museums and galleries worldwide, by writing several books on various aspects of the Collection and by encouraging research. All this to make the Collection better known and better appreciated as the unique entity it was. Also to earn some money through these activities to support the Collection. I did none of this alone of course.

Our aim was to collect and strengthen areas of photography already represented rather than try to acquire, retrospectively, single examples of international, expensive "famous names" having little acquisitions budget. We wanted to present and explore the Collection as a whole, as archives of material supported, whenever possible, desirable or practicable, by related equipment, publications and documentation and we built on this as our predecessors had done.

By the end of the 20th Century, 70% of the RPS Collection comprised work by its members from Roger Fenton to Don McCullin and that was a tenet of the 'Octagon Years' when exhibitors in the RPS Annual Exhibition were asked to donate prints or sell for minimum costs. My book *Photogenic* (2001) on the RPS Collection with over 336 pages and 300 images, emphasised that the Collection was made up of a series of overlapping and inter-connected archives of, mostly, RPS members' work, rather than bought-in famous names.

The RPS Collection contains examples of practically every 19th and 20th century photographic process, so enhancing and adding to these was also fundamental. Early colour photography is a particular strength and large collections of beautiful autochromes were added during these years when few museums seemed to be collecting them. We also collected examples of specific photographic processes and techniques, reinvented in the 20th century such as the resurgence of tri-colour carbon printings and platinum and palladium printing.

This paper will concentrate on showing examples of acquisitions, exhibitions and publications during this period and putting them in context.

Pamela Glasson Roberts is an independent researcher, curator and writer. Her book *A Century of Colour Photography; from the autochrome to the digital age, a survey of the history of colour photography*, was published in 2007.

From 1982-2001, she was the Curator of the Royal Photographic Society Collection in Bath, UK, this Collection is now at the V&A. She organised over sixty exhibitions and wrote catalogues on subjects ranging from Julia Margaret Cameron to *Camera Work* to Don McCullin. In 1995, she was an exchange curator at the Library of Congress in Washington working on a catalogue and travelling exhibition on Boston photographer F. Holland Day and in 2003 she was guest scholar at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, working on a catalogue and travelling exhibition on Roger Fenton.

Her most recent exhibition and catalogue/biography was on Alvin Langdon Coburn (2014).

Colin Ford CBE

The development of the National Portrait Gallery and National Museum of Photography, Film and Television

Colin will discuss his career at the British film Institute and National Portrait Gallery and his role in the setting up of a national museum of photography in Bradford in 1983.

Colin Ford CBE is one of Britain's first curators of photography and has had a long and distinguished career. Starting in theatre and the British Film Institute, Colin was the first Keeper of Film and Photography at the National Portrait Gallery and became founding head of the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television at Bradford (now the National Science and Media Museum) from 1983-1993. He has a passion for the history of photography and has written many books on the subject, including *An Early Victorian Album: the Photographic Masterpieces of David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson*. He was instrumental in helping save an album of their photographs for the nation, and he has written many books on Julia Margaret Cameron, including *The Cameron collection, an album of photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron*.

Colin has a particular interest in Hungarian photography. Together with Péter Baki and George Szirtes he curated the acclaimed 2011 exhibition *Eyewitness: Hungarian Photography in the Twentieth Century* at the Royal Academy and co-authored the accompanying book. Along the way he has been involved with many other organisations in photography including the Kraszna-Kraus Foundation and Julia Margaret Cameron Trust.

Colin Ford has tested positive for Covid and is unwell. He will be unable to present his paper. Those interested in his topic may be interested in an online interview and conversation he had with Gilly Read FRPS, Group chair. This can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/MDIU437VzV8>

A replacement paper and speaker will be delivered:

Dr Michael Pritchard FRPS

'many interesting and valuable gifts of apparatus for preservation in the Museum'. The Royal Photographic Society and networks of collecting photographic technology.

The paper will look at three areas: how the institutional collecting of photography and photographic technology evolved, the institutional relationships that developed with the RPS at their centre, and the the personal relationships that developed, again, with the RPS at their centre. It focuses on the period from the 1960s-1990s.

Karine Chambefort-Kay

Positive action in British photographic collections

The paper will examine some of the positive action programmes conducted since the 1990s by institutions dedicated to collecting, archiving, or exhibiting photographs in Britain. It will briefly consider the cultural and political context in which the question of the representation of diversity in British photographic history arose, before shedding light on the shifts in funding policies which created opportunities for positive action programmes to develop.

The core of the discussion will revolve on four projects, each of a different genre, but all dedicated to enhancing the presence of minorities in visual culture: *The Missing Chapter: Black Chronicles*, by photographic agency Autograph, the *Staying Power* project, by the Victoria and Albert Museum and Black Cultural Archives, *Connecting histories* by Birmingham City Archives, the University of Birmingham, and Warwick University, the more recent Apna Heritage Archive part of the *Living Memory Project* in the Black Country. I will compare the strategies exemplified by each project and show how they reflect both the specific agendas of actors —depending on whether the collection is dedicated to one community, one city, or the photographic medium per se— and the political agenda of funding bodies regarding diversity in the UK. After pointing at the difficulties in assessing each project's outcome in terms of public outreach and visibility, I will argue that the different strategies developed should be regarded as complementary rather than competing models, allowing for the circulation and ubiquity of some images between various repositories and exhibition venues.

Ultimately, this ongoing research project, centred on four emblematic positive action programmes, hopes to shed some light on the dynamics at work in the shift from invisibility to historical recognition and inclusion, and to start mapping what could be a specifically British approach to diversity in photography.

Karine Chambefort-Kay is a lecturer in contemporary British history and visual culture at the Université Paris Est Créteil, France. Her PhD thesis was entitled *Photographic Narratives of Collective Identities: Class, Ethnicity and Nation in British photography, 1990-2010*. Her research interests include the cultural, social, and political uses of images in British contemporary society, as well as exhibition and archive policies, and the issues of identity formation, memory and nationalism. She has published on various artists, photographic practices and projects in the UK.

Katrina Whitehead

The public and photography: the popularisation of photographic history on television, genealogy, and local history; experience through newspapers, publications, and online.

Genealogy: A Virtual Walk Through Time. During Lockdown 1, I decided to create a home-movie based on an exploration into my family tree. This took up several weeks of liaising with various family members, combined with on-line training on a MOOC. This research enabled me to plug some gaps into my family tree, expunge some family myths and above all, helped me to understand my ancestors and therefore my own identity. It also gave me something productive to do, at an unprecedented time in social history, armed with free access to ancestry websites, for the duration of the lockdown period.

I was particularly drawn to the women in the family tree and two in particular who came across as interesting characters. I realised that over the weeks, I could quite easily delve much deeper into individuals in the tree and uncover family photographs which I had never seen, shared via email or sent in the post, or old photos in albums looked upon with fresh eyes, particularly one family photo of one ancestor who perished in the Battle of the Dardanelles.

I felt like a detective searching for missing people, piecing together scraps of information, interviewing people and in one case seeking professionals to comment on specific aspects such as identifying the year when a photograph was taken, with only the fashion being worn as evidence.

During lockdown, there were strict rules surrounding the right to go out, therefore the use of Google Street View was a valid resource. The home of my ancestors, a farm, still present over 100 years

later, yet many houses demolished to make way for commercial outlets. Family tree research has become more accessible with the use of technology and enabled me to virtually visit places all over the world, with access to photographs I never would have seen.

Katrina Whitehead is a Lecturer in School of Arts and Humanities at University of Huddersfield. As a Contemporary Photographic Artist, I am studying a PhD in Practice on crime culture within the context of photo-novels, which blur the boundaries between truth and fiction. Photography has been at the core of my research and practice for over 30 years, from studying it at night school, converting my bedroom into a darkroom and spending long hours developing negatives.

I have been teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students since 2007, gaining a PGCE and Fellowship in the Higher Education Academy. I am a member of the British Institute of Professional Photography and former Chair. of BIPP (Yorkshire).

I have exhibited internationally and spoken at conferences including a regular contributor and participant at the Psychogeography Congress, inspired by archival research into my family tree. Link: <https://youtu.be/DXgnthRrMFU>

Stefano Cagnoni

Report and International Freelance Library 1972-1988, and beyond into the digital age.

By 1972, Report and IFL (International Freelance Library) was a London-based picture agency comprised of a group of freelance photographers taking photos primarily focused on 'progressive' elements within British society - trade unions, the burgeoning gay rights movement, women's campaigns for equality, anti-fascist protest, black theatre, etc.

Started in 1946 by Simon Guttman, a friend and contemporary of Walter Benjamin in the early twentieth century, Report/IFL was ostensibly a 'co-operative' but in reality was led by Guttman, who by then was 79 years old. Simon Guttman had been the head of Dephot in 1920s Berlin and was said to have been the man who first gave Andre Friedmann – later Robert Capa – a job as a dark room assistant in the Dephot offices, before sending him off to Copenhagen to photograph Trotsky in 1932.

Report/IFL, under Guttman's helm, would continue to supply photos, mainly to the British press for the next 20 years until his death at the age of 99 in 1990.

Whilst its photographers gradually dispersed over the next two decades, the vast majority of the photographic archive left behind, plus that from 1946-70, remains intact, a small proportion of which can be found on the digital platform <http://www.reportdigital.co.uk> which after Simon Guttman's death, was established by an ex-Report photographer, John Harris, and aims to continue in the traditions set by Report's original founder.

The aim of my talk is to offer a brief introduction to the origins of Report/IFL; then to deal with the years 1972-1990. Namely, the numerous UK socio-political events photographed by Report/IFL; the closure of the Report/IFL picture library after Guttman's death and change in working practises for Report/IFL photographers, resulting in the transition from an analogue photo library to a digital photo library by the early 1990s.

Stefano Cagnoni is a photographer with 40+ years of experience. After graduating with a degree in Politics from York University, he trained at Report in the early 1980s under Simon Guttman; a man widely recognised as one of the founders of photojournalism in Weimar Germany.

Guttman's training mantra was simple: relate on a human level to the person in front of you; don't shoot for the sake of it, but wait for the right moment before clicking the shutter; and trust your instincts. Four decades on, and those rules still apply, 'waiting for the right moment', even more so when one considers the multitude of images shot by photographers in the digital age.

He works mainly in the UK, with reportage style shots for editorial, corporate and charity clients. Published by most of the major broadsheets, numerous weeklies, trade newspapers and magazines, many charities, trade unions and press and pr agencies. Major clients have included the Big Lottery Fund, the Church of England, Citizens Advice, DFID, the Environment Agency, Texaco and Transport for London.

He is also primarily responsible for the digital archiving of the Report and International Freelance Library archive, which dates back to 1946. Both current material and archive images are available at NUJ rates from his agency: <http://www.reportdigital.co.uk> He was a photographer with Report from 1982-1988.

Dr Donald Stewart FRPS is a former chair and editor of the PRS Historical Group's *The PhotoHistorian*.

Saturday, 2 July 2022

Dr Grant Scott

One Short Trip to New York: Bill Jay, Tony Ray Jones, and the introduction of American Photography to the UK.

"Your magazine is shit, but I can see that you are trying." That was Tony Ray Jones's opening gambit in 1968 on first meeting Bill Jay, editor of *Creative Camera* magazine. Jay was already publishing and promoting a broad range of photographers in the pages of his magazine, from Atget to Phillip Jones Griffiths and Brassai to Sam Haskins. Social meetings at David Hurn's West London flat were introducing Jay to Magnum photographers passing through London at the time when the agency had no London headquarters and a new generation of documentary photographers including Chris Killip and Homer Sykes. But it was Jones who suggested to Jay that they should travel to New York together where he would show him what was really going on in contemporary photography and introduce Jay to its leading figures including Diane Arbus, W. Eugene Smith, Ralph Gibson, Weegee and Robert Frank. They stayed at the Chelsea Hotel and Jones stayed true to his word.

That trip provided Jay with a new vision for photography in the UK and for *Creative Camera* magazine. Subsequent issues featured all these photographers, as well as Garry Winogrand, Lee Freidlander and of course Ray Jones himself, tutored by the great American Art Director Alexey Brodovitch. Jay introduced the UK photographic community to American photography every month, in his magazine *Album* that launched in 1970 and through his Photo Study Centre at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. The impact of this work on British photographers was immediate and important as evidenced by Martin Parr, Brian Griffin, Daniel Meadows, Paul Hill, and Homer Sykes in the film *Do Not Bend: The Photographic Life of Bill Jay*.

This paper will explore the impact that this trip and the resulting promotion of US photographers and Jones by Jay had on the British approach to documentary photography in the 1970s including the instigation of photographic galleries, collectives and educational initiatives.

Dr Grant Scott studied for a BA (HONS) in Graphic Design at St.Martin's School of Art before art directing photography books and magazines such as *Elle* and *Tatler* fifteen years. Scott began to work solely as a photographer for commercial and editorial clients in 2000. He is the founder/curator of United Nations of Photography (www.unitednationsofphotography.com), a Senior Lecturer and Subject Co-ordinator: Photography at Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, a working photographer, documentary filmmaker, BBC Radio contributor and the author/photographer of *At Home With the Makers of Style* (Thames & Hudson 2006), *Crash Happy* (Café Royal Books 2011), *Professional Photography: The New Global Landscape Explained* (Routledge 2014), *The Essential Student Guide to Professional Photography* (Routledge 2015), *Photographers Photographed* (Café Royal Books 2018) *New Ways of Seeing: The Democratic Language of Photography* (Routledge 2019), and *What Does Photography Mean to You?* (Bluecoat Press 2020). His film *Do Not Bend: The Photographic Life of Bill Jay* (www.donotbendfilm.com) was first screened at the Martin Parr Foundation, Bristol in 2018. Scott was the founding art director of the documentary magazine *Foto8* and the founder/editor and art director of the photography and film magazine *Hungry Eye*. Each week he presents the *A Photographic Life* podcast in which he asks photographers from around the world What Does Photography Mean to You? He received his Doctorate in the Arts from Oxford Brookes University.

Paul Herrmann

The New Photographer: professional photographic practice.

The paper will explore some of the key changes in professional photographic practice over the last forty years brought on by technological, cultural and political change, and how well those changes are supported by organisations.

What is the role and purpose of the working photographer? The professional photographer of 2022 retains some of the characteristics of their 1970s predecessor – a highly motivated problem solver with a strong visual sense and a standout body of work – but they are more likely to be: better networked, collaborative, more adaptive, working in multiple genres or cross-discipline, and better at research. Their work is driven by clear values and a strong business model. In some cases it includes elements of teacher, organiser, facilitator – and influencer.

I'll explore these changes, the extent to which photographers have been able to adapt, the external forces driving the changes, and critically, whether their ambition and sense of purpose is different. I'll also consider how inclusive these new modes of practice are, and the barriers that photographers cite to progress. I'll look at the extent to which the UK's membership organisations, professional associations and networks have supported these changes. I'll finish with a brief speculation on further change on the horizon.

The paper will be informed by my role as Director of Redeye, the Photography Network, and the research, interviews and surveys conducted by Redeye over the past two decades.

Paul Herrmann leads two photo organisations in the UK; Redeye, the Photography Network, and the Photographic Collections Network. Redeye has supported hundreds of photographers in every different genre to develop their photographic work and careers through a programme of events,

courses, professional development, collaborations, business advice and information. Alongside Redeye Paul directs the Photographic Collections Network, which provides knowledge and support for photography specialists, archivists, scholars and historians. Paul is a regional chair of WhatNextCulture.co.uk, a nationwide movement to inform and shape the future of the arts and culture, and a visiting lecturer at several universities. He started out as a freelance editorial photographer with a social, political and arts perspective in the 1980s, and talks, writes and advises on business and professional issues in photography.

Liz J. Drew

The Oil Rush: A neglected British Photo-History.

Throughout the mid to late twentieth century an increasingly public arena, for socio-political debates on nature and society, facilitated the long relationship between landscape and photography. Cultural impact is evidenced by projects relating to fast-changing natural and built environments. A resurgence of interest around ecology, climate and finite natural resources had emerged following campaigns for nuclear disarmament in the 1950s and counter-cultural narratives in the 1960s. By the 1970s environmental writing and imaging were invigorated. Expanded notions of 'landscape photography' furthered a genre of what Catherine Zurmoskis has called 'Petroaesthetics'. In Britain, multiple projects mobilized to document the decline of hitherto central industries of fishing, coal mining and shipbuilding.

Despite an expansive corpus of insightful work, made with the communities of the industrial North Sea, there is an absence. The hulking vessels depicted at this time were not often identified as oil tankers. Unemployed miners, engineers and skippers provided skilled labour as a new industrial landscape emerged, literally out of the North Sea, into the collective consciousness. In 1975 the oil reached land, piped from the transforming seascapes. Despite huge visibility (across the national media) and tangible impact on ways of life, the oil, and oil workers, were not visible in concerned photography.

A notable exception is a modestly sized yet rigorous photobook. Critically neglected in British photo histories *The Oil Rush* (1976) was the result of a collaboration between writer Mervyn Jones and photographer Fay Godwin and their arduous fieldwork conducted, on and offshore. This provides an early example of an eco-critical approach that redefines the possibilities for researching 'industrial' and landscape photography. My paper will introduce *The Oil Rush* as a foundational work for under researched eco-critical practice in this area.

Liz J Drew is a writer, researcher, visual practitioner, and tutor. She has delivered papers at conferences for photography, also for Education, in Europe and Britain and has lectured on various programmes for arts and humanities in Higher Education including for History of Art, Photography and Film. Her doctoral thesis *A Poetic Realism: Photography and Equality in the North of England 1968-2018* (registered at Birkbeck, University of London) is an analysis of participatory works as counter narratives. She is a director (since 2016) of [Ph:The PhotographyResearch Network](#) as recently exhibiting at Four Corners, London. Liz is currently focussing on her visual practice, which is concerned with changing landscapes, also co-authoring a book relating to research methods and photography (Routledge 2022).