

The Newsletter of the
Contemporary Group of
the Royal Photographic
Society



Image © Duncan Unsworth

**September
2022**

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Editorial

Hello and welcome to September's issue of Concept. I hope you had the opportunity to make the most of the wonderful summer and take photos and create images which inspire you. This month's issue features a variety of contributions from CSIG showcasing some of our member's work. Whilst we are always excited to publish members' photos from ongoing projects, we are keen to provide a platform for sharing images even if they don't constitute part of an ongoing project. To this end, I am pleased to introduce 'Photo Focus' a new series featuring single images submitted by our members who wish to share their work.

To kick this off, both Christine Pinnington and myself have taken the plunge and provided images which we hope you enjoy. More information on submissions can be found in the 'Photo Focus' section.

You will also see some key dates for your diary this autumn – providing multiple opportunities to become further involved with RPS and your regional CSIG. With autumn around the corner, I certainly have a renewed focus within my photography, and for those who feel the same, I wish you all a productive and enjoyable time ahead.

Suzi

View from The Chair - Sing Out!

Like a lot of folk I find inspiration in music, I have a collection of music to play when deep in the features of Photoshop, music to work out to and music to lift the spirits, from Vangelis's Rosetta to Supertramp's Breakfast in America – my tastes are fairly eclectic. This is also the way my photography has developed - from my early days when I only wanted to photograph wildlife to today, when I have an idea and off I go.

Often, I need to develop skills to present the idea as I saw it in my head. Sometimes the idea can't be seen by other folk and sometimes the idea doesn't sit in a box with a name on it. But it is an

idea to explore, play with and develop, infinitely better than no idea at all.

Some of the Contemporary Group will now say I am a full-fledged Contemporary Photographer, following my own track as an individual – not a speck in the mainstream. In my first six months as Chair of CSIG I have talked to many folk who don't want to be mainstream and see the Contemporary SIG as the perfect home. They would prefer not to be part of an organised event or culture, producing images that speak in uncommon and extraordinary ways. We also have many members that know they want to step outside these boundaries but are frightened and/or not sure how to.

Cat Stevens said, "Well, if you want to sing out, sing out, and if you want to be free, be free."

And that's why we have our Sandpit events with themes that encourage out of the box thinking in a safe environment. An opportunity to explore individual ideas inspired by a word or several. Not for everyone, because not everyone is afraid to sing out. I was, and when I realised that the only thing that stopped me singing out was what others might say, I stopped being afraid.

Sing Out!



Next Sandpit :
15 October 2022.
Who I am – Who
am I?

Alexandra Prescott FRPS

The Postal Box Scheme

Tired of having your images looked at for two seconds on a screen before the viewer scrolling to the next image? The Postal Box Scheme of the Contemporary Group could be an antidote. It is a form of 'slow photography' where actual prints and books, both hand-made and print on demand, get circulated in boxes between members.

Having honest constructive criticism of your images by peers can be rewarding. It is always interesting to see the range of reactions from different people to work inserted. The criticism may not always be what you expect. Recently I put in some images of wet pavements (a comment on the glamour of London) and was surprised when several people commented that due to the way we look at people I should turn them upside down. It was not something I had thought of!

Looking and commenting upon others' often great images is an equal pleasure. However, it does require commitment as the boxes ought to get passed on after 2 or 3 weeks to avoid frustration for others in the circuit. Currently there are two circuits with 5 boxes circulating in each so it can be a couple of months between boxes arriving.

Not being complete Luddites, we now also have monthly online meetings one Saturday afternoon a month. Limited to members of the Postal Box Scheme it means that the meetings are relatively intimate and everyone gets the chance to participate. The meetings alternate in form. In standard meetings participants can share work as well as discuss exhibitions, photographic topics and have a chat among friends. Alternate meetings are now run as a book club. A book, which is readily available for £20 or less, is chosen a couple of months beforehand and discussed at the meeting. So far this has included books by Sally Mann, Mario Giacomelli,

David Laundy and others. I think all the members would agree it has been rewarding in introducing us to photographers we wouldn't have come across otherwise.



There is currently capacity for a few new members to join the Postal Portfolio.

If you wish to know more about the scheme, please contact

Duncan Unsworth at
duncan.unsworth100@gmail.com

Jim Souper ARPS

It can be said Jim Souper is predominantly a landscape photographer and has travelled extensively including Hokkaido Japan, developing his own style.

Due to the pandemic and like many other photographers he has taken up more local urban projects which are nature based. The images shown here are from a series called Encounters with the Calder an ongoing project exploring the River Calder in West Yorkshire.



Jim Souper

Website: <https://www.jimsouper.co.uk/>

Instagram: @jimsouper

Facebook: jimsouperphoto

Brookfields Park

Don Harris FRPS

A paradigm of things to come: bland, soul-less creations bleeding into one of the largest brownfield re-development sites in the county, situated on the former NCB Manvers complex with colliery, coking plant and railway sidings.

Brookfields Park, as it is now known, is the home to the ubiquitous call centre, characterless warehousing and a token wooded area, described on the Woodland Trust site as a “Woodland Welcome Wood.”

Within in the annals of time will any of these buildings achieve the status of listed buildings of exceptional interest? Makes you wonder!





all images © Don Harris

Joint event with Contemporary North and the Yorkshire Region Saturday, 1 October 2022, 10.00 – 5.00 Clements Hall, York

Contemporary North is hosting a full day of activities with the Yorkshire Region.

10.30 – 12.30

Mary Crowther ARPS will host Photo Forum, a chance to meet other members in the Region to discuss all things photographic. Bring prints or books to discuss, whether personal projects or ideas for Distinctions.

1.00 pm for 1.30-4.30

Contemporary North will present three speakers.

Alexandra Prescott FRPS, Contemporary Group Chair

Aspiration to Distinction



"The presentation covers my journey, some useful stuff that it makes sense to share and some universal truths – the point of my journey. "

Wendy North



"Following lock-down and significant changes in my life, my approach to photography has changed, and I've begun thinking much more about 'making' images rather than simply taking them. This has recently culminated in a 'book making project' where I compare the rich man in his castle (Wentworth Castle) to the 'poor man' who lost children in the Huskar Pit Disaster.

During my session I would like to take you on the 'photographic' journey that led me back into making books and to a better understanding of what Contemporary photography might look like."

Glenys Garnett



"I'm generally known for being a very creative photographer always willing to push the boundaries and try something new with my image making. I never really thought of myself as a contemporary photographer as most of my work fits more within the visual arts. However, a lot of my work centres around my personal experiences and I often aim to present a visual metaphor of my thoughts, feelings and emotions through my photography. My talk will give you a little insight into my work showing two projects I've worked on most recently, including a photobook project about the Battle of Towton 1461."

Refreshments will be available. A packed lunch is suggested if attending both sessions.

Booking will be available on the Yorkshire Region webpage.

<https://rps.org/regions/yorkshire>

Contact: Yorkshire2@rps.org

Thunder in the Glens

Alexandra Prescott FRPS

The Ski Resort of Aviemore and HOG – The Harley Owners Group make an unlikely pairing but every year (Covid casualties 2020 and 2021 excluded) owners of Harley Davidsons from all over the world meet at the resort.

The first rally in 1996 attracted around 200 riders. At the 20th anniversary event in 2016 there were over 4000 riders, contributing around £15 million to the local economy.

Harley Davidson riders from the Dunedin Chapter run the event for charity. There are rallies and live music and the event has the atmosphere of a big party for riders and visitors.



Patches 2022

At first sight, the bearded mostly male bikers are reminiscent of Outlaw Hells Angels. Dressed universally in waistcoats with splodges of oils, badges from past meetings, plus their Chapter motifs, patches and leathers.

Patches are usually embroidered and tell personal stories. Historically they told of involvement with criminal activities / years of service to their Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (OMG). Appearances are deceptive. Today some of the historical anti-social behaviour patches are forbidden, bikes and riders are 99.9 percent legal and riders bring their dogs to rallies in custom made trailers or made to measure harnesses. And all for charity.

Live Music is a big feature of the event, usually there are at least 2 bands playing at either end of the village but it is definably not 2 tribes. There are riders of vintage and brand new bikes, swapping notes on performance, experiences and gossip, whilst sharing the love of the marque. The love is demonstrated by the mint and or customised condition of the bikes. From bespoke accessories such as mirrors supported by skeleton hands to hand painted tanks, bills can run to thousands of pounds.



Hand Painted HD Tank

Part of the joy of ownership for the more vintage bikes is wielding spanners to tweak the max in performance, contributing to that unique Harley exhaust sound which resonates through the bones. I first heard the sound in 2017, passing through Aviemore on my way to an engagement at the Highland Wildlife Park. A convoy of over 500 Harley Davidsons traveling in the opposite direction for the traditional Saturday afternoon run to Grantown on Spey. Riders in fancy dress, channelling their inner animal from the Muppets, Vampires and 2nd World War

Tommie's. Harleys with National flags from as far afield as the USA and Japan. In 2018 I heard and saw it again, this time on Cairngorm Mountain as Thunder in the Glens - Rocky Mountain Convoy headed up to base station with exhaust notes echoing off the granite outcrops.

In 2019 I resolved to be brave and take a camera. I was made welcome by complete strangers. The love of the marque and the bike culture transcends everything. I expected to be chased off each time



Captain Tom Artwork



I ventured near the shining chrome and individually customised paintwork. Instead, proud owners would dust off polluting specks and shine dull patches, inviting me to focus on individual elements like hand tooled leather seats / panniers and engines that were surgically clean.

Riders on the rallies would either slow down or smile as I pointed the lens, doing their best to put the bike in the most photogenic position. For an enthusiastic photographer, nothing was too much trouble for the owners.

Covid happened and there was no TITG for 2 years, perhaps that's why at this year's event there was a palpable feeling of joy - 2 days before the official start. With or without their Harleys, riders were sharing the fun. As I focused on one bike, with its teddy mascot in a full set of miniature leathers and patches, there were teasing calls from others inviting me to photograph a better model, theirs. This year there were more bikes / riders with service links, one decorated on the theme Captain Tom. There were also Ukraine reminders.

This year's event saw approximately 4000 bikes take part in the opening parade, not just Harleys but other marques including Triumphs and Indians. The opening parade / ride out starting from the Macdonald Complex was led by Scottish Police and the Volunteer Road Crew and the crowd lining the route through Aviemore was 3 or 4 deep in places. The route encompassed Boat of Garten and ran through to Grantown on Spey. The sun shone, the crowd cheered and there was a feeling of bigger and better than before.

It is now Monday, Aviemore is quite and almost empty but the website for next year's bookings is up and running. There were no hitches apart from a nameless establishment running out of draft beer. The charities are looking forward to their donations and the sun is still shining. My 2023 diary has been marked.



Thunder in the Glens – Opening Parade – 2022

Obituary

Graham Sergeant FRPS 1937-2022

Graham Sergeant, died age 85, obtained two Fellowships from the Society in the Contemporary category. The first of these, obtained in 2006, consisted of photographs he had taken for a biography of Elizabeth Twistington Higgins an inspirational ballet teacher who continued in her profession despite having been almost completely paralysed by polio, and who slept each night in Chelmsford hospital in an iron lung. His photographs of her, which featured in an article he wrote about in his submission for the RPS Journal, demonstrated the rapport that he developed with her in telling her story of conquering her extreme disability with humour and determination.

He said in the article:

“With its unique and inherent precision, photography can capture people, places and events that have touched our lives.”

Graham came late to the Society, recording that he joined it on his 65th birthday as a kind of present to himself and a spur to become serious about photography again.

After becoming a Fellow, the Society invited him to become a member of three of its distinctions panels Contemporary, Applied and Multimedia. It was in my role as Chairman of the Contemporary Panel that I got to know him. He contributed greatly to the collegiality of the panel and brought his professional skills as a teacher to its work. He had the capacity to analyse the quality of work submitted in the context of the requirements for contemporary distinctions. He could articulate his perceptive views on a submission with clarity and precision which was of great assistance to his fellow panel members in making a decision about it. In an article in the Society Journal of December 2013/January 2014 he gave one of the best expositions I have seen of what was required for a successful contemporary submission.

As a member of the Chichester Camera Club he steered many of its members to achieve their own successes in obtaining the Society's distinctions

I first became aware of how good a photographer he was when at one of our assessment days in Bath he asked me to look at an audio visual presentation he had made of the 2015 General Election. He had put together a series of photographs including many taken off the television screen and from newspapers which told the whole story of that election in a slick, snappy and compelling way.

Audio visual work became the main method of expressing himself through photography. He won the RPS International Grand Prix trophy and gold medal for his AV entitled “Beeswing” in 2016.

He lectured in sociology for thirty five years at Southgate College in London. During that period he also did freelance and wedding photography. He was a 16mm film maker. He shot film for a TV documentary on the battle of the Atlantic. The highlight for him was meeting the German naval commander Admiral Dörnitz.

He was a companionable man with a sunny disposition who made a significant contribution to contemporary photography within the Society.

Douglas J May FRPS.

Photo Focus

Welcome to Photo Focus, a new feature in Concept where images from our members are shared. These can be stand-alone images or form part of a wider project, but the aim is provide an outlet for your creativity and a place where images can be enjoyed. Concept will publish four images each issue and if you are interested in submitting your images for consideration please email them to concepteditor@rps.org. You also have the option of providing accompanying text of up to 30 words to give any background or thoughts about the image.



Heads down – Suzi Darsa

This image was taken as we emerged from the first lockdown and aims to depict the strange and hesitant experience of re-entering normal life again.



The Viking Festival, Flamborough, New Year's Eve - Christine Pinnington LRPS

A Viking carrying a fireball was passing a fast food retailer. The event was very crowded and stewards kept us well away from the fire so I was lucky to get this. Unfortunately I 'lost' the Viking!

However, it's a very interesting comparison between cooking methods approximately 10 centuries apart!

Southwest

Following on from Contemporary's South West Regional report in our last issue, it's great to be able to share some of those images that were shown and discussed at their meeting.

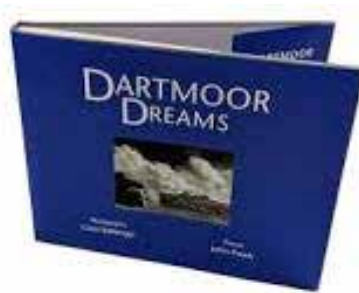
Viv Howse stunning monochrome images of woodland scenes were taken using an infra-red camera. These were followed later in the meeting by infra-red images of Dartmoor, concentrating on the various types of boundaries which exist.



Tree Study, Bridford



Foggintor Quarry



Haytor from Smallacombe Rocks



Ancient Oaks, Wistman's Wood.





Images: © Viv Howse

These are a selection of images take from Ken Holland's successful Fellowship Panel 'When Hannah Left Home' focussing on the departure of the Dame Rogers Trust from Seale Hayne in Devon.



Images: © Ken Holland FRPS



The next meeting of the Contemporary South-west Group will take place on Sunday 30th October,

Contact: Adrian Hough, Regional Organiser
email: contemporarysw@rps.org

East Anglia

Our group decided on a holiday for 8 weeks from the beginning of August. In the meantime, I will still be working hard to get our next virtual exhibition on-line by 1st September. It will be called 'Weekend' and the published state if to be confirmed.

'Weekend' is best viewed using the Artsteps app on a mobile device. Please note that this freeware version of the platform is optimised for mobile and the user experience on desktop displays is somewhat disappointing.

Our next meeting is on 6th October 2022.

Contact : contemporaryea@rps.org

Central

We've been taking a break from our monthly online meetings for the summer, but during this time, we've finalised our 'Introducing...' book. This is available to see via Issuu at <https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/introducing>

It features a short series of photos from each of eight members of the group, showing some of the variety of interests of our members.

We planned our first in-person meet-up to take place in Coventry in June. Naturally, it was one of the few days of rain in this very dry summer, which cut down our numbers, but those of us who attended enjoyed seeing the different ways in which we approached photographing this city. On this dull day, for example, I decided to concentrate on colour.



© Steph Hutchinson



© Steph Hutchinson

Our meetings start again on Wednesday 14th September, at 7pm via Zoom. New members and those who just want to try it out are always welcome.

Contact: info@steffhutchinson.co.uk to request the link.

The following meetings will be on Wed 19th October, Wed 16th November and Wed 21st December

North

Contemporary North met for a face-to-face meeting on 4 June at Clements Hall. Here's a highlight of what happened on the day.

We enjoyed spending time on discussing what interests us about photography, our current projects and plans for the future. On the day four members talked about recent work.

Wendy North showed us images from a trip to the Outer Hebrides as well as the finished concertina book about the Huskar Pit Disaster.

Robert Harris talked about his photographic essay for his degree course when he followed the Tour of Britain for over 10 years. He queried, "When does the picture become more important than the event?"

Jane Batty entertained us with a project that began during lockdown when she wasn't able to see her Grandson. She created a digital Easter egg hunt for him and shared online.

Christine Pinnington brought two of her books, most unusual "round" books, based on Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" and one with using experimental fish eye lens.

For more in-depth details here's a link to our Newsletter:
<https://rps.org/media/rrwhuhyg/cn-june-2022.pdf>

I'm looking forward to Autumn and hope that you are too. **We begin with a Zoom meeting on 17 September, 1.30 - 4pm (UK time).**

Contact: Patricia Ruddle, Regional Organiser
contemporaryne@rps.org



© Robert Harris

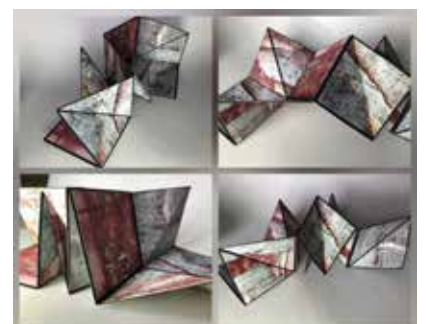


© Jane Batty



Round Books © Christine Pinnington

© Wendy North



Explosion Book © Wendy North

STOP PRESS

Look out on the RPS Website for two forthcoming meetings

15th October 2022

Sandpit Meeting Live/Zoom - Who I am, Who am I?
Clements Hall, York

29th October 2022

Contemporary Advisory Day
Clements Hall, York

The next issue of Concept will be available November 2022

If you have any contributions you would like to have including, news, reports, reviews, publicity, profiles, images, please email your ideas to Suzi via email concepteditor@rps.org

Features and reports should be between 300 and 800 words please. Pictures as separate jpeg files of 1 to 2 megabytes, containing no watermarks please.



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