

# concept

abstraction image conceptualisation notion thought  
impression theory view conception idea hypothesis

THE **RPS**  
ROYAL  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY  
GROUP

e-newsletter

Hi folks

Our October edition is, in part, dedicated to our recent AGM in Manchester, updating you on the work of the Contemporary Group officers throughout the year.

It is very interesting to read the reports of our officers and heartening to see just what has taken place across the year. Big events have included the Photobook exhibition which opened at the Espacio Gallery in Bethnal Green Road, London and then moved on to Bradford Impressions Gallery. This was followed by Yan Wang Preston and Polly Braden who came to Birmingham to show their work on two very different rivers. Our final event of the year was the AGM in Manchester where Derek Trillo and Zelda Cheatle shared their skills with us. A particular highlight of the day was the chance for members to share their work with Derek and Zelda and receive some excellent guidance.

I was also pleased to see that apart from Concept, Social Media has provided our members with other ways of communicating with each other and sharing work. Can I suggest that if you have not already done so, you investigate joining the RPS Contemporary Facebook group. This is a closed group but Contemporary members are all eligible to join. You can also post images on Instagram via [#rpscontemporary](https://www.instagram.com/rpscontemporary).

So, all in all, a busy year for everybody and many thanks to our committee members who have all worked tirelessly to promote contemporary photography.

As always, I would very much appreciate any work you would like to feature on our Gallery page and news of any exhibitions or events going on in your area. We can only be as good as the information we receive and hearing from all our regions gives us a real flavour of what is happening.

You can contact me on [lynconcept@btinternet.com](mailto:lynconcept@btinternet.com). The deadline for our December edition is 5th December.

Lyn Newton  
Editor

## Special AGM Issue

Also

North East  
Contemporary  
Group Meeting

Graham Low on  
Public Art

Arnie Whittle on  
Experimentation

Next Group  
Meetings



Members at the AGM © Alan Cameron

## RPS CONTEMPORARY GROUP

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Saturday 30 September 2017

10:00 - 11.00 am

Manchester Central Library  
St Peter's Square  
Manchester  
M2 5PD

#### AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minutes of the last AGM, 19 July 2016, and matters arising
3. Election/confirmation of officers and committee members
4. Chair's report - Avril Harris
5. Financial report - Treasurer, Greg Holba
6. Further reports circulated and matters arising. Reports received:
  - Brian Steptoe: photobooks
  - Paul Ashley: Journal
  - Duncan Unsworth: Postal portfolios
  - Sean Goodhart: Webmaster
  - Kate Wentworth: Secretary
  - East Anglia Region: Tom Owens
  - North East Region: Patricia Ruddle
7. Any other business

RPS Contemporary Group  
Minutes of the  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017  
Saturday 30 September, 10 am,  
at Manchester Town Hall

## 1. Welcome and apologies

There were 27 members present. The Chair, Avril Harris, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from:

Anne Crabbe  
Rod Fry  
Greg Holba  
Douglas May  
Lyn Newton  
Tom Owens  
Christine Pinnington  
Duncan Unsworth

## 2. Minutes of AGM of 9 July 2016 and matters arising

The meeting agreed the minutes of the last AGM, 9 July 2016.

## 3. Election and confirmation of Committee members and officers

Avril Harris agree to continue as Chair, and this was agreed by the meeting with thanks to Avril.

Paul Ashley (Journal Editor) and Lyn Newton (Concept Editor) were elected to the Committee (proposer Peter Bartlett seconder Bob Farrer, agreed by the meeting).

Peter Ellis (Vice Chair) and Kate Wentworth (Secretary) were elected and confirmed in their offices (proposer Sean Goodhart, seconder Alan Cameron, agreed by the meeting).

The meeting also confirmed the following Committee members for 2017/18:

Alan Cameron (North West Group Organiser)  
Anne Crabbe  
Rod Fry (South West Group Organiser and CG representative at RPS Advisory Board meetings)  
Sean Goodhart (Webmaster)  
Greg Holba (Treasurer)  
Douglas May  
Tom Owens (East Anglia Group Organiser)  
Patricia Ruddle  
Brian Steptoe (Photobook Exhibition)  
Duncan Unsworth (Portfolio Boxes)

## 4. Chair's Report

Avril read her Chair's Report (which had been previously circulated) to the meeting. With reference to a future International Photobook Exhibition/Competition, she said that there was a strong possibility that this would take place in 2018/19 when RPS have moved to their new headquarters. She added that CG should keep up pressure on the RPS to ensure that this happened.

Brian Steptoe said that Michael Pritchard (RPS chief executive) had confirmed in an email to Avril that he and the Council wish to go ahead with a Photobook exhibition. The Event needs backing by the RPS because the CG does not have enough volunteers or suitable premises for handling the event (including receiving and storing the entries and their packaging, handling return postage, transporting the books etc). Responses to RPS surveys

confirm that the membership are very interested in photobooks, and developing this aspect of photography would greatly add to the benefits of joining the RPS, beyond distinctions and exhibitions. As part of the Photobook initiative workshops to enhance skills in understanding, planning and making photobooks should be organised.

## 5. Financial Report

The Treasurer's report (circulated before the meeting) predicts a loss of £1,300 for 2017 (calendar year). The main cause was loss making national weekend events. Brian Steptoe emphasised that the Journal printing costs had been reduced by the printer using a cheaper printing method (though postage costs are rising). The financial aim is that Journal production and postage costs should be covered by group members' subscriptions; and the cost of events should be met by the income they generate. Peter Ellis said that local Contemporary Groups might organise events supported by the national CG (RPS regional groups generally do not subscribe to the ethos of the Contemporary Group). The numbers of the CG remains stable at about 435-440 members. It was agreed that the CG needs to work to break even, rather than make a profit, and the outlook is positive.

The meeting approved the Financial Report and thanked Greg Holba for his work.

## 6. Further Reports previously circulated - matters arising

- Journal: Paul Ashley said that he had taken on the editorship of the Journal because of its high quality, thanks to Patricia Ruddle's able work as editor. He did not plan any particular changes, but hoped like Patricia to use as much space as possible for articles about contemporary photographers and their work (a strong attraction of the Journal) as well as work by CG members.

The meeting passed a vote of thanks to Patricia for her six years as Editor, and for transforming the Journal from an irregular newsletter to a serious quarterly photographic magazine.

- Concept: Apologies were made for failure to circulate the AGM papers to all members of CG. It was agreed that this oversight could be remedied by issuing a special edition of Concept with a report on the AGM, and to including the minutes and all the papers submitted. Peter Ellis agreed to produce a report, and provide it and the papers to Lyn. Members had been asked to take photographs at the meeting, which they will send to Peter to incorporate with the report.

Peter also said that he would like to see more of CG members' work included in Concept. Patricia said that Lyn was planning to set up a Gallery page

- Website: Peter Ellis thanked Sean Goodhart for his good work. However, the web pages are underused and not viewed very much. Lyn and Sean should add cross links between the website and the Facebook group. A problem with the CG webpage gallery is that a large number of the images posted do not conform with the CG ethos. Those posting on the CG Gallery do not have to be members of the CG.

- Alan Cameron suggested that more use should be made of Instagram and possibly Twitter and other social media. It was agreed to acquire an Instagram hashtag using the word 'Contemporary': eg hashtag/RPSContemporary.

## 7. Any other business

There was no other business.

Avril closed the meeting at 11 am

## Report from the Chair

It seems a long time ago that we were knee high in PhotoBooks but it is only a year. The exhibition was shown with great success at the Espacio Gallery in Bethnal Green Road and again in Bradford at Impressions Gallery. On both occasions the help of members was invaluable. The RPS have been approached about taking over the PhotoBook Exhibition/competition and after consideration there is the strong possibility that it will return in late 2018/19 after the hoped for removal to new HQ for the RPS and to possibly tie in with the Bristol PhotoBook weekend. We should know more in the New Year.

Over the course of the year there have been quite a few personnel changes. We welcome Alan Cameron taking over from Ian Maxwell to lead Contemporary North West. Ian has been a stalwart for many years for which we are extremely grateful and I think he deserves his break from Contemporary duties.

Patricia Ruddle has retired from editing the Journal to have more time to pursue her own interests, Patricia has taken the Journal from an irregular newsletter to a publication which can hold its own with any photographic magazine. Patricia also was instrumental in choosing her successor and we welcome Paul Ashley whose first edition of the Journal proved Patricia correct in her judgement. Christine Pinnington, after two years, has handed over Concept, our online newsletter, to Lyn Newton. Christine will remain available to Lyn for guidance, if needed, for the time being. Again Concept has improved immeasurably in the past two years.

The committee has also seen changes, Peter Ellis has handed his duties as secretary over to Kate Wentworth and is now vice chair as Rod Fry stood down. Rod is now one of two representatives, the other being Janine Freeston, Chair of the Historical Group, who will represent all the SIG's at RPS advisory meetings. Rod also represents the Contemporary Groups at other meetings held at Bath. Both Peter and Kate should have their positions ratified at this AGM.

This past year we had a one day event instead of our normal weekend as many said they would prefer it while it turned out that just as many preferred the weekend. We try to have events alternately North and South also using Birmingham as a central point, it doesn't seem to make much difference as the same faces show up giving us much needed support in our endeavours. This time we met in Birmingham with Yan Wang Preston and Polly Braden talking and showing their work on two very different rivers. The venue was excellent and the work brought to show was of a very high standard, all of it being individual projects as opposed to individual prints. My thanks to our speakers who made it such an interesting day and to our attendees for being a lively and receptive audience.

Our next event will probably be held in London and will again be one day.

In Manchester, we will be welcoming Derek Trillo (runner up in the pilot PhotoBook Exhibition) and Zelda Cheatle who has kindly stepped in when Dewi Lewis found his plans changed as the rescheduling by his printers of two books coincided with our AGM.

I thank you all for your support both to our members and in particular to my committee for their help and understanding while I underwent treatment last year and their considerable help in the last few weeks when I carelessly broke my leg. Thank you.

Avril R Harris.

**ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**  
**CONTEMPORARY GROUP – 2017 FINANCIAL VIEW**

**Honorary Treasurer's Report, dated 25th September 2017**

***Purpose and coverage***

This report has been produced for the 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Contemporary Group of The Royal Photographic Society. The Treasurer's commentary follows, with the Profit and Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet presented on pages 2 & 3.

Thus far 2017 has been a financially simpler year than 2016. As a result this report does not provide as much commentary as last year.

***2016 Actuals – A financial profit***

In 2016 the group made a profit of approx. £2,000. The main reasons for a profit were articulated in last year's report when a profit of £600 was predicted. There are three reasons that the actual profit is higher than predicted. First, the VAT expense associated with the Photobook ticket revenue was not paid until 2017 and thus the profit is inflated by £616. Second, subscription income was a little higher than predicted. Last, some Photobook competition fee receipts were remitted late.

***2017 Projected – A predicted loss?***

The projected finances show that the group is predicted to make a loss of £1,300 this year. However, there are two main reasons why members should not be concerned. First, the 2016 profit was inflated by £616 of unpaid VAT (as mentioned above) and therefore the predicted loss can be viewed as a real loss for the year of approx. £700. This is only 6% of current day assets. Second, it has been assumed that Q4 subscription income remains unchanged from last year. As the YTD subscriptions have been higher than last year it may transpire that Q4 subscriptions increase in line with the trend, thereby reducing the loss.

***Funding the quarterly journal from subscriptions is secure***

Last year I commented that the group's commitment to producing a leading quarterly journal looked more secure than in earlier years as projected subscriptions covered the total costs of printing and distribution. I am happy to report that this is still the case, with further increases in subscriptions more easily covering smaller increases in production and distribution.

***A proportionate response to protecting the group's cash assets***

Given the last couple of years of financial information it remains my opinion that the committee should continue to take a proportionate approach to protecting assets by :

- Maintaining a conservative risk appetite towards financially supporting annual and regional events.
- Finding ways of increasing and maintaining member numbers.
- Looking to organise one or more profit making events during the year.

**ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**  
**CONTEMPORARY GROUP – 2017 FINANCIAL VIEW**

**Profit and Loss Statement**

	<b>2017 Actuals<sup>1</sup> (to 25/09/16)</b>	<b>2017 Projected<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2016 Actuals</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Subscriptions <sup>3</sup>	6,460	8,250	7,676
Photobook event income	-	-	5,616
Conference receipts	1,000	1,000	-
Miscellaneous	12	12	153
	7,472	9,262	13,445
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Journal production <sup>4</sup>	2,950	3,850	4,861
Journal distribution <sup>4</sup>	2,103	2,803	2,241
Photobook events costs	-	-	3,372
Conference costs	1,790	1,790	-
AGM costs <sup>5</sup>	378	1,528	676
Miscellaneous costs <sup>6</sup>	616	616	227
	7,837	10,587	11,377

Notes :

1. 2017 Actuals figures include transactions recorded 1<sup>st</sup> Jan to 25<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2017 inclusive.
2. 2017 Projected figures include the Actuals and any known income and expenditure that are expected to fall between the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept and 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2017.
3. Projected Subscriptions is estimated to increase at £ 550 per month till the end of the calendar year plus a December Life subscription remittance estimated at £ 140. This is based on last year's Q4 receipts and may be conservative if current subscription trends are maintained.
4. The Journal production & distribution costs of the Q4 journal have been estimated at approximately £ 900 and £ 700 respectively and this is based on costs incurred for the earlier 2017 copies.
5. AGM costs consist of (i) £ 378 venue hire, (ii) an estimated total of £ 750 travel expenses and (iii) speaker fees.
6. 2017 Miscellaneous income and expenditure in 2017 is entirely composed of VAT movements. The large VAT payment of £ 616 relates to the VAT on tickets sold for the 2016 Photobook event.

**ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**  
**CONTEMPORARY GROUP – 2017 FINANCIAL VIEW**

**Balance Sheet**

Assets as recorded in cashbook at <b>31 Dec 2016</b>	11, 947
P&L movement for <i>Actuals</i>	-364
Assets as recorded in cashbook at <b>22 Sept 2017</b>	11, 583
Remaining P&L Movements	
Estimated income	+1, 790
Journal production and distribution	-2, 750
Assets as projected to <b>31 Dec 2017</b>	10, 623

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### **Kate Wentworth - Secretary's Report**

I have been acting Secretary to the Contemporary Group Committee for almost a year. My very light duties include receiving the membership lists from RPS every month. It is encouraging to see that we now have 436 members, while a year ago there were 423.

When I receive the lists, I send welcoming emails with information about the group to new members. I also email those whose membership has lapsed reminding them that if they have simply forgotten to renew their subscription they can do so by contacting the RPS; and saying that if they have decided to leave we are sorry and hope that in due course they might rejoin. I have had one or two replies to these emails - one lady saying she had been ill and would rejoin; others explaining their reasons for leaving.

I am grateful that Peter Ellis has continued with the strictly secretarial work of posting the Journal to members. And he also keeps the Group Facebook page - that would be quite beyond my capabilities!

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### **Duncan Unsworth - Postal Portfolio**

The portfolio box scheme continues to have a core of devoted members. Looking at and critiquing each other's prints and books included in the boxes proves to be a valuable and rewarding experience for those taking part.

Over the past year it was decided to amalgamate the three circuits of 4 or 5 boxes down to two circuits. This means that each circuit now has a healthy number of members with only a few people belonging to both circuits. Over the last six months the loss of any members has been matched by new recruits but even more would always be welcome.

As each box can take a year to go around the circuit it is proposed that anyone wanting more rapid feedback can ask for e-mailed responses from each member when they view it.

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## Sean Goodhart - Webmaster

Reflecting on the content without actually looking I was feeling a little low; in the last couple of months I've captured a few ideas for blog posts but been unable to prepare and publish them – I was beginning to feel that I'd not done much in the last year. Looking at the detail, however, surprised me. There were 16 blog articles and I created 23 event listings; many of those listings were supporting regional sub-groups within the Contemporary SIG..

### **Event postings**

[Photobook craft and publishing with Contemporary SIG AGM](#)

[Contemporary North East September Meeting](#)

[Contemporary Group North East July Meet](#)

[Contemporary North West Meeting 5th June Now Cancelled](#)

[Contemporary Group North East May Meet](#)

[Tales of Two Rivers](#)

[Suprematism Exhibition](#)

[Exhibition 21](#)

[Contemporary North West March Meeting](#)

[Rivers by Duncan Unsworth](#)

[Contemporary North East March Meeting](#)

[Contemporary South West meeting](#)

[Contemporary Group North East January Meet](#)

[Regular Contemporary North West Meeting](#)

[2016 Royal Photographic Society Open International Photobook Exhibition](#)

[Contemporary North West Meeting](#)

[Midlands Contemporary Group CANCELLED](#)

[Contemporary Group North East November meeting](#)

[Contemporary North West Meeting](#)

[Contemporary Midlands Kick-off Meeting at QUAD](#)

[The Contemporary Group North East - Wakefield](#)

[RPS Open International Photobook Exhibition 2016](#)

[Regular Meeting of the North West Contemporary Group](#)

### **Blogs**

[Digital Imaging Expo 2017](#)

[Contemporary SIG AGM 2017 - save the date!](#)

[A picture really is worth a 1000 words](#)

[Must there be an image?](#)

[Contemporary Conference Report - April 2017](#)

[Format International Photography Festival 2017](#)

[Ready for the River?](#)

[Subversion](#)

[Provoke: Photography in Japan between Protest and Performance, 1960–1975](#)

[Wolfgang Tillmans](#)

[Doris, how good to meet you again](#)

[Images about... science and the environment](#)

[Know Your Onions](#)

[Magnum Photobooks](#)

[Instagram and Depression](#)

[Future Perfect: What does appropriation say about us?](#)

In addition to the events and blogs, with the support of committee members I reviewed the galleries posted to rps.org and tagged with "contemporary". The objective here was to find candidates to highlight in the "showcase gallery" on the Contemporary pages which I updated in February 2017 (... I guess it's about time I had another look to see if there are new sets of images that can be linked).

<http://rps.org/special-interest-groups/contemporary/about/contemporary-showcase>

One thing clear in this review is there's many images tagged as contemporary which are not relevant to "our" description of that tag! Whilst it is technically possible to remove the tag I don't know how; if the committee want me to find out how I will.

One other initiative that I was involved with in the last year was David Edge's attempt at forming a Midlands Contemporary group. Frankly I didn't have the time with work/travel/family and I'm guessing from the lack of response many others didn't either. People complain there's nothing in the regions... but then don't take part when there is. People get out of organisations what they put in...

## Brian Steptoe

The first RPS International Photobook exhibition, organised and run by Avril Harris, Tom Owens, Rod Fry, Kate Wentworth and myself, was held in October 2016 at the Espacio Gallery, as part of East London Photomonth. The exhibition subsequently travelled to Impressions Gallery, Bradford. A short list of 25 were selected from the 155 total entries from 23 countries. An accompanying print+book exhibition showed work from 13 invited members of the Society. A full report on the event, including lessons learnt, lists of experienced photobook selectors and recommendations was sent to Michael Pritchard and forwarded to the RPS Council. Council subsequently stated support for the RPS going forward with future such exhibitions. Action on this rests with Michael Pritchard and depends on RPS staff resources being identified to move this forward.

I have continued my self-education on the world of the photobook, attending photobook fairs at Format, Derby, Offprint at Tate Modern and an event run by Val Williams and David Moore in London in conjunction with the Photographic Archive at the London College of Communication.

Facebook Group RPSPhotobook has been continued as a reference resource on events and activities taking place around the world. There are about ten entries posted per month.

Estimates of worldwide photobook publication numbers are over 2000 per annum. A first UK photobook exhibition, other than those we have organised for the RPS, was held in August 2017 by the Swansea College of Art and the Elysium Gallery, Swansea. The shortlist was selected by Lucy Moore, who was a selector for our 2016 exhibition. The winning book was by Erin Solomons, PhD student at UCA Farnham, which had won a Magnum Graduates Award at Photo London in 2016.

Bob Books, one of our sponsors last year, have now organised their own Photobook awards, held in conjunction with BJP magazine. The first of these was awarded this August, with a winner and two runners-up. The winning entry was a documentary book about daily life in Transnistria, an unrecognised country between Moldova and Ukraine. Bob Books have also recently become one of the RPS sponsors, replacing Blurb Books.

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## Paul Ashley Editor, Contemporary Photography Journal

In the spring of this year I took over from Patricia Ruddle as editor of Contemporary Photography with both excitement and nervousness. Excitement, because I had come to recognise the journal as the best of the RPS Special Interest Group publications for editorial and production standards; nervousness, because I knew it would be difficult to replace Patricia, her global knowledge of photographers and her judgement in assembling each edition.

My first issue has appeared, and I can breathe a little more easily now that I am familiar with the planning and production process. I am grateful to Patricia for her advice during the handover period, not least for her suggestions of sources for future content. Brian, Peter, Avril and Anne have all been of enormous help – I have become part of a smoothly running machine.

I have no immediate wish to make substantial changes to the journal structure and layout, although Brian has changed the cover layout to give a more modern (full bleed) appearance. I shall keep 'the look' under review over the next year – and I would welcome any comments from members.

Last year Patricia reported that the electronic journal on Issuu had 367 'followers'; the number is now 429, which is good progress. I would like to see the journal more widely circulated and

read. There are difficulties (not least the financial risk) in printing more copies and finding sales outlets, and so I will give more thought to publicising the electronic publication, both in the UK and internationally.

I welcome all suggestions for inclusion in the journal, from members and non-members. I look forward to hearing from you, and meeting many of you at the AGM and at meetings over the coming year.

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## Tom Owens - Contemporary Group East Anglia Region

The East Anglia Contemporary Group is a motley crew of itinerant photographers. We are organised organically and meet up to discuss individual projects on a random basis. Doing what we do means that we tend to be lone operators and we only get together to eat cake, drink tea and coffee and stuff the Contemporary Journal into envelopes.

In between stuffing and scoffing we are preparing for a free format exhibition next July in a gallery in Ipswich featuring the work of maybe four or five of us.

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## Patricia A. Ruddle ARPS - Contemporary Group North East

The North East subgroup has been meeting bi-monthly at Nigel Tooby's art studio in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, since the first meeting on 17 September 2016. Like before at our venue in York, we meet for three hours on Saturday afternoons. People come from Middlesbrough as well as North and West Yorkshire. The venue is well-situated for travel by car and train.

The atmosphere and hospitality of Nigel and Elaine has served us well. Over the past year we have become a friendly, cohesive group. We usually average between 12-14 members with a half dozen apologies. If everyone on our list would show up, it would be difficult accommodating everyone. Also of concern is the amount of time each member has to talk, followed by discussion time, when we have three hours to divide among ourselves as well as time allocated for CG news. To try to remedy this, our next meeting on 18 November will include an extra half hour.

Nigel's studio has everything needed for a successful meeting – computer, laptop, television, 35mm projector, tables, including ongoing lashings of tea, coffee and biscuits. Members bring work on USB sticks. More recently, there has been an increase in showing books whether made by hand or online. Prints and contact sheets are also shown and discussed.

Sadly for us we may have to move next year because Nigel is not going to continue the lease on his studio. We are looking to relocate back in York.

There are no current projects at the moment except for the production of a book on some aspect of the North. Christine Pinnington LRPS volunteered to oversee the project and eleven members have shown an interest. However, the idea is on hold at the moment. I think that it is because our members are too occupied with their own projects, making books and participating in several exhibitions around Yorkshire.

Something that I initiated is working very well. I ask for a volunteer to write a report about each meeting for "Concept." This has the advantages of everyone feeling included and getting different viewpoints on what we are doing.

I announced last year that I planned to step down from co-ordinating the subgroup. To date no one has come forward. I'll continue to look after the group until someone else volunteers.

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# Gallery



Derek Trillo



Zelda Cheatle



© Alan Cameron

L-R Kate Wentworth, Avril Harris, Peter Ellis



© Alan Cameron

## Contemporary Group AGM

After the meeting, Derek Trillo presented his handmade photobooks and explained how he works and develops his ideas by planning and making successions of books.

Zelda Cheatle talked about her career, concentrating on her experiences of selecting and publishing photobooks, the qualities of photobooks and the world of publishing.

Derek and Zelda then commented on photobooks and prints from members at the meeting. Their advice was encouraging, frank and helpful.

Peter Ellis Sept 2017

*Thanks to Alan Cameron LRPS for providing these images*



© Alan Cameron



© Alan Cameron

# Contemporary North East Meeting

09 September 2017

## Report by Peter Bartlett LRPS

Twelve members of the Contemporary North East group met at Nigel Tooby's Wakefield studio on 9 September. Apologies had been received from Mary Crowther, Paul Anderson, Wendy North, Graham Evans and Dave Richardson. Several members had brought along work.

To start the proceedings, Lyn Newton showed a series of images depicting a "Tough Mudders" event at Broughton Hall, Skipton. Lyn explained that the competitors were all "ordinary people" not athletes who ran an 8-10 km course across muddy fields and through a variety of (muddy) obstacles. Lyn was impressed about the way the participants had supported another when in difficulty and she had sought to capture this in her images.

Graham Low's images presented an amusing take on modern public art and the difficulty in interpreting it. He showed images from Brimham Rocks and Coldstone Cut. His projected images were interspersed with digital slides containing text with wry comments about the art work questioning how to interpret it as a photographer and asking of the art, "what does it do?"  
**More about Graham's work at the end of this article.**



© Graham Low

Avijit Datta showed images from a visit to Ecuador that depicted the wall paintings on buildings in Quito, the capital city. The painted images ranged from beautiful graphic designs and murals to, at the other extreme, modern street art or graffiti like those seen in any major city around the world. In his commentary, Avijit drew parallels between Hokusai's ability to evoke emotion with a single brushstroke and the urban art of Quito conveying the spirit of the Ecuadorean people.



© Graham Low

At the break, Peter Bartlett showed a selection of Café Royal books. He explained that Craig Atkinson the publisher of these excellent books had been one of his Flickr contacts a number of years ago and that he had become aware of the series of books through that. Over the years, Peter had bought the odd book, but invariably, ones that appealed to him were often sold out before he got around to ordering them on a one-off basis. As a consequence, he decided to subscribe a few months ago and was very pleased with the collection of photographs that was developing. Several members took Café Royal business cards away with them. Café Royal's website is: <https://www.caferoyalbooks.com>

Chris Hopkins is one of the founder members of the CNE group, but had been unable to attend meetings for the last couple of years because of other commitments. To mark his return to the group he showed a selection of images from three projects:

Poultry Farmers - a series of images capturing the activity of farmers, buyers and poultry at Otley Market.

The Lady's Not Returning - images made at the state funeral of Lady Thatcher. Chris's reportage series concentrated on the protesters that attended. He explained that he had been attracted to the subject by the fact that protesters would attend such an event. Chris got in amongst the protesters to shoot his images using a wide angle lens to create a sense of immediacy.

Woodland Echoes - a spin-off from another project about a local wood within which there had once been a large house, formerly a school. The images are of found artefacts photographed under controlled conditions and set against a standard background.

Christine Pinnington has become involved with a local anti-fracking group and she showed variations of prototype images designed to capture the potential environmental impact of fracking. A lively discussion ensued in which several suggestions were made for development of the concept.

Celine Alexander-Brown showed her images of Kolkata's railway slum community, Indian street photography and the work of Interplast who provide free reconstructive surgery in developing countries at previous meetings. Celine had brought these images together in a book published using the Photobox platform and added a selection of personal family images that reflect her own Indian heritage. She had chosen monochrome conversions as colour detracted from the emotion of the contemporary street and documentary images. The completed body of work creates a very personal record of the author's links with India, both recent and historic.

Finally, our host, Nigel Tooby produced a light box and a small collection of glass lantern slides that probably date back to the early 20th century. Nigel explained that he had discovered these images made by a Reverend Evans in an antique shop in Thirsk, North Yorkshire. The images were fascinating, apparently having been made in such diverse locations as India, Norway, Durham and Cologne. The majority were monochrome, although several had been beautifully hand coloured. Nigel had selected his slides from a much wider collection. He commented that he hopes in time to scan them and print them.

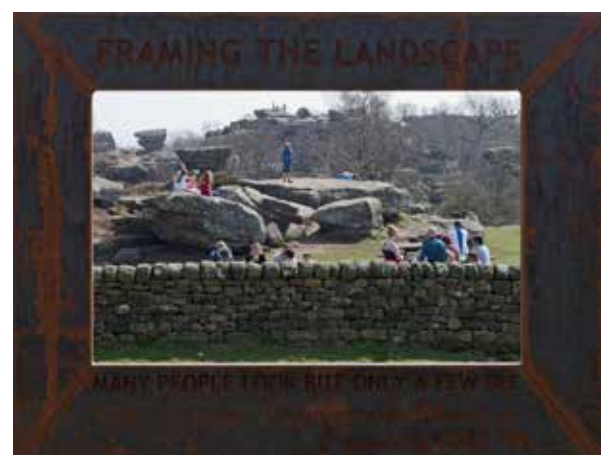
**Next meeting - 18 November 1.30 -5.00pm at the same location.**

## Public art and the photographer by Graham Low LRPS

Some examples of public art are easy to understand and their functions with respect to photographers are transparent. The shoulder-high rectangular metal frame on a tripod in the middle of the National Trust's Brimham Rocks in N. Yorkshire is a good example.

Other public artworks are less transparent. Thus, just outside Harrogate, on a windswept Nidderdale hillside, is the stone structure called Coldstones Cut. Perched atop a bleak hillside, it resembles a crumbling fortress without the military attributes. The aggregate path up from the car park leads, incongruously, through a field to two spiral stone 'towers' with a short tarmacked urban-style single-lane roadway, complete with no-parking bollards and white lines on the road. This leads to a viewing platform overlooking the Coldstones quarry. The structure is signed and dated by the artist (Andrew Sabin, 2010) on a stone next to a large yellow bike with (seemingly) tractor tyres. In a short essay on the Coldstones Cut website, Sabin describes the structure in largely instrumental terms, as helping the visitor to interpret the surrounding landscape and/or the quarry. Little is said about what the structure contributes, beyond an evocation – which with hindsight seems fair enough – of Mycenae. Quite why the roadway has tarmac, white lines, and no-parking bollards, or why the two pathways up the 'towers' are spiral remains unclear, to me anyway, as does the question of whether the hurricane-force winds along them that we battled against were an intended design feature.

My quandary was what to do as a photographer, especially as I had little idea of the artist's vision. Should I just interpret the landscape and the quarry and ignore the artwork? Should I treat Coldstones Cut as just a shape, or a rock, and use it to make my own visual statement? Or should I try and stay with the artist's vision, if I could work it out? Simply recording the structure does not lead to one's own work.





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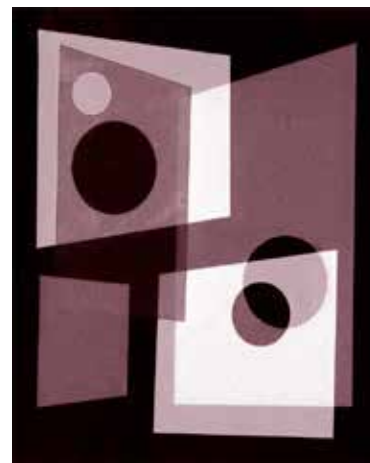
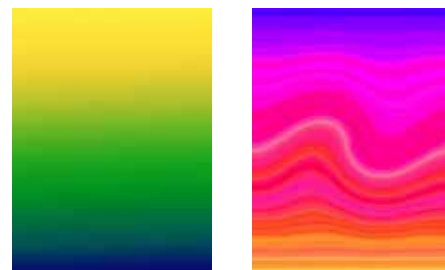
## Arnie Whittle ARPS

Sometimes, when experimenting, we happen on a set of actions which produce an interesting result but then, when asked how we did it, it is difficult to recall exactly what we did.

That was the position Arnie Whittle was in when I asked him how he created the vibrant and uplifting images we have featured. Arnie tells me he has been inspired by all kinds of art but he has been particularly influenced by David Hockney's wonderful colours, vast canvases, and photographic experimentation.

As a photographer Arnie has worked on many projects over the last 27 years and been inspired by many great photographers. 'I am a people picture photographer' he says. 'I like portraits, street photography, art work projects and experimental work'.

Arnie created the pictures on his old computer some 4 years ago very much as an experimental process and to date he hasn't managed to recreate the recipe. Luckily, he kept some of the images on file and we are pleased to feature them on our page.



## Group Meetings Coming Up

### Contemporary Group North East Meeting

Saturday 18 November 1.30 -5.00pm

Third Floor, Suite 4,  
13 Bull Ring  
Central Buildings  
Wakefield WF1 1HB

Patricia A. Ruddle ARPS  
[patriciaruddle@btinternet.com](mailto:patriciaruddle@btinternet.com)  
07572 124 290

**Please note earlier start time**

### Contemporary North West Weekend Meeting

11 November 2017 14:00 - 17:00

#### **New Venue**

Samlesbury War Memorial Hall  
Cuerdale Lane  
Samlesbury  
Preston PR5 0UY

Alan Cameron LRPS  
[alan.cameron@me.com](mailto:alan.cameron@me.com)  
07825 271344

### **Deadline for contributions for inclusion in the next Issue is 5th December 2017**

News, reports, reviews, publicity, profiles, images, in fact anything of interest in the contemporary world. If you have any contributions you would like to have included, please email to: [lynconcept@btinternet.com](mailto:lynconcept@btinternet.com)

Concept The e-newsletter of the RPS Contemporary Group  
Lyn Newton LRPS, Newsletter Editor  
Christine Pinnington LRPS, Layout

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