



Sean Goodhart

**RPS Contemporary North**  
**A subgroup of the RPS Contemporary Group at**  
**St Clement's Hall, York**

Saturday 19th February 2022 1:30-5:00

Text: **Gary Morgan**

Coordination and editing: **Patricia Ruddle**

Layout and design: **Robert Harris**



As the Covid restrictions were somewhat more relaxed, we held a face-to-face meeting at Clements Hall in York.

A total of twenty had booked. However, Storm Eunice came as well and we had sixteen attending although four left immediately due to heavy snow falls. Sometimes you just can't win! However, there were plenty of opportunities to talk about photography and generally catch up with each other.

Our screenshot this month is a thermal image taken by **Sean Goodhart**. Although a bitterly cold, snowy day, you can see that we were enjoying the heat!

### Announcements

The Contemporary Group AGM will be held on 2nd April on Zoom. Patricia suggested that we should attend this. More can be found at the following URL:

<https://rps.org/events/groups/contemporary/2022/april/>

**Avijit Datta** mentioned that he was standing for Chair of the Digital Imaging Group, now the largest RPS SIG. The following day he was elected by 98% at the Group's AGM.

Congratulations Avijit! It is hoped that later in the year both Groups can hold a joint meeting.

### Books and Prints

We had a very good selection of prints and books brought along to this meeting, and these were examined thoroughly between presentations.

**Peter Bartlett** brought a collection of zines from ADM Publishing. These are the same people who published his book *A Day at the Races*.

<https://www.artdecomagpie.com/>

The zines covered a wide range of subjects, and each is the work of a single photographer. Based upon Peter's information, these don't seem to be well advertised appearing to be a little bit of a collector's niche – for those in the know.

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**Rachel Perry** brought a beautiful portfolio of her prints, including some of water towers. The photos were taken digitally but then transferred onto a silk-screen process for printing.

**Morris Gregory** brought in a collection of his self-made books covering underwater scenes, the Namibia desert and Glen Coe, among many other subjects.

Several of us thought that it would be interesting to have presentations from Rachel and Morris about the process behind their works, what they would do differently in the light of experience and what techniques they used. Maybe in a future meeting (hint hint – Patricia...).





**Robert Harris** brought in a portfolio of his surreal digital images. Robert is currently doing a photography degree and presented a short video developed as part of his degree in photography at the Open College of Arts.

[Oca.ac.uk](http://Oca.ac.uk)

*He describes the work as follows:*

The project looked at our everyday activities in a world of surveillance capitalism. The images replicated actions we take every day when using technology.

The images created looked at everyday activities with information conveyed on the monitor screen within the background. The images offer a mechanism to show what we do and the links with the data mining of the big companies.

The video followed up the idea from the original images and provided a platform to create *Protest Billboards*. The billboards brought the outside inside and delivered an alternative message to the viewer.

The video was divided into many monitors; the monitor to the right provided the original message, while the monitors on the left identified individual components from the main image once the images moved on.

The breakdown of the main images provided the viewer with a detailed view of the individual components. Each of the components provided additional information on what we do.

The video was selected as the media as I felt it could be replayed repeatedly in any environment.

Robert also showed us some very impressive prints from his video. Big data is very poorly understood by just about everyone who does not work with it; and can be seen as a threat to our privacy as well as our free will. Robert's video is one way of conveying the suspicion that we should all have of the ways that the data is collected, used and abused.



## Sean Goodhart

Sean is the Contemporary Group web master. He was born on Tyneside but moved to Teesside for most of his childhood. Therefore, it was natural for him to show us a collection of his North-East England photographs which is entitled, *My relationship with Teesside*. His relationship fell into two distinct periods: his youth and, much later, after he had left Teesside and returned, as an adult.

The adult Sean can look at, for example, **Tish Murtha's** work *Youth Unemployment* and **Chris Killip's** *In flagrante* which strongly remind him of his youth in Teesside (as they also strongly remind your humble scribe of life on the western coast). However, as Sean didn't get his first SLR until he was 18

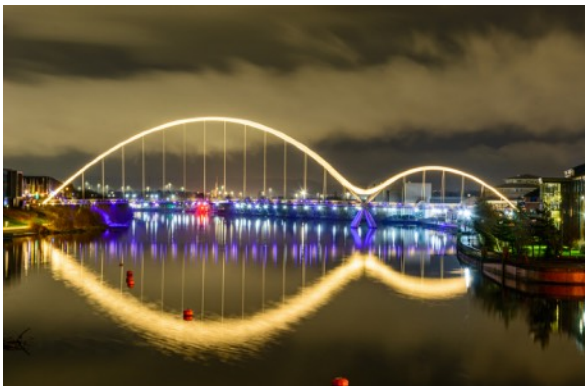
studying at a poly', his images are not from that youthful period but from his adult period – after his return. Sean provided a useful lesson in this dichotomy: "Take the picture now! It will be of interest in many years".

He took us on a river journey past industrial and architectural landmarks such as the Norton housing estate built for ICI Billingham. Norton is now a fashionable area with nice shops and a restored duck pond but which was full of detritus when Sean was a boy.

Also, when Sean was a boy, the last bridge on the river, before the sea, was in Yarm. Now there are five more bridges between Yarm and the sea, including the famous Infinity Bridge.

One of the bridges (Newport Bridge) is a vertical lift bridge and was one of the first in the UK. It allowed boats to get to the port in Stockton but is now welded shut. The bridge is illuminated at night and is worthy of a late-night visit with a camera.

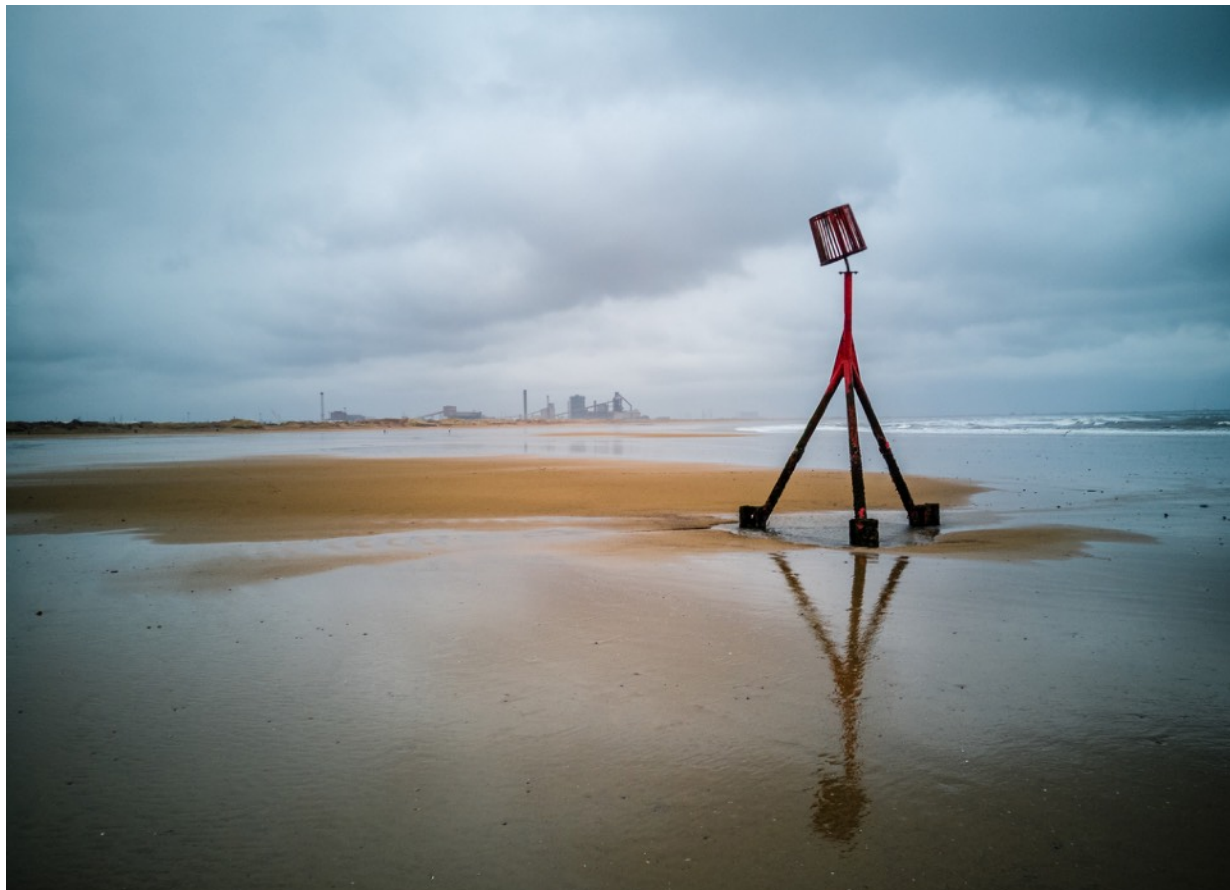
Another bridge conducts the A19 over the river. This bridge was built to be high enough so that ships with masts can get under it.





North of Norton is the Able shipyard which is now recycling the old North Sea oil platforms. The photographs that Sean showed us of this were rather surreal showing huge oil platforms partially disassembled.

Teesside is very close to the sea and holds many memories for Sean such as going to Pacitto's for ice cream in Redcar and the colourful slot machines. Also on the Redcar sea front is The Beacon, which is designed to be a vertical pier. It's possible to travel up the beacon for an elevated view of Redcar with the steel works in the background.



Redcar does have a beach, which is unusual, because under the sand is a pre-historic forest parts of which are exposed after storms wash the sand away. From this and nearby beaches people used to collect the sea coal caused by the nearby collieries which used to throw their spoil into the sea. If you've seen the final scene from the original *Get Carter* (just that scene can be available on YouTube) you'll know about the spoil being tipped into the sea.

Also of photographic interest in that area are the fisherman's huts at South Gare as well the small fishing port of Paddy's Hole. Sean also noted that it doesn't seem to matter which way you look, you can see either the steel works or the nuclear power station.

In the following discussion, it was suggested that we have a group outing to Redcar or that area. It was also noted that Redcar is also close to Saltburn, for a different photographic perspective.





## Ken Furmage

A presentation by **David Burgess** was given of **Ken Furmage** photographs, entitled *Streets of India*. This consisted of a series of monochrome images, taken in the 70s and 80s. The images were monochrome and film-based showing beautiful grain.

The images were a snapshot of that time (see also the comments made by Sean, above) consisting of informative posters about AIDS, a beggar with polio outside a hotel, and a lady with leprosy. Ken had taken some pictures of the Taj Mahal but eschewed the rote image that most people do producing something much more interesting.

Ken liked writing on the walls and many of his images include text. He also tried to include multiple points of interest in photos.

When Ken died, David and Ken's cousin each took different parts of his archive away to look after. Based upon the quality of the images we saw it's a shame that more of these images are not available to view.

Ken was an early member of the Contemporary Group. He was an active member and judge of several photographic clubs and societies. He founded the *New Image Contemporary Exhibition Group* which held many exhibitions throughout Yorkshire and beyond. (It was with this Group that **Patricia** and her late husband **Michael Lee** first had the opportunity to exhibit prints in the 1980s. Ken was not only a friend but a mentor as well.)



### Next Meeting

The next meeting will be 19 March 2022, 1:30-4:00 (UK time) on Zoom

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