

Hi folks.

This issue's deadline was a little earlier than usual because of administrative issues. As a result, I am aware that at least one sub-group's November meeting may not be included. However, the February issue will carry that report. Nevertheless, I hope we have found items for this issue which will interest you.

The move to put CONCEPT onto ISSUU has been very well received because of it allowing readers to view images in much higher definition than the emailed version. We do encourage all readers to have a look at the ISSUU version for this reason. We want you to have full value of our contributor's images.

CONCEPT is, amongst other things, a vehicle for our Contemporary regional groups to report on meetings and advertise upcoming events. We therefore appeal to all the regional leaders to send reports and news of upcoming meetings with some images please.

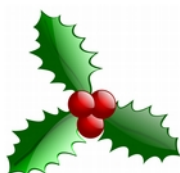
Whilst we scan national journals and web sites for exhibitions of interest to contemporary photographers we would also like to include more local events which do not reach the national media. This is, therefore, a matter for the regional groups and also individual group members to let the editor know about, they cannot be included if we don't know about them.

Our readers are also encouraged to send reports of interesting photographic talks and events that have been visited. Also articles for inclusion. Please don't be shy to do so and also don't worry about not being fluid in the writing, we can always help in that regard.

Very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to you all from the CONCEPT team.

Howard Fisher  
Concept Editor

**(Please read the important note from Alan Cameron at the end of this issue)**



## e-newsletter

### December 2019

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Images as jpegs (approx 1Mb)  
Text as Word files*

*Please send to Romney Tansley:  
[romney@tansley.co.uk](mailto:romney@tansley.co.uk)*



## East Midlands Contemporary/Documentary Group

The group met at our usual venue on 28<sup>th</sup> September with 11 of us attending and 9 showing images.

Peter Rowarth ARPS, showed us more of his fascinating pill-box images together with his latest project looking at graffiti carved into trees.

Peter says of his pill-box project:



*I have looked in, with a camera, through the loopholes of a Lincolnshire pillbox to show the shapes and colours created on the concrete walls from sunlight at a low elevation above the horizon. The intensity of the light and the colour temperature varies throughout the year, dependent on the season and the time of day. The images are cropped square to resemble a loophole.*

*Most pillboxes were constructed in 1940 when there was a real threat of German invasion during the Second World War. They were part of the first line of defence and were designed to offer protection to the field staff who were manning them. A wider horizontal view to improve observation was made possible by the splayed edges to the 12-inch square loopholes and there was a recess in the lower shelf of the aperture to secure a machine gun.*

*Being on watch must have been uncomfortable and cramped in the cold, bleak, concrete environment. However, the coloured shapes that I have photographed would have been seen by the field staff during their time on watch some 80 years ago.*

There was a discussion about where Peter would take the series forward with suggestions of a book and a gallery where the images might be shown, local to his home.

[https://www.peterroworthphotography.com/gallery\\_751421.html](https://www.peterroworthphotography.com/gallery_751421.html)



Sue Hutton, ARPS, showed us more of her images from Morocco where she has a home. Sue knows the country well and is able to explain aspects which we would otherwise likely not understand. All very colourful in strong lighting conditions which Sue's experience copes with very well. This image is Rabat, Morocco; political wall art depicting anonymous agents (spying neighbours and 'friends') for the Royalist party oppressing the people with corruption. Dates from around the Arab Spring.



Chris Keenan had made a project by drawing a smile line across the Nottingham A-Z map and then spent time visiting various intersections to make images which expressed very well aspects of the city. Starting in the up-market housing area of The Park, and progressing along her line to finish at the City Farm.

Chris not only photographed 'as is' but also on several images had made interpretations to show the busier parts of the smile areas.

It was a really excellently conceived and executed project which brought discussion and questions.



Jackie Fisher showed a really nice set of monochrome images from a day spent at Salford Quays around Media City and other areas, where she had put a personal interpretation on the modern architecture of the area. It was an excellent sense of place.



Jamie Davis was a new attendee and had brought three images of street portraits which gave rise to discussion about techniques – should one ask permission or photograph overtly. We agreed that by asking the dynamic was changed since the person was aware of being photographed. Sometimes better to ask and other times best to capture unknown for natural behaviour.





Malcolm Sales, ARPS showed images from his favoured haunting ground of Nottingham for people images, Gunby Hall church of a peeking dog – a matter of being in the right place at the right time, Galashiels independence march, Magpie mine and Bakewell market.

Malcolm is a master of street people photography and discussed his techniques with the group.



Stefan Shillington showed his Images in a Box project. Each image is stored in a box separated from the next by tissue paper. They showed aspects of containers and other scenes with an underlying theme of nature v the unnatural. Taken in Wester Ross.

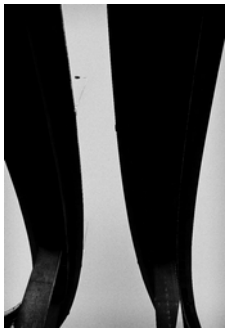
The images were not sequenced and the whole point was that we could all rearrange them to make our own take on how they should be shown.

*An interesting exercise for the viewers.*



Stuart Downes expressed himself as faltering in his projects, not being able to sustain them and questioning how to tell a story through a project. He showed several images made in an allotment close to his home. They were very expressive and we all sought to encourage him to continue with that project and others. He had two really pleasing images from Photo London amongst those shown.

He received very encouraging support from the group and we hope to see more of his project work at future meetings.



Howard Fisher, LRPS showed images made on a recent workshop with the Focus group. One set was made in the graveyard at Howarth, split toned mono, where the workshop exercise was to make use of the strong light experienced on the day. There were two made on a quick call at Black Dyke Mill and then a set made in Halifax where graphic shapes were seen in the fly-overs of that town. Included was an obligatory image for Halifax of Bill Brandt's famous cobbled slope.

Another excellent day of stimulating, enjoyable and thought provoking photography.

Our appreciative thanks, of course, to Jackie for providing the beverages and those who helped out in the kitchen. It is a feature of our meetings that we offer a welcoming cuppa on arrival and at a mid-point break both coupled with high quality biscuits!

Howard Fisher LRPS



## Following the White Rabbit Jake Williams

*Beardown Man*



Photography...easy isn't it? iPhone therefore I am; it just couldn't be any more simples, as a certain lovable Russian-accented rodent and seller of car insurance might say. Like a tub of popular potato-based snacks, once you pop you can't stop. Nothing ever *just happens*, though sometimes things seem like that. So often, you see the final results on the wall or the printed page, without knowing how the photographer got there, or what possibilities they considered and rejected. A couple of useful and inspiring books in this respect are 'Magnum Contacts' (Phaidon) and 'Contact Theory' (Lustrum Press; grab a copy if you can find one). It's always worth revisiting contact sheets periodically to see what may reveal itself. The most interesting images aren't necessarily the ones with instant impact, but reading contact sheets takes practice. As a former press photographer, Paul Hill was someone else who knew a thing or two about reading contact sheets and sequencing images. His *Approaching Photography* is another book to add to your reading list (along with 'Dialogues With Photography', with Thomas Joshua Cooper). 'Contact Theory' includes work by Robert Adams, whose writing is as intelligent as his photographs.

Time for a quick rewind, CSI-style! In 1982, there was a blank roll of HP5 (simply hold a Pentax) and some blank sheets of paper. Margaret Thatcher had just declared the lady was not for turning, the Berlin Wall hadn't come down and there were only four TV channels. Oh and you could still get Agfa Record Rapid. That was when I took my first steps in photography. At the time, I hadn't heard of Jung, Zen or anything like that, however it occurred to me much later that the Zen mind, Beginner's Mind thesis could be helpful - "in the beginner's mind, there are many possibilities. In the expert's there are none" (DT Suzuki). A beginner may get some happy accidents, but building on the initial burst of enthusiasm and creating images with staying power takes work. Nonetheless, the beginner has far fewer preconceptions about how, what or why, compared to the more experienced photographer, who may have become stuck in a rut without even knowing it.

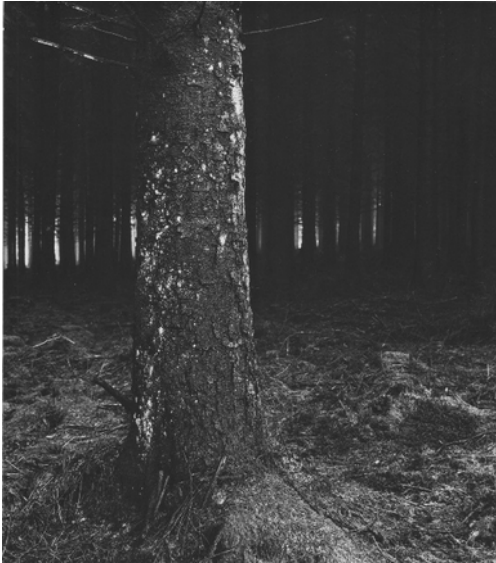


*Kitchen Table at 101*





After the experienced stage, you then have the potential to become someone different, who has travelled a little further along the road and sorted out the technical stuff, to the point of not having to think about it any more. Those who say technique gets in the way are partly right, in that a lot of people do get obsessed with technical trivia, but if you don't know how to use your bow properly, you're never going to hit the target. Most importantly, the knowing unknowing photographer has refined their vision, not that that ever stops (you may remember that Zen saying about the rocks and trees). Accepting the beauty of chance is key for me. Randomness and not knowing what will happen or how things will turn out are some of the greatest joys of photography. They represent opportunities rather than worries: knowing enough to have some idea of how things might turn out, but enjoying the unexpected. The ambiguity of photography can be one of its greatest strengths - seeing just how deep the rabbit hole goes and letting the work take on a momentum of its own.



*Believer Forest, 1994*



*Ian & Malo 007*

Engaging with fresh subjects and employing different tools to portray them pushes you to be open to the unexpected - inspiration can be found in unlikely places and in the bleakest, coldest weather. Think of it as the artistic equivalent of leaving the cosy confines of The Shire to seek adventure (of course, a little knowledge can be dangerous).





*Malo and Mum*

The Surrealists juxtaposed umbrellas and sewing machines on dissecting tables, in order to break out of rigid creative patterns, Brian Eno employed his Oblique Strategies ( "where is the edge?") and John Cage used random musical notations. Cycling is another passion of mine and it's great, because when you're cycling up a 30% gradient, you're definitely not going to be worrying about work or creative blocks or anything like that. Stieglitz worried about photographers forsaking the camera for the bicycle, but doing something completely different can be really helpful when you feel deadlocked. Circle round the obstacle and come back energised. When life leaves you lemons, make drizzle cake. Remember to take care if you decide to push Heath Robinson type contraptions up hills in search of breakthroughs though, as in the video for Kate Bush's 'Cloudbusting' (which incidentally features no conventional 'rock' instrumentation at all).



*Mull, February 2013*

Reinvention is a classic artistic strategy for circumventing those creative roadblocks, although you don't have to go as far as creating a fictional alter ego and then declaring them dead onstage at the Hammersmith Odeon. Or relocating to Berlin. Some other artists have almost reinvented themselves by hardly changing at all, or being gloriously out of time, rather than painting lightning flashes on their foreheads and setting out to be outré pioneers. But all consciously or unconsciously followed what they felt was the right path for them. Don't compare your own progress to other people's, or worry about the BIG Project (a larger scale version of the BIG STOPPER to impress a judge or editor ). So often in photography, one set of rules just gets replaced by another, however as Harry Callahan observed, "there are no rules in photography, that's why it's so much better than baseball". The second part of this statement rarely gets quoted, sadly. It's also all too easy to get bogged down in wordy definitions at the expense of actually appreciating the photographs themselves, especially that old chestnut 'what is contemporary photography?' The naming of Cats is still a serious matter though, as David Hurn and Bill Jay remind us in 'On Being A Photographer'. Anyone with a serious interest in the medium should own a copy!



Listening to music (everything from AC/DC to Arvo Part) is one of my favourite creative strategies. You can't beat a bit of soul or funk while you're shaking a Paterson tank, maybe a bit of jazz. Sherlock Holmes of course liked to play the violin while searching for revelations to help crack those really tricky cases. Reading books that might appear to be totally unrelated to photography is also a rich seam of inspiration.



*Mull 2013*

For instance, I've just finished 'Regeneration' by Pat Barker, which explores the impact of WW1 on the minds of the men who fought it and those who treated them. It centres on the relationships between William Rivers, an army psychiatrist at Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh and his patients, including Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen (the encounter between Sassoon and Owen was crucial in inspiring Owen to write some of his greatest poems, including 'Anthem For Doomed Youth'). This gave me the idea of relating mental and physical landscapes in order to portray the experiences of a shell shock sufferer, maybe using blur and darkness to evoke fragmented and semi-repressed memories. Pinhole maybe? Old papers? Cyanotypes? The HOW is a vital part of the WHY and a key part of expressing your ideas. Reflect on subject matter, do you focus on familiar locations or things, maybe limiting yourself to an area as small as your kitchen table, or seek out the new? There's something to be said for both approaches. Taking a break and changing the scene can provide fresh perspectives on familiar ground, but the apparently familiar is always changing and can challenge you to look beyond the easy images, as I've set out to do on regular visits to West Bay in Dorset, or Dartmoor, or portraying my family.

People (and photographers) aren't all the same, so let your images reflect that. Your pictures will always show something of who you are. Ten different photographers could visit the same location (such as the near legendary groynes at Watchet, or the equally storied chapel at Micklepage) and come away with ten completely different pictures. Consider, for example, Tod Papageorge and Bruce Davidson's take on Central Park in New York. In Tod Papageorge's 'Passing Through Eden', everything looks grimy and run down (New York was basically bankrupt in the 70s), but people are still determined to enjoy themselves no matter what. In Bruce Davidson's 'Central Park', published in the mid-1990s, the mood is sunnier and the people look more prosperous. However, in one of the closing images in the book, we glimpse the twin towers of the World Trade Centre through the foliage, an image which of course reads very differently 20 years on. Staying in New York, another Bruce (Gilden) took a much more confrontational approach to photographing on the streets, using flash, close quarters camerawork and harsh contrast. A few decades earlier, William Klein was using grain, blur and high contrast to produce images that evoked the feeling of blaring, harsh tabloid headlines, an approach that went on to be hugely influential on the PROVOKE photographers in Japan and many others.

Finding a good group of likeminded people who understand that there's so much more to photography than STYLE and gizmos, is helpful and enlightening, as is going to workshops. I've got a huge amount from both over the years-a couple of key ones were Charlie Harbutt at Duckspool 1998 (his 'Travelogue' is a lost gem) and John Blakemore at Inversnaid 1997 (I remember going for walks to collect random objects to make a Photogram).





*Mull 6*

Some of the assignments on the Harbutt workshop seemed quite off the wall to me at the time, such as making a literal self-portrait plus a metaphorical self-portrait and the famous (or infamous!) Spaceship assignment.



*West Bay, 2015*



*Zeal Monchorum*

There can be only one...picture that sums up your photographic journey. That's a tough one and I've often reflected on my key images since then, such as Bellever Forest 1994. I can still feel the mist and smell the damp forest in April with the ranks of dark trees stretching off into the distance. It was a moment when my feelings for the landscape and my understanding of how to focus them onto the print really came together. John Blakemore once said you can learn to print in an afternoon and I've seen it happen, but what I ultimately learned from workshops was how to develop an individual approach to photography. What you learn depends on you. Just like in 'The Matrix', others can only show you the door. You're the one that has to walk through it.

See you on the dark side of the moon.





## Contemporary NW Meeting Report

Samlesbury War Memorial Hall 14th September 2019

Four members attended: - Ken Rowlatt, Brian Williams, John Corbett and Alan Cameron with apologies from Nigel Richards and Romney Tansley.

Everyone brought work to discuss.



**Ken** was seeking advice following his disappointment over the work he had done for his A. He now feels that he would like to use the images he has taken at his local Hospices to create a narrative around the organisation.

His images include staff, patients and volunteers at the two sites and also outreach staff who visit and support patients at home.

Ken has been creating images for the Hospices for some time and they are used for publicity by the organisation. He feels that he has now acquired a large body of work that can be corralled and used to create a wider story.

We all felt that this couldn't be conveyed in a standard A panel, but would certainly make a book which could be used by the Hospices as a record of treatment and support as they do it to-day; something that would have a historical use and as part of an archive.

Alan suggested that Ken should talk to Brian Steptoe who could give him plenty of advice on creating a successful book. Part of the process would include a look at candidate images and moulding a story from them. This would test whether he had enough images to create a book and also to show where there might be gaps in the narrative that could be filled by further photographs. Alan agreed to contact Brian Steptoe in the first instance and connect him to Ken.

**John** discussed the images he had used when we had our exhibition in 2018 where he took a contemporary view of the Lake District and its paths where he concentrated on a less romantic view of the countryside. Instead he captured the more overlooked aspects of landscape such as the paths, bushes, side views and even notices about viewpoints.



In his latest series John considered was to convey the emotions of being out in the countryside in spring and walking among swathes of bluebells.



**Brian** shared some images he had taken of some performers readying themselves for a Halloween pantomime. The photos were taken against a white background with lighting provided by a large single soft-box with the aim of letting the performers use the images for publicity.

We looked at the images and felt that they would all do a great job for the performers.



One image in particular portrayed an aerialist hanging from a trapeze with a Steam Punk character keeping her company. This we felt was particularly effective and then Ken said, "What does it look like upside down?"

At this point we all got really enthusiastic and suggested various backgrounds to change the message somewhat.

After the meeting Brian produce this composite. Suddenly the image takes on a whole new meaning - something between Harry Potter and Discworld with Mort accompanying damsel in distress!



Alan discussed a musical performance he had attended the previous weekend. This was a performance of "The Nature of Why" by the Para Orchestra, an ensemble, directed by Charles Hazelwood, including both able bodied musicians and dancers and also those with various physical limitations. Some of the performers were blind (a singer and a violinist), one dancer was missing a hand, a harpist had some missing fingers, a horn player was in a wheelchair and the deputy music director and clarinetist was deaf.

The event was interactive with the audience and performers mingling in an amazing light display. Alan's images were taken on a full frame SLR with a 50mm 1.4 lens, firstly for speed in



low light and secondly because it is a very compact lens.

### Next Meeting

It was felt that we needed some sort of theme for images at the next meeting. After some discussion it was agreed that we should create a short series on the theme "Cycle Lanes."

Alan Cameron LRPS  
26th September 2019



## Documenting the Everyday

Stewart Wall ARPS    East Midlands Regional Organiser

Photography is such an interesting pursuit, and how we all engage with it is so varied; for me, to see how different people photograph the same thing holds a lot of interest.

In 2015, having been a professional photojournalist since 1978, I decided to study for a degree at a local college, and I also joined the committee of the East Midlands Region. I began organising book events where the photographers each photographed the same event on the same day, and wrote a few words that described their photographs. Then, with the help of my wife Shona (a print production journalist), we produced photobooks to show the different approaches as a guide to photographic awareness and development.

The first event in 2015 was in Sheffield where we photographed the 1960s social housing flats on Park Hill, known as Streets in the Sky because of the 12ft wide aerial runways which provided cover throughout the five blocks so children could play out in poor weather and the milkmen could drive around deliver milk to all the 1,000 flats spread over the 13 floors.

We stuck to the principle of shooting on the same day. The photographers had one week to send me their images before Shona and I produced the book, with the first copies printed within two weeks. Not that it was the purpose of the project, but after Tom Bloxham of Urban Splash, the company that is renovating the flats, showed interest in the book on his blog people from all over the world ordered copies, from Australia, Dubai, Finland, America and others. I developed an interest in Park Hill and during the degree studies looked at Le Corbusier and brutalist architecture, something the designers of the flats had been inspired by. This had led to their use of reinforced concrete which allowed them to include more windows.

After Sheffield, the region photographed the Milk Race around Nottingham City Centre and the Nottingham Goose Fair. We were also asked to photograph a village event but the organisers began to ask us to make sure we got certain shots and that is not what these projects are about. We covered the event and made a book, but I insisted that the photographers be in charge of what they photographed and how they approached it, since for me that is the whole idea. I want to see how different photographic perspectives of the same thing, photographed at the same time, evolve.

I think this interest in seeing how different people work goes back to when I was a young press photographer in the 1980s and I would often find myself in a 'press pack' pointing my camera at the same thing as everyone else, but rarely would two identical shots be taken. Of course, a photograph is taken in a fraction of a second, sliced from a timeline of events we all share, so what makes these differences? I tend to lean towards Barthe's ideas about photography, where he suggests a photograph is also dependant on what experiences the photographer has had, and that the way a photograph is perceived also depends on the experiences of the viewer. This opens a large debate on how 'real' documentary photography is. Is a document real or is it simply one person's view of what reality is?

Moving forwards to 2019, a number of members approached me and asked if we could start planning the books together. So, in May this year, we ran another event, this time restricting the image taking to a couple of hours in the morning, followed by an afternoon of looking and discussing each other's photographs, and then to begin planning the book and talking about possible printers. We also decided to photograph on our doorstep, in Whatton where we hold our regional meetings, which is especially quiet on a Sunday which is the day we meet. When I look at everyone's images there are very few people in them, with only one photographer, Sue Hutton, making contact with a local. I wonder what this says about how the RPS members view Whatton - the village we have been visiting for three years now.

As I write this, the design of the book is complete and it is being printed. In October, we are planning a meeting where the photographers will be on hand to talk about the experience and show the book for the first time. At the same event, the Magnum photographer Ian Berry will be giving a talk in the morning about how he approaches documentary projects.

In this article there is one image from each photographer, whereas in the book there are five and a few words from each. The photographers involved in the book, in alphabetical order, are:

Malcolm Brown ARPS who went for a walk through the village.

Stuart Downes who looked at romantic views of past labours.

Howard Fisher MA LRPS CPAGB who went for a two hour stroll.





Robert Herringshaw ARPS who took an 'uncommon' gaze.  
 Sue Hutton ARPS who met Wendy.  
 John Marris LRPS who shot a reflection  
 John Marris LRPS who shot a reflection of his first foray.  
 Mervyn Mitchell MA ARPS who considered the splendour and richness. Mike Poole LRPS who looked for the older bones of the body of Whatton.  
 Peter Rowarth ARPS who captured the leaves of the trees.  
 Colin Smith who considered the survival of living organisms.  
 John Smith who considered the activities of the cricket ground.  
 Stewart Wall MA ARPS who captured the beauty of the trees that had a hidden, dark personal reminder for him.  
[www.beyondthestreet.net](http://www.beyondthestreet.net)



The EM Team



An early start for the photographers



Colin Smith and his unusual lens



After a quick 2 hour photowalk



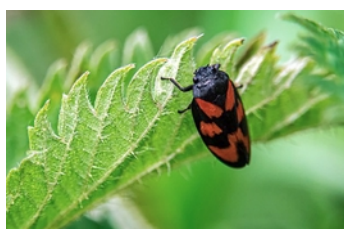
The Whatton Village Hall Plaque



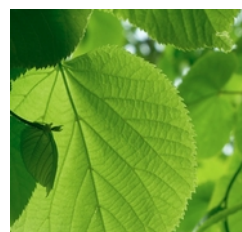
John Smith



Mike Poole LRPS



Colin Smith



Peter Rowarth ARPS







John Marris LRPS



Howard Fisher MA LRPS CPAGB



Stuart Downes



Sue Hutton ARPS



Robert Herringshaw ARPS



The Cover: Malcolm Brown ARPS



## SOUTH WEST CONTEMPORARY GROUP

The Group met on 3<sup>rd</sup> November at Dartington in Devon, with ten members present. After a short session of 'business' the rest of the day was spent mulling over the work which the various members had brought along for discussion.

Under 'administrative business' there was a brief discussion about the regeneration of the Group webpage on the new RPS website, something which will probably not be possible until the end of the year. There was also a range of views as to whether the first portfolio in the recent Contemporary Journal was supposed to be in magenta or whether it was due to the printing process. There followed discussion about national Contemporary Group Conferences and dates for 2020. The latter will hopefully be available before the end of November.

Then down to the real business! As usual, prints went first then the books and finally projected images.

**Rod Fry** had discovered a range of large models of various animals (tigers, giraffes, dragons, unicorns etc) in gardens along a bus route in Totnes and also uncovered the fact that most people on the bus did not notice them. This inspired him to produce a series of gently surreal images of this exotic wildlife which promises to be just the first chapter of a project entitled something along the lines of 'Photographs along a bus-route'.



**Ken Holland** had recently visited Krakow, Poland, and whilst there taken the opportunity to visit the concentration camp at Auschwitz. The nature of the tour meant that photographs had to be taken quickly, but he produced a series of emotional monochrome images of what had been left behind as their owners were taken to be killed. However, his images went beyond this because he was able to pair them up with photographs taken between 1996 and 2000 at Ilford Park near Newton Abbot in Devon. This former American Forces Hospital had become the home for a large number of Polish refugees between 1946 and 2000 and had earlier formed part of his acclaimed 'Little Poland' project.

**John Evans-Jones** presented a wide range of images in groups of four, every set being 'the same but different' – anything from the tops of bollards through doors, patches of rust, beach-hut numbers forming a magic square, people engaged in activities, trees and seasons etc. In each case these were small images all on the same sheet and highly characteristic of John's personal style of photography.



**Martin Howse** showed us a set of Black and White Medium Format images of a Japanese Garden at St Mawgan in Cornwall which were highly evocative and ethereal and, as always, superbly printed.

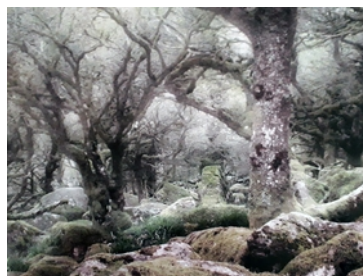
Back in 1996 **Muriel Somerfield** had visited the Kashgar area of China on the Karakoram Highway and taken an extensive series of photographs of the local population in both monochrome and colour. Today, this is one of the areas where the local population is being 're-educated' in large 'schools' and Muriel speculated on the present day



lives of those who appeared in her images. The monochrome photographs have recently been reprinted by Martin and Muriel plans to use them in a book. Jumping ahead to the afternoon, Muriel also presented digital versions of the colour reversal images that she had taken at the same time and we discussed the value of these also appearing in the forthcoming publication.



Finally under prints, **Carol Ballenger** showed further images from her trees project, 'Branching Out', the video of which was being shown at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen. The A1 prints of impressions of woodland were very impressive. She also noted how the image which she had prepared of the cross section of a tree-trunk photographed looking upwards had effectively 'gone viral' in various ways and was being used in ways which she had never dreamt of when she produced it.



**Vivian Howse** had recently come across an exhibition by Chris Killip and had brought along three of his books of black and white images from the 1970s, including his photographs of Skinningrove. Unlike other local villages, Skinningrove had resisted becoming a tourist attraction with houses on the sea-front remaining in local ownership and the village retaining its identity as a working village. Today, whilst the village is still there, the work has gone. Having found herself in Skinningrove (up in North-West Group territory?) during 2018, Vivian had photographed many of the same places and produced a leaf-fold book of her images.

Our viewing of projected images began with **John** who had produced a series of selfies which he had classified into different, often esoteric and highly tongue-in-cheek, varieties of the genre along with a little self-deprecation of his interest in classification and categories. One thing which all his images had in common were that they were all reflections but definitely conceptual in style rather than what we normally experience in the world of selfies.



**Adrian Hough** had recently returned from Greenland with a large number of images dealing with several different themes. Not having had time to do anything other than get rid of the rubbish, he showed a hastily selected selection of photographs of housing blocks, some constructed in the 1960s and many built very recently but all built to accommodate the rapidly expanding population of the capital, Nuuk (formerly Jacobshaven until Greenland obtained devolved government). The first blocks, built by the Danish Government, were Le Corbusier inspired but wholly unsuitable for Inuit who had to dry fish on the balconies and butcher seals in the baths. Life today is different and the blocks (now authorised by the local Greenland Government) are much more colourful and stylish but it remains to be seen how they are viewed in fifty years' time. He also popped in some buildings at Ilulissat which gave him the



excuse to include a whale. Hopefully he will be able to share a better selected set of printed images at a future meeting.

**Ken** revisited his article in the recent Contemporary Group Journal by showing a much wider range of images about 'When Hannah Left Home' and the closure of 'Hannah's at Seale Hayne', which had been owned and run by the Dame Hannah Rogers Trust which works with children and young people who have disabilities.



Finally, the meeting ended in its traditional style with an off-beat presentation from **Graham Hodgson**, entitled 'Death by Filter' this time focussing (or perhaps not...) on the use of the digital filters available in a well-known brand of photographic manipulation and editing software (other software is also available). The audience were invited to 'demonstrate their knowledge' by guessing 'What's that filter?' as applied to a photograph of a graveyard in Venice (puns abound here – you can work them out for yourself). However, Graham then showed the effect of applying the same filter again and again (ad infinitum) with interesting and sometimes unexpected results.

We all headed home after a fascinating day, filled with good humour and with many many thanks to Carol and Graham for both putting up with us and also feeding us so well.

Adrian Hough LRP5





## NOTICE OF GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Contemporary Group will take place at 10.30 am on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at RPS House, Paintworks, Bristol, BS4 3AR

Nominations for officers and committee should be made to the Secretary in writing, signed by at least two members and carry the signed consent of the nominee at least 21 days before the AGM, i.e. 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

Proposals for discussion at the AGM must also be with the Secretary at least 2 days prior to the meeting and signed by a proposer and seconder.

Romney Tansley [romney@tansley.co.uk](mailto:romney@tansley.co.uk)

## THE RPS WEB SITE - email from HQ

Most of you will be aware that the main RPS web site is undergoing a fundamental change as from the end of November, at the time of writing.

It does involve changes to how we use the website and the following is an email sent at the end of October just in case anyone has missed this information:-

As you may be aware, we have been working hard this year to update the RPS website. Things have been progressing well, and we switch to the new website at the end of November. This will see the site shift to a modern, stable and more easily managed platform, optimised for mobile devices and focussed upon an increasingly diverse audience.

If you are a regular user of MyRPS then the changes will impact you and **you may need to take action before 26 November**. Please be aware that **any images you have uploaded to your profile will not be retained after 26 November**, so you may wish to save these to your computer before then. You can log in to save your images by clicking here: <https://www.rps.org/login>.

Once the new website is live, you will need to reset your password and update your profile with new information.

We will provide regular updates and reminders between now and then but in the meantime, please read more about the change here: [www.rps.org/website-updates](http://www.rps.org/website-updates).

Our website is receiving much more interest from a younger audience and from more non-members, and we anticipate that with a new site we can look forward to more and more people engaging with all that the RPS has to offer.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who work so hard and continue to contribute to our website and its development, and to give credit to our small internal website team who are working so hard to manage this transition.

Best wishes

Mike Taylor MSc DChA | Chief Operating Officer | The Royal Photographic Society





## A HOME FOR OLD JOURNALS – by Paul Ashley

You may remember that in the last year I have offered copies of past journals to anyone who would take them. They have been taking up space in my living room and loft for too long, and before that in Peter Ellis's shed! I have finally passed them on to two good homes: the photography departments of Hills Road and Long Road Sixth Form Colleges here in Cambridge – in fact they were so excited by the offer that they sent two staff with a van to collect them and divide them between the two schools. Last week I took the opportunity to go and see how one, Hills Road Sixth Form College, would be using them.

Tuuli Parker, head of photography, met me and showed me around. A fine art and photography graduate herself, she also teaches ceramics and makes jewellery (using photography to collect design ideas from nature). She had already sorted through the old journals and divided them up into resource packs that students could use to get new ideas and gain exposure to different photographers. She explained that, in this Instagram age, there is a risk that students gravitate to the famous or those with the most 'followers'. Our journals will help them start to use their own judgement in appraising work which comes with no such pre-packaged notions of value or quality.

The department takes up to 22 A level students each year, and allows others to use the facilities for their own work. It is well equipped: a good darkroom is used to teach traditional skills, and the social skills of co-operating in groups. It also has a (small) studio and good IT facilities.

Many of the students go on to degree courses – Falmouth and Nottingham Trent in particular. I saw (and was given) the most recent photographic year books, and was very impressed with the work – and some I want to see more of. Technical ability was evident, but students are also encouraged to think about why they were taking photographs and how to present them – I had a good conversation with Tuuli about photobooks and zines, and it is clear her ideas are taking root. She is also introducing them to older processes, such as cyanotypes, and how they could be combined with digital techniques.

I was surprised and delighted that there was such enthusiasm for our old journals. I shall continue to send them more of our leftovers, but I also hope to see more of the work of these students.





'Tuuli Parker, Head of Photography'



## EXHIBITIONS

### UK

TAYLOR WESSING PRIZE - National Portrait Gallery, London  
To 16 February 2020

SHOT IN SOHO Photographers Gallery

To 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020

*Shot in Soho* is an original exhibition celebrating Soho's diverse culture, community and history of creative innovation as well as highlighting its position as a site of resistance.

This is a rare opportunity to see outstanding images from renowned photographers including **William Klein**, **Anders Petersen**, **Corinne Day**, alongside other photographers whose work in Soho is lesser known such as **Kelvin Brodie**, **Clancy Gebler Davies** and **John Goldblatt**. The show also includes a new commission by **Daragh Soden**.

BERND and HILLA BECHER INDUSTRIAL VISIONS National Museum Cardiff, Cathays Park.

To 1<sup>st</sup> March

More than 200 photographs from the founders of the Düsseldorf School. This is the last exhibition Hilla Becher selected prior to her death on 2015.

ARTISTS ROOMS – August Sander National Museum, Cardiff

To 1<sup>st</sup> March

Presents over eighty photographs by August Sander (1876-1964), one of the most influential photographers of the 20th century. The photographs are drawn from Sander's monumental project *People of the Twentieth Century*, which classifies individuals and groups of people according to profession and social class. The exhibition is drawn from a major collection of over 170 modern prints, produced from the original plates by August Sander's grandson, Gerd Sander and placed on long loan to ARTIST ROOMS.

MARTIN PARR IN WALES National Museum, Cardiff

To 4<sup>th</sup> May

Martin Parr is one of the most influential and prolific photographers working today. He has always been drawn to Wales, having lived just over the border in nearby Bristol for thirty years. Throughout that time, he has undertaken several editorial and cultural commissions, covering subjects from working men's clubs to coal mining. This exhibition brings together, for the first time, works that explore different aspects of Welsh life and culture, from male voice choirs and national sports to food, festivals and the seaside.

THINK OF SCOTLAND – Martin Parr To 23rd February Aberdeen Art Gallery

Martin Parr loves Scotland. The world-renowned photographer has been visiting for over 25 years, taking pictures the length and breadth of the country, from Ayrshire to Aberdeenshire and from Orkney to the Western Isles. Presented for the first time at Aberdeen Art Gallery, 'Think of Scotland' explores leisure, landscape, food and community with Parr's characteristic twist.

Also on display is 'Aberdeen at Leisure', a new series of portraits of the city commissioned by Aberdeen Art Gallery to celebrate its landmark redevelopment. Will you spot someone you know?

### SWITZERLAND

THE NEW PHOTOGRAPHY - Kunsthause, Zurich -

15 November 2019 to 9 February 2020

30 works in an attempt to reveal how 'photography moved from being a tool of depiction to a self-reflective artistic medium, as the old concept of craftsmanship came up against new artistic ideas.'

### USA

SURROUNDS - MoMA, New York

To Spring 2020

The full 6<sup>th</sup> floor is dedicated to 11 watershed installations which are 'united in their ambition and scope, marking decisive shifts in the careers of their makers and the broader field of contemporary art.'



## MEETINGS

Contemporary North-West - 4<sup>th</sup> January 2020 1 to 4 pm  
Salmesbury War Memorial Hall, Cuerdale lane, Salmesbury, Preston, PR5 0UY.  
Contact: Alan Cameron – alan.cameron@me.com

Contemporary North 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020 1.30 to 5 pm  
Clements Hall, Nunthorpe Road, York, YO23 1BW  
Contact: Patricia Ruddle, ARPS, patriciaruddle@btinternet.com

Contemporary East Midlands (with Documentary East Midlands) 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020 2 to 5 pm  
Keyworth Methodist Church hall, Selby lane, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5AH  
Contact: Howard Fisher, LRPS, handjaf@virginmedia.com

SE Documentary Group (including Contemporary Group) 26<sup>th</sup> January 2020 10.30 to 1.00 pm  
Tangmere Village hall, Malcolm Road, Tangmere, PO20 2HS  
Contact: Jeff Owen, docse@rps.org

South Wales Region, RPS. 15 February 2020 On being a Photographer: Key Decisions of  
Magnum Photographer David Hurn. Billed as his last public talk.  
Cardiff University. Book via RPS web site.





## Contemporary NW report

Meeting of 2nd November 2019 Samlesbury War Memorial Hall

Six members were present:- Alan, Brian, John, Ken, Nigel and Romney.

Five members brought work for discussion, four relating to "Cycle Lanes," and one brought some work for general discussion.

### Cycle Lanes



All four members who tried to meet the brief found it somewhat hard to make a meaningful series of related images. Ken's images concentrated on the fact that most cycle lanes were ignored by motorists who simply parked on them and in addition in the autumn they were leaf covered and so unusable as they were unseen.



Romney travelled around his new central Manchester home where there are quite a few cycle lanes. Some were ignored but at the same time new lanes are being built and these often give rise to complex junctions where major road intersections were designed in such a way to make the cyclists' journey safer but much more complex as they were sent in unintuitive directions to get round a set of lights and islands.

As well as the newer lanes Romney turned his gaze to the road marking which were frequently worn and difficult to follow, but happenstance in the form of litter gave rise to one of his memorable images.



Alan turned his gaze on Blackpool, following some cycle lanes near home. Like the others he found that the provision for cycle lanes was hit and miss. Along the promenade the cycle lanes have been removed and replaced with shared usage signage and a 10 mph speed limit though he didn't see any speed cameras to enforce the rules.

Like Romney complex islands had many confusing directions designed to help people to get across safely if sometimes via circuitous routes.

On one bridge cyclists are encouraged to use the footway over the main structure, but are then directed back onto the road at a point where vehicle drivers are forced to drive in the marked out lane as the road is too narrow for them to do anything else.

He also found some signage with something to raise a smile.





John concentrated on the cycle tracks in Kendal where there were few marked out, but where back lanes were often properly tarred and this easy and safe to use. His feeling was that the council still hadn't come to grips with cyclists' needs in a very congested town.

There was a discussion of the limitations of the theme, but members felt that extending the scope to cover cycling as a whole would provide more scope for images. It was agreed that "Cycling" would be the theme for the next meeting.

### **Other work**

Nigel brought a portfolio of his infra-red images for discussion about creating book. Images ranged from his earliest photographs using IR filters on standard cameras to those taken on his converted digital compacts.

Some of his most striking images included shots taken on a trip to New Zealand and others showing modern architecture in a Spanish resort.

We all admired the range and quality of Nigel's work and after some discussion he felt that he now had a way forward to create a series of images that he could use to create a phonebook to showcase his IR work.

There was further discussions of some of Alan's images from the Para Orchestra performance discussed previously. One in particular was a portrait of a dancer taken under bright blue overhead light and Brian suggested a much tighter crop to accentuate the subjects skin and hair.

### **Next Meeting**

The next next meeting of the group will be on 4th January 2020 in Samlesbury War Memorial Hall. The theme for the meeting will be "cycling."



## HOWARD FISHER

It is with regret that I have to tell you of the unexpected resignation for personal reasons of Howard Fisher, our Secretary and Concept Editor.

Howard became Secretary of the Group and took on the editorial position on Concept just over a year ago and he has made himself a key member of the Contemporary Group in these important roles. We will all miss his input as will the East Midlands Contemporary and Documentary Group in which he was a key member and instigator. We wish Howard all the best in the future.

After discussions with our Chair, Avril Harris, I contacted a potential candidate to take over from Howard, who along with Ken Holland, helped to explain the roles and the work involved. I am pleased to tell you that Romney Tansley ARPS has agreed to take on the dual roles. I'm sure that you will join me in welcoming Romney whose details you will find on the front page of Concept.

Alan Cameron LRPS  
Chair Designate.

DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE is 1<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

