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Forward from the Editor

Welcome to the March Edition of Concept and I hope you enjoy this varied and packed filled edition. As you will see Concept has been through a visual redesign to enhance your enjoyment of all the contributions from our members. Thank you to Christine Pinnington for her hard work on this and thank you to all those who have contributed to this edition.

It has been a busy few months for the CSIG, and there remains much to look forward to. The Contemporary SIG AGM is on March 25th and the Foxton Fens event will be held on 13th May. With regular scheduled regional meetings taking place in the months ahead, there is plenty of opportunity to get involved and more information on all these events can be found in this edition.

With best wishes,
Suzi Darsa

Vacancies

The committee of the RPS Contemporary Group, which has over 400 members, is interested in filling three positions which all give members the opportunity to get involved in the running of the group and helping to steer it's future. These are important and rewarding roles which we are very keen to fill by the AGM in March.

First of all we need a new CHAIR, the exact duties of which can be discussed but fundamentally we need someone to chair committee meetings and represent the group to RPS Bristol. Ideally this position would be supported by a DEPUTY CHAIR to assist the Chair. The third position is an EVENTS SECRETARY to help create an events calendar for the group. All these positions will be supported by the experienced existing committee so do not feel you will be dropped in the deep end!

If you want to put your name forward, or discuss in more detail, please email the Group Secretary Tim Hancock ARPS on

contemporarysecretary@rps.org

in the first instance, stating which position you are interested in.

Photographic Bursary for Rural Schools

The Contemporary Special Interest Group of the Royal Photographic Society is offering a bursary of £1500 to a Rural School, in order to fund :

‘A photographic project that conveys the experience of being a school student in a rural environment.’
Please could all members communicate this offer to any local schools in your area who you think maybe interested.

The bursary is open to all schools in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and The Isle of Man which are located in a settlement with a population of less than ten thousand (or which has been designated as Rural by the relevant Government Legislation) and must be used for work with and by pupils/students under the age of sixteen on 1st September 2023. It is open to both primary and secondary schools.

The bursary would be paid in full at the beginning of the project, in September 2023 and the project should be completed by the end of March 2024. Whatever form the project takes it should have a tangible outcome in the form of an exhibition, a book or a Zine. Any exhibition would need to be in a publicly accessible location and the bursary would be made on the condition that whatever the format of the outcome it can be reported in RPS media and in the press, television and/or radio if opportunity arises.

All schools making an application would need to confirm their rural status (as above). Applications also need to include details of the year group(s) of the students involved together with their current photographic expertise. The project could either be a stand-alone project outside school hours or could be used to support an existing area of the curriculum such as Art or the human geography and fieldwork skills sections of Geography.

The successful school would be allocated a member of the Royal Photographic Society who would contact them during the duration of the project and with whom they could discuss ideas and progress.

For full information including Terms and Conditions see
<https://bit.ly/cgbur23>

[RPS CG Photographic Bursary Application Form](#)

! AGM Announcement !

The AGM of the Contemporary Group will be held by Zoom on March 25th at 10.00am. Log in details are as follows.

Topic: RPS Contemporary Special Interest Group AGM
Time: Mar 25, 2023 10:00 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82283340144?pwd=cHIWdkhGZ0daSjJCNI VvaEsIbIhSdz09>

Meeting ID: 822 8334 0144

Passcode: 761155

The committee is still looking for volunteers to help run the group – if you are able to put your name forward to join the committee, or to discuss in more detail, please email the Group Secretary Tim Hancock ARPS on contemporarysecretary@rps.org

Agenda and The Minutes of the 2022 AGM can be found <https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/cg-meeting-minutes/>

Member News

Our member Patricia Ann Ruddle has been selected to participate in this year's York Open Studios, the biggest annual art event in York: 15-16 and 22-23 April

For more information about her work please see her on the York Open Studios webpage:
<https://www.yorkopenstudios.co.uk/artist/patricia-ann-ruddle>



Book review

by Sean Goodhart

Vivian Maier

ISBN-13: 978-0500025703

The 2022 book on Vivian Maier, published by Thames & Hudson, forms a biography of the enigmatic street photographer. Born in New York in 1926, Maier spent much of her life working as a nanny in Chicago and taking photographs in her free time. Despite her artistic talent, Maier never showed her work to anyone during her lifetime and it wasn't until after her death in 2009 that her photographs were first seen by the public.

The book offers a detailed look into Maier's life and work, including her upbringing, her travels, and her experiences as a nanny. It features a wealth of never-before-seen photographs, including images of Maier herself, as well as candid shots of everyday life in the 1950s and 1960s. For someone who was a little reclusive, Maier shows a remarkable self awareness. Perhaps the largest section in the book looks at images Maier made of herself – either as formal looking portraits or as, possibly, opportune reflections in the windows and street furniture.

Maier's work has been widely recognized for its raw, unsentimental vision of American life and its striking sense of empathy for her subjects. The book highlights her technical skill and her ability to capture the essence of a moment, showcasing her as a master of street photography and a true original. It also includes quotes from the people who knew her best, giving readers a glimpse into her personality and her relationships with those around her.

It is a must-read for anyone interested in the life of a unique and talented artist, it captures the spirit of Vivian Maier and pays tribute to her legacy. That said I have to admit that I found the two lengthy essays which preface the photography hard going; after so much "art speak" I had to skip to the meat and enjoy the images.

Contemporary Photography Journal

From the next issue of the journal, we will be publishing on a different schedule: every four months rather than every three. For some years the print journal has cost more to produce and distribute than we have received in membership fees. Rather than reduce the quality of the journal, we will change the timing. The next issue will therefore be sent out around the end of May.

The ongoing disruption to postal services in the United Kingdom is causing problems with mailing out the latest edition of the Contemporary Photography Journal. The latest issue (Number 90 Winter 2023) is out now and should be on its way to you.

Please accept our apologies for this but it is beyond our control. In the meantime the latest edition has been published on the RPS website earlier than usual – see the link below:

[090-winter-journal-2023-01.pdf \(rps.org\)](https://www.rps.org/090-winter-journal-2023-01.pdf)

Paul Ashley ARPS, Editor, Contemporary Photography

Wildebeest Migration

Patrick Foster MA ARPS

Wildebeest migrate on a loop path through Tanzania and Kenya following the seasonal rains even when that involves passing through dangerous territory. Wildebeest, also called gnus, are members of the antelope family. They are related to oryxes and gazelles. A wildebeest can grow to 2.4 meters (8 feet) in length and weigh up to 270 kilograms (600 pounds).

Wildebeest typically inhabit the Serengeti plains of south-eastern Africa. For most of their lives, wildebeest graze in the grassy savannas and open woodlands of the plains, which straddle the nations of Tanzania and Kenya.

More than 1.5 million wildebeest migrate in an enormous loop every year. The annual migration northwest, at the end of the rainy season (usually in May or June) is recognized as one of the "Seven Wonders of the Natural World."

The search for greener pastures does not come without danger. Its migration route crosses many rivers, most filled with giant Nile crocodiles. Many are drowned in the fast currents of rivers and make excellent feeding for scavengers.





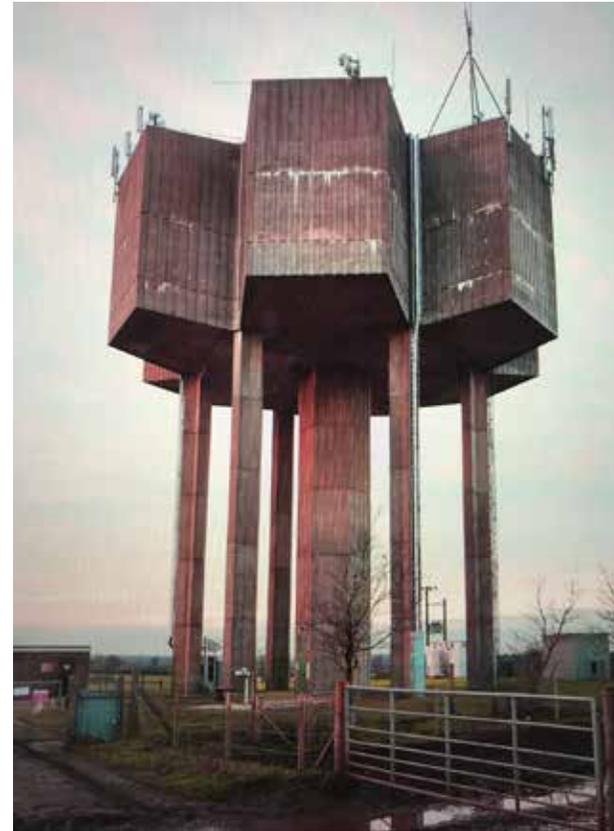




Neil Whittman ARPS

Passionate sunset
Afternoon delight
Treasured moment

I enjoy trying to write Haiku-type poems to present with some of my photos, a three line "title" to go with them. The words arise through the process in a vague attempt to link the liminality from viewer to picture to my thoughts.



Rachel Parry

When photographing water towers, I find that their design varies in shape and size enormously. This image of Horstead in Norfolk, a strange looking, huge brutalist construction from the 1960s or 1970s, is said to be inspired by a snowflake. Subtle but unnatural colour are used to reference the science fictional quality I see in this building.

It stands on a hill indifferent to the surrounding countryside. With increasing drought due to climate change, it is a mistake to decommission these buildings, which are useful water storage vessels.

RPS Contemporary SIG Conference

Fens at Risk

A weekend looking into the issues of the Fenlands near Cambridge,
featuring speakers Peter Corr and Justin Minns.

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th May 2023 in Foxton, Cambridgeshire.

The aim of the weekend is to investigate the 'Threat to the Fens' by lack of infrastructure maintenance or the 'Backdoor re-naturalisation' of a habitat by lack of investment – or whatever other issues you discover in this weekend mix of lectures, practical photography and discussion.

With a third of the Fens currently below sea level, the area has a network of flood protection infrastructure that is nearing the end of its design life and will soon need significant investment. With the increasing effects of climate change, flood infrastructure is key in providing water resources and sustaining the environment. Sea levels are predicted to rise by up to a metre by the end of the century. On this basis, without major sea defences, the sea could reach to the outskirts of Cambridge and Peterborough; flood much of East Norfolk; and drown large areas of coastal land in Suffolk and Essex. A further effect of climate change is increasingly heavy rainfall which overloads rivers, the potential for severe flooding is considerable in the region.

Our speakers will discuss their photography and experiences in the Fenland.

Peter Corr will show us his viewpoint where this land called the Fenland exists as a black and white rudimentary, utilitarian landscape,

reclaimed from the sea, re-purposed and reconfigured. His photographs include landscapes, buildings, rivers, trees and roads and are included in his book "Fenland" and were exhibited at the 'Beyond the Image' photographers gallery in Suffolk in 2021.

Justin Minns, author of this best-selling photo-location and visitor guidebook "Photographing East Anglia", spent 2015 photographing the East Anglian coast as a commission for the National Trust. Justin will present images taken for that project and other work he has done for the National Trust.

Spread over two days, with a dinner on Saturday evening (possibly in one of the Cambridge colleges), the event will soon be available on the RPS portal – but meanwhile **save the date in your calendars: 13-14 May 2023.**

We hope to see you there.

Understanding Alzheimer's: A Photographic Journey

Silent Voice

Bunshri Chandaria FRPS uses photography, inviting us into the world of a loved one's Alzheimer's.

Dementia will affect a million people in the UK by 2025. The majority will have Alzheimer's.

Witnessing the devastating effects of her late mother-in-law Ramaba's, Alzheimer's prompted her into taking action.

The result is Silent Voice, a handmade artist book to help raise money for research in Alzheimer's and a multimedia installation, and was shown as a part of Invisible Threads exhibition at the Keeper's Gallery, St Albans Museum and Gallery from 13th Jan to 12th March 2023.

She shares with us, where she drew her inspiration from – how the project inspired her RPS Fellowship Distinction:

'My late mother-in-law, Ramaba's diagnosis with Alzheimer's had alarmed and saddened me. She was still the epitome of beauty but a disconnect between her and the world had set in. She could not communicate in a manner people were accustomed to. They did not know how to react or interact with her. She went quiet. I felt a deep need to give her a voice.

My aim was to break down the barrier between her and how the world

saw her. I wanted people to understand how she perceived her new world and for them to be at ease with that. So, I decided to make a photographic book. My challenge was to make visible the invisibility of Alzheimer's.

When Ramaba was diagnosed, close family and friends had sent her flowers. She believed the flowers had a life too. She wanted to preserve them for as long as possible. I dried some and froze others to photograph them. To me, their beauty mirrored my mother-in-law's, while the slow-melting ice echoed her fading memory.

I showed her the image of the frozen flowers, hoping to bring her joy. To my utter surprise, she started talking about the backdrop I had used – the table. It evoked sporadic memories about the past. It was a serendipitous moment! Might other personal objects also trigger her memories? This is what the photographs and conversations in Silent Voice reveal – how her treasured items and nature in her familiar surroundings triggered her memories.

Ramaba would only speak of her transient memories during our one-to-one time together. These were precious snatched moments. Her fractured memories would trigger some of mine. We both loved our conversations and interconnectedness – we giggled and laughed a lot. I miss her look of joy, I miss her! I believe that the true essence of the person never leaves.



The time constraint of her daily needs had prompted me to photograph spontaneously and intuitively, steering me in a new way: to slow down and breathe, to press the shutter. I learnt to be light and playful – to embrace her changing world.

My idea was to create images that evoked a visceral response in the viewer. I selectively focused on certain elements in each image and blurred others, to emphasise her foggy, confused mind. I also wanted the viewer to pause: to look back and forth between the images and her spoken memories – to reflect on the harshness of the disease.

The challenge of applying for a Fellowship for Silent Voice kept me motivated to finish the project by the required deadline. This project has been my solace. It enabled me to unleash the deep sadness and loss I felt within. Being awarded the Fellowship in 2021 has delighted and prompted me to make Silent Voice available to a wider audience.'

Silent Voice touches on diaspora, culture and family dynamics. A book that can be revisited at any time, hopefully prompting both current and future generation to reflect on the world of all those affected by Alzheimer's.

Bunshri feels a deep urge for a cure to be found as soon as possible. She believes that collectively, we can help Alzheimer's research. All profits of the sales of the books go towards Alzheimer's research.

Silent Voice Artist Books:

Both versions are made with a labour of love from Bunshri to publisher/printer.

- **Boxed Collector's Edition** with signed giclee print. The book is handmade without any joins. It is a lay flat book, which one of the critiques described as opening and closing like an accordion – touching on memories coming and going. Each package is designed, inviting the viewer to open the box to explore: the book with the jacket takes the viewer on a journey - into the inner world of Alzheimer's



- **Standard Edition**- made using the same beautiful paper as the Collector's, but slightly thinner paper. It is hand stitched.



Available by ordering directly from Bunshri Chandaria:

E: bunshri@bunshri.com

W: www.bunshri.com



Regional Reports

East Anglia

All is quiet in East Anglia. Most of the group are trying to create and edit a response to our Waldo quote “Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path, and leave a trail”.

Contributions so far can be seen on our blog
<https://rpseacg.wordpress.com/>

We’ve had two meetings so far this year and our next is scheduled for 9th March 1400hrs via Zoom.

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South West contact
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North West Group

Forthcoming Events

19th February 2023 14.00 - 1700
Meeting on Zoom

26th March 2023 11.00 1600
Lancaster
Meet outside Lancaster City Hall, Dalton Square entrance

23rd April 2023 14.00 - 1700
Meeting on Zoom

21st May 2023 11.00 1600
Salford Quays
Meet at Imperial War Museum North for a chance to visit the Generations Exhibition

25th June 2023 14.00 - 1700
Meeting on Zoom

30th July 2023 11.00 1600
Clitheroe
Meet at Station Car Park, Station Road, Clitheroe

Contact
Alan Cameron ARPS
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Contemporary North

We have a new publication! We've replaced our Newsletter, the report of our meetings, with Showcase. The idea was conceived by Lyn Newton, who now designs and compiles each issue. Each one contains members' contributions, whatever they want to say and which photos to include; basically they curate their own space!

Since the last Concept publication, our North subgroup has met three times, far too many to detail what we did at each meeting.

Our most recent meeting was held on Zoom on 18 February. As always, Zoom gives us the opportunity to get together with members who live further afield. Four members shared their latest projects.

Barbara Pollard took us through her new website and the thoughts behind its creation and how her photography has evolved.



Douglas May talked about the application that Robert Burns made for a job as slave overseer in Jamaica with regard to the current attempt to re-fashion history.



Carol Olerud shared a project that she has made for the Royal Dutch Fotobond, how it evolved from her first idea during the pandemic to take photos during curfew.



Mike Rooke showed us photos about what it's like to live in a seaside town during the winter. The days look bleak, but residents enjoy the tranquil, desolate beaches.



Avijit Datta's photos from our January meeting were included in which he discussed the tension between a growing feminism and the dominant patriarchy in middle eastern society over thousands of years.



The full meeting with text and photos are online:

<https://rps.org/media/mfgpi4kh/cn-showcase-02-23.pdf>

https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/members_showcase_february_2023

If you're interested, in our previous meetings here's a link to our last meeting of 2022 on 20 November (with Issuu link as well.)

[cn-showcase-11-22ii.pdf \(rps.org\)](https://rps.org/cn-showcase-11-22ii.pdf)

https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/showcase_11_22ii

On January 20 we met face-to-face again in York.

[cn-showcase-01-23.pdf \(rps.org\)](https://rps.org/cn-showcase-01-23.pdf)

https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/january_23_members_showcase

Contact

Patricia Ruddle ARPS

contemporaryne@btinternet.com

The next issue of Concept will be available June 2023

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

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



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<https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/contemporary-youtube/>



Instagram page [@rpscontemporary](#)

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