

Hi folks

Reports this time from our groups in the North West, North East and East Midlands. As you will see below, due to Rod's situation there is no report from the South West. Here in East Anglia we are basking in the reflected glory of Bill Jackson achieving a Gold Medal in the Venice Biennale for his art film *The Venetian Mirror*, a collaboration with the poet Tamar Yoseloff, which was screened as part of *The Alive In The Universe* project.

Sadly we have had no response to our appeal for an Editor for Concept. As such this will be the last edition until a replacement can be found. Ken is prepared to carry on with layout duties but we do need someone with the time to produce a newsletter worthy of the Contemporary Group, including not only regional group reports but also providing feedback on the wide and varied world of contemporary photography as we see it.

In closing I would like to add my best wishes to Rod and hope he has a speedy recovery. I look forward to continue to see the fruits of his singular approach to producing truly contemporary series of images.

Peter Ellis

Deputy Chair

## Rod Fry

Rod has decided to stand down from all his RPS commitments due to health problems but I would like to thank him, on behalf of all of us in the Contemporary Group for his dedication. He has been the organizer for the South West Group for many years, his place will be taken by Adrian Hough. Rod has also been part of the team that organized the Photo Book exhibition, our representative to Council and also joint chair with Janine Freeston of the SIG's rep group. At one time he was my deputy chair until, again, ill health forced him to stand down.

I think we will all wish him a speedy recovery and able to enjoy his retirement without any untoward stress.

Thank you Rod.

Avril Harris

## e-newsletter

June 2019

### *In this issue ...*

#### **From the Regions**

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North West  
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#### **A Celebration of Books**

#### **Journal back issues**

#### **Introducing your Committee**

Ken Holland

#### **AGM and Chris Steele-Perkins**

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*Preferred format for submissions  
to Concept:*

*Images as jpegs (approx 1Mb)*

*Text as Word files*

*Thank you.*



## From the Regions

### East Midlands

Our meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> May brought some new people to our gathering and we were very pleased to welcome them.

We saw some very interesting and outstanding work which provoked lots of helpful and constructive comment and discussion, which is where a great deal of the value is in our meetings.

Peter showed us a series he is working on using the play of light in a WW2 pillbox situated close to his home.

Sue shared her weekend workshop images on dance, the workshop being led by Maria Falconer in and around a studio in Nottingham.

Brian shared his book project entitled 'A Wet Weekend in Wales with Otis Redding'. Made as a result of a weekend when he was alone in a b&b when the weather was poor.

Jackie had monochrome prints of architecture in Sheffield from a walk alongside the River Don from the canal basin to Kelham Island.

Tom shared an ongoing series of detailed close-up colour prints of tree bark.

Richard has two projects in progress, one is a commission to photograph a group who will perform 'Oliver' in Lincoln Cathedral. He is photographing the groups' rehearsals and individual headshots of all 100+ cast members for the show's programme plus a book. His second piece of work was of gloomy colour prints taken on miserable days through his car windscreen which were very evocative.

Howard also had two pieces of work in mono prints. The first was of Willow Tree Fen nature reserve in Lincolnshire which is a fairly new reserve being returned to wetland from agricultural land. The second set was from a visit to Middlesbrough.

The group's next meeting is on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2019, again in Keyworth.

Howard Fisher

### North East

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Contemporary North East had an enthusiastic and lively meeting at Clements Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

A meeting full of entertainment and diversity was attended by 10 members and 2 most welcome guests Adrian and Gary. I hope we passed the test guys! After introductions, Patricia distributed a pamphlet by Don Harris giving some useful information he has gathered during the process of making his handmade books.

7 members presented DPI's, 3 books were shown and 2 members presented their printed projects.

Christine Carr is exploring boundaries in their various and diverse forms, one of which are dry stone walls.





The construction materials used to form boundaries, from stone, slate, water and wire and the reasons for their construction was shown excellently by Christine. A lively discussion followed on the numerous other physical and emotional boundaries/barriers we all encounter.

Symmetrical Railway Arches is the theme Peter Bartlett presented to us. Be they tall, small, narrow or squat he has perfected the art of capturing their symmetry. Railway Arches has been a 4 year project. Peter showed us some of the many different and contemporary uses these arches have now. We then discussed how and why they might have evolved.



Also a prolific book maker, Peter presented his book "Snap" a series of images of a holiday on Lake Garda. He explained that he views photo books as a way of producing a permanent archive.

Our guest Adrian James showed the group a series of images about what photography means to him. Images of everyday subjects taken out of context and often close up, showing details of lines, form and pattern.



The variety of subjects, from road kill to coastal work, prompted discussion on possible projects.



Have you ever been to Blackpool when its rained and rained and. (you get the picture)?



Lyn Newton has and she brought iconic images of what makes up Blackpool. With an entertaining look at the attitudes of people on holiday in the rain and people doing what people do! "I'm on holiday regardless".

Celine Alexander-Brown visited a London fashion show recently and was fascinated by the array of people outside and around the event. Celine was intrigued by the expressions of some of these people and the way they dressed to stand out, be they models or wannabes. An interesting experience and beautifully captured.



With an entertaining presentation in words and pictures Graham Low described how difficult it is to take baby pictures. In his own words, "2 Babies" As a new grandfather to 2 babies, I am interested in exploring the extent to which grandparents can ethically and practically photograph their grandchildren in the first few months. I have come to the conclusion that babies are frequently in very low-light and cluttered environments, making unposed 'art' photos difficult, and they also tend to (1) peer out of swathes of items, like slings and snowsuits and (2) be fussed over (swamped?) by multitudes of adult family members. To conclude Graham remarked that parents take the best pictures.

Neil Wittmann brought two examples of different printing techniques he has been trying, using gold/metal leaf and alternative papers and watercolour.





Gosh! Although experimental we all thought this exciting, and we wait to see what else Neil can do with these techniques.

Our second guest of the afternoon, Gary Morgan impressed us with the images he likes to take which "ask questions" and are visual puzzles. Gary, when traveling with work often finds himself walking out at unsocial hours taking images which reflect (what I might describe as) not so glamorous but more thought provoking and challenging. I hope we get to see more of your work Gary.



In complete contrast Robert Harris treated us to an exhibition of prints produced working towards his photographic degree. A montage for a profile picture, a study of lilies using a photo stacking technique, 5 self-portraits with the theme of self-expression and a body of work depicted in black and white of a group called "Tea and Chat". Robert works as a volunteer with a Friendship and Leisure group based in Knaresborough, of which Tea and Chat is a subgroup. Helping to set up the group, he finds the work very rewarding and has taken the opportunity to photograph these very appreciative people. We could see the trust and communication he and they have in each other through his prints.



Patricia, Janet and myself, not bringing any work ourselves, had an enjoyable, relaxing and entertaining afternoon joining in with the discussions, topped off by coffee and biscuits.

Contemporary North East next meets on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at Clements Hall, York.

1.30 – 5pm

Jane Batty

## North West

Meeting Report 11th May 2019

Five members attended, Alan Cameron, Ken Rowlatt, Nigel Richards, Romney Tansley and Brian Williams.

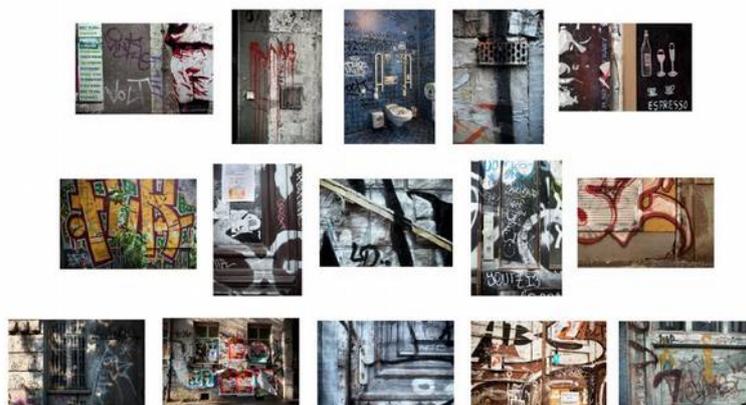
Apologies had been received from John Corbett and and Keith Launchbury.

The main event of the meeting was a fascinating talk given by Romney on how he achieved his ARPS. Though he achieved his "A" in Visual Art, we were able to see that the images fitted on the nexus of VA, Contemporary and Documentary photography, and were excellent discussion points in our meeting.

Romney had travelled with his wife to Berlin on holiday and had stayed in a residential area not far from the city centre and close to Bernauer Strasse. When he goes to new cities Romney likes to get up early and inspect his surroundings. He showed us images taken in and around the area, of the people and buildings as well as the more familiar images of the Brandenburg Gate and the Holocaust Memorial.

Romney and his wife went to the nearby Mauerpark or Wall Park and it was then that they realised that the Berlin Wall had been constructed along the centre of Bernauer Strasse and the park was in the old West Berlin. We discussed the Wall and the famous image of the fleeing border guard jumping over the early barbed wire, and the photographer who took it.

After looking at the area Romney started to home in on a theme for his panel around the edges of this Bohemian area, including wall art graffiti and the fascinating patterns made by multiple layers of posters. He built a panel and after taking advice went back to Berlin and took more images including some of the windows in KDW, the Berlin answer to Harrods, but on taking more advice he rejected the images of jewellery in the window and went back to his original theme, refining the images and cropping for better effect. The digital version of the images were really interesting, but our biggest treat was to see the prints too. The panel is shown below.



Next Nigel discussed a recent trip he had made to Switzerland showing us images over two seasons a contrast between winter on the Glacier express and spring when the snow had disappeared. Highlight for me was the change to see some very rare cars in a classic motor show on ice.

Finally Alan talked about his latest book project which covers the people in some singing groups where he volunteers. The activities are called "Harmony and Health."

The idea behind the books is to celebrate people of all abilities from around Wyre Borough who come together for companionship, relief from loneliness, respite from caring from a loved one with dementia or just sing. There is a celebration of inclusiveness concert to be held soon and Alan wanted to tie the book in with that.

Three books are being produced to cover the three established venues and a few pages more have been added to the last book to cover the newest group. Participants voluntarily took part in the book and all had to be capable of signing a model release form. All photos were taken against a standard backdrop, and they were offered to take control of a remote release. About 25% of people did that. Most were very comfortable with the photographer and this resulted in good natural portraits. Ages ranged from early 20s to 90s.



Subjects could take part singly or in groups and the most tenacious appear several times in their respective book. They could stand very still or pose as they wanted, the results being varied and interesting. Everyone who took part received at least one print and the book prices were subsidised to enable many of those on modest incomes to afford a copy. Take up has been very good.

Millie, top above is 91 while Jacob and Jamie who have learning difficulties and identify as transgender are in their twenties. Michaela is one of our most vocal members and appears in multiple images. The books are nearing completion and when complete Alan will complete a composite book laid out with more space to consider entering it for an A in Contemporary and Conceptual photography.

The next meeting was planned for 27th July, but because of a previous booking at the hall **the next meeting will be Saturday 20th July starting at 13.00.**



## South West

We met at the home of Carol Ballenger and Graham Hodgson on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Also present were: Martin Howse, Vivien Howse, Nigel West, Ken Holland, John Evans-Jones, Adrian Hough. Apologies from Rod Fry and Muriel Somerfield

We were small in number, this time, but it gave us more time to catch up, in more detail, with what each of us had been doing recently.

**Nigel** is a new (potential) member. He brought some well-observed mono prints of people from many different countries involved in various forms of communication. He was warmly encouraged to continue with his project.

**Martin** and **Vivien** shared some darkroom mono prints of images made in Skinningrove, North Yorkshire, revisiting a site made well-known by Chris Killip. These very evocative and melancholy images were helped by grey skies and few people.

**John** showed his feet, and those of many others. Beautifully put-together prints of feet on the London Underground, and on the sea shore, were both entertaining and thought-provoking. Later he showed a projected series of images connected with signs and their meanings.

**Ken** brought two photobooks. One made a few years ago (Little Poland) and a very recent one (a collection of favourite mono images scanned from his old negatives). He later showed digital images of Re-birth (a re-building of the old Polish Camp in his book).

**Adrian** brought recently made photobooks, with a variety of subjects: Lofoten, Statues in churches, Arran and Paignton Pier. He was complimented on the arrangement and the print quality in all four books.

**Carol** showed us some colour prints from an earlier exhibition on Dartmoor Prison. She was given extensive access to various parts of the prison, and her images caught the feeling of being confined and occasionally trapped.

Finally **Graham** entertained us with an apparently eclectic collection of projected images of an industrial building. It turned out that each image was just a small part of a much larger image: a sting in the tail! We saw the completed image at the end.

Our next meeting is likely to be in early November, subject to confirmation. Adrian will take over from Rod as chair. Our best wishes go to Rod for a speedy recovery, and our grateful thanks go, as always, to Carol and Graham for their wonderful hospitality, and for keeping us superbly fed and watered.



Ken Holland: from Re-birth series



## A Celebration of Books

Contemporary Group member John Pyatt FRPS told me that his idea to celebrate the book was accidental. It developed when he began to visit and photograph second-hand/used book shops with a view to exhibit prints at the Swinton Library, South Yorkshire. The event grew into *A Celebration of Books* to accompany his exhibition, which took place in April over several weeks. John's motive for taking photographs of these shops was to record a diminishing world; what he found was an interesting one of dedicated people who sell books, not for the money, but because they love books.

With over 400 shops visited in the UK (and two in the USA), his method was to take an external picture, ask permission for internal shots and the last and most important – a picture of the owner in their environment. However, some of his photographs didn't show the owners; the books themselves in their environment provided the portrait. The exhibition contained 50 photographs printed by John, and were shown in themes, for example, one wall contained a panel of his favourite shops chosen by its atmosphere, and how the personality of the owner was demonstrated in the shop. There was a panel on closed shops; paperback books only and antiquarian ones.

To broaden his scope, John also had a panel showing books dedicated to a niche market such as "ghosts" and "aspects of conflict". He explained that he tried to go beyond documenting bookshops to show some of the motives why people love books and their personal stories. In one poignant piece, an old letter found in a second-hand book brought a separated, scattered family together. There was information interspersed among the images about the current state of used bookshops – fun fact: Yorkshire has the highest number of bookshops per capita outside London.

The print exhibition was the genesis for the *A Celebration of Books* event. It began on World Book Night with a preview organised by Contemporary Group member and former Yorkshire Regional Organiser Mary Crowther ARPS. She invited local schools and colleges and three local authors. (Michael Fowler and John Newly, both crime novelists and Ken Wyatt, local historian and heritage champion.)

To accompany his print exhibition John asked Yorkshire members to lend him their photo books for a table display. (He even went to the trouble of traveling throughout the country to collect their books.) With over 40 books on display, they contained a myriad of subjects, themed on personal projects. Most of these books were made by companies such as Bobs Books, Blurb, Saal and Photobox.

Another highlight of the event was the table with handmade books, organised by Contemporary Group member Don Harris FRPS. He brought all his tools, stitching apparatus, jigs, etc. – all handmade by him – to demonstrate how to produce a book using several methods, for example from the humble glued pamphlet to taping to sewing. He also showed how to make a quick book with a dozen photographs, stapled together with supplies that we all have at home. There were over 30 of his own handmade books to demonstrate every process. Books on how-to-make books and sequencing were on display, along with a handout he made with suppliers' information.

Not to finish there, John was selling second-hand photographic books with donations going to a local charity, the Barnsley Animal Rescue Centre.

John had hoped that visitors to the event would not only enjoy seeing the photographs and books, but also share ideas and gain knowledge. And, to go home with the desire to make books themselves. When I was there on staff duty, everyone with whom I spoke, whether artists or photographers, or those library goers who knew nothing about the world of the



photographic book, were impressed with the displays, some overwhelmed, and indeed learned much from the wealth of knowledge presented.

PS. John says that he has not finished with the project. He estimates that there are some 200 more to visit in the UK.

Patricia Ann Ruddle ARPS

Don Harris FRPS



Mary Crowther ARPS

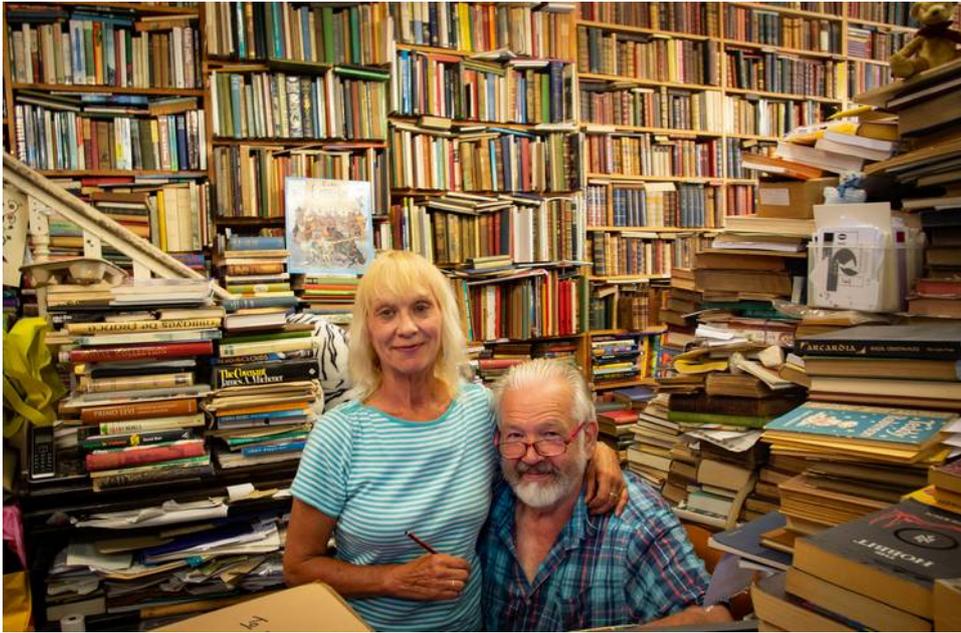


Visitor and CG member Peter Bartlett ARPS with Don Harris FRPS



*All of the above taken by Patricia Ann Ruddle ARPS*





## RPS Contemporary Photography Journal – back issues

I have a number of copies of past issues of the journal which are taking up space in my house, and I'd be glad to pass them on to a good home.

Please let me know what you are interested in and we will find a way of getting them to you. You will have to pay for the cost of postage or other transport!

Anything left over after a few months will go for recycling.

Paul Ashley, Editor



Ken Holland ARPS

[www.lowenna.co.uk](http://www.lowenna.co.uk)

My interest in photography began while I was at primary school, and I have not stopped making photographs ever since: longer than I care to remember!

I have never believed in pigeon-holing my (or anyone else's) photography. So often the boundaries are crossed. But, in hindsight, I guess I have always been a "Contemporary" photographer: much more interested in photographs that are about something emotional rather than just "of".

I am an honorary life member of Dawlish & Teignmouth Camera Club (just starting my 35th season). I lecture and judge throughout the South West. Clubs keep inviting me back so perhaps I'm doing something right! When judging I look for images that say something, or provoke a reaction, rather than just show a pretty picture. I am also a member of our SW Contemporary Group, which is where I feel my photographic "home" lies.

I will photograph almost anything that interests me, but I mostly enjoy working on projects: [Little Poland](#) and [What's The Hurry](#) are two that I have published. I have recently found books to be a wonderful opportunity to show and share work. I used to teach City & Guilds darkroom courses, and I still enjoy making fine prints, mostly in mono.

I was fortunate to be awarded my ARPS and DPAGB (a few years ago, now). I was also honoured to be awarded a PAGB gold medal for my print "Way Out". However, awards are not particularly important to me. Recently I was invited to become a member of the RPS Licentiate Distinction panel: a huge honour and responsibility, which I am looking forward to with enthusiasm.

I guess my reaction to the question "What is Contemporary Photography?" is best summarised in a short piece I wrote in the Journal 12 years ago:

*"Contemporary Photography reflects the time in which we live: the here and now. However, if I merely record what is happening around me in my lifetime it would just be a factual record made for the archives of the future. More importantly, photography gives me the opportunity to record not only what I see, but also my thoughts, emotions and reactions to what I see".*



Way Out, from Little Poland series



from No Entry series



## AGM and Chris Steele-Perkins

The 2019 AGM will take place on Saturday 12th October 2019 at RPS House in Bristol.

It will be followed after lunch by a talk from Chris Steele-Perkins.

The AGM will be at 10.30 am and there will be light refreshments available from 10.00 am.

Lunch will be at noon and at 1.30pm Chris Steele-Perkins will give a talk followed by a Q&A session.

Following the AGM up to lunch and after the afternoon talk, there will be opportunities for Contemporary Group members to display work.

The event will close at 4.00 p.m.

Chris Steele-Perkins' talk is separate to the AGM and booking must be made through the RPS website. Group members will not be required to pay a fee but non-Group members and non-RPS members will be charged.

This day is a chance to see the new RPS HQ building and to experience a talk by the very well-known and respected Magnum photographer. Maybe also visit the adjacent Martin Parr Foundation.

Full directions to RPS House are on the RPS website.

