



Newsletter

Sheffield Photographic Society

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Four Missing Buttons—Guy Brown

Medal winner in this year's London Salon Exhibition

PRESIDENT'S PIECE—Peter Mason

There is an apocryphal Chinese curse that goes "May you live in interesting times" and we are certainly living through interesting times in photography at present, as well as the more obvious interesting times in the financial markets. We probably have the wrong idea, but when we look back over the last few decades of photography (as many decades as we confess to remembering) we feel that in the fifties and sixties and seventies nothing changed very quickly. Everyone was using film and keen amateurs took colour slides but also had darkrooms where they produced monochrome prints. A few adventurous souls went in for special processing such as using lith film, and very keen control freaks attempted to master colour processing and understand magenta and cyan casts - where have I heard that recently? Cameras slowly became more sophisticated, but it all happened quite slowly and you could keep up with what was going on.

All that started to change in the nineties. Suddenly the adventurous ones had computers and printers, and were producing better and better colour prints from scanned slides without having to keep a water bath steady to within one degree centigrade. Since then the pace of change has accelerated to a degree that either fascinates or alarms us according to temperament. Each week we

PRESIDENT'S PIECE—Continued

hear of new cameras that do different things (take the picture automatically when the subject smiles anyone?) and new fascinating and devious things that computer experts can do.

The point is very obvious, but we have as usual to be careful to look after the baby when discarding the bath water. I was very aware when helping Keith Brown to plan this year's programme that we wanted a balance between new-fangled anything-goes digital photography and more traditional it's-all-in-the-eye-and-the-finger-on-the-button talks. We may not have got the balance right but we are trying.

One area of photography that has been greatly affected by this is colour slide work. I would guess that twenty years ago virtually all our members used slide film a great deal, but the gradual shift that we saw over to digital has accelerated until now we have only a few stalwarts who take slides on a regular basis. This has been apparent in the various slide-based events that we hold where members have gone to a lot of trouble to submit slides to support the event, but the numbers are down and clearly a few of the slides submitted were not taken very recently.

This puts us in a delicate situation. We have tried to take our cue from members and observe how much support there has been for slide-based events, and we have certainly not tried to lead anyone into digital who did not want to go there. We have made changes, such as reducing the internal slide competition down to one evening, and this year we have seen the end of the long-standing favourite Lilian Alsop 'Six Slides on a Theme' competition, replaced by the Ken Doney trophy for similar sets of digital images. We are trying to encourage slide users by keeping some events going, but we are aware that most of our members now do not use film. I wonder if we are getting the balance right?

You probably have views on this so buttonhole me or other members of council and bend our ears about them. We want the club to live in the 21st century, but we also want to keep the baby from going down the plug hole. Are we succeeding?

Peter Mason

DOES DIGITAL EQUAL SLOPPY—Colin New

A recent editorial in the AP by Damien Demolder posed the question "Does Digital Equal Sloppy?" He suggested that the ease of use of digital cameras and the ability to re-use memory cards encouraged people to be less careful when taking pictures. It is an accusation that is bandied about quite a lot and I suppose it is encouraged by the instantaneous nature of the digital preview.

Does digital make us sloppy? Well I know I take more pictures now that I know they are "cost free" - there is no cost involved for those pictures that don't work. I also like to think that working digitally encourages me to experiment more. What will happen if I try a long exposure? What will the image look like if it is under or over exposed? I can afford to play with the camera more - perhaps not quite to extent of John Wells who has been known to balance his camera on his shoe and use a long cable release to get his images. However, like Keith Lord I am more than happy to walk into a crowd and fire away and then later see what I have got. This spontaneous, grab the moment photography can be a lot of fun and convey the mood and atmosphere of a scene in a way that more studied prepared shots do not. Of course you get a lot of shots that do not work - but occasionally there is a little gem. Some people - rather disparagingly call it the scatter gun approach.

When I was making a number of dance images with floating material I knew that I had to make a lot of exposures in order to capture the moment. Was it luck that I got some decent images? Well, I like to think that I had prepared carefully and thought about what I was trying to achieve but knew that freezing the moment would need that additional element of chance.

When I work in this way I no longer think "every frame is costing me 25p" as I did when working with transparency or negative film. Memory cards are now ridiculously cheap.

DOES DIGITAL EQUAL SLOPPY—continued

In the old days - I didn't say good old days - SPS used to run regular model evenings. We used to meet twice a week then and filling the programme was not always easy. A model would be employed from a local modelling agency who was then encouraged to pose and take her clothes off in front of the society's lights and members. It was a well known joke that many of the more "careful" members did not load film into their cameras until the session was well "warmed up."

Many camera clubs still have such evenings - I know that Smethwick and Hull have regular portrait and glamour nights - but I guess that there is no longer that thought in the back of the mind that "every shot has to count because it is costing me money."

I used to say that people in camera clubs were notoriously mean and while that would think nothing of spending hundreds of pounds on cameras and lenses they were as mean as hell when it came to using film.

I have always made a lot of exposures - it is the way I make my best pictures. When I find a subject that interest me I like to shoot round it. Find different angles and view points. Experience has taught me that the first shot is not always the best one.

Of course all photographers do not work that way. The great Alan Jackson - who encouraged me and taught me so much - was a photographer who would carefully previsualise everything before he pressed the shutter. A film could last him all season. His contact sheets were crammed pack full of winners. I could not work that way but it suited him. By the way Alan was not a mean man - he was one of the most generous people I have ever met.

PERSPECTIVES 4—November 2008—Keith Allchin



This is the exhibition wherein authors select their own panel of work and compose what I call a "blurb", about their images or themselves, to be displayed with their pictures.

This year we had a record number of authors represented; forty-two, and this is the maximum we can have unless we buy some more (very expensive) display boards.

We provided stewards over the busy lunchtime period throughout the week and during this time at least there was a continuous stream of visitors. It is good to see such interest in our work, and also in

the images of historic Sheffield which Ray provided.

This event seems to have become established in the local calendar. Some visitors return every year. When I emailed Deirdre, the assistant City Centre Manager who oversees events in the Winter Garden, to tell her we had dismantled the exhibition and to pass on our thanks to the ever-helpful Ambassadors, her reply concluded with "See you next year"!

Thanks to everyone who helped with this exhibition, and especially to Adrian, Clive, Gerry and Terry who provided transport or the boards.

Some comments from the Visitors' Book:

"Didn't realise how brilliant photos can be and no doubt how difficult it can be to photograph"

"Beautiful. It's good to recognize places - and even people"

PERSPECTIVES 4—November 2008—continued

“Great pics. A real art”

“A lovely way to spend time!”

“It was lovely, the girl with the bucket” (Annabelle age 3½)

“What wonderful photos! Glad my acquaintance at the no. 21 bus stop gave me the tip the exhibition was on - I made it this year!”

“Un lugar muy agradable”

“It was the best experience (bar sex) I’ve had in years”

PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER—Guy Brown

Some time ago I was fortunate to be given an old MPP 5x4 view camera. I’ve long admired the technical excellence of large format photographers such as Joe Cornish, and fully expected the MPP to be my ticket to a new life shooting big colour landscapes for fame and fortune. But of course, it wasn’t that easy. The big, bulky MPP was too much for me to handle; it was difficult to set up and focus, used expensive film and just seemed like too much trouble. However, there was something magical about putting the blackout cloth over your head and viewing the shimmering, grainy image on the ground glass screen. I thought at the time that since I liked the look of the ground-glass image, I should just photograph it with my digital camera. Hmm.

I didn’t think about this again for a couple of years, and then for some reason the idea came back to me. Before beginning to experiment with photographing the ground glass screen I did a quick Google search to see if anyone else had tried it. There is, I believe, an unwritten law of the world wide web; *no matter how bizarre an activity may seem, you will always find an internet community dedicated to it*. So it was really no surprise to find a sizable group of people on the Flickr photo-sharing site who specialise in “through the viewfinder” photography; taking photographs of images made through the viewfinder (or on the ground glass screen) of a second camera.



The Kodak Duaflex. This is the first model of the Duaflex, which was available in the UK in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Note the glass bubble viewfinder.



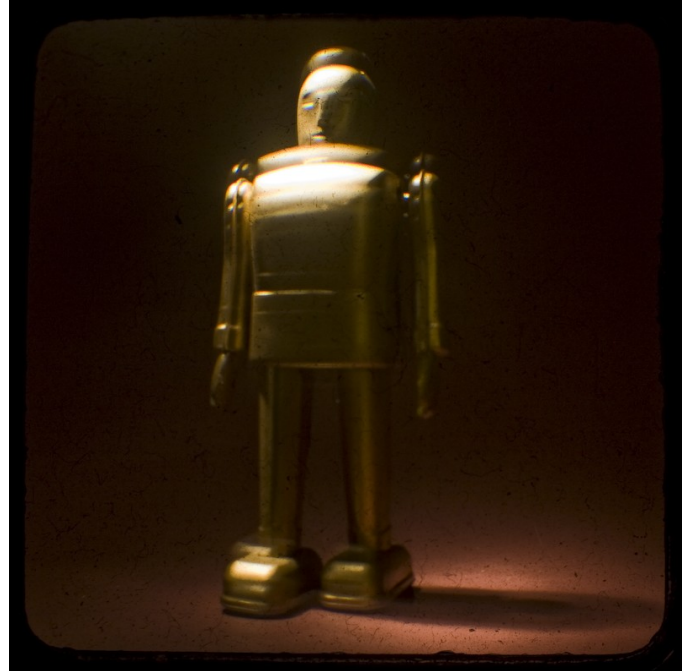
The whole contraption. Duaflex with cardboard snorkel and Canon DSLR, which will photograph the bubble viewfinder.

PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER- Continued

It seems that the preferred camera for this kind of thing is not my old MPP, but an obscure 1950's Kodak camera called the Duaflex. The Duaflex is especially suitable because it has a glass bubble viewfinder on the top, which gives an interesting edge effect when you photograph it. To shade the viewfinder from ambient light you need to build a snorkel from black card; this is straightforward, although detailed plans for a Duaflex shade are available on the internet (see below). The camera itself can be obtained second-hand from internet auction sites; I got mine from eBay for £12 including postage. A good tip here is to search eBay for misspellings of "Duaflex" - the camera is often incorrectly advertised as a "Duoflex" or "Dualflex".



Robbie the robot. In this case the subject was very close to the Duaflex so there is little depth of field, and the edge of the viewfinder appears blurred. Canon 5D with Sigma 50 mm macro lens, 15 sec at f/8, lit with two small torches.



Golden robot. With the subject further away from the Duaflex, the edge of the frame is sharper and the dust on the viewfinder is clearly visible. This also illustrates a peculiarity of the Duaflex camera; the viewfinder tends to ghost, producing a double image. This is particularly noticeable in high contrast scenes, as here. Canon 5D with Sigma 50 mm macro lens, 15 sec at f/8, lit with a small torch.

When photographing the viewfinder of the Duaflex, the aim is to produce as large a digital image as possible, so that maximum detail is recorded. You'll probably need the close-focusing ability of a macro lens to achieve this. I used my Canon DSLR with a 50 mm macro lens (I bought the latter for my wife as a Christmas present three years ago, and she's never seen it since). Putting the two cameras together admittedly looks very strange, but actually doesn't feel as clumsy as it looks. If you're shooting a static subject, the digital camera can be held in place by a tripod (the Duaflex doesn't have a tripod bush). The sharpness of the viewfinder edge will vary depending on the aperture you set on your macro lens, and also on the distance between the subject and the Duaflex. After a while, dust will accumulate in the snorkel which provides an additional grungy effect. I prefer to keep it (to be honest, my house is so dusty it's unavoidable), but if it bothers you then the dust is easily blown out with a blast of compressed air.

So once you've put together this wonderful contraption, what should you photograph with it? The limited resolution you obtain with "through the viewfinder" photography makes it particularly suited to subjects that have strong shapes and bold colours. Also, you should probably forget the rule of thirds; the Duaflex has a square format and sharpness falls off at the edges, so it's best to place the subject in the middle of the frame. For the test shots shown here I photographed some toy robots against coloured card, with lighting provided by one or two small torches.

PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER- Continued

Clearly there is a lack of consistency in my approach to photography – having dismissed the clumsy MPP view camera as too much trouble, I let it lead me down a path that involved even more fiddling about. But so be it. For me, experimentation is a big part of photography, and my regular forays with pinhole cameras, Holgas and home-made contraptions help to keep image-making interesting for me. Often these experiments amount to nothing, but just occasionally it's possible to stumble across a technique that has a lot of creative potential. For me, the jury is still out on whether “through the viewfinder” photography is a hit or a miss – I might need to build a few more cardboard snorkels to be sure. But it will be fun finding out, and isn't that the point?

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Internet resources

Through the viewfinder group on Flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/throughtheviewfinder/>

Tutorial on through the viewfinder photography, with instructions for building a Duaflex viewfinder shade:

<http://www.russmorris.com/ttv/>

RETURN TO SALVE MATER—Colin New

I have just returned from my second visit to Salve Mater. Salve Mater is the disused women's mental asylum in Leuven - Belgium. As with my last visit I went with a coach load of friends from Smethwick Photographic Club.

Returning to a place is always a worry. My first visit to Salve Mater had given me such an emotional response I wondered if I would again be inspired to make pictures. As expected – this visit was very different.

The basic format of the visit is that on the Friday we travel to Belgium – we have Saturday and Sunday based in Leuven and on Monday we return home. Most people planned to spend Sunday at Salve Mater but the Saturday arrangements were many and various. Some people went to Spa for the qualifying of the Grand Prix, some visited Antwerp led by the English Speaking Photographic Club of Belgium, some went to Bruges and others spent the day shopping in Brussels. A small group of five of us – led by Roger and Judith Parry decided to spend an extra day at Salve Mater.

The plan for this extra day was that we would concentrate on exterior shots in the grounds of this vast complex but also spend some time photographing a couple of models. However, when we arrived at Leuven on the Friday evening we had a phone call from Pascal Baetens – the professional photographer who runs the Salve Mater – to say that there was a problem. Both of the models he had booked had let him down. There was no problem with models for the Sunday – he had booked 10 models for us to use in groups or in his workshops.

He said he was still trying to get us models for the Saturday and would ring again later that evening. At 11.00pm we took a phone call in the Leuven Brewhouse when Pascal told us that he still had no luck. There were no models for us. We said that it was not a problem – we would concentrate on exteriors.

On Saturday we travelled to Salve Mater – it was a grey rainy day. The weather in Belgium matched the dreadful English Summer. We thought we were going to get very wet. On our arrival Pascal was full of apologies but said we could photograph his two young daughters aged 11 and 7 if we would like to. The girls were keen and the five of us spent the morning and early afternoon photographing Laura and Iris Baetens. They were terrific. Neither girl really spoke any English although both understood a great deal. I was amazed at how camera aware Iris aged 7 was as she very professionally slightly changed her pose every time she heard the shutter of the camera fire. She had obviously learned a lot from her father.

After a really enjoyable couple of hours we broke for lunch and Pascal told us he had managed to get some models for our afternoon session. He said he had not worked with them before but he hoped they would be alright.

While we waited for our new models, three of us went off to explore the buildings and take some interior

RETURN TO SALVE MATER—Continued

shots. It is a vast place – with three buildings – all in different states of disrepair. It is very easy to get lost!

When we returned to the main building our two colleagues were missing. Pascal met us and told us that the models had arrived and were getting changed. “Have I got two models for you!” he said. “They are Goths – very very different. Very unusual.” Naively I asked if they were male or female. “Two Women – well I think they are. You can’t be sure.”

We were intrigued and went to meet them. When we got to our meeting place we met Carina (also known as Destiny) and Nina. Nina was 6 foot 3 inches and with her splendid black almost flamenco style dress and platform boots totally dominated every space she entered. She told us that she was 43 but had no children. With her black make up and shock of grey hair she frightened the life out of me!

Carina was less tall – a 42 year old Mother of five plus one grandchild. Both girls had splendid tattoos. They explained that they were good friends who often worked together.

This was not quite what we had expected!

We worked as a group of five with the two models in different parts of the building. It was what you might call a photographic challenge. About half way through the afternoon the two girls asked if we would like a change of costume. “Yes, that would be good” we said. When they returned wearing leather bondage gear, carrying a whip and pink handcuffs Judith Parry said “We are never going to live this down at the club. I am going to save these pictures for a particular judge in the monthly competition. He will have a fit!”

To see 6 foot 3 Nina in her tight little knickers with a whip is the stuff of nightmares! To see the protruding adam’s apple in her throat and hear the deep rich contralto tones of her voice is to pose questions and ask if perhaps Nina started life as a Norman.

No – this was not what we had expected!

When it was pointed out to Peter Yeo (who had joined me on the trip) that Nina might not have started life as a girl he was stunned and amazed. “I have led such a sheltered life” he said “my years in the RAF did not prepare me for the likes of Nina.”



It was an interesting and enjoyable session in an unusual way. We thanked the girls for entering into the spirit of things so enthusiastically. It has to be said that both seemed extremely comfortable and at ease in their clothes and bodies. As someone said “as long as they don’t make it compulsory I don’t mind.”

After they had gone Pascal was profuse in his apologies. We said it was great fun and we would not have changed it for the world. However, the fact that we had worked together as a group of five had been reassuring. Would I have had the courage to book and photograph Nina in a one to one session? Probably not!

RETURN TO SALVE MATER—Continued

On our return to the hotel everyone was swapping stories about what they had been doing during the day. Our story of Nina and Carina had to be told over and over again and caused much delight.

If this article has not been politically correct – then I apologise.

Sunday was a much quieter day. The workshops and group sessions went smoothly – if you can imagine 10 naked women and 40 photographers sharing a venue.

During the course of Sunday afternoon our coach driver was heard to call his head office “You are not going to believe what is happening here” he said. “I want this trip again next year.”

Our driver had been terrific – navigating the narrow crowded streets during Carnival weekend with incredible dexterity. As a reward we arranged most of the models in a splendid tableau and placed him in their midst. We promised to send photographs to the head office of his Coach Company to let them know what the other drivers had been missing.

It was a great weekend – not the draining emotional experience of my first visit. This one was very different. Now how am I going to get a photographic project from my pictures of Nina, Carina, Laura, Iris and the lovely Nele? No, I have not mentioned Nele – that is another story.

GET INVOLVED! - Keith Allchin

On the Friday before the Winter Garden exhibition there was a two-page spread about it in the Sheffield Telegraph, including five images. Publicity like this ensures not only that the public knows about our exhibitions but also that SPS continues to be promoted as a worthwhile and prestigious entity in the local, and perhaps national, artistic world.

As Exhibition Coordinator for SPS it is timely for me to point out what should be obvious: that publicity like this does not happen by chance. Photographs have to be taken of suitable images. These have to be processed and burnt to CD in the appropriate format and submitted to the Press. Contacts in the press and other media have to be made and maintained. Press releases have to be submitted.

In addition, posters have to be designed, printed and distributed around the city.

Somebody has to do this work. We are very fortunate in SPS that we have an excellent publicity team, notably Meg and Judy. Many thanks to both!

I feel it is important that members appreciate what happens in the background, not only for exhibitions but for the general running of the Society. Furthermore, everything has to be done as cheaply as possible to keep the annual subscriptions within reasonable limits.

I am concerned that this work is falling on the shoulders of fewer and fewer people. For example, this year we have lost dear Ken Doney. The Winter Garden exhibition was Ken’s “baby” and he worked quietly and hard to ensure its success. From my point of view, he produced the posters and forms, printed and laminated the authors’ “blurbs” and gave his time and the use of his large car to help transport the display boards to and from the venue.

These jobs still have to be done and someone has to do them.

Some other stalwarts of the Society are in failing health and can no longer dedicate the effort and time they have given so freely in the past. The work they did still has to be done by someone. And none of us is getting any younger!

It was pleasing to find that, of the 42 authors having their work hung at the Winter Garden, most helped with the exhibition in one capacity or another. My role as Exhibition Coordinator is made much easier because I know there is a large pool of members I can rely on who will help out and who do not wait to be asked.

GET INVOLVED! - Continued

But the Society's membership base has increased tremendously over the last few years. With a few notable exceptions, new members are not coming forward to get involved in the running of the Society. It is important that they do, if only to ensure continuity. Skills and knowledge have to be passed on.

Of course I realise that important commitments compete for our time. I am well aware that the pressures of the workplace have increased beyond imagination. But the fact remains that jobs have to be done in running a Society such as ours, and to repeat myself, someone has to do them.

I also appreciate that some members might be reluctant to put themselves forward because they are not sure what has to be done and are afraid that they might be left to get on with it without any guidance. Perhaps in the Society we need to get a system going where "old" members approach a newer member to join them, for example, in stewarding for a couple of hours at an exhibition.

In my experience, the old principle that you get out what you put in still applies. True, the jobs have to be done, but they are not necessarily a chore. Getting involved is usually a pleasurable sociable experience and a lot of laughs can be had. New contacts and friends are made. We are drawn out of our usual everyday existence.

I must point out that these views are mine and not necessarily those of other Council members. But I do feel that they need expressing if SPS is to continue as we know it.

I DO IT MY WAY—Notes from an AV talk by Ron Walker

The first thing to say is that I'm not going to show you a sequence or even any pictures. Sorry, but I think you might understand why in a few minutes time.

I do it by following that wonderful tome;

"An introduction to digital AV using Pictures to Exe" by you know who...

But even then, I don't really do it that way. I try to follow Ken's song sheet, but I invariably get lost and end up playing all the wrong notes in the wrong key, hoping I'll get away with it.

People whose work I admire, tell me that I should start by writing a script, I should then break that script up into sections with timings and I should think about the sort of images that are needed for each of those sections.

Next I should decide on what music and sound effects need to be added and just how and where they should be placed.

I must also consider what my opening hook might be, got to have a hook, and I must think about all my dissolves, all my third images, (you'll be lucky) and I must not forget that my last shot will be the only one that any member of the audience will remember.

All I have to do now, is to set all that lot against a time line and get cracking.

That's it. That's all there is to it.

I don't think I have to tell you that my progress towards that imagined wonderland has been very, very limited so far. You've all seen examples of my rather lame product...which I think, says it all.

Currently, I have a couple ideas rolling around in my head. I'm pretty sure that the only way they can be constructed is in the proper, script first, break it into sections, shake it all about, dah. dah. dah... kind of way.

I therefore need to put in a lot more thought about how I might make, or acquire, the necessary images, and given my current performance with a camera, that might take a pretty long time. I need then to explore how the tales might be told. In both cases, song lyrics generated the initial ideas, but how I get to actually producing something concrete from them, is still well beyond me.

I DO IT MY WAY—Continued

So, to date my AV's have started with a simple pile of images. Usually they're the ones that are not good enough for competition use, in other words the best of virtually every thing I shoot. I hope for the kind of thing, I imagine, other like minded souls might find acceptable and to be of passing interest.

Although I've been an SPS member for getting on for five years now, I still find basic photography very difficult, as I'm sure you're all aware. There is just so much to get right, and rarely do I get even most of it right, so I seem to spend my life sifting through compact flash cards, that are full of rubbish.

I desperately look for anything, anything... that might have a little value. Always bearing in mind Uncle Ken's thundering dictum... If in doubt ...leave it out. That's why I have so very few images to choose from.

Occasionally, something does pop out. I then find myself playing with it in Photoshop, often for days on end, only to conclude that I can't do anything with it, it is simply another plonker, so I leave it, unsaved and it gets forgotten.

(I'm now playing with things in Apple Aperture 2 as well, but I'll tell you about that later).

If, as has happened on a couple of occasions, a few images on a similar theme look, just about, reasonable, I start thinking ... maybe I might be able to put these together and dazzle the world.

So, I make a folder into which I start to drop these little treasures. Usually I forget to number them, so I then have to go back and spend yet more time trying to get them into something like their original sequence, whilst wondering what if anything, creatively, I might be able to do with them.

Anyhow, to give you some idea of just how chaotic the process is in my hands, it's at about this stage that I start thinking about suitable fonts and graphics for titles and end credits. I tend to think that simply sticking a plain, bald font on the opening and closing frames, is a bit of a cop out. So, days go by, with different words, colours, backgrounds, sizes, transparency values, all whizzing hither and thither across my screen. I have been trying to get a bit of a handmade feel by handwriting things using a Wacom tablet, but mine is not pressure sensitive, so I don't find even that simple task, very easy.

When I start to get bored with this game, I either revert to image processing or.. more often... just go for a lie down in a quiet room.

A few days or maybe weeks later, as life seems to be all right, no major problems. I've paid my credit card bills, John Lewis, and the house insurance, I've mowed the lawns, that speeding ticket I thought as coming, hasn't. I know it can't last. Then, slowly, I start to get this feeling of something in the air. My calm begins to develop a distinct wobble. It all gets heavier and heavier. I am suddenly aware that some Tsunami of trouble is sitting up there, waiting to dump on my shoulders. Life is about to take a dive. I may very well not survive.

And then it happens.

The smiling angel of doom stands before me with those huge wings extended.

"Excuse me Ron...but have you got anything ready for St Lukes, or St Peters or St Somebody else's? The fear and guilt well up and up. I swallow, hard, and then I hear myself say ..."er, erm, erm, well... I might have". "Oh good" comes the reply, "can you let me have it before the meeting on...so and so, it doesn't have to be finished, but exactly how long is it and can you let me a bit of paper with a few words of introduction for it?"

Oh Gawd ...here we go again..

Then it starts. I make a frantic search for the folder that contains those images that I thought might work. I then make another frantic search for the file containing the rest of the images, from that same shoot, because I know there aren't enough reasonable ones and I need to work out how long the piece of music I now have to look for should be.

I DO IT MY WAY—Continued

Then it dawns on me ... there are nowhere near enough pictures. Panic. Panic. Panic. I start to process the poor things that I do have, (some of you will say that I definitely **over** process things). I start sticking one frame on top of another... and then another and another. I try various blending modes, I try de-saturation, re-saturation, desatination even, I introduce noises on and noises off, I mask everything and then cut holes in those masks, only to throw the whole lot away and start again. I'll try anything. I blur some horizontal frames so that several vertical frames or letter box jobs can sit on top of them...and vice versa.

I'll let you into another secret of mine...I used to be able to use a filter called Buzz.

Of course by now I will be listening to a lot of music...in the car, on the computer, every where. Ken said...Six minutes maximum without narration...how many slides do I need for six minutes... the calculator is near melt down.

I try to think of a few tunes that might suit the mood, is it going to be A.Vivaldi, JS Bach, GF Handel or... probably not. Although I love their music, we simply are dealing with different kinds of emotions. I am more likely to be trying to remember film scores or trying to identify what is being played behind that TV trailer. I'm lucky in that my son in law likes a lot of the same kind of stuff that I enjoy, so we can compare notes (No pun intended) and we both listen to a lot samplers in iTunes .

Most of what I do listen to is Rock, Jazz, folky funk, and Ambient Electronic. Throw in World Music, particularly African and Indian stuff, then a bit of Reggae, and Salsa and you are getting to where I'm at. What I cannot stand is the sentimental.

I promise that you will never get anything remotely like the so called music from the, *expletive deleted*, sound of, *expletive deleted*, music, on anything that I will ever do.

I remember listening to a talk by Suzanne Walker, soon after I joined the group, and hearing her say that on no account should music with a beat be employed, because people would start tapping their toes and would not be concentrating on the images or the message.

Well, that might be the case for the more serious, reportage, kind of AV's, but as yet, I'm just not in that division at all. I'm sorry Suzanne but I feel that in the context of what I do, a strong bass line can do much to drive the whole thing along.

When I eventually do find a couple of likely candidates, I play them whilst I'm processing the pictures, play them over and over, just to see if they really do suit the pictures. They are played at quite high levels...well that is...until the the door opens, the management comes in... and I get my wrist slapped.

To date, a pick, has eventually emerged. So I then have to dig out Ken's bible for info on how to rip it off and put it into PtoE. Even following that indispensable aid, line by line, I invariably get into some kind of mess and have to do it two or three times.

When I have all the slides strung out evenly along the time line (note the technical term), I spend hours just running it, over and over again, until I'm happy that it adds something to the mood of the pictures and I don't have to go looking for something else. I usually do have to look for something else... and it's usually the black slide, at both ends. I even have to go to Ken's bible to find out, yet again, how to do that. That means rejigging the timeline, so on and on it goes...

Now comes the resolve.

This time I will add a narration and make a proper, grown up, AV.

Some hopes.

ANNIE LIEBOVITZ—Colin New

I recently visited the Annie Leibovitz exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in London. It is an excellent show and I recommend you try and get to see it. It is on until February 1st 2009.

I have always been a bit critical of those photographers that specialise in celebrity portraits and said that often we admire the work of these people because we recognise the person being photographed. Exceptions to this rule are photographers like Karsh who seemed to convey something of the character of his sitters – his Churchill and Castro portraits were stunning; Arnold Newman who managed to put his sitters in a context that added so much to the final image – his Stravinsky and Krupp portraits are masterful; and Bailey also managed some fine portraits like his Rolling Stones series. In the main however people who specialise in the celebrity portrait rarely make images that would stand out if the person being photographed was just that ordinary person who lived next door. Their images too often depend upon the viewer recognising who has been photographed.

I went to the Annie Leibovitz really not expecting to be impressed. I had seen a television film of her working with a huge retinue of assistants when photographing The Queen and felt that many of her images were over contrived. However, I was bowled over when I saw this exhibition. The portraits are the work of a master craftsman.

One of the aspects that make the exhibition especially interesting is that her personal work is included along with the celebrity portraits. There are pictures of her three daughters and also some very moving pictures of Susan Sontag with whom she had a long time relationship.

This is an exhibition that is not to be missed. Go see it if you can.

ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2009—Sponsored by Harrison PhotoVideo

The Annual Exhibition is the most prestigious event in the Society's year. It will be held in the 1554 Gallery within Sheffield Cathedral on 19th – 22nd February 2009.

Rules for the exhibition are given within this newsletter but new members in particular might find the following general information helpful:

Members submit entries and these are selected on merit by an external judge (except for the Sheffield, its Life and Environs class which is judged by our President) for inclusion in the exhibition. Usually about 50–55% of submissions make it into the exhibition.

Any paid-up member may submit entries. There are six classes:

- Open (prints and slides)
- Beginners (prints and slides)
- Sheffield, its Life and Environs (prints and slides)
- Juniors (prints and slides)
- Small Prints
- Slide Photoessay

Prints must be mounted in a window cut from standard mount board. If you need advice on mounts ask me or most members of the Society. We do not use frames.

The Society has built up an impressive collection of trophies over many years and these will be awarded within each class at the judge's discretion (see Trophies List within this newsletter). Each trophy is linked to a specific type of image (such as Pictorial or Natural History, as shown in the Trophies List). Certificates may also be awarded but these are for merit and are not linked to a particular class or type of image.

Guidance concerning types of image is given in Notes for Guidance in this newsletter.

Entry and Summary forms are enclosed with this newsletter. If you require more entry forms you may copy them, download them from our website or ask at a club evening.

THE ANNUAL EXHIBITION IS COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT OF INTERNAL AND INTER-CLUB COMPETITIONS. The only general condition for entry is that an image must not have been included in a previous SPS Annual Exhibition.

ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2009—Continued

Publicity is essential and the Society's team will be hard at work to attract as many visitors as possible. Please do your bit and publicise the event as widely as possible in your locality. Fliers and posters will be available on club nights.

Admission will be free and the exhibition will be open 9am–5pm Monday to Saturday and 12 noon–5pm on Sunday. We will provide Society stewards over the lunch period Wednesday to Saturday, and all Sunday afternoon. Set-up will be by our members on Wednesday 18th and take-down on Monday 23rd. There is a kitchen which we will use for our own refreshments. Lockers and toilets are also available.

The Lord Mayor has kindly agreed to open the exhibition at 11.00 am on Thursday 19th February, and we hope the Bishop (of Doncaster) and Dean will also be present. Please make a note in your diary since we would like this to be as well attended as possible.

Council has yet to decide whether a printed catalogue booklet will be produced this year. Visitors may express a wish to purchase your work and I will give you contact details so that you can make arrangements personally with the potential purchaser.

We have a Favourite Print Poll in which visitors are invited to name their favourite print. A special trophy is awarded for the most popular print in the exhibition.

We have to pay to hire the 1554 Gallery but we get it at a reduced rate. All proceeds from hire go towards supporting the Cathedral's Archer Project which supports homeless and destitute persons within the city.

Most of you will realise that a lot of work goes into planning and carrying out any exhibition. We rely on willing volunteers who give freely of their time and resources. Perhaps, if you are a new member, or have never volunteered to help out before, this would be a good opportunity. There is something in it for you! – it is sociable and fun and you get to know other members. If any of your images are on show, you will get a first-hand experience of how the public reacts to them and visitors might want to discuss them with you. Perhaps you will sell some of your work.

So, come along and support your Society at the Cathedral!

Keith Allchin, Exhibitions Coordinator

PS. Make sure you read the Rules, Trophies List and Notes for Guidance in this newsletter! If there is anything else you need to know, or are not sure about, ask me at a meeting or by phone or via email at keith@allchin.f9.co.uk

TIMETABLE

Submit entries (with entry forms, entry fee and summary form)	Club night Tuesday 6 th January 2009
Return cleaned trophies	Club night Tuesday 6 th January
Judging and Selection at Greenhill Methodist Church (all are welcome)	Saturday 17 th January 10am – 4pm
Presentation of Awards	Club night Tuesday 17 th February
Set up at Cathedral	Wednesday 18 th February (time TBA)
Annual Exhibition	Thursday 19 th February – Sunday 22 nd February
Take down at Cathedral	Monday 23 rd February (time TBA)
Return of images to authors	Club night Tuesday 19 th February

ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2009—Continued

MEMBERS' ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2008/9

RULES

1. The closing date for entries is Tuesday 6th January 2009. No late entries will be accepted. Please return trophies by this closing date, in a **CLEANED** condition.
2. A completed entry form and summary form must accompany the fee of £5.00 (cheques payable to Sheffield Photographic Society).
3. An entry will not be accepted if the member's subscription is in arrears.
4. Entry into a class indicates acceptance of the SPS rules for that class.
5. Members may enter a maximum of eight prints plus one Small Print, and eight slides (but see 6 below).
6. Members may enter only one slide essay and/or one print essay. Slide essays should consist of six images. Print essays may consist of four or more images, mounted on a single card not exceeding 50 x 40 cm or equivalent area. The slide essay will count as one slide and the print essay as one print within the maximum total of eight prints and slides.
7. In the Sheffield, its Life and Environs class, entries must have been taken locally within the last two years. The location and date of shooting should be included in the title.
8. Trade processed prints and slides may be entered.
9. The Beginners' classes are for members who have not won an award or certificate in any exhibition, or had work accepted in an Open Exhibition. Beginners may enter other classes, but not exceed the exhibition maximum (see 4).
10. To be eligible for the Small Prints trophy, the print must not exceed an area of 75 square centimetres (e.g. 7.5cm x 10cm).
11. Entrants in the Juniors class must be aged under 18 on Collection Day and be the sons or daughters of paid-up members (paid-up on Collection Day). Family membership is not required. Two prints and/or slides may be entered.
12. No work accepted in previous Annual Exhibitions of the Society is eligible.
13. Prints must be mounted. The maximum mount size is 50 x 40 cm or equivalent area. Mounted panoramas must not exceed 2000 square centimetres mount size. Prints affixed to the mount with parcel tape will not be accepted for selection.
14. Name of the author, title of the print and class entered must appear on the backs of all prints on one of the Society's adhesive labels, affixed at the upper right on the back of the print/mount.
15. 5cm x 5cm slides should be spotted on the front of the mount, in the bottom left hand corner when the slide is held correctly for viewing in the hand. Each slide mount must bear the author's name, title of the work and class entered (and see Rule 6 above).
16. Natural History. Members who wish their images to be considered for the Natural History Trophy must indicate this on their entry form and on the print or slide by the letter "N" after the title. By indicating this they confirm that they have adhered to the SPS rules for natural history. See Notes for Guidance.

Entries should be accurately titled.

Digital adjustments in Natural History should be kept to a minimum (see Notes for Guidance.)

17. Whilst every care will be taken, the Society cannot be held responsible for the safety of work entered in the exhibition. Glamour prints especially are at risk from vandalism. Also, prints measuring longer than 50 cm do not fit into standard print boxes and may be more susceptible to damage in transit.

18. Work entered in the Society's Annual Exhibition is assumed to be available for submission to the Yorkshire Photographic Union's Annual Exhibition, unless the author indicates to the contrary on the Summary Form.

ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2009—Continued

Notes for Guidance

While all awards are obviously at the judge's discretion, most of the following conventions have been in use within our society for some years and have previously formed the guidelines for awarding the trophies.

Pictorial work

Conventional landscapes, 'atmospheric' and general scenes

Pictures in which figures form only subsidiary subjects

Images which have been heavily manipulated are not appropriate in this Class.

Pictorial creative

The judge will look for evidence of imaginative manipulation of the image by the photographer.

Use of Photoshop effects and filters, and other computer and in-camera manipulation, are encouraged in this class

Portraits and Figure Studies

The subject may be a human or an animal but it is likely that, other qualities being equal, the judge will give more marks to a human subject.

Conventional portraits, head and shoulders or full length

'Glamour' and nude studies, taken in or out of doors. If a figure is shown in a setting, it should be the dominant part of the composition.

Record

Any photograph which depicts the whole or a significant part of the subject. The essential quality is the accuracy of representation and the recording of detail. Titles should be factual.

Natural History

SPS rules for the Natural History Trophy

These rules are derived from those for the BBC/Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Competition and the YPU rules on natural history photography.

Natural History photography depicts living, untamed animals and uncultivated plants in a natural habitat and all natural phenomena. The accurate record of the subject, behaviour and natural environment is the prime factor.

Photographs of cultivated plants, floral arrangements, domestic and caged animals, mounted specimens, museum groups or man and his specialised environment are NOT acceptable.

Entries should be accurately titled.

Digital adjustments are only acceptable if limited to:

minor cleaning work, Levels, Curves, colour, saturation, contrast, sharpening and cropping.

Compositing (i.e. combining elements from different images) and multiple exposures is not allowed.

Photojournalism/Action

Pictures of people at work are acceptable under this heading or in Portrait and Figure study.

Any subject that would be considered by an editor of a newspaper or magazine to be newsworthy. A famous person, travel scene, function, people (not portraits), sports, races, and accidents such as fires, etc.

Titles should be explanatory.

Photo Essays

Images on a theme or which tell a story.

ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2009—Continued

TROPHIES

At the discretion of the judge, trophies may be awarded within the Classes as follows:

Open Prints Class	
Pictorial	The Cooper Cup
Creative Pictorial	The Hodgson Cup
Portrait and Figure Study	The Horton Cup
Record	The Record Cup
Natural History	The Natural History Cup
Photojournalism / Action	The Dixon Trophy
Photo Essay	The Constantine Cup

Beginners' Print Class	The Rose Bowl
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Sheffield, its Life and Environs Print Class	The Fred Hague Trophy
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Juniors Class (Prints or Slides)	The Junior Trophy
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Small Prints Class	The Ron Harrison Trophy
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Open Slides Class	
Pictorial	The Colour Pictorial Cup
Creative Pictorial	The Shaw Cup
Portrait and Figure Study	The Colour Portrait Cup
Record	The Colour Record Cup
Natural History	The Colour Natural History Cup
Photojournalism/Action	The Walker Cup

Beginners' Slides Class	The Iklody Cup
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Sheffield, its Life and Environs Slides Class	The Ray Brightman Trophy
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Slide Photo Essay Class	The Whitear Cup
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The **Best Print** in the exhibition is awarded The Society Trophy

The **Best Slide** in the exhibition is awarded The Gaisford Plaque

CERTIFICATES

Highly Commended and Commended certificates may be awarded for merit at the judge's discretion. These are not linked to classes.

