

Viewfinder

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIELD END PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

April 2008

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FEPS New Website – Images for the Gallery

As you may know we are in the process of creating a new website. We are at the point in the site's development where we would like to invite all FEPS members to submit images for the Members Gallery pages. We hope that as many members as possible will take advantage of this opportunity to show your work on the web.

All you have to do is let me have up to six images for your personal gallery. We will display one thumbnail image from each portfolio in the opening page of the gallery. A click on your name will open the six images in your personal portfolio, again as thumbnails. The viewer will then have the opportunity to open up a larger version of each image.

The six images should each be in jpg format (please use .jpg and not .jpeg) and be a maximum size of 1024 pixels wide by 768 pixels tall. The file name should include your own name as you would wish it to be displayed on the website (ie including any RPS or PAGB distinctions if you have them) and the title of the image – make it meaningful as the title will be displayed on the web page. So it should look something like - View from Outer Space by A Spaceman LRPS.jpg. Those of you who take part in the digital competitions will be familiar with the format. Resolution is not critical but you may wish to choose 72 dpi to deter downloading of your images. We will make the thumbnails. If you have strong views about which image you want to use for the opening gallery page, let me know, otherwise I will choose one.

We would also like to include a gallery of images from the local area, either scenes or events/activities. A few words to go with the images to describe where the shot was taken would be useful.

You can e-mail your images to me at catherine.allen@virgin.net or a box will be available on club nights for you to deposit CDs or memory sticks etc.

The closing date for letting me have your material is 30 April.

Catherine Allen

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EXTERNAL COMPETITIONS

NWF Final

The final of the NWFed was held on 23rd February at Wycombe PS. Amersham beat Ealing & Hampshire House to win the trophy. Although as a club we had been knocked out of the competition in earlier rounds, five starred images – 2 slides and 3 prints - went on to do battle for the Best Print and Best Slide. Mike Walker's Piratical Gull was judged by Rosemary Wilman, ARPS to be the 'Best Print'. Well done Mike! Anyone interested in seeing the full results can view them on <http://users.tinyworld.co.uk/mark.buckley-sharp/nwfed/FinalProg0708.pdf>

(See Brownsea Island article for details of Mike's image)

CACC Championships Day

The interclub print and slide took place on Sun 9th March, alongside the Strictly Digital Competition. See Val's write up further on for further details.

Rosebowl Day

The CACC Finals Day is scheduled for 18th May and will be held at Amersham Community Centre. The top 12 clubs go through to compete in the Rosebowl Finals. Unfortunately FEPS failed to make it this year, but will be competing for the Best Panel of Prints. Each participating club submits six prints and all prints are on display throughout the afternoon. The event also hosts the Audio Visual competition, which has become increasingly popular over the last few years. It is open to all individuals of member clubs. Entries must be submitted by 15th April. Full details of results and events can be found on the CACC website at <http://www.chilternsassociationofcameracclubs.co.uk/frameset.htm>

It is likely that all external slide competitions will switch to a digital format next season.

Marilyn Dennis, CPAGB

CHANGES TO FEPS COMPETITION STRUCTURE FOR NEXT SEASON

Much discussion took place at the last committee meeting regarding the structure of our competitions next season, in particular whether we should continue with slides, as there seemed to be only a few people taking new slides. Most are going through old slides or having them made from digital in order to enter this season's competitions. Chris Wallace offered to provide a slide scanning service for those still taking slides. He would make basic level and saturation adjustments to compensate for the scanning process (as would be the case for commercial automatic scanning), but not change the images in any other way. Bearing this in mind a formal proposal was made to drop slide competitions with effect from next season. This was seconded and voted through by a majority.

With regard to the Digital Set Subject it was suggested that the number be increased to 4 in order to compensate for one odd mark. After some discussion it was proposed that we still keep 3 set subjects but allow 3 entries per person. This was agreed as it was thought to provide more flexibility for entrants to be more creative and also would increase the number of entries on competition evenings now that slides have been removed.

It will be put to the vote at the AGM as to whether image titles and/or authors names are read out during competitions. It is now common practise for titles to be read out at all external competitions.

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It was also suggested that we consider having 2 classes in digital, as we have 2 classes in prints. This may encourage new members to participate but there is no evidence so far that new members find one class to be a drawback. There is also a problem in deciding who would be in each class if we adopted this policy. This issue will be discussed further and feedback from members (both new and old!) would be appreciated.

Marilyn Dennis, CPAGB

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BROWNSEA ISLAND AND THE GULL PIRATES.

As many of you will know, Brownsea Island is in Poole Harbour and is owned by the National Trust. It is famous as the place where Baden Powell had the first scout camp and is still used by the scouts for trips even now. Part of the island is also let to the Dorset Wildlife Trust as a reserve and it has a number of attractions including pleasant walks, a pond, boardwalk and 6 hides. It is well worth a visit at almost any time of year, particularly as the boat trip from Poole Quay and the National Trust café make it a very good day out.



Of particular interest to us, as both photographers and birdwatchers, is that the Macdonald Hide overlooks a couple of sandbars and in May and June this provides great opportunities for close viewing of the terns that nest on these banks. Sandwich and common terns rear their chicks only a few yards from the hide, and it is almost unnecessary to use your binoculars, although obviously this enables you to see everything in much more detail.

On the day of our visit last June, the terns were working hard as parents, bringing fish and sandeels back on a regular basis to their eagerly waiting chicks. There were several black headed gulls waiting around to see if they could steal a quick meal from the terns but on the whole the terns were too quick and flew straight in to where their chick was waiting. On many occasions, when a tern missed the correct landing on the island, it would fly around again and try for a second landing rather than risk robbery by the gulls.

However, one sandwich tern was set upon by a black headed gull on its return and there is no other word for it but piracy. As he had been trying to capture pictures of the terns flying in with the fish, it was fortunate that Mick had his camera at the ready. The photo below shows the peak of the action with the gull literally trying to pull the fish from the tern's beak.



The tern tried very hard to resist but the gull had the upper position and at one instant had its foot

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on the tern's head trying to push it under the water. The tern finally had to concede when another two gulls arrived on the scene and joined in the struggle. The end result was that the fish was pulled apart and the gulls then scrapped over the pieces. As you can imagine this was all over in a matter of seconds.

We have seen piracy before with the famous frigate birds who make a regular practice of robbing other birds of their food but this is the first time Mick had witnessed this situation in British waters.

So, if you are interested in an interesting day out next spring or summer, why not take a trip to Brownsea? The National Trust handbook and website both give details of the opening times of the island and during the months from March to October the boats run to the island every half an hour from either Poole Quay or Sandbanks. The Dorset Wildlife Trust also has a very useful website at <http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset/reserves/brownsea.htm> which lists sightings and other information about the reserve.

Val and Mick Walker

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Focus On Imaging

What's this?

Very early one Sunday morning at the end of February I left my home and headed up the A40 in the direction of Birmingham. I was aiming to avoid the traffic so left at 530 am. When I arrived at the NEC approximately 2 hours later the place was just beginning to wake up. It was the first day of an imaging trade show, billed as Focus on Imaging. FOCUS ON IMAGING claims to be Europe's biggest annual imaging show, covering the needs from image capture through to output and beyond. It is open to non trade visitors and over 33,000 individuals attended the show over the 4 day period.

Whilst it is primarily a trade show with demonstrations of almost every piece of equipment remotely connected to imaging a number of big retailers have stands and sell camera's and photography equipment. For the duration of the show most things are discounted from 15 % to 25 % on normal high street prices. Big names like Jacobs, Purdy, Camera World, and Digital Depot were in attendance.

Canon was well represented with a very large stand just inside the main entrance. Their stand was tiered and on the various levels every model of their current range of cameras could be handled and tried out with different lenses from their range. The manufacturers were not selling from their stands but almost anything on their stands could be found at one of the retailers stands for sale at a discounted show rate.

Various free demonstration talks were held on different stands throughout the day covering flash photography, portrait photography etc and if one was keen you could actually pay to attend seminars on covering the various facets of image making.

Image manipulation software from Adobe, Coral and the like was being demonstrated on different stands. There were also companies demonstrating Adobe plug in software. Again the software being demonstrated could be purchased at discounted prices from the retail stands.

(Continued over page)

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Epson was well represented on their stand demonstrating the new commercial printers and they also had a selection of home printers being demonstrated.

The Royal Photographic Society was represented on a stand and there was also an exhibition of prize winning images. Many of the photographic magazine publishers also had stands and were selling subscription packages.

Matt Board Cutters were in evidence at various stands and the way to use them was being demonstrated. At these stands one could purchase board cutters at discounted prices.

Before I went to the show my wife said “well what are you going to buy this year” and I answered I have nothing in mind. That was true when I answered her question. However the lure of good prices was an irresistible temptation and I manage to spend quite a lot of money on plug in software for Adobe CS3 and a number of other items!

The show is an ‘all under one roof’ shop window for seeing current imaging equipment demonstrated. For anyone contemplating buying equipment it is an excellent opportunity to take advantage of discounted prices. The show is again scheduled to take place at the NEC next year in February.

David Harris

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National Geographic

National Geographic run a competition where they choose 12 images a day to go into their “Your Shot” section of their website and overall winners each month are voted for online and go into the magazine. It is a chance to get something published well above the usual photo magazine level.

I had a go in January and my Chinaman made it into the Daily Dozen, but it was not in danger of getting most votes in the January section. The competition is stiff as you would expect and I didn’t even put it in the top group myself!

You are allowed only one go a month and I think they get about 3000 entries. It is very easy to enter and you can find my shot if you scroll through Jan week 4 here at:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/yourshot/daily-dozen/daily-dozen.html>



Mike Longhurst

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(You may recall that some time ago I asked for thoughts and views about F.E.P.S from new members. Well I'm pleased to say that Trevor responded, here are his comments. -Ted)

As a newcomer to FEPS I would like to make a few comments in View Finder:-

After putting-off joining FEPS for some time now, due to heavy work commitments, I finally took the plunge in September 2007 (retirement came along in the summer!). I have not regretted that decision.

So, why did I want to join such a club?--primarily so that I could hear criticisms of, and receive advice on, my photos. I have enjoyed using film (yes that medium!) for very many years, but always felt nervous about "going digital"; mainly because of my low-level computer skills, and because I want to be able to enlarge my images considerably (I have some film enlargements made from 35 mm negs. up to 3ft x 2ft). I also wanted to be able to "pick the brains" of those who are more comfortable with the new medium.

So far, I have not pushed the questioning too much as I "get the feel" of my new camera and new computer; but as time goes on, and problems arise, I am sure that I will be seeking a lot of advice.

On my other reason for joining, I have enjoyed the competitions. I have listened intently to the judges comments on the slide and digital competitions, in line with my aim of learning more about digital work. In the print competitions, though, I have been very pleased with the judgements made on my offerings, and they have fed my competitive instincts. At the time of writing I am in a leading position in the Class 2 competition, and also in the friendship challenge. This may sound all very well, but...

I now find myself submitting prints which I hope will "catch the eye" of the judge and earn me high marks in the competition, rather than submitting those prints which I would like to hear opinions about, but which I feel may not necessarily earn high marks. So, maybe I should stick to my original idea for joining the club, and submit prints which I feel break some of "the rules", and which may / may not, attract high marks. I would like to hear comments on these other prints, but, as a highly competitive individual, I would like to have a high final position in the Print Competition. Members may feel that this is merely a problem which I have to sort out, personally; making a decision as to exactly what I want to get out of these evenings. I will also suggest that on these occasions the Title of the image is announced, and the "author", possibly given a chance to say what they intended to capture. Those people who are making comment can then decide if the author has correctly interpreted their theme, or advise as to how such an interpretation could have been better achieved. (I am aware that discussion has taken place at the committee about giving out titles in our normal competition rounds; although I do not know the outcome of such deliberations) However, I am asking here, if there are other members who find themselves in a similar situation as the season progresses. Would it be reasonable to ask that one session each 3 months is given over to a non-competitive evening at which members submit 2-3 prints/images so that comments can be made by our more experienced members (plus all others, if time permitted). We could then gain a wide range of opinions about our work, and, also possibly, learn how the judges approach these competition evenings.

I thank all those who have made me welcome, and made Monday evenings a pleasurable experience. I will certainly be renewing my membership in September, and will look forward to the ensuing challenges, which will mean that I submit digital entries as well as prints.

Trevor Hyde

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SPLASH



I had wanted to try my hand at 'high-speed' photography for some time but didn't want to have to go out and buy lots of new equipment. Everything I'd read about this sort of photography pointed to the need to use movement sensor triggers and slaves for external flashes - all I could see was lots of pound signs and knew if I was going to do it, I was going to have to do it the hard, and cheaper, way.

I realised straight away that I needed a fish tank - it didn't have to be huge but I didn't want it too small either because I was worried splashes could cause a problem. I phoned around a few pet shops and managed to get an ex-display one for a tenner - so far so good. It took a lot of

cleaning but as long as the side you're shooting through is sparkling you'll be fine.

I set the camera up on a tripod about a foot from the tank, with the level of the lens just below the water line in the hope I would be able to capture some decent air bubble shots. Putting the camera this close allowed me to be close enough to press the shutter button myself while dropping things into the tank with the other hand - using a remote control was an option but doing it this way seemed to me to be a lot more intuitive to the timing.

I knew I had to make everything as bright as possible if I was to have any chance of freezing the motion well - I have a very high powered, very bright (albeit very hot) set of halogen lights. I set the lights up very close to the tank - one lighting through the side to the left and one from the front and slightly to the left of the camera.

To get the focus right I placed a big plastic bottle in the centre of the tank in order to set my focus and white balance. I had slices of lemons, oranges, peppers, chillies, lychees, apples - basically if it grew, I had it on standby! I had the camera on continuous burst and just intended to take plenty of shots to see what happened. I realised it was going to be very much a matter of luck so was prepared to delete plenty of empty frames. I was also thinking that it was something that was going to take a lot of practice before I got anything worth keeping.

I started with the lemon actually, and they are the ones I like most from the whole shoot but I was right, I did have plenty of frames where I'd missed the movement completely but as long as I threw the items in the right place and had continuous burst on, the focus was pretty much spot on for everything - I thought it might be a problem as I needed the lens opened right up (f/1.8) so I could get enough light for shooting at high speed.

It did take quite a bit of preparation and setting up - I had to make sure I knew what I was going to shoot and have it on hand, and cleaning and filling the tank took a while too. It was definitely worth the effort though, and is one I'll go to again just because you can't take the same photo twice and you never know what you're going to get either.

I wanted some bright fun photographs and I think that's what I got - I hope so anyway. It was a lovely experiment to try and I had lots of fun doing it - even missing the action altogether on occasions wasn't frustrating - the beauty of digital really shines through with something like this - what does it matter how many times you miss, just delete and try again!

Sally Blackmore

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Just in case you thought that you hadn't heard anything about Harry's book—*Pictures and Premieres*. You will see from this photograph that he's been mixing with royalty again. Only this time armed with his book and not a camera. To be fair it was a reception hosted by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall at Clarence House. I understand that the book was given royal approval by the hosts although Harry is keeping quiet about the comment that Prince Charles was making at the time.

Ted Weller



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The Savill Garden



Following our successful outing to The RHS Garden at Wisley, in last month's Viewfinder we stated that we were planning a visit to the Savill Garden around the end of April or beginning of May. We have now decided on Saturday, the 26th April, so please note that date in your diary. The current price of an adult ticket is £7.00 with concessions for seniors, children and groups. If everyone going meets outside the entrance at 10.30 we may have enough for a group concession.

Savill Garden covers some 35 acres and was created in 1932 by Sir Eric Savill.. Today the garden is well established and is considered to be the finest of its type in the northern temperate

region of the world. There are wonderful displays of colour all year round with spectacular spring plants; the formal rose garden and herbaceous borders in the summer; the fiery colours of autumn and the misty vistas of winter. There is also a unique temperate house which shelters frost tender plants from the rigours of winter and is a fragrant delight in spring. The New Zealand Garden has re-opened after extensive re-planting. The Savill Garden has a new visitor centre inspired by leaf form,. It contains a large airy restaurant and a shop offering plants and many interesting gifts.

The best way to get to the Garden is probably M25 then A30 towards Sunningdale and look for signposts. It is easy to park near the entrance and it is free if you get your ticket stamped on entry to the Garden. From the car park you can also visit the Valley Gardens and Virginia Water (see www.theroyallandscape.co.uk).

We believe there will be an opportunity to take some memorable pictures and, if you think they are good enough, to enter their photographic competition.

To enable us to determine how many are likely to go, please let us know if you are interested.

Harry Myers and John Berge

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What We Have For You

First of all, maybe not everyone is aware of what is already available to everyone, but may be especially useful for those starting out.

1. We do still have copies of the handouts that were produced for our digital workshops, covering getting the most out of your camera settings, transferring images to the computer and making basic improvements to composition. These could be made available if required.
2. There are some more advanced handouts on layers, levels, jargon etc which again could be photocopied and given out, or maybe put into documents for emailing to those who have email addresses.
3. The Club has its own copy of the DVD "Getting Started in Photoshop" which I have in my possession and can be loaned out to anyone for a couple of weeks at a time.
4. I am sure many of us have copies of the digital magazines and their CD's of tutorials, which again can be loaned out to others to watch if they need help on a particular topic. As we all know the same topics are often repeated and sometimes they publish an index of which topics are covered on each CD.
5. I have also photocopied a number of articles out of these magazines which I use for my own "library" of articles. If anyone finds a particular topic difficult and needs some written guidance there should be something available. Maybe you could make a "hitlist" of the most popular things that we should be targeting.
6. It would be helpful to find out if they would prefer group discussions on a club night or smaller meetings at someone's home. Can we establish how many people actually are looking for personal tuition?

The reason I would like to find out about all this is that, in formulating the programme, I want to try to strike a balance between helping beginners and maintaining the interest of more experienced people who already know the basics and would be bored with really elementary principles.

Please let me have some feedback.

Thanks

Val

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WHY DO I TAKE PICTURES – Your Turn.

I am sure that everyone who attended Adrian Herring's talk on "Why do I take pictures", and also completed the questionnaire, found it quite thought provoking about the reasons for taking some of their pictures. I would imagine that pleasing judges came well down the list in importance.

As those of you who have looked at the programme will realise, we have a Member's Evening on Monday June 2nd and I thought it might be nice to continue this theme and give some of our own members the opportunity to show some of their work in a non-competitive way and talk about why they took the pictures.

I would envisage 3 or 4 members talking about their images. If we have 4 people it would be

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about 20 minutes each. Depending on how quickly you wish to run through the images, maybe 20–25 images would be appropriate. You will have noticed that Adrian did not spend more than about a minute talking about any individual print or slide.

It would be nice to see some work from the newer members, especially images that we have not seen at the club previously! Talks can be done using prints, slides or digital.

Please let me know if you would like to volunteer to do a short talk of this nature, and if you need any help in putting it together.

Val Walker Programme Secretary.

SNAP HAPPY

The 2008 RHS Photographic Competition, supported by fine art publisher, The Medici Society, is currently welcoming entries. This is a perfect platform for both amateur and professional garden photographers who would like to showcase their talents to the horticultural world, with the chance of winning £1,000 plus the coveted title of RHS Photographer of the Year.

Categories include Plant Portrait, Garden View, Plant Close-up, Wildlife in the Garden and People in the Garden. There are also two new categories this year. The first is for budding young photographers (18 and under). Entitled In the Garden, it's designed to inspire budding photographers to venture outside and show us what they love about their garden or local park. The winner will become the inaugural RHS Young Photographer of the Year, and also receive a top of the range digital camera. The second new category for 2008 is for aspiring card designers of all ages. The Medici Award, supported by fine art publisher, The Medici Society, will give the winner the ultimate prize of seeing their photograph sold as a greeting card across the UK.

The closing date is 26 September. Entry free for 18 and under; adults pay £5 (£4 RHS members) per image entered. Email photocomp@rhs.org.uk or visit rhs.org.uk/news/photocomp for an application form.



Jacky Parker's image of dewdrops on Nectaroscordum. First prize winner in the Plant Portrait category in 2007.

SNAP HAPPY

The 2008 RHS Photographic competition is currently accepting entries. Categories include Plant Portrait, Garden View, Plant Close – Up, Wildlife in The Garden and People in The Garden. An entry fee is payable, full details and an entry form can be obtained from:

www.rhs.org.uk/news/photocomp

John Berge

The CACC Inter-Club Competition Day at Amersham on March 9th.

The introduction of the “Strictly Digital” competition has added a large number of entries to be shown on the day of the CACC Inter-Club competitions. For the benefit of those who did not enter, the Strictly Digital competition is not club based but is individual entries. The winning image, which was the only one to score the maximum 15 points, was “Sanderling” by Paul Keene FRPS of Amersham. This has recently also won an award in slide format in an RPS competition and is a very high quality image of a Sanderling running along the beach. Mike Walker’s “Tricoloured Heron with Fish” was our highest marked entry with a very commendable 13 points.

The Inter-Club print competition was next with 15 clubs competing for the right to take part in the National Championships at Connor’s Quay in North Wales. Each club had 15 prints making a total of 225 prints on display. With such a large number of prints to be judged, each print was only on display for a few seconds. Overall Field End did not fare too badly finishing joint 4th. The Winners were Amersham with Oxford in second place.

It was much the same result in the Slide Competition in which clubs compete to represent the Chilterns Association at Warwick in July. The demise of slides is shown by the fact that only 7 clubs competed in the Slide Competition. Again the winners were Amersham and second were Oxford. It is obvious that not only are both these clubs very strong but they also have slides made from their digital images, and have the sort of slides that pleased these particular judges.

I do not really like to criticise judges as they have a difficult job and are necessary for these competitions to take place. However, I found it strange that the CACC had chosen a husband and wife pairing who obviously had very similar tastes and then had allowed them to choose who else

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they would like to judge with. It is no real surprise that they chose someone they know, and who also likes similar kinds of images. Overall this meant that there was a strong bias and the more traditional landscapes did not get high marks. I will let the statistics speak for themselves. 275 digital images, plus 225 prints plus 105 slides gives more than 600 images on display that afternoon. Of all the images shown, not one landscape won an award or any of the judges individual choices. I will leave you to draw your own conclusions...

Val Walker

Winners Enclosure

In every issue I try to include a sample of images that have either won or done very well in club competitions along with the story behind them. This issue is no exception, although some images, 'Splash' and 'Piratical Gull' have been featured earlier. Unfortunately some members have not sent in the story behind their image.

Via Musica by Mike Longhurst

Some may remember that I showed this picture at a print evening with Chris Palmer and Chris picked it out of the pile as an interesting one to talk about. I seem to remember he favoured the woman's face a little more blurred, which was a pity since I'd spend some time un-blurring it! At the time my night shot of the poster shop, also taken in Prague, was doing well and I lost interest in Via Musica. With my change of circumstances this year, I had had to rely on things I had already mounted up but never used and this gave me a chance to try out what I think of as "quieter" and less obvious print comp images. In this case I was lucky, because I know the judge is a bit of a Prague specialist and he obviously appreciated the shot. There is nothing worse than seeing a place you know well and someone getting a shot you never saw the possibilities of, but he obviously didn't hold it against me! I shot the street in poor weather in February because I liked the posters (yes me and posters again!), but it really needed a person. I had shot several nicely on a third, when the two ladies crossed and I saw the chance for something different. Normally they say you should only shoot two people if there is a relationship between them, eg walking together, talking etc. In this case I felt there was a spatial relationship in the composition that could overcome any problem of having two. The cropping was a bit of a challenge and whether the pipe in the background should be in or out was a bit of a conundrum, so I tossed a mental coin and went for it.



Winners Picture Gallery

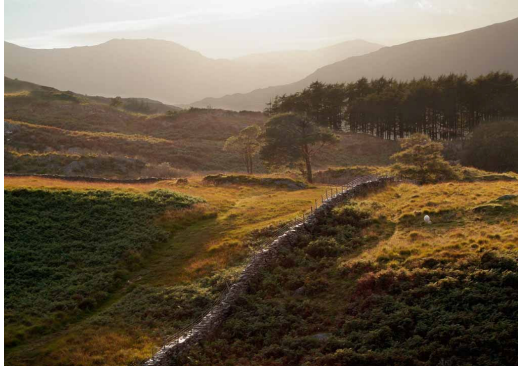


Fog
by Roy Pearman

Marbled White
by Mike Walker



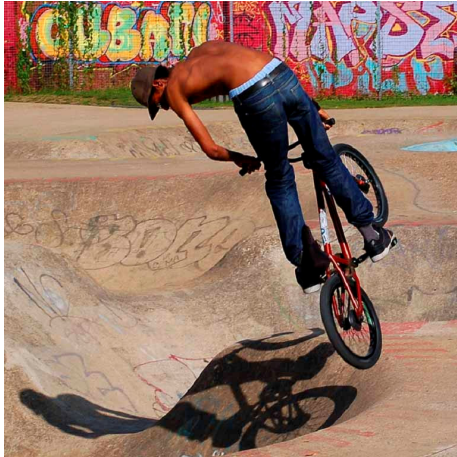
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Snowden
By Ray Staff



Sandwich Tern
By Mike Walker



Cuban
By Alan Rhodes

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Annual Exhibition — Important Announcement.

First of all I must stress this is NOT an April fool's wind up. Unfortunately due to circumstances that are out of our control our annual exhibition that was due to have taken place on Monday 28th April to Saturday 10th May at The Cow Byre in Ruislip has been cancelled by The London Borough of Hillingdon. We have been told that this is due to the ongoing redevelopment of the Manor Farm Complex. It remains to be seen if we will be granted dates later in the year when the refurbishment is completed.

Extensive research has taken place over the past few days to find an alternative venue at short notice that meets the needs and location for a photographic exhibition. As yet this has not been a success, but the search continues.

Our meeting on the 28th will still go ahead, possibly with an informal members evening. If you have any suggestions regarding either of these issues then please contact either Marilyn or Val.

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