

# SPS Newsletter

## Welcome

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Many congratulations to Phil Moorhouse on being elected President and to Martin Thompson as our President Elect. 'Thank You' to Jenny for her year in office and to those Committee members who have stood down this year.

We are 'resting' as a Society at the moment giving us all time to get away and opportunities to get your camera lens focussed and your shutter clicking capturing all those images that just might be good enough to appeal to a judge and do well in our competitions next year. I would love to hear from you if you fancy writing me a few words about where you have been or are going this Summer and send me some photographs – it will certainly brighten our Newsletter up over the dark winter months. As ever do please email anything to me at [172elizabeth@gmail.com](mailto:172elizabeth@gmail.com).

Well what a busy month May was with a Coronation celebrated, an historic event many of us have not seen before. I hope you enjoyed the extra Bank Holiday and celebrations we had that weekend, although it was a shame we didn't have better weather but C'est la Vie, that's Britain and its weather!

June is flying along and it's nice to have some warmer weather and less wind. I don't know whether you have noticed it but I think we seem to have much more wind these days that is quite strong and has a chill to it (and it's not helping me with trying to photograph flowers outside – they keep moving, talk about in-camera blur!).

We kicked off the first week of June with World Milk Day, World Bicycle Day, World Sausage Roll Day, World Environment Day and I particularly liked World Knit in Public Day on 10<sup>th</sup> June (I hope you all got your needles and 3 ply out!). And we celebrate Fathers on 18<sup>th</sup> June and the Summer Solstice on 21<sup>st</sup> June. That's something I have always wanted to do, see the sun rise at Stonehenge to celebrate the Solstice. And 21<sup>st</sup> June is also National Writing Day, so put pen to paper or type on your keyboard. I always think receiving a personal handwritten letter or card is lovely and we don't do it enough in these days of technology – maybe I am a bit of a dinosaur but there is something about the writing (with a nice pen and paper) and the receiving – although the price of stamps these days is less appealing!

Oh and I almost forgot, we have the start of the Summer of Sport, there is so much going on it's hard to keep up with things. If, like me, you are a tennis fan enjoy Wimbledon and your strawberries. And don't forget the Club's Social Nights and the President's Picnic at Stratford upon Avon on 25<sup>th</sup> June.

But I leave my Editor's column with a tribute to the iconic, wonderful and 'The Best', Tina Turner, who we lost last month and was one of my favourite singers.



With my very best wishes

Liz xx

# 02

## Through the Lens

Well, whilst on holiday in Yorkshire recently I found time to practice with my camera. The focus (excuse the pun!) of my efforts was to blur backgrounds on flowers etc. with the location of the RHS Gardens at Harlow Carr a perfect location. I am not sure how 'successful' my pictures are but I enjoyed learning this aspect of photography.

So what's next? Well, a good friend of mine has given me several books on photography techniques and CDs to watch. So, I shall be doing a lot of reading over the next few weeks!

And here's some interesting things I came across recently relating to photography:

### Professional Photographer Ages

40+ years	44%
30-40 years	33%
20-30 years	23%

### The 100 Rule in Photography?

According to this 'sunny day' rule, if you're using ISO 100, the shutter speed should be 1/100 and the aperture should be f/16. This rule generally produces the best-exposed front-lit photos on a sunny day.

### The 500 Rule in Photography?

When taking an untracked photo of the night sky using a camera on a tripod, this rule tells you how long you can expose before the stars begin to trail. You take the number 500 and divide by the focal length of your lens. For example, if you have a 20-mm wide angle lens, then  $500 / 20 = 25$ .



Why do pirates hate May, June, July and August?

Because they don't have Arrrrs in them!

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# 03

## Introducing Our New President

Phil Moorhouse LRPS



We asked our new President, Phil Moorhouse, to tell us a bit about himself.

### ***When did you take up photography?***

Growing up, my Dad always enjoyed his photography and introduced me to some decent equipment, including the Praktica MTL5 and the Olympus Trip (both of which I still own, pictured below).



However, things really took off in 1996, with the advent of digital photography, when my wife bought me a Casio QV-10, for our first Wedding Anniversary (*Paper*). This featured a resolution of 320 x 240 pixels, and sported a ground-breaking LCD screen and a swivelling lens so you could take selfies! Now, I could shoot hundreds of shots, in the hope that one of them might turn out ok! Not quite true, the 2Mb internal flash card could hold just 96 images. I bought my wife a book about *Origami* for our *Paper* Anniversary. I think she has now forgiven me.



### ***What sort of photography do you enjoy?***

All sorts really. Of course, I have a back catalogue full of aircraft photographs, cars, landscapes (usually shot from the comfort of my car) and family photos, but I also enjoy table-top photography, like the cameras and the railway figures shown above, and a little macro photography, shot with a long zoom lens. Nothing is left untouched by Lightroom and Photoshop, and, you may have noticed, I do rather enjoy 'creating' a picture in the software.

### ***Where did you grow up?***

My parents are both from Liverpool, hence my love of football.... Bill Shankly put it best, 'There are two great teams on Merseyside, Liverpool and Liverpool Reserves!'. My parents moved to the Black Country town of Great Wyrley, where I was born in 1966, again, hence my love of football! We moved to Solihull when I was 5-years old, to be closer to my Dad's work at (the then) Elmdon Airport, and here, I have remained to this day. I love this team photograph of the 1970's Liverpool squad, taken in the players' car-park! Amusing to see, back then, the players drove cars like the Austin Maxi, VW Beetle, Ford Cortina, etc. The height of luxury back in the day! Imagine the players' car-park these days! Lamborghini, Ferrari, McLaren, Range Rover, etc.



BACK ROW (left to right): Peter Thomson, Alex Liddell, Ray Charnock, Tommy Lawton, Chris Lawton, Ian Ross, MICKIE BLOOM, Alan Evans, John McLaughlin, Larry Lloyd, John Toshack, Steve Heighway, Phil Brown, Brian Hall. FRONT ROW: Bobby Graham, Brian Young, Ron Yeats, M. W. Sharkey, (Unmarked) Tommy Smith, Graham, Ian Dalgleish, W. Parker, (Unmarked)

### ***When did you join Shirley PS?***

Having had surgery on my back, sadly, I'd had to retire from playing wheelchair tennis and decided I needed a new hobby. I joined our Society in September 2012, having read a small article in the local newspaper (remember the *Solihull News*?!). There was a picture of the then President, Gordon Lee, looking resplendent, wearing the 'Jewel of Office', welcoming new members. I felt I had recently taken some pretty good photographs of my family on holiday, so I thought I would give the club a try. I soon realised that mine were just 'holiday snaps' compared to the standard of club photography. I decided it was wise to 'sit on my hands' at the back of the room for the first season, taking it all in, learning the ropes, observing what made for a good picture, before entering my first competition. This was the best apprenticeship I could have served. After a few seasons, I was starting to enjoy some success in competitions. I was hooked. Created in 2014, this picture of Apple's *i-Cloud* spotted over Torquay, raised a few smiles. A good reminder that our shared hobby should be fun.



### ***What sort of equipment do you use?***

I was once described as a 'Brand Tart'(!) because I have tried so many different makes of camera, mostly purchased and sold on eBay. I have settled on two Olympus bodies, with three prime lenses (I hate changing lenses out in the field). However, some of my most successful shots were taken on an *i-Phone*, confirmation that the best camera is the one you have with you! I don't print my own shots at home, preferring to use an online service, but this is something I may change in future.

### ***What other interests do you have?***

I retired from my work as a teacher some years ago, but I still work part-time as an Examiner for international GCSE and A-Level Computing, which keeps me busy for four months of the year. I am a self-confessed 'Petrol-head' and I do enjoy my motoring, travelling to different places to take photographs. I have been driving for 40 years, and in that time, I am ashamed to admit, I have owned 27 cars! Lots of different manufacturers and models, but I enjoyed (*almost*) every one. I still enjoy creating things at the computer, hence my love of Audio-Visual Presentations, and website design.

I live in Solihull, with my wife, Helen, grown-up twin daughters, two house-cats and a tortoise. All of whom have featured in club photographs in the past!

## 04

### **What the Romans Did For Us**

Having seen many photographs of 'Sycamore Gap' on Hadrian's Wall (Northumberland) entered in photographic competitions I have always been keen to go and visit Hadrian's Wall and see it (and take some photographs myself). Well, May saw me walking along Hadrian's Wall and I have to say it was just as spectacular in real life as photographs show it. Walking along the Wall to get to it was a very enjoyable experience, so if you have never been there do try and go, I don't think you will be disappointed. But be prepared to wait to get the perfect shot with no-one in it as there are lots of others there all with the same idea!

Known to some as Robin Hood Tree, Sycamore Gap featured in the 1991 blockbuster film 'Robin Hood Prince of Thieves' starring Kevin Costner and Morgan Freeman. The tree is thought to be several hundred years old and is one of the most iconic and photographed trees in the country. The name 'Sycamore Gap' was coined by a National Trust employee when the Ordnance Survey were re-mapping the area and asked if the previously unnamed spot had a designation.

The wood of sycamore trees is very strong and makes great furniture. In Wales, people used this wood to carve Love Spoons for their loved ones. In Cornwall, children used to carve whistles, giving sycamore the nickname 'whistle tree'. Sycamore trees are super spreaders, the secret lying in their seeds.

A sycamore tree symbolizes strength, protection, eternity, and divinity and it is thought the Romans were the first to introduce the tree to Britain.

And here is one of my photographs of 'Sycamore Gap'. As the judge would probably say it's "a good record shot" but for me it's much more than that. Looking at it evokes the memory of walking to see it and the privilege of being able to walk in the footsteps of the Romans.



## 05

## The Colour Brown

Brown is one of the world's most common colours, humans perceiving it probably more than any other on a daily basis. It's everywhere: it is the world's most common eye, skin and hair colour; it's widely found in the natural world – in earth and soil, plants and trees; it's the colour of much food and drink eg chocolate and coffee. Pigments for brown are also among the oldest: paintings using raw umber – a natural clay pigment – have been found to date back to at least 40,000 BC.

In textiles and clothing, brown became the colour associated with the humble and lowly across Europe. In the Middle Ages brown robes were worn by Franciscan monks as a sign of their humility and modest lifestyle. And what began as probably a means to get by (coloured inks were more expensive and brown vegetable-dyed cloths were cheaper to produce), became a stamp of social standing. In Ancient Rome brown clothing was worn by the citizens of low classes and even those considered to be 'barbarians'. Their old term for an urban poor civilian, 'pullati', literally translated as 'those dressed in brown'. By the statute of 1363, lowly working-class English citizens were required to wear russet a coarse woollen cloth that was dyed with woad and madder to turn it grey or brown.

One of the most unusual sources of brown is 'sepia', a term derived from the Greek word for cuttlefish. A reddish-brown pigment has long been created from the ink sac of a species of cuttlefish since the Ancient Roman period. There are consequently subtle differences between 'sepia' shades, due to the various diets belonging to the cuttlefish depending on where they were found, and also where the inks were made. Sepia has long been used as a drawing medium (most famously, Leonardo da Vinci used sepia-toned coloured washes) and 'sepia' became the term given to the method of toning photographs with a faded brown tint. This process uses chemicals such as sodium sulfide or polysulfide toners, and today a 'sepia effect' can be achieved digitally with duotone – a method that combines a greyscale image with another colour.

A surprising and rather morbid source of brown pigment originates in the medieval period, when the remains of mummies were ground up for archaic medical procedures (potentially due to them containing the substance bitumen – believed to have medical powers). During this process, the rich consistency of the powder was observed, but it was later, during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, that a paint source was created from the ground-up corpses of exhumed Egyptian mummies (both humans and cats). It was known as 'Mummy Brown', and was given commercial status as artist's paint. 'Mummy Brown' was particularly popular amongst the Pre-Raphaelite painters of the mid-19th Century, such as Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The ground powder would be combined with myrrh and white pitch to produce a brown pigment. Its transparency meant that it was a good medium for glazes, shading and colouring natural flesh and hair tones. Used until the Victorian era, 'Mummy Brown' dropped out of favour as it became more expensive, and when artists began to realise how the pigment was sourced (Edward Burne-Jones was rumoured to have buried a paint tube of 'Mummy Brown' in his garden when he found out). 'Mummy Brown' took an even more macabre turn when demand surpassed supply, and people were found to have made black market versions of the pigment from the ground powder of recently deceased corpses of criminals or slaves. If you come across the paint today, you'll be pleased to know that the pigment is now made up of quartz, kaolin, goethite and hematite.



After its popular use among Renaissance artists, brown was utilised by subsequent painters in a monochromatic way. It became an important colour for realism in portraiture, in shades such as Burnt Sienna and Burnt Umber, and to create shading and in subtle shifts from light to dark. During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries it became common to paint onto a surface that was tinted brown rather than white. Dark pigments, including brown, were significant in Rembrandt's palette. He favoured 'Vandyke Brown' (named after Flemish painter Anthony van Dyck) when sketching out initial compositions of paintings, using it in combination with other earth pigments to give his works their recognisable broody, dark background glazes.

Today, brown is increasingly associated with the rise of sustainable and eco-friendly products, from bamboo toothbrushes, recyclable cork to brown paper bags. Brands use brown in their marketing visuals to target audiences tuned in to the climate crisis and who have ecological awareness of lessening their impact, think organic products and recycled goods. What was once deemed as 'lowly' has come full circle brown now being one of the modern world's most important colours in helping to push forward environmentally ethical change.



Did you hear about the people who were sick in June from eating bacon past its use by date?

It was May-ham!

## 06

### Places to Visit

This month's suggestion is a place that you might find interesting generally and is just on our doorstep. The Coffin Works in the Jewellery Quarter (Birmingham) is the restored factory of Newman Brothers. Founded in 1882 by two brothers the firm were originally brass founders predominantly making cabinet furniture. Then in 1894 they began to produce some of the world's finest coffin furniture including the fittings for the funerals of Churchill, Chamberlain and the Queen Mother. Containing original stock and tools of their trade alongside the original machinery working again you can experience how this old Jewellery Quarter firm once operated on a day-to-day basis entering a 1960s time capsule where the sounds of the day mingled with the industrial sounds of a working factory.

And to round of your visit they also have a café, The Casting Shop Café. So, a perfect day out (and possibly some good industrial photographic opportunities if that's one of your photographic interests).

Located at Fleet Street, Birmingham, B3 1JP, they are open Thursday-Sunday from 10.45 am.

**If you have any suggestions on places to visit, days out, what's on etc. do please let me know and I will include them in the Newsletters. I am sure other members would appreciate some ideas and suggestions.**



# 07

## Photography Podium Annual Awards Dinner April 2023



April saw us celebrating the end of our formal programme season with our very own version of the Oscars, the Annual Awards Dinner. Once again, our hosts at Fulford Heath Golf Club served up an excellent meal, enjoyed by all. Here are some of the highlights. Congratulations to all those who entered the competitions this year, without you entering there wouldn't be a competition. And well done to all of you who were successful in the competitions. Many thanks to Michael Prince, our photographer on the night.





## Trophies 2023

<b>Eric Jones Memorial Trophy</b>	Nat Hist Proj Gp 1	Rosie Thompson
<b>David Bentley Memorial Trophy</b>	Nat Hist Proj Gp 2	Tony Dyson
<b>Norman J Prue Trophy</b>	Nat Hist Proj Gp 3	Jenny Ladbrooke
<b>Hugh Owen Trophy</b>	Nat Hist Print Gp 1	Rosie Thompson
<b>Haydn Jones Memorial Trophy</b>	Nat Hist Print Gp 2	Dave Ward
<b>Don Mallett Trophy</b>	Nat Hist Print Gp 3	Sue Pearmain
<b>Mobley Trophy</b>	Set Assignment	Kevin Watts
<b>Watkins Trophy</b>	Digital Panel	Jenny Ladbrooke
<b>Tom Bartlett Trophy</b>	Print Panel	Jolanta B Axon
<b>Don &amp; Elsie Wardell Trophy</b>	Best Mono Print Gp 1-3	Jolanta B Axon
<b>Landscape Colour Trophy</b>	Landscape Project Gp 1	Mike Goodwin
<b>Strange Trophy</b>	Landscape Project Gp 2	Chris Lee
<b>Kirk Cup</b>	Landscape Project Gp 3	Jenny Ladbrooke
<b>Suffield Rose Bowl</b>	Landscape Print Gp 1	Mick O'Malley
<b>Biggs Salver</b>	Landscape Print Gp 2	Hazel Lane
<b>John Hogg Salver</b>	Landscape Print Gp 3	Jenny Ladbrooke
<b>Timbrell Trophy</b>	Annual Proj Gp 1	Mick O'Malley
<b>Roy Holmes Plaque</b>	Annual Proj Gp 2	Hazel Lane
<b>Colour (Slide) Goblet</b>	Annual Proj Gp 3	Jane Storer Jane Roby
<b>Ken Bowles Salver</b>	Annual Print Gp 1	Graham Newman
<b>Walker Challenge Plaque</b>	Annual Print Gp 2	Chris Lee
<b>Frank Smyth Memorial Trophy</b>	Annual Print Gp 3	Jenny Ladbrooke
<b>John Burton Memorial Trophy</b>	Best Mono Gp 1-3	Chris Mallett
<b>David Venables Shield</b>	Best AV	Tim Hutchin
<b>Intermediate Merit Award</b>	Best Total Prints Score Gp 1	Mick O'Malley
<b>Advanced Merit Award</b>	Best Total Prints Score Gp 2	Kevin Watts
<b>Advanced Plus Merit Award</b>	Best Total Prints Score Gp 3	Jenny Ladbrooke
<b>Tri-Colour 6 Cup</b>	Best Total Proj Score Gp 1-3	Chris Lee
<b>Peter Woodbridge Trophy</b>	Highest Score groups 1-3	Jenny Ladbrooke

# 08

## Selection Committee and Promotions

Following the AGM the subject of promotions was raised and questions asked about how the Selection Committee decided on who would be promoted. When this was discussed at a recent Selection Committee meeting it was felt that the wider membership may not be aware of the factors that the Committee take into account when making these decisions, so if you are unsure, hopefully this article will help clarify matters.

The aim of the Selection Committee is to make the groups as evenly matched as possible to ensure that everyone within a group feels they have a chance for success.

Generally we look at a member's work over a period of time to ensure that they have a broad range of skills and not a couple of good pictures which can tend to give an unbalanced view. Only as an aid to this consideration of a member's body of work do we take into account the points accumulated.

As you are all aware we award points for our competitions, members gain points for entering and also for any awards they achieve in individual competitions. We use these points for a guide only as so many factors can distort the final points score against other members in that group, for example one really good image can gain a lot of points, inflating the total points score, some members may not be entering prints or the number of entries for some competitions may be low, all of which have an effect on the final points and the selection committee's interpretation of the point tables.

As a rule, unless it is obvious for all to see that someone is in the wrong group, we tend to monitor members doing well over a couple of seasons before promoting to ensure that going forward they will be in the correct group. Hopefully that way members gain some sustained success in their current group and confidence to help with the step up to a higher group.

We do look at everyone's images throughout the season and as previously stated do not just rely on the points scored, no individual on the Selection Committee makes the decision alone, the matter is discussed and a vote taken.

Although we do our utmost to make sure these decisions are correct and that we are being fair to all our members sometimes we may get it wrong.

**It is therefore important to note that if any member of the Society does feel they are in the wrong group for any reason they can apply to the Selection Committee to query the decisions made and to ask for a review. I would ask in the first instance that this is sent to Christine Mallett, the Committee Secretary.**



"No matter how much you push the envelope it will still be stationery"

*Courtesy of Tim Hutchin*

# 09

## External Recognition

### Photofolio 2023 Results

We had mixed fortunes in this year's 'Photofolio', coming 9th out of 15 in the Mono Prints, 14th out of 31 in the PDIs and 3rd out of 15 in the Colour Prints.

We had 5 mono prints accepted, 11 colour prints and 11 PDIs. 15 were entered in each section

Jenny Ladbrooke received a Highly Commended for her colour print 'Twr Mawr Lighthouse', whilst Jolanta B Axon's 'Man's Best Friend' was judged Best Colour Print. Well done to both of you.

### Print and PDI Championships 2023 Results

Shirley competed in the Print and PDI Championships held at Leicester to select the clubs going forward to the national championships later in the year. In each section, we had to enter 15 images into the first round.

The top 8 clubs moved into the second round and we qualified in both prints and PDIs.

The average score of our PDIs was just under 12 and that for the prints was just over 12. (12 is normally an acceptance into an external exhibition!).

In the second round we had to submit 10 images, of which 5 could be carried over from round 1. We came 8th in the PDIs and 5th in the Prints. The first, second and third place clubs had already qualified because of their results the previous year. We tied in equal 5th with Lichfield, but because they had a higher prints score (15) than we did, they went through. This is the second year we have just been pipped at the post! Maybe next year....

Congratulations to Jolanta who scored 15 with her 'Simply Wild Garlic', and also to David Steele (14 for 'Brown Hare') and Sue Pearmain with 14 for 'Cheetah Stare'.

Hopefully we will see more members from Shirley supporting us next year. It is a great day of Midland Photography. Shirley can be very proud of their performance and it just shows what a high standard of photography we have within our membership.

*If any of you enter any competitions and get any external recognitions like this then please drop me a line so that I can add it into the Newsletter. It's great to see what everyone is up to and the accolades they receive.*



**See you next in August!**