

SPS Newsletter

Welcome

What's Inside?

01 Welcome

02 Through the Lens

September
By Editor Liz

03 Common Problems and How to Avoid Them

Edition 6
By Mick Schilling

04 My Scottish 'Sojourn'

By Phil Moorhouse

05 Backing Up Your Images While on the Move

By Kevin Watts

06 A Proverb

By Roy Buckle

07 Photography Podium

The winning images from recent competitions.

08 External Recognition

It is with a heavy heart that I write the front-piece for this month's Newsletter. Little did I think that we would witness the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II so soon after celebrating her Platinum Jubilee. We all knew that at some point this time would come but I don't think anyone was prepared for the speed of it. Whether you are a supporter of the monarchy or not, I am sure we can all agree what a remarkable life Queen Elizabeth had and respect the service and duty she gave to us all right up until the very last moment. The images we keep seeing in the media I think bear witness to this. One image that struck me was the bag with the marmalade sandwich in it and a note on it saying 'For Later' that was left outside Buckingham Palace. However you may choose to spend your time on Monday, 19th September 2022, may you have a day filled with peace and love.

I dedicate this editorial in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. May she Rest in Peace.



With my very best wishes
Liz xx

02

Through the Lens

September

September's name is really quite inaccurate these days. It was originally the seventh month of the ancient Roman calendar, and as such was named Septem, which translates into "the seventh month". It wasn't until 451 BC that the months of January and February were added to the calendar, making September the ninth month.

September also used to only have 29 days. Thanks to Julius Caesar's reform of the Roman calendar in 46 BC the month now has an additional day!

The Romans would often associate different months with different gods. September is associated with Vulcan, the Roman God of Fire, quite possibly because it was a fiery hot month back when it was the seventh month of the year.

In 1752, the British Empire skipped 11 days of September (between 2nd and 14th), due to another calendar change when the British Empire changed from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar.

The Anglo-Saxons called September 'Gerst Monath', which translates into "barley month", so named as it was the time of year that the barley crop was harvested and it was a special time as they brewed a popular drink out of it. The Anglo-Saxons had another name for September too, which was 'Haefest Monath', which translates into "harvest month", and our modern-day usage of the word harvest originates from this name.

September begins on the same day of the week of just one other month, December. It is the only month with the same number of letters in its name as the number of the month: it is the ninth month and has nine letters.

September is graced with having two different birth flowers, the vibrant aster and the beautiful yet resilient morning glory. The significance of both flowers is actually very similar, with the aster being said to represent love, while the morning glory represents affection.

September only has one birthstone, the majestically vivid sapphire. With its deep blue tones, this precious stone is said to represent the wisdom of the gods, purity, and trust. Sapphires were once worn to protect the wearer from both poisoning and other evils.

Those born in September fall under one of two star signs. If you were born before September 23rd, you're considered to be a Virgo. If you're born on the 23rd or later, you're a Libra. Virgos are said to be analytical and hardworking people, while still being kind and loyal. Libras, on the other hand, value harmony and diplomacy, and are said to be both intelligent and kind.

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September hasn't been a particularly "good" month for the world in history:

- 1st September 1939, was a dark day for the world with Hitler invading Poland, consequentially beginning World War II.
- 2nd September, 1666, saw the outbreak of the Great Fire of London. Starting in the bakers in Pudding Lane it destroyed over 100 churches and 13,000 houses. What's most surprising about this tragedy is that there were only 6 recorded deaths!
- 8th September 2022 – Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's death, Britain's oldest and longest reigning monarch.
- 11th September 2001, changed the shape of the world forever, when the worst terrorist attack on US soil happened. Four commercial airliners were hijacked, two of which were flown straight into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre, another was crashed into the Pentagon and the fourth plane crash-landed into a field in Pennsylvania after the passengers of the flight attempted to regain control of the plane from the terrorists.
- September is the worst month for share prices which on average lose 1% of their value.

But some good things have happened in September too ...

- 5th September 1965 – SPS Newsletter's Editor was born
- 6th September 1852 – First Public lending library was opened.
- 18th September 1839 - George Cadbury born. Where would we be without all his delicious chocolate products!
- 22nd September 1955 – ITV first went on-screen.
- 26th September 1955 – Bird's Eye Fish Fingers were first sold.
- 28th September 1745 – First singing of the National Anthem.
- 30th September 1928 – Penicillin was discovered by Alexander Fleming.



What do trees do during September?

Turn over a new leaf!

What did one Autumn leaf say to the other ...?

I am falling for you!

03

Common Problems and how to avoid them

Edition 6

By Mick Schilling

There's Too Much Noise in the Image

Noise usually comes from using a high ISO value. This may be necessary due to low light and the need or preference to use a faster shutter and a narrower aperture. Sometimes it's just a bit too dull and the ISO needs to come up just to get a photo. I leave ISO on Auto unless shooting long exposures where it is set to the minimum value to ensure the longest exposure.

If you have that amazing shot but it was at crazy ISO, it can be possible to reduce noise afterwards, or even in-camera. Note that in-camera noise reduction can make your camera slow when saving the images, and the results can be a little hit and miss. It is usually best to shoot RAW and process the noise afterwards.

Many different applications can be used for noise reduction, again some are free. So please ask other members about what they use for best results. I use Lightroom in most cases but I am aware not everyone uses it. The free software from manufacturers will usually have some degree of noise reduction ability.

04

My Scottish 'Sojourn'

By Phil Moorhouse



Thanks to the astonishing generosity of my friends and colleagues at the Club, in August, I enjoyed a fabulous, long-weekend in Scotland's largest City, Glasgow, crossing-off another location from my hit-list. Have to say, the most wonderfully vibrant and thriving of cities, with so much to see and do. Also, the friendliest city I have ever visited.

A little local knowledge goes a long, long way, so I consulted our friend Martin Sproul to research some of the best wheelchair-friendly locations to photograph. In his own inimitable way, Martin described the geography of his home-town, *'If you're out-and-about in Glasgow, you'll be walking in one of two directions, uphill or downhill!'*. I accepted Martin's recommendation and stayed in the Pacific Quay area of the City, on the banks of the River Clyde, which promised to be a little flatter and more gentle on my ageing muscles! A great location to visit the Tall Ship and Transport Museum (truly excellent!), the Science Museum, the Clyde Arc (*'Squinty'*) Bridge, the Armadillo and the Hydro. Also, in wobbling distance to the Clydeside Distillery...

Of course, as a closet plane-spotter, I was just as excited about the flight, as the chance to explore a new City. EasyJet's 50-minute service to Glasgow was faultless. Have to say, flying alone from Birmingham could seem a little daunting, but the ground staff at both airports and the flight crew were so friendly and helpful, the journey was simply a joy! I have nothing but praise for EasyJet, and BHX and GLA.



I met Martin, in George Square on the Friday and, as anticipated, we chatted for hours. Martin, an educator, a photographer and a true gentleman, who loves flying, travelling, computing, Photoshop, Lightroom, 80s music... it was like we were separated at birth! His son even has a private pilot's licence! Have to say, we have become firm friends and I suspect this is not going to be my last visit.

On Saturday, the Sightseeing Bus tour of the City proved to be a superb overview, stopping at the famous Sauchiehall Street, and visiting the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, and another chance to meet up with Martin again for a few hours.

At night, Glasgow is perhaps at its most photogenic. The River Clyde and the Hydro look spectacular lit-up at night. The 'Squinty' Bridge looks at its most impressive.



On my last day, the nearby Science Museum and 3D cinema was a revelation, with tonnes of interactive attractions,... for children of all ages.



A fabulous place, wonderful memories and a few special photographs as a bonus! Glasgow comes highly recommended, and the Pacific Quay area is a great base from which to explore. You might recognise one or two of those memories in the forthcoming season. Once again, thank you all, I've loved it!

05

Backing Up Your Images While On The Move

By Kevin Watts

Shortly before my wife and I were due to depart on our long awaited holiday to Zambia, I heard of Christine's misfortune in losing not only her camera gear, but also all the memory cards and photos she had taken on her recent safari trip. As photographers, I'm sure that you will all agree that this must rank as one of the worst things that can happen on a trip such as this and my sympathies went out to her.

This set me worrying..... not only was this to be my first time in Africa and a definite "bucket list" vacation, but due to COVID it had been cancelled twice already and even now flight disruptions and baggage handler strikes threatened to spoil it. The risk of losing any images either to physical loss, as in Christine's case, or to a faulty memory card were too big to ignore. I didn't have a laptop and, in any case, due to flight weight restrictions etc. would prefer not to take one, so I searched our old friends Google and Youtube for answers. One answer seems to be in a "smart" hard drive. The type advocated in many of the search results appears to be only available in the USA, but I did find one on Amazon which looked similar and decided to give it a try.

The SSK 1TB Portable NAS Wireless Hard Drive Personal Cloud Smart Storage, External Hard Disk appeared to be able to do the job. Certainly not cheap at almost £100, it did however look as if it would allow me to back up my memory cards on the go without being too big or needing a laptop to interface with it. The SSK is capable of backing up to the cloud, however, I decided to simply use the internal hard drive in this case.

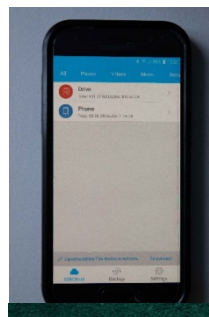
Upon receiving the SSK after it was thrown over the garden gate by our super-efficient Amazon delivery drivers I struggled for two or three days to get it and the software to work reliably. Eventually I realised that one had to switch things on, connect etc. in a very precise order and be very patient since download speeds are slower than expected. But, eventually I did find that it works and I managed to safely back up all my cards while out in Africa. But since I found that using it is not quite straightforward, I thought others may benefit from my experience.

Using the SSK

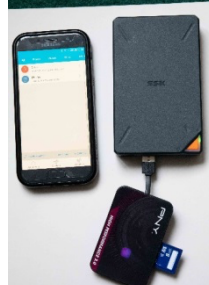
The SSK Portable Smart storage is about the size of an external Hard drive, but has its own internal battery power supply or can be mains powered. One can connect a simple memory card reader directly to it and, using your mobile phone as the control interface, transfer all the files to the internal hard drive or cloud for backup or subsequent transfer to your main PC when home.

However, the process does take time and the software is “clunky” and not intuitive, so here is the step by step process which worked for me. I found that if I varied from this sequence, the WiFi connection would often frustratingly drop out midway through the process or I had not transferred the files I thought I had !! So.....

1. On your camera, write down the first and last file names of the images you wish to transfer and the number of files in total. This will make it easier to monitor when the process is complete. Remove your memory card but do not put it into your card reader just yet.
2. Switch on the SSK and wait for it to flash as per the instructions.
3. Go to your mobile phone “settings”, “connections” and connect by WiFi to the SSK as per the supplied instructions.
4. Once you have a connection open the SSK APP on your phone and select the “SSK” cloud on the lower right of the screen. *(I found that if I had the APP open already, then it did not always connect over WiFi).*
5. You should then see the drive itself, with usable storage information etc. and underneath will be your phone.

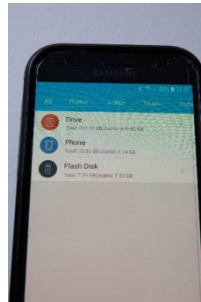


6. If you

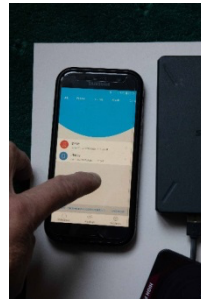


then connect your card reader

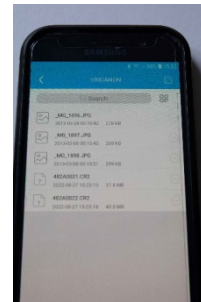
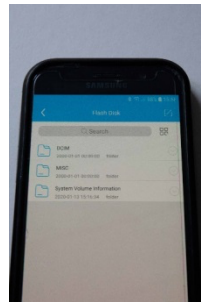
- You should see the card or flash disc on the directory structure in the SSK APP software.



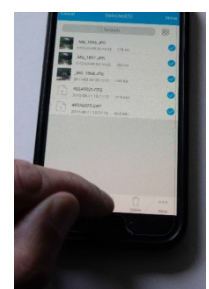
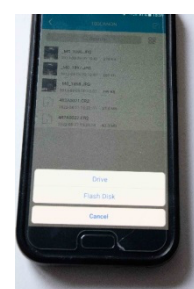
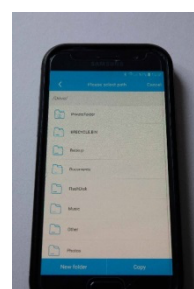
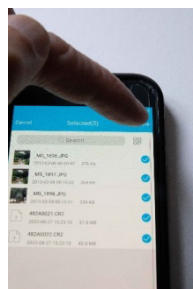
- If it does not appear (and in my case I had to do this every time), then you need to refresh the screen by “pulling down” with your finger...You may need to do this 2 or 3 times.



- This should then refresh to show something like the image in step 7. You can then navigate through the file structure of the memory card to the images you wish to transfer.



- The next stage is to select the images by using the small square on the upper right. Toggle through this until your images are all showing a blue “tick” . You will then see an option to “copy” on the bottom row. Select this and you will then be directed to your destination storage (the SSK itself) where you can create folders, decide where to store the images etc.



11. Finally, hit copy and the transfer should begin.
Be prepared for this to take a while. A 32GB could easily take over an hour to transfer. Because of this I advise that you power the SSK from an external source rather than risk the internal battery running low halfway through the transfer.
12. Monitor the card reader itself and watch for it to stop flashing/showing activity etc.. If you then navigate through the SSK folder structure you should see the files which have been transferred all listed.

However.... this is where you use the notes you made earlier to see the file names of the first and last file on your memory card. If they are not all there, pull down the screen a few times as mentioned earlier to refresh the screen and also check that the card reader is inactive, indicating that it has stopped copying. If the transfer has been successful, you should now see all the files listed under the SSK file structure. Be prepared for the transfer to take a while and refresh the screen a few times to ensure that it is showing you the final picture.

13. Disconnect the WiFi/phone connection and remove your memory card. I would then suggest you store your memory card (with the images still on it) in a different location to that of the SSK., separate bags/luggage etc.
14. Once safely home, connect the SSK to your primary computer as you would with any normal hard drive and upload the images as normal.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I did not find the system intuitive, nor quick or smooth. However, it does work and gives you the peace of mind that at least you have a backed up copy of your images until you can get home.

06

A Proverb from Roy Buckle ...

There was once a group of Dodos. They realised they were being killed off by the Sailors. The Leader said to avoid extinction they would have to leave the island, but they couldn't fly. After a debate one of them suggested making several hot air balloons and going to another place. It was a good idea said the leader but they would build one large one to transport themselves and all of the eggs.

He overcame all objections and the day of the flight came. All of the eggs and remaining birds were loaded. Unfortunately the cargo was so heavy it crashed into the sea destroying everything and bring about extinction!

Moral – “Don't put all your eggs in one basket.”



07



Photography Podium

'Members' Evening'

Congratulations to everyone who submitted images for the recent 'Members' Evening'. There were some super images to look at with interesting commentaries and back stories to hear. As ever, thanks to Phil for compiling a super video and voice overs for the evening.

08

External Recognition

Many congratulations to Jolanta, who has secured an exhibition of her photography at the Highbury Theatre, running to the end of September. Jolanta has attached the details below. Notice, the theatre are happy to accommodate exhibitions from other photographers,.....

Dear All,

A friend that I know from working in education, asked me if I wanted to exhibit my photographs at Highbury Theatre in Wylde Green. Sheila is part of Highbury Theatre working group and arranges the exhibitions in their foyer and cafe.

She asked me some time ago if I would like to exhibit my photos and I agreed. Yes it's been quite a lot of work but I've learnt a lot especially in having to produce prints of a reasonable standard to display. The exhibition is now up and will be there until the end of September.

So it's just where I am at the moment with this hobby and only with thanks to Shirley Photographic Society. The opportunities to learn and share with like-minded people is second to none plus the friendship and help from Club members.

At Highbury they have some great plays on and very reasonably priced and even one distanced performance for each play so that's a bonus for anyone who wants to keep really safe. The play for September is 'It Runs in the Family' by Ray Cooney. A really funny farce.

The coffee shop and box office is open on Wednesday mornings from 10-12 when one can look around and see the exhibition. Sutton and Sutton Park are not too far away. Dates one can visit in the day are 14th, 21st and 28th September or some evenings if you want to see the play or pop in around 6.30ish before a play starts.

Highbury Theatre, Sheffield Road, Sutton Coldfield...which is very close to Chester Road Station in Wylde Green. B75 5HD. Sheffield Road is a one way road so can only be entered via Marston Road that comes off the Chester Road. Map on theatre website shows that.

Sheila has also asked if anyone else may be interested for the opportunity to exhibit a selection of their photographs. She has two more slots available this season, in 2023 up to the summer and maybe two people could even exhibit together. So if you are interested, please let me know or ask me more and can also give you her contact details.

*See you all soon,
Jolanta*

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 in
October**