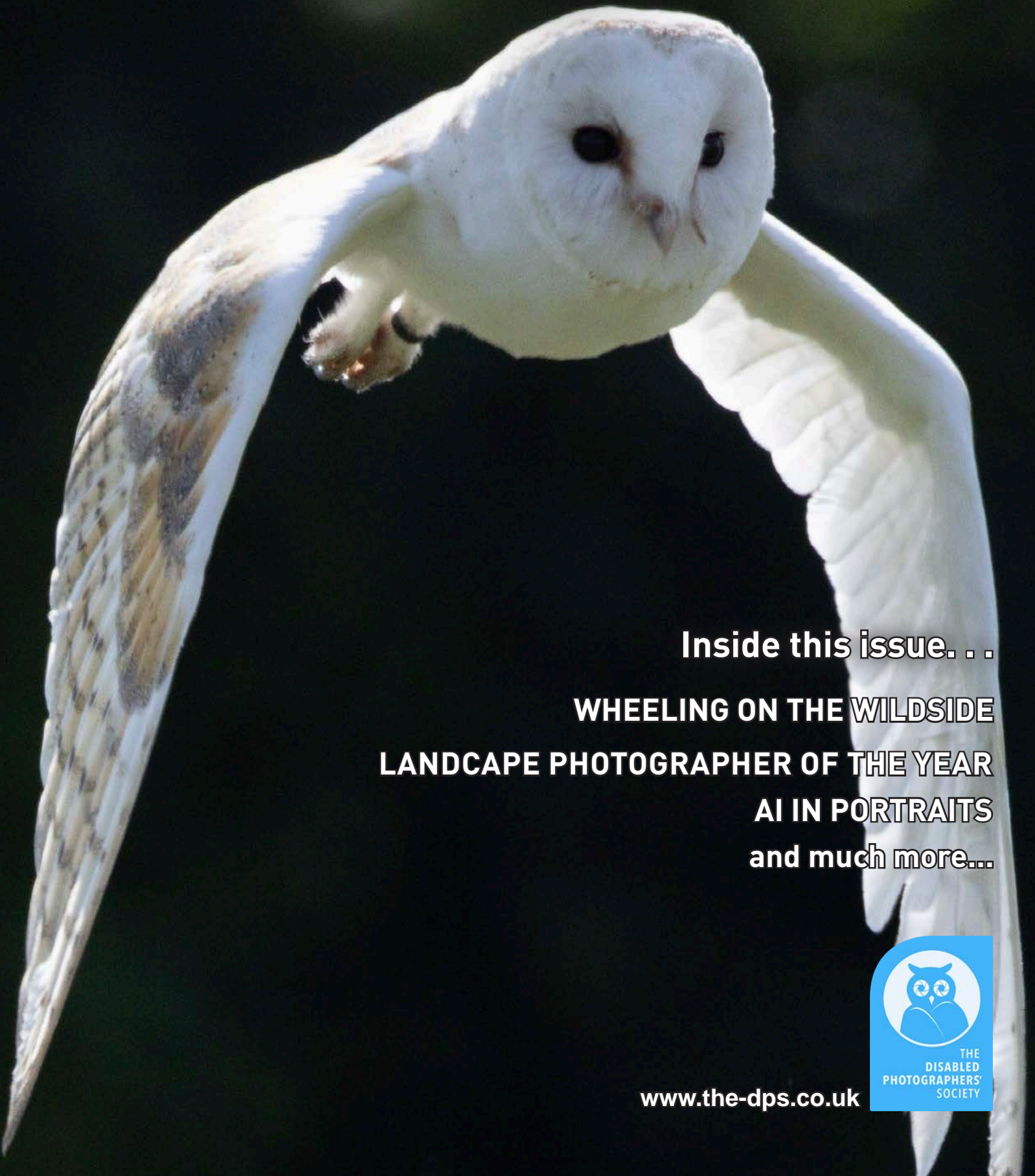


IN FOCUS

The Disabled Photographers' Society

Winter 2023



Inside this issue. . .

WHEELING ON THE WILDSIDE

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

AI IN PORTRAITS

and much more...



www.the-dps.co.uk

The Disabled Photographers' Society

Charity Number 262866 Established 1968

Membership

The procedure for membership renewals is as follows:

1. At the beginning of each month email reminders will be sent to members whose membership is due to expire at the end of that month, we also send a letter reminder to those members who do not use email.
2. If at the end of that first month the member has not renewed, then a reminder letter will be sent at the beginning of the following month.
3. If at the end of that second month a member has not renewed then their account will be deactivated.

Please note that if you intend to renew your membership please do so after receiving the

initial email, as sending a letter is a cost to the society and we want to keep costs down as much as possible.

If you do not wish to renew your membership then please respond to the email by letting me know, which will prevent me from sending you a letter at the beginning of the next month.

If somebody else is paying your membership by card please let me know who it is, by email, so that I can allocate the payment to you, otherwise your membership might lapse.

Regards
Membership Secretary
membership@the-dps.co.uk

What do we do?

We offer our individual members adaptations, equipment, support and advice and we lend equipment free at the point of need. Most important, however, is the opportunity to contact like-minded people. We organise an annual exhibition, photography, our own distinctions, regular competitions, the quarterly magazine In Focus, a website and social media.



Please help our members. We exist to encourage people with all types of disability to take up, or continue with, still photography in its many forms.

Please support us by

- **Joining as a member**
- **Becoming a friend of the society**
- **Donating new or used equipment**
- **Donating money**
- **Remembering us, please, in your will**



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A Message from the Editors

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A big thank you to all who volunteered for some of the roles within the DPS, following the heartfelt appeal for volunteers in the last issue. News of those taking over new roles will be published in the Spring issue. I am hopeful that we have found someone really great to take over as Joint Editor of In Focus. He is also a very talented photographer.

This was only a temporary role for me but it has lasted rather longer than anticipated! I have thoroughly enjoyed working with so many members on features to make the magazine as varied and interesting as I can. It's always good to hear your inspiring stories and to see the stunning images presented. Sometimes the news is of a more personal nature and I am delighted to include this image of Pam and Mark Pickup, who got married recently after many happy years together and with a postponement of the original date due to Covid. Congratulations from us all.



My esteemed colleague Mark Pritchard, who works his magic on the design of the magazine, deserves a word here too...

Thanks Meg, I can't believe that it's been a year since we teamed up with the magazine production, I hope people like the new style magazine and I would love to hear feedback and suggestions from our readers. I would also like to thank our contributors for their outstanding articles and I look forward to reading more in 2024. Have a great Festive season.

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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tom Molloy *Hon FDPS*



Firstly, it is my duty to inform you all that our Chairman, Eddie Currall, has decided to stand down, for personal reasons. Eddie had been in the post for a year and I am sure that we would all like to thank him for the extensive work that he did for the Society, as well as transforming our AGM meetings and many other contributions during his tenure. The Committee are now looking for a replacement Chair and hopefully that will not take too long. In the interim period a temporary or interim chair will be decided upon at any meetings that take place. Meanwhile business continues as normal.

I have personally been extremely busy with the final preparations for our Annual Exhibition, which I am very pleased to say will now be extended until January 14th. It looks as though we may have a volunteer to fill the Exhibition Secretary role for next year and I hope to be able to announce that early in 2024.

We have been extremely fortunate to have been offered the facility of RPS House as the venue for our Exhibition, due mainly to Mervyn Mitchell, who is one of the RPS trustees and was the Guest of Honour at our Opening and Awards ceremony. There will be much more about the exhibition, awards and images elsewhere in this edition.

The judge for this year's competition was our own Margaret Salisbury. As I am sure many of you know, Margaret is extremely well qualified and a very experienced judge so she was a natural choice, and also cost effective as she always gives her valuable time for free. It additionally

allowed me to include a trip to North Wales as part of a journey to Ireland I was already due to make. We needed to make a final selection of prints to hang at the venue, from the award winners. This is never easy as we always like to include a print from everybody who enters one, despite limited wall space. As I was travelling to Ireland anyway, I stopped off to visit Margaret on the North Wales coast and she made the final choices and gave approval from a box full of prints. That done I could resume my journey onward to Holyhead to catch the ferry the following morning.

I could then relax for a week and get over my earlier summer DIY exertions, after checking for no lingering wood-stain skin blemishes anywhere! The Irish Sea in October can be a bit like playing Russian roulette with the weather conditions and I have endured many a ferry trip that bore more than just a passing resemblance to a scary theme park ride, but this time I was fortunate to have calm conditions both ways across that 60 something mile and 3½ hour long watery crossing.



I did however have a slightly rougher trip when my cousin told me he was collecting his trawler, the Lady Emma, from the dry dock in Southern Ireland where it had been undergoing its annual maintenance and repainting. It had been refloated and was now having the engine exhaust completely re-lagged and would be ready the following morning for the short trip back to its home port. I was invited to accompany him as "a second pair of eyes". We set off well before dawn to catch the high tide that would allow us to dock before it went out again. I have been on his trawlers, he owns 3, many times before and for much longer trips but as we had no other crew, load of fish or ice as ballast on board this was going to be different as we would be bobbing like a cork. The wind was cold and from the north west so we would have it coming from a few points off the starboard for most of the one and a half hours it would take us to make the short trip, at a steady 10 knots.



We made good progress towards Hook Head where we turned north into the Waterford estuary and headed into the strengthening wind, as we passed by the village of

Crooke on the other side of the river estuary. Hook Head is a treacherous place and the site of numerous shipwrecks over the years, even in fair

weather. It is a long thin peninsula that juts out into the Atlantic Ocean and the sight of the oldest working lighthouse in the world, built in the 13th century by The Knights Templar. This is where the old saying of "by hook or by crook" comes from as apparently Oliver Cromwell gave orders for his troops to land in Ireland by either or both of those villages, or so the story goes.

After passing those landmarks, we eventually arrived at the small fishing port of Duncannon, a small harbour that partly dries at low tide, and securely tied up to await the Lady Emma's next working voyage. Having managed to survive that ordeal I could then get back to just enjoying a few days off.

Eventually I had to return home and begin the job of mounting and framing the chosen exhibition prints, a fairly easy job when you have the right kit. With several meetings to attend and a catalogue to prepare the final preparations were completed in good time.

I have now begun planning our next big event, The Photography Show, in March next year. As there was no show this year, we have a huge number of items to sell in order to raise funds and we could really do with a few more people volunteering to help out on our stand, even if only for a day or two. Just drop me an email if you are interested.

I would like to close by wishing you all a happy Christmas and I hope that the New Year brings you whatever you wish for.

MEMBER PROFILE

Linda Biggs



The excitement of being given an old Box Brownie at the age of 7 by my uncle to play with was the start of my photographic interest. For my 10th birthday my mum bought me a Brownie 125, and as they say – the rest is history. In later years, I, my husband and two daughters got by with various point and shoot cameras as did many of us, and my personal favourite was my dear little Kodak Coloursnap 35. I bought it second hand for £6 in the early 1970's which was a week's wage then. That little camera went everywhere with me and together we explored the Peak District near where I live, rambling for miles capturing beautiful landscapes plus portraits of friends and family, all on 35mm slide film. I still have the Coloursnap 35 in my vintage camera collection and it holds enormous sentimental value, and still works too.

As I approached retirement in 2014 I invested in my first digital SLR, a Sony A390. And so the game changed. To my husband's amusement I did what I always do when trying to learn something; I shut myself away for days on end with the camera and manual and studiously watched You Tube tutorials learning all the settings, emerging from my lair to go out and practice what I'd learned. There

were squeals of delight from me when something worked out wonderfully, but also many expletives when something didn't. I'm sure we're all familiar with that! My current camera is a Sony A7iii which I love and have no plans to change it.

Up to 10 years ago I was a keen landscape photographer. On the spur of the moment I would be in the car with my gear heading out into The Peak District on my own, exploring The Edges above Baslow, and Bamford near Ladybower for the best views, best crags, best dramatic skies and best



sunsets. In 2015 I joined Westfield Photographic Club based in South Yorkshire. It's a small club, really friendly, we all help and guide each other so from this point my scope for even better quality images really began to broaden.

Then gradually my health began to change, starting with some arthritis in my feet, then my ankles and so walking was very uncomfortable. I had to quit rock scrambling and stayed on more stable ground, but still getting great shots. A few years later, I found I was continually short of breath and could barely walk inclines especially carrying my gear, and it was eventually confirmed I had Pulmonary Fibrosis. Coupled with my increasing mobility issues, being out on my own in the middle of nowhere had to stop. But the one thing I couldn't stop was my photography. Dear me no! I had to find new ways of expressing myself which brought me to more local opportunities such as exploring nearby parks and community gardens. Gardening has always been one of my hobbies, so I began to grow more flowers to attract bees and butterflies, and which would provide me with flower portrait opportunities. If I haven't grown them, I will happily buy them.



For the images featured, I created a set up in my kitchen using natural light only. I pulled the table to the bottom end of the kitchen where there is a sizeable window at right angles to the glazed back door. I use A3 foam board for my backdrops in both black and white. Stabilizing the flowers gets a bit tricky, so I chop down the stems to about 6-8 inches. Sometimes if the stems are floppy or the heads are heavy, I use florists Oasis foam and wire. I strip unwanted leaves off and even take a pair of nail scissors to discoloured areas to get rid of what I consider to be a distraction. The foam board is propped up using the back of a dining chair, sandwiching it to the edge of the table. I'm sure there are better ways of doing this but it's what works for me. When I am working with black backgrounds, I prefer to use white or pale coloured flowers. Then, I create some distance between my subject and the backdrop to eliminate any shadowing. For these images I used my Samyang 35mm 2.8 lens with settings at F1, shutter speed 1/125 but varied the ISO slightly according to the light availability.





The multi floral image was done on a lightpad and a bit of experimentation was needed with white balance settings to reduce any pale blue appearing at the edges. I used the Samyang 35mm again, settings at F8, 1/4000, ISO 400. The purple Anemone was achieved with a white foamboard background using my Viltrox 85mm lens, at F11, shutter 1/8 and ISO 1000. For this I used a tripod with much trial and error, but it's all good fun, learning along the way. The Samyang and Viltrox lenses are my favourites, being super sharp and perfect for my current needs. If I do any editing it's usually Photoshop Elements 12 (really old!) and occasionally use Nik Efex as I find it easy to use.





Since joining the Disabled Photographers' Society I feel inspired to get out and about again. I look on with envy at the wonderful images I see of landscapes and wildlife, and thinking about it there's no reason why I couldn't still do this type of photography. It will just be different to before. I now have a mobility scooter that folds up and fits in the car, I have my oxygen, I would need to plan and choose my camera gear carefully, and find my warmest clothes now winter is approaching. So having said all that, why on earth am I still sitting here? Oh, I know, I'm writing this piece for the magazine. As soon as I'm finished I'll be off to find a good viewpoint!

A New Approach to My Photography

Shaun Parkes

I was always active as a young man. Born into an RAF family, my career aspirations were to be commissioned into the Royal Marines, so I was always involved in sports. I was a keen footballer, until our whole School year was forced to play Rugby as a collective punishment. From day 1, I revelled in the sport, finally finding something where my physical stature, strength and speed were all highly useful attributes. So I switched allegiance to the 'odd-shaped ball', although I still played for the School's Second XI football team when it didn't clash with Rugby matches. I also ran for the Cross-Country team too.

I was also a very enthusiastic member of the local Air Training Corps air cadet squadron, representing the unit at Rugby, Soccer and Cross-Country, and I ran, swam, weight-trained and played squash in my own time too.

About 18 or 19 I bought myself a Chinon CE4 35mm SLR with autowinder, and developed an interest in photography. Due to my RAF background, I was very interested in aircraft and therefore my primary interest was aviation photography.

Ultimately the road-running was my downfall, I developed stress fractures, which; being a 'military man'; I brushed off and pushed on through. Long story short – whilst impatiently trying to short-cut the recovery, I ended up extending the process a few times, I became too old to apply again to be an Officer in the Royal Marines and opted to remain a civilian but to work with the Air Cadets as an adult instructor.



WEST, Mark. 1993.
Shaun Parkes (left) at age 30 in the Brecon Beacons.

Fast-forward to my forties, and I started noticing increasing pain in my back, my hips and my spine. Again, I 'pushed through', however it became acutely obvious that I had a medical condition and so I sought a diagnosis, which came back as chronic arthritis in the spine, hips and knees.

With several limited mobility now, I decided that I needed to move more, and to take up a hobby that helped me to do so, so I bought a Nikon D3200 DSLR and cracked on learning about digital photography. I took and passed a couple of online diplomas as a check that I understood the basics. I started photographing multiple genres in addition to the aviation photography, including wildlife, landscapes and studio work.

As for the effects of my disability on my daily routine and on my photography, I shoot most of my images sitting down, either directly from a mobility scooter or from a folding camping seat that lives in my car. This gives a slightly altered perspective on close range shots but doesn't affect longer range shots, e.g. wildlife, landscapes, studio portraits.



PARKES, Shaun. 2023.

Pigeon waiting for a train, Sleaford Station from the series 'Scars on the Landscape 2023'.

I eventually decided to undertake formal studies in photography to underpin my practical experience and 'on the job' learning. I saw an advertisement for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in photography, hosted by Falmouth University, which I applied for. After reviewing my portfolio of work and my CV, Falmouth stated that they would support my application direct to the Masters level course, and so I applied.



PARKES, Shaun. 2023.

Felixstowe Container Port seen from Harwich from the series 'Scars on the Landscape 2023'.

The Falmouth MA Photography course is a part-time, two year, remote-study course consisting of four taught modules and a final major project (FMP) spanning the last two study blocks. The course looks at various aspects of contemporary photography and methodologies and requires the student to conduct a lot of self-reflection about their photographic practice before embarking on their FMP. It should be noted however that the MA course is not really concerned with improving your ability to operate your camera per se; it assumes that you are proficient with your camera and is about improving your photographic practice and making you a more complete practitioner.

Whilst you are a student at Falmouth you are eligible to undertake their digital skills short courses at vastly discounted rates, for example I undertook two courses in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign which conferred Adobe 'Professional' status in each subject, however in combination they confer the Adobe accreditation of 'Adobe Certified Professional in Visual Design'.

Some students follow a theme throughout their taught modules and into their FMP whereas others, like myself undertake different projects for each module.



Same container ship being unloaded at Felixstowe. From the series 'Scars on the Landscape 2023'.

The MA course has definitely been a challenge. However it has forced me to consider my photographic practice and modernise my thinking, making me think much more about such aspects as sustainability and my approach to my photographic projects.

You can find out about the course at the following link:
<https://info.flexible.falmouth.ac.uk/photography>

PARKES, Shaun. 2021. Model Charli on an armchair.



PARKES, Shaun. 2023. Blackburn Buccaneer folding its wings, 20 second exposure.



About the author:

Shaun Parkes is a retired Chartered Manager and Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute. With a varied career centred around logistics and operational management, most recently coming out of retirement to service a 3-year contract as Freight Operational Finance Controller for the Department of Health and Social Care's COVID19 Emergency Response Team, previous roles have included Contracts Manager for a company supplying military and police forces with small arms, ammunition and specialist equipment, and Area Operations Manager Northern Europe for a computer networking company. Hobbies include photography, and military history.

Wheeling on the Wilder Side

Peter Lau

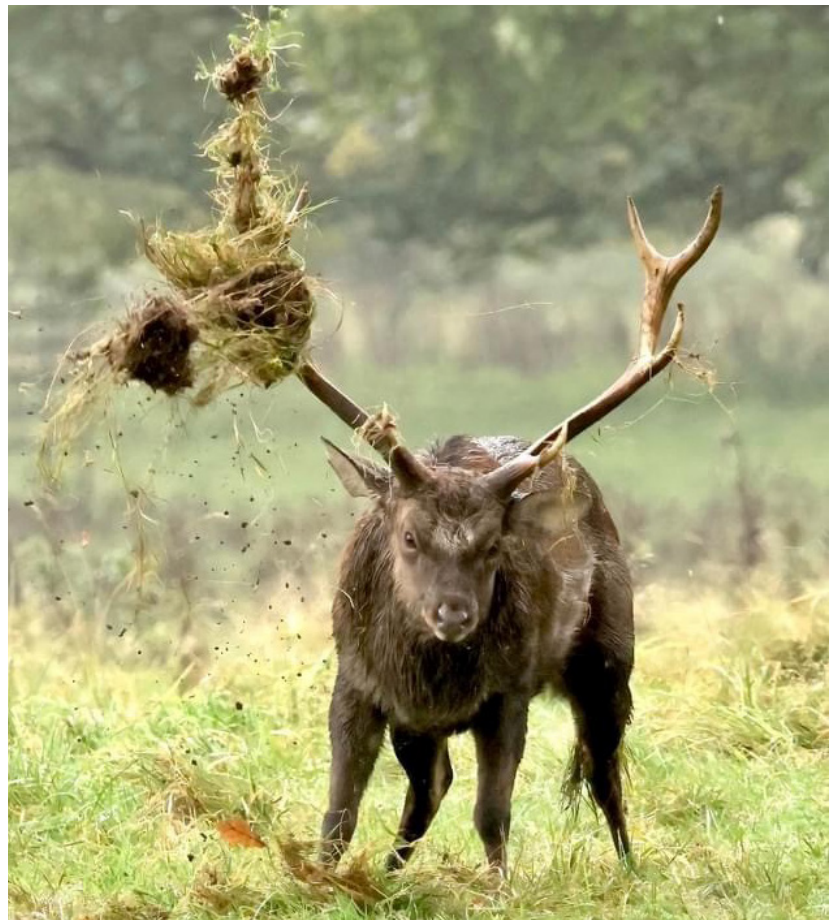
Photography is for some a career and profession, some a hobby or pastime, perhaps a creative outlet to express or produce your own style, art, and creativeness. The great thing about photography is there are so many aspects to it and how one can achieve it. Digital, mirrorless, DSLR, bridge cameras, compacts, and of course film formats, not forgetting those instant cameras that produce a photograph as you watch it self-develop, in front of your very eyes.



Modern smartphones also now have the camera capability that we could never imagine when the first mobile phones became available. My first mobile phone with a camera had a 0.3 Megapixel (MP) resolution camera, back in 2002 (Nokia 7650). My latest smartphone has a 12 to 48MP resolution, three lens capability you can capture ProRaw Photos. We truly have seen huge leaps forward in available tech.

For most, not all, the ability to do some form of photography has never been easier, or more available. Even now, if geared up for a wildlife shoot, if I see a stunning landscape, I just take the photograph with my smartphone. I am thankful that my own disability has left me with good sight and with the use of my hands, fingers, arms, and head. My physical and mental capacity situations could easily have been far worse.

As a very active outdoor person, deep wreck scuba diving, distance running, on and off-road cycling, motorbiking, sky diving, climbing, kayaking, and caving were my hobbies – often combining several into weekends or holidays. To fund these exploits around the world I was forging my career in the British fire service, as my wife also did in her profession with the NHS. Life was charmed, we could pick anywhere and go where we wanted on a whim. We had a freedom to do as we wanted, with barely any restrictions or barriers, life was full on, I have to admit we took it for granted, in many ways.



My photographic experience was

mainly videography and underwater stills of the wrecks we dived, or the exploits we shared in pursuit of our many activities. Looking back, I did quite a lot of photography but not to any reasonable standard or quality.

In 2014, aged 47, this all changed in a second. A misjudgement and poor decision led to my becoming paralysed chest level down, as a result of an almost fatal mountain bike crash, resulting in a prolonged medical coma, a few “this is possibly the end” moments and a severed spinal cord at thoracic T6 (chest level). Eventually I learned to breath unaided, then speak again, move my fingers, hands, and function as a now disabled man with a good level of independence. Quite a journey if I dared ever look back. Now using a wheelchair for all mobility and trying to reclaim parts of my old me back. My spinal injury meant I was on a cocktail of pills to combat spasms, neurological pain, I could barely function and lived with a head full of fog.

My rediscovery of photography has to be credited to my amazing wife Deb. Deb bought me a DSLR (Canon 6Dmk2), knowing once it was in my hands, I would want to master it and learn how to use it properly. That was around 3 years ago, experimenting, messing, and learning mostly from my mistakes and occasional success. Trying to grasp the relationships between iso, shutter speeds, F numbers, focal lengths, AV, TV, rules of thirds, composition and many more aspects of this new to me language. Most of us have been here or will at some point be so as part of your own photographic journey.



A few years in and I still do not think I have a style to call my own? I am now happy to share my pictures with others and I still learn something new every time I pick up my cameras. I have a far better understanding of the technical side and how to use the camera in various circumstances. I do not feel as though I am technically proficient, or fully developed yet, but am I feel on my way. I am also a member of the DPS.



My most favoured subjects are wildlife. Initially I was taking pictures of anything, doing anything - usually nothing, my end results not saying anything about the stumbled upon creatures' behaviours or character. I soon realised that rarely do wildlife photographers just happen on the pictures they capture. Of course, sometimes you do have luck, and your camera handy, capturing an interesting image of an unexpected, unplanned subject. This to me is part of the appeal of wildlife as a subject. Interesting things can happen or take you by surprise when you least expect it!

My usual approach is to research my intended species. Great crested grebes (GCG) are a great example. I would look at their habitats, habits and lifecycle, points known about the species and what I might be looking to photograph. In Spring they pair up and can do their courtship and weed dance. Early first light mornings usually being the best time of the day. A sunrise back lit pair rearing up and presenting weed gifts to their mate being one hopeful capture. Later in the spring adults feeding their small young black and white ones, small fish, crustaceans, and bugs. Some species of wildlife are protected species – I always check the Countryside Act (UK)1981, and the Wildlife Order (NI)1985, of species before I go any further to ensure my photography is permitted, lawful and will not be detrimental to the species in any way.

My photography led me to make a bold decision. To ditch all of the opioids and mind suppressing prescribed medications, and to live a more active life. Do NOT do what I did and DO speak to a medical professional (your GP). I threw all of my medications in the bin on the day of our refuse collection. There was no going back....this led to the worst week of my life, but I am used to digging in and seeing things through. I will admit to having very dark thoughts but thankfully these eventually passed. Today, I have a pain score of 11 out of 10 but can function better. I now have strong body spasms but have learned to control the impact of these more.





Having a purpose and being busy with a task takes my mind away from the issues I have to suffer and endure. I am achieving my own mindfulness and wellbeing by using photography as my distraction.

You can follow my story further by visiting my own web site www.accessiblenatureuk.com or search: [accessiblenatureuk](#) on social media platforms. My website is a by-product of my trying to find trusted information of places differently able people can explore safely, particularly if like I, you have to use mobility equipment to get around. I also showcase many of my photographs on this site.

I now write several magazine columns. I also advise the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, National Trust, Natural England, DFRA, amongst other organisations on accessibility issues and solutions. I have had my photographic work featured on high profile BBC TV programmes dealing with nature and the countryside. I am a motivational and photography keynote speaker and also present and educate trainee occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

“ Interesting things can happen or take you by surprise when you least expect it! ”

Wheeling on the wilder side.



- ### EQUIPMENT LIST
- CANON 60MK2
 - CANON R5,
 - EF 24-70 F4
 - EF 16- 35 F4
 - EF 50MM F1.4
 - EF MPE 65MM, MACRO, F2.8
 - EF 100MM MACRO, F2.8
 - EF 70-200, F2.8
 - RF 100-500, F4.5-7.1
 - RF 800MM F11,
 - EF-RF ADAPTER
 - RF 1.4 EXT
 - SPEEDLIT 470EX-AI
 - MANFROTO CARBON MONOPOLE
 - ARCA SWISS HEADS,
 - MANFROTO TRIPOD,
 - CANON REMOTE CABLE RELEASE.

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Overall Winner: The sixteenth Landscape Photographer of the Year has been announced. The judges chose the stunning image 'After the Fire' by Mik Dogherty as the overall winner of the prestigious title and £10,000 prize. Mik Dogherty says, "I was absolutely shocked and stunned' at the award. Over the years, I've been commended about seven or eight times and shortlisted over thirty. So, after all those commendations, I told Charlie I was starting to think I would always be the bridesmaid and never the bride, as the saying goes. Thinking back, I think Charlie was a little puzzled by my underwhelming reaction, but I guess, like most people in shock, it was just a bit hard to take in and a little overwhelming. I needed to sit down and let it sink in."

Awards Founder Charlie Waite says, "For many, there has been a series of deeply rooted multidimensional emotional responses to this winning LPOTY 2023 photograph, all of which may be triggered by thoughts of 'otherworldly' to 'dawn of time' or perhaps the frightening counter-response of 'the end of time'

The tangled and stark reminder of what was once a beautiful and intimate wood perhaps brings forth a feeling of 'profound environmental alarm' and numerous other responses.

We will all know, of course, that a still image has the potential to have a very considerable and powerful effect on our emotional interpretation of it, and perhaps over and above all of the thoughts discussed, there remains one overwhelming response, which is the sheer striking beauty of this photograph which transports us to a place of transcendent emotional experience".



Overall Winner - Mik Dogherty - After the Fire

HER OF THE YEAR 2023

Youth Winner: Aaron Northwood has been awarded the Young Landscape Photographer of the Year title for the serene image 'The Wishing Tree', taken at Craven Arms, Shropshire, UK.

Awards Founder Charlie Waite says, "When Aaron Northwood set about making this photograph, I do not doubt that he experienced that overwhelmingly joyful and profound confirmation that he would be successful in producing a breathtaking testimony of nature's beauty.

His simple yet immensely striking composition has powerfully awakened our emotions to respond to his tree's nobility, sheer beauty and perfection. The graceful arc and slant, the detail of every delicate branch, the supportive, appropriately vague adjacent hedges, and the snow dusting around the trunk base all deliver nature's beauty to us to our immense satisfaction.

Look carefully to see the suggestion of a rook or crow in the top left-hand segment". Aaron Northwood says, "The whole experience was totally unexpected and overwhelming. It has given me new inspiration and confidence to take forward with my photography".



Youth Winner - Aaron Northwood - The Wishing Tree

2023 Exhibition Opening and Awards

The Royal Photographic Society's extremely attractive gallery at RPS House, Bristol, was the prestigious venue for the DPS Exhibition this year. Our sincere thanks to the RPS for welcoming us this year. RPS Trustee Melvyn Mitchell kindly performed the Opening Ceremony and gave out the awards. He praised the high quality and creativity of all the entries. This year's Judge, Margaret Salisbury, was also there to commend the images and chat to winners.

First prize in the Advanced Open Projected category went to Julie Pigula with Copper on Blue. She also won the Mike Birbeck Award for the Best Overall image, which was presented by Gillian Birbeck. As Julie was unfortunately unable to attend, Paul Grant received the award on her behalf. Paul was himself the winner of the Best Advanced Open Print with Final Destination.

We were delighted to welcome two of our younger members: Kayla Hackney who won First Place in the Preliminary Open Print Category with Leading Somewhere and First Place in the Preliminary Nature Category with Just Landed. Sian Elizabeth was awarded First and Second places in the Preliminary Nature Print category for The Kingfisher and Little Bear.

The Exhibition will be open at RPS House, 337 Paintworks, Arno's Vale, Bristol BS4 3AR until January 14th, 2024. Please note that the Exhibition is only open from Thursday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm. Check their website for details: www.rps.org

More in the next issue of In Focus.

To view the exhibition sideshow visit the DPS YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJfF3_HUSqw



Gillian Birbeck with the Mike Birbeck award



Winning Image, Copper on Blue - Julie Pigula



DPS Members and family at the Bristol Exhibition opening

Quarterly Competition

Architecture Theme Judged by Les Arnott

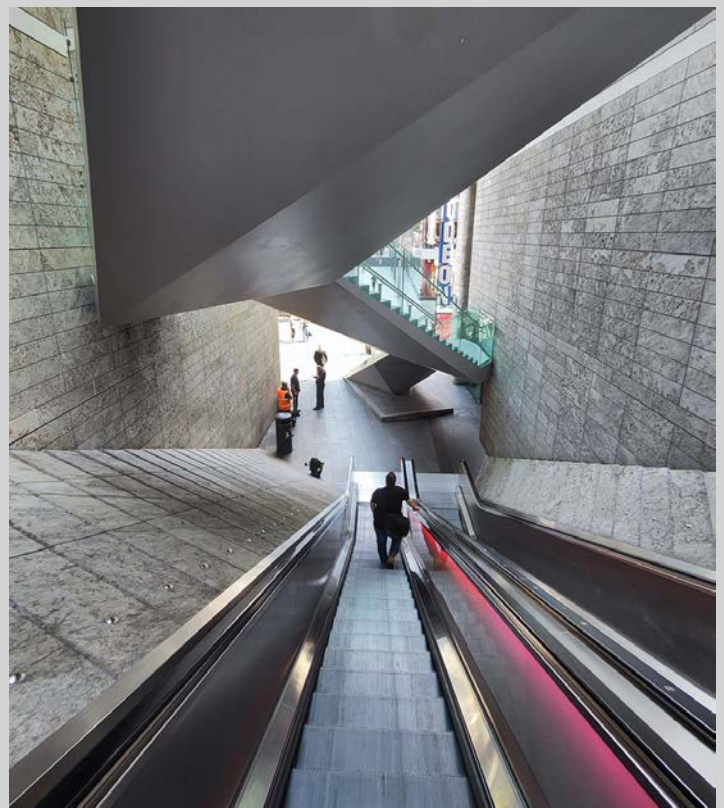
Experienced 1st Place - Palma Airport - Paul Grant



2nd Place - Thatched Cottage by the River -
Keith Parker BPE1



**3rd Place - Ancient Lights
-Sandy Robertson - Left**



**Highly Commended
Going Down - Lee Sutton
- Right**

Aspiring



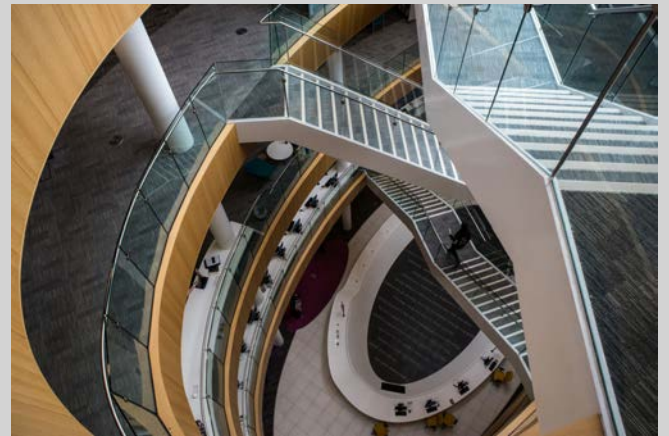
1st Place - Manchester Art Gallery
- Chris Chapman
- Left



2nd Place - Liverpool Cathedral
from Albert Dock -
Pam Gresty - Above



3rd Place - Walk On By -
Danny Jackson
- Above



HC - Going Down -
Martin Green
Above

Next Year's Themes

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 6 th January | Open |
| 1 st April | Make The Ordinary Less Ordinary (take and every day object or something you like and show it us in a different way so that can be by using macro, different lighting, changing its normal location) |
| 1 st July | Open |
| 1 st October | A Colour Of The Rainbow (you have 7 colours to theme your images on) |

QUARTERLY COMPETITION

Rules of Entry

Points in each category are awarded as follows

1st Place - 10 points

2nd Place - 7 points

3rd Place - 5 points

Highly Commended - 3 points

Each image entered - 1 point

Please submit Digital JPG images ONLY - You may submit a maximum of 3 images each quarter.

Images sizes: A maximum of 1200 pixels on the longest edge. Maximum file size of 1.5 MB.

Images must be submitted by email as an attachment, please do not use a zip file.

Send to - quarterly@the-dps.co.uk

File naming:

Please adhere to the following structure

If you are entering the Aspiring section

A_Sunset over the sea _JBlogs

If entering the Experienced section

E_Mountain view_JBlogs

You should receive an email confirmation of receipt.

If you do not get an email confirmation then it should be assumed that the images have not been received and you should try again.

The themes are listed in advance. Use your imagination and skills to convey those themes to their best advantage.

Medals are awarded annually to the Photographer with the highest total scores in each class league table.

Please state if you do not wish for your image comments to be published on the website.



VANGUARD

Please do not forget that DPS members get a 40% discount on everything at the Vanguard website.

Just email the chairman for the code and full details of how to get your discount.

Chairman@the-dps.co.uk



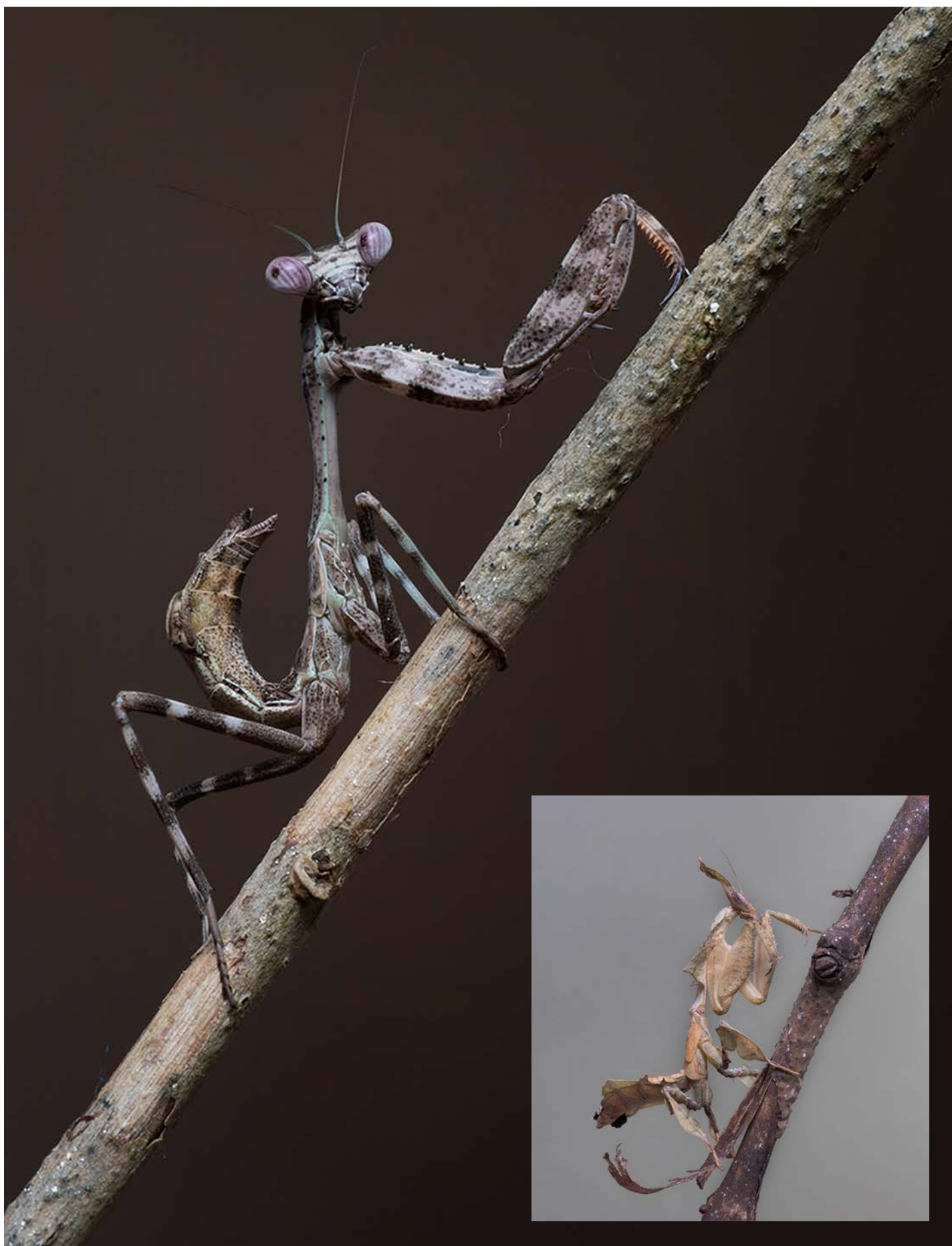
THE RPS
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

DPS members can now join or even renew their existing membership of the RPS at an exclusively low cost of just £40 per year, which is not available anywhere else!

Please email the chairman for full details of this exclusive offer.

Chairman@the-dps.co.uk

KEEPING PRAYING



MANTIS AS PETS

The Praying Mantis, probably something most of us have never considered keeping as a pet!

They are very easy to keep, approximately 2,300 species of mantis. You need a Mantis house, which is a Perspex box with lots of holes for air flow, that's 3 times the length and twice the width of the insect's body. Some decoration, like vermiculite and a couple of sticks to hang off, Praying mantis are from tropical origins and therefore need to be kept warm, as a general rule 20°C to 25°C, so either a warm room or a heated mat with thermostat. Also spray bottle for humidity, which can be sprayed in once per day, they will drink from the droplets that run down the side of the container.



They must live alone, they are very territorial. They eat live flightless fruit flies, which many pet shops sell, and you put 2 – 3 every few days, a bonus is you don't need to walk them in the rain. They only live about 12 months and cost between £8 - £25 depending upon the size of the Mantis. Best to handle them daily if you wish to photograph them.

So which mantis do I buy?

Mantis develop through three life stages. Nymphs hatch from an egg during late winter to spring and develop through about six or seven, increasingly larger instars before maturing into adults. Nymphs and later adults are present from spring to fall. So I would buy a 3rd or 4th Instar. Some adult mantis have wings as an adult and can fly a short distance.

You may wish to breed them, Yes, it's true, female praying mantis do cannibalize their partners. In some instances, she'll even behead the poor chap before they've consummated their relationship.

Beginners Mantis:
Giant Asian Mantis
Dead Leaf Mantis
Orchid Mantis
Asian Shield Mantis

Part 2 will follow next year, how to photograph your mantis.

The Future of History

AI in Portraits by Julian Rouse

In March of this year I was fortunate enough to attend a workshop hosted by Jane Lazenby hosted by Bromsgrove camera club and who had invited my own club in Droitwich to attend. Jane Lazenby has been organising these events for a while and if you like portrait work I would thoroughly recommend them. As well as being a talented photographer and excellent speaker she has a wide collection of costumes and armour (mostly plastic! Replica) which she has collected via theatre prop sales or eBay as well as costumiers.

We arrived early in the morning and after coffee and cake we had a brief talk which included the fact that Jane had a great source of models namely the attendants. Very soon a select band of volunteers were gathered the selection process being either we were up for it or we didn't run fast enough. Once chosen we were dressed in one of her costumes and arraigned with suitable props. Jane had set up a simple lighting array involving a single source of light which if memory serves me well was a continuous lamp in an octobox. This was supplemented with a spot source above and over on her right. She then informed us of a suggested ISO, aperture and speed setting these being about 800 ISO f 6.3 and 1/125 of a second. One by one the victims sorry volunteers were taken to the stage and posed while half the group took photographs, after a short period the half taking were swapped with the rest of the group who were patiently waiting.

I got to channel Sean Bean/Ned Stark and was dressed as a medieval warrior. The sword wasn't plastic and was very heavy.

Once we had all taken turns as being the subject t or photographer Jane got us to process the shots in her suggested way on the laptops we had brought with us.



My process was to import into lightroom then increase the black/shadows setting while decreasing the highlights/white levels thus decreasing the contrast. How much you did was up to you but I found +/- 20 to be about right.

We then imported the image into photoshop where our main work was to import a texture which Jane provided and was a shot of a concrete slab. This was added as a new layer, into our photo.

The next bit was where the magic came in. We resized the texture layer to cover our image and then blended this layer into our photo. I usually blended the layer as soft light or overlay, but if you are feeling playful try the range of blend modes. That is basically the process, we spent the rest of the day capturing our own textures to try and playing with the images we created.



For quite a few months this is what I did editing my shots in a variety of ways however, in the last couple of months Adobe in their latest beta of photoshop have added AI and I have recently been playing with my own range of portrait shots and this technique but using AI generate to put my subject into a more interesting costume thus replacing T shirts with something more classical looking. Here I have put one of my all time favourite students Milly into a 19th century costume and tried to make her look like Renoir painted her, or at least that's the idea.



She started off sitting on the stairs at her Mum's house and I used the Adobe AI to alter her clothes and the background. I then applied the texture from the workshop I attended. I think it all worked out rather well.

MORE FROM CHRIS FREAR - DRONE PHOTOGRAPHY

Back in the spring, I went out and in a moment of silliness bought a drone. Could I have spent the money on other things? Absolutely!

But would I have had as much fun? Definitely not!

Here are a few photos as a taster. Meg has asked me to write a little about my adventures with the drone for the next issue.



In the meantime, if you want to see some more images follow me on Instagram at [@chrisfrearphotographer](https://www.instagram.com/chrisfrearphotographer).

CALENDAR

December

31st December

Winter Quarterly Competition (deadline extended to January 6th)

Theme – Open

March '24

16th to 19th March

The Photography & Video Show
NEC Birmingham

April '24

1st April

Spring Quarterly Competition deadline

Theme – Make the Ordinary Less Ordinary (take an everyday object or something you like and show it in a different way. That can be by using macro, different light or changing its normal location).

31st April

Deadline for Distinctions Submission for May panel sitting



STOP PRESS

GET YOUR TICKETS FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO SHOW AT THE NEC BIRMINGHAM FROM 16TH TO 19TH MARCH 2024. BY USING THE CODE DPSTPS24, DPS MEMBERS CAN OBTAIN 20% OFF THE STANDARD ADVANCED TICKET RATE. THIS WILL EXPIRE AT MIDNIGHT ON 14TH MARCH. TICKETS FROM THE TICKET FACTORY OR VIA THE TPS WEBSITE.

www.photographyshow.com

The EPG provides a free Supportive environment where members can receive help with improving their photography.
<https://www.the-dps.co.uk/portfolio-group/>

This is done by both receiving constructive comments on your photographs from others in the group and you making constructive comments on theirs. This will help in improving your skills of looking at an image

This is all done in a non-competitive and friendly environment.

The group's aim is to make photography fun. Members normally submit one image a month (with a specified subject) to the organisers.

The organisers then circulate all images received.

Group members comment on the images in a positive and constructive manner and return their comments to the organisers, who will then circulate the comments to the group.

This is a members' only photography group and your comments will remain private and not in any way be made public.

For more information including guidance on commenting please see:

www.the-dps.co.uk/portfolio-group

Interested?

Please contact

PaulG and SandyR at

EPG@the-dps.co.uk





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Tickets on sale soon

*Professional photographers, videographers and image-making industry representatives can apply for FREE entry to the show. All applications must be made before midnight on 13 March 2024 and will be verified against specific criteria.