Viewfinder

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIELD END PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

Jenny Hanley to Open FEPS Exhibition.

We have been very lucky to get Jenny Handley to open our annual photographic exhibition at The Cow Byre in The Manor Farm Complex on Monday 27th April

Jenny Hanley (born 15 August 1947 in Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire) is an English actress, the daughter of Dinah Sheridan and Jimmy Hanley. She remains best known for being one of the presenters of the ITV children's magazine programme Magpie.

After education at various schools in Southern England and in Switzerland, she trained as a nanny and did modelling work.

Jenny appeared on Magpie from 1974 to 1980. She has also appeared on television as an actress in such series as Department S, The Persuaders!, The Adventurer, Softly, Softly and Return of the Saint. She co-presented Saturday Night At the Mill and appeared in the dictionary corner of Countdown.

Film appearances include the James Bond film On Her Majesty's Secret Service, The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes and the Hammer horror film Scars of Dracula.

Regular radio shows as a presenter include BBC Radio Berkshire and Radio SAGA where she worked in a studio next to David 'Diddy' Hamilton. As well as playing music, she interviewed guests.

Her grandmother was a photographer who, as Studio Lisa, had privileged access to the royal family, photographing both Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret in relaxed, family poses and the next generation, Prince Charles, Princess Anne and Prince Edward in informal shots. She also helped to launch the career of a male model who later became an actor, Roger Moore.

Marilyn

Frozen Frames.

Earlier this month a new website was made available by the Polar Institute at University of Cambridge. This is www.freezeframe.ac.uk.The site has a very broad collection of photographic images of many polar explorations, dating from the late 1800's to the latest "jaunt" by Sir Ranulf Fienes.

The collection is filed into sections on "Ships"; "Ice",; "Icebergs"; "People"; "Penguins"; "Wildlife"; etc, etc.

The old photographs have been digitally processed by latest technologies; but one must not expect all the photographs to reach the quality which modern equipment can produce. For those of us who have been fortunate enough to have experienced these conditions at close hand, we can only marvel at the images on the site. We have travelled in modern ships (well stabilized Russian Research Vessel in my case—well, it was actually built as a spy ship for the cold war).

We have worn modern thermal clothing, warm "Gortex" Clothing; and travelled in the Antarctic Summer, or Arctic Summer. In spite of these niceties, I experienced storm-force 11 winds off South Georgia; and was fog-bound off Svalbard, in the Arctic, during July. Many of the photographers, whose works are exhibited here, bore the brunt of Polar Winters, without modern clothing, without modern ships – indeed Ernest Shackleton made his great escape in an open rowing boat in winter storms. They frequently survived on meagre biscuit rations, or seal blubber.

These images show the men who explored these wilderness areas. The file of Herbert Ponting's photographs is really special. The images were captured, during the 1910-13 Antarctic Expedition, on glass plate negatives. An extremely interesting one for us, as photographers, is of Herbert Ponting and his camera. They show such famous explorers as Capt. Scott, Capt Oates, Lt Evans, Shackleton; and Bowers, Wilson, and Cherry-Garrard as they were about to embark on their winter journey to Cape Crozier. There is an image of both Evans and Tom Crean – and I recommend to anyone who is interested in the "Men of the Poles" to see the one man play "Tom Crean" by Aidan Dooley.

There is an image of men working in Shackleton Hut in the Antarctic, others of men working, and relaxing in the harsh conditions, of the cook preparing meals, and of "Commercialization" when the men had to take photographs of them using "Heinz" products, in return for that company's financial support of the Expedition. There are images of the "Terra Nova" moored by ice bergs and ice flows, and one very nicely "seen" picture of the "Terra Nova" viewed through the entrance to an ice cave (or grotto).

I found that the old glass plate photographs seem to have provided better images than other later images secured on plastic negatives, of photographs taken towards the end of the last century. One, in particular, which I have in mind, is an aerial photograph of a melting, disintegrating ice shelf. However, there are some good images of polar bears taken on the 1982 Trans-Arctic Expedition.

The site provides us all with a source which we can dip into for some excellent ideas on taking images of our working and leisure environments.

Trevor Hyde

The Pro's and Cons of Shooting in RAW.

A question that I'm often asked is when shooting digital why shoot RAW. Well first of all let's look at what a RAW file is. RAW is one of a couple of formats that your digital camera will store your images in, the most common format being JPG.

There is a belief that a RAW image is much better in quality than a JPG this is not completely true. The main difference is that when an image is saved as a JPG it is compressed by the camera's software, and in doing so, it discards some of the image information. This is the reason why JPG files are smaller, the size of which depends the level of compression that you have determined on the cameras set up menu. Usually these are small or basic, medium and large. The more the file is compressed the more data is discarded. When you decide to save in a RAW format, in most cases, all of the image data is saved as an uncompressed image, it does however produce a file size usually in the range of 15 - 25 Mb, in some cases it's even higher.

It's an argument akin to film over digital as to whether this loss of data makes a RAW file visually better than a JPG. What a RAW file does give you is a higher dynamic range which really only comes into play when you start to make colour corrections to your image. A RAW file will give you more tones to play with which means you can correct them with a higher degree of accuracy, although I'm not so sure some judges on the circuit seem to appreciate this. The other advantage is when shooting in low light, JPG can lead to banding, JPG artefacts and higher noise levels, this is not always the case when shooting in RAW, or at least it's reduced.

I think that one of the most used benefits is the ability to correct small under / over exposure errors to give a workable image. This leads to the school of thought that you can do away with the need to 'bracket' exposures in difficult lighting conditions and correct later. There is the argument that it is still better to 'bracket' if need be in camera, and choose the correctly exposed image later for processing, as altering the exposure later purely alters the 'luminance' of the pixels not the overall exposure. I'll leave you to chew that one over. For most of the time I tend to go along with the idea of bracketing in camera. I do, however, use one of the other main advantages in shooting in RAW which is the ability to alter or adjust the colour temperature (white balance) of an image. After you have processed your RAW image and saved as a High Quality JPG or Tiff the RAW file will always stay unaltered no matter how many times it is opened, worked on, and saved.

Some cameras give the option of saving in JPG + RAW. Here the camera saves a JPG image, the size of which can be altered on some models, alongside the RAW version and will use the JPG file for viewing. Depending how quickly your image editing or RAW software will display your RAW images for viewing will determine if you need this setting. Some software is slow to display RAW for viewing in which case you might want to keep it. Bear in mind that if you print direct from camera to printer or email some images then the JPG setting will be needed. If however you are lucky enough to have a PC or software that processes images quickly or your software does the same you might not want to use it. By not using it you ill be saving valuable space on your memory card. I hope that this short explanation will answer a few myths about using RAW and it's advantages and disadvantages.

One last point to remember; don't get too bogged down by it all, it's not the be all and end all of digital working. For your average family photograph then JPG will do fine but if you have that extra special image lined up in the viewfinder consider switching to RAW before you fire. Alternatively you could shoot one in RAW and one in your normal JPG mode, compare the two and see how you get on.

Ted Weller

ANNUAL EXHIBITION – 26TH APRIL – SATURDAY 9TH MAY

Details regarding our Annual Exhibition have been e-mailed to all members and can also be found within the Members Section of the website. Your prints are required by Monday 6th April. As usual help is required with stewarding –this is not an arduous task and can be a pleasant way of spending a couple of hours. Now that we are back in the Cow Byre, the exhibition has to be supervised during opening hours. If you are able to assist, please contact Roye Dolbel, or simply put your name down on the stewarding rota. Thanks for your help.

EXTERNAL EVENTS

CACC Championship Day
The Championship Day will be held on Sunday 5th April 2009 in the Drake Hall, Amersham Community Centre, Chiltern Avenue, Amersham, HP6 5AH, commencing at 1:00pm. The Championship Day includes
  Inter Club Prints – 15 images from each club
  Inter Club Projected Digital Images – 15 images from each club
  Strictly Digital – individual entry
FEPS is participating in both Prints and PDI, please see our notice board for details of the work selected. The top 2 clubs in each section will be invited to represent the CACC at the PAGB Interclub Championships.

CACC Finals Day (Rosebowl)
The CACC Finals Day is scheduled for 10th May and will also be held at Amersham Community Centre. The top 12 clubs go through to compete in the Rosebowl Finals. Unfortunately FEPS failed to make it again 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 to Ian Bateman by 15th April.

There will be no entry charge for either the Championship Day or Rosebowl Finals Day this year.

DISTINCTIONS, ETC.

I was recently asked by one of our newer members what the various 'letters' after peoples names meant. Simply 'Googling' the various acronyms can produce some interesting results, but not necessarily useful or accurate. Most letters signify that the person has been awarded a photographic distinction, i.e. they have achieved a certain standard in photography. Here are the most common ones, listed by their awarding bodies, with links to relevant websites.

RPS – Royal Photographic Society
The RPS distinctions are normally awarded upon submission of a panel of work which is assessed by a panel of judges. The requirements and criteria are very specific

depending upon the level and chosen category. Only current members of the RPS may continue to use the initials following a successful submission. i.e. you have to pay an annual fee.

LRPS   Licenciate of the RPS. This is normally the entry level distinction and is awarded for good basic skill and competence. It is judged on a panel of 10 images.

ARPS   Associate of the RPS – judged on a panel of 15 images. Various categories are available (Applied, Contemporary, Nature, Printing, Science, Travel, Visual Art and A/ V). A high standard of technical competence and individual creativity is required.

FRPS   Fellow of the RPS, This is the highest distinction and is awarded in recognition of original work and outstanding ability in a specialist field. It is judged on a panel of 20 images.

Hon FRPS   Honorary FRPS, awarded for services to the RPS.

PAGB   Photographic Alliance of Great Britain
Adjudications in Prints, Slides and Projected Digital Images (DPI) are carried out by a panel of 6 judges. They are usually held twice a year and are hosted by each Federation in turn. All applicants have to pre-qualify by supporting Federation events for a minimum number of years. A full list of qualifying events is listed on the **CACC (Chilterns Associates of Camera Clubs)** website. Once obtained, distinctions are held for life and the holders are entitled to use the designated letters after their name, without payment of an annual fee

CPAGB   Credit - a first level award judged on 10 individual images with a standard of 'good club photography' (pre-qualification 2 years).

DPAGB   Distinction - judged on 15 individual images with a standard of 'Open Exhibition Photography'(pre-qualification 3 years).

MPAGB   Master - their highest award, judged on 20 individual images with a standard of 'The highest standard of amateur photography.' (pre-qualification 5 years and have held DPAGB for at least 11 months).

APAGB   Is for Meritorious Service and is awarded to persons who have given outstanding service to photographers belonging to member societies of the federations of the PAGB.

BPE British Photographic Exhibitions.
The BPE circuit consists of approx 15 national exhibitions that take place throughout the year. Each competition will have an entry fee. For every acceptance in a BPE exhibition you gain a crown award and after accumulating the appropriate no. of acceptances you can apply, free of charge, for a crown rating:-

BPE1* - 25 acceptances
BPE2* - 50 acceptances
BPE3* - 100 acceptances
BPE4* - 200 acceptances
BPE5* - 300 acceptances

FIAP Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique.
FIAP is an international federation which affiliates the national associations of photography. The PAGB is affiliated to FIAP and applications for honours are made via the PAGB. The PAGB website offers the simplest explanation of the awards. Many international Salons and Exhibitions have FIAP patronage. Details of exhibitions and entry forms can be found at http://webplaza.pt.lu/public/suyswill/index.html   Essentially

points are accrued for every acceptance:- slide 1 point, print 2 points and dpi 1 point.
AFIAP   Artist FIAP At least 75 points must have been accrued over a minimum of 5 years. 20% must be achieved outside the UK. In addition you must have received at least two awards (HC, medal, ribbon, etc.) and also submit a portfolio of work for assessment.
EFIAP   Excellence FIAP Requires a minimum of 60 acceptances since AFIAP over a 3 year period. Further levels are obtainable:-
        /B – Bronze, /S – Silver, /G – Gold, /P – Platinum
MFIAP   Master of FIAP, the highest level award.

Marilyn Dennis, CPAGB
(well you have to start somewhere, even if it is the bottom rung of the ladder!)

Dinner or No Dinner (that is the question)?

For the last few years we have had our Annual Dinner during the first week of March. This is because we cannot use the Methodist Hall on that evening due to a Church meeting. It seemed a good idea to use the opportunity to have a social evening elsewhere and the Annual Dinner was the outcome.

Maybe it is time to review this as this year only 32 people attended. When we have over 60 members and our usual attendance on a Monday evening can be over 40, this is a poor turnout. Which prompted the committee to ask why it is not more popular and I would like some feedback on this issue.

There could be many reasons why people decided not to attend this year such as the cost of eating out, or maybe members already eat out quite frequently and another meal out is not the treat it once was. Maybe you do not like Mediterranean food or the Bel-Air restaurant or perhaps you do not wish to mix socially or feel that your partner would not know anyone. All are perfectly understandable but it would be useful to know the reasons.

All in all it may be time to remove the Annual Dinner from the programme!
The question would then be what to put in its place if the Methodist Hall is unavailable.
Suggestions:
a) Do nothing and give everyone a night off
b) Arrange to meet somewhere for a night-time photo shoot (lit up buildings in the city perhaps) – do you have other suggested locations that would be suitable?
c) Book a studio and have a portraiture or still life session
d) Team up with another club and book a joint speaker for that week. As Pinner meet on a Monday evening, maybe they could be approached to agree something for March 2010.
e) Any other suggestions that you might have

Next year's programme needs to be organised in the near future. I would therefore appreciate your opinions as soon as possible.

Thanks - **Val Walker**

Windows Movie Maker - A Beginner's experience.

I wanted to create an Audio Visual presentation for the FEPS Audio/Visual Evening. I had seen a demonstration of 'Pictures to Exe', but did not have the software. When I looked at Adobe's offering it seemed too daunting to use.

On my PC running Vista there is Windows Movie Maker that appeared relatively easy to use. One selects images, puts them in an order and adds some sound files. Sounds too easy, but I was not sure of what to display, what to say and the exact steps required.

However, if at the beginning one does not know all the details and procedures required, there is a simple 4-step guide to solving any task or problem.

1.   Aim   - What is the purpose of the Audio Visual presentation?
2.   Plan   - Define what steps and procedures are required to achieve the aim
3.   Action   - Perform the steps required
4.   Review - View the result, analysis and refine the Audio Visual presentation

1.   Aim - Purpose of the Audio Visual presentation

   I thought that images from a holiday in Venice might be presented in a way that would be of interest to photographers. So there would be no need to overburden the viewer with customs, geography or history.

   The show should last about 3 to 4 minutes (180 to 240 seconds) and projecting an image for an average of 6 seconds, would mean about 30 to 40 images.

   The images would be in the following sequence, buildings, canals, hotel, gondola and a final ending.

2.   Plan - The required steps and details

   Set up the following group of folders to hold images and sound files
   -    **Venice Movie project**
   -    **Images**   a copy of all the Venice images
   -    **Buildings** for selected building images
   -    **Canals**   for selected canal images
   -    **Hotel**   for selected hotel images
   -    **Gondola**   for selected gondola images
   -    **Sounds**   for the sound files

   View all the images as a slide show, and identify approximately 35 images for display, then move the selected images into their appropriate folders.

   In order to identify images later, the selected images will be renamed from say IMG_1234 to BLG_1234, or to CAN_1234, HOT_1234, and GON_1234.

   The commentary would be based on a script with numbered sentences or phrases though at this stage I did not know what the script would be.

To aid identification later, the sound files later would be numbered V-1.wav, V-2.wav, eventually it would go up to V-16.

3. Action

When preparing an Audio Visual presentation there is a **Timeline** that can be likened to a horizontal ruler graduated in minutes and seconds of running time. The images and sound files are placed on this Timeline so that they will be played in the desired order.

The Title image of the Italian flag with overlaid was prepared using Photoshop.

Then the images were imported into the Audio/Visual project, placed on the time line, in groups of images for buildings, canals, hotel, gondola. Each image would initially be displayed for 5 seconds.

The script was developed in the following way. Two windows were opened, one for Windows Movie Maker and a second window with Notepad. By repeatedly viewing the images as a slide show and pausing at intervals, I would construct one or two sentences and type them into Notepad and number this portion of commentary as V-1, V-2, etc.

Windows Sound Recorder was used to create the sound files, where I would read each portion of commentary and save it as a file named V1, V2 up to V16.

These sound files were imported into the Audio/Visual project and each sound file positioned under the starting image for that group.

The Audio/Visual presentation was then published as a file that could be replayed on a PC and also on a DVD that it could be played on a DVD recorder/player and shown on the television.

4. Review

The Audio/Visual presentation was played and reviewed several times, each time adjustments were made to length of image display, or to modify one of the commentary script files.

It was easy to lengthen or shorten the display time of each image say from 5 to 7 seconds, to match the commentary.

Some points to watch out that occurred to me were
- Speak clearly and slowly so that the audience can take in the information
- Maintain enthusiasm throughout the commentary.
- Ensure that image display times seems comfortable, otherwise short display times are irritating and long display times are boring.
- Have a variety of images, too many similar images seem tedious.
- One's first attempt might not be perfect but improvements will occur.

Overall, it was a very lengthy process to assemble the A/V presentation and all of the steps were not immediately apparent and required some thought. However, the next presentation will be assembled more quickly. I look forward to the Audio/Visual display and the comments.

Brian Hillier

To Sharpen or Not To Sharpen.

Sharpening is a much-misused tool, as it is too often seen as a way of saving a poorly focused image in Photoshop. If your image is out of focus, then sharpening cannot make it look better, the only thing that can be done is to take it again.

A little sharpening on an image can however, improve its visual impact, but this needs to be undertaken with care. Usually this is a small adjustment on a slider rather that a large movement and you should be viewing the image at 100% when applying the sharpening in order to see how much it is affecting the edges of the image.
All sharpening does is to extend the contrast range on the edges of the image pixels. Remember that it will also make any noise stand out more.

How you use it depends on what your next step is after colour correction. If you are shooting in RAW and you are going to undertake some extra post-processing in Photoshop then you should sharpen just a small amount, usually at the default level at the RAW stage of the workflow and apply the main sharpening in Photoshop after you have done everything else.

If, however, you are fortunate enough to have one of the latest RAW programs that allow direct printing from a RAW file, then you will need to sharpen at this stage of your workflow.

The rule of thumb is that Sharpening should be done in very small amounts and it's the final part of the process before you hit the Print Button.

Ted Weller

COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Print Panel Rules
Our current rules state that the panel competition for the Edith King Memorial Trophy should be 'home' processed work only. For many years we had a separate trophy for 'trade' processed work, but this was abandoned a couple of years ago due to a lack of trade processed work and the BPD Trophy was reassigned. The situation seems to have reversed again and more people are using trade processed prints. In order to make the competition available to more members, a proposal was put forward that panels may consist of either trade or home processed prints. This proposal was accepted and the change will take place with immediate effect.

Committee Posts
Unfortunately Chris Wallace has given notice that he will not be continuing as our Digital Secretary next season. Naturally I am disappointed to be losing him from the Committee as he has done a sterling job and his technical expertise has come in very handy. You don't need to be a computer expert, but obviously a certain degree of computer literacy is required (basic keyboarding skills, file management and communication via e-mail). Training will be given in the use of our competition software ImageCompPro. I've had a couple of offers of help to act as 'backup', but as so many of our competitions are now in a digital format it is essential this post is filled. Chris and I will be happy to chat with anyone who feels up to the challenge! Perhaps some of our newer members might be interested?

John Coombe has also advised that he would prefer not to stand for re-election as Treasurer. I am particularly grateful to John for his assistance in revising the Constitution and thank him for his support. Alan Golding has indicated he would be willing to take on this role in addition to social secretary.

WANT TO JOIN US: Visit us at www.fieldendps.co.uk
Or call Alan Rhodes on 020 8868 1785

Constitution
Following comments made at last year's AGM, the Committee has reviewed the Constitution and agreed upon changes. These mainly concern the wording in respect of the dissolution of the Society. Full details of the proposed amendments, together with an explanatory note, will be issued with the other AGM papers at least 3 weeks prior to the AGM.

Marilyn Dennis, CPAGB
Chairman

And Finally

James Dunlop found a piece recently on '**Why Film's on a Roll Again'**.

According to Damien Demoulder the editor of Amateur Photographer after years of digital dominating the photographic world traditional cameras are making a comeback. He goes onto say that whilst it's true there are only a few film cameras left in production there is an appeal that's keeping film very much alive. Film is simple, you shoot, drop it off / post it and your prints are returned. Conversely digital can seem complicated—printing at home can be expensive and time consuming. Storage and sophisticated software can be expensive.

Whilst film cameras might be expensive to run they are cheap to buy, the next updated model doesn't follow on a month after you have bought a new one and the second hand ones are a bargain.

However which ones deliver the best results—well we wont go into that one, that's been done to death many times before.

Digital photography on the other hand is almost fool proof for amateurs and you can see your results immediately.

Digital and film photography are just different one isn't better that the other.

Ted Weller

Well that's it for now FEPS, I'll see you all next time around and remember to keep those articles coming in.

Ted Weller - Editor