



Mold In Focus

The Newsletter of Mold Camera Club

Volume 1, Issue 8

March 2010

Planned Events (**Hand In Nights)

March

- 1st St. David's Day Lecture – Jill Bunting on AV creation using Pictures To Exe **
- 2nd Mold & Hawarden Projected Images Battle Round 1 at Hawarden – Go One Better
- 8th Interclub Battle
- 15th Competition 5 – Monochrome Portraits
- 22nd Mold & Hawarden Projected Images Battle Round 2 at Mold– Go One Better
- 29th Lecture – Stuart Lawrie – Photoshop Basics **

April

- 5th Lecture – TBC
- 12th Competition 6 – Open
- 19th Members Practical Night – Making AV's
- 26th Lecture – Marion Waite & John Rowell – AV's **

External Events

- 7th – 10th Mar Focus On Imaging – NEC Birmingham
- 20th & 21st Mar – IAC Geoffrey Round AV Competition
- 27th Mar – Eryri Photo Group Lecture (Anne Sutcliffe)
- 28th Mar NWPA Interclub Print & Projected Image Battle
- 28th Mar Closing Date for NWPA Exhibition Entries

Awards, Competitions & Publication

We are now two thirds of the way through the first year of Mold In Focus and it just keeps getting bigger. I've had a lot of ideas for items since my last request and thankfully quite a number of members have agreed to produce articles for future issues, so the future looks bright and we should be able to continue well beyond the year.

For the second issue in a row I am delighted to report that we have a contribution from outside the club, this time from Frank and Margaret Barber (Beumaris & Menai Bridge Camera Club and the Eryri Photo Group) on the subject of the PAGB Awards. It is well worth the read. Thanks to Frank & Margaret for allowing us to publish this article and to Don & Christine Langford and our own Andy for arranging access to it.

I am also delighted to announce our second Newsletter competition which this time will be sponsored by Cambrian Photography. Many thanks to Sarah at Cambrian for arranging the prize. Full details of the competition are on Page 2. You have until 23rd April to submit your entries which should give you plenty of time to get out there and get those shots. There is no limit to the number of entries you can make.

This issue is full of variety again but I draw your attention to an item on Page 6 from Andy, which shows very much how persistence and patience are very much a part of Photography. It also shows that there are many paths to success in photography. Andy must be impossible to live with now that he has had his photo shown on TV.

Finally, it was great to see so many members attend the EGM on Monday 15th February and that the constitution and trustee insurance are pretty much sorted. Afterwards of course we had the AV session, a medium I enjoy working in very much. I had some very good feedback on my School Project AV and now await the IAC Geoffrey Round Competition later this month. I hope you will all keep your fingers crossed for me for a good result.

Thanks to everybody for their contributions to this issue and I look forward to the promised contributions coming in.

Chris (Editor In Chief)

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PHOTO COMPETITION

Sponsored by Cambrian Photography

We are pleased to announce our second newsletter photo competition of the year. With spring just around the corner the subject will be Floral Photography, with all subjects pertaining to flowers, from any season, allowable. All entrants must be members of Mold Camera Club.

Images should be in JPG format, of the same size as for projected image competitions and sent by e-mail to photo@noblemultimedia.co.uk before 5:00pm on Friday 23rd April 2010.

The winner, selected by the judging panel, will receive £25.00 Voucher supplied by Cambrian Photography, 87-89 Abergele Road, Colwyn Bay, LL29 7SA

The judging panel will consist of Chris Noble, David Allen & Andy Polakowski.
The panel's decision will be final.



www.cambrianphoto.co.uk

A cold and foggy night, ...

... a small group of strangers nervously pace up and down and around a lamp post on a street corner at one end of a bridge. The bridge spans a mighty river flowing through the heart of a city. I approach cautiously, looking for some signs of friendly acknowledgement if not recognition. Strange shadows are cast on the milling strangers. The combination of tungsten light and dense fog creates a mysterious orange glow, inspiring yet sinister. Note to self must remember to set my white balance to tungsten. Then I remember. I only shoot RAW, so I can relax knowing I can fiddle later in the err darkroom. WAIT, one of the figures moves towards me, slowly sliding something long and menacingly dark from under his heavy coat. Thank God, it's only a tripod. He keeps coming and when he is close he whispers, "what lenses have you brought"? A wave of relief spreads through my body; it was only Gary from the club.

This was the start to a memorable evening of photography in Chester, on a very cold and very foggy Saturday night. Chris had kindly organised a night shoot in Chester. He even laid on a real pea-souper for us. Actually I think he went over the top with the fog. It was having a strange effect on the lighting, giving everything a strange glow and making focusing even more interesting in the dark. A surprisingly large number of members turned up. We must have numbered at least 15. Given it was so cold, this was an impressive turn out. Chris, we must do this again, but in the summer when it doesn't hurt to carry a metal tripod.

Once we had all successfully rendezvoused, Chris made us buddy up. His strict orders were "guys, it's going to be hell out there but whatever happens, never leave your buddy..."

Well what happened next took me straight back to my school days. In a flash, people were moving around pairing up. Once again, I was last to be picked for the football team. But to my surprise, this beautiful blond sidles up to me, her lips part and she says "hello big boy, do you want to come with me tonight". Well that is what I heard, what she actually said was "ah Mike, if no one wants to go with you, you can come with me". So in another flash,(sorry for the photography puns), all the mad photographers dispersed over the bridge, each staying within sight of their buddy but all trying to spot something unique that the others have missed.

The objective of the night was to try stuff out. In particular, a number were keen to capture some tail light trails. Before we set off, Chris had gone through some basics in getting night shots. Primarily how to set up for long exposures using bulb on the camera, use of tripods and remote releases to help reduce blur etc.

Lots of pedestrians, kept stopping, asking us who was about to arrive, clearly they thought some celebrity was about to drive over the bridge. But let me ask you, when was the last time you saw a paparazzi take photos of a celebrity, with a tripod, long exposure, remote release and no flash! I guess they can't have been photographers. But strangely they did make us feel very important and professional ...

After about 20 minutes, we regrouped as we had pre-arranged and Chris led the way down some paths to take us to a much smaller bridge. Actually it was a foot bridge, and it afforded another set of weirdly lit vistas to keep us happy.

Once we had our fill we set off again, this time ending up along the river. Here, Chris decided to get his big one out. No, I meant his big torch, what are you like.. He gave everyone time to get their shots prepared and then would count down so we could all synchronize opening up the shutters whilst he painted various boats with his torch. I hope some of the others got interesting shots, all my boat ones came out blurred. I think the boats were bobbing a bit. But it was an interesting exercise and one I intend to re-try, but with a subject that is deadly still. After some time, we had all decided that we were so cold that we just had to pop into a local pub to have a nice cold Guinness. Yeah, even I'm confused, but somehow the words that came out of my mouth were Guinness rather than hot coffee or soup.

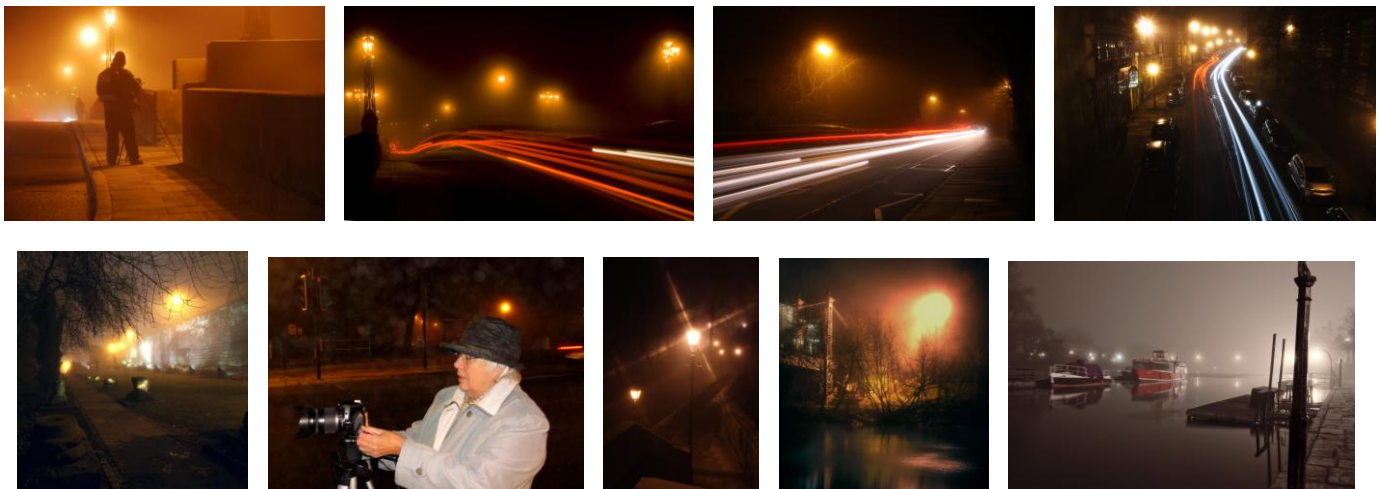
Suitably re-charged, we strode out of the pub for one more location. Chris knew of some old garden that had funny stones in it so we could try light painting again. I think it was old enough to be Roman. Again various experiments were tried, but I decided that having not taken any gloves, I would forgo photographing old stones so I could keep my hands in my pockets.

This was the last location, when the torch batteries started to fail we packed up and walked back to the cars. Some slid off into the foggy night to go home and switch on PC's and download photos, others went off for a Chinese. The latter being the most sensible I thought. The food was quite the converse to the weather; one or two wimps were complaining that they had extra hot chillies. Pah! I'm not sure if my few words do justice to the night. I think we all learned something, had ample time to experiment, enjoyed the company and whether you were man or woman; you felt safe taking photos in a city in the dark.

The night was; fun, sociable, educational, experimental and tasty, worth doing again, oh and cold.

Thanks Chris for organising it and to the others for making it such a good laugh.

Mike Catania



Images supplied by:

Top Row: Janet M. Davies : Chris Davies : Pam Ratcliffe : Anwen York

Bottom Row: Gary Jones : Keith Ratcliffe : Elaine Williams : Mike Catania : Ian Parker

Image Appeal

Janet Davies volunteered some time ago to start gathering images of the club events as they happened throughout the season. Her mission is to use the images in an AV to be shown at the New Members Evening at the start of the 2010/11 season.

If you have any images taken on any of the practical nights or lectures during the season so far could you please forward them to Janet at janetpenyparc@yahoo.co.uk.

Images of other members in action at these events would also be useful. For more information please see Janet at one of the Monday meetings or contact her by e-mail.

Thanks to those who have already contributed.

EYRYI PHOTO GROUP

Saturday 27th March 2010 - 2.00 p.m.

Craig-y-Don Community Centre
Queens Road, Llandudno. LL30 1TE

“KEEP ON RUNNING”
Anne Sutcliffe, FRPS, EFIAP

Anne will show her FRPS panel of prints and a variety of subjects in both colour & mono.

Eryri Group Members: £4.00
Non-Members: £5.00

Further information: Christine Langford 01758 713572

MEMBER PROFILE



Name: David Lewis

Camera: Canon 40D

Lenses: Canon 100-400, 55-250, 17-85, 28 & Sigma 10-20

Software: Lightroom, Photomatrix AcdSee. Vuescan.

Photography: General

Other Hobbies: Snowboarding, but my main hobby is Wakeboarding.

I am an electrical contractor and electric gate installer based in Mold, North Wales. I live in Buckley with my wife Pat, 3 girls and 1 son Neal all of which have moved on now.

My main passion in life is 'boating', I have been a member of Deeside Water Ski Club since 1973 and been an active committee member most of this time and help run the club. I sponsor a club jump completion every June each year.

The clubs main focus now is wakeboarding and water skiing. Even though I am 59 years old I still wakeboard every weekend from March through till November each year and I intend to carry on wakeboarding until I drop.

Whilst wakeboarding, I have had the need to take photographs of who ever rides behind my boat so we can see what faults we have and so we can improve.

FOCUS ON IMAGING



7th-10th March 2010

NEC, Birmingham

To register visit

www.focus-on-imaging.co.uk

Chairman's Address – Getting Involved

One of the big changes in the club evenings over the last couple of seasons has been the increasing focus on doing rather than just watching and listening. It would be really great to continue with this further. Andy's session last Monday from what I have heard went down really well, thanks Andy. We have many members with lots of skills - as photographers amongst other things. Also several are experimenting with techniques new to them. Let's widen the circle of those leading our Monday evening sessions. If you have something you would like to present do mention it to Bob. There is no reason why evenings could not be put together with smaller presentations from several members. One of the best ways of learning something is to teach it!!!!!!!

With AV's becoming increasingly popular in the club should we start to think about a ways we could develop this further, perhaps with more regular presentations of AV work, and possibly in the not too distant future having AV work as a competition category in some way or other. Do let Bob and Chris and myself know of your thoughts and ideas on this. We will have presentations this season by leading workers in the AV field and there will be an international competition at Capel Curig over the weekend 20-21 March to provide inspiration. We have a practical evening planned for everyone to have a go at an AV.

Best wishes

David

www.pistyllphoto.org.uk

THE STORY BEHIND THE PICTURE

Andy Polakowski

For as long as I've had my Canon 10D I've also had the Canon 15mm fisheye lens. Trouble is, it only gives the whole fisheye effect on a full (ie 36mm x 24mm) frame camera; consequently, on my 10D with its APS-C sensor (22mm x 15mm) it gives a 35mm equivalent focal length of only 24mm.

So just before New Year I ordered a Canon 5D full frame camera. Frustratingly it didn't arrive until 6 January but by then there was even more snow. The next day found me struggling around Eryrys trying to get to "my tree" but because of the banks of snow, parking was virtually impossible. Eventually I managed to find a space off the road on the edge of the village. With a temperature of -8C I set off with the 5D and 15mm and after slipping and sliding for a while met a chap outside his cottage waiting to help a neighbour guide her flock of sheep to lower ground. We chatted until this docile flock appeared and I took a few shots.



Back home I checked the results and was very happy with this new combination. And so the following morning, just before we set off for a funeral in East Lancashire, I had the bright idea of sending one of the pictures to BBC Wales Today for Derek Brockway, their weatherman, to use. "Imagine my surprise" when we returned in the evening just in time to see it shown and even my name pronounced correctly! So there we are: from new camera to "published" photo in just over 48 hours.

For those interested in repeating this stunt the address to use is: dereksdiary@bbc.co.uk; I also copied the email to wales.today@bbc.co.uk. I kept the text to a minimum: the Subject was Weather Picture, Eryrys and the message was: Attached is a picture taken at Eryrys near Mold of sheep being moved to lower ground followed by my name and address. For the title I again kept it simple: Eryrys_by_Andy_Polakowski.jpg. I reduced the image size to 1280 x 707 giving a file size of about 1MB. Why not give it a go? Oh, by the way, there's no remuneration.

MEMBERS PHOTOS



Caernarfon Castle at Night by Anwen York



Videographer (Capel Curig) by Chris Noble



Ogwen Valley by Pam Ratcliffe



Daisy Daisy by Ann-Marie Metcalfe

North Wales Photographic Association

EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHY 2010

ENTRIES BY: 28th March 2010

JUDGING: 15th May 2010 at The Electric Mountain Centre Llanberis

SHOWING: 19th June to 29th July 2010 at
The Electric Mountain Centre Llanberis

**ENTRY FORMS AND FURTHER INFORMATION
AVAILABLE FROM KEVIN HIRST**

Hints & Tips on Spring Floral Photos – Chris Noble

As spring approaches it won't be long before we start to see the emergence of the green shoots of snowdrops, crocuses and bluebells in our gardens and woodlands. It's an ideal time for those with an interest in floral photography to get out and capture the beauty of nature at work. I love this time of year as nature begins its process of new life and the spring flowers offer much more delicacy than their summer cousins.

Because most of the subjects are low growing plants any picture of them taken from above, whether standing or kneeling tend to bring in the ground from which they are growing. This is not too bad if the ground is covered in grass but bare earth doesn't do much to enhance the image at all. For that reason it is important to get down to ground level for the best shots. If you don't mind getting dirty then just get down there and do your work, but I find a simple ground sheet or waterproof picnic blanket make an ideal base to get down on. Be careful when putting these down that you do not damage any of the plants.

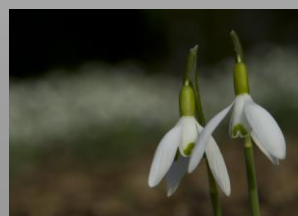
Make sure you survey the area very closely before getting your equipment setup. There's nothing worse than getting everything setup for a low level shot only to find the background is poor or the subject you have chosen is not quite the specimen you wanted. Taking your time and planning the shot is very important. Avoid having direct sun light on the subject.

As with most types of photography a tripod is very important so it's important to have one that allows you to get your camera close to the ground while still remaining stable. A remote release is also useful as you may find yourself in awkward positions and pressing the shutter release button may be difficult (at least it is with my aging bones).

Be prepared to do a little gardening so a small scissors and soft paint brush are useful items to have in your camera bag. Be sensible when using the scissors and don't just go cutting all around you. The paintbrush is useful for getting rid of dirt or cobwebs without doing any damage to the plant.

What to do with shutter speeds, apertures, ISO and so on. The best thing to do is experiment. With floral it's important to get the subject sharp and clear. A good out of focus background is also seen as the norm.

It's short and sweet for the hints and tips section this month as there really isn't a lot to say. A good venue to visit is Ness Gardens and we may arrange a club visit at some point in the near future. For more information visit www.liv.ac.uk/nessgardens



Interclub Battle V Hawarden (Go One Better)

On Tuesday 2nd March (at Hawarden) and Monday 22nd March (at Mold) Mold Camera Club will be participating in the annual Interclub Battle. For those of you who have not been before they can be a really fun nights, full of banter and plenty of shouting, in fact the clubhouse sounds like the terraces of a football game at times. The idea is that one club projects an image and the second club then shows an image which matches the first image in some way (this can be very tenuous at times). There are points awarded for matching and points awarded for the best image.

Images are needed for this event. They need to have photographic merit but be a bit different in terms of composition (to make it harder for the opposition to match). So look through your images and send anything different to andy.extra@virgin.net. Please add "GOB" (Go One Better) in the subject heading of your e-mail. Thank you in advance. Please make sure your images are in JPG format and are no greater than 1050 pixels on the vertical side and 1400 on the horizontal side.

Support will also be needed on both nights.

The IAC Geoffrey Round AV Competition

**In Association with North
Wales & Wirral AV Group**

**with PAGB Patronage - Number
07/2010**

The event will be held in

**The Community Centre,
Capel Curig, North
Wales**

on

**Saturday & Sunday,
March 20th -21st 2010**

Upcoming Competitions

**15th March – Monochrome Portraits
Submissions on 1st March**

**12th April – Open Competition
Submissions on 29th March**

**10th May – Print & Projected
Image of the Year
Submissions on 26th April**

EYRYI PHOTO GROUP

Saturday 20th March 2010 - 10.30 a.m.

Craig-y-Don Community Centre
Queens Road, Llandudno. LL30 1TE

"FOTOSPEED PRINTING"

John Herlinger of Fotospeed and Margaret Salisbury will demonstrate how to get the very best out of your printer.

Eryri Group Members: £8.00
Non-Members: £10.00

Further information: Christine Langford 01758 713572

Photographing Zoo Animals – Brian Lowens



Introduction

I would never go to a bullfight. I abhor the practice and the idea of watching and photographing an animal being tormented and killed. I know that some people feel the same way about keeping and displaying captive animals in zoos. I respect their views and, in some of the zoos which I have visited, I have felt that some animal/enclosure combinations were unacceptable. However, in general, I find zoos to be fascinating places to visit with many photographic opportunities. The general public obviously agree as, from my observations, about a third of all the visitors carry cameras.

Why go to a zoo to photograph the animals? Why not photograph them in their natural environment where you can expect better backgrounds? If you look at any book on wild animal photography you will find that up to half the book will be taken up with: where to find the animal, when to go, how to approach and what type of hides to use, how to apply for permits, how to back up your photographs and maintain your batteries when away from civilisation and a reliable power supply etc. Forget all of that. The zoos in this country allow you to build a portfolio of photographs of some of the rarest animals which you know will be in prime condition and you need never know the horror behind the words “Terminal Five”!

When observing or photographing animals, whatever the circumstances, care must be taken not to cause stress to the animals. With endangered species in particular, and more than half the animals at the Chester Zoo are in this category, the modern passion for organized photographic safaris is leading to more and more photographers chasing fewer and fewer wild animals. With careful organisation this may not be a problem but many tour leaders feel under pressure to provide their clients with “good” photographic opportunities leading to invasive techniques and interruption of the animals normal behaviour. It is clear that, provided the photographer keeps to the areas of public access and avoids the use of flash, then the photographing of zoo animals does not cause any additional stress.

Photographic Techniques

Most people adopt an approach of walking round the zoo and taking photographs as opportunities present themselves. This can result in some superb photographs but I believe that most will be disappointments for reasons we can all imagine. As an annual member of Chester Zoo I often adopt this approach and spend many enjoyable days there at a minimal cost. My best photographs, however, are not obtained this way.



To consistently obtain good photographs of the animals it is necessary to first study the animal, its behaviour patterns, its feeding habits, its interaction with others of its species and its favourite locations. In all the zoos I have been to the Keepers have been pleased to talk about their charges and will often be able to give helpful information. One of the most useful is when particular animals are to be fed as this ensures that the animals will be present and active. This may allow you to plan your schedule to avoid long, dreary waits staring at an empty enclosure. On one occasion a keeper at Chester Zoo arranged the bamboo branches for the Red Panda so that he sat just where I wanted him and facing

forward. I obtained my best Red Panda pictures at the price of a few minutes chat with a charming young lady. Not a bad exchange!

The behaviour which is to be photographed should be chosen in advance and with it a suitable location. The choice of the background is of particular importance as the eye concentrates on the subject of the picture whilst the camera records the whole scene with equal weighting to each part. Backgrounds should be chosen which avoid distractions and allow harmonious framing of the composition. Contrasts in tone and colour should be looked for as they can lift an adequate picture to be an exceptional one. If the subject lives in a group in the wild then group portraits may be chosen. Either way the pictures of animals with their young should be sought as they may show unusual behaviour patterns. Photographs of a lioness with cub are often more interesting and informative than the more usually sought images of a roaring lion.

Composition is a subject which requires as much consideration in animal photography as in any other. There is the difficulty that unlike landscape photography, say, one is totally dependent upon the unconscious cooperation of the animal. The opportunity for the desired shot may be fleeting. As with all photography the key to success lies in being able to visualise the final image before composing and triggering the shutter. If much of the environment is to be shown then the animal will be small in the frame. It is then essential that the subject stands out well from the background. A subject which is dark in tone should be placed against a lighter tone and vice versa. Contrasts in colour may be used in the same way. Frame filling portraits are often the most impressive although by leaving out the environment part of the story may be lost. It is for the photographer to decide what is being attempted as to try for everything is a sure route to failure. Better a well composed and executed image portraying one aspect of the subject than an uncoordinated and confusing picture into which too much has been crammed.

One aspect on which all the wild life photography experts agree, is not to have direct eye contact with the animal as this is seen as a challenge. The animal must then decide on flight or fight, neither of which would be wanted by the photographer. This is one area where zoo and wild photography differ as the zoo animals are used to being observed and are not disturbed by the experience. The ideal in zoo photography is to have the animal looking directly at the camera with the eyes in sharp focus. This draws the viewer into a feeling of personal contact with the animal and changes the experience from one of observation to one of participation. The change in the picture, from one in which the animal directly views the camera to one in which it looks to the side, may be small. The change in the experience of the viewer can be immense. As always the photographer must hope for the opportunity to take such a picture and must wait upon the animal but as a principle of composition it should always be remembered.

One photographic consideration which must be chosen with care is the depth of focus of the image. Not only does this determine whether the animal is to be seen as part of its background or against an out of focus blurred background but also if foreground objects are to be blurred. Many of the larger, predator animals such as the lions and tigers will be in wire mesh enclosures. With animals observed through wire mesh care must be taken to focus on the animal and not the mesh. If the camera and the skill of the photographer allow, it is usually preferable to use manual focus. If the camera can be placed against the wire mesh then the picture may be taken through the gaps in the mesh lattice. For the animals quoted the public is kept five to six feet from the fence and so a wide aperture with the animal as far from the fence as possible are required. This will have the effect of creating a narrow depth of focus, well away from the fence which should then be blurred in the picture. The photograph of the Scops Owl was taken with the camera held against a one inch wire mesh enclosure with the bird about six feet away. No work in Photoshop was needed to remove any sign of the mesh and only cropping, sharpening and brightening were applied.





Some of the animals will be observed through glass and trying to photograph them can be a very frustrating experience. Reflections are always a problem and must be tackled on an ad hoc basis. In addition to reflections the glass may be greasy **on both sides!** One can forgive the animals for rubbing their food on the glass and the keepers for whom internal glass cleaning will not be a priority but the behaviour of the public is unforgivable. I will not go into details but be prepared to take a cloth to clean a small area to shoot through. The photograph of the baby gorilla (2/3 weeks old) was taken through thick armoured glass in a very large pane. I was assured that it would stop an irate 17 stone mother or a rather bad tempered looking 22 stone father. In the event both were totally placid and uninterested in me but it was rather uncomfortable being within three feet of such creatures.

In addition to the ideas mentioned above all the normal aspects of photography such as the source and strength of the light and the need for a fast or slow shutter speed must be considered. In this work it is usually necessary to use a tripod to ensure a sharp image especially in poor light. The need for patience must be accepted. Animal photography can be planned but not organised. Long periods of waiting must be expected but the photographer must remain alert as the best opportunities will be short.

In considering photography in a Butterfly House there are such different conditions from those in the rest of the Zoo that the techniques must be seen as separate from the ones already considered. Such a high temperature and high level of humidity are maintained that cameras must be allowed a period, of up to twenty minutes in the winter, to acclimatise and on no account must the camera be opened to change lenses, batteries or memory cards. If the water proofing of the camera is not known to be good then it might be wise to keep it in a plastic bag whilst it acclimatises.

The photographs taken in a Butterfly House will always be of stationary butterflies. Butterflies in flight are fascinating because of their languid and unpredictable flight paths but this is lost in a still photograph. Butterflies are quite unmoved by the use of flash no matter how close the release and, provided that they and the leaf on which they rest are not touched, they may be approached with the camera lens as close as focusing permits. For this type of photography it is usual to use a macro lens or setting, a very small aperture, say f22, a short focal length, some form of camera support and flash. The objective is to photograph the small subject with the maximum enlargement and depth of field. For this type of photography most compact cameras are well suited except that the closeness of the subject may cause the flash to be obscured by the lens. Since the depth of field may only be a few millimetres the lens is often positioned at right angles to the plane of the butterfly's wings.



Finally, and in contradiction to much of what has been said above, the photographer must be aware that some of the finest animal photographic opportunities do occur by chance. These chances cannot be predicted and so the photographer must be prepared to abandon the planned shot and seize the chance when it occurs.



On Location in Morocco with Kevin Hirst

Having seen images and heard about the colours and smells: a photographer's paradise as it were, Morocco is a country I'd often thought of visiting. A few weeks before going I'd been to an Eryri Photo Group talk given by Phil and Gwen Charnock of Wigan 10 fame. They'd been to Marrakech too, also drawn by the people and colours of the east and the photographic potential. In fact it was a Wigan 10 club trip (!) and they'd gone to get some competition and exhibition images – they take these things seriously in Wigan. It was here that I first learnt of the challenges of taking pictures of the Moroccan people: being Muslim, it is against their beliefs and culture to be photographed. In fact even a gang of photographers from Wigan 10 had found it difficult getting images. So if they struggled I stood no chance and doing further research I knew I'd not be getting the images I'd hoped for. Although a little disappointed about this aspect we were still looking forward to the trip.



We flew into Marrakech and got a taxi, as directed by our riad (guesthouse) owner, to Sidi ben Slimane in the old city. There we were supposed to find a man with a handcart to carry our luggage the rest of the way to the riad; there was no sign of any such people. But as if by magic, by the time we'd got out of the taxi and got round to the boot, there was a man and a handcart!! We dutifully followed him through the labyrinth of narrow streets to the Riad Ariha. We arrived in time for dinner and enjoyed our first of many many lamb tajines of the trip.



The next day we'd arranged a guide to take us around the medina taking in the Ben Youssef Medersa (Koranic university dating from the 14th Century), carpet shops and of course the famous souks. I managed to sneak off a few shots here and there. Well lots of shots really, but shooting 'from the hip' meant a very poor success rate with most being out of focus or at obscure angles! We also went to some more modern areas outside the where the wealthy southern Europeans buy property pushing land prices to €1million per acre! Lunch was in an authentic cafe, used almost exclusively by Moroccans; it looked like just about any other cafeteria in the World, but the food was very authentic. We both had a rabbit tajine, in fact the only time we had anything other than lamb or the more vaguely named 'meat' tajine.

On our second day in Marrakech we ventured to another part of the old city; Mellah. This is the old Jewish quarter. In the early part of the 20th century some 36,000 Jews lived in Mellah, now it is estimated that only 260 remain! The creation of Israel in 1948 was largely the cause of the exodus with only those too poor to leave remaining. Few tourists venture to Mellah so all the tourist trappings of the souks and the Jemma El Fna were absent. We wanted to visit the Marché Couvert a working market supplying fresh produce, meat and fish to the kitchens of the southern Medina; it's still known to locals as the Jewish Market. We found the market, but business was pretty much over by the time we got there, but we didn't stay long as the smell was intense with the meat and fish crawling with flies! We sat in the square for a bit watching life go by, sneaking a few more snaps and then headed back to our riad.

The rest of our stay was in the mountain village of Imlil in the Atlas Mountains. We travelled there by taxi: about a 2-hour trip. Part way we stopped at the Kasbah Tamadot owned by Sir Richard Branson. These were originally forts but are now largely converted to hotels. This one is definitely at the luxury end complete with infinity pool and costing some £400 per night. Not sure if people staying there really experience Morocco or just another luxury hotel.



Eventually we arrived in Imlil and were met by the owner of Dar Ouassaggou, the guest house in which we'd be staying. The last leg of the journey was in his beat up old car.

Imlil, a one street town is the total opposite of Marrakech, although a forest of satellite dishes was a common theme. We had a wander into the village that afternoon and had our first meeting with Ibrahim owner of one of the local gift shops. We chatted briefly and promised to return the next day. (Picture of Ibrahim on previous page)

The next day we hired a local guide and went for a 5 or 6 mile walk taking in many of the local villages. In the absence of maps the guide was very worthwhile if only to navigate us through the villages – although pretty small they were a labyrinth of paths and alleys and it would have been easy to walk through someone's back garden! This was the day we met another local character. He introduced himself as "I am Robin Hood the 2nd of Morocco!" A larger than life character who owned a gift shop on the road outside one of the villages we passed through. Buying a few souvenirs off him was a pleasure! His reference to Robin Hood was because many of the items he sold were made by cooperatives in the surrounding villages. A great character and we came away a few dirhams lighter! But it was a fun experience and supports the local community.

Giuliana was suffering with the altitude a bit so the next day was a lazy day lounging about in the village and planning our next outing. We also kept our promise albeit a day late and called in on Ibrahim. Chatted for a bit, parted with more dirham and left as friends.

The next day dawned warm and sunny and we set off up the valley. It was a couple of hours walk following a mix of roads and mostly donkey tracks to the pass and when we got there.....WOW! What a spectacular valley – I'll show you the pics somedayJ. There was a hut at the top serving tea and food so we stopped for a brew then headed back down do Imlil for a bit more chilling out – we were on holiday after all!



Next day was our last full day in Imlil and another day of rest and relaxation. Another wander round the village and an invitation to share tea with Ibrahim; no pressure to buy, this was an invitation to friends. What an amazing young man. He'd had to leave school at 14 to run the family shop but even so spoke fluent French, Arabic and excellent English that he'd taught himself by studying a dictionary



That was it pretty much, next day a taxi back to the airport and before you know it back to the noise, hustle and bustle of Gatwick Airport.

And the pictures? Well I came away with a few that I'm happy with, just got to find time to print them up now!

PAGB AWARDS FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC MERIT

The PAGB hold two weekend events each year for the adjudication of work submitted for the three levels of distinctions. Both are fully subscribed for this year but North Wales is due to host the event in November 2011, so you should start preparing your work now.

There are three levels of distinction and prints and projected images are seen at all three levels. The first 'rung' is the Credit (CPAGB) where 10 images are entered, then comes the Distinction (DPAGB) for 15 images and the very best is the Master (MPAGB) for 20 images.

Frank and Margaret Barber (Beaumaris & Menai Bridge Camera Club and the Eryri Photo Group) both gained their Credits and below is their take on the proceedings:

Photographic Honours – Would you like a CPAGB?

Want a photographic project to concentrate your efforts?
Is your work up to a good club standard?
Do you think your work is brilliant and you would like confirmation?
Then why not try for the CPAGB Award?

This requires you to have been an active club member and supported both your club and the Federation by entering the annual NWPA Exhibition and offering your work for selection in InterClub Battles and InterFederation competitions for at least 2 years. Have you done all of that?

You will have to convince the Awards Officer (Don Langford) of your NWPA and club involvements, as your application for the CPAGB Award has to be passed through him to the organisers.

Next, you need 10 prints or 10 projected images to present at the adjudication. On the day the first image of every applicant is presented in turn to the judges (six of them) and a mark is given. This procedure is repeated until all 10 of your images have been marked. Each judge gives a mark of 2 to 5 i.e. the maximum score per image is $6 \times 5 = 30$ and the minimum is $6 \times 2 = 12$. In order to be successful, the total score for all your images has to be not less than 200, so you must average at least 20 for each of your images.

If you are successful, you are entitled to put the letters CPAGB after your name and it is for life, without having to pay an annual subscription as is the case with some other organisations.

If your nerves and your pocket (current entry fee is £60.) can stand the strain, give serious thought to putting yourself forward for the Award. If you have aspirations about judging within the NWPA, and there is a current shortage of judges, then obtaining the Award of CPAGB gives you some credibility.

We went through the process in November 2008 and would like to thank all those who gave us help and encouragement.”

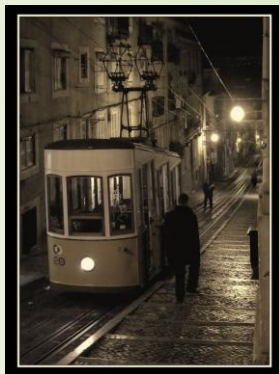
The November 2010 event will be held in Lancashire (possibly Chorley) - a good opportunity to see how it all happens and see the standards required.

Guidance notes and applications forms may be obtained from Don Langford (01758 713572). These Awards are very popular and early applications are essential.

Editor: Special thanks to Frank & Margaret Barber and Don & Christine Langford for arranging this article for Mold In Focus.

Competition 4 - Results

Monday 7th February was the night of our 4rd internal competition, the Tree Triptych. We welcomed Ronnie Williams for his first visit to Mold and he certainly gave us some detailed feedback. I'm sure it won't be long before we see Ronnie again.



The results were as follows:

Beginners Prints:

1 st	Yesterday Today (Above Left)	Elaine Williams	20
2 nd	Reflection	Elaine Williams	19
3 rd	Enchanted Woodland	Simon Cartwright	18

Advanced Prints:

1 st	Night Scene, Lisbon (Above Right)	Peter Thomas	20
2 nd	Moving Sheep To Lower Ground	Andy Polakowski	19 (See Page 5)
	Craig Maclean Goes For The Line	Andy Polakowski	19
3 rd	Dead Beetles	Chris Davies	18
	Turkish Delight	Chris Davies	18

Beginners Digital:

1 st	Winter Scene (Below Left)	Pamela Davies-Ratcliffe	20
2 nd	Dune Racing	Jacky Shennan	19
	Woodturning In Action	Jude Lloyd-Johnson	19
3 rd	Daisy Daisy	Ann-Marie Metcalfe	18

Advanced Digital

1 st	All Strung Out (Below Right)	Andy Polakowski	20
2 nd	In Profile	Chris Noble	19
3 rd	Pure Focus	Kevin Hirst	18



Andy's "Open Invitation"

Pam Ratcliffe

Following Andy's invitation to club members to join him on a visit to other North Wales camera clubs when he was lecturing or judging Keith and I arranged to accompany him to Bethesda.

The weather forecast was a bit ambiguous - warm front hitting cold front somewhere over Wales could result in some heavy snow(!!!)- but, not to be put off, Andy arranged to pick us up at 1.30pm (the lecture was at 7pm).

Piling our gear into the car I noticed with relief that he was prepared for all eventualities ie shovel in boot. So off we went in search of those magical photographic opportunities (and snow) that we all dream about.

We drove slowly across country looking out for just the right subject in just the right light, and failing miserably as drizzle and low cloud thwarted our efforts.

At Llanwrst we crossed the bridge and drove along to Llyn Sarnau where we braved the weather and took our cameras for a walk around the lakeside.

It was here that Andy confessed that it was a well known fact that whenever he organised a field trip it usually rained. Thanks, Andy! Now you tell us!

Back in the car, we drove past the Ugly House and as far as the youth hostel at the end of Llyn Ogwen. Here, as the light faded and the temperature dropped ever lower we stood looking at the fabulous view along the valley. and just managed to take a few shots before the light went completely. I made a mental note to return.

It was now so cold and raw that we were glad to seek the warmth of the pub where Andy had pre-booked our evening meal.

Excellent food and drink and good company. What more could we want?

The members of Bethesda C.C. made us very welcome and we all thoroughly enjoyed Andy's lecture on his transition to digital photography. (We had already promised to applaud in all the right places and definitely not to heckle)

A really enjoyable trip out. Thank you very much Andy, but perhaps next time you would allow us to organise the weather?

Useful Website Links

The following are a list of websites which might be useful for photography advice, equipment etc.

Mounts: www.cotswoldmounts.co.uk

Prints: www.proamimaging.com
www.dscolourlabs.co.uk

Canvas: www.bigphotoshop.co.uk

Cameras: www.warehouseexpress.com
www.cambrianphoto.co.uk

Equipment: www.speedgraphics.co.uk

Photo Paper: www.fotospeed.com
www.permajet.com

Education: www.photoshopsupport.com
www.picturethis.channel4.com
www.photowalkthrough.com

Landscapes: <http://stephentrainor.com/tools/>

Camera Hire: www.hirecamera.com

Training: www.swphototraining.co.uk
www.thephotographyinstitute.co.uk
www.welshotimaging.co.uk

Online Mag: www.ephotozine.com

Organisations: www.pagb-photography-uk.co.uk
www.cffgc.co.uk
www.rps.org

Insurance: www.aaduki.com

Weddings: www.adriansimages.com

If anybody has additional websites that they feel should be added to this list please advise the editor.

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