

THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES PHOTOGRAPHIC  
FEDERATION  
NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2021



photograph by Marina Woodward

John Hodge LRPS AFIAP DPAGB  
29th December 1942 - 13th September 2021  
SCPF President 2012 - 2013 and 2019 - 2021

Our September newsletter is a tribute to John Hodge who died earlier this month. John led the Federation through two presidencies and the last eighteen months of pandemic. He believed firmly both in camera clubs and the Southern Counties Photographic Federation and always showed dedication, enthusiasm, and strong leadership, especially during the last two years when faced with dealing with all the complexities thrown up by COVID and the closure of clubs etc. As always John dealt with everything in his usual calm, efficient and caring manner much to the admiration of his fellow Council members.

Originating from Waterford, Ireland, John moved to London to finish his studies. Here he met Ann who would become his wife. They were to start married life in Teddington, but moved to Overton nearly thirty-six years ago when John, a qualified architect, became Director of Estates at Basingstoke Hospital. John and Ann shared almost fifty years of marriage (their Golden Anniversary was to be celebrated in early October this year) and raised three children Paul, Emma and Mark and five grandchildren Jonathan, Alexander, Jamie, Sammy and Elsie.

John was a quiet, unassuming "gentleman" (in all senses of the word). While he might never have boasted of his own successes, be assured that behind the pleasant, mild-mannered demeanor ran an extremely competitive streak and he regularly won awards for his photography,

cups for his golf and medals for his running (he was a serious runner not a jogger!). His sons are still both a long way short of coming close to his London marathon time of 2hrs 59 mins - achieved when he was 50!

#### **Overton's John Hodge strikes gold at the Irish Masters**

John Hodge proved age is no barrier when the 70-year old from Overton struck gold at the Irish Masters Athletics Championships.

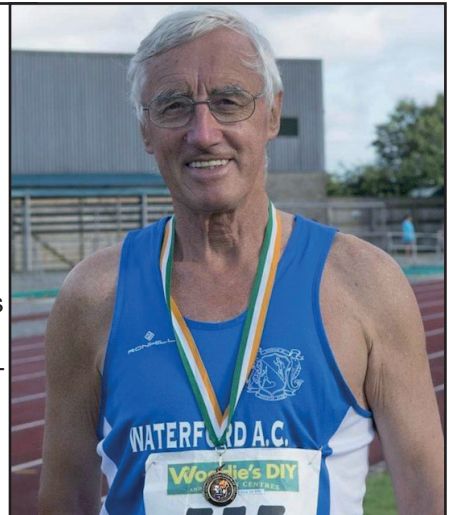
Representing his original home club Waterford AC in these Championships, Hodge, pictured, won a bronze medal in the over-70s 800metres, then followed this up by winning the 400m in 77.74 seconds.

The runner, a long-time member of Overton Harriers, was delighted with the results and said: "I had a series of minor injuries in the weeks leading up to the Championships, so did not manage a lot of training, so had no high expectations going into the events. Perhaps it kept my legs fresh for the big day."

Earlier in the year Hodge won the South of England Indoor Championships over-70s 400m, 800m and 1500m, and is now looking forward to the British Masters.

Ann believes he went on to win a Silver medal in that too!

3/10/2013 - from the Basingstoke Gazette: <https://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/sport/10716396.Overtons-john-hodge-strikes-gold-at-the-irish-masters/>



Playing tennis until his shoulder operations forced him to give this up a few years ago, John was also a swimmer, a cyclist, and a "master" cake-decorator. No baker, John decorated cakes for all his family's birthdays, christenings, Christmases and even Emma's wedding cake. We're not just talking nice icing, the odd candle, maybe an iced name or "happy birthday". We're talking works of art that would often take him days to complete.



Ann recollects for her sixtieth birthday, John produced a miniature version of Tara - the mansion from *Gone with the Wind*, carefully recessing the candles so that when lit, they created an illusion of the house being on fire. For his youngest son Mark's 18th birthday, John recreated the famous scene from "The Spy who Loved Me" when Roger Moore uses the Union Flag to parachute into the sea.

He regularly contributed photographic articles for the local parish magazine and was a founder trustee of the HART Wild Animal

Hospital and continued to be an avid supporter.

To his family he was Mr Fixit--and a bit of a hoarder-- nothing ever got thrown away. He rarely sat down except to do the Independent cryptic crossword. To us he was a talented photographer, whose quiet authority, sound judgement and great sense of humour made him a great colleague and friend to so many.

Leo Rich says: "Isn't it strange when you think you know someone (you may even consider them a close friend) then something happens, and you realise you didn't fully know them at all?"

"This is the case with my friend, John, who is now, sadly, missing from all our lives. I only knew him from a club photography angle and had no idea he was heavily involved in all sorts of other sports and activities which others, who have more knowledge of this aspect, will hopefully outline. His commitment to photography alone was immense and he was a very capable photographer to boot as shown by his "credentials".

"One thing I was aware of was that he was a season ticket holder at St Mary's and a great fan of Southampton Football Club (the Saints). This came about when we were in discussion about various things to do with the SCPF and a date was mentioned for a specific event. Unusually for him he hesitated (most un-John like) and he could see I was puzzled. He confessed being a Saints supporter and recall saying to him "Well, someone has to be!" The date in question clashed with a "crucial" home match (I do not remember who the opposition were) and it was the only time I think that he put his love of football before his club and the Federation.

"They lost and on this and countless later occasions, I took great delight in rubbing salt into the wound. On the rare occasion they'd won he'd be crowing in delight. Such was John's kindness he always took it in the spirit intended and I do not think, if a similar clash occurred, that he would put football before an SCPF event."



"Thinking back we did liaise quite a lot over the years and, if we had a problem, would bounce it off one another (two heads are better than one) Very rarely did our opinions differ but often he would come up with a different justification for the way forward which I valued very highly. This even continued recently when I prepared information for his monthly SCPF newsletter and he "guided" me when he thought I had overstepped the mark or some such!

"Throughout my fifty plus years in club photography and visiting many UK clubs I have come across a small number of people who went well above and beyond what could be expected of them both for their club and Federation not only taking on a role but doing so many other things to ensure everything ran smoothly. The very best of this small number did so out of a genuine love of their hobby and gave their all without seeking any form of fame or glory. In John we have a classic example of this as he shunned the limelight in the true, gentlemanly, fashion which we all grew to love and admire.

"For me, John secured his place in that small number many years ago and I know the Federation will be the poorer now that he is no longer amongst us. I only wish we can have done more to recognise the considerable contribution he made."

Peter Rocchiccoli knew John back in the mid eighties when they were both involved on the same work project at Basingstoke Hospital. He says, "I have known John since 1984 both as a close work colleague and a friend. Over the years John was supportive of my professional role and my photography, but initially despite working closely together neither of us knew of each other's passion for photography. That was until we both obtained our first exhibition awards at the same Winchester Annual Exhibition in the days of film and slides back in 1991."

John said about his own photography (taken from the OPC 40th Anniversary Book):



John Hodge - Fight to the End

"My photography is mostly driven by things which I come across in which I see interesting shapes, patterns, visual quirkiness or intrigue etc., what I call "delights of the eye", and capturing and presenting these so I can share these experiences with others.

"I often add some creativity in post processing to enhance the image or more properly to recreate what I felt when inspired to press the shutter.

"Day to day life has so many rich visual experiences that I don't feel any urge to set up images, though I am a great admirer of

those who produce such photography well.

"I also love wildlife photography, but as a natural extension of being immersed in nature rather than working from hides."

Sue Teagle recalls a particular nature picture. "John and I frequently shared transport to SCPF meetings, and had very enjoyable conversations. However, the last time we travelled together was to one of the OPC Summer Programme meets at Magdalen Hill Down, near Winchester in early August. It was a lovely occasion to be outside in beautiful countryside looking for butterflies in such sociable company. Eventually they settled to roost, but were quite difficult to photograph.

This image was taken by John on my CF card as he'd run out of space on his own card. John had very nobly cut the stalk that this specimen had settled on. He carefully brought it back to the group and fastened it to a convenient post for us all to photograph. I found this image when opening up my card recently, and immediately thought that it had to be shared. I only did very basic processing learnt from one of John's Saturday morning Photoshop sessions."



John joined Overton Photographic Club in 1988, quickly becoming a committee member and going on to be chairman on three occasions.

Throughout that time John acted as mentor to many members conducting Photoshop and other sessions in his own home to encourage others to take part in Overton's internal competitions, national and international salons, competitions organised by the Southern Counties and also the PAGB as well as pursuing distinctions.

Damian Morris recalls John's new Photoshop tool launch, "At one of John's teaching sessions to the club, John launched a new Photoshop web tool "WWC". This revolutionary new tool could add things back into a landscape, even if they had been removed years before. John demonstrated by getting a tree to re-appear limb by limb on top of an old stump. WWC turned out to be "Woman With Chainsaw" who John had photographed cutting down a tree the previous week. Then along with the perfect sales pitch he showed us the felling of the tree but in a reversed sequenced, so placing the tree back into the landscape. Yes, we all bought into this and wanted a copy!!"

John's commitment to club photography was acknowledged by the SCPF when they added his name to their Roll of Honour in May 2010. Both John and Peter Rocchiccioli joined the council around that time, and in 2012, John took over the presidency for the first time. It was a role he loved, getting out and meeting both clubs and members--so much so that he was happy to take on a second term six years later in 2019.

In 2014 John was elected Overton Photographic Club's President. In which capacity he also chaired their exhibitions and was selector of their entries for external competitions again both for SCPF and PAGB events.

Stan Gibson, Overton's current chairman, recalls, "John was always there and ready to help, even on the phone. His support was never ending to the point when selecting prints for an SCPF exhibition he could see things that I couldn't and told me, "That print would look better upside down". He was right, it did and it duly went to the exhibition upside down."

During John's leadership Overton reached the first division of the SCPF league, alongside much bigger clubs with hundreds of members. Overton gained their highest successes, achieving more awards and qualifications than ever and, thanks to John, was firmly on the photographic map.

#### The Overton 40th Anniversary Exhibition



John being filmed for Channel 7



John at the opening of the 40th Anniversary Exhibition with Peter Rocchiccioli (the then SCPF President), and Allan Croombs (the past OPC Chairman)



Thank you John for all those years of incredible commitment to photography, Overton Photographic Club and the Southern Counties Photographic Federation.