

THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES PHOTOGRAPHIC
FEDERATION
NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2022

In the recent November PAGB adjudications I am really pleased to say that eight of our members achieved awards and in this edition two, have very kindly, shared all their images with us and agreed to talk about their experience. Ray Hems from Newbury was awarded a DPAGB and Suzannah Jordan from Southampton achieved her CPAGB. I think you'll agree they are stunning images and Leo Rich also gives us some insight into the judging process.

ENTRY for 2022 Championships closes midnight - February 28th 2022

Usual Keycodes apply.

Entries must be uploaded by 28th February 2022 (no exceptions)
Please check SCPF website for updated rules.

This is our first print competition for sometime and **we need your prints!**

This year not only will the winning two clubs from both the print and PDI competitions go on to represent the SCPF at the PAGB Print and PDI Championships, but we have just been notified that this year's Inter Federation Competition and Exhibition will be a print only competition.

There will be three sections in the Inter-Fed Competition - Colour, Monochrome and Nature. Federations can enter up to 30 prints in each section - which means 90 prints per Federation! Accepted images will tour the country and there are of course individual awards.

High scoring prints from this year's Championships will be retained for selection for the PAGB Inter-Federation Entry in mid May and will hopefully form the basis of a strong SCPF entry..



Southern Counties Photographic Federation
Founded 1963 as the Southern Photographic Federation

SCPF Print and PDI Championships 2022

Sunday March 20th 2022

To be held at

Alton Assembly Rooms, High Street, Alton GU34 1BA

Judges:

Monica Weller FRPS
Roger Reynolds Hon FRPS, APAGB, FBPPA, FBPE
Peter McCloskey FRPS APAGB

Full details at www.southerncountiespf.org.uk

SUZANNAH JORDAN CPAGB

Suzannah has kindly shared with us the ten images that gained her a successful CPAGB at the recent awards adjudication. All images copyright Suzannah Jordan CPAGB



Antigoni



Black Church Rock



Female Marbled White



Goulart The Flying Ace



Great Egret Mating Dance



Heron with Catch



mmm Buzz Snacks



Mysterious Encounters



My Weird Dreams



Treasure Hunters

Welcome to the newsletter Suzannah, thank you for agreeing to share your images with us and congratulations on your award. Before we start, can you tell me about your kit?

I'm a Nikon user D750 full frame I can hear the boos already - LOL.

I have invested in lens's for each of the categories that I enjoy ...

- 35, 50, 85mm from F1.4 to F1.8 for Portraiture/Street Photography
- 14-24mm, 24-70mm, 70-200mm for Landscape with a selection of Lee Filters/polarizer
- 200mm F4 Macro, 300mm prime, 200 – 500mm - 1.4 converter for Animals/Nature
- Manfrotto tripods and rucksacks
- A variety of gimbles and heads for different purposes.
- A variety of studio lighting some of which can also be taken out into the field.

My current debate is go smaller, mirrorless and try Sony!

Do you always carry a tripod?

YES or a Monopod

Excluding camera, lens etc. what one item of photographic equipment are you never without?

iPhone, I use it a lot for composition, compass, triggering the camera when needed etc.

Photographing textures, backgrounds that can be used in my compositions.

What made you decide to go for the PAGB award of photogenic merit?

To support the PAGB, get recognition for my photography skills and as a judge it confirms that I have good photography skills and understand the fundamentals of photography.

You have an amazing selection of images; can you tell us please something about the process for deciding which of the images formed part of your CPAGB panel?

I wanted a variety of images so that they didn't compete with each other. I chose what I thought was the strongest from Landscape, Portrait, Open and Composition.

There are so many fabulous images here, which is your favourite, and can you tell us something about it?

Aww! That's a hard question to answer. I really love my portraits and working with people. When my brother passed away 3 years ago he left me some money which I used to build my own studio in the garden, it's here that I love bringing a character to life. I make most of my costumes, props and backdrops and I pay my models with copies of their images. The downfall for me now is that it is so difficult to put my work forward as most judges think they are taken at timeline events.

Comments like 'No doubt, we will see lots of copies of this image'. So, it's putting me off entering my portrait images into any competition or having to re-title them for example 'Goulart the Flying Ace' – "Own Work". To answer your question, Goulart is my favourite, he works with my Husband and whenever he stays with us he knows he will be dragged into the studio, along with his fiancé. I kept my fingers crossed that the PAGB panel would know that the portraits were all my own work

and I'm glad I made the choice to keep them in as they carried the highest marks for me.

Do you have one image that didn't quite make the panel? what made you decide to leave it out?

I had two other landscapes and one still life that I thought about using but decided although I liked them they were not as strong as the others I chose to put forward.



Abandoned



Trebarwith Strand

Composite creative and wildlife seem to feature quite predominantly in your selection. Do you look have images in mind when you set out with your camera?

I don't tend to enter Nature or Wildlife images as I always find something wrong with them which I like to put right! So, my images of animals are just categorized as 'open'. The 'Mating Egret Dance' was taken in Spain just as I was packing up. I very nearly deleted it but thought it had potential, so I did a lot of work on it to get what I wanted. Regarding my composite images, I have lots of ideas and have a book where I put an idea together, so I don't forget. I then think about the components I need to bring it together; this can take up to a couple of weeks if it's simple and months if it's more complex. I don't make a point of going out and searching for each component of the jigsaw puzzle. I just get them as I see them, some are found in shops where I use my iPhone which can take a RAW file. Once all the components are in a folder this is when it all comes together. I have seas from the British Virgin Islands, Mountains from Wales and Scotland, plastic animals from eBay or Amazon, textures from trees, walls, floors and material shops, it's all about being aware of your surroundings, as there is always something there that can be used in many different ways.

What's next in your photographic journey?

Fingers crossed, an AFIAP is on the horizon, and I have met the criteria to put my application forward. DPAGB hopefully later this year and I've been looking at the RPS.

Is there any genre you're not happy photographing?

No, I'll have a go at anything and take up opportunities that arise. You never know what you can achieve until you try!

What would you say to anyone out there, considering going for an award of photographic merit?

I would tell them to have a go, get photography colleagues to give feedback on images they intend to use. Attend any advisory meetings that are being held. Take a friend/mentor with you on the day for moral support.

Thank you so much for your time Suzannah and we look forward to hearing about your AFIAP and future successes.

Photographic Alliance of Great Britain

AWARDS FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC MERIT



Des King CPAGB



Dave Airston DPAGB



David Keep MPAGB



The Awards for Photographic Merit are available at three levels, CPAGB, DPAGB and MPAGB, to all members of affiliated Clubs. See your Federation website or talk to your Federation Awards Officer, listed in this Handbook.

RAY HEMS DPAGB

Ray has also kindly shared with us the fifteen images that gained him his successful DPAGB at the recent awards adjudication. All images copyright Ray Hems DPAGB



Antarctic Iceberg



Glen Etive



Sea Eagle Conflict



Fish Fight



Osprey with Catch



Budir Church



Dawn Patrol



Stokksnes Beach



Icelandic Aurora



Dancing Cranes



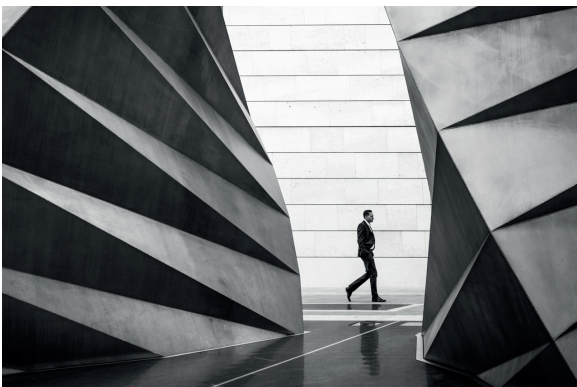
Bass Player



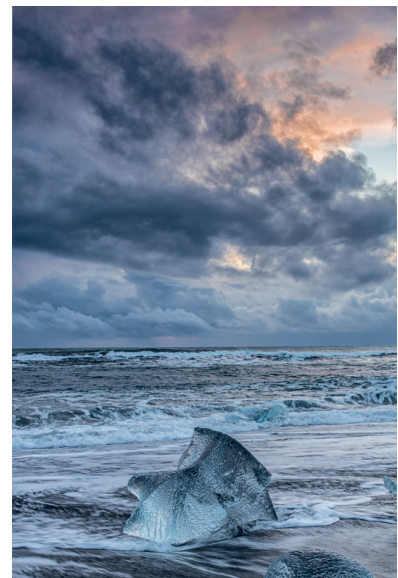
Kite Flyer.



Cuban Girl



Casual Walker



Icebergs on the Beach

Ray, Congratulations on your DPAGB and thank you for sharing your images with us and congratulations on your recent award and taking the time to talk to me about your journey.

First because it is something all of us photographers want to know, can you tell me about your kit?

I have been a Nikon user since film days. The DPAGB images were taken with a mixture of D3, D750 and (currently) D850, and lenses varying from 24-70, 70-200 and 200-400. When I go on dedicated photographic trips, I carry everything in a Think-tank Airport Acceleration bag, a perfect size for aircraft carryon, plus I will always take a tripod - Gitzo 3541LS and RRS BH-55 head - in hold luggage, except for vehicle safaris when I will take a bean bag to be filled locally. Street images on these trips will be hand held though, for flexibility to move around easily.

Excluding camera, lens etc. what one item of photographic equipment are you never without?

Aside from the obvious essentials like spare battery and card pouches, I always carry a spare camera (which has saved the day on more than one occasion), a waterproof cover for the camera/lens, as well as a polariser filter. I have other filter sets, ND and graduated, but do not always take them for, say, wildlife photography.

What made you decide to go for the PAGB award of photographic merit?

Over the years I have acquired some good images that do well in local camera club competitions. A few years ago I decided that I would like a wider review of my work and began entering National and International Exhibitions with some success. The logical next step was then to apply for the PAGB Awards of Photographic Merit, highly regarded by photographers worldwide,

You have an amazing selection of images; can you tell us please something about the process for deciding which of the images formed part of your DPAGB panel?

To select my images for my DPAGB panel, I initially chose those that had done well in club competitions, then looked at acceptances and awards from my International Exhibition submissions as this is the standard required by the PAGB for this level. Only images successful at both UK club and internationally were considered.

There are so many fabulous images here, which is your favourite, and can you tell us something about it?

It is hard to choose one favourite image from the DPAGB panel, each has memories of the location, and the difficulty of capturing it. Perhaps one that is more memorable than the others is the 'Bass Player'. I was in the colonial town of Trinidad in Cuba wandering the streets in late afternoon looking for interesting subjects. I saw a couple of musicians carrying their instruments walking along one of the historic streets, but the dull light lacked interest. The late evening sun suddenly appeared, bathing the colourful streets, and the musicians, with a warm golden light; I sprinted down the road to be alongside one of them, and managed just one 'grab shot' before they disappeared into the bar whose window is seen in the image. It was a true 'decisive moment'

Travel and wildlife seem to feature quite predominantly in your selection. Do you spend all your holidays behind a camera?

I enjoy all genres of photography, though with perhaps a preference for wildlife. Travel photography would be my second favourite, with family holidays in exotic countries like India and

Vietnam resulting in memorable street life and local culture images. I am never without a camera, even if it is my iPhone! As I favour outdoor photography, formal studio portrait photography and Still Life has little interest for me, as does altered reality/creative 'art' image making.

What would be your favourite photographic destination?

Over the years I have been fortunate to travel to many photogenic places, and it is difficult to choose a favourite destination. Antarctica and South Georgia though has proven addictive with several repeated visits. The abundant wildlife and spectacular scenery in such a unique uninhabitable environment I find irresistible.

Is there one place you've never got to, but is on your bucket list?

One destination though still on my bucket list is Namibia, with its mix of extreme landscape and wildlife viewing an attractive prospect.

Do you have one image that didn't quite make the panel? (if you have that image, please send it) what made you decide to leave it out?

One image that didn't quite make the DPAGB panel was of a young girl from the Bishnoi village near Jodhpur in India (see attached). Although it has gained International Exhibition acceptances and awards, I was not sure whether simple portraits like this would have the same immediate impact that I felt some of my other images might have, so reluctantly I left it out



Bishnoi Girl

What would you say to anyone out there, considering going for an award of photographic merit?

I was delighted to be awarded the DPAGB and would encourage all photographers to consider applying for an award of photographic merit.

Probably everyone has favourite images languishing on the hard drive. The process of choosing my selection, post processing them to improve impact and having them reviewed by experienced assessors was initially daunting but ultimately satisfying in the knowledge that other photographers thought my images were as good as I thought they were!

What's next in your photographic journey?

Several of my DPAGB images did score encouragingly well for me to consider looking at applying for MPAGB as my next step. I will continue to trawl through my hard drive for hidden gems, as well as trying to make images of a sufficiently high standard in my future photographic trips

Thank you, Ray, for answering my questions and sharing your images and process with us. There are some lovely images and hopefully it won't be too long before you apply for your MPAGB.

But it's not just about the entrants. There are six others between you and a PAGB award and this month our very own Leo Rich talks about his experiences as a PAGB judge.

Okay Leo, the one question on all our lips - Why do you do it?

In the past I have (rather cheekily) mentioned that, sitting in the audience at an Adjudication and watching your treasured images being judged is akin to eating a jar of prunes. I have been there myself and wondered why my masterpieces were not meeting the approval of the six "judges" having done well in other competitions. But have you ever considered what it is like to be one of those who will decide whether you should be given an Award? No doubt, like me at one stage, you consider them to be cold, insular characters who are incapable of recognising your "gems" amongst all the others.

Well, I can assure you this is not the case. When I was first considered to be added to the panel of judges that the PAGB use, I was taken aside by that doyen of the Awards, Ian Platt, who said to me "Being a judge for the Awards is the most demanding of all judging - far more so than judging National and International competitions, let alone Club and Federation events". I could not help smiling, inwardly, to myself. What is he on about? At that time you judged 650 images a day for each Adjudication (now increased to 850) whereas judging an International you could see upwards of 2,000 a day - should be a doddle.

How wrong I was and how true Ian's words proved to be. Although the format of an International and an Awards Adjudication appear similar, they are poles apart in the way they operate. When judging an International the three judges set the standard using the familiar marks of between 2 and 5 each so that the lowest score is 6 and the highest 15. If it is an Exhibition with FIAP Patronage they require an acceptance rate of around 20% - the PSA are more generous at 30%. As the day progresses the organisers will have some idea of the numbers achieving 11 and above. Normally a score of 12 (ie each judge scoring 4 or a combination of 3, 4 and 5) will achieve this rate but, if it does not they ask the judges to review the 11's to see if one, or more, have been a little mean with their original score and can be upgraded.

With the Awards there are six judges. They use the same 2 to 5 range but, instead of marks these are votes. If an image is considered having reached the standard required each judge will vote 4 - if it is clearly not up to the standard they vote 2. Many will have a 3 vote which is a very near miss - 3's can be extremely useful in the outcome. Outstanding images which could do well at the next level of Awards will achieve a vote of 5.

Why is a 3 useful? Taking the Credit level the average pass rate required by PAGB is a total of 20 per image, with some scoring more and others less. So your masterpiece might be given two 4's and four 3's and hit the pass rate even though the majority of judges did not think it quite made the grade.

Now, having blinded you with science we come to the actual judging. Staying with the Credit level the judges are looking for work which is "good club photography" and this is virtually impossible to define accurately as standards vary considerably not only between clubs but also Federations.

To cater for this the PAGB make sure that the six judges are very experienced and knowledgeable in all aspects of our wonderful hobby. Each will have their specialities (subjects they love and take themselves) and also, maybe weaknesses (eg not fully appreciating very creative work) but, with six it does even itself out. I am often asked how can you judge an image in the few seconds it is on the easel or being projected? Again, I feel it comes down to experience. Even leaving aside club events I estimate I judge at least 10,000 images in a year which, I hope, gives me a base from which to work. It also teaches you not to favour your own style of photography.

In the back of my mind, throughout each day, is the fact that there are people sat in the audience behind us, who are going through the agonies I mentioned at the start of this piece, and that the button I press could make or break their dream of an Award. This is because the Awards are so personal - far more so than in an International.

Just to give you two examples of scores that really do make me sit up and pay close attention. Firstly when an image scores a total of 29 and I am the one who has pressed the 4 button. This does make me wonder if I am becoming too critical and make sure I am applying the correct standard for the Award being judged (have I slipped into Distinction level mode when judging at Credit level?). The score is a pass mark anyway but.....

Conversely when an image scores 15 and I hit the five button. This means that all my fellow judges considered it unworthy and I think it good enough for the next level up. How can this happen? Simple really. I like to consider myself an "Emotional" judge. If an image speaks to me or conveys some mood, feeling, whether it be happy or sad, I might turn a blind eye if it is not 100% perfect. Other judges can be very "Technical" in their approach - the image does not appear to matter to them so much but they do not wish to see any flaws and will score it low. Naturally I consider my approach is best. Some of the most stunning images in the past - both amateur and commercial have not been, technically, perfect but express emotions that make them all time classics.

When our team of six have finished judging there are bound to be some entries which have not quite reached the total score required (Credit 200, Distinction 300). However, as far as the judges are concerned they do not have the "luxury" of a second chance to go back and see them again - their work is done.

This is where the PAGB come into their own. They have a Review panel which will look at every entry which didn't quite make it - let's say scored 195 at Credit level. Each image is looked at and, where humanly possible, an extra point or more is added and, if enough to lift the entry above 200 a "Pass" is given. I have sat on the Review committee as well quite a few times and, this too, can be very emotional and rewarding. It is inevitable that some images will pass before the judges and they might press a 3 instead of a 4 and it is lovely when an entry is upgraded.

In this Newsletter you can see two entries which were successful at a recent Adjudication. Whilst I do not wish to comment on these (having been one of the judges!!) I will try, in a future newsletter, try and explain some of the common pitfalls that entrants fall into and wonder why their treasured images do not meet the level required. Meantime, if you enjoy your photography as much as I do - the ultimate hobby - why not consider having a try yourself? There is so much help out there, such as the free Mentoring Service run by the PAGB and our own forthcoming Advisory day on 24th September, where you can find out if you are near the standard required. You only have to ask!

Saturday 24th September 2022

PAGB AWARDS - ARE THEY FOR YOU? Why not come along and find out?

The PAGB team are visiting the Southern Fed on 24th September 2022 to run an advisory/explanatory day prior to us hosting the Adjudication in April 2024. This will be held in the Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall, Littleton - just outside Winchester.

The team are very experienced and will be able to provide you with unbiased opinions on whether you meet the standard of the level of award you are considering.

Spaces for assessment are £15.00 and for observers are £8.00

Please email: -pagb.awards@southerncountiespf.org.uk for further information or to secure a place.