THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES PHOTOGRAPHIC FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2025

We have put the Annual Exhibition to bed for another year – if you blinked, you would have missed my interview on That's TV Wiltshire. The feedback I have received from those who visited, be they club members or members of the public, has been overwhelmingly positive – a fair reward for everyone who put in so much effort to making it happen. Now we must turn our thoughts to the Print and PDI Championships on the 23rd of March.

In this month's newsletter we get to meet Sandhurst Camera Club, one of the younger clubs in the Federation. I also get to visit the exhibition of Chichester Camera Club's advanced members.

SCPF Print and PDI Championships 2025

Preparations are well under way for the Championships on Sunday 23rd March in Totton. If you haven't already done so, please consider entering either or both of the Federation's main competitions. There's no minimum number of images and entry is free. PAGB medals and SCPF certificates are awarded to the best images, and the winners and runners up go on to represent the federation at the PAGB inter-club competitions.

Judges are:

- Martin Fry FRPS FBPE EFIAP/d3 AV-EFIAP/b APAGB
- Sandie Cox ARPS DPAGB EFIAP
- Pat Couder CPAGB BPE1* QPSA

Entries must be uploaded by the closing date of Sunday 2nd March 2025. Competition secretaries uploading images must be a registered user on the SCPF directory. Don't forget to check the rules.

Chichester Camera Club advanced members' exhibition

Chichester Camera Club held its annual exhibition of advanced members' work over the weekend of 1st-2nd February at North Mundham Village Hall. I paid a surprise visit along with my Council colleague, Suzie Kirkby and we were bowled over by the quality and variety of work on display. We are used to seeing work presented in 50x40 mounts, preferably white or black, but here the exhibitors could be as creative as they liked. The members also had the opportunity to present bodies of work, rather than individual images. I can't show you all the work that was on display, but I want to highlight three of the exhibitors that I had the chance to talk with.





Sue Nash is working towards her ARPS and explained how her panel of preserved flower pictures are a metaphor for dealing with dementia. As memories start to fade, so do flowers. We try different ways to preserve those memories – freezing them in time but eventually, they are just shadows of their former selves. This is not Sue's usual genre, so this adds an extra dimension to her challenge. Best of luck with your panel Sue!



I have seen quite a few European Bee Eater pictures recently, but I really enjoyed Ann McDonald's refreshing pictorial take on the subject. The colourful birds stood out beautifully against the cool pastel backgrounds. I could really see stories unfolding in the panels. But we always expect something special from Ann!



And talking of colourful birds, I was really drawn to Phil Shaw's extraordinary portraits of exotic birds, all photographed over a 15-day period in an equatorial rain forest. His brightly coloured panel stood out across the room. I wondered how he managed to capture the birds on simple perches with uncluttered backgrounds in a dense forest canopy. He explained that the locals had realised that there was money to be made by attracting the birds from the forest into their gardens and giving access to photographers

I met several visitors from other clubs while I was there, no doubt gaining inspiration from this fine body of work but, if you missed it, there are still Chichester's Spring and Summer exhibitions to look forward to!

Two new entries to the SCPF Role of Honour

The SCPF created the Roll of Honour in 2004 to recognise significant contributions of individuals in support of their clubs and/ or the federation over a period of at least 10 years. I was delighted to recently make presentations to two such individuals.



Peter Woodhouse has been a member of Salisbury Photography Club for nearly 20 years and has been on the committee in various capacities for nearly as long. He gets involved in all club activities, be it organising field trips and the annual exhibition to sorting out the refreshment rota and selling raffle tickets. He is always ready to assist his fellow members with queries and photographic problems. He is also a very well respected SCPF level 2 judge.



I was able to surprise Andy Dulson of Chichester Camera Club with his award while he was busy coordinating the setup of the club's advanced workers annual exhibition. This is one of three annual exhibitions held by the club each year and Andy has been involved in all of them in various capacities for the last 8 years. He has designed the annual exhibition catalogue for the last 5 years.

He has been a member at Chichester for over 17 years and has been an organiser of the portrait group for nearly as long. He has been print secretary for a number of years and provides support with computer software, audio and lighting.

Congratulations to both Peter and Andy. We rely on people like you to help our clubs and the federation thrive. Perhaps you have someone at your club worthy of nominating for the SCPF Roll of Honour. You can find the nomination form here on our website.

The PAGB Inter-Federation Print Championship

The Inter-Federation Print Championship Competition is held each June. This year it will be hosted by the SCPF on the weekend of 21st and 22nd June at Copythorne Parish Hall (Southampton CC venue). Attendance is strictly limited. Please contact pagb.competition@southerncountiespf.org.uk if you would like to attend.

Federations will submit entries from the members of their affiliated Clubs in three Categories – Monochrome Prints, Colour Prints and Nature Prints. Trophies are awarded to the winning Federations. PAGB medals and ribbons are awarded to individual images in each Category.

Most of the judging will take place on the Saturday 21st with the Sunday reserved for re-sorting the entries for transportation back into their boxes to go back to the regions.

There are 3 appointed PAGB judges who will be scoring each section of the prints and then choosing an exhibition from the 3 categories which will be framed and exhibited in various locations around the country following the event.

Ahead of the event, there will be an opportunity to see the successful exhibition entries from the 2024 competition, which will be on display in the Youngs Gallery in Salisbury Library as follows:

Exhibition running dates - 12th April to 24th May 2025

Ferg Cowhig
PAGB Competition secretary for the SCPF

Viewfinders of Romsey Camera Club

A member of the Southern Counties Photographic Federation affiliated to the PAGB

Wildlife Wonders of France and Spain

A presentation By Brian Pettit

World Wildlife Photographer

A fundraising evening in aid of the Jubilee Hall.
7.30pm on Tuesday 4th March 2025 Entrance: £5

www.viewfinderscameraclub.org.uk







Having "ex-patted" to Spain in the 80's Brian has made the overland journey from here to there and back again so many times that he has managed to seek out many of those unexplored highways and byways that do not feature on the Tourist maps.

He has made the journey at all times of the year which has resulted in him being able to offer, with this presentation, what he believe is one the most comprehensive talks available on the Wildlife and scenery that features along this route to the South. From the Massif Central of South-central France to the Alps on the Italian Border, from the Camargue to the Corbieres, from the Pyrenees to historic Cuenca and the Montes Universales and "down South" to the Montes de Cazorla and on to the Sierra Nevada, this presentation covers it all.







www.naturepicturesworldwide.com

Meet Sandhurst Camera Club

I was delighted to be invited to the recent 10th Anniversary Meeting of Sandhurst Camera Club (SCC) and had a very enjoyable evening with them.



Colin Pizey Chairman SCC

It was a packed occasion, with Viveca Koh giving her talk on 'The Photographers Perspective'. There was also a rather large and scrumptious 10th anniversary cake for everyone to enjoy, which included members, past members, guests from other local camera clubs and myself on behalf of the Southern Counties Photographic Federation (SCPF).

Because this was such a milestone event for SCC, I have taken the opportunity to chat with the club's present Chairman, Colin Pizey, to learn a little more about its history and future.

What are the origins of the club?



Bob Hallsworth, chatting with members

The club was founded by our (now) Honorary Life President, Bob Hallsworth. I therefore asked Bob about its history and origins, and he explained as follows:

"I had had cameras for many years, including a Zenit-B 35mm film camera when I was in the army. Some years later, after leaving Fujitsu, I was able to afford a Canon EOS 5D. I then wanted to improve my photography, so tried to join a local camera club. Because of where I lived, Yateley Camera Club were an obvious choice, however they already had a long list of people waiting to join. I therefore decided to establish Sandhurst Camera Club. Yateley kindly gave me lots of advice on how to set the club up and I, in turn, helped them with their waiting list.

The local council also then gave us a rent-free year for our meeting hall, which helped enormously with being able to buy a projector, screen and computer. As a thank you to the council, we covered their fireworks nights, and I discovered the power of the photographer's yellow tabard for entry to 'off-limit' areas.

In recent times, I've come to believe that the best camera is the one already in your pocket, so these days only use my mobile phone camera."

What is the current club membership and trend?

We presently have 30 members, comprising roughly 25% women and 75% men. There has been a gradual decline in total membership these past years, as we had 54 members back in 2016. Our single biggest annual drop in membership, of 9 people, occurred during the 2020-21 pandemic period, despite continuing club activities via Zoom.

Like any other club or organisation, we occasionally loose members due to health, age or relocating, and sometimes even loss of interest. During 2024, we lost 2 members, though also gained 2 new members.

We would love to attract new younger members. However I suspect many, who are conditioned by lifelong use of cameras in mobile phones, no longer consider photography to be a real hobby, but rather simply part of their everyday life.

Does the club have a specific ethos?

We see ourselves as a club where people should come and have fun sharing their hobby, though specifically where they can be stimulated and improve as photographers. Our members have a wide range of skills and equipment, and we just want to see everyone enjoy and enhance those skills.



Some of the SCC members

Contests are therefore promoted as a tool for nurturing improvement. We are not a club where members are encouraged to 'out-do' or 'beat' each other. We are all on the same photographic journey, just in different places along that road.

What does a typical club year and meeting look like?

The Committee, and particularly our club Programme Secretary Lynne, always pre-organise the following year's programme in advance. This is usually after discussions about what works, what members find interesting, and sometimes what might be different and challenge new thinking. We then publish a printed a fold-out programme for the coming year, for each member to keep as a pocket reference. This provides the date and topic of every scheduled twice-monthly meeting, of which there are usually 20 per year.

Typically, every second meeting is either a competition or a photographic talk. Competitions are sometimes PDI's and sometimes printed photos. Talks are normally given by invited guests, usually paid, and cover varied photographic topics. Sometimes members are encouraged to also prepare and give talks.

We have a coffee break at half-time, then wrap-up with thankyous, plus any other club business or reminders about the next meeting. It's always fun and Committee Members work hard behind the scenes to make things happen as they should.

We occasionally, still have some meetings via Zoom, either from home or within the hall. The advantage of this is we can sometimes book a speaker or judge who is not living close to Sandhurst. This just adds to the variety we can offer our members.

Between meetings, our club Secretary Sue sends out a regular newsletter to members, keeping them up to date, reminding of coming meetings, and to share interesting information. Sue is part of the glue behind the scenes who keeps everyone on track.

We also have a website at: www.sandhurstcamera.club which is maintained by Steve, our webmaster. We have 11 Committee members (…too many to mention here), who are listed on the website. All are invaluable and play their part in the organising and running of the club. Even members not on the Committee are active and supportive of the club in their own ways, and some have periodically provided extra add-hock improvement and training sessions via Zoom.

What other activities does the club get involved with?

Club members will occasionally get together and arrange their own photography outings. This helps to foster friendships, and we would love to see this happening even more.



We also hold annual local printed photo exhibitions and have been experimenting with different venues and approaches. This helps to promote the club and provides local interest.

What are the photographic interests of the various club members?

We have a rather diverse and eclectic mix of photographers and interests. These include deep sky astro photography, people, machinery, nature and birds, macro, landscapes, monochrome, studio photography, ICM and even infra-red. This makes the club interesting and ensures that we get a very wide range of styles and content submitted for photo contests. We therefore also gain new ideas and inspiration from each other.

How did you become involved with photography and the club?

I have had a camera 'in-hand' since I was 9 or 10 years old, perhaps even younger. My Godmother gave me a Kodak Box Brownie, which started me off. A cousin later gave me a Yashica Mat and, once I was working and had some spare cash, I bought a Canon AE-1 (…which has always been my favourite). Since then, I have had many cameras and am now a Nikon fan. During the Covid pandemic, I started running film through my old AE-1 and was amazed by the results. I have since experimented with vintage lenses on modern digital cameras, as they can produce surprisingly beautiful images.

Peter Forbes, our club Treasurer and a good friend, is a longer-term member and invited me to join (…or maybe I badgered him). One day I naively volunteered to be Vice Chair when no one else 'put-their-hand-up'. Then, a couple of years later, I found myself in this role when Ian, our previous Chairman, retired. Most of the club work though, is done by our dedicated and hardworking Committee. However, no role is permanent, and we do try to rotate Committee roles occasionally, to stimulate fresh ideas and energy.

What are your thoughts about the future of the club?

I feel the longer-term future of our club, and many other clubs, is inexorably linked to changing technology and social trends. We have previously seen the migration from film to digital and, in recent years, the relentless convergence of digital technologies. The impact of the internet and social media on how we live our lives, plus interact with each other, are also big influencers.

Instant results and gratification are now the expected norm. Mobile phones, with integrated cameras, fast internet access, plus powerful software, mean we can increasingly share enhanced images instantly with almost anyone, anywhere.

Mobile photography is now part of everyday life and, for many, just a convenient extension to their online world and social media, perhaps no more a hobby than, say, listening to streaming music.

The emergence of AI (Artificial Intelligence), with ‘on-demand’ manipulation or generation of photo realistic images, also further blurs the boundaries between “real” photography and digitally imagined images.

For now, though, Sandhurst Camera Club is in a good place, despite membership trends being a concern. Our finances are sound, and our members still enjoy their photography and the face-to-face club environment. We share photos and experiences, get quality peer feedback, and listen to stimulating talks. All of this helps us to improve as photographers.

As for the much longer-term future, none of us can really be sure, so we just continue to enjoy what we have now.

Project Support Group

The Project Support Group is a relaxed informal workshop where we support photographers undertaking a project.

- Are you working on a project for personal development and satisfaction?
- Do you want support and guidance on applying for a RPS Distinction or PAGB Award?
- Want advice on the suitability of images for your project?
- Want to know how to improve your images that were not as successful as expected in a competition and work on them in relation to judges' comments?
- Do you have any printing, mounting or calibration issues?



The bh photography club has a number of experienced members who are willing to offer their help and advice. Occasionally we will invite an experienced judge to provide advice on the projects and panels.

One to one mentoring is available if you don't like working or asking questions in groups.

The workshops will run on a Sunday, every other month - 10:00am to 3:30pm.



There is a charge of £5 to cover the costs of the group, which includes tea/coffee.

Bring your own lunch and your work, either prints or PDIs, for us to help with.

You don't need to have started a project to attend. If you are thinking about starting a project and want to discuss your plans (or lack of them) or just want to see what other people are up to, you are welcome to attend.

The Project Support Group meets at:

Muscliff Community Centre
Shillingstone Drive, Muscliff, Bournemouth. BH9 3LR

What3Words: ///slave.items.backs

Dates for 2024/25

15th Sep 24	19th Jan 25
17th Nov 24	16th Mar 25
	18th May 25

Contact Russ Foote at rdfphotos@yahoo.co.uk for further details.