

NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2026

This month I would like to give you another little prod! We really would like to increase our roster of appraisers and are hoping to run training in April. This typically takes the form of a couple of Zoom sessions, followed by a one-day workshop, likely to be in Littleton. We need more of you to come forward. There is no obligation to be listed as an appraiser following the training – you may feel that it is not for you, though we hope you are inspired to carry on. The training itself is an opportunity to understand better how appraisers “see” images. So, why not give it a go! Email Sue Sibley at judging@southerncountiespf.org.uk to express your interest.

Continuing my theme of articulating EQ from last month I thought – ChatGPT is good with words, I will ask it to appraise one of my images and the outcome is detailed in the article below. I clearly state that I am not advocating replacing human appraisers with AI, but I saw in the “UK and Ireland Camera Club Photography Group”, on Facebook, that Stroud and Cardiff Camera Clubs did just that.

Also, in this newsletter we celebrate two new Roll of Honour awards, success for two club members in the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition, visit the Chichester CC Advanced Workers’ exhibition and meet Gosport Camera Club. So, let’s tuck in.

Stewart Lacey

President and newsletter editor

Chichester Camera Club Advanced Workers’ Exhibition



Exhibition organiser, Lorna Brown

Despite the saturated roads around the area, North Mundham Village Centre entertained a large number of visitors over the weekend for Chichester Camera Club's annual Advanced workers' exhibition. Several members from other federation clubs were there to enjoy the extreme range of images on show.

Organiser Lorna Brown was delighted with multitude of panels of photography from the highly experienced and creative photographers in their club. She said “This is a superb opportunity for our members work to shine outside the usual confines of

club photography. The creativity and presentation is exceptional and there are a wonderful variety and diversity of techniques.”

Even though the images themselves were so captivating many of the photographers themselves were on hand to explain all the considerations needed to execute their visions. Members produce sets of

images usually to a theme and they do not have to conform to the usual strictures of PAGB or RPS panels. Michael Palmer's latest FRPS panel was on display at the far end of the hall. The condemned Grafton multi-storey car park, Worthing was depicted in stylised and distorted images, all done in camera with Michaels unique filtering. Ian Roberts and Julia Wainwright showed spectacular sets of wildlife pictures including superb Polar Bears in their natural Arctic habitat. A fine set of slime mould pictures were presented by Ann McDonald, each image being a combination of 70 to 100 focus-stacked images. Lorna Brown herself presented three diverse panels including an exquisite pentptych of the South Downs assembled from a many elements procured from a number of other photographs.



Michael Palmer with his latest FRPS panel



Gordon Gentles

The CCC team provided excellent light lunches and refreshments in the café area where a vast number of PDIs were on display cycling through on the TV. They also held a raffle of members' prints to further boost their coffers.

Like many clubs, Chichester has sub-groups to help their members including those doing project work for the RPS and PAGB distinctions. With so many acclaimed photographers that are so eager to assist their membership it is no surprise that their club and its members are so successful.

Their Spring Exhibition is on the weekend of 28th and 29th March at Tangmere Village Centre PO20 2HS – admission free; see their website for details.



Heather Buckle



David Harris panel



Words and images by Suzie Kirkby

IGPOTY Successes for Two Basingstoke Members

The International Garden Photographer of the Year (IGPOTY) is the world's premier competition for plant, flower, and garden photography, founded in 2007 and closely associated with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. It showcases top global talent in botanical, garden, and landscape photography, highlighting the beauty and importance of a green planet through annual competitions, book publications, and international touring exhibitions.



Sabine Tillie-Davidson with her panel at Kew

Two members of Basingstoke Camera Club are celebrating successes in this competition. Sabine Tillie Davidson achieved 1st place and an RPS gold medal in the Portfolio category, whilst Leena Roy was awarded a highly commended in the Plants and Planet Category.

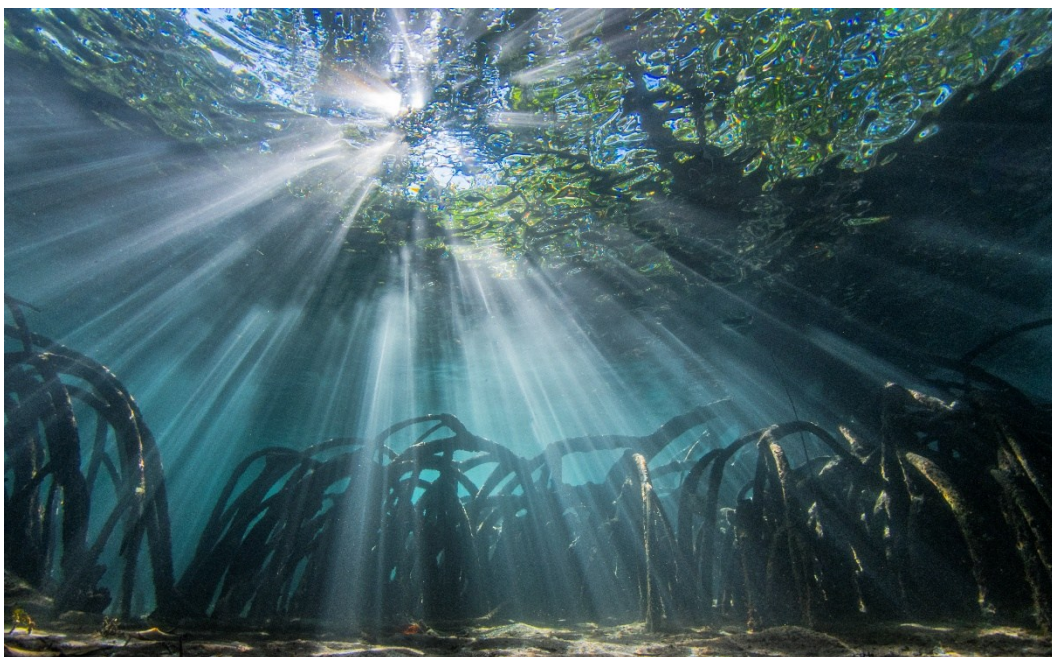
Of her award, Sabine said "I guess you could say I got bitten by the bug for external competitions after winning last year's RHS portfolio Competition and having my panel exhibited at the Saatchi Gallery in London on my first attempt.

This year, inspired by Leena's 1st place, 3rd place and Commended awards in the Plants and Planet category in 2024, I entered the Portfolio category of the International Garden Photographer of the Year Competition (IGPOTY). It is a stand-alone competition run in association with The Royal Photographic Society (The RPS). There are nine 'main' categories for IGPOTY, not all of which require gardens to feature in the image. I chose to photograph Ikebana flower arrangements in my home studio because that is my happy place. The inspiration, no doubt, is portrait photography. I used lighting more commonly used in that genre. I just replaced people with flowers.

Of course, I am absolutely delighted to have been awarded First Place in the 'Portfolios' Competition and to receive the RPS Gold Medal. It was beyond my wildest expectations that my first IGPOTY entry would lead to such a remarkable accolade. The exhibition looks fantastic! It goes on tour after it finishes at Kew Gardens on 9th March and is well worth a visit if you get a chance!"



Leena Roy is a highly accomplished underwater photographer, one of several in Basingstoke Camera Club. She is often frustrated when judges assume that her pictures have been taken in a tank! Of her highly commended image, Leena said I am pleased that the photograph highlights the importance of mangroves and their beauty when explored underwater. This is a natural light photograph taken with my diving kit on and I was hovering a few inches above the sand trying not to kick up a sandstorm. I tilted my camera up and exposed for the light and in editing reduce the shadows of the dark roots below. "



Lightshow in the mangroves, by Leena Roy

You can see Leena's previous successes in this competition [here](#)

The AI Appraiser

Last month I talked about appraising expressive quality (EQ) in photographs and how some appraisers, even experienced ones, find articulating EQ to be a challenge. After one somewhat disappointing appraisal of a print, where I heard no mention of its EQ and received a score of 6.5, I thought I would ask ChatGPT to give an appraisal of the technical, craft and expressive qualities of the following image.



Here is what I got back!

1. Technical Qualities

Focus & Sharpness:

The image is very sharp across most of the frame, with excellent clarity in the foreground, especially in the wildflowers and the gate. The background has a natural depth of field, softening slightly due to atmospheric perspective, which enhances realism.

Exposure:

Exposure is well-balanced. The highlights in the sky are retained, and shadow details in the foreground are preserved without becoming muddy. The golden hour lighting provides a pleasing warmth.

Colour Balance & Tonality:

The colour palette is rich but natural. Warm tones dominate the sky and the landscape, transitioning gently into cooler shadows. There's a good dynamic range, with no harsh clipping in highlights or shadows.

Noise & Artifacts:

Noise is minimal or non-existent, suggesting this image was taken with a high-quality sensor in good lighting conditions. There are no visible artifacts or issues from compression or over-processing.

2. Craft Qualities

Composition:

The composition is excellent:

- The gate in the foreground leads the viewer’s eye into the rolling landscape.
- The signpost adds a focal point and narrative suggestion (a path or journey).
- The rule of thirds is effectively used: the horizon sits near the upper third, and the signpost is well-placed off-centre.

Use of Light:

Golden hour light is used skilfully to add depth, enhance textures, and create a peaceful atmosphere. The side-lighting highlights the contours of the landscape and adds dimension.

Depth & Perspective:

There is a strong sense of depth achieved through:

- Foreground interest (gate, wildflowers),
 - Middle ground (grassy slope and trees),
 - Background (rolling hills and fading horizon).
- The atmospheric haze in the distance adds a painterly touch.

Framing:

Natural elements like the overhanging branches and encroaching wildflowers act as a frame, which draws attention inward and creates intimacy.

3. Expressive Qualities

Mood & Atmosphere:

The image evokes a sense of calm, serenity, and the quiet beauty of the countryside at sunset. It suggests themes of journey, transition (day to night), and contemplation.

Narrative:

The closed gate and direction sign subtly hint at travel, boundaries, and choice. There's a feeling of "pause before proceeding" that adds narrative depth.

Emotion & Aesthetic Impact:

There’s a strong emotional resonance – a mix of peace, nostalgia, and appreciation for natural beauty. The colours and light gently invite the viewer to linger.

Summary Rating

Aspect	Rating (out of 10)
Technical	9.5
Craftsmanship	9.5
Expressive Impact	9

This is a standout landscape image, combining technical excellence with expressive storytelling and artistic craft. If you're the photographer, this is a portfolio-worthy piece.

As an aside, I also asked it to suggest a title:

Evocative Titles:

1. "Beyond the Gate"
2. "Stillness in the Valley"
3. "Last Light Over the Downs"
4. "Where the Path Pauses"
5. "Twilight Fields"

Descriptive Titles:

6. "Sunset over English Farmland"
7. "Golden Hour Gate"
8. "Countryside Horizon"

Poetic Titles:

9. "A Hush Before Dusk"
10. "The Silence Between Hills"

The title I actually used was the rather mundane "This Way". However, I digress.

I am not for one minute suggesting that AI can replace human appraisers, who can physically visit your clubs and give human appraisals tempered by their own experiences and personalities. In particular, AI can't appraise prints as you have to upload the image.

AI such as ChatGPT and Grok are large language models whose "experience" is entirely derived by scraping data from the internet. I have often found ChatGPT to be completely wrong (though it is usually very apologetic when I point out its errors). I have been impressed by the language it uses to describe expressive qualities so is a helpful tool to understand how you might articulate what you personally feel about a particular image. It would also struggle with relative scoring, particularly as the free version only lets you upload and analyse 5 images a day.

I asked ChatGPT "what does an apple taste like?". Its response – "An apple tastes fresh and mildly sweet, with a light tartness that wakes up your mouth. When you bite into one, it's usually crisp and juicy, and the flavour feels clean and refreshing." I challenged with "How do you know what an apple tastes like? You are a LLM and lack human senses of taste, smell, touch, etc". It responded with "You're right—I don't know what an apple tastes like in the way a human does. You're pointing out an important distinction between phenomenal experience (what it *feels* like) and linguistic knowledge (how people talk about it). I only have the second."

When it comes to conveying expressive quality, we have the first in abundance but possibly struggle with the second.

I would make a final, but important observation. It is suggested that AI can take the drudgery out of our lives – doing repetitive but intensive tasks and freeing humans to be creative and expressive. Why would we want to allow AI to take away from us those creative processes that we are supposedly now free to enjoy? ChatGPT can make pictures for you too!

I rest my case

Roll of Honour Awards for Two Practical Members



L-R Gary Armour, Bob Crouch, Stewart Lacey

It was my pleasure to visit The Practical Camera Club in February to present Roll of Honour Awards to two of the club's longest standing members. As you can see in the picture, they were both celebrating 40 years membership of the club. Before I presented their certificates, we were entertained by a selection of images each had shared in the club over the years.

Bob Crouch is considered to be one of the technical experts in the club. He seems to be able to help with any camera, any problem, any photographic challenge. As well as being someone who is generous with his time, often at the expense of his own photography, he has also given extensive service on the committee, including a substantial period as Chairman.

Gary Armour has also rarely missed a meeting since he joined in 1985 and is also always willing to help. For the past 10 years he has served as Competition Secretary. He regularly stewards exhibitions and represents the Club at SCPF Reps' meetings. He is also regularly found in the kitchen, making the tea.

Congratulations both, you are truly worthy recipients of this award!

The PAGB Inter-Federation Print Championship

The Inter-Federation Print Championship Competition is held each June. This is a flagship PAGB competition where the 15 regions compete against each other

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. In 2025 the SCPF won the Nature class and also Ian Roberts from Chichester CC won the Individual Nature Gold Medal.

The judging will take place on the Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st June.

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.

WHAT DO I NEED FROM YOU?

We need to select 20 Prints which have not been entered into this competition before, for each of the 3 categories – Mono, Colour and Nature – so 60 in total.

I am looking for all our clubs to provide their best prints so that we can represent the SCPF the best way we can. If your image is selected for our entry and then subsequently selected by the judges for the travelling Exhibition, this is truly an honour. Think of it as being the best of the best from around the country. It does also mean that you may have to reprint the image if you need it for another competition as the exhibition runs for a year.

Prints that are not selected for the Exhibition will be returned to the regions at Warwick during the Inter Club PDI Competition which is held in July. The SCPF will be represented by 3 clubs at that event this year.

So, Reps and Compsecs, please dig out your best prints (this could be last season's club work if this season is a big problem) and bring them along to me at the regional championships at Littleton on 22nd March or Finals day which is on 10th May also at Littleton.

Ferg Cowhig

PAGB Competition secretary for the SCPF

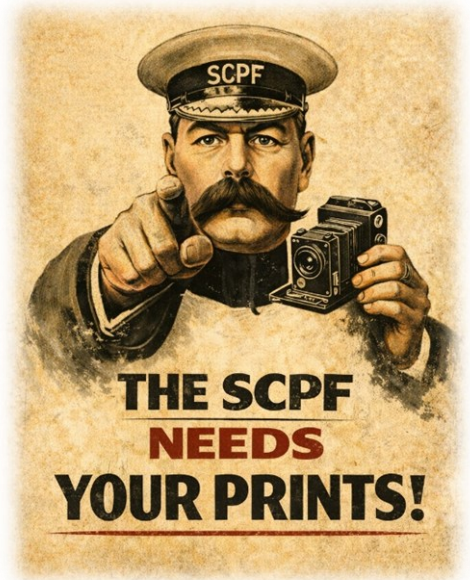
The entries and scores from last year can be found [here](#).

Meet Gosport Camera Club



Club History

Gosport Camera Club (GCC) was founded in 1952. Unfortunately, a lot of the Club history has been lost over the years, but particularly when one committee member volunteered to digitise the many years of paper records back in the early 2010s. That person sadly died suddenly, and his family were not able to either find the paperwork, or to access his computer to retrieve relevant files. Hopefully this is a lesson other Clubs can learn from. The below history is based on the memories of older Club members.





Sunday Photo Walk

We have had a few meeting places over our history, including Thorngate Halls, St Vincent Centre and (currently) the Hardway, Elson & Districts Community Association (HEDCA). We used to be very active in Gosport's twinning with Royan in France in the 1970's; with our respective Camera Clubs staging exhibitions of member's work in each other's towns. However, in the early days some of the French prints that came over were considered "too salacious" to go on display to a very conservative Gosport public and were quietly put to one side!

We were a founding member of the Southern Photographic Federation (SPF) as the SCPF used to be known before we joined the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain (PAGB) and had to change name because

there was already an SPF member (the Scottish Photographic Federation). Indeed, in the first year after the SPF joined the PAGB, Gosport CC was one of the two Camera Clubs that were eligible to take part in the PAGB's Inter-Club Championships. GCC have been very active within the SCPF for many years, consistently taking part in the League Competitions, Exhibitions and Championships. Some GCC members have also been active on the SCPF Council in several positions over the years (including President, Publicity Officer and Treasurer).

Bringing you up to date



Some of our keen members getting down for the shot

The Gosport Camera Club is still very active, up until two years ago we met two times a month, mainly for competitions and presentations, and the committee decided to increase this to every Tuesday during our season (from September to the beginning of June).

We called the extra nights Members Nights and we use them to hold presentations, demonstrations, Audio visual evenings, photo critique nights, portrait nights and anything to do with photography.

On the last Sunday of each month we hold walks to interesting places (normally with a pub lunch as well); we also arrange evening walks during the year to different locations in the local area for night photography.

On the second Wednesday of the month we meet in a local cafe and enjoy a morning of coffee, cakes and good company.

During covid we started a Whatsapp group which is still very active and members are encouraged to put their photos on, including a monthly photo set subject to test interpretation skills. We also have an active Facebook group

Exhibition

We hold our annual exhibition in July each year at the Discovery Centre in Gosport and again in September during Gosport Heritage Open Days at Holy Trinity Church in Gosport.



Members' Night Demonstration

Finance

Gosport CC is not a large club, with a membership in the mid-thirties (which is increasing at the moment) so we have to keep a careful eye on our finances. This season we had a considerable rent increase, and with the extra nights we needed to create more income to cover our costs. With this in mind we increased the fees this year. The subscription amounts to two pounds per meeting which we feel is still good value and no-one has left the club because of this.

The Future of Gosport CC

Our camera club is (I suspect like many others in the Federation) made up mainly of members of a mature age group. It would be great to see youngsters joining the club but being realistic I cannot see this happening anytime soon. Mostly we have seen interest from people approaching retirement who would like a hobby in their retirement and are looking to expand their photographic skills.

Our website contract finishes this Spring, and we are looking at a more camera club friendly website that makes more of an impact online. We have formed a program subcommittee, so our members have more of an input in the club activities going forward.

Our main aim at Gosport CC is to promote interest in photography but also it has to be a place where the members can talk about photography and socialise with each other and enjoy this fantastic hobby.



Gosport CC Chairman Tim Reekie Presenting Mike Barton with a SCPF Championship Silver Medal



Lynne Carter receiving her roll of honour award from Stewart Lacey at our Christmas Party in December. Very sadly six weeks later Lynne passed away

Freedom Through Expression Gallery

Alton Camera Club



Founded 1957

4th – 31st March 2026

Local photographers display their skills through landscapes, wildlife moments, and local scenes.



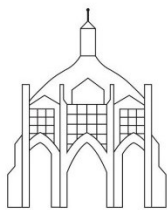
1 NORMANDY STREET
ALTON, GU34 1DD

GALLERY OPENING:
TUES – SAT
10AM – 4PM

ADMISSION: FREE



www.freedomthroughexpression.art



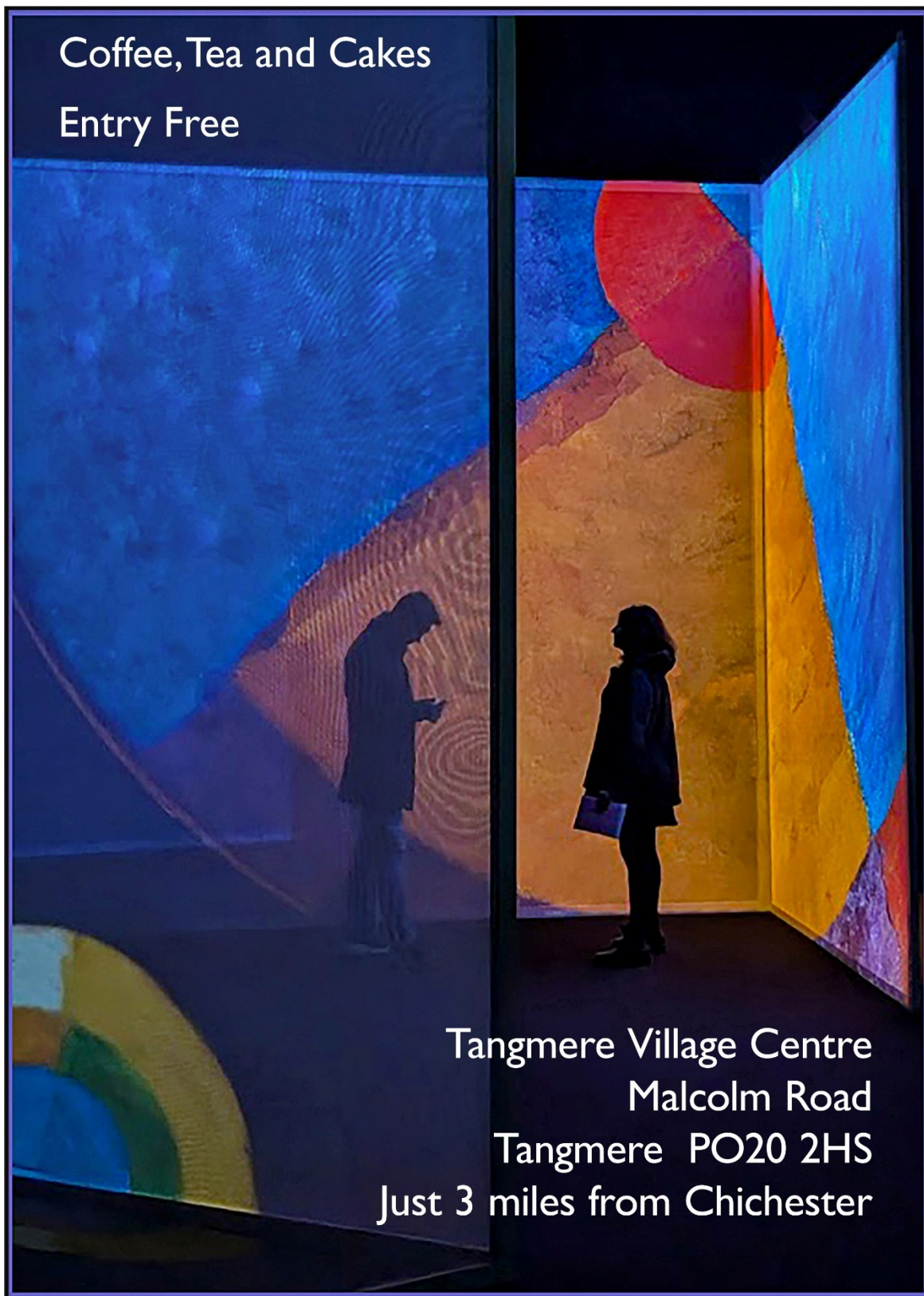
CHICHESTER**CAMERA**CLUB

SPRING EXHIBITION 2026

Weekend 28 & 29 March

Saturday 10-5 Sunday 10-4

Coffee, Tea and Cakes
Entry Free



Tangmere Village Centre
Malcolm Road
Tangmere PO20 2HS
Just 3 miles from Chichester

Photo: Vince Lavender



Open Exhibition 2026
10th Feb-4th April

The Spring



Enjoy a varied selection of prints
and projected images
from local members



Main photo credit Gordon Gentles

The Spring, 56 East Street Havant PO91BS
Open Mon-Sat 10-4



Dorchester
Camera Club

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Cards for sale

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16th - 29th April

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Dorchester
DT1 1UY

Free Entry

10am to 4pm
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