

Newsletter

No. 2 June 2020



NORTH FYLDE PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

- A selection of news, stories and written articles from members of the club
- Barbara Clayton shares what she's been up to during Lockdown
- Clare Trewick leads us on another lovely Lytham walk
- Dawn Keeling shares her Pre Lockdown Shoot at the Dress Rehearsal of Shrek
- David Delmage entertains with tales of dogs and foxes
- Dave Bibby puts some positive energy into sorting his negatives
- Bob Sapey explains the rule photographers need to know when shooting heavenly bodies

Cover photo:
Barbara Clayton, *Astrantia*, 2020

Dear All,

Editor's Note

Welcome to the second edition of our Club Newsletter. Huge thanks go to everyone who submitted such lovely work. There's lots to look at and I hope you really enjoy it.

Bob Sapey made a great suggestion about photos of fireworks, which got me thinking ahead to the next edition. We love photos of fireworks. Many in the club are accomplished at making them, leaving one or two of us who would *love* to, but who never seem to get the right settings on-camera before the firework has fizzled out.

It would be super to have a 'Showcase and Tell' of Fireworks Photos in the next edition, so dig out your best and brightest, add a couple of words about the settings you used on your camera, or any other tip which helped you nail a *great* shot, and send it in to me at newsletter@northfylde-ps.co.uk by 10th July.

Ali xx
Editor



Both images by Peter Slater, with thanks

Club News

News from the committee, which met on Zoom on Thursday evening, 18th June 2020

Next Season - A light at the end of the tunnel?

Dear All

I'm sure many of you are wondering what is intended for the Club next season, particularly in light of the current situation with Covid-19 and the lockdown.

We have given this a lot of thought and, as you know, there is still much uncertainty about meetings like ours. The church hall remains closed for the time being, but being optimists, we are *hoping* for the best, and are *planning* for it, even to the extent of looking forward to a 'normal' start to the new season in September. Dave Bibby has been beavering away, and you can expect to see the fruits of his labours very soon, when you get an email with the usual pack of pre-season material sometime over the coming month.

We are *hopeful*, but also *realists*. Firstly, we must allow for the possibility that the church hall may not have re-opened by the 1st September, or for some time after that. How will we all meet? Other clubs are meeting up online, using video-conferencing technology, for competitions, presentations and so on. Our committee meeting made use of a software application called 'Zoom'. Wayne recently ran a couple of his presentations on it very successfully. It is likely that the club will make use of it, if we cannot meet up physically, so for those who are unfamiliar with it, practice sessions will be arranged in August.

The committee will be planning for such a contingency at the next meeting. We will all need to be practical and flexible. As the situation evolves, club members will be put in the picture as soon as it is possible to do so.

In addition to meeting via video conferencing, we can enjoy other activities together outdoors. For example, the illuminations will be on for an extended period, until January 2021, and there are other locations near us suitable for small groups to safely meet observing social distancing.

Even when we do manage to get back into the hall, some may be anxious about meeting up in a group. Please rest assured, we will be following all the Government Guidelines and doing everything to ensure your safety. More details of this will be circulated closer to the time.

If you have any questions or queries about the above, or any suggestions for activities, or ways to meet up, please contact Paul, our chairman, or myself, Neil, in the first instance, or indeed *any of the committee members*. If you have a response to any of the points raised here that you'd like to be published in the newsletter, do please send those comments to Alison, at this email address newsletter@northfylde-ps.co.uk, by the 10th of July for inclusion in the next edition.

Keep positive. Keep snapping. Keep in touch.

Best wishes and take care

Neil



'BOCAIRENT, SPAIN'

Barbara Clayton

Barbara's Lockdown

Barbara Clayton tells us what she's been up to both before and during the lockdown

Hope you are all continuing to keep well physically, and are finding enough to keep yourselves occupied. The weather certainly helped for me; giving plenty of excuses for a drink in the garden (it would have been rude not to)!



'CAP PRIM, JAVEA'

Barbara Clayton

Pre-Covid, hubby and I were enjoying a few days in Spain, at a regular haunt of ours. Unusually we had stayed in a small hotel rather than an apartment and for reasons not worth sharing here, we didn't have much access to the news channels, so even when we took our flight home we didn't realise how worrying things had become. We actually flew home the afternoon before UK-Spain flights were turned back!

The reason for sharing this? The first couple of images are of the area we visited: 'Cap Prim', a scenic end to a local walk and 'Bocairent' an inland town we visited for the first time in March. As we drove down, the road took a bend and the view opened up. It was absolutely stunning and totally unexpected

Safely home and realising the implications of what was happening, I managed (without pressure I might add) to get hubby's agreement to some overdue painting of the staircase spindles. Strange how it expanded to 'plus two bedrooms'. That kept us entertained and we worked our way through it at a leisurely pace, having not much else to do.



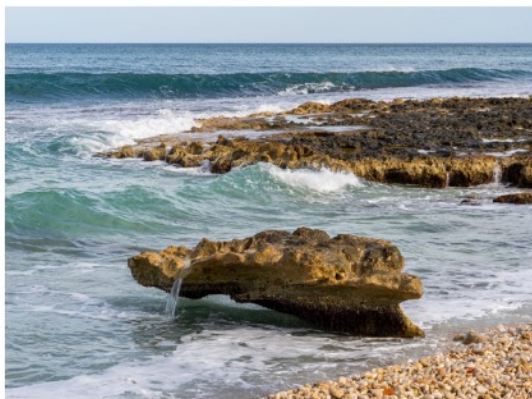
'MECONOPSIS TRIPTYCH'

Barbara Clayton

Decorating done, I decided I would try to get my head around using flash lighting. A bit of progress made, but I hate being indoors when the sun is shining outdoors, so the floral images are all from the garden taken during the lockdown.

Earlier in the lockdown, face bookers may have seen Angela post some excellent 'twirls', so of course I had to have a go and have included 'before and after' of a couple. I have to say, using them as backgrounds to the original image is not as easy as Angela made it look, so Im not sharing any of my 'unfinished' attempts at that.

A skills challenge for any twirlers who use Photoshop™ is to create an action for it if you haven't already done so. Take care everyone and I look forward to meeting up with everyone as early as we can safely do so.



'BIT OF A TWIRL'

Barbara Clayton



Even Shrek fell victim to the corona virus !!

Dawn Keeling shares her shots from the ill-fated theatrical production

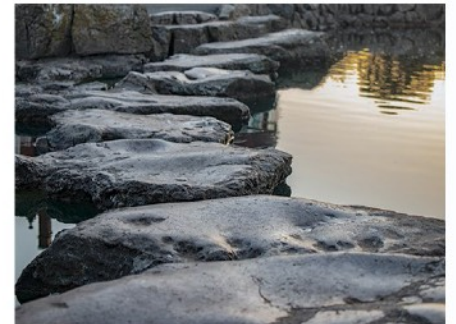
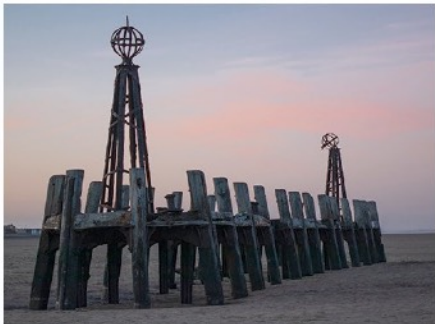
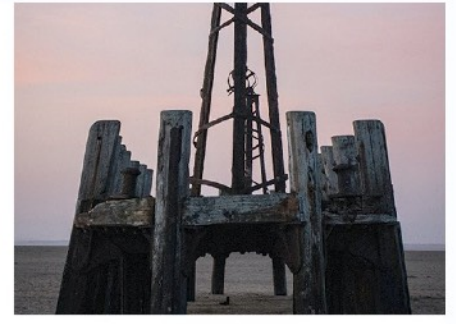
The last photoshoot I did was in February this year. I went along with Neil to Marton Methodist Church Hall, where BOPs (Blackpool Operatic Players) have their rehearsals. This years' production was going to be *Shrek the Musical*, but as we know, due to Covid 19, it had to be cancelled.

Such a pity. The cast put their heart and soul into it, and I can't imagine the expense involved in putting on such a lavish production. Another untold cost of this damned virus !

For my contribution to the Newsletter, I thought I'd share some of the images I took at the rehearsal. It seems so long ago now, a time when we were all blissfully unaware of corona virus. I think the pictures capture the spirit of the show, and the obvious pleasure the performers got from putting it all together.

I hope you like them.



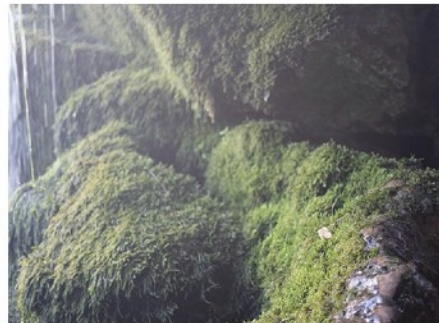


All on a Lytham Morning

Clare Trewick braves the earliest alarm call and is rewarded with a sighting of a heron on Lytham's lovely shoreline

As I set a series of alarms for between 3.45 and 4.00am, along with a request for Alexa to remind me to 'GET OUT OF BED AND GO FOR A WALK!', I once more question my sanity – or as my friend Mark generously puts it, my dedication. I question it again at 4.00am as I drag myself out of bed, open the door and fall over the kitten and one of my adult cats, both of whom demand a feeding before I go anywhere!

I start my journey at St Annes Pier, and as I arrive, my spirits lift. There is an atmosphere of quiet anticipation in the pre-sunrise light, and although there's no promise of the incredibly vibrant skies I have recently been treated to, there is a slight orange tint to the sky which looks promising. I look across to St Anne's Square and admire the skyline before walking onto the golden sands of the beach and alongside the pier, to the old jetty section, separated from each other by fire in 1982. I walk around this, and head towards the swimming pool, adjacent to the RNLI lifeboat building, and from the angle I look at it, it rather looks like a wise owl looking at me. I decide to walk alongside the beach huts, and ponder the fact that they're not too much different to the old beach huts which used to adorn the north side of St Anne's Pier until the 1980's.



I come round the side of the miniature golf course with the train tracks running around the outside, and head towards my favourite part of this walk, the waterfall which sits opposite The Grand Hotel. This is a beautiful Victorian building, built in 1897. which certainly lives up to its name. As I walk around the front of the waterfall a heron swoops down – just my luck I only have my macro lens on as I'm practicing this style of photography. I walk around and as I get closer, the heron flies past me. I grab a quick blurry image, just to say I saw it – before landing back where I was standing moments before. I decide to walk across the stepping stones, to behind the waterfall – you never know your luck - but the bird quickly flies back to where it had been in the first instance.

I smile wryly and continue my walk, past the Beach Café and onward towards Fairhaven Lake, stopping at a small scattering of trees which almost hide the electricity sub-station, a building which looks like a gateway to another world. I get to Fairhaven Lake and pause for a moment of reflection at the Spitfire, then, as I walk on, I come across a large number of geese, grumbling at me, which is understandable as I am on their land, it is only 5.45am and they have rather a lot of goslings between them. I see a pair of swans on the lake with four cygnets; tiny, fluffy and grey. They too do not look pleased to see me, with one of the parents swimming in front of the babies as though to hide them from my view. I take the hint and move on, stopping at the boathouse to marvel at how quickly the blooms on the magnificent wisteria have faded, leaving little more than lush green leaves.

I turn back now and return past all the sights previously mentioned. The birdsong surrounds me and I have sight of a small yellow bird at the top of a tall tree, and I walk past a small patch of marshland and wonder what sights might be there – something for another day’s exploration maybe. I walk back past the Island Complex with the cinema, restaurant and activities a plenty, past the small handful of train carriages containing a few shops and a café, and wander back through the colourful Promenade Gardens. I’m feeling wonderfully refreshed and ready to take on the rest of my day.

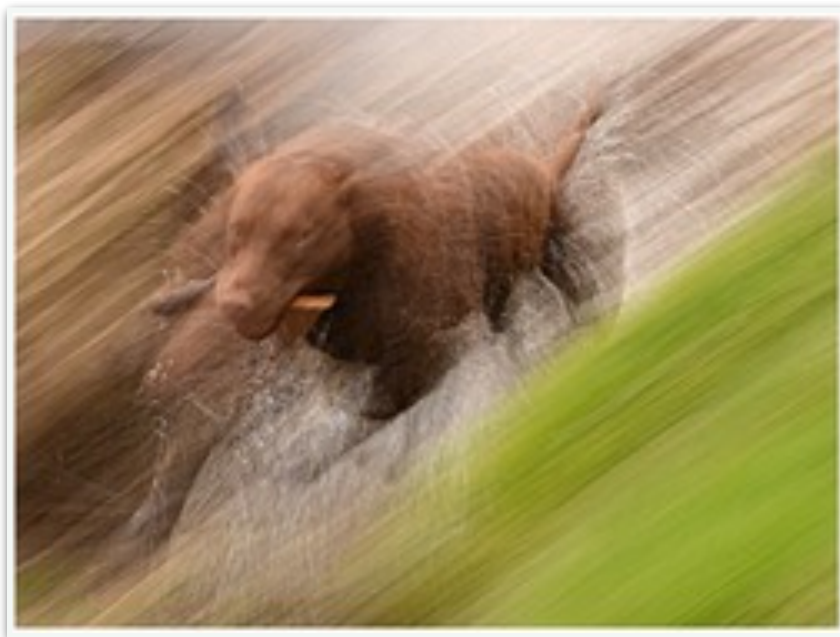
Of Dog-Days and Foxes

David Delmage returns with tales of animal antics and observes fox cubs preparing for adulthood

Trago says “hello”.

He's a lovely dog, and very attached to me. He follows me around the house all day long. When I'm cooking my dinner, I'll suddenly realise that he's between me and the gas rings.

Laying down and waiting - I suspect - for any food to be dropped on the floor. It probably wouldn't actually reach the floor!



Trago is up to his same game, waking me up at first light of the day. He sleeps in the kitchen, but scratches the door to the hallway to wake me up. I shout out “NO!”, but he still scratches the door after about three or four minutes of quietness. He also throws himself down at the bottom of the door as if in desperation. Eventually I get up, and let him out in the garden. In February, he started at waking me at 7am, then 6.30am but it's down to 5am now. It's not even sunrise, only twilight.



Trago has two Kongs - made from very hard plastic, about the size of a hand grenade and probably about the same weight as well! Any other plastic toys, he will destroy in about 2 minutes. When he comes into the kitchen, he will often be carrying a Kong - which he then drops on my foot, while I’m cookng. He wants me to throw it down into the garden, but I’m usually too busy, so he keeps picking it up and dropping it on my feet. One of my big toe-nails started going brown, then black and after a few weeks it came off completely. Kong damage!



Soon it's light enough to try to get some pictures of the foxes in my neighbour's garden/smallholding. So I go down into the garden, and climb up on my wobbly stepladder so I can see what's happening and get my camera up on the garden wall. Only a few sessions so far. One session in my pyjamas - that was cold! There's a good picture of two foxes fighting, which, thanks to my colleague, Carolyn, from the vet's practice, we've worked out are youngsters. They are nearly full grown so I think they are last year's cubs. Soon there will be another mating, and young cubs to photograph, and last year's ones ejected.





Trigo lost both Kongs one day, and I couldn't find them anywhere in the house. A few days later I looked out of the kitchen window - and saw both of the Kongs on the roof of the building next door (where the foxes live). It was a bit of a struggle, on a wobbly stepladder, to retrieve them. I was really puzzled about how they got there. Someone said "Perhaps it was a bird that picked them up". I didn't say anything - but it would have had to be a Golden Eagle to do that! The Kongs are heavier than a crow!

Later, when I saw the foxes walking along the top of the roof, I realised that they were probably the culprits.



Submissions for next edition

By

10th July 2020

To

newsletter@northfylde-ps.co.uk

Don't forget to submit your favourite fireworks shot. Send it in with a note of the camera settings you used, and/or any top tip you may have for securing great fireworks photographs

LOCKDOWN!! OR – CHANGING A NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE INTO A POSITIVE ONE

Dave Bibby rolls up his sleeves, takes a deep breath and gets stuck into sorting and cataloguing his old work

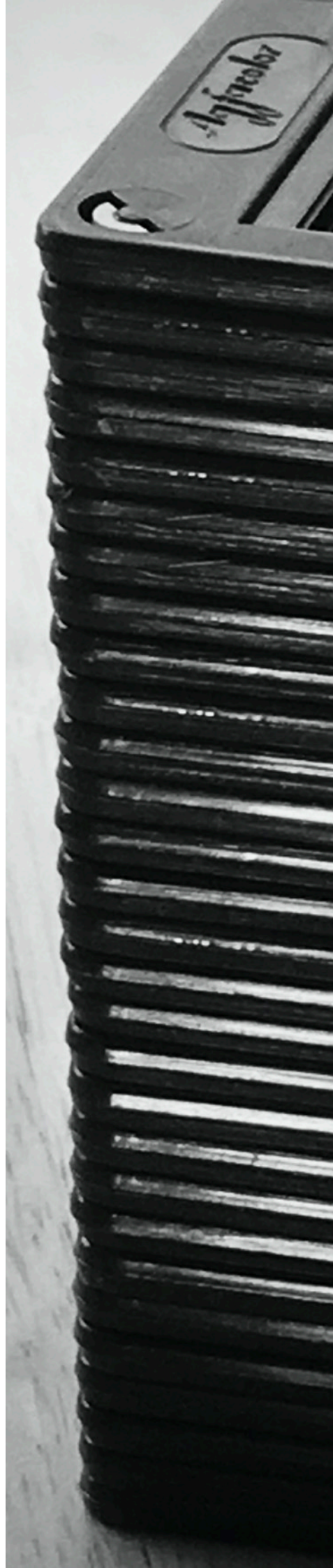
When “lockdown” was first imposed on us I assumed I would be spending many days indoors while the rain was pouring down outside, so I decided I needed a project to do.

Well, I got the weather forecast wrong (big style!), but I decided it was time to start scanning my old monochrome, or black & white (b&w), film negatives.

This is a job that I have put off for many years as it seemed such a daunting task. Four or five years ago I scanned many of my old slides. I decided at the time that I should be ruthless and only scan those which either included friends and family, or other meaningful subjects, competition entries and Audio Visual sequences. Even so I ended up with 11,800 scanned slides, most which of course I haven't looked at since!

I bought a Nikon Coolscan scanner as soon as I went digital, in around 2002, but if I'd scanned thousands of slides/negs straight away I would have found it a tedious chore. However, leaving it a number of years means that it actually became a voyage of discovery, reminding me of days out and incidents long forgotten. Didn't we look young? Didn't we have loads of energy?!

So, when lockdown started I dug out my scanner, plugged it in and... nothing happened. Seemingly, Nikon stopped supporting Coolscan in 2014 and it won't work with Windows 10. Bummer. However, fortunately I didn't chuck away my old Windows Vista laptop, so I plugged the scanner into that and hey presto! I was back in business.



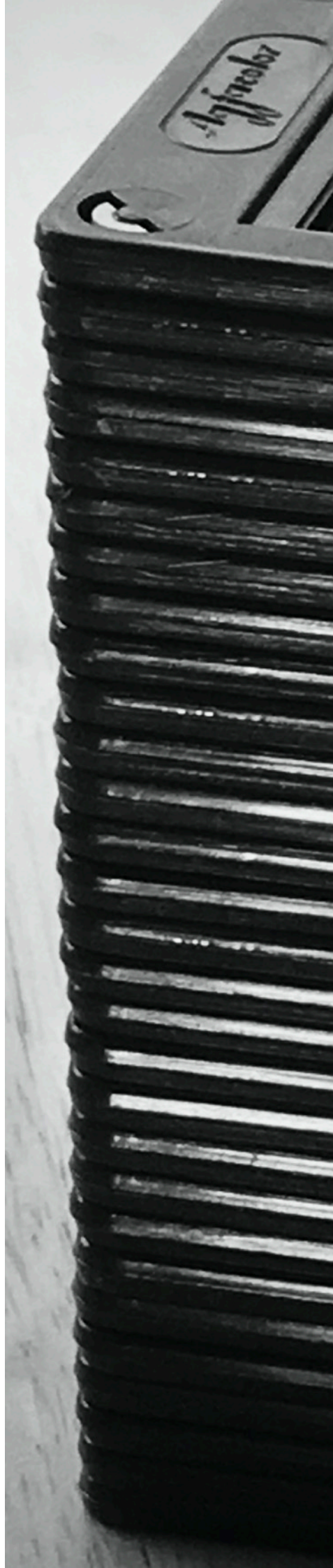
As people who know me well would tell you, I may be slow to start something, but once I do I become fully committed to it. Even when the sun was beating down outside I sat in front of my laptop diligently inserting negative after negative. During the 1970s I took mostly b&w photos because I was a poor impoverished Civil Servant and couldn't afford colour film, but I for the same reason I didn't take that many so it didn't take me long to polish those off.

In 1980 I joined the Photographic Society at Norcross. I started to use slide film, but with the encouragement of other members (in particular my old mucker Graham Schofield), I also learned printing skills in the on-site darkroom we had at Norcross. Switching between colour & mono became annoying so I soon bought a second camera and my b&w photography really took off.

On looking at many of my negs I wonder why I took them in the first place, but I'm now really glad I did. Although enjoyable, darkroom work was time consuming and quite expensive and many of the negs have never seen the light of day, so it was with some trepidation and increasing delight that I scanned the next 10 years' worth of negatives.

I have currently reached the end of 1989. What used to take hours in the darkroom now takes seconds and to date I have scanned around 2,000 negatives. However, my scanning has currently hit a barrier (probably just as well), in that I don't know where my negatives from the '90s and early '00s actually are!!

Editor's Note: Hope you find them in time for the next edition, Dave, to tell the rest of the story. It would also be lovely to see a few of your favourites from your trip down memory lane.



The NPF Rule

Bob Sapey closes the second edition with a formula to help improve your astrophotography

In astrophotography the 500 Rule has been used since the days of film photography to determine the maximum length of exposure that is possible without seeing trailing of stars. This trailing is caused by the rotation of the Earth which means that a camera on a tripod is moving relative to the stars in the sky. The 500 Rule says that for a full frame camera, the maximum exposure should be no more than 500 / the focal length of the lens and this transferred from film to digital photography without any problem until we started to use cameras with many more megapixels. Photographers noticed trailing and some changed to a 450 Rule or a 400 Rule while others started to say 500 Rule less 5 seconds. These were all ways of reducing the time but they were guessing at the correct exposure.

French photographer Frédéric Michaud took a more scientific approach to the problem and developed a formula which includes not only the focal length of the lens, but also its aperture and the size of the pixels in the sensor of the camera. This is known as the NPF Rule where N denotes the aperture or f-number, P is Pixel size and F is Focal length. The full rule also includes the latitude of the photographer and the direction of the camera, but the rule can be simplified as follows:

$$\mathbf{(35 \times \text{aperture} + 30 \times \text{pixel pitch}) \div \text{focal length} = \text{shutter speed in seconds}}$$

Unlike the 500 Rule this formula is still a bit too complex for photographers to quickly calculate the exposure themselves, but it is available in various phone Apps, though many fail to stay up to date with newer cameras. The one App I know to be reliable is Photopills which is kept up to date with sensor data new cameras and I also understand that qDslrDashboard is reliable.

The difference can be quite considerable between the 500 and NPF Rules. For my camera, using my widest angle lens on full aperture - Canon 90D, 10mm, f/3.5

- 500 Rule = 31 secs
- NPF Rule (default) = 20.91 secs
- NPF Rule (Accurate for large prints) = 10.46 secs

Reducing exposure by these amounts means a lot less light coming in and as my aperture is already at its widest, I would need to increase the ISO. This will increase noise levels, though the noise caused by long exposure should be reduced. It becomes a balancing act which will be down to individual preference.