

SPS Newsletter

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It is with a degree of sadness that I write this Newsletter as April means we have come to the end of our season's 'formal' competitions and programme. I cannot believe it has gone so quickly but I have enjoyed all of our speakers and the competitions. And I have been quite pleased with my results so all in all a good year I think. And what about the creative competition entries weren't they super. The AVs were as ever very good and I thought Tim Hutchin's winning entry was not only clever but a historical reminder of what it was like living through a Pandemic and Lockdown. It seems a distant memory now and looking back at those images of a completely empty city centre seems so surreal. We still have the Annual Meal and Trophy Presentation to look forward to, congratulations to everyone receiving recognition this year. We also have our AGM with Jenny passing the President's baton over to Phil, and thank you Jenny for presiding over a good year in office and your capable hands. We wish Phil all the best for his forthcoming year in office.

So what's happening this month? Well April seems to be a busy old one for World and International Days. We had International Pillow Fight Day on the 1st and National Chocolate Mousse Day on the 3rd and look forward to National Scrabble Day on the 13th, Earth Day on the 22nd, National Shakespeare Day and St George's Day on the 23rd, World Penguin Day on the 25th and World Day for Safety and Health at Work on the 26th. It's also time to celebrate Easter (I just love all those chocolate eggs ...), and it's Jazz Appreciation Month and Move More Month, so no excuses put your music on at a good volume, don your trainers and get bopping round your living room or alternatively trotting round the pavements and parks. And just think after all that 'moving' you will be able to happily eat some chocolate and Easter eggs without feeling guilty! And in honour of the Bard all of this month's jokes have a Shakespeare theme to them. So, friends, Romans and Club members I hope you enjoy them.

The Newsletter will have a rest in May to recharge its batteries and be back with you in June. May is going to be a very busy month for the Editor with 3 Bank Holidays and the small matter of a Coronation to celebrate along with a Coronation golf competition to organise – no rest for the wicked! So fingers will be crossed for the sun to shine on us all and this awful grey, cloudy, rainy weather we seem to have had so much of recently becoming a thing of the past. As ever if you've any articles you want to send in, photographs of places you've been etc. then do please email them to me at 172elizabeth@gmail.com.



With my very best wishes

Liz xx

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02

Through the Lens

Well I am still playing with my new camera equipment. Again I have not got out much with this dismal weather we have had recently. There's only so many puddles, rain drops and grey, cloudy skies I can take images of – they are not very inspiring! But, I have been practising changing lenses on my camera body. I liken it to being a cowboy when they practice pulling their guns from their holsters as quickly as they can or a formula 1 car taking a pit stop for its tyre change. I figure when you are out with your camera you need to look professional and be able to do a quick lens change and not be seen to be fumbling about all fingers and thumbs (like the amateur that I am!). I think you might be impressed if you see me now changing my lens ...

03

A Look Back

Elizabeth asked me to pen a few words about the time I've spent being President last year. It's good to look backwards and review what has been a hugely enjoyable task.

I agreed to take on the role after the very charming and persuasive Mick Schilling put the idea to me as a possibility. You kick off in the role of Vice Chair for a year and then the following year President. It seemed a fun role, and I said as long as all the key players who make this club what it is still do what they do then I was more than happy to act as President. Trust me, no one would not want me to be in charge of the techie side of this club..... making equipment work and IT things happen is not a skill set I have!!!

In fairness, being President is not an onerous role simply because we have such wonderful people, in particular Phil, Sue, Chris, Dave and Mick who do so much behind the scenes. But it has given me an insight into just quite how much has to be done by Committee members. It really is the case of swans (no blown highlights of course!) swimming gracefully while feet frantically paddle underneath. For my part, I have mostly done a lot of smiling sweetly and introducing speakers and chatting to them afterwards so that they'll come again if they get a nice warm reception from us! As I say, not a difficult task as speakers and judges are invariably charming and very interesting to talk to.

It's been our first full year back in the club and it has been so enjoyable having that old buzz in the hall when everyone is together and have the chance to chat afterwards over tea and coffee. But while Zoom had its place and was a God send when we had our snow day recently, normality is even sweeter when we've had it taken away from us.

In terms of highlights this year, it was good to meet members outside of the club on the occasions we've had trips. We had a super-hot and sunny day at the Cotswolds Wildlife Park. It's also been wonderful to see new members not just attending but very successfully competing. It took me a year to build up the courage for that!

And we've had some absolutely wonderful speakers. Sue, has the knack of finding fabulous speakers and a network that seems to come up trumps every time with presentations with different themes, ideas and images. They've been truly inspiring. It won't surprise you that the creative speakers will always be my favourite but there hasn't been a speaker that I haven't enjoyed and or hasn't inspired me in some way.

And of course the competitions have been great fun with friendly rivalry. Okay, the results aren't always what we would pick ourselves but in some ways that keeps us all guessing. Nevertheless, judges' comments are consistently about the same themes of avoiding bright spots, clever cropping, and horizons being straight amongst many others. I only wish I could remember them all and apply them! Many also suggest simple and effective changes that will dramatically improve the image I know, I've applied that idea back at home and invariably it's improved the image.

So it's been a fun year and it's good to share that role amongst club members and next year we have the wonderful Phil who will adding 'President' to the many hats he wears. I wish Phil and the Committee all the luck in the world, may the speakers turn up, laptops and projectors behave themselves and the club go from strength to strength.

Jenny Ladbrooke
President

04

Camversation

Our recent hark back to the old days of all of us Zooming in to hear a speaker when we had that snow day reminded me that if you enjoy listening via zoom to speakers, then Camversation may just be for you. Not, I hasten to add as an alternative to being a member of our lovely club but additional to what you currently do. If you haven't heard of Camversation it was set up during Covid as a means by which photographers could listen to speakers and be inspired even if getting out to club meetings or trips out to take photos wasn't allowed.

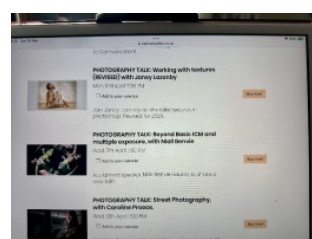
If Covid did one thing, it introduced us to Zoom and allowed us to reach out to speakers we could never have heard before. So, using that simple concept, a lovely guy called Mark Evans runs it and finds speakers and then every Monday and Wednesday there is a Zoom session lasting about a couple of hours. The clever thing about it is that you can drop in or drop out as you like. It's a different pricing model, so instead of a typical camera club membership where you pay for a year here you pay for each session you want to attend. And at the princely sum of £3.75 (or very occasionally a tad more..) it really isn't going to break the bank.

The other clever thing which keeps me going back is that in most cases the session is recorded and you have access to it for two weeks. So you don't even have to watch it live, and for those of us who are making up for lost time having been housebound for the last two years that's good news. I don't join every week by any means. Some speakers I feel overlap the ones we have at our club and don't inspire me quite as much. But there have been ones that really hit my soft spot of creative and still life. So if you pick and choose you can find what works for you. By way of example last year Glenys Garnett was a speaker (and she is due to come back shortly and well worth watching). She is incredibly creative not just with editing but in camera.... It was picking up her tips that helped me with this panel.



To give you a taster of what talks are planned they cover every genre you can imagine, mono work, street photography and creative techniques just to name some of what is happening in April alone! Hard not to find something that doesn't interest. Give it a go!

Jenny Ladbrooke





What does Shakespeare order to eat when he goes into a MacDonalds?

A Macbeth!

05

The Colour Black

Black is the colour given to the night-time, death, evil and darkness, conjuring up images of magic and the gothic, and notions of formality in fashion. In many ancient European languages, from Old Norse to Greek, the word black comes from 'to burn'. Early humans utilised charcoal or ground charred bones to decorate their cave dwellings in black paintings. Then, because it was easily readable and contrasted well against light backgrounds such as white parchment, black became the primary colour for transcript or writing. Black ink for writing purposes was invented in China during the Neolithic Period, possibly as far back as 4,500 years ago. The ink was made from ground soot combined with animal glue shaped into solid sticks or 'cakes' and was used for calligraphy and painting. The Greeks began to use black ink at this time also developing a painting technique used to decorate fine pottery. Black-figure artwork originated c.700BC, was glossy clay that turned black after firing onto which were painted ornamental shapes and figures observed in scenes such as battle, with intricate details incised into the black. Many vases were inscribed with a signature by the craftsmen themselves, believed by many to be the first signed pieces in the history of art.

Early civilisations established black's relationship with death, decay and the afterlife. Halloween derives from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, which marks the end of summer and the darker nights to come, during which the souls of the dead were believed to visit their familial homes. In the Roman Empire those who were in mourning would wear black togas (a tradition of wearing black we still follow today). In Ancient Egypt, Anubis, the god of death, mummification and the afterlife, is illustrated as a semi-human with a black jackal's head. To the Egyptians, black represented the colour of decay, including that of corpses after the embalming process, but also rebirth, as it was the colour of the Nile River's fertile soils.

Greek mythology is rife with representations of the underworld. Separated from the living by the black waters of the river Acheron, and shrouded in darkness, it is assumed to have been inspired by underground caves as the underworld was set deep within the earth.

The 'evil eye' superstition (a stare which will bring bad luck when unprotected) is widespread across the world. In India and Pakistan, black is the colour most often connected to evil, but it can also be used to ward against it, especially in the case of the evil eye. In Hinduism a black ointment known as kajal has for centuries been used to decorate a tiny black dot on the forehead of infants as a mark of protection from its powers.

The European Middle Ages and early Renaissance also attached black to all things evil, including the devil. People turned to the church in response to huge waves of disease, famine and war (in particular the Black Death, which wiped out millions of Europe's population), the devil being the figure to which all blame was attached. In Latin the word for black, 'ater', was closely associated with evil or monstrosity, and in medieval paintings the devil is often illustrated in a jet-black coat.

Focus then shifted to those believed to be associating with the devil and evil spirits in the form of sorcery and witchcraft, the term 'black magic' being attached to them. Women were often persecuted, as there were many female pagan practitioners who were seen as a threat to the church, and also because women were seen as likely to be seduced by the devil and turn to sin. Witches were portrayed in dark attire, and often accompanied by a black goat - the devil in disguise.

Black later gained status as a colour that represented power and importance. Prior to the 14th Century it was difficult to come across good-quality black dye, so it was only when a new dyeing method was invented (a blend of indigo undertones with a top dye of red) that the colour became a uniform for the wealthy and superior. And due to laws that stated only coloured cloths could be worn by the nobility, high-quality black clothes became the next best thing. The wealthy middle class, from government officials to bankers, began to wear black as a sign of affluence and importance. Ironically, this had a reverse effect, as black became one of the most fashionable colours for royals to wear throughout the late Renaissance period. Noblemen of northern Italy, Spain and France (notably Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy) began to wear black, making it a popular colour of choice in the court. While 15th Century portraits display powerful men donned in brightly coloured costumes, 16th Century examples show many courtiers and kings wearing black gowns and headwear.

Black then dipped out of fashion until it saw a resurgence when, in the early 19th Century, British 'dandy' Beau Brummell brought into vogue the black Regency-era tailored three-piece suit that became the mode of the modern man. Later, during the Victorian era, respectability was highly desired, and a black wardrobe often denoted this.

By the 20th Century, black jackets, waistcoats, bowler hats and umbrellas became the norm for business attire. The 'black lounge' suit or 'stroller' became popular in the UK, US and Commonwealth nations, showcased most memorably by British prime minister Winston Churchill. For women at this time, black had become an acceptable colour for evening wear. The 'little black dress' trend owes itself to Coco Chanel's 1927 series of black suits and dresses in American Vogue, and is considered a wardrobe staple to this day.

From the 1970s black was redefined again by youth culture and music scenes, from goths to new romantics and punks, popularised by artists such as The Sex Pistols, KISS and Marilyn Manson. Steampunk-themed dress plays with vintage Victorian and industrial-style wear, corsets and waistcoats teamed with contemporary accessories of body piercings and heavy black eye-makeup. These subcultures blended into popular culture, with dark gothic themes in fashion, hair and beauty, cinematography and costume emerging in films that would engage a cult following.

06

Places to Visit

As we have turned the clocks forward and hopefully the weather is improving, now is the time to start thinking about visiting places further afield from home. This month's suggestion is a place I really like to go to and go walking in the Peak District from.

[Hartington Village, The Peak District](#)

Set in the Peak District National Park just off the A515 between Ashbourne and Buxton, the village of Hartington is set in magnificent White Peak Limestone scenery, close to the River Dove (which marks the county boundary of Derbyshire with

Staffordshire). It's an interesting village closely associated with the Dukes of Devonshire (of Chatsworth House fame), the Duke's eldest son having the courtesy title of the Marquess of Hartington. Hartington was the first Derbyshire village to be granted a Market Charter in 1203. The Old Creamery used to make ¼ of the world's Stilton Cheese and there is still a cheese shop selling it and other local cheeses in the village today. The village was also home to Charles Cotton who wrote the famous book 'The Complete Angler' first published in 1653 and still in print today. If you are interested in visiting 'Well Dressings' Hartington has one each year on display by the village pump. If this has aroused your interest to discover more about Hartington Village to visit and see more I don't think you would be disappointed. Best of all (and essential in my list of requirements!) it has a couple of pubs, a tearoom and super farm shop with café where you can get a super range of drinks and food and yummy cakes, and a great local village store. The village also hosts the footpath into Beresford Dale, Wolfscote Dale and Dovedale, one of the most popular and scenic walking routes in Derbyshire.

If you have any suggestions on places to visit, days out, what's on etc. do please let me know and I will include them in the Newsletters. I am sure other members would appreciate some ideas and suggestions.



Why didn't Shakespeare use pencils to write?

Because he didn't know whether to use 2B or not 2B!

A Little Teaser of a Competition ...

Thank you to those of you who submitted answers for March's competition. Congratulations to Helen Beston who submitted the correct answer first, closely followed by Sue Pearmain.

Question:

What can be seen in the middle of March and April but can't be seen in the beginning or end of either one?

Answer: The letter 'R'

07

Photography Podium

Annual Prints Competition

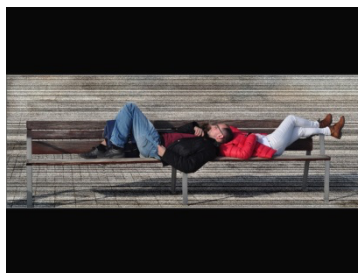


	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
First	<i>The Beautiful Natasha</i>	Graham Newman	<i>Alpine Hikers</i>	Chris Lee	<i>Reaching for the Light</i>	Jenny Ladbrooke
Second	<i>Couple Content</i>	Mick O'Malley	<i>Tuscan Doorway</i>	Kevin Watts	<i>Simply Wild Garlic</i>	Jolanta B Axon
Third	<i>Meerkat Portrait</i>	Rosie Thompson	<i>Lizzie Dodds and Daughter</i>	Tony Dyson	<i>Cheetah Stare</i>	Sue Pearmain

Group 1



The Beautiful Natasha

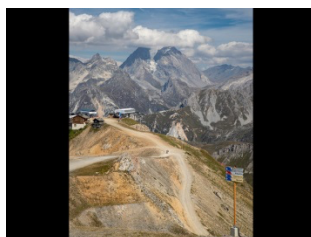


Couple Contents



Meerkat Portrait

Group 2



Alpine Hikers



Tuscan Doorway



Lizzie Dodds and Daughter

Group 3



Reaching for the Light



Simply Wild Garlic

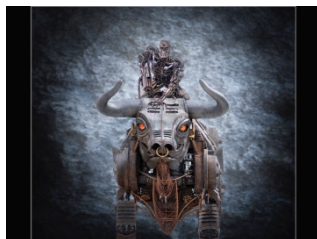


Cheetah Stare

Creative Competition

Well our creative competition didn't disappoint this year and we had some wonderful and clever images to choose from. And the members' choices for the accolades were as follows, well done to all those who submitted images and congratulations to Tony with his very clever image of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bull.

	All Groups	
First	<i>Bullfighter 2090</i>	Tony Dyson
Second	<i>The Gift</i>	Jenny Ladbrooke
Third	<i>Blue Shutters</i>	Dave Venables

*Bullfighter 2090**The Gift**Blue Shutters*

AV Competition

Some super AV entries this year. It always amazes me with how people come up with the ideas. Entertaining as always and congratulations to all who entered but to the top 3 as picked by the members, very well done. And it was so close to call we had two joint second places.

First Place [‘Ghost Town’](#) by Tim Hutchin

Second Place [‘National Trust Treasures’](#) by Dave Venables
(Joint)



What do you call a tiny pig reciting Shakespeare?

Hamlet!

08

External Recognition

MidPhot 2023 Results

Thanks to Chris for sending through the results of our entries for MidPhot this year. It was great to see that we had so many members entering images. Congratulations to all of you that entered, even if your image was not selected (that's me!). Well done to all of you that had images selected, 47 in total for the Club, with huge congratulations going to Phil, Kevin and Jolanta. Results were as follows:

Graham Newman 1 image selected

Phil Moorhouse 2 images selected (including 1 Ribbon)

Jane Storer 2 images selected

Kevin Watts 3 images selected (including Best Mammal Print)

Jane Roby 3 images selected

Jenny Ladbrooke 3 images selected

Mick Schilling 3 images selected



Chris Mallett	8 images selected
Sue Pearmain	9 images selected
Jolanta B-Axon	13 images selected (including Best Colour Print Portrait and 2 HCs)

If any of you enter any competitions and get any external recognitions like this then please drop me a line so that I can add it into the Newsletter. It's great to see what everyone is up to and the accolades they receive.



See you next in June!