

# SPS Newsletter

## Welcome

### What's Inside?

#### 01 Welcome

#### 02 Through the Lens

#### 03 Poor Kate by Jenny Ladbrooke

#### 04 'Save Our Souls'

#### 05 The Colour Green

#### 06 Hockney Country

#### 07 Fungi

#### 08 Out and About

#### 09 Competition Corner

#### 10 Photography Podium *The winning images from recent competitions.*

#### 11 External Recognition

Well we have officially welcomed in Spring, it's good to see her again in all her colourful glory! And we have put the clocks forward, always a happy experience and something I don't mind missing an hour of sleep for. I don't know about you but I have as usual over-indulged on chocolate Easter eggs, but they were enjoyable and worth every calorie!

On the subject of photography I can't help but feel extremely sad and disappointed regarding how our media and society reacted to the family photograph recently published by the Princess of Wales. The reaction to it and the fact that she had manipulated the image, albeit in good faith, was in my opinion extreme. How many of us as amateur photographers have undertaken image manipulation and had odd mishaps such as she did. It will probably put her off photography and publishing her images for life. I do appreciate there is another side to the story though in that should someone of such high profile have released an amateur, manipulated image? I am sure we could debate this one at length but the shame of the incident is that it has not shown photography perhaps in the best possible light. And on this theme have a read of Jenny's great article on this subject later in the Newsletter.

So what awareness days in April have caught my eye this year? We have National Pet Month, Stress Awareness Month and Active for April Month. So you know what that means ... take the stress out of your life by getting a dog and taking it for a walk ...! It's National Stop Snoring Week from 22<sup>nd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> April, National Gardening Week from 29<sup>th</sup> April and National Stationery Week from 29<sup>th</sup> April-5<sup>th</sup> May, so there is still a place in our modern digital world for paper, pens and pencils it seems! And my favourites are National Scream Day on 26<sup>th</sup> April so get practicing, and also on 26<sup>th</sup> Brake Zebras Beep Beep Day, I just love its name!

April also sees the end of our 'official programme and competition year', hasn't it all gone by so quickly. We have our AGM in the near future and a number of the Committee are relinquishing their roles so on behalf of us all may we thank you for your service on our behalf. A particular big shout out goes to Mick who is standing down as our Secretary after many years' service. And thanks to Phil for 'steering the ship' so ably again this year and we look forward to Martin taking up the reins for our forthcoming year. And there is the Annual Awards Dinner on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024, at Fulford Heath Golf Club to look forward to, superbly organised as ever by Sue and Fay.

On a photography note did you see the image 'On the Ball' by Ryan Stalker which has been chosen as the grand prize winner of the British Wildlife Photography Award? It's a picture of goose barnacles attached to an abandoned football below the waterline. An interesting image that says so much about our world today and the environment.



And to finish on a positive and heart-warming piece of news, I am very happy to see the press reports about the seeds taken by the National Trust from the felled Sycamore Gap tree at Hadrian's Wall. It's wonderful that they have been able to grow a number of seedlings from the tree that fingers crossed will be able to continue to grow into healthy saplings and eventually be planted out, possibly at Sycamore Gap again. If you are interested the National Trust is asking people to submit ideas about where the saplings should eventually be planted and what to do with the wood rescued from the felled tree. Further information is available on the National Trust website ([nationaltrust.org.uk/hadrians-wall](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/hadrians-wall)).

I hope you enjoy the Newsletter, and please continue to send material into me at my email address: [172elizabeth@gmail.com](mailto:172elizabeth@gmail.com).

And I hate to admit it but I think my jokes are getting worse .....

With my very best wishes

Liz xx

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On-Line!

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02



## Through the Lens

### Our Friend Val Manning

We recently said farewell to our good friend Val Manning and Ray has asked us to publish the moving speech President Phil gave at her funeral for those of us who were unable to attend.

*"It is truly an honour and a privilege to pay tribute to our dear friend Val, on behalf of her friends at Shirley Photographic Society. When Ray asked me to say a few words, I thought it was probably one of the hardest things I have ever been asked to do, but, in fact, I was wrong, it proved to be one of the easiest things I have ever been asked to do. Because, when I spoke to Val's friends at the club, they confirmed what we all knew, that Val was one of those rare and unique people who was universally adored by everyone she met. No-one had a cross word to say about Val, and Val never had a cross word to say about anyone.*

*Val and Ray joined Shirley Photographic Society in 2010, having previously been members at the Kings Norton Club. Now, I always wonder did we poach Val, Ray and Jane Storer from Kings Norton because I know how much they enjoyed each time our own Dave Venables visited. Dave was a regular visitor to Kings Norton as a Judge or a Lecturer. Val and Ray always loved his approach and Dave's smile. They thought he had a real twinkle. Perhaps it was Dave's twinkle that convinced them to join Shirley.*

*We are so glad they did join us at Shirley, because Val and Ray joined-in, wholeheartedly with everything we did as a club, from the President's Picnics, trips out, meals out, the exhibition we held in 2019, the Zoom Meetings during the Pandemic and the practical workshops. Indeed, Val once told me she had learned all of her Photoshop skills at Chris and Don's workshops, which were held in the Shirley Community Centre and how she used those skills in the most creative ways to produce photographs which looked like a work of art. We still remember her 'Swan Lake' photograph and 'Monet's Bridge' colour-popped. Val was a most accomplished photographer, and explored many different styles of photography, but those artistic images sort of became her trade-mark.*

*In fact, when I joined the club, I sat at the back of the room observing what went on for the first year. I had not really touched Photoshop at that stage, but was inspired by Val's creative approach, to try her style of photography combining different components to 'make' an image, rather than just 'take' a picture. Val had a real eye for an artistic image. Quite something.*

*Val will be sorely missed by all her friends at Shirley Photographic Society. We look forward to welcoming Ray back to the club with open arms."*

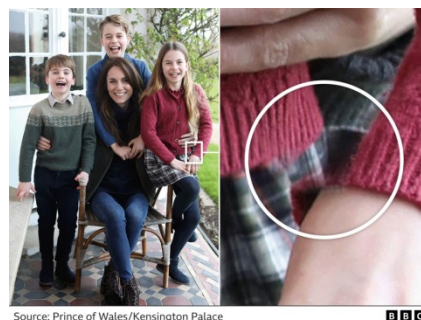
## 03

### Poor Kate!

What amateur photographer didn't feel huge sympathy for the Princess of Wales over all the furore to do with the image taken of her and her children by the Prince of Wales. And this was ahead of the shocking news of her cancer diagnosis.

All she had done was slightly tweak the image to improve it, but in so doing left tell-tale minor mistakes, which got all the press agencies withdrawing the image because it had been manipulated, leading to this press response on the BBC news website.

#### 'Bad job of photoshopping'



Source: Prince of Wales/Kensington Palace

BBC

When you think that most commercial photography, particularly of portraiture, will be hugely manipulated for aesthetic reasons, I don't really understand it other than I presume this was being released by their press office as a genuine family picture for Mother's Day. And journalistic standards for editorial press photographs are incredibly high. You can't remove anything from the image it has to be pretty much straight out of camera only allowing for some dodging and burning, cropping and general light changes. Certainly, no cloning or swapping of bodily parts! Knowing my style of photography, I think we can all comfortably rule out press photography as a second career for me!

My old boss used to always say mistakes get made when you don't ask the right questions and you assume you know the answer. Well clearly her press office didn't ask whether the image had been changed at all and didn't check it!

I think we can forgive the Princess of Wales for treating this like any other family photo with a little bit of editing to improve it without taking away from its essence, but I'm afraid the press agencies saw it differently. The cynic in me can't help thinking that maybe they resent an amateur taking such images as opposed to a professional photographer. So they metaphorically 'set the dogs' on the image to find something out of kilter, in which to be fair they succeeded. But we did find out from the photo meta data that she shoots with a Canon 5D!

Now we've all been picked up by judges for Photoshop errors. It's remarkably easy to miss something when you get too close to an image. But then it's only the 35/40 or so people in the audience who get to see your mistakes pointed out kindly (usually) by the judge, but in this case it's less kindly and the entire world is gazing on.

Personally, I was hugely impressed by the photo the Photoshop errors were minor and didn't take away from what appeared to be a genuinely happy family moment. And given what we now know the family had been coping with it really is quite remarkable. But I suspect heads were swapped and blurred hands replaced knowing that any image they put out in social media will be scrutinised. But the main reason I was impressed is because I have tried to do the same with my three children when they were younger, following a general request from the Grandparents to have a family photo of the children and well, it was a complete disaster. Firstly, trying to ensure that they were all dressed vaguely appropriately, then finding a day that wasn't too wet/too sunny - I knew that much about photography at that stage - and then and most difficult of all getting them all to pose together without internal squabbling. Well, as I say I failed. My only excuse is that one of the three was at that point a young teenager and had moved from being a reasonably compliant junior age child to well, shall we say a less compliant teen whose main objective in life was to rile his siblings. If I had had the skill to swap heads (or bang them!) trust me I would have done it!

Fortunately, at that time, a neighbour was a professional photographer, so he was roped in, and of course they all behaved perfectly, and I now have some lovely pictures of that stage of their growing up.



Now the world knows the context of Kate's Mother's Day photo and the health issues she and the family are coping with, all negativity has disappeared and I hope some humble pie has been eaten by the world's media! Context is everything.



Why did the Photographer throw their tripod in the lake?

One of the legs was loose and they couldn't stand it anymore!

# 04

## ‘Save Our Souls’

This year sees the 200 years’ anniversary of the RNLI (Royal National Lifeboat Institution), the oldest organisation of its kind in the world. The RNLI is an independent charity (the only time it took any government funding was between 1854-68 when the organisation looked in danger of running out of cash), and responds to any distress call, crews often won’t know the nature of the distress call until they are kitted up and at sea. The RNLI provides a 24/7 search and rescue service to 100 nautical miles out from the UK and Northern Ireland coast. They aim to meet 90% of call outs up to 10 nautical miles out within 30 minutes of launch in all weathers.

And here’s some statistics for you:

- 238 Lifeboat Stations (444 operational lifeboats)
- 5 Inland Lifeboat Stations (eg. Scottish Lochs)
- 4 Lifeboat Stations on the River Thames
- The RNLI is a £230 million a year outfit with c.2,000 permanent employees and c.10,000 volunteers.
- It costs £3,500 to train and equip a crew member each year.
- If charitable donations ceased tomorrow the RNLI would have operational reserves only for seven months.
- Lifeboats are expensive:
  - A D Class costs £89,000;
  - A B Class costs £245,000;
  - A Shannon costs £2.2 million.

So how did it come about? The RNLI was the eccentric dream of its founder Sir William Hillary. Brought up in a Quaker family in Liverpool he left the city in his 20s to see the world. An adventurer, he became equerry to the son of King George III and sailed around Sicily in an open boat. Having come into a fortune he squandered it and fled to the Isle of Man to escape his debtors. Whilst on the Isle he conceived the idea of a nationalised lifeboat service. At the time, shipping lanes were the busy heartbeat of the economy and life boat services were patchy and private. In a pamphlet published in 1823, he called for ‘a large body of men ... in constant readiness to risk their own lives for the preservation of those whom they have never known or seen, merely because they are fellow creatures in extreme peril’. Almost immediately his idea caught the imagination of the great and good and philanthropic paternalism. Originally called the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, its inaugural meeting was held in the City of London Tavern on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1824, and was supported by the then Prime Minister Robert Jenkinson and the campaigner William Wilberforce with King George IV its patron.

Blue Peter through its appeals funded 28 lifeboats in the programme’s history. Since its foundation the RNLI has lost 600 of its volunteers killed at sea. The last time an entire lifeboat and its crew were lost was in December 1981, when the lifeboat from Penlee Harbour in Cornwall was lost trying to rescue the coaster Union Star.

Today the RNLI has c.5,700 volunteer crew members. Since its foundation the RNLI has saved c.150,000 lives. During World War II it pulled more than 3,400 troops from the beaches of Dunkirk as well as numerous airmen shot down over the Channel. Today the RNLI also runs a lifeguard service across 242 beaches in the UK, saving 117 lives in 2022.



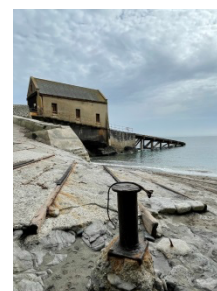


How many of us when we have been on holiday at the seaside have visited the local Lifeboat Station and looked at the lifeboats, I have on many occasions and taken countless photographs. And have you ever been present when a lifeboat is launched, a spectacular event to witness from hearing the siren go off (which sends a tingle up your neck as you know what it is), to the crew arriving, some running from shops and houses, others coming by car, and then the lifeboat launching. But whilst dramatic to watch you know that somewhere someone is in trouble and needs help urgently. And as you watch the lifeboat launch and head off your hope is that they all come back safe and sound.

So, if you happen to visit a Lifeboat Station this Summer and have a few spare coins in your pocket why not drop them into the RNLI collection boxes, every penny helps to save a life at sea and you never know when you or your loved ones might need the RNLI's assistance. If you want to find out more about the RNLI go onto their website (rnli.org).



Lifeboat Station (Trevoze Head, Cornwall)



Old Lifeboat Station (The Lizard)



A boat carrying red paint crashed into a boat carrying blue paint.

They were marooned!



Two fish swim side by side up a river when they swim smack into a concrete wall

One fish turns to the other and says "Dam"!

## 05

### The Colour Green

Green is a ubiquitous colour, the colour of our varied landscapes and can range from black greens to yellow greens. Our perception of green varies from connotations of lush evergreen green forests and fields and the environment in general, lucky four-leaf clovers, ideas of status or envy. It's fascinating that one colour can bring to mind such a variety of images and themes.

A new year brings with it fresh starts, budding ideas and new beginnings. Whether it's depicting growth, fertility or rebirth, the colour green has existed for thousands of years as a symbol of life itself.

In Islamic legend the saintly figure Al-Khidr represents immortality and is depicted adorned in green robes in religious iconography. The Ancient Egyptians illustrated Osiris – god of the underworld and of rebirth – with green skin, seen illustrated in paintings applied to the Tomb of Nefertari dating as far back as 13th century BC.



Ironically, though, the colour green initially failed to endure the test of time. Creating a green paint using a combination of natural earth and the copper mineral malachite meant that its longevity was compromised over time, as the green pigment turned black. Yet still the legacy of green as a symbol of life and new beginnings has remained intact.

In the Japanese language, a term to describe the colour green is *midori*, which comes from "to be in leaf" or "to flourish". Vital to landscape painting, green flourished immensely in artworks from the 19th century. Consider the pigments mixed with verdian and emerald greens in Van Gogh's 1889 Green Wheat Field, Morisot's Summer's Day (circa 1879) and Monet's Irises (circa 1914–17). And the colour has evolved further still from canvas to international emblems, recognised in the Pan-African flag in the 20th Century. Established in 1920 to honour the Black diaspora around the globe, the flag's green stripe stands for the natural wealth of Africa's soils and as a reminder of one's roots.

By the Middle Ages in Europe green was used to separate rich from poor. In dressing yourself in green, you could project a ranking of high social status or of respected profession, distinct from the crowds of peasants wearing lacklustre grey and brown cloths. Jan Van Eyck's masterpiece The Arnolfini Wedding (c.1435) has drawn countless interpretations surrounding the portrayal of the painting's mysterious couple. One thing is undisputed, however, their wealth and social ranking. Van Eyck's use of a vivid shade of green for the woman's dress is one of the giveaway clues as to their affluence. At the time, producing this colour fabric was an expensive and lengthy dyeing process that used a combination of minerals and vegetables.

However, the colour green had its limitations. The most famous painting of all time portrays its model dressed in green: in Da Vinci's 'The Mona Lisa' the green dress suggests that she is from the gentry, as red was reserved for the nobility. Today, the relationship with green and social status has transitioned to financial wealth over class. From the faded-green hues of the US dollar bill since 1861 to the green tables lining gambling halls, green characterises a major change in the way that we quantify status in the modern world.



What did the green bean ask the banana?

How are you peeling?

Though green has been associated with sickness since Ancient Greek and Roman times, we owe its association with jealousy to William Shakespeare. The idiom "green-eyed monster" was first coined by the Bard in 'The Merchant of Venice' (c. 1596–1599), and "green-eyed jealousy" is a line taken from 'Othello' (c.1603). This untrustworthy affiliation with green continued when toxic paints and dye were used in wallpaper, upholstery and clothing in the 18th Century. It had become easier to create the colour green using brighter and more permanent synthetic green pigments, and the now notorious arsenic-laced 'Scheele's Green' was invented in 1775 by Carl Wilhelm Scheele. The element of arsenic meant that a much more vibrant green colouring could, for the first time, be created, and its bold hue was hugely popular amongst Victorian society in London and Paris, who were ignorant to its poisonous effects. The resulting widespread illnesses and deaths inflicted led to the colour ceasing production by the end of the Century.

More recently, L Frank Baum's 1900 book 'The Wizard of Oz' uses green as a method of trickery and deceit. The Wizard enforces a rule whereby the residents of the Emerald City are led to believe that their city is more beautiful than it is in reality:

"My people have worn green glasses on their eyes so long that most of them think it really is an Emerald City." Furthermore, the 1939 Technicolour cinematic adaptation changed the face of witches in popular culture for good, when film studio MGM decided the Wicked Witch of the West's skin colour would be green.

Green has been used to signify freedom and independence through the 20th Century onwards. Art Deco painter Tamara de Lempicka's glamorous 1925 self-portrait 'Tamara in a Green Bugatti' was emblazoned on the cover of German fashion magazine *Die Dame* and has since become an icon of the rising women's liberation movements of the early 20th Century. Though the artist herself did not own the eponymous vehicle, Lempicka sitting in the driver's seat represents an empowered ideal through art. More recently, in 2021, actor Elliot Page adorned his Met Gala suit lapel with a green carnation – a nod to poet Oscar Wilde, who did the same as a sign of secret solidarity amongst homosexual men in 1892. Today, this statement can be seen a sign of the growing freedom and open solidarity in support of the LGBT+ community.

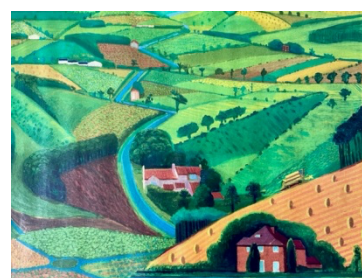
## 06

### Hockney Country

Talking of the colour green always makes me think of the countryside and great landscapes, particularly in the Summer months. If you are a fan or appreciative of the artist David Hockney's work, did you know that the Yorkshire Wolds is affectionately known as 'Hockney Country' and there are online trails that guide you to the locations that inspired him (see [visiteastyorkshire.co.uk](http://visiteastyorkshire.co.uk) for more information). Wold is an old word meaning wooded hill. Hockney's pictures capture the essence of the Wolds and its elements of quiet winding lanes, iconic dry valleys, the rolling patchwork of arable fields and hedgerows, pockets of trees and charming villages. So if you are up in Yorkshire this Summer I am sure there are some wonderful vistas for you to admire and capture (and maybe even enter in our landscapes competition next year!).



Huggate St Mary's Church Spire



The Road Across the Wolds

## 07

### Fungi

I don't know about you but with all this wet weather we have been having have you noticed how prolific moss and fungi is this year? This got me thinking about all the different types of fungi there are and I discovered that the UK is home to a staggering 15,000 species of fungi! And they have such wonderful names. We are all familiar with the Stinkhorn, Deathcap and Parasol, but what about King Alfred's Cakes?



Why does the mushroom always get invited to parties?

Because he's a fun-gi!





So where does the name fungi come from? Well the Latin word for mushroom of course, the singular being fungus and the plural fungi. Normally fungi are named in Latin but we then give them an English name also, hence the interesting and sometimes quirky names you can find.

Fungi are usually classified in four divisions:

- Chytridiomycota (chytrids);
- Zygomycota (bread moulds);
- Ascomycota (yeasts and sac fungi);
- Basidiomycota (club fungi)

Placement into a division is based on the way in which the fungus reproduces sexually.

The world's oldest fungi was collected in Canada's Arctic by a research team and is estimated to be somewhere between 900 million and 1 billion years old. So next time you are out and about and see some fungi just think how old they are and how many of them there are! Here's a couple I took but I haven't a clue what their names are!



## 08

## Out and About

I always like to visit new places and with Spring and Summer on the horizon thought it would be good to highlight some ideas of places to go that are interesting and can also offer potential photography locations – always thinking ahead to next season's competitions and the need for new material ...!

What about a trip down to Hanbury Hall (Hanbury, Worcestershire)? The National Trust property is a large two storey red-brick 18<sup>th</sup> Century stately home in the Queen Anne style standing in parkland. Grade 1 listed it has a Grade II Orangery and Long Gallery. In addition to its 400 acres of parkland the property has formal gardens based on the original 1705 design, heavily influenced by the Dutch Het Loo Palace and the Palace of Versailles. So if you want to get some formal garden photographs (and at this time of year the hyacinths and tulips will be in bloom) this is a place to visit. And if you want to see and perhaps get some photographs of blossom trees in bloom Hanbury is your place. From 15<sup>th</sup> April to 28<sup>th</sup> April they are holding their 'Festival of Blossom'. So get your walking shoes on and head on down to Hanbury. I might see you there – you will know me I will be the one with the camera in their hand ...!

Oh and I almost forgot, the best thing about Hanbury ... it has a restaurant and café and they do great cheese scones, warmed with butter ... what's not to like ...!

***If you have any suggestions of places for people to visit do please let me know and I will put them into the Newsletter.***

09

## Competition Corner

Thank you to all of you who submitted entries for the March Competition. And the first correct entry submitted was from Jane Roby, very well done. The answer is given below:

What goes out but never comes in?

**The Answer: A Flame**

And here's another little teaser for you this month:

## April Competition

What's black and white and eats like a horse?

The first correct answer emailed to me will win. So send your answers in by email to [172elizabeth@gmail.com](mailto:172elizabeth@gmail.com). **Closing Date for Entries: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

10

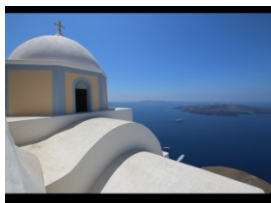
## Photography Podium

### Annual Print Competition

#### Prints

	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
First	Church View *	Mike McShane	Rainstorm *	Martin Green	Dalmation Pelican Dipping a Toe *	Jane Roby
Second	A Robin in the Snow	Graham Newman	One Step at a Time	Kevin Watts	Buttermere Evening	Mick Schilling
Third	Salen Wrecks	Ann Ashford	Gelada Baboons Grooming	Kevin Watts	Looking Back	Mick Schilling

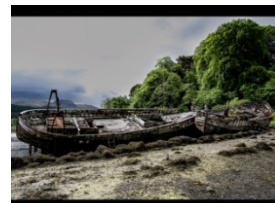
#### Group 1



Church View

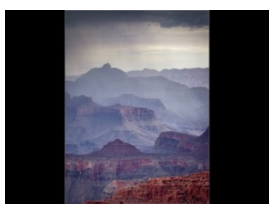


A Robin in the Snow

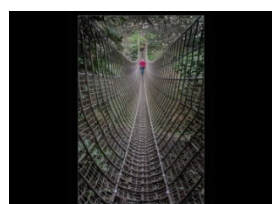


Salem Wrecks

#### Group 2



Rainstorm



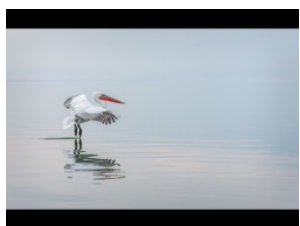
One Step at a Time



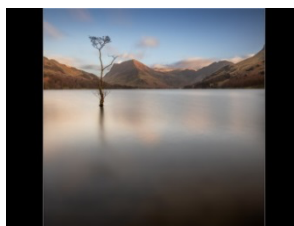
Gelada Baboons Grooming



### Group 3



Dalmation Pelican Dipping a Toe



Buttermere Evening



Looking Back

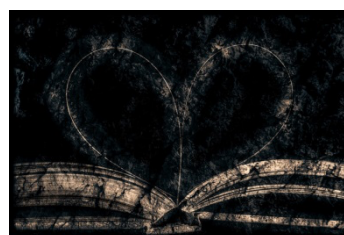
### Annual Creative Competition

Well this year's Creative Competition didn't disappoint. Didn't we have some very clever and different images and great titles that really captured wonderfully the pictures' context. I really don't know how people think them up and the level of skill demonstrated to create them I take my hat off to. And didn't we all vote for some wonderful images so congratulations to all runners and riders in the competition and to Jolanta for taking first place with her beautiful image. And the two that made me really chuckle were Phil's 'The Latest iCloud' and 'A Gander Down the Shops'.

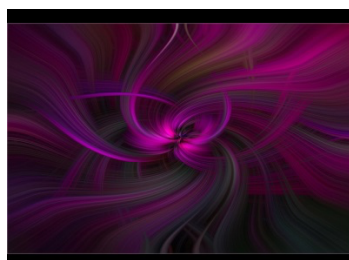
	All Groups	
First	Swans and Cygnets	Jolanta Bujalska Axon
Second	Book of Love	Ann Ashford
Third Equal	Twirling Hydrangeas	Jane Roby
Third Equal	Love at First Slice	Anne Ashford



Swans and Cygnets



Book of Love



Twirling Hydrangeas



Love at First Slice

### Annual AV Competition

Although I haven't seen all of the AVs submitted I thought the top 3 placed ones were brilliant. So well done again everyone but particularly to Tim for his winning AV. I thought it was very clever and am wondering how you did it (perhaps there's a future article there for you to let us into the secret?).

## 11

## External Recognition

### InterClub 2024

Didn't we do well in the recent InterClub 2024 competition with convincing wins in both the Prints and Digital Projected Images categories and overall competition winner. Well done Shirley and congratulations to everyone whose photographs went into our submission for the competition, and to the Competitions Committee for picking fabulous images, you certainly have the 'eye' for picking a winner.

### MidPhot 2024

This year 11 members entered Midphot and we had 38 acceptances:

Jolanta - 12 acceptances and received an award for 'Best Creative' and also a Ribbon

Sue Pearmain - 8 acceptances

Jenny Ladbrooke - 4 acceptances with 2 Highly Commended

Jane Roby - 3 acceptances

Chris Mallett - 3 acceptances and received a Ribbon

Kevin Watts - 3 Acceptances

Phil Moorhouse - 2 acceptances

David Venables - 2 acceptances

David Steele - 1 acceptance

Our "newbies" had near misses, so hopefully they will try again next year.

Congratulations to everybody. MidPhot was a brilliant exhibition as I'm sure those of you who visited will testify.

*If any of you enter any competitions and get any external recognitions 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 May 2024!**