



SPA President's Newsletter

December 2024

At our AGM back in October I expressed my profound thanks to the outgoing President Roger Mendham as he handed over the reins at the end of his two year term. Many clubs will have enjoyed visits from Roger in his capacity as one of our 'A List' judges and lecturers, and his leadership at the helm of our hard-working committee means he leaves the SPA in a very healthy state.

Looking back over 2024, a highlight of course was our Biennial Exhibition held at the Guildford House Gallery throughout most of April. An excellent showcase for the work of individual club members, the full catalogue of acceptances and awards can be found here <https://surreypa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/SPA-2024-Biennial-Exhibition-Catalogue.pdf>. I would strongly encourage all members to consider entering their best work for the next edition in 2026: you have just over a year to prepare your submissions!

At a club level, the worthy winners of our inter-club PDI championship in May were Epsom CC (Open) and Ludshott PC (Nature). Epsom CC together with Richmond & Twickenham PS provided SPA presence at the PAGB's Inter-Club PDI Championship held in Warwick in July. Very creditable placings were gained in this national event with Epsom 8th and RTPS 16th in the Plate competition. Of particular note was the individual image Gold Medal awarded to Rosemary Wilman (Epsom) for her "The Squash – Exit Left", which I reproduce here.



Again at the national level, the SPA's two nominated clubs at the PAGB Inter-Club Print Championship were Epsom and Woking. This annual event, held in Blackburn, is ably organised by our very own David Smith (Woking). In the Plate competition Epsom finished 6th with an impressive average score of over 13 per print (max. score 15), with Woking not far behind in 11th. Amongst the exceptional prints gaining individual praise "San Mother and Children" by Nicky Rochussen (Epsom) was given "The Backroom Team Award". Her compelling shot can be admired later in this newsletter.

We welcome four new judges to the circuit. Having been personally involved in their induction process I can say with certainty that we will benefit greatly from their photographic insights and generous donation of evenings over the coming years. They are ready to accept bookings and their details can be found in the recently updated and circulated SPA Handbook.

John Atherton	(Epsom)
Robert Ayto LRPS CPAGB	(Ludshott)
Suzy Courtnege LRPS CPAGB	(Ludshott)
Andrew Webster LRPS	(Dorking)

Retiring from judging duties are Helène Rogers, David Harford, and Bob Turner. They have our collective thanks and gratitude for the thousands of miles travelled and all the evenings spent scrutinising our efforts.

To those of you who enjoy club competitions and find yourselves anticipating judge's comments (or radically disagreeing with their image analysis!), why not consider becoming a judge yourself? Our clubs depend heavily on these volunteers giving up their time and expertise to support and enliven programmes. A new cycle of judge training will begin in the Spring with a taster session. Do get in touch to express interest and find out more.

Only last week we enjoyed a record number of clubs entering the annual **Inter-Club Print Championship**, held as usual in East Horsley and judged by Leigh Preston, Louise Hill and Clive Tanner. Results below:

Open

CLUB	SCORE		Ave Mark
Molesey	195	=	12.19
Godalming	195	=	12.19
Woking	188		11.75
Kingston	187	=	11.69
Southwick	187	=	11.69
Yateley	187	=	11.69
Epsom	186	=	11.63
Richmond	186	=	11.63
Bookham	185	=	11.56
Carshalton	185	=	11.56
Malden	185	=	11.56
Dorking	182	=	11.38
Reigate	182	=	11.38
Guildford	181		11.31
Croydon	180		11.25
Mid Sussex	178	=	11.13
Tandridge	178	=	11.13
Cranleigh	176	=	11.00
Horsham	176	=	11.00
Chertsey	175	=	10.94
Windlesham	175	=	10.94
Capel	168		10.50
East Grinstead	164		10.25
Ludshott	161		10.06

Nature

CLUB	SCORE		Ave Mark
Godalming	106		13.25
Bookham	99		12.38
Malden	98		12.25
Molesey	94	=	11.75
Yateley	94	=	11.75
Ludshott	93		11.63
Reigate	92		11.50
Capel	91	=	11.38
Woking	91	=	11.38
Dorking	90	=	11.25
Epsom	90	=	11.25
Richmond	90	=	11.25
East Grinstead	89		11.13
Chertsey	87		10.88
Cranleigh	86		10.75
Guildford	83	=	10.38
Kingston	83	=	10.38
Mid Sussex	83	=	10.38
Southwick	81		10.13
Horsham	79	=	9.88
Tandridge	79	=	9.88

Congratulations to the members of Molesey and Godalming for the depth of talent on display. Their championship winning images can be found on the front page of the SPA website along with the individual medal winners. The three judges were in agreement as to the overall best image in each class: fantastic shots from John Phillips (RTPS) and Caroline Cartwright (Bookham).



Here are more great images to enjoy: this time from our **Individual Members' Competition** held back in October. Always well supported, this time exceptionally so, with members free to showcase their latest work outside the confines of club rooms and selection committees. I can't include all the award winning images (again, the SPA website is the place to go) but these are the very top of an impressively large pile. I would encourage everyone to add **Saturday 25th October 2025** to their diaries and join in the celebration of the region's photography.

2024 Individual Members' Competition – Best Nature PDI



Great Crested Grebe and Chick

Kirsten Asmussen ARPS, Bookham Camera Club

2024 Individual Members' Competition – Best Nature Print



Goldfinch Collecting Nesting Material

Mandy Byatt, Photocraft Camera Club

2024 Individual Members' Competition – Best Open PDI



San Mother and Children

Nicky Rochussen ARPS, Epson Camera Club

2024 Individual Members' Competition – Best Open Print



Last Goodbye

Saman Gareeb CPAGB BPE2*, Reigate Photographic Society

I make no apology for the next item; a profile of fellow Kingston Camera Club member Simon Street. As you may well be aware, over the course of very few years Simon has amassed a staggering 10 Fellowships from the RPS (in addition to one from the Irish Federation). For most of us one such distinction would be the pinnacle of our photographic career, and a wreath of laurel to rest on but, as Simon describes below, his passion and energy very much continues to fuel his creative flow. After reading his profile, explore more of his work on his website <https://www.simon-street-photos.com/>.

Profile: Simon Street FRPS FIPF

The Digital Beginner

"Simon – your homework is going to be to produce a colour image.... for a change". So began my Digital Beginners class in late 2016. I see shapes. I see tones. But my head is wired less for colour, more for mono. Nor can I claim any obvious creative track record. Indeed, being a chemical engineer then a management consultant never felt like a promising platform for any photographer. Everyone's photographic path is different. Let me share a little of mine.

Stumbling from my Digital Beginners class, I looked for a camera club. Kingston CC was full at the time with a waiting list (remember then?). 6 months later a cancellation in 2017 let me in. I submitted my 'masterpieces' for Standard group (SPA) judging - as we do. At best, I had mixed success. I joined Richmond & Twickenham PS as well to see if they better appreciated my 'masterpieces'. They didn't. I hope this is sounding all too familiar to the reader.

Distinctions Road

Photographic readers repelled by the mere mention of Distinctions and Awards should look away now. I had convinced myself that if I was going to get any better, I needed to subject myself to the humiliation and euphoria of RPS Distinctions. I really enjoyed Licentiate and the open days were fantastic at giving blunt advice. It took 6 months and 10 prints to get my 'L' - in mono!

The Associate Distinction was much harder. I struggled. It took me 3 tries (over 9 months) all with different subjects. My third try – 'All The Lonely People' – was an important experience. I had never done any 'people' images before. I became invested in the emotional theme. I became invested in the seaside locations in Winter. For the first time, I realised what photographers meant when they said, "I have a real passion for this subject".

For the next ugly Distinction chapter – I blame Covid for a succession of Fellowships. Let me share the first two – Broken Glass and Beach Hutters. I was under 'house arrest' during lock down. An accidental breakage of a glass resulted in a cut finger and realisation of how beautiful glass looked. I tried to use a zoom to photograph it – no good. I bought a second-hand macro – still no good. I bought extension tubes – getting better, but still no better than my eyesight. I trialled stacking software – promising at last! So, 5% creative idea, 95% trial and error.

Next came Beach Hutters. The Two Metre Rule imposed a creative challenge to photographing people: distance and open air. One morning I hit upon the 'bright idea' to photograph the owners of beach huts. Photographers had done the colourful row of beach huts to death. I needed more differentiation. I decided I would go for owners AND unusual body language. I began to have engaging conversations about their views on Covid and Brexit.

This Fellowship cycle went around 10 times (yes reader – sad) over a 2-3 year period as I enjoyed the different challenges of RPS Visual Art, Travel, Documentary, Landscape...print, book...digital, etc. Yes – still all in mono! If you care, the different projects are on my website.

Judging and Assessing

‘What goes around comes around,’ as they say. Now was my chance to get my own back on the pain and anguish caused by so little appreciation of those early ‘masterpieces’.

In 2022, with plenty of coaching, I started assessing RPS Documentary work. It is very scary standing up in front of 20 images and an international audience who created the work, to provide anything close to a coherent assessment of it. I cannot imagine how many people since then I have managed to upset in maintaining a consistent standard.

In 2023, the SPA invited me to the judge training and mentoring. Over the last year, I have been having great fun at different clubs and societies as I (very) gradually learn a new skill. I am sure some attendees sitting in the room will feel the same way I did back in 2017!

The future is eBooks

I confess I prefer the ‘marathon’ experience of producing a small eBook over the ‘sprint’ of one outstanding image. An eBook allows me to get inside the subject. I aim for between 30 and 60 images which I then process and compress down to an eBook of less than 10MB for mailing. So far, I have managed 10 different subjects, but let me tell you about 2 of the most recent – see panel for examples.

You are probably going to hate me for reminding you of this period. In July 2024, I camped down in Clacton on Sea. An unknown (??) politician called Nigel Farage was seeking to establish a new party and become an MP. Did I meet him? Yes – both with and without my Press Pass. Did I meet the people of Clacton in the days leading up to the Election – definitely.

The second eBook was related to the first. I went to photograph the US election in November. I chose a swing state – Georgia. I chose the city that Trump tried to bully into reversing the 2020 election – Atlanta. I focussed on the Voters and came away shocked.

So there you have the sordid truth – from Digital Beginner to Distinctions addict to novice eBooker. As my Boss used to tell me: “Simon, as you get to the top of one ladder, you join the bottom of the next!”



Congratulations to members of SPA clubs who have achieved success in the PAGB's **Awards for Photographic Merit** over the last twelve months.

BPAGB

Angela Karney (Cranleigh)

CPAGB

Saman Gareeb (Reigate)

Robert Ayto (Ludshott)

Suzy Courtage (Ludshott)

Terri Bethell (Molesey)

John Phillips (Richmond & Twickenham)

DPAGB

Roger Hoyle (Windlesham & Camberley)

Tim Morland (Kingston)

In November 2025 the SPA will be hosting the weekend of adjudications for the APMs. If you are the sort of photographer who likes this kind of target for their accumulated body of work, then this is the ideal opportunity to apply for an award. In the Spring we will be hosting a workshop offering advice and guidance: in the meantime you can find general details on the PAGB website [Awards – The Photographic Alliance of Great Britain](#).

I must highlight further noteworthy individual achievements. In the 8th edition of the prestigious **Masters of Print** exhibition, out of the 60 with accepted images, three photographers hail from our region. Perhaps 2024 should be dubbed “the Year of the Pelican”!



“Wrong Way”

Roger Hoyle ARPS DPAGB EFIAP

(Windlesham & Camberley)

“Dalmatian Pelican Portrait”

Annie Healey FRPS DPAGB EFIAP/g BPE5*

(Molesey)

Selector’s Silver Medal



“Texture”

Lynda Bailey (RTPS)

GOLD MEDAL, Best Nature Print



In the previous MoP exhibition, **Saman Gareeb** (Reigate) was awarded a Silver Medal for his “Jumping a Puddle”. Another Reigate member **David Lyons** gained his BPE5* in June, joining **Annie Healey** who achieved this in March. For those of you unfamiliar with the distinctions awarded by British Photographic Exhibitions, this impressive feat requires over 300 acceptances! This year David and Annie were also crowned **EFIAP/p** and **EFIAP/g** respectively.

https://thepagb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/fiap_working_towards_distinctions.pdf

By virtue of our club membership we are all part of the wider family of the PAGB. If you are also a member of the RPS then you will be aware of its regional activities. For her outstanding contributions to the London Region, **Judy Hicks** LRPS (Hampton Hill PS) is one of the latest recipients of a **Fenton Medal**. Many congratulations to Judy.

Finally, a personal thank-you for the welcome I have received in my judging visits to clubs. It is always a pleasure to see the quality and variety of work produced across the federation. There are some clubs that I will be visiting for the first time this season and I look forward to meeting you all. To everyone (over 2700 individuals across our clubs) I wish you, your friends, and your family, a very happy Christmas and a photographically fulfilling New Year.



Tim Morland

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Upcoming SPA Events

15 th March	Club Officers' Meeting	10:00am ZOOM
10 th May	Inter-Club PDI Championship	East Horsley (deadline 19/04)s

Member Eligibility

Readers of their e-news will have seen that the PAGB has introduced new eligibility criteria for photographers which the SPA and our clubs must adhere to when entering PAGB events. The SPA has therefore decided to introduce a similar system which will protect the SPA and its member clubs both from entering images from a photographer who is not eligible to represent a club/the SPA and ensuring that clubs enter images in SPA competitions only from genuine club members who live in the club's catchment area. The new criteria will only be for SPA competitions, starting with the May PDI Inter-Club competition, and, as with the PAGB, there will be a process to enable clubs to apply for an exemption in special circumstances. Full details to follow in the New Year.