

Ludlow Photographic Club

Newsletter No. 7

Dear Members

It was good to “see” the majority of you at our recent Social Meeting using Zoom. Thanks again to Nick Tranter for organising a testing quiz.

Since the last Newsletter, lockdown measures have been eased however the maximum number of people allowed to meet outdoors is still 6, thus our Photo Meets are still constrained by this.

Six of us met up at the Stiperstones on 6th June and you can see some of the images taken by the group on our website under “Members’ Gallery” and also some have been posted on the LPC Facebook site.

We met again on 25th June at Clun Castle and results should soon be appearing online.

I would like to thank Keith Pointon for agreeing to give a critique of members’ travel images on 30th June and to all members who took part.

At the time of writing, the re opening of indoor meetings is still being discussed by the government. However, I have received a letter from Helen Hughes, CEO of Ludlow Assembly Rooms and have copied part of it here for your information.

Dear Colleague

Building work recommenced on 26 May and the latest projected completion date is somewhere around the end of November. This assumes that there are no more unknowns discovered - more rotten timbers were uncovered in the first week back! There will obviously be a lot for staff and volunteers to do before the doors can be opened, (not made easier by the loss of a lot of our stored equipment during the floods earlier in the year and the not unexpected ongoing saga of an insurance claim). As you can imagine, our finances are also under severe strain.

The other unknown is of course a date when cinemas/theatres are permitted to reopen. (Current social distancing means that no more than 45 people could be accommodated in the auditorium which will obviously be completely financially unviable).

At present all staff are furloughed under the Government's Job Retention Scheme and some have left during the prolonged capital building project - which was, after all, due to be completed in January 2019!

The Board are currently working on future plans: financial, staffing, Health and Safety and dates. In the meantime, and taking social distancing into account, they have decided that it would not be appropriate to open the 'Farmers' side of the building until the whole building can be open.

As soon as I have better news for you, I will of course write to you again. We are remaining optimistic that the future holds great things for the organisation and, more importantly, for the residents of Ludlow.

In the meantime, I do hope that you are all staying safe and well,

With very best wishes
Helen

Therefore, the Club will need to continue to meet virtually using Zoom and use videos for planned events for the time being.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 14th July when we have a talk on entitled

“Journey to the End of the World – The Fjords of Patagonia”

by Julian Elliott using Zoom.

Julian is an award winning professional freelance landscape and travel photographer based in the Loire Valley, France.

<https://www.julianelliottphotography.com>

The meeting will start at 7.45pm and as Julian has a Professional Zoom licence, there will be no interruption after 40 minutes.

We will then have a further event on 28th July, the

Fourth General & Advanced Projected Image Competition.

Images to be received by Rosemary by 21st July. The judge will produce a video of the competition which will be available on 28th July.

There will be no meetings or events in August to give a brief **Summer Break**.

However, we re convene on 1st September for a talk on

Iceland

by Nick Tranter & Julian Crombleholme using Zoom, commencing at 7.45pm.

I am grateful to Kate Maxwell for providing the following illustrated article.

The Wounded Hill

A photo project: Titterstone Clee Hill

Landscape photography has become something of a sport these days – good conditions are forecast at a popular location, and hoards of enthusiasts jump into their cars and whizz off at silly o'clock to capture their very own version of Durdle Door, or the Duke of Portland Boathouse, or the Lone Tree of Llyn Padarn. In the Age of Instagram, many once peaceful places have become extremely popular and crowded, and it is difficult to capture an image that has any originality, or improve on what has already been done thousands of times before.

With this in mind, I was open to some new ideas when I attended a *Meeting of Minds* Conference in Cumbria in 2018, organised by the online subscription magazine *On Landscape* (and conveniently just down the road from my sister, who owed me a meal). This event is held on alternate years, and offers landscape photographers a chance to hear some of the big guns discussing the genre.

First up was Charlie Waite, founder of the annual Landscape Photographer of the Year competition, discussing the aesthetic of beauty in the landscape. Later in the day, Paul Hill seemed to turn this idea on its head. Paul is a former Ludlow boy, once a press photographer and journalist, but now an academic and photography tutor - you might have met him when he had an exhibition at the Photo Space in Ludlow a couple of years back, with some stark monochrome images of the town taken in the Sixties when he was a cub reporter. Coming from a documentary rather than pictorial route, he dismisses the “pretty picture” tradition, and thinks photographers should look closely at the real, lived landscape rather than seek out clichéd, idealised, popular locations which have been photographed to death.

Both talks are available on YouTube, and well worth a listen if you are interested in some of the discussions taking place around landscape photography (just type *On Landscape Meeting of Minds* into the search bar).

I find myself somewhere in-between these extremes – I am moved and inspired by beautiful light and patterns in the landscape, but equally, I appreciate that it is also a workplace, a playground, a breathing space. The conference did make me question what I am trying to achieve with my camera.

I bought my first digital camera in 2007 to help me capture the light and shape and colour I experienced when I was out walking my dogs – to use as reference for the paintings I wanted to do. Gradually I became hooked, joined Ludlow camera club to improve my skills, and started entering club competitions for expert feedback. However, I eventually reached a point where I was feeling a little lost in direction – I can't afford to be heading off to hotspots every week, and in any case, if another photographer has planted a tripod somewhere, I'm reluctant to set up next to them and take the same picture.



Giant's Chair

So, inspired by Paul Hill's challenge to photograph your own surroundings, I decided to start a project about the Clee. Previously, I had dismissed it as a subject, partly because the heather-clad Mynd or the rocky Stiperstones are more photogenic than the disused quarries and the boggy, pock-marked, sheep-littered hill I see every day from the end of my road (when it's not shrouded in cloud). It tends to be a more attractive place to look away from, as the views and sunsets can be amazing, than to look at. And it is challenging to photograph.



Goldrush

But Clee is fascinating because it is a kind of wilderness in the otherwise very tame and controlled, micro-managed landscape of our county. Used, abused, abandoned and neglected, this former industrial landscape, exploited by humans since the Bronze Age for its treasures, even featured by name in the Hereford Mappa Mundi of 1300, is gradually being weathered and softened by time, and has a kind of haunted, eerie beauty, once you start to look at it more closely.



Over the Radar

I have been visiting it now for several months, in all conditions, finding derelict buildings and ancient sites that I hardly knew existed previously, and building up a collection of images. Alf Jenkins's book, *"Titterstone Clee Hills: Everyday Life, Industrial History, and Dialect"*, has been invaluable, prompting me to explore little known sites and features.

Doing a photography project is an interesting and challenging exercise – the pictures need to work in harmony, and to tell a story, rather than be one-off killer shots, and to hang well together in a cohesive style - this aspect I'm still working on. I did not want the project to be purely documentary – I wanted to try to convey some of the wonder and fascination I have for the hill, its exceptional character, and its extraordinary weather moments.



Quarry With Storm

But Titterstone is, truth be told, also rather ugly – until you get the right light. Many of the pictures do not stand alone, but work in pairs or triplicate, and need an explanation. In isolation, their purpose might be rather mystifying - as in, why on earth would you take that, who would want that on their wall? But I feel the bellpits, the ruined squatter cottages, the crumbling concrete, are all part of the story, and so I am determined to catch them when the light is right. My challenge is to create some interesting images from what might at first seem unpromising raw material.



Rising from the Mist

As lockdown is relaxed, the project continues, and I hope will be ready to exhibit at the Photo Space later this year. Meanwhile, I've included some of the images I've taken so far.

Kate Maxwell

19.05.20



Snowfall

I am also grateful to Brian Minniss for providing us with a Photo Quiz with 28 images for you to identify.

I will publish the answers in the next Newsletter but if you would like to send your answers to Brian (brianminniss@yahoo.co.uk) before 1st August, the member with the highest score will eventually receive a small prize when we eventually meet again in Oscars!

I am sending out the Quiz in a separate email to reduce the file size.

So with a final plea for any short articles for the next Newsletter,

Best wishes

Paul.