



e-news

from the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain

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GWEN AND PHIL CHARNOCK OUR LIFE IN PHOTOGRAPHY



Barney – possibly the most photographed dog in Lancashire

In these unusual times, when most of us have to stay indoors due to Coronavirus, it can be an interesting exercise to reflect on our own photography. Throughout our lives, photography has provided the backdrop for much of what we have ever done. You could say it has defined our lives and, along the way, it has provided the most rewarding times.



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Our interest in photography provides a unique story going back some 45 years. We met at school at the age of 16 in 1974, when Philip had already done an "O level" in photography and Gwen's favourite subject was art. It was then that our two interests came together and we discovered the fun and the excitement of photographing anything and everything.

In those days we were using the tried and trusted Zenith E camera, a favourite Russian export for many photographers at the time. It was so reliable that we bought the Zenith enlarger to print our favourite mono images. We have had many exciting times in photography, but none more than those pioneering days, on which we look back fondly.

However, there were only so many photographs of rusty railings and reflections in water that our parents were prepared to show interest in, so we had to find an outlet where we could discuss photography with like-minded people. This came in the form of Wigan PS. Two 17 year olds walking into a camera club in 1975 was rare to say the least. Our first night was print competition and we remember being 'gob smacked' by the 20 x 16 inch flush mounted colour images being produced by the likes of Fred Wilkinson and Keith Wright. No trade processed work allowed!



We walked out of the place; half disillusioned by how poor our photography was in comparison, but wholly inspired by how stunning their standard was. We then had to decide whether to return or not. It was a great decision that we did. The next month, we entered the print competition with our 10" x 8" black and white images in the Beginners Section. However, we only had each other for competition. Better not to say which one of us won! From then on we had the competition 'bug' which drove us on for many years to come.



Early work by Gwen Charnock



We realise that competition isn't for everyone, but for us and for many taking up photography, it can be exciting and it is a great way to improve your skills by setting goals, such as trying to win club competitions and obtaining distinctions. This certainly applied to us when we progressed to the advanced section in Wigan, alongside each becoming President of the club. We even joined Bolton Camera Club for a few years as they were the best in monochrome in our region, a subject which we wished to learn in more depth.

The next step for us was looking beyond our club competitions and putting ourselves against the best in the country or even the world. So we started to enter the National and International Salons. Forty years ago, there were very few Exhibitions compared with today and, with no internet, entries had to be posted. We entered most of the Internationals in Britain and a few abroad, in order to gain points towards a FIAP distinction. At that time it took a minimum of 5 years exhibiting in order to attain an AFIAP, then a minimum of 3 further years to obtain EFIAP - A long but rewarding road.



At the time, Wigan Photographic Society had a nucleus of 6 photographers who were keen on entering Salons and formed what may have been the first ever competition group of its type. We named it Coccium, which is the Roman name for Wigan. We used to meet regularly to take photos, discuss exhibitions, and check up on who had gained any acceptances. If one person had an acceptance out of the six of us, we had a celebration! Coccium 'planted the seed' for another idea of our forming a completely new club, based on the principle of collectively supporting and improving each other's photography, whilst entering competitions individually and as a club. Hence, in 1988 Wigan 10 was formed, meeting in the lounge and then the studio of our house.



The early days of Wigan 10 were undoubtedly the most exciting and rewarding. From success at a local level in the L&CPU, the club went on to win PAGB Championships in both Slides and Prints. The pinnacle came in 2006 when we won the inaugural FIAP World Cup. It was a once in a lifetime trip to share with the group we had then to accept the award in Paris.

For us, having photography as a hobby is all about having fun. It is pleasing to produce a successful photograph, but we accept disappointment when an image fails, because in many ways more pleasure had been provided from the social side, meeting like-minded people. It has been a privilege to sit on the PAGB and RPS distinction panels and to have enjoyed and witnessed so much wonderful work from other photographers. We were delighted to both obtain our FRPS in 1991, our MFIAP in 2009 and to be both awarded the APAGB for Services to Photography in 2019.

“photography as a hobby is all about having fun.”



Phil & Gwen receiving APAGB Awards from Roger Parry, PAGB Vice President. Also in the picture is Christine Widdall.

Our photographic gene seems to have been passed down somewhat to our son Christopher.

He is also a keen photographer - when he gets the chance away from his profession as a teacher.

He was the youngest to obtain an ARPS at the time, aged 15.



Pictures of Chris Charnock by Gwen

Whilst it can be a good thing to have a hobby interest with your partner, a number of people advised us never to work full time with each other. So, of course, we set up a business together!



A life changing occurrence happened for us in 1984 at a time we were entering photographic magazine competitions. We were stunned when Philip won a Camera Weekly photo competition. The prize was a weekend with a top photographer, Patrick Lichfield - the Queen's Cousin for those of you who are too young to remember - photographing a model in Kensington for the Unipart calendar.

Returning to two boring jobs in Wigan became a depressing proposition and so, just a few weeks later we resigned from both and set up our photography business. Only recently married, with no formal photographic training or qualifications and now with no income, this decision was a little risky to say the least. However, turning our hobby into our living was a very exciting, adventurous thought.

We spent our time turning a bedroom into a studio and ringing as many prospective clients as possible in order to get a 'foot in the door' for an interview. We decided to concentrate on the industrial, commercial and travel photography business. This marketing strategy would be impossible today, but those were the days when a phone call would give easy access to the Managing Director or a Buyer.

Glamour day for winning shutter bug

Noble Lord puts me in the picture!

IT WAS a day to remember for camera-mad Philip Charnock. The Evening Post and Chronicle advertisement representative was about to pick up his prize for winning a national photographic competition - a day with Patrick, Earl of Lichfield. Here is his diary of that memorable day in London with one of the world's top photographers.

And snap-happy Gwen!

When Philip and Gwen Charnock gave up their ordinary jobs in an advertising agency, they took up a hobby which has become a full-time career. And for a couple who believe that 'hobby' should be a word which never comes to mind, they have found that their hobby has become a profession. Charnock and Gwen are the gold medal winners of the Camera Weekly photo competition. They were in Kensington for the Unipart calendar.

The Observer Philip and Gwen Charnock turn their hobby into a Career.

Framing a jet-set future

THEIR'S really clicked for Philip Charnock when he won a photography competition. The prize was a weekend with a top photographer, Patrick Lichfield - the Queen's Cousin for those of you who are too young to remember - photographing a model in Kensington for the Unipart calendar.

After knocking on many doors, our 'luck' began to change and small local photo assignments began to come in, from someone making bird cages in the garden to I.C.I. We could see that the market for professional photography was massive and no one else was offering a similar service locally, other

than the big advertising agencies. We loved the variety of photographic jobs and we were lucky to be able to embrace digital photography and Photoshop from the beginning. Our clients were awe inspired by its creative possibilities and we quickly learned how to design brochures and literature for small companies, which strengthened our business.



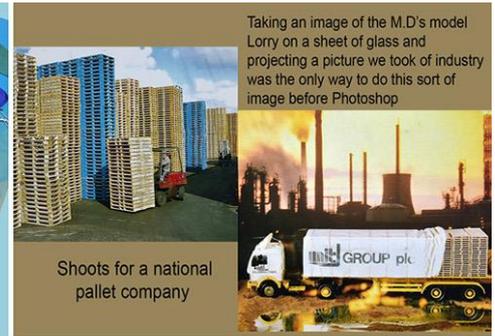
We photographed many foods and confectionery

De Roma's icecream to Heinz food factory. Variety is the spice!



Philip and Christopher stood in as models on many occasions.

BBQ's positively encouraged

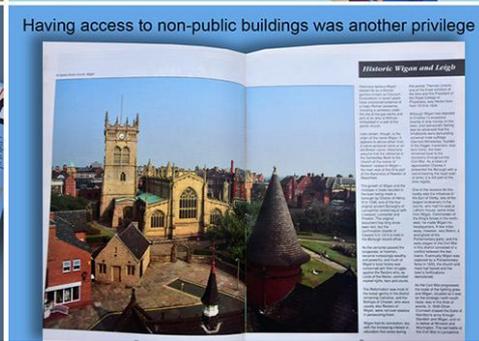


Taking an image of the M.D's model Lorry on a sheet of glass and projecting a picture we took of industry was the only way to do this sort of image before Photoshop

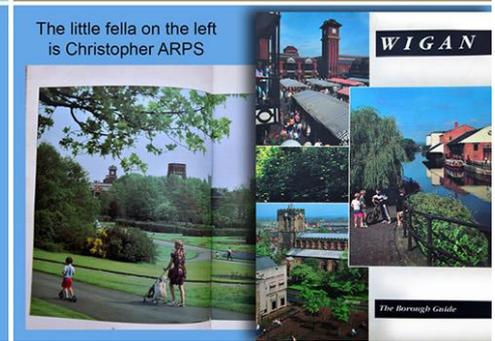
Shoots for a national pallet company



Brochure Production for schools



Having access to non-public buildings was another privilege



The little fella on the left is Christopher ARPS

Our most exciting and rewarding times came after a chance meeting in our early days with an art director who was looking to do a photo shoot abroad for a young Company named Eurocamp. All we had to show in our portfolio were images submitted in the club competition world. However, this proved enough to convince the company that we had what it takes. Thirty four years later, we are still photographing around Europe throughout summer for Eurocamp. This year, due to Coronavirus all shoots have been postponed and we have genuine fears for them and the travel industry in general.

Chenonceau Chateau, an attraction for the nearby Eurocamp, Loire



Something we always remember being told when starting our photography business was that we would no longer want to do photography as a hobby. This could not have been further from the truth. Without being constantly driven to improve by competing in Salons and competitions against the inspiring images of other photographers, we would not have had the confidence to start and continue with our career. The many lectures, workshops and seminars we did around the country, spraying subjects with water droplets, setting fire to slides with *Nitromors* paint remover, or demonstrating Photoshop etc., always gave us great pleasure. And, of course we have had the pleasure of being invited to judge exhibitions and events for Clubs, Federations and the PAGB.

“professionals don't enjoy photography as a hobby.”

Gwen & Phil Charnock



Barney



Fred Wilkinson ARPS our wedding photographer Wigan P.S. Secretary

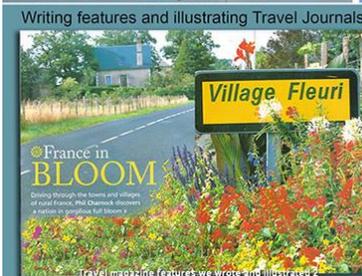


Gwen Christopher and Philip in the 'Studio' Charnock Photography

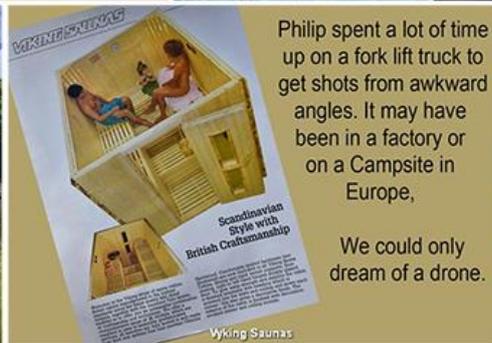
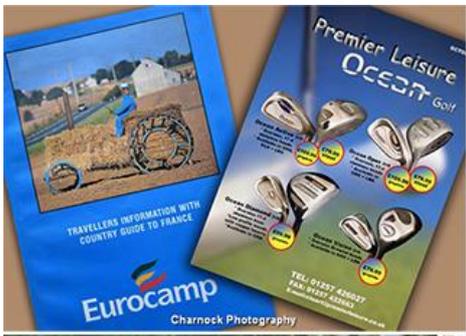
We have always tried to do our own thing with the emphasis, most importantly, on having fun.

35mm Photography Magazine

Picture of Gwen by Philip Charnock



<< Some of our commercial work



We have really enjoyed more than three decades photographing for Eurocamp and we hope that our good friends there can survive the current COVID 19 pandemic in good business order.



One of the great joys of amateur photography for us, has been sitting on judging, selection and Awards panels for the PAGB and the RPS where we have made and met many good friends.

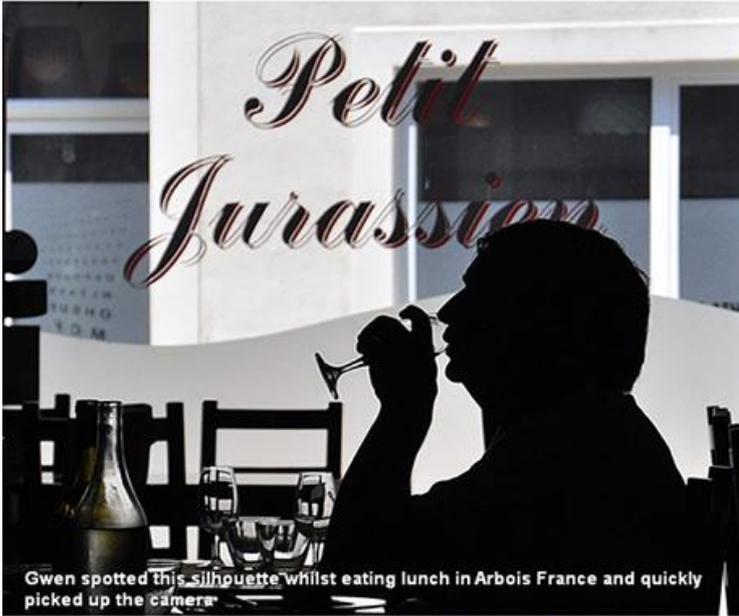
A general selection of our favourite photographs.



Gwen shot of Jess, our Daughter in Law



Gwen pic of Maurice Jones wigan 10



Gwen spotted this silhouette whilst eating lunch in Arbois France and quickly picked up the camera



Looking for quirky images in Anney whilst drinking coffee opposite the Boulangerie



Gwen with Tessa by Phil



Phil charnock 'Magic Broom' paint stripper on slide then burned off technique for FRPS

We have enjoyed giving seminars and workshop presentations all over the UK.



How to turn this

Into this...



Workshop...

How to make the above from the two images on the right



Workshop...

How to make the above from the two images on the right





20Charnock_Snowy Walk



21Charnock_Snowy Trees



22Charnock_Salon work 17



23Charnock_Stormy lighthouse



24Charnock_Salon work 20



25Charnock_Frost



26Charnock_Lake



27Charnock_Salon work 16

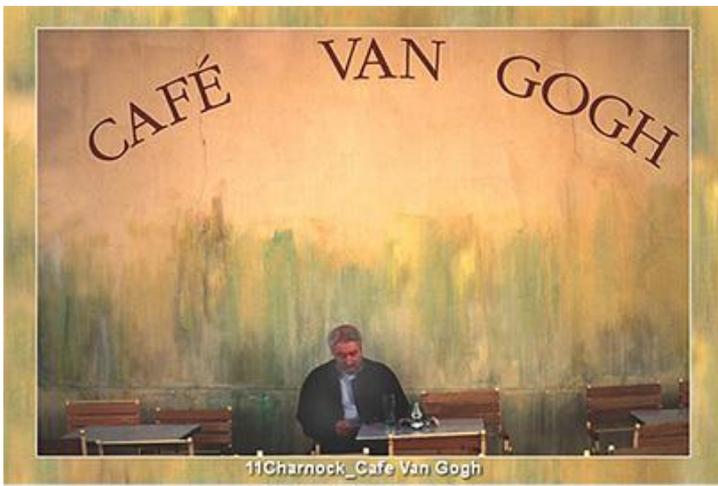
CLICK ON any picture to view them more comfortably on our e-news website



39Charnock_Salon work 4



34Charnock_Salon work 12



11Charnock_Cafe Van Gogh



50Charnock_Salon work 22



13Charnock_Empty chairs & empty tables



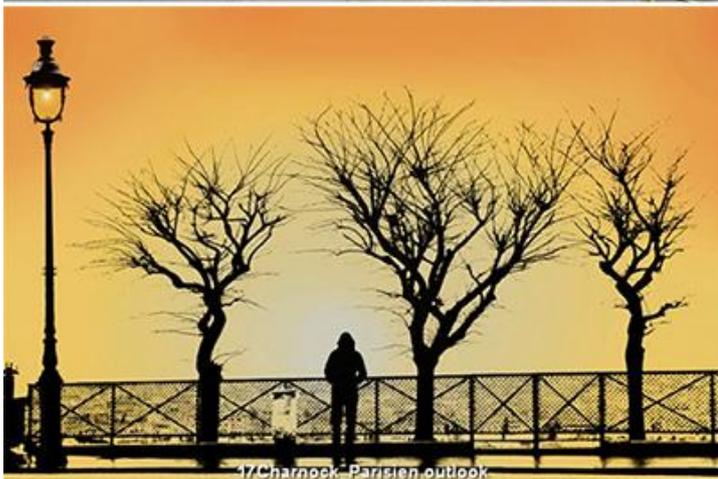
12Charnock_Egyptian trader



14Charnock_Egypt, goat and chicken



18Charnock_Oradour sur Glane



17Charnock_Parisien outlook



19Charnock_Northern Storm

"We realise that competition isn't for everyone, but for us and for many taking up photography, it can be exciting and it is a great way to improve your skills ..."

MFIAP - Maitre de la Fédération Internationale de l'Art Photographique

The distinction "Master Photographer of FIAP" is awarded to a photographic artist in recognition of his/her entire achievements in the field of artistic photography. To even apply, the candidate must be holder of the EFIAP distinction for at least 3 years and, for many, it is the ultimate photographic award. A panel of work has to be submitted and approved by the entire Directory Board and only the very best work is accepted. At the time of writing there are 158 holders of MFIAP, worldwide.

Gwen and Phil were both awarded the distinction in 2009, each with a panel of 20 monochrome prints.



Gwen Charnock - for MFIAP 1



Gwen Charnock - for MFIAP 2



Gwen Charnock - for MFIAP 3



Gwen Charnock - for MFIAP 4



Gwen Charnock - for MFIAP 5



Gwen Charnock - for MFIAP 6

Gwen Charnock MFIAP FRPS



Phil Charnock - for MFIAP 1



Phil Charnock - for MFIAP 2



Phil Charnock - for MFIAP 3



Phil Charnock - for MFIAP 4



Phil Charnock - for MFIAP 5



Phil Charnock - for MFIAP 6

Phil Charnock MFIAP FRPS

Throughout our lives, photography has provided the backdrop for much of what we have ever done. You could say it has defined our lives and, along the way, it has provided the most rewarding times.

Gwen & Phil Charnock

CLICK ON any picture to view them more comfortably on our e-news website.
You can view every MFIAP Entry at <https://www.fiap.net/en/mfiap?page=1>

GWEN & PHIL CHARNOCK - OUR LIFE IN PHOTOGRAPY



69Charnock_Lighthouse_The Vortex



40Charnock_Horseman



72Charnock_Justice Floyd



73Charnock_Salon work 18