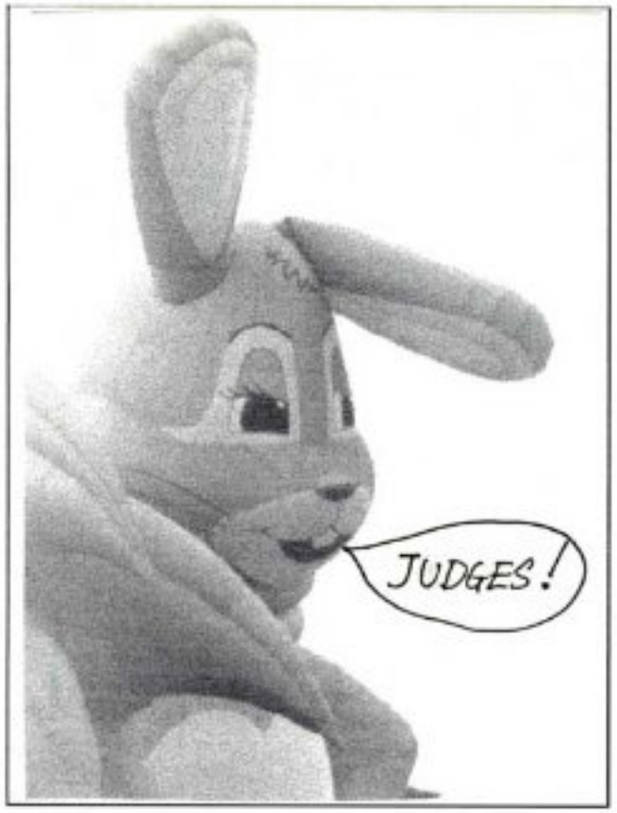
Programme Changes

Ken Scott will be giving an illustrated talk on the "Basic Techniques in the Use of Camera and Lenses" on **Wednesday, 15th February**. This will replace the "Insight into News Photography" talk which is now scheduled for the 12th April 1995.

Please make a note on your programme. This also means that the last round of the internal club competition on "Reportage" has had to be cancelled.

Cliff



Judge and be Judged

I do not mind how the work is judged as long as it is constructive, fair, and promotes a better understanding of 'how it should be done'.

The article on page 2 by Peter Crook should prove to be the basis for a lively discussion about how competitions are judged.

Personally I only agree with him to a certain extent, some judges may prefer to spot judge, some may find they get more out of an image by extra contemplation. It depends on how committed a judge is, both in the time he has available to him and maybe to his commitment to appreciate and criticise the finer details of the image.

I think also some photographs have immediate impact but are not necessarily the images that are the most effective in conveying a message.

The fact that the 'works of art' do not leave the safety of the club's confines obviously has its attractions - but I don't think we should expect every judge to be able to analyse the images on the spot.

We must not forget that photography at our level is first and foremost something we enjoy doing and also that a great deal of pleasure is derived from seeing the work of our 'peers'.

Personally I do not mind how the work is judged as long as it is constructive, fair, and promotes a better understanding of 'how it should be done'.

I could write a lot more on this and closely related subjects - perhaps you could let the Committee Members know how you feel about it. It is YOUR Club.

Cliff Carter

Photo Hunt Result

The results of our efforts at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum were judged by Michael Thyer at Woodmancote Village Hall on Friday, 6th January.

It is amazing how differently we all see the same subject. The overall winner was Ian Betts from Henfield Club with an excellent panel of slides. Steyning's winning entry came from our Chairman, Roger Tapner who came third overall - Well Done.

I hope we will be invited to compete in this year's Photo Hunt - more news if I hear anything.

Steyning Camera Club Newsletter

NUMBER 5
February 1995

Editor: Jim Jenkins

Viewfinder

Spot the Judge

Any judge worth his or her salt should have the total confidence and ability to assess images when put before them.

The judge for our January Competition was Chris Peet FRPS. On this occasion Chris had the prints and slides delivered to him at home for pre-judging, however at all other times, Chris 'spot' judges the pictures on competition night. When I was chatting to him during the interval, he told me he preferred to 'spot' judge, and felt he did a better, fairer job without having seen the work prior to the competition. It was interesting to note that on the night of this competition, he changed his mind over some marks which he had previously given at home.

Some members may be under the impression that 'spot' judging does not afford them an accurate assessment of their work. I disagree for several reasons. The only way for us to have an accurate appraisal of our best work is obviously to drift away from the seen, tried and failed judges, many of them on the Regnum Crouch list, and select people with a national reputation to uphold.

Angela and I visit two or three associations, including photographic organisations, every single week. We generally have time to discuss matters other than our chosen lecture or audio-visual presentation, and we have discovered that it is only in the South Coast region of Sussex that judges often expect prints and slides prior to the competition in order to perform some sort of pre-judgment of the work.
We have also discovered, somewhat to our amazement, that some of these judges assess your best slides by means of small, hand-held or desk-top viewers. One judge apparently holds slides up to the window!!! We feel that this is unacceptable at our Club. Several judges have openly admitted to being influenced by the preference of their wives in reaching their top scores! By the time your precious slides are returned to us, they may have acquired some additional imaging in the form of dust, sneeze spots, fingerprints and horror of horrors - scratches!

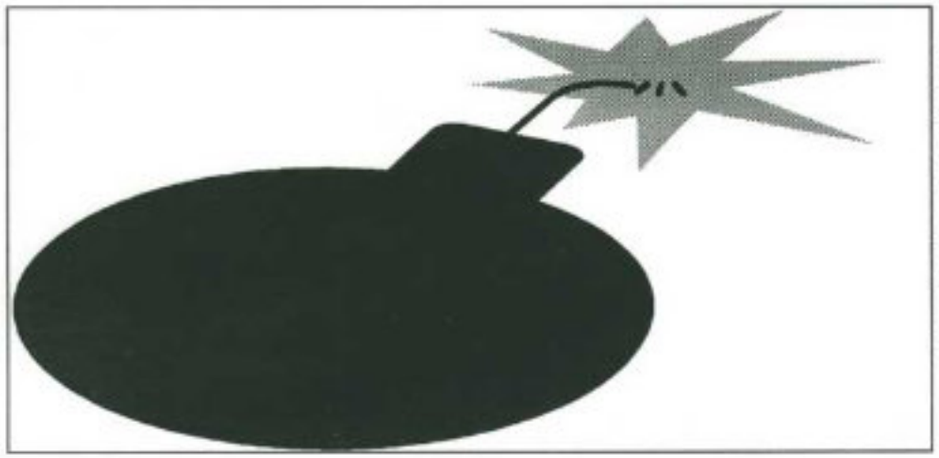
Prints are often abused more seriously than slides, with fingerprints on Cibachromes, damaged or marked mounts, and in one case, dried biscuit crumbs adhered to the print surface.

Just up the road from us, the Surrey Photographic Federation is a large, prestigious organisation, running high-powered competitions, using ONLY 'spot' judges. Most of these judges are superb. They are expert photographers in their own right and have the distinctions to prove it. They are able to give valuable constructive criticism, they are erudite and confidently assess the work, on the night, with sensitivity and perception. Surely these are the judges we need if we are to continue to develop and improve our skills? A good 'spot' judge does not miss a thing - think of some of them you know such as Chris Peet, Graham Devenish, Andrew Perry and Co. Any judge worth his or her salt should have the total confidence and ability to assess images when put before them. People who need to mull over your pictures for a considerable time must be lacking in the basic skills one would expect in a competent, intelligent and communicative judge. How can the constantly repeated examination of a photographic image either improve it or degrade it? Exhibitions, including those run by the Royal Photographic Society are 'spot'-judged. The Society's applications for distinctions are judged with slides, on the screen, for about ten seconds. In this period the panel of expert judges make their considered appraisal.

When a judge wishes to pre-judge our competition entries, it means that your slides and prints are out of your club official's hands for nearly two weeks. When 'spot judged, your work is in our safe custody until the night of the competition. Prints and slides are handled as the precious objects that they are. In order to be pre-judged, the entries for our March Competition need to be handed in early one month before the contest. I do not consider this to be reasonable. This means that they will be stored outside our Clubs' care for far too long. Our prints and slides are too precious for this risk, and I personally have not yet decided whether or not to enter this competition. In any case some of my slides are required elsewhere until the 14 February, which is the day before the originally published hand-in date.

A couple of weeks ago, a gentleman named Ken Scott judged the January Competition at Henfield Camera Club. He 'spot' judged and did an excellent job. A man of many talents!

Peter Crook LRPS



Club News

*** David Pemberton would like to stand down as Treasurer at the next AGM after looking after the club's books for over five years. Would anybody care to offer to become his replacement?**

*** The evening with "Variations" on the Old Toll Bridge proved to be interesting with the marking being done by all the members present. The subsequent adding of the scores taxed the grey matter and the overall top scoring slide belonged to Cyril Roberts with a moody view down river towards the railway bridge. Well done Cyril.**

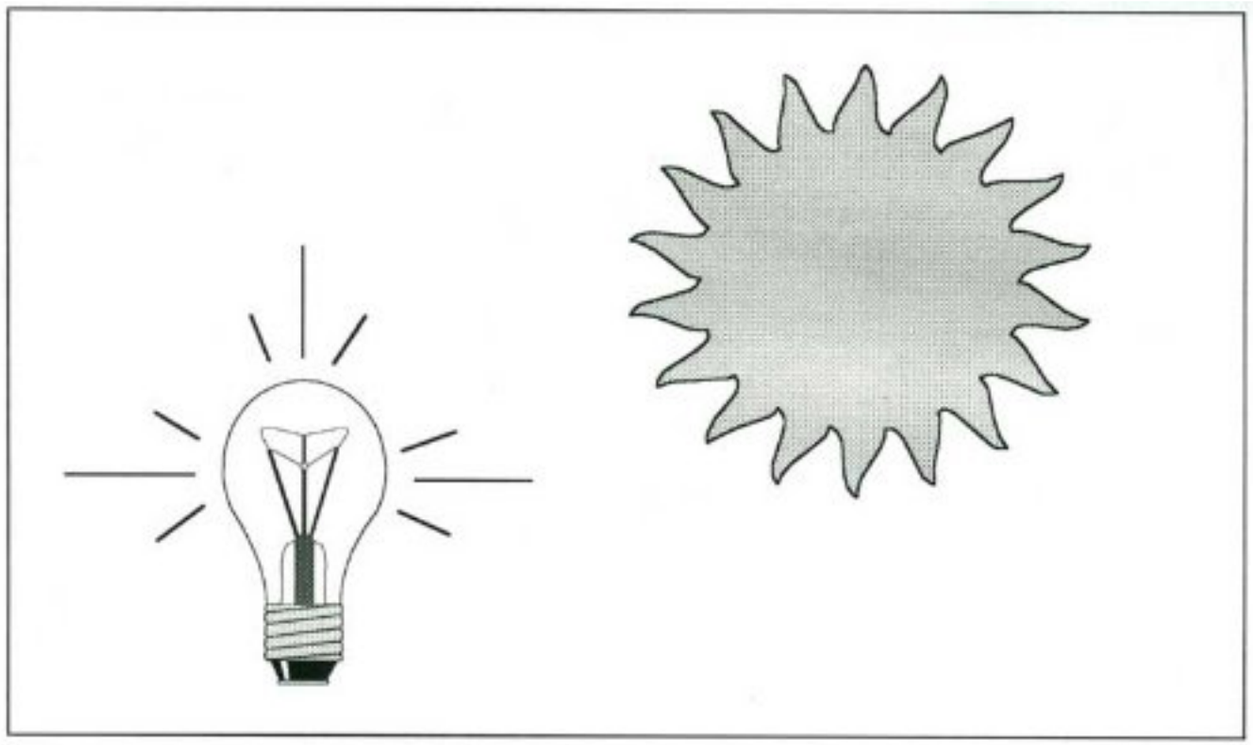
*** Ken Scott will be giving an illustrated talk on "Basic Techniques in the use of your Camera and Lenses" on Wednesday, 15th February. It might be a good idea if you could bring along your camera and any other equipment you have any questions about. I think our collective experience in the club should be able to solve most of the problems arising.**

*** The New Year Dinner at Janines in Bramber proved to be a great success - I think we had about twenty members and guests for the evening.**

*** The Interpretation of Book or Song Title should be interesting and I wonder if musical accompaniment would be appropriate to help the judge, Linda Mostyn ARPS with her critique - perhaps we should make her guess the titles?**

*** An addition to the programme is the West Sussex Gazette Challenge Shield Photographic Slide Competition which is being held on Thursday, 20th April 1995 at The Old School Hall, School Lane, Storrington and being organised by the Storrington Camera Club.**

Slides have to be delivered to their club by the 2nd April so we need to select our best slides. It would be appreciated if you can get them to Cliff at the latest by the 29th March which is the Slide Battle with Middleton.



In Praise of Light - The Raw Material of Photography

It may be stating the obvious to say that without light there would be no photography.

Yes I know - a bit like climbing Everest without oxygen ? You'd die ! What is important here is the sentiment. A technically well executed photograph which is sharp, well composed and interesting may be transformed by fine light into a great photograph. Equally, the most mundane of subjects can be transformed by fine light and when such a variety of subjects can depend upon the quality of light in the same way, light becomes the single most important ingredient, in my book, in the making of photographs.

My dislike of coloured filters is well known. I suppose I have the privilege of being able to witness a great variety of light in the mountains. Some of the light and atmospherics I have experienced have been so incredible that I have felt guilty about claiming that the resulting photograph was my work. I have simply stood and watched and recorded as the work of a much greater force unfolded before my eyes. With such wonderful natural light available to us, why try to cheat the eyes with special effects filters ? One just needs to wait until the light is right.

My approach to landscape photography is influenced so strongly by light that I rarely set out to photograph a subject (if I get time off from the kids at all that is !). No I have a number of subjects and locations in memory and when the light looks as though it is going to get good, off I go in search of the subjects that will match the light. In many cases, particularly during those best mountain days, it is light itself which is the subject for me. And a little understanding of the conditions that lead to fine light really help me to put myself in the right place at the right time, to make my own luck. And I can't play down the importance of luck either.

A favourite instance of being in the right place by luck was my excursion along the Crib Goch ridge of Snowdon in December 1991. A promising day was planned with late afternoon and evening photography in mind, especially as we knew there would be mists clearing if the forecast fronts passed over. An afternoon of incredible occurrences was sinking into twilight as we descended as steep rock ridge late in the day. Thinking the photography was ending, I was roused into action by my two companions shouting loudly as I climbed down a 20 foot step. The mist beneath our feet had turned to fire as the last rays of the sun lipped the edge of the cwm. A quick climb was well rewarded as I grabbed the last three shots of the day before completing our descent to a warm and dreamy evening.

Does it always work ? No. One day as I drove down the M23. Clearing skies in the West and lingering rain just to the East of Gatwick created a stunning double rainbow against a black sky. Drifting in to land between the bands was a Virgin 747, brilliant white with its red tail plane afire. What a picture ! And did I grab it ? No - this was the classic that got away, as they do all too often when you're driving. Any other road but the motorway and I might have got it for my camera is always in the car. You just never know.

Here are a few things to look out for to help make your luck :

The most dramatic light always occurs in the early and evening hours. Why ? Well firstly it comes at a low angle and creates shadow and texture. Secondly, it is warmer, more golden. This is because it has to travel through a much greater depth of the earth's atmosphere and more of the shorter blue wavelengths of light become scattered. This leads to the red end of the spectrum shining through dominantly. In the case of high mountains, the tops are often lit by intense red light after the sun has set, usually known as alpenglow. If you can drag yourself out of bed early, the rewards are often magnificent even if you have to fight hard to summon up those creative instincts !

Atmospherics play a part in the day too. Look for the colour of the sky. A deep blue signifies clear air and deep contrasts - great for high impact landscapes. When the sky is whiter, much more blue scattering is occurring and the contrasts are very low whether the sun is shining or not. This is much more suited to close portraits or work under trees where high contrast is a nuisance. Atmospherics are the cause of many optical phenomena. High level atmospheric ice that gives rise to haloes and sun-dos around the sun. Rainbows, sun bursts and rays through breaking cloud. Mist that becomes brilliantly backlit by the sun, gold in the morning and crimson in the evening.

Also, we might watch the weather fronts. In a depression, rain occurs following the passage of a warm front. Following this some time later the cold front will pass giving rise to spectacular clear air and sometimes showers. If this happens near to sundown, you can often see it approaching as a sharp edge to the cloud in the west with clear skies behind it, just like the M23 example. The sun then shines brilliantly out of a crystal sky with dark clouds often lingering to the east. Any situation where the ground is brighter than the sky will give superb photographic conditions.

Putting yourself in the right place at the right time is never easy but you can learn to predict when conditions will look good. And if we treat quality light as the real subject, we are on our way to photography on a higher plane.

Ken Scott ARPS



Angela and Ken Slightly Ahead

Leaders of the Overall Slide Competition, after "Curves" with Chris Peet FRPS on the 18th January, are *Angela Rixon* and *Ken Scott* both with 172 points, closely followed by Peter Crook with 166 points and Cliff Carter with 154 points.

The leader in the Prints Competition is also Angela Rixon with a maximum of 60 points, followed by Cliff Carter with 57 points and Roger Tapner with 52 points.

I will bring along the updated score chart for you all to check your scores and also the score sheets if anybody wants to see how their slides or prints were marked by the judge.

If you have any comments or suggestions about improving the system please let me know before the AGM.

Cliff

Copying and Sandwiching Slides

Copying slides with a relatively cheap OHNAR or similar copier is very simple. Try it for yourselves.

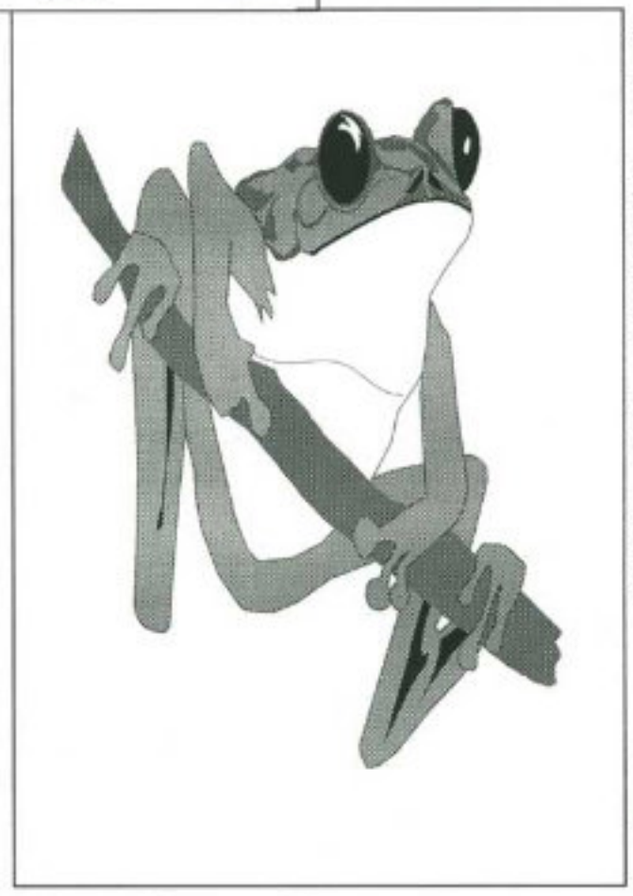
These copiers invariably have a "T" mount adaptor - which means they can very cheaply be adapted to fit virtually any make or system of camera. These "T" mounts usually cost between £10 and £15.

With the slide mounted in the holder on the copier, frame the image to be copied centrally. (It is possible to move it up and down and sideways.) Alternatively, if you want to enlarge just a part of the slide - or alter the composition, it is possible to zoom in on a particular area and copy just this. Many of the cheap copiers zoom to give an image twice the original size or any magnification between.

Lighting can be either natural light or flash - depending on your camera's metering it is advisable, at first, to bracket your exposures to get an idea of how you arrive at the best settings. On average I have found that the best way to arrive at the correct exposure is to make the adjustment on the exposure compensation control of your camera. With one of my cameras the best setting is usually +1 1/2 to +2 1/2 stops, whereas with the newer camera - same make - different model - the setting is +2 to +3 stops. Using this method, natural lighting or flash, it is possible to get reasonably consistent results. Once you find the best method make notes so that you can repeat the procedure.

Sandwiching is much more fun than straightforward copying and some dramatic changes can be made to your slides. Sunsets can be added to scenes with bland skies, bright skies or even stormy clouds to silhouettes. Just let your imagination run wild!

Cliff



Next Years Programme

If you have any suggestions for the types of talks, lectures, etc. required by members to include in next season's programme - i.e. slide shows, talks on birds, wildlife, natural history, and techniques such as black and white printing, colour processing, close up/macro photography, landscape or portrait specialist, please have a word with Ken at one of our meetings.

Wanted

Your letters and comments are wanted for Viewfinder.

Please let the editor have your letters with questions, tips and advice about anything of interest to our members, particularly if it is related to the Club, it's members or to photography.

A holiday trip, a favourite piece of equipment or even a bit of local history!

If you wish to write a large article and have a computer please send the wp file on disk .

Jim

Christmas Social December

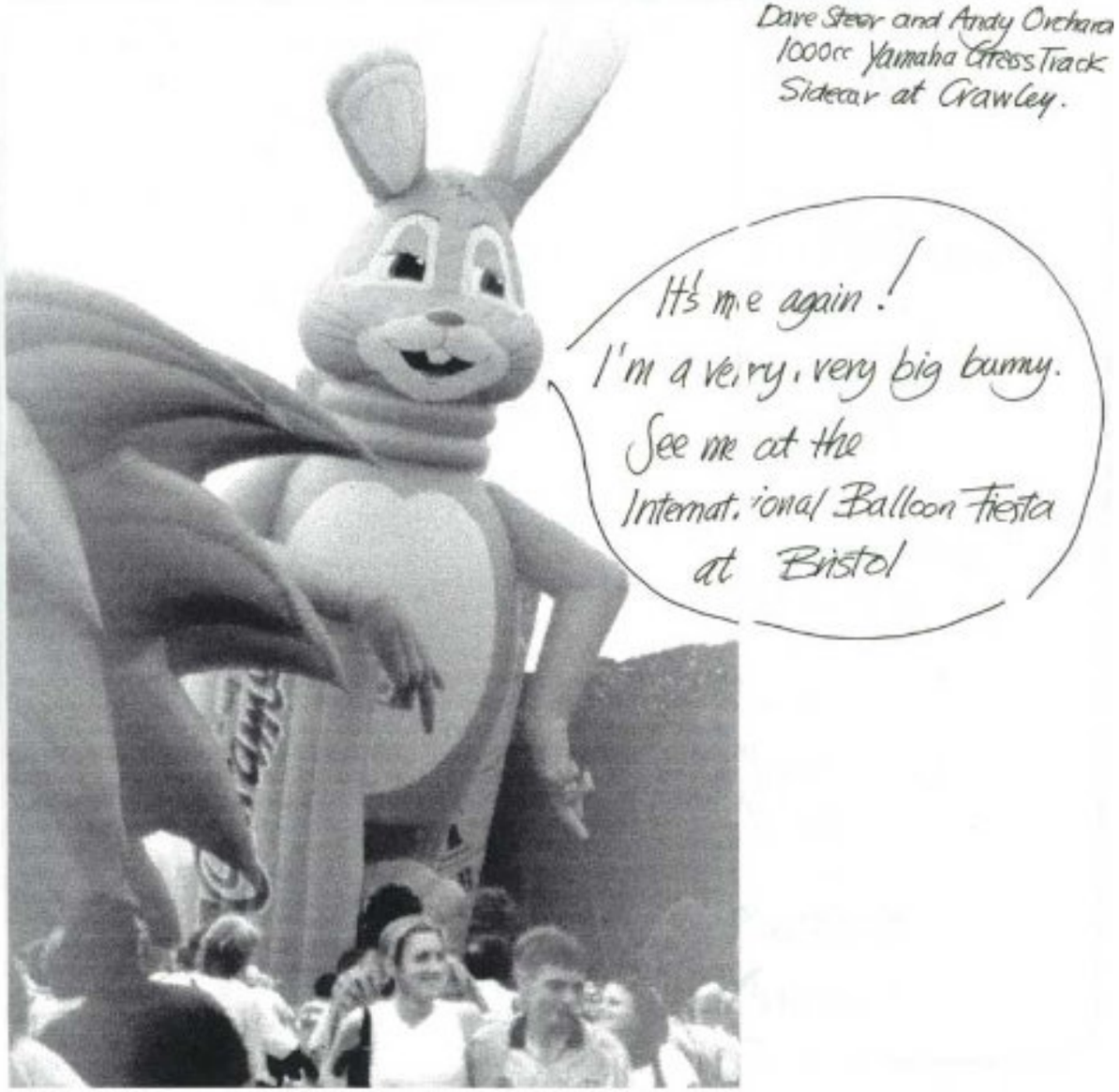
This was the best Christmas Social I can remember - with plenty of food and wine. The "Worst Slide" show proved we could rank alongside the greats of "non" photography and some of the comments made during the show were even worse than the slides!

I think everybody had a good giggle and this was followed by a very sociable chat with the refreshments. Thank you very much to everybody who helped and who brought along the food and drink.

Cliff



Dave Steer and Andy Orchard
1000cc Yamaha Cross Track
Sidecar at Crawley.



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