

lip service

Issue 11



From the LIP exhibition, The Independent Image:
John Holmwood's 'Grand Union Canal, Apsley, Hertfordshire'.

Unfortunately, Roger Estop has relinquished the editorship of LIP Service. LIP President, Janet Hall, pays tribute to his editorship, while LIP Secretary, Virginia Khuri, reviews his recent exhibition at the Photographers' Gallery.

Tribute to the erstwhile editor

Roger Estop's tenth edition of LIP's newsletter was his last as editor. His swansong, 'Show', was a beautifully produced and printed collection of members' photos.

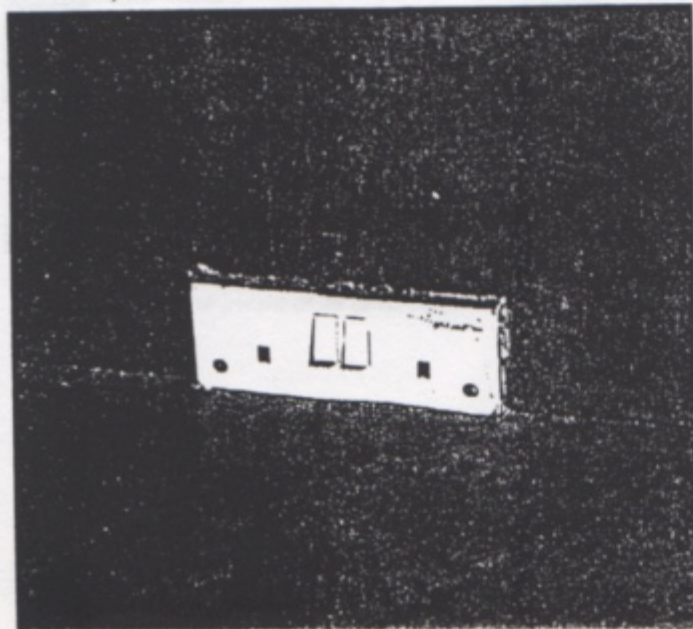
In each issue, Roger has strived with integrity and imagination to air issues and ideas of interest to the independent photographer and built for our newsletter a reputation which has certainly helped to enhance the standing of LIP. As each issue grew in size, so Roger's grasp of his role seemed to become more sure.

It was with great regret that I received notice from Roger of his intention to relinquish his position as editor of 'LIP Service', but I know there are other demands on his time which have forced the decision. Although, editing a publication on a subject close to one's heart can be very gratifying, it can also be very demanding on time, patience and energy.

I would like, therefore, on behalf of the whole membership to thank Roger for editing the first ten issues and wish him well in those other areas of his busy life - not forgetting his new responsibility in fatherhood. At the same time, I hope he feels he has gained something from the time and energy he has invested in the newsletter.

Matthew Rake has edited this issue of 'LIP Service'. I apologise for its belated appearance. I hope 'Show' has kept you entertained in the meantime.

Roger's roving eye picks out oddities...



'One Offs' by Roger Estop

Photographers' Gallery, February 1993

One of the values of photography is that by its ability to communicate through individual vision, it provides access to the photographer's imagination. But, in order to do so, the 'seeing' of photographers must be in direct result of their own uniqueness. The exhibition by Roger Estop at Photographers' Gallery was just such a celebration of seeing.

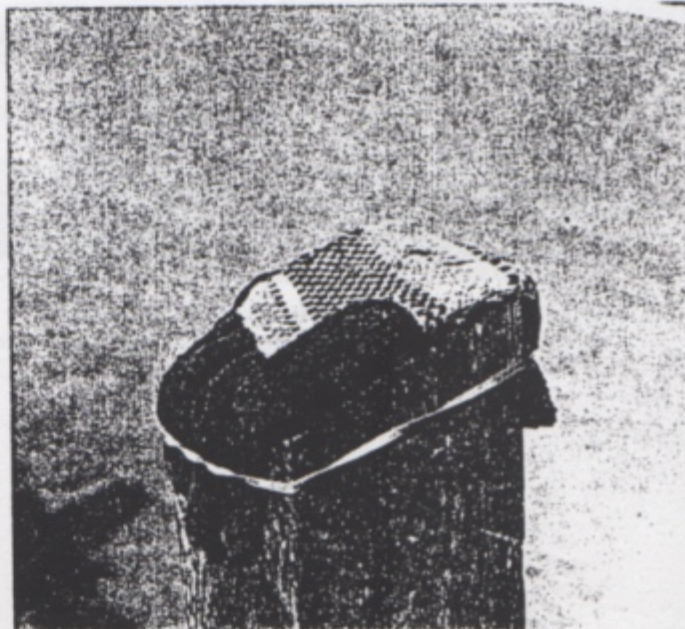
The photos are small monochrome squares showing telling fragments of city life, odd juxtapositions, out of place items. They are precisely framed often with just one small detail centred in a square format. It is a minimalist reduction of the complexity of any city, but one which allows the imagination to wander.

What was on the paper, the torn corner of which we see taped to the dark window? For what are the keys dangling down the broad human back? Or the one key suspended from a post? Why the sudden splotch of bright cement in the middle of brickwork? Why, in echo, the white patch on the side of a shiny black car?

Roger's roving eye also picks out oddities and anomalies: an electrical outlet too close to the floor for use; a newspaper stuck halfway through a letter-box disembodied from its door; a zebra's head on a chainlink fence; a glove fastened with a rubber band bent over the top of a post; another glove in a tree; a spanner hanging from a fence. A tennis ball suspended over a busy market is, on second look, seen to be fixed to the end of an awning pole.

There is also the designer's eye at work here: a paper pyramid; a spiral on the ground; a nail centred in a circle bisected by parallel lines on a wall; the glowing white roundness of a car's taped-up headlights.

The total effect is a slightly surreal vision of the city, but one that is distinctly human and humane. Even though there are few people in evidence in these images all speak eloquently of human occupation. All also give evidence of intelligence, quiet wit, and an attentive looking through the viewfinder.



LIP activities

o **LIP evenings** will be held on Oct 14 and Nov 18. These are informal evenings to which all members are invited (with or without work) to join in print viewing and general discussions. They start at 6.30pm - coffee and tea (sometimes wine) are on hand.

o **Workshops:** Together with Independent Photography in the South East, LIP will be holding a workshop with Paul Hill on 9-10 Oct at Micklepage in Sussex. John Blakemore will conduct a hands-on LIP workshop on black and white printing at 2 Ferrestone Rd, Hornsey on 13 & 14 Nov.

o **A blu-tac evening/bring-and-buy sale/Christmas party** will be held at 7.15 on 16 Dec at the Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St, London WC1 (nearest tube: Goodge St).

o **Tuesday Talk** at the Photographers' Gallery: Mike Seabourne on the urban landscape on 2 Nov. For more info on all these events: ring Janet Hall 081-847 5989.

Things that make you go Hmmm

'My first thought had been to exact revenge, to sit him on a red satin sheet, legs akimbo, and see how he liked it...'
Judy Rumbold on photographing a naked man at a Robin Shaw workshop. *'The Guardian'*, 15.7.93.

'There's a feel for the moment that's almost too intense to bear. Before the gloved wrist, the cascade of tucks, the chef's-toque gathers on a coat sleeve, Penn is like a Zen monk meditating before a flame.'

Kennedy Fraser on Irving Penn's early 50's photos of his wife, Lisa Fonssagrives. *'Independent on Sunday'*, 11.10.92

Lambeth documentary

Photofusion photography centre is launching a new project for people interested in documenting life in the borough of Lambeth. The group will work up to the year 2000 resulting in a major exhibition. Anyone interested should contact Julia at Photofusion 071-738 5774.

Camera repairs

LIP member, Yoke Matze, recommends Warren B. Vinecor of Phototech, 40 Chestnut Drive, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 7DJ for any problems with your cameras. Warren has repaired Yoke's cameras successfully, at reasonable prices. He is also helpful with advice on secondhand cameras.

Courses

o **Yoke Matze** will run short courses designed for individual photographers. She plans a minimum of two sessions and up to six sessions of four hours per session, for a minimum of two students to a maximum of four.

The content of such courses would include: looking at work and discussing its problems, printing demonstrations, print finishing, toning and spotting, individual printing sessions, building a portfolio, and presentation of work to a gallery for an exhibition.

Yoke works as a photographer, teacher and exhibition organiser. She ran a gallery in Holland before coming to England nine years ago. She has been involved in various aspects of photography including architecture, landscape and still life, and has been awarded a grant by the Greater London Arts Council. Her work has been exhibited

across Europe and in the US. Fee £5 per hour. Contact Yoke on 081-693 8107.

o **Independent Photography** in the South East are holding a workshop with **Mick Williamson** on 27 Nov. Contact: Jill Staples 0444 881891.

o **Pete Davis and John Nesbitt** are running their view camera workshops in Altyblaca, west Wales on 15-17 Oct. Tel: 05512 2711 or 0570 480611.

Printing service

Linda Chapman and Judy Tynan will hand print your black and white negatives. They print seven days a week; overnight service on request; all formats printed; special requirements available (inc. toning). Prices start from £5 for a 10x12in RC print. Contact Linda on 071-627 1208 or Judy 071-584 6080.

A history of 'Inscape'

'Inscape' is a quarterly journal for communication among photographers around the UK. The editor, William Bishop, briefly summarises its history: 1860s: the word, Inscape, is coined by poet, Gerald Manley Hopkins.

1991: a book called 'Inscape' produced by John Blakemore. 2 April 1992: article in 'British Journal of Photography' on impending launch of a newsletter for independent-amateur photographers called Inscape. (Mistaken for an April Fool by a woman in Scotland). June 1992: 500 copies of pilot issue of 'Inscape' given away free (printing paid for by LIP). Now a collector's item.

1993: 'Inscape' comes of age - issue No. 3 has 40 A5 pages.

For a free sample copy, write to William Bishop, 22A Gladwell Road, London N8 9AA.

Roger Estop reviews the Artists' Handbook series, while Matthew Rake prepares for Salgado season.

Artists' Handbooks

When choosing new books to update your photography library, as well as Cindy Sherman, the Starr Twins and latest essays by Andy Grundberg, buy a copy of one or more of the excellent Artists' Handbooks published by the Artists' Newsletter.

Over the past year, AN has added new titles to its range of handbooks and published new editions of existing titles, all of which have information of great value to photographers working independently and selling, publishing and exhibiting their work. Two AN publications are already familiar to many photographers - the 'Code of Practice for Independent Photographers' and the 'Directory of Independent Photography'.

The third handbook, 'Organising Your Exhibition', is a comprehensive guide to every aspect of setting up and running an exhibition - finding a space, finance, publicity, insurance, framing and hanging, private views and selling.

The fourth handbook deals with copyright, a crucial and easily neglected aspect of publishing and selling. It explains the legal complexities and shows how to make the most of copyright. The fifth handbook is an artist's financial guide and is essential for any art-of-photography oriented business, offering easily understood guidance on tax, insurance, VAT and so on.

All the handbooks are useful to refer to when a particular problem or opportunity arises, and they remind you of details which might easily be overlooked in the excitement of a sale of work, an exhibition opportunity or publication.

The Bible of the Artists' Handbooks is 'Making Ways' - the visual artist's guide to surviving and thinking. It's the first choice of the handbooks as it covers nearly everything you can think of. It aims to help you live as a professional artist; not to make you a fortune, but to provide 'the assistance to withstand the vicissitudes of committing yourself to the visual arts'.

In addition, AN publish the 'Directory of Exhibition Spaces' listing every exhibition venue - large and small - with detail of the size of the spaces, exhibition policy, related activities, accessibility and opening times. It is an essential companion to 'Organising your Exhibition'.

Together, the Artists' Handbooks are a formidable body of advice. They're recommended - AN should produce a boxed set! If you can't get them from a bookshop, obtain them directly from AN Publications, PO Box 23, Sunderland, SR4 6DG. Tel: 091 567 3589.

'Workers' and 'An Uncertain Grace'

Sebastiao Salgado season is upon us again. His latest book, 'Workers: An Archaeology of the Industrial Age', has received extravagant praise from critics writing for as divergent publications as 'The Guardian' and 'Amateur Photographer'. In December, Salgado will have a one-man show at the South Bank and an edition of the BBC's 'Omnibus' programme devoted to him.

'Workers' has the extraordinary price tag of £79.95, which prevents me from reviewing it. However, I recently took a copy of 'An Uncertain Grace', Salgado's 1989 book on African famine sufferers, out of the library. I would like to offer a critique of this book.

One of the first things one notices is that the pictures are not laid out with captions; the captions are tucked away at the end of the book. (There were also no captions at a one-man Salgado exhibition at the Photographers' Gallery where many of the 'Uncertain Grace' images were displayed.) This is particularly disturbing in images of African famine sufferers; it means that we are compelled to appreciate the photos in aesthetic, rather than moral, terms. And, heaven knows, Salgado is obsessed with aesthetics.

In 'An Uncertain Grace', his photographs exhibit bilateral symmetry, a concern with pattern, and especially 'visual' rhymes. A thin boy with a stick is 'rhymed' with a dead branchless tree. The image, it seems, is not chiefly about the lifeless tree as a symbol of drought; nor is it about the emaciated condition of the body as a symbol of the drought; it is about the formal comparison between the two.

Two children lie on the ground in similar curled-up postures. The two children are obviously stricken; they are thin, tired, scarred, lying in the dirt. And yet the photograph's bilateral symmetry encourages the viewer to contemplate their beauty, not their suffering.

A man crouched down, attempting to crawl, in the foreground of a picture is related to the triangular shape of a tree's branch. A baby in a man's arms is related to a camel lying on the ground, and so on. There is an attempt to give the lives he photographs an order which they patently do not have.

Fred Richtin, in the panegyric that prefaces 'An Uncertain Grace', notes that Salgado compares his photography strategy with Henri Cartier-Bresson's dictum of the 'decisive moment'. Richtin quotes Cartier-Bresson: 'To me, photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organisation of forms which give that event its proper expression'. However, in Salgado's work (as ▶

indeed in Cartier-Bresson's) the significance is the precise organisation of forms. The event is obscured by the aesthetics. When the event is mass death of human beings, this seems wrong.

Wherever Salgado shows his images he seems deliberately to avoid tying caption information to his images. Even his postcards (yes, you can send your friends picture postcards of Salgado's famine sufferers) have no caption information. And this is also apparently the case in his new book, 'Workers'. Francis Hodgson, in his 'Guardian' review of 'Workers', notes that the captions were put in a separate booklet; he thinks this is a thoughtful touch that 'help[s] without interfering'. I think it would be quite salutary for our aesthetic contemplation to be interfered with.

One must keep reminding oneself when looking at Salgado's photos of the chaos the life he depicts. The dire helplessness of many of his subjects is more important than the grand articulation of the artist.

'The Magic Image'

Matthew Rake writes: I recently picked up a book entitled 'The Magic Image: The Genius of Photography' for £5.99 at a remaindered bookshop. The book is an illustrated who's who of photography, with the photographers listed in chronological order. The photographers and their photos were chosen by the unlikely duo of Cecil Beaton (famous English photographer) and Gail Buckland (less famous American critic/curator). Here are the photographers who have the most pages devoted to them - photography's first division, if you like.

6 - Julia Margaret Cameron.

4 1/3 - Fred Holland Day.

4 - William Henry Fox Talbot; David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson; Roger Fenton; Alfred Stieglitz; Baron Gayne de Meyer; Jacques-Henri Lartigue (inc. photo in colour section); Henri Cartier-Bresson; Bill Brandt; Philip Jones Griffiths; Irving Penn; Donald McCullin.

3 - Oscar Gustave Rejlander; Edward Steichen; Richard Avedon; Josef Koudelka.



In situations like these, compensate for the back lighting by using the control lever.

Money matters

Janet Hall writes: We are sorry to say good-bye to Scott Younger who has been our dedicated treasurer since the group's beginning in 1987. He is now working and living in Germany which makes it difficult for him to perform the role as treasurer. However we are very lucky that Len Salem has agreed to take on the position and I am sure he will prove a most valuable asset to the smooth running of the group and keep us in line financially. Welcome Len.

The committee decided not to increase the subscription rate this year because of the economic climate. The increase, when it comes, will not be great and we feel sure that members will still be getting a good deal for their money!

inside	cloudy	clear
30 60	125 250	500 1000

A day with Jay

To encourage you to attend some of the LIP activities listed on page three, here is David Malarkey's review of a LIP workshop with Bill Jay:

Bill Jay is a name that always crops up when the recent history of photography is discussed. Can you imagine a contemporary editor of 'Creative Camera' who regularly visits camera clubs?

He's been in Arizona for some time now, and I couldn't put a face to the name and neither probably could you. Well, he has a face, and a brain behind it. On Saturday 10 July, a few of us had a treat - A Day with Jay. A day was not enough. The man has so much to say, and he is such a good listener that we wanted double time at least. We talked so much we didn't even see all his slides.

So, what did he actually do? We discussed issues in contemporary photography, but with humour, tolerance and an explicit respect for examining the evidence before making theories. There were one or two blood-curdling stories of PC in the US, and some astonishing slides of current best-sellers in the fine art market.

There was more - apparently American photographers think that there are very few British landscape photographers. But the really significant thing for me was not what was said, but the atmosphere which Bill created. It's the way he tells them, you know. We want him back, we want him for a longer time. We asked him. Book your places now.

William Bishop extols Mick Williamson's 'transformational blow-ups' and also tackles the 1993 LIP exhibition, *The Independent Image*.

The Photo-diaries of Mick Williamson

Main Gallery, London Guildhall University, London, February 1993

A 'BJP' article on 31 May 1990 remarked on the startling effect of a particular image amongst the maze of photographs exhibited in celebration of five years of photography as fine art at Glasgow School of Art. The reviewer wrote: 'It would indeed be in the public's interest for [Mick] Williamson to have a one-man show of these "transformational blow-ups".' Well three years on, the interested public were offered this treat; but Williamson's exhibition really required more than one venue for a mere fortnight.

Mick Williamson, senior lecturer in photography at the Sir John Cass Faculty of Arts in the London Guildhall University, has been keeping a photo-diary for last 17 years, carrying around an Olympus half-frame camera around with him everywhere and making a point of shooting some pictures every day wherever he happened to be.

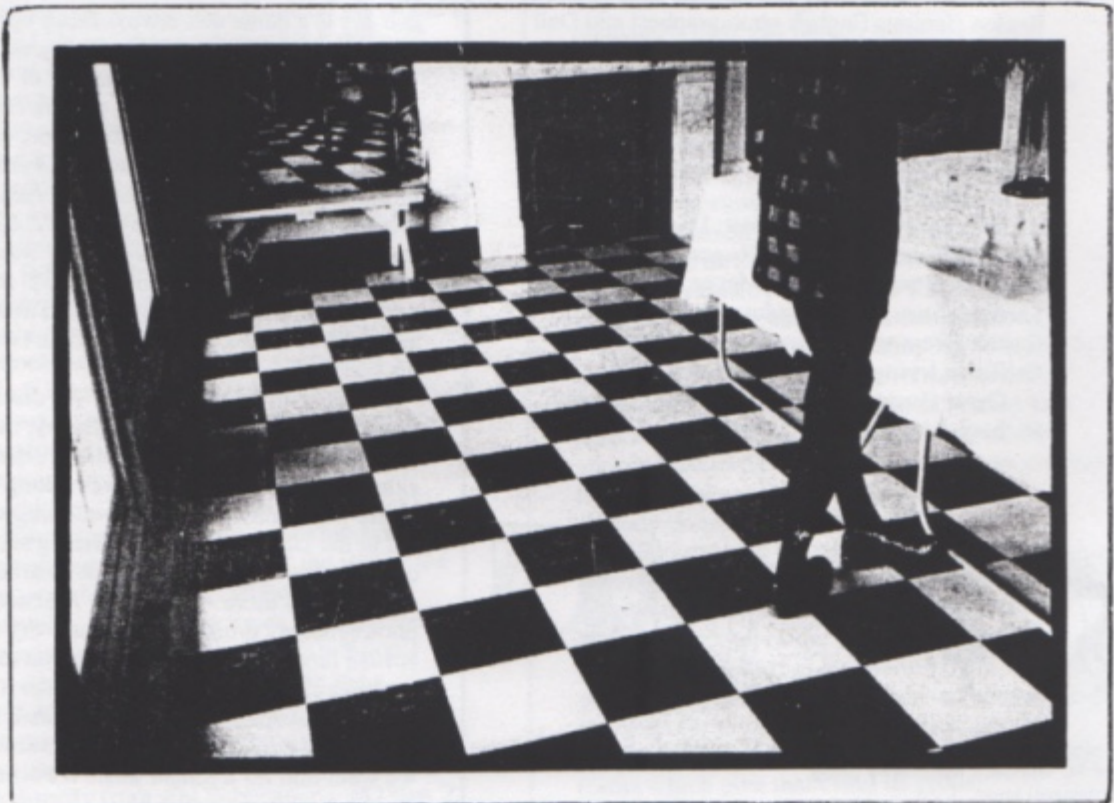
Generally, he would shoot without looking

through the viewfinder so he was often in for compositional surprises. The surprise for the viewing public is that these half frames have been blown up to 52 x 38 inches. This gives many of them a feel of black and white film stills: each picture is pregnant with narrative and gives the impression of having a story wrapped around it. A personal connection is felt within the images, a humanity, and a warmth - an enjoyment of involvement in life.

This kind of work is rare. There is a variety and yet a common thread connecting all the images, the thread of Williamson's life. Some of the images are magical, some like studied paintings, others purely photographic documents. There is a sense of fine art, photography, and life all being mixed up together to celebrate being alive and conscious each day.

It is possible that a showing of just six or seven of these photographs carefully selected and presented in a well-lit gallery would have had as much if not more impact than these 33 presented shoulder to shoulder two-deep in the form of a cinemascope screen. But for a taster, this was a generous helping.

Mick Williamson: Often shoots without looking through the viewfinder.



LIP's The Independent Image

Mermaid Theatre, Blackfriars, April 1993

This review has been written after the event and by request - and it will probably seem like it. So do I come to praise Caesar or to bury Caesar? That is the question.

Submissions this time were subject to the quality control of two outside selectors, so some of the members who submitted pictures were not represented. What was presented in the show could therefore be seen as the preference of the two selectors. But, without an exhibition of the rejected, it's impossible to compare the selected with the rejected.

In spite of this, what was on show - the visible iceberg if you like - was extremely varied. But it had to be if the aim was to present a collection of individual personal work, which, by definition, is individual.

This is in contrast to some types of club photography which readily forces a visual style on all participants. The title or theme, The Independent Image, was clearly represented here. Different selectors might choose different images from the pool, and there were some images here which I would not have included. But, in the end, we had a selective representation of what LIP is

about.

Numerous images gave me pleasure: I was most impressed by the image of a mask-like face by Linda Chapman, who is professionally involved with theatrical photography. I have not met her, but her single photograph has burnt itself into my memory. It seemed to have the intensity of ten photos surrounding it. It is a very visual image rather than a literary one - best seen, rather having pages written about it.

The pictures which did make it to the show gave an insight into the different types of work with which some of the members are involved. This, I think, was the value of the exhibition from a member's point of view. Someone off the street yet appreciative of photography could justifiably regard it as generally of a high standard in conception and execution. And the opening provided a valuable opportunity to meet other members, but a review has not been requested of that.

One final thought is that a show with an obvious theme might make the reviewer's job easier next time around.

Independent image: 'Peckham, 1991' by Peter Marshall.



Roger Estop presents some peripheral vision.

Finding myself in the picture

Did the man jumping in the puddle ever know he was in a famous photo by Cartier-Bresson? Or the couple kissing by the Hotel de Ville: did they discover years later they had been immortalised in a photograph by Doisneau*? More down to earth, think of all those picture postcards, news photos and brochures containing people unknowingly photographed.

The discovery that you are in someone else's photograph can lead to a complex reaction and says a lot about the power and limitations of the photo. Some years ago, I was told that I featured in a photo depicting student life in the University of East Anglia prospectus. Sure enough, there I was in relaxed conversation with a woman in the dining room of the Sainsbury Centre.

However, my reaction was mixed. Firstly, I felt I was party to a deception - I was not a student, I'd been visiting! Secondly, I felt a weight of responsibility - sixth formers might be influenced in their choice of university by this picture. Thirdly, and most disturbingly, I felt strangely spied upon and exposed. For this relaxed conversation over a half eaten plate of pasta was actually a fairly anguished talk with a rapidly receding girlfriend.

This simple photo represented a complex range of thoughts and feelings involved in the arrangements leading up to this lunch and subsequent actions - leaving the table, walking across the grass, catching a train, concluding a relationship.

So, take a picture of strangers, watch them emerge in your developing dish but note, the photo shows only so much.

**The full story of the Doisneau photo has recently come out in court. Apparently the shot was set up (quelle surprise!). The couple were paid for the photo at the time, but only recently became aware of its fame [Ed].*

Meeting famous photographers

Be warned. Going to a workshop led by your hero photographer may cause your health and well being more harm than good. I was reminded of this when reading Nicholson Baker's book 'U and I' in which he describes his nervous agony over a brief meeting with John Updike at a book signing.

Ralph Gibson ran a workshop at the Photographer's Gallery in 1988 at which he worked his way through a stack of portfolios and we listened to his succinct reactions, which became more and more curt as the day wore on. I could see my set of pictures in an old Multigrade box about half way down the pile gradually nearing the top as he dealt mercilessly with the portfolios.

Then a shocking thing happened - he reached my portfolio, placed it in front of him, and suddenly someone asked him a question. Distracted, he took another portfolio and continued to work down the pile with my work sitting on the table. This was almost unbearable; I grew breathless and agitated - has he forgotten them?

After two hours of near apoplexy, he finished the pile and said, 'Well that's it.' Numb with horror, I gasped, 'There's one more in front of you!' Finally, he opened my box and shuffled the prints across his thick hands. 'You handle your materials well, but you need to work on something.' That was it. I was traumatised: this was supposed to be a positive experience.

At one Paul Hill workshop, Lewis Baltz spent a weekend being extraordinarily relaxed and unforthcoming. Finally, on the Sunday afternoon when we held a half-hearted post mortem, he said, 'My friend Peter Turner says that the most important things about these workshops is what the people attending gain from each other.'

I was aghast - Peter Turner had criminally undermined our Baltz experience. Doesn't he know we come for the big name? I was tempted to demand that he pay the bill.

Also known as

Few independent photographers manage to make a living from their own work and many quietly earn their keep in other ways. John Davies revealed in a talk that he keeps the wolf from his door by photographing furniture for mail-order catalogues.

He is by no means unique and it is therefore an amusing pastime to check the by-lines to magazine photos. I was delighted to discover some pretty duff photos of a pop group in the German magazine 'Tempo' by Paul Graham. The now defunct 'Metropolitan Home' magazine had a couple of interiors' features shot by David Brittain. Surely not the esteemed editor of 'Creative Camera'?

Been there, done that

Fay Godwin once described how she had been surprised on entering an exhibition to see one of her own photographs. After a double take, she realised it was a photograph by Bill Brandt taken at the same location.

I was browsing through other people's prints at a workshop and was astounded to discover someone had taken a photograph of a very specific, fairly inaccessible and unsightly bit of Southend pier that I had shot. What could I say? Oi, you've nicked my vision!

I had a similar but more exciting experience on visiting the Andre Kertesz exhibition at the Barbican two years ago. There was a photo which I hadn't seen before taken in a side street at Chartres, looking between two buildings at a statue on the cathedral. It was nearly identical to a photo of mine. A quiet wonder came over me: I'd stood in the same spot as Kertesz, seen the same scene.

Maybe Chartres is a tourist honeypot and maybe it was an obvious photograph to take, and, of course, Kertesz took it first. Even so, the excitement was real, Kertesz has been an inspiration, and I had independently looked where he looked.