

Northern *news*

BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS
FROM OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
AROUND THE WORLD

August 2017



Editorial Ramblings



I've been on holiday from work for much of this month and what a wonderful time I'm having; just being able to relax and enjoy life away from the pressures of the job. Late on the 12th August, we drove out to Beacon Fell Park to watch the Perseid meteor shower that was predicted for that night. We arrived shortly after midnight (13th) and stayed until 0115 hrs. Disappointingly, we didn't see any shower of meteors, although we did see a number of individual meteors shooting across the night sky. Well, at least I did. JP was so excited about going out into the night, packing all his things and our survival rations into the car. After a few minutes of watching he got back into the car and promptly fell asleep. Grace joined him soon afterwards so I sat out on my own to watch the night sky. We got to bed at 0200 hrs. After a lie in, we packed ourselves and three bicycles into the car and drove to Anchorsholme; on the north side of Blackpool. We then rode our bicycles along the seafront path nearer to Blackpool so we could watch the Air Show. To see the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight with their Avro Lancaster and Supermarine Spitfire flying together was quite an emotional moment for me - bringing a few tears to my eyes. My father served with the RAF during World War II and the father of one our friends with whom I worked in Qatar was a Lancaster pilot during that time and served (and survived) three tours of operations - a miracle to survive so many operations. The Red Arrows also did their stuff although, for the first time ever, I was rather disappointed with their display. We decided not to go anywhere on holiday which was something of a surprise for all of us. However, we've got a few jobs done around the house and made a few visits to places of interests. JP has started to have some tennis lessons and is enjoying that very much (*see pages 4 & 5*). He has also been unwell a couple of times; once necessitating a visit to the hospital A&E Department late at night. You will also have seen the photographs taken at Derian House where we made a visit to place an engraved pebble in the memorial garden pool in remembrance of Annelise. When I return to work on 5 September, I'm pleased to say it will be for three days a week only which will give me more time to do what I enjoy doing and take some of the pressure out of my life.



Photograph above and on our cover: The memorial book showing Annelise's page on display in the chapel at Derian House with the stained glass window in the background. We were also invited to place her named 'pebble' in the memorial garden pool on 16 August 2017 (*see photograph next page*).







Dunham Massey Hall

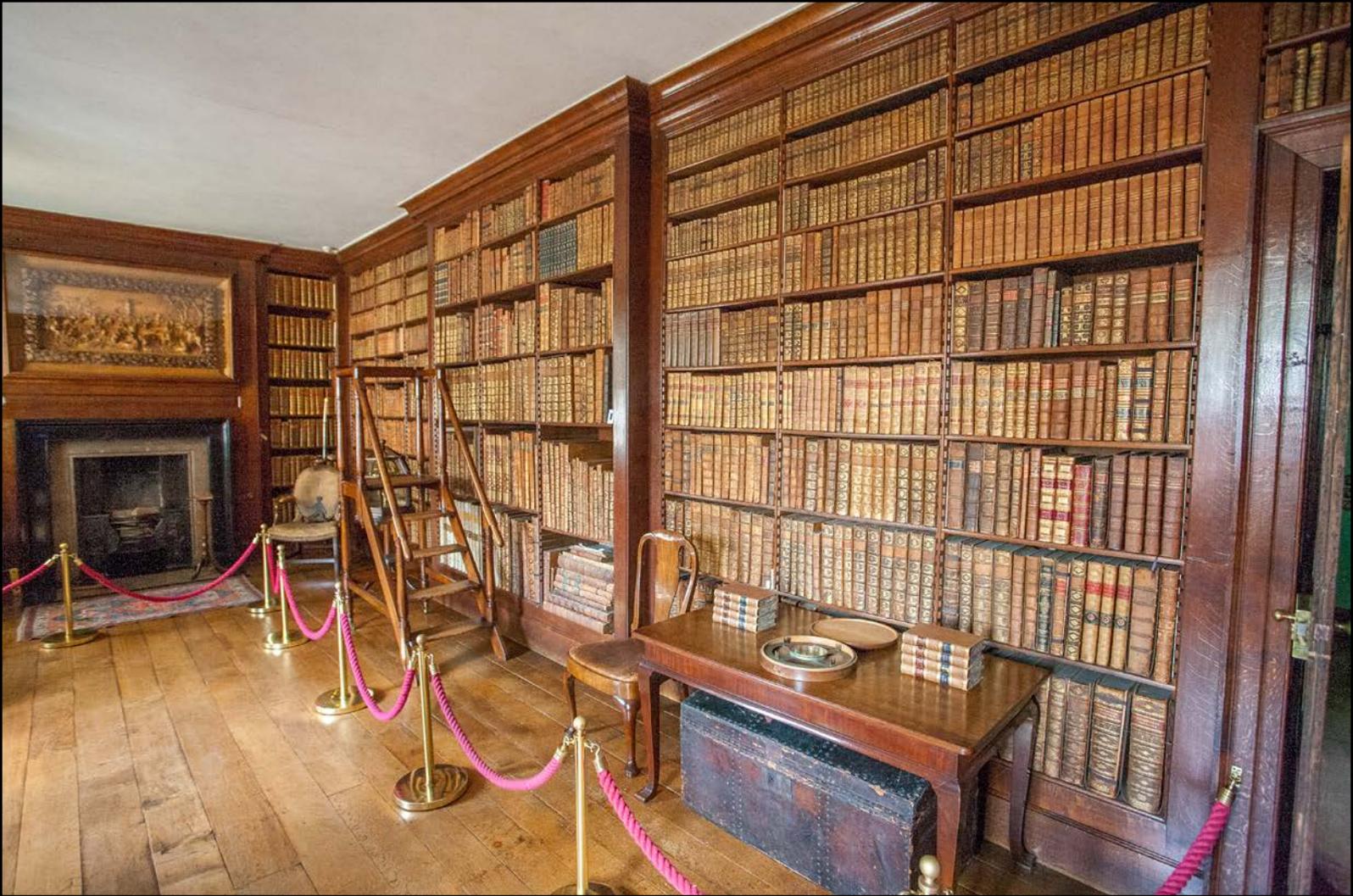
Dunham Massey Hall (visited on 16 August) is an English country house in the parish of Dunham Massey near Altrincham, Greater Manchester. It has been owned by the National Trust since the death of the 10th and last Earl of Stamford in 1976. Dunham Massey was built in the 1730s by the Earls of Warrington, passing to the Earls of Stamford by inheritance. There were significant alterations made at the start of the 20th century. It has historic formal gardens and a deer park.











We'll just have to cut down the amount of fertiliser we give JP - now bigger than his Mum (not that that would be too difficult!).





Brockholes Nature Reserve and the Ribble Valley

Located a few yards off Junction 31 of the M6 motorway is this lovely nature reserve covering about 250 acres bordering the beautiful River Ribble. This river has always had a special place in my heart as it was within walking distance of the homes of my maternal grandparents and uncles. On the opposite side of the motorway from the reserve there was a footpath from their housing estate that led down the quite steep side of the valley to the river and, whenever I was visiting Preston, I used to frequently visit the river from the time I was quite a small boy. There was no nature reserve in those days (1950s and 1960s) and no cycle path alongside the river (part of the Preston Guild Wheel cycle path). Much of what is now part of the golf club was agricultural land where cows would be grazing. I have to say that when I first saw the path by the river in more recent times, and the expansion that had taken place with the golf club, I was extremely disappointed as it was so unlike my memories from when I was so much younger when I used to walk along the river bank amongst the grazing cattle. Such is life. When I was a young man, in my early 20s, I sometimes took my kayak onto the river too. I preferred my trips to the river in those days. Just a few fisherman, no bicycles and lots of cows.









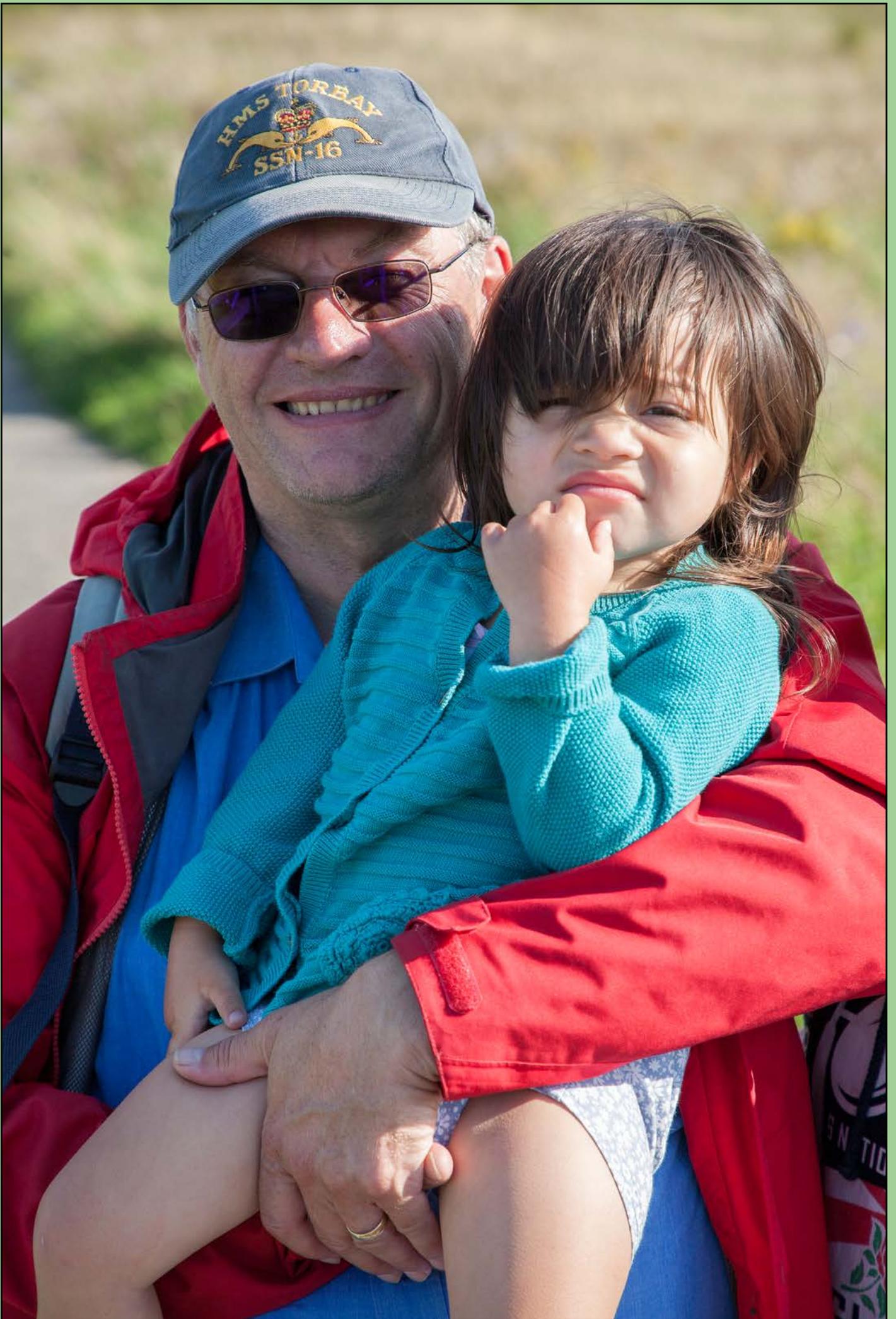
With David and Elsie and family at Brockholes Nature Reserve

We were delighted to receive a visit from David and Elsie and their three daughters (from Newcastle-under-Lyme) on 22 August 2017. We visited this beautiful nature reserve and then went on to visit Lytham.





Watch the video by clicking [HERE](#)



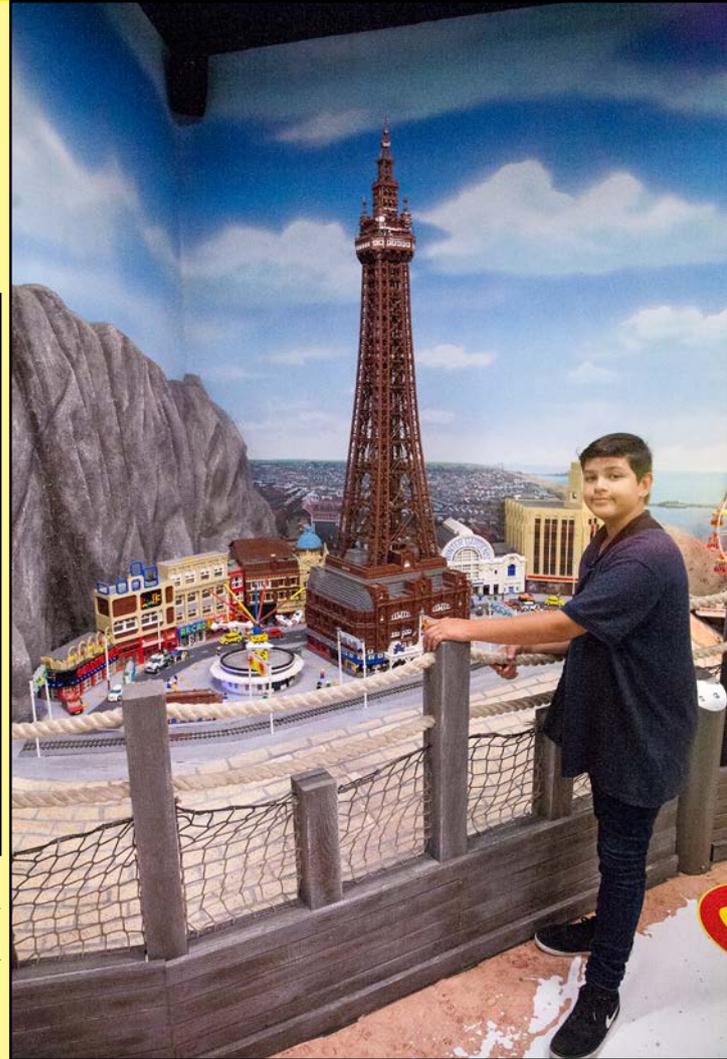
and at Lytham



Legoland



Thanks to Derian House who provided us with complimentary tickets, we were able to take JP and his friend Leo to Legoland in the Trafford Centre in Manchester on 22 August 2017.

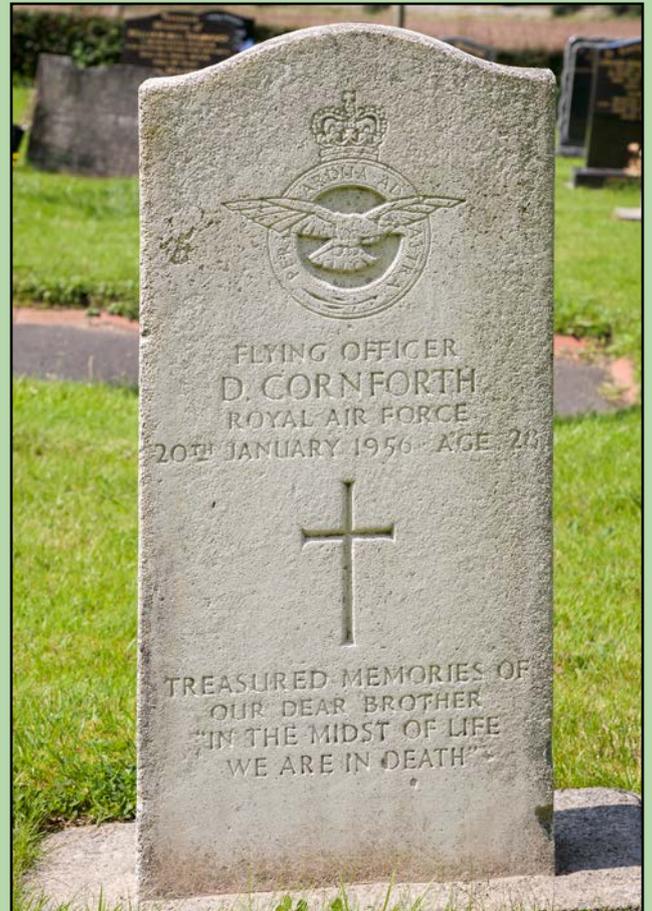






St. Michael's, Weeton

I first spotted this charming old English church from the M55 motorway when travelling home from Blackpool. Later, when Grace and JP were travelling with me, I pointed it out to them and said I didn't know where it was located. JP immediately informed me that it was at Weeton, a village very near our home. Sure enough, he was (as always!) correct. What it is to have a bright child! On 23 August I visited this beautiful church, twice; the second time to view the interior. Whilst wandering round in the graveyard I happened to notice that there seemed to be a disproportionately high number (7) of former RAF personnel buried there - the vast majority of whom were not aircrew - and were not killed during WWII. I am trying to investigate further. I did manage to find out that the only Flying Officer buried there, Douglas Cornforth, was the navigator of Canberra P.R. Mk.7 WT505 of No.58 Squadron, RAF, when it crashed on Ponsonby Fell near Gosforth on the western side of the Lake District on the 21st January 1956. But why bury him at Weeton? I'm informed that his family is not from the area - but there must be a reason.







All the fun of the fair...

The brilliant photograph of JP (above) was taken by Grace - such good timing!
All other photographs on this page and the next were also taken by Grace.

Watch the video: [CLICK HERE](#)

at Southport







Little Moreton Hall





Watch the video and see more photographs by clicking [HERE](#)





Sealife Centre



Thanks again to Derian House who provided us with complimentary tickets, this time to visit the Sealife Centre in the Trafford Centre in Manchester on 30 August 2017.





Watch the video: [CLICK HERE](#)

Alan's Reflections

Alan's Reflections

Many years ago I had a friend, Richard, who was also interested in photography. At the time, we were both in our teens and photography was a major expense as we were both low paid apprentices. Photography in those days (1960s) was very expensive relative to our income and the vast majority of working class people just couldn't afford to have such a hobby. My first adjustable 35 mm camera (a Halina 35x Super) was second-hand and cost £9. I took out a loan to buy it. It cost close to 2 weeks income and a roll of Agfa CT18 transparency film – process paid - was almost £1.50 (pre-decimalisation in those days; 29/11d).

Richard caught the 'photography bug' from me and we both sacrificed a lot in order to buy our equipment and materials. In those days, unlike now, I frequently changed my camera in order to obtain better quality images. Sadly, Richard got the idea that I was changing my cameras so I could be one-step in front of him and always have better equipment than he had. Nothing could have been further from the truth as I didn't care in the least what camera(s) he used as I was only interested in the results I obtained. After the Halina, which was a pretty poor camera by anyone's standards, I bought a new Pentacon Pentaflex SL for almost £30 – again, I took out a loan. My next step up the equipment ladder was a secondhand Ashai Pentax S1a, probably for much the same price as the Pentaflex SL, although I can't remember exactly now. A bit later I also bought a lovely secondhand medium format (6 cm x 6 cm) TLR which was the Yashica Mat with the f2.8 Yashinon lens for £30. I sometimes used to borrow/rent a Pentacon Praktica MAT from the local photographic shop too. I even bought an old Exakta 500 at one time, which I later gave to a friend along with 50 mm and 300 mm lenses.

When I started college full time in October 1971, I spent much of my grant money (yes, we used to get paid to be a student in those halcyon days) on a secondhand Ashai Pentax Spotmatic with a Super Takumar 50 mm f1.4 lens for £95 (that equates to about £1300 today) – which I still have. I once had a print made that was 8'6" long from this camera and lens for a commercial job I undertook in Leicester. As the years passed, and long after I'd lost touch with Richard, I bought a number of other cameras and their lenses, solely to improve the quality of my images or improve the flexibility when it came to obtaining photographs I perhaps wouldn't otherwise be able to take. My two favourites were the Canon A-1 and the medium format (6 cm x 4.5 cm)



Left to right: My old Canon A-1 with a 35 mm f2.8 lens; my current Canon EOS 5D with the 24-105 mm f4 lens and my old Pentax Spotmatic with the 50 mm f1.4 lens. This really illustrates the massive growth in size and weight of digital cameras when compared to film cameras.

Mamiya 645J with a wide range of lenses (I still have both of these cameras and lenses).

Sadly, Richard continued with his mind set on me always trying to outdo him when it came to equipment. Many, many years later I bumped into him and he recited a long list of equipment that he was using just to prove he could get the better of me when it came to equipment. How sad. I couldn't get a word in to let him know how far from the truth he really was. Not that I think he would have listened.

So, the question arises: Do you need expensive equipment to take good photographs? Definitely NOT! However, this needs some explanation. I may have mentioned this previously: I once had a friend who, on looking at some of my photographs, made the most insulting comment anyone could make to a photographer. He said I must have a really good camera in order to get such good photographs. That's like telling Michelangelo he must have used some really good brushes to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel! Needless to say perhaps; we didn't stay friends!

It is the photographer who makes the photograph – not the camera. A brilliant photographer could compose a better photograph on a 'Box Brownie' camera than I could with a top of the range Phase One camera. The difference is the quality of the image. You might get a reasonable postcard size print from a 'Box Brownie', whereas you could get a decent quality mural size print from a Phase One camera. The quality of the image is not the same thing as a good photograph. Sadly, I couldn't get this through to my friend, Richard.

So, does the same still hold good today in this era of digital cameras? Yes, of course. The main difference these days is that photography is now affordable to almost everyone except the poorest. One of the main expenses that Richard and I had to cope with was the

cost of film and processing. We used to process our own monochrome images (and sometimes colour transparencies) by developing our own film and, when we could afford it, either making prints from the best negatives or getting them printed commercially – when we could afford to!

We are now in the digital photography era and the same principles still apply regardless of what equipment we use to obtain our photographs. As I always tell people who ask me about such things. “If you get the results you want from your camera it doesn't matter what it is or how much it cost – just as long as you are happy with the results”.

Image quality wise? As we used to say in the film era. “A good big one is better than a good small one”. That's why many serious photographers would use large format film that produced negatives or transparencies in sizes such as 5” x 4”;

7” x 5”, 10” x 8” or even larger (I could never afford to use these film sizes). In today's parlance; a good big sensor is always going to be better than a good small sensor. However, for most photographers, the difference is likely to be less noticeable than it was in the days of film (unless you're using a small compact camera rather than a DSLR - see last month's newsletter for a comparison of sensor sizes). Of course, lens quality is also a factor, just as it was in the film era, but if you fit the same lens to one camera with a large sensor and take some photographs and then swap the lens onto a camera with a smaller sensor and take similar photographs in good lighting, the difference will not be massive and for any print size less than huge there will be little difference to observe – assuming the resolution of the sensors are pretty much identical. Take note that you will have to use a lens that will cover the size of the image circle of the larger format sensor and live with the crop factor when the same lens is used on the camera with the smaller sensor.

So, why spend thousands of pounds on a camera body when good results can be had from one as inexpensive as, say, £500 or thereabouts?

Firstly, sensor size can be important when using your camera in poor light with high ISO settings, as the result will be less noisy than that obtained on the smaller sensor – like for like in terms of processing and resolution. The individual photoreceptor on the larger sensor will be much larger than the photoreceptor on the small sensor and therefore take in more of the available light in the same period of time – given that they are both the same resolution.

The more expensive camera will almost certainly be more robust and durable than the cheaper model which, to some people, is an important factor. It will almost certainly be reasonably weather proof too.

The viewfinder of the camera with the larger sensor will also be larger, therefore giving the photographer a better view of the scene he/she wants to photograph.

Another factor regards lenses. The camera with the larger sensor (I'm referring to a sensor size of 36 mm x 24 mm – not medium or large format) will usually have a very wide range of high quality lenses available for it when compared to, say, a camera with an APS-C size sensor. Of course, one can fit the more expensive lenses to the smaller sensor camera and, subject to the 1.6x crop factor they will do a really good job – particularly as they will only be using the centre area of the lens's image circle. However, all is not good news with that idea. Because of the crop factor, you will have trouble when it comes to using your 'full-frame' very wide angle lenses on your smaller sensor camera – they are no longer wide angle lenses! Of course, you could always spend £2500+ on the Canon EF 11-24mm f4L USM Lens, but that rather defeats the object of buying a 'budget' camera body (as does using the professional category lenses anyway), or you could buy the Canon EF-S 10-18mm f4.5-5.6 IS STM Lens for about £200 which is designed to be used on cameras with the smaller, APS-C, sensor. The very wide angle lenses for the smaller sensor are okay, and certainly fall in the 'budget' category, but they won't be as good as your top of the range professional lenses – or as robust (usually – although even the 'pro' range lenses can fail - as I've found to my cost).

To put this to the test in a rather non-scientific manner, I've been taking some photographs using JP's 7 year old Canon EOS 1000D SLR Camera as well as my own 11 year old Canon EOS 5D. The lenses I used have been those normally used on my full-frame sensor camera – primarily those in the 'pro' category 'L' series that Canon produce. I had to use my own camera body when I wanted to shoot wide angle views with my Canon EF 17-40mm f4L USM lens, because of the previously mentioned 'crop-factor'.

The results are here for you to see in the photographs taken during our visit to Brockholes Nature Reserve. I paid about £360 for JP's camera body. My camera body was £2500. Can you see any difference in the image quality of the pictures?

I doubt it.

Here are the details of the cameras and lenses used to take those photographs. Please remember that there is a magnification factor (sometimes called a 'crop' factor) of 1.6x between my camera and JP's camera, therefore the angle of view at any particular focal length will be different with each camera as indicated (approximately).

- 1) The panorama across the top of pages 12 and 13:
8 separate photographs taken using JP's camera with a budget lens designed for the full-frame format - Canon EF 24-105 mm f4L IS USM II set at 35 mm. This is equivalent to a lens of 56 mm if used on my full frame camera. Images combined using Adobe Photoshop CS6.
- 2) View of river on page 12:
Alan's camera fitted with Canon EF 17-40mm f4L USM Lens (Pro. lens) set at 17 mm. This would be equivalent to a lens of 27 mm if used on JP's camera.
- 3) Mallard Ducks - page 13:
JP's camera fitted with the Canon EF 70-200 mm f4L IS USM (Pro. lens) set at 200 mm. This gives a field of view equivalent to a lens of 320 mm if used on my full frame camera.
- 4) Yellow Flowers - page 13:
JP's camera fitted with the Canon EF 70-200 mm f4L IS USM (Pro. lens) set at 200 mm. This gives a field of view equivalent to a lens of 320 mm if used on my full frame camera.
- 5) Swans - page 13:
JP's camera fitted with the Canon EF 70-200 mm f4L IS USM (Pro. lens) set at 200 mm. This gives a field of view equivalent to a lens of 320 mm if used on my full frame camera.
- 6) View of river on page 14:
JP's camera fitted with Canon EF 17-40mm f4L USM Lens (Pro. lens) set at 17 mm. This gives a field of view equivalent to a lens of 27 mm if used on my full frame camera.
- 7) View of river on page 15 (Upper):
JP's camera fitted with Canon EF 24-105mm f4L IS USM II Lens (Pro. lens) set at 24 mm. This gives a field of view equivalent to a lens of 38 mm if used on my full frame camera.
- 8) View of river on page 15 (Lower):
Alan's camera fitted with Canon EF 24-105mm f4L IS USM II Lens (Pro. lens) set at 31 mm. This would be equivalent to a lens of 50 mm if used on JP's camera.

You're probably wondering why I spend so much money on my cameras when there seems to be so little return on investment. In a nutshell, and reiterating some of the points I've made previously, here is a brief list:

- 1) Better quality, less noisy images in low lighting conditions.
- 2) Great for high quality, very large, prints - we do have some made occasionally.
- 3) Really super viewfinder - much bigger than those fitted to cameras with smaller sensors.
- 4) Reliability - shutter counts can easily exceed 100 000 images.
- 5) Ruggedness in harsh conditions - and less likely to break if dropped - as mine has been several times.
- 6) Fantastic range of high quality lenses - including some super wide angle lenses.

The downside is that they are big, heavy and expensive! Do I strongly recommend such cameras? No! Neither do I recommend a sensor size anything smaller than Micro-Four-Thirds (*see last month*). As always, it's a case of personal choice and the use to which you put your camera. For serious photography, I do not recommend compact cameras at all as their sensor sizes are just too small to provide a good quality image. As for me, I'll stick with my full-frame sensor for a variety of reasons - but there are times when I would prefer to use JP's APS-C sensor DSLR.



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Wilson