

Northern *news*

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

July 2017



Editorial Ramblings



This edition is partly taken up with pictures of the flowers growing in our tiny garden. We recently happened to be driving past a house that had a rose garden and Grace mentioned that “Nothing beats a rose”, so I immediately got on line and ordered her three roses in pots from David Austin Roses whose nursery (in Albrighton) we visited during the time we lived in Wolverhampton. I was delighted to read that they have just won another Gold Medal at the RHS Hampton Court show - their 16th Gold Medal! Buying from a top quality supplier like this pays dividends as their products carry a long guarantee and are in marvellous condition when they arrive a few days after placing the order.

This month should have seen me a free man as my contract ended on 21 July, however, I’m giving them an extra three weeks of my valuable time. This means that the six weeks holiday we had planned has now been reduced to three weeks. After that, they’ve asked me to continue working for them which I’ve agreed to; but only for three days a week (unless there is a big ‘push’ on and they need me for more hours). It will be wonderful to have a four day weekend. I might actually get some worthwhile projects completed.

I still haven’t bought a new camera. I’m having to think through this very carefully. Thinking outside the box means that I’m now considering the purchase of a Panasonic HC-X1 4K video camera - with maybe keeping my old still camera for a little while longer. The Panasonic HC-X1 seems to be a fantastic bargain at £2400 - complete with a 20x lens (35 mm equivalent from 24 mm to 480 mm). Nothing else comes close to the specification for the price - almost a ‘give away’ price. Also, I don’t believe any fixed lens video camera of this calibre has a 24 mm equivalent wide angle end to the zoom lens. I have bought a new (still camera) lens to replace the lens that failed a few years ago whilst we were in The Netherlands. I’ve bought the MkII version of the Canon 24-105 mm f4 L IS USM, the original version of which was my main ‘everyday’ lens for some years until the focussing mechanism jammed. This range of focal lengths was sorely missed as my shorter lens only covers from 17mm to 40 mm and the next longer lens covers from 70 mm to 200 mm.

As I write this, we still have no idea where we’ll be travelling to on our holiday. Exactly 5 years ago we took Grace’s little Ford Fiesta on a tour of Europe. My truck being unreliable meant we couldn’t tow our newly aquired caravan so we took Grace’s car with our camping equipment instead. We visited six countries covering 3000 miles in 2.5 weeks. Last summer, JP and I rode our bicycles along the path by the River Rhine whilst Grace went to Toronto in Canada. Next month’s newsletter will let you know where we are heading for in the near future.



Left: I do love the deep blue colour of these pansies in our garden - and we have lots of other colours too.

Watch the video of a tour of our garden.

[Click HERE](#)

Cover photograph: Motorcyclist stunt rider at Great Ecclestone Show on 16 July 2017. This will have been taken either by JP or myself - neither of us are certain who it was as we were both using the same camera throughout the afternoon.

Next page: One of three new (potted) roses I bought for Grace, this is aptly named *Grace*.



A rose named 'Grace'

The third of the three new roses I bought for Grace, this is named *Munstead Wood*.



Another of the three new roses I bought for Grace, this is named *Iceburg*. This particular variety was my late father's favourite rose.













Great Ecclestone Show

On 16 July we headed out to this nearby village to see the show. And what a show it was. The panoramic view above (and next page) only shows about half of the showground - there was much more of a spread behind me. The dirt road in front of the scene above was used for tractor pulling; a more pointless form of entertainment I have yet to encounter (*see two photographs taken by JP on the next page*).



Not quite *Ben Hur* but it's only a little village show!



[Click here to watch the video](#)



The car in the photograph above is very rare indeed. Only 1983 were built between 1992 and 1995, mainly for export to Japan, where the model above originally lived. This is the MGR V8, which had a 3947 c.c. V8 engine. I'd never see one before so was especially delighted to find one at this show.

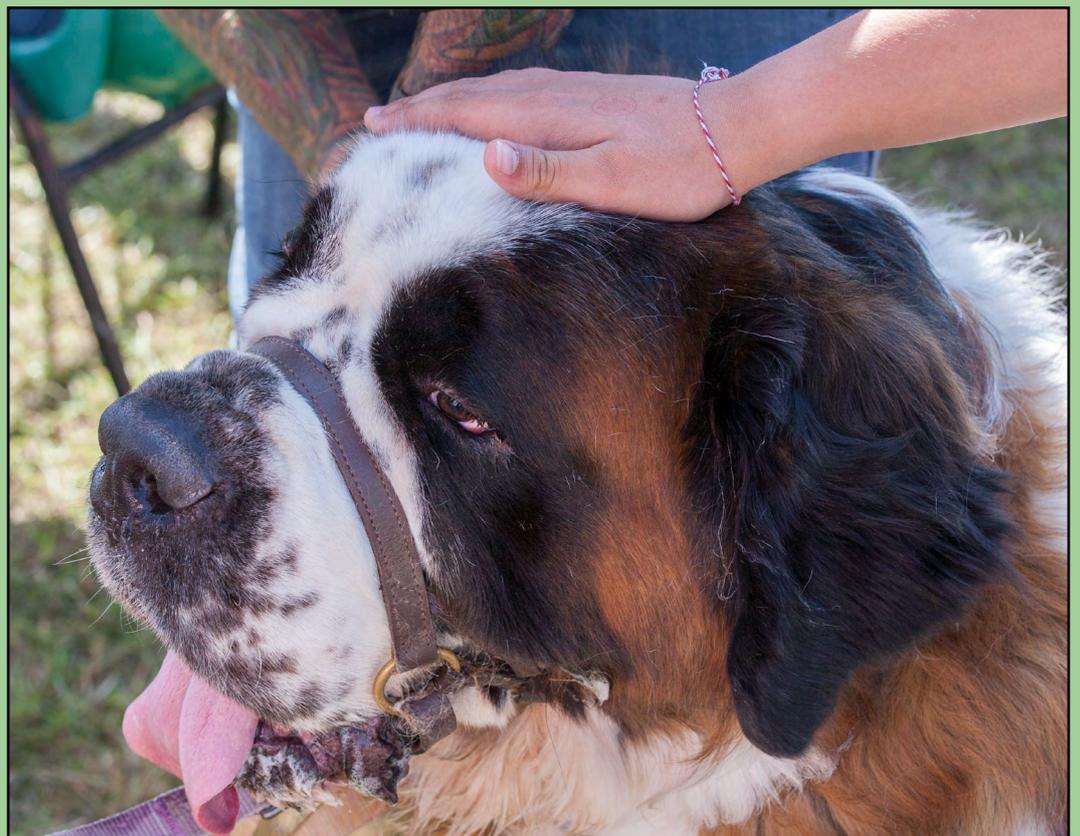


The most important two of JP's loves are shown on this page - food and dogs! The third love is his England rugby shirt (worn in the above photograph)

How we would have loved to take this beautiful (and huge) dog home with us.

Don't forget to watch the video clips from this show.

Click the blue button on page 7 to view them.





Legend:
 - - - towpath
 ☺ pub
 ☕ café
 P parking

Map Labels:
 River Lune
 Glasson Basin
 visitor moorings
 School Lane
 Lancaster Canal (Glasson Branch)
 towards Lancaster
 B5290

Navigation:
 you are here (indicated by a red arrow)
 N (North arrow)
 map not to scale: covers approx. 1/2 mile / 0.8km

Safety:
STAY SAFE:
 Stay Away From the Edge

Welcome to Glasson Basin

The Glasson Branch affords lovely views across Morecambe Bay to the high fells of the Lake District. Opened in 1820, the branch runs through tranquil countryside before finally reaching Glasson basin and Glasson Dock.

The Canal & River Trust is the charity that ensures Lancaster's canals are here for everyone to enjoy, now and forever.

canalrivertrust.org.uk

Charity no. 1146792

On 23 July 2017, a typical UK summer's day; wet, windy and cold, we visited Glasson Dock - now mainly a marina. This port, located at the mouth of the River Lune, was once the largest in the North West of England and still handles more than 150 000 tonnes of cargo each year, with a link, still operating, to the Lancaster Canal.







For new **digital cameras**, a bigger **sensor area** captures better quality, but requires larger diameter, bulkier lenses. To **optimize** the size of a serious **travel camera**, consider **1-inch Type sensor** or up to **APS-C sensor size**.

Full-frame sensor (Nikon FX, Canon EF, Sony FE) = **36 mm wide**

"Full-frame 35mm" sensor / film size (36 x 24 mm) is a standard for comparison, with a **diagonal field-of-view crop factor** = 1.0

In comparison, a pocket camera's 1/2.5" Type sensor crops the light gathering by 6.0x smaller diagonally (with a surface area 35 times smaller than full frame).

APS-C Nikon DX, Sony E = 1.5x crop

APS-C Canon EF-S = 1.6x crop

Four Thirds 4/3" = 2x crop

1" Type = 2.7x crop
Sony RX10, RX100

1/1.7": 4.6x

**1/2.5":
6.0x crop**

24 mm

"Medium format" size 48 x 36 mm

Compact & pocket zoom cameras have small, noisy sensors, tiny enough to extend superzoom lens reach.

APS-C sensor gathers 15 times more light (area) than a 1/2.5" Type sensor, and 2.4 times less than Full Frame.

Many years ago, before I'd bought my first (and only) digital camera, a colleague in Kuwait asked me why, given my interest in photography, I hadn't bought a digital camera. I informed him that I was waiting for an affordable full-frame sensor camera that would produce higher quality images than those from my (new) film camera which I'd bought whilst we were living in Kuwait; the Canon EOS 5. That was probably in 2001. I waited until 2006 before I bought the then revolutionary Canon EOS 5D - which I'm still using. So many people I've spoken to believe that image quality is all about the pixel count i.e. how many mega-pixels the sensor contains. This is, of course nowhere near the whole story. The size of the photo-receptors is also critical. Just as in the days of film, the bigger the original, the better the quality. That's why photographers in those days used massive film sizes, many time larger than the standard 35 mm format (36 mm x 24 mm). The same holds true even today with digital cameras - see illustration above.

This of course brings me to my dilemma. What camera do I buy next? I've mentioned this a few times before, but I still have no idea. I was hoping to be able to buy a Canon full-frame DSLR that also produced good quality 4K video for about £2000 (the cost of the new Canon EOS 6D body). No such luck. The revolution of combining a (full-frame) still and video camera was instigated by Canon when it produced the Canon EOS 5D Mk II. Since then Canon have gone backwards. Yes, I know two of their DSLRs shoot 4K video, but the codecs they use are very old and the quality leaves a lot to be desired, particularly in the Canon EOS 5D Mk IV (about £3400 - body only). The better of the two, the Canon 1D X Mark II costs around £4800 (body only) and is a very large, heavy camera. The new Canon EOS 6D only produces Full HD video of doubtful quality and even as a still camera it (has been reported) isn't even as good in terms of dynamic range as its predecessor. Other manufacturers that use full-frame sensors are also struggling to produce good 4K video. The remarkable Panasonic GH5 (£1700 body only) produces good 4K video at the expense of still image quality as it uses a Micro-Four-Thirds sensor - a fraction of the size of full-frame and it's not a DSLR (it has an electronic view-finder). As things stand at present I'm still going to have to carry two cameras around with me (still and video) which I was hoping to avoid.

Alan's Reflections

Alan's Reflections

I have seen huge social changes during my lifetime. Not all for the good, I might add. When I was a young lad a woman's place was in the home. My grandmothers were born more than a century ago and they didn't work after they had got married. Their job was looking after the family and the home. In those glorious days women didn't drive and neither did many men - after all, only the rich and famous could afford cars.

In my parents generation, born in the early 1920s, women did sometimes work but rarely drove cars - again, few working class people could afford one. My father was one of not all that many men who could drive and did, sometimes, own a car. In my childhood he sometimes had to hire a car with which to take us on holiday - and holidays were few and far between as he would only have two weeks holiday a year anyway. My mother only ever had part time jobs as she was doing what generations of women had done before her since time immemorial; looking after the family and their home. When she was at work, I spent those few hours with my grandmother if I wasn't at school.

In my generation, many women worked once the children were old enough to be somewhat self-reliant. Many women started to become car drivers too.

In the generation of my children almost all women work and most have cars of their own.

So what has effect have these two significant changes made to our lives today?

The really sad thing is that most children are now largely brought up by child-minders, nurseries and nursery schools instead of having their own mother to take care of them, teach them and provide love for them throughout the best part of the day in the very early and formative years of their lives. Not only are the children missing out on this, but their mother's are too as it is an important part of family bonding and keeping the family close to each other. Who knows what the long term effects of this will be.

At the other end of the age range many families are now dumping their aged parents into old folks homes instead of looking after them at home as part of the family. This seems to have become another casualty of family life often brought about by women who insist on working.

Of course, the excuse given for this is often that the women work for the financial benefit of the family. Of course, this has also had a huge effect on house prices as more income means that house prices increase in turn and that means even more money needs to be generated by the family to pay the mortgage (and the car loans!). A vicious circle. We also have incredibly over-crowded roads - another detrimental affect.

Compare our society with that of Filipinos and we see a massive difference. Grace has a grandmother aged 93. She doesn't have a permanent home and neither does she live in a care home of some sort. She lives with the family on the outskirts of Toronto, Canada. She is happy and loved by all. She has a variety of homes in which to live as she is made welcome in whatever relative's home she cares to stay in for a while. She still flies off to see other family members in the Philippines from time to time where, of course, she is made more than welcome to stay in their homes too.

One of my biggest regrets is that I didn't intervene when my own grandmother was dumped into a care home. I wish I'd taken her into my own home to live. She died from boredom and lack of mental stimulation and, it has to be said, not being part of a family anymore and having to tolerate living with a load of other old folks all crammed into a home together. Old people need to be with younger people in a family environment where they are loved and feel needed - helping to bring up their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Sad to say but whilst we may be far better off materially than our parents and grandparents we are sadly deteriorating in our family and social lives. At least people *seem* to be better off but this can be misleading as they have huge debts to pay. I know several people who admit to having thousands of pounds of debt on their credit cards - as well as huge loans to pay for their latest model top of the range cars.

It's time for another *social revolution* that will reverse this trend. This will also have a massive positive effect on families staying together instead of falling apart.

Of course, what I've written is hugely simplistic (and somewhat controversial), but these social changes are changing attitudes and lives throughout the western world at great cost to everyone involved.

Alan

Grace in our home on 22 July 2017

