



## Remembering Sean

A special edition IPF Newsletter

January 2015

"Have you any good pictures for the yearbook, Michael?"

This is what Sean would say to me any time I bumped into him at IPF events in the couple of short years after he used my image on the front cover of "Photography Ireland". I didn't know Sean anywhere near as well as some others in the Irish photographic fraternity, but in that short time, Sean made a massive impact on me as a photographer. Sean had no problem taking my image, that of a very new and largely unknown practitioner in Irish club photography, and gave it the prime position on the front cover of 2011's yearbook. From that point on, at every event I went to, people would ask; "Are you Michael O'Sullivan? Is that your image on the front of the IPF book?" I found that life in Irish Photography was suddenly different for me. Since then, I have had all kinds of opportunities to travel, and meet amazing people all over the country, and across the UK. I have really enjoyed every lecture, and every judging trip. This was all as a direct result of the curiosity in my work that was generated from that front cover. And from the confidence that I gained as a result. That one decision of Sean's, to give the "new guy" a shot, changed the direction of my photographic life. It showed me that people wanted to see my work, and it was maybe worth sharing. For that, I am, and always will be grateful to Sean Casey.



I will say no more in this introduction. This special edition of the IPF newsletter is a tribute to Sean, and it is also an opportunity for people to remember Sean, and to share their memories with us all. In Sean's long time dedicated to Irish Photography, there are countless friends and comrades of his who have so much to say, and I am delighted to invite you all to share in this tribute to the man, the character, the IPF pioneer.

Michael O'Sullivan FIPF FRPS  
IPF President

**In memory of Sean Casey MFIAP, Hon FIPF**

**by Des Clinton**

I got to know Sean all of 42 years ago at inter club events when he was with the Dundalk Camera Club and I the Drogheda Camera Club. He had been a hairdresser by profession and had now moved into Public Relations business and running the annual Maytime Festival in Dundalk. A very keen and skilled photographer, Sean saw how the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain and the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain catered for the photographic clubs and individual photographers in the UK. Sean gathered a group of keen photographers from various clubs together and outlined his proposals for a federation of photographic clubs. All the known photographic clubs in Ireland were contacted and asked to attend a meeting in Dublin where the IPF was formed probably in year 1975. The names that come to mind from these early days were Cliff Hutchinson (Dublin), Jim Finn (Thurles), Michael O Sullivan (Mayo), Podge Kelly (Dublin), Sean Cannon (Monahan), Willie Farrell (Wexford), Des Clinton, Patsy Reilly and Joe Dowdall (Drogheda), Peter Slattery, Colm Wynne and Eddie Chandler (Dublin), John Doheny, Bob Morrison, Joe and Lillian Webb and Kieran O Keefe. Sean was the National Secretary, PR and chief fundraiser then and continued in these roles with others added for the best part of 34 years.

### **National League**

Sean was a man of great vision for Irish photography. His aim was to cater for the needs of Irish photographers and clubs as well as a plan to put Ireland on the world map of photography. The SACC had already been formed so the rest of the country was broken into IPF regions and Sean soon set up the National League competition for affiliated clubs (National Club Championships) with the top clubs from the regional qualifiers going through to the finals. Sean donated the Rose Bowl trophy for this competition and it is still the trophy all clubs would like to win.

### **Distinctions**

Sean saw many Irish photographers going for distinctions with the RPS in UK so he set up the IPF distinctions system modelled on the RPS knowing that this was what many Irish photographers wanted. In these early days Ken Tomlinson FRPS from Belfast was the distinction's chairperson for about 10 years with mostly RPS distinction holders from North and Southern Ireland on the panels. Sometimes UK fellows of RPS were drafted onto panels when Fellowships were being assessed. These distinctions were a great success and they have mushroomed into the success they now are today.

### **North/ South Relationships**

Sean was a great promoter of North/ South photography relationship during the dark days of conflict in the North. As much as 2 busloads of southern photographers made the annual trip to Monkstown in North Belfast for the individual and inter federation AV events, stopping off at Stanley Mc Ilreavy's photographic shop on the way to pick up photographic bargains. The fun always started on way home when custom officers boarded the buses on the border. Sean coming from the border town of Dundalk knew all the smuggling tips and always had everybody well groomed on how to smuggle the goods through. Sean also set up a head to head competition between the top clubs in the IPF and NIPA to decide the overall best club in all of Ireland.

## Sponsorship

Sean with all his PR skills was a genius at getting sponsorship. Agfa, Kodak, Fuji, Nikon and Mazda were only some of the sponsors he got sponsorship from. He loved meeting with possible sponsors and always went with something to offer and tempt them with. One of his best achievements was getting the Arts Council of Ireland to sponsor the first edition of Photography Ireland, a book of photographs taken by Irish photographers. The sales from this yearbook went to fund the printing of the next year's Photography Ireland edition etc. This continued for twelve years under Sean's watch with him as producer and editor. These books gave every photographer in Ireland an opportunity to have images published and he always tried to publish at least one image from each photographer who submitted images.

## PHOTOGRAPHY IRELAND 2001



Irish Photographic Federation Yearbook 2001

## PHOTOGRAPHY IRELAND 2003



Irish Photographic Federation Yearbook 2003

## FIAP

Sean's great vision was to see Irish photography competing and doing well in the world stage with FIAP. Sean attended 5 different FIAP congresses as the IPF delegate at no cost to the IPF and he was elected onto the FIAP directory board. He just loved meeting all the photographers from the many nations attending the meetings and he made many lifelong friends there. He set up the FIAP distinctions in Ireland for the IPF and for over 30 years he alone was the FIAP liaison office and he looked after all Irish application for FIAP distinctions.. Many IPF photographers aspired to and obtained these coveted international distinctions. He himself achieved the highest accolade by getting his Masters distinction with FIAP with a panel of super images taken in a Co Monaghan horse fair. Three other Irish photographers have since gained this MFIAP. His great joy for Irish photography was when Ireland won the top country award in the colour FIAP biennial in 2012 followed in the same year winning the best country award in the Monochrome

biennial. How far photography had come since the foundation of the IPF! This was the vision Sean had for Irish photography. The IPF also hosted several FIAP international biennials in Ireland under Sean's watch for over 20 years. One of Sean's biggest disappointments in photography was not being given the opportunity to continue as the IPF delegate for FIAP.

## Celtic Challenge

Sean set up the Celtic Challenge, a friendly international photography competition between Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Isle of Man, Southern Ireland and Britany. He loved this competition as it was a means to meet so many fellow photographers from our neighbour countries. He always attended this competition no matter where it was hosted. It was meant to be a fun event where photographers from the Celtic nations could meet up and enjoy photography at the highest level.

## Lecturing / Judging

Probably Sean's greatest love in photography was visiting clubs as guest lecturer or guest judge or visiting a newly formed club with his starter IPF pack of information. He was the perfect ambassador for the IPF. He was a wonderful judge of a single image or distinction panel. He must have visited every club in Ireland at some stage and he was known to tell a good story or yarn and his lectures were always interesting. He also set up a fantastic club insurance scheme

especially for IPF photography clubs and he always said clubs should join the IPF if for nothing else other than access to this insurance scheme.

### Latter years of Sean

About 15 years ago Sean became so seriously ill he almost died. Over a period of time, doctors got Sean's organs and body systems back working to various degrees. Visits to doctors and hospitals became the norm for Sean but he just got on with life. Attempts by many to get him to cut back on IPF activities were fruitless as in Sean's words "he just loved doing what he was doing for the IPF". Sean always bounced back from medical setbacks and we all somehow got use to this and it came as a shock when he was unable to overcome his most recent illness. One of Sean's last requests was to make contact with some of his close photography friends from North and South to have a final chat and last goodbye. In 2014 Sean was still taking photographs and he made his annual trip to his favourite horse fair Muff in August and he also photographed Belfast on the week of the 12th. Typical of Sean, he ended up doing a recorded interview in the Loyalist Shankill square with the mentors of those building the huge bonfire in the square. Sean was always working towards photography exhibitions and was great believer in a good quality print. Weeks before Sean died he had an exhibition of prints in the Dundalk Museum titled "children of the troubles".

Sean was a fluent Irish speaker and he loved Irish music, dance and games. His family were football lovers and most weekends he would end up going to a GAA match or to Oriel Park with his sons to watch Dundalk FC play. He was an avid book reader and he was lifelong boy scouts leader in Dundalk. Sean had a presence and always took pride in being immaculately dressed. I remember one day Sean called to collect me in my school, dressed to the last with his briefcase in hand. He sat down with staff present having a chat and cup of tea. The principal of the school joined in and he realised that Sean was the perfect foil to pull a stunt on the staff prankster. He sent Sean to the prankster's classroom as an inspector of Classical Studies. Sean introduced himself as an inspector and went looking for teacher's class notes and plans and he grilled the teacher for 30 mins. Well the staff members still talk about how Sean pulled this off and the reaction of the prankster when told who Sean really was. Cyril the prankster still tells this story. A letter to Sean from Australia addressed Sean Casey Ireland found its way to him in Dundalk! Sean was one in a million, a gentleman and a genius. I was honoured to have known Sean for so many years as were so many others who were his friends. He was the IPF and we are all indebted to him for all he did to make the IPF the great organisation it is today. His motto in life was "if you want something done do it yourself "and this is what he did.

To Sean's wife Ann and sons Paul, Colin, Ian and their extended families I offer my deepest sympathy and I do so also on behalf of all Sean's many friends in the photography world in the IPF, NIPA, PAGB and FIAP.

Ar dheis lámh Dé go raibh a hanam dílis'



## Sean The Photographer

Sean was not only an advocate for photography in Ireland, he was also an extremely talented photographer with numerous awards and accolades to his name. He was awarded the MFIAP (Master level recognition from The International Federation of Photographic Art) in 2005 for the body of work below title 'Muff Fair'. Sean is one of only four Irish photographers granted this recognition. Please click the image to go to FIAP website where you can view in more detail.



In April 2011, after more than three decades at the forefront of the Irish Photographic Federation, Sean retired. He had served for over 35 years in many positions on IPF Council, including as President and Secretary. Sean was joined by friends far and near on this very special night and was wished the very best in his retirement.

## Sean remembered far and near..

**PHOTOGRAPHY  
IRELAND 2005**

Irish Photographic Federation Yearbook 2005

"When Sean attended the FIAP Congress in China in 2006 his trip was fraught with difficulty. Chinese bureaucracy can be quite inflexible and every time Sean tried to check in at a hotel, or sign in for a flight, or register at the Congress, he was told that they had no Sean Casey listed. He even missed the greeting board displayed for his arrival and failed to find his pre booked accommodation in Beijing. Luckily he knew where I was staying and he got a taxi to take him there so that he didn't have to sleep on the street. Later we discovered that he had been incorrectly listed everywhere as Mr Sean Éireannach. It plagued him for the entire trip but everyone else thought it only correct that he should be known as Mr Irish. Only Mr Grianghrafadóireacht Éireannach would have been more appropriate."

- Rod Wheelans, Dumfries Camera Club & PAGB

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"Spent many a long hour with Sean on our many visits to Ireland to judge and lecture. Always full of enthusiasm for photography and photographers. On our first visit to Ireland, he gave us a lift in his car, to where I'm not sure, and the journey was unforgettable. I'm sure he wouldn't mind me saying that we both still shake at the memory! He came to Smethwick a couple of years ago for a Permajet Lecturers day and stole the show. He organised the raffle draw and kept us entertained for over 20 minutes without showing any images. He'll never be replaced. Truely, a one off!"

- Bob & Sue Moore, Arden Photo Group

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"Over the last 10 years or so I have got to know and enjoyed Sean's company and humour. In 2005 Sean and Des Clinton arranged a trip to Belfast for the three of us. A photo from that trip attached."

- Tom Dodd, North Wales

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"Sean Casey, RIP. It is hard to credit that Sean has hung up his camera gear for the last time and if I had not made it to Dundalk for his funeral I would not have believed it. I first met Sean in the early 70's not long after we had got the club in Castlebar up & running. Sean, Des and the late Michael Kelly came along to judge our entries for the First competition our fledgling club entered. We got to the final in Dublin that year and a lot of the clubs progress was due to encouragement from Sean.

Later on I became involved in the Council of the IPF

where Sean was an almost permanent presence in his role as National Secretary. He worked with me on many competitions over the years and even when I occupied the position of IPF Distinctions Secretary, we got through many Competitions and events together. Sean was no saint but like the rest of us had his blind spots but everything he did was, as he saw it, for the good of The Federation and Irish Photography. he held exhibitions in his beloved Dundalk, started at least 2 clubs there and had published atleast 2 books on the town. Sean had a trong will and a fiery temper to go with it and we often differed on organisational matters but no matter what he always pressed on with his pet photographic objectives. At times we all fell out with him but he always bounced back and kept working on for the Federation's benefit. Sean worked tirelessly on the International profile of Irish Photography, signs on the current level of success enjoyed by Irish Photographers from the Federation is in no small measure due to Sean and his constant efforts to lift the Irish profile at International level. I have not been active at Federation level for a few years now and Sean shortly afterward, started to run into health problems and had to pull back from his favorite activity, working for the Federation. As always the events will not be the same without Sean but hopefully the foundation he helped put in place for the federation will continue to inspire those of us who knew him, well into the future. The memories are many varied and colourful, occasionally black & white and to say Irish Photography has lost a colossus is not an understatement. To Anne, his wife who spoke so eloquently of him after his funeral service and to his sons and extended family I wish to extend my sincerest condolences on behalf of my club and myself. Ar Deis Laimh De Go raibh a anam."

- Michael O'Sullivan, Mayo Photographic Club

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"Sean Casey, a legend. Not too long after the formation of our club in 1977, maybe around 1980, I became aware of the name Sean Casey. We were affiliated nowhere at the time. Somehow

through various messages it became apparent that it would be a good idea to be members of the IPF and the man promoting the message was the one and only Sean Casey. Over time going to SACC and IPF events Sean changed from being just a name to being a real person and a well known face because he was at everything. At many meetings when policy matters were discussed we didn't always agree on some things but, by the same token, we had to admit that Sean was constantly working for the development of clubs and of photography. Sean's

dedication was legendary and, I believe, the IPF would not have flourished as it did without his unstinting work particularly in the early years of the Federation. He will also be remembered for the manner in which he worked towards getting the IPF accepted as a FIAP member and leading to the recognition of the photographic prowess of so many Irish photographers over the years. Sean was a good friend and will be sorely missed."

- Sheamus O'Donoghue, Shannon Camera Club

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"Ireland has lost a larger than life figure. I didn't know Sean well but will always remember him for his kindness, friendship and generosity towards me and my late husband, Alan Millward whenever we visited your beautiful country. I send my deepest sympathies to his wife and family"

- Anne Sutcliffe,

Solihull and Smethwick PS

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national voluntary organisation. Surely the summation of all Sean's efforts over the decades must have been realised in 2012 when Ireland won both FIAP colour and monochrome biennials, our own world cup. I once took Sean out for a meal in Dundalk. The food was incidental, the conversation unforgettable. He was the veteran statesman, myself the rookie IPF President. Sean was most concerned that I got to know "the spokes and gears" of everything, as the IPF remained so close to his heart. I do have some regrets. Firstly that I got to know Sean for all too short a time in this life. Secondly, I was in India when he passed to his reward and I could not attend his funeral. Instead, a candle was lit in his memory at a local temple to a god of our understanding. My own mother died early last year, and to this day I remain bowled over at the appearance of Sean, then in poor health, at her removal in Kilkenny. Finally, my deepest sympathy to Sean's wife, Ann, to his children Paul, Iain and Colin. It was indeed a deep honour to have known such a remarkable man. "

## PHOTOGRAPHY IRELAND 2006



Irish  
Photographic  
Federation  
Yearbook

- John Cuddihy, AIPF, Former President, Irish Photographic Federation.

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"Sean Casey RIP

I first got to know Sean in 1991 shortly after I returned from London and re-joined Drogheda Photographic Club. Sean's passion for photography and his total commitment to the Irish Photographic Federation were obvious from our first meeting.

I got to know Sean better over the years when he visited our club to judge competitions and give lectures. He was always approachable and willing to give advice to club members. I served on the IPF Council for a couple of years and saw, at first hand, how committed Sean was to both promoting photography and ensuring that the IPF was on a secure footing.



Sean single handedly succeeded in getting funding from various sponsors over the years for events such as the National Finals. He also sourced funding from the Government to ensure that the IPF continued to prosper.

Sean was instrumental in Ireland becoming a member of FIAP and served as our delegate for many years. He secured funding for the Yearbook of Irish Photography and for North/South co-operation in the area of photography.

I have many fond memories of attending horse fairs such as Ballinasloe and Muff with Sean as well as trips to Belfast and Markethill to photograph the building of the bonfires and the 12<sup>th</sup> of July parades.

When I was collecting the bronze medal Drogheda won in the FIAP world club championship in 2014, it was obvious that the Council of FIAP held Sean in very high regard with many of them enquiring about him.

I am delighted that my club honoured Sean by making him an honorary Life Member some years ago.

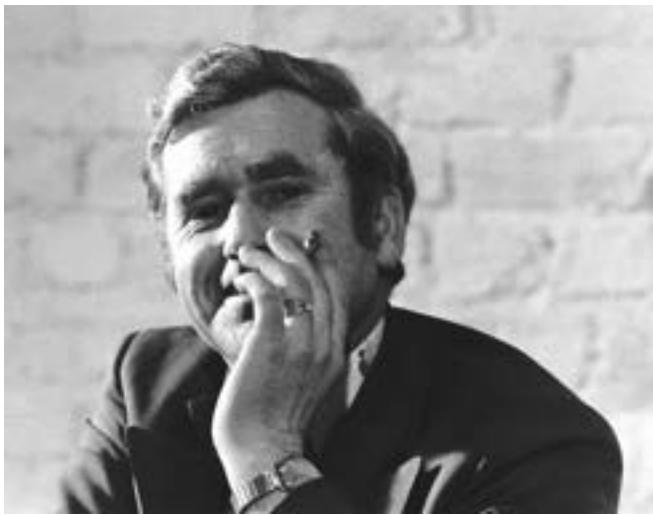
Without Sean Casey the IPF would not exist. Irish photography owes Sean a great debt and I am proud that he was one of my friends.

May he rest in peace"

-John Butler, Chairperson Drogheda Photographic Club.

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"I first met Sean Casey when after leaving college and joining a previous iteration of the current Dundalk Photographic Society. The club then met in a storeroom of a pub in Linen Hall Street. It was only for a few years, '76-'79, that I had the pleasure of knowing Sean before moving away from Dundalk and club photography until making a return in 2013 and only in 2014 I realized that Sean was still involved in photography and the significant contribution that he made to it in Ireland.



My memories of Sean were that for what ever he got involved in he was dedicated, hard working, along with encouraging others to get involved. I enclose two portrait shots of Sean, scans from negatives. These were taken at a club portrait workshop held in Castletown School in 1978."

- Michael O'Brien, Dungarvan Camera Club



"I have many happy memories of meeting Sean on various visits to Ireland, but really got to know him for the first time when Keith Brown, Clive Atkins and I did an AV tour in 1987. Sean travelled to every venue during the week and transported our mountain of gear around so we could enjoy our sightseeing during the day without worrying about it. We christened him 'Chief Raffle Organiser' as his mantra at that time was "whenever three or more people gather together in the name of the IPF, they hold a raffle!" Happy days. He will be sadly missed. Photo: Keith, Clive, Sean and Anne, Dundalk May 1987."

- Richard Brown, PAGB

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"Unfortunately the only time I met Sean was at the PermaJet Lecturers' day at Smerwick a couple of years ago. But he gave us a hilarious end to the day and we much enjoyed his company."

- Irene Froy -

PermaJet Lecturer & Wrekin Arts PC

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"Sean really was a legend in his own lifetime. I had many contacts with him either re the Southampton International or in connection with visits to the IPF. Two stories stand out. Firstly having dinner with Des Clinton and Judy Boyle in Drogheda, shortly before Jean and I were due to judge Tallaght in 2009. We were talking about Sean, Des' mobile rang, and guess who - yep Sean himself. Secondly a Permajet Leturers' Day at Smethwick. Sean was there but had arrived without any prints to show. He was charged with drawing the raffle. Somehow he managed to up end Smethwick's magnificent ticket-holder and scatter the contents all over the floor."

Glyn Edmunds APSA EPSA APAGB,  
Chichester CC / SIE / SCPF

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## PHOTOGRAPHY IRELAND 2008

"I was so sorry to hear of Sean's passing. he was a lovely man, and

although I don't get to Ireland very often, whenever I did, he always treated me like an old friend. I still remember our first encounter as if it were yesterday, although it must be about 20 years ago. Les Mclean and myself were doing a joint lecture tour and our first talk was at Dundalk, with Sean as our host. We were invited to dinner prior to the talk, and bearing in mind that we were both to speak for about an hour and a half each, we expected a very prompt start. However, 7.30 came and went, with no sign of dinner ending, and I was getting a bit anxious. So I asked Sean what time we would be 'on stage' and he very casually replied - 'Ahh, don't you worry now - it will be sometime after eight' It surely was! We didn't start until almost 10 pm, and we finished at around 1 am. I couldn't believe how everything was so laid back and apparently disorganised in Ireland - and everyone kept awake until the end!! And then we started on the Guinness..... An unforgettable evening and a

wonderful introduction to Ireland from Sean."

- Colin Westgate, Quest Photography

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A photo I took of Sean while he was waiting for the Giro De Itilia 2014, Donal Shields, Tain Photographic Group

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"In life we meet many people - In my line of Business - Photo Journalism - I probably met more than most. Some you remember, some you forget, almost instantly.

However, Sean Casey was a man I first met in the late seventies or early 1980's on a visit to judge an inter club show between IPF Clubs in Dundalk.

Refreshingly, Sean was a man passionate about his photography. I was immediately impressed by his enthusiasm. No doubt his experience in P.R. work inspired his confidence.

He was a prime mover in getting "Photography Ireland" launched. I felt that the book reflected the wide and varied nature of images from the Emerald Isle, and deserved support. Sean travelled North with a box full of books - hot off the press. I shot pictures of winners and their work - many superb images.

I managed to sell the idea to three main Belfast newspapers and achieved several publications - Sean was delighted.

My last meeting with the great man, was on Wednesday 9th July at Stanley McIlreavy's funeral - a very sad occasion indeed. Des Clinton's car pulled into the church car park. A very well dressed gentleman stepped out of the car, holding a floral spray - was it Sir Anthony O'Reilly. No, not actually, it was Sean.

He looked so well when he greeted me. I was shocked to hear that he had died, we all lost someone very special. Sadly I did not hear of Sean's death until after the funeral had taken place. However, I have very many happy memories of time spent in his company.

May he rest in peace."

- Stanley Matchett MBE FRPS LBIPP

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"To Sean Casey's family and to the Irish Photographic Federation

On behalf of the the great FIAP Family and of all the FIAP Board of Directors let me pass to all of you, our deepest condolences on the recent passing of our dear friend Sean.

He will always be remembered as an incredible man and a great photographer.

He will forever remain in our hearts."

- Riccardo Busi, FIAP President

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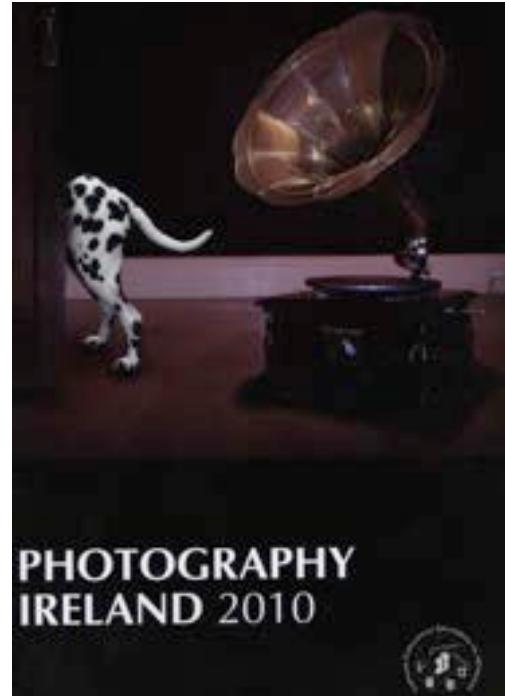
"It is with profound emotion and great sadness that we learnt the death of Sean.

We are aware how outstandingly he was serving your Society, FIAP and the Photography.

I met him very often in many different countries and I think he liked to discuss with me, and so I did with him.

We will keep for a long time his memory.

Please transmit our very sincere condolences to his family."



Jacques Denis, MFIAP, HonEFIAP, Honorary Vice President of FIAP

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"Appreciated family of Sean,

As Vicepresident of FIAP I adhere to the words of our Secretary General Ioannis Lykouris. Sean was a good photographer, good friend he loved photography, my sincere condolences"

Joan Burguès Martisella

Vicepresident of FIAP

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"Our sincere condolences for the loss of Sean, a wonderful personnalitiy joyful and fruitful to all FIAP family, on behalf of the Hellenic Photographic Society"

-Ioannis Lykouris MFIAP, HonEFIAP  
Vice President of the Hellenic Photographic Society  
Hellenic Photographic Society's FIAP Liaison Officer

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"Although Sean grew up just two streets away from me, I didn't really meet him until I joined what was then the Dundalk Practical Photographic Society in 1986. Sean was a founder member of the society; and, with others, encouraged many budding photographers to develop their skills. He was a founding member of the Irish Photographic Federation and initiated contact with fellow photographers in Northern Ireland. I remember accompanying him on several of his visits to the Crescent Art Centre in Belfast to meet photographers during the time of the "troubles" in the late 80's. There was very little which took place on the amateur photography scene in Ireland for over four decades that he was not involved in. Sean never lost his drive or enthusiasm up to his retirement from council in recent years."

- Denis Whelehan AIPF, IPF Council Member

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"Sean always made himself available to clubs in his quest to promote club photography and the IPF.



He regularly travelled to Mallow Camera Club and other clubs in the region giving talks not just on his own photography, but on the importance of club photography and why each club should be affiliated to the IPF.

When a new club, or a member of a new club won an IPF award Sean often travelled the length of the country to present the club or club member with their award at the club meeting.

He was always courteous and pleasant and, even if he had his own way of doing things, always had the interests of Irish amateur club photography a heart. He always knew who to contact in a club if he wanted a message passed on, or wanted information.

Over the years he built up an extensive network of photography contacts not just in Ireland but across the UK and internationally.

He instigated the Celtic Challenge and was the guest of the IPF and SACC when the event was held in Cork in September 2013. That was the last official IPF event Sean attended."

- John Doheny, Mallow Camera Club, SACC Secretary & IPF Council Member

## Rest in peace Sean

## In Our Next Issue..

We take a look at the fellowships of 2014 and we look forward to the national finals of the IPF National Print & Projected Image Competition in association with Canon and the IPF National Nature Competition. Our newsletter also gets its new name, plus lots more!

## Share the News

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