



## Oscailt

**IPF Newsletter - February 2015**

A cháirde go léir, ta súil agam go bhfuil sibh ag baint "taitneamh" as an solas alainn órga ata caite orainn anois le teacht an earraigh!

Spring has truly sprung it seems, and with it, we can hear the machine-gun sound of camera shutters around the country! Some of which have only just come out of hibernation, along with their owners!

Spring is always a time for new photographic life! The weather is more welcoming, the Golden hours are slightly longer without occurring too early in the morning or too late at night. The sun is still not too high in the sky for most of the day, and, for the artificial light shooters among us, it's easier to balance your light when you're not fighting the July Sunshine. Spring truly is a season of new life and inspiration for all of us photographers! The opportunities are boundless, regardless of our preferred style or genre. And what better way to look forward with mouth-watering delight to the photographic season ahead, than to celebrate the glorious photographic bounty already on show for us all to enjoy?



In this issue, we have just the sparks to get the embers of inspiration glowing! We focus on the upcoming National finals of both the Print & Projected Image and Nature competitions in Kilkenny this month. This promises to be a fantastic event, and it is always a wonderful celebration of Photography & Photographic art from all over the land.

We also have the amazing work from our recent successful fellowships! This is some truly inspirational work, and nothing is more enjoyable as a lover of images than to celebrate and share in the work of those who have persevered and attained the highest possible standard in their work.

On that note, I'm not going to hold you here any longer! Until next month, go ahead and enjoy this month's issue.

...and Keep those shutters firing!

Michael O'Sullivan FIPF FRPS  
IPF President

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## 2015 Calendar of Events

Event	Date	Venue
IPF PPI Finals	Sat, Feb 21st	Hotel Kilkenny
IPF Nature Finals	Sun, Feb 22nd	Hotel Kilkenny
IPF National Club Championship	Weekend, May 16th/17th	The Atrium, County Council Offices, Mullingar, Co.Westmeath
IPF Distinctions Sitting	Sat, May 16th	Mullingar Arts Centre, Co.Westmeath
IPF Distinctions Sitting	Sat, Sep 26th	Venue TBA
IPF AV Championships	Weekend, Oct 17th/18th	Venue TBA
IPF National Shield	Sat, Nov 7th	Malahide Community School, Dublin
IPF Distinctions Sitting	Sat, Nov 21st	LIT, Thurles, Co.Tipperary

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### IPF National Print & Projected Image Competition Finals 2015 in association with Canon

The national finals of the IPF National Print & Projected Image Competition 2015 in association with Canon takes place on Saturday February 21st at Hotel Kilkenny. Canon have once again been very generous with their sponsorship and we look forward to another great day of images.

Judging is due to begin at 10am and will start with colour prints.

There is a dinner organised on Saturday evening in Hotel Kilkenny for €25 per person. For details on how to book and for more information on the event, please refer to [this article](#) on our website.

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## **IPF National Nature Competition Finals 2015 in association with Whites Photo Centre Kilkenny and Fujifilm**

The national finals of the IPF National Nature Competition 2015 in association with Canon takes place on Sunday February 22nd at Hotel Kilkenny. We are delighted to welcome Whites Photo Centre of Kilkenny in association with Fujifilm as sponsors of the nature competition this year.

Judging is due to begin at 10am and will start with prints.

Are you making a weekend of it? Why not join us for a dinner organised on Saturday evening in Hotel Kilkenny for €25 per person. For details on how to book and for more information on the event, please refer to [this article](#) on our website.

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## **The Fellowships of 2014**

In 2014, the IPF welcomed three new fellowships to the list of fellowship distinction holders. We got hold of all of them and asked them to share a little about their fellowship journeys and to once again share our congratulations on their achievements!

**May 2014 - Ross McKelvey FIPF**



Ross McKelvey FIPF

I gained my Associateship (from the ARPS) in 2011, as well as the DPAGB, and at that time, I had no real intention of applying for a Fellowship. I started entering National and International Exhibitions in January 2012, with unexpected success - throughout 2012 my success continued, and I was awarded the MPAGB in 2013 - which is their highest Distinction. I was only the second ever MPAGB from N.Ireland, following Colin Thompson MPAGB over 16 years ago! At that stage, I decided to attempt the Fellowship of the IPF.

My first attempt was in 2013 with a panel of 20 digital composites. That was unsuccessful, and I decided that even if I took the suggestions from the Assessors Panel onboard, it was still unlikely to be successful. So I had a good long think, before deciding to do something completely different - a panel of 20 mono portraits. My mono portraits were doing really well in exhibitions, I was being complemented on my printing skills, and I was winning awards with more than a handful of different images. So from a starting point of something like 6 or 7 award winning prints, I set about completing a panel of 20. This took considerable time and commitment - I was constantly on the lookout for suitable 'subjects' - looking for people that were 'different' with either character, style or beauty. By choosing a genre that I knew was successful for me, and that I particularly enjoyed, I felt this gave me my best chance of achieving the Fellowship.

My task then was to get a decent mix of male and female subjects, both landscape and upright portraits, and get them to fit together as a balanced, cohesive panel. One advantage of producing a monochrome panel, is that it is easier to get the exact same tone throughout. All were high contrast, with deep blacks and lots of texture and detail. More by accident than design, I ended up with a fairly even mix of male and female pictures, but it still took considerable time to finalise the layout.

As my prints were all studio portraits, there were no issues about quality, so I decided to go for exhibition size mounts (20x16) with large prints. All were printed on a platinum baryta paper, and all were rolled down onto sticky fast mount so there would be no ripples - something that drew favourable comments from the assessors. I believe that the Fellowship requires a certain

respect in terms of approach and presentation, and I finished off by getting the prints double mounted with a 'v' groove.

The panel was initially presented as two rows of 10, and it did not pass on its initial assessment - it was 'referred' for 2 or 3 images that were felt to have relatively minor issues. But one of the assessors (Mark Sedgwick I believe!) suggested a slight change to the layout, which made it rows of 9 and 11. This was a touch of genius, that somehow gave the panel better balance. When I came back on the referral, I knew I had to get it right. I looked at the feedback from the assessors, but still had to use my own skill and judgment to decide whether to re-print, replace or do something different with the referred images. With one of the images, I did not agree with the 'problem' that was flagged up, and therefore decided it had to be replaced. With another image, the problem that was flagged up was so obvious, I could not believe I had not been able to 'see' it myself. (You really do have to take a step back and detach yourself from your images and critique them as if they were someone else's image). So I completely replaced 2 images, and tweaked a third. The panel was then unanimously passed at Mullingar in May 2014.

What did I learn from the process? If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. But in doing so, ask yourself whether your original panel is capable of improving to the required standard - and if not, do not waste time and effort trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear - go back to the drawing board like I did, and come back with something new. Concentrate on what you are good at, and what you enjoy most.

### **Bill Power FIPF - September 2014**



I joined Mallow Camera Club in September 2010. After I was awarded my Licentiate and Associateship (a panel of butterflies) in 2012, I immediately began thinking about working towards the Fellowship. The first question for me, as it is for anyone doing a Fellowship is 'a panel of what?' I was determined to do something different to anything that had been done before. I thought a lot about that and, having won some IPF Nature medals and a PSA Gold for toadstool images, I felt that maybe, just maybe, a panel of toadstools might be the way to go. So I began to make some enquiries and satisfied myself that no one in Ireland had ever done a panel of toadstools for a distinction.

That began a journey of exploration. Some people think toadstools are 'easy' but that's because they have never tried to photograph them. True, they don't move but you have to find them. They don't grow just anywhere in a wood. As I soon learned, they are habitat specific. They

grow best in dappled light, preferably in mixed woodland. Although they grow all year 'round, the best time to find them is in the Autumn. But they are not like daffodils or tulips. They do not come up in the same spot year after year. In fact, some only appear once ever five, ten, 15 or even 25 years. Their Irish name, 'Fás aon oíche' ('grown in a night') reveals how quickly they grow but they disappear almost as fast. So when you see a good toadstool, photograph it today, don't leave it until tomorrow.

Throughout September and October 2013, I scoured several woods, most of them within twenty miles of my home. One wood in particular on the Galtee mountains became my favourite hunting ground. I learned every inch of it and got to know some of the best places around there for toadstools. To create the panel, I took in excess of 4,500 images of toadstools. Sometimes, if I really like a toadstool, I might take fifty or sixty images of it and still not be satisfied with the result.

But how do you photograph a toadstool? There has to be huge attention to detail. All distractions have to be removed. Backgrounds must be perfect. Lighting must be subtle. It was on the latter point that my first panel was criticised by the judges. They identified six images they did not like because they thought I had used flash (I didn't). Sharpness is also critical and being able to see the important parts (usually, but not always the gills), is vital. I usually end up lying on the floor of the forest to get the lowest possible angle.

I used a Nikon D800 with a 105mm macro lens for all the images (except one that was taken on a D300s). The aperture varies depending on the location. I always use ISO100 and exposures can be anything from a couple of seconds to 30 seconds. I did not use image-stacking for any of the images. My primary tools in Photoshop are unmask-sharpening, saturation, vibrance and cropping.

As already mentioned, the first panel I submitted in November 2013 was unsuccessful. I vividly remember individual judges approaching me afterwards to sympathize, and yes, it was a small consolation to realize that some of the very best of them had been unsuccessful the first time they went for the Fellowship. But it was still a painful experience and I will never pretend otherwise. With my tail between my legs, I sloped away but did what I advise everyone else to do in such situations - 'get back up on the horse'.

Last August, I was back in my favourite wood, a lot wiser, hunting my toadstools. I had already decided to revamp the panel and in the end removed about half of the images that had been on the first panel. I got superb help and advice along the way. Members of my own club (Mallow) gave me valuable insights. Brid Coakley and Niamh Whitty gave me sound advice on panel layout. I showed the 'final panel' to Michael O'Sullivan on the week of the adjudication. With his advice, the last change was made and the panel was ready for Drogheda.

I won't pretend that I wasn't nervous. It was nerve-wracking. Having been unsuccessful almost a year earlier, I felt that it really had to go right this time. I stopwatch every panel that interests me to see how long it takes for the adjudication (it's a good indicator of how much trouble the panel is in). With my first FIPF panel the adjudication lasted 17 minutes and 50 seconds. The second time, Bob Morrison's immortal words 'The panel has been successful' were uttered seven minutes and 20 seconds into the adjudication. I think that the last time I felt that ecstatic was when my son was born almost fifteen years ago.

## Jason Town FIPF - November 2014

Successful Fellowship Panel - Jason Town 2014



It was the challenge of the fellowship that got my interest and following my successful associateship panel on insects, I decided to stay with that genre to

persue the fellowship. With a young family at home, insects were the ideal subject matter as I didn't have to travel and could always try to grab a few shots out the back garden when the kids were quiet! I had a picture in my head from the beginning of how I wanted the panel to look and I tried to shoot for that.

My images are taken handheld with a flash and post processing was kept to a minimum to keep them nature valid. I printed the panel myself at home on my Epson R1900 and tried out a couple of different papers in the process but I found that with my subject matter, only a few papers were appropriate. I printed at 10x15 for maximum impact and to highlight the sharpness of the images.

This was my second attempt at the fellowship. The judges felt that the initial panel, while technically very good, was missing something for fellowship level, specifically, action in the shots. I followed their advise and thankfully after chewing my way through several coffee cups on the day, my name was announced as being successful!

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## **Name the Newsletter**

Congratulations to John O'Neill from Carrick Camera Club who wins himself €50 as the name he submitted for the newsletter is the name that was chosen. Our newsletter is now called '**Oscailt**' - which John suggested given that its the Irish translation for opening/aperture.

Thank you to everyone who participated!

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## **Focusing on: Waterford Camera Club**

Q: When was Waterford Camera Club founded?

A: 1972.

Q: How many members do you have?

A: Approx 40 members.

Q: When and where do you meet?

A: We meet at the Tower Hotel The Mall Waterford, every fortnight on Monday nights.

Q: Any notable events?

A: We had a great Inter Club Event in December, The Suir Valley Challenge. Participating were Waterford, Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel and Thurles. We won, which was fantastic as this was the first time this event took place.

Q: What was the reaction to your National Shield win?

A: We were delighted to have come second, maybe a little disappointed to be beaten by just one point, but we will be back to fight another day. We would also like to thank everyone in Malahide for the warm welcome we received.

Q: Any member had any significant achievement or milestones recently?

A: Tom Quilty received his L.I.P.F and many of our members had a great day at the Regional rounds of the Nature Competition. We took 12 awards out of 38.



Q: What was the best outing/talk/club night in last 12 months?

A: We had a very productive work night at our last meeting. We had a painting with light mentoring session, good fun and everyone learned something. We also had a night for our fellow photographer Morgan O'Neill, we held a raffle as a fundraiser, this was a huge success.

Q: If another camera club came to Waterford, where are the best kept secrets that they should photograph?

A: Well if we told you them all they would not be secrets any longer!! But we do have the beautiful Copper Coast. We would be only too willing to show any members from other clubs around, should they wish to visit.

Q: If you could ask the IPF to improve on one thing, what would that be?

A: To run workshops for photographers preparing for distinctions, particularly those going for their AIPFs.



## **In the Spotlight: Patricia Ronan LIPF AFIAP**

Q: Which club are you a member of?

A: Malahide Camera Club

Q: Do you have any IPF / FIAP / RPS etc. distinctions?

A: LIPF and AFIAP

Q: When did you take up photography & why?

A: I took up photography about ten years ago. I always felt the compulsion to have a creative hobby. For years I had been painting in my spare time. Eventually I wanted to take record photographs for my painting so I decided to join a camera club and learn how to use a camera properly.



My first visit to Malahide Club was on the judging night for the monthly competition and I was really impressed with the members images, how well they were presented and printed. I was also impressed at the feedback and comments from the judge. I had never experienced anything like this at any art group I joined. The club members were very friendly and welcoming and I was delighted to have found such a great club that I was able to join. I just came along and sat quietly for a few months enjoying everything that went on in the club I didn't have a decent camera, but I was really hooked. My first camera was the Olympus E 10 which I bought from a club member (Harry). Most of my recent images have been taken with the Nikon D700.

I have been impressed and inspired by so many of the guest speakers that have come to our club from all the camera clubs around the country. I enjoy looking at most photographers work from all different genres both Irish and International, too numerous to mention.



Q: What genre of photography best describes your photography or are you a general interest photographer?

A: I am definitely a general interest photographer, I like to take a camera with me when I go out for a walk or leave it in the boot of the car just in case I spot something that I would like to capture.

Q: What was the background to your most successful image?

A: My most successful image has to be "A Glance" the image with which I was lucky enough to win the IPF Print & Projected image competition last year. I went along to a flash training course given by one of our club members Gareth Byrd and at the end of the course we got to work with a model. I brought along a few props, one of them being the scarf in the image. The background for the original image was plain white, using Photoshop I selected a few of the neutral colours in the image and using different brushes and opacities on a few layers I made up the complimentary background for the image, the line of the scarf made it easy to insert the new background in the image.

Q: Your own favourite image?

A: I don't have any specific favourite image!

Q: Would you recommend joining a camera club? Why? What have you got out of it?

A: Yes certainly I would recommend anyone with an interest in photography to join a club, you can get so much inspiration and learn so much when you join a group of like minded people.

Q: What does photography mean to you?

A: Having a creative hobby is nourishment for my soul, I don't think I could exist without it.

Q: What is your photographic dream?

A: I had to take a break from photography recently, but I hope to get back to it soon and carry on learning and improving and hopefully one day take my "Favourite Image"

To see more of Patricia's work, please have a look at her [Flickr](#) page.



"A Glance" - Patricia Ronan

Best Overall Image at  
2013/2014 IPF PPI  
Competition in association  
with Canon

Another of Patricia's  
successful images - "Furrows  
and Tree"





"Are you coming for a pint"  
showing Patricia's eye for  
capturing fleeting moments!

## IPF National Shield - Individual Winners



Click any of the images above to go to website article on the IPF National Shield Competition 2014 where you can view these images at a bigger size!

### **Individual Awards - Colour Print**

Gold Medal - Stephen Conway - 'Nude' - Waterford Camera Club

Silver Medal - Des Glynn - 'Collie' - Galway Camera Club

Bronze Medal - Noel Kierans - 'Symmetry' - Mid Louth Camera Club

HM - Virgil Ispas - 'Drowning in 6" of Water' - Celbridge Camera Club

HM - Mario MacRory - 'Kingfisher' - Waterford Camera Club

### **Individual Awards - Monochrome Print**

Gold Medal - Monica Ralph - 'Chest of Drawers' - An Tain Photographic

Silver Medal - David Armstrong - 'Who Cares' - Clones Photographic Society

Bronze Medal - David O'Sullivan - 'Tankardstown' - Waterford Camera Club

HM - Janusz Trzesicki - 'Treasure' - Mallow Camera Club

HM - Micheline Murphy - 'Horse' - Wexford Camera Club



## **Cork Salon**

March 7th: Gala dinner & awards ceremony

March 8th: Exhibition, seminars, trade show and other treats...

Taking place at Clarion Hotel Cork.

See [www.corkcameragroup.net](http://www.corkcameragroup.net) for further details.

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## **Got News?**

Have news for us?! Great! Suggestions for future editions most welcome by your editorial team of Niamh Whitty (IPF Webmaster) & Joe Doyle (IPF Public Relations Officer).

Get in touch via Contact Page on our [website](http://www.corkcameragroup.net) and select "Newsletter" to send your message!

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## **In Our Next Issue..**

We'll be focusing on the award winners from the Print & Projected Image Competition and from the Nature Competition and showing you the winning

images (which we know are going to be stunning!).

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## Share the News

Please feel free to share this newsletter with anyone you feel may be interested and encourage your club members to subscribe via [this link](#).

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