

DAVENTRY

PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



© Bee Jackson

BUSY BEE JACKSON

Interview with Christine Prickett

Two years ago the club could not boast of one professional gardener being a member and now we have two! This article and another to follow will illustrate how their work and their interests in photography happily co-exist and flourish.

Bee Jackson joined in November 2017. She simply googled photo clubs near Norton and up popped Daventry. Her motivation for doing so was that her interest in photography had taken off in the last few years and she wanted to share this with like-minded people who could not only appreciate her work but perhaps assist and expand her capabilities.

Bee's beautiful and fascinating *mobile* phone images have captivated us all since she joined and I thought it would be interesting for us all to know more about her and her images. She suggested that we meet where she works in Norton as this is a crucial element to Bee's photography



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I didn't know quite what to expect as I drove up the long bumpy track through a six acre site to a large house. It was a beautiful still Summer's day and I got out of the car and thought WOW. I was looking at a beautifully presented garden set amidst large lawns and then fields. The wonderful vista I was to learn was all down to Bee's hard work and dedication, although modestly she brushed off the compliment when I said this to her. For indeed she is the only gardener here at Park House Norton and looks after the whole estate.

When I arrived she greeted me with her customary cheeky grin and German Schnauzer dog Susie. She suggested we go first to her operational hub and led the way to an extremely run down old shed. It had no electricity, in fact hardly a roof, but this is where she spends a lot of her time in the other seasons doing the necessary prep for her work. I asked if the shed had mice, she didn't think so but she did like the beetles that shared it with her.



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As we stood in a quintessential walled garden amongst many different coloured dahlias and raspberries Bee told me that although she loved plants – as any gardener would - it was the insects that they attracted which fascinated her most. It was the recording of them photographically now that has got her even more hooked as she can go home with the image and investigate further on the internet. She explained that Matthew her husband, who is the Wildlife Conservation Officer for Northamptonshire, has always used his Canon camera for work. A few years ago, whilst visiting one of 'his' sites at the weekend, Bee saw a common blue butterfly she wanted to take a picture of but she didn't have her camera with her so she borrowed Mathew's phone. That was, as Bee describes it, her 'EPIPHANY moment.

She, in her own words, said 'I thought this is easy, convenient' and the result was good and I was smitten.' She added "I realised I could easily slip a phone in my pocket and start to record all I saw at work. Result."



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Bee grew up with photography. Her German father was a very keen photographer and Bee remembers her uncle had a very well equipped darkroom in his cellar. As a family Bee and her twin sister and other sister and brother used to travel extensively around Europe in their camper van, her father taking lots of images on film and slides. Bee's Godmother gave her a Kodak Brownie camera when she was seven. This camera was to be a trusty friend that would accompany her to Exeter University and beyond into the digital age when her brother bought her a Nikon Coolpix.

Bee by this time had met Mathew at university, obtained her Botany degree, married Mathew, studied and taken an HND in gardening and given birth to her daughter Charlotte.

Bee has had quite a prestigious gardening career working for the rich, famous and royalty. She has worked for the queen at Windsor Great Park, Galen and Hilary Weston the owners of Fortnum and Mason at Fort Belvedere, and Hugh Johnson the well-known wine expert. But it was the vacancy at Park House Norton that conveniently became vacant that allowed her to move to Northamptonshire where Mathew had already got his important post and this is where she has worked for the past twenty years. Given Bee's history of circumstances for first days in her new jobs, which includes a slipped disc, a badly cut leg and her father passing away, it might make her reluctant to move on although she does get very frustrated with her employer's intransigent nature and his reluctance to 'share' on occasion the wonderful environment that Bee has created and maintains.

However, not all is 'lost' as the estate's wildlife is being recorded with pictures sent by Bee with their date and grid reference to the Biological Records Centre using the app 'irecord'. In what would be a sea of black Norton glows on their map of the UK giving out wildlife sightings and further information including Bee's documentation that there has been to date nine different species of dragonfly, seven of damselfly and approaching twenty different species of butterfly. Bee also puts some of her images on her Instagram account @beeholderphotos



© Bee Jackson

In addition to her trusty Samsung phone Bee rattled off the more recent cameras she has owned - a Canon Powershot, an Olympus TG4 and a Panasonic Lumix L100 all bought on eBay. She does little to her images before she shows them at the club as she prefers the insects to be true representations. She described herself as not a 'software person' although she enjoyed and found most useful the talk that Mike Fuller gave on Snapseed. I asked what else Bee enjoyed about the club and she answered that she thought the subject-orientated competitions were a good challenge and helped improve her range and expertise, although the 'Fish' topic was proving difficult! Bee doesn't enjoy portraiture but she has recently developed an interest in architecture and in particular enjoys taking images of doors.

Bee has quickly immersed herself in the club administration and her willingness to get involved and assist has seen her join the committee – an alien world to someone who had never worked in an office environment. Her preferred activity is the club competition subjects and their descriptions. She has also recently helped out with projecting images. The prickly subject of judges was discussed and Bee said she appreciated most those that gave constructive criticism.



© Bee Jackson

Two herons had previously skimmed across the water over one of the lakes where the swans and their brood were and now one had returned into view. I had seen evidence of a badgers set, foxes and much more. As Bee continued talking to me Susie was contentedly lying under the bench we were sitting on and we were surrounded by different dragonflies and could see the circular ripples caused by the carp as they came up to feed. It was quite magical. I knew perhaps that I was enjoying 'the best of moments' knowing that these beautiful surroundings took so much effort in cold and inclement weather to maintain.

I felt privileged to sit and listen to such an interesting person humbly tell 'her story'. Thankfully Bees efforts are not wasted as we can all enjoy them at the camera club and importantly the wildlife she engenders is of benefit to us all and also documented for the nation. © Christine Prickett.



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DPS WHAT'S ON IN OCTOBER

1st Speaker: John Lewis - Capture One

8th Competition (Print) - BORROWED ART - Guest Judge: Trevor Rudkin

15th Guest Speaker: Colin Southgate FRPS - Infra Red and Other Diversions [http: www.colinsouthgate.com](http://www.colinsouthgate.com)

22nd Practical Portrait session with female model Holly - session led by Stuart Batchelor

29th Hollis Trophy Feedback - Judges: John Lewis, Graham Walton, Trevor Rudkin

DPS COMPETITION THEMES 2019-20

October - **Borrowed Art - Print**

November - **Creative** - The Peter Cosentino Trophy - Projected

December - **Curves** - Projected*

January 2020 - **Open - Panel of 3 Prints**

February 2020 - **Food** - Projected

* Graham Brown Memorial Trophy entries will be judged before the start of the DPS competition

Hollis Trophy Entry Deadline - Sunday 29th September
Badby Challenge Cup - November 19th

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