

Sue Shreeves CPAGB : BPE 2*

A photographic distinction is always such an achievement! But just how do you go about gaining one?

Sue Shreeves of Barnstaple Camera Club is a newly qualified CPAPG. I thought it might be helpful to ask her how she worked towards it?

ANN Congratulations on gaining a CPAGB. May I ask you a few questions?

SUE Yes. What would you like to know?

A Why? What decided you to apply for a photographic distinction? Why the PAGB? How did you go about it?

S A PAGB distinction is yours to keep without further monetary requirement to maintain it - but you need to remain a member of a PAGB affiliated camera club, like the WCPF.

My first attempt was during the pandemic, which I failed. This time, I felt I needed a new direction.

At camera club level, I had been regarded as “a good photographer”. But I realised I lacked experience at external competition level - so this was the start of my ‘journey’.

A Good idea, but how and where to start?

S I found the British Photographic Exhibitions (BPE - [List of Exhibitions](#)) a good starting point - and I gained a BPE 2* along the way! A good confidence booster!

A That’s a great piece of advice! BPEs are *exhibitions* organised by PAGB affiliated camera clubs around the UK, hosted monthly, and judged by British judges. A distinction is a recognised award, and again may be held in perpetuity.

So a more structured and focused approach this time?

S Yes. I enjoyed it very much, and gained so much experience. I felt I was better prepared for a second attempt at a CPAGB.

A You chose to do prints, Sue, and PAGB distinctions take place at venues around the UK. How did you send your work? Did you attend in person?

S I enjoy making prints and the advantage is that judges are able to see your work exactly as you created it. Not dependent on projector calibrations! I have a friend in Manchester who kindly offered to attend Cumbria, where my adjudication took place, and feed back to me.

A. Let me interject here, and reassure readers that the PAGB goes to great pains to ensure their projection equipment is set up at each venue, in situ, and calibrated carefully before each adjudication! But prints are wonderful, and if you cannot attend in person, your arrangement was good.

S This was not just about collecting another distinction but producing a body of work that I could be proud of and to ‘earn’ my distinction my way, and this approach paid off. The BPE circuit taught me this and helped me submit a balanced set of images in. Even so - images I thought would do well, didn’t and the ones that I thought would not do so well, did!

A As a subjective art form, this is what can happen! Not just in photography either! The PAGB offers a mentoring service, free of charge, when you enter for a distinction. Did you ask for one?

S No. For me, I just wanted this distinction to be my project alone, for whatever crazy reason!

A Some excellent guidance there, Sue. Thank you. But succeed or fail - if you want to raise your standard of photography - you will.

A huge “than you” to Sue for not only providing images of her successful work, (see elsewhere) with scores, but also for giving in to my request to explain how she attempted her second submission!

Help and guidance is always available from the PAGB, the WCPF and of course the BPE!

You won't know unless you try!