

Roll: hobbies

Camera:

Film: **Kodak Tri-X, Ilford FP4, Ilford HP4, Ilford HP5, Boots Panchromatic Full frame digital 22MP 1/2 inch digital 1MP 1/2" 48MP Ilford HP5 1 inch digital 20MP 1/2.3" 16MP 50MP 1/2.5 7MP****Subject:**

Hobbies - U3A Photography Group February 2024

Notes:

In the confusion of the technical difficulties on Tuesday I forgot to offer you the link between my father's birthday in February 1965 and the project. As I did mention it was apparent at breakfast that my Dad had started a moustache. When pressed on reason for this he said that there was nothing coming up in the garden at that time of year and that gave him time to concentrate on growing a moustache. A man has to have a hobby.

I remember the morning quite clearly, it was a Saturday and my sister and I bought him Phyllosan which we thought was hilariously funny.

22nd August 1975. I bought my first camera that month A Russian built Leica M4 copy called a Zorki 4. All my previous pictures had been taken with a leaky old box camera of my Dad's which I lost the use of when I moved to Birmingham. It was taken in the attic flat we rented in Edgbaston in the evening using two second hand floor tanning lamps in which I had replaced the ultraviolet with some bright white bulbs. I might have used the time but I suspect from the pose that my girl friend actually released the shutter as I don't think I had a tripod at the time.

29th May 1976. Taken in the back garden of my parents house in Beaumont Gardens on Wilford Hill. I was still using the Zorki 4. I am sitting in a deck chair. I used the range finder to focus on my feet, then I held the camera between my feet and used a cable release to take the shot.

24th September 1977. This was the year I upgraded to a brand new Olympus OM1, a 35mm with joy of joys, a through the lens viewfinder. I was the occasion of my cousin Judith's wedding in Sherwood. It was shot on colour reversal film which as with the earlier black and white film was developed and printed in our kitchen, which by this time was in Stoke Newington, London. Developing was a major challenge as with colour reversal there could be no darkroom light so everything had to be done by touch in light bag.

13th November 2001. Me and my son at one month old. At this time I was largely disillusioned with the process of photography. I took few pictures and when I did I used tiny digital cameras. This was taken with a FujiFilm MX-1700 that I bought in Washington DC when I thought I had moved there. I'm pretty sure it was taken with a timer. Technically it's a poor picture but I love that beard and my new born son.

7th August 2004. My Dad's moustache at it's best. Dad is 79 years old. The picture was shot with a Canon . A monster of a camera with automatic exposure and focusing which addressed some of the problems with my declining eyesight. It's the occasion of my niece's wedding at St. Giles' and the tache is at it's splendid best.

29th May 2005. Just nine months later. My dad is dying of prostate cancer and was unhappy much of the time. Unable to garden at all, he grew a fine Victorian beard which sadly he found caused too much itching to maintain. Technically a terrible photograph, out of focus, massive camera shake, too far away from the subject but for a brief moment he looks very happy. Taken I think with an early phone camera in the Memorial Gardens.

28th November 2016. Taken by my wife with a Canon EOS 5D. I had finally gone digital with full frame house brick. Recovering from a heart attack with walk around the grounds at Wollaton Hall I am experimenting for the first time with fancy beard that needed daily attendance. I even bought myself a cut throat razor to try and emulate the shaving skills of Clark Gable.

28th July 2018. Still in the same mould but with the beard reconnected to the sideburns a self portrait with the Canon EOS 5D and the remarkable 24-105mm lens. Its on the beach at Peppercombe, Devon.

20th March 2019. The William Booth birthplace museum in Sneinton. My Nana was the daughter of Eliza Booth and the strong physiognomy of the Booth's male line in the horns and the proboscis still shows through. I did promise to send a copy of the picture to young lady curating the museum that day but I think I may have forgotten so to do. The camera was again the Canon House brick Mk III.

22nd September 2021. Taken by wife in the Chestnut, Radcliffe on Trent. My Kenny Rogers period if the "accolades" of strangers were to be believed. Canon EOS 5D again.

28 February 2022. From the U3A photography group project "Something Old". The lighting was provided the ordinary overhead room light and by my Dad's old oil lamp, which at the time I had just completed renovating.

5th March 2024. On Monday 4th March I still had not taken a single shot for the project "Hobbies".

I have had endless hobbies of the years, I am a dreadful enthusiast for all manner of things. Bricklaying, gardening, photography, hill walking, running, genealogy, woodworking, writing, calligraphy, cooking, classic car renovation, sailing, wine making, brewing et al. I never want to stop these activities but have been obliged so to do by age, injury and the simple shortage of time available to one in single life time. The problem therefore was not a shortage of topics but a shortage of content in that for the most part I never recorded these activities on film.

I toyed with idea of photographing all my old photographic equipment but this I thought would be too long a task and too difficult, in the time available, to get right.

In the end I took my inspiration from Dad's quip of nearly sixty years ago. It occurred to me that I could collect together a number of images I already had and put a cherry on the top with some new images that I was sure I had time to take on Monday night. I also thought the topic was unlikely to be taken by others.

Monday morning I was at the dentist's in town but I was able to collect together the images I needed in the afternoon. Unfortunately, after tea, as I was feeling rather tired I decided to rest for half an hour before setting up for the self portraits. I woke up in time to go to bed.

Tuesday morning I was up with the lark and after a frugal breakfast set up for the shoot in my front room. I was still confident that I could take the pictures and transfer them to a card in time to go to Tai Chi at 12.15 before a fish and chip repast from Rectory Road chippy and the photography group at two.

Acquiring the images took a little over five hours.

The setup was a blackboard I had made for my son when still a small boy. Him that is, not me, I doubt sometimes that I was ever a small boy. I think possibly my favourite toy as child in Birkin Avenue and later in Wilford Hill, was a blackboard that my Dad repainted and wrapped for me each birthday for many years. I say for each Birthday, it may have been Christmas. The two events are only 16 days apart and I cannot clearly recall which was occasion for the refurbished blackboard each year.

In my enthusiasm to replicate the joys of my own childhood I built my boy a much larger blackboard on a double side easel, with a chalk tray in between. I don't think he ever used it and as my wife has for reasons I fail to understand, banned it from the house, it sits in the front porch and is occasionally used for parking notices when expecting a large delivery. But I digress.

I put the easel on the window sill which raised the board to the right height, that is the height of my head when standing in the window. I turned on all the room lights and then used a flash gun with softening hood, mounted on a old broken tripod, forward and to the left of the subject (me). I experimented a lot with the height.

To focus I replaced the subject (me again) with a standard lamp, which I then moved back to the right.

The flash was triggered remotely from the camera and camera was remotely triggered too when the gadget chose to co-operate and with the timer when it did not.

I took dozens of pictures but kept failing to get more than half of my face in shot which I thought was flash / shutter sync problem for a while but then found I could resolve it by moving the camera further back.

The lens was my Canon 100mm f/2.8 Macro lens.

Selecting the final two was a bit of a rush job as I found that a quarter to two I still had not got the images in right order, still less off my computer and on to a thumb stick.

Overall I'm quite pleased with the outcome but I really must find a way of starting these exercises perhaps a week or more before the deadline. At the moment it feels rather too much like my academic career or worse still my time in teaching.



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