

Printagram

A photograph of a man standing in a room with a large, ornate stained glass window. The man is wearing a dark sweater and trousers, and is holding a small object in his right hand. The room has a rustic feel, with a thick rope hanging from the ceiling and a wooden chest of drawers on the right. The lighting is warm, coming from the window.

On A Knife's Edge
Greeting The Sun

The magazine of Douglas Kurn, photographer



Douglas Kurn photographer



What's your Story?



Interesting People, Interesting Places, Interesting Things

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Jennifer Mead in the bell ringing chamber of Esher church.

Who Tolls The Bell?

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Behind the scenes with the sound of the English Countryside. Portraits and reportage images of bell ringers.

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First Frame



**Put the kettle on it's
Printagram time again!**

**If you've got the printed
version then give
yourself a break from the
screen, and if you've got
the PDF version then
shut down your email,
turn off notifications and
enjoy this latest edition
of my magazine in
peace.**

**Please share the print
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widely with your
colleagues, it's all of our
planet after all.**

**If you want to keep it for
yourself, point them in
the direction of my
website
(www.douglaskurn.com),
where a PDF version is
available for download.**

One of the great things about mankind is that we're all different; almost in spite of globalisation we still all live in homes that we have made our own, do different jobs, support different teams, watch different programmes, eat different food, drink different drinks, and do different things.

And it's the things we do and the people that do them that interests me. For this edition of Printagram I have photographed a knife maker, Morris Dancers, Country & Western fans, bell ringers, and agricultural show attendees.

And unusually most of them I have found on my doorstep - in the stock broker belt of Surrey (not that I know anything about stocks and shares!).

I also seem to have spent an inordinate amount of time in very small spaces; artist's studios, the knife maker's workshop, a milliner's studio, a metalworker's workshop and numerous bell ringing chambers.

The chambers were the most challenging as a lot of them were at the top of narrow, winding spiral staircases, which made carrying my gear up extremely arduous.

But I discovered that spiral staircases were designed as a defence back in the days when wars were fought and won with a sword. From the bottom they will spiral upwards in a clockwise direction so that people defending themselves in the tower get more room to swing their sword with their dominant right hand, defeating intruders!

I did point this out in one church tower which spiralled the other way, only to be told it was designed by a left hander...

Douglas Kurn **photographer**

On A Knife's Edge



Tim checking the edge of a knife

Or more accurately a knife's edge on a river's edge. Meet Tim who hand makes knives from reclaimed steel in his workshop on Lots Ait, an island on the river Thames in Brentford. Tim's a trained chef, and like all chefs he has a fascination with knives, but he's taken it a step further and decided to make them himself.

What could be more fun than making your own high temperature oven out of an old gas cylinder, heating bits of steel up to over 1000 degrees C inside it, and then bashing the steel repeatedly with a big hammer until you have a knife? Okay there's a lot more to it than that, including the amount of time spent

making it razor sharp.

Tim also hand makes the handles which he traditionally made from wood but has started making recycled plastic handles from plastic that he collects from the River Thames. All this in a 12' x 12' workshop in an old boatyard - to create these pictures we had to take the window out!

Check out Tim's videos of him slicing an onion with one of his knives on his Instagram page (clementknives). Remarkably Tim still has all his fingers!

“ ...heating bits of steel up to over 1000 degrees C...



Greeting The Sun

Why would grown ups get up at 4am, strap some bells to their shins, and head to a hill in Surrey to wave hankies and bash sticks? Probably because they were members of the Ewell St Mary's Morris Men and were participating in their annual dance event to "Greet The Sun" on May Day morning. It was a mixture of intrigue, and a rash promise to a magazine editor, that made me get up even earlier and head to Box Hill to capture some portraits of the Morris Men as the sun came up at 5:34!



Alan Mead, Bagman of Ewell St Mary's Morris Men, on Box Hill in Surrey, May Day 2019



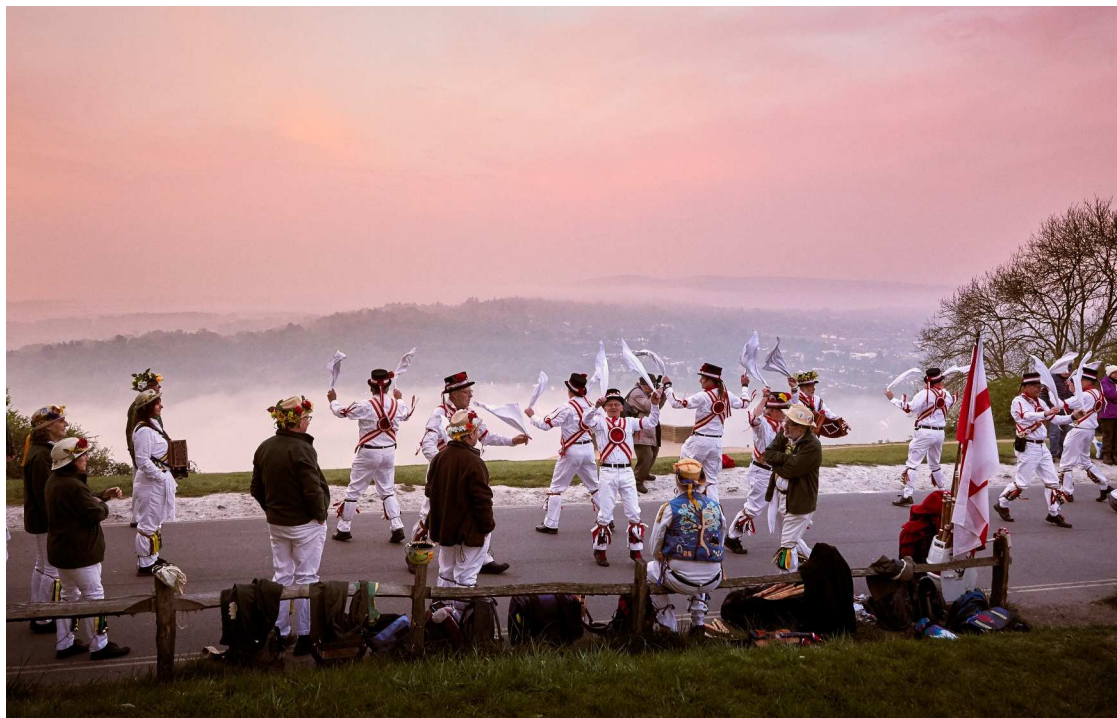
It was pitch black when I arrived to set up my gear, but I had packed a head torch and had done a reccé of the hillside a couple of days before to work out the best spot for the portraits. Initially I was alone but then I heard what I thought were goats, only to realise that it was the bell clad Morris Men making their way down from the car park!

It was very misty on the day and we were on the shadow side of the hill so the sunlight wasn't around for long but there were some interesting skies and I was able to interrupt their dancing enough to get a few portraits.

“

...I heard
what I
thought were
goats...

*The Ewell St Mary's morris Men on
Box Hill i Surrey, May Day 2019*





All: St George's Day 2019

It's not only on May Day that the Morris Men come out in force - St George's Day is always on their calendar, when they head off to the City Of London to entertain all and sundry, dancing, singing, shaking their bells and quaffing ale! .

What could be more English than grown men wearing daft hats and having a thoroughly good time in the midst of the UK's major finance and business centre? As always there were crowds, selfies in abundance, as well as confused and bemused tourists, and the odd, far too self important, grumpy businessman.

This year one of the Morris Men even had to earn his Ewell St Mary's rosette by performing a dance on his own in front of the public; the dance of course was choreographed by one of the other Morris Men and involved lots of running around, jumping and even pirouetting!

And as with everything the Morris Men do, they ended up in the pub. St George would have been proud...



Festival Folk



BST Hyde Park 2018

I'm a music lover and an avid people watcher, and with the festival season and line-ups starting to be announced (do they actually ever end?) I was reminded that I took some time out last year at the BST Festival in Hyde Park, where we'd gone to watch primarily The Cure, and grabbed some

“...but I've chosen shoegaze...

candid shots of the festival goers.

Music fans come in all shapes, sizes and T-shirts, but they're all united in their love of music (and the odd drink too), and I find it endlessly fascinating how different we all are, but how we can still all have a common passion.

It was very hot that day so not everyone kept their T-shirts on but my favourite (which turned out to be from a Radio station called Decay FM) was "I LOVE YOU BUT I'VE CHOSEN SHOEGLAZE"...

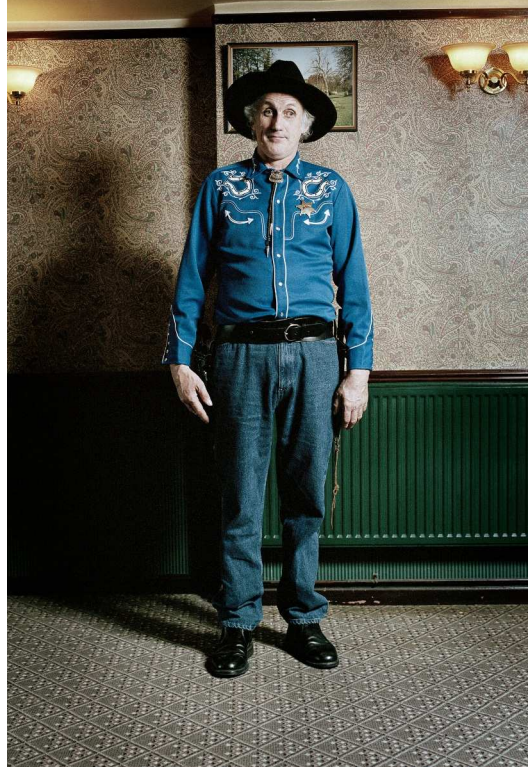


Country & Western Fans



Ladies





Probably my first foray into finding interesting people doing interesting things in interesting places was when I discovered a Country and Western night in a social club in West Oxfordshire. I went along armed with my camera and a few rolls of film and found a world of cowboys and cowgirls, all

dressed for another time and another place.

I also attended a Country and Western festival at Lakeside (home of world darts), and was told that there was a no weapons policy! Sure enough all the cowboys turned up at Lakeside and handed their holsters in at reception.

Jesse James would be turning in his grave...

Metal Music

Johnson's Island on the Grand Union Canal in Brentford is an artist's community that's hidden away. As with most artist communities there are painters, sculptors, mixed media artists, jewellery makers and printer makers.

Rather unusually it is also home to a man who makes musical instruments; but not in a conventional way. All the instruments made by luthier Peter Longfellow are made from aluminium, and every single one is unique.

“

**...which the likes of
Keith Moon and Pete
Townshend would
regularly frequent...**

A toolmaker by trade and a music fan (one who would visit pubs back in the day which the likes of Keith Moon and Pete Townshend would regularly frequent), he decided to use his knowledge of aluminium to try and build an aluminium guitar.

After some trial and error Pete managed to achieve his aim and subsequently expanded on the range of instruments he makes including a violin and an African instrument called an N'goni, used by Max A Hatter (see p22) in the Rad Orchestra.

One of his more unusual musical commissions was for an aluminium girdle for Lady Gaga!



Pete Longfellow in his studio



Who Tolls The Bell?

This portrait was selected for the Portrait Salon exhibition in Bristol and Harrogate

The sound of church bells ringing out across the countryside is one of those quintessentially English things, usually associated with the summer and weddings.

Although we're all familiar with the sounds there aren't many people who've been inside a bell ringing chamber, so when I got the chance I jumped at it and decided that there was a project to be made from the places I went and the people I met.





The location of the bell ringing chamber varies from church to church, and you can find some chambers on the ground floor, but many are at the top of narrow winding staircases, and on entering a different world opens up. These worlds tend to be small though and in some exceptionally tiny chambers a trap door is lowered over the staircase to allow a ringer to stand on it to ring their bell!



“

Peals, methods, bobs and Sallys...

Peals, methods, bobs and Sallys were all words that I thought meant something else until I started meeting bell ringers, but it turns out that they are all part of ringing life.

St Peter's Church in Chertsey, where I live, has a dumb bell for beginners to practice on, and when I visited them I was encouraged to have a go on it.

It's called a dumb bell because it makes no sound, and the residents of Chertsey don't know how lucky they were when I had a go!

I think bell ringing is best left to the professionals...



Max A Hatter



It's amazing what you find on little islands. I met Max A Hatter on Johnson's Island in West London; he makes hats in a very small studio, at the top of a spiral staircase.

Max's hats are really quite unique; based on a bowler style but with influences from Sapeurs and Yardies, and with a Turbanesque - a detachable padding or turban, which is used for position and comfort. He is a self-taught milliner (traditionally a women's hat maker, but generally used interchangeably these days, and Max's hats are unisex in any case), and uses a lot of steam to meld the shape of the hat.

As well as being a hat maker of distinction Max is also a member of The Rad Orchestra, a band for whom he plays the Ngoni, a West African string instrument, but not one for convention Max has had his Ngoni made by fellow Island resident Peter Longfellow, and Pete's speciality is making musical instruments out of metal. You can see the Ngoni on the sofa in the portrait of Max to the right, and read about Pete on page 14.



Max in his studio on Johnson's Island

“

**...for whom he
plays the Ngoni...**

Steam used to shape his hats.





Where The Streets Have...

Photography from the streets



Every now and then I hit a creative block; I lose my way and don't seem to be getting anywhere with any of the projects that I am working on. It happens, I'm told, to all creatives and it is a very frustrating experience.

When it happens (or more accurately when I realise that it has happened, because it's not an instant effect) I decide to grab my camera, put on some comfortable shoes, and head out to the streets; these can be local streets or further afield.

I spend my time wandering, watching, mingling, meandering, looking and loitering; one day I will get arrested for suspicious behaviour! However that day hasn't happened yet, although I do encounter some officious security guards who overestimate their own importance and jurisdiction, so I continue to capture the everyday.

“

**...one day I will get
arrested...**





Hastings Pier

I love street photography, and there are so many great street photographers that I admire. I am a huge fan of the work of Martin Parr who was inspired by another great, Tony Ray-Jones. I was lucky enough to visit the Martin Parr Foundation in Bristol, where he had an exhibition of some of Tony Ray-Jones' work including some original prints and a display of contact sheets and one of his notebooks. I was in my element.

I'm no Martin Parr but was secretly pleased when a photographers agent told me that she could see some influence from him in my portraits. I'm happy with that.



London Eye



***Top: Is Life Worth Living?.
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne***

***Centre: Warning. Special
Brew. Fatal Attraction.***

Bottom: Hair pair, Staines

Overleaf: Hastings Pier







The Bridge of Sighs, Oxford



Above, below and bottom: Brollies, London



Pacy Portraits

175 Portraits in two days



A tractor competitor, Chertsey Agriculture Show

Over the summer of 2018 I shot 175 portraits in two days - mad but true.

It was Chertsey Agricultural Association's 175th Annual Show so they asked me to shoot 175 portraits of people at this years show, one for each year. Obviously wandering around a field asking a load of strangers if I could

photograph them was right up my street (or field may be a better word!). Luckily my assistant took care of collecting the model releases as I didn't have time to even think about that.

To emphasise the history of the show we gave the show images an aged treatment and you can see all the characters (okay there are some of kids cuddling dogs, but come on I had to shoot a portrait every 4 minutes) on my website in the



Pig Judge, Chertsey Agriculture Show

Projects section.

Some of them were too good to not to take a second look at in colour, so I've selected some of my personal favourites and reproduced them here.

Did I mention that I am a massive fan of Martin Parr's work? Last year the National Portrait Gallery ran a competition inspired by his Only Human exhibition, so I entered some of these

**“ ...shoot a portrait every
4 minutes...”**



portraits, and the one of the man with the bull (bottom right p.35) was selected in the top 30 images and used in the PR for the competition by the NPG.

With it being an agricultural show, when I had completed my 175th portrait I obviously had to enjoy a pint of cider...





That's A Wrap



My nephew's first film shoot.

My nephew turned 18 years old recently and I was reminded of a time when he was just a few years old and I decided to do a photo shoot with him. It was the first time that he had been on a set up shoot, although I had taken plenty of grab shots of him growing up to this age.

I set up a studio in my sister's lounge and then loaded up my Mamiya RZ67 with some colour negative film. I mounted the RZ on a tripod and then went and got my nephew to come in on set.

He had spent some time deliberating over what he wanted to wear for it and for the first shot he decided to wear this white vest.

I focussed the camera, moved him slightly then pressed the shutter; the flash went off and then immediately afterwards he came running over to me; 'Let me see! Let me see!' he cried enthusiastically. "It's film, you can't see it." I explained. The look of bewilderment on his face as he stared at the back of the camera still makes me giggle today. It turned out it was also the first time I had photographed him on film.



Douglas Kurn photographer



BP Pagoda, from the series The Spirit Of Brooklands

What's On Your Wall?



Porto Santo Waves



Sandbags On Portobello Beach



Misty Trees

Limited Edition Archival Quality Prints

