

Photo opportunity

John C Harding
CEng MIMechE LRPS

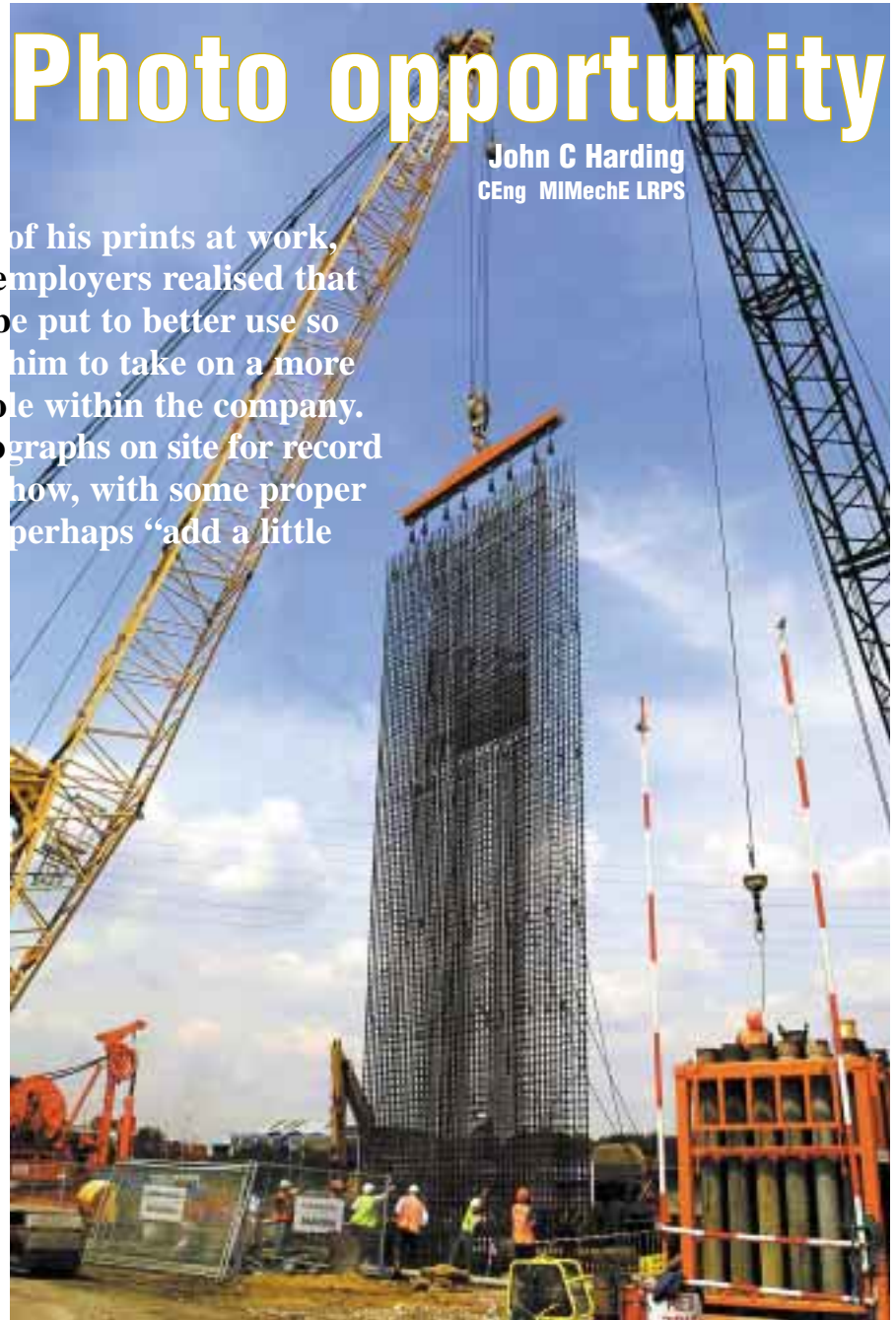
After selling a few of his prints at work, John Harding's employers realised that his talents could be put to better use so they encouraged him to take on a more professional photographic role within the company. Most of us take regular photographs on site for record purposes. This article shows how, with some proper additional training, we could perhaps "add a little value" to our own output.

"I started photography at school in the mid-fifties and sold prints to classmates for one and sixpence each. I am now a chartered engineer, producing mechanical and electronic equipment, mainly for the construction industry, particularly for ground engineering and foundations aspects. My work initially involved taking pictures purely as technical records and, until recently, I regarded myself as an amateur photographer and photo club member.

However, a few years ago I sold some of my prints at work for the Children in Need Appeal. After this, the management of Cementation Foundations Skanska suggested that I produce pictures with impact for our advertising and marketing needs.

This was much more demanding than I had envisaged.

My first assignment involved photographing a new process for producing foundations and I felt that, in accordance with my more professional role, I should be using a medium format camera. So out came



On site, John uses his EOS D30 in preference to a medium format camera. It's light, compact, and delivers the quality he needs.

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my old Bronica and cumbersome tripod. However, I found this combination difficult to use in the prevailing environment. Climbing up ladders and embankments in order to obtain photographs of a more artistic nature proved to be quite a physical workout. So I turned to my EOS 100 and two Canon lenses, the EF 20-335mm and the EF 70-300mm image stabilisation lens.

After a few successful assignments I was asked to do presentations and cover company functions. I also started to reorganise the photographic administration, assigning

large capacity Microdrive allows me to shoot rapidly without the expense and inconvenience of film and images can be imported into publications quickly without the need for developing or scanning. I also find it very useful to be

able to bracket exposures in difficult conditions, and to be able to review the results at once. Another great advantage of the EOS D30 is the ability to change film speed at will. One thing that you have to bear in mind with digital cameras is the fact that a 20mm lens crops the image to the equivalent of that taken with a 33mm lens. I find this is a bit of a disadvantage when photographing tall foundation-producing equipment. Wherever possible I prefer to use a monopod rather than a tripod – it's much more moveable and means I'm less likely to get mown down by a 50 tonne dump truck!

I have to work to tight schedules and rarely have the luxury to spend much time setting up a shot. I have to be prepared to shoot quickly as the action unfolds. It's important that I

am fully inducted to the safety rules of each site, not only for my own protection, but also because my photographs must portray safe working conditions.

To sum up, I have found that my more professional role of taking pictures in the workplace is much harder than I had expected, both physically and mentally. And Trying to make a hole in the ground look photogenic has certainly tested my imagination."

professional photographers for other record work. When the digital EOS D30 became available I persuaded the company to buy one, on the understanding that I would use my Canon lenses on the digital body. I find the digital technology very much suited to the commercial environment that I am working in. A

My kit bag: EOS D30; EF 20-30mm lens; EF 0-300mm IS lens; Spare battery (essential); Tripod; Monopod; 340mb Microdrive; 128mb Compact flash card; camera back pack; Fuji Provia ISO 100 to 1000 transparency or Kodak ISO 400 negative film. Also hard hat, ear defenders, steel toe cap boots, rain protection, a sense of humour and repartee with the site personnel!

Skills shortage

I am sure that every one of us has recently experienced the effect of the major shortage of skilled tradesmen within our industry. No doubt we each have our own ideas of how this state of affairs has come about – laying-off during the last downturn, the lack of apprenticeships and self employed sub-contracting will certainly feature in the list. The most damaging effect that the skills shortage is having is the reduction in our ability to make profits from the work that is available. The question is, how to redress the balance; how do you attract suitable youngsters into an industry,

that, it cannot be denied, often has miserable working conditions and just does not seem to be able to shake off its "builders-bum" image. The answer to an extent lies within the current condition – skilled tradespeople can now attract substantial rewards, the workloads stretch into the distance and are forecast as sustainable. This would make school leavers sit up and take note – if they knew about it. The industry badly needs a voice, it needs to get out there and bang the drum. We will not however be able to convince young people unless we can offer a proper graded structure for training in the needed skills and help them to gain qualifications and therefore self-esteem. We should be supporting and advertising the

Construction Skills Certification Scheme and we should be lobbying for assistance from government to have a nationally recognised and government supported ladder of progression within the industry. A good start would be a properly structured system of "try it for a day" opportunities where an experienced member of the construction team would take a young person under their wing for a day or two to see if we can fire a spark within them. I know that our members are already eight days a week men – but who are we going to manage if we don't have young recruits to actually do the building? So; do I hear any volunteers?

Ed.

The Queens House Lyndhurst, Hampshire

The Queens House is owned by The Crown and contains the Offices of the Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest. Inside is the hall where the Verderers of the New Forest hold their ancient courts, also the Forestry Commission offices for the New Forest and Dorset Forests. This is a mansion house of the seventeenth century, but substantial portions of a Tudor building survive within it, as well as earlier relics, and there have been extensive later renovations. It forms nevertheless a remarkably complete unit and has historical significance not only for the New Forest but as an example of architectural development in Hampshire, where it is the only surviving major building of the Charles I period. It displays one of the few examples, on any scale, of seventeenth century brickwork to be seen in the County.

The history of the building which has occupied this site is woven of four strands: its origin as the hall or house of the Lord of the Manor of Lyndhurst, its occupation as a residence and hunting lodge by the sovereign and by tenants of the Crown, its accommodation of the courts of justice set up to administer the forest laws and its use as an administrative office.

Charles I built the front part of the house, replacing the Tudor building which was used as a hunting lodge. Then, when Oliver Cromwell ruled the country for eight years, he also used the house. Charles II added the rear part, joining the two together. The original estimate was £1,563.12s.6d but it was exceeded and it is said that the Clerk of Works was hanged!

In 1978 an inspection was carried out due to the floors showing signs of sagging. Its use as offices and the effects of modern central heating over the years had dried out the oak joists: additionally heavy office furniture was placed in the centre of the rooms on the floors which were not built for the load. All the staff and equipment were moved to temporary accommodation while the renovation took place.

A discovery was made of a Tudor floor below the reception and entrance to the house, and a tunnel entrance off one room, which according to records was an escape



The Queens House, Lyndhurst, seen from the garden. Venue for Mike's recent retirement party – what would Charles II have thought? – Ed.

passage from the house when invaded, probably by supporters of Cromwell. This tunnel had long been filled when the village was built up over the centuries. When horse and carts were replaced by heavier means of transport, the building settled even more. The rear of the Charles I building had windows and a door leading to the gardens, this was evident when renovation took place. When Charles II built the back addition of the house, doubling the size, these windows and doors were filled in. Luckily one window was found intact showing its plaster arches and it can be seen today behind a glass panel to protect it. In the basement, on lifting some of the flagstones, the foundations were found to be only 300mm below, built on hard sand, whereas most other parts of Lyndhurst and the forest are clay.

The house is said to be haunted (before the renovation may-be). The floors in the attic were way out of level due to settlement over the years and twisting of the oak timbers. Carrying out inspections up there when the building was empty was a bit eerie, even allowing for sounds that you encounter with old large houses... who knows?

The house stands at the top of Lyndhurst High Street, next to the church, at the centre of the New Forest.

*Mike Bishop FICnstM
Chief Building Surveyor (Ret.)*

The illustration shows the Charles II part of the house with the Verderers Hall on the right on the ground floor. The reason for there being no window facing the garden from the hall is because in the old days the Justice sat at that end of the Hall on a

raised platform to preside over the proceedings. The top floor over the Hall is the Deputy Surveyors office.

My Word

Your editor recently encountered this mouthful in a prestige national publication aimed at Architects. Perhaps this is why you can't always understand all the nice little details on the drawings.

...“Much of this hinges on our implicit conceptualisations of time and space, of “history” as a single linear progression: one story in which we all participate, although some may be further ahead or behind than others. Much “modern” imagination of time is like this; singular narratives of progress and development in which spatial differences are dragged on in temporal sequence (two cultures or economies – the US and Chad – although temporally co-existing are imagined in terms of developed/undeveloped, advanced or backward). The real nature of the difference, and the present validity of both, are occluded.

Yet space brings to time its multiplicity of contemporaneous stories. Both space and time are multiple and open. Just as local places are confluences of temporalities.”

Ed.

Suspension trauma from safety harnesses

The arrest harness must of course be considered the last line of defence against injury from a fall. A plummeting body arrested and swinging at the end of the line is liable to injury incidental to the avoided impact. Recent research following a fatal accident actually caused by a harness has uncovered the phenomenon of *Suspension Trauma* - or *Orthostatic Shock*, which was until then unknown within the industry.

If you have personnel on site using suspension harnesses you should be taking action to assess this newly identified risk and providing a method statement which addresses the potential danger. In the accident mentioned above, the operative, although unhurt by the drop, tragically died after hanging suspended in an upright position for over half an hour whilst he waited to be lowered down.

If a body is in the upright position and "dangling" the blood collects in the legs and consequently the brain does not receive its share. This effect can be fatal in a little as fourteen minutes so you need to have in place a strategy for emergency rescue within ten minutes of an incident. Buddying-up, radio contact, emergency lowering kits, MEWPs, can all take their part but proper training and awareness is paramount in any case. Personnel should be trained to rescue and be rescued. After the incident the operative should also be closely watched for Crush Injury which manifests itself by releasing toxins into the blood stream after the harness is removed and can have a serious effect on the kidneys.

A few simple tips could save a life: If a person is left suspended they should attempt to raise their legs onto say a flashing or ledge, they should attempt to bring their legs up against the chest and hold them there with their arms or they should at least immediately start contracting and releasing their leg muscles to assist the flow of blood in the veins.

Sources:

HSE Contract Research Report 451/2002 - Harness Suspension: review and evaluation of existing information. Paul Seddon
HSE Infoline 08701 545500
The Access Group 0114 273 1333



Diary dates

May 2004

- 1-3 Caravan Rally at Charmouth
Mike Bishop 01962 713000
- 9 Southern Region - Skittles Evening
- 12 Southern Region - Combined ICM/CIOB Lecture on Demolition and Planning for the Tricorn Centre. Ladies Welcome. Buffet and Raffle
E Richards 02392 618049
- 19 The Health and Safety Awards 2004
The Hilton Hotel London
- 21-23 National President's Weekend Rally
Normandy, France

March 2004

- 3 Northern and Scottish Region - Open Forum on CDM
- 5 Closing date for The Health and Safety Awards 2004
L_bond@cmpinformation.com
020 7560 4009
- 25 Midland Region Lecture – Weber Ltd
- 27 Executive and Councillors Meeting
Brackley Bowls Club
Brackley Northampton

April 2004

- 22 Midland Region Lecture - Keim Mineral Paints
- 22-29 Interbuild (+ Civils 27-29)
NEC Birmingham
www.interbuild.com
0870 429 4558

June 2004

- 12 National AGM
- 26 Southern Region – Family BBQ

Please send any dates and venues of interest, socially or professionally, to the editor at the address below and in written form.

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