# IOMPS Reports During April 2010

### 30th April 2010 - Presidential Address

Well, what can I say?   My term of Office is rapidly coming to an end.... and I’d like to say that it has been my pleasure and privilege to have been your President for the past 2 years.   John Phipp warned me before I took office that the time would pass incredibly quickly, and so it has proved.

The society exists to promote photography in the widest sense, whilst the role of the committee is to co-ordinate and provide a balanced programme of competitions, guest speakers, presentations and practicals which assist members in their enjoyment of - and enthusiasm for - photography.  I would like to think – and hope that members will agree – that it has been another successful year.

I hope that attendance at our meetings has enabled you to develop your interest in photography, to hone your skills, and perhaps encouraged you with lots of ideas of images to shoot in the future......  because that essentially is what the programme is required to do.

As I look back, my tenure in office year started nearly two years ago with a bang, with the Society’s 70th Anniversary Exhibition at the Manx Museum, opened for us by the Lieutenant Governor  – a super shop window for the Society’s work, and which was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

My tenure has also finished with a bang – albeit a volcanic one in Iceland – and I would apologise for missing recent meetings which I understand have been exceptionally good.  My thanks as always to my committee colleagues for ensuring my absence did not cause any problems with the programme.

I believe the committee has been a very successful one – it has been a happy group which has worked hard and well, with a good mix of experience and older and younger members to provide a varied programme, and the fact that our membership is strong, that our meetings are generally well attended, and the sheer quality of the work being shown by members is so high – suggests that in large measure the programme meets the expectations of most members.

As in previous years, your committee started the year by arranging several “summer outings” for those members willing and able to participate with weekend activities – visits to an aircraft hangar at Ronaldsway, to the Steam Railway sheds in Douglas, and to Government House being particular highlights, whilst an afternoon in Peel using a disposable camera proved an intriguing “blast from the past”, and a real challenge for the participants.

The summer recess provided the opportunity for the committee to debate the purchase of a new digital projector – a major expense but one which I think has shown its worth despite some initial teething problems. I would confirm our thanks to the Manx Lottery for a significant contribution to that expense.

Following the summer outings, the season quickly swept into full gear with a range of weekly competitions and presentations.  I think perhaps I should stress the intent of the programme has always been one of trying to provide a balance of activities – and whilst the emphasis of the programme remains on competitions, a leavening of presentations is included to give opportunity to members or guest speakers to present on their chosen topics, together with portfolios from the L&CPU and some more practical sessions to assist those looking for help and advice on particular aspects of photography.......

Having said that, the quality of competition entries during the year has been exceptional - I think club members can take great pleasure in the work shown this year – I know I have very much enjoyed seeing your images each week. I think the quality of entries is getting ever better – whilst it gets ever harder to meet the quality standard needed to win competitions.  The challenge is to ensure we all develop our skills, maintain our enthusiasm, and keep on trying !

I would in particular wish to express my thanks to our judges both internal from the club membership  and external –who give up substantial amounts of time – unpaid and sometimes underappreciated – and whose comments, criticisms and guidance are so essential if members work is to progress and develop.  Their contribution has been immense, and their constructive and helpful comment on our competitions gives great encouragement to members. I would especially  thank Andrew Barton who has been a great supporter of club events, both as a judge and as a presenter – having the benefit of someone with his experience explain studio techniques, the use of lights , reflectors and equipment for portrait and product photography, has been eye-opening and I think very helpful in developing skills.

As I said earlier, in preparing our annual programme, I believe it is essential we include occasional guest speakers and presentations  – partly to give a balance to the programme, partly to give a break in the sometimes relentless run of competitions, and partly to allow the photographer to explain the way he or she works. For example, I understand I missed an absolutely brilliant presentation last week by David Kneale on the Volvo Round the World Ocean Yacht Racing –and am very disappointed not to have been able to attend. And next week we have John Kearney talking about Underwater Photography .....

I am particularly pleased to note the greater involvement and participation by individual club members in some of our events and club activities – the recent evening when 6 or 7 members were persuaded to talk about their work being a very good example, whilst the rota we now have in place for writing the weekly report for the Courier is also working well.  My thanks to Bob Servante, Ray Davies and Antony Hamilton for their contribution on that.

I must again pay tribute to my committee who have, as always, been unstinting in their support of club activities, and who have made my tenure as near a delight as I could have wished for ....  I would especially say “thank you” to Evie and Sue Jones and Ian Lumsden for their work for our competition programme – and without whom our programme would suffer major difficulties.  The club is very fortunate to have them on the committee, because they give hours of their time every week to the programme, and its success is very much down to their efforts. I cannot overstate their contribution.

I must also thank Pam Kershaw as our Secretary, very quiet and very efficient, and who always has everything under control.  It is a matter of great regret that she intends to stand down this year from the Secretaryship after 7 years of holding the position, and I would formally thank her for all her work over the years. I would also express thanks on behalf of the club to Brian Kershaw, Pam’s husband, now standing down from the committee after 16 years, including 5 years also as Secretary from 1997 to 2002.  Their support – and Brian’s ready humour - has been very much appreciated.

Our Treasurer, Nigel Owen, is also always in control, and as we will shortly hear, the club remains in a robust good health as regards its membership and its financial position.

The other members of your committee – Anthony Hamilton, John Phipp, Tony Curtis, Brian Kershaw, Mark and Claire Stringer - have each in their own way, been enormously helpful and supportive of the club’s activities – from moving chairs before and after our meetings, making suggestions for our programme, or for actually arranging events and making presentations.  As I previously said, it has been a very happy committee, with good participation from all members, and it has made the job of President a remarkably easy one.... !

Not on the committee, but almost a de facto member is John Cowan – who is responsible for co-ordinating the weekly input to the Courier and for our website– his contribution to the club is phenomenal – and the website in particular is a great strength for the society, providing us with an excellent public relations front and a recruiting process for new members.  He, together with John Phipp and Ian Lumsden as the recent ex-Presidents, and with Evie as Competitions Secretary, have been towers of strength to me, always available with advice, and always willing to help wherever they can.  I think the point I would emphasise to members is that the programme runs pretty smoothly  – and whilst there may have been the odd hiccup – it has run smoothly thanks to a lot of effort by those individuals in particular, and we should all appreciate that – because I certainly do !!

My Presidency is now rapidly coming to a conclusion – but there are perhaps several other highlights deserving of mention.

I have very deliberately made the effort over the past two years to re-build our relationship with the L&CPU – and believe we now have some excellent links and at very senior level.  It obviously started with Bob Dennis as our Annual Judge last year, who also introduced us to the delights of the Bebington Salon  -  of which more in a moment. He also encouraged several members to enter for their CPAGB awards –  two of whom have been successful (Ray Davies and Janet Servante). I would congratulate them for their hard work and their success.  As regards the unsuccessful candidates – I am sure they will be re-applying at the next opportunity, having gained much from the initial experience – and I suspect I will be joining them later this year and “having a go” myself at gaining the award....

The L&CPU connection was further strengthened when the then President, Norman Thompson came to the Island with his wife last October, and presented to all the clubs on the island over a few, very hectic days. And just a few weeks ago, at our recent Annual competition, we had the absolute pleasure of Christine Widdall as our judge, the current L&CPU President, and who gave two super presentations on her exhibition work – a memorable experience and one which I know was enjoyed by all members.  I can already confirm that she will be returning later next year, not as our Annual Judge but as a guest speaker – something to look forward to.  She has also challenged us to an inter-club battle with her own club in Oldham – something to add to our programme.

The Annual Competition was, as always, a great success, with 350+ print entries for our opening night, and a similar entry for the digital and slide competitions on the second – it proved a marathon event and a major exercise in logistics for those organising it, but with an extremely high quality of entry throughout, demonstrated the strength in depth that the club now enjoys.   Christine was particularly complimentary about the standard of prints on display, and perhaps rather more critical of our digital work.....

I mentioned the Bebington Salon  – and which proved to be a superb climax to our 2009 year. We had some 60+ attending the slideshow at Nobles Hospital – and whilst many were from our own society, there were others from the Western and Southern Clubs, as well as members of the general public.  Given that I believe part of the club’s role is to popularise photography and to develop a wider interest in photography, this was a very relevant exhibition, and included some superb images which encouraged all who attended.  It generated a profit for club funds, and Bob Dennis will be bringing the 2010 Salon for a showing in just 10 days time on Saturday 8th of May at Nobles – another super opportunity to see the very best of current photography.

That brings me more or less up to date, and near to the end of our current season. As I said at the start, I have very much appreciated the privilege of being President – and hope that members will give our new President their unstinting support, just as I have had.

Accordingly, I think it’s now well beyond time for me to conclude my opening remarks and to move the agenda along.  I therefore in time honoured fashion would commend this report to the house !

 CHRIS BLYTH

# IOMPS Reports During June 2010

### 15th June 2010 - Copy of Press Release

The Isle of Man Photographic Society has had one of its most successful seasons ever with its entries into the Annual Competitions run by the Lancashire and Cheshire Photographic Union (L&CPU), to which it is affiliated. Society President, Antony Hamilton, stated "Out of 68 photographic clubs and societies in the L&CPU, our Society came 10th in the category for "General Projected Images’; 6th in the "Monochrome Prints category; and a very creditable 16th overall. To be placed in the top quarter is a magnificent achievement of which our members can feel extremely proud."

He added "Five photographic images submitted by the Society have been retained by the L&CPU for inclusion in its various folios that will be circulating around photographic clubs across the region over the coming winter months. This wide exposure gives valuable publicity to the Isle of Man and much deserved recognition to the members of the Society who produced them"

Society stalwart and Life Member, Ron Shimmin ARPS DPAGB, had two mono print images retained by the L&CPU, entitled "He shopped "til He Dropped" and "Filling in Time"; two of the colour print images submitted by Ray Davies CPAGB were also retained entitled "The Blues in Gold" (a busker playing a saxophone) and "Marble Statue with Face Mask" (a creative image of a statue in marble putting on a human face); and Mark Stringer had one colour print image retained entitled "Acoustic Session". Ray Davies was awarded a Certificate of Merit for his mono print titled "The Alleyway" (a lone man walking along an illuminated alleyway at night).

Another particularly noteworthy achievement this year is that Ron Shimmin has also had a stunning print titled "Storm Over the Millau Bridge" selected by the Royal Photographic Society as one of only 123 images (out of a total of over 3000 entries submitted) for inclusion in its prestigious International Print Exhibition. This exhibition is now in its 153rd year, making it the longest standing exhibition of its type in the world. It will be on show this summer in London, after which it will tour various venues throughout the UK, before being seen world wide.

The Isle of Man Photographic Society exists to promote amateur photography in all its various forms from traditional black and white to colour prints and slides and the latest digital techniques. Its doors are always open to new members.

Contact for further information : Antony Hamilton (625388)

# ****IOMPS Reports During July 2010****

### 20th July 2010 - Visit to Douglas Fire Station on Wednesday, 4th August

Thanks to Tony Curtis who has been able to make the arrangements, your committee is delighted to announce another addition to our summer activities programme - with an evening visit to Douglas Fire Station.

The visit is currently arranged for 7pm on Wednesday, 4th August - but is obviously subject to any real emergency that may require crews to be "out of station"! In the meantime, it is expected that the visit will include some fire drills and action.....

The other prime requirement is that the senior officer at the Fire Station needs to know the numbers of members likely to wish to attend - so can members please advise Tony no later than Friday evening the of july their interest.

Bearing in mind that one of our assignments this coming season is "People at Work", it is anticipated that many members will be keen to attend - there is currently no limit on the numbers, but if sufficient members are interested, we may need to split into two groups - and the same with the firemen, during any drills, to ensure lots of photo opportunities......

Tony can be contacted by email on tonycurtisiom@hotmail.co.uk or on telephone at home on 819007.

### 18th July 2010 - Ballanette Nature Reserve at 2pm on Sunday 1st August

I am delighted to announce that Antony has arranged the next Summer Outing for members (and their families) wishing to participate. The visit is to Ballanette Nature Reserve starting at 2pm on Sunday 1st August - and if the weather is bad, then there is the option of postponing it until the following Sunday (the 8th August). The Ballanette Reserve is owned by Stuart Clague and is used as both a private house for Stuart and his family, but also as a corporate headquarters for the company, including a visitors centre / training facility. The estate includes a series of lakes with at least one bird watching hide. The coastal footpath runs behind the estate and goes back over Clay Head, giving access to some excellent views across to Laxey and Garwick Bays, whilst Lonan Old Church is a short stroll, and also offers some excellent photo opportunities.

Ballanette is in Baldrine - going north from Onchan towards Baldrine, go past the Liverpool Arms, another 300 yards further takes you over some tram tracks, and about 250-300 yards after the tram tracks, you will see a lane on the right hand side just as you start to enter Baldrine. The lane is marked "Lonan Old Church" and the entrance to Ballanette is down the lane on the left hand side, past some houses.

The entrance is quite discreet, marked as "private road - no through road", but we have permission to enter and to park in the company car parking area close to their training centre, as well as to use this facility to make tea or coffee and to use the toilets. Members should be advised that, even on a nice day, there may be a cool breeze so warm clothes should be brought along, in case needed. There is no limit on numbers.

The committee looks forward to welcoming as many members as possible on this outing - see you there !

### 2nd July 2010 - Gemini Boat Trip

Arrangements have been made to book the Gemini from Port St Mary harbour for a club sponsored boat trip to the Calf of Man at the end of June.

There are two trips booked, each with a maximum capacity of 12 - and the allocation is on a strictly "first come, first served" basis.

The trips are both for 2.5 hours duration, with a cost of £15 per ticket. The boat - a twin hulled catamaran - is very stable and seaworthy, with tea served halfway !

The boat departs Port St Mary breakwater as follows

1530 hours on Saturday 26th June - returning at 1800 hours

OR

0930 hours Sunday 27th June - returning at 1200 hours.

The trip will take you close to the cliffs along Spanish Head and the Chasms, both coming and going - and close enough to see spectacular bird displays and their nests (guillemots, fulmars, maybe puffins, etc), whilst out at sea we hope to see basking sharks. The trip should take us as far as the Chickens Lighthouse, and close to the shore along the Calf.

Please email chrisblyth@manx.net to reserve your places.

Very best wishes

Chris Blyth (Secretary)

IOMPS Reports During August 2010

25th August 2010 - John Cowan

John Cowan sadly passed away on the 25th August. He was a much loved member of the Isle of Man Photographic Society for many years. He always spent a lot of time working behind the scenes for the club, including the creation of the IOMPS website and keeping it up to date.

He was a great photographer who always took the time to pass on his help and wisdom to other club members, he will be sadly missed by all at the club.

Our sympathy goes to Jan, Nikki, Andrew, Donna and his entire family

14th August 2010 - Letter from the President To All Members of the Society

**Introduction**

This is my first letter to the whole membership of the IOMPS as your President.  Though I have been a member of the Society for over 40 years, my attendance in quite a few of those years was, of necessity, extremely erratic due to my work commitments which often meant my having to work on Wednesday evenings!  My daily work also meant having to attend countless meetings, which is the main reason why I always tried to avoid becoming involved with any more committees in my leisure time!  So, I hope you will understand why it took more than a little arm twisting before I finally agreed to allow my name to go forward for your consideration at the Annual General Meeting.

Now I feel very proud and greatly honoured to be your President, so I should like to begin by thanking the membership for their faith in electing me to this prestigious position.  When I look at the long list of those who have preceded me as President over the years, many of whom I have known personally, I do feel somewhat ill-equipped and under qualified but, nevertheless, I promise that I shall do everything I can to lead the Society forward and to represent its interests at every opportunity to the best of my ability.

**My Aims for the Society**

I believe it is important that I should set out my aims for the Society for my term of office and to seek your support in helping us all to work together towards their fulfilment.  In no particular order, I would like to see:-

* a steady improvement in the overall standard of the projected digital images of Society members;
* maintenance of the high standard of the Society’s print work, with  further improvements being sought at every opportunity;
* the Society maintaining and building upon its links with the L&CPU and the PAGB;
* the Society improving its liaison and collaborative working with other ‘local’ photographic clubs and societies;
* greater encouragement being given to our less experienced members by listening to their views and seeking to respond constructively to them;
* a furthering of our reputation as being a ‘welcoming’ Society so that new faces are greeted warmly and encouraged to feel ‘at home’ because I believe the doors of the Society should always be wide open for new members; and
* the Society continuing to publicise its activities and to promote its successes.

So, if any member has any ideas or suggestions for improvement in what we do generally or in relation to our programme of activities, please do not hesitate to approach me or the Secretary of the Society, Chris Blyth (862082).  Whilst I cannot guarantee that every idea will be adopted, I can promise that it will be properly considered with an ‘open’ mind before a decision is taken and that the committee will let you know the outcome.

**2009/2010 in Retrospect**

Last year, the Society had one of its most successful seasons ever with its entries into the L&CPU Annual Competitions.  Out of 68 photographic clubs and societies affiliated to the L&CPU, our Society came 10th in the category for ‘General Projected Images’; 6th in the ‘Monochrome Prints category; and a very creditable 16th overall.  To be placed in the top quarter is a magnificent achievement of which we can all feel extremely proud.  Five images submitted by the Society have been retained by the L&CPU for inclusion in its various folios that will be circulating across the region over the coming winter months.  This wide exposure gives valuable publicity to the Isle of Man and much deserved recognition to the members of the Society who produced the retained images, namely Ron Shimmin. Ray Davies and Mark Stringer.  Moreover, Ray Davies was also awarded a ‘Certificate of Merit’ for his mono print titled “The Alleyway”.

However, the highlight achievement this past year must be that Life Member, Ron Shimmin, had his stunning print titled “Storm Over the Millau Bridge” selected by the Royal Photographic Society as one of only 123 images (out of a total of over 3,000 entries submitted) for inclusion in its prestigious International Print Exhibition.  This exhibition is now in its 153rd year, making it the longest standing exhibition of its type in the world.  It is on show this Summer in London, after which it will tour various venues throughout the UK, before being seen world wide.  So, Ron receives our warmest congratulations for this magnificent and well deserved recognition of his photography.

 **The Committee of the Society**

 Your Committee has been working very hard over the summer months, meeting on three occasions so far, to consider a variety of matters that have to be dealt with between May and September each year.  This includes planning the Summer and Winter Programmes, of which more later.  Several important decisions have been taken.  Though our Secretary has circulated details, I believe I should repeat the main ones here briefly for completeness and as a useful reminder.

 1. There will be no classes for slides in our Monthly Competitions this year but we have decided to retain classes for slides in the 2011 Annual Competitions.  [Because relatively few members are now using slides, this decision will be re-visited next year].

 2. The rule that all images submitted in competitions must be entirely the work of the entrant has been re-affirmed.  [In particular, members are reminded that, whilst it is permissible for prints to be printed and mounted by a professional, any and all editing must be carried out by the author and no computer art, images from magazines or CDs can be used].

 3. All digital images entered for future Monthly and Annual Competitions must be at the higher resolution of 1400 x 1050 (rather than the current 1024 x 768).  [This should ensure that we make best use of the Society’s new digital projector and also satisfy the rules of the L&CPU.  I am hoping that a guidance note can be circulated shortly to members to explain how best to make the necessary adjustments prior to entry].

 4. Decisions regarding the elevation of members from one class to the next above will be based solely on a member’s work during the year in the Monthly and Annual Competitions.

 5. A Sub-Committee has been re-formed, with the President in the chair, to deal objectively and expeditiously with such matters as the reclassification of members; the entries to be submitted from the Society for ‘slide battles’; and the entries to be submitted to the L&CPU.

 6. A review of the Society’s Rules and Constitution is to be undertaken during the Winter months and any ideas or suggestions for changes that might need to be considered by the Committee should be submitted by the end of October at the latest to our Secretary, please.

**Re-Classifications for 2010/11**

Based on the points awarded to members throughout the past year, it has been decided that, for competition purposes, Peter Cartmell, Natasha Wilson, Anita Gould-Davies, and Jenny Shanley should be elevated from the Standard to the Intermediate Class; and that Ray Davies should be elevated from the Intermediate to the Advanced Class.  So, congratulations to all of them for having the improvement in the quality of their work recognised in this way.

**Chris Blyth, John Hall and John Cowan**

To my knowledge, three of our faithful members have suffered ill-health over the past few months.  (If there are any others of which I have not been made aware, I apologise to them).  Our Secretary, Chris Blyth, has been suffering from quite a bit of pain and discomfort during the Summer.  He underwent surgery on the 9th August and, when I spoke to him a few days ago, he was still a bit sore but, thankfully, beginning his recovery at home.  I am pleased to say that John Hall, who I visited on Friday, is in goods spirits and now making progress at home after being discharged from hospital.  As many of you will know, John Cowan has been very poorly, also having undergone surgery recently.  I saw him in the Hospice on Friday where his medication is being sorted but, hopefully, he will well enough to return home again before too long.

I have conveyed to all three of them on behalf of the Society our very best wishes.

**IOMPS Summer Activities**

I hope you are all enjoying the Summer, ‘mixed’ though it has been so far.  There have been good days, it is true, but they have been few and far between.  We are always told not to put our cameras away when the weather is inclement but, if you are like me, sunshine and blue skies (with a few white fluffy clouds) are a greater inspiration!

Three summer outings have been arranged so far, namely, two boat trips from Port St Mary to the Calf and Sound (thanks to Chris Blyth); a visit to the Ballanette Nature Reserve (with thanks to the owner, Stewart Clague, for kindly facilitating this) and to Lonan Old Church; and an evening visit to the Douglas Fire HQ on Peel Road to witness and photograph a drill (thanks to Tony Curtis).  I can personally vouch for the fact that the boat trips were most enjoyable but indisposition and a long-standing prior engagement prevented me from attending the other two, though I am told both were very successful.  Unfortunately, my attempts to arrange an evening visit to the Douglas Power Station have been frustrated and it now looks unlikely that this will proceed this year.  I understand the difficulty for the MEA is one of staffing for an evening visit as there are particular health and safely issues and there is normally only a skeleton staff there at night.  Sadly, we had to abandon plans for a disposable camera afternoon this year but hope to re-introduce this idea for next Summer.

**The Winter Programme**

The Programme for the coming Winter has now been finalised and will be circulated soon.  I wish to thank the members of the Committee for their helpful input, especially our Competitions’ Secretary, Evie Jones, for all her hard work seeking judges and in other ways.  I am keen to ensure that the Programme offers some variety to meet the differing needs of the membership and hope we have been successful in that endeavour.  Whilst there is a serious side to photography with our regular competitions, our main focus should be on enjoying our weekly gatherings and each other’s company in a convivial atmosphere where old and new members are able to share ideas and make new friends.  I hope, therefore, that you will all try to encourage guests to come along to our meetings so that, if they are interested in photography, they might be persuaded to return on a regular basis and become full members.  New members should not feel pressured into entering competitions or that they need to be proficient photographers to join us.  Our membership has a wide range of abilities from beginner to ‘expert’ and uses film, digital or both.  Whatever level we have reached, new members wishing to improve the standard of their images should be enabled to learn by seeking help and advice on photographic problems on club nights from those who are more experienced and knowledgeable.  We obviously cannot promise that the expertise will be available to provide the answers to every query – but, if we don’t know, we probably do know someone who does!

For our second meeting on the 6th October, we wish to respond to requests we have received for a practical evening early in the Winter programme.  So, if there are any specific issues or subjects on which you would like advice, assistance, or practical help, then do please let me or Chris Blyth (862082) know as soon as possible so that we can try to tailor the evening to meet real needs.

Finally, perhaps I could just remind you all of the topics for our Winter assignment competitions which are ‘People at Work’; ‘Architectural Detail’; ‘Shapes’ and, for the Isle of Man Bank Cup, ‘Manx Landscape’.

**The Society’s Website**

Because of John Cowan’s illness, he has decided that he will not be able to continue as the Society’s Webmaster.  I have thanked John on behalf of the IOMPS for all his painstaking, meticulous and diligent work as our Webmaster over past years.  He has done a magnificent job in ensuring that the website has been kept right up to date each week in terms of both words and images and supported our efforts to promote the Society in so many other ways.  However, we must respect his decision and I know that we all wish him well.

We are extremely grateful that Mark Stringer has very kindly agreed to take on this important role and he is currently working very hard to construct a new website for the Society.  This rebuild would have been necessary in any case as the old software is no longer supported.  You can view the developing site by entering  [www.iomps.com](http://www.iomps.com) in your browser of choice.  If anyone wishes to contact the Society, they can e-mail contact@iomps.com, and, for the present, the message will be ‘picked up’ by Mark.  This might change as we give further thought to how best we might improve its accessibility and our speed in responding to enquiries.

I shall look forward to welcoming you all to our first meeting of the Winter which will be held a little earlier than in the past few years, on Wednesday, 29th September at 7.45 pm at Thie Ellyn with a ‘showcase of the Society’s work’.

With my very best wishes

**Antony Hamilton**