

# John Hedgecoe

Born 1932. Photographer.

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## Contents

1. Introduction
2. First Job Interview
3. A Son Remembers
4. Books

# 1. Introduction

*This introductory chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from Wikipedia.*

John Hedgecoe (24 March 1932 – 3 June 2010) was a British photographer and author of over 30 books on photography. He established the photography department in 1965 at the Royal College of Art, where he was Professor from 1975 to 1994 and Professor Emeritus until his death. He was also Pro-Rector of the college from 1981 to 1994. His photographs appear in permanent collections at the New York Museum of Modern Art and London's National Portrait Gallery.

Hedgecoe was born in Brentford, Middlesex. Born the son of a banker. John Hedgecoe received his first camera from his father at the age of 14. Hedgecoe and his family were evacuated during World War II. They settled in Gulval, a village near Penzance in Cornwall where he attended the local school.

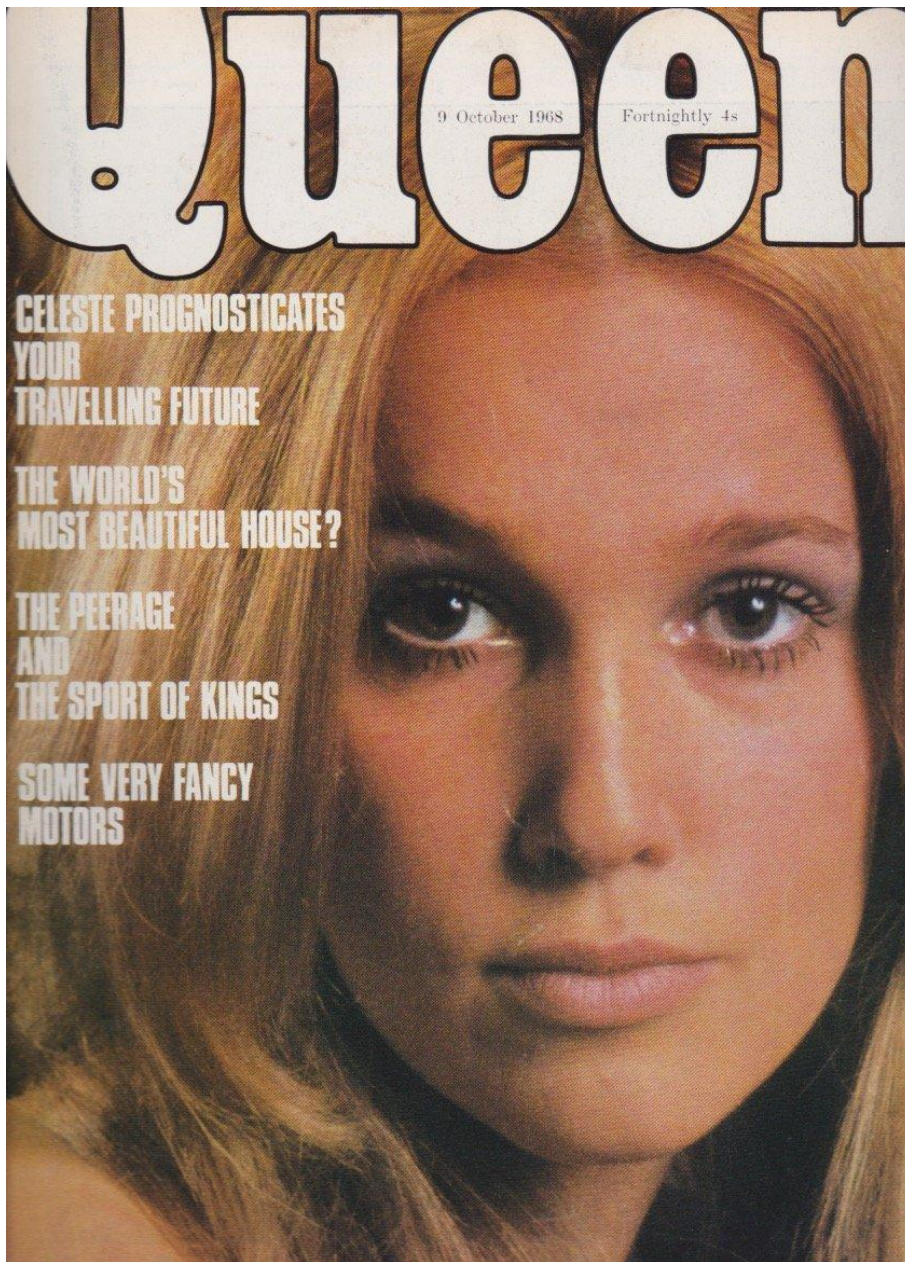
Hedgecoe attended Guildford School of Art (now University for the Creative Arts), while also completing his National Service with the RAF. During his service with the RAF, Hedgecoe experimented with aerial photographic surveys of bomb damage from the war. In 1957, he started work as a staff photographer at Queen magazine, working there until 1972.

In the main, Hedgecoe's works are focused on artists and writers. He said: "A good portrait photograph should try to tell us something about the subject's character, for the portrait is a visual biography in a sense." One of Hedgecoe's books was Henry Spencer Moore, published in 1968. Most photographs by John Hedgecoe are stored at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich. Hedgecoe's profile shot of the Queen, taken by him in June 1967, was used by Arnold Machin to make a plaster version. Once the plaster version was produced, Hedgecoe photographed it for the stamp image. It is one of the most-reproduced images, with over 200 billion copies sold.

In 1960, Hedgecoe married the photographer Julia Mardon. The couple had three children: Sebastian, Dolly and Auberon.

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## 2. First Job Interview



*A Queen magazine cover photographed by John Hedgecoe.*

*The following chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from The Times of January 16th 2008.*

No one forgets their first job interview. The portrait photographer, John Hedgecoe, whose work is the subject of a new exhibition at the London Art Fair from today, had a particularly odd one in 1957 when he was invited by the art editor and cartoonist Mark Boxer to visit the offices of Queen magazine.

“I had just finished a photography course at Guildford School of Art and when I arrived at Queen I found a young chap sorting through the dustbins outside. He smiled in a friendly way so I asked him what he was doing. He

said he was looking for some Cartier-Bresson prints that had been thrown out by mistake. I was early so I stopped to help him for a while, and then went up to my interview. Mark offered me a job as the magazine's staff photographer and then took me upstairs to meet the proprietor. To my surprise it was the young man who'd been sorting through the rubbish, Jocelyn Stevens. I didn't expect to stay in the job long but in the end I stayed 14 years."

Stevens ran the magazine with loose editorial reins, allowing Hedgecoe to do more or less what he liked. Having a keen interest in contemporary British art, Hedgecoe spent time making friends with artists, chronicling the British art scene from Henry Moore and Augustus John in the early 1950s to Terry Frost in the 1990s. By 1964 he was also working for The Sunday Times, The Daily Telegraph and The Observer, broadening his remit to include portraits of musicians, scientists, writers, fashion designers, actors and other people he admired. In 1965 he joined the Royal College of Art and set up the photography department there.

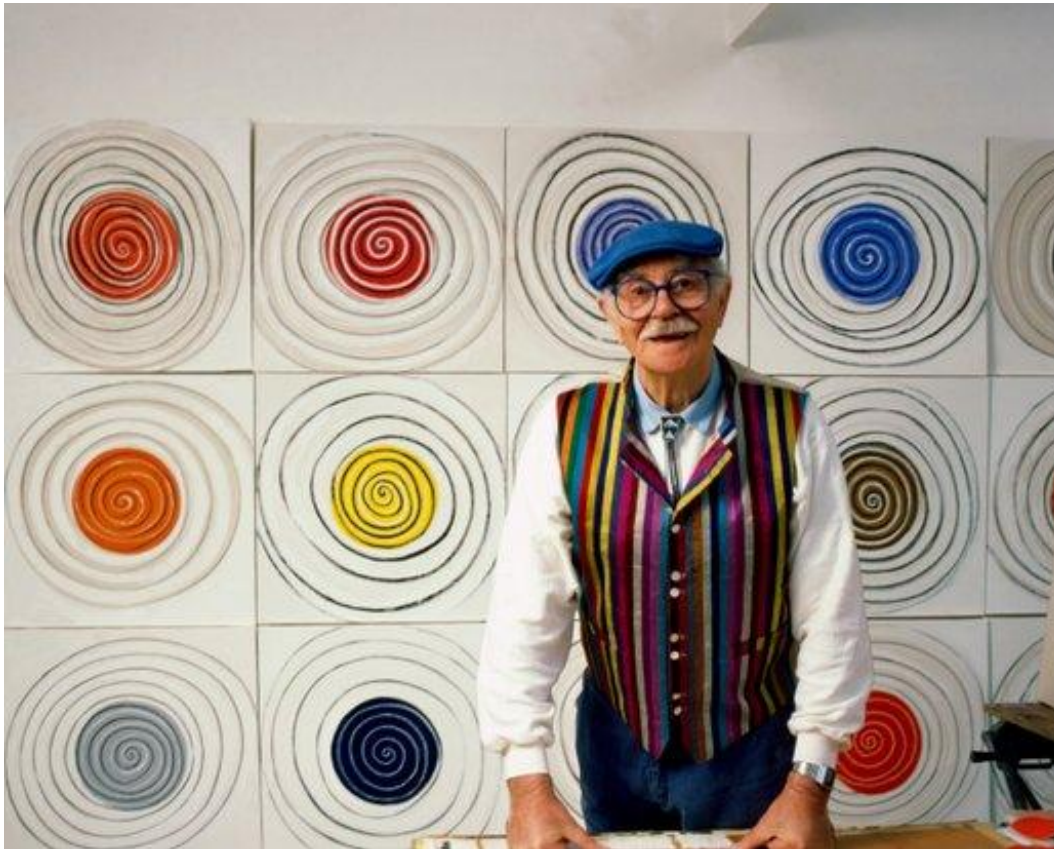
Of all the 800 or so sitters who posed for his camera during the second half of the 20th century, it was the artists who interested him most, and they are the focus of the London Art Fair show. The range is broad - from Peter Blake and Sandra Blow to Francis Bacon - but what is evident is a clear admiration for a certain will, energy and bravado that these artists share, and a need to record the fragility of lives lived on the edge.

"I knew Henry Moore for nearly 40 years and saw him most weekends. I met a lot of other artists through Henry. He was a wonderful and interesting man, very comfortable in himself, relaxed in front of a camera. He had the most amazing hands I always thought. Most artists were rather jealous of Henry. I particularly remember Sutherland was a bit upset about Henry taking all the publicity and all the cream."

It was through Moore that Hedgecoe met Barbara Hepworth. "He told me that he was a bit sweet on her, which was the way people talked in those days. He never actually said she was his girlfriend, but I suspect she was." Hepworth was another powerful subject for Hedgecoe and in 1970, not long before she died, he photographed her in her black fur coat, a brightly burning head perched on top of a pyramid of raw fur. "That fur was like a uniform to her. She wore it most of the time when she wasn't in bed. She wasn't at all well, but you can still see the energy in her eyes. I remember she asked me to pour her a whisky, so I poured about an inch into the tumbler and handed it to her. At once she shot back at me 'oh do fill it up properly will you?' and one just did."

The portrait of David Hockney included in the show was taken in 1972 on an assignment for Flair magazine in Hockney's Bayswater studio. His mop of brilliant corn-yellow hair flops over a face defined by huge owl-like

spectacles and a mouth shaped like an upturned U. “I remember he told me that he dyed his hair with Lady Clairol bleach. I think he was a bit keen on my assistant that day. He asked him to come back and visit him, although he probably wouldn’t remember that now.”



*The artist Terry Frost photographed by John Hedgecoe.*

One of Hedgecoe’s favourite subjects was the effervescent Terry Frost, a fellow teacher at the RCA, with indefatigable wit and charm. Hedgecoe photographed him in 1990 wearing a striped waistcoat, gesticulating wildly in front of one of his colourful paintings. “He was fantastically energetic and funny. He loved to make all the students laugh. He would cheer you up, never mind teach you. Really he was the ideal teacher.”

Hedgecoe’s most reproduced image is the profile portrait he took of the Queen in June 1967 which was used by the sculptor Arnold Machin to make an exact relief plaster image which Hedgecoe then rephotographed. It has been reproduced two billion times on our postage stamps.

When Hedgecoe wrote about the portrait in his book *Portraits*, published in 2000, Lord Snowdon wrote to him, angrily disputing his



role and claiming that the stamp image was based on his own photograph. When the Royal Mail backed Snowdon's claim, Hedgecoe took them to court and won.

“The portrait was pretty easy really. I chose which crown she should wear from a scrap book of press pictures, and decided where she should sit. It was quick and straightforward except that every time I said something to her she turned to face me to reply. She was so very polite, you see. I just had to stop talking for once.”

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### 3. A Son Remembers

*The following was extracted and archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from an article by Charlotte Cripps published in the Independent on 22nd October 2011.*

Hedgecoe's son Sebastian recalls Italian holidays with Moore in Forte dei Marmi, a place Moore sourced stone for his sculptures, which were more photo shoots than conventional family holidays. "We went on family holidays with dad and mum and my sister Dolly and brother Auberon for many years with Henry, who taught me to swim. I remember long lunches at his house and at restaurants on the seafront. We played table tennis in his garden. He was such an easy person to talk to, even as a child. Endlessly dad was taking pictures of Henry, who was there to source the marble, but we never went into the quarries. Dad would go with him up into the mountains. Whether it was breakfast lunch or supper dad was always taking photographs."

*Sebastian Hedgecoe followed his father's footsteps into photography. This description of his career was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from his website [www.sebastianhedgecoe.com](http://www.sebastianhedgecoe.com).*

Sebastian is an international Photographer, Director and former Production Designer who has worked with the still and moving image since early childhood. He is a graduate of the Royal College of Art (Film & TV School) having previously studied Graphic Design at the renowned Hornsey Art School.

Based in Andalucia Sebastian's work covers a broad spectrum which includes, Editorial, Advertising, Books, Fine Art and other specialist Individual Commissions.

From a family of prolific Photographers and Artists; his parents being the distinguished Photographers John Hedgecoe and Julia Hedgecoe, Sebastian's love of Photography started literally in the studio and on numerous locations as a child.

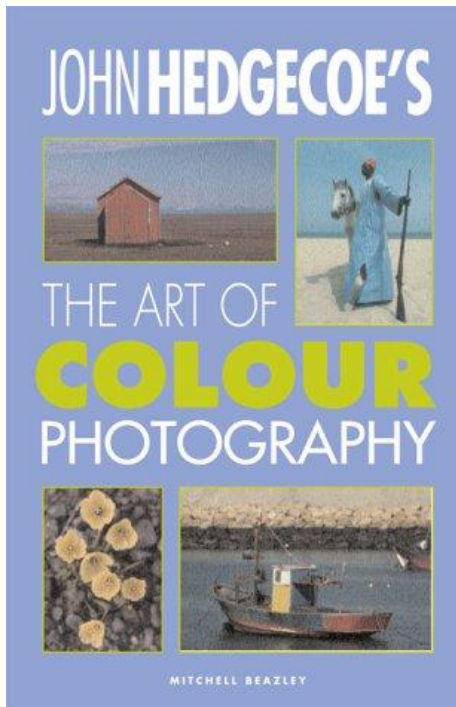
Sebastian is the CEO & President of Atmósfera Academy of Inspiration in Andalucia: an Academy which is dedicated to teaching excellence in Photography, the Fine Arts and Commercial Creative Disciplines.

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## 4. Books

*John Hedgecoe wrote more than 30 books, mostly handbooks for photographers. They include:*

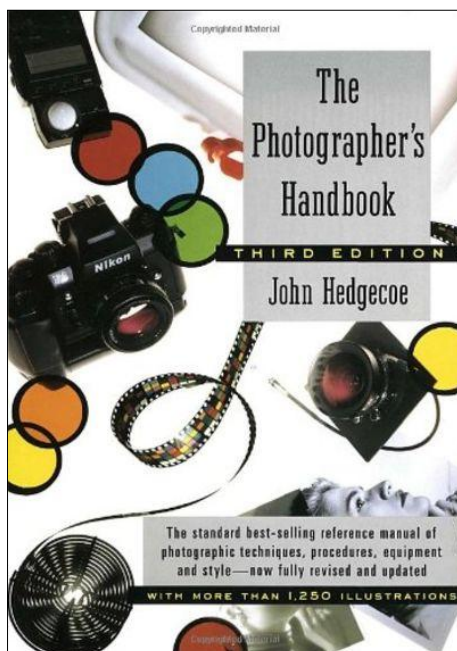
Manual of Photography Focal Press, 1977.



The Art of Colour Photography Mitchell Beazley for Marks and Spencer, 1984.

John Hedgecoe's Nude Photography Simon Schuster, 1984.

John Hedgecoe's Practical Landscape Photography Ebury Press, 1988.



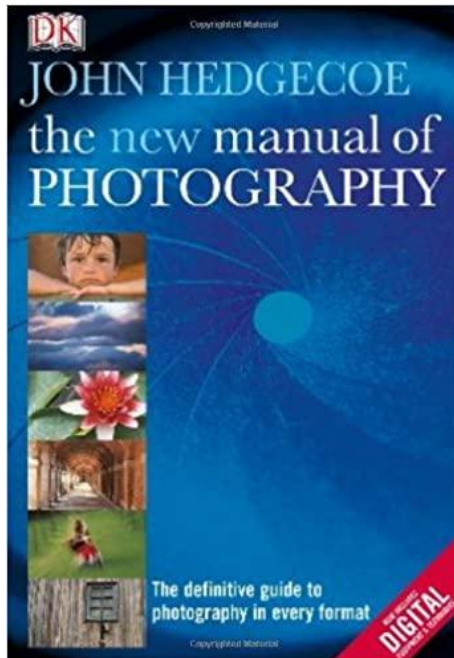


The Photographer's Handbook Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.

John Hedgecoe's Camcorder Basics Collins & Brown Limited 1995.

Breakfast with Dolly, novel (1996)

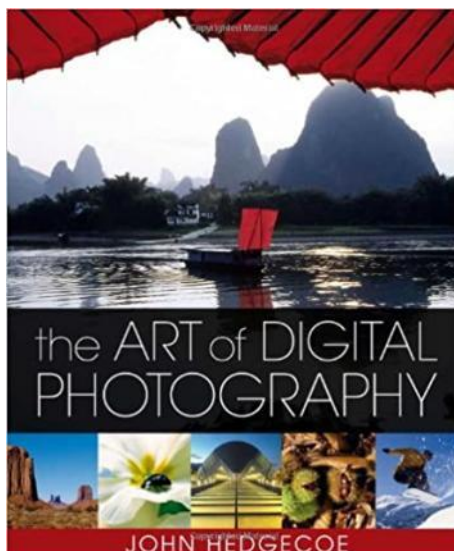
John Hedgecoe's 35mm Photography Collins & Brown, 1999.



The New Manual of Photography DK Publishing, 2003.

John Hedgecoe's Complete Guide to Black White Photography Sterling, 2005.

How to Take Great Photographs Collins & Brown, 2005.



The Art of Digital Photography Dorling Kindersley, 2009.