



Gold Star – Brian

## Description

Although most projects and tutorials in the Campus revolve around scrapbooking, many PaintShop Pro users still benefit from the tutorials and resources for projects that are completely unrelated to scrapbooking. Brian is one of them.

## Tell us a bit about you

I'm Brian Dowling from St Albans in England. I am 67 years old and retired from 32 years of policing in busy London, not everyone's favourite occupation but I genuinely believe I made things better. For twelve years after that, I was running a company facilitating meetings between victims and offenders in very serious and traumatic crimes. Some of this time has been spent training others to do that Restorative Practice process. I have often had to train people and present various things. I am a cancer survivor from 2008 with a raft of post-treatment challenges but overall I am a most fortunate person. I am married for 46 years with two over-40 disabled sons but they are both in fine fettle. I was an 'early-adopter' of computers long before the Internet arrived and have been using them extensively since the 70's and have always enjoyed presentations.

While I am a poly-hobbyist my main interest for decades has been family history and I run a One-Name Study for my surname, this includes, apart from all-important genealogical research, presenting the Study in a Website. This nicely combines computing with presentations so keeps me enthusiastic. I have been making websites for years but the more recent CSS focus on websites means I find it harder to understand the workings than I did in the old 'Dreamweaver' days. All in all, there are not enough hours in a day for all the things I want to do and enjoy, and, as I get older, time is definitely running faster!

## How did you get to work with PSP?

My experience with PSP is as a user for many years since JASC days, with a brief dalliance with a well-known alternative. I have mostly used it for correcting or improving old photographs. I became disillusioned with more expensive graphics programs that, despite the cost, did not actually seem to

add any practical value to me. One upgrade to the PSP 'alternative' actually increased in price but did less (like paying more for biscuits that are now smaller!), I don't find that happens with PSP. I went back to PSP and stayed with it.. I tend to upgrade every time. All graphics programs have a learning curve but PSP is somewhat more intuitive and I want to make pictures not work 'under the hood'.

I still use PSP to improve old photos and its AI utilities have been a big improvement. It is amazing how poor or tiny some old pictures are, so sometimes I am trying to make something reasonable out of a low-resolution face shot that was originally only a few millimetres wide and blurred, pixelated, and/or torn and faded.

With my website, I wanted to decorate and illustrate the pages to stop them from becoming too dull. Family history sites can look quite static and, while the star of the show is the data, the demographic of my visitors led me to believe that presentation needed to be more than an academic look of black on white text. While my site does change nearly every day in a data sense, adding a new family from a place obscure to the visitor will not be enough for it to look fresh or keep visitors returning. So, I started making decorative or illustrative images. It's not quite scrapbooking but sometimes it seems much the same! Websites for my topic, and many others, are not always suitable for 12x12 images or pages with several photos in one image. Memory size and placement considerations are different. I have had a go at photo templates and tend not to use them... but I don't like saying never. Typically my starting template is a wide screen width but narrow in height. For fun, I made a logo for the site at <https://www.dowling.one-name.net/> and it is a source of fun to give the logo a different look from time to time.

I recently came across the marvelous [Creation Cassel](#) range of scripts and these have injected a new lease of life into PSP for me, they are so much fun I have to be careful to get some family history done! Each image 'project' is to promote something on the site so that has given great purpose to making an image rather than purely art for art's sake. Some have been put on the Scrapbook Campus already and all are favourites until I work on the next one. My older projects were more informative or technical than decorative but now, I am looking at illustrations for occupations, countries, and places (I have an extensive postcard collection) and with some inspiration from other people on the Campus, I have embarked on presenting genealogy quotations.

One of my big learning points on my early projects was on recolouring portraits and I now seldom do it. This is because I have calibrated my computer monitor but other people haven't! The end result is a coloured portrait of a person that looks subtly realistic on my screen but has oh-so-rosy cheeks and yellow hair on someone else's screen! Today I enjoy using some 3D layering to make an image pop.

## How did you get to join the Campus?

I had bought Cassel Creation's 'Pencil Sketch' for a project from the Corel website a good while ago. Many months or a year later when using it for someone's picture, I just wondered if CC did anything else. I started hunting as I had been a little disappointed with other quite expensive scripts. When I found the CC site and it was like the biggest toy store had opened up just for me. An e-mail from the site pointed me to the Scrapbook Campus which I did enjoy immensely and am toying with Diamond membership although I seem to have so much to do already.

Here are some projects made by Brian using various tools from the store and tutorials from the

Campus.







And if you visit Brian's site, you will also notice that most graphics there are done using PaintShop Pro (and you may recognize some products from the store too!).

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myclone