



Vignettes 121

February 16th, 2022

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Club News

Hi everyone. Hope you are all well. Good to see a healthy turnout of around 23 members watch the Competition D judging by Peter Weaver. 15 different award winners from the 28 possible awards continues to demonstrate the general trend this year that we have a good spread of talent across the membership but we can always improve so keep snapping and keep entering. All it can do is improve your photography. Mike made a video recording of the session for anyone who was unable to attend the F2F meeting. This is the link to the folder:

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AsZzxajrGoYWiNorCKydRgLWWN9NHw?e=sBzIYG>

Here's the results:

Comp D Results -Coastal

Set Print

1st - Clevedon Pier – Patrick Barker

2nd - Newcastle, County Down – David Wallis

3rd - West Bay Catch 22 - Ruth Barker

HC - Bow Fiddle Rock – Alun Thomas

C - An Artist's Paradise – Jill Bewley

Open Print

1st- Full Stretch – John Hankin

2nd - Inspiration from Above – Mike Cheeseman

3rd - St Paul's Reflection – John Smith

HC - My Dress – Patrick Barker

HC - Walking on Water – Jill Bewley

C - Iceberg Generations – Paul Jones

C - Sitting on The Horizon – Martyn Smith

Set DPI

1st - Giant's Causeway – Colin Hoskins

2nd - Thai Heaven – Katrina Ellor

3rd - Portnaboe, Northern Ireland – Davis Wallis

HC - Cliff Top Stroll – Paul Jones

HC - Lowry by The Sea – Martyn Smith

C - Quayside Bollard – Alun Thomas^[1]_[SEP]C - The Seven Sisters – Jill Bewley

C - What Is Going on In Mevagissey – David Cahill

Open DPI

1st- The Golden Hour – John Crew

2nd - Solitary Confinement – Paul Jones

3rd - This Friendship Is Fur Real – Liz Gillham

HC - Flying Pony – John Hankin

HC - Our Energy Future – Davis Wallis

C - Diva – Alan Barker

C - Bright Eyed – Jill Bewley

C - School's Out – Martyn Smith



Clevedon Pier by Patrick Barker



Full Stretch by John Hankin



Giants Causeway by Colin Hoskins



The Golden Hour by John Crew

Next Week

Our final Zoom meeting of the year is next week when we have Charles Ashton talking to us on Street Photography. Called “Right up my Street”, it promises to be a really great night. Charles is speaking for free but would welcome a club contribution to Warwick Hospital which, I believe, is where he works as a physician. Here’s a little bit about him:

<https://www.lensculture.com/charles-ashton>

PAGB E News

Paul has just received the latest PAGB newsletter:

[Issue 301 | enews \(pagbnews.co.uk\)](#)

[Issue 301 extra | enews \(pagbnews.co.uk\)](#)

A Few Thoughts

I thought I would put down a few thoughts this week about what I’ve learnt from judging and competitions over the last few years. I’ve drawn from watching and listening to judges at both Cirencester and Cheltenham Camera club competitions as well as from talks we’ve had from judges on how to improve our images. This is not a definitive list of subjects but one which seems to appear regularly. Let me know if you want to add anything in a future Vignettes

Print judging (DPI shown)

By this I mean a print judging competition but where the judged image is also shown as a projected DPI just for the audience. However, it’s noticeable that the DPI is often different in size and colour to the judged print. The judge says that he’s only judging the print and that’s generally what happens but invariably he/she draws a comparison between the two. It’s difficult to know whether or not this has any impact on the final judging but why make it difficult for yourself by adding this disparity which might subconsciously influence a judge’s view? There are two reasons why these differences come about.

1. The print mount has been bought pre-cut and the “fitted” image is different to what’s on your screen and resulting DPI. This is understandable as buying blank mounts and decent mount cutting gear can be expensive although the Jacar range of rulers and blade cutters

are quite cheap and can be mastered. If you really think your screen image is better than your mounted print (images often look too “tight” in the pre-cut mount), try and find the right mount or ask for help from a club member who has mount cutting kit. It might make all the difference.

2. The colour print has been printed by a professional print lab who’s “colour space” is not the same as yours. If you have a printer that’s been calibrated and a screen that’s been calibrated, the screen image (and resulting DPI) and print image should be the same. But not everyone has a printer. Printer, Paper, ink and waste all add to cost. I’ve reprinted below a couple of excellent articles from Vignettes 109 on Colour Space as it should be possible to make sure that your colour space and print lab’s are the same. You might need to recalibrate your screen. There’s a club calibration tool doing the rounds and John Crew is trying out my ColorMunki Smile as my Mac’s operating system can’t now use it. A well printed image deserves to look good as a matching DPI.

Too many “Birds on a stick”

A generic reference but one very relevant in club comps. In any competition, it’s a simple fact that a judge will not award all the prizes to one genre of photography even if they are all the best images. They end up, in the judge’s mind, in a mini competition where only one or two get chosen to allow other genres to be considered. It doesn’t make any difference whether it’s a bird on a stick or images of Clevedon Pier. Only one/two are likely to be chosen. Therefore, although you won’t know what other images are being submitted, you might be able to make a judgement as to what might be submitted particularly in the narrower “Set” category. Cheltenham Club has a large group of excellent wildlife photographers and many a time I’ve seen potentially excellent winning images fall by the wayside in a highly competitive situation. So, think about how good your image is but, at the end of the day, it’s your image.

Where is that Bird on a stick?

As F-stops have got progressively lower, there’s been a tendency to go for the lowest F-stop in image taking particularly with wildlife in order to make the subject stand out. But a very low f-stop can throw the background of an image so out of focus that it removes the ability to appreciate its contextual environment. Sometimes the blurred background can just look like a sheet of cardboard. The better judges have regularly picked up on this as detracting from the image which have been marked down as a result. So, depending on the subject you are photographing, think about an f-stop which helps to narrate the image’s environment without detracting from the central subject. It might be vegetation, buildings or people all of which help to sell the story. F4 or F5.6 might be better than F2.8 depending on the focal length. Remember that wildlife/natural history competitions don’t allow dodging/burning/cloning so that might have a bearing on the chosen backdrop context.

A busy picture

“Reading” an image is all about where your eye rests and the resulting emotion that this brings. From that point you can be taken on a visual journey around the image to strengthen your initial appreciation. That is the photographer’s task. Sounds easy doesn’t it?! Some pictures can be naturally “busy” and despite your best endeavours, the reader is sent on a roller coaster of a trip in trying to understand what you are “selling”. How many times have you heard a judge talk about a busy picture and the disappointment this brings in not getting some further recognition?

A couple of years ago we had (judge) Alex Gjika from the Cheltenham Camera Club talk to us about judging. The one thing he was consistent about was the need to bring the main image subject “forward” by “knocking back” its background as supporting but ancillary. It’s a simple exercise one can do in processing software and involves reducing the background by fractions of a Stop until you find the central feature of the image starting to stand out. You might need to blur the background as well and you might also need to increase the exposure of the central feature of the image. It’s a matter of experimentation but it helps to create a sort of three-dimensional image to help focus the reader on the image and its narrative.

Look at the edges

Another common judge comment. A judge’s eye should, as mentioned above, land on that part of the image you want him/her to see but after that they can get picky. They soon head to the edges as the first port of call. So take a look at extraneous elements around the edges of your image and ask yourself whether they add anything to the image or (be honest) are they just a distraction. If the latter, clone out (as long as it’s allowed - take note wildlife/natural history comps)

Titles

This is entirely personal but I’ve found that a snappy title not only adds to the narrative but also may bring an extra dimension to an image not appreciated by a judge. It can even raise his/her spirits. This can only help in judging and I’ve never found it to my detriment. At worst it’s had a neutral effect. Humour needs context to succeed and shouldn’t be overtly smart. It is of course true that some competitions don’t allow titles or provide very strict title criteria. Humour is definitely a “no-no” in Natural History comps - just the Latin or English equivalent of the image subject is allowed. Two loved up caterpillars with the title “Your place or mine” isn’t probably going to get you anywhere!

That’s it. Let me know if you have a burning topic where you have fallen foul of a judge - remembering of course that it’s only his/her opinion. Here’s that colour space article

Colour Space (from Vignettes 109)

Ever wondered what colour space is all about and how choosing the right one can improve your photography in post processing? Jill and I were having a chat about this aspect of photography recently and I came across two excellent articles below which pretty well sets it all out for you. To my mind there are a few nuggets worth remembering:

1. If you shoot in RAW, your camera setting options (RGB and sRGB) have no effect. They are there if you shoot in JPEG.
2. The three most common Colour Spaces are ProPhoto, RGB and sRGB. They all show the same colours but the widest Colour Space is ProPhoto which has the biggest saturation range whilst sRGB has the smallest.
3. If you process in RAW, use ProPhoto 16 bit (set in your preferences) as this reduces the risk of “banding” artefacts and creates a smoother image. This aids printing.
4. Always export in sRGB. It’s the universal (and only) Colour Space for the internet, websites, competitions etc. The Algorithm will smooth out the ProPhoto processed wider Colour Space image so don’t worry that you’ve lost detail by converting to sRGB.

It’s a bit more complicated than that, which the articles deal with, and provide helpful advice on settings for Lightroom and Photoshop, including exporting from one to the other. You’ll be examined on the subject the next time we meet!

<https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fphotographylife.com%2Fsrgb-vs-adobe-rgb-vs-prophoto-rgb&data=04%7C01%7C%7C21c988f6d6d34297420408d9a05fa8af%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637717154969571622%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiOiM4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikh1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&data=EU2rJRrAmxFStIhlBatYZ5LMMaumSPykDY1sHZdal%3D&reserved=0>

“Flow” - freeride ski film shot entirely with DJI drones

If you do nothing else this month, you have to watch this amazing film, all shot by a range of drones. Absolutely stunning in the Red Bull mould of film making. The link below is to both the film and the making of the film. Some of the amazing footage looks like the skier is going down a vertical drop. Just amazing.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/uk/news/this-breathtaking-freeride-ski-film-was-shot-entirely-with-dji-drones>

POTY Time

Underwater photographer of the year (UPOTY)

Another spectacular collection of winning images from this year's Underwater Photography of the year competition. The link to the website and gallery slide show is below but here's a few words from the web site:

Restriction on travel over the last year may have stopped many photographers visiting their favourite waters, but it hasn't stifled their creativity as you can see from the stunning photos on this page. UPY aims to celebrate underwater photography in all its forms and we are delighted that this year's awarded images represent many genres and are produced by photographers from around the world. The winners below reveal amazing ocean spectacles and species, and capture vistas from flooded mines to deep shipwrecks, while many more come from home countries and some are even taken in swimming pools. But what unites them all, is that they are all photographs that are worth our time to dive into and explore. Enjoy!

<https://underwaterphotographeroftheyear.com/>

Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award 2021

The People's Choice award within the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the year has just been announced and here's a few words from the press release followed by the website link:

A chilly scene of willow trees rising above a frozen lake in Italy by Cristiano Vendramin has won this year's Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award. The image 'Lake of Ice', showing trees in the depth of winter, has won this year's People's Choice Awards after coming top from an online vote of 31,800. The image was taken by Cristiano when he visited Santa Croce Lake in northern Italy, and noticed that the unusually high water was submerging some of the willow trees that fringed the edge of the lake. Inspired by the play of light and reflection on the lake's icy surface, the scene reminded Cristiano of a dear late friend who had loved this special place.

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/news/2022/february/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year-2021-peoples-choice-winning-image.html>

BBC Pictures

Another selection from the BBC's news website.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-60334402>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-60282053>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-60331022>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-60219775>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-60250029>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-60305168>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-60266207>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-60271520>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-60288470>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-60347907>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-60319086>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-60374371>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-60368862>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/60375539>

CISP Is Up and Running

Don't forget that entries for the Cheltenham International Salon of Photography competition are now open. Here's a link:

<https://cheltenhamcameraclub.uk/salon-2022/>

Internal Competitions

Subject	Competition	Submission Date	Judging Date
Water (in all its forms)	A	September 27 th , 2021	October 25 th , 2021
Architecture	B	November 8 th , 2021	December 6 th , 2021
Sunrise, sunset	C	December 6 th , 2021	January 17 th , 2022
Coastal	D	January 17 th , 2022	February 14 th , 2022
Winter	E	February 28 th , 2022	March 28 th , 2022
Farming in the Cotswolds	Pitchers Trophy (annual Competition)	April 11 th , 2022	May 9 th , 2022
Various	Annual Competitions	April 11 th , 2022	May 9 th , 2022

The Dropbox link is now up and running and is featured on every Comp submission page, along with as a News item - here is the link.

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/DpAdq7inLJSz17gWu2Bg>

Quote of the Week

When I photograph, what I'm really doing is seeking answers to things - Wynn Bullock

Cheers and stay safe

Martyn (thehoneys@btinternet.com)

Mike (mike.cheeseman1777@hotmail.com)

Appendix 1: Club Face to Face (F2F) Meetings - Covid Measures

The easing of Covid restrictions over the summer as part of the Covid roadmap has made physical club meetings a practical proposition and Watermoor Parish are now permitting hire of their hall facility again. To enable this and to satisfy their insurers there are a number of things that hirers have to provide to gain approval for hire. After some consideration, below is a summary of the club's approach to enable meetings to take place within the requirements. We will aim to put the relevant docs on the website if members want to have a look.

Clearly members will need to make their own judgements in light of their individual circumstances, but it is hoped that the pragmatic approach taken allows the club to recommence face to face club (F2F) nights as per the season's programme in an enjoyable manner. As always with these things this is subject to any changes in guidance. Please get in touch with me, or other committee members, if you have any issues arising. Many thanks. Stephen

Watermoor Church Hall Hire Covid Measures

Our activities must remain consistent with government guidelines at the time of the event. The requirements from the hall involve some element of cleaning by the club before and after the evening's programme.

Emphasis will be on precautions taken and as such the club:

(i) advises that anyone feeling unwell or having been notified for quarantine under Track and trace or NHS App or as a result of travelling requirements should not attend club meetings.

(ii) will ensure that seating, social distancing and ventilation are consistent with government guidelines.

(iii) request that members bring personal crockery/cutlery for any refreshments - some disposable items will be made available. We will not utilise hall crockery, just the kettle/boiler as appropriate.

(iv) suggest members consider continuing to use facemasks during meetings when appropriate.

Club Approach

1. The club will provide hand sanitiser for members use on entrance and exit from the hall.

- 1. The hall has QR posters displayed for members who wish to utilise the NHS app.*
- 2. In accordance with general "Health and Safety" good practice, a log will be kept of attendees on a F2F club night in case of the need for evacuation from premises which facilitates a roll call.*

3. *Access to kitchen facilities will be restricted to reduce contacts and users will sanitise hands before and after use of kettle etc. It is noted that no cleaning of switches is to take place (for safety) therefore the emphasis is on sanitising hands before and after any such operations, ensuring hands are dry.*
4. *Access to W/C's is restricted to one person at a time under the hall guidelines. Members should sanitise hands on entry and exit. At the end of evening contact points are wiped down as part of the exit process.*
5. *The club will use readily available Covid appropriate cleaning materials in the form of spray /paper towel and/or sanitising wipes to facilitate cleaning and provide bags to remove used material from the hall on completion.*
6. *Hard contact points e.g. door handles/locks, window handles/locks will be wiped on first contact when being operated and on final use when closed prior to exit.*
7. *The club anticipate utilising a restricted number of members on a given night to clean and handle equipment/chairs etc. thus reducing the number of potential contacts.*
8. *Those members should sanitise hands before commencing any handling, using spray/wipes to clean contact points when moving /setting up chairs etc. On completion of set up handling, members should sanitise hands again before commencing the actual event.*
9. *It is assumed that club materials in the locked storage may also be potentially contaminated and therefore contact points should be wiped before handling and on replacing in store.*

Although it all sounds a bit complicated, I hope that we will soon get into the swing of things in managing what we do to minimise impacts. Do get in contact if you have any queries. Stephen.