



Vignettes 122

February 23rd, 2022

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Club News

Hi everyone. Hope you are all well. I'm sure we'll be seeing a splattering of yet more lighthouse and coastal images from the storms in Porthleven and Porthcawl over the coming months. It certainly looked spectacular from the warmth of our kitchen! As for Monday night's excellent talk by Charles Ashton, he showed us some of the best "street" images I've seen. His rise to the highest ranks of the PAGB and RPS along with accolades from various salons and comps has been meteoric helped in no small part by Leigh Preston who, of course, spoke to us just after Christmas. Charles gave us a great walk through his bespoke "Up your street" talk using Travel, Street and Environmental Portrait Photography, the latter term of which I hadn't come across before but the description says it all. To me the most striking feature of his images was the exceptionally high quality of focus, all handheld, even where a longer exposure time became necessary to give movement in the image added narrative (viz the Indian weaver, or metal worker).

What I particularly liked was Charles's detailed description and guidance on how each of his images evolved from initially being "seen" as an opportunity to setting up the shot. I made a brief note of Charles's main comments - good advice for budding "Streeters":

1. Look at the background to add context - it may be fundamental.
2. Consider the point of view - low, eye level, lead in lines etc
3. Use accessories to bring context - reflections, puddles, signs, smoke etc
4. Use a range of focal lengths from "wide" to "tele". Include a 50mm prime low stop lens in your bag (f1.8?)- good for low light situations.
5. Use burst rate - 5 per second is plenty. To increase your "hit" rate.
6. Switch off your shutter sound.
7. Be quick and/or be prepared to engage with the subject, particularly in more sensitive situations.
8. Read the light - exposure compensation may be necessary
9. Use panning with appropriate shutter speed to give motion.

Although Charles commented that his images have come about through a lot of experience (in a relatively short period of time), some aspects of his photography requires a certain approach which not all of us would find comfortable, me included, (despite liking the genre). His terrific FRPS panel on protest movements is a case in point - great images but in a potentially hostile environment. His comment that, with two camera bodies on his person, his appearance akin to the paparazzi kept him safe seemed counter intuitive to me. But of course it's the paparazzi who the protesters look to to further their cause so in this "mode" ones safety is more assured. I guess "I'm from the Cirencester Camera club" doesn't have the same ring about it! The police might be more sympathetic though. Worth remembering so I guess it's horses for courses.

Finally, Charles drew some clarity between the process required to achieve an RPS accreditation and that required for one from the PAGB. The former is about a carefully considered submission and equally considered assessment whereas the latter is absolutely about impact, with only 5-7

seconds available for the judges to make a decision. Quite stark really and something we in the club were beginning to get tuned into.

Charles's talk was, generously, for no charge but he welcomed a donation to the Warwickshire Hospital Trust where he works as a physician. We are happy to oblige and for the record this will be done through <https://swiftcharity.co.uk/donate>

For anyone who missed the talk, we recorded it and it's well worth a watch. Here's the link to Mike's One Drive:

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AsZzxajrGoYWiNorCKydRgLWWN9NHw?e=G5xksh>

Next Monday

Next Monday is the beginning of our regular F2F meetings through to the end of the club season where we have Heidi Stewart presenting her talk "My Journey So Far" - a PDI presentation including two short AV's at the end. The talk is in two halves:

1. **1st half:** Landscapes of the UK, Glamorgan Heritage Coast, Brecon Beacon National Park, Lake District, North Wales and more.
2. **2nd half:** A mixed bag; including candid, portraits, natural history and fun pics. Ends with 2 short AV's.

Heidi will also bring along a selection of her prints for members to browse during the refreshment break. It promises to be another enjoyable evening.

Finally, don't forget that next Monday is the submission date for the last of this year's regular club competitions (Comp E).

Monday 7th March - Martin Fry AV Workshop

The highly experienced Martin Fry from the Cheltenham Camera Club has offered to present an AV workshop evening in which you can participate. So we need to prepare. Martin has been in touch on the evening's format:

Hi Martyn

I hope this helps your members who want to have a go at AV. It's a fun thing to do. To start off I will show a few sequences in the evening and demonstrate making AV on big screen. Those with laptops can follow the demo and make simple AV on their laptop. I will bring my laptop, projector and sound system. So, for those members who want to have a go they will need the following:

- *Their laptop, fully charged up.*

- *In advance to download PTE AV STUDIO trial on their laptop (Windows or Mac version) <https://www.wnsoft.com/en/pte-av-studio/>*
- *have a folder with 10 images of their choice all with same format either 1620 x 1080, or 1920 x 1080 or 1600 x 1200. It doesn't matter which size but keep to one format.*
- *And two pieces of music about 2 minutes each. The music can be from any source as long as it can be accessed on your laptop. To make things easier I suggest putting the music files in the same folder as pics. This should be done in advance.*
- *Members might want to bring headphones for their laptop. It might get noisy!*

Look forward to seeing you on the 7th March. Best wishes. Martin

Martin has asked me to give him an idea of numbers joining in so can you let me know either by email or at next Monday's club night if you want to have a go. We'll set up the tables for those participating and for those who aren't, they can choose to sit alongside. Martin has achieved many awards for his AV work as well as many commissions so it should be a good night.

Annual Awards Competitions 2021/22

Jill has been in touch with a timely reminder of the annual competitions which will soon be upon us. Here's her note to members:

*Hi everyone. The deadline for entering the Annual Competitions is fast approaching as all entries must be received by **Monday 11 April**. Here is a reminder of the competition categories:*

*Pitchers Trophy - Set Subject: Farming in the Cotswolds - **DPI***

*Dennis Moss Trophy - Open - **Print***

*Leonard Jones Cup - Open - **DPI***

*Black and White - Open - **Print***

*Miles Shield - Open but must have been taken on a Club outing or at a Club practical meeting - **DPI***

*Gladiator Trophy - Set subject = Aviation - **DPI***

*Pitcher's Cup - Open - **Print or DPI** - Entries from new members only*

All DPIs must be 1600 x 1200px, and mounted prints must be no larger than 50cm x 40cm, and in the sRGB colour space. Images must not have been taken before 11 April 2017. Please follow this naming convention when sending in your images, to ensure your entry goes into the correct competition:

Membership number_Annual_Award_Title_jpg

for example : 30_Annual_PitchersTrophy_Image title_jpg

30_Annual_Dennis Moss_Title-jpg

(To avoid any confusion, for the New Members, please use the full Pitchers Cup)

Please note that members are eligible to enter the Annual Comps if they have entered two or more of the club's respective general competitions during the current season (with the exception of the competition for the Best New Member).

If you have any questions please do drop me an email at competitions@cirencestercameraclub.org

Many thanks, Jill

PAGB Western Counties Council Meeting and Knighthayes Trophy Judging, 5th March

We've been notified of the upcoming Council Meeting and competition judging. See below:

The Western Counties Photographic Federation

Member of the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain

www.wcpf.org.uk

COUNCIL MEETING SAT 5th MARCH 2022

Meeting to be held via Zoom. Meeting Start 10:30.

AGENDA

- 1 Welcome and opening remarks
- 2 Apologies for Absence
- 3 Minutes of 2021 Council Meeting – Available on the WCPF website
- 4 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on Agenda
- 5 Financial Statement
- 6 Committee Members Reports - Q & A Session
(Reports will be available in advance on the WCPF website)
- 7 Any Other Business, to be notified in advance to
secretary.wcpf@gmail.com

KNIGHTSHAYES TROPHY

“Simplicity”

Judged by the President

Zoom Log In for WCPF Council Meeting & Knightshayes Trophy Judging

Time: Mar 5, 2022 09:30 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86822533063?pwd=bHE3YVZ4VmJMRIp5dE5DL0xLS0xGQT09>

Meeting ID: 868 2253 3063

Passcode: 086434

This will be judged by Nick Bodle, President of the WCPF who has chosen set subject “Simplicity” to win the Knightshayes Trophy for a year. We have had nearly 200 entries to this popular event this year.

Please note that the afternoon talk by Robert Harvey ARPS EFIAP CEnv CSci MCIWEM, based upon his latest book “Britain's Best Landscapes and How to Photograph Them”, Web Site <https://www.naturalworldphotography.net>, has been postponed to the AGM on Saturday 8th October as Robert is keen to give his talk at a live event. There will be no afternoon Zoom talk after the Council meeting and Knightshayes judging.

Martyn's Ramblings Part 2

Following on from last week's personal commentary about comps, judging and what to do/watch out for, a few more thoughts have entered my head, dangerous though I know. These were precipitated, in part, by watching Colin Walls's excellent judging last Thursday at Cheltenham. Colin is a very conscientious and thoughtful judge and is always looking for ways to improve images which he passes on during judging. Very direct and "hands on". Here goes:

The Set Subject "Brief"

Who hasn't been caught out by a judge's, sometimes weird, interpretation of the Set Subject "Brief" in judging an image? In Cirencester, we do try to clarify the definition of the Brief if there's potential ambiguity and pass this onto the judge but of course a judge may still take a different view even if he/she doesn't express it. The Set Subject in last week's Cheltenham Comp was "Town". A pretty wide term you might think. However, Colin was quite strict in his interpretation for the Advanced member entries in looking for "Town" to be at the centre of the narrative. A pivotal element in the image. "Town" had to be clearly demonstrated. Buildings and people are pretty essential ingredients and make a good start. So, two old ladies sitting on a bench in front of a shop might be in a town but wouldn't score highly as not being very "towny", neither would a shot of London Bridge from the centre of another Thames bridge where the narrative of the image is essentially centred on the Thames. Ditto Gloucester Docks at night where water dominates the wonderful reflections but is not really very "Towny". The message is clear - think carefully about the brief and what it's trying to convey. Don't make the Brief Set Subject tangential to the composition of your image. It's very easy to persuade yourself in the wrong direction by thinking that you comply with the brief particularly if you like your image. I've fallen foul in the past.

Pinstripe borders

Although it's by no means impossible to add a pinstripe to a printed image, this does require very accurate mount cutting to achieve the desired effect. In DPI's, particularly mono, adding a pinstripe border is much easier to do. A pinstripe border around a mono image can be very effective in "lifting" the image to help focus the reader particularly where the image edge is indecipherable from a black background. Here's a few tips:

1. Do not make the pixel border too thick otherwise it can be very distracting. You just end up looking at a white square or rectangle! This is a common fault. A maximum of 3 pixels thick is plenty for most situations. Even a one-pixel border can be effective.
2. Do not use a white border (mono or colour images) as it can look too stark. Use the (Photoshop) eyedropper to sample an off-white shade or muted colour found

in the image to make the border colour more subtle whilst still achieving its aim to frame and “lift” the image.

3. Make sure that the border’s pixel thickness is counted in the 1600x1200 comp pixel image size. Not 1603x1203. You can do this in Photoshop.

Vignetting

Vignetting the image corners is a very effective way of drawing the eye into the image particularly where it has a strong reference point. A vignette can be black or white although the former is far more common. Once again it’s about being subtle in using the tool. Sometimes it’s best to do it, go off and make a cup of tea, and then come back with a fresh pair of eyes. The most effective vignette is the one where you really have to look to see it yet, strangely, your eye is drawn into the image as a result. Just don’t make it look like the end of a Tom & Jerry cartoon!

Contrast - make a cup of tea!

It’s surprising how often a great image composition is let down by over or under exposed elements within the image. This is another case of giving your fantastic image a rest - let’s face it, you’ve probably been staring at it for two hours fiddling and diddling. Wood from the trees springs to mind. So, take some time out, have a cup of tea and give your eyes a rest. When you come back, start looking at potentially detracting elements - is something too bright that can easily be toned down? Have you lost detail in the shadows which is very easy to recover? It’s not only that you’ve missed something but have you ever come back to an image and thought that someone’s been fiddling with your screen brightness? It’s almost certainly your eyes needing to readjust. Another reason for taking a “time out” to reassess later. You can always spot things you hadn’t seen before, second time around.

Mono processing

An image taken in Raw in B & W will always retain the RGB colour information in the camera even if you’ve set the camera to B & W. JPEG’s however will stay permanently as B & W if this mode is set in the camera. In general it’s best to take pictures in colour in Raw and process in B & W later but viewing a potential B & W image in the Camera’s viewfinder in real time can help you “see” how greyscale is interpreted. Some mono photographers do this permanently. In general, the best way to process a Raw colour image in B & W is to use the B & W button in Photoshop or Lightroom (and other image processing software). Do not use the “Desaturation” slider which outwardly can create the same effect. This is because you have more capacity to manipulate the B & W grey shades (which were colour shades) from an image created by using the B & W button but not if the image has been created by the desaturation slider. Colour “popping” however is a different process (and now getting a bit “last week”!)

Mono contrast - don't go "flat"

A colour image converted to black & white (as referred to above) in Photoshop nearly always looks "flat" if no other processing occurs. This is when the range of grey shades in the image appear to merge with the effect of diminishing the impact of different grey shades in the composition. The software simply interprets and links the greyscale range in the image to the 256 shades of grey in the histogram. "Flat" mono images are easy to spot and generally get marked down in competitions - unless the intention is clearly there to create a "soft" scene because of the subject matter. In most cases processing a mono is needed. So, if you do nothing else to your B & W image, try sliding the "contrast" button to the right a little and you will immediately give the image more "punch" which will bring it to life by giving greater definition to each of the grey shades. The same is true of colour but to a less extent as your eyes tend to take the colour gamut for granted. All the other tools in the "basic" develop toolbar (Lightroom and Photoshop) effectively work on expanding the dynamic range of the image - the secret is to not overdo it.

A bit of culture for you.

Just to widen your cultural horizons, you just might be interested in this upcoming auction of surrealist photographs including what may well be the most valuable photograph ever to be auctioned to date by surrealist photographer Man Ray. (Link below). All I can say is, keep your eyes peeled at your next car boot sale. You never know what you might find. As for the 1924 "Le Violon d'Ingres" image by surrealist photographer Man Ray to be auctioned, I don't know about you but this just might be the inspiration for another of Mike Cheeseman's music influenced images for his growing ARPS portfolio. Volunteers anybody? I'm sure he'll offer the budding model a % share of the £4m proceeds if he goes on to sell it!! Take a look:

<https://www.christies.com/about-us/press-archive/details?PressReleaseID=10366&lid=1>

"I Love Oxfordshire" photography competition

This is an interesting one which has popped up on the grapevine. The world-renowned British photographer, Rankin, has just been announced as the judge for the **"I love Oxfordshire Winter Photography Competition 2022"**. He's shot everyone from Kate Moss to David Bowie, Madonna and even the Queen, and now the infamous photographer will help select his three favourite images in this brand new competition. "I love Oxfordshire" is a website launched as a reaction to the pandemic and acts as a platform for charities, social enterprises, sustainable businesses and individuals who are able to create free listings and raise awareness of their initiatives. Entry to the competition is free and open to anyone aged 15 and over. Rankin recently acted as a mentor and host on the BBC TV series "Great British Photography Challenge" where six amateur photographers took on challenges hoping to be crowned the winner. With Rankin's name attached

to the Oxford competition, both experienced photographers and complete beginners have shown interest, hoping to tell a story and capture a moment in time. Entry to the competition closes on 28 February 2022 and winners will be announced on 20 March.

As we have “Winter” as our next Comp Set Subject, (coincidentally our comp E and “I Love Oxfordshire” being on the same submission date - 28th Feb), perhaps you’ve already got one taken in Oxfordshire which you can use to kill two birds with one stone. Here’s a link to the comp website:

<https://iloveoxfordshire.com/enter-iloveoxf-com-photo-competition-rankin-to-judge/>

BBC Pictures

Another selection from the BBC’s news website.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-60428222>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-60346869>

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

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-60414123>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-60390827>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-60429635>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-london-60471272>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-60455065>

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

Character, like a photograph, develops in darkness - Yousuf Karsh

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.