



Viewfinder

September 2017



Intro:

Welcome to the first edition of Viewfinder for the 2017-18 season. I hope that members have enjoyed the summer months and that everyone has been able to give the shutter button finger lots of exercise! Thank you to those members who contributed to, and/or commented on, the final edition of the previous season in June.

Philip

News & Info:

The Venue:

The beginning of this new season also marks the start of a new era in the life of HHPS. After over 40 years of meetings in the Hemel Hempstead Old Town Hall, and due to circumstances beyond our control, we have moved into a new venue at the Salvation Army Hall. We were given very short notice to move all our equipment out of the OTH, and so we needed to find another suitable venue. Various options were explored but none of them was able to allow the Society to have some suitable storage space for all the gear that is required for our regular meetings, except for the SA.

Over the summer period, several members (mainly from the committee) have worked very hard to move all our equipment, first into a rented storage unit on the industrial estate, and subsequently into our storeroom at the new meeting place. They all deserve our sincere thanks for enabling the Society to continue and the new season to start on time. However, there must be a special mention of the sterling work of our new Chairman, Vince Stone, and our Treasurer, Brain Howard, as it seems very fair to say that they bore the bulk of the mental and physical stresses of the whole process.

It is actually good to be centrally located in the town, and therefore not difficult for visitors to find, and there appears to be adequate free parking around the area during the evenings. Although it is sad to lose the environment of the theatre at the OTH, our first few meetings in the SA hall, other than a few equipment gremlins, seem to have progressed quite well, and we can continue to enjoy another successful season for the HHPS.

Monday Meetings:

The first Monday meeting of September began with the **Annual Awards Presentation** for the activities of 2016-17 season. The Chairman, Vince Stone, presented the certificates and trophies to the winners of the various leagues and categories, as listed in the June Viewfinder.

In the second Monday meeting, three of our members gave presentations to explain how they produced their winning images. Cathy Stamp spoke about her use of wild-life trips along with an expert guide and hiring powerful lenses, to capture her wonderful close-ups mainly of birds in the wild. Sophie Saunders described how she produced her lovely natural light portrait of Deborah, and also her amazing effort and workflow involved in creating her image of The Shroud. Finally John Humphreys gave an enlightening talk on how to take close-up photos, this including macro photography, i.e. images of 1:1 subject magnification or greater on the sensor. Many thanks to them for this interesting session and for showing us some more of their excellent images.

The third Monday meeting was the **First Projected Image League Competition**. As usual, we enjoyed a pleasant evening viewing lots of wonderful images, mostly digital, but also a small number of film slides, with a wide variety of subjects. We gave our thanks to the judge, Barbara Lyddiatt, for coming along to assess the 52 entries from 26 members, and for her interesting comments and suggestions about them. The results were recorded by our Projectionist and P.I. Competition Secretary, Richard Anthony, and they are presented here on Pages 6 & 7.

The final Monday meeting of the month was for us to consider three of the shooting modes common to most modern digital cameras - Aperture Priority (A or Av), Shutter Speed Priority (S or Tv), and Manual Mode (M). Philip Byford described the meaning of the aperture values, and showed examples of how they influence the depth of field in an image, wider apertures separating subject from surroundings, by creating more blur in front of and behind the point of focus. Vince Stone incorporated his passion for photographing planes at air shows into his presentation, which was about the need to prioritise shutter speed when taking photos of moving objects, showing us lots of images of both propeller driven and jet-engined flying machines to illustrate the Tv effects. Finally John Marshall spoke about the measurement of light in photography, using a separate light meter in preference to the one built into the camera, and taking full control of both aperture and time values in using the light correctly to record the image.

Reminders:

The HHPS 80th Anniversary Lecture - Will Cheung:

This important event is scheduled on the calendar for the evening of Friday the 17th of November, and will take place at the Bennetts End Community Centre, Gatecroft, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9LZ. Tickets will cost £10, but HHPS members can buy them from the Secretary, Brian Howard, at a reduced price of £7.50 up to the end of October. So bring your payments along to the Monday meeting!

Storage:

HHPS has been very fortunate to be allowed storage space at the Salvation Army Hall, but we still have quite a number of Society items in a storage unit at Blue Box along Maylands Avenue. As we cannot afford to go on indefinitely paying rent for that, we need to find alternative places for those items. Several members have already offered storage spaces in their homes for some of them, but more are still needed. If you are able to help in this regard, please contact the Chairman, Vince Stone. Thank you.

Philip

Images:

This month we have some of the images from the Annual Exhibition Commentary:

'Car Park in Watford' by Peter Cotton (P.I. Section B):



This is typical of what I call my opportunistic photographs. This car park I have often used in the middle of Watford and love the shapes and curves and dead space it creates. I have always wanted to take this shot and the occasion presented itself when there was a queue on the up ramps.

This shot is taken with my iPhone 6E (as are a lot of my photographs) on square photo format setting, and other than tightening the crop I haven't done anything else to it

'Ladybird' by Steve Jones (P.I. Section C):

This was captured with a Fuji X-T1 (which has an APS-C sensor) and an 18-135mm lens.

It was taken hand-held in my garden, in the late afternoon, probably at about 100mm, with a wide-open f-stop to get the depth of field to make it stand out from the background.

Very little was done to it post processing.



'Graham Port Casks' by Ted Sponder (Colour Print Section B):



Whilst on holiday in Portugal, I visited the Graham Port Cellar where we were able to take photographs but without using flash.

This photograph was taken on a Nikon 1 V2 (with a 1 inch sensor) using a 10-30mm Lens. The camera was hand-held, exposure being f/4.5 at 1/4 sec and ISO 800. To steady the camera, I braced myself against a pillar.

The image was processed using Nikon Capture NX2, changing the colour balance, cropping and straightening.

'Tennyson's monument' by Richard Anthony (Colour Print Section C):



This is at The Needles Headland, Tennyson Down, on the Isle of Wight. I walked up the coast path from Freshwater Bay, and could see the Monument against the sky, seemingly at the top of the next rise. I reached the top of the rise and, low and behold, it seemed to be at the top of the next one!! Eventually I made it to the Monument, enjoying a panoramic view of most of the Island along the way (and on the way back). I looked for a 'non-conventional' shot which avoided including the other visitors.

I used a Sony Alpha SLT-A65V (DSLR with APS-C sensor) hand-held, set at ISO 400 and spot metering, and a Tamron 18-270mm zoom lens at 18mm. I took the shot as a silhouette but later decided I wanted some detail in the Monument. I need to get into the habit of exploring more photographic opportunities than I currently do, for example, in this instance I should have also tried taking non-silhouette shots.

For processing I used both Snapseed and Lightroom, and also opened the JPEG file in the Camera Raw module in Photoshop Elements where I managed to recover some details.

'Haiti Sunset' by John Humphrey (Colour Print Section A):



The picture was a seascape taken just as the sun was setting.

The camera was a Panasonic FZ1000 Bridge camera set at 25mm focal length (full frame equivalent), ISO 125, aperture f/2.8, and shutter speed 1/600 sec.

Initial corrections were to increase the contrast and colour saturation to give the picture more impact. I then changed the aspect ratio of the image by compressing the

sea and the sky to make it more of a panorama. The final change was to add an extreme texture effect by applying a displacement map based on a separate image of tree bark.

'Harvest Time' by Steve Jones (Mono Print Section C):

This was also captured hand-held with my Fuji X-T1 with 18-135mm lens. The camera was set at ISO 200, the zoom lens being at mid-range and small aperture, to give good detail and depth of field.

The processing involved a small crop and some fine adjustments to the levels and contrast in Lightroom.



'Corfe Station' by Philip Byford (Mono Print Section B):



This is along the Swanage Heritage Line, which runs between Swanage and Norden. The picture was taken hand-held from the right hand side of the railway footbridge, enabling the inclusion of the Corfe Castle ruins in the background.

The camera was a Pentax K-5IIs at ISO 200 with a 20-40mm zoom lens at 26mm and f/4.5 in Av Mode, giving a shutter speed of 1/500s.

It was an overcast day so the light was rather flat. The image looked OK in colour but I think it is better in the mono conversion, for which I used Nik Silver Efex to increase the contrast and structure, with some extra tweaks applied in PaintShop Pro.

Projected Images											
Group C											
Name	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4		Round 5		Total
BARLOW Dennis	18	20									38
GEENE Linda van	16	17									33
HOWARD Brian	18	15									33
MITCHELL Mike	17	17									34
STONE Vincent	16	14									30
TURNER Jim	20	18									38
WILLIAMS Emyr	15	14									29
Group B											
Name	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4		Round 5		Total
BALLARD Steve	15	16									31
BYFORD Philip	16	16									32
COTTON Peter	16	17									33
GUEST David	17	16									33
HUTCHINSON Graham	16	16									32
LINDSEY Graham	17	15									32
McDOWALL Mary	17	15									32
MOORE Hilary	20	17									37
WINSLOW Paul	15	18									33
Group A											
Name	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4		Round 5		Total
ANTHONY Richard	20	19									39
HARLEY Rob	18	19									37
HUMPHREY John	17	18									35
JONES Steven	18	16									34
JORIMANN Uily	17	17									34
MARSHALL John	18	19									37
McCRACKEN James	17	17									34
SHAW Ian	17	16									33
SMITH Ron	19	18									37
STAMP Cathy	17	18									35

Competition	Judge	Group	Position	Score	Name	Image Title
1st Projected Image 18/09/17	Barbara Lyddiatt	C	1st=	20	Dennis Barlow	Cormorant Family Tree
			1st=	20	Jim Turner	Saturday Afternoon in Xi'an
			3rd=	18	Dennis Barlow	Derwent Water
			3rd=	18	Brian Howard	Dahlia
			3rd=	18	Jim Turner	The Mystery of Time
		B	1st	20	Hilary Moore	Sleeping Tiger Symmetry
			2nd	18	Paul Winslow	On Yer Bike
			3rd=	17	Peter Cotton	A Perfect Specimen
			3rd=	17	Graham Lindsey	The Arch Window
			3rd=	17	Mary McDowall	Low Tide at Wells
		A	3rd=	17	Hilary Moore	Flower Shower
			1st	20	Richard Anthony	Geranium
			2nd=	19	Richard Anthony	Flour Sprinkler
			2nd=	19	Rob Harley	Gearing Up to Go on Stage
			2nd=	19	John Marshall	Why Does the Phone Always Ring When...?
		2nd=	19	Ron Smith	Maple Colours	

P.S.

Spring Cleaning?

Spring is the season when it is a tradition to have a clean-up in the home. However, the calendar summer could be considered to be the HHPs winter, so the current period is our photography spring, and so it might be an appropriate time to mention cleaning! It was the following events that prompted this awfully tenuous introduction to the first of 'Philip's Snippets'!

At the end of July, I stopped the car at the side of a country lane just north of Berkhamsted to practice some landscape shots. I usually use f/5.6 or f/8, but I wanted a huge depth of field so I set the lens to f/22. Later that day, when I viewed the images on the PC monitor, I was horrified to see the state of the sensor - specks and spots all over the sky! The image on the right is cropped from one of the photos.



Never having seen this problem before (apparently it can go unnoticed at larger apertures), I did as usual and searched the Web for guidance. It seemed that to get the sensor cleaned would cost many times what the local team charge to wash and dry the car. However, having seen them at work, handing over the camera to them didn't appear to be a sensible option, so I tried searching YouTube for a D.I.Y. approach.

After watching several videos, I decided to buy the correct gear to attempt the job (a blower, cleaning swabs, and optic fluid, from Amazon), and I nervously followed the instructions. To my surprise and delight, after two cleaning cycles there was not a mark to be seen on the sensor and it still actually worked perfectly!

So, my initial fears of ever daring to touch the 'retina' of the camera proved to be unfounded, and I can now make a recommendation to those of you with interchangeable lens cameras: If you find spots on your images (often called 'dust bunnies'), rather than spending time having to clone them out on every image, or spending excessive charges for a technician to do the cleaning, view some YouTube videos of the procedure and have a go yourself. You will need an air blower (a squeezy, not the aerosol type) and cleaning swabs of the correct size for your camera's sensor. The cleaning fluid is necessary only if there are stubborn spots - I did not need to use it on this occasion.



Batteries:

Ever since starting this hobby about 5 years ago, I have carried a couple of spare lithium camera batteries in my shoulder bag, along with everything else but the kitchen sink. It soon became apparent that, after replacing a camera battery with one of the spares, sometimes I could not remember which one in the bag was discharged. Since then, I have always applied this method:

The spares are kept in small polythene bags, to prevent the contacts shorting out on anything else in the shoulder bag. They are secured with a rubber band - end-to-end over the contacts for a fully charged battery, and at right angles across the battery when discharged. It might seem daft to some but it's helpful to me anyway!

Fully Charged



Discharged



If you have any odd photography tricks that might be of interest or help to someone, please see below!

Philip

Contributions:

If you have any stories to share, or some useful hints and tips to pass on to other members, please think of Viewfinder. Maybe you have an image that tells a story, demonstrates a photographic technique or the use of a much-loved piece of equipment. If there is anything that you would like to describe or explain for the members, you might consider producing something for inclusion in a future Viewfinder. In particular, it would be great to have something to interest and challenge the more advanced members.

If you have anything to contribute, please email using the address in the footer, or see me on a Monday evening. Please keep those articles flowing in! Thank you.

Philip

And finally, I haven't found the origin of this quote, but it is perhaps worth bearing in mind as we go through another season of competitions: "The only photographer with whom you should compare yourself, is the one you used to be."
