



Viewfinder



May 2017

Intro:

Welcome to the May edition of Viewfinder. Thank you to those members who contributed to, or commented on, the April issue. The Society's activities were more limited in May, as there were two Monday Bank Holidays, and the remaining Monday meetings were devoted to competitions.

Philip

News & Info:

Monday Meetings:

The first meeting of May was our 5th Projected Image League Competition, and we are grateful to Terry Coffey for coming along to judge the 48 images entered by 24 members. We thank him for giving his constructive comments on each image, and for awarding the marks recorded by the Projected Images Competition Secretary, Richard Anthony - see the results on Pages 5 and 6.

The second meeting was the first of the three special competitions this month - the **Landscape Projected Image Competition**. This proved to be popular for a themed competition, drawing a big entry of 81 images from 19 members, so that it was quite a struggle to finish on time! For achieving this we are most grateful both to the judge Mark Buckley-Sharp for his interesting, helpful and concise commentary, and also to Richard Anthony, the Projectionist and Competition Secretary. The top scores were:

Joint 1st: 'Filtered Bluebells' by Ian Shaw and 'Haiti Sunset' by John Humphrey, both scored 20
Joint 3rd: 'Frosty Ashridge' and 'Moonlight over Bovisand', both by Hilary Moore, and 'Malham Cove' by Ron Smith, each scored 19.

In the third meeting of May we had the other two special competitions, both quite well supported - **Triple Format Portfolio** - one colour print (C), one mono print (M) and one projected image (P), each of different genre, and **People Photography Projected Images**. Ron Tear came along to judge both competitions, and we thank him for his comments and assessments. Thanks also to Cathy Stamp and Richard Anthony for organising and presenting the photos. The accolades went to:

Triple Format:

1st: Rob Harley - 'Incense in the light'(C), 'Enjoying the shoot'(M), and 'Urban detail'(P)
2nd: John Marshall - 'Spider Woman'(C), 'Whitby whale bones'(M), and 'Puff Ball'(P)
3rd: John Marshall - 'Erythronium'(C), 'A long smoke'(M), and 'Blue Morpho'(P)

Highly Commended:

Linda van Geene - 'In need of TLC'(C), 'The Invisible Man'(M), and 'Toothache'(P)
Steve Jones - 'One last weed'(C), 'A country churchyard'(M), and 'Are you looking at me?'(P)
Paul Winslow - 'A day at the museum'(C), 'Misty waters'(M), and 'When I'm calling you'(P)

People Photography:

1st: Sophie Saunders - 'Reading in the drawing room'
2nd: Rob Harley - 'Gearing up to go on stage'
3rd: Sophie Saunders - 'Under the bridge'

Highly Commended:

Sophie Saunders - 'On the railway bridge'
Steve Jones - 'Did you see that?'
Paul Winslow - 'Best mates'

Reminders:

The AGM

This will take place on Monday the 12th of June, so any item members want discussed at the AGM must be notified to Richard Anthony, the Interim Secretary, by Monday the 29th of May (HHPS rules state that they must be 'registered' 14 days before the meeting).

Trophies

Time passes quickly and we have come round again to the time of year when those who were awarded trophies for last season's photography should return them to Brian Howard.

Prints

Please remember that if you have some mounted prints that you can spare for a while, more are still needed for both display in various local locations, e.g. health centres, where the small exhibitions there are part of our public presence in the community, and also for storage in an image bank to facilitate an interesting Monday evening activity, in the event of the programmed event having to be cancelled.

Philip

Images:

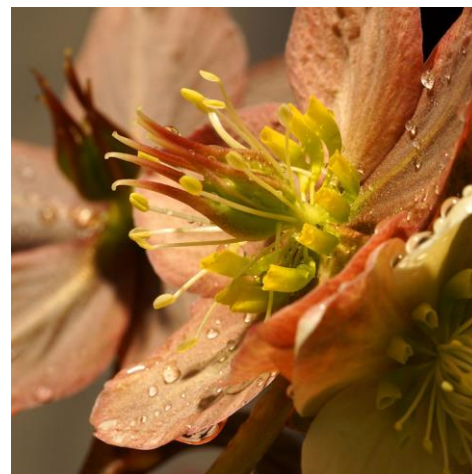
Here are some of the top-scoring images from Round 5 of the League Competitions, with some information about the photos from the authors:

"Hellebore" by Richard Anthony

The image of the hellebore was taken in my garden one sunny morning after overnight rain.

The camera used was a Sony model SLT - A65V with APS-C sensor, fitted with a prime 90 mm Tamron Macro lens and mounted on a tripod. Camera/lens settings were ISO 200, 0.8 sec, and f/11. A reflector was used to bounce some light onto the darker sections of the image.

Using Photoshop Elements 10, the sides of the image were cropped to give a square format and the saturation of the image was increased slightly.



"Tuscan Hills" by John Humphrey



Original:



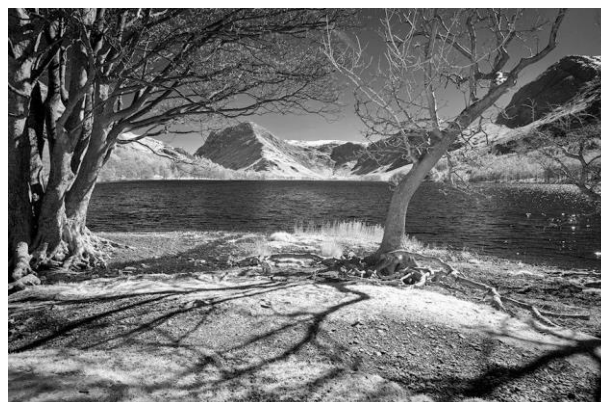
The original picture was taken using my Canon EOS 5D MkII (full frame sensor) with a zoom lens set at around 100mm. ISO was 160 and exposure settings 1/100sec at f/11. Unusually for me, I used a tripod! I left the picture untouched for some time but, on revisiting it, I thought it would have some potential if cropped to lose some of the sky and to reduce the brown foreground, so that there was a leading line in from the bottom left corner. For me, the appeal of the image was the very simple colouring with blue sky and brown fields, so I stripped out some of the detail in the picture using Topaz Simplify blended back into the original. I then increased contrast and reduced colour saturation to give a more 'moody' feel to the image.

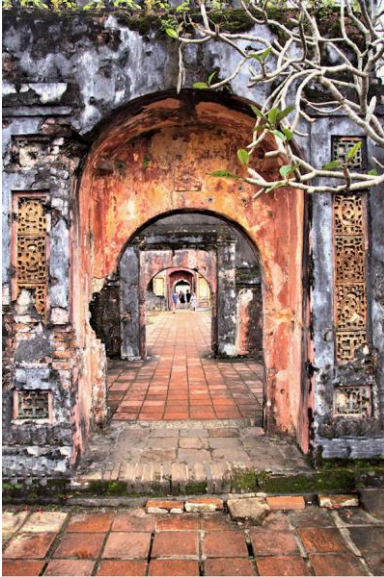
"Buttermere" by Ron Smith

This is Buttermere in the Lake District, taken handheld on a Fuji X-E1 camera converted for Infrared with an 830nm filter fitted to a 16 MP APS-C sensor.

The lens used was a 14mm f/2.8 prime lens. The exposure settings at ISO 640 were 1/125s and f/6.4.

The raw file was processed in Lightroom, with final adjustment made in Silver Efex Pro.





"Temple Gateways" by Mike Mitchell

This was taken on a recent holiday to Vietnam which is a photographer's paradise. The receding line of archways through the gorgeous coloured crumbling brickwork just asked to be photographed and the people in the distanced added to the interest.

It was taken on my Canon 60D with a Tamron 16-300mm lens which I find very convenient for travelling with, as I don't really need to take any other lenses.

I upped the saturation a little bit using PaintShop Pro to bring out the richness of the ochres on the arch.

"Amaryllis" by John Marshall

The image was taken of the house plant on my dining room table. The room has a south facing patio door so this was covered with diffusing material as the day was sunny. A 30cm Sunlite Lastolite reflector was positioned on the opposite side of the flower to the window. A black velvet background was placed behind the flower.

The camera used was a medium format Bronica ETRS_i fitted with a 105mm macro lens and placed on a sturdy tripod. The film used was Fuji Provia 100F and the exposure was 1s at f32 - to maximise depth of field.



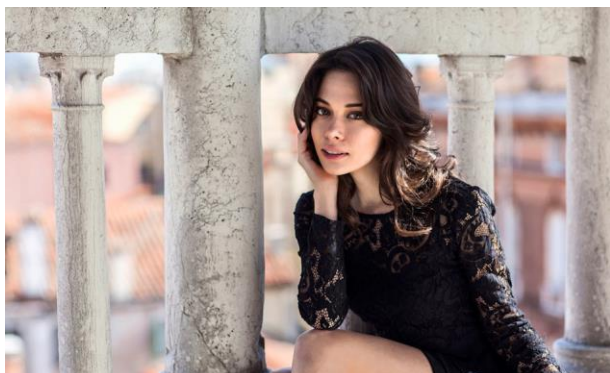
"The Tulip Staircase" by Brian Young



The image was taken in the Queen's House, Greenwich. The "tulips" forming the pattern of the staircase are in fact lilies! This is claimed to be the first spiral staircase in the world not to have a central column, so it was possible to take a photo looking straight up the centre line. I liked the way the light was shining through the patterned ironwork.

The image was taken with a Canon 60D and a wide angle lens at about 18mm, tweaked slightly in Camera Raw and Photoshop. The staircase is reputed to be haunted - there is a famous photo taken by a tourist in the 1960's showing several ghostly hands on the handrail. I resisted the temptation to clone in such embellishments in Photoshop!

'American girl in Venice' by James McCracken



This is a digital image taken with a Canon 5D Mark 2 on Aperture Priority at ISO 250, using a Fixed focal length lens of 85 mm at F2.8 and shutter speed 1/2000s, and Evaluative Metering.

The subject is an American model who was touring Italy (in a very short space of time!!!) and we had only a few hours together in Venice to shoot. It was taken in the natural light of a very bright day, with marked light and shade.

The image was shot at 13:41 on a high shady staircase, with the blurred background provided by the rooftops towards San Marco Piazza.

The camera settings are interesting.....I would not have chosen them but we were shooting very quickly and on this occasion they worked well.....sometimes you get lucky!!! She was a lovely professional model which makes life easier..... shame she is so far away.

League Results -

Round 5 Projected Images:

Competition	Judge	Category	Position	Name	Image Title
5th Projected Image 08/05/2017	Terry Coffey	C	1st=	Ron Smith	At sunrise
			1st=	Ron Smith	Buttermere
			3rd	Alan Reed	Snowdrops
		B	1st	Brian Young	The Tulip Staircase, Queen's House, Greenwich
			2nd=	Paul Winslow	I like the colour yellow
			2nd=	Paul Winslow	Looking through the arch
		A	1st=	John Humphrey	Tuscan Hills
			1st=	John Marshall	Amaryllis
			1st=	James McCracken	American girl in Venice

Projected Image

Group C

Name	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4		Round 5		Total
Ballard - Steve	16	18	17	14	18	15	19	17	15	15	164
Byford - Philip	19	18	16	16	16	14	17	17	16	17	166
Hutchinson - Graham	19	17	15	15	16	17	16	16	17	15	163
Jones - Steven	20	20	14	14	15	17	20	17	17	19	173
Lindsey - Graham			16	14	15	15	16	18	16	18	128
Reed - Alan			14	14			18	16	19	18	99
Smith - Ron	18	17	15	16	15	18	17	19	20	20	175
Stamp - Cathy	19	19	20	18	20	15	20	19	15	15	180
Stone - Vincent	16	17	15	16	15	15	16	18	14	14	156
Walkley Bob	17	20	17	17							71

Group B

Name	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4		Round 5		Total
Daily - Ian	19	19	15	17							70
McDowall - Mary	17	18	15	16	12	15	19	16	16	16	160
Mitchell - Michael	17	18	15	17	14	14			15	16	126
Moore - Hilary	17	20	16	16	15	14	17	16	14	16	161
Winslow - Paul	18	18	16	15	16	16	15	18	17	17	166
Young - Brian	17	19	15		16	16	17	17	18	17	152

Group A

Name	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4		Round 5		Total
Anthony - Richard	15	20	17	15	17	17	17	18	19	16	171
Barlow - Dennis	15	18	16	17							66
Cotton - Peter	19	16	16	14	15	15	20	16	16	18	165
Derbyshire - Tom	17	17									34
Guest - David	15	18	16	20	15	17	17	15			133
Harley - Rob	17	19	17	17	17	19	17	18	16	19	176
Howard - Brian	16	16	15	14	15	14	16	16	18	15	155
Humphrey - John			16	19	17	20	17	19	19	20	147
Jenkins - Alan	16	17	14	14	10	13	16	16			116
Jorrimann - Ully	16	18	19	17	17	18	18	18	16	19	176
Marshall - John	18	20	17	17	13	17	18	18	20	17	175
McCracken - James	17	19	19	14	16	19	19	17	18	20	178
Shaw - Ian	18	18	15	15	19	18	19	20	18	16	176
van Geene - Linda	17	17	14	15	14	15	15	15	15	17	154

P.S.

Difficult exposures:

Concluding this short series on exposure (for those relatively new to digital photography and anyone else interested), is a mention of **dynamic range** (DR). This is the difference between the brightest and darkest parts of the scene. Sometimes the DR exceeds the capabilities of the camera's sensor to record the scene as it appears to the human eye, so we have to accept that some shadow or highlight areas, where our eyes can see detail, will be recorded as pure black or pure white in the image ... or do we? Instead we could use **HDR** (high dynamic range) photography to reveal both shadow and highlight detail.

HDR images might have a Marmite reputation, but this is mainly due to the way that some photographers use the techniques and HDR software to produce almost psychedelic 'LSD trip' impressionistic or abstract images, with extra-strong local contrast, glowing edges, and exaggerated colours. However, in its basic form, HDR photography simply involves taking two (or more) images, separated by different exposure values (EV), so that the shadow details are visible in one (some) and the highlight details in the other(s). The images are then correctly blended together by using image editing software, e.g. Photoshop.

The image capture is easy to set up in the camera, using the **Exposure Bracketing** feature, for which you will need to consult your camera's user-manual and menus. The number of shots taken in a bracketed set is usually 3 or 5, and the EV between the exposures can be set in the menu, e.g. -2 EV, 0 EV, and +2 EV, where 0 EV is the exposure suggested by the camera's meter; exposure compensation can also be used to give, e.g. -3 EV, -1 EV, and +1 EV. On pressing the shutter release button, the camera takes the bracketed shots in rapid succession, so the camera needs to be held still during shooting.

For those who like the camera to do most of the work, many modern digital cameras have an on-board HDR Mode, which I find works quite effectively and I often make use of it. Again, if you are interested, consult your camera's manual. E.g. the following images of Penn Church (Buckinghamshire) were captured recently with a Pentax DSLR:



<<< This was a single shot exposed for the walls of the church, which has caused some darker shadow areas in the foreground and the sky has almost completely blown out.

This was taken hand-held >>> in HDR Mode, set up to bracket 3 shots at -3EV, 0EV, and +3EV. The camera's software (firmware) then took a few seconds first to align and then to combine the 3 images for this result >>> As well as improving realism in the shadow regions, the sky has re-appeared in the image!



For those who shoot in the raw format, it might be possible to apply HDR methods starting from a single exposure. It is possible to adjust parameters in JPEG images, but raw data files have more latitude for post-processing - approximately an extra stop of information is available at each end of the DR.

Dynamic Range is yet another area of the whole topic of exposure that is available for extension or expansion, if one of the more experienced members would like to contribute an article for Viewfinder.

Philip

Stored Digital Images:

Perhaps the recent 'cyber attack' on computer systems around the globe will have been a loud wake-up call, not only for governments, corporations, institutions, and companies, but also for individuals. It is a simple fact that computers, operating systems, stored data, and Web accounts can be vulnerable to abuse by unscrupulous hackers. Therefore a timely reminder can only be worthwhile.

It is likely that many photographers will store their digital image data files - those from the camera and those resulting from post-processing - on the hard disk drive in their desktop or laptop computers. In this form it is already quite insecure, as anyone who has ever experienced a hard drive failure can confirm. Therefore, for anyone for whom their own images are important, a primary consideration must be to backup their data regularly.

It is not difficult to get into the habit of copying new and/or edited image files onto an external USB hard disk drive, and it takes not much more than a few minutes, if done routinely and regularly. The drives are not expensive, e.g. A one terabyte (1000 gigabytes) USB drive costs about £50 from the local Currys/PCWorld, and it will store at least 25,000 photos (originals and edits) from a typical modern DSLR or mirrorless camera. The chances of the computer's drive and the external drive failing at the same time are quite low, so each one is an effective backup of the other should one of them fail. If the USB drive is then hidden, you will still have your data if your computer is stolen.

As either an alternative or as an additional backup storage option, important data files can be saved in an on-line data centre via the Web, i.e. 'Cloud Storage'. A large amount of data can be uploaded, usually for a modest monthly or annual subscription. This method has the advantage that the files are available for download to a portable device - phone or tablet - or to any other computer that you are using, from anywhere that has access to an Internet connection.

To reduce the chances of the computer being hacked and data being stolen, corrupted or encrypted by a malicious attack, it is important to ensure that the operating system, e.g. commonly Microsoft Windows, is updated regularly. The more recent systems do this automatically, nevertheless it is worth checking that 'Updates' are switched on. Further protection, in the form of security software - such as Norton, AVG, Avast, Kaspersky (this is the Which? Best Buy), etc. - can be purchased and installed. Again, this should be updated automatically and regularly.

The third area of security is related to our own computer use. Computers, data access software, email and web accounts, etc., should be protected by strong passwords: they should be difficult for anyone else to guess, at least 8 characters long, and using a mixture of numbers, symbols and letters (some upper and others lower case). E.g. Instead of smith123 it might be 5m1Th_lz3. Also, it is unwise ever to respond to a link in an email if the source of the message is not known to us; the email and its contents could be benign, but there is a risk that it might be an attempt by a hacker to install malicious software onto the computer.

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 doing an article 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. Keep those articles flowing in! Thank you.

Philip

And finally: Neither we nor judges should be overly concerned with rules for photography; here is a quote from the great American photographer Edward Weston - "To consult the rules of composition before making a picture is like consulting the law of gravitation before going for a walk."
