

# Viewfinder

December 2017



## Intro:

Welcome to the final edition of Viewfinder for 2017. Thank you to those members who contributed to, and/or commented on, the previous edition in November. Also, thank you again to all those who, during the past year, have supplied their images along with some interesting details about them, and to those who have contributed articles, to help make Viewfinder what it should be - the monthly journal for members' photography at the HHPS. This month there is the usual spread of content: news and information, more members' high quality images, and recent competition results, together with a report from our Chairman, Vince Stone, and also Part 2 of Landscape Photography from Jimmy McCracken.

Philip

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## News & Info:

There is always a seasonal collection for charity at HHPS, and this year the beneficiary of our donations will be the obvious and highly-deserving recipient - the Salvation Army. Many of you will be aware that the SA is not only a Christian Church, but also a national, well-organised army of employees and volunteers, who act upon their beliefs to give help and support to anyone who is vulnerable, poor, needy, desperate, or homeless. Our collection box will still be available at the first meeting in January, if you have not yet had a chance to contribute. If you want to learn more about the organisation and their work, you can view their web site at: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/about-us>

## Monday Meetings:

The first Monday of the month was the second round competition of the **Mono Print League**. We are grateful to the visiting judge, Jim Nemer, for coming along to critique and assess the images in his usual inimitable style: a mixture of anecdotes and commentary (sometimes with more of the former!). He was obviously impressed by the high standard of the 32 images entered by 16 members, generally giving high marks to all, and holding back nine of these competing for the top scores. Our thanks also go to Richard Anthony and John Marshall for administering the competition, and for reporting and recording the scores which are presented here on pages 11 and 12.

Owing to some of the worst winter weather we have seen in these parts for several years, the second Monday meeting, which was scheduled to be the Third Projected Image League Competition, had to be postponed because of the hazardous conditions on the roads and pavements. It must be Global Warming.

On the third Monday there was the members' social evening. It began with an informal projected images competition, with the subject of Christmas and/or Winter, and images that had been taken previously or on that evening. After viewing all the images projected by Roy Harris, the audience voted the winner to be Richard Anthony for his image of a Sock Sculpture Snowman in the snow. Following the interval, during which we enjoyed Christmas refreshments for which we thank Linda van Geene, there was a fun quiz with sixty multiple-guess questions about photography! This was ably hosted by Quizmaster Brian Young, who not only provided the questions, but also demonstrated his skill in pronouncing several very difficult words and names. The winners were Ullly Jorimann for the ladies and Ron Smith for the gentlemen. Our thanks go to Linda, Brian and Roy for helping to organise a most enjoyable end-of-year event.

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**Reminders:**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Projected Image League Competition:**

This was the one postponed due to bad weather on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December, and it has been rescheduled to take the place of the Film Titles Competition, on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of January.

**The Projected Image Set Subject Competition: 'Film Titles'.**

The details about this competition have previously been sent by email to every member and, more recently, members received another email with the notice that this will now be rescheduled for later in the season, possibly with the People Competition on February 5<sup>th</sup>. This also means that there is more time to enter images for this competition, and any of those already entered may be replaced if you wish.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Colour Print League Competition:**

Please notice on the calendar that the registration deadline for entries to this competition is also on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of January.

Philip

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## **The Chairman's Report:**

It is now three months since the start of this season when we began holding our weekly meetings at the Salvation Army Hall. My impression is that the Society has settled in well to the new meeting space and the resulting routine tasks.

### **Program of Events:**

So far this season there has been an interesting and varied program of events and activities thanks to Mike's planning during last season. The backbone of the season's activities is set against the routine competitions and a range of talks given by both our club experts and also some quite individual external speakers. The quality of the images presented in our competitions has been, as always, of a very high standard and demonstrate a wide variety of styles and interests.

Our speakers have effectively demonstrated that there are very many ways of producing images that are directed towards different markets and viewers. All produce interesting images. All seem to have been well received and helped to motivate and inspire our members.

I feel it is essential to make mention of our 80th anniversary public talk by Will Cheung. Will showed his own unique way of approaching photography and the resulting range of images. I think the main thing to take away from Will's presentation is for all of us not to be afraid of developing our own style. Equally it is important to note that this event was a team effort with input and help coming from all of the committee members. In financial terms the event only just broke even, but it was a fitting celebration of 80 years of photography by the HHPS.

### **Website:**

The difficulties with the website are the biggest problem for the Society at present. After a special meeting to discuss the website problems, I am pleased to say that we are starting to make some progress.

We have agreed that:

- a) We should continue with the current website at present, where possible. Special arrangements have been made to manage competition entries. There are limitations in putting current news and publicity on the site.
- b) We should develop a new website, using easily available software. If required, more than one software package will be used. The emphasis will be on system reliability, cost effectiveness and ease of use.

I am delighted to report that many members have made an input to date and that Roy Harris is well on the way to producing a new website. We hope this will be able to be fully commissioned within the first quarter of next year.

### **Membership Numbers:**

The Society has lost a number of members through various causes contributing to natural wastage. It is a necessary ongoing activity to recruit new members. It seems that other local camera clubs are losing members. This is despite the fact that with the rise of mobile phone usage, most of us carry a camera in our pocket.

The standard methods of publicity are ongoing with posters and leaflets in all the regular locations. The annual exhibition was postponed due to the upheaval from changing meeting venues and equipment storage problems. I hope we can organise an annual exhibition to be held in the coming months and therefore show off our good work with the objective of encouraging new members to join and take advantage of the summer months to produce pictures for entry into next year's competitions and exhibition.

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## **Studio Group:**

I am hoping that we can re-establish the Studio Group within the society. There are shoots planned using facilities in Berkhamsted and Watford. At present, while we are still feeling our way, I am reluctant to do anything that may damage our relationship with the Salvation Army. I hope we can, in due course, hold the occasional HHPS studio session at the Salvation Army hall, but we need to tread carefully at present; I will not sanction any action that is going to put our current weekly meeting place at risk. In the meantime we will make use of external venues.

We need to encourage more members to attend these events. It is clear that when we hold club sessions where members can bring in and use their cameras, the sessions are well attended and appreciated.

It is important to continually emphasise that Studio Group sessions are not the sole domain of the male membership and also that such sessions do not solely involve taking pictures of models. Still life and other genres have a place within the Studio Group activities.

## **Committee Membership:**

The unplanned events of the last few months have underlined the need for more members to step up and take on roles within the committee.

I am grateful to Brian Young stepping into the breach created by Mike Mitchell's health problems. Additionally, Roy Harris has stepped in to try and resolve the website issues. Similarly, Richard Anthony is performing the dual roles of Committee Secretary and two of the three Competition Secretary roles. I am also mindful that the post of Vice Chairman is still vacant.

Taking an overview it is clear that, in terms of the management and direction of the Society we are very vulnerable; we need more members to help.

## **Conclusions:**

The society is surviving and has the potential to move forward and grow. I am optimistic that, providing we do not suffer any more major problems in the coming months, the security of the society will improve.

We need to cultivate a stronger public image and continually seek to increase our membership.

We can move forward into 2018 with optimism.

Vince Stone

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## Images:

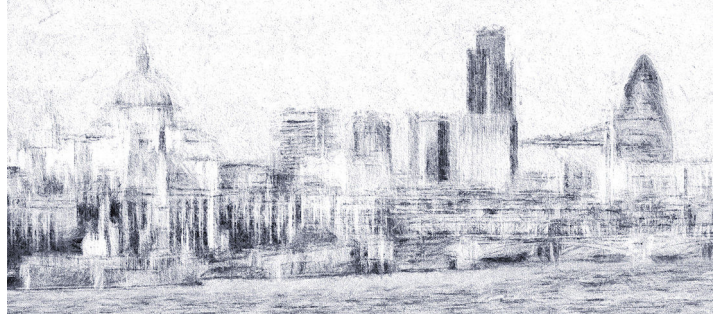
This month, here are some of the top-scoring images from the first and second rounds of the Monochrome Print League Competition, along with some information about them provided by the photographers:

### 'London Skyline' by John Humphrey:

This is a picture taken from London Bridge with Photoshop manipulation. The starting picture was acceptable but not very distinctive. Many people take this exact picture from this spot, so I wanted to make it a bit more personal.

The main changes were to convert to black and white, increase contrast, selectively add motion blur, add texture with a displacement map, and add noise. Although this required several steps, none were particularly complicated.

The original picture was taken with a Canon 5D Mk III (full-frame), using a zoom lens at 28mm. The image capture settings were ISO 200, aperture f/8, and shutter speed 1/100 sec.



### 'Alan in Character' by John Marshall:

This was taken using a Bronica ETRSi medium format camera on a tripod, and with a 100-220 mm zoom lens. The film used was Kodak Tri-X (ISO 400) which was processed in Xtol developer. The print was made on bromide paper (commercial).

The picture was taken at a club Studio Group session. The studio flash lighting was deliberately "hard" from the left, with a soft fill light from the front and a hair light.

The exposure was at f/11 and 1/60 second although, of course, the shutter speed could have been anything, as the exposure was governed by the flash head settings!

### 'Pulling Out' by Brian Howard:

This was taken at Strathspey Steam Railway which is part of the Aviemore Railway system; it runs parallel to the main line.

I used a Sony A77 mark 2 DSLR camera, hand-held and set to ISO 200 and Aperture Priority Mode. The lens was an 18-70mm zoom which I use for most of my photos that are not really close up or macro. It was set at about 35mm and aperture f/14; the shutter speed set by the camera was 1/250 sec.



I processed the image using Lightroom 4 and Photoshop Elements 14.

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### 'Cheetah' by Dennis Barlow:

I had taken my grandson to Whipsnade Zoo after school, for him to practice his photography on the cheetahs. They were quite active and moving quickly around their enclosure. My grandson seemed to be coping well so I took advantage of the situation to try my new lens. The photograph was taken quite late in the day (around 5:00pm) and the lighting was rather flat.

The image capture details are:

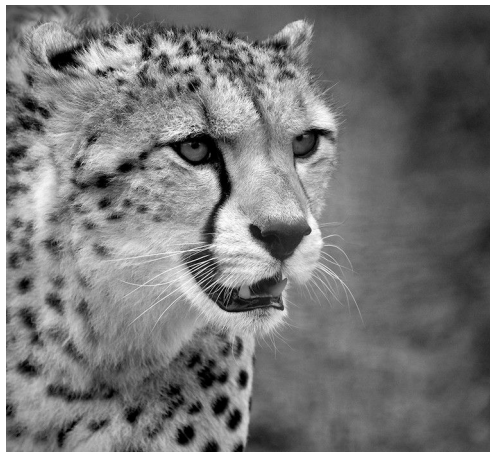
Camera: Fujifilm XT2 (CSC with APS-C sensor), shooting in RAW and JPEG, and hand-held at ISO 2500 and 1/500 Sec.

Lens: Fujifilm 100-400 f/4.5-5.6, set at 400 mm (600mm full-frame equivalent) and aperture f/8; Image Stabilisation set for random movement.

Exposure: Aperture priority, auto white balance, single spot Auto Focus.

The image was converted to black and white using Topaz B&W version 2, cropped and tonal range adjusted, and eyes lightened slightly (the judge commented that he'd like to have seen them lightened more). It was printed using a Canon Pixma Pro 1 with Permajet Oyster paper using the Permajet printer profile.

Whipsnade Zoo is a great place to practice animal photography - with or without a grandson!



### 'Flag, Golan Heights' by David Guest:

This was taken at the Regiment 77 Memorial Site on the Golan Heights, about 1 km from the Syrian Border.

There was a wind blowing, and the shutter speed was chosen to show the motion in the flag.

The differential focus gives an impression of distance, both physically and terms of history.

The camera used was a Nikon D300 DSLR (APS-C sensor), set at an ISO value of 200.

The lens attached was a Nikon 28-120 mm zoom lens set at 110 mm.

The exposure settings used were 1/125 sec at an aperture of f/14.

### 'I Do Not Tu-wit or Tu-woo' by Hilary Moore:

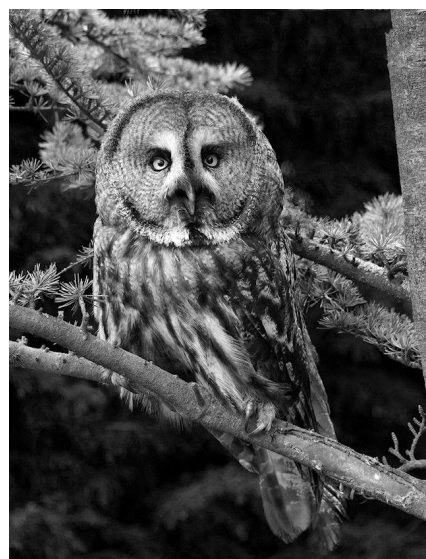
This is a Great Grey Owl that likes to sit quietly up trees and watch the world go by. Just right for taking photos! If it does get annoyed then it will growl.

It was taken on a fantastic Bird of Prey day run by John Wright. He and his wife run 'Photographers on Safari' often advertised in camera magazines. If you get the chance to attend one of his courses you will not be disappointed. He is quietly amazing.

The camera used was a Nikon D800 set at an ISO value of 1250, with a Nikon 28-300mm zoom lens at 160mm, and the shot was taken hand-held.

The exposure was at aperture f/6.3 and shutter speed 1/160 sec, with an exposure bias of +0.3

In Photoshop I changed the image to mono, got rid of some intrusive background, and then sharpened it.



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## 'Feeling Wistful' by Vince Stone:

This image was captured at a studio group session in May 2017 at the Old Town Hall. As I recall, I was the first to shoot, and this was one of my warm-up shots. I put this image aside with the intention of working on it in Photoshop; it was then neglected until recently when I needed images for this season's competitions.

When I started working on the image it became obvious to me that it really didn't need any adjustment at all, so what you see is straight out of the camera, simply converted to monochrome by adjusting the saturation - the only manipulation required. I made the decision to get the image printed at A3 size and hoped that it would be acceptable. I was pleasantly surprised with the result!

The camera used was a Canon 5D Mark III with a full-frame sensor, set at ISO 100.

The lens: a Canon EF 28-135mm zoom lens at 53mm, with a UV filter attached.

The exposure settings were 1/125 sec at f/13.

I used a tripod for this shot and a remote control shutter release.

The key light with a large softbox was forward and to the right of the model, Holly. A smaller fill striplight was forward and to her left. A hairlight with a grid was also set above and slightly behind her. The backdrop was illuminated with two brolly lights, set wide and behind Holly.

I am always aware that the success of each studio image is the result of a collaboration between the model and the photographer. There is no doubt that Holly is beautiful and a master of her trade. There was very little direction required from me. That's why so many photographers regularly want to work with her. I hope I can work with her again very soon.....



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## Landscape Photography Part 2 by Jimmy McCracken

Hello again. In this article I would like to follow on from the basics of the genre, into the less technical and more hands and minds on aspects of finding and recording rewarding landscapes.

I'm sure you have heard this before but it's fundamental: it is said that there are only two times of day to take top quality landscapes. When those times have everything right they are sublime, but they are very elusive and require patience and perseverance:

(1) The hour of sunrise and just beyond, and make sure you are there knowing where you want to shoot from and in good time - no rushing to get the camera set up on the tripod and fiddling with the settings, while the gorgeous first light sweeps tantalisingly over your location, unrecorded !!!

Weather forecasts from the night before are helpful but obviously only a guideline, and if in doubt give it a go - clouds and mist come and go and we all need that bit of luck - but if we are never there ???.....

(2) Just before sunset and beyond, and this is a little easier to predict. The same principles apply but many people leave when the sun dips below the horizon, although staying around for the next half hour or so often results in some lovely atmospheric images in the fading light, with our good old tripod, ever-lengthening shutter speeds, but retaining our f/16 aperture and 100 ISO camera settings.

Of course how often do we have the freedom and weather to shoot at those times of day???... So realistically we have to make do with what we have in front of the lens.

Here with the sun ever rising or setting, and reducing the low-angled light of sunrise or sunset, we can look towards cloudy skies to give us some quality of light, shade, and modeling within our image - again a waiting game but a little more predictable.

Just a quick word on the rule of thirds in landscapes: more often than not 2/3rds land 1/3rd sky but, when the sky is more interesting than the land, reverse the proportions. Like many photographic rules, it is there to be broken (providing you know it!!!).

Let's look at and comment upon a few images:

### 1. First Light:

Aperture f/16, ISO 100, Shutter speed 0.3 sec evaluative metering, raw + JPEG, auto white balance; Taken on 20/05/13 at 06:11 with all autofocus points active.

The light coming from the left at about right angles (ideal for many landscapes) is very low-angled and illuminates only the raised left sides of the gentle hills, part of the house and some of the trees, leaving the right sides in shade and producing good modeling in the image



Within around 2 to 3 minutes the quality of light went, never to reappear, yet breakfast at a nearby bar about an hour later tasted so good, with some promising images to post-produce at home.



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## 2. Belvedere Morning:

Aperture f/16, ISO 100, shutter speed 0.6 sec, evaluative metering, raw + JPEG, auto white balance; taken on 28/09/15 at 08:28 with all autofocus points active.

This image, taken at the same location as No.1 (at a more civilised hour), came about because the classic image (i.e. No 1) did not seem to be working. This was taken at about 150 metres to the right and thus more into the sun, which had the effect of back-lighting the house and trees more and, with the higher sun angle, more of the land.



Watch out for flare and don't get stuck with a single composition - move around the location and see what you can find.

Just a few words on evaluative metering - it will give an exposure balanced for the whole image.

Auto white balance is normally OK and can easily be changed in post-production on raw files. Raw files are highly recommended for their flexibility in post-production (and they can be shot with JPEGs at the same time on some cameras).

Autofocus - I almost always use this with all focus points active, trusting the camera rather than my own aging eyesight!!! At the apertures used, if one point is in focus then the image should be sharp throughout.

So enough of theory and time for a few more pictures:



## 3. Early Light at Montenero:

Aperture priority f/16, ISO 100, shutter speed 1/8th sec, evaluative metering, raw + JPEG, auto white balance; taken on 07/02/17 at 10:18, all autofocus points active.

The image was taken on a bright winter's morning with clear light coming from the East (left of image), and it was polarised and the sky filtered.

## 4. Dusk Amongst the Olive Groves:

Same location as No.3 but taken 3 months later and in the late evening light sweeping from right to left of the image, polarised and filtered.

If you find a good location, it is worth going back at different times of the day or seasons of the year and recording the changes.



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The following images No.5 and No.6 show clearly the changes between Spring and Autumn; the settings are similar to the others and, although taken from almost the same spot, the images are very different in character and appearance.

#### 5. Light, Shade and Clouds:



#### 6. Autumn Textures:



Before I finish, I would like to say a little about seascapes and the use of neutral density filters. I have already said that I feel landscapes and cityscapes can be approached initially in the same way (with more leeway for artistic input re. the aperture in cityscapes.)

Seascapes, however, are different in that the sea has life and movement. If foreground is included it is a fixed point but beyond there is the ever-moving sea and we may wish to use a high shutter speed to freeze that movement; or we may wish to utilise a slower shutter speed to produce a softening (blurring) of the sea (or a river), which can add great atmosphere to the image.

We can achieve this by using a simple neutral density (ND) filter which cuts down the amount of light reaching the sensor, and hence the shutter remains open for a longer time to produce the correct exposure. There are three filters varying in strength: 0.3, 0.6 and 0.9; they are relatively inexpensive and require a filter holder and perhaps a conversion ring. The final resulting image is slightly hit and miss, depending on how much softening you would wish to achieve, and the same principle can be used to convey any form of movement (so our images become "artistic" and not another blurry image again!!!).

#### 7. Neist Point, Isle of Skye

Aperture priority at f/16, ISO 100, shutter speed 1/8 sec, ND Grad 0.6; other settings as normal. This image was taken after an unlucky week weather-wise on the West coast of the Isle of Skye. As ever it had rained very heavily all morning but I set out, ever the optimist, after lunch and arrived, yes - in heavy rain.

I settled down with my book in the car and saw a lightening of the sky over in the West, light that continued to improve when the rain had stopped; it was some trouble opening the car door against the gale force winds but off I went through a bog towards the headland.



When finally set up, I realised the biggest problem would be camera movement due to the wind even though on the tripod, so I could only use a shorter telephoto lens (24-70). I set the shooting mode to continuous and shot off 3 bursts of around 6 each (it seems with this method that one or two are more likely to be sharp). I checked as best I could and they seemed OK; the light had gone again and I had had enough for that day. Having seen that the images were OK on the computer, I enjoyed all the more the local oysters with chips and beer in a friendly pub - they don't serve them like that in Tuscany!!!

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## 8. Reflections of Dawn, Camogli, Liguria

Taken on 06/11/16 at 08:17; note shutter speed at 2.5 secs, other settings as before.

The Ligurian coast near Genova just after sunrise. Although the aperture was f/16 and ISO 100, the slow shutter speed indicates there was not much light around but this slow speed gives us, without filtering, the smoothing effect on the water which I feel adds to the tranquility of the image.

Worth observing is the pinkness of the Western sky; the weak sun was at my back as I shot but it was reflected into the clouds in the image



So there we have it - personal thoughts and habits built up over some years (yes it's the disclaimer!!!).

But seriously, Britain and Europe have so many wonderful places to photograph, and air travel is still relatively inexpensive. Once there with Internet information, one can be independent; car hire has never been easier and the images are there just waiting for you. Britain's coastline is outstanding and the Hebrides, outer and inner, remain one of the last bastions of unspoiled land and seascapes. Go and photograph them before they spoil.

Best wishes and good luck,

Jimmy McCracken LRPS

League Results: Monochrome Print League Competition, 4/12/17:

<b>Mono Print</b>											
<b>Group C</b>											
<b>Name</b>	<b>Round 1</b>		<b>Round 2</b>		<b>Round 3</b>		<b>Round 4</b>		<b>Round 5</b>		<b>Total</b>
BARLOW Dennis	20	17	17	20							74
GUEST David	12	17	18	20							67
HOWARD Brian	17	15	18	20							70
HUTCHINSON Graham	15	18	18	19							70
SINCLAIR Vicky	16	13	16	17							62
TURNER Jim	15	15	18	19							67
<b>Group B</b>											
<b>Name</b>	<b>Round 1</b>		<b>Round 2</b>		<b>Round 3</b>		<b>Round 4</b>		<b>Round 5</b>		<b>Total</b>
ANTHONY Richard	17	16	17	17							67
BYFORD Philip	17	18	18	18							71
COTTON Peter	13	16	15	18							62
MITCHELL Mike	15	16									31
STONE Vince	16	16	20	16							68
Van GEENE Linda			19	18							37
WINSLOW Paul	16	17	19	17							69
<b>Group A</b>											
<b>Name</b>	<b>Round 1</b>		<b>Round 2</b>		<b>Round 3</b>		<b>Round 4</b>		<b>Round 5</b>		<b>Total</b>
HARLEY Rob	18	18	18	19							73
HUMPHREY John	19	20	19	19							77
MARSHALL John	16	19	20	19							74
MOORE Hilary	17	16	18	20							71

Top-scoring Images:

2nd Mono Print (04/12/17)	Jim Nemer	C	1st=	20	Dennis Barlow	Cheetah
			1st=	20	David Guest	Flag, Golan Heights
			1st=	20	Brian Howard	Pulling Out
		B	1 <sup>st</sup>	20	Vince Stone	Feeling Wistful
			2nd=	19	Linda van Geene	Looking for a Gossip
		2nd=	19	Paul Winslow	Worthless Hands	
A	1st=	20	John Marshall	Alan in Character		
	1st=	20	Hilary Moore	I Do Not Tu-wit or Tu-woo		
	3rd=	19	Rob Harley	Holly		
	3rd=	19	John Humphrey	Old Wood		
	3rd=	19	John Humphrey	Marsh Marigold		
	3rd=	19	John Marshall	Hair Brushing		

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## P.S.

This month's first snippet is from Dennis Barlow - thank you, Dennis.

### Chimping (or not):

For those unfamiliar with the word "chimping", it's a term used to describe the behaviour of photographers when they check their results on the rear screen of their camera. Somebody noticed that, when looking at their camera screens, press photographers made involuntary noises and sounded like chimpanzees, so "chimping" has entered our urban vocabulary! There are dangers to assessing the quality of images on the rear screen, but improvements to the colour fidelity and tonal quality of screens have made them more effective. However, they cannot compete with a well-calibrated computer screen or a good quality print.

Many years ago, I attended some photographic courses at an old shooting lodge in Inversnaid. I was fortunate to meet two of my nature photography heroes, Laurie Campbell and Niall Benvie, and I picked up a lot of inspiration and tips from them.

One of Niall's best tips was to carry a notebook but, rather than just use it to record shooting information, Niall suggested that each photograph should be roughly sketched and then compared with the resulting image when it was returned from processing.

I'm not an artist and struggled with this, but I soon realised the benefits. This was in the days of film so chimping the back of the camera wasn't possible. I found that my expectations of composition and the effect of lighting didn't always match reality. Things often appeared in the photograph that I hadn't noticed at the time of shooting.

I'm trying to help my grandson master photography and I've suggested he adopts this technique to help him become aware of what to look out for at the shooting stage. Also I've realised that chimping doesn't completely cut the mustard, and it's useful to put a bit of time between taking a photograph and reviewing the result. So if you see me with a notebook of rather pathetic sketches, you don't need to take pity on me! It's just another tool to help me to improve my photography.

Dennis

### Aperture:

Back in September, we had a short presentation about the f-numbers (aka f-stops) used when describing apertures in camera lenses. The f-numbers (i.e. 2.8, 4, 5.6, 8, etc.) give consistent exposure for different focal lengths when used as ratios: the aperture is the size of the lens opening, and its diameter is the focal length (f) divided by the f-number. That is why, when describing the aperture for exposure, we should write, e.g., f/2.8, not f2.8, nor 2.8 (the symbol / means divide by).

E.g. At an aperture of f/4, the diameter of the opening will be 6mm for a 24mm wide-angle lens (24/4), but 50mm for a 200mm telephoto lens (200/4). This is logical, as a telephoto lens at f/4 must gather the same amount of light as a wide-angle lens at f/4 but from a much smaller field of view.

At a simple level, one generalisation from this is that telephoto lenses, both primes and zooms, tend to be larger than normal or wide-angle lenses. A typical example would be this moderately priced Nikon 70-300mm f/4.5 - f/5.6 zoom lens, which has a widest aperture of only f/5.6 at the long end of the range. Nevertheless, it must have quite a chunky body in length and width, and some fairly big glass elements inside, as there will be an opening with a diameter of at least 5.4cm (300mm/5.6) for its widest aperture.



However, beware if your desire is for a longer lens with an even wider aperture....

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.....nevertheless those of you who like to photograph wildlife might like to ask Santa for one of these:



It is the 200-500mm f/2.8 zoom lens from Sigma.

However, apart from the price tag (around £15,000.00), the other feature that might put off both you and Santa is its huge size, making it awkward to hold and difficult to fit into a shoulder bag! It is 72.6 cm (28.6 inches) in length and 23.7cm (9.3 inches) in diameter.

It also weighs in at around 16 kilograms (35 pounds), so fitness and strong muscles are essential, and perhaps some portable scaffolding rather than a tripod to support it in the field. It's not really surprising to see it referred to around the Web as the Sigzilla!

Philip

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### 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

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**And finally:** Two aliens were orbiting the Earth in a UFO when they were suddenly surprised by a flying sleigh, moving at near hyper-speed, apparently powered by several strange creatures wearing huge antennae on their heads, and controlled by a large white-bearded human in a bright red suit. One alien exclaimed to the other, as they zoomed off into outer space, 'There's no way we could invade this planet; their technology is far too advanced.'

Season's Greetings Everyone!

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