



VIEWFINDER



Hemel Hempstead Photographic Society

Viewfinder is the monthly journal of photography for and by members of the **Hemel Hempstead Photographic Society** (otherwise known as HHPS).

In This Issue

This month we have images from the First Colour Prints competition held at the end of October (the results were published in last month's issue). There are also images from the First Mono Prints competition, judged by Micki Aston before she retires to her new home in Gloucester.

The first Studio session was an All-Shoot session, in which all members present photographed the model together. John Marshall has provided a summary of the session, including the lighting set-up, with photographs of the session provided by Rob Harley and John.

If you've ever found you have haloes around the edges of some elements of your photographs (often where the edges of buildings or land meet the sky) I've provided an easy solution in Snippets.

Jim Turner, Editor

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News, Information, Meetings

Back Issues and Contributions

Previous editions can be viewed and/or downloaded from the HHPS website in the Viewfinder Archive, (under the Viewfinder tab) which goes back to 2016. There you can also find the Viewfinder Index which has been updated to include links to all the articles from January 2016 to June 2025, listed under three headings - date, author, and topic.

Content from any member for future editions is always welcome, whether short, helpful, snippets, or longer articles (preferably illustrated with photos) of one or more A4 pages, and they can be about any photographic topic.

Reminders

If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining HHPS please bring them along. They can sample up to three sessions for free before deciding to join (from January the membership fee for the rest of the season is half the full fee).

December Meetings

- 1st December - **Talk by Andy Sands: Ancient Woodland and Trees**
- [Submit up to 3 DPIs for 2nd DPI Competition](#)
 - 2nd December - **External Competition: NW Federation, Group C Round 3**
(Hosted away at Stoke Poges, against Watford and Stoke Poges)
 - 8th December - **League Competition: 2nd DPIs (Judge: Alan Taberer)**
 - 15th December - **Social Event: Quiz and Christmas Party**
(Host and Quizmaster: David Howard)
 - 22nd December - **No Meeting: Christmas Break**
 - 29th December - **No Meeting: Christmas Break**
- [Register up to 3 prints for 2nd Colour Prints Competition](#)
-

This Month's Meetings:

*The majority of meetings will be scheduled for the Salvation Army Hall. However, it is still possible for circumstances to change, e.g. an event planned at the hall might be changed to a Zoom meeting or alternative venue at short notice. Consequently, **be aware of any special announcements**, usually posted on the web, via email and/or on WhatsApp, which might indicate a change of location and/or activity.*

This month's first session was an illuminating presentation by [Simon Turnbull](#) showing his approach to Intimate Landscapes, which he defined as parts of the wider landscape, possibly including the urban landscape, but also close-up images of nature. The first part of his presentation covered the Why and the What of intimate landscapes, and the second half covered how he goes about photographing it. Throughout his talk, which was amply illustrated with his own photographs, he emphasised the importance of slowing down in order to observe not just the wider landscape, but the details which often get overlooked. Sometimes a wider scene can be split into more than one image (a photograph of a lake with a house and trees on the far side, for example, although he also defined this as an Intimate Landscape, could yield a more intimate image, focussing on the house and trees alone).

Although many of his photographs were straight images of the natural world, he wasn't averse to experimenting with different techniques such as Intentional Camera Movement or multiple exposures in order to be more creative.

[So far this season we've had two contrasting views of photography: one mainly using software as a route to creativity (with no trees); and from Simon a celebration of the natural world (and a lot of trees) with an emphasis on observation and taking time to enjoy the world around us, occasionally using software to enhance the viewer's experience. Which of the two you prefer is a matter of personal taste, but there is room for both].

In the second round of the N W Federation competition, held this time at Watford Camera Club, we once again competed against Watford and Stoke Poges and came second with 178 points, behind Watford with 182 points. Stoke Poges were third with 169 points. We had two starred 20s - 'Railway Carriage' by John Humphrey and 'A Touch of Silk' by John Marshall.

The second session on 10th November was a studio session in which members were able to photograph a male model. John Marshall has provided a more detailed summary of the evening, with photographs supplied by John and Rob Harley (see Page 6).

The first Mono Prints Competition was held on 17th November, judged by Micki Aston, in what was her final judging session (at least for our club) before retiring from judging competitions and moving to Gloucester. A regular at the club, she provided her usual insightful comments on each of the twenty three images. She emphasised the need for simplicity in images, avoiding busy compositions which could be confusing for the viewer. Some images needed more contrast - a lack of contrast results in grey "muddy" images which lack definition, but can be improved by using the Whites slider in Lightroom, which can add "sparkle" to a black and white image. Contrary to some judges she felt that for some portraits a black background can work well. Using differential focus helps to focus attention on the main subject, but making backgrounds even more out of focus can enhance the effect.

The final session of the month was a follow-up to the studio session on 8th November. Members submitted thirty-six projected images: some from studio sessions, either at the club or elsewhere, and some location portraits as street photography.

A panel of three members - Ullly, Rob and David Howard - made initial comments in turn, with members giving additional comments (due to time constraints this was later restricted to a comment from one member of the panel and from the owner of the image). It was felt, in some cases, that a stray piece of hair could be distracting, but would depend on the model and what the photographer hoped to convey. In studio portraits it was sometimes inevitable that there would be two catch-lights in the eyes due to the light sources being used, although one catch-light in each eye could be cloned out (making sure that they were from the same light source so that the model didn't look cross-eyed!).

Jim Turner, Editor

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All Shoot Studio Session November 10th 2025

On Monday 10th November we had our first “All Shoot” session. The model was Draco 1999 (AKA Michael). Michael is the partner of Lottianne (AKA Charlotte; AHA Lavender B) who has modelled for us before.

Twelve club members attended the evening and Michael changed into three different outfits during the two-hour shoot.

The lighting was arranged differently for this shoot. The lights were not fitted with the usual softening “Shower-caps”, in order to give a harsher light suited to male portraiture. The key light was placed in the usual “Rembrandt” position and the other light was placed opposite the key light and behind the model and set two stops lower than the key light. This gave more shadows in the portraits – often desired by judges!



I provided a number of props to help with the posing and these can be seen in the images taken. Michael also brought one of his “cosplay” outfits with him.



Linda, who had arranged the model, asked each photographer to supply one (best) image (DPI size) for each of the outfits that Michael wore. These were to be emailed to Linda who would forward them to Michael.

John Marshall, November 2025



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Members' Images

[For a better view of the images in Viewfinder, your PDF Reader software should allow you to zoom in.]

This month's high-scoring images

Colour Print Competition Round 1 (27th October)

'Ashridge Wood' by John Humphrey

Taken with a Panasonic FZ2000 bridge camera with the zoom setting at 42mm equivalent. Exposure f/32, 1/80sec, ISO 200.

The picture is of the line of trees in Lady's Walk in Ashridge on a misty day, which gave a sense of depth.

The picture was given added warmth by placing a sepia toned version on top of the original in Photoshop layers and then reducing the opacity of the sepia layer. The overall image was then slightly desaturated to enhance the misty feel.



'Borneo Pier' by John Humphrey

Taken with a Canon EOS 40D and a zoom lens set at 17mm. Exposure f/8, 1/125sec, ISO 100.

The subject was a rather precarious wooden pier, but lent itself to a directional composition leading to an interesting focal point at the end.

The treatment was to desaturate and to reduce the image to a simple line structure using the Edge Only setting in Photoshop's Smart Blur filter setting.



A high key effect was achieved by lightening the image in Photoshop Levels and a little of the original colour was painted back into the rooftop of the pagoda-like structure. A white vignette was added to draw attention to the centre of the picture.



'City of London' by John Humphrey

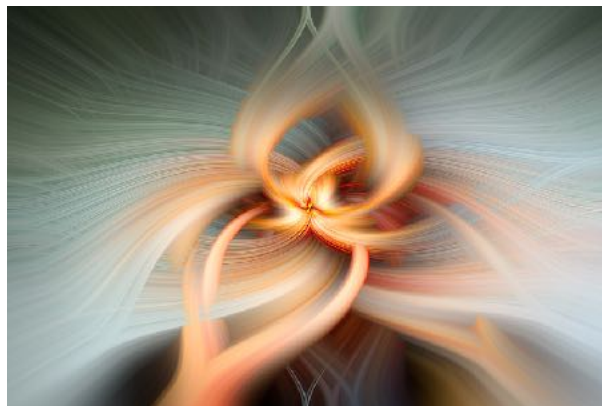
Taken with a Canon EOS R7 mirrorless camera with a zoom lens set at 60mm. Exposure f/36, 1/8sec, ISO 100.

The picture was taken from the South Bank of the Thames looking towards the City and is one of a series of Intentional Camera Movement pictures to create direction blur.

After experimenting with various shutter speeds I settled on 1/8sec and practiced the appropriate speed of vertical camera movement to deliver sufficient blur without losing the main structure of the subject.

Since resolution is not important in these blurry pictures, it was possible to use an extreme crop of a section of the image that delivered a balanced composition.

'Flux' by Rob Harley



This image started off as a portrait of my daughter, Christina, taken on an iPhone 15 Pro Max. We were taking passport-style images, with my wife holding up a white foam-board to give a plain grey background. After we nailed the passport shot, we did a couple of fun portraits with a head and both hands.

Initially, in post processing, texture was added (Filter > Filter Gallery > Texture > Texturiser) and a mask added to avoid putting texture on the subject. I ended up with a nice family snap.

I decided to experiment with it to see if it could be the basis of a competition entry, using an "emergent" technique i.e. one where the end result bears little or no resemblance to the original image. By their nature, emergent techniques are a matter of trial and error (often with emphasis on the latter).

I used the Twirl Effect technique described on page 61 of John Humprey's second book, Creative and Experimental Photography.

In summary, apply Filter > Pixelate > Mezzotint, with mode of "Medium Lines" to give a lined effect. Then use Filter > Blur > Radial Blur and repeat this blur a couple of times. Then duplicate the layer and call the new layer "Upper".

Select the lower layer again, and use Filter > Distort > Twirl with a positive amount of around 50 to 100 (I used 80). Then select the "Upper" layer and use Filter > Distort > Twirl with a negative amount of the same number (-80).

Finally, change the blending mode of the Upper layer and see what works best. As it happens, in this case I ended up with the blending mode left as Normal, hence showing just the Upper layer.

I then added one further refinement. The result of the technique used was copied and flattened (Ctrl+Shift+Alt+E). This new "Top" layer was flipped horizontally and had its blending mode changed. In this case, I felt Lighter Color worked best.

'Popular Location' by Rob Harley



There are no prizes for guessing this was taken at the Natural History Museum, one of the most attractive buildings around. I chose the title "Popular Location" to reinforce the feeling of busyness in this multi-exposure image.

I used my iPhone 15 Pro Max at 1/125s at f/1.8 and ISO 100 at a focal length equivalent to 24mm on full frame. As usual, I captured all the images handheld. Eight images were taken at about one second intervals.

The eight images were opened as layers into one Photoshop image. Auto-align was used to precisely align the images - that is why you don't need a tripod.

The creative bit is deciding which parts of which image to use in the multiple exposure. I played around and finally chose just four of the eight images to include. They were initially given (from top to bottom) opacities of 1/4, 1/3, 1/2 and 1 (i.e. 25%, 33%, 50% and 100% opacity) which gives them equal weighting in the image. Then the combination was fine-tuned to de-emphasise people in the bottom two corners, and faded two individuals who had kept very still and were too prominent.

The resulting combined image was then finalised.

The Adobe Camera RAW (ACR) filter was used to correct the verticals. The aspect ratio was changed to fit my nearest print aperture size. I deliberately left in the bottoms of the windows at the top on the image, but the judge said that he felt they should have been cropped off. The latest version of the Remove Tool (which is really good) was used to remove a stationary pram and a push-trolley, plus a few other distractions.

All in all, it took quite a lot of time to edit but was great fun to see the final version emerge.

[NB: The results of the First Colour Print Competition were published in last month's issue - Editor]



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Mono Prints Competition Round 1

'A Beacon in a Storm' by Jim Turner

Sometimes you just have to suffer for your art! This was taken on a very wet and stormy day at Happisburgh (pronounced Hazeboro) in Norfolk. I took several images while dodging the (very) heavy showers (luckily I was wearing a heavy-duty waterproof jacket). This was a five-image panorama, cropped to a 16:9 aspect ratio, with the lighthouse positioned more or less on the right-hand third.



The camera was a Canon R5 with a Sigma 24mm-105mm lens at 80mm focal length. The exposure was 1/320 sec., f/11, ISO 100, on a very sturdy tripod.

The original colour image didn't really bring out the drama of the scene the way I wanted, so converting it to black and white was an obvious decision. The Landscape masking feature in Lightroom now makes it easier to isolate different elements of a landscape and make adjustments without affecting other elements, so I first worked on the sky, darkening it and increasing the contrast. I then darkened the foreground and used a radial filter to bring back the patch of light to the left, which was created by a break in the cloud to the right of the image, allowing the sun to filter through. I wanted the lighthouse and the keeper's cottage to stand out against the glowering sky so brightened those separately, and used the Colour Mixer slider to darken the red bands. Finally, in Photoshop I created an irregular vignette using the lasso tool and a curves adjustment layer. (The colour cast that Micki noted is actually a light blue tone I applied deliberately to counteract the warm-toned paper I use, which seems to produce a sepia tint with dark monochrome images).



'Porcelain Caps' by Jim Turner

Although I've occasionally photographed fungi in the past, this year I specifically sought them out. These Porcelain Fungi were situated low down on a fallen branch, which made them difficult to access as I felt photographing them from below would make a more interesting image, showing the details of their gills.

I used a Canon R5 with Sigma 105mm macro lens and exposure of 1/6 sec at f/11, ISO 500.

I used a small LED light to illuminate them from below and manually chose the focus points which, at an aperture of f/11, I thought would give me the

maximum depth of field. That gave me eleven frames to work with.

After focus-stacking in Photoshop, in Lightroom I selected the Mushrooms, increasing the exposure and using the Texture slider to enhance the detail. Although I liked the colour version I wanted to see how it would look in black and white. By copying and inverting the mushroom selection I could darken the background separately, but felt the mushrooms then looked as if they were suspended in mid-air; so I brought back some of the detail of the branch they were growing from on the right of the image and underneath the mushrooms.

'Sunday Walk' by Roger Hudson

This shot was taken by the Grand Union canal on a bright frosty morning.

As the shot was taken into the light some additional post processing was needed to hold back the light areas and add some detail to the water.

Nikon D90 DSLR. ISO 250, f/16. 1/400th sec.



'Fourth Position en Pointe - Derriere'

by John Marshall

This image was taken at a Studio Group session. A mottled black cloth background was used and lighting was from studio flash units.

The camera was a Bronica ETRSi medium format film camera fitted with a 100-220mm zoom lens and mounted on a sturdy tripod. Exposure was f/8 at 1/60 second (though the exposure time was really determined by the duration of the studio flash units), ISO100.

Kodak 120 T-Max 100 film was used and the film was developed in T-Max developer. The resulting negative was enlarged on to Ilford Multigrade paper at Grade 3 (a slightly higher contrast than the normal Grade 2).



'Smile Then' by John Marshall

This was taken at a Studio Group Session.

The model was lit using studio flash. The camera used was a Bronica ETRSi medium format film camera fitted with a 100-220mm zoom lens and mounted on a sturdy tripod.

Exposure was 1/60 second at f/8, though the exposure time was really governed by the duration of the studio flash units. The film used was ISO 100 Kodak T-Max 100 120 black-and-white roll film which was developed in T-Max developer.

The resulting negative was scanned on a flat-bed scanner and the digital image produced was printed by the professional lab, BPD Photech.



'The Next Generation' by John Marshall

This was taken at home on a dining room table. The poppy seed heads were set up in front of a black velvet background and the main light was from a patio door on the right on a cloudy/bright day. A Lastolite reflector was placed on the left of the subject to soften the shadows.

The camera was a Bronica ETRSi medium format film camera fitted with a 110mm macro lens and mounted on a sturdy tripod. Exposure was 4 seconds at f/32 to give maximum depth of field. The film used was ISO 100 Kodak 120 T-Max 100 which was developed in T-Max developer.

The resulting negative was enlarged on to Ilford Multigrade paper at Grade 3. The black-and-white print was then chemically sepia toned.



'Still Got It' by Rob Harley

Everyone will recognise this as our favourite model, Alan Byrch. It was taken at a Studio Group meeting. The exposure was f/7.1 at ISO 1000, with a focal length of 200mm on full frame.

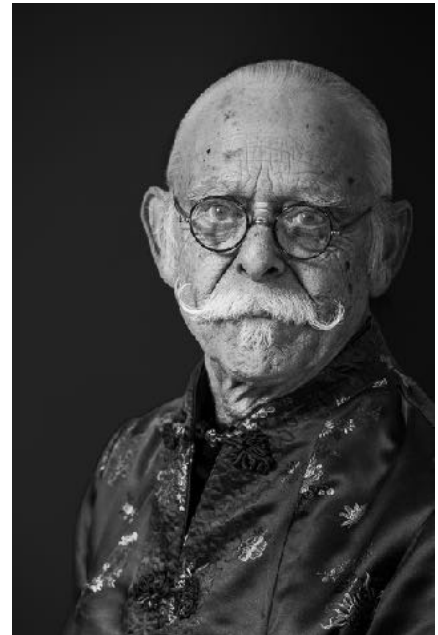
No adjustments made in Lightroom.

In Photoshop the background was changed from white to black.

Alan's eyes and the areas inside the frames were brightened. Some hot spots of the frames of the glasses were darkened. Thanks to John Marshall (who supplied the glasses as a prop), there was no glass in the glasses, so there was no reflection getting in the way of the eyes!

The second catchlight was removed from each eye.

The neck and the shirt were darkened and the contrast in the shirt was reduced, to make the it less prominent



'Watching' by Rob Harley

The model is another photograph of "AJ The Model", from the shoot earlier this year.

The exposure was f/11 at ISO 200 with studio flash. The focal length was 120mm on full frame.

No adjustments made in Lightroom. In Photoshop the facial skin was smoothed. Her hands and the overall image was darkened.

Her face was brightened, except there was a slight bright patch on her forehead which was too shiny so that area was darkened.



'Spinnaker Tower' by Rob Harley

When you take the ferry out of Portsmouth you can't help but enjoy this imposing structure. The problem is that it rises up from a very busy mass of buildings. It was captured hand-held from the ferry at 1/640s at f/8, ISO 125, with a focal length of 70mm on full frame.

It was a dull day. My intention from the start was to give it a Fine Art Architecture makeover. This involves re-lighting the image.

No adjustments made in Lightroom. In Photoshop the ground buildings were darkened but still visible.

A new, darker sky was put in, with a relatively bright patch in the top right of the image. This bright patch was the new "light source" for the tower.

A couple of hours was spent on carefully selecting the Spinnaker Tower accurately, mainly using the Pen tool. The selection was divided into areas to be Dodged, since they were "facing the light source"; and areas to be Burned, facing away from the light. The near-horizontal struts had to be selected separately and were really

fiddly to do accurately. The bumps on the right of the tower also had to be selected separately.

Once the selections were done, it was easy to make the correct areas brighter or darker. After that, contrast was increased significantly.

A vignette was added to the sky.

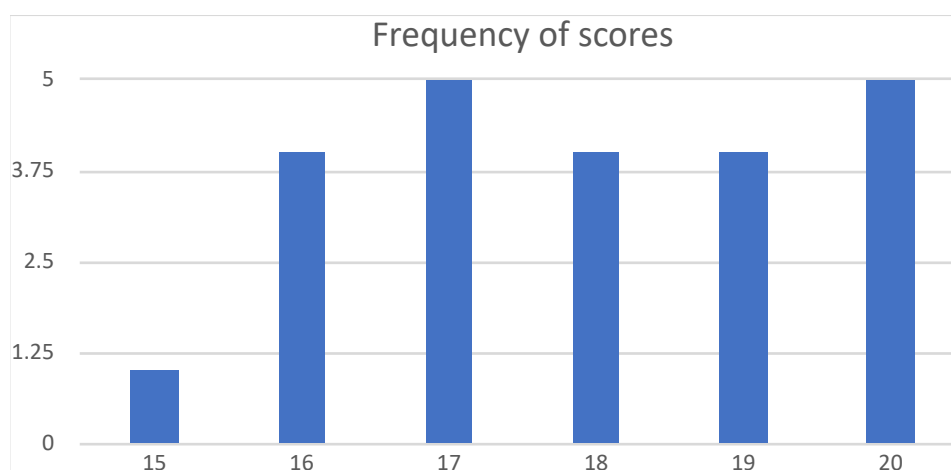
The image was then shown at the Summer Break Images event. The Members' feedback was that the bright area in the sky was too bright; and that the ground was not very attractive.

Consequently, it was edited further for the mono print competition. The bright area in the sky was made less bright and the ground buildings were darkened to pretty much being just a silhouette. I am sure this helped when the print was judged - thank you Members!

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Mono Prints Competition Round 1 - Results

Group	Position	Score	Author	JS and Title
C	01	18	Brian Howard	20 Semi Cactus Dahlia
			Linda van Geene	10 Berber Girl
			Linda van Geene	19 The Wheelwright
	04	17	Linda van Geene	01 The Boatyard
	05	16	Brian Howard	11 Emma Williams
	06	15	Brian Howard	02 He Ruined The Feeder
B	01	17	Brian Burgess	06 Saving Lives
			Brian Burgess	15 The Herd
			Clare Long	21 Alan
	04	16	Brian Burgess	24 Steam Power In Motion
			Clare Long	03 Focused
			Clare Long	12 The Artist
A	01	20	Jim Turner	07 Beacon In A Storm
			John Marshall	04 Smile Then
			John Marshall	22 Fourth Position En Pointe - Derriere
			Rob Harley	23 Still Got It
			Roger Hudson	18 Sunday Walk
	06	19	Jim Turner	16 Porcelain Caps
			John Marshall	13 The Next Generation
			Rob Harley	05 Watching
			Rob Harley	14 Spinnaker Tower
	10	18	Roger Hudson	09 Is That Really Me
11	17	Roger Hudson	26 A Quiet Corner	



Mono prints: Frequency of Scores

Cumulative Scores to Date

League	Group	Author	Round and Preference												Total	
			Round 1			Round 2			Round 3			Round 4				
			01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03		
CP	C	Clare Long	16	16	17											49
		Linda van Geene	15	17	16											48
	B	Brian Burgess	17	17	17											51
		Brian Howard	17	15	17											49
		Richard Anthony	15	15	17											47
	A	Jim Turner	16	18												34
		John Humphrey	19	20	20											59
		John Marshall	18	18	18											54
		Rob Harley	19	17	19											55
CP Total			152	153	141										446	
MP	C	Brian Howard	15	16	18										49	
		Linda van Geene	17	18	18										53	
		Richard Anthony														
	B	Brian Burgess	17	17	16										50	
		Clare Long	16	16	17										49	
	A	Jim Turner	20	19											39	
		John Marshall	20	19	20										59	
		Rob Harley	19	19	20										58	
		Roger Hudson	18	20	17										55	
MP Total			142	144	126									412		
PI	C	Clare Long	20	16	17										53	
		David Guest	19	17	16										52	
		Linda van Geene	20	17	15										52	
		Mike Mitchell	18	19	16										53	
		Richard Anthony	20	18	17										55	
		Emyr Williams	17	16	17										50	
	B	Brian Howard	16	17	17										50	
		Ian Shaw	16	17	19										52	
		James McCracken	20	19	17										56	
		John Marshall	17	15	16										48	
		David Howard	18	16	17										51	
	A	Brian Burgess	16	16	16										48	
		John Humphrey	15	19	17										51	
		Rob Harley	19	18	16										53	
		Roger Hudson	17	18	16										51	
		Uly Jorimann	17	16	20									53		
PI Total			285	274	269									828		

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Editor's Pick

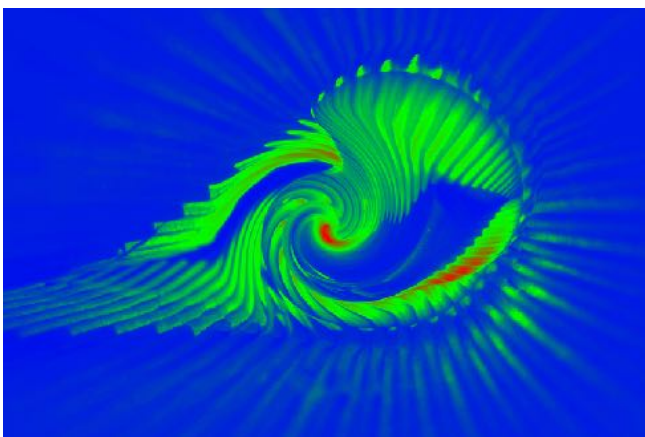
A selection of other images from this month's competitions



'Amaryllis' by Brian Howard



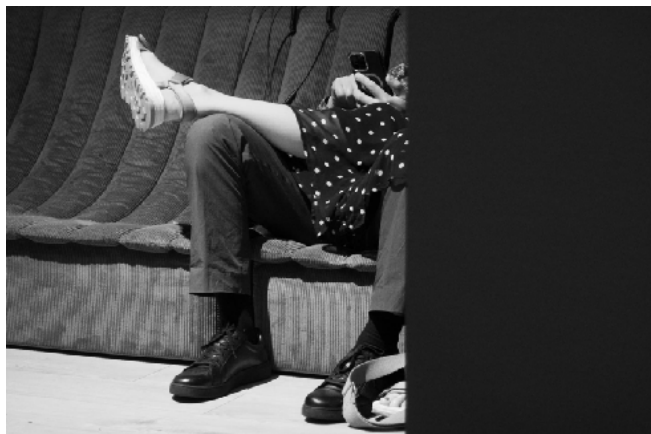
'Having Fun' by Rob Harley



'Eye of the Dragon' by Brian Burgess



'Still Waters Run deep' by Clare Long



'A Quiet Corner' by Roger Hudson



'Steam Power in Motion' by Brian Burgess



'The Artist' by Clare Long

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Contributions

If you have any stories to share, or any useful hints and tips to pass on to other members, please think of Viewfinder. It would be great to have a different member's article every month.

Perhaps you have an image, or a set of images, that tells a story, or demonstrates a photographic technique or the use of a much-loved piece of equipment; or illustrates an interesting place or an unusual scene. If there is anything photographic that you would like to describe or explain for members, consider submitting something for inclusion in a future edition. You need only to supply a text and the images, and I will put it all into a suitable format for Viewfinder.

If you have something to contribute, please email me using the address in the footer and/or discuss it with me at a Monday meeting. Thank you.

Snippets....

For Tree Lovers everywhere: [Trees Are So Weird](#) an entertaining (and simplified) explanation on the evolution and science of trees.

Exhibitions

Images from the [Taylor-Wessing Photo Portrait](#) prize, at the [National Portrait Gallery](#) until 8th February 2026

Removing Haloes

Haloes can occur at the edges of areas of high contrast, and are the result of over-sharpening or boosting the contrast, for example - particularly between skies and land or buildings. They can also be caused when focus-stacking as a result of "focus-breathing", when elements of the lens move backwards and forwards between focus points.

If you can use Photoshop, there is a fairly easy solution. I've seen a few versions of this method, and there are other methods, but this works in the majority of situations. It is not particularly complicated, although it can be tedious and time-consuming, depending on the extent of the halo.

1. Create a Transparent Layer:
Go to Layer / New / Layer
(set Colour = none, Blending Mode = Darker Colour, Opacity = 100%)
2. Select Cloning Tool:
Mode = Normal
Hardness = Soft
Opacity = 100%
Set Sample to All Layers
Make the size slightly wider than the width of the edge halo.
3. Sample the lighter of the colours adjacent to the halo and begin cloning.

Snippets (continued)

It helps to zoom in on the image so you can see more clearly what you're cloning, and to make sure you haven't missed anything. (I haven't used this technique for focus-stacking, so I don't know how effective it is for that purpose).

This technique can also be used to tone down blown highlights. Using the Highlights or Exposure sliders in Lightroom just makes blown highlights look grey as there is no information there. You can use this technique instead, but reduce the opacity of the clone tool to about 20% or less, and sample similarly-coloured areas from around the blown highlights. You can then gradually paint in the highlight to blend it in with its surroundings so it looks more natural (you can change the Blending Mode to Normal and see which works best).

If you know how to Create Actions in Photoshop you can automate the first two steps above so you can just run the Action when you need it (call it Remove Haloes) and just begin cloning.

Using a separate transparent layer for cloning means you're not directly affecting the original image.

Jim Turner - Editor

Food For Thought

Photography for me is not looking, it's feeling. If you can't feel what you're looking at, then you're never going to get others to feel anything when they look at your pictures.

Don McCullin

A portrait is not made in the camera but on either side of it.

Edward Steichen

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