



# VIEWFINDER



## Hemel Hempstead Photographic Society

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

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### In This Issue

In this month's issue there are images from the Third Mono Prints competition (there are no Editor's Picks this month as I wasn't here for the session, so my apologies to those whose images deserved more attention).

John Humphrey provides another of his useful guides to Creative Photography, this time how to create a Dispersion Effect, which makes the subject look as if it is disintegrating.

There's a link in **Snippets** to an interesting article on club competitions and competition judges by Cat Cross who is well known to us (as Cat Humphries), having been a judge of our own competitions for many years. She provides a rationale for the effectiveness of club competitions and how competition judges make their decisions (bearing in mind that competition judges are themselves often on the receiving end of other judges' decisions).

*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 before deciding to join (from January *the membership fee for the rest of the season is half the full fee*).**

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**Members are reminded not to discuss displayed prints with judges, or within the hearing of judges, before the images have been assessed and given a score. Doing so could inadvertently influence the judge's decision.**

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### April Meetings

6th April - **Bank Holiday. No Meeting**

- [Register up to 3 Prints for 4th Colour Prints Competition](#)

13th April - **4th Colour Prints Competition (Judge: Peter Cox)**

16th April - **Studio Shoot: One to One Portraits with model**

(Maximum of 6 members. Run by John Marshall and Rob Harley)

20th April - **Social Event: Communal Walk (Bluebells or canal walk)**

(Details to be decided)

- [Register up to 3 Prints for 4th Mono Prints Competition](#)

27th April - **4th Mono Prints Competition (Judge: Roger Weightman)**

## This Month's Meetings:

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*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.*

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The judge for the 3rd Mono Print Competition was Michael Lurie. Michael started with a quote that he had Googled (I am paraphrasing the quote), *"Black and white photography is a timeless art form that emphasises composition, lighting, texture, and contrast over colour"*.

Michael stated that he had observed that there was a lack of architectural prints, and that architectural prints had previously worked well. There were twenty-one images on the night, so Michael took slightly longer on each image, which was appreciated. He commented on a couple of images where the subject was dark against a light background, advising that this was the wrong way round and distracting for the viewer. The subject should be lighter to make it stand out and draw the viewer's eye.

Michael also commented on a superimposed print, mentioning that he thought it was strange for a Black & White competition.

Before answering a couple of questions from the members, Michael told us that he thought that all the prints that he had seen this evening were beautifully mounted.

*Summary contributed by David Howard*

The second meeting of March, on the 9th, was to be a studio session, with all those present photographing the model. Unfortunately, due to a mix-up with dates, the model had to cancel the session, to the disappointment of members, who had already set up the lighting and other equipment.

The 16th March session was the Set Subject on the theme of Street Photography. There were 33 projected images, with initial comments from a panel consisting of John Marshall, Uly Jorimann and Rob Harley. Although a definition of what constitutes Street Photography had been put out before images were submitted, Roger Hudson read out a distillation of various definitions for the benefit of the audience to make it easier to decide if an image complied with the brief. Ten images were held back by the panel and those were voted on by members in the second half of the session, in a process of elimination which involved each image being compared to its neighbour. That left three images which, through a show of hands, were awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd place - 'The Lonely Walk Home' by James McCracken, 'Siesta' by John Humphrey, and 'Prayer at Man-Mo Temple, Hong Kong' by Rob Harley, respectively.

The three winning images are shown below in reverse order, with a summary from James McCracken of how he took his winning photograph.



3rd: 'Prayer at Man-Mo Temple, Hong Kong' by Rob Harley



2nd: 'Siesta' by John Humphrey



1st: 'The Lonely Walk Home' by James McCracken

"'The Lonely Walk Home' was an ICM image taken in November 2024 around 5pm, as it was getting dark, in Siena.

The camera settings were set at Shutter Priority, Aperture at f/20 and ISO at 100 and 0.6 seconds was the exposure time. It gave enough blur to make the image seem slightly unreal, but with panning the man was still recognisable as a man walking down an even more blurred alleyway.

I was sitting on my own at an outside table with a coffee and was thinking it was time to make my way home when this figure came into the alley. The camera settings were ok for tracking him and it was the last image I took that day." *James McCracken*

The session on 23rd March, on Zoom, was a change from the programmed session. [Tony North](#), who has given us some interesting presentations in the past, this time gave us an interesting talk on his approach to Photographing the Urban Environment. In the first half of the session he showed photographs of Manchester, where he lives, and on visits to London. When photographing during the day he prefers overcast, cloudy conditions, and likes the reflections on wet roads and pavements. Although he shoots mostly in colour he sometimes converts images to monochrome, which makes subtle detail in buildings stand out more. For wider city-scapes he prefers to photograph in the Blue Hour, when the light from buildings and the light in the sky are better balanced. Sometimes an elevated view (eg from the top of a multi-storey car park) provides a wider vista (similar to photographing a landscape from the top of a hill).

In the second half of the evening, after showing photographs from Portugal and Venice, he explained, and demonstrated, some of the more creative techniques he uses to give a more impressionistic feel to his images. In this he was inspired by the photography of [Sandra Bartocha](#) and [Pep Ventosa](#). As well as partially desaturating some of the colours in an image, he has more recently been using Intentional Camera Movement (ICM), multiple exposures and montages. The latter involves photographing sections of a scene and piecing them together in Photoshop (or other editing software) like a jigsaw puzzle.

The multiple exposure technique, on the other hand, involves taking five or six (sometimes more) images of the same scene, but moving the camera in small increments, then combining and overlapping them in Photoshop. The trick was to have one element of the image in focus. To achieve that he aligned the prominent element from each image but allowed the rest of the elements to slightly overlap (it was easier to demonstrate than to explain!).

Jim Turner, Editor

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## Members' Articles

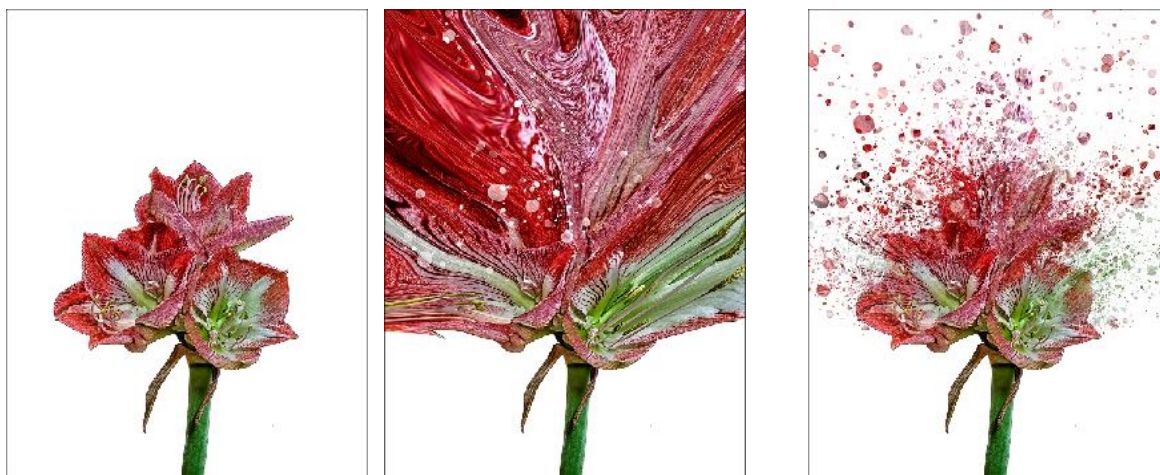
### Dispersion Effect

John Humphrey

The image dispersion effect makes the subject of the photo look as though it is disintegrating.

- **Open the image in Software that supports layers, such as Photoshop.** For best results, choose an image where the subject stands out against a solid background. Make sure there is sufficient space around the subject for the dispersion to appear.
- **Make a duplicate of the image layer.** Layer > Duplicate Layer.
- **Apply the Liquify filter to the top layer.** Use the Forward Warp tool to drag the image over the area to which you wish to apply the dispersion.
- **Add a Hide All layer mask to the liquified layer.** Layer > Layer Mask > Hide All. This will be displayed as a black mask and will conceal the liquified layer.
- **Set the foreground colour to white and paint on the black mask with a dispersion brush.** When the brush tool is active, a drop down menu allows selection of the brush. Photoshop includes some suitable scatter effect brushes, but others can be downloaded from the web.
- **Keep moving the position and size of the brush.** It is generally effective to use a small brush size close to the edge of the subject and larger sizes further away.

*An Amaryllis picture showing the liquified layer, and the result after applying the dispersion brushing on a Hide All layer mask.*



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## Members' Images

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

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### This month's high-scoring images

#### Mono Print Competition Round 3

##### 'St Andrew's Church, Covehithe' by Richard Anthony

Whilst site-seeing during a holiday in Suffolk I discovered St Andrew's Church, Covehithe after following "tourist" signs for an ancient church. Covehithe is on the coast about 7 miles from Lowestoft toward Southwold and consists of a thatched church built in 1672 within the ruins of an older church, a couple of cottages and a few farm buildings. Due to coastal erosion it is thought that the church and surrounding buildings will be lost to the sea within a hundred years.



The weather was far from ideal for photography as light drizzle was falling and the grounds of the church were very wet. It was not possible to get a vantage point that gave a single suitable image of the church so I took a number of shots to later stitch together as a panorama.

The images were taken on my handheld Olympus OM-D E-M10 II micro 4/3 camera fitted with an M. Zuiko 14-42mm lens set at 14mm (35mm equivalent 28mm), whilst my wife kindly held an umbrella over me and, more importantly, the camera. The exposure was 1/320th sec at f/8 with the sensitivity set at ISO 1000.

Affinity 2 was used to combine 3 shots for the image and Lightroom was used to convert it to black and white. The image was very flat and dull and Lightroom and Photoshop Elements 2021 were used to get contrast and detail into the image. As the sky in the initial images was a dull uniform grey a suitable more interesting sky was added, though this resulted in the need to remove some trees that had been showing through the windows of the ruin.

I was not too happy with the final image, but could not improve it and had nothing better to enter, so I was very pleasantly surprised by the judge's comments.



### **'Inside Tate Modern' by Roger Hudson**

This picture was taken inside Tate Modern, London. The exhibit was a minimalist room full of glass panels suspended from the ceiling. To me it gave the effect of a "hall of mirrors" at a fair. The person here is behind one of the panels but gives the impression he has somehow been cut in half. The shot was a case of waiting for the right person to move around the exhibit so I could execute the idea.

There was minimal post-processing in Photoshop except for cropping to align the subject with the centre of the frame.

Camera was a Canon G7-X compact, ISO 2500, f/4. 1/80th sec.

### **'Simple Lines' by Rob Harley**

I chose to capture this office building due to its bold, striking lines. I shot upwards to avoid any clutter (which was why no cropping was required in post-processing).

It was taken hand-held with an exposure of 1/50s at f/8 and ISO 500 and focal length of 58mm.

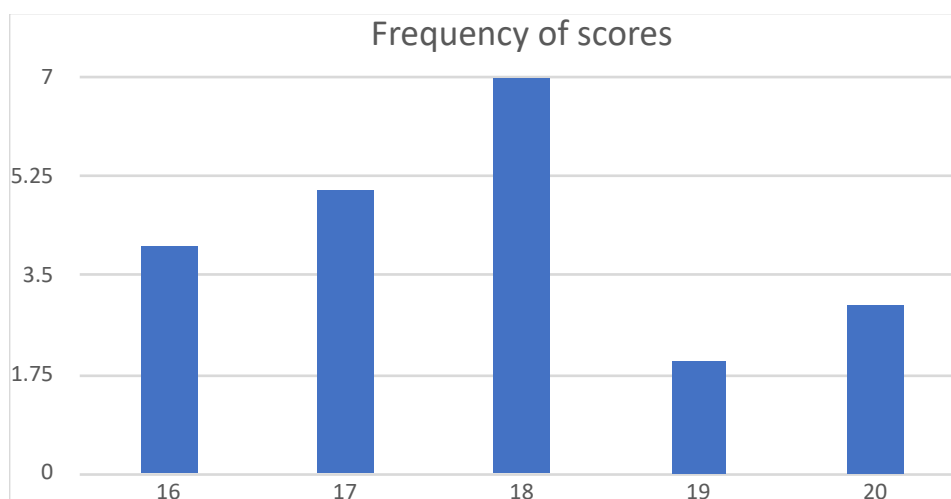
The post-processing was quite straightforward. The plain, boring white sky was turned black. The left-hand side of the building was brightened a little. The right-hand side of the building was darkened. Overall, the contrast was increased. The image was converted to black and white, which did not change it much as it contained very little colour.



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### Mono Prints Round 3 - Results

Group	Position	Score	Author	JS and Title	Pref
C	01	20	Linda van Geene	03 Tulips	01
			Richard Anthony	15 St Andrew's Church, Covehithe	03
	03	19	Linda van Geene	10 Winter Trees	02
	04	18	Brian Howard	14 Helen	02
			Richard Anthony	08 Beached	02
	06	17	Brian Howard	21 Riley Pre 1963	03
			Linda van Geene	17 Thinking	03
			Richard Anthony	01 The Elephant In The Image	01
	09	16	Brian Howard	07 Bindweed	01
B	01	18	Clare Long	20 Looking Down	03
	02	17	Clare Long	13 Relaxing	02
	03	16	Clare Long	06 Beach Walk	01
A	01	20	Rob Harley	18 Simple Lines	03
	02	19	Roger Hudson	16 Inside Tate Modern	03
	03	18	John Marshall	19 Roseanne	03
			John Marshall	12 Mirror, Mirror	02
			Rob Harley	04 Shapes And Tones	01
			Rob Harley	11 Once Proud Flour Exporter	02
	07	17	John Marshall	05 In Full Bloom	01
	08	16	Roger Hudson	02 Nepalese Girls	01
Roger Hudson			09 Look Into My Mind	02	



Mono Prints distribution of scores

## Cumulative Scores

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	15	17	16	18	16	19				150
		Linda van Geene	15	17	16	16	17	15	17	18	18				149
	B	Brian Burgess	17	17	17	16	16	16	19	17	18				153
		Brian Howard	17	15	17	18	16	15	17	17	18				150
		Richard Anthony	15	15	17	15	19	16	17	17	18				149
	A	Jim Turner	16	18		17	17								68
		John Humphrey	19	20	20	18	20	19	18	20	20				174
		John Marshall	18	18	18	17	16	20	18	15	18				158
		Rob Harley	19	17	19	19	17	17	20	20	20				168
	CP Total		152	153	141	151	155	134	144	140	149				1319
MP	C	Brian Howard	15	16	18	18	16	19	16	18	17				153
		Linda van Geene	17	18	18	17	18	20	20	19	17				164
		Richard Anthony	18	18	19	19	16	18	17	18	20				163
	B	Brian Burgess	17	17	16										50
		Clare Long	16	16	17	16	18	18	16	17	18				152
	A	Jim Turner	20	19		18	17								74
		John Marshall	20	19	20	20	19	20	17	18	18				171
		Rob Harley	19	19	20	20	18	16	18	18	20				168
		Roger Hudson	18	20	17	20	16	16	16	16	19				158
	MP Total		160	162	145	148	138	127	120	124	129				1253
PI	C	Clare Long	20	16	17	15	16	16	15	18	17				150
		David Guest	19	17	16										52
		Geoff King				15	17	20	19	18	16				105
		Linda van Geene	20	17	15	19	16	15	15	18	18				153
		Mike Mitchell	18	19	16	17	15	15	15	18	15				148
		Richard Anthony	20	18	17	16	15	19	17	18	15				155
		Emyr Williams	17	16	17	16	14	15							95
	B	Brian Howard	16	17	17	18	15	17	16	17	17				150
		Ian Shaw	16	17	19	18	16	14	16	18	17				151
		James McCracken	20	19	17	17	16	17	18	18	20				162
		John Marshall	17	15	16	15	18	15	20	18	18				152
		David Howard	18	16	17	18	16	15	17	19	17				153
	A	Brian Burgess	16	16	16	15	16	15	16	19	17				146
		John Humphrey	15	19	17	17	17	20	19	17	20				161
		Rob Harley	19	18	16	19	20	16	16	18	19				161
		Roger Hudson	17	18	16	15	20	16	16	20	16				154
		Uly Jorimann	17	16	20	17	17	16	17	19	15				154
PI Total		285	274	269	267	264	261	252	273	257				2402	

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## Contributions

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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.

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### Snippets....

#### Competitions

[London Camera Exchange Photographer of the Year 2026](#)

Everyone has their views on club competitions and competition judges: judges are rubbish when they give us a low score - especially for an image we're particularly pleased with - but brilliant when they do see the merits of our efforts and give us a high score (especially the coveted 20). But being a judge isn't easy. Often they have only a few seconds, maybe a few minutes if the number of entries is low, to make an assessment. Then they will try to find something encouraging to say, even about a relatively mundane image.

Cat Cross has been a competition judge for 10 years and has been a regular judge at HHPS (previously known to us as Cat Humphries). In an article on her web-site she gives some insight on her own experience of judging club competitions. Here are some of the points she makes. You can read the full article on her [web-site](#).

*"A fair number of images in a regular camera club competition will usually have technical issues or be a poor choice of subject so these will be easily given something in the range of 12-15."*

*"Let's be very honest with each other. The technical & creative execution of the vast majority of camera club competition images will be capable but not exceptional. Seasoned camera club members know a lot about how to control cameras but when comparing a range of photographs on a club night, very few will be a good deal more impactful and creatively successful than the majority."*

## Snippets (Continued) ....

Something a little bit different - a play about photography. 'Firewing' is on at the [Hampstead Theatre](#) from 17th April to 23rd May.

*"In a dilapidated cabin by a lake, deep in the English countryside, Tim, a celebrated wildlife photographer, prepares to welcome Marcus, the latest in a string of failed apprentices. Despite his lack of knowledge or experience, Tim quickly sees there's something different about this one - he just needs to figure out if Marcus can be trusted with the professional techniques he's spent decades developing.*

*Together, they endeavour to find and photograph the elusive Firewing - a task that will test the lengths they're willing to go for something that may be just beyond their reach. It's said that a picture tells a thousand words, but for Tim and Marcus every shot becomes a question: of what we see, what we choose to capture, and what we leave out of frame... "*

A useful accessory if you ever find yourself photographing through a window. These flexible lens hoods allow you to get close to the window, cutting out reflections (of course you could also use your existing lens hood, although petal lens hoods will still let in extraneous light). Both are available from Amazon:



[Lens Hood skirt](#)



[Silicone Lens Hood](#)

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**Food For Thought**

"Capture what inspires you and learn to use the tools to communicate your idea effectively." *Cat Cross, Photographer and Competition Judge*

"There are no rules for good photographs; there are only good photographs." *Ansel Adams*

"Art is the expression of the imagination, not the reproduction of reality." *Henry Moore, Sculptor*

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