

U3A Digital Photo Group – 25th March 2019 Meeting Notes

General

The meeting was another good one with an excellent turnout ([19 Members + Apologies from 6 others unable to attend – thus the overall numbers continue to increase meeting-on-meeting](#)), and welcome to the 3 new members who attended for the first time: Christine Johnston, and Barbara & Ron McCrea.

Before anything else, this to ask for a volunteer (willing or otherwise!😊) to prepare a presentation on “Photographing Children” for the May Meeting (with Ian Brown who will address “Photographing Animals”) – see further down!

Main Presentation: “Event Photography”

I gave a presentation on the above subject to try to show the similarities and differences in the approaches and techniques for photographing:

- **“Static” events** – such as processions, flower shows and others where there may be some movement but it’s not rapid or extreme.
- **“Action Events”** where the opposite is the case, and people/objects move rapidly and often change direction quickly, such as motorsport/aviation, soccer and athletics, etc.

That, however, there are **Common Factors** to take into account for both types:

- **Often, “less is more”**: Main “objects” should be the largest – don’t lose them in the sky/buildings/”other stuff”
- **“Main Objects”** - Concentrate on these for “Impact”
- **“Zoom settings” &/or zoom lenses**: fill the “frame” – or “zoom with your feet” by walking towards the subject.
- **Backdrops**: “bland”/low contrast/ “complicated backdrops fool camera metering and causes under/over exposure
- **Lighting**: Keep Sun &/or strong artificial lighting behind you to illuminate subjects, and avoid “flaring” if in front
- **Thus use Common Sense: and think about the subjects before pushing the shutter button!**

And for “**Static**” events:

- Venues may be crowded-> you could be close to subjects
- Wide-angle settings/lenses are useful in such locations
- Identify “targets” & wait until you can get clear shots
- “Depth of Field” in shots may be limited – so don’t use wide apertures unless you:
- Have no alternative (*or use “High ISO” to compensate?*)
- Want to “isolate” the subjects from the backgrounds
- Overhead lighting can cause lens “flaring” on shots
- Arrival timing may not be critical at some events except at *historical re-enactment events, theatre productions, etc.*

Then, for “**Action**” events, there’s quite a lot more to take into account:

- **Locations** - Choose them carefully, and:
 - o Don’t stand in crowd-line centres -> you will be jostled & get poor shots of the subjects passing rapidly past you
 - o Go to ends of lines, with fewer people, to get better choice of position & views of subjects approaching/departing.
 - o If “track”/crowd-line has bends = good because subjects will probably change direction there -> stand to one side!

- Shoot subjects “at an angle” showing a side and front/rear -> more effective than totally “side-on” shots.
- Out-of-doors, moderately cloudy skies can result in more “atmospheric” shots than totally blue/totally cloudy, skies – especially if subjects are silhouetted against clouds
- **Shutter Speeds**
 - Too slow-> subjects will be blurred (unless “panning”)
 - Too fast-> “sense of movement” can be lost
 - For most shots-> Use 1/250th-1/500thS, but for fast-moving subjects (*e.g. motor vehicles, jet aircraft, birds, animals*) maybe need 1/1000th-1/4000thS
 - If “panning” with fast-moving subjects: Use 1/60thS (possibly slower) to 1/250thS (max!) - > sharp subjects & blurred backgrounds
- **Aperture & Focus**
 - High shutter speeds can require Wide Apertures to compensate for lighting-> restricts Depth of Field
 - Too large -> subjects could be out-of-focus &/or autofocus can’t cope quickly enough
 - Too small -> limits usable shutter speed
 - For most shots->Use F4-F8 for high shutter speed
 - However, Autofocus may still not cope with fast moving targets, so switch to Manual focus &
 - Pre-focus on the point/at the distance where you expect the target to be when shooting
- **Viewfinders**
 - Success is hard to achieve if using rear screens (& phones!) !
 - Especially when subjects move rapidly to Left/ Right as you are trying to look at:
 - the screen close to your eyes,
 - & ALSO at the distant subject at the same time.
 - Our eyes and brains aren’t “built to do that” - and that gets worse as we get older!
 - So, if your camera has an optical viewfinder, or maybe an electronic one (older ones are poor but modern ones are better), then try to use that instead of the rear screen

General “Preparation for both Types of Event –

- Plan WELL BEFORE “The Day” and check:
 - Event website, &/or “event-specific” webpages.
 - Photo kit restrictions (*camera size, lens size, tripod/monopod?*) or “No cameras allowed” (*especially at indoor events*) !! (& *if taking dogs then check any relevant restrictions/prohibitions*)
 - Traffic controls/parking restrictions/diversions & car park locations - especially if you carry “heavy” stuff!
 - Buy tickets in advance – saves money & time, & *pay-at-gate often not possible for popular events*.
 - How to set your camera up and use it correctly!
 - NB: If the camera takes interchangeable lenses then check the sensor for dust & get it cleaned if needed

- “ON “The Day” - “Essential Stuff”
 - o Right clothing/**shoes**/bags for location & weather, especially if sunny/hot or cold/wet/windy
 - o Maps, tickets, parking pass (if required) & fully charged phone/satnav to ensure you find the venue!
- “ON “The Day” – Photo Kit
 - o Camera & fully-charged spare batteries, or make sure the internal battery is fully charged
 - o Spare formatted & empty memory cards (*formatted in the camera is best*)
 - o If the camera takes interchangeable lenses then the right lenses – & *lens hoods & USE them!*
 - o Tripod/monopod? - *weight might be more hindrance than help & often banned at many events*
 - o Separate flashgun & batteries? – *but, same again, often banned at indoor events*
 - o Photo kit bag for all above, + a cover if likely to rain!!
- ON “The Day” – “Other Stuff”
 - o Snacks/drinks - on-site catering **IS** expensive, & *may be far from likely shooting locations.*
 - o Folding chairs/stools if you will be standing a lot
 - o Paper towels/tissues to wipe things clean/dry, & plastic bags for rubbish!
 - o Possibly a trolley to carry the stuff, but get the right one as many are too heavy or fragile - although that can sometimes be fixed!
- Finally, “ON The Day”, there WILL be delays & queues everywhere, -> Allow plenty of extra time for:
 - o Traveling (*avoid “popular”/sat-nav routes!*), entry to carparks, getting to/through security/ticket-checks, loo (!) & food queues, finding shooting locations (& *maybe even to exit at the end of the day!*)
 - o Thus, arrive as early as you reasonably can!
 - o At “Action” events, keep within defined spectator areas – you will be safer there than elsewhere

The current pdf version of the slideshow is attached, but I will now slightly update it for the webpages in a few days or so – but note that most of the illustrative shots linked in that will be separate pdfs linked from the main presentation (*due to website file size constraints!*), and so you will have to click on those links to view them.

The March Prints Competition “Landscapes”

In February Robert Waltz gave his presentation about the Landscape Photography course he attended in Italy last year, and so it was agreed that the theme for this month’s competition should also be “Landscapes”

14 very good prints were entered, and here are the results of the Voting that took place after the tea and coffee break:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------|---------------------------------|
| - 1 st | - | Margaret Mayes | “Early Morning” |
| - 2 nd | - | Ian Brown | “Sunrise over Bushey Park Lake” |
| - 3 rd | - | Robert Waltz | “Descent” |
| - 4 th | - | Robert Waltz | “Tree Hut” |

The Winning Members should send the image files for those shots to the email address (hillingdonu3a.pictures@gmail.com) - giving the:

Competition name, the photo position number and the “photo name” (as above), and, of course, their own name, and the image file sizes should be NO LARGER than 1Mb.

The winning shots will then be put on our website pages (<https://u3asites.org.uk/hillingdon/page/81260>) a few days after the next WCH meeting on 8th April.

"YOUR Shot of the Month, ANYTHING goes!"

As usual we had a good entry of 16 images, and so the Members discussed where and how the shots were taken and then vote, and the 4 “winning” entries were:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|---|-----------------|
| - 1 st | Ian Brown | - | “Robin” |
| - 2 nd | Malcolm Barwick | - | “Trunk Call” |
| - 3 rd | Andrew Langridge | - | “Pensive Child” |
| - 4 th | Brian Hillier | - | “Leaf in Lake” |

As I already had the image files, I reduced each one to <1Mb max (where necessary) and sent them on Tony Kemp, who has now added them to our web pages here <https://u3asites.org.uk/hillingdon/page/86648>.

This “competition” is popular, and so please send me up to three (3) digital images of your “best shots” each month – doesn't matter what the subject is, providing it is interesting, and well composed & executed (and give date & location where taken, if possible).

NB: shots must be taken between the current meeting and just before the next meeting:

Thus, for the April meeting, shots must be taken between 26th March and that meeting on 25th April
- but send them to me by 20th April to give me time to put them into the presentation for the 25th!

The April Prints Competition = “Event Photography with the Emphasis on Action”

Following my Event Photography presentation earlier, when the question of the subject for the April Prints competition was raised, it was suggested and agreed that the theme for the April Prints competition should be “Event Photography with the Emphasis on Action”.

To remind you: prints are to be from shots taken in the last 12 months (preferably far more recently than that!) before the meeting in question, be between (roughly) A5 & A4 size, and with the following info on the back (a post-it will do &/or a screen shot of the “EXIF” data from the image file):

- Date
- Camera make/type
- Image size (in “pixels”) & Image file size (in “kB” or “MB”)
- Shutter speed, Aperture size, and possibly the exposure metering mode
- Lens “focal length” & Zoom setting (only “sometimes” for some camera/lens combos)
- ISO sensitivity setting
- Any Exposure adjustments used, including possibly “White Balance” setting.
- Whether flash was used
- If you did “post production work” (“Photoshopping”, etc.) then notes on what you did.

Presentations and Discussions at Future meetings

- **April Meeting - “Printing with various brands of Printer”**

At the February Meeting, I proposed we set up a joint presentation to illustrate the similarities and differences in using several brands of printers to produce good prints, and suggested using Canon, Epson and HP Printers “side-by-side”. However, several things have since happened after that meeting, and then at this March one:

- Andrew Langridge has volunteered to take on the Epson presentation (and Brian will back him up if necessary)
- Mick Madigan has volunteered to take on the Canon presentation (and I will back him up if necessary)

- We had a show of hands to find out who uses which brand of printer, and, from that, it appears that the majority of members use Epson printers and a few use Canon.
However, hardly anyone uses HP and there appear good reasons for that – most likely, the lack of straight-through paper feeds makes it difficult to use the thicker high-quality photo papers. Thus we decided to drop the idea of an HP printer demo (at least for the present).

The Committee will select a couple of shots to send to both Andrew and Mick for them to sketch out the processes for printing with their respective printers – *the emphasis being mainly on the steps involved, rather than the absolute quality of the resulting prints*, but they are encouraged to include any useful tips on how to produce good results with their particular printers!

- **May Meeting - “Children & Animals”**

Ian Brown has volunteered to give a presentation on shooting animals (and we know how good he is at that!), but said that he couldn’t address the “Children” side of the subject

Therefore we need a volunteer to prepare and deliver that part of the presentation on shooting photos of “Children”.

(and, since we know that there are several members who have already proved that they are good at this, then please step forward - preferably before the April Meeting!)

Monthly meeting Diary Dates for 2019 – the 4th Monday of each month

(EXCEPT for some which will be on Thursdays as indicated below)

Thrs 25th Apr, **Thrs** 30th May, Mon 24th June, Mon 22nd July, **Thrs** 29th Aug, Mon 23rd Sept, Mon 28th Oct, Mon 25th Nov, **Thrs** 19th Dec

PS: We would very much appreciate “Apologies” emails/phone calls if you can’t attend any of the meetings!

All the best and see you on **THURSDAY 25th APRIL 2019**

John

And on behalf of the other members of the Steering Committee: Judy Peddie, Len Fenton and Brian Hillier!

NB: you will soon be able to see these Notes on-line at <https://u3asites.org.uk/hillingdon/page/61662>, where you will also find those from previous meetings, and also much information & guidance on many aspects of photography, learning how to use your camera, image processing and printing, etc.!