The Zoom virtual meeting went well and with 10 members attending "on-line", and apologies from several others who had medical appointments.

Brian Hillier introduced the meeting, which then followed the Agenda set out in his email of Thursday 21st, and thus the main item was Robert Waltz's presentation "**Mobile Phone Photography**" – *of which a pdf version can be found at https://u3asites.org.uk/hillingdon/page/84586 on our website pages.*

The Presentation: "Mobile Phone Photography" – Robert Waltz

Before he started, Robert told us that this was to be an interactive presentation, and thus to get our phones up and running as he would ask us to experiment with various functions and facilities in the camera App that was installed – ***and, for those who could not attend the meeting or would like to revisit the presentation, get your phone/tablet out and experiment with it as you read through the attached pdf!***

*NB: Please note that some facilities mentioned in the presentation **do not** appear to exist in the default Apps installed in phones by some manufacturers (notably for Motorola-branded ones, as several of us discovered!), BUT other Apps **do** include them and can be downloaded from either the Google Playstore for Android devices or the Apple Store for iPhones & iPads! (although you may then have to pay a few quid to get rid of the adverts in the free versions!).*

In summary, as will be seen from the pdf, Robert's presentation looked at the following:

- "Basics" – basic stuff + an important question for you to answer: *"where on your phone are your photos stored?"*

- *That could be on the internal memory (the "RAM"), or on a uSDHC card in a card slot on the edge/back of the phone (iPhone/iPad users needn't bother looking – those devices have no memory card slots!). You need understand where that is, how many shots are there and how to manage / delete them, OR ELSE you might otherwise run out of storage space at "the wrong moment" and thus the camera App might not let you take any more photos!*

- "Quick Launch" – an App facility to enable you to get your phone out and shoot "straightaway"

- "Framing & Composition", including using "Gridlines"

- "Digital Zoom" and why that's actually a bad idea!

- "Lighting, Flash or No Flash" (flash is often a *bad* idea as there are other methods of lighting a subject!)

- "Steady Yourself" & "Examples of low-priced mini tripod/ clamp to support a smartphone"

- "Remote Shutter Release", why it can help, and how to do it using Bluetooth &/or a facility in the Camera App

- "Expose Your Subject Properly" – why, when using the default settings, photos can be over/under exposed, and how to fix that

- "Portraits" & how a dedicated Portrait mode function can simulate the shallow depth of field from a "real camera"

- "HDR" ("High Dynamic Range") & how to deal with big differences between the lightest & darkest parts of a scene using App options

- "Changing your stock camera app" *and why that might be a good idea - as mentioned above!*

During, and after, the presentation, there was much "experimentation", and many comments/questions as to why/where/how to find and use the various functions, and so most of the members learnt quite a lot about what the Camera Apps on their phones can actually do, *or not,* that they didn't know beforehand – and **therefore very many thanks to Robert for that presentation, and for the engaging and amusing way in which he delivered it** 😊.

The January Competitions

Brian has already circulated the list of winning entries in both competitions, and has sent them to Eirwen and Tony as appropriate, and so those shots will soon appear on our website pages as normal.

At the meeting Brian then led discussions in which he "Shared "the Google Photo albums of the two sets of competition entries and invited comments from the photographers of the winning shots, and from the other members present. We discussed the circumstances and locations where the shots had been taken, why they had turned out as they had, and whether alterations to framing, lighting, subsequent cropping etc., might or might not have "improved" the end results – and, as such that was very thought-provoking and entertaining.

The Best Photo Size for Google Album is 3600 x 2200 pixels - Brian Hillier

When I added Members photos to the Google Albums for our Monthly competitions I noticed that some photos did not fill the frame, and upon investigation I found the following.

 The Google photo frame will display an image with a maximum of 3600 x 2200 pixels.

 Test results showed:

- An image of 3600 x 2200 pixels will fill the entire Google Photo Frame

- Images with small pixel counts will not fill the Frame;

- Images with larger pixel counts will appear as a horizontal or vertical crop;

  and there is no distortion of the photograph

- The image that does not fill the frame it will be surrounded by black.

 - There is no apparent loss of definition if the image size is 1 MB or 500KB.

So, when you prepare your competition photos check that at least one side of the frame is at least 3600 pixels in width or 2200 pixels in height.

Try this link to see my Google Photo test. https://photos.app.goo.gl/3GpwVdVuyY61VsbKA

> *NB: The pixel-count can be changed in various Apps, (e.g. FastStone Image Viewer, PhotoRazor and Affinity Photo) & on your PC/MC.*

The 22ⁿᵈ February presentation

Len Fenton will be giving a presentation of how to use "**Layers and Masking**" in post-processing of shots in order to improve &/or alter them.

NB: the Committee aims to develop a meeting programme where the themes and presentations are decided on a rolling 3 month basis, and thus those for the following months' will hopefully be announced quite soon.

The February Competitions

The February themed-competition will be for shots of "**New Life**" – that could include anything from snowdrops, sprouting buds or leaves, animals or insects coming out of hibernation, new babies ("animal" or human!) and so on…..

The "Shot of the Month" competition continues "as normal" of course.

The timeline for competition entries and voting has now been brought forward to enable the entries, and notably the winning ones, to be reviewed and discussed at the following meeting
– **which in this case will be the 22ⁿᵈ February**

Therefore:
- The deadline for all **entries** will be: **midnight on Saturday 13ᵗʰ February**
- The deadline for **voting** will be: **Saturday 20ᵗʰ February**

NB: We know that getting out to take photos is quite challenging at the moment due to the pandemic and the weather – but the Committee encourages you to do that whenever possible for the sake of your health, and to ensure that we get a steady flow of new competition shots (entries have unfortunately been a bit "light" recently!).

Monthly meeting Diary Dates for 2021 - the 4th Monday of each month *(at least for the immediate future)*

As you will all know, the u3aH meeting programme for 2021 is currently very "fluid" due to the ongoing pandemic and restrictions, but, for at least the next few months, the Committee aims to continue to have **Zoom meetings on the 4th Monday of each month** until such time as opportunities for face-to-face meetings at the Baptist Church *(or maybe elsewhere &/or as "photo-shoots??)* become much clearer and more stable.

Well, that's all for the moment, and so all the best and hope to see you all on **MONDAY 22nd FEBRUARY at the next ZOOM Virtual Meeting!**

Brian Hillier

And on behalf of the other members of the Steering Committee: Andrew Longhurst, Judy Peddie & John Allen!

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