

## General

We had a good turnout 19, plus, of course our guest judge, and this is what happened during the meeting :

- We welcomed the judge, Amanda Wright and her friend Rick Beresford – who Tony Kemp knows from their time at EMI, and who was instrumental in arranging the visit -, and then I briefly outlined the programme for the meeting, and the themes and highlights for the forthcoming February and March meetings.
- Amanda then:
  - o Gave us a quick summary of her work for both the Ealing and Hampstead House Photographic Society (EHHPS) and the Chiltern Association of Camera Clubs (CACC), and of how she became a qualified photographic judge, which she has since been for a number of years;
  - o Outlined how she would be judging and scoring the (26) shots that had been entered for judging (*and as made available to her beforehand for initial review by Tony*) – which was essentially to score on a scale of 1 to 20 (highest), but that she would probably “Hold back” some shots for final review and scoring at the end of the session;
  - o Reviewed, commented and scored each shot, and did indeed hold back 5 of them for final review & scoring.
- The tea & coffee break was then taken quite a bit later than normal, and was followed by voting on the “Christmas Decorations” prints which had been on display during that break – and in which I invited Amanda and Rick to participate (on the “same basis” as Group members!)

## The Review and Judging Session

It is obviously not feasible to discuss Amanda’s comments on each of the 26 shots here (my scribbled notes would not do them justice, and it would take too long anyway!), but here are some of the points which I “distilled” from what she said (plus a few thoughts that I had afterwards), and quoting the subjects &/or issues in relevant shots (*and apologies for anything that I missed or misinterpreted!*):

### Good – Shots where:

- o An “object” (*e.g. animal, bird, tree, flower, boat*) with interesting detail (*e.g. facial expression, design, pattern & colouring*) is accurately focused and stands out from the rest of the image by the latter being “muted-out” (*e.g. with low-key or “all-white” background*) ;
- o Good “lead lines” draw the viewer’s eye towards “far” & “interesting” areas such as mountains, hills, trees or even simply the corner of the image (*e.g. line of trees stretching in the distance, converging tracks in snow and leading “away”, curving beach line, train tracks leading towards a corner of the image*) ;
- o There is an element of unintended “humour” (*e.g. sleepy water buffalo wallowing contentedly in muddy water*);
- o Animal head shots are accurately focused enough to show highlights in the eyes (*or else those were added during post-processing!!*)
- o The “aspect ratio” (*ratio of image width to height*) was changed by cropping to maximise the “impact” of the interesting main subjects and to remove “dead areas” around those.
- o Skies have “interesting” detail (*e.g. cloud formations with variations in lighting & contrast*) as opposed to bland clouds or none at all.
- o The colours are relatively limited, but the main subject stands out because it is strongly coloured, and the background is less so but still contributes to the overall effect (*e.g. strongly coloured deck chairs on a bright sandy beach, brightly-coloured old-looking wooden boat with interesting superstructure on sloping pebbled beach*)

Not so Good – Shots where:

- It would benefit from tighter cropping to remove distracting areas/details at the edges, and thus focus attention on the main subject &/or to move it slightly off-centre to add “interest” (e.g. *Burmese lady with basket & wearing local sun hat moved right-of-centre by cropping righthand edge of image*);
- Intruding objects (e.g. *tree /branch /leaves /grass /lamppost /shed, etc.*) at the edge distracts attention from the main subject – so crop or clone it/them out;
- “Something” (e.g. *grass, reflections, people, etc.*) behind the main subject draws attention away from the main subject &/or is obviously “not right” (e.g. *profile shot of a lady with the arm of someone behind her appearing to sprout from her face, or distractingly bright vegetation/objects to one or more sides of the “main” subject*), and thus either:
  - Alter the shooting angle to eliminate that distracting “thing” &/or use a wider aperture to blur out or otherwise minimise the distracting object; or
  - In post-processing, blur-out the distracting “object” whilst leaving the main subject sharp (*can be difficult but Len showed ways to do that in one of his presentations*) &/or “mute” its brightness/colour to make it less obvious.
- The main subject is unintentionally in shadow, and thus cannot be seen clearly, as can happen with strong backlighting behind it (e.g. *alpaca head & neck with strong sunshine from behind and to one side*) - thus check lighting direction before shooting to minimise such effects, &/or adjust Highlight and Shadow levels during post processing;
- A “horizon line” is not horizontal, or a vertical edge is not vertical, and thus the image does not look realistic – thus make sure it *is* level or vertical when taking the shot, or else correct it in post-processing;
- Fast moving objects/people are shown from the back instead of, preferably, slightly chest on because the shot was taken a little later than it should have been &/or from a less-than-favourable position (e.g. *the back instead of the front of a person on a fairground roundabout*) – adjust shooting position AND practice (*probably a lot it in my experience ☺*) taking shots of rapidly moving objects;
- Harsh, contrasty lighting makes it difficult to make out the main subject &/or that’s lost in “shadow” (e.g. *strong fairground lighting, floodlighting at sporting events, strong targeted lighting at static displays*) due to poor choice of shooting location automatic exposure being based on the stronger light sources – careful choice of shooting location is needed as may the need to exposure more carefully for the “mid-tones”, &/or adjustment Highlight, Shadow & Contrast levels during post processing,
- The title does not reflect in that what the viewer actually sees as it relates to only a small part of the image - as such it is difficult to “find” & “explore that “main subject” (e.g. *title is “Spanish Pool at Night”, but that pool only occupies a very small part of the image and it is surrounded by many large & distracting objects, trees., etc.*) – crop image so that the title subject is larger and more detail of it can be seen.

BTW: the software that Tony used to display the shots for review and judging is called “Image Comp Pro” (*and was one of two that recommended to him for that purpose*).

*The Scores!*

Position	Title and Author	Score
1	"WILD HARE IN THE SNOW" by John Clark	20
=	"KINGFISHER" by John Clark	20
=	"PUFFINS" by Freda Longhurst	20
4	"WINTER IN THE PARK" by Tony Kemp	19
=	"LE TOUQUET WAITS FOR YOU" by Brian Hillier	19
=	"HASTINGS" by Malcolm Barwick	19
7	"TREE AND LOGS" by Freda Longhurst	18
=	"WHITE ISLAND CRATER NZ" by Len Fenton	18
=	"WATER BUFFALO" by Robert Waltz	18
=	"SKIING THE MOUNTAINS" by Robert Waltz	18
=	"BURMESE LADY WITH BASKET" by Janet Nicolas	18
=	"HIGH WATER" by Malcolm Barwick	18
13	"BEAMISH MUSEUM" by Brian Hillier	17
=	"THE RED ARROWS" by John Allen	17
=	"SOUTH WALES" by Andrew Longhurst	17
=	"TWO CHAMPIONS" by Janet Nicolas	17
=	"GOING FOR BIRD WATCHING" by Jothy Rainbow	17
=	"FRIEND FISHING" by Ian Brown	17
=	"VIEW FROM EAGLES NEST BERCHTESGARDEN GERMANY" by Ian Brown	17
20	"AFTER THE RAIN" by John Allen	16
=	"FLOWER" by Len Fenton	16
=	"ROUNDABOUT" by Andrew Longhurst	16
=	"DOG WALKING" by Jothy Rainbow	16
=	"U3A WALK" by Tony Kemp	16
=	"SPANSIH POOL AT NIGHT" by Tony Kemp	16
26	"ALPACA" by Tony Kemp	15

Tony has now placed all the shots on the internet on Google Drive and you can find them here:  
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14eD2SUcWtm-e3NmP-sJmOPGxj-UPRnc4?usp=sharing> or  
<https://bit.ly/2RLusQr> for a shorter link.

We would now like to heartily thank Tony and Rick for arranging for Amanda take the time to come along and give us the great benefit of her knowledge and experience – and for those thanks to be passed on to her in the near future! 😊

And, of course, for the work that Tony himself then did to receive, collate and display our shots on the day 😊.

## **The December & January Prints Competition “Christmas Decorations”**

There were 11 entries, and the voting on those submitted resulted in the following:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Equal	-	Freda Longhurst	“Salt Lamps”
		-	Andrew Longhurst	“Roundabout”
3 <sup>rd</sup>			Freda Longhurst	“Fortnum Window”
4 <sup>th</sup>		-	Andrew Longhurst	“Xmas Market”

As usual the Winning Members should send the image files for those shots to the email address [hillingtonu3a.pictures@gmail.com](mailto:hillingtonu3a.pictures@gmail.com) - giving the:

**Competition name** – “Christmas Decorations”, the photo position number and the “photo name” (**AS ABOVE, PLEASE!!**), and, of course, their own name; and image **file sizes should be NO LARGER than 1Mb**.

**NB:** I will send a message to the above email address so that Eirwen knows what to expect to receive from the Winners. They should then be on our webpages a few days after the WCH meeting on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December – see here in due course: <https://u3asites.org.uk/hillingdon/page/93256>

## **Future meetings**

### **February**

Len will be giving his new “Shooting Macro & Close-up” shots presentation, which I understand to be much revised and updated as compared with that which he gave us several years ago.

He will also be challenging you to provide answers to the latest version of his Christmas Photo Quiz. Yes, *I know*, the last one sent to you was the “Final, Final” version, but now he provided what must now be (*or at least I really, really hope is 😊*) the “Final, Final, Final” version – see the “PhotoQuiz Page 1” and “PhotoQuiz Page 2” files which were attached to the email version of these Notes which was sent out to Members on 1<sup>st</sup> February (*and, Yes, they have even more “questions than the “Final, Final” version!*).

Study the jpgs, and enter the answers in advance on the Excel spreadsheet also attached (same one as before, so you will have to add a few more lines!).

The Prints Competition will be “**January Blues**” – blue skies, Blue Moon, “Blue moods” *or whatever “blue” subject takes your fancy!*

The Shot of the Month Competition will actually be, as I said before, “**Your Shots of the Last 3 months, Anything Goes**” (*i.e. since the November meeting*) and you will be allowed a maximum of **4 (FOUR)** shots in total.

Thus, if you have *already* submitted four to me then you will need to tell me which of those “retire” if you want to send me any new ones (and if you have not already told me that).

Anyway, please send your shots to me by **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February!**

### **March Meeting**

Andrew will be giving his views on the comparative “pros and cons” of various types of “photographic devices” such as compact cameras, DSLRs “Mirrorless Interchangeable Lens Cameras” (“MILC”), “Bridge” cameras, and “phones used as cameras”.

## **Group Membership Review and Confirmation**

Many of our Members do come along very regularly – but there a number whom we have not seen for quite a long time, and thus we wonder if they are still interested in belonging to the group.

Therefore, since it takes time and effort to accurately maintain the membership records, email addresses and contact phone numbers, and to distribute information to people, we will soon be considering whether

to reduce the size of the mailing list – *and that will be dependent on how many people do now confirm to us that they wish continue to be kept informed of our activities and plans.*

We aim to discuss this at the February or March meeting with a view to “slimming down” the distribution list for the beginning of the next “U3A financial year” in April – **therefore we would like YOU to confirm to me by email that you do want to remain on the list, so please do so as soon as it is convenient!**

### **Diary Dates for 2020**

On the normal basis that the meetings will – *wherever possible* – be on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month, here are the dates that are booked **at the moment**:

<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mon 24<sup>th</sup></b>	
Mar	Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup>	No English B/H in March, so no issues like last year
Apr	Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	Good Friday-Easter Monday B/H is 10 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup> – again no issues
May	<b>Thrs 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b><i>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> is the Spring B/H, so see below!</i></b>
June	Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup>	
July	Mon 27 <sup>th</sup>	
Aug	<b>??</b>	<b><i>August B/H is Monday 31<sup>st</sup> – BUT see below!</i></b>
Sept	Mon 28 <sup>th</sup>	
Oct	Mon 26 <sup>th</sup>	
Nov	Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup>	
Dec	<b>Thurs 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b><i>But see below!</i></b>

The issues for 2020 seem less severe than in 2019, except for the following which we will discuss at the February meeting:

- **May** – do we hold a meeting on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> (for which we have made a provisional booking), have an off-site photoshoot, or no meeting at all?
- **August** – it now appears that the Church is completely booked throughout August for children’s summer holiday activities, and so the previously provisionally-booked date of Monday 24<sup>th</sup> will not be available to us – therefore do we have either an off-site photoshoot or no meeting at all?
- **December** – Xmas Day is Fri 25<sup>th</sup> and that basically rules out most of that and the following week, and therefore we have provisionally booked Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>

However, after the “total fiasco” of the double booking on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, *we now have to positively confirm if the Church would be actually available to us on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December this year, and, if so, then decide if we actually do want to hold a meeting on that day?*

Therefore, all the best and see you on **MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

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 there is also much information & guidance there on many aspects of photography, learning how to use your camera, image processing and printing, etc.!