

# U3A Digital Photo Group – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019 Meeting Notes

## General

The 28<sup>th</sup> January meeting was a good one with an excellent turnout (*18 Members + Apologies from 5 others unable to attend due to unavoidable appointments and/or illness*), and, we were very pleased to welcome another “new” member (Rayner Heyd) who, in fact, used to be a member many years ago and has now “returned to the fold”. ☺

## Main Presentation: “PC and Apple Mac Basic Editing Tools Compared” – Well, Almost!

The main presentation *should* have been “PC and Apple Mac Basic Editing Tools Compared” presented jointly by Brian (on a Mac) and Len (on a PC), who have worked hard together on it since Christmas – however, at the very last minute, there was a loss in Brian’s family and so he had to attend the funeral on Monday, and obviously could not do the presentation.

Therefore Len had to rapidly modify his presentation, and then gave a very interesting and enlightening talk on some of the basic, and then some of the more advanced, tools in PhotoShop Elements (version 14). Whilst that presentation was given in a manner which doesn’t really lend itself to being condensed into something that can be displayed on our website pages, here are some of the main tools and functions that he addressed:

- The various “Marquee”  and Lasso  (including *Magnetic Lasso*) tools which allow you to select specific areas of image on which to do further work
- The “Crop”  tool to select the part of the image to which you want delete, and then saving the remaining areas as a new file
- The “Spot Healing” tool which allows you to drag an adjacent over something that you want to hide
- The “Red Eye” reduction  tool to remove red reflected light rings in peoples’ eyes
- The “Clone” tool to select areas of the image you want to overlay over other areas where there are distracting objects
- The “Blur”  tool to make selected areas of any image less sharp, and thus to attract the viewer’s attention to specific objects
- The “Sharpening” and “Unsharp Mask” tools to control how sharp the edges of objects are – and how to avoid over-sharpening of an object which can lead to white and black lines either side of the actual edges.
- The “Verticals” tool to straighten up “leaning” buildings and the like
- The “Text” tool  which allows you to overlay a text box on an image and then add text to the box
- The “Image” & “Enhance” process which allows you control over Shadow and Highlight levels
- The “Magic Wand”, unlike other selection tools that select pixels in an image based on shapes or by detecting object edges, the Magic Wand selects pixels based on tone and colour – as outlined here: <https://www.photoshopesentials.com/basics/selections/magic-wand-tool/>
- Then Len many of the above (and other tools) to demonstrate some very creative editing of a picture of his daughter on top of a tram. The original was very “flat” with little detail in the shadows and a very dreary grey sky, but, by the time he had finished the job, you could clearly see previously unseen details in the shadowed areas – and he had completely replaced the sky by a bright one with fluffy white clouds. ☺

As a number of people expressed considerable interest in how this was done, and how they could do similar things themselves, Len has very kindly detailed the process in the attached document, and also included the original shots of the tram and the sky so that anyone can have a go at doing the same thing for themselves ☺

- At various points, Len commented that from his experience with working with Brian, he could see how close the Windows & MAC processes actually are – and thus there is relatively few differences between them
- Finally, during the presentation, Len demonstrated the use of many of the “Keyboard shortcut” combinations that can be used in Elements (*and often in some other Windows Apps*) to make common tasks a lot quicker and easier. Since the meeting I have found several information documents on using those in Elements/Photoshop on both the PC **and** MAC platforms, notably:

The Kwiktips “Photoshop Elements Keyboard Shortcuts” from Phototree.com which seems to include most of those that Len used: [http://www.phototree.com/kwik/downloads/kwiktip\\_shortcuts.pdf](http://www.phototree.com/kwik/downloads/kwiktip_shortcuts.pdf)

Adobe’s own “Adobe Photoshop Elements Keyboard shortcuts” [https://helpx.adobe.com/content/dam/help/en/photoshop-elements/using/keys-selecting-tools/jcr\\_content/main-pars/download\\_section/download-1/Shortcut%20keys.pdf](https://helpx.adobe.com/content/dam/help/en/photoshop-elements/using/keys-selecting-tools/jcr_content/main-pars/download_section/download-1/Shortcut%20keys.pdf)

So good are these that I downloaded them, and both are attached herewith!

We all both enjoyed and learnt a lot from the presentation (as usual!), and so, Len, thank you very much! ☺

### **Something Handy for archiving those old prints in the Cupboard**

Having piles of envelopes full of old prints in various cupboards, and, having been alerted to the possibilities by Tony Kemp, I have just bought a PanDigital SCN04 Photolink portable scanner which can scan prints up to 7”x5” to either the SD card (up to 2GB works, but it doesn’t seem to like larger ones) in its integral card slot or direct to a PC via USB. It looks like this.



As I thought that some other people might be interested in this sort of device, I gave a short demo of the scanner to show how easy and quick it is to scan prints direct to the PC (*although it can take some time to figure out just how it needs to be set up in advance!*) and we then had a short discussion of its merits, or otherwise, and thus:

#### **Good points:**

- Quick and easy, once the setup procedure is understood and correctly followed:
- Allows you to create digital versions of all those old family photos in your cupboards (or those in your relatives cupboards when you visit them), and you don’t need the PC as you can do the job whilst sitting on the sofa and watching TV ☺
- Not very expensive IF you can actually find one for sale (I got mine in the UK for about £60, but others are available from the US for about £100)

#### **Not so good points:**

- Each print has to be fed in by hand, whereas some scanners can auto-feed a stack of prints through the machine
- Scan quality is “so so” and can be a little grainy, and much poorer than you will get from a decent larger scanner or MFP – then again, many of those old prints probably aren’t that great anyway

- Needs to have a cleaning cycle run every 50 scans or so
- It's a very old design, dating from before/around 2008, and product support will be poor to non-existent, and the s/w is "clunky"

Anyway, should anyone else want to get one then keep an eye on Amazon and eBay – and you can set up searches on the latter which will then throw up Alerts when any do appear for sale, either in the UK or elsewhere.

**The January Prints Competition "Winter, with the emphasis on precipitation (thus rain, sleet, snow, etc.!)"**

When we agreed on the above title, I think we all hoped there would be "interesting" weather conditions at some time before the current meeting – but unfortunately the actual weather has been pretty continuously mostly overcast dull and damp, and that resulted in many of us (including me!) staying indoors unless there were unavoidable reasons to actually go outside our front doors☺. As a result of that, there were very few prints on show (*and many thanks to those who obviously did go outside and provide us with some prints to look at!*), and here are the results of the Voting that took place after the tea and coffee break:

- |                   |   |                  |                           |
|-------------------|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| - 1 <sup>st</sup> | - | Margaret Mayes   | "Flowers covered in Snow" |
| - 2 <sup>nd</sup> | - | Len Fenton       | "Rainbow"                 |
| - 3 <sup>rd</sup> | - | Margaret Mayes   | "Garden Scene"            |
| - 4 <sup>th</sup> | - | Andrew Longhurst | "Reflections of a Bridge" |

The Winning Members should send the image files for those shots to the email address ([hillington3a.pictures@gmail.com](mailto:hillington3a.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 on our website pages (<https://u3asites.org.uk/hillingdon/page/81260>) a few days after the next WCH meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February.

**PS:** The subject of reducing photo image file sizes came up again, and, again, we suggest you download and use the free **FastStone ImageViewer** editing programme – and the instructions for doing that, and then reducing the file sizes can be found in the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 Meeting Notes, which can be found here <https://u3asites.org.uk/files/h/hillingdon/docs/u3adigphoto-nov18meetingnotesv2.pdf>

**"YOUR Shot of the Month, ANYTHING goes!"**

By contrast to the Prints competition, and (*as usual* (☺) after a bit of "reminding" to get Members (i.e. **YOU!**) to send me their shots, we had 15 images to look at, and the Members discussed where and how the shots were taken.

We then had the opportunity to vote, and so the 4 "winning" entries were:

- |                   |   |                  |  |
|-------------------|---|------------------|--|
| - 1 <sup>st</sup> | - | Brian Hillier    | "Desks in a Brunel University Examination Room"    |
| - 2 <sup>nd</sup> | - | Andrew Longhurst | "Wine glass backlit by lights on a Christmas Tree" |
| - 3 <sup>rd</sup> | - | John Perryman    | "Pink Pelican"                                     |
| - 4 <sup>th</sup> | - | Malcolm Barwick  | "Isiabel" (his granddaughter)                      |

Since I already have the image files, I have 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 proving 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 it was taken, if possible*).

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

**Thus, for February's meeting, shots must be taken between 28<sup>th</sup> Jan and the next meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019**

**- but please send them to me by 20<sup>th</sup> Feb to give me time to add them to the presentation for the 25<sup>th</sup>!**

## The February Prints Competition = “Reflections”

Having asked the Members what the theme should be, quite a few suggestions (as below) were made but no agreement could be reached in the short time available. Therefore I sent those out for “voting” with a request for replies by 31<sup>st</sup> January, and the list below shows the numbers of votes by the end of that day:

- a) “Landscapes” - **3**
- b) “Water” - **4**
- c) “Reflections” - **5**
- d) “People” (including possibly statues &/or figures) - **0**
- e) “Weather” (but that was the January theme, and best not to repeat it) - **0**

Thus, based on the above voting numbers, it seems sensible to select “**Reflections**” (from any shiny surface) as that obviously includes **from** “Water”, and possibly “Landscapes” &/or “People” reflected **by/in** Water, Glass (etc.).

To remind you: prints are to be from shots taken in the last 12 months (*preferably a lot more recent than that!*) before the meeting in question, and should be between (roughly) A5 & A4 size, with the following info on the back (a post-it will do):

- 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.

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

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

Mon 25<sup>th</sup> Feb, Mon 25<sup>th</sup> Mar, **Thrs** 25<sup>th</sup> Apr, **Thrs** 30<sup>th</sup> May, Mon 24<sup>th</sup> June, Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> July, **Thrs 29<sup>th</sup> Aug\*\***,  
Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept, Mon 28<sup>th</sup> Oct, Mon 25<sup>th</sup> Nov, **Thrs** 19<sup>th</sup> Dec

- **\*\*** subject to discussion with Members early in 2019 on whether they want a meeting that month, and we will then decide if we actually want that slot.

*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 **MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> February 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 there is also much information & guidance there on many aspects of photography, learning how to use your camera, image processing and printing, etc.!