

General

Monday's Zoom virtual meeting went well and with 11 members attending "on-line", and apologies from another 4.

Competitions

The entry deadlines for the June competitions was extended to *Close-of-Play on Friday 26th June*, after which the Votes go up on Google Photos, with the voting during the following week– with all votes to reach me by Friday 3rd July, thus:

June On-line Competition – "Still Life"

Brian suggested shots of subjects like "baskets of fruit", "vegetables", "flesh" (now, apparently that could mean anything from a fish to an artistically-posed" shot of the Sunday roast!) anything similar that you think will result in interesting shots.

June "Your Shot of the Month"

"Normal rules" – "anything goes" as long it is well composed and executed.

The Presentation: "Affinity Software" – Brian Hillier.

Brian's presentation was "**Adobe Photoshop & Affinity Photo: Affinity's Main Features. Demonstrations, Crop, Improve an Image, HDR**" - a PDF version of that will hopefully soon be on the website (*although, of course, that inevitably won't be quite as interesting and "involving" as the watching and commenting on it during his actual presentation!*).

Basically, he outlined some of the differences between Adobe **Photoshop** ("**APS**") and **Affinity Photo** ("**AP**"), such as:

- **APS** has existed and evolved in many forms over the last 30 years, whereas **AP** was released about 6 years ago – thus many more people will be familiar with the former than the latter, and that means that there is steep learning curve as **AP** does quite a few things in different ways to **APS**.
- He summarised the products produced by Adobe, including "Photoshop", and Affinity, including "Photo"
(NB: there is a typo on of the PDF Page 2, under "Affinity's main products" the word "Photoshop" should obviously read "Photo" – corrected by Brian during the presentation, but nevertheless must have "slipped through the net" in the process of creating the pdf)
- **AP** has most, but not quite as many, of the same tools as **APS**, and these are grouped and used in different ways – notably that AP groups them by "**Personas**" rather than on menu tabs. The number of tools will be adequate for most people's purposes, but further ones can be purchased from Affinity – one of the ways in which they recoup some of the costs incurred from selling **AP** very cheaply in the first place (see below).
- The **AP** screen has tool icons along the top and down the left side – but they are very small unless you are using a large external screen! See PDF Page 3 of the PDF.
- Some **AP** tools work in different ways to their **APS** counterparts – e.g. with the commonly-used Cropping tool you have to select the desired crop frame aspect ratio before using it. See PDF Page 4
- The RAW Image development tool is very powerful – the image shown on PDF Page 5 was very bland and low contrast before using it!
- The HDR tool is also very powerful – the image shown on PDF Page 5 was built up from 5 bracketed exposures which varied between the intensity of the light through the window completely obscuring any detail outside to one showing far more detail of the wall inside.
- Some of the other **AP** image manipulation tools do work rather similarly to those in **APS**, notably the "curves" tool.

- Brian said that if you do get **AP**, then it is a VERY GOOD IDEA to buy the “[Affinity Photo WORKBOOK](#)” which has detailed guided and step-by-step exercises on how to use the various tools. OTOH, Robert later commented that a copy had just come through the letterbox and hit the floor with a loud “thump” – so it’s probably a “heavyish read” in more ways than one 😊.
- The **AP** programme is fairly resource-heavy but should work on most fairly recent desktop and laptop PC’s & MACs – but do bear in mind that the desktop has all those tool icons around it and so an external monitor (or you could use your TV set?) might be a good idea.
- Adobe phased out **APS** as a new standalone programme installation some years ago, and nowadays it’s only available as Adobe “Creative Cloud” (“CC”) on a subscription basis starting around £10 for APS & Lightroom.
- OTOH, Affinity **AP** is sold as a standalone installation at a normal price of around £49, but with regular “special offers” and discounts which bring that down to around £25-£30 – if interested, watch out for special offers around 4th July (the US Independence Day) that could do that.

But, of course, there are many add-ons and plugins that you can buy, and that would put up the cost.

*NB: also, if you are after any other s/w (photo or not) watch out for deals on that around the **4th July!***

Brian again commented that, overall, **AP** is a very powerful piece of s/w, but that it comes with a pretty steep learning curve - therefore, if you do want to try it then be prepared for that. OTOH, if you are fairly happy that your existing photo-editing s/w does what you need, then you are probably best-off sticking with that.

The Miscellany!

Before the meeting, I asked what members had been doing to “get out and around” now that the lockdown is gradually easing, and a discussion on that mentioned cycling (long distances with his mates in Robert’s case!), Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Burnham Beeches amongst other places.

However, questions on “are the cafes and **the toilets** open?” was a recurring theme, with people commenting that the situation varies a lot from place-to-place, and that you need to check before going to places as many are not (especially the toilets!), and that’s not always easy.

However, on this morning’s “Your Money and Your Life” programme (with Matt Allwright and Kim Marsh), that very subject was discussed, and they pointed to two very relevant websites!

- <https://www.toiletmap.org.uk/>
- <https://www.lockdownloo.com/>

The 27th July Meeting

Andrew will be giving a new presentation on “**Where on earth did digital sensors come from - We all know the history of chemical film but what about the digital thingy?**”

In addition, Judy will be reprising her short presentation on “**Photographing Buildings and Architecture**” in anticipation that we should soon be able to get out and do that sort of thing

Future Meetings

We have no idea yet when actual physical meetings at the Church (or elsewhere?) will be possible, and so, assuming that we do go ahead with either

- **Either**, as discussed months ago, an off-site photoshoot on the same day – although, again, where and by whom it would be organised would TBD;

- Or a virtual meeting in August (on Monday 24th or Monday 31st – the latter being the Bank Holiday), then we are looking for presenters and subjects:

– If so please “step forward” if you think you have a subject of general interest and are able to put a suitable presentation together (we will help/ mentor / review/ practice via Zoom /etc., with it if asked!)

Monthly meeting Diary Dates for 2020 - the 4th Monday of each month

(EXCEPT maybe for some on Thursdays as indicated below – some may be virtual, whilst later ones will hopefully be “real ones”!)

On the basis that, the meetings will normally – *wherever possible* – be on the 4th Monday of the month, here are the dates **at the moment**: Mon July 27th, Aug 24th (**), September 28th, October 26th, November 23rd, Thursday December 17th (***)

We have previously discussed the above dates, and provisionally agreed the following:

- ****August** – The Church is completely booked throughout August and so not be available on Mon 24th – so see above
- *****December** – Xmas Day is Fri 25th and so we provisionally booked Thursday 17th, but Judy will check on whether that is still viable, given the “total fiasco” on the 19th of December 2019!

Well, I think that’s all for the moment, and so all the best and see you on **MONDAY 27th JULY at the next Virtual Meeting!**

John

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

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.!