

U3A Digital Photo Group – 25th April 2019 Meeting Notes

The April meeting was good one with an excellent turnout, considering that that was the “holiday week” after Easter, and that a number of members have pre-existing Thursday commitments.

IMPORTANT Note for the “Prints” competition on THURSDAY 30th May

Since this will be for prints from the same “stock images” as provided to Andrew and Mick for the “Printing” presentation, the “rules have changed” – **PLEASE read them** – and the 2 images for you to “play with” and print are attached to this email

IMPORTANT Note for “Your Shot of the Month” Competitions

There seems to have been some confusion – especially among new Members - over the rules for these competitions, and so do please read those if you are not sure.

Request for Themes for Future Meetings

Near the end of these Notes, we are asking for suggestions for themes for the future meetings – and give so ideas of the places where you can look to identify them please do that and let me/us know in the next few weeks!

Main Presentation: “Printing with Epson and Canon Printers”

Andrew Longhurst and Mick Madigan gave very interesting and insightful demonstrations of printing with Epson and Canon printers respectively using 2 “stock images” provided by the Committee to try to give some idea of the similarities and differences between printer from the two brands.

Unfortunately, it is pretty much impossible to describe here just exactly what they did and how they did it because of the amount of “detail”, and the various available “options” which one has to choose, when setting up a printer.

Andrew gave a good presentation of how to prepare images for printing on his Epson XP960 6-ink printer (it has both light and dark Grey, which helps with tonal gradations), using mainly the “Bologna.Italy” shot provided by Len, and he then pointed out that:

- The Windows 10 “Photo Editor 10” is very straightforward to set up for image printing as it allows a choice of paper types and print qualities. It also has the unusual (for a simple software package) the ability to “straighten” crooked images, and – to a small extent – to correct “converging verticals” in those images.
- He also uses Serif Plus 7 & 8 (which are somewhat the predecessors to the current Serif “Affinity Photo” package) which allow the same sorts of adjustments but in more detail

Mick then followed on (after the break) with a demo using his Canon PIXMA MG7750 printer and using the Canon “Easy Photo” image preparation and printing package – mainly on the “S-Beamish-11” shot provided by Brian, and thus:

- He pointed out that the image, as provided, seemed rather “flat” and showed how that could be improved by changes to the colour saturation levels, and also by some cropping
- He also “played around” with the other image manipulation options in that package and showed the changes that can be achieved using only that relatively simple software

Whilst it is impossible to go into very much detail on those presentations, here are a few points to note that came out from both of them:

- Quite a lot of image manipulation can be achieved with the simple software packages provided with printers, but a fair bit more can be got from the more complex packages like PhotoShop Elements, FastStone Image Viewer, Corel Aftershot Pro, and so on.

- When setting up the printer, you need to take care to select/check:
 - That your printer cartridges contain enough ink to be able to print what you want – otherwise if one colour runs out, then the printer will still print using those cartridges which are not empty, and so the colours of the resulting print will be very “weird”!
 - The appropriate “grade” of printing paper from the proffered options - typically “Glossy” or “Photo Glossy” or similar – but could be “Matt” or “Semi Matt” if using one of those – as opposed to the “default” which might be a standard plain paper grade used for letters etc.
 - The correct overall size of the printing paper **and** the relative size & orientation (portrait or landscape) of the image – otherwise you might find that you print a small image on a large sheet of expensive printer paper!
 - BTW: Mick advised care if choosing the “borderless print” option (if offered) as he has experienced resultant ink splatter on the print rollers – and that can affect the subsequent prints. In general it seems that most people print with borders and then crop them off manually.
 - In the latter context, change the widths of the white borders around the image to maximise the size of the latter, &/or to allow enough border to be able to fit the print in a frame
 - The correct paper tray as most printers have at least two – and you don’t want to waste expensive ink by printing on plain paper from the wrong tray.
 - To “Preview” the image before sending it to print to ensure that you can check that it looks how you intend that it should.
 - That, once you have found a good combination of the above (and probably more) options, to Save the selections for future prints to avoid having to go through the complete setup processes each time you want to make further prints.

Therefore we would like to thank both Andrew and Mick very much for their very entertaining demos – and for volunteering to use their own printers, papers and inks (at some relatively considerable cost because of the preparation required for the demos) ☺.

These demonstrations also raised the very large subject of the choices of printing papers, and of printing inks, since most printer manufacturers heavily promote their brands of both although 3rd party suppliers are generally a LOT - BUT the resulting prints may not always be what was to be expected!

Therefore, it seems a good idea to look into the choices of papers and inks available, and so – starting with the May Prints competition - we are going to ask you to provide that info with your prints. We will also look for independent reviews and comparisons of papers and inks, with the objective of possibly having another printing-themed presentation sometime in the future to better inform you of the choices.

The April Prints Competition “Action with the emphasis of at Events”

At the March meeting, I gave a presentation about “Action” shooting, and it was agreed that the April Prints competition would be for “Action shots”.

- 12 good prints were entered, and here are the results of the Voting after the tea and coffee break:
- 1st - John Allen “Duck Rising (Saville Garden)”
- 2nd - John Allen “Spitfire (Shuttleworth Trust)”
- 3rd - John Allen “Stearman Biplanes (Duxford)”
- 4th - Margaret Mayes “Flight of birds”

As usual 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, PLEASE!!), 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 13th May.

“YOUR Shot of the Month, ANYTHING goes!”

As usual we had a good entry of 19 images, and so the Members discussed where and how the shots were taken and then to vote, and the 4 “winning” entries were:

- | | | | | |
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| - 1 st | - | Malcolm Barwick | - | “Uxbridge Station Stained Glass Window” |
| - 2 nd | - | Jothy Rainbow | - | “Tree looking like a Cow” |
| - 3 rd | - | John Allen | - | “Saville Garden Lake” |
| - 4 th | - | Robert Waltz | - | “Bluebell Walk” |

As I already have the image files, I will reduce each one to <1Mb max (where necessary) and send them to Tony Kemp to add 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 ABSOLUTELY MUST be taken between the current meeting and just before the next meeting:
Thus, for the May meeting, shots must be taken between 26th April and that meeting on 30th May
- but send them to me by 26th May to give me time to put them into the presentation for the 30th!

The May Prints Competition = “Using info and tips from the April Mtg Printing Demos”

Following on from Andrew’s & Mick’s Printing Processes demonstrations, we agreed that you folks be provided with the same two images they used for their demos so that you can practice and refine your own printing techniques – and thus those images are attached (*NB: the files are quite small, so no-one should expect particularly “sharp” prints as a result!*).

However, to make the challenges “more interesting”, we will split the entries into 2 categories for judging at the May meeting:

- Your “best prints” – preferably using the “stock” image processing s/w provided by your own printer brand manufacturer, but, *if not*, then with the s/w that you do normally use for printing.
- Your best attempts at “**imaginatively manipulating**” the images to produce “interesting results” (*You may remember that we did that for the Nov 2017 Competition, and you can see the winning images here: <https://u3asites.org.uk/hillingdon/page/70671>*)

“NEW RULES” FOR THIS COMPETITION!

Given that this means two separate categories of prints to be judged, I’m going to allow you to enter up to **two (2)** in each category and thus **up to four (4) in total** – *as opposed to the normal maximum of three!* – and thus offer more opportunities to improve your printing techniques.

Also, as this will be for prints from the supplied images, the “rules” for the info to be supplied on the back of each differ from the usual ones, and that should thus include:

- **Prints should be between (roughly) A5 & A4 size – and, BTW, I suggest you try to minimise the width of any borders!**
- **Printer brand name and model number**
- **Brand name of the software** used to prepare the print
- **What, and roughly how much, “processing” you did** before actually printing the image
- **Brand name and type of the printer paper** used
- **Brand name and type of the printer inks** used

Presentations and Discussions at Future meetings

- May Meeting - "Shooting Animal Images"

Ian Brown has volunteered to give a presentation on shooting animals (and we know how good he is at that!).

However, no-one has **volunteered to prepare and deliver that part of the presentation on shooting photos of "Children", and thus we have dropped that idea for the moment.**

- June Meeting (Onwards) – TBD!

We are now asking YOU for themes – **AND volunteer presenters!** – for the presentations at the meetings from June onwards.

Thus please send me your suggestions (*even if you aren't able to prepare and give the presentations!*) in addition to the following which have already been made:

- Comparisons of printing papers and inks (*one of the reasons why I'm asking for those details for the May Prints competition prints*).
- Brian suggested that photography magazines and websites often have articles suitable for presentation to the group, and thus for you to look in/at:
 - "Paper" magazines like "Amateur Photographer" ("AP"), "Digital Photo", "Digital Camera", "Outdoor Photography", "PhotoPlus Magazine (Canon)", "N Photo (Nikon)", etc.
 - On-line "ezines" like "DPReview" "ePHOTOzine", "Photography News"
 - Websites and forums specialising in **your camera** brand(s)

Each will have articles on many aspects of photography, and **so you can make a list of possible Articles/Topics for members to consider, and please indicate which topics might be of interest to you.**

- Brian also suggested we should have a "working session" on how to take pleasing photos of club members, for which:
 - Members volunteer to be a 'models' - or their names are chosen out of a hat!!!!
 - Lighting can be natural, directional from a window or flash
 - Members then present their photos at the next meeting, when they have had time to "photo-shop" the images.

Monthly meeting Diary Dates

Dates for 2019 – the 4th Monday of each month

(EXCEPT for some on Thursdays as indicated below)

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 30th MAY 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 much information & guidance on many aspects of photography, learning how to use your camera, image processing and printing, etc.!