U3A Digital Photo Group Meeting – 27 September 2021

The 27th September was actually, *and finally,* back at the Baptist Church in Hillingdon! A fairly large group of the members attended and so it was good to just be able to have a good old face-to-face general "natter" – *as well, of course, as having an interesting and informative "photography-centric" meeting!* 😊

General

Brian introduced the meeting and then passed it over to, in order, Andrew, Judy and John for their short presentations on various methods of "Converting non-digital images to Digital"

Those were followed by a short one from Janet & Mick on "How I recovered photos deleted from my SD card".

The Main Presentations: "Converting "non-digital" images to Digital"

Most of us have piles of old negatives, slides &/or prints from "before the digital age" languishing in cupboards or drawers somewhere. We would like to view them again, but that's difficult nowadays because most of the viewing equipment that we used to use has now failed, "disappeared" or just been thrown away – *so **what** can we do?*

Also, now that we are well into the "digital age", it seems preferable to convert those old shots images to digital image format in order to easily view / print/ send pass them to interested relatives and friends – *so **how** can we do that?*

Well, there is no *single* method for converting negatives, slides & prints to a digital format, but there are several *quite closely-relate*d methods, and thus Andrew, Judy and John gave short insights into how they can be used.

Andrew: "Converting Slides using a "Bridge camera"

Andrew tapes his slides onto large sheets of translucent tracing paper and hangs those sheets in front of an externally-lit window, and that results in the slides being back-lit by well-diffused daylight.

He then uses a bridge camera (a Canon SX50 in this case) with a *very* close & auto-focusing zoom lens to photograph the images on the slides "one by one" - he commented that this works well and produces very good images in most instances.

Caveats

- Mounting and photographing slides in this way is *very* time-consuming!
- Reducing possible camera shake &/or mis-focusing problems by fixing the camera on a tripod and using some form of remote shutter release would probably be a "good idea";
- Tracing paper has a "surface texture" that can easily show up in the resulting images if that paper surface is actually within the sharp "Depth of field" zone of the lens – so careful focusing is necessary to avoid that;
- The "quality" of the results is very variable with really old slides, especially where they were not very "sharp" &/or correctly exposed, and that's made worse by any dust, grease or fingerprints (!!) on them!

  NB: C*leaning old slides (& negatives) is very tricky as you can easily cause more damage by using the wrong methods &/or cleaning agents/solvents!*

NB: Andrew is on holiday at the time of preparing these Notes and so this section thereof may be incorrect, but he will hopefully be able to email members with any corrections, together with a pdf version of his presentation, when he returns in a few days.

Judy: Converting Slides using a "Slide Scanner"

Judy gave a short presentation, as attached, to illustrate how she uses a small "slide scanner" to convert slides to digital images that are written to an SD card in the body of the scanner.

This is essentially the same as using a digital camera as Andrew does, except that it's an "all-in-one" device: you put the slide into a slot in the scanner body *(with the lens, sensor and image processing*

unit, & auto-exposure control) located close to that slot, push one or more buttons to "take the shot" &/or do image correction or enhancement *(as in digital cameras & phones).*

Such scanners (often clones of the same basic designs!) are widely available on Amazon, eBay etc., at from around £80 up to around £250-300 – as the price gets higher, better "quality" and facilities *,(e.g. auto-feed 4-6 slides in a moving slide-holder, remote controls, image enhancement, direct connection to a PC, etc.)* can be obtained.

Caveats

- Using a basic slide-scanner is *very* time-consuming – Judy has 1,000's of slides, and she's yet to finish copying them after several months 😊
- The same caveats regarding image quality & possible damage/repairs apply here as with Andrew's method.

Possible alternatives (and also for scanning some negatives)

- Slide copiers (sometimes for hire) resembling magazine-loading slide projectors, but which copy slides in the same way as above instead of projecting them on a screen;
- Dedicated "flat-bed scanners" resembling scanners MFP scanners, except having covers incorporating lighting to back-light slides, and which usually have accessory frames into which you load multiple slides and then scan them all at the same time *(& can also be used for scanning prints).* They generally include dedicated PC s/w for image processing, enhancement and scratch reduction etc. – the more "advanced" (i.e. expensive!) the scanner is then the better is that s/w (even if there's little real actual difference in the hardware!);
- The number of pixels to be scanned can generally be selected – but the higher the pixel count the longer it takes to produce image files
- NB: ALL of the above are expensive - decent ones start around £300 and go up to £1000+.

John: "**Scanning Film Negatives & Prints**"

John gave a short presentation, *as attached*, on *s*canning film negatives and printed photos, including:

- Correct & careful scanner choice – *some* MFPs, dedicated flatbed scanners, photo-copying stand scanners, slot-fed scanners
- "GIGO" applies, especially where old/damaged/faded prints (& negs/slides) are involved
- Web-links to various types & models of scanner (they are in the presentation!)
- Some negative scanners work like the simpler slide scanners but using a negative holder, taking a strip of 4-6 negs at a time, automatically fed through the body of the unit;
  Some flat-bed scanners can be used with different accessory frames to scan *negatives,* but you have to set the s/w accordingly;
- how he *(very occasionally!)* uses a small slot-fed print scanner – the results from which are not terribly impressive!
- General caveats & cautions on the likely time/cost/handling of scanning - and so maybe consider sharing equipment & costs?

Janet & Mick: "How I recovered photos deleted from my SD card"

Janet outlined how *(but not why – she's not sure!)* she managed to accidently delete recent holiday shots from an SD card, and so she requested advice & help from other members on how to recover those images. Mick responded and recommended the free version of "Recuva" file-recovery s/w, and Janet was then able to recover most of those lost images *(although it did take quite a long time!).*

Mick then outlined some of the pros & cons of using Recuva, notably that it doesn't always recover all missing files, that you will need to rename some /all of them because the original file names are

not recovered, and that the number of files recovered by the free version is somewhat limited (can be overcome by purchasing a licence!). !) He did find it straightforward to use although Janet had issues depending on the device she used for using Recuva but she was successful finally.

Recuva is not the only free s/w that can recover files – others are available, including "RescueProDeluxe" which comes as a free download with some of the higher capacity (& more expensive!) Sandisk USB drives. Also Mick mentioned DiskDrill, another free s/w, which seems to work better since it recovers more files.

Warning: If you accidently do the same as Janet, then **DON'T** take any more shots on that SD card as those may overwrite the "now missing" files, and make it more difficult to then recover the latter!

The September Competitions Results

Andrew announced that the two competitions had received a total of nearly 80 entries, per the attached spreadsheet, and that the winning ones were, in descending order, as follows:

"**Denham Village**":	Title	Votes	Position
Malcom Barwick	Bricks of interest	4	1
Andrew Longhurst	Denham Window	4	1
Robert Waltz	Riverside Cottage	3	2
Ian Brown	Little Egret, River Misbourne, Denham	3	2
"**Shot of the Month**"	Title	Votes	Position
John Clark	Last of the pollen	6	1
Andrew Longhurst	Tenby Harbour	4	2
Robert Waltz	Owls in Uxbridge	3	3
Andrew Longhurst	Shire Horse	3	3
Susan Madigan	Old fishing village	3	3
Susan Madigan	Bark Endeavour	3	3

Most of the winning shots were sent to Eirwen for the Monthly Slide Show, and to Tony for our webpages, but, unfortunately, there were too many winning 3rd placed Shot of the Month entries for the website, and so Brian reduced those to two, as follows:

- He discarded Andrew's "Shire Horse", because Andrew already had a
Second place
- He then used the Excel "RAND" "randomising" function to select
Robert's "Owls in Uxbridge" and Susan's "Bark Endeavour"!

Andrew then led discussions in which he "Shared" the Google Photo albums of the two competitions and members discussed where, when & how the winning shots had been taken.

However, as mentioned above, he's on holiday ATM, and hopefully will be able to provide some details of his thoughts & comments on members' shots when he returns in a few days.

In the meantime, it seems worthwhile mentioning that John Clark's "Last of the Pollen" shot was of particular interest because it looks as if it had been taken in, or converted to, "Black & White" – but he told us that it was shot with a DSLR which has been converted to take **Infrared** images as he particularly likes the results from shooting in that mode.

The October Competitions

The October themed-competition will be "**Freedom**" – which you can interpret entirely as you choose, and then submit your three shots for each competition to Google Albums as follows:

1.1   Competition – **"Freedom"**
    https://photos.app.goo.gl/BiuSwHv9BaPodHzv8

1.2   Competition – "**Shot of the Month**"
    https://photos.app.goo.gl/RjAF7tSVBAUcnbQx8

U3A Digital Photo Group Meeting – 27 September 2021

NB: Please add a "Title" to each shot in Google Photos by typing it in the "Details" on the "Info" panel for the shot.

The deadline for all **entries** will be: **midnight on Sunday 17th October**

The deadline for **voting** will be: **midnight on Saturday 23rd October**

Members are now encouraged to upload their photos directly to the relevant albums *(see Brian's 23rd March email) –*
but, if you are uncertain about that, then send them to Brian at bhillier75@gmail.com *)*

The 25th October presentation

The October presentation will be "**The British Press Photographer Association - 2021 Exhibition of Photographs**" by Brian.

Monthly meeting Diary Dates for 2021 - the 4th Monday of each month

As you know, the 2021 H u3a meeting programme is still a bit "fluid" due to ongoing pandemic restrictions, but we now hope to continue with **Face-to-Face meetings at the Baptist Church** on the **4th Monday of each month** *(& the occasional photoshoot elsewhere).*

However, we are *also* going to try to hold these meetings in "hybrid" form so that members who can't attend at the Church can join in via Zoom in the same way as for our "virtual meetings" over the last 18 months – *further details on that will hopefully follow in the next couple of weeks or so!*

NB: Ref "hybrid" meetings, we hope that this will also allow members who have moved, or will soon move, out of the area to continue to participate in the Group if they wish as we already know that Sheppy (who moved to the Worthing area) and Robert (see below!) would like to do that.

Committee Changes

"Unfortunately for us", Robert and his wife Christine have decided to move to the Lincoln area from the middle of October and thus he is stepping down from the Committee. The Group will greatly miss his interesting and amusing photos and commentaries of a wide variety of locations and situations – nevertheless we really wish them well for the future and hope they enjoy the area around Lincoln. 😊.

In the meantime, we will hope to recruit another member to join the Committee in the near future, and will to update you accordingly.

Well, that's all for the moment, and so all the best and hope to see you all on **MONDAY 25th October at the Church -** *or possibly on Zoom if you can't make it in person!*

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

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.!