



Photographic Club Newsletter

Issue 11 – 3rd November 2014

Next meeting 1st December, 7.00 – 9.00pm

October Competition (Celebrations) Results

Colour:

1st Brent Thompson



2nd Dave Lewell



3rd Richard Hammersley



Black & White:

1st Dave Lewell



2nd Trevor Long



3rd Mark Woodward



I think we can confidently say our first projected image competition (with our new projector) was a success. I think everyone enjoyed the evening.

I must say a huge thank you to Jeff Ali, Jeff as you will have seen is a very knowledgeable and competent photographer. On his way home from work at MG that afternoon the wheel bearings went on his car, he straight away phoned his daughter, borrowed her car and travelled from the other side of Birmingham, and he wouldn't take a penny for his troubles, and yes I spoke to him the following day and he thoroughly enjoyed the evening and has already agreed to come back to a future meeting.

I'm sure he will be made very welcome.

Camera subjects – tips and tricks

Camera Exposure

In photography, 'exposure' means the amount of light that falls onto the sensor of your digital camera. In modern cameras the exposure is usually set to automatic by default and, most of the time, it can be left there and will produce beautiful pictures. There are times though, when the camera lets us down or we want to produce a particular effect and it would be nice to understand what is going on 'under the bonnet'.

Getting a 'correct' exposure means recording as much of the relevant information in the scene as possible. In the shot on the left, the important information is the bird. The sky has gone completely white as it was much, much brighter than the bird. If I had let the meter expose for the sky, the bird would have been rendered as a black silhouette.

Even when the exposure is 'correct' the problem with all cameras is that they cannot record the entire range of contrast (black to white) that the eye can see. Especially when you take into account that the eye is constantly adjusting to cope with high contrast. On a sunny day if you look into the shadows of a scene then into the bright areas, the iris in your eye will quickly adjust so you can see detail in both.

Faced with the task of recording as much information as possible, the camera will try to average out all the light levels and expose accordingly. As burnt out highlights are normally considered uglier than black shadows, the camera, left to its own devices, will normally err on the dark side, which is no good if you are shooting against a bright background. It's the subject you want to see, and you don't really care if the background is white.

Auto Exposure Modes

The camera manufacturers have come up with all sorts of ingenious metering systems to try to help, there are now multi mode metering systems, which give you a choice of 'centre weighting', 'spot metering' or 'multi spot metering' on many of the better cameras, but none can guarantee to give you what you want every time.

Tip - *using auto exposure to your advantage.*

If you have a modern camera, the chances are that the default metering system is 'centre weighted average', which means that, although it takes an average reading of the whole scene, it takes more notice of what is in the middle of the frame, which is good news for us. The other good news is that it takes this reading at the time when you take 'first pressure' on the button to take your picture.

When you push it halfway down and it beeps at you, not only is the focus now set (on an auto-focus camera) but the exposure reading is taken and the aperture and shutter speed are set. So, if your main point of interest is not in the centre of the frame, it's a good idea to put it there temporarily while you focus and take your light reading, then move the camera whilst still holding the button halfway down and compose the picture the way you want it to be.

A common use for this technique is when you are taking a close up shot of two people and there is space between their heads, if you're not careful the camera will focus on the wall or trees behind them. If the background is very dark or very light this can alter the exposure significantly and result in faces that are too dark or too light.

Skin tones are what most meters are set up to consider an 'average tone', they are also usually the part of the picture that we most want to get right. If I am photographing a group of people in difficult circumstances, like bright sunlight for instance, I will often move close in to the group and take a light reading from someone's face or, if we are all standing in the same type of light, I will take a reading from the back of my hand. This is no good, of course, if the subject is in bright sunlight and I am in the shade.

Manual Exposure

Now it's time to turn that dial away from 'program' mode and have a look at the dreaded 'manual' mode. There are also a bewildering array of other choices such as 'aperture priority', 'shutter priority', 'exposure compensation' etc., but once you understand the basics you will be able to select the most suitable mode. The amount of light falling on the film is governed by four things.

- The amount of light reflected from the scene which, if you are outdoors, you can do very little about.
- The 'shutter speed' which is the amount of time the shutter is open, measured in fractions of a second.
- The 'aperture setting' which is the size of the hole through which the light enters. If you look at the lens of your camera you will see a diaphragm in the middle of the glass which the camera adjusts according to the light. This does exactly the same job as the iris in your eye. Aperture settings are measured in 'f stops'.
- The ISO setting. This is the 'sensitivity' of the sensor.
- The shutter speed and aperture settings have other quite separate effects on the photograph, but for the purposes of exposure, making the picture darker or lighter, they are interchangeable. Make the hole twice as big and open the shutter for half the time and you will expose the sensor the same amount.

Why use manual exposure?

The advantage of manual exposure is that the settings do not keep changing as your scene changes. Let's suppose that you are taking close up photos of cars passing by. Some of the cars will be black or dark colours and some will be light colours or white. If you are filling the frame with almost nothing but car, the meter will be trying to render each car as mid gray. Although it will probably not succeed, what you will notice is that the background is a different shade in each photo.

Suppose you were taking portraits of people, some are wearing very dark clothes and some are wearing white. If you are not careful with the exposure settings, they will be affected by the clothes.

Although it is by no means always necessary to use manual exposure, an understanding of how it all works will save a lot of disappointment.

Stop Press

- **November straight from the camera Competition**

We have put this back to the December meeting due to time restraints in November.

Get to get out with your compact/phone or whatever you have for our 6"x 4" competition, bring them along in December for display and critique.

Please write on the back what you took them with and the settings if you have them, but they must be printed straight from your device, no stop offs at Photoshop or the like.

Colour and or black and white, but black and white must be set in camera and not converted on your PC

- **Please put 5th Jan 2015 in your diaries, it is the Clubs first AGM, it is important that we get a good attendance on the night to discuss and decide the events for the coming year.**

A bit of fun. 20 Questions.

Name – Pat Cripps

1. Where were you born? *Dar es Salaam in Tanzania*
2. When did you get your first camera? *Umm, when I was about 10 I think!*
3. Can you remember what it was? *I remember it well - a very sleek, compact Minolta-cutting edge camera technology back in the day and much coveted!*
4. Money no object, what camera would you buy? *I do love the look of these retro digital cameras with proper dials instead of on screen display*
5. Did anyone in particular inspire your interest in photography? *All my family are photo enthusiasts, we all travel a lot and have stacks of photo albums of places and landscapes.*
6. Best photo you have taken *My most striking photos all seem to be of Venice, but perhaps my best photo is yet to come?!?!*
7. Favourite photo subjects *Scenery and places, but I also love getting in close to any plants or wild-life that keeps still long enough to get a macro shot.*
8. Favourite all time TV programme *Green Wing – silly & surreal hospital comedy with the best cast ever*
9. Favourite current TV programme – *It's got to be Great British Bake Off just now!*
10. Favourite type of music – *I like pretty well any kind of music but a solid bit of proper rhythm and blues can make me throw a few moves on the dance floor!*
11. Favourite song – *The River - Bruce Springsteen*
12. Favourite singer - *See above, the Boss of course!*
13. Favourite film – *Local Hero*
14. Favourite actor – *depends! Love Michael Sheen's work, he seems to be able to become anyone.*
15. Favourite place in the UK – *Llyn Peninsula, North Wales*
16. Favourite place anywhere else – *Plettenburg Bay, South Africa*
17. Favourite photographic season - *Autumn*
18. Traditional or modern photos? *Don't mind, just happy to enjoy images and ideas*
19. Do you have any pets? *2 sleepy cats and a beagle whippet cross called Joey who also sleeps a lot now – in dog years he's a very senior citizen*
20. The one thing you would like to photograph anywhere in the world – *A penguin in the Antarctic ☺*

Coming Months

03.11.14	7.00	Photograph of the Year – Guest Judge	9.00
01.12.14	7.00	Competition – Autumn Landscape + 6 x 4 Competition	9.00
05.01.15	7.00	AGM	9.00

Competition Themes for 2014

03.11.14	Photograph of the Year	Annual Competition	All placed photos from monthly competitions
01.12.14	Autumn Landscape	Club Competition	1 b&w, 1 colour

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