VIEWFINDER

A New Year Message

Firstly may I trust that everyone had a happy Christmas and is now looking forward to a successful New Year.

For Steyning Camera Club, the new year looks like being one of our most exciting. Of course it is the last year of the millenium (not in my book, but in most people's therefore we will have to go with it !), and that will bring with it not only a number of exciting projects, but also the need for a plan to see us into the next century.

You will all have seen the questionnaire put out by Steve Brooks, our new Programme Secretary, to enlist your views on a variety of aspects of the Club and the way it is run. Please take the time to complete this as fully as you can and don't be afraid to suggest new ideas.

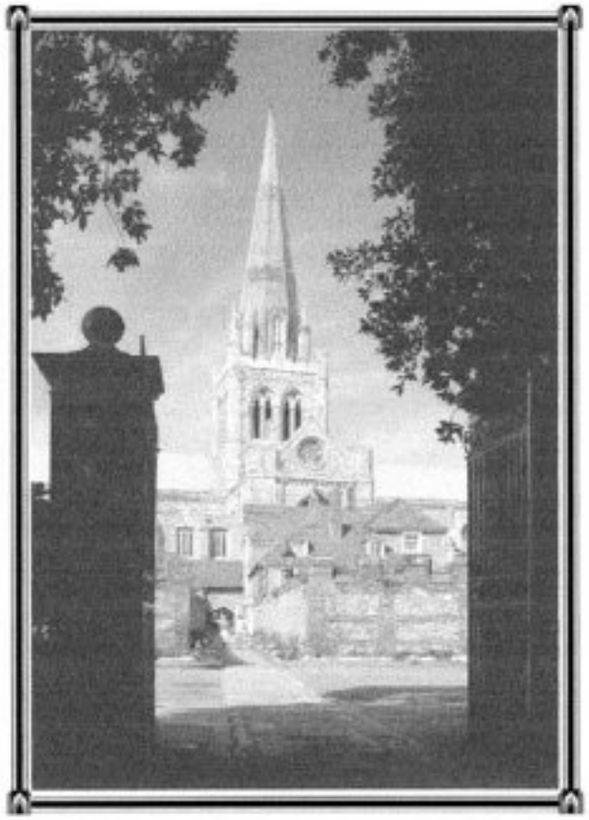
Unfortunately, almost all of the smaller clubs in Sussex are finding it more and more difficult to survive. Whilst we can never be complacent, we continue to buck that trend and to grow in numbers and interest. The impact this has on our use of the committee rooms at the Steyning Centre, and on our competition evenings has been discussed at some length on the committee, and is one of the main reasons we have enlisted your views via the questionnaire.

We have all noticed, I'm sure, just how crowded the room is when we are all in. You should all know that we have been considering switching to the Saxon Room for next season, and this will mean that we have a good deal more space, especially when we have guests. However, it comes at a price and the Saxon Room costs twice that which we have to pay presently. The simple economics mean that there will need to be an increase in the Club subscription to accommodate a move, but we will also have to work extra hard to ensure that our programme is exciting and absolutely right for what you want so that our evenings are always well attended and we continue to attract new members.

Competitions too have been a topic of lengthy debate. I am confident that the changes to the format introduced last season have been successful, but it is evident that a more radical overhaul is needed if you are all to have sufficient opportunity to show your work for appraisal - which is the main reason for the competitions. With such strong interest at the moment, often we are able to show only two open slides per round, which, in my opinion, is not enough. We may need to change the format of the set subject rounds, or even introduce additional evenings to accommodate a full programme as well. As last year, we will put forward a proposal on this to the AGM.

So you see, as we continue to be successful, so that brings about the need for further change, and your views are very important in making sure we do things right. Change is sometimes uncomfortable, and the resulting organisation often looks very different from what went before. However, rest assured that the Club's core values will remain unaltered - people will always compliment us on our warm and friendly approach, and I hope too on the quality of our photography.

Ken



WHERE DO YOU BUY YOUR PRINT FILMS?

Have you thought of buying your colour print films from your local supermarket? Tests carried out by the AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER magazine suggest that the quality and reliability of some of the films offered is remarkably good and compares favourably with the well known branded goods.

The supermarkets surveyed: TESCO, ASDA, SAFEWAY and SAINSBURYS apparently all use AGFA HDC for their colour print films and BOOTS use AGFA products for both their print and slide films.

The tests were conducted using FUJI SUPERIOR 200 ASA for comparison with each of the supermarkets 200 ASA print films, which revealed that the "yellow saturation" of the AGFA film was very slightly less than that of the FUJI film, but to all intents gave equal results.

There is possibly one drawback with the supermarket products and that is the pricing strategy that exists, which allows prices to vary suddenly up or down from one week to another, along with special offers, i.e. "Buy 2, get 2 free", etc.

In other outlets there are, in addition to the well known brand names, PRIVATE LABEL films such as SCOTCH and TUDOR. SCOTCH brand films use the same emulsion as AGFA and have similar characteristics whilst the TUDOR brand uses an earlier FUJI emulsion which does not come up to the FUJI SUPERIOR currently used for supermarket print films.

So, in general, if you want to know who makes your film, "\Made in Germany" is probably AGFA, "Made in Japan" is FUJI/TUDOR and "Made in the E.U." is either AGFA or IMATION (formerly 3M).

D.S.

Do you fancy seeing your prints in the Viewfinder?

We need more prints to broaden the subject matter and give all our members the chance to share their work through this newsletter.
If you are interested we can work from slides or any form of print, black & white or colour.
Please contact Cliff for more information, thank you.



Steyning 2000 - Joint Venture with Steyning Music Society

You may remember some months back I mentioned the Steyning 2000 Project to which all local organisations have been invited to contribute.

I am delighted to announce that we have agreed to a joint venture with Steyning Music Society to commission a piece of music, combined with photographs, inspired by the light and landscape of the locality around Steyning.

The intention is that the two Societies will jointly host the live premiere of this piece to celebrate the new millennium.

Initially, I will be working on the project with Gary Prior from the Music Society, and on developing the concept for the piece with Michael Finnissy, a local and eminent composer. There are many details to attend to during the early phase of the project before we will know exact requirements. What we do know is that there will be a need for high-quality local work with a light and landscape theme.

I will keep everyone posted on the progress we are making and invite contributions as things become clear. Meanwhile, the Committee has given enthusiastic support to the idea and I'm sure it will turn out to be a very exciting venture for both organisations.

Ken





ARE YOU PAYING TOO MUCH FOR YOUR FILMS?

Capital Sound & Vision in Crawley and Horsham have some of the most competitive prices in West Sussex, in particular when 10 films or more are purchased.

Not everyone wants to buy 10 films at a time but collectively it would be possible to obtain the "10 films lower rate" regardless of the mix of BRANDS, SPEED, QUANTITY, etc.

If club members are interested in buying films in this way, I will co-ordinate individual orders and obtain films at the lower rate. The films are all fresh stock!

You can contact me at club meetings or phone me on 01903 813885.

Dave Sherwin

Our next Exhibition is at the

Steyning Horticultural Society SPRING SHOW

Saturday 27th March 1999
Open from 2.30 to 4.30pm

also Flower Arrangements by

Steyning & District Flower Club

Take your camera as these flowers are well worth

Beating the Photography Blues

Ever had that blue feeling ? No, not the colour blue. Not the musical blues either. Just blue. Down. Depressed. The kind of feeling that has you thinking you'll never make a good photo ever again.

I have. I've had it for some months, if not even longer. It undermines your confidence. It makes you choose to do something more comfortable rather than go out and fight it.

Creativity is one of the most indefinable skills any of us has. For some of us it is more pronounced than in others. Children have it in abundance until it is reasoned out of them by we adults. It comes and goes in cycles, even for the most creative of us, and when the spark isn't there, nothing happens. We have seen it in musicians and sports people. Artists and writers will know what it feels like. And yet when there is a spark, nothing stops us. Images flow into the mind faster than they can be realised. Words land on the page at an extraordinary rate, and the sportsman is on the very peak of her game.

So it is perfectly normal to have these dips. But how can we get out of it when we are in one ? Probably the worst thing to do is fight it. Struggling on in the same old circumstances just leads to more of the same mediocrity. In fact it probably makes things worse in the long run because enthusiasm gets even further dampened.

It hasn't helped me that the conditions I need for my light and landscape work have been missing almost totally in the mountains this past year. But I haven't helped myself either. I haven't made the best of the bad conditions, and neither have I made the best of the great conditions here on more than a few occasions.



Here's my ten tips for beating the blues :-

1. Think about the best things about the best work you have done and concentrate on them - remind yourself of what you like and what you do best AND WHEN you feel you do your best work
2. Take a break - go somewhere new, get out and about early
3. Do something new - start a project, try a new form of photography
4. Look at great books full of pictures (not "How To" textbooks), telly ads, magazines, documentaries - get inspired by something
5. Take a camera with you all the time - think pictures, see pictures
6. Go out with the camera - don't opt for the telly
7. Go immediately - if you start to notice good things around you, drop whatever you are doing and go for it AND make a note of the things that made you feel good today
8. Buy a new (small) piece of kit or clean your equipment
9. Sort out your fifty best photos ever and show them to someone - they will always praise you
10. Go back to basics - think simple

..... Ken Scott

Forthcoming Events

Monday 8th March 1999

We will be giving a small presentation to Crawley Camera Club showing a selection of slides & prints and talking about our photography.
If you feel you could help on this outing, please have a word with Ken Scott

Wednesday 10th March 1999

We have been invited to Steyning Ramblers to talk about our photography and we thought it might be a good idea to repeat our Crawley talk