VIEWFINDER

Spring 2006 Number 34

Steyning Camera Club



Round 1 - "Self Portrait" by Rex Peters



Round 2 - "August, Lyme Regis" by Rex Peters

Congratulations to Rex Peters
Winner of the Lewis Cup for set subject slides



Editorial

Sorry for the late appearance of this Viewfinder, work has been a top priority and time has flown.
We are now into our Summer Programme of events, a group has already had an enjoyable and productive evening in Chichester with Steve Broad as our guide and mentor. We even had a meal together at the end of the stroll.

Do try to attend the annual **Photohunt** organised by Henfield Camera Club on **Sunday, 18th June** as this is always good fun. Please meet in the East Green car park at 12 noon for the picnic. The Photohunt will begin at 2pm and finish at 5pm, so you should have plenty of time to select your images for the set subjects. Digital images, as well as slides, are allowed and all will be projected together, with the results being shown in December at their Xmas Social. It is always amazing to see how others see the same set subjects.

Margaret Tully is busy arranging events for the Coffee Club group of the camera club and also the coach trip to **London Docklands** on **Tuesday 27th June**, stopping off at Greenwich for those who would like to explore this area and perhaps have a boat trip along the Thames.
Details of various attractions should be available on the coach but you can plan your own visits during the course of the day, as long as you are back at the coach at the advised time for the return journey. Keep your fingers crossed for good light and a fine day!!

Sunday, 2nd July is also another invitation from Henfield and this time it is a visit to Guildford. Meet in the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre car park at 10.30am and please confirm if you are going to attend by ringing David Barrett - 01273 493888.
Tuesday 11th July - Coffee Club will meet at Carrott's Cafe, Southwick Harbour at 10.30am coffee and cakes, followed by a stroll around the marina, lock gates and harbour arms.

Our **Annual Camera Club Coffee Morning on Saturday15th July,** will be in Dave and Joan Sherwin's lovely garden at 3 Coxham Lane and will start at 10.30am. Bring and Buy stall with a super raffle as usual, with refreshments and an entrance of only £1.00 to boost club funds. Any plants, unwanted gifts, books or magazines, jams, cakes, etc can be sold on the on the Bring and Buy Stall and all items will be welcomed.
Please feel free to bring along any of your unused equipment to sell, as there may be another club member who could find it useful. Prices will be between the seller and the buyer, a small donation to club funds would be appreciated if a successful transaction results. Please bring your friends!!

Tuesday 25th July - Coffee Club meet at 10.30 for coffee and cakes at Joan Hornsby's, 9 Dawn Crescent, Upper Beeding.
Saturday 29th July - Summer Workshop at Joan's, 9 Dawn Crescent, Upper Beeding. We are hoping for fine weather again and this workshop will feature "Portraits", with lighting set-ups and also flower photography or "imaging", using both film and digital equipment. Results will be shown on laptops during the session.

MACRO Workshop - tba - please contact Mike Warren, tel 812877 for more information.

Set Subject Reminder for next season's competition

18th October - "Past its Best" - appraised by JEAN HOLMWOOD

3rd January 2007 - "People at Work" - appraised by tba

7th March - "Patterns in Nature" - appraised by STEFAN SEGSCHNEIDER

This competition will be open to traditional slides and digital images for projection. We will try to use a normal slide projector together with a digital projector for showing the entries each competition evening and request that the appraiser takes this into consideration.

Also as a reminder here is a copy of the changes made at the 2006 AGM

Summary
The restructure provides a set of competitions as follows:

Competition	Medium	Groups	Trophy
Open Prints	Prints A	advanced	Matanle Shield
Open Prints	Prints B	beginner / int	Penfold Cup
Open Slides	Transparencies	Combined	Steyning Bowl
Set Subjects	Projected	Combined	Lewis Cup
Open Digital	Digital Proj A	advanced	West Sussex Gazette Cup
Open Digital	Digital Proj B	beginner / int	Viewfinder Trophy
Image of the Year (Projected Images)	Any source	Combined	Slide of the Year
Print of the Year	Prints	Combined	Print of the Year

S O S

Save our slides. In recent years Steyning has enjoyed considerable success in the external slide competitions and as we all saw in the recent SPF Exhibition slide show there is still a wealth of good work in this field. It is difficult to better the enjoyment of looking at a display of large vibrant images on the big screen. It is a shame to see the number of entries in club slide competitions gradually diminishing so why not use your 'old' camera (you remember - the one you had before you took off with digital) and load up a slide film. There is the discipline of getting everything right at the moment of taking the picture and it is still the ultimate test of camerawork; no second chance to rescue a small flaw or introduce an extra element to improve the composition. We are now competing in the Sussex Federation, twice the size of the Crouch, and are off to a great start. This year Steyning Camera Club has won the Sussex Federation Annual Print Competition and tied in second place with Chichester in the Crouch Slide Competition. Later this year, in November, the club will take part in the Sussex Federation Slide Competition and the Regnum Print Competition. Two more good results would put Steyning right at the forefront of Sussex Camera Clubs. This status, through, will only be achieved if the club can prove itself in both areas of photography. One final thought - members who enjoy the opportunity of enhancing their work can still use their expertise by taking a print from a slide. Nothing is lost!
Boots slide film (produced and processed buy Fuji) costs £7.79 for 36 exposures and quite often Boots does a 'three for the price of two'. This then works out at £5.20 a film.

Ken and Rex



"Trees" by Vicky Knight

"Self Portrait" by Margret Preece ARPS





"The Geese Man"



"Irish Fiddler"

Prints by
Vic Garbett



"The Spinnaker"

Chichester

Thanks to Vic Garbett for the top three images.

Wednesday, 7th June 2006







Steve Broad and the club members enjoying the Italian food after the Chichester workshop. We were lucky to have a fine evening for our stroll along the North Walls and around the cathedral district.









Daguerreotype or Calotype?

In the heady days of this new science called photography, when the uninitiated must have marvelled at an image which no pencil nor brush produced, I can imagine its nineteenth century pioneers arguing the merits of the newer process over the original. And could they ever have dreamed of an image without silver? Now that we seem to have such, does the total departure from methods tried and tested over a period of some hundred and sixty years represent real progress or yet one more instance of the computer permeating our lives and our hobbies, which we had thought sacrosanct?

So how is the digital process superior? You are presented with the image you have just made and can reject there and then what you don't want. So many shots are at your disposal that never again will you need to suffer the predicament of the sun obliging just while you are changing the film and steadfastly refusing to emerge thereafter!

At your computer you can combine images, subtract unwanted items - the parked car, the telegraph wire, the litter bin or the individual who lingers in your viewfinder only too aware that you are attempting to click in their direction, but determined they have as much right to be there as you! And you can correct the converging verticals or maybe even create them. Monochrome can be produced as effectively as colour or both can appear on the one image. Never have you had greater control over colour, sharpness and contrast. In fact it seems that the possibilities are so immense that you may well finish up with an image you swear you never took. And it makes, 'That wasn't in the picture when I took it....' into a perfectly credible statement! Remember the darkroom, the frustration at all those wasted twelve by sixteens and the reek of fixer in your nostrils? Having successfully 'dodged' the bright patch, a minute hair settled on the negative and, much magnified, ruined the print. At least it used up the vast quantity of developer you had to mix and, of course, there was no chance of turning in until you had a decent result, however cross-eyed you'd become. Those were the days...!

Could any sane photographer seriously wish to be retrospective in the face of such constraint - taking slides, for example? Maybe there are still some who will. In my opinion there could have been no finer display of photography than the array of slides shown by a recent visitor to the club. I believe we saw traditional skills in their purest form, the images demonstrating how the photographer wielded only a camera in response to his observation. Focus, exposure and filtration are determined prior to pressing the shutter, after which no further adjustment is possible. I am slightly alarmed at the decline in enthusiasm for slides, as I consider the skills in producing them to be fundamental to photography and for as long as I can remember have loved the projected image. The eagerness of the club to obtain a digital projector suggests I am not alone. Let's project regardless of whether the image is digital or on film. Both ways are possible and who knows, the digital file may even have begun life as a transparency, but its correct form or provenance is far less important than its creative and technical quality. Producing a photograph for display can be likened to arriving at the summit. Others will at the same time be reaching the peak, and thus achieving a similar aim. Does it matter which path led the climbers to their goal?

David Pemberton



"Galilleo" by Harry Pierre



"Changing Guard at Buckingham Palace" by Mike Jennings

"Just William" by Peter Penfold



A selection of prints from this years competitions.

Aspects of flash photography

If you just want something to take snapshots with, the built in pop-up flash in your camera is probably sufficient. It does not emit much light and so doesn't have a lot of range, but then friends in restaurants aren't going to be very far from you. It has a harsh quality, but for snapshots most people don't seem to mind much. If you intend to do candid photography, or take photographs in sensitive situations such as inside churches, beware that many cameras with built-in flash guns automatically use them. Some do let you switch them off.

However, if you want to get into more advanced photography you'll probably want either to buy a good external flash unit or else avoid using flash as often as possible and use available light. The light from an internal flash unit is very harsh, whereas external units let you soften the light by bouncing it off of walls or ceilings, or allow you to attach a light-softening diffuser to the flash. Most importantly, an external flash unit can be taken off the camera - either with an extension or wireless transmitter. This is important since on-camera flash provides unnatural head -on lighting.

Basically, soft lighting is light which originates from a large area. Portable camera flashes, by contrast, have very small light-producing areas and, therefore, produce very hard-edged light with pronounced shadows. Flash units also tend to be mounted right next to the camera lens, producing an unnatural look. If you decide to soften the light by bouncing it off a surface, avoid non-white surfaces which will reflect coloured light on to the scene unless that is the effect you want.

The "red-eye" effect; is a common problem with the internal flash units built into cameras. It is caused by the white light from the flash unit reflecting off the red blood vessels lining the interior of the eye. The light shines back into the camera, resulting in the famous red glow. Photoshop Elements 4 contains an automatic red eye correction tool. There are related problems of green-eye in cats and dogs.

If you use a built-in flash the first image may be correctly exposed, but subsequent images may be dark. All flash units take a number of seconds to charge up between flash bursts. Some flash units have "rapid-fire" abilities which let them fire the flash even if the internal capacitor is not yet fully charged - but many do not.

So if your second photo is dark it probably means that your flash unit lacks rapid-fire capabilities. You have to wait for the unit to charge up fully (and the pilot light on the back of the unit goes on) before taking the second photo. However, if your flash does have rapid-fire capabilities and the image is dark, you probably took the second photo too quickly and the flash unit didn't have enough time to recharge to an adequate power level.

Note that different types of batteries charge up the flash at different speeds.

Diffusers of any kind obviously reduce the amount of light that your flash unit produces. You'll find a similar effect if you bounce the light from your flash unit off a wall or into a photographic umbrella.

However, so long as you're using automated (TTL, A-TTL or E-TTL) metering then the camera will compensate automatically. There is no need to adjust anything.

You'll have decreased range, but you shouldn't have any exposure problems unless you're too far away from the subject and the decreased range now means you're out of range.

Diffusers can easily cost you at least half your flash range, depending on the type. If you see a flash gun with a Guide Number of say 40 metres, you may think – why do I need such a powerful flash, but they are designed to be fitted with a diffuser or used for bounce flash, where a lot of the light output does not return to the film or sensor screen.

Sometimes when you use the flash the shutter is slow to operate. because you are trying to take a flash photo in low-light conditions and the camera is in Av (aperture priority) mode or the night PIC (icon) mode if your camera has it. This can produce interesting effects because the flash will illuminate and freeze the object, but the open shutter still allows ghost images to occur.

In Av, night and Tv (shutter speed priority) modes the camera meters for ambient (existing) light and fills in the foreground subject using the flash. It does not assume that the primary light source is the flash, and therefore the shutter speed it sets is the same as it would set if you weren't using flash at all.

In low light this results in slow shutter photography. If the shutter speed is very long you will, therefore, need a tripod to avoid motion blur during the exposure.

Alternatively you can switch to full auto or Program (P) mode, which automatically exposes for the flash-illuminated subject and not the background. These modes try to ensure that the shutter speed is high enough to let you handhold the camera without a tripod. The drawback of these basic modes is that photos taken in dimly lit areas usually end up with black or poorly lit backgrounds.

Each camera model has a top shutter speed that can be used with flash. This is known as its flash sync or X-sync speed and varies from 1/90 second low-end cameras to 1/250 on pro cameras.

In P (program) mode and all flash-using PIC (icon) modes except for night mode (if your camera has it) the camera uses the flash as the primary light source for the foreground subject.

If the ambient light levels are low, therefore, the background will turn out very dark. This is because the flash is not illuminating the background and the shutter speed is too short to expose adequately for background areas.

Remember that the light from any battery-powered flash is somewhat limited. You can't expect a small flash unit to light up the Grand Canyon or Eiffel Tower. You can only reasonably expect it to light up people standing in the foreground or close backgrounds such as room interiors.
To avoid this problem of black backgrounds you will need to take a photo in aperture priority, shutter priority or manual modes. If the ambient lighting is very low you may need a tripod to avoid motion blur for the time required to expose the background adequately. Using fast film (eg: ISO 800) and wide lens apertures (the smaller the f stop you can get on your lens) will help bring up the background as well.
Keep in mind that the camera meters for ambient (existing) light conditions and flash illumination independently.
P (program) mode keeps the shutter speed between 1/60 sec and the maximum flash synchronisation speed your camera can handle. It does this so that you shouldn't need a tripod, even if light levels are low. It then tries to illuminate the foreground using flash.
Av (aperture priority) and Tv (shutter speed priority) modes set the shutter speed or aperture to expose for the existing light conditions correctly. They then fill in the foreground using flash. If light levels are low you will need a tripod to avoid blur.
M (manual exposure) mode lets you set both aperture and shutter speed to be whatever you want. The camera then automatically controls the illumination of the foreground subject using flash.

Flash metering systems

The light output changes instantly in response to the presence or absence of power being delivered to the tube, so the primary form of control you have over the light output is duration of the electrical pulse, which is switched off by a component called a "thyristor." Old-fashioned manual flashes require you to calculate the distance to the subject and then set the flash duration time yourself; a cumbersome and error-prone process. Modern flash units automate this process completely through the use of computer-controlled electronics.

Controlling flash exposure.

In regular photography you have two basic ways by which to control the amount of ambient (available) light entering the camera and exposing the film. You can adjust the shutter speed, which affects the duration of the exposure since ambient light is essentially constant in this context. And you can adjust the lens aperture - the physical diaphragm on most lenses which governs the quantity of light that enters the lens. (you can also use different lenses, add filters to the lens and so on, but we're talking about the fundamental issues here)
However, flash photography is quite different since it involves split-second bursts of light. A key point to remember in flash photography is that the shutter speed of the camera normally does not have any bearing on flash exposure. Light from a continuous source is affected by shutter speeds, but flash bursts are so brief - in the milliseconds - that a mechanical shutter mechanism has no way of limiting the amount of light from a flash unit that hits the film. Shutter speed only affects the amount of ambient light.
You therefore have four basic ways to control how much light from a flash unit exposes the film.

* **First**, you can adjust the lens aperture. However, lens apertures also affect the amount of ambient light striking the film as well, so it would obviously be hugely inconvenient if that were the only option at our disposal.
* **Second**, you can adjust the distance from the flash unit to the subject. Light falloff follows known physical laws and so can reliably be calculated, but of course it'd be very inconvenient if you had to move the flash unit around all the time just to adjust flash exposures. That sort of thing is fine in a studio setting, but not for casual or photojournalist photography. Additionally, altering flash unit/subject distances affects the relative size of the flash light source, which results in different qualities of light (hard vs soft).
* **Third**, you can put various diffusers or light baffles between the flash unit and the subject, which would be a nuisance to carry around and deal with.
* **Fourth**, you can adjust the duration of the flash pulse as mentioned above, which thereby affects the intensity of the light produced. And this is the primary method of control we use for electronic flash.

So that's what flash metering is really all about, in a nutshell. You need to adjust the duration of the flash pulse so you can expose the film correctly and achieve your photographic goal. Determining what this flash duration should be is not an easy thing to do, however, and so camera makers over the years have come up with various automated systems to do it.

Flash metering principles.

Flash metering has very different requirements from normal ambient light metering for the reasons outlined above. Ambient light metering is performed well in advance of the shutter opening. EOS cameras, for example, activate the internal light meter when you press the shutter release button down halfway. But the subject-illuminating flash pulse, however, occurs after you press the shutter release all the way. That means that the flash pulse appears after the mirror has flipped up (blocking the ambient light meter) and the shutter has opened.
There are thus two basic ways you can meter for flash automatically. First, you can measure the flash pulse as it is being emitted or second, you can send out a low-power test pulse (pre-flash) of known brightness first and base your light calculations on that data before the shutter opens.

To be continued



"Dawn in the Adur Valley" Mike Warren

"Blue Led"
Malcolm Bull





"Remembrance" Cliff Carter



"Beachy Head" Connie Morris



"Frost on Silver Birches" Malcolm Bull



"Finale" Connie Morris



"Patio Lightning" Cliff Carter