Steyning Camera Club

VIEWFINDER

Spring 2007

Number 37



"Jetsam 1"

Congratulations to winner Graham Smith for this image

Projected Image of the Year, 2006/7



Second Place
"Cloudbow, Pla de la Casa"
a traditional slide
by Ken Scott ARPS



Third Place
"Hot Pursuit"
by Malcolm Bull

Editorial

Hi to all members
This edition has many of the top scoring images from our competitions from the past season, together with a great illustrated article by one of our newer members, Clive Jones.
Congratulations to all members who won the trophies and shields, there were certainly some close results. Thanks also to all who participated and to those who allowed us to use their images in outside competitions.
Please support as many of the Summer Programme events as possible, as this often helps to produce good images for next season as well as being fun.
Thanks also to Margaret Tully, who has been beavering away in the background, organising coach trips and helping with this summer's events.
Any more articles would be most welcome. They could be submitted as Word documents, but I can type them if needed and any digital images could be added as jpeg files.
Have a great Summer, Cliff.

SUMMER PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 20th June at 7.30pm
Evening Walk - meet at Swanbourne Lake, Arundel.

Saturday, 14th July at 10.30am
Coffee Morning at Joan and Roger's, 9 Dawn Crescent, Upper Beeding.
Raffle, plant stall, bring and buy.

Saturday, 28th July at 7.30pm
American Supper at Margaret and John's, Seasons, Sopers Lane, Bramber. Please bring a plate of a sweet or savoury dish, not forgetting liquid refreshment! Wine, beer, etc. etc. A garden chair if possible. Husbands, wives, partners are welcome.

Saturday, 4th August from 2.00 to 5.00pm
Summer Workshop at Cliff and Virginia's, Nelern, top of De Braose Way, Steyning.
Bring your camera and tripod and anything you might want to photograph outside, ornament, cut flowers, etc.

Wednesday, 15th August at 7pm sharp.
Evening Walk - meet at **The Black Horse**, Amberley. 3 miles, two stiles.

Saturday, 15th September.
Photo Hunt with Henfield CC at the West Grinstead and District Ploughing and Agricultural Society Show at Aglands Farm, Picts Lane, Cowfold,
Meet at **12.30 for picnic lunch.** The Photo Hunt will start at 1.30pm and finish at 4.30pm. The actual event starts at 9.30am and many interesting activities, including the setting up of the old ploughs, preparing the horses, hedge laying, etc begin early in the day and are well worth watching. My advice is to be there as early as you can and make a whole day available, especially if the weather is good!



"Dandelion Clock"
by Gail Bell



"Marine Scape"
by Leon Bellis

"A Good Preen"
by Pete Etheridge





"Droplets" by Pete Etheridge

"Stamen"
by Mike Warren



A selection of Five Star images
from various competitions

West Sussex Gazette Cup

Round 1
"Fenders"
by Mike Jennings





Round 2 - "Concorde and Sunset" by Cliff Carter



Round 3 - "Autumn Stream" by Harry Pierre

The Florida Everglades National Park – A Unique Wildlife Experience
by Clive Jones



Introduction

A common misconception of the Florida everglades is that it is a swamp. It is in fact a river. It is a vast 'river of grass', flowing at only one quarter of a mile a day, which covers the southern end of the Florida peninsular. This 50 mile-wide sheet of moving water is home to some 600 species of animals, including 350 types of birds, 26 kinds of snakes, alligators, crocodiles, manatees, the Florida panther, turtles, fish, and deer, as well as butterflies and 60 species of mosquitoes. It is the only place in the world where you will find both crocodiles and alligators in the same environment. However, by far the most noticeable and spectacular is the variety of birds: herons, egrets, ibis, cranes, spoonbills, black vultures, wood storks, kites, osprey, cormorants, brown pelicans, and anhinga. It is designated a World Heritage site, an International Biosphere Reserve, and a Wetland of International Significance.



This slow moving river, averaging 6 inches in depth, and losing only 2 inches of elevation for every mile it slopes down towards the Gulf of Mexico, encompasses an ecosystem composed of coastal and saw grass prairies, mangrove swamps, tree islands, pinelands, hardwood hammocks, and coastal estuaries. The flow of water is crucial to the continuation of the ecosystem, as it has been since its creation during the Ice Age. It is an environment unlike any other natural place on earth. Until you visit it you cannot imagine how different it is from anything you've encountered before, no matter how many photographs you might have seen.

However, despite these high accolades, it is an ecosystem under threat. Years of drainage and alterations, begun when the Everglades ecosystem was not well understood, have created a threat to the balance of the area and efforts are constantly needed to counteract these changes.

Shooting tips

Although birds are abundant in most places it is better to visit the State National Park areas. These are primarily in place for conservation reasons and the environment is allowed to maintain its natural status as much as possible. The visitor centres are a very useful source of information maps and guides for planning your visit, and here you can see video films, listen to lectures, and book ranger-led events.



The best places to visit in the north for photography are Shark Valley, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Fakahatchee Strand State. In the south there are equally interesting projects such as the Anhinga Trail, Pa-hay-okee Overlook, and guided cruises that tour the back country canals and open waters of Florida Bay. What can be seen depends on the season as the Everglades is on the migratory route from the Arctic Circle down to South America.

Photography does not pose any serious problems in the Everglades. It is possible get up quite close to much of the wildlife by making use of the walking trails and boardwalks. The important thing to remember is that these are wild animals, no matter how tame they might appear, especially the alligators. Just to take a half-mile walk away from the visitor centre in Shark Valley is exhilarating. In a short distance you might first spot a couple of Egrets and some White Herons sitting on a tree branch just across the creek, then a Great Blue Heron carefully wading in the water looking for a meal. You might then see an alligator motionless on the bank only a metre away ready to take to the water, but also keeping an eye on its litter of perhaps six young alligators only 12 inches long just behind you! (As long as you stay standing you are safe because you appear very big to the alligator).



Walk on a little further and you might see a female Anhinga sitting on a tree limb with wings outstretched to dry them (they have no oil covering to their wings) next to a Wood Stork on the next limb, with

perhaps a sinister looking Black Vulture only feet away. Then close by a whole group of Herons might suddenly take flight, offering more photo opportunities. With patience the opportunities are plentiful.
Depending upon your location there is also the chance to take interesting sea and sunset images across the flat landscape, so a middle range wide angle zoom would be useful. Florida is after all the 'Sunshine State'. Away from the Everglades the city of Miami provides plenty of interesting Art Deco buildings and colour especially at night.



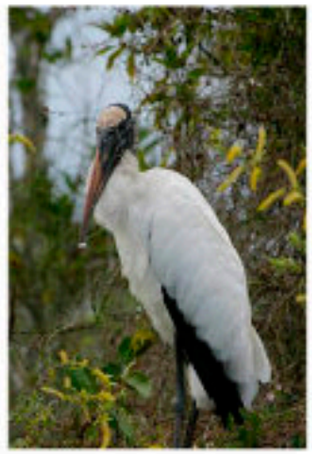
Equipment
A zoom lens of at least 400mm is recommended. I used a hand held 100-400mm IS lens. Using this can be a bit tricky when switching from a relatively still bird to one in flight as the panning of the camera can upset the lens stabilisation if on the wrong setting.



For film users it would be wise to avoid high contrast film, especially in the middle of the day. The ideal weather for photography here would be bright but cloudy. A Tripod, monopod or beanbag would be useful especially with heavy lenses.

Seasons
The best time to visit is between November and mid April (winter). This is the dry season and temperatures range from 60° – 80°F. Mosquitoes are tolerable if at all and wildlife is easier to spot.

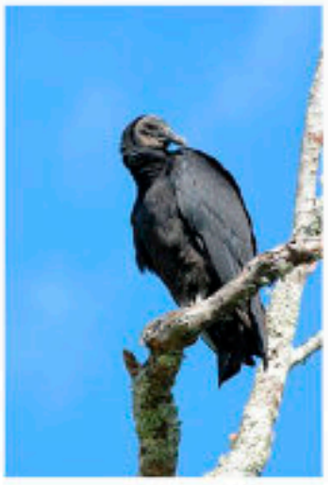
Conversely, summer brings hot humid weather, clouds of mosquitoes and other biting insects, and fewer visitors. Also flooding may occur in the wet season and some areas become inaccessible. For the summer months an insect repellent and antihistamine or hydrocortisone cream are essential.



Accommodation
Good range of hotels, motels, B&Bs etc in Miami, Homestead, Florida City, Everglades City – see links below. The only accommodation in the Park is at Flamingo Lodge.

Directions

By Air – Miami International Airport. Major rental car hire agencies located in the airport.



By Car – There are two entrances to the Everglades. For the southern entrance take Route 9336 east then south from Florida City. The north is accessed via the Tamiami Trail (Route 41) from Miami.

By Bus – Greyhound buses available four times daily to Homestead.

Useful Links
www.nps.gov/ever/ - Park information.
www.phototraveler.com - Photography Travel Guides.
www.flausa.com - for planning and accommodation.
www.flamingolodge.com - Flamingo Lodge motel, cottages etc.
www.tropicaleverglades.com - general information.
www.greyhound.com - buses.

Thanks to Clive for this informative article and the Editor would really appreciate any submissions from members with images of their travels or even any Hints & Tips that might be of interest to your fellow photographers.

Subjects for next year's Set Subject competition for traditional transparencies and digitally projected images, which were voted for by all members present at one of our meetings and the most popular subjects were as follows:

Round 1 - "Customs & Traditions"
Round 2 - "Cityscapes"
Round 3 - "Temptation"

This should give plenty of scope for using your imagination and we all look forward to seeing the resulting images, especially Round 3!
We are hoping to have separate awards for slides and digital images, this will be discussed at the next committee meeting and more information will follow.

Viewfinder Trophy

Round 1
"Lilypool Reflections"
by Joan Hornsby





Round 2 - *"Madelaine"*
by Mike Williams



Round 3 - *"Ebbing Away"* by Leon Bellis



"Reflections"
and
"Fisherboys"
by
Joan Hornsby
from the winning panel.



A Judging Ideal?

I am privileged to be invited regularly to give appraisals (judge) around the country, and it is something I care about greatly. Some of my previous articles have suggested ways in which I think 'judging' could be improved, and have explored my own motivation for wanting to do it. Here I want to share with you some thoughts for what 'judging' could be as an ideal.
My motivation is not to stand in judgement but to help photographers to develop, to grow and to improve through constructive appraisal; hence my preference for the term over 'judging'.
One of the most influential psychologists of the last century, Carl Rogers, proposed that there are three conditions that must be present in any growth-promoting relationship. I've been thinking about these in the context of appraising photographs with an audience, and I'll consider them one by one.

Congruence

To be congruent means to be genuine or real, to reveal myself with no 'professional' façade. In making a comment about an image, therefore, I have to be aware of the feelings a picture evokes for ME and to express those feelings. This could cause difficulties, because many people believe that judges should be objective. Total objectivity, of course, would require me to turn off this human part of myself, so we might as well have a machine do our judging – I've often referred to this as 'judging by numbers'. Congruence requires subjectivity, but expressed in a caring way. This is where the second condition comes in.

Caring

Rogers called this condition "unconditional positive regard", and so when I am expressing personal feelings, which may include "I don't like this image, because ..." I should make it very clear that it is "I" who has this feeling about the image, and that I totally respect the photographer. I must also find something good and encouraging to say about every image; destructive criticism has no place in any situation. I cannot apply the final condition without being caring.

Empathy

The third condition is perhaps the most difficult. Empathy means to sense accurately the meanings, intentions and feelings of the other person – the photographer in our case. However, trying to "get inside the head of the photographer" is fraught with danger, particularly if I use language that is too categorical. It is risky also, for I might get it wrong. If I do, then congruence helps me; if I get it right, the photographer almost always thanks me, for people love to feel heard and understood. I also need to understand how you might be feeling, now, as your image comes up for me to appraise. So I talk to you, the audience, as though I am speaking one to one.
Of course, it helps my credibility to have high levels of photographic knowledge. However, I contend that someone with no photography knowledge at all, someone who is able to articulate what they like or don't like about a picture in this "person-centred" way, could give an appraisal that we would all be delighted by.

Communication is everything.

... Ken Scott ARPS

Lewis Cup

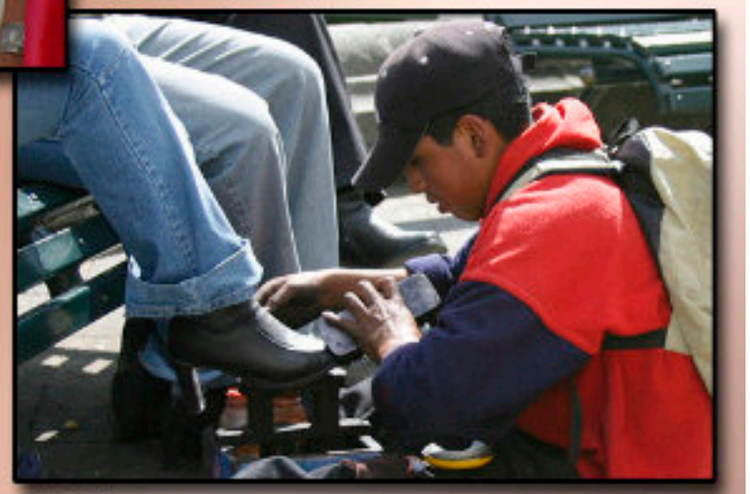
Set subject competition for traditional slides and digitally projected images.

These are the winning images from each round and congratulations to the overall winner, Mike Jennings.

The two lower images are Mike's other images from the winning panel.



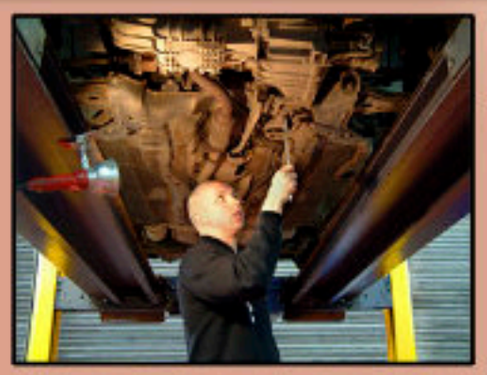
Round 1 - Past It's Best
"Past It's Best"
by Mike Jennings



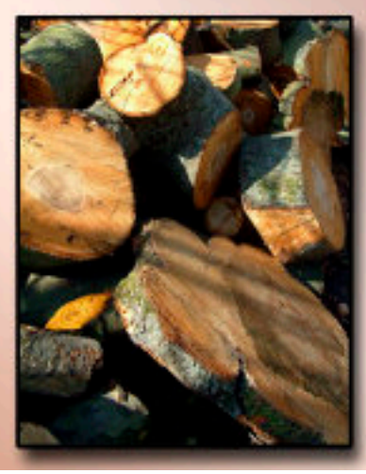


Round 2 - People at Work
"Shoe Shine Boy" by Clive Jones

Round 3 - Patterns in Nature
"Reflections" by Vic Garbett



"The Mechanic"



"Logs"