VIEWFINDER

Summer 2008

Number 40







A selection of images submitted by Connie Morris



Steyning Camera Club

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AWARDS FOR ALL

Editorial

Welcome to the 40th edition of Viewfinder, now partially distributed via the internet. We are hoping to make all previous editions available as a web archive and this should enable all current members to read many of the articles written by club members since Viewfinder number 1 and also to see some of the early images.

The idea of "Viewfinder" was originally conceived by Jim Jenkins and the very first edition was published as an A4 newsletter back in the Summer of 1993, how technology and even the way we take photographs has changed in such a short period of time.
Computers were a novelty, low resolution scanned images were "state of art" and Jim was the first in the club to see the possibilities that were beginning to be available.
We now have a club web site, the vast majority of members regularly use the "new" digital cameras and use computers to play around with their images, printers that are now capable of printing superb colour and black & white masterpieces and we see the development of ever increasing resolution, speed and sophisticated features becoming available at lower prices.
The future for imaging looks brighter than ever, the problem will be selecting the best images to work on and then producing the "perfect" finished article that will be appreciated by our peers.

One of the real highlights for me this year has been following Ken Scott's 366 Project on his Flickr web site. There was a time when I believed that he would never change to using a digital camera but this project would not have been a practical proposition using film. The selection of images that Ken has captured to date has been staggeringly good and varied, comments occasionally added to the daily image have been revealing and I am sure that the experience has been both stimulating and satisfying for Ken, despite a few inevitable dark days.
Hopefully he will collate the whole experience into one of his inspiring presentations after day 366, good luck with the rest of the year Ken.

So far this summer we have been lucky with the weather for all of our events, except the damp walk in the Whiteways Woods with Margret Preece.

The "Meet Your Navy" coach outing organised by Margaret Tully was excellent, members and friends were spoilt for action and subject matter in the hot sunshine. We were dropped off and picked up by the coach close to the main entrance and the journey there and back was fast and without incident. A really good time was had by all and we look forward to seeing the results sometime during the coming season, so many thanks Margaret for all her hard work with the organisation.

Members' Flickr Galleries, which can be viewed through links on our club web site, are a source of inspiration and may be the way forward for sharing our images. Take the time to browse through them and consider joining in with your own set of images.

Reminder
The set subjects for this comig season 2008/9 are Round 1 - ***"Seascape"***, Round 2 ***- "Shadows"*** and Round 3 - ***"Reflections".***
The committee has also decided to announce the subjects for the ***following season 2009/10*** in order to give members more time to take their images and these will be Round 1 - ***"Still Life"***, Round 2 - ***"Rush Hour"*** and Round 3 - ***"Moods".***

Hope you all enjoy the remainder of the summer and look forward to seeing you all at our first meeting on Wednesday, 3rd September.

All the best, Cliff.

Some Notes from the Competition Secretary

First of all I would like to extend my congratulations to Connie Morris, Peter Etheridge and Malcolm Bull whose consistent work and competition results have been rewarded with promotion to the 'A' Group. Well done.

Hopefully with the summer recess well under way there is an opportunity to get out there and take some images that can be entered into competition. That said I personally have found it hard to get enthusiastic to meet the mid summer 'light' of day break at 4am, so have tended to opt for the other end of the day. With that in mind there are some evening workshops in the summer programme that will no doubt provide an opportunity to catch the soft light. Margret and Cliff have circulated the programme but if somehow this has passed you by then please get in touch and we will provide details.

Next season I will be producing a leaflet to describe the various competitions; formats required and dates by which material is to be submitted. This information is currently published to a lesser extent in the club programme but many members have asked for a more detailed explanation.

The club will continue to support external photographic competitions. Images/prints selected to represent Steyning Camera Club will continue to be chosen by a member's panel. The panel will comprise of at least two (2) experienced members plus two others on an ad hoc basis. As in the past I will be asking members to assist. Much can be learned from the process and I will try and give as much notice as possible for the dates when the panel meets.

Some new members to the club might have difficulty 'breaking into the circle' and wondering what to do in certain situations. Is my camera okay, do I have to have a computer, if so what software do I need on my computer, is my work good enough for competition, how do I mount a print that is good enough to enter into a competition? If we are honest I think we can all relate to some of these issues, but, if not addressed can very easily put new members off! Whilst the club is not able to run structured courses to teach the skills required, there is a great deal of experience within the club that can be shared, and in particular, with our newer members. My message to new members is 'please ask if you are unsure' and to the established members 'please help new and sometimes less experienced members'.

How often have you heard the statement 'My prints show no resemblance to what is on the computer screen?' The reason for this is varied but one aspect is to calibrate your computer monitor and also use a print profile. The club has recently purchased a calibration kit and this available to loan to members. Either I or Cliff will be on hand to assist.



Finally I hope that the summer presents you with some good opportunities for photography and I look forward to seeing you in September or if not sooner at one of the summer workshops/events.

Michael Williams
Competition Secretary

The Tony Knight Cup
Enprints
Margaret Tully





Penfold Cup
"B" Group Prints
Connie Morris

Matanle Shield
"A" Group Open Prints
Mike Warren LRPS



Steyning Camera Club Award Winners 2007/8

Presentation of awards at the AGM by Hilda Metcalfe, the Steyning Camera Club's first President and an Honorary Life Member.

Steyning Bowl
Open Slides
Margret Preece ARPS



Colour Photographer of the Year (Traditional Slides)
David Pemberton



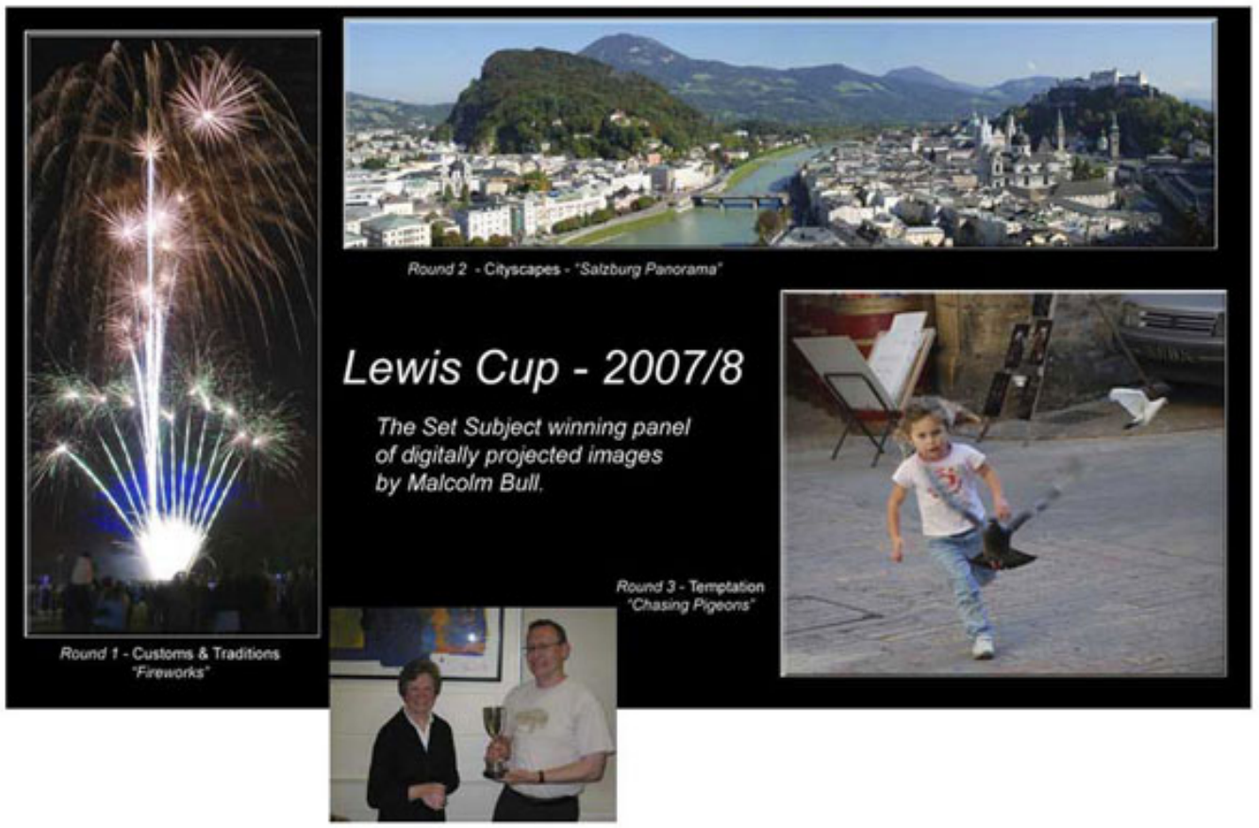


Digital Image of the Year
Harry Pierre









Please contact Cliff if you have any images or articles you would like to see published in Viewfinder, we can use text sent as an e-mail as the basis for a feature and even the.jpg images can also be forwarded now that many of us have Broadband.
If you need advice or help please have a word with Cliff or Mike.

Document or Create? Travelling hopefully……

I have often wondered what it must be like to be a 'freestyle' photographer, inspired to produce a quality image with skill and enthusiasm, irrespective of location, subject matter, even weather. This is clearly someone able to use photography as an entirely creative medium. Someone who would bore at the thought of deploying such an art-form as a mere recording tool. With a chosen subject do we risk casting a prosaic shadow over our images, creating more a data-base than a portfolio? Many of us, when asked, love to boast of our own field, which we consider gives structure to our photography and in turn increases our incentive to explore the subject to greater depth. My photography would undoubtedly be the poorer were it unable to focus on my love of architecture. The reverse is also true. Lifelong obsession it may be, yet the very marvels in stone, brick and timber, that I have sought out since my teens may yet prove more a staitjacket than a vehicle. What follows will, I hope, go some way towards explaining the wistful remark.

The urge in camera clubs to travel ever further afield on holiday in pursuit of the complement to photography makes a revisit less feasible. In these times, when television makes a speciality of capturing the most sumptuous light to accompany any outside location – from a prospective UK house purchase to a browse through Roman ruins in the Syrian desert, we photographers are set an ever more exacting example. I doubt I am the only one who sets out with a preconceived idea of what is to be achieved – only strong light is good enough for my chosen subject, set obliquely to it and, of course, polarised. Thus, light and shade will be sharply defined and colour saturated to the optimum. Skies will be landscaped by towering clouds suspended far below a vivid blue sky - almost black in monochrome, without trace of haze or cirrus. Yet if those conditions prevail, will a suitable subject be near? My long-awaited view of Carcassonne was grey under louring cloud, St Mark's Square saw its campanile shrouded in scaffolding and heaved under the weight of tourists, in themselves responsible for a sinking Venice, the Taj Mahal was lost in an amorphous, unrelenting fog, just as weather reports from home hinted at the possibility of some glorious effect of temperature inversion on the South Downs. Maybe at that moment, Wiston House would have been preferable! These examples, while not the reality, represent something of the disappointment I may have at times experienced and often feared. With the ease of travel (should conscience permit you to take a long-haul flight, and mine, I have to say, probably would), destination is no longer considered an achievement in itself. Infinitely more important is what you are able to take from it. Lover of architecture I may be, but have never been stirred by the prospect of an array of facades and steeples, near or far, seen in diffuse, flat light. The resulting images would be soulless. I need my chosen conditions in order to impose a personal stamp onto the subject. Thus, my emotion in anticipating the visit might be matched when I press the shutter and in turn reflected in the end result, but what a rare stroke of good fortune it can seem! In the timeless words of photographer, Carl Mydans, it is the quest of the sight 'that will set my hands trembling as I raise my camera', which keeps me travelling hopefully. Often, as must have happened with his striking 1953'Wales Landscape', it is the unforeseen which outshines the planned, and yields something original, containing greater emotion than could ever have been anticipated. The common factor is light, sufficiently vibrant to create its own subject matter. Miles from home the clouds massed just as my chosen building was near, and obstinately refused to disperse until time had passed and illumination shifted direction – sadly, an all too frequent scenario. Returning closer to home, a moment of strong sun and angry skies rendered a familiar scene unfamiliarly dramatic and beautiful. Thus, luck provided a chance to create, and a not quite trembling hand to attempt the task.

Sometimes I dream of being back in the pioneering days of William Henry Fox Talbot and his 'sun pictures', in which any documentation, produced for the first time by 'the pencil of nature' had to be creation in itself, as it used science to produce the new art. 'The Open Door' may well be among the first contrived images, in which the new art depicted a detail reminiscent of something Vermeer may have painted two hundred years earlier. By the twenty-first century, after generations have wielded a camera and reaped technology's successive fruits, there is a light year between shutter action and image fit to convey emotion and thus receive accolades for creative quality. Between lie the thousands of images, which have given us personal satisfaction in obtaining exactly what we saw – the family members, the special occasions, the candid, the humour in notices with unrealised double meanings, the copying of a post card reviving a long-disappeared scene and whole sequences of shots in holiday visits. As mere documents, these may never make it to the camera club, but are they not the rocks from which the gems are revealed?

Having travelled hopefully and arrived at no serious conclusion, I feel better for having at least expressed thoughts which recur every time I embark on a camera journey and wonder if it will be productive or abortive. Now, however, with a glimmer of late sun, it must be time to turn words into shutter-action, so here goes….

David Pemberton.

Programme Secretaries Notes

For the club meeting on 1 April 2009 it says in the programme "discussing panels and panel competitions". The discussion will be led by Graham Sergeant FRPS from Chichester; you will meet him before this at the very beginning of the season when he will be talking about "portraiture in art and photography".

Originally I had intended to start with a competition, like those we have held in the past. But we already have enough competitions and it would probably be more useful to have a general discussion based on the panels presented by club members.

Therefore: it would be good if on the evening as many club members as possible could bring at least one (titled) panel of between three and six separately mounted prints (and a maximum of three panels) – and it would be even better if in addition there were several spare prints, images that follow the theme of the panel but that for some reason had not been included.

You are free to choose the subject of your panel, maybe something relating to your holidays, or a garden you have visited, or one of our summer workshops, anything that you feel you would like to explore in more detail than is possible with just one print.

On the evening Graham will discuss each panel in turn, how relevant are the images to the overall theme; he might suggest ways of improving the layout, replace one or more of the original prints with some of the "spares", just generally show how to construct a winning panel. I am hoping that he will conclude by showing one or two of his own panels.

After this he will briefly discuss ways of achieving distinctions of the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) where candidates present their work in panels of 10, 15 or 20 images (depending on the distinction they are hoping to achieve). And who knows, Mike Warren has recently won his Licentiateship (LRPS) and hopefully soon also his Associateship (ARPS) of the RPS – who will be next??

As an afterthought: Chichester Camera Club runs a separate group (led by Graham) for people who want to achieve a distinction with the RPS (or just want to learn more about panelling) – if any Steyning Club member is interested, they would be most welcome (though regrettably there is a charge of £4 for the evening).

Margret Preece

Thanks to all who submitted items for ***Viewfinder 40.***
All contributions for this newsletter, either in the form of images or articles, would be most welcome, it is your way to communicate with the rest of the club.
As most members now have e-mail facilities the Viewfinder will be mainly sent out in an "electronic" or web format in future, with hard copies still being printed and delivered to those without computers.
If you have any constructive suggestions that may improve the magazine please contact Cliff in the usual way.







"Meet The Navy"

Images by Malcolm Bull and Mike Williams of our great coach outing to Portsmouth. Many thanks to Margaret Tully for all her hard work with the organising and for making sure we had such glorious sunshine!!
More images are on Malcolm's Flickr Gallery, with a link from the club website:
www.steyningcc.org.uk









"All the Fun of the Fair" - Steam Rally at The Weald & Downland Museun, Singleton by Cliff Carter

