Amateurs and Photographer

Digital versus printing and photography: Which they should be the best of angle of the capability, certified images and given an insight into they may variety. Grown Photographer Photographer Photographer

with a waiting boat at this popular Canadian tourist attraction. Sandie said it was a strong monochrome image showing some interesting buildings.

A very different subject again was depicted in the third placed image – this time a flying helicopter. 'RAF Chinook' `below right` was an image by Martin Stokes with well caught shot.

Nineteen images were awarded Highly Commended including 3 from Martin Stokes, 3 from Tim Tapley and 3 from Pam Mullings.
Special mention of Christine Elterby whose image 'Spiralling Navel College' has gained her an HC in the first competition she has entered with the club so very well done to her. Also 'Lime Avenue on a Foggy Morning' by Bridget Codrington which the judge declared the best of the many misty woodland scenes that were entered.
Awards were given to members in all 3 sections of the club with many of them going to those in the Beginners section which was very pleasing. Well done to all those who entered.
Thanks to Sandie for all her helpful comments and for judging the competition. Thanks to Competition Secretary Dave Eagle for organising the competition and hosting the Zoom session so successfully once again. *PM*

Full results ***All the awarded images can be seen in the Galleries***

Member's Speed Critique

19 January 2021

This critique evening gives some club members the chance to show some of their images to groups of fellow members. The 'speed' aspect is that they have about 10 minutes to show and discuss their photographs.

Usually members can meet up and have face to face discussions but this time it all had to be set up using Zoom. After some trial runs 6 members were able to present their images with the rest of the members split into 3 'rooms'. Sounds complicated but it all worked perfectly on the night thanks to Dave Eagle and his patience dealing with a group of 'amateur' presenters!
Some of those showing their images were experienced photographers and wanted some feedback others were quite new to photography and so comments from fellow members can be really helpful for presenting their images at their very best.

Sharing his 'photographic journey' David Wilkinson said that he first showed his early images a few years ago at a critique. Having advice and learning from his mistakes has very much helped him progress into a very competent wildlife photographer. David has learnt a lot editing skills as well as field craft which has helped him achieve some excellent images of birds, mammals and insects. An outstanding image of a White-tailed Sea Eagle shown on the right.

During the lockdown Janet Rutter had fun trying out several photographic techniques that she can do indoors. Using flowers or grasses placed on light box produced some interesting images and Janet experimented by freezing flowers in ice and floating oil on water `shown left` to produce some very interesting and unusual photographs.

As a newcomer to photography Graham Sawyer has concentrated on getting to know more about his camera and showed a range of his images for members to comment on. Some excellent snow scenes and other images which just needed a bit of editing to bring out the best in them. The photograph of weather-worn steps `left` made an interesting abstract image.

Having recently retired Lynda Croft has more time to develop her interest in photography and showed members a range of images. Landscapes and architecture are her usual interests but she recently took an unusual image of water droplets on a sassy cabbage `right` with good results.

Already an accomplished photographer Pete Souster presented some of his outstanding minimalistic landscapes. Pete experiments with seascapes using long exposures and likes to photograph areas of the Wiltshire countryside such as the clump of trees near Beckhampton `shown below`.
Pete showed us an interesting image of the Royal Crescent in Bath as well as a sunset image that was published in a photography magazine.

Members complimented Tony Leach on the excellent colours of his image of a balloon flying over Namibia `below right`.
Tony showed some of his landscapes as well as zebras and a stag and asked members for ideas about any improvements that might be made.

All those members showing their images for the critique said that they enjoyed the experience. As usual there were lots of ideas put forward about cropping and whether an image looks better in mono or colour but as always the final judgement has to be made by the photographers themselves.

Thanks to all those who presented their images for others to comment on. Hopefully everyone enjoyed the critiques and learned some new ideas.

Special thanks to David Eagle who sorted out all the technology needed, so that we could all join in the discussion from our own homes. PM

Bird Photography Simplified

12 January 2021

This presentation was a first for Devizes Camera Club, we welcomed a photographer from overseas to our Zoom! meeting. Glenn Bartley joined us from Victoria, Vancouver Island, Canada.
For those of us who had browsed his website, we knew we would be listening to an expert. Glenn is an award winning bird photographer, particularly known for his hummingbird portfolio. Fascinated by these "mesmerising birds" since childhood, Glenn has spent months, over the years, in the rain forests of Ecuador and Costa Rica developing and honing his skills. He has a regular contributor to magazines and journals, and has published a number of his own books.
Glenn started by talking about his approach to capturing images, in particular the 7 elements of a great bird photo: Exposure, Light, Composition, Sharpness, Perch, Background and Pose.

He said it is important to balance the exposure and avoid images such as a dark bird against a bright sky. Use your histogram, he urged, and "expose to the right". He said that, although Manual exposure is best in some situations, he uses AV most of the time and dials in exposure compensation as required. Glenn prefers to work in natural light, but the quality of light is critical. Ideally, you want a "soft" light with shadows, not a harsh light. Photographs taken in the middle of the day are not as good as those taken in the early morning or late afternoon when the light will be too harsh. He said that bright overcast conditions are your friend in the Tropics, giving you more shooting time and flexibility of composition. However, images may appear a bit flat out of the camera and will need more post-processing time. Using flash is useful, especially for fill-in purposes, but you need to learn how to control the power and you should get the flashgun off the camera. He showed how the use of flash with the right mode and power can help to freeze the action, particularly of hovering hummingbirds.
Key composition issues for bird photography, Glenn suggested, include the orientation of an image, which will depend on the shape and pose of the subject. And he suggested leaving some space around the subject to allow for some cropping in post-processing. For wildlife images, Glenn confirmed, sharpness is all about the eyes and the factors required to achieve sharpness include using a tripod, good quality lenses with stabilisation and an appropriate shutter speed. But he warned us not to over prioritise sharpness as its not the only factor in achieving a good image.
Glenn pointed out that a good perch for the subject can be essential for a great shot, whether it is about finding a branch in the wild that a bird keeps returning to or a set-up in your back garden. While a messy, distracting background is to be avoided, Glenn warned against getting too hung up on blurred backgrounds as the inclusion of some environment can be important. The pose of the bird is also important, he said, and should always include eye contact with the camera.
Having sorted out all these elements, Glenn then talked about finding an a factor that will really make an image stand out. He provided a long list of things to watch out for including birds feeding, especially with prey, birds mating, birds with chicks, birds in bad weather or any sort of action.

In the second part of his presentation, Glenn talked about the research that he does before going on a trip. He likes to find out where birds are located for which he recommended ebird.org which provides information on sightings. He familiarises himself with bird calls (xenocanto.org) and other peoples trip reports (cloudbirders website). In the field, he advocated keeping it simple, only taking the equipment you need, setting realistic goals and taking your time to get set-up correctly. When building a portfolio, Glenn emphasised the importance of defining your goals with regard to species diversity and styles of images. During post processing, on your calibrated screen, he recommended targeting the deletion of at least 90% of the images taken. Becoming picky about your images will make you a better photographer. He also recommended establishing your own workflow, using basic techniques, and building your skills over time. He encouraged us to share our work with others through websites, social media and email.
After finished off by talking about the sort of gear you need for successful bird photography. In answer to questions from the audience about his basic camera set-up, he said that he starts with AV, f5.6 and an ISO setting depending on the available light. He generally uses Evaluative Metering with AV and checks his histogram to see whether any exposure compensation is needed.
Throughout his presentation, Glenn showed us some stunning images to illustrate points he was making. His website at **glennbartley.com** is full of amazing images of birds from the various countries he has visited. Despite having spent considerable time in countries such as Ecuador and Brazil, when asked which country he would most want to return to, Glenn unhesitatingly said – "Colombia"
A thoroughly interesting and comprehensive evening was enthusiastically applauded by the audience. DF

Projected Image League

5 January 2021

The first club competition of 2021 was rather different this time – not only a virtual competition as we have become used to, but instead of members all using pencil & paper to vote it was all very cleverly done with a click on our own screen and some clever software
Members are asked to score each set entered out of ten taking into account how they look also a set of 5 images, the quality of each image and how well they all the images fit the set title.
There were 54 sets entered altogether from 18 members who were each required to enter 3 sets. Frank Collins set out the guidelines and a demo set was shown so that members could try out the on line voting system. It was suggested that it would take an exceptional set to warrant the top score of 10 but none the less several sets achieved this high score. Thumbnails of the sets were shown with up to 5 separate images then members had to give their own score. After members had voted for each set the results were shown and we could see the range of votes. It was interesting to note that scores for some sets ranged from 4 up to 10 showing a big difference in how members regarded those sets and how very much opinions can vary!
There was a large range of subjects entered with as usual wildlife and landscape photographs dominating but there were also some interesting sets on Vintage Vehicles, Abstracts, Reflections and Trees. Would have thought images of pollarded gables, traffic lights, Newspaper or vintage car steering wheels could make such interesting sets! We also had pilots waving from aircraft, laughing animals, slices of fruit and even 'slightly flighty' portraits.

Members voted for their favourite set of the sets except their own and the scores were averaged – then each set that contains 3 scores were added to give the results.
For the third time in a row Robert Harvey ARPS EFIAP won the competition and the Hewitt Cup, this time with landscape images of the Cornish coast, Savernake forest and Wiltshire fields. One of the images from the set showing a field of sunflowers is shown above.
In second place with delightful images of hares and red squirrels as well as autumn scenes was David Wilkinson. Third place went to Club Chairman Steve Hardman with images of the Isle of Skye, riverside and Cotswold scenes.
Peter Souster, Pam Mullings and Dave Gray were awarded Highly Commended for their sets.
The individual set with the highest score was 'Hares' by David Wilkinson, 'Just Wilde' by Pam Mullings was second favourite and the set 'Red Squirrels' by Gill Cardy FRPS DPAGB EFIAP was placed third.
It takes a lot of time and patience to find all the images and put 3 sets together so many thanks to members who entered. Another very successful and interesting evening showing the great talents of club members.

Very special thanks to David Eagle who not only collected up and put together all 54 sets for the competition but also sorted out so successfully the software that allowed the scores and results to be shown on the screen. Thanks also the Frank Collins, David Wilkinson and Gerald Clarke who verified the scores. *PM*

See the top sets as scored by members

Christmas Lights 2020

A few club members went out recently and took photos of the Christmas lights in their area and added them to an Album on the DCC Facebook. Mostly festive street scenes, but some members came up with a few different ideas as well.

One of the images with the most likes was by Sue Wadman and showed the attractive lit up tree in Devizes Market Place. `right`

Another photo was a rather topical 'sign of the times' by Bridget Codrington showing the Social Distancing sign and all the clutter in the lit up Marlborough High Street. `left`

Other images in the album were by Helena Chambers, Richard Blackbourne, Pam Mullings, Jennifer Skjoldbro and you can see them all by going to our DCC Facebook.

Christmas Knock-out Competition

15 December 2020

The club's usual Christmas Knock-out looked a little different this year but nevertheless we were still able to have Santa as Master of Ceremonies as usual even though we were all sitting in our own homes to see him!

Due to the wonders of technology we were still able to view the 128 images entered by members.
In this competition two of the randomly selected images are shown on their screens side by side and members vote for their favourite of the two. One image is knocked out and the image with most votes then goes on to the next round.
Several members had cleverly worked out how the competition could be run this year using Zoom and everyone was very impressed how well it all worked on the night. Usually Santa has to count raised hands in a darkened room but this time at the click of a mouse the result came up after each pair of images shown.
Anyway all was ready for the fun to begin with all the usual rough justice along the way.

No different to usual was the occasional injustice as 2 images came up by the same photographer and one had to go. Also how do you choose between a cute animal, a superb landscape, fantastic close up or something a bit different. Everyone was impressed by all the superb images entered but sadly many very good images were eventually knocked out. Only once did Santa have to choose his favourite when the votes were equal for each of the two images and that came up in the semi-final.

Anyway we had to make up our minds on each image so round by round images got eliminated down to eight and the finally the last four images that survived all 8 rounds.

This year the favourite with most votes in the final round was a portrait of a Hare by David Wilkinson. In second place was a Red Kite by Tim Tapley then third was 'Rutter Force' `right` a riverside mill by Sue Wadman. In fourth place was The Greenhouse, Ullswater `left` by David Evans. Very well done to the winners who all received Amazon vouchers.

Thanks to all those who entered the competition.
Thanks to Dave Gray for his work displaying the images in pairs, eliminating the losers and shuffling the images between rounds.
Thanks to Dave Eagle for setting up the voting process and passing the results on to Santa to read out. Also many thanks to Santa alias Frank Collins for making it such a fun evening even though we could not meet up together this year and share some Christmas goodies *PM*

Hoping all our members have as good a winter break as they can possibly manage and that they can look forward to the next virtual club meeting on 5 January 2021.

Photoshop Clinic

8 December 2020

The club was pleased to welcome back a former club member, Ray Grace ARPS DPAGB to give members advice about solving Photoshop problems and demonstrating new techniques.
Members were asked to send in their Photoshop queries so Ray went through them one by one giving his expert advice.
One of the questions put in by Ray was how to develop a working system to edit your images.
As Ray explained there are often many ways to use the many tools available in Photoshop and in time everyone develops their own techniques which is why any advice given may vary.
There were several queries about the best way to apply a filter to just one layer in a multi layer image and Ray demonstrated some of the many ways that a selection can be made. If the outline is fairly simple, then there are quick selection tools in Photoshop that can do a pretty good job. If the part of the image to be selected is more complex then the use of several tools and mask layers may be required but with time and practice you can learn the skills.
Among the other queries were 'how and why to use layers' and Ray explained about the many types that can be used such as adjustment or mask layers. Using layers means that your original image is left untouched and that any adjustments are on separate layers that can be turned off and on to see what effect they are having on the image.
Some of the queries required quite complex answers such as the use of luminosity panels and using selective clarity using Camera Raw. Another rather complex subject was on the use of 'smart objects'. Ray explained how to focus stack in PS and showed how his set of images taken at different focus points can be cleverly aligned and then added to give an image sharp from front to back.
Simpler questions for Ray to answer were 'how to add a border' or 'how to add a vignette'
Many photographers gain information from Youtube videos but it is sometimes hard to know who which explain in detail how to do different tasks. Just type in your question and you will get many answers. Take time to practice and it will become much easier and you will work out from all the options the methods that you prefer. Also don't get too stuck in your ways but take time to experiment with the many editing tools at your disposal. Ray kindly said that he would send members his information sheets on various topics for them to learn more details.
There were too many queries for Ray to answer in one session so there will be another chance in February.
Dave Hardman thanked Ray and said that it had been a fascinating evening and a massive topic and hopefully all those watching will have learned something. Thanks were given to Dave Eagle for setting up the Zoom session.
There were too many queries for Ray to answer in one session so there will be another chance in February. Photoshop is a very big learning curve! *PM*

Projected Image Competition (print 1)

1 December 2020

This competition should have been the first print competition of the year but because of restrictions it had to be changed to Projected Images with the judge giving his comments and the results to members using Zoom. The judge was John Taylor who said that he was fairly new to judging and he said that he felt that his comments should helpful, supportive and positive. He felt that club photography should be fun and not taken too seriously. John said that the images entered were very interesting and that it is not easy to judge one image against another and there was such a wide range of subjects. In many cases John gave his views about cropping parts of the image which he felt were unnecessary and detracted from the image. Some images John said that in his opinion were rather cluttered and the main subject not obvious and he preferred the rather simpler images. He looked for good composition often with leading lines that guided the eye to the subject.
Starting with the 33 entries in the Beginners section the judge gave his detailed comments on each one. John went "wow" when he came to 'Power Performance' by David Evans. That image really shows the power of the jet aircraft in flight and the lighting is excellent and he awarded it a well-deserved first place. Another image by David also impressed the judge – this time a portrait of a young lady titled 'Feather in my Hat'. The eyes engaged with the photographer and there was great detail so it was awarded second place.
A delightfully simple image by Megan Boardman gained third place in the section. The early morning start rewarded the photographer with an excellent image titled "Cygnet in Early Morning Light" with good detail in the feathers and a very nice reflection. Two photographs of fungi by Tony Leach gained Highly Commended. A very simple shot taken in Iceland by Lynda Croft and a Puma by Penny Clarke also gained HC's.

Next came the Intermediate section with a seascape catching the judges eye. 'Portland Bill Sunset' by Pete Soster was a crashing on the rocks and the lighthouse to draw he eye and the judge gave it first place. Another seascape by Pete this time a monochrome also impressed with its simplicity so 'Silver Seas' was placed third.
Second place went to an image of a colourful fungi by David Eagle. The judge said that David's 'Fly Agaric with Climbing Rope' was well seen with good lighting.
Finally, a close up of a rat by Steve Hardman titled 'Unwelcome Visitor' was awarded a HC.
After a short break the judge went on to comment on the entries in the Advanced section. Again simple but effective images came to the fore and John's eye with 'One Tree Hill' by Sue Wadman awarded first place. There were just 3 elements – a tree, blue sky and a ploughed field. The judge said it was very well balanced with the tree on the thirds and a good leaf in line. Sue also impressed with 'Peeping out of the Fog' this time in an early morning shot with a good balance between the spire of a church and a group of trees. Sue also did well with her image of one of the statues on Crosby beach with a strong sky and good detail.
In third Place was 'Hadrians Wall' by Dave Gray which the judge said was taken from just the right viewpoint. The eye follows the line of the wall towards the distant hills and the sky. Highly commended's were awarded to Frank Collins, Tim Tapley (ARPS and Pam Mullings.
Congratulations to all.
Chairman Steve Hardman summed up saying the club had a very talented bunch of photographers. He thanked the judge for his comments and said that the 'crop tool' was an important aid to improving the balance of images. *PM*

Competition results **All the awarded images can be seen in the Galleries**

'Show and Tell'

24 November 2020

Members were invited to send in some of their images so that they could explain where and why they took the photograph and ask fellow members for comments.Ten club members sent in some of their images and asked for suggestions about any improvements that could be made. The idea was mainly to review members landscape images taken during the year but there were also some other types of image that members sought opinions on. Would the image look better with some areas cropped or would the image display better as a monochrome image? There was a discussion about how far to take HDR to improve the image or can it go too far and look unrealistic?

Of course member's opinions differed so this brought about some interesting debate and maybe this gave the photographers some new ideas. It is good to get the views of others but in the end it is a matter of personal taste and the photographers have to decide themselves how best to present their images.

Many of the photographs featured the lovely autumn colours including a selection from Megan Boardman who has been exploring local woods and looking for interesting compositions amongst the trees. Also looking out for the colours found on the trees was Martin Rawlins who made visits to several areas to find interesting viewpoints.
Frank Collins showed some of his images taken recently on the Cornish coast and explained that the lighting conditions were often not ideal. Also in some cases he would have preferred to have taken the image at a different time of day if it had been possible.
Some wildlife fungi images taken by Tony Leach on a photography course were discussed and he also showed some impressive landscapes taken in the Lake District.

Gill Cardy FRPS DPAGB EFIAP showed some of her landscapes taken on her travels in the past to Spain, the Outer Hebrides and an obliging Egyptian Goose posing for her in South Africa.
Tim Tapley LRPS usually specialises in close up images of local wildlife but wanted to see what members thought of several of his landscapes which he had almost forgotten about. A colourful view of the river in Bath, a 'surprised' castle in France, the Caen Hill locks and a photograph taken with Edington Priory in the background.
Gerald Clarke showed some of the images taken on a photography course using light painting to illuminate features at night and an image taken on the Dorset coast.

Bridget Codrington asked for member's views on several images including a Dorset river scene featuring a ruined mill with members giving some ideas on cropping.
Interesting images were shown by Lynda Croft including a still life that she had set up.
Robert Harvey ARPS EFIAP had of course been out and about during the summer and had some interesting images to show including one of Clevedon Pier and images taken on a visit to the Lake District.
Probably some of the images shown during the evening will appear in club competitions so members can then hear the views of the judges.
Steve Hardman summed up the evening saying it had been an interesting debate and it confirmed how good the club member's images are.
Thanks was given to those who put up their images for comment and to Dave Eagle for running the Zoom meeting. *PM*

Images: Westwoods by Megan Boardman Ellenwater by Tony Leach Kimmeredge Bay, Dorset by Gerald Clarke

From Camera to Print

17 November 2020

In our latest Zoom! meeting, Tim Jones from Fotospeed gave us a presentation entitled From Camera to Print. Tim started by telling us a bit about his photographic journey, including working with hand-rock bands around Europe followed by many years doing assignments involving schools, weddings, portraiture and product placement. He then explained that he wanted to talk about the 3 foundations of printing - the camera, the computer and the printer.
Taking a picture with a camera is clearly the photographic starting point for creating a printed image. While it is important to try and get the image right in the camera, there is also much debate about whether to take RAW or JPG images. In his view, RAW images are better as they will capture the higher level of data which can be used during the print preparation process. For the same reason, he advocated using the AdobeRGB colour space in the camera rather than sRGB.
Having obtained an image for printing, Tim explained that colour management is important for ensuring that the print is as you want it. He said that colour management is about consistency of colour rather than accuracy and as we all see colours differently, we need to make sure the colours we present are consistent. So we need to have profiles for our screens and for each printer/paper configuration that we use. Screen profiles, he said, are generated using a calibration tool such as the Datacolor Spyder range and printer/paper profiles can be created with the help of organisations like Fotospeed. This involves making a print of a calibration chart, posting it to Fotospeed who scan the print using software to compare it against International Colour Consortium (ICC) standards to create the profile, which is then returned to the user.
Having received the profiles they need to be loaded into the computer's hard drive to make them available from Fotospeed's website. Tim explained the process of selecting the appropriate profiles, and other options, at the time of printing to ensure the results are as required. He also pointed out that the choice of paper type, while being very personal, can make a difference to the impact of the image. To illustrate this, Tim showed us a range of images and explained what paper he would choose to print them on.
Following an extensive question and answer session, our Chairman thanked Tim for a very interesting and informative evening. *DF*

Open Projected Image Competition No 2

10 November 2020

The second Open Projected Image competition of the season was judged using Zoomby Robert Phelps from Bristol.
Robert has not judged Devizes CC images before but said that he was impressed by the high standard of competition entries particularly in the Beginners Section. He said that it is sometimes difficult for judges when they have to compare images against perfection and excellence against those with perhaps, some technical flaws but with much greater emotive interest. Robert commented that many of the otherwise well taken landscapes needed a point of interest somewhere in the image to give a focal point. Starting with the 36 Beginners entries Robert commented on the good points and then where needed gave his ideas on where the image could have been improved. Often it was too much uninteresting foreground which could have been cropped or the background could have been more muted.
It was 'Shaking it off' `right` an unusual image by Megan Boardman which particularly impressed the judge who awarded it first place. Robert said that the flow of water droplets as the duck shook its head was very well captured.
In second place was a delightful still life by Bridget Codrington entitled 'Afternoon Tea' – the judge said that the arrangement of objects, the lighting and focus all worked very well. Robert commented on the third placed image 'White-tailed Eagle by Hilary Tapley saying that it was a dramatic capture with the subject well placed in the frame. The judge awarded Highly Commended to nine of the Beginners images.

Next images in the Intermediate Section were shown with an impressive image 'Gannet' `left` by Steve Hardman gaining first place. The judge said that it was a dramatic, detailed close up of the flying bird with the wings on the diagonal adding interest.
Second place went to a subtle coloured, minimalistic landscape by new member Pete Souster. Swanage old pier is a very popular subject for photographic competitions and Peter's version titled 'Stillness' was awarded 3rd place. Martin Stokes was awarded an HC for his impressive panoramic landscape 'Celestial Heavens'.

After a refreshment break Robert continued with his comments.
The Advanced Section had a range of subjects including many stunning landscapes and impressive nature images. An extreme macro shot of an arachnid titled 'Harvestman' `right` impressed the judge and he awarded it first place. The image by Tim Tapley showed in great detail the body of this tiny creature.
A small white dog featured in the second placed image by Robert Harvey ARPS EFIAP. Titled 'Bewildered' the dog was photographed in front of an interesting gothic- looking doorway. Third place went to a creative image 'Delicate Beauty' by Pam Mullings portraying white Camellia's. Seven other images were awarded Highly Commended.

Summing up club chairman Steve Hardman thanked members for sending in such a stunning array of images for the competition.
Thanks to Robert for giving his helpful comments and opinions on the images and thanks to the Competition Secretaries for running the competition.
Congratulations to all. *PM*

All the results See all of the awarded images in the **Galleries**

Up Your Photography

3 November 2020

Club members had a very entertaining and informative evening when Phil Savoie gave us an excellent presentation on how to get the very best out of your photographs. Phil describes himself as a biologist, photographer and filmmaker and his dream came true when as a photography consultant, Phil biologist he joined the BBC Natural History Unit based in Bristol. He was able to photograph wildlife subjects around the world and has amazing stories to tell about his time filming for 'Planet Earth' and making his own wildlife films.
Living in a beautiful part of wales Phil enjoys photographing the local scenery and wildlife as well as a range of different genres and showed some excellent monochrome portraits, sports shots, panoramic landscapes and even some astro-photography.
Keen to help others get the most from their photography Phil maintains that a photo needs to tell a story and emotionally engage the viewer. He suggests focusing on subjects of personal interest and be prepared for any photo opportunities.

Phil says plan ahead, compose the image and stick around as the image can often change in minutes. Take time and try to take a fresh point of view and try out new ideas.
Photographers should have projects and Phil has many of his own which he works on for years aiming to get the 'perfect shot'. He were shown some of the images taken of swallows as they dived about catching insects. Another project he works on is the life of bees and macro shots of them collecting nectar. Members were amazed at the extreme close ups where even the hooks on grains of pollen used to attach to the hair on a bee can be seen. Another project is the night sky with impressive images of the milky way with ruined castles in the foreground. When photographing at night let your eyes get used to the darkness and you will see more.

Phil says it is very important to get an ever-so level with your subject so in most cases get down low. Use depth of field to direct the viewers eye to the main subject. Check that the background complements the subject. Study the pattern of behaviour of wildlife subjects and get to know your subject really well. Set up your camera, set the manual focus and wait for often repeated actions. The blue hour is especially came to the same branch with insects and Phil was able to get very detailed close ups that even showed the hairs on the insects legs.
Phil has a great knowledge of the technical side of photography and has worked out in great detail how to get the very best images from his range of lenses. Phil often makes up his own contraptions to enable him to get just the image he is striving for and he shared lots of the tips and tricks of paper use.
Be creative, experiment and enjoy your photography!

Members very much enjoyed the humorous presentation from this great character who clearly enjoys sharing his passions and skills with others. *PM*

See **Phil's website** for amazing images

Smartphone photography - more than just a camera on a phone

Nature Competition 2020

Photographing Wiltshire

Waiting for the Herds

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