

in this issue >>>

Roger's report

The review – February Speakers

How do I do that?

Question corner

Snippets

Competition news



"Common darter valentine" – Trevor Blundell – Three-way team challenge – Top 10 image

A Monthly Insight into the activities of Stroud Camera Club

STROUD CAMERA CLUB



Contacts >>>

Welcome to Stroud Camera Club

We hope you enjoy this Newsletter. If you want any help with matters relating to the club, or your photography in general, we are here to help.

Chairman: Roger Matthews

Secretary: Trish Bloodworth

Treasurer: Leslie Holmes

Competitions: Richard Atkinson

Publicity: Jenny Smith

Programme: Margot Page

For more information, including contact emails for all the committee please go to www.stroudcameraclub.co.uk

"Worcester Lodge Milky Way" – Brian John's from the Three Way Team Challenge – "Annie's choice"



Roger's Report

Another cracking month for SCC members with three very good results in inter-club competitions - a win for Stroud in the Newent/Forest of Dean battle, a creditable 2nd place in the Cheltenham/Cirencester battle and another top-10 finish in the Western Counties Photographic Federation DPIC competition. Congratulations to all the members who had images selected and represented the Club so well.

Competitions are a great way to challenge ourselves to produce our best work, but it doesn't have to be too serious as demonstrated by the very successful 3-way team competition organised by Trish and Annie for our first meeting back in the Bowls Club after the short Omicron pause. The pre-competition banter set the scene for a fun evening with over 40 members contributing images for their respective teams. I was, of course, delighted with the result and wish to thank my team for sending in some great images.

My 'Chairman's Challenge' is coming up shortly and I have already received plenty of night/low-light images from members who probably rarely consider taking their cameras out at night. Although I can't compete for the prize-winning image, I have enjoyed taking up the challenge myself and have been pleased with my efforts. Whether night photography is

your thing or not, it is important to challenge ourselves and step out of our comfort zones from time to time to learn new skills. Don't wait until next year's challenge to broaden your photographic skill set - you may just find a new genre to keep your interest alive. Sadly, I missed Kate's drone talk, but having seen Annie's drone imagery, I'm tempted to give that a go later this year - now, that's a challenge!

With a little over a month until our AGM, I would also like to invite members to consider how they might challenge themselves by contributing to the running of the Club, whether on the Committee or in other ways. If you have the time and energy to help and wish to get involved, please get in touch with me so we can identify opportunities to make best use of your strengths and ensure that our Club continues to thrive.

AND FINALLY – REMEMBER
Don't limit your challenges, challenge your limits

The review >>>

“Drone Photography” Kate Peake

A warm welcome was given to Kate (and Angela) both previously SCC members. Kate returned to the Club to offer us an insight into her world of drone photography, something that she has been doing for many years, with her faithful drone “Sparky”.

The evening was very interesting with a super range of images and video being shown, and various of her images in print format available too for members to view at the break.

Kate gave us tips on using a drone and touched on some of the rules that are currently in operation.

The drone perspective certainly gives such a different viewpoint than is normal with a standard camera. With the technology getting better and better, it is hard to imagine that, much like mobile phone photography, drone photography won't become more mainstream in coming years.

We shall wait to see how many members will be inspired to join this growing trend following Kate's talk!

Three Way Team Challenge

Once again, our members rose to the challenge, this time a team challenge. Annie, Roger and Trish as Team Captains and twenty members assigned randomly to each team. Members were then asked to submit to their team captain up to three images for judging by the members present on 3rd February.

We had a massive forty members who took part – a further three missed the deadline, and the captains were not allowed to enter images.

The teams were very evenly matched and some great images were presented.

The members judged the evening, with Trish and Annie spending the break totting up the 1,860 individual scores to determine the winning team. At the end of the night Roger's team came out on top with 2,367 points, Trish's team had 2,150 and Annie's team had 2,128 points.

Well done Ian York, Dave Swinburne, Brian Johns and Ali Garrett, who were the Captains' Choices. Once again, a massive thank you to all the members who took part.

Highlights >>>

The month in review:

February was the month for the Battles! A win at Forest of Dean, which was an in-person battle attended by Richard, Roger, Trish and Margot, was a great start. The Zoom Battle with Cheltenham and Cirencester saw us come 2nd to Cheltenham, so a very credible performance.

A fantastic range of images was on show, as was also seen at the annual showing of the Cheltenham International Salon. It was incredibly satisfying to view, as part of the presentation, images from many of our Stroud members: Jeff Wilson, Jeff Kirby, Andy Harbin (including an award), Nigel Bowsher, Annie Blick, Trish

Bloodworth (including an award), René Cason, Richard Atkinson and David Hunt. The 2022 Salon closes on 28th March so why don't you think about entering this year?

The other competitive highlight in February was DPIC, which was as usual very hard fought, and Stroud once again really “punched above our weight”. We didn't manage the lofty position of 2021, but 9th out of 51 clubs was excellent. Don't forget you do need to be “in it to win it” as they say. Our Battles committee select for DPIC and the Battles from images entered at Stroud during the year. So have a go – you never know!



“Six spot burnet on scabious flower” – Freda Watson who sadly died last year

Facebook

Upload your images to be the “face” of Stroud Camera Club for a month.

Why don't you share some images via our Facebook group? It will be lovely to see them, and **if you would like to be the featured image**, just tag it #coverphoto and our publicity secretary Jenny Smith will add it to her collection of potentials for the cover image.

If you are not yet a member, simply click the link within Facebook and answer 3 very simple questions.

For more information go to
[https:// facebook.com/stroudcameraclub](https://facebook.com/stroudcameraclub)



“Shannon after the storm” – Freda Watson – see next section for a short obituary

How do I do that?

Tips for better hair extractions in Photoshop

Photoshop is an impressive programme for post processing, and whilst there are now excellent automatic tools for extracting hair or fur, it is still difficult to get excellent results from the automatic tools every time.

Sometimes you may wish to change a background and need to extract a person or animal with hair or fur.

These are a few easy tips to assist with refining your final masks and making excellent extractions.

They are aimed at final refinements after you have created your initial masks, using the various methods available within Photoshop.

► Try using decontaminate colour.
After finishing your mask, go to Layer > Matting > Decontaminate Colours.

This option is also found in the Select and Mask workspace, but it does not allow you to adjust the amount there.

► Try using defringe.
For a very slight adjustment, try Layer > Matting > Defringe

► Try using blend modes.
Duplicate the layer, set the layer beneath to multiply (or screen depending on the background colour), then use a layer mask on the top layer to paint away bright (or dark) halo areas.

► Try painting in additional hair.
If you are feeling artistic and have a steady hand, mask out a little too much and paint in hair with a tablet pen. This method is an excellent choice if you are extracting a furry creature against a busy background for example.

Start with a basic extraction, then paint in the fur outline with one or more of Photoshop's hair brushes.

► Use overlay blend mode
To remove messy grey in your hair mask, try painting over your mask with a brush set to Overlay blend mode at low opacity.

Painting with black or white in this mode will only affect the grey areas.

► Use levels.
With the mask selected apply a 1 or 2 pixel gaussian blur to the mask.

Then, go to Image > Adjustments > Levels and slide the black (left) slider towards white until the fringe is gone.

► Use the smudge tool.
Use a 1 – 6 pixel brush and smudge out a few stray hairs to add to the authenticity of the extraction.

Snippets

Don't forget WCPF Knightshayes Trophy is live on Zoom on 5th March

Zoom details in 25th February bulletin.

There is also still time to enter the WCPF Member exhibition (closes on 5th March):

<https://www.thewcpf.com/copy-of-exhibition>

As well as Cheltenham International Salon

<https://cheltenhamcameraclub.uk/salon-2022/>

Closing date 28th March 2022

Let Trish know any snippets of information that you would like included in future newsletters. Contact her using email: secretary@stroudcameraclub.co.uk

Sad news...

We have been informed by her daughters Julia and Tricia, of the very sad passing of **Freda Watson**.

Freda passed away peacefully at home on 29th July 2021, at her home overlooking the beautiful Golden Valley near Stroud. Freda had been a member of the Stroud Camera Club for many years, she had a keen eye for composition and loved the process of selecting images to fit a theme or subject for the various competitions.

A photographer from her teens onwards, her subjects were wide ranging, often from nature - landscapes, flowers and butterflies, but she also liked the challenge of a still life too. After 50 years with slides, she moved over to digital photography happily using a Sony DSLR; she also mastered the basics of Photoshop using it to reframe and enhance both new and old images for submission to competitions. When her health eventually limited her ability to get out to visit places and friends, she continued to record the changing seasons and the astonishing variety of wildlife in her garden with a Lumix TZ60 point and shoot zoom.

A few of Freda's images are in this newsletter.

Welcome

A very warm welcome to our new members, **Cherie Wiseman, Kerry Williams and Mark Halling** – I know that our members will make you feel like you are already part of our SCC “family” and we look forward to seeing your images over the coming months. Members are always happy to answer questions, so don't hesitate to speak to people and ask, “How did you do that?”

Question corner>>>

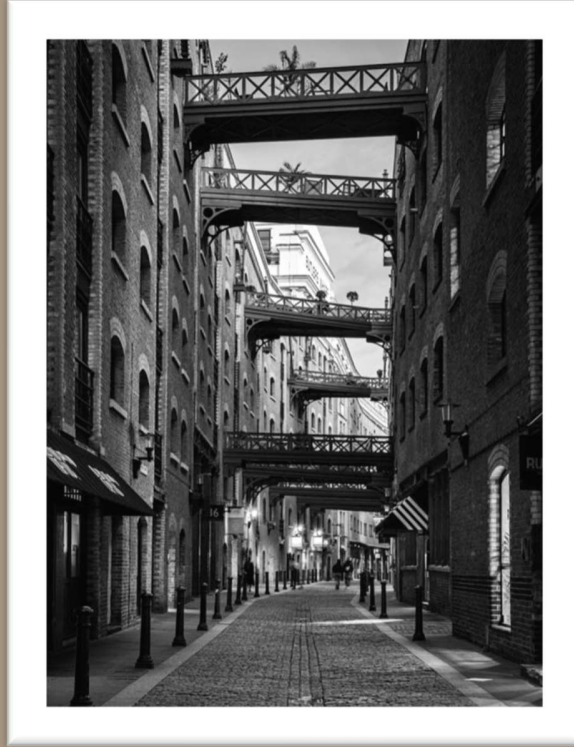
Q: What is the reciprocal rule?

A good “rule” to remember is that to avoid camera shake your shutter speed should be the reciprocal of the focal length of your lens.

A: This means that if your lens is say a 100mm lens, you would use a shutter speed of 1/100. A 24mm lens, could be slower at 1/24, and a longer lens, say 500mm would need faster at 1/500. With image stabilization you can go slower, depending on your camera/lens.

Remember though any of these photography “rules” are simply a starting guide and are not really rules at all!

Mono Competition – Prints - Winner



“Butler’s wharf” – Roger Matthews – 1st Place

Digital – Winner



“Becky” – Martin Gill – 1st Place

“You don’t make a photograph just with a camera. You bring to the act of photography all the pictures you have seen, the books you have read, the music you have heard, the people you have loved.” – Ansel Adams

2022 competitive thoughts...

We thought we were "back to normal" but the judge was not able to join us in person, so whilst he had the prints in person, the actual night was run via Zoom.

Pete McCloskey had a difficult task selecting his top images from the wide range of mono images entered in the competition.

It was evident however, from his critique that mono takes not just a quick "conversion" and that members have to think more about what images work well without any colour properties – several times he commented that the particular image may have worked far better in colour rather than as a mono image. Plenty of food for thought as usual for members to take away and improve upon.

It was once again excellent to see new members sharing their images, and a new name as a winner too.

Prints

1st place Butlers Wharf – Roger Matthews

2nd place Calm before Communion – Margot

Page

3rd place Twilight in the city – Roger Matthews

Digital

1st place Becky – Martin Gill

2nd place The lecherous angel – Ian Peters

3rd place Look at me – Tim Murfitt

Highly commended

Richard Atkinson (print)

Trish Bloodworth (digital)

René Cason (digital)

David Hunt (digital)

Brian Johns (digital)



*Tim Murfitt – Look at me
3rd Place*



*Ian Peters – The lecherous angel
2nd Place*

coming up >>>

March 2022

Thu 3rd March – Chairman's Challenge

Thu 10th March – Carl Downing – capturing movement in sport and wildlife

Thu 17th March – Competition Night – Nature

Thu 24th March – AV Night

AV Night 24th March – start preparing now!

Please send your AV's using WeTransfer (or similar) to Scott - scott@photofilms.uk

These MUST be sent to Scott by 10th March please.

Next Competition

Nature - Prints and Digital

Remember to read the rules – special rules do apply for Nature. See the website

CLOSING DATE 3rd March



*Beyond these castle walls - Derrick Whitmore
Commended*

INTERNATIONAL SALON NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS to the following members who have had acceptances into International Photographic Salons! This month we have seen our club members accepted throughout the world once again

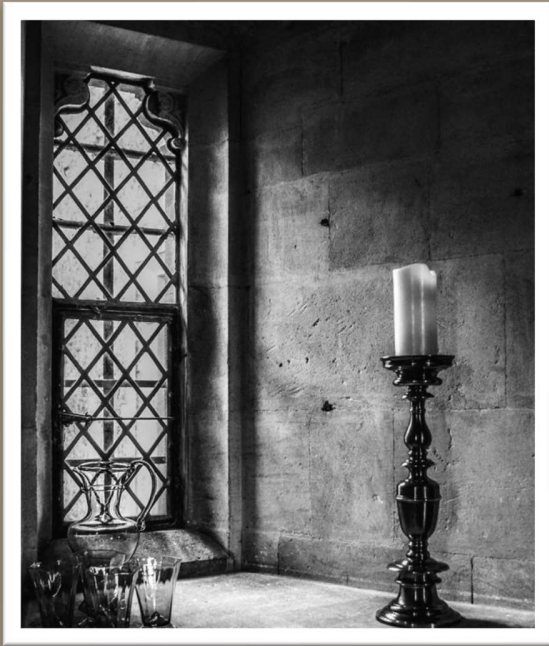
Richard Atkinson – an impressive 5 at Bristol Salon

CONGRATULATIONS

*Please send details of your acceptances or other external "wins" to secretary@stroudcameraclub.co.uk
Apologies if you are missed here – please let me know so you can be added next time.*

UPLOAD YOUR IMAGES – to your gallery and My Stroud & District competition

Award-Winning Images



"Calm before communion"
Margot Page – 2nd Place



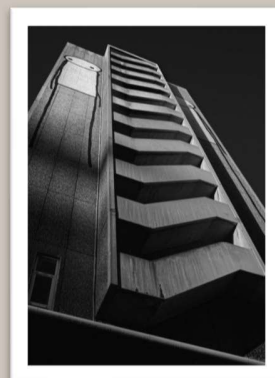
"Twilight in the city"
Roger Matthews – 3rd Place

Award winning images

Highly commended – Richard Atkinson – Wet



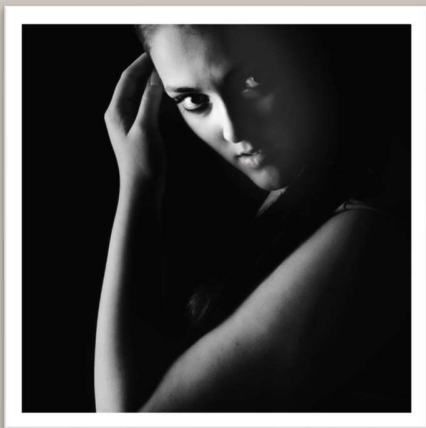
Commended – Grey Heron – Roger Matthews



Commended – Brutal – Steve Vines

More from the Competitions

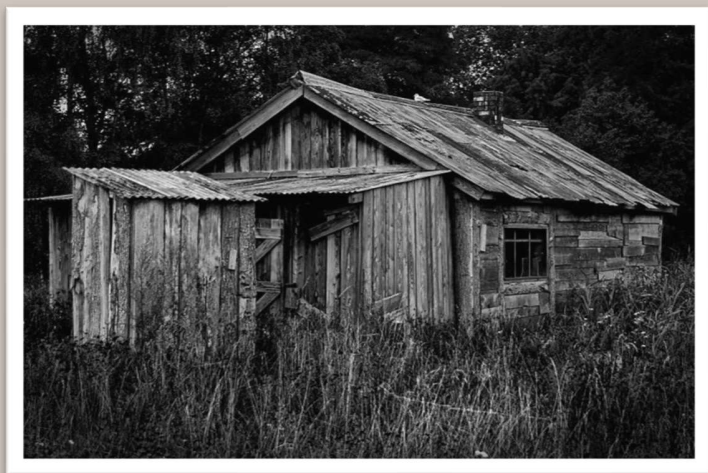
*David Hunt – I only have eyes for you
Highly Commended Digital*



*Brian Johns - Steam
Highly Commended*

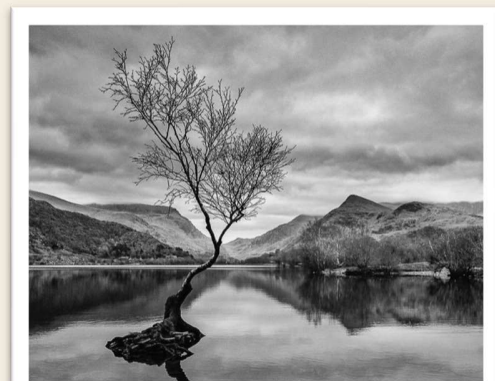


*Rhys Owen – Forest Cabin
Commended*



See more on our website: www.stroudcameraclub.co.uk

*René Cason – It's that tree
Highly Commended*



*Trish Bloodworth – Sitting for my photo
Highly Commended*



Steve Vines – Reflective - Commended



Dave Swinburne – Enchanted Avenue - Commended

