

How To Improve Your Photography

I would like to encourage more of our members to take part in our competitions. I have now been entering our competitions for more than twenty years and I still feel that every year I pick up a few tips that help me to improve my photography.

Most photographers like others to see and comment on their work and the great thing about being a member of a photography club is that not only do you get the opportunity to receive comments from very experienced judges but also from ones own peers. Even if you don't necessarily agree with the judge's decision on which images he thought were the winners, most judges will give some very helpful tips on how the images could have been improved.

The opportunity to hear constructive comments on ones own photographs and other competition entries provides a fast track to improving your photography. This particularly applies to relative beginners who are willing to listen to the offered hints and tips and then take them onboard and give them a try. In my experience, after a few years of persevering with this process I began to develop my own style, learnt the "rules" of composition and when to break them, allowing me to move on from taking snap shots and start taking images with impact.

As I said, even after more than twenty years of taking part in competitions I still feel that I am still learning how to improve my photography. This learning process continues as you master each set of techniques and allows you to move on to the next level. This can be an exciting and rewarding journey as we strive to get ourselves to level of the recognised masters' ability to be able to see and capture those very special images that we all enjoy and admire so much.

The Committee is a bit concerned that the number of entrants and entries has declined over the last few seasons, so I would urge you all and particularly any of the recent new members to give it a try. If anyone would like a bit of advice on the presentation of their images/prints e.g. mounting or sizing for digital entries, just ask any of the regular competitors, they would be only too willing to help. So please give it go, the more the merrier.

Malcolm Blenkey



Monthly, Malcolm Blenkey

Confession of a Club Member

I found the recent lecture by Keith Blundy, "Confessions of a Professional Photographer", stimulating and very enjoyable. My training and early photographic experiences were in the field of industrial / commercial photography so what he said really struck a cord. Then Keith criticised the kind of pictures taken by club members. He suggested that current competition judges were old-fashioned and unimpressed by the kind of pictures that grab your attention, preferring instead shots of the Taj Mahal or other subjects which were in vogue 30 or 40 years ago. I was bold enough to point out that maybe we should look for some new judges and Keith agreed with that idea.

However, on mature reflection I'm not sure that I was right. It's true that an illustration in a newspaper has to have immediate impact to be successful and I can remember clearly a number of press photos, such as the first man on the moon, Kennedy's assassination or the military in Vietnam. But I can't think of any newspaper pictures that I'd care to hang on my wall for more than a few days. No, for long-term viewing I'd choose just the kind of pictures that we see in our Society or in the RPS publications. Perhaps our judges are doing the right thing after all.

I guess it comes down to a case of horses for courses. But what do you think? What picture style excites you? Are current judges out of touch? Is Saltburn Photographic Society heading in the right direction?

It would be great to get a debate going on this issue. We can post your comments on our website and you can follow up any lines of thought that emerge. Please give comments to me in person or I can give you my e-mail address.

Alan Meek

Meetings after Christmas

We start again on Wednesday 7th January. At 7.30pm in the Methodist Church Hall, as usual. See you there.

Don't forget entries for the "Water" competition to be in on the first meeting back !

7th January	NY & SD prints and slides portfolio
14th January	Members' Evening - nostalgia
21st January	3rd Monthly Competition "Water"

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