

Crawley Camera Club Newsletter

We meet every Monday and Wednesday at 8 pm Hut 16, Tilgate Forest Recreation Centre

Volume 1, issue 8

April/May 2006

Chairman's Corner

Points of Interest:

Treasurer's Report

Secretary's Report

Digital Infa Red

Amended Guidelines

Chairman's corner:

Well here I am again in front of the PC, for a change, but this time writing instead of "making pictures", it was not so long ago that I was a bit apprehensive about the digital process and always said that I was going to be the last one to switch the darkroom lights ON!

But the "digital bug" is difficult to avoid, its simplicity and the speed of the results that can be achieved coupled with the cleanliness of the process are virtues that I like the most.

For this edition of the newsletter, we decided that most Committee members would have a space to communicate to you on various issues that they feel important or are currently involved in.

What is probably more important is that it is you, the members who should make use of this media to express yourselves and opinions.

Inside this issue:

Chairman's Corner

I would like to take the opportunity to copy a letter sent to me by John King, who, for those of you that were not at the club on those times, was an active member of the Club, together with his wife, Averil, both of whom were also committee members.

Letter to the Editor

Studio Matters

Hi Daniel.

Digital infa red

I have just had a look at the CCC website - well, very impressive I must say. How're things at the club apart for what there is on the site? Membership up/down/about the same? What about the fees - Aghhhhh, that was the killer I think, but what can be done.

Diary Dates

Useful Contacts

I have tried 3 clubs up here and none can equal the quality and friendly atmosphere of the CCC. The locations of some of the clubs are a long way away and are usually in a rented room. Not very good at all.



One club, Ripon City Photographic Society had an upstairs room on a Monday, whilst downstairs there was a dog obedience class. You could hardly hear speakers because of the noise of the animals! Apart from that they tended to be careless with photographs that were submitted for competitions. I have had them returned to me with coffee rings on the mount. Apart from that though, there is some reasonable work. However really I think the standard is well down on what the likes of Yourself, Steve Yates, Colin Head and in fact the club as a whole.

Cont.....

Chairman's Corner continued

You helped me to get my toes into the groove to start with digital and computers, but I have now all but abandoned it as far as photography goes. I have gone back - lock, stock and barrel to a wet darkroom, and do both mono and colour. I had to almost completely re-equip myself with enlarger, processors etc., but since the advent of Digital, the prices have plummeted. I have 2 enlargers, a Leitz V35 for mono only as it has a multi grade head, plus a LPL C7700 for colour & mono medium format. Both came with lenses as well. 2 Nova deep tank 12x16 processors for the prints, all for a tiny fraction of what they would have cost 6 or 7 years ago.

What I have noticed is the change in availability of the usual chemicals and papers. There has been a real resurgence with mono, but colour materials and chemicals are taking a little more to find. However they are still there, and show no signs (yet) of disappearing altogether.

It is surprising how much skill and technique I have lost in the period since I last had a darkroom, but it is coming back on a shallow learning curve, not like I had when getting to grips with the computer where the learning curve was vertical!

My daughter lives in Surrey now, so I will try to get down to see her on a Monday and show my face at the club, I would like to see how it is getting on and to speak to old friends again.

Best wishes to yourself, and please pass my regards onto the others who knew me.

John King

Ps. I have only just learned that Mike Syrett has passed away - that is so sad, he was such a character, he could make anyone laugh.

I am sure he will be very welcomed at any time at the club.

Daniel

A Letter to the Editor

Dear Ed

I have been thinking about our competitions and wonder if it is time to bring some variety and new ideas to them. I go to quite a lot of other camera clubs and increasingly I see them changing their normal competitions from open subjects to chosen subjects. This seems to create more interest, encourages people to go and take pictures for the competitions, gets a wider range of pictures and increased numbers number of entries.

For example we might make each of our 3 competitions with one open round and two closed rounds.

For prints we might choose one round to be portraits and one round travel. Slides may have one round as structures and one round an natural world, for Digi, one might be abstract and the other movement. it would certainly make things more interesting

Perhaps other members could let you know their views

David Eastley

Studio Guidelines amended April 2006

So why do we need to have guidelines? The allocation of twelve slots came about by lack of response for voluntary contribution to studio running costs, the electricity is approx £18 per week and a majority of this is through studio use.

Any cancellation less than 24 hours may still stand as part of you allocation, this will be at the discretion of the committee and the studio manager. If you feel this is unjust and you had reasonable cause to cancel then you will be able to appeal in writing to the committee.

Any cancellation should be sent directly to me, in the first instance preferably as a telephone call or an email, at worst in the form of a SMS text message, with follow up email.

Please do not pass messages on to other members or their wives as they get cross and shout at me!

Cancellations, some are inevitable others maybe not, perhaps I'm just lucky I have only had one where the girl was rushed to hospital and genuinely poorly.

I will make my mobile number available to anyone who wants it, please note although I carry a mobile it is only ever used to receive text messages, so please do not call me on it to make a booking.

Members have mentioned that they have been put off by being unable to book the 2 – 6 slot on a weekend it is suggested that a maximum of two weekend prime slots in any one month can be booked in advance, however if by the Wed of the preceding weekend there is no booking an extra prime slot booking may be allocated.

Due to recent events where members have failed to make reasonable efforts to return keys after use, thus causing absolute chaos for two other members wishing to use the studio it is proposed that the loss of one free booking will be incurred. If you feel this is unjust and you had reasonable cause then you will be able to appeal in writing to the committee.

Once the twelve free slots have been used advance payment of £20 is to be paid on the collection of keys to cover the full four hour slot, if the keys are returned within a reasonable time after two or three hours use respectively the appropriate refund if any will be issued accordingly.

Keys are always a problem but only if they are not returned to the rightful key holder for the next person to use, if you have a booking, first make sure you know where you will be collecting keys from.

Secondly make sure you know where and when you are returning them to, if there is some one else using the studio after you then ensure they know where the keys are going to and make a note on the booking out form "keys passed to " AN Other". (this is only by prior arrangement of the key holder)

Out of courtesy to the club and other members Please ensure that you return the keys straight after your shoot rather than running any errands as someone else maybe needing them after you, After all if you arrived to collect keys and were told they had not been returned because the last person had run some one home, you probably wouldn't be very happy and your model would be even less amused!

You are asked not to take pictures in the digital room as the background to a shoot and then post them on the Internet. This uncontrolled publicity could cause a security issue, by advertising the fact that computer equipment is kept on the premises

Fire extinguishers are for that purpose and that purpose only, please do not use them as props, if they discharge through misuse the you will be asked to pay for there replacement.

Smoking and the use of any pyrotechnics is strictly forbidden within the club, this includes sparklers and indoor fireworks

A Word or two from your Treasurer

Those of you who came to the EGM in September will recall that your Committee outlined the serious problems that the club was faced with ; in a nutshell, a falling income (due to a steadily decreasing membership) and ever increasing costs.

With little control over most of these costs it was felt that the best way forward was the bold move of drastically reducing the cost of membership so as to attract new members and retain existing ones, yet at the same time spending some money improving the club's facilities and programme.

With this in mind, and for the first time in the club's 40 year history I believe, a budget was prepared and presented to members at that EGM so that our financial objectives were clear and progress could easily be monitored month by month by your Committee. I am pleased to be able report that 8 months into the financial year we are not only meeting, but beating the budget as the table below shows.

	At 31/01/06	Feb—May	Year	Budget year to 31/05/06	Variance
	Actual	Estimate	Projected	Budget	
Total Income	£4514	£1285	£5799	£5735	£64
Total Costs	£3804	£2429	£6233	£7275	-£1042
Profit/Loss	£710	-£1,144	-£434	-£1540	£1,106

Assuming that my forecasts for the remaining 4 months are accurate our income will be almost exactly as budgeted. Not only has the increased membership helped us achieve this, but also the considerable income generated through the studio. Without this facility we would not have had the income from the Net Model rentals, the Spectacle project, or the studio usage fees all of which has amounted to approaching £1,000 in total. Many thanks particularly to Robin and Paul for all the time and expertise they have put in. The studio is proving to be our most valuable asset and it is essential that in the coming financial year we invest some of these earnings back into it to ensure it remains a regular source of income to the club.

Our big improvement against budget has been in cost savings i.e. spending less than anticipated to the tune of around £1,000 despite the purchase of the digital projector, the spare bulb (at £240 !) and improvements to the hut (partition, lighting etc).

The net result is that we shall only make a loss of around £400 this financial year rather than the budgeted loss of £1,540, an improvement of £1,140. This means we fully expect to be able to propose, at June's AGM, a further reduction in the standard membership of up to £30 from Sept 2006 plus the introduction of the 10% reduction for seniors, though all other concessions will need to cease.

Although the club's financial health is improving steadily we still need more members to get involved and run events etc rather than the same 'ol faces !!

John Alsop

A word or two from your Secretary

Recent visitors to the club will have noticed that a partition is in the course of construction to separate the kitchen/lounge area from the main area where we hold our meetings. This is part of a more extensive refurbishment of the club planned by the committee.

We plan to refurbish the following:-

- **Kitchen** – general replacement of cupboards, flooring and redecorate
- **Entrance/lounge area** – Improve the arrangements for club notices etc, provide a lounge area with bookshelves, computer etc outside the kitchen area. Redecorate and replace flooring
- **Main area** – redecorate, replace flooring, provide new facilities for hanging prints which will include a print of the year ‘hall of fame’. We plan to erect a partition, either removable, sliding or folding, between this area and the studio.
- **Studio** – general refurbishment, extend wooden floor provide fittings for back drops etc.
- **Models changing room** – general redecoration, replacement dressing table and wardrobe.

Throughout we will improve the lighting and heating, each area will be separately controllable.

The objectives are to:-

- Improve the facilities for our members
- Increase usage of each area
- Reduce energy consumption
- Improve noise insulation, mainly between kitchen and main area.

We have estimated the cost to carry out the refurbishment at around £8.5k, The work can be carried out in phases and the rate of progress will be dependant on funding – **so buy lots of raffle tickets and support any other fund-raising activities organised by the committee.**

We have applied for a grant from the Gatwick Airport Community Trust of £5k towards the refurbishment but we are unlikely to get awarded all of what we ask for, we may get nothing. I will keep you updated on progress.

Membership

As you are all aware, at the EGM we were concerned about the falling membership numbers, they were reported as

2002/3 – 46

2003/4 – 40

2004/5 – 35

the current number is – 42

We started to address this by reducing the membership fees to £90 for the standard membership with a view to reducing it further to £60 next year. Use of our facilities, especially the studio is attracting new members but it should be remembered that every member is a salesperson when it comes to increasing membership. Any ideas will be gratefully accepted.

Best regards

Graham Russell.

Forays into Digital Infra-Red Photography

This is something that I looked into briefly last Summer, after seeing a mention in one of the magazines. On the one hand, I have always liked the look of B&W IR landscapes., but on the other have had very mixed results with film. I have experimented more successfully with Ilford SFX film, which has an extended red sensitivity – but this is one product that did not survive Ilford's problems.

I was intrigued to learn that many digital cameras can register the IR part of the spectrum, but that the manufacturers have deliberately placed an IR filter inside the cameras. I believe that this is partly to protect the sensor from heat, but also because if you have a camera without a filter, the recorded image is skewed by the IR component. So the recorded image is somewhat different from that seen by the human eye.

Some cameras have very internal good IR filters, so that if you place a filter impervious to visible light on the front of the lens, the IR radiation is recorded but you lose so much sensitivity (11 stops in the case of the Canon 20D) that exposure times are quite long. In the end I went for a second-hand Minolta Dimage 7, for which the reported light loss was 'only' 7 stops. This means that in bright Summer sunlight it is possible to hand-hold at ISO 100, with exposures of 1/30 to 1/60 second at F2.8.

The downside of this camera is that it is only 5 mega pixels – and I produce A3 prints. So I decided to go for a tripod support and with the camera in portrait mode try for panoramic images through the 'joining' of overlapping images. After a few experiments, I think that I have the basis for better attempts in 2006!

- Choose a calm day with no or a small amount of slow-moving cloud, if there is to be sky in the shot. Fast-moving cloud will cause a problem when you come to join images later.
- Ideally, use a tripod with a spirit level, to get a true horizontal.
- Set the camera to Raw for maximum quality and later editing control.
- Set White Balance to something other than Auto (such as 'Sun'), as you don't want the camera to change this from shot to shot.
- Turn off the auto focus, as there may be slight zooming which will alter the amount of subject in each frame. Go for manual focus, which with the greater depth of field of the average digital camera is not a problem.
- Take a light reading across the scene and manually set the camera to an average exposure time and aperture, such as 1/30 sec at F4. Take a couple of trial shots to fine-tune. Ensure that the sun is always out from behind cloud for each shot, as otherwise there will be fluctuation in light levels.
- Now with these settings constant, take a series of images, rotating the camera in between each shot. Make sure that the images overlap, for easier joining later.

Hey Presto! All you need to do now is join the images together. The end-result is not a typical 'film IR' image, but 'glow' and noise can be added to taste later. The great advantage of this method over film is of course that you can see the potential image on the LCD and get the exposure right. In addition, you have the options of retaining the colour information (an RGB file is captured) and playing with the colour channels (some wacky effects there), or desaturating to monochrome.

Hopefully, I will be able to develop this technique in the Spring and Summer ahead. Perfect timing!

By Graham Wilcock

Useful Contacts

Chairman	Daniel Eugenio LRPS	01293885244	chairman@crawleycameraclub.co.uk
Vice Chairman	Graham Wilcock	01403265655	competitions@crawleycameraclub.co.uk
Club Secretary & Membership	Graham Russell	01342 327 229	secretary@crawleycameraclub.co.uk
Treasurer	John Alsop	01342716237	treasurer@crawleycameraclub.co.uk
Programme Secretary	Paul Mason	01293 888224	programme@crawleycameraclub.co.uk
Comp Secretary	Graham Wilcock	01403265655	competitions@crawleycameraclub.co.uk
Publicity Officer	Brian Kendall	01293 535 768	publicity@crawleycameraclub.co.uk
Exhibitions Secretary	Steve Yates	01293 512 757	exhibitions@crawleycameraclub.co.uk
Studio Manager	Robin Hills ARPS	020 8679 7382	studio@crawleycameraclub.co.uk

April events

Monday 10th. A Digital Evening
with Gavin Hoey

🍷 Wednesday 12th. SPA slide show and exhibition.

SPA will present a stunning show of slides (with a visiting lecturer) on the best SPA slides of the year.
The best of the best - a night not to be missed.

Monday 17th. EASTER - CLUB CLOSED

Wednesday 19th. Review all the pictures from the CCC advertising project and select those that we should include on the web site and club literature to attract new members.

Monday 24th. 3rd Round Digital Competition
Judge Marcus Scott-Taggart

Wednesday 26th. Table Top / Macro / Studio -
Clothes and Materials.

Saturday 29th Snakes and Spiders 9.30am-12.30pm

Peter Jenner and Cassie MacCullum will be bringing along their pets for members to photograph. These include a boa constrictor, tarantulas and other spiders, we are told they will have been fed beforehand !

Please let us know if you are coming to this event