

CHAIRMANS UPDATE – DECEMBER 2024

With Christmas approaching and all the festivities just ahead of us, I am guessing it's a very busy time of year for us all.

As I write this, Jeanette is busy in the kitchen decorating the Christmas cake and I have been warned that I will need to find the Christmas decorations from our loft over the next few days as they will be going up around the house.

Last night I received a call from my granddaughters and they are already counting down the 'sleeps' until the big day and are already writing their letters to Santa!!

This really is a magical time of year which I hope we can all enjoy with loved ones.

With so much going on as usual perhaps photography will take a back seat for a just a few days. We will only hold one meeting in December but will be making it a celebration of the year and of the season. And as a club we have a great deal to look back on and to celebrate in 2024.

We have enjoyed a full programme with some excellent speakers.

I look back at the lecture of Millie Pilkington as being a particular highlight. Her portfolio of portraits was simply amazing, and I don't think anyone that attended the evening in February could have left her talk without having picked up some valuable tips on how to improve our portrait photography.

And who can forget the evening we spent with Jet Lenden. Jet woke a lot of us up to just what can be achieved with the smart phone camera that most of us carry around in our pockets everyday. Her presentation was simply inspirational.

We have also seen a lot of wonderful images submitted by club members in our competitions throughout 2024. All that have taken part in these competitions should be extremely proud of their work as the standard of the images has been extremely high.

As a club we should also be very proud to have been the winners of the Bradford Abbas Shield this year. In a competition that saw some extremely good images on display I think it is fair to say that we walked away as worthy winner this year.

It really has been a good year for our club and one that I hope you have all enjoyed.

CLUB NEWS

I am very pleased to tell you all that Paul Norman, Kevin Pescott, and Michael Ives, have all decided to join us and I know I speak for us all in welcoming them to our club.

November has seen another full programme that started with our postproduction challenge on 12th November. This is always an enjoyable evening which allows members to demonstrate images before and after processing has taken place. It is always interesting to hear the many varied ways that we all go about producing our images, and I know there isn't a year goes by when I don't pick up a useful pointer or two around postproduction that I take away and use for myself.

The Iris Overton cup was well supported this year with 39 digital images, and 11 prints on display. The standard of images on display was incredible this year and speaking to our judge Malcolm McNaughton I know he was very impressed and found identifying the winning images very difficult. Malcolm is well known to many club members and I thought that the way he gave feedback on the images was done in a positive and very helpful way.

Congratulations go to Mat Philips for winning the Digital competition with his image "Don't Look Back", and to Mark Taylor for winning the print competition with his image "Sea Wall"

Looking ahead here are some dates to look forward to.

On Monday 2nd December the club is offering an evening photoshoot in Sherborne. With the Christmas decorations on display this will give a great opportunity to practice nighttime photography in a particularly photogenic town. Anyone wishing to come along should meet up at the front of the Abbey at 7pm. All are welcome, and this is a great opportunity to improve your skills in long exposure photography. For those who would like some coaching I am sure we could buddy you up with a more experienced group member if you would like.

Then on 10th December we will hold our Christmas meeting. This year we have changed the format a little to reflect the wishes of many members. Instead of the 'most unusual image' competition we will be inviting you to submit two images that you consider to be your favourites taken during 2024. They don't necessarily need to be your best, but should have a special meaning to you. It doesn't matter if we have seen them before either and there is no theme, we would all just love to see them. This will lead us into the second half of the evening, which will be a social event when we can all relax with our friends. And as we have become accustomed to I believe there will be some cake on offer.

Looking slightly further ahead on 14th January we will be holding out "Shoot a Theme Competition". This year's theme is **HOMES, OR PARTS OF HOMES CONSTRUCTED BY MAN OR THE ANIMAL KINGDOM**. This theme was set by Chris Dowding who was last year's winner. Chris has stipulated that members should ensure when taking photographs of man-made homes that these are not or could not be construed as being intrusive to the owners or occupiers in anyway. When taking nature-based images the photographer should as far as possible ensure that no disturbance or distress is caused to the animal using the home.

I am sure this will lead to some creative interpretations and great images. As usual we do not have a judge for this evening as the winning image will be chosen by club members who attend the evening.

Many of you may have already noticed that the programme of photoshoots for 2025 has now been published on the website. I will attach a copy of the programme to an email for you to print off and keep. Our first outing will be to RSPB Ham Wall, where we can hopefully witness the starling murmuration.

After our success in the Bradford Abbas Shield the committee has met to discuss the theme for next seasons competition that will be held on 24th March 2026. We are pleased to let you know that the theme will be:

Farmers and Farming

To help provide some clarity we have offered guidance as follows : *This theme will include the activity or business of growing crops and raising livestock and poultry.*

We believe this is an interesting subject that will challenge all participants.

And Finally

I would like to wish you and all your families a Very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year.

Enjoy the break in whatever way you have planned and with whoever you may wish to spend the festive season with. I look forward to seeing you all again in the New Year.

Steve Davenport
Chairman

