

Camera Club News

Letter From The President

Our *Run of the Ruamahanga* exhibition will now run at Aratoi from 4 August until 2 September. We *had* been gearing up to exhibit in October. Now we have much less time. Image selection will be done at the beginning of July, so we have only until the end of June to get out with the cameras and make our images.

Remember: Our selection of images will cover the length of the Ruamahanga River. Themes to guide your photography could include

- water clarity, relationship to mountains and bush etc
- The effects of European settlement and activity
- The relationship of the river to the farmed countryside
- Downstream water quality
- The bridges
- Recreation on the river (fishing, boating, swimming ...)
- Man's attempts to control and channel the river

Finally a big thank you to Tim for doing all the work in this months newsletter!

Regards *Nik*

Club Information

To learn more about photography, to share your skills and experience or simply to enjoy photographic time with like-minded people, come to a meeting or contact us at

info@wairarapacameraclub.org

Meetings start at 7:30 pm on the first Tuesday of every month from February to November, at the Education Centre next to Parkview Motors in Dixon Street, Masterton.

WCC, PO BOX 502, Masterton

www.wairarapacameraclub.org

All questions, submissions and general information regarding this newsletter should be made to the Editor, Nik Player.

nikplayer@me.com



Competition: Nature

WINNING PRINT

"Tussock Island" By Glenys Robertson



WINNING PROJECTED IMAGE

"Morning Mist" By Barry Baxter



Notice: Change to Syllabus

In the Syllabus we had planned a day photo-shooting trip to Ngawi on April 15th.

Because the Run of the Ruamahanga exhibition has been brought forward, the committee has decided to dedicate that day trip, as well as the planned workshop on May 13th, and the day trip on June 19th, to more activities and visits that will provide opportunities to get and prepare images for the exhibition.

So, no day trip to Ngawi on April 15. Instead, we will organise a trip to some part of the river run. Sid, or someone else from the committee will send an email with details closer to each date.

Competition Results

Prints

Karen McCosh	Locust	M
Franz Marwitz	Bottom of the Taranaki Falls	M
Carolyn Smith	Colourful Moth	A
Jazell Wilkie	Fungi Glow	C
Richard Lambert	An Eye for an Opportunity	M
Franz Marwitz	Dotterill Eggs	C
Louise Sage	Love Birds	C
Tim McMahon	Scleranthus Flower and Bug	A
Richard Lambert	Having a Whale of a Time	M
Karen McCosh	Butterfly	C
Tim McMahon	Prince of Everything I See	A
Zahra Ali	Nature's Compliment	A
Louise Sage	Passion from the Deep	C
Glenys Robertson	Tussock Island	H (Winner)
Lorraine Garrity	Oh Deer	HC
Carolyn Smith	Bird Bath	M
Glenys Robertson	The Leaf and the Fern	C
Barry Baxter	Kokako	HC
Lorraine Garrity	Knot to be Reckoned With	M
Les Wong	In Unison	HC
Les Wong	Whitebaiter	A
Barry Baxter	Kaka	C
Jazell Wilkie	Working Hard for the Honey	C
Kay Halligan	Robin	HC

A Accepted 1 Point | C Commended 2 Points | M Merit 3 Points | HC Highly Commended 4 Points | H Honours 5 Points

Projected Images

Tim McMahon	What are you looking at? #1	A
Nik Player	White Ibis	A
Nik Player	Cicada	HC
Tim McMahon	What are you looking at? #2	A
Glenys Robertson	Leave Only Footprints	HC
Glenys Robertson	South Island Robin	HC
Kay Halligan	Caterpillars	A
Kay Halligan	Feed Me!	HC
Bruce Levy	Heart of the Matter	A
Bruce Levy	Katydid	M
Karen McCosh	Animal or Vegetable	A
Karen McCosh	Textured Rose	M
Lorraine Garrity	Just Buzzing Around	C
Lorraine Garrity	Winter Decorations	A
Barry Baxter	Kereru	C
Barry Baxter	Morning Mist	H (Winner)
Carolyn Smith	Lenticular Cloud at Sunset	HC
Carolyn Smith	Stalactite	A
Jazell Wilkie	Reptile Wildlife	C
Jazell Wilkie	Ridgeline Mews	HC

This month's nature competition attracted some amazing images. Well done all!

Thanks to Gary Foster for judging the photos for us and for his wise and insightful words. Good critical commentary can only help us to improve.

Congratulations to our winners, Barry Baxter and Glenys Robertson.

Next Month's competition

Don't forget next month's competition challenge: **Group Portraits**. A group must consist of a minimum of three *people*. Pets do not count!

Have You Ever Wondered About ?

If there is anything about making digital photographs that you've wondered about, email me at tim.mcmahon@me.com and if I can find the explanation I'll try to include it in a future newsletter.

How to make a photograph stand out from the crowd...

This month I'm going to digress a little from the technical 'how digital things work' and see if I can start a discussion on what, for members of the WCC, makes a good photograph.

Two things have prompted this month's tack:

- i. Our exhibition is looming fast. As you will have read in the president's note, our exhibition "*The Run of the Ruamahanga*" has been brought forward, by Aratoi, to August. That means we all need to be getting out there making photographs that we will be proud to present to the public;
- ii. For the nature competition, I took a photograph of a weta. But it is not satisfying. Technically I thought it was OK: the bits that should be in focus are in focus; the exposure is fine; and I thought the colours were true; although it could have been framed a bit better (I got too close and lost his feet!). But somehow I feel it is 'just a photo of a weta'.

All of this prompted me to write about two sources of inspiration.

Not 'of' but 'about'

I don't remember where, but some years ago I read that the really good photographers do not set out to "*take* a photograph *of*" something, but rather to "*make* a photograph *about*" the something — be it a person, event, or scene. Trying to apply that simple distinction has increased both my satisfaction, and my frustration, with photography.



This thinking often leads to looking for "the picture within the picture". Club members who recall Alison Meier's excellent image "Wabi-Sabi Truck" from last year will know how zooming in on details conveyed much more about the old wreck than a photo 'of' the truck could possibly have done.

Mike's theory

I was fortunate to be able to take a course with Mike Langford, one of New Zealand's top landscape photographers. He argued that before you set up and prepare to press the shutter, you should always stop and literally try to put into words what it is about this particular scene that makes you want to photograph it. Is something about the particular light? ... the angles of things? ... repetitions? ... contrasts of shape? or texture? ... or ...?

According to Mike, you should have a short sentence clearly in your head before pressing the shutter. His theory is that if you can put into words what you are trying to capture, that will naturally influence the centre of interest in your shot, the framing of the shot, your point of view and so on. If you are not clear what you are trying to capture, it's unlikely that anyone looking at your photograph will see what made you click the shutter.

At the time I thought Mike was kidding! Talking to ourselves in that kind of way doesn't come naturally! It feels a bit weird. But I think he is right. Taking the step from 'gut feel' to putting the feeling into thoughts and words is the first step in using your photography to communicate. If one picture is going to be worth a thousand words, as they say, it's probably necessary to know what at least some of those words are before making the picture!

**Get real!**

I remember thinking that the Langford theory was all very well for a landscape photographer. But it wouldn't work if you were looking for photo opportunities at, say, the Castlepoint races. Interesting things pop up and you need to lift the camera and shoot before the opportunity disappears. There's no time for trying to find fancy words!

Mike's answer to that is that if you took your camera to the Castlepoint races you must have had a reason! Why not take a minute or two before first getting the camera out to decide whether you're going to try and capture the speed of the horses; or the excitement of the children, or Having objectives in your mind before putting the camera to your eye, will help to concentrate your subject selection, your framing and so on. Easier said than done! But making really good photographs is not easy and is not luck.

Most camera club members take a camera with them when they go on holiday. Often-times you're travelling from place to place at a rate that doesn't allow enough time for very considered photography. People often take 'record' shots: images that do not represent fantastic photography, but which remind them about the places they went to. Nevertheless, it is worth trying to take the time at each location to make at least one image that will remind you, and maybe communicate to your indulgent friends back home, something significant or striking *about* the location or the people.

Look at some photographs you already took. Ask yourself questions like "why did I do that?" "What did I see?" If you got a chance to go back and do it again, would you do it the same way? Why? Why not?

My weta image doesn't suggest a story about the weta: it doesn't make a viewer think about the weta; what its doing there? Where is it? It is not projecting any kind of 'emotion' (I don't know about wetas' emotions but it doesn't look aggressive, defensive, or anything, really.) The weta's partner, a huge female, had attitude! I'd love to have been able to capture her "Don't bother me" air! Sadly, she took herself, and her attitude, off into the depths of the woodpile before I could get the camera pointed at her.

The idea rules.

Last year the club had a workshop presentation on judging in photography competitions. The presentation was by PSNZ judge, Bruce Girdwood. Bruce reckoned there are four main principles for judging photos: the idea; how well the image expresses the idea; craft and technique; and presentation.

The first and foremost thing a judge is looking for is "what is this image about?", "what does it communicate?". Bruce showed examples and challenged club members at the workshop to try and say what they thought the photograph was about. In all the cases where participants said "Wow!" most people agreed on what they thought the photographer intended. He contrasted this by putting up some images about which all could be said was "it's just a photograph of...."

There you are. Even PSNZ agrees!

In our club competitions, we're often given the idea to work to: 'Rubbish', 'Nature', 'Lines', or whatever. The themes set out in Nik's front page letter in this newsletter, might help when you're taking your shots for our 'Ruamahanga Run' exhibition. But don't be constrained. Just 'do a Mike'. Try to ask yourself what is interesting? or special? or particularly awful? or whatever, about this place, person, or event. See if you can put those feelings into words and then let those thoughts drive how you frame your shot, and what you focus on as you make your photographs.

Happy shooting!

Tim