



The Image – Monthly NEWSLETTER

The Abertawe Photographic Society –

Based near the heart of Swansea, Abertawe Photographic Society is an established, friendly and welcoming club, who's members both amateur and professional all share a common interest, in all aspects of photography.

Whether you are a complete beginner or a seasoned snapper, interested in digital techniques or 35mm film, there is a warm welcome by a likeminded group of people sharing in the search for the perfect image.

By sharing, not only our enthusiasm but also our skills, techniques and knowledge, we all grow as a club and by trying new things we all get the opportunity to stretch our boundaries. All members are encouraged to take part in club events.

The Society meets every Tuesday at:
Greenhill Community Centre
Chapel Street, Dyfatty,
Swansea.SA1 1NB.

This Month's Events: October

3rd Hand-In for Comp – Colour Prints x5

3rd AGM

10th Annual Colour Print Comp – TBA

17th Pix2Exe

18th Fun Battle with Pembrey at Pembrey 20 DPI

24th Hand In for B&W Print Comp

27th Mannheim Plate Morryston 8 DPI

31st People at Work DPI – Garry Shinner

This Month's Inspirations.....

Here's another six inspirations, did you try any of last month's, hope you did? Just remember, you don't have to follow exactly, you maybe have ideas of your own, or thinking of something stemming from these ideas.

Hope you try this month's ideas, and enjoy

1. Shoot a subject that's only partly in the frame.
2. Open a magazine and recreate the first image you come across.
3. Spend a day shooting things with your camera that point upwards.
4. Shoot a piece of white paper in 10 different ways without cutting or tearing.
5. Find each of the letters in your name, shooting each. (hint look on signs, shop names, etc.)
6. Photograph a watch or other gadget in the style of a glossy magazine advert..

Go on, have a go and let's see what you have.

Rule or Opinion?

I decided this month that I would begin with a rant on a subject discussed many times in club. It, of course, relates to judging and judges, and do they really consider a rule of photography and art, or is it just their opinion.

On so many occasions I have heard some judges stating the various rules that are common knowledge to photographers. They also talk about a photograph needing to tell a story. Now for me, stories don't always stick to rules, so here is my conundrum.

I can recall one infamous image shown by an experienced and competent photographer that for me told a story. It was of a cricket match, whereby the batsman had just had his bails knocked off (I did say bails!). It is a great photograph that catches that instant in time when the bails are flying through the air as the cricket ball is seen taking the middle wicket. The judge in this competition did not be heard to extoll the photographer's skill in catching the moment in time, but was more transfixed on the amount of daisies growing around the wicket.

So tell me this, where is the rule in photography that states you cannot show the wonders of nature in a photograph? Correct, there is no rule, but what the image did achieve was that it told you a story. The story is that not all cricket matches are played on pristine village greens, but are indeed played on fields cared and nurtured by ardent supporters of the game. This judge, in my opinion, was neither apathetic or understood what the photograph was really showing, a story that played out in various daisy covered fields all over the British Isles, and probably in other countries around the world where daisy or other typical plants grow in profusion.

This is one of many instances whereby I have heard judges' comments that this is wrong or that is wrong, in fact they are purely giving opinion, that can change from day to day, mood to mood, or any other reason, and not judging according to rule or common sense. In fact, the "rules" of composition have never really been rules in my mind, but they do exist, especially in the minds of art critics and judges. In fact, some judges see things that no ordinary, reasonable person can, or at least come up with a scientific-sounding explanation as to why a good picture is a good picture, even if it may mean making up a new compositional rule. What I will add here, is that some images that are more pleasing to the eye when the main subject is on the third, but there again, there are many different ways to create a picture that is either pleasing to the eye or tells the story you want to tell. It's your image, if you are pleased with what you produced then that is more important than pleasing a judge.

As for a photograph telling a story, we all see photographs in a different way, for example the cricket game photograph that I allude to above we may all see a different story. Let me try and explain this with the use of another photograph example. I put an image into a competition at the club, it was of three rooks, not a good image really. The judge at that time, who by the way is one of our favourite judges, and a good judge at that, perhaps did not see a story at all, in fact he never mentioned one at all. I called the photograph "Three Crooks", meaning that birds of the genus Corvid are renowned for picking up (or stealing) bright objects, such as anything metallic, therefore I was attempting to state that they were "cRooks". However, the judge preferred to state that the collective name was "Parliament of Crows", he was correct of course in the use of the collective word, but in fact they were, as I have stated, Rooks and not Crows, but he failed to see the story I was trying to tell. I hope you can see from that example perhaps how fickle showing a story may be.

Before I really got into photography with Abertawe I used to take a photographs many years ago, in the days of film, using a variety of cameras including what was my pride and joy, a Minolta X700, which I still own. But unfortunately for me I never got into the dark art of developing my own, or showing at a club. However, those that did have a lot to put forward in this and related arguments. Namely the showing of slides and a number of these "old hands" have stated that judges should judge as if the image was shown via slide. Some of you may not fully understand the credence in that comment if you had not, like me participated in it.

So, to conclude, next time we have one of these judges who decide that opinion is king and not the full aspect of an image, including what rules of photography may have been taken into consideration in the judgement or not, or even have the nuance to see a story in the image, no matter how deep in the image it may be. Don't be disheartened because you have achieved more than the judge has achieved, and remember, they live amongst us!

Now that was my rant, and I feel much better for it too, I hope you enjoyed as much as I did writing it!

Back Button Focus

We have all half pressed the shutter button get the image into focus, then with you finger still in the position, recompose and then take the photograph. However, were you aware that you don't have to half-press the shutter button to focus? Yep, it's true because there is something called "back button focus".

So what is "back button focus"? As I mentioned above, normally you would half-press the shutter button on your DSLR to find focus, and then fully

press the button to take the photo. Back button focus frees up the shutter button to serve just one task, i.e. to take the photo. You can actually then use one button at the back of the camera to set focus, and the shutter button simply takes the photo.

So why use it? Back button focus actually gives you the best of both focusing worlds, that is single and continuous AF. By continuing to press the back button in order to use continuous AF when the subject is moving back and forth in the frame, or otherwise simply press the back button once to lock the focus. Then, you can take the photo using the shutter button and recompose as long as you wish without needing to keep finding focus.

There are many situations where back button focusing is superior to the traditional shutter half-press:

- Shooting a portrait with a subject that is only making minor adjustments to their pose between photos. You want to take a rapid succession of shots and don't want the AF system to choose a different focus point each time.
- Fast-moving action, children or sports photos. Using a back button to focus will help reduce the lag time between half-pressing to focus and fully pressing the shutter button to take the shot.
- Situations where the AF system can get confused with what to focus on. For example, shooting through a busy foreground like a net or a gate, Your DSLR will want to focus on that rather than what's behind it. With back button focus you can choose to keep the focus locked on the background, even if you recompose the photo.
- When you need pin-sharp images. Half-pressing and holding the shutter button to lock focus shifts the weight balance in your hand. Simply pressing the shutter button down fully to take the photo reduces the effect of hand and camera shake in photos.

So Where is the Control On Your DSLR? -

Depending on your camera make and model, back button focus either needs to be turned on in the menus and you then assign the function to a dedicated button, or it is already active by default. However, some entry-level models may not have the ability to use back button focus. If in doubt, check the manual. As camera makes and models may vary I'm not going into setting up in detail, so you will have to study your own camera manual.

The most important thing you need to know about setting up back button focus is, that you must turn on the continuous AF mode (AF-C) on your DSLR for it to work if you use a Nikon. As a Canon user, you don't have to shoot on the equivalent mode; on Canon models it's called AI Servo. The following identifies where to find this function here are some various camera maker advice on finding back button focus.

Canon – Certain higher-end models, for example my 7d Mk II will have back button focus already assigned to a button by default, as shown below. Look for the "AF-On" button near the viewfinder. It should be in the area where you would place your right thumb which makes it easy to find, once noticed your memory should kick-in.



To fully enable back button focus using AF-On only, you will need to disable focusing when pressing the shutter button. Either check your camera handbook or go on line to find the Custom Settings, in these settings you can change the shutter button function from Metering and AF start to Metering start only. Now, back button focus is enabled when using the AF-On button.

For Canon models without an AF-On button, you can usually set the asterisk or AE Lock button to be your focus button. In the Custom Controls section within the menu, find an option called "Shutter/AE lock button". The options from here in will vary from camera to camera, but note that the number before the slash will control the shutter and the number after the slash will control the asterisk or AE lock button. Generally you will want to choose Metering start / Meter + AF Start or similar. Again, consult your manual for a full rundown of each option to choose the right one for your situation, or the internet.

Remember that to access the custom functions menus; you have to be in one of the PTAM modes, **NOT** full automatic.

The following is a cheat sheet from the Canon Learning center where you'll find the menu option on your Canon camera to set up back button focus. If your camera isn't listed here, look on your camera manual, or on the internet; you should find it quite easy.

EOS Rebel T3: C.Fn 7 (option 1 or 3)
EOS Rebel T3i: C.Fn 9 (option 1 or 3)
EOS 50D: C.Fn IV-1 (option 2 or 3)
EOS 60D: C.Fn IV-1 (option 1, 2, 3, or 4)
EOS 7D: C.Fn IV-1 (Custom Controls — Shutter, AF-ON, AEL buttons)
EOS 5D Mark II: C.Fn IV-1 (option 2 or 3)
EOS-1Ds Mark III: C.Fn IV-1 (option 2 or 3)
EOS-1D Mark IV: C.Fn IV-1 (option 2 or 3)

Nikon – First check to see if your camera has an AF-On button. If you do, then it's quite easy to set up back-button focus!

In the camera menu, head to the custom setting menu (the option with a pencil icon as shown below).

Step 1: All you'd have to do is select your custom settings menu (pencil icon)
Step 2: Select "a – Autofocus"
Step 3: Select "a4 – AF activation" and
Step 4: Select "AF-ON only" and you're done.

If your Nikon doesn't have an AF-ON button, you'll need to set up the AE/AF-lock button in the custom menus to use it as the AF-On button. Follow this:

Go to Custom Settings menu and then the Controls section. Choose Assign AE-L/AF-L button and scroll down to AF-On. Press OK and then the AE-L/AF-L

button at the back of the camera now acts like an AF-On button for back button focusing.



I hope this helps you, and if you have not tried BBF before give it a go.

..... and finally

Ever since buying a digital camera, I can only think of its positive points. There aren't any negatives.
