



# 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: April

1<sup>st</sup> Open Evening

8<sup>th</sup> Using the Old Grey Matter Rob Mitchell

15<sup>th</sup> An Evening with Club Members

15<sup>th</sup> Hand-In for 4<sup>th</sup> Competition

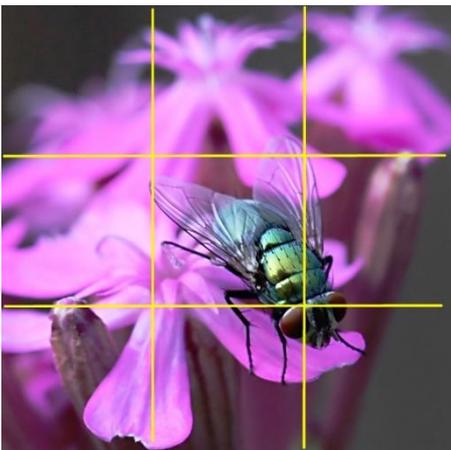
22<sup>nd</sup> Fun Battle with Pembrey

29<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Monthly Competition Gareth Martin

## Composition

I thought I would concentrate this month on composition, with the two articles either side of the knowledge spectrum. The first is going back to basics really with the number of "Rules" of composition in photography. *By the way, the images I have used are from the internet, and not my own.*

**Rule of Thirds** – Try to imagine that your image is divided into nine equal segments, with two vertical and two horizontal lines all equally spaced. Try to position the subject or most important element along these lines, or where they intersect, as shown below in the photography of a fly on a



flower petal.

Doing this will balance and interest to your photograph. Most cameras these days offer the option to superimpose a rule of thirds grid in the LCD screen at the rear of your camera.

**Balancing Elements** – If you place your primary subject off-centre, similar to the rule of thirds, it creates a more interesting image. However, it may leave a space in the image which may make it look empty. Try to balance the 'weight' of the

primary subject by including another object of less importance and thus fill the space. As you see below, the main subject of 'Big Ben' is slightly off-centre but the space to the right has a lamp-post that fill the space, and helping it to be more interesting.



**Leading Lines** – When we view a photograph our eyes tend to be naturally drawn along any lines within the image. By studying the scene in front of you, you can compose your photograph to introduce leading lines, which pulls your main subject into the photograph, or takes on a journey through the scene. You should understand that there are many types of leading lines, including: straight, diagonal, zig-zag, curves, circular, etc.,

and anyone of these can be used to enhance your image, as shown below with the line of benches, railings and boards.



**Symmetry and Patterns** – This is one composition where you can definitely ignore the rule of thirds. In fact our world is surrounded by Symmetry and patterns, some are man-made, and others are natural. Using the viewpoint to the greatest advantage you can make a very eye-catching photograph. The image below of an escalator may seem pretty mundane, but the lighting and B&W image make it a very dramatic shot, and introduces tension by expecting somebody to enter the escalator at the top.



**Viewpoint** – Many times we just lift the camera to our eye and take a photograph. However, if we take our time to think about where we will take the photograph from it may have a huge impact on the final photograph. In other words, we take too many photographs from head height, but what about getting down low, or even high (get that step ladder out! ☺). In fact other viewpoints will give you a more dramatic photograph, try photographing against and up a building or a tree, from a different angle, from the side or back, etc. The image below makes the simple and broken fence very imposing by getting low to the ground.



**Background** – when taking a photograph we often ignore the background, for example, how many have taken a photograph with a pole or tree sticking out from your subjects head, or a busy background, perhaps with advertising. All distract the image you are trying to portray. The human eye quite easily distinguishes the foreground from the background, whereas the camera will flatten the image, both foreground and background in one. Try to use a plain or unobtrusive background and compose your image so that subject is not distracted by the background, as shown in the image below of mushrooms.



**Create Depth** – When we view a scene to photograph we actually see depth, and actually photography is a two-dimensional mode. So we must be aware that our photograph should convey a sense of depth. You achieve this sense of depth by including foreground object(s), such as the tree in the foreground, middle and background as you can see in the photo below. Another method of producing depth is to partly obscure the middle or background image by one in front of it. Our eyes distinguish between the two and we mentally separate them thus creating more depth in our image.



**Framing** – we see natural frames all around us every day, animate or inanimate objects, such as archways, railings animals, humans, etc. By framing your main subject with whatever you choose as a frame on the outside of your composition you will isolate the main subject and naturally draws your eye towards it as the main point of interest as shown below with the cow framed by the fencing.



**Cropping** – To crop or not to crop, that is the question. Sorry, I couldn't help that. We may often take a photograph that doesn't have impact because it is too small and becomes lost in the 'jumble' of photograph. However, by cropping tight

around the subject, or part of the subject, you remove the background 'jumble' or 'noise' thus ensuring that you get the undivided attention, just like the cat's eye in the photo below.



**Experimenting** – Now we are 'drowning' in the digital age in photography, and being shackled by film is no longer with us. Therefore, experimenting with our photographic composition is a real possibility. We can now shoot off loads of shots at no extra cost, and delete in-camera or during post processing the one we don't like.

Composition when photographing is not a science, and subsequently the rules above can be 'taken with a pinch of salt'. If the don't work in yur scene then ignore them. However, they are often spot-on so you may want to follow them, or at the very least consider them.

There are actually more rules that you can follow in photography, such as rule of odds, golden spiral, colour, texture, etc., take a look at the and you decide which are important for you. Keep snapping!

#### Fibonacci and the Golden Ratio

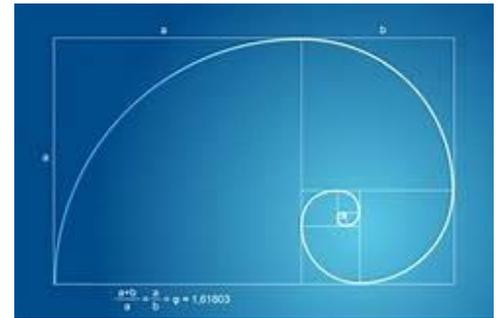
As I mentioned earlier this month I will write about composition and either ends of the knowledge spectrum.

Fibonacci's Golden Ratio is actually the rule of thirds on steroids. It was first developed by Leonardo Fibonacci around 1200 A.D. He noticed that there was an absolute ratio that appears often throughout nature, a sort of design that is universally efficient in living things and pleasing to the human eye.

Now I don't want to get too technical with you, but just to say the it has been used by artists and architects since the Renaissance period, and utilises a specific ratio, and was in fact used to design the Parthenon, and in famous works of art such as the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper, and in fact is still used today. It has been used by various companies such as Apple in the design of their products, rumor has it that is was used by Twitter to create their new profile page, and has been used by major companies all over the world to design logos. You don't often hear about it in photography because it's an advanced method of composition and can be confusing to a lot of people. It's so much easier to just talk about the "rule of thirds" because it's exact, precise and easy to follow.

However, some well-known photographers have used it. In fact certain top-end Canon models have the Golden Ratio setting in the menu, and can be viewed on the back screen.

Below is the Fibonacci Curve and below that is a pictorial description of it with a spiral staircase.



that's enough of that technical stuff, some of you may find it interesting but I'm sticking the simple rule of thirds, if I have to!

Some events you might be interested in:

- English Civil War Period at Laugharne Castle - May 5/6
- WW1 at Blaenavon Ironworks - June 2/ 3
- Severn Valley Railway 1940's weekend - June 30/July 1 and July 7/8
- Blaenavon Ironworks, Steampunks -July 14/15
- Severn Valley Railway, Classic Road Vehicles - July 29
- Severn Valley Railway, Steam on the road - August 11/12
- West Somerset Railway, Forties Weekend - September 15/16
- West Somerset Railway, Autumn Steam Gala - September 27/30

Thank you Mike Clatworthy for the information.

#### Welsh Salon Exhibition & Opening:

The 2018 Welsh Salon Exhibition official opening day will be the 16th June at 2.00 pm in the Volcano Theatre, High Street, Swansea, SA1 1LG.

The Salon Exhibition will be open from the Tuesday 5th June until Friday 29th June, at the Volcano.

.....and finally

A mate of mine bought a Labrador puppy from the pet store and named him Kodak.

That way he could say he owned a Kodak lab.