

Photo News

The monthly Newsletter of the
MARLBOROUGH
CAMERA CLUB

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April 2011

I've been called into action to do this months Photo News, while Trevor has gone up North to attend the North Shore Convention 'A Shore Thing', where he is taking workshops on HDR. I would have loved to have gone up as well, being that North Shore is where I am from, and it's my old club, but one cannot do everything.

Instead, I've been pointing my camera around at home and learning about things that usually one would never give a second thought. Firstly, I found a spider on my windowsill. Instead of grabbing something to kill it with, I decided to put my macro lens on and photograph it. Once on my computer, I realised I had never seen one of these before and that started a lengthy search on google.



I found that this spider has been in New Zealand since approx. 1943, and is found in Wellington and parts of the upper South Island. It's called the Swift Ground Spider, or Wasp Mimicking Spider. If you put your hand on it's head, it'll bite you and cause you pain, but it won't kill you. It eats other spiders, and is successful because it's such a fast spider, the others don't see him coming. Apparently this is one of the hardest spiders to photograph as they never sit still. They are known as Australia's fastest Spider.. This was just sitting in the sun on my windowsill so I was lucky. (It spent no time in the fridge or any other cold place).

A day or so later, I found a pair of paper wasps mating. Having never seen this, I rushed to my camera bag for my macro lens again and again took some different photos. On getting them up on my computer, I once again googled about these wasps to find out their mating habits and learnt that the male dies after mating, but there were no photographs on the web showing exactly how they do mate. Friends said I should have killed them immediately, but I still can't bring myself to do that. If they were rabbits though, I would have gladly hired a bazooka and nuked them! I never thought I would ever want to kill another creature in my life. That is, until I moved down to Marlborough and seen those cute furry critters eat up my very expensive lawn. A friend of mine brought round a rescued baby rabbit for me to photograph two days ago...





Google told me that with the amount of rabbits I have round here, that in 36 weeks, I'll have 4950 of them on my lawn. This brings home the fact that in New Zealand, rabbits are not cute and furry, but are an absolute pest. If anyone wants to do a bit of target practice please let me know, there's plenty to go around!

Just don't get me started on Possums!

This is one of the reasons I love Photography, as one can learn so much about the immediate world around us.

Robyn Carter



PRESIDENT'S Corner



Roger's article about submitting an Honours set in the last issue of Photo News came a bit too late for me. I decided at the very last minute to put in a set for my Licentiate, going from having the idea, to mailing off the CD with my ten projected images, in less than a week. Of course I failed to convince the Board of my worthiness, and quite rightly so. My set is on the right of this page, and the Honours Board's comments below:

The portfolio shows good diversity, and starts off strongly. The middle section is not as strong and has let the set down. However, the control of light in five was quite nice. The diagonal composition of number 10 and its background caused some concern.

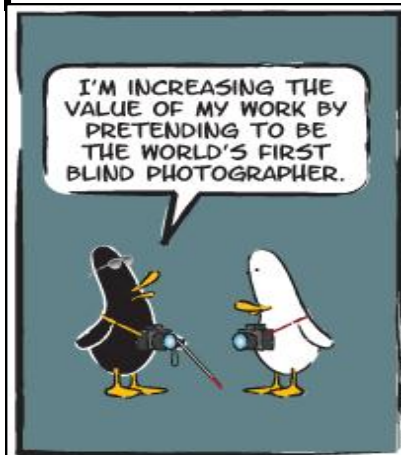
Several people have told me that it is much harder with a projected image set. The Board can look at a prints set comparing each image with those around it, but with projected images they can obviously see one image at a time. You also lose control of how your image will be viewed, no matter how carefully you calibrate your equipment. This is something I have noticed at club nights when my pictures look very different to how I'd seen them on my monitor. With prints you know that the Board will see your images the way you saw them.

What was most ridiculous was the insanely short time I devoted to my set. You need to revisit your pictures over a prolonged period, and get as many opinions as you can manage from people with the right experience. But even the owner of those images will likely see them anew after a period.

But long before I started on my short journey ignoring Roger's advice, Liz Davidson had set out to do it properly with a number of small prints to choose her set from, and seeking advice from other people about which images to use, and how to present them. So congratulations to Liz, who by the time you read this, will LPSNZ after name.

A so far small group of Club members have decided to work together, and help each other to put together sets for next year's Honours Board. If you would like to be a part of this group, and are prepared to

Trevor



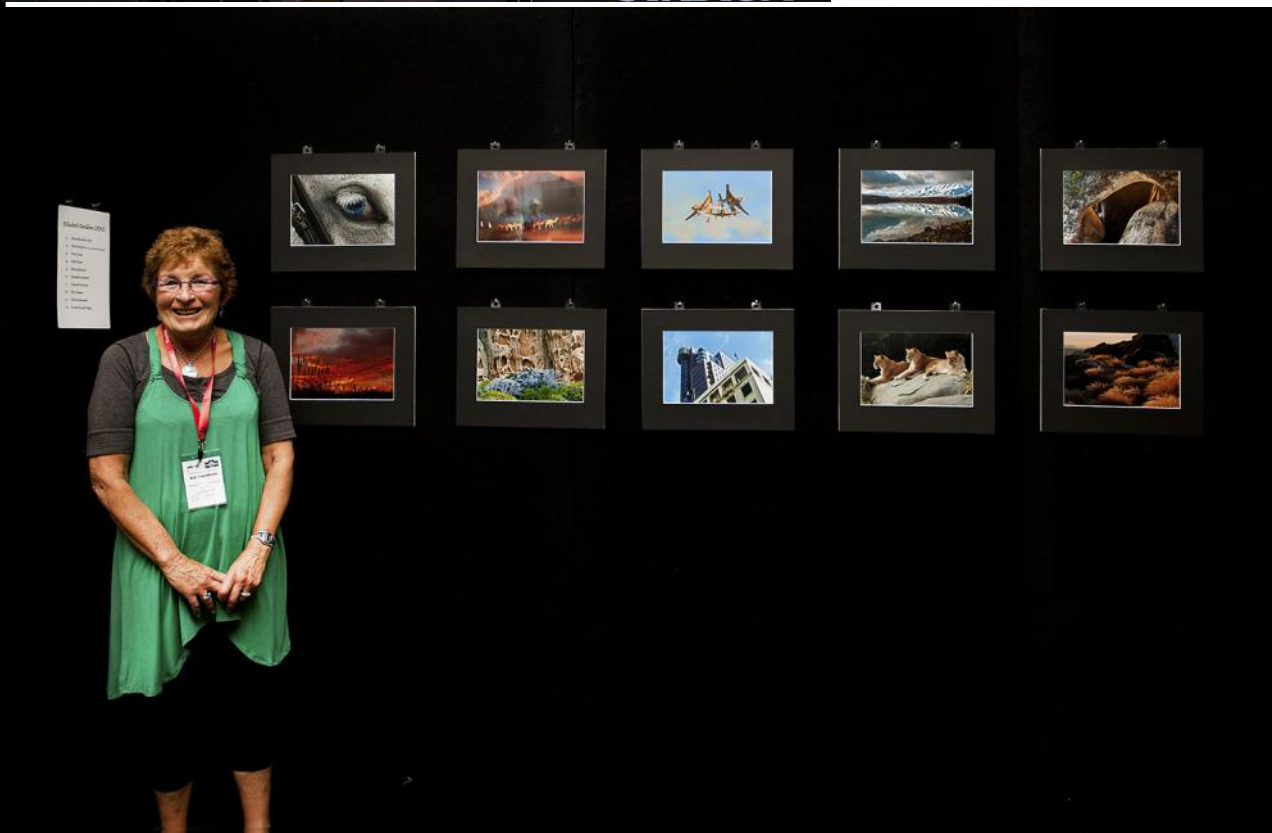
Introducing Liz Davidson LPSNZ

A hearty congratulations goes to Liz for attaining her Honours with a wonderful set of images. We're all immensely proud of her and its testament to her enthusiasm, go-getting attitude and attention to detail. It must have been really exciting and I only wish we could have all been there to see her get her award.



Here she is getting her award from Ron Parry at the North Harbour Stadium on the awards night.

We look forward to hearing her experiences up in the big smoke at the convention. No doubt both Liz and Trevor will have lots of things to share with us when they get back.



Her smile says it all—Liz standing with her award winning images.



PHOTOGRAPHY # 81 — PHOTO CRITIQUE—USEFUL OR NOT?

By Roger Thwaites, APSNZ

This is a question that seems to always occur to me, after hearing the various comments from judges, or from those people who have very ‘defined’ opinions about the photos they are viewing. I am always left to be wondering whether or not, their opinions are relevant, and being a judge myself, makes me question my own opinions, as well.

If we look at the word ‘critique’,...Isn’t it just another word for ‘opinion’? The dictionary describes it as: “critical essay or analysis, criticism”. Perhaps we need to examine how we apply the word ‘critique’ to photography. As I see it, there are three main areas of critique:

~ Self-critique; Viewer-critique; and Judging Critique.

SELF-CRITIQUE is the way in which we look at our own photos, and if we have some knowledge about ‘what makes a great photo’, then this is very much to our advantage. We need to be able to identify photo quality, excellence, presentation, and the standard we should be aiming for (particularly for competition or exhibition purposes). Composition, Impact, technique, and high standards, are all things that can be helpful, when we critique our own photos. One of the most important aspects of ‘self-critique’ is that the photo you are looking at, is one that you have singled out as being a photo that you have a great liking for. If you don’t like your own photo, then it is almost certain, that other viewers won’t either. Sometimes, ‘self interest’ may cause us to be blinded by the ‘bias’ we might possibly have towards our own photos, and gives rise to the thinking, that the photos being critiqued might look better than they really are.

An independent opinion, may help to put this into a more realistic perspective.

VIEWER-CRITIQUE. This is the viewing of photos, (in a very general sense), by interested members of the public, eg. – An Exhibition. In this situation, many of the comments made are usually of an “uninformed” nature, i.e. – the viewer may have very little knowledge or experience of photography, but, any comments made, can be ‘refreshingly’ honest! Much can be gained from how people (other than photographers) see your images, so don’t just dismiss their views, out of hand. The ‘untrained eye’ sees a very different aspect of your photos to what you do, and this could mean the difference between possibly succeeding with an image, or not.

JUDGING-CRITIQUE. Quite a different approach to photo critique is taken when photos are being selected for Exhibition or Judged for a Competition. The theory is, that judges ‘usually’ have a vast knowledge of photography to draw on, and this, coupled with years of experience of being involved in taking photos, usually gives them an advantage when it comes to critiquing. Most have the ability to be subjective, and look at, and comment on each photo, without ‘fear’ or ‘favour’ (i.e. – Impartially).

In general, judges don’t usually give comments or opinions on the photographic entries in larger Salons, due the huge volume of entries making it logistically impossible, but for club competition photos, the smaller number of entries are usually more manageable, and every effort is made to give helpful comments aimed at improving the overall standard of photography, as a whole.

“Critique” is not just about criticising someone else’s photo. It’s more about, looking at a photo objectively. It’s about having the knowledge and experience to know what makes a great photo. It’s about helping photographers to improve their photography by offering helpful comments, suggestions, and solutions. Most of all, it is about helping photographers to gain the skills that are necessary for them to enjoy their craft.

Whether ‘critiques’ are useful or not, that is up to you (the photographer) to decide. Most critiques have some helpful comments, and these are what make critiques a useful tool. You can also learn from some of the negative comments as well, but as a whole, you take out of it what you will (or want to) and reject the rest!



HERE'S AN IMAGE TAKEN ON THE MAUD ISLAND TRIP, TO TRY OUT YOUR CRITIQUING SKILLS

Roger



Digital ...

A monthly column by Harry

. As many of you know, my wife Iris died recently, on March 8. Memoirs of her life from early childhood onward as well as some pictures of her from the last 10 years are now on my Web site, www.photographgallery.net/hrm. Among other things, this event has triggered some reflection about our relationship and life together. We were well set in our lives when we married, aged almost 40, and we were very different: born on opposite sides of the globe, one from a remote rural area and one from suburbia; one academically inclined, one not; one very skilled with her hands, one not; and so on. This diversity meant that in most situations one of us led the way and the other followed depending on which skills were most in demand in a particular situation. Sometimes, however, both sets of skills were equally valuable (when travelling for example) and the equal combination could be very powerful. Which brings me to photography.

How dominant must the primary centre of interest be?

This month I am asking a question to which I don't know the answer.

If you have followed club photographic competitions or evaluations you may have noticed that successful images have one dominant centre of interest. No obvious centre of interest (a “wallpaper” shot) or too many centres of interest (“there are two or three photographs mixed up here”) are negative features. In fact, last month's column was all about making sure the centre of interest dominates.

Look at figures 1 and 2. Figure 1, the lioness with her tongue showing, has two competing centres of interest, the tongue and the light on her face. The red tongue's colour is stronger but the area of light on the face is larger; consequently the viewer is confused about which is the main point of the photograph. In figure 2, the saddle-billed stork, though, the bright red patch at the top of the bill has no serious competition for the viewer's attention; it doesn't hurt that this is also the location of the bird's head which also tends to draw our attention. Both images were submitted for evaluation at the same time and the stork scored higher than the lioness.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Subsequently, both images have been hanging together on my wall. At first, I came to appreciate what I have just described, the clear structure of the stork image. More recently, however, the stork image has begun to fade into the background (metaphorically speaking) and I find myself looking more at the lioness. Could it be that the competition between the two centres of interest creates excitement that, over a longer period of viewing, maintains interest in the image; maybe a more complex but ultimately more powerful dynamic?

Another example: figure 3 shows an older image of mine, the Sydney Opera House late one evening, in light rain, decorated with a very fine rainbow. This image was quickly dismissed, when evaluated one club night, as having 3 centres of interest, the Opera House roof, the rainbow, and the sky to the right of the rainbow. Being an independent kind of soul, I still hung it on my wall, surrounded by much more successful photographs. Over the

years, with a wide variety of visitors, it is one of the the images most commented on. If I dimmed the roof to leave the rainbow or dimmed the rainbow to leave the roof, would the image have the same impact?

Figure 3



Figures 4 and 5 show an image of a vervet monkey cropped in two ways. The tighter crop has much more immediate impact because attention jumps straight to the monkey's face with no distraction. This crop was recommended when I submitted the more loosely cropped image for evaluation. I could see exactly what the evaluator meant and I planned to re-mat the print to cover up much of the background. Meanwhile, I hung the image as it was, while I attended to more urgent matters.

I've been getting more and more attracted to the loose crop. The competition for my attention, between the large area of tree and sky and the monkey, provides context for the monkey and creates a dynamic situation that maintains interest in the image over the longer term, at least for me.

In general, I work to get one dominant centre of interest in my images but sometimes I wonder if contrasting centres of interest, in some cases, might create a more interesting dynamic, like a dissonant chord in a piece of music or contrasting personalities tackling a problem together. What do you think?



Left: Figure 4

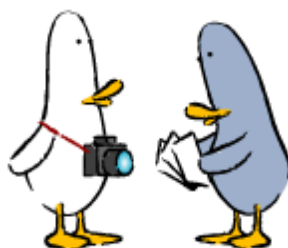
Right: Figure 5

Harry

What The Duck



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<http://www.whattheduck.net/>



Open Competition Results

Judge—Alan Bingham

We got a stellar number of images put into our Open Competition for judging last night. We also got some fantastic results from everyone. Below are the results of Honours and Merits.

Honours—Prints

Robyn Carter	Fire & Ice
Liz Davidson	The Fence
Roger Thwaites	Majestic Pipes
Joanne Patchett	Shepherd
David Brinn	Gerbera
Robyn Carter	The Gannet
Owen Dunne	Old Fishing Skiff-Nova Scotia



Merit—Prints

Gillian Clover	Forest Giant
Carolyn Hope	Bonsia
Trevor Dennis	Bulb Changer
Rod	Janie Sedon
Nola Neal	Day Lily
Roger Thwaites	Flirtatious Peony
Lloyd Neal	Dottrel Eggs
Gordon Walker	Water dragon
Carolyn Hope	Summer's Past
David Brinn	The Black Cliffs Lake – Swiss Alps
Gordon Walker	Queen Victoria Building – Sydney
Anne McLauchlan	Looking For Breakfast
Nola Neal	Feeding the young

Honours—Projected Images

Heike Richter	Popart Tulip
Gillian Clover	Seagull Flutter
Lyndie Henry	Soft rose
Gillian Clover	White Fronted Tern Touch Down
Gordon Walker	Fungi
Robyn Carter	Little Pied Cormorant
Mary-Ann	This is my Mean Look

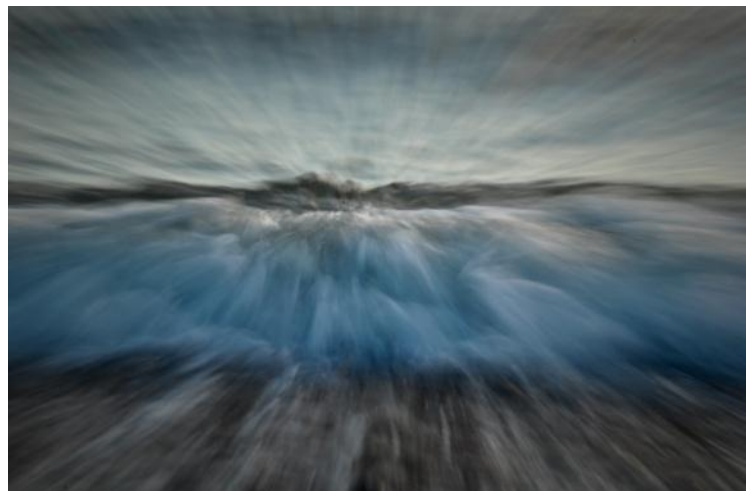


Open Competition Results—Continued

Judge—Alan Bingham

Merit—Projected Images

Lyndie Henry	Alternative Wedding
Liz Davidson	Coastal Textures
Ruth Gill	Lavender
Owen Dunne	Scarecrows Unite
Dave Tose	Magnolia Dream
Sue Clifford	Solarised Matches
Emily Jones	Fresh
Ruth Gill	Night Cap
Emily Jones	Muscari
Chook Searles	Iris
Chook Searles	Treasured gold



For those people getting honours and merits in club competitions, or any outside competitions, could you please forward those images to Trevor so we can add them here in the newsletter.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 14th April 2011 at St Mary's Parish Hall, Blenheim, starting at 7.30pm

Agenda:

Results of — **Landscape/Seascape/Urbscape**
 Hand In — **Photojournalism**
 (up to 1 print and/or 2 projected images)

7:30 Club announcements, house keeping etc.

7.45 Speaker — Kevin Boxall who will give a presentation of photographs taken in the mid 1960's by his late father Tony Boxall, who was a Fellow of the RPS.

8.30 Club Competition: Landscape/Seascape/Urbscape.

9:15 15 Minute Tip — if time allows.

9:30 Supper thanks to Ruth Gill and Mary-Ann Reinke (please stack your chairs)

FIELD TRIP - Sunday 17th April,. At this stage we are planning to visit the Seaview area, Seddon on Sunday the 17th of April. There we will be able to photograph vineyards as they develop their Autumnal hues. We will probably meet in the afternoon....time and place to be advised.... in order to catch the light at the end of the day. Yealands' property has some amazing vistas of gently rolling contours, newly established ponds and wetlands with birdlife and the Yealands Winery building which has won various environmental awards.

Roger Thwaites is running a 6 week basic photography course commencing 12th April 2011 which will include two field trips. Roger's courses are renowned as being as good as they come, so if you are setting out as a beginner, or if you have some experience, and think a 'back to basics' course would help to improve your photography, contact Roger at 03 578 3185, or boxbrownie@snap.net.nz

Upcoming Speakers on Club Nights.

You may remember an article that appeared in the Midweek several weeks ago, in which **Kevin Boxall** talked about the photographs his father had taken of gypsy campsites many years ago. Kevin will be coming to the club to show us some of the pictures, and talk about his father this week.

Nomadic Photographic Tours organise trips for photographers in both New Zealand and overseas, and while their main focus is encouraging people to go on their tours, they have some interesting stories, and some great images to show.

Most Club members will know **Elizabeth Passuello** who is currently the President of the Greymouth Camera Club. We are hoping to persuade Elizabeth to come to Marlborough later in the year to talk at one of our meetings. Elizabeth has a rare talent, and is someone whose work I greatly admire. Have a look at A Touch of Colour on [this page](#), and see if you agree.

[Derek Flynn](#) is a multi award winning photographer at the Marlborough Express, and he has provisionally agreed to talk at a Club meeting. Derek has a knack of being in the right place at the right time, and I am looking forward to hearing how he manages to do this.



Last month we wished Club member Rod Inglis and his family all the best after their move to Christchurch. Since then, so much has happened, and of such monumental proportions, it hardly seems possible that it was only a month ago, but you'll be relieved to hear that Rod and his family escaped the worst effects of the huge earthquake that hit Christchurch on February 22nd.

Rod captured the above scene after the September Quake, and the damage is mostly due to the building needing to be demolished, but it remains a striking image with the staircase reaching up, phoenix like, out of the ruins.

Most of us have been directly or indirectly affected by the Christchurch earthquake — three of my wife Chris' children have lost their homes — and we have also heard that PSNZ President Ron Parry, and his wife Dorothy, have been left homeless. We send all those people affected our very best wishes.

The Special Annual General Meeting we announced last month, was intended to seek approval to shift our financial year. This was to ease the pressure on getting our audit done in time for our normal AGM, but our Treasurer has looked at the timeline, and conjured up a way to squeeze it all in. So the SAGM has now been cancelled.

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Upcoming Events



**MARLBOROUGH
CAMERA CLUB**

Selection of Nelson Marlborough Challenge Pictures
Selection by Don Kelly, Roger Thwaites & Owen Dunn
Thursday March 24th @ 07:30am — St Marys — Blenheim



Bristol Photographic Society

Presents the

65th Bristol International Salon of Photography 2011

Closing date 19th March

[DETAILS HERE](#)



A Shore Thing - PSNZ National Convention

6th to 10th April 2011

information, please contact Terry Cockfield terry@cockfield.net.nz



**MARLBOROUGH
CAMERA CLUB**

Nelson Marlborough Interclub Challenge
Sunday May 15th @ 10:00am
Founders Park — Nelson



For more news and information visit the PSNZ site

www.photography.org.nz/welcome.htm

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[Competitions](#)

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