

The Newsletter

Insight, Primesite, Foresight



Editorial – July 2010:

During the summer, at least on the surface, the club doesn't seem to have much going on. Yet the members are not idling; they are getting on with their photography. Often we do many of our best shots at this time of year.

This year it would be good to get a bit of feedback about what members are doing through the summer. We might get an insight into the exciting photos we are going to see in the coming season. Alternatively we could gain from your experience. A tip or trick from another member is always beneficial.

This year I am going to continue the Newsletter over the summer. I hope that you will keep me informed about what you are doing. Then, we will have a lot to look forward to when we start back. You might give others inspiring ideas too.

This is the July Newsletter. Why not send me a short report about your exploits. Tell us about your holiday. Maybe excite us with a report of a fun day out where you took some good shots. You could even tell us about your intentions – holidays or other adventures. Help us to look forward to your exciting shots next season.

Something that would benefit us all could be short notes on something you learned. The other day I learned why I have three types of exposure metering on my camera. More on that later.

Don't let the summer drift by without any contact with the club. Let's hear some news, views and reports of your exploits. After all that's what the club is for – to gain experience, share thoughts and improve our shots.

Have a great summer...
Damon



Buy your Amazon books through the club website. You will find the Amazon search box (shown above) on the club website home page. We get a small return for every purchase you make. It costs you nothing. It helps the club to raise much needed funds.

Auto-settings – blessing or blight?

The digital camera does a great deal of the work that once was done by the photographer. In the point and click era we seem to have lost the ability to do the 'skilled bit'. Electronics have taken over.

Actually I don't think that is true. We now have an almost bewildering range of settings and controls to use. What can happen however is for the photographer to hand over these functions and controls to the camera. Let's look at exposure evaluation. It can be something of a problem as well as a blessing. It all depends how you use it.

I have been frustrated many times by the lack of control in difficult focusing situations. Have you ever tried focusing in twilight? If there is low contrast the evaluative metering causes the camera to hunt, but never find, the point of focus? Perhaps you have had the irritation of a still subject suddenly move but you still get the shot. Then, in the processing, the shot is horribly blurred. Yet, you

'absolutely know' you got the shot. These problems are down to the auto-features of the camera making a wrong choice on your behalf. **Yes folks, if you leave it to your camera to make the choices in difficult situations it will often fail you.** Learning to control a digital camera is about mastering the use of the right feature the right way. Don't leave it down to the programming to do it for you.

A few weeks ago I went to Santa Pod Raceway for the annual "Main Event". It is the UK international leg of the drag racing circuit. It is a great day out for all the family, a unique experience and a photographic challenge.



This year I had my Canon 5D. It's the first time I have had it at a big motor event. I had high hopes of great action shots, lots of panned freezes and smoking tires. This year I tried to extend my skills. I wanted to get shots at the end of the track. After 5 to 8 seconds of a super-charged burn over a quarter mile the terminal velocity of these cars is around 200 miles per hour. When the parachute snaps open to slow the car the photographer is taxed to the limit. Just panning fast enough to keep up with the car as it shoots past is hard, let alone getting the shot. I thought I had got some good shots. Back in the e-lab a very poor hit rate showed that all my panning practice had failed me. So I went back to the camera manual and found I had made a basic error.

Canon cameras have three types of evaluative metering by which the camera sets its exposures during the auto-focus process. Basically these are easy to remember. 'One-shot': used to take photos of still subjects. 'AI' Servo – a continuous evaluation and focus against moving objects. The third, 'AI focus', is a sort of switchback. It switches back and forth between the other two – a way to

cope with the unpredictable between still and movement.

So, there was I at the side of the racetrack attempting to take pictures of cars moving toward me at two hundred miles an hour. Was I likely to succeed with a camera set to take still life shots? I guess I now know a bit more about the camera and my manual. I still have the bruises where I kicked myself! The moral of the story - know what the settings do and how to use them. Practice, practice and more practice! Damon.

New Website – a picture of the future

An exciting development is taking place. We have a new website up and running. The difference hits you as soon as the home page opens. A new graduated colour scheme and graphics gives the site an open and friendly feel. The look and feel is not the only feature



that is friendly. Ray Reeder the author of this new site says, "I hope that it is easier to navigate around and to find points of interest". Ray has also worked hard behind the scenes to make it easier to update. "The site will be more dynamic" he says. "We want it to be more alive and responsive to the needs of the members".

Gallery

The gallery has been redesigned. The new setup allows for quick and easy additions. The aim is that all images from the PDI competitions will be loaded quickly after events. Members will be able to review them soon after a competition. The later images in the gallery have more descriptive file names. You will also see

that comments can be added to individual images displayed in the gallery. I am sure we will make good use of it as we learn more about it. Ray suggests we add titles and descriptions in our favorite photo-editor to enable us to see into the photographers thinking for some of the shots. That might be a good challenge for members to try out.

Forum

A great new feature of the site is the forum. A number of people have already commented that it is easier to use and there seems scope to use it in different ways. At the moment the forum threads can be read by any interested Internet user. However, only members who sign up with a user name and email address can add comments. One forum section will enable us to post photos to show others. You can leave comments for those too. I think that could be a great stimulus for participation and will make the forum a must for keen members.

Image of the month

A great idea came from members in the pub after the night shoot earlier in the year. We discussed a possible image of the month competition. That would work well in the forum. Some of us are very keen on the idea. Anyone got ideas on how it might be done? Who would judge it for example – a different member judging each time? There is lots of scope for discussion there. See you in the forum to thrash that one out. Comments anyone?

Ray has put a lot of hard work into developing the new site. His time has been well spent in my opinion. Now we need to make the best of a great new opportunity. However, as with all websites it is a work in progress. Ray is keen to get member ideas and participation on the site. So put your ideas up on the forum and let's make it a real focus for our club community. See the new features at:

<http://www.marlowcc.org/>

Thanks Ray, for all your hard work.

Tuesday evenings

Some people in the club would like to carry on having Tuesday meetings all summer. So a small social club has developed in the "George and Dragon", down in The Causeway at the bottom of the High Street. If you are in the town and want a friendly chat with other shooters from the club, pop-in on a Tuesday night. If you let me know in advance who is going I will try and do a mail-around to everyone. We might get a crowd... A pint anyone?

And Finally...

... a good website.

If you are buying a new camera or lens you will want to know all about it before you spend your money. A good place to start is <http://www.dpreview.com/>. There is a large number of reviews on a wide range of lenses and cameras as well as other equipment. The author and team go into real depth in their testing, putting the equipment through all their paces. This is a highly informative site and one that is well respected.

... a great little purchase.

Want a lens cleaner on hand all the time? Look at this fun little thing:

<http://www.warehouseexpress.com/buy-spuhz-6x6-black/p1013790/>

... a joke.

A friend of mine teaches film-making at a well-known school of photography. He was approached by a famous brain surgeon. The surgeon asked to be given a 2-week crash course in film-making. He wanted to produce a film on brain surgery. "Okay," my friend said, "but, I won't charge you for the course if you'll swap me a two-week course in brain surgery. That's something I've always wanted to do". - Anonymous

... and an event.

Goodwood festival of speed is on 2. 3. 4 July. Its an exciting event for all with great photo opportunities and many different activities. More here:

<http://www.goodwood.co.uk/festival-of-speed/welcome.aspx>