

U3a DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Notes of meeting held on 11th September 2024 in Louise House

1. Review of themed photos – Books

A total of 22 photos were submitted on the theme of Books.

Most members commented that this had been a difficult subject and, not surprisingly, this had resulted in an imaginative interpretation of 'Books'! During the review, we discussed variously cropping, lighting, perspective, B&W vs Colour and the use of AI to remove unwanted items.

It was agreed that the new theme for the period Oct-Dec would be selected at random from the list – but it would be good if it had an autumnal connection

ACTION - DSF

2. Technical Session – Birds in Flight

In advance of our field trip to Ellesmere next month, Peter gave a very comprehensive presentation on the trials and tribulations of photographing birds in flight (copies of the slides are attached to the email).

- It is important to be familiar with your camera controls and to prepare / plan ahead
- Aim to capture the bird so that it occupies 25%+ of the screen area to give autofocus a chance to operate properly
- The guidelines on camera settings need to be adapted to the situation
- Using a high frame rate to capture the images places significant demands on the memory card – a write speed of 300mps is advisable and a 32GB is a minimum
- There is a trade-off between shooting in RAW (more detail, larger files, longer write time) and JPEG (smaller files, shorter write time)
- The technique needs to be varied depending on whether the bird is flying across, towards or away from you
- Birds of prey (and even wild fowl) fly remarkably fast – don't be surprised if you achieve a low success rate!

3. Ellesmere Field Trip

It was agreed that we will follow the usual format, meeting at Meole Brace P&R for an 09:30 departure.

There should be good opportunities to photograph wildlife around the Mere and the Canal, but we may have to be flexible if this is not the case. It was suggested that the hide at Woodland Nature Reserve could be a fallback (and may also provide a second site to explore after lunch).

Details for the trip will be circulated after checking on the number of attendees. This will include possible lunch venues

ACTION – DSF

4. Annual Competition

Some members of the group thought that having an external judge was beneficial – but were reluctant to use one from SPS. Last year's process of in-house judging worked but it was felt that there was insufficient time to consider each photo and there was no real feedback on why the various marks had been given.

This year, members will be required to submit their entries by the December meeting (ie before the 11th Dec). There will be a limit of 3, any topic, but taken in the calendar year 2024.

The entries will be put together in a pdf file and sent out so that members can consider them in the weeks leading up to the January meeting. Each photo should be marked against the categories used last year and should have accompanying constructive comments. The review of the marks plus comments will be held in January.

5. Mileage Rates for Field Trip Travel

Peter has researched how other U3a groups handle car mileage payments. There is no consistent approach. To fully reward the cost of a car journey is approx. 45p/mile (the figure recognised by HMRC) whereas most groups use a variant of 10p/mile.

It is important to stress that any provision of places in cars and payment is on a voluntary basis.

The majority of those present felt that the approach used by local Ramblers Society was what we should adopt. Viz. each person contributes according to

£ (Journey total mileage / 10) rounded up to the nearest £

Since we only make ~ 3 journeys per year, we do not need anything more complicated

A proposal based on the above will be circulated to members for their comment

ACTION – DSF

6. Christmas Meeting

This topic was discussed. Several members present thought that by Christmas most people are 'turkey-ed out'! So rather than a restaurant meal, as last year, they proposed that we revert to using the December meeting to have a quiz (photography related) and mince pies etc. in Louise House. This will be tested with the full membership

ACTION – DSF

Kind Regards, David