



WELCOME!

HITCHIN

CAMERA CLUB

This welcome pack contains a wealth of information that we think will be invaluable to people considering joining Hitchin Camera Club. Inside you'll find details of the different types of events we hold, information about becoming part of the club, and some hints and tips so that even if you've never been to a camera club before you can quickly join in and won't feel out of your depth.

www.HitchinCameraClub.org

 Hitchin Camera Club

Member's Welcome Pack

**Everything you
need to know
about joining the
club**

**Information about
our events**

**How to enter
competitions**

Hints and Tips

VENUE

**Walsworth Road Baptist
Church
SG4 9PS**

**September to May
Thursday at 7:45 PM**

Hitchin Camera Club – Member's Welcome Pack

www.HitchinCameraClub.org

Welcome to Hitchin Camera Club

The club has a strong history and has been running in its present form for nearly 50 years.

Our focus is to introduce new ideas and concepts, and to inspire you to let your photography grow. We pride ourselves on being a friendly and inclusive club, and welcome members of all levels of experience.

Like most camera clubs we don't "teach" photography, however we aim to provide an environment where your photography can develop. We'll expose you to a wide range of images from many talented photographers, and to many different styles of photography.

Through our competitions and assignment nights we'll give you the opportunity to exercise your skills and challenge you to tackle different projects throughout the club season.

I hope you'll choose to join us, and I look forward to welcoming you to the club.



Andy Hyde Chairman



Key Contacts

Andy Hyde (Chairman)

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Top Tip

Many blurry photos aren't out of focus, but are suffering from camera shake. This is where the camera moves during the exposure. Make sure that you and your camera keep really still to get sharper shots!

Do I need PhotoShop?

Not necessarily! Photo editing and manipulation is part of modern photography, but you don't have to be a Photo-shop whizz to shoot digital. There are many easy to use photo editing packages, and you'll be amazed the difference a few tweaks to your images can make, even something as simple as cropping your image or adjusting the brightness and contrast.



Top Tip

Don't be afraid to shoot into the light (known as Contre-Jour). Use a reflector or a flash gun to brighten the shadows, or under-expose to shoot silhouettes.

About Assignment Nights

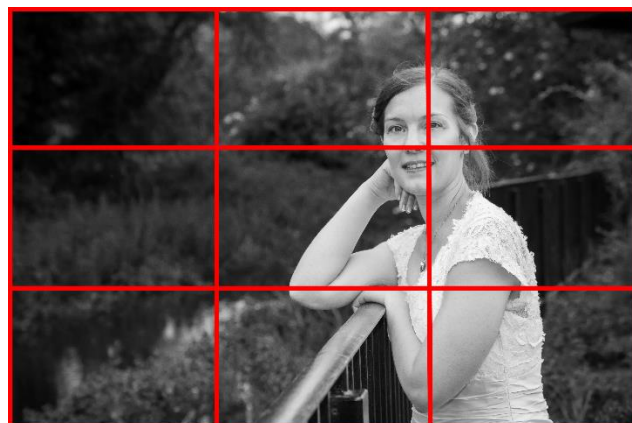
Another of our most popular evenings are the Assignment nights. Here you have 6 weeks to prepare up to 6 photos that answer 2 photographic challenges, which you send in as if it were a competition.

On the Assignment night each of the photos are shown and the authors get to talk about their picture, and you as the audience can ask about how and why the shots were taken.

Introducing the rule of thirds

One of the most useful techniques a photographer can learn is the rule of thirds. The rule of thirds is a compositional technique used by painters for hundreds of years. Here the photographer simply imagines their picture divided into thirds by horizontal and vertical lines creating a grid of 9 rectangles.

By placing the key elements of the picture on one of the "thirds", or ideally at the intersection of a horizontal and vertical third it creates a strong composition.



For a "safe" composition have your subject looking into or moving into the center of the frame, but for a shot with a sense of mystery or tension have your subject looking out of the shot.

The rule of thirds can also be used for landscapes. Consider putting the horizon on one of the thirds to either emphasize the sky or land.

Of course, who says you have to follow the rules?

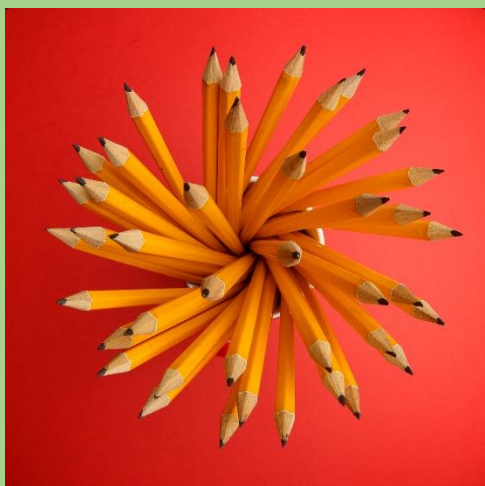
Need a better camera?

Like most things the quality of what you produce is more closely linked to your skills than your equipment (you never hear an author being complemented on the quality of their typewriter). Although a better camera can let you take different types of pictures, it won't make you a better photographer.

Whilst some club members do have expensive cameras and lenses, many use entry level kit, compact cameras, and even mobile phones.

Joining Hitchin Camera Club

If you're interested in joining Hitchin Camera Club you're welcome to attend as a guest to "try us out". As a visitor we'll ask you for a small attendance fee for each session, but you'll be able to take part in all club activities with the exception of competitions (you can attend but not submit entries for judging). See our web site for the latest subscriptions.



Getting help

As well as our normal meetings, a number of the experienced club members have offered to be mentors outside the club.

If you need help or guidance simply ask a mentor. They can help you in a number of ways; maybe explaining a feature on your camera, discussing composition, or even helping you decide which pictures to enter in a competition.

With the wide range of skills available in the club we will usually be able to match you up with a relevant expert!

Our events

In addition to competitions, and assignment nights we have a number of other events throughout the season.

- **Lectures**

Around half of our evenings are lectures where we invite guest speakers. The speakers are often professional photographers who talk about their photographs or specific photographic techniques.

- **Tutorials**

We have a great deal of skill and experience within the club and we encourage our members to share with the other members through Tutorial Nights where members give a 45 minute presentation on a chosen subject. On a smaller scale we have Member's Minis where 10 minute slots are available to talk about a photography related subject. We encourage members to ask questions.

- **Social evenings**

As a club we also have a Christmas social with a sit down meal at a local pub.

- **Practical nights**

From time to time we have practical evenings where we invite members to come along and have a go. Several times in the past we've set-up studio lighting and hired models to pose for us. Recently we've run splash photography and light painting workshops. Don't worry if this is new to you experienced members will be on hand to guide you.

Although there are no formal meetings during the summer, we organize a meet ups in different locations for guided photo-walks followed by a visit to pub to discuss photography and review each other's work.

What are Depth of field and Aperture?

Whenever you focus some of the background and foreground will be in focus too. The amount in front of and behind the subject that's in focus is called the depth of field. Changing the depth of field will affect how your pictures look and give you artistic control.

The depth of field is determined by the focal length of your lens and the aperture (a control inside the lens that opens and closes to adjust the amount of light coming in (like the iris in your eye)). Wide angle and telephoto lenses produce different depths of field. Making the aperture smaller will give a greater Depth of Field, however this extra depth of field comes at a cost, a smaller aperture will let in less light needing a longer exposure (shutter speed) or higher ISO ("film" sensitivity) to get the right exposure.

Jargon Buster

A few common terms you'll hear at the camera club...

Aperture – A control in a camera lens that affects the exposure and depth of field

Crop sensor – A camera where the image sensor is smaller than a 35mm film negative

Cropping – Only using a section of a photo to remove distracting elements or changing the shape of picture to improve the composition

Depth of Field/Depth of focus/DOF – How much is in focus in front of and behind the subject

DLSR , Digital SLR – A generic name for a camera with interchangeable lenses where the view finder looks directly through the lens

DPI, Digital Projected Images - Photos which are supplied as JPGs (digital files) to be projected onto a screen as opposed to prints. Most competitions have categories for Prints and Digital Projected Images.

Fast lenses – A lens with a large aperture to be able to shoot in low light or give a shallow depth of field. Fast lenses tend to be more expensive

Hard light – light that produces strong shadows. Hard light is good for showing texture and form

ISO – A measure of how sensitive to light your camera is. The ISO can be increased to allow shooting in lower light, but this can add noise to your image

JPG, JPEG - A common file format for images, which can be easily printed and viewed

Landscape Format – A picture that's wider than tall

Letter Box crop – Cropping a picture to be very much wider than tall as if you were looking through a letter box. Often used for landscape photography

Portrait Format – A picture that's taller than wide

RAW - A special file format for images which needs to be post processed using a program like LightRoom or PhotoShop before it can be used, but offers more flexibility in editing

Soft light – Light that doesn't create hard shadows. Soft light is great for portraits

Synch speed – The fastest shutter speed that can be used with flash

White Balance – Different types of light (sunlight, tungsten, fluorescent tubes) aren't the same colour. Your camera can adjust for this automatically or you can manually change this for effect

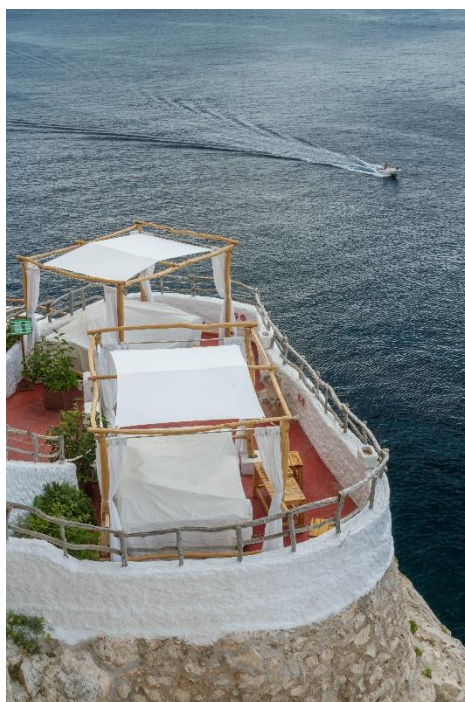
The social scene

Within the club (like most groups of friends) we get together at different times to socialise.

In December we organize a Christmas social which is a sit down meal at pub in Hitchin.

After the meetings on Thursday a regular group goes to the Radcliffe Arms pub in Hitchin to discuss the evening.

From time to time we'll also arrange club days out.



Top Tip

Always take 2, 3 or more versions of the same shot, especially when shooting people. That way if your subject blinks or pulls an odd face you can use one of the other shots which might be better.

Take shots at different shutter speeds and apertures too, so you can pick the best if the exposure isn't perfect.

An introduction to competitions

During the Camera Club year from September to May we hold a number of club competitions. These are held about once a month and each competition will either have a specific subject (for example “Water” or “People and Portraits”) or be “Open” where anything is allowed. Your challenge is to take pictures which illustrate the theme, and demonstrate both your artistic skill and your technical prowess. Competitions are popular with our members and always well attended.

How competitions work

- The list of competition subjects, dates and who will be judging are published before the start of the season (the list can found on our web site and on the programme cards).
- You need to shoot a number of images (normally 2 prints and 2 digital) that match that subject.
- Most competitions have separate classes for prints and digital projected images.
- On the night of the competition the judge will be shown the images one at a time and the title of the photo will be read out, the photographer's name is only announced during the competition when they score exceptionally well.
- The judge will look at the image and highlight areas where the photographer has done well and will suggest areas for improvement, before giving an overall mark for the picture.
You should always remember judging is subjective and depends on many factors, not least of which is the other entries, therefore your score will represent the judge's opinion on the night.
- Some competitions have trophies for the best print and best digital image.
- Points are collected during the year and trophies are awarded at the end of the season for the overall winner in print and digital categories.

How does the judge choose the best images?

All judges used by Hitchin Camera Club, will be approved by the East Anglian Federation and will have completed a period of study and passed an assessment day. They will be looking for 3 things;

- Technical competency both in shooting and post processing
- An understanding of their subject
- Artistic competency to put their image together

How to prepare for a competition

Firstly you need to choose your pictures. Most members shoot specific images for each competition, however providing it's not been used in a competition before, there's no reason why you can't enter an image you've shot previously.

Choosing your entries

- You need to make sure that your image fits the competition subject, for example having a duck in the background doesn't make it a nature photograph.
- You need make sure the image is technically good; is it focused correctly with the subject in sharp focus? Is the exposure right, not too dark or too light? Have you made good choices about the shutter speed and aperture, and the type of lens to use?
- Have you used light well, whether that's artificial, natural or a combination?
- If you've used a special effect, does it add to the picture?
- Is the image "artistic", i.e. is it more than a record shot?
- Does the image tell you something about the subject?

Finally for prints you need to think about how to present it? How big should the actual print be, what colour or finish should the mount be? Should there be a border?

What's allowed?

The subject of the competition will give you a good idea of what images you can enter. If you need more guidance check out our website, where you'll find more detailed descriptions of the different subjects, and pictures from previous years' competitions. If you need more help or guidance just ask a committee member or mentor.

Are my images good enough?

Absolutely! Everyone has to start somewhere, and we brief our judges that we have a range of abilities within the club, so images are never judged harshly and once you start entering competitions you'll have the opportunity to get feedback on your images to help you improve.

How do I enter?

Very easily! As a member you're allowed to enter all of the club's competitions, and there's even a New Member's trophy especially for those in their first 2 years within the club.

Prints

Your prints can be any size (although between 8" X 10" and 12" X 16" is ideal) but must be mounted on card no larger than A3 (talk to a committee member or a mentor about how to mount a print). Write your name and the title of the image on the back and then simply give your mounted prints to the competition secretary at least a week before the competition date.

Digital Images

These need to be JPG format and ideally re-sized to 1920 X 1200 (again ask a committee member or mentor for help). Rename the images with your name, a hyphen and then the title (e.g. JohnSmith – Red kite) then simply email to Competitions@HitchinCameraClub.org no later than the Sunday before the competition.

Our Web Site

A few years ago our club web site was completely re-written and given a new look'n'feel and huge amount of new content.

You'll find all sorts of information about the Hitchin Camera Club, Information about entering competitions, and a full list of what's on.

In addition you'll find many examples of our member's photography, and series of inspirational articles to give you some ideas for what to shoot!

What's a typical night like?

Although each evening will be slightly different we follow a standard pattern;

- Members arrive from 7:30 to help set-up the room (setting out chairs etc.)
- At 7:45 the meeting will open with a short introduction
- The first half starts
For a competition this would usually be the digital entries
- Around 8:40 we take the coffee break and do our announcements about what's coming-up and what's going on in the club. This is where we also recognise our member's achievements. We ask that everyone takes turn helping out in the kitchen at the coffee break
- We then have part 2 of the evening.
On a competition night this is when we'd do the prints
- We finish at around 9:45, and thank our speaker or judge.
Then everyone helps pack-up at the end of the evening



Don't forget to visit our website and Facebook page, especially the What's New section where you'll find all the latest info

Annual General Meeting

Towards the end of the season (late April or early May) we hold our Annual General Meeting. Here we get updates from the Chairman, Treasurer, Programme secretary, and Secretary/Competition Secretary. We then ask for nominations for the committee for the next year, and discuss any business or matters arising. Finally we round the evening off by announcing the results of the year's competitions and giving out prizes and trophies.