

Chiltern U3A

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Briefing Notes No 5.

HOLIDAY PHOTOGRAPHY

Some pointers to creating satisfactory HOLIDAY IMAGES.

Holiday “SNAPS” are what our grandparents used to record on their Kodak Box Brownie.

Aided by modern technology we have enormous advantages at our disposal today

AUTO EXPOSURE,

AUTO FOCUS,

ISO “film speed” ADJUSTMENT from shot to shot,

ZOOM to WIDE ANGLE LENS ADJUSTMENT,

up to 10 MEGAPIXEL DEFINITION,

and not forgetting

COMPLETELY AUTOMATIC CAMERA FUNCTION

Granddad would simply “POINT and CLICK”, we are able to still do the same BUT with much better results AND with instant PLAYBACK to make sure we have captured what we thought we would get immediately after taking the shot.

WONDERFUL !!

So, nothing to it ?

Well actually yes there is, in fact nothing has changed from granddad’s day when it comes to capturing a pleasing image.

ALL of the same rules apply to seeing, capturing and recording an image we wish to file away and return to for reminders of places visited, elderly relatives living in an earlier age, children doing what children do best, pets being cute, accidents without injury which made us laugh.

To coin An appropriate phrase **YOU GET THE PICTURE !**

To make the most of such opportunities preparation is essential and it starts with your *total familiarisation with the camera and equipment you will be using.*

This takes conscious effort and application, it is no earthly use picking up a camera once a year for a fortnight in Benidorm and expecting your images to be greeted with *“did David Bailey take these then ?”*

With the camera in front of you open the Owners Manual and progress from page ONE until every adjustment and setting that you will want to use are familiar. This will probably take several sessions to become properly and reliably familiar.

If the camera is a digital type you will now be able at NO COST, to take as many pictures as necessary in all sorts of lighting conditions, static and moving subjects,

making adjustments as you go until you have a good grasp of which adjustments do what and which settings give the optimum results under any set of conditions subjects and environments, likely to be met with.,

The cost of a two week holiday is never cheap and some prior preparation will ensure that you create pleasing and lasting memories of happy times to sustain and motivate booking next years holiday in the dark cold days of January when the new season's brochures drop on the doormat.

2.

USEFUL HINTS

FRAMING THE SHOT.

Go in close, fill the viewfinder with the image you want to capture.

Final 'cropping' can be done on the computer, BUT visibly exclude problems and move position to gain the best, most pleasing taking position.

Most poor 'holiday' pics place the focal subject at the centre with lots of space around i.e auntie May becomes a small dot.

It is difficult to position your camera lens too close to the subject.

NOTE, always ask, never intrude impolitely.

AVOID BRILLIANT OVERHEAD (midday) SUNSHINE.

No, I know it is not always possible, but the worst shadow effects this causes with people can be reduced by turning on 'fill in flash'.

Early morning and late evening are by far the best times of day for landscape lighting. Always be aware of background, especially the clouds in seascapes, nothing is worse than a massive but bland background sky. Add clouds digitally after the event if necessary.

PEOPLE

"watch the birdie ?" shoot the d—n birdie !

UNPOSED is the secret to the very best people holiday images. Doing something unconsciously i.e. licking an ice cream cone, in close up, with a blob on the nose, unbeatable !

NEVER, ever, expect children to stand/sit still.

Children's attention span equates to one second per year of age.

YOU stand/sit still and use your camera's facilities to frame and capture "**the moment**" just as it unexpectedly happens.

Digital imaging is cheap, take many shots, sort and reject, keep only those with that extra something.

ASK before taking shots of the "locals". Learn the question and BOTH answers in their language e.g. permesso ? niet ! Do not forget GRAZZI afterwards.

Avoid creating a bad manners and insensitive impression, you ARE an ambassador for your homeland when visiting foreign countries.

ANIMALS.

Pets, they do “cute” you capture the moment.

Create interest or activity, actually get someone else to do it while you are waiting and watching for the moment to take THAT picture.

Water and cats do not mix, kittens and dogs mix, old Tom cats and dogs mix but just a tad too physically for most people’s tastes.

Other Beasts, are best captured pictorially in their natural environment.

Lions, giraffes, elephants, zebra on the African Savannah do not translate into Whipsnade, the background concrete and bars/wire just seem to lose that uniquely African backdrop.

Close ups ? well now, best stick to Whipsnade here, you will not need to run so fast or so far to reach safety should you be chosen from the menu.

DUST, animals and sunshine, all at the same time, are made for each other, seek it out and use it.

Fishes, (nearly) always get in the water with them, both above, DOLPHINS, or below, SHARKS, the surface. Proper waterproof casings are not too costly these days however a clear plastic bag can repel an awful lot of loose water from an expensive camera, DO NOT SUBMERGE though.

LANDSCAPES.

Tripods are a pain, to carry, erect, move etc. USE a lengthy walking stick as a monopod, stick its business end on the ground, hold the camera and stick together, point and click.

This also works for binoculars and telescopes, in fact Scottish deer stalker Ghillies use nothing else as a ‘rest’ when ‘spying the hill’ but they lay on their backs while doing so with the stick braced by a leg (in kilt of course)

Long shadows, against the light (contre jour), halo effect by placing the low sun behind the subject i.e. subject between camera and sun, are all tricks for enhancing IMPACT.

Night shots = long exposures and camera shake without a tripod, so use one.

Lights reflected on rippled water reproduce as interesting strips of interrupted light, v pretty.

Shapes and patterns, be ever conscious and watchful, from small plants and grasses, to large fields/hedges/shadows/waves/architecture.

FOREGROUND interest = essential, in many subject choices (not all mind)

Part of an old boat, leaves (dingle) framing overhead and side of scene.

“Lead in”, a curving path, river/stream taking the eye to the focal centre.

SMOKE = atmosphere, shape, windblown.

ACTION.

Fast shutter, high ISO setting FREEZES action = probably boring.

Blurring from slow shutter adds atmosphere, impression of speed if appropriate.

Fairground chairplane, dodgems, carousel blurred by movement with static lights as background = atmosphere.

EXPERIMENT.

STUDY.

Pictures, holiday brochures, magazines, supplements.

Work by artists, photographers, museums, exhibitions etc and use them for **INSPIRATION.**

Observe and define **WHAT EXACTLY** sets a “**STUNNING**” image/picture apart from the merely record and unremarkable.

You will find all of the above suggestions are applied effectively throughout the whole range of the very best, most striking images.