Tring & District CAMERA CLUB

Competition Handbook 2019 - 2020

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1.	Summary for Entering T&DCC Competitions

Our 2019/20 programme includes:
- 3 Digital Competitions
- 3 Print Competitions
- 1 Exhibition (Print based)

Club members are assigned to one of 3 groups so they can compete with others of similar ability. At the end of the year, awards are given on a group basis.

The exhibition is print based. Exhibitions are not competitive and, primarily, are about showing your work and receiving open and constructive feedback.

Competition and Exhibition subjects can be found on the club website at this location. There is also a useful summary of the competition process here.

For any questions, ideas or other thoughts, please email the Competition Team using the following address: competitions@tringcameraclub.co.uk

2.	Competition groups

Members that participate in competitions will be placed in a group. There are, currently, three groups:

- Group 1 - Improvers
- Group 2 - Intermediate
- Group 3 – Advanced

For each competition, winners are announced across each of the three groups. The objective of the groups is to allow members to compete against others whom are of, roughly, similar photographic ability. The group system also acts as a way by which progress in development of photographic ability can be recognized.

Entry to a group: New members and members who have not recently entered competitions are not, currently, allocated to one of these groups, but instead to a "New Member" group. After the first couple of competitions, the Competition Team will discuss with the member which of the 3 groups would be most beneficial for them.

Development through the groups: Each year the Competition Team will assess the progress of members based on participation and achievement level in the competitions/exhibitions. The higher achievers in groups 1 and 2 *may* be moved to a higher group, should they show consistent participation & high achievement. Also, if it seems that a member is struggling within their group, they will be consulted to discuss whether a move to a lower group may be beneficial.

All members will be consulted about any change to their group.

Allocation to a group is only relevant to competitions.
It is not in itself a reflection of the general ability or experience of a member
outside of competitions

3.	Competition Rules And How To Enter Them

Rules… Who needs rules? Well there are a few.

General
- Competitions are open to paid-up members. If you haven't paid your subs then we can't accept your entry!
- You can submit up to 2 images for each competition
- Images submitted must be entirely your own work and not previously entered in another T&DCC competition.
- Whilst images and processing must be your own work, consulting and seeking advice from other members is allowed.
- Use of image processing software is acceptable (e.g. Photoshop Elements), but any processing must be the work of the submitting member.
- Third party printing is permitted
- In both competition types, entrants are expected to also score the other entries. As this is not always possible, please understand that your photos will be adjusted down by 7 points if you are unable to submit your scores for the other entrants.

Print Competitions

Print Competitions work like this:
- The Competition Team will email everyone an "Invitation" Google Form around 2-3 weeks before the Competition Evening.
- Anyone submitting images should do the following by 1 week before the Competition Evening:
  - Complete the invitation form with the image names and send it back
  - Place corresponding low-resolution jpg/jpeg image(s) in to the appropriate competition dropbox folder (please limit image sizes to 3 Mbytes or less)
  - This enables the Competition Team to prepare scoresheets for the Competition Evening.
  - Members who enter images should keep an eye on email in case of questions from the Competition Team
- On the Competition Evening, members should bring their printed images to place on the club's exhibition boards by 7:30pm:
  - It looks best if the images are mounted, but not essential (they should NOT be framed)
  - Please ensure the mount boards have Velcro dots/pads (hook type) to enable the board to "stick" to the exhibition boards
  - Many members bring A4 or similar sized prints. Larger or smaller prints are acceptable, but the mount should not exceed an area of 320 sq inches (e.g. 16" x 20" or 40cm x 50 cm)
  - Please write your name plus entry title on the back of photograph
  - Feel free to place your image anywhere on the exhibition boards; do not move other images
  - Review the scoresheets provided by the Competition Team, identify the numbers allocated to your image(s), find the appropriate ready-made Velcro numbers and stick them by your image(s)
- The Competition Team will give every member attending a scoresheet to allow them to review all the images and score them before the tea break
- After the tea break, a guest judge will select a number of images that piqued their interest and give the club some constructive feedback on the images
- A few days after the Competition Evening, the Competition Team will email the results, winners and runners-up in each group
- The images submitted in Dropbox will be uploaded to Flickr so that members can enjoy them, particularly if they could not attend on the evening.

If you cannot attend a Print Competition Evening, but would like to submit images(s), please ask another member to bring your images. Note that your scores will be reduced by 7 points as the other members will not have the benefit of your scoring.

Digital Competitions
Due to the complexity of setting up the Digital Competitions, your entries may be rejected if you do not follow the process. OK that sounded a little bit strict, but it really does help if you can help us by taking the following steps:

- The Competition Team will send everyone a "Invitation" Google Form around 3-4 weeks before the Competition Evening.
- Anyone submitting images should do the following by TWO WEEKS before the Competition Evening:
    - Complete the invitation form with the image names and send it back
    - Place full resolution jpg/jpeg image(s) in to the appropriate competition dropbox folder. A minimum resolution of 1920x1080 is recommended. There isn't a maximum limit for Flickr, but there is a point at which no extra benefit is realized from submitting bigger files, simply because most people will not have a monitor that will display higher resolutions.
- The Competition Team will review the submissions shortly after, upload the images to Flickr (with Exif data removed for anonymity) and send out an email which provides:
    - A link to a new "Scoring" Google Form to allow members to score the images.
    - A link to the Album of images in Flickr
    - The deadline by which the forms must be submitted
    - An attached scoresheet that can be printed and used, if required, for notes, scribbling or drawing on with crayons
- The Competition Team will review the submitted scoring forms and create a digital presentation to show the submitted images and the results
- On Competition Night, the typical format is:
    - All images are shown in a short slide show
    - A selection of images will be chosen by a guest judge so that constructive feedback can be given
    - The results will be announced

The Competition has a lot of work to do for Digital Competitions, so again it is stressed that the process above should be followed carefully.

Exhibitions
Exhibitions are much simpler, and the process is:
- There is no "Invitation" Google Form
- Alongside the competition folders in each member's dropbox folder, there will be an exhibition folder
- Before the Exhibition, members should stage low-res images in their exhibition folders (there is no need to inform the Competition Team in advance)
- On the evening of the Exhibition, members should bring their printed images for display
- After the Exhibition Evening, the Competition Team will upload the images to Flicker and inform every one of the Album locations on email

Members are free to bring friends and family to the Exhibition evening. They still need to pay for coffee or tea though ☺

Guidance for the image sizing in dropbox and printed image sizing on the Exhibition Evening is the same as for Print Competitions.

Use of Dropbox and Image Names
Image names are the name you give to the image, nothing more. These image names are what you provide when submitting an "Invitation" Google Form, for example "A beach at Sunset". Whatever you type is exactly what will appear on scoresheets. So, do not include underscores, your name, the competition name or anything else that would look odd when your image name appears on a scoresheet.

When you put your images in to dropbox, the files should be given the exact same names that you submit on the "Invitation" Google Form, and be either a jpg or jpeg. Do NOT provide raw image files. For example:
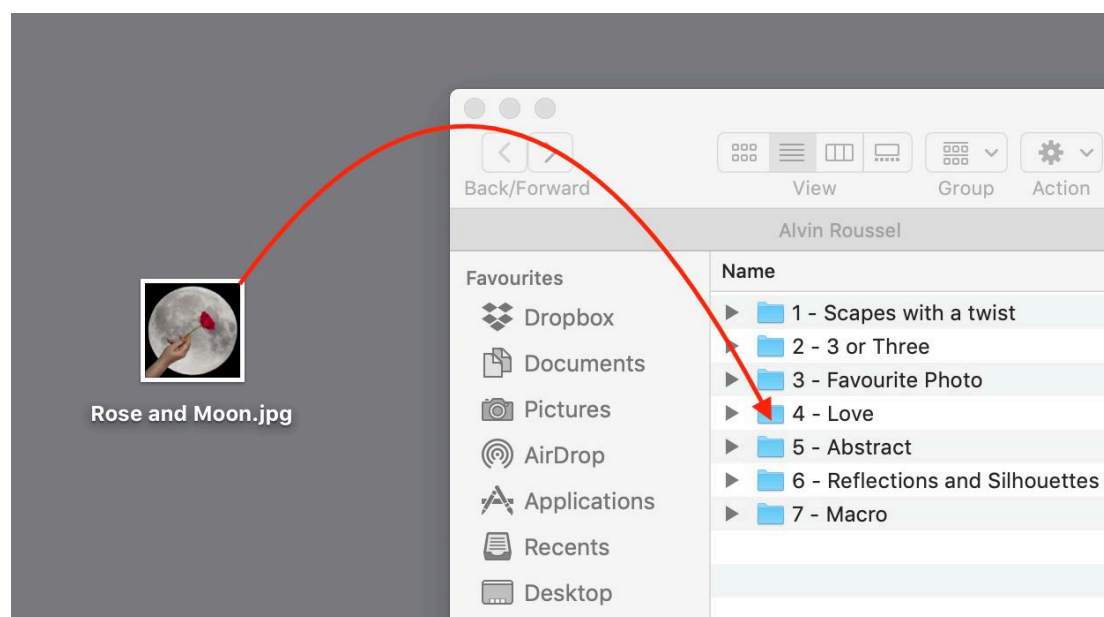
Finally
You can upload your competition entries into your DropBox any time before the competition deadlines. This may be helpful if you are travelling as a deadline approaches, however you should aim to submit the "Invitation" Google Form when it comes out. If, and only if you do not think you'll be able to do this, please email the Competition Team to advise them.

4.	Scoring Print Competitions

On the competition night, pick up a score sheet and clipboard, then peruse the entries and give them your scores. Guidance on how to score with respect to looking for creativity, technical ability and subject, is given later. When you have finished, ensure your name is on the score sheet and hand it to the Competitions Team.

The first part of the evening is given to scoring, the second to discussion and feedback of the photos.

5.	Scoring Digital Competitions

As already described, for Digital competitions, you will receive a link to the Flickr album where you can view the photos, a link to a Google voting form and a printable list of the entries.

The printable form is just for your convenience.   Since the actual Google voting form cannot be saved, only submitted, the printed form allows you to spend time noting your scores, then you can enter them on the Google form in one visit.

Flickr is where you can view the photos. This is a public group and whilst the option to download the files has been turned off, please understand that we cannot prevent images from being copied.

You do not need a Flickr account to view the photos, but if you don't, you will have to endure some adverts as you go through the pictures.

If you have a Flickr account, logging in will avoid the ads, but you will be encouraged to follow the Tring Camera Competitions page. Feel free to do this.

Please do not comment or like photos in the competition pool. This is simply to ensure that no bias is perceived. Feel free to offer your complements to the photographer on the competition night.

6.	Tips For Scoring

For print competitions we will invite a guest judge to be the assessor and to give their thoughts on some of our work on the evening. However, member's scores will be used for the competition, not the judge's scores or comments. The following will help you consider how you score the photos.

Each image is ranked on a range of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent), where scores are later collated and published the following week

In marking images you should consider the various elements that contribute to a good photograph, which we divide into 3 categories: -
1. Creativity (3 points)
2. Technical (3 points)
3. Subject & Impact (4 points)

1. **Creativity**
   - How well has the photographer composed his image?
   - Does the composition lead the eye to the main subject?
     - While generally you might expect leading lines to the main subject, nevertheless the lines might not be as expected; indeed they could be suggestive or even non-existent

- Is the image balanced, does it fill the frame, has it been cropped appropriately?
  - There are different forms of 'balance', it can include colour, shape or size or a combination of these
- Did the photographer use the best angle or other interesting perspective?
- Are there any distractions in the image?
- Is the 'Rule of Thirds' used appropriately?
  - Careful however for this is not a rule written in stone and indeed some of the best images don't follow the 'rules' at all!

2. **Technical:**
- Are the following the best they can be: - (i) Focus, (ii) Sharpness (iii) Depth of Field (iv) Colour Tone (v) Brightness (vi) Contrast (vii) Saturation & (viii) Usage of Light?
  - Use of all of these needs to be subject to the intent intended ~ i.e. the technical aspects of the final image has to respect the intent of the photographer.
- In looking at quality of focus is the image sharp where it is supposed to be and non-sharp where necessary for effect?
- Did the photographer use proper lighting of the subject matter?
- If printed what is the overall image quality including how the photograph is mounted?
- Has any digital manipulation been done in a technically competent manner?
  - It is the finesse of any process that can drive the make or break of acceptability

3. **Subject & Impact**
- How well does the image fall within the competition brief?
- Impact ~ your immediate response to the image. Does it grow on you? Ultimately does it have the wow factor?
- Does the photographer show creative thought / an original idea in the making of this image?

The outcome of your assessment will be to grade images from 1 to10 where: -

10 = indicates a flawless, exhibition standard image, i.e. one you would want to have in your home or office!

7 = indicates a fine all-round image that tells a story, has good impact and fully meets the theme

5 = indicates a good image but with at least one significant perceived flaw, i.e. a problem in one of the key category areas of Composition, Technical and Subject & Impact.

3 = image has little creativity and essentially a snapshot type of picture

1 = indicates a very poor image with too many major imperfections

These are nevertheless only guidelines and the important issue is for you to maintain a consistency in your marking. Finally no member may incidentally award points for his/her own work! (any attempt to do so may result in a long stint on the coffee rota!)
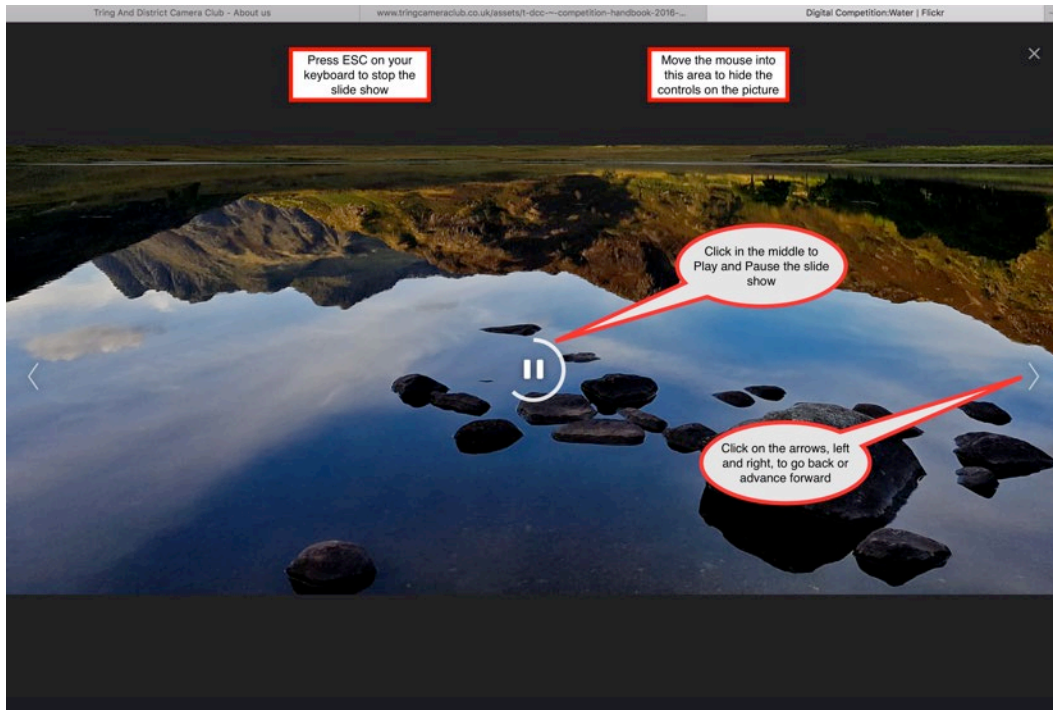
7.	**Tips on Viewing Photos in Flickr**

If you are not familiar with Flickr, the following will give you an insight into how it works.
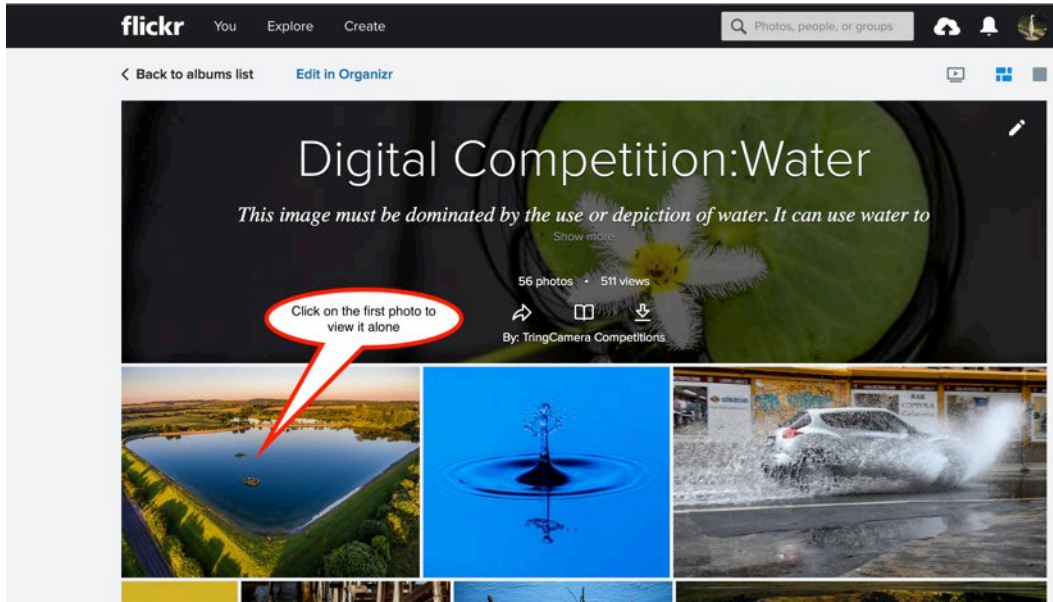
Automatic Slideshow
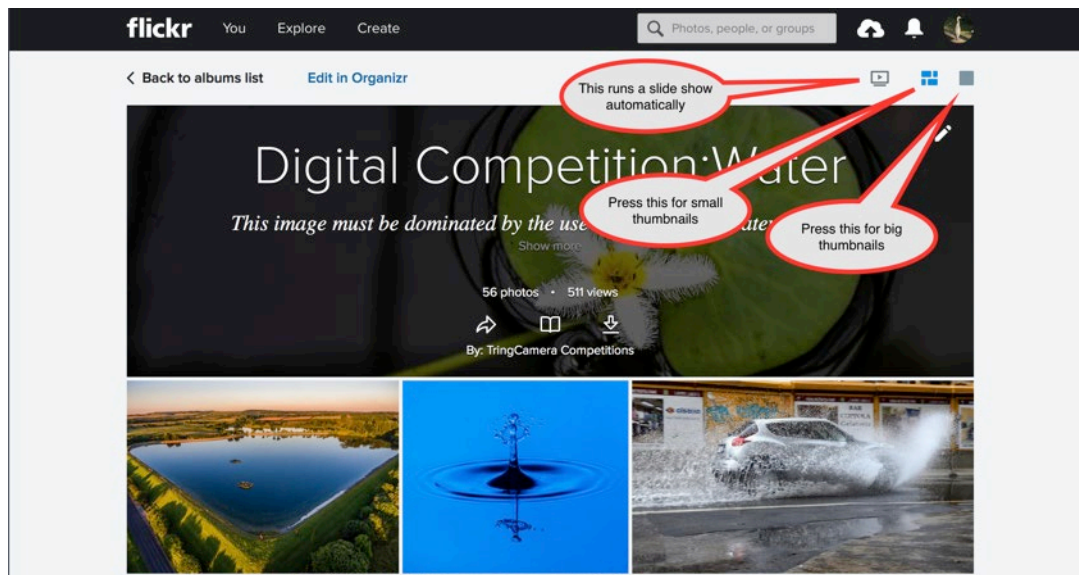
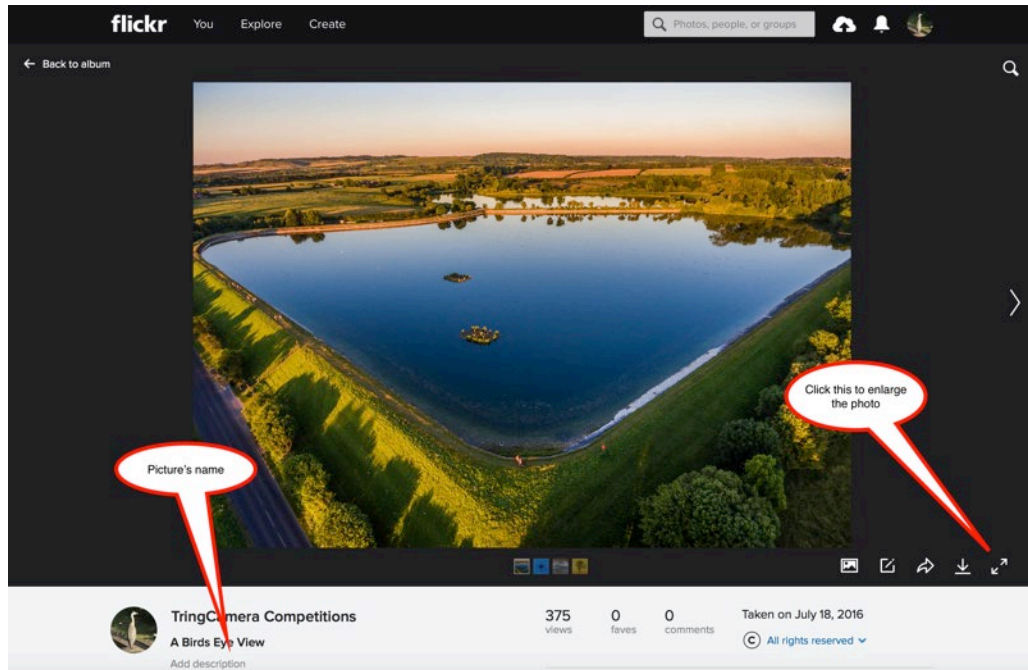Press the slide show button shown above.

Hover the mouse on the shot to bring up the controls.

Manual Slideshow.

The photo will display on its own, with it's name and details underneath.

Pressing the arrow icon in the bottom right will toggle you between full screen view and the view with the pictures name. You could therefore use that to look at each picture in all its glory, then check on the name of the shot for scoring purposes. Press the arrow on the side to advance to the next show

You might also consider running the automatic slideshow first as a way of previewing all the pictures before using the manual method to inspect them more closely.