

# LOUTH U3A

## Photography Group Newsletter

### April Meetings Reports

This is the first time there are two meeting to report on; so here goes.

*1st April – Outside meeting:* I was going to call this the gathering of the “soft-core” group to distinguish it from the “hard-core” group of photo enhancers. However, events make this inappropriate this month. We met at the car-park beside the church in Fotherby where we picked up our local guide and member of the group, Tony Brentnall. I had been watching the weather forecasts the whole week and was very relieved when it began to look like we would have a dry day. It was dry, but the cold and the wind made conditions very trying. We headed off through the village and then set off across an open field. In the open, the wind was too strong to be able to hold the cameras steady but we did manage it when in the shelter of bushes round the fishing lake we were aiming for. We returned to the village via the somewhat sheltered course of the old railway line before taking a very welcome break for coffee at Tony’s place. We then called in to see what the inside of the church had to offer. It was unfortunate that the weather was so cold and blustery because it was a good location that would be worth re-visiting in warmer weather and when there are some leaves on the trees. So the “soft-core” group are the more hardy this month at least.

Notifying members of this first meeting in the month is going to be problematical. Exceptions aside, the date is fixed; first Thursday in the month. The meet time is fixed; 10:00 till 12:00ish. But the venue will change each month and being so early in the month it’s not going to be fool-proof to rely on the Newsletter to make the only announcement. I will have to e-mail everybody as a separate task to make sure you all get the details. This e-mail should come out immediately following the second monthly meeting, i.e. on the Friday following the third Thursday of the month. I will also endeavour to get the date and location posted on the web site via Morag’s help.

*15th April – Inside meeting:* The real “hard-core” group of photo enhancers met as usual at the Louth Golf Club. The six members present got stuck into using some more new features we had not tried yet; things like resizing images accurately to a fixed targeted size and transferring them onto a new canvas that was purpose made for the task in hand (in this case long and thin). Then just to round off the session we very quickly tinkered with “radial blur”, another of the special effects that come with paint.NET. Time caught up with us as usual, so I hope some of those present have tried this at home by the time we meet again!

### Group chit-chat - scanning slides

This subject initially came up several month ago when Bob bemoaned the fact that a local establishment in Louth charged £1 a slide to scan it and make a .jpg file of it, and did not produce a very good result in some cases. Bob has subsequently found a better and cheaper way using an outlet in Grimsby where the cost is only 50p a frame and the results are better. Ask Bob for details if you wish to follow up on this source.

Notwithstanding the above, it is possible to scan slides, colour negatives for 35mm film and B & W 35mm negatives at home (anybody still remember them – I’ve got loads from the days of messing around in the dark room developing and printing black and white prints). There are two pieces of kit that we amateurs can use at home.

Some flatbed scanners come with a gizmo in the lid which accepts either individual slides or filmstrips. My reasonably old HP Scanject 4370 is just one such device. Scanning film and

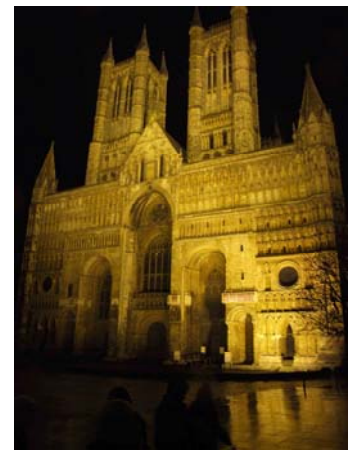
### Special points of interest:

- Next Outdoor Meeting—  
Thursday 6th May.  
(See page 4)
- Next Indoor Meeting—  
Thursday 20th May  
(See page 4)
- June meeting dates and venue  
now set (See page 4)

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Photo Gallery – "Lincoln by night" by Tony Brentnall



## Group chit-chat - scanning slides (continued from page 1)

transparencies can only be done if you have the gizmo in the lid because behind the gizmo is a light which comes on when you enter “scan film” mode. This makes light pass through the slide or negative and produce an image which is captured by the scanner and turned into a computer file. Normally documents are scanned using reflected light from the moving sensor and light bar which transverses the bed as the scanner runs. This method will not work with slides or negatives which must be scanned with transmitted light so it's no good just laying your negative on the bed of the scanner and telling the device to scan as though it were scanning a document. Apart from that, 35mm media are much smaller than documents so need to be scanned at a very much higher dots per inch (dpi) than for a document.

I also have a dedicated film and slide scanner which is what I usually use. This will take either single slides in their usual mounts or you can feed in a roll of film and let it work through say 36 frames automatically. It's not a quick process either way and on the film scanner there are so many settings to choose from, one of which wants to know what type of material is being scanned, i.e. Kodachrome 25, Kodachrome 64, Ektachrome etc. etc. When I bought the scanner I had visions of converting all my old slides, or at least the best ones, into digital masterpieces but that vision quickly went out of the window. I reckon I was spending at least 10 minutes a frame on the process from end to end and that only included doing a quick and dirty fix on those frames that did not scan well because they were not exposed absolutely perfectly when taken.

Slide scanning is therefore only worth doing on your very best or most valuable slides, in my opinion.

## Getting in really close—continued from the April Newsletter

Last month we stopped after considering the set-up issues in taking close-ups. Now we get on to the optical issues.

The most critical parameter is focussing. Whilst the rings do connect the auto-focussing system between the lens and the camera body it is not always successful at getting things sorted out automatically. I always switch to manual focussing; it's then one less thing to go wrong at the time of firing the shutter. The range of focussing at these distances probably spans three or four inches between nearest and furthest focus points. Practically it's far better to set the focus mid-range then move the subject until it is in focus.

Depth of field is miniscule at this range, maybe less than  $\frac{1}{4}$ " if you have all the tubes on and the lens wide open which you may be inclined to so that a fast shutter speed can be used to reduce camera shake.

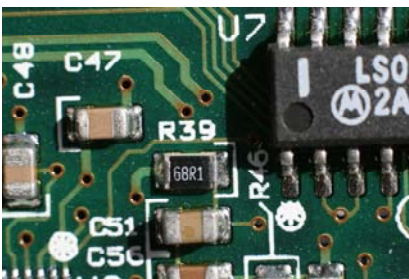


Fig 1

To illustrate this, look at Figures 1 and 2. Fig. 1 was used in the April Gallery and was actually the second shot I took of this set-up. This one was taken with settings of 1/250 secs at f8 to give a deep enough depth of field to be able to get the board and the top of the integrated circuit into focus together.

Initially I had used settings of 1/1600 secs at f2.8 to take Fig. 2 before I saw what was happening. Here the board is in reasonable focus but the top of the integrated circuit, just  $\frac{1}{4}$ " tall, is way out.



Fig 2

So controlling the aperture is essential to get the result you need, hence the camera was set on aperture-priority leaving the shutter speed to be set by the exposure meter system. Most lenses give their best performance at around f8 to f11. It is not surprising that as you open a lens up towards its maximum aperture the distortion will get (slightly) worse. It is more surprising that things do not improve right up to the fully stopped down setting which may be as high as f22. Once you go above f8 the size of the iris gets so small that diffraction effects start to become noticeable. Diffraction is a phenomena whereby light passing close to an edge of something gets very slightly bent towards the edge. If the iris is very small, a greater part of the light passing through it will be close to its perimeter. Therefore a greater percentage of the light will be distorted until the point when the distortion begins to be noticed. (I'm digressing now, so let's move on.)

With the lens so close to the subject lighting can become an issue. It is not easy to get light onto the subject with the lens so close in. Hence you will notice the shadow from the edge of the integrated circuit package which means I was using light coming from a very low angle. Normal flash will not work for two reasons. Firstly the subject will be in the shadow of the lens because the flash tube is positioned low down relative to the lens. Secondly, at these distances the flash will be way too bright without taking other steps to reduce it. You can get what's called a ring-flash unit where the flash tube is circular and fits around the front periphery of the lens. This avoids the shadow effect and was developed for use mainly in portraiture where normal flash guns can produce distracting shadows. But then for close-ups they would be too bright again.

An idea is beginning to form in my mind as I type this for a way to get the right amount of light where it's needed. As this idea might be a winner I'm not going to tell you what it is until I've made one to see if it will work and my patent has been filed. Watch this space—you just might be able to say you saw it first in the Louth U3A Digital Photography News.

## Letters to the Editor

No letters this month. I hope you all read April's letter before noon on 1st April — otherwise I expect you would have thought that I had lost it again.

## The May Meetings

There will be **2** meetings in May and throughout the summer months;

First Thursday— 6th May 10:00 to 12:00 We will be visiting Margaret Finch's place at Gayton-le-Marsh again to see Spice and her four week old pups. Also Margaret's horse will put in an appearance. We may end up walking round the village so come prepared; stout footwear and your stick, if needed.

Third Thursday— 20th May 10:00 to 12:00 "Hard core photo enhancing" - usual rules, phone me beforehand (previous hard-core folk excepted) to reserve a seat as we have limited space and a limited number of computers. Usual venue. This meeting will be run by Bob Syrett who has volunteered to help out by preparing the session material due to my absence on the day.

## The June Meetings

There will be **2** meetings in June and throughout the summer months;

First Thursday— 3rd June 10:00 to 12:00 Photo opportunities at Legbourne Woods. Meet at the entrance to the woods; grid reference is 369837, arrived at by taking the road opposite the P.O. in Legbourne and heading out of the village, After  $\frac{3}{8}$  mile, follow the road round a sharp left bend and proceed to end of road after another  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to entrance to the woods. We'll wander around the woods and probably end up back at the splash for a coffee. Come prepared; stout footwear and your stick, if needed.

Third Thursday— 17th June 10:00 to 12:00 "Hard core photo enhancing" - usual rules, phone me beforehand (previous hard-core folk excepted) to reserve a seat as we have limited space and a limited number of computers. Usual venue.

## Newsletter news

The publication date of the June edition of the Newsletter will be put back to 5th June. As this is after the date of the outdoor meeting, which falls on Thursday 3rd June, it will not be in time to give separate notification of the venue, so the June outdoor meeting is publicised in this edition, see above.

The Newsletter is generated as a colour document and will be distributed in colour by e-mail to those members who have, or admit to having, an e-mail address.

To keep down the cost of printing, I want to try to limit the size of each edition to 4 pages and distribution in hard copy format by snail-mail will be in black and white only.

Notes and questions to the editor will be accepted and will be used as space permits.

**Happy snapping,**

**Brian Cooper**

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