



Oscailt

IPF Newsletter - October 2015

A cháirde,

Tá súil agam go mbeidh oíche iontach draíochta agaibh go léir anocht. Is é oíche shamhna an oíche is fearr liom den bhliain ar fad. Is trua, áfach, go mbeadsa ag obair anocht agus cách ag baint spraoi as an oíche. Ar a laghad, beidh mé ag obair mar ghriangrafadóir ag imeacht mór shamhna i gCorcaigh. B'fhéidir gur é sin an slí is fearr domsa chun spraoi a baint as?

What are the rest of you up to for Halloween? I can imagine there will be a whole world of photographic opportunities tonight. Maybe you're going and setting something up? Or maybe you'll just have your gear with you while partying or trick-or-treating? Cameras these days can work wonders at high ISO, so don't be afraid to push the ISO and bounce a bit of on-camera flash in to a conveniently placed white surface or two to keep shooting long into the night.



Here's a quick tip - On camera flash bounced into the corner between two white walls and a ceiling coming back down onto your subjects can look very like light from a studio umbrella or soft-box. Positioning your subjects at the correct angle to receive the light is key to this working successfully. If the surfaces are not pure white, it's not ideal, but you can correct in later, especially if you shoot RAW. Have a go, and let us know how you get on.

Anything that can help you keep the creativity flowing is an opportunity that should be grabbed with both hands! Who knows, you might end up with your best competition entry yet from the night. And if you take a look below, for us in the IPF, competition season is well and truly underway. The recent IPF National AV championships held recently in Clondalkin are testimony to that! This was a fantastic event by all accounts owing to the hard work of Lilian Webb and her team in the AV group. AV work is a beautiful marriage of creative media, and I urge you all to go and take a look at the technique of creating AV (Audio-visual) work. We have a bit of info on Lilian below if you want to know more about the person driving AV in Ireland and we're working on sharing AV content on the website in the near future.

The Wexford county inter-club competition is also featured this month. This event has been going for a number of years and is continuing to grow in success. It is great to see healthy rivalry fostered between clubs in any area. Well done to the Wexford county clubs for such a shining example of inter-club camaraderie.

Once again this month we see Irish photographers representing Ireland abroad, this time in international Exhibition in Italy. Take a look at the images below. I'm sure you will enjoy them. Is it any wonder we do so well internationally when we see the strength and growth of our Clubs as a hot-bed of photographic development? That, combined with the strength of our Distinctions service means that we are constantly progressing at a stellar rate. New names pop up all the time in Distinctions, competitions and Salons. This is a sign of a very healthy photographic club scene! This month we have included the names of those who were recently successful at our distinctions sitting in Galway, as well as the AV distinctions session in Clondalkin. Congratulations to the successful candidates! I am sure we will see your names pop up again in various photographic contexts.

Anyway - I am sure you've got apples to bob for, and barm track rings to find! I will leave you to it while I go prepare my gear. Go and have fun, and don't forget your camera! But be warned - In ancient tradition, tonight is the Celtic New year, the death of the old year at Summer/harvest's end and the birth of the new cycle which begins with Winter - a season of death in nature making way for new growth later. Tradition has it that the veil is thinner between the other-world and our world tonight, and though we may not see this with our eyes, who knows what our cameras will see?

Slán go fóill

Michael O'Sullivan FIPF FRPS, IPF President

Calendar of Events

Event	Date	Venue
SACC Creative Photography Competition	Oct 31st 2015	Seven Oaks Hotel, Carlow
IPF National Shield	Sat, Nov 7th 2015	Malahide Community School, Dublin
IPF Distinctions Sitting	Sat, Nov 28th 2015	LIT, Thurles, Co.Tipperary
IPF Photographer of the Year Final	Sat, Feb 20th 2016	Kilkenny
IPF Nature Photographer of the Year Final	Sun, Feb 21st 2016	Kilkenny
IPF Distinctions Sitting	Sat, March 5th 2016	Dunamase Arts Centre, Portlaoise
IPF National Club Championships	Weekend, May 14-15th 2016	County Buildings, Mullingar
IPF Distinctions Sitting	Sat, May 14th 2016	Mullingar Arts Centre

IPF Distinctions Service Update

New Distinction Holders

Please find below a full listing of all successful distinction applicants from the sitting of the IPF Distinctions Adjudication Sitting held at the Institute for Lifecourse and Society, Galway on September 26th 2015. Three Associateships and 18 Licentiateships were approved. Congratulations to all concerned.

Panels which have been received are available to view below, as are the presentation images and some images from the day. Thank you to Bill Power, Riana Parsons & Andreas Riemenschneider for photos.

Thanks to Galway Camera Club, the judges and all involved in making the day run so smoothly, especially our distinction secretary Bob Morrison.

Many of the panels from the day are now available to view [over on our website](#).

David Whitaker	Offshoot Photographic Society	AIPF
Niall Brownen	Cork Camera Group	AIPF
Niall Whelan	Celbridge Camera Club	AIPF
<hr/>		
Adrian G. Wheeler	Belfast Photo Imaging Club	LIPF
Anthony Byrne	Carrigaline Photographic Society	LIPF
Caitriona Whyte	Dublin Camera Club	LIPF
Dave Schmidt	Belfast Photo Imaging Club	LIPF
David Triglia	Blarney Photography Club	LIPF
Graham Kelly	Mid-Louth Camera Club	LIPF
Jim Kelly	Celbridge Camera Club	LIPF
Julie Watson	Greystones Camera Club	LIPF
Ken Collins	Cork Camera Group	LIPF
Ken Dobson	Offshoot Photographic Society	LIPF
Lorraine Strang	Mountrath & District Camera Club	LIPF
Michael Reen	Ennis Camera Club	LIPF
Paul Marry	Dundalk Photographic Society	LIPF
Philip O'Rourke	Dublin Camera Club	LIPF
Richard Boyle	Offshoot Photographic Society	LIPF
Roger Eager	Belfast Photo Imaging Club	LIPF
Ronald Kilkenny	Dublin Camera Club	LIPF
William Strain	Belfast Photo Imaging Club	LIPF

New Audio Visual Distinction Holders

At the IPF AV Distinction session held recently in Áras Chrónáin Ionad Cultúrtha, there were two successful LIPF applicants. Well done Liam and Yvonne. We're working on a new feature on the website to share these sequences with you. Stay tuned for updates!

Liam Haynes	Offshoot Photographic Society	LIPF
Yvonne Acheson	Shannon Camera Club	LIPF

Deferring Your Application

A reminder that the closing date has been reached for the November session and as announced last month, once this date has been reached, deferrals will no longer be accepted. The application fee will be forfeit and a new application must be made, putting you back to the end of the queue.

While we try to make the application process as easy as possible, we must be fair to those who are waiting on vacancies.

This applies to all sessions going forward. The closing date, availability and current status of any session can be found on our 'Distinctions Dates & Availability Page'.



November Session Date Change

Please note that for reasons outside of our control, the date of the November adjudications has been moved back a week from November 21st to November 28th.

IPF AV Group Update

Report of the Irish Photographic Federation's 33rd National Audio Visual Championships & 5th International Audio Visual Competition by Lilian Webb, AIPF.

The above was held again in Áras Chrónáin Ionad Cultúrtha, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 on Saturday, 17th & Sunday, 18th October, 2015, hosted by the East Leinster Audio Visual Group & organised by the IPF AV Group Committee. The judges were Malcolm Imhoff, FRPS, FACI(M) & Maggie Imhoff from England. Both have a wealth of experience and success in audio visuals and in judging and workshops. The sequence authors' in the national championships were given comments by the judges after each sequence - a great learning curve - for everyone. There were 22 entries over Novice, Intermediate, Club & Advanced and these represented sequences from clubs in Celbridge, Shannon, Enniscorthy, Offshoot, Malahide, Palmerstown and the IPF AV Group.

In the International Section, the 22 sequences came from both Northern and Southern Ireland, England, Wales, Australia & South Africa. We had attendees from England and Germany and many parts of Ireland - north and south.

The weekend commenced with a meal in the Maldron Hotel on the Friday night and ended with a meal there on the Sunday night. Áras Chrónáin was the venue for the Gala dinner on Saturday when there were 38 attending. It was difficult to get the judges home as they enjoyed the music session afterwards! Many thanks to Áras Chrónáin for making us so welcome each year.

It was an action packed two days with 42 sequences - the time limit on sequences is 12 minutes. However, we did have 45 minutes to see some of the prize winning sequences of Malcolm & Maggie Imhoff before lunch on the Sunday.

The weekend finished at 5.30 p.m., on the Sunday following the showing of the prize winning sequences and presentation of certificates, medals and trophies.

On behalf of the Committee - Alan Lyons, AIPF, Edwin Bailey, LIPF, Christopher Doyle, LIPF, Margaret Finlay, LIPF, Rita Nolan, LIPF, Marie McGuinness & Brendan O'Sullivan, AIPF, we wish to thank everyone for making the weekend such a success with numbers up on last year and especially our friends who do not have entries but have been faithful supporters of the championships for many years.

Full results available over on the website and photos will be added to the [website article](#) shortly also.

IPF National Shield 2015 - Schedule



Date: Saturday 7th of November, 2015

Venue: Malahide Community School, see [Google Maps](#) for directions.

We are delighted to welcome back [Canson Infinity](#) papers, along with their distributor [Fine Art Papers](#) as sponsors the forthcoming IPF National Shield competition. Please be sure to stop by their stand and say hello on the day!

10:00 - 11:00 am - Time for breakfast
Tea, coffee and light snacks will be available at the venue

11:00 - 12:30 pm -Talk: Ciara Drennan AIPF
12:30 - 2:00 pm - Time for lunch - <http://www.enjoymalahide.com/eating> for more information
2:00 - 3:30 pm - Talk: Daragh Muldowney

3:30 - 5:00 pm - Judges Comments followed by awards ceremony
Our judges for the National Shield 2015 will be:
Caroline Colegate ARPS
Christine Widdal DPAGB AFIAP
Tim Pile MPAGB EFIAP/s AIPF ARPS.

Removal of panels

Panels maybe removed only after 5pm, no earlier unless agreed with the event coordinator in advance. Individual panel results will only be made available after all images have been removed and boards cleaned up.

Accommodation

For those needing accommodation, we can recommend the Grand Hotel, Malahide, County Dublin, Ireland. T: +353 1 845 0000
E: booking@thegrand.ie W: thegrand.ie



The Bloodmoon!

Thanks to Maureen Maher from Clonmel Camera Club who took the time to send us in her report from the night of The Bloodmoon along with some great images!

I was out "practising" for later in the night, taking a few shots of the Harvest moon. Just finishing up when I noticed a plane flying by. I hit the shutter button, not knowing if I'd caught it or not. I was very happy to see the plane in my shot later!

Even fairly sharp!!

I set the alarm for about 3.15 to have a quick look, and stayed out 'til 5.30!!



My 2nd image is well into the 2nd half of the eclipse where the bright side of the moon looks quite bulbous.

My last image is towards the end of the eclipse where the bottom right is dark but brightening by the second.

Such a fantastic night to experience!!

-Maureen Maher, Clonmel Camera Club.



IPF Photographer of the Year Competition 2015/2016

The Canon logo in red, with a white outline.

Dear fellow photographer,

The time of year has come again when we launch into the new Photographer of the Year season for 2015/2016. As you can see, we've had a change of name. No longer are we the Print and Projected Competition, but the IPF Photographer of the Year Competition, generously sponsored by Canon Ireland.

Please pay particular attention to the following major announcements

regarding this competition -

- The competition is open to all individual photographers who are paid up members of currently affiliated photographic clubs or societies
- This year we are introducing a uniform and mandatory labelling system for all print entries. These labels will be colour coded as per your region and available from IPF website
- Please take a very careful look at the definitions of Advanced and Non Advanced entry criteria. Entry into the incorrect category can cause administrative mayhem!
- A digital copy of ALL entries including prints must be uploaded at the time of online entry

The successful administration of this major national process involving several thousand images overall depends on you, the photographer following these very straightforward guidelines. There is a huge voluntary teamwork involved here both from regional rounds through to the final, so let's get it right from the beginning.

The updated rules for this season along with [details of this competition are available now over on the IPF website](#). Regional qualifying rounds start in November and run through to the end of January. Keep an eye out for details of your region! I'm looking forward very much to seeing your work and meeting many of you in person over the coming months.

John Cuddihy AIPF,
National Coordinator,
IPF Photographer of the Year Competition

Region	Date	Closes	Venue
DSLR	Nov 28th	Nov 25th	Palmerstown Community Centre, Dublin
Mid-West	tbc	tbc	tbc
North East	tbc	tbc	tbc
SACC	Nov 22nd	Nov 20th	Horse & Jockey Hotel, Tipperary

**IPF Nature Photographer of the Year
Competition 2015/2016**
**IPF Photographer of the Year Competition
2015/2016**

Dear fellow photographer,

The time of year has come again when we launch into the new Nature Photographer of the Year season for 2015/2016. As you can see, we've had a change of name. No longer are we the National Nature Competition, but the IPF Nature Photographer of the Year Competition, generously sponsored this year by Mahers Photographic of Drogheda.



As with the Photographer of the Year Competition above, please pay particular attention to the following major announcements regarding this competition -

- The competition is open to all individual photographers who are paid up members of currently affiliated photographic clubs or societies
- This year we are introducing a uniform and mandatory labelling system for all print entries. These labels will be colour coded as per your region and available from IPF website
- Please take a very careful look at the definitions of Advanced and Non Advanced entry criteria. Entry into the incorrect category can cause administrative mayhem!
- A digital copy of ALL entries including prints must be uploaded at the time of online entry
- As you can see we have introduced a new rule under Section 5.7 relating to distress caused to any creature in the course of taking an image. Please observe carefully and respect all creatures you photograph.

The successful administration of this major national process involving several thousand images overall depends on you, the photographer following these very straightforward guidelines. There is a huge voluntary teamwork involved here both from regional rounds through to the final, so let's get it right from the beginning.

The updated rules for this season along with [details of this competition are available now over on the IPF website](#). Regional qualifying rounds start in November and run through to the end of January. Keep an eye out for details of your region! I'm looking forward very much to seeing your work and meeting many of you in person over the coming months.

John Cuddihy AIPF,
National Coordinator,
IPF Nature Photographer of the Year Competition

Region	Date	Closes	Venue
DSLR	Jan 30th	Jan 27th	Palmerstown Community Centre, Dublin
Mid-West	Jan tbc	tbc	tbc
North East	tbc	tbc	tbc
SACC	Jan 24th	Jan 22nd	Celtic Ross Hotel, Clonakilty, Cork

Focusing on: Malahide Camera Club



Q: When was Malahide Camera Club founded?

A: 28th September 1995. We just celebrated our 20th birthday!

Q: How many members do you have?

A: 112

Q: When and where do you meet?

A: Thursday nights in the Grand Hotel, Malahide

Q: Any notable events? (exhibitions / workshops etc)

A: We are delighted to host the National Shield again this year - our third time to do so. A new record number of clubs will participate exceeding the new record set last year. Saturday 7th November in Malahide Community School. See IPF website for full details.

Our next exhibition will be in Malahide, for 2 weeks in February, with over 140 images on display. All welcome.

Q: Any member have any significant achievements or milestones recently?

A: We now have our first EFIAP distinction holder - Catherine Bushe and five others also achieved their AFIAP distinctions in the last year: Deirdre Murphy, Marek Biegalski, Mike Pilkington, Joe Doyle and Tony Murray. Some members have also won several salon awards this year including one Best Author for Joe Doyle. We also have 2 new LIPFs, giving us about 30 distinction holders in the club including 2 AIPF's (Joe Doyle and Michelle La Grue)

Q: What was the best outing/talk/club night in last 12 months?

A: We had a trip down memory lane as part of our 20th Birthday celebration on 28th September last. We invited as many former members as we could contact and we were delighted that a great many of them attended and renewed old friendships. Lots of us were suitably embarrassed via the slide show and narrative that covered the years and everyone had a good laugh. After cutting the cake, we adjourned to a local until closing time, a great night!

Q: If another camera club came to Malahide where are the best kept secrets that they should photograph?

A: Malahide Castle and Demesne, Broadmeadow Estuary, for birds / wildlife, High Rock, Howth village and Howth Head, Bull Island nature reserve.

Q: What is the aspect of your group that makes it so special?

A: The level of volunteering in the club is phenomenal. We are never short of members willing to serve on the club committee or the sub-committees we form to run events and special projects, such as the exhibition and our education programme. The ethos of the club really is "The more you put into it, the more you get out of it," There is a genuine willingness among members to share their knowledge. It's the quickest way new members learn. We try to make things as enjoyable as possible and have a great social aspect to the club as a result. Our annual weekend away is always very well attended and great craic – we even manage to take a few photographs!

Q: If you could ask the IPF to improve on one thing, what would that be?

A: To develop deeper links with mainland European Federations, possibly twinning with one or more of them and getting more mainland European judges for our national competitions. This would broaden Ireland's photographic horizons even further and would enhance our international standing year on year.

County Wexford Interclub Competition 2015

Wexford Camera Club were the hosts of the 2015 County Wexford Interclub Competition which was held on Sunday October 18th in Wexford town. It was judged by Seamus Costelloe and Niamh Whitty with Enniscorthy, Gorey, Menapia, Wexford and Wexford Local Authorities camera clubs competition.

Wexford Camera Club swept the boards with best colour panel and best monochrome panel to take the overall prize and with their member Vladimir Morozov taking the best colour print, best colour print and best overall image award, it was a great day for the club. Enniscorthy Camera Club took the runner up spot.



From left:

Angela Meyler, Ann McCafferty, John Dunbar, Natalja Murphy, Vladimir Morozov (& his winning image!), Niamh Whitty, Ann Hyland, Marie Phelan and Seamus Costello

Club Affiliation Fees for 2016

Our Treasurer Brian sends us the following note regarding annual fees for 2016. Please ensure your club treasurer is aware.

"For a Club to be affiliated to the IPF they must pay an annual Affiliation Fee. Please note that regardless of when a club pays this fee, the affiliation year runs from 1st January to 31st December. Only affiliated clubs may enter IPF competitions and members of affiliated clubs can apply for distinctions at the preferential rate, which offers a 50% reduction on the distinction application fee.

The Affiliation Fee is €75 for clubs with less than 50 members and €100 for clubs with 50 members or more.

All clubs must complete the online form when making the payment as this allows the IPF to maintain up-to-date information on club contacts. Your yearly application is not complete until this form is completed. You may pay via Paypal directly from this form, or indicate on the form that you will be paying by cheque. For ease of administration, Paypal is preferred.

Each club is also obliged to provide a copy of its current public liability insurance cover. There is a space on the online form to upload a digital copy of this (or you may send a paper copy).

New clubs must also lodge a copy of their constitution with us.

The facility for clubs to pay the 2016 Affiliation Fees will be made available on the IPF website from 1st December 2015 and payment should be made before the 31st January 2016.

For SACC clubs, please note that the same process and same form applies, but payment & information is collected via the SACC website instead.

- Brian Deering, IPF Treasurer"

The Wonderful World of IPF Distinctions - Part Three

by Mark Sedgwick, IPF Distinctions Chairman

"The Thorny Topic of Variety among Others"

So Round One of the season is down with the completion of the assessment session in Galway and this will be followed shortly by our regular visit to Thurles in November - please note that the date is now the 28th of November and not the 21st as originally announced.

Congratulations to all those who were successful in Galway and to those who were not fortunate enough to get past the post remember that the distinctions are a learning process designed to help you improve and move forward in photography and that learning from not succeeding is every bit as important a tool!

Last month we covered the topic of paneling and presentation - indeed some assessors passed comments directly on both these areas during the Galway assessment. This month we will look at the single issue of variety.

Variety

Applicants should be mindful that one of the prime requirements of a distinction is to present a body of work that represents your photography and demonstrates to the assessors your competence across the panel that you submit. For Licentiateships variety within the panel means something different to that for either Associateship or Fellowship applications.

Variety in Licentiateship

Here we are looking for a demonstration of your competence in the broadest sense of the word. We are looking to see that you can deal with a range of subject matter, lighting conditions and photographic techniques. The need for specialist panels is probably at a minimum here and we would prefer to see a range of your photography with a mix of types - say some landscape, portrait, architecture, nature to mention but a few. Even within this the images should not be too similar, for example two portraits with the same model in the same lighting and pose would be an issue.

Variety in Associateship

Within this distinction level the assessors are looking for the beginning of a photographic style emerging and this seems to drive applicants towards more specialised, single genre panels. (Please note that single genre panels at A level are not a specific requirement!). Within the single genre a common failing is the issue of sufficient variety. This can be with:

- Subject matter

Too much of the same model, location, bird, insect, building etc where repetition will lead assessors to the conclusion that the applicant does not have a sufficient body of work. A good guide would be not to use the same subject in more than two images

- Lighting

The same set-up being used for every image on a panel again an point to a lack of understanding / creativity

- Photographic Technique

Simply adding the same texture mask to a collection of images to tie them together, or using the same viewpoint or pose for each image etc

The bottom line is to avoid the impression that your panel was produced from a single shoot

Variety in Fellowship

Again many of the requirements at this level are in line with those for the Associateship. There are some significant differences however. It should be noted that variety is supposedly less of an issue at this level as applicants are probably very specialized and are exploring specific niches within photography. Additionally a distinctive and recognizable photographic style must be apparent. While this limits opportunities for variety it does not, however, diminish the requirement for variety and indeed the assessment panel have declined a number of panels in recent times for a lack of variety.

The task for a Fellowship applicant is to demonstrate their unquestionable skills within the genres they are exploring. In nature, instead of just recording a range of species variety can be introduced by exploring the behaviour of same. In landscape variety can be introduced through a range of techniques such as slow shutter speed, appropriate use of filters, multiple locations and time of day, season etc. In portrait be very careful to limit the number of times a specific model and pose is used. Lighting should also show a range of competence as should location or set up. Your fellowship should not just depend on that one backdrop, location, texture etc.

And Finally...

Let us know if there is a specific aspect of the world of distinctions that you would like to see discussed.

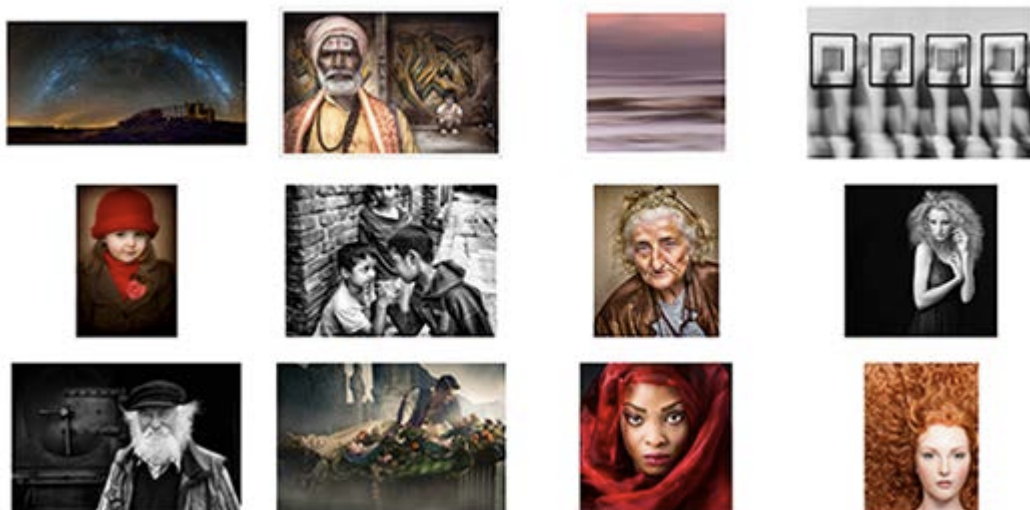
The best of luck to everyone bringing their work to Thurles - we look forward to seeing you there!

Irish Photography in Italian Exhibition

Ireland were asked to Participate as a country in the 43rd Trofeo Aternum which took place in Pescara, Abruzzo in Italy on 3rd and 4th of October.

We were asked to submit 12 images from our members. These were shown along with images from Oman and Iran. The images selected and list of photographers are both shown below.

The images were printed and displayed by the organisers of the event, which also saw a series of workshops and seminars run.



Top Row:

Anthony Demion, The Arch
Brendam Tumilty, Holy Father
Charlie O'Neill, Eventide
Frank Van Pelt, Motion

Middle Row:

Freddie McArdle, The Red Hat
Gabriel O'Shaughnessy, Arm Wrestlers
Hugh Wilkinson, Hard Times
Joe Doyle, Fredau in Thought

Bottom Row:

John Hickey, A Life of Steam
Micheal O'Sullivan, Sleeping Beauty
Ross McKelvey, Red Shawl
Vladimir Morozov, Megan

Cork Salon open for entries

3rd Cork International Salon of Photography



Under the patronage of FIAP, PSA, RPS, IPF and SACC

5* Full Colour Printed Catalogue

Six sections

143 awards

www.corkcameragroup.net

Closes December 1st 2015

The 3rd Cork International Salon of Photography is now entries submissions for 2015.

Cork's salon operates under the patronage of FIAP, PSA, RPS, IPF and SACC and it's full colour catalogue has received a five star rating from FIAP (the highest rating possible). Along with Tallaght, Cork is one of only two Irish salons to have patronage from FIAP.

Closing date is December 1st 2015.

There are six sections:

- Colour Open
- Monochrome Open
- Landscape

- Photo Travel
- Nature
- Creative

More information can be found at <http://www.corkcameragroup.net>

Follow them on their [Facebook page](#) to keep up to date.

In the Spotlight: Des Connors

Q: When did you take up photography?

A: 1987

Q: Which club are you a member of?

A: Breffni photography club

Q: Do you have any IPF / FIAP / RPS etc distinctions?

A: F.I.P.F

Q: First camera?

A: Canon AE1 and Fuji S2 Pro



Q: What was the background to your most successful image?

A: Kingfisher 'Fish Presenting Display'. IPF Nature Finals Overall winner 2012

Q: Your own favourite image?

A: Still looking for it.

Q: What genre of photography best describes your photography or are you a general interest photographer?

A: Nature, action, landscape and people mostly, but I do trick around sometimes for the craic anything goes if you know what I mean.

Q: Canon or Nikon or Fuji or Sony?

A: Canon.

Q: Would you recommend joining a camera club? Why? What have you got out of it?

A: For sure it's a great way to start, we all learn from each other & it will save you a lot of money in the long run plus I have made some lifetime friends through IPF.





Q: What is your photographic dream?

A: To be dropped off on desert islands in the most remote and secret tropical corners of the world.

Top Tips for Perfect Bird Photography - Kevin Murphy FIPF ARPS

Kevin Murphy, one of Ireland's finest nature photographers, continues with his series of articles regarding bird photography. Kevin holds a Fellowship with ourselves and an Associateship with the Royal Photographic Society and such is his expertise, we could have asked him to write about almost any nature subject out there, but we decided to ask him to focus this set of articles on his approach to bird photography and to share some of his tops tips for getting those perfect images!

Last month I looked at specialised photographic techniques required to capture images of fast moving birds. In this month's article I will talk about some more useful techniques, exposure, composition, minimizing background distractions and post processing images.

Full Control

Understanding the controls on your camera is a key element of bird photography. By this I mean the ability to change the shutter speed, aperture and ISO settings rapidly. You need to be able to adjust these settings as the situation unfolds, without taking your eye of the subject. If you can master the technical side of the photographic process this will allow you to concentrate on the aesthetic quality of your images. When this skill becomes second nature you can concentrate your mind on framing the image, composition, background, exposure and ultimately produce a better picture.

Exposure

As in all photography, getting the exposure right is essential for a good picture. The main area of the picture that you want the exposure to be correct in, is the bird itself and often the eye of the

bird. There are 3 types of light metering built into most SLRs:

- Evaluative (averages the correct exposure across the whole image);
- Centre Weighted (averages the correct exposure required across an area in the centre of the image);
- Spot Metering (takes one point and exposes correctly for this).

Bear in mind that this is your camera's estimate of the correct exposure which may or may not be correct for the image you are trying to achieve. In bird photography you are concentrating on one central subject and the aim is to get the exposure right for this point of the image, so Spot Metering is the best option. Some areas of the image may be over or underexposed but in many cases these will be peripheral and will be cropped out during the post processing. You need to check the image on your camera display, when you get a chance, to ensure that no part of the bird is over or underexposed. This is best done by using the histogram alongside the image. If you need a minor adjustment use the exposure compensation dial and correct it - you need to know where this dial is so you can change it without taking your eye off the subject. It's always good practice to manually bracket the exposure, if you get a chance, by taking shots at a variety of exposure settings.

Available light in Ireland tends to vary from minute to minute. This complicates things a lot as you try to balance the freezing of the subject and still achieve the correct exposure.

Common Sandpiper

*Canon 20D, Sigma 170-500mm,
Manual*

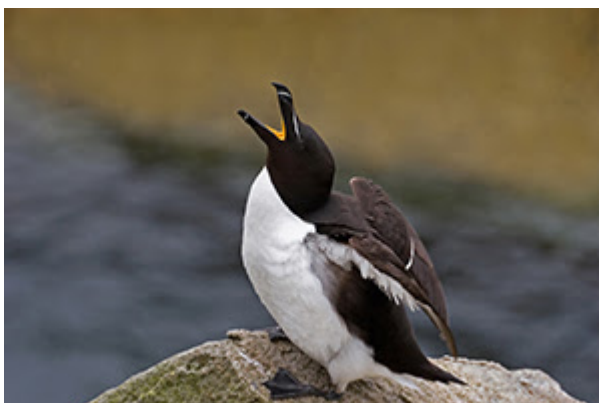
*f/6.3, 1/160th sec, ISO 100
Focal Length 500mm*



Composition

Your position relative to the subject is very important for achieving a good image. Most shots of birds from above or below end up in the bin, although there can be exceptions. If you are setting up to photograph a particular bird it's usually best to find a position where you can shoot at the same height as the subject. You need to be able to get a clear shot of the whole bird with no foreground distractions. Simplify the scene and isolate either one bird or a pair.

Compose the image to allow space for the bird to look, or fly, into. Bear *the rule of thirds* in mind and apply if appropriate. However, if you are looking for a specific species shot this may have less relevance than in other types of photography. Portrait shots that show the intricate beauty and features that make that species unique are, in my opinion, often as good as any action shot.



Razorbill

*Canon 20D, Sigma 170-500mm,
Manual*

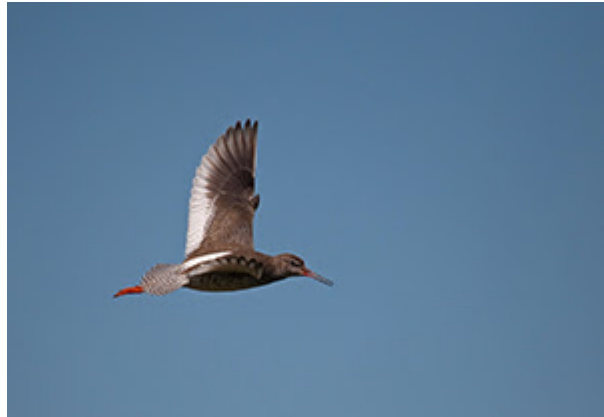
*f/6.3, 1/320th sec, ISO 100
Focal Length 232mm*

In summary, general terms and conditions apply for bird photography: the image has to be sharp, exposed correctly and composed sympathetically. Like all photography rules are made to be broken but understanding the rules first is a prerequisite for consistently good results.

Redshank

*Canon 5D, Sigma 170-500mm,
Aperture Priority*

*f/6.3, 1/6400th sec, ISO 400
Focal Length 500mm*



Minimizing Background Distractions

Minimizing background distractions is another major challenge for good bird photography. Plan your shoot in advance with this in mind. Run a few test shots and set up in a location where you know there are no, or minimal levels, of background interference. If there are issues move to a new position. The picture of the coal tit below was taken with this in mind. I placed a freshly cut twig close to a bird feeder, knowing that the birds would use this as a staging post before moving onto the feeder. My camera was on a tripod approximately 3 metres from the twig and 10 metres from the grass lawn behind it. Initial test shots of the twig showed that the grass would be out of focus and blemish free in the background.



Coal Tit

*Canon 5D, Canon EF 100-400mm,
Aperture Priority*

*f/7.1, 1/640th sec, ISO 500
Focal Length 400mm*

Of course, in the field it's not this simple but the same principles apply.

Post Processing

Post processing in all nature photography is very different to most other forms of photography. Very limited post processing is permitted. The FIAP (Federation Internationale De L'Art Photographique, 1st January 2015) rules for nature photography are as follows:

"No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning. Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, and film scratches, are allowed. Stitched elements are not permitted."

In principle this means that your image needs to be near perfect as shot.

My workflow in Photoshop is almost always the same for each image.

1. Crop

Cropping is one of the most important aspects of the post processing workflow. Usually, as the subjects are so small, the final image will be half or one third of the original. Cropping controls your composition and framing of the final image.

2. Minor adjustments to shadows and highlights

Minimal lightening of shadows, darkening of highlights and minor adjustments to mid-tone contrast.

3. Clone Stamp

Removal of minor blemishes.

4. Levels

Minor adjustments using the Levels tool.

5. Resize Image

Because of the cropping of the initial image, the size needs to be readjusted to 360 pixels / inch, approximately 12 inch x 8 inch using bicubic smoother (best for enlargements).

6. Unsharp Mask

Minor adjustments to sharpness using unsharp mask, if required, generally no more than 40%, radius 1.0, threshold 0.

7. Reduce Noise

Noise reduction is another important step in the post processing of bird

images. As a high ISO is used more often than not, some noise reduction is usually required - set at strength 5, preserve detail 28%.

In next month's newsletter I will be giving tips on photographing birds in your garden, a great place to practice and improve your bird photography skills.

Chaffinch & Goldfinches

*Canon 5D, Sigma 170-500mm,
Manual*

*f/5.6, 1/4000th sec, ISO 100
Focal Length 307mm, flash*



Who's Who on IPF Council

Lilian Webb is in her 4th year as Vice-President of the IPF, and has served on Council for many years with a sabbatical spell somewhere in the middle! For well over a decade, Lilian has been the IPF Audio-Visual Co-ordinator.



"I have been a member of Celbridge Camera Club since 1998, however prior to that I was a member of the Photographic Society of Ireland for over 20 years. Over these decades, I have made many friends through our shared hobby of photography.

When I was twelve, I received my first camera, which I still have - a Brownie Box camera and my first SLR was my 21st birthday present from my parents. I have progressed through a few cameras since then, having had to change to an auto-focus as my eye sight required me to do. Unlike many others on Council, I couldn't tell you the model of my cameras - Nikon at present - Fujicas before hand. I'm probably the least technical person on Council - having no interest in Photoshop either!

My first passion is Audio Visual, and love the camaraderie I have with fellow AV workers here - north and south, in the UK, Australia, South Africa and other places. My introduction to Audio Visual was from the late Joe McCusker, one of the founders of the IPF, whose sequence "Weeds in the Garden" I still recall, and only have to hear the music on the radio, when I'm transported back to that sequence. My hero when I started was the late

Michael Kelly, from Cong - a master of third images in his Audio Visuals. I very reluctantly moved from analogue to digital!

As Audio-Visual Co-ordinator on Council, I'm also a member of the IPF AV Group Committee, which has 8 members from Shannon to Enniscorthy to the greater Dublin area. I have been Hon. Secretary/Hon. Treasurer for all of these years. I continue to keep the flag flying for Audio-Visual on Council."

SACC Presents Ray Spence Lecture Tour

The Southern Association of Camera Clubs are delighted to announce that Ray Spence FRPS will be coming to Ireland at the end of October for a series of lectures in Carlow, Wexford and Cork. He'll also be judging the SACC Creative Photography Competition. For further details, please [visit SACC website](#).



Ray's talks will provide insight on how he uses personal projects to develop his photography covering many genres such as documentary, music and portraiture.

- Saturday October 31st - Seven Oaks Hotel, Carlow - 11am (€5)
- Monday November 2nd - Westgate Centre, Wexford hosted by Wexford Camera Club- 8pm (€5 for non-members)
- Tuesday November 3rd - 36 Patricks Quay, Cork hosted by Cork Camera Group - 7.30pm (€5 for non-members)

Ray is a fine art photographer, author and lecturer. He is the co author of five books on photographic technique and has exhibited extensively at many venues including The Herbert Art Gallery in Coventry, La Manège in St Petersburg, The Royal Albert Hall in London and the Royal Photographic Society in Bath.

He has lectured for many academic and private institutions including Warwickshire College and Birmingham City University. His work spans all photographic genre from digital to wet plate collodion.

In 2013 he was awarded the honour of the Fenton Medal from the Royal Photographic Society.

Cork Camera Group Exhibition



Cork Camera Group's annual exhibition is currently open at Cork School of Music. It was officially opened by IPF President Michael O'Sullivan who chose the winning image as "Girl & Piano" by Morgan O'Neill (pictured above in the exhibition posted).

IPF President Michael O'Sullivan presenting Morgan O'Neill with trophy for best image at recent Cork Camera Group exhibition.



The club also introduced a new award called The Power of Photography which celebrates an image that resonates with the viewer and an image through which the photographer has told a story, made a connection, instilled emotion in the viewer. The first recipient of this award was Noel O'Connell with 'On The Ropes'.



Wexford Camera Club Exhibition

Last few days to catch Wexford Camera Club's latest exhibition!

Welcome



Wexford Camera Club

Opera Festival

Photographic

Exhibition

Starts Wed, 21st Oct.

Finishes Sun, 1st Nov.

Upstairs

Westgate Heritage Centre

An Óige Photographic Group

- Interested in Photography?
- Photographic Group, based Dublin 7
- Founded 1938, member of the Irish Photographic Federation
- Premises, fully equipped for photography, at 61 Mountjoy Street
- All ages and levels of photographic knowledge/experience welcome
- Full schedule of photographic activities throughout the year.
- A monthly league competition is held over the winter months
- Annual Exhibition, 2015 was our 77th and was held in National Botanic Gardens.
- Dedicated outings for photography
- Courses in various photographic topics are held from time to time.
- Only prerequisite is Membership, open to all ages, of AnÓige (€20 per year) and yearly subscription for the Photographic Group is €25.
- Further information: AnÓige Photographic Group, Marie McDonnell @ 01 8826702



Fine Art Abstract Photography Exhibition by Patricia Roche in Wexford



Exhibition at the Eddie Chandler Gallery



Each Saturday from October 24th to November 21st, the Eddie Chandler Gallery will be open with its current exhibition which features the LIPF panel from Rebecca Keogh and the AIPF panel from Roseanne Baume.

Competition time!

This month's winner is Julie Corcoran from Breffni Photography Club in Co.Cavan. Julie joined Breffni Photography Club earlier this year and tells us that she has found it a very positive experience.

The photograph, featuring her son on his bike, was created through light painting technique with sparklers.



So.. to be in with a chance to win €50 next month, keep on reading :-)

The rules are simple:

- Image MUST be sized to 851 pixels wide by 315 pixels high
- Winning image will be posted to our Facebook page as cover image for as long as we see fit (about a month!)
- Closing date is midnight Friday November 20th
- Send your entry to newsletter@irishphoto.ie
- No theme this month!

We look forward to receiving your entries!!

PS: Keep in mind where the image will be used and how the Facebook profile image covers a portion of the cover image... choose wisely!

Well done to the shortlisted images this month which are shown below.



From top: Fidelma Read, John Finn and Paula Falvey

Got News?

Have news for us?! Great! Send it in!
Suggestions for future editions also most welcome!

Get in touch via Contact Page on our [website](#) and select "Newsletter" to send your message!

In Our Next Issue..

Next month, we'll be welcoming the latest holders of the IPF National Shield competition, continuing with Kevin's tips on photographing birds and learning even more about distinctions!

Share the News

Please feel free to share this newsletter with anyone you feel may be interested and encourage your club members to subscribe via [this link](#).

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[Unsubscribe](#)

Irish Photographic Federation

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