



Competition Handbook 2016 - 2017

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1.

Summary for Entering T&DCC Competitions

Our 2016/17 programme includes eight competitions, which are open to members to show off their best images

The competitions fall into two categories:-

- 4 Print competitions, and 4 Digital Competitions
- Awards are given in each of three categories ('Less Experienced', 'Intermediate' and 'More Experienced')

Entries must be notified to the Competition Secretary at least one week before the date of the competition. This should be by email to the competitions@tringcameraclub.co.uk. It should state;

- Your name, Image name and competition
- You may enter one or two images per competition. The images should not have been entered in any previous T&DCC competition

All files must use the following naming convention;

- Your Name – Image Title – Competition, (Jo King - Rubbish Shot - B&W.jpg)

For the Print competitions;

- The images should be mounted and have an overall size of **less than 16" x 20"** including the mount.
- Please put a digital copy of the image in your T&DCC Dropbox folder for our archive.

For the Digital competitions;

- The images must be correctly sized for the projector;
 - For landscape images the long edge, (horizontal), should be no more than 1920 pixels
 - For portrait images the long edge, (vertical), should be no more than 1080 pixels
- The image must be put in to you T&DCC Dropbox folder at least one week prior to the competition date.

T&DCC are nice people, thus we have only a few rules, but they are important

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
- Use of image processing software is acceptable (e.g. Photoshop Elements), but any processing must be the work of the member. Third party printing is permitted

Print Competitions

- The maximum display dimensions are 20" x 16" (inclusive of any mounting board)
- Your name plus title of the entry must be written on the reverse of the picture

Digital Image Competitions

- Only JPEG files are accepted
- The image must have a maximum width of 1920 pixels and/or maximum image height of 1080 pixels (see Section 6)

Competition Entries

- These should be sent to the Competitions Secretary by 08.00 hrs on the Friday preceding the relevant competition
- The deadline is to provide time to collate the entries, put together the presentations and score sheets by Thursday. Entries that are late or not valid are liable to be forfeited
- Nevertheless if you have a specific problem with meeting the deadline then please contact the Competition Secretary (Mike Roberts) ~ he might be able to be flexible on a one-off basis, but we cannot make any promises
- Competitions are judged internally, (An external judge may be invited for a specific competition and advanced notice of this will be given).
- The committee reserves the right to refuse to publish any image it regards it as being distasteful and/or likely to cause offence. Whilst we regard this as very unlikely to happen, we trust you will understand why we need to have such a rule
- All entries may be published on the T&DCC website.

3.

Submitting Competition Entries

The method for submitting your competition entries is by way of using the shared Dropbox folder that is set up for all members

Whether it be a Print or Digital Competition entry details are communicated by way of uploading a JPEG of your image to the shared Dropbox folder. If it is a digital competition then this image is the one that will be used for projecting on competition night. In both types of competition your image will later be used for publishing on the club's website

Additionally please also email:- competitions@tringcameraclub.co.uk to advise the number of images that have been uploaded to Dropbox ~ you will receive a reply to confirm. This simply acts as a double-check that we don't miss them!

Note:-

- The JPEG title needs to include:- (i) your name (ii) the competition title & (iii) title of your image. (Jo King - Rubbish Shot - B&W.jpg). This enables us to track your image when processing the competition entries
- Only a "reduced" JPEG image is required (i.e. max width 1920 pixels x max height 1080 pixels) ~ see Section 6 for further details
- Just for the avoidance of doubt in a Print competition ~ we don't print off your images ~ it is up to you to bring them along!

If you are new to the club then for details of installing and using Dropbox please see Section 7.

If for any reason you need an alternative means to submit your competition entries please speak with the Competition Secretary ~ he can be flexible

Print Competitions

- Prints look better mounted, but this is not essential. Our display space is finite; therefore to make sure everyone can get their pictures on the display panels please make sure that your image is no greater than 16"x20", inclusive of any mounting board (or 40cm by 50cm in new money). Also, please ensure you write your name plus entry title on the back of photograph.
- Entries must have Velcro 'hook' dots on the back to allow them to be secured to the club's display boards.
- On the competition evening please bring your prints to be displayed by 7.30pm. Entries may be given to the Competition Secretary earlier if necessary

Digital Image Competitions

- Photos need to be resized for digital competitions so they fit on screen ~ please make sure the image has a maximum image width of 1920 pixels and/or maximum image height of 1080 pixels
- Whilst huge pixel/high resolution photos might sound great, the simple answer is that our projector cannot cope with anything more than 1920 x 1080. If the image submitted is larger it may lose resolution in an uncontrolled way
- The presentation software will attempt to present all images as close to the same size as possible
- If you do not put a border on the image, a simple white border will be added as part of the presentation

On occasion we will invite an external judge to be the assessor. Nevertheless the majority of competitions are ranked by the members present on the competition evening. We believe this helps members in understanding the art of photography

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. Composition (3 points)
2. Technical (3 points)
3. Subject & Impact (4 points)

1. Composition

- How well has the photographer composed his image?
- Does the composition lead the eye to the main subject?
 - while generally you might expect lead in 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 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 to 10 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!)

Photos need to be resized when submitted to Dropbox* for our Competitions. Please make sure your photo has a maximum image width of 1920 pixels and/or maximum image height of 1080 pixels.

This sizing convention applies to all Competition images submitted, including digital competition entries that are used for projecting plus when submitting details of print competition images.

(* or alternative means if used)

1. Background

- Image files come out of your camera with a certain size in terms of pixel dimensions. For example a Canon EOS 5 can produce images of 5616 x 3744 pixels and even my Lumix TZ compact 4320 x 3240 pixels. Normally you can see these dimensions in your editor program after you open your image
- Large image sizes can be great for when it comes to printing, nevertheless when projecting an image the simple issue is that our projector cannot cope with anything more than 1920 x 1080. (i.e. HD size) . Most computer screens have similar limitations
- For digital competitions if the image submitted is larger than 1920 x 1080 then it will be resized by our projector in an uncontrolled way, which can result in a loss of sharpening or loss of other image characteristics. The result can be overly soft images, which we really don't want! It is far better that you control the resizing
- All images submitted for Competitions should thus have a maximum image width of 1920 pixels and/or maximum image height of 1080 pixels. For portrait images this can result in a lower pixel width, thus yes, portrait images are at a disadvantage
- Most software that comes with your camera provides options for you to resize an image ~ often it is just a case of spotting where this exists within one of the menus

2. How to Resize

- Firstly an important recommendation is that you should save a full size copy of your image, as you may need this in the future. This should include any processed versions
 - § One way would be to make your copy images into a new directory, that way, should there be an accident and you overwrite the copy your working on, all is not lost (you could also make them read only in the properties associated with the image)
- **Adobe Photoshop Elements**
 - § After carrying out any necessary processing to the image choose 'Image -> Image Size...'
 - § Next insert:- 1920 in width for landscape images or 1080 in height for portrait images
 - § The other important items are in yellow highlighter. Make sure that 'Resample Image' is ticked, also 'Constrain Proportions' is ticked
 - § Photoshop will fill in the 2nd dimension automatically in order to keep the aspect ratio of your image unchanged.
 - § It is by the way important that the link to the right of the width and height is not broken, i.e. this should remain locked, that way by entering 1920 in the top (width) box will ensure that the lower figure follows proportionally. The same goes for the lower height box.
 - § Don't worry about items in the rest of the window, they are irrelevant for our purposes
 - § Click then on 'OK' to finish
 - § A final sharpening of the image should then occur
 - § This is the important bit and should be done last of all before saving. Sharpening works to reduce any softening created the reduced resolution via exaggerating the brightness difference along edges within an image
 - § The resulting image should be saved as a JPEG. Use the High or Very High in the Settings box that will appear. The file name should follow the convention detailed in Section 4

- **Other software**

- Using other software will have slight variances to the above, but basically there should be an option to select 'Image.... Image Size' and then resize the image in a similar way as described above. It is important to make sure any Resample Image box is ticked.
- Then click 'File - Save As' and select JPEG in the format box and give it a file name. Then click 'Save'.
- Select High in any JPEG Options panel that appears.

As a rule of thumb the resulting resized image will be somewhere between 0.5mb and around 1mb. If it is a lot over this then it is worth checking whether the resizing has correctly worked

3. What if you don't have any editing software?

- There are quite a few free software downloads available on the web. A good guide to them can be found here:- <http://www.techradar.com/news/software/applications/best-free-photo-editing-software-10-top-image-editors-you-should-try-1135489>.
- IrfanView (www.irfanview.com) is reported to have useful functionality to resize images
- Google's Picasa is worth a look as well (<http://picasa.google.com>)

4. Further guidance on resizing can be found at:-

§	Adobe Photoshop Elements	http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=qu5adJfxuhw
§	Adobe Lightroom	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUrTn7gV3Is
§	IrfanView	http://www.bleepingcomputer.com/forums/t/65221/resizing-an-image-using-irfanview
§	Mac Preview	http://alums.vassar.edu/images/volunteer/image-reductions-in-preview.pdf
§	Picasa	https://support.google.com/picasa/answer/13821?hl=en-GB

Dropbox is quite simply one of the most useful bits of free software that the club uses. In a nutshell Dropbox is an online storage warehouse, which once set up acts exactly like an ordinary folder on your computer ~ you can put into it whatever files you like and organise content into subfolders for ease of use

What sets Dropbox apart is that the contents of the folder are stored online, in addition to being on your computer. Further the content of any folder can be shared, which is achieved simply by inviting other people to join it. Once the invite is accepted by the other party, the files in the shared folder will appear in both parties Dropbox ~ this is the process that we use for managing TCC's Competition entries. Other than the shared parties no one else can see what is in the Dropbox folders

If you are new to Dropbox then a useful introduction can be found at:- <https://www.dropbox.com/tour>

Those who already have a Dropbox account will know how wonderfully useful it can be for lots of things

Dropbox and Tring Camera Club

Using Dropbox is the preferred method for administration of TCC's Competitions. The process is very straightforward, avoids any problems with email attachments plus helps us when publishing your images in the Club's on-line gallery ~ all entries incidentally go on here, not just the winners!

- If you already have Dropbox installed then email competitions@tringcameraclub.co.uk to let us know. Please include details of the email address you used to sign up, if it is not the one you are emailing from (see also Note below)
- If you don't have a Dropbox account then it is pretty painless to sign up to one and install their software via:- <http://db.tt/rpnblBlh>. Once installed you should see a Dropbox folder on your desktop. Please then email us to let us know you've installed
- The next step in both situations above is that we will then send you an invite to a shared Folder. You will get an email from Dropbox asking you to join a 'Shared Folder'. The folder will be called something like 'Shared ~ Your Name (T&DCC)'. Please accept the invite
- Once you've accepted the invite you should see the shared folder inside your Dropbox folder (the Dropbox folder should be on your desktop if you didn't change its location when you installed the software)
- That's the hard part done!

In either method we will undertake a dummy run with you to ensure everything works OK. You then don't have to worry about Dropbox any more, for it should all run smoothly!

From now on whenever you want to upload Competition pictures to the club all you need to do is either copy them into the shared folder on your computer or upload them via your account on the Dropbox website to your shared folder

When you have uploaded your entries, please email the Competitions Secretary competitions@tringcameraclub.co.uk that you have done so ~ this is a double-check that we don't miss them! No information is required other than saying how many pictures you have uploaded.

In using Dropbox, it is recommended that a sub-folder is created within your shared folder for each new set of competition entries, as this will help in managing entries. Sub folders should be given the competition name e.g. '2013-14 ~ Water'.

One other thing, when you are copying your pictures is to leave your PC switched on for a few minutes so that it has a chance to upload the files (if the pictures are sized for our competitions then it will only take a few seconds for them to upload. Larger files will, obviously, take longer to upload)

All Dropbox files in the shared folder will, by the way, be deleted prior to the start of a new camera club year

Note:- If you are already a Dropbox account holder then you can only run one installation of Dropbox on a single computer and it can only be linked to a single account. If thus you did not want to use your existing Dropbox account for the shared folder then we can establish for you a shared folder on TCC's Dropbox and invite you to join this. You will though need to use the Dropbox's web based facility to upload competition images

If you have any queries on anything in this handbook please contact or speak to the Competitions or any of the other T&DCC Committee member

See also:-<http://www.tringcameraclub.co.uk>