**Lomg Mynd Camera Club**

**Review Notes for Viral Challenge #1**

**Storm Force**

A very dramatic image of a storm. I like the spacing of the lighthouse and the coastguard (?) building with the headland in the background. The focus looks fine on the buildings, but the waves look a little bit blurred as though a higher shutter speed was needed. However the lighting conditions might have prevented a higher shutter speed, or the slightly blurred impression could be a function of the web sized resolution.

I am not sure about the toning of the image. It looks as though the White Balance has been adjusted to give a warmer or more dramatic appearance. If it is shown as taken, I would have been tempted to take out the orange toning.

Well done for getting out there and getting the shot. I hope your camera gear was not affected by the salt spray!

**Mersea Island**

A well composed shot with some strong features. I like the positioning of the horizon and the intertest in the foreground with the jetty/bridge forming a good diagonal across the picture. The boathouse and boat, which are the main items in the picture have been well placed on the thirds. The water in the centre looks a bit blown out, but I don’t mind that as those were the lighting conditions at the time. Rather like “Storm Force” this looks as though it might have been warmed up a bit. If it wasn’t, I would put something in the title such as “Early Moring at Mersea Island” to make it clear that this was the lighting. The only change I would make would be to remove the wire that goes across the middle of the picture which keeps drawing my eye.

**Before Lockdown**

Good control of the lighting and contrast because I suspect there were some areas of shadow in the building. I like the small area of grass and shadow viewed through the doorway and I think there must have been some good abstract compositions at ground level using the shadows and walls. I think there are 2 areas which could do with attention. The building looks as though it is leaning to the right by a couple of degrees which could easily be checked and straightened if necessary. The second problem is the sky which has lost most of the definition. A grad filter would have sorted this out, but if you didn’t have one, a bracketed shot and a quick automation in Photoshop would have achieved a similar result.

**Deadly Force**

A shot full of drama and menace. The floodlight placed behind the wheel chock gives further drama to the setting. This looks like the sort of shot that Time Line Events or Threshold specialise in and the set-up is very good. It is a pity that the background is so distracting. I am assuming that these are painted silhouettes of aircraft tail planes and the figure 4 doesn’t help much. However, there is not much you can do about this, but I would have had a go at cloning out the number.

**Cormorants in Mist**

A great shot which has a sort of oriental painting feel about it. I like the way there are so many tones to the cormorants from almost black to a very light grey. The birds are well positioned in the frame with some space on the right. Cropping is always subjective, but I wonder if the dark rocks in the foreground are over-dominant? A crop to remove something off the bottom (or even all of them?) seems to balance up the picture, but this is a matter of personal taste. Whatever you do, or don’t do. This is a well crafted and executed work which would look good in any gallery. The icing on the cake of course, is the fabulous background.

**Aussie Cyclist**

Excellent action shot catching him in mid air. Good use of Depth of Field to make sure we concentrate on the subject. The red jacket is a bonus and the sharp focus shows a good choice of shutter speed. The diagonal composition of the rider gives even more strength to the image. Well captured, composed, framed and executed – I don’t think you could improve on this

**Rainy Day at the Coast**

The use of the letter-box format is ideal for this picture. The long sweeping beach looks deserted which is not surprising looking at the weather conditions. The threatening rain clouds at the right hand side show what’s coming. I hope you were able to stay there long enough to get the rainclouds moving towards the buildings on the sea front. The splash of yellow on the centre building gives a good focal point. My only slight criticism is that the sand looks a very vibrant yellow as though it has been over-saturated, but maybe that is a feature of the sand in this area!

**Scare Crow**

An interesting and bold composition showing just a portion of the tractor as it goes out of the top and side of the image. The focus is where it should be – on the crows and it looks as though a longish telephoto lens has been used to compress the distance. It takes a bit of working out, but the crows must be on top of a slight rise in the field. Wouldn’t it have been ideal if the 2 crows on the left had had some separation between them? (but you can’t have everything). Very well composed to get the crows against the lighter part of the unploughed field. Very opportunistic shot and you did well to bring all the elements together in this shot.

**Arteries**

Good title. A fine example of macro photography and some nice subtle colours and tones in the picture. Absolutely nothing to distract the viewer. The centre stem looks pin sharp where it matters and only goes out of focus at top right. I think you were right to concentrate on the centre area and allow the background to drift slightly soft which again forces you to look at the centre stem. This would be a good exercise in focus stacking to see what it looked like with everything in focus, but on the whole, I like it as it is.

**Shadows**

What a lucky photographer (or a very patient one). Not only have you caught the dog between the posts with its own shadow, but it was wearing a nice red coat. The composition is perfect - strong diagonals from the post shadows, a virtual horizon on the thirds and no distractions. And the painted ladder matches the dog’s coat – how lucky was that? If I have one nit-pick, it is the tendency for people to keep putting padlocks on bits of chains. Here the elegant simplicity of the shadows is spoilt by the padlocks. I would clone these out (and the shadows on the woodwork). Not a big job, but I think it would be the final touch.

A lovely shot and well captured and composed

**Soft as a**

Congratulations on producing something different. This looks like an owl of some sort (tawny owl? eagle owl?) but instead of giving us the standard beady stare you have concentrated on the feather detail. Beautiful lighting, pin sharp and a picture that would look good on any wall. I like the way the base of the image is slightly darker and the colour palette is just browns, blacks and white. Well done on thinking outside the box and producing such a simple, but attractive, image.

**Gone Paddling**

How simple and minimalist can you get? This certainly tells a story with the very stylised paddler and the sandals forming a diagonal through the picture. Composed so that you look at the sandals first and the arrangement of them draws you to the figure. The series of horizontals of the waves, the sea and the wet sand add an extra element. Very creative, whether it was set up or was taken as seen. Would it have helped to have had footsteps leading from the sandals towards the sea? Possibly – possibly not. The absence of step marks could be explained by the hardness of the sand. Nicely lightly vignetted to hold the attention in the frame.

**Steampunk Mohawk**

What a very serious looking gentleman. How long does it take to get that headgear together? Well done for getting the picture – he doesn’t look too happy about being photographed. Without seeing the original colour version, it is difficult to say whether the mono conversion is better, but there looks as though there might have been some nice colour in the jacket and headwear. At these events it is difficult to get a “clean” shot without distractions in the background and the two other people are not adding much to the picture. I think they would have been relatively easy to clone out. With the proportions of the subject it might have been worth trying a portrait format picture to get the whole of his head in the frame.

**Red Pram**

This is certainly a vibrant and colourful picture. It has a sort of retro feel about the treatment which is maybe to tie in with the 1940s background. It is a bit of a shame that the re-enactment setting is spoilt by the non-participant tourists. It would be worth trying the perspective correction tool in Photoshop to straighten the picture up. On the whole I think the over-saturation treatment doesn’t quite come off and I would have preferred a more natural tone.

**Conclusions**

I enjoyed looking at these pictures and there are clearly some very creative photographers in the club who are prepared to present something a little different. Quite difficult to pick out 3 for commendation but in no particular order….

**Gone Paddling**

**Shadows**

**Cormorants in Mist**

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