

Wakefield 2nd Clubman DPIs 2020
Comments by Richard Hall

1	chatsworth sculpture	A straight forward record of a sculpture which shows the work off well in the setting of the parkland around Chatsworth. The shadows are rather heavy and wonder if it needed a bit more exposure.	12
2	Aye, Aye	So nearly an excellent action shot. Here the crew man in action is adjusting the jib, though this means we don't see his face properly. We feel up close and involved with the sailing and I like the slightly blurred background. It would have been better to see the corner of the jib on the left hand edge of the frame, but what is most distracting is the edge of the coloured sail intruding on the right. With careful work you might be able to clone this out and that would make a big difference I feel.	16
3	Greedy	It's when I see squirrels looking like this that I think the name tree rate is very appropriate. Here we have a head on close up which is rather an unusual view. The focus point is on the ears and everything else is soft through to out of focus. A good idea to take a shot this way but to be successful it needed the eyes, nose and whiskers to be sharper.	12
4	Honingsvag - Norway	A bright image that shows the place well. Could even illustrate a travel brochure. But it is rather busy with a cluttered background. The reflection in the deep blue water is attractive and I do wonder if there wasn't a much stronger image to be found by simplifying and concentrating on the lower parts of the boats and the reflection as the main subject.	15
5	Tea for Two	Here we have two for one which is a slightly different take on the usual red squirrels, and I like that. There is some symmetry that does wok quite well and the background is quite blurred so the squirrels show well. Nice soft light, though the face of the right hand squirrel is in shadow. A delightful picture.	18
6	Devotion	The basic approach and idea to this picture is good. There is a narrative and the composition works quite well, and I don't mind the wide spacing of the main elements. The colour of the walls is sympathetic with the nun's headdress, but I do find the colour somewhat overpowering. Have you tried it in mono? Finally, I think the crucifix and table are slightly soft. I would have preferred them to be either properly blurred bit recognisable (as if in her thoughts) or properly crisp. You might have got away with this if it was projected but it shows on my screen.	15
7	March View	So here the author has cleverly used a glass ball as a prop. Then in close up within the ball we have a wide view but with the background blurred. This has been well thought through. The ball is on the third point. While I really like the idea there are things which don't sit comfortably with me. I think I would crop off the blue sky and bright line below it or at the very least work on that bight line and darken the sky a bit too. The stick used to hold the ball in place is also a bit of a niggle.	14
8	Nesting Swan	Here we have a nature image which is informative of behaviour and interesting. Not only do we see the nest, but the eggs as well, and mum seems to be proudly inspecting her potential brood. The swan is well sized and placed within the frame. The lighting could be better, but you have to cope with what is there.	16

9	Black Eye	An excellent piece of abstraction. And I like the clue you give in the title. The black is the eye of the train, but the man's head are the real eyes of the train. Simple strong pattern with sweeps and curves framing the head which we see in profile with light on the face. The head is well positioned in the frame. Good work, well seen, enjoyable, I like it.	20 THIRD
10	Dent Snow Screens	From the title the author is suggesting we should look at the snow fences and certainly there is an interesting pattern within them. But my eye keeps going to the house which is strong in the frame and positioned on the thirds. As this is image is about patterns and shapes I'm sure monochrome is the correct choice, but I think the conversion here could have pulled out more texture and been given more punch.	13
11	Lighting up time on the pier	Very attractive and enjoyable. The author has chosen a time when the sky was dark providing an excellent moody background and there is still some natural light revealing the cloud. In contrast we have the warm artificial lights of the pier which show well. On the left the entrance is a focal point and invites us into the image and out along the pier to enjoy the fun despite the stormy weather. I like the narrative and it has been superbly delivered even down to the people and the car rushing past. Crisp and colourful. Very well done.	20 SECOND
12	COMMON DARTER	Here we have a colourful little beast in bright light showing well on a flower head and against a good sympathetic blurred background. The head of the darter is pin sharp as it should be and I don't mind too much the wings on the left nor the end of the abdomen going rather soft, getting enough depth of field would be difficult. All very good except I do think the bright purple flower at the bottom is intrusive and pulls the attention away from the darter. This is an open competition so you could have done something about it. I think the new YPU/PAGB rules would also allow that change. But if you use it for proper nature competitions sadly it will have to stay as it is.	19 Commend
13	NUTHATCH	I do like nuthatches they are attractive little birds with lovely colours. I like the bird's position and pose though perhaps there could have been a little less area included on the left. The light is good too and the background is blurred with a sympathetic colour. All good. Obviously deliberately the author has applied a circular blur around the bird to keep our view on the nuthatch. I would have preferred a vignette as this blur feels like everything is spinning. The head and eye are acceptable but could be crisper. Still overall a pleasing image.	18
14	Greeting the tide	The photographer has seen these silhouetted figures within this area of reflected light on the textured sand and recognised there is a pleasing image. The wave forms an attractive curve. We can enjoy there various people in different poses and I particularly like the children nearest to us. The author was correct, there was an excellent image to be captured. But I'm not sure the distribution and number of figures is quite right. I would certainly clone some out. I suspect the couple in the top right corner have been added, anyway they don't look quite right even if they were there in the original. Great idea, but I think it could be improved with some careful cloning.	15

15	I Was hungry	Is it set up, was it seen? Either way the photographer had in mind a little joke. The doll and It's expression suit the story line and yellow is a dominant colour in both doll and packet. But I think there is just too much included top and bottom. I would certainly take a chunk off the bottom and perhaps the top too to give a square format and focus attention on the doll and packet which are the story.	13
16	Female Mandarin Duck	A lovely duck with lovely detail in nice soft lighting and a sympathetic background colour Which is well blurred. I think the size in the frame is about right but you could give a tad more right. Some might say "it's just a duck on a post rather than a bird on a stick", but I say it is still a very attractive bird. I do think the colour is a bit 'purple' and the balance is not quite right.	17
17	Roaring Forties	A period portrait that works well. I suspect she enjoyed the 40s dressing up and you have found a suitable background good lighting. Hands can sometimes be a problem in a portrait but these work well as she feels at the fur and pushes it up. Her upward gaze communicates something quite different to having direct eye contact. A penny for her thoughts perhaps? But would direct eye contact be stronger or just different?	17
18	Glencoe	A well known view of majestic mountains, always good to look at. Lighting is so important to a landscape and its mood. Here we are almost looking into the sun, but you have still revealed some texture in the land and also the sky has some quite interesting cloud. The mood is of a pleasant summer day rather than anything atmospheric, so it is pleasing rather an emotional.	14
19	Bolton Abbey and River Wharfe	An interesting subject and I like the semicircle of grave stones around the bottom of the ruined abbey. Clearly the author has thought about composition here with trees either side and interest in the foreground. But I'm not sure it has worked as the abbey is very central and the main elements go across the image rather than leading us in. But most off putting is the colour balance as there seems to be a strong colour cast (magenta?).	12
20	Crystal	Well done for putting together an image with mystery that asks us to consider what the crystal ball might be saying. Her hair colour with her costume work well and I like the kneeling pose studying the ball. However, I find the background unconvincing and she seems to be floating rather than kneeling on something firm. Maybe that was the idea, but to me it seems unnatural.	16
21	'Teddy'	Wonderful! A delightful child portrait. So often pics of the kids and grand kids are inappropriate for competition images, but not so here. It communicates pure joy and lifts the heart to see such a happy face. I don't care it's not my grandchild, he/she is just lovely. And you have captured the moment with the funny headdress which adds interest and there is a sympathetic background, good lighting and catchlights. Super.	20 FIRST
22	Kelly Gal	A restful image that speaks to me about the place. Perhaps more a travel image rather than a scape. The arrangement of the boats is pleasing leading us into the picture and the sea loch with little houses beyond. The front boat is well lit and shows well against the more gloomy background. The mist is coming down on the hills but there is rather a lot of featureless sky. Finally, nothing to be done about this either, but I find the metal equipment overhanging the bow of Kelly Gal is ugly.	17

23	Natasha Bella	Another joyful portrait. The expression is communicating a playful lightness. I like the head slightly tilted. Good lighting. Nicely done.	18
24	Derwent Packhorse Bridge	A good record and suitable for illustrating the bridge in a walking guide or leaflet about the area. Well composed with the river leading through the image and trees either side to frame the bridge. The strong lighting, with contrast and clarity ensure the bridge stands out showing its shape and detail, but it has rather robbed the scene of mood or atmosphere.	13
25	im not all grey	The head whiskers and hands of this squirrel are pin sharp and pleasing coloured – indeed not grey. Against the blurred background this is a lovely part of the image. So, within this image there is an excellent one. But the tail is losing focus and the grass in the foreground speaks of the garden lawn rather than the woods. If there are sufficient pixels in the original I would crop down tight on the top left quarter of this image. It would make a supper close up study – and looks to be sharp enough to do a big crop.	13
26	'Fete' accompli - Copy	An interesting group of girls with their expressions and lost in their thoughts. There is a narrative about the event going on, with the crowds around while the girls rest and take stock. You wisely turned it to mono as I'm guessing the colours would only detract add to the business. But the background does cause the eye some confusion and I find the lady seated to the left of the girls and the one in the stripped dress over the head of the right hand girl are distracting.	14
27	Public Inconvenience	A good piece of observation, recording a scene many of us would walk past. Yet it has a story and a documentary feel to the image. This is kind of 'contemporary life today' image continues to have meaning and we don't see it much in open competition. Perhaps more of an exhibition image or even more as part of a panel of similar observations. So you get marks for content and observation, but I think much more could be made of this image if it is used in a competition, it's all in the processing. Add a vignette, pull out the detail, and so on to give it some atmosphere. But I suspect this wouldn't be the image you intended or had in mind when capturing it.	14
28	House No. 2	This is another image to explore. It is quite dark with some saturated colours standing out. The processing has pulled out the detail and added clarity. The blue figure stands out the artwork is somewhat enigmatic adding a little interest. What we can see in, or through, the window is also slightly strange. What should be a straight forward record abstraction from a house frontage has been shown to be something more. But do I like it?	15
29	War Memorial Port Sunlight	Here I believe the author has wanted to turn a straight record shot into something different. The grey sky is good with some detail in the clouds and it sits well with the memorial's white stonework. The background trees and houses seem to have been blurred to make the memorial stand out – a good idea except some top edges of the stonework have also blurred. And it is as if there is a grey line around some parts of the memorial which gives the illusion of it being cut out and stuck onto the scene. A lot of work has been done on this image, but I don't think the attempted improvements have quite worked.	12

30	Towards the Light	I like the simplicity of this image. Three is often a good number compositionally, but here we have three pairs of figures. I like the questions it asks. Why are they looking at a bright white wall? What is there to see? The couple on the right seem to have decided to try the guidebook to find out the answer! The image has depth and in this case I'm happy with all the blank space around the figures as it gives scale and space. I like the shadows of the figures too. It's quite noisy and while I can live with that as it seems almost dreamlike, a sharp noiseless image would have a different feel. However, the figures themselves are also soft and I would have preferred them sharp and crisp. Perhaps try just a slight darkening vignette too.	16
31	Yellow	Gorgeous autumn colour and this image has a wonderful soft feel with a misty background. Very pleasing. But while there is an attractive overall pattern of leaves, where should the eye rest?	17
32	Seated Figure looking over Yorkshire Sculpture Park	Here we have a photo of another artwork, a sculpture, but the photographer has added their own approach and included the autumn colour behind in an appropriately slightly blurred background. This makes the sculpture stand out from the background very well. The sculpture itself is sharp, detailed and textured. It is also placed nicely in the frame looking out to the left so it seems we are sharing the view with the seated figure. I'd have liked just a little more light on the figure, his arms and bag seem dark and more light on the trees in shadow would also help.	16
33	Wouldn't Your Eyes Bulge	If there is one thing this club does well it is the amusing titles and here is another! The author has seen the face in the cleat and rope which was very well spotted, produced a sharp well cropped image with some impact. Great fun, very enjoyable, but after an initial smile I'm sorry it's not going to win any prizes. Well seen.	15
34	Great Tit	If the author is new to nature photography and to the challenge of trying to capture little birds that are never still, I think you would be pleased to have got this one. It's difficult; I know. However, the standard of nature photography these days is very high and this image has one or two shortcomings. Most importantly the bird is not sharp particularly around the eye which is most important. The background with the diagonal twigs is distracting – background is important in this type of shot. I would also suggest you have cropped much tighter than need be, give the bird or animal a bit of space. But let me encourage you to keep trying and further develop your bird photography skills.	12
35	Natasha	Elegant figure work where the shapes and form have been highlighted by the strong lighting. I like her expression and the pensive look. The highlights are well controlled and the plain black background works. I feel the side of the face on our left is too dark and the shape formed by the arms and legs is rather angular so not as attractive as it might be. But I do find this a very tasteful and attractive nude portrait.	17
36	GUITAR MAN	Strong and gritty with plenty of contrast, just as a rock guitarist should be. This has all the correct feel. The author has concentrated our view on the guitar and hands asking us to consider the skill and the sound made with the instrument. Even the tee shirt adds to the story. My only dislike is the bright burned out hot spot on the guitar near the bottom.	19 H.C.

37	PAINTED LADY	Potentially a lovely nature shot. The butterfly shows well against the blurred background. The butterfly is also a good size in the frame, while also having space around it. The flower is attractive and forms part of the colourful beauty of the image. So just two concerns: first the background green is a too bright and an unnatural 'digital green'. Second the head and eye of the insect are a bit soft, though the wings are fine. Another which is so nearly a stunner.	14
38	The Lime Avenue, Goldsborough Hall	Not sure what process the photographer has used here, but it reminds me of photos taken using a red filter in the days of film, which so often worked well with architectural subjects and blue skies. The author is wanting us to enjoy the pattern of tree shadows on the foreground as our eye is led up to the house under a dark sky. Although I see the interest, I think there is too much foreground with shadow. Plus, the house is a bit small in the frame. So, I do think there was a stronger image by walking closer to the house. There would still be plenty of tree shadows, but a better view of the building. I'd also clone out the small patch of cloud showing as grey. Striking but a slightly different view point might have been stronger.	13
39	Lost	A little piece of street photography. The expression, the signs and the title all work together to give a narrative. The background has been darkened down and the figures are not too distracting. The face has been nicely lightened. But I do wonder if the author could have tried for a slightly different composition by lifting the frame. The figure could be further down the frame, the suitcase could be excluded and all of the figure posts could be included. If, however, that would include plain bright sky it was correct to exclude it. A nice bit of people watching.	13
40	Whitby Goth	This is a portrait with impact in abundance – always a good starting point for an image. The eyes are strong and piercing. The expression is quite intense. And the make-up gives an 'other worldly' feel. The colour is quite strong and better that we see the colour around the eyes, the red lips and the blue sky than being mono. But the light is strong, sunny and directional. I don't think this lighting helps build any atmosphere. With different light it could have been so much moodier which I think is what this supper face deserves. Despite that the appearance of this face lives will live in the memory.	16
41	The Hat	A light hearted image but one with an intriguing shape. The back lighting works well and the colour of the background is sympathetic to the colour of the hat. Simple and enjoyable. I like it!	19 Commend
42	Reflections	This is a bold image that takes a moment or two to decode. The overall effect has impact, but it also rewards a closer detailed examination. There is symmetry in both the building and the reflection, plus the colours are warm and attractive. The verticals have been correct like. Well spotted.	17
43	Catnap	A lovely sweet picture of your cat. There is a typically cat expression on the face. Likely to be appreciated by cat lovers as it wants us to reach out and stroke the cat. Sharp and crisp with adequate depth of field. Very meaningful to the cat owner, but cute rather than stunning or artistic. Perhaps a good one for the wall at home rather than a club competition.	13

44	Twixt Life & Death	Clever and inventive the author has wanted to produce something a bit different, creative and to give a story. To a degree quite successful, but I find the multi exposure approach makes the bunch of flowers appear to be violently shaken rather than both living and dying. Good idea that doesn't quite work for me.	15
45	'Water baby'	An image with immediate impact. The bright magenta colour is very striking as is the high key approach to the portrait. The almost white hair suits the image. And then one realises she is in water. There is also the expression with dark eyes - almost piercing, what is she thinking? I don't think the top she is wearing flatters her, especially not in these modern times. But still it is well done.	17
46	Longing	What a contrast to the previous portrait. This one is full of angst, quite low key and dark in mood. The sideways look adds to the narrative. Slightly soft and not much depth of field but to the feeling of a moment captured in passing rather than a posed shot. The nearest eye is sharp and that's what matters.	18
47	Trento Selfie	The photographer has seen an opportunity here and worked at making an interesting image. I like the colour in mirrors but mono for the background, which is kind of opposite to reality. I also like the figure stood in the background – a good juxtaposition. A couple of niggles: I would suggest he should have taken his camera bag off and put it out of the picture and I would clone out what looks like a blue leg and white trainers in the left hand mirror. Well seen.	16