

Wakefield 2nd Clubman Prints 2020

Comments by Richard Hall

1	the mining monument phoenix park	An interesting record of this mining memorial in pleasant lighting. Sharp and well positioned in the frame. Good technique. But the interest in this image is the sculpture itself rather than any added interpretation by the photographer.	14
2	Round the Bend	An image with impact that draws the viewer in to the vanishing point with strong curved leading lines. It feels modern futuristic and sterile, a feeling enhanced by the monochrome treatment. Maybe that is the intention and exactly what the author wants us to feel, but a figure approaching the vanishing point would totally change the feel and give a different story. Still quite a strong image.	16
3	The Barrier	The author has put a lot of thought into creating what I am pretty well certain is a composite image. The lamp light is balanced by the sun. The wall leads us into the image and in the distance there is a boat. All give it a dreamlike quality and as such it works. But some things make me uncomfortable: for example, the way the wall seems to just disappear into nothingness and the sun being so large in the frame. But I shouldn't be so harsh, after all I think it is intended be dreamlike.	15
4	Escape to the County	Wonderful. I'm often not a big fan of concocted images nor of textured layers, but here I think it been very well done. The overall effect is painterly and I'm guessing that printed onto the right textured art paper it could be stunning. The story, the atmosphere and the sense of the windy weather are excellent. The tree dominates the frame yet it is the figure balanced by the birds in the other corner which give the meaning. The colour, together with a two-dimensional feel, add to the sense of a painting. Well done.	20 FIRST
5	Chess Piece	Clever title which makes me smile. Obviously the wonderful sunset sky adds colour and makes a pleasing image. While the idea of the tower as a chess piece adds to the story. The tree shapes are an interesting contrast to the straight tower lines. But I do feel it is rather too tightly cropped, not only are we missing the top of the tree, but for me the benches are slightly too close to the bottom.	15
6	HONEY BEE	A fine close up of a honeybee covered in pollen, so this one has been a 'busy bee' pollenating. The depth of field is adequate, and the bee is generally sharp in the right places. The flower adds some strong colour, but I find the petal at the top a little overpowering. Also, it's always stronger if the camera angle is level with the insect, so we don't look down on it. But good macro work.	15
7	Poised	A strong figure study that can't be viewed without some emotion. The strong side light and black background help us concentrate on the form of the figure which becomes almost 3D. The face in profile adds to the shapes. Maybe her right leg is just a little lost in shadow, so we seem to be strangely missing a body part. But the dark, low key lighting and treatment suits the model and gives atmosphere. Well done.	17

8	Canada Goose	Here the wings are quite striking and have an immediate impact. It is unusual to see the wings raised up and also have all the detail in the feathers. It looks almost golden, quite stunning. So, the bird and its wings are attractive. But here is a slight halo around the left and bottom of the top left wing. And although the print maybe fine (because files for prints often need to be more heavily processed than dpis) on my screen it seems a tad over-sharpened.	14
9	Redcar Wind Farm	This is an interesting landscape with good use of the panoramic 'letter box' crop and pleasing pastel colours. The long exposure has given an interesting contrast of textures – the smooth milky water, the blurred cloud, mistiness around the headland all contrasting with the sharp pebbles and turbine pylons. The blurred blades are the final addition to the story. But I feel the weakness of this otherwise strong image is the foreground pebbles which cover quite a large area so dominate too much.	16
10	Charlie	Well set up and a lovely back story to the image. Very expressive and a good pose. The walking stick is a nice inclusion. The image has been heavily processed to give texture and feeling (probably using detail extractor or something similar). This seems a little overdone on this dpi but again it may look OK on the print.	17
11	Natasha	I've seen this lady photographed a couple of times before and she is a lovely model. You have caught a good expression which conveys what I would imagine her character to be. The eyes are very strong. I like her pose with body facing to the right and the head turned towards us. The square format works well and the lighting is good, but then it should be you are in a studio.	18 Com
12	In the Savoy	Well this title made me chuckle. It has been well handled. The lighting shows the gerbera (?) flowers very well and they have an attractive rich colour. This bright colour combines well with the muted green of the cabbage. The vignette is heavy but works OK to hold our view on the subject. A feel good picture.	19 H.C.
13	Borrowdale Mill	There is a lot I like about this image. The author has given us this strong low view looking up at the mill. The wet rocks in the foreground are full of detail and the hard sharpness contrasts with the misty water. There is a wet damp feel typical of the Lake District. Don't take it as a slight, but I think this would be a quality postcard! I do wonder if the clarity and vibrance have been 'wound up' and perhaps a bit too much – but this may look much better in the print version. Although I like lace like water from using slower shutter speeds the long exposure used here makes it look like mist rather than water and is a little unnatural.	17
14	Defender of the Valley	A very well known location, but still a worthwhile subject. The castle stands out against the misty background of the glen. I particularly like the soft misty mountain behind. And the flag is a nice addition. While the overall image is quite attractive and pleasing with a good atmosphere, I find the water in the foreground dull and uninteresting and there is also a lot of grey sky.	16
15	wareham church window	A carefully composed record shot with perfect symmetry well delivered. The stained glass and its colour show well surrounded by the neutral grey. Strong as a record, but in an open competition this kind of subject struggles to stand out.	15

16	Strawberry Fields NYC	I've never seen it, but I immediately guessed this was some kind of John Lennon related artwork or memorial. The success of this kind of subject depends on engaging the viewer and communicating a message. I suspect this is one of those images where you as the author feel the emotion much more than I do. Having said that the diagonal angle for the word is well chosen and the flowers are well placed and add colour. The whole image does seem a bit too saturated and I don't particularly like the way the shadows fall across the mosaic.	13
17	Thoresby Hall	This is a lovely intricate high key monochrome image. The result reminds me of a carefully crafted pen and ink drawing and the correct choice of print paper would enhance that feel. I think the fine detail is delightful. Although I like the crop which suits the subject I suggest you might consider a small crop off the left hand side.	18 Com
18	Regency Maiden	A carefully set up portrait. The author has given this a lot of thought: the pearls in the hand, the diamond on the forehead, the pose, regency pattern cloth and the square crop. They all contribute. She has a somewhat enigmatic expression and a touch of mystery. The lighting is excellent, and the grey background sets off the pink and flesh tones well. I am certain the pearls are plastic particularly the ones in the hand which look too large and so for me they spoil the sens Regency. But very well done.	20 SECOND
19	Yorkshire Cat	I assume he is a Yorkshire Cat because he is resident of Yorkshire Wildlife Park. If so it demonstrates how strong wildlife images are there for taking. The lighting, blurred background and strong vignette work well. The eye is strong as it looks towards the space on the right. I like the idea of this image and going in really tight works well. But sadly there just isn't enough within the field of focus. At the very least either the nose or the whiskers need to crisp.	14
20	MORNING REFLECTIONS	Pleasing and restful – so this is an image that has a gentle atmosphere. The soft light, the hint of mist and the reflection all combine well as we are led into the picture along the canal. You've made the best of the grey sky, which is still a little plain, but the large white house does pull the eye away from the main subject.	16
21	Towards Haw Wood	A bold punchy high contrast mono landscape. I like the sky. The sweeping curve of the field lines echo the track on the right and give excellent leading lines. The large tree is on the classic third point. Well done, good technique, though for some reason it doesn't fill me with emotion or make me 'feel' the scene.	15
22	Poppy Down to the Shops	Another clever title and an image where you have done a lot of processing work. The background was potentially very distracting but it has been darkened right down to form a backdrop where we can just see the context and detail without distraction. The main subject is we in the frame and the image tells a bit of a story. While you have done a good job on this image, the man on his scooter is so well separated from the background he almost looks to be an added cut-out, so the result is slightly unreal. I did wonder about a mono version, but then the poppy wouldn't show, unless you pop the colour which some judges hate!	14

23	Swan	A striking image which results from strong lighting on the swan surrounded by the black water. The exposure has been well handled and the author has retained beautiful detail in the swan's feathers. It is very easy to have white bird feathers 'blow out' on these circumstances. I'm going to be a bit picky and say I would crop slightly tighter. There is a lot of black and I would make a small crop top and bottom, plus a slice off the right, still leaving some space to swim into. Also, I would have preferred to see the tip of bill. Despite these minor quibbles the white feathers are still excellent.	16
24	Down in the Forest	This is an image that rewards a careful look. At first sight it is rather busy, but there are some interesting shapes and leaves. The author has used a high key treatment giving a light and airy feel. And the choice of mono was probably wise as it helps focus attention on the shapes while so much green could have been overpowering. The result is pleasing rather than stunning. Forgive the pun but it's an image the more I look the more it has grown on me!	17
25	Whitby Abbey	This isn't the usual view of Whitby Abbey, but as an architectural record it works well. The lighting is high and strong but has been well handled. The use of a conversion to mono means the contrast could be controlled and used to pull out the detail and shapes. The plain sky suits the subject and it has been appropriately darkened at the top. However, in doing so the tops of the towers are also unnaturally darkened. Use of layers and masks could have prevented this.	14
26	Nest	A good still life carefully constructed. The result is a delightful image. The colours work well together and I like the round nest within the square crop. I assume the eggs aren't real, otherwise you might be in trouble with wildlife authorities, but it has allowed use of three different colours carefully placed. The background is nicely opaque, but I do wonder if the three heart shapes are a little too strong.	18
27	Whitby Pier	I like this simple seascape very much. The long exposure has given a calmness to the image. The general blue colour sets off the small red tower. The pier is sharp and detailed contrasting with the water and sky and adding to the 'feel'. Some might say there is too much blank sky, but I like the negative space and the sense of scale. Even the birds on the railings stayed still during the exposure, though I suggest you might try cloning out all but one (third from right) as it may add to the sense of desolate lonely calm.	19 THIRD
28	Intense	A portrait 'shot on location' and could be a fashion shot to show the dress. The magenta coloured dress stands out well from, and is complimented by, the dark blue background. There is good eye contact and her face expresses a mood. Nice lighting too, though her right eye (on the left) is a touch too dark. While this image is visually strong her pose seems a bit uncomfortable.	16