

18-19 Dyment DPI Trophy: Entry Report (Closed)

Judge: Kay Wilson

General Comments

I have looked at the images on two calibrated monitors and studied them over several days - an interesting pastime during the lockdown. Many of the images convey emotion, or atmosphere, and there is even humour. The technical standard is very high with few technical errors. This made it very difficult to choose images for awards, especially with such a range of subjects. I hope the members can accept that not getting an award, or not getting the one they hoped for, is not a reflection on their photographic ability but arises from the need to make choices, and while I try to be as objective as possible, favouring no genre over another, there is a certain amount of subjectivity in making those choices.

No	Image	Entry Title - Comments	Award
1		<p><u>Old Boat At Corpach</u> The 'Corpach Wreck' as she has become known, ran aground at this location in December 2011 and is something of a draw for photographers. This image conveys mood that many published photos don't. Boat and landscape have an overall purplish-blue tone, suggesting that the boat is becoming part of the landscape, being reclaimed by nature.</p> <p>The overbearing mountain looming over the tiny town almost creates a sense of oppression, that the works of man are puny compared with nature. Yet the mood is lifted by the light at top right and the bird. (There is another bird left of the A frame which you might not notice at first.)</p> <p>If there are a couple of things that I find slightly annoying, they are the green at the left and the tarpaulin on the boat. Would the owner consider desaturating the tarpaulin to make it stand out less?</p> <p>However, this image has been carefully composed for viewpoint and has been processed in a way that both tells a sad story and conveys powerful feelings.</p>	1st
2		<p><u>Pirate Town</u> Captain Jack Sparrow strikes again! The portrait of the chap in his fancy dress is engaging and well exposed. Although he is not looking at the camera because he is pointing the gun, we can see his eyes despite the shadow and there is a hint of highlights.</p> <p>The 'Golden Hind' doubles as an excellent pirate ship.</p> <p>This looks to me as if it is a creative image compiled of several parts. Nothing wrong in that, but there are issues that bother me. The chap on the left has a black edge around his head which does make him look pasted in. The fishing harbour has been given a painterly effect which is fine in itself but covers the top of the flag and is used on the left pirate's face, both of which I find disconcerting.</p> <p>The bold colours of the flag and the Captain serve to direct attention to that part of the image. This is a picture to be enjoyed in the spirit in which it is intended: a fun image.</p>	

3		<p><u>Is It Coming Yet</u></p> <p>The title is hardly necessary; the little girl's expression says it all - enquiring and slightly anxious. The angle at which her face is photographed breaks some of the so-called rules of portraits, but it works. The image suggests an earlier era, with the hair ribbon, not so common these days, the delicate shoes, and above all, the old suitcase. The tight crop on the child positions her beautifully in the frame, really sharp and immediate against a slightly diffused background which sets the scene. If I have a niggle, I could perhaps wish the triangular reinforcement was totally in the frame.</p> <p>This is a very intriguing picture; I find myself wondering who she is, if anyone is with her, and where she is going. It invites the viewer to use their imagination to construct a story around her.</p>	2nd
4		<p><u>RONDO STREET</u></p> <p>This does not look like British architecture and I find myself wanting to know where it is. The residents clearly take pride in the appearance of their buildings. Shame about the small area of peeling paint near the car! The contrast of black and white, with only a few touches of any other colour, is well handled; you can see the texture in the walls, right and left, nearest to the camera. The sharpness of the image clearly shows the intricacy of the black metalwork.</p> <p>Composing the image on the diagonal makes for a pleasing composition, perhaps the only one possible because the street appears to be very narrow. However it would have been nice to have the edges made upright in processing. (Take a wider photo than wanted to allow for the cropping that occurs when straightening.)</p> <p>The texture of the cobbles makes an interesting contrast with the buildings, and I can't help wondering what is marked out by the lines. The spaces look too small to be allocated parking!</p> <p>The overcast sky is a boon to the photographer. Its colour fits perfectly with the white buildings. The light is diffused, casting no harsh shadows, possibly helped by white walls opposite acting as reflectors.</p>	
5		<p><u>The School Outing</u></p> <p>When I open this image my attention goes immediately to the boy at the left end of the bench, a combination of his glum expression and his position in the frame. He becomes the focal point of the image. What a well-behaved group of children they are! From what little we can see of the two ladies in the background, the children are causing no disturbance. There is a lot to enjoy and smile at in the body language – even the teacher scratching her arm!</p> <p>The viewer's attention is kept in the image because the people at both ends are facing inwards. The pastel colour of the floor tiles sets off the deep blue colour of the pullovers. The letterbox format suits the image, removing extraneous details. We can tell that the shutter speed was not fast because there is movement in the legs of two children. For me, that doesn't detract.</p> <p>Children and teachers are unaware of the photographer above them; it appears to be a totally candid image. Compliments to the photographer on getting this composition!</p> <p>I assume that any required permissions to show this photograph were obtained.</p>	Highly Commended

6		<p><u>Miss Day</u> Great care has been taken with the colour palette of this portrait. The colour of the background harmonises with the colour of the model's hair, eyes and dress. The soft diffused texture of the background contrasts with the sharpness of the way she has been photographed. The lighting on her face is a subtle version of Rembrandt lighting and makes for a flattering portrait. Her eyes, beautifully sharp with beautiful highlights, are compelling. Her skin is beautifully rendered, with just enough detail and texture visible. Her body, however, looks as if she is holding a slightly forced pose. I think this is because of the way the folds in her sleeve look as if it is being pulled. Nevertheless, this is a beautiful portrait of a beautiful young lady.</p>	Highly Commended
7		<p><u>Red Arrows Seeing Double</u> The spiral vapour trails give a sense of depth and three dimensionality, making a tunnel that the left hand-group seem to be curving out from, turning back into the frame. The straight vapour trails of the right-hand group intersect with the other group in a way that does not obscure them, but raises questions about direction of travel and distance, which only arise when you notice that the smaller (apparently more distant) group is in front of the white vapour trails as a result of combining two action images. Would a little more space under the bottom plane enhance the image? Nevertheless, the composition is well balanced between the good detail in the large group and the headlights drawing attention to the smaller group. It is an enjoyable image with a beautiful limited palette of colours, skilfully photographed, exposed and processed.</p>	Highly Commended
8		<p><u>Pavement Art</u> At first glance this is a very simple still life, but study reveals it is not as simple as one might think. The leaf has been presented in a way that alters its character: it is not meant to be a realistic picture. Although the leaf, and most of the image, is sharp, the details of the veins are hidden. The whole set-up appears wet and there is a hint of water at the base of the stem. The sheen makes the leaf look artificial, as though it is man-made. The lines between the slabs give framing and a sense of place, but rather than show them just off straight as they are, would the owner consider straightening them? The positioning of the leaf feels right, using almost the whole width of the frame. The diagonal running from the stem to the central tip works well against the square slabs and is continued by the lower shadow area. The most striking thing about this image is the colour, the way the vivid orange of the leaf contrasts with the steely blue-grey of the pavement. The lighting is interesting too. If you look closely at the shadows in the bright area of pavement in the top left quarter and compare them with the shadows in other areas, the light appears to be coming from different directions. So I believe this a much more carefully produced image than it appears on first impressions.</p>	

9		<p><u>Contemplation</u></p> <p>The young lady certainly looks thoughtful and has just the barest hint of a smile. This portrait shows her as a modern young person whose ideas of enhancements for beauty differ from the ideas of an old person like me! But tattoos, nose piercing and funny haircut can't hide her inherent beauty. Her skin looks flawless.</p> <p>Her pose takes the viewer's eye from her face, down her arms to her leg and all the way to her toes. However, she looks a little tense. I would have asked her to lower her shoulders and soften her right arm to look more relaxed.</p> <p>The setting and its colour scheme complement her skin tones and the colour of her dress. Although this is a full body portrait, there is no distortion; this would be due to the position of the camera and the choice of lens. Keeping the whole of the model in focus with no fall-off works well for this kind of portrait, as does the even lighting. The amount of detail captured in the whites is excellent.</p>	Highly Commended
10		<p><u>Prevailing Wind</u></p> <p>You can almost see the wind in this image. Not only has the tree grown deformed in the direction of the wind, but the streaks at the top left seem to swirl out from the top group of branches. The streak lower right - regardless of whether it is land or cloud - seems to be moving through the image. Yet the tree (is it one or two?) is standing firm. Its sharpness and texture set it out clearly against the sky. There are subtle leading lines in the foreground rocks and a good range of tones in the image. It must be hard to photograph a well-known tree and make something new; however this photographer has succeeded in doing that by conveying a strong sense of movement.</p>	4th
11		<p><u>Somerset Levels</u></p> <p>When I look at this image, I am reminded of the floods of 2013 - 14. Noticing that there is water around the bases of some trees, I hope that this image is not showing a serious flood. The tones of the image suggest early morning light, as does the mist in the distance. The dark area in the centre is almost blocked out; however it does contain detail which could be brought out just a little, without spoiling the overall effect.</p> <p>Without the small green area bottom left, we would not be able to discern the bottom edge of the image if it were shown against a black background. But the green introduces a distracting area of colour not seen elsewhere in the image. Suggestions are: either desaturate it, or remove it and put a thin, faint line around the image.</p> <p>The sky has interesting streaks of cloud with patches of blue, and taking the image as a whole, the colours don't sit well together. A little tweak of the white balance sliders could enhance the gold to improve the colour balance without changing the mood. It is an image that would work in black and white too, because there is a lot of contrast which would produce a range of tones.</p> <p>This image makes me think how vulnerable the Somerset Levels are to water.</p>	

12		<p><u>Pasty Time</u> This is an amusing image, mainly because of the expression on the face of the woman at the end. There is gentle humour in the way the other three are holding their pasties in unison. The blue jackets worn by the end characters hold the group together. The blue is echoed in the background - almost like book ends. The exposure is well handled because the light looks fairly harsh; there are no blocked-out shadows or burnt out highlights. The choice of aperture isolates the characters while giving a hint of the setting which doesn't distract. Altogether, a delightful image taken at just the right moment.</p>	Highly Commended
13		<p><u>Taking A Break</u> The photographer wants to show us the incongruous juxtaposition of the train and the woman. This is done visually by the use of colours. Most of the image uses a very limited palette of dark colours, while the woman's clothes have their bright colours revealed by the shaft of light that also illuminates the steam. The shape of the steam makes a connection between the train and the woman. The amount of detail in the steam is excellent. Obviously workers need breaks, but it does feel as if this woman is in a different world, engrossed in her magazine. The photographer has conveyed this very successfully.</p>	Highly Commended
14		<p><u>And Rest</u> She's not really resting between dance sessions because her shoe, with carefully placed ribbon, is not done up! But it doesn't matter. A successful portrait conveys something about the person, and this young lady has oodles of personality. The little touch of red lipstick draws attention to her face and her expression looks like 'the cat that got the cream'. The pose creates a triangular shape which is always a good compositional tool, although her tutu has almost disappeared into the background on the right. The high key treatment makes her glow, with beautifully rendered skin. The bright white infinity curve background has just the right amount of shadow detail on the floor, although there are one or two marks that might be worth removing. This is a well taken image, suggesting that the photographer has good people skills in directing the model.</p>	5th
15		<p><u>Storm Warning</u> What a dramatic image! The contrast in the sky is the main subject, thus the photographer has chosen to fill most of the frame with it. The land looks vast, bleak and desolate, with very contrasting light and shadow. The dark strip (probably a road or path) acts as a leading line, along with the line from the bottom left corner, taking us into and through the landscape. The very bright cloud on the third is slightly burnt out but catches the eye and acts as a focal point. It is not always necessary to have a border around a DPI, but with much of the image bleeding out into the surrounding screen, a discreet border might be advisable. Conversion to monochrome really suits the dynamic range of this subject; it focuses attention on the contrasting light and shadow and the drama in the sky.</p>	

16		<p><u>Over The Sea To Skye</u></p> <p>There is a certain romance about the Isle of Skye, for instance the Sky Boat Song* and this image conveys that romanticism and evokes the song, with the sailing boat. Distance creates a blue haze and the photographer has used that concept to create what appears to be a monochrome image in blue, suited to the distant hills and the colour of water. (Except that there is a minute touch of red visible if you zoom in on the boat.) The coastline has been placed carefully on the third and the clouds make a pleasing top to the image. The boat is very white and sharp and immediately grabs attention.</p> <p>Letterboxing is suitable by cutting out what were probably featureless areas of sky and water, but I feel that the proportions are possibly too long and thin. Would the owner consider experimenting with cropping a little from the left? On the other hand, as a print, it could be mounted and framed very successfully as it is.</p> <p>The mountainous nature of the landscape is quite amazing, looking slightly compressed by the focal length used. There is a sense of recession in the way the colour fades with distance and in the hint of mist in the valleys. The reflections of the mountains are soft and beautiful.</p>	
17		<p><u>Music Box</u></p> <p>The title of the image refers to the revolving dancer figurines on top of traditional music boxes. While I am no expert on dance, I believe the creative use of this young lady's dress is original. She actually reminds me of a bird of paradise displaying. I can't decide if the slight lack of symmetry detracts or not - no doubt there will be opinions in both directions.</p> <p>The lighting on the floor and background is excellent. The light pastel colour shows the model and her dress to good advantage, while leaving enough hazy detail and enough slight shadow to let us know she is not 'suspended in space'. I do find the highlights on her cheeks a little annoying; would the photographer consider toning them down a little?</p> <p>The photographer has coped very well with the dynamic range from white to black. There is nothing burnt out in the white frills, although at the sides it gets dangerously near it! The model is very engaging. Even though her face is small in the frame, the highlights in her eyes draw the viewer's gaze.</p>	Highly Commended
18		<p><u>Cot Valley Slow Water</u></p> <p>What a delightful high key image, with pastel colours and such contrasting textures! There is a definite sense of depth in the image. The way the water bounces over the rocks is lovely. Flowing from the top of the frame, it runs into a circular rocky pool which fills most of the frame and is the main interest, before flowing out in a small channel bottom right. It invites the viewer to enjoy the delicate colours in the rocks along with the detail. The shutter speed is spot on; the water is ethereal, transparent, full of detail and nowhere burnt out.</p> <p>I have two minor niggles; fixing them would make a perfect image. Near the top left corner there is a small patch of blue which introduces a colour not seen anywhere else in the image. Possibly it is an oversight in processing. In the top right corner there is a brown twig. If the rules do not allow it to be cloned out, (the preferred method), a slight crop would get rid of it.</p> <p>In a way this is an idealised vision of the stream showing it in the best light (in both senses), bright, yet soft and diffused. Lovely.</p>	3rd

19		<p><u>THE VICARAGE AND GARDEN</u></p> <p>The stone wall on the right gives us a hint of the kind of building the photo was taken from, giving us a view that could not be achieved at ground level. The line of trees on the left, and the shed on the right, lead the viewer into and through the image. The sky has sensibly been kept to a minimum, with just a line of clouds to prevent it from being bland. The image is sharp from front to back. Only a real fusspot, (which I'm afraid I am) would point out that the uprights aren't quite upright and have a slight divergence!</p> <p>The green garden takes up much of the frame. It avoids being boring because of the long shadows, creating varied shades of green, and the curious circular marks in the grass. The old shed is fascinating; was the photographer able to get a close-up of it?</p> <p>The large vicarage building itself is dominant in the frame and, while it is not in the conventional position, acts as a focal point. Clearly the light was not ideal, yet the photo has been taken at the time of day when only the vicarage and garden, and little else, are catching it, thereby drawing attention to the intended part of the image.</p>	
20		<p><u>Reflections</u></p> <p>This image is as much about the reflections that are not there as the ones that are. Not just the ladies - photographing shiny cars without annoying reflections is technically demanding and here it has been achieved successfully.</p> <p>The lady third from left becomes something a focal point because of her position and her pose which is unlike the others. I notice slight halos around the heads.</p> <p>Is this a suitable image for monochrome conversion? Possibly there was a clashing mix of colours. There is a good range of tones. The four ladies at the front have been positioned such that their dark leggings contrast with the light tones behind them.</p> <p>The crop suits the subject, showing the setting but avoiding a featureless expanse of sky.</p>	
21		<p><u>Restored At Kew</u></p> <p>We are shown one corner of the enormous glasshouse at Kew Gardens after it was lovingly restored and modernised taking account of the original stone-coloured paint and decorative features. The high key nature of the photograph conveys a sense of light and airiness. The portrait format accentuates the height. My eye goes first to the top part of the image with the blue sky and the detail in the metalwork, but then I notice the figure in red, positioned near the powerful point where the thirds cross, providing a focal point for the eye to rest and giving a sense of scale. I work my way down the spiral staircase to see that the photographer has included some of the ground to show the height.</p> <p>The photographer has chosen the point of view carefully in order to create symmetry. Photographing from this high vantage point also serves to minimise the service pipes running under the balcony. The pillars on the balcony level are all presented upright, generally a good thing in architectural photography, although there is a slight tilt to the ground-floor pillars at the sides of the frame. This might have been unavoidable but in any case, I don't think it detracts.</p> <p>This image makes me feel I want to go there, inadvisable and probably impossible in the current crisis!</p>	6th

Rock Formation

Seeing this makes me want to learn about the geology that created these amazing formations. Conversion to monochrome focuses attention on the shapes and textures. From my familiarity with the coast, I suspect that many of the small spots on the rocks are shells, but the required re-formatting to 800 x 1200 does not allow for the zooming in which the high-res image would.



There is a sense of depth in the image, enhanced by cutting the horizon with the point of rock. Positioning the camera in such a way that we can see the dark line of water beyond the surf separates the sea from the sky which is full of interest. But I do wonder if the image has been over-sharpened because there is a white halo along the horizon.

The chosen point of view creates a series of lines which converge beneath a large white cloud that catches the eye. There is a great range of tones from black to pure white, but unfortunately some of the clouds are burnt out. While this does not matter in small patches, the large cloud has no recoverable detail. The dark filter effect at the top of the image serves to keep the viewer's attention from wandering out of the frame.

It must be a very difficult terrain to walk over, and I compliment the photographer on going there and taking this geologically interesting photo.

*Speed bonnie boat like a bird on the wing
Onward the sailors cry.
Carry the lad that's born to be king
Over the sea to Skye