Dapto Camera Club Newsletter

Viewfinder.

June 2017

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Dude Be Nice – Mastering the Art of Constructive Criticism

By: Meredith Clark

Several years ago, one of the local high schools near me put on an anti-bullying campaign called "Dude, Be Nice!" During the time that the campaign was going on, I'd often see students, parents, and teachers wearing navy blue t-shirts with the slogan in huge white lettering across the front. I loved seeing those shirts around town because they served as a reminder to me that I almost always have a choice as to whether my words tear someone down or build them up.

Since then, the phrase "Dude, Be Nice!" has become a kind of life motto for me (I even managed to get my hands on one of those t-shirts), and I think it is an especially relevant foundation for learning how to offer quality feedback in photography. Being nice is always the most important part in offering constructive criticism that is meaningful and will be heard.

Here are a few other tips that will help you master the art of constructive criticism:

Be Conscious of the Setting

Have you ever seen a photographer share an image on social media, saying how much they love this particular image, only to have some random person comment with criticism? Sometimes the comments may be constructive criticism, other times they're just plain criticism like, 'This photo sucks, and you're a terrible photographer." We don't need to get into the dynamics of what might cause someone to leave the latter sort of comment because that's just not worth any of our time.

One thing that we should spend a bit of time thinking about is whether the person you're responding to is actually asking for constructive criticism. There are a lot of great Facebook groups for new photographers to give and receive constructive criticism. That's an appropriate place to offer thoughtful feedback about another person's image. However, a photographer's personal Facebook page may not be an appropriate place for that sort of feedback. You obviously have the freedom to say whatever you'd like, but I'd argue that offering criticism (even if it is constructive) when it hasn't been asked for is very rarely helpful.

Use a Compliment Sandwich

Most of us have heard about the concept of a compliment sandwich before. This idea isn't new or ground breaking, but I want to reiterate just how effective it can be in terms of providing constructive criticism that is actually heard by the recipient.

Straight Criticism: Your composition sucks. The baby should be either in the center or following the rule of thirds.

Constructive Criticism: The photo would be stronger if you composed it differently. I would have put the baby in the centre of the frame so that there was the same amount of greenery on either side.



Compliment Sandwich: The vibrant colors of the flowers are a really unique and fun contrast to the usual neutrals you see in newborn photos, I like it a lot! One thing that could make the image stronger would be to adjust your composition so that the baby is in the center of the frame. Or, you could adjust the other direction so that the baby is more off-center, following the rule of thirds, which would make your composition look more intentional instead of accidental. Overall though, good job on exposure, focus, and coloring!

As you can see, the essential criticism is the same in all three examples. However, when you use a compliment sandwich, that same criticism is framed in a way that serves to build the recipient up which will make it more likely that they are able to hear and internalize your feedback.

Ask a Question

Another really good method of offering constructive criticism is to phrase your criticism in a question. For example, you might ask something like, "Why did you choose to apply a matte treatment to this image?" Or, "Why did you decide to focus on the left petal of that flower rather than the center of the flower?"

Framing something that may be a criticism in the form of a question helps to diffuse the psychological impulse that hen we receive criticism, we're being attacked. In addition, it requires the photographer to think about whether the element that you're asking about was a conscious decision or an accident. This will help determine whether the criticism is coming from a stylistic difference (more on that in a minute!), or whether it was not an intentional decision, and an element that they may not have thought about before.

Be Aware of Stylistic Differences

The novel, "The Road" by Cormac McCarthy received a Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2007. It also breaks almost every conventional grammar rule known to man. Does the fact that it doesn't follow the traditional rules mean that it's less

valuable? Nope. On the other hand, does the fact that it won a Pulitzer mean that it's going to be everyone's cup of tea? Again, nope.

Whether you're talking literature, art, music, or photography, there are lots of different styles or genres that will appeal to different people. The fact that I don't personally prefer HDR photoraphy doesn't mean that there's no value to HDR images.

When giving constructive criticism, it's important to consider whether or not your criticism is rooted in stylistic differences. For the most part, I've found that constructive criticism based primarily on stylistic differences is not a productive use of anyone's time.

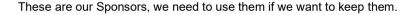
Offer a Suggestion or Solution

I'm a firm believer that learning how to offer constructive criticism is beneficial to both those giving and receiving the feedback. It forces the giver to think about an image in greater detail, and to really identify things that you like and dislike about an image (and why). When constructive criticism is done well, it allows the recipient the opportunity to hear from others about their photography, affirming the things they do well and identifying areas that may need improvement.

One of the ways that you can make your feedback even more beneficial to the person on the receiving end is to offer advice as to how to either correct or prevent the problem that you're providing the feedback on, in the future. Whether you're suggesting a remote shutter release in order to prevent camera shake in astrophotography or cropping an image in post-production to improve composition, giving someone else the tools to better their craft is one of the qualities that separates constructive criticism from quality constructive criticism that is likely to make an impact.

It also makes YOU a better photographer, as it forces you to think in advance about how you'd handle different challenges and circumstances in advance, and create a game plan for how you'd handle them.

https://digital-photography-school.com/mastering-art-constructive-criticism/? utm source=newsletter&utm medium=email&utm campaign=May-1817



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DCC Recomend Domayne

for Development and Printing of your Photos.

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Links of Interest:

Viewbug - <u>http://www.viewbug.com/</u> ePHOTOzine - <u>http://www.ephotozine.com/</u> Federation of Camera Clubs [NSW] - <u>http://www.photographynsw.org.au/</u> Australian Photographic Society - <u>http://www.a-p-s.org.au/</u> Gurushots - <u>https://gurushots.com/</u> Free Lessons with Serge Ramelli - <u>http://photoserge.com/free-lessons/all</u>

An Introduction To Splash Water Photography

by Yahya Kisana

Water splash photography is one the coolest and most elegant types of photography. And it's not as difficult as you may think. The process is actually quite simple, you just need the right equipment and a little practice to create a simple yet perfect water splash photo.

Taking a photo of a water splash is quite a fun little project, and it will definitely improve your photography skills.

Here's what you'll need:

High quality camera Camera timer (built-in is fine) Glass of water Item to drop in the water (fruit, rock, more Water) External flash Black backdrop/surface Light reflectors (aluminium foils works great)

Dark Location

Tripod (optional, recommended)

Towel (optional, recommended)

Photoshop or Other Editing Software (Optional but highly recommended)

Create gorgeous photos quickly & easily. Get instant access to all of our Photoshop actions. That's 150+ Photoshop actions worth over \$130 for the low price of \$39. You save over 70% and you get all future updates free, for life.

The Setup

The setup is probably the most important part in taking a water splash photo. The first thing to do is get your backdrop and surface ready. Once you found your surface make sure the backdrop right behind it. Setup up your camera. What you want to do at this point is make sure all the camera sees is black (don't forget to take your lens cap off).

While getting the black backdrop and surface ready, make sure that you still have the room for the camera to be able to see a glass and water splashes. Place the almighty glass o' water into the setting, make sure every part is visible.

Get your external flash and reflector ready. You want the flash to be facing the side of the glass, not toward the camera nor the back drop. Then place the reflector on the other side. This allows great light, one side will have more focused light while the other has a medium light, this creates a great effect and is visible on both the glass and water. Make sure you have the item that you want to drop ready. For camera placement, you don't want the camera to be too close but not to far either. Make sure that you get the image but no water into your lens.

Moving onto the camera setup/settings. To begin use an aperture any where form f/4 to f/8. I found that f/5.6 works great. You don't want the image to be too bright nor too dark. As for shutter speed use 1/125s, it works great for a water splash. 1/250s worked great as well, this is something to experiment on. The ISO should be a low/medium ISO setting. Something like 300 ISO would do fine. You want the flash and reflector to do their jobs, if the settings on the camera do not allow that, you could end up with a blurry photo. Don't forget to use a RAW image over a JPEG.



It won't really make much of a difference if you use JPEG. If you are editing this in Photoshop I would highly recommend that you use a RAW image. Auto-focus works great for this, just make sure you have focus via Auto-focus before you do anything. If you prefer Manual focus for everything, that is fine, as they both work great. Finally, get a timer on your camera ready. This is important because you need to work very efficiently and won't have the time to press the capture button. I would use anywhere from 5-10 seconds.

Taking the Photo

This is where patience comes in handy. Once the timer is initiated and the item is in your hand, get ready to drop the item. You want to make sure that there are one to two seconds left till the photo will be taken, when that happens drop your item. Timing is key. You turn on the flash as soon as there is a splash/when the picture is captured it brings a better effect rather than if you leave the flash on the whole time. Leaving the external flash on the whole time will also create a nice effect and it takes less time, but it is not as good as of an effect and turning it on as soon as the splash is initiated.

Taking the photo is a process that is filled with trial and error, as I said timing is key. Make sure that you don't drop it from a location that is too high, it will create a huge splash that the camera may not capture, along with that, it can create a mess. Keep on doing this until you get the perfect photo, after a little practice this can be done with quickly and easily.

Photoshop

This is an optional step, but highly, highly recommended. Once you have your not-yet perfect photo, open it in Photoshop. The first thing you want to do is check if there is a reflection of the glass or splash on the picture, you can add or remove one depending on your liking. Onto more important matters. Create two new duplicate layers, you should have three layers in total. Change the layer mode of the second layer to overlay and lower the opacity to around 60% percent.

As for the third layer first, lower the contrast. Mess around with the contrast, see what works best with the photo. Create a layer mask to the third layer. Now using the paintbrush tool (white, feathered at 10%) fill in the bottom 1/4 of the image. Duplicate the third layer and lower the opacity to 60%.

You now have an amazing looking photo, we still have some final touch-ups to do. The photo should have some tiny drop lets of water on the sides you want to remove some of them, only a few, and only the ones on the sides. To do this first, merge visible. Then use the same brush used before, and change the colour to black. You probably will also need to scale the brush to a different size, the size should be relatively small. Begin removing the tiny droplets, only a few and only unwanted ones. If you like the effect with the little droplets, keep em' you can also add more.

Adding more is a very simple task, To add more droplets use the square select tool and select a droplet, now copy and paste them. Every time you paste it, rotate it and scale it so that the photo won't look weird. Don't add too many, it looks better with just a few. You should be done now. In result of your hard work you get an elegant, cool looking, perfect splash photo. With a little practice, you can master this in notime.

And here's ant example of splash water photography:

https://contrastly.com/an-introduction-to-splash-water -photography/



What is the Golden Hour?

This is a guest post from Adam Price from ACD Systems. They are the makers of ACDSee Ultimate 10 for Windows.

You may have heard the term 'golden hour' or 'magic hour'. These are figurative terms referring to the period of time just after sunrise or before sunset. These terms are interchangeable, and for the sake of keeping things simple, we'll use the term 'golden hour'.

The golden hour is a measurable time based on the sun's angle to the horizon. The length of time varies since it depends on where you are, the season, and weather conditions. Using a sunrise/sunset calculator [https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/] helps to determine when the golden hour will take place. There are also a number of iPhone and Android apps that calculate the local golden hour based on your location.

Why is this time so special? Lighting is a critical part of photography, but we'll get into that in a bit. First, we are going to talk about how to plan for shooting during the golden hour.

Getting Started

Before you know it, you can miss the golden hour. If you're not already out and ready to shoot when the golden hour starts, you're most likely going to miss it before you can pick your subject and get set up. It's best to plan ahead – pick your location ahead of time and get there an hour or two before you want to start shooting.

As mentioned before, the time and duration of the golden hour is determined by your location and the time of year. For instance, if you're close to the equator, the sun rises quickly and you may only have minutes, not an hour. On the other



hand, if you live in a northern location, the sun may not rise very high in the sky and you'll have a whole golden day.

What Makes the Golden Hour Magical?

Before sunrise and sunset, the sun is low in the sky, creating orange, yellow, and red light, hence the name, golden hour. Due to the sun being close to the horizon, and, therefore, traveling through more atmosphere than at other points in the sky, the light is soft and diffused with little contrast.

Practically any kind of photography – landscape, cityscape, portrait – they all benefit from the soft, golden light. This isn't just limited to outdoors either. Shoot indoors with the beautiful natural light shining through a large window.

How to Shoot in the Golden Hour

Shooting during the golden hour is much more versatile with regards to the direction of the light. You can have your subject directly facing the sun without causing them to squint or looked washed out. Additionally, you can have the sun behind your subject, creating a beautiful warm glow behind them. Create an eye-catching effect with lens flare, or open up your aperture for a boken effect. Play around with the position of the sun relative to your subject.

It's important to note that you want to adjust your <u>white balance</u>. Auto white balance will not be your friend, as it will work to neutralize the golden glow. It's best to set the white balance to cloudy.

Finally, take as many photos as you can. The lighting in the golden hour can change quite quickly so you will have an array of photos with many variations of light..

https://photofocus.com/2017/05/29/what-is-the-golden-hour/

The Basics of Creating a Long Exposure

by Bryan Esler

We've all had those "ooh" moments. When we see a type of photograph that we've longed to create, but have often been afraid to do so.

Four years ago, that was me, specifically when trying my first-ever long exposure. With my new (at the time) Nikon D800 in hand, Levi Sim by my side and a really cheap, light-weight tripod that could barely hold the camera, I ventured into the frozen tundra that is known as Winter in Michigan.

I had always been in awe of seeing the water look like glass. The starbursts of the street lights. The frozen-in-time movement. And once I learned the basics of creating a long exposure, I never stopped.

My first-ever long exposure, taken in sub-zero degree temperatures!

What You Need

You really only need three pieces of equipment. One, your camera that supports manual mode, and ideally, a bulb shutter speed. Two, a lens that's wide enough to capture what you desire. And three, a tripod that will hold your camera and lens.



Note that these are just the basics. If you want to take long exposures during the day, or for extended periods of time (over 30 seconds), you're going to need a Neutral Density (ND) filter as well. And a lot of patience.

The one piece of gear I didn't have for my first long exposure was a remote trigger. This helps to eliminate camera shake, and it lets you both start and stop your exposure. Something like the Vello FreeWave Plus Wireless Remote Shutter Release would be perfect.

Alternatively, you can use the exposure delay option on your camera, or if your camera has a smartphone app, you can use that (note that will greatly decrease your battery time).

Getting Started

First things first — compose your image. Focus on your subject and lock the focus. To do this, half-press the shutter button, and once your focus has been made, switch your lens from Auto Focus to Manual. This way, your camera doesn't have to search for its focus point when there's little (or no) contrast available to it during a long exposure.

From there, I recommend changing your camera to Manual mode. Close your aperture to its sweet spot — often between f/8 and f/11. Then lower the ISO to somewhere around 200 or 400. Slow down your shutter speed to 5 seconds. Then take a test shot.

What you should see is a shot that is at least starting to resemble what you envisioned. If your exposure is too bright, try lowering the ISO even more, or slightly increase your shutter speed.

If your exposure is too dark, slow down your shutter speed, and increase the ISO.



Continue to play around with your settings until you are happy with the image. Certainly don't be afraid to take your time with this and get the right look and feel you want!

Taking it a Step Further

But what if you want a 1-minute exposure...or perhaps even longer? You don't have to be limited by your camera's abilities. This is when the remote trigger I mentioned earlier comes in handy.

By switching your shutter speed to "Bulb," you control when the exposure starts and ends by clicking the shutter button on your remote.

Oftentimes though, without an ND filter, your exposure will just be

too bright. Think of an ND filter like putting on a pair of sunglasses. It shades your eyes, just like it shades your camera's lens. Putting on an ND filter allows you to slow down your shutter speeds dramatically. What otherwise would have been a 10-second exposure might now last for four minutes, depending on what "stop" of ND filter you have.

Once you've mastered the basics, you can try out some creative approaches to long exposures. Like...forgetting your tripod at the hotel.

Try, Try and Try Again!

There is no right or wrong way to take a long exposure. By following the basics, though, you can create something truly enlightening and be well on your way to creating a work of art!

https://photofocus.com/2017/05/27/the-basics-of-creating-a-long-exposure/

BIRDS OF THE NIGHT.

by Jim Thompson

Photographing birds of the night is probably an unusual subject, certainly a subject we do not give a lot interest to, but some remarkable photographs can be taken of the different types of owls in my local area. My interest started in the Atherton Tablelands where after dark on some of the quite country roads adjacent to Cane Fields, there are plenty of owls because they sit on posts watching the ground for mice and insects. In the Atherton Tablelands, it is quite common to find a few owls in one night, in the Hunter they can also be found but some nights you can go out and find nothing, however on the odd night you can be successful. Last season Barn Owls and Barking Owls were prominent in the Hunter Valley, I have found Tawny Frogmouths and Barn Owls.

When attempting to photograph birds of the night, a careful approach has to be made. I have tried a few methods, the method used by some photographers in the top end is probably the best, you move your car along in first gear, with the beam on watching all the posts each side of the road, the owls stand out.

Your camera and flash have to be set, there will be no time once you are on the subject. This is what I have found to be the best settings for my canon camera, flash and 100-400 lens, have your camera set on two programs, the first one will be AUTO for the subject as you place the car about 6 meters car lights on subject, this enables you to get



shots of the bird on the post whilst it turns its head backwards and forwards. You will find the owls are very tame and pay little attention to you, it also lets you auto focus on the subject, this setting is no good for freezing the subject as it lifts off, this brings us to our next approach. Have your camera preset on Shutter Priority TV high speed flash, set the shutter to about 1000 second, ISO 1500 and the flash only requires a click to change it to high speed

Now the reason for making this change: you will find you can walk straight up to the owl, probably getting as close as 2 meters, before the bird lifts off. I experienced one owl that would not lift off just kept watching the ground.

So here we have it, with your camera hand held stabiliser on, the bird lifts it wings or takes off, the program will freeze the action and you can end up with some great images. I should mention that the higher the ISO the shorter the duration of the flash system, so you don't want to be more then 2 metres maybe 3 metres away from the bird because the further away you are, the more the exposure drops off.



These are the methods I have used, I have tried focusing on the subject with a lamp tapped onto the lens, rather than the car lights but it was not as successful, all this requires a great deal of effort in finding subjects, which takes many hours of searching, so good luck with your owl hunting.

Barn Owls are found all over Australia, they prefer open wooded country rather than forest where the house mouse is the chief prey. Barking Owls are a noisy owl, it is one of the most pleasant sounds of the Australian bush. The Barking Owl is not at all shy and is at home around houses, it is found in forest, and woodland, both mammals and birds are the chief prey of the Barking Owl.

I should also mention that I am always interested in other readers with information on locations of bird life, on my wanted list especially are Azure Kingfishers. JT

Copied with permission from f/stop, the newsletter of the Federation of Camera Clubs NSW Inc.

How To Take A 'WOW' Photo

by David Peterson 21 comments

Some pictures are simply impossible to describe. They yank us right out of our seats and force us to pay attention. The only thing we have left to say is "Wow! I didn't think you could do that." It is the photographer's dream and ultimate goal to produce pictures like this, and even the best photographers will tell you it isn't something that happens



every day. While luck is definitely a factor, there are ways to increase your odds of creating a stunning image whenever you go out and shoot. Here are a few tips that will help you knock people to the floor with your photography.

Kill 'em with composition

You will notice that the picture above is not perfectly centered. This actually makes it much more visually appealing. The eye is forced to follow the outline of the trees across the photo, giving it more of a feeling of flow. Consider the rule of thirds. If you divide your photo into thirds and do your best to put the interesting subject matter somewhere along the thirds lines, you will often end up with a nice composition. Notice how the sun in the above picture occurs at the top third, a point of interest. Even though the rule of thirds doesn't apply all the time, it's a good bet. And good bets are all we can hope for when it comes to crafting an amazing image.

Shoot when the light is right

The most interesting photos are oftentimes very colorful. The light just after sunrise and just before sunset is the best for capturing real photographic drama. You're much more likely to find something interesting to shoot

when your subjects are illuminated by less harsh light. Change your daily exercise routine so you're out at sunrise and sunset every day with your camera. Bring a tripod along to keep your camera still for longer exposures (it's weight will help your running too!). Less light is available in the early morning and at dusk, so this is very important.

If you have an external flash, bring it along. The light in the early morning and at dusk shines to the sides of things. This means about half of your subjects will be in the shadows. You might need to throw some extra light on them in order to get the shot you want.

Try to find the right subjects at the right moments with the right weather

This is the part that constitutes most of the "luck" in photography. Nevertheless, you still have some degree of control. Look for things that stick out on their own. Finding an interesting subject in an interesting situation is one of the biggest challenges a photographer will face, and I only have one piece of advice. Go on a lot of walks and pay attention. Notice how the light hits a subject at 7:00 A.M., then at 7:15 A.M., and again at 7:30 A.M. Wait until the perfect moment, and take your shot.

Pay attention to the weather. Clouds can either ruin a photo or make it very dramatic. That's why it is important get out and about a lot. You might just get lucky and find some interesting cloud formation that might never occur on any other day.

Consider alternate exposures and angles

I created the picture above using a telephoto lens at f8 with a very fast shutter speed. This is an ideal aperture and shutter speed setting for creating a silhouette shot. The fast shutter speed creates an orange glow while completely blacking out the tree. If I had chosen a slower shutter speed, I would have gotten a completely different photo. The front side of the tree would have been partially illuminated, and the light from the sun would have blown all of the color out of the picture.

There are a lot of different aperture and shutter speed combinations that yield different creative results. My best advice is to try all of them! You can use these combinations to create brilliant night time pictures, lush green landscapes, perfect portraits, and stunning silhouettes. There is a creatively correct exposure for each type of picture you take. Find them all!

Your lens is a very important instrument. Some subjects look really interesting close up while others look better from a telephoto lens. At the very least, try to have some basic lenses that cover the entire range between 18mm and 200mm. If you are shooting with a wideangle, get as close as you can to your subject so you can give it a real presence in the picture.

Learn how to color correct and sharpen your images

It's the secret the pros don't tell you. There are ways to bump up colors and to make your subjects stand out like never before. If they aren't overdone, color correction and sharpening techniques are a must for almost every photo. In fact, the above photo was enhanced very slightly in Photoshop Elements. Try out these techniques, and you'll see the difference.

Be patient

The best pictures happen when all of the right factors come together in a moment that makes you run for your camera. This is not the kind of thing you have control over, so embrace it. Realize that if something around town is visually interesting at 8 A.M. every day, every photographer in town probably has dozens of great pictures of it. I once lived in a town with a lone tree in the lake. You could find 300 or so high quality pictures of the tree just by googling the name of the town. Don't add another tree to the pile. Do your own thing.Until then, keep going on walks and capturing the most beautiful time of the day

http://www.digital-photo-secrets.com/tip/202/how-to-take-a-wow-photo/

Photography Outings.

Bass Point Reserve - Shellharbour

Bass Point Reserve is a 72 hectare coastal jewel, located just south of Shellharbour Village and contains one of the few littoral rainforest areas in the Illawarra. The reserve is recognized as one of the most important archaeological sites on the NSW coast and is listed on the Australian Heritage Commission register. You will always be able to find something to photograph here.



Wings Over Illawarra 2017 [6th and 7th May]

Relive the past with a spectacular display of classic warbirds and amazing vintage aircraft of yesteryear. Be inspired by the Australian Defense Force as they present the best Aus-tralia has to offer. Loud, fast jets and formation flying will delight and provide you with an unforgettable experience as they perform breath-taking maneuvers above the beautiful Illawarra. Don't miss heart stopping aerial antics, flying displays, fantastic static displays, classic cars and motorbikes, a free Kid's Zone presented by McDonalds Illawarra, souvenirs and simulators - there is no better way to spend an unforgettable day with family and friends!



Illawarra Light Railway Museum - Albion Park

The whole family will love cheering and waving from the steam train as it

travels past the station and navigates its way through the quiet bushland setting in Albion Park. The museum also has tram and miniature train rides that let the children experience a piece of history that was enjoyed at fairgrounds by their parents and grandparents alike.



Photographing Light trails [star trails]

Star Trails, Set up an ultra-long exposure, position your camera on a Tripod, point it up at a clear night sky and see the path that the stars make once your image is developed.



A great chance to take some great photos.



This software will stack several same images together to give you top results.

We are on the web !!

www.daptocameraclub.org.au

www.facebook.com/groups/560318574135732/

Your Portfolio on our Web Site.

A number of our members have not taken up the service provided by our club on the website.

This is a place online where the public can see your photography expertise.

If you would like to have a portfolio on our site, showing **[20]** twenty of your best Photos, then please bring a USB pen drive to Jeff Gale at the next club night that has your name written on. You may wish to give them to me on a CD/DVD, that's OK, just please make sure that your name is on it.

The images need to be in the jpg format and be no bigger than 800 pixels on their longest side.

They need to be named 1.jpg, 2.jpg, 3.jpg up to 20.jpg in the order that you want them shown on the screen.

Once we allocate space to all who wish to use this club service we may be able to allow you to place more Photos in your portfolio.

Watch this space.....