

SPS Newsletter

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Well what a great start to 2023 we have had with three sets of engaging speakers so far. First we had Duncan Armour with his presentation 'North' which I thoroughly enjoyed. And then the humour and wonderful photographs of Chris Shepherd with his 'London Light: London Life' talk which I thought was great. I was particularly interested to see the different images of well-known London landmarks he had taken. And talk about dedicated, going out every lunch-time to practice his photography. Perhaps this is where I am going wrong ... I need to practice more! Solihull also doesn't have so many iconic landmarks, but I am sure I might come up with something original! And then there was David Saddler. Not sure his photography floated my boat but I appreciated how clever his ideas etc. were. Recently we had the 'Refresher Workshop' and I am happy that I now know how to do key-lines. So watch this space with my entries for future competitions. And hopefully some more of us may have felt confident enough to dip our toes into external competition waters and enter MidPhot this year.

So what's happening this month? Well, we have World Cancer Day on 4th February, raising awareness about cancer, educating more people about the disease, and encouraging governments to take action to make life-saving cancer treatment accessible to everyone, regardless of where they're from, thus preventing the illness and millions of cancer deaths. British Yorkshire Pudding Day takes place on 5th February, how yummy! Darwin Day on 12th February celebrates the birthday and life of Charles Darwin, the "Father of Evolution". 22nd February is World Thinking Day, celebrated every year by millions of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world. On this day, girl scouts are encouraged to celebrate their sisters from all different countries and think about them, and the impact that the Guides and the Scouts have on a global scale. Oh and let's not forget St Valentine making his annual appearance and for the Christian religion Ash Wednesday (also known as the Day of Ashes) marking the start of Lent, observed 46 days before Easter Sunday, and signalling the beginning of the forty days of Lent period. But my favourite day of February has to be Shrove Tuesday (otherwise known as Pancake Day). I shall be taking my pancakes fairly plain with some fresh lemon juice and a tiny sprinkling of sugar. How will you be taking yours, sweet or savoury?



With my very best wishes

Liz xx

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**MARGARET BIGGS (Mum)**

Mum was an active member of the Photographic Society and really enjoyed attending on Thursday evenings and entering all the competitions.

Over the years she won many competitions and picked up many trophies and certificates. Her photography took her all over the world on holidays and weekends away especially, the weekends/holidays with the Club and her favourite, was when she went on safari in Kenya when she was 63.

Mum was President of the Society in 2006 to 2007 and took on an active role with the social side of the Society.

Her funeral will take place at **12:30 pm on 21st February** at Robin Hood Crematorium and afterwards at the Solihull Retirement Village, Victoria Crescent, B90 2FH. Mum loved daffodils so we are asking everyone to wear a splash of yellow. She will be missed.

Many Thanks from Heather, Martin and Rosemary

02

Through the Lens

In January's Newsletter I was talking about photography equipment and that I was thinking of expanding my horizons by getting some new equipment. Well, as they say, "She's only gone and done it"! I am now the proud and happy owner of a Canon camera (new to me – but I am hoping it's provenance rubs off on my photography!) and 3 different lenses. I feel like a proper photographer now. So, watch this space, as I may well regale my efforts on learning how to use it with you all.

My first outing saw me going to Baddesley Clinton to practice using it. And here was Lesson No 1. Always remember to check what lens you have with you. I hadn't realised I had a macro lens on the camera so that put paid to me taking shots of the property and church which is what I had intended to do! But, every cloud has a silver lining as they say, and I did enjoy trying to do a bit of macro and taking the beautiful carpets of snowdrops.

I also patted myself on the back as I managed to read a piece in the manual (I don't really do manuals, I am more of a visual learner!) and worked out how to use the small screen to take a shot. I think I have a mountain to climb (Everest, Kilimanjaro...) in getting to grips with my new camera but as they say where there's a will there's a way.



03

What's 'On-Trend' for 2023?

I thought I would see what the main genres for photography are likely to be this year and here's what I found:

- Colourful Cityscapes.
- Creative Portrait Concepts.
- Digital Photo Collages.
- Fairytale Portrait Photography.
- Landscape.
- Travel Photography.
- Urban Photography.

And the predicted 'Hottest Photography Trends to be Aware of in 2023' are:

1. More Climate-Conscious Purchasing of photography equipment.
2. Return of the Self Portrait

As the selfie came to dominate social media news feeds, the credibility of the self-portrait took a severe knock. But some excellent self-portrait photographers are re-establishing the self-portrait as a serious art form. Their pictures are stylised and involve a lot of consideration, exploring themes of self-exploration and geopolitics. It's a trend that's picking up pace. You can expect to see some wonderful self-portraiture over the coming year.

3. The Rise of AI

For many, artificial intelligence (AI) is the topic of science fiction. But we're starting to see AI all over the place including the world of photography. For instance, we see AI technology in cameras. Elite cameras like the [Sony a7R V](#) use AI for more advanced autofocus. AI technology is used for faster and more accurate subject tracking. They have face- and eye-recognition features and they can predict a subject's movement and don't just respond to it.

Photo editing software is the other main place you'll see AI with Developers using it to simplify complex editing processes. With the help of AI, tedious and laborious tasks now have one-click solutions.

Skylum has been a pioneer of AI photo editing for the last couple of years. [Luminar Neo](#) is the best AI-powered software on the market. It uses AI to recommend presets for each photo you upload. But the headline features are its AI editing tools. You have AI powerline removal and AI sky replacement. AI saves a photographer time, effort, and money and it will continue to change photo editing for the foreseeable future.

4. Celebrate Age Diversity

Cultural diversity and body diversity have become important and relevant topics. Age diversity is no different and the trend is to photograph people of all ages undertaking activities together.



Why do people walk slowly in February?

Because it's not March!

5. Female Empowerment in Photography

Female empowerment focuses on women thriving in every industry they choose to pursue. It also highlights the importance of positive body image. Women of all ages, shapes, and sizes are worthy of being in photographs. You can document this in a variety of ways: focus on women representing the concept of a "girl boss"; photograph women working, playing sports, balancing family life, wearing bold clothes, or standing up for their rights. Peggy Shoots Film is a great photographer to follow if you want to celebrate your femininity. Her photography is bold, sexy, and fun, taking a more-is-more approach. Isabel Rovira is another outstanding female photographer. Her photography is closer to more traditional portrait and fashion photography, more subtle and nuanced, her female portraits a statement of womanly elegance.

6. Create Dark and Moody Backgrounds

Dark backgrounds are often used in fine art photography to create an edgy but classic feel. They're also popular in other photography genres, like still life, where they can make a subject look moodier. You've probably noticed them on many book covers and movie posters. The simplicity of a dark background can make a big difference in your work. It can turn a simple portrait into a thoughtful one, and it can transform a normal food photo into one that looks professional.

7. Embrace Vibrant Colours

Strong, bright colours are what we expect to see in the future. We believe this is to grab attention from the hundreds of thousands of images taken and shared daily. The stronger the colour, the louder it shouts. And it needs to if it wants to get noticed. Graffiti, wall paintings, and other outdoor designs are becoming trendy.

8. Vertical Is the Way

It's hard to imagine that the orientation of images can be a trend. Expect a photography trend of more vertical photos. Horizontal images had their place for landscapes and vertical for portraits. This is due to smartphones which captures images automatically as vertical unless you turn the phone sideways. This is a big change from DSLRs, SLRs, and mirrorless systems in their initial horizontal position.

9. Relaxed Wedding Photography

Wedding photography used to be a very formal act with everyone posed perfectly. Nowadays it has become less formal. Often self-capturing ideas are being used with Instax cameras and a guest book.

10. More Drone Activity

As drones become cheaper and better, more photographers will use them. The quality of images has become outstanding and helps create great content. Photography trends like drone wedding photography will grow and drone cameras will find their way into many other areas we didn't expect.

11. Serious Smartphone Photography

Smartphone technology moves at lightning speed, and the camera is one of the main areas of Smartphones are becoming a tool for serious photography, many artists now using them as their primary cameras.

12. Cloud Storage

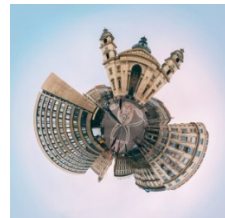
As technology advances, cameras gain better and better resolution. Higher resolution means bigger file sizes are needed to hold more information taken from the scenes you capture. If you're shooting RAW, the Canon 5D Mark IV averages 40 MB a shot. With increased file sizes comes an even greater need for storage. And this storage needs to be mobile, as many travel and work on the road. So hello, cloud storage, a way to store and move your images around wirelessly allowing you to access your images anywhere. You need a connection to the internet so you can edit your images on the go.

13. Film, Film, Film

Film photography trends are growing. You might not believe so, as we constantly see manufacturers dropping their film-based products, but film photography is still very strong among professionals and enthusiasts alike.

14. 360 Photography Trend

360-degree photography is going to be a big photography trend again this year. This type of photography gained a foothold in product photography, where the subject would turn as the camera captured. Photographers are changing how we shoot by turning the camera 360 degrees to capture the world around it. Time-lapse photography is something that benefits from this process. There is huge potential for panoramic and on top of that, you can create tiny globe images, which, when done correctly, look great. If you don't have the capital to invest in an expensive 360 camera you can recreate the same technique using a tripod with a special 360-degree head, like the Vanguard Alta Pro. Or you can transform panoramas with Photoshop.



15. Lose the DSLR

We have entered a new era of photography. Camera manufacturers have started to pour their resources into new types of devices, the recent change being towards digital mirrorless cameras. These systems are smaller, quieter, and lighter while retaining great resolution. The Sony a7R IV full frame mirrorless camera gives you a 61 MP resolution, with 10 fps, better and faster than most DSLRs on the market.

So why carry around the extra weight? As more and more photographers travel from place to place, a camera like this comes in handy. A mirrorless camera presents no noise for events where noise can be distracting. Does this mean that the DSLR is dead? No. There are still some excellent DSLR cameras available but it does mean the days of the DSLR are numbered. Canon and Nikon are the main DSLR camera brands. but both are now focusing on developing mirrorless models.



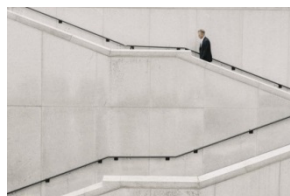
What month is the best to tell a lie?

February!



16. Embrace Minimalism

Complexity has always been used in photography. Photographers use so many different techniques on top of composition and colour management. With the overuse of filters, photographers who want to be taken seriously should take a step back. They should look for something that makes their different - a more minimalist approach. Less “noise” means more focus on the subject, the more stripped down you can make your images, the better, aim for simpler backgrounds.



04

The Colour Red

With St Valentine's day red is very much the colour of February. Over history red has represented all things dramatic and passionate from famed romances to flags of revolution. But what is it about red that draws our attention, and to what does red owe its daring connotations?

The impact of red can be understood in its early influence across the world, as well as the immediate way in which humans perceive the colour. It has been used for decoration for millennia, and is the first colour humans see after black and white. It's also believed to be the first basic colour term to be defined in most languages after black and white. Red ochre pigments were used to decorate caves in prehistoric times, and it was frequently used in ritualistic ways, from marking gravestones to painting the skin of the deceased – examples found date back to the Upper Palaeolithic era, estimated at between 50,000 and 12,000 years ago.

The Aztecs and Mayans discovered red dye from a cochineal beetle as far back as 2000 BC. This made red the first colour to be used for dyeing, and it was used in everything from murals to textiles and feathers. The impact of the tiny cochineal beetle was immense - when the Spanish later introduced the dye to Europe it led to widespread use of red cloth. The highly saturated, rich crimson hue was greatly valued as it shone brighter than the varieties available in Europe at the time – such as St John's Blood, which was ten times less potent than dye produced by the cochineal. Dyes were mostly available in yellows, greens and blues – even purple, but genuinely vivid red was hard to come by. Dyers often used Brazilwood, lac and lichens, but its qualities were poor in comparison, a brownish or orange hue being produced, and it tended to fade quickly. By the 1570s, cochineal had become one of the most profitable trades in Europe. It produced the colour we know as Carmine Red, which would be used by nearly all the great 15th and 16th century painters, from Rembrandt to Vermeer, van Dyck to Rubens with oil on canvas. Its popularity then endured into later periods, with artists such as Gainsborough and Turner. Often, Carmine was painted on top of other reds to give oil paintings a deep crimson glaze, but it also had a tendency to fade in sunlight.

In the Christian faith, red is commonly worn by members of the clergy to represent the blood of Christ, but is paradoxically used to illustrate all that is unholy in many depictions of the Devil and the burning flames of Hell. Red has also long been the colour given to battle, leadership and warfare due to its connotations with blood and anger.



Mars, the hot-tempered god of war in Roman mythology was depicted wearing the colour red. And in real battle scenes, warriors, samurais and soldiers across the globe often wore red uniforms, such as Roman gladiators who sported red tunics and cloaks. Away from the front line, red cloths were used to enrage beasts in bull fighting contests, and it is believed that the phrase 'seeing red' evolved from this sport, which we now deploy to suggest blind anger and rage in human emotion.

Red is known as the colour of love, passion and romance due to its connotations with the heart and the blood pumping through our veins. Think St Valentine and Cupid in red robes, or Romeo and Juliet. Many romantic figures in paintings are depicted with red hues. In Jean Honore Fragonard's 1778 painting *The Bolt*, a red curtain is draped over a bed where a young man and his lover are wrapped in a passionate embrace; Rembrandt's *The Jewish Bride* (1667) depicts a young woman in a vivid red gown in a tender pose with a man – his hands over her heart; and the painting *Radha and Krishna Walk in a Flowering Grove* (anonymous artist, circa 1720) shows the goddess of love Radha in a red sari, with a deep red sunset behind the romantic couple.

In many cultures across Asia, particularly in India and China, the colour red is most commonly linked to luck, good fortune and happiness, and this is often apparent when it comes to weddings. Brides traditionally wear red in India and China, and in southern and eastern Europe many brides wear red veils. Red jewellery is often worn at wedding ceremonies, and in various Indian religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism, married women wear red bindi dots in the centre of their forehead.

The way in which the human eye sees red has played a monumental part in how we respond to the colour. Red has also been proven to generate more of an immediate emotional response than any other colour and is one of the most vibrant colours we see, thanks to its longer wavelength. It's no surprise then that it's the colour used to alert, signal and warn people of potential danger, and also to prohibit or stop – from traffic lights to hospital signs, hazard labels to construction signs. If a pirate ship raised a red flag, it meant that no mercy would be shown, and when motorcars were a new commodity, red flags were waved to announce their presence to those driving horse and carts. It's also the colour used most to draw attention – seen in celebrities lining exclusive red carpets and the thick, velvet curtains opening to a theatrical performance on stage. In studies, bright shades of red have even been found to reduce lethargy.

As the perception of red began to shift towards that of warning, it came to represent amoral or adulterous motives. In the Bible's Book of Revelation, the Whore of Babylon is described as wearing red and 'sits upon a scarlet coloured beast'. 'Red Light Districts' across European and Asian cities came to showcase the relationship between red and promiscuity.

The red flags of the French Revolution played a huge role in the colour coming to signify liberation, freedom and left-wing political movements from the 18th Century. Red became the colour of the people in many of the world's communist and labour parties (eg. France, Russia, Cuba, Vietnam and China), the red star flag being the most commonly used symbol of communism. During the Russian Civil War, the so-called 'Red Army' fought on the side of the Bolsheviks for socialism, those in support of the Cuban Revolution wore a red and black armband, whilst communist revolutionary leader Chairman Mao, who founded the People's Republic of China, started up the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, and published what is commonly known as *The Little Red Book*. A compilation of Mao's speeches and messages, the book includes many quotations highlighted for emphasis in a red type. Posters, badges and artworks of Mao depicted in red ink were mass produced and circulated around the country, many illustrating the phrase 'Chairman Mao is the red sun in our hearts'.

From love to war, passion to anger, safety to danger or organised religion to communism, red is a colour of stark contrasts. But on either end of the spectrum, whether associated with negative or positive energy, red has through the ages stayed true to its audacious nature. This, combined with our innate response to the colour, remind us that it's no surprise we continue to employ red to make an impact, in more ways than one. And on this note how many times have we heard judges say the subject matter would have benefitted from some red in the image (someone in a red coat perhaps)?

05

Places to Visit

Hill Close Gardens, Warwick

Not too far to travel to are the hidden hedged gardens of Warwick, offering rare survivals of Victorian gardens once used by townfolk living above their business to escape from the crowded town, now lovingly restored and nationally recognised. The sixteen garden plots have a variety of plants and designs, with summerhouses, and there is a Victorian-style Glasshouse. There are eight historic Victorian summerhouses. Located on the west side of Warwick, beside the Racecourse it is an interesting place to visit at any time of the year. Admission fee is £5.

Winter opening hours

November to March
Gardens – Open Tue – Sat,
11 am – 4 pm
Last Gardens entry, 3.30 pm
Closed Sun and Mon
Tearoom – Closed

Summer opening hours

April to October
Open Every Day
11 am – 5 pm
Last Gardens entry, 4.30 pm
Tearoom – Open Weekends and Bank
Holidays

If you have any suggestions on places to visit, days out, what's on etc. do please let me know and I will include them in the Newsletters. I am sure other members would appreciate some ideas and suggestions.

06

A New Home Wanted

Our friend and colleague Chris Johnson is having a bit of a 'clear-out', and has a range of studio lighting equipment, including studio lights, remotes, stands etc. (pictured), he no longer uses. Not pictured are some backdrops and stands.

Chris is happy for one of our members, who can collect them, to have the items (for a modest donation to Club funds). Contact Chris directly to confirm what is there, and arrange collection: chrisjohnson956041@gmail.com





07

A Little Teaser of a Competition ...

Last month I set a little teaser competition. Thank you to those of you who sent me your answers. The answers are given below in red. Congratulations go to both Phil Moorhouse and Mick Schilling who both got both answers right. So being the fair minded person I am I have decided to award them both as winners with each of them receiving a prize.

Question 1: What gets harder to catch the faster you run?

Answer: **Your Breath**

Question 2: The more of these you take, the more appear behind you.
What am I?

Answer: **Steps**

And here's February's Little Teaser:

On Sunday the Club had an outdoor photography session organised by Mick Schilling at Kingsbury Water Park, which several members went along to. Here is a photograph taken on the day which I thought would be fun to use for a 'Caption Competition'.



So think of a 'Caption' for it and email this to me at 172elizabeth@gmail.com by no later than **28th February 2023**.



Why did the man get fired from the calendar factory?

He took a few days off in February thinking no-one would notice!



08

Photography Podium

'Monochrome' Competition

Another super competition of prints and digital images. Well done to our newer members for entering and impressing the judge.



	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
First Place:	<i>Beach Peddler</i>	Mick O'Malley	<i>Bull Elephant</i>	Kevin Watts	<i>Mother and Child*</i>	Jolanta B Axon
Second Place:	<i>A Far Away Look</i>	Graham Newman	<i>One for the Road</i>	Dave Ward	<i>Alongsides</i>	Sue Pearmain
Third Place:	<i>Feeding Magpie</i>	Graham Newman	<i>Swans and Cygnets</i>	Tony Dyson	<i>Zebra Submission</i>	Jenny Ladbroke
Highly Commended:	<i>Dubai Dusk</i>	Mick O'Malley	<i>New York Skyline</i>	Chris Lee	<i>Reaching for the Light</i>	Jenny Ladbroke
Commended:	<i>Marianne</i>	David Stocks	<i>Arches</i>	Kevin Watts	<i>It's a Secret</i>	Chris Mallett
	<i>A Frosty Packwood</i>	Michael Prince			<i>Fences on the Dunes</i>	Chris Mallett

PRINTS:

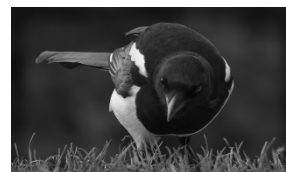
Group 1



Beach Peddler

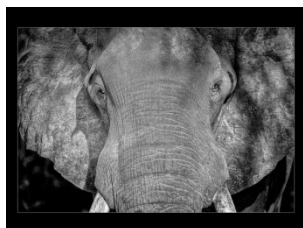


A Far Away Look



Feeding Magpie

Group 2



Bull Elephant



One for the Road



Swans and Cygnets

Group 3



Mother and Child



Alongsides



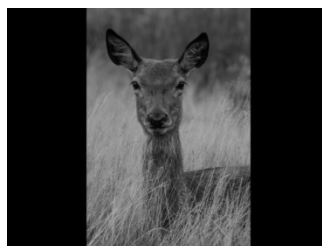
Submission



DIGITAL IMAGES:

	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
First Place:	<i>H-2-O</i>	Michael McShane	<i>Tranquil Bay</i>	Chris Lee	<i>Powering Through *</i>	Chris Mallett
Second Place:	<i>Fallow Deer Portrait</i>	Georgina Foxwell	<i>Shot at Dawn</i>	Dave Ward	<i>Percival and Calypso</i>	Jolanta B Axon
Third Place:	<i>Canoeist</i>	Mick O'Malley	<i>The Little Thinker</i>	Jan Cochrane	<i>We'll Meet Again</i>	Phil Moorhouse
Highly Commended:	<i>Horse Portrait</i>	Rosie Thompson	<i>Carnewas at Bedruthan</i>	Kevin Watts	<i>A Moment of Reflection</i>	Jenny Ladbrooke
	<i>Wind Power</i>	Helen Beston			<i>Sheep!</i>	David Steele
	<i>Pigeon Man</i>	John Leighton				
	<i>Hartland Point Lighthouse</i>	Michael Prince				
Commended:	<i>Clonmacnoise</i>	Helen Dufficy	<i>Manhattan Night Skyline</i>	Chris Lee	<i>Coming in to Land</i>	David Venables
	<i>Abyss</i>	David Stocks	<i>Iguaso Falls</i>	Hazel Lane	<i>Winter Web</i>	Mick Schilling
	<i>In Need of TLC</i>	Elizabeth Smith				
	<i>Tap, Tap, Tap</i>	Elizabeth Smith				

Group 1

*H-2-O**Fallow Deer Portrait**Canoeist*

Group 2

*Tranquil Bay**Shot at Dawn**The Little Thinker*

Group 3

*Powering Through**Percival and Calypso**We'll Meet Again*

09

External Recognition



Photographic Alliance of Great Britain

The Club recently submitted entries for the GB Cup 2023. Of the images submitted the top 12 images are counted for the final result.

In the **'Open'** we submitted 24 images and scored 139, coming 25th out of 66 clubs. In the **'Nature'** we scored 133 and came 33rd out of 63 clubs

Although the competition had a much lower entry than usual we can give ourselves as a Club a big pat on the back and be very proud of our performance. Well done to everyone, we have some super photographers and high standard images constantly being produced by Club members that stand up well to external scrutiny. Particular mention should be made of Kevin Watts' image 'Taking a Peek Around the Door' and Sue Pearmain's 'A Mother's Love' that were entered into the 'Open' category, each image scoring a very commendable 13 points.

The GB Cup 'Open' 2023 - Entries

Christine Mallett	It's a Secret
Christine Mallett	High Wind on the Dunes
Christine Mallett	Piggy in the Middle
Christine Mallett	Running the Bull
David Steele	Cuboids and Prisms
David Venables	Incoming Tide
David Venables	Tranquillity
David Venables	Tree Trunk and Leaves
David Venables	Embleton Bay
Jenny Ladbroke	The Waif
Jenny Ladbroke	Floating
Jenny Ladbroke	Padley Gorge
Jenny Ladbroke	The Chefs Table
Jolanta Bujalska-Axon	Simply Wild Garlic
Jolanta Bujalska-Axon	Sunflower Still Life
Jolanta Bujalska-Axon	Victorian Pipe Smoker
Jolanta Bujalska-Axon	Allium Seed Heads
Kevin Watts	Taking a Peek around the Door
Kevin Watts	2-0 England Mama Mia
Liz Smith	Looking up at Kew
Sue Pearmain	Vanishing Giant
Sue Pearmain	A Mothers Love
Tim Hutchin	Early Morning Flight
Tim Hutchin	Sitting on the Fence

The GB Cup for Nature 2023 - Entries

Christine Mallett	Hyena Carrying Buffalo Leg
Christine Mallett	Newborn Atlantic Grey Seal with Mother
Christine Mallett	Red Squirrel Lunching in the Snow
Christine Mallett	Wheeling Knots at Sunset
David Venables	Bison Wallowing
David Venables	Brown Rat
David Venables	Grey Wagtail
David Venables	Pintail
Jane Roby	Red Squirrel
Jane Roby	Wren Splits
Jane Storer	Bee Eaters
Jane Storer	Leaping Kudu
Jane Storer	Lion Kill
Jane Storer	Olive Baboon
Jenny Ladbroke	Rhino Mudbath Time
Jolanta Bujalska-Axon	Stonechat on Teasels
Kevin Watts	African Wild Dog Pup
Kevin Watts	Home Alone
Sue Pearmain	Elephant Shaking Grass
Sue Pearmain	Kirks Dik Dik Etosha
Sue Pearmain	Lappett Faced Vulture Waiting
Sue Pearmain	White Backed Vulture Quarrel
Tim Hutchin	Jaguar with Cayman
Tim Hutchin	Yacare Cayman

If any of you enter any competitions and get any external recognitions like this then please drop me a line so that I can add it into the Newsletter. It's great to see what everyone is up to and the accolades they receive.



See you next month!