

I-M-A-G-I-N-E

THORNBURY CAMERA CLUB NEWSLETTER - FORUM SPECIAL

Issue 110

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Club Forum - how are things going?

The forum has been the most significant change in how the club communicates for several years. So on the eve of the AGM, perhaps it's a good time to set out what's happened since launch. This special forum-centred issue of the newsletter looks into its first three months ... and beyond.

The team

All aspects of the forum, either technical or otherwise, are being shepherded by Steve Skinner, Simon Meeds and Brian McBride. They've been busy!

A healthy take-up in numbers

The forum was launched to members on January 30th. Since then (up to mid-April)

- 40 out of 49 regular members have signed up, and 4 out of 11 beginners.
- More than half our members have accessed the site in the last two weeks
- 17 members have raised at least one post.
- 253 posts have been raised so far, with 536 comments and 95 likes.

- Leading the way is the Coffee Break Category, with 67 posts, 153 comments and 57 likes.

Using up our free capacity?

When the forum was established we were allocated 500mb of free storage. However, such has been the uptake and use that we are quickly using up this free storage. Steve, Simon and Brian are monitoring things and expect that sometime in the coming months we'll need to start deleting some of the older material. Watch this space and follow the advice below on image size. But in the meantime – PLEASE DON'T STOP POSTING.



For the techies

The forum has been designed using simple web development tools from Wix, who host the site for us. We're using their free plan, but this does mean that we see their name and logo at various places on the site. To complete the picture, the regular Club Website uses another provider called Weebly who are a competitor of Wix. We chose Wix for the forum because they have a simple add-in specifically for running a forum-type site, which Weebly does not. Other than the link to the forum on the club website, the forum is completely separate.



Using our storage wisely

Help us to manage space on the forum by restricting the size of your images when/if possible:

- While 1200*1600 is good for club images, web images can still work well at smaller sizes (800*600 for example)
- Use 70-80% quality unless you really need higher quality.

Challenge Update

Members will recall the challenge highlighted in the previous newsletter to come up with an image that encapsulated 'Challenges' and thus become the chosen image for the Challenges category in the forum. Well, those who have read the posts will know that Steve won, but actually it's Simon's entry that adorns the 'Challenges' category. How so? It's all to do with postcard aspect ratio constraints and the

applicability (or not) of tall images. Well that was Challenge #1. What is Challenge #2?

The latest one could win you a prize at the Games Evening on 5th June. Basically, which single image that you have taken since last June do you think is your best? All the information can be found in the Challenges category. (We'll be emailing information to those who haven't yet joined the forum - everyone can enter!)



Brief Reminders

Please use your Profile to introduce yourself to other club members – new or old! Have a look for the 'Making a Good Profile' post in the 'About the Club Forum' category for guidance on what to do.

Please don't critique other people's images unless they've requested comments – either by posting to the 'How to Improve My Image' category or by requesting help in their post.



Category Header Images

We're keen to update the Category header images, so if you have an image that you think would suit a Category feel free to add a post with your image to that category. Mention that it's a candidate and we'll take a look.





Upcoming Changes

Here's some advance notice of a few changes that are in the pipeline for the run-up to the summer break. We'll let you know when each change will actually be made, but meanwhile feel free to ask questions or make comments.

A New Category for Sharing Images

Currently most people who want to share an image, post it to the 'Coffee Break' Category. In there, image-sharing posts are mixed in with other types of general discussion posts. Whilst this is not a problem per se, we think enough people are sharing images to warrant a new category specifically for this.

Making Images More Visible

At the moment, there is no way of telling whether a post has an image attached except by opening the post. During the launch presentation back in January, someone did ask about having thumbnails visible when looking at a list of

posts. This is possible and very simple to achieve but changes the way that the list looks - from a straight list to a 'card' view. Have a look at our test site to see this for yourself: <https://postmasterthornbur.wixsite.com/xyzforum/forum>

Club Announcements: Blog

Something else mentioned at launch was a place for announcements from the Committee. This can be done using a Blog, where we can restrict who is able to raise new posts but members will be able to view and comment thereafter. We plan to start this over the summer when we will use it to let folk know about summer outings (information will also be available on the club website).

Categories or All Posts?

Currently, whenever you click on the 'Forum' menu option, or when you 'Access the Forum' using the link from the Club website, the first page you see is a list of Categories.

Stuck? Unsure?

If anyone is having problems, technical or philosophical, with the forum please contact one of the team at any time. You can also email Steve on postmaster.thornburycameraclub@gmail.com on any issues or concerns that may be limiting your use of the forum.

Several people have mentioned that they look through the Forum by going to the 'All Posts' view. We have an option to change the opening page to show this page instead and so would like to canvas opinion on whether this would be the favoured option.



Please visit the 'About the Club Forum' category and find the post called 'Categories or All Posts' where you'll find a poll for you to help decide which is preferred.