

# SPS Newsletter

## Welcome

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Would you believe it we are now in and nearing the end of the final month of 2022, and the 'Big Day' and period of "eat, drink and be merry" upon us. I am pleased to report that progress with my Advent Calendar has gone well, I think the saying is "A chocolate a day keeps the bugs away ...!" Imagine if we had an 'Annual Calendar', 365 days of chocolate ... heaven, but the stress of keeping up with opening the windows might get a bit much!

I read earlier this month that on 3<sup>rd</sup> December we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the text (SMS) message. What would we do without it now? The first text message was sent to a mobile 'phone by a Vodafone engineer, Neil Papworth, in Berkshire (UK) to test out the technology. He sent the message to one of the firm's bosses who was at a Christmas party. Guess what the message was – 'Merry Christmas!' He didn't get a reply! The 'phone he sent it on was a new Orbitel 901 which weighed 2.1kg, yes that's right it was heavy – roughly the equivalent of 12 standard iPhone 14s today! Originally texts were limited to 160 characters long. At its peak 'phone users exchanged billions of SMS (Short Message Service) annually and in 2010 the word 'texting' entered the Dictionary. In 2021 in the UK 40 billion texts were sent, down from 150 billion in 2012. WhatsApp is now more popular with 100 billion WhatsApp messages sent worldwide every day. So on Christmas Day when you are texting relatives and friends, whatever app or platform you may be using, raise your glass to Neil Papworth who changed the technology we use and how we communicate. Wouldn't it have been great if this year I could have Whatsapped Father Christmas with my Christmas Wishlist rather than sending it by snail mail ....!

We have finished off our year at the Club with some interesting speakers, recently had the Christmas Meal at Fulford Heath Golf Club and the very enjoyable fun 'Christmas Knock-Out' competition. 2023 beckons with a packed Programme that I am sure we are all looking forward to. Thank you our Committee Members for all your hard work and efforts on the membership's behalf, it is appreciated.

May I wish you all, whatever you will be doing, wherever you may be and whoever you are with this Christmas and New Year period, that you have a very happy, enjoyable and peaceful time. I hope 2023 brings all you wish for in your hopes and dreams. We certainly have a busy year with King Charles III's coronation in May and for the golfing buffs amongst us the Solheim Cup and Ryder Cup in September ... I can't wait, "Come on Europe". There are some notable anniversaries: 250 years since Captain James Cook and his crew became the first Europeans to venture south of the Antarctic Circle; 100 years since Howard Carter opened the door to Tutankhamun's tomb; the 70th anniversary of the first James Bond novel; the 75th anniversary of the founding of the National Health Service (NHS). Oh and 2<sup>nd</sup> January is 'World Introvert Day' (not quite sure how we "celebrate" that one!) and 14<sup>th</sup> January 'World Logic Day' (that's a new one on me!).



With my very best wishes  
Liz xx

## 02

## Through the Lens

I thought a little bit on 'Christmas Photography' would be appropriate in this section. At this time of year there is so much opportunity to try out different photography techniques 'in-camera' as well as 'post-processing' (crikey I sound like I know what I am talking about here ...!). And the wealth of material is endless with all of the decorations, lights and activities that are normally taking place over the festive period. A quick consultation with 'Professor Google' threw up loads of articles, projects and ideas to try etc. So, if you are at a bit of a loss of what to do over the festive period or need some idea refreshments put your surfing pants on, get on the internet and I am sure you will find something to spark your interest, it certainly has mine. And be honest, when reading this article had you ever heard of the term 'Bokeh' before? Hands up, I hadn't but what a lovely word to describe it in a photograph which I have seen many times. I will leave you to read on and learn about it. So to whet your appetites here are a few 'tips' I found about Christmas Photography:

### Photograph People

The Christmas portraits that really shine have the focus point set on the subject's eyes, which show genuine emotions. The eyes are where we look when talking to a person, and the same goes in photography. We automatically look straight to the eyes, therefore it is vital to make sure that they're in focus.

For Christmas group portraits though, you're safest using a **smaller aperture**. Start off shooting at F/11, particularly if there are children in the shot who might not stay still for long enough. If you do have wriggly children in your shot, make sure your **shutter speed** goes no slower than 1/125th to avoid motion blur.

To set the Christmas spirit in your shots, get up close with your subjects in order to fill the frame. One of the wonderful parts of Christmas photography is spending time with your family, who are more than likely already comfortable being photographed by you, so experiment!

To ensure that your images clearly set the time of year and the celebration, try to include some Christmas decorations like the Christmas tree in the background of your images.

For a family/group portrait, sit everyone down in front of the tree and surround them with presents or decorative objects to truly set the scene. Use a tripod and self-timer so that you don't miss out too! Try not to leave any empty space in-between people, as this can give the impression of omission. Throughout the day, try to take some candid group shots too, family members laughing, pulling crackers or carving the meat.

### Pick Out Textural Images

Lighting your scene correctly with your Christmas photography will make a huge difference. This is especially true if you are trying to emulate the magical atmosphere.

Indoor lighting can be tricky with the warm Christmas lights. Make sure that your white balance is set correctly for your wonderful white Christmas lighting. Generally speaking, the higher your Kelvin number, the cooler your shot will appear. This will differ in every house as not everyone uses the same bulbs. Household lighting tends to cast warm tones. Therefore, you will need to counter it using an incandescent white balance setting to counteract the warm colour temperature.

### **Shoot in Aperture Priority Mode**

Taking your Christmas photographs in Aperture priority (A/Av) mode allows you to take control over your depth of field. This removes the headache of worrying about shutter speed or ISO. Shooting in aperture priority gives you easy adjustment options throughout the day, as well as for quick transitions between candid portraits and close-ups of delicious food.

For example, think of a shot of the family sat around the table. You may want to use a mid to small aperture (F/8) to ensure everyone is featured clearly, whereas a bauble on the tree would require a large aperture (F/2.8) for that stunningly out of focus, evergreen backdrop.

### **Camera Settings for Bokeh**

There's nothing better than seeing the elation on a child's face upon discovering Santa has been during the night, eaten his mince pie and left a sack of presents!

To make sure that you don't miss a shot, switch your camera to burst mode (or continuous shooting drive mode) so that you can absorb every second. Make sure that your eyes are drawn to the main subject with nothing too distracting in the back.

To work around the problem of a busy background either zoom in close to your subject (which compresses the background) or use a large aperture such as F/2.8 to blur out the background instead.

### **What is Bokeh?**

Bokeh translates from Japanese as the 'quality of blur'. Some beginner photographers' mis-understand bokeh only as the appearance of those magical glowing blurry ball effects in the background of photos. While that is a formation of bokeh it's not solely found in background light. It is more about the overall quality of blur in the image.

Bokeh can be formed in the background AND/OR foreground of a photo and it doesn't have to have light orbs in it.

Portrait photographers are big advocates of using bokeh in their shots as it has the ability to isolate a subject in a busy scene drawing attention to them. Whereas landscape photographers tend not to employ bokeh that much as their discipline tends to rely on a wider depth of field (DoF).

### **General**

Using a shallow depth of field will keep your subject in focus and blur the background. To achieve this, you need to use a small f-number. If you're not familiar with the manual mode, set your camera to Aperture priority, then choose f/1.4 or f/2.8, whatever your lens allows, and start shooting.

Use the shutter speed creatively. You can freeze things with a fast shutter speed or create a motion blur with a slow one. If you are using a slow shutter speed, use a tripod to avoid camera shake.

Change your perspective. Always photographing at eye-level can make your images look dull. To get more interesting shots, you need to take photos from different angles. You can crouch, climb on a chair or photograph the party going on in the living room from the top of the stairs. Try them all out and see what difference changing your perspective can make.



Knock, knock who's there?

Felix

Felix Who?

Felix-cited about Christmas!

## 03

## Common Problems and how to avoid them Edition 8

*By Mick Schilling*

### The Image Isn't Level

One of my main bug-bears – “it's not level, which ruins it for me....”  
This is actually an unforgivable one for me, as it is so easy to avoid.

Take care when shooting. Switch any grids on which might be available in the viewfinder or on the screen. Some cameras have a built-in level gauge. Check the screen after shooting. Don't forget to take your glasses with you – if you can't see the screen you won't be able to check the images! Tripods often have a level built-in too, or you can stick it onto the tripod.

It can easily be sorted in post processing, even in the most basic software. So even if you're on a speedboat in the mid-Atlantic, you can straighten it afterwards.

The main reason that this is my bug-bear though, is that we all view the images on a screen. The screen has straight sides and top and bottom. We can easily reference the verticals and horizontals. Just zoom in a bit and drag the image to the edge and line them up – if it's out you'll see it, and once seen it will just be there glaring at you – and the judge – for as long as you look.

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## 04

### December

December is the twelfth and final month of the year in the Julian and Gregorian calendars and is also the last of seven months to have a length of 31 days. December got its name from the Latin word 'decem' (meaning ten) because it was originally the tenth month of the year in the calendar of Romulus c. 750 BC which began in March. The Saxon word for the month was Giuli whilst the Germanic name was 'Heil-mond' (Holy Month).

December's birthstones are Turquoise (considered a symbol of good fortune and success), zircon, or tanzanite. Its flower is Narcissus or Holly and its zodiac signs are Sagittarius (23<sup>rd</sup> November to 21<sup>st</sup> December) and Capricorn (22<sup>nd</sup> December to 19<sup>th</sup> January).

December is full of important days:

- **6th - Saint Nicholas Day** St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, inspires traditions around the world from hunts for presents to stockings or shoes filled with sweets.
- **13<sup>th</sup> – St. Lucia’s Day** Long associated with festivals of light. Before the Gregorian calendar reform in 1752, her feast day occurred on the shortest day of the year (hence the saying “Lucy light, Lucy light, shortest day and longest night”).
- **18<sup>th</sup> December** marks the beginning of **Hanukkah** (also spelled **Chanukah**). An eight-day winter “festival of lights,” which begins each year on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev. Because the Hebrew calendar is based on the **lunar cycle**, the dates of Jewish holidays according to the Gregorian calendar change from year to year. For this reason, the beginning of Hanukkah can range from late November to late December. In short, Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after a group of Jewish warriors defeated the occupying Greek armies. The festival celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and of spirituality over materiality.
- **21<sup>st</sup> December** is the **Winter Solstice**—the astronomical first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere.
- **25<sup>th</sup> December** is **Christmas Day**, a Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.
- **26<sup>th</sup> December** is **Boxing Day** (Canada, UK) and the first day of **Kwanzaa**.
- **31<sup>st</sup> December** is New Year’s Eve. Kiss the person you hope to keep kissing!

Around the world countries marked New Year’s Eve in different ways. In Thailand, it was once tradition to fire guns to frighten off demons. In China, firecrackers routed the forces of darkness. In Denmark, they throw plates and glasses against each others’ front doors to banish bad spirits. In Ecuador, it’s tradition to burn effigies of famous people to destroy bad “juju” from the past year and start fresh. In the United States, many watch the ball drop in New York’s Times Square. In other countries, many people wait for the church bells or the chimes of clock towers to ring out.

Many New Year’s traditions involve food. Here are a few:

- In Spain, people attempt to eat 12 grapes during the 12 strokes of midnight! Tradition says that if they succeed before the chimes stop, they will have good luck for all 12 months of the coming year.
- In the southern USA, black-eyed peas and pork foretell good fortune.
- Eating any ring-shaped treat (such as a doughnut) symbolises “coming full circle” and leads to good fortune.
- In Dutch homes, fritters called *olie bollen* are served.
- The Irish enjoy pastries called bannocks.
- In India and Pakistan, rice promises prosperity.
- Apples dipped in honey are a Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) tradition.
- In Swiss homes, dollops of whipped cream, symbolising the richness of the year to come, are dropped on the floors (and allowed to remain there!).



What does a clock do when it’s really hungry?

It goes back for seconds!

New Year's Day was once the time to swap presents.

- Gifts of gilded nuts or coins marked the start of the new year in Rome.
- Eggs, the symbol of fertility, were exchanged by the Persians.
- Early Egyptians traded earthenware flasks.
- In Scotland, coal, shortbread and silverware were traditionally exchanged for good luck.

In Scotland, December 31 is known as **Hogmanay**. Along with fireworks and fireworks, "First footing" (or the "first foot" in the house after midnight) is still common across Scotland. The first person to cross the threshold into one's home, called the first footer, is an indication of the year to come. Although the tradition varies, if the first footer is tall and dark, the year will be a good one. Of course, the entire spirit of a Hogmanay party is to welcome both friends and strangers with warm hospitality and of course lots of kissing all-around!

The dawn of a new year is an opportune time to take stock of your life.

- Jews who observe Rosh Hashanah make time for personal introspection and prayer, as well as visiting graves.
- American Christian churches hold "watch-night" services, a custom that began in 1770 at Old St. Georges Methodist Church in Philadelphia.
- The practice of making New Year's resolutions, said to have begun with the Babylonians as early as 2600 B.C., is another way to reflect on the past and plan ahead.

#### And did you know ...

- 28<sup>th</sup> December is considered to be the unluckiest day of the year.
- More dentists have a birthday in December than in any other month.
- Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was originally an advertising gimmick for Montgomery Ward in 1839.
- The Royal Mail estimates that it delivers 150 million cards during the Christmas period. Other sources claim that **one billion** Christmas cards are sold in the UK annually. It takes one tree to make 3,000 Christmas cards.
- Jingle Bells was originally named One Horse Open Sleigh and was an American Thanksgiving song. Two years after it was released, the name was changed to Jingle Bells. It was also the first song ever played in space!
- Saint Nicholas, who would eventually be called Santa Claus, is the patron saint of children, students, thieves, and pawnbrokers!
- Christmas was banned in England for 13 years by the Puritan leader, Oliver Cromwell, in 1647.
- The first artificial Christmas trees were made of wire and dyed goose feathers.



How did King Charles III sign his Christmas cards to his family?

'The Artist formerly known as Prince'!



- Christmas came from the words Cristes Maesse meaning “mass of Christ.”
- There are close to 750 different versions of Silent Night.
- The largest bauble ornament according to the Guinness World Records was in the Dubai Mall and it stood over 15 feet high.

## 05

### History of Christmas Cards

The very first recorded Christmas card was sent in 1611 by Michael Maier, a German physician to King James I of England and his son the Prince of Wales. The rather elaborate greeting read...

‘A greeting on the birthday of the Sacred King, to the most worshipful and energetic lord and most eminent James, King of Great Britain and Ireland, and Defender of the true faith, with a gesture of joyful celebration of the Birthday of the Lord, in most joy and fortune, we enter into the new auspicious year 1612.’

Sir Henry Cole (first Director of the V&A Museum) commissioned the first commercial Christmas card in 1843.



The initial print run was for 1,000 cards. Designed by painter John Callcott Horsley, cards were printed lithographically and then hand-coloured by the professional colourer Mason. The family depicted were of Cole and his family. Cole used as many of these cards as he required and sold the rest for one shilling each (£3 in today's money) under the pseudonym Felix Summerly.

An advert in the Athenaeum paper for the cards read:

*“Just published. A Christmas Congratulation Card: or picture emblematical of Old English Festivity to Perpetuate kind recollections between Dear Friends.”*

Horsley's design depicts two acts of charity – “feeding the hungry” and “clothing the naked” – and a family party scene, in which three generations are drinking wine to celebrate the season. The depiction of children drinking wine proved to be controversial, for this was an era when the temperance movement was gaining in popularity in the UK, but this did not stop people buying the cards and more were printed to satisfy demand.



How can you keep your home warm this Christmas?

Insulation!

Why has Santa been banned from sooty chimneys?

Carbon Footprints!

Early British card designs rarely showed winter or religious themes. Whimsical themes such as flowers or fairies became popular, alongside humorous or sentimental illustrations of children or animals. Scenes of middle-class jubilation (drinking, dancing and celebrating) remained popular even into the 20th Century. Christmas cards, initially printed in small numbers, remained expensive and out of reach for most Britons.

The 1840s were an especially festive time. Prince Albert introduced the idea of a decorated Christmas tree, and Charles Dickens published his Christmas classic 'A Christmas Carol', in the same year as Henry Cole's first Christmas card in 1843. Christmas had never been so popular, and its commercialisation was now in full swing. Queen Victoria sent the first official Christmas card



By the 1870s the Christmas trend was firmly established, and advances in printing and publishing technology meant that firms such as the lithographers 'Prang and Meyer' could begin mass-producing affordable Christmas cards for everyone. In 1874, Prang and Meyer introduced the Christmas card to America and cemented Henry Cole's timesaving solution as an international trend. The rest, as they say, is history.

The production of Christmas cards was, throughout the 20th Century, a profitable business for many stationery manufacturers, with the design of cards continually evolving with changing tastes and printing techniques. The now widely recognized brand 'Hallmark Cards' was established in 1913 by Joyce Hall with the help of brother Rollie Hall to market their self-produced Christmas cards. The Halls capitalised on a growing desire for more personalised greeting cards, and reached critical success when the outbreak of the First World War increased demand for cards to send to soldiers. The World Wars brought cards with patriotic themes. Idiosyncratic "studio cards" with cartoon illustrations and sometimes risqué humour caught on in the 1950s. Nostalgic, sentimental, and religious images have continued in popularity. In the UK, Christmas cards account for almost half of the volume of greeting card sales.

During the first 70 years of the 19th Century it was common for Christmas and other greeting cards to be recycled by women's service organizations who collected them and removed the pictures, to be pasted into scrap books for the entertainment of children in hospitals, orphanages, kindergartens and missions. With children's picture books becoming cheaper and more readily available, this form of scrap-booking has almost disappeared.



The UK conservation charity The Woodland Trust runs an annual campaign to collect and recycle Christmas cards to raise awareness of recycling and collect donations from corporate sponsors and supporters. All recycled cards help raise money to plant more trees. Since their Christmas Card Recycling Scheme has been running, more than 600 million cards have been recycled. This has enabled the Woodland Trust to plant more than 141,000 trees, save over 12,000 tonnes of paper from landfill and stop over 16,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from going into the atmosphere – the equivalent to taking more than 5,000 cars off the road for a year.

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# 06

## Photography Podium

### Panels Competition

Congratulations to everyone who submitted panels for this competition, what a super and varied lot we had across the digitals and prints sections. Jolanta and Jenny shared the top honours in each section between them with some different styles of images that I thought were lovely and soft to look at.



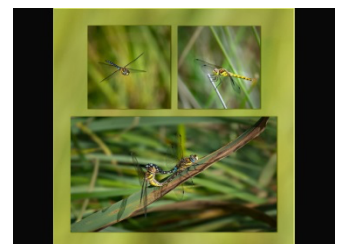
	Digital	
<b>First Place:</b>	<i>Botanica</i>	Jenny Ladbrooke
<b>Second Place:</b>	<i>Brothers</i>	Jolanta B Axon
<b>Third Place:</b>	<i>Hawker Dragonflies</i>	Tony Dyson
<b>Highly Commended:</b>	<i>Pavement and Steps</i>	Dave Venables
	<i>Thru the Toadstool</i>	Mick Schilling
<b>Commended:</b>	<i>Brookfield Catacomb Swirl</i>	Mick Schilling
	<i>Flies Undone</i>	Chris Lee



*Botanica*

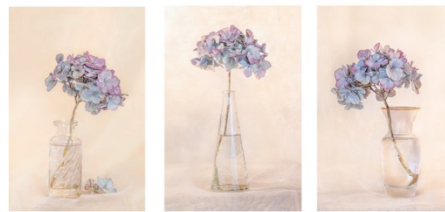


*Brothers*



*Hawker Dragonflies*

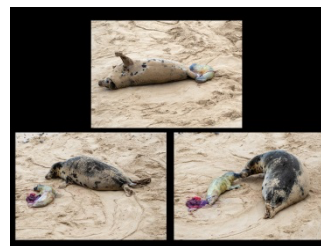
	Prints	
<b>First Place:</b>	<i>Trio in Pastel</i>	Jolanta B Axon
<b>Second Place:</b>	<i>Vintage Bottles</i>	Jenny Ladbrooke
<b>Third Place:</b>	<i>New Life</i>	Chris Mallett
<b>Highly Commended:</b>	<i>Mute Swan Study</i>	Mick Schilling
<b>Commended:</b>	<i>Heat Wave</i>	Mick Schilling



*Trio in Pastel*



*Vintage Bottles*



*New Life*

### **'President's Assignment' Competition**

A very successful competition with our President, Jenny, judging her set assignment theme. The images were certainly thought provoking and showing 'Feeling, Emotion, Mood'. And I thought the landscape ones were so atmospheric. A difficult choice to make due to the standard of images submitted, but well done Judge Jenny and to all those who were awarded a placing. Congratulations to Kevin Watts, whose image 'Home Alone' was awarded the Trophy for the 'Image of the Night'.

We now look forward to Phil's set assignment next year on 'Straight Lines'. Good job I have a good few months to think up something that will capture the theme but executing it is another thing! Well, you never know I might come up with something vaguely presentable and worth submitting ... I live in hope!

	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
<b>First Place:</b>	<i>Goalkeeper</i>	Rosie Thompson	<i>Home Alone *</i>	Kevin Watts	<i>Early Morning Flight</i>	Tim Hutchin
<b>Second Place:</b>	<i>You're Not Wanted Here</i>	Mike Goodwin	<i>Tranquil Bay</i>	Chris Lee	<i>Go Away!</i>	Sue Pearmain
<b>Third Place:</b>	<i>Please Throw My Ball</i>	Mike Goodwin	<i>Forest Dawn</i>	Kevin Watts	<i>Familiar, But Unfamiliar</i>	Jane Roby
<b>Highly Commended:</b>	<i>Rude Boy</i>	Mick O'Malley	<i>Pensive Moment</i>	Fay Venables	<i>Siblings</i>	Mick Schilling
			<i>African Wild Dog Pup</i>	Kevin Watts	<i>Feel the Rhythm</i>	Mick Schilling
			<i>Shot at Dawn</i>	Dave Ward	<i>A Mother's Love</i>	Sue Pearmain
					<i>Every Emotion Possible</i>	David Steele
<b>Commended:</b>	<i>Lonely</i>	John Leighton	<i>A Morning to Remember</i>	Jeannette Strange	<i>Baby Love</i>	Jolanta B Axon
			<i>Hang on Tight</i>	Chris Lee	<i>Unconditional</i>	Mick Schilling
					<i>We'll Meet Again</i>	Phil Moorhouse
					<i>Misty Awakening</i>	David Steele

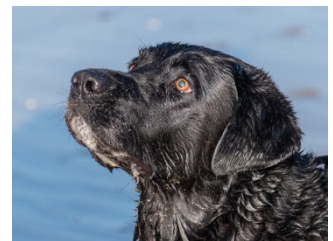
### Group 1



*Goalkeeper*



*You're Not Wanted Here*



*Please Throw My Ball*

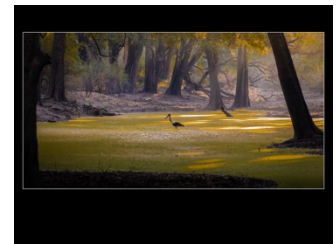
### Group 2



*Home Alone*

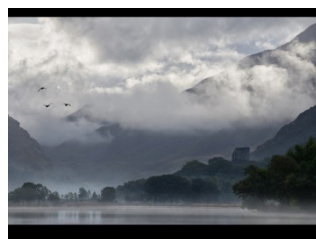


*Tranquil Bay*

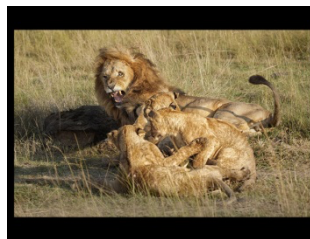


*Forest Dawn*

### Group 3



*Early Morning Flight*



*Go Away*



*Familiar but Unfamiliar*

## 07

## External Recognition

### *Jolanta B Axon - CPAGB*

Huge congratulations go to Jolanta who goes from strength to strength with her photography work and has recently been awarded her CPAGB. What a fantastic achievement for her and very well done and in her own words she was "dead chuffed to get it". Jolanta also was thankful for the help and support she received from mentors, being fortunate to have advice on her images from two individuals who are well known to SPS, Graham Walton and Sandie Cox. Jolanta has said she didn't realise how much work it would be but has learnt so much from the process. She went to an advisory day too and they were very blunt and quite critical but that's the way you learn. Jolanta has thanked the club and its members for all the help, advice, technical help and inspiration from many superb photographers.

I am sure you will all join me in congratulation Jolanta on her award and join me in giving her a big virtual clap. Such lovely news to finish 2022 on.

*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 year in 2023!**