

On Saturday 21st October we headed to Blackburn to represent NNPS and N&EMPF at the PAGB Inter-Club Print Championships.

It was an early start for all with journeys starting at 5am from Nottingham, with Alan Young (our External Comp Secretary) taking the M6 and President Chris Love heading up the M1 and M18 to collect Andrea Hargreaves from Selby on the way. The journey post Storm Babet wasn't too bad, and some dawn sunlight took fears of a washout journey away and the sky revealed some blue tinges over the Pennines.

Alan dutifully handed in our Round 1 Prints on arrival, and we grabbed a much needed coffee and reviewed strategy ahead of a 10am start.

Our Round 1 prints had been selected to show a breadth of genres from members, without putting too much focus in one area. Alan talked of the tricks of the trade; saving stronger prints until the judges had warmed up that 5 button, as well as ensuring we all had eyes on the scoring for what the judges liked, and didn't, so we could pick our Round 2 prints accordingly. We also shared intelligence on the Judges, what might they like and what they may not, from what we knew of them. The judges were:

Armando Jongejan FRPS

Eric Oram CPAGB AFIAP BPE3

Christine Widdall MPAGB EFIAP FBPE APAGB HonL&CPU

For those unfamiliar with the scoring system of these events then each judge will score the images using a keypad in front of them, choosing a score from 2 to 5. The total score is then read out by the scorekeeper, resulting in a score from 6 to 15.

As we settled into our seats, and after a brief introduction from the PAGB Chair and Competition Chair, then we were underway with a brief look at the standard to help show the judges what to expect. These prints were from later in the first round and the standard was extremely high, I'm sure a few hearts sank.

Then we were underway, the images have at most a few seconds with the judge, during which time they are photographed and projected to the audience (albeit the judges don't use this projected image in any way, they only have eyes for the print). Images flicked by at pace - providing an important reminder of how little time we have to "land" an image with a judge.

With 37 clubs competing there are a lot of images to get through in round 1, 444 in total, and so after 7 prints per club we (and the poor judges) got a rest and chance to think about what we'd seen.

Scoring seemed on the low side, with just two 14's scored and no 15's, albeit perhaps a lot of clubs had saved their big hitters for the latter part of the competition. We also noticed that set-up shots, like Dave Jones' Chaplin, below, weren't doing well. This image had scored a 14 at the qualifying round for NEMPF and also won a Selectors Award for our Internal Club Competitions. A good demonstration of how judges on the day, and the difference between Club and PAGB photography, can really affect what does well.



Good quality Sports images, like Alan Young's Maximum Effort, were going well, but anything Sports and average seemed to be doing worse than average. Similarly, Queen

of the Kingfishers, Paul Cheetham's image that did so well at the FIAP World Cup with an honourable mention, also didn't do as well as we expected.



Conversely, travel "in situ" portraits were doing extremely well. This perhaps was a danger for us, as our "bank" of images perhaps didn't include enough quality breadth in that area.

After a coffee and pastry, then it was once more into the breach and soon we were given the scores, revealing a close contest. We were joint 8th with 6 other clubs, with just a few points separating 4th to 16th. The eight places in the final could go anywhere...

The judging perhaps got slightly more generous, and the final scoring put on on 143. A solid run of 12's and a 14 from Andrea Hargreave's Svafa the Sleep Maker put us in a hopefully good position.

Alan would have liked us to be averaging closer to 13 than 12 for a shot at the final but with the scoring on the low side it would be close. Our final scoring in Round 1:

Title	Author	Score
Just Too Tired	Treva O'Brien	12
Chaplin	Dave Jones	10
Lady of Magick.	Andrea Hargreaves	13
Anticipation	Ken Wade	12
Queen Of The Kingfishers	Paul Cheetham	10
Maximum Effort	Alan Young	13
St Tomaz Church Slovenia	Chris Denning	11
<coffee break>		
Only Just Can Reach	Alan Young	12
Miki Serves	Ken Wade	12
Partners	Jason Gericke	12
The Will To Win	Alan Young	12
Svafa The Sleep Maker	Andrea Hargreaves	14
	Total	143

The Club scores were revealed and we found ourselves joint 8th, enough to qualify from the final. With 37 clubs on show, with some terrific prints, we felt extremely pleased to be there, even if we scraped in. Catchlight CC (151) and Rolls Royce Derby PS (150) predictably led the pack, but newcomers to the competition Colchester PS (145) put on a great set of images. However, in the final the points are reset and everyone brings a new bank of images, so there was all to play for.

So, we retreated quickly to the canteen and collected our prints to select a set of 16 images for the final. All around us clubs did the same; some, who hadn't made the final, selecting 8 for the "Plate" competition.

It's a logistical challenge to juggle prints in a small space all the while trying to meet the requirements of:

Each Entrant Club must provide 15 Prints, with two copies of matching entry forms, chosen from the Club's Print Bank. No more than 10 Prints may be reused from Round One. There must be at least 5 Monochrome Prints and at least 5 Colour Prints, by at least 5 different Photographers. There must be no more than 4 Prints by each Photographer, and no more than 4 Nature Prints.

Our immediate task was to select the prints scoring over 12 from Round One, we then discussed what was doing well. Andrea's Creatives had scored well and so we chose four of hers, as well as filling out the mono's with Alan's and Ken Wade's sports prints which seemed to be doing well. Our bank didn't have a lot of mono's and so it was a tricky task, matching what we'd seen do well with the requirements and our bank of images.

It's a tough decision whether to keep the 12's from Round One, which may well be marked lower in the final, or gamble with new prints, and we opted for the latter strategy in the main.

Some frenzied form filling, and stickers add to the rears of prints left little time for food, but with 15 mins before the deadline Chris could be spotted eating a rather sloppy Cheese Pie, while Andrea sneaked a sandwich and Alan returned the prints to the sorters.

A 30 minute lecture on Paper Selection from Permajet gave the print sorters time to get everything lined up (how they manage it I'll never know, we struggle with just 60 prints for an internal competition) and soon the Plate competition was underway. A short break and we were into the Final scoring. Here's how we fared:

Title	Author	Score
Maximum Effort	Alan Young	13
Srafa the Sleep maker	Andrea Hargreaves	14
Muddy Days Rugby	Ken Wade	11
Jewelled Flower Mantis	Derek Doar	12
Freya's Garden	Andrea Hargreaves	12
Only Just can Reach	Alan Young	12
Return Ball	Ken Wade	11
Anticipation	Ken Wade	13
381 Takes it	Alan Young	12
One Way Street	Andrzej Bargiela	11
The Ride to Valhalla	Andrea Hargreaves	12
Ayla Rose	Dave Jones	11
Paralympian Polly Maton	Ken Wade	11
Unleashing the Javelin	Alan Young	12
Lady of Magick	Andrea Hargreaves	12
	Total	14

You'll notice some of the images from Round 1 scored differently (lower) and this was the risk as the judges calibrate to the quality on show in the Final. Some of the bigger/better clubs had some great images in reserve and the quality showed.

Our focus on Sport didn't pay off, and in the end we didn't manage the scores we needed to compete for the top spot. In the end we finished 9th in the final.

Final scores:

1st	Rolls Royce	191
1st	Catchlight CC	191
3rd	Wigan 10	185
4th	Colchester	184
4th	Beyond	184
4th	Arden	184
7th	Chorley	183
8th	Photo Imaging Co-op	180
9th	Nottingham and Notts	179

The day concluded with Presentations and we were pleased as punch with qualifying for next year's competition and our bronze PAGB medal.



Congratulations to everyone who had images selected for inclusion, and also those that contributed to our "bank" for the day. Selection for these events is tricky, images that do well in FIAP and Club Competitions may not do well here, so please don't be down heartened if we didn't use yours. We are indebted to Alan and Andrea, and their experience, for helping

select images.

The long day finished at 5pm and so it was back to Nottingham, via Selby, in time for Pizza, Wine and Rugby (and disappointment for England).

