

KCC Photo Group

Competition themes guidance notes

Landscape/Seascape: The sky's (literally!) the limit here. Lots of scope for creativity. Just remember that judges will have seen hundreds of "chocolate-box" images – very nice, but nothing new. So here's your chance to do something different, where the judge might think "Wow, I've never thought of that viewpoint/perspective/foreground/etc. before". So try a new approach, with e.g. an attention-grabbing rock or tree to lead the eye into the picture; good lead-in lines; and hopefully something in the distance to finish the journey. And if your seascape includes the horizon, do remember to make it horizontal! Judges don't like sloping horizons, where the water's running out of the picture (unless it's deliberate, which would hopefully be obvious to the judge).

History / Culture: Your image should take the viewer back in time or location. Museums – indoor or outdoor – are good places to start; but many household objects are also of interest here. If you do get out and about, capture the atmosphere of a specific culture. Oxford's streets are full of history, right on your doorstep, so get shooting!

Frame It: When taking an image, we often concentrate on the well-known composition "rules" and ignore what's at the sides of the image, often cloning or cropping to remove distracting objects. In this competition the challenge is to deliberately **include** features that will form a "frame" around the subject. Trees, gates, arrow slits, ...

Seasons: your images should leave the judge in no doubt as to what season s/he is looking at. And in case you forget, they are: Spring - blossom, lambs, bluebells, etc., Summer – profuse flowers, beach scenes, holidays, etc., Autumn – colours, leaves, etc., Winter – snow, ice, cold.

Portraits - people or animals: Just a few points to think about here: Good eye contact with the subject(s) is usually – but not always - very important, so make sure the viewer connects with the subject. Catch-lights in the eyes should where possible be visible. A medium telephoto lens is better than a wide-angle for portraits - unless you get in close for impact.

General points: remember, the judge will be looking for reasons to deduct points, so try not to leave him/her with any. If your image falls within the set theme, but has a very different approach from the other entries, it should score well. And regarding composition "rules", these are NOT set in stone – they are useful pointers, but don't feel you have to always obey them.