



**FEBRUARY
2016**

**ACTION
&
OPEN**

**PROJECTED = 53
PRINTS = 07**

JUDGE

BRIAN EASTWOOD

ACTION A GRADE DIGITAL

AS FAST AS – Honours –Helena Gratkowski

I can remember the joy I felt when walking my dog and letting her off the lead and watching her rush off across the paddock. This image of two dogs racing off across the paddock gives me the same feeling. By panning the camera with the dogs has created the feeling of fast movement, this feeling of speed is increased by parts of the dogs being blurred. As well as the feeling of speed the photographer has caught the joy of freedom on the dogs faces. Subtle vignetting on the corners has insured that the viewer's attention remains within the image.



AWESOME TEEN LADY DRIVER - Acceptance

When taking a photograph you need to decide what your subject matter is, what are you trying to tell the viewer. Here we have a car jumping over some cars. But the dramatic sky is competing for the viewer's attention. The story is in the bottom right corner of the image, so you could crop down closer to the action in that corner. The jumping vehicle is dark and has a white halo around it, which suggest that some aggressive post processing treatment has happened.



BITE THE DUST – Highly Commended

With the flying mud and, tight crop and the fact that the photographer has got down low the viewer is right in the centre of the action. The action has been frozen thanks to a fast shutter speed. The exposure is a little flat, although there is detail in both the highlights and the shadows, maybe there could have been just a bit more contrast to make the image pop.



BOYS AT PLAY – Honours—Barbara Anderson

This photograph tells a wonderful story of two boys totally engrossed in playing with the dry leaves. Concentrating on the boys the photographer has got in close to them and eliminated any outside distractions. The boys are slightly blurred but this adds to the feeling of the action going on.



ACTION A GRADE DIGITAL CONTINUED



CATCH EM COWBOY - Honours—Lou Kibby

There is something happening in every corner of this image and that is why this is a great story telling image. There is the main part of the action where the cowboy is chasing the cow. Notice the expressions on the face of the cowboy and the startled look on horses face. The cow is making a determined break for freedom. The cowboy, on the white horse, is about to take up the chase. Look at the various expressions of the three men

behind him and the crowd in the background. The image has been cropped to eliminate any unnecessary distractions.

DIVE DIVE DIVE – Merit

A Whale dives down to the depths spray flowing off its tail. This sort of shot is not as easy as it looks to get right. You have to anticipate when the Whale is going to dive, frame up and focus the shoot before the Whale dive below the surface. The water running off the Whales tail would look better if the photographer had used a faster shutter speed to freeze the droplets of water. A wider aperture would have reduced the depth of field and separate the tail from the water.



GOOOOOOOOO – Honours—Barbara Anderson

By using a fast shutter speed the photographer has frozen the action and captured detail of the horse and rider as they surge forward. Movement is shown with the dust being kicked up by the horse's hooves and its flying tail and the flowing hair of the rider. The photographer has placed the horse and rider on the left of the image, leaving them room to ride into. Interest is added by the inclusion of the crowd with their mix reactions.

OUCH – Merit

By taking the shot just before the cowboy hits the ground the photographer has created some tension and anticipation in the image. The looks on the faces of the spectators help to tell the story.

I find the big white gate on the left keeps taking my attention away from the main action. There are ways in post processing to reduce the glare of the gate and I suggest the author investigate the options.



OUT THE SIDE DOOR – Merit

The battle between the powerful bull and the determined rider is the story the photographer is telling here. The flying dirt and the expression the riders face enhance the story. But there is the distraction of white gate and the words on the sign in the background. Maybe the photographer could try cropping on the left, closer to the action, to lose the sign you will lose some of the tail but that maybe better than leaving the sign in, as viewers will try to read words when they are in the picture.

**POOCH RACING – Honours—Scott McDougall**

This image has impact, because the photographer has got down low to the dogs level to take this photograph, the dog is looking straight at you creating an instant engagement between the dog and the viewer. The flying dirt, the flapping ears and raised front paws give the impression of fast movement. The photographer has done well to freeze the action with a fast shutter speed. The focus is concentrated on the head and front paws and the use of a low aperture has given a shallow depth of focus eliminating distractions in the



background. Purist would not like that the end of the tail and the back legs have been cut off, but because of the overall excitement and power of the image, I can forgive that.

STRAIGHT THROUGH - Merit

The success of this image is that it puts you right in the middle of the action. As you look at the image you can hear the sound of the engines raw as the 4WD vehicle faces the almost impossible task of fighting its way through the soft, liquid mud, sending it flying in all directions. Lighting conditions have not been ideal but the photographer has handled it well.





SUNSET LEAP – Highly Commended

The subject is well placed on the right of the image with plenty of space ahead to move into. The low angle has given the appearance that the boy is high up. The shallow depth of field has blurred the foreground and background, which make the viewer concentrate on the cycle and cyclist. The shutter speed has been carefully selected so that the cyclist isn't blurred but the wheels are giving the impression of movement.

THIS IS GUNNA HURT - Acceptance

The photographer has done well to freeze the action at a moment that leaves the viewer asking questions about what is going to happen next will it crash or survive. But the subject here is the vehicle and it is lost in a lot of space behind the vehicle. The ramp in the foreground is a distraction. I would suggest the photograph try to concentrate the viewer's attention on the vehicle by removing some of the top, bottom and right hand side of the image.



TO RUN A 100KMs – Highly Commended

As the runners set off a Maori Warrior blows his horn. The photographer has used a combination of slow shutter speed and fill flash which has resulted in an interesting image. Normally we would not like the bright light in the background but in this case it contributed to the ambiance of the image.

TRACTOR PULL – Merit

This is a well-exposed image showing the tractor straining to pull along a sled. It is well exposed and focused on the action. I can understand that the photographer might want to show how far the tractor had pull the obstacle but I think that all the space behind the tractor has unbalanced the image. If you try cropping the left hand side so the space in front of the tractor is greater than what is behind you may have a stronger image. There are a couple of black marks in the clouds top left, if this was in a salon competition it would be marked down for that.



ACTION A GRADE CONTINUED DIGITAL



WCC @ SEDDON PARK – Merit

The action at the cricket is frozen as the batsman is poised to take a run. As the subject is the batsman and the space on the left of the image is not contributing to the action I would suggest that the photographer might have a look at cropping some of the left hand side off to make the batsman and fielder larger and more dominant in the image. There is also a blue colour cast on the image so make sure you pick the correct white balance when shooting.

WHAT A LOAD OF BULL – Highly Commended

This image has been captured at just the right moment because there are so many unanswered questions. Will the bull fall on the cowboy, will he hold up the bull with the one leg he is raising towards the bulls side. I like that the photographer has taken the shot from a low angle and decided to present the image in black & white. The exposure is well controlled, it would have been so easy to over expose the white gate, but instead it has detail and doesn't take your eye away from the action.



ACTION B GRADE DIGITAL



ALL IN A DAYS WORK – Honours—Debbie Stevens

The composition of this image is well thought out. The main subject, the cowboy on the horse, is positioned on the right hand side of the image and the photographer has left plenty of space in the front of the horse for it to move forward. The focus is on the horse and cowboy who stand out from the background, which is sufficiently out of focus to allow the viewer to see what is happening without it taking them away from the action.

AMPHIBIOUS – Merit

Timing is everything and I applaud the photographer for capturing the boat in mid air as it flies out of the water after missing a turn. The difference between a good shot and a great shot is timing and if this had been shot a fraction of a second earlier so you could see all the boat, it would have been a great shot. The flags in the image are a bit distracting to minimise this and give the image more impact you might consider trying to crop out the left hand flag, this would make the boat larger and more dominant.



AVANTE – Honours—Brian Fuller

This image has the wow factor. The photographer has used a slow shutter speed and moved the camera during the exposure to give the impression of movement. The composition is good with the cyclist in the bottom left of the frame and space in front for the cycle to move forward. If the photographer wanted to improve the impact they might consider cropping some of the empty space off the bottom.

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN – Highly Commended

This image has been well timed with the cowboy about to jump on the cow. Look at the expressions on the faces of the two competitors. If you wanted to increase the drama you might consider cropping some off the top and left and side of the image. This would take you closer to the action. The exposure is spot on with some detail in the white gate behind the riders.



ACTION B GRADE DIGITAL CONTINUED

COWGIRL – Honours—Debbie Stevens

This is a beautifully composed image. The fast shutter speed has frozen the horse and rider, but you still get the feeling of speed from the kicked up dust and flowing tail of the horse. By choosing a wide aperture the background is blurred making the horse and rider stand out. The brightness of the sky does draw the eye up to the top of the image and if the photographer wanted to make any improvements I would suggest considering cropping off the bright sky area at the top of the image. This would make the horse and rider stand out more.



DIGGING DEEP – Highly Commended

This image would make a great press shot. There is not a lot of time to react when action like this happens, so to get the boat sharp and capture the mud flying through the air to add to drama to the image is to be commended. If only the photographer had zoomed out a bit more to include the back of the boat and the hole in the fence where it came through. The white fence post in the foreground is distracting.



FLYING BOAT – Merit

Shot at a fast shutter speed the boat is frozen in the air as it takes a short cut across country. The action is confined to the bottom third corner of the image and I am wondering if we really need to see all of the water at the top of the image, maybe the drama of the image could be improved if some of this was cropped off allowing the boat to fill the frame more, maybe the author would like to try that to see if it works better.



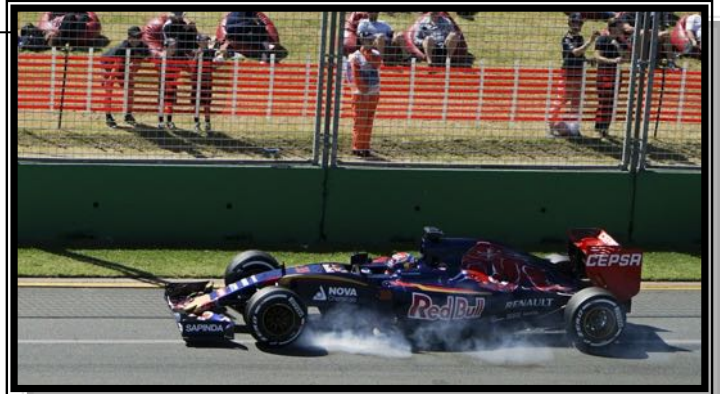
FLYING LEAP - Merit

This is well composed image. The horse and rider have been placed to one side. Space has been left in front of the horse for it to move forward, which adds flow to the image. I like the black & white treatment of this image. The horses head is a bit on the dark side and you might like to try lightening it up in your processing program using an Adjustment Curve.

ACTION B GRADE DIGITAL CONTINUED

LOCK UP IN MELBOURNE - Acceptance

The composition of this image is good with the car having room in front to skid into. Unfortunately there is no detail in the car this is because the photographer is shooting into the light so the side of the car the viewer is looking at is in shadow. If you find yourself in a similar position try setting your camera metering to either centre weighted or spot metering and make sure your camera is reading the exposure off the car. There are some tricks in post processing where you can get a bit more detail out of the car.



RAGLAN SURFER - Acceptance

Shooting surfer can be a lot of fun, but it can also be very difficult. This image has been shot with the light coming from behind the subject so the photographer has to decide if they are going to favour highlight detail over shadow. This image has detail in the white foam of the waves but the trade off has been that the subject is in deep shadow. The surfer is placed over on the right hand side of the image, so there is a lot white water behind them and

because the water is bright the eye tends to wonder over to the left. A solution would be to crop off some of the left hand side and lighten up the image to make the surfer the hero of the image.

SCURRY RACING ASHBOURNE - Honours— Brian Holland

The photographer has captured a lot of emotion in this image. There are the expressions of joy on the drivers face and the encouragement on the passengers face. I like the black and white treatment of this image. Over all there is a good detail in the image, maybe the horses are a bit dark and could be lightened up to show more detail. The main subject stands out from the background, which is light, and out of focus. The crop may be a bit tight especially on the top.



ACTION B GRADE DIGITAL CONTINUES

SPARROWS ON WHITE BACKGROUND #1 - Merit

I find it so restful watching the bird's fluttering around a feeder. The photographer has had to handle difficult condition with a dark subject against a white wall in bright sunlight. I would have like to see a bit more detail in the birds. If you are faced with this situation again try using spot or centre weighted metering in your camera and do the metering off the birds. There are also ways in post processing where you can lighten up the birds.

I am a fan of the square format used here.

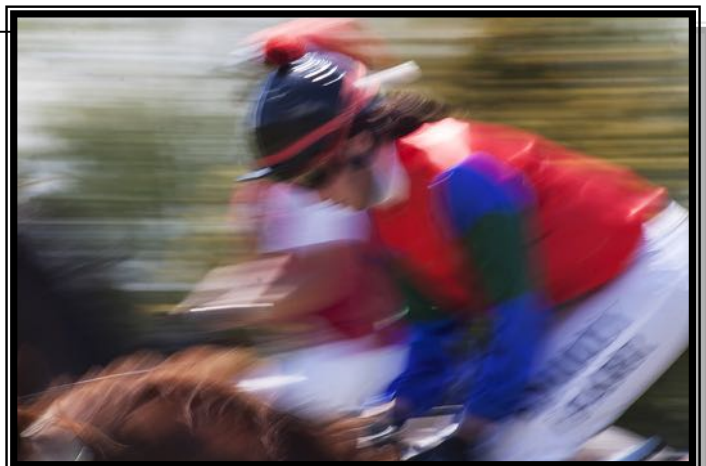


SPARROWS ON WHITE BACKGROUND #2 - Merit

The same as the previous image the photographer has handle the exposure well considering the bright sun reflecting off the white wall. This time though the detail in the flying sparrow's feathers is a lot better in this image.

THE JOCKEY – Honours—Brian Holland

The use of a slow shutter speed combined with panning the camera has resulted in a beautiful impressionistic image. The exposure is well controlled with bright vivid colouring. The tight cropping and placement of the jockey on the right of the image is very good composition. This would be a good image to enter into a national salon, but first there are a number of sensor dust spots on the image, which should be removed if you intend to put this image into a salon competition.



CRANKED OVER - Honours—Steve Parker

Shot from a low angle this is a perfect example of a panning shot. The bike is perfectly in focus. The photographer has panned the camera at the same speed as the bike; the movement has blurred the background making the bike leap out at the viewer. The movement has also blurred the crash barrier in a way that emphasises the speed of the bike. This is a very good image.



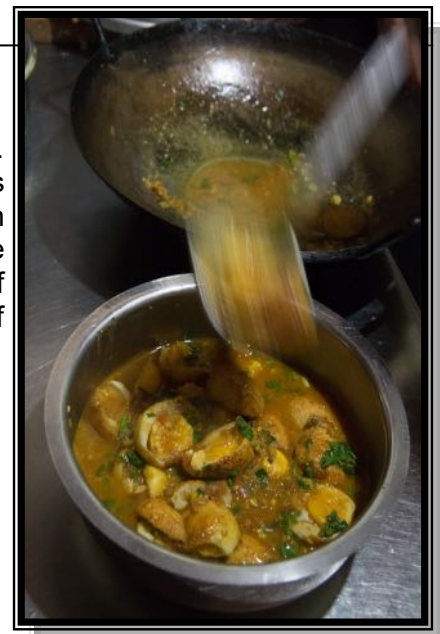
CRUZZIN – Highly Commended

This is a good example of shooting a moving vehicle. I suspect that this could be shot from another moving vehicle rather than panning the camera. Whichever way it was shot the result is the same, the vehicle is sharp and the moving background is blurred giving the feeling of movement and making the vehicle stand out. The photographer has used a slow enough shutter speed so that the wheels are blurred showing motion. The

car and background are a bit dark and I think the image would be improved if it was lightened a bit

ANOTHER SERVING – Highly Commended

This image tells a story of a fast food kitchen, in a simple way. Instead of shooting the whole kitchen the photographer has concentrated on a small area. Using a slow shutter speed has given movement to the ladle, which symbolises the hectic kitchen. The shallow depth of field means the viewer concentrates on the bowl of food, which is sharply in focus while the focus on rest of the rest of image falls away.



ACTION C GRADE DIGITAL CONTINUES

LOOP THE LOOP – Acceptance

There is lots of exciting action going on in this image, but the photographer has not capitalised on it. The main subject is the guy with the jet boots with water spraying out of the boots. But the subject doesn't dominate because it is very small and gets lost in the overall image. As the rest of the image doesn't contribute to the drama in the image I would suggest the author try's to crop the in closer to the action, then you would have an image with drama and impact.



THRESHING RICE – Highly Commended

This is a good story telling image of village life. It has been taken in a documentary style, so we see the fields where they are growing rice and the villagers working together to bring in the harvest. There is lot activity, with people in different stages of threshing the rice crop. The image is a bit on the light side and I would suggest the author darkens it down a bit in post production.

A HOT DAY ENDS – Highly Commended

The light reflecting off the wire fence creates a leading line down to the tree, which is in silhouette. The surrounding darkness has subtle detail, which makes you study the image closer. The area behind the tree is softly focused so it is not competing with the tree for attention. I notice that the photographer has tried to darken the bright sun but in doing so has given it a grey tone; you might like to try brushing in a bit of colour from the sky to blend this in with the colour theme of the rest of the image.



AN EVENING AT HOME – Highly Commended

Shot at a slow shutter speed the photographer has managed to capture the beautiful vivid sky as the sunsets. The house and plants at the front of the house are bathed in the blue cast of night. The image is leaning a bit to the left and the house, as the subject, needs to stand out more in the image, this could be achieved by lightening the house up a bit.

BOYS THINGS – Honours- -Chris Atkins

This boy is engrossed in his own little world. The photographer has not disturbed him and using a shallow depth of field with the foreground and the boy perfectly in focus has produced this wonderful image of a tender moment. The focus rapidly falls off in the background, so while you can see the environment the boy is in it doesn't demand your attention. The decision to present the image in black & white was perfect for this subject.



FRANKIE – Honours—Lawrence Bredenkamp

A moody portrait nicely executed. The photographer has adopted a slimming pose with the body on a three quarter angle. The use of a low aperture has resulted in a very shallow depth of field. The result is the face and leading shoulder are in focus and the shoulder at the back is out of focus. The girl has a mood/broody expression and I like the way the brim of the hat sweeps down to cover one of her eyes adding an air of mystery.

MONNET IN NEW ZEALAND – Merit

This image evokes a feeling of a hot summers day picnics down by the pond. The photographer hasn't had the best conditions to take this image. The high sun has created some heavy shadows in the shade and there are bright reflections off the grass at the waters edge. I'm not sure if the photographer has used one but sometimes the use of a polarising filter can help reduce the reflections in this type of scene, unfortunately it also deepens the shadows. The scene has been handled well, but I do find my eye wondering up into the bright sky. Maybe the photographer could try either darkening the sky or cropping it out of the image altogether.

**SUNSET AT RAGLAN - Merit**

Shooting into the sinking sun this photographer has been working under difficult condition and achieved good result. I like the sweeping curve of the tide against the sand bank, but I think the main interest of the image is the buildings, under a stormy sky at sunset and the large dark area of the mud flats on the left is not contributing enough to the image. Maybe, to produce more dramatic image, the photographer might like to try cropping it about half way up to turn it into a panorama.



Unfortunately the image is not sharp, I'm not sure if this is focus or camera movement.

THE MAGIC HOUR – Highly Commended

Photographing in the fog can very easy to end up with a photograph that looks washed out and flat, however it can also give a wonderfully moody, atmospheric feeling to your subject.

The warm tones of the sunrise reflecting off the morning mist give this image a beautiful warm glow. As we look into the distance the tree line gets lighter and lighter the further away they get, this gives the image it's feeling of depth.

**THE FARRIERS HANDS – Honours—Chris Adkins**

This is a beautifully composed image. The viewer is lead into the image by the farriers arm coming down from the top of the image. The tool in his hand then leads the viewer towards the horseshoe. It is not necessary to see the whole horse or the person doing the work to know what story this image is tell. The strong hands, the horseshoe, a glimpse of the apron all contribute to the story and the steam hides all the clutter in the background. This is a well-composed and exposed image.



THE FIELD TRIP - Merit

The image is nicely composed image taken high up in the cold mountains. The subjects are placed to the left of the image with the instructor pointing out the possibilities of the scene to the student. The image is a bit dark and flat; this can easily be remedied by brightening the image a bit to introduce white into the clouds. It would then have a nice range of tone from black to white. There's a tell tale white halo round the two people, which could be an indication of over sharpening.



OPEN B GRADE DIGITAL

MOODY DESERT – Highly Commended

The photographer has got down and shot from a low angle. Coupled with a wide-angle lens. They have created a feeling of a very large cold, desolate and wind swept place. The desaturated colour adds to the bleak mood. There maybe a bit to much sky which is a bit dark and feels heavy, I suggest the photographer might like to try cropping the sky down a bit to a panoramic image, this would have the benefit of reducing some of the heaviness on the top of the image and enhancing the feeling of space.



SEEN BETTER DAYS – Highly Commended

This is a well composed photograph with the hero of this image is an old abandoned fishing boat left rotting amongst the rocks on the seashore. Positioned in the bottom right corner of the image, the photographer has made the image dark and gloomy to add to the mood. I feel that, maybe the image is to a bit to dark and the boat, which is the main subject is lost amongst the background rocks. The green grass or seaweed on the left, is a brighter colour than the

boat and stands out more actually drawing the eye away from the boat. If the photographer has Photoshop or similar image processing program they might like to try lightening the boat with a curves adjustment layer mask. At the same time maybe you could desaturate the green grass o seaweed to blend in with the rocks.

SURF TOWER NORTH PIHA – Highly Commended

This is a nice low angle image of the Piha Surf Tower, sitting on the bleak, rugged west coast of Auckland. The image has been desaturated to add to the bleak mood.

The surf tower is the hero of the photograph and I would like to see the tower stand out more from the rest of the image, This could be achieved in Photoshop with a curves adjustment layer by lightening the whole image then turning the mask black to hide everything and then with a white paintbrush paint over the tower to lighten it.



THE FIRE DANCER - Honours—Tanya Houghton

There are photographers who make an art of photographing fire, smoke or incense. They take multiple images and blend them together to resemble things we recognise from daily life. This image would have taken a lot of patients to achieve and the photographer has been rewarded with a good likeness of a dancer. Exposure would have been difficult to control especially the highlights of the flame but the photographer has successfully managed to get detail in the highlights.

DRIFTWOOD - Honours—Lynda Holland

The driftwood has been placed in the bottom right corner. The large expanse of beach adds a feeling of desolation to the image. I particularly like the ark scored in the sand, which adds interest to the image and connects the viewer to the driftwood. I also like that the photographer has cropped the image to a panorama letterbox shape, this contributes to the feeling of space.

Pay attention to the dust spots, from your sensor, in the sky, they should be removed before you enter this image into a competition.



FLOWER AND BEE - Honours—Lynda Holland

This beautiful image of a flower and bee, takes me to a peaceful place. It's sharp and well exposed. The main subject is isolated in corner of the image and is surrounded by a beautiful out of focus hazy background and foreground. It looks like the photographer has stood back and used a long lens to focus in on the flower, notice how the flowers in the foreground are out of focus and appear like a mist. Used a wide aperture the focus is just on the flower with the foreground and background rendered out of focus so as not to cause any distraction

to the main subject. I think this image could do well in a National Salon.

IMPRESSIONIST GANNETS - Merit

Impressionist images are when a photographer sets a slow speed on the camera and pans the camera during the exposure. Done well this can be very effective. This image is a good interpretation of the technique. You can clearly see that the main subjects are the nesting gannets, but we also have the sea to give us location. I think the sea being so bright tends to draw the viewers eye away from the Gannets. The photographer has a few choices on how to deal with this distraction. They could darken the sea so that it doesn't attract the eye or crop the image so there is not so much of it. Maybe the photographer might like to try it out when you have a chance.



LOW TIDE – Highly Commended

The photographer has got down low to take this image. They have captured detail in the rocks in the foreground, but the focus falls off quickly, maybe try a smaller aperture like f16 to give you a bit more depth of focus. I would have loved to have seen the image when the sun was on the horizon either setting or rising I'm not sure if this is a sunset or sunrise but there would have been more colour and drama in the sky at that time. The subject here is the rocks and rock pools so the brightness of the sky attracts the viewer attention away from main subject. The sky it's not contributing to the image and it is competing with the

foreground for attention so try and crop the bright part of the sky out.

ACTION A GRADE PRINTS

BEACH EXERCISE – Merit

The horse and rider are placed on the left third of the image with plenty of room in front to ride into. There are other people in silhouette using the beach, which adds balance to the image. The horse and rider are well exposed and sharp and the white patch of water behind them makes them stand out. I find the boarder distracting; because there are a large area's of white it competes with the image for attention.



FOUNTAIN OF WISHES – Highly Commended

By using a slightly longer exposure the water in the fountain has formed a dome, with a ring of foaming water round the edge. The coins, distorted by the water, add interest to the image. This is a simple image but very affective.

LEMON SPLASH – Honours—Tina Tait

This is a good example of a Triptych. It shows the progress of a Lemon as it falls into a glass, causes a splash and the resulting mess of the overflow. All three images are perfectly exposed, sharp and crisp images.



THE RACE – Highly Commended

The viewers eye is initially drawn to the brightly coloured blur of the cyclist as they speed round the corner, your eye continues to follow them racing on through the rolling countryside. The motion blur of the cyclist as they speed round the corner indicates the speed that they are traveling at, and ahead, you can see the road they will be traveling up.

Your eye is then drawn to the countryside they are traveling through. The exposure has been well controlled. The cyclists have been photographed in the shade, and ahead of the lead cyclist you have the beautiful side light, as the sun, coming from the left, sidelights the tree.

As presented the image tells a very good story of cyclist racing through a spectacular countryside. But there is a large area of tarmac on the bottom right and I wonder, because the theme of this image is action, if the photographer could try to crop closer to the cyclist at the expense of the countryside.

HANS WORK – Highly Commended

The photographer has put a bit of thought into this image and has taken it from a low angle, which gives the image its drama. From this angle you can see the concentration on Hans face. The photographer has used the girder as a lead line into the area where Hans is working. There is a possibility that you could have increased the drama by getting even lower. The side lighting is working well in this image and soft focus in the dark background has helped the sparks from the grinder stand out.



RNZAF PARA – Merit

This is a well-timed image. The photographer has captured the shot just as the skydiver has landed, with the canopy still open and trailing the smoke behind him. A fast shutter speed has meant the image is sharp without any motion blur.

The skydiver is placed well over on the left hand side and there is a lot of space behind him on the right, this leaves the image unbalanced. The empty space is not adding to the image. I think if the photographer was to

crop 6 to 8cms off the right hand side of the image they will find it is a better-balanced image.

WHOOSH – Highly Commended

By utilising a slow shutter speed the photographer has captured the red taillights of vehicles as they move up the street at night. The scene is crisp and sharp and the light trails add interest to the image. The white lights of oncoming cars on the right of the image are a bit distracting and I suggest the author tries a crop on the right up to the tree, which could be used as a frame for the image.

