

Assessment of Open and Set Subject 'Frame in a Frame' for Whanganui Camera Club

Hello Whanganui Camera Club members this is Don Pittham from Nelson. Thank you for allowing me to view and comment on your July Photography Assessment. I do hope that's the correct terminology. I don't want to be branded as politically incorrect before I've even started saying anything about the actual images.

I've mentioned to you before that I'm not a Photographic Society of New Zealand Accredited Judge. That doesn't mean that I take no notice of the guidelines such judges are advised to follow. I particularly support the advice that photographers should receive encouragement for their endeavours rather than be on the receiving end of a barrage of adverse criticism listing all that is at fault with their images. Having said which I feel that judges/assessors, call them what you will, must be totally honest in their appraisal of a photograph. Encouragement that leads a photographer to think that their image is better than it really is helps no one in the long term. It's a little along the lines of so called progressive schools where every student is declared a winner. That's fine until the student steps into the Real World and discovers that many people, and they may be one of them, far from being winners are near the bottom of a pile of losers. Photographers who have been erroneously praised for their images at the local camera club level may be in for a nasty shock when those same images are ruthlessly rejected from national competitions. If some of you are now concerned that the wrath of an over-zealous assessor is about to be unleashed upon you fear not. I'm just trying to make my comments fair but at the same time honest.

I'll comment on the images in the order that they were listed to me.

First up we have three **A-Grade Open images**

Elephants Approaching

A title which states exactly what is happening. The monochrome treatment is a good idea. It encourages us to concentrate our view on the elephants whereas with a colour image we might be more inclined to be distracted by the colours of the background forest. However the light area of sky does still draw our attention. Perhaps completely cropping off that region of sky could be beneficial in two ways. Firstly it would force the viewers' attention on the elephants and secondly the resultant panorama-like format would emphasise the progress of the elephants. A technically competent image with an optimistic message. **Highly Commended**

Flying Free

I think we are viewing a White-faced Heron. A beautiful looking bird even if in reality not a beautiful sounding bird. I really appreciate the feather detail in this shot. The photographer has aimed at producing a gentle, subtle photograph of a graceful bird. I appreciate that aim but, on my screen at least, the resulting image appears rather flat-looking. I use a image viewer called Faststone. It's freely downloadable and has a lot of the facilities of Photoshop though it does not have layers. It has a button called 'Auto-Adjust Colours'. Clicking on that button for this image produces a remarkable change in the picture. Colour saturation and contrast are increased incredibly. I feel that somewhere between that new Faststone depiction and the image as presented lies the Goldilocks picture. A picture that has just the right balance between too tender tones and too harsh a level of contrast. The angle of the heron's legs make it appear as if it has only just taken off (or is about to land). Perhaps making the photograph a second later (or earlier) would have produced a more streamlined form of the heron. I would like to see a print of this picture.

Highly Commended

Grey Teal Calling

From what I have read it seems it's the colour of the beak that gives rise to this bird's name. It's body plumage being predominantly not grey but brown. The colour that stands out in this shot however is not that of the duck but of the vivid green background. A less eye-catching, more muted natural colour would be preferable. The duck is competently captured with even the hint of a catch light in its eye though it's a shame that the end of its tail is hidden behind the branch. Since the tail is already obscured there is nothing to be lost by cropping the left-hand side of the picture to remove the unattractive end of the branch. A good attempt. **Accepted.**

On now to the set subject 'Frame in a Frame' beginning with the A Graders.

Admiring the View

This is certainly an entry that complies with the Set Subject title. There are frames everywhere but the dominant frame is the one formed by the door frame around the view of is it Mt Tongariro? In which case we must be in the Chateau. The image is most competently made with striking colours and lighting. However what delights me most of all is the message inherent in the image. Through the window we see the imposing view of Tongariro but what are these visitors doing? It looks as if there maybe a couple of conversations in progress while one man is looking in a rather concerned way at the High Tea menu. He's probably concerned because there's nothing on the menu that he can afford. No one is looking at the mountain. Look you jokers, forget your High Teas and your conversations get outside, go for a walk, pay homage to Mt. Tongariro and enjoy being in the National Park. High Tea indeed. Excellent work. **Honours.**

Autumn Cradle

The natural framing of what looks like willow trees draws our eyes across the river to the contrasting colour of what might be deciduous trees showing their autumn colours. The pattern effect formed by the multiple leaning boughs of the willow is a most pleasing feature of this picture. This is an autumnal image and so perhaps meant to favour darker tones. However some adjustments in Levels to lighten the shot would emphasise the role of the trees and help to increase the contrast so making the picture a touch more dynamic. A restful and pleasing image. **Accepted.**

Boss Bagels

I thought that there might have been more images of this through-a-street-side window style amongst the entries in this set subject. There is great potential in this shot. Although the area outside of the actual window is attention grabbing with its various patterns and in-your face pink it's what's going inside that offers opportunity for the photographer. Inside is a stage waiting to be filled with the cast - the workers and customers of Boss Bagels. At the moment rather than the stars of the show we seem only to have a stage-hand or a scene shifter but then maybe I'm wrong and this is the lead actor playing her 'what are you looking at ' role to the audience. I wonder if the person who made this real frame within a frame is brave. If they are they might have plucked up their courage, entered the eatery and, after ordering a bagel of course, asked for a bit of action. A waitress looking out of the window offering bagels, a group of customers 'hamming it up' with bagels akimbo. You can come up with more scenarios. And if the proprietor of the bagel house tells the photographer "Beat it this ain't a playhouse" well never mind you tried. A compliant, competent image that needs just a little more creativity.

Accepted . <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/jun/25/melissa-breyer-best-phone-picture-new-york-deli-worker>

Captured Beauty

Roses are beautiful and I appreciate the idea and the potential of this entry. It has a feeling of Beauty and the Beast about it where the rose is obviously Beauty and the dark framework the Beast. However the rather dark area of Beast is tending to dominate the captured rose Beauty. Perhaps cropping off the left hand portion of the image would increase the prominence of the rose whilst still retaining the well conceived message of the entry. A good attempt. **Accepted.**

Come On Let's Get Going

A title that typifies the energy and enthusiasm that brims over from young children. And here are the children excited at having what must surely be the best seats on this double decker London bus. 'Look at us! And we are having our picture taken!!' You can imagine them saying ... actually yelling; excited young children don't 'say'. My one real disappointment with this image is that, because of the reflections of the tree, we cannot see the children's faces as well as I would like. Cropping off the white area at the base of the image and the leaves on the right of the shot would help to concentrate the viewers' attention on the well positioned rascals in the Big Red. This is a creative image with a good interpretation of framing. **Merit.**

Coot with Chick among the Reeds

What a cute Coot Chick. And try saying that after a good night out on the town! The chick is undoubtedly the star of this image with the parent's watchful eye and distinctive white beak playing a significant but secondary role. Both parent and chick are most competently and sharply depicted but I fear at the expense of losing a vital element in this set subject, namely a strong frame. The concept for the picture is valid and we have a distinct reed on the right-hand side of the shot but for me the other reeds are too blurred to successfully complete the framing, rather they detract from the main subjects of the image. I appreciate this entry, it's actually a praiseworthy nature image. Although I can imagine other commentators disagreeing with my analysis for this set subject entry I have made **No Award.**

Divided Loyalties

I'm concerned that I may not have grasped the meaning of the title of this image. Is the division of loyalties to do with the different teams that are being supported or is it that the men are interested in what's going on on one end of the paddock while the boys' interests lie on the opposite end of the ground?

A compliant and most competently produced picture with lots of creative framing. I particularly appreciate the colour pallet but even more so enjoy the enthusiasm of the boys, who let's face it are just being silly, in contrast to the laid back 'seen it all before' attitude of the blokes. The image raises all sorts of questions in my mind. Where was it taken? Does that clock work? What does the man in the gum boots do? Has he come straight from the farm? What was the final score? It doesn't look good for Manuhiri! The image has all the classic components of a photograph that might have come from the late Robin Morrison and it has grown on me the more I have studied it. **Honours.**

Foot Bridge

A compliant and technically competent image with evidence of creativity in capturing a scene with some interest through the red sculpture or that is what I assume it to be. The area with the cabbage trees seems to be the part of the image that is sharpest. The element in the shot which annoyingly lacks sharpness is the red sculpture. Perhaps an increase in f number or even a trip into the world of stacked images could have overcome this problem. My eye travels to the top of the red sculpture and thence out of the frame. Perhaps cropping off the top of the image to the point where the two curves of the sculpture meet so that the red curves form a more complete frame to the bridge beyond would strengthen the picture. A good attempt at this set subject. **Merit.**

Framed

I really appreciate the simplicity of this most effective shot. It's a very creative answer to the set subject. I was ready to wax lyrical on the apparent loneliness of the man walking towards the waves when I noticed the other two people in the picture. Yes our framed hero has two more people with him. One is in the sea to the right of the wooden triangle and the other is playing hard to spot, but I'm pretty sure I can just see the point of a hat and possibly the shadow of a leg near the sea on the inside of the right hand wooden upright. Does it matter that Mr. Man is not alone? Probably not and I may even be mistaken about his second companion. However it does communicate a slightly different story. Instead of a man with a mysterious mission this is simply a family out for a day at the seaside. And no, I haven't forgotten that, unless a tripod and self-timer was in use, somebody else made the picture! I would clone out Mr. Man's accomplices and restore his sea-shore loneliness. I'm nit picking. This is an excellent image. **Honours.**

Friends

Although this shot just about ticks the compliance box the framing is somewhat tenuous being made up of the wires surrounding the two birds. The difference between the two birds, one large and a sculpture the other small and live is not one that generates a strong message for me. Understandably the sculpture is devoid of meaningful eyes but so also in the image is the real bird. There is no emotional connection either between the birds or between the image and the viewer. If the little 'un' had somehow been looking up at the big 'un' as if to say 'Gosh one day I'd like to be as big you!' then both the bird connection and the viewers' connection might have been established. **Accepted.**

Leaf in the Frame

A compliant and pleasingly gentle image making me think of autumn. It's the end of growing, the end of summer for both the leaves and the branches. The stillness and calm of the water is almost a pictorial message for that hiatus that autumn can represent before the violent storms and wild weather of winter. This message comes from a view of the total image. Does the message emphasise the framing aspect of this set subject. Perhaps not. For that emphasis I would suggest that the image be cropped on all sides to a square format featuring only the framing branch and the leaves within. The white border tends to drag the viewers' attention away from the image proper. A grey border might be more in keeping with the tones of the picture. Regardless of these suggestions I would be more than happy to put this photograph on one of my walls. **Highly Commended.**

Mimosa with ice

I read that mimosa is a cocktail consisting of champagne and chilled citrus juice, usually orange juice. It is often served in a tall champagne flute at brunch, at weddings, or as part of business or first class service on some passenger-railways and airlines. I'm obviously either totally naive or I've been moving in the wrong circles because all this is a revelation to me. Unfortunately this image does very little to enlighten me to the apparent delights of this particular beverage. The circle of what I assume to be the glass does frame the liquid and the lumps of ice floating in it. Alas after that my attention is drawn to the various highlights in the image including the rectangular shape which looks suspiciously like it might have come from a flash head. The darkish surround supplies no further information. I wonder if a more abstract approach to what is a creative idea might be more successful. **No Award.**

Mobile Barber

A compliant and technically competent image with the barber well framed within the back of his truck. By the way I like his idea of giving the interior of his vehicle a brick wall effect. Perhaps it's aimed at reassuring his customers that his truck and business are absolutely as safe as houses. What I'm not enthused about in this image is the mixture of colour and monochrome. Perhaps this is an attempt to concentrate the viewer's attention on the truck. However, if that is the case, I'm afraid that for me it does not work. I'm as inquisitive as the next person and after checking out the truck I'm more interested in trying to work out what is taking place on the right hand side of the picture. The people depicted there are looking at something; we cannot see what ... how annoying ... and consequently how much more is our attention drawn away from the truck, which should be the main subject, to the happenings elsewhere. I suggest that cropping off nearly all of the right hand side of the picture to just leave the truck and then converting to a black and white image would produce a much stronger photograph. **Accepted.**

Morning Light

Photography is about light, or at least it used to be. I sometimes think that currently it's about post-processing, but that's another of my old foggy grumbles. This entry, as its name reinforces, is totally about light. Of course the stone arch and the beach combine to produce a beautiful frame but it's the light on the other side of this frame and particularly on the rock stack which are the main "ooh that's lovely" stars of the show. The detail in the dark archway and the similar detail in the light stack together with the blurred sea make me wonder if this is an HDR produced image. If it is then it has been well done but the point is irrelevant. It's the emotion generated by this image that wins the day. All is calm, the scene is one of gentle optimism, we have the place to our selves, it's a great day to be alive. In the past judges would have requested a woman in red swim wear to be positioned on the thirds just below those distant trees. Sacrilege! Leave absolutely everything just as it is. **Honours.**

New Brighton

And what else for New Brighton but the pier. This technically competent, well lit photograph gives me a choice of three options in my search for framing. Firstly a restricted view of part of the pier framed by a circular hole in a concrete wall, secondly a view of the main length of the pier framed between the stone wall below and what looks like the overhang of some form of cladding above and thirdly to enjoy both of these framings together. The both together option I find somewhat wearing. I look to the end of the pier and then back to the concrete hole then back to the end of the pier and then back to the hole and ... I'm sure you get my drift ... both figuratively and literally! Option two, the stone wall and cladding frame I find a rather weak concept. That leaves option one, the hole in the wall, which appeals to me as the strongest and most creative framing. I wonder if the photographer is brave enough to crop off everything to the right of the right hand edge of that wall? Less is more is the saying. What do you think? A last small point clone out the attention grabbing cast aside tissue at the base of the wall. A good attempt. **Accepted.**

Pastoral

The trees act as an effective frame to this not unpleasant rural image. The harsh lighting seems to indicate that this is a mid-day shot with the highlights on the leaves of the trees being distracting rather than attractive. I look through the trees to the distance expecting to see something of significance and find myself disappointed in that expectation. I have nothing against green paddocks but there is more to life for most of us than watching grass grow. In PSNZ judging terminology this image needs a focal point. I feel a bit of a fraud and almost scared to suggest that a big red tractor might fill that need. **Accepted.**

Pillars

I have earlier commented on an image similar to this one. In this compliant entry the photographer has cropped close in to the red sculpture so cutting off anything outside the frame. Perhaps that cropping has been too severe and needs to be reassessed. The framing would be more complete and more successful if we could see both the bottom part of the sculpture and its join at the top. I appreciate the view of the pillars and the palms within the frame but the un-sharp areas of the sculpture and the lighter area in the top left-hand corner are concerning. Well tried. **Accepted.**

Recovery Care Prevention

Oh what fun somebody has been having with pictures taken inside looking outside, outside looking inside, flipped images, joined images and whatever else that is too much for me to even guess at. In other words this is not only a compliant and competent entry it's also a creative entry. Before the photographer gets too cocky let me tell them that anything I have difficulty in understanding I deem to be creative! There are quite a few frames in this image, including the window frames, at least sixty I would guess. Because of the repetitive nature of the contents of the image it could be regarded as a pattern shot. What do pattern shots need to make them successful? Answer a break in the pattern. In this case the break is supplied by the out-of-work guitar player. The guitarist is positioned or perhaps 'placed' just about on one of the thirds of the image (in case that sort of thing interests you). I appreciate the photographer's confidence in submitting a panorama format entry with a hint of "'Let's see what the assessor thinks of this one then!'" Well done. **Honours.**

Reflections

A tranquil scene. I can almost hear the ducks quacking. The trees frame the water in a neat manner whilst still allowing the viewer to follow the progress of the duck that is making its rippling way through the reflections of the far-side trees. I wonder who, if anybody lives in the building half hidden by the trees. This is not a dramatic image but I suspect that in a way it is not meant to be. Compliant, competent not overly creative but with a calming message of 'here is something restful away from the madding crowd please enjoy.' **Merit.**

Roof Tops Through Old Glass

What the title says is exactly what we see. That 'seen better days' chimney stack in the foreground compared to the rather superior looking facade at the rear almost conveys a message of social status. If we were in the days of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* we would have no doubt about where Fagin, the leader of the pick-pocketing street urchins, would be holed out and where Mr. Brownlow Oliver's well-off benefactor would be living. The out of focus rather old style window framing helps to reinforce this message to a degree but after a while

the blurry edges and the overly rigid symmetry of the cross frames become distracting factors in an otherwise well seen image. **Accepted.**

Ruru Revealed

I'm a great believer that photography should be fun. This totally compliant, incredibly creative image certainly brought a smile to my face. The eyes of the owl almost dare me to award an Honours to the entry. Well my beaked friend, if the competence of your photographic creator had been a little more convincing in tidying up your feathers where they meet the hole in the tree I might have taken you up on your dare. A great idea even if it did result in a totally unbelievable image. My thanks to the photographer for this off the wall interpretation of a Frame in a Frame. **Highly Commended.**

Scene biking

I hope the cyclist has their brakes on else they look like they are going to crash into the inside edge of the concrete frame. In PSNZ jargon that means not enough room has been left for the cyclist to move into. I appreciate the blurring of the bike rider it does give the impression of moving and contrasts well with the very solid 'not going anywhere' frame. The idea behind this image is good. What stops it from being a totally successful entry are the distracting elements in the picture; the white roofs of the houses, the bright sky, the post and chains, the untidy markings on the wall. All of these subsidiary details demand our attention at the expense of the main subject, the bike rider. **Accepted.**

Sunset on the Awa

A compliant image in that the trees and foliage provide a frame. Unfortunately what I see within that frame leaves me somewhat disappointed. The term 'sunset' conjures up for me all sorts of red glows as our star sinks below the horizon. In this shot, on my screen, the dominant colour is a tone of green. Yes I know about the green flash at sunset but I can't believe that this is it. In looking for a focal point my view eventually rests on the patch of land in the water in the middle of the image. It is not overly breath-taking. There is the potential for a pleasing image from the camera viewpoint but sadly in this instance that potential has not been realised. **No Award.**

The craft maker's display shelf

The craft maker is to be complimented if the figures on the shelf are representative of their crafting prowess. The photographer also deserves praise for isolating those figures in a circular frame which blocks out any features other than the actual craft figures. I'm intrigued to know exactly what the frame is. If I was to be told that it's a tube of rolled up card, or something of the like, I would be accepting of that as the truth. Does this particular frame add anything to the simple message of attractive, well made craft work? Well maybe we are being allowed a special, secret-showing of the figures. To my mind such a secret story would be strengthened if the frame were to be key-hole shaped. Imagine a young child looking through the key-hole to check on mummy's story that the craft figures come alive when no one is looking. Then again perhaps I should just make an effort to keep my imagination in check. Compliant, competent and creative but perhaps needing a key hole shape to keep this assessor happy. **Merit.**

The Lion peeps through the window

I'm uncertain exactly which Lion this title is referencing but, based on the snow and the size of the rock, I'll opt for the Lion in Milford Sound. The window cited I take to be the window in the clouds or is it an aeroplane window? I find the framing aspect in this image rather questionable. But let's consider the subject matter within the framing cloud. I'm really sad to say that the rock-scape is not making my emotional juices come to the boil. Cropping off some of the cloud at the top and on the left of the shot would give the Lion more significance in the image. But sadly this is another case where something such as a red-clad climber, small in scale against the vast rock face, is needed for viewers to illicit, that much desired by photographers, exclamation of 'Cor look at that!'. I fear it may be. **No Award.**

Tree nest

Don't you have any proper hen houses or owl roosts in Whanganui ? Are all your birds forced to find holes in trees for nesting places. Compliant, competent, creative and further more just about credible! Whether the believable aspect of this shot is due to it being a straight capture of a real hen in a real hole in a real tree or is due to some very accomplished post processing that has put a none hole roosting hen into a none hen roosting hole is neither here nor there. Excellent work. An entry that really succeeds in fulfilling the criteria of this set-subject and puts a smile on my face every time I view it. **Honours.**

Twilight

This is a most competent image. The title sets the time frame. The autumnal-looking trees form a beautiful frame that invites us to walk up the driveway, enter the neat-looking house, make ourselves a hot drink, sit down and mull over the activities of the day. Even if that mulling makes us remember that we still need to put away the ride-on mower which we have left out

by the side of the house. I'm hesitant to suggest that the picture has an HDR look about it. Hesitant only because it's sometimes said that if the viewer identifies the use of HDR in an image then the photographer has failed to use HDR effectively. I don't entirely agree with this viewpoint and in a lot of instances I actually enjoy an obviously HDR processed picture. This is an image that is exciting only because of the abilities of the photographer to recognise the potential of an ordinary everyday scene and turn that potential into a technically high-caliber image. **Highly Commended.**

Urban Space

At first I had difficulty in understanding the perspectives inherent in this picture. It was only when I realised that the bottom half of the foreground wall is shaped like the bottom half of a capital 'H' did things fall into place. The octagonal hole in the concrete wall frames the mural of skateboarders and this mural reinforces the scene's title of Urban Space. Graffiti is not uncommon in urban areas and the foreground concrete structure has not escaped its effects. The messy graffiti adds realism to the image but at the same time it distracts our attention from the primary subject matter - the skateboarder pictures. Two possible changes to the image that the photographer might like to consider are firstly to crop to a square format around the octagonal hole and secondly a lightening of some of the darker areas. A good attempt.

Accepted.

On now to the B-Grade workers

There is just one Open entry

IR Winter Landscape

From the IR in the title and the unnatural colours of the picture I presume that this is an Infra Red image. I appreciate the manner in which the tree dominates the photograph whilst we are still able to discern a complementary forested background. Compositionally a more balanced image might be obtained if there were further branches spreading out from the tree to the left of the picture. From the 'Winter Landscape' titling I assume that the photographer is suggesting that the image could be viewed as a snow scape. I mean no disrespect when I say that the absence of people and the strange infra-red produced colours, particularly of the sky, almost make me imagine that this is a scene from a post apocalyptic world. Some psychopath has pushed the button and the threat of a nuclear holocaust has become a reality. Well done on providing a different way of looking at the landscape. **Highly Commended.**

Here is the first of the B-Grade Set Subject entries

Beyond the door frame after life.

Maybe this is a glimpse of what we may expect following my previously envisaged nuclear holocaust. There's no doubt about it, those red and green lights are guiding us to the door. What lies beyond the door? Well the after-life of course. This dramatic, semi-abstract image is very creative. It could have been more effective if the ceiling light and the door had been more 'other worldly'. A star instead of the ceiling light and an heavy iron-studded door instead of the twentieth century, suburban villa front door. Alternatively for a more farcical effect have a sign on the door saying something such as "After Life Entry Only." a Creative entry.

Highly Commended.

Country lane

A compliant, tranquil image with the framing trees leading our view down the lane. Cropping off the sky to produce a more panorama format picture would ensure that the viewers' attention is firmly focused on the lane and the view at the end. I've nothing against sheep and these sheep are doing their required sheep may safely graze act but perhaps something more exciting as a focal point - even a person looking over the paddock fence - would add more strength to the image. I don't advocate showing a red tractor in the paddock that would be crass in this appealing, gentle, pastoral picture. Besides which I've already sent the red tractor to another entry. One last suggestion - maybe lighten the trees a smidgen to reveal more of their detail. **Merit.**

Door On The Wall

Compliant, competent and creative this is a well seen image. The vibrant, complementing colours really shout 'look at me' to the viewer. Apart from the orange frame around the door we also have frames formed by the green hedging. If the photographer wanted to concentrate the viewer's attention totally on the circular door they might consider cropping each side of the image back to the outside edges of the vertical hedging. Finally for total symmetry clone the left-hand horizontal hedging to the corresponding area on the right hand side! **Honours.**

Framing the Bush

The hand railing does provide a frame around the plant but the image is too dark for a full enjoyment of that plant. I suggest rotating the image clockwise until the left-hand post appears vertical. Then crop away everything on the right hand side of the picture as far as the middle of the right hand post. Lighten the image in Levels and increase the colour saturation. These actions should release the potential in the shot and provide an improved picture. All of these

adjustments can be made in the free to download image viewer Faststone. There is no need to go into Photoshop or Lightroom. **Accepted.**

Hanging Frame

A picture that makes me want to know what's going on inside those windows. Although totally compliant and competent I feel a touch more creativity is required to make the best out of this scene. What a difference the appearance above that frosted glass pane, of an arm with a blood stained knife held in the hand would make to this shot! Or if the photographer feels that's too much drama for the sort of photo shoot they enjoy, then even a 'what are you looking at?' face peeping out might add the vital spark of creativity that is needed. **Accepted.**

Inside Outside

A well titled, compliant, competent and creatively intriguing image. Intriguing because I'm still not certain why that outside landscape is appearing on the inside wall of the church. That's good! Because it keeps me, and presumably other viewers, looking at the picture and if the photographer can keep people looking at their photographs they are on to a winner. There are a number of options for cropping this shot but in all cases the 'outside on the inside' element needs to be retained. On my screen increasing the contrast brings out the beauty of the wooden walls and also increase the 'outside on the inside' effect. **Merit.**

Mysterious Window

This is a compliant and competent image but perhaps the photographer has a more vivid imagination than I have; I'm not too sure what is mysterious in the window about a garment on a clothes airer and what looks like a rubbish bin. I've already mentioned how more drama or intrigue can be added to a window shot by introducing extra props but in this case the image could be made more exciting by simply rotating the window within the picture. Then rather than running parallel to the sides of the picture edge the window lies at an angle to those edges. Lines at an angle in a photograph make the photograph more dynamic. Pressing Faststone's Auto Adjust Colours button on my computer results in a lighter, more contrasty and I feel a more successful version of this image. **Accepted.**

Saw Point

A pun title that links with the saws in the picture. I enjoy the image but I do feel that its strength is not so much in the frame of the window but rather in the more interesting half-frame formed around that window by the two old saws. Most of the window shots in this assessment have needed that extra something to reach their full potential. This entry, competent as it is and even with those saws, still falls into that category. That window is not holding my interest. For some reason, that I don't fully understand but maybe it's to do with the

direction of the light, this picture appeals more to me when it is rotated through ninety degrees in an anticlockwise direction to become a vertical rather than a horizontal presentation! A good attempt. **Merit.**

Through Devils Gate

Here is a braver driver than me! A fine interpretation of the set subject. There's plenty of drama here ... I hope they made it. The red brake lights add to the excitement in the message of this adventurous journey. Can I suggest any improvements? Possibly cropping a tad off the top of the picture to put more emphasis on the vehicle and a slight all-round increase in exposure but that's nit picking. The well communicated message here more than carries the day. **Honours.**

Through the Gates

Yes, the palm trees seem to be the major framing element in this entry. I do wish that they had framed something that held my interest longer than the empty driveway does. I want to walk down that driveway and see what lies at the end. I can't. the gates are barring my entry. Elder statesmen photo judges nearly always demanded that gates be open to 'lead the viewer into the picture'. In this case their opinions might be valid. The colour of the sky is unnatural are we looking at another infra-red image? I think that the shot is stronger when converted to a black and white picture. An image that to succeed needs to deliver just that extra bit more. **Accepted.**

Turakina Church

I'm free to walk down this path even though at the end the church door is closed to me. No matter because I'm totally happy to look around and enjoy all the beautifully vibrant colours that surround me. Those colours are the strong-point of this delightful image. The red of the door acts as a focal point, the star of the show, while the range of complimentary greens and golds are the supporting actors. Even the sky has deigned to dress in blue rather than wear the boring overcast grey that it sometimes wears when it's sulking. So all's right with the world is it? Not quite. It's that 'seen better days' post with the container fixed at the top. What's that doing on-stage demanding the audience's attention? Perhaps the photographer wanted an item of foreground in this, to all intents and purpose, landscape image. I'm happy with that but the post and particularly the container becomes too much an item of curiosity to the viewer detracting from the real message of the picture. Clone out the post and look for a different foreground feature. Even with that niggly post a very strong entry. **Honours.**

Wanted Dead or Alive

That picture of Jesse James makes him look more like a bank teller than a bank robber. My reading of this image is that the connection between the framed wanted poster and the framed boarded up window is the set of prison-like bars on the window. Prison (or worse) is where

Jessie should go. This connection might be strengthened by cropping off the horse shoes from the left of the image to feature just Jesse and the barred window in the picture. A well seen image. **Accepted.**

Widow to the past

The title of this entry helps the viewer to understand the message that the photographer is trying to communicate with this simple but well constructed image. Inherent in the photograph are unanswered questions. What used to be on this site? When did it disappear? Why did it disappear? Is something going to replace whatever was here? Where do those openings lead? The viewer is dependent on their own imagination for the answers to these questions. Nor is the window frame simple. I enjoy the interruption to the framework provided by the foliage growing over parts of it (leaves of *Coprosma repens* is my guess). The hinges seem to suggest that the windows were actually shutters of some kind. There's lots to look at in this image particularly if you are a Sherlock Holmes type. If you lack imagination this is not an exciting image and some critics will demand more of a focal point. However what is certain is that the picture has intrigue a-plenty. The choice of monochrome for the photograph is a very sound decision. **Highly Commended.**

We come now to the last entry. But before I comment on that entry and before you turn to other matters may I request some comments from you. Comments on how you found my reviews of the entries to this assessment. Were those reviews valid, too harsh, too soft, Interesting, boring or just right? As the Beatles sang send me a postcard drop me a line stating point of view indicate precisely what you mean to say ... before this old foggy wastes away.

Alternatively just drop me an email. John Smart has my address. Many thanks.

Wistful Rex

Wistful, among other things, means yearning, longing, sad and forlorn. Looking at Rex the title is spot on. But wouldn't you be all of these things stuck inside a rusty old vehicle that looks like it's going nowhere and has gone nowhere fast for a long, long time? Rex is well framed in this creative interpretation of the set subject. However being in the shadow his role in the picture tends to become subservient to the attention-grabbing yellow of the vehicle. Perhaps lighten up the shadows in this shot and Rex will achieve his true 'Aaah poor Rex' status. **Accepted.**

Well done to everyone who entered images into this assessment and once again thank you for allowing me both the pleasure of viewing those images and the opportunity of commenting upon them. From Don Pittham in Nelson goodbye.