

N M C P F
News

Dec 2025

Edition 201



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"Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection."
Winston Churchill

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Calling All Club Secretaries

Please forward any information that is emailed to you from the MCPF about: exhibitions; entry forms; and events, including the Newsletter cover letter to all your club members.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone from MCPF Council.

MCPF Diary 2026

More details about each of the events can be found at
www.mcpf.co.uk

Date 2026	Event	Contact Details/Venue
Jan 24 th	AV Competitions	Alastair Taylor avchamp@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton Burton on Trent, DE13 0QX
Feb 14 th	MCPF General Meeting	Christine Lovatt, sec@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury B69 2AS
Feb 14 th	MidPhot 2026 Closing Date	Ralph & Lu Duckett midphot@mcpf.co.uk
Mar 25 th –29 th	MidPhot 2026 Exhibition	Ralph & Lu Duckett. midphot@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse Oldbury, B69 2AS
Apr 18th	Print and PDI Championships	Peter Owen, mcpfchampionship@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Braunstone Civic Centre, Braunstone
May 14th	Closing date Photofolio 2026	Bob Goode photofolio@mcpf.co.uk
Jun Wed 10 th ~ Sat 13 th	Photofolio Exhibition	photofolio@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury B69 2AS Days and times to be announced
Jun 13 th	MCPF Annual General Meeting	Christine Lovatt sec@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury B69 2AS
Jul 5th	APM Workshop	Mike Sharples seminarsec@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury B69 2AS
TBA	Midland Salon	Midland Salon Closing date
Aug 8th - 15th	Midland Salon Exhibition	Judith Parry: chairman@midland-salon.com Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury B69 2AS Days and times to be announced
Sep 19 th	General Meeting	Christine Lovatt, sec@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury B69 2AS
Sep 19 th	Closing date Panel Exhibition 2026	Nasar Hussain
TBA	Panel Exhibition	Nasar Hussain Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury B69 2AS
TBA	Seminar	Mike Sharples seminarsec@mcpf.co.uk Venue: Smethwick PS. The Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury B69 2AS

2027

Contact

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newsletter@mcpf.co.uk

Subscribe

To subscribe to the MCPF Newsletter for FREE please go to the MCPF website homepage where you will find a link to the subscribe page or click on this link <https://mcpf.co.uk/newsletter>

Editorial Notes

As you can see I am trying to use as many images as possible in the newsletter. I hope I am not upsetting anyone by not contacting them directly for permission, but I would like to point out that they are of low resolution and as part of our Exhibition rules, we can use your images to promote the MCPF and its member clubs. Any opinions expressed are not necessarily the opinions of Midland Counties Photographic Federation and neither the Editor nor the MCPF accepts any liability for any content. Any mention of products or services in e-news does not constitute an endorsement or approval of those items.

Articles and Club Adverts

Send your club event, exhibition or news to: newsletter@mcpf.co.uk

Please send it in text format along with an image and a poster. All this information will be forwarded to the Webmaster for inclusion on the MCPF website.

Closing date for submissions is 28th of each month. The editor reserves the right to withhold any submitted article if it is deemed inappropriate for this publication and to postpone publication if required.

Website News

All the clubs who have websites should have the www icon next to their names in the "Find a Club" on the MCPF website. If, for whatever reason, you change the address, please ensure that you update your details on our database. Whilst going through and checking, I did notice a couple of clubs have changed their venue address but have not updated this on our database. Help us to help you by keeping your details up to date with us.



Judges Seminar 2025

The MCPF held its biennial Judges Seminar at the Old Schoolhouse on Nov 29th. The event was led by Mike Sharples, along with other experienced judges, Graham Walton, Ralph Duckett, Roger Parry (MCPF and PAGB Judges Secretary), Bob Goode and Dave Tucker. The morning began with a presentation by Mike of some guidelines, what is expected of being a judge and some of the do's and don'ts. 20 delegates attended the day, who were from the start, encouraged to ask questions and get involved with the discussions, which they duly did. As you can imagine, these discussions carried on during the lunch break.

Some of the aspects and expectations of being a judge were covered, including taking the booking, expenses, travel, etc. How to comport oneself in front of an audience, talk to the audience, not the print (a lot easier said than done, especially for newbies), speak up, etc.

The criteria to be: Informative, Positive, Encouraging, Critical, Consistent, Concise. Try to always start your critique with several positive comments. Sometimes this may not be easy to do. Look at the issues that you think could be improved, with encouraging and positive comments based on the opening comments of your judging criteria.

Take more time on the novice sections to be encouraging, but maybe not taking prisoners in the advanced sections.

Again, the do's and don'ts were covered, and try not to be regimented in your approach to an image, i.e., rules of thirds, on the diagonal, etc. Try not to dismiss images that are not what they would normally see in a camera club competition; take them at face value. These are things that come with experience.

.... BUT sometimes we may need to Challenge Convention, break the mould and Judge from the Heart".

Sometimes club photography judging can be done to a formula, what is good and bad, what's been seen before, BUT sometimes we may need to Challenge Convention, break the mould and Judge from the Heart. It was pointed out to the delegates that they will meet a variety of marking systems and that clubs have different ways of sorting their members abilities. The advice given was "Remember your audience will often

range from complete Novice to Top Advanced Photographer. In small clubs, these can be in the same section. Encourage the Novice and give well founded

2nd opinions to the Advanced."

The afternoon was split into two sessions. In the first one, the delegates were split into groups, and everyone in the group was asked to critique a few photos in front of the other people around the table, including one of the experienced judges. They were given feedback from the other members of the group.

In the second afternoon session, the attendees were asked in turn to stand on the stage and critique a photo in front of all the people there. One of the more noticeable things was that there were seven lady delegates, of whom two signed up on the CMS straight away.

We hope that everyone enjoyed the day and got something out of it. And we are pleased that we have had at least 6 people sign up for the PAGB CMS as

judges. Details will be published later in the newsletter, in the MCPF Guide & Directory (to be published in the New Year) and in the January MCPF Newsletter.

Lots of information and insights were given on the day, which will not be reproduced here. To find out more, sign up for the next seminar, so you can hear them firsthand.

An Additional Piece of Advice

An additional piece of advice given, which could be applied, to not only judges but to anyone thinking of applying for their PAGB distinctions, or any club member, and that is: "To establish in your mind what a good standard is, all Judges are advised to attend and view: MCPF, National and International Exhibitions and Championships".

Letters from Jayne Hutchings and Jenny Webster.

Thoroughly enjoyed it. I'll give it a go.

My inspiration for joining the seminar came about from a social media 'rant' that there weren't enough female judges, coupled with my love of seeing beautiful images. So, I thought why not go along and see if this is something I'd like to try.

Having already received information on the structure of the day I thought I was well prepared, albeit a tad nervous.

The opening session opened up some great interactions with attendees, covering hints and tips for: taking bookings; constructive judging to encourage all and not to deflate (especially those just starting their photography journey); presenting yourself to the audience; and the all important "do's" and "don'ts".

In the afternoon we got into small teams with a seasoned judge and started a desktop exercise of putting the theory into practice.

Then the grand finale when all attendees were given the opportunity to get on the stage and do a 'live' session - hopefully remembering the hints and tips that had been shared earlier.

Having an opportunity to do all of this in a safe and supportive environment was invaluable.

I've come away knowing so much more; I'm now eager to give a bit back to my much loved passion and dip my toes into judging. I'm sure it will be as rewarding as photography itself has and continues to be.

Many thanks to all who helped run what was a great day.

Cheers

Jayne

Hello Mike

.... I Will take the challenge and place my name down in the judges for assessment....portal.

I Thank you again for both yourself and the active judges on hand to answer all questions fired at them.

Kindest regards Jenny Webster.

Thank you to Mike Sharples

No event such as these can run without someone to take on the organisation of arranging speakers, preparing presentations and handouts, being the contact for any queries. So a huge thank you to Mike Sharples for being that person, he spends a lot time making sure these days run smoothly.

PAGB Booking a judge or a speaker procedure

One topic of discussion at the MCPF Judges Seminar was the PAGB CMS system. Some of the delegates had never heard of the system, which got us to wondering how have clubs been booking judges and speakers? Let's start with how we the MCPF let you the clubs, Judges and Speakers know about us, how to find Judges and Speakers and where to find the information.

How the MCPF and the PAGB keeps you up to date with information

MCPF - the MCPF produce a Guide and Directory (G&D) at the start of the year, every year. This is one of the most up-to-date sources of information about the MCPF, rules, guidelines, current member clubs and current judges and speakers in the Federation. This is published in PDF format and is sent to every Club Secretary, judge and lecturer, via email. If there are any changes to clubs, judges or speakers, a revised edition is sent *"IMPORTANT - if you have paper copies (last printed in 2023) DO NOT use them."* A copy of the G&D can be found on the MCPF website, but because of GDPR, Judges or Speakers are NOT included. This is purely for reference to our procedures and the list of member clubs. This system was adopted because of the prohibitive costs of postage (well over £400, and that was the bill two years ago). Secretaries can circulate the PDF version or print off the relevant pages and pass them onto those Committee members who book judges and speakers, but not to every member of the club.

IMPORTANT - if you have paper copies (last printed in 2023), DO NOT use them. They are out of date; some judges and speakers have come off the lists, and sadly, some are no longer with us, and it can be upsetting to their families if they get enquiries.

PAGB - the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain (PAGB) have a web-based system called Central Management System (CMS). They use this to circulate all their information: APM information, ticket booking and Judges and Speakers information. This system gives you access to all the judges and speakers throughout Great Britain, gives you information about whether or not they will do an evening in person or Zoom or either, the distance they are willing to travel, and where about they are based. Speakers list their talks individually, so you know which one you are booking. It gives a contact number (if supplied) or an easy contact form for you to send to the person, and then you can do your wheeling and dealing via email or phone.

Two-way Street - Emails are great for instant communication, but they only work if the information it relies on, i.e., email addresses are kept up to date, pointing to the right recipient and spelt correctly. The MCPF has a database of all its clubs accessed via the MCPF website. Each club is given a code and password, which is only editable by the MCPF data master. The codes are only given to club secretaries and Treasurers for them to update their club's information. We ask for the Secretary, Treasurer, Competition Secretary and Club Chairman/President information and, most importantly, email address. Clubs can also upload their delegates' names and emails as well. Each one of these addresses is used for the MCPF Newsletter, news about events and exhibitions. Anything about administration, e.g., Subscriptions, General Meetings, etc is only sent to the Secretary and the appropriate people on your committees or delegates.

This only works if the information on the database is kept up to date, we understand that committee's change on regular basis, and passwords are not passed on, but please do remember that we do not have a crystal ball to see when these occur, please update the information yourself or tell us, either the General Secretary or the MCPF Webmaster, we will do it for you. Yes, believe it or not, clubs do sometimes forget to tell us that they have moved premises.

Now then, Judges and lecturers, this applies to you as well. Please keep us informed of any changes to your email address, changes to lecturers, or any other information that helps with communication with the MCPF and clubs. The PAGB CMS system is really your responsibility to keep your own information up to date, but it does help us, the MCPF, to keep our records current if you tell us as well.

What is the PAGB CMS System and How Do you sign up to it?

CMS is a system managed by the PAGB, which lists all the Speakers and Judges approved by the various Federations within the PAGB.

The system allows anyone who is registered as a Club Officer to view and book Speakers and Judges from the MCPF or any other Federation via the system.

It also allows people to register as a Speaker or Judge; however, this requires further approval by the relevant Federations.

To register a new account, you need to visit the PAGB home page at <https://thepagb.org.uk/>. From that page, you can either choose the dropdown menu on the "services" tab or the Quick Links – CMS: Management System on the right-hand side of the page.

Then, from the new page, choose the "Go to CMS Login option. This will take you to the page where you will see a green button labelled "CMS Login/ register". Click on that button, enter your personal email address and your chosen password and hit the "Register" button.

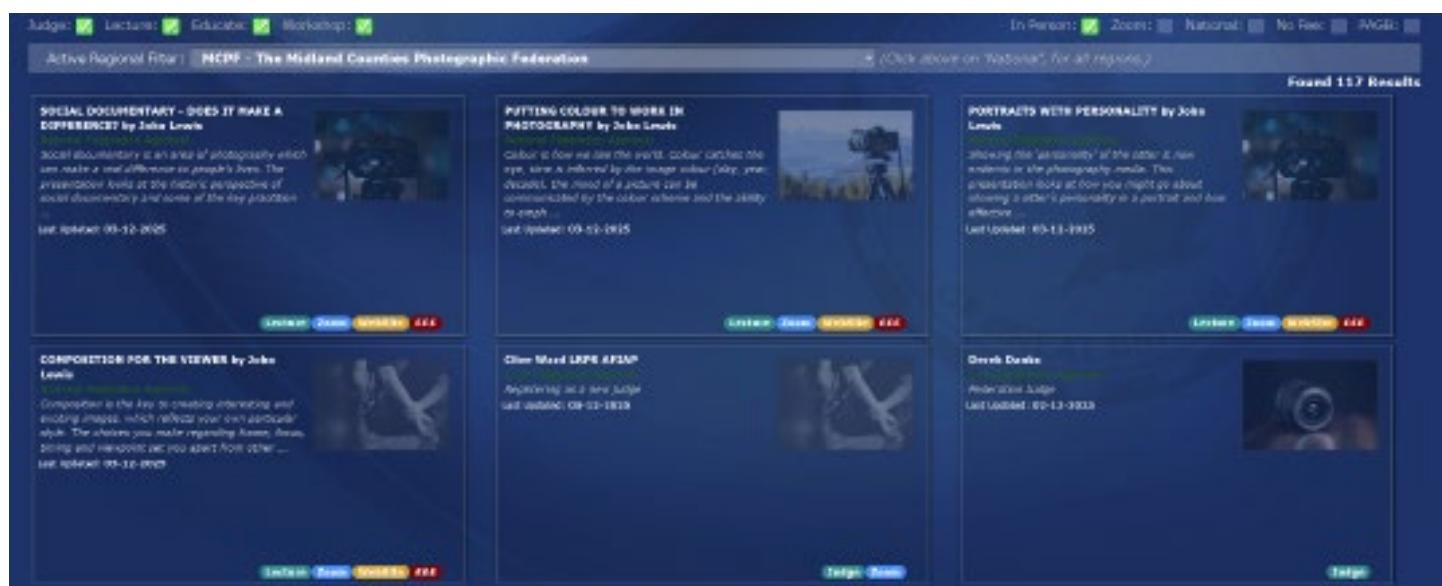
You will then be presented with a form to complete with the relevant details.

Once you have completed the form, press submit. After pressing the submit button, you should receive an email from noreply@pagbhost.co.uk – if you do not receive this email, check your junk/spam folder.

To complete your registration, you should click on the link in the email to authenticate your account.

How to find a Judge or Speaker.

Once you have your account logged in and using the dropdown menu under services, you will find the option for Judges and Lectures. Click on this and a screen full of cards appears. (These are in order of the most recent added, at the top).



Tick on or off any of the options across the top row to filter the results. Use the dropdown menu to look at other federations in turn or tick National at the top to view all them all.

Each person listed can add as much or a little information about themselves, whether they will lecture, judge, do Zoom, charge additional fees or have travel restrictions, these are shown at the bottom of each person's card. To have a closer look at someone, click anywhere on the card, where you find more information about them. Also shown is the distance from the postcode of your club's meeting place.

On the right-hand side of the card is a message box to email to the judge/speaker. You can either use this method or copy the email provided on the left-hand side. Be aware that sometimes these initial contact emails can drop into Spam boxes, so don't be offended if you don't hear back from them; they may not have seen the email.

More information about the Central Management System and lots How to's can be found on the PAGB website

Judges & Lecturers at Club Meetings

Code of Good Practice

This Code is intended to ensure that the contributions of speakers at Club events are properly recognised and that the event runs successfully. This Code is supplemental to the Terms and Conditions for speakers, but should be used whether or not those apply.

Clubs and speakers should report to their respective Federation any significant disregard of this Code.

Bookings - Booking requests are best made with long notice, unless either as an urgent substitution or the speaker has indicated that short notice bookings are preferred. An outline of the event should be provided with contact and venue details. There should be agreement as to what equipment is provided by the

Club and what is provided by the speaker. Expenses and any fees should be discussed and estimated.

Programme - The Club programme should acknowledge whether the speaker is PAGB or Federation listed and should include relevant distinctions. Where appropriate, the name of any sponsor must be included, and the club should comply with any specific conditions of the sponsorship.

Reminder - A reminder should be sent shortly before the event. For a physical meeting, clear directions to the venue should be included with information about parking and potential problems. For an online meeting, access codes should be sent. Mobile telephone numbers should be exchanged for emergency contact.

.... I agreed with everything the judge said about all the images until it came to my own"

Horses for Courses.

The MCPF does NOT have a vetting or grading system as such, the current Council believe that no judge fits all. Some of your members may think the judge was great, whilst other members at the same judging will think he/she was not great, too critical. Everyone will have a different opinion, so how do you assess that?

We believe that the system *".... has volunteered their time and put themselves will self police. If a club is forward, ask yourself, would you do it?"*

not happy with a judge, they don't invite him or her back; if a club does like a judge, they invite them back more frequently. Some judges suit one club whilst others don't.

So, what do you do if you do want to make your club's feelings known to the MCPF council, remember this is your club's opinion, not your personal opinion.

Before you do, please bear in mind the following: the judge is giving their personal critique on your work, he/she could be new at judging, still getting used to speaking in public, they've had a bad journey, feeling under-par, any manner of things. But please, above all, remember that he/she has volunteered their time and put themselves forward, ask yourself, would you do it?

If you still want to go ahead, please write to the Judges/lecturers secretary, tell him/her about the evening and how the club felt about the judge (or speaker), and the matter will be looked into.

New Kids on the Blog

The following have joined the list of MCPF Judges.

David Bray	spellow3010@aol.com
Derek Danks	derek.danks26@gmail.com
Mike Glyde	jabba69@gmx.com
Jane Hutchings	jaynehutchings@yahoo.co.uk
Peter Irons	ipeterirons@hotmail.com
Liz Peat	liz.peat57@gmail.com
Steven Stamford	steev@azimuthimages.co.uk
Clive Ward	crw1001@googlemail.com
Jennifer Webster	websjen@aol.com

N.B. Anyone who signs up on the PAGB system, please let the judges secretary know that you have done so. He will need to approve you and keep their records up to date. Also let the Newsletter Editor know so it can be announced to all the MCPF clubs and go in the MCPF Guide and Directory.

Current Judges and Lecturers

It is that time of year where we start to compile and update the MCPF Guide and Directory. Could you please let us know the following information for our records and to ensure the correct information is published;
You want to stay on the list?

If YES, check that we have your correct contact details including telephone number and email, and where appropriate, an up to date list of lectures titles.

If NO, that you have notified us so we can remove from our records and on the PAGB CMS system.
Please, let Roger Parry know as soon as possible by email to judgeslecturersec@mcpf.co.uk



**What to do on a cold winter's day?
Take photos through the window.**

**WHY NOT SORT YOUR
ENTRY FOR MIDPHOT 2026**

**25
MAR**

MidPhot 2026

**29
MAR**

→ **IMPORTANT DATES**
Opens for entries Dec 1st
closes for entries Feb 14th 2026.

→ **WHO CAN ENTER**
The Exhibition is Open to any MCPF
Club Member.

→ **SECTIONS**
Open Mono & Colour Prints
Open Pdi
Nature Prints & Pdi.

→ **HOW MANY**
Up to 8 images in each section

→ **RULES AND HOW TO's**
Can be found on the MCPF website
and via your Club Secretary

→ **COSTS**
85p per entry

→ **WHERE TO ENTER**
online via the MCPF website

Full details can be found on the MCPF website www.mcpf.co.uk/
Including the rules and the link to the online entry system.

Exhibition Venue

The Old Schoolhouse Churchbridge Oldbury B69 2AS