

Newsletter

InFocus at DVCC

August 2026



Learn, Develop, Share, Support

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Summer Time

Summer time in a curious way marks the coming of the end of the DVCC year and whilst the last two weeks of August are flagged as 'holiday' there is still lots of activity to be getting on with.

First up we welcome Bev Kisby back to DVCC to do some modelling for us. We will be doing outdoor portraits (subject to weather) and will be learning and developing our skills in what is referred to as balancing ambient light with outdoor flash. Some oft call it overpowering the sun!

Following that we will have our AGM and social evening. Now given we have managed to arrange a lot of our club nights to coincide with world cup football matches we have decided to go one better for the AGM and at great expense and effort the club's committee have arranged for an eclipse of the sun to coincide with our meeting. So you might want to bring your camera and whatever safety gear is recommended for taking photographs of an eclipse. **But read on!**

First week of September it's back at Wath for members show case of 3 of your best mono or colour images taken in the last year. No theme, just three of your very very best. Give AI a go and ask it how you could improve your images to meet the requirements of



The wonderful Bev at DVCC

photography competitions like the YPU / PAGB. Perhaps you could also share with us what feedback you got from AI and if you chose to / were able to take advantage of the feedback.

Some general guidance re 'what can be submitted as open mono or open colour'. Well on the face of it anything, but ...

For mono is Pure Black and White: Images containing only pure black, white, and varying shades of grey, or Single-Hue Toning: An image completely toned in one single colour remains a monochrome work. Examples include a traditional sepia wash, a cyanotype (blue) effect, or a uniform digital tint across the entire frame. Colour popping is not "mono" For colour work it's a tad less restrictive, but for YPU, photojournalism should be entered into either mono or colour.

Photojournalism as a genre? Photojournalism is a form of visual journalism that uses raw, un-staged images to tell a factual news or human-interest story. In competitions, so I am told, photojournalism is treated with a strict ethical framework where storytelling value takes priority over pictorial perfection, so grab some emotional impact and let the photograph explain the story. Remember though it's strictly no staged scenes.

When thinking of some to choose for our September's members showcase have a think if your image might fall into the YPU categories of: 'scapes; **Sport Action Movement**; Architecture; Travel; Nature; People, or creative (composites). The when we showcase them you might say "this is my colour image of XYZ, AI thinks that I should have done ABC to it, and I think its a good example of a photograph for the YPU category of ...". Failing that say 'here's my photo of X and I like it cos '

Outdoor flash

Outdoor flash can feel intimidating, but it's one of the most effective ways to lift a portrait from ordinary to eye-catching. Whether you're a novice finding your feet or an old hand looking to refine your technique, a few practical principles make all the difference when balancing flash with ambient light.

Start by thinking of flash as *fill*, not domination. Your goal outdoors is usually to keep the natural atmosphere while adding just enough light to shape the face. Set your camera to aperture priority or manual mode, expose for the background, and then bring in flash at a low power—often between 1/16 and 1/4 is plenty. This keeps the scene natural while giving your subject definition.

Positioning matters. A small off-camera flash placed at 45 degrees to your subject creates flattering modelling and avoids the flat look of on-camera light. If you only have a hot-shoe flash, try bouncing it off a reflector or using a small diffuser to soften the output.

Don't forget the sun. When it's bright, use it as a backlight and let your flash become the key light. High-speed sync is invaluable here, allowing you to shoot wide-open apertures for shallow depth of field without blowing out the highlights.

Camera Settings		
Mode	Manual	Gives you control and greater consistency
ISO	400-800	Higher ISO keeps ambient visible without forcing slow shutter speeds
Aperture	f/2.8-f/4	Wide enough for shallow depth of field, narrow enough for flash efficiency
•Shutter speed	Around 1/125-1/250 sec at 7:30 p.m. 1/60-1/125 sec by 9:00 p.m	Using a speed like this earlier in the evening, drop your shutter speed as the evening develops and the light drops
White Balance	5600K	Set your white balance to 5600 degrees Kelvin, (or use a preset like cloudy, indeed try the same shot but with different white balance settings and see what impact it has. The smaller you Kelvin number the cooler (bluer)the image looks the higher the number the warmer (yellow) it looks. If its a room
Flash Settings		
Set your flash / the studio light at something like 1/32 or 1/16th power and see how it looks. The goal is a gentle wash of flash light, not to over power the scene. Remember 'balancing the ambient light with flash'; we are using 'fill flash to add light to the shadows' - shadows caused because we are placing the model with her face in the shadows and she is illuminated from the rear by the sun. As the night gets darker try increasing the flash power		
If your flash is off camera position it at 45° to the model, again play around with the position and angle to see what the effects are.		
As the sky darkens, watch the histogram. When ambient drops too low, raise ISO before raising flash power – it keeps the background alive and avoids that "flash-in-a-dark-void" look.		

Finally, experiment. Outdoor flash is wonderfully forgiving, and digital feedback means you can adjust power, angle, and exposure on the fly. With a little practice, you'll discover how a subtle pop of light can transform a portrait while keeping the charm of natural ambience.

Some practical tips

Shooting portraits with outdoor flash between **7:30 and 9:00 p.m. in South Yorkshire** puts you right in the sweet spot of *late golden hour into blue hour*. Light levels drop quickly, by 7:30 p.m., you'll still have usable golden-hour light. But as the night progresses, come 8:30–9:00 p.m., you're into blue hour where ambient drops fast and colour temperature cools.

Photography etiquette

At some camera clubs when it's 'model night' it's a bit of a free for all with photographers blasting away over the top of each other, around each other, shouting at the model to 'look at me' - *this is not the DVCC way*. If nothing else it is discourteous to the model and does not make for a pleasant evening for members.

The DVCC way is to take it in turns, to be on hand to help each other, and to offer encouragement and guidance to those who are a little unsure or are attempting 'fill in flash' for the first time



Someone who will always shine bright and never be eclipsed.

Talking of the DVCC way we will of course be putting a link on the website so you can upload your images and we can then send pass them on to Bev.



Shot at Wortley Top Forge in daylight using fill in flash. Look at the reflection of the soft box in the sunglasses.

The eclipse

Members may want to try their hand at capturing this rare celestial moment.

Be very aware that when photographing a solar eclipse, the most critical mistake to avoid is pointing an unfiltered camera lens at the sun during its partial phases, which can instantly melt your camera's internal sensor shutter mechanism and destroy your eyesight.

o protect your equipment, your eyes, and your final image quality, strictly avoid these common mistakes:

1. Optical and Gear Mistakes

- **Do not use standard ND filters:** Regular 3-stop or 10-stop neutral density filters are completely inadequate. They do not block invisible infrared (IR) and ultraviolet (UV) radiation. You must use a certified ISO 12312-2 solar filter or a dedicated 16-to-20-stop solar ND filter. Try Rother Valley Optics if you want to explore this sale of photgrpahy.
- **Do not look through an optical viewfinder:** If you are using a DSLR camera, looking through the glass viewfinder at an unfiltered or poorly filtered sun will focus the light like a magnifying glass, causing permanent blindness. Use **Live View** on your rear LCD screen instead.
- **Do not leave the filter on during totality:** If you are lucky enough to be in the path of a total eclipse, you **must remove the solar filter** during the few brief minutes of total darkness. Leaving it on results in an completely pitch-black, blank photo. Reattach it immediately when the sun begins to peek back out.

2. Camera Setting Pitfalls

- **Do not use Autofocus:** The lack of stark contrast will cause your lens to continuously "hunt" and blur the shot. Manually focus on the sharp outer edge (limb) of the sun or a visible sunspot beforehand, then lock it down or tape the focus ring.
- **Do not shoot in JPEG:** The dynamic range of an eclipse is extreme. Avoid JPEG and **shoot in RAW format** so you have the necessary exposure latitude to rescue shadow details in the solar corona during post-processing.
- **Do not rely on automatic exposure:** Your camera's internal light meter will become incredibly confused by the heavy dark surroundings and try to overexpose the sun. Shoot in **Full Manual mode** and use **exposure bracketing** (taking a fast burst of images at different shutter speeds) to capture all the varying light levels.
- **Do not crank up the ISO:** Keep your ISO low (between 100 and 400). Raising your ISO too high will introduce severe digital noise into the dark sky, ruining your image clarity.

3. Composition and Handling Errors

- **Do not handhold your camera:** As the environment darkens, your shutter speeds will slow down. Handholding long lenses guarantees blurry photos. Use a stable tripod and fire the shutter with a remote release cable or a 2-second built-in camera timer to remove physical hand vibration.
- **Do not go too wide without a foreground:** If you shoot at a standard wide angle (like 24mm or 50mm) with nothing else in the frame, the sun will look like a tiny, insignificant

dot. Use a telephoto lens of at least 300mm to 600mm to fill the frame, or only use a wide lens if you are intentionally creating a landscape composition featuring the environment or spectators around you.

4. Mirrorless

- Using a mirrorless camera gives you a huge advantage when photographing an eclipse because you can preview your real-time exposure adjustments directly on the electronic viewfinder (EVF) or rear LCD screen. However, mirrorless sensors are completely exposed to incoming light and can easily be scorched if you are not very careful.

The article on the eclipse is via AI and comes with a caveat that AI responses may include mistakes. So don't forget to do your own research.

Coming Soon

Date	Main Theme	Type
05/08/2026	Model and outdoor portraits	Practical
12/08/2026	AGM and Social	
19/08/2026	Holiday	
26/08/2026	Holiday	
02/9/2026	Members showcase: Share your best photos of the year gone by be they mono or colour	Show and Tell

Upload your images

This is a **representation** of what to do, but don't post them via Royal Mail use the website upload link.

