

Viewfinder

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIELD END PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

April 2007

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Forthcoming Dates

April 9th	No Meeting
April 16th	Digital AV
April 22nd	Stage Exhibition
April 23rd	Exhibition Opens
April 30th	Mike Selby from Rex Features
May 5th	Exhibition Closes
May 7th	No Meeting
May 14th	Print Portfolio Competition
May 21st	AGM
May 28th	No Meeting

New Look Viewfinder

Welcome to the April edition of Viewfinder. I do hope you like the re-vamped layout. It's a mammoth edition with 11 pages. Whilst it would be nice to claim full credit for it I feel that I must acknowledge the fact that I have 'borrowed' some of the ideas from Southampton Camera Club's newsletter 'Pin-Sharp' which I have been privileged to receive from Chris Palmer. However, trying to determine how it was done and trying desperately not to copy it's format completely was a different matter altogether. Still a couple of stiff drinks later and all seemed OK — I hope. Still I'm sure you will let me your thoughts — good or bad.

Ted Weller — Editor

Snowy weather brings out the photographers

The recent snow in the borough might have been bad news for travellers, but it was viewed with delight by members of Field End Photographic Society, the Ruislip-based camera club.

With a competition in their calendar titled "Winter" and months of mild weather, there had been little opportunity for most members to exercise their creativity. Then with just a couple of weeks to go came the opportunity they needed.

Over 30 entries showed the most picturesque side of winter and the competition was won by Chris Wallace of Governor Avenue, Hayes with a shot of thistles titled "Frosty Teasels". He said: "This image was taken a short walk from my home next to a footbridge in part of the Yeading Brook Meadows Nature Reserve. Up until that cold Sunday morning I'd had nothing to enter for the competition, but the heavy frost I'd been waiting for finally came."

Second in the competition was Mike Longhurst of Pinner with a shot taken on the way to work at Pinner station and third was Derrick Leather of Ickenham with a shot of a snow-covered Willow tree in Swakeleys Park. All three pictures received maximum marks from judge Alan Copeland of Whitchurch Hill camera club.

You can read the story behind these and other pictures on Page 3.



EX-BOND GIRL TO OPEN ANNUAL EXHIBITION

Thanks to Harry, I am delighted to announce that Madeline Smith has kindly agreed to officially open our annual exhibition. Madeline played the role of the sexy Italian spy, Miss Caruso in *Live and Let Die* (1973). This was Roger Moore's first Bond film and if you are a Bond fan you may remember the scene in which Moore unzips Miss Caruso's dress hands-free by means of a magnetic watch!

Madeline Smith started her career as a model and made her film debut in 1967 in *The Mini Affair* with Georgie Fame. In 1970 Hammer cast her in *Taste The Blood Of Dracula* with Christopher Lee as the blood sucking Count and she went on to be a regular in the Hammer series, including *The Vampire Lovers* and *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell*. She has also had numerous TV roles including appearances in *Doctor in the House*, *His and Hers*, *The Persuaders*, *Jason King*, *The Two Ronnies* and *All Creatures Great & Small* to name but a few. Other film credits include *Up Pompeii*, *Carry on Matron* and *The Bawdy Adventures of Tom Jones* (1976). The official opening is on Monday, 23rd April, 7.45pm for 8.00pm at the Cow Byre in Ruislip.

Exhibition Details

- All members are invited to submit up to 4 prints of their own choice.
- All prints must be mounted – maximum size of mounts 50cm by 40cm.

All work must be titled and have the author's name on the back.

This is your chance to show your work to the general public and they will vote for their favourite image. The winner will receive the Pinner & Northwood trophy.

Please note that the print portfolios must be handed in by 30th April, so any prints exhibited will not be available for this competition.

Help is required for the following:

- Stewarding – if you can spare a couple of hours of your time, please put your name down on the stewarding roster.
- Saturday 21st April at 5.00pm to set up the room after previous occupants.
- Sunday 22nd April at 9.30am to set up the exhibition and hang prints.
- Saturday 5th May at 4.00pm to take down exhibition. Prints may be collected from the Cow Byre between 4.00pm – 5.00pm.

If you are able to assist or have any queries, please contact on 020 8868 9723 or e-mail royejdolbel@blueyonder.co.uk

Winners Enclosure

A selection of recent winning images and the stories behind them.



Peter Trowell took this image in Venice in January on his Pentax D10 SLR. He tells me that he did very little manipulation on Photoshop Elements except for toning down the sky, removing a washing line above the reflections, adjusting levels and cropping out a bit of the sky.

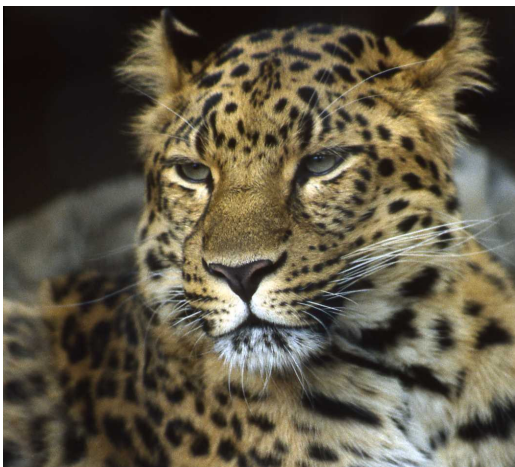
The result: A 1st place in last months 'open' print

Derrick Leather a man of few words gained in his words 'A humble 3rd' with this image. Derrick said that on the morning of the snow he walked down to Swakeleys Park and snapped this Willow Tree.



Val Walker —1st Place Slide of The Year

It is a close up of an Amur Leopard and was taken at Marwell Zoo, near Winchester in Hampshire a couple of years ago.



I have a fascination for big cats and love taking pictures but rarely get the opportunity. On our Tanzania safari for example we only saw one leopard and it was about 400 yards away. Therefore when I saw this beautiful animal sitting in a photographable position in its cage, I could not resist having a try at a portrait. The background was thrown out of focus as much as possible and I also used a square mount in order to concentrate on the animals face and move it slightly so that it has a little more space in the direction it was looking. As I had to use a long lens and the light was relatively low, I had to use a tripod.

'Frosty Teasels' by Chris Wallace

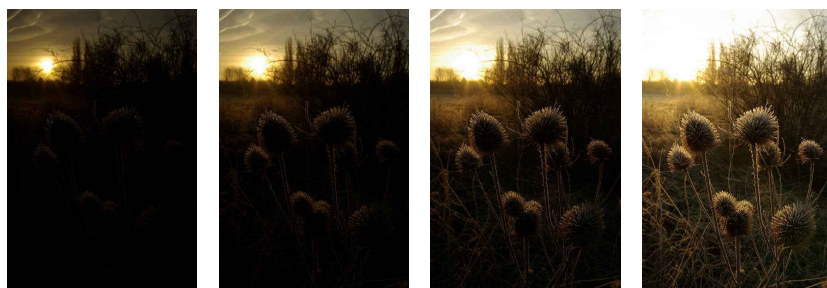
(1st Place in 'Winter' Digital Set Subject Competition)

This was taken early on a frosty Sunday morning the first week in February. The only flurry of snow we'd had, I'd been at work and it had virtually all gone by the time I was able to get out with my camera, and I was desperate for ANYTHING to suit the 'Winter' subject.

The location was a nice but not particularly inspiring local nature reserve (Yeading Brook in Hayes, click here for a map:

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/streetmap.dll?G2M?X=510330&Y=182285&A=Y&Z=3>).

I'd been wandering around the stream and surrounding bushes when the sun popped-up over the horizon and gave great backlighting to the frost. The downside was that there wasn't much cloud to soften the light, so there was a huge contrast range: do I burn-out the sky or silhouette the foreground? I took a bracketed range of exposures on a Pentax K10D with the zoom lens at its wide-angle end and thought I'd see what I could do on the computer.



Back home, the images were ok, but a bit dull. I'd heard about 'High Dynamic Range' software which blends differently exposed images to cope with extremes in light-levels, and did some investigation.

After downloading some trial software, I was so impressed I bought 'Photomatix Pro' from www.hdrsoft.com for around £50. With this software, you give it two or more images (ideally 5 or more), each with different exposures (with at least 5 stops range for best results) and it combines these into one image in its own format with a full range of tone information. At this stage it looks awful!, but don't worry, the next stage (tone mapping) converts this file, with lots of options and tweaking, into a narrow enough range of brightness that the screen and printer can cope with.



With my shot of the teasels, this enabled me to have my cake AND eat it: I had a range of tones in the very bright sky AND in the dark undergrowth, and also showed the strong backlighting of the crisp frost covering the spikes of the teasels as well as keeping detail on the shadow side of them. There are all sorts of controls to set localised contrast, white clipping and lots of other things that you can read in the manual, but I personally find it easier just to drag around the sliders and see what works well for each particular image! After the tone mapping, I did the usual editing and tweaking in my preferred photo editor 'Picture Window Pro' from Digital Light & Color at <http://www.dl-c.com/> (at around £55 for the pro version with colour management and 16 bit support, it's much cheaper than PhotoShop and more sophisticated than Elements). This involved adjusting the greyscale curve, correcting the colour balance and

saturation, a little sharpening with the Unsharp-mask tool, and cloning in some branch detail that had been burnt out in front of the sun.



'Winter' - Mike Longhurst

My winter shot that got second place in the set subject competition was a piece of luck. I had no time to do anything, but when I woke one morning in February and saw snow I grabbed my camera on the way to work and found a nice scene at Pinner station. The swirling effect of the lamp that the judge remarked on was quite natural and happened when I converted all except the Underground sign to mono. I've done a lot of mono with a splash of colour before, but not for some while and the idea was given to me by new member Liz Bellchambers when we were exchanging some shots on email. Mono makes snow scenes look much colder and changes what would have been quite chocolate-boxy.

FEPS VISIT TO SHELL WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

A couple of weeks ago a small group of FEPS members ventured up to the Natural History Museum to view the Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition. We arrived early just as the main museum was opening, but only had to queue for a short while to gain entry. As a result we were some of the first people to view the exhibition that day and the gallery was relatively empty. It soon filled up and by the time we left, visitors were being given timed tickets to avoid overcrowding. One of the nice things about going in a small group is being able to discuss the merits, or otherwise, of the images. Not surprisingly, there was some stunning work on display and the general consensus of opinion was that it was better than last years. Once again, none of us agreed with the overall winner! My personal favourite was Turtle Grooming, by Andre Seale and the 'Animal Behaviour – Birds' section also proved to be very popular. The exhibition is on until 29th April 07. Tickets are £6, or £3.50 concessions. Alternatively you can view the images [online](#), vote for your favorite image, read other visitors comments and even add your own thoughts.



overall winner! My personal favourite was Turtle Grooming, by Andre Seale and the 'Animal Behaviour – Birds' section also proved to be very popular. The exhibition is on until 29th April 07. Tickets are £6, or £3.50 concessions. Alternatively you can view the images [online](#), vote for your favorite image, read other visitors comments and even add your own thoughts.

FEPS ANNUAL DINNER

The annual dinner of FEPS was again held at the Belair Restaurant, and was again well attended although not by as many people as last year. It is a pity that more people didn't come as they missed a very enjoyable evening. As usual John and Harry put on a wonderful evening with a rose for each of the ladies and a bar of chocolate for the men, also a raffle was organised with great prizes, as ever.

With most of the competitions now almost over and settled it is time to ponder the future and

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what better place to discuss this than the Annual Dinner, eating and drinking with friends on a cold and wet March evening. The seating arrangements are somewhat difficult at the Belair but most restaurants do not cater for large groups such as ours so if you know of a more suitable one please let John or Harry know.

Andrew and his staff did us proud the menu was good but obviously done to a price however none the worse for that. I would have liked another cup of coffee at the end but I know I am greedy!

In other groups of which I have been a member and some I still am, people are always complaining that nobody wants to organise events, outing etc. Well, we are fortunate to have two people who are only too willing to do this, and the thing is that if we don't support then we can't complain if they lose heart-so come on, join in !

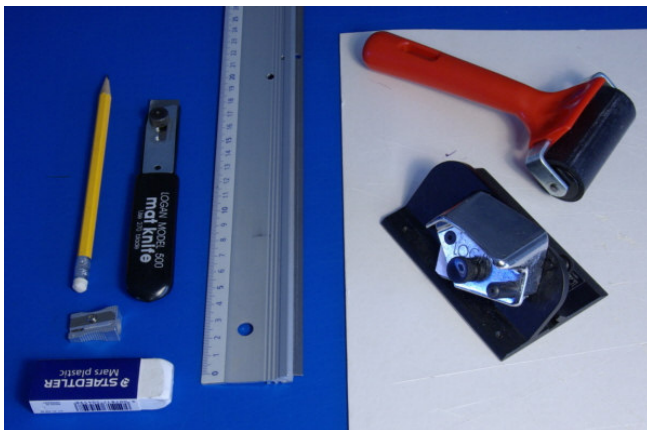
In the coming months John and Harry are putting on more outings - the first of these is to the RHS gardens at Wisley on the 2nd of June names are being collected at this moment. This may well have passed by the time you read this so if you have missed it that's just too bad, the rest of us will have had a really good day out!

Another outing is to Beaulieu Motor Museum in Hampshire to see the old cars. It would be nice to see a lot more of our members joining in. A further trip is being organised for another boat trip on the canal, the last one was a great success even though it rained.

Anyone who has any ideas about other outings should discuss these with John and Harry.

Thanks to the pair of them for what they do for our club.

Barry Lanning



Wally's Guide to Mounting Prints

by Chris Wallace

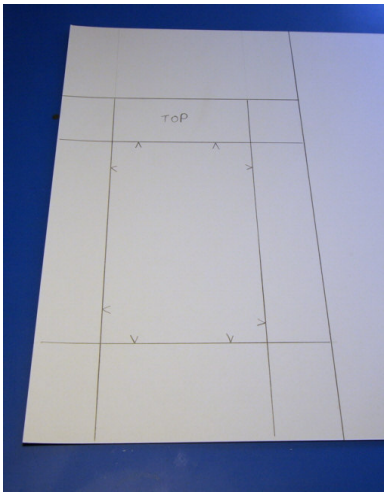
Equipment

- For marking-out, a pencil and sharpener. Don't use a ball-point pen: if it leaves a blob of ink, you might not notice until just after it has smudged your print while sticking down the mount board.
- For cutting to size, a sharp knife. A Stanley knife will do, but I find a handle that takes the same blades as the bevel-cutter is better as the blades are thinner and disturb the edges less while cutting.
- Cutting rule with a finger guard or handle. Apart from being much safer, protecting your fingers if you slip, cutting rules usually have an anti-slip strip on their underside to ensure your cut doesn't wander.
- Bevel cutter. This has a blade held at 45 degrees to give a perfect bevel cut. There are two types: push and pull. I prefer the pull type, with the same cutting-towards-you action as a knife, but either should work satisfactorily.

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- Soft faced roller for getting even pressure when bonding mount and print to backing card/board.
- Cutting mat. The large, self-healing plastic ones are ideal but expensive. As long as you're VERY careful, you could use one or two spare sheets of board, but make sure you don't cut through to the table – or the plastic one might have become the cheap option!
- Board and Card. For the front, bevelled mount I use the widely available Daler Mount Board, costing around £3.30 per sheet from HobbyCraft (big enough to get two 500 x 400 mm sheets from). For the backing board that the print is stuck onto, I use the 350 x 500 mm “Self-Adhesive Media Support and Mounting Card 200gsm”, available online from: <http://www.on-linepaper.co.uk>

This is a 200 gsm weight card with a water-based latex adhesive and a waxy peel-off protecting paper (similar to that on sticky-backed plastic). I find this MUCH easier and less smelly than using aerosol adhesives such as Scotch PhotoMount. For me, the only disadvantage is the initial cost: around £64 for 125 sheets including VAT and P&P. At just over 50p per sheet it might be worth a few people clubbing together and splitting a pack between themselves.



Marking Out

Once you've decided on the colour of your mount and the width of your print border (if any) and width of your mount (i.e. the difficult aesthetic choices – that's up to you!!!), check the board for defects (marks, scratches, crumpled corners etc.) and lay it face down on cutting sheet. Unless you're sure the board is true and the edges square, lay your rule against both sides you'll be working from and check that they are straight. Then check for squareness with either a tee-square, or by making marks 3 and 4 units from the corner and seeing that the long side of the triangle is 5 units long. For example, make a mark 300mm from the corner on the bottom, 400mm from the corner up the side, then check that the two marks are 500mm apart diagonally across the board. If not, trim the board square first. Calculate

the overall dimensions of the mount as follows:

$$\text{Width} = \text{Width of Image} + (2 \times \text{Side Print Border}) + (2 \times \text{Mount Width})$$
$$\text{Height} = \text{Height of Image} + (\text{Bottom+Top Print Borders}) + (\text{Bottom+Top Mount Widths}).$$

For a very simple mount, you might not leave any white space on the print around the image, and the width of the mount around the print is the same on all four sides. However, as at least one judge has remarked, a mounted print can look more balanced and pleasing if the border and mount width on the bottom is large than that on the other sides. It's all a matter of taste and I'm still learning so don't ask me for a definitive answer!

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Mark the shortest overall dimension at 3 or 4 places from the edge of the sheet and join them up using your pencil and cutting rule, making sure ALL the points line-up: if not, check your measurements (if you only mark two points you're less likely to spot a marking error and end up with non-parallel sides). Do the same for the longest dimension from the other edge. To avoid mistakes later, write 'TOP' on what will be the top of the mount, especially important if you're using unequal borders.

Since you've now marked the cut size of the mount and you know how wide the mount edges are, it's a simple process to transfer these measurements in from the edge of the board (remember, three or more per side to eliminate measurement errors) and draw lines through the marks to show where to make the bevelled cuts to reveal the print. To highlight if there's a problem with the cutting rule moving during bevel cutting, I make a pair of 'v' marks on the inside each of the four sides to be cut. This way, starting with the point of the 'v' lining up with the rule edge, if the rule moves (giving a wavy cut, bad!) then the 'v' will either be covered up or a gap will appear.



of

Before doing ANY cutting, lay the print over the marked board to visually satisfy yourself that the bevelled cut will fit the print (keeping the print in a clear wallet until sticking it down helps avoid fingerprints etc).



Cutting to Size

Using the cutting rule to guide the knife, keeping fingers BEHIND the raised safety shield, draw the knife firmly and steadily towards you to make the cut. Without lifting or moving the rule, make as many passes as necessary to cut all the way through the board. Make all the periphery cuts until you have got the mount detached and to the correct size (without the bevel cuts yet).

Cutting the Bevel

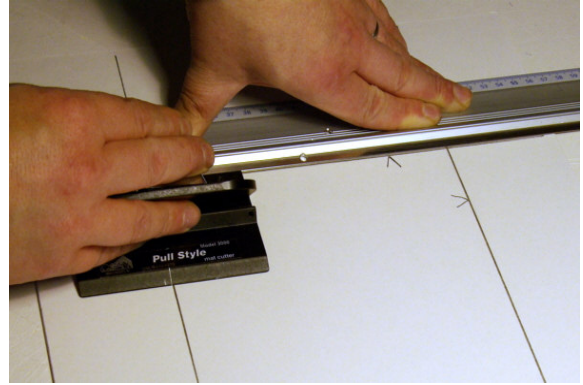


IMPORTANT – before bevel cutting, lay the board on a piece of spare board or card, NOT directly onto a plastic cutting mat (otherwise you will probably snap the corner off the blade on the first cut). Holding the rule firmly with its edge is exactly on one of the bevel cutting lines (the 'v' marks visible, their tips just touching the rule), position the bevel cutter with its datum line just outside the rectangle to be bevel cut. The rule should be on the outside of the cut, the bevel cutter on the inside (if wrong, your bevel will be cut facing the print). With a 'pull' cutter this will be at the top of the cut, just above the line; on a 'push' cutter start at the bottom and just below the line. I usually aim to overshoot each end of the cut by about one millimetre – you

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won't notice this overshoot from the front of the mount, but if the cut is too short and doesn't join with its neighbour then you will notice the coloured piece torn away from the corner when the waste rectangle is pulled out.

To start the cut, depress the blade holder fully in, then pull or push the cutter until its datum mark is just past the finish line, then release the blade holder. Repeat for the other three cuts, then lift out the waste.

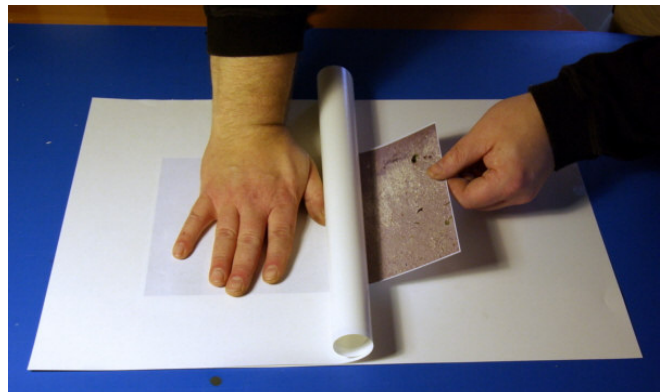
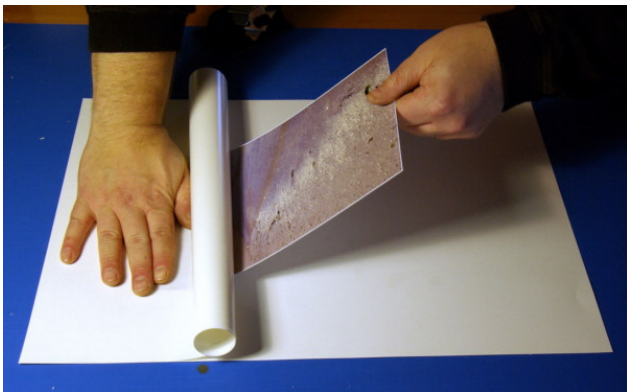


Preparing the Print

I usually find it easier to cut any excess off the backing card after the front mount has been attached. What does need to be trimmed, though, is the print. Since the self-adhesive card is what holds the front mount on, you don't want too much border around the print giving a large non-sticky area. I find that around 5 mm extra in addition to any visible white border you want is sufficient for good adhesion, without being too small to worry about the print not filling the bevel cut area. On the second bevel cutting photo you can see two holes drilled into the cutting rule. I've drilled these holes myself in pairs for easy print trimming: they are at set distances from the cutting edge and if I line up the edge of the printed image so it's visible in the middle of a pair of holes, I know I can cut an even border around the image without fiddly measuring. The different pairs allow different width borders.

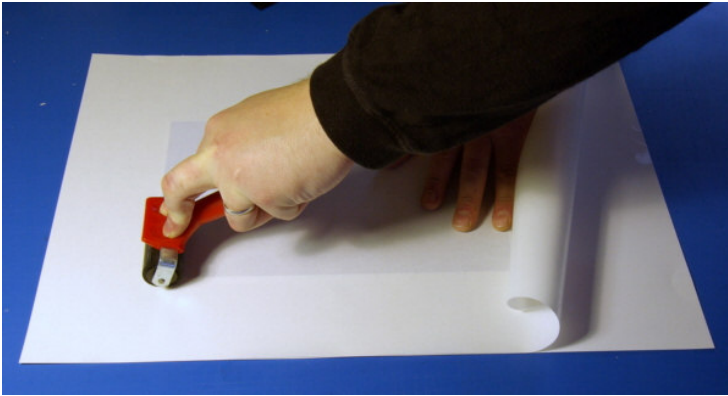
Sticking the Print to the Backing Card

Lay the print on the card (waxy paper still on), then lay the mount over both (CHECK YOUR 'TOP' LABEL ON THE BACK OF THE MOUNT!). Position the print and mount as you want them to end up. Lift off the mount without moving the print, then mark the waxy paper where the top of the print comes to. If using a clear wallet, remove the print now. Peel back the waxy paper to the mark just made, then position just the top of the print level with the mark, nuzzling the print into join of the card and its waxy paper



Using the waxy paper to protect the print, gradually smooth down the print from top to bottom onto the self-adhesive card. With the waxy paper still in place, use a roller to get a really good

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bond between the print and the backing card. This is best done from the centre outwards to avoid trapping air bubbles. If using spray adhesive, spray the back of the print, gently place in position, then use the roller with a piece of clean paper to protect the print surface.

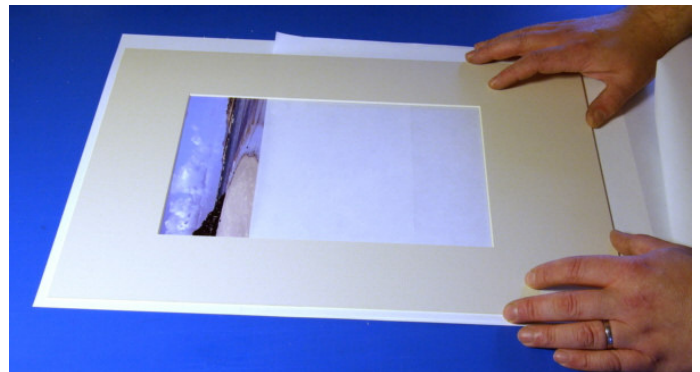
Fixing the Front Mount

Now the print is securely attached to the backing card, peel off the waxy paper and

reposition it (waxy side still downwards) to leave about a quarter of the print exposed. This paper will make it easier to position the mount without it sticking prematurely.

Checking the mount is right way up (remember the 'TOP' marking on the back), lay the mount loosely over the print in approximately the right position, sliding it around as needed holding at the base. Since the waxy paper is fairly translucent, you can see enough of the print through it to get the most pleasing position within the bevelled cut-out.

When you are happy the mount is in the right position, press firmly at the top edge to fix its position. Now remove entirely the waxy paper and smooth down the mount from top to bottom. If using spray adhesive, spray the back of mount, and be particularly careful when placing the mount not to 'tack' onto the image area and leave a visible blemish.



Secure the mount really strongly in place by using a roller on the mount face, working from the middle of each side towards the corners to avoid any buckling in the centre. Finish the mount by trimming away any excess self-adhesive card. DON'T rely on the edge of the mount board to guide the knife. Speaking from experience, I have found it only needs a little mis-alignment for the blade to slice into the mount messing-up all your hard work: always use the cutting rule. (See over for image).

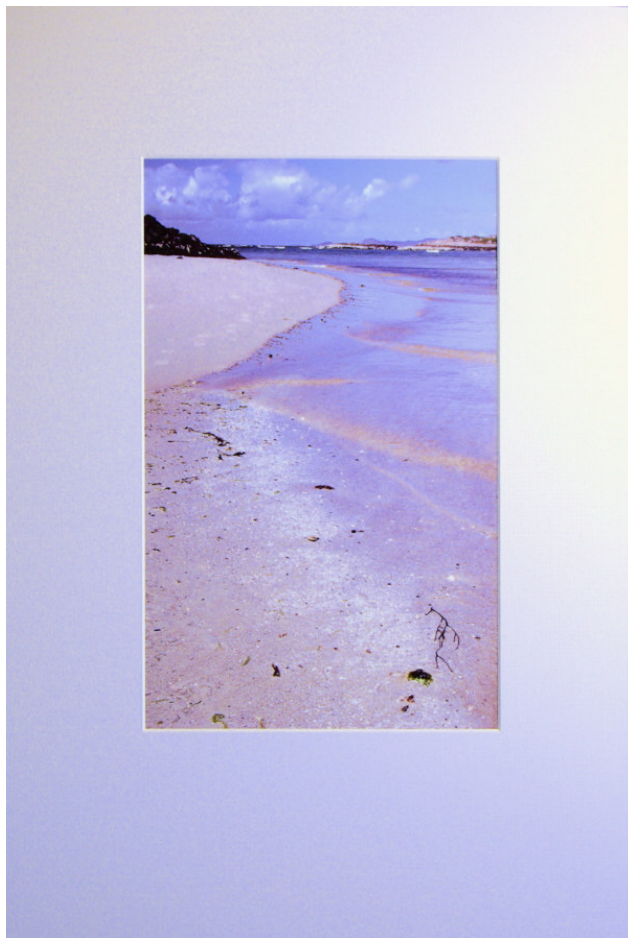
The Finished Article

If things haven't gone well, and you've made the same mistakes I have in the past, then you will have:

- ruined prints with biro splotches.
- prints with visible adhesive marks.
- wonky non-square mounts.
- wrong-sized bevelled cut-outs.
- perfectly mounted prints, BUT upside-down with the big border at the top!
- a pile of bevel-cutting blades with the tips snapped off.
- 'bubbly' prints coming away from the backing card.

If all has gone well, you should now have a nicely mounted print looking its best...

Happy mounting (!)
Chris Wallace



Many thanks for this article Chris, it's certainly a subject that I find hard to get to grips with at times. I can certainly relate to the mistakes list at the end.

Ted Weller