



e-news

from the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain

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Famous Dave had his first camera some fifty years ago and has been interested in photography ever since. His main focus has always been on the image and not the equipment, a trend which continues to this day. In this respect he was fortunate in his early days to have a mentor, an excellent and well respected photographer who later became President of the RPS, who helped him to understand that technique is always necessary but the resulting image is what really counts.

Having been a mentor himself and an image assessor or judge for thirty-five years Famous Dave's photographic philosophy has remained constant to this idea.

It is probably best summed up by the following quotes from these other eminent photographers

"Seeing is not enough - you have to feel what you photograph" - Andre Kertesz

"Photography to me is not looking - its feeling" - Don McCullin

"A photograph is usually looked at - seldom looked into" - Ansel Adams

Another quote from Ansel Adams also contributes to Dave's thinking and that is - **"there are always two people in every image - the viewer and the photographer"**.

RECENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Famous Dave is well informed but his opinions are not necessarily those of the PAGB who take no responsibility for any inaccuracy.

Just looking through a recent e-news. On the front page it lists one of the GB Cups as Natural History but, when you click on the link for the rules it lists the section as Nature. As the definitions for 'Natural History' and 'Nature' are slightly different, which set of rules should we be using?

There is no difference. There is only one, internationally agreed, Nature Definition and Dave cannot think where you have seen a different PAGB Natural History Definition. The PAGB don't use the term "Natural History" at all, except, of course, by mistake.

In the recent GB Trophy competition, one of my fellow Club members scored 14 for one of his prints and got an award. One of mine scored 15 and got no award at all! Anyone can make a mistake, so is this just poor organisation?

In most such competitions there are three judges marking between 2 and 5. 5 doesn't mean this is the best picture – simply, that it is amongst the top tier and is worth looking at later to see if it merits an award. A score of 15 means that all three thought it was worth looking at again but perhaps none of them thought it was the best picture.

In the course of the event the judges will each give lots of 5 scores but they won't always agree with each other. Thus your friend scored $5+5+4 = 14$. Normally the panel will look at everything scoring 14 or 15, sometimes all the 13s, to choose their awards. A number of things can happen then. A previously unnoticed flaw may be detected which rules out that 15 from the awards. In the case of the 14, the lower scoring judge may convince the others that she was correct or may accept that she underscored it. In the latter case this could end up as the photograph they all like best, or at least the one they all agreed on. It isn't unusual for that to be a picture that none of them thought was the best but it is the one they can agree on. That's why many competitions allow a Judge's Personal Choice so that they can award their personal favourite even where the other two judges didn't agree

Can I use the same cut out on different backgrounds or is that against the rules of fair play? I have a great picture of a moody guy and I can see lots of backgrounds I would like to use him on but I'm worried that people in my club might think I'm cheating.

Federations and Clubs are completely autonomous and can make their own rules so I cannot answer for them. The PAGB simply say that the whole photograph has to be your own work so, provided you took all the components yourself, there isn't any reason not to use these components in several pictures - even if that repetitive component is the most important part of the picture. Of course, you do run a substantial risk of becoming boring.

Is the GB Cup Nature a Wildlife competition?

Don't know why you are asking Dave this as the PAGB rules are quite clear. "The GB Cup is not a Wildlife Competition but photographs which comply with the Wildlife definition ... and which are marked (W) may be considered for a Wildlife Individual Award". Famous Dave is a big fan of the GB Cup and every Club would benefit from entering, but you only have until 17 January. <http://www.pagbcup.co.uk/>

I've been asked by a club who competed at both the Inter-Club PDI Championship at Warwick and at the Inter-club Print Championship at Ellesmere Port, why it was that they saw Prints and PDI which appeared to be identical image. Surely the rules do not permit this and you cannot use the same picture in both Championships?

The PAGB decided some time ago that the same picture could not be used as a PDI and a Print in the Annual Inter-Federation competitions and this has now been clarified so as to require entirely different pictures in every section, even in future years. The image can only be used once in any section and in any form.

However, in considering the Inter-Club competitions it was noted that a relatively few clubs qualify to compete in both and that they would be severely disadvantaged by such a ruling. In fact, more than one club indicated that they could not find sufficient different pictures to compete in both Championships and would have to withdraw from one of them. The PAGB feel that this would be both unfair and detrimental to one, or both, Championships and decided, therefore, that there should be no bar on using identical images in these competitions.

Incidentally the same picture can be used in the GB Cup (PDI) and the GB Trophy (Print) but this will be the subject of future discussion and may change. *Editor. The GB Cups 2016 are now complete and you can see the results at <http://www.thepagb.org.uk/competitions/great-british-cup/>*

I am curious why the PAGB do not practice an exemption system like, for example, the RPS does at LRPS level. I have done well in international competitions, including ribbons, a silver and a gold medal and I have applied for my AFIAP. I have also achieved the distinction of ARPS.

Why would any organisation, including the PAGB, give their Distinction to someone for success with an entirely different organisation? FIAP and RPS have their own very well established criteria and these are quite different from the PAGB. In fact, to Dave's certain knowledge, the PAGB - late comers to the Distinction game - developed their system to be as different as possible to anyone else and as near to Camera Club and Federation type competitions as possible. The achievement of a FIAP, PSA and RPS Distinction is very creditable but none of these could be linked to a PAGB Award for Photographic Merit. Why should two Distinctions be awarded for just the same achievement?

There was a well-researched article on club projectors in e-news recently, but I have a question for you Dave. The article said that the new format is likely to be 1600x1200 (4:3). The 4:3 format was the only projector format available at the time, but I dare say the majority of club members use cameras with a 3:2 format. Surely this is an opportunity to bring the format up to date and move to 1800x1200 (3:2)? Any 4:3 users could still use 1600x1200 format, keeping both camps satisfied. As for portrait images it makes no difference how wide the format is as they will always be limited by the vertical size.

1400x1050 has become the standard for projected images and, although they apparently have not yet got around to discussing it, I suspect the PAGB will retain 4x3 (1600 x 1200) in future, as a 3x2 format is even more unfair to portrait pictures. I know you said it makes no difference for portrait images but it does.

If we assume a 3x2 portrait of 800 x 1200px, then at a 1600px width projection it will occupy 50% of the space. At an 1800px width projection it will occupy only 44% of the space. This may not sound of much consequence but on an 8' screen it is enormous. If we went to the full potential of the projector, 1920 x 1200, the situation would be even worse and our 800 x 1200 portrait would occupy 40% of the projection area.

In a competition I saw recently, with three judges on buttons, the average time taken for each PDI was about 3 seconds, perhaps a bit longer for prints. Given that short amount of time I am thinking that (within the bounds of what is humanly possible) the initial impact of the image is what mostly matters, perhaps how 'different' it is. The judges have little time to assess the technical merits of the image. What do you think Dave?

As you might expect I am a very experienced judge and you might be amazed how much my colleagues and I see in just a few seconds. The initial impact is, of course, important but we will have assessed the content, composition and storytelling value of the image before we hit a score and, in that few seconds, we may even have changed our minds after spotting a technical flaw which has detracted from the initial response.

If you see a photograph in an exhibition, how long does it take you to decide if it is a good photograph or not? I bet it isn't more than a few seconds. No doubt there are some pictures that might grow on you over a longer period of time and this kind of judging may disadvantage those but the whole point of "button" judging is to get through a lot of pictures in a short time. Whilst you won't agree with every score I'm sure you recognise that, no matter how fast we go, the good pictures come to the top.

HERE ARE JUST SOME OF THE QUESTIONS FAMOUS DAVE HAS ANSWERED IN THE PAST

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The pictures published in e-news are too small to look at properly. Can they be printed bigger or can we have a link to the photographer's website? Oct 14

Not everyone has good download speed so the Editor has to keep the total e-news file to about 2MB. We do feature individual photographers quite often, with their website details, but searching out web addresses for photos from exhibitions and competitions would be just too time consuming. The PAGB is however looking at the possibility of an enhanced website with a more accessible library of back numbers with a searchable database. This might include galleries to be accessed via e-news to larger versions of the published pictures. (Editor. As Dave forecast, this has now come to pass).

I passed my CPAGB about 7 years ago and I have encouraged members of my Club to try but they are finding that the standard is much higher. Is the PAGB pulling up the drawbridge? Oct 14

The CPAGB is assessed at the level that our Adjudicators consider to be "Good Club Photography". It is true that you would be unlikely to achieve a pass today with work from 7 years ago but this is because the standard of photography in Clubs has improved dramatically in recent times, mainly due to the accessibility of digital technology and techniques. The CPAGB is like a cork floating on the rising Club standard and the PAGB are confident that it still "Good Club Photography".

OK Dave, Make yourself famous – can you stop the RPS scheduling great events on the same day as our Federation events? Oct 14

There has been a great improvement in this area in recent years and both organisations are keen that there should be even more co-operation. There are several members of the PAGB EC who are RPS Regional Organisers, members of the RPS Advisory Board and even ex-members of the RPS Council and this will hopefully lead to much better communication in future. It isn't simple because there are a great many events to co-ordinate and it is easy, if annoying, to trip over each other.

Hi Dave. My Club likes the GB Cup but we are better at prints. Can you persuade the PAGB to have a GB Cup for Prints please? Oct 14

I love making prints and I will demand that the PAGB do something about a competition. I'm sure I can get them to run a GB Cup for Prints next year! Just watch this space. (Editor. As Dave forecast, this has now come to pass).

Hi Dave. I lectured at a Club last night and they made a video of my performance to show to members who could not be there on the night. Should I be flattered or annoyed? Nov 2014

This should NOT have been done without your prior permission and it is strongly recommended that Clubs discuss this with their guests BEFORE they confirm the booking. I know of two cases where such recordings have been sold or given to other Clubs and you might find the risk to be quite unacceptable. Besides this is a live performance and you cannot know how it will translate to a TV or as a projection at the Club. You cannot even know if it will be edited or how secure your pictures will be. Famous Dave is not prepared to risk his masterful photographs being stolen or misused

On a related subject, many Clubs now photograph the Prints during a Judging or a Lecture in order to project them for the benefit of those sitting further back. Again, this requires your permission. It is unlikely that anyone will object to Clubs doing this for a competition when it is their own Club work being copied. However many lecturers will take the view that you asked for a Print Lecture so why do you want to show PDIs? These do not properly represent the print, especially when subjected to the varying degrees of "capture" skill shown by Clubs.

Many lecturers only permit this where there is a very large audience. Clubs should make provision for their members to see prints by providing display stands or even encouraging the use of binoculars! FD recommends that any lecturer who does permit their prints to be copied should insist, and should verify, that the copies are deleted immediately after the show.

Dear Dave. In the Print Championship recently one Club used two pictures which were almost identical. Do the PAGB need to add something along the lines of most international exhibitions that you cannot enter "an image which is substantially similar to another, irrespective of title"? Nov 2014

Well I have read the rules and they do have a rule which states that "any photograph by the same author that has been used at any previous PAGB Inter-Club Print Championship, or any image so similar as to be considered by the organisers as nearly identical, is ineligible and may be disqualified at the time or after the Championship". Now that doesn't cover them if one person enters two near identical prints in the same round but that isn't what happened. The two prints you are thinking of were from the same Club but they were taken by different photographers. In fact, from my vantage point, I saw at least three instances of near identical photographs from different photographers in different Clubs. One even had an almost identical title. It is hard to see any fair way of preventing this – the Clubs don't necessarily know what the others will enter and why should they give up their photograph just because someone else has been there?

Hello Dave. You seem to know everything! Can you tell me why there are so many adverts in e-news? Why don't the PAGB restrict the number they take? There are good articles but sometimes they get lost amongst all the advertisements. Jan 2015

I have discussed this fully with Rod, e-news editor, and with Gordon who raises most of the Corporate Sponsorship for the PAGB. Rod would like to see less space given to advertising but both he, and Gordon, have stressed how important these adverts are to the overall finances of the PAGB. Although a significant sum is raised for paid adverts more space is taken up servicing the needs of our sponsors. e-news, with its circulation to over 10,000 Club members, has proved to be one of the greatest attractions to potential sponsors and the income this raises is quite substantial.

In the last few years the PAGB has been able to maintain its fees at a much lower level than would otherwise be possible whilst, at the same time, increasing services to Federations and Clubs. And, of course, many of the adverts are useful to many.

Dave, Is it Projected Digital Image (PDI) or Digital Projected Image (DPI)? Feb 2015

I guess it is your own choice. The PAGB, I know, prefer PDI to save any confusion with “Dots Per Inch”, but there is no “rule” that I know of and they aren’t consistent with it. One thing I am sure about though is that the, often used, plural of PDI’s is certainly wrong. Just one more abuse of the apostrophe! The plural is PDIs although, “*Send me all your PDI*” seems to work without the “s”.

Dear Dave. Is it really true that you don’t write this column yourself? March 2015

Thanks for the question. Like most celebrities I am far too busy with Premieres and Exhibition Openings to have time to write everything myself but I employ an excellent team of researchers and writers to do this for me. But everything has my unique stamp of authority!

Hi Dave. Why have the pictures in e-news become so pixelated? I do not feel that I can truly appreciate the skills of these photographers when the presented images are of such a low quality. Is there a technical reason for this low quality? March 2015

I am not happy about this either but there is good news and bad news. The bad news is that it is not going to improve soon as the increasing number of pictures available to the editor, together with more adverts which give important revenue, mean that it is increasingly difficult to keep the e-news file size down to its <3MB target. The PAGB could send a larger file but not everyone has good download speed. Possibly, there could be fewer pictures of better quality but this could mean that most people would never see their photos in e-news. The publishing of a picture in e-news is as much for the recognition of achievement as much as it is for viewing.

The good news is that e-news has come to an arrangement with its sponsor, PermaJet, to build an e-news website where, amongst other benefits, the pictures might be displayed larger. Watch this space for more news soon. (Editor. FD had answered this already in Oct 2014 but probably forgot.)

Dave. I have heard it said that Pontefract Camera Club in the YPU is the friendliest Camera Club in the UK. Is this true? If you don’t have the answer maybe you could ask Tony and Eva Worobiec. 3/15

The only thing I have ever heard about Pontefract is that it is a good place for liquorice cakes and rhubarb. With that recommendation I guess you need to be friendly if you want to have anyone return! (Dave. I later received a gift of Pontefract cakes and rhubarb from the YPU and they were delicious!)



Did you get to the Photography Show Dave? April 2015

Apparently a lot of people asked for me on the PAGB stand but unfortunately I just couldn’t make it back in time from Hollywood where we have been discussing “Famous Dave – The Movie”.

Dear Dave, at the recent Awards adjudication for Audio-Visual it seemed that only sequences with a narrative story did well. The PAGB had said beforehand that they encouraged “photo harmony” – pictures to music without needing a story line – but this didn’t seem to be true and only “traditional” AV work seemed to be successful. Why was that? Have the PAGB gone back on the idea of accepting Photo Harmony AV sequences? May 2015

Thanks for asking. Dave was represented at this adjudication and he had the same question. The judges, and the organisers, were keen to talk to him and said that they really want to see lots more photo harmony work. However, they all pointed out that, if you don’t have a script or a story, then the photographs have to carry much more weight and need to be rather better than the level of competency required for a traditional AV. Some simple “pictures to music” sequences were well received but, in the main, neither the photographs nor the subject matter were sufficiently interesting to justify a pass. I have told the APM organisers that they need to make this much clearer in their guidance notes and publicity. Have a look at this Bridgend site to see what can be done

http://www.bridgendcameraclub.co.uk/5to8Comp_Results.html

Hello Dave. Many photographers have their own web sites as well as Flickr and other places where they display, and sometimes sell, their photographs, also some photographers supply photographs to Stock Photography sites such as Shutterstock. I am aware of the rule "Copyright of all prints must be at the disposal of the author" but are there any other restrictions relating to entering images posted to the Internet? I have seen in other competitions a rule which states "Images must not have been previously displayed on the Internet", but this was some time ago. June 2015

As far as I know there is no reference to copyright, or any condition about displaying on the internet, in the rules of any PAGB competition. The appropriate PAGB rule, which is also used by most Federations, is a bit more specific.

Photographs entered must be entirely the work of the photographer. Composite images are permitted provided all component images meet this requirement. For the avoidance of doubt, use of images from any other source including, but not limited to, royalty free image banks and clipart are not permitted.

Dear Dave, I have heard a friend who organises an International Exhibition say frequently that "photographers cannot read!" Why would he say something like that? Sep 2015

Many of my supporters in the PAGB will tell you that this is true and it isn't just International competitions. The e-news editor is currently receiving files for the "150 by 150 photographers" issue and he has told me that almost a third of the respondents could not read the instructions and sent files at the wrong size, wrong format or incorrectly titled.

A Receiving Officer for the Awards for Photographic Merit, whom I know well, reports a huge number of problems of the same nature with the CDs received with entries. The quicker the PAGB can introduce online entry to the APM the better as this resolves many of those problems and the entrants will have to get it right themselves. All the PAGB workers are volunteers and they display an equal mix of fortitude, resignation and humour as they resolve these problems. It is all part of the job and they love it really. Even Dave gets his hands dirty with such matters sometimes.

Dave. The PAGB Awards for Photographic Merit in PDI require PDI entries to be submitted in sRGB colour space. All my files are Adobe 1998 and I do not know how to convert them. Why do they not show how to do this in their leaflet? And why do they refuse to convert them themselves when I ask them to do so? Sep 2015

If you type into the "help" area within your image processing software "how to convert a colour space" I am sure it will tell you - or Google it and you will receive four million links. It is generally a very simple process. The PAGB do not include "how to do it" info within their leaflet as there are too many software programmes around which have slightly different processes from Photoshop and they would have no idea which you are using.

In fact, the Receiving Officers are instructed not to make any alterations to the images which are submitted as they have learned from past experience, that anyone failing to achieve an Award may blame the failure on what they did to the images! Let's face it, if Prints are submitted with an obvious colour cast you would not expect them to be reprinted for you so why should they "alter" your PDI's?

I am relative new to photography and we are having a nature competition at our local photographic club. I am wondering if I can enter pictures of garden roses, (macro), raspberries (from our allotment), blueberries and onion in flower. Oct 2015

Clubs are free to make up their own rules and definitions so I'm afraid your competition secretary needs to answer your question. We have a PAGB Nature Definition, used also by the RPS, FIAP, PSA, most Federations and most exhibitions, but local Clubs don't need to use it. Download it at <http://www.thepagb.org.uk/services/advice-to-federations-clubs/>

I have a DPAGB in Prints but to go for an MPAGB/AV it looks like I need a DPAGB/AV. Do I have to apply over again at the DPAGB/AV level? Nov 2015

In the more recent APM/AV reincarnation the PAGB has decided to designate its Awards for Photographic Merit in Audio Visual as CPAGB/AV, DPAGB/AV and MPAGB/AV and this has not been universally popular. However it is an entirely different, in many ways more demanding, discipline and the PAGB now think it fair to distinguish the AV Awards, which they didn't do before.

However, the PAGB consider that the DPAGB in any medium qualifies you to apply for the MPAGB in any medium. Unless you are very sure, you are strongly advised to take expert advice to be certain that your work is at the correct level"

Why don't the PAGB say who the judges are for their competitions? I couldn't find a note of the GB Trophy Judges anywhere and it is quite annoying. Nov 15

I have spoken with the organisers of the GB Trophy and they admitted that they hadn't listed the judges anywhere or published the names in e-news. This was just an oversight and usually the names for all PAGB competitions are published well in advance and sometimes they appear in the Rules or the Invitation to enter.

But why do you need these names? I guess you think that you can then tailor your entry to suit the judges listed? Most experienced entrants will tell you that this is largely a fruitless exercise and Dave agrees. Just because the individual judge has given a picture a high, or a low, mark in another competition doesn't mean that the same thing will happen in another competition.

The photograph will be up against a whole different range of pictures, perhaps of much better quality or, whisper it quietly, the judge might just change his/her mind. In any case, in competitions like the GB Trophy, the judge is only one of three and the other two judges may not agree with him or her.

Do nature photographs have to have proper species titles, including Latin names? Dec 15

I don't know that many competitions specify that you have to have titles in any particular format but specialist nature judges will probably prefer an accurate description. "Lion Feeding" is probably better than "Dinner Time". Latin names are usually unnecessary, especially if you get them wrong. Judges are normally briefed not to pay too much attention to titles but in nature it is obviously important that you get the details right. Misidentification may cost you points.



CLICK ON
the pictures
to view them
more
comfortably
- with titles -
on our
website



The pictures of
Famous Dave



Your hero -
Famous Dave

The perfect Gift at
local outlets
near you.

