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Photogroup
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and



Hartlepool
Camera
Club

Interclub Competition

2nd March 2021

Judged by David Boath

Images, Scores, Judge's Comments and Result

Here are the forty images submitted for our friendly competition. They're in the order of the presentation AV via Zoom on the evening.

It is Gallery Club policy not to record these events without prior consent and then only by exception.

We have taken steps to place a copyright watermark on each image together with much reduced resolution to safeguard them.

It proved to be a very enjoyable evening with both the judge, David Boath, and those present acknowledging the variety of imagery and very high standard overall. David said, *"Please thank everyone for their comments and thank you again for the opportunity to judge such impressive images"*.

We now look forward to the return fixture next season.



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1. Covid 19 by Lynne Shaheen (Hartlepool)

Interesting monochrome shot of an almost deserted station and I can see where the title came from. Despite initial impressions, the image is not symmetrical around the platform and to an extent the lone figure on the mid left and the single train in front of it balances the 2 trains on the right. Lots of detail and sharpness in the roof of the building, less so on the sides. I wonder if we need to see quite as much walkway before the start of the platforms and whether a crop here might be beneficial?

Score: 18

2. Generations by Dennis Weller (Gallery)

An interesting photographic device showing 4 generations of the same family (I think). The use of the frame, held in similar positions by each figure, demonstrates consistency and reinforces the “handing down from each generation” story. Lighting is well controlled as is detail and sharpness and the broadly similar dress styles between the older family members and then another style for the younger members demonstrates that some thought and planning has gone into the image.

Score: 25



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3. Try by Kathryn Waites (Hartlepool)

Technically according to the rules of Rugby, it isn't a try until the ball touches the ground, but given no-one else is near this chap, I think we can assume it will be a try in about another nano second? This is an exciting action shot and does demonstrate the drama of the game. The figure is just a touch soft, particularly around the face area and the colours and lighting levels perhaps just a touch subdued, but it is a well caught “moment in time”

Score: 19

4. It's Only Me by Dennis Weller (Gallery)

A quirky but charming portrait of this young lady. The facial expression is nicely balanced by the unusual stance in that we see only part of the figure. The background is nicely soft and therefore does not intrude and we see only enough of the door jamb to place the young lady in context. Good catchlights in the eyes, although perhaps the hair has lost a little detail.

Score: 23



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5. Hitting the Nail on the Head by Ken Bladen (Gallery)

A very atmospheric monochrome image of a farrier at work. The detail in the hoof and hands is very good and allowing a brighter band across the central belt of the image and allowing the detail both above and below it to just darken a bit is I think a clever device to help us focus on that central section where all the action is. Lighting is very well controlled throughout. I think the similar lighting and detail in the human arm on the right versus the horse's leg on the left is particularly good. My only slight concern is that the background, although soft, is still quite strong lighting wise and therefore pulls the eye a little.

Score 22

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6. A Force to be Reckoned With by Philip Kilburn (Hartlepool)

Good judgment on the part of this photographer in choosing exactly the right moment to press the shutter. The spray from the wave is detailed, with the central core of denser water contrasting well with the thinner water and spray on either side. The figures in shadow are I think the right decision as they bring scale to the spray but lack of detail means that they do not pull attention away from it. I initially wondered about the decision to leave only the top of the wall reasonably well lit and the rest in shadow, but again and on balance I do think this is the right decision.

Score 17



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7. Kirkjufell by Tony Robinson (Gallery)

A globally famous location and on this occasion well caught and displayed. Lighting and shade are well handled, with enough detail in the wall formed by the rock and waterfalls on the left, but without distracting too much from its main role of forming a leading line pointing at the mountain in the background. The mountain is well lit with again good detail which illustrates its scale very well as does the inclusion of the figure. I wonder if a slightly tighter crop along the bottom of the image would eliminate a some details in the frozen pool which distract a touch?

Score: 24



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8. Through a Child's Eye by Caroline Wray (Hartlepool)

Interesting framing and colour treatment of this face certainly creates impact. I find the almost central placing of the eye in the image very effective, as are its strong colours against the mono background of the rest of the scene. The photographer cleverly allows us to see only enough of the nose, eyebrows and hair and ear and cheekbones to provide the essential framing for that startling eye, which is itself very sharp with lots of detail. My only slight caution is the artifact in the eye at bottom right – it may be a reflection or something else but it does distract a bit and I wonder if it could be eliminated with a little further post processing? The central story is that eye, but how do we know it's a child's?

Score: 22



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9. Graffiti by Alan Musgrove (Hartlepool)

Another intriguing image, for its content, its framing and its colour treatment. Framing wise, the frame is quite tight, eliminating much of the surrounding context which we normally get with graffiti images – here the photographer relies on the artists' work to provide impact. Although the surrounding wall is detailed, as much of it is in gentle sepia and brown tones they support the central black and white painting well but don't distract from it. Lastly, much graffiti is usually highly stylized images or phrases and words, but here we have an almost painterly piece of art, which the treatment brings out well

Score: 25



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10. Hanging On by Irene Berry (Gallery)

A well observed and framed piece of candid or street photography. The author gives us just enough of a frame to give us the context of a train or bus, but correctly no more because it would pull our attention away from the figures. Although they are at the bottom right corner of the image, they are sufficiently intriguing and well depicted that they still dominate the image. There is a hint of other people and more going on behind them, but again as this part of the image is predominantly dark, the figures are what grabs our attention, even although we really see are two heads of (presumably) a mother and her son. Well seen and well taken.

Score 27



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11. Water Rail by Harry Brenkley (Hartlepool)

The body of the bird is well lit and shows lots of detail in what is quite complex plumage with a good catchlight in the eye. Lighting between bird and its reflection is well handled and its not difficult to work out where the bird stops and the reflection begins. I think the tight framing we get here is on balance the right decision because as overall lighting is quite high key and even throughout and although the background is suitably diffuse it can at times be difficult to separate bird from its background (which is of course the way nature has designed things)

Score: 20

12. Lighthouse by Dave Treveil (Hartlepool)

A well framed and composed image which succeeds well despite challenging lighting conditions. The lighthouse itself is on the third, both horizontally and vertically and its stark black and whites is nicely balanced by the mass of the wave which on the whole is sharp with only a little burnt out in its top right. Framing is tight and against a largely grey and featureless sky this is again I think the right decision. There is just enough of the sea in the background to give context – well seen and executed.

Score 26



13. Fressias by Colin Hugill (Gallery)

The secret to this delicate image is clever use of lighting – the source is predominantly from below and this succeeds in showing up the delicate structures and shades within the flowers themselves which are sharp mostly throughout their depth. The areas around the stamens are particularly impressive in their depth and texture. I wonder if the treatment of the green stems is quite so successful? They are universally quite bright and this lighting does show up any slight flaws quite starkly – the fact that they are not quite as sharp becomes quite obvious and risks detracting slightly from the beautiful treatment of the flowers themselves.

Score: 23

14. Other Things On My Mind by Keith Collins (Gallery)

A very well caught piece of candid or street photography with some subtle messages in the title and image itself. The expression of the figure is rapt and lost in thought, whilst the inclined stance of the head indicates that not all his thoughts are cheerful. Conventionally, we might expect the figure in the foreground to be better lit than the background, but here the reverse is true and this supports the message in the title very well – there is a lot to be seen and to distract in that brightly lit and sharp background, but the figure is clearly focussed elsewhere. Again, his positioning on the left allows us full view of the distractions which are not claiming his attention. Well seen and thought through.

Score: 26



15. Misty Morning by Alan Musgrove (Hartlepool)

Really this image is composed of a series of parallel panels of interest, starting with the line of fence and hedge in the foreground to the second hedge line in the middle and rising to the two ridgelines in the background. What holds it all together is the mist evenly spread throughout and a clever use of lighting in that shadow area are almost universally dark throughout all parallels. In compensation, the author gives us a mass of fine detail amongst trees and hedges, which are commendably sharp. Finally the use of the dark hill in the upper right is nicely balanced by the mist and cloud on the left – well composed and framed.

Score: 23



16. Surprise View by Caroline Wray (Hartlepool)

An interesting monochrome treatment of this well known Lake District viewpoint. Lighting and treatment of light and shade is consistent throughout the image, from the shadows in the rocks in the foreground to the hills by Catbells in the distance. The figure is an interesting idea – normally, they are used to bring scale to larger scenes (relative to themselves, I mean) but in this case the figure is large enough to obscure an interesting weather front coming down the lake behind and there is a little fringing around the figure (perhaps diffraction) which once spotted is difficult to ignore, nevertheless an interesting interpretation of this famous spot.

Score: 20

17. Timberwolf in the Wild by Keith Collins (Gallery)

These are magnificent animals and this is a good example. The stance and colours in the image and the various shades of the animal's coat from almost pure white through cream, fawn to brown come across well. The light coming through the fringing of the animals coat on the left is particularly good and conveys strongly the sense of just how thick these animals' coats are. The eyes and that area of the head are very sharp, but this fades away quite quickly and the rest of the animal is quite soft throughout which lessens the impact of the image a bit.

Score 19





18. Approaching Storm by Jeanne Moore (Gallery)

The impact of this image is all in the contrasting lighting, between the brightly lit rocks and foreground and the dark sky and background of the impending storm. The detail in the rocks, grasses and bush in the foreground is impressive with the strong lighting picking out lots of interest, particularly in my view towards the left of the image. My slight caution is around framing – I wonder if cropping the top 2 cms and the 1 cm vertically from the left of the image would increase the visual impact from the main elements of the image without in any way reducing the message?

Score: 18

19. Hold on Tight by Steve Waller (Hartlepool)

Lots of frozen action in this image from the Speedway – the spray of earth from the rear wheel of the vehicle conveys strongly the sense of speed and excitement and the crouching stances of the figures also shows the concentration and strength needed to perform in this sport. The curving line of the track and fence all bring the eye to the 2 figures successfully, where their colourful clothing dominates the image and the way the reflection from the visors is well handled. My overall slight caution is about saturation which I think on this occasion is quite high and which combined with the mass of detail in the clothing risks being just a little too much.

Score: 20



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20. Trio of Windmills by Keith Collins (Gallery)

I think this is a different but nevertheless effective image of these wind turbines. Conventionally, we often see them taken with a shutter speed fast enough to “freeze” the blades but the evening or subdued light setting here effectively precludes that and I think the image is better for showing these machines in action. Also good I think is the colour treatment in the image which is rich enough to contrast the turbines well against the dark background of sea and sky. The vignette used in the image to focus our attention on the turbines is quite strong however.

Score 23

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Scores at the end of Part 1

**Gallery v Hartlepool Interclub Competition
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Gallery 230 - Hartlepool 210



21. Damselflies by Steve Waller (Hartlepool)

Fantastic detail in this natural history image. I am no entomologist, but I should imagine we are looking at a male and female of the damselfly species here. Both bodies are beautifully detailed and exposed, down to the hairs on their legs. |The background is muted and therefore does not intrude, which is important here as all this excellent detail would otherwise be lost. The stalk or branch the insects sit on is also very detailed but as there is relatively little of it, it does no more than provide support.

Score: 25

22. Rainy Night by Lyn Newton (Gallery)

An atmospheric treatment of a street scene with lots of interest and drama in it. Much of this drama comes from the street lighting as it reflects off the flagstones and shows us the buildings behind. The figures are mostly in outline only, but their stances and the umbrellas all convey a strong sense of heavy rain and people hurrying to get to shelter. That little strip of buildings that we see which is not a reflection is sharp and lends scale to the image. The framing is particularly good horizontally, with the foreground figure being allowed some space to walk into – vertically, I wonder if we need the patch of black flagstones at the bottom centre of the image?

Score: 24



23. And So My Story Begins by Dennis Weller (Gallery)

This portrait of this young lady has buckets of charm and has been very effectively taken and framed. The eyes are beautifully lit with an interesting expression on a face which somehow seems composed beyond its years. The hair has lots of detail and variations in light and shade, with the possible exception of the area on the right (her left) hand side. The background, although high key, has little detail in it and therefore does not intrude and the similarity between its colour and the little girl's outfit allows us to focus on her face and expression.

Score: 25



24. Sew'n Sew by Kath Jobson (Gallery)

A well-constructed still life composition with balance of shape, colour and tone – the scissors form a strong leading line, and contrast well with the geometric black and blue strips in the middle ground. The tape measure forms a nice frame on the right and top of the image and the yellow and blue bobbins balance nicely the scissors with their bulk and I'm particularly impressed by the way the light falls on the blue bobbin. I wonder if a little more attention to detail might improve the image further – the numbers on the tape measure are quite blurred, whether by diffraction or perhaps a wider aperture and the black thread has been allowed to sort of solidify into one lump and it could be just a matter of bringing up the levels a little bit here

Score: 22



25. A Night on the Tyne by Garreth Waites (Hartlepool)

The challenge with landscape photography and famous locations is finding something new to say about them and on this occasion I think this photographer has found a way to do that – the secret here of course is the use of colour, not only in terms of the lit areas of bridge, Sage and Baltic but also in the shaded areas of night sky and river. The treatment of the blues, greens and reds is not only interesting but also consistent between bridge, Sage and Baltic and surrounding offices. Framing is I think good as it allows all the major landmarks to be captured in good detail – my one slight caution is the highlights and slight halos around the white lighting.

Score: 22



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26. Ingjaldshólskirkja by Dave Murrell (Hartlepool)

(Pronounced—“Ing-yard-shol-skirk-ya”)

Very atmospheric wide angled landscape shot of the Northern Lights set against this (perhaps Icelandic?) church. Essentially, this image is very balanced – the shape of the Aurora Borealis in the right centre is almost the mirror image of the Church itself and its steeple. Exposure is bright enough such that we see the distant hills and the lights of villages at their foot along with some snow at the front right balanced with some breakers on the far left. I wonder if we could have managed to de-emphasize the handrail shadow along the Church whether the image might have been improved?

Score: 24



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27. Two Frogs by Colin Hugill (Gallery)

I find the use of colour in this image quite interesting – the grey of the frogspawn does contrast well with the almost golden colour of the water and the streaks of light add an interesting and intriguing touch. Framing is tight on the two frogs themselves and I think this is a wise choice, because larger groups of frogs tend to congregate in disorganised groups making fanning choices difficult. I wonder if the plane of focus could have been moved from the frogspawn, to the two frogs themselves as they are the principal subjects?

Score: 22



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28. Nayala Ewe and Lamb by Graeme Clarke (Gallery)

Beautiful creatures very well photographed. I find the position of the mother’s head looking directly at the camera whilst the kid suckles very typical of motherhood and nature in general. The body of the ewe and lamb are beautifully exposed with lots of detail in their coats and I think the almost translucent nature of the ewe’s ears and the detail on the kid are particularly well handled. My one slight question is framing, in the extent of the background that we see – by design of mother nature, the animals are well camouflaged against their habitats and this is the case here where animal are just a little lost amongst the foliage – if not a tighter crop, then perhaps a subtle vignette just to help us focus?

Score: 22



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29. Let's Be Friends by Mick Martindale (Hartlepool)

Unusual concept for a nature style image, I nevertheless think that this portrait of 2 dormice does work. The animals themselves are very sharp and appropriately lit (perhaps one animal mirrored in post processing?) and the central part of the flower stem is also very well detailed and lit. Both sharpness and colour tail off a little as we proceed up and into the image, but I think this too is appropriate. For an image which is so much about symmetry, I do wonder slightly at the decision to place the imaginary dividing line between the two mice just slightly off to the right of the frame?

Score: 25

30. Harris Beach by Lyn Newton (Gallery)

A mood study of a beach scene in the Outer Hebrides. This image is really a series of different bands of colour and contrast descending from the dark grey waves to the white breakers to the sand and grass on to more shades of sand. Perhaps some ICM for the lower panels and we have a very accomplished image which is not an exact representation of a Harris Beach but is very representative of the sort of scene you do find frequently in Harris. The narrow almost letterbox style framing brings great sweeps of subdued colours to the image – I wonder a little about the treatment of the grasses, their upper lengths being mostly obscured by the dark strip of sea and then reappearing against the white of the breaker – I feel this is slightly unresolved.



Score: 24

31. At the Going Down of the Sun by Philip Kilburn (Hartlepool)

An interesting take on a traditional theme. The use of the Fallen Soldier design almost as a mask for a more traditional landscape image is creative and the fragments of text from perhaps a gravestone or memorial lends drama to the image, the concept being completed by the Poppy at the bottom of the image. My slight questions mark is the variations in sharpness throughout the image, with poppy and soldiers quite soft in comparison to the landscape and setting sun - there is nothing in the title to suggest this is an artistic device, so consequently the eye tends to reject it and focus primarily on the pier/sunset combination.

Score: 19



32. Warrior by Mike Kipling (Gallery)

Strong monochrome portrait of this figure in (perhaps) historical Scandinavian costume, although not too much about him, other than expression, perhaps, to indicate he's a warrior. The image itself is sharp and well defined and I note the author's decision to have the face and head quite brightly lit, with the rest of the shoulders and chest tailing off into darker tones and shadow quite quickly. The facial hair is well defined and lots of detail in it. My slight question is about the streaks of light to the left (his right) of the head and I wonder what they're there for? The hair on that side of the face is well enough defined given the direction of the light and these streaks do distract slightly.

Score: 21





33. Light in the Shadows by Lynne Shaheen (Hartlepool)

Some careful thought and preparation has gone into this image I think. The key is of course control and management of light and its interplay on the branches and what might be dandelion seeds in the upper area. The whole structure of the plant and branches is admirably sharp throughout, with good detail to be seen at all levels including hints of green buds and shoots at various points. The keyline is appropriate. The one slight conundrum for me is the upper right hand stalk curving into the dandelion head – it is slightly burnt out and given the admirable control of light elsewhere, I feel this must be part of the story this photographer wants to tell us, but there's nothing in the title to tell us about it (there's a hint there).

Score: 27

34. Little Tommy by Angie Ellis (Hartlepool)

A charming portrait of this young man. A good deal of planning has gone into this image as well, witness the boy's period clothing and general state of cleanliness (although I hope no-one removed his tooth for historical accuracy reasons!), so the image does communicate a child from a bygone age strongly and of course we look for strong messages from portraits in particular. I think the piece of sacking seen over his right shoulder is a very good touch, as it matches his skin colour well. There are good catchlights in the eyes and of course his expression makes the image. I understand the decision to use a vignette, both in focusing our attention and supporting the bygone age feel, but I do wonder slightly at its strength?

Score: 23



35. Using Filters by Ann Johnson (Gallery)

An interesting image on a number of different levels – the principal colours are blue and brown, with one being partially “twirled” and the other almost completely so, but it is the tension created between them which first catches the eye. I find the use of the horizontal pencil along the bottom as a link between the two colour sets quite clever. The twirl on the blue wallpaper (?) is particularly effective I think in creating a waveform reminiscent of Hokusai's “Great Wave” and I like the shapes of the glass and paints at the bottom – are you telling us the full story with this title, though?

Score: 22



36. Durham Downpour by Carl Gorse (Hartlepool)

On one level, you might describe this image as a piece of candid or street photography as it is just a well framed shot of a poor girl struggling along in a downpour near the railway bridge in Durham, but on another level I think it also says something about our lives here in the North East in that we do live all the time with weather which can belike this and also that we live with monuments from an industrial past which were so well built, we're still using them. I think the framing is excellent in that it catches the scale of the bridge and the torrential nature of the rain very well - I wonder if perhaps we might have cloned out or reduced the emphasis a little on the three sets of signs? They are quite stark in the image and they impeded the eye a bit as it travels too the left hand side of the image, which is itself a little less distinct than the rest?

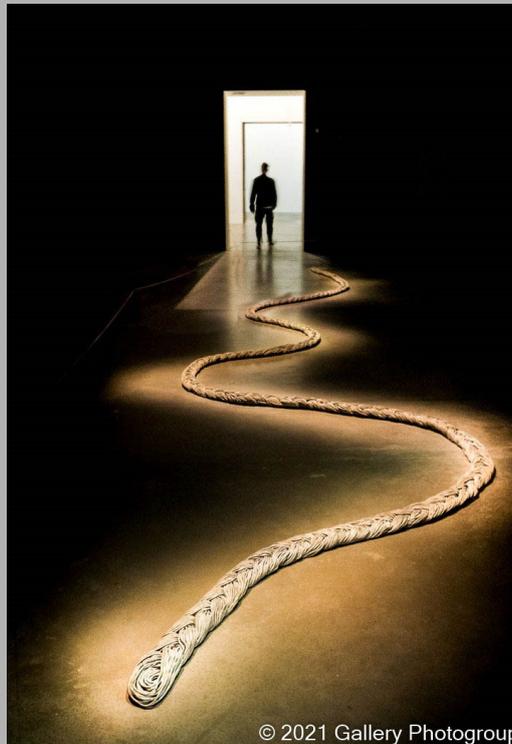
Score: 21





**Gallery v Hartlepool Interclub Competition
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Joint 3rd Highest Score



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37. Man and Serpent by Chris Hawking (Gallery)

A most interesting image, almost a piece of conceptual art. The secret to this image is the management of light and focus – only the front third of the cable/hawser is truly sharp, but only that bit needs to be. At the same time, the way light is used to pick out its serpent-like shape as it recedes into the distance is very good and sensitively done. The figure of the man is blurred by movement, which adds further to the sense of mystery and I'm impressed by the use of light as it spills from the doorway the man is walking through and by the high key background on the other side of the doorway, meaning that nothing distracts.

Score: 28



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38. Oculus by Philip Yuill (Hartlepool)

Another well composed and thought through image, this time a mono cityscape of New York. The Oculus is I think the new metro station with the sharp almost wing like structure which forms a strong leading line by its edge from left to right throughout the image. The photographer has cleverly allowed the converging verticals of the skyscrapers and even the bollards in the street to follow that same leading line and focus our interest towards the new building which replaced the World Trade Centre. This process is carefully mirrored in the right hand third of the image – had the image been in colour, the bright sky and contrails would have had the potential to distract, but the monochrome treatment successfully prevents that. Well seen and framed.

Score: 28



**Gallery v Hartlepool Interclub Competition
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2nd Highest Score



39. Hamelin Bay Jetty by Dennis Weller (Gallery)

Wide angle lenses do tend to produce converging verticals but here the photographer has embraced this concept and as a result produced quite a striking image, helped by a low viewpoint. The photographer has used the large scale of Western Australia to good effect here, placing the Jetty squarely in the scene and using bright summer skies and light cloud formations to isolate the Jetty such that it dominates the scene. I'm struck by the use of careful framing to show us a distant island between two posts and the balance between the sunlight on the water on the left and the breaking surf on the right. A very accomplished image.

Score: 29



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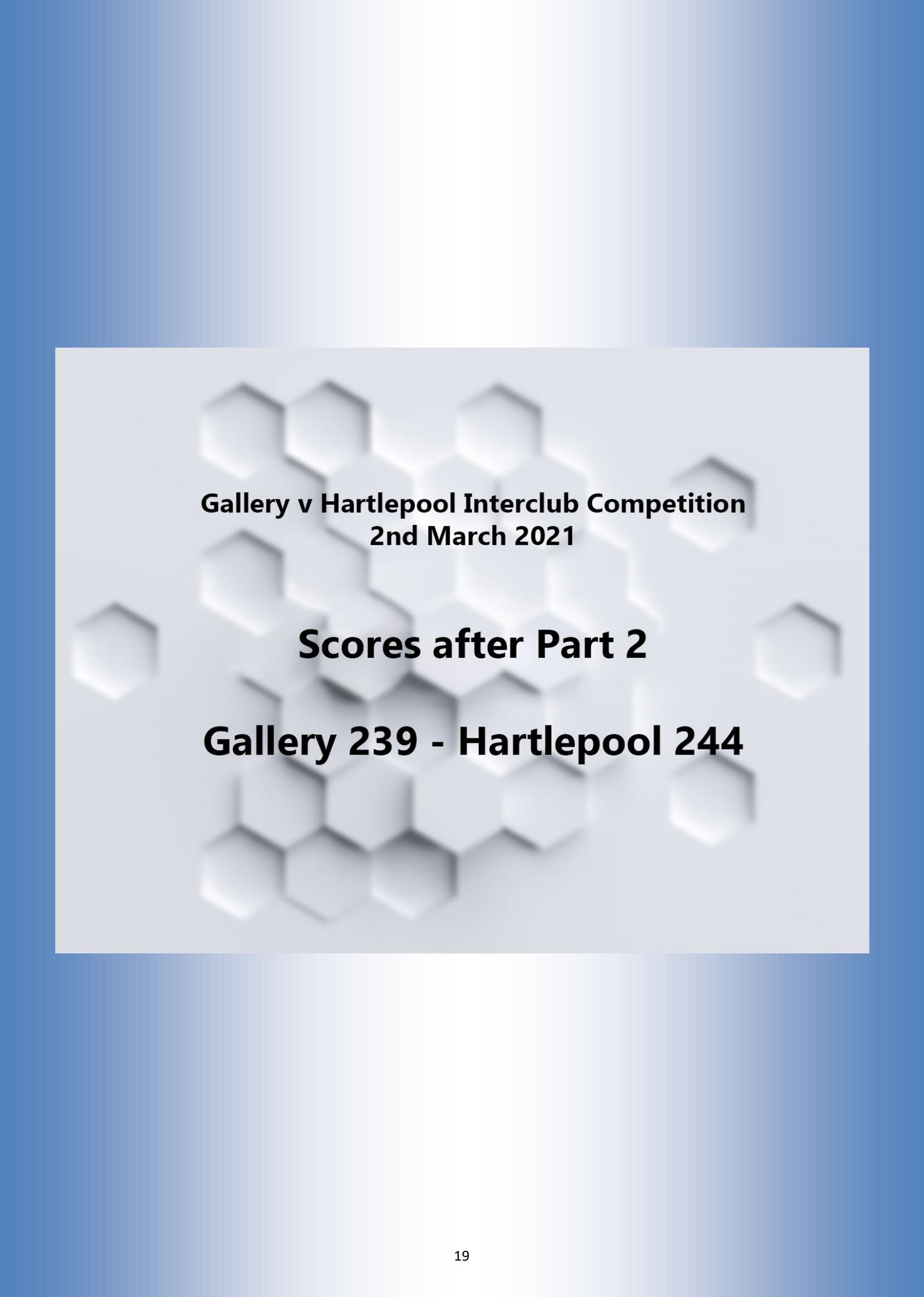
Tonight's Highest Score



40. Trees by Dave Murrell (Hartlepool)

This is a fascinating multiple exposure image of these tree trunks – at first sight, the image appears to be quite simple, but the consistent highlight and shadow patterns, the way focus and sharpness soften as we climb up through the image and the way the trunks in the background fade into a predominantly green hued light all indicate that a great deal of thought has gone into this image. The “streaked” treatment of the upper trunks is both clever and consistent. Perhaps lit by artificial lighting of some description, the temperature indicate that it wasn’t flash. The grasses at the bottom of the image are all very sharp, well-lit and detailed.

Score: 30



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Scores after Part 2

Gallery 239 - Hartlepool 244



**Gallery v Hartlepool Interclub Competition
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TOTAL SCORES

Gallery 469 - Hartlepool 454