BCC Meeting

Speaker Event – Mark Pain

On 3rd November 2025 guest speaker, professional sports photographer Mark Pain, made a return visit to Bracknell Camera Club having presented to us 7 years ago.

It was a talk which is as clear in my memory as if it was delivered yesterday. It could be that outstanding image of Tiger Williams' golf ball heading straight for Mark's lens. An image you are unlikely to forget. However, for me I have the added element that he was actually the very first speaker I heard when I joined Bracknell Camera Club in September 2018. Searching for the Parish Notes from way back then I failed to find them but what I did find was an email I sent to my mother, full of excitement about the talk. He made an impact then and he made an impact again on us last night.

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'*Mark Pain is a multi-award winning sports photographer with over 25 years experience and international recognition. Covering major events worldwide from the Olympic Games to the Ryder Cup, and from football and rugby World Cups to World Championship athletics, Mark has worked at the top of his profession for many years and was Chief Sports Photographer of the Mail On Sunday for over twenty years.*'

I am sure you will all agree that the opening sequence Mark Pain played, displaying images of which he is particularly proud, demonstrated to us exactly why he is an award winning photographer. Did you feel the excitement of these images? Each and every one of them demanded an emotional reaction.

What is particularly wonderful is that a pro photographer like Mark is happy to share his knowledge and allow us to benefit from his experience. Certainly 'experience' seemed to be a key message in Mark's talk. Experience and the willingness to accept failure and learn from it. He demonstrated to us that you often have to forfeit a well

planned image for an unexpected moment.

Mark stressed the importance of learning your craft - the building blocks of knowledge - and ensuring you fill in the gaps in your knowledge. Get those blocks in line until they become second nature and then you are ready to create.

He emphasised the need to be in complete control of your camera by shooting in manual, even down to the focusing to avoid your camera's automatic setting hijacking a well planned image. Much of the time Mark predicts where his subject will enter the frame, pre-focuses and then waits for the drama.

He also demonstrated his panning technique and his 'pan zoom technique'. If you try this out it would be wonderful to see some examples posted on the Facebook page.

Mark said, 'you will not improve unless you make mistakes and learn from them'.

What a super talk and we must be grateful to Mark that as soon as he realised he had been to BCC before he changed the content of his talk. Is this about forfeiting one great talk on account of an unexpected change of plan? Well we would not have known it. His redirection was seamless.

What I particularly enjoyed about his images was not only did he capture the drama and excitement of the various sports but he also gave us a behind the scenes view of what it actually looked like beyond the lens. Who would have known that downhill skier racing over the crest, spraying hard flakes of icy snow as he turned his skis sharply, was surround by a massive crowd of supporters standing behind the fences drinking beer. In that moment when the shutter was pressed the skier was on his own.

You can view Mark Pain's award winning images on his website.
https://www.markpain.com/