

STEVE'S GUIDE TO PREPARING IMAGES FOR BCC COMPETITIONS

You need to size your image such that it will fit into the display area which is 1400 pixels wide, by 1050 pixels tall. **Warning! It is not sufficient to just set the width to 1400 pixels, or the height to 1050 pixels.** Read on...

Don't make a small image bigger!

Note: if your image is already smaller than 1400x1050 pixels, it's probably better to leave it rather than making it bigger.

Save your work *before* resizing

Before going any further, decide whether you want to save your image at this stage. If you've worked on the image, tweaking it in various ways, you should make sure you have this saved BEFORE you resize it. When saving it, you ought to save it in a *loss/less* format, e.g. PSD, TIF (but **not** a JPG!)

An image sized for a camera club digital image competition is not suitable for printing to any reasonable size. If you don't save it now, you might have to do all those edits again if you ever want to print your masterpiece.

Ok, so we've saved our image for posterity, now let's make a copy of the right size for submission to a BCC competition...

The resizing operation

Use image>image size. Make sure that the 'scale styles', 'constrain proportions' and 'resample image' checkboxes are all ticked.

There are two sections where numbers can be entered: 'pixel dimensions' and 'document size'. We're not interested (at all) in the document size section, it is totally irrelevant when preparing a digital image. **We're only going to do things in the 'pixel dimensions' section.**

Make sure that the units (in the 'pixel dimensions' section) are set to 'pixels'.

Enter **1400** in the 'width' box. As you type the digits, you'll see the number in the 'height' box changing automatically – Photoshop is working out what the height will be if the width is 1400 pixels. Remember that we checked 'constrain proportions', so Photoshop knows that we want the aspect ratio, or shape, of the image to stay the same even though we're changing its size.

Having entered **1400** in the width box, look at the new number in the 'height' box. If the number in the 'height' box is greater than 1050, press the tab button twice to go to the 'height' box, and enter **1050**. This time, you'll see the number in the 'width' box change automatically, to a smaller size.

At this point, the width should be no greater than 1400, and the height should be no greater than 1050.

You now need to choose your interpolation method, using the drop-down at the bottom of the dialog box. The usual recommendation is 'bicubic (sharper)' if available, otherwise 'bicubic'.

'Nearest neighbour' and 'bilinear' are not recommended. Now hit the 'ok' button. The image will be resized.

If you examine the image at 100% magnification, you may decide that it needs a very small amount of sharpening, as the resizing process can soften the image slightly. The amount will vary according to the individual image and your personal taste, but I suggest trying unsharp mask with these settings as a starting point: Amount: 25%, Radius 0.5 pixels, Threshold 0 levels.

A note about canvas size

When projected, the background will be filled with black. It's unlikely that your resized image dimensions will be exactly 1400 by 1050 pixels. It doesn't matter. You don't need to expand the canvas to that size.

Bit depth

We want to end up with a JPG file, which means the image has to have a depth of 8-bits per channel. From the main menu, choose image>mode. There should be two or three items towards the bottom of the list, showing '8 bits/channel', '16 bits/channel' and possibly '32 bits/channel'. If the tick is not by '8 bits/channel', click on that option.

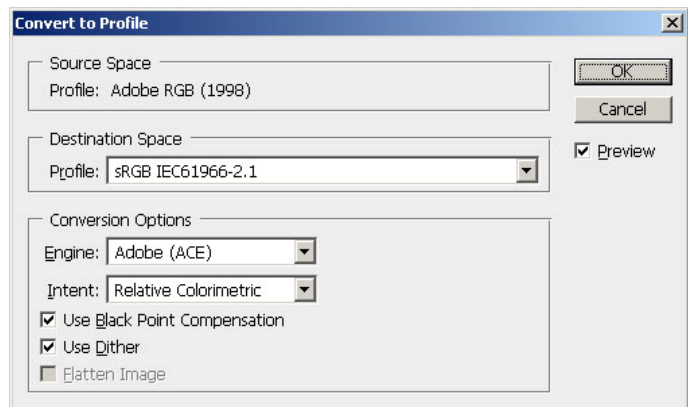
Colourspace

The projector is calibrated, and the software that controls the competitions expects images in the sRGB colourspace. Regardless of what colourspace you like to use for your image editing and printing, for competition purposes, the image you submit must be in the sRGB colourspace, otherwise the colours will be off, possibly way off.

From the main menu, choose edit>convert to profile. *Note that for some versions of Photoshop, e.g. CS, you need to choose image>mode>convert to profile.*

In the dialog box that comes up, look at the profile shown in the 'source space' section. If it's 'sRGB IEC61966-2.1', the colourspace is fine, just hit 'cancel' and skip the rest of this section.

If, on the other hand, the source space profile is listed as something else, perhaps 'Adobe RGB (1998)' or 'ProPhoto RGB', choose 'sRGB IEC61966-2.1' from the 'destination space' profile drop-down list.



Unless you want to experiment after reading into the subject further (particularly about rendering intents), it's probably best if you leave the 'conversion options' section alone, which should hopefully have default values the same as the example shown.

Now hit 'ok' to convert the image.

Saving the image for submission

Now, save the image as a jpg, choosing the highest quality available. If Photoshop says that a file of that name already exists, think hard before choosing to overwrite it! Are you perhaps about to destroy the original copy of the image? If so, save it using a different name.

The file you've just saved is the one to be submitted to the Competition Secretary. All that remains is to rename it using the naming convention outlined in the Club programme, and below.

Closing the image

Before closing the image in Photoshop you need to decide whether or not to save it again, in a lossless format, e.g. a PSD or TIF. If you saved the image *before* you started the resizing exercise, you probably will NOT want to save it at this stage as it will overwrite the larger version.

Renaming the image

It is a requirement of the entering a competition that each image must be named in the following format:

picture name_ author name_ competition.jpg

where:

picture name

is the title that you've given the image. You can use spaces, but you must not use underscores (on a UK keyboard, an underscore is shift-hyphen, i.e. between the zero and the equals keys).

author name

is your name. Again, You can use spaces, but you must not use underscores. Please try to be consistent through the year. For example, if your name is Fred Ferguson, keep to 'Fred Ferguson'; don't submit some images as 'F Ferguson', or 'Frederick Ferguson'.

competition

is the competition to which the image is being entered:

for the Club league competition, class A, use	'A'
for the Club league competition, class B, use	'B'
for the Set Subject competition, use	'S'
for the Fred Adnams competition, use	'F'
for the Image of the Year competition, use	'Y'

As you can see, the image file name is made up of the three parts, or fields, shown highlighted above. They must be separated by a single underscore character (only – no spaces or anything else). The reason for this is that the competition software examines the image file name, and breaks it into the three separate fields, using the underscore as a separator.

Valid examples:

Lady with pigeon_Fred Ferguson_A.jpg
Caterpillar emerging_Fred Ferguson_F.jpg
Red tractor_Fred Ferguson_S.jpg

Invalid examples:

Lady_with_pigeon_Fred Ferguson_A.jpg
(this is invalid because underscores have been used in the title)

Caterpillar emerging-Fred Ferguson-F.jpg
(this is invalid because hyphens have been used to separate the fields instead of underscores)

Red tractor _ Fred Ferguson _ S.jpg
(this is invalid because the fields have been separated by underscores with a space either side)