Mounting prints for competition

There are numerous ways to mount prints, this outline is a way to get started with photo prints for club competition.

The mount should be large enough to balance and support the picture, and the texture and colour should compliment the overall tone of the photo. If in doubt use a plain white such as **Daler-Rowney snow white.**

The maximum mount size is 40cm x 50cm, the display can be presented in landscape or portrait. Smaller mounts may be used, 30cm x 40cm being suitable for an A4 print. This also enables more mounts to be cut from a large sheet.

On A3 paper an image printed at 25cm x 35cm looks fine in a 40 x 50cm mount so there is no need to print edge to edge if you have an A3 printer.

Mount board is usually supplied at A1 size (60cm x 90cm approx) and mounts cut from it as required. Only two 40 x 50 cm mounts can be cut from a single A1 sheet but you can obtain four smaller mounts.

The simplest way to display a photo is to cut a mount to the required size and then to glue a print to its surface. Position the print on the mount and lightly mark the position of the corners with a pencil. Then place the print face down on a larger protective item such as a piece of cardboard and lightly spray adhesive on the back as per the instructions on the spray can. After 15-20 seconds carefully position the print to match the corner marks on the mount and gently smooth over the surface with a clean cloth to press it down and remove any air bubbles. Over a period of time a mount may warp having a photo glued to one side but it is a quick way to start mounting.

The next step up is to glue the print on to a separate backing card, bevel cut-out a suitable size opening in the mount and then secure the print/backing card in position on the rear of the mount using masking tape. This produces a more professional looking presentation.
Gluing the print to the backing card is a similar process to gluing to the mount described above. However, cutting out a bevelled opening does require special tools and careful measurement to accurately match the opening to the print size.

To save work you can get mounts cut to order. This saves having do deal with large sheets and you can also include cutting out a bevelled opening but this limits creative image cropping as the displayed print would need to be a standard size to fit the cut-out.
Mounts can be cut to custom sizes for a reasonable price at **Ron's Framing Workshop**, 195b Desborough Avenue, High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 2TW. Phone No. 01494 550162.

Tools

Cutting mat

Use a cutting mat to help protect your working surface when cutting. This self-healing mat has gridlines on one side to help with straight cuts and is heat-resistant, odourless and anti-glare.

An A1 size (60 x 90cm approx) costs in the region of £20, an A2 (45 x 60cm approx) £10

Cutter

An example is a Maped MatCutter featuring a 60cm anti-slip aluminium ruler with guide groove and both 90° and 45° cutters.
Cost is about £70-80.

Stanley knife or similar

Useful for cutting out the corners after cutting a bevelled mount opening and general tidying. Only costs a few pounds.

Guillotine/rotary trimmer

Useful but but by no means essential for trimming photos and thin card.

Photo mount adhesive

There are a number of different mount adhesives around but for photos you need one that is pH neutral. Any adhesive containing acid could discolour an image over time. 3M PhotoMount in the red spray can is a good product. Costs about £5 for a small can, £12 for a larger 400ml one.

Tape dispenser gun

Used to apply double sided adhesive tape as an alternative to to spray adhesive. Cost around £12. Acid free tapes for use with the gun cost £5 or £6 per 33m length roll

Masking tape

Used to fix photo backing card to rear of the mount.
Don't use very cheap tape as it will most probably peel off after a short time.

All these products are available over the Internet and a good local supplier is **Boville Wright** at 59 Woodside Road, Amersham (opposite the petrol station).

John Harrison, September 2009