Mount-Cutting and Preparing Prints for Competitions & Exhibition

The information provided below explains how to display your images for Club Competitions and our Annual Exhibition. It tells us why we need to mount images and gives tips/hints to help make the process easier! Once the technique is mastered there is great satisfaction gained in producing a mounted print for yourself.

The Need for Mounting Prints:

It's all about protection and presentation –

- A mount provides stiffening to allow the print to support itself when being displayed either on the print easel at competitions, hanging in an exhibition, or stored/transported in a print box with other prints.
- It protects the image from creasing and getting dog-eared at the edges, and in the case of recessed mounting, protects the surface of the print from rubbing against other prints when stacked or carried in bulk.
- In terms of aesthetics, a mount around a print can greatly improve the presentation, adding contrast, impact and leading the eye into the picture.
- There is no requirement to put prints in frames and behind glass - they would be too heavy, the glass would create reflections and there is the obvious danger of broken glass!
- Colour of Mounts – mostly, the colours used are White, Off-White/Cream (not yellow) and Black. Any other colour is not favoured by Judges generally. Of course, it is your choice if the print is to be displayed at home. **For the Exhibition - the colours are restricted to White/Black & Off-White.**

Methods of Mounting:

There are two methods for mounting prints –

- Surface Mounting: probably the simplest and easiest method - the print is simply stuck onto the front of your chosen mount board. The print is afforded protection by stiffening, but be aware that the surface of the print is still liable to be scratched or rubbed when in contact with other prints.
- Recessed Mounting: **the preferred method for Club activities.** The print is sandwiched between a backing board and a front mountboard which has an aperture (window) cut in it with bevelled edges. As well as producing a very professional finish, the main benefit of recessed mounting is that the front surface of the print is better protected from being rubbed by other prints when stacked or carried.

Mount Size

For Club competitions: – the maximum mount size is 50cm x 40cm, the minimum 40cm x 30cm.

For the Exhibition: - the size is set at 50cm x 40cm (this size is the adopted standard by the SCPF)

An additional stipulation is that the finished mounted print must not exceed 4mm in overall thickness.

Adhesive Tapes

- Avoid using tape which is not long lasting (e.g. decorators' masking tape, parcel tape, cheap sellotape, etc.) These have poor quality adhesives which deteriorate over time causing the adhesive to fail, have sticky residues which damages anything coming into contact with it and the residue can also 'creep' and stain your print. Use a quality tape from a craft shop, such as those which claim to be 'acid-free' or 'archival' quality.

Recommendations: Finger-lift 9mm double-sided tape (Amazon, e-bay or Framing sites).

Mount Board

- There are various suppliers of mount board. One could say 'you get what you pay for'.
For example - The Range/Hobbycraft supply A1 board at 4 for £10 – 2 x 50cm x 40cm can be made from A1 board. It is thinner and you need to sort through the pile to make sure there are no marks – especially on the black! However, it is good value and definitely a candidate for use as 'backing board'.

  Cotswold Mounts – very reasonable, will cut apertures to size on request, minimum order £20
  www.**cotswoldmounts**.co.uk

Cutting Mount board

This is a general method used – you may well adapt a routine which works for you:

- Measure image dimensions: basically subtract 1) long side image dimension from long side dimension of mount and 2) subtract short-side dimensions in similar fashion.
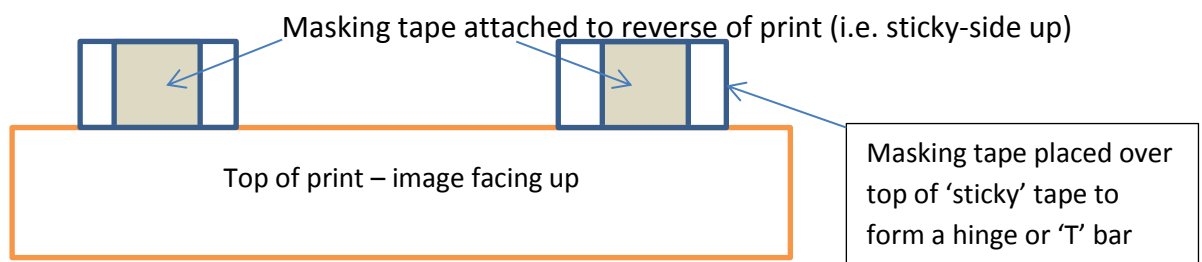e.g.
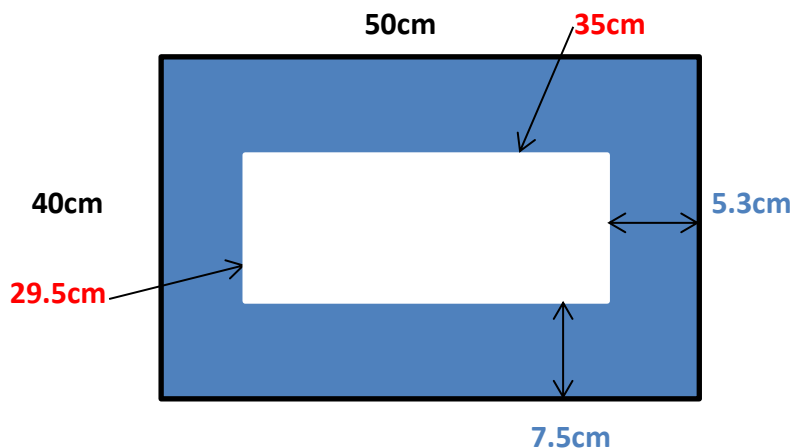
50-35 =15cm then divide result by 2 = 7.5cm   & 40 – 29.5 = 10.5 cm / 2 = 5.3cm

- The measurements will vary depending on where you wish to site the aperture! Suggest that the edge of image is no less than 5cm from edge of mount.
- When cutting 50x40cm mounts (or whichever size required) from A1 mount card using the Logan cutter system, mark-up measurements with right-side facing down. Take care not to mark surface – again the black card suffers most with this.
- Cutting the Aperture:
- Place mount card face-down and mark up size required

- Always work on left-hand side of the aperture and turn card clockwise when cutting (this makes sure the bevel is facing the right way).
- Place the straight edge ruler on the left hand border and slide the cutter away from you.
- Take care when reaching corners not to overcut.
- When finished the aperture should ideally fall out. If not, don't be tempted just to pull the insert away - as you do so the attached corner may pull away some of the mount fibre and you may have to start again.

- **Tips for Success:**
- When using the Logan Cutting system – have found cutting much easier when using Longridge 'Sprint' mat plus the Longridge blades – as the drag is much reduced (compared when not using these items).
- Use a clean, stable work-surface which is preferably at a comfortable working height.
- When about to make cut – the cutter/ ruler should be perpendicular to you. Move to stand slightly to the left beforehand – again this makes cutting easier (Left-handers' need to reverse this of course!) and use a smooth action.

Mounting a Print

- Begin by putting mount & backing board together. Place long edges together and secure with Masking tape (Framers tape, acid free).
- Place image on backing board and align with aperture taking care not to put finger-marks/ scratches on the print. A (clean) paperweight can be used or mark the corners with a pencil.
- Attach 2 pieces (approx. 4cm) of masking tape to the top of the print. Replace print onto backing board and align within the window. Now place another piece of masking tape across the sticky tape to secure the print to the backing board. There is no need to further adhere print – this way of hanging the print allows for expansion in different temperatures and is known as the 'T-bar' method.

Masking tape attached to reverse of print (i.e. sticky-side up)

Top of print – image facing up

Masking tape placed over top of 'sticky' tape to form a hinge or 'T' bar

- Place several small (3-5cm) strips of double-sided tape around edge of backing board to seal mount & backing board together
  NB. The mount can be re-used if you are careful when opening it.
- When storing your print(s) place them facing together so the print is protected and store as flat as possible.