

Mounting prints for competitions, exhibitions & shows.

Most competitions, exhibitions and shows require prints to be mounted. Mounts will protect prints and keep them flat to allow them to be displayed in a pleasing and consistent manner and will also provide a border on which information such as title, author's name, etc., can be placed.

Different events will have different rules regarding mounts. The main specifications are:

The mounting material, and its thickness and colour.

How the print is to be attached to the mount

The width of the mount border surrounding the print

Please make sure you read and observe the rules to ensure your mount is acceptable!

There are several methods for mounting prints, but the preferred method with most camera clubs is to use a 500mm by 400mm mounting board with rectangular beveled edged opening cut to match the size of print, through which the print is displayed.

Firstly, a mount board is a thin but stiff material typically between 1 and 3 mm thick. I normally use either Pinnacle black 1400microns or Pinnacle ice white 1400microns both pre-cut to 500x400mm as I prefer to cut my own outings. I purchase these from a company called Paper Spectrum, but there are many other suppliers online. If you don't want to make your own mounts, pre-cut mounts ("mats") can be bought online and from some picture framing shops. These have a rectangular opening with beveled edges.

I will now try to show how I cut out an opening and mount an A4 print in a landscape orientation on the board (see diagram at the end). It is always best to do all the marking out on the rear of the mount board. Although I use a cutting board to mark out on, I will always put a sheet of brown packing paper under the mount to keep the front of it clean.



Photograph 1. Equipment I will use for marking up the mountboard.

With the mount board lying with rear facing up I mark a box the same size as the A4 (210x297mm) print. To do this I need to calculate the width of top, bottom right-hand and left-hand borders using basic mathematics as shown.

Top and Bottom Borders.

The mount board in landscape orientation is 400mm high.

The A4 print in landscape orientation is 210mm high.

So, $400 - 210 = 190$

It is normal to have the bottom border bigger than the top border, taking this into consideration I make the bottom border 100mm and the top border 90mm.

Right-hand and left-hand Borders.

The mount board in landscape orientation is 500mm wide.

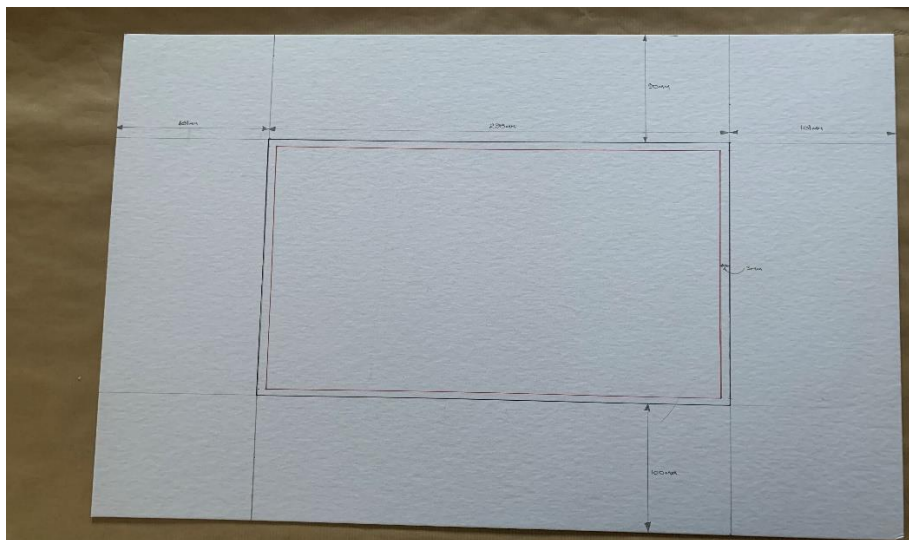
The A4 print in landscape orientation is 297mm wide but I use 298 as this will give me an equal border each side of the image.

So, $500 - 298 = 202$

Now divide 202 by 2 gives you 101mm.

Therefore, this will give you a left-hand border of 101mm and a right-hand border of 101mm (this can be seen as the black rectangle in the Photo. 2. below and on the diagram in Fig 1 at the end of this document).

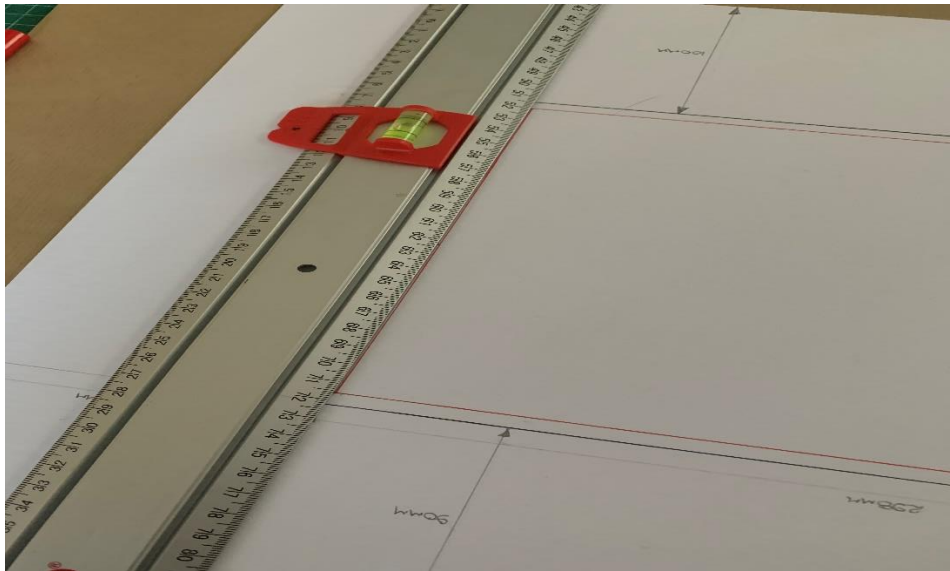
This A4 box will give me guidance later when I come to mount and tape down the print and is not where I cut the opening, I normally print out on A4 paper with a 10mm borders all the way around the image, I will now draw another box 5mm (red rectangle in the Photo. 2 and in diagram Fig. 1 at the end of this document) inside for the A4 box I previously drew this become the cutting lines.



Photograph 2. The mountboard once the marking up is completed.

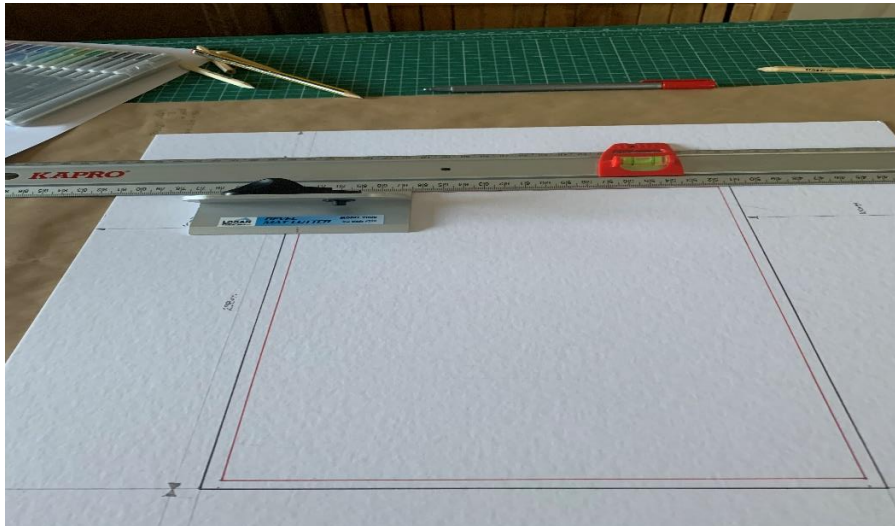
Now to cut out the opening, it is possible to cut an opening with a ruler and a sharp knife but to get a consistent beveled edge you really need a mat cutter like the Logan 302 bevel cutter again there are other cutters available.

Start at any of the red cutting lines, place the ruler (straight edge) on the outside of the line as shown in Photograph 3 below.



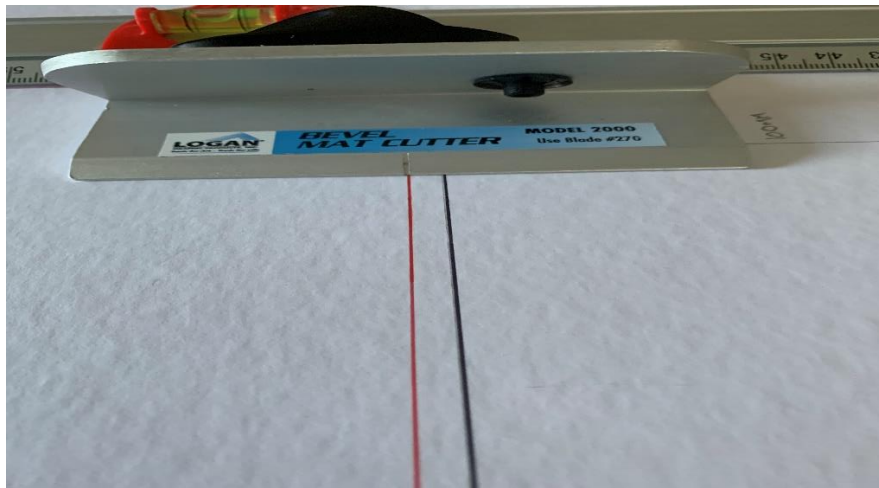
Photograph 3. Placing of the straight edge prior to cutting

With the Logan 203 mat cutter you must push the cutter away from you, so standing to right of the ruler place the cutter so that the centre indicating line on the cutter lines up with the line running at 90° to line be cut as shown in Photograph 4 below, this is the starting point of the cut.



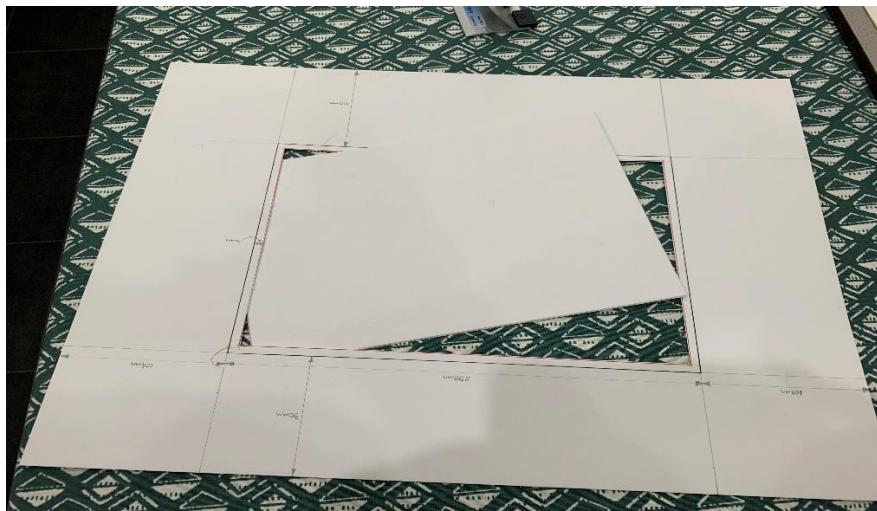
Photograph 4. Alignment of the mat cutter at the start of the cut.

Push down on the cutter lever so that the cutter blade cuts through the mountboard, now hold the lever full down push the cutter away from you, remembering to also to apply downward pressure on the ruler so that does not move. Stop cutting when the centre indicating line on the cutter is in line with the red line parallel to the starting line as shown in Photograph 5 below.



Photograph 5. Alignment of the mat cutter at the end of the cut.

Repeat the process for the remaining three side of the opening and the centre of the mountboard should now just drop out as shown in Photograph 6 below.



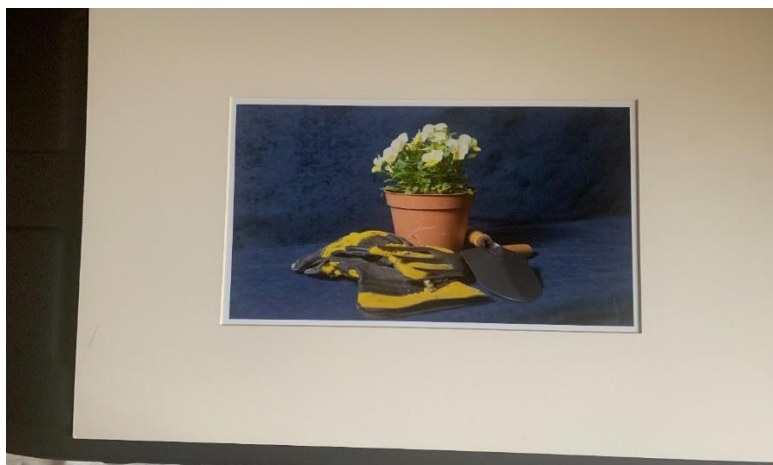
Photograph 6. Centre of mountboard has dropped out.

Once the opening is cut it is time to mount the print, I always mount my prints on a backing board in same size as the print, in this case A4 with mount adhesive such as 3M Photo Mount. Spray the adhesive on the backing board then place the print on the backing board, making sure it stays flat then place something on top to press and keep the print flat until the adhesive dries, it doesn't take long. I have found an old A4 photo frame is ideal to lining up the backing board and print during this process.



Photograph 7. Equipment I use to fix prints to backing board.

Once the print is stuck on the backing board it can now be taped on to the rear of the mount board. With the mount board again face down on the brown packing paper place the print on the mount board using the outline of the previously marked out A4 box as guide. Put a few temporary pieces of tape just to hold the print in place whilst checking that it is square in the opening and an equal amount of border is showing around the image as shown in Photograph 8 below.



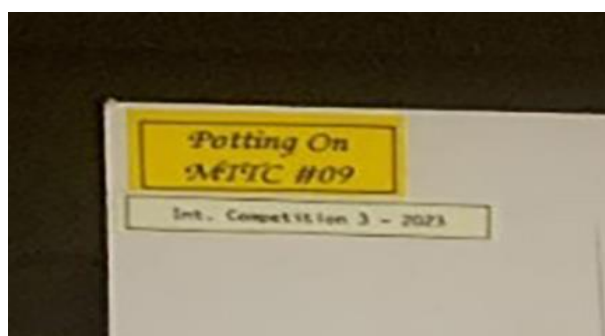
Photograph 8. Ensure the borders around the print are equal.

Once you are satisfied you can then tape the print down completely. Remember to tape the full length of all the sides of the print as shown below.



Photograph 9. The back after taping is completed.

All that is left to do is label the back with a title, club membership number and which competition the print is entering. I have a Brother P-touch E550W printer from my day as an electrician so I print all my labels using this, the labels are seen in Photograph 10.



Photograph 10. Labelling to final print.

Appendix

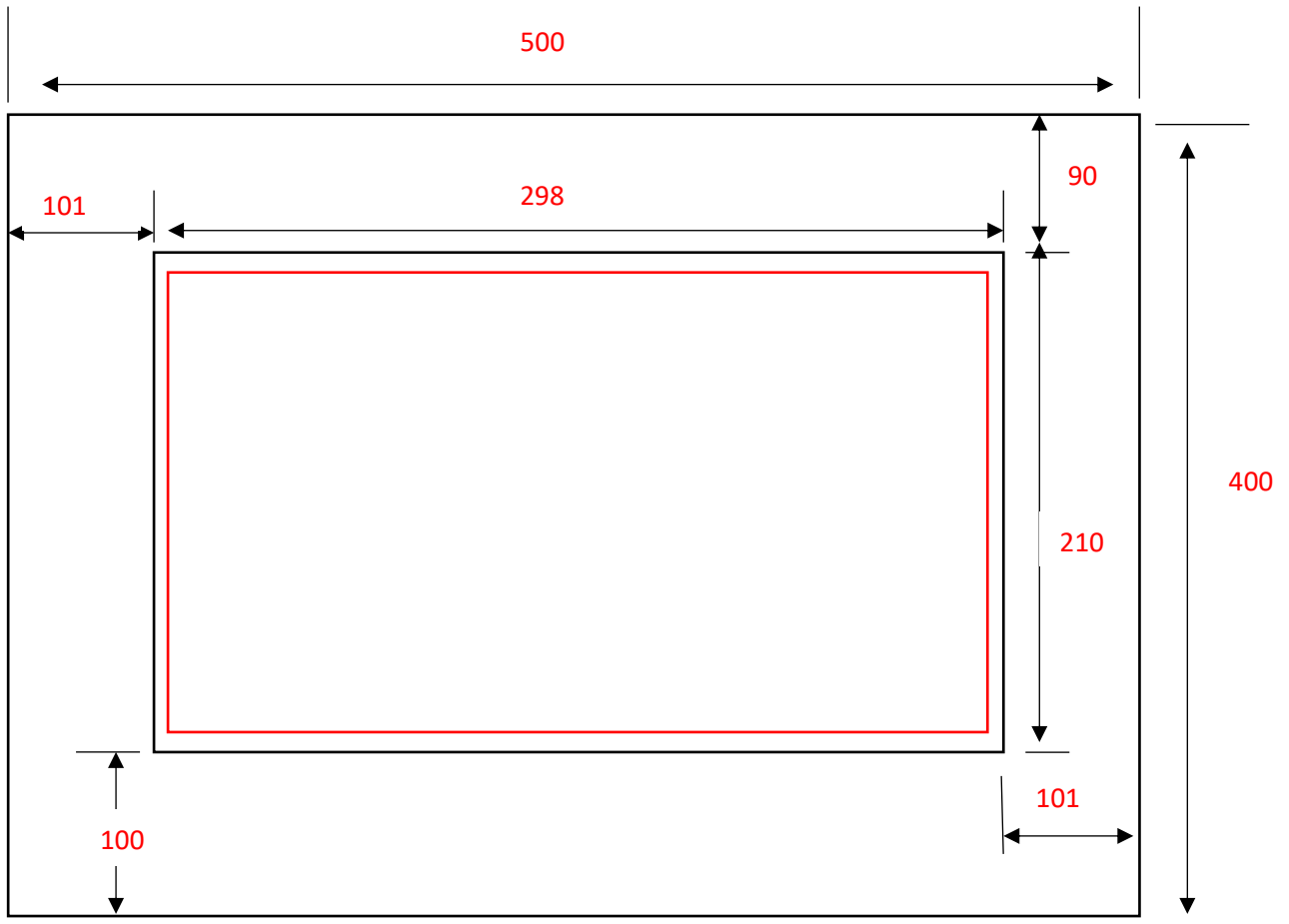


Fig.1. How I mark up the rear of the mount board for an A4 landscape photograph.

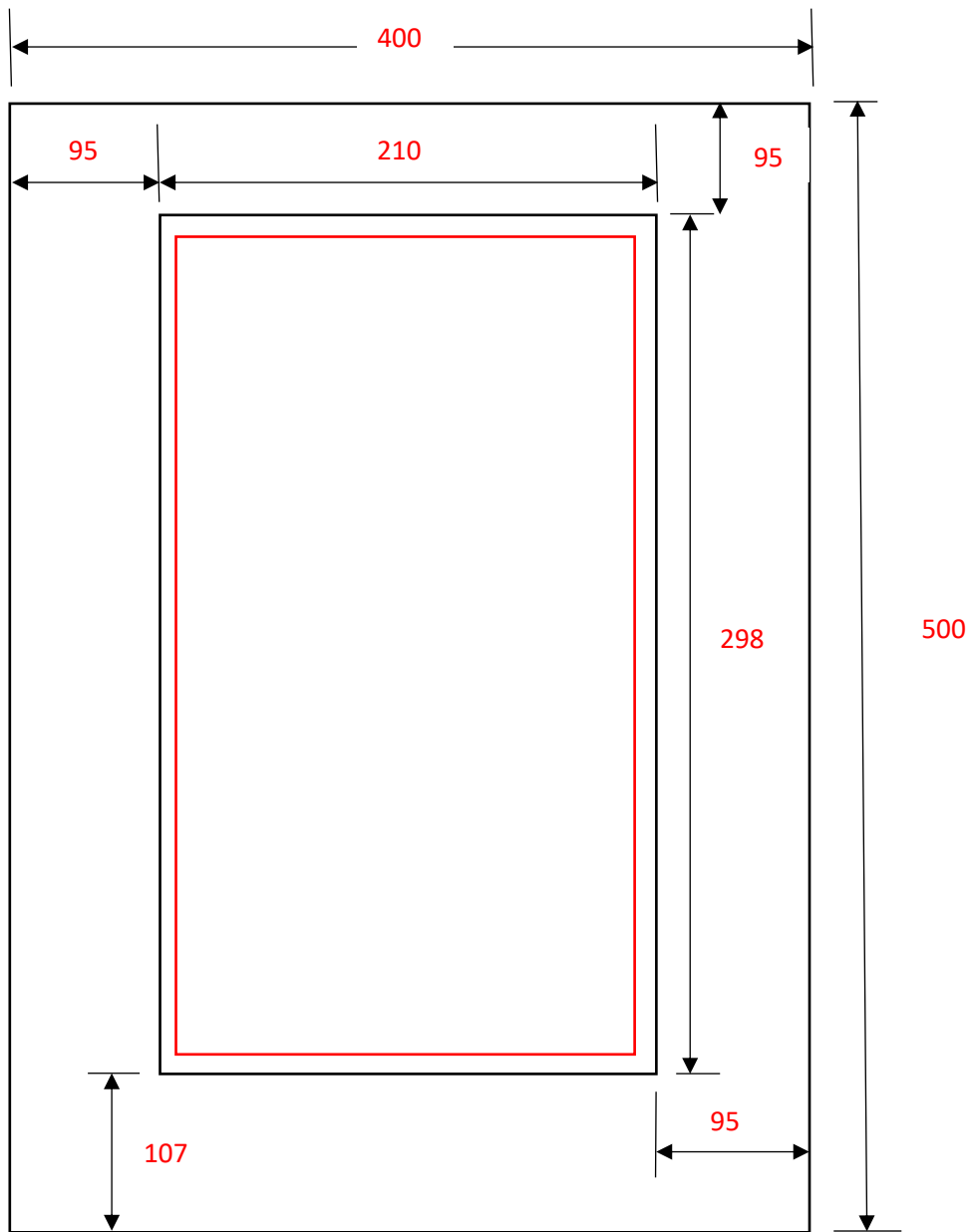


Fig.2. How I mark up the rear of the mount board for an A4 portrait photograph.



Logan 350-1 Compact Elite Mat Cutter