Making a Mount

A. General Points.

1. You can buy mount board and backing board pre-cut to 500mm by 400mm (the required size for club print competitions) from Seawhites of Brighton. The club has arranged a discounted price of £7.50 for a pack of 10 mount boards and £5 for a pack of 20 backing boards as long as orders come through the club.

2. This description is based on the Logan Elite Mount Cutter, but the principles will apply to any mount cutting equipment. It is widely available from framing sites on-line and also on Amazon. The best price I've come across is £145.20 through our deal at Seawhites. Also www.Axminster.co.uk is a good source of mounting and framing equipment. Finally, uTube offers many guides on mounting photographs and is well worth looking at.

3. Generally, make the mount's side borders the same size. Make the bottom border a little larger than the top one - this isn't gospel, but it mostly works well. Another point to consider is that having the top border the same size as the sides also works well, but this isn't always possible – don't worry if it doesn't look right to you.

4. Always work with a sharp blade to obtain a clean, smooth, beveled cut. If your cut is not perfectly smooth, replace your blade and use the spoiled board as a backing board instead.

B. Measuring the aperture to be cut.

1. Use a precut 500 by 400 mm board, or cut a larger one to 500 x 400 mm.
2. Accurately measure the width and height of the photograph to be framed.
3. Subtract the width of the picture from the width of the mount, and the height of the picture from the height of the mount. Halve the results to obtain the sizes of equal side borders and equal top and bottom borders. Then if you prefer having a bigger bottom border, add a few mm to the bottom border and subtract the same amount from the top border.
4. Finally, to avoid unsightly gaps between the picture and the borders, increase each border by 2 to 3 mm.
5. Example: To mount a 420 by 300mm landscape print on a 500 x 400mm board.
    a. Mount Width less Picture Width = 500 – 420 = 80, so side borders are 40mm each.
    b. Mount Height less Picture Height = 400 – 300 = 100, so top and bottom borders are 50mm each.
    c. For a bigger bottom border, increase it by 10mm and decrease the top by 10mm, giving borders of 60mm at the bottom and 40mm at the top.
    d. Add 2mm to each border, making the final border sizes 42mm at each side, 42mm at the top and 52mm at the bottom.

C. Marking out the Aperture to Remove

1. **TURN THE MOUNT BOARD OVER AND WORK ON THE BACK OF THE BOARD FOR ALL THAT FOLLOWS.**
2. Start with the bottom border, and mark that border to indicate it's the bottom one. I just put a B near the edge and also a T on the top border – it can save a lot of confusion later! Move the sliding measuring bar so that its edge (furthest from the cutting groove) lines up with the measurement you want for the bottom border and tighten its 2 screws to keep it firmly in place. Lift up the cutting guide bar and push the mount board against the sliding bar edge nearest the cutting groove. Lower the cutting guide bar and use it to draw a pencil line from end to end of the mount board.

3. Repeat for each of the remaining 3 borders, turning the board as needed. You now have a rectangular shape, and at this stage I usually place the picture on the mount board and check that the borders slightly overlap it. If not, correct any mistakes.

D. Cutting the Mount

1. **STOP**. Before using the bevel cutter, **place the slip mat** on the Logan Mat Cutter over the cutting groove and beneath the mount board you are going to cut. This will preserve the blade and make your cut accurate.
2. Set the sliding bar to the measurement of the first border you're going to cut, tighten the screws and butt the mount up against it. Lower the cutting guide over the mount and place the bevel cutter on the guide rail.
3. You're now going to cut along the pencil lines you've drawn, from one end where the lines intersect to the other end. To get neat corners, start and end your cut just outside the intersecting lines (i.e. nearer the edge of the mount board, 1 mm or less at each end).
4. Place the centre guide mark of the cutter just outside the intersection of the two pencil lines where your cut will start.
5. Then press down firmly on the cutter's thumb pad while at the same time preventing it from moving forward with pressure from your other hand. You should feel the blade cutting through the mount to start the cut, but the cutter's central mark should still be just outside the intersection of the pencil lines. This sounds complicated but you'll soon master the technique to stop the cutter moving.
6. Start the cut and keep a firm downward pressure as you move it along the cutting guide bar. As you near the end of the cut marked by the pencil line, you may want to use your free hand to help control the cutter so that it stops precisely when the central guide mark on the cutter goes just beyond the pencil line. Always remember to maintain downward thumb pressure on the cutter to ensure a complete cut.
7. Then repeat 2 – 6 above for each of the other borders, moving the sliding bar as necessary so you cut the correct size border each time.
8. If you find that one (or more) of your cuts is not exactly along the relevant pencil line, all is not lost! Simply ensure that you start and stop your next cut from a previous cut line rather than a pencil line. The important thing to get good corners is that each cut starts and ends precisely at another cut line.
9. Remove the central part of the mount board. Occasionally you may need to very carefully use a sharp blade at 45 degrees, parallel to the bevel, to free a corner or two from the central cutout.
10. The border should now fit snugly over the picture with no gaps.

E. Finishing the Mount

1. The final stage is to attach the picture to a backing board and then fit the mount border over this.
2. Cut a piece of board so that it is around 20 mm smaller all round than the mount border, but larger than the picture. Turn the mount border over so that the back is uppermost and butt its top up against the top of the backing board so that it overlaps it equally along both sides. Your earlier marks of T and B on the top and bottom borders help here!
3. Tape the mount and backing board together using a good quality sticky framing tape and then fold the mount border over the taped joint so that it fits over the backing board and the top surface faces up.
4. Fold back the mount border and place the picture on the backing board. Then fold the border back over the backing board and picture. Move the picture as necessary until it sits perfectly within the mount border.
5. Place a heavy non-scratchy object on the picture so that in cannot move relative to the backing board and then again fold the mount border away from the picture.
6. Cut two pieces of conservation quality sticky tape to a length of 4 - 5 cm and slide these, sticky side up, on the top of the backing board and beneath the picture a few cm in from the side edges. Leave about half the length sticking out from the picture. Make sure you don't move the picture relative to the backing board, and gently push the picture onto the sticky side of the tape.

7. Now cut two more 3 - 4 cm pieces of conservation sticky tape. Stick them down over the protruding sticky tape at right angles to the latter, ensuring no sticky bits are left uncovered, that no part of the picture is covered by sticky tape and that they are well stuck to the backing board so the picture is firmly held in place. By just sticking the top of the picture to the mount board you will prevent the crinkling of the picture often caused by temperature and/or humidity changes.
8. Remove the heavy object from the picture and fold the mount border back over the picture, which should now be sitting perfectly within the border. If it doesn't, you may have to repeat steps 5 to 8 till you get it right.
9. Finally, on the back of the mount, use sticky framing tape all the way round to cover the join of the back of the mount with the backing board. This gives a tidy finish and prevents dust entering.