

General

If you wonder why the Newsletter style is a bit different, it is because Joe and Ian are off & they left me with the keys and I ran the PPG session on 18th.

For simplicity (for me) I am using the old PPG Newsletter style.

The British Wildlife Rescue Centre at Amerton Farm (Staffs) was at the Armitage Village Day. They provide a home for wild animals who are injured or orphaned and do their best to return them to the wild whenever possible. They continue to accept animals needing rescue, but are now closed to the viewing public (they cannot afford a Zoo license) but will welcome a trip from us as a photo party in return for a modest donation.

Merchant Navy Day was established in 2000 and is on 3rd September each year, the anniversary of the start of the Second World War. It is to commemorate all the brave men and women (over 50,000) of the merchant navy who gave their lives in both world wars

On 1st July 2018 (Sunday) it will be ARMED FORCES CELEBRATION DAY – STOKE ON TRENT. 9:00 am to 6:00 pm Queens Park Ave. Stoke-on-Trent ST3 4AU.

It's a family day of celebration including a full military parade and drumhead service. Parades include veterans, serving military and cadets, with family members invited to parade wearing medals of lost love ones. Following the service is an afternoon of musical entertainment from the wartime era. There will be military displays, military vehicles, army climbing walls and various military displays. Last year's event attracted over 4000 visitors.

Photo Themes

(copied from the previous Newsletter):

Coverall rolling topic:

(For general use and submission to local publications)

Summer/Spring Colours

Holiday Snaps

Main Themes

(For our regular six-weekly members' photos sessions)

Transport

Novel

Dereliction

Please send your images to Ian Halstead as usual.

Last Meeting: 18th July

Introduction

The session was very much about actually taking photographs rather than anything else.

There was no formal presentation.

The members were divided into two equally sized groups. For convenience we called them Group A and Group B.

In each group there was a spread of ability.

The aim was that each group worked collaboratively with the minimum of "external" help.

There were two activities:

- 1) **Portraits Using the PPG Portrait Kit**
- 2) **Capturing the Motion of Fruit Falling into Water**

Group A was given Activity 1) and had 5 minutes to discuss and agree how to organise their shooting session, then 30 minutes to do it.

Group B was given Activity 2) and had 5 minutes to discuss and agree how to organise their shooting session, then 30 minutes to do it.

Then the two groups swapped places.

Portraits Using the PPG Portrait Kit

The PPG Kit is ideal for portraits such as head and shoulders or upper torso.

In the past, the use of studio kit has been a fait accompli, with the kit already set up.

The purpose of this activity was to encourage members to find out for themselves how to use the club's kit.

The Group had to assemble the kit and then set it up for portraiture.

- Both groups decided to use the green colour-key backdrop. This makes cutting out the subject easier in a photo editor.
- Both groups got a good separation between the subject and the backdrop. This is necessary with white or mid-tone backdrops to avoid shadows. The black backdrop (which does not show the shadows) was avoided because some members were already dressed in black.
- The reflector brolly (shiny) was deployed on one side as the main light source (open face towards the subject and above, to one side and slightly in front).
- The white translucent brolly was deployed (open face away from the subject) in a mirror position to the shiny brolly, but at about twice the distance away (to give about ¼ of the light) to soften the shadows.
- Each member took turns as photographer & subject.

At the end of their session each Group had to dismantle and pack the kit for the next Group to assemble from scratch. Everyone (than you) was careful to handle the lamps with care and ensure that they were cool before being packed away.

Capturing the Motion of Fruit Falling into Water

This was a simple enough task in theory, but difficult in practice because of timing the shot.

The idea was to have a small aquarium 2/3 filled with water. Into this were dropped a strawberry, a plum tomato or a combination. The task of the photographer was to capture the exact moment of "drama" as the fruit "dived" into the water.

The Group first had to decide whether they wanted to shoot the tank in daylight (plenty of light) using fast shutter speeds on their camera, or to go indoors with little light and use electronic flash to arrest the motion. The latter can give better results but is technically more demanding.

Both Groups decided to shoot outside.

Each group had to fill the tank, erect a black backdrop of bin liner on card (to isolate the subject), & organise the “fruit dropping monitor” who had the job of releasing the fruit on its downward plunge on a count of 1-2-3. The photographers took turns to shoot.

- Autofocus cannot focus on the space in a water-filled tank where the fruit will be. Therefore photographers set their camera on a tripod, switched off the autofocus (i.e. to Manual) and focused on a human finger or other object where the fruit would be.
- There is a delay between pressing the button & the camera performing all its calculations before firing the shutter. This makes correct timing very hard, therefore many photographers switched to M mode (you set the shutter speed, aperture and ISO).
- This was very much a matter of keep on trying until you got the shot that you wanted.

At the end, the tank was emptied for the next group to create their own set-up.

Conclusion

This (both activities) were hailed by all as a great and enjoyable success & lots of fun.

Apart from John Turner (who had just had his retinopathy examination and was still suffering from blurred vision from the eye drops), everyone got good images of the fruit splash and of the portraits.

The members were unanimous that, having tried both activities, they wanted to do it all again soon, so that they could “improve & refine” their photographs & develop their ideas after these initial experiments.

A benefit of the “portrait” session was that everyone realised how easy it was to use. The only advice came from their colleagues in the group.

Four members expressed a wish to borrow the studio kit for in the future for use at home. This is entirely congruent with the reason for buying the kit.

Session Photos:

Here, with grateful thanks to Geoff, are some of the photos from the session.

Please send any that you have taken at the sessions to me bell.r@virginmedia.com

Here is Geoff’s shot (using a timer) of The Group “Los Diabólicos”



Because the background is green (a hue not usually present in skin tones of healthy people), it was possible to select the green background and remove it.

it was the work of a few seconds (far less than a minute) in Corel Paintshop to

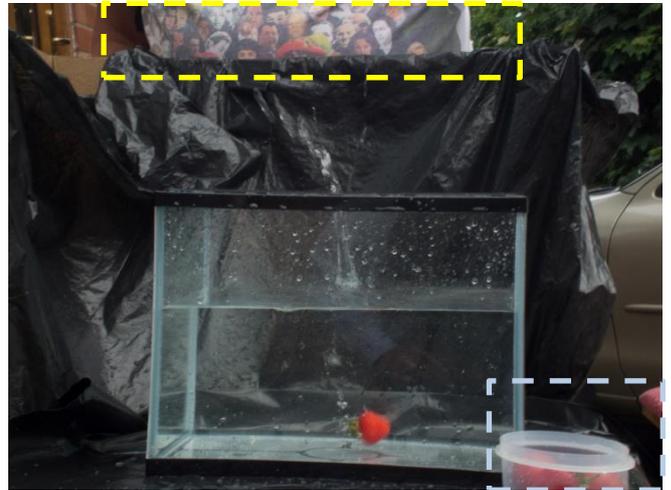
- create a duplicate layer.
- Select the green.
- Delete the green.
- Insert a layer shot of some flames behind
- Crop



Likewise for this one of a “Beatles fan” with his Sgt Pepper T shirt...



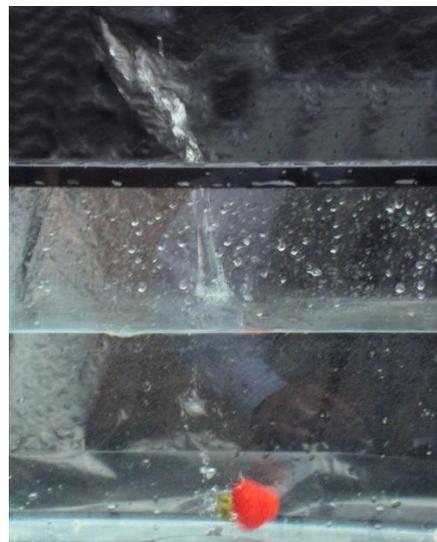
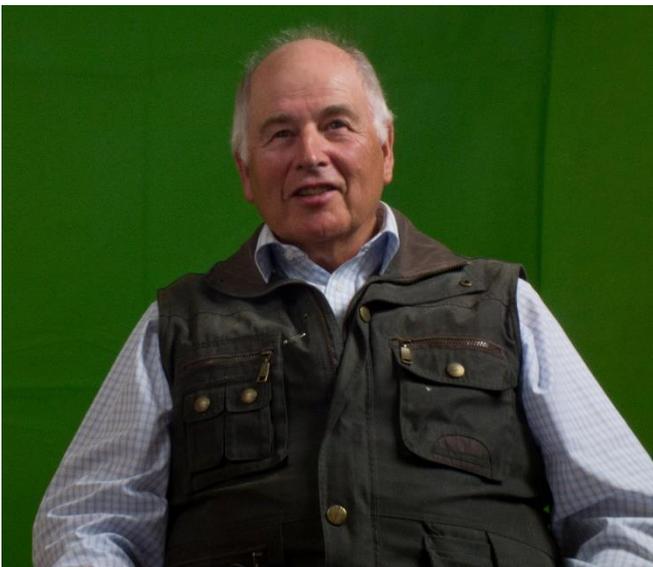
Here is one of the Fruit Shots that Geoff took to illustrate a few things..



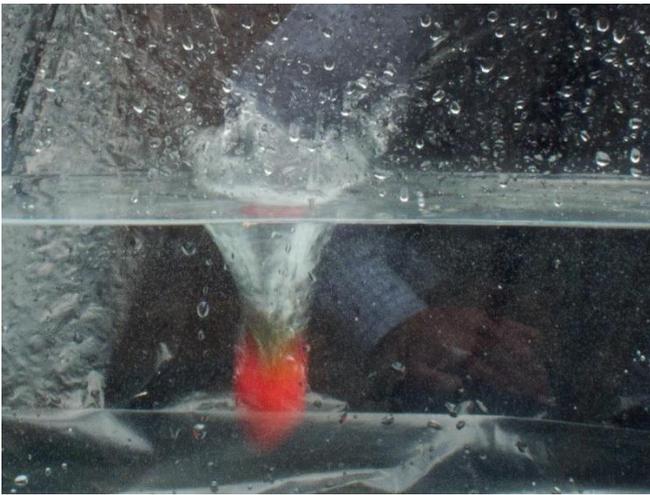
- Needed to be closer or a longer zoom.
- Items not wanted in the photo that could have been moved (in blue).
- Crown watching the action (in yellow).
- A bit of care with the black plastic to avoid the awkward reflections.
- But timing almost right.

And another...

with Geoff fishing at Blithbury Reservoir.



And two un-doctored images....



Architectural

Patterns

Armitage Village Day.



Optimism, pessimism



See you next week.