

Phoenix Photographic Group

Newsletter from Meeting of 25 June 2018

Introduction

There were 16 of us in the Village Hall for this meeting. The agenda wasn't immediately disclosed as Joe had only dreamed it up about two hours beforehand.

News Items

Stafford Hospital Picture renewal. Marie asked if we will provide 16 images (10 Landscape, 6 Portrait) for Monday 23rd July. The images need to be of local (10 miles radius of Stafford) interest and mounted in 20" x 16" mount card. Please write picture title and your name on the reverse.

John Turner advertised an upcoming Merchant Navy coach trip to London that will depart from Cannock Bus Station at 7:00am on 9th September. £18 per seat, 5 hours free time in London. See John.

John Ford noted the National Air Force Day happening this weekend at the National Arboretum. Many colourful sights and fly-overs by a Lancaster on Saturday and a Spitfire on Sunday.

Alan Shaw explained some peripheral activities connected to the art (painting & drawing) presentation he'll be giving on 16th July. Firstly, he's prepared to loan some materials to anyone who fancies "having a go"; secondly, given some interest, we will hire EHVH for an hour on a

Monday morning so that Alan can give some personal coaching to people willing to try for themselves. It was emphasized that this is not an attempt by the PPG to start a new Art group – simply a way to encourage the artistic appreciation required to visualize an un-started picture, which precisely mirrors the skills needed for good photo composition.

Joe then bored the faithful with a long and tedious story about his journey by train from London on the previous Friday night/Saturday morning. The point of this being that due to a weekend in Bristol as well, he'd started this morning with no known agenda for the PPG meeting. In consequence he'd quickly prepared a quiz and proposed to spend the second part of the afternoon getting some quality input from members about what they most enjoyed, wanted, felt deprived of etc etc in the PPG schedule of activities. So, the agenda was now 'fessed up'.

Activities

The quiz – which Joe was a bit uncertain about – turned out to start some really useful discussions from which certain members learnt stuff they didn't already know, or had stuff clarified through explanations from a new angle. There was a bit of amusement here and there – e.g. why are people never smiling in really old photos? – true answer: smiling for no apparent reason was then considered to indicate insanity!

The following 'open floor' discussion about session topics also turned out (in Joe's humble opinion) to be the most useful we've ever had. Everybody contributed and some interesting conclusions can be drawn. Here's a synopsis:

A widely shared 'like' is that we have informal meetings and the social aspect of getting together is allowed to flourish alongside serious work.

Also widely supported was the desire to include hard-copy prints in our member's pics from time to time. To embrace 'prints' more by re-instigating a group selection session to swap Sheepfair prints around every 3 months. Bob B volunteered for the grunt work of actually swapping them out.

It was clear that presentations/workshops on editing applications such as PhotoShop have to continue in our plans. Lots of members are interested. However, these members' baseline understandings and aspirations vary widely. One size is unlikely to fit all. What Joe heard was:

- Keep the demonstration boundaries very tight. Show a limited amount of functionality but do it very clearly, so that people are confident to replicate the steps again at home. Document these in the Newsletter as an aide-memoire. In order to minimize confusion, do not stray, diverge etc from the 'script'. Keep It As Simple And Repeatable As Possible seemed to be the message.
- Maybe run two parallel streams – one for accomplished members (cutting out seemed to have a multiple interest) – the other for novices who, having mastered cropping, re-sizing and adjusting the brightness, now want to know what other simple changes they can make.

A surprise to Joe was the number of people who still would like more practical sessions with mount-cutters. Between the club, John Ford and Joe we have three to play with. Sandra believes we could borrow the Art Group's new cutter which is apparently much easier to use. So, we

should organise more sessions but ensure all who are interested have first acquired their mount board and some relevant prints!

Composition (of pictures) was another common theme. Two suggestions here:

- Presentation/discussion of acknowledged 'good composition' images and then we debate why they are seen to be good
- Member's Pics follow-on sessions to thrash out which of our own pictures fall into the 'good composition' category and why

Practical sessions are valued by many. Small groups work better than big groups because people tend to get involved. More portrait work was requested by a couple of us.

Group discussions on the comparative benefits of new cameras and accessories were called for. So, the PPG becoming its own living 'Which' magazine really – using one another's knowledge and experience to help people buy 'good stuff'.

Lastly a session to lay bare more explicitly the 'working parts' of the camera ... with the belief that the more you understand it, the better you might use it.

Next Meeting

Monday 2nd July at Etching Hill Village Hall. The session will be:

MEMBERS' PICS. **WE NEED THOSE PICS!!**

Members Pics

Topics

Spring Colours

Holiday Snaps

Transport

Novel

Dereliction

Please send your images to: -

WE NEED THOSE PICS!!

ianchalstead@yahoo.co.uk



Bidulph Gardens

John Ford



Boxes

Bob Southall



Pavement Games

Bob Bell



Jeep

Arthur Davies



Ironbridge

Les Atkins



Greater spotted woodpecker

Woodpecker

Geoff Allsop