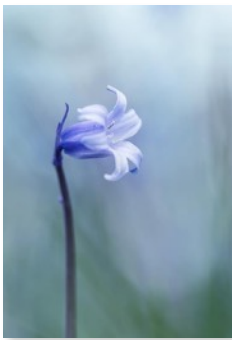


Club Newsletter

A selection of news, views, stories and written articles
from members of the club
May 2020

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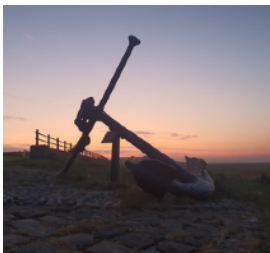
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Email your submission for the next publication to
newsletter@northfylde-ps.co.uk



News

A Word from Our Chairman...

Dear Members

With the current situation regarding C-19, we were sadly not able to finish the season in our usual way. However, members have been busy posting what images they have been able to do on our Facebook page.

Wayne Paulo has been putting together a series of images for the website from what would have appeared in our local Library Exhibitions, and Matt Polke has been able to get them up and running on the website.

Alison Bonner put forward the idea of a newsletter, with the resulting issue that you are now reading.

Dave Bibby is busy beavering away with the syllabus for next season, which we are looking forward to. So, all in all, there are members still putting in a lot of work to keep us going.

So, as you can see folks, people are still actively involving themselves in the club and taking things forward in preparation for the new season.

As to the future, we are still at this moment in time unsure when we will be able to confirm an actual opening date, but we are aiming for our usual date in early September.

If you have any stories for future editions of the newsletter, please let Alison know.

Regards to all. And stay safe.

Paul King

Chairman

.....



News

And a word from our Secretary...

Many thanks, Paul, for these opening words to our “new” newsletter.

It is always great when something good comes from adversity. We could probably all do with cheering up, and I hope this new venture will help you stay in touch with the rest of the club this Summer, as we continue trying to cope with lockdown.

As Paul says, it was Alison’s idea, and she and Matt joined forces to make it happen. Well done, you two, and, above all, thanks to our first contributors as well.

The aim is to produce it monthly, until September. So, if you fancy adding your two pen’north (a story and/or pics), get in touch with Alison by email at: **newsletter@northfylde-ps.co.uk**. (If you don’t, she might just get in touch with you herself - editors are like that - so better to jump before you’re pushed !) But I’m sure she’d appreciate any views or ideas about the newsletter anyway.

Neil Pascoe

Secretary

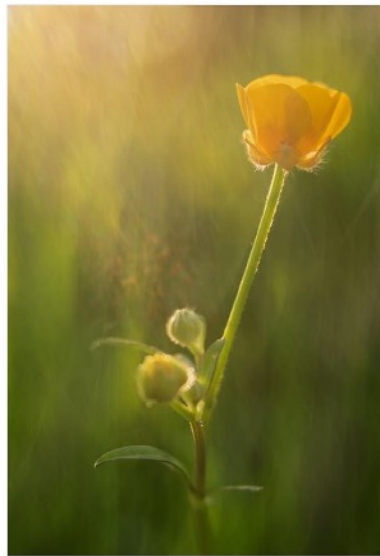
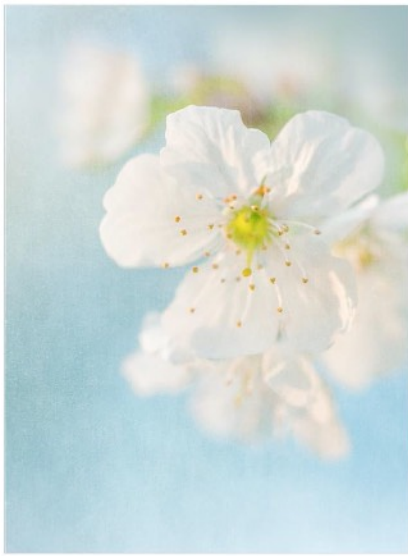
Please Note: The deadline date for contributions for the next edition is ...

Wednesday, 10th June 2020. Send newsletter submissions and pictures to, **newsletter@northfylde-ps.co.uk**

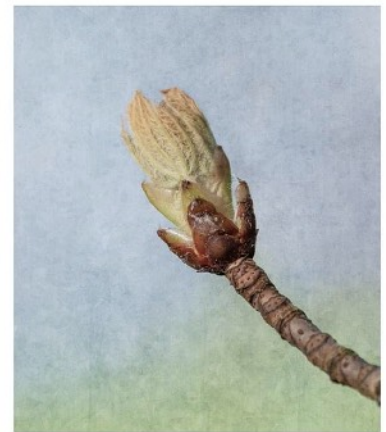


Views

Angela Carr presents a posy of welcome Spring visitors, flora and fauna both. Often overlooked for more fashionable flowers, Angela's lens reveals the enduring and uncommon beauty of these familiar favourites.



Spring in the garden
By Angela Carr



Spring in the garden
By Angela Carr



Buttercups in the Garden

By Angela Carr



Bluebells in the garden

By Angela Carr



Peter Slater shares a dual portrait he is particularly pleased with.

Friends

By Peter Slater





Stories

Clare Trewick, one of our newest members, shows us a lyrical vision of Lytham, as dawn breaks.

Lytham during the lockdown

Clare Trewick

I'm Clare. As most of you know, I joined the club in September 2019, prior to which time I'd just been a 'happy snapper' taking lots and lots of pictures on my mobile. I joined the club and realised just how much work was required to take 'proper' photographs. It's a tough challenge, with a lot of learning ahead of me, but the club has so many helpful members that I've already learnt so much.

The lockdown enabled me to reset my body clock somewhat - for the first week or so, I was constantly tired and sleeping - probably due to the sudden change in my routine and the stress of the uncertainty of what was happening with the world. I've always enjoyed walking, just never quite made the time to do as much as I'd like! But now, suddenly, I had so much time. I tried going for a walk during the day - far too many people about, not all of them observing the social distancing guidelines in place - not for me! Evenings were out, especially on nice days, because living near to Fairhaven Lake, I know just how many others would be out watching the sunset. So early morning it was - the first morning I wondered what on earth I was doing... until I walked towards Lowther Gardens and was met by a beautiful fiery sky,



absolutely breathtaking. Every day a fresh sky, a different photo to be had. Walking through Lowther Gardens, I was surrounded by the incredible morning sound of all the birds waking up - it never fails to lift the mood. Onwards towards Lytham Windmill, passing the flag pole, the Clifton Arms Hotel looking magnificent; then onto The Mussel Tank; Ribble Cruising Club and the Lifeboat; then onto the Windmill itself, and the old Lifeboat Museum (one of my favourite buildings). Not forgetting the two anchors on the slipway next to the old building, so much history in one small space!

Carrying on, I walk to the end of Lytham Green, down the steps and round the

outside of the car park

of (what to me will always be) the old Land Registry, and straight up the steps which take you to the back of Lytham Quays - there is an old boat there which is sideways on and I'm curious of the history (old boats and '*boat graveyards*' are one of the things which



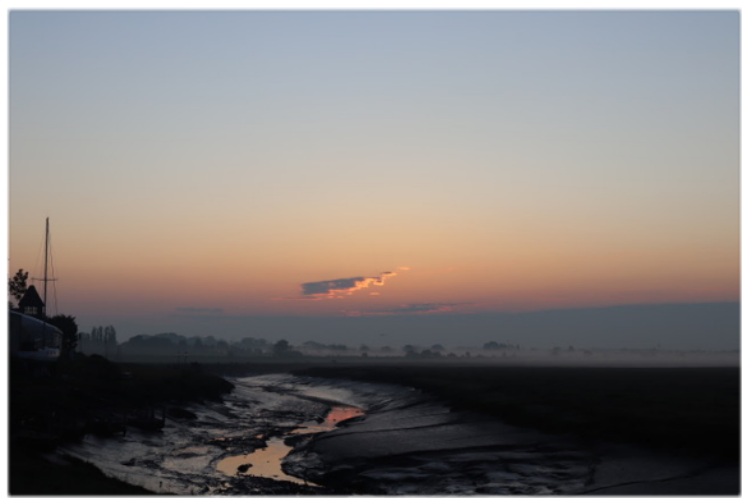
fascinate me). The sky has been absolutely on fire on my journey to this point. It is calmer now, just waiting for the actual sunrise - still very beautiful. There's a gentle slope downhill now, and as I reach the bottom I look over at the creek and take a moment just to appreciate having such incredible surroundings.

Heading back through Lytham Quays now and back out at the traffic lights and turning back onto the green, the Windmill is now reflecting the rising sun beautifully. I watch a couple of fishermen hooking their boats to the back of their vans and heading away and I turn through Lowther Gardens again, enjoying the sight of the flowers now that it is a little lighter. I see a couple of



squirrels chasing around a tree and reflect that I've seen some lovely wildlife on these walks - a fox, an owl. A hedgehog crossed in front of me this morning, and I'd better not forget to mention the heron I saw flying over the pond in Lowther Gardens too.

Heading home, the town is beginning to wake; there are people walking, jogging, out with their dogs - most give me a cheery "Hello!" or "Morning!". I head home, refreshed and ready to start the day.



Now let **David Delmage** delight and entertain with tales of his encounters with animals both wild and domestic, in his private and professional life.

A Vet's Life

David Delmage

The Heron

While I was a Vet, we had lots of injured birds carried into the surgery. We looked after a puffin, guillemot, swift, lots of swans (usually with fishing hooks stuck in the neck), and pigeons with broken legs. And, once, we were brought a heron...

It was very thin, just skin and bone, and couldn't fly. There were no injuries, like dog bites, broken feathers or wings. So we kept him in a dog kennel at Mere Road Vets for three weeks. My wife, Kay, said they eat 20% of their body weight per day, so we went down to Abingdon Street Market and bought lots of sardines, whiting, and other small fish. He ate those and put on weight quite well. As he got heavier, we still fed him his 20%, which meant more and more fish. After three weeks, Leighton Moss RSPC said they could take him, so we drove there, with the heron in a cat basket. A worker was there to meet us when we arrived. I put the cat basket down, and the worker bent down to lift the bird out. "Crikey!", he said, "He's heavy. They are usually just skin and bone." Kay and I went into the hide, and he went around the back and put the heron at the edge of the water. From inside the hide, an elderly lady shouted out, "Hey Bill, there's a heron. Come quickly! *Quickly!* Or he'll fly away". The worker, just outside, replied, "Oh, take your time. He won't be flying for about three weeks!".



Cornwall

Some years ago, Kay and I were down in Cornwall with a previous dog, called Bodmin. We were on Fore Street, Liskeard. On the corner, we met an old fellow who said, “that’s a nice dog.” I replied, “this is Bodmin.” He said, “Oh, no, this in’t Bodmin, Bodmin’s away down the road”. We said ‘thank you’ and once out of hearing, started giggling.

One year, when we were in St. Ives, Cornwall, there were loads of people there, even though it was October. I took Trago down on the beach. Retrievers have this built-in love of balls, and Trago loves it especially if he has to swim out to retrieve a ball. He thought he saw a child’s football, bobbing in the waves and he was off - into the water. He was pulling and tugging at the ball and couldn’t bring it in to me. The reason being that it was a buoy, tied down by an anchor and a rope to a small boat nearby. The people on the promenade were all shouting, “Look at that dog!” and their children were laughing.

What was worse, *I* was jumping up and down on the sand shouting, “Trago, Trago, come *HERE!*!”



Articles

Bob Sapey's inspirational article gives step by step guidance to help you achieve your own versions of these thrilling pictures, and rounds up our first newsletter in fine style.

Star Trails

Bob Sapey

This article is based upon my presentation to the club a couple of years ago.

Preliminaries

Star trails can make an interesting landscape and are relatively easy to produce with a DSLR or mirrorless camera, a tripod and access to Photoshop. When I started making star trails, I shot in RAW and batch processed the photographs on my computer before converting them to JPEGs and combining them into a trail. JPEGs are necessary as you will be combining 30+ photos in Photoshop and RAW files would be too large. So long as you know what you are doing and take time with your preparations, I think it is much easier to make use of the processing ability within your camera and shoot JPEGs at the outset.

Any star photography is best done with clear skies in a dark place. As you will be taking photos at a relatively high ISO and with long exposures (up to 30 seconds) light pollution from populated areas will have a considerable impact on your image. The glow you can see on the horizon in *Image 1* would be considerably brighter near large urban areas. This first example was taken just a few hundred yards from my caravan at Herdwick Croft in the Lake District which was very convenient, but when I am at home in Garstang I have to travel several miles to find a dark enough sky.



Image 1. Looking north from Herdwick Croft, ISO 1600, f/2.8, 20 secs

A clear sky at night usually means it will be cold, so coat, hat and gloves are essentials. It is best to set up your equipment before going out as it will be much more difficult in the dark whilst wearing gloves.

The classic, circular star trails are taken facing north as the Pole Star remains almost stationary in relation to the Earth's movement and forms the centre of the stars' apparent rotation. It is worth trying to understand that the Earth is spinning and as the camera is resting solidly on the ground, it too is moving. Everything on the Earth is also moving at the same speed in the same direction and therefore appears to be stationary, whereas the stars which are not moving with the Earth appear to move. However, for the sake of my sanity in trying to write clearly, I will describe the stars as moving.

Image 1 was exposed at ISO 1600, f/2.8 for 20 seconds. At this length of exposure, the trailing of the stars is imperceptible and their contrast with the darker sky is good. If the exposure was longer so as to capture trailing, the sky would also be brighter, and it would soon become impossible to see the stars. So, while the eventual aim is to photograph the movement of the stars, this will be done by combining multiple shots without trailing, rather than with one long exposure.

Calculating Exposure Time

The movement of stars will appear faster, the closer we zoom in on them. This is because the distance a star must move to have the same movement on the sensor of the camera is less with a longer focal length. In *Diagram 1* the blue arrow represents the distance the star must move to cover the full width of the camera's sensor with a 75mm lens. The red arrow shows that for a 25mm lens the star would have to move 3 times the distance to have the same impact on the sensor.

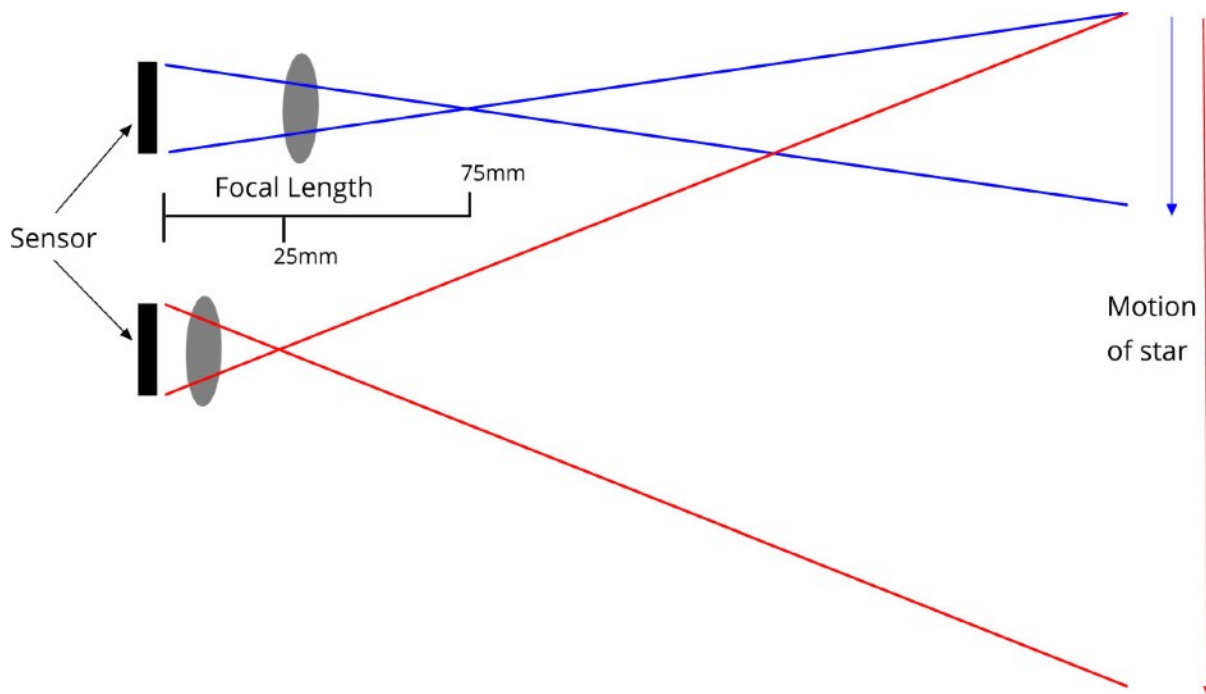


Diagram 1. Focal Length and Sensor

Therefore, the formula used to calculate length of exposure must take into account the focal length of the lens and it is known as the *500 Rule*, that is 500 divided by the focal length of the lens. So, with



a 25mm lens the exposure is 20 seconds, with a 75mm lens it would be just 6.7 seconds. Following this rule should mean that the movement of the stars will be imperceptible.

The *500 Rule* assumes a full frame camera so if you are using a crop sensor camera the focal length of the lens needs to be multiplied by the crop factor. For Canon ASPC cameras this is 1.6, for Nikon 1.5 while for micro four-thirds it would be 2.

Example: With my Canon 90D and a 17mm lens the formula would be $500/17 \times 1.6$ ($500/27.2$) = 18.4.

Lens and Aperture

The classic star trail pictures tend to show a large area of the sky and as full a circle of stars as possible. For these you will need to use a wide angled lens. I have the choice between a 17-55 f/2.8 and a 10-22 f/3.5-4.5. If the view I want to capture can be had at 17mm then I would use the 17-55 as it has the wider f/2.8 aperture which will allow in more light. However, using a wider angle lens would allow for longer exposures which may offset the smaller aperture. The aperture can be set as wide as possible as at wide angles there will be no problem with depth of field.

Both my lenses have a *Distance Scale Window* which allows for accurate manual focussing in the dark. This is an important consideration as there will be insufficient light in the sky to use autofocus and it will not be possible to be sure of your focus without this feature.

ISO

The camera should be set on *Manual* and the aperture to its widest. The exposure time will be determined by the focal length using the *500 Rule* leaving just the ISO to complete the exposure triangle. I find an ISO of 1600 to be effective at capturing the light from the stars while not introducing too much noise, but you should experiment to find the level that gives you a pleasing result – I may be more or less tolerant of noise than you.

White Balance

If you are shooting in RAW you can deal with this in post-processing, but if you have chosen to shoot in JPEG you will need to set the white balance to between 3200-3900 K. In *Image 1* I have used 3200, but you could reduce the blue in the sky by going higher if that is how you would like your image to look.

Interval Timer

An interval timer may already be built into your camera in which case you would access and control it via the camera's menu. If it is not built-in then it will be necessary to use an external interval timer. This will plug into the camera's remote socket and usually would mean setting the camera to *Bulb* instead of *Manual* mode as external timers also control the exposure time.

I have come across two variations in setting interval timers and it is essential you know how your time works. The external timer I used to use required that I set the exposure time, say 20 seconds, that I set the number of shots, say 30 and, that I set the interval between the end of one shot and the start of the next.

The built-in interval timer I have used did not require me to set the exposure time as this was set as part of the *Manual* mode of the camera. It required the number of exposures, but crucially the interval was from the start of one exposure to the start of the next. Rather than setting a 5 second

interval between 20 second shots, I would need to set a 25 second interval between the start of each 20 second shot.

I would recommend setting up the interval timer before getting out into the cold and dark, but don't enable it until you have had the chance to take a few test shots to ensure you are happy with all the other settings.

Shooting

With your camera securely mounted on a tripod, set up as above and with the Image Stabilisation switched off, press the shutter and step back to enjoy a warm drink while the camera does its stuff.

Processing

The next step is processing. With your photos downloaded you will need to open all of them as layers in Photoshop. From the File menu select `Scripts > Load Files into Stack`.

Then browse your computer and select the images and press OK. Most importantly **DON'T** select **Attempt to Automatically Align Source Images** as you do not want the stars aligned, you want them to form trails. Once the images are loaded into Photoshop, select all the layers and under the blend menu, change the setting from Normal to Lighten (see *Image 2*) and hey presto, you have a star trail (*Image 3*)

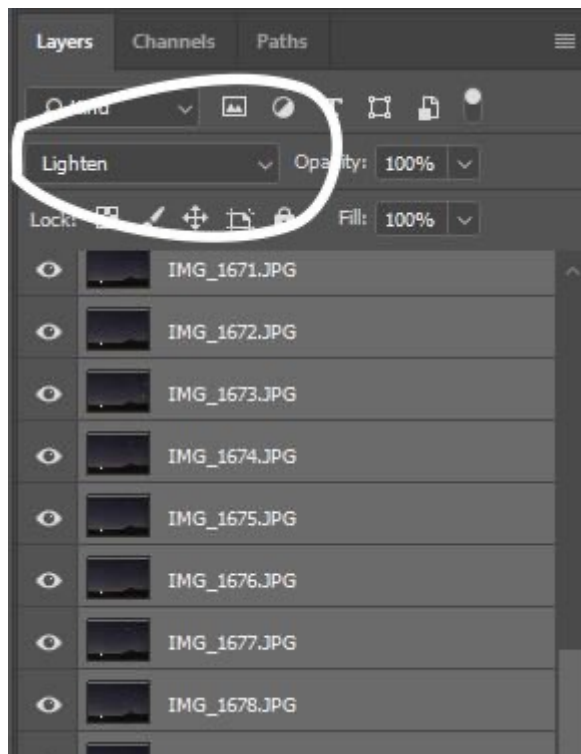


Image 2. Blend Mode in Photoshop



Image 3. Star Trail

With this trail I wanted to lighten up the foreground so I used the Camera Raw filter to make subtle changes to the final image. Using the brush, I raised the exposure and shadows to show some colour in the field. I wanted to keep it very dark, but felt it was good to have a slight distinction between the field and the trees.

I also thought it would help to remove the farmhouse lights in the final *Image 4*.



Image 4. Final Star Trail

