

The Newsletter

Insight, Primesite, Foresight

February 2011 - Issue #8



Editorial

Well, it hasn't happened yet. The cold weather this side of Christmas that is. Some, perhaps most, will hope that it will not happen. Others wish for the snow. For my part I struggle a bit in the snow - dodgy legs, don't you know. There are wonderful photo opportunities in the garden in times of snow. There is a little project for you in this months newsletter. You can do it without snow. With snow it gets great results and is a wonderful opportunity for the local birds.

We all occasionally look at our worldly goods and wonder about our luck. One member this month ended up with a submarine gin palace. This was not about being driven to drink - more about being in the drink. Enjoy...

One of the more critical issues when taking a photograph is how you hold the camera. It is not an easy lesson to learn. It takes practice. If you put in the time to develop a good stance and always use it your photography will improve a great deal. The technical focus this issue is on stance.

No philosophical insight this month? OK I have a confession. Deep thoughts take time to develop. I am starting a new business. Most of my spare thinking time has gone into that enterprise. There is philosophy in this however. My transition from public service worker to private business owner has sharpened my awareness of photography beyond competitions. A new world is opening up for my 'seeing'. So expect some future insights as that new line of thought develops.

Enjoy this newsletter. How about some feedback if you have a minute?

Damon Guy

Email the MCC Secretary
mccsec@marlowcc.org



Help M.C.C make a little money. If you use Amazon via our search box on the website, you can earn us a little commission.

Simple tips for a good photo stance

OK, it sounds simple. Take a shot in bright daylight and ensure that it is sharp. Point and click eh? Easy...

Nope, it's not so easy. Why? Breath, shift, close, stab and roll - that's why.

Yes, it's true. These are some of the things people do when they take a photograph. Here is the sequence in full. They look through the lens and get the shot lined up, everything just so... Composed, they take a breath and shift their weight. Then, suddenly, they close their eye and stab the button followed by the roll. The roll is where the camera is peeled away from the face to see the subject of the shot again. All this introduces a degree of movement to the shot. Do you do all that? You don't fool me.

Some dedicated personal training can get you past this disaster sequence. Become aware. Adjust your stance and breathing to suit, then take the shot in a fluid way. Be a stealthy hunter, sneaking up on your shot with deliberate controlled moves. Avoid the uncontrolled movement of the ambush.



Hunt your shot with deliberate, stealthy moves...

Here are some tips to help you get a sharper shot...

First, the basic stance is critical. If you don't stand still you are onto a loser. Place your

feet apart. Slightly more than one length of your own foot should fit between them to be comfortable. One foot slightly forward sometimes helps. And make sure you are comfortable as that is a key issue. Your back should be straight and neck upright. Tuck your elbows into your chest so to create a tight triangle of support for your camera. Your right hand should hold the hand grip where the button is positioned. Your left hand should be palm up under the lens supporting its weight. Your left-hand fingers should be free to focus without shifting support from the lens.

Breathing - every sport or interest has a way of breathing. Photography is no different. People often take a sharp in-breath before shooting. Arggh! Movement. So, simply keep your breathing smooth and composed. Once you are aware of this you can control your breathing and compensate for the movement.

Compose the shot in this stance. When ready to shoot, DO NOT stab the button. The smoothest method I have found is to have my button finger poised at the edge of the button and turned out slightly at the outset. To shoot, I roll the finger onto the button so the contact is composed and relaxed. It is not a sudden downward stab. It is more of a smooth motion like rolling pastry. All the time keep your hands firm but relaxed – not strained or white knuckled.



Finger poised ready to roll over the button

By the way, don't close your working eye. Most people don't realise they often blink in anticipation of the shot. Look through the lens for as long as possible. This helps control the hand movement and steadies the camera. The action of the mirror/shutter will block your view during the shot. You will

already have it in the bag by then though.

Now you use the "anti-roll" bar. My term... Bar yourself from rolling the camera away from your face the instant you have pressed the button. I have personally ruined many, many shots by rushing the camera from my face after the shot. I have no idea why people do this. If you do it however, you will find that the movement is often premature. To overcome this foible simply count to two after the shot. Then gently remove the camera. Practice it and soon you will not do the roll anymore.

If you put these tips together you will return measured and controlled shots. It will help break the cycle of frenetic composition and hasty captures. With practice your shots will get sharper and more considered. You will be making the shot, not snapping it.

The Club Website

Been there this month? Here is the address so you can check it out. www.marlowcc.org Support the website, pour over it and ensure that you comment in the forum, blog, tell your friends and write to me about it. The site is there for your use and for the club to develop ideas around it. Use it well my friends, for therein lays wisdom.

There have been quite a few blogs this month. Mostly short. Do you know what is happening? Check out the blog page on: <http://marlowcc.org/blog/>



See the club website at:

<http://www.marlowcc.org>

An idea for snow - fun even if it is warm

Here is something to do in advance of snow. Put out a small table. Make sure it is within camera shot of your observation window in the house. Now make sure that a garden fork or other implement is leaning

there, or nearby, stuck in the ground. Don't place the fork more than about five feet from the table and not too close. Make sure your background is clean and uncluttered. This bird table arrangement needs to be in place before the snow falls – so do it now.

You are mostly interested in the fork. You must put seeds and bread pieces on the table every day. You will notice that the smaller birds land on the fork first. Then go to the table. The fork will be where you will get your shot. The birds use this perching point as a quick 'check-spot' to make sure they are safe before coming to feed. It is also a great posing point for your photo opportunity.

To get your shots put a sheet of cardboard up against your window. It must have a slot in it for you to look through and a hole for your camera lens to poke through. This is your hide. It is also the reason you can have your table near the window.

Set up your camera on a tripod with the lens through the hole. It must be pointed at the fork handle to capture the bird in that important pose position. The lens will hunt on auto-focus because it 'sees' the glass. You should manually focus the lens onto the fork handle. Now wait for your subjects to fly onto it and pose for you.

Here is a cautionary word. Make sure that once you start feeding you keep it up. The birds will quickly rely on the food – especially if it does snow. They may die if you suddenly stop. If you don't feed from the start you will find the birds take a day or two to get used to it. You may miss shots if you wait for the snow before feeding.

Have fun with this one and bring lots of bird shots to the next competition. Damon.

Mid-Thames AV Day

The Mid-Thames AV group are holding a one-day event on Audio-Visual sequences. Keith Leedham FRPS EFIAP FIPF is key speaker and is well known within the audio visual community. Attendee AV sequences will be appraised by Keith in his friendly manner. You'll get encouragement and advice to improve your AV skills. Keith will

also entertain and inspire the group with his own AV's to enthuse and improve ours.

Sunday 10th April 2011 - 9.45 at
The Community Centre, Woosehill,
Wokingham, Berkshire.

Contact Damon for a flyer to book a place. For more information contact Steve Galvin our keen AV enthusiast.

Marine Misery... Member Mourns

Club member Marcelle Brogden was not happy this week. Her family boat sank. Rushing to the bank-side she captured this picture of the moment.



"Christine B" – chilling out down by the river

The cause of the submarine interlude at that point was not known. Bumping on the bottom, the Brogden boat needed help.

The "Christine B" has provided many happy memories. Having travelled the full length of the Thames during its time it has served the family well. It has also had its fair share of bad luck. Polythene hell resulted from a wrapped up propeller in the tideway. Another time floods caused her to break her moorings and strand on the weir at Hurley. Yet another occasion saw bow damage from a falling bough. Up-to-the-minute reports suggest this time a rotten mounting caused a hull-plug to leak. Sadly the boat went down the drain as a result.

The "Christine B" has not finally bottomed out. Rescue plans came to fruition today as she was lifted from the river. It was a rebirth befitting of any crane. The pictures show the exciting rescue of this symbol of the adventurous and intrepid seafaring Brogden family. Marcelle Brogden said today, "We are keeping our fingers and toes crossed

that she will be okay to navigate the beautiful River Thames in the future".



The "Christine B" at the start of the rescue



Tooling up to for the rescue attempt



Up, up and away, in my beautiful... Boat?



The crane "rebirthing" Christine B.

It makes you proud to be a citizen of this island nation! (Thanks to Marcelle)

And Finally...

Please think of contributing to this newsletter. Hunt, click with every trip. You know it makes sense!

Contributions?



A good website...

OK, I am coming clean. All those photography quotes I come up with are not from my excellent but slightly geeky memory. Here is a website that gives me the inspiration... Enjoy.

<http://www.photoquotes.com/>

...Focus On Imaging

This national photography equipment exhibition is from the 6th - 10th of March at NEC in Birmingham. Anyone interested? Entry is £8.00. Share a car anyone?

Visit <http://www.focus-on-imaging.co.uk/>

...A quote

Here is a quote to reinforce the idea you should sneak up on your shots with stealth.

"Taking pictures is like tiptoeing into the kitchen late at night and stealing Oreo cookies."

Diane Arbus [1923 - 1971]
American photographer

...and from the Internet

Those Canon photographers really get the shot...

