

# IN FOCUS

## Newsletter of the Lostwithiel U3A Photography Group

### David Chapman

We were introduced to David by Peter Bland, who had known him for many years. David's background is in education and he moved to Cornwall in 1992 as a maths teacher at Helston School. He had always been interested in photography and wildlife so the move to Cornwall brought these interests to the fore. David has written several books on wildflowers and birds, and has many published articles and images.

David became a friend of Lostwithiel U3A in 2015 when he started running workshops for the Photography Group, and also gave a talk to the whole Lostwithiel U3A on birds in Cornwall. Over the next three years David ran a number of different workshops for us on landscape or wildlife photography throughout Cornwall. As an educator David's style was always encouraging yet challenging!

The fondness which several of our members have for David is evident in their comments on some of the images in Gallery 2 this week. He has now retired and is enjoying his own time but perhaps we can tempt him out of retirement soon to meet us Lethyep next year.

**Lindsay**



### In this issue

**W**e begin a series of articles linking the newsletter and gallery by looking at the professional photographers who have led workshops for us, encouraging us to develop our photographic skills. We start with...

### Roland's story

**I** have been taking photographs for a long time, sometimes using decent 35mm cameras, before entering the digital age with a bridge camera, both of these gave some options to experiment with exposures and composition. However, I had not fully taken on board how I could get more out of the experience, not only by appreciating the scope of the equipment I had, but also by preparing well, and learning some of the processes we apply to create images we are happy with. This way we may, more often, achieve what we are aiming for, rather than something which comes about by accident.

My first insights into this were provided by Peter (Bland), who helped me to distinguish the differences between an average and a good image, before embarking on some of the wizardry of the virtual darkroom to bring out the strong points in a photograph. These 'tutorials' were the first of my forays into widening my understanding of what my camera and I could do.

Then along came the workshops with Ross Hoddinott, David Chapman and Carla Regler. Though I was very pleased to get a place on these workshops, I was also nervous, primarily because I wasn't overly confident and perhaps a little intimidated by these geniuses with a camera, who are widely renowned. The ease with which each of 'The Professionals' engaged with me, patient, without being patronising, removed a barrier that was in my head rather than in their practice. That doesn't mean I instantly changed into a more proficient person with a

## Ross Hoddinott

Ross is another photographer introduced to the group by Peter (Bland) in May 2016. Roland describes the impact of the first workshop with him at Trebarwith Strand and Bedruthan Steps.

Ross is one of the UK's best-known landscape and wildlife photographers, having worked as a full time professional since 1997, supplying photographs and undertaking commissions for a wide range of clients worldwide. Ross is the author of several photography books and a regular contributor to the UK photo press. Based in North Cornwall, in South West England, Ross is best known for his exquisite macro and close-up photography, and for capturing evocative landscape images - particularly of Cornwall.

He co-runs Dawn 2 Dusk Photography, who specialise in landscape photography workshops in the UK, and he also offers bespoke 1-2-1 photography tuition.

Over the last 4 years Ross has been a good friend to the group. He has run two or three workshops a year for us, often over subscribed, that have taken us from moorland to coast in both Cornwall and Devon. Through him we have been introduced to the magic and mystery of such things as long exposure, bracketing and panoramas.



We look forward to working with him again on the **21st June 2021 for the Upton Towans Butterfly workshop** if not before.

**Steph (picture courtesy of Lindsay)**

**Other workshops to look forward to - on the 17th June 2021 "Flowers on the Somerset Levels" with Victoria Hillman**



camera, but my confidence grew a little.

What I also discovered is that whilst they are very talented photographers, there are also processes which they could follow and adapt, borne out of experience and through practise which they didn't have to think about, but came to them automatically. The importance of this was brought home to me in workshops when we were using filters, something very new to me. The first occasion was at



Kynance Cove with Carla, a very long exposure to capture the sunset. I had gone some way into the exposure, but was panic stricken as I thought someone was going to walk in front of the camera before the exposure was complete. Not that I needed to worry as it wouldn't have affected the final image I was told, but in being flustered I may have released the shutter early. I was distracted and my final image was a little disappointing.

The second occasion at Trebarwith Strand with Ross, we had very limited time to capture the image I was looking for (not



hoping for). But I got in a muddle about the process of setting up the camera with the filter for a long exposure. Fortunately Lindsay came to my aid and I managed to get organised for the picture I wanted. Both these experiences demonstrated to me that whilst practice may not always make perfect, it can make better.

**Roland**

Of course, focus doesn't require a permanent no, but it does require a present no. You always have the option to do something else later, but in the present moment focus requires that you only do one thing. Focus is the key to productivity because saying no to every other option unlocks your ability to accomplish the one thing that is left. Now for the important question: What can we do to focus on the things that matter and ignore the things that don't? Before we talk about how to get started, let's pause for just a second. If you're enjoying this article on focus, then you'll probably find my other writing on performance and human behavior useful. Focus is priceless in our always hectic, often overwhelming lives. It's also getting harder and harder to find. Whenever you're up to your eyeballs on a tight deadline and find yourself wandering off into a social media black hole or a YouTube binge, a single question comes to mind: Why can't I just focus already? Digital distractions are everywhere we look, so it's easy to blame them as the culprits. Others—perfectionist types—chuck up the problem to a lack of discipline or willpower. But the truth is a bit more complicated. Notice how easy it is to find something else to do the second your project gets hard? That's because distractions are little breaks from discomfort. That quick scroll through Instagram is like a pressure-release valve from a hectic day. Make note of it, acknowledge it, and put it in a mental parking lot to think about later, when you can discuss it with someone else, or when you're not at work and have lots to do. Taking those few minutes will hopefully slightly alter your mood or lower your adrenaline, so you can get back to your work with a renewed level of concentration. Reason #3: You're Spinning Too Many Plates. You've probably heard that your obsession with multitasking is sabotaging your productivity. It sounds simple enough to tell yourself that you're only going to focus on one thing at a time. But, if you've ever actually tried to do it, you know just how challenging it can be. Start by controlling whatever you can to create an environment that's conducive to highly-focused work. Put your phone in the other room.