

Forest of Galtres Camera Club
Monday 11th March
An Engaging Evening
John Devlin ARPS and Mike Berry ARPS

Monday was a good-humoured evening when a guy from north of the border, John Devlin ARPS, teamed up with another from Tyneside, Mike Berry ARPS. John enjoys landscape photography while Mike, an urban photographer, travels to the Far East to collect arresting images of Asian life. The evening was a perfect mix of striking photographs, discussion and technical insight.

Discussion came through the selection of a card from a pack. On each was written a question or statement relevant to photography. Interspersed amongst the showing of photographs came the opportunity to share opinions and thoughts on whatever was on the chosen card. For example, was there ever an occasion when an individual regretted not taking a photograph or what do you want to say in your photographs?

Surprisingly, the first image showed a variety of ingredients that could be used for the best kind of curries. This was an interesting approach. A club member would select an ingredient at random which would lead to a themed selection of either Mike or John's images. The photographer of that set would then share the photographic experience that led to the outcome on screen alongside the elements considered when preparing to take the shot.

Members of the club regularly see photographs from different parts of the world: photographs that are striking and beautiful, that show landscapes, buildings and people. Occasionally, someone comes along with images that are original in form and impact. Mike and John were two such photographers. They shared some truly breath-taking images.

In the Far East, Mike has taken close- up portraits of children, excitedly engaging with the camera, their faces expressing mischief and fun-loving enthusiasm. This contrasted completely with portraits of older members of a community, showing lines etched into their skin. The Pushkar Camel festival in India provided some of the images as well as visits to Cambodia. Mike reminded members that the best portraits of children are gained when getting down to their level.

Some of John's images were taken in Scotland. He always uses a tripod and a cable release. When photographing trees, he prefers not to show the tops to create impact.

On a trip to Hong Kong, Mike used a fixer. This is someone local to the area who will help you find the locations you want to photograph. Mike wanted to photograph those areas where people lived who were not amongst the financially mobile. Thousands lived in enormous blocks of flats. How to access the tops of some of

these blocks or find your way amongst them was the job of the fixer. This enabled Mike to capture images refreshingly impressive, full of pattern, texture and tone.

Select chilli as an ingredient and the photographic qualities of the north East coast were available courtesy of John. He believes in using the camera itself to get as near as possible to the desired image and therefore, keep to a minimum the time spent editing.

Reference was made to two photographers, one Danish, Thorsten Overgaard, and Steve McCurry, an American. The former has produced many books on different aspects of photography, one called *The Moment of Emotional Impact in Photography*. That emotional moment, reiterated by John, was the moment you choose to press the shutter. Well worth a visit are YouTube tutorials delivered by Steve McCurry. One was shared with members on Monday about the rule of thirds and the positioning of the dominant eye in portrait photography, short, clear and well worth viewing.

There was still more packed into the evening and I for one, just wanted to go home and reach for my camera with renewed inspiration thanks to Mike and John.

Next week, the AGM will be held next Monday followed by the presentation of trophies to winners of the various competitions that have been held over the season.