



Rugeley & Armitage Camera Club Newsletter

24th March 2018

www.rugeleyandarmitagecameraclub.com

Last Week - Dr Michael Leach FRGS - 'It's a Funny Way to Make a Living'

Not really sure if it's a funny way to make a living but it's certainly an interesting one. After so many good speakers over the years it's not easy to compare one against the other. But I would imagine that for all those present on Monday evening, Dr Michael Leach would probably be in the top one. Put simply he was brilliant. Michael explained the basics of his art from humble beginnings through to the present day in this revealing, humorous introduction to the realities of professional wildlife filming. He has visited over 200 countries, 16 this year alone. On the morning of our meeting he'd travelled down from Wick in Caithness, and the next morning he was flying off to the Seychelles. Tough job at times.

The first half of Michael's presentation was all talking with no pictures, but this didn't matter one bit. Michael told us how when he left school and told the careers advisor he wanted to be an Adventure Writer he was basically told to go away and come back with a 'proper job'. Despite this knockback he ignored this advice and set about making his own way as a wildlife author and photographer. Unfortunately he soon discovered the chicken and egg scenario where no-one uses your work until you become known, and you can't become known until someone uses your work. After numerous interviews he finally got an assignment with the BBC where he was required to produce a six second long film clip on blue tits. Every idea Michael put forward was met with the same response "No good, that's been done before". Finally he decided to cut a milk bottle in half and mount the camera inside the bottle and film the blue tit pecking away at the bottle cap. This same theme ran through Michael's talk. Everything you photograph or film must be done differently. Nothing what's been done before.

Michael spoke very little about which make of equipment he uses. He said he doesn't actually own a camera. He uses kit from whichever manufacturer supplies him. Over the years he has used them all. He said that make is not important as all modern cameras will give more than acceptable results "What you film or photograph is more important than the quality".

For those who unfortunately weren't at the club, here is a brief video [1 minute] of Michael giving a talk to school children on gorillas. Hopefully in the near future he can come back and give the talk to us.

[Dr Michael Leach - Gorillas](#) and here's Michael's website: [Michael Leach Photography](#)

As you know I asked for comments on Michael's talk. I expected half a dozen at most. I had twenty two

Alien Skin Exposure X3

Now that Adobe Lightroom has gone to subscription only, if that's not for you and you'd rather make one off payments, then Alien Skin appears to be a good Lightroom alternative. From Alien Skin website:

Introducing Exposure X3, the advanced non-destructive RAW editor that enables you to easily create beautiful images and master your entire workflow. Fast performance, powerful organizing tools, and unmatched creative editing make Exposure the only app you need to quickly transform your photos into works of art. Use Exposure as a complete photo editor to master your full workflow, or as a Lightroom or Photoshop plug-in for your creative edits.

As with most software nowadays, you can download a 30-day free trial: [Alien Skin Exposure X3](#)

If you would like to read a review and tutorial there's a good one here: [Alien Skin Exposure X3 Review](#)

This Week - Competition Night

Our 5th Monthly Competition of the season. This is a PDI competition and the subject is 'Open' We have an excellent entry of 77 images for the judge Ken Hudson to wade through. This is Ken's first visit to our club, I'm sure he'll be impressed.

St Giles Hospice

With regard to the visits to St Giles Hospice. The 7th June is fully booked but there are still places available for 15th July. If you would like to go please give your name to Carole. Note the maximum is 10 people so please be quick.

Practical Evening - 9th April

Sheets will be out on Monday for the next Practical Evening. Rob has once again drawn up an excellent menu of subjects. As always thanks go to the tutors who will attempt to convince others that they know what they're talking about. If you feel you can help out in any way, either solo or as a double act, please see Rob. I'm sure he'll welcome you with open arms.

Remember - Practical Evenings rely on volunteers.

16th April - Aldridge P.S. Roadshow

The members of Aldridge Photographic Society will visit us and entertain with their Roadshow. They are a very friendly crowd and have made us most welcome on our visits to them. I'm sure we will do the same.

Tolkien Exhibition at Chasewater Country Park

Unique exhibition celebrating the author of The Lord of the Rings and his links with Staffordshire. Until April 21st. See details here: [Tolkien Exhibition](#)

If you were observant and noticed the change in club logo at the top of the page, put clocks forward tonight

Guest Speaker Dr Michael Leach FRGS
'It's a Funny Way to Make a Living'
Comments from Members

Our speaker on Monday night Dr Michael Leach was exceptional! I have never known our members to be as enthralled as they were. He's certainly a speaker that I would recommend to many other camera clubs.
Carole Perry, Chairperson

Entertaining, informative and inspirational - a great insight into the world of the wildlife photographer!
I would like to hear more.
Clive Pritchard

When I got home I told my wife it was the best speaker we have ever had. I was totally gripped by his voice, experiences and photographs. Cannot wait to see him again with his gorilla talk.
Karl Riley

The Best
David Durose

He was a brilliant entertaining speaker. He wondered why we were all quiet. Well I for one was spellbound. His photos were fantastic too.
Marie Lakin

In the past I have paid premium prices to listen to the likes of Chris Packham, Andy Rouse, Bill Oddie and Martin Hughes Games etc. They were all very entertaining and true professionals in their field. Up until last night Simon King stood out as probably the best and most engaging speaker I had been privileged to see. Dr Michael Leach surpassed all of them, Humour, knowledge, inspirational and truthful. A wonderful evening I just wish it could have gone on for longer.
Tony Slater

I thought Michael was really good as a speaker with a sense of humour thrown in. The talk was fascinating. Would have liked to see few more photos as they were so good.
Anon

I thought it was an unusual delivery but found it very interesting, particularly the perspective of the professional photographer and the lengths one has to go to get a shot that will sell.
Roy Alexander

Whole heartedly agree with your comments. We were so hyperactive that we could not go to sleep and having a cuppa at 03.00 hrs. Was the best speaker we have ever heard at the club and looking forward to the next meeting with him. Congratulations to who booked him.
Pat & Alan Heeley

He had me enthralled from start to finish. Fascinating and funny all at the same time.
Karen Kreft

Thanks to everyone who sent a comment. I think it's clear from this that Michael was certainly a hit with you all. Looking at Michael's website he has fifteen other talks in his armoury. I'm sure we would like to hear them.
We will send all these comments off to Michael (minus names of course).

Nothing like a bit of praise and flattery to entice someone back.

What an enthralling speaker. Brilliant raconteur. I could have listened to him all night, Congratulations to you all for booking him We MUST have him back
Paddy Ruske

A really enjoyable evening with a brilliant speaker giving us an insight into the life of a wildlife photographer.
Geoff Setterfield

He had the exceptional speakers gift of being enthralling though personality alone. His knowledge was evident throughout the presentation of his specialist subject. I learnt a lot, because he enticed me to listen.
Eugene Kiernan

A very good evening. It is the second time I have seen him. On both occasions he was outstanding. He kept the club interested all evening. Thanks to Kay and Graham for booking him.
Colin Wiles

Exceptional. Didn't want it to end. Come back soon.
Dave Hanmer

I thought that Dr Leach gave an excellent talk. It was humorous and very informative into the world of nature programmes and the images he showed in the second half were first class.
Graham Walker

It was a good night and very informative.
Roy Westwood

Brilliant!
Margaret Cross

Most entertaining speaker we have had at the Club. Did not want the evening to end. Very good talk and gave an interesting insight into life as a Natural History Photographer.
Kay Williams

Dr. Leach is the sort of speaker who could enthrall me for days! Hope he comes back to give a second instalment.
Paul Mills

A fascinating insight into the lifestyle required to produce amazing wildlife footage. Spellbinding!
Anon

What a great speaker on Monday night Dr Michael Leach was. I hope he has been booked again for next year, I would love to hear another of his talks. An enthusiastic and truly inspirational speaker, his story telling contained so many bits of good advice for photographers of all standards, who want to try and take better nature pictures.
Steve Higgins