

Ballynahinch Camera Club Panel Project - 250th Anniversary Edengrove Presbyterian Church

For those of you who had the pleasure of recently joining us for a talk by Robert Thompson will know, Ballynahinch Camera Club meet in the church halls of Edengrove Presbyterian Church. The current minister of the church Reverend Scott Woodburn approached one of our long-standing club members, David Barr, when the 250th Anniversary of the Church was approaching. He wanted to build a series of images and thought who better to ask than the members of Ballynahinch Camera Club who have been meeting in the Church halls for several years. Some of the senior committee members, Keith, Terry, and Alan met with Scott to discuss the project and as a group we really wanted to get involved. Not only was it an opportunity to take a wide range of images, utilising many photography techniques but it was also a chance to celebrate this milestone whilst also raising the profile of our club within the local community.

The aim was to take a range of photographs showing both the building and all those who use it for various purposes. Initially we thought we would have around 6 months to pull this together, but we actually only had a little over 8 weeks. This was especially tricky as some of the groups only met once per month. We wanted to be really creative with the brief and ensure that the images were fun and full of life, just like the church. When completed we were able to present the church with 48 printed images for use in an exhibition on their 250th anniversary, together with a further 120 digital images which they displayed in a digital carousel.

Our panel is a selection of these images....

The first image was taken by our current Chairman, Keith Wilson. It features a gentleman called Winston who is the historian within the church. We felt he really embodied part of what this project is for, creating a snapshot of a moment in time and recording it for future generations to look back upon. He was the first person photographed and the image is taken in the main church amongst the pews. He is holding a book he wrote on the history of the church so far. This was created using off camera flash and a soft box to camera left, this enabled Keith to control and reduce the background ambient light in the church.

The second image is of one of the members of the church praise group called Nick and was taken by one of our Novice members, Leah Gaines. Well, she was a novice when this was taken, but after successfully gaining not one but two stars in round one she will be an advanced member next season! This was her first attempt at portrait photography, and it is a fantastic image. As a musical artist Leah wanted to ensure this shot showed his creative side and warm smile. He was a brilliantly willing subject and was happy to hold his guitar in unconventional ways, leading to this fun shot. She utilised a black background, a large octabox flash and a reflector. This is one of two mono images within our panel both taken by Leah.

Central image at the top is a drone shot of the church buildings and grounds taken by Jim Hunter. This was a fantastic opportunity to utilise the drone to show the entire church, including the old original church building and school house to the left and the newer current church to the right, and the modern middle joining section including a large multipurpose hall at the rear. The buildings are surrounded by a graveyard to the rear and side which is also captured. Ballynahinch Camera Club have met in "The loft" of this church hall since xxxx and one of our founding club members even went to school here. Many of you will have joined us here in the loft or in the large main hall where we have hosted various talks and most recently the NIPA round 2 adjudication. In taking this shot, Jim visited several times to garner the best times of the day for the lighting to be best to get a clear overall view and I think you will agree that this planning and attention to detail resulted in this great shot. We decided to place this shot top and centre as it really is the core of why the project came about, the 250th anniversary of this great building and the people who bring it to life.

The next image is also central to this story, the current Reverend Scott Woodburn. This is Leah's second image on the panel and again in mono. In this shot Leah took the opportunity to push the boundaries of the project and asked Scott to pose in many different ways, ultimately culminating in this image of him holding his most treasured Bible, symbolic of his role and willingness to lead this congregation and inspire future generations. This image was achieved using a two light setup, one large octabox on the left, a reflector on the right and a bare flash behind the subject to create the halo like rim lighting and a fan to gently waft the pages of the Bible.

Finally in the top row is an image taken by myself of one of the members of the Wildlife society. It was an opportunity to create a photograph that was a little bit different and quite striking. This image was taken looking straight down the lenses of his binoculars from approximately 1 metre away, using 2 grided strip lights which can be seen reflecting in the lenses, giving an almost lizard-eyes effect to the subject, which was very fitting for the wildlife society.

The first image in the lower row of images in the panel is of the Edengrove Cares group, who provide outreach and support for members of the congregation experiencing hardship. This image was taken by Keith and was probably one of the most talked about, silly and fun images of the project. Keith placed a camera inside a fridge, tethered to his laptop, which he used to control the camera settings and remotely fire the camera using Lightroom. There is a little distortion from the use of the wide-angle lens. A flash was placed into the fridge bouncing the light off the white fridge interior and lighting the subjects. Each member of the group were asked to reach into the fridge and reach for an item that they might provide to a person in need.

Next up we have the Nicola Campbell school of ballet, taken by Keith Wilson. These children are all primary school age and a lot of thought and attention was given to composition and in placing the children into this triangular formation with those in purple at either side and Nicola in the centre for balance. Keith utilised a light on a C stand to create this pool of light over the ballerinas and darkening the background. He chose to take the shot from a low angle to enhance the natural reflection from the floor. In post processing a handrail was removed which was providing a negative distraction.

We placed this image in the centre of the bottom row. It is one of the most technically challenging shots of the panel. Taken by Keith, this image is an example of the use of stroboscopic flash. Keith used a slow shutter speed and had variations using 3 to 5 flashes in quick succession. The subject is a pilates instructor and she performed a “running man” pose. There were two flashes in use, one directly in front of her and one behind her.

Our second last image is one of the gardening club, taken by Terry Hanna. For the eagle eyed amongst you, you may recognise Bonsai expert and former NIPA vice president John Lambe; who has been succeeded by our own former chairperson, Alan Chowney. Terry composed this image using a single off camera speedlight and umbrella, and composited the subjects onto a background shot he had taken of the archway and gardens at Rowallane Gardens in Saintfield. Care and attention giving to the composition using Bonsai trees and props, such as secateurs for context.

Finally bringing our panel to a conclusion is an image from our most treasured treasurer Angela McCullagh. On the day Angela was accompanied by both Frances Price and Leah Gaines, but try as these ladies might, they were unable to get the lady to the right to smile. Leaving one club member to remark, there is only one thing that could make her smile – photoshop! This was one of the more challenging shoots due to the strong sunlight coming from behind the photographer and the bright windows behind but this was all extremely well handled on the day. As was the use of the brightly coloured knitting and the use of props such as plants to disguise the kitchen area.

All in all this was a rewarding project for our club and I think you’ll agree the panel shows how successful it was.