

Newsletter

InFocus at DVCC

18th May 2025



Learn, Develop, Share, Support

Portraits - Natural Light and Environmental

Don't have a studio, don't have a flash / speedlight then why not have a go at doing natural light portraits - wait - if you do have a studio, or do have a flash then why not have a go at natural light portraits.

Here is a bit of a guide, and in the links elements of the newsletter there are some, er links, to some YouTube videos exploring natural light photography.

Natural light portraiture is a timeless and accessible technique that appeals to photographers of all levels. Harnessing the sun's illumination can yield stunning results, provided you understand how to work with its nuances.

Here is a guide to Mastering Natural Light Portraits

1. Embrace the Golden Hour

The golden hour—shortly after sunrise or before sunset—offers soft, warm light that flatters subjects and adds a magical quality to portraits. Shooting during this time minimises harsh shadows and provides a pleasing glow.

2. Utilise Reflectors

Reflectors are invaluable for bouncing light onto your subject, especially when shooting in shaded areas or indoors near windows. They help fill in shadows and create a balanced exposure without the need for artificial lighting. You can also use a diffuser (look at 5:1 reflectors) to 'shade' your subject from the glare of the light and reduce harsh shadows.

3. Understand Light Direction

Positioning your subject relative to the light source affects the mood and depth of your portrait. Front lighting offers even illumination, while side lighting adds dimension. Backlighting can create a halo effect but may require exposure adjustments.

This week at Wath:

Coming this week is something different, some might even call it risky as our speaker will look at the YPU exhibition, judge the judges, let you have a go at judging and there will be one or two surprises.

We will also be asking for your thought on what photography experiences we could explore in the coming months.

So please make sure you come along to contribute, bring some ideas that are perhaps different, perhaps something risky, or photographically speaking, a bit "dangerous".

Otherwise it will be pictures of plastic forks.

I understand that some folks were a little "upset" that the wonderful story of Gill Batson's photography journey did not share any of her renowned photographs of dogs. This will be remedied shortly - no need to wait for part 2 of Gill's journey.

4. Seek Soft Light Conditions

Overcast days provide diffused light that reduces harsh shadows and highlights, ideal for portraiture. Alternatively, shooting in open shade or using diffusers can mimic these conditions when the sun is strong

5. Practice and Experiment

Regular practice helps you anticipate how natural light behaves at different times and in various environments. Experiment with settings, compositions, and locations to develop a keen eye for natural light opportunities.

You might also wish to concentrate on creating **environmental portraits** where your photography captures the subject in their “natural” environment be that at work or fulfilling their hobbies.

Taking portraits of people in their working environment is one of the most rewarding types of photography. It’s more than just a headshot—it’s about telling a story.

When someone looks at your photo, you want them to *feel* who that person is and what their work means to them. Start by getting to know your subject. Have a chat with them. What do they actually do? What tools do they use? What part of their job are they proudest of? - Once you understand that, it’s much easier to plan a portrait that feels personal and meaningful.

When it comes to taking the photo, make sure the surroundings play a role. Their environment—whether it’s a busy kitchen, a quiet studio, or a cluttered garage—is part of the story. Include some of that in the frame, but try not to make it too messy or distracting. A few well-chosen details go a long way.

Light is your best friend here. Natural light from a window can create lovely soft shadows and a warm mood. If you need a little extra help, a reflector or a small light can add just enough fill to keep things looking natural but polished.

Instead of having them just stand there and smile, get them to do something—hold their tools, demonstrate a task, or simply relax in their space. The best photos often come when people are comfortable and doing what they know best.



For those who don't know - this is Eric

Think about your composition, too. Position them in a way that feels balanced and lets the environment support the story. And don't be afraid to take close-up shots of their hands, tools, or workspace details. These smaller touches can add real depth to the story you're telling.

Above all, look for real emotion.

Whether it's pride, focus, joy, or even a quiet sense of determination—those are the moments that make your portrait come alive.

If you're curious to see this in action, there are some great YouTube videos that offer real-world tips and inspiration:

- [How to Shoot Environmental Portraits](#)
- [Storytelling Through Portrait Photography](#)
- [Environmental Portrait Tips with Real People](#)

Goodbye to BVH.

Billingley Village Hall was our 'home' for quite a few years, but as the club had grown in both membership and in our activities it was time to find a new home and we opted to return to the place that was our home before we moved to BVH.

As part of the final act of moving committee members recently spent a few hours over a couple of sunny afternoons sorting and sifting mouldy, broken, damaged, rusty and defunct kit from the store room at BVH and then taking two estate car loads to the recycling centres. Other kit that was possibly useable is being stored, on behalf of the club, in committee member's sheds, garages and spare rooms or temporarily in the cupboard at Wath.



Photo by Tom

Some useful photography "accessories"

A Solid **Tripod** - Stability is everything—from long exposures to sharp landscapes.

External **Flash** / Speed-light - built-in flashes can be harsh. An external flash offers creative control and opens lots of wonderful opportunities

Lens **Cleaning Kit**, Dust and smudges are the enemy of sharp images keep your kit clean.

Padded Camera Bag to protect your gear should never be an afterthought.

Spare **Batteries & Memory Cards**, nothing worse than running out of power or space can ruin a great day out shooting. - well forgetting memory card in first place would be worse

Polarising Filter will help to help cut out reflections, deepen skies, and reduce glare.

A **Field Guide or Photography App** will provide you with quick access to tips, exposure charts, and location scouting.

Using a **reflector disc** will help you modifies natural light and will cast (reflect) light into shadows

Look ups and Links.

None of these are endorsed by DVCC, they are things I've found on t'internet that might (or might not) be helpful and or interesting and offer you some places to go

[Natural Light Portraiture: What You Need to Know](#)

[4 Simple Steps For Improving Your Natural Light Portraits](#)

[10 Tips to IMPROVE your Natural Light Portraits](#)

Calendar of events - Look on the website for the new schedule.

28/05/2025	Wed	Wath	Celebration and Forward Planning
04/06/2025	Wed	Barnsley	Street photography walk around Barnsley
11/06/2035	Wed	Wentworth	A visit to capture the essence of Wentworth - be prepared to consider printing your best images so we can display them in Wentworth.
18/06/2025	Wed	Wath Walkabout	A walkabout the village of Wath, can you capture the spirit of Wath