

## Photography group trip to Durham at night (2023/11/07)

The plans of rodents and humans don't always work out as expected. Our original intention was to go, as advertised, to The Glasshouse (erstwhile Sage) at Gateshead. The purpose was to take photographs of the city, bridges, and river, at night. However, on the night there was just one car full of intrepid photographers, and by the time we got to Staindrop the mood was that one city at night is much like another, and Durham was only half the distance. Upon arrival we quickly located a suitable bar/café and had a sustaining cuppa/glass before setting off into the night with an agreement to return to the café at 8.0pm, for more sustenance. Durham at night offered many wonderful photo-opportunities and taxing challenges for night photography.

**Pete's photo-tip of the month:** Night photography is tricky....because it's dark ! When there's not much light one needs to be especially mindful of the three basic aspects of photography: (i) how much light you let into the camera (aperture); (ii) how long you let the light in (shutter speed); and (iii) how sensitive the camera is (ISO). So, how can the likelihood of getting a keeper when it's dark be maximised? First, modern cameras are smart, so let it decide how sensitive it should be – set the ISO to automatic (it will be somewhere in the menu). The darker it is, the more sensitive the camera will set itself – but at the cost of more speckled noise in the picture. Don't panic. You can fiddle with the other parameters, and modern image processing software (Lightroom, ON1) can denoise images. Second, because it's dark, it's generally good to have a wide-open aperture to let in as much light as possible (small f-stop). Lastly, the longer the exposure (shutter speed) the more light is allowed into the camera, which is all well and good if you keep the camera still – cue the tripod or stabilising the camera on a solid object (wall, post, vehicle). At this point, it's time to give it a go and learn by trial and error.....trust me, there will be lots of the latter.

We all had a great time, and the weather was kind. The only improvement would have been a picture of the cathedral with aurora borealis as a backdrop.

Pete Redgrave



