



Jon interviews Sheila Morris, photographer

Jon Okay, so I'm with Sheila Morris who won last year's AIKB Photography competition. So, Sheila, could you tell us about the photograph that won the competition for you first?

Sheila I brought it along so that we can talk about it together, although I know that you've seen it in the *CBJ*. Yes, it was last summer. What actually happened was we had gone on holidays, and when we came back we noticed there were some thrush birds around the patio; did a little bit of looking around and my husband said 'They're here in the bay-tree', and we've got some small bay-trees in pots by the kitchen door. And there was the nest that, mummy bird had made this beautiful nest, and of course she'd built the nest because we weren't there. Then after a few days we kept an eye, and of course the birds all started to hatch. So luckily I was able with my camera – I use what they call the back-button focus, which means you can sort of get a nice focus without the lens going in and out as it were, making a noise to scare them, so I managed to focus in nicely, and just quickly took a few shots just as they were saying 'We're hungry 'and they're sort of looking up 'Mummy, mummy come back with dinner.'

Jon For our French listeners would you happen to know the French name for these birds?

Sheila *Grive musicienne*, so, thrush.

Jon Ah, tres bien. So here we have how many little babies in the nest?

Sheila So there's three in the nest there. And as you can see from the photograph, the surroundings of the bay tree there are quite dark, and so I was able to capture the light that had come across, and you can see the light shining right on their little beaks.

Jon They are wonderful colours, aren't they, very orange the beaks? You would swear they had been Photoshopped.

Sheila There is absolutely no Photoshopping or Lightroom or anything. That is the image exactly as I took it.

Jon Mmm. So you're not a Photoshop user?

Sheila No, I don't use Photoshop, I'm not clever enough. It's very complicated, I think. When I met Evelyn Whittington at a art exhibition at the AIKB, she was running the Photography Club at the time. She told me that they were running a competition entitled 'The Fragile World'. And so, of course, I said to my husband, 'Oh, I think I might have the perfect photograph 'so that's why I put the



birds in for the competition. And then they said, 'Oh, you must join the club now you've won', which was fabulous. So, of course, I did join.

Jon Yeah. But, er, so what are these little grooves here? Are they wings?

Sheila That's the wings, yes. You can see there the wings are formed and there's just a tiny little suggestion of down. They're very sweet. Very fragile.

Jon They're very young at the time.

Sheila Very fragile world isn't it.

Jon: It would be nice to know where they are now. Hopefully, they're all okay.

Sheila We have got some thrush in the garden again this year ...

Jon Maybe the same ones?

Sheila So I'm wondering if maybe they've built a nest somewhere else. I'll have to try and find that won't I ...

Jon Yes, and photograph them for us. So what attracted you to photography in the first place?

Sheila Ah, well I'm very artistic and very creative, so I do like Art. And for my big birthday a few years ago, the children all clubbed together and bought me a very nice Canon camera. And then my daughter got married (I know she was paying a lot of money for the professional photographer) but I thought I want to – in the evening – take my own little photographs for her. So I learned. I taught myself, I looked on YouTube 'tutos' as they call them in France, and I really taught myself an awful lot. And that's how I sort of got started with my nice camera.

Jon And was that before you took this shot?

Sheila That was before, that was about three or four years ago, and then after meeting Evelyn at the art exhibition, and then I submitted the photograph, and then having won the competition, Evelyn said 'Please join the Club'. The members have been fabulous. They welcomed me, and we all learn so much from each other. We are a mixture of photographers and we like different types of photography as well, so we do have a lot of members who have been in the Club for many years and who are expert – very, very experienced photographers. So they are always there at the club meetings and they are so very, very happy to give us advice. And in fact this week was the last session, the last Club before the summer break, and we all took along our lenses, and even the more experienced photographers brought in lenses. We all swapped and even they said 'I have learnt so much.'



- Jon** Was this winning picture, for example, of the birds in the nest, was that taken with a telephoto lens?
- Sheila** No. That was the lens that came with my camera.
- Jon** Fixed or a zoom?
- Sheila** No, it's not a zoom. I didn't zoom in on that because I could get close enough to the birds because they were at eye level.
- Jon** With that particular shot I don't think needs an awful lot of adjustment because you're zooming in on the interest by virtue of the fact that the foreground here, which is not your main interest, is slightly out of focus ...
- Sheila** Anyway.
- Jon** Yes. And it has a pulling effect, doesn't it?
- Sheila** Yes, it does. Yes, you're drawn into their little beaks, really.
- Jon** I just hope they get fed.
- Sheila** I'm sure they got fed, well they did, they grew and they all flew off, which was lovely. Happy story.
- Jon** Okay, well thank you very much, Sheila, for coming in and I look forward to seeing this year's entrant for your photographic competition.
- Sheila** Thank you very much.
- Jon** Thank you.