

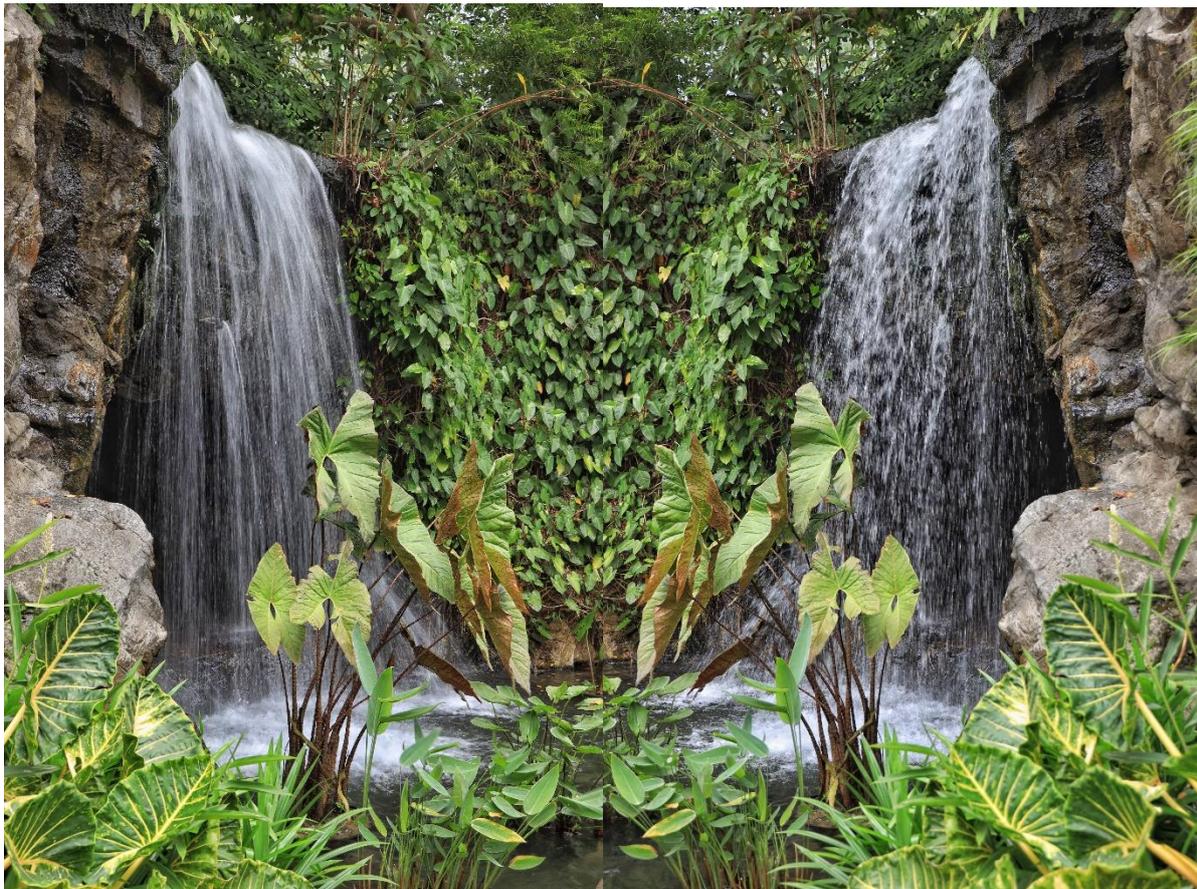
Viral St James Photo competition - No 6 'Water'

Perhaps a little bit more cheerful this week....

Water is all around us, sustains us, occasionally annoys us, and creates some of the most beautiful things that we can ever get to see. That's even before we start to talk about the 'living water' that satisfies our spiritual needs!

Once again, this can be an indoor or outdoor subject, and can encompass a huge range of subject matter, from a rainbow (unlikely, looking at the weather forecast for the next week or so!) to a fountain, to a running tap, or soap suds.

With apologies to camera-phone users I'm going to talk about exposure again, as exposure time can make a huge difference to moving subjects – and this can obviously include water. I'm afraid that phones generally don't offer varying exposures, so you'll need to be extra-creative if that's all you have to take photos- A bit of post processing might be in order!



1:10th second exposure f/9.5 ISO 160

1:60th second exposure f/4 ISO 160

Compare the photos of the same waterfall above. On the right I've used a faster exposure (and let the camera dictate a larger aperture in order to get the right light level), while on the left I've deliberately used a longer exposure and smaller aperture to get the water to 'flow' rather than be in sharper droplets. These are both hand-held photos – I probably should have used a tripod for the longer exposure, as 1/10 second is pushing it for hand-held – I'm lucky that my lens has 'Image stabilisation' which automatically compensates for a certain degree of camera movement. If I was taking the above photos for a competition, or exhibition, I would have used a tripod, which would have allowed me to extend the exposure even further, softening the water flow. In retrospect, I would also have used a faster exposure for the right hand picture, 'freezing' the droplets of water for more drama. Remember also, that a small aperture gives greater depth of focus in the photo than a large aperture.

So, bear in mind camera movement if you want to take a longer exposure – best to use a tripod or some other firm support as you probably want the movement in the photo confined to the water!



For this picture of the sea at Burgh Island, Devon I needed to use a dark filter on the camera to allow a long enough exposure – 2 ½ seconds at f /22 to really soften the water movement – definitely a tripod job on this one.

Water can also provide texture – this picture of Jack on a beach in Devon creates a texture using reflections from the very shallow water flowing over the beach contrasting with the movement of the dog (note the 1/3 spacing of the moving tail!). Although taken in colour, I’ve processed the image into stark black and white to emphasise the contrast between the subject and surroundings. The frayed edges are a bit of a post processing indulgence!



Please don't take this subject as an excuse to bend or break the current rules on travel, although the latest government advice certainly seems not to preclude a trip out for exercise!