Email report – meeting 09/05/2012 at Stowupland School

Sorry our April meeting had to be cancelled at short notice - hope you all received the message in time & thanks again to Sylvia for holding the fort in my absence from the March meeting.

Today we had 10 members present with a special welcome to Brian James joining the Group for the first time. Apologies received from John Haseltine, Sylvia Downs, Joyce Kay, Harry Orde, Andrea Burton and Zena Dakeyne.

Agony Corner:

Some items carried over from the March meeting and not resolved.......

1) Tablet Computers, has anyone else purchased one since the talk in February?

- Yes, Zena and I have acquired one, an Asus Transformer identical Philip's. This was very useful on our recent trip to Australia being mainly used for email updates and mapping. Free Wifi was available at such places as McDonalds and some coffee shops; even when it had to be paid for it wasn't too expensive per hour.
- It's unlikely that the tablet will ever supplant our desk top PC but quite a bit of the lap top work has transferred. It works particularly well with Skype.
- The ASUS recently updated itself to the latest software, 'Ice Cream Sandwich' (!) which makes it fast and fluid.
- There is an issue with the pre-installed 'Polaris' office software. Whilst away I received Sylvia's notes (in docx) on the March Meeting. I edited these slightly (in Polaris to 'doc') and then circulated to you all. However, when trying to open this file on a PC there's a Microsoft 'Failed Validation' message which is quite scary. It will open but you have to be sure of its origin before doing so! Apologies to those of you who experienced this.

2) Issues with 'Dropbox' - friends can't access files.

- When Dropbox is installed on your PC it creates its own folder. Within that folder, two more will have been created, 'Photos' and 'Public'.
- Drag or copy/paste a folder with pictures into the Photos folder or individual files (say doc, xls or pdf, say) into the Public folder.
- Your files will immediately start to upload to the Dropbox server. When complete, a green tic is placed next to the folder/file.
- Place your mouse pointer over the folder (within the Photos folder on your machine) or on the file in the Public folder and right click. On the menu that appears select 'Dropbox' then 'Copy public link'. Left click to copy and then paste into your email - by following this link, the recipient will then be able to access the folder of pictures, or if it's a file, this will download onto their PC.

3) Issues with 'Join.me'. A member tried Join.me but deleted it when payment was asked for.

- At the February meeting we managed to install and run the 'Join.me' program without having to pay anything. It is genuinely free and without registering or signing up to anything, several computers can link together to share information.
- The thing to remember is that most 'free' programs have a paid for 'Pro' version usually targeted at businesses. Just avoid clicking on any of the links referring to 'Pro', 'Extra' or the like.
- Similar experiences have been had with AVG Free. Just make sure you don't follow the 'Pro' link. Also at the top of the AVG download page, in big letters is a 'Download PC Tuner' link - again just ignore this.
- This followed onto more 'AVG Free' discussion. Below is a screen shot of the current AVG control panel.

4) 'How can I permanently change the default microphone settings in Skype?'

- This should be straight forward. In the Skype control panel, go Tools, Options, Audio settings and click the down arrow on Microphones, select the required source. Make sure to click 'Save' at the bottom before exiting (see picture below). Our member says, however, that it always reverts to the original!

- One of the features of the latest version of Skype is claimed to be that you can change devices without changing settings (see screen shot below) but how to do this is not easily found. A good starting point is to visit the Skype help pages. Try this for starters http://tinyurl.com/d8rfhuo the Skype sound set up guide where there are selections for all versions of Windows. Failing this, on the RHS of the page there's a link to the FAQ page where you can post a question if necessary.

5) 'I have Office 2003. My friend sent a word file but I can't open it, I just get an error message saying that it is not compatible.'

- Your friend is probably using Word 2007 or 2010 which both produce 'docx' files which Word 2003 cannot read. This issue is easily resolved.
- Microsoft supplies a compatibility pack. By installing the Compatibility Pack along-side of Microsoft Office XP, or Office 2003, you will be able to open, edit, save, and create files using the formats that are used by Office 2010 and the 2007 Office system. Follow this link for instructions http://tinyurl.com/3kqsbxt .
- Make sure you know where the default 'Download' folder is on your machine. Locate the downloaded file and double click to install.

6) 'I recently tried to send a poem (which I had on my memory stick) as an attachment, but my computer would not allow me to this - why?'

- Is it the computer or the ISP that's preventing this? What's the file format? What's the file size? Being a poem (say txt or doc) it will be very small and should not be a problem. Have you tried going to the file on the memory stick, right clicking then move to 'Send to' then left click 'Mail recipient'? This should open your email programme with the file attached.

7) 'How can I go back into an e-mail and alter or add more info?'

- You can't edit an email if you are just reading it from the 'Sent or 'In' boxes. Easiest way is to click 'Forward' and then you can edit it to your heart's content. You can do the same with 'Reply' but (in OE anyway) you get a black line down the side.

8) 'When I go to BBC Homepage and select a news item video I get a yellow circle which keeps stopping and starting and this makes viewing very irritating - how can I remedy this?

- News items are transmitted by 'streaming the video'. The rotating circle is when it's buffering data to your PC so that it can run properly. When it continually happens it means that the data is not travelling fast enough which probably means that your broad band connection is too slow to allow for videos to stream smoothly.
- Do you know what speed you are getting? You can check by visiting www.speedtest.net (subsequently checked - download speed only 0.5Mb/sec!).

9) 'When I first view my emails they are in a small strip and difficult to read, why?'

- This is the 'Preview' pane which allows you to check whether the mail is genuine or whether you want to view it or not.
- If you don't want it, just click delete. If you do want to see it in full, double click and it will open in its own window.

Restoring an old photo

Thanks very much to **Marian** for presenting **Today's topic.** Using the Photoshop Elements programme she used one of my own pictures, with which I'd struggled a few years ago, to work on.

The original was scanned at 300ppi but, as Marian explained; this does not give sufficient details for later manipulation and is better done at 600ppi or greater. The image she worked on was a new scan (jpg) at 1200 ppi. At the outset, the point was made that, unless an old photograph is of great significance, then it may not worth the amount of time needed to restore it. This is largely due to the intricate 'cloning' necessary to remove/obliterate the evidence of very bad creasing of the original photo.

She demonstrated the use of the cloning tool and went on to show how various parts of the picture could be isolated (too much to go into detail here) to be worked on easily without affecting the rest of the image. The final stage was using various 'fixes' to get the best out of the image information.

We worked along with her instructions and managed to finish up with some quite presentable pictures. I've loaded up some in Dropbox so you can see the kind of thing that can be achieved http://tinyurl.com/littlemuriel . There's the original (probably taken in 1920) scanned at 1200dpi in colour and greyscale, plus one of mine (still work in progress) and one completed by Roy on the day (just click on the first one of the thumbnails and the gallery will open full size).

Overall, a very interesting session and I, for one, learnt a lot more about the topic and the techniques necessary to do a good restoration.

Next Meeting:

Will be next **Wednesday 13th June,** 1.30pm at Stowupland School.

Many of the questions we get in 'Agony Corner' relate to '**Security**' in all its computer related aspects so this will be subject of this month's topic. Thanks to Philip for the suggestion.

Skype™ - What's New?

What's new in this version

Focus on call quality
Major improvements in sound quality, which mean significantly reduced background noise, less delay, fewer call drops and cut-outs.

Change devices easily
Change your headset, headphones or microphone without having to touch your settings.

Skype™ - Options

General

General Settings

Audio Settings

Sounds

Video Settings

Privacy

Notifications

Calls

Chats & SMS

Advanced

Audio Settings: set up sound on your computer

Microphone   Windows default device
                        Windows default device
Volume   SigmaTel Audio
                        Modem #0 Line Record (emulated)
                        Bluetooth Audio
                        Bluetooth High Quality Audio

Speakers   Windows default device
                        Low   High
Volume
                        Make a free test call

Ringing   Windows default device

                        Ring PC speaker

Other things you can do

Learn more about setting up your audio equipment

Buy a headset or Skype phones from the Skype Shop

Save   Cancel