

Camera club Communiqué

October 2018 U3A ACT Australia

Click + Capture 2019

May 2019 marks the 5th anniversary of the formation of the *U3A Camera Club* and as in the previous two years members are celebrating with an exhibition of their photographs. This, the third *Click+Capture* exhibition will be held from 31st May to 23rd June next year at *Kyeema Gallery* at Capital Wines Cellar Door, 13 Gladstone Street, Hall Village.

Introduction to Cropping

If the object of taking photos is to communicate, then cropping is a relatively simple process which can greatly enhance the ability of a photo to tell its story. Of course, you can do this in camera by filling the frame with only those elements that are part of the story but often that is not possible or, in the rush to grab the picture, gets forgotten.

Post-processing cropping in an editor such as *Photoshop* or a RAW processor such as *Lightroom* is a relatively easy form of first aid which will



probably result in a superior image.

Bob Hay: *Meekah with Blue Ball*, iPhone, 2018

Lola Elise, writing for *Photography Life* earlier this year, gives a rather

good overview of what cropping is all about and the considerations which need to be taken into account when cutting off portions of your precious image. <https://photographylife.com/introduction-to-image-cropping>

One of the most important points to remember is to be careful that you are using software which does not alter the original image. Programs such as *Lightroom* do not change the image itself but if you are working in .jpgs or .tiffs in *Photoshop*, whatever changes you make will be saved back to the original. The answer of course, is always use a copy of the original before you do anything drastic in an editor. And before you work on .jpgs, because they are *lossy*, always make a .tiff copy. That way, as you save and re-save your work, the image will not degrade.

How to Crop in *Lightroom* and Why

John Sherman, also posting in *Photography Life*, also argues why we often need to crop an image, but he goes on to tell us how to do it in *Lightroom* where hitting the “R” key (it is not case sensitive) opens up a screen in which you can both crop and straighten the image.

<https://photographylife.com/how-to-crop-in-lightroom-and-why>

Layer Masks & Adjustment Layers in *Photoshop*

Although many photographers don't like the subscription method of accessing Adobe's *Photoshop* and *Lightroom*, it has nonetheless made it possible for many of us have *Photoshop* for the first time.

The basic features of this editor are not so difficult to grasp, but two of them, layer masks and adjustment layers, are rather difficult to understand. Even so, we would probably all want to be able to do what these options allow us to do.... Let's take an example:

Imagine the frustration of seeing a wonderful landscape in front of you; the “golden hour” is working its magic; you prepare to take the shot... But right at that wrong moment, someone in a red jumper walks into the scene and by so doing, alters the whole scenario from golden landscape to distracting intruder.

All is not lost: using *Photoshop*, the red jumper can be changed to a less distracting colour if the figure added scale and human interest and, of course, the person was compositionally in the right place. More probably, you would simply remove the intruder completely.

Jason Row in *Lightstalking* gives a good *Beginner's Guide to Layers in Photoshop* at

<https://www.lightstalking.com/guide-to-layers-in-photoshop/>

Follow that with two video tutorials by Rich Harrington from *Photo Focus*. They can be found first, at:

<https://photofocus.com/2018/07/31/using-layer-masks-and-adjustment-layers-in-photoshop>

and a more advanced follow-up, at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/photoshop-advanced-adjustment-layer-and-blend-modes>

This last is actually a promo for a course in which the presenter tells you what topics will be covered if you sign up, but in giving those descriptions of the many adjustment masks in *Photoshop*, he does provide a good clue as to what the tools do and where to find them.



3 Free Guides for Perfect Black and White Photos

Because digital cameras make it seem easier and less expensive to take colour photos than it was back in film days, B&W to most people seems a bit out-of-date, *passé* or even plain boring. But as a medium, it is far from

that: B&W is perhaps the most dramatic, most communicative, if indeed the most challenging form of photography. To help us meet that challenge, Fredico Alegria in *Lightstalking* directs us to three free Guides to B&W. These are: *Colour vs B&W*; *Street Photography Types*; and *Black and White Short Guide*. Get them at:

<https://www.lightstalking.com/3-free-guides-black-and-white-photos>.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Photography Workshops



If you wish to attend one of those photography workshops you see advertised just about everywhere on the Internet, then you need to know that you will be getting value for the not inconsiderable sum you will be charged. An article by Trey Amick on *fstoppers* looks at some of the factors you will need to take into consideration before you invest.

<https://fstoppers.com/originals/good-bad-and-ugly-photography-workshops-263034>



As Trey points out, you also should give some thought as to whether you basically are looking for tuition by someone whose expertise is better than your own or alternatively, what you want is more like a photo safari where a guide takes you to the best places at which to get the best shots. And, while on the subject, are those “best places” the same where

everyone and his dog has taken the same photo or places which give you some room to wander around and take images which are more individual? There are some photos which have been taken so often from exactly the same spot that it would be cheaper to download an image from the Web and save your money. These dead trees in a salt-pan with the red sand dunes of the Namibian desert in the background are a case in point: you have seen them so often, with minor variations, that you recognise them every time.

On this topic, would anyone who has been on one or more photo safaris to anywhere in the world which they could recommend to fellow travellers, please let *Communiqué* know (bob4236@gmail.com). Of special interest are those specifically designed for seniors, and particularly for those with mobility problems.



Jumping the Gun: A Free Alternative to *Lightroom*

It is very disappointing for those of us who put a lot of effort into providing feedback and constructive criticism in meetings and workshops to see many members still showing images which are just as they came out of the

camera. Admittedly, there is a school of thought that one should not “mess with” a photograph, but even the most fervent purists permit some cropping and maybe even a little straightening. To those of us trying to help

members improve their photography, not optimising images looks like fear of using software and/or lack of pride in one's creative handiwork.

However, perhaps another reason is that many beginners are unwilling to commit to the cost of buying a program like *Lightroom* or signing up to the monthly subscription system. Next November, we will present a workshop on *Alternatives to Lightroom*, but to jump ahead a little, let me recommend a free, versatile and easy to use program which will allow you to do most of the things which must be done to bring out the best in your photographs. This is a program produced locally here in Canberra by NCH Software and is called *PhotoPad*. It is free to download and use *for domestic purposes* (that is, non-commercial). *PhotoPad* works on Mac & Windows and there is an Android Ap. You can get it here:

<https://www.nchsoftware.com/photoeditor/download-now.html>



Avoiding the Devilish Red-Eye

Most photographers know that “red eye” is produced when flash bounces off the red inner surface of a person's eyes but might nonetheless be unsure how to avoid it. In a recent *Picture Correct*, Ted Garrison tells how. He offers, among other advice, three tips for better photos free of that maniacal stare. These are:

1. Avoid being at the same level as the subject – shoot from slightly above or below the subject's line of sight;
2. Avoid being in a direct line with the subject – you move slightly to the right or left before you take the photo. Do not have the subject look directly into the camera but somewhere over your shoulder.
3. Diffuse the flash itself. Place a tissue or handkerchief over the flash – some flash units come with diffusers. Alternatively, use bounce flash – direct the flash towards a (preferably white) wall or ceiling.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/digital-flash-photography-tips/>



Wild Bird Photography

Photographing wild birds is a popular but challenging speciality in the camera world. So, when someone like Matt Brading shares his expertise and experience, his article in *Picture Correct* is well worth reading, especially if you are

new to this game. <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/wild-bird-photo-tips/>

Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year

24 August 2018 – 28 January 2019 Australian Museum, College Street, Sydney.



To quote the Museum's website, *Witness nature at its most dramatic, graceful and unexpected with this stunning collection of breathtaking photographs celebrating the natural heritage of the Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and New Guinea bioregions. This year's Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year exhibition showcases the timing, patience, artistry and technique of professional, emerging*

and junior photographers as they capture spectacular moments in time.

<https://australianmuseum.net.au/landing/agnpy/>

Night or Low Light Photography

Just because the sun has gone to bed does not mean you cannot take photographs, but it does mean you need to know how to capture the magic of night or low-light images. Peter Phun in *Picture Correct* recently published a series of what he calls "tips" on how to go about this after-dark art. <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/night-low-light-photography/>

The Good Oil on Sports Action

Sam Todd is a 25yo London-based photographer already well known for



his coverage of major sporting events, including the Tour de France and the Rugby World Cup. In his article *Top 10 Sports Photography Tips*, he starts with Tip # 1, *Preparation is the Key* and works his way through the remaining nine, all of which are well expressed and worth heeding if sport is your "thing".

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/top-10-sports-photography-tips/>



Shooting the Moon

Recently we have had a run of blood moons, blue moons and even eclipses so you might have been tempted to photograph our largest satellite. Here, Amy Renfrey in *Picture Correct* makes capturing the craters and even the faces (not the green cheese) seem simple.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/moon-photography-tips/>

Do you *really* know what ISO means?

Richard Butler (*dpReview*, August 2018) says that most probably ISO does not mean what we think it does and goes on to explain that our misunderstanding is probably holding our photography back. This is because most people think that ISO is the digital equivalent of the old ASA film speed rating used in days gone by, but this is not so – ISO in digital is not the same as in film!

<https://www.dpreview.com/articles/8924544559/you-probably-don-t-know-what-iso-means-and-that-s-a-problem>



Current Best Monitor Calibration Devices

Even if you don't print your images, monitor calibration is essential if you are to maintain a standard of colour over time. To help if you don't already own a calibrator, here is a review of what the US photographic paper company, *Red River* suggest are the best monitor calibrators on the market. The review looks at a range of products, some for "enthusiasts", others for "pros".

<http://www.redrivercatalog.com/infocenter/articles/Current-Best-Monitor-Calibration-Devices.html>

The Melbourne-based fine art printer and photographic supply house, *Image Science* also have their recommendations and explanations.

<https://imagescience.com.au/products/calibrators/calibrator-recommendations>

The Curious Case of Abstract Photography



Our recent focus on abstract photography left some members asking for clarification as to what makes an “abstract” photo. Federico Alegria on *Lightstalking* back in August gave this very useful guide to abstract photography. Also useful is his list of some photographers whose work is inspiring in this *genre*.

<https://www.lightstalking.com/the-curious-case-of-abstract-photography-an-overview-to-get-you-inspired/>

Not unrelated is another post, this time by Tedric Garrison in *Picture Correct* on “Repetition and Patterns in Photography”.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/repetition-and-patterns-in-photography/>

How to Sharpen Images in *Lightroom*

Sharpening images can be fraught with dangers, mostly of creating artefacts (halo-like edges to details) and increasing noise. *Lightroom* automatically increases sharpening (up to 25 on the slider) to compensate for the effect of the low-pass filter built into all digital cameras, but usually you have to increase this even further. There are two pre-sets, one for faces — this is kind to wrinkles — and the other for scenic shots which takes you up to 40 on the slider. You go beyond this with caution. An article published on *Digital Camera World* recently called “How to sharpen images like a pro using Lightroom” takes you through the process with both notes and an excellent video tutorial.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/features/sharpen-with-care>

Bob Hay

Presenter/Course Leader

