

# Camera club Communiqué

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The *Camera Club Communiqué* is part of a newsletter sent to members of the “Camera Club” and “PhotoGroup” which are year-long courses run by the University of the Third Age here in Canberra. For privacy reasons, class notices have been omitted from this public version. To contact either class, please email [u3acanberracameraclub@gmail.com](mailto:u3acanberracameraclub@gmail.com) or [u3acanberraphotogroup@gmail.com](mailto:u3acanberraphotogroup@gmail.com) respectively.

## The Wild West of Photography



In the old days, cartographers used to mark unexplored parts of their maps with the caption “here be tigers” and fill them with all manner of scary beasties. But, closer to home — precisely, in your own backyard — there are monsters more scary than tigers but it takes your camera with a macro lens to spot them. “Macro” is a bit of a problem word in photography: strictly speaking, it means a 1:1 magnification or higher but you get away with “close up is close enough”. Most modern camera

lenses will let you get close enough to fill the frame or nearly so with some gruesome beastie or beautiful tiny flower.

How to find and photograph macro subjects is the topic Simon Takk writes about in his article at <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/how-to-find-photograph-great-macro-subjects/>.

## Good cameras can take bad photos

Or, more accurately, no matter what camera you have, don’t blame the camera if things don’t turn out as good as you hoped. Chances are, most cameras are better than their owners and the excuse so often heard, “if I had a better camera I could take better photos” simply does not hold up. Back in the 1930’s or so, an American camera magazine ran a competition: anyone could enter, amateur or pro, and use any equipment they chose.

The catch was: at the end of the competition, all materials had to be submitted for the judging... The competition was won by a man using a Box Brownie because, unlike those who used all manner of new-fangled technology then coming on the market, he knew and worked within the limits of his camera. As Aussie nature photographer, Andrew Goodall, says *The truth is, you can take better photos no matter what sort of camera you have*. The answer lies in your level of skill and yes, some cameras will enable you to take better photos but only if you know how to use and take advantage of those features.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/good-cameras-can-take-bad-photos/>

## Extreme Sports Photography



Carl Spring is a skate boarder and illustrates his *5 Tips for Extreme sports Photography* with pictures of skate boarders, not people jumping off high mountain cliffs or scaling skyscrapers, but his photos make the more everyday activity look just as “extreme”. However, he does insist that “extreme sports photography is a

discipline all of its own” and looking at his photos, that is entirely believable. While an attractive proposition as a genre to try one’s hand at, maybe a word of caution: older men hanging around skate board parks can attract sometimes hostile attention so take along a grandkid or two while you capture the action.

<https://digital-photography-school.com/top-5-tips-for-extreme-sports-photography>

## Shooting into the light: mastering the *contre-jour* technique

In a rather long and beautifully illustrated article on what the Impressionist painters called *contre jour*, Jeremy Walker takes the reader through the sometimes complicated but usually rewarding technique of “against the light” photography.

There are several major points to remember when shooting into the light. First, and most importantly, do not spend too long starting through a lens



at the sun — just as looking at an eclipse can be dangerous to your eyes, so too focussing when the sun is shining directly into the lens can be damaging.

Most of the difficulties encountered in *contre jour* have to do with the fact that the light source, being more or less in the frame, can give you a wrong exposure meter reading. Spot metering is probably the best way to explore the scene and angle the camera a little away from the light source so that you get the reading from the surroundings, rather than from the light source (sun, etc) itself.

[https://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/technique/landscape\\_photography-technique/shooting-into-the-light-mastering-the-contre-jour-technique-60472](https://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/technique/landscape_photography-technique/shooting-into-the-light-mastering-the-contre-jour-technique-60472)

Another technique we used to use in film days was to take the reading of the landscape or whatever when facing *away* from the light source before swinging around to take the picture. An alternative to this was an *incident light reading* and we conveniently did this (if we were Europeans with light skin) by taking the meter reading off the back of our hands. Because of the way exposure meter readers work, that would normally give us a Zone 5 – mid-grey reading so some bracketing might often be advisable. For silhouettes, of course, we did not have to be so fussy!

## Six Steps to Better Photos

It never hurts to revise what we should all know about taking photos. In his post on *Picture Correct*, Wayne Turner lists the main points we should have by now already burnt into our muscle memory. They are: Get in closer; Exclude clutter; Watch the edge of your frame; Choose a clear focal point or subject; Change your angle; and finally, Practice, practice, practice... <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/better-photos-in-6-simple-steps/>



## Patterns in Photography

The same author, Wayne Turner, also in *Picture Correct*, passes on good ideas for using patterns in photography. His illustrations perhaps tell you as much as his words – just another illustration that a picture is worth a thousand words.... <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/tips-for-using-patterns-in-photography/>

## How to Reverse-Engineer a Photo



This sounds very technical but actually all it means is looking at a photo and working out how it was taken with what gear and under what conditions. So, for example, was it taken with a normal lens or a wide-angle? At what time of day was it taken? You can learn a lot by looking at other people's photos and studying them in this way.

Sometimes too, photographers publish the some of the Exif data for the image — along with their name and the title of the photo they also list the make and model of camera, length of lens, shutter speed, f-stop and so on. Rowan Simms asks the questions you might ask when “reverse engineering” images and the steps you need to take to get your answers in his article for *Digital Photography School* at <https://digital-photography-school.com/reverse-engineer-a-photo/>

## Street Photography



*“Street photography is all about detailing the everyday life of people, society and circumstances on the street. .... [But] It doesn't require the presence of any street or urban environment. You can practice your street photography anywhere and it doesn't require travelling a lot to capture awesome shots”.*

You might even say that street photography is like the photo-journalism of every-day life and as a *genre*, offers some of the most satisfying aspects of our hobby. Read more about it at

<http://www.shawacademy.com/blog/street-photography/>



## How Low can you go in Low-Light?

In an article in *Amateur Photography*, David Clapp offers suggestions on how to take photographs in low light conditions. These include shoot in manual mode, make sure the colour balance is accurate, always use a tripod, use a remote release or set the camera to self-timer so you don't shake the camera when pressing the button... And artificially create low-light conditions even in good light by using Neutral Density Filters if you want to get those creamy effects when shooting waterfalls and waves. Those suggestions might sound familiar but Clapp spells out the details for all manner of situations in a well-thought-out article at

[https://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/technique/expert\\_advice/low-light-photography-low-can-go-116765](https://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/technique/expert_advice/low-light-photography-low-can-go-116765)

## Leading Lines

These days digital cameras take most of the work out of obtaining correct exposure in a photo but nothing the manufacturers can do will ensure a



good composition. Furthermore, although there are people who seem to have been born with a natural sense of style and balance, most of us have to train ourselves to the same end.

One of the features of scenes which many photographers find helpful in getting the best composition and thereby not only making a pleasing image but also ensuring that viewers look where he or she wants them to look is by using "leading lines", that is

lines such as fences, railway tracks, roads, streams and so on which point to the actual subject of the photo. Leading lines can be a powerful aid in composition, but you have to make sure they lead the viewer to the right place or, as in this illustration, don't take the eye to nowhere. In this photo, used by Andrew Goodall called *Asparagus field* — *A boring day in the pampas*, a photo by Reinhard Kuchenbäcker, the lines are so strong that you cannot avoid following them where they point — but, there is nothing there! As a photo of textures, this is interesting but it lacks a point of interest. Clearly, it is the furrows and embankments which caught the photographer's eye, they are the subject, but this is a case where leading lines can mislead the viewer into thinking they point to somewhere else.

## How to Capture and Stitch Panoramas

There are times when you simply must get the bigger – or rather, wider – picture to record the scene before you.



This is when a panorama is the name of the game. It is not difficult but there are a few guidelines worth following and in this article by Jaquin Duenas for *Picture Correct* those helpful hints are well set out for us to follow: <https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/how-to-capture-and-stitch-panoramas/> Of course, using a smart phone will do the job for you almost automatically but for a better, bigger panorama, a dSLR or mirrorless would be preferable. If you are shooting RAW, remember that recent updates of *Lightroom* make special provision for panoramas to be processed in that program

<https://helpx.adobe.com/au/lightroom/help/panorama.html>.

## NCH *PhotoPad*

Last year in the “Alternatives to Lightroom” workshop I recommended the free version of NCH *PhotoPad* as a good program for anyone just beginning to explore editing/post-processing. Some might already have tried to download the “freebie” but found instead they ended up with a much more sophisticated version which comes at a cost. As far as I can see, this applies only to the PC version — the Mac version automatically downloads the free one. Both free versions (v. 3.22) can be found

at <https://www.nchsoftware.com/photoeditor/index.html>

**Bob Hay - Presenter**