Rod's Adobe Lightroom Classic CC RAW workflow – from Import to Print.

This document summarises my experiences after using Adobe Lightroom Classic CC for the last 4 years. I purchased a subscription to Lightroom, which I will call LR from now, and Photoshop CC (PS) when they became available in 2013. I believe the subscription model give us access at a reasonable price to two powerful suites of software that meet most photographer's needs. Some people are concerned about Adobe's decision not to support further stand-alone versions of LR, and there is concern that the price of access will rise In the future. But for now, I think this is the best product for the average and enthusiast photographer who wants to get the best from their photos.

I won't go into the pros and cons of using RAW vs JPEG – there are lots of places on the web where this has been argued. I believe that RAW processing gives more options, and LR make it easy to use RAW files.

There are many ways to set up LR if you haven't used it before. This is a whole topic by itself, and outside the subject of this presentation, but there are many tutorials on how to set up LR on the net, including from Adobe. I highly recommend Julianne Kost's tutorials, found at https://blogs.adobe.com/jkost/lightroom-training-videos. If you are starting out, or even experienced, these are fantastic.

Workflow:

LR has 7 modules – Library, Develop, Map, Book, Slideshow, Print and Web. I will cover the Library, Develop and Print Modules (I don't use any of the others except Map). The modules are accessed through the top right of the LR screen.

1. Connect the memory card to the computer whichever way you find the best. I load the card onto a card reader. Use the Library module, click on "Import" (bottom left).
2. The "Import" screen asks you to select a source - it shows available drives on the left and places to put the photos on the right. Select the drive with your photos from the left hand side and select a folder from the right hand side to copy the photos to (or make a new folder). My naming convention for my folders stored on my computer is YYYY-MM-DD.
3. Untick any photos you don't want to save on your computer (eg if they are obviously no good or you don't want them), then hit "Import" (bottom right). The import may take a while if you have many photos. When finished, your photos are now copied to your computer and ready to organise.
4. <u>Keywords</u> – it is best to have a few keywords against each photo, as it is difficult to find particular photos once you have a few thousand. As an example, for a coastal scene my keywords could be: South Durras, beach, sunrise, rocks, waves, Point Upright, long exposure. So if I wanted to find all my shots of South Durras beach at dawn, I could use the first three keywords to find them all. Keywords can be stacked, as in under "ACT" you could have keyword tags such as "Floriade", "Belconnen" and "Lake Burley Griffin".
5. <u>Assessment</u> - The next thing I do, still in Library module, is to go through the photos one by one to delete those that aren't any good (eg blurry or boring) and assess whether I'd like to do any further processing. Its best to be ruthless, as you quickly accumulate gigabytes of RAW files, but don't be too ruthless. <u>If a photo is technically good but maybe doesn't look as good as you'd hoped, I'd keep it.</u> You may be able to do something with it at a later date when your skills improve and when you are less influenced by the actual feeling of the shoot. Some of my better photos are ones I have gone back to after leaving for months. I usually

give any photos I think worthwhile a 2 star rating – you could also flag them. Select the photos you have picked for further work by clicking on the flag or the rating stars on the panel under the photo. You can also select colours (eg I use yellow to indicate a B&W photo.

6. Develop module – select the Develop module. On the left side of the screen you have the History tab, which we will use, as well as tabs for Presets, Collections and Snapshots – we won't worry about these for now. On the right are the Develop module tools, which I will go through below. From the top there is a histogram, some tools, and some sliders. The order that you use the tools can be changed, but I usually do it in the following way.

7. Look for any dust spots on the photos. If there are any, use the Spot Removal tool to remove them. If you have lots of spots and lots of photos, then it is possible to sync the removal across the rest of the photos. Best use a tutorial to see how.

8. I then move to the Basic tab (on the right hand side) and adjust the white balance. You can choose from the drop down menu (under Custom) or just use the sliders to adjust the blue-yellow axis and/or the green-red axis. Your photo, your choice!

9. I then adjust the exposure. This is where the histogram comes in handy. I find most pictures can use a little more exposure, and I would normally try to increase exposure until the histogram just touches the right side, and sometimes a bit further, to be corrected later.

10. Contrast is often pushed up slightly – maybe to 10.

11. Adjusting the highlights and shadows - this can improve the overall balance of your photo. If you have overexposed parts, moving the Highlights slider to the left can fix these, and conversely, under exposed parts can be helped by moving the Shadows slider to the right. Don't push the shadows too far, or the photo starts to look unrealistic. There are usually some shadows in a scene!

12. Adjust the White and Black points – move the whites to the right and blacks to the left until you see the histogram reaching the edges. Once you are here it may be useful to go back and adjust the exposure and other sliders until you get the photo how you want it.

13. Now if you like you can fine tune the exposure and colours using the Tone Curves and HSL/Colour/B&W tabs, but I won't do that here.

14. You can use the Detail tab to sharpen your photo and deal with digital noise if necessary. If you use high ISO then noise can become a problem. In this case minimise sharpening and use the Masking and Luminance sliders to reduce noise. Remember the noise reduction comes at the cost of sharpness so you need to balance these.

15. If you like you can use the Effects tab to add a vignette or some Dehaze, which adds clarity and saturation to your photo but also adds noise. Small amounts (say 5-10) of Dehaze often lift a photo.

16. Now it's time to critically assess your photo. Does it need cropping, are there still areas too dark or too light. These can be fixed using the tools – Crop, Spot Removal, Graduated Filter, Radial Filter, and Adjustment Brush. Practice with these until you feel confident with them.

17. Printing – when happy with the photo, click on the print module. Click on Page Setup (bottom left) to select the printer and preferred paper size.

18. Then click on "Printer" (bottom right) and select Preferences. What happens now depends on your particular printer, whether you use printer profiles or not, and other factors. If none of this makes sense just go with the defaults and see if it looks good.

19. Hopefully you will have a good print.

20. Any queries please email me at canberrarod@hotmail.com and I may be able to help.

PS – There was some discussion at the DIGSIG about Collections. These are very good shortcuts to the photos you may want again and again. For example, I have one called "Last 31 days" and this is what I click on to decide what photos to export to a USB to take to a Camera Club meeting. I have others like "Best Panoramas", "Best of 2017" and so on.

To create a smart collection, click on the + symbol near the Collection tab and select Smart Collection. You can then specify different parameters for the collection. For example, my "Last 31 Days" collection has two – capture date is the last 31 days, and the Rating is greater than or equal to 3 stars.

Rod Burgess, November 2017