



Camera Clips

August 2013 Bi monthly publication

From the Editor

James Allan

Welcome to the August edition of Camera clips. As you can see from the banner— this month we are celebrating Steam Trains. If you really want to be inspired—check out the monochrome photography of Colin Telfer Gifford. (image on right) He was a 1960's British steam train photographer, who has been commemorated in 1994 when the Royal Mint printed a collection of stamps with his images. He portrayed the dirty grimy realism of steam culture. I think we may have some budding Telfer Giffords in our midst. There are some excellent colour images in a photo gallery on page 1 from the club excursion to Mount Barker. (refer to the web page for a description of this excursion). And we also have pictures from a prior excursion to Mannum (page 7)



Speaking of photographers from the 1960's, I was fortunate enough to see a documentary on the Rock and Roll photographer Bob Gruen. There is a gallery of his images on page 6.

The remaining three articles this month were submitted by Chris Schultz, John Duckmanton and myself. These are "how to" articles. Chris sent an e-mail to me earlier this month outlining his light room settings to export images at the correct size for competition. I was asked twice to send a copy of this e-mail to various members. I was thinking "Well it's probably useful information for everyone." So I decided to put it into the newsletter. (apologies to Chris who's permission I have not sought yet) John Duckmanton has some great ideas on how to use cross polarization to create interesting effects. He uses a polarizing filter on the camera and a computer screen. I tried it and it works. It's definitely worth having a try. Lastly I have an article on how to get the most out of your telephoto lens. It is an issue that I have been struggling with. At the last meeting Heather Connolly asked a question very much along these lines. So I decided to jot my thoughts down on how to drive a big lens. (I admit that I have had some help from Joe Tabe and Les Peters in this area).

Heather Connolly has also informed me that the early orchids, spiders and helmet orchids have started appearing in Belair National Park.



I would like to draw your attention to the latest SAPF newsletter. In fact my attention was drawn to it by a member from one of the other photo clubs. Although it is not as good as our own newsletter (I am quite modest), it has an article by Ashley Hoff. Ashley explains some of the thinking of our club that has lead to the peer review / critique nights. I will say that the ideas are fairly avante guard and adventurous and many from the other clubs are watching to see how our experiment will turn out.

We will be going to the Polls in September to elect a new president. I am talking about the camera club, not the nation. In the last 6 years I have seen the membership grow in the club. It is now quite a successful club. Personally I can say that joining the committee is a great opportunity to contribute and to learn about photography and I would encourage you all to consider nominating for a position. (Although there are not enough positions for you to all join). Read on—enjoy.

Upcoming Events

Nomination forms for AGM available

August 15 Guest speaker: Astrophotography

Come and explore an art that few of us indulge in.

August 29 Peer Review/Critique Session

Not judging—You present describe and explain between 1-3 of your images.

September 12 Annual General Meeting

Elect your committee!

This will be followed by the disposable camera competition [Bring a plate.](#)

September

26 Competition : Emotions

"pleasurable or painful memories or judgements."

- *Start preparing entries for Annual Exhibition - forms available*

- *Please nominate the club member you feel deserving of the Bill Templar Award*

October 5-7/10 Labour Day Weekend

Club excursion—To Broken Hill—see Eric Budworth

October 10 Peer Review/Critique Session

Not judging—You present describe and explain between 1-3 of your images.

October 24 Competition: Industrial/Urban Landscape

A landscape intensely affected by man and his culture.

Contacting a member from the club; This month Mark & Jenny Pedlar : mnpjpedlar@biqpond.com



Top—Duke of Edinburgh, Ron Hassan,
Middle—Crossing Pt Elliott Viaduct, Graham Field—Steaming, Howard Schulze—Cylinders, Alan Raine
Bottom—621, Anne Trebilcock— Driver, Howard Schulze—Attendants. Alan Raine— Coupling, Ken



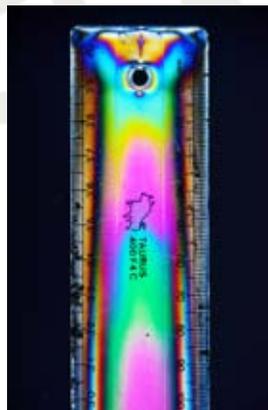
For this you will need 2 polarising filters, a good white light source, camera and tripod of course and a small sheet of very clean glass that can be held vertically between the camera and the light source.

All computer monitor screens are polarised and can be used as your light source. It helps to select a blank, white page such as a document page and turn up the brilliance on the monitor. For most of my illustrations here I used a sheet of polarising paper between the camera and an old enlarger as the light source but you can use a slide projector lamp.

Set up the camera and light source opposite each other so that the light can shine directly into the camera.

Switch the light on and look through the camera viewfinder. You should be able to rotate the filter on the camera until the field of view almost blacks out. Dark blue is OK.

To test the system, place a clear plastic ruler in the light path and twist it slightly whilst viewing through the camera. You should see all the colours of the rainbow at stress points. Photograph this if you like but it will be hard to keep still. I usually use a macro lens but most modern zooms get very close.



I would suggest using the aperture setting if you can at wide open (f3.5-f5.6) and maybe moving the light source as close to the subject as possible to fill the field of view – any vignetting can be cropped out on the computer.

So far so good. Now for the glass. A piece 6x4 from a small photo frame is big enough, in fact you can buy a wooden frame in Blackwood for around \$2.50 at the discount shop. Take the glass out and clean it then staple/glue/ pin a piece of card to the bottom of the frame to give you a vertical holder for the glass! Next you need some cheap cellotape, the yellower the better as the more expensive white stuff doesn't work (try the cheap shop again).

Place 7 or 8 strips of tape on the glass, criss-crossing, vertical etc and then put this between the polarisers. You should get the effect shown in my example. Slight twisting of the polariser on camera should give a kaleidoscope of ever-changing colours. Photograph away, but if it has worked, don't demonstrate it to young children as you may never get your camera back!

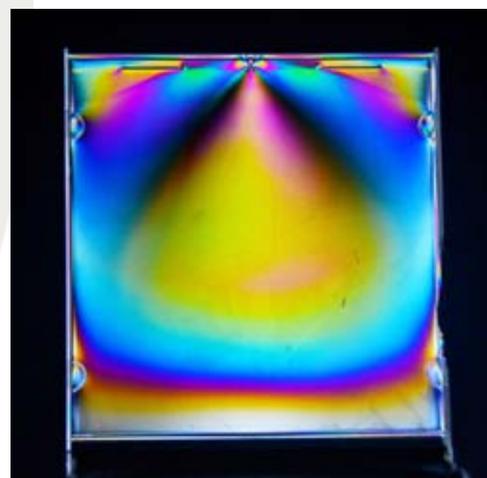
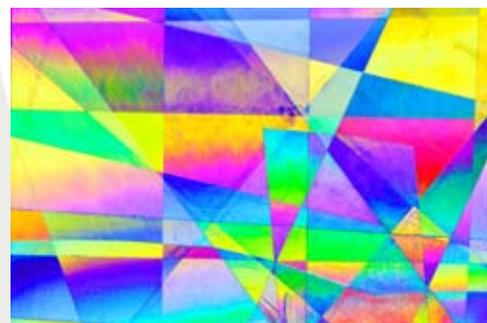
If all has gone well, try putting a bit of wrinkled gladwrap over the cellotape, or a clear plastic lid – anything clear and plastic should give you a unique picture.

If you are flushed with success you might want to go on to try some crystals.

Dissolve some pure urea or other soluble garden fertiliser in a little warm water. A teaspoon of each is enough. Spread it out over a small sheet of glass or Perspex and allow to dry undisturbed until it crystallises out. Put between the polarisers again and photograph away. Epsom salts are another good product for this.

The ultimate crystal experience is to use a microscope but this is getting very specialised. Try melting some Flowers of Sulphur onto a microscope slide and allowing it to crystallise out again. One polariser on the light source is often enough to get a good effect, but again experiment.

Better to melt the sulphur outside unless you have a dog to blame for the smell!



I have had the same question from 3 different members of the club in the last month. The question and answer go something like this:

Question: I'm a beginner with Lightroom 5 and I found how to resize images for email; File > Export > with Preset for EMail.

I set up a custom edit at 500K max down the bottom right corner, but the image when it arrives in my INBOX for a test is only 157kb!

What am I doing wrong?

Answer: You are doing nothing wrong.

Your image size when stored as a JPG will vary in size depending on the amount of complexity in the image. (ie how similar are the colour etc.) So an image with only a single colour throughout, even though its 1024x768 72DPI will be much smaller in kb than the same size image with a complex image. Its down to the compression algorithm for JPG. Setting maximum size to 500kb means—"don't exceed that amount". If the amount of compression required is low, then the file can be small and still have minimal JPG compression.

I've attached some images (on the right) to show you what I mean. Each of these images were saved at the same size 1024x768 72DPI. However the file size varies from 64kb to 503 kb depending upon the complexity of the image. The solid colour is the smallest file (64kb), while the 7 colour gradient is larger (181kb) and the sunflower is considerably larger again (503kb). They are all exactly the same resolution & size. The jpeg file size varies with the complexity of the colour content.

What I do in LR4 is use my own preset which has the following settings:

Export to: Choose folder later

Existing Files: Ask what to do

Rename to: Custom Name

Custom text: Name_Title_XXX

Image Format: Jpeg

Colour Space: sRGB

Limit file size to: 500k

Resize to fit: Long edge

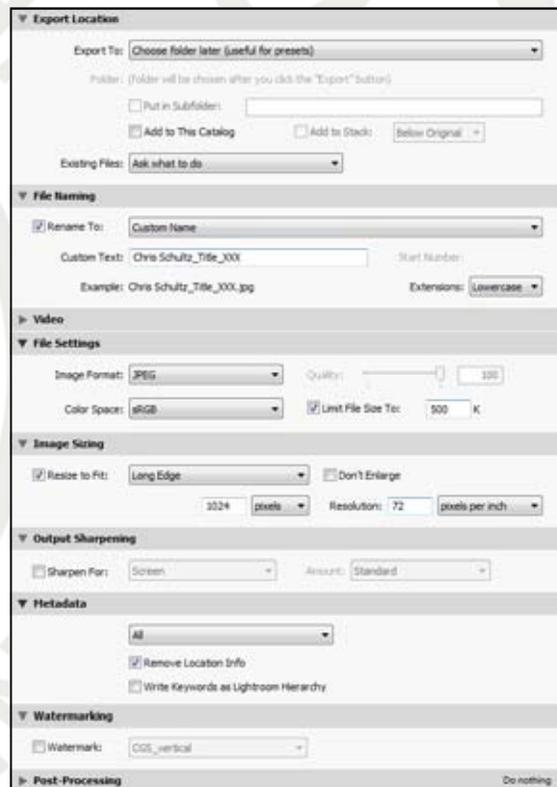
1024 pixels

72 pixels per inch

LR5 should have something like that - the important settings are

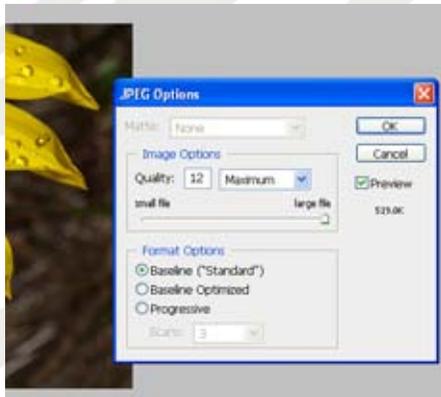
- the File Setting of Limit File Size to 500kb and JPG/sRGB. The Image Quality is automatically adjusted (the more compression the worse it is)

- the Image Sizing - note the 1024 pixels on the long side and the resolution of 72dpi

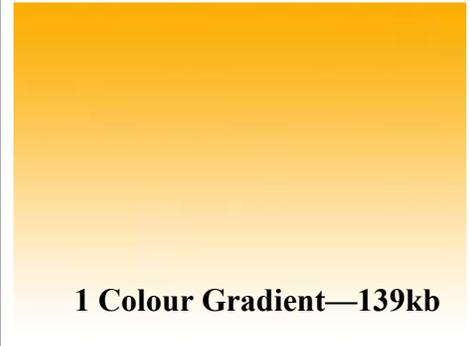


In Photoshop

In Photoshop you are asked to select a JPG compression ratio. A higher compression will result in a smaller file size. If the compression is too great you will see banding and pixelation of the colours. When using Photoshop, I start at the highest image quality (largest file size) and gradually turn up the compression (turn down the quality) until I get the file size just under 500kb. Sometimes I will achieve 495kb, but at other times the best I can achieve is 250kb. Lightroom will do this juggling automatically when you set the "limit file size" box.



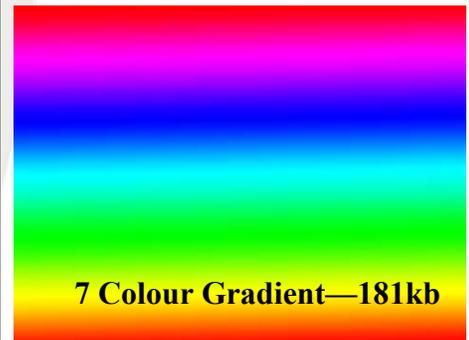
Uniform colour—64kb



1 Colour Gradient—139kb



2 Colour Gradient—151kb



7 Colour Gradient—181kb



Sunflower—503kb

When I was at Mannum, a kite swooped down low and grabbed a fish. I snapped the scene with my Nikkor 300mm lens and 1.6 teleconverter. Chris and Richard were standing right behind me and took the same shot with their Sigma 120-400mm zoom lens. Why was mine less sharp than their shots? This question is the reason I am writing this article. Actually Heather Connolly asked a similar question in a different way at the recent critique night. “What settings should I use when I’m doing bird photography?” I think she was concerned about what shutter speed to select.

In my minds eye I should be able to pick up my camera, swing it around 90 degrees to focus on an overhead flying bird, have the camera focus automatically and take a salvo of 5 to 10 crisp and sharp images as it flies away. Why doesn’t it always happen like that? Have I got a dud lens? Have I got the wrong settings? Am I a bad photographer?

As I researched this question I have come to the following understandings.

1. **Back Focus.** Can my lens take a sharp photo? Sometimes the lens may be mounted a little too far forward or behind the ideal position. This is called back focus. Interestingly my camera (and many brands) have a feature that will allow the camera to adjust for this. What you have to do is take a photograph of a special target designed to detect back focus. It consists of a bullseye on one side and a sloping ruler angled towards the camera on the other. When the camera auto focuses on the target, you will expect the ruler to be sharpest at the mid point. If the sharpest point occurs behind or in front of the target, then you will have to make an adjustment for the lens. My lens was perfectly positioned.

2. **Is the camera stable enough?** Frances always told me that hand shake would blur photos if you used a shutter speed less than $1/60^{\text{th}}$ of a second. I got a bit cocky with my little Nikon / Panasonic cameras taking hand held photos down to $1/4$ a second with minimal blurring. I guess this was possible because I would brace myself, hold my breath and turn on the image stabilisation. With the big lens it is not so easy. I am trying to hold a much larger weight. The big lens tends to tip forward. Furthermore the long focal length tends to amplify the effect of my hand shake. A little bit of shake will cause more blurring in the long lens than my wide angle lens. It’s like trying to sign your name while holding the pencil from the eraser end. You have less control over the tip and it wanders all over the place. I have read that for a 35mm camera you should select a shutter speed equivalent to $1/\text{focal length}$ of the lens. In my case this is not $1/300$. It is more like $1/600$ because of the 1.6 teleconverter and the 1.5 cropped sensor. Unlike Chris and Richard my old Nikkor lens has no image stabilisation (IS) capabilities. IS has the effect of improving the acceptable hand held shutter speed by around two stops. (back to $1/150$) I think this is the chief reason why their photos were sharper than mine. So what should I do? Turn up the shutter speed? This means I may lose out in other areas – like f stop and ISO. There is another answer. I don’t need to take all my shots hand held. I can use a tripod. In fact a monopod is used by a lot of bird photographers. I watched an interesting YouTube clip of a photographer who attained amazing flexibility on a monopod with a few cheap accessories. I will have to explore this option. Another recommendation was to use the flash. (preferably a speedlite on the flash shoe) Using a flash will improve the lighting and thus the shutter speed and reduce the impact of hand vibration.

3. **The F-stop.** I looked at some of the photos taken with the big lens. There is a narrow depth of field with a pleasing Bokeh (the blurred areas). However the narrow depth of field was also causing problems. The eye of the duck was sharp, but the bill and the feathers on the neck were both blurred. This is more of a problem when the subject is closer to me. I had the lens fully open, (f/4) but I would do better by shutting it down a bit. (f:5.6 up to f:8). There is another effect to be aware of. The central sharp area of the photo (eye of the duck) is sharper on many lenses once it is stopped down 1 or 2 stops. An F/4 lens will not be as sharp at f:4 than a F/2.8 lens at the same aperture f:4. In summary, for both of these reasons – it is better to shut the lens down a little bit. Jo Taber calls this the “sweet spot”

4. **Shooting mode.** I have heard all sorts of different recommendations for various reasons. Should I use aperture priority / shutter priority or program mode? Spot or area focus? Should I allow continuous focus tracking, or focus locking? I’m not sure I’ve got this all sorted yet. I’ll tell you what I do. I go straight to aperture priority, closing the lens down 1 or 2 stops, with ISO set at 400 (to allow a faster shutter speed) – but allowing the camera to increase the ISO up to 1600 if the shutter speed drops below $1/125$. I use spot focus and continuous tracking to capture birds in flight. I have all these settings preset in the custom shooting mode, so I can flick to it quickly when I need to. Sometimes I might just switch over to shutter priority set at $1/1000$ of a second.

Well there you have it. I don’t know all the answers. I suspect that my initial expectations are too high for my lens. By experimenting I can get a feel for its capabilities. By some small fine tuning I can get sharp photos at a good focal length (around 600mm equivalent). Certainly they are sharper than an equivalent photo on my old Panasonic. I hope these comments are helpful.



My Photo of the Kite and Fish



Chris Schultz photo

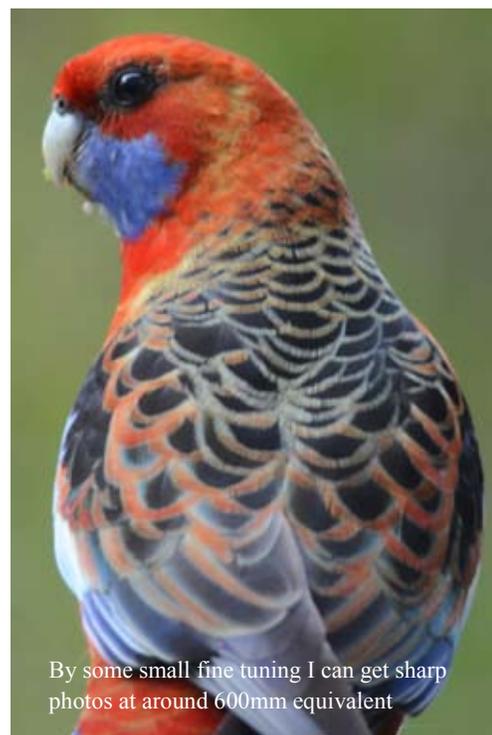


Narrow depth of field

Blurred

Sharp

Blurred



By some small fine tuning I can get sharp photos at around 600mm equivalent

Photo Essay—Bob Gruen—Rock and Roll Images



Last week I was fortunate enough to see a BBC documentary on the New York Rock and Roll photographer Bob Gruen. Bob is one of the most well-known and respected photographers in rock and roll. He has captured the music scene for over forty years in photographs that have gained worldwide recognition.

Shortly after John Lennon moved to New York in 1971, Bob became John and Yoko's personal photographer and friend, making photos of their working life as well as private moments. In 1974 he created the iconic images of John Lennon wearing a New York City t-shirt and standing in front of the Statue of Liberty making the peace sign - two of the most popular of Lennon's images.

As chief photographer for Rock Scene Magazine in the '70s, Bob specialized in candid, behind the scenes photo features. In the documentary Bob lamented not achieving the technical skill of studio photographers. However the artists that he photographed testified to his knack for capturing the emotional climax that set him apart from his peers. Part of his skill was in befriending and accompanying his subjects so that they relaxed and acted more naturally in front of his camera.

In the spring of 2007 FAAP University in Sao Paulo, Brazil presented an exhibition of Bob Gruen's work. Titled ROCKERS, the exhibition attracted 40,000 visitors. Bob's "Sid Vicious with Hot Dog" photo was acquired by The National Portrait Gallery, London, in 1999 for their permanent collection.



Excursion—Mannum



In June the club held an excursion to Mannum. Frances and I spotted Chris and Ashley in the main street, enjoying lunch at the bakery. We joined them for a coffee before wandering down to the ferry to meet the rest of the crowd. We had a lot of photographers and a battery of cameras. There were 3 main parts to this excursion. A walk through the town. A walk past the bird sanctuary and a trip across the river on the ferry. Perhaps the highlight of the trip for me was spotting a whistling kite circling lower and lower over the lagoon before stretching out and grabbing a fish from the surface of the water. There were 3 cameras capturing the moment. Unfortunately Chris and Richard outgunned me and took much sharper images of the crucial moment. (see the article on driving a big lens) I misidentified the bird as a marsh Harrier (stupid when you look in the bird guide).

Graham had found a darter sitting nestled in a willow tree. It's quite tame he announced and took several snaps of the sunning bird. Later he declaims—I didn't realise it was injured. On the photos there is a hook and fishing tackle dangling from its right wing.



I was disappointed that the Marion paddle steamer was not in its berth. Anne and Ken had found the Murray Valley Queen further down stream. As we were chatting the Steam powered Marion came puffing down the river, did a U-turn in front of us and berthed just yards away. Fantastic! Check out the photo Caroline took on her phone. (Camera batteries had gone flat)



The township is an interesting mix of old and new buildings. The waters of the 1956 floods had engulfed many of the older buildings. We broke into small groups. I walked with Graham and Chris Peck. It was interesting to climb the old steps to the top of the cliffs and overlook the town.

Frances during this time was hold court on the banks of the river with the other photographers partners. (widows and widowers as some would say.) A good day all said and done.

Top—Murray Valley Princess—Ken Treblicock
Second—The Marion—Carolyn Beckett , Paddle Wheel -Chris Schultz, Wounded Darter—Graham Field
Bottom—Whistling Kite—James Allan, Bow Line—James Allan

