Camera Clips

October 2010

From the Editor
James Allan

Welcome to the October edition of Camera clips. We are approaching the end of our club year, with only one competition before the Annual exhibition. Application forms for the annual Exhibition are due to be handed in by October 21st.

We recently held the Annual General Meeting where Matt Carr was elected as president for the second year running. Matt must be congratulated for the hard work and dedication he has shown to the club over the last year, and he was also awarded the Bill Templer Medal for contribution to the club.

At the AGM we also saw Gary Secombe and Eric Budworth retire from the committee, while Chris Schultz was elected onto the committee. There has been a change in some of the roles within the club. Chris and Ashley will be manageing the digital submissions for competiton. There has been a change of the e-mail address for digital competition. You should now send your entries to bpcdigitalentries@gmail.com

Do not forget our disposable camera competition and community judging that will be held this Thursday. It is expected that participants will have collected their cameras, taken their photographs and handed them into Fotoswift Blackwood for processing. Last year this event was quite popular and well attended. It's a great chance to try your hand at judging.

Ray Goulter is collecting images for an exhibition in the Foyer Gallery for the Mitcham Council. As we have been recipients of grants from the council over the last two years we hope that club members will help to fill this exhibition to show our appreciation. Hopefully these images will help to form a nidus of work that can also be shown at the Noarlunga Expo.

The next club outing will be a tour down the south coast departing from 19 Allworth Drive, Happy Valley at 9.00am on Sunday 3rd October for the Labour day weekend. There should be enough cars for people to car pool, and enjoy each others company during the day.

Ray Goulter is also co-ordinating a photographic course for the Onkaparinga college of TAFE on behalf of the club. It looks at this stage as though it will be fully enrolled and we hope that this may prove to be an opportunity for new people to be introduced to the club. Overall a busy month and the newsletter is full of articles.

Upcoming Events

(Note—Single use cameras collected for processing)

October 7—Competition—**One Use Camera**

October 21—Competition—**Life on the street**
(Note—Entry forms for Annual Exhibition are due)

November 4—Competition— **Annual Exhibition—Judging**

November 18—**Annual Exhibition—Display & Awards**

December 4—Satureday—End of year Picnic

Bird Photography - Interview James Allan with Heather Connolly

JA Heather you have taken a lot of fine images of wild and native birds. What is the fascination? Why the interest in this form of photography?

HC You know it's very difficult taking good bird photos. Partly I'm interested in the sense of achievement. They are really magnificent creatures. Until I became a bird watcher they mostly went unnoticed. They probably go unnoticed for most people. Once I became aware and began to look at birds, I found that they were everywhere. A good bird book helps. There is a lot of enjoyment in trying to name them. The more I looked the more my interest grew. Sometimes I get very frustrated when I can't work out what kind of bird I'm looking at.

JA What equipment do you use?

HC I've just got a Cannon SX10 which I am very happy with. It has 20 times magnification, giving an equivalent to a focal length of 500mm. I have found that you need a long lens and a view finder. Mind you it can be hard finding the bird when you are at maximum zoom. It's probably better to zoom in gradually. Also you have to leave a bit of room around the bird in

Continued page 2

case it opens it's wings, or decides to take off. You don't want to cut it's wing or tail off or something like that. They rarely stay still. They are on the move the whole time, especially little birds.

JA I can recall trying to take bird photos with my old Nikon Coolpix that had a 110mm equivalent lens. I could never get close enough. In the end I decided that the best thing was to settle for common birds like crows, magpies and ducks. You can learn a lot from photographing common birds. It's a big problem really, getting close enough. Tell me how do you get close to birds?

HC You know the best technique is just to sit and wait. Sometimes you might spot a bird and it flies off. Don't lose heart. Come back at the same time the next day. Chances are it will be there again. You know you can't creep up on birds. They always see you before you see them. It's better to find the right spot and sit and wait. If you are not too threatening, they will take a chance and carry on with their foraging. Look disinterested, as if you are doing something else. Don't look at them the whole time.

JA Yes I find that the best time is when birds are very intent on doing something. Like Lorikeets having a feed on eucalyptus blossoms. You can just about walk up and touch them. Sometimes if I hear a bird calling I will mimic the call. The very territorial birds, like shrike thrushes will come in to see who is making the noise. So tell me Heather, where do you go to find birds?

HC In my garden, or when I go on holidays. You know wetlands, the coast and bushland are all good. I see a lot of birds as I sit down in the morning to eat my breakfast. I sometimes wonder if they are attracted to the noise of the radio. Some of the birds have a beautiful call. I am often attracted to the bird when I hear their call. I like the Grey shrike thrush, and the Currawong, even the Adelaide Rosella has a range of different calls.

JA I used to think that I would find birds in the forest. I spent a lot of time walking, hearing lots of calls and not seeing any birds.

HC No that's not the way to do it. In the dense forest is never the right spot. It's better to go to the edges where the forest meets a grassy field or a watercourse. You could find a clearing, or a pond, or a tree in flower or perhaps a nest. You just sit down and let it all happen. It will usually take about 20 minutes. You never find birds by tramping around. I don't believe in stalking.

JA Do you ever use bird hides.

HC Yes if they are provided in a National Park for instance it's always good to sit down and see what turns up. I don't ever use those portable hides that you see in the bird watcher magazines.

JA Do you use any special settings on your camera?

HC The birds move quickly, so I like to use a fast shutter speed. The other problem I've had is with the shutter lag. It's probably not so bad with the newer cameras and the dSLR's. Have you ever had problems with that?

JA Yes, especially with my Nikon. I would compose the picture, press the button and by the time the camera takes the picture the bird had looked the other way or hopped to another branch or even flown away.

HC Yes I found that the best technique was to use the burst mode or sports mode setting. The camera would take 3 to 5 pictures in succession. Often the first shot, the one you intended to take was no good, but the third or fourth photograph might be unexpectedly just what you wanted.

JA How about birds in flight. I always found that very difficult. In a few seconds the distance of the bird from the camera, and thus the focusing dis-

Tips

   1.Start with Common birds (they are often less shy)
   2.Larger birds are easier than smaller birds
   3.Sit and wait – don't go tramping after the bird
   4.The transition between habitats (eg forest and field) is an ideal location
   5.Use the burst mode
   6.A long lens and a fast shutter speed helps

Ursula—Watersport,
Matt Carr—Hopetoun Falls,
James Allan—Lunch for a Godwit,
Ray Goulter—Dog Frolic,
Chris Schultz—Ghosts in the Castle,
Ashley Hoff—that bike Picture,
Adrian Hill—Spinning Round

Strategies for Capturing Motion:

1. Freeze motion with rapid light burst from a flash light (eg bird in flight)
2. Fast shutter speed to freeze motion (eg surfing photo)
3. Slow shutter speed and tripod to blur moving objects (eg waterfall)
4. Slow shutter speed to record light trails at night (eg traffic)
5. Pan the camera with a moving object to blur the background (eg rally car)
6. Freeze multiple images of motion with rapid repeated light burst from a strobe light. (eg golf swing)
7. Montage photos of object in different phases of it's motion (eg the moon)

tance can change dramatically.

HC Yes, it's better if they fly perpendicular to you rather than toward you. It's better if you can predict where they're going. On Kangaroo Island we know of an Osprey. When I see him (or her) I know its going to fly along the beach. I can predict

what it's going to do and so I can plan the best moment to take the photograph. You know they are very inquisitive. Sometimes it will hover directly overhead and check me out.

Another example is when a kingfisher or if you're lucky a red robin or a bee-eater is looking for food. You know they use a perch. You might spot them on a branch and they fly off. Don't go tramping off following them around with the camera. Just stay patient. You can usually have the camera focused on the perch and get a photo when it returns as they invariably do.

JA What do you think makes a good bird photograph?

HC I prefer shots where the bird is doing something. A passive shot of a bird on a branch is somewhat bland. I also like eye contact. The feather contrast needs to be good and the focusing sharp. I like birds in their natural environment and it's best if the photo tells a story.

JA Do you have any favourite bird photographers?

HC I'm not so sure. I know when I see a photo that I like, but I don't always know the names of the photographers. I quite like Steve Parish and Peter Dobray.

JA Tell me is there a particular bird that you would really like to photograph?

HC Yes I've always wanted to get a good photo of a wedge tailed eagle. I've often seen them on road kill when we've been traveling, but never had the opportunity to get that iconic photograph

JA Well best of luck

Photoshop Skills—Sharpening   James Allan

Sharpness is the characteristic of an image whereby detail is clearly evident. This article is based on a workshop we held several months ago. You know there are two aspects to sharpness. Resolution is the intense concentration of detail when an image is captured with excellent optics. The other aspect I will call the illusion of sharpness which occurs when the eye and the brain interpret an image as being sharp. There are various tricks to create this illusion, for instance enhancing contrast, isolating the subject from the background and improving local contrast or actuance. This last effect is created by computer sharpness filters, which interestingly mimic the circuitry of the retina within our own eyes.

Resolution - Optical Sharpness: When you take a photo, sharpness occurs when the subject is in focus and remains stationary for the time that the

Sharpening in the darkroom

The un-sharp filter effect can be achieved in the darkroom. Two sets of negatives are produced. A blurred less intense positive version of the negative is created by exposing fresh film under a sheet of glass and the original negative. In the enlarger the two strips are overlaid. The positive film will tend to counteract the negative, except at the edges where it is blurred. Here the edge is enhanced. The resulting image will have improved acutance.

shutter is open. The focal point is a feature of optical devices including lenses and curved mirrors. There is really only one point that will be perfectly in focus. The depth of field consists of other points (other than the focal point) where the loss of sharpness is not detectable to our eyes. The depth of field is greater if the aperture is smaller. A pin hole camera appears to have an infinite depth of field.
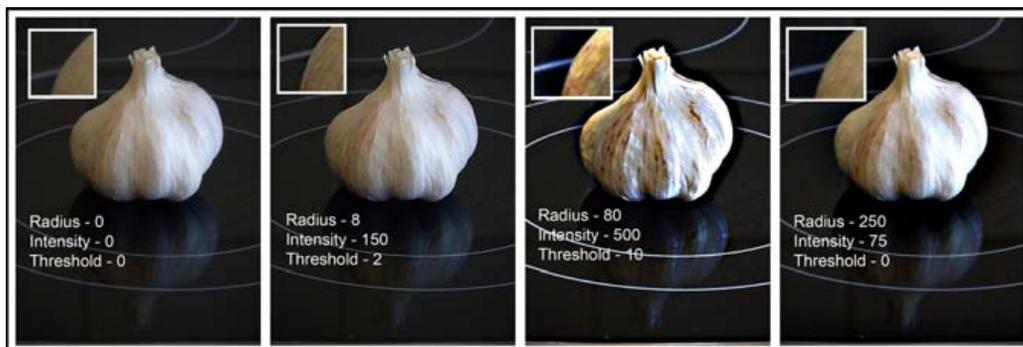
Enhancing Actuance. This will exagerate the contrast at edges. For the rest of this article I will discuss the use of the unsharp mask, a sharpness filter found in many graphics programs.

In photoshop I created an image that consists of a sharp transition between two blocks of uniform grey. I then sharpened this image with the unsharp mask.   In photoshop go to filters – sharpness – unsharp mask. A dialogue box will appear allowing me to adjust the radius, intensity of effect and threshold. You should try adjusting each of these functions to see what happens. Look at Figure 2 to see the effects that I achieved by changing the radius. It is apparent that the filter has it's effect entirely at the edge. For a short distance from the edge, the darker colour becomes darker and the lighter one lighter. This increases the contrast at the edge making the transition more easily recognized between the colours. You should try this same experiment with a blurred transition. The line will become sharp when the radius of the sharpening approximates that of the blurring.

Note the effect of the different controls:

- The radius dictates how far into the colour block this transition will extend.
- The Intensity will dictate how much lightening or darkening takes place.
- The threshold appears to weaken the effect. Actually it will diminish the effect most where the edge is subtle, retaining the effect where the edge is more pronounced. See Figure 3. The threshold is useful for targeting edges and avoiding the creation of noise in areas of subtle variation.

Now it's worth trying it on a picture. Figure 4 shows a picture of a garlic on a black reflective surface. This image was 12Mpx (3000px by 4000px) in size.   The first image is unsharpened, while the remaining three images have been sharpened with the various settings as shown.
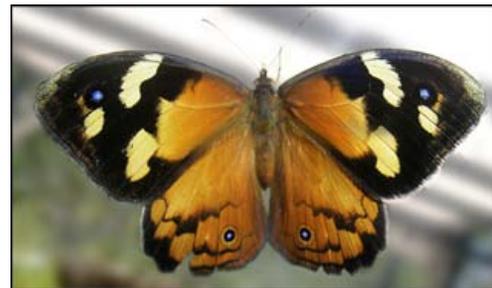

Figure 1 :An illusion of sharpness is created when you blur the background. In this case I achieved this using layers. (Criticism: To give the blurring a more natural look I should have added a small amount of noise.)
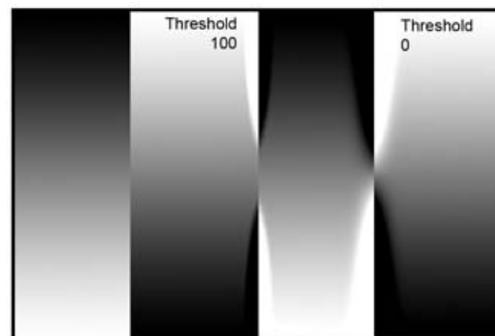

Figure 2 Un-sharp mask at different radiuses

Figure 3: Three gradient transitions. The first line is unsharpened. The second two are sharpened with a radius of 80 pixels and intensity 500. The middle line has also had the threshold set at 100. Setting the threshold has not only reduced the sharpening effect along the entire length of the line but also a large section in the centre is now unaffected by the filter.

It is interesting the range of effects possible. The small radius sharpen in the second image creates a subtle but natural enhancement of the edges and fine detail. This is the effect that is most frequently sought from this filter. The third image on the other hand is quite garish with a marked halo effect around the garlic and chromatic aberration around the edge. It is almost a posterisation of the image. Although this demonstrates many features of an over-sharpened image, it could be a useful effect for graphic art design. The last image uses a large radius sharpen with a small intensity. This produces very little edge effect, but does pleasantly improve the overall contrast in the picture. Actually this effect cannot be reproduced in curves or levels. It is worth remembering and is a useful way to improve low contrast images.

I often find a combination of a small radius sharpen and a low intensity large radius sharpen will give a pleasing result in most images.

I guess I should hazard a warning at this point. I have mentioned in passing that there are adverse effects from using the unsharp mask. Noise, halos, colour aberration and fringing are just a few to watch out for. You can reduce these effects to a degree if you selectively sharpen just the subject and not the whole image. You can reduce noise with filters, however in my opinion it's better to use restraint and avoid making too much noise by not over sharpening. You will learn with time not to go too far. (I had many disasters before I learnt moderation)

I hope that this brief discussion will help you to achieve the effects that you want when you are looking to sharpen an image. Remember however that you should never sharpen just for the benefit of the judges. Usually this results in needless enhancements taking away from the impact of your image. Sharpen only where you feel that it gives a better result.

Key Points

• High Resolution can only be achieved by optical means.
• Objects appear sharper if isolated from the background and if the lighting is harsher.
• Sharpness can be improved by enhancing the acutance with a filter.
• The radius of sharpening is best adjusted to match the width of blurring of the lines. (usually between 1 and 4 pixels)
• Adjusting the threshold may reduce noise, but requires some experimentation.
• Special contrast enhancement can be achieved by sharpening at a large diameter.

Sharing Images online (part 2)   **Ashley Hoff**

Getting Your Pictures Online

OK, now, you have decided to join a community and share some of your photos online. This means you need to get your images online somehow. There are a few methods to do this:

Use your free webspace – for most home internet users, your ISP would have supplied you with some free webspace. Usually, this only amounts to at most a few hundred MB. You may also need to learn how to use such applications as an FTP client to get the data online

Buy some webspace and create your own website and upload your photos there – This is obviously going to cost! I share some webspace with another user (there are in total 4 websites setup on this space) and it costs me around $150 a year, plus domain name registration……AND I have to use FTP to get my gear online…

Use a communities online gallery – A lot of communities and forums have their own online gallery, but you may be restricted to only showing your images to that forum

Use an online photo sharing service – This allows you to upload your pictures online and share them where ever you want. Popular choices are:

http://photobucket.com/

http://www.flickr.com/

I have used pretty much all of the above 4 options for one reason or another, but I have to confess, I have a bit of a soft spot for flickr. The good thing about flickr is it's a photo community in itself.

The other good thing about the last two options is they both can be used free of charge. You can also pay for a subscription, which will give additional benefits (check out each individual site for what it has to offer).

Now, let's get cracking. For this example, I am going to use flickr.

1.   The first thing you need to do is create an account. Navigate to the main page: http://www.flickr.com Look for a button or a link somewhere on the page that looks like or is similar

to this: **Create Your Account**   Click on this button and you will be directed to the yahoo!7 login page. As flickr is part of the greater yahoo!7 network, if you have a yahoo!ID, you can use that to create your account. If you don't have a yahoo!ID, you will need to create one first. Find the box that looks like this and click "Sign Up"
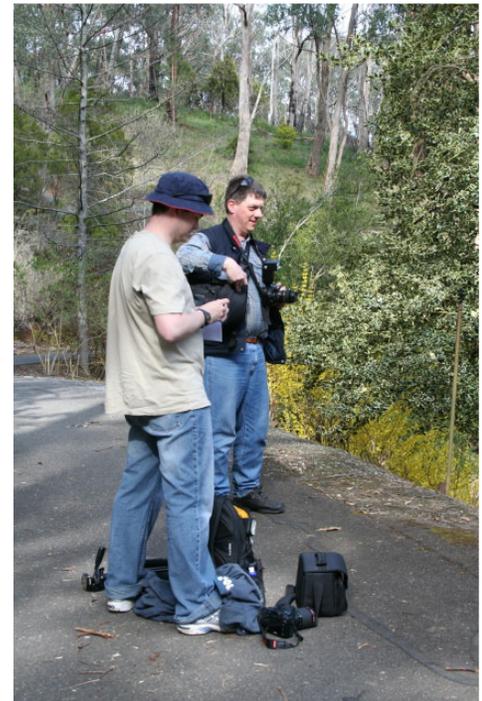
Don't have a Yahoo! ID?
Signing up is easy.
Sign Up

From that screen, create your account by filling in

Club Excursion: Matt Carr and Chris Schultz at the Mt Lofty Botanical Gardens in late September. Picture thanks to Heather Connolly.

the appropriate boxes. This will include creating an account ID. You may have to have some trial and error to get one that hasn't already be used. It's also wise to leave an alternate email address. The reason behind this is that if you forget your account details, information on how to reset your password can be sent out to you. (its best not to forget your password in the first place!) Once you have filled out all the boxes, click the "Create My Account" button. If you have forgotten to fill in any of the required details, you will be reminded at this point. From the next screen you will be given a run down of the account that you have created. Also, as you have come originally from flickr, there will be a box that will send you back to flickr. This will look like the box on the right: Just a word of note, deselect the tick in the "Contact me occasionally…." Box if you don't want promotional emails from yahoo!7

Ready to experience Flickr?

Continue

☐ Contact me occasionally about special offers, promotions and Yahoo!7 features. More information here.

Click on Continue. In the resulting screen, you will be prompted for the password you used to create your account, fill this out and click continue again. The last step is to create a Flickr user name. What you use is totally up to you, but this is how you will be known on Flickr. Once you have filled this out, click on the final "Create A New Account"
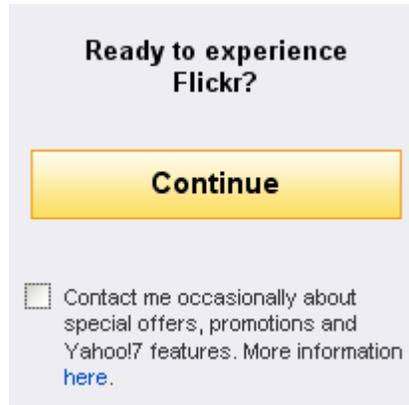
flickr

You're almost done!

Choose your new Flickr screen name

Joe Smith
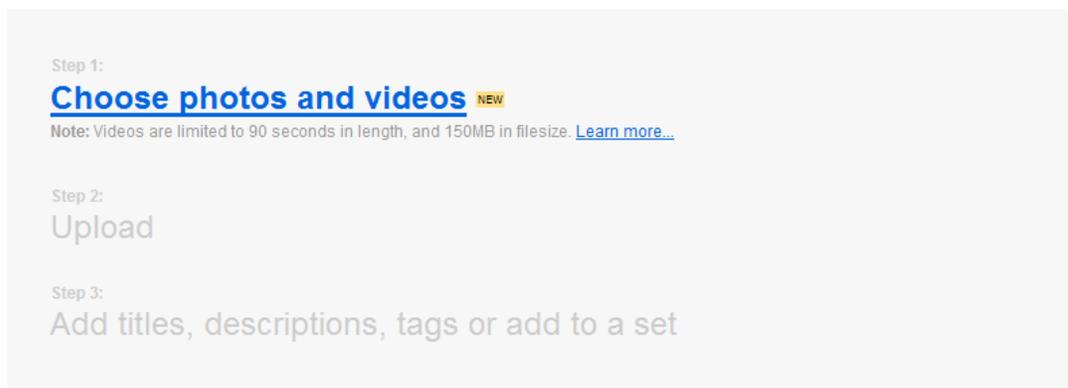
You can change this whenever you want, and spaces are fine.

CREATE A NEW ACCOUNT

Community is the most important part of Flickr. Make sure you're familiar with our community guidelines.

You now have your Flickr account. At this point, explore the customisation options if you wish, or you can head on into uploading some photos

2.   In this step, we will jump on straight into uploading a photo. One of the good things about Flickr, especially for those who don't necessarily want to resize their images, is that Flickr will do it automatically for you, to a maximum of 1024px on any side. There is a catch, though. Sometimes the images may not be as sharp as you expect or may have funny artefacts. I would strongly suggest that you resize your images before uploading (make sure you save them as a copy of your original!) OK, we will assume that you have resized your image appropriately and you are ready to upload. Towards the right hand size of the screen, you will

find the following button: **» Upload Photos & Video** NEW   Click on this to open the upload dialog box, which will look like this:

Upload to Flickr

You've used **0%** of your 100 MB photo limit and 0 of your 2 video limit this month. Upgrade?

Step 1:

Choose photos and videos NEW

Note: Videos are limited to 90 seconds in length, and 150MB in filesize. Learn more...

Step 2:

Upload

Step 3:

Add titles, descriptions, tags or add to a set

From here, its just follow the bouncing ball. Click on the Choose Photos and Videos item and select the pictures that you want to upload from your computer (You did remember where you

saved them, right?) You can select more then one from the same location by holding down the [Ctrl] key and clicking on each photo individually. Once you have made your selection, click Upload. Now, if all you want to do is get your pictures online, that's it, you are done! If you want to add descriptions, tags (which help people find content based on key words) or add to a set, you can do this next…. I'll let you explore these possibilities by yourself (don't you think that this article is long enough!!?).

3.   OK, we should now have some pictures online! Since you are still logged into flickr, you can view these pictures, by clicking on the 'You' link across the top of the screen. By clicking on this link, you go to what is called your photostream. The latest picture you have uploaded will be the first you see. The pictures you see are a preview size. If you want to look at them bigger, click on the one you want to view and this will open a bigger size. In this area, you can also organise your pictures, but again, I will let you explore the possibilities.

Right, by now you are thinking, "How can I share this on my newly joined online community?" Firstly, depending on community, you will need to start a new thread in the appropriate area. Each community will have their own little way of doing that. Once you have worked out how to start your new thread, you can add content to it, whether its writing and most importantly for a photo community, pictures. The tricky part about photo communities is that some code is required to get your pictures online. Most offer a little dialog box to help, but flickr does its bit by offering to create the code for you, which you can copy and paste in your thread. This is done by the share this box, which is found on each pictures page:

Clicking on this will give you the dialog box in the right margin: As you can see, there are many ways to share a photo, but in this instance, click on the "Grab the HTML/BBCode" box. As we are posting to a bulletin board, it's the BBcode we are interested in, so ensure that you click the radio button that says "BBCode". Also, choose the size that you want. With all this done, it should look like this:

At the last competition I was particularly impressed by this Macro photograph of a desert grasshopper taken by Gordon Hinds. It is not a Locust. Gordon tells me that he spotted this insect at Arkaroola in the Northern Flinders

If you click on the box underneath "Copy and Paste…", it will highlight all the text. Right click and select "Copy" Return back to the thread you are creating for the forum you are posting on and simply right click => paste. Create your post and you are done!

So, did you make it this far? If you did, you are well and truly on your way to sharing your pictures with like minded people who like to socialise via online communities.

Ashley