



Newsletter

Issue 02 - May/June 2011

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Out and About with Michael

Welcome to the latest instalment of my photography newsletter. Feedback to my inaugural newsletter last month has been universally positive and many thanks to those who took the time to let me know their thoughts.

Life continues to be busy, with the last month or so having been filled with presenting Trekabout workshops, one-on-one tuition, presentations at camera clubs, writing, and working on new projects. I have also been on a few short photographic trips, including a boat trip photographing shore birds at the Pumicestone Passage, near Bribie Island, Queensland, with Mark (my Trekabout business partner), as well as a session photographing fungi in the rainforests of Mt. Glorious, on the outskirts of Brisbane.



It's great to see many natural areas, such as rainforests, so incredibly green and lush at the moment, which makes for great photography opportunities. Trees, shrubs and flowers, fungi, as well as mosses and lichens, are looking quite amazing right now and this certainly is the time to get out there with your camera! After several years of drought in parts of South East Queensland, where so many plants had dried or weren't flowering, it is wonderful to see them thriving. Even if you don't get a chance to head into the rainforest with your camera, I'd suggest heading to a local park or botanic garden and start clicking away. You'll be surprised what you will find...

In my inaugural newsletter, I mentioned that I had been photographing in the Snowy Mountains and Blue Mountains. I have included a handful of shots from each destination to my website and you can see them by clicking [here](#).

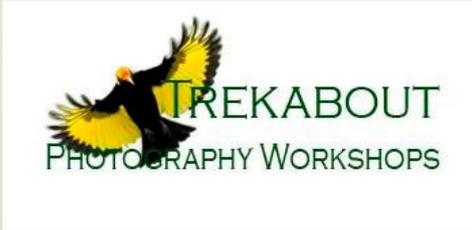
In a few days, Mark and I will be heading to the Northern Territory to present our 6 day Trekabout Photography "Red Centre Experience". We also plan on doing some photography ourselves and can't wait to get out to the "Centre" again!

In the meantime, keep photographing and stay well.....

Cheers

Michael

Trekabout Photography Workshops



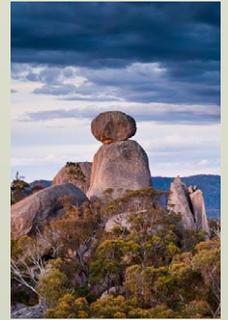
I'd like to welcome all of the new participants who have joined our workshops lately and also good to see many repeaters again. After the great feedback we received from our new, fully-booked, half day "Historical Experience" workshop at Newstead House, we have added a new date for this workshop. For more details, click [here](#).

Last year, I made two separate photographic trips to Girraween National Park and all I can say was that it was truly wonderful experience with lots of photos "in the bag". I'm pleased to announce a new three day workshop there this coming spring (details below).

Three Day "Girraween Experience"

Friday 16th September 2011 - Sunday 18th September 2011

Set in the stunning "Granite Belt" and a 45 minute drive from Stanthorpe, Queensland, Girraween National Park is a photographer's paradise. There are lots of opportunities to photograph landscapes as well as one of the best profusions of wildflowers (including orchids) anywhere in south-east Queensland. Mark and I will spend 3 days showing you how to best use your digital camera to take stunning shots, as well as show you all the best photographic locations within Girraween National Park. For more information, click [here](#).



Islands have always been popular destinations for photographers, as there are so many different subjects to photograph and you also get the chance to escape the "rat race" and completely unwind at the same time. Here are details for two of our island workshops:



Lord Howe Photograph by Darren Jew

Seven Day "Lord Howe Island Experience" with guest tutor, Darren Jew

Sunday 9th of October - Saturday 15th of October 2011

An island "gem", Lord Howe Island has the most stunning, natural scenery and is a photographer's paradise. With guest tutor and professional nature photographer, Darren Jew, I will be showing participants how to best photograph the different locations and subjects on Lord Howe Island. One of the highlights of this workshop is that Canon has kindly loaned us some G12 cameras and underwater housings that will be available for participant use for underwater photography. As one of Australia's premier underwater photographers and tutors, Darren will also be showing participants how to take great underwater shots during a cruise that is part of this workshop. For more details, click [here](#).

Six Day "Norfolk Island Experience"

Sunday 30th October - Saturday 5th November 2011

Without doubt, Norfolk Island is one of my favourite places to photograph and also unwind. The scenery and landscapes are beautiful, sunrise and sunsets can be amazing and there are lots of opportunities to photograph birds in flight. There are also convict ruins, old lighters (boats) and an amazing old stone church, with stunning stained glass windows and timber interiors, all of which make great photographic subjects. For more information on this workshop, please click [here](#).



Upcoming Trekabout Workshops:

[6 Day Red Centre Experience - Alice Springs](#)

[Weekend Beach to Mountain Experience - Sunshine Coast](#)

[Brisbane Wildlife Experience - Brisbane](#)

[Half Day Macro Experience - Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens](#)

[Reptile and Frog Experience - Closeburn, near Samford](#)

Monday 30th May - Saturday 4th June 2011

Saturday 18th - Sunday 19th June 2011

Sunday 26th June 2011

Saturday 2nd July 2011

Sunday 3rd July 2011

One-on-One Tuition

Full day and half day “One-on-One with Michael” photography tuition (for one or two people)

If you would like to learn how to use your digital camera to take better photos, I am available for personalised, one-on-one tuition, for either half or a full day. Tuition can include my showing you how to best use the various settings on your camera (such as exposure compensation, metering, focus points and styles, best use of aperture and more) as well as explaining all settings in your menu. In addition, I can concentrate on photographic areas you may be having problems with. Tuition sessions can also be about general photography techniques or geared towards specific subjects such as macro, wildlife, landscapes and more. For more information, click [here](#).



Two day “One-on-One with Michael Wilderness Experience” photography tuition (for two people)

I have just returned from a two day one-on-one “Wilderness Experience” at the Bunya Mountains and it was very well received. Not only can I show you the best photographic locations from some of my favourite natural places, but I can spend a full two days showing you the photographic techniques I have learned over the past 15 years. So why not join up with

a friend, relative or fellow-photographer and come and learn how to take better photos and do so in some great natural settings?

Locations include:

- Bunya Mountains National Park
- Lamington National Park (O’Reilly’s)
- Mt. Barney National Park
- Girraween National Park

For more information, click [here](#).

Eight day “Bowra Birding and Bird Photography Experience”

The eight day Bowra birding and bird photography workshop I’m presenting with professional birding guide Barry Davies, starting at the end of July 2011, has **booked out in record time**. We have added **new dates starting on Saturday 13th of August until Saturday 20th of August 2011** and this workshop is also **filling extremely fast**.



If you would like to spend a week “out west” being shown where to both find different bird species, as well as learn how to best photograph them, then this workshop is for you. To book a place on this second Bowra workshop, you will need to act fast! For more information and/or to make a booking, click [here](#)



Photo of the Month

White-lipped Green Tree Frog in Heliconia



This month's "Photo of the Month" was taken a while back and is one from the archives. It features a White-lipped Green Tree Frog in a Heliconia and I managed to capture it while the frog was stretching. There are many important aspects when taking an interesting wildlife portrait shot. Having your subject look into the camera is an advantage, as it "connects" with the viewer of the photo. If your subject also performs some sort of behaviour, this is simply a bonus. It isn't always easy to capture behaviour on camera so patience is definitely necessary, as are quick reflexes when pressing the shutter button.

Composition is a crucial aspect of wildlife photography. In this instance, I composed this shot so the whole frog was in the frame, while at the same time leaving room in the direction the frog was facing. That way the viewer's eye leads out to where the frog is looking, rather than have the frog up against the edge of the frame, where it looks totally cramped.

An important factor when photographing frogs (or any wildlife for that matter) is to focus on the eye(s), as this is the first part of a photo that people look at. If the eye(s) are out-of-focus, then the image is ruined. Also, try and position yourself as close to eye-level to your subject as possible, rather than shooting up at it or down over the top of it.

Lastly, having bright colours against a dark background (in this instance, black, as it was night time), helps make the image stand out. This photo was taken hand-held, with a portable twin-flash set-up, making it much easier for me to move around and compose my shot, rather than using a static tripod.

Nikon D70, Nikon 105mm f2.8 macro lens, f11, 1/200th of a second, ISO 200, twin diffused flashes

Photography Tip of the Month

When photographing birds in flight while hand-holding a digital SLR, I recommend using a zoom or telephoto lens with a decent focal length (anywhere from 200mm to 500mm). Use aperture priority wide open (i.e. aperture with lowest number possible) to blur out the background as much as possible. Set your focal point setting to single and use auto-focusing. Check your lighting conditions by pointing your camera in the direction where the bird will be and half-depressing your shutter button. By using aperture priority, your shutter speed will automatically be shown. To increase your shutter speed, raise your ISO. A higher shutter speed will minimise blurry shots.



Another important aspect to capturing birds in flight on camera is to observe the bird you are about to photograph. If, for example, the bird is typically flying from left to right, I would move my focal point to the right of centre. This is where the bird's head/eyes will be and the most important part to focus on. Set your camera to continuous or "AI Servo" focusing style as well as high continuous shutter.

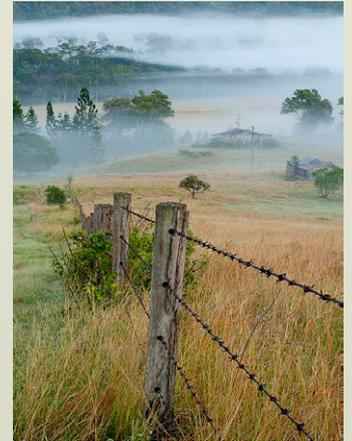
As the bird starts to fly, pan with it by following your camera in the direction it is flying. Make sure your focal point, that has been positioned right-of-centre, is on the bird's eye/head and press your shutter half way to activate continuous focus. By moving with the bird as it is flying and keeping your finger half-depressed, its eye/head will remain in focus as it is moving. Once the bird is in a decent position to take a photo and there are no distracting objects in the background, then press the shutter and hold it down. You will hopefully have captured a series of shots, each with the bird in a slightly different position. This is a difficult technique to master, but persevere as the rewards will be worth it - as the old saying goes: "Practice makes perfect"!

Photographic Location of the Month

Mt. Barney National Park

There are so many different great natural locations across Australia and Mt Barney National Park is one of them, situated around 120 km south-west of Brisbane via the Mt Lindesay Highway. The prominent peaks of Mt Maroon, Mt Barney, Mt Lindesay, Mt Ernest, Mt May, Mt Clunie and Mt Ballow make up Mt Barney National Park. These amazing peaks are remnants of an ancient shield volcano which erupted some 24 million years ago.

There are various types of vegetation at Mt Barney, including open forests around the foothills of the peaks, subtropical rainforest above 600 metres, montane heath towards the peak summits as well as cool temperate and mallee eucalypt. All of these make for great landscape photography, including some stunning sunrise shots at various spots within the park.



There are plenty of macro subjects at Mt Barney, including a plethora of different flowers as well as fungi, especially after decent rain. There is also an abundance of different bird species.

As far as accommodation is concerned, I highly recommend staying at Mt Barney Lodge. They offer four styles of accommodation, including:

- Queenslander Homesteads
- Rustic Cabins
- Glamping (Glamorous Camping)
- Camping

For more information, please visit Mt Barney Lodge's [website](#). Alternatively, you can call Innes or Tracey Larkin on 07 5544 3233.

Industry News (Competitions, Exhibitions and more)

Images of the Wild Exhibition

For those living in or travelling to Sydney in the next few weeks, there is an exhibition opening titled "Images of the Wild". This is an exhibition of wilderness photographs by Henry Gold, OAM, to raise funds for wilderness conservation by the Colong Foundation. It starts on Tuesday 31st May 2011 and finishes on Sunday 12th June 2011, at the Bondi Pavilion Gallery. Opening times are from 10am – 5pm daily.

The exhibition will be officially opened by former New South Wales Premier, Bob Carr at 6pm on Wednesday 1st June 2011. Everyone is welcome to attend the launch.