



Newsletter

Issue 09 - September-December 2012

This Month's Contents

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
Out and About with Michael	1	Photo of the Month	5
Photographic Tip Of The Month	2	Photography Article	6
Trekabout Photography Workshops	3	One-on-One Tuition	8
Other Extended Workshops	4	Photography Competitions	8

Out and About with Michael

Welcome to issue number nine of my photography newsletter. Life continues to be very busy, with the world of photography taking up much of my time nowadays. No two days are ever the same. They vary from presenting one-on-one tuition sessions, Trekabout workshops, solo photography workshops, audiovisual presentations, judging photography competitions, writing articles on photography, working on websites, scouting new workshop locations and, when I can squeeze in some time, taking photos myself. Never a dull moment!

Since my last newsletter, I have really enjoyed getting back into my bird photography. I love all types of nature photography but do have a 'soft spot' for my birds. On a recent shoot, after many kilometres of walking with all of my gear and then waiting patiently in one spot, I managed to photograph a delightful pair of Red-backed Fairy Wrens, flitting around and interacting with each other on some dead branches, close to where I was positioned. I had to be quite quick with my composition and focusing, as the male, in particular, never stopped moving. It took a bit of patience, but in the end I ended up with some great shots.



I regularly present audio-visuals on nature photography topics at different camera clubs across Australia. One of these was a recent presentation at the St George League's Club Photographic Society in Sydney. Camera club members from all over Sydney had heard 'through the grapevine' that I was presenting there and were all made very welcome as visitors. The audience was incredibly responsive and it was a real pleasure to present at the club.

I followed up my presentation at St George Leagues Club Photographic Society with a well-attended wildlife photography workshop at Taronga Zoo. Once again, there were participants from different camera clubs across N.S.W. (seven in fact) and everyone got on extremely well. Lots of great photos taken, perfect weather and Taronga Zoo's stunning backdrop certainly made for a great day.

In August I presented an audio-visual on nature photography at the Redlands Camera Club in Brisbane. This was the second in the series of presentations called MASTER SERIES, the first in the series having been a presentation by my favourite wedding and portrait photographer in Australia, Marcus Bell. Once again, a very receptive and appreciative crowd.



The September 2012 issue of Australian Birdlife magazine features my regular bird photography page, the subject this issue being the rare and beautiful Lord Howe Island Woodhen. To read the article, click [here](#).

I have just arrived back from presenting a very successful, fully-booked workshop on Lord Howe Island, one of Australia's most beautiful and photogenic locations. Read the full report in the 'Other Extended Workshops' section of this newsletter (page 4).



As always, I'm looking forward to what the coming months will bring. With extended workshops to Norfolk Island and Tasmania still to come, some shorter half day and full day workshops, one-on-one photography tuition, photographic trips planned and a number of audio-visuallys, it looks like a busy, yet rewarding few months ahead.

To the many new subscribers to my photography newsletter, I'd like to invite you to my 'Michael Snedic Photography' page on Facebook and join my online photographic community. All you need to do is click [here](#) or on any of the Facebook logos in the newsletter and 'like' my page.

As this will be my last newsletter for 2012, I wish each and every one of you all the very best for Christmas and 2013. Here's hoping for good health, happy times and lots of great photos!

Cheers

Michael

Photographic Tip of the Month

When using a telephoto or zoom lens, it's often difficult to handhold your camera and lens still enough to achieve sharp shots. In some circumstances, the use of a photographic beanbag is highly recommended. I recommend filling the beanbag with some sort of grain such as rice, beans or birdseed for camera and lens stability. I don't recommend using polystyrene, as it isn't stable enough.

One example of where a beanbag works really well would be draping it over a half open window of a car and then placing your lens on it. The lens nestles into the grains and is stabilised, often becoming more sturdy than using a tripod or monopod. Other uses include placing the beanbag on fence posts, large rocks, the bonnet of a car, or on the ground.

Beanbags aren't the type of thing you would carry around filled for many kilometres, but are handy when you are either driving around looking for wildlife (especially birds) to photograph or are positioned in one area that your subjects frequent and you are willing to wait around.

If travelling overseas, beanbags can be transported empty and filled with whatever cheap grain you can find. That way you are minimising extra weight. On return, you simply empty out the grain and bring the beanbag back. Apart from lowering the weight you are carrying back in your luggage, it is also illegal to bring grains into Australia through quarantine (AQIS).

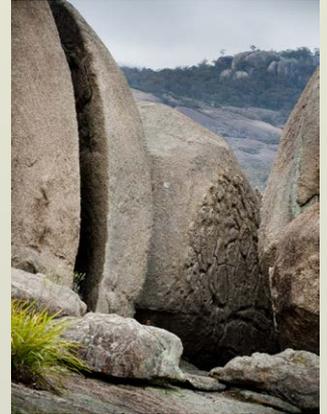
Photography Bean Bags.com

Davina Priestly, owner of 'Bean Pod Photography Beanbags' makes quality products and at very affordable prices. I can highly recommend her products, prices and service. For more information on photography beanbags, or to make a purchase, click [here](#).

Trekabout Photography Workshops



Trekabout Photography Workshops are now into our seventh year of business and things are certainly powering along! Apart from presenting our regular array of half day, full day and weekend workshops, we recently



presented another fully-booked 3 day 'Fraser Island Experience', a 5 day 'Mountain Experience' at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat in Lamington National Park, and our once-a-year 3 day 'Girraween Experience' near Stanthorpe, Queensland. All the workshops went really well and it great to see so many new participants and to welcome back repeat attendees.

Our new 5 day 'Tropical North Queensland Experience' is currently in the final development stages and we will make an announcement as soon as we have concrete details. There has been a lot of interest in Trekabout presenting an extended photography workshop in Tropical North Queensland and Mark and I can't wait to have some finalised specifics to announce.



Each year around late October, we present our 6 day 'Norfolk Island Experience' workshops and this year is no exception. As one of our favourite locations to present an extended photography workshop/tour, it's always a real joy to show participants the best spots to photograph, as well as the best ways to photograph them. Apart from visiting lots of stunning places around the island for landscape and seascape photography, including sunrises and sunsets, we also spend time photographing birds, old convict ruins, macro subjects as well as having some sessions on post-processing images and image critique. We can't wait!

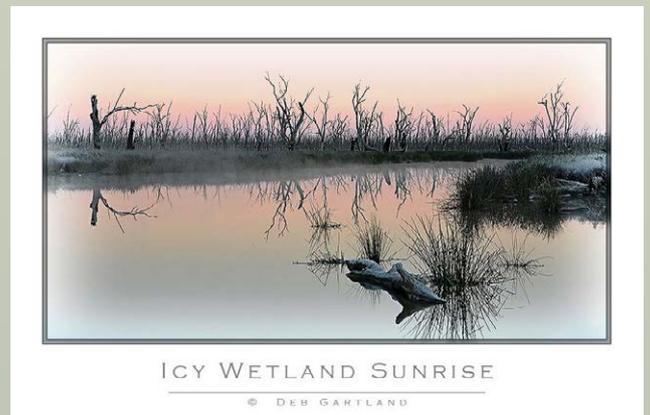
For more details on Trekabout Photography Workshops, click [here](#)

Our ever-popular gift vouchers are available for all workshops. The perfect Christmas gift!

Trekabout Photo Competition

Congratulations to Deb Gartland for winning the July/August 2012 Trekabout photography competition, themed 'Landscapes', as well as all the other place-getters and highly commended recipients. Mark and I both chose Deb's stunning image, titled 'Icy Wetland Sunrise', as the hands-down winner from over 100 shots entered. You can view all of the entries [here](#)

The current photo competition is themed 'Movement' and entries close at midnight on the 31st of October 2012. You submit your entries [here](#)



Other Extended Workshops

8 Day 'Bowra Birding and Bird Photography Experience' - July and August 2012 - Report

At the end of July and again in mid-August 2012, I presented the 8 Day 'Bowra Birding and Bird Photography Experience' with my friend and professional birder, Barry Davies. Both workshops were fully-booked and we had 20 participants in total spread out over the two workshops, including some tag-alongs in 4WDs.



From early in the morning until sunset on most days, Barry spent his time finding and identifying birds for the groups, while I showed them how to best photograph them. Bowra Sanctuary, near Cunnamulla in Queensland, is an amazing location for finding and photographing a large variety of bird species. Between the two groups, there was a fabulous array of bird photos taken, which was great to see.



Barry and I are presenting this workshop again from the 1st to the 8th of August 2013. If you are interested in taking part in this ever-popular workshop, click [here](#) for more information.

7 Day 'Lord Howe Island Experience' - October 2012 - Report



After checking in and a little free time, we started our first day on beautiful Lord Howe Island with a session on best photography techniques, camera settings and a general overview of the week ahead.

Before long, we were out by the beach, photographing the stunning views that only Lord Howe can provide, with the iconic Mt Lidgebird and Mt Gower in the background. Judging from the big smiles on the participants faces and the jovial banter all round, I knew this was going to be a great group and this certainly turned out to be the case.

After our photography session on the beach, it was time to get ready for our 'welcome dinner'. Stevie, owner of the delightful Pandanus restaurant, made us feel so welcome and the food was delicious. Our first day on Lord Howe was a great success!

Over the next 5 days, the group headed out to many of the iconic locations across Lord Howe. This included sunrise shoots on Blinky's Beach and Ned's Beach, sunset shoots on Malabar Hill and Signal Point, rainforest photography in the Valley of the Shadows, shoots from Mt Eliza overlooking North Bay, as well as a visit to the Old Gulch. There was also a macro shoot on the beach and various bird photography sessions. This was all capped off with an audio-visual on nature photography as well as an image critique session. Another highlight included snorkelling with my group at North Bay amongst the amazing array of coral and fish and seeing massive Green Turtles via the glass bottom boat.



After the workshop had finished, I spent an extra 3 days on the island, both photographing and relaxing, after a busy week with the participants.

I'm heading back to beautiful Lord Howe Island in February 2013. If you would like to join me for a week of photography and fun on this island paradise, you can find more details [here](#).

7 Day 'Tasmanian Experience' Photography Workshop and Tour

One position now available for November 2012 workshop!

The 7 Day 'Tasmanian Experience' workshop I'm presenting with professional Tasmanian landscape and nature photographer, Luke O'Brien, booked-out in record time. Due to personal issues, however, one of the participants has had to change to the March 2013 workshop, so we now have one place available on the November 2012 workshop. Along with Lord Howe Island, Tasmania is one of my favourite places in Australia to visit and photograph. Everywhere you look, there are stunning locations and subjects to photograph.



If you are interested in taking a place on the workshop starting either in late November 2012 or March 2013, click [here](#) for more details.

Photo of the Month



"The Gateway"

Photo & story: Narelle Power

Thank you so much Michael for offering me the opportunity to feature in your newsletter - what a lovely surprise!

This shot is an 'oldie', taken in 2006 with a D70 and a late 1970's, metal-bodied, totally manual Tokina 17mm lens. I have 2 nieces and one nephew - for each of them I have taken a series of sunrise shots for their 1st birthday (I always found out too late to actually get a sunrise shot on the day of their birth).

The morning was one of heavy fog, and after taking a series of early sunrise shots, I headed out to Ripley Valley to see what kind of shots I would get when the fog finally lifted.... so I picked my spot, set up the tripod and waited.

At 8.20am, the fog started to lift, letting the sun filter soft light onto the scene, and give an almost rainbow effect to the edge of the lifting fog. This was the shot I had been waiting for. This year, this shot received runner up in the Landscape division of the Enviroplan Photography Competition run by the Ipswich City Council. One of the my other shots in this series won the division, and was awarded the overall winner, but this particular shot still remains my favourite.

I guess it is important to note that no matter what camera gear you are shooting with, it is the shot that matters, not what you took it with, and you don't have to buy the latest and greatest to get great shots. Many people wouldn't even look sideways at an old bashed up lens from the 1970's, but it still remains my favourite lens for landscape photography. So get out there, and get shooting!

Settings : Nikon D70 with Tokina 17mm 1:3.5 RMC lens, f16 @ 1/30 sec, iso 200, taken with tripod.

The Importance of Light in Nature Photography (previously published and re-edited) - Part 2

Another atmosphere in which it is beautiful to photograph, is mist. Locations high in the mountains, such as the Bunya Mountains or Lamington National Park in Queensland, regularly have pademelons and wallabies wandering about at close range, often with a joey either in the pouch or near its mother. Many pleasing photos have been taken of these delightful marsupials, but having mist in the background can add mood to a photo. Mist is more prevalent in the early morning, as the sun can burn it off quite quickly. I'd recommend spot or centre-weighted metering for this type of photography, as the subject is the most important part of the photo and the light reading will be centred mainly on the area on which you focus.



Diffused Macros

Out in nature, there are countless macro subjects to be found and photographed. Once again, using correct lighting can make all the difference between an average photo and a great one. When I photograph fungi in a rainforest, I try and use natural light where possible. If there are plenty of light clouds about, I often use a portable reflector to reflect natural light onto the fungi. This effect shows off the colours and texture more effectively and the lighting is much more natural-looking than having shafts of bright sunlight shining directly onto the subject.

I sometimes use a macro flash if I am hand-holding my SLR camera and lens. The extra light given off by the flash will generally freeze any movement you would normally encounter when hand-holding a camera in low light conditions. Even though a macro flash is nowhere near as powerful as an external flash mounted on your SLR, I still prefer to use the macro flash but with the power of it reduced. This stops harsh light from bouncing off the subject I am photographing. For compact cameras and SLRs that have a pop-up flash, this may also be used to give you extra light. I advise using an accessory such as the Gary Fong "Puffer" or similar in front of the flash to help create an even, diffused light.

Sometimes you plan a photography trip way in advance, but of course you can never control the weather. The day arrives, you have planned to photograph flowers in a Botanic Garden, but the sky is blue and the light is harsh. If you take photos of flowers, especially white and yellow ones, in these conditions you will inevitably end up with greatly over-exposed photos. Fortunately, there are a couple of solutions. The first solution, whether your camera is a compact one or an SLR, is to utilize the exposure compensation setting (+/-) that is available in most cameras (when using aperture priority mode – my preferred mode for shooting most subjects). By reducing your exposure, you will greatly reduce the chance of blown highlights. I am a strong believer of using the "blinking highlights" setting on your camera, if it is available to you, as this is a great way of seeing instantly if the photo is over-exposed. The brighter the subject, the more you need to adjust your exposure compensation into the negative to compensate.

The second solution is to use a portable diffuser and hold it over the flower or other macro subjects you are photographing. This method is my preferred option, as diffused light over a white or yellow flower looks much more pleasing to the eye than using exposure compensation. I set up my camera, macro lens and tripod and use a cable release to activate the shutter, while using my other hand to hold the diffuser over the flower(s). All over-exposed areas are completely eliminated and the diffuser spreads out the light evenly. Diffusers/reflectors can be purchased online, or at most camera stores and normally fold up into a compact, manageable size that fits perfectly into many camera backpacks.





Long Exposures for Luminous Subjects

In various rainforests across Australia, there grows a fungus that is luminous at night. It may only last a matter of days, being either devoured by giant Panda snails or shrivelling up in dry and hot conditions, but at night it glows a stunning bright green. The best way to photograph glowing fungi is to set up your camera on a tripod and use an external light source (such as a headlamp) to help you focus on the fungi. Your camera should be put on manual and the “bulb” setting used. This allows you, with the aid of a remote or cable-release, to open the shutter for a period of time and close it when you feel the time is right. In the example to the left, I tried various exposures, with twelve minutes being the best one. I used a low ISO to help eliminate noise and had my in-camera noise reduction setting turned on, which adds another twelve minutes image processing time after the shutter is closed.

Painting with Light

This may seem like an unusual way to add light to a photo but “painting” with light is a fantastic way of creating light on a specific area of a photo at night. By setting your camera on a tripod and using a long exposure at night, a torch can be used to “paint” the area that needs light. The great part of this technique is that you can not only add light to chosen areas with a torch, but depending on how bright the torch is and how long you shine it on certain areas, you can completely control the way the photo will end up looking. At a night shoot in the Red Centre (Northern Territory) I set up my SLR on a tripod at night, and using a headlamp for light I composed a shot of a dune. I focused manually and then turned the headlamp off. Using a manual setting and a remote, I released the shutter for approximately 30 seconds. Careful not to knock over my camera and tripod, I shone a Dolphin torch over the dune in an up and down, then a left to right motion, making sure not to shine the torch in one area for too long to avoid blowing out the shot or having too much light in one area of the photo.



Another example where I used the painting with light method was during a shoot I did for a magazine, photographing glow worms. I was asked to take photos of the worms glowing, as well as showcasing the sticky pearl-like threads the glow worms release in order to catch any insects that fly towards the glowing light and become their prey. I composed my shot using a macro lens mounted on a tripod and used a 30 second exposure. During the time the shutter was open, I used a torch that I had diffused with a tissue and proceeded to move the torch in all directions all over the glow worm threads. Since the light was diffused, it created just enough light in the eventual photo

to light up the threads but not overexpose the shot.

Good lighting is such an important part of any nature photo, and if you follow the tips and techniques that I have explained in this article they will help you create photos much more pleasing to the eye.

One-on-One Tuition



One on One Photography Tuition - Half Day or Full Day

If you are having problems with your digital camera and settings or would like to use your camera to its fullest capabilities to take better photos, one-on-one photography tuition may be just the thing for you.

The one-on-one sessions are presented in various locations in Brisbane and can be either a half or full day. You can also bring another photographer along for a reduced price per person.

My tuition is very hands-on and I work fully to each individual's skills and photographic interests.

For more information on one-on-one photography tuition with me, click [here](#)

Gift Vouchers also available.



Photography Competitions

**ANZANG
Nature
Photography**

An exhibition of stunning photographs from
Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica and the New Guinea region.

ANZANG Nature Photographer of the Year 2012 – Winners Announced

The winner, runner-up and highly-commended images for the 2012 ANZANG Nature Photography competition have been announced. I'm pleased to announce that my image of a Little Egret fishing was one of the finalists and is currently exhibited in the South Australian Museum, and will be included in the ANZANG 2012 book of winners and finalists.

You can see the winning and runner-up images [here](#)



Veolia Environnement Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2012 – Winners Announced

The greatest wildlife and nature photography competition on earth, Veolia Environnement Wildlife Photographer of the Year (commonly known as BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year) this year received a staggering 48,000 entries from all corners of the globe. This photography competition is, in my opinion, the most respected and prestigious wildlife/nature photography competition in the world and to win this competition, or to win a category, is the photographic equivalent of winning an 'Oscar' at the Academy Awards.

To view the winning images, click [here](#)