

Hird About The Place

The Scene by Hird Newsletter.

Edition #8: January 2005

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone. I hope your festivities were enjoyable and the company pleasant

I'll make my apologies now for the brevity of this newsletter. December was so busy, I haven't done anything except staff the gallery – I haven't taken a single photo and I'm itching to get out there. My camera is my therapy and I'm slowly going mad writing newsletters only compounds the problem.

Now, on with the show

Closed for Therapy ...

I'd like take this opportunity to boast that we are heading for a **very** exotic location where beautiful landscapes are behind every bend in the road, the light is always perfect, the weather agreeable and the people pleasantly "laid-back". I'd *like* to boast about that trip, but in reality we are driving to Victoria.

Given this mismatch between desire and actuality, we'll be closing the gallery from Christmas Day until January the Twentieth. If you desperately need something from the gallery, call our mobile number (see below) and we'll endeavour to get someone to help you out.

Photography Tip: Don't Cut Corners.

Many images fail to impress when they are printed because the little details we miss at the time of exposure become blindingly obvious distractions on a print.

So, my tip for this month is to carefully check the corners of your frame before you push the shutter release button.

Latest Photos

Sorry Sir - can I have an extension on my homework please? I haven't got anything new to show this month because:

- My dog ate my film
- I left my key at home
- I forgot what day it was due
- My mum was sick
- My dog was sick because my photos tasted *really* bad

(Please tick the appropriate box)

I expect the drive to Victoria and back will yield some wonderful images, so watch this space in early February.

Stop Press Printer: I found one that **is** new to the gallery (it must have fallen down the back of the couch, Sir, honest!). The print of the Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby that was shown in November's newsletter is now in stock.



"Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby"

And you can't even see the dog's tooth-marks in the print ... ☺

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How your camera works – The Aperture.

I'm writing a series of articles on how the mechanisms of a camera operate and how they affect the photographs you take. I'll start with one about the camera's aperture.

The aperture is the opening via which light travels through the lens. It works like the iris of your eye's pupil, becoming smaller when there is too much light or getting wider when there is less light.

The mechanism consists of a series of blades of thin metal which are arranged to slide past each other and control the size of the opening. Most cameras don't allow the aperture to "close down" until the shutter release button is pushed, so you won't see this happening.

The camera tells you the relative size of the aperture with a series of numbers (often called "f stops") which typically are 5.6, 8, 11, 16 and 22. Some cameras will display numbers between these stops – very confusing for most people: don't worry – it's a relative thing. The size *is* just as important as how you use it.

Each of the numbers in the series above signifies an aperture with half the area of the previous number. That means it lets through half the amount of light too. Therefore the shutter speed will need to be adjusted if you adjust the aperture setting. (I'll explain this more fully next month.)

The most important thing to remember about f stops is that a higher number means more is in focus (i.e. greater "depth of field"). I think of the f as representing the *focus* number (that's not what it really means, but that's not important).



"Bush Cricket"

An example of shallow depth of field with a small f number.

f stops are consistent on all lenses and all film formats: f11 on your 50mm lens is the same as f11 on my 80-200mm zoom lens which is the same as f11 on his digital P&S and on her 5x4" large format camera. To put it another way, if a group of us were all using 100 ISO film speed and set our apertures to f11, setting the same shutter speed on each camera would yield the same exposure for everyone.

In next month's exciting instalment in this highly anticipated series, I'll reveal the deep dark secrets of the camera's shutter, its speed settings and how they are inexorably linked to aperture size. (Actually, it's not really all that exciting nor even slightly anticipated, but I gotta sell it somehow!)

The Workshops.

Which of course brings us very nicely into a paragraph or two about the upcoming SLR workshop run by me. We'll be kicking off at 7.00 on Friday, 28th of January if you're interested in attending. Please call us to book your place in the workshop, since only 12 people at a time are accepted in any given class.

In the workshop I'll be revealing the deeper, darker secrets of how the camera works and demonstrating the principles behind using that bewildering bunch of controls on your own camera. Call us now if you want be the first on your block to know how the new "How your camera works" series ends. (Here's a cryptic hint: the secrets won't be deeper OR darker if you use a small f number. ☺)

Again, our apologies for the short newsletter. If you are considering writing a letter of complaint, just remember to ask for your money back – we might even double what you've paid ...

Seriously though, we hope you had a great time with your family and friends over the Christmas break, and we look forward to speaking with you in the gallery or on the phone during 2005.

Cheers,

Graeme & Michelle Hird

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