February

Millions of Pixels – Great Quality – Let's throw some away

The internet is awash with photographic tips and tricks. We seem to have a desire to compare cameras, lenses, software, techniques, we seem to want to spend all our energy comparing and judging everything. It's no wonder sometimes that we get overwhelmed by information and we can't see the woods for the trees.

The mention of trees here is not accidental because I have used a technique for years that works particularly well with images containing trees. Not all images with trees, but certainly enough of them for this to become standard operating procedure for me.

The technique works for the same reasons a monochrome conversion often does. When we create a monochrome image, we simplify the image a little by giving the viewer less detail to view. Whether this fact is uppermost in our mind at the time doesn't alter the fact that we have simplified the image.

All creative filters like impressionist and those that create pencil or oil paint effects do the same. The difference with those is they are applied more heavily, and the effect is more obvious. What I have done with the image above is far more delicate and at the size you see above what I'm describing is hard to appreciate. Look at my Abandoned Boat Image on Flickr at a larger size.

Some years ago, there were a set of filters available called Buzz and they created quite a nice effect. The company that made the filters went out of business and for a while the old Buzz filters I had, became unique.

Those same filters are available now made by Topaz in a set called Topaz Studio and they are called Buzsim. There is a [free download](#) on their website that you may want to look at. I'm not sure if the free set contains the Buzsim filters, but Topaz make good filters and anything they offer free is worth a look and a download.

The image above is another typical image packed with millions of leaves, where the Buzsim filter improves the image by simplifying it. The Buzsim filter needs to be added at a very low setting, in the same way we apply a corrective vignette to the outer edges of an image. Both the vignette and the Buzsim filter have an effect, but the viewer is not aware they have been applied.

Why Shoot Raw? – Video Available

I was asked to give a brief talk on this topic for my own camera club in February and to enable me to do that I got together some facts and some images to help. In fact, I've used one image to demonstrate this for years, because I think it demonstrates the question very well.

Once I had the files together, I thought I would record my talk so I could include a video to those members who couldn't attend, but so they can watch it again later if they wish.

 For those interested you can download the HD Mp4 video from HERE onto your desktop. It won't take very long to download, or you can view it on YouTube HERE

Canon 5D Mk4 – First Results

 Given that I have been using Canon right from the start of the digital revolution, it's not a great change to go from a Canon 1Ds Mk3 to a 5D Mk4. Most of the controls are all in the same place, but the menus of the 5D are a bit more comprehensive.

If you're a Canon user, an hour with the camera and the instruction book will be all you need. One of the first things I wanted to find was the back button focus controls. Can't work effectively without that and if this is a new term to you, then look HERE. Back button focusing, if your camera allows it, is something worth a look at. It's one of those shooting techniques that will improve your photography.

This is one of the first few images I shot with the camera. Middle of a baking hot Australian Day was not the best conditions to test a new camera, but I was pleased with the result here taken at Bells Creek. For a bigger version of these images, click the picture and view them on Flickr.

The shot below was much later in the day with the last rays of the sun lighting up Natures Lantern's. 200th @ f10 with 200iso. Click the images for a larger Flickr view.

The image below was a lucky image. I was moaning that the high winds were stopping me from getting my drone in the air, but here the high winds worked in my favour causing me to see the dust cloud from this tractor from quite a distance. Canon 400mm lens – 640th @ F5.6 with 200iso

Cover Image – In Pieces

I have been working on a new set of videos with the main topic of Presentation of our images using Photoshop. Presentation is an important part of photography and can be corrective, creative, or sometimes a little of both.

The technique used on our cover is obvious. We cut up an image and reassembled it, hopefully in a creative way. I have 17 full HD videos made on a wide range of topics, and they will be posted in a few weeks. I've also made a slide show presentation showing all the images we created. That will be posted at the same time.

The image below was not created as part of our Presentation videos, but the paper texture was. More about these videos in a few weeks.

Drone Photography

I've had the new Mavic Pro 2 for about a month and had only one flight with it. There are several reasons for that. We are in the height of summer and the schools are all on their summer breaks. So not the best time to head to the beach with kids everywhere with protective parents.

Better to wait till their back at school and the areas I want to photograph are less populated.

I also thought I would save my enthusiasm for a recent 4-day trip north, but strong winds prevented any flying. It was disappointing, but all good things come to those who wait. So, I'm told.

Just to keep the subject on the go. Here is another shot from the very first flight. 40th @ F3.5 with 100iso. X marks the spot.

New Web Site Build

Some frustrating snags getting simple menus to work on the new website I'm building is holding up progress. An upcoming trip to Tasmania means its unlikely to be launched now for some weeks.

Watch this space……. On second thoughts, don't watch this space. That would be too boring. I'll tell you when I have it done, and I'll be asking you to visit and let me know what you think. In the meantime, the original Beckham Digital site rolls on

The Camera Club – Vague and Mysterious -Video

Are we taking something simple and well understood and making it complicated and misunderstood?

YouTube: The Camera Club – Vague and Mysterious

Download: The Camera Club – Vague and Mysterious

Flickr Galleries

I have been working through some further new images, which are now posted in the February section of Flickr HERE

See you next time