

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the second Newsletter for 2015. While summer hasn't quite been as hot as usual, some – like me – haven't missed the 40 degree plus days at all. Still, we have February to get through yet, and as you all know, we often have our hottest weather that month.

This is the time of year when we start preparing for the VAPS Interclub Competition – please give some thought to putting forward some entries. Entries for consideration do not need to have ever been entered in a competition – just a photo that you know has that “wow” factor. Just remember, all prints need to be LARGE. There are also categories for digital and audio-visual entries as well – please speak to any Committee member if you wish to submit an entry.

The Committee welcomes feedback from all members in relation to a proposal we have for purchasing some studio lights for the Club. There are some on offer at “special” pricing of @\$1000 for a set. This pricing is very reasonable for what's on offer. We were looking at having these available for workshops, especially for portrait photography, as well as for hire to members for their own use. Our healthy bank balance means we can easily afford these – and it's a great way to help us all improve our photography. Please let us know what you think!

From the President's Desk.....



When it comes to gaining new skills, many people find it easier and quicker if they work on a project that necessitates new skills to be acquired. This can apply to improving one's photography as well.

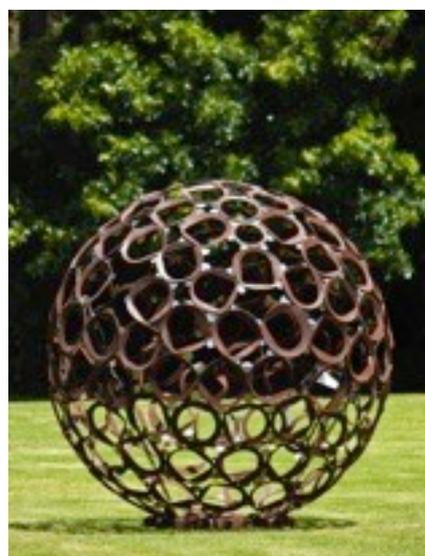
Having a project will give something to concentrate on and force you to go out to take photos that will suit your project. That way, your skill set should hopefully also grow. This can also make you a better photographer. For some projects, you may have to do more preparation before you go out.

Projects vary in the time taken, of course. It can be as simple as taking a series of photos on a particular topic. It can be a series of photos to put into a photo book, or to put to music in an audio-visual presentation. We have had workshops on both photo books and audio-visual presentations. Give it go, it will be great to see a few people in the club working on such a project. Make an audio-visual among a group and submit it for the VAPS Interclub Competition.

You could try topics such doors and windows, which are everywhere. The older they are the more 'character' they have, with old cracked paint work or even rotten timber. The old timber or brickwork around them also adds to the character. Or, you could use 'Through the seasons', taking photos of the different weather conditions, and seasonal colours.

We are also looking for members to provide some large prints for the Club to enter in this year's VAPS Interclub Competition. We need to decide by the end of February, because the deadline is usually the Presidents' Meeting around the middle of March.

Happy snapping everyone!!



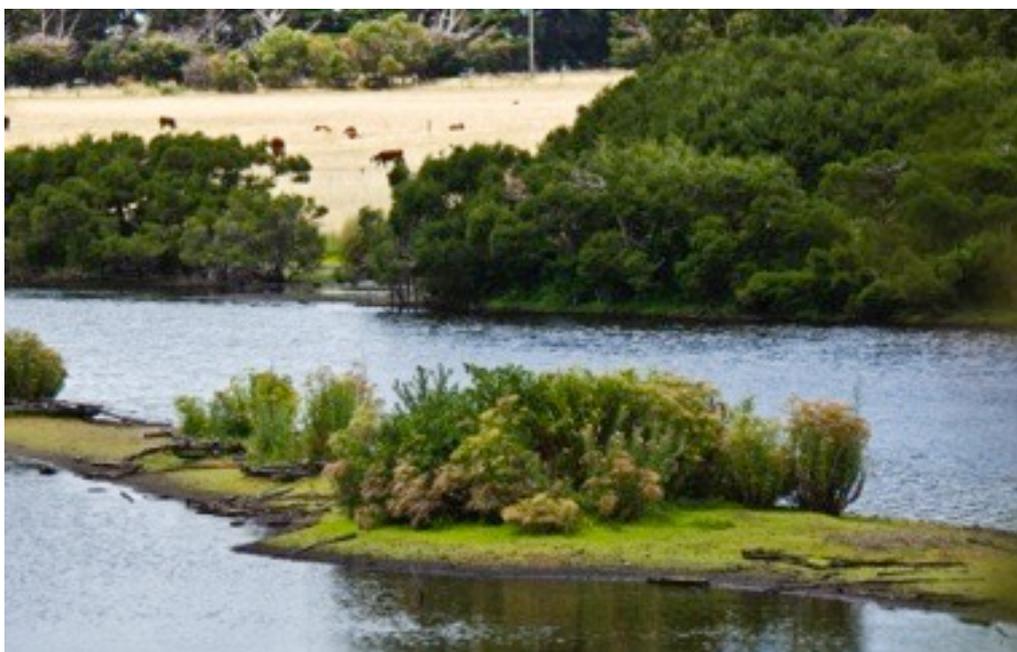
Coolart Wetlands

Recently, there's been talk regarding Club activities, such as day trips, to enable us to enjoy group outings and share our common interest in photography. The benefit of these is that we get the chance to learn more when we spend time together (not to mention, lots of fun!). Each of us have our favourite subjects, and these outings give us the chance to broaden our range, and to "have a go" at something we wouldn't normally choose. The Club is fortunate to have several very experienced photographers, all of whom are more than willing to share their knowledge and assist others.

However, I would like to encourage you not to over-complicate matters. An outing together need not take all day, nor does it need to involve hours of driving, or require a group of 20+. An outing can be as simple as a group of 4 members getting together and heading off. We are very fortunate to be living on the Mornington Peninsula, which is home to many easily accessible photographic opportunities. Amongst these are some of our wonderful State Parks, all within easy reach, so in well under an hour you can be enjoying some great scenery and walks.

This week, I visited Coolart Homestead and Wetlands, a short 25 minute drive from home (Rosebud). It offers a veritable smorgasbord of photographic subjects from architecture, formal gardens, wildlife, birdlife, waterviews and seaviews. There are very easy walks, of varying lengths around the park, as well as picnic and bbq areas. Several bird hides are dotted around, giving the chance to take some great shots. There are also historic buildings set in the garden, some constructed from hand made bricks, including a buttery and meathouse. As you can see - plenty of variety for some great photography.

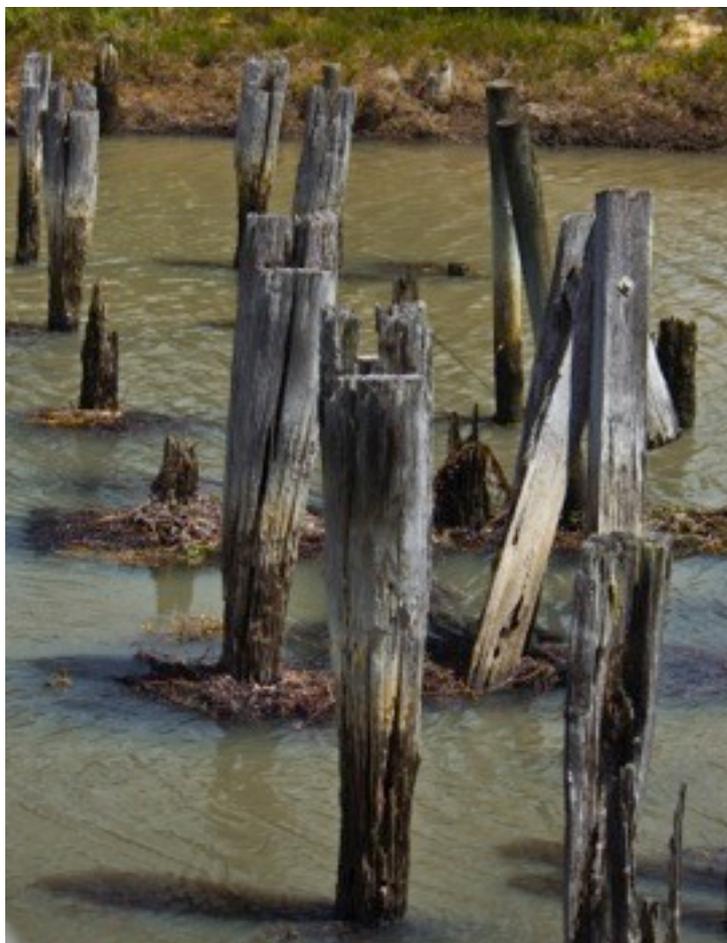
Some of you may have visited this park previously, but for those of you who haven't, I strongly encourage you to pack a picnic lunch, grab a couple of friends and make your way there. If you've already been, take a look at Parks Victoria's website and choose from their extensive range of parks for somewhere different. I've included some of my shots in this Newsletter, just to show some examples of the range of subjects at Coolart.



Coolart Wetlands



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“Find the Focus Yourself”

by Terry Lane

This article first appeared in “Livewire” in “The Age” on Thursday, January 22, 2015 – reprinted here by kind permission of Terry Lane.

For more articles and reviews by Terry, please see his website:
dpexpert.com.au

Here’s a bold resolution for the new year – take the camera off Auto and take control of the picture taking process. Believe us, it’s not that hard and the photos will be all the better for a bit of human intervention.

We’ve been down this path before but it is using the Sony a5100 for today’s review that moves us to revisit the auto vs user control once again. Because the Sony is obviously intended for the auto shooter we set out to use it in that mode for our testing. We quickly gave up and braved the cumbersome menu settings to get the best from the camera.

Left to its own devices a camera will get some things right most of the time. It will do a reasonable job of adjusting the white balance (colour accuracy) and it will set an appropriate ISO sensitivity. Even exposure will be acceptable most of the time, but the one thing it will fail at is focus.

Just think about it for a moment. When you point the camera at a scene that contains a child, an adult, a donkey, a tree and a cathedral in the background how does the camera know which is the important subject for sharp focus and correct exposure? It doesn’t. So it is set up at the factory to either focus on any object closest to the camera, or on one or more faces if face detection is turned on.

Switching the shooting mode to P – which stands for Program – means that you don’t need to worry about exposure because the camera is programmed to set the best shutter speed/aperture pairing for the light conditions. This works well enough most of the time. And if you go boldly into the menu and set Metering Area to Centre Weighted you will get a little extra control.

While you’re there in the menus take a look at Autofocus – you will find two settings for Focus Mode and Focus Area. Set Focus Mode to Single Shot (S-AF) and the Focus Area to Centre. Turn Face Detection off.

Face Detection is useful if you are really tracking one particular face, but in a scene where there are faces that are not important to the picture it only confuses the camera.

When you’ve got all your ducks lined up – or in this case your focus and metering set to centre – you put the viewfinder centre on the subject, half depress the shutter button to lock focus and exposure, and then reframe if necessary, holding the button half way while you do it. Easy.