

[Editor's Note: It is best to view this PDF File in Acrobat Reader to use the Bookmarks to help navigate through this edition of HOCUS FOCUS].

SEPTEMBER WORKSHOP NIGHT

Workshop night on Monday 25th September was made up of a mixture items. The evening commenced with David Whyte giving a demonstration on resizing of photographs. We also viewed some photographs taken by some of our members that have recently visited the USA.

Kevin Stokes gave a talk on his obvious passion of Australian flora and photographing it. Kevin has extensively photographed flora in Western Australia. Examples were shown. His primary aim in botanic photography is to document a species. Sometimes the depth of field is limited due to the difficult circumstances in which the photographs are taken e.g. windy conditions. There was some discussion of macro lens, settings and using a ring flash.

OCTOBER WORKSHOP NIGHT

October workshop night is on Monday 23rd. This workshop is to be a follow up on bird and nature photography following the social outing to Mike Fidler's place on Wednesday 11th October. Please bring along (on a USB stick) your photos from the outing. However, keep an eye on the website for any updates.

OCTOBER COMPETITION NIGHT

The October competition night was held on Monday 9th.

There were 54 A Grade and 33 B Grade entries over 4 large print categories and 2 EDI categories.

A Grade			B Grade		
Category	No. of Entries	No. of Entrants	Category	No. of Entries	No. of Entrants
Open Colour Print	20	17	Open Colour Print	10	8
Open Mono Print	17	14	Open Mono Print	7	7
Set Subject EDI (Music)	17	15	Set Subject EDI (Music)	16	10
	54			33	

The judge for the evening was Dianne Schofield.

COMPETITION SUMMARY

Awards A Grade: Open Colour Print

Merit-Judges-Choice	Sue Winsley	Halloween!
Merit	Ross Burgess	Tucker Time
Merit	Ross Burgess	Power Boat on The Manning
Merit	David Whyte	A little bit dry
Merit	Dianne English	Mt Wilson
Merit	Bettina Damme	Eat More Fruit!
Merit	Ian English	Kakadu Burning
Merit	Mike Fidler	SWAMPIE FAMILY
Credit	Dave Vane	Busy Little Bee
Credit	David Price	Art Appreciation
Credit	Toni Conquest	Tulip
Credit	Joy Thomas	The Grand Tetons Reflection
Credit	Joy Thomas	Prismatic Spring
Credit	Colleen Price	Fun in Prague
Credit	Ardis Emmerton	Floating on Ice
Credit	Michael Martin	Croc-eyed.
Highly-Commended	Brad Le Brocque	Rain in the Desert
Highly-Commended	Ray Watts	Teddy Bears
Accepted	Sue Winsley	Red Leaf!
Accepted	Ian Nunn	Schwabacher Sunrise



Halloween! Sue Winsley Merit-Judges-Choice (8)



Tucker Time Ross Burgess Merit (6)



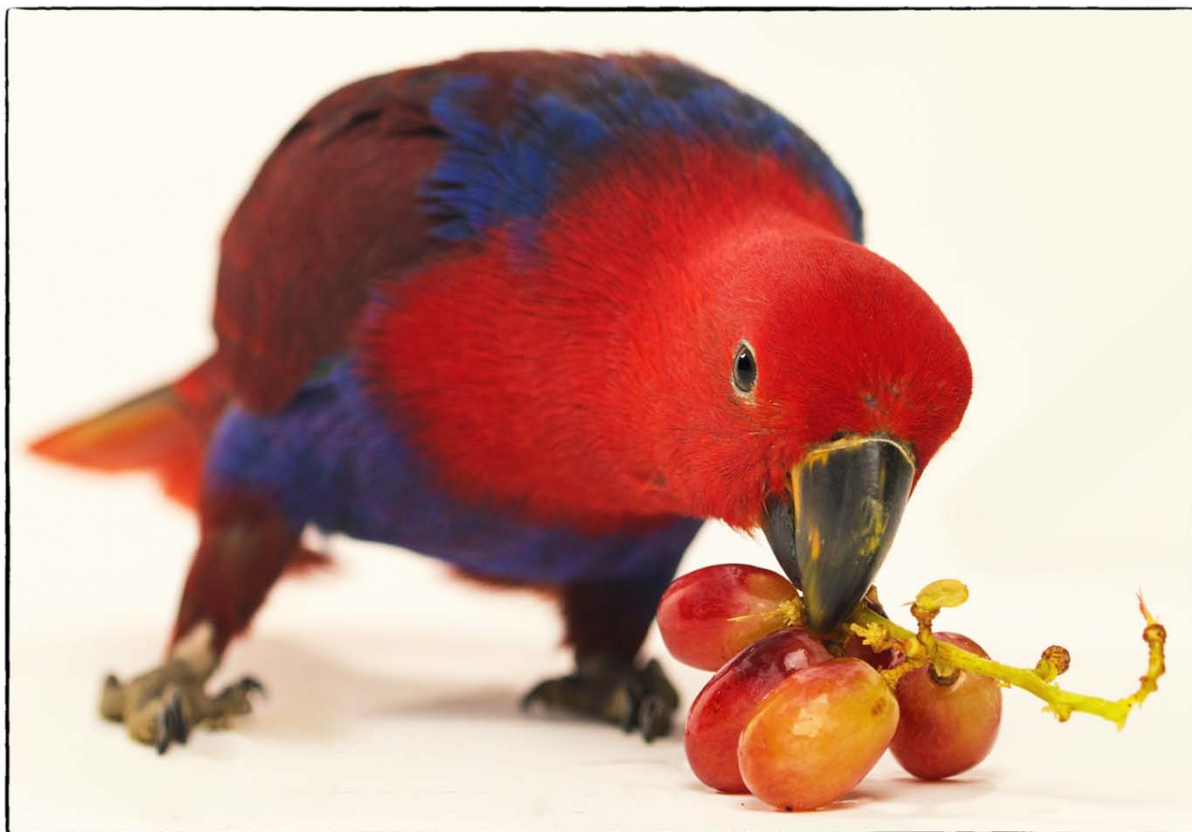
Power Boat on The Manning Ross Burgess Merit (6)



A little bit dry David Whyte Merit (6)



Mt Wilson Dianne English Merit (6)



Eat More Fruit!

Bettina Damme

Merit (6)



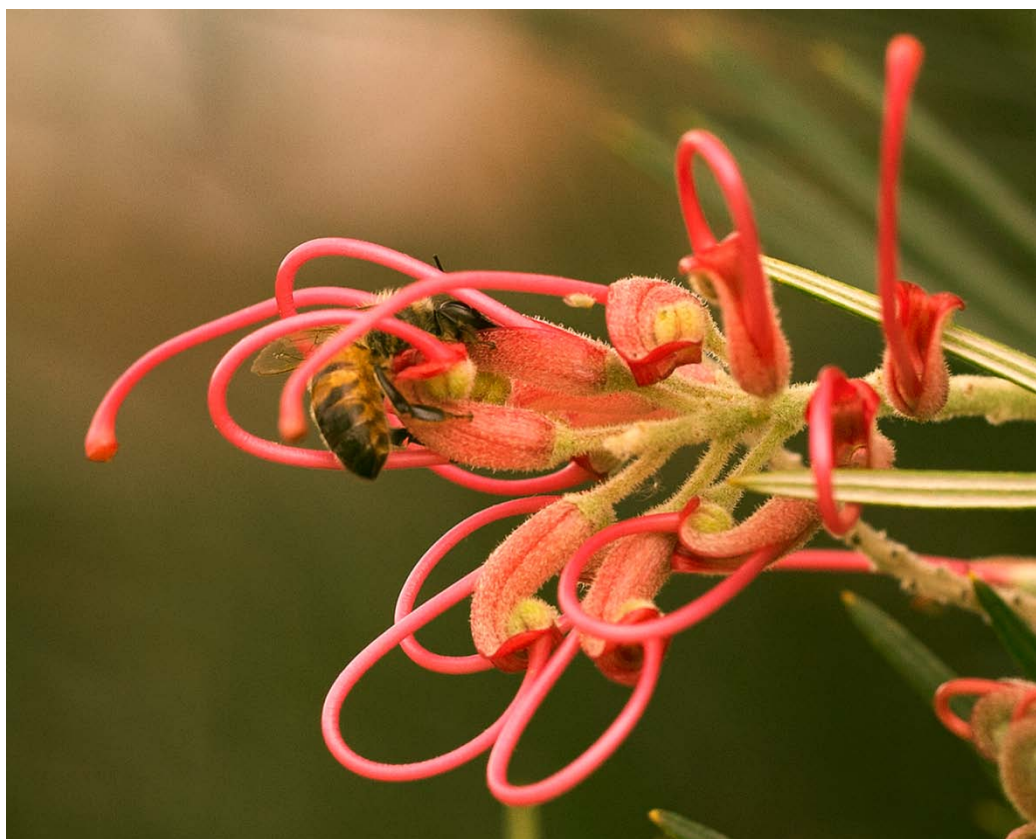
Kakadu Burning

Ian English

Merit (6)



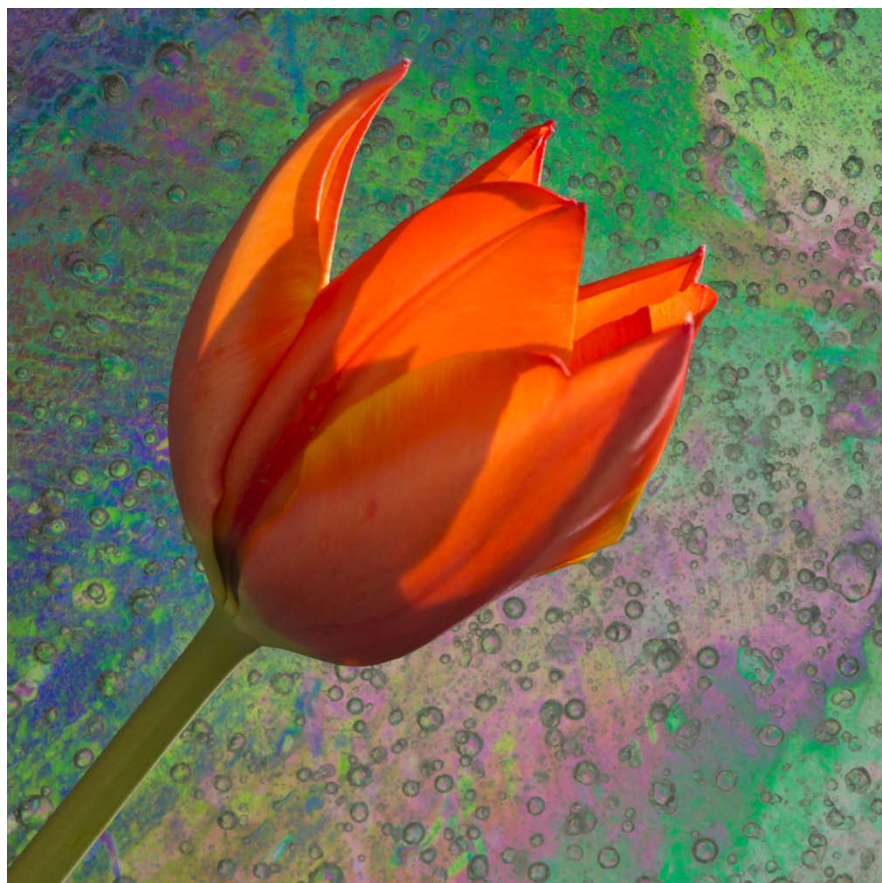
SWAMPIE FAMILY Mike Fidler Merit (6)



Busy Little Bee Dave Vane Credit (4)



Art Appreciation David Price Credit (4)



Tulip Toni Conquest Credit (4)



The Grand Tetons Reflection Joy Thomas Credit (4)



Prismatic Spring Joy Thomas Credit (4)



Fun in Prague Colleen Price Credit (4)



Floating on Ice

Ardis Emmerton

Credit (4)



Croc-eyed. Michael Martin Credit (4)



Rain in the Desert Brad Le Brocque Highly-Commended (2)



Teddy Bears Ray Watts Highly-Commended (2)

Awards A Grade: Open Mono Print

Merit-Judges-Choice	Mike Fidler	EAGLE TUCKER BW
Merit	David Price	Cafe Alfresco
Merit	Ian English	Clydesdale Hotshoe
Merit	Sue Winsley	Astalavista!
Merit	Dave Vane	Indian Scout
Merit	Dave Vane	Dry Argument
Merit	Carla Edwards	Emmm, you think so?
Credit	David Whyte	On the prowl
Credit	Bettina Damme	Misty Morning
Credit	Colleen Price	Gazing
Credit	Brad Le Brocque	Rock dancer
Credit	Carla Edwards	Queen
Highly-Commended	Dianne English	Skyward
Highly-Commended	Ian Nunn	Inca Stonework
Highly-Commended	Toni Conquest	Homeless
Highly-Commended	Brad Le Brocque	The Realisation
Accepted	Ray Watts	Lonely Sky



EAGLE TUCKER BW Mike Fidler Merit-Judges-Choice (8)



Cafe Alfresco

David Price

Merit (6)



Clydesdale Hotshoe Ian English Merit (6)



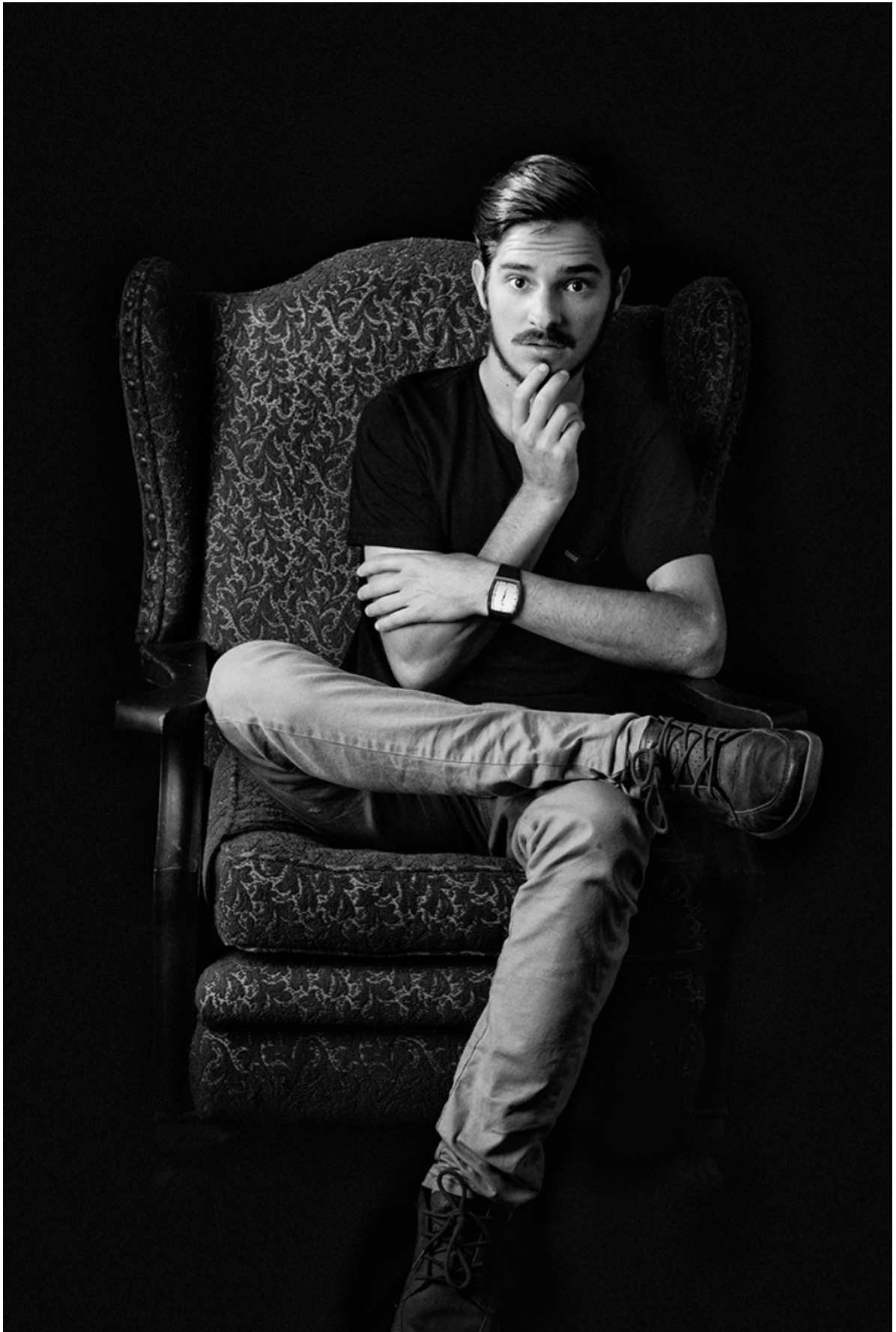
Astalavista! Sue Winsley Merit (6)



Indian Scout Dave Vane Merit (6)



Dry Argument Dave Vane Merit (6)



Emmm, you think so?

Carla Edwards

Merit (6)



On the prowl

David Whyte

Credit (4)



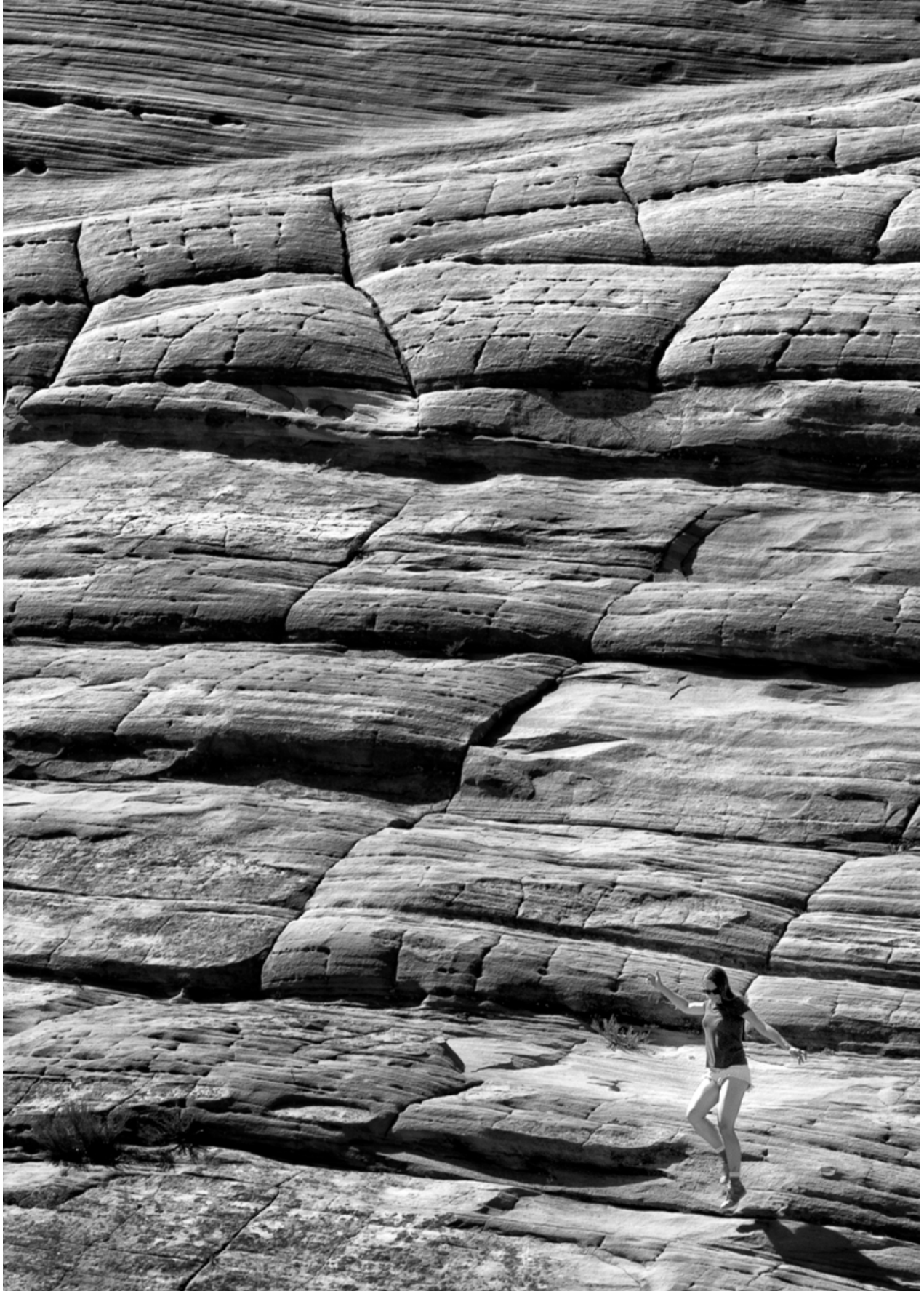
Misty Morning

Bettina Damme

Credit (4)



Gazing Colleen Price Credit (4)



Rock dancer Brad Le Brocque Credit (4)



Queen

Carla Edwards

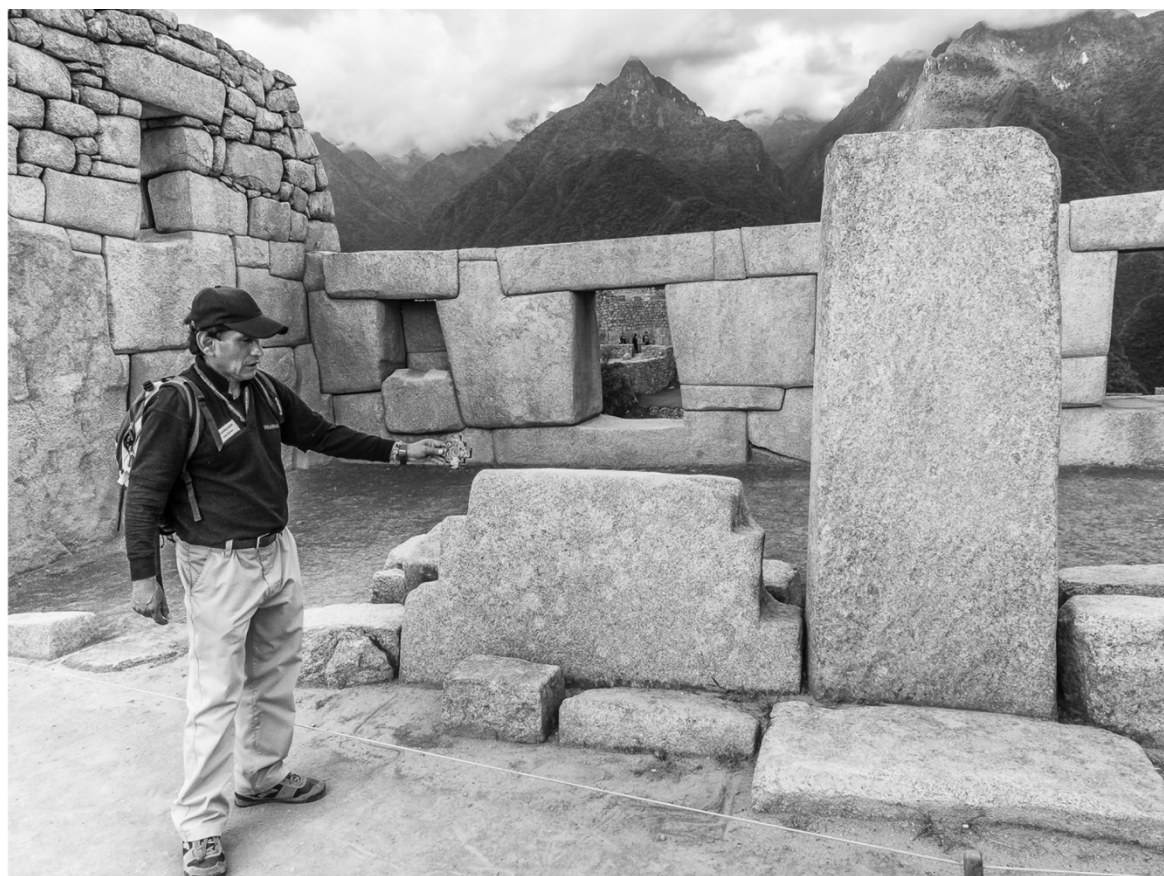
Credit (4)



Skyward

Dianne English

Highly-Commended (2)



Inca Stonework

Ian Nunn

Highly-Commended (2)



Homeless Toni Conquest Highly-Commended (2)



The Realisation

Brad Le Brocque

Highly-Commended (2)

Awards A Grade: Set Subject EDI (Music)

Merit-Judges-Choice	Ian English	Cuba Musica
Merit	Carla Edwards	Inspiration
Merit	Ray Watts	Golden Notes
Merit	Toni Conquest	Marcus
Merit	Bettina Damme	Sweating on the High Notes
Merit	Dianne English	Guitar Work
Merit	Dave Bouten	miners band
Credit	David Price	The Violinist
Credit	Joy Thomas	A Young Musician
Credit	Colleen Price	Street Music Prague
Credit	Michael Martin	The Sheik - Chad Morgan
Highly-Commended	David Whyte	A guitar gently weeping
Highly-Commended	Michael Martin	Claire & Anthony
Accepted	Ardis Emmerton	Busy Fingers
Accepted	Ian Nunn	Latin Band
Accepted	Mike Fidler	MORNING CHORUS
Accepted	Dave Bouten	bongo man



Cuba Musica Ian English Merit-Judges-Choice (8)



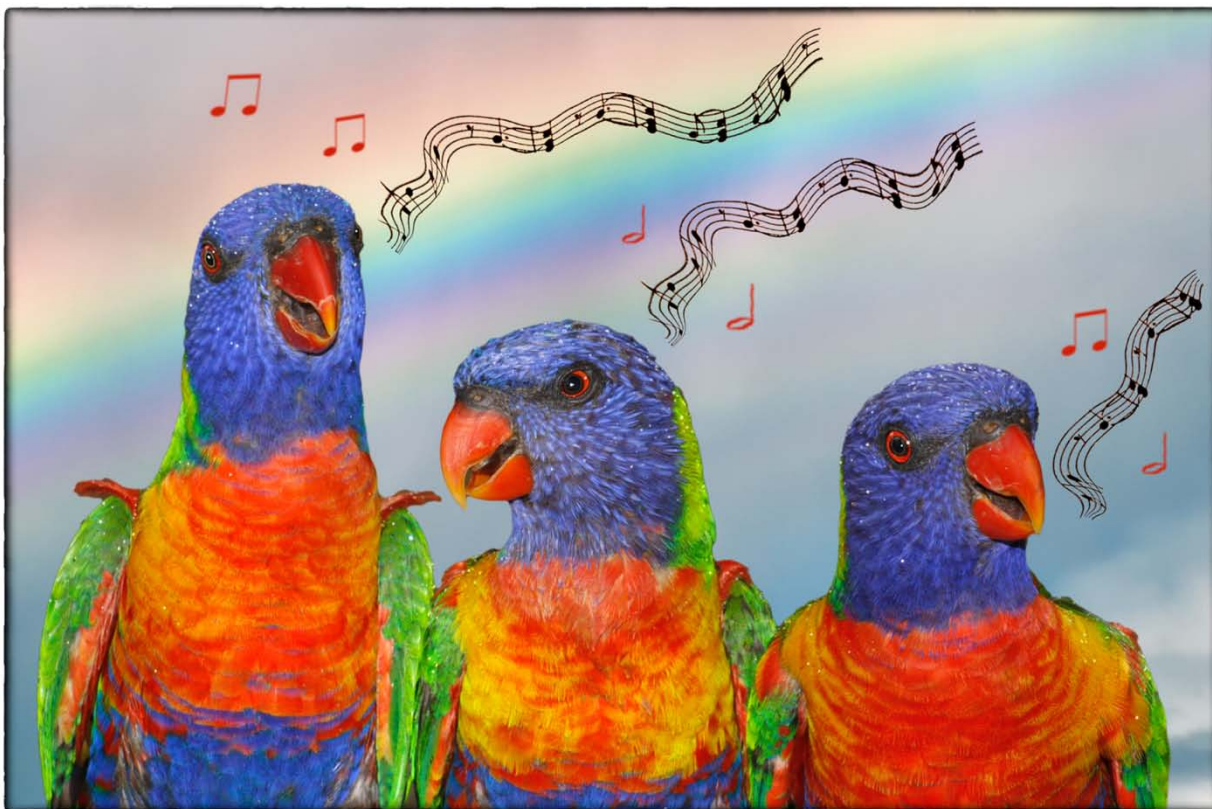
Inspiration Carla Edwards Merit (6)



Golden Notes Ray Watts Merit (6)



Marcus Toni Conquest Merit (6)



Sweating on the High Notes

Bettina Damme

Merit (6)



Guitar Work

Dianne English

Merit (6)



miners band Dave Bouten Merit (6)



The Violinist David Price Credit (4)



A Young Musician Joy Thomas Credit (4)



Street Music Prague Colleen Price Credit (4)



The Sheik - Chad Morgan Michael Martin Credit (4)



A guitar gently weeping David Whyte Highly-Commended (2)



Claire & Anthony

Michael Martin

Highly-Commended (2)

Awards B Grade: Open Colour Print

Merit-Judges-Choice	Megan Willis	Balloon Reflections
Merit	June Rush	Knaresborough Colour
Merit	Helen Oliver	Are You Listening
Merit	John Frost	To admire nature.
Merit	John Sharples	Little Fisherman
Credit	Rene Schipper	Too Funny
Credit	Chris Latham	Hello down there
Credit	Chris Latham	Cooee
Highly-Commended	Ken Linsley	Returning to Port
Accepted	Ken Linsley	Chamberlain Gorge Reflections



Balloon Reflections Megan Willis Merit-Judges-Choice (8)



Knaresborough Colour June Rush Merit (6)



Are You Listening Helen Oliver Merit (6)



To admire nature. John Frost Merit (6)



Little Fisherman John Sharples Merit (6)



Too Funny Rene Schipper Credit (4)



Hello down there

Chris Latham

Credit (4)



Cooee Chris Latham Credit (4)



Returning to Port Ken Linsley Highly-Commended (2)

Awards B Grade: Open Mono Print

Merit-Judges-Choice	Megan Willis	Sweet Music
Merit	Rene Schipper	The Runner
Credit	Helen Oliver	Federation Square
Credit	Chris Latham	Smoke on the water
Highly-Commended	John Frost	It's how you hold your tongue.
Accepted	June Rush	Edinburgh Mono
Accepted	Ken Linsley	Sparkling Danger



Sweet Music Megan Willis Merit-Judges-Choice (8)



The Runner Rene Schipper Merit (6)



Federation Square Helen Oliver Credit (4)



Smoke on the water

Chris Latham

Credit (4)



It's how you hold your tongue. John Frost

Highly-Commended (2)

Awards B Grade: Set Subject EDI (Music)

Merit-Judges-Choice	Terry Biden	The Romance of Music
Merit	Megan Willis	Delightful Music
Merit	John Frost	Practice make perfect.
Merit	Chris Townsend	Still Playing
Credit	June Rush	Brass and Crotchet
Highly-Commended	June Rush	His Master's Voice (3)
Highly-Commended	June Rush	His Master's Voice
Highly-Commended	Helen Oliver	It's Three O'clock
Highly-Commended	Rene Schipper	Sounds of the sea
Highly-Commended	Marie Kildey	Behind the 73 Kee Grand Organ
Highly-Commended	Michelle Frost	Getting ready to perform
Highly-Commended	Michelle Frost	Accompanyist
Accepted	Marie Kildey	Concert Street Grand Organ
Accepted	Marie Kildey	Andre Rieu Concert
Accepted	John Sharples	The Old Trombone
Accepted	John Sharples	Rock-n-Roll



The Romance of Music Terry Biden Merit-Judges-Choice (8)



Delightful Music

Megan Willis

Merit (6)



Practice make perfect. John Frost Merit (6)



Still Playing Chris Townsend Merit (6)



Brass and Crotchet June Rush Credit (4)



His Master's Voice (3) June Rush Highly-Commended (2)



His Master's Voice (2)

June Rush

Highly-Commended (2)



It's Three O'clock

Helen Oliver

Highly-Commended (2)



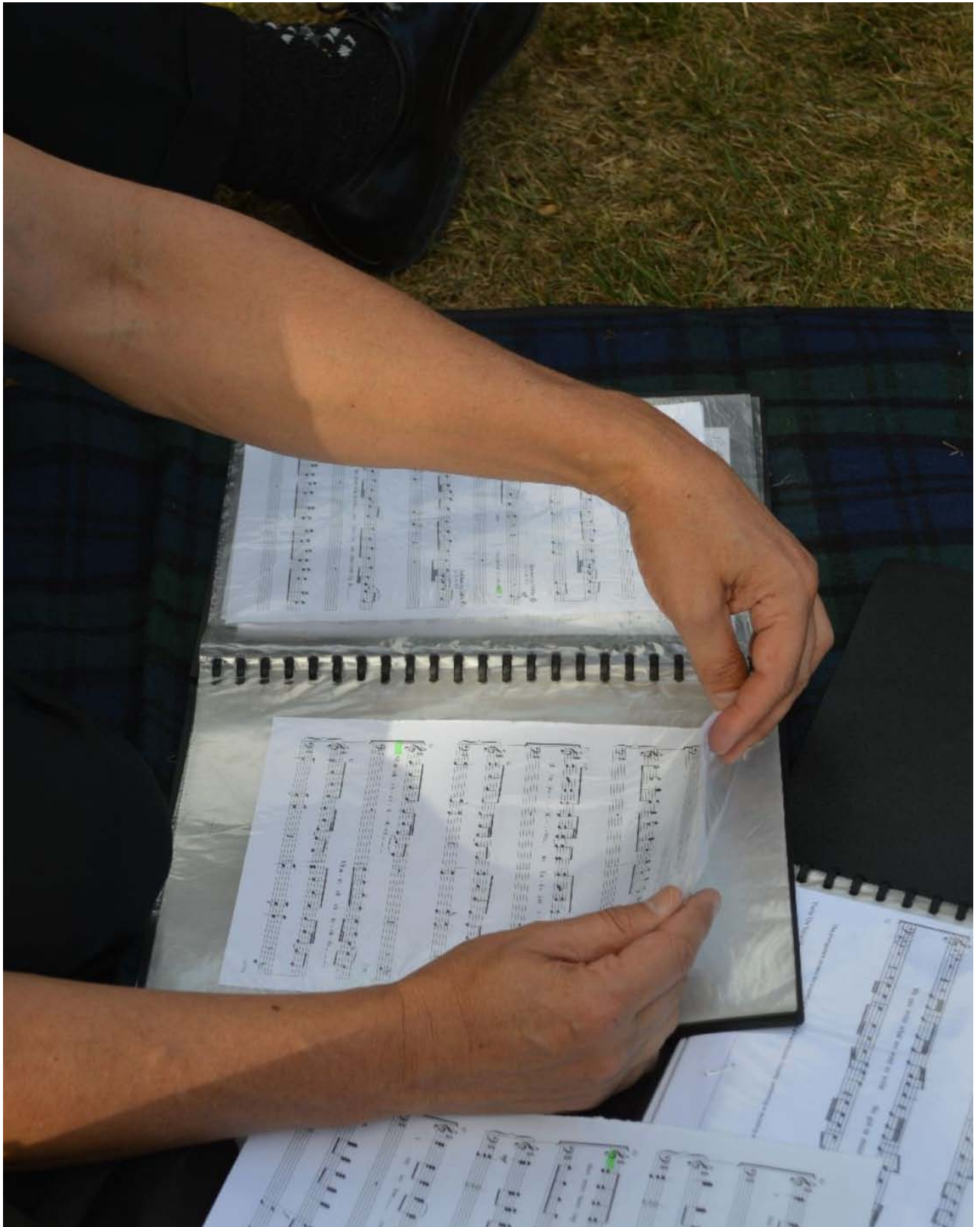
Sounds of the sea

Rene Schipper

Highly-Commended (2)



Behind the 73 Kee Grand Organ Marie Kildey Highly-Commended (2)



Getting ready to perform

Michelle Frost

Highly-Commended (2)



Accompanyist Michelle Frost Highly-Commended (2)

SCORES SUMMARY

The scores are year to date, after the October competition (on 9th October).

A Grade		B Grade	
Dianne English	138	Megan Willis	157
David Whyte	119	Rene Schipper	126
Bettina Damme	113	John Sharples	109
Ian English	110	John Frost	95
Michael Martin	109	Helen Oliver	94
Colleen Price	108	Ken Linsley	85
Mike Fidler	97	Chris Latham	73
Ray Watts	94	Dale Golby	38
Sue Winsley	91	June Rush	36
Brad Le Brocque	81	Marie Kildey	33
David Price	70	Mark Chellew	31
Dave Vane	68	David Hansell	30
Ian Nunn	62	Chris Townsend	22
Toni Conquest	54	Michelle Frost	16
Joy Thomas	48	Terry Biden	14
Matt Golby	39	Robert Kildey	12
John Payne	38	Susan Hansell	10
Susan Shipway	37	Charlotte Gale	7
Ardis Emmerton	35	Vaughan Winsley	6
Kevin Stokes	34	Ikuyo Pugh	4
Janet Payne	30		
Carla Edwards	29		
Dave Bouten	20		
Sandy Walker	19		
Lee-ann Hattander	14		
Garry Kemp	13		
Ross Burgess	12		
Sharon Eaton	10		
Bob Carey	8		
Betty Moncrieff	6		
Barbara Roy	5		
Ann Summerhill	3		
Don Roy	3		

OUR SOCIAL OUTINGS

by Colleen Price

Hunter Region Botanic Gardens Social Outing 15th September

A great day was had by the members who went to try out their macro skills. Kevin knew all the secrets of the gardens and was happy to share his knowledge and expertise. Hopefully some photos were entered in the Botanic Garden’s photography competition.















Mike Fidler's Bird Photography Morning 11th October

The drizzling rain did not deter our keen bird photographers from venturing to Martinsville to practise their nature photography under Mike's watchful eye.

A hearty breakfast was created by Dave Vane, assisted by Dianne English, and, no doubt, enjoyed by all. Fun and games followed breakfast with some challenging attempts at croquet and chess.















DATES AND DEADLINES

- **Newcastle National Exhibition of Photography 2018** The Newcastle National is in its 36th year of competition and is run annually in conjunction with the Newcastle Show. This year marks the first time that the Exhibition will be conducted using a web based platform developed by MyPhotoClub. The Exhibition will remain a PRINTS ONLY exhibition; however the entry process this year will require the submission of a digital image of each print for recording.
 - Full Details are on the link:
[Welcome to the 36th Newcastle National Exhibition of Photography 2018](#)
 - **Entries close:** Wednesday 10 January 2018, 6pm
 - **Exhibition day:** Friday 2 March
- **Wangi Worker Camera Club – POTY Competition:** closing soon. See Competition Night for November below for details.

MEMBERS CORNER

Keep an eye on our club website and the Facebook Page for up to date information.

Photo Editing Tips and Tricks

This month there is an article in Appendix A below by Mandy Disher on using LED lightpads in macro flora photography.

COMPETITION NIGHT FOR NOVEMBER – PHOTOGRAPH OF THE YEAR

The competition night is on **Monday 13th November at 7:00 pm** is our Photograph of the Year.

A reminder that POTY (Photography of the Year) **entries will be due at the Tutorial night in October (23rd October)** to be hand to the Competition Co-ordinator (Dianne English). **If you can't make the tutorial night they can be handed to Dianne English or David Whyte at least a week before the POTY night.**

POTY Definition

This is where we pick the best photo of the year. You can submit up to 4 photos but only 2 in any category. It must be a photo that has been entered in this year's competition but it doesn't have to have won an award.

When you bring your POTY photos to the tutorial can you have a label on the back with the following information:

Name
Grade
Title (Original title)
Section

There is no EDI or set subject section in POTY competition, so if you wish to enter an EDI entry in POTY it must be printed out.

A set subject entry can be entered but it will need to be entered in the Colour or Mono section and will compete against all the others.

The POTY sections are: Mono, Colour and Nature.

A winner will be selected out of each section and the POTY award will be chosen from those 3.

POTY entries do not need to be entered on the web as the POTY competition is independent of our web based comps. Entries need to be delivered to either Dianne English or David Whyte a week before the POTY night.

A nice trophy will be handed to the winner at our Christmas Dinner

YOUR HOCUS FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Hocus Focus would love articles and photos that may be of interest to our members. Please email to David at dlprice@tpg.com.au. Articles could include camera hints, Photoshop/Lightroom hints, holiday or local photography shoots, awards, competitions or upcoming events. Please send articles in Microsoft Word or plain-text-format with photos attached as separate files. Images should be jpg format and 1 to 2MB in size.

David Price
Newsletter Editor
Wangi Workers Camera Club
dlprice@tpg.com.au

Club Motto: A Shared Enjoyment of the Art and Craft of Photography in a Learning Environment

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APPENDIX A

Mandy Disher: Experimenting with light pads for photography

Mandy Disher: Experimenting with light pads for photography

[Amateur Photographer](#)

April 26, 2017

A few years ago Mandy Disher embarked on a series of experiments using flowers and high-key lighting from an LED light pad, with stunning results. Here she explains how you can recreate the look.

image: <http://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-florals-Japanese-anemone-600x400.jpg>



With delicate shades of pink, and an elegant shape, the Japanese anemone is a great subject for the light pad technique.
Canon EOS 6D, 100mm, 2.5sec at f/32, ISO 50. Credit: Mandy Disher

The spring and summer months offer a plentiful supply of flowers to admire, but when the winter garden fails to deliver, a trip to the local florist, or even supermarket, will allow you to stock up on attractive blooms and plan an indoor photo session to create high-key florals, and so much more.

I like to try new techniques and so embarked on a new and exciting challenge when I bought a light pad a few years ago. Experimenting with flowers and high-key lighting, I realised that with practice I could create beautiful and dynamic images. High-key is a style that spans both photography and other visual arts, where the tones are primarily light as the bright lighting eliminates most, or all, of the shadows, giving pictures a bright, energetic feel.

Light pads emit a controllable, bright and even light; I always use mine at its maximum brightness. These devices are considerably brighter and a marked improvement over the older traditional bulb light boxes, especially when one is looking to use their light pads for photography.

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-Florals-Heleniums.jpg>



Carefully arranged heleniums make for a cheerful image. Canon EOS 6D, 100mm, 0.8sec at f/29, ISO 50.

Selecting suitable subject matter

There are many different subjects that suit the light-pad treatment, so don't restrict yourself to just flowers and leaves. Personally, I like to work with natural elements and have accumulated a nice collection of dried seed heads and pods that work well as subject matter. I like the array of shapes and textures: the fragile papery seed cases of lunaria or the delicate lacy cages of physalis. Other more robust subjects include poppy pods and teasels – if harvested and kept dry these remain woody and strong.

I love to use pressed flowers and leaves in my work too; over the summer months I collect lots of flowers and press them using a Microfleur flower press. This is a great gadget for pressing flowers fast. The Microfleur comprises two plastic plates that clamp together with the flowers sandwiched in between. As the name suggests it goes into the microwave for just a few seconds.

The traditional method of pressing flowers involves placing them between the pages of heavy books, which can take months. The Microfleur presses and preserves them in seconds, and the results can be good with practice. The time it takes varies depending on the thickness of the plant: a rose is quite dense and contains a lot of moisture, which makes the process more difficult to get right; whereas a flat daisy-type flower does not contain much moisture and takes far less time to flatten and dry out. It only takes a few seconds to overheat a flower and doing so will result in them becoming scorched and brown. I microwave subjects initially for 30 seconds, and then in 10-second bursts, checking after each blast until the right amount of dryness is reached.

Many types of plant, including fruit and vegetables, make excellent subjects, as do seashells, sea urchins, sand dollars and fossils as they come in many wonderful shapes and colours. Nature offers an amazing and endless supply of beauty, colour and texture for inspiration.

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-florals-Spring-flowers.jpg>



Late winter heralds the arrival of narcissus, muscari and galanthus. Canon EOS 6D, 100mm, 2 seconds, f/22, ISO 50.

Studio set-up

My studio set-up is basically a small, low table that is just slightly larger than the light pad resting on it. With the centre column of my Manfrotto 190XPRO tripod repositioned horizontally, I attach my Canon EOS 6D and Canon 100mm macro lens and position them so they are pointing downwards onto the light pad.

My tripod is quite heavy and sturdy but because the centre column is extended horizontally, and fixed to a very weighty camera and lens at one end, it becomes a little unstable and there is the risk of it toppling over from a knock or push. As a result, I use a counterbalance to provide more stability to the off-centre load.

I set up the height I need and make sure that the lens is perfectly aligned using the electronic level function in my camera to correct any tilt. If I need the camera and lens closer to the light pad I add a little more height to the light pad by placing a book or box underneath it – it's much quicker than adjusting the tripod legs.

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-Florals-Blue-hydrangea.jpg>



Getting in close captures the petal structure and cool blue tones of these hydrangea flowers. Canon EOS 6D, 100mm, 2 seconds, f/32, ISO 50.

Lighting considerations

You don't necessarily need a macro lens to do light-pad work, but the light pad does need to be quite large. An A2 or larger size is needed to fill the viewfinder if used with a standard 50mm lens, and you can get away with an A3 size for macro lens work.

It's useful to place a sheet of glass directly onto the light pad – a same-size clipframe glass is ideal as the edges are usually ground smooth for safe handling. Arranging the subject on the glass allows you to make changes to your composition, such as rotating or realigning with the viewfinder, without having to move the light pad.

My top lighting is provided by a softbox that houses two corkscrew fluorescent bulbs, positioned to the side of the light pad and tilted downwards to illuminate the front of the subjects. The light emitted is diffused, bright and even – perfect for eliminating the shadows. It works for me and remains my lighting set-up of choice. Other types of continuous lighting could be used: the available natural light from a bright window might be good, for instance. A reflector is really useful here to bounce some light into the shadows.

Camera settings

With my flowers arranged and my camera positioned, I take several shots at different exposures for comparison. I shoot raw in manual mode and use small apertures to obtain a wide depth of field. If I'm very close to the subject and overexpose the shot by 1, 2 or sometimes 3 stops my shutter speed can be anything from 1 to 8 seconds.

The camera's histogram will be mainly to the right-hand side as there are a lot of bright pixels in the image. Settings vary depending on how close I am to the subject, but they are also governed by the luminosity or brightness of the flowers, and by how much of the subject is filling the frame. If I were shooting white flowers on a white background the camera settings would be different to those if I were shooting darker flowers under identical lighting.

Starting out with high-key is very much a case of trial and error – my aim is to get a good range of tones in the subject, avoid blown highlights and experiment with apertures and shutter speeds until I find a good balance.

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-Florals-Poppies-and-Heleniums.jpg>



A botanical beauty that's been given an extra creative touch with texture overlays and colour. Canon EOS 6D, 100mm, 0.6sec, f/22, ISO 50.

Making minor adjustments

Importing the raw files into Adobe Camera Raw allows me to access tools to adjust exposure, white balance and tonal values, as well as tweak colours, saturation etc. I then export my files into Photoshop to fine-tune them, removing any flecks that may be on the white background – there are usually a few no matter how carefully I try to keep the light pad free from debris. These flecks are hardly visible looking through a viewfinder, but they become more evident at the editing stage. Thankfully they are really simple to remove either using the clone tool or spot healing brush. Sometimes I'll need to make minor adjustments to colour and tonal values before sharpening the image.

Take your time

The great thing about creating a still-life image is the complete control you have over the scene, and the freedom you have to be creative with the content. It varies greatly from other types of photography such as landscape, wildlife or street photography where the scene is already set or waiting for the right moment to happen.

Arranging flowers into a pleasing composition on the light pad can sometimes be a lengthy process, especially if the flowers are very small and delicate, as they can be damaged easily. Hastily arranging the flowers won't produce good results unless you're very lucky.

A steady hand and nimble fingers are needed to move tiny flower heads into the desired position without upsetting the other flowers alongside them. As my fingers are not that nimble I prefer to use a large pair of tweezers to grab the stems or petals, adjust their position and move the plant subject around the light pad. A good deal of my work is close-up, and tiny adjustments can make significant changes when viewed through a macro lens.

Allow plenty of time to compose the arrangement, use your creativity and try out new ideas. I often look back at images and note that if I had spent a little more time composing the shot it could have been improved. Learning by past mistakes, I now make sure that I get it right in-camera as much as possible.

In the long run a relaxed, unhurried approach regarding the prep work will help you to create a more engaging and compelling image. It will also save you a great deal of time and effort in post-production. It takes only a split second to fire the shutter, but much longer to set the scene.

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-Florals-Pressed-flowers.jpg>



A mix of assorted pressed flower heads makes for a lively image. Canon EOS 6D, 100mm, 1 second, f/32, ISO 50.

Visual design

An eye for composition and an understanding of light, colour, form and shape is a valuable asset. It doesn't matter how technically perfect a photograph is, if it has a weak composition it won't hold your attention. A good structure of shape, and a sense of order and balance with colours that work well together all contribute to make an image that stands out and catches your eye.

I examine the different shapes, and pay particular attention to form, which is different to shape as it contains the contrast and depth of subjects too. I also look at the colours, small details and textures of flowers, using varying sizes of flower head. What's more, I try to consider the different stages of a plant's development from bud to mature bloom. I then consider where I want to place them within the frame of the viewfinder, repositioning the flowers until I find an arrangement that pleases my eye.

It's important to not only think about how the elements work together, but also their relationship with the negative space in the frame. I place the stems meticulously, creating gentle curves and flowing lines that hopefully convey a sense of movement or emotion. They can also lead our eye, guiding us through the image.

I don't consciously think about any of the rules or guidelines for composition as I think I have a natural ability to see when the scene before me looks right or wrong, it happens instinctively as I build the image, but I probably do subconsciously divide the frame into sections, each portion of the frame linking into the next floral filled space in a seamless way without even being aware of it.

Mandy's Top Tips

1. Add a texture overlay

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-florals-add-texture-overlay.jpg>



Once I've created a high-key image on a pure white background I sometimes play around by introducing a soft colour and adding a texture overlay to it. Occasionally I import elements to the scene, which I edit to appear understated in the background.

2. Try an oil paint filter

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-florals-try-oil-paint-filter.jpg>



This allium image has the same processing technique as mentioned in the first tip, with an added oil paint filter. I love how this Photoshop filter smoothes the tiny details out rendering the photographic image into painterly wall art.

3. Use glass on the light pad

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-florals-use-glass-on-light-pad.jpg>



Snowdrops can be surprisingly delicate. When faced with such specimens it can be helpful to place them on a sheet of glass over the light pad and manoeuvre this, rather than risk damaging the flowers by constant handling and repositioning.

4. Experiment with fruit

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-experiment-with-fruit.jpg>



Don't simply limit yourself to flowers and leaves on the light box, experiment with other bold, easily recognisable subjects, such as slices of fruit or vegetables. I love the way the hairs on the skin of this kiwi are so clearly defined.

5. Try using a flower press

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-florals-use-flower-press.jpg>



The traditional method of pressing flowers involves placing them between pages of heavy books, but I use a Microfleur flower press, which is much faster. The time it takes to dry each specimen depends on the thickness of the plant.

6. Change the background

image: <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Mandy-Disher-florals-change-background.jpg>



By using a sheet of glass over the light pad I can lift the arrangement off intact. One reason for doing this is if I would like to place coloured tissue paper or textured paper on top of the light pad and replace the arrangement back over it to vary the background.

Kit list**LED light pad**

A modern LED light pad outputs a bright and even light. An A3 size is perfect for close-up work, an A2 or larger allows more freedom and a better solution for longer distances with standard lenses.

Counterbalance sandbag

Don't risk the tripod falling over – a counterbalance costs just a few pounds or you could simply make your own by adding some weight in a strong holder, but make sure it is secured well.

Remote control switch

A remote control switch is an essential as exposures can be long. Firing the shutter by hand will only result in disappointing images.

Softbox

A softbox fluorescent continuous lighting system for a home studio doesn't have to break the bank. Budget kits can be found on eBay and Amazon that are really good value for money.

Tripod

A good quality, versatile and sturdy tripod that features a sliding centre column that can be operated in the horizontal plane is essential for shooting parallel above the light pad.

Fine-art photographer Mandy Disher has built up an extensive portfolio since her interest in floral photography began 10 years ago. Mandy has achieved great success in the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition, being awarded winner of the Plant Portrait category for two consecutive years and Portfolio winner of the 2015 competition with her 'Full Circle' series of botanical images. Visit www.mandydisher.com