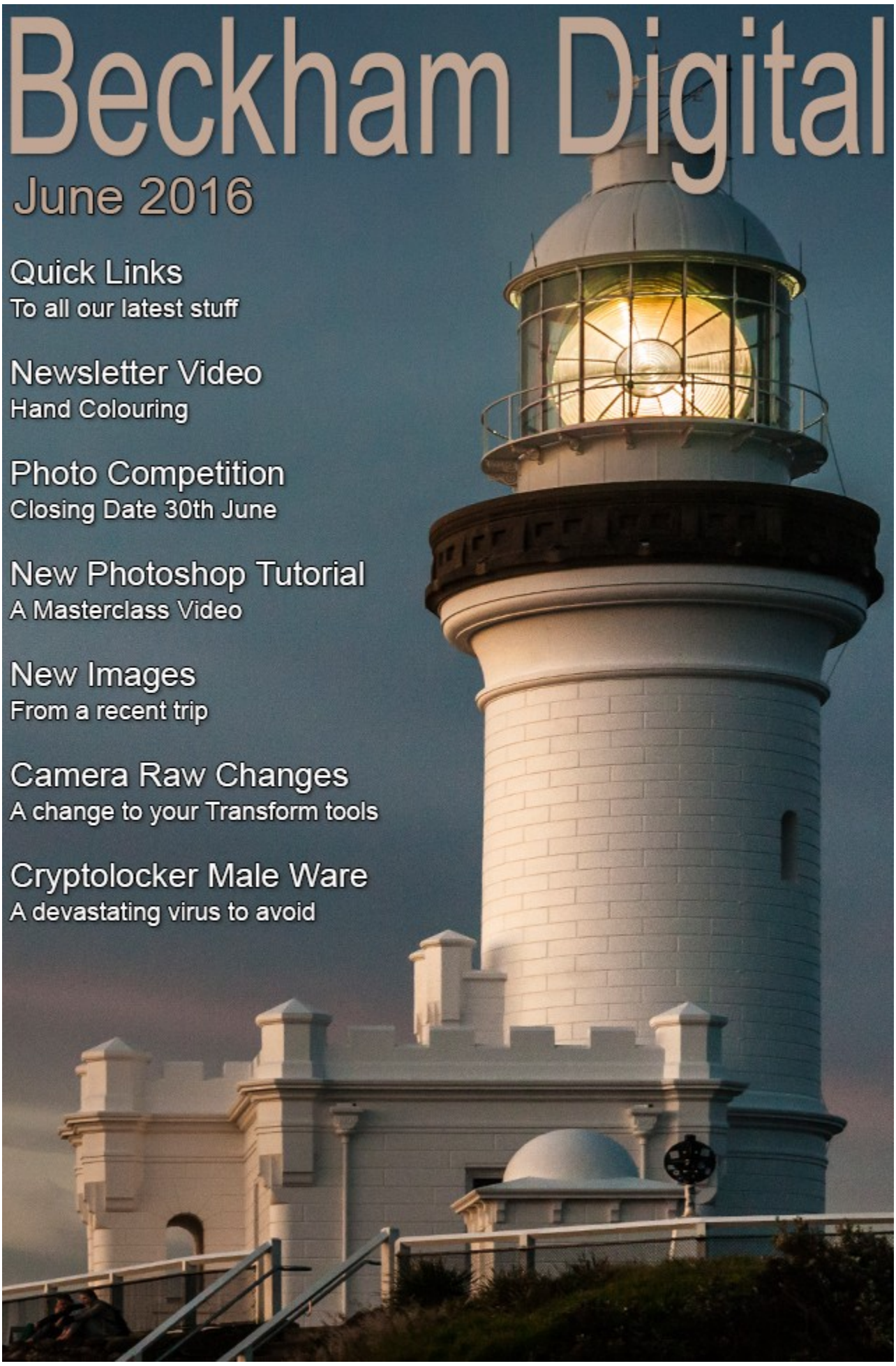
Beckham Digital

June 2016



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June Newsletter

Welcome to our June Newsletter. My cover image is the Byron Bay Lighthouse and this was shot after sunset while back at the car after an evenings shooting. It happens doesn't it? You're just putting the tripod and cameras away in the car and as you look back there is suddenly a picture there.

The thing is everything had been packed away, you're tired and ready for dinner, so I did the other thing. A hand held shot using 1600 iso, which allowed me to shoot the lighthouse at a 30th of a second shutter speed at f5.6. The focal length of the lens was 75mm, so some care was still needed to avoid camera shake.

Remember the old rule that is still a good guide. If you're using a 200mm lens, you will need at least 200th of a second shutter speed to get a crisp shot. If that is used as a guide it will pay off. Even if you can't get the shutter speed you want, that old rule or guideline at least tips you off about the potential for a blurred shot. Then we can be a bit more careful holding the camera.

The above is the view from the lighthouse platform, with the lighthouse directly behind us. It's a wide sweeping bay with a great westerly view. Here we have the age old problem of shooting before the sun has set and in these situations we have to control the high contrast light between the sky and the forground, Some choose graduated filters, but I use exposure. Taking a bracketed set of three images with 1 stop between each.

Using Photoshop, Camera Raw, Layers and Masks, I can easily use the better exposed sky from one of the images with the best exposure of the forground from another. Our Photoshop for Photographers tutorial set covers this technique, which is easier and quicker than you think. Look particularly at Part 7 for this option. It's the technique I use all the time.

Remember our Photoshop for Photographers Part 1 set is completely free of charge and so is our Photoshop Bridge tutorials

Photographic Competition

Remember, you still have time to enter an image into our June competition. It's simple to do, just click the file drop link and drag ONE jpeg image only onto the page. As if by magic is will appear in my MediaFire folder ready for judging

Competition Guide

Try to keep your images no larger than 1920 pixels by 1080 pixels and that is simply to allow me to put together a slide show of all the finished images, quickly and easily along with the results.

1. The subject is open, **one image only**. Colour, Monochrome, anything you want
2. Entries will be via a MediaFire file drop link here
3. Closing Date for enties 30th June 2016
4. Images may contain a title, but in all other respects must remain anonymous, no authors name. You will know who you are when you see and hear the results.
5. Judging will be arranged via a judge who will also remain anonymous to those entering.
6. Marks will be out of 10

Competition Guidelines or Etiquette

Try to avoid the temptation to sort through your images and use a tried and tested successful image from a previous competition. Try something new and different, so you're honour bound to submit newer images or those not seen before if possible. That benefits both you and others entering.

The judge and all entries will be anonymous to each other and that should ensure the most honest feedback you're ever likely to get on your images.

So, why not give it a go and the File Drop Entry web page is HERE Results will be available via the Forum HERE

June Newsletter Video – Hand Colouring

A request from one of our readers was to demonstrate hand colouring of black and white images. Using Photoshop's Layers, this technique is relatively easy, but it just needs a steady hand in some circumstances. This sort of work is also made so much easier with a Graphic Tablet. Using a pen instead of a mouse makes this sort of photographic editing much more controllable.

We don't always have to be precise of course, sometimes a little strategic and subtle colour painted into an image just at the right spot can be all you need. One image I created last year was the old Crofters Cottage taken at the Blists Hill - Victorian Town museum at Ironbridge Gorge in the UK.

If you have not been there, give it a go and have a great days photography. There are more subjects here than you can shake a stick at and here is a novel idea. Wait for a rainy day, because it will enhance the look of the images you shoot and keep some of the tourists away.

Hand coluring can be done on a monochrome image like the one above, or even a colour image like the one right.

Here only two of the sails were originally coloured yellow. The rest were all white sails until the other yellow colour, plus the blue and green were painted in manually.

The technique is both simple, yet opens up creative posibilities in many images.

Photoshop Creative Cloud Masterclass – Video Tutorial

Here is a subject that I think most photographers would be attracted too. The bird was walking around in the gloom of the forest floor, occasionally raising its head and neck up into the brightest sunlight.

It looked very appealing. Then again, there is always that gap between what we can see with our own eyes and what we can reasonably capture with our camera

Of course, I didn't see the scene as it looks here in this captured image, far from it. It looked much more appealing than this.

Before I even framed up on the subject I knew that the contrast range between the background shadows and the bird would be huge on the image and far worse than I was seeing at the time.

It's a fact of life that a cameras sensor will not capture the contrast range that our eyes can see. In addition I didn't have to radically increase the ISO of my eyes just so I could see a sharp subject, but that's what I had to do that to get a sharp image with a 400mm lens.

In times like these our exposure is critical, I couldn't lose too much detail in the highlights or allow the shadows to go too dark. The last thing I want to do is to have to raise a lot of tone from over dark shadows after using 1000 ISO. All that would do is make any noise in the image far worse.

With a bit of care, I think we can get a good image here, but really the excersise is in controlling the contrast and dealing with the noise caused by the use of a high ISO. The trick is to do all that while not making the good parts of the image worse. Plus, we have to tidy up the composition too.

So, whether you are a Photoshop or Lightroom user, you do have the tools at your disposal to make something of an image like this and the type of contrast we see here is not uncommon. However, Photoshop Layers gives us an edge and are often the difference between success and failure.

Check out our 30 minute video as we work our way through the manipulation of this image.

New Flickr Photos

A recent trip south from our home North of Brisbane to Batemans Bay which is south of Sydney (around 1250km) allowed us to capture some New Images. Our travels lasted 6 weeks and in that time our approach was to try and find those out of the way places that may provide interesting images for our photography.

Much of our effort is spent in getting to these places at the right time of day, meaning a time when the contrast

is more controllable, or when the wildlife may be around. We generally call this the golden hour around dawn or dusk, but even in those times, exposure can be tricky.

I tend to work from a tripod a lot of the time because when light is low, the tripod enables me to use a full range of apertures, to keep the iso set low at 100, but not have to be concerned with camera shake due to hand holding the camera. Yes, carrying the tripod can be a pain at times, but if you want to achieve the very best results, then it's worth the effort.

As the light levels drop at evening time, a small aperture can be selected, which allows for some movement in water. Remember that dust particles on the sensor of your camera will be more visible at f22 than they will be at f8. However, even that is a small price to pay to have the freedom of use of all the settings on your camera.

When you're hand holding in low light, your shutter speeds will be dangerously slow or too slow and you lose the ability to select a smaller aperture. Then the temptation is to raise the iso to 400 or more and the result is increased noise in your image.

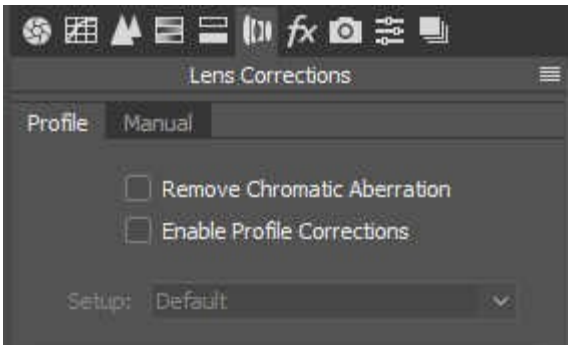
Remember, if you do increase the iso late in the day, exposure has to be the best you can achieve. If not and you have to lighten shadows to bring up detail, that noise will then be made much worse.

The Byron Light - 15th @ f8 – 100iso – Lens Canon 24-105mm set at 58mm – via a tripod

At this size the light of the Lighthouse on the headland is difficult to see, but in the higher resolution example the Byron light can be seen flashing in our direction. While a small point of light, it's pretty vital for the image.

Photoshop Creative Cloud - Changes

I have noticed a slight change in Adobe Camera Raw following a recent small update, When you go to the Lens Correction section of Camera Raw you will notice a slight difference.



There are now only two tabs available, Profile and Manual, previously there were three.

We can see that Chromatic Aberration and the Profile Corrections shown on the left are now situated together, which is a logical change. If you go to one, you are more likely to want the other as well.

What has been moved away from the Lens Correction panel in Camera Raw is the Manual Tab.

This is where we would find those tools to correct distortion manually and also where we can use the automatic tools to fix converging verticals.

All these transform tools can now be found in the tool bar at the top left of the Camera Raw screen, as shown below.

Cryptolocker Maleware – Beware

A week or so ago we got hit with the Cryptolocker Maleware. Our electricity statement was due and turned up as expected in my wife's emails looking very authentic with all the right logos, but the document was zipped. We are generally very street wise when it comes to these things, but also recently one of our other payment methods has been changed. She thought this may also be a change and our guard slipped for a moment. The file was unzipped and that affected just her PC.

Cryptolocker Maleware encrypts word docs and files including images and the cretins who create this demand you pay a ransom for the key to unlock the files. Nothing can be opened.

What is most devastating about this male-ware is that generally we expect attacks to come on our C drive and not on other internal drives on our computer that we tend to think of as a bit safer. Internal drives that may contain lots of completed images and word documents.

We have three internal drives on that computer. The C drive for programs and the Operating System and two others for everything else. Most of the damage appears to be on just one of those drives, so it seems that we have lost little due to our regime of backing up important stuff on external drives, but I think she has lost some images and recent accounts for the last month that

will have to be done again.

Getting rid of the Maleware was not such an issue and we did that using Malewarebytes software. However, we have a premium version of Malewarebytes running on all our computers, so how did it let the male-ware through if it was able to remove it later? I think an email to Malewarebytes for an explanation might be in order.

Unfortunately, no one seems to have found a way to retrieve those already encrypted files, so although the cause can be got rid of easily, the damage cannot be undone. The only option is to delete the encrypted files, unless you want to pay some cretin to unlock them for you.

So, be on your guard people and when you stop and think about these things in the cold light of day. Why should anyone send a statement or email to you in zipped format. With the benefit of hindsight, we should have seen this coming, but you only have to let your guard down for a minute and the damage can be done.

However, we mustn't allow these attacks to make us so nervous that our computer starts to become a liability or cause us stress. There should be few reasons, if any, for a zipped file to be sent to you attached to an email. So if you get one and you're not 100% certain of its authenticity, dump it.

Canon 5DsR – 50 Million Pixel Camera

Recently, Doreen from the Beckham Forum kindly sent me some raw images from her new Canon 5DsR. The camera is based on the 5D build, so the operation of the camera is very much the same as any Canon SLR users will recognise.

I was interested to see the difference that a 50 mega-pixel camera had over a 20 mega-pixel one. My views, for what they are worth, are found on the forum HERE.

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