

Photography tips -

A great start - The apparatus

By Ruth E. Henderson

The other night after doing a 'slide show' I was asked "What camera do you use?"

Funnily enough I had to stop and think, cos I've been through a few lately. (note waterproof cameras do not swim, they sink). The answer that should have been on the tip of my tongue is an Olympus Tough TG-810. It replaced the drowned Olympus TG-310, which replaced the rusted Canon Powershot A620... But the make and model really is irrelevant.

The real answer is whatever is in my hand. It could be my daughter's camera handed to me at a grandchild's birthday party, or your camera given to me to take your picture.

My point is that the camera, any camera is just a tool. You the operator create or compose the picture.

Or as Frank Hurley the photographer on the 'Endeavour' wrote in 1911 'Regard your camera as an artist does his brush. Think that you hold a piece of apparatus worthy of the same possibilities as the artist. Your camera is but a piece of mechanical apparatus. You are its intellect.'

But, before we look at the art, let's look at the brush...

A professional photographer will have different cameras, several lenses, and tripods for different situations. Most of us will have only one, so choose a camera that suits your main purpose. This will involve compromise.

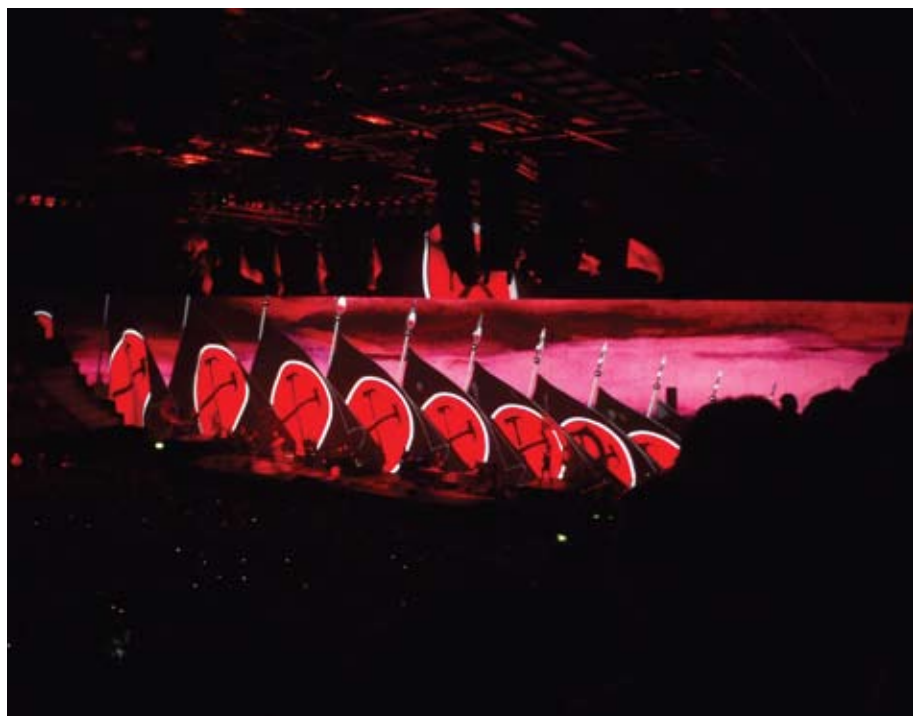
Perhaps one day we will be able to have a camera that has a viewfinder as well as a screen, is waterproof and floats, takes standard torch batteries available anywhere in the world, and is a slim-line compact jobbie that fits in your rear jeans pocket, and doesn't break when you fall off your bike and land on your butt.

Meanwhile I've gone for a camera that is

waterproof, shockproof, and compact.

I miss the viewfinder and convenience and cheapness of AA batteries! But do love being able to slip it into my buoyancy aid pocket and not worry about it when I get creamed in the surf.

Have a play, be familiar with your camera's basic functions. If you want to be able to capture the action anytime, anywhere, be able to find your way around it in the dark or without your reading glasses. Know how to turn the flash OFF - very useful for those moody or natural light shots or at concerts when flash is not allowed. Know how to quickly set it to multi-shoot mode - in case the dolphins start cavorting around you. Make sure you load it up with a decent sized memory card especially if you want to take movies or photos for printing or publishing. I use a



Left Be able to use your camera in the dark - good at concerts!



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4GB card, and carry a spare.

Set the image size or resolution high enough so that if you do get a pearler shot, and want to mount it on the lounge wall it can be printed at A3 or even A1 size. I set my camera at image size 8MB and compression Fine. At this setting I can take 626 photos on a 4GB memory card. Enough for most weekends! If I do need more, then I can change the compression to Normal and get 1224 shots.

When downloaded, the 8MB raw image compresses down to about 3 - 4MB as a JPG. This size will keep James happy when you send in photos to accompany stories in this magazine, and if they are suitable allow him to use them for an A3 centrefold or A4 front cover print.

Another reason for setting your camera at a high resolution is that it allows you to crop a photo. Occasionally you want to trim or crop the

got in the way of a good composition.

Apart from the stuff that came with my camera, the other hardware I use is a battery charger that works independently from my camera/ computer. I'm often away from my computer and some times four



Essential accessories – spare batteries, battery charger for power mains or car cigarette lighter, spare memory card

batteries are just not enough!

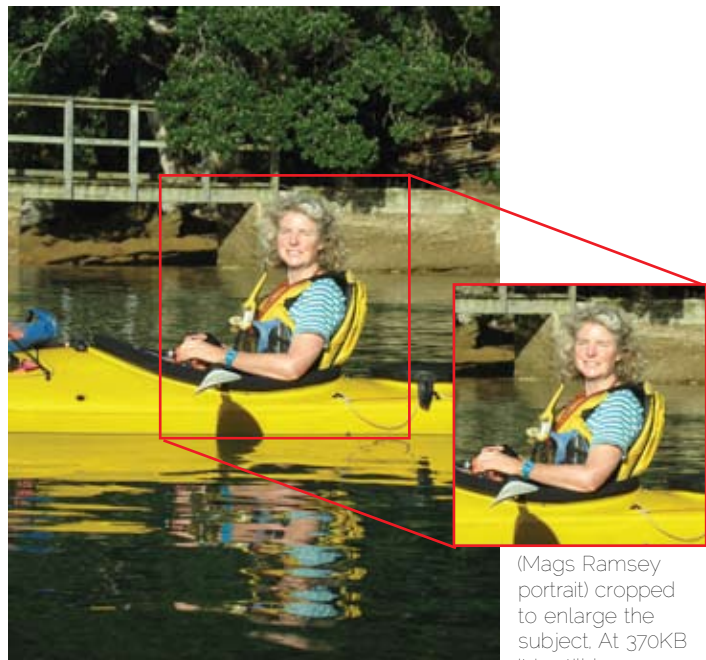
Being very conscious of losing photos or computer files by fire, theft or other misadventure, after downloading to my computer I always save my photos to a USB external drive which is kept in my emergency 'grab bag' and once a year before cleaning up my computer files, I put the past year's photos on discs and store those at 'Mum's'. This means that at any one time my photos are in at least two storage devices and places.

Other extras I consider essential are a tripod (love my Gorilla) and when on the water, a float. Do test these; the fancy anchor shaped ones are not buoyant enough for the average compact camera.

A lens cleaner is a good idea, and if you do have a waterproof camera use the brush to clean the invisible dust off the seals every time you open it.

Lastly I use a card reader when downloading my photos. It is simpler than using the camera and its various leads. Beside which, I'd just hate it if my camera was tied up doing its laborious dual thing of downloading and charging the battery and I looked out my office window and saw some orcas cruising by!

Next issue I'll talk about composition.



(Mags Ramsey portrait) cropped to enlarge the subject. At 370KB it is still large enough to print a 4 x 6" photo.

full sized image at 3MB

photo to enhance the subject or make the subject more dominant. Sometimes you just cannot get close enough to the action and need to get rid of surplus foreground, or a stray elbow or boat that somehow



Unable to get close to the action

(Sue Levett rolling) cropped of extraneous material

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