

Newsletter, August 2019



The “Ironfest Three”

Scott Gilbank, Eddy Summers and Mick Tait on photographing Ironfest



Ironfest. The annual pilgrimage for so many club members. It's a tough gig: the mid-April, midday light can be cruel; the weather in Lithgow can be hot.

The festival can be pretty crowded – intimidating even for those of us uncomfortable with pointing our cameras directly at people. There's so much going on – finding one's focus can seem impossible.

The newsletter asked three seasoned Ironfest photographers – professional shooters Scott Gilbank, Eddy Summers, and Mick Tait, how

Getting good shots at Ironfest can be a challenge for our club members, even for those for whom it is regular event. We asked “three of the best” how they work the festival.

they approached the challenges (and rewards) of shooting this spectacular event.

One standout difference in their approaches is control. Gilbank controls his photographic environment by using a marquee, a canvas backdrop and shooting his subjects close up, with a strict measure of control over the lighting using a 5-foot Octabox (this is an

octagonal light diffusion ‘umbrella’ that is particularly good for photographing people at close quarters).

His is a professional portrait service, for which he charges a modest fee.

Summers and Tait prefer to roam the crowds and take their chances although Tait, in particular, focuses in close on his subjects to eliminate

unwanted clutter and distractions in the background.

He didn't always shoot this way: Tait, from Gerringong on the NSW South Coast, is a keen underwater photographer but a knee injury spelled an end to diving about three years ago. In 2017, Tait met a retired American photographer for the girlie magazine Playboy, in Bali, whose close-up street photography style influenced his technique.

Take heart: Tait's a newcomer to festival photography. “Ironfest 2018 was my first venture into the world



Photo: Mick Tait

of photographing a festival event,” he says.

“From then on, I started following different festivals and events, and began meeting all the creative and talented people that were turning up on this circuit.”

This networking might be a key to his rapid success in festival photography: building confidence in approaching people; gleaning tips and techniques from other photographers.

One thing he learned was to keep on the move. “I was told to not think too much when shooting. I was also told to keep moving: keep trying different angles; don’t get too

focused on one shot. While this may seem a little crazy, it does seem to work.”

The contrast in background and style with Gilbank couldn’t be more

stark. Glibank’s profession is in corporate videography and digital online content – working in a controlled environment but never losing sight of the excitement of



Photo: Scott Gilbank



Photo: Eddy Summers, illustrating his “weird thingy” flash technique

“taking the ordinary and making it beautiful”, as he says, and doing every shoot with passion.

He captures the essence of Ironfest – the theatricality of the costumes, often a full year or more in the design and making – with his studio-style, close-up portraits. No

distractions: just a full focus on the face and the costume.

Sitting beautifully between Gilbank and Tait is Summers, whose passion is ‘cosplay’ (costume + play). No wonder he loves Ironfest.

For Summers, the costumes add a whole other dimension to portrait photography.

“So much attention to detail goes into the various costumes and designs that translates fantastically to the medium of photography.



Eddy Summers holding the “weird thingy”



Scott Gilbank in his “studio” at Ironfest



Photo: Eddy Summers, illustrating some “art lens” flare

“With cosplay I get to enhance and drive the focus of the image to all aspects of the portrait and not just the face ... the camera loves cosplay. They make it easy!”

Summers, who describes himself as “still fairly new” to “proper

photography” especially likes public events like Ironfest as they provide “a safe place where possible failures might occur without harming paying clients.”

For shooting at the main Ironfest event Summers used his “weird

thingy” - a “single Speedlite (flashgun) set to maximum power firing through a hand-held MagMod bounce and diffuser umbrella”.

He notes that while this spills a lot of light it nevertheless produces sufficient soft light for filling out

the shadows, creating shots where it’s not at all obvious that a flash was actually used.

At the same time as managing, or at least influencing, the external lighting conditions, Summers sometimes purposely chooses less than perfect lenses that add further character to his images.

“I quite like optically-flawed glass, ‘art’ lenses I call them. I don’t mind flare and feel it can add to the shot when controlled.” His website (see box page 5) has examples of shots taken with selected lenses.

Summers emphasises that “light is everything in photography” and so “if it’s poor, bring your own”.

For working public events his advice is to “stop and think for a second before launching into shooting mode - and don’t be afraid to move the public to the angles you think will get the best photographic outcome.”

Gilbank’s “BYO studio” approach gives him great lighting control and allows his subjects to present their Ironfest characters at their formal best, perhaps as they’d wish them to be seen.

On the other hand, both Summers and Tait capture their subjects amidst the active, sometimes jostling, outdoor ambience of Ironfest.

Summers' "BYO lighting" approach necessarily means his subjects, while beautifully lit, tend to appear posed.

While Ironfest cosplayers inevitably pose almost automatically on approach, Tait's greater freedom of movement allows him the chance of taking shots with a candid flavour.

What all three men agree on about shooting Ironfest is to be courageous, bold, inquisitive, experimental and, above all, enjoy the mob!

As Tait says: "Shoot Lots. No good shot was ever taken on a camera sitting in a bag. Talk to people; 99.9% of them are awesome.

"Surround yourself with like-minded people who like to share."

See more of "The Ironfest Three's" photos on pages 12-14.

"No good shot was ever taken on a camera sitting in a bag".



Scott Gilbank

<https://www.instagram.com/scottgilbank/>
<https://www.facebook.com/scottgilbankphotography/>
<https://www.scottgilbank.com>

Ironfest images only:

<https://www.facebook.com/ironfest2017photos/>

Eddy Summers

<https://www.instagram.com/eddysummersphotography/>
<https://www.facebook.com/eddysummersphotography/>
<https://eddysummersphotography.myportfolio.com>

Behance Cosplay:

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/83338541/Cosplay>

Mick Tait

<https://www.instagram.com/micktaitphotographer/>
<https://www.facebook.com/MickTaitPhotography/>

Members' choice DPI – “They’re definitely blue”

This image was taken on the club outing to Coachwood Glen one morning earlier in the year where Emanuel had organized a fungi photography shoot.

Emanuel had told us we would need to look around us carefully to spot the fungi and to tread carefully so as not to break or squash them unwittingly.

It was certainly a cool, damp and dimly lit area with just a little sunlight filtering through the trees but once you started to look, they were dotted around in numerous places: fungi of many different sizes, shapes, colours and patterns.

Taking photos was at least a little challenging in places where it was muddy and damp and having to crouch so low, very close to the ground made the body ache more than a little! The tiny blue fungi captured in this image were growing from a rotting log in just such an area.

They were so small it would have been easy to miss them unless you were especially looking!



Sony A6000, 55-210mm (210) with
26mm extension, f 6.3, 2/5s,
ISO 200.

Andy Horsfall

Members' choice mono – “Magpie”

Photography can often be a technical and demanding thing. However, there are times when the process is just a simple and uncomplicated reaction to seeing something pleasing. Such was the case with this shot.

It was certainly not what I had expected to find at the mining museum at Lithgow. I'd loaded a macro lens to try capturing the old rusty equipment stored around the yards, but I couldn't help noticing this lone magpie on a lamppost. I quite liked the curve of the post and the vacant background so I just snapped off a few shots from below before he flew away.

Back home on the computer it just needed a bit of a crop, smoothing out some background clouds and converting to mono before printing on Canson Baryta paper.

Pentax K1, Sigma 70mm macro, *f*11, 1/80s.

Alan Daniel



Members' choice colour – “The trek”



This is one of a number of photographs I took of a group of trekkers on the Skaftafell glacier during a trip to Iceland last year.

Located on the southern coast of

Iceland, the glacier is part of one of the largest glaciers in Europe, the Vatna glacier.

Trekking on the glacier is not a task to be undertaken lightly and

certainly not without the correct equipment and experienced guides.

Apart from the cold and the changeable weather conditions it is cut by crevasses and moulins.

While the crevasses are typically 30-40 metres in depth, moulins are well-like shafts into which water enters from the surface and can be hundreds of metres deep. On this glacier they could have reached a depth of over 500 metres.

Taking the photograph presented a few difficulties, not the least of which was caused by the significant amount of moving mist regularly obscuring the group of trekkers.

Added to this was the problem of the brightness of the ice, for which I used a polarising filter.

Canon EOS M6 (mirrorless),
Tamron 18-200 mm $f3.5-6.3$ Di II
VC (50), $f8.0$, $1/125$ s, ISO 100.

Robert Lipscombe

Diary

Reminder: Blackheath Horticultural Society Photography Competition, September

Club members, and especially all our new members, are encouraged to enter this inaugural competition.

The entrance fee is a measley \$10 and framing is not required, indeed it is not permitted! The required presentation is similar to that for our club exhibition nights: photos mounted with a cardboard mat. Image size to be no larger than 500 mm x 400 mm.

Entries are to be submitted to Laraine Graham, 231 Govetts Leap Road, Blackheath, Friday 20th September from 3.00pm to 7.30pm - the day before the show.

Entry forms are now available. We will distribute some at the club next exhibition night, or you can request one directly from: bdhsinc89@gmail.com.

Grandparents' Day Competition

The NSW Government is running a photographic competition as part of their Grandparents Day program. The aim of the competition is to foster relationships between generations by creating and capturing their special moments together.

The photos should star grandparents, grand-friends and kin to thank them for the amazing contributions they make to our lives and communities across the state.

For more information and to enter please click [here](#).

Photographer of the Year

There is still time to enter this terrific amateur photography competition. Photographer of the Year is the largest competition for amateur photographers in the Southern Hemisphere. This year's prize pool is valued at more than \$25,000.



Helen Whittle's winning portfolio in Photographer of the Year 2016

There are seven portfolio categories – Landscape, Wildlife and Animal, People and Portrait, Travel, Black and White, Junior and Action – that require you to submit a series of four images.

Photo of the Year is an open, single-image category.

What are you waiting for? For entry details, deadlines and fees click [here](#).



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MEDIEVAL FAIRE

Tickets are now on sale for this 21 – 22 September event. Click [here](#) for details and to purchase your tickets online.



Time for some Spring Cleaning?

As we all know only too well dust is an enemy all photographers have to contend with.

But you may not be aware that your sensor, lenses and other sensitive gadgetry is not all that those pesky particles can find their way into.

The laptop or desktop computer that you rely on for processing and organising your precious photos is a “dust magnet” and appreciates a regular spring clean.

Its cooling fans move a lot of air through the case, and thus inevitably a lot of dust. Over time, a matted layer of dust can build up clogging grilles and cooling fins.

A significant dust build up can seriously degrade the performance of your computer, typically slowing it down as the processor core goes into self-protection mode to prevent it, literally, from melting down.

If you have dust building up inside your PC or laptop you will probably hear fan noise more loudly and more often than usual, and in severe cases your PC performance will slow down considerably. It may even shut itself down apparently at random to save itself.

Hopefully the inside of your desktop PC looks more like this ...



than this ...



Gentle work with small brush and a vacuum cleaner will swiftly deal with the problem. Persistent dust stuck in cooling fins can be blown out using a can of compressed air.

Laptops are just as susceptible to dust build up, especially as the intake and exhaust grilles are finer and much smaller.

Ideally you should bravely remove the back once a year to inspect for dust.

If you own an Apple iMac, opening the case is a tricky operation and several vital components are very easy to damage in the process. Not for the faint hearted. However, dust buildup can be removed without dismantling the case by following the instructions [here](#).

Apple laptops on the other hand are very easy to open but care must be taken when removing the tiny screws which may be of several different sizes. Note carefully the position each came from. A magnetic sheet to hold them in position can be handy.

If you own a Mac Mini you are in luck as dust can be simply shaken and blown out of the case with compressed air, as an Fstoppers' contributor explains (click [here](#)).

Happy spring cleaning!

Michael Peck



Bowness Photography Prize Shortlist Announced

The shortlist for the \$35,000 Bowness Photography Prize has been announced.

Established in 2006 to promote excellence in photography, the annual William and Winifred Bowness Photography Prize is an initiative of the Monash Gallery of Art Foundation in Victoria. The Bowness Photography Prize has quickly become one of Australia's most important photography prizes.

Some of Australia's most respected and celebrated artists, including Polly Borland, Sonia Payes, Danie Mellor, David Rosetzky, Justine Varga, Stephen Dupont and Jacqui Stockdale – just to name a few, will be exhibited at Monash Gallery of Art from 5 October until 17 November 2019. Nearly 700 entries were received this year.

To see more entries click [here](#).

FREE!



ON1 Effects 2019

This application for both Windows and Mac offers many preset filters and image adjustments. It runs stand alone or as a plug-in to Lightroom and Photoshop. You can still get it for free via this [link](#).



Shortlisted photo by Gerwyn Davies: *Flesh 2019*, from the series *Deluxe*



Photo: Scott Gilbank



Top photo: Eddy Summers; bottom: Mick Tait



Top photo: Mick Tait; bottom: Eddy Summers



Photo: Scott Gilbank



Photo: Mick Tait



Photo: Scott Gilbank

For sale

Canon 700D + gear, excellent condition

This sale is for a Canon 700D DSLR with shutter count 5,600 and:

- 1 x 18-55mm, $f1:3.5-5.6$ lens
- 1 x 55-250mm, $f1:4-5.6$ lens, with hood
- 2 x batteries
- 1 x charger
- 16 GB memory card
- Case Logic camera case

Price for all: \$540. Ph. Selena 0418 420 445



LowePro camera bag

This camera bag is 300mm x 240mm in size and is in very good condition as it has never been used.

Price: \$35. Ph. Selena 0418 420 445



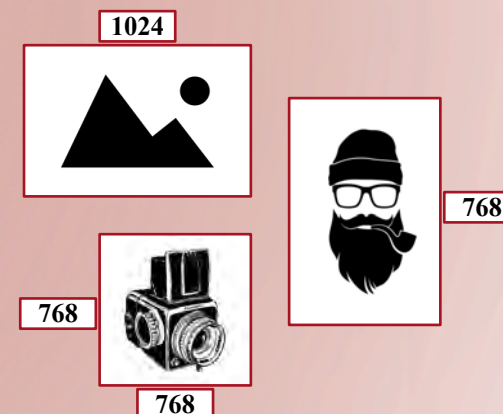
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Webmaster: Greg Wood: gsw333@gmail.com

Submitting images

Whether submitting a DPI or digital images of your prints the required format to match the projector is a maximum width of 1024 and a maximum height of 768 pixels.

For a landscape format image, set the longest side to 1024; for portrait, set the longest side to 768, and for a square image, all sides are 768.



Our web site

www.upperbluemtnscameraclub.com.au