



Penrith RSL
Photographic Club

Camera Angles

The Official Newsletter of The Penrith RSL Photographic Club Incorporated - Established 1995
Member of the Federation of Camera Clubs (NSW) Inc - <https://fccnsw.myphotoclub.com.au>

August, 2025



LEFT:

When I took this photo of the Korean War Veterans Memorial, located in Washington DC, I pre-visualised that I was going to convert it to monochrome.

The white figures set against the green ground cover and dark trees in the background was screaming to be converted.

I then added some rain for affect and mood.

How to see in B&W before pressing the shutter

This month we have Mieke Boynton explaining her decision making process when converting images to monochrome and the techniques she uses to do that. But first, you need to be able to assess what image has the potential to make a good black and white.

Why does black and white photography command such acclaim? One reason is that colour is a distraction. It takes attention away from the visual building blocks of a great photo; texture, tonal contrast, shape, form and lighting. A photographer shooting in monochrome has to learn how to use all these elements to create a memorable image.

The key to successful black and white photography is learning to see the world in monochrome. This means pre-visualising your images before taking the shot. Not all images will work in black and white, some images rely on colour for impact, and therefore they may not be as powerful in black and white.

For example, in colour photography we tend to compose images around elements of colour, often working with complimentary colours to build a strong visual statement. In black and white photography, most colours have the same brightness and/or tone, so the image will appear dull and flat.

Removing colour from our vision will bring out the hidden details, textures, and shapes. The successful photographer recognises this, and searches out subject matter that looks better in black and white.

Tonal contrast is important in all types of photography, however it becomes more apparent when you start shooting in black and white. The tonality of an image is what gives a photograph atmosphere and mood. Some images are dark and punchy with distinctive definition of contrast, while other images may be more subdued and softer in appearance.

To capture stronger monochrome images it's essential that you understand tonality and how to use it. The easiest way

to understand tonal contrast is by categorising it into three simple categories: high, medium and low. An image with high tonal contrast will consist primarily of blacks and whites. Medium tonality is a balance of all three, while low tonal contrast is when an image looks more washed out, usually just with grey tones.

As you're evaluating your subject, try and imagine how it will look in black and white. Pre-visualise the result after you have post-processed the image using your favourite techniques, such as adding textures and toning. With practice, your vision will become very accurate.

A good tip for digital SLR users is to shoot in the RAW format (which you should do for the best quality colour to black and white conversions anyway) but set the Picture Style (this is Canon's term – check your instruction manual if you have another brand of camera) to a black and white mode. The photo will be displayed in black and white on the camera's LCD screen, and you'll have all the colour

For information about the club or articles of interest you wished published in Camera Angles please contact The Editor and Secretary: Peter Thorpe on 0416 070 512 or any of the club officials – Manesh de Silva, President on 0498 377 455, Allen Cullen, Vice President and Activities Coordinator on 0418 674 598; Belinda Desmond, 2nd Vice-President on 0417 427 057; Ian Aggett, Treasurer on 0412 472 524 or Dave Whiteman, Training Coordinator on 0407 351 358. Visit our web site at <http://penrithrsl.wix.com/photographic-club>

information in the RAW file for your conversion afterwards.

TEXTURE

Imagine the wall of an old building, or rusty metal, or weathered wood. Anything old normally has lots of texture, and textures look great in black and white.

Texture is affected by the lighting conditions. Low raking light, typical of the golden hour of light near sunrise and sunset, makes texture stand out sharply. The soft light of an overcast day can also bring out texture, though it may need some help in post processing by techniques such as increasing contrast.

The worse light for photographing texture is harsh midday light. The flatness of this type of light hides texture.

TONAL CONTRAST

When colours are converted to black and white, they become shades of grey. Light colours become highlights, and dark colours become dark tones. The differences between these shades is called tonal contrast. Black and white photographers utilise tonal contrast to make good photos.

SHAPE AND FORM

Shape and form are two very important visual elements. Every object has both shape and form. Shape is how the subject looks in two dimensions.

Form is how the subject looks in three dimensions. Photos are two dimensional, and like painters, photographers have the challenge of depicting three dimensional objects (their subjects) in a two dimensional form (the photo).

Black and white draws attention to the shadows and flowing lines that depict form. Use lighting to make your subject look three dimensional. Side lighting reveals form by casting shadows. Front and backlighting obscure it.

LIGHTING

The word photography derives from the ancient Greek for 'painting with light'.

Photography is light, and the quality of the light determines the quality of the photo.

Black and white gives the photographer freedom to take photos in all sorts of lighting conditions. The best light is still created by the sun when it's low in the sky. But with black and white you can also take photos during the middle of the day and on overcast days, which are difficult lighting conditions for colour photography.

The secret is to make sure the light suits the subject. Midday light, for example, can be great for architecture but poor for portraiture. An overcast day is ideal for taking portraits, but poor for landscapes.

There are certain subjects that are ideal for black and white photography, such as:

Portraiture – Without colour, attention is focused on the eyes and face, and the textures of the subject's clothes. Sepia toned photos are very flattering and often used by commercial portrait studios. Elderly people, with wrinkled and time worn skin, are wonderful subjects for black and white.

Landscapes – It draws attention to the shapes and forms of the components within the landscape, and the quality of light.

Architecture – Our suburbs and cities are full of modern architecture constructed from metal and glass. Look for the shapes these buildings make against the sky. Old buildings have beautiful weathered surfaces full of texture. Cathedrals and churches also make great subjects.

Travel and Street Photography – Travel photography is about capturing the memory and emotion of a place that you've visited. Black and white photos have a timelessness that is suitable for travel.

Still Life – Without colour, the emphasis is on the shapes and forms of the subject, and the quality of the lighting.

Shooting in Black and White or converting later

If you don't have much experience shooting in black and white, you might think all that's involved is setting your camera to 'B&W' or 'Monochromatic' mode and shooting away.

But it is a much better idea to set your camera to capture the colour data as well. This is useful as it gives you a few more options such as how you convert to black and white (and there's always the chance you'll find you prefer the colour version).

One way to do that is just shoot in your normal settings to capture a colour image and convert it later in editing software. However, that can make it difficult to visualise what the final B&W image will look like.

To get the best of both worlds, set your camera to 'B&W' mode but make sure it is also set to RAW+JPEG capture. This will let you preview your shot in black and white while still capturing a RAW file that has all the colour data.



If you're shooting in colour and planning on converting later, don't forget that converting to black and white will change the look of the image. One important lesson is that colours with similar luminosity (and those that are next to each other on the colour wheel) will convert to similar grey tones, making it look flat as in the above example.

Keeping you posted



DIGITAL COMPETITION

Congratulations to all who entered our Digital Competition and congratulations to our winner Sue Jowett, 2nd Place John Lindsay and equal 3rd Place Sue Thomson and Nicole Mahon. Another competition with outstanding images, making it hard for us to judge a winner.

PRINTING SERVICE

We have 2 members printing images to a profession standard, suitable for competition or Show & Tell usage.

Brian Corlis
(02) 4733 4357 or briaen2@bigpond.com

Chris Carter
0416 150 000 or chris@carterfamily.biz

Please speak to either for costs and an understanding of what they require.

EXHIBITIONS

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Australian National Maritime Museum
15 May – 19 October, 2025

UPCOMING THEMED COMPETITIONS

THEMED COMPETITIONS

You can enter up to 2 images, at any size, with a \$2 per entry fee. The purpose of these themed competitions is to get you to think creatively about a subject and then take a new photo rather than picking something you have previously shot, that happens to fit the theme.

CHRIS TODD MEMORIAL COMPETITION

Our third themed competition will be a LANDSCAPE competition and will be held on Monday, 13 October. PRINTS ONLY.

AND NEXT MONTH – SEPTEMBER

8th Little People

Peter Thorpe will give a presentation and practical demonstration on how he shoots his little people images.

12th Friday-Sunday Weekend Away to Canberra

Areas to be visited are yet to be decided.

22nd Competition Night (Prints Only)

Our third competition. Guest Judge is Jeff Walsh.

Download the full syllabus and newsletters at:
<http://penrithrsl.wix.com/photographic-club>

Meetings start at 7.30pm