

**The Official Magazine of
the Dapto Camera Club**

Viewfinder.

January 2019

A biplane is shown in flight against a clear blue sky with a few wispy white clouds. The biplane is viewed from a low angle, looking up at it as it flies towards the top right of the frame. The wings are dark, and the fuselage is lighter. The propeller is visible at the front.

**Happy
New Year
2019**



VIEWFINDER INDEX

How to Photograph Fire

Night Landscape Photography

photographycourse.net

The First Step to a Quality Portrait

Digital Photo Paper Guide

Website of the Month

* Set subjects 2019

February	Fire
April	The Colour Purple
June.....	Graffiti
Aug.....	Portrait (No Children)
Oct.....	Street Photography

Cover Photographer

Anthony Crampton

How to Photograph Fire

by [Catherine Ramsey](#)

I don't know about you, but one of the things I really look forward to in the winter months is sitting around a bonfire with friends, toasting marshmallows, keeping warm, and getting some awesome photos!

Last year a couple of friends of mine had decided to burn off all the loose tree litter on their big property, so we all brought our cameras and tripods along and decided to make a go of it. I can remember how interesting it was that we'd all chosen different angles and details, which all made for very unique and amazing shots.

I'm going to share with you some tips that I learnt from that night, as well as some other fun ideas for photographing flames.

Safety first

I can't stress enough how important it is to have a safety plan in place, no matter how experienced you are.

Read this checklist before you even begin planning a fire shoot:

- Do you have a well ventilated area to work in?
- Is your work area clear of fire hazards and combustibles? I recommend working over sand, grass (without leaf litter), bricks, cement or gravel.
- Do you have either a fire extinguisher, hose or buckets of water with you?
- Shoot from a distance. Don't let you or your equipment get too close to the flames, and particularly anything that may spark.
- Wear tight fitting clothing as opposed to loose, drapery clothing. Depending on your fire of choice, you may also want to wear safety goggles and gloves.
- Do this at your own risk!

Once you've got all your precautions in place, you're ready for the fun stuff.

Equipment

More than likely you're going to need a tripod or a steady base to put your camera on, particularly if you're shooting at night. I would also recommend using a zoom lens or a macro zoom lens. 100mm is excellent. You want to try and put some distance between you and the fire, not only for safety but to help isolate your subject.



The flames will obviously show up best on a dark background. For this reason it's best to be shooting outdoors at night. But if you are shooting in a lit area or during the day, you may want to place a backdrop of black card or cloth to strengthen the contrast.

Capturing the action



There's several different ways that you can approach this shoot, but it's a good idea to ask yourself what effect you want to capture, then work backwards.

Using a fast shutter speed will give you more of the split second details. For instance, the moment a match is lit or the spray from a sparkler or power tool.



"Fast" may be a little broad in terms of settings, but for most action shots you'll want to be at 1/250th or above. You may find that you need to go as high as 1/1000th or more, and that's ok, just remember that the faster your shutter, the more you'll have to compensate for the lack of light by using a smaller aperture number or a higher ISO. Luckily the flames are a light source, so they will



help to add ambient light to a scene.

A macro lens with a long focal length is excellent for capturing those small details, like the sparkler above or the lighter below. Notice how the details are sharp and the light particles twinkle.

These are our Sponsors, we need to use them if we want to keep them.



Links of Interest:

Viewbug - <http://www.viewbug.com/>

ePHOTOzine - <http://www.ephotozine.com/>

Federation of Camera Clubs [NSW] - <http://www.photographyNSW.org.au/>

Australian Photographic Society - <http://www.a-p-s.org.au/>

Gurushots - <https://gurushots.com/>

Free Lessons with Serge Ramelli - <http://photoserge.com/free-lessons/all>

Slowing things down

Using a slow shutter (one that falls below 1/50th second or as much as a few seconds worth) will have its own unique effects. The extra-long exposure will follow the path of spitting flames and sparks until they burn out, creating squiggles and fountain effects like in the photos below.



Take care with unnecessarily long exposures, as they may cause unwanted lens flaring and highlight blow out. If your fire lacks any detail at all it may lose effectiveness.



If your shot includes a human element, remember that they are likely to blur out of your shot with lots of movement in a long exposure. Try to keep them sharp if you can.

Get experimental...

Whilst still maintaining the safety rules mentioned earlier. Here's a couple of neat ideas you can try with little or no budget.

Double up on your lights. Add some background bokeh or expose for the stars on a dark night while your campfire is burning. I would recommend an exposure of at least 20" with a med-high aperture number for this effect.



Try adding smokebombs to your background for a funky psychedelic vibe. Alternatively you might capture a coloured flare preparing to go off. Flame colourants are also available at some camping shops (at BCF for only \$3.99) or search an auction site such as Ebay or Amazon.

Think outside the box. Where else can you see flames and sparks besides campfires? Think of power tools, knife

sharpening blocks, lanterns, fire baton twirling and fire dancing to name a few.



Document or video the process of an object burning; a toy figurine or a pile of matches perhaps.

Just make sure you're always maintaining a safe distance and wearing the appropriate safety gear.



<https://photoh.com.au/how-to-photograph-fire/>

Night Landscape Photography

Many photographers assume that once the sun goes down, so do the opportunities to take spectacular landscape images. Some of my favourite photographs were taken under extremely low light or nearly pitch-black conditions. In fact, I have found that the darker it is the better results I usually get in my images. You are more likely to pick up unusual colors not typically visible to the naked eye while capturing wonderful streaks in the sky when shooting at night. Here are a few suggestions that will help you capture great nighttime landscapes.



Scout out locations during daylight hours

This is extremely important because it will be difficult at best to find good places suitable for nighttime photography during hours of darkness. I normally try to find several potential spots where I can go to shoot during a single trip out. Look for areas where it is safe to park your car and where you might be able to setup your tripod.

I have found myself standing right next to lonely country roads, in deep ditches, and over irrigation sloughs to get just the right composition. Having a specific place to setup in mind before it gets dark can save you a lot of time and frustration.

Find a strong subject to anchor your image

A good landscape image typically has something of interest in the foreground to grab the viewer's attention. Whether it is an old barn, hollowed out tree, or windy creek, try looking for something to make your image visually interesting. Also keep in mind the rule of thirds when composing your shots.

Avoid artificial light

The farther away you can get from city lights, the better your images will turn out. I have found that shooting in nearly pitch-dark conditions using long shutter speeds pulls out colours and tones not generally visible to the naked eye. I typically drive an hour or more to get to locations that have few or no artificial lights. Nearby artificial lighting will not kill a decent landscape image; however it can overwhelm the subtle ambient light that is naturally present. Remember that you can adjust the color temperature of your images later in processing so do not let a nearby light spoil your evening.

Do not trespass

Nothing ruins a night of landscape photography faster than being contacted by the police for trespassing on someone's property -especially at night (I know this from experience).

My general rule of thumb is if the area in question has a fence around it, a sign posted advising that trespassing is not allowed, or if it appears that someone is caring for the property, I usually stay out. I have

been pretty successful at obtaining permission to go onto private property to take photographs; however remember to do this during the day. Being respectful and courteous can help you get into places that might be ordinarily off limits.

Take the right gear

Obviously you will need a sturdy tripod and remote bulb switch for the long exposures. I almost always shoot landscapes with a wide-angle lens. If you are shooting in cooler weather, ensure you have a fully charged camera battery and even consider bringing a second one with you. Between shooting in cold or cooler weather and long exposure times, battery life can dwindle quickly.

Be sure to bring a couple of flashlights along too. I typically bring a small LED light to adjust the exposure and shutter speed on my camera so as not to ruin my night vision. I also bring a



small, high intensity Surefire flashlight to quickly shine on my foreground subject to get my image initially focused. There is nothing more frustrating than staying out all night shooting landscapes just to return home to find the main subject out of focus because it was too dark. I consider a bright flashlight so important that I will return home if I forget to bring it.

Bring warm cloths and snacks

Most of my images required between 5 and fifteen minutes to properly expose. I also typically take several shots of same composition at varying exposures (manual bracketing). This means that there is a lot of lag time between photographs. Standing outside in the middle of the night



-even during the summertime-can get chilly. I usually wear pants; bring a light fleece jacket, cap, gloves, and light walking boots. I also recommend wearing something reflective so that passing drivers can easily see you. Bringing along snacks helps the time go by while waiting between exposures.

Consider shooting in RAW format

If you have not started doing this already, this might be a good time to begin shooting in RAW format. Nighttime landscape images are typically shot with long duration shutter speeds and the results are unpredictable. Shooting in RAW format offers you the ability to push shots a stop in either direction depending on your needs.

Carefully consider your composition

Most of the time you are not going to see much of anything but black through the viewfinder. I usually start out by taking a short exposure of what I think is a properly composed shot. For example, I found myself standing in nearly pitch-black conditions for the shot below. The light visible in the horizon in the image was only faintly visible to me while taking the photographs. I started out by exposing the image at f-3.5 for about 30-seconds. This yielded a very dark image; however I was able to at least see the overall composition. I ended up needing to straighten out the skyline and move the composition upward to include more of the sky. After taking several short duration exposures, I was ready to start zeroing in on a proper shutter speed.

Since I am usually shooting in very dark conditions, I rarely raise my f-stop up past f-3.5 or f-4.5. Remember that each time you close your aperture down by one stop, you are doubling the

exposure time. This can really add up if you are starting out with a ten-minute exposure.

Keep it in focus

Take the time to get your image in sharp focus. As I mentioned above, having a bright flashlight will make it easier to use your camera's automatic focus. This is method I prefer because I never know if the image is truly focused if I set the focus manually (since it is typically so dark). I usually focus on a main foreground subject using a high intensity flashlight. When that isn't possible, I sometimes try to focus on the horizon or a bright object in the distance such as a streetlight. I have even been successful finding a focus point by using distant stars. If all else fails and your camera refuses to settle in on a focus point, switch to manual focus mode and start experimenting.

Consider including the sky as much as possible

The beauty of nighttime landscape photography is the wonderful tones, textures, and colours you get in the sky. Each time I go out, I come back with something new. I have found clear or partially cloudy nights work best. I especially love shooting nighttime landscapes when a few high altitude, thin cirrus clouds are moving through the area. These clouds, against a clear night sky, turn into feathery streaks during long exposures. Pay attention to where the bright stars are and do the best you can to include them in your shot. I have found setting the shutter speed to 5-minutes or longer creates beautiful streaks of light from the individual stars.

Use the bulb setting on your camera

After arriving and setting up my camera on a tripod, I take several test shots to confirm my composition. At this point I also lock in on the focus. The test shots I take will range from 30-60 second exposures at f-3.5. This usually gives me just enough of an image preview in my camera's LCD to allow me to adjust and finalize the overall composition. Next I work to find the ideal shutter speed. I typically have a rough idea of how much time I am going to need to expose the shot after looking at the 30-second test shots I took. This can range from two or three minutes to 15-minutes depending on the lighting conditions. I usually try to adjust my in-camera exposure settings so that my shutter speed is at least five minutes or longer. I do this in hopes of capturing the unique and interesting colours and tones present in the non-visible ambient light. I also want to get as much streaking out of the stars and clouds in the sky as possible.

Keep in mind that each f-stop increment upward doubles your shutter speed. For example, if the settings for a properly exposed image are f-4 at 120-seconds, then the shutter speed would jump to around 240-seconds if you bumped your f-stop up to f-5.6. This can add up real quick!

Long exposures can result in more digital noise

Always shoot at the lowest ISO possible for your camera. For example with my Canon I shoot at 100 ISO. Even after shooting at a low ISO, you may find that there is a bit more digital noise in your nighttime images as a result of the longer shutter speeds. My experience has

varied in that I sometimes find more noise than usual and other times the noise is not noticeable at all. The most likely place for you to spot increased noise will be in the sky. To resolve this problem I typically run the noise reduction filter later in Photoshop and then paint out areas of the image that I do not want it to affect. Noise Ninja is another effective noise reduction tool.

Have fun

Remember to have fun and experiment. None of these suggestions should be considered hard and fast rules. I am always trying out new ideas. I think the key to getting exceptional landscape images is to shoot often and to be willing to go out and come back empty handed. As strange as that sounds, it has really proven true for me. Every time I head out to shoot I always hope to come back with stunning images. The sad truth is that I occasionally come back with just mediocre shots that never see the light of day. At some point I realized that this was just a natural part of learning and growing as a photographer. You just never know when you are going to be in the right place at the right time with your camera. It is all about capturing those unique and beautiful moments. Good luck!

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Be confident in yourself and portray your confidence at all times during the session. Be relaxed but ready to photograph when the subject is ready. Remember that you are the person in control, and the subject needs to see you that way.

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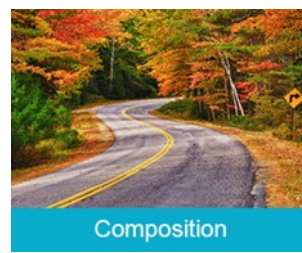
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The First Step to a Quality Portrait



It would take a much longer article than this to tell you everything about how to pose your subject, because one of the hardest pictures to take is one where you have to pose the human body. You want the portrait to be as captivating and natural as possible. Please consider the following points that will help to lift your portraiture to a higher standard.

- The best portraits are the ones that not only capture the physical likeness of a person, but his or her **character**, as well. At least one element revealing the personality of the subject, or maybe his or her attitude, mannerisms, or other features will make a super portrait, as it will tell us something about them.
- It is the portrait photographer who has never met the subject before that is presented with the biggest challenge. He or she must work on the proficiency of **studying people**, their mannerisms, expressions, reactions,

body language, and anything else that can be presented in front of the camera.

- If you can develop a skill in **understanding human nature**, it would be a great asset to your photographic profession. Developing this skill mandates getting quickly involved in conversation with the subject, questioning their interests, perhaps evoking reactions or excitement, and really bringing out his or her natural personality.

This process results in a more relaxed presence in front of the camera for the subject, with a more at-ease and natural attitude. At this point, it is important to remember not to rush through the portrait session. Do your work, avoiding idle conversation that would take up your time and his or hers. Always **boost confidence** by telling the person that the session is going well.

Be confident in yourself and portray your confidence at all times during the session. Be relaxed but ready to photograph when the subject is ready. Remember that you are the person in control, and the subject needs to see you that way.

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Black and White Photography Basics

Most modern photographers, even those of the purely amateur variety, understand how important it is to use color and lighting effectively in a photograph.

What most people do not realize is that some incredible results can be created using the grayscale or black and white settings found on almost every advanced digital camera.

Consider the dramatic effects of contrast in the black and white setting. At the two extremes however (i.e. pure black or pure white); it also includes gray as well. Paying attention to a scene, without considering any significant detail, is a skill that can train a photographer's eye.

Lighting can play a powerful role in black and white photography, especially when shadows become elements or even subjects of the photograph themselves.

Lighting can also be put to use in black and white photography by emphasizing the strength of textures, shapes and patterns.



Black and white photography techniques

Another important thing to remember about black and white photography is to use it artistically, and to create immediate impact.

Consider that most people automatically associate a level of 'timelessness' to any black and white image. This is because it is not immediately apparent that the subject is a contemporary one.

This means that it sets a mood almost instantly, and it also focuses the eye of the viewer on the subject without any real distraction from color.

The significance of this can be seen in the many portraits, both formal and informal, that are now being done in black and white as well as all of the official wedding photography that is done with a total absence of color as well.

While most of the modern digital cameras come with full color, black and white, grayscale and even sepia tone modes, most professionals prefer to shoot in the RAW format instead.

This is because the file retains all of the true tonal values, which can then be more accurately converted to a black and white format. If a camera does not have the RAW setting, the black and white mode can still produce remarkable results.

Black and white landscape photography

When shooting black and white landscape photography try to fill your frame with powerful stormy skies, which makes a great composition.

Black and white landscape photography relies heavily on contrast that only skies can provide. Look for rocky landscapes, stormy skies and dramatic composition.

The trick to great black and white photography is in paying attention to some details not required of color imagery. This includes the interplay of light and dark, the textures of everything in the scene and the power or balance that can be created by heavy shadows or brilliant lighting. And basically anything that will be made more dramatic by the total absence of natural color.

Digital Photo Paper Guide



In the digital world we live in, traditional media such as printed photographs plays second fiddle. When photographers look to print their work, the lack of readily available information makes it hard to decide on the correct type of digital photo paper. In this digital photo paper guide we will talk you through your options.

Printing Systems

Printers use either liquid ink in the case of Ink-Jet printing technology or micro polymer powder in the case of laser printing technology. While both use the same principle of mixing four base colors to generate colorful images, the method of dispensing the color is different. It means that Inkjet photo paper will not suit laser printers and natural-

ly the other way around.

Therefore you must first match the intended paper to your printer's technology. Overwhelmingly, Inkjet is the choice of photographers who are serious about printing detailed images due to its ability to print at up to 2880dpi vs. 720dpi of most laser printers.

Photo Paper Size

The most common sizes are 13x18cm, A5 and A4 sizes. Other sizes to consider are the smaller photo lab size of 10x15cm and the commercial size of A3 (in which an A3 printer is required). It is imperative to match the size with the intended use to limit waste. The most common combinations of size and use include:

Photo Album Inserts - Sizes to consider are the 10x15cm (or 6x4") and the 13x18cm (or 7x5"). Using an A5 sheet and trimming it to size will result in waste.

Invitation and Greeting Cards - Sizes to consider are A5 and A4. Each can be folded to allow for double sided effect, in such case you will end up with an A6 and A5 printing area.

Photo Reproduction - Sizes to consider are A5, A4 and A3 (double an A4 size). A5 and A4 will traditionally be framed and hung on the wall or placed on a desk, while the larger A3 size is normally wall mounted to become the focal point of attention on the wall.

GSM

Photo Paper Weight - GSM

Weight of digital photo papers is measured in GSM or in plain English, the weight of paper in one square meter of area. Contrary to what you might think, GSM does not equal quality of print.

More often, higher GSM leads to thicker photo paper which at times can be beneficial.

For example, handing a greeting card to someone on thick GSM example feels more invested and luxurious, while on the other hand producing brochures to promote your business does not make sense on thicker higher GSM paper as it has a short lifespan and no keepsake value. The most common combinations of weight and use include:

100gsm to 150gsm Photo Papers - [Printing](#) on lighter weight paper is cheaper, therefore, work which has little future value such as a presentation, marketing charts and even commercial flyers are better printed on the more cost effective option.

150gsm to 200gsm Photo Papers - The industry loves to call these papers every day paper or value range because they will do for most photographers. Photo papers in this range are also safer alternatives when users are concerned about possible jamming problems that heavier weights can cause during the feeding stage. Take particular notice of this if you are using an old printer that

has been through the hoops.

200gsm to 300gsm Photo Paper - These are used for photo reproduction, especially when the print is likely to be cherished i.e. has a high keepsake value. Most printers can safely accommodate up to 260gsm or 280gsm, above it, you are recommended to consult with your printer manual to check the maximum supported paper weight.

Photo Paper Brands

The biggest myth in the printing world has to be suitability of other makes to your printer. Your printer, whether Canon, HP, Epson or any other brand CAN accommodate other makes provided the printer technology is the same (Ink-Jet vs. Laser), size is supported (A3 being the abnormal size) and weight in GSM is not exceeded. Don't limit your options.

Photo Paper Finish

After evaluating size and weight, comes the more creative part of deciding on the finish. Different manufacturers use different descriptions to describe their finish, which can become confusing. The finish is a transparent chemical layer that affects the final look. It is measured on a glossiness scale, from the most to the least and those in-between.

Matt / Matte Finish - The easiest to come to terms with is the matt finish, simply because it has no glossiness about it. It is rarely used for colorful image reproduction as it comes across dull, though it has a rightful place when it comes to printing B&W images. In this case, the matt finish gives the B&W print more authentic look.

Satin / Semi-Gloss / Pearl / Luster Finish - Depending on the manufacturer you will come across one of the four terms when a balance between matt and glossy is required. These are closely related alternatives in which a degree of glare can be found.

Glossy Finish - In this case, the print will have a maximum level of glare. It is suitable in most cases, except in certain lighting conditions when the reflections of the print make the details hard to see. Particularly noticeable when glossy prints are framed behind glass and viewing takes place from the sides (imagine a gallery in which people congregate to view the print from all sides).

Photo Paper Quality

Quality of photo paper isn't measured in GSM, nor by manufacturer and nor by how much you spent. It is measured in the quality of the receiving layer that is responsible to absorb the huge amount of ink your printers throws at it. Quality is measured in longevity of the print (before it yellows for example), how quickly the ink dries, how well the image details appear in the print and how close the colors are to true tones. The most common coatings are the cast coated and micro-porous.

Cast Coating - It is common in budget and everyday photo papers, as the chemical is cheaper to produce. Ink is absorbed both into the coating and the paper making it "sit" a little deeper in the paper. This makes the print comparatively slightly duller. The coating gives a lower UV protection to the ink and images printed on this type of paper will fade quicker. With some pigmented inks, there might be a slightly longer drying time although it is instantaneous on dye based ink systems.

Micro-porous Coating - This time, the ink sits within small pores in the chemical. These micro and nano pores are invisible to the eye and absorb dye and pigment inks. Further, it makes the print water resistant and instant dry. Colors are also better represented with deeper definition and due to the high concentration of ink at the face of the coating, UV stability of the image is enhanced.



THE FIRST 3 WORDS YOU SEE ARE
WHAT YOU WANT IN LIFE:

X C U A L O V E Y K B W S N G
D U A W K C B E A U T Y R J V
Y O U T H F S M G N E Z L P R
M H J R E Y W D K Z L U S T J
F S U C C E S S D H E A L T H
E N M Q X P T I M E L M S A Q
V E X P E R I E N C E G H B W
G H U M O U R L O Y M O N E Y
S Y Z P O P U L A R I T Y N A
A M K C F U N B X H U Z Y I X
C W I H Y S H A P P I N E S S
H O N E S T Y C F R I E N D S
K P Y J A E T W P O W E R Q C
B T Y A C F R E E D O M J M O
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