

Hird About The Place

The Scene by Hird Newsletter.

Edition #7: December 2004

Dear Friends,

As I write this, I'm watching the price of gold in US dollars hit values I've not seen since I was a teenager – more than US\$450 an ounce! If you live in Kalgoorlie, you've probably noticed the spring in everybody's step too. This is a great place when the price of gold is on the up – vibrant, happy, relaxed and abuzz (all at the same time).

Of course, what's good for gold is good for Kalgoorlie, and that is bound to make the locals happy. Jobs are plentiful and wages are increasing as some companies offer more to keep their employees from leaving, while try to entice them away.

I love Kalgoorlie in a boom! Now, if we could only get the price to rise in Aussie dollars

Victoria – here we come!

After Christmas we are heading over to Victoria to make photographs of mountains and waterfalls. Since we can't be in two places at once, we'll probably close the gallery from Christmas day until the 19th of January (inclusive). We hope you don't go into withdrawal due to your favourite art gallery being closed ☺

There will be a January newsletter and Photo of the Month, and you're likely to receive them before the New Year commences – bargain! Two newsletters in one month!

Photography Tip: Fire at Will!

Shoot lots of film. It's cheap compared to your camera, and those moments will never happen exactly like that again.

Your kids will never open that present again and your dog will never be covered in mud again (you hope ...). The clouds will never again look like

that particular fish and that fantastic sunset is gone forever too.

Do you remember how much fun it is to look through your family's old photo albums? Let your grandkids share the same experience - don't skimp on film this Christmas.

Storms we've had lately

You may not have noticed, but the Goldfields had some decent electrical storms in the last few weeks of November. The best one from my point of view came through town at 1.00am on the 25th of November, while most people slept. You may remember being late for work that morning – the follow-up storm at about 4.00am knocked the power out.



"Night Stalker"

I've called the best shot I made that night "Night Stalker" due to its resemblance to a loping "monster of the night" (cue the spooky music, maestro!). You can see it can't you? It's not just my mind playing paranoid tricks, is it? Ah well, humour me, will you?

Unfortunately, we are not likely to have many framed "Night Stalker" prints available before Christmas due to production delays at this time of the year. We will have unframed prints ready by the second week of December, and we should be able to get 4 or 5 frames built in the following week for special orders. If you simply **must** have this print, come in and see us. We'll jump through flaming hoops for our best customers!

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Cassidy St, Kalgoorlie, 6430

Ph: (08) 90 911 611 Fax: (08) 90 911 711 Mobile: 0408 95 11 76

Email: graeme@scenebyhird.com Web: www.scenebyhird.com

Latest Photos

In the last month we've brought into the gallery a series of new prints. Some of them are the prints we had in the Kalgoorlie Boulder Art Prize, while others are new and haven't been printed before.



"Resistance"
One of our new prints.

Rather than try to show them all in this newsletter, I've put a new area on my web site (www.scenebyhird.com) for the latest images. It will be updated each month.

Photo of the Month: Hamersley Gorge

For December, we're presenting another image from the Karajini trip we did during Easter this year. This image has been receiving great reviews from critics around the world, so I thought I might print it for the enjoyment of the people who come into the gallery.

We decided to go on a tour on Good Friday, leaving our camp-site at about lunch time. We drove eastwards out of the park, then north to a brilliant little roadhouse selling ice-creams and cold drinks. (I've decided any roadhouse selling ice-creams and cold drinks can be truthfully described as "brilliant".) When you're camping in the heat and flies, it's the little luxuries that count!

From there we headed west towards Wittenoom. What a beautiful place to put an asbestos mine! The gorge that hosts the town and mine site is quite stunning, although we were there at the wrong time of the day for me to make any decent photographs. When I'm next in the area, I will definitely spend more time at Wittenoom.

We had to move on towards Tom Price to ensure we didn't miss out on a Good Friday serve of fish & chips, so we left Wittenoom with regret on my part. We drove up the main highway in the area (signposted as Route 109). *They* called it a highway – *I* called it a dry river bed! As we came

off the flood plain, the sign on the single lane of dirt said "give way to oncoming traffic". We were driving up a winding gorge with no room to pull over; I'm so glad there were no road trains operating that day.

A couple of kilometres after we reached the top, we found the turn off to Hamersley Gorge. By this time the sky was covered by unbroken high cloud, giving flat lighting conditions – ideal for waterfall shots! I could hardly wait to get down to the stream and search for an image worthy of spending my film on.

My father, who was travelling with us, decided to stay with the car, since we didn't expect to be long. And we weren't! I soon found a suitable composition and then it started: "I'm *BORED* Dad! Can we go now? We're going to miss out on dinner if we don't move on" Let me tell you, don't plan on taking a lot of time on decent photos if you're travelling with kids!

Thankfully, I've learnt to work quickly and was finished making the exposure before the stoning started. The image was made using my large format camera with some small tilts applied to the front and rear planes of the body. Doing so allowed me to keep sharp focus from quite close, out to forty odd metres away. I used a slow speed slide film (Fuji Velvia) which allowed me a long exposure time of one second, making the water look "soft". It was the only shot I made that day.

After surviving the making of this image, I drove on to Tom Price. During the course of this leg of the trip, it became apparent that ~~we~~ I should have filled the fuel tanks at that "brilliant little roadhouse" some 400 km earlier. Did you know that a standard diesel Landcruiser wagon can do more than 900 km on a single filling of the tanks? No, neither did I! Limping into a little town like Tom Price at 6.30pm on Good Friday with both fuel tanks showing less than empty is not a good strategy for keeping the lady of the house happy....

The only roadhouse in town was closed (it was definitely **not** "a brilliant little roadhouse") and we were still 180 km from our camp site. Michelle eventually performed a miracle and got her husband to stop for directions. We were told the

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Ph: (08) 90 911 611 Fax: (08) 90 911 711 Mobile: 0408 95 11 76

Email: graeme@scenebyhird.com Web: www.scenebyhird.com

caravan park sells fuel and would probably still be open. Brilliant!

After an over-priced (and over-appreciated) meal of fish & chips, we made for our camp site and collapsed into our swags.

And all I've got to show for a 600km afternoon ramble is December's Photo of the Month.



"Hamersley Gorge"

More "Freebies" On-line

There are a couple more screen savers on our web site now. One contains my favourite lightning photos and the other has my best shots from Karajini. You can find them in the "Downloads" section of the site.

Showing off your Scene by Hird photo.

This month I'd like to offer some advice on how to display your Scene by Hird print so it looks stunning on your wall for many years to come.

Our prints look best when illuminated by down lights. 12V 50W halogen lights are the lamps we prefer at the gallery, in either 30 or 60 degree coverage. Ideally, the lights will be mounted about 1 metre from the wall on your ceiling. The cone of light should completely cover the print, extending minimally from the frame where possible.

For versatility, track mounted down lights permit you to easily slide your lights along the ceiling, so you can easily change which print you hang and where you hang it.

If down lights are not an option, hanging your print on a wall which faces a window can make our photos shine. We use special paper with a reflective base for our colour prints. When light from behind the viewer is illuminating the print, it seems to glow, radiating colour. Try it for yourself if you haven't already seen this quality of our prints.

No photographic print should be hung in a location where direct sunlight falls on it. Sunlight can damage the dyes used in prints and shorten the "life" of your piece of art. While our prints are certified by Kodak to last for more than 100 years in normal household lighting, I'd be surprised if any photo receiving direct sunlight didn't fade after 10 years or so.

A useful addition to your wall is a picture rail, providing the versatility to move your prints around the wall as your décor changes or your collection grows. The ones we use in the gallery are surprisingly cheap to buy and easy to install. However the wires and hooks that match the system are quite expensive, with each wire/hook set costing nearly as much as the rail it hangs from.

Pictures hung by themselves look best when the upper third of the frame is at about eye level. Some say the centre of the print should be at eye level, but the difference will be so close as to not be worth worrying about (especially since everybody has different eye levels anyway).

If you have a single print to hang and you can't install a picture rail, put the frame in the preferred position with the print facing the wall and hold it by the middle of the cord. Get a friend to measure the height from the upper apex of the cord to the ground and note that distance. Remove the framed print and use the measurement your friend made to mark the position of your hook on the wall. Use a good quality wall anchor to hold your hook: nails in

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plaster are a sure fire way of smashing your frame.

Hanging multiple prints will get the experts debating amongst themselves as to what you should have done, but of course they won't tell you until after you've committed to a course of action:

- "You should've hung the prints with the centres aligned."
- "You should've hung them with the upper thirds aligned."
- "You should've hung them with the tops of the frames aligned."
- "You should've hung them in a cascading fashion."
- "You need more space between them."
- "You need less space between them."

Only you will be able to decide what you like when you've got more than one print to hang. Do what you like – it's your house!

When you next come into the gallery, please feel free to carefully examine our lighting set-up. We sought expert opinions when we were setting up the gallery and followed it as closely as possible. We are more than happy to pass this information on to you, so please, ask away!

Christmas Shopping Hours

We are extending our trading hours during December, to include Saturday afternoons until 5pm and Sundays from 10am until 4pm. Keep an ear open for the Christmas trading hours as announced by the Chamber of Commerce: we intend to be open when the other shops in the area are open. If they are trading late during the week, we will be too.

Missing some old Newsletters?

Coming soon to the web site will be an archive of all previous newsletters. They'll be posted in the "Downloads" section each month for perusal at your leisure, though only after the month is over. You people who receive this in the mail will

continue to be the first to read my words of wisdom (What was that? You haven't seen any words of wisdom? You must be on the wrong mailing list. Sorry – you had better come in, buy another picture and get your name onto the *real* mailing list ☺)

We hope to see you before Christmas, but if not, we hope Santa brings you all you deserve. Stay safe, and enjoy the time you spend with your family this holiday season.

Graeme & Michelle Hird

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