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# Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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## Newsletter #59 – September 2017

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*This newsletter goes out to many photographers in New Zealand and overseas - and to anybody who asks to go onto the mailing list. If you know anybody who would like to be on the mailing list, please get them to email me. It's free and they can unsubscribe at any time, of course.*



*Weddell seal pup next to mum, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica.*

## 1. "SOUL" IN YOUR PHOTOS - CONTINUED

"Your best photos will be of places and subjects you already have real connections with". "That sort of makes sense Kim, but what about my next trip to Paris or Africa or Alaska? Does that mean that my photos of the Eiffel Tower or giraffes or grizzly bears won't have the "soul" that you are talking about?"

Perhaps. Perhaps not. The answer is not a straight yes or no, but more of a "it depends". On many things. If for much of your life you've wanted to visit Paris, have loved films set there, read about it, that it's been one of your dream places, then perhaps you already have that deeper connection that will help you find or create an extra layer of meaning in your photographs. You will want your photos to matter, so you'll put in extra effort. You'll also have a portfolio of Paris images in your mind [from films you've watched, books, magazine article, brochures, a Google search of "Paris photos"] so you already know many of the possibilities and you'll already have a list of what you'd most like to photograph. Unless you're staying in Paris for months, you can't visit every place, so it will be the places you've chosen as the ones that matter most: the Eiffel Tower [compulsory, I guess], the Louvre, Notre Dame, Sainte Chapelle... and the rest. So, yes there's a good chance that your Paris photos will be good, that they will have soul.



If on the other hand Paris doesn't especially connect with you, but it's just one of the dozen or so places you want to tick off on your all-too-short Europe vacation, then your chances of photos with soul are considerably diminished.



Bruce Barnbaum in his book "The Art of Photography" recounts a telling story. Bruce is one of the planet's great photographers. He could go anywhere and come back with compelling photos. And does. On one occasion, he spent some weeks photographing a ghost town in some forgotten part of America. On his return, he processed his photos as usual. They were good. But not great. There was something missing. For ages, he couldn't identify what it was. Eventually it hit him. He simply had not – for whatever reason – connected with the place. He'd just gone through the motions. And he knew it showed in the photos.

"So how can I get **connection** and therefore great photos, Kim?" Aha. I'm not sure that I can tell you that, any more than I can tell you how to love. What I can suggest is to simply start by photographing whatever you love, whatever you are passionate about, put genuine time and effort in, try many approaches, get feedback from any sources whose opinions you respect, and keep at it.

There is no app for great photography. You can't Google "great photography" or "soul in your photos" and be doing it by evening. It's much deeper and much richer and much more rewarding than that. Much more fun. And a longer journey. It's not paint by numbers. It's not "Kim says Aperture Priority and f5.6 and ISO200 and 28mm, focussing a third of the way into the picture and sticking to the rule of thirds with a leading line or two". It's your photography, your way.

You'll hear [or read] a lot about technical stuff: sharpness, exposure, lens choice, the rule of thirds .... You won't hear a great deal about soul or connection or "deeper" in photography [other than from me, David du Chemin, Bruce Barnbaum and a few others]. Sharpness and exposure matter. Definitely. But soul and connection and "deeper" matter more.

## 2. WORLD PHOTO DAY

The 19<sup>th</sup> of August has become World Photo Day. From humble beginnings in 2010, every year it gets bigger. Why August 19? On this day in 1838 the French government purchased the patent for the Daguerreotype photographic process and gifted it to humanity.

A few weeks ago [August 19<sup>th</sup>] I joined a group of keen photographers for a few hours photography at McLaren Falls Park. The event was organised by Carters Photographics [Matt, Terry and Jo were there] and Dion of Canon came down from Auckland for the event [and lent me a Canon 11-14mm zoom to try]. I spent much of the morning helping other photographers, but grabbed some photos as well, mostly of the photographers at work. A large flat white and salmon eggs benedict afterwards at the nearby Kaimai Café topped off a very pleasant morning.



### 3. CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Tauranga's Hazel Ellis for her Highly Commended in the prestigious International Garden Photographer of the Year! This is the world's top competition in garden, plant, flower and botanical photography. It is run by Garden World Images in association with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, United Kingdom.

<https://igpoty.com/competition-entries/cewb-12341274/> [this links directly to Hazel's photo]

<https://igpoty.com/competitions/macro-art-results-single-entry-competition-11/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2017/jul/31/international-garden-photographer-of-the-year-macro-art>



### 4. FROM KIM'S FIELD DIARIES – ANTIPODES ISLANDS – part 3



Getting to the Antipodes Islands is not easy: they are further from the New Zealand mainland than all the other subantarctic islands groups and the Chatham Islands, are famed for their often-atrocious weather, have steep, often vertical, shorelines and have no good anchorages.

I was there as a part-time underwater cameraman for the National Film Unit and part-time marine biologist, along with 17 other scientists and film crew. We were hosted by the Royal New Zealand Navy, and our mother ship was the Monowai, the navy's hydrographic survey vessel.

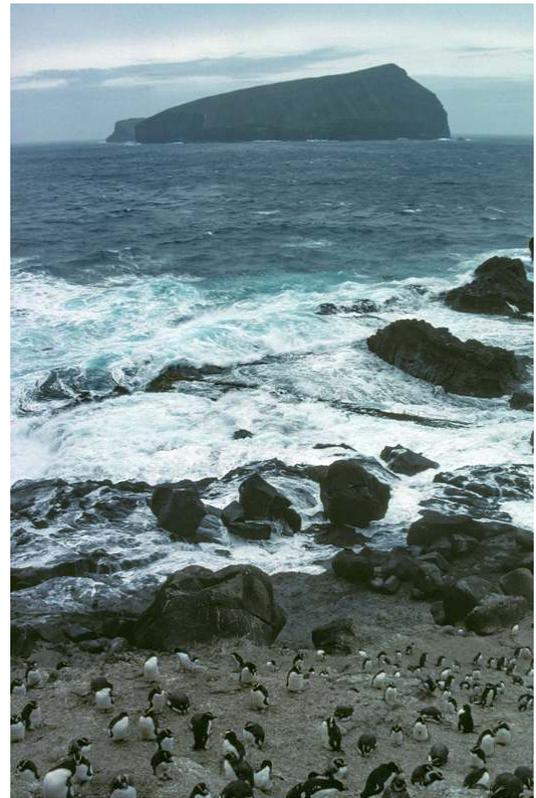
Fellow marine biologist Dr Cameron Hay and I had our dive gear with us, but getting into the water was another matter entirely. We were on a navy ship, and the navy had definite ideas about how, when and where we could dive. If at all. In fact, diving prospects at the Antipodes Islands looked so poor that I asked to be put ashore. There I stayed for the next three days: photographing, marine biologizing, and drinking in the rugged beauty of these remarkable islands.

I eventually did get two dives at the Antipodes Islands. On day 5 a wet fog hung low over the sea, reducing visibility to a few hundred metres, and a light wind roughened the sea a little. But we were going diving! It was cold, yes, but that was as expected and not a problem. Under the surface it looked different to anywhere else I'd ever dived, either on the New Zealand mainland, offshore islands or subantarctic islands.

Most distinctive were the massive subtidal forests of bull kelp covering the boulder bottom from low tide mark out to depths of over 20 metres and up to 200 metres from shore.

Until our visit, four species of bull kelp were known from the Southern Hemisphere: an Australian species, a New Zealand species, a Chatham Island species and a fourth - widespread around the cold waters of the Southern Hemisphere. Our expedition added a fifth. Cameron Hay, a world expert in cold water seaweeds, looked closely at the bull kelp densely covering the seafloor here, and decided that it was indeed a new species. Some of the sponges and sea squirts I collected were new species too. Good fun.

I usually enjoy swimming through underwater kelp forests. In them, there's a sense of being within a living being, like walking through a forest on land. But the Antipodes Island kelp forests were so thick and heavy that there was an almost claustrophobic, oppressive feeling. The massive ever-slithering fronds [up to four metres long] were kept up off the bottom by stalks up to a metre high and so thick they seemed more like tree trunks than seaweed stalks.



Fish? Hardly any. I saw only three species, none in any numbers [thornfish and two species of subantarctic cod] and Cameron noted three more small species. Crayfish? Sorry – none. The large subantarctic spider crab? Sorry, again. Paua? Only the small virgin paua. Kina? Nope, though there was a small species of sea urchin in deeper water.

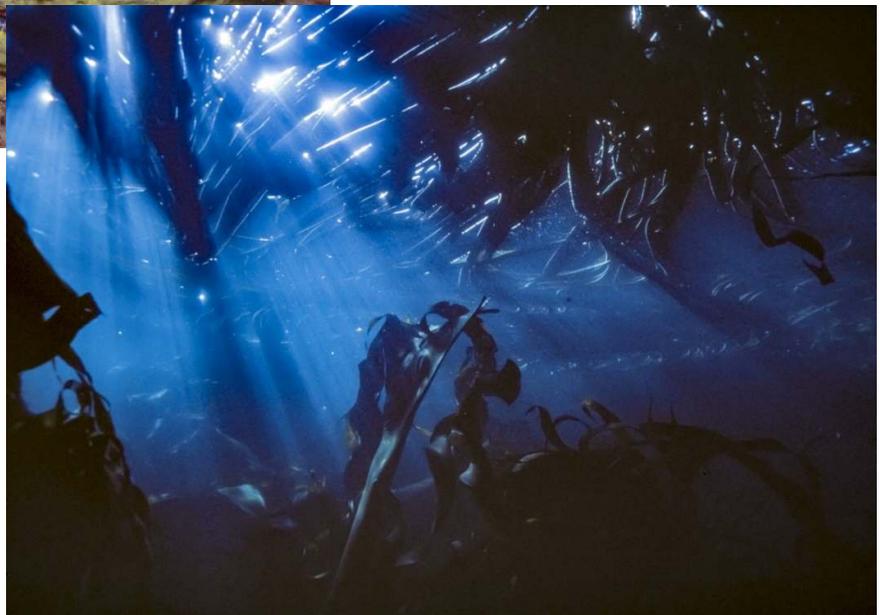
What then? Lots of other invertebrates [many kinds of shellfish, sponges, sea squirts] covering the underwater rock faces completely in many places. And plenty of smaller seaweeds.



I was swimming back to shore when I noticed several people there gesticulating and shouting. They were pointing to a large grey shape in the shallows, a big male elephant seal. Growing to a length of 6 metres and a weight of 4 tonnes [the weight 4 or 5 All Black scrums, or the average weight of an Indian elephant] they are enormous animals on land. Imagine how big they look underwater where everything is magnified by a third [the physics of light and facemasks], plus a bit more for the fear factor. Not that I've ever heard of an elephant seal attacking a diver, but then again, few people ever dive with them. Marine biologist Don Horning did once, here at the Antipodes Islands, and was towed out to sea by a large female who had one of his legs firmly in her jaws. And another biologist was bitten at the Auckland Islands, though that was on land.



So I approached it slowly, with a natural apprehension [wouldn't you be apprehensive?] rather than fear, because it was making no aggressive movements at all. On the contrary, it lay there completely motionless, gazing at me with large calm eyes. I inched to within a metre of it, marvelling at its massive bulk – it seemed to take up the whole ocean. And then made my retreat while I was still ahead of the game. Photos? Sorry [very sorry actually]. I had run out of film and was swimming back to shore. From then on, for the rest of my diving career, I never finished films completely during the dive, always leaving one or two spare shots at the end of the film – in case I met an elephant seal – or other noteworthy animal on the way back to shore or the boat.



## 5. 2017 PROGRAMME

### SEPTEMBER

- **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September.** “Good photos, great photos – anytime, anywhere” workshop. Full day.

### OCTOBER

- Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday-Sunday 14-15 October.** “Great Photography Weekend” workshop. Weekend + follow-up.
- **Saturday 28 October.** “Photography 101” workshop. Half day.

### NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 18 November.** “Close-up Magic – with or without a macro lens” workshop. Full day.

### DECEMBER

- Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

Half-day workshops 9.00am – 1.00pm

Full day & two-day workshops 9.00am – 5.00pm

**COST:** Course fees include tuition, detailed hand-outs & yummy catering, plus assignment and follow-up evenings for full day and two-day workshops.

- **Half day workshops:** \$135 – or \$115 for Early Birds if you register by 10 days before workshop. Fulltime students with ID \$70.
- **One day workshops:** \$295 – or \$245 for Early Birds if you register by 10 days before workshop. Fulltime students with ID \$145.
- **Weekend workshops:** \$475 [\$425 Early Bird]. Fulltime students with ID \$235.

## 6. “GOOD PHOTOS, GREAT PHOTOS – ANYWHERE, ANYTIME” One day workshop – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September

Will that overseas trip to Africa or Europe – or anywhere – make you a better photographer? Probably not. You’ll take more photos than usual, but will they do the trip [the expense, the time, the effort, the early starts] justice? Those big trips are precious, so you owe it to yourself to bring back the best photos you can. The best approach is to become the best photographer you can BEFORE you leave on your big trip. A new camera or lens may or may not make much difference either, but a collection of new skills definitely will. And that means getting to know your camera better, the principles of photography better, and – most important of all – developing your vision – being able to “see” photos everywhere. There is no simple “secret setting” for this but it can be learned. That’s what this workshop is about – “seeing” photos wherever you are. “Finding” photos wherever you are, whatever the light.





This workshop will explore the idea that you can find and take [or create] good photos wherever you are. Right where you are at the moment! Right here, right now will do just fine. Or within walking distance or 30 minutes' drive at the most. Or anywhere else. We will dispel the myth that "I would get great photos if only I could go to Paris or Africa or Antarctica .... or somewhere interesting". We explore the idea of "seeing photo possibilities", seeing and getting good [and sometimes great] photos wherever you are. LOTS of techniques, approaches, tips, ideas, inspiration, lists of "get yourself going" ideas for you to try.



Full course fee [which includes the workshop, follow-up, hand-outs, and Vivienne's yummy catering] only **\$245**. Fulltime students with ID **\$145**.

7. "GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY WEEKEND" 14-15 October



If you're thinking something like "hmmm, maybe I'd like to go to one of Kim's workshops sometime, but which one?" then this is the one I'd most recommend. Over two days we'll cover enough to inspire you for the next 12 months and well beyond. And it's different from all the other workshops I run. Instead of covering just one topic, we spread our wings wider, touching on many of the topics covered in my workshops & tuition over the last 10 years. "Will I learn a lot?" "Yep". **"Will it be fun?" "I'm afraid so!"**

This is the biggest workshop I run, **a full weekend of workshop, field trips and people photography, followed by an assignment and an evaluation evening** about 3 weeks later at a time that suits everyone. Learning is via many paths: a creative mix of modules with detailed hand-outs, live demonstrations, screen-projected images, questions answered, and taking real photos in the field.

It's a weekend of a bit of most things. We'll try our best to squeeze the following in:

- Landscapes & seascapes
- Wildlife photography
- Photographing people
- Travel photography
- Composition, depth of field
- Which lens to use? Telephoto vs. normal vs. wide angle. Using each for best effect
- Wedding photography
- Going professional or semi-professional - or not
- Photo competitions – should you enter? What do the judges look for?
- Copyright, legal stuff, model and property releases
- Specialised techniques for night/dusk photography and aerial photography
- Digital workflow, backing up, archiving
- That troublesome triangle of ISO/aperture/shutter speed - often not understood well [if at all] but absolutely vital if you want real control over your photography
- Photoshop & Lightroom
- Manual or Auto or ....?
- What makes powerful photos powerful?
- Harnessing & developing your creativity
- Silky waterfalls, long exposure photos
- Dealing with problem foregrounds... and more

\*\* Cost: The standard price is **\$475**, reducing to **\$425 for EarlyBird** registrations [for booking before 4<sup>th</sup> October. The price includes the two full days of workshop, follow-up meeting, detailed hand-outs, and yummy catering [courtesy of Vivienne] on both days. **You will feel well looked after.** Special rate for **fulltime students** with ID **\$225**.

For anyone living outside the Tauranga area, there are three good motels [and various eating establishments] within 10 minutes' walk of Kim's studio. The workshops are held at Kim's comfortable studio at 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga.

## 8. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“What we lack is not better cameras,  
but better photographers.  
It's our turn”

David DuChemin

## 9. TWO GOOD PHOTO COMPETITIONS

**NEW ZEALAND GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR.** Got some photos taken in New Zealand you're rather proud of? Entries are now open for the annual New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year competition. This is New Zealand's largest and most prestigious photography competition. And the richest. There's \$5,000 in real hard cash up for grabs, as well as an expedition voyage and some other great prizes. Entries close 13th September. <https://www.nzgeo.com/photography/entry/>

**BIRDS A PLENTY PHOTO COMPETITION.** An annual bird photography competition with good prizes. Its aims are to promote the beauty of, and encourage the appreciation of, NZ birds generally [one section], and birds of the Whakatane Harbour specifically [another section]. Entries close Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017 [www.facebook.com/BirdsAplentyPhotoCompetition](http://www.facebook.com/BirdsAplentyPhotoCompetition)  
[www.whakatane.com/events/birdsaplenty-photo-competition](http://www.whakatane.com/events/birdsaplenty-photo-competition)

The online form can be accessed at <https://goo.gl/forms/d4xEwigwpsshpLp1>

## 10. PHOTOGRAPHING ARTWORKS, PHOTOSHOPPING, PHOTO RESTORATION

As well as teaching photography and mentoring a number of photographers, I also offer photo restoration, Photoshopping, and "Photographing your Artworks" services. \$50 per hour [we get a lot done each hour].

## 11. INVITATION TO ALL CAMERA CLUBS & GROUPS

If your club or group might be interested in hosting one of my presentations - or workshops - or "Field Trip + Photo Critique" days, please get in touch.

## 12. MENTORING

"Mentoring" is the ongoing process of **inspiring, advising, guiding, teaching, critiquing** ... whatever is needed for the ongoing development of a photographer. It's one-on-one, so it's different for each person. One month it may be about equipment or Photoshop, next month it may be "I just want my photos to have more 'Wow' in them", the following month it may be about exhibitions or "Should I go pro?". **Who is mentoring for? Anybody. At present I'm mentoring both established professional photographers and amateurs.**



Photos of Kim by Malcolm Macfarlane & Tony Whitehead

1. At least 90 minutes [probably more] of my time every month. \$115/month.
2. At least 3 hours of my time [probably more] every month. \$165/ month.
3. At least 4 hours of my time [probably more] every month. \$200/ month.

Your mentor [me, Kim]:

- Over 30 years as a professional photographer
- Five First Prizes in the BBC "Wildlife Photographer of the Year" competition, the Olympics [or Oscars] of nature photography worldwide.
- 18 books published – written and photographed by me.
- **Passionate about photography and passionate about inspiring, guiding, and supporting photographers. I'm there for you.**

### 13. KIM'S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month [except January], chat informally about photography, and view some of the recent photos we've taken. It's **free [no charge], supper is served**, and there's no obligation of any kind. **Please email me if you'd like to come.** These evenings are always fun and friendly. It's a great way of meeting up with like-minded people, **being inspired by the creativity of our group of photographers, and coming away with news ideas and tips.** Bring photos if you wish, but there's no obligation to bring any. The next one is on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, starting 7.00pm. 18 Greerton Road, Tauranga.

### 14. PRIVATE TUITION

Yes, like you I'm usually busy doing "other stuff" too, but I can nearly always fit private tuition in, and am very happy to do so. First 2 hours: \$80 per hour, after that \$70 per hour. If you come again, it's \$70 per hour right from the first hour.

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