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# Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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## Newsletter #49 - August 2016

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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.*



## 1. “NEW & DIFFERENT, NEW & DIFFERENT”

Tony watched as I photographed the coastline around Lottin Point for two weeks before finally saying “I’ve figured out how you get your photos Kim. You just take normal subjects like seagulls or waves or Pohutukawas or rocks on the beach – and then photograph them in different or unusual ways”. “Yep, Tony, you’ve got it. That’s it. Simple really, isn’t it?”

Simple - but not necessarily easy. It’s easy to see what we see, obviously. But – how do we see what we do not see, what’s not obvious? Seeing photographic possibilities beyond the obvious is to my thinking possibly the single most important thing in my own photography, but also the hardest to teach, largely because we are all so different. We all see the world differently.

Imagine heading out with a group of 20 photographers for a two hour shoot as part of a workshop. Somewhere, anywhere, it doesn’t really matter where. The exercise is – without moving more than say 50 metres from the starting point – to see what photos each photographer can find there during the two hour exercise. I’ve heard of such exercises being held in supermarket carpark [places not known for being particularly photogenic], but anywhere will do: beach, river, park, downtown street, anywhere.



Chances are that one or two photographers will end up saying “That was a waste of time – there’s no good photos there!” But probably a few others will come back with a wide variety of good quality photos showing a range of subject matter, technique and creativity. And most of the photographers will be somewhere between those extremes. This middle group will have got some photos, maybe a few they are pleased with, but not too many. Same place, same time frame, same light, same opportunities – and yet some of the photographers “get it” and see many photographic possibilities while others see few [or even no] photo opportunities worth taking.

I’ve been teaching photography formally for 10 years now, and the question of “seeing photo possibilities” is the one I’ve found the hardest to teach. To a large extent, it’s probably not teachable in any kind of “Aha – now I’ve got it!” sense. However, there are some approaches I’ve found useful. A big one – beautifully simple but powerful – is to tap into the creativity of other photographers. Whatever your subject matter is, there will already be some [usually many] photos already in existence of that subject or place. If you’re into photographing shore birds in flight, then Google “shore birds flying” and click on “Images”. There will be thousands of photos there, especially if you find some you like and click on “View More”. Some of them will give you good ideas of what to try next time.

What I’m always after [and I’d encourage you to be after too] is “New & Different” – photos different from those you taken before, approaches new **to you**. Coming up with approaches that no-one else in

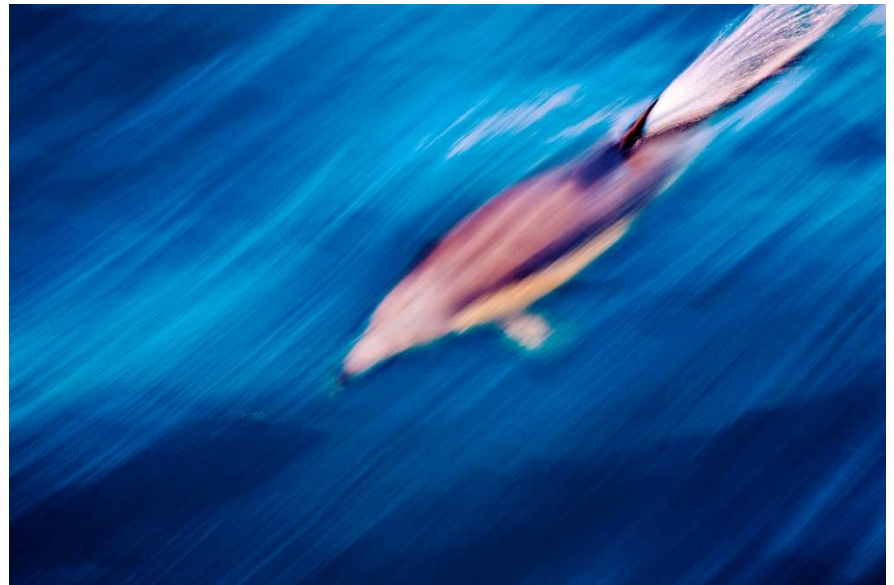


the world has ever tried before is not easy [possible, but definitely not easy], but at least the approaches should – as often as possible – be new to YOU. And sometimes the new way works – making you smile. And sometimes it doesn't – so you smile anyway, shrug your shoulders, and move on. The most creative people are often those willing to play, to experiment, to try new things, to get it wrong often.

Here's three examples from my own photography. When I was younger I was a keen surfer [and before that a surf lifesaver]. I've loved waves ever since, in all their marvellous diversity. Waves are different enough that some surf photographers put out high quality photographic books featuring nothing but waves [I know, I have some of them].

The photo above at the left is a good quality surfing-type wave, in this case on a remote Fiji atoll that has possibly never been surfed. It nearly caught our small yacht and smashed it onto the atoll – if that had happened, I might not be here writing about it now. The point is that this is the kind of wave photo that most other wave photographers have taken ever since the first surf photos were taken – sharp, clear, and taken above water. What could I do that was “New & Different?” One answer was to take my camera underwater and photograph the breaking wave as seen from underwater. So I did. On another Fiji reef. Photos like this have to be taken with wide angle lenses and the photographer has to be close – very close – to the subject, the wave. The closest part of the wave in the photo is near enough that I could probably have touched it.

The only problem was that every wave is slightly different from every other wave. So if I was in just the right place for getting good underwater wave photos most of the time, occasionally a bigger wave would break further out, smearing me across the reef.



The second example is dolphin photography. After countless trips out to sea over many years I had a lot of dolphin photos. Enough for a book. So I wrote and illustrated a book on dolphins. But there's only so many sharp, clear, documentary

photos of dolphins you need. The photo at the left, of a young dolphin and its minder, is a perfectly nice photo and I rather like it, but there's some important things missing. What's missing includes their speed, grace and agility, as well as the senses of freedom and harmony and simply “feeling good” that are dolphins' gifts to us. What could I do that was “New & Different” and that might show some of these qualities? So I started experimenting with slower shutter speeds and ended up with the photo on the right.

Thirdly, I've been photographing tree ferns for a while now. Photos like the one below are fine, but what can I do that is "New & Different?" There's been a lot of wind recently, as I'm sure you've noticed, and the tree fern crowns dancing in the wind gave me the "Aha!" moment – time to try blurred motion photos of tree fern fronds twisting and dancing in the wind!" So I spent two afternoons using slow shutter speeds to create a new way [for me] of looking at tree ferns.

Me: "New and Different." "New and Different." "New & Different." It's been one of my main mottos for a long time now, and will keep on being one of the most important.

You?



## 2. FROM KIM'S FIELD DIARIES – STORMY CAMPBELL ISLAND







It's going to be one of those days. Yesterday I was swimming with sea lions in Northwest Bay over on the western coastline of subantarctic Campbell Island. Afterwards the navy helicopter carried my dive gear back to the Monowai, and I walked back over the hills in the gathering darkness. The photos & story of swimming with sea lions will eventually become a School Journal publication "Searching for Sea Lions" which will stay in print for many years, sharing the adventure with children in many countries [it's still in print – thank you Learning Media].

Campbell Island, southernmost of New Zealand's subantarctic island groups [and home to the world's largest albatross, the Southern Royal Albatross] is a wonderful place to visit, but challenging to live on long term. Last year I had three great weeks at Campbell Island, spending my days with the albatrosses, mollymawks and other wildlife, and my nights with the staff of the Meteorological Station.

Mark Crompton ["Swampy"] was OIC that year. Between 1969 and 1991 he spent seven years on Campbell Island and probably knows the island and its weather better than anyone else. His succinct summary of Campbell Island's weather: "God, the weather was cold! It was wet, it was windy, and everything that wasn't tied down blew away".

### **Campbell Island**

Rain days per years: 325

Snow days per year: 42

Hail days per year: 69

Average air temperature: 6-7°C [rarely above 12°C]

Average wind speed: 31-34 Knots [a gale]

Wind gusts reach over 100km per hour [50 Knots, 60 MPH] on at least 100 days a year. That's serious wind. On the Beaufort Wind Scale that's Force 10 ["Storm"]. The next category up – Force 11 – is "Violent Storm".

I have attached myself to a film crew from National Film Unit who with the New Zealand Navy are visiting all five of New Zealand's subantarctic island groups. We have only four days at Campbell Island.

Our first three days were normal Campbell Island weather – lousy. Yesterday had been pretty good for Campbell Island, with not much wind as I swam with the sea lions. But today [the day we're leaving] the wind roars up over the hills and charges down the harbour in violent gusts [called williwaws] which lift sheets of water high into the air.

Our gear is loaded safely onto the New Zealand Navy's hydrographic ship "Monowai", we board, the anchor is lifted and we head down the harbour towards the open sea.

Monowai's anemometer isn't up to the williwaws that scream down upon us. It can only measure winds up to 90 Knots, and these farewell williwaws are clearly stronger than that, jamming the needle on the 90 Knots mark as they roar past. So how strong are they? Who knows. Definitely impressive.

One thing worth mentioning here is that we are still inside Perseverance Harbour, the best harbour at Campbell Island. What is it going to be like out at sea? We will know soon enough. The Monowai passes out the entrance of Perseverance Harbour, heads up along the sheltered east coast of Campbell Island and then encounters the full fury of the Furious Fifties. The Auckland Islands – our next port of call – seem a long, long way away.

I'm now alone on the aft deck, watching the big ocean swells marching past and marveling at the large number of seabirds obviously at home in the conditions: from the small petrels to the large albatrosses.

Campbell Island is home to six species of albatross, including the Campbell Albatross which breeds nowhere else. In the photo below a Campbell Albatross soars effortlessly above the stormy seas. Knowing that their wingspan is 2.0 – 2.5 metres [6 ½ – 8ft] gives a good idea of the size of the swells. There won't be long queues in the mess rooms for lunch or dinner today.





### 3. "PHOTO IMPRESSIONISM" WORKSHOP – Sunday 21 August

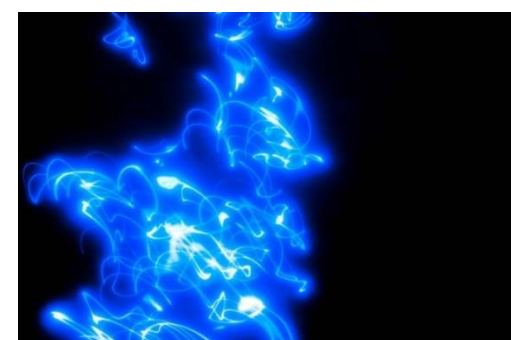
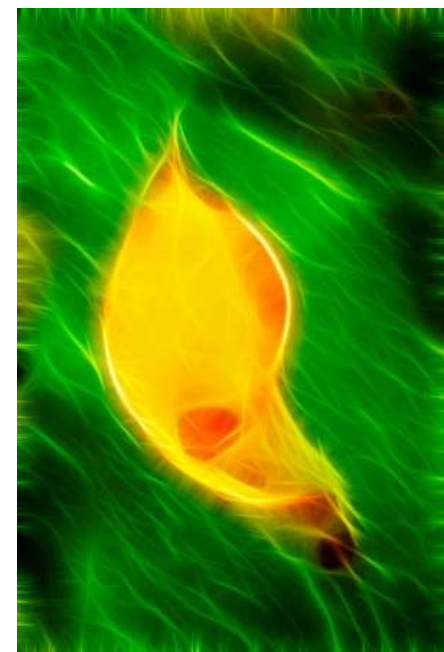
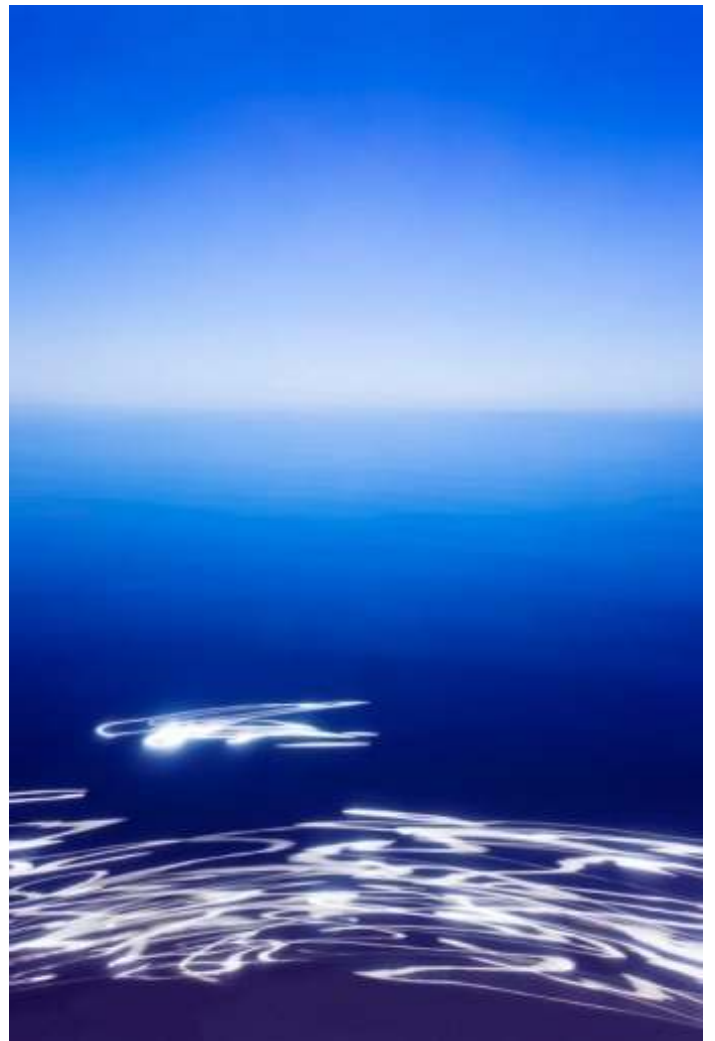
Photo Impressionism is an exciting area of photography. It releases your inner artist. It creates images filled with colour and movement and texture and feelings and emotion. It allows you to get really good photos when other photographers are complaining that "there's nothing to photograph" or "the light is lousy". I've learned and developed many techniques, tips and tricks over the years, and I'll pass these on to you. Many are remarkably easy, once you know what to do and "get your eye in". You will very likely impress yourself!



**Sunday 21 August** 9.00am – 5.00pm plus assignment and follow-up evening 2-3 weeks later for assignment evaluation [at a time that suits everyone]. The follow-up can be by email. **Cost:** Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs, Vivienne's yummy catering, assignment and follow-up] **\$245** Fulltime students with ID **\$150**

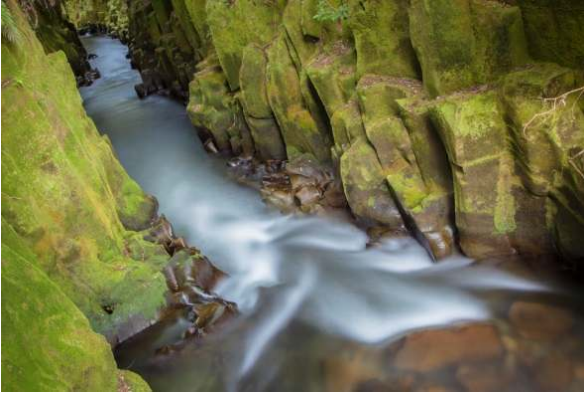
- "I was thrilled with my photos thank you. It opens a whole new world!! The photo impressionism workshop was wonderful. We went to a bleak, midwinter park and created beautiful, colourful photos. Photos full of fun, imagination and mystery." **Vicki Ostler**
- "Hi Kim, I LOVED the Impressionist Photo workshop and would recommend it to anyone wanting to have some fun and get creative with their camera. My family and friends were very impressed with my impressionist photos taken at Yatton Park and one friend even offered to buy one to put on a canvas to hang in her home!!" **Jan Gill**
- "I found the photo impressionism workshop very exciting as it allows me to pursue my more artist/creative side, the techniques we learnt have opened up a whole new world for me." **Lynda Farnworth**







#### 4. "LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY" WORKSHOP - Saturday 10 September



Everything you need to know to give your landscape photography a BIG boost. More details in the next newsletter [or email me], but note the date if you're interested.

**Saturday 10 September** 9.00am – 5.00pm plus assignment and follow-up evening 2-3 weeks later for assignment evaluation [at a time that suits everyone]. The follow-up can be by email.

**Cost:** Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs, Vivienne's yummy catering, assignment and follow-up] **\$295** - or **\$245** for Early Birds – those registering by **1<sup>st</sup> September**. Fulltime students with ID **\$150**



#### 5. BIRTHDAY OFFER

On July 26<sup>th</sup> I had a most excellent birthday [thanks Anne, Gareth & Vivienne]. To keep the celebration going, I'm offering a 15% discount on all workshops booked during August – not just the August workshop, but any future ones ["Landscape Photography", "Great Photography Weekend", "Good photos, Great Photos – Anytime, Anywhere"] that you book during August. All you have to do is mention "birthday" [or "Mick Jagger" – it was his birthday too] in your query or booking, and confirm the booking before 31<sup>st</sup> August. Combine this offer with an EarlyBird discount, and that's a real saving.

#### 6. NEW PLYMOUTH PRESENTATION - 24 AUGUST

On Wednesday 24 August I will be presenting **"Attacked by an Octopus, Cuddled by a Whale"** at the Puke Ariki Museum in New Plymouth. From diving under the ice in Antarctica to swimming with whales in the tropics, in this talk I'll share some of the adventures I've had over the years as a dedicated & professional wildlife photographer.

**Time:** 6.00pm

**Venue:** Museum Foyer, Puke Ariki, New Plymouth

**Cost:** Free

**Bookings:** Not needed. Just turn up

## 7. WHANGAREI PRESENTATION – 14 SEPTEMBER

**Illustrated Talk Title:** “**The Power of Photography – the light and the darkness**”

**Speaker:** Kim Westerskov

**Date:** Wednesday 14 September

**Venue:** Whangarei Public Library, May Bain Room (Level Two of Library)

**Time:** 5.30pm Start

**Cost :** Gold coin entry

**Bookings Essential Due to Limited Seating:** email Nyree Sherlock on [nyreesherlock@outlook.com](mailto:nyreesherlock@outlook.com)

If your club or group might be interested in hosting one of my presentations, please get in touch.

## 8. BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

I know many of you like photographing birds [well, it's hard not to like photographing birds, isn't it?] If you've got some photos of New Zealand birds you're rather proud of, you might be interested in this competition. There's three sections and good prizes:

1. Wild birds anywhere in New Zealand
2. New Zealand birds photographed by young photographer - up to 18 years old
3. Birds of Whakatane Harbour [time to visit this harbour perhaps?]

The overall winner receives \$500 in real hard cash, while First, Second, and Third in each category receive \$200, \$150, and \$100 respectively. Plus – all entrants go into a draw to win one of four gift vouchers to a Kim Westerskov photo workshop [valued at \$295 each]. Entries close 23 September.

Prize giving on Friday 30 September 5:30pm at Te Koputu, Whakatane District Library.

This competition is part of the BIRDSaPLENTY Festival, an annual celebration of the Eastern Bay of Plenty's migratory and native birdlife.

Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/BirdsAplentyPhotoCompetition/>  
<http://www.whakatane.com/events/festivals-and-shows/birdsaplenty-festival>

## 9. PROGRAM FOR 2016

### AUGUST

- **Sunday 21 August. “Photo Impressionism” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- **Wednesday 24 August.** Illustrated presentation “**Attacked by an Octopus, Cuddled by a Whale**” at the Puke Ariki Museum in New Plymouth. 5.30pm. See above for details.

### SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 6 September. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 10 September. “Landscape Photography” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- **Wednesday 14 September.** Illustrated talk “**The Power of Photography – the light and the darkness**”. Whangarei Public Library, 5.30pm [see above for details]

### OCTOBER

- Tuesday 4 October. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.



- **Saturday-Sunday 8-9 October. “Great Photography Weekend” workshop.** Weekend plus follow-up.
- Thursday 20 October. 7.00pm. “In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition”. Details below.

## NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 1 November. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 6 November. “Good photos, great photos – Anytime, Anywhere” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Thursday 17 November. 7.00pm. “In-depth Photo Critiques & Tuition”. Details below

## DECEMBER

- Tuesday 6 December. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

## 10. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“It takes a lot of imagination to be a good photographer. You need less imagination to be a painter because you can invent things. But in photography everything is so ordinary; it takes a lot of looking before you learn to see the extraordinary.”

David Bailey

## 11. MENTORING

“Mentoring” is a bit hard to define exactly, but it’s **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, as every photographer’s needs are different. 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?”



Photos of Kim by Malcolm Macfarlane & Tony Whitehead

Being mentored is possibly the fastest and most rewarding way of progressing rapidly. It’s at your pace and at your level. And I try hard to be as supportive and positive as possible. I’ve designed it to be both affordable and flexible, so to begin with I’m offering “Mentoring by Kim” as a monthly subscription - you can try it and see if it’s what you want. If it is, we continue, fine-tuning as needed. If not, then you pull out at the end of the first month. Every month you have a one-on-one meeting with me, discussing whatever you want. My 30+ years’ experience as a professional photographer & writer is there, ready to help and [hopefully] inspire you. Your questions are answered, options are discussed, photography techniques or approaches are taught, your photos critiqued, new ideas suggested. This is either in person or by phone.

**Who is mentoring for? Anybody. At present I’m mentoring both established professional photographers and amateurs.**

I’m offering three levels of “Mentoring by Kim”:

1. Everything listed above, with 90 minutes “one-on-one” every month. \$115/month.
2. Everything listed above, with 3 hours “one-on-one” every month. \$165/ month.
3. Everything listed above, with 4 hours “one-on-one” 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 of nature photography worldwide.
- 18 books published – written and photographed by me. 12 are currently “in print”.
- **Passionate about photography and passionate about inspiring, guiding, and supporting photographers.**

## 12. IN-DEPTH PHOTO EVALUATION & TUITION EVENINGS

A cost-effective way of moving your photography ahead rapidly. Think of these evenings as a cross between private tuition and workshops, with lots of targeted feedback based entirely on **YOUR photos**. You bring along some photos you’d like evaluated and I critique them, both plusses and minuses, in considerable depth. Not just “how can we improve this photo in Photoshop or Lightroom?”, but what can you learn about photographing a similar subject next time: maybe changing the timing, lens selection, depth of field, aperture/ISO/shutter speed choice, composition, lighting etc. – anything and everything that helps **you on the road towards better and better photos**.

The next In-Depth Evening will be on Thursday 20 October, starting at 7.00pm. Book by email. Cost: \$55

## 13. KIM’S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month [every month of the year 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** [it’s not a big room so I need to keep an eye on numbers]. These evenings are always fun and friendly - there’s usually many smiles and laughs. 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**. There’s a wide range of interests and abilities – so for those of you who have not been before, you’re very unlikely to feel out of your depth. There’s also a small “library” of photo magazines you are welcome to borrow from. Bring photos if you wish, but there’s no obligation to bring any. Some people do, some don’t.

The next one will be on Tuesday **6 September** starting 7.00pm. 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, 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 [I enjoy teaching and mentoring ☺]. So – if you’d like some tuition, give me a yell. First 2 hours: \$80 per hour, after that \$70 per hour [forever!]

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