"Bits and Pieces" by Lindsay Gibbs

Always take your camera when you go for a stroll as you never know what you may encounter.

Take today for instance. I was having my annual stroll around Wellington when I encountered the strangest of sights. Asleep on a bench was this guy in a sleeping bag, shoulders exposed, and no worldly possessions other than his clothes which were neatly folded at his feet (Fig 1). Talk about a human interest story. The boots were immaculate!


When it came to printing Fig 1 there are some major flaws. Firstly the subject of interest is in the middle of the image which is a no-no. Secondly the vertical lines in the concrete wall are converging. And lastly the horizontal part of the concrete wall is a distraction that needs to be cropped out. The shadow area in the boots could also be opened up but I'm going to ignore that for now.

Cropping the image
The following method allows you to fix all of the problems at once.

First we need to set up a "Rule of Thirds Grid" in Photoshop (Elements). To do this open Photoshop and click "Edit/Preferences/Grid" and set the "Gridline to every 33.33 percent" and the "Subdivisions to 1" as shown in Fig 2.
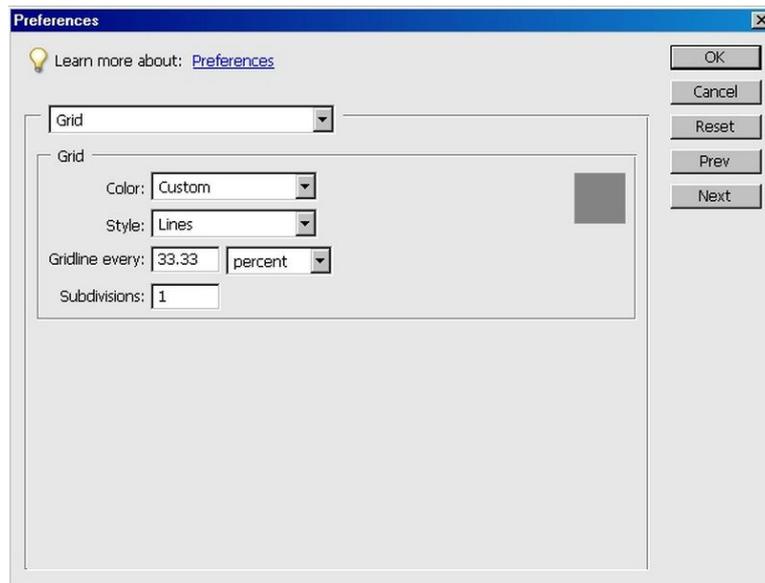
Now open the your image in Photoshop (Elements).

Next we create a new document as shown in Fig 3 by clicking "File/New/Blank File" and entering the desired image dimensions. In this case I've chosen to make a 6 x 4 inch print at 300 dpi.
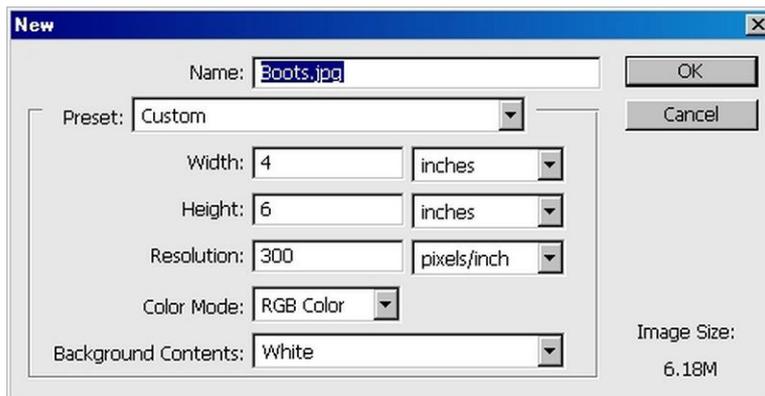

Having done this select the "Move Tool" in the "Tools Palette" then click "Window/Images/Tile"so that you can see both the image and the new document. Now click on the image and drag it into the document as shown in Fig 4.
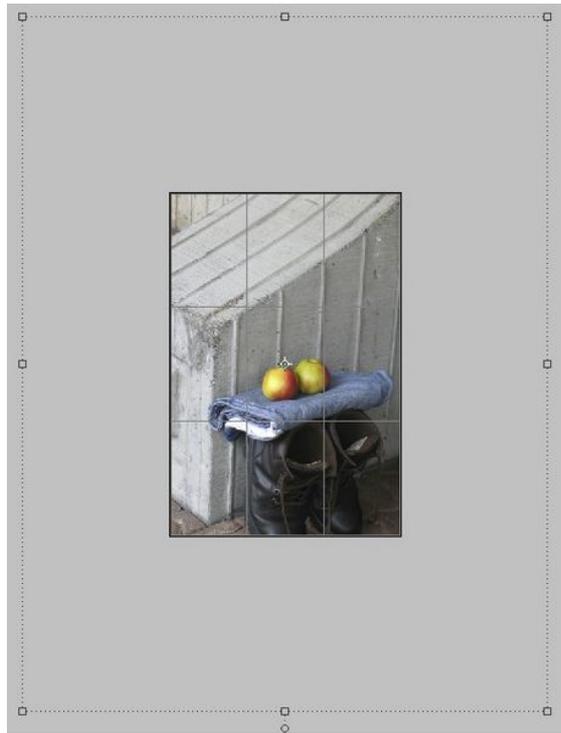
Notice the square boxes and dotted lines that surround the visible portion of the image. Those boxes and lines represent the edge of the actual photo. Your task is to rescale the image to fit the document. The "rule of thirds" grid on the document (if it's not visible click "View/Grid") is for positioning the key parts of your image.

Having got this far we are almost done. Click "Image/Transform/Distort" and pull the boxes any which way until you are happy with what you see. The "distort" tool allows you to fix all of the problems at once. A possible image is shown in Fig 5. Click "okay" then flatten your image.
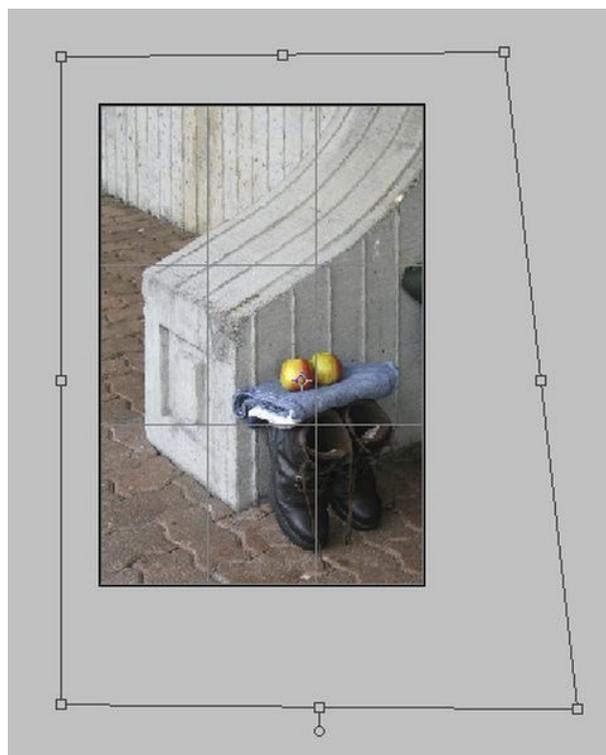
Any defects, such as the sleeping bag, can be removed. The final image (fig 6) is now ready for sharpening and print.