



All the birds came today
by Brian Eacock ARPS
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I'm pleased to be able to report that we enjoyed a fantastic event in October, when under the umbrella of The Real Thing initiative in conjunction with the RPS, we staged Illusion and Reality featuring Steve Caplin. The day was memorable and excellent and we've a full report on the next page. Our thanks go to Jim Buckley for his organisation and co-ordinating skills in ensuring the day was an outstanding success. And to Martin Addison and John Long for judging the prints contributed by members. Without willing volunteers the whole event would not have run so smoothly and in this respect we sincerely thank Elizabeth Restall, Alex Dufty and David Gamm, plus Roger and Judith Parry from Smethwick Photographic Society and their team of helpers. It was good to have RPS President, Rosemary Wilman Hon FRPS with us on the day. Rosemary was able to open the RPS International Print Exhibition which graced the walls of The Old School House.

This issue carries details of our AGM. Everyone is welcome to attend. The day presents an opportunity for you to have your say about the running of our group and to take part in the election of committee members. The day isn't all business by any means. We have the selection of prints for our members' exhibition and a great lecture in prospect when digital imaging guru and workflow expert, Mike McNamee, will give an illustrated presentation about The Impact of Digital Imaging on the Creative Process.

If you haven't already booked your place for our Portraits, Fashion & Nudes Workshop on 24 and 25 April 2010, then be aware tickets are going fast and we're already past the half-way stage for numbers. It'll be an informative and inspirational event - book your place as soon as possible.

As you know from time to time I use my Chairman's Letter introduce a subject that I feel strongly about - and hopefully evoke a response from our members. So here are some further thoughts...

The Tyranny of the Cliché As alert and active photographers we constantly seek subjects and ways to express ourselves. From time to time we present our results to audiences, whether to intimate groups - that is to say, colleagues, discussion groups, camera clubs or folios - or to the public in galleries, at exhibitions, on websites etc. Yet the range of subject matter, treatment and approach remains astonishingly similar and unadventurous. Naturally, one can take the view that there's nothing new under the sun and

perhaps this is true, but there are many ways of portraying familiar subjects and, with a little imagination, discovering how to present these things anew. I dare say that we could all identify a number of photographic and artistic clichés which could look something like the list below. And, yes, I know - before you shout at me - I confess that I've also become a victim of many of the clichés on the list:

- Cute pictures of cats, dogs & kids
- Contrived, aggressive-looking youths set against urban decay and brick walls
- Studio shots, including tramps and other unlikely characters looking all too glossy
- The lone tree
- Nude draped over rock
- Glamour poses with coy-looking models
- Nude in crumbling, desolate building
- Sweeping landscape/seascape with dramatic sky
- Abandoned room/house
- Slot Canyons
- Venetian Masks
- Panning shots of racing cars/motorcycles/sports
- First-class though somewhat static natural history shots of birds on twigs
- Slow-shutter effects of flowing water/sea
- Floral arrangements and close-ups of flower heads
- Red hats/red umbrellas
- Sunset/sunrise (more points for getting up early!)
- Reflections in windows of skyscrapers

Feel free to add more!

We all take these sorts of pictures and there's nothing intrinsically wrong about this nor do I seek to be sweepingly highly critical. The reason for my observation is this: when we're presented with typical examples of these genre images and asked to judge or interpret them, it's very difficult not to fall back upon and automatically repeat (often without realising it) the same old response - as when a similar offering appeared before us. When I see yet another lone tree, piece of rust, patterned stone, abandoned cottage etc it's very difficult not to respond in the same old way. Indeed to find a fresh response to repetitive subject matter is becoming something of a challenge! It's no wonder therefore that the less perceptive judges at club competitions find an easy retreat into stereo-typical and mechanical response. The subject matter and picture frequently remain worthy but it's the viewer's response that's the problem.

Perhaps we should endeavour not to repeat our subject matter quite so frequently. A fresh approach would allow us to better engage our audience and judges too (please!) in a two-way relationship to challenge perception and gain the informed response which, as artists, we seek.

Clive Haynes FRPS



*Clive Haynes FRPS
Chairman*

Articles and Images for DIGIT Spring 2010

Copy Date end January

DIGIT relies on the contributions of members. We're all learning and your experience is valuable. You don't need to be an expert writer - we'll help you. We need *How To* articles with your favourite digital techniques and your brilliant images. Thank you.

Jim Buckley LRPS Editor

Email: *editor@digit.rps.org*

A Day with Steve Caplin

'A brilliant day and one of which we can be justly proud - a wonderful shop window for the DI Group' - Clive Haynes FRPS, Chairman.



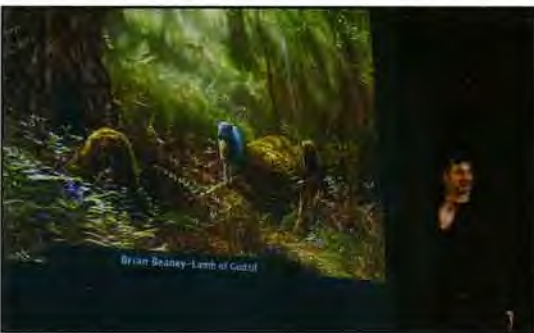
With almost one hundred people packed into the Smethwick Photo Soc lecture theatre it was a crowded day in more ways than one. Rosemary Wilman HonFRPS the new President of the Society introduced the day by opening the International Print Exhibition which was on display,

before rushing off to Chester to do the same for the International Projected Image Exhibition.

Judges Martin Addison FRPS and John Long ARPS gave a commentary on the prints which members had brought and awarded prizes of Martin's new book, *Painter 11 for Photographers*, and wine (thank you Gentlemen!) to Valentina Kulagina ARPS and Peter Read LRPS for their prints - see alongside.

More prizes were to follow in the next part of the day as Steve Caplin, who produces satirical, political montages for major national and international print media talked about ethics and image manipulation. He soon had us all wondering just how we would push what we might feel were the boundaries of acceptability in manipulation for newspapers, and our own pockets! Using examples from both history (including painting and photographs a century before Photoshop) and his own work, Steve explored the moral issues which confront us as photographers.

After the lunch break (in which Steve nipped outside to take a couple of shots) he gave us his views as an illustrator rather than a photographer on the prints. And, guess what, he saw things somewhat differently. Moving on to the images which delegates had sent in for Steve's assessment, he had some revealing points to make, including taking care to scale human figures appropriately.



He was impressed with the quality of DI Group members' work and gave a copy of his book to Geoff Coles Food for Thought (above) whilst the bottle of wine went to Brian Beaney FRPS.

Steve then took us on a fascinating and interactive tour of magic in Photoshop, covering Content Aware Scaling, quick Selection, Blend If, Displacement maps and much else. And Yes, it's in his book: *How to Cheat in Photoshop*. The most fun you can have without breaking the law, said Steve! Afterwards Steve told me: *I enjoyed it hugely. What an interesting and inspired group of people. A real pleasure! Thanks for inviting me.*



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

NATIONAL EVENTS

18 April 2010: AGM, Smethwick Photo Soc

24/25 April 2010: Portraits, Fashion and Nudes Weekend, Cheltenham

DIGIT is printed by Ian Allan Printing, Riverdene Business Park, Molsey Road, Hersham, Surrey KT12 4RG

WATER COLOUR SKETCH

Like most of us, Mahendra Bhatia took snapshots of holidays, birthdays and the family but when he retired from his full time NHS job in 2002 he booked into a Jessops photography class. The lecturer, Leigh Preston FRPS, suggested he joined the Cookbridge Camera Club in Leeds. In addition, he was fortunate enough to meet and be taught Photoshop by Margaret Hockney - sister of the famous painter and user of photographs in art, David Hockney. Mahendra moved on to LVS on line courses (www.lvsonline.com/schedule.shtml) and before submitting his successfull L panel at FOCUS he attended a Society workshop. In this article, he shows us a technique to convert your photos into a watercolour sketch. This method may work best with jpegs with earlier versions of Photoshop so convert RAW and TIFF files to 8 bit jpegs. Choose your subject carefully since some look a lot better than others depending on the colours in the photo.



The starting image

First duplicate your photo layer twice by dragging it to the Make New Layer icon or pressing Ctrl+J twice (Cmd+J on a Mac). Now you should have three identical layers in the layers palette as shown on the right.

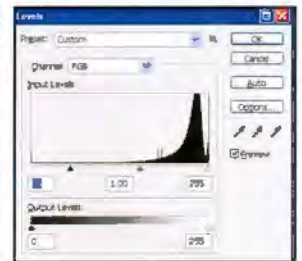


Now click on the top layer to activate it and choose Filter>Stylize>Find Edges.

Now hit Ctrl+Shift+U to make your photo monochrome. You can see this step on the left.

To create the Art Effect open the Levels

palette (Ctrl+L) and move the black and white sliders to give a good line art effect. The idea is not to have too much grey in the edges, so it looks like a sketch in black ink.



Now we'll prepare to run the Dry Brush Filter on the middle layer. Click the top layer (which is now monochrome) and change the mode to Multiply to blend the top layer with the layer underneath, the middle layer.

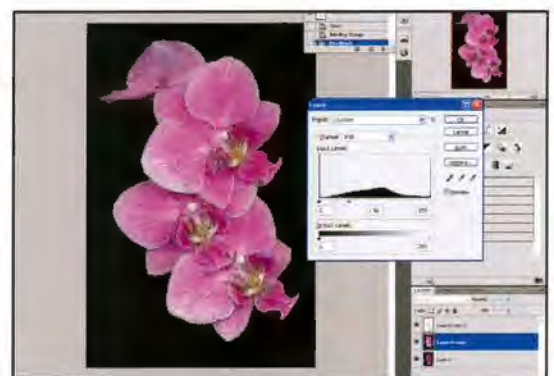
Now click the middle layer to activate it and go to Filter>Artistic>Dry Brush. I used the settings 2, 2 and 3 for my photo of the orchid. You will need to experiment to find the best settings for your own



photo. Then click OK.

The final step is to adjust the paint effect. Click the Adjustment Layer in layers palette and select Levels

from the list. Move the middle slider to the left or right to brighten or darken the paint effect and give the look you are after. Click OK and you're done!





Left: The finished watercolour orchid

Below: Watercolour Venice



Below: Street Artist





Windy day in Norfolk

THE LEVELS AND CURVES OF MY SHORT PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY

Brian Eacock has been interested in photography for many years but it was not until he retired that he was able to take it more seriously. Here he describes his interests and experiences.

When I was asked to write an article for the magazine three things immediately crossed my mind: shock, horror and finally a sort of pride. But what am I going to say? So once again my ever faithful motto, give it your best shot, 110%. But heavens, how am I going to fill a whole article with my thoughts and feelings on photography, with no formal training of any sort, and no years of experience in the dark room? So what will all the eminent and famous authors who are members think about my comments?

I have always been interested in photography, that is to say, I owned a camera that came out at least once a year, usually with last year's film in. When I retired from my job and discovered that I could no longer run marathons or play squash as I used to it became obvious that, with a replacement hip, knee, and elbow, sadly golf was not an option.

I was Clerk of Works at Worcester Cathedral for almost 30 years, not just a job, my life. But unfortunately it did not include the use of computers, and I did not know how to switch one on let alone use one. So when I suggested to my wife June that I was going to buy a computer, hilarity was very much to the fore. But I did, and I struggled. Fortunately June's son Alan is a top class IT consultant and always at the end of the phone to sort me out. That was when I started to

notice articles about Digital Photography. After much reading and studying I bought my first 3 megapixel digital camera. That was it. I was hooked.

My next encounter was a short course on Photoshop with Clive Haynes FRPS which presented even more challenges. I will never forget that course: there were two professional photographers who knew nothing about computers, and three others who knew nothing about either computers or photography. Clive had quite a challenge on. When I am talking to people about my short time in photography I tell them I am trying to squeeze a lifetime's photographic enjoyment into a short number of years. The best way I find to do this by the "Levels, and Curves Method". I try and set the LEVEL I would like to achieve - very high - and point out that trying to master how to use the computer, learn about photography, and the intricacies of Photoshop is a very steep learning CURVE.

My next step was to join Beacon Camera Club where I was encouraged to enter the competitions and from then on photography has become my passion. I later joined Worcestershire Camera Club, the RPS Digital Group and I was recently invited to join the Smethwick Club.

Now on my fifth camera, fourth computer, fourth printer and



Sunset over the M4

using the 2nd bedroom as a study, I am more than happy with my kit, but at the start printing was a nightmare. I knew nothing about profiles or colour management, and the first printer which came “free” with the computer cost an arm and a leg for the cartridges so yet more trial and error, mostly error. Then success. I went to meet Robin Whetton at PermaJet and he gave me great advice and explained to me where I was going wrong. He and all his staff were brilliant. I now use an Epson 2400 with continuous ink flow system and I use PermaJet paper exclusively.

I have always been very competitive person, especially in my sporting pursuits and my motto in life has always been to strive to do one’s best no matter how unexciting or menial the task may be, 110% every time. So why not try for a distinction?

For my LRPS panel I had a variety of subjects but for my ARPS I concentrated on birds in the Nature section. I think I was more nervous sitting in the room at Bath hearing the outcome of the appraisals, than I was when I got married. The fact that so many failed on both occasions made me even more proud to pass both distinctions at the first attempt. Had I failed the ARPS I do not think I could stand the strain of going through it again.

When asked what is my favourite subject I immediately say Nature (especially birds), Portraits, Seascapes, Dereliction, Still Life, Architecture - every one a favourite. I just enjoy taking pictures of anything and everything that I find attractive and would like to look at again and again; and hopefully other people might enjoy looking at as well.

The planned photo shoot does not always turn out how I envisaged but a spontaneous one is often brilliant. So rather than concentrate on one subject I keep an open mind and my camera at the ready. Invariably the sky is washed out; the birds always seem to have something in their mouth, move, or the wind blows as I click. I can recall taking every photo and the problems I encountered. It is like looking through a diary for the memories but instead of words, my photos tell my life story.



Wild in the wood



Michelle



Kingfisher



The M4 in Mono



I am not the most patient man in daily life but when it comes to waiting and taking the perfect shot I can sit for hours. I read all the articles in magazines in an effort to learn and perfect my photos. I look at the composition and subject matter - why did they choose that shot? I try to look into the author's mind. I do not always see the competition winner's composition as my choice, but yes, occasionally I think –“Yes I could try that”.

When Alan, my stepson, offered to create a website for me I was then faced with the decision of which photos to display from the hundreds, nay thousands if I am honest, I have taken over the past six years.

People have different perceptions of a good subject matter so a variety was called for to cater for everyone's taste. My website is at:

<http://www.eacock.co.uk>. I hope you find some to your liking.

One of my early pictures that I gained a lot of satisfaction from was completely out of the blue. We were in Pembrokeshire on holiday when we happened across some surfing championships. So down to the beach I went with my trusty 70-300 lens only to spot that the pros, from the surfing magazines, had their 500, 600 lenses plus converters. I felt a little bit overawed. Anyway, I thought “give it a go”. I have always loved this shot (The Wave) and it has done quite well in external competitions plus it reminds us of Pembrokeshire, one of our favourite places. We've been going there for 20 years but only seen this event once.

The most evocative picture I think I have taken has to be When you coming out to play? - our grandchildren. Originally intended as a snapshot for the family album, I like to believe that this picture will re-live the moment for many years to come, i.e. Special birthdays 18 and 21, and possibly a wedding day, and will be passed around the family when reminiscing about the birth of Jake.

Another favourite is Windy Day in Norfolk because it reminds us of our first wonderful holiday in Norfolk. It was a very simple shot, vast space, enormous skies and far from the madding crowds. A straightforward, no messing about photograph which captured the moment when we found this wonderful scenery.

My bird shots vary between snapshots spotted on our walks, to days or weeks trying to catch a decent shot of the “Kingfisher”. All my bird shots are truly in the wild (no visits to places where they tell you where the bird is going to land). When you mention to people that you were trying to get shots of a particular bird, it is amazing how many people say “Oh we see one every day in the garden or at the pool” or whatever. But when you try to narrow it down it appears the last time they saw one was about 2 weeks ago, when he passed through at 30 mph. But



The wave

they are only trying to be helpful. Part of my enjoyment is just seeing the birds in their natural habitat and if I am able to get a good shot to show for it that is a bonus.(see also “Pair of finches”)

One of my few planned visits was to the M4 Bridge where I spent nearly five hours from arrival to when I left in the dark. My shots started with early visions of sunset right through to when the lights came on. (“Sunset over the M4” and “The M4 in mono”).

I have recently been trying my hand at portraits. I started by using daughters of friends, then the occasional studio session at the Midlands DI Group. I recently joined Smethwick and have been to a few of their studio nights. I find this very rewarding with a number of attractive young ladies and with the lighting already set up. But the problem here is time: for a beginner having only a three minute session to get a perfect shot is difficult. However I have achieved a degree of success with “Michelle” in a number of competitions. (See also “Wild in the wood”). Having been in the construction industry all my life, architecture and all its characteristics from Norman Crypts to derelict farmhouses have always fascinated me. How were they built? Have they been altered? And why are they falling down? I always try to picture in my mind the



When you coming out to play?



Norman crypt



Pair of finches



Scissor arch in nave

people who were building these wonderful buildings, the hardships and lack of amenities and the equipment that is now taken for granted. Sadly, in my mind, we are unable to equal the sheer skill and workmanship of days gone by. ("Norman crypt" and "Scissor arch in nave").

What does the future hold? As I said before I am trying to cram 25 missed years of enjoyment into however many years my failing joints will allow.

I am finding it increasingly difficult with mobility, and without my wife June's help with the driving and carrying I would be lost. While on this subject I would like to add

what an inspiration June has been to me: encouragement when I needed it and infinite patience to cope with my lack of it.

I really enjoy my camera club meetings at Worcester and Beacon and seldom miss one. The DI Group meetings at Smethwick are always an inspiration with the varied speakers and demonstrations. I support and enter all the club competitions, colour, mono and digital projections, and enter a considerable number of external competitions. Friends ask what about an attempt at a Fellowship and my response is: That is one of my dreams. People can have dreams can't they?

THE NEW BUZZ WORD IS TOPAZ

For years, people who wanted to use simplifier software on their images used buZZ but this is no longer available. In this article, Tony Healy discusses an alternative, Topaz.

In the Spring 2009 issue of DIGIT (No. 41, pp 8-11) Alan Dedman mentioned that one of his major Adobe Photoshop plug-ins was buZZ. Unfortunately the company that produced this plug-in went out of business leaving those yet to experience this feature without a chance to do so and those who had demonstration copies unable to buy an activation key to use it beyond the trial period. I found myself in the latter group. Alan had a follow-up article in the Autumn 2009 issue of DIGIT (No. 43, pp 28-29) with a brief comment on the application and an example of Topaz Simplifier. However it is a case of the “King is Dead, Long Live the King”. An alternative and more flexible replacement has arrived called Topaz Simplify 2.

The manufacturer states that their product:

- Creates artistic simplification and edge effects on regular photos in a unique way
- Instantly transforms your photos into breathtaking art with its innovative Photoshop plug-in
- Allows you to take control of the artistic process with infinitely customisable and malleable options
- Requires no drawing skills – using simple, quick and easy-to-learn sliders
- Maximises your time by using presets or make your own favourite settings
- Operate with both 8-bit and 16-bit mode
- Utilise Photoshop's Smart Filter feature for convenient and non-destructive editing
- Is fully compatible with Photoshop CS4 64-bit and the accompanying speed benefits

Well that's quite a list but I have to say it does offer a few benefits over buZZ.

The first thing you notice is the larger window size you have to work with in Topaz. You have the option of “Fit” to Window or “100%” with any percentage in between and up to 400%. The controls work from left to right and are laid out in a logical workflow.

The yellow arrows in Figure 1 indicate the position of data about the image size. The left hand arrow pointing at “Preview Mode” is showing that the image is displayed at less than 100% by using the term “approx”. This is also confirmed by the next small arrow to the right which points to the specific image size. The last arrow point indicates the button to display the image at 100%. Once this is chosen the “approx” word at the first arrow head changes to “accurate”. Figures 2 and 3, respectively, show the “Fit” size and how you can fill the window using the “+” button next to the 100% button.

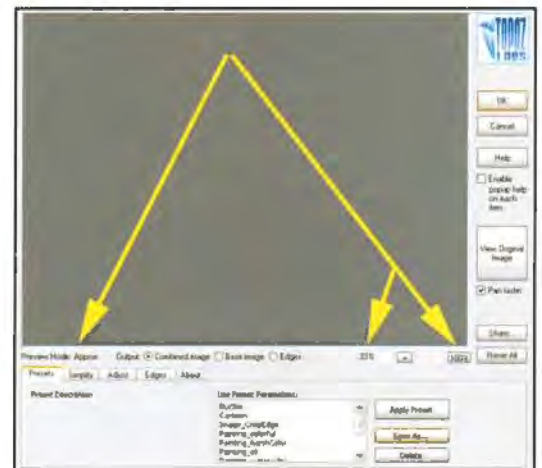


Figure 1

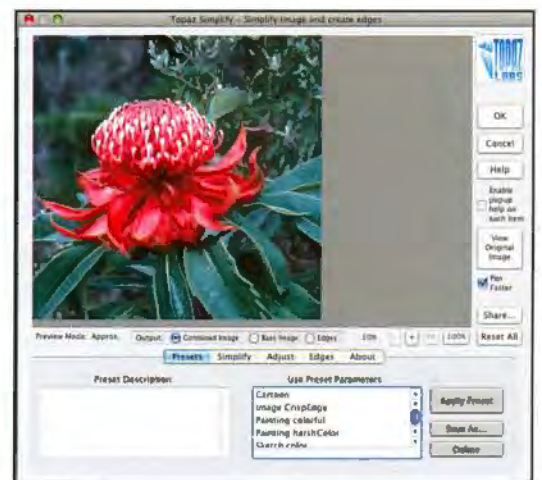


Figure 2



Figure 3

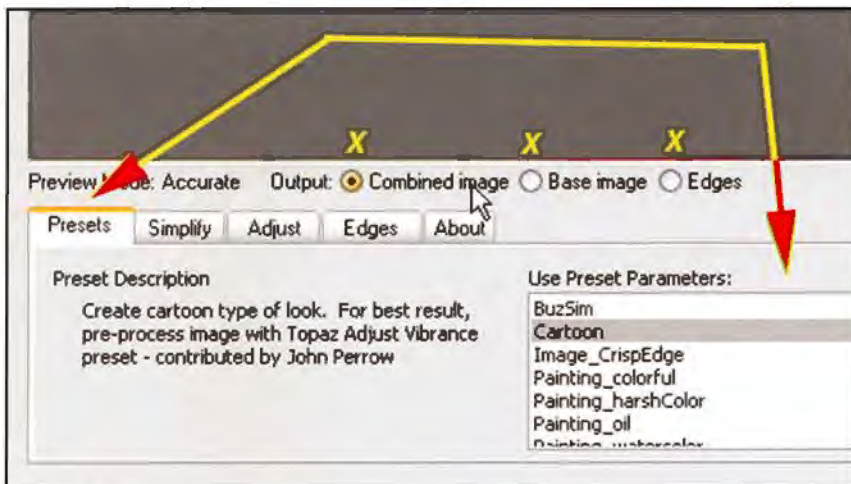


Figure 4



Figure 5

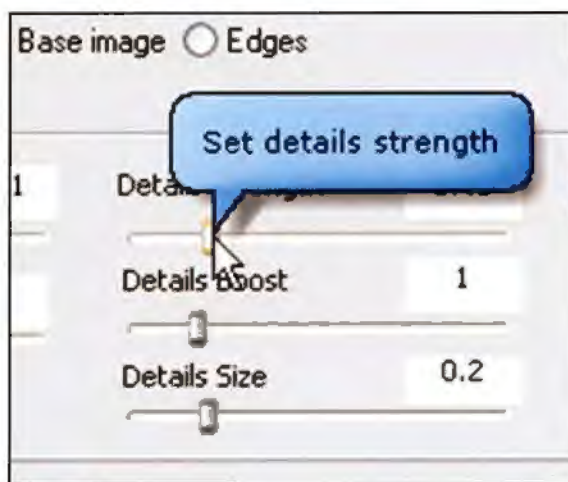


Figure 6



Figure 7

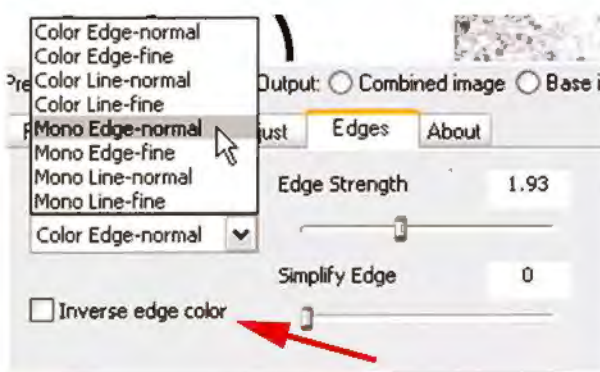


Figure 8

In Figure 4 there are 3 Yellow Xs above “combined image”, “base image” and “edges”. The “combined image” option shows the changes made combined with the edge data generated by the changes. The “Base image” shows the simplified image on its own and “Edges” shows the line image that has been generated by changes. The two arrow heads indicate the “preset” button and the list of “presets” that can be accessed. If you create your own set of changes and do not use the presets then you can save the steps and add it to the list that is already there.

There is a strip located on the right hand side of Figure 1 seen in close up in Figure 5. From top to bottom, clicking “OK” commits all changes and opens the image in Photoshop. “Cancel” obviously cancels all changes. The “Help” button will connect you to Topaz Labs to learn more about the application. If the “Enable pop up” box is checked whenever you place your cursor over a slider or button a pop up bubble will appear as in Figure 6 to tell you what the function does. The large “View Original Image” button is a toggle between the modified image and the original image. The “share” button creates on the clipboard the list of changes that have been made to an image that can be pasted into a document, sent to a friend via email or posted on a web site. Finally “Reset All” sets everything back to their default settings.

We now come to the engine of the plug-in. Figure 7 shows the settings you will use to create your work of art. The “Simplify” tab brings up the sliders to make your changes. Although you will work in RGB colour space the simplification can sometimes create odd colour patches and changing to YCbCr colour space can remove them. The sliders in the “Simplify” tab allow control over how much of the original image you want to simplify. It is used in conjunction with the “Adjust” tab to bring out detail that would normally be lost using the “Simplify” slider alone.

Work can be done in both a colour mode and a B+W mode. Figure 8 shows the list of options, and you can decide whether or not you want a positive or negative image by clicking on the “Inverse Edge Colour” box. Figure 9 illustrates the two options.

While I was in the process of writing this article Topaz Labs upgraded the software to version 2. The interface changed and the “presets” which were just listed below the sliders now appear with their effect down the left hand side of the interface. Figure 10.



Figure 9

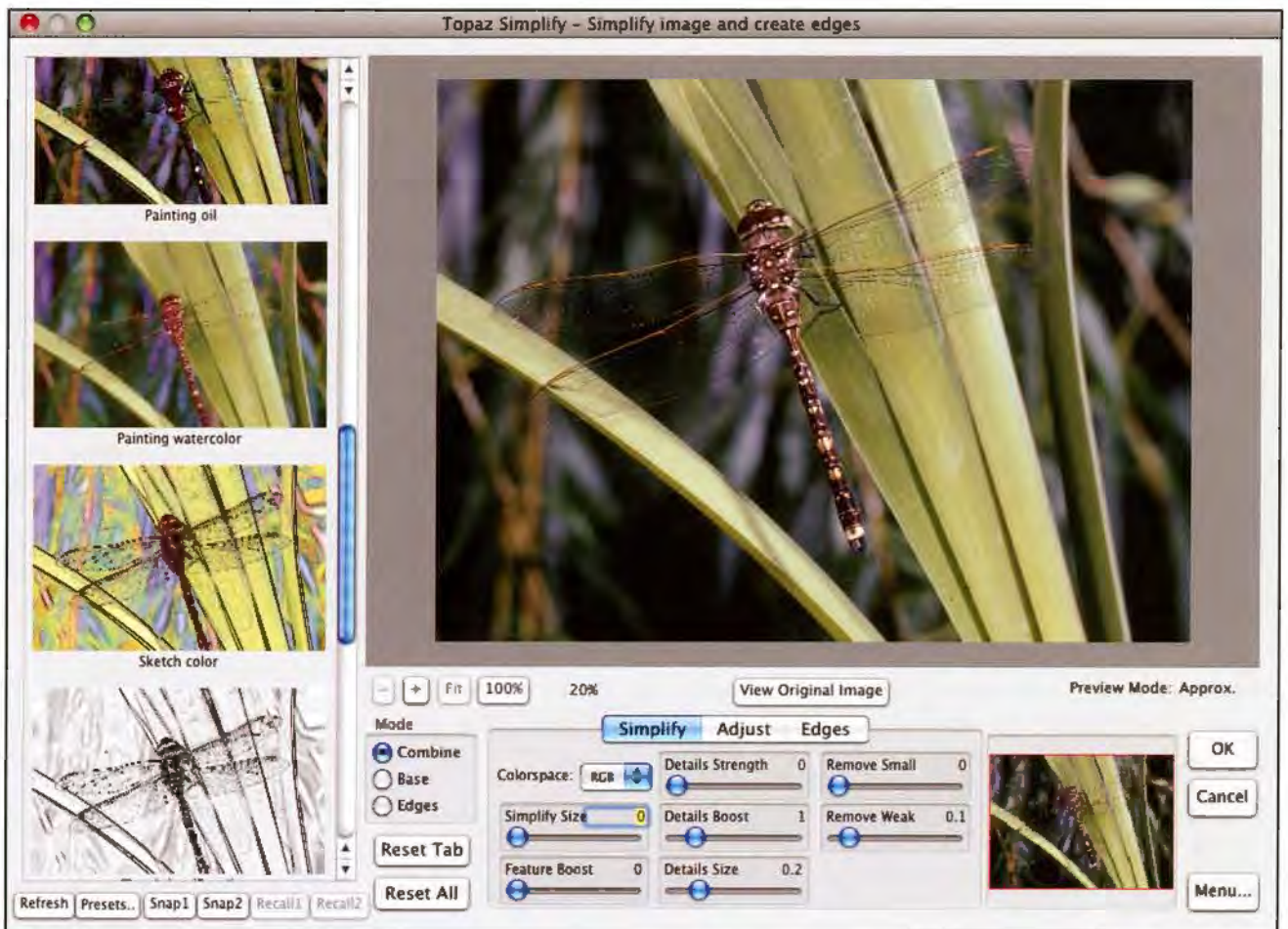


Figure 10

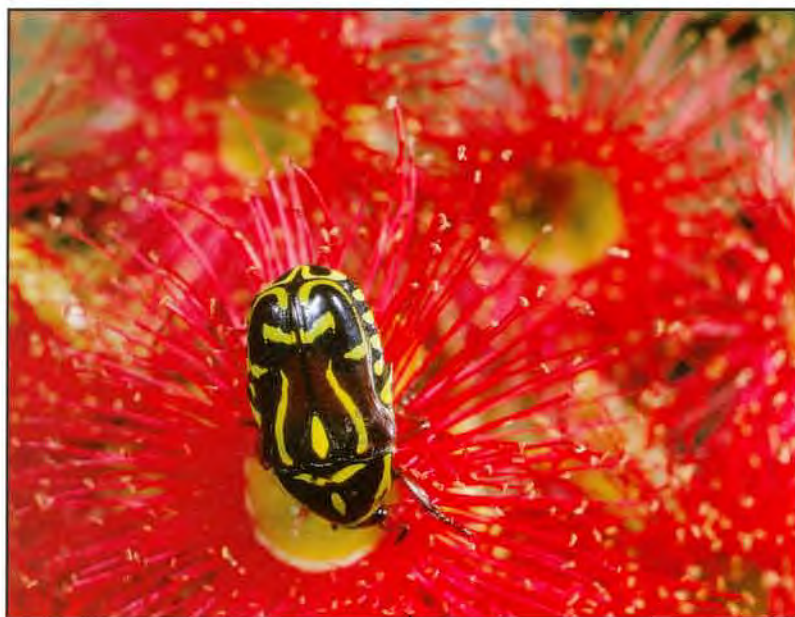


Figure 11

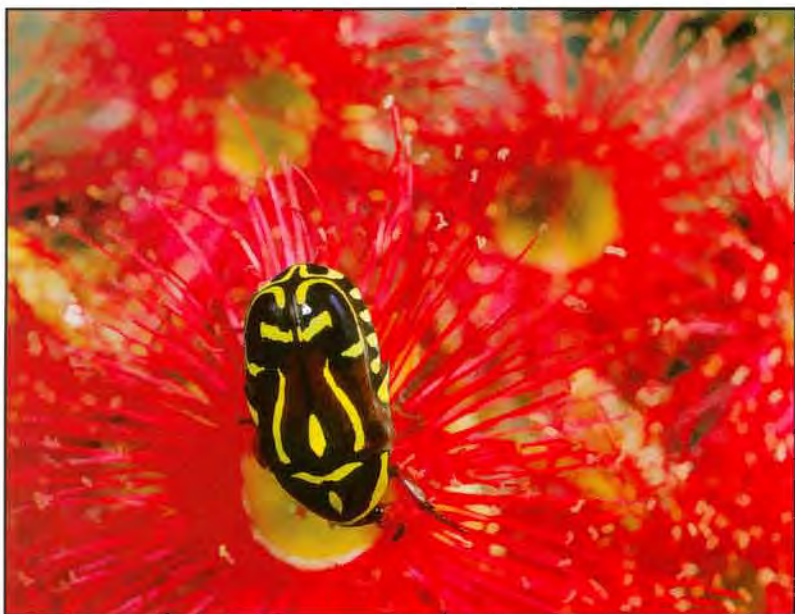


Figure 11a

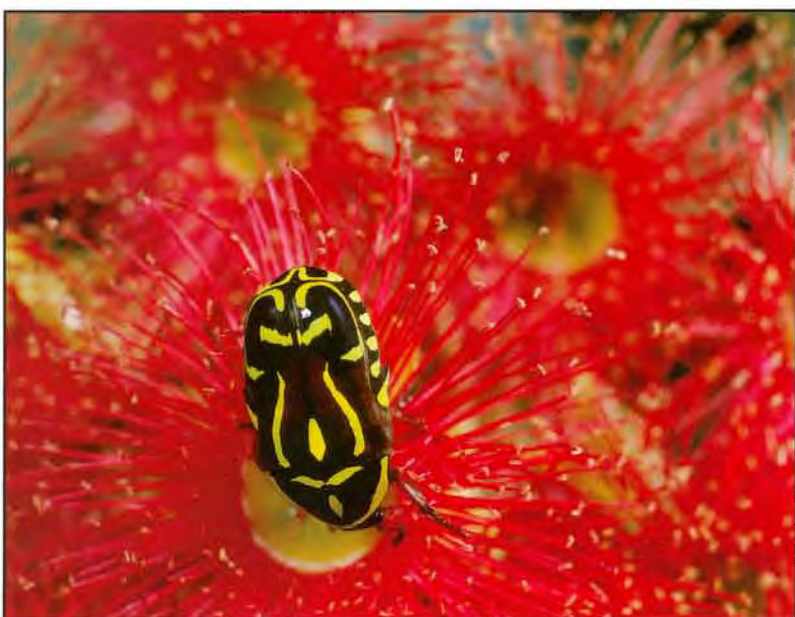


Figure 11b

Figure 11 is an original image of a Fiddler Beetle so named for the pattern on its back. Two variations of this image are Figure 11a and Figure 11b. The first variation is using Topaz Simplify 2 on the whole image and Figure 11b has the beetle modified and the original background flowers

Figures 12, 12a, and 12b show the original image together with two variations using Topaz.

Figures 13 and 13a (page 16) show the difference between just a simplification and using the detailed boost feature. It is most noticeable in the bottom left hand corner.

This article was intended to alert members to this software and not act as an instruction manual

To get a broader idea of the features view the excellent video tutorial at <http://www.topazlabs.com/tutorials/> Although at the time of writing this tutorial dealt with version 1 all of it also applies to version 2. No doubt when a version 2 tutorial becomes available it will cover all the new features.

For Mac users who wish to have a copy of the video tutorial to keep and view whenever they wish on their computer there are two methods. For those still using TIGER download a free copy Real Player. (<http://www.real.com.au/mac/?lang=en&loc=au>). This will put the video data in cache and give you the option of saving it when the video has finished.

For those using Leopard start to view the video in Safari and pull down the WINDOW>Activity. If you don't see a list of files click on the triangle beside the title to expose them. Within the list will be one that is increasing in size as you watch. Copy this line and then paste it into WINDOW>Download. This will cause Safari to download a copy of the tutorial to your desktop or download file. It can then be viewed in Quicktime at your leisure.



Figure 12 Original image



Figure 12 a Simplified with Topaz



Figure 12b Water colour preset in Topaz



Figure 13 Image simplified



Figure 13a Image using detailed boost

WEBWISE 7 with David Cooke ARPS



All the *Webwise* material is on the new DI Group Forum which is located within the main RPS Forum. You'll need to register to make comments and to contribute. Details of how to do this are on the main RPS DI group page at <http://www.rps.org/group/Digital-Imaging>. Please do make a comment on the Forum or email me at digitwebwise@gmail.com to let me know how useful (or not) you found the sites recommended. And please do recommend sites you've found interesting yourself so other members can share them.

Welcome to the 7th edition of Webwise. This time we have three websites and a podcast. I hope you find them all interesting and useful.

Entheos

<http://www.entheosweb.com/default.asp>

Entheos is a five-year-old Web Design company based in Bangalore, India. They have a very comprehensive web-site which gives details of their services but it also contains some very useful free resources at: http://www.entheosweb.com/free_resources.asp

They include tutorials on Flash, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, web design and web promotion. There are also free Flash add-ons, website templates add-ons and backgrounds, logos, and brochure templates.

It's a very useful resource and I'd recommend that you take a look at it.

Photoshop Roadmap

<http://www.photoshoproadmap.com/>

As its name suggest, Photoshop Roadmap contains resources for Photoshop. These include written tutorials and videos as well as free downloadable brushes for example water, leaves and trees, seashells and eye brushes. In addition, there are reviews on plug-ins.

It's another valuable resource which may contain something of interest to you.

London independent photography

<http://www.londonphotography.org.uk/>

London Independent Photography is a forum for both amateur and professional photographers. It has around 500 members and a very interesting website. One feature I'd like to draw your attention to is that they have back copies of their magazine up to issue number 7 (Summer 2007) available for free download from their site. Go to:

<http://www.londonphotography.org.uk/LIPmagazine.php>

and click on the back issues archive links

on the right hand side of the page.

The magazines are very interesting with good features and images. They are well worth looking at.

Jeff Curto's Camera Position

<http://www.cameraosition.com/>

or subscribe through iTunes

Jeff Curto is Professor of Photography at College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, where he has taught since 1984. Since 1989, he has been photographing the architectural landscape of Italy, exploring the visual splendour of its religious, public and vernacular structures.

As he says on the site: "Camera Position is a podcast about the visual and creative processes in photography, not the technical. Using images and the spoken word, my podcasts are about the "why" of photography from the point of view of the creative photographer. Passion for subject, experience and image all wind together in these short commentaries about camera-based images and my life as a photographer. The podcasts are presented as enhanced podcasts; they have images embedded in them so there are visuals that accompany the audio."

You can watch them on the Camera Position website or you can subscribe via iTunes. They are reflective and interesting podcasts and I hope you find them interesting.

An invitation

If you'd like your website to be featured in future Webwise articles then please email me at digitwebwise@gmail.com with details of your site and let me have a few words about your photography. It could help to put you in touch with like minded photographers.



Making 3D Pictures

The Red/Cyan Method - Anaglyph

Recently there's been a resurgence of interest in stereoscopic image making with cinema films and television adopting the technique. Here Clive Haynes FRPS explains how it's possible to introduce the third dimension using digital imaging techniques available to all of us. To see the pictures on these pages in 3D you'll need the free red and cyan glasses that are in the centre of the magazine. If you misplace them you can buy further pairs from 3D Images Ltd - see box on page 21.

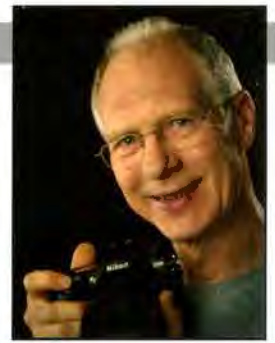
What is a 3D image? The human optical system views a scene and transmits messages to our brain which are the contents of two simultaneous, two-dimensional images, spaced about three inches apart. In making a 3D image we need to convince our optical system that, just as in real life, the two flat images presented add together to make a stereoscopic (3D) picture.

In Victorian times bioscope scenes viewed with a hand-held stereo viewer were very popular. Two

pictures were taken of a scene and pasted together side-by-side for viewing through simple lenses. They were very good, with excellent depth and clarity.

How to do it. The first requirement is to take two pictures of the scene, one left, one right. Obviously unless you are using a specialist stereo camera, it's best to avoid scenes with movement. The viewpoint for pictures for most normal scenes, using say a 35mm to 100mm focal length lens (as per 35mm photography) needs to be about

Above: Bicycles



Clive says:

I hope that this introduction to making stereo pictures will encourage you to explore the subject - it's a fascinating topic. For more information visit the 3D Images Ltd website (see page 21) and the Stereoscopic Society: stereoscopicsociety.org.uk The Know How section of my website has information about making 3D Anaglyphs and many other techniques: www.crhfoto.co.uk

Below: Vines and Hut

3 inches apart - this is the average distance between the left eye and the right eye. Special devices can be bought to do this with extreme precision: however it can be done quite successfully by simply moving the camera. To do this take one picture (left) then lean to the right a little - go about 3 inches (75mm) keep everything level and, without twisting the camera, take the second shot (right).

Toeing-in An improvement upon the simple 'move to the right' method can be made by toeing-in. This is what you do. When taking the left (L) shot, look at the centre of the scene area for a reference object and remember where it is within the frame. Move the 3 inches to the right (R) and pan the camera back into the original scene area - this is toeing in. Place the reference object in the same spot as it was in the left image. Take the shot.

The slight pan almost re-aligns the image elements. However, they remain displaced by 3 inches to the right and this gives the stereo effect. The toeing-in is to reduce the amount of image area that spills beyond the frame of each shot when combined in the anaglyph. In this way a more complete image area is retained. Actually it's far easier and more obvious to do than to explain! Note: For wide-angle lenses you'll find that it's often preferable to reduce the L to R separation and ignore toeing-in. This is due to the exaggeration and distortion of perspective by wide-angle views. For longer focal length lenses L

to R separation will need to be greater than 3 inches. Indeed for distant scenes with long telephoto lenses the separation may be several feet. However, with greater separation it's more difficult to maintain correct registration. You'll need to experiment.

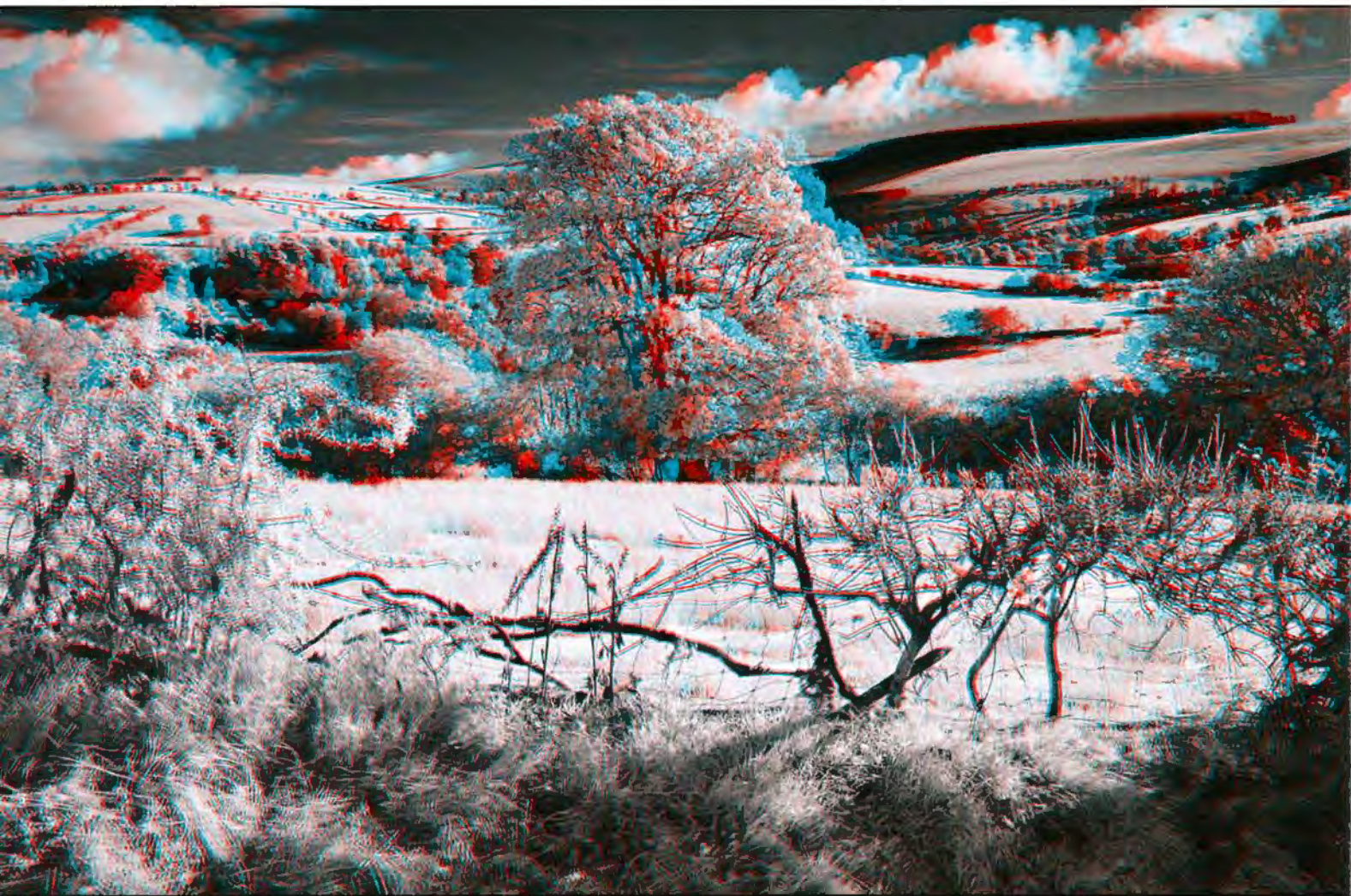
Work in RGB (colour) mode Finally, I recommend using a colour image as the image will be available for either colour or 3D stereo use. Also, for monochrome, the tone and contrast can be adjusted to suit the subject and aid spatial separation. Any Greyscale images must be converted to RGB before beginning the process outlined below.

An Anaglyph A popular form of 3D picture is a two-colour image that recreates depth by making each half of the stereo pair a different colour; this is known as an anaglyph. For many years red and green was the most common combination. However, now red and cyan are more often preferred. Using red/cyan makes it easier to view colour images in 3D as more colour information is retained. The accepted convention is to make the image for left eye image red and for the right eye, cyan.

Digital imaging has made the production of anaglyphs simple.

By the way, the word anaglyph, derives from the Greek - anaglyphos, anaglyptos - in low relief - ana, up/back, glyphein, to engrave or carve. Anaglypta wallpaper has the same derivation!





*Above: Welsh Landscape
This is the mono infrared
image which Clive cretaed
using the steps outlined
alongside*

Making an Anaglyph (red/cyan) 3D picture What follows looks long-winded because I've detailed every step. In practice the whole process is very quick and I can run through it all, from opening the images, to the final 3D version, ready to print, in less than two minutes - honestly!

Start with a monochrome 3D image to get used to the idea, then have a go with colour and miss out desaturation in steps 3 and 9.

Before you begin, make certain that the Channels palette is visible: if you can't see it, go to Window > Channels.

1 Open the L and R images in Photoshop in the usual way. Save your RAW or jpeg files as Photoshop (.psd) files. With jpeg files the Duplicate Channel functions listed below will not work correctly.

2 Make any obvious corrections, bearing in mind that the two images will ultimately overlap each other to form a single optical composite. Do not make any alterations to the pixel dimensions either by Cropping or Transformation at this stage. If alterations are made the Duplicate Channel functions listed below will not function correctly.

3 Go to the L image and de-saturate it. Do this using Image> Adjust > Desaturate (Ctrl+Shift+ U)

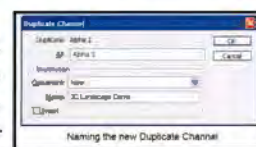
4 Go to the Channels Palette and click on the RED Channel - it highlights in blue. At all times for this method, when activating the required Channel,

keep each eye icon visible for all Channels.

5 Go to the drop-down menu arrow at the top right of the Channels palette and click. In the menu that opens choose Duplicate Channel.

6 In the dialogue box that opens go to the Document box and click on the drop-down arrow and choose New.

7 In the Name box (not the Document box) type in the name of the image you are working on. If



Above: Naming the new Duplicate Channel

you've already saved the L and R originals then

choose another file name otherwise the system may not accept it. Click OK. A new monochrome (Alpha Channel) image will appear

8 Minimise or close the L original. Keep the new Alpha Channel (monochrome) image open.

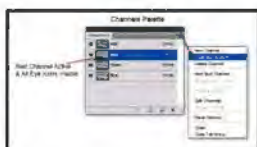
9 Go to the R image and Desaturate it. Do this using Image> Adjust > Desaturate (Ctrl+Shift+ U)

10 Go to the Channels Palette and click on the GREEN Channel - it highlights in blue. Remember to keep all the eye icons visible.

11 Go to the drop-down menu arrow at the top right of the channels palette and click. In the menu that opens choose Duplicate Channel.

12 This time in the dialogue box that opens, go to the Document box, click on the drop-down arrow and choose (click on) the file name you gave in

Below: Channels Palette



step 7. Click OK.

13 Go back to the R original and repeat steps 10, 11 and 12 this time selecting the BLUE Channel in step 10.

14 Minimise or close the right original.

15 Go to the Channels Palette and make certain that all the eye icons for the Red, Green and Blue Channels are visible. The (monochrome) Alpha Channel image, created from the three separate colour Channels (red = L, green and blue (cyan) = R) will appear as overlapping images with a pink hue and not stereo-looking at all. The three Alpha Channels have created a Multichannel image and we need to change this to RGB. Go to Image > Mode > RGB and, as if by magic, the monochrome image becomes a red/cyan anaglyph!

16 Put on your stereo red/cyan spectacles and view in glorious 3D.

17 All should be well but some adjustment may be necessary. See tweaks below.

18 Print the picture on semi-gloss or matt paper as reflections from a glossy surface may be distracting.

Tweaks and adjustments

To make global changes to the image, be certain to use the Layers Palette, otherwise if you remain in Channels you may find that you are adjusting one colour Channel only!

Sharpening: Use your preferred method at an appropriate level.

Brightness: As viewing through red/cyan spectacles can darken the scene, extra brightness is often required. This can be done using an Adjustment Layer using Brightness and Contrast. However, depending upon the image, Levels or Curves may be preferable. Adjustment Layers are best for the task as they can be altered later

without detriment to the image.

Tonality: Use either Levels or Curves via an Adjustment Layer.

Re-alignment: Should the two Red/Cyan image Channels be misaligned then some adjustment is possible. This is best done with the Red Channel only. Go to the Channels Palette and activate the Red Channel. Click on the eye icon in the RGB Channel - this automatically opens the Green and Blue Channel eye icons too. Next, Select All (Ctrl+A) so that the 'marching ants' appear around the image border. Choose the Move tool and adjust the positioning by the four direction-arrow keys on your keyboard. This will incrementally shift the Red image up/down, left/right. Shifting left or right will decrease or increase apparent spatial separation. Viewing with the grid visible (Ctrl+@) will help to align accurately.

If necessary, the image (Red Channel) can also be rotated - do this using Edit > Transform > Rotate. However, remember to Select All (Ctrl+A) first. Deselect (Ctrl+D). Use the Crop tool to remove unwanted sections of the image beyond the 3D window.

What sort of pictures work best? In my experience the scenes that work best have many planes of image information, are of a gentle contrast range and avoid large, dark, featureless areas. Dark areas frequently reveal ghost images from the other Channel which can be a distraction.



Green Channel



Above: Mode change



Where to get the 3D spectacles For a wide range of 3D-related products go to 3D Images Ltd, 31 The Chine, Grange Park, London, N21 2EA
Tel: 0208 364 0022/0104
www.3Dimages.co.uk
We thank Dr David Burder FRPS of 3D Images for his valuable advice and supplying 3D specs for this edition of DIGIT.

Please note: This method is intended for direct viewing on the monitor screen or printing by ink-jet printer. Commercial printing processes may degrade or distort the 3D imagery. Some images may therefore appear less successful to some viewers.

Orgues and Broom
3D Colour image

Remember you will need the special Red and Cyan glasses enclosed with this copy of DIGIT to view this photograph in 3D



Summer Garden Infrared 3D

Notice of AGM and Exhibition Print Selection

with a talk by Mike McNamee FRPS on The Impact of Digital Imaging on the Creative Process

**The Annual General Meeting of the RPS Digital Imaging Group will be held at
1030 on Sunday 18 April 2010**

at The Old School House, Smethwick PhotoSoc Club Rooms,
Churchbridge, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 2AX
Easy access from M5, Junction 2 or train to Sandwell and Dudley.
See <http://www.theoldschoolhouse.com> for club details and map

Coffee available from 1000
AGM AGENDA

- 1 Notice of meeting
- 2 Formal adoption of minutes of 2009 AGM
- see website for minutes
- 3 Matters arising from the previous minutes
- 4 Annual Reports and Accounts:
- Chairman & Treasurer
- 5 Election of Officers & Committee
- see overleaf for vacancies
and Nomination Form
- 6 Any other relevant business
- 7 Date of next AGM



The AGM will be followed at about 1100 by the Selection of Prints for the Exhibition
1300 Hot lunch or vegetarian, which must be pre-booked, available in the lounge. Licensed bar.
Or bring your own lunch

1400 - 1630 Mike McNamee FRPS on The Impact of Digital Imaging on the Creative Process

Coming from a background in which he had been trained as an airbrush retoucher, Mike will discuss the impact that digital cameras and digital manipulation have had on the creative process, with some ideas for concept generation and demonstrations of Photoshop execution. Today's tools allow for ideas that were previously only possible to express by brush-painting onto paper or canvas. Every so often we need to take stock of just how well-served we are today and how we can exploit the situation particularly for competition and high-impact images.

Free for Group members - tickets for others £5 on the door

Please cut here to use the booking slip below for lunch or photocopy the booking slip

Hot or vegetarian lunch available at £7 per head. Booking and payment to be made by 5 April.

Please book me: hot lunches Vegetarian lunches at £7 each

Cheque enclosed for £

Stamped addressed envelope enclosed - please tick:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

**Please return booking slip with cheque to RPS DI Group and SAE to:
Bob Pearson FRPS, Orchard House, Broadhembury, Honiton EX14 3LW**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: COMMITTEE FOR 2010/11

The AGM provides the opportunity to elect the committee which comprises the four officers laid down in the constitution and six further members who may also have specific responsibilities. The President, the Secretary and the Treasurer of the RPS are ex officio members of the committee and are additional to those elected. DI Group Regional Organisers are also encouraged to make their contributions to the committee.

The positions for which elections will be held, together with the names of the current committee who offer themselves to stand for election at the AGM are:

Officers

The following offer to stand:

Chairman: *Clive Haynes FRPS*

Deputy Chairman: *Graham Whistler FRPS*

Secretary General: *Bob Pearson FRPS*

Treasurer: *Elizabeth Restall LRPS*

Six Committee Members:

The following offer to stand:

Maureen Albright ARPS

David Cooke ARPS

Alex Dufty LRPS

Anthony Healy ARPS

John Long ARPS

DIGROs

Thames Valley: Roger Norton LRPS **North West:** Harry Bosworth **South Wales:** Maureen Albright ARPS

East Anglia: Vacant **Scotland:** Vacant **Wessex:** Maureen Albright ARPS

East Midlands: John Colmer ARPS **Southern:** Barry Senior Hon FRPS **Western:** Tony Poole ARPS

Midlands: Clive Haynes FRPS **Yorkshire:** Robert Croft LRPS

Nominations for election to the Committee and for Officers should be put forward in writing by not less than two other members of the Group and such nominations must be received by the Secretary not less than fourteen days before the date of the AGM. Nominations must be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee. In the event of the number of nominations being greater than the number of vacancies, an election will be held at the AGM.

Assistance continues to be needed from outside the committee to encourage and spot potential articles and images and to help with copy preparation. Please contact the editor David Cooke ARPS if you can help, on editor@digit.rps.org

*Please cut here to use the Nomination Form below
or photocopy the slip for more than one nomination*



ROYAL PHOTGRAPHIC SOCIETY DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP
NOMINATION TO FILL VACANCY ARISING AT THE AGM ON 18 APRIL 2010
TO BE RETURNED TO THE SECRETARY BY 1700 ON 4 APRIL 2010

I, _____ (Please print)

wish to stand for election as: _____ or to the Committee.

Signed _____ Date: _____ 2010

Proposed by: _____ (Please print)

Signed _____ Date: _____ 2010

Seconded by: _____ (Please print)

Signed _____ Date: _____ 2010

**Please return nomination form by 1700 on 4 April 2010 to:
Bob Pearson FRPS, Orchard House, Broadhemhury, Honiton EX14 3LW**

DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP 2010 MEMBERS' EXHIBITION

The 2010 print exhibition will be shown at the following locations:

**Northlight Gallery, Brooke's Mill, Armitage Bridge,
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD4 7NR**

www.northlightgallery.org.uk/

The Gallery is open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

4, 5 and 6 June.

11, 12 and 13 June

18, 19 and 20 June

**West Swindon Library, Link Centre, Whitehill Way
Swindon SN5 7DL**

Thursday 1 July until Friday 30 July during Library opening times

Closed on Mondays

**Smethwick Photo Soc, The Old School House, Churchbridge, Oldbury
West Midlands B69 2AX**

Monday 16 August to Monday 30 August

Any changes or additions will be displayed on the Website

Closing date for postal entries: Thursday 8 April 2010

Selection of Exhibition: Sunday 18 April 2010

You may bring your entry to the Annual General Meeting of the Digital Imaging Group, to be held at the Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands on Sunday 18 April 2010. But you must send the Entry Form overleaf, your CD and cheque to Alex Dufty in advance.

Selectors:

Andy Beel FRPS

Paula Davies FRPS

Mike McNamee FRPS

**Please read the rules carefully and complete the Entry Form overleaf
Any queries, please contact the Exhibition Secretary, Alex Dufty LRPS**

127 Bradley Avenue, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1HW

Tel: 01454 778485

Email: exhibition@digit.rps.org

For Membership, News, Information, Folio, Forum, Competition and much more

- Log on to www.digit.rps.org

2010 MEMBERS' EXHIBITION - RULES

1. You may enter either TWO or THREE prints.
2. Do not enter prints which have been accepted for previous DIG Exhibitions.
3. Mount your prints on 40 x 50 cm card.
4. Mark each print on the reverse with your title, name, address as on the entry form.
5. Make copies of your two or three images as single layer TIFFs in Adobe RGB (1998) colour space, exactly 2400 pixels on the longer side - that's about 20cm at 300 ppi - if you want your images to be published on the website, in the Exhibition DVD and in the Exhibition issue of DIGIT. Ensure that the file names are exactly as on the entry form.
6. Burn a disk with your images and write your name and image titles on your CD with a suitable marker.

Entries for the Exhibition without the CD and files in the correct format will be accepted for the print exhibition but, regrettably, the images may not be able to be published.

7. Complete the Entry Form below and your cheque for £5 to **RPS DI Group** to cover the exhibition costs.
8. Post or deliver your prints, CD, cheque and entry form to Alex Dufty LRPS - see address on reverse
OR
Post or deliver your CD, cheque and entry form to Alex Dufty LRPS - see address on reverse -
and bring your prints to the AGM on 18 April 2010.
9. Ensure that the packing is suitable for use in return posting of the prints unless collection arrangements have been previously agreed with the Exhibition Secretary. Remember to include return postage stamps or cheque.
10. Selection will take place following the AGM on 18 April 2010 by the judges listed overleaf. Each entrant will have one print accepted. A Gold Medal and six Ribbons will be awarded.
11. It may not be possible to display all accepted prints at every venue.
12. The utmost care will be taken of all prints but the Digital Imaging Group cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage during the exhibition or whilst in transit.

ENTRY FORM - 2010 MEMBERS' EXHIBITION

Name: _____ RPS Distinction: _____
Address: _____ RPS Membership Number: _____
Tel: _____ E-mail: _____ (write carefully please)

Entry fee of £5 enclosed:

Return postage enclosed:

PRINT TITLES

1.

2.

3.

PINHOLE CREATIONS

Jake Snaddon enjoys using homemade and commercially available pinhole cameras to produce 'raw' images for subsequent digital manipulation. Here he describes the basis of pinhole photography and how to make a camera. He presents some of the images he has produced in sequence from some of the first ones made to the latest and most manipulated images.



Study of house plants; Kidzlabs pinhole camera; 2 minute exposure

Pinhole photography is the art of taking a photograph without using a lens. Instead the light passes through a small hole in the front of the 'camera', which is often no more than a lightproof container. The absence of a lens gives pinhole images distinct characteristics - they have a nearly infinite depth of field, a soft focus from chromatic aberration and long exposures, and can be heavily vignetted. These qualities give pinhole photographs their much loved appearance and together with the experience of building your own camera, producing a pinhole image can be a very creative endeavour. The experience does not have to end there, as these images make great starting points for digital creations.

Since the 1960s pinhole photography has become increasingly popular. There are now dedicated websites, forums, workshops and even a Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day (WPPD) (see the link at the end of this article). This annual event is held on the last Sunday of April, when pinhole photographers are encouraged to submit and share an individual image they have taken on that day. It started in 2001, when the first WPPD attracted 291 participants from 24 countries. This has now grown substantially, with 3202 participants from 69 countries each submitting individual images to this year's event. The success of the WPPD illustrates just how popular pinhole photography has become.

The beauty of pinhole photography is in its simplicity, with the requirements of the camera being a lightproof box, a pin-sized hole and some sort of photosensitive surface. This means you can easily build a camera at home.

There is a great deal of choice when deciding on what type of containers and what type photosensitive surface to use. Using different containers will result different effects, for example a tubular container such as a can, where the film or paper is curved, will produce a distorted perspective. Some of the more commonly used containers are soda cans, oatmeal boxes, film canisters and matchboxes. Any lightproof container has the potential to make an excellent pinhole camera and there are some unusual examples including seashells, gasmasks and even an abandoned aircraft hangar.



Self Portrait; Match Box pinhole camera; 30 second exposure

As you are making the camera yourself the whole range of film and photosensitive paper is available to use. My preference has been to use 35mm film as it is readily available and can be easily developed at any local processing lab where they can transfer the images into a digital format on a CD. If you do not want to adventure into making your own camera out of your latest shoebox, or are still waiting to finish off your oatmeal, there are a number of commercial pinhole cameras on the market at both the toy camera and professional level.

I became interested in pinhole photography while working with my digital images; I often found I ended up manipulating the pictures to incorporate a pinhole or vintage camera effect. So I thought that I would try producing the 'raw images' the old fashioned way.

My ambition was to take the pictures with a camera I had built myself. However, not having any experience with this type of photography I first went out and bought one of the many toy pinhole cameras on the market, mine was the 'Kidzlabs' pinhole camera. This camera is very simple; it is a black plastic box with a spring loaded shutter and takes 35mm film. The pinhole is made through a thin piece of aluminium stuck onto the inside of the camera. Finding it hard to believe that a very small hole would produce an image, I made the mistake of making the pinhole

too large and the images from my first role of film (Study of house plants) were more out of focus than I would have liked. I was able to replace the aluminium and make a pinhole of a smaller size which produced much better results.

Feeling I had made progress with the technique, I constructed my first homemade camera from a matchbox. Briefly, to make a matchbox camera you will need: a matchbox, two rolls of 35mm film (one new and one discarded roll with at least 1cm of film sticking out), a piece of thin metal (e.g. from a soda can), and black PVC electrical tape. The film from the new canister is threaded through the box and attached to the old discarded roll. The inside part of the box, has a rectangular hole cut in the bottom to form a frame that holds the film flat against the back of the 'camera'. A small hole is made in the front of the box over which the thin metal with the pinhole is placed. These separate parts are joined together with the PVC tape, making sure that it is all lightproof.

There are excellent resources online on how to make different pinhole cameras from a whole variety of containers. For more details on how to make a pinhole camera out of a match box see the link at the end of this article. The matchbox camera has become a firm favourite, as they are quick and easy to make and their size means I can carry them around with me with little trouble.



Snow covered Jesus Green, Cambridge; Match Box camera; 2 minute exposure

One of the goals for pinhole photographers is to produce a sharp, well exposed image. However, as the cameras don't have the technical settings which are common to modern cameras (there are no buttons or dials for different f-stops or for shutter speeds) it takes a bit of trial and error to learn how to get the best results from your individual camera.

While you are still learning, you get many over exposed shots. It would be hasty to throw these away as with digital manipulation software programs like Photoshop and Lightroom you can rescue a lot of the detail and create some very interesting effects. When I get my images processed, instead of getting them printed I have them put straight into a digital format on CD, which enables me to treat them as 'raw images' that I can then enhance and creatively manipulate through post processing.

As an example of digital manipulation of pinhole photographs I would like to describe the development process for a



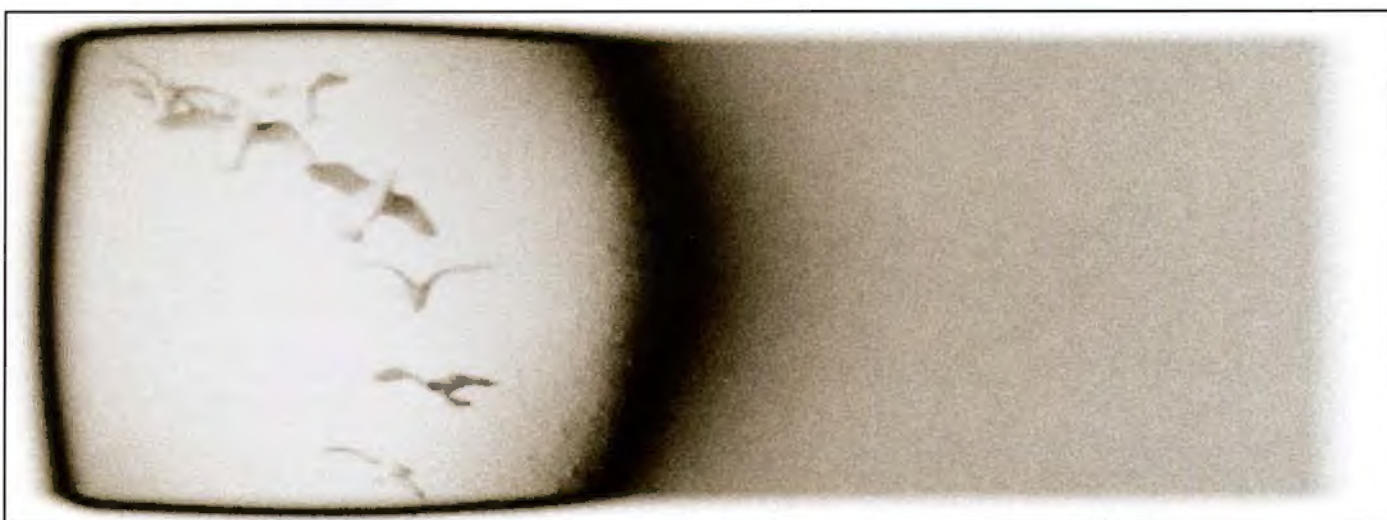
Reading books; Match Box pinhole camera; 10 minute exposure



Irchel Campus University of Zurich; Match Box camera; 2 minute exposure



The Seagulls I; Match Box camera; 2 minute exposure



The Seagulls II; digital manipulation of 'Seagulls I' using Silver Efex Pro filters, Nik software



Lonely Chair; Match Box camera, 2 minute exposure, digitally manipulated using Nik software

couple of the images in this article: The Seagulls II and Rorschach pinhole. The Seagulls II image was created from the original The Seagulls I photograph, which is of porcelain seagulls hanging on a mobile at home. The original image was cropped to give the letterbox aspect ratio, with the seagulls on the left. I then used the Nik software plug-in for Photoshop, called Silver Efex Pro. This plug-in allows you to apply filters to create black and white images with different effects, (ironically Silver Efex Pro. includes a pinhole effect filter). Each filter has a number of adjustment bars allowing the fine control over how the filter is applied. One of the great things about this software is that you don't have to apply a filter to the whole image. You can use control points to select where you want the effect or you can paint the effect in or out. The filter I used for this photograph was 'Antique Solarization', where I adjusted the brightness, contrast and structure. The second example is the Rorschach pinhole, the last picture of this article. The original image was taken with the 'Kidzlabs' pinhole camera with a pinhole that was quite large, this resulted in the collection of ornaments which was subject of the

picture being out of focus. In Photoshop, I copied the image to a new layer and then flipped it horizontally. I adjusted the opacity of the layer to 50%, allowing both the flipped and original images to be visible. I then completed the manipulation with slight colour and contrast adjustments. What I like about this image is that the dark unexposed strip on the left of the original photograph becomes part of the picture, framing the central section.

These are just a couple of examples of what is possible when using pinhole photographs as 'raw images' for digital creations. I have found building my own cameras and producing original pinhole photographs a very rewarding experience. There is still time to make your own camera for this year's Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day.

Online Pinhole Photography Resources

CK Pinhole Photography

<http://www.chriskeeney.com/pinhole/pinhole/index.html>

This website is a great resource for pinhole photographers. It has a fantastic collection of links to other pinhole photography sites. The site also features a different pinhole photographer every month, showing the breadth of how the technique can be used.

Worldwide Pinhole Photography day (WPPD)

<http://www.pinholeday.org>

This is the website of the Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day, an international event which promotes and celebrates

the art of pinhole photography. They encourage anyone, anywhere in the world to make a pinhole photograph on the last Sunday in April, which then can be uploaded to their online gallery. It is a great site to find out about pinhole resources and events.

How to make a pinhole camera out of a match box

<http://www.matchboxpinhole.com>

There are many websites that provide instructions on how to make different pinhole cameras. One of the best is the matchboxpinhole.com, this site give very clear instructions on how to make a matchbox pinhole. Their design also incorporates a 'clicker', which is a clever method for knowing how far to wind the film on between each photograph.



Original pinhole for the Rorschach pinhole image; Kidzlabs pinhole camera; 2 minute exposure



Rorschach pinhole; Kidzlabs pinhole camera; 2 minute exposure; digitally manipulated in Photoshop, image has been reversed and layered



By the poolside

A PHOTOGRAPHER OF NO FIXED ABODE

Ian Wilson regards himself as something of a photographic Nomad. In his article, he explains why and discusses some of his images.

As part of a recent publicity drive for Cambridge Camera Club, one of my pictures (Closing Time, of which more later) was among those chosen for publication in "The Cambridgeshire Journal" to illustrate what the club gets up to. All well and good, you might think, but this also involved participating in a questionnaire related to the image. I had little problem with the more basic questions (Name? Age? Address? etc.) but one really got me thinking: Do you specialise in any particular subject matter? Difficult. Very difficult, in fact. After due consideration the answer I gave was: No, not really, although I specialise in avoiding certain types if possible!

This lack of specialisation was driven home to me a couple of weeks later when I took part in an exhibition of local artists in Grantchester (and, before anyone asks, the church clock told the right time and there was no sign of any honey for tea or any other purpose). One of the visitors summed it up rather eloquently when she saw my work, describing it as "an eclectic mix". I assumed this was just a polite way of saying "random and lacking in style", but she insisted that lots of variety was infinitely preferable to an exhibition where everything looked the same. At least one satisfied customer, then.

Unlike Paula Davies (DIGIT, No 43, pp 8-12), I wouldn't claim to be a "Butterfly Photographer flitting from Subject to Subject" (more a kind of toad hopping about in the leaf litter) but am very definitely a "Photographer of No Fixed Abode". I'm happy to tackle most things; but, as the questionnaire reminded me, there are areas I tend to avoid like the plague. The most obvious example is formal portraiture, which has always struck me as requiring both photographic and social skills in equal measure (and, being an engineer, the latter is significantly more challenging than the former). While on the subject of "things to be avoided", I once agreed to help a work colleague by photographing his wedding. Never again! In addition to the skills of the portrait photographer, it's necessary to add nerves of steel and advanced crowd control to one's armoury: the phrase "herding cats" was coined for just such occasions. But I digress.

Like pretty well everyone reading this article, photography is a passion and has been for many years. It all started in the dim and distant days of the late 1970s when I came to Cambridge from Yorkshire as an undergraduate and discovered that the college had a darkroom which I could use. Having bought myself a Praktica MTL3 (remember those?) and several rolls



Inis Oírr

of FP4, I began a long-standing love affair with confined spaces, red lights and smelly chemicals. After graduating, I bought an enlarger of my own and persuaded my wife to let me convert the spare room of our first house into a makeshift darkroom. This worked well for several years, but my empire became somewhat diminished when our first daughter was born in 1989 since we needed to accommodate a cot and all the other paraphernalia associated with babies! Talking of houses and families, I am struck by the fact that following a photographic passion shares much with the three pillars of the criminal law - in my case at least - as it is fundamentally driven by Means, Motive and Opportunity. Let me explain...

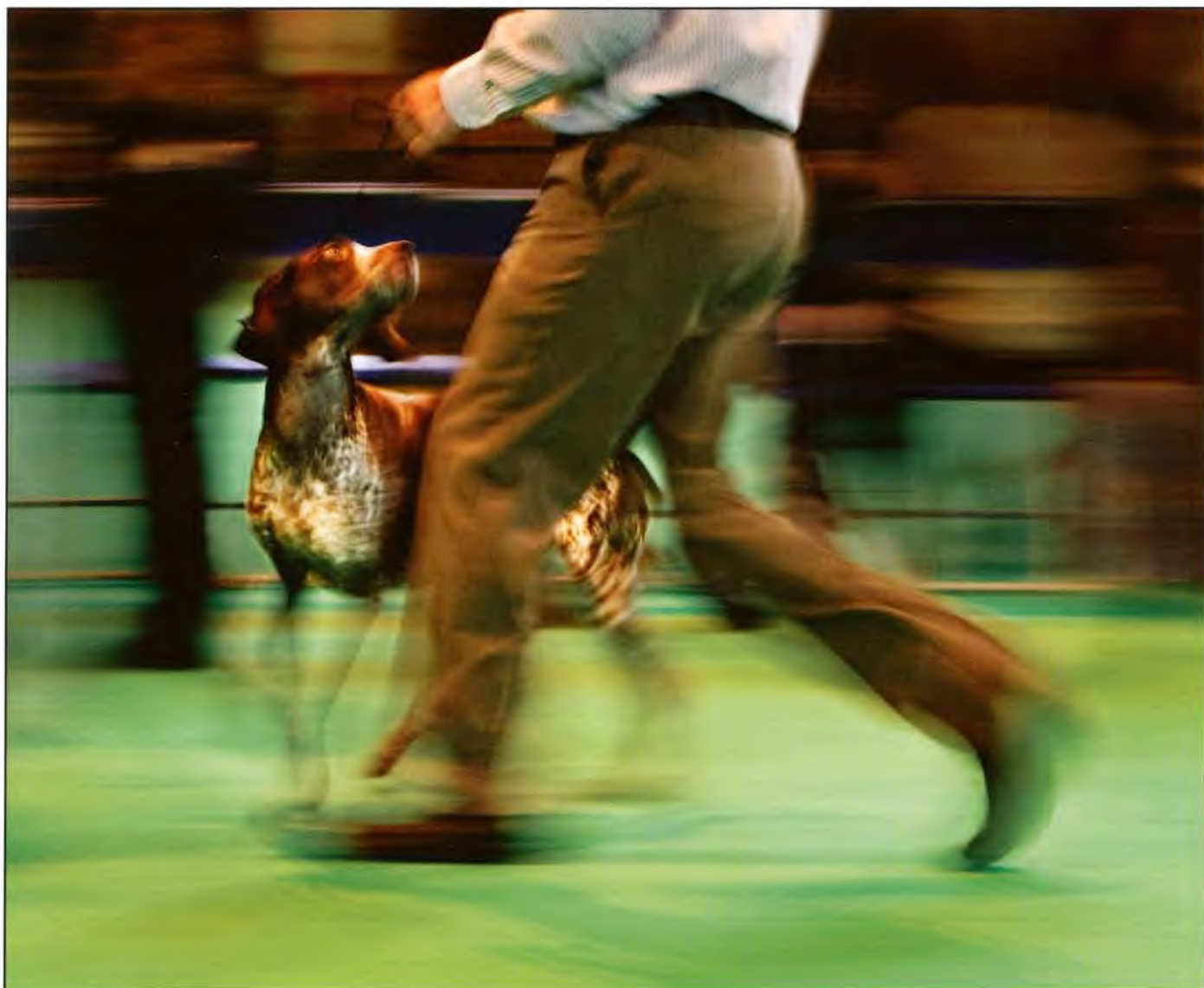
Means. This, I suppose, would be better stated as "lack of means". Financial priority, for obvious reasons, needs to be given to the family's wellbeing; hobbies - even passions - must inevitably take a back seat as a result. In an attempt to alleviate this situation I have recently started selling prints and greetings cards: an interesting and slightly scary venture, but one which is helping to fill my 5D mkII piggy bank.

Motive. I discovered that children are a double-edged sword when it comes to photography. They make superb subjects (at least, they do until they become self-conscious); but are also highly demanding in terms of time and energy. My darkroom became a haven of peace within the family maelstrom, with time spent in it having wonderful restorative powers (and, no, I wasn't hitting the fixer bottle!). Even after its transformation into a computer room, I'm relieved to report that the magic still works.

Opportunity. As with "means" above, having a job and young children results in very few opportunities for photography, in terms of both time and location. Weekends come and go, usually consumed by the chores and minutiae of everyday life. This leaves the local area, family holidays and the odd outing as pretty well the only opportunities to take pictures. I am convinced that, ultimately, this was the cause of



Clare bridge in the mist



His master's voice

my nomadic photographic behaviour, and explains why the subject matter is so diverse in terms of style and location. Like thousands of other amateur photographers out there, it was simply a matter of Hobson's Choice. You have anything between half an hour and two weeks in (insert the name of a location here) to take photographs, starting from ... NOW! Enough waffle already. Let's look at some pictures!

Clare Bridge in the Mist

The first image, appropriately enough, is in monochrome and was shot on film. It is also of Cambridge, which has been my home since arriving as an undergraduate in 1977. The fact that I've never quite got round to leaving says something about the place, with its peaceful atmosphere and fabulous mediaeval buildings. Very occasionally, during the Winter, the mist hangs over the river all day, despite the best attempts of the sun to burn it off. This particular image of Clare Bridge was taken in December 1999 around mid-day, and was one of a series I took in the wonderfully foggy conditions. Having tried (and failed) on previous occasions to represent the "feel" of fog in a photograph, I was experimenting with a new film which had just come on to the market: Ilford Delta 3200. As I discovered, the combination of film grain and low contrast was absolutely perfect for the conditions. Nowadays, shooting digitally, I still tend to use an ISO setting of 1600 or 3200 to try and recreate the atmosphere portrayed with this film.

By the Poolside

I'm one of those people who seem to be perpetually behind the times, as my family never tires of reminding me. Photography is no exception, and having adopted the Canon FD system in 1980 I continued to use it for 25 years. Why? Well, I refer the honourable gentleman/lady to the answer I gave earlier! Means were limited, and using an obsolete system allowed me to buy some superb equipment relatively cheaply as a result of others catching the "upgrade bug". Later, as more and more people followed the digital route, I stuck resolutely to film: partly because I liked being old-fashioned; but mainly because I use computers every day for my work, and wasn't too enamoured of sitting in front of a screen at home as well.

By early 2005 the time had come - eventually - to embrace change and go digital: I sold my collection of FD kit, replacing it with a Canon 20D and a couple of L-series zooms. This came as a triple shock to the system, as I discovered auto-focus and colour photography at the same time as having to learn about digital image processing. Although I'd spent a couple of years printing colour negatives in the darkroom (something I gave up when those working digitally could produce better results *and* see what they were doing) I had always leaned towards working in monochrome. Suddenly I found myself a world full of colour, and was like a kid in a sweet shop as a result. It was a family holiday to Crete which was the real turning point, and,



Early morning, Cromer beach

like all true aficionados, I spent significantly more time photographing the hotel's pool than I did swimming in it. Although it was never intended at the time, several people have commented that I must have been paying homage to David Hockney. Well, like me, he is a Bradford lad after all...

Inis Oírr

In 2007 the family went on holiday to the Republic of Ireland, staying for a week at the southern end of Galway Bay before moving to County Kilkenny for another week. The novelty of colour hadn't worn off yet, and I was bowled over by the traditional painted cottages to be found in many of the local villages. I started snapping away; and, over a period of time, a theme of "graphic shapes, bold colours and strong shadows" began to emerge. This evolved into my ARPS panel the following year; but that's another story, of course.

While on the West coast, we took the opportunity for a day trip to Inis Oírr, the innermost of the Aran islands. As is often the case in Ireland, the weather was wet, misty and grey on the chosen day, meaning that a certain amount of imagination was needed when attempting to observe the "magnificent Cliffs of Moher"! Once on Inis Oírr, however, the weather cleared enough for us to go for a trip around the island by horse and trap (the lanes being too narrow for motor vehicles). The landscape is very sparsely populated, and is covered in hundreds of tiny fields surrounded by dry stone walls. The

combination of weather and subject matter (plus an element of "colour overdose" from all those cottages) allowed me to experiment with digital monochrome for the first time. Unsurprisingly, I was hooked all over again.

His Master's Voice

I have a dog (a slightly scatty labrador called Amber) and earlier this year decided to have an outing to Crufts to see it first hand. Saturday happened to be "Gun Dog" day, and I spent many happy hours wandering around the show chatting to people who were even more infatuated with their animals that I was with mine. The overwhelming majority of owners were more than happy to be photographed; the same could not always be said of the hounds themselves, unfortunately.

I decided to see if I could capture some of the flowing motion of the dogs with their handlers in the judging ring, but found that it was almost impossible to get a good viewpoint from which to take pictures. Away from the main rings there are lots of practice areas, and these proved to be much more appropriate. As well as having far fewer people around, dogs and owners would go backwards and forwards along the same piece of matting, allowing several opportunities to try and get a good shot. Even so the hit rate is embarrassingly low, and the situation is made worse by the very strange mixture of light sources at the NEC. The chosen image attempts to capture the special rapport which exists between dog and handler, and has



Closing time

what can only be described as “a pleasing lack of definition”.

Early Morning, Cromer Beach

Speaking of dogs, I could cheerfully strangle mine sometimes. My wife and I had gone for a weekend away in Cromer (no, not *that* kind of weekend - she was attending a doll-making workshop in Sheringham, a few miles along the coast). We took the dog with us, and were staying in one of those wonderful old-fashioned guest houses on the cliff which I thought had become extinct in the 1970s. I'm not sure if it was because of the dog, but we'd been put in a room right at the top of the hotel: great for the sea view, but not ideal when Amber decided she needed to go outside at 5:30 the following morning. Uncharacteristically I had the presence of mind to pick up a camera at the same time as the dog lead, and I'm very grateful I did. The beach was deserted apart from me and my four-legged friend, and on this occasion we were treated to a fabulous sunrise over the pier.

Thinking back to my comments on “opportunity”, there have been many occasions when I have only been in the right place at the right time to take a picture because of the dog. On a few of them, I've even had a camera with me...

Two-way Traffic

Think of “Tuscany” and what springs to mind? Tony Blair? Chianti and Olive Oil? Dawn pictures of villas and cypress trees in the mist taken using Charlie Waite's tripod holes, perhaps? Another family holiday resulted in us passing a very hot and mosquito-bitten week between Pisa and Siena in August 2008. I didn't see any point in trying to take the same pictures as everyone else. Besides, the lack of a car

and the presence of a two teenage girls meant that pre-dawn starts were unlikely to be on the agenda. In the evenings we used to visit the old town, perched high on a hill above the place where we were staying. As the sun went down, the local inhabitants - mostly in their seventies and above - would venture outside into the cooler air. I spent a little while observing an old lady who was attempting to impose her will on a small dog which obviously had a mind of its own. The battle came to a head in the main square, and I managed to grab a shot of the two of them standing next to the arrows pointing in opposite directions. Photography is meant to be fun, and I love any kind of quirky shot which can portray the humour and - let's face it - absurdity of everyday life.

Beans for Drying

Another weekend away, only this time without the dog who had been banished into kennels. There was a good reason, though, as we were in Cornwall specifically to visit the Eden Project and Lost Gardens of Heligan. Impressive though the Eden Project was, I confess that I enjoyed Heligan far more. It's one of those places which is large enough to swallow the crowds which descend on it, and there's something for everyone there: I was rather taken with the walled garden, greenhouses and potting shed - especially the potting shed! I'm not one of life's gardeners, but there was something very comforting about the place with its ordered stacks of terracotta. Maybe, being murky and damp, it reminded me of being in the darkroom? There again, maybe it's just the “shed” mentality which seems to be burned so deeply into the male psyche?

A couple of weeks before the trip I'd treated myself to a Panasonic LX3, which possesses a rather fine wide-angle Leica lens. This shot was taken on the compact camera, as there

simply wasn't room to swing either an SLR or a cat. I needn't have worried about quality, however, as the LX3 is a superb performer, being easily capable of producing A3 prints. Just as well, as this one turned out to be my most popular image by far at the Grantchester exhibition, and I've now sold half a dozen framed prints and lots of greetings cards of this particular picture. I'm still not quite sure exactly why this image has so much appeal (not that I'm complaining, of course) but it's finally made me realise that my photography could become partially self-funding. Exciting stuff...

Closing Time

Rather appropriately, the final image in my Desert Island set is called "Closing Time". Much to my surprise it was selected for this year's London Salon, and I'd like to say that it was a well-planned and perfectly constructed masterpiece. I'd like to but I can't, since the final image was pure serendipity!

As part of a workshop I ran for Cambridge Camera Club on flash techniques, a group of individuals congregated close to King's College and spent a very happy evening, as it got dark, flashing at anything which moved. The shop in question closed at 7:30, and I spotted the chap about to take the sign in for the night. Since the camera was mounted on a tripod, I thought it might be fun to try and capture his movement against the static shop front. The first shot was of him picking up the sign, but then a random passer-by walked into the scene. I had only one opportunity to capture the two individuals, walking in opposite directions, as the exposure was about half a second. What you see is the result: a combination of the initial vision and a healthy dose of luck.

Postscript

So, will this nomadic photographer ever settle down? The simple answer is: I hope not! It's great fun being a "Jack of all trades" even if - inevitably - one ends up as "master of none". Although not represented here, I have recently rediscovered the joy of natural history photography - something I haven't tackled in many years. Who knows, one day I might even pluck up enough courage to attempt some portraiture again? But weddings? Never! We are fortunate, as photographers, that our passion is so universally applicable. Why bother to wear the strait-jacket of specialisation?

Other information

Website:

<http://photography.greenmen.org.uk>

Blog

<http://littlegreenmenphotography.blogspot.com>

Cambridge Camera Club

<http://www.cambcc.org.uk>



Beans for drying



Two way traffic

THE COOKE CHALLENGE

This time we have four more images from DIG members who explain how they created them. I hope you'll find these interesting and helpful techniques to use in your own photography. If you do, why not join in and send me some of yours? Email me at: digitchallenge@gmail.com



Sharon: as taken

Sharon by Robert K Croft LRPS

1. Load image into Photoshop CS4.
2. Select background, using the Quick Selection Tool
3. With the background now selected, go to drop down menu Image, click on Adjustments, click on Selective Colour, change the colour square to white, with the Preset on Default and the Method checked on Relative, move the black slider to the left to make the background white then deselect.
4. Go to the drop down menu Filters. Click on Stylize then click on Find Edges and apply.
5. Go to the drop down menu Image, click on Adjustments, then click on Brightness / Contrast, leaving the Use Legacy Box un-checked. Move the Contrast slider to 100% and click OK.
6. Go back to the drop down menu Image then click on Adjustments, click on Hue / Saturation taking the Hue slider to minus 180 and the Saturation slider to minus 50 and leaving the Lightness Slider on zero.
7. Crop the image to the required size.
8. I then put on a double border. Go up to the drop down menu Select, click on Select All. Go back up to the drop



Sharon: finished image

- down menu Select, click on Modify, and click on Borders. I gave my border selection 6 pixels. Click OK.
9. Go to drop down menu Edit, click on Fill. I chose to fill with the Opacity set to 75% black and with the Blending Mode set to normal, click OK.
10. Go back to the drop down menu Select and deselect.
11. Go to the drop down menu Image, click on Canvas Size. I chose to enter 0.5 inches Width and 0.5 inches Height, making sure the Relative Box was checked and the canvas extension colour was set on white. Click OK.
12. Go back up to the drop down menu Select, Select All. Go back up to the drop down menu Select, click on Modify, then click on Borders. I gave my border selection 6 pixels. Click OK.
13. Finally, go to drop down Edit, click on Fill. I chose to fill with the Opacity set to 100% (50% Grey) setting and with the Blending Mode set to normal. Click OK.



Image 1



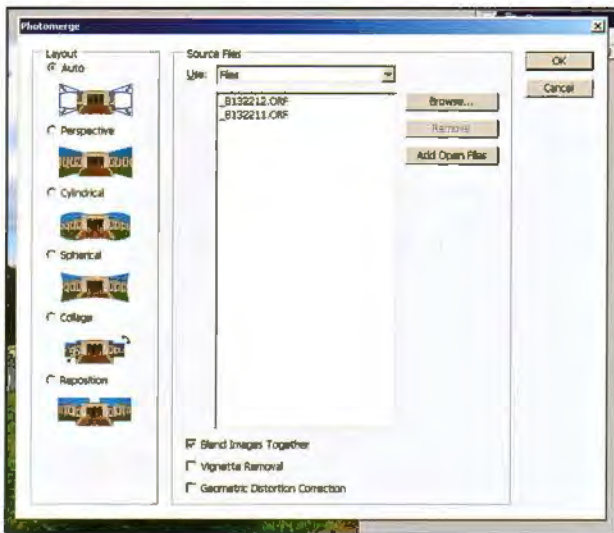
Image 2



Whiston Church, Northamptonshire

Max Green LRPS

The finished image



Photomerge Auto

Panorama Whiston Church, Northamptonshire by Max Green LRPS

I take my pictures quite often when taking the dogs for a walk or perhaps returning from a shopping trip. I rarely carry a tripod around with me so this is an "easy to achieve" method that works for me.

I found the highest point I could and took two portrait format exposures (Image 1 and Image 2) making sure that my exposure did not change between the two and that they overlapped by a third.

Both pictures were taken in RAW and not adjusted. If you try to adjust before merging its easy to get one darker or more saturated than the other.

The process in CS4 is simple and automated.

Select FILE > AUTOMATE > PHOTOMERGE select chosen image files.

Select AUTO and BLEND. Click OK and Photoshop gets to work aligning and joining the images.

As you see on the screen grab two separate file layers are shown.



Merged image



Lens correction

Flatten and crop the layers.

I then made a duplicate layer and used the Lens Correction filter (FILTERS > DISTORT > LENS CORRECTION) to adjust any abnormalities.

You can get really good quality images this way as you are nearly doubling your camera's pixel count.

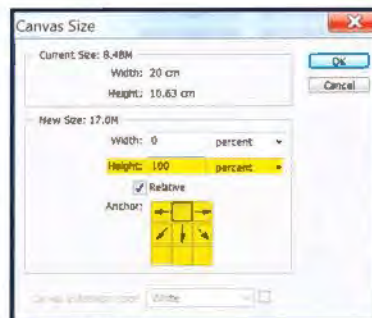
Hopefully by being able to keep the camera fairly level due to the portrait format you do not need to adjust for perspective. The rest is just ordinary image adjustments as any other photograph.



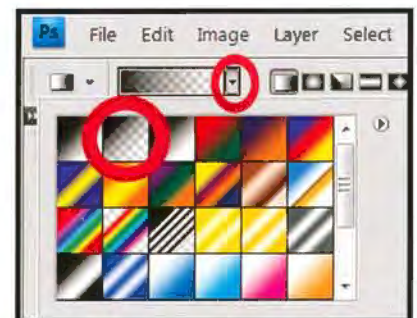
The final image

Image Reflection by Gitta Lim LRPS

This isn't exactly a realistic reflection effect but rather a mirrored reflection of your image. It works quite well on web pages and slideshow presentations. It looks particularly good when placed on a webpage that has a black background and alternatively on white using a white gradient. Open your image file and make a Layer 0 out of the Background in the Layers Palette by double-clicking the layer to create a transparent background. Then enlarge the canvas size height downwards in Image>Canvas Size by 100%. See Screenshot 1. Next create a copy layer out of Layer 0 using Ctrl+J keys and name it 'Reflection'. You now need to flip the Reflection layer by first hitting Ctrl+T keys to create a Transform bounding box around the image. Drag the top (centre) side handle past the bottom handle to flip the image. Drag until you are happy with your reflection size. No need to use the full canvas if it looks fine at a smaller size. To resize the canvas go to Edit>Trim and pick the Transparent Pixels option. If you wish to create an exact mirror flip of the original then drag the centre Transform reference point on top of the the bottom side handle and go to Edit>Transform>Flip Vertical. The reflection layer now needs an added



Screenshot 1



Screenshot 2

graduated effect. I used a black gradient effect here. You need to hit the D key to ensure the background colour is black. Pick the Gradient Tool from the Tools palette. Next go to the Gradient Picker dropdown menu at the top left corner in the top toolbar and pick the black to transparent gradient. See Screenshot 2.

On the Layers Palette click the eye icon of your Layer 0 to deactivate it. You will now add the gradient on your reflection layer. Place the Gradient Tool crosshair at the bottom edge of the layer and while holding down the Shift key drag upwards to the layer top edge. The bottom part of the reflection should now look totally black. Depending on your image type you can use the up/down arrow keys (hit first the V key) to nudge the activated layer slightly up or down to lose some of the centre area between two layers. You can also add filter effects on the reflection layer using Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. I also added Filter>Distort>Ripple effect and used Edit>Transform>Perspective to change the reflection angle. Then flatten your image and add your watermark to finish it off.

*Original image***Freedom Fighters by Jim Buckley LRPS**

My original picture was shot on Kodak negative stock and owes a good deal to Don McCullin who was working with me. I love dropping names! Well, it wasn't quite like that but in 1980 as private secretary to the Governor of Southern Rhodesia photo opportunities were abundant, if sometimes a little tense. Some 20,000 fully armed freedom fighters had assembled in this particular camp under a deal to allow elections to proceed reasonably peacefully and with not too much intimidation.

On this visit a touchy press photographer suspiciously demanded to know which paper I worked for. Mr McCullin was relieved when I explained who I was and that I wasn't about to steal his scoop.

When he saw my 135mm lens on my Spotmatic he laughed: Put a wide angle on! Get close in! Come on, I'll show you. And so followed an intense session in photo journalism in which I timidly followed his lead as he got right in amongst the AK47s and rocket grenades. I fancy his pictures were stronger than mine! Still, I was pleased with this shot at the time.

25 years later digital imaging offered me the chance to give it rather more impact, creating a more threatening impression with their weapons coming out of the frame.

This was my route to the image above which I first made in 2004 and have since remade for this Challenge.

Having improved the scanned negative a little with Levels and Unsharp Mask, I duplicated the background layer in Photoshop. This allowed me to bring back elements of the original picture when I wanted. I hadn't learned about Masks and it was all long before sophisticated non-destructive tools so this simple two layer technique may be of interest to those who are

*Final image**Blur applied**Erased parts**Detail*

starting out with DI.

Because I wanted to emphasis the three central fighters, I cropped from the left and then drew a frame with the Rectangular Marquee Tool (M on the keyboard) around them on the second (copy) layer. I used about 5 pixels of feather for a slightly soft edge. Next, I chose Select>Inverse so I had that part of the picture outside the frame selected.

To create a zoom effect, I blurred the outer part using Filter>Blur>Radial Blur and Zoom. This filter does not have a preview so you have to experiment a little to get the precise degree of blurring that you want, as shown in the left hand thumbnail above.

But of course this also blurred those parts of the guns, boots and magazines which were outside the frame. Before bringing these elements back in I delineated the frame using a light, neutral colour by inverting the selection again and choosing Edit>Stroke at about 2 pixels.

Selecting the Eraser Tool (E on the keyboard) with a small brush, I removed carefully the rifle tips, boots and

magazine - together with the frame line where it intersected those parts that I wanted to be shown. In the centre thumbnail I've switched off the bottom layer so you can see where I've rubbed out those parts that extend beyond the frame. As you work on detail you can vary the size of the Eraser Tool using [(left square bracket for smaller) and] (right square bracket for larger) on the keyboard.

The erased elements now appear in front of the frame and on top of the blurred background as shown in the detail on the right. If you make a mistake, press Edit>Step Backward; and keep saving frequently so you don't have to go too far back. It's also helpful to reduce the opacity of the copy layer on which you are working to enable you to see just where you need to erase.

If your software has the facility, you may prefer to use Layer Masks which will make corrections much easier and allow you to go back and modify what you've done at any point.

MY PRESENT

A Seasonal Musing

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me. Enough of that - listen to this...

I was given a Sinclair-Rover ZX12 Special Tourer Compact DSLR. OK, I got it early as my birthday is just before Christmas - but in time to get you the news that will make you want to dash out and get one too.



Great Tidings of Good News

Compact? You could have cooked the turkey in it. Big enough to capture any scene! The size of that LCD too! At least 22 inches but oh so thin and flat - cleverly it can be rolled up and tucked away into one of the 'apartments' in the side. How good is that?

I will go through the main features. I can hear you all jumping with excitement - or the effects of champagne?

The Ultra Automatic (eye sensing) Zoom can tell what you're looking at and sets the Zoom for you. The planet Saturn in the viewfinder just blew me away. Macro easy. Just look at a bug and bingo, a twenty-two inch beauty in 256 colours. (A firmware upgrade promised for 2012 will give even more colours.)

The Sinclair-Rover engineers are obviously photographers who know how important a real viewfinder is. They know that the more pieces of glass in the way the worse the light-path and the view. So they removed it all to create a 'straight through view'. Clever; effective; clear: brilliant.

I particularly like the rotating barrel lens set: no longer any fiddly lens swaps. No more dust bunnies (although I do like rabbits - shame). There are eight fixed focal-length lenses and two coated-zoom-lenses (for winter shots I presume - as it can get pretty cold out there). More on this unique lens set up later.

Anyway let's get down to the important basics. I am sure you are really keen to hear my in-depth assessment.

The 'family friendly' feature is in a class of its own and by itself justifies the £2,562.56 price tag (excluding VAT). It comes in 256 FF colours. Yes 256. There's a special button that you press and turn to access the full range of colour options

without the need for separate buttons - now that is good thinking. Fewer buttons means less confusion, after all my mobile phone would be far better with just two buttons: 'answer' and 'don't answer' rather than the ten million that it does have. Why don't designers ever think like this?

So this 'family friendly' feature allows you to change the appearance of the camera at the touch of the FF button so that whatever your age or gender (or preferred hair type) you can look 'cool'. It brings the family together so that you all feel good together - brilliant! No more isolated photographic holidays - you all can get out there together. The government could do with thinking like this in their many committees!

I chose 'hot icicle' for my test colour! And it did seem to help me to take better images too. Just shows that if you are comfortable with your camera then better images will result.



The brochure says that the camera is best suited to nature photography. Mmm: not my scene. Oh hang on - no it's 'nurture' photography. What on earth is that? Now this blew my mind. It seems that the camera has special temperature and moisture sensors and can work out from these and from what's in the viewfinder what you are trying to do. So it automatically adjusts everything for you. It 'nurtures' your photographic experience. But it has a trick up its sleeve. Just in case it senses that you don't really know what you want (and

Right: Moving Higher

Below: Holding breath in anticipation



how many of us are like that) or perhaps you're in two (or more) minds, it sets 256 different settings and snaps at each one - all in under 10 seconds. As the brochure says: '... guaranteed to get at least one good shot in every shot'. Now that's marvellous - guaranteed results every time. I could give them another £1,000 just for that.

Does it use memory cards? Nope, none needed ever. Think of the saving! It has a 5 terabyte internal hard drive memory. Never will you be in the situation where you have carefully set up your camera, waited for just the right moment, only to discover that you forgot to bring any memory cards.

There is no need for wires to connect the camera to your computer either as it uses a Maglev induction loop transfer system (MILTS) to transfer images directly to your PC! They claim it's faster but I just like the fact that I have fewer wires hanging about and also the way the camera hovers just above the computer case.



That swivel LCD is just great but underneath, hidden away, are a ton of buttons for those who need them (not me). They cover just about everything and anything and there are even some that appear to do nothing at all; they're just there for you to impress your friends. It must work too because the gasps are almost audible when I show my latest piece around.

This is a camera for serious photographers. For those of us who *have* to get that shot there are no excuses: this is where the unique lens setup comes into its own. Click the 'get that shot no matter what' button and it automatically grabs all of the possible images that it can with each lens in turn - it fairly whizzes around! Ah, I hear you say - that's silly because it would cause camera shake. Not so: those engineers at Sinclair Rover are way ahead of you. They worked out that if it rotates at just the right speed then it will act as a gyroscope and it will stabilise the whole camera to stop all vibrations, camera shake, wind effects - you name it. Brilliant: all this high end technology in one package.

This mode uses up half the memory as it takes so many shots - but its worth it to make sure that you've got that ultimate shot in there. Must-have shots, sorted!

But of course all of this is nonsense if the image quality (IQ) is poor. Do we need to know the exact

number of pixels to know that the IQ is the best there is? How many of us have bought cameras of x or y Mega Pixels only to find that their IQs were poor at best. So those clever chaps at Sinclair Rover refuse to tell us the number of pixels - no disappointments. AND on top of that they say the number of 'actual pixels' varies from shot to shot as it adjusts to get the best image possible: something to do with removing noisy and irrelevant parts.

And that brings us nicely on to - noise. Noise IS the bug bear of all digital users but not for the ZX12. It has built in (no less) an algorithm that 'compares all images and eliminates all noise'. I think they refer to it as a 'difference engine' in the brochure. It is the camera we have all been waiting for. No noise! This explains why there is no ISO setting button. I kind of missed that one for a while. I felt uneasy always shooting at ISO 64,000 but the proof is in the pudding as they say. In fact it is so good that I never moved it out of auto mode - well to be honest I couldn't actually find the right button to do anything else, but it's there somewhere.

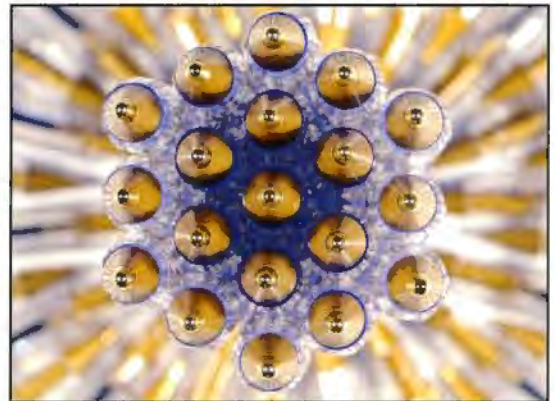
A3 prints? Well, of course Sinclair Rover say that the A3's performance is second to none but as I am still downloading my first pictures, I cannot refute their words. Everything else they have said is there is there so I don't expect any surprises.

There is just one minor problem, which the boffins at Sinclair Rover say they are working on and will have a fix for in the very near future: the battery is a bit on the large, heavy side and it doesn't really last that long - but then this is a pioneering, first generation camera, so it is to be expected.

I'm off to see my Osteopath next week. I seem to have developed a bit of a nasty pain in my back. I probably should have bought the soft, contoured, 'rest me' bag for the camera right at the start. But come on - camera bags? They're for wimps!



Young Gwynn



A Lot of Ps

Left: What? You mean to say it's yet another feature?

I think I'll stick to what I know thanks!

Sharpening with High Pass Filter

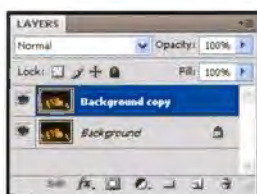
The sharpening filter you probably didn't know you had

In this third article, following the starter piece in the spring issue of DIGIT this year (No 41) and the more sophisticated sharpening techniques like luminosity blend mode and selective sharpening covered in No 43 in the autumn, Clive now presents an alternative method of sharpening an image and one that presents an amount of flexibility. It also has the advantage that it's quick and easy to do. Clive's website at www.crhfoto.co.uk contains a wealth of information on Photoshop routines, including sharpening.

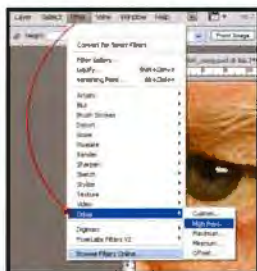


Above: The starting image: a studio portrait of The Fisherman

Below: Background Copy Layer



Below: High Pass filter location



This method addresses principally the edges of subject matter and areas of contrast change. This makes it an effective method in avoiding sharpening areas of the image which may contain noise or those which are soft and diffuse.

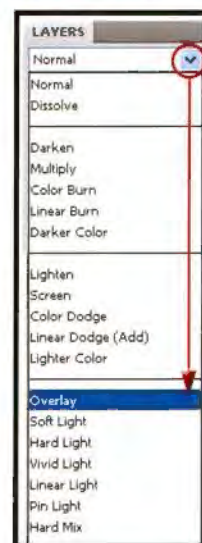
Open the picture as a Background Layer. Make a copy of this layer, placing it on the layer above, as shown left.

With this layer active, go to: Filter > Other > High Pass. The location of this filter is shown below left.

Set the High Pass radius to between 4 and 8 - this increases the fringe effect, as shown in the picture below.



To prevent colour fringing Desaturate (using Image > Adjust > Desaturate) the High Pass effect - as shown below.

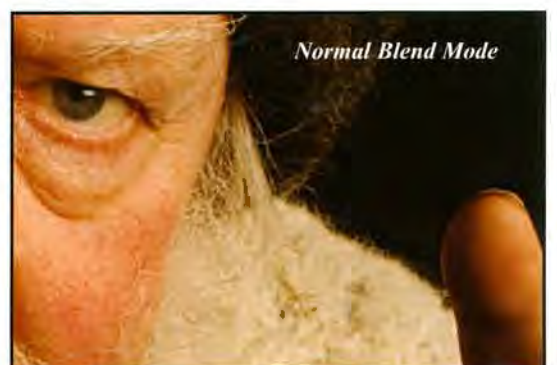


Now we need to blend the two layers together.

Set Layer Blend Mode to Overlay, Soft Light or Hard Light - choose whichever suits the image. The opacity setting for the layer will also influence the sharpening effect.

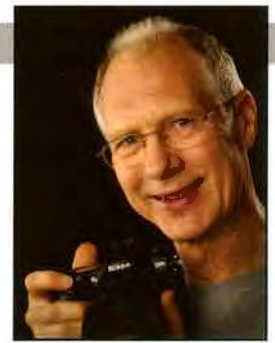
A further refinement is the application of a Layer Mask. This enables parts of the sharpening layer to be selectively erased (using black as the foreground colour) or restored (using white as the foreground colour) with a suitable size of brush.

The following screen-grab details illustrate the effect of Hi-Pass Sharpening at a screen magnification of 500%





Next in the Clive's technique series will be Sharpening Edges Precisely. Look out for it in the spring DIGIT.



Graham Whistler FRPS

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This weekend workshop, where there are just 36 places, will be led by Graham Whistler FRPS (studio portraits), Clive Haynes FRPS (RAW files and Photoshop) and Simon Walden (principal photographer at Cheltenham Film Studios - fashion and nude photography), who is well known for his workshops at the studios. Two professional models will be booked for the weekend. There will be instruction on the use of both Canon and Nikon DSLR cameras. PermaJet are supporting the event with printers and paper and you will be able to print your pictures. All three tutors will display examples of their work. There will also be room for members to display their pictures taken during the event. Bring your own laptop. Lunches available and a Travel Lodge and hotels are nearby.



To reserve a place contact Graham Whistler at graham@gwpmultimedia.com or phone 01329 847944.

£50 deposit required and balance by 1 February 2010

TONY HEALY ARPS

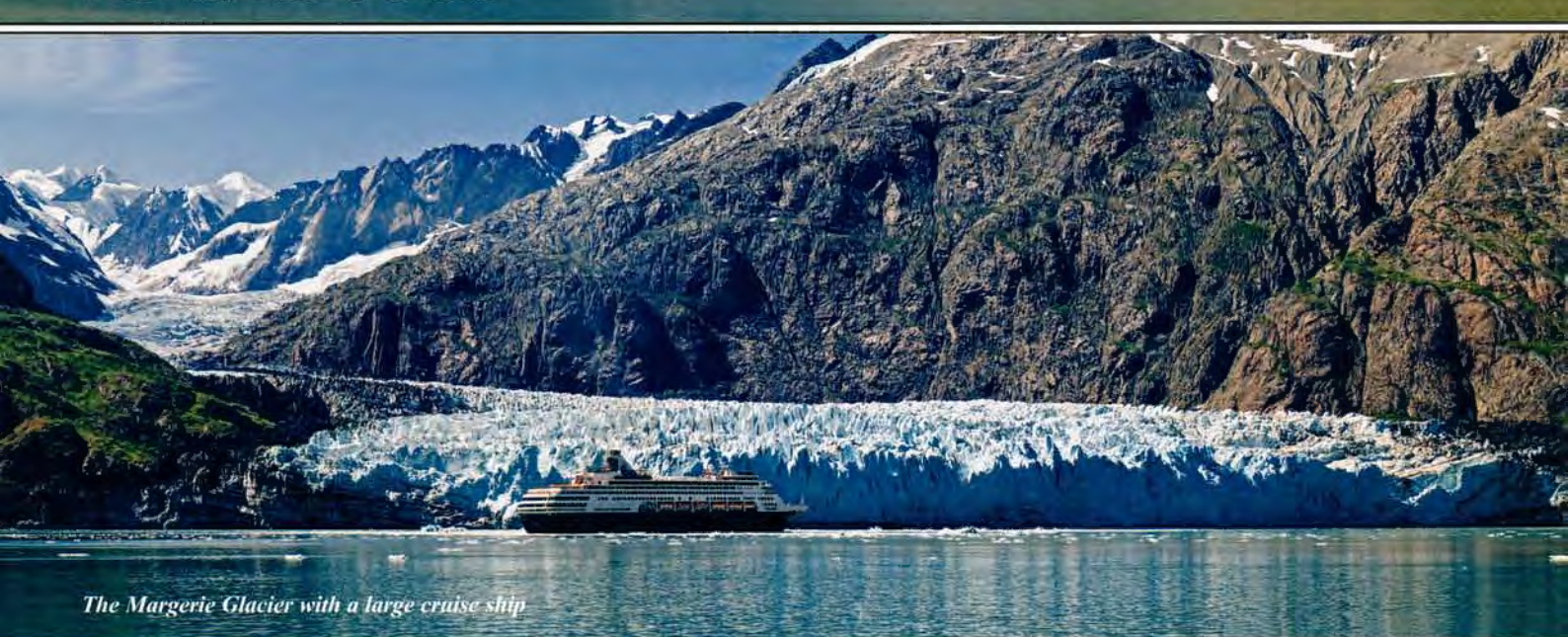
WIDESCREEN ALASKA

A panoramic taster for Tony's article, planned for DIGIT next year, on his Alaskan trip.

Mt McKinley, the highest mountain in North America. A clear view occurs only on one in four days. Taken from inland Alaska



U-shaped valley, Glacier Bay National Park



The Margerie Glacier with a large cruise ship

MAC CORNER

Apple Macs have a growing market share. With elegant design and loads of included software they are ideal for photographers. Here DIGIT seeks to offer something specific for the small but increasing number of Apple Mac enthusiasts in the DI Group. But we need your help to make this a regular feature so please send your reviews, favourite tips and your expertise to: editor@digit.rps.org and help spread the knowledge. I'm very grateful to Tony Healy ARPS for help with this first page.

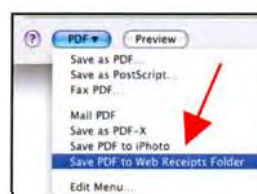
Slide shows on the Mac

Apple Macs come with a sometimes bewildering array of software to do anything from compose your own music to make and burn video shows. Arguably you don't need to buy any third party software with Apple's word processing, spreadsheets, photo management and manipulation all at hand. In a brand that's aimed at graphics users and video or movie creators, the Macs are particularly strong with both iPhoto and iMovie. When combined with iDVD they offer a powerful and sophisticated model for creating exciting and fast moving shows in a variety of formats ranging from Utube to HD TV. But what if you want something straightforward to make a little AV show of your holiday snaps to share quickly with friends?

It may seem surprising but you may want to look outside Apple at a cheap, stand alone program to make slide shows with a mixture of still photographs and video clips in the story, coupled with a sound track, narration, a range of fades and dissolves, pans and zooms and tiling. Yes, just like the Society Harmony distinction slide shows. Take a look at German company Boinx's Fotomagico for US\$29 (www.boinx.com) or possibly free when bundled with DVD software burning offers. This program, designed for the Mac, allows you to take your photos and movies in pretty much any format from a memory card or drive and create a slide show which can be burned in a variety of formats using iDVD. It's totally compatible with Apple's software and whilst in one sense it offers nothing new it's a very convenient way to create a quick show.

On opening the program and selecting the output format - anything from an HD video to a QuickTime movie - it's like most AV software: simply drag your photos and sound tracks into the lower tray and zoom, pan and rotate.

Sadly, this is one example where more is less and in my view the company's Pro product is over-priced at \$149 so stick to the simple version. A free 5 day trial is available so you can assess it.



Invisible Gamma Confusion

Had you always associated Macs with a gamma value of 1.8, whilst Windows used 2.2? Think again. With the new Snow Leopard operating system on OSX v 10.6.2 now, you've probably upgraded and noticed nothing. But Apple have slipped in a change to a gamma value of 2.2.

You shouldn't need to recalibrate your display and it all happens behind the scenes with the computer taking your images and videos colour space information and converting it. But what if you are working with images without colour profiles? They may appear too dark on the screen. The solution is to use Preview to add a colour profile so your pictures display correctly. And if you want to continue using the traditional Apple 1.8 gamma set this in System Preferences>Displays and select this profile in Displays Preferences. There's more at: <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT3712>

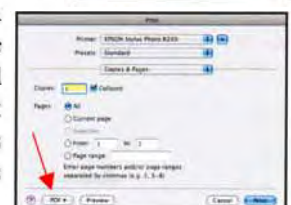
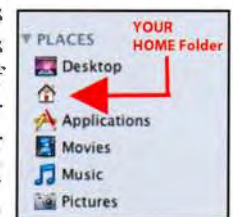
Mac Help

A useful site: <http://reviews.cnet.com/macfixit/> Have you ever been puzzled when starting to type in a name in Mail address and finding up pops an email addresses that doesn't look right? Perhaps you knew it had changed but you couldn't find that particular address in your Address Book to remove it. It's probably in Previous Recipients located within Mail under Window>Previous Recipients. If you no longer use them simply Remove from List. Have a look at yours.

Tip for MAC users.

When you download an application and subsequently receive a serial number or activation code you probably have a way of storing this information safely just in case you have to re-install the application. Perhaps you print the email or text details or create a 'Keep' folder in Mail and file it there. But Apple has provided a Web Receipts folder for this sort of information. It's in your Home folder, under Documents. Open the email and click the Print command.

In the dialogue box here choose PDF in the bottom left hand corner. Then select Save to Web Receipts (left) and the job's done.



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