

CAMERACRAFT

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 THE GUILD OF PHOTOGRAPHERS



ANDREW FUSEK PETERS



IAN KNAGGS



EVA WHITE

New Photography Centre in South of Scotland

A NEW Centre for Photography was recently unveiled in the newly renovated Shambellie House, set in the picturesque village of New Abbey near Dumfries. Comprising exhibition spaces, a state of the art Digital Suite, and a well-fitted Darkroom designed by Ricky Nolan, the Centre is run by a Charity set up specifically to save the House and grounds.



By having both a Darkroom and Digital Suite it will be possible to produce large format negatives from digital images and experiment with various printing and alternative processes, including cyanotypes.

Locally based landscape photographer Allan Wright who will present the first of a series of two-day photography courses commented: "The facilities at Shambellie are wonderful and I am looking forward to delivering courses there.

We also have access to the wonderful Solway Coast and the mighty Southern Uplands which we will use as locations on my courses."

Morag Paterson (one half of the well-known duo of Leeming and Paterson) based in the region added: "I am keen to see the centre being well used and hope to deliver some courses here, particularly as it can be accessed by anyone in the UK without the need to fly. The region was the subject of our project on Zero Footprints where the landscape and the weather produce such amazing subjects for any photographer".



The Solway and Lake District fells from the coast near Shambellie – photograph by Allan Wright



Shambellie House (main photograph by Ricky Nolan) was built in 1856, gifted by Charles Stewart to house part of his collection of costumes, and run by the National Museum of Scotland from 1978 but closed in 2013.

Scottish Government transferred the House and grounds in July 2021 to Shambellie House Trust. Renovations were completed and the House opened in April 2022 delivering a wide range of photography, art, craft, and wellbeing courses.

Details of all courses can be found on <https://www.shambelliehouse.org>

Publisher & Editor:

DAVID KILPATRICK

Icon Publications Limited
Maxwell Place, Maxwell Lane
Kelso, Scottish Borders TD5 7BB
editor@iconpublications.com
+44(0)797 1250786
https://www.cameracraft.online

Associate Editor, USA

GARY FRIEDMAN

gary@friedmanarchives.com

FACEBOOK PAGE:

@cameracraftmagazine

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TIME AND MOTION are words which pair naturally today thanks to attempts to make human workers behave as efficiently as robots over a century ago. It wasn't all bad – those turn-of-the-20th-century ideas created the modern fitted kitchen, the computer workstation and those production lines which still assemble your cameras and lenses in Japan, Vietnam, Thailand and China.

Darkrooms and studios were always planned to reduce the number of steps taken during work but these days I see the opposite as a benefit. Sitting at a computer desk most of the time, I think how great it would be to have everything in one big open-plan room. My studio at one end... the printers... the big Mac... a sitting space with a coffee machine and TV!

Well, I've got all of those and a bit more but through a few rooms and doors so a typical day does not mean rarely standing or walking. At different times in the past I've had upstairs and cellar workspaces, outbuildings and garages and generally kept moving. The darkroom, now long gone, was of course a standing environment – no chairs. Where editing digital files means sitting down, making prints meant being on your feet. Mounting and framing still mean that and the bigger the prints you make, the larger the space and the more physical work you need.

There's a treadmill readily to hand but any time I decide to walk or run on that, I wonder why I'm not outside in the landscape or street with a camera to hand. If I want to write, do I need to be at my desk? Why not take a laptop, climb a hill or visit a city café and be inspired by a different environment?

The car is very efficient for getting places but not for stopping on the way, or taking pictures. Almost anything is better – train, bus, bicycle, feet. Time and motion aside!

So for this issue I took the inspiration from Time & Motion for many of the articles and briefs to contributors. The lead feature with Andrew Fusek Peters' butterflies is one outcome and could not combine the two aspects better, with the OM-Systems 'Pro Capture' mode anticipating the action.

Our next issue, May/June, will be out on May Day.

– David Kilpatrick

Publisher and Editor

IN THIS ISSUE

Andrew Fusek Peters, Fiona Millington-Pipe, Gary Friedman, David Kilpatrick, Katie Hughes, Kenny Martin, Ian Knaggs, Tim Goldsmith, Tom Hill and all the winners in the Guild of Photographers Photographer of the Year 2022

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SIGMA



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TAMRON



**Commercial
Cameras**

NEWS & PRODUCTS

Straight Eight streamlines Canon range

SMALLER AND LIGHTER and designed to suit an entry level market, the **EOS R8** is a 24.2MP full framer in a body weighing just 461g with card and battery, the lightest ever in this class for Canon. It's also the smallest at 132.5 x 86.1 x 70mm. With it Canon launches the **RF 24-50mm f4.5-6.3 IS STM**, a small lightweight RF series zoom as a perfect partner.

The sensor offers fast read out and reduced rolling shutter for 40fps continuous shooting with low noise up to ISO 102,400 matching the R6 MkII. The R8 has a lower resolution 2.36m dot 120fps EVF. Its use-friendly controls include 12 mode dial settings and a switch for moving between still and video.

Uncropped width 4K 60p is oversampled from 6K, with 180fps Full HD slow motion, and internal Canon Log 3 at 10-bit YCbCr 4:2:2 H.265 to UHS-II. HDR PQ and HDR Movie modes enable HDR direct to compatible HDMI devices. It offers recording of up to two hours of 1080p.

Dual Pixel CMOS AF II matches the R6 MkII to focus in as little as 0.03 seconds (even at 40fps with electronic shutter) with detection of animals,



vehicles and people, plus head, face and selectable eye options. 2.4GHz Wi-Fi and Bluetooth plus Apple iOS MFI certification make direct download and operation easy.

The RF 24-50mm F4.5-6.3 IS STM offers image stabilisation up to 4.5 stops on the R8, which has no sensor IBIS. The STM focusing motor benefits from a customisable lens control ring. The RF 24-50mm supports a wide range of in-camera features including panning in scene mode and focus breathing correction, now a camera function included in the R8.

The Canon EOS R8 costs £1,699 body only or £1,899 with the 24-50mm lens (price from major dealers, end of February, for pre-orders April delivery).

See: <https://www.canon.co.uk>

Sony 20-70mm redefines standard zoom performance

SONY has moved the wide to portrait zoom goalposts – just as Panasonic did with their highly affordable 20-60mm L-mount full framer. The **FE 20-70mm f4 G** may cost twice as much but it has an extra 10mm at the long end plus a constant f4 aperture rather than f3.5-5.6. With 'G' image quality and improved AF Sony say it is "the perfect choice for a variety of content capture like vlogging and movie production through to still shots of portraits and landscapes".

The AF uses XD (extreme dynamic) Linear Motor technology, two AA (advanced aspherical) elements, one aspherical element, three ED (Extra-low Dispersion) glass elements, and one ED aspherical element with optimised coatings. It has a 9-blade circular aperture and autofocuses down to 30cm at the wide end, 25cm at the portrait end. Maximum image scale is 0.39x. It does not have optical stabilisation, and takes 72mm filters.

The lens claims 60% increased AF speed and 2X better tracking performance, working at up to 30fps and



high video frame rates with the Alpha 1 body. Reduced focus breathing, focus shift and axial shift when zooming ensure the image doesn't change size, go out of focus or move off centre as much when zooming. Both the AF and aperture operation are quieter. The zoom and focus rings can be customised for angle of throw. There are two function assignable focus hold buttons, an AF/MF mode switch and Aperture Lock. It has a dust and moisture resistant design and fluorine coated front element.

The lens is now on sale and dealers in the UK are pricing it at £1,399.

In other news Sony has announced the development – surprisingly overdue given that they have already released a 400mm f2.8 GM OSS and 600mm f4 GM OSS – of the **FE 300mm f2.8 GM OSS** for planned launch in 'early 2024'.

See: <https://www.sony.co.uk>

L-mount 14-28mm



THE PANASONIC Lumix S 14-28mm f4-5.6 Macro L-Mount full frame ultra-wide zoom offers a compact size and light weight, and a minimum focusing distance of 0.15m over the full zoom range giving a macro capability of 0.25x to 0.5x. It is dust/splash-resistant and can withstand use down to -10°C.

The 14-28mm and the Lumix S 20-60mm f3.5-5.6 lens have a similar build and centre of gravity, to exchange lenses quickly with minimal adjustment on a gimbal, as it is a video optimised design with AF at speeds up to 240 fps and MF by wire variable between 90° and 360° throw, linear or non-linear. The lens has a mechanism that suppresses focus breathing and a micro-step aperture control for video recording.

The filter thread is 77mm with the lens itself 89.9mm long and weighing 345g. Pre-order sales from UK dealers have been priced at £699.

See: <https://www.panasonic.com>

Sigma's smaller ART 50mm f1.4 + new 60-600mm DG DN Sport

WHO KNEW that a focusing mechanism could improve optical design? The **Sigma 50mm f1.4 DG DN Art** is the first to incorporate their new HLA (Highresponse Linear Actuator) autofocus motor for fast, accurate and near-silent focusing. The power of the new motor allowed Sigma engineers to use a single double-sided aspherical element as the focusing lens in contrast to the eight-element focusing group on Sigma's existing 50mm

f1.4 DG HSM Art. This has delivered AF and optical design benefits. The lens has dust- and splash-resistance, a rubber seal around the mount, and a water- and oil-repellent coating on the front element. The new design has slimmed the barrel, which incorporates a declckable, lockable aperture ring, and focus mode switc. It takes 72mm filters, is 109.5mm long excluding the supplied petal lens hood and weighs 670g and retails for £849.

Widest range long zoom

A new DG DN mirrorless 10X zoom going from 60mm f4.5 to 600mm f6.3 has also arrived from Sigma in the fast-AF, rugged professional Sport line. Already made for DSLRs since 2019, the design is enhanced for E

The new 50mm on Sigma's tiny full frame body



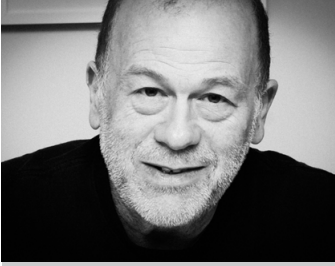
and L mount with the HLA focus drive, carbon reinforced plastic and magnesium construction saving around 200g. It's a heavy and large lens taking 105mm filters. Stabilisation is improved over the DSLR model (4 stops) to 7 stops at 60mm, 6 at 600mm and the tripod grip is Arca Swiss fit. The price is about £300 more than the earlier DSLR version, at £1,999.



The **Sigma ART prime lens series** for mirrorless L and E mount now extends to cover five lenses from 20mm to 85mm all in f1.4 maximum aperture, with 24mm, 35mm and 50mm completing the set. All three DG DN lenses share features such as the one-third stop declckable aperture ring, and their overall design. The optical designs have not been manipulated for a one size fits all filter thread – the sizes are 82mm for the 20mm, 77mm for the 85mm, 72mm for the 50mm and 24mm, and 67mm for the 35mm.

See: <https://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com>

DANNY



CLIFFORD

Amy and Katie ... just no flocking way to be birds of a feather!

I have many funny and lovely memories of Amy Winehouse. Naturally, she could be wary around media, so the fact I wasn't a Press photographer afforded me her trust over the years. We were backstage at the BBC Jazz Awards, where I was official photographer and had a studio set up.

Amy had just performed a few songs from her first album, *Frank*, and was knackered. At this early point in her career, it was my first time meeting her and, between shooting a few other acts, we got chatting. She was putting off going over to the Press wall, huffing and saying, "I can't be fucked, Danny." "Come on, I'll come with you."

She reluctantly traipsed over to the cluster of Press photographers and proceeded to stand, sulky and wooden, in front of them. I felt sorry for her, but then again, I felt sorry for them too (she wasn't easy if she didn't want to be).

"Amy, look! You're hanging out there..." I whispered loudly, acting out a wardrobe malfunction. Grabbing her chest in horror, she quickly realised I was winding her up and laughed. "You fucker!" She cackled, hoisting her bra up as I joined the press in rattling off a load of photos.

We walked back to my studio setup and took some shots away from the crowd.

Once relaxed, Amy really showed a gentle side. Her vulnerable warmth wasn't something she reserved for only my camera – I think people always knew she wasn't the brash, ballsy image she put out – but I always loved these shots of her looking fresh-faced and at ease, with a feisty twinkle in her eye.

It didn't last long though... It was a couple of minutes later, an enthusiastic, bambi-eyed Katie Melua bounded over to join the chat. The three of us nattered briefly. "How about we get a couple of the two of you together?" I suggested. Katie's face lit up, before Amy replied, "I ain't having a picture with her. She's shit." Katie stared at me, wide-eyed. "She doesn't even write her own songs", Amy continued.

I paused, thinking (hoping) that maybe it was a joke... nope! "I'll take that as a no then", I said...



Danny Clifford has a lifetime of music photography under his belt and is now a popular speaker inspiring new generations. See: <https://www.dannyclifford.com>

It was only ten years ago that Andrew Fusek Peters, well known for children's books as is his wife Polly, discovered photography.

It was a late discovery for someone working in a creative environment. A friend took him along with his new Canon DSLR purchase to try a night shot with car light trails, and something clicked. "I thought to myself, you can capture light and sell it!", he told us. And it's about the best description of independent creative photography.

Initially, his attention turned to what many enthusiasts were doing with cameras like his Canon – birds in flight, night skies, and landscapes with an emphasis on nature. Living in the South Shropshire hill and

TAKING FLIGHT



In a month we'll see life return on the wing to countryside and gardens as butterflies wake up, emerge and arrive to captivate and frustrate photographers. Andrew Fusek Peters migrated from bird photography to track down sixty UK species. He shows them in their environment, often in motion composites, to create one of the best books ever on the subject – *Butterfly Safari*.





Two of Andrew's studies in butterfly flight, which also show both the top and underside of wings. Left, Large Blue, Daneway Banks, Gloucestershire. 12-100mm $f4$ at 14mm, 1/4000s at $f7.1$, ISO 2500. Above, Small Tortoiseshell, garden flight sequence using the 12-100mm at 100mm and $f5$, 1/2500s at ISO 5000.

vale country bordering Wales, he has locations like Stiperstones, the Long Mynd and many small country parks and reserves close by. He was happy with the Canon 5D MkIV and his trusty 500mm $f4$, alongside the 100mm $f2.8$ Macro for close ups, until he discovered Olympus MicroFourThirds and its benefits for high speed capture five years ago. He changed systems in the summer of 2018, and as successful entrant in wildlife competitions with a growing reputation through the photographic press, he became in

due course an ambassador for what is now the OM-System.

It has been the unique *Pro Capture* buffering of very high speed continuous shooting, up to 120 frames per second, which enabled Andrew to post-process perfect flight sequences, first with birds then working out how to tackle the far more difficult field of insects. His 2021 book *Flight* is a portfolio with poems, and he says that Covid lockdown focused him on this and the project already in hand which has become *Butterfly Safari*.

It's been five years in the making and involved travelling repeatedly to dozens of locations across Britain, often in the company of fellow 'Aurelians' – butterfly aficionados. Their knowledge of hard to find and often very small environments where rare species have established colonies allowed him to include sixty butterfly species in the book.

Butterfly Safari becomes one of the best field guides around because of the clarity of the images and the quality of his commentary and captions. By using the range of M.

Zuiko lenses from 7mm to 300mm (equal to 14mm to 600mm in full frame terms) and functions such as hand-held focus stacking, he's got himself into camera positions which no tripod can easily allow without disturbing the environment. His working lenses are 7-14mm, 12-100mm, the 60mm macro, 40-150mm with 1.4X convert option, and 300mm $f4$. The OM-System stabilisation and computational image processing mean that his favourite camera support is his hands, though for techniques like focus stacking



Above: one of Andrew's favourite flight sequences, the Granville Fritillary, Compton Bay, Isle of Wight. 12-100mm at 12mm, 1/5000s at f8, ISO 1600. Right, and below, 'Finches in fight or flight' and its use with associated pictures in the Daily Star. 150-400mm f4.5 lens at 277mm, 1/1600s at f4.5, ISO 12,800. Facing page, top, a bird often heard but rarely seen – juvenile cuckoo in autumn whinberry, Stiperstones. Canon 7D MkII, 500mm f4 at f4.5, 1/1250s at ISO 800. Bottom, a hummingbird hawk moth feeding with its proboscis extended, in the garden, 40-150mm at 150mm and f2.8, 1/12,800s at ISO 5000.



he uses a tripod and a wireless remote. Shooting at speeds like 30, 50, 60 or 120 frames per second means that rare views of the underside of butterfly wings, or the top in some species which you'll only ever see static with wings together, are shown during flight. It's like have a slow-motion movie where every frame is a 20MP raw file.

At the same time he's taken an approach to photographs very different from many who seek out butterfly farm specimens or scour the countryside and gardens. "I'm not a spotter", he explains with reference to related photo enthusiasms like birds and trains. "It's about the beauty of the subject, but also the context – all four corners of the

frame count as well as the butterfly. I want photographs to move people and for the setting to be more than just a backdrop”.

This environmental aspect suits the greater depth of field given by the MicroFourThirds format, most so when using the shorter lenses he chooses for the wide angle views with butterfly take-off flight sequences. The 20 megapixel files have not proved any barrier – he sells large prints, and can joke about being a poster-boy for the system as he knows they can run to poster size. In the week that we interviewed Andrew, he had a double page spread in the *Daily Star* and a half-page in *The Times*.

While the example shown here is of finches, and the press naturally prefers birds which readers can see in their own gardens, the butterfly flight sequences have also sold well and Andrew he has had over 450 images published across the range of subjects he tackles. But it's the butterflies taking off which have been the hardest to get right.

“The speed of a butterfly's wings during take-off is so intense that you may as well be shooting in the dark”, he says. “It took me five years to get it right, and it's a method I will not reveal in articles – it is such a high skill set.”

We can say it depends on predicting the likely path of the butterfly, using the depth of field of the lens from a viewpoint which is likely to have many frames in focus, using the fast shutter speeds offered by the system – and then being prepared to capture far more frames than most photographers would consider possible to review and edit.

“I have had shoots where there have been 50,000 actuations – it does not affect the shutter life as they are electronic exposure. The earlier E-M1X captured 60 frames a second, but the new OM-1 can take 120fps at full resolution. No other system can offer that, it's extraordinary.”

He looks back, naturally, at the work of past masters of flight photography Eric Hosking and Stephen Dalton, securing their best images using precise single frame timing whether by hand or using triggers and aids like ultra-high-speed electronic flash. His approach is very different and he can take his working kit anywhere easily, in a

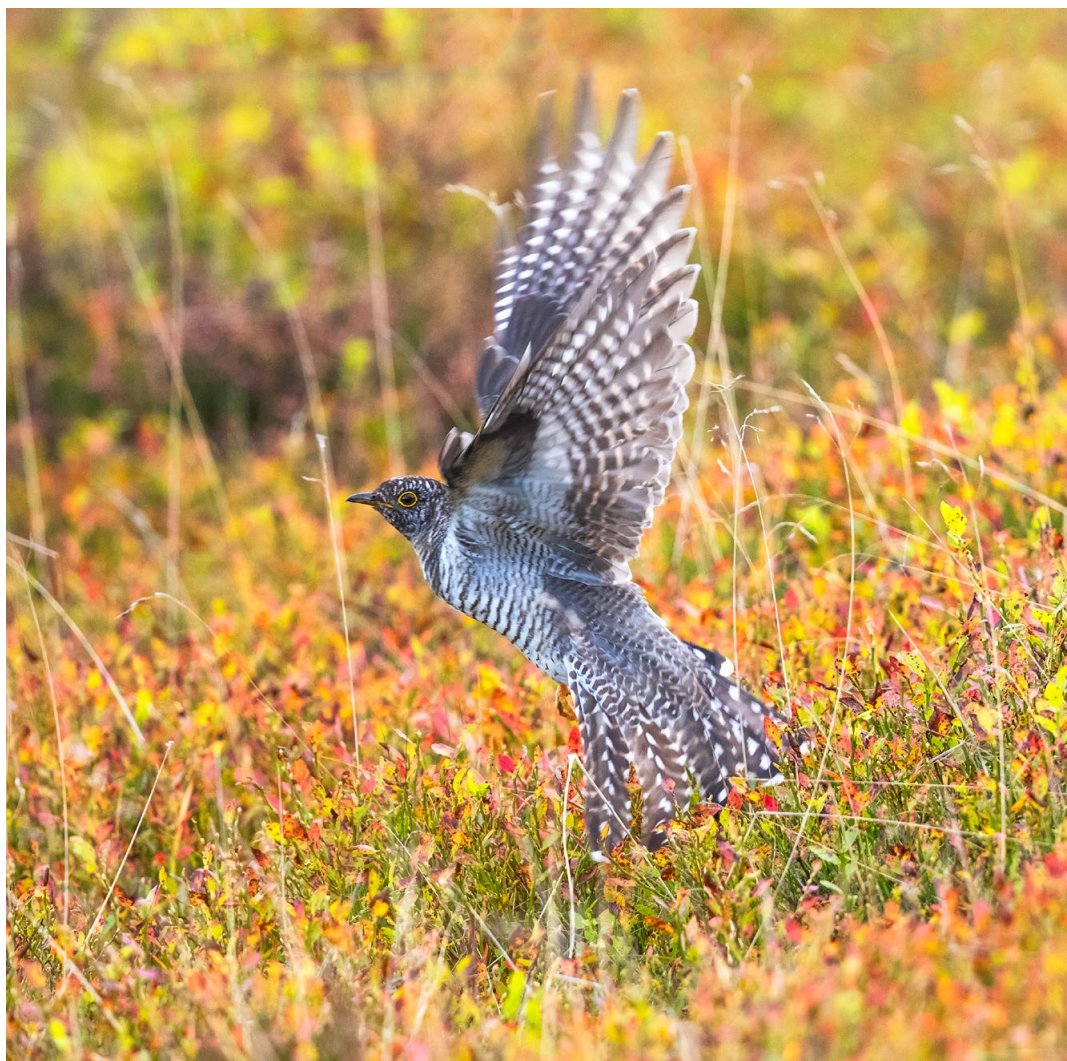


photo backpack. “Give me the tools and I will absolutely hammer them to find out what they do”, he adds.

“The newer bodies even have hand-held focus stacking for macro work in the field”, he says. “I was working with the E-M1 Mk3 and X until the beginning of 2022 when I started with the OM-1. From April, I was out almost every day looking for butterflies.

“The butterfly stories in the papers are usually wide-angle flight sequences, and for these I may have the lens placed just one or one and a half centimetres from the insect.

“I am often visiting very small habitats or locations, it can literally be one corner of one field. There has been such a sad loss of previously large populations. But I have found some encouraging signs –





Facing page: diversion from the butterfly pursuit – dragonflies at sunset, Long Mynd, 40-150mm at 142mm and $f2.8$, $1/16000s$ at ISO 64. Bottom – Common Blue and Milky Way, The Bog, Shropshire – Canon 5D MkIV, 30s at ISO 2000, plus flash. Above – extreme macro of a butterfly's eye, an Orange Tip roosting on a cloudy day and still enough for the focus bracketing needed. 60mm M. Zuiko macro, $f6.3$, $1/60s$ at ISO 200.

I secured the first ever flight shots of the Chequered Skipper in England, at a location in Northamptonshire. I will soon be visiting Kent and Jersey where there are colonies of very rare specis. Now the book has come out, I have been invited to visit some very private locations”.

Being there, the right place at the right time, seems to be a part of the skill set Andrew emphasises. “I wanted to get a single exposure shot of a Common Blue at night, by flash, with the Milky Way – the

camera just two centimetres away, and caught in one raw exposure.”

However the use of a tripod and flash is not typical. He takes two camera bodies fitted with different lenses in his rucksack, and can respond very quickly to seeing a specimen looking promising. There’s rarely any time to spend setting up and the shots are normally hand held, working without a tripod helping him to get the low viewpoints often needed. He generally doesn’t ‘garden’ the environment and if

there are grasses between the lens and butterfly, they are not retouched out as many would do. His aim is a faithful record.

All the rest of the magic lies in selecting from the hundreds or thousands of frames and using *Photoshop* to compose the final action sequences. The computational functions built into the camera may be able to do this with static tripod shots but he prefers to do the montage in post-processing.

The power of the new camera

is harnessed fully, however, in tracking and focusing on wildlife subjects. “The bird AF and tracking can even work with small garden birds”, he told us. “It can follow a wren – it must be down to recognising the body shape.”

Andrew’s book *Butterfly Safari* is published by Bird Eye Books, Graffeg Limited of Cardiff, and costs £30. ISBN 9-781802-583700.



See: www.fusekphotos.com

Instagram @andrewfusekpeters

Beetleuse (429 light years from Earth)
Mag 0.4
1594 AD

Bellatrix (243 light years from Earth)
Mag 1.6
1780 AD

TIME & SPACE

by Katie Hughes

Mintaka (919 light years)
Mag 2.3
1104 AD

Alnirtak (826 light years)
Mag 1.7
1197 AD

Alnilam (1360 light years)
Mag 1.07
663 AD

Orion Nebula (M42)
(1344 light years)
Mag 4.0
679 AD

Rigel (777 light years from Earth)
Mag 0.2
1246 AD

Isn't it amazing that when we look up into our night sky that we're looking into the past!

We all take the night sky for granted, we go out, we look up and we see the stars, but we never give much thought to what is really up there.

Everyone on the planet recognises the constellation Orion (The Hunter). He graces our night sky every winter and is the most recognisable star formation as we can see him clearly with the human eye. The wonderful thing about Orion is, he is filled with beautiful nebulae that we can't see without the aid of a telescope, binoculars or with long

exposures of photographic images.

When we see the Orion constellation, we recognise the stars that make The Hunter, Orion's sword and his belt.

But did you know that although these stars look close together and bright, that they are in actual fact many light years apart in distance from their neighbours, our planet, our eyes and the present moment?

Orion's stars lie at a distance between 243-1400 light years. The magnitude of stars describes how bright they are. The lower the magnitude number the brighter the star. Some of these stars are many thousand times brighter than our

Sun, but they are so far away they look similar to closer stars of higher magnitude number.

A light year in Astronomy refers to how long it takes for the light to travel from the star to reach Earth in one year, which means we are looking into the past. What we see in the night sky is not how it looks now, but way back then. For example, it takes 8 minutes for the light from the Sun to reach our Earth, so if anything happened to the Sun we would not be aware of it for 8 minutes.

On this photograph we have put the distances in light years – and also the year in our history when the

light we see left these stars, when each one was in the position and state we see now.

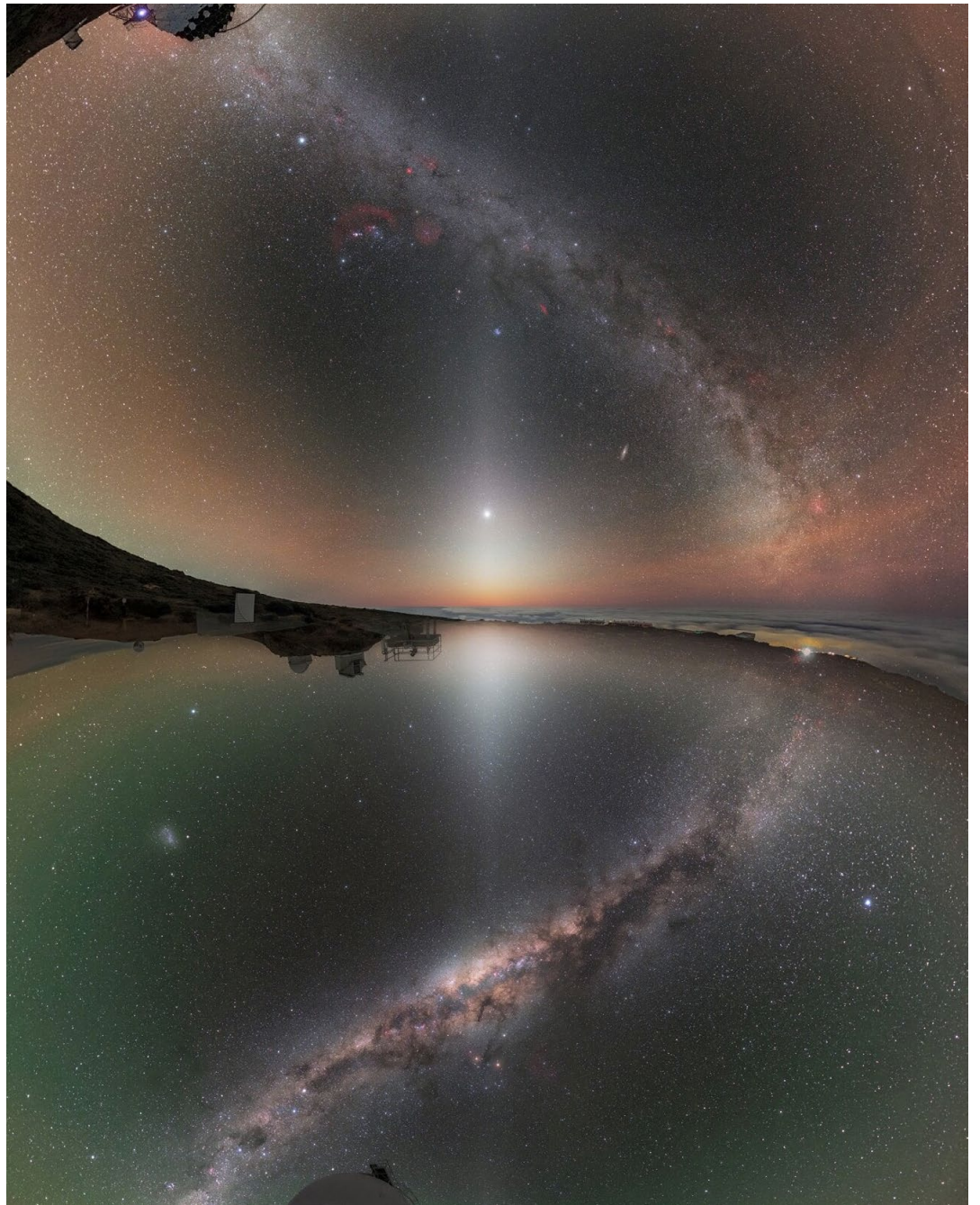
Some of these stars are 30 times bigger than our Sun. Ultimately for future astronomers some stars in this constellation will be famous in death, as their fate will have been to explode violently into a Supernova.

With the new James Webb Space Telescope we are now finding nebulae and planets that we didn't know existed due to JWST seeing further back in space than the Hubble Telescope. We live in exciting times.

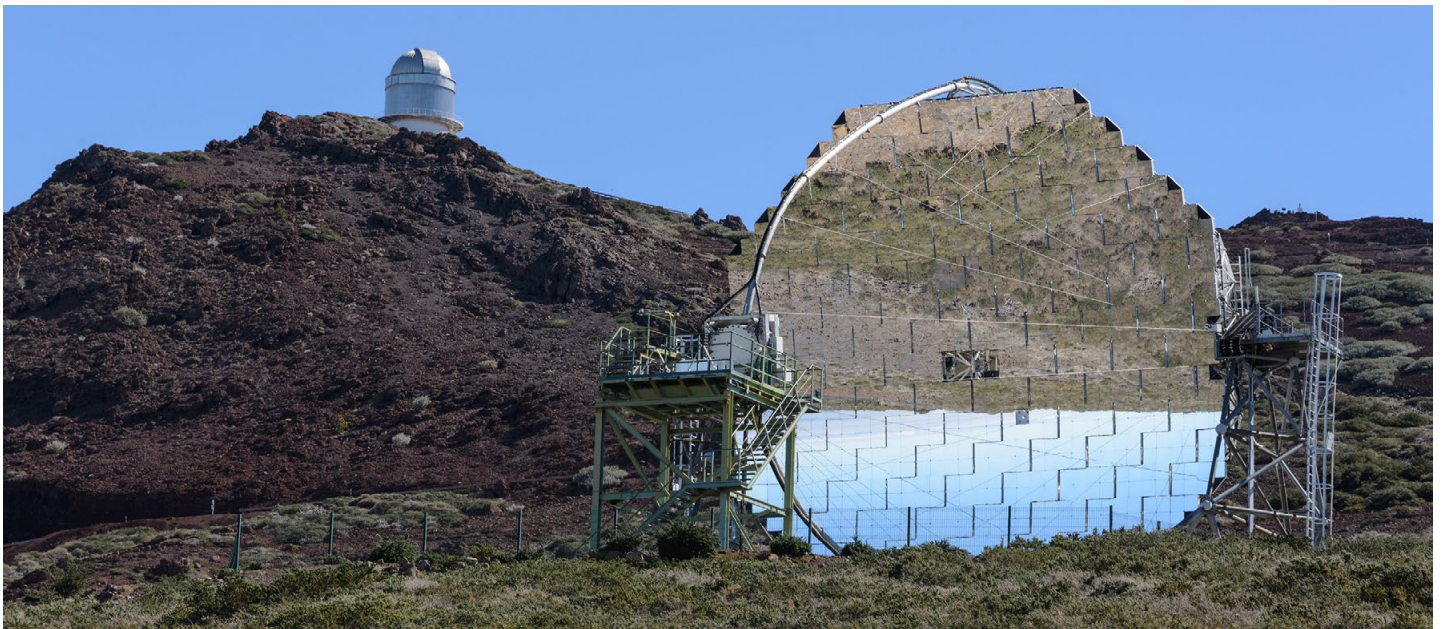
See www.instagram.com/alba_astro
www.youtube.com/@katieyhughes
(Alba_Astro) & [twitter@mcblondieh](https://twitter.com/mcblondieh)

...and an exceptional image from NASA

THIS IMAGE from the European Southern Observatory, ESO, captures both the northern and southern hemispheres (the entire night sky) – impossible to see in real life. Petr Horálek and Juan Carlos Casado took two photographs at observatories located at the same latitudes in the northern and southern hemispheres. The top was taken at the Roque de los Muchachos Observatory of the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias on La Palma, 29° north of the equator, while the bottom half was taken at ESO La Silla Observatory in the Atacama Desert of Chile, 29° south. Merged they create a continuous panoramic view of the night sky. The vertical white glow in the centre is the zodiacal light, visible only in areas with extremely dark skies free of light pollution, caused by the dust that permeates our Solar System and scatters sunlight. Shining brightly in the northern part of this we see the planet Venus. The reflective mirror seen upside down in the top image is part of the CTA (Cherenkov Telescope Array), an array of gamma-ray telescopes being set up in La Palma at the same site as MAGIC. A second set of CTA telescopes will be installed in the southern hemisphere, near ESO's Paranal Observatory, thanks to an agreement between the CTA Observatory and ESO. Source: NASA Spanish language information, image © P. Horálek & J. C. Casado/ESO



Above – the northern and southern hemispheres joined at the 'horizon' in a photograph released by the European Southern Observatory. Below – the MAGIC site in La Palma with one of the gamma-ray telescopes (photograph by Shirley Kilpatrick).



TIME TRAVEL 1

Colour negative movie film, processing and scanning revive a 1930s camera using the obsolete 127 film size

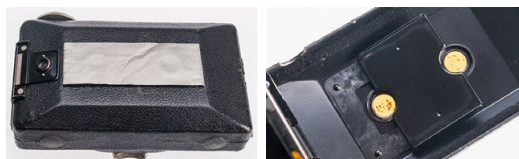
Not so much nostalgia please, asked one reader recently, and also linked this to the prevalence of old white men in magazine publishing. To an extent that's true – you can't have photographers looking back not only on working with film, but on the generations of older tech which came before them, unless they fairly ancient.

Then you go to something like The Photography Show and find the busiest stands are in the Analogue Zone and they are mobbed by students and young female photographers. Maybe what's actually happening is that this demographic is not generally digging up proper old gear, but buying new retro products from Lomography and loading these with repurposed film stocks. The popularity of these cinematography films, which were never originally intended to be used in still cameras, brought new turnover to a few 'converters' buying in the raw film from makers often in Germany (former Agfa production) or Poland (FOMA who acquired Kodak emulsion formulae in the 1990s). This could then be made into 35mm and 120 film fairly easily, but with more manual cutting and rolling into obsolete formats like 127 rollfilm. There's still some current production 127 in the world, like Shanghai ISO 100 listed by AliBaba for import from China. You can buy 100 and 400 speed Rerapan from Bristol Cameras, Rollei name branded stock from other sources and can get it processed expertly by Ag Photographic + Photolab.

For a few years, I've been looking on eBay and other sites to find a good example of the camera I learned on, my father's Zeiss Ikon Kolibri 523/18 from around 1933 which he gave to me in 1966 when I was thirteen. I bought Woolworths' (Bott & Co, a genuine British film maker) and got them processed by a small photo shop or by Boots. It cost my dad a small fortune so I had to learn developing and printing myself, with a very small darkroom space in a walk-in wardrobe and a washbasin. I built my own enlarger which shared the Kolibri's simple three-element Novar 50mm f4.5 lens, removed from the camera. The 127 camera taking 16 shots per roll only had shutter speeds of 25, 50, 100, B and T from its self-cocking Telma shutter. Combined with two red windows on the camera back to show the carefully wound-on



The Kolibri was a premium pocket camera in its time, with a spring-loaded extending tube, folding viewfinder, a choice of lenses and a precision interior. The 127 rollfilm has a spool with a very slim centre unlike 120.



Some versions came with a clamshell case and two close-up lenses. This basic model has a leather case and the slot in the front seems just to be designed to hold its small metal lens cap, or perhaps a filter.

exposure numbers alternately, it was easy to leave a blank frame or double expose. The 127 spool also has a very skinny spindle, making film curl tightly which affects flatness in the camera and makes it hard to get into a developing tank reel (especially my original Nebro). I didn't even try!

None of my dozens of early prints have survived and nor did the camera. I was persuaded to move on to Olympus half-frame as soon as my savings allowed, with a very good Pen D (fast f1.9 lens of fine quality) because 72 exposures per roll would slow down my spending! The need to learn meticulous processing and printing skills with the half-frame negatives set me up for life.

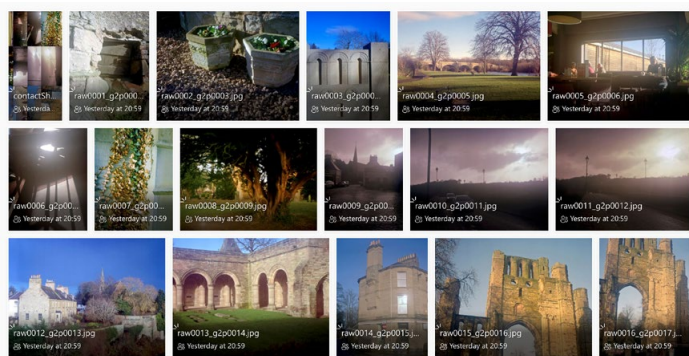
Finally this year our columnist Tim Goldsmith came across a collector friend selling a good working Kolibri with the right lens and shutter at a price I was prepared to pay. Before putting it away for ever in a glass case as my reminder of the camera which went to Kenya training RAF pilots and then on bombing sorties with my father, I wanted to see how it fared today. I found an offer on eBay from RL Processing for Kodak ISO 50 ciné colour negative, 46mm

unperforated stock made into new 127 rollfilm, including uprating to 100 and scanning for just over £20. So I bought a roll, loaded it up, and took the little collapsible compact camera out in the sun. The negatives are a touch over 35mm in size at 30 x 40mm.

I covered the faded amber film number windows on the back with a rectangle of bitumen Sylglas tape (above) – totally lightproof, and just enough tack to seal to the windows but not damage the leathercloth. This had to be lifted carefully from each window in turn when advancing the film; it worked, as there was no trace of fogging. Exposures were all estimated and as the 'contact sheet' of scan thumbnails shows I pretty much got them right. The uncoated lens has seriously flare and focusing by estimated distance was slightly less accurate, but good enough to prove the Zeiss triplet sharper than expected when it was never intended for colour. The re-purposed film's colours are a touch jaunty but you can see here what a camera 90 years old can produce.

– David Kilpatrick





The 16 exposure film supplied, processed and scanned (within a couple of days by post) by www.rfilmprocessing.co.uk gave bright colours and high contrast. Above left and right, estimated close focusing. Below, excellent sharpness of detail at 1/100s and f11 in late January mid-day sunshine.



TIME TRAVEL 2

Testing the water with 30-year-old films, legacy chemistry and a high powered filter jug

When we were offered a sample ZeroWater 2.8 litre water purifying jug, which comes with a TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) measuring device, it was not its appeal as an office water jug which got a yes please reply. It was the promise of zero dissolved solids in enough water to process black and white film.

If you do not have a filtered, tempered water supply on tap – which my darkroom once had – the alternative to washing for 20 minutes in running water is to use four changes of water at 20°C with plenty of agitation, for five minutes each change. If this water, along with whatever you use to make up dev/stop/fix, can be zero TDS there's a chance your film will dry without any marks.

It's not guaranteed as dust in the air can reach surface water on the film and dry down with it, but after doing a couple of process runs with the filtered water we can report that it works. Of four rolls processed in two 600ml Paterson tank runs, only one had marks and that was definitely because it fell to the floor during hanging up! Even then most of the film was perfect.

The TDS meter showed that our very clean and soft Scottish water had a reading of only .060 out of the tap and as expected .000 once filtered. There will be areas with hard water or dirtier supplies where the filter jug will have a dramatic effect on taste and make tap water as good as de-ionised or distilled water for mixing processing chemicals.

To test, we didn't buy film. For twenty years and more a few films have hung around in the old darkroom. Two were exposed, Tri-X and Delta 400. These were almost certain to have no usable images and a massive fog level as they were lost in room temperature desk drawers.

To process, we bought 500ml Adox FX-39 II (Paterson formula) dev concentrate and 250ml Tetenal Super Fix from Speed Graphic, total cost a little over £20 including rapid postal delivery. Development was 12 minutes at 1 + 9 which gives the best hope of contrast on old fogged film. The exposed rolls were so degraded hardly anything could be recovered by copying to digital (bellows rig on full frame body) but two or three mysterious forgotten images were revealed.

I then shot 24 exposures of Agfa APX 100 with an expiry date of 07/95



The ZeroWater 2.8l purifying jug comes with a TDS testing device. / Below: it's very heavy to lift when full but has a spigot and can be placed on a countertop to draw off water.



so definitely 30 years old, and 36 of Fuji Neopan 400 dated 10/98. Both were rated at their normal speed, with the giving the Agfa the same development time of 11 minutes as the Fuji, so boosting its speed and contrast relatively. I used a 60-year-old Minolta SR-1 with its original 55mm f1.8 and 135mm f4 lenses and a Sigma 24mm f2.8 from the late 1970s, with an 8X red filter on many sunlit shots to give the intense almost black sky architectural views on the slow film and cut haze with boosted contrast on telephoto landscapes with the fast film.

Despite golfball grain and very high base fog levels, both films



The kit needed for film dev, above, and 25 to 30 year old films, below.



yielded useful exposures throughout. No meter was used, but on a sunny day none should be needed as long as you know to increase substantially for close-ups, skimmed light, dark subjects and so on. The January sun was judged as f11 light mid-day falling to f8 an hour before sunset, and subjects like a texturally lit gravestone close-up two stops more, so 1/60s at f5.6 even though the sun casts distinct shadows. Twenty years of actually seeing settings when framing up with digital cameras have made me a better judge of estimated exposure than my years with handheld exposure meters and TTL ever did.

As for the results, apart from being surprised by the sharpness of the old preset 135mm, I had only watermark to retouch (the film that dropped) and really minimal evidence of any 'spotting' which would have been a long task on darkroom enlargements. Copying to 61 megapixels with a 50mm SMC Takumar macro lens set to f8 gave super-sharp grain right into the corners. Even the APX 100, a fine-grain advanced film in its day, yielded high contrast grain which can only be called a creative effect.

The filtered ZeroWater was tempered to 22°C by storing next to a lagged hot water cylinder, giving the right mixed 20°C for the dev after allowing for the room temperature making the dev tank and cylinders cause a drop. The mixed fixer was kept at 20°C the same way. Stop bath was easy (distilled white malt vinegar, a quick squirt into water). The final wash baths started at 20°C and as some more water needed to be added to the ZeroWater to get four washes they were allowed to fall a bit.

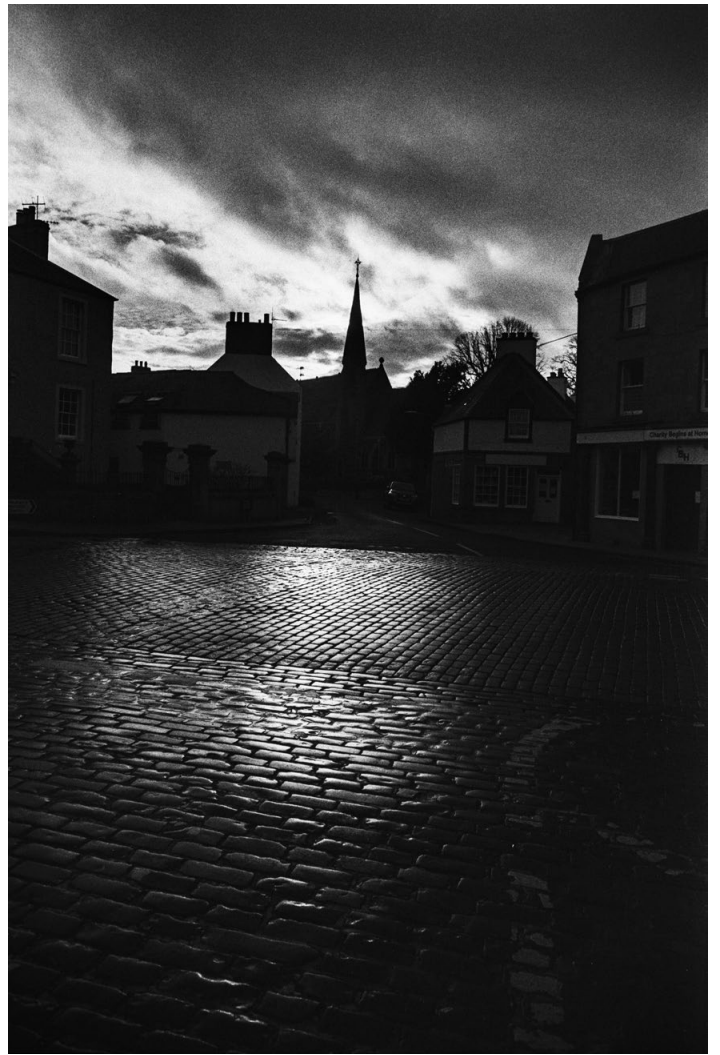
These were obviously winter conditions and using a certified spirit thermometer with fast response it was interesting to see how just pouring 20°C developer into a tank 16° room temperature caused a rapid drop of 2°. With no constraints on energy use, I would keep the room at around 20° and then everything in it from the film itself to the measures and the plastic of a tank and its reels would be at working temperature. I monitored the temperature during development and extended the time from a planned 11 minutes to 13.

It was all done in the kitchen sink and for a visit 30 years back in time proved enjoyable – even if the smell of fixer stayed on hands, clothes and in the kitchen for days!

The expensive side of using silver halide film, whether old stored stock or brand, comes when you want to set up an enlarger and make prints. These negatives have never been printed. The 61 megapixel 'scans' via a 1960s Pentax bellows and slide/neg copy holder, with processing from raw and the same use of dodge and burn shading as would be given when enlarging, make inkjet prints with convincing crisp grain and rich density.

– David Kilpatrick

See: www.speedgraphic.co.uk for chemicals and for the filter jug and www.zerowater.co.uk



Top and right, with the 24mm Sigma an 8X red filter increased contrast and yielded a nearly black overhead blue sky. Above, no filter and a full three stops more exposure than a landscape scene for a sidelit tombstone. All on Agfa APX 100 push-processed for the same time as the Fuji Neopan 400.



The Neopan 400 received about the recommended development time for fresh, not ancient, stock. Fog level was high compared to the APX 100 and the grain was much coarser when a custom inverted contrast curve to restore the tonal scale was applied in Adobe Camera Raw. Local adjustments applied! Facing into the sun at the 1/500s fastest shutter speed of the old SLR, f16 is sharp from the first white line to the distance on the 135mm pre-set telephoto.

Sharpen your memories – auto retouching tested

Once upon a time, the clone stamp tool and the paint brush were the workhorses of the photo restoration world. Milo Shapiro, sole proprietor of FreshenYourPhoto.com, has been doing it this way for well over a decade. Here he is, telling us how he restored this photo of a serviceman from the 1940s (credit: Sean McDermott):

“For this shot (top left), I started with the repair of the torn area, mostly using the clone tool and following the lines of the leather. Where it would go awry, I’d use the Healing brush at different angles to see if I could coax it where I wanted. Most of the scratches were eliminated with careful use of Healing brush, but at times I switched to clone for more precision. The two are my mainstays for restoration. I repainted the background completely, rather than repair it.

“I then used *Topaz Suite* of products to sharpen the face and then a combination of the colorize neural filter and manual coloring to complete the image (top right).”

These tools can be perceived to be the equivalent of stone knives compared to the emerging crop of neural-network based tools to help the restoration artist accomplish the same thing in a fraction of the time. Here are three cutting-edge tools, all with differing capabilities:

- *GFPGAN*, a free web-based utility for sharpening facial features (mouth, eyes, hair. <https://hugging-face.co/spaces/Xintao/GFPGAN>)

- *Remini*, which does about the same job as *GFPGAN* but costs \$6.99/week (app.remini.ai)

- *Img2Go.com*, a free online tool for colorizing old photos, and

- Good old *Photoshop*, which offers new “beta” neural network tools that can colorize, sharpen facial features, and also get rid of scratches (sort of).

There are many other tools out there as well, but this is just a quick assessment of the quality of the current state of tools.



“The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there” – Associate Editor Gary Friedman tests software which promises to update history

What do they do?

GFPGAN, *Remini*, and *Photoshop* all leverage training sets of other snapshots to build libraries of what eyes, teeth, hair, and other features look like at high resolution, and they try to graft high-resolution versions of these facial features on to your image, in a way that looks consistent with the original.

While the first two tools are all online (you upload the image and download the finished product) *Photoshop*’s new neural filters tools are somewhat hidden under *Filter > Neural Filters* menu. From there you’re presented with a range of tools, many labeled Beta, for manipulating images. The two used in this article are Photo Restoration (which gets rid of cracks and sharpens faces), and Colorize.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about these tools is that none of them require a skilled user to do their job. The first two tools require no input at all, whereas *Photoshop* thankfully provides optional sliders for tweaking the intensity of its operations. The only recommendation we can make about the Face Restoration slider to keep it at about 50% so it doesn’t get overzealous.

The downside of these tools is, like any other photoshop manipulation, that the enhancements might call attention to themselves if done too much. Check out the *Photoshop* example of the father and young son where the Face Restoration slider was set to 100%. Yeah, it’s sharp and detailed, but looks out of place from the rest of the picture.

The six Father and Son pictures (facing page) provide an example with two faces in an out-of-focus image, which is especially challenging since if only the faces are filled in with high-quality detail then it will surely call attention to itself. Here *GFPGAN* is the clear winner in terms of aesthetics. Also compared it with *Topaz Sharpen AI* (which tried to sharpen the whole image), which did a mildly decent job.



Here all of the tools are being pitted against what a skilled photo restorer can do, and as you can see there’s still no substitute for a human. Original old print, above left; Milo Shapiro’s finished restoration, top right. Very often the human restorer will use these new tools as a starting point to save time. Although the image wasn’t unsharp, we ran it through *GFPGAN* anyway and it made subtle improvements to the sharpness of the eyes and eyebrows.



Above left, after *Photoshop Scratch Reduction*; right, *Face Restoration* only. Below left, *Img2Go*’s auto result; below right, *Photoshop*’s *Colorize*.



Notice that if these programs don't find a face, they won't touch anything.

Removing scratches

Only *Photoshop* offers this feature, which didn't do nearly as good a job as a skilled retoucher using either the healing brush or the clone stamp tool. Go to *Filter>Neural Filters...>Photo Restoration* and use the *Scratch Reduction* slider. You can go overboard on this one.

Auto colorizing

The ability to add color to B&W without human intervention is probably one of the more difficult aspects for an automated filter to handle, since 1) How does it know what color the skin and eyes should be? and 2) How does it know the color of everyday objects? The skin color is inferred by detecting race from facial features, and things like foliage, streets, sidewalks, and stone walls can be recognized and colored accordingly. See *Photoshop's* background building colors in the row below.

Of the two tools tried for this feature, *Photoshop's* is preferred because, unlike *Img2Go* which doesn't allow tweaking, *Photoshop* lets you tweak the automatic job the neural filters come up with, right down to changing the color of a specific object by using the "Focal Points" feature – just click on an object whose color you'd like to change, specify a new color, and then tweak the strength from there. In theory you can also remove the 'giant rainbow Moiré' pattern which seems to permeate all their colorizations by using the filter's Color Artifact Reduction slider, although in my tests it seemed to have no effect.



Left to right – crop from blurry original, Remini processed, GFPAN processed



Left to right – Photoshop 50% Face Restoration, Photoshop at 100%, and Topaz Sharpen AI



Students pose in a group with Gary in China – a crowd of Asians surrounding one white guy, converted to B&W and then colorized. Both *Img2Go* and *Photoshop* handled the skin colors well, although *Img2Go* tended to saturate those a tad. The programs handled blue jeans appropriately, but the other colors were less predictable. Original color, left; *Img2Go* auto colorize, center; *Photoshop* neural filters auto colorize, right.



Scott and Baiba – Colorization programs seem to do a good job of deducing skin color based on facial characteristics. It can also properly guess the color of foliage and stone walls in the background. But clothing? It has to guess what kind of original color can de-saturate and be the same shade as the B&W image it was fed. From the left, the original color shot, Photoshop colorizing from a B&W conversion, Photoshop with the green jumper re-assigned a green color, and Img2Go. Notice Photoshop's tendency to vary the colors within a single article of clothing, something it did in all of the examples.



Ancestors – With these archival images, both Img2Go (center) and Photoshop produced results reminiscent of the time-honored technique of hand painting B&W images using watercolors, paints, and dyes. However Photoshop almost completely missed the bottom right print.



Self-portrait with max Covid beard by Gary, in mono, left. Center, realistic from Img2Go – right, a brave colorizing guess from Photoshop for Mr MacFriedman...



A 1976 Daily Telegraph environmental story shot by David Kilpatrick in original B&W. Photoshop, below, makes it lush in the greens. Img2Go, right, does better but has areas of odd toning.



Are these tools at all useful to the professional image restorer? Milo says yes, to a certain degree: "I've never tried hard to achieve exactness in skin color. Much of the time, the new *Photoshop* colorization tools get a lot of it right if I'm going from b/w to color and I just fix the areas (often ears or a hand down lower) that it fouls up. Remember, I've rarely met these people and the photos are often them at younger ages, so skin changes with age and also by what time of year the photo was taken."

About the tests

I did many further tests and with so many very subtly different outcomes we do not have space to show all of them, or print them large enough for close study.

One of the first files I was sent to try out was David Kilpatrick's industrial landscape shot in black and white in the 1970s. The two programs produced similar results, with *Photoshop* leaning toward more greens and saturation, with surprisingly convincing scrubby ground and building color from *Img2Go*.

The photograph of teenage me at the enlarger shows what happens when an inexperienced photographer relies too much on the micro-prism focusing aid in the center of the image, and shoots wide open at *f*1.4, rendering the shirt in proper focus but not the face.

Could modern technology save this shot? Here two Neural Filters were used – one for Colorize, and one for Photo Restoration which also will attempt to sharpen the face. Of the three tools used for sharpening, *Photoshop* and *Remini* did the most responsible job, whereas *GFPGAN* was a little overzealous in its face and hair sharpening (especially around the eyes).

No sharpening test would be complete without comparing the output with what *Topaz Sharpen AI* does, which has been a popular option for this sort of thing. *Sharpen AI* works on the whole image, not just faces, and its output is similar to that of the others – even though it tried to sharpen the entire image instead of just the faces, there's still something otherworldly about the output, like you know it had been



Original – badly out of focus face



Remini processed – face very well refocused



GFPGAN – best hair detail, good face



Photoshop – a good average, good coloring

processed somehow. I've only included one example, of the father and son. This image has been cropped heavily from the middle of a wider shot so the effects on the eyes and mouths in particular can be seen better, and it also shows how *Topaz* has a much stronger effect on the toddler's eyes than the father's which are darker but enhanced by the other programs and *Photoshop* at 100% Face Restoration.

Other programs not tried included Hitpaw.net because it didn't offer a free or low-cost try-out and Photomyne.com because it relied on scans from a smartphone camera, and the results would have been low-resolution compared to the source material.

Special thanks to Steve Winnie for inspiring this article and helping to do the initial tests.

Our co-founder and Associate Editor now based in Plymouth, Massachusetts, Gary Friedman produces substantial operating guides to digital cameras and a wealth of other advice through his Friedmanarchives.com

Gary is allowed the indulgence of American spelling which your UK editor finds hard not to change even when confronted with 'colorize', as we have a strong US readership. Cameracraft is a bi-lingual magazine for the whole world of photography!





Despite being a small object, wrist watches are deceptively difficult to photograph. They often have highly reflective polished metallic surfaces, numerous circular components that reflect light from all angles and the most important details of the face are again hidden by a highly reflective piece of glass that often has a slight dome shape to it. Despite the initial difficulties, it can be incredibly rewarding to overcome these challenges by taking a logical step-by-step approach and using the following simple techniques.

Before even getting the camera out, there is preparation work to be performed on the watch. Although fingerprints are rarely visible to the naked eye, once shot under studio strobes every tiny mark is visible. Therefore, a thorough rub down with a microfibre cloth, such as a glass and polishing E-cloth, is a great

Taking time: the basics of studio watch photography



Top, the working setup with diffuser cone and camera mounted looking down vertically. Above and right, backgrounds are best created as a separate image and montaged in. With every speck of dust needing removing or retouching...

Ian, UK based and specialising in studio product photography, is a popular instructor in studio set-ups and lighting, digital processing and Photoshop. See:

<https://www.ianknaggs.com>

preparation. Whilst cleaning the watch and strap and for the rest of the shoot, it is imperative to wear gloves so that you don't replace the newly cleaned fingerprints with fresh ones. I find that nitrile gloves are an ideal option as you retain a good level of sensation in your fingertips although had are prone to sweating if using for prolonged periods.

You may not have noticed before, but nearly every watch



photograph has the hands positioned at about 11 minutes past 10 (or 10 minutes to 2) and around 32 seconds. Whilst this may sound a bit odd, there is a logic behind this; the overall position of the 3 hands splits the watch face very nearly symmetrically into thirds whilst also ensuring that the vast majority of manufacturer logos are unobstructed and nestled neatly between the hour and second hands. This usually also leaves the date window clearly visible, if there is one.

To hold the hands in this position you can either pull the crown out slightly which can be moved back into position in post processing, or the battery can be removed to freeze the hands. With the watch cleaned and the hands positioned correctly it just needs to be held in position before starting shooting. Due to the necessary flexibility of the strap, watches rarely hold themselves in a circular position, hence some support is required. The two most popular methods that I use are either a commercially available clear acrylic watch stand

that is often seen holding watches in jewellery shops or suspending the watch on two wires that are stretched across the opening of a large clear plastic box. Both of these methods allow the watch to be lit from behind if necessary which is not possible if it is held on a solid surface.

Once the watch is positioned, the camera is placed on a tripod and macro lens fitted. A focal length of around 100mm on a full or cropped frame sensor is ideal. Whilst the portrait photographers' lighting modifier of choice is probably a softbox, the best modifiers for shooting watches are larger diffusers. These can be either sheets or a cone made of diffusion material. The cone is ideal for products that have curved surfaces as they can give general beautiful smooth gradients over reflective surfaces.

The sides of the cone are lit using strobes with either stripboxes or grids fitted to control the amount and direction of the light. If necessary, black cards and strips can be placed inside of the cone to produce clean and crisp dark



The watch strap can be supported in many different ways when shown. Here, the arrangement of three Hanbury watches is self-supporting. Note the different times set on the watch faces, which keep to the basic rule about the angles of the hands.

Below, a concealed strap support for NY Incridibles on the left – usually a plastic support made for the purpose and used by watch retailers. The second hand here is carefully placed to avoid crossing the dials and coinciding with other hands.

On the right, a soft black bar is used in place of a wrist.



reflections to highlight the glossy reflective watch materials. For a front-on image, the camera is directly in front of the watch face and one of the first problems will be that the face is dark and dull irrespective of how high the strobes are set. This is due to the fact that the camera and lens are being reflected in the watch face, hands and minute markers.

The trick here is to angle the watch face away from the camera very slightly, not perceptible in the

final image but preventing unsightly reflections in the face. The majority of lighting adjustments will be concentrated on controlling and adjusting reflections. Often moving a light by as little as 1cm can have a drastic effect upon the position of reflections. It is also possible to use a polariser on the lens to further control unwanted reflections – this needs to be paired with a sheet of polarising material between the light source and the watch so that cross-polarisation can be used to



remove the unwanted reflections. One last trick is to position black cards and strips around the watch where necessary to create with dark reflections to accentuate the edges of metallic materials. As long as the cards do not cross the outline of the watch, they can be easily removed in post production.

Now that the watch is prepared and positioned, the lights and modifiers are positioned, you can make the exposure. Actually, you will need to capture many exposures

unless you are using a shallow depth of field for artistic effect. This is due to the very shallow depth of field of macro lenses focused at this distance, making focus stacking a necessity to ensure front to back sharpness from the extreme edges of the strap to the front of the watch face.

With thorough preparation and iterative adjusting of lights there is should be minimal work required in post production. Adjustments to contrast and desaturation of silver metal are the most likely steps. However, never, ever underestimate the amount of dust that will be present both on the outside and inside of the watch no matter how meticulously you cleaned it! This results in significant time during post processing cleaning dust and imperfections in the surfaces that are not visible with the naked eye. With the watch edited it can be added to many different styles of background depending upon the look required. So, next time you see an advertising image of a watch, have a careful look at the reflections and think of the dedication and attention to detail – and of course the time – that went into creating the image.

PIVOTING PRO

FIONA MILLINGTON-PIPE

Hello, dear reader... and welcome to my first article.

I write a blog for my website, which contains a bit of trivia and a good dose of chat, but you don't know me. Well, not yet anyway. So, for this piece I thought I'd introduce myself.

Please get yourself a cuppa, glass of wine, maybe a beer or even a scotch – along with some chocolate, always some chocolate and join me as I wax lyrical about my journey from teacher to photographer.



Fi's earlier photography was social, and mainly children from her work as a teacher. She still loves photographing children, people and animals...

It all began in Venice! I first discovered the joy of viewing life through a lens while on holiday in Venice. I couldn't get enough of the architecture, the friezes, and the beautiful surroundings. I used a film camera and I couldn't have been happier.

In my past life as a teacher I got a bit of a reputation for shooting the children. Photography-wise, obviously – and once word spread amongst parents and their friends, I was being asked on a regular basis if I could photograph their children in my spare time.

I decided to launch Fiona Millington Photography in 2013 as a result of these requests. I was still working full-time at a local independent school in Ashby, which meant that initially photography was my 'go-to' place after work.

Weekends, evenings and school holidays became exploring my time with different settings, the effect of light and various subjects that I captured. My children tended to feature a lot, but more and more I ventured out into the countryside to see what I could find.

Anxiety had held me captive on many an occasion, but my camera allowed me to explore the world without panic. It was during this time that I began to notice some aspects of myself re-emerging, parts of myself I feared I had lost. Being behind the lens opened a world of experiences for me, providing a place I didn't fear and that held no boundaries.

Me, a pro photographer?

It was those moments when I started to think of the future and how becoming a professional photographer was something I would give almost anything to become.

I spent the following seven years garnering as much knowledge as I could wrestle into my spare time. Not always an easy task with a full-time job and two small

children. However, early on in those years, I was introduced to Andrew Appleton who volunteered to be my mentor. This wonderful man watched me learn, answered my questions, reflected with me on my work and set me challenges. Sadly, Andrew passed away before I had the chance to tell him that I was following my dream. He was more than my mentor – he was my friend, and I will be forever thankful for that friendship. He believed in me when I didn't even believe in myself.

Fast forward to March 2020 and the world turned upside down with the pandemic and lockdown. The school where I was teaching had closed down and I had stepped into supply teaching as a stop-gap. This turned out to be a bad position to be in owing to the fact I hadn't been there long enough to qualify for furlough. With no job and no furlough, I decided that things had to change.

I knew that I no longer wanted to teach – my children were older, no longer completely reliant on me, and the youngest learned to cook which really did make life easier! This combined to provide the ideal opportunity for me to really think about what I wanted to do next. Stepping away from teaching had been a discussion point so many times but I couldn't believe that I could make photography pay – pay enough for me to justify leaving a career. But suddenly the answer was right there in front of me. I decided to set Fiona Millington-Pipe free after twenty years as a teacher – to be brave and try something that was solely about me, my talent and my vision.

Fiona Millington Photography was suddenly very real and was a real NOW or NEVER moment.

Challenge those voices

Over the years, I captured wonderful moments of real worth celebrating life and laughter amongst my friends, family and clients. Moments

that showed their spirit and their beauty – unarguably demonstrated for all to see. I challenged people's opinions and more often than not, obliterated that voice telling them they weren't good enough.

This element of my work became so important to me because that voice was so loud in my own head. Quietening it for other people allowed it to quieten for me.

There had been a progressive feel to my work, with more referrals than I had anticipated, giving me the confidence to rent premises. It was a scary time, whilst the world seemed to be closing, I felt like I was perched on a cliff edge and at any moment could fall.

Lockdowns, coupled with the ever-looming dark cloud of uncertainty, made me assess my business. I knew I would have to pivot.

And pivot I most certainly did

In the eight years that I had been taking photographs, the majority of my business had been family orientated. But then we'd endured lockdown and the fallout from that was that people wanted to keep going – businesses wanted to re-launch, re-brand and just get back to being seen. That old adage of people buying from people had never rung truer.

I began to promote headshots, which led me into personal branding, where I could show the different strands of businesses. Ranging from a set of headshots to the directors showing their human side, I was capturing the heart and spirit of those companies and making people feel good about themselves at the same time.

I was helping people be seen.

My own premises

Within two years, I took on my own premises. I must have been temporarily insane! I signed the contract in February 2021, when the world was closed and I couldn't trade, and opened my doors two months later.

Having decided to take the business full time, there were obvious concerns regarding little things like how on earth was I going to earn money. I think, looking back, I was a tad blasé about it – only because the nation as a whole were all nail-bitingly worried about money.

Thankfully, I neither had to grovel to the bank manager nor



Companies marketing services on-line now want personnel photographs which go beyond the old headshot galleries and show the personality of their staff. This 'branding' portraiture is a relatively new trend and Fi has embraced it as a prime offering from her new studio business.

My ethos is all about empowering confidence, celebrating family, capturing spirit and togetherness in business. In essence, capturing the extraordinary within.



Ooh Betty's fashion brand photography by Fiona Millington – one of her favourite client portfolios.

sell a kidney or child, (honestly, I'd have gone with the child) because two friends stepped forward. They had recently inherited some money and offered me a loan of 5k, with which I purchased lights and equipment. Then came the bank of mum and dad. My mum has always been a loud advocate of supporting dreams and with their help the studio went from a large empty room to three

distinctive zones – the area with backdrops, the area with the bed and my space for working. It goes without saying that my husband was supportive and cheerlead the loudest – never doubting me.

Moving in day arrived. My husband, two children and I were in the room at 9am and by 5pm we had a full set up – cabinets built, bed built, seven paper backdrop kit on

the wall... it was HARD, but the carrot-like stick of cakes, brownies and cookies from the awesomeness that is the on-site, Bom Bom Patisserie, kept us all going.

I have a photo from the end of that day where we are all curled up, exhausted but happy – knowing that was the day we all made my dream come true. My studio is my happy place. There, I said it and I don't

care how clichéd it is – it is true.

It's a half hour from home, which is slightly further than when I took it on owing to us having moved in with my father-in-law a year ago following a short hospital stay. He went from living alone to suddenly being surrounded by the four of us and our energetic greyhound cross collie, who despite her large size thinks she is a lapdog.

Bizarrely, he loved the noise and company, helped by his and my love of wine, and asked us to stay. We sold our home and have not looked back. The wonderful oldie-world pub across the road is also a win in my opinion.

That distance to work helps me separate my two worlds. In the car, I look forward to my time in the studio and when I leave the studio I look forward to my time with our new family dynamic.

One of the benefits of having my own space is the freedom to work on business, while simultaneously focusing my attention on 'passion' projects that align with my own core values. One such project which combines both is my work with Ooh Betty Clothing. I have been their photographer for about three years now.

Ooh Betty's ethos is centred around their determination to provide beautiful fashion clothing to women of all shapes and sizes. As a slow fashion, sustainable brand making garments to order, Ooh Betty accommodate outside of readily available fashion on the average high street. Body diversity is a subject important to both of us and this is highlighted throughout Ooh Betty's marketing and branding.

As someone who exists in an overweight body, seeing myself in a positive light doesn't always come easy. One of the Ooh Betty models, Kelly is 5ft 4ins and size UK24, which isn't a body shape often seen for marketing and e-comm purposes. However, seeing this body shape and representation used in such a positive light has really helped me to focus on my own journey of self-acceptance and empowerment. This has directly resulted in making me a better photographer.

Another business I have close links with is Zamanis restaurant in Ashby de la Zouch. Zamanis was instrumental in feeding key workers during covid. They couldn't trade



Food photography for Zamani's Restaurant, a business with a commitment to social good.





Natural light and flash in Fiona's new studio, for music business promo portraiture. Below, starting out in technical and commercial photography.

but they could help. Each day they delivered pizzas and food to those who were keeping the country going despite the difficulties they faced themselves. The people of Ashby

rallied round, helping them to fund and deliver food to those who needed it. Zamanis was exactly the type of business that I wanted to work

with – their attitude towards the community and the people around them aligned with my own. I was thrilled when they approached me to photograph their food and

location, but BOY was I nervous. I had done limited food photography in the past, but it was always in the studio and with no pressure.

This time food was brought out directly from the chefs, in an open restaurant and my responsibility to dress the table, ensuring everything was looking absolutely perfect. Despite my fear, I nailed it and provided me with a fabulous dose of confidence to boot!

My business has evolved into a kind of 'general practice' – a kind of all sorts, if you will. I may not niche down to just weddings or babies or families, but I am fanatical that each shoot is its best! Whether that's photographing environmental simulation systems for Weiss-Technik (left), properties and grounds for the National Trust (as second shooter for James Reader – Front Row Productions), fireplaces for a showroom or photographing a seventy-year-old woman for boudoir, I always guarantee my clients will receive the very best from me... and I never fail to deliver.





Face your fears if you want to succeed in a photographic business

Kenny is currently one of the most successful One 2 One Business Consultants and has lectured on both photography and business matters in over 16 countries.
Photography Website:
kennethmartinphotography.com
Training Website:
thestudiadoctor.co.uk

If anyone would like to find out more about Kenny's TCMP program please pop an email to info@kennethmartinphotography.com to arrange a no obligation totally confidential chat!

Fear is one of the biggest stumbling blocks facing the professional photographer and studio owner. Fear is the single most common feeling which holds the professional photographer back from achieving greatness, in business, in the creative photographic process, in personal goals and in simply moving their business to the next level. Fear can disable you, it can paralyse you, it can hold you back in starting a new business, releasing a new concept, entering a competition, changing your working methods or upping your prices. It is a dangerous and potent force but it is one that can be beaten.

Overcoming this fear is not easy. It is a very powerful force, it speaks to you, confuses you, makes you doubt yourself, mocks your ideas and aspirations, laughs in your face and taunts you. It's the instinctive, reactionary side of your brain having a few words in your ear, telling you to not be so stupid to try this, you are going to look crazy and what will other people think when it fails. It's natural – it literally happens hundreds of times a day, decisions need to be made and your brain will react instantaneously usually as a protective tool to stop you making a fool of yourself or hurting yourself. The person who can control these initial thoughts and counter the instantaneous protective reaction with the logical more human side of the brain will have a distinct advantage in life. Fear will always hold you back, if you let it.

Imagine if you will, a situation where you are running late for a flight, you arrive at the desk to be told the gate has closed and you cannot fly, there are two scenarios here: one, your instinctive reactionary side of your brain is triggered, you see red, you shout at the lady behind the desk about the injustice of it and how it's all her fault, it descends into a full blown shouting match, your face is red, your veins popping out your neck, a crowd gathers to watch the show, you eventually give in, shaking, tired, embarrassed and you sit seething, once you calm down a bit you go and try to arrange alternative arrangements.

The logical side of the brain has not kicked in, if it had we could have Scenario 2. Initial reaction is anger,

but you realise that there is nothing you can do about it, the airline is not going to change its mind, there is simply no other option, you take it on the chin, you calmly arrange another flight with the desk attendant, you book into a nearby hotel and have a calm peaceful nights sleep, before catching the first flight in the morning. There is little point in getting upset about something you can not change.

Fear of what other people think! I was once in a judging room where a new judge was sitting next to me, his first day judging, I could see he was nervous, as the prints were passed across in front of the judges the scores were rolling in, the new guy was scoring everything around 75 to 80, playing it safe, good experienced judges will score from 60 to 100, trusting their instincts and hoping to elicit debate. At lunchtime I had a word. His scoring was all about his fear, he was fearful that his fellow judges might mock him if he was wildly off track. I persuaded him to go with his heart and he excelled as a judge, got involved in discussions and really enjoyed the day.

Fear of rejection is another common problem. I know photographers who have never asked for a critique of their work, never went for qualifications and who won't enter competitions for fear of rejection. The secret here is to accept rejection happily, with a smile and learn from the process. It's hard I know but ultimately it will pay dividends. Two years after turning professional I applied for an associate panel with the MPA, only two pictures got a pass and 18 didn't but it was a fantastic learning experience. At the time I thought I knew it all! I never got upset by it, I used it as fuel for my creative fire and two years later I passed as a much better and more informed photographer.

This type of reaction happens all the time. Imagine that your good client, someone who uses you all the time, for years and years, who out of the blue posts a family picture on Facebook taken by another local photographer. Get over it, the client does not belong to you, they have simply had another offer from another studio which they took up. Before you react to this type of thing you must stop and think before

posting something which might damage your business or make you look twisted and bitter. It's done, nothing you can do about it, don't get upset, get on with your day and forget about it, otherwise it will affect your performance.

As professionals we must realise that we can not be affected in a negative way by failures, failures are a part of the growing process, it is better to be in the arena and fail than to be in the car park or in the crowd watching on.

Fear in running a business or in the creative process can manifest itself in many ways. You must believe – if you don't it will likely not happen, a positive attitude goes a long way to success.

I have worked with many studios who have a fear of increasing prices and a even bigger fear of telling the clients the prices. This is in fact a pretty fundamental part of running a successful photographic business. If you don't believe in your own pricing your client never will: if you state them loud and proud, the clients will simply trust you. Sometimes I see studio owners who are scared to pick up the phone to make a contact, arrange a joint promotion. This is another fear of rejection situation. I always say what's the worst thing, the absolute worst thing that could happen? Yup, they say no! One thing I can say with 100% certainty – if you don't ask you will never get! Overcome that fear and prosper. Fear of change is a huge one, changing products, procedures, software, workflow will in-still a feeling of panic, face the fears and just do it.

The fear of *change* is one thing I have to help my studio clients overcome. As professionals we should understand that we will never sit still – we need to change constantly and adapt to markets. This is what sets apart good pros from amateurs, our livelihoods depend on it, if we are not successful we wither and die. Look at any top sportsman in the world. In pretty much any discipline, tennis, golf, athletics, cycling and more they will all have coaches. That's what I do for photographers..

Face your many fears, control your emotions, keep a positive outlook and you will increase your chances of success..



LENSES

Tamron 50-400mm f4.5-6.3 Di III VC VXD

Going from 50mm all the way to long telephoto is not an entirely new thing though past lenses in this class have gone further to 500mm and been substantially larger and heavier than Tamron's new 50-400mm, appearing first for Sony E-mount mirrorless. A sensible $f4.5$ at the short end has somehow enabled this lens to have the same 67mm filter thread as it stabilimates, and $f6.3$ at the long end is just as fast as most in this class.

Unlike older lenses approaching this specification, the new Tamron can focus down to 1.5m at 400mm and give a quarter life size image. As you zoom back towards 50mm, the closest focus improves even more. However, where the close focus at 400mm is a really clean image you can trust wide open, the 50mm 'macro' half life-size is not unlike some other Tamron designs in sacrificing outer field image quality unless stopped well down (a curvature of field compromise). Also, while a 25cm minimum distance at 50mm seems generous

more than 20cm of that is taken up by the length of the lens and the body register, without its supplied bayonet hood. The clearance is about 50mm from the fairly large front rim. Sony's 50mm $f2.8$ FE design places the subject 88mm from the front rim at 1:2. There are consequences including cast shadows from a close and physically large lens, but some benefits if you don't have to kneel or crouch as low for ground-level subjects. Above all, having this bonus close focus over the full zoom range means that at intermediate settings like 100mm or 200mm you rarely find AF out of range when you frame close.

For those who don't need to get very close, but cover sports from the side lines, being able to rack back rapidly to 50mm instead of the typical 70 or 100mm of long zooms combines with the focus range to mean players can be caught in action even when they stray too close to the camera. Some will find the 50-400mm eliminates the need to work with two cameras.

As for the potential for close-ups at 400mm, I have to admit that this lens was hardly ever off the long end of its range. It's good to be able to frame up against a highly selective narrow angle of background detail. When reviewing my shots, far too many were actually at 400mm and it wasn't because the zoom slips when not locked at 50mm. It only does that reluctantly. Finding it at 400mm

came down, mostly, to having shot with it at 400mm and not returned it to 50mm. Even at its full extension it's not a cumbersome lens to carry and a near 600g difference in weight between this and the big 150-500mm made it far more comfortable for all-day use shoulder or neck slung. Yet the 400mm aperture of $f6.3$ is faster than the 150-500mm at $f6.7$. It falls to $f6.3$ from 200mm onwards, but this is typical of long range zooms. What counts is that this lens when used



Full aperture subject tracking while zooming worked well, though this location has a habit of diverting autofocus on to the white railings.



Wide open at 400mm cold winter air allows extreme detail to be seen – down to single fruit-tree wires on the castle wall, left. That's resolving 3mm thick wire at 1.6km...



A full aperture Animal Eye AF natural light shot at 400mm shows the sharpness and focus accuracy as well as the scale.

wide open, at any focal length, has a very high standard of resolution and contrast across the full frame and it almost doesn't matter how much you zoom in, it stays sharp. This is not a lens where using the longest setting means losing the edge – a 400mm shot at $f6.3$ is very much as sharp as a 50mm shot at $f4.5$. If you shoot with a high ISO and aperture priority to get the fastest shutter

speed, and set $f4.5$ when you are at 50mm, the lens will always use full aperture.

It is not a basic lens, and has a full level of custom control via the Tamron Lens Utility and its USB connector. Functions can be assigned such as changing the focus ring to be an aperture ring, changing the resistance of the focus-by-wire action, setting focus limiter

range and for movies or presets like 'goalmouth' or a particular fence in a race the custom button can be set to move between, or to, focus points. It's very well weather sealed and uses the premium VXD linear AF motor, positioning it as a semi-pro rather than consumer lens. At £1,249 it's £150 more than the excellent 150-500mm, and that alone should give you an idea of Tamron's ambitions for the lens. It is a compelling alternative to the camera makers' 70-400mm or 100-400mm lenses which are often bigger and heavier than its 183.4mm and 1155g. – DK



The custom button and custom switch (above left), thanks to the USB port (right) gives the lens unique control potential for stills and video.



See: <https://www.tamron.co.uk>

CAMERAS

Sony A7R V

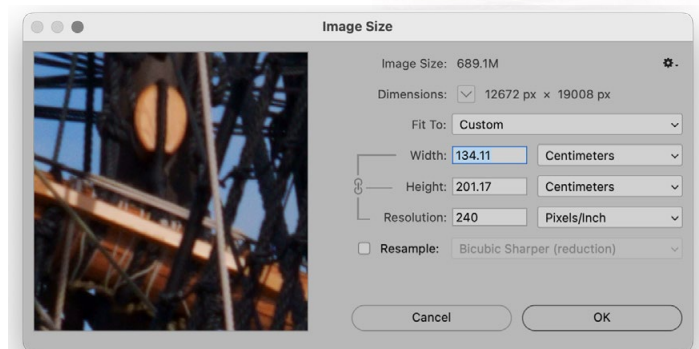
The 61 megapixel, full-frame Sony A7RV is probably one of the most complex cameras Sony has ever produced (if you don't count their professional video cameras, that is). The A7RV combines the resolution of its predecessor, the A7RIV, with the new processor/menu system of the A1, adds new subject recognition targets, a handful of small features, and surpasses their previous cameras with innovation in the image stabilization department.

This camera shouldn't be dismissed as being an incremental upgrade just because they just uses the same sensor as the A7RIV. There's actually much more. The A7RV shoots 8K video, which generates a LOT of heat. In order to be able to shoot 8K video for the maximum 30 minutes they attached a large and heavy heat sink to that sensor – a sensor that moves to counteract unsteady hands with the Steadyshot feature. Ever try to move a large mass quickly and with precision? Sony was able to get the In-Body Image Stabilization (IBIS) system to work properly with that extra mass on the back. Not only that, but they increased the effectiveness of the IBIS down to 8 stops' worth! The engineering on this camera is amazing. Also amazing is the camera's ability to autofocus and track subjects while stopped down, something that's hard to do yet Sony's been doing it for years.

In this new model, Sony kept the button layout and ergonomics of the A7IV, adding only a new twist-and-flip rear display (not the same as the A7IV) that's almost as good as the one gracing their now-discontinued A-mount cameras. The touch screen feature now lets you take the picture by touching the subject you wish to focus on, and there's even a sensitivity feature for when you're using gloves. So this high-end camera can be used just like your low-end smartphone. Another bonus compared to the A7IV is the inclusion of a flash sync socket, as on the A7RIV. From the A7IV, it gains Large, Medium and Small raw files – very useful when the starting point is 61MP.



The articulated rear screen is the best yet on a Sony mirrorless, and nearly as good as the A-mount A99II.



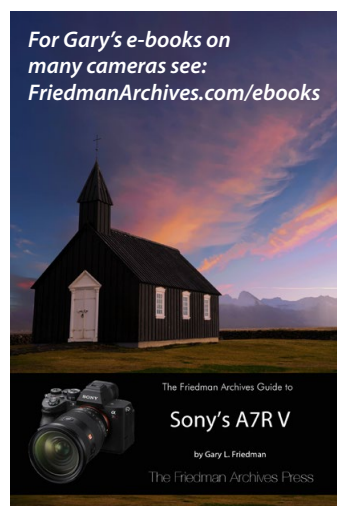
See facing page – although the result requires post-processing from 16 raw captures, the A7RV can produce a hand-held shot large enough for a two metre long print at standard 240dpi inkjet resolution.

For half the price of Sony's flagship A1 you forgo only a handful of capabilities: there's no near-global, blackout-free sensor, you can't shoot at 30 fps (10 is the max), and you can only shoot 8K video for 30 minutes (the A1 goes for an hour without overheating). Only an extreme sports photographer will miss those capabilities. But you don't lose out on the AF Tracking abilities; these are just as good as the A1, and you have 11 more megapixels to boot.

This camera has so many features that it took 800 pages to explain every option and feature in my latest book.

And while writing this book I discovered several characteristics and features, some good and some

bad, that you just won't find in your average online review. So here are some noteworthy features worth describing that you probably won't read about anywhere else.



Handheld Pixel-Shift

With Sony's earlier pixel-shift features, you had to put your camera onto a rock-solid tripod, and the camera takes 16 images with the sensor shifting one-quarter pixel in each direction. The 16 images are then combined on your computer later on, resulting in a 240 MP image (!). The new version of pixel shifting doesn't actually pixel shift at all, borrowing instead techniques that smartphones and the Pentax K1-II used: using the same pitch, yaw and roll sensors needed for in-body image stabilization, the camera's relative positions are recorded in each .ARW file. This information is used by the *Imaging Edge Viewer* computer software to line up the images when merging them into the final image.

I tried this feature handheld a couple of times; one with the A7RV and then the same handheld test using the A7RIV. The images below show the differences, along with a 100% crop of the merged image. Not bad for a 50mm lens!

Subject Recognition

This has evolved to "The camera can be configured to automatically focus on the eye of a human, animal, bird, insect, car/train, and even airplane". In the case of Animal, Bird, or insect, you can also choose specific parts such as the eyes, eyes and head, or eye head and body. And then you can specify further how quickly the camera tries to re-focus should it lose track of its subject (among many other parameters). Quite advanced, and understanding all of the tweakable parameters can be mind-numbing. Fortunately, the factory default values to do the job well.

The biggest disappointment was the new **Focus Bracket** feature, which is used to achieve maximum depth-of-field (beyond what is normally possible using small f-stops) by taking several images (specified by the user), each focused at a slightly different distance (also specified by the user), and then merging the sharp parts of the all the images on your computer. My biggest complaint about this

feature is that there's absolutely no guidance or clues provided for how to set these values. What's an appropriate Step Width? How many shots are needed? Plus, the Step Width varies with lens/focal length/aperture used, making it difficult to publish recommendations. Bracketing the focus manually is my recommendation.

Other small feature additions include:

- You can specify a BULB mode duration, anywhere from 1 to 900 seconds

- Full-time Direct Manual Focus, where it's ALWAYS in Manual Focus mode unless you press the shutter release button halfway

- You can actually trim video clips before sending them to your smartphone (but the method is clumsy and inexact)

- +/- 5 EV on the exposure compensation dial (not just the menu). The Live View screen is programmed to never show an all-white or all-black screen, as well.

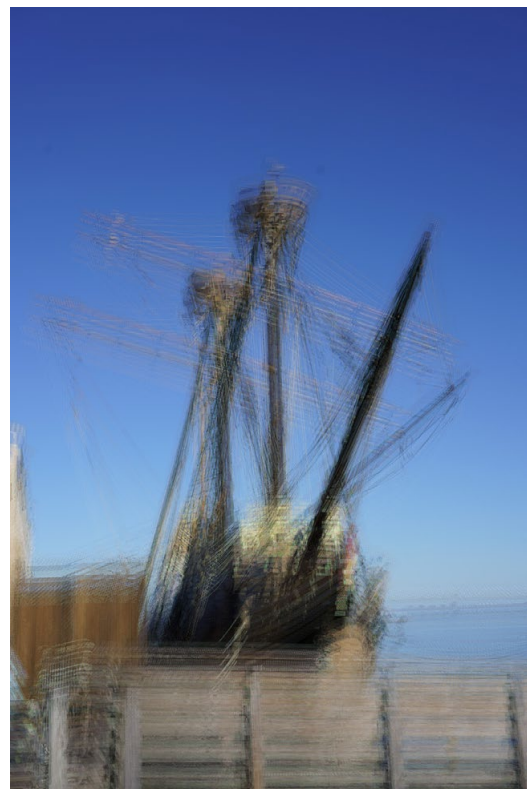
- A self-timer function for video (a feature not available in a menu; you have to assign it to a button first)

- The Anti-Flicker TV scan feature helps you to avoid banding when shooting under certain types of light by automatically analyzing the light's frequency. The camera chooses a shutter speed that will minimize the likelihood of an interference pattern developing

Finally, like the A7IV the camera can shoot HEIF files natively (.HIF). These are smaller and have greater dynamic range than .JPG files (and can also encapsulate video too). The downside? Many image processing programs, including Windows versions from Adobe, still don't know how to open them even though the Mac versions can (they default to opening in Preview, so change the filetype association to use them directly in Bridge and Lightroom). For Windows you have to convert them manually to 16-bit TIFFs using Sony's software first.

At the end of the day, probably the best reason to own a camera this capable and this refined is it will help you land more jobs when you claim "I shoot with a 61 MP camera!"

Yes, clients really respond to that...



Hand-held pixel shift shooting 244 megapixels, above left the full shot; above right, the same using the A7RIV pixel shift hand-held shows the differently positioned multiple images which the Sony Imaging Edge program can assemble into a single sharp 2X scale (4X area) .DNG. Below: 300dpi (print repro resolution) section of the file.



– Gary Friedman



A new trick for old dogs – the “I’m Back” digital back for 35mm film SLRs, a concept which has landed almost a quarter of a century after it was first attempted



From working in a central London studio to marketing manager at Paterson and full time camera dealer, Tim Goldsmith is now a self-employed photographic auction consultant. He is Chairman of the Photographic Collectors Club of Great Britain (PCCGB) and a long-time member the Stereoscopic Society. You can reach him at info@cameravalues.com or on Facebook as Monark Cameras <https://www.monarkcameras.com>

I guess it's all my own fault (either that or I'm a undiagnosed masochist) but, just like I reported in my last article, I have been spending way too much time recently playing with a camera and not getting any decent results. It all started nearly four years ago when an interesting Kickstarter project called 'I'm Back' popped up in my Facebook feed...

Trying to get a film camera to shoot digital has been attempted before. If I think back to the late 1990s, US company ImageK announced 'Silicon Film', which looked a bit like half of a 126 film cartridge with a tiny (1.3mp) sensor built in. The unit dropped in place of the film cassette but was only compatible with a handful of top-end film cameras. Due to the multiple variations in film chambers on different makes of cameras, and the low resolution, the product was doomed to failure and never made it to market. Hopes were raised again in 2005 when Leica launched a 10mb Digital Module for their R8 and R9 film cameras, but it was expensive and came to the market just when DSLRs were taking off.



To fit the I'm Back to this Nikon, a Universal carrier was used. This allows the position to be adjusted.



So the aforementioned Kickstarter campaign, an attachment that would allow you to convert just about any 35mm film SLR with a removable back to shoot digital, sounded almost too good to be true. Brilliant, I thought, just as people are using vintage lenses on modern digital cameras, now I can use my vintage cameras to shoot digital – and I have lots to choose from. I hesitated for a while but with Kickstarter campaigns you only have to initially pledge your money to the project, and are only charged if their target has been reached and the project goes ahead. So I pledged my 422 Swiss Francs (around £360) and waited for my 'I'm Back' digital set. For that price I ordered the digital back with a Universal holder, plus two other dedicated holders for specific SLR makes.

Time passed and there were numerous up-dates from 'I'm Back', sometimes just a few lines explaining a small problem and how they were going to solve it, other times videos of prototyping and their progress so far. With each up-date the delivery time was pushed back. Then covid hit, and everything stopped, not least because production and sampling took place in China. Eventually, late in 2022, things had returned (almost) to normal and the finished product was finally ready to ship. My set arrived in mid-January this year and obviously I was eager to test it.

I don't think I have ever so eagerly awaited a delivery, nor been so frustrated once it had arrived. As with most things digital, the first step is to charge the battery, but this was easier said than done. Firstly the battery was such a tight fit in the rear compartment, and there was no "spring-loaded" system for its easy removal, that I had to use a pair of tweezers to get it out. I added a piece of tape to the end of the battery making a little tab, which fixed the problem. Next, the charger. The mains plug supplied was an American flat-pin design but it came with a 2-pin "shaver" adapter so it could be fitted into a UK 3-pin plug. The problem was that both parts were so loose, and the Sony type battery so heavy, that it would not charge. By some miracle I managed to find the correct Sony charger in my digital cupboard and set it to charge.

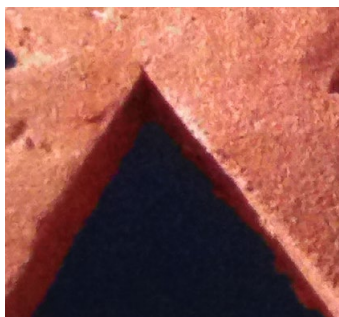
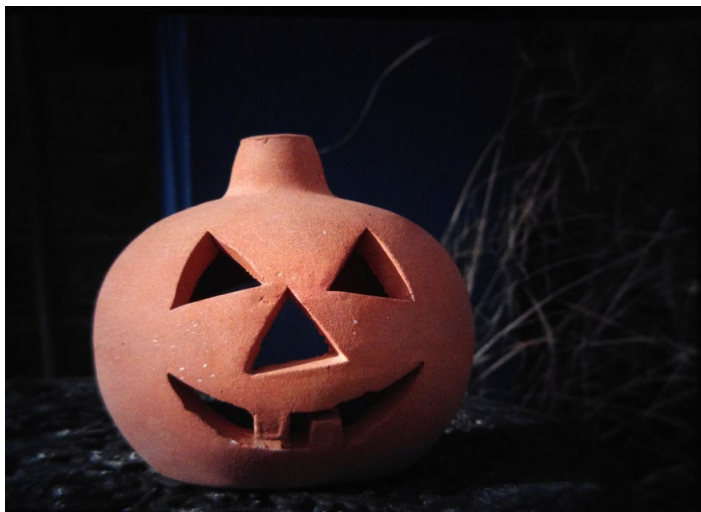
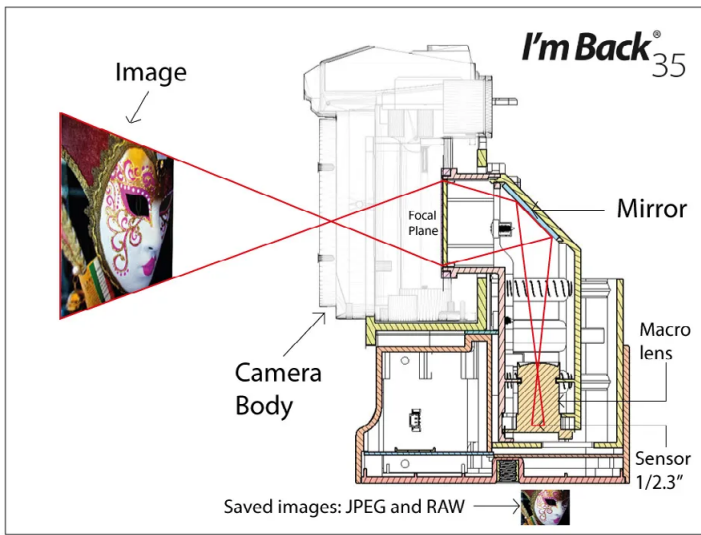


A relay lens system and small sensor was used inside the Nikon/Fujix E2 series in the mid-1990s. The I'm Back design uses, instead, a physical focusing screen re-photographed via a mirror and fixed 4.3mm macro lens to the 2/3rd" sensor.



Above: the I'm Back digital back assembly, without its camera adaptors, as delivered.

The instruction sheet that came with the back was basic, to say the least. In essence, with the back of the camera removed, you fit the camera on to the dedicated holder, which is actually quite compact. As I was going to be trying several different makes of camera I decided to use the bulkier Universal back which was a little more fiddly to fit. However, the clever twin adjustable



A test shot JPEG, 5268 x 3804 pixels (almost 20MP) and on the left a 300dpi section of the shot. The JPEG quality is not very high, but the module is able to record raw files too and more tests are needed to assess its functions and capability.

rails allowed me to align the fixing point with the tripod mount of the camera. Next you fit the camera and holder combination to the digital back, switch on and, theoretically, you are ready to start shooting.

This is what is supposed to happen. If using a camera with auto exposure, choose A in the exposure menu or, if using a camera with manual exposure, set the menu to M. Now, simply press the OK button on the digital back and, within 2 seconds, fire the shutter and wind the camera on. If possible, use a camera that allows for continuous shooting after the frame counter reaches 36, or you may have to remove the whole unit to reset the counter. The back takes a second or two to write the file to the micro SD



Above: the dedicated carrier for this Canon A-1 body.

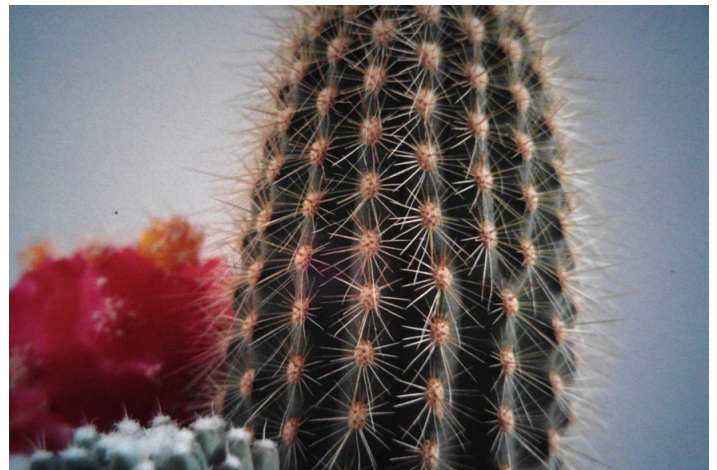
card and you are ready for the next shot. To view your pictures press the "play" button on the touchscreen.

But what I have found actually happens is that after you set A or M in the menu and take your picture, you often have to press play multiple times to get the touchscreen to display the image, which 95% of the time is either totally, or partially black. Then, if I change the exposure on the camera to compensate and take another picture, I find the menu has stayed on playback. So, two presses on the touchscreen are needed, one to return to a sub-menu and another to choose the camera mode, and try again. After repeating this many dozens of times I might occasionally get an image. If I can see it is under- or over-exposed, I adjust the aperture very slightly and often get a totally black image again! Sometimes half or slightly less of the image is totally black (like with out of sync flash photographs) but mostly, all I get is frustrated. *Editor's Note: this probably really is a sync or capture-triggering issue as this is not a 'relay lens' based back, so optical occlusion which I suggested when you first encountered the problem can not occur.*

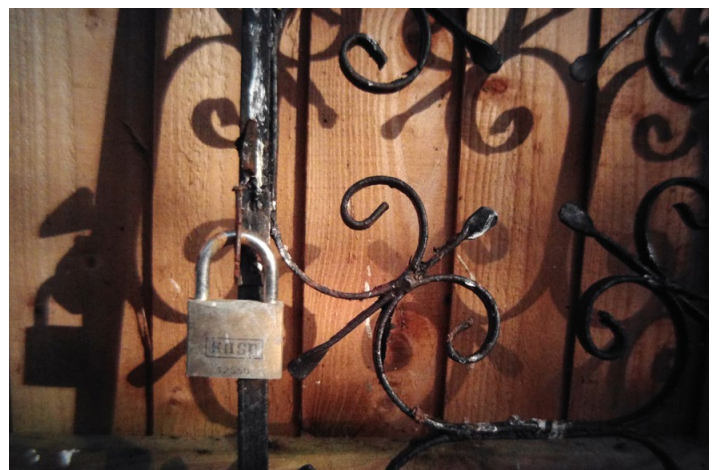
This attachment promised so much, but only just managed to deliver. One of the reasons I persevered with the system for so long was the fast replies myself and other users with problems received via the dedicated 'I'm Back' Facebook group. Other companies please take note. With an imminent print deadline, I decided to have one last go and I think I have just about got there. With plenty of trial and error, I managed to get a batch of acceptable images.

I still have several functions to investigate as 'I'm Back' features Live View, whereby you set the camera shutter to stay open, focus and adjust the exposure, then press the OK button to record an image. It is also WiFi enabled and you can use an iPhone as a remote control and Live View monitor. There are also several dedicated modes, including long exposure, ideal for recording car light trails at night, as well as burst, video recording (sadly, not HD) slow motion video and even a time-lapse mode. 'I'm Back' also have a medium format version but I think I will practice on getting a decent still image on a 35mm camera first.

See: <https://www.imback.eu>



Test JPEGs from the digital back.



After the end of each year's *Image of the Month* January to October season, the judges' scoring of all eligible winners is augmented by further deliberations including more personal voting by the judging panel and the membership. As well as aggregated scores which determine the photographers of the year, highest individual image ratings produce photographs of the year. At the early February awards dinner there are also plaudits for dozens of entrants who have achieved the benchmarks of The Photographer's Bar, within their specialisations and also over time. The whole contest is known as Photographer of the Year but there are many laurels to be gathered along with superb final framed prints given by One Vision Imaging. Many awards carry other valuable prizes, given this year by Click



Clare Perry won the UK Photographer of the Year title with an Epson SC-P900 prize worth over £1,000 – and also the Newborn and Baby Photographer of the Year. **Katie Brockman** from the USA won the overall titles of both All-Round Photographer of the Year (highest combined score in any two sections), and International Photographer of the Year, as well as the Pets and Natural World titles, collecting prizes of both £1,100 worth of backgrounds from Click Props and a Loupedeck editing console. *Racoons, below, by Katie.*

Props, Datacolor, InFocus Insurance, Digitalab, GraphiStudio, Cewe, Epson and Loupedeck. The awards book was produced by Loxley Colour. The judges for 2022 were Charlotte Bellamy, Jo Bradley, Heather Burns, Lesley Chalmers, Saraya Cortaville, Claire Elliott, Panikos Hajistilly, Lynne Harper, Gary Hill, Rob Hill, Davis Islip, Scott Johnson, Mark Lynham, Gordon McGowan, Gavin Prest and Hamish Scott-Brown – assessing over 13,000 entries. The dinner was hosted by Guild directors Steve and Lesley Thirsk at the Hilton Etruria hotel in Stoke-on-Trent. Special awards were made to photographers and mentors Claire Elliot and Charlotte Bellamy, Jeremy Price of GraphiStudio, Calum Thomson of Digitalab and to Christopher James Hall for his *Emmaus Journey* book published in 2022.





Above – the winner of the Pictorial Landscape Image of the Year category, by **Chris Chambers**. This also gained the popular vote, becoming the Members' Choice Image of the Year. Below – winning the Pet category Image of the Year, this character captured by **Lorraine Lucas** also caught the judging panel's eyes and became the Judges' Choice photograph of 2022, and very much the signature image for the awards.







Top left – the *Wedding Image of the Year* from the ever-original **Chris Chambers**, who also won *Wedding Photographer of the Year*. Bottom left – the *Avant Garde and Contemporary Portraiture Image of the Year* by the equally original (and patient?) **Sarah Wilkes**. Above – getting out of the studio paid off for **Ela Drozynska** with the *Baby and Toddlers Image of the Year*. Below – *Classical Portraiture Image of the Year* with engaging eye contact, from **Millissa Forbes**.





Above – the charmingly natural outdoor winner of the Children’s Portraiture Image of the Year from **Eva White**. Above right – **Ian Knaggs** cut through to win Commercial Image of the Year. Right, bleeding hearts gained the Flora and Insect Image of the Year title for **Gaile Gray**. Below, the Urban Image of the Year from **Morag Forbes**, who entered many examples experimenting with multiple exposure overlays.





Above – Cameracraft contributor **Jayne Bond** snared the Nature and Wildlife Image of the Year award with the all-round vision and hearing of an alert hare.

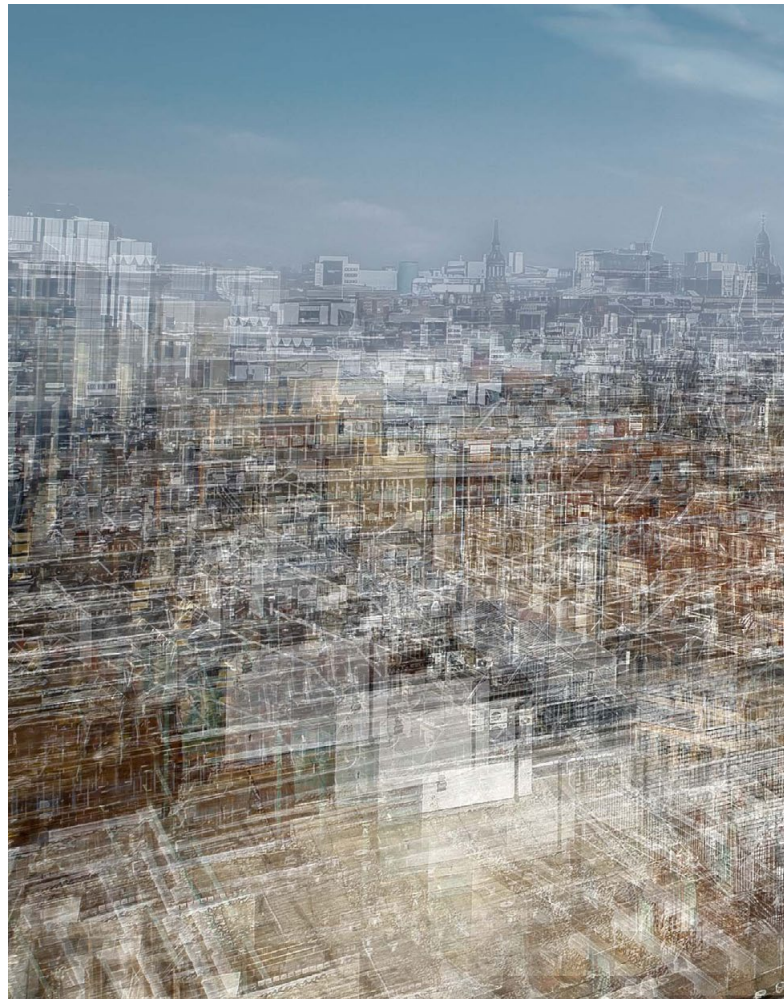
Right – from the high scoring body of work from the People Photographer of the Year, **Magdalena Bartnicka**. The photographer of the year titles are based on overall scores in the category and are separate from the Image of the Year winners. Below – selected from the entries by the Open Category Photographer of the Year, **Simon Newbury**.





Above – **Sharon Bolt** won the Equine Image of the Year with the evocative action pastoral above.

Left – **Anneka Lewis** secured the Newborn Image of the Year title with her original ethnic portrait study, left.





Above – the Birds category is very popular and in some ways predictable, but this Image of the Year contrasts with expectations. It's a flowing freehand impression of the flight of gulls created by **Judith White**.

Below – that signature style from **Morag Forbes** earned her the Creative and Digital Image of the Year for the juddering city panorama below.





Above – **Ryan Hutton** won the Events, Sport and Action Image of the Year with this RNLi lifeboat launching across swelling waves.
Below – the Founders' Cup is given in memory to the Guild's progenitors, Ian Gee and Roy Doorbar, for a themed three image panel and is restricted to Registered and Qualified Guild members who have not previously won any regional, national, or international photography competitions run by photographic bodies (such as the 'Guild's Image of the Year or Photographer of the Year titles). It went to **Sarah Dowdall** for her Cherry Crowned Mangabey triptych.



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The Guild's website [photoguild.co.uk](https://www.photoguild.co.uk) has full information of the benefits of joining and links to all the activities an services offered. [photohubs.co.uk](https://www.photohubs.co.uk) is the event-staging arm of the Guild.

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OVER & OUT!

Tom Hill has been putting up 365 images using Facebook likes to rank the Top 40. We've picked one here to cover our focus on Time & Motion... getting the Andrew and Fergie wedding shots from London to Paris when minutes counted.



Nowadays Tom is a business copywriter providing content and images for international clients. See Tom's website www.bigfrogsmallpond.co.uk and LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/tomhill63

After returning to the UK in 1986 from working as a photographer on Caribbean cruise ships, having been a recent photography student of Blackpool and the Fylde college, I spent that summer despatch riding motorbikes across London.

I sometimes photographed my fellow despatch riders, purely for posterity, as shown here. This was before the days of email and even fax machines. Those latter devices soon killed the motorbike and bicycle courier business stone dead – with all the finality of a cement truck pulling out in front of a motorbike howling down Fulham Broadway.

We all know that modern techniques of image transfer have moved from being written on to magnetic caches like data sticks, then subsequently burned to optical media such as DVD. Either of these two types of physical file storage would then be placed into a jiffy bag and sent to the recipient by motorbike courier, or, if there was no particular hurry, by the good old Royal Mail. Of course, since then, all file transfer has become digital. Files that would have been considered enormous a decade ago are now routinely sent internationally via *WeTransfer* or *Dropbox* over the internet within seconds.

On the wedding day of Prince Andrew to Sarah Ferguson, on July 23rd, 1986, I was given a fascinating assignment by my courier company. They knew I was a photographer, so assigned me to work as the designated despatch rider to a French pap working for *Paris Match* magazine and some other Gallic publications. The fact that I happened to be near-fluent in French was a big plus to me bagging the assignment.

My job was to sit next to the snapper, drop his shot rolls of film into my satchel and wait until he had exposed three or four rolls of Ektachrome. Then I howled over from Westminster Abbey to the once-famous pro-lab Joe's Basement on Wardour Street, which was only about one and a half



Self-portrait on my motorcycle, left – above, despatch rider colleague, London, 1986/87.

miles distant. I'd hand over the latent images, then immediately blast back over to the wedding venue and repeat. At one point, when I told the guy (in French) that I had a photography qualification – and I was very accustomed to exposing and processing emulsion, had done some press work myself for *Time Out* magazine – he even trusted me to rewind his shot

35mm cassettes and load new ones into the Nikon camera bodies that he passed to me whilst hose-piping everything he saw with a motor-drive.

After the wedding ceremony was over, I gave the snapper a helmetless 'backy' on the pillion to Joe's Basement. Every picture editor from the world's press seemed to be there. They started a fascinating live auction

over landline phones and between each other for various frames of unmounted slides over a light-box table the size of Winston Churchill's war room Battle of Britain map. Inevitably, the auction process went on longer than anyone expected.

After what seemed like a frantic hustle of contracts for thousands of pounds per original E6 slide, I was then given the job of safely delivering the client's original transparencies to Heathrow onto a particular flight for Paris. I guess wired colour drum-scans in those days weren't of sufficient quality for the glossy magazines, they needed the original media.

The unmounted 35mm trannies were put into a jiffy bag in their acetate sleeves. I had to sign for the envelope, then cane it over to Heathrow double ASAP to drop off the film at the airside courier desk to catch a particular flight. Such urgent air-courier jobs in those days were assigned to flight crew in their carry-on bags.

I remember thinking that I had only about 25 minutes to get to the desk before the flight closed. Heathrow to Wardour Street is about 17 miles, most of it along the A4 then the M4. This would normally have been impossible, even on a motorcycle, but the royal wedding had caused the authorities to close many arterial routes in Central London, to enable emergency vehicles rapid access to the city centre.

As I red-lined the twin overhead cam rice-burner engine of my ratty old Suzuki GS550 in every gear along the Cromwell Road, I had never seen such an absence of traffic. The blacktop was almost empty from Knightsbridge to Chiswick, then the M4 out to Heathrow was similarly almost deserted.

I made that 17-mile trip a from Wardour Street in around 16 minutes, that's averaging around 65mph across central London. I remember doing about 90mph along the A501 Euston Road underpass, then I was topping over a ton-ten along the subsequent M4 stretch of the route.

On arrival at the airport, I ran into the courier desk, put the envelope on

the table, insisted on a timed rubber stamp, then got on the two-way radio and 'called clear' to the despatch company. In those days there was that strict radio protocol: each spoken sentence was ended with 'OVER' as you let go of the mike button, then 'OVER AND OUT' when the conversation was ended.

My call sign was simply numerical, I was known as '74':

"Yeah, 74 here. Package from Wardour Street – Whisky One F Foxtrot [the phonetic term for the postcode W1F] to LHR Heathrow courier desk. Package for Paris signed for and received safe. Over and out."

When I returned to Wardour Street, I was slapped on the back by one picture editor, who subsequently informed me that the transparencies were on the desk in Paris around two hours later. Then me, him and my French snapper friend all went to the nearest boozier. I didn't put my hand on my wallet all night. Leaving the bike parked down an alley somewhere in Soho, I took the tube home, very drunk and happy. I took the next day off.



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