

DIGIT

Autumn 2004

From the Chairman

Welcome to the Autumn Issue of DIGIT. Nearly three hundred members of the Group (that's about a third of you) met at Benn Hall Rugby on Remembrance Sunday to enjoy the 'Spectacular'. This is the sixth occasion that we have organised such an event. We were very pleased that so many of you thought it worthwhile to come along and enjoy the day.

There were presentations by manufacturers as well as trade stands, that had been organised on our behalf by Jessops, to whom we express our thanks. Our two speakers, Ian Bateman and Steve Caplin each gave two, very well received lecture/demonstrations. We also had the usual members competition, the standard of which made the voting for the winner, a really difficult, but welcome, exercise.

The draw, with prizes donated by our trade stands, seemed to favour the antipodeans-all the luck of the draw!

We have been discussing other National days for the Group. If you have any suggestions about venues and timing then we would be delighted to hear from you. We would also be delighted to hear from you if you have gained a 'digital distinction'. On Sunday 19th June we are organising a Digital Celebration Day at Smethwick. The meeting will be open to all and we hope to feature the work of members who have gained a Distinction by the digital route and should include prints, CD and AV presentations. We also hope to organise lectures and still life studio sessions. The Smethwick club house is well equipped and will be able to offer refreshments. Access is very good too with the M6 nearby. Further details will be available nearer the date and we shall be publicising the event by all the usual outlets, including the DIG website.

So if you have gained a distinction via the CD route, or as digital prints and would like to take part in the day, will you please let us know. You should contact either **Glenys Taylor** or **John Long** via email - their addresses are on the back cover of this edition.

We are also planning an edition of DIGIT with a special emphasis on Distinctions. The same request therefore applies here. If you have gained a Distinction by the digital route, will you please contact **Jim Buckley**-whose address is also on the back cover. I would like to repeat here, my thanks to your committee, without whom, none of this would happen. Please give them your support.

From the Chairman

Geoffrey Carver has decided not to continue as editor and I would like to thank him for the work he has done for DIGIT and also to thank Jim Buckley for taking on the editorship starting with the next issue.

The editor's rant

If you missed meeting the team at Rugby, then I'm sorry-we had an excellent day. Stimulating lectures, helpful trade stands, a members' competition and a dazzling draw. I feel like ranting because my ticket missed the prize of a copy of Photoshop CS by just one number. We shall be back in Rugby at the same time next year, so do come along and enjoy the day.

There was a wide range of digital cameras on view, and they are getting better all the time. Nevertheless, on my way home, I read a *New Scientist* article that claimed "In Japan, digital cameras are already dying out in favour of cellphones with built-in cameras". Perhaps we should be organising a virtual 3G Group meeting.

On the four pages of the centre fold you will find 'The French Connection' a selection of prints I made at the judging of the Annual Exhibition in Smethwick. These have been exhibited recently as Invité d'honneur at Mois de la Photographie in Cherbourg. They were extremely well received by the organising committee, the Regional Press and members of the public.

In the text of this edition we are trying to reflect the move to all-digital photography. We don't claim this as new and earth breaking since, as Graham Whistler's article shows, professional practice has been fully digitised for some while. It is now that the last link, the affordable high-quality digital camera is available for amateur use, that we shall see the effective end of film and wet chemical processing.

I spent some time encouraging members I met at Rugby to share their experiences in print with you. I am very grateful for their ready cooperation. Please think about being a contributor to DIGIT. Have you produced some work that makes you feel pleased, even proud? Then please share it with the wider membership. Writing an article and sending a pictures is easy and help is freely available.

NIKON DIGITAL SLR

Graham Whistler

The author relates his experiences of making the transition from film to digital cameras

I have been using Nikon SLR cameras since the 1960s partly in my work as an advertising and commercial photographer but mostly for my personal landscape B&W images. However, much of my work requires very high quality reproduction so my main working tools had been Hasselblad and Sinar 4x5 up until five years ago when Nikon produced their first digital SLR the D1 and my life changed forever!

I had been using Photoshop for most of the 1990s (using high end drum scans from my 120 and 4x5 colour transparencies) so I was very keen to get a digital camera. The early Kodak conversions using Nikon F5 Body cost £14,000. I hired one to try but was not that impressed with the results and even less happy with the price! When the **Nikon D1** came out in the autumn 1999 at about £4000.00 I was at once impressed and followed the early reviews with growing interest. (£4000 might sound like a lot of money but at that time I was spending £10,000.00 a year on film and processing and digital cameras are free of this.) I soon decided I had to have one...

First impressions were that it handled just like my Nikon F5; it had the same auto focus system and well tried Matrix Metering. Put in the 128mb Flash Card (in those early days costing over £300 each!), a quick set-up in the studio, and flash! Moment's later an image appeared on the LCD monitor on the back of the camera. It was a bit dark, so I turned up the studio flash by ½ a stop, flash again: and this time it was spot on. All this in moments compared with waiting for one and a half minutes for a Polaroid to develop. Images in the computer looked excellent and the first A4 prints out of my Epson Printer looked very good indeed, sharp with good colour and no grain. I then took my time to test the new camera shot for shot against the F5 (100 ISO Kodak EPS Transparency converted to digital by top quality drum scans) The results proved to me beyond any doubt that the 2.74-megapixel CCD in the D1 set at 200 ISO was quite a bit sharper than the scanned images from the F5. Blow-ups to 16 x 20 INS confirmed this and were shown to several people including some clients. Everybody remarked on the clear colour, sharpness of image and, above all, the lack of grain from the D1 pictures!!

The D1 was soon put to work on interior photography for 'top of the market' house brochure photography. Clients had long been used to getting pictures on CD so they did not at first remark on the change. I looked at those early Nikon D1 A4 brochures with my photographer's eye comparing previous jobs done with scans from medium and large format cameras. The digital printed images looked sharp and clean and were better overall. Printers were soon asking me how I got such high quality scans? A3 inkjet prints from the D1 looked good and often better than similar Hasselblad images. By the end of the first year with the D1 I was doing over half of my work with it. Some clients were still asking for colour transparency but mostly it was the printers (who wanted to sell their services on for pre press drum scanning!).

The release of the **Nikon D1X** in May 2001 was, for me, the point of no return and I was lucky enough to get one of the first in the country. With its 5.47- mega pixel resolution CCD the image quality was fantastic! I set up studio test shots and now compared the new Nikon with Hasselblad images. On the light box 100 ISO transparencies may show a bit more fine detail but only you, the photographer, will see this. I had high end drum scans made to compare with the images from the D1X. I rejected the first batch of drum scans for poor quality but the second batch was no better. The D1X was far sharper; no grain the colours were vibrant and saturated. Shadow detail was far better than any colour transparency film I had ever used. Like film, digital is not good on over-exposure and it is easy to blow out highlights. Early on I learnt to slightly underexpose my pictures as the images can easily be pulled back in Photoshop but blown highlights are lost for ever!

The D1X was soon being used for nearly all my work. The only problem is that Digital Nikons use CCD image sensors measuring 23.7x15.6mm compared with the full frame 35mm film of a standard 35mm camera at 36x24mm approx. This is fine if you are a press or wild life photographer as the x1.5 factor with the CCD size makes your 300mm lens into a 450mm! For a commercial photographer needing wide lenses it is not such

good news, as a 20mm lens becomes 30mm! Early on with the D1 I got the 17-28mm f2.8 AF-S lens, at 17mm this became a 25.5mm and this proved wider than the 40mm lens I had been using with my Hasselblad. It was also very sharp. Another advantage of the smaller CCD is that by cropping into the image and only using the central area, any edge of field lateral or off axis distortions and edge fall off of sharpness are removed! I soon had the amazing Nikon 14mm Lens which, with the x1.5 factor, is a 21mm lens on the D1X, it is pin sharp and is ideal for interiors as verticals can easily be corrected in Photoshop. So my Hasselblads became an early casualty of the new digital revolution and began to gather dust.

To maximise the sharpness of digital it is essential to use only the top quality lenses.. As I had several Hasselblads and six lenses that were now hardly being used I slowly started to sell them all, allowing me to invest in high end Nikon Lenses. Unfortunately, it soon became more difficult to get good prices for top second hand film cameras as more and more photographers traded in equipment to go digital. I'm glad I sold early and now only own one film camera, my Rollicflex I had as a photographic student in the early 60s!

In the studio I use the D1X with "Fire-wire" IEEE 1394 direct into the computer using Nikon's own Capture software. This is a super way to work as seconds after taking a picture you are viewing your image on a large high resolution monitor. On location I can still work this way with a laptop if the subject matter is static. I only shoot NEF (Nikons RAW File) files as these give the best quality. Most image adjustments can be done in 16 bit in the Capture software on the NEF File and these adjustments are saved with the NEF file. As these image adjustments are appended to the file they can be altered if need be at a later date. NEFs are saved to computer and backed up to a CD or DVD before the images on the flash cards are deleted. Batch processing in Capture automates production of 16 bit TIFFs to be finish off in Photoshop CS.

Post production computer time must be charged for and if creative work is required this can run into many hours. The client is now getting a far better product and quality is now firmly in the hands of (we hope) the skilled creative photographer.

In the three and a half years I have been using the D1X with its 5.47 mega-pixel chip clients have been very happy with the quality. Subsequently, both Canon and Kodak have come out with full frame 11 & 14 mil pixel digital SLRs. However, I do not think that pixel count is the whole story. I tested the Kodak (it uses Nikon Lenses) but did not like the design of the camera body and I found the results to be poor with very noisy shadows. Early this year a friend purchased the full frame Canon 1Ds and we spent a very interesting afternoon doing a 'back to back' test comparing it with my now ageing D1X. The Nikon stood up very well and at A3 size there was very little difference between the two cameras. At 1600% in Photoshop it possible to see the finer detail at pixel level from the larger Canon files. The Canon uses CMOS chips and these seem to generate more noise than the Nikon's CCD at higher ISOs.

One of my freelance colleagues has been using the **Nikon D100** since it came out 2 years ago. It's an excellent little camera well able to match the D1X for image quality with slightly better retention of highlight detail. I have used it several times and as I work with him all the time have seen plenty of good images from it.

This year Nikon produced the all new **Nikon D70**, at last a sub £1000 digital SLR complete with the new DX AF-S 18-70mm lens. These new "DX" Nikon lenses are designed to take advantage of the smaller size CCD used by Nikon compared with the full 35mm frame size. (See Digit issue 20, March 2003 where I did a write up on these new lenses.) This little camera is a real winner and some members may have followed my running case history on our RPS Digit Web Site in Forum. I got it as back up for my D1X and its light weight and compact size means it is always with me. The image quality is even better than the D1X and the little lens is very sharp.

Nikon has also produced two other professional digital SLRs the **Nikon D1H** launched in May 2001 and last year the **Nikon D2H**. These cameras are aimed more at the press, sports and wild life photographers. The D2H is similar in size and build quality to the D1X but has high speed image processing with 8 frames per second and a buffer of 40 consecutive frames! The DX 2/3 size LBCAST 23.3 x 15.5 image sensor is 4.1 million pixels and I understand produces very high quality images.

What of the future? On 16 September 2004 Nikon announced its all new replacement for the D1X, the **Nikon D2X**. Early reports look good. The durable magnesium-alloy body will be similar in design to the D2H but the camera is aimed firmly at professional photographers who require the highest image quality. With 12.4 million effective pixels its DX sized all new CMOS sensor will have to work hard. Nikon have not been tempted to go full frame and claim that the all new CMOS sensor will ensure outstanding colour rendition, excellent sharpness, low noise and high level reproduction of skin tones. I have slight reservations about the use of a CMOS sensor but understand the all new image processor has overcome previous problems of image noise and sharpness at higher ISO settings. The D2X will also work with an all new high speed WT-2 Wireless Transmitter making a wire free connection to a remote computer, I understand this will send high quality images several hundred yards! Its due out Jan 2004, priced at £3500 for the body only. This should be another winner! I have ordered mine so hope to write a full report for members next year.

Graham J R Whistler FRPS FBIPP

Going all the way.....with a 300D

Geoffrey Carver

The author, a long time Canon user relates his travels along the digital road.

It was the frantic barking of Jacques the yap, my neighbour's guard dog, that alerted the whole hamlet to the arrival of a plumber's van. When I looked quizzically at the van after signing for the parcel, the driver said "No, don't ask". That was the event that marked my arrival into the all-digital era.

Silver chemistry, like wet plates and daguerreotypes before it, had progressed a little way towards obscurity. I didn't feel any remorse at purchasing a digital camera – it was a logical process that had began several years earlier.

I first dabbled with digital images by using a video camera and a piece of hardware that could perform some quite interesting manipulations. The results were inevitably a bit crude and certainly failed to impress the rather sniffy, Leica-owning cognoscenti at my local club.

Things improved a great deal when I bought a scanner and an early version of Photoshop, but with rather limited computing capacity it was all rather slow.

I was still, however, a hybrid. I owned a film camera, but was able to manipulate and print images that I had scanned into the computer.

Probably like most other people, I never bothered with my own colour film processing. The design of the house didn't easily lend itself to setting up a permanent dark room and the urgent pleas of those desperate to use the toilet at inconvenient moments was, in reality, difficult to ignore. Here in Normandy, commercial developing and printing was more expensive than in Derby, and, rather too often for peace of mind, the results were none too good. I had become conscious that I seemed to spend a lot of time in Photoshop correcting curious colour casts, adjusting levels and eliminating the tiny white marks that infested both negatives and prints. The end was in sight and very welcome.

I chose a Canon EOS 300D as the natural successor to my EOS 5 and auto-focus lenses, with which I was very happy. It was the first well specified but reasonably priced camera that would give me the quality I wanted. My initial experiences were interesting. The camera was easy to use, and because it was a family

member, felt quite familiar. I was a little startled, but much encouraged, by the punchy pictures I took in my local, rather gloomy church. The serious test would come shortly afterwards on holiday in New Zealand. The change from a film to a digital body has the well documented effect of lengthening the effective focal length of the lenses. This was acceptable, although it did of course, deprive me of the lower range of my wide angle lens.

I don't know if I am a typical camera user, but my philosophy has been, by and large, to let my modern cameras get on with it. Like many of you no doubt, my first serious photographs were taken with a totally manual 35 mm single lens reflex camera and a separate light meter. Oh what a fiddle it was. Now I look, compose and shoot. Its quick, its accurate and the results pleasing. When called for, I can easily over-ride shutter and aperture settings or select shooting and metering modes. The technology is the slave, not the intrusive master of previous years.

The camera performed very well indeed on its first serious tests. The large viewing screen gave a good rendition of the picture, although it was not too easy to see in the bright summer sunlight. The battery life was very good, and far exceeded that found in devices that are sold more as fashion accessories.

After a visit to a planetarium I was stimulated to take a picture of the southern night sky. I rested the camera on a window box....yes I know I should have used a tripod, but they are bulky and heavy and I had taken a principled decision to travel light. Thirty seconds later I saw a clear bright picture of the star field accompanied by some very tastefully placed red geraniums. Even with my eyes dark adjusted I couldn't see the colours. That was Impressive.

On my return home, the process of downloading several hundred images was a bit leisurely, but quite straightforward. There is software provided with the camera. There is the option of connecting the camera directly to the computer using the supplied USB connector, or of using a separate card reader. The choice of card is quite large and will depend on your circumstances; I chose to buy two half-megabyte cards and have found their capacity quite adequate for my fairly modest needs. They are certainly easier to handle than the equivalent amount of film and without the attendant worries caused by airport X-Ray machines. There is also the point made by Graham Wheeler in his article; once you have purchased the card, there is no on-going cost.

The camera isn't without small niggles. The otherwise excellent built-in flash does pop up uninvited on occasions. The auto focus system had odd quirks, but blame the lenses rather than the camera for that. The quite unpredictable appearance of what looked like a distant swarm of locusts did manage to ruin a few images; it was, of course, a small piece of dust on the CCD. I removed the lens, and during a thirty second exposure, gently shook the camera with the aperture facing down. It seems to have worked (others advocate the more brutal method of vacuuming).

Whether you choose Canon, Nikon or any other major producers' digital camera is purely a matter of personal preference. Nearly a year on, I am delighted with my purchase. I am totally digital. I produce good quality prints with ease. I manipulate images at will; I email them without difficulty. I incorporate images into text. I feel liberated.

Brothers and sisters, join the digital revolution. Film is dead.

Geoffrey Carver LRPS



Breaking wave Paula Davies LRPS



Autumn flame Kevin Maskell FRPS



Dunstanborough dawn
John Hartshorne LRPS



Girl in black satin Margaret Salisbury
FRPS



Dartmoor bridge Cesi Jennings LRPS



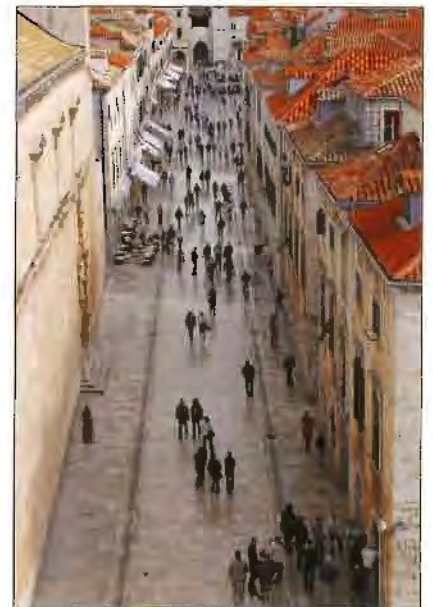
Echoes in sand Iona Eric Bower FRPS



Café Cesi Jennings LRPS



Empty bottle Tony Poole LRPS



Busy street Jim Marsden FRPS



Card game Ian Ledgard LRPS



Winter morning Peter Paterson ARPS



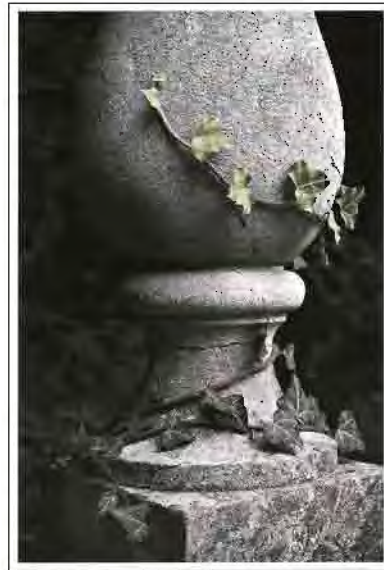
Morpho Helena Jessica
Garry James LRPS



Higher & higher Gitta Lim LRPS



Fuschia Sara Bunn ARPS



Ivy John Gray ARPS



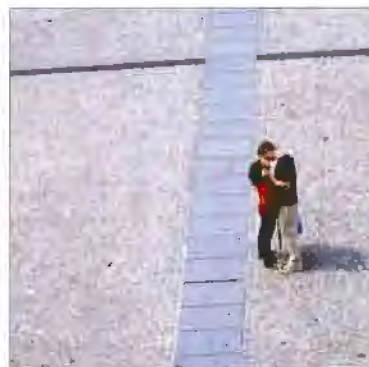
In the farmyard Jim Marsden FRPS



Gerenuks # 2 Margery Maskell ARPS



Monument valley Fiona Senior FRPS



Love Bill Henley LRPS



Herbs Graham Whistler FRPS

h connection



Perspective on perspective
Stanley Newton ARPS



Prismatic springs Yellowstone
Elizabeth Hilton LRPS



Time squared
Clifford Brown LRPS



Stourhead – autumn gold Ray Grace LRPS



Siesta Peter Roberts ARPS



Repose John Colmer ARPS



Terror in the wood Gwynn Robinson LRPS



Slimy beech caps John Berry ARPS



Puppy love June Cook LRPS



Oyster bed Chris Kislingbury ARPS



Tree remnant Sesriem David Eaves ARPS



The green man Vincent Lowe ARPS



Nigella No 2 Eric Saul ARPS



A story book church Tony Cluley



Tulip sand Robert Albright FRPS



Paired six spot Burnet moths Monique Vanstone



Neglected Barry Senior ARPS



Winning the race Maureen Albright ARPS



Viewpoint Dennis Stephenson ARPS

OK—so now what?

Bill Henley, with time on his hands, seeks inspiration in his local book shop

My car was in for service and MOT and I had some hours to occupy in Gloucester. A Costa coffee in Ottakers the bookshop seemed appropriate and a long sit in one of their comfortable settees with the daily paper. Having drunk my coffee and the read the news there was still no call on my mobile to say that the car was ready. Danger time; an opportunity to look at the books and all the temptation to spend some of my hard earned money.

Naturally I gravitated towards the digital imaging volumes and was once again taken back at the number of titles that include the word Photoshop. It really has become an industry in its own right. Now I much enjoy the occasional lecture and demonstration of Photoshop but there really is a limit to how much I can take in during one session. I know some people take in voice recorders and even video cameras but I have never been inclined to do so myself. Not only self conscious I wonder whether I really would give the time to sit and replay everything, take notes and practise all the skills.

I tend to use the talks for inspiration but to rely on the manuals, instruction books and CD Roms/DVDs. These I can take at my own pace and concentrate on the particular skills that apply to the job in hand. I particularly value the ability to jump between topics rather than following someone else's agenda. This is especially true if I am currently involved in a project and am looking for ideas.

The CD ROMs often accompany and amplify a text whilst the DVDs tend to be stand alone resources. The CDs are also likely to have the resources such as original images for you to follow the instructions and compare you results with the 'expert's' work. Both have their place but I personally remember things much better when I do them myself. But back to me in Ottakers. With notebook in my hand and a soft lead pencil I decided to look at just some of the books and to make some notes. I include my observations here in case they are of interest.

Peachpit Visual Quick Start Guide by Elaine Weinmann & Peter Lourekas "Photoshop Cs for Windows & Macs" (author's note: it should say Microsoft windows as the Mac has always had a windows interface since 1984!) 586 pages priced £18.99 ISBN: 0-321-21353-X. I find the Peachpit series ideal for jumping in and out of topics and have a large number of titles by them for my large range of application software. This edition on Photoshop departs from the the usual monochrome only images and includes some useful colour photographs in addition. It clearly shows the menus and steps involved. A well organised book with a comprehensive table of shortcuts.

Seybold (Wiley) by Jon Kabili "Adobe Photoshop CS, A complete course" 500 pages priced £31.95 0-7645-4175-7 This book comes with a CD ROM that include tutorial files to match the text. There is full colour throughout and is very well presented. There is an interesting section on the management of documents using keywords. It appears extremely good for all basic Photoshop but does not go into the "tricks" or "clever photo techniques". Its strap line is "Create while you learn." The book is mainly monochrome with a 16 page colour insert. There is good technical information and much sound information. However, the style will not appeal to all. There is a light hearted "Dummies Book" style and the inclusion of humorous cartoons and comments.

Wiley "Photoshop CS (All in one desk reference) 804 pages priced £23.50 ISBN: 0-7645-4239-7 This book has 16 pages of colour images. It claims to be "10 books in one" The text is related to tasks in addition to giving the overall skills. Sections include "Fundamental Image essentials", "Selections", "Painting Drawing Typing", Working with layers", "Channels and masks", "Filters and distortions", "Retouching and restoration", "Photoshop and the web", Photoshop and print"

Adobe Press (Peachpit Press) by Ben Willmore "Adobe Photoshop CS, Studio Techniques" 697 pages priced £38.99 ISBN: 0-321-21352-1

This book is colour throughout and has an accompanying CD ROM. Some text refers to technicalities and other parts are related to particular tasks. The CD supports the text well. Includes working foundations, real world production techniques and creative exploration. In addition to the CD further resources may be obtained from a companion website. A very sound and well presented book that reflects the easy and authoritative style of the author as many DIG members have seen him when he has talked at the DIG spectacular. Included are the working foundations of tools, palettes, layers, and masks. "Real world" production techniques and creative exploration are fully covered. There is a very readable and easily understood style of writing and presentation. The many illustration fully support and enhance the text. Ben is the founder of Digital Mastery, a training and consultancy firm that specialises exclusively in Photoshop.

Adobe Press (Peachpit Press) "Adobe Photoshop CS, Classroom in a book" 690 pages priced £33.99 ISBN: 0-321-19375-X. This is the official training workbook from Adobe systems. There are 15 colour pages but otherwise monochrome illustrations. There is an accompanying CD ROM. This book very usefully enhances the manual that comes with Photoshop and gives a very sound foundation of Photoshop basics. It does not go into the photographic tricks.

New Riders by Scott Kelby "Photoshop CS Down and Dirty tricks" £30.99 ISBN: 0-7357-1353-7 "A new collection of nothing but eye-poppin, jaw-droppin, heart-stoppin Photoshop special effects that will blow you away!" Stated to be for intermediate to advanced students. This book has chatty US humour and a very direct approach. It uses examples of techniques that are applicable to the commercial world (eg poster production) and contains a host of hints.eg. "Try f f tab", "Colour replacement for red eye" There is colour throughout and a very clear layout.

New Riders by Scott Kelby "The Photoshop Book for Digital Photography" 358 pages priced £30.99 ISBN: 0-7357-1236-0 The edition I saw was still for Photoshop 7 but presumably a CS version should be available. The strapline is "Are you ready for a Photoshop book that breaks all the rules?" Specific examples are taken step by step. The book is in full colour but the quality of the printing/paper could be better. There is a feel of commercial photographic practice with some sound basics combined with "tricks". "Learn how the pros do it." Scott is the editor of the US Photoshop User and President of the US National Association of Photoshop Professionals.

Focal Press by Martin Evening "Adobe Photoshop CS for Photographers" 554 pages priced £29.99 ISBN: 0-240-51942-6 A very comprehensive text from basic to advanced with a full colour clear attractive layout. The accompanying CD includes movie tutorials and addresses all the MAC/PC issues where there is a difference between the two platforms. The images are of a high quality. There is technical background information in addition to instruction with skills and tips. A clear and authoritative text. "A professional image editors guide to the creative use of Photoshop for the Mac and PC." Martin is an alpha tester and official speaker for Adobe.

Agentum by Tom Ang "Photoshop for photography, the art of pixel processing" 128 pages priced £16.99 ISBN: 1-902538-22-6 This is an interesting variation on both the format and the intention of a Photoshop publication. It is square with sides the same length as the longest side of an A4 sheet and this enables a very attractive layout with a great deal of information on each page. It is full colour throughout and the quality of the colour images is superb. It avoids dealing with "clever" effects and concentrates of the tools required to produce high quality digital images. The background technicalities are explained including colour calibration and resolution. Levels and curves are very fully discussed with many useful examples. The use of paths with the clone tool and sharpening considerations are all dealt with well. There are a limited number of examples but each is highly relevant to a photographer's need and often emulate chemical darkroom techniques. "I hope this book will help you to work invisibly. You will then be creating on a higher plane than other image manipulators on this planet."

Meanwhile in Ottakers when my mobile eventually rang I made my way back to the car service centre and wrote a very large cheque. I would much have preferred to spend my money on all the above books but sadly a working car with an MOT certificate has to take priority. When I can I will be back in Ottakers with another latte coffee and continue searching the shelves.

Bill Henley LRPS

Making a Border

Clive R. Haynes

Did you notice how many of the photographs in the Annual Exhibition had borders? Clive explains how its done.

A finished image may frequently be set off to better effect by surrounding it with a border. Borders are easy to make and can be produced in a variety of ways. Here are some ideas to try using Adobe Photoshop.

Note: Photoshop CS has some differences to earlier versions and these are shown as (CS) where appropriate.

Firstly, make certain that your image has a Background Layer - if your image doesn't have one, go to Layers > New > Background from Layer / Layer from Background (CS) and one will appear.

The important thing to remember is that every time you expand the canvas size the space outside the image will be automatically filled by the background colour – or the colour selected in the Canvas Size dialogue box (CS).

As an example we'll begin by working with a horizontal (landscape format) A4 size image to which we'll add a white pencil-line around the picture, surrounded by a blue border.

Open your image

Go to:

Image > Image Size. Make certain that the Resample Image box **is not** ticked.

Make certain that 'Constrain Proportions' box **is** ticked

Set the Width to 26cm. (The Height will take care of itself).

Ensure that the Foreground and Background colours to the base of the toolbox are set to Foreground, blue (or the colour of your choice) and Background, white.

Expand the canvas area

Go to:

Image > Canvas Size

Expand Width & Height by 4 pixels. Use the drop down arrow alongside the Width and Height boxes to enable you to choose the pixel dimensions (rather than inches or cms); the more pixels you choose, the wider the border will be.

Keep the image in the centre of the nine small squares in the Canvas Size dialogue box. This will ensure a regular border width around the outside. Click OK

The image now has a narrow white pencil line surrounding it. Press Control + 0 (zero) to show the whole image area.

Exchange the Background and Foreground colours by clicking on the double-ended curving arrow to the top right hand of the Foreground/Background colours icon (near base of toolbox) or simply use the 'X' key on the keyboard – this changes or 'exchanges' (X-changes) the f/g & b/g colours and is a useful shortcut.

Return to Canvas Size, this time using the 'cm' dimensions; increase the Width and the Height by 2cms each. This is, in effect, 1cm for each side of the image. Click OK and again view by Control + 0 (zero) and there you have it! - A bright new (blue) border surrounding your picture.

Photoshop CS users please note that the CS Canvas Size dialogue box enables more choices - you can choose whether to use Foreground, Background colours or a colour set by choice (Canvas Extension Colour > Other).

If you wish to change the border colour, use the Magic Wand tool (near top right hand of the toolbox) to select the border area, then go to Edit > Fill to select another colour.

Saving the Selection for the Border

If you intend trying different ideas and techniques for the border area, then it's a good idea to save the selection for the border. The selection can then be quickly reapplied.

Select the border area by using the Magic Wand tool

Go to Select > Save Selection > and give the selection a name ('Border') and click OK.

When you wish to use the selection again, go to:

Select > Load Selection > and choose the name of the selection you saved. Click OK.

Fill Border

After filling the border area with colour it can always be changed. Re-select the border area.

Go to Edit > Fill > Use > Foreground (or Background) colour. Filling by this route enables you to decide upon the Opacity (saturation) of the colour by altering the figure (1 - 100%) in the 'Blending' area inside the Fill dialogue box.

Paintbucket Border

To fill colour by this method it's not necessary to make a selection first as the Paintbucket tool will seek out like colour tones and replace them with Foreground colour. First, choose a Foreground colour. Next, select the Paintbucket tool then click within the border area and hey presto! A new border colour has appeared. Look at the Paintbucket 'Options' after selecting 'Paintbucket' tool (to alter its Opacity if you wish).

Textured Border

Once the border has been selected by the Magic Wand or by any other convenient selection method, filters may be applied. Experiment by adding 'noise' to produce a 'grainy effect'

Go to:

Filter > Noise > Add Noise.

Choose 'Gaussian' and click 'Monochrome' (suggested).

Set 'Amount' to your personal taste.

To add some directional streaks to the noise texture:

Keep the selection active.

Return to the filter menu and add brush strokes

Go to:

Filter > Brush Strokes > Angled Brushstrokes.

Numerous variations and combinations are possible.

Pattern Border

You can copy a 'pattern' into your border. Start by using the rectangular Marquee tool to select an area within the image (or within another image).

Next, go to Edit > Define Pattern.

Note: the 'pattern' must be created from a square-corned selection so make certain that in the 'Options' for the Marquee tool that 'Feather' is 0px.

Select the border area by, say, Magic Wand (this works best on a plain colour tone) so if you're experimenting after making a texture border - return to a previous state via the History palette or use the Select > Load Selection route described earlier. Alternatively, use the marquee selection tool to define the border inner limits and Inverse the area (via Select > Inverse).

Once the border area is selected go to:

Edit > Fill > Use > Pattern

Choose the pattern you've just 'defined' from the thumbnails presented. Hey presto - another interesting border!

Tip1: When in the Edit > 'Fill' dialogue box, you can alter the Blending Mode or change the Opacity to modify

the pattern effect.

Tip 2: After defining the pattern, create a new (empty) layer, then once the border area has been reselected, make certain that the new layer is active and 'fill' the border area with the pattern. Using a separate layer gives greater flexibility.

Cloned Border

This type of border can appear rather like a 'Patterned Border' but it's more random, more 'artistic' and less 'mechanical'.

The best way to make a 'cloned border' is to start by creating a new layer.

Select the border using Magic Wand or another selection tool or Select > Load Selection. Using the Clone tool (Clone Stamp) and with the Background (picture) layer active, select/target your starting point (Alt + click). Choose 'Align' (tick)

or 'non-Aligned' (no tick) in Clone Stamp Options - it depends on the effect you wish to create.

Activate the new border layer, choose a suitable brush size then clone inside the selected area. The cloning effect will stop at the edge of the selection so your picture content will remain tidy.

Don't forget, if you wish to re-sample / re-target your cloning area on the main image, you must activate the image layer first, or choose 'Use All layers' from the Clone options. As the border is now on its own Layer - it can be treated independently - just like any other layer, so many more options are available.

Pencil-line Border

An elegant and simple 'pencil-line' border surrounding the image can easily be made by either successively expanding the canvas size or by 'stroking' a Selection.

Method 1. Expanding the Canvas Size

Go to Image > Canvas Size and expand both width & height by, say, for A4 size, 1cm, using white (or colour of choice)

Expand again by 4 pixels (w & h) using black as the colour.

Expand again by 1cm (w & h) using white (or whatever).

Method 2. 'Stroking' a 'Selection'.

The 'pencil-line' border can be added within the area of an existing border by using the Marquee tool to define the position for the line.

Next:

Go to Edit > Stroke

Choose width 2 px, Colour, Black (or whatever you prefer) – click on the colour square to show the 'colour picker' and choose colour - OK

Choose 'Inside'

Click 'OK'.

Combinations

Try combining some of the above border ideas, for example the 'Texture Border' could be combined with the 'Pencil-line' to pleasing effect. Many other options are available, including those of adding mitres and shadows to borders to simulate 'inset framing' effects.

Making a border will enhance your picture. However, remember that its presence is as a supporting rôle and as such should not detract from the picture content.

Details about making borders and other techniques can be found on my website: www.crhfoto.co.uk

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The Digital Imaging Group

The Group is administered on behalf of the Society and its members by an elected committee. The committee is elected annually at the AGM. The provisional date for the 2005 meeting is 23rd April; full details will be available nearer the date. Information about the Group is made available through this publication and on the web site – www.digit.co.uk

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