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Society

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**DIGIT**

**WINTER 2008/09 Issue No 40**

**Clive Haynes FRPS  
on Shooting the Invisible**

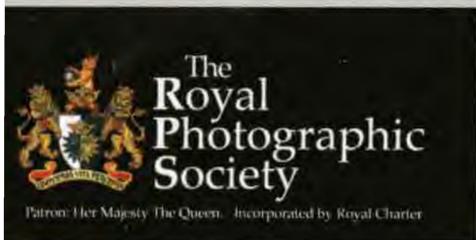


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for News, Information, Regional Events, Folio, Competition  
and a unique source of expertise and advice**

**AGM Notice and Exhibition Entry  
In centre fold**



*Clive Haynes FRPS  
Chairman*



**Committee for 2008/09**

See opposite page for DIGRO contact details.

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I remain amazed how the world of photographic digital imaging constantly presents ever-widening horizons, new opportunities for expression and methods of working. For those of us - and it's my guess that we still form the majority within the RPS as a whole and the Digital Imaging Group in particular - who learned our craft either in the darkroom or by taking colour slides, DI provides new methods improving the way we used to work whilst offering new opportunities that were previously impossible.

It would be a full-time task to try to keep abreast of new developments in camera design and features, plus understanding ever-advancing programs - Photoshop CS4 is already with us. In view of this, perhaps we should take time to pause to consider carefully where we are going - both as technically competent craft-based photographers and as imaginative artists with vision. There's very little doubt that the equipment currently available will meet our needs whether as enthusiasts or professionals. Indeed top-end equipment will satisfy the needs of the most stringent and demanding professionals. It's also true that we will continue to push technical and artistic boundaries and I'm certainly not questioning these advancements. What I would like to draw attention to is the value in exploring and understanding what we already have, before pursuing yet another new camera for the sake of perhaps two or three million more pixels definition, or software that does little more than expand the options of existing features. I'm reminded about this as a result of developing my way of working with infrared images - more of which in this issue starting on page 9. I'm using a camera that's a few years old with a trifling six mega-pixel spec and yet I have no problem in producing high-quality A3 prints with my inkjet printer - a two-year old model. Much of what we do must be the product of well-founded craft-based skills and workflow. I know from both teaching the subject and from my own experience that the fundamentals gained from manual cameras and working in the darkroom provide a firm foundation. I'm certainly not advocating that everyone goes back to basics and that progress isn't possible without manual camera and darkroom experience, it's just that people tend to jump in at the deep-end after buying state of the art cameras and high-spec software then, whether darkroom-based or not, suddenly discover that success is not the result of the fabled press of a button! Among fellow photographers a great need remains. Photographers need to be reminded about the most appropriate ways of using the new generation of cameras and the benefits of really understanding the software. Like many, I've frequently encountered a £1,000 camera in a

£100 pair of hands! Indeed sometimes high-end cameras are simply set to either Auto or P mode and left there! The same applies to an image management program such as Photoshop: many users don't venture beyond the basics and explore even the most fundamental of helpful features, such as the non-destructive attributes of Adjustment Layers. In view of some of these needs amongst our fraternity we hope to provide, from time to time, features in *DIGIT* that will address some of these topics.

The flip-side of this particular coin is the need to emphasise the value of pre-visualisation - that is to say, having a clear image in your mind of the picture you want to make before you start. The days of film-based photography taught us to conserve our resources and to plan the shots. The same logic should apply to digital shooting but, as we all know, camera-based memory is so relatively cheap that we frequently watch colleagues taking multiple shots, hoping for that single lucky strike.

We certainly live in a brave new world of digital technology and most of us are running hard simply to take advantage of technical developments as they meet our needs. We hope that the DI Group will continue to inform and help all members to enjoy and share their love of photography, whether they are grappling with comprehending new technologies or striving for perfection with digital media they already feel comfortable with. *Clive Haynes FRPS*

**DI Group AGM and Exhibition  
2009 Dates for your Diaries**

Print exhibition last submission date:

**9 April**

Annual general Meeting and print selection:

**19 April 2009**

In the centre fold you will find the notice for the 2009 Annual General Meeting, together with the arrangements for the submission and selection of prints for the members' exhibition. This is the time to get shooting and printing to ensure your work will go on display at a number of UK venues.

**LATEST DISTINCTIONS  
FOR DI GROUP MEMBERS**

We like to congratulate DI Group members who have recently gained distinctions but at the time of going to press none had been notified to DIGIT by the Society in this period.

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## Committee Report from Secretary Bob Pearson FRPS

### Meetings and teleconferences since Autumn report to December 2008

● **Finance** Expenditure for the year to date was just about within the income of £11,400 from some 980 members. DIGIT was costing £7,000 annually. The subscription increase should ensure break even. Membership needed to be increased. Graham Whistler would update the publicity brochure which would be available at as many events as possible, including regional meetings. A Digital Meetings events diary was thought to be essential. The India trip would generate little income because of the small take up by RPS members.

There was concern about the Group's ongoing costs which needed to be examined, including the options of cost savings by fewer pages in *DIGIT*; fewer issues; and limiting the summer issue to exhibition images only, together with the DVD. The Editor would prepare a background paper for the next meeting.

● **Website and Forum** The DI Group must have a good website but, sadly, the interactive facilities of the old site could not be afforded. Neither the Society nor the Group had available money to fund a web template for SIGs. The Committee did not want to rely on a single person again. Maureen Albright hoped to have a corporate template running for the DI site by the AGM. Maureen would also seek to resolve the the Folio and Forum password issues so that global protection of authorised members would mean less need for repeated password entering.

● **Regional Group Affairs** Currently there were nine DIGROs in post and two vacancies in Scotland and East Anglia. The Committee was grateful to Tony Poole for taking over the Western Region. Chris Haydon would set up a regular conference call to the DIGROs. The Society had produced a note on the appointment of Regional Officers which would be adapted for DIGROs. An environment needed to be created in which DIGROs interacted with the DI Group Committee.

Chris Haydon had compiled a list of DIGRO meeting centres which would be sent to new members. A list of new members would similarly be sent to DIGROs and Chris Haydon would encourage DIGROs to contact new members, welcoming them to the area with a list of events.

DIGROs would be asked to send regularly their diary of events to John Long so the events could be included in Membership Matters and in DIGIT.

DIGROs would be listed in the AGM papers, alongside the Committee.

● **Improved contact with members** The Secretary would set up a Group Email List of members and *DIGIT* would carry a plea to members to keep the Group up-to-date with changes to email addresses.

● **Exhibition** Gavin Hoey has agreed to be the guest speaker and a selector for the exhibition.

After discussing issues of print quality, it was agreed to maintain the present format and selection arrangements. This year the selectors would be encouraged to choose more adventurous work. Every entrant would have one print selected with those submitting particularly high quality work having the possibility of a second being selected. The new Group Email List would be used to ask members to vote on the Forum as to whether they would prefer a digital projected image or a print exhibition from 2010 onwards.

The Exhibition might also be staged in the Yorkshire and Thames valley regions.

The cost of producing the Exhibition DVD was agreed as satisfactory. This year Graham Whistler would film the selection process, with each selector explaining why they had chosen particular prints. The DVD would have an option for a shorter slide show with music background only.

● **DIGIT** Some editorial support had been forthcoming with one regular column by Dr David Cooke and invaluable help from Elizabeth Restall in proof reading. A successor to Jim Buckley as editor by 2010, perhaps with a number of members helping in specific areas, would be sought, with information published in *DIGIT*.

● **The Real Thing** Chris Haydon would liaise with the Society about the possibility of Steve Caplin talking on photomontage and the ethical issues using Photoshop as a vehicle.

● **Other Matters** The Group would extend an invitation to those who might form a panorama group to join the Digital Group.

The possibility of using The Cheltenham Film Studio for weekend or day workshops of about 30 members would be explored.

2010 would see the centenary of infrared photography. The Chairman would liaise with the steering group being formed.



Digital Imaging Group

## DIGITAL REGIONAL ORGANISERS

Contact the organisers listed below for full details

**Central Southern**  
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**East Anglia**  
Vacant

**East Midlands**  
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### Have we got your Number? Look out for the DI Group email

As you'll see in the committee report above, we want to keep you better informed, and seek your views. A new email distribution has been established and you should be receiving it soon.

But ...

Members move, change telephones or now prefer mobiles rather than landlines, and above all swap email providers and so addresses at the drop of a hat. Have you remembered to tell the Society? Electronic communications are increasingly important and we want to be able to contact you - assuming that is, that you are content to be contacted electronically by the DI Group. Please let the Secretary, Bob Pearson FRPS, know of immediate changes by email at [secretary@digit.rps.org](mailto:secretary@digit.rps.org). Please also update your address, telephone and email details with Simon Bibb at The Society by telephone on 01225 325743 or email at [simon@rps.org](mailto:simon@rps.org).

The first email should be with you soon so if you haven't received it by the end of January it may be that we haven't got your email, or it's incorrect. The email will welcome you to the new service and explain how to get the best out of it.

Please help us to help you by updating your details now.

**Held in the conference suite of the National Motor Cycle museum,  
Think Photography 08 was a joint venture between Jessops and the Society.  
Graham Whistler FRPS reports on the DI Group contribution.**



*Left: Three wise Fellows: Noel Shaw, Philip Antrobus and Graham Whistler ready for the off.*

*Right: Clive Haynes speaking during his well-received demonstration on digital IR*



*Below: Philip Antrobus engages with potential young members*

*Right: Vice-Chairman Chris Haydon mounts some of the Exhibition prints*



Our Digital Imaging Group stand at the weekend of 15-16 November 2008 held at The National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham was very well supported. The Museum was a good venue for the show with adequate parking and easy access from the M42.

We were part of a major RPS presence at the conference and trade show. Jessops jointly sponsored the event with the RPS and set up well stocked trade stands and seemed to be doing good business. We were downstairs in the conference room with all the Society stands and special interest groups positioned round the busy conference presentation area.

Our stand had a backdrop with selected prints from this year's members' exhibition. We also had a large monitor running this year's exhibition DVD. Supplies of back issues of *DIGIT* were eagerly taken by the many photographers who came to our stand over the two busy days and I think we may well have gained some new members.

The LRPS judging Panel was also in open session during the weekend and it was fascinating to observe their care and rigorous standards at first hand. We were able to publicise the RPS DI Group India Tour in January, now nearly fully booked, so we should have some great images for the spring *DIGIT*.

Several of the trade stand representatives gave



*Right: Elizabeth Restall, Group Treasurer, shows off DIGIT to a potential member.*



*Right: DIGIT Editor Jim Buckley explains the Group's role.*



*Left: Clive Haynes and Dorrette McAuslan enjoy a moment's relaxation during a non-stop busy weekend.*



talks and demonstrations on photography and their new products. Nikon and Canon presented some of their latest equipment with Fotospeed and Permajet talking about their range of art papers. Mike Lane FRPS and Bob Moore Hon FRPS and DI Group Chairman Clive Haynes FRPS gave presentations to full houses with late comers having to stand. Clive made a very informative and well presented talk on Digital IR using a specially converted Nikon D70, and you can read more about that starting on page 9. He projected several dramatic and creative examples with easy to follow guidance on how to achieve those results.

The many interesting trade stands were all busy with Sony showing it's all new full frame digital SLR A900 with 24.6 MP CMOS sensor. The camera looks good and at under £2000 for body only it will keep Nikon and Canon on their toes. Sony as yet have only a limited range of high quality lenses made for them by Zeiss for the new camera; the older Minolta/Sony range are unlikely to resolve all the high detail from the 24.6 MP chip.

Nikon kept their cards tight to the chest at the show about their new Nikon D3X with full frame 24.5 MP CMOS all new chip producing 50mb RAW files. Officially released to the world on Monday 1 December 2008 at a projected price of £5500 for body only, they are aiming for a different market.

Are these new digital cameras resolving more detail than perhaps we can see, or need, for most applications?

**Chairman, Clive Haynes FRPS adds:**

This busy event went very well for us and all the planning proved to be most worthwhile. Everyone who volunteered to help made it and they have my grateful thanks. In particular, Graham gave fabulous support and generously provided his personal equipment which made our stand lively with the Exhibition DVD running on a very large monitor throughout the weekend.

The consensus was that around 800 to 1,000 people attended. The Society area and trade stands were kept busy and lectures were all presented to large audiences. Other Special Interest Groups represented seemed to be having good levels of interest and, when I was on our stand, I found lots of interested visitors. I was also able to help with some advice and guidance to those considering a submission for a distinction.

*Thank you to the  
volunteers*

*Clive Haynes FRPS  
Dorrette McAuslan LRPS  
Elizabeth Restall LRPS  
Chris Haydon  
Philip Antrobus FRPS  
Noel Shaw FRPS  
Graham Whistler FRPS  
Jim Buckley LRPS*

**DIGIT NEEDS YOU!**

**Do you fancy the Editor's chair? Or perhaps helping source articles and images? Do you enjoy desktop publishing and layout? Or checking and proofing other photographers' articles? Are you persuasive with busy people to convince them to contribute? Please contact the Editor, Chairman or any committee member to discuss this if you'd like to help.**



At the end of this year, my fifth as editor, I estimate that I will have put together over 700 pages of *DIGIT*, along with brochures and flyers for special events. Picking up the baton from the pioneering members who established the DI Group, *DIGIT* has grown from my first 20 pages of black and white to a regular 32 page, and occasionally more, full colour magazine. It is now in its 40th issue and has an established look and regular format. I print with Ian Allan who also produce the Journal.

By 2010 it will be time to hand over to someone with new direction and fresh ideas. At the same time the economics of *DIGIT* need careful attention since it consumes the bulk of our annual income - that is, your subscriptions.

So what's involved? Let's break it down into its component parts - in order of production not priority since these roles can be allocated to several people working with the editor:

- Generating ideas for articles and images and persuading members to write them;
- Watching the Folio for outstanding digital images and persuading the photographers to explain how they created them;
- Getting the expert teachers to produce How To pieces;
- Checking that the articles are sound and the tutorials are clear and really do what it says on the tin;
- Laying out text and images, within a defined grid, to be attractive and clear;
- Liaising with the printer on schedules and special inserts such as the Exhibition DVD;
- Liaising with the Society for the membership mailing list, sorting in a spreadsheet for cheapest postal prices.

**Articles and Images for Spring 2009: Copy Date end February**

*DIGIT* relies on the contributions of members. So, when will you send me an article for *DIGIT*? Remember that everyone is learning and that all experience is valuable. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

*Jim Buckley LRPS Editor* Email: editor@digit.rps.org  
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**RPS DI Group Yorkshire Region Meetings and Print Exhibition**

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1000 Sunday 18 January 2009</b><br/>Print Lecture: One Step Beyond Ricky O'Neil FRPS</p> <p><b>1000 Sunday 29 March 2009</b><br/>Lecture/Demonstration Creatively Digital<br/>Gwen and Phillip Charnock FRPS.<br/>Ticket events only<br/>£5 to RPS DI members/£6 otherwise<br/>Cheques to RPS Yorkshire DI Group.</p> | <p>Contact: Robert Croft. Regional<br/>Organiser:: Tel: 01977<br/>685262/<br/>07876 655801<br/>Email:<br/>WebSite: www.ydig.co.uk<br/>Robert@robertcroft.wanadoo.co.uk</p> | <p><b>Saturday 25 April and Sunday 26 April</b><br/>Yorkshire D I Two Day Print Exhibition 2009<br/>To be shown at<br/>North Light Gallery<br/>Brooke's Mill, Armitage Bridge<br/>Huddersfield, HD4 7NR.<br/>Free Admission and Car Parking</p> |
|---|--|---|

# GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

**Bob Pearson, Secretary of the DI Group, outlines his approach to the tricky area of White Balance, explaining how to ensure your images have as near as possible a faithful rendering of the original colours of the scene by carrying a relatively inexpensive tool in your camera bag.**

One of the characteristics of light is its colour temperature. One of the unfamiliar controls that a photographer finds when changing from a film to a digital camera is that called *White Balance*, perhaps better understood as *Colour Temperature Correction*. Daylight Films were balanced so that a white object was rendered white when the colour temperature of the incident light (the light falling on the subject) was about 5500 degrees Kelvin; Tungsten Film was balanced for an incident light temperature of 3200 degrees Kelvin. Without colour correction filters on the lens daylight film would produce a bluish image on a cloudy day but enhance the warmth of a sunset. Unlike film, the sensor of a digital camera has no inherent colour balance: this is determined by the processing of the data from the sensor. By default, a digital camera is set to *Auto White Balance*, that is the processing tries to render a white object as white, irrespective of the colour temperature of the incident light. Under such circumstance it can be disconcerting how sunsets lack the warmth that we had become used to when using Daylight Film.

If the processing is done in the camera (that is, producing a jpeg file) then it is the camera's white balance setting that determines the final colour balance of the image.

Typical options for white balance presets are shown in the table alongside. The more sophisticated cameras offer many more settings under the general heading of fluorescent, covering all types from sodium vapour lights to high temperature mercury vapour lights.

To replicate the result of a film camera leave the setting fixed at a value between 5200 – 5500 degrees. To deliberately achieve a slightly warmer image set the colour temperature slightly higher than its normal setting, that is, set it to cloudy for direct sunlight conditions.

If a digital negative is created by shooting in RAW mode then the colour temperature is not 'baked in' to the image until the point of development. There are many software programs available to execute this development, either specifically provided by the camera manufacturer or generic such as Adobe Camera Raw (ACR). When choosing the parameters to be used for this conversion from the raw image it is certainly possible to use the colour temperature that was set on the camera

at the time of exposure: the 'as shot' setting. Much more importantly, at this point the white balance can be set to any value that the photographer chooses. On many images it is desirable to move away from the 'as shot' value to increase the aesthetic appeal of the image.

The algorithm to determine the white balance of an image in the camera's Auto mode has become increasingly complex. In the early days the algorithm was little more than averaging the colours in the image and setting the colour balance to produce an average grey, a method

| Option          | Colour Temp (Degree Kelvin) | Description                                  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Auto (Default)  | 3500 - 8000                 | Adjusted automatically                       |
| Incandescent    | 3000                        | For Incandescent/Tungsten lighting           |
| Fluorescent     | 4200                        | For cool white fluorescent lighting          |
| Direct Sunlight | 5200                        | For subjects in full sun (1000 - 1600)       |
| Flash           | 5400                        | For flash lit subjects                       |
| Cloudy          | 6000                        | Use under overcast skies                     |
| Shade           | 8000                        | Use in daylight when subject is in the shade |
| Choose          | 2500-10000                  | Choose colour temp (deg K) setting           |

### KELVIN?

Irish-born William Thomson (1824 to 1907) was a brilliant mathematician and physicist. Professor of Natural Philosophy - physics - at Glasgow at just 22, his major contributions in physics included electricity, magnetism and thermodynamics. He was created Lord Kelvin for his work on the first transatlantic cable, having moved into the field of engineering. But it's his work in establishing a temperature scale - the Kelvin scale where zero (0 K) is absolute zero, the absence of all thermal energy - with which his name is now forever linked. The colour temperature scale is represented by the colour of a black body when at the given Kelvin temperature. A black body is a theoretical object which is a perfect absorber and emitter of electromagnetic radiation - light in our case. As the black body is heated it emits light which changes from red through yellow to blue according to its absolute (Kelvin) temperature.



clearly prone to error where there was a very predominant colour in the image. As an example of current sophistication, in the latest Nikon cameras white balance is part of the scene recognition system and it is only possible to hint at the complexity of this system. Nikon has for some years used a separate dedicated 1005 pixel RGB sensor to evaluate the scene from a store of tens of thousand of images. In order to improve the accuracy of this system a diffraction grating (which acts like a prism) has now been introduced. This splits the light so that mostly only the red light is incident on the red filter of the sensor, similarly for the green and blue light. The type of scene, the colour and brightness of the scene are extracted. This integrated system determines the colour of the incident light very accurately. Nikon claim that the system can decide whether the light incident on a scene is from a mercury vapour lamp for example. When the system detects the scene is lit by tungsten lighting it will leave the scene slightly warm, as human eyes see the scene.

Despite the accuracy of modern cameras there are occasions when a second reference is worthwhile - for nature and record photography



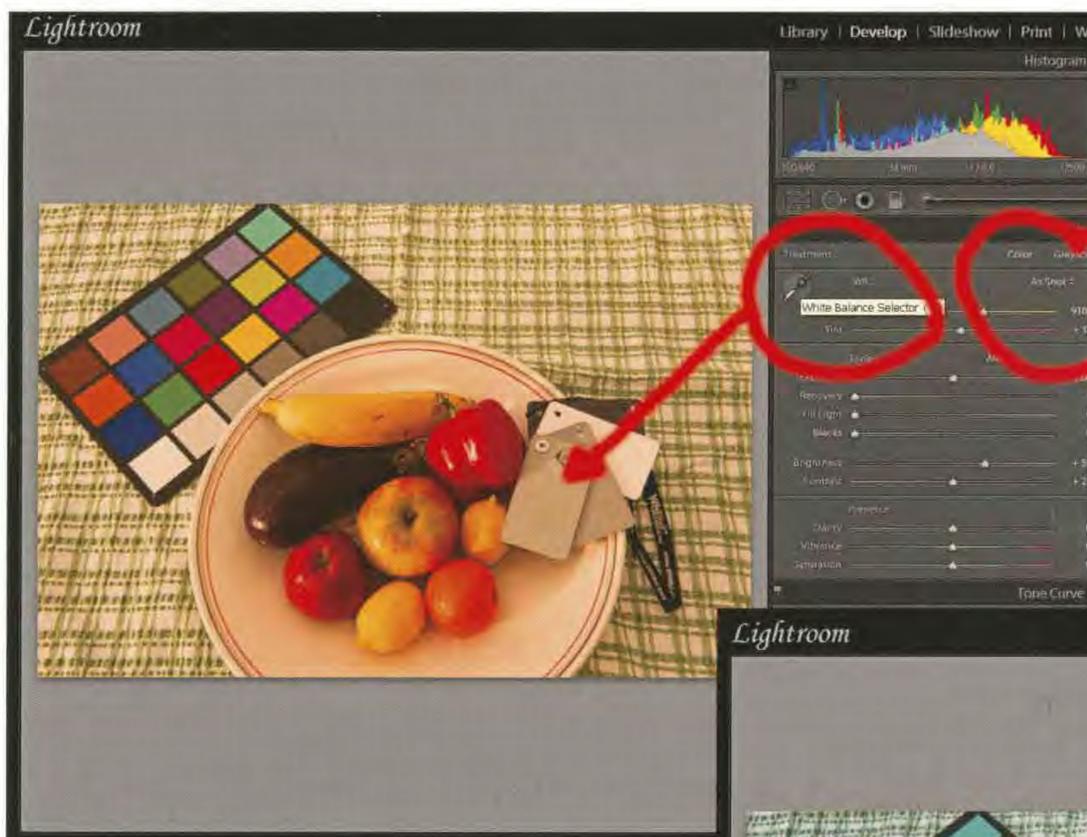
Above: WhiBal on the left and ExpoDisc on the right.

The WhiBal offers a range of tones from white, two greys and black. The multi-prisms of the ExpoDisc are shown clearly.

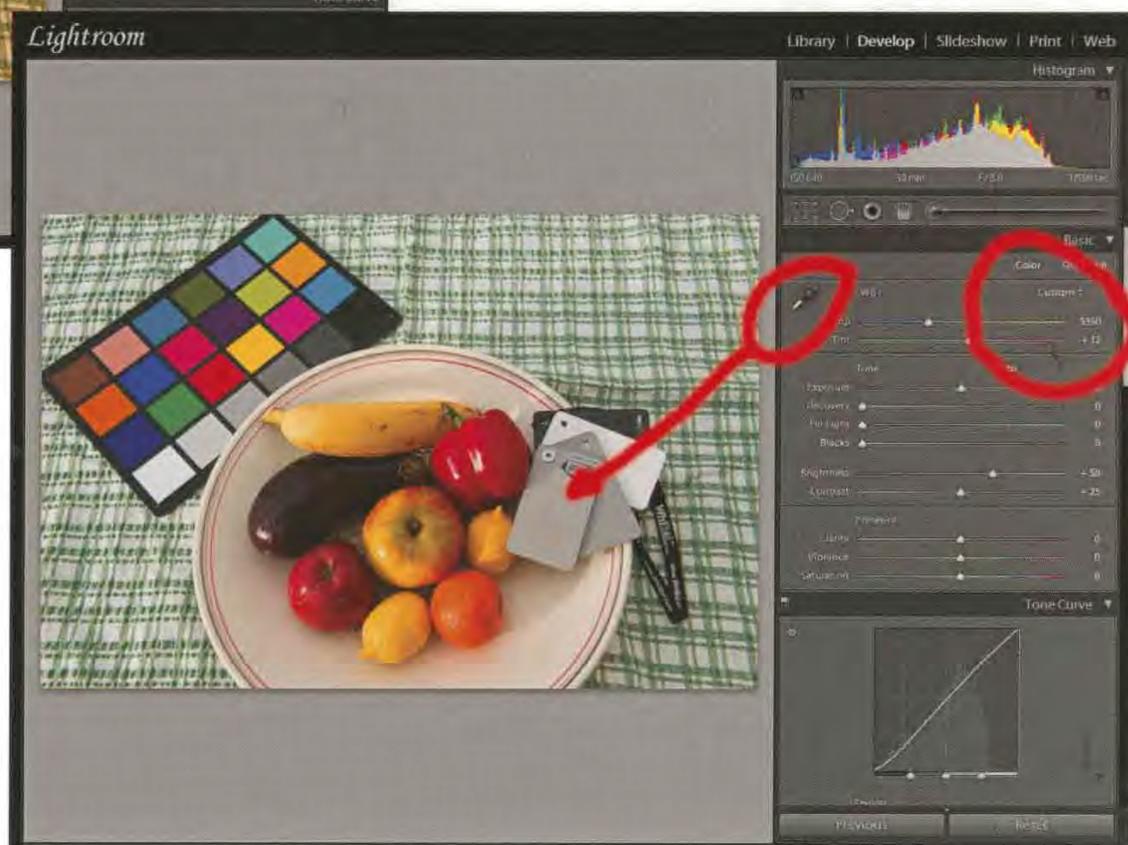
for example where the colour of the subject can be particularly important. Amongst the most popular items for achieving a good white balance of a scene are the WhiBal and the Expodisc. The WhiBal is simply a portable, rugged, precision grey card. The Expodisc slips onto the front of the lens and has a series of prisms facing outward that remap the incident light into an even monotone that is the integration of the colour temperature of that light.

Using either system does need some care. The Whibal is used by placing it within the scene being photographed, taking one shot and then removing it for subsequent images taken at the same location. Images are taken in RAW mode and the white balance for the series determined in the software by using the white balance picker in, for example, ACR and clicking on the WhiBal where it appears in the first image so that it is registered as a true neutral grey. The resultant colour temperature is then used for the rest of the series of images. An example of how to use the colour picker is shown below.

It is essential to realise that the WhiBal reflects the light incident upon it: it must therefore be facing the camera at an angle as close to ninety degrees as possible. For example, It is all too



Above and right: Place the grey card in your scene and take an exposure. Remove the grey card and continue shooting under the same lighting. Open the image which you took with the grey card in your photo editing software - here we've used Lightroom. Choose the White balance eye dropper and click on the grey card. The colour shift is marked and we now have a faithful rendering.



## BOB PEARSON FRPS

easy to place the *WhiBal* carelessly on the ground such that it reflects much more blue light from the sky than that incident on the subject. An alternative to placing the grey card in the scene, for example when taking wildlife where it is inappropriate, is to handhold the *WhiBal* facing the camera.

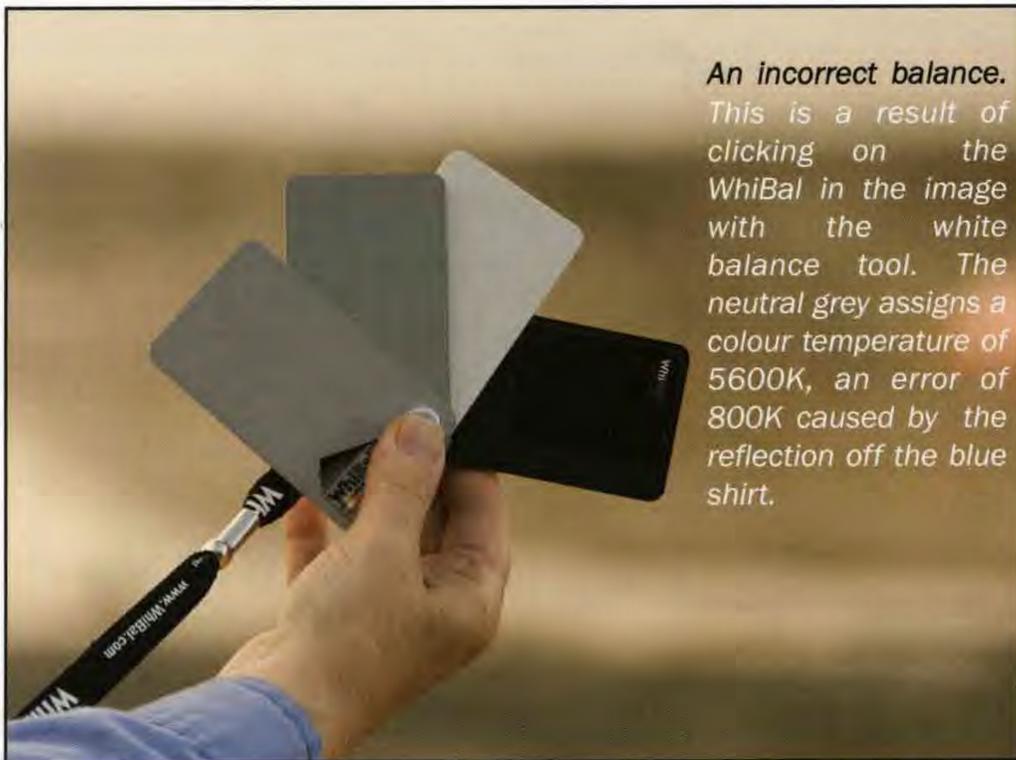
It is not without its pitfalls as demonstrated in the two pairs of images shown below. The first pair shows the image corrected using the *WhiBal* reading. Looking at the light grey plumage of the Stilt (the smaller bird on the right) the image is clearly too warm. Checking the light grey plumage in the 'as shot' image shows that the camera on auto was within 100 degrees Kelvin of the value to make the plumage a neutral grey. What went wrong? Well, you will notice that my assistant holding the *WhiBal* was wearing a blue shirt and this was unfortunately reflecting onto the card.

The *Expodisc* also has its limitations. It is sensible to buy a large diameter version to cover all your lens diameters and then use adapters down to each lens size. If the camera is on a tripod it's possible to handhold it over

the front of the lens but it is rather awkward. There are clearly some lenses, very wide angle ones for example, which it simply won't fit and so it is necessary to change the lens to get a reading. The *Expodisc* converts the camera to an incident light meter so the best way to use it is to compose the picture with the camera on a tripod, remove the camera, fit the *Expodisc* and walk to the main subject, point the camera back to the tripod and take a reading. Not always very practical! The reading is recorded into the *manual preset white balance* setting of the camera and used for subsequent images at this location.

When judging how successful the colour correction of an image has been be aware of the following points. A scene lit with two different colour temperature sources can never be correctly balanced over the whole image. In addition, we generally assume, and usually work with, light sources that have a continuous spectrum. A low-pressure sodium light is monochromatic: images lit by such a source can only be monochrome and white balance is academic.

*Below: Using the WhiBal in practice*



# SHOOTING THE INVISIBLE

In this second part of his major exploration of digital infrared, Chairman Clive Haynes FRPS looks at infrared capture and workflow in more detail, venturing into artistic interpretations. One of the fascinations of recording a scene in IR, says Clive, is that the world is revealed with a different tonal response to that with which we're familiar. In this respect no one can tell you that it's incorrect. How you record and adjust the tones and manage so-called false colours is entirely your own affair and the product of your artistic judgement and aesthetic sensibility. At the end of the article Clive also highlights some problem areas which you may meet in exploring IR with a digital camera.



*Eglise de Cabanac and Vines*

## *Choice of IR Filter Depth*

When deciding to have a camera converted for IR take a moment to consider the depth of the filter you need. Until fairly recently the most common IR filters were for wavelengths of around 720nm. Many specialists can now offer as an alternative a deeper IR filter at around 830nm. Which one to choose? Deeper is not necessarily better – it's simply different. If you prefer a deeper filter to see further into the infrared, it comes at a price.

That price is an image that will be pretty well monochromatic, revealing little or no false-colour characteristics. Monochrome is what one expects from IR; however, at 720nm near-IR frequencies contribute to the attractive properties of Channel Swapping and associated manipulations. So if you wish to

utilise the pictorial effects and alternative colour tonalities of Channel Swapping or Lab Color Mode working (see later) then a 720nm filter will serve you better.

## *White Balance*

In Part 1 I emphasised the importance of setting a custom white balance and the benefit of shooting with RAW files. JPEG files can be used but offer less flexibility when we need to exploit the range of tones, some of which will frequently be off the scale both for JPEG and the in-camera histogram display. Setting a custom white balance helps in presenting more meaningful information for the camera-based histogram. A custom white balance will typically provide a more evenly distributed channel-to-channel histogram for each of the three RGB channels and, thereby, a more favourable tonal range for initial adjustments in RAW and future image management.

### *Bit Depth, Modes and Gamut*

For better image processing, fidelity and control, 16 bit working is preferred. Set your RAW file reader to open as 16 bit and remain with 16 bit operation until you feel that further tonal and colour adjustment will not benefit from continued 16 bit working. At this point you may choose to swap to 8 bit working (Image > Mode > 8 bit). Also you may wish to save on file size and utilise features only available in 8 bit. There are some advantages to working in Lab mode (Image > Mode > Lab Color) these are worthy of exploration and we'll look this option more closely shortly. But first a short note about gamut.

Modifying and extending the image histogram, converting to other modes and applying unusual processes can sometimes result in a wider than expected colour gamut. It may therefore be preferable to alter the colour profile of the image to one which offers a greater colour space. Many photographers will already be using Adobe RGB (1998) as the default colour space as this is frequently preferred to the more modest sRGB space: however, for some images and procedures wider gamuts such as Pro Photo RGB may be preferable.

To change the colour profile go to Edit > Convert to Profile and make your choice. Experimentation will be the key. Remember though that for output to currently available and affordable inkjet printers, the results of opting for wider gamuts may not be apparent in the final print. However, for good practice one should maintain maximum fidelity throughout the image workflow so far as is practicable, bearing in mind that other applications and high-end commercial printers can take advantage of wider gamuts and more accommodating colour spaces.

### **Channel Swapping**

The method of Channel Swapping was described in the autumn edition of DIGIT and is reproduced in the grey box opposite. The highly manageable and subtle results obtained are usually my preferred method of working with IR images.

Now for something different and wonderful - Tonal Adventures with Lab Color.

I use an IR converted Nikon D70, with in-camera Custom White Balance (important - see autumn DIGIT). I open RAW files in Adobe Bridge, then to Photoshop CS3. I've included screen-grabs which illustrate Histogram, Channels and Layers. However, there is no 'follow this route to success' workflow for exploring the tonal opportunities in Lab. Hopefully, the following examples will point the way and provide an introduction. Please remember that the results will be image-dependent and the examples illustrated here may not be replicated with your chosen image.



### **Tonal Adventures with Lab**

Lab Color Mode separates Lightness (L) from the two colour channels - those of magenta/green (a) and blue/yellow (b). The separation of L, a and b allows the colour channels to be adjusted independently of the Lightness channel. For example, you may wish to invert (make negative) Lightness only, or invert one or both colour channels. The effects can be weird and bizarre but for the right image, the results can be both striking and successful. The ability to separate the L, a and b channels can offer certain advantages and these allow

*Maillezais Abbey  
IR capture with Lab  
adjustment*

### **Channel Swapping**

*Open the selected image and create a Channel Mixer adjustment layer. In the Channel Mixer dialogue box: with the Output Channel set RED, change the Red Source Channel to 0% and set the Blue Source Channel to 100%*

*Go to the BLUE Output Channel and change the Blue Source Channel to 0% and set the Red Source Channel to 100%. Click OK*

*At this stage the image may display a range of muted colours, depending upon the content of the scene.*

*Next, create a Levels adjustment layer and click Auto Levels. (Yes, not something most of us would normally do I know but have faith; this provides a really useful boost in contrast.) Following Auto Levels, the result is frequently of a pleasing tonal range, however, it is, of course, image-dependent: for example in a scene including a blue sky and some clouds Channel Swapping will tend to give a result which offers a blue-shaded sky with the remaining areas represented by tones of peach, apricot, magenta and cool slate blues mapped over the grey-scale content.*

*At this point you can decide to work with the partially toned result or convert to monochrome, apply Curves, colour tone, whatever. However for some images the following additional tweaks may prove of service. Try Image> Adjustments>Auto Colour and Image>Adjust>Auto Contrast. The above are naturally content and contrast dependent but sometimes they give that little extra. And such factors do inject an element of serendipity into the process - just like the old days really!*

*It's an advantage to make an Action for the Channel Swap and Auto-Levels procedure as this will probably become the most frequent quick-process route for pleasing results for many subjects.*

*Should you wish to view the image without the Channel-Swap then simply switch off the Channel Mixer Adjustment Layer.*

Note: Quick key/short-cuts shown in brackets are for PC.



Above: The Skiff and The Hulk. Original unprocessed 16 bit RAW file and associated Histogram, Channels and Layers palettes



numerous excursions and adventures. To indicate the variables that one can enjoy I'm going to use my image (left) of The Skiff and The Hulk as an example. Please remember that not all tonal changes will affect all images equally and that the results obtained are, understandably, referred to as false colour: therefore the tones and colours cannot be wrong - only more or less pleasing or appropriate.

Open the starting image and convert to Lab Color (Image > Mode > Lab Color) - see screen grab left.

Make sure that you can see the Channels palette, shown below left. If it's not visible go to Windows > Channels.

Beginning to explore the flexibility of Lab mode, experiment by Inverting (making negative) each channel. This simple exercise will illustrate the independence of each channel or combined Channels. We have seven independent options at our disposal: L, a or b individually, and the combinations L/a, L/b, a/b, L/a/b. To understand the principle we'll look at just two - comparing b alone and the combination b/L. Click/highlight Channel b (quick-key = Ctrl+3) - see left. Make certain that the eye icons for each of the Channels are on but only the b Channel is highlighted/active.

Go to Image > Adjustments > Invert (Ctrl + I) and the image (below) will be subtly different from our original shown at top left as only b (blue content) has been inverted.



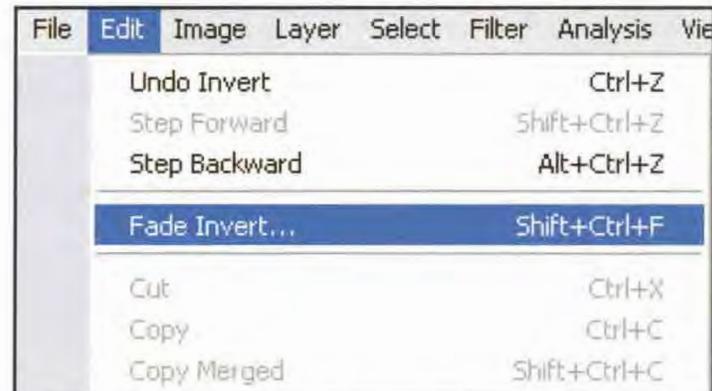
Undo the change above, Edit > Undo Invert (Ctrl + Z) to restore the image to the starting point.

The next step in this introduction is to Invert more than one channel by choosing a Channel, say b, then shift-clicking on, for this example, the Lightness Channel.

Two Channels will now be highlighted, as shown on the left. Once both Channel b and Lightness Channel are active, invert this combination (Ctrl + I) and here is the very different result, now incorporating the Lightness Channel. The effect will not be to



everyone's taste but you can begin to understand how valuable access to individual channels can be. If you wish to experiment with reduced intensities of Invert, go to Edit > Fade Invert and adjust the slider control. Also, as an option in this dialogue box, different Blend Modes can be tried. NB Edit > Fade is only available immediately after making the Invert command as shown below.



For an alternative and more flexible approach we're going to explore the subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) use of Level changes to Channel a and Channel b.

To follow this route return to the image starting point. Look at the Histogram: if not visible, go to Window > Histogram. This Window option is not available on pre CS versions of Photoshop, in which case observe the Histogram as we proceed via Levels.

Activate Channel a. This reveals a sharp spike of Histogram information which represents the narrow range of tonal information captured in this channel.

We seek to expand the tonal range by adjusting Levels. To do this go to Image > Adjustments > Levels. For the working example I adjusted the black, white and mid-level sliders to produce the result here. Adjusting Levels controls the



amount and distribution of magenta/green for Channel a. Adjusting Levels for Channel b will control the distribution of yellow/blue - below.



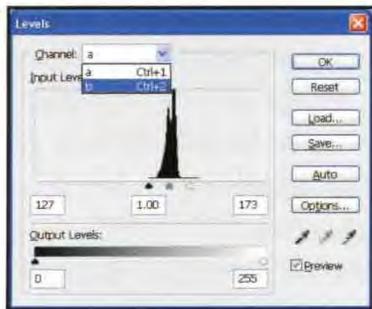
Whilst the Levels dialogue box is open, it's also worth experimenting with changes to the

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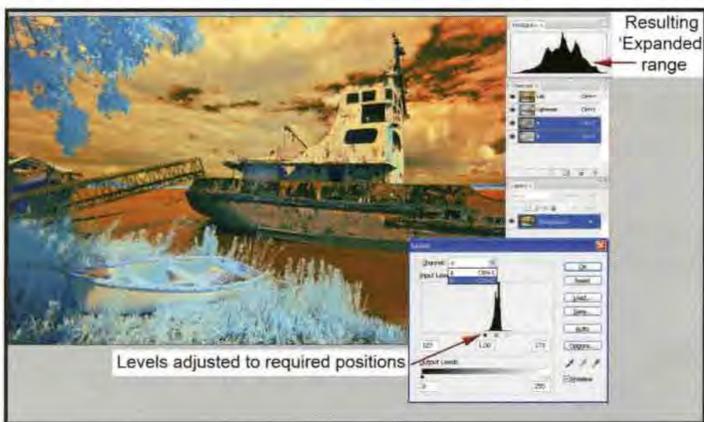
Output settings. After returning to the example image starting point, we'll look at a further step. This is a useful refinement to control both a and b Channels in the same dialogue box. Begin by activating both Channel a and Channel b – do this by clicking on Channel a, then shift-clicking on Channel b, as shown below.



Go to Image > Adjustments > Levels. Click on the drop-down arrow adjacent to the word Channel. This will reveal a choice for the independent adjustment of a and/or b Channels, shown here.



One example of this independent control is illustrated in the screen grab below.



For finer adjustment and extended control of tone I suggest that you choose Curves from the Image > Adjustments menu. The Adjustments menu also presents other options – where the humble Brightness and Contrast are worthy of exploration. For those who enjoy a not-so-subtle approach, this is a wild example of Curves applied to Channel a!



I could continue to present ever more variations to Lab Channel adjustments. However it's best if you begin to experiment with your own images.

To complete this section, I include a more fully worked example of the image below. From the screen-grab you'll notice that the Layer structure is more complex. The various Layers include tonal variations based upon the methods above, Layer Masks and Adjustment Layers for both Curves and Hue & Saturation.



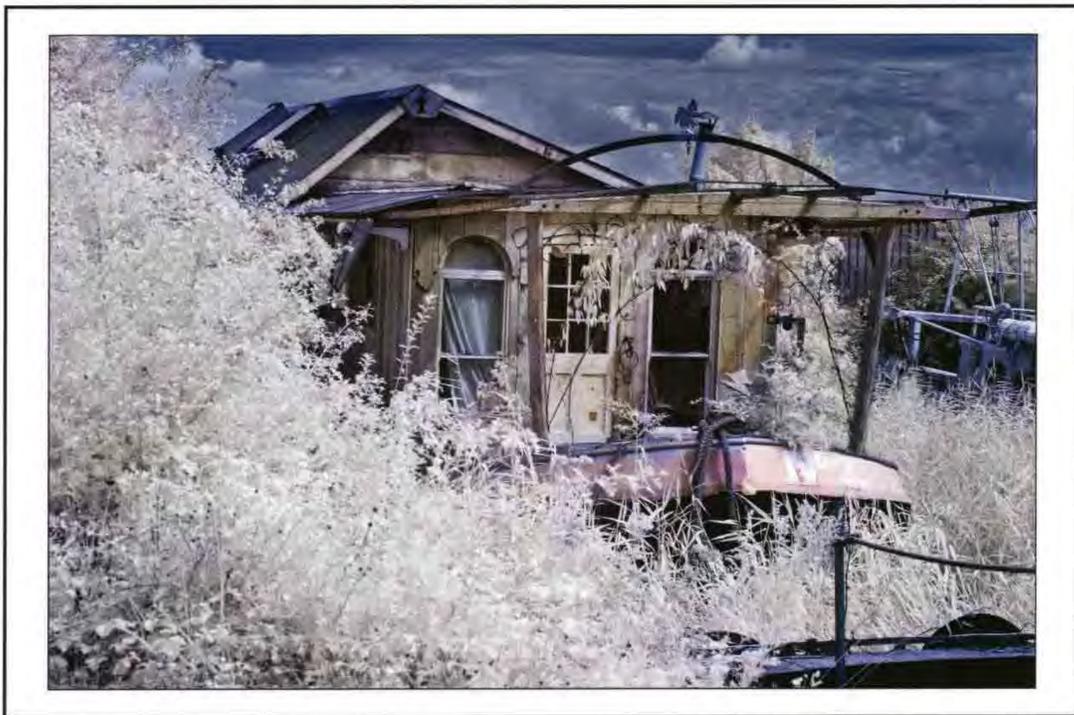
For comparison, the straight Channel-Swap image is also shown.



### Working in Monochrome

For onward conversion and management of an image in monochrome, the image can be treated in several ways. It's a matter of experiment to discover which one suits any given subject the best. The most usual methods will be: conversion to mono in the RAW file reader; or once opened as a Photoshop (.psd) or .TIFF file, the options are:

*Houseboat*



Desaturation, monochrome via Channel Mixer, Black & White (CS3 on), Gradient Map, Calculations (definitely worth exploring) or conversion to Lab mode utilising the L channel only. Please note that wherever possible you should use an Adjustment Layer as this will allow maximum flexibility and editing. Converting straight to Grayscale (Image > Mode > Grayscale) is not recommended as the conversion is frequently bland (although one can have the occasional lucky strike) and as colour channel information is lost, you'll need to swap back to RGB Mode (Image > Mode > RGB) for any toning and tinting, except for Duotones for which the mode needs to be Grayscale.

The image below has been opened in CS3 Bridge and converted using HSL/Grayscale in the RAW Converter and ticking the Convert to

Grayscale box. In HSL/Grayscale, it can be helpful to decrease the Oranges slider as this will offer some increased contrast (in this image in the sky and water) and give a boost prior to opening. You may notice an increase in noise: however, magnifying the image will show that the noise is minimal. I've also shown the same image after adjusting Curves to provide more localised contrast and bite.



**Infrared and Water.** I recently experimented by shooting test images of goldfish in our garden pond and I was surprised to discover just how far IR could see into the water. The example included here isn't beautiful but it does reveal that IR penetrates well below the surface. In fact IR allowed me to see further into the water with greater clarity than with my eyes alone.



I hope that in opening the lid of this particular box of delights you'll be keen to make adventures further into this fascinating 'Invisible World'. Key elements to success are: pre-visualisation of your final image, an open

mind and a willingness to experiment. You'll soon discover which methods enable you to express yourself best. Let's see some of your results in future issues of **DIGIT**.

My website offers information on DI Infrared Capture and Workflow plus many other DI Know-How Techniques, and image galleries too. Visit: [www.crhfoto.co.uk](http://www.crhfoto.co.uk)

And finally, some problems you may encounter. **Hot-Spots, Occasional Flares and Softness**

In the autumn edition of **DIGIT** I mentioned that, unlike the days of film-based infrared photography, DI capture is now far less wayward and more predictable. This is certainly true, but only up to a point. From time to time one can still encounter the odd and unexpected quirk from IR capture. This usually stems from the fact that we're asking the camera to record a range of tones (light) beyond the spectrum that the camera and lens combination would have been designed for (visible light 400nm - 650nm).

A common occurrence is that of a hot-spot, that is to say a circular light-toned area usually noticeable in the centre of the image. In my experience it was far more apparent when using a non-IR converted digital camera where an opaque filter had been fitted to the lens to ensure that only IR was transmitted. However, I have noticed the occasional barely discernable hot-spot using my IR-converted Nikon D70.

This is not a fault with the camera or the IR conversion or even with the lens (although IR may exaggerate a tendency inherent in any given lens that is not obvious under normal visible light conditions). I found that the hot-spot can occur only under certain exposure conditions and that it's largely unpredictable. Fortunately the occurrences are rare and can be readily dealt with by some deft tonal correction work (Levels and/or Curves) in Photoshop.

Hot-spot problems are usually more pronounced at apertures from, say, f/8 or f/11 and beyond so, unless depth of field is critical, a wider aperture will reduce the hot-spot considerably. Odd streaks and flares also may be experienced from time to time - again a vagary of IR capture. The severe hot-spot illustrated here occurred when shooting with a non-IR converted camera, with an opaque (IR) filter, stopped down to f/32.

Softness is the other occasional problem.

Sometimes, although one is absolutely certain that the focus was accurate, the image appears soft and the focus a little off. IR converted cameras will be carefully adjusted to overcome back-focus problems (see autumn **DIGIT**) and should softness occur, the error is



## CLIVE HAYNES FRPS

probably the result of the auto-focus mechanism simply getting it slightly wrong from an infrared point of view. When using a zoom lens the error may not be constant or apparent at all focal lengths.

Only by experimentation will this become evident. If in doubt, stop-down to a considerably smaller aperture to gain greater depth of field or use manual focus with a guesstimate as to the forward or backward

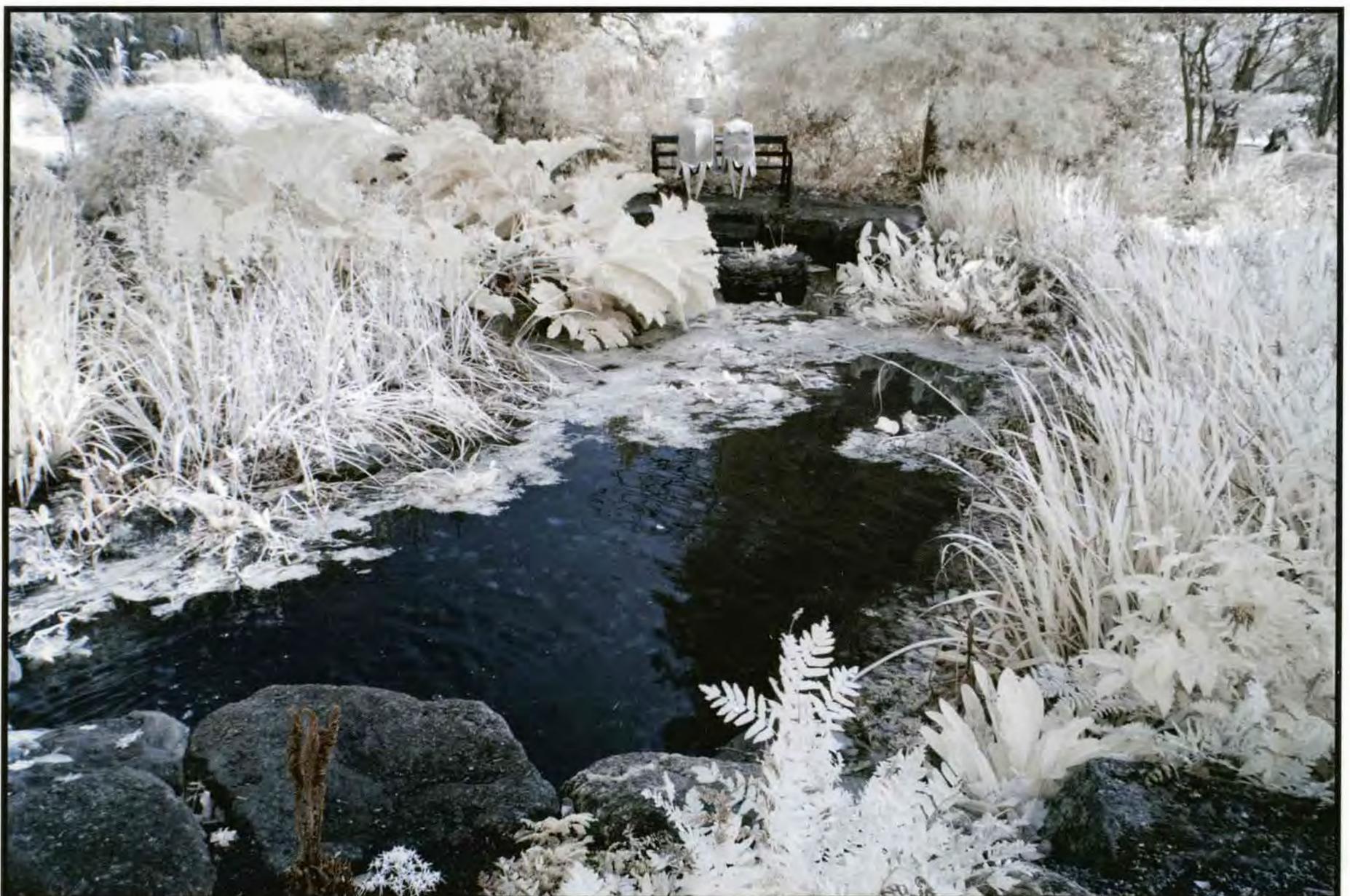
tweak required. There's also the consideration that not all lenses will transmit IR wavelengths the same or as effectively. Even one's most favoured and expensive lens may not perform as well as expected at the IR end of the spectrum. This is hardly surprising considering that the manufacturer would have been primarily concerned with ensuring the fidelity of the optics for visible light.

Go to:  
[www.crhfoto.co.uk](http://www.crhfoto.co.uk)  
for more

*Marais Sauvage by Clive Haynes FRPS*



*Bert Housley ARPS is also a digital infrared convert. He wrote to say that he had thoroughly enjoyed Clive's article on IR capture in the Autumn issue of DIGIT and as a result had even had a Nikon D200 converted by Advanced Camera Services. Bert is delighted with his results so far, as you can see. To give another user experience Bert will be writing a piece for the spring issue of the magazine, with some more of his digital IR images. This one from the Sheffield Botanical Gardens is called Aliens.*



**Notice of AGM and Exhibition Print Selection**  
**with talk by Gavin Hoey on the most useful, exciting and downright fun parts of Photoshop**  
**The Annual General Meeting of the RPS Digital Imaging Group will be held on**  
**Sunday 19 April 2009 at 1030**

at The Old School House, Smethwick PhotoSoc Club Rooms,  
Churchbridge, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 2AS

Easy access from M5, Junction 2 or train. See <http://www.theoldschoolhouse.com> for details.

|  |                   |                    |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>1000 Coffee</b>   | <b>AGM AGENDA</b> | <b>1000 Coffee</b> |
| 1 Notice of meeting  |                   |                    |
| 2 Formal adoption of the minutes of the previous AGM - see:<br><a href="http://www.digit.rps.org/phpBB-3.0.1/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=5&amp;t=778">http://www.digit.rps.org/phpBB-3.0.1/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=5&amp;t=778</a> |                   |                    |
| 3 Matters arising from the previous minutes  |                   |                    |
| 4 Annual Reports and accounts:<br>• Chairman • Treasurer   |                   |                    |
| 7 Election of Officers and Committee members -<br>see overleaf for vacancies and Nomination Form.  |                   |                    |
| 8 Any other relevant business  |                   |                    |
| 9 Date of next AGM   |                   |                    |



By rail use Sandwell and Dudley -Birmingham then short walk, bus or taxi ride.

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

1400 - 1630 Lecture/Demonstration by Gavin Hoey - Confessions of a Photoshop Anorak .  
A well known writer and demonstrator of digital imaging, Gavin defines Anorak (slang) as a person obsessively interested in a thing or topic that doesn't seem to warrant such attention. The talk is the distillation of all the knowledge he's gained from spending too much time in front of a computer. In just a couple of hours you'll see demonstrations of the most useful, exciting and downright fun parts of Photoshop. Gavin will also pass on his thoughts on what to avoid, saving you hours of wasted time learning useless stuff you'll never need.  
Free for Group members - tickets for others £5 on the door.

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

**A two-course lunch is available at £7 per head. Booking and payment must be made no later than 7 April.**

Please book me:  chicken lunches at £7 each

vegetarian lunches at £7 each

Cheque enclosed for £

Stamped addressed envelope enclosed - please tick:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: COMMITTEE FOR 2009/10

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

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

### Officers

The following offer to stand:

**Chairman:** *Clive Haynes FRPS*  
**Deputy Chairman:** *Chris Haydon*  
**Secretary General:** *Bob Pearson FRPS*  
**Treasurer:** *Elizabeth Restall LRPS*

### Six Committee Members:

The following offer to stand:  
*Maureen Albright ARPS*  
*Alex Dufty LRPS*  
*Anthony Healy ARPS*  
*John Long ARPS*  
*Graham Whistler FRPS*  
*Cesi Jennings LRPS*

### DIGROs

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Central Southern:</b> Roger Norton LRPS | <b>North West:</b> Harry Bosworth        | <b>South Wales:</b> Maureen Albright ARPS |
| <b>East Anglia:</b> Vacant                 | <b>Scotland:</b> Vacant                  | <b>Wessex:</b> Maureen Albright ARPS      |
| <b>East Midlands:</b> Bob Rowe ARPS        | <b>Southern:</b> Dr Barry Senior HonFRPS | <b>Western:</b> Tony Poole ARPS           |
| <b>Midlands:</b> Clive Haynes FRPS         |  | <b>Yorkshire:</b> Robert Croft LRPS       |

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

*Note:* The editor of the magazine is not a committee post and Jim Buckley LRPS offers to continue in that role. Assistance is needed outside the committee to encourage and spot potential articles and images and to help with copy preparation. Please see page 5 and contact the editor if you would like to help.

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

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP</b>        |                  |
| NOMINATION TO FILL VACANCY ARISING AT THE AGM ON 19 APRIL 2009 |                  |
| TO BE RETURNED TO THE SECRETARY BY 1700 ON 5 APRIL 2009        |                  |
| I, _____ (Please print)  |                  |
| wish to stand for election as: _____ or to the Committee.      |                  |
| Signed _____   | Date: _____ 2009 |
| Proposed by: _____ (Please print)                              |                  |
| Signed _____   | Date: _____ 2009 |
| Seconded by: _____ (Please print)                              |                  |
| Signed _____   | Date: _____ 2009 |

**Please return nomination form by 1700 on 5 April 2009 to:  
Bob Pearson FRPS, Orchard House, Broadhembury, Honilton EX14 3LW**

## **DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP 2009 MEMBERS' EXHIBITION**

The 2009 print exhibition will be shown at the following locations:

**Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton TA1 3XZ  
Monday 8 June - Saturday 20 June**

**The Link Centre, Swindon Library.  
Tuesday 30 June - Friday 31 July**

**The Old School House, Oldbury, West Midlands.  
Tuesday 18 August - Saturday 5 September**

**Any changes or additions will be displayed on the Website**

**Closing date for postal entries - Thursday 9 April 2009  
Selection of Exhibition, Sunday 19 April 2009**

**You may bring your entry to the Annual General Meeting of the Digital Imaging Group, being held  
at the Old Schoolhouse, Oldbury, West Midlands  
on Sunday 19 April 2009 - if doing so, please send the Entry Form, CD and cheque to Alex Dufty  
- in advance**

**Selectors:  
Hilary Roberts FRPS  
Bob Pearson FRPS  
Gavin Hoey**

**\*\*\***

**Please read the rules carefully  
and complete the Entry Form overleaf**

**\*\*\***

**Any queries, please contact the Exhibition Secretary  
Alex Dufty LRPS  
127 Bradley Avenue, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1HW  
Tel: 01454 778485  
Email: [exhibition@digit.rps.org](mailto:exhibition@digit.rps.org)**

## 2009 MEMBERS' EXHIBITION - RULES

1. A **minimum** of two prints and a **maximum** of three prints may be entered. They should be posted or delivered to the address on the reverse side of this entry form **OR** brought on the day if you are attending the AGM. **In which case, the Entry Form, CD and cheque should be sent to Alex Dufty in advance.**
2. Each print must be marked on the reverse with the entrant's name, address and title as shown on the entry form. **Mount size must be 40 x 50 cm.**
3. Prints accepted for previous DIG Exhibitions are not eligible for entry.
4. Packing must be suitable for use in return posting of the prints unless collection arrangements have been previously agreed with the Exhibition Secretary. Please remember to include return postage, either in stamps, or by cheque.
5. There is an entry fee of **£5** per set of prints. All cheques made payable to: **RPS DI GROUP.**
6. A **CD must accompany the entry** with the images in TIFF and JPEG format if you wish your images to be published on the website, on the Exhibition DVD and in the Exhibition edition of DIGIT. Entries for the Exhibition without the CD and files in the correct format will be accepted but only shown as Prints. The file names on the CD **MUST** be the same as the print titles to allow us to identify the selected one. TIFFs at 300 ppi sized at 15cm longest edge. JPEGs sized 500 pixels longest edge with a maximum file size of 95 KB. Mac users please ensure that the image is readable in PC format.
7. Images to be on **CD only, NO FLOPPY DISCS.** Names to be written on the CD with CD marker and without sticky labels please.
8. Judging will take place following the AGM on 19 April and will be carried out by the selected judges. Each entrant will have one print accepted. A Gold Medal and six Ribbons will be awarded.
9. Due to constraints on hanging space, it may not be possible to display all the accepted prints at every venue.
10. The utmost care will be taken of all prints, but the Digital Imaging Group cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage during the exhibition or whilst in transit.

*Please cut here to use the Entry Form below  
or photocopy the slip*

### ENTRY FORM - 2009 RPS DI GROUP MEMBERS' EXHIBITION

Write carefully please

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

RPS Distinction: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

RPS Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Entry fee of £5 enclosed: Please tick

Return postage enclosed: Please tick

#### PRINT TITLES

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return entry form by 1700 on 9 April 2009 to:  
A Dufty LRPS, 127 Bradley Avenue, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1HW**

# WEBWISE 3 with David Cooke LRPS

All the *Webwise* material is on the DI Group website: <http://www.digit.rps.org/phpBB-3.0.1/phpBB3/>. You'll need to register on the Forum to make comments and to contribute. Click on the Register button on the top right of the main Forum screen. There's guidance on how to subscribe to podcasts using iTunes as well as the links given in the previous *Webwise* articles. When you look at them, please do make a comment on the Forum or email me directly at [d.f.cooke@open.ac.uk](mailto:d.f.cooke@open.ac.uk) to let me know how useful (or not) you found them. And please do recommend sites you've found interesting yourself so other members can share them. And I look forward to seeing your images in response to the my Challenge overleaf.



## **Update on The Radiant Vista.**

In the first *Webwise* (DIGIT no 38, page 35, Summer 2008), I recommended two features of the Radiant Vista website, namely The Daily Critique and the Photoshop Workbench. Since then, the Radiant Vista has been reorganised and split into three. The original URL: <http://www.radiantvista.com/> is still functional but you'll now find links to three new sites. Here are two sites of particular interest.

### **The Mindful Eye**

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

is run by Craig Tanner and his associates. It contains The Daily Critique, many other of the features of the old Radiant Vista site, together with a number of new ones. To use the site you'll need to register but it's easy, free and I would strongly recommend that you do so as I'm sure you'll enjoy the things you'll find there. If you registered on the old Radiant Vista site your registration should still be valid on the new one.

### **Mark S Johnson Photography**

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

contains the Photoshop Workbench as well as other video tutorials on Photoshop. You don't need to register on this site to view the tutorials. If you'd like to read the original recommendations and you don't have a copy of DIGIT, remember you'll find them on the DIGIT Forum.

I have *Recommendations* for two podcasts and a website this time.

### **Thoughts on photography**

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

Thoughts on Photography (subscribe through iTunes) is somewhat reflective and philosophical in nature and Paul Giguere, its author, says it covers 'the more fine art aspects of engaging with your photography as opposed to the gear and technique and that sort of thing. It talks more about what you need to do and what things you might want to think about as an emerging photographer who's looking to get into the fine art field.'

The topics covered are wide and varied, many of which are in response to requests from listeners. They include, for example, developing a photographic style, using projects to sustain your photography, book and magazine reviews, marketing and selling your fine art photography, writing an artist's statement, and interviews with photographers

The podcasts are short, about 10 to 15 minutes each and, as they can be played on an mp3

player, you can listen to them anywhere. I've enjoyed listening to them and I've learned a lot from them. I highly recommend them to you.

### **Photowalkthrough**

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

Photowalkthrough (subscribe through iTunes) is run by John Arnold, a UK based photographer. On the site John says that it 'presents video tutorials showing the post processing of a photograph using Adobe Photoshop and other programs. Along the way you will learn about the tools and techniques used and gain insight into the creative decisions that directed the artist's hand.'

The podcasts are grouped together into tutorials which give very detailed information and guidance on the work done on a specific photograph. A tutorial typically contains between 4 and 8 podcasts (Chapters), each of which is typically some 20 to 35 minutes long. The website also gives details of what is covered in each chapter so it's easy to scan if you are looking for a particular technique.

I particularly like this series of podcasts because they go into some depth rather than just being quick tips on how to use various aspects of Photoshop.

### **Masters of Photography**

<http://www.masters-of-photography.com/>

This website contains photographs, as its name suggests, by some of the greatest and most famous photographers. As well as images, it has articles and other resources on each of the photographers listed. More photographers are being added as the site is being developed.

This isn't the easiest site to navigate: when you click on a photographer's name you will get thumbnails of the photographs which look like mounted 35mm slides. Click on the first one. This brings up the first image. Then click on the magnifying glass icon at the bottom right-hand side of the image. This will give you a larger image but there will also be an arrow at the bottom right-hand side of the image which allows you scroll. When you've finished, you'll find the Home button at the bottom of the screen.

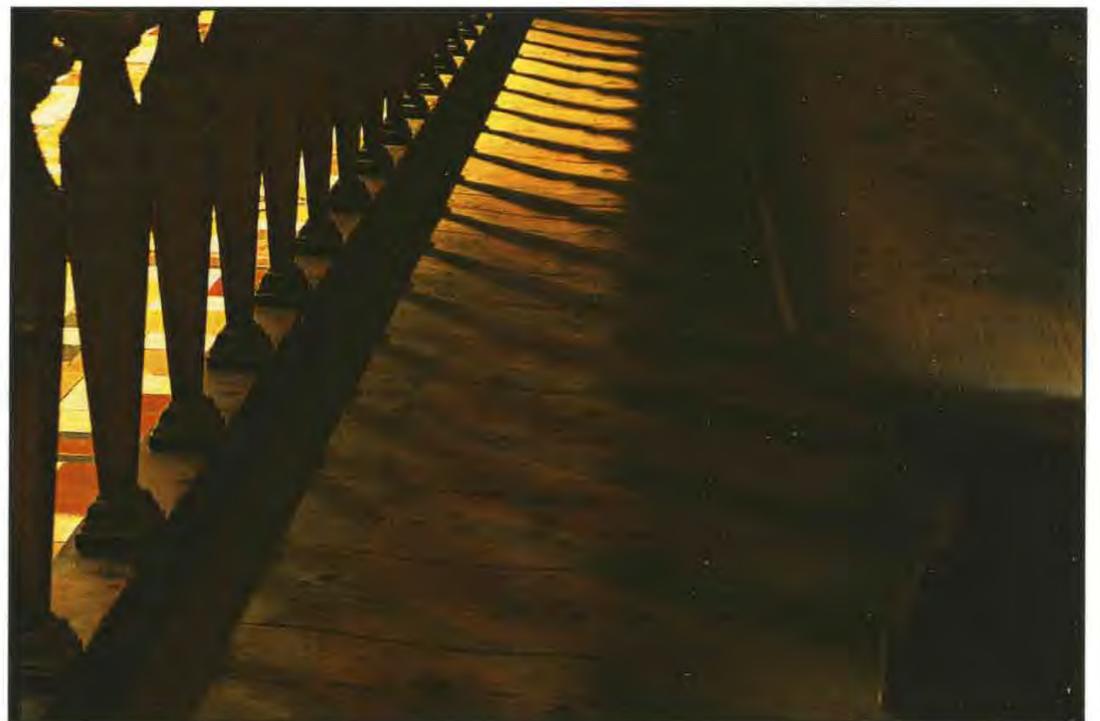
It's a really useful site to get a taste of the work of the many people listed. I strongly recommend it as a resource particularly for people, like me, who are still finding out about the history and development of photography and the people who have strongly influenced its development.

Since I joined the Digital Imaging Group I've learned a lot from reading DIGIT, from the very helpful comments I've had on images I've posted on the Forum and from the podcasts and tutorials I've been recommending in Webwise. Here are two images which I have produced in that time, together with a short explanation of how they were made. If you find them interesting and helpful, why not let me have some of your own images, together with a short description of how you created them, for publication in *DIGIT*? We can all learn from each other and it would be good to have as many members as possible displaying and explaining their work – after all, what greater pleasure can a photographer have than knowing that their images are being seen by over 1000 people? Email me at: [d.f.cooke@open.ac.uk](mailto:d.f.cooke@open.ac.uk)

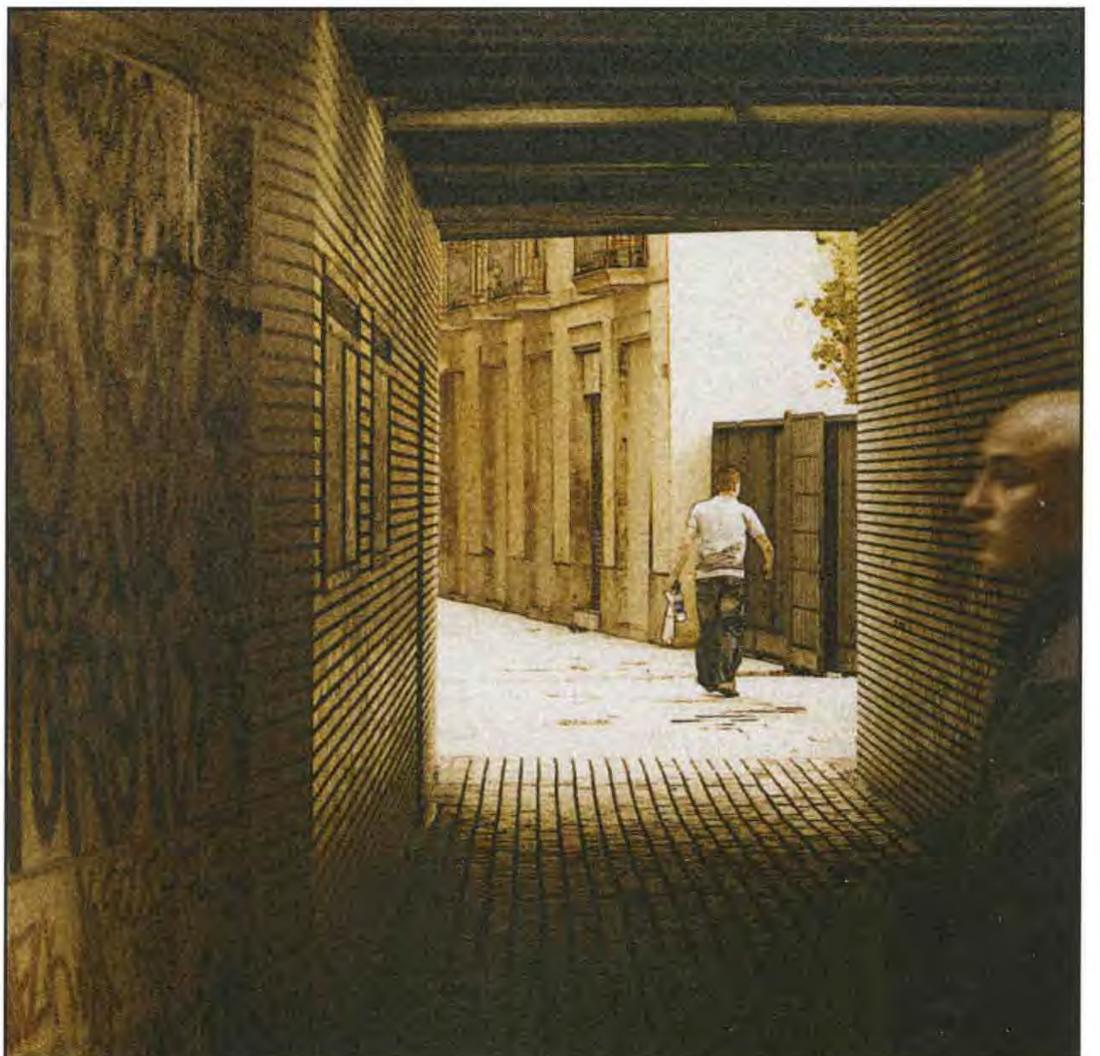
# TAKE THE COOKE CHALLENGE!



**Light and Shadows.** This is an High Dynamic Range (HDR) image but in this case made from a single RAW image, rather than from three separately shot images. The original image was first manipulated in Nikon Capture NX to straighten and crop it and to selectively bring out some of the detail in the shadows. Two further images were made from this using raw exposure compensation of -2 and +2 and the three images (saved as TIFF files) were then combined into an HDR image using Photomatix Pro 3.0. The result has much more detail and impact but there were some over bright areas and unnatural colour in some places which were adjusted in Capture NX. The image was taken into Photoshop for final adjustments: cloning out small blemishes and sharpening as shown right. If you've not used HDR before you can find articles in previous editions of *DIGIT* (eg Nos 34 and 38) or type *HDR photography* into Google.



**Through the passageway.** My intention here was to produce a sepia image with just a hint of colour and the appearance of a line drawing. The original Raw image was taken into Capture NX where it was cropped and colours and levels were adjusted before saving it as a TIFF file. A second TIFF sepia version was also made. Both images were opened in Photoshop and the sepia image was placed in a layer above the colour image. The opacity was reduced to 75% to allow the amount of colour I wanted in the image to come through. The Find Edges filter was then applied to a copy of this layer and the opacity was reduced to 36%. Clone layers were used to remove the harsh edges around the end of the passageway and the post at the bottom right of the image; Levels and Curves adjustments were applied and finally the 'grain' was applied using a white colour fill layer and adding monochromatic Gaussian noise at 250% and reducing the opacity of the layer to 31%.





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## THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE ROAD: IS LIGHTROOM THE ANSWER?

**In the last issue of *DIGIT* Phil Drake told us about his monochrome work. Here he explores the latest Adobe offering in the digital world. It may seem like a tool for the professional or high-end amateur who has lots of images to process but Phil reckons it's a cost-effective piece of software when combined with Photoshop Elements to cover all our needs. And even if you don't fancy giving Lightroom a try there's helpful guidance here on Adobe Camera RAW in Photoshop CS.**

On first examination, Lightroom seems very similar to Bridge and Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) rolled into one. The main difference is that Lightroom is a database, while Bridge is a browser. Both, however, share the same RAW processing engine. I was involved with Lightroom from the start, initially using the Beta version. When the full version was launched, I had it on my computer within the first week.

If Lightroom seems to be very much the same as Bridge and ACR, why bother to use it? The short answer is that I find it very much more user friendly. Switching between modules like *Library* and *Develop* is quick and easy, and other features are also very good.

Don't take my word for it: try it for yourself. I think Adobe still offer a 30 day free trial - and no, I don't work for Adobe!

There are five modules within Lightroom: *Library*, *Develop*, *Slideshow*, *Print* and *Web*.

I am going to concentrate solely on *Develop*.

### *Develop Mode*

The first thing I wish to point out is that tonal adjustments are non-destructive in that your original images are preserved. This is not just limited to RAW files; it also applies to JPEGs, TIFF and PSD. To get the full benefit RAW should be used since when using pixel-based images the results are limited. The adjustments are exactly the same as those in ACR, so if you are not familiar with them read on to discover more about how to use them.

Let me describe how I adjust the colour and tonal scale of my images. I am not saying that this the right or only way to work but it works for me. It is not something that I developed but it is generally the way most books would say you should work. The method is set out for a colour image but it is the same for B&W - more on that later. If you are not familiar with ACR I suggest you use an image that is pretty well a standard, low contrast image to start with and

## PHIL DRAKE FRPS

then try images that have more extreme lighting conditions when you get more confident.

Open up your image in Lightroom and select *Develop* on the Top Panel. The panel shown here will open up and you will find all the adjustment sliders, laid out in a logical way. We will work downwards in sequence.

Before we do that it's a good idea to crop and straighten your image by using the tools in the Toolbar, found at the bottom of your screen under the content panel.

### Now start on the tonal adjustments

The first box you will see is Histogram. If you can't see it click on the triangle (next to Histogram) and it will open. This tip applies to all the boxes.

The next box is Basic. This is where we will change the White Balance to adjust the overall colour appearance of the image. It is a matter of personal taste. Click on the eyedropper and find a spot on your image that you think is light grey and click in that area.

If you not happy with the result move around your image until you find one that works better. You may find that when using the eyedropper it automatically docks itself after one click. You

can overcome this by un-ticking Auto Dismiss found on the bottom toolbar.

It also helpful to have Show Loupe ticked, found under the image when the eyedropper is selected. This gives you a grid showing all the colours surrounding the point where you click on the image, plus the RGB values (expressed as percentages) thereby allowing you to pick a better Grey Point.

Now move down the panel and you will see the sliders Temp and Tint. If you need to, fine adjust the colour temperature and also the colour cast, if one exists. I find I rarely have to do this.

The next four sliders are used to get the maximum detail from your image. You need to



go back to the Histogram and at the top corners you will see two triangles. These show when clipping is occurring. The left hand one, when clicked, will show blue shading in your image denoting black clipping and the right hand one will show red for highlight clipping as shown at the bottom of this column.

If you don't see this then great, you have a perfectly exposed image with no loss of detail. If you wish you can leave these triangles switched off and just watch the triangles when moving the sliders. They will change to the colour of the channel that is being clipped. Grey denotes all channels are clipped, as shown alongside.

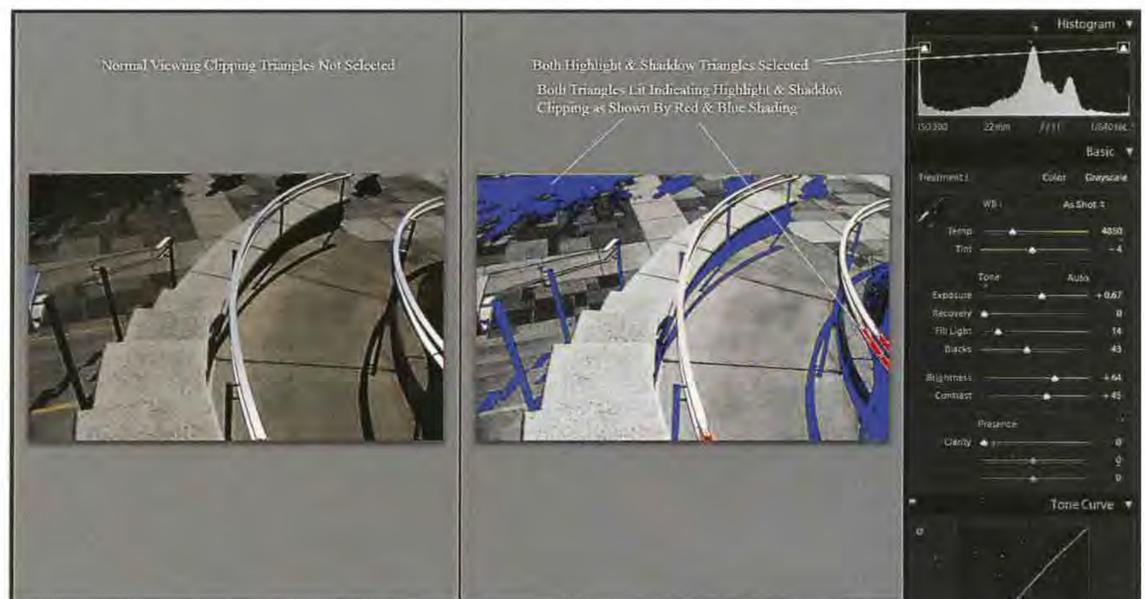
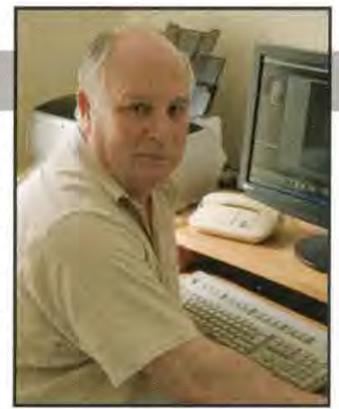
I know you purists are going to raise your eyebrows, but before any adjustments try clicking the Auto button. The results are surprisingly good!

Start with Exposure. With this adjustment you need to have the four sliders - exposure, recovery, fill light and blacks - set to the default setting of zero. If using RAW the Black default setting is 5. Leave it at that.

Move the Exposure slider until you just get Highlight Clipping (Right Triangle or Red Shading will come on as already described) and then back it off until it just disappears. Using the Recovery slider will enable further recovery of highlights but we will come to that in a moment.

Jump the next two sliders to Blacks. This time you are adjusting Shadow Clipping and you will be looking at the left triangle. Move the slider until shadow clipping occurs and then back it off until the lit triangle goes off. Try not to have the Black slider at zero. To avoid this you may have to adjust the Fill Slider.

You will next have to adjust the two sliders which up to now we have ignored - Recovery and Fill Light. Start with the Fill Light. This adjusts the detail in the shadows. You will probably find that you will have to juggle with this and the black slider to avoid shadow clipping. The recovery



slider puts back any lost detail in the highlights. In theory you shouldn't have to use either but believe me you will. Much of what you do will depend on how good your initial exposure was and the tonal range of the subject. If very over or under exposed a compromise may have to be made. It will be up to you to decide whether to lose shadow or highlight detail.

The next two sliders are Brightness and Contrast, which I use sparingly. I tend to use the Tone Curve, detailed below, or when the image is in Photoshop I use Curves to get the image exactly how I want it.

The Clarity slider is used, as Adobe describes it, to add depth to the image by increasing local contrast. What this does is to make the image more punchy: the same thing can be done in Photoshop using Unsharp Mask and playing around with it but here it is so easy with just one slider. How much to adjust is down to personal preference. Just don't over do it!

Vibrance & Saturation seem to be the same thing but they are not. Saturation adjusts all the colours by the same amount whereas Vibrance increases the lower saturated colours more than the higher ones. Adjusting these is a matter of personal preference.

The next step is the Tone Curve Box. This is a very easy to use curves tool. You have the choice of applying three different types of adjustments, Linear, Medium Contrast or Strong Contrast by selecting one from the Point Curve.

Then, by using the sliders or by dragging the curve, you can selectively adjust Highlights, Lights, Darks and Shadows. Another feature is the Target Adjustment Tool (located in the top left of the box). By clicking on this and then dragging up or down in the image itself you can alter the tones of the image.

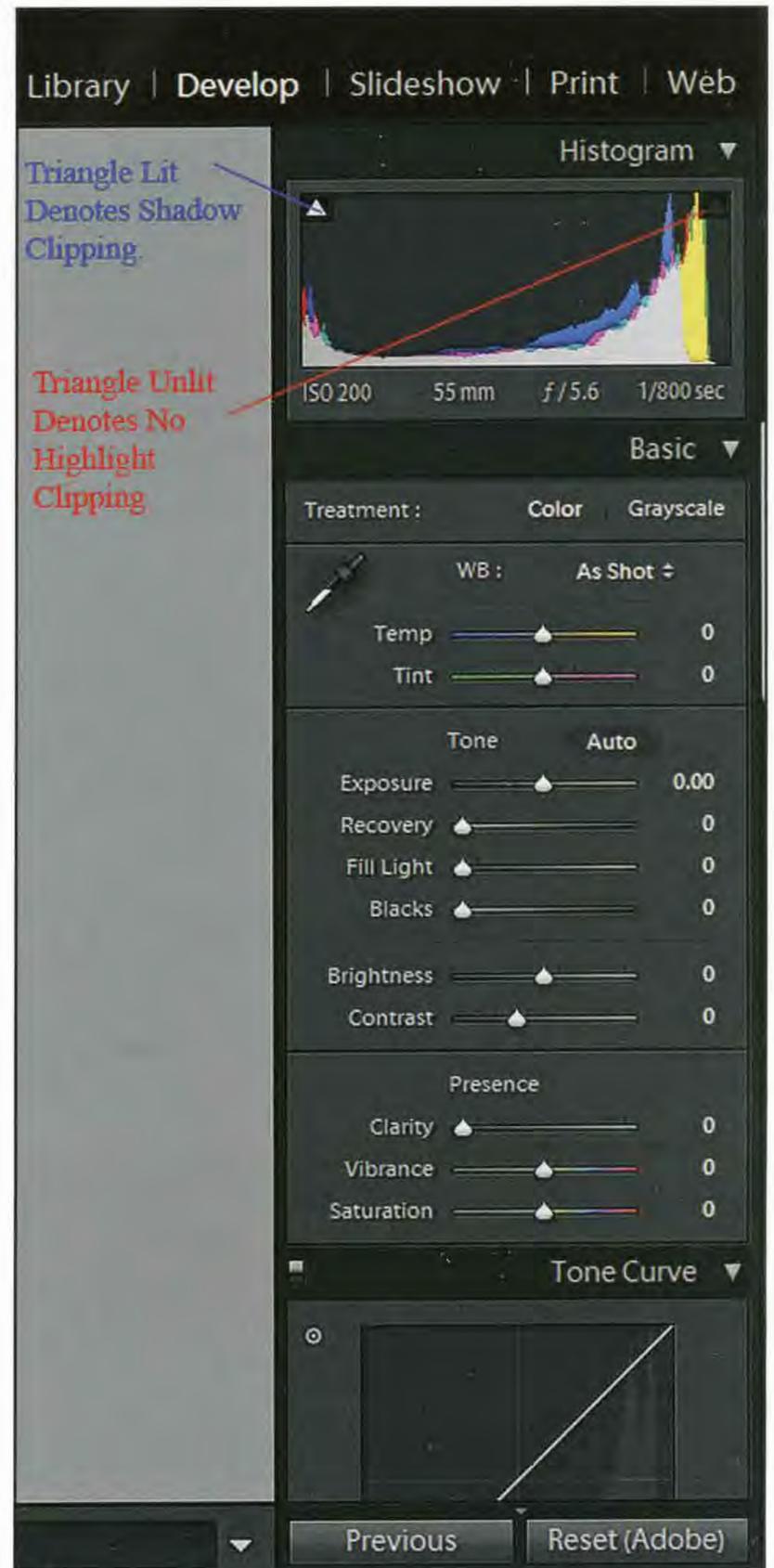
This is the point where I normally exit Lightroom and go into Photoshop. To do this simply hit Ctrl + E and a dialog box appears asking what File Format you require, the Colour Space and Bit Depth. Click OK and you will open up Photoshop CS or Elements depending on what you have installed. If you have both then it will open in Photoshop CS unless you have the default set otherwise.

Once in Photoshop I work on the image in the way most people do - Selections, Layers, Curves, Levels and Layer Masks to get the finished picture exactly the way I want it. Finally remember it's your photograph so don't get too hung up about the technical aspects. Produce the image, as you want it.

As previously said, the adjustments carried out in Lightroom were for a reasonably exposed image. If you had extreme over or under exposure or an extreme highlight to shadow ratio then you will have shadows or highlight clipping or both.

### B&W

I am told that there are around eighty plus ways



to convert to B&W in Photoshop. Well here are a few more!

To convert an image to B&W in Lightroom you have a number of options. Select one of the B&W Presets, click on Grayscale in the Basic Panel or desaturate by using the Saturation Slider. The term Grayscale in Lightroom is a bit misleading. It's not the same as Grayscale Mode in Photoshop: it is in fact an RGB image.

### Other Features

Some of the other features within the Develop module are Crop, Red Eye Removal, Clone and the ability to see the image before and after adjustments.

### Conclusion

Now updated to Lightroom 2 this is a great piece of software; it's easy to use and quick. To get maximum benefit from it RAW files should be used. At around £200, it's good value for money. Combine this with Elements, often given away free, and you have a couple of powerful programs at less than half the price of CS3 or CS4.

# MAKING CURVES WORK FOR YOU

**Do these statements seem familiar? *What are Curves? Why do we need Curves? I've looked at Curves and they're complicated!* Regrettably these responses do rather typify many a first contact with Curves. Some people venture once, never returning to discover what Curves can offer; others use only part of the great potential of Curves. Here DI Group Chairman Clive Haynes gives you all the spin on Photoshop's Curves.**

As a teacher of photography and Photoshop for many years I always sought to demystify Curves and to promote its use as one of the most powerful tools in Photoshop. Indeed my website has numerous pages devoted to understanding Curves. Many pages, yes, but not because Curves are that complicated. It's just that I've divided know-how about Curves into easily digestible portions. In this issue of *DIGIT* I should like to illustrate one frequently overlooked aspect of using Curves - the advantage of working with Luminosity Blend Mode. (The same practice can also be used with Levels.)

## **Working with Curves in Luminosity Blend Mode**

Most people tend to make tonal adjustments in Curves that affect both colour and luminosity content simultaneously.

When adjusting and modifying the shape of the curve in Normal Blend (the default mode) we affect the composite RGB content of the image. For small changes the alterations to colour, although present, are not usually significant. However when making more dramatic changes to the tonality of an image by lightening, darkening or increasing the contrast range, changes to the colour content become more pronounced and frequently undesirable.

It's often better practice to apply tonal changes to the underlying black and white (Luminosity) content of the image when we need to alter contrast. And to achieve this it's preferable to use an Adjustment Layer.

The Adjustment Layer route is the preferred option as not only is it non-destructive but also it has a useful Layer Mask, which is invaluable for the selective application of the adjustment needed. This mask appears as a white box to the right of the Curves adjustment icon as shown to the right here.

## **Creating a Curves Adjustment Layer**

At the base of the Layers palette, click on the half black/half white circle icon. From the drop-down list that appears, choose Curves.

To illustrate the value of working with Luminosity Blend Mode we'll first look at the example image opposite, with the Curve adjusted using Normal Blend mode. Notice that the contrast has increased and colour values become more intense - in this instance this is undesirable.

The next example shows the effect of choosing



The starting image



Normal Blend Mode

Luminosity Blend Mode with the identical adjustment to the shape of the Curve. To change the Blend Mode, click on the drop-down arrow to the right of the Normal box (at the top left hand of the Layers Palette) and from the drop-down (Blend) menu, choose Luminosity.

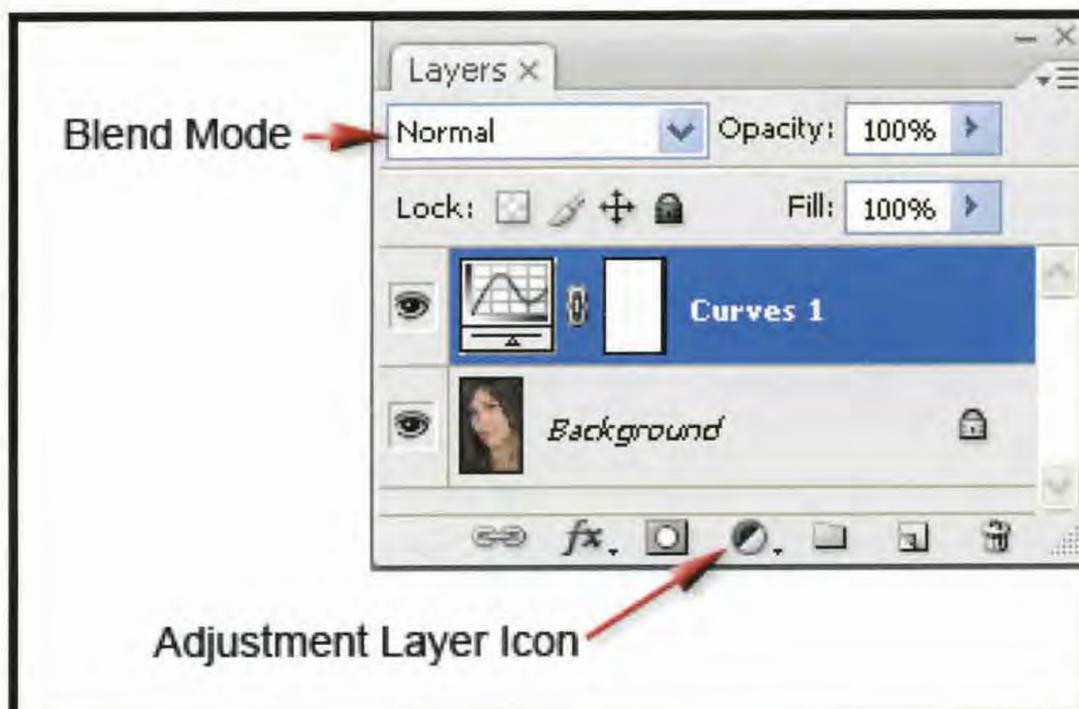
The alteration to the contrast has become more subtle as it now emphasises the change of underlying tone rather than colour.

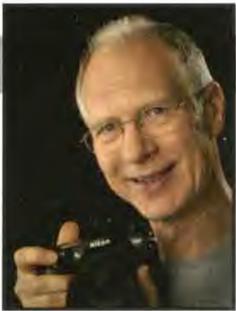
In this example the Curves adjustment has been initially applied to the whole area of the image. However, in the images on the facing page I have used the

Right:  
Luminosity Blend Mode



Below:  
Activating the Curves  
Adjustment Layer





Paintbrush tool and, with black, as the foreground colour, areas of the change have been selectively removed.

When painting on the Layer Mask associated with the Adjustment Layer white will apply the change and black will undo it. You can see what you've done by looking at the box to the right of the Curves adjustment; you will see where you've applied black to suppress the effect of the Curves adjustment. Judiciously swapping between the black and white (press X on the keyboard in Windows) will produce a pleasing result.

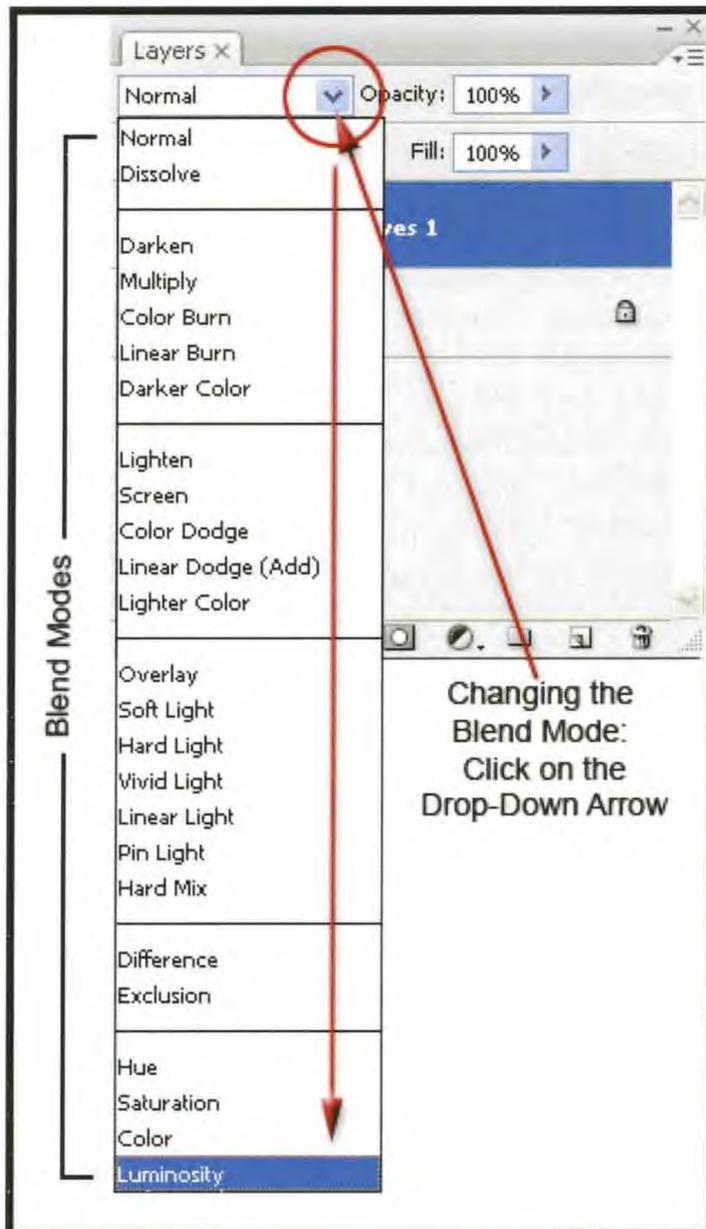
**Want to kick start your Curves?**  
Go to:  
<http://www.crhfoto.co.uk/crh/curvesp03.htm>

By clicking on the Curves icon on the Adjustment Layer, the Curves dialogue box will re-open and further tweaks and changes can be made - to be able to re-visit is one of the advantages of using an Adjustment Layer.

The decision whether or not to apply Curves in Luminosity Mode will depend upon the image and the outcome that you pre-visualise. For some images the boost given to the colour content is appropriate whilst for others an increase in underlying contrast is all that is required. Experiment as to which answers your needs best by swapping between Normal and Luminosity.

And, as mentioned above, working in Luminosity Mode is equally applicable for the adjustment of Levels too.

For more information about Curves, including using Curves in Luminosity Blend Mode, please visit the **Know-How** section of my website: [www.crhfoto.co.uk](http://www.crhfoto.co.uk)

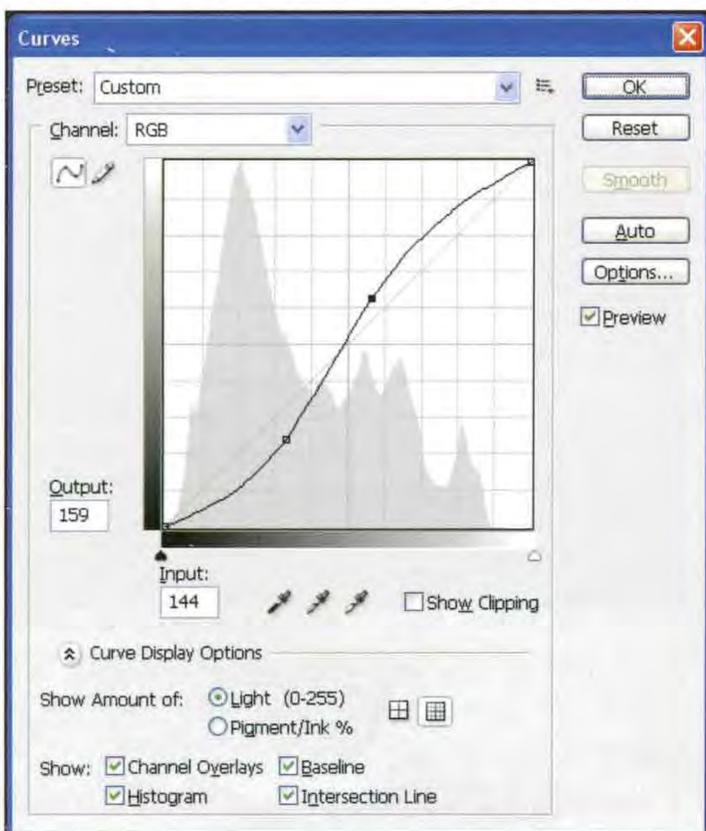


**Left:**  
*Changing the Blend Mode to Luminosity*

**Below:**  
*Selective masking of the Curves Adjustment layer produces this final result*



**Below:** *The Curves adjustment is a gentle S-shape*



# ESSENTIAL TECHNIQUES?



Left: Puffin  
Right: Birth of a Dragon

**Gwynn Robinson asks of these two contrasting images: How do I produce images like this? What essential techniques did I need to master? Is it difficult? Do I possess some special ability? What makes it possible? And offers his personal approach to the technique-free skills you should acquire.**



The first technique I use is applicable to both traditional photography and to the creative work that I do – visioning or seeing: roughly (at least) knowing what I want to capture. For landscapes this translates to capturing (and expressing) the experience. For creative work, this means expressing the concept. For portraiture we need to show the context and embedded history of the person. Sport? The achievement, anguish, effort and so on.

Photography is all about thought. Thought before the image is captured and thought by the observer of the image later on. The connection or communication is what we are after.

Whether I go out to shoot a landscape, set up a portrait or create a fantasy it is important to see the image that I am trying to produce. It can take some time at a location or with a set up to feel the scene and to see the image that I wanted. Sometimes I have to take a few images before I settle down and understand more fully what I am trying or able to do.

Sometimes I go out and just take pictures to enjoy taking pictures, but it is rare that I get any useful material when I do. It doesn't matter as long as I enjoy myself and don't mind not ending up with great images. But when I concentrate, start to really look and care about the image I am trying to capture, I enter a different world and it becomes possible to get the very best out of the situation.

It takes time to learn to see too. I now look much more carefully and check out different angles, zooms and depths of field. But at the start of my photographic journey I just shot what I saw and liked. What made the difference for me was being with other people who saw things and captured things differently. Their images were often much better than my own – certainly they were different. I learned by seeing other people's work in the same situation. I learned by seeing my own images and understanding the shortcomings. Club outings can be excellent for learning (and enjoying) – as long as the best

(and worst) images are then seen by the club members – perhaps in a competition – so all can learn.

Once you start to 'see' then images appear everywhere, wherever you are.

Recently I was out on the beach with a friend walking. We came across a rather rough 'sculpture' made out of rubbish. I was intrigued. We had both of us brought our new compact cameras to try them out. We were both of us interested in the object. I took about 50 pictures of it from all angles, zooms and positions. My friend took just one image thinking that that would be enough. He learned very little. I learned more. I enjoyed it more. I was immersed in it and experienced more about the sculpture and its textures/colour/form as I worked with it. I got to wondering about who had crafted the wood. What did they do? Why had they created this? Who did they show it to? I got a competition image from it but I got a whole lot more from the experience as a whole as I immersed myself into it. I enjoyed being with the sculpture and spending the time capturing the image. My friend was quickly bored with it all and just wanted to go home.



But what of the more fantastic, creative work that I do? Well the first thing that I must say is that it is not for everyone.

It requires a lot of imagination, cheek, a sense

Right: Looking for Tom



of fun, a deep desire to say something, a whole stack of different techniques and lots of time on the computer.

Traditional photography requires a few post processing techniques - adjustments (brightness, contrast, saturation, sharpening). Brightness, contrast and saturation are relatively easy to adjust as you can see the immediate result. Sharpening is more difficult and many people seem to over do it. I use a set of standard low sharpening settings that work for all images.

Creative work requires considerably more techniques (selection, copy, paste, cloning, recolouring, resizing) - nothing particularly complex there. However, Creative work also makes use of filters, effects, and distortions. It can be quite offensive to some traditionalists and so may not suit. But if it does then basically anything goes.

Here is a creative image that I have always liked. It formed part of my FRPS. I am sure I could improve on it but that is the problem that we all face. Whatever image we create or capture, most of us will look at it and know that it could be improved. Do we go out and reshoot or recreate? I sometimes do. The models here are a set of three bronze figurines. I have a whole series of different images with them in exactly the same position - just different uses of filters and effects.



*Left: Dance of Life (FRPS Image) and Alive!!!*

Traditional photography requires effort. You have to go to the location, look around, spend time there, wait for the right light, take many images from different perspectives. Take in the location so that you can communicate your experience in your images. It takes time and effort.

What I am saying is that whatever your style of photography, capturing good images requires considerable time and effort - like any worthwhile journey. The very best images require dedication and determination too. It is unusual to find someone who will naturally learn and create the very best in photography in total isolation - so put in that effort but do it as part of a group. For me the group activity enhances my enjoyment more than anything else. I learn new techniques from those around me. I can also learn which techniques don't

seem to work or will not suit my style of photography - an equally important aspect. And I enjoy the company.

My personal favourite style? I must admit that I do like the more fantastic creative work. It is different. It makes people sit up and take notice. It is a good medium for communicating ideas, thoughts, statements, concepts.

Does the style of photography matter? I have heard all sorts of discussions and arguments, some pretty heated, especially over traditional versus creative. Thankfully the arguments are abating - there's little point in them anyway. It is impossible to stop 'change'. Our art will always change. Art always does as we, as artists, grow and learn.

My recent FRPS was based upon conceptual creative work hopefully demonstrating to everyone that high acclaim can be achieved in non traditional ways.

Don't be discouraged if your present work doesn't seem to match up to the best around you. Photography is a journey. A journey to be enjoyed and to be taken at your pace not the pace of others. But it is a good journey to take with friends, to compare notes and to help each other.

My view? The most essential technique is being with like minded people in a group and learning from each other on outings and in the society meetings, so I urge all clubs and societies to include your members into active participation - outings - learning sessions - practical aspects. After all photography is a practical activity. To me this is the essential photographic technique to ensure that our photographers do well and enjoy their life long journey of photography.

I run an online photographic society to help people grasp the new technologies and enjoy their hobby, and attain RPS distinctions. Take a look at WIGIT at: [www.good-image.co.uk](http://www.good-image.co.uk)

*Below: Piece by Piece from Gwynn's A Panel*





# START HERE - AND KEEP IT SIMPLE!

Jim Buckley, Editor of DIGIT, offers his simple start right solution to those taking their first tentative steps with a new digital camera and a PC. Next time Mac expert Tony Healy ARPS will give his approach to getting started on the Mac, with its own built in software especially for digital images.

When you've mastered the basics and want to have fun, try Actions in Photoshop. To make it easy on yourself take a look at: [www.panosfx.com](http://www.panosfx.com) for some really useful little routines. Some are free, others cost relatively modest amounts for a great deal of fun.



Make yourself a film strip, book cover or even a jigsaw. These are just a few of the fun ways to use Panosfx Actions in Photoshop and they take only a short time to run. Downloading is easy with clear instructions on the website.

Ah, they say: You know about cameras. What digital camera shall I buy for myself/my son/my grandmother? My response is always the same: Why buy a digital camera? What's wrong with your film camera? Somewhat crestfallen they ask: So you still use film, do you? Well, err, actually No. From that moment I know the battle is lost as they explain to me that digital is great for photographing children, you can delete the ones you don't want, you can email your snaps to the relatives on the other side of the world, and these new cameras even take videos. Wonderful!

OK, so they are hooked. How best to guide them without making it all too complicated? Do you even need a computer? If you haven't got one you can take the memory card to a high street processor and have prints made on the spot. If you do have a PC you need to be clear that you are familiar with Windows Explorer so you can store, move and - importantly - find files again. Above all you need to be organised. If you're not confident with your PC get a friend to guide you through these simple steps. So here we go: Top Tips for the first few months with your new compact or D-SLR.

- Set it to AUTO, select Red Eye Reduction and leave it at that till you gain confidence. Modern cameras are incredibly sophisticated with myriad functions. Don't fiddle or you'll end up filling your memory with video when you wanted a quick shot of the children.

- Make a new folder - not on your desktop (nor in My Pictures as Microsoft would have you do it) but on your main drive, C. Give the folder a date and title - 2009 Photos. Now create sub folders for each occasion such as New Year Party, Johnny's Christening, Paris.

- Ignore the manufacturers' software: it will take over your computer. Use the cable supplied to connect your camera to a USB port on your PC. Switch on the camera, open Windows Explorer and there you will see your camera.



Double click to access the images on the memory card and they will appear on the screen.

- Highlight the ones you want to save. Either Drag and Drop to the appropriate folder or right click, Copy and after navigating to your chosen folder, right click again for Copy.

- OK, so now you're sure they are on your PC you can safely reformat your memory card in the camera so you're ready to go again. Ideally, if these are unrepeatable shots, back up to a disk or external hard drive.

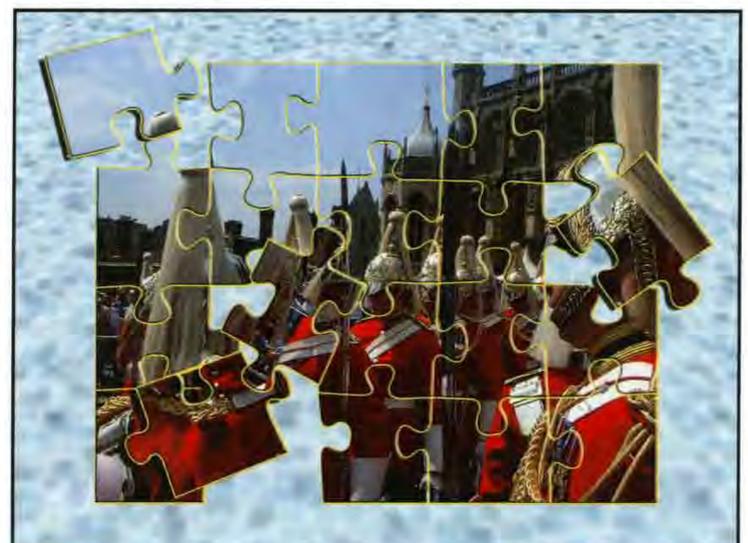
- Since you ignored the manufacturers' software and it's too early to spend your cash on PaintShopPro or Photoshop Elements, download the FREE Picasa from Google at: <http://picasa.google.com/>. Remarkably intuitive and with lots of online help and tutorials, Picasa 3 will meet your needs for the first few months at least. You will be able to crop, straighten, enhance, print and email your photos from your new toy with ease.

- Remember the **Five Fs of Photography** which are just as valid in digital:

- \* **Fill the frame**, don't waste pixels
- \* **Frame** the subject to concentrate attention and avoid distracting backgrounds
- \* **Focus** carefully. Select your subject, half depress the shutter, then re-frame as necessary.
- \* **Flash**, built in or pop up, can be used creatively against the main light to put sparkle in eyes and lift the shadows. Select Flash on.
- \* A **Firm** hold on the camera, squeezing the shutter rather than jabbing, will ensure sharp shots.

- And finally, print out your pictures for the album or make a photobook using one of the online services like [www.photobox.co.uk](http://www.photobox.co.uk). Photographs are meant to be seen.

When all this is second nature we'll introduce you to Levels, Layers, Sharpening, Curves and all the wonders you can read about in *DIGIT*.



# BARRIE AMONGST US

**In February 2008 Hilary and Peter Roberts travelled to Cuba for a unique celebration of the work of Barrie Thomas FRPS. And over the page Hilary tells us something of her photographic love affair with this central American island.**



*Right: The Square, Remedios*



*Left: The poster*

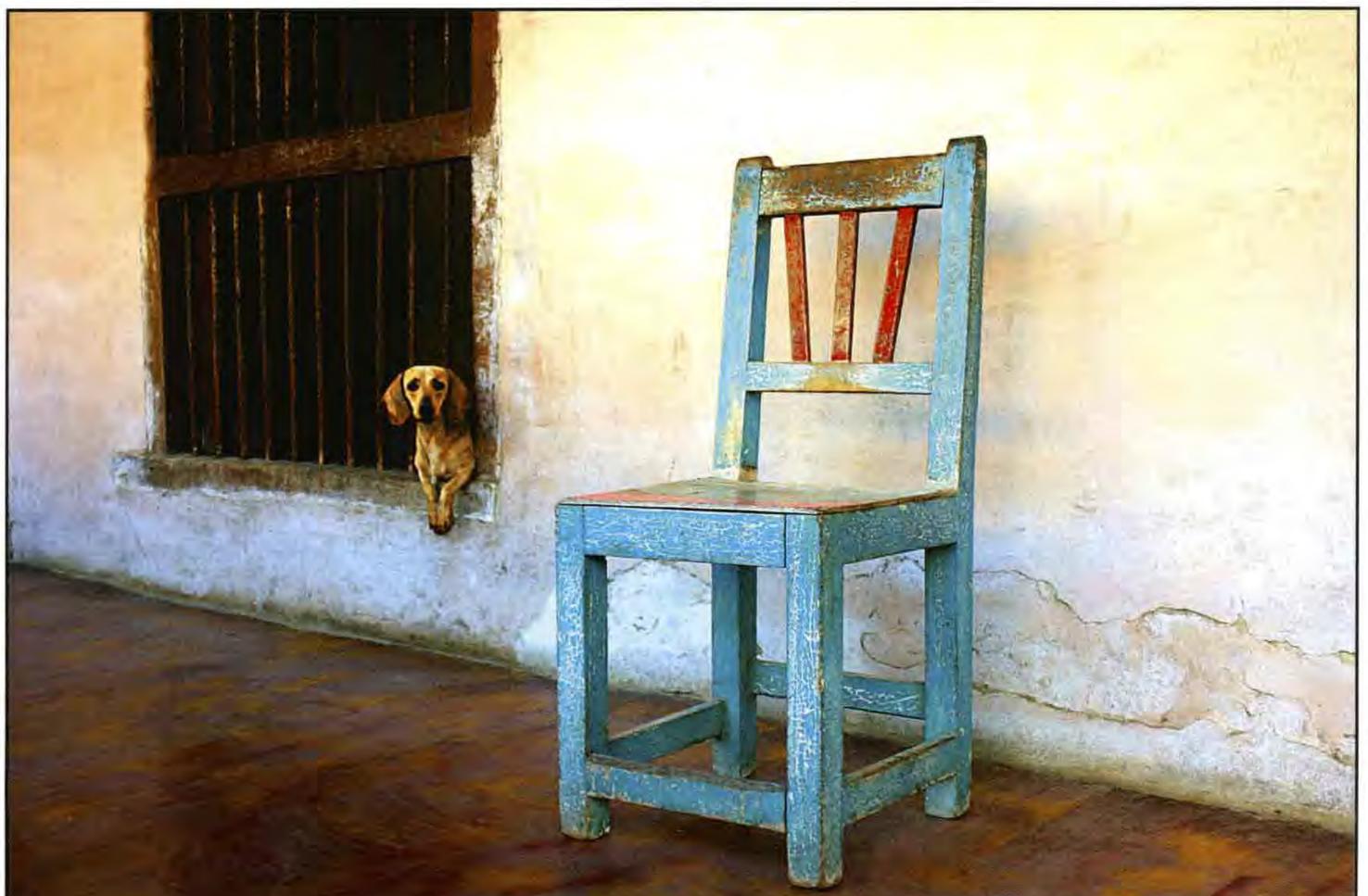
Remedios is on the north coast of Cuba, some six miles from the sea and was founded by the Spanish in the 1520s. Today it is a sleepy backwater which few tourists visit. There is a beautiful church, one ten-roomed hotel and a pretty square. Much of the housing is in very poor condition, there is no transport in or out and the few shops stock only basic commodities. The richness of Remedios lies in its people, who like most Cubans are delightful – friendly, welcoming and kind.

We went to Remedios last February because of Barrie Thomas, our dear friend and well-known Photoshop guru, who is remembered with affection and gratitude by some citizens of Remedios. Barrie visited Remedios several times with us, and during a visit there with him and his wife Pam a few years ago we met by chance in the street a professional photographer called Loly, and her husband Obel. They were struggling, because their only camera had gone wrong. A well-meaning tourist had taken it to Belgium, allegedly to be repaired, but we all knew that they were unlikely to see it again, not least because it would never get back via the Cuban postal system. I had a back-up camera, and I gave it to Loly and Obel, enabling them to start work again. Barrie had his laptop with him, and the sight of him giving lessons in Photoshop to Obel is one I shall not forget – Obel speaks no English and Barrie's Spanish was limited to

'Caramba' which he remembered from Western films. On his return home Barrie sent me a copy, in Spanish, of his magnificent book "A Photographer's Guide to Photoshop" and on my next visit to Cuba I took it with me and gave it to Obel and Loly.

Everyone in Cuba who had met Barrie was devastated to hear of his untimely death, especially his friends in Remedios. Loly and Obel decided that they would like to hold an exhibition of photography in Barrie's memory. They negotiated with the regional arts organisation and overcame the stultifying Cuban bureaucracy to secure the local gallery, a decrepit colonial building, for the exhibition. During a visit in 2007 with Pam Thomas and a photographer friend from Australia, Trish Taylor, we gave Loly and Obel prints from all of us for the exhibition. Subsequently we printed some of Barrie's F panel here in England and took them to Remedios just in time to be mounted and framed for the exhibition. >>>

*Waiting*





*Above: Girl with Barrie's portrait of her from a few years before.*

Loly and Obel worked themselves practically to death preparing everything for the exhibition. Together with the staff of the gallery they framed all the pictures and organised the opening night. They produced posters and secured publicity on the radio and television. They arranged to have a book for people to sign when they came, and a little podium on which was a photo of Barrie, and a biography in Spanish and English which Pam had asked me to write. A well known Cuban poet who lives in Remedios composed a poem about Barrie and this was printed and enclosed with each copy of the exhibition leaflet. And all this in a country where you cannot pop out and buy mount board – or anything else – and to go to the printers you have to stand by the side of the road and hope to hitch a lift in an open lorry. The exhibition was called **Barrie Amongst Us**. On the opening night Peter and I were quite overwhelmed. Two hundred and twenty people came, and filled the gallery to bursting. There were speeches and a short concert by two young musicians. Beautiful bouquets were presented and sparkling wine was offered. There is a huge appreciation of the arts in Cuba and all the photographs framed on the walls were scrutinised and enjoyed by everyone. A sweating cameraman from the local TV station followed every move and interviews were carried out. The exhibition was open for a month, and in the days following the opening everyone else in Remedios who hadn't come on the first night stopped by to admire the display.



*Ready for the opening*

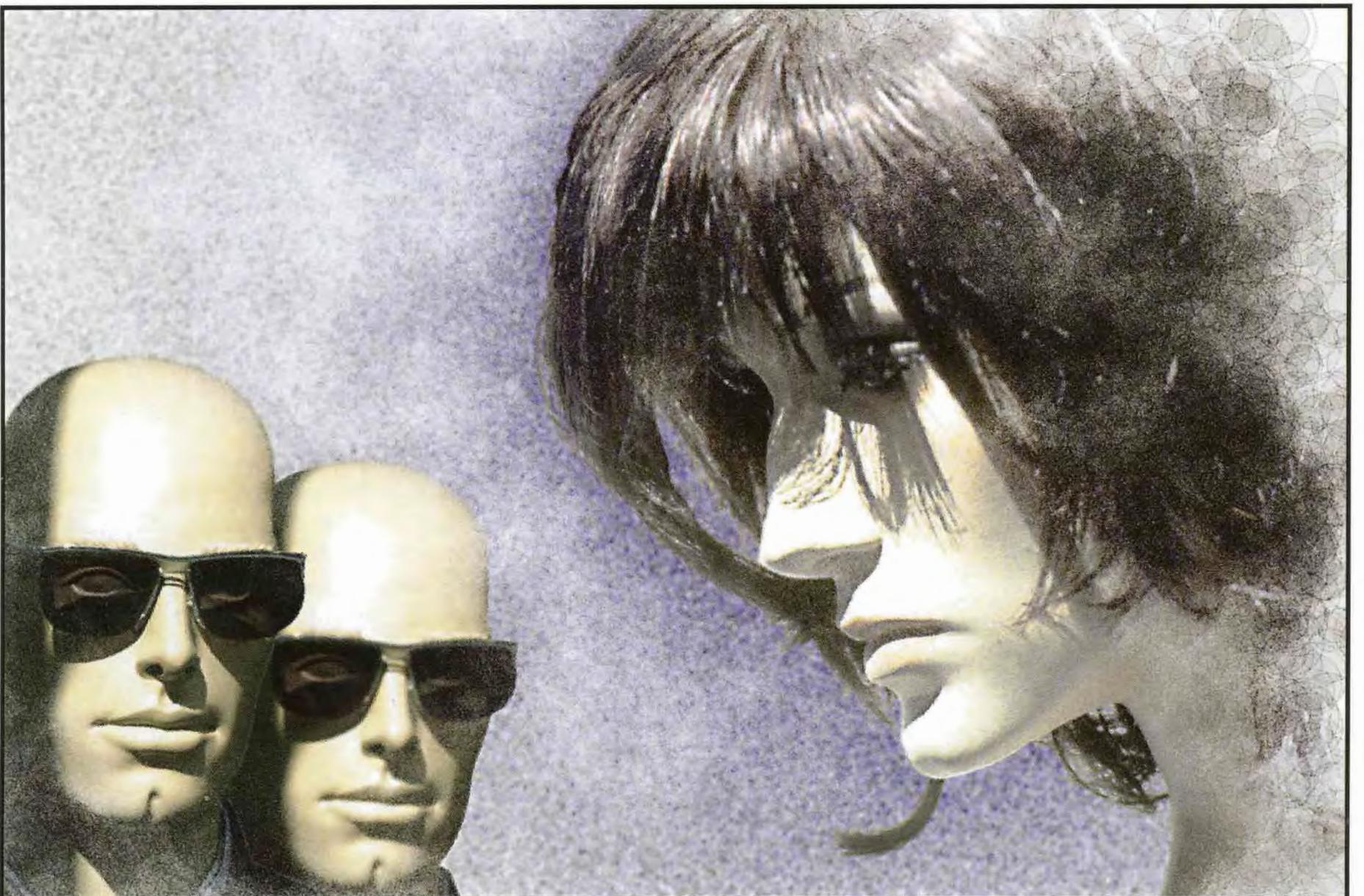
When we left Remedios a few days later we were presented with a video recording on DVD of the opening evening, so we are able to relive the experience whenever we wish. Taking part in the exhibition was very moving for us, partly because of the huge effort everyone had made in very difficult circumstances to make it happen, and partly because it felt almost like a memorial service for Barrie and helped us finally to say goodbye. We hope that Digital Imaging Group members, many of whom also knew and loved Barrie, will enjoy this opportunity to hear our account of the event and see some images which nevertheless give a flavour of this extraordinary happening.





Above: *Old Boys' Club* by Hilary Roberts FRPS

Below: *Two Bald Men with Shades* from Barrie Thomas' digital Fellowship Panel.



# TEN REASONS WHY I GO BACK TO CUBA WITH MY CAMERA

**1** Every face in Cuba is different. If you go to Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, you get lots of wonderful photos of people but they all have pretty much the same skin colour and features. In Cuba they vary from black to white, and everything in between. And without exception, they are beautiful. You even find black people with blue eyes. Your pictures are not necessarily unmistakably Cuban. The only way judges can definitely identify an image as Cuban is if you have included the Cuban flag, Che, Fidel or a cigar.

**2** It is quite difficult to put on weight in Cuba. Because of the American embargo, and the total inefficiency of all systems in Cuba, there is not much to eat. At least half a stone weight loss was guaranteed when Peter and I first used to go, because we lived on bananas. Unfortunately, we eat well now, because we stay with people we know, so it is not so good for getting thin.

**3** There are lots of dogs in Cuba. Dogs enhance pretty well any picture, providing points of interest, filling up empty spaces etc. Dogs have featured in all my successful images over the past few years. Dogs in Cuba are full of character, even when sleeping, and are just as photogenic and keen to be included in pictures as the people. Anyway, I like dogs.

**4** There are wonderful backgrounds to be found in Cuba. This is mainly because they cannot afford to renovate the beautiful, old, colonial buildings. Thus there is a lot of decay – always a winner in photos. Fortunately for the Cubans, who have to live in these houses, money is gradually being spent on them. So soon everywhere will be done up, and Havana will be like many European



cities – smart and boring.

**5** Cubans, apart from being very photogenic, are delightful people. They are friendly and welcoming – and they love to be photographed. Despite the awful problems besetting them they have a wonderful sense of humour.

**6** I make a point of walking around the grottiest part of any town, and I have never felt threatened. This doesn't mean you don't take sensible precautions, the most important of which is to be friendly and talk with people – and ask if it is OK to photograph them.

**7** Life in Cuba goes on in the street, because it is generally hot. This means that photos of people playing dominoes, having their hair cut, selling pies or being shaved are very easy to get. In any case, there is usually no glass in the windows, and people don't mind you peering in, and will readily invite you in if you show any interest, and encourage you to take photos inside their houses.

**8** There is no malaria in Cuba. So you don't have to take those awful tasting pills.

**9** Motorway driving is much less stressful in Cuba than in England. All you have to worry about are the potholes, the complete lack of signs, the people on bicycles and horses coming towards you in your lane, the fact that there have been no parts available to maintain your car since 1952 and the men who suddenly leap out in front of you waving strings of onions or home-made cheeses. In any event, motorway driving is much safer than internal flights in old, single-engined Russian planes for which there are also no parts.

**A**nd finally, I am not tempted to revert to being a wildlife photographer in Cuba because most of the wildlife has been eaten.

