

photoWORLD

Vol 1 No 2
Autumn 2004



KONICA MINOLTA

Photo by Duncan McEwan

10% off repairs and servicing for Photoworld club members

The Konica Minolta Photoworld Club Camera Check Scheme runs all year round, taking the seasonal load off the service department. Service will give Club Checks 'absolute priority' and these will normally be accomplished within 3-4 days of receipt. This is great news but please be sure to allow a little more time – and please do not send equipment to the Kelso address.

As a Photoworld subscriber you have a permanent 10% discount off all repairs and servicing if you deal directly with Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Limited.

The Service Address is:
Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Ltd
Service Department
Unit 7 Tanners Drive
Blakelands
Milton Keynes MK14 5BU.
Tel 01908 200400

If you ask for the discount, your membership status will be checked and validated. If this is disputed, you may ask the Service Department to check with us, and we will confirm your paid-up status or enable you to renew your subscription if has lapsed not more than six months ago.

Equipment under 1st year warranty can be sent in directly, accompanied by any document showing the date of purchase, including credit card statements etc, even if you have not returned your guarantee card. But you should always complete and return warranty documents after buying equipment.

Club Checks

The cost of a Club Check, inclusive of VAT and return insured carriage, is:

£18.68 for camera + lens

£25.85 for all video and digital products

Club Check tests include shutter speed accuracy, aperture accuracy, metering accuracy, and focusing accuracy. They also include checks for correct electronic operation,

film transport, AF operation, self timer, flash synchronisation and all other key operational aspects of the camera. External cleaning of camera and lens is undertaken, along with loose dust removal.

Equipment which passes the tests will receive a **TestC certificate** and may qualify for the **Extended Warranty** (right). If problems needing repair are found, you will be contacted with an estimate – the Club Check cost is deducted from the cost of the repair if you decide to go ahead. You also get your 10% discount. See also new information about direct repairs, below.

Direct Repairs

If you know your gear needs to be repaired, remember that a repair always includes a full service and a 6 month guarantee on the whole item. If you have equipment which you think needs repair, you can send it for a Club Check service, enclosing your payment.

You can also send items directly to the service department for repair estimates outside this scheme. Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Limited will accept equipment directly from readers and provide estimates, it is not necessary to go through a dealer. If the estimate is not accepted then a charge of £5.88 is payable for return.

There is a difference between the Photoworld Club Check and a Service. The check may show that your shutter speeds and so on fall within ISO tolerances, but a Service may allow adjustment to better than ISO standards. It also allows lubrication, tightening of screws, cleaning and adjustments.

Information on this page is printed in each issue for your benefit – please use it.
Call 01908 200400 for service!

Extended Warranty

The **Minolta Extended Warranty Scheme** is available on new equipment. However, you may be able to take out an warranty on a camera which has just been repaired, or overhauled. The warranty is an optional extension of the usual six-month repair guarantee to a full two years. This offer is administered and underwritten by Domestic &

General Insurance Company. Some parts for older models are now no longer available, and Konica Minolta have to restrict these warranties to the list below. If your equipment is more recent, but now out of warranty, call the Service Dept for advice on 01908 200400. If you wish to find out more about the warranty terms, ring Domestic & General's Helpline on 0181 944 4944.

Please note this is NOT the same number as for our Camera Equipment Insurance facility.

Please enquire to the Service Dept about earlier Konica products. We shall be publishing details for Konica owners in future *Photoworld* editions.



KONICA MINOLTA EXTENDED WARRANTY SCHEME

SLR BODY

Dynax 9, 7 and 5
 800si, 700si, 600si
 500si & Super
 505si Super
 300si, 303si
 404si
 X-700, X-370S

COMPACT

Zoom 70, 70EX
 Zoom 90, 90EX
 Zoom 105, 105EX
 Zoom 115
 Zoom 125
 Zoom 150
 Zoom Pico
 AF-25, AF-35
 F-25, F-35BF
 F 35ST Super

AF FLASH

5600HS
 3600HS
 5400HS
 1200AF Macro

AF LENSES

AF 100-300 (D)
 AF 24-105 (D)
 AF 75-300 (D)
 AF 28-80 (D)

AF 35-70/3.5-4.5

ACCESSORIES

VC-600, VC-700,
 VC-7, VC-6, VC-9

MD LENSES

MD 100/4 macro
 MD 50/3.5 macro
 MD 135/2.8 tele
 MD 28/2.8
 MS 100-300/5.6-6.7
 MD 35-70
 MD 70-210
 MD 50/1.7
 also 220X flash

VECTIS

Vectis 40, 300, 300L,
 3000, 2000, 30, 25,
 260, 200, 20, 100BF,
 Weathermatic, GX-1,
 GX-2, GX-3, GX-4. Vectis
 S1, S-100, V lenses
 400RF, 22-80, 50 macro,
 28-56, 25-150, 56-170,
 80-240, SF-1 flash

DIGITAL

Dimage 7, 5
 Dimage S304
 Dimage E203
 Dimage E201

Dimage RD-3000

Dimage RD-175

Dimage 2330

Dimage 2300

Dimage V

Dimage 1500EX

Scan Multi, II, Pro

Scan Elite, II

Scan Speed

Scan Dual, II

Quick Scan, Plus

PHOTOMETERS

Flash Meter V Colour
 Meter II Colour Meter
 IIF Flash Meter III, IV
 Spotmeter F
 Spotmeter M
 Autometer IV-F
 Autometer III, IIIN
 Autometer III Flash

BINOCULARS

Activa: 8x42DWP,
 10x42WP, 7x35W,
 7x50, 8x40W, 10x50W,
 12x50W, 7-15x35,
 8-20x50, 8-22x27,
 10-30x27, Pocket
 8x25WP, Pocket
 10x12WP, 8x25FM,





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Andrew McCartney's dramatic landscapes under Western skies – mountain, cloud, water and sun.

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It doesn't have to be dull!

Duncan McEwan follows up a very moderate summer season with advice on using dull, overcast or adverse light to the best effect.

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Assembling a Digital Panorama

Cliff Carter explains his technique for shooting, montaging and printing long strip panoramic prints from digital cameras.

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David Kilpatrick – with photographs

by daughter Ailsa – looks at VX400 monochrome, Centuria Chrome slide, and Impresa 50 ultra fine grained colour negative films.

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We continue to sponsor this excellent series of tuition days and photo trips, run by long-time Minolta user Colin Westgate.

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Emmanuel Agbaraojo has used the DiMAGE electronic viewfinder camera system from the start, and looks at his experiences with the A1 and image stabilisation.

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The only such service we know of!

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KONICA MINOLTA

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Whilst every care is taken of MSS and photographs submitted all submissions remain the responsibility of the sender. Return postage and packing must be included. The views expressed in this magazine are those of individual contributors and do not represent the views or policies of Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Ltd unless otherwise stated. All offers and arrangements made by the Club are subject to availability and limited to paid-up subscribers of KONICA MINOLTA PHOTOWORLD unless specifically stated otherwise.

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Who's Who @ Konica Minolta Photo Imaging UK and the Photoworld Club

The headquarters of Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Ltd are the former Konica offices at Feltham, Middlesex, close to Heathrow Airport, the M25 and London.

From 1980 on, Minolta (UK) Limited was based in Milton Keynes and the Service Department remains there along with distribution.

For Club members, your two key contacts will still be at Milton Keynes.

Bernard Petticrew is Technical Support Manager, and has a database of information on Minolta products going back to the SR system and beyond. He is the man to contact for advice on conventional (silver imaging) photography, and to obtain instruments manuals or literature. His direct line is 01908 208 325.

John Baker is Service Centre Manager. You should contact John with any queries about repairs or service in progress (it is not necessary to telephone before sending equipment in for a Club Service Check). He is on 01908 208 352.

The Konica Minolta Photoworld Club continues to be free to subscribers to *Konica Minolta Photoworld* (formerly *Minolta Image*). For membership queries or advice on photo technique and camera use, call **David Kilpatrick** on 01573 226032 or email iconmags@btconnect.com.

Paul Genge, who has dealt with digital technical help in the past, is now promoted to Product Manager of Konica Minolta UK, and digital helplines are 0870 0104107 for the UK, 1850 946478 for Eire. Feltham is now HQ for both the UK and Southern Ireland.

The address for Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Ltd is:

**Plane Tree Crescent
Feltham**

Middlesex TW13 7HD
and the main switchboard number is 020 8751 6121.

We shall keep you updated on services for owners, contact names and telephone numbers. Please use the the Konica Minolta website, if possible, to look for solutions before calling directly.

The Photoworld Club

The Minolta Club of Great Britain was founded in the mid-1960s by Japanese Cameras Limited, and published its magazine Photoworld until shortly after the formation of Minolta (UK) Ltd, when the title was changed to Minolta Image.

With the merger of Konica and Minolta, and the existence of more than one other magazine called Image, the magazine has been returned to its original name and the club is now the Konica Minolta Photoworld Club UK.

The directors are **David and Shirley Kilpatrick**, who are independent of Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Ltd. David and Shirley have been writing and editing photographic magazines and books for 30 years and are directors of Icon Publications Ltd, based in the Scottish Border town of Kelso.

You can email David via iconmags@btconnect.com, or telephone 01573 226032 during office hours, for subscription help and general photo advice.

Websites and email

There are Konica Minolta websites operated in the UK, Europe, the USA and Japan. The correct web address to use is: <http://www.konicaminolta.co.uk/> but since the merger the sites continue to develop, and separate areas still exist for Minolta and Konica. At the time of going to press you can also access www.minolta.co.uk and www.minoltaeurope.com directly.

Technical support, software and firmware downloads, product news and information are all available on-line.

There is also a European owner club site called **Konica Minolta Photo World** (no connection with this magazine) which requires registration (a simple process of filling in

an on-screen form) to use. This is at: www.konicaminoltaphotoworld.com and is available in English, French and German. The English version is a translated site – the original is German. There are monthly competitions which can be entered on-line, together with all the latest product information, a range of technical background articles and some profiles of Konica Minolta users.

You can join a Minolta discussion group at www.yahoogroups.com; fill in Yahoo membership, which is free, and you will find this group founded in 1998 now has nearly 5,000 members.

There is another Web Minolta mailing list called the Minoltians, available at www.theminoltians.com, with on-line galleries.



If you are travelling to Mediterranean resorts, particularly in Turkey, you will find the Konica sign over many photo shop, studio and processing premises. It's the leading brand on in-house photo lab equipment in many countries. Photo: DK



Bernard Petticrew, Technical Support Manager – 01908 208 325



John Baker, Service Centre Manager, 01908 208 352



*Paul Genge
Product Manager*

Technical Help

Digital – UK 0870 0104107
Film – 01908 208 325

Brochures

and details of your nearest stockists 0208 751 6121

Service and Repairs

01908 208 352

Photoworld Club

01573 226032

EISA awards recognise anti-shake and Dynax 60 'features for price'

KONICA MINOLTA Photo Imaging has won two of this year's EISA Photo Awards from the European Imaging and Sound Association.

The European Photo Innovation of the Year 2004-2005 award went to Konica Minolta's Anti-Shake Technology for correcting camera shake, incorporated in the Dimage A series of digital cameras. And the European SLR Camera of the Year 2004-2005 award was won by the Minolta Dynax 60.

The first award recognizes the fact that the Anti-Shake correction function is a completely new mechanism. That is to say, it does not function within the camera lens; instead, it moves the CCD within the camera body itself in order to counteract camera shake. It does this in one simple operation by means of a dedicated signal-processing circuit that responds quickly to the touch of a button.

The Anti-Shake correction mechanism is incorporated in the Dimage Z3 digital camera released in August and in the Dynax 7 Digital SLR camera planned for the autumn.

The SLR award highly rates the Dynax 60 for providing an ideal balance between price and performance. While priced as an entry level SLR camera, it provides a full range of AF functions usually found in higher priced cameras, as well as high-speed operation, ADI flash metering, and 14 custom functions.

Big image X50

THE 5-MEGAPIXEL Dimage X50 digital camera takes the X series concept of "thin, fast and stylish" and adds even more speed. It also has a full 5 megapixel file size and a huge rear screen.

With its non-protruding zooms lens, the X50 fits neatly in a breast pocket and is ready in around half a second to ensure that you never miss a photo opportunity. Automatic Digital Subject Program Selection automatically selects the optimum-shooting mode for the subject at hand.

The 2.8X zoom range (plus 4.3X digital) gives everything from wide-angle shots to close-ups that are clearly focused as near as 10 cm from the subject, without the need to switch to macro mode. If you need to get even closer, the **Super Macro**



Top: the Dynax 60 with EISA award. Above: the impressive rear view of the X50, seen in coloured form below.



mode based on Konica Minolta's newly developed optics system gives amazing close-ups as near as 6 cm.

While still as thin and light as our previous model, the Dimage X50 has a very large 2-inch LCD screen whose easy-to-view menus equal greater ease of operation. And the slide cover protects the lens, so there's no need to worry about putting the camera inside a pocket or purse.

Photos can be output directly to **PictBridge**-compliant printers. There is an optional Marine Case for taking stunning underwater shots.

UHS Continuous Advance captures 1280 X 960 images at 11 fps regardless of the image quality setting, making it ideal for capturing a tennis or golf swing.

The X50's 5-megapixel CCD and newly developed optics system combine to deliver sharp, high-resolution images. You get photo-quality prints as large as 17 X 13cm at 300dpi, as well as enlargements up to 35 X 26cm at 150dpi.

Noise Reduction automatically prevents the blemishes and graininess associated with slow-shutter shots (up to 4 seconds). This gives exceptional night scene images.

The **XR (Extended Recording)** Movie mode lets you record longer movie clips onto the SD memory card at a resolution of 320 X 240 pixels. Just keep on recording until the memory card is full. **Movie Editing** lets you isolate and capture clips from captured movie data, while **Movie Frame Capture** lets you isolate and capture individual frames from captured movie data.

Audio Recording allows you to record any sound for up to 180 minutes. **Voice Memo** lets you record sound immediately after you've taken a shot, and **Audio Caption** enables you to record sound simultaneously during playback. Both Voice Memo and Audio Caption let you record up to 15 seconds of sound.

The X50 gives you full viewing capabilities. **Slide Show Playback**, for still images or movies with dissolve effects, can be viewed either on the X50's LCD screen or on a TV screen. With **Image Rotation**, you can change settings to rotate your vertical images from their horizontal position for easier viewing.

You can also transform 9 consecutive images into one

extraordinary print with the **Multi-Frame** function. Press the shutter release once to shoot a sequence of 9 shots. The images are shown as thumbnails in a single frame.

With **Crop Frame**, you can trim unwanted parts of captured still pictures and save the image as a separate file, while keeping the original image intact in its file.

The Dimage X50 lets you create custom photos and cards by selecting part of a saved image and overlaying it in your choice of nine picture frames on any chosen photo.

Color Mode adds either black & white or sepia colors to your shots.

Although the Konica Minolta Dimage X50 offers an array of features and functions, what it really gives you is all you really need in a digital camera: fast and easy, beautiful pictures in an attractive package.

X31 adds features

DIMAGE X31 comes in a compact, 24.5mm thick body, which weighs as little as 115 grams, fitting into your jacket or shirt pocket to follow you wherever you go.

Innovative folded optics technology provides a non-protruding lens as with the entire Dimage X series to date, so the Dimage X31 remains flat when the zoom lens is activated; you can also use the 4X digital zoom in combination with the 3X optical to take shots at up to 12X total zoom.

The independent playback button lets you preview your shots instantly. There are image editing functions for adding frames or combining two photos (**Side by Side**). **XR (Extended Recording)** movie lets you record movie clips up to the duration of your card's remaining storage capacity.

The Dimage X31 is ready to use in about 1.0 second, incorporates the **PictBridge** feature that enables printing without a PC, and can take macro photos as close as 10cm without changing modes.

The self-portrait mirror lets you make sure you're properly framed before taking self-portraits (of up to two people together); portrait mode produces more natural skin tones and gives even more detail in things like individual eyelashes and hairs.

The X31's internal memory stores up to 10 of your favorite photos, which stay there even if you erase the memory card. Viewing these photos requires a special control key combination, so you can keep them to yourself as 'passworded' contents on the camera.

The Dimage X31 is powered by AA batteries (alkaline or Ni-MH for maximum travel friendliness.



Top: the new Z3 has anti-shake and a 12X optical zoom, plus 4 megapixels for more details images – and a further 4X digital zoom (1680mm equivalent!). Shown with wide-angle converter. Above: Z10 8X zoom model.

Third gen Z gets AS

WITH A CCD-SHIFT Anti-Shake System to accompany the 12X optical zoom in a 4 megapixel Z-style body, the Dimage Z3 gives you amazingly steady and reliable telephoto shots. It also gets you the shot right away with a Rapid AF that's the fastest auto focus in its class. The AF also has a Predictive Focus Control that brings out the best in shots of moving objects.

Previously a function only on the high-end Dimage A-series, the CCD-shift Anti-Shake System is now on the DiMAGE Z3. This system compensates to minimize the effect of camera shake at 2-3 shutter speeds slower than on cameras without an Anti-Shake function.

The Z3 has a 12X optical Mega Zoom, which can be combined with a 4X digital zoom for up to 48X zoom. The Z3's newly developed GT APO lens offers strikingly clear, high-contrast, high-resolution images thanks to Konica Minolta's G lens optical technology. The AD (anomalous

dispersion) glass and two aspheric elements help the Z3 correct spherical aberration and curvilinear distortion, factors that can cause problems at high zoom ranges.

The real motion monitor has a 50-fps capability for smooth video viewing, a minimum shutter-release time lag, and continuous shooting at 2.2 fps. The movie recording function allows you to take high-resolution movies that are as beautiful as TV programs or footage taken with a video camera. In addition to the VGA 640 X 480 Standard mode that captures movies at 30 fps, Konica Minolta has added a new, high-quality-image Fine mode, **640 x 480 Fine**. The **Silent Zoom** feature employs a newly developed Silent Zoom mechanism that greatly reduces how much noise from the optical zoom is picked up while shooting movies with sound. With **Night Movie**, the Z3 can record in extreme low-light conditions thanks to a CCD that's four times more sensitive than conventional sensors.

The Z3's anti-shake system is

effective in correcting both the fine movement of pressing the shutter-release button and the larger and slower movements of the user's body, and works in movie and still modes. The 4-megapixel, 1/2.5-inch CCD produces plenty of detail for creating high-quality enlargements as large as 36.4 x 25.7 cm at 150-dpi print resolution. In addition, the CCD's primary color filter offers high color fidelity.

The Z3 can be connected directly to a **PictBridge 3**-compliant printer. You can check which images you want to print on the Z3's LCD monitor and then print out. The optional **Wide Converter Kit** allows you to fit more of the scene into each shot. The lens has a 26mm wide angle that is ideal for capturing indoor or outdoor architecture and panoramic landscape shots. The Z3 is equipped with a Konica Minolta flash shoe to go beyond the range of the built-in flash.

Baby brother?

THE DIMAGE Z10 is a new model with 8X optical Mega Zoom and 4X digital zoom combining for a total 32X zoom, and a 3.2-megapixel primary-color CCD.

The Dimage Z10's Rapid Autofocus (AF) combines a passive AF sensor with the video AF system, giving a fast focusing time of approximately 0.3 second in both wide-angle and telephoto positions. The Rapid AF also has **Predictive Focus Control** that predicts where a moving subject is heading and focuses accordingly. To round out the list of quick-response features, the Z10 has the fastest startup in its class, a minimum shutter-release time lag, and continuous shooting.

Power efficiency allows you to take up to approximately 500 frames with the four included AA alkaline batteries. This is more shots than any digital camera with built-in flash running on AA alkaline batteries.

In addition, the Dimage Z10 has a Macro mode that allows you to bring the lens as close as 1cm from the subject.

The Z10 allows you to take high-speed consecutive shots at 1.5 fps and the Z10 captures consecutive images onto the 16mb internal memory. Release the shutter and the last six shots are recorded on to the memory card. This function is handy for shooting sports events or for recording and improving your form in personal sports training situations.

Noise Reduction gives exceptional night images by automatically preventing the blemishes and graininess associ-



The G530 improves on the 500 with a larger, clearer review LCD screen.

ated with slow-shutter shots.

The Switch Finder function allows you to view the LCD monitor images through the viewfinder (Viewfinder display) or on the LCD monitor itself (Monitor display). There is no color, contrast, or resolution difference between the images viewed on the viewfinder and on the LCD monitor.

The Z10 can be connected directly to a PictBridge 3-compliant printer. You can check which images you want to print on the Z10's LCD monitor and then print out.

Despite its large 8X zoom range, it weighs just 300 g. It's also easy to tote and operate even for camera novices. The ergonomic form makes it easy to keep on holding even for those steady zoom shots. The optional Wide Converter Kit ZCW-200 allows you to fit more of the scene into each shot. The lens has a 26mm wide angle that is ideal for capturing indoor or outdoor architecture and panoramic landscape shots.

New 5 megapixel GT

THE DIMAGE G530 is a slim 23mm-thin digital camera with a 5-megapixel CCD, lightning-fast response in all operations, and dual card slots for SD Memory Card and Memory Stick.

The high-performance GT Hexanon is a proprietary 3X optical zoom lens consisting of seven elements in six groups. Konica Minolta's A*IPS image processing technology ensure that anyone can take high-quality pictures that capture the subject in sharp, real-life detail. With an approximately 0.8-second startup time, an approximately 0.25-second focusing time, and incredible shutter response with an approximately 0.03-second shutter lag, you can be sure of capturing that instantaneous smile on your child's face or any other precious but fleeting photo opportunity.

By connecting the Dimage G530 to a PictBridge-compliant printer, you can print photos out directly

without the need to go through a PC.

The G530 has a 1/2.5-type interline primary-color CCD with a total of 5.4 million pixels, one of the highest for a compact digital camera. Up to approximately 500 frames can be taken with the four included AA alkaline batteries, based on Konica Minolta's standard test method.

Software on-line

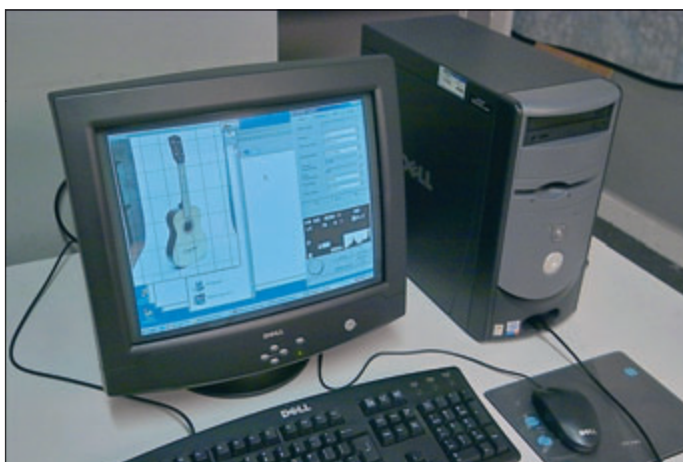
If you visit **www.dimagecapture.com/english** you can find some software available for direct purchase.

Dimage Capture is a PC specific program which allows control of a Dimage A1 or A2 camera (the 7 series is not compatible) over a USB connection, from the screen of a Windows computer. The screen becomes a viewfinder, and also a control centre, allowing all the usual adjustments to be made from the keyboard and mouse.

A firmware upgrade is needed (you should check Konica Minolta websites regularly for these if you own higher end digital cameras and scanners). We tested *Dimage Capture* and it worked perfectly in the studio, but an extended USB cable and camera mains adaptor lead would have been useful. There is no requirement for card storage space on the camera and the final images are saved directly to hard disk. The one-line cost is €99, shipped on CD-ROM.

You can also visit **www.dimagemessenger.co.uk** for the *Dimage Messenger* program, for sharing pictures by net. It is downloadable with a €29.99 unlock key, or on CD for €39.99.

SilverFast Ai for the Konica Minolta Dimage Scan Elite 5400 and Multi Pro is now available on-line from **www.konicaminoltaeurope.com** (see *Digital Accessories* for the order page). It costs €229 inc VAT for the 5400 version, €399 for the Multi Pro, so is really only a purchase for those very seriously into scanner control and processing.



Our studio showing the Dimage A2 set up and connected to a Dell Windows XP computer, with the screen displaying a grid overlay, histogram and many other controls and functions. This software is available on-line (see story) for the A1 and A2 only, and each camera requires its own version.



The Dynax 7 Digital will go on sale in October to November, according to Konica Minolta in the UK. Visit **7digital.konicaminolta.com** for a running update on the camera specifications – and see our next issue, out in December 2004, which will carry our report from photokina and hopefully a first look at the camera itself.

photoWORLD gallery

Earn Konica Minolta film, inkjet paper & CD-R media with your pictures



Welcome again to our quarterly *Photoworld Gallery* open reader competition under a new name, and with new rules and prizes.

You may now enter pictures taken on Konica equipment as well as Minolta, and this is retrospective – vintage Minolta pictures were always eligible, and the same goes for vintage Konica.

You may also enter pictures from other camera brands made on Konica films and (if colour negative rather than slide) processed and printed by a Konica photofinisher, normally a High Street mini-lab using Konica paper and chemicals. See the new entry rules on page 12.

Each picture used will receive a prize of Konica Minolta supplies – E6 35mm slide film, 35mm colour negative film, inkjet paper or CD-R media. Film entry winners will be sent films, and digital winners will be sent paper or CD-Rs (or both). The prize packs are at the discretion of Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Ltd.

As always, all entries remain your own property and we require only single rights use in the context of the *Photoworld Gallery* pages. Slides are returned (you must send return p&p); prints and digital entries are only returned if you ask for them to be, and enclose return p&p.

Right: a man attending to pot plants on fire escape, taken in New York 26/06/04 while on holiday, by Michael Dalhousie of Milton Keynes. Taken with Dimage 7i 1/250 at f4.5, full tele zoom (200mm equivalent).

Facing page: Sand Texture by Tony Jones, of Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex. Scanned image. Tony does not give any details for this one. Like the fire escape image above, it depends on repeated elements for its impact.







Many contributors had an eye on an autumn seasonal cover, and we have kept a few digital files aside for future planning. Top, taken last November using a Minolta XG-2, on slide film, by George Anderson of Wokingham, Berks. Above, from Peter Karry of Ashted, Surrey, taken at Westonbirt Arboretum; Minolta 9xi, 90mm macro lens, 1/30th at f11. Left, a digital entry from Barbara Nash of Ross-on-Wye; Minolta 7i. Barbara labelled her CD for cover consideration, but this file was only about 5 megabytes – this reproduction is as large as the image can go. The single stalk of bracken in the foreground would be enough to make a cover use unlikely; we look for images which are as nearly perfect 'of their kind' as we can find, right down to fine details.



It's been a cracking summer for the ducks, and Chris Mole – as ever – adds style and humour to his highly professional Dimage A1 entry above, 'The British on a Bank Holiday'. 1/320th at f6.3, ISO 100. . . so it wasn't all that dull a day really! Below: Tim Witball of Southampton found an equally monochromatic seascape at Southampton Container Dock. 'Dock at Dawn' was taken with a Dynax 9, 24-85mm, tripod, and RC-1100s cable release using 100 speed slide film, 1/30th at f16.

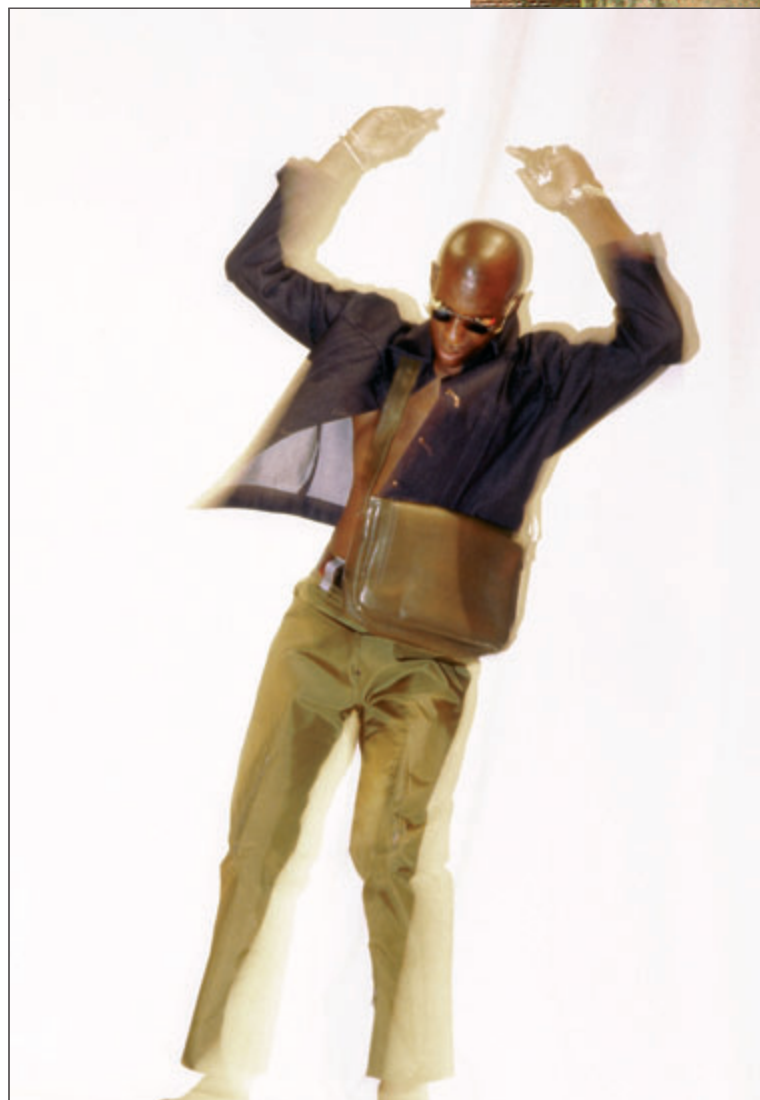


Photoworld Gallery Rules

You may enter a maximum of three slides, three prints and three digital images every quarter. Slides must be in non-glass mounts, clearly labelled with your return address on each slide, and protected in a plastic sleeve or wallet. Prints must be no larger than 12 x 8"/A4, on glossy photographic paper NOT inkjet paper, unmounted, with name and address and caption details on the reverse. Digital images should be on an ISO 9660 Mac/PC readable CD-R, in RGB JPEG or TIFF form, file resolution set to 300dpi and should be a minimum of 1600x 1200 pixels in size. A printed contact sheet, or reference prints, must accompany your CD.

Slides must be accompanied by return post and packing; prints and digital entries should be accompanied by return post and packing only if you require their return. Otherwise, they may be filed or destroyed as seen fit. Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Ltd and Icon Publications Ltd accept no financial responsibility for the receipt, safety or return of entries.

Suggested entry dates are before the end of June, September, December and March. You may send single digital entries consisting of a high quality JPEG from any Konica Minolta digital camera to iconmags@btconnect.com stating 'Photoworld Gallery Entry' in your email subject header, and including your postal address and all caption details in your email.



Above: by Mavis Watkin of Lofthouse, Wakefield. Mavis works with a Dimage 7 and scanner, but also uses other makes of camera – this is a scanned image and she doesn't reveal its origins. It's a good subject to try in winter when low sunlight can produce reflections like this.

Left: by Steve Howdle of Whitkirk, Leeds. Fashion studio shot using Dynaflex 9 with 28-105mm lens, slow sync flash 1/15th at f4 on 400 speed E6 slide film.

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 Which Camera? Magazine, January 2004



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Extending the Dimage A system

The Dimage A1 and A2, like the 7 series before them, are very convenient all-in-one cameras for everyday use. They are fully expandable in terms of their flash system, both with Konica Minolta's own HS (D) series flash units and most modern studio flash.

The lens is not, however, interchangeable and the rechargeable battery while very efficient and economical can not be replaced with an over-the-counter dry cell.

To extend the scope of the cameras, Konica Minolta has introduced two converter lenses – a 0.8X ACW-100 wide-angle and a 1.5X ACT-100 telephoto – plus a substantial base grip EBP-100 which allows six AA cells or two lithiums to be used for power.

EBP-100 adds a second shutter release but no additional control wheel, and will stabilise the camera for those who find the A body shape a little small and light. It replaces the rechargeable cell (which can be used in it along with a second one), slotting in and storing the open battery chamber lid. Once secured to the tripod thread the grip feels like part of the camera.

It uses six AA cells but rechargeables tend to come in packs of four, and should be charged and used in groups. Three packs of four, and a charger such as the Ansmann Energy 4 which can tackle individual cells, provide an ideal solution.

Wide and long

The telephoto converter is dauntingly heavy, and demands that the lens is extended to telephoto position and held very carefully. When shooting,

Add-on wide and tele converters and a battery grip with vertical release for the A1 and A2



I supported the combination in a cupped hand at all times. It does not lose any lens speed, unlike rear lens converters on SLRs, and autofocus is really positive. It is amazing sharp even at full aperture.

The wide converter is also best

used with the lens locked at one length – its 28mm setting – and turns this into a 22mm equivalent, with very little barrel distortion, no light fall off and stunning sharpness right into the extreme corners. A massive piece of glass is needed to accomplish this

but it's worth it; the results easily hold their own against, say, a 35mm wide angle on a 645 rollfilm SLR. Just for fun I tried it on film camera lenses (28mm f2.8) and it worked perfectly with those as well. A free camera firmware upgrade allows correct reporting of the focal length with converters fitted. These are expensive accessories but they work superbly.



Left and above: the battery grip fitted, and its fitting method. Examples: at 200mm with the 1.5X tele converter (300mm), and at 28mm with the 0.8X wide (22mm) both on the Dimage A2. Centre: the wide and tele converters shown on camera. Inset on the right hand picture is a front view of the wide-angle converter.

*Report and photographs by
David Kilpatrick*

*Main image: chapel and
mosque of Bodrum Castle,
Dimage A2 with ACW-100
lens converter*



The Wild Welsh West

The dramatic quality of light found in western Britain – whether it be the Scottish Isles, Cornwall, the Lake District or Snowdonia – distinguishes it totally from the photographic experience of the eastern half of our country.

Andrew McCartney has been taming the powerful Welsh landscape using filters to balance the sky and land, and wide-angle lenses to put big foregrounds in front of huge skies, for some time. We've published many of his pictures in the past.

This spread shows just how good a destination Wales can be for the out of season photographer; here are bare branches, winter skies, low sun and more than a hint of wind and rain but the results are worth braving the elements for.

On this page, we see Llyn Tegid (better known as Bala Lake in English) below, caught with a 24mm lens, grey graduated filter and Dynax 600si. The waterfall is the famous Swallow Falls near Betwys-y-Coed



Andrew McCartney discovers that the changing light of Wales makes all seasons photogenic

in Snowdonia, using the same camera and lens but no filter.

Top right, Andrew captured the sand dunes of the Mawddach Estuary, Fairbourne, Meirionnydd using his grey grad and 24mm on a 9xi body; bottom is a wonderful seasonal view of the Penygarn Reservoir and Graig Dolfaenog, in the Elan Valley, using a polarising filter on the 24mm instead. All the shots apart from this are on 100 speed slide film but with the polariser grabbing light, Andrew used 200 speed for an exposure of 1/60th at f9.5.





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The essentials of imaging

It doesn't have to be dull!

We often lament them, especially when they coincide with holidays or planned photography, but grey days form a significant part of British weather and, in small doses, need not be a cause of disappointment. Avoiding them altogether can lead to many worthwhile opportunities being missed.

There are two key elements in making successful use of these days. Firstly, to recognise subjects that will suit low light conditions. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, is getting oneself sufficiently motivated, because dull days rarely provide that "must get out" factor – inspiration is much harder to find. Not all grey days are the same and some will prove more productive than others. A tripod is advisable unless fast film is being used and a warm-up filter, 81A or 81B, can be useful as well. Even if results are less than perfect, they could be a good starting point

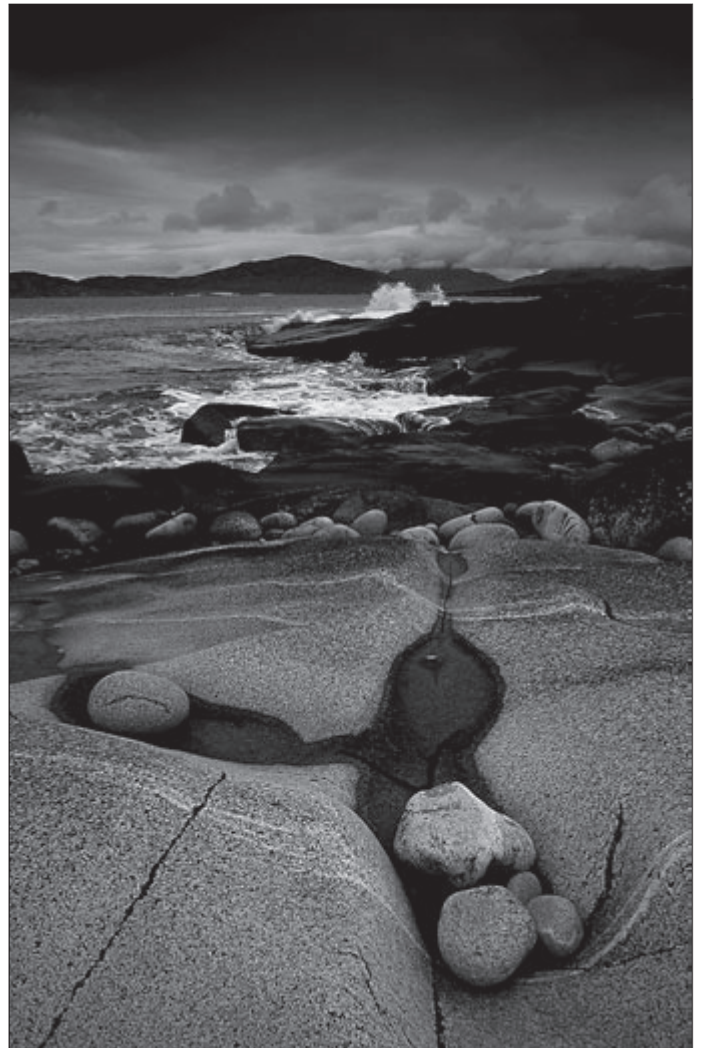
We have had some poor months in 2004 for photography – but Duncan McEwan sees potential in the greyest of overcast days



for *Photoshop* treatment, with the option to convert to monochrome or toned black and white prints.

In bright sunshine and especially when using colour transparency film, contrast can often be difficult to handle in such naturally contrasty locations as woodlands or street scenes. Overcast conditions lower this contrast and provide a softer, more diffused, even illumination that can be more pleasing, while at the same time presenting fewer exposure problems. Using high contrast films such as Konica Minolta's Centuria Chrome 100, Fuji Velvia or Kodak Elitechrome Extra Colour will prevent the results being too flat and have the advantage of producing well saturated colours in poor light.

Scenes of dereliction, such as old buildings, walls, timber, peeling paintwork, will often benefit from dull conditions, the drab lighting proving more appropriate to the



Centre top: a derelict cottage on the isle of Harris, Dynax 9, 28-70mm G – overcast light is often better for such studies. Above, a stormy day at Scarista, Harris, taken using the 20mm lens on ISO 50 slide film, and the same view converted to monochrome using Photoshop, showing how a mainly black and white view can render effectively this way. Right, Loch Quoich, near Kinlock Hourn, Inverness-shire – colour can sometimes shine out in overcast conditions and make a good foreground.



depressing, decaying nature of the subject matter. Strong lighting on the other hand can brighten up the subject to the extent that the feeling of dereliction is reduced or removed, destroying the intended emotional response to the image.

In landscape photography, dull conditions can often be used to inject mood into a picture. When people remark that they feel their pictures seem to lack mood, it is usually due to the fact that they are always shooting in full sunshine, in the middle part of the day. As with early morning/late evening photography, rougher weather conditions can also be used to inject the sense of mood that had previously been lacking. Many dull days have bright skies that result in a distracting, bright, washed-out area at the top of a picture, totally taking the eye away from otherwise good aspects of the composition.

Composing to exclude the sky altogether or by using neutral density graduated filters to darken the sky, will produce more acceptable results. The density of the ND grad used will give control over how dark the sky is rendered. Days with dark, threatening clouds already have a strong mood and will probably require little or no assistance from ND grads. Uniform grey skies hold limited interest and it is best to exclude much of them,



Street scenes which might be difficult in sunshine can work well in dull light. Culross Village, Fife. Below – look for textures and details like this coiled hawser. Right: low light is ideal for long exposures of water, here 1/4 of a second. All on 24-105mm.

whereas a sky with different densities of grey can be full of interest, even to the extent of being a dominant feature of the composition.

With less available light, longer exposures are inevitable and this can provide creative opportunities by applying slow shutter speeds to moving subjects such as cascading

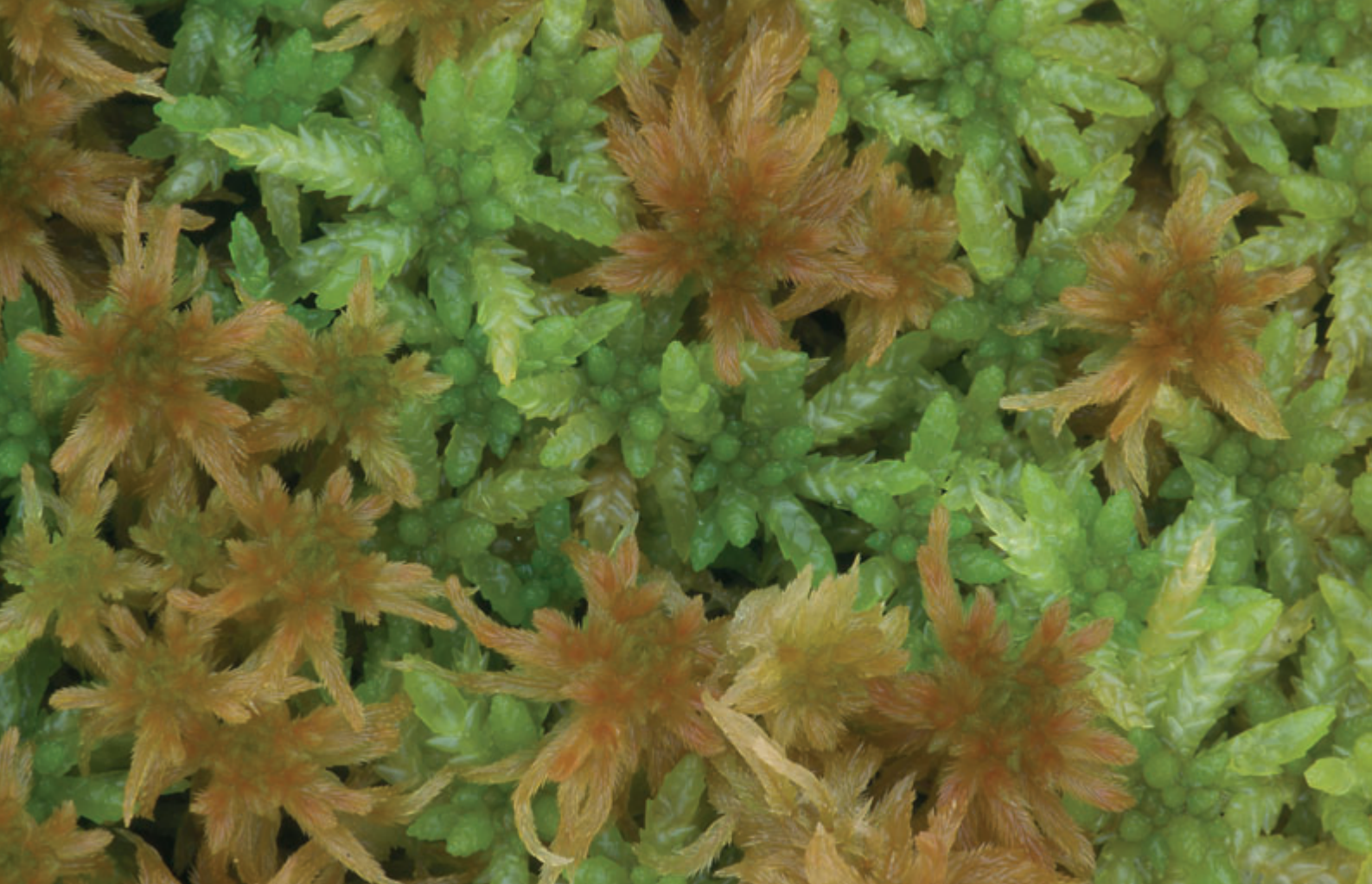
water, waves or wind-blown vegetation. Shutter speeds can be further shortened by using a polarising filter (loss of two stops) or an ND filter. Using the dark area of one of the larger ND grads, such as those produced by Lee, will cover lenses up to about 62mm diameter and achieves the same as a straight ND. Combining

ND filters might also be considered for even slower shutter speeds. Low light can also be the stimulus for experimenting with other techniques such as multiple exposures.

Soft light works very well for all botanical subjects, especially fungi and plants with delicately coloured or white flowers. Direct







It doesn't have to be dull...

sun creates very harsh shadows with most fungi and the petals of light coloured flowers can easily burn out, resulting in loss of detail.

Many plants with blue flowers, bluebells being the classic example, are not faithfully recorded in bright sunshine whereas in dull conditions, a much truer flower colour is recorded. Lower plants like lichens and mosses also benefit from subdued lighting as do exposed seaweeds on the shore. In the latter case, as with damp rocks, strong highlight reflections from wet surfaces can be avoided leading to give a much more pleasing rendition.

Outdoor portraits are much more successful on a bright but slightly overcast day producing better skin tones, fewer harsh shadows and helping to prevent screwed-up eyes. This applies particularly to candid situations where there is no opportunity to control lighting through posing or using reflectors. Children make wonderful candid subjects, but be aware of the potential problems of photographing young children in public situations unless you have parental consent. Concentrating on family members is a safer option these days.

We are surrounded by a wealth of shapes and patterns, from tree bark,

rock details, hillsides and agricultural fields, to buildings and other man-made structures. Such patterns are not dependent on bright light and should therefore be attractive as subjects for less promising days. Subdued colour is not a disadvantage where there are strong patterns and shapes – rely on slow, saturated film, rather than the lighting, to pull sufficient colour from the scene.

While there is no substitute for good lighting, equally the lack of it should not lead to despair. Rather than moan about the weather, regard what it throws at you as a challenge – get shooting and you might have some pleasant surprises in store.

Let's hope autumn offers us better days than we have had this summer, but if it doesn't, get out there and use the light. Make a tripod your companion in the car, or a monopod on walks (some double up as a walking stick) and turn those dull days into memorable images.



Left: botanical subjects in soft light – sphagnum moss, sessile oak acorns, and speedwell, all taken using the 100mm AF macro. Right: soft light is much better for candid portraits too (ask permission first when photographing children).



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8 x 6	1.50	0.90	0.60	0.45	20 x 16	9.89	5.93	3.96	2.97
9 x 6	1.50	0.90	0.60	0.45	24 x 16	11.24	6.74	4.50	3.37
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Panoramic production

There is a growing interest in panoramic printing. My involvement grew rapidly after acquiring a Minolta **Dimage 7** digital camera. It became possible to grab series of images to stitch into a single picture. The huge advantage was not wasting expensive film, plus the processing costs, when taking "practice" shots.

This meant that an evening walk could yield numerous collections of images to select from at home on the computer, in the knowledge that if they were all rubbish it really was just part of the learning curve and that the next time, maybe, we might improve our chances of success.

Most people's first experience will probably be with the **Photostitch** feature in the Adobe programmes, or similar and this is a good starting point. My problem was that the resolution was not high enough to make really large prints and eventually I decided to stitch the images "manually", mainly using *Photoshop Elements*. This is a greatly underrated program and has many almost hidden features. If working on photos is your main interest I would suggest this is the best investment in terms of value you could make.

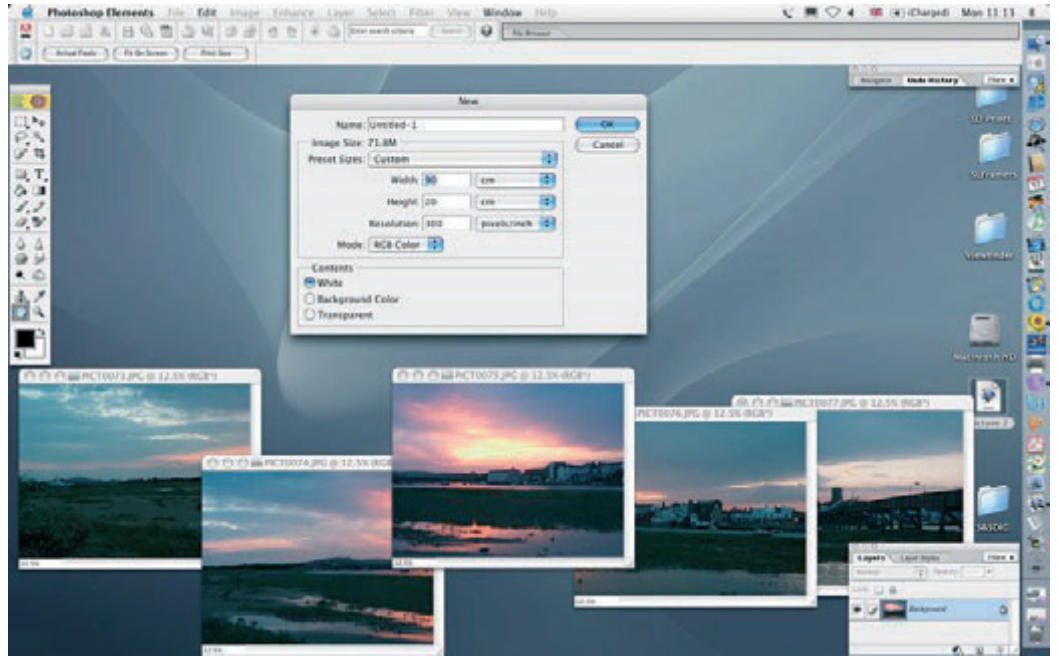
The basic technique that has developed over the months is as follows and hopefully this experience will help others to develop an enthusiasm for panoramas.

Taking the Images

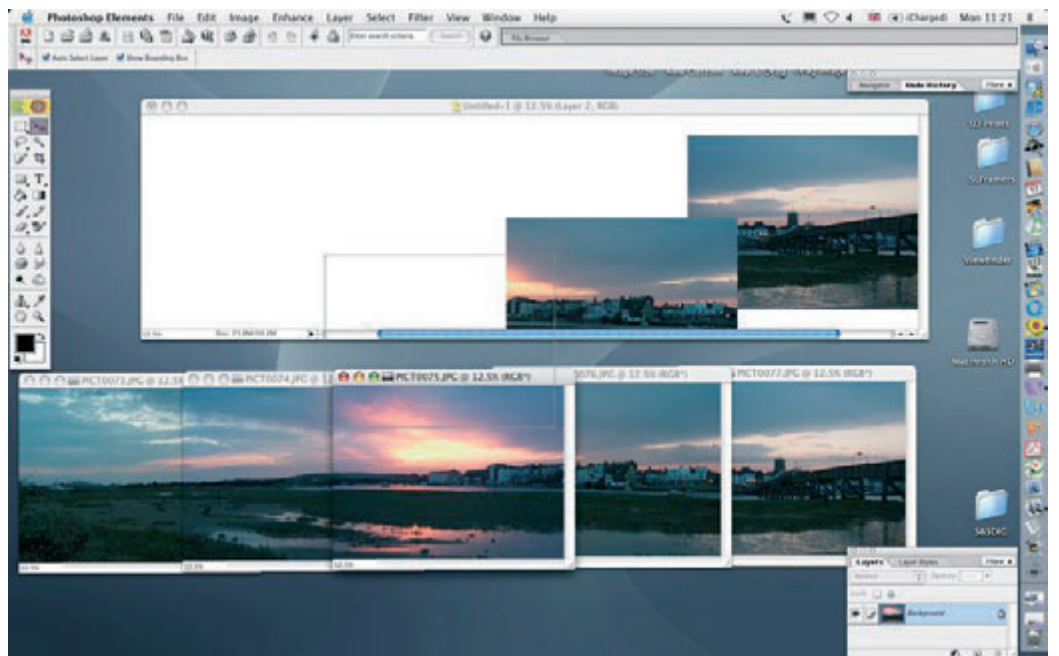
First, a suggestion for the taking stage of images to be used for panoramas. I have found it is a good practice to use manual exposure on the camera, digital or film and also manual focus, if you have the choice and to scan from left to right to make sure you set an exposure that will give detail in the brightest and darkest sections of the total image.

Pick a part of the scene to use as the level and follow this from frame to frame as you pan across the scene. A tripod is useful for this but I nearly always manage with a monopod and have successfully hand held on occasions, practice helps. If there is a zoom lens on the camera make sure that the setting doesn't change between shots, reason for this is pretty obvious but easy to overlook.

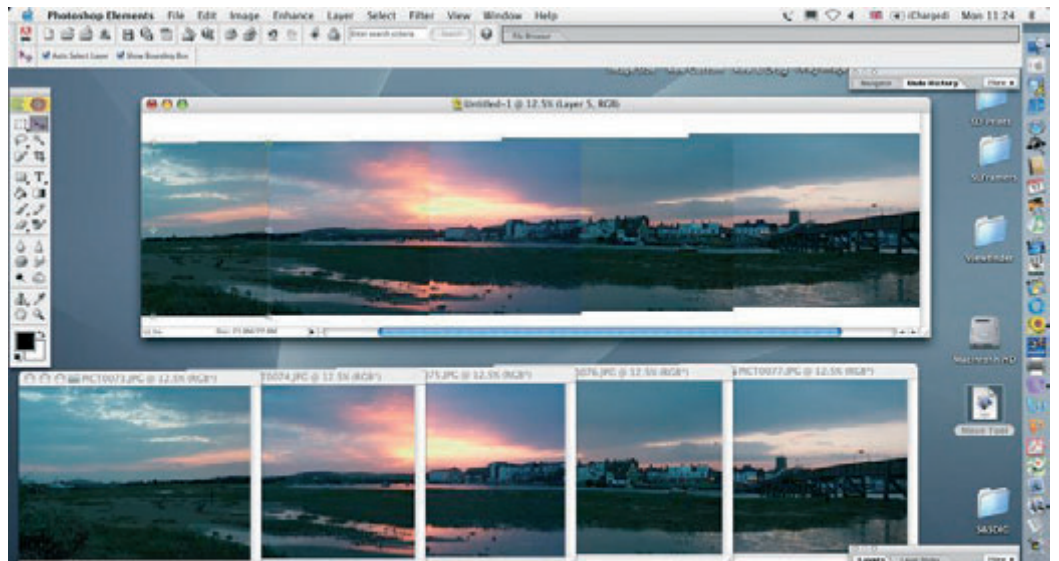
This is an area where digital capture is very beneficial as you can take many sequences of images for panoramic prints and then only

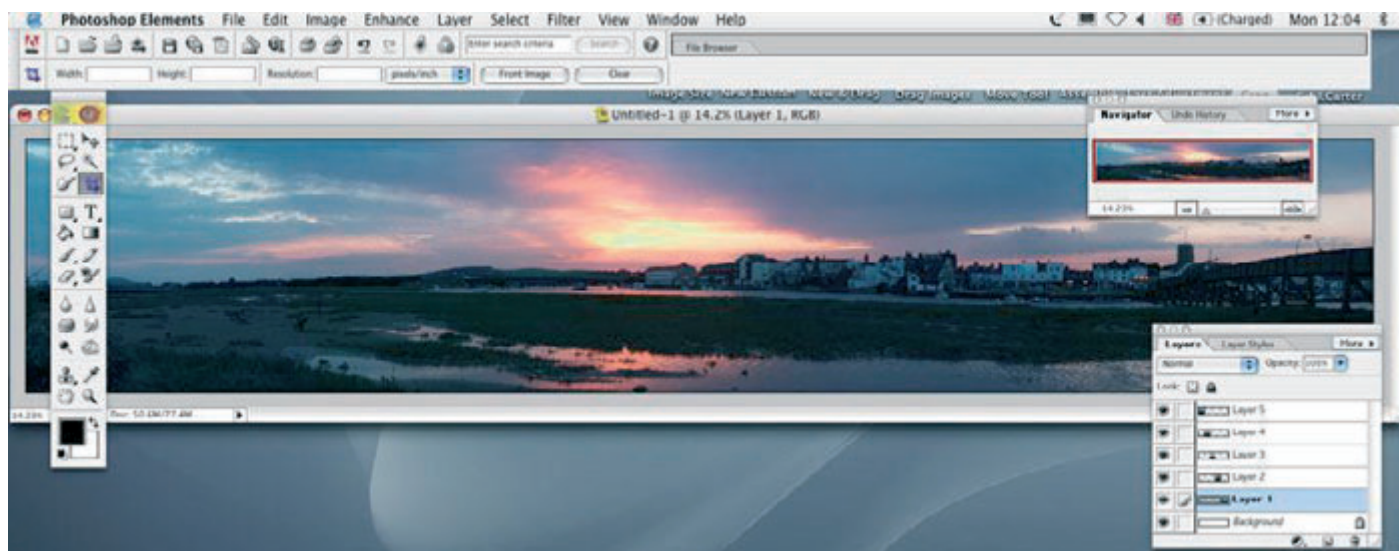


Seen on screen, the separate pictures in the sequence may have slightly different exposure and white balances.



After working out a canvas size, each image is cut and pasted, creating a new layer every time, above. The layers, below, are lined up so that soft edged erasing can join them – and each can be adjusted to match the next using Levels, etc.





use the ones that look best when you preview them on the computer. With film you may not even take the images in the first place because of the cost of processing.

If you open the images in *Photoshop* or *Elements*, line them up along the lower part of the screen, reduce their screen image size by holding down the control key and dabbing on the minus key on the top line of the keyboard.

You can also click on the left hand symbol under **Navigator**, watch the percentage readout and keep all the images at the same reading as this will give a good indication of how they match up.

Select the first image and click on **Image** on the top menu bar, from the drop down menu click **resize** and make a note of the dimension in the box.

Work out the size needed for your new image from this and then click on **New** from the **File** menu at the top, you can also hold down the control key and tap "N" and in the box that is opened you can click on preset sizes, select **Custom** and then type in the desired dimensions and resolution.

Use the move tool to select each image and drag it onto the Untitled New Canvas, you can then move all the images with this tool until you are happy with their alignment.

Fine tune their positions using the up/down and left/right arrows on the keyboard. Once the images have been moved onto the new canvas, close the originals lined up along the bottom without saving any changes. This will free up your RAM and allow the computer to work faster.

Select an overlaying layer and erase the edge with a large soft brush as necessary, it usually takes a little practice to pick the best effect but you can always use the History palette to undo or just check to see what you have done.



This is one of Cliff Carter's set-ups for supporting long cut sheets of panoramic paper, on an Epson 2100 A3 printer equipped with a Lyson continuous ink supply. The A4 magazine shows the scale of the assembly. Some printers accept roll feed paper which can be used for 3.5 inch wide panoramic output.

If one of the layers needs to have the exposure, colour balance, contrast, etc changed use the appropriate palette to make the adjustment. All the open images should now appear to blend together.

Crop to the final size and save the layered image as a PSD file and then as a JPEG copy when you are satisfied with the result. Close and save the PSD file as your main backup and working file.

Next open the JPEG file, which will have all the images joined as a single layer and use **Levels**, **Hue** and **Saturation** or whatever tools are suitable to fine tune the exposure, colour balance, etc and finish with unsharp mask should you think it is needed.

When you get the hang of the routine you can use the **adjustment layers** feature at the bottom of the layers palette, the advantage with this is that any changes you make in **Levels** for example can be modified at any time in the future without damaging your original image. Perhaps more of this another time!

Printing the Panorama

My only printers have been Epsoms and therefore these notes are based on using both A4 and A3+ versions, starting with a Stylus 600 and now using a 2100 with the Lyson Fotonic continuous ink system from Marrutt Digital of Uckfield.

Panoramics are simple with an A4 machine, the initial problem is the paper size and my first efforts were on A2 paper carefully cut into 21cm strips.

Next stage is to select the user defined paper size in the properties section of the printer driver and type in the dimensions of your paper strips, as an example say 100mm X 650mm and save them with a suitable name, maybe Panorama 100X650, for future use. PC's and Macs have different layouts for the setting up dialogue boxes but mainly the same information and then use the printer settings you would normally use for the type of paper you have cut into strips. Maximum depth on an A4 machine is about 210mm and width will almost

Above: the finished panorama.

certainly be a maximum of 1100mm or 44 inches. More of this later.

The strips were carefully rolled, with the printing surface inside and fed through the normal feed, making sure the end entered the printer at exactly the desired angle. Not easy but with practice it is possible, with later machines you could utilise the roll paper feature which makes life a lot easier. Watch in wonder as this marvellous long creation appears and make sure you catch the paper before it falls to the ground.

The quality of paper to print on is now amazing and it is possible to purchase rolls from makers such as Lyson, Epson, Somerset Mills, Hahnemuhle, etc with superb surface textures that are normally only available for large format printers. These are then rolled out as required and cut to size with a craft knife, ruler and a cutting mat.

With the A3+ printers paper up to 329mm wide can be used but again the limit on maximum length seems to be still only 1100mm. This is truly annoying and after much searching through various forums, chat groups, etc there may be an answer by using other programs, such as *PhotoPaint*, *Paintshop Pro* or others and some definitive experience on this subject would be welcomed.

Thicker art papers and card are best fed through the rear feed on the 2100 and the new GRP tray has adjustable guides that guarantee precise paper alignment. Without this guiding system it is extremely difficult to control the parallel feed of the paper and if you get it wrong there is the possibility of damaging the printer mechanism, apart from the frustration of having to trim the print and waste paper.

— *Cliff Carter*



Konica Minolta's unsung film heroes: VX400, Chrome, and Impresa 50

In our first *Photoworld* issue, we looked at the wide ISO range of Konica Minolta Centuria Super colour negative films, all the way from 100 to 1600. While these are aimed at the general user, Konica has always made professional and specialist films. Their Infrared 750 emulsion in both roll and 35mm form has been popular ever since Icon Publications sold the first batch ever imported to the UK, off the pages of our *PHOTOpro* magazine back in 1990.

Hard to find but unique in terms of results, Konica Minolta's specialist emulsions are covered in our second film article by David Kilpatrick
Photographs by Ailsa Kilpatrick

Below: Konica Minolta Centuria Chrome 100 is a very fine grain, high contrast, neutral balanced slide film. A scan to CD by Lab 35, top left, alters the colour to a much warmer and sunnier look while a Scan Elite 5400 scan (right) is more realistic. It has excellent highlight rendering (bottom, scanned on Elite 5400).





VX400 is processed like normal colour negative films, but produces distinctive and 'real' looking black and white prints with superb unfiltered sky tones (above) and sharp detail.

Recently, Konica has kept faith with enthusiasts by retaining an ultra-fine grain colour negative stock, Impresa 50, a chromogenic black and white film, and an E-6 process slide film.

The slide film is the first example shown on these pages, and it has a long history. The first Konica Chrome 100 slide films arrived in the early 1980s and Minolta Club members who joined around 1983 had a chance to try them in disguise. They were also sold as Ilford Ilfochrome 100, and the club gave away thousands of rolls as samples to new members, selling many more to follow up the trial offer.

At that time of course we had no idea that Konica and Minolta would one day join forces, but Ilford discontinued their colour films, and we started stocking Konica's own films. The Minolta Club, as it was, has had links with the Konica name for 20 years.

The 100 chrome is unusually neutral, and some would criticise it for being a very unforgiving film. It is a touch contrasty for the sunniest days, and certainly does not belong on a Mediterranean holiday; it is a little cool in colour for dull days, where the contrast can be useful. Where it excels is in morning and evening light, with natural subjects and landscapes (it has vivid and well defined greens), for natural history and telephoto shots with low image contrast. Centuria Chrome 100 is perhaps the best E-6 slide film made for copy work; it handles postcards, old black and whites, book pages, maps and similar subjects with spot-on neutrality, very high sharpness and fine grain.

Punchy black & white

The colour-process compatible VX400 black and white film is equally distinctive. Where most chromogenic black and white films today are aimed at wedding photographers wanting soft edges and low contrast, VX400 is a punchy crisp film just like traditional black and white materials. It almost looks like Tri-X or FP4 developed in a darkroom.

The colour sensitivity of VX400 is half way to the Infrared 750 material – it is a 'red pan' emulsion, which does not need a yellow filter to produce beautifully graded skies on sunny days. If you do use an orange or red filter, the results are very dramatic.

While VX400 is not the finest grained film of its type, it is by far the sharpest visually and is well-suited to action sports, photojournalism and pictorial work. It is rather like



Impresa 50 colour negative film has extremely fine grain and smooth tones, ideal for landscapes like this moody sunset taken on a 20mm lens. Below: a full Impresa frame and a 5400 dpi Elite scan of detail equal to an 18 x 27 inch print.



the original Ilford XP1 with benefit of pure grey printing on most minilab colour processing machines.

VX400 also scans remarkably well, far better than a silver-based film like Tri-X will scan. You can use *Digital ICE™* on suitably equipped scanners like the Minolta Elite series, with dust or scratch removal completely effective (this does not work with silver-based black and white films at all). The scanned grain is much finer than a typical ISO 125 silver-based negative film, and excellent prints up to 12 x 16 are easily obtained.

Like all chromogenic mono films, VX400 has a wide exposure latitude and can be overexposed by a couple of stops without losing highlight detail in the print. Grain becomes finer, and sharpness lower, if you increase exposure; the reverse happens if you rate the film at ISO 800 and work from a thinner negative.

Our test 7 x 5 prints from VX400 were a real joy and this film is something which you should try if you want black and whites which look like traditional home darkroom work, but actually emerged from a digital lab.

The finest gradation

Lastly, we come to Impresa 50. You will probably have to order this film; it is rarely stocked by photo dealers.



Both Fuji and Agfa have previously made 50-speed colour negative films, and Kodak made their ISO 25 Ektar material. Agfa's Ultra 50 aimed for exaggerated colour, as the name indicates; Fuji's Reala 50 did the reverse, and has a soft natural look which is great for portraits but can lack impact. Kodak's film was purely aimed at getting fine grain despite very limited exposure latitude, making it a critical material to use.

Against all these hard-to-find or discontinued competitors, Impresa 50 stands out for its neutrality and balance. Konica's approach to colour

emulsions, like Minolta's approach to lens colour transmission, has been very scientific. They have never taken the route of other makers and produced colour materials with exaggerated or altered renderings to suit snapshot taste. If you shoot a grey card with a Konica colour film, you get a perfect match easily.

Under the new joint name Minolta and Konica teams are working together to create a single look to all their digital files, film emulsions and scanned images from those emulsions – and this means a very accurate look, not a biased one.

Impresa 50 is, quite simply, a benchmark colour negative film with ultra fine grain, very high sharpness, and optimum colour fidelity. It will respond to lighting with a colour cast by showing a colour cast, and it will also reveal very subtle gradations in natural light.

It does not suffer from excessive contrast, it has good latitude, and it does not alter the appearance of the scene. Like the Centuria Chrome slide film, it is a first-rate copying emulsion and would make a good choice for a permanent film record of inkjet prints. It also scans even better than colour slide film, and is one of the few emulsions which can benefit fully from the 5400 dpi scanning of the Konica

Minolta Dimage Scan Elite 5400.

There are other benefits to using an ISO 50 film, such as differential focus for outdoor portraits on bright days, and better compatibility with studio flash at moderate working apertures.

For home darkroom workers (there must be a couple of you out there) your editor can remark from experience that Konica colour films, in the past, tended to need exactly the same low filtration settings roll after roll. We also used Konica colour papers and found that overall exposures were around half that of the leading brand, which needed a new filter set-up for every pack of film and every box of paper.

That was a long time ago, and films today are nearly always scanned for printing; our scans here are from files written to CD by a local photo shop, and such is the quality you can now get that we usually ask for this service instead of spending time scanning. Impresa 50, however, takes it to a new level and our local photo shop's 17 megabyte scans are not enough to do it justice; to show a fine detail area it was essential to rescan using the Dimage Scan Elite 5400.



Introducing...



FREELANCE+DIGITAL SILVER+SILICON

a new magazine
launched this year
Issue 3 due in
October

PHOTOKINA REPORTS

f2 magazine will be visiting photokina in Cologne at the end of September 2004, and putting stop press reports into place into Issue 3 of the magazine, October/November 2004. We expect to be covering the new Konica Minolta Dynax 7 Digital and our appointment on the Konica Minolta stand is already firmly made!

For this, and other important news from the major biennial photo trade show, subscribe now to *f2*. It comes from the same publishers and editors as your Konica Minolta *Photoworld* magazine, and the emphasis is on taking pictures of a quality which gets them published, sold through picture libraries, winning competitions, hung in exhibitions or just framed on your own wall.

IF YOU EVER SUBSCRIBED to *Freelance Photographer*, or the earlier *PhotoPro* and *Photon* magazines, *f2* is our new title which finally brings together just about all the threads Icon Publications Ltd has followed in the last 15 years. We launched *f2* with a June/July 2004 edition and if you subscribe now, we will send you the first two issues while stocks last (commencing your subscription to start with one FREE issue provided). Please note that we are short of Issue 2 compared to Issue 1, due to demand, and you may receive a free Issue 1 only with your subscription starting from our next edition.

f2 is the new magazine for silicon and silver imaging alike and we intend to make it visually and technically excellent. It will put you ahead of the game and hopefully we shall keep up our record of being ahead of the monthlies – and even the weeklies – in bringing you news and proper tests reports. So far the response has been great!

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PLEASE enrol me as a founder subscriber to *f2* magazine from the October edition (Issue 3) 2004 and send one free back issue, or, while stocks last, two issues with the subscription commencing from Issue 2 for renewal purposes.

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Cover photograph by Jerry Mason.
Nikon F3. Ektachrome: Lla, Algarve.

Club Events & Activities 2004/5

HIGHLAND AUTUMN WEEKEND 22nd – 24th OCTOBER, 2004 MONESS COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL, ABERFELDY

THIS EVENT is included for information only and is fully booked, but is normally **repeated each year**. Contact Duncan McEwan for dates of spring and autumn events similar to this in 2005, or to check for cancellation places.

Moness House and Country Club has proved to be an ideal base for an autumn photographic weekend, with comfortable en-suite accommodation and good food, combined with a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

Price: £190.00 for 2 nights dinner, bed and breakfast, picnic lunches, Sunday afternoon tea and inclusive of course fee and VAT. There is a £10.00 per night single room supplement.

TORRIDON "INVERSNDAID AWAY" 25th – 31st OCTOBER 2004

This course is based in the attractive coastal village of Gairloch, giving easy access to the rugged, attractive land-

scape of W. Ross, an area well known to leader Duncan McEwan. Locations visited might include Shieldaig, Loch Torridon, Glen Torridon, Loch Maree with its native Scots pines, Red Point, Gruinard Bay and numerous other coastal gems. Travel will be by minibus and anyone travelling by air or train can be picked up in Inverness. E-6 processing will be carried out on-site by Inversnaid staff. Telephone 01877-386254 or email info@inversnaidphoto.com for the full Inversnaid brochure. Website is www.inversnaidphoto.com

Details of all courses and meetings can be obtained from: Duncan McEwan
Dunarden, Horsewood Road
BRIDGE OF WEIR
Renfrewshire PA11 3AT
Tel/Fax: 01505-612673 or email: mcewan@dunarden.fsnet.co.uk

Duncan's club talks

Duncan will giving Konica Minolta Photoworld sponsored lectures in the Autumn and Winter season to selected camera clubs. Starting times

will normally be around 7.30pm, and details of the venue can be obtained from the clubs; sorry, we have no printable information on these events.

November 5th 2004

– Ilkley Camera Club, 'Scotland: Land of Landscapes'

November 8th 2004 – Harrogate Photographic Society, 'Scotland: Around the Edges'

November 22nd 2004

– Bramhall Photographic Society, Stockport, 'Special Brew 2'

November 24th 2004

– Penrith & District Camera Club, 'Scotland: Around the Edges'

November 25th 2004 – Morton Camera Club, 'Special Brew 2'

December 9th 2004

– Carlisle Camera Club, 'Landscape Commandments'

January 24th 2005 – Clay Cross Photographic Society, Derbyshire, 'Landscape Commandments'

Admission to these lectures is on identical terms to members of the photographic societies involved, whether or not you are a member of these (or any local camera club).

Peter Karry's shows

PETER KARRY is one of the Minolta Club's most dedicated slide show speakers visiting camera clubs, and will continue to do so for Konica Minolta Photoworld.

Peter has two dates notified in advance, for the autumn and for next spring.

November 9th 2004 (Tuesday), at Welwyn Garden City Photographic Club – 'Creative Colour'. The club meets at 8.00pm at the Friends' Meeting House, Handside Lane, Welwyn Garden City. Contact: Monty Trent, 01707 883628.

April 26th 2005 (Tuesday), Maidstone Camera Club – 'Creative Colour'. The club meets at St Andrew's Church Hall, St Andrew's Road, Barming, Maidstone, 7.45pm. Contact: Margaret Lloyd, 01622 672492.

Konica Minolta Photoworld subscribers are admitted to our sponsored lectures at camera clubs on the same terms as the club members. The clubs welcome new members if you are local to them!



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72mm fit filters also available, other Minolta filters include Yellow, Orange and Red.

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the QUEST for perfection

Photoworld sponsors Colin Westgate's Quest workshops which welcome Konica Minolta users of all abilities. The Autumn programme includes a full course on digital imaging covering four days.

BIRDS OF PREY & OWLS

*(1 day, near Horsham, Sussex),
with George McCarthy*

Tuesday 12 October 2004

A superb workshop which has been oversubscribed every year. It takes place at a Falconry Centre, which houses the largest collection of these magnificent birds in the South East and which is available for the exclusive use of Quest on the day. George will demonstrate his own individual and professional approach to photographing captive birds in such a way as to make it virtually impossible to distinguish them from those in the wild. The falconer will arrange for individual birds to be positioned to the best photographic advantage, thereby guaranteeing stunning pictures. And one or two surprises may be in store too! Many of you will be familiar with George's famous owl posters and this is a great opportunity to learn how it is done!

Price £62 (deposit £20).

Includes refreshments. 10 places.

SURREY LOCATION! FUNGI

*with George McCarthy
(1 day, Surrey location)*

Wednesday 13 October 2004

Another opportunity to learn the techniques of this well known professional Natural History photographer and author in a superb location. Situated in ancient forest, this is an excellent area for fungi, with some rare varieties usually seen. Fungi are fascinating and interesting subjects, but are not nearly as easy to photograph as it might seem – often they are very tiny, and in awkward, dimly lit positions. George will explain the techniques required for the most effective photography and demonstrate these in the field. Participants will be shown how to choose the appropriate lens, make best use of available light and reflectors, use flash, select viewpoints, deal with backgrounds, and other 'tricks of the trade'. There should be plenty of subject matter for the camera, although weather conditions will influence what is actually available. George McCarthy is the author of the best selling book 'The Wild Mushroom', and his work has appeared in various magazines and books, including

To book any of these workshops and receive information on the 2004/2005 programme, write to: Quest Photography, Colin Westgate, 2 Marine Parade, Seaford. East Sussex BN25 2PL – or telephone 01323 897812 mentioning that you have seen this in Konica Minolta Photoworld.

the *Photography Year Book*.

Price £58 (deposit £20). 10 places.

DEER IN RICHMOND PARK

*with George McCarthy
(1 day, Richmond Park)*

Thursday 14 October 2004

The deer are rutting and in prime condition at this time of the year, and make majestic subjects for the camera. With the autumn conditions just setting in, there should also be some very pleasing backdrops, not only for photographing the deer, but also for conventional 'pictorial' photography and fungi. George will guide you in finding the best situations and opportunities for photographing these attractive and at times, dramatic animals.

Price £55 (deposit £20). 10 spaces.

NORTHUMBERLAND AND THE BORDERS

*with Colin Westgate (including a landscape day with Les Mclean)
(Hotel based, 7 nights. Free minibus travel to & from destination)*

**Saturday 23 October to
Saturday 30 October 2004**

Now a regular Quest destination, this trip will explore the superb coastline and inland landscape of unspoilt Northumberland. The beaches on the north east coast are some of the loveliest in the U.K., but as well as these, there are the Cheviot Hills, Roughting Lynn waterfall and several castles. The week will include a visit across the causeway to Lindisfarne (Holy Island) and Les Mclean, the well known photographer and writer, will lead a landscape workshop on one of the days, as well as giving an evening talk. There will be plenty of subject matter to photograph, and the evening social activity will, as with all Quest trips, include showing and sharing our own work.

The minibus will leave Sussex early Saturday morning, and will, collect passengers en route where

this is practicable. This may be at your home or nearby, but if you live far off the route north, special arrangements will be made.

Price £545 (deposit £100), 8 places.

Price includes full board accommodation, with packed lunch. It does not include cost of meals and/or refreshments en route. Price is based on sharing a twin room. Single room accommodation is limited and a supplement of £60 is payable. If you require a single, you must make this clear when booking. Minibus travel is free from pick up, put down, and for travel during the week.

AUTUMN IMPRESSIONS

*with Colin Westgate
1 day, Sheffield Park, near
Uckfield, E. Sussex*

Tuesday 2 November 2004

This was one of Quest's original workshops, and has featured in every programme since. Colin has an established reputation for his beautiful, impressionistic images, and you will learn how to produce these yourself, using various diffusion techniques – you are virtually guaranteed to get some lovely pictures. After showing pictures and discussing methods, the day will be spent photographing in the Park, well known for the variety of its exotic trees and spectacular autumn colours. Fast slide film is preferred, and the technique works particularly well when these are pushed as the grain qualities are enhanced. However, standard

colour films, slide or negative, also give very pleasing results

Price £48 (deposit £20).

10 places.. Park entrance fees (where applicable) and refreshments on arrival included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL IMAGING

*with Barrie Thomas FRPS
with FBIPP EMPA*

1 day, at Seaford

Wednesday 10 November 2004

Continuing advances in technology and reducing prices make digital imaging ever more practical, and probably a majority of photographers now use a computer instead of the darkroom to make their prints. For those new to computing, the subject is often surrounded by mystique, which tends to frighten off many adherents of traditional methods. This workshop is designed for novices and workers with limited or no experience, and will provide a foundation from which to move forward. Barrie, using the latest *Photoshop* version, will discuss and demonstrate the technology in a very clear and methodical way, projecting onto a large screen so that each step can easily be seen and followed in full detail.

Barrie is a leader and pioneer in computer imaging, and was the first photographer to gain Fellowships of the RPS, the BIIP and the MPA with panels of digital prints. He is now living in Australia but is returning to the UK to undertake these workshops and we are very lucky to get him. He is an inspiring tutor, and is acknowledged as one of the finest in this field. A workshop not to be missed, especially by those wishing to decide whether or not to 'go digital'.

Price £45 (deposit £15) includes



Photo by Colin Westgate

Digital workshops £80 (deposit £25), any three for £120 (deposit £40), all four £160 (deposit £50).

FURTHER STEPS IN DIGITAL IMAGING

with Barrie Thomas FRPS

MFIAP FBIPP EMPA

1 day, at Seaford

Thursday 11 November 2004

This workshop carries on from the 'Introduction' day and will look at digital techniques in detail, including more advanced and creative procedures. Barrie will use the latest version of *Photoshop*, but if you have an earlier version, do not worry, as the principles are very similar. This is an ideal follow up for those who have attended the introductory workshop, for those wishing to make further explorations along the digital road, or simply refresh existing skills. For details about Barrie Thomas, see above. There is probably no finer teacher of digital imaging, especially at this level.

Price £45 (deposit £15) includes buffet lunch, 30+ places.

**SPECIAL OFFER - Any two Digital workshops £80 (deposit £25), any three for £120 (deposit £40), all four £160 (deposit £50).*

DIGITAL PROBLEMS, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

with Barrie Thomas FRPS

MFIAP FBIPP EMPA

1 day, at Seaford

Friday 12 November 2004

An interactive workshop, where you ask the questions and Barrie provides the answers. He will work through problem images with participants, suggesting solutions and improvements.

Although designed for workers with some digital experience, it is also suitable for beginners. This is a unique opportunity to learn how to overcome difficult situations, arising not only from your own work, but also from that of others. Questions will be taken in order of booking, and it is expected that there will be time for most participants to be accommodated. However, much can be learnt from other peoples topics, so even if you are unable to place a question yourself, the workshop should expand your digital knowledge.

Price £45 (deposit £15) includes buffet lunch, 30+ places.

**SPECIAL OFFER - Any two Digital workshops £80 (deposit £25), any three for £120 (deposit £40), all four £160 (deposit £50).*

DIGITAL MONOCHROME

with Barrie Thomas FRPS

MFIAP FBIPP EMPA

1 day, at Seaford

Saturday 13 November 2004

This workshop is now one of the most popular in the digital series and will explore the particular techniques required to get first class monochrome results, from black & white or colour negatives or colour transparencies. There are problems peculiar to monochrome which Barrie will illustrate and by using various techniques, provide solutions. He will show how to use digital tools to achieve tonal controls and effects similar to those obtained in the 'wet' darkroom. This promises to be an exciting day, with Barrie challenging the final frontiers of the darkroom enthusiast!

Price £45 (deposit £15) includes buffet lunch, 30+ places.

**SPECIAL OFFER - Any two Digital workshops £80 (deposit £25), any three for £120 (deposit £40), all four £160 (deposit £50).*

SEALS

*with Colin Westgate
(2 nights, hotel based,
free Minibus travel)*

Friday - Sunday 19-21 November 2004

The location of the seals is on an area of the Lincolnshire coast where the seals follow the tide in, and it is possible to get close to them for some spectacular photography. Pups can usually be found fairly close in, but it we will also walk across the sands to photograph the seals at the waters edge, where they are particularly active. The bus will leave Sussex Friday morning, arriving late afternoon at the charming Lincolnshire town of Louth. This will enable us to photograph all day Saturday, and Sunday morning, before leaving for the return journey at around 2.30 pm. Participants will be picked up and dropped at points close to the proposed route, but due to the tight timetable, it may not be feasible to pick up from home addresses.

Price £185 (deposit £60). 10 places. The workshop price includes over night B&B accommodation, but does not include other meals. Accommodation is based on sharing a twin room. Single rooms have limited availability and incur a supplement of £30. Minibus travel is free.



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KONICA MINOLTA

My DiMAGE A1 journey

It's potentially an exciting time for the Minolta shooter, looking forward to the eagerly awaited digital SLR. Yet, since the introduction of the Dimage 7 Minolta has been busy pushing the capabilities of what a digital bridge camera can do, as a result changing people's expectations. Having used the Konica Minolta **Dimage A1** for well over 6 months I'm really impressed with how capable a photographic tool the camera is. Three years on from the introduction of the original Dimage 7, the A1's CCD still has a mega pixel count of 5 unlike the 8 megapixel A2, but the engine under the bonnet and the user interface has been some what enhanced.

Konica Minolta has paid a lot of attention to detail with regards to the general feel of the A series cameras and their ergonomics. The hand grip is large with plenty of grip making it comfortable to hold. I was extremely pleased to see that the camera features two control dials for separate aperture and shutter speed adjustments. This brought the camera in line with many of the more expensive digital SLR cameras in terms of exposure control. The focusing ring is now easier to grip due to it being made slightly wider than that used on the Dimage 7 series.

Stamina boost

Compared to my previous Dimage 7Hi with its NiMH cells of variable quality, I find the Dimage A series offers very impressive battery life. Its new high capacity (1600mAh) lithium-ion battery allowed me to take on one particular photo shoot 260 RAW photos (the equivalent of approximately 2GB data) before the battery was depleted. This was fantastic performance considering the amount of use I made of the Anti-Shake mode and the LCD monitor. One thing I became aware of was how fast the battery died after the low battery warning appeared; a second cell is almost essential.

For prolonged photo shoots I invested in the power pack EBP-100 which can be powered from one or two lithium-ion NP-100 rechargeable batteries or six AA cells, and also fits the A2. With the power pack the camera becomes as bulky as some of the digital SLRs but remained comfortable to hold in both vertical and horizontal positions. With two fully charged

Emmanuel Agbaraojo has progressed from the original DiMAGE 7 to the A1, and here reviews its performance as a travelling companion



Candid of two sisters; and white tiger, Singapore Zoo



lith-ion batteries installed I found that I could shoot for two full days.

I could not resist powering the camera with 6 alkaline batteries to determine how it would perform with the 'worst case' power source... batteries bought from a shop on the street corner. Fifty shots were taken (with some use of the Anti-Shake mode and flash) before the batteries ran out of steam. Had I powered the camera with NiMH rechargeable batteries of 2300mAh, I would expect a considerably improved performance.

The power pack has a shutter release to make shooting in portrait format easier but I felt the implementation was somewhat half-hearted. The lack of duplicated control dials meant that I could not make exposure adjustments while holding the camera vertically. Also, there was no provision for adjusting the AF sensor. Obviously, Konica Minolta has basically intended the power pack to be used as just a power pack rather than a proper vertical grip (then again, I may have been spoiled by the vertical grips on the Dynax 700si, 7 and 9 cameras). It's worth noting that the external power pack originally designed for the Dimage 7 still works with the Dimage A1 and A2 and may come in handy when using the camera under very cold weather as it can be kept under a warm jacket while it powers the camera.

A clearer view

The adjustable LCD monitor may not be as flexible as that found on some other cameras but it did make life easier for me to take awkward shots. It allowed me to take low level photos with relative ease, acting as a waist level finder. With the LCD monitor tilted downwards, it came in useful when shooting over peoples heads when in a crowd.

The redesigned EVF to me appeared to be of lower contrast than that used in previous models but the amount of viewable detail looked the same. It would be nice if the A1 could have a custom upgrade so it could use the higher resolution EVF found in the Dimage A2 model (wishful thinking on my part).

The now standard metering modes of Evaluative, Spot and Centre Weighted are provided as a matter of course. In practise I found that for the majority of situations the camera could safely be used in the

default evaluative metering mode. However, at times there is a tendency to overexpose from 0.3 to 0.7 stops depending on the lighting conditions. As the EVF/LCD monitor reflects the set exposure, with the aid of the histogram it's a simple matter of dialling in the correct amount of exposure compensation. My preference was to set the rear control dial for exposure compensation adjustment, which avoids needing to use the +/- button, and the front control dial to adjust the aperture.

An essential component of the metering process is determining the correct white balance. In common with all the Dimage cameras I have used to date, the A1 does not have a particularly strong auto white balance mode in tungsten light (leaving a distinct warm look) but may overcompensate in other conditions. Shooting in parks where there are lots of greenery, the auto white balance has the tendency to over-compensate for greens and produce rather dull looking images as a result. I have always preferred to use preset white balance settings to ensure consistent results. Daylight WB is my usual default. I take my hat off to Konica Minolta for allowing the presets to be tuneable. This



Anti-shake and accurate autofocus and exposure, above, fruit bat, 1/50th at f3.5, 200mm. Below, good noise free night shooting, 1/10th at f2.8, ISO 200.

capability came in very handy. I must however add that when I'm shooting in raw .MRW format I'd generally leave the fine tuning of white balance to the *Dimage Viewer* software.

Focus factors

I'm generally very pleased with the AF performance of the A1. It's reasonably quick and its performance has been more consistent than the Dimage 7Hi. I have longed for the predictive AF and finally it has been provided. Generally, I've found the predictive AF works well and can track vehicles moving towards or away from the camera with little difficulty as long as there is decent contrast detail for it to lock on to. Problems only seem to occur when the camera is set to track movement in three dimensions. The AF sensor can on some occasions happily follow a subject round the viewfinder and on others refuse to lock on the subject and just crawl across the viewfinder. When I required the use of predictive AF I generally switched off the 3D tracking capability so the AF sensors position remained in one place. Would have preferred if there was an option to use predicted AF with the wide area AF mode.





There are times when I preferred to use manual focus but rather than just set the camera in that mode I found the DMF (Direct Manual Focus) mode more beneficial. When used with the 8x magnifier, manual focusing is very straightforward. I let the camera auto-focus first then I fine tune if necessary. This way, the sharpest results are always assured.

I must raise my hand and say I'm not really a fan of the wide area AF for general photography. This is because I could never be certain what was actually in focus. I would have preferred the wider focus area for tracking moving subjects. Unfortunately, this has not been employed in the A1. The flex focus was always the better option for focusing on the correct part of a subject. Its worth noting that the actual focus area even for the flex focus was larger than it appeared.

Lens, flash and shutter

The 28 to 200mm equivalent lens performed well across its range though some distortion was apparent when dealing with architectural subjects with the lens set at 28mm. There were times I could have done with a slightly wider view than 28mm. Shooting wildlife did make me wish for a 300mm lens but a lot was still achieved at the maximum 200mm. The lens seemed to exhibit a little more aberrations than I've previously seen on the Dimage 7 series but overall the lens performed extremely well.

The internal flash came in handy on a number of occasions to remove or soften heavy shadows. For the more demanding tasks I preferred to use my trusty external flashgun, the 5600 HS D, as it allowed more flexibility. The A1 could synchronise with the flash (internal or external) at all shutter speeds. This meant even in bright sunshine I could use wide apertures and maintain the correct exposure. This is a very useful

but often understated feature. The main issue I had with the flash was its performance in wireless remote mode. It at times produced hugely over exposed photos even when the flash light was bounced off a surface. I never came across this problem before on any of the other Minolta cameras that used this technology.

The high maximum shutter speed of 1/16,000 seconds meant in practice I could shoot when necessary with the aperture wide open (the A2, by the way, lacks this feature and also some of the shooting speed of the A1). Although I never required the maximum shutter speed, it was nice that I was never restricted by the camera and so free to set whatever shutter speed I preferred.

AS and A-to-D

The key feature of the Dimage A1 is no doubt the **Anti-Shake**. Being what was effectively a new technology, I was not certain that AS could live up to the performance of existing image stabilising technologies. After using the camera in anger while travelling for a wide range of situations, its now hard to imagine using a camera without AS. In practical terms I found I could hand hold the A1 at all focal lengths down to shutter speeds of 1/10th. This made the camera great for my style of travel photography.

I have always considered that there are two basic ways of improving detail captured in digital photos, either increase the mega pixel count or increase the number of bits used to sample the original image. The technology employed in the A1 makes use of 14-bit A-to-D rather than the now standard 12bit A-to-D (which the A2 employs, it is worth noting). The higher bit rate theoretically should result in captured images with improved shadow and highlight detail. Having used the A1 for many months it is fair to say that there



Two cases when Anti-Shake is a great feature. Macro of a butterfly, Singapore Zoo, was shot at full f3.5 aperture (200mm macro setting) hand held at 1/80th, ISO 100.

Bridge construction at Macau, above, was at 1/400th and 200mm; AS still sharpens the picture. Detail, left, is from a 300dpi full size reproduction.

is something 'different' about the photos. They appear to have more depth compared to what I'm used to seeing in a digital image. What was apparent from the photos I printed was the camera was very good at capturing small transitions in tone and hue resulting in well rendered gradations. It would be hard to conclusively say this was all due to the A-to-D converter or just general improvement in the image processing.

The raw .MRW file format has always been my choice for recording the best possible image that a camera can capture. With the reduction in the raw file size compared to the Dimage 7 series, it became my preferred format. Raw files can not be magnified in playback (the same applied to the TIFF files) so as a result I take extra care to ensure that I achieved sharp focus before tripping the shutter.

Noise and heat

Digital cameras based on small CCDs are always prone to image noise especially at ISOs above 200. When the camera is operated for an extended time with the Anti-Shake active and in a warm climate the, image noise levels increase.

The noise levels were well controlled but photos shot with a 15 to 30 second exposure were typically very noisy, and not useable once the camera had been operational for a while and had warmed up when I was shooting in a tropical climate.

I also noticed that when the camera got very warm an ERR message would appear on the top LCD display and I had no choice but to power down the camera by removing the battery and then reinsert it, especially when shooting in hot climatic conditions when the AS was active. I found it best to leave the AS off unless it was required.

My photography has been in hot climates, pushing the tolerance of any small sensor digital camera to the limit. In normal British weather, you can leave AS on all the time and never see any of the noise problems I encountered.

I'm very pleased with the overall image quality produced. The captured images were usually quite neutral in colour rendition and never lacking in detail. Raw mode was definitely the way to go to get the best possible photos. I found by keeping the ISO range to Auto with the AS activated I could handle a wide range of conditions throughout the day.

The key strength of the Dimage A1 has got to be its flexibility. It's so feature packed that it puts some of the digital SLRs to shame. But at the end of the day no matter what technology is employed, it's the end results that matters. Although the A1 was not as quick as my Dynax 7 SLR, it's the first digital camera of its type I've used that hardly hindered me and allowed me to concentrate on what was important – taking photos.



Ansmann's NiMH quality solution: speed and reliability combined

Ansmann rechargeable cells and chargers are distributed by Konica Minolta Photo Imaging (UK) Ltd, and have the reputation of being the best NiMHs on the European market.

Because Minolta developed some of the most powerful consumer digital cameras at an early date, they were stretching the abilities of the NiMH batteries then available. When the Dimage 7 appeared, with both its electronic viewfinder and rear LCD screen to power plus a hungry 5 megapixel sensor, the largest cells commonly available were 1600 milliAmp hour (mAh).

There was such a variation in quality and true capacity between makes that Minolta (UK) Ltd experts were constantly testing different samples, to see which should be included with the cameras when sold. Some brands would report a low voltage after only a few shots – others would keep going and match the published performance of the camera.

The cameras continued developing, and photo magazine testers discovered all kinds of variations between NiMH cells. Some were larger than others and did not fit well into the battery chamber of the Dimage Z1. Some stated extra high capacity, such as 2300mAh, but lost their charge in a few days and could not even be kept in a camera bag on a two-week holiday.

Finally, Ansmann cells emerged as being amongst those with the best quality control. They proved a good fit to battery chambers, not over-long or loose against the contacts, and lived up to the stated capacities with better than normal retention of charge.

Ansmann also branded a range of intelligent chargers, including some capable of refreshing NiMH cells which had been damaged by long storage. The choice of chargers is a little confusing and needs explanation!

Home and away

The two chargers most useful at home are the Energy 4 and Energy 8. You should only need the 8 if you have a wide range of NiMH or NiCad cells to charge; it will handle PP9 (rectangular 9V) and large C or D type batteries as well as AA and AAA.

The Energy 4 is the most obvious



Ansmann products tested by David Kilpatrick included the Energy Check, left, and the Energy 4 and Digispeed 4 chargers, below. These are available from The Photostore (see page 33) and from Konica Minolta dealers.

Ansmann's Energy 8 with its wide range of cell size fittings (top) was not tested. Their 2200 and 2300 mAh cells were, and remain in use now for three months without problems; the battery and card held, above, is very useful.



choice, taking four AA or AAA cells and charging each cell individually. Unlike most chargers, it is not necessary to charge in full sets of four, but in pairs – and even then, each cell is processed on its own, allowing a longer charge time or a different refresh cycle for tired batteries. You can charge two NiMHs and two NiCads at the same time, or pairs of different capacity and make.

The Energy chargers diagnose faults, and will 'red light' a cell which can not be used. They automatically refresh old cells, and made one set of Energizer 1200mAhs perform like new after four years of storage. The charging is fast, and once complete, the batteries are kept on a controlled trickle charge which maintains them without generating heat. They stay cool, and can be left permanently in the charger when not in use.

The Digispeed 4 charger is entirely different. It is a very rapid charger – one and half hours even when working from a car cigar lighter socket, and provided with an in-car kit. It has a cooling fan and maintains cells on a charge which would leave them warm, and it's not recommended as a permanent home for a set of NiMHs. It does not refresh cells the same way, and it should be used to charge pairs of one type of cell at a time one – there is a switch for NiCad or NiMH selection, due to the high charging rate involved.

While the Energy 4 comes with an international power kit (plugs on the back the charger can be changed, and it is multivoltage) the Digispeed 4 uses a mains adaptor providing the same 12v as the car kit. Between the two, they form an ideal travel outfit, one compatible with hotel bedrooms almost anywhere, and the other dealing with rapid recharging during car journeys.

Ansmann's 'Energy Check' shows the state of your cells on an eight-LED display, and this enabled us to see very quickly which of our old NiMHs were taking a good charge, and which were not. It also showed us that the new Ansmann 2200 and 2300 mAh cells supplied were far superior to other makes of 2300 mAh cell bought the same week in photo dealers, and held their charge much longer. The answer – if you use NiMH AAs – is definitely Ansmann!



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20mm f2.8	£250	£7.50	£30.00	£45.00	£6.00
24mm f2.8	£200	£5.00	£20.00	£30.00	£6.00
35mm f1.4-G	£400	£7.50	£30.00	£45.00	£6.00
85mm f1.4-G	£400	£15.00	£60.00	£90.00	£6.00
100mm f2.8 Macro	£300	£7.50	£40.00	£60.00	£6.00
200mm f4 APO-G Macro	£500	£15.00	£60.00	£90.00	£6.00
200mm f2.8 APO-G	£450	£15.00	£60.00	£90.00	£6.00
300mm f2.8 APO-G	£500	£10.00	£40.00	£60.00	£25.00
300mm f4 APO-G	£450	£15.00	£60.00	£90.00	£6.00
400mm f4.5 APO-G	£800	£20.00	£80.00	£100.00	£25.00
500mm f8 AF Mirror	£350	£7.50	£30.00	£45.00	£6.00
1.4x APO Converter	£350	£5.00	£20.00	£30.00	£6.00
for use with the 200 f2.8, 300 f2.8, 300 f4, 400 f4.5, 600 f4					
2.0x APO Converter	£350	£5.00	£20.00	£30.00	£6.00
for use with the 200 f2.8, 300 f2.8, 300 f4*, 400 f4.5*, 600 f4* (*MF only)					
17-35mm f3.5 G – soon!	£600	£15.00	£60.00	£90.00	£6.00
28-70mm f2.8 G – soon!	£600	£15.00	£60.00	£90.00	£6.00
24-85mm f3.5-4.5	£200	£5.00	£20.00	£30.00	£6.00
100-300mm f4.5-5.6 APO	£200	£5.00	£20.00	£30.00	£6.00
100-400mm f4.5-6.7 APO	£500	£15.00	£60.00	£90.00	£6.00

Please Note: Where Post & Packing is shown as £6.00 despatch will be by first class registered post. Where Post & Packing is shown as £25.00, despatch will be by overnight Datapost. Optional upgrade from first class to Datapost is available for a £14.00 supplement. WHY NOT hire a 300mm plus 1.4X converter for your next shoot?

Using T2/manual lenses – UPDATED INFO

DYNAX xi and si cameras, and most later models, have a shutter lock, which prevents the shutter from being released if anything other than an AF lens is fitted (e.g. slide copier, T2 manual mount lens, telescope etc). To over-ride this –

Dynax 9/7 Select Custom Function 16 and set to 2
Dynax 60 Select Custom Function 13 and set to 2
Dynax 5 Select Custom Function 14 and set to 2
Dynax 4 Select Custom Function 12 and set to 2
 On other Dynax models, press and hold the following buttons, while turning the main switch to ON:

Dynax 40 DRIVE
Dynax 3L SUBJECT PROG and DRIVE
Dynax 9xi/7xi FUNC and AEL
Dynax 5xi FUNC and SPOT

Dynax 800si AEL and SUBJECT PROGRAM
Dynax 700si CARD and SPOT
Dynax 600si LENS RELEASE and ISO
 (with lens removed for safety)
Dynax 500si AV and DRIVE/ST
Dynax 500si Super SPOT and DRIVE/ST
Dynax 300si FLASH MODE and DRIVE/ST
Dynax 505si/Super SPOT and SELF TIMER
Dynax 404si P and SELF TIMER
 (with Function Dial at ME position)
Dynax 303si MODE and SELF TIMER

Dynax 2xi }
Dynax 3xi } Send to Minolta UK for circuit
Dynax Spxi } modification (chargeable)

DIGITAL SLRs & VECTIS

RD-175 SELF TIMER and AV
RD-3000 DRIVE and SPOT (while switching to REC)
 On the Vectis models, press the following buttons. There is no need to 'press and hold'
Vectis S-1 MODE + SELF TIMER = 'on' appears on display; SEL = 'off' appears on display. Press any other button to confirm.

Vectis S-100 SUBJECT PROGRAM and +/- = 'on' on display. +/- = 'off' on display. Press any other button to confirm.

To re-instate the shutter lock, repeat the same procedure. On Dynax 9, 7, 5, and 4 set Custom Function 16 back to option 1.

BATTERY BUSTER

Dynax (Maxxum) series autofocus SLRs

Dynax 3000i, 5000i, 7000i, 8000i, SPxi, 2xi, 3xi, 5xi, 7xi, 9xi	1 x 2CR5
300Si, 500Si, 505Si Super, 600Si, 700Si, 800Si	1 x 2CR5
Dynax 303Si, 404Si, 505Si, 505Si Super, 5, 4, 3L, 40, 60	2 x CR2
Dynax 7, Dynax 9, Dynax 9Ti	2 x CR123A

Minolta Original Autofocus SLR series

9000	2 x AA
7000/5000 with battery holder issued with camera	4 x AAA
7000/5000 upgraded by fitting BH-70L big battery holder	4 x AA

Minolta Manual focus SLRs

XM, XE-1, XE-5, XD-7, XD-5, XG-1, XG-2, XG-9, XGM, X-9	2 x EPX-76
X-300, X-300s, X-320s, X-500, X-700	or 2 x 10L14
SRT-101, 100, 202, 303, 100x, 101b, 303b, SR7, SR1 meter	1 x PX625

Minolta Vectis (Advanced Photo System)

Vectis S-1, Vectis S-100, Vectis 40	2 x CR2
Vectis 3000, 300(L), 30, 25, 2000, 200, 260, 20, 10, UC, Weathermatic, GX1 x CR2	

Minolta Himatic compacts and earlier rangefinder models

Minolta AL-F, AL-E, Himatic 7, 7s, 9 and 11	1 x PX625
Himatic 7S-II, 5, G, G2, C	1 x PX675
Himatic E, F	1 x PX640
Himatic S, S2, GF, AF, AF2, AF2M	2 x AA
Minolta CLE (Leica M mount system)	2 x 10L14 or EPX-76

Autofocus and Focus-free compacts (modern series)

140EX, 135EX, 105EX, Panorama Zoom 28	2 x CR123A
90EX, 70C, Weathermatic DL	1 x DL223A
Riva Zoom 110, 160, 160c, 150, 130, 125, 130c	1 x CR123A
80c, 150c	1 x CR2
115EX, 75W, 70W, 70EX, 90EX, RZ70, Pico, Mini, Panorama	1 x CR123A
105i, 90C, Twin 28, AF Zoom 65, AF Zoom 90, AF Tele Super	1 x 2CR5
AF 5, 100AF, AF35EX, AF35, AF35C, Riva 35, Zoom 60	2 x AA
AF-101R, AF-20R, F-10/BF, C-10, Memory Maker	2 x AA
FS-E, FS-EII, FS-35, AF-E	2 x AA
AF-C	4 x 10L14
AF-T	2 x AA or DL223A
AF-Z, AF-EII, AF-DL, AF Tele 60, AF-SP	4 x AAA or DL223A
TC-1	1 x CR123A

Minolta & Konica Minolta Digital Cameras

Dimage V, Dimage EX, Dimage 2300, 2330, E201	4 x AA 1300+mAh (NiMH)
RD3000, DiMAGE 5, DiMAGE 7/7i/7Hi, S304/404/414	4 x AA 1600+mAh (NiMH)
Dimage Z1, Z2, Z3, Z10, GT530	4 x AA 1600+mAh (NiMH/Alkaline)
X21, X31	2 x AA 1600+mAh (NiMH/Alkaline)
F100, F200, F300, E203, E223, E323, X20*	1 CR-V3 or 2 x AA* 1600+mAh (NiMH)
RD-175	1 x 2CR5
Dimage A1, A2	NP400 Lithium-Ion
X, Xi, Xt, Xg	NP200 Lithium-Ion
X50	NP700 Lithium-Ion
G400, G530, G600	NP600 Lithium-Ion
G500	NP500 Lithium-Ion
(NP500 and 600 are identical except for capacity and may be interchanged with the Konica DR -LB4)	

Konica Film Cameras

Hexar RF	2xCR2
Hexar AF	1x2CR5
Lexio 115, 70, 70W	1xCR2
Mermaid	1xCR123A
Z-up 60e, 80e, 100W, 115e, 125e, 130e, 150e	1xCR2
Z-up 28W, 80	1x2CR5
Z-up 70 Super, 70 VP, 110 VP, 110 Super, 120 VP	1xCR123A
Z-up 135 Super, 140 Super, 150 Super, 150 VP	1xCR123A
Revio, Revio II, Revio CL, Revio Z2, Revio Z3	1xCR2

Konica Digital Cameras

Q-mini, QM-3501E	3xAA
KD-100	2xAA
KD-220Z, 200Z	2xAA, 1xCRV3
Q-M200	3xAA, 1xPX-LB1
Q-M-100, M100V	4xAA
KD-3000Z	4xAA
KD-300Z	1xDR-LB1
KD-3300	2xAA, 1xCRV3
e-mini, C2	2xAAA
e-miniD, e-miniM	2xAA
KD-25, 20m, 30m	2xAA
KD-420Z	NP-600
KD-310Z, 410-Z, 400Z, 500Z, 510Z	1xDR-LB4

Minolta Exposure Meters

Flashmeter V, Autometer IV F, Spotmeter F	1 x AA
Flashmeter IV	1 x AA + 1 x PX28
Autometer III F, III and II, Spotmeter M	1 x PX28
Colormeter II, Flashmeter II	1 x MN1604
Flashmeter III	6 x 10L14
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