

photoworld



summer07



The product news which kicks off this issue is pure speculation. Why? Because that is all that Sony has been able to allow. In an unusual move, they have issued high resolution images of cameras which may be mock-ups and have no official names or specifications – and lenses which are described only by their general type. We do not even know exactly when any of these new products may be available.

It is most likely that October 2007 and March 2008 will see either announcements or full launches of selected products, and that Sony will aim to have completed a three-DSLR, 30+ lens system line up before photokina 2008 which takes place in Cologne in September. They will be planning a large exhibition stand with a range to match Canon or Nikon head-on.

We will, of course, be attending photokina 2008. It would have been disappointing to go to PMA in the States last March only to see prototypes and mock-ups, but missing seeing just those items left us less well informed.

Each magazine issue will be placed on our websites in PDF form, so if you lose a copy yourself, it's easy to acquire a printable version by downloading. The Spring (April) 2007 edition is now downloadable from [www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com).

– David & Shirley Kilpatrick

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# The website awaits you! 'photoclubalpha'



OUR club website – [www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com) – is now ready for all members to visit following three busy months of site development. The site is also open to other Minolta and Sony users, who are encouraged to register and also to subscribe to the magazine. We have started welcoming a regular flow of new magazine readers since the new site went live on May 21st.

Photoclubalpha offers you extended views of topics covered in the magazine, and many additional short articles, along with news and resources. It has been built using Wordpress, a 'blog' system, which makes it easy for me to add complete articles in the time it takes to write them and prepare the images. They are automatically placed in the categories, indexed and searchable.

Highlights of the new website include one article, based on the information we print here about new cameras and lenses, which attracted over 8,000 readers on the second day after posting. The site now averages over 1,200 article reads per day.

One page all our readers will enjoy is a complete, extended electronic version of the classic 1999 '70 years of Minolta history'

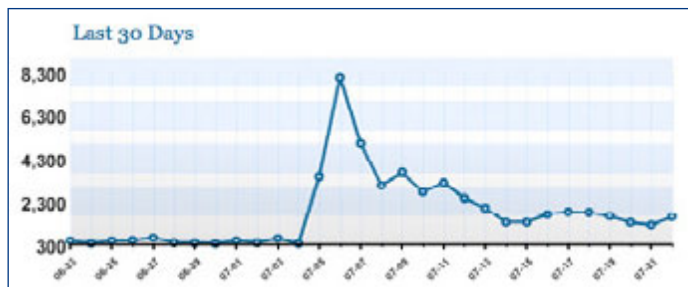
will poster. All the photographs of the 113 featured cameras appear to a large size with real clarity. To go directly to this, enter: <http://photoclubalpha.com/useful-and-vital-links/minolta-history-seven-decades/> in your web browser.

Photoclubalpha also has a Forum. While registering for the main site is not vital, you should register to use the Forum properly, and join in with discussions. Over the last couple of months we have been encouraging Forum activity so there are already plenty of topics you can view and learn from.

The benefit of Forum membership is that advice is available from other members who have encountered similar problems or are specialists in one field. I also drop in regularly and follow up posts where needed.

To go straight to the Photoclubalpha.com forums, the web address is: [www.photoclubalpha.com/phpBB2](http://www.photoclubalpha.com/phpBB2)

Finally, we have added a free Reader Gallery to the website. Here you can upload your own pictures (600 x 400 pixels) to create your own exhibition, and other subscribers can comment on your work. There



Above: website statistics – 75,000 visits in the first two months from May 21st launch. Right: the Forum, Gallery and typical article pages.

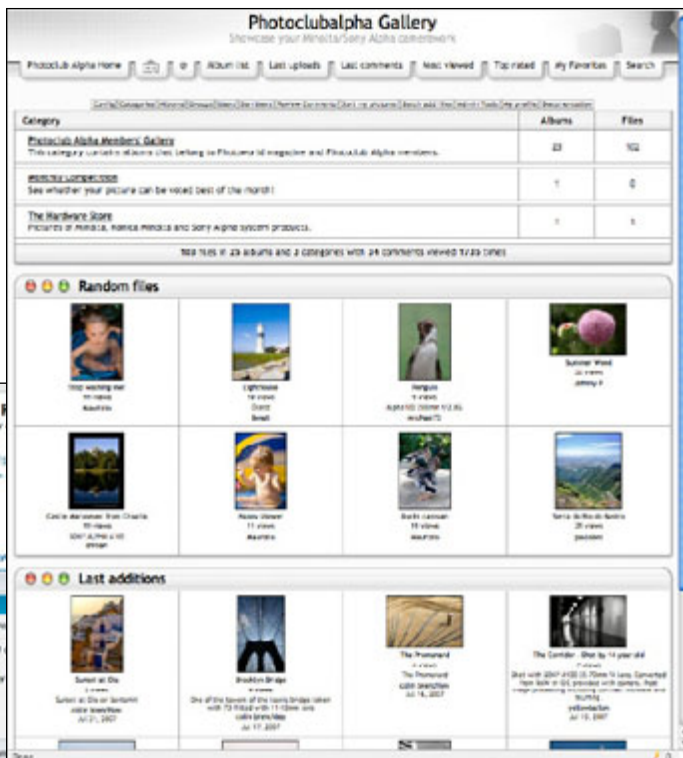
is a rating system too, though at present I am the only one doing the 'star ratings'. Once enough users are active and my level of ratings has become familiar, we will open up the star rating system to all users.

To see the Gallery (which you are automatically signed up to use when you create a user name and password for the Forum) go to:

<http://www.photoclubalpha.com/coppermine/>

There are no charges associated with the Photoclubalpha website. Pages carry advertising, and this helps cover the costs. We plan to continue with the printed Photoworld magazine and Photoclubalpha is not a replacement. It is an additional benefit for all Minolta and Sony users which provides valuable publicity for *Photoworld* and the prospect of reviving club activities, services and offers.

– DK



## MINOLTA REPAIRS

by specialist workshop in Milton Keynes

**FOR MANY** years **Camera Repair Workshop**, based in Milton Keynes close to the original Minolta UK service department, handled the repair of classic SRT, X, Vectis and later film cameras for Minolta UK.

They have obtained many of the spare parts and KM's stocks of older 'cannibalisation cameras' like 7000 and 8000i. Their proprietor is David Boyle, and his two technicians are Minolta trained. As an independent repairer they will specialise in film and digital, and hold parts going back to models like the XM. The Dynax 9 is an exception, previously serviced by a special European centre, and must be sent to JP (see right). No VAT is chargeable at present, and they offer Photoworld Club members a **10 per cent discount** on prices which they say are already better than former retail repair charges. This enables the Club to continue with its 10 per cent service and repair discount offer.

The **Photoworld Club Camera Check** scheme will be operated by Camera Repair Workshop, though in absence of Konica Minolta's former bulk shipping arrangements, the return carriage costs have increased and a charge of **£25 per camera/standard lens** combination is now required.

Your equipment is bench-tested for shutter speed, metering, focusing and aperture accuracy, externally cleaned and adjusted (this includes mirror box and film track, and all accessible parts or adjustments). If performance is below standard, a quotation will be issued for optional servicing. A certificate is completed showing the test results and functions checked, and returned with the camera. Camera Repair Workshop were actually responsible for most of the Club Camera Check work, and hold a stock of original 'Minolta Club' certificates along with all the necessary bench testing equipment.

They are based at:

**Unit 9, Wharfedale, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2AZ.**

**Telephone 01908 378088, fax 08712 427677.**

**Email: cameraworkshop@tiscali.co.uk**

## HELPLINES AND INFORMATION

Authorised & warranty repairs, assistance and enquiries

**A DEDICATED** helpline is available for Konica Minolta Dynax and Dimage digital system owners, and also for film camera owners. The helpline phone number is **0870 0104107**.

**ALL REPAIRS** for Konica, Minolta and Konica Minolta branded photographic products are handled by;

JP Service Solutions  
Johnsons Photopia Ltd  
Hempstalls Lane  
Hempstall under Lyme  
Staffordshire ST5 0SW  
Tel: 01782 753366 – Fax: 01782 753340  
Email: [kmsupport@jpss.co.uk](mailto:kmsupport@jpss.co.uk)

**SONY** may announce further firmware upgrades or indeed products. Your first step should be to check Sony's website regularly:

**[www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)**

Their general helpline, which will have information on any other numbers, addresses, departments or offices which Konica Minolta owners may need to reach in future, is: **08705 111 999**

Our new website **[www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com)** has a full directory of useful links for downloading software or obtaining help, on its front page. For downloadable printable manuals, legacy firmware and software updates, visit:

**<http://ca.konicaminolta.com/support/americas/>**

For the Sony European user service – there is still no UK user club:

**<http://www.sony.co.uk/nextlevel>**

To order KM/Sony parts, accessories, and new Sony flash components etc, visit:

**<http://www.photostore-uk.com/>**



# α The professional line-up?

More work went into this page than you think! While it was possible to get an idea of Sony's lenses and cameras planned for 2007-8 from the group image we used in the last issue, the individual press images are all shot to different scales.

By a bit of analysis, it looked as if they have used the same size of focusing scale window on all the lenses along with similar sized SONY and ft/m lettering. Using the measure tool in *Photoshop*, I found that the smaller black lenses had been shot with the camera in three different but fixed positions, probably moved back on a tripod as the lenses were swapped over. The press photos of the lenses were all actually taken with a Sony Alpha 100 on the same day, despite the poor matching of the black colour.

So, for this spread, each individual image has been carefully resized in *Photoshop* so that you can judge the scale of the lenses – their relative size. The three long lenses on the facing page are so much bigger that their relative scale is probably not so accurate, and could not match the others.

So what are the lenses?

Sony is not saying.

They have given the press release images filenames, however, such as 'Large Aperture Wide Angle Zoom' and 'Super Telephoto Zoom'. It was already known that a 24-70mm f2.8 lens was in the pipeline, because a presentation screen flashed up at the July 2006 press conference included this specification.

Sony executives later confirmed that a fast, standard full frame zoom would be coming, along with a better quality tele zoom (the



## Flagship Model – the Alpha 500?

THIS dream camera is expected to go on sale for the first time in 2008, with the first samples tried and tested around March and a full rollout in time for photokina in September. If rumours are to be believed, it will be equipped with a 18 megapixel advanced CMOS sensor either full frame in format, or with a slight reduction all round to allow for SSS.

SSS has been confirmed as a feature of both cameras by Sony.

It will have a very bright 100 per cent viewfinder with glass prism, and will be built and priced to professional standards. We would expect a short burst frame rate of 4.5 frames per second to be achieved, and that the shutter will be speed to 1/12,000th with flash synchronisation at 1/250th or 1/300th. In terms of image quality, it will be Sony's intention to match or better the Canon EOS 1Ds MkII or its successor. There are rumours that Canon will take full frame capture to 22 megapixels.

The '500' will accept a handgrip power base, and has no pop-up flash. No working prototype has yet been spotted anywhere!

existing 75-300mm is very much a budget design) and an 18-250mm. We do not believe that any of these prototypes of mock-ups represents the 18-250mm and it's almost certain to be a Sony revision of the excellent Tamron design.

A Spanish website published imaginary – or leaked – specifications for the lenses in June. Some of this information ties up well with other clues.

The designations I have chosen to give these lenses are speculative. The final lenses may have a different focal length range or aperture. However, it's taken a lot of discussion and detective work to reach these conclusions and I look forward to finding out just how right or wrong I am in the near future!

## The cameras

There will be two new cameras, which people who have seen the mockups compare more to the Dynax 7D in size than to the Alpha 100. My feeling is that glass cases may be getting in the way and the size is midway, not as big as the 7D. The D-rings, in proportion to the cameras, indicate a size more like the film Dynax 7 – often considered to be one of the best overall body size and shape choices.

The camera with the very starkly outlined pentaprism housing is called the 'Flagship' camera by Sony, indicating that this may be a true professional weapon in specification. There is no onboard flash, so in order



'Large Aperture Wide Angle Fixed Lens' – this may be a 24mm f1.4 or f2 Sony design.



'Wide Angle Fixed Lens' – everything says 35mm f1.8, even the front glass and rim. Low cost, Sony SAL.



'Large Aperture Wide Angle Zoom' – it's huge! Full frame CZ 16-35mm f2.8 is where our money is.



'Large Aperture Standard Zoom'. This is already thought to be the planned 24-70mm f2.8 Carl Zeiss.

to work with wireless flash there must either be a built-in controller or a way of attaching a flash command module, probably via the hotshoe. Current wireless flash models can not be used with a separate flash as the controller (you must use the pop-up flash) but the protocol could perhaps be altered. Even so, it's a big waste to have a large flashgun on the camera just doing the work of controlling off-camera flashes.

The prism will no doubt be glass and there is a fair possibility that this may be a full-frame, or nearly full-frame, model. All the lenses released appear to be full-frame, not APS-C digital only designs. Since film is not in the picture now, we think this means Sony is planning around a full-frame flagship.

The other camera (bottom right) is called the Advanced Amateur model, and is thought to be the planned replacement for the Konica Minolta 7D, restyled and with some of the expensive external mechanical controls replaced by buttons. It is agreed that this is unlikely to be full-frame, but the same format as the Alpha 100. We know for certain that a new sensor and new BIONZ processor will be used because Sony has said so.

As for the launch dates, trade sources seem convinced that they will have the new amateur model to sell by the end of October 2007. Sony tell us that the two cameras will be announced (firmly) before the end of 2007. Everyone expects the first Flagship working cameras to be seen at the USA Photo Marketing Association show in March 2008. — DK

## The long lenses

THE big lens at the bottom sets the scale for these. We think it may be a 600mm *f*4 new version with SSM and more compact optics; another possibility is a 400mm *f*2.8. This lens has only been seen as a wooden mockup without any glass inside.

The lens immediately above it is a more complete mockup. From the front element and overall size, we think it will be an SSM version of the affordable 300mm *f*4 APO G. Some suggest it might be a 200mm Macro but it really doesn't look like it.

The top lens is tipped to be an 80-400mm *f*4-5.6 or 6.3, and is called a Super Telephoto Zoom. It may be Carl Zeiss, judging from the styling. If so it could be the perfect companion for the 16-80mm ZA.



## The Advanced Amateur model – next on the market?

THE UPGRADE path from your Sony Alpha 100, Konica Minolta Dynax 7D or 5D will become clearer once a firm launch date is known for the '300' or Advanced Amateur DSLR. This camera has been photographed in the hands of European Sony company executives, apparently taking pictures with it at a meeting in Japan during the last week of June 2007.

We delayed this magazine slightly because it seemed most likely Sony was about to make an announcement – however, no announcement happened. There are strong rumours that the Advanced Amateur model will be seen at Sony trade events planned in Europe for September, and will be on sale from the end of October. Rumours are rumours... and some of the speculation about this camera has been extreme. Read on!

Everyone is sure that it will use a CMOS sensor developed by Sony from the architecture already used by either the Cybershot DCS R-1, or the Nikon D2X which has a jointly developed component. Either way, the likely pixel density would make it a 12.8 megapixel DSLR – a perfect step up from 10, and well proven already.

Figures for the shooting speed have included unlimited 4.5 frames per second JPEG, unlimited 5 frames per second RAW (unlikely!) and one suggestion that it will actually shoot at 10 frames per second in bursts. Another rumour is that Live Preview will be possible with mirror-lockup.

We can be sure that viewfinder brightness and size will be improved, AF speed and accuracy improved, and flash performance totally overhauled. It may have a choice of focusing screens, it will definitely accept a vertical grip base as shown, and it may be better water and dust proofed. A 3 inch screen, faster control interface, higher speeded and quieter shutter and mirror action, and superior high ISO low noise performance all seem likely. But Sony is very good at building in surprises too.



*'Telephoto Zoom Lens' – has twin barrel extension (study the front). Probably 70-300mm *f*4-5.6.*





**M**y Name is Vaughan Breat, I am 44 years old and I live in a small village on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park in South Devon. I was born in inner-city Birmingham, in the Industrial Midlands, but escaped in 1991 to start a new life in the South West.

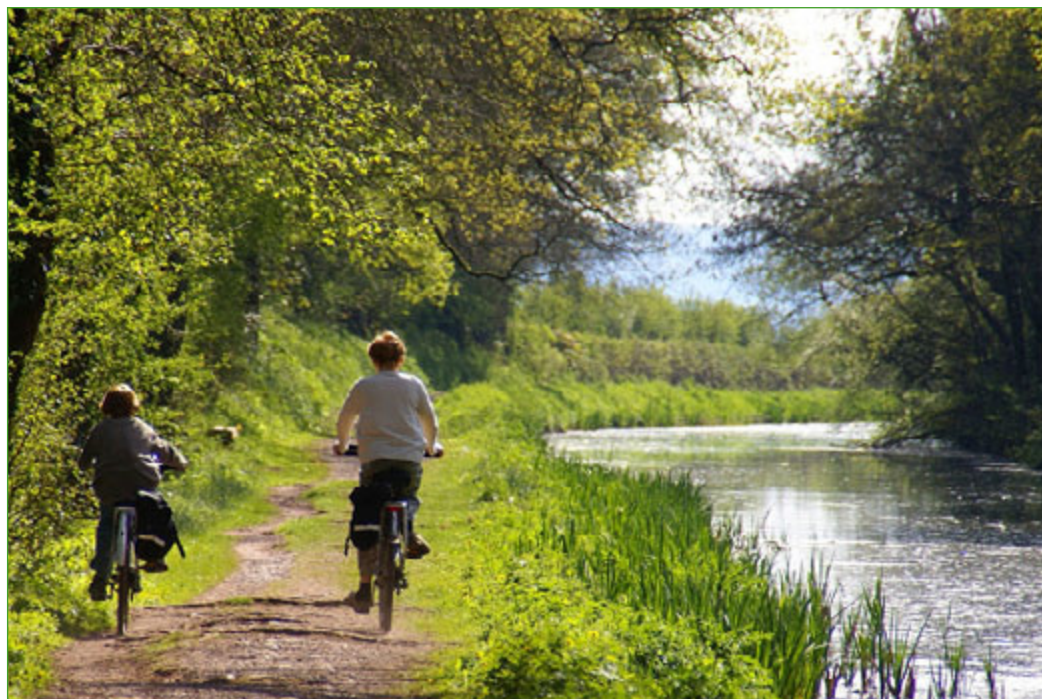
I have always loved the outdoors, ever since I was taken on a school camping trip to Scotland. In addition to the annual family holiday, I was frequently away with the Scouts or the local youth club, on camping trips to Wales, and Scotland. My parents were good like that, and I loved it.

My wife and I have always made good use of the natural beauty of the South West, and whenever we have a family day out, we take our two boys aged 15 and 11 to the coast, which is never far away. I had always looked at those little signposts with the acorn emblem that appear everywhere around the UK coastline, and seen those magic words "costal path". They are everywhere – and I had always wanted to see what this mysterious footpath was really like.

## Walking the coastline

My passion for walking the route started in March of 2007, we were all at home debating what we were going to do on that sunny Saturday morning, it appeared that both of my sons had previous engagements,

# 640 miles with the Alpha 100 – on foot



*Days out with the family – a 200mm shot using the 18-200mm, on the canal near Tiverton. Below – the real thing, the challenge of the South West Coastal Path, seen here on the dramatic stretch from Boscastle to Bude. Top of facing page –wildflowers make a colourful foreground on the stretch from Trebarwith Strand to Polzeath, Cornwall. Bottom right – fishing villages along the route offered many colourful assemblies of boats. Looe Harbour.*







and my wife also had other plans, so I just decided to drive to Brixham in Torbay, and take a walk.

Brixham is situated on the resort coast of Torbay. This area had never been my favourite as I prefer the remoter parts of the South West, and in my mind this area wasn't really of much interest – how wrong I was proved to be.

I parked up in Brixham, and just started to walk, keeping the sea on my left, and following that path.

The South West Coastal path generally shows signs of use around the towns and car parks, but I reckon that the average visitor by car parks up, takes a stroll of maybe one or two miles, and then returns to the car satisfied with an invigorating breath of fresh air. After the first couple of miles, I noticed just how lightly trodden the route appeared. I was fascinated, so on I went.

Well the next “civilization” after Brixham is the village of King swear – that is some 11 miles away, and in between there is nothing, just magical unspoiled wilderness, I was hooked. The only problem was I was fairly unfit, had eaten no breakfast, had no warm clothing and this is quite a tough section, tougher than I had bargained for.

Needless to say I made it, but I had learned a valuable lesson. The South West Coastal Path contains



very long sections where there are no people, no villages, no supplies. It is amazingly remote and unspoiled, but as such, needs to be treated with respect, when you set out on a hike you are on your own,

and you need to be prepared.

I now walk with warm clothing, a whistle, high calorie drinks, a cell phone (although a signal is often not guaranteed), and of course my Alpha 100.

That first long hike was the catalyst, the following week I did another amazing route, Torcross to Salcombe, this was a little further, some 13 miles this time and equally inspirational. This was followed by





Trebarwith Strand to Bude – 18 long miles this time, I was getting fitter! Nearly every weekend I set of on a hike, and I always take my camera.

It occurred to me that I should record this adventure, so I started my blog which you can visit at [www.southwestwanderings.blogspot.com](http://www.southwestwanderings.blogspot.com).

## Camera choice

I initially started with the splendid Sony Cybershot DCS-R1, however as time has passed, I found that although the images from the Zeiss lens are excellent, I missed a long zoom and due to the often very high winds, image stabilisation was obviously desirable.

I bought the Sony Alpha 100 with a kit 18-200 mm lens, and instantly



*Apart from obvious scenes like Penzance harbour, below, Vaughan encountered many townscapes and features like the Royal Albert Bridge by Brunel, top left, which spans the Tamar and links Devon to Cornwall. Quick shooting with the 18-200mm captured flying gulls and flying coastguard exercises with equal facility. Vaughan 'blog' – weblog – at [www.southwestwanderings.blogspot.com](http://www.southwestwanderings.blogspot.com) gives more of an insight into the weekly stages of his walk and his various camera choices.*

loved it. I have subsequently bought a KM 17-35/2.8-4(D) lens which I am using most of the time, but I also carry the 18-200 for wildlife and I am hoping to get a shot of a basking shark later this season. I've added a second (silver) Alpha 100 body too.

I get terrific results from my Alpha 100s, and I particularly like the exposure, shooting conditions can often be tricky, high winds, I am carrying a rucksack, I find that the Alpha 100 delivers great results with no fuss. My ambition is to get that Zeiss 16-80 zoom, I have promised that to myself as soon as I can afford it

I could write so much about the South West Coastal Path, no two sections are the same, the variety is fabulous and my only way to try and communicate the beauty and diversity of this amazing treasure







is through my photographs.

So please if you can, take a look at my blog, and I hope it may inspire someone to give it a go. I accept that it is far easier for me as I live here, but there are companies that can help you organise a walking vacation on the SW coast path. They will arrange your accommodation and even ferry your gear from each guest house to the next, and the photography opportunities are as good as the best you will find anywhere in the world. It's fantastic.

## About the Path

I will finish with a little explanation of why the Coastal Path is so amazingly unspoiled, that some may find interesting – it really is a national treasure.

The South West Coast Path is unique because it is based on a working footpath which was in use

*Above: Land's End – the midway point for some walkers? Below: Hartland Quay rock formations on the path from Bude. Bottom: the Union Inn at Saltasbe, a diversion from wide open spaces and a good photographic novelty.*



until comparatively modern times. Coastguards used to patrol the whole coast of the South West Peninsula on foot, every day, in the course of their duties in pursuit of Revenue protection against smuggling. This lasted until 1856 and the Admiralty carried on the work until 1913.

To enable them to do this in the days of less speedy transport, a whole series of coastguard cottages were erected at convenient intervals, and most of these still stand in rows along the path today. Usually they are now converted to other use, but if you look for them, they are there to remind you of how the path originally came about.

It was the essence of their job that the coastguards had literally to be able to see into every cove and inlet on the coast. This meant that their well-beaten path, usually with stone stiles, had to hug the cliff top, so providing the splendidly scenic coastal views we get today. The coastguards' children going to school, their wives visiting from one fishing hamlet to the next, all walked these paths too, building up a considerable history of use.

Over its length it offers views, unparalleled for their extent, which have simply come about from its working origins.

– Vaughan Brean





# Tamron 18-250mm superzoom: a glimpse of the future?

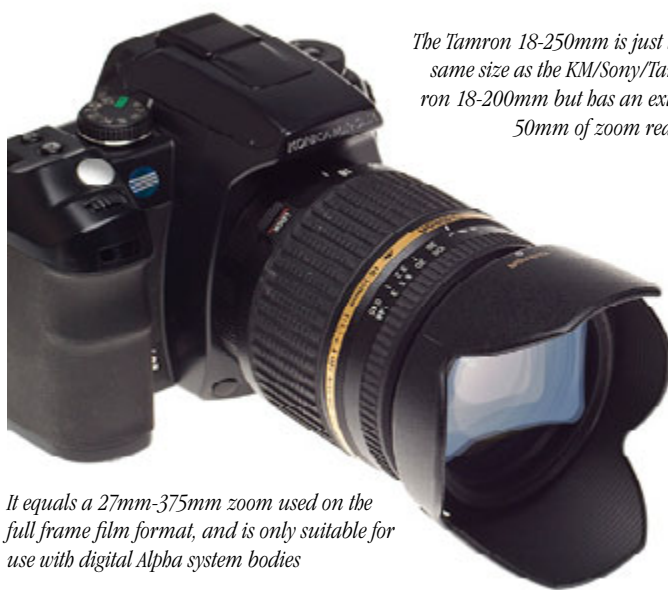
No camera maker readily admits to sharing lens design or manufacturer with an independent competitor, and it is most certainly in the contracts of external suppliers that they never imply any connection.

It is well enough known that Tamron – partly owned by Sony – worked closely with Minolta and became the first independent optical works to use the hybrid aspheric plastic-glass element technology developed by Minolta. Certain Konica Minolta lenses such as the 17-35mm f2.8-4 (D) and 28-75mm f2.8 (D), and later KM and Sony designs like the 11-18mm f4.5-5.6 (D) and 18-200mm f3.5-6.3 (D), have much in common with Tamron counterparts.

This does not mean that they are Tamron made – my Konica Minolta 28-75mm (D) is labelled made in China, and Tamron's equivalent lens is made in Japan. It probably means they are joint design projects, and different parts or elements may well be supplied by any of the companies involved.

So the arrival of a **Tamron 18-250mm f3.5-6.3 Aspherical Macro LD IF DiIII** zoom – something of a mouthful as well as the world's first 13.7X zoom for the digital APS-C format – may presage a Sony SAL of similar specifications.

The Sony SAL 18-200mm f3.5-6.3 lens is a cousin of the Konica Minolta version and the similar Tamron. Now there is a Tamron 18-250mm – will Sony follow?



*The Tamron 18-250mm is just the same size as the KM/Sony/Tamron 18-200mm but has an extra 50mm of zoom reach*

*It equals a 27mm-375mm zoom used on the full frame film format, and is only suitable for use with digital Alpha system bodies*

*Below: the combination of very close focus with an extensive zoom range makes it easy to frame a close-up like this. Blue enhanced using Adobe Camera Raw camera calibration adjustments. All photographs are by Shirley Kilpatrick.*

We decided to upgrade from the Konica Minolta 18-200mm and gain the benefit of a zoom lock at 18mm plus 50mm of extra tele reach. Shirley normally works with one wide range zoom only while I swap out from a bag of lenses, so the greater the range the better. I tend to be a wide-angle photographer, Shirley is very much a close-up and tele shooter, so I find the Carl Zeiss 16-80mm a good range when she finds it disappointing for many shots of people and animals.

First of all, the Tamron 18-250mm has all the faults you expect from a superzoom – it vignettes, no more than others; it distorts, as badly as any 18-200mm but no worse; it has limited sharpness at full aperture especially at the long end, and the f6.3 setting kicks in half way to 250mm, not gradually. Don't imagine you will be shooting at f4.5 at 100mm because it's f3.5 at 18mm and f6.3 at 250mm. The moment you zoom to even 20mm the aperture is cut to f4 and it continues rapidly towards its minimal long-end bore.

But the 18-250mm is very sharp at the wide end, almost matching the CZ 16-80mm, and if stopped down to f8 or f11 gives high levels of fine detail. Because of this, Shirley shot at ISO 200 even in the bright conditions of summer in Provence and for macro work increased this to ISO 400.

The focusing of the 18-250mm is tediously slow from the moment you switch on. The lens does a sort of calibration dance, which seems to take seconds (in reality, just a bit over one second). When using AF, travel to go from close-up to infinity or vice-versa is slow and quite noisy but fine adjustments for a moving subject are quick and quiet.

The 18-250mm uses over 10 turns of the focus screw (body coupler) to cover the same distance the CZ 16-80mm does with fewer than three turns. There is a great difference in AF speed. In return, the Tamron nails focus accurately even at the wide angle end. The question Konica Minolta once put – 'which do you want, fast AF or accurate AF?' is well represented by the CZ and the Tamron. It clearly is a choice and not something easily combined for the best of both options.

As for results, the lens copes very well with a great range of conditions. It does not seem over-sensitive







to adverse light and no pictures were spoiled by flare marks. With careful use of the zoom lock when walking or in the case, the zoom mechanism is remaining firm and after two months showing no signs of slackening off and 'creeping'.

The Tamron 18-250mm is no larger than the 18-200mm when collapsed to 18mm. If Sony do make a similar lens they will have a winner – in the meantime, the Tamron is an excellent buy for any 5D, 7D or A100 owner.

– DK



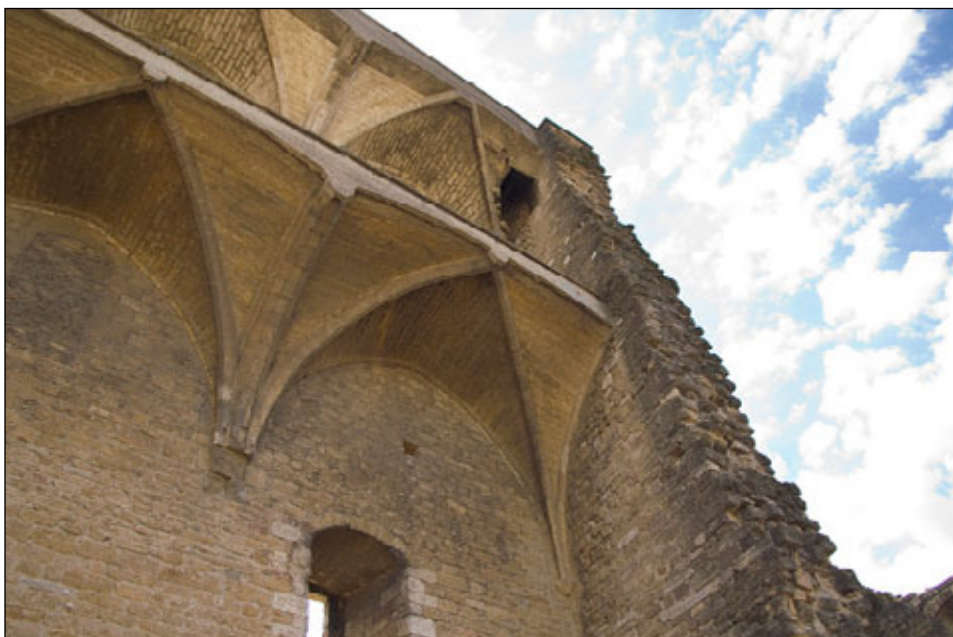
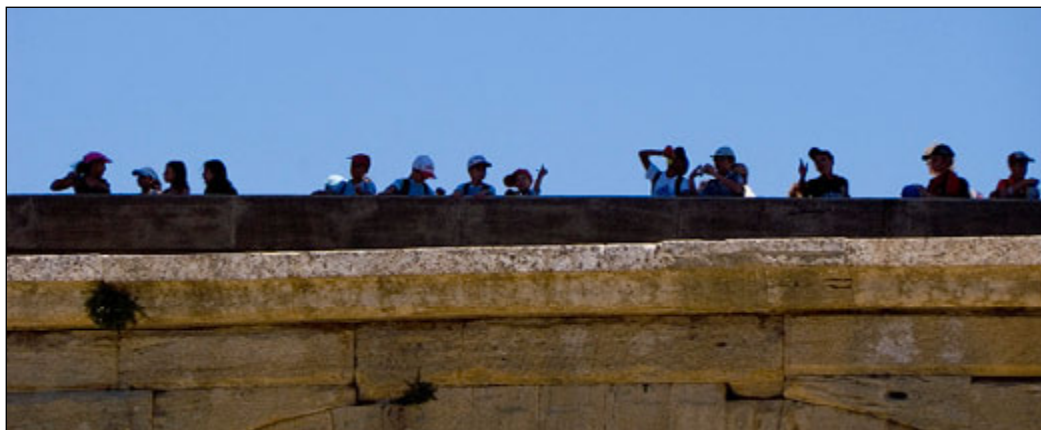
*Above: at 75mm, for this shot in difficult light, f/5.6 is the maximum aperture – used here at 1/125th. Below: at 40mm, anti-shake copes with 1/10th at f/14 and a remarkable effect is created by water droplets flying into bright sun, creating trails which look like frozen water. Below left: 250mm full extension, and minimum macro focus for a Le Flambé butterfly feeding.*





Top pair of images: Pont du Gard at 35mm focal length for a general view, and at 250mm for a close-up of the silhouetted kids on the bridge level of the aquaduct. The old high level access is now barred off, you can no longer walk across the top.

Bottom of page: Shirley using the 18-250mm to photograph the Papal castle of Chateaufort du Pape, and a view taken with the lens at 18mm from this position (with upward camera angle). All images on Dynax 5D, raw .MRW processed with Adobe CS3 Bridge/ACR.







*The long end of the lens, equal to 375mm in conventional 35mm-frame terms, is ideal for giving compressed distant perspectives. Shirley took several entirely different views from one vantage point looking out over the vinyard of Chateauneuf du Pape. This is a relatively close view with the rows of vines and the winding road creating a classic composition. For edge to edge sharpness at maximum focal length it is necessary to avoid wide open  $f6.3$  – she used  $f9$ , approximately one stop down.*



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[www.lensbabies.co.uk](http://www.lensbabies.co.uk)





# gallery

To enter your own pictures for future *Gallery* pages, just send digital files (full resolution – 6 megapixels from a 6 megapixel camera, and so on) in RGB JPEG high quality form by email to [iconmags@btconnect.com](mailto:iconmags@btconnect.com), or by post on CD (TIFFs may be used on CDs only, not by email) to **Photoworld Gallery, Icon Publications Ltd, Maxwell Place, Maxwell Lane, Kelso, Borders TD5 7BB**. CDs or DVDs must be universal (Mac or PC) and always ‘finished’ never left open for another writing session. Please do not send memory cards.

You may enter as many images as you like at any time, including your name and address and all relevant caption details. *Gallery* entries will be considered for cover or portfolio use and web editions. Each contributor chosen receives a £25 credit\* against Icon subscriptions or house offers (see p29).

Where appropriate we will also publish details of websites of web galleries which our readers can visit to see more work. We are now looking for entries for the Autumn (October) edition and these should show autumn/winter themes.



Dale Dickerson sent us this tenth birthday ‘Portrait of James’. “He is almost human”, Dale claims... like any cat owner! “He was photographed using the 85mm f1.4 wide open at 1/100, ISO 800. Light is a 75 watt room light. The image was processed using *Noise Ninja* and one of Stuart Little’s actions. The short depth of field keeps just his nose and eyes in focus.

“*Noise Ninja* is my primary tool for noise. But Stuart’s tools are great for a wide range of needs. Stuart’s action collection called *The Professional Actions Kit v3* has many helpful actions that make it much easier to work with *Photoshop*. He is also selling *Photoshop* lessons by download and/or DVD.”

Stuart Little is a well-known digital imaging expert based in Ayrshire – his website is [www.thelittlephotoshop.co.uk](http://www.thelittlephotoshop.co.uk)

Tony Jones of Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex, is as usual our resident seasonal garden photographer – though these flowers are from a little earlier not late summer. He has now moved on to use a Sony Alpha 100 with 24-105mm zoom, and this shot of a mixed border was taken at ISO 400, f9, 1/400th of a second shutter speed.









# gallery

This view of a Hawaiian beach was taken by Eric Matsuda of Honolulu. He has coped with the extreme range by using High Dynamic Range conversoion from bracketed JPEG images taken on a tripod.

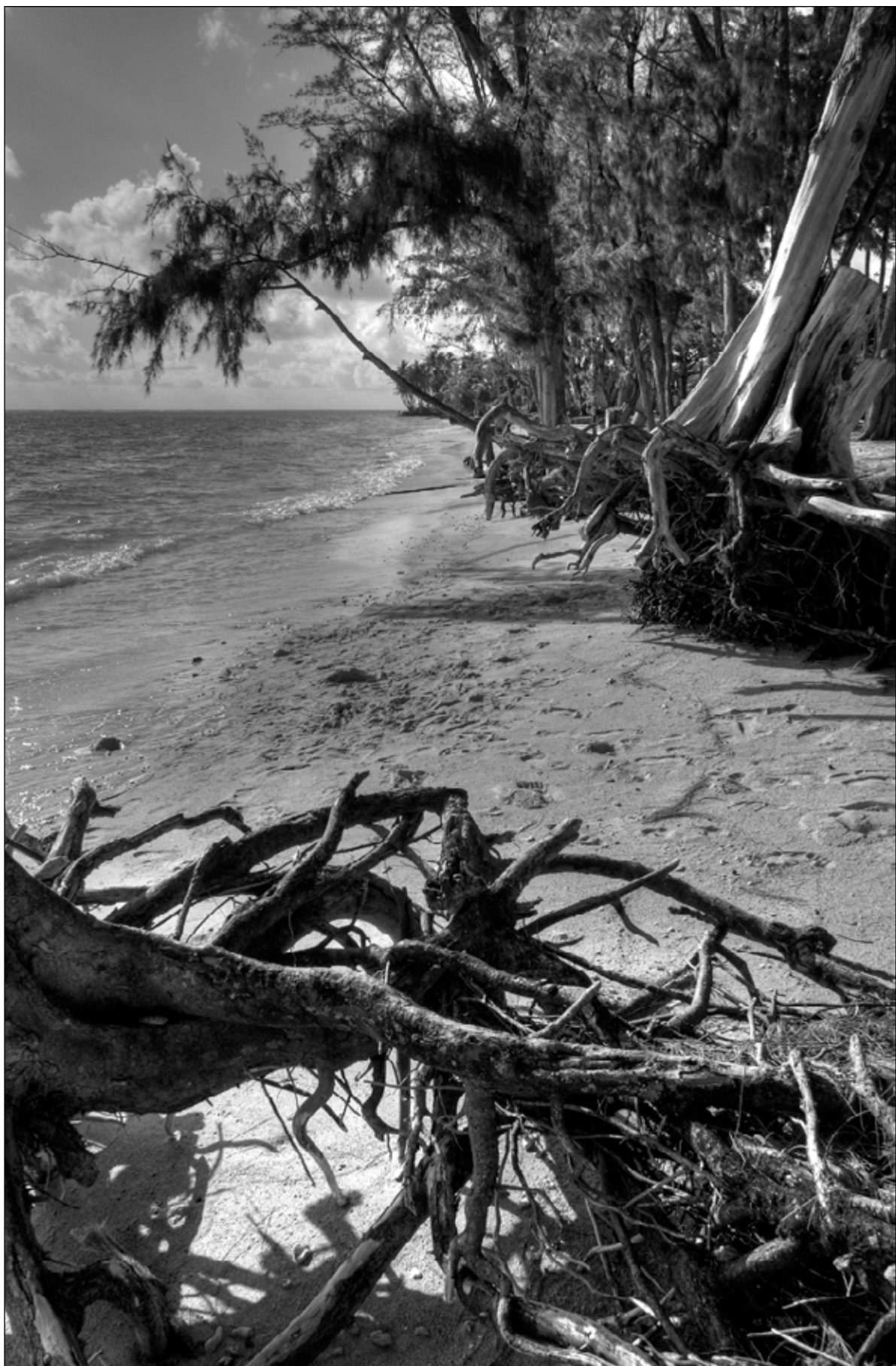
"This was an HDR done in Photomatrix Pro from three JPEGs", he says. "Actually the RAW file doesn't have blown highlights."

Eric was not entirely happy with the slightly bleached-out white on the top right tree trunk but we felt that for printed reproduction the extra contrast would help.

The shot is slightly reminiscent of Jerry Uelsmann's surrealist seascapes with tree roots mirrored above and below the water, only this is a real mirroring of two sets of roots.

Eric used a Konica Minolta Dynax/Maxxum 7D with Konica Minolta 11-18mm lens set to 18mm. He exposed at f11, ISO 100, for 1/300th sec.

Facing page, top: if you want snow this month, head for the Alps! Don Phillips of Towcester shot this on August 23rd 2006 with his Konica Minolta Dimage X1. It shows Aig. de Blaitière, which is near Mont Blanc and Chamonix in France.







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# **ALPHA 100**

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**- JAMES HANDCOCK**



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*Gary's number one lesson is to make a photo session with children – of any age including mums – great fun. Kids love fun pictures as well. Here are three of Gary's classics. Simple ideas, but they work, don't they? You need a very confident parent to attempt the wide-angle shot top right, and a bit of practice. It was taken using the 11-18mm wide-angle set to 11mm, on a Dynax 7D digital body. 'Lena bolding Lousia' below it might look wide angle, but Gary used the 28-75mm f2.8 lens at 75mm – and f22.*



# Taking better photographs of

says award-winning photobook author Gary Friedman

**S**ay, “cheeeeeeeeeese!” If you're after an outstanding portrait of your children, invoking this very common (yet perpetually ineffective) gimmick is a formula for disaster.

Having kids say “Cheese” forces an unnatural expression which doesn't even approximate a smile. Why keep doing something that doesn't work??

I've shot children most of my life, and I have amassed a nice variety of techniques for getting very natural, very pleasing portraits which parents say really captures the true spirit of their child. I hesitate to call them “tricks”, since that implies a degree of deception; but nevertheless it's really an appropriate term.

There is certainly nothing earth-shattering in these techniques; these are the same tricks used by all child-shooting pros since the invention of film. Perhaps the real value is being able to articulate some of them all in one place, with the

understanding that combining two or more of these formulas may be enough to go from a great shot to a shot which makes people say, “Wow!”.

## Say, “Squid!”

§Your timing has to be perfect with this technique. All kids are taught to say “Cheese”, but none of them have ever been told “Say ‘Squid!’”.

At first they'll comply; and then a split second after you take your first picture, they'll realize that that's a ridiculous word to say, and will then break into a natural smile. It only lasts for a second or two, so be ready for it!!

## Lens Baby

Very young toddlers instinctively understand eye contact with humans, but rarely will they naturally peer into a glass Cyclops. That's usually why they won't look at the camera while your eye is behind the viewfinder.

There are two good ways around this. First, if the toddler is relatively

still, set the camera on a tripod, focus manually, and then peek your head from behind the camera and make direct eye contact. When your baby looks at you, snap the picture. You'll need a magnifying glass to determine that the baby is actually looking just slightly off centre.

Another great technique is to keep a whistle in your mouth and use it only when you're ready to shoot. This technique becomes less effective with use, so use it sparingly. For those of you who want to go to extremes, paint your camera with bright primary colors, and put lots of flashing lights and noisemakers around the lens.

## Earning Trust

Just as a doctor encourages young patients to play with a stethoscope to take the ‘edge’ off a first medical visit, so too have I found that letting new subjects hold my camera, look through the viewfinder and even take a few shots just to acclimate

to the “big scary looking professional camera”. Pose for each other, take some shots, and review them together. I find about 15-20 minutes of this is enough to get your subject warmed up and comfortable in front of the camera.

## The Polaroid Effect

Before the digital era, whenever I'd travel I'd always take a Polaroid SX-70 camera with me. This proved indispensable in “breaking the ice” with complete strangers, even if I had no command of their language – usually I'd make eye contact, say “Hello!” using universal body language, and ask if I could take their picture. Kids love the attention.

At first I'd take just one shot and share it with them; then a few more which I would offer as a gift. By this time they love getting to know a stranger through this medium, and they even volunteer to do more poses! Then the good camera came





**CHILDREN... it's kids' play!**





out and I'd get some remarkable shots of young subjects at ease. Note: Don't try this technique when visiting America. They'll arrest you for approaching strange children! It's weird over here. Editor's note: it's weird in Britain as well – if you are shooting candid portraits, or even taking a camera to a school open/sports day as a parent, expect to be challenged or asked to stop.

Today of course you can employ the screen on your digital camera to achieve the Polaroid effect, or better yet plug it into a TV and watch their excitement as they see themselves on the telly! This ALWAYS gets kids comfortable and excited, but be careful to use this technique sparingly, for once the child realises that this is really a high concentration of attention on THEM, their excitement levels might become too great.

## Colourful Attire

'Nuff said. Solid colours are best; clothing (especially T-shirts) with pictures and words are usually a distraction.

## Environmental portraits

Besides the classical portrait composition (where the eyes of the subject are positioned in the upper third of the frame, and shot with a mild telephoto like 100mm/35mm equivalent), another method I enjoy using is the "environmental portrait", where you show off the person where they feel most at home. With kids, this will either be in their bedrooms or in an activity they thrive in, like sports. Wide angle lenses (like 28mm or even wider) are the tool to use here.

## Go for the unusual

Here's the most difficult part to write about – the "something different and unusual" category. It's difficult because you just can't tell someone "do something different" and then go on to talk about technical stuff. That's the problem with magazine articles.

However, I will talk about how I got the shot which has garnered the most comments over the years, which is the one of the child swinging in circles and holding onto my hands. How was this shot??? It took about an hour from start to finish. I started with a KM 7D and the 11-18mm lens strategically strapped to my shoulders chest using bungee cords, and then I attached a Remote Release cord RC-100L (which has a mechanism for locking the shutter release button in the "down" position. I put the camera



*Props make good photos, above and below – and so does diffused light with plenty of reflected fill-in. Upper photo on Dimage 7i, lower photo on Dimage A2. Facing page – top, colourful T-shirts work well but slogans are to be avoided. This Cuban boy's T-shirt motif is just small enough not to spoil the shot! Below, both sepia and black and white can be appropriate for portraits of children. Window light is always worth seeking out, and activities like combing hair make unusual shots.*



into Manual focus and manual exposure mode, with a shutter speed of 1/15th of a second (to create the background blur), and the *f*-stop to match the light level. Then I locked the shutter release button on the remote release cord, and put it into my pocket. Since the camera is set to "continuous shooting" mode, the camera was now shooting about 2.5 frames per second all by itself. Then I picked up my niece and started spinning! It took about eight tries and a few *hundred* JPEG shots (plua a lot of breaks from being dizzy!) until I got the shot I had originally envisioned.

## Light, Light, Light!

Being a *Photoworld* reader, you probably already know this, but the right light is such an important ingredient to any outstanding shot that it's irresponsible not to mention it. It took me many years to realize that just because the light looks good to the human eye doesn't mean it will look good on film (or digital).

Nothing makes or breaks a photo like good light. Nothing. Be aware of it, develop an eye for seeing light as the camera sees it, and after awhile you'll just know where the soft light is and how to position your subject so the light creates the illusion of depth on the face. I use window light a lot for my portraits; and sometimes I'll have someone hold a reflector on the other side of the subject to bring up the shadows. If your camera supports wireless flash, use it off to one side with a softbox or umbrella for very professional-looking images.








## Give it some warmth

Purists would disagree with me on this, but I have found that adding a tinge of red and yellow to a portrait in post-processing helps to give it a “warmer” feel than with perfectly calibrated white balance.

You can also use the ‘Portrait’ colour setting on the Sony Alpha 100, which warms up skin tones selectively. 

*Gary Friedman is the author of several downloadable e-books on using Dimage, Dynax and Alpha cameras – see [www.friedmanarchives.com](http://www.friedmanarchives.com)*





# Karry goes wild... digitally

Peter Karry continues his experiences with the Dynax 5D by visiting the British Wildlife Centre armed with a 2Gb storage card and macro lenses

I had often driven past the British Wildlife Centre in Lingfield, Surrey, on my way back from places in the south like Sheffield Park towards the M25, along the A22, and was tempted to stop and call in. But on some occasions it was closed and on the other times I was 'photographed out', so it never happened.

So when a photo competition called for photos of British wildlife, I decided to make a visit. That intention was reinforced when I read a short description in one of the popular photography magazines. So I looked the Centre up on the web, and found that it offers dedicated photography days when it is not open otherwise to the public. After reading more about these days, and that during this time access is given to the inside of some



*Peter Karry used the Sigma 180mm f5.6 EX Macro lens for all the shots on this page. All except the otter (below left) were taken at full aperture of f5.6 – the otter is at f7.1. Exposure times were generally faster than 1/200th with the Dynax 5D set to ISO 200. The Marsh Frog, bottom, was taken with a shutter speed of 1/1,000th to maintain a wide aperture and concentrate focus on the eyes only.*

of the enclosures, accompanied by a keeper, I decided to book.

The day dawned to a promise of cloud and showers, and of course this was one area where digital photography scores over traditional film usage. If I remembered I could set the White Balance to Cloudy, Shade, or Daylight as appropriate, but even if not, using Raw file output meant I could adjust this at the manipulation stage. I also know that one does need to achieve fast shutter speeds as animals tend to move fast and erratically, so set speed to ISO 200 as a start.

Getting close to the animals promised shots that are not normally possible, so I decided to take my macro lenses – a Tamron 90mm and a Sigma 180mm – becoming 135mm and 270mm equivalents on the Dynax 5D digital format. I did use these





extensively, and only infrequently the 100-300mm and 24-105mm that I also took along. I took a tripod but left it in the car, and found that the group had split into those who did use one and those who did not.

A group of around 16 gathered in the Centre for 9.30am – there was another Minolta user who was on film – and were split into two, each with their own keeper. The day promised to go on till 5pm, but I could leave at any time, as there is no set schedule.

At 10am, we were taken to our first enclosure with the keeper bringing their own supply of food for the animals. My group went first to the Scottish wildcats, which are normally elusive – shy as well as ferocious. There were two couples (kept apart) and quite different in appearance and mannerisms.

The keeper managed to bring them up close and personal to the group – sometimes appearing snarling and sometimes looking as tame as a household pet, which they are definitely not. When one snarls right in front of you, you'll certainly notice a surge of adrenalin.

After spending 45 minutes with them, we went into the fox enclosure where there is another couple and as a bonus they had a cub. The foxes came right up to the keeper, taking food out of her hand, and I spread out on the ground beside her to take shots at the same level as the fox – yet another stimulating viewpoint.

By 11.30am each group went to one of the otter enclosures, but in ours even the temptation of food did not keep the couple interested and they kept disappearing back into the water so we all decamped to the other enclosure.

Once again I was able to sprawl on the ground to shoot at the same level as the otters, and used that 180mm to get close-up photos. There were many opportunities to try different compositions and shutter speeds. By this time the daylight was getting brighter to show up the texture of the wet fur when they emerged from the water.

The penultimate activity before lunch was when the keepers brought out two owls – one Little Owl, one Barn Owl – on long leads, but under the trees so we were in heavy shadow. Again we were able to get very close to the birds. One of the group felt that there was a distinct possibility that one would peck at my lens. The final act was to bring out a hedgehog, but he was very lively and I could not anticipate his moves.

We then moved indoors to eat our lunches, and also to delete those images not worth keeping.

After lunch the first trip was to



see the deer, using a walkway and platform higher than their enclosure which holds a mixture of Red Deer, Roe Deer, and Fallow Deer. At this time it was very heavy cloud, and I did not feel particularly inspired to get any creative shots although on one occasion I used a longer shutter speed as the deer jogged past.

Following that, by around 2.30pm, as the sun started to emerge from behind the clouds, we went to the Copse where there are compounds for polecats, which gambol round the area. It proved very difficult to get a sharp shot – other than the times when they sit on the concrete perimeter to stand and look at you. Another keeper brought out one of the snakes, but again, I found this too difficult.

Close by, there was a badger sett, and we are very lucky that the male badger had come out early and so the keepers feed him to keep him above ground.

He stayed visible for some time, but I became distracted by the loud sounds originating from the nearby small pond.

This proved to be the Marsh Frogs making noises that one associates with bullfrogs, as their air sacs are inflated and deflated. This area kept me interested for a long time as frogs hopped in and out of the water.

As a last diversion, I went to the Wetland Walkway, but only managed to scare away the half-dozen herons, so gave up. On the way back to the frogs, I came across a pheasant. Having filled up my 2 Gb card by 4.30pm, although I knew I had not shot all the creatures, I felt it was time to go home to investigate what images I had captured.



*The running deer shot used the 180mm Sigma stopped down to f22, with a shutter speed of 1/40th to show movement. The wildcat took a snarl-freezing 1/640th at f7.1 with the same lens. For the Little Owl, in dull lighting, Peter used the 90mm Tamron macro at f4, 1/80th at ISO 200.*

*For further information: British Wildlife Centre, Eastbourne Road (A22), Newchapel, Lingfield RH7 6LF. [www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk](http://www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk)*



# The red rocks of Roussillon

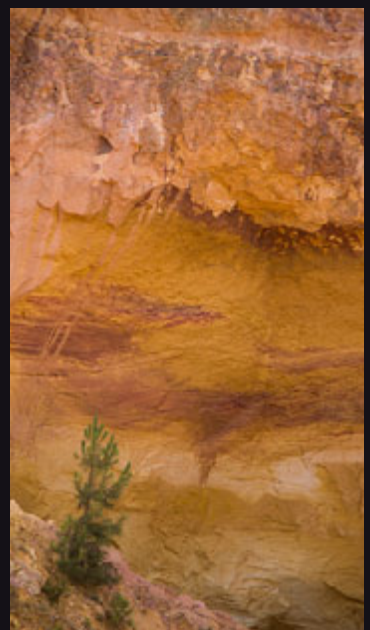
Ochre pigment workings of a French village that rival the US mid-west



ROUSSILLON is a 40-minute drive east of Avignon Airport, which has recently been opened up to low cost seasonal flights from Edinburgh by Jet2.com.

The Sentier des Ocres – Ochre Trail – leads through canyon-like former ochre pigment workings from the heart of the hill village with its paint-washed houses in shades of pink, umber, ochre and russet.

There's a short 30-minute trail and a longer one hour version leading further through pine and oak woods. The photographic appeal is obvious, but the fine ochre dust leaves a souvenir on your shoes. We had half a day to spare before flying back from a week in Avignon, and chose Roussillon to fill the time – and capture some unique colour.



photographs by David & Shirley Kilpatrick on Sony Alpha 100 and Konica Minolta Dynax 5D







# Lensbaby 3G: a creative

**T**HE Lensbaby was a novelty item when first introduced as a low-cost meniscus lens mounted on a flexible concertina tube with an SLR fitting at the other end. The idea was to get soft focus effects by manipulating the angle of the lens, skewing it to the film plane by pressing with your fingers to focus and tilt the assembly. No two shots were ever the same!

The third generation uses a multicoated glass doublet lens, introduced with Lensbaby 2, but adds precision control of three points of tilt and swing on threaded posts plus a fine-focus stage in a helical thread.

The clever part is the unlock and lock system which grabs all three screw-gear posts simultaneously. Just squeeze the Baby's balls together, and it releases grip instantly allowing fingertip setting of focus and skew like the original. Lightly depress a small button and the setting is locked. Then, fine tune with the three screw posts (with black ball knobs on their ends) and hone the focus using a helical collar.

Small magnetic plastic aperture stops drop into the lens front, and are held by a set of three spring-loaded ball bearings. To remove or insert the stop, a probe with a magnetic tip is supplied. This probe has a small tub on its other end to hold the unused discs.

## A-mount version

The maximum effects of the Lensbaby 3G are obtained on full frame cameras, but the zone of sharpness is probably more usable on APS-C. They make it specifically in Alpha system fit with a well engineered mount, and custom lens rear cap. To use the Lensbaby on the Dynax or Alpha camera whether film or digital you must first set the camera to allow shutter release with a T-mount lens fitted (see page 34 of this issue for instructions).

You must work at  $f2$  to  $f4$  for maximum visible special effects. At  $f5.6$ , the lens begins to appear rather sharp across its entire field unless it is tilted. From  $f8$  to  $f22$ , you can use it as a good quality semi-macro lens and control some sharpness in depth, but extreme swings will cause problems focusing at all. With digital SLRs you lose some sharpness at apertures smaller than  $f11$  because of diffraction, and in any case you can barely see to set the focus correctly unless the lens



*The Lensbaby 3G with aperture*



*1: unlock*



*2: free adjust*



*3: lock*

is used 'straight' and unswung.

In some of my first tests, I wrote that small stops could be used to make sharp pictures with lens tilt. That's not proved true after more testing. They make sharp pictures *without* lens tilt, but the moment you move the lens off plane-parallel position, the edges still acquire the aber-

rations even with the smaller stops.

Anyway, sharp images are not why Lensbaby 3G is bought. Most users will take it into the wide world, using it for fashion, stock, still life or architectural interpretations. They will work with  $f2$ ,  $f2.8$  or  $f4$  and tilt the lens plane to create a vortex of sharpness with dramatic

blur streaming out from it.

The instructions for Lensbaby remind you to be very careful with your digital SLR's dioptic viewfinder correction because today's focusing screens allow you to see an image as sharp by accommodating your eyes. You must be relaxed and not try to peer into the detail. There



# twist

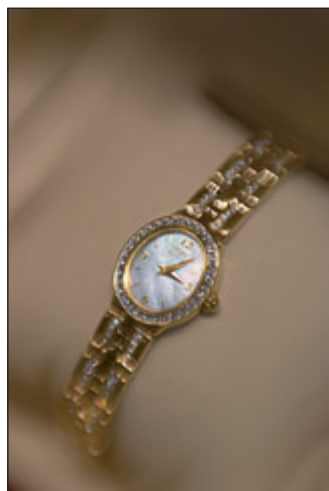
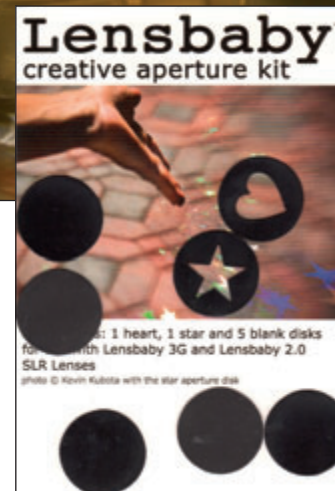
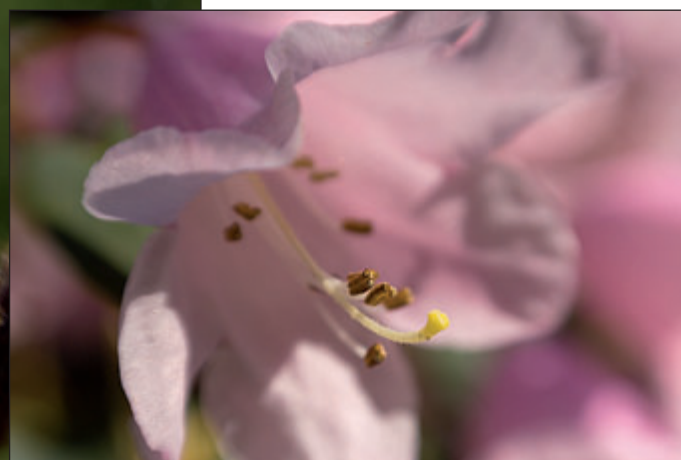
is a secondary effect of this which Lensbaby do not mention; modern focusing screens don't give an accurate preview of depth of field. The results from Lensbaby may surprise you by appearing more extreme in the final image than you set up for, so it is best to make tests before using the lens on a non-repeatable shot.

Lensbaby blur is indelibly written into your capture unlike using *Photoshop* effects later, but it can do things *Photoshop* can not imitate. A £9.99 kit buys you five blank aperture discs and two pre-cut special shapes, a heart and a star. Used into the light against small specular highlights like sparkling water these throw up sharp shapes – a bit like the doughnut effects from a mirror lens, but much more dramatic.

As for value for money, my initial thought was that it was too expensive at £175 + VAT – you can get a complex zoom for the same. After a month using it, I realised that the effects are unique and can make or break images. I ended up buying the test Lensbaby 3G and continuing to use it for occasional batches of experimental shots. It now gets carried in my camera bag waiting for such opportunities.

For further information, visit [www.intro2020.co.uk](http://www.intro2020.co.uk)

– David Kilpatrick



*Lensbaby 3G: top, bottom and left are all taken at the full f2 aperture. The central shot above uses the star-effect aperture from the Creative Aperture kit combined with macro focusing on a grass seed head with sunlight off the river beyond. The flower close-up uses the f4 aperture and the lens aligned without any tilt. The watch shot on the left has an enlarged detail from a 24 x 36 inch print showing how good the core sharpness really is.*





# The Haoda Fu replacement split image/microprism screen for 5D/A100

**H**AODA FU has been supplying alternative focusing screens for the 5D and A100 since 2006 and for many other makes before this. While the Alpha system DSLRs are not intended to have user-changeable screens, it is relatively easy and risk-free.

The worst that is likely to happen is that you end up with dust on a screen and find this distracting. Minolta AF SLRs had interchangeable focusing screens from the start with the 7000 and 9000. The screens came in a rigid plastic case complete



with a pair of screen changing tongs.

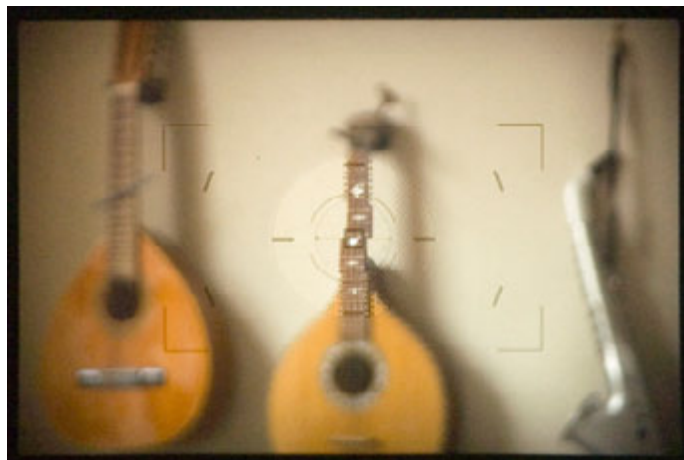
The Haoda screens, being the much smaller digital size, come in a small dust sleeve packed in a memory card case (seen on top of 1980s Minolta screen packaging). Unlike the 5D/A100 screen, a Haoda screen does not have a tab on the side to aid removal, nor does it have any position locating pins.

In order to change the screen, you need a well lit, dust free, uncluttered table. The camera should be placed upside down – not on its back, but resting on the prism/flash shoe area, so the screen is facing upwards. You do not need to lift the mirror or power the camera up at all.

To remove the original screen, it is easy to unclip the metal spring frame from the front. I found that a fingernail works fine but my small forceps with a bent end (from a craft shop) could have been used.

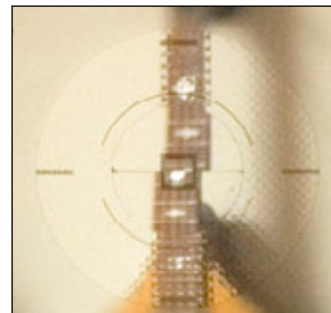
With the camera in this position, you can withdraw the metal clip without disturbing the screen itself. At the front of the screen there is a small tab which can be grasped with tweezers. To ease the screen up, a brand new clean plastic coated paper-clip is ideal (right). Once the screen is out, hold it by the sides with clean fingers. I do not recommend wearing gloves, you need to be able to feel the tiny, lightweight object easily.

Once the screen is out, popping in the Haoda replacement is easier.



There is a brass shim frame under the screen, and below that a clear LED display relay screen. These should not be disturbed. Slide the Haoda screen from its dust wrapping, and holding it by the ends with the SHINY SIDE UP pop it into the camera and let gravity do the rest. If necessary, nudge it into place with the plastic-covered paperclip tool.

It will not be centered first time. Visit [www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com)



*Left: out, slightly out and in focus top to bottom. Above: enlarged out of focus.*

and see the full Haoda screen fitting article there for details of how to get it centered.

## In use

When the image is totally out of focus, the microprism breaks up dramatically. You can also see that the split image shows clearly that the subject is not in focus while also showing a sharper view due to the clear lightpath through the two angled faces of this aid. The microprism consists of a grid of miniature split image aids, alternating facets set at opposed angles.

If you have poor eyesight, the split image focus aid provides a better tool. You will still see a slight step in any suitable target line or edge. To test the Haoda screen, I used my 50mm f/1.4 original series Minolta AF lens. In the past I have found focusing with this lens to be unreliable using AF, and the standard screen gives a very poor indication of depth of field through the viewfinder. Haoda's screen is much more like the Minolta Type M matt screen which was offered as a service-fitted alternative for the Dynax 7D. I got very accurate focus with the 50mm.

As for exposure, my main caveat must be that the Haoda screen may affect auto exposure less than some other third party screens, but it still can produce extreme over or under exposure in some conditions. It is therefore vital to check your shots – most will be perfect, but sometimes over-ride or manual setting will be vital.

To obtain a screen – sent very quickly by air mail – visit Haoda's webstie <http://haodascreen.com/>. Remember this is at your own risk.

– David Kilpatrick



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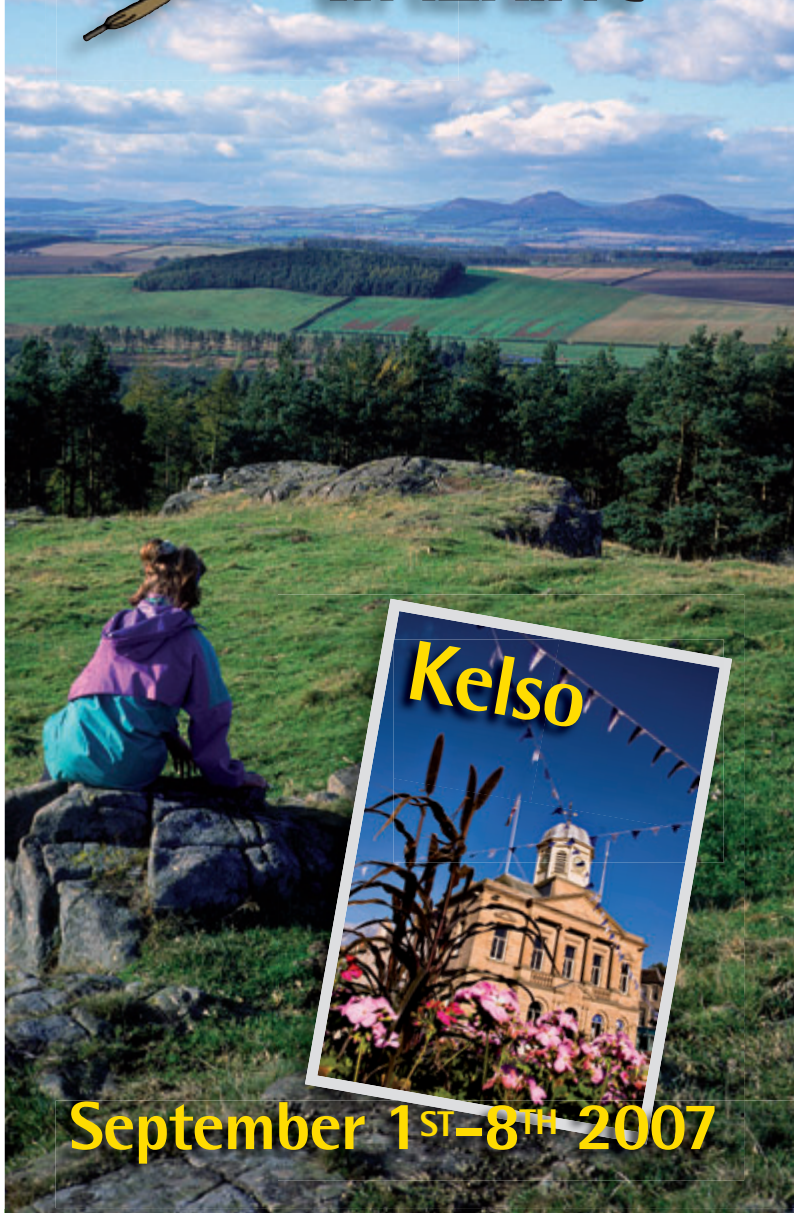
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# 13th Scottish Borders Festival of Walking



**September 1<sup>ST</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup> 2007**

The 2007 Scottish Borders Festival of Walking opens during Kelso's famous St James's Fair, two days with wonderful street markets, performances, pageantry and good cheer. The week offers countless opportunities for photography.

There are over 40 walks around Kelso, the Tweed, the Cheviots and Lammermuirs, with something to suit walkers of all ages and abilities. Experienced guides lead and back mark all walks and will keep you informed about the diverse wildlife and fascinating history of the area on your journey.

In the evenings there is a full programme of entertainment, including a Festival Cabaret, History Talks and a Grand Ceilidh, featuring local and international musicians, speakers and performers.

Register with Visit Scotland to receive your free Festival Brochure on T: **0870 608 0404**

The Festival Brochure includes details of all Walks and Evening Events and is also available on line at:

**www.scotborders.gov.uk/walkingfestival**



# Special Indian dress offer

## Reduced prices – final stock

These two beautiful and comfortable dress designs, made specially for Icon's web mail order department, are truly timeless. They suit all ages and come in four selected colours – a soft beige natural sand, a delicate lilac which shifts to mauve or blue depending on light and film, a light pastel sage green, and a lovely deep blue.

**The price for both styles has been reduced to an incredible £14.95 including post and packing (UK).**

Both styles have a tie-bow at the back for shaping, and use styled layers, embroidered textures, contrasting weaves, fringeing or sheer fabrics. Naturally dyed as a complete garment, their Indian natural cotton viscose detailing absorbs the colour in a subtle range of densities.

They are hand-wash, easy dry, pack well for travel, and make ideal day or evening dresses with the bonus of photogenic cut and colour. Each style is available in three sizes – S/M (10-12), M/L (14-16) and XL (16-18). We offer a money back guarantee of quality, and will accept returns complete with their attached labels as despatched for size exchange or refund if not satisfied.

These Indian fashion dresses are not available in shops or through catalogues to the best of our knowledge, but comparable quality garments typically sell for £60 to £100 (you can buy 'New Age' shop Indian peasant-style stuff much cheaper, but there is no comparison at all). They were selected by Shirley Kilpatrick from a wide range of samples, and chosen for their style and fabrics. Modelled at Maxwell Place by Shirley and Ailsa.



*We selected the styles for their visual appeal and photogenic colours to suit all ages*



**STYLE A**

**£14.95 inc p & p**

**STYLE B**

**£14.95 inc p & p**

**To: 'Indian Summer' Offer, Icon Publications Limited,  
Maxwell Place, Maxwell Lane, Kelso, Scottish Borders TD5 7BB  
or visit our eBayshop: <http://stores.ebay.co.uk/Icon-and-Troubadour>**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Tel No \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me the following styles/colours/sizes: circle size/s required:

### STYLE A

*This style is looser fitting*

	S/M	M/L	XL
Sand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lilac	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cornflower	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### STYLE B

*More tailored in fit, less generous*

	S/M	M/L	XL
Sand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lilac	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cornflower	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Total number \_\_\_\_\_ at £14.95 ea including p&p and VAT

Postage overseas: add £5.00 per dress

Total £ **p&p free UK £5 per dress overseas**

Cheques should be payable to 'Icon Publications Ltd' or please complete credit card details (Visa, Mastercard, Amex only please):

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# Remote possibilities – from film to digital

AT THE end of March we were plagued by a pair of blackbirds which insisted on building nests in the wheel arches of our car, no matter how often we destroyed the nest or whether we moved the car. Eventually, I decided to photograph this, and dug out the **IR-1n** infrared remote trigger kit from many years ago.

This remote trigger was made for X-700 series and the first AF SLRs as the IR-1. My IR-1n kit has both the cable for the threaded centre of the X-700 type shutter button, and one which fits the Remote socket of the 7000, 9000 and so on. The Receiver fits in the flash shoe, and was never updated to have a new-type shoe. Mounted suitably, it remained functional for the entire life of the Dynax model line of film cameras.

What had not occurred to me was that the digital SLRs were incompatible with the system. It turns out that they need two stages of activation, once for the focusing, a second time to fire the shutter. The Remote Cords RC-1000S and RC-1000L incorporated this from the very start, and are unchanged from 1985. The IR Trigger kit just fires the shutter.

So, to get acquainted with it after many years, I dug out a 7000 body

and a roll of slide film, and manually prefocused the set-up as required.

Of course, despite many exposures where I was convinced the wary female blackbird would be right out in front of the wheel arch (and in the plane of focus I had set) every shot managed to show no bird at all or a beak peeping out from the shadow. The Fujichrome 400X film, while a very good material with grain more like an old 100 slide film, was so disappointing compared to the detail I now expect from digital.

In fact the picture I took of the camera in position, using my A100 with CZ 16-80mm through a window, shows the blackbird rather more clearly. . .

## Solutions

There is a crude modification possible with the IR Receiver which wires the unused focus trigger connection to the release side. It is not advised and may possibly damage DSLRs. A month or two later, neat little wireless control remotes made specifically to work with all Minolta and Sony Alpha cameras started appearing on internet (eBay).

These very small Chinese made Cactus brand remote



*The 1980s to 90s IR-1n kit (left) included a transmitter IR-1, and a receiver IR-1n with cables for the X-series manual focus camera (as originally supplied with the IR-1 kit) and the AF series models (making it 'n'). It also has a bracket which will hold the receiver in early Dynax hotshoes, but it's not compatible with later models. It does not function at all with digital bodies. Results? Operator error!*





The Cactus Wireless Shutter Release works with all Dynaflex, original AF models, and Dimage 5/7A. It costs \$39.95 plus \$5 postage from GadgetInfinity of Hong Kong – [www.gadgetinfinity.com](http://www.gadgetinfinity.com). They also supply the Hot Shoe Adaptor III, shown below with a Wein SSR infrared flash trigger. This adaptor also has a PC sync socket.

controls have multiple channels, and two-stage triggering which allows you to focus the camera before releasing, just like using a remote cord or the camera itself.

I ordered one for \$39.95 plus \$5 shipping (US) from Hong Kong vendor Gadgetinfinity, who had proved reliable in the past with flash and lens mount adaptors. It arrived within five days, not the ten suggested on their website.

There is no indication whether the radio frequencies used are approved for the UK, but up to 16 channels can be selected on both transmitter and receiver allowing several users to work in the same location. The familiar four dipswitches are not a rapid way to change from firing one camera to another, but at this price, anyone wanting to do multiple set-ups could buy a few kits and have a separate trigger for every camera.

The transmitter is about the size of a car key remote lock unit. The receiver is a little larger. Both take unusual batteries which will be hard to get, and the vendors state that the fitted batteries are for test purposes only – they are not expected to last. The battery covers and fittings are a weak point too.

The receiver has no mounting facility, it just plugs into the remote socket and dangles. It weighs almost nothing and this is hardly a problem.

Since the kit arrived at the beginning of a period of almost unbroken rain it was not advisable to set up a camera outside and wait for wild visitors. As to whether our visitors are really wild, we are not sure. The garden has its own family of rabbits, innumerable birds, frogs, toads, squirrels, hedgehogs, bats and our hens. The hens hardly need a remote control – opening a door is enough to get the entire rabble around your feet – and the rabbits happily trim the grass with one eye on people and dogs. Bat photography

is impossible without supernatural reflexes, and it would take days of waiting for a squirrel to drop in or a hedgehog leave the undergrowth.

After a few experiments with a remotely placed camera and things to tempt rabbits (if the hens didn't get there first) the best remote solution turned out to be the obvious one – a remote lens!

The 500mm f8 mirror lens comes into its own on the digital format, acting like a 750mm, and from the ten foot distance which the younger rabbits consider safe allows a frame-filling portrait.

The new wireless remote is so much smaller than the old IR trigger kit, it can be popped into a side pocket of the camera holdall, and no doubt the right subject will come to light. When the IR-1 was first introduced I placed an X-700 with fisheye 16mm in the middle of a horse trial course, right under a fence, and fired it from beyond the barriers. My trust in insurance, or good fortune, is not so great today!

## Flash without cords

While the Minolta-Sony flash system is wireless in its own right, studio flash these days is rarely connected using PC sync cords. Everyone uses either an infrared trigger, or a wireless kit. The most popular is the PocketWizard. The benefits of wireless are that flash units placed further away, behind solid objects, can be triggered reliably. Infrared sync often means being in line of sight.

To fit any type of trigger to the Dynaflex or Alpha models, it is necessary to convert to a regular hot shoe, which is done via the Minolta FS-1100 adaptor or a similar item. The 'Hot Shoe Adaptor III' from Gadgetinfinity is ideal and adds a sync socket, which the current Sony/Minolta version lacks. – DK



The Elinchrom Skyport RX Transmitter is dedicated to operating the multichannel RX wireless studio flash system. Flash power can be controlled from the camera module.



Below: the ultimate remote – a 500mm mirror lens! Unlike remote triggering, using a long lens lets you follow the action and compose the shot. Photograph by Shirley Kilpatrick – Dynaflex 5D, ISO 400, 1/100th at f8, hand held with AS.





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