

# photoworld



the final issue

2011/#3





Cover: by Peter Karry

*This image is intended to be symbolic in a way, but it's also something which resonates at Photoclubalpha – Peter took it on a Quest photo trip north, at Akeld Steads only 20 miles from our offices. These pumps had already made a subject for your editor (in colour, and maybe a year or so earlier in their state of decay). But the optimistic and incorrect OPEN sign was not there! Peter's sepia treatment shows a different eye as ever. And though the pumps are now entirely gone, the road flows with traffic just as ever.*

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Icon Publications Limited

Maxwell Place, Maxwell Lane

Kelso, Scottish Borders TD5 7BB

Tel: 01573 226032

Fax: 01573 226000

e-mail: [david@photoclubalpha.com](mailto:david@photoclubalpha.com)

website: [www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com)

**PUBLISHED AND EDITED BY**

David Kilpatrick FBIPP Hon. FMPA

Shirley Kilpatrick MSc (Colour

Science), BA Hons (OU)

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## HELPLINES AND INFORMATION

Authorised & warranty repairs, assistance and enquiries

OUR website [www.photoclubalpha.com](http://www.photoclubalpha.com) is now packed with detailed features on the Minolta and Sony Alpha systems, has a busy discussion **Forum** and you can search the site for help on topics. It has a full directory of useful links for downloading software or obtaining help. For personal advice from the Club, use e-mail only please, to [david@photoclubalpha.com](mailto:david@photoclubalpha.com).

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

Newcastle 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**

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 the Photostore, where Bernard Petticrew also hosts an advice forum:

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

## 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 above).* 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, Wharfside, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2AZ.

Telephone 01908 378088, fax 08712 427677.

Email: [cameraworkshop@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:cameraworkshop@tiscali.co.uk)

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# The waiting game

Too many of our readers have been contacting Photoclubalpha to ask for advice about which other system to switch to. Something has been missing from the Alpha line-up now for almost four years – the 700 successor.

Four years is an aeon in the world of digital SLR systems. Yet it will soon be that long since the Alpha 700 was launched, in September 2007, and despite a steady flow of Alpha models there has not been one which updates the 700.

The closest call is the current Alpha 580, in terms of bringing something close to 700 specification and size to the system but adding the vital new functions of live view and HD video recording.

We have been using the 580 now since its launch. It really is not a 700 substitute, as re-acquaintance with the 700 reminded me recently when the 580 was away on holiday for a week. Picking up the 'old' body again, the viewfinder was of course in a different class and the ergonomics simply much better.

What was interesting, too, was that the 12 megapixel raw images files when processed using the very latest *Adobe Camera Raw* were much better than memory suggested. The responsiveness of the camera – the sense of delay or lack of delay in focusing and firing the shutter – also seemed better than remembered. The Alpha 580 has a new focusing module and a different sound to its shutter.

The greatest difference is the viewfinder. After working with the NEX (screen for composition), the Alpha 55 (large but electronic viewfinder) and the Alpha 580 (optical finder but far from easy to view) the 700 was simply a return to 'what a viewfinder should be like'.

The rumoured, and no doubt real, Alpha '77' has already been spread round rumour-based websites as I write this and Sony has invited us to a launch on August 15th. But I can't really delay this magazine a full month.

The Alpha 77 (if that is the correct name) clearly has a magnesium inner shell with a skin, the strap lugs connecting to the inner skeleton the same way they do on the 700.

It's also known to be an SLT – 'Single Lens Translucent' in Sony terminology, with an electronic viewfinder and a fixed pellicle



*That's a 16-50mm f/2.8 lens on the front of the 'A77' – but no-one knows whether it will be Sony or CZ, SSM or plain SAM as rumoured. The rear screen has an arm-binged plate as well as a twist/pivot hinge and should be able to aim forwards over the 'prism' top.*



mirror. In this respect it matches the Alpha 55, 33 and the new Alpha 35 (see product news, overleaf).

With no replacement announced for the Alpha 900/850 full frame camera which is shortly to celebrate its third birthday, the 77 may signal the end of the optical viewfinder or true SLR design in Sony Alpha. This is why so many of our readers, on the web and on paper, express their intention to change system.

Today, the NEX system has dropped into the travel-friendly bracket perfectly. I also use the Alpha 55 because it is so much smaller and lighter than any DSLR, even the Alpha 580. I've got used to interpreting the electronic finder but I would hate to have to work with this all the time.

In the studio and for 'serious' location work I use the Alpha 900 but so good is the quality of the 14 and 16 megapixel files from the NEX-5 and Alpha 55 that it's almost redundant.

Now we are expected to see 24 megapixels in the Alpha 77, and possible also in a rumoured Alpha 65 update to the 55 and an EVF-equipped professional specification NEX-7 body with a flash shoe. There may be an intermediate 18 megapixel sensor instead.

Sony's long awaited introduction of electronic-shutter ultra high speed sequence shooting may also be unveiled, and journalists expect to get a first look at the working retail version of the Sony SSM 500mm f/4.5 G lens.

But I am writing four weeks before the scheduled press launch and the truth is that apart from websites hunting down leaked images and specifications, no-one outside Sony knows exactly what surprises are in store.

I do have some idea that I'll need £1,200 or so to update my system should that seem

necessary or desirable.

I will, like most Alpha owners, continue to have patience and not to prejudge or predict what Sony will bring to the market next. Who could have predicted the NEX a year before its launch?

– David Kilpatrick



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# Alpha 35 & NEX-C3

The 16.2 megapixel sensor first seen in the Alpha 55 and 580 finds its way down the range into two new entry level models for the SLT and NEX ranges respectively. Sony's multi-choice line-up policy continues.

The Alpha 35 will cause a bit of head-scratching as a purchase decision, because in some ways it is better than the entry-level pellicle mirror 'translucent' Alpha 33 and in other ways it is less attractive.

You get a sensor which is a close match to the quality of the Alpha 55, and a little more resistance to thermal cutout when shooting videos. But you also get a fixed, not articulating, rear screen. In this respect the camera is like the Alpha 450, and that model has been almost invisible in shops.

You will not be interested in the A35 if you already own an Alpha 55 with GPS function, unless you specifically want slightly better noise suppression, higher maximum ISO and video 'overheat' control.

Losing the articulated rear LCD (see above), not even replacing it with a tilting one, is a big sacrifice. The 7fps 1.4X digital tele conversion mode – with continuous AF tracking – is interesting and reminiscent of the sensor crop mode of Nikon's first CMOS, the D2X, which was itself developed from a Sony sensor (the Cybershot DSC R-1). It shows that there are genetic traits in the Sony line that won't be forgotten.

There is not much other point to this camera, unlike the NEX-C3 which sees a significant body size reduction and style change. The A35 contrives to be a poor relation of either the A33 or the A55 because it lacks that excellent, reversible, twist and swivel rear screen.

As for the NEX-3C, the story is slightly different but still not perfect.

Good changes include the shift in position of the stereo microphones to the front of the camera, and having a separate cover for the memory card instead of having to open the battery compartment.

There's a claim that along with a 20% better battery life, greater heat efficiency means the new cameras won't cut out before 29 minutes is up when filming HD, even if you use SSS on the A35. Of course the NEX has no SSS but still managed to overheat, at least in the NEX-5, unless you were savvy enough to shift the rear screen away from contact

*The Alpha 35 continues the refinement of the SLT body design with more rounded contours and a neater overall look. It is the smallest camera in its class, and also introduces ISO 12,800 high ISO to the system (shared by the NEX-3C).*



*Above: the Alpha 35's EVF may be easier for some to see with the rear screen not sticking out so far. But the lack of a tilt or hinged screen is a limitation. HD video is retained at full 1080 resolution, with an almost guaranteed 29 minutes, no overheating.*

*Left: the new E 30mm f3.5 (SEL) NEX macro goes all the way to 1:1 using an internal focusing mechanism. It is a very unusual lens design and has surprised the NEX community – 'did we really want this next?'.*

with the camera back – in which case it generally keeps filming OK.

The operating times, startup, focusing speed are all reported to be much improved – by a factor of two or better. Only the image review time is worse due to the larger file size. Sony's information makes it clear that very strong noise reduction is applied and this may affect raw files as well as JPEGs.

Clearly the improved performance is welcome and should be carried through to the next generation. That's why, on the Photoclubalpha website, we recommend waiting to see what comes out later this year.

## Updating the old kit

Firmware updates for both NEX and SLT models are available now which add most of the benefits of the new models along with some of the clever image processing looks. Again, wait until the next round. A higher end SLT camera is firmly promised, it's been prototyped and mocked up and preproduced and somewhere as I write someone is actually using it.

Photoclubalpha has been a photographer's thing not just a camera owner's thing – a small difference, these days, but important. For photographers any reason to prefer the new models to what you've got may depend on small hidden differences which come to light as people use them. Certainly the provision of functions with changed names because no-one can be expected to understand what an aperture is, what a shutter speed is (and so on) is no reason to want the new models. Probably the reverse!

Video enthusiasts may like to note that the firmware update for the A55/33 allows all the overlaid text to be removed from the live view, which can be output from the HDMI port to surprisingly high quality. Recording devices to accept HDMI signals like this are just starting to appear at affordable prices. There's some potential to experiment with the image provided for LV (Focus Check Live View more so than Quick AF LV) once fed into other systems free from overlays.



## New lens and flash

For the NEX system, which has a 'road-map' involving many new items such as a Carl Zeiss fast 24mm, two products have been introduced to keep the pot boiling.

One of these is the promised GN20 flash with bounce facility. The new HVL-F20S flashgun (based on the HVL-F20AM only in the design of its rotating reflector/diffuser) has changed considerably since it was previewed with a mockup based on the Alpha model.

Sony has decided to power it from the NEX camera's battery where the HVL version uses two AAA cells. That's almost certainly because the NEX Smart Connector is simply not capable of holding the gun with a couple of cells in it, the weight would be too much and they have cut it down to the minimum.

In an ideal world, this new flashgun would do for the NEX system what its originator does for the Alpha 900 and 850 – act as a remote wireless flash commander. But it does not, leaving NEX outside the main Alpha system still. If you want remote flash (or even just a more powerful flash mounted on a bracket beside your camera) the Nissin Di 866 MkII remains your best bet, programmable to fire correctly in synch with the NEX and to use its own auto-exposure cell for metering.

Even so this is a welcome addition to the range and does make the NEX models far more useful. Remember that today's exceptional high ISO results – perfect images at ISO 1600 for example – make any flashgun worth about four times its power relative to guns of the film era. So this is as useful as a GN40 flash was with ISO 400 film – and that's what nearly all mainstream flashguns were

Finally, there is a new macro lens which is surprisingly similar to the SAM 30mm macro for the Alpha mount. The SEL 30mm 1:1 macro is slower, at  $f/3.5$ , but has a much smoother focusing motor to allow its use for video. It is effectively a standard lens as well as a macro, being roughly equivalent to a 45mm on full frame. It's not particularly small but benefits from internal focusing, which avoids long racking-out lens tubes to reach life size.

More SEL (NEX system E-mount) lenses are expected to be launched this year, along with at least one new NEX body and hopefully a new Alpha body. The tsunami and following events in Japan changed the production schedules of most companies and it has been good to see that Sony were able to do all this.

*NEX meets ET – the new C3 fitted with HVL-F20S flash, powered by the camera's own battery. The gun has wide and normal angles and bounce.*



*Above: the C3 has an improved ergonomic design as the contours of the camera, and the revision of the rear control wheel, show. The rear screen remains tiltable only, without vertical swivel, one of the constraints of this rugged mechanism. The whole camera is smaller than the NEX-3 or NEX-5.*

*Below: contrasting with the black version above, a silver NEX-C3 shows how the non-metallic body has been designed to look as good as a metal shell. That movie button, however, is only capable of bringing you 720p not 1080p – deliberate downgrading of specifications, we think, to allow space for a higher model.*



## Firmware updates

### Version 04 firmware update for NEX-5, NEX-3

Available now, a firmware upgrade for existing NEX-5 and NEX-3 cameras adds the new 'Picture Effect' function as introduced on the new NEX-C3. It also adds a *Peaking* function to assist with more precise manual focusing (the image has a visible graphic effect applied to in-focus areas). Available free to registered users, latest Version 04 firmware update for NEX-5/ NEX-3 can be downloaded from: <http://support.sonyeurope.com>

To find the software, enter your camera model and the system will take you to the correct download for either Windows or Mac systems.

### Version 2.00 firmware update for 33, 55

Available now, a firmware upgrade for existing 33 and 55 cameras by Sony adds several creative and operational enhancements. Support for the 'Picture Effect' function featured on the new 35 is now offered. High-Speed Synch is supported during wireless operation with a compatible external flash (only 55). Ergonomics are further improved with revised menus and a new mode that lets users switch off shooting parameters overlaid on screen for clear, uncluttered composition. The camera's Digital Level Gauge can also be displayed when shooting via the optional CLM-V55 external LCD monitor. Frequently used features can now be custom-assigned to the D-RANGE button for rapid, menu-free access.

Available free to registered users, the latest GB English Version 2.00 firmware update for 33 and 55 can be downloaded from: <http://support.sony-europe.com>

Again, just enter the model of the camera and your operating system to download the correct file.

These firmware updates are performed with the camera connected to the computer, not by copying to a memory card. You will need to have a USB cable, and a fully charged camera battery.

The Sony website provides full instructions and the camera's screen and your computer inform you of the progress. The process takes a few minutes.

Please be sure to visit our website. **Photoclubalpha.com** is where all future news will be – and indeed has been for some time now, usually within hours of announcement. It is searchable even if you do not register or subscribe.





# The final issue

This is to be the last issue of Photoworld. We have produced thirty years of the printed club magazines but today our website is the right place to break news – and it's time to create something even better in print.

We have had a great time since 1981 when the first *Photoworld* was issued, in April that year. Since then we should have reached our thirtieth year of quarterly editions back in January, but of course there were two years when events overtook the club and issues were missed.

So we have completed our three decade stint a bit late thanks to the Konica Minolta merger of 2004 and the Sony Alpha acquisition of 2006.

Although the Minolta Club was 'signed over' to us as a business partnership (*David and Shirley Kilpatrick, trading as AI Studios of Tuxford*) at *photokina* 1980, it's involved dozens of individuals as free-lances, staff in our businesses, and of course at the three incarnations of the camera company. For many years Adrian Paul, who now runs The Photostore, took on the administration of the club in Doncaster after Shirley and I decided to move our new limited company, Icon Publications Ltd, to Scotland in 1988.

There would not be space on this page to list and thank all those who have helped keep the magazine fresh but consistent over 30 years but a few must be singled out – Duncan McEwan, Peter Karry, John Watterson, Colin Westgate, Gary Friedman, Raymond Lea, as contributors; Bill Christie, Daphne Llewellyn-Davies, Neil Whitford, Damian Dinning, Paul Genge as our 'corporate buddies'; and the late Dick Bryant of Minolta Osaka, whose annual *Minolta Mirror* inspired as all.

Why bring it to an end?

It's as good a time as any. Shirley and I were both 29 years old when we took this on, so you can work out how old we are now!

Sony said from the start the club would never be supported as Minolta and Konica Minolta had done, and we have run for the last five years on an empty tank. Falling print prices have enabled the magazine to break even with a smaller number of surviving members in the UK, but most new readers are from the USA or further afield where rising postage costs have far more effect.

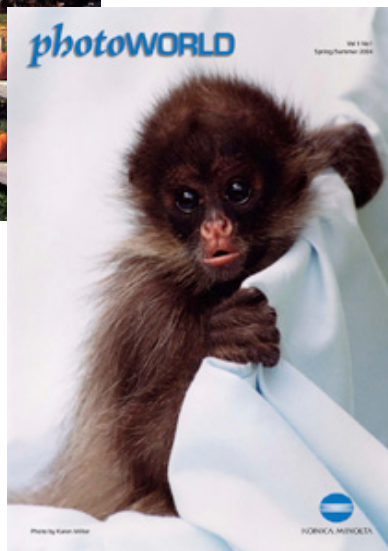


For Summer 1982, the magazine acquired a new name and new graphic design. Birmingham professional Lorentz Gullachsen shot the cover on a club trip to Tunisia.



The first issue of *Photoworld* featured a cover by actor and celebrity photographer Graham Stark. It consisted of just 16 pages, and only eight of those in colour, and appeared in Spring 1981. Graham was invited – as a star Minolta user – to the opening ceremony for Minolta (UK) Ltd, consuming much saké from traditional wooden boxes. A wonderful man!

In the year 2000, *Image* acquired this logo (one of several updates) and the 'MI' name. Nick Higham contributed the Autumn cover.



Karen Miller provided this captivating zoo study for the first issue of the magazine, renamed *Photoworld* after the Konica-Minolta merger, in Spring/Summer 2004 – one of the 'missed issues' caused by corporate activities. KM continued with the Minolta logo which had cost over \$1m to create back in 1981.

And, quite frankly, a quarterly magazine can't really make best use of news and product launches. I've tried to make the magazine content unique and to find different angles on new models, so that it does not repeat the website (and vice-versa). But that is a contrived editorial position. Really, the website which has over 30,000 regular readers deserves more attention to daily or weekly updates.

## The Annual

Always, in our minds and in the bookcase, we have the evidence that an annual publication once defined the quality of Minolta.

The budgets put into *Minolta Mirror* were phenomenal; Dick Bryant travelled the world, business-class, even if he happily ended up sleeping on a mattress in a half-decorated house. He would climb mountains to reach interesting photographers. Dick passed on a very short time after retiring, and that retirement was rather sudden. It's been fifteen years since there was a *Minolta Mirror*.

We can not bring *MM* back or even hope to copy it, but we can create a good Alpha Annual with the budgets currently for four quarterlies. There is some hope, too, that if we can plan and budget an annual of the right quality for its first publication in 2012 we may have some additional support.

So, will continue to collect the standard membership annually. But the first annual will not be published until one full year from now.

What will you get in the meantime?

## The Book

Between 1982 and 1996, Shirley and I worked on many book publications. I wrote fewer than I should have, and acted as a commissioning editor for many.

The most carefully-written of my own books – *Light and Lighting for Photography and Video* – was originally produced to fill a gap left by something far better, Walter Nurnberg's *Lighting for Photography* from two generations earlier. Focal Press encountered a crisis of



confidence in hardback publishing, and shifted it into a low-cost softback series with particularly limited colour and poor reproduction. Only in Russia, of all places, did the translated version become a hardback textbook (with even worse printing!). I was amazed to be approached by a young Russian photo writer earlier this year, asking to shake my hand, as the author of that book. I got a £250 translation fee – they got twenty years of my slim volume as the principal lighting textbook for photographic courses in Russia...

One of our plans for using the 'deadline time' freed up by losing the quarterly is to revise that book. I bought back the right to it from Focal Press, and so much has changed in technology. But it's worth publishing in the form originally intended, which we can now do.

Club members may not want that book, but if we get it into print, it will be available at a good discount.

For the club subscribers, we have something else in the pipeline. How about the book which will put the Sony Alpha system, its history and development, its qualities and scope, into perspective and on record for all time?

That's what the next project is.

And it our intention that all paid-up subscribers will receive this book in a softback edition. I don't think we will have it ready for Christmas – the days when I could guarantee to produce a book within six weeks, illustrated and typeset and ready to print, disappeared when every single part of the process ended up on one Mac screen with one pair of hands doing the work.

But the book is started, it's shaping up, and the title will have to remain under wraps. It will definitely be worth your £17.95/\$30 subscription – and so of course will the projected annual.

## The Website

In the meantime, the Photoclubalpha website will remain the focus of activity and we'll be trying to find ways to integrate it better than the current setup.

Premium content (mainly the magazine PDFs) will remain available to subscribers, and once the plans for the future annual are firmed up we'll have provision for submitting images for consideration.

Web printing (Lulu, Blurb, etc) almost certainly means that special hardback versions will also be available to purchase.

– David Kilpatrick



Above: through the 1980s and early 1990s, David & Shirley Kilpatrick and Icon Publications Ltd produced many photographic books – writing, illustrating, commissioning and designing. We plan to return to creating books once again.

Left: Dick Bryant created Minolta Mirror for Minolta (edited in Osaka, designed in Hawaii!) from 1975 to 1993. Can we follow this incredible (rotogravure and litho) annual?

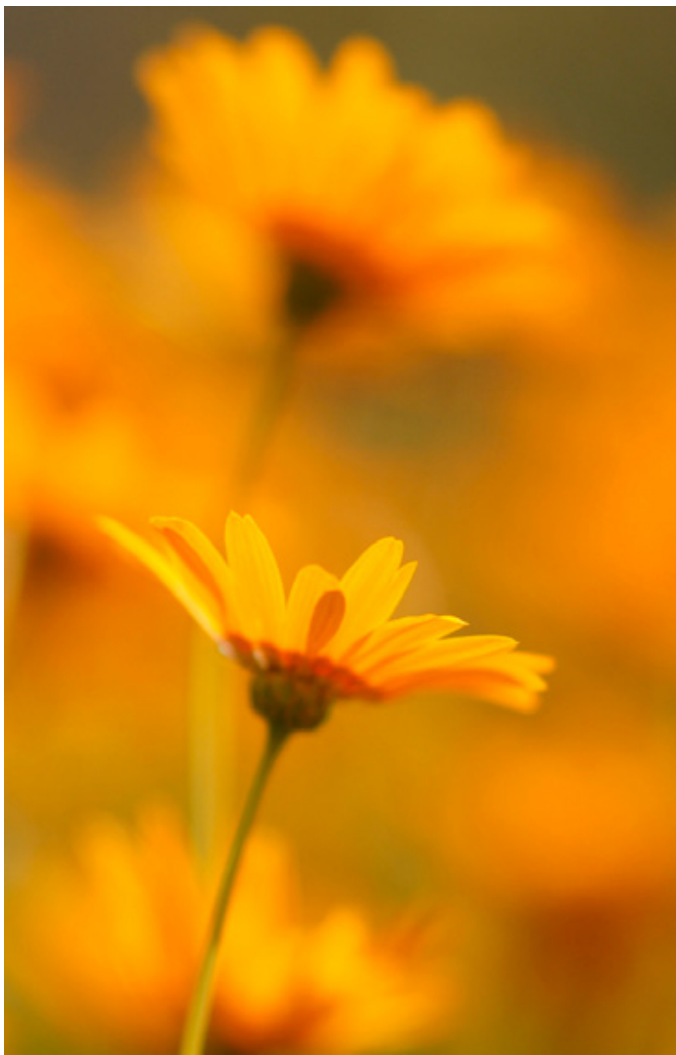
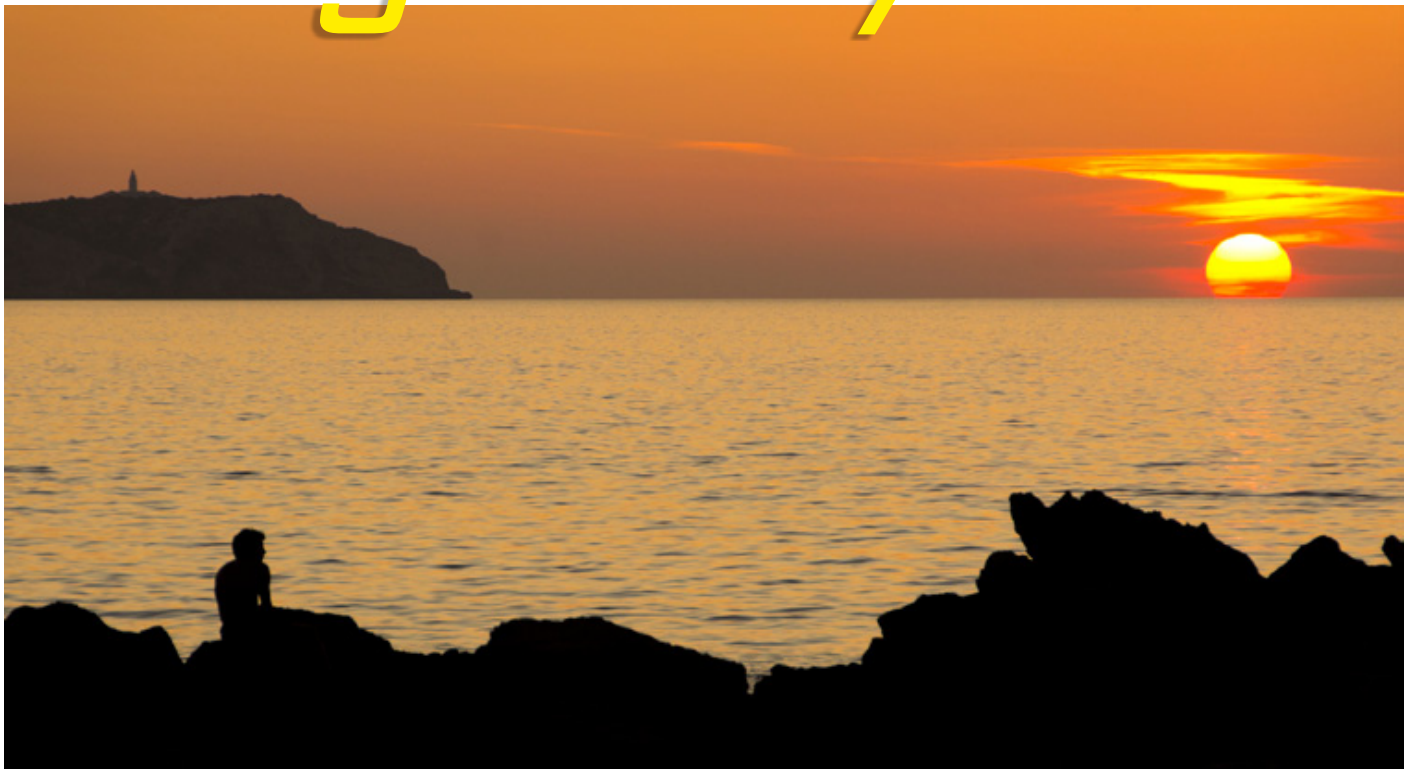
Below: the 2006 new look to Photoworld with Minolta Classic typeface by Justin Bailey.

Below left: photoclubalpha.com





# *α gallery*







*Top left: a Sigma 18-250mm sunset for Shirley Kilpatrick looking from Ses Fontanellas, Ibiza. Hand-held with stabilisation at f/8, Alpha 580.*

*Bottom far left: Sony's classic Carl Zeiss 135mm f/1.8 ZA T\* lens – one of the original designs launched alongside the Alpha 100 back in*

*2006 – provided the superb out of focus bokeh for this summer flower study by Jeff Pittman. Focus and colour or tone distinction makes the bloom stand out.*

*Lower left: a more assertive bokeh at 160mm and f/7.1, for Tony Jones using a 70-300mm zoom*



*with close focusing for this study of heather on his Alpha 700.*

*Top left: Pat Morgan captured the wind and spray of Balnakiel using a Tamron 20-40mm on Alpha 850 full frame body.*

*Top right: Colin Burn-Murdoch*

*caught the Red Arrows over Leith Harbour and a lucky cruise ship using an Alpha 350 with 18-250mm Tamron lens.*

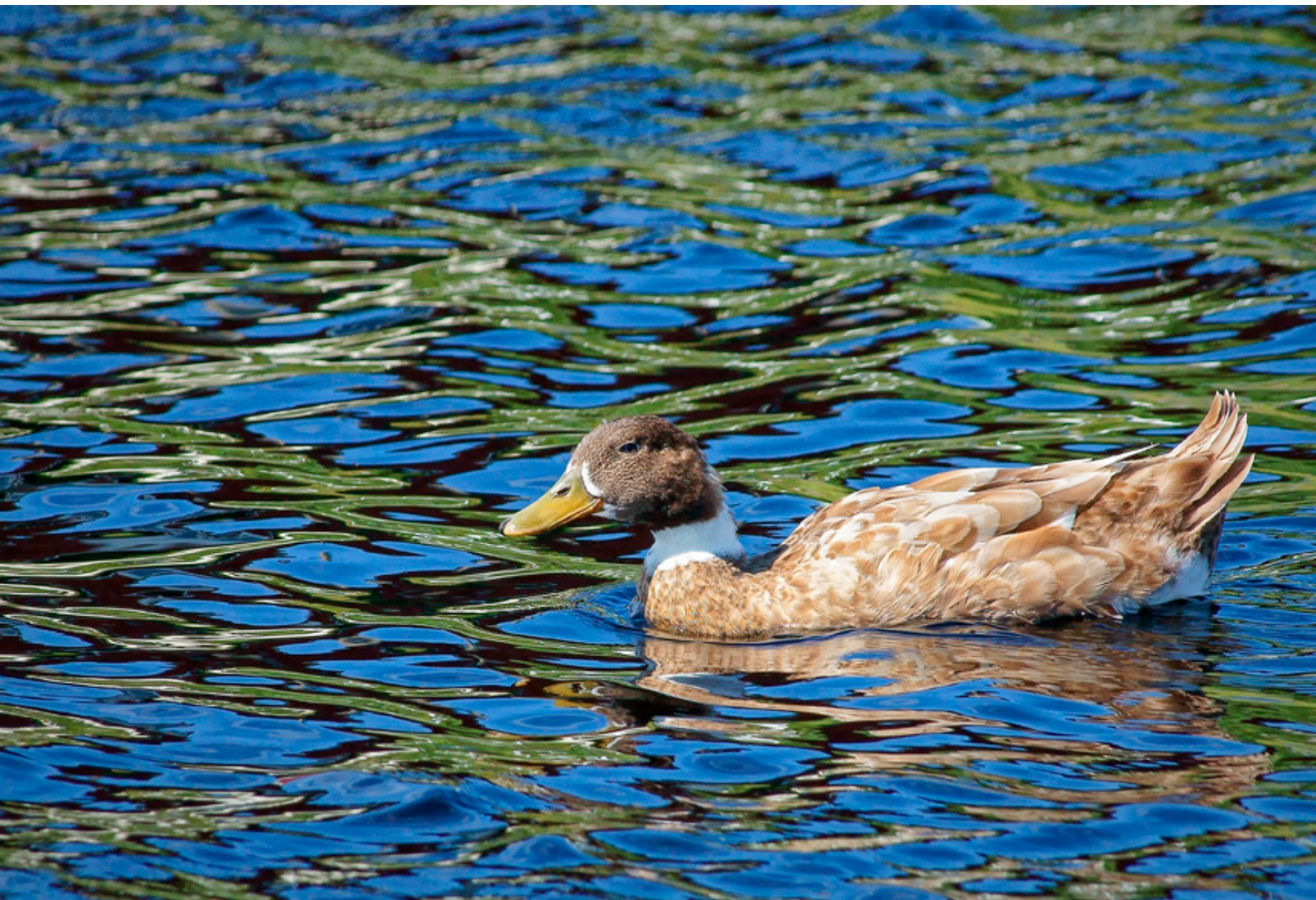
*Below: Ed Dvorak caught AF action at 1/1000th, f/8, using a Tokina 300mm f/2.8 lens with Kenko 2X converter on his Alpha 700.*











*Left: the distant raptor adds a lot to this study of an Armenian hawk by Anna Mkrtichyan. In low light, f/4.5 was needed for 1/125th on her SLT-A55 fitted with the new 35mm f/1.8 SAM lens. Great detail and also great defocusing effect from this 'standard' lens.*

*Above: Glen Beevor, well known on Photoclubalpa forums for his wonderful shots around Fogo Island, Newfoundland, found colour and pattern which flows superbly round the duck.*

*Right: Peter Karry signs off our final Gallery with some ghosts of morris-men making their exit – having never given up on experimenting with exposure times and movement.*





# Return to b&w

Peter Karry loaded up real black and white film to return to the traditional photographic approach which dominated the art, the hobby and even the profession when the Minolta Club was originally founded.

Most of us now take it for granted that our photos should be in colour. Actually it has only been since the 1970s that colour took a firm foothold in this hobby that has now become part of everyday life. Before then, black and white photography was the norm, but even now it still remains popular with many for the style that can result in photos with style, mood and atmosphere.

If like me, you consider that you have not been capable of providing full justice to this medium, perhaps now is the time to try it. You might try out some real black and white film (*which is what I used to illustrate this article*) or alternatively if you have committed to digital you might convert your colour shots into black and white using various of the options available on the market – well known software such as *Photoshop* or *Photoshop Elements*.

Most digital models, such as my Sony A700, provide a function to create Black and White or even Sepia JPEG files, but I this is not recommended unless you shoot RAW+JPEG because of the colour lost in the process which you can never get back from the JPEG in mono.

If you have a RAW file you can of course produce a wide range of different colour and contrast effects and 'develop' it as monochrome too.

Digital software offers many optional ways to create Black and White results from colour images – including Grayscale mode or Desaturate adjustment, although I find it best to use Channel Mixer and tick the "Monochrome" box (you can then modify the mix of Red, Blue, Green colours for better control).

Although there may be fewer retailers stocking a wide range of black & white films now, the big manufacturers (Ilford, Kodak, Fujifilm) have continued to develop their products, with improvements in areas such as grain and acutance. Some photographers actually bemoan the passing of some of their "old friends" as they have become accustomed to the type of results they could achieve. You will be able to search online



*Anchor Chains: This image was found in a harbour. These chains only needed a minimal amount of dodging and burning where some seagull's guano had been burnt out because of the contrast. This was one occasion where I found the Photoshop Dodge and Burn tools more useful than the layer technique mentioned in the article, because these tools can be selected to work solely on the highlights, midtones, or shadows in any one area.*

and several Internet photo retailers do have a good selection which can be delivered to you within days.

It is a pleasing trend to find that there does seem to be a resurgence of people using film. If you feel the desire to explore this avenue and do not have a film body, you can still find second hand film cameras on eBay – and this magazine gives you the details of extremely good film camera repairers (whom I can happily recommend) who can check and service Minolta film cameras [*at a discount for Club members*].



*These abandoned pumps were beside a main road. I got down low to impose their isolation against the rain-clouds, and capture the feeling of decay and dereliction clearest in the contradictory "Open" sign. I Photoshopped out some telephone wires in the background, and used a Sepia filter. David Kilpatrick tells me these pumps are now demolished. Take your image when it first presents itself to you whether or not conditions are ideal!*

*Facing page: Roughting Linn. I was glad to be shown the location of this waterfall, as I doubt that I would have found it by myself. Although the day was overcast, which allowed me to use longer exposure times to create a mist from the falling water, there was sufficient contrast for my taste not to require much extra work on the scanned result. Scanner software provides the flexibility needed to increase contrast had it been too low.*

## Nor'Easter

My decision to take an opportunity to think afresh came when I booked on a one-week photo trip to Northumberland with Quest Photography, who have been sponsored by the Minolta Club and later by Photoclubalpha over the years.

There have been many famous images taken in colour in this area where wild and wide landscapes abound, so I decided to see what I could discover about my approach to photography by exposing black and

white film. I was happy enough with my first attempts to decide to use b&w again when I made a return visit by myself, having been shown some of the landmarks on the first photo trip.

I could not see myself committing to only shooting b&w, and completely discard taking colour photos. You may find, as I did, that it is best to make a conscious decision to focus at any one time on taking pictures *either* in b&w or in colour. One main difference I find is the need to more frequently use filters with b&w for better control of the results – colour







correction, polarising (circular ones are necessary for use with AF cameras), and/or graduated filters.

An advantage, but also an extra onus, is that you can scan in the negatives – I use an Epson V750 scanner because of its multi-format flexibility– and then work on them just as you would with any digital image. If you want a quality Minolta 35mm film scanner, this is another item that you could find on eBay.

One of the reasons I had not seriously attempted black and white photography before was that to achieve great images one really needed to have access to a darkroom for the processing stages. As I preferred to be outdoors taking photos to being indoors manipulating chemicals, I tended to stick to slide film to avoid doing any processing myself – for black and white even using the now defunct Agfa Scala slide film. So now I have to spend my time indoors manipulating images on the computer!

However, dodging and burning to achieve improved rich blacks and whites is now “simpler” as you can use these functions in *Photoshop*. Still, as this is a destructive process (well okay you can always go backwards to a previous version).

A non-destructive method that I was originally shown by Colin Westgate (Quest) is:

Open up the digital image to be worked on

Create a new *Layer* and change the *Blending Mode* to *Overlay*

Tick the box “Fill with overlay – neutral colour (50% Grey)”

Then paint on this layer using a *Soft-edged Brush Tool* (set to *Black* for darker, or *White* for lighter) with the *Opacity* set to 5% - 15%, the strength depending on how much you want the image affected. You can use higher opacity levels but this could give too great an effect. The nice thing is that if you do not like the result you can return to b) and start again.

If you want to check and see where you have painted, change the *Blending mode* on this *Layer* to *Normal*. Do not forget to change the mode back to *Overlay* before continuing.

Then you can *Flatten Layers* and you end up with the modified result.

A few of the original images taken on my trips were shown in *Practical Photography*, but I have worked on them following the advice given by that magazine and so hope that the results shown here now show an improvement.

Part of my enjoyment of photography is the experience of trying something new, and this change to black and white certainly provided that. There are many subjects that can benefit from a monochrome treatment, and perhaps, just perhaps, you may feel inclined to try this approach yourself. After all, you may even get hooked.

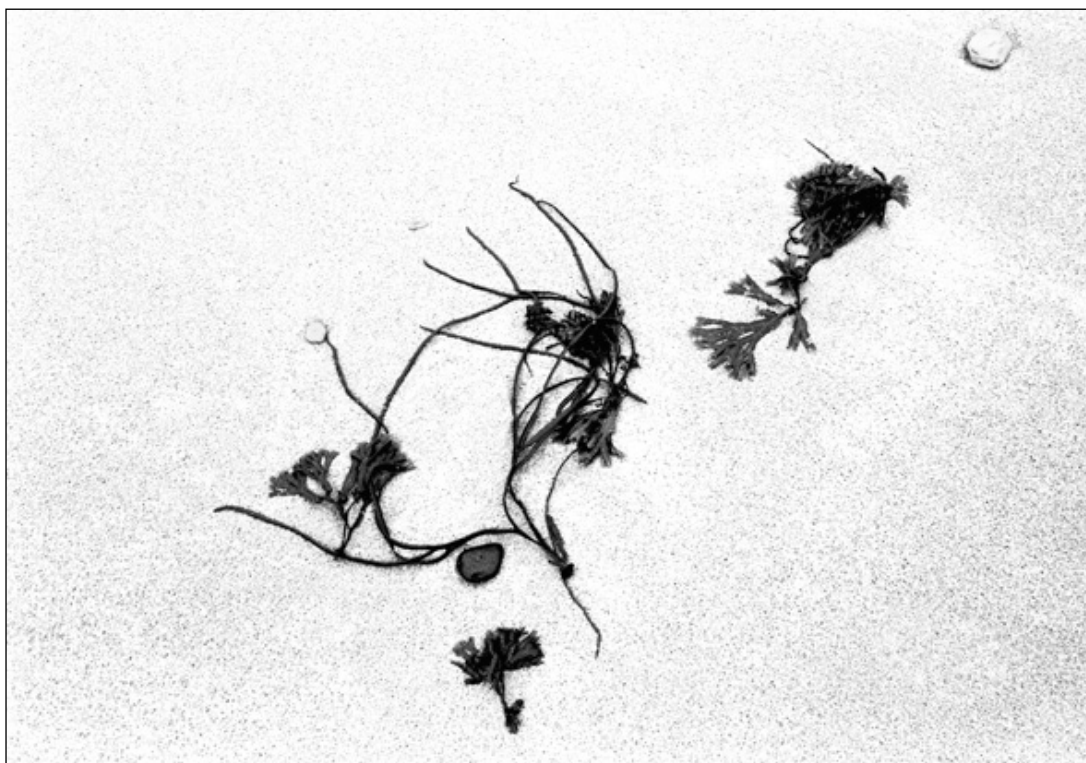


*This door is set into one of the upturned boat houses, a well known landmark on Lindisfarne. This was taken to show texture on the full door that had attracted me. In Photoshop I used levels and contrast/brightness selectively to bring out the textures.*

*The drizzle was falling when I walked on the shore at the base of Lindisfarne castle, and as I looked down at the rocks, I came across this individual rusting anchor ring which seemed an anomaly and so close to the castle and spoke volumes about the history of the place. The things I wanted to capture were the texture and the way the slight light from the sky enhanced it. I cut back the reflections by using a polarising filter. Because the resulting light levels were very low, I used a tripod. This is a cropped version as the advice given was that in the original the ring was too central.*







*I took a few landscapes like the one above on the Causeway linking Holy Island to the mainland – be careful to read the tide timetables before you stop here! All exposures used a graduated ND filter so that the sky's cloud details were not burned out – being so much brighter than the shore. Even so, there was one where I decided to dramatically crop the image to a more panoramic result, so that the textures stood out.*

*Photographs © Peter Karry*

*Left: I liked the way that the seaweed lay on a beach on a rainy day creating texture and patterns with the sand and pebbles. No, I did not move any element of the image but wanted to achieve a minimalistic landscape that described the area. I have used the burning and dodging method described in the article to modify some of the darker seaweed.*



# When in Rome...

John Price travelled light to visit the eternal city, leaving behind his heavier DSLR kit and taking instead a NEX-3 with zoom backed up by a classic Konica-ancestry G600 compact.

We shall never know what the ancient Romans would have made of digital cameras, but an opportunity of a first trip to Rome over a long weekend in April set me thinking about which camera to take. My recent purchase of a Sony NEX-3 with the 18-55mm zoom was always going to be the obvious choice.

I had originally settled for the NEX-3 because of its cost advantage; my main interest has always been in still images not video, and on the still side it is as functional as the NEX-5. I regard it as my walk-about “compact” camera now.

Portability and compact baggage size also dictated that on this occasion my KM 5D and Sony A350 DSLRs would have to stay at home. The rest of my NEX-3 equipment comprises the Sony rigid screen protector and a 49mm UV filter (essential accessories) fitted from new, together with a spare battery and three 2GB memory cards.

I always take a backup camera on holiday trips and settled for the excellent Konica Minolta G600 compact, taking only JPEGs but very good 6 megapixel ones.

Having installed the late 2010 NEX firmware upgrade I set up the lower ‘soft key’ for ISO selection and, as with all my cameras, set the Image Mode to my default Aperture Priority and *f*/8. My general approach to photography is to aim to try to get the image right in the camera from the start, so as to minimise post processing time. Shooting most images in RAW is my usual approach.

I was particularly anticipating some urban panoramas and set the Sweep Panorama Direction to “UP” so that holding the camera in the “portrait” position and sweeping horizontally from left to right meant that my resulting images would, in this way, have the greatest height.

Our first day in Rome saw us rise early to get to the Vatican Museum for a pre-booked 8.30am start – highly recommended if you can, to avoid the inevitable crowds as the day unfolds. Fortunately, photography (without flash) is generally allowed inside most of the museums in the city, although definitely *not* in the Sistine Chapel. Incidentally, if you can’t get to Rome but could manage Goring on Sea near Worthing on the south coast, there is a superb reproduction of the entire ceiling of the Sistine chapel in the Church of the English Martyrs.

We spent the remainder of the day in the



Capitoline Museums, with their numerous ancient sculptures. At one point in the museum there is the opportunity of splendid high level views out across the entire Forum towards the Coliseum and the Palatine Hill in the distance.

For indoor photography (without flash) I decided to set Auto ISO and then revert to the lowest setting ISO 200 outdoors, where for the duration of our trip the weather was hot and sunny with clear blue skies. It was reassuring that if I did overlook to change the ISO back to 200, the camera generally reverted to ISO 200 in those conditions.

Our second day saw us back in St Peter’s Square to watch the crowds hear the Pope’s midday blessing, after which we walked down by the River Tiber to Tiber Island and then on past the Circus Maximus to the Coliseum.

*John’s use of Photoshop helps him keep his shots architecturally correct, as with the Forum picture left and the Coliseum top right. Both have been carefully corrected to remove converging verticals, one from a high viewpoint and the other from ground level. Equally interesting is his use of art treatments for photographs of bridges, like the Ponte Fabricio below and right.*









The following day we climbed to the top of St Peter's Dome affording superb views of the city and presenting opportunities for some sweep panoramas, although I know I need to work on my sweep panorama techniques to avoid field curvature and maintain correct geometry.

Other trips included a visit to the remarkable Pantheon with its impressive masonry dome – the largest ever made with the height and diameter the same: 43.3m. Natural light streaming in through the circular opening in the dome results in a spectacular beam, the position of which changes according to the position of the sun. This can present some photographic problems due to the large dynamic range between the bright highlight of the dome opening



*The 18-55mm lens on the NEX-3 handled the extreme contrasts of the two domes, above, successfully. St Peter's Basilica with its rich ornamentation and luminous atmosphere, top, contrast with the ancient massive architecture of the Pantheon, above.*

*Left: you can't be in Rome without encountering Romans doing as Romans do – acting out their Imperial ancestry for tourists.*

*Below: another bridge shot, the Ponte Emanuele II looking towards St Peter's.*







and the shadow areas, but the NEX 3 coped well with this. Similar challenges presented themselves in the dome of St Peter's Basilica.

We inevitably covered much of the city in a few days, necessitating photography in crowded situations and times of day when the light wasn't

always ideal. Sometimes this resulted in only one chance of an image at a specific location – but at least it concentrates the mind on technique and familiarity with the camera.

In conclusion, the NEX-3 exceeded my expectations, impressing with its image quality and clarity, and the

flexibility of shooting RAW and/or JPEG images, the tilting LCD monitor, sweep panorama, and the very useful hand-held twilight mode. I have yet to experiment with any of the many lens adapters available but I am sure that's just a matter of time.



*Sweep panoramas take some mastering; John chose to hold the camera vertically to achieve a more conventional pan shape. Top, the Vatican Museum from St Peter's; above, St Peter's and the square. Below, another view of Ponte Emanuele II, contrasting the panoramic approach to the single-shot image.*





# Filter Factors

Sticking with your old trusted lens filters may not be a good decision. The latest hard multicoated filters, whether labelled 'digital' or not, offer significant gains in performance. We test a Sigma DG UV and a Hoya HD polariser.

CZ lenses for Sony are T\* multicoated – that's one of the best multilayer coatings available, and the difference between for example the Sony DT 16-105mm and the Sony CZ 16-80mm DT ZA is noticeable. The CZ lens has much higher contrast, higher colour saturation and is less prone to flare patches from light sources included in the shot.

The CZ 16-80mm has been a problem lens for filters, because anything in a thick rim will tend to cut into the image corners at 16mm. So, ever since I started using this lens it has been fitted with a B+W 62E Slim 010 1X UV filter. This special filter design is extra slim for wide angles, but has no front filter thread and it's been annoying to be unable to fit the lens cap.

But see the photograph below and the two filters shown beside this blow-up detail. The one on the left is a Sigma DG UV. It is certainly much thicker in mount than the Slim B+W – but it doesn't cut off the corners at 16mm, and it can accept the lens cap.

Study the image and you will see why. The B+W has a very thick glass retaining ring which comes all the way to the front of the mount. Draw a line tracing the angle of view, and Sigma's more recessed filter glass with a flatter retainer



followed by full 62mm width threaded section will allow the same angle. Even at  $f/22$ , infinity focus, there's no corner clipping.

Most of my other 62mm thread lenses have been fitted with a top quality UV protector made by Rodenstock. I bought several of these German filters a few years ago. But when the Sigma filter arrived, with its claims to have a hi-tech hard multi coating resisting water and oil as well as reflections, I decided to check over my filters



*Filter coating effectiveness – B+W MC top, ineffective Rodenstock single-coated lower left, Sigma DG UV lower right with almost 100% effective coating.*



*Above: new Hoya HD Circular Polariser density, left, compared with much darker Minolta circular polariser, right. Below and inset left: the thickness of the Sigma filter rim compared to B+W Slim, and why the B+W is no better for w/a lenses.*



for the efficiency of the coatings as well as their mechanical qualities.

In the shot to the left, you can see the B+W (a coating very similar to T\*, and the same glass as Zeiss filters) top; the Rodenstock UV bottom left, and the Sigma DG UV bottom right.

They are carefully positioned to reflect an illuminated area. As you can see, the Rodenstock's coating is next to useless compared to the B+W and the Sigma is so good there is no trace of reflected light.

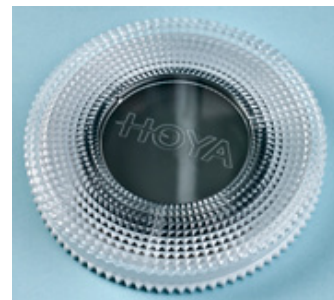
You can guess which filters are being set aside now and what will be replacing them!

Next, I found my expensive Minolta 62mm circular polariser had areas of poor flatness causing patches of unsharp image with tele zooms, or wide apertures generally. My other (49mm, 55mm, 72mm, 77mm) Minolta circular pols were all defect-free. So a new 62mm polariser was needed.

I opted for the Hoya HD Cir-PL Digital, which has three things – an ultra slim mount OK for the 16-80mm, a hard water and oil proof multicoating much like the Sigma DG UV, and a new polarising layer admitting half a stop more light than older circular polarisers.

You can see the lower density clearly in the comparison with a Minolta 49mm polariser, left. It's got all the optical quality I need and loses less light. But Hoya now pack all filters in a 77mm size case (bulky!) and it will be rehomed in an old Minolta 62mm keeper.

– DK



*Hoya and Sigma retail filter packs. Neither is much use for carrying your filter in a kit, both are bulky. Filters transferred to old neatly-fitting cases.*



# Velbon UT43D

Is size more important than weight? Velbon's UT43D must be one of the smallest tripods ever designed, when collapsed, for the height it achieves when extended. And it's only a touch heavier than carbon fibre.

Travelling light with a tripod has been made a little easier by the introduction of carbon fibre and similar lightweight materials. It's not made any easier by the restrictions on both size and weight applied by airline operators, and the occasional crisis at security checks if you need to carry this 'weapon' in cabin baggage.

On the right you see two tripods.

The larger one is actually a very small tripod, the Gitzo Traveler 6X in its now-discontinued GT1550T form with a very small magnesium ball and socket head. This is more or less a £500 travel accessory and has been the standard copied by Chinese brands.

The shorter one is the Velbon UT43D which costs under £150 in most stores complete with a slightly more substantial QHD-53D ball and socket head using a DIN-type quick change insert, and with two spirit levels. What you can't see easily from the Velbon photo is that the centre column is telescopic, and the legs conceal five sections just like the separately clamped sections of the carbon-fibre Gitzo but all released and locked in any position using just one twist of the big rubber foot.

Despite the much more substantial head and quick-lock camera mount, the Velbon's aluminium and plastic construction comes in at 1170g versus 1025g, and all the extra weight is in the head. As for length, when folded it comes in at under a foot – 29.5cm – which officially makes it OK to carry on board flights. When extended, its 156.5cm camera height above ground is 7cm short of the Gitzo's maximum but for most people this is still a comfortable eye level. The Velbon centre column makes up more of the final height in proportion, the Gitzo's 'shoulder' being 17cm higher.

Both tripods have low-level modes via three different leg angle positions, but the method for accessing these is very different. The Gitzo legs are set separately by holding a catch as you open the leg out. The Velbon has a preset slider for each leg, which once positioned allows that angle to be reached quickly. A spring-loaded collar carrying these slider stops is

*The Velbon UT43D, left, collapses to under 12" where the Gitzo Traveller is slightly over 14" – a critical difference for carry-on items with some airports.*



*Above: £150 versus £500-plus, 145g difference in weight but 55mm difference in collapsed size. Below: the narrow DIN-fit camera shoe works well with tilting rear screens, and the locking mechanism is automatic, snapping to when inserted.*



lifted and turned to move between working position and folded away. Low-level shooting is possible, but not as versatile as the Gitzo which allows the ball and socket mount without the centre column and also allows this column to be reversed.

Which would I travel with? Well, I love the Gitzo – and I very nearly lost it for good to an Italian airport security official in Bari in May. He only relented on confiscating it when I said it was worth 500 euros and was made in Italy specially for travel.

So for the next trip I used the Velbon, and with its handy carrying bag it proved every bit as useful. I don't mind risking £150-worth in hold baggage either. And the quick mount allows the Alpha 55 screen to tilt down in waist level position too!

– DK





# A hero but no VC

Although Sony DSLRs and SLTs have onboard image stabilisation using the sensor based system (SteadyShot Inside) the Sigma 18-250mm OS lens has been a top choice with optical stabilisation. So why did Tamron make their 18-270mm VC superzoom without VC for the Alpha mount?

After using Sigma's 18-250mm optically stabilised zoom on Alpha bodies for a year and more, the first thing which strikes about the Tamron 18-270mm for Sony mount is the lack of the VC (Vibration Control) stabiliser found on the same lens made for Canon or Nikon.

With Sigma facing patent claims by Nikon – that parts of their OS technology infringe on Nikon VR – Tamron VC is a mature system not so far challenged in the same way. It is also a very solid kind of stabilisation, free from swimming effects, and in this respect closely matches Sigma's approach. Both are generally more comfortable than Canon's IS which often seems to attach the image by a bungee cord to the viewfinder screen.

For video work, in-lens stabilisation is generally better than



*True focal lengths, below: at near-infinity, the Tamron focal length equals 265mm relative to the Sigma's 250mm (upper image). Closer up, the Tamron actually seems to be shorter in focal length than the Sigma, and its macro ratio is a little less. The Tamron is sharper centrally and higher in contrast, but at 270mm outer field sharpness was poor and colour fringes were strong.*

in-body as long as there is a good stable view which does not tend to float free when you pan slowly. For long lens work in general – over 200mm – in-lens stabilisation provides a view which is easier to aim and compose.

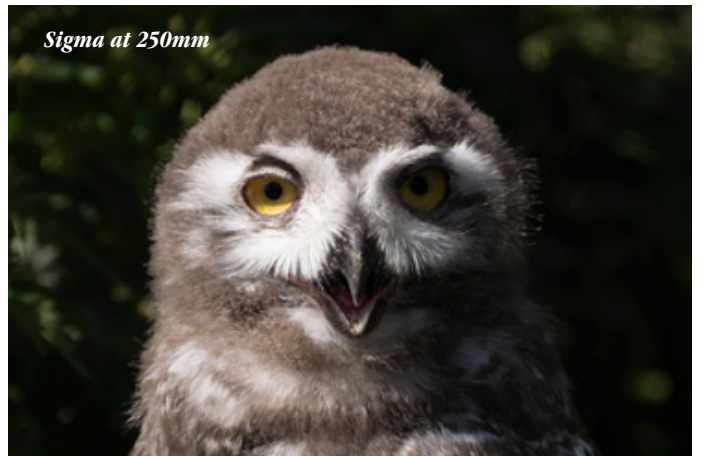
So, the lack of VC in the Sony version of this lens is regrettable. There is no corresponding reduction in retail price.

But against this the Tamron has a longer zoom range, and it's much smaller and lighter than the Sigma, taking regular 62mm filters not the unusual and large 72mm size. It also offers Piezo Drive focusing, which almost as quiet as SSM yet as fast as SAM. Small adjustments make a sort of faint clicking sound and focus travel is unusually fast, but a range of freehand refocusing tests using the Tamron showed that it is just as reliable in lock-

*Sigma at 250mm*



*Sigma at 250mm*



*Tamron at 270mm*



*Tamron at 270mm*





ing on to difficult targets as any other lens. Usually fast focusing means lots of overshooting or hunting, but not on the Alpha 580 used for this test.

Although the size and weight difference between this and the Sigma doesn't look all that extreme when photographed in the studio, the heft in your hand (volume) is much less for the Tamron. It does not really seem any bigger than the Tamron/Sony 18-250mm design or the earlier 18-200mm.

The design of the lens follows these, with the LOCK switch for holding the lens at 18mm when walking round positioned for the right hand to operate, a long way from the AF/M switch (which should be used instead of the body switch for changing to manual focus).

This is a better design than the Sigma which clusters the AF/M, OS on/off and Lock controls together on the left hand side. Even after a year of use, both Shirley and I regularly turn the lens OS off, or turn AF off, instead of operating the Lock. All three controls move in the same way and are intended for the same fingers. Tamron's location of Lock on the right hand side is ergonomically better.

However, both lenses fail to do the one simple thing which would improve such zooms – make the Lock control operate at ALL focal lengths not just 18mm. The Tamron is firm as we test it, so was the Sigma when new, but our Sigma can not now be used to pan with a plane or bird flying overhead unless one hand is used to keep the zoom from collapsing to 18mm immediately the lens is aimed upwards. To do the studio shot, the Sigma had to be taped to keep the zoom extended. Otherwise, it can't even sit on a table set to 250mm.

It can not be difficult to devise a zoom lock which works at intermediate settings and it would transform the functionality of lenses like this.

Apart from ergonomics, there is no significant difference in build quality. Sigma feels more solid but heavier in action, Sigma's exterior finish is difficult to clean and collects marks and dust easily. Tamron feels more plastic in build but has a high quality metal bayonet just like its rival.

## Performance

The Tamron lens has visibly higher detail contrast than the Sigma, and in the centre of its field produces a very sharp image. The edge of the image lets it down, however, rather badly. The detail is soft at longer focal lengths unless stopped well down ( $f/11$  or so) and red-green



*The Tamron used at 18mm has very slight barrel distortion. At 270mm, pin-cushion is extremely well controlled.*



*The size (and weight) difference between Tamron, left, and Sigma, right, is more apparent in the hand than in the studio shots here. Top right, distortion at 18mm on the Tamron. Below, the Tamron (left) has superior lens coatings to the Sigma and generally exhibits better central contrast, let down by poor edge resolution.*



chromatic fringes are serious enough to spoil JPEGs. They are not even very well corrected by using Adobe Lens Profile to process from raw (there is no Sony profile but Nikon, using similar sensors, can be selected).

At full aperture and 270mm the performance is markedly inferior to the Sigma at 250mm wide open. The lens has better multicasting but poor field flatness, which creates the softening to the edges and corners.

At wide to medium focal lengths, the difference is less marked and the Tamron is more equal the Sigma or other 'best' superzooms. But this is a lens bought for its extra reach at 270mm; given the performance, it's not all that much use unless your subject is centred and surrounded by out of focus background.

Another issue is that of focal length. If the Sigma is a true 250mm (which it is not, all such zooms are shorter than their stated figures) then the Tamron is actually 265mm not 270mm at infinity. Although the close focus is good, at 49cm and 1:3.8 scale it's not as good as the Sigma with 45cm and 1:3.4 scale – the true focal length at closer distances also seems to be shorter than the Sigma, though this is hard to evaluate.

The Tamron PZD focus does work on the LA-EA1 Alpha adaptor for NEX; it's not fast, but can lock autofocus perfectly even in difficult light. The Sigma can not do this at all and is not AF-compatible with the NEX adaptor. But... manually focused, the Sigma has OS. Vital!

Most telling is the weight difference when mounted on a light body like the A55. The Tamron is a far better match even if not as 'good' a lens – 970g for A55+Tamron, 1400g for A580+Sigma. Check prices, and work out your priorities.

– DESK







# Look – just hands

Image stabilisation with shorter focal lengths can make even a special travel tripod redundant. Sweep pans don't need tripods or panoramic heads – short time exposures can be hand-held. High ISO can now be grainless.

Despite the expense of a high-end travel tripod and the effort of taking it when travelling, it still gets left behind in the room or in the car.

Fortunately, the latest Alpha models have effective image stabilisation and fantastic performance at high ISO – and that means that 'tripod shots'

can be taken without needing any support. Even travel pictures which have to stand up to picture library quality control and demanding uses may be tackled without a tripod.

The sweep panorama feature of the Alpha 55 is the easiest of all to use because this camera can display

a virtual horizon, a spirit level, in the finder or on the screen. Getting the green light from this graphic display starts your pan off perfectly straight and keeping the horizon level, green light on, ensures you don't go off at an angle. Testing the NEX-5, Alpha 580 and 55 sweep pan functions,

we found the 55 much the best to use because of this one feature. In the process we also found that you MUST use a fast enough card – the same as for shooting movies – when doing sweep pans or there is a risk of the card becoming corrupted. This happened to one SanDisk Class







4 card we used and images had to be recovered later on, with the card put out of use after it was overloaded by the panorama above. This view of the Sassi of Matera, the famous cave-dwellings in southern Italy, was taken on the next card loaded.

In the evening in Matera, still carrying cameras but no tripod, we found the piazza fountain was illuminated and conditions were just right for shots. By resting the Alpha 55 with 16-80mm CZ lens set to 16mm on the barrier surrounding the fountain, a half-second exposure at ISO 100 and f/8 was possible. To get the right feel, this length of exposure was wanted. Taking a dozen shots ensures plenty of choice to pick a sharp one with the best lighting and water jets. When

you use a tripod, turn SteadyShot off – but if you use a fence or a wall to steady an otherwise hand-held camera, leave it switched on.

In the old Sassi Caveoso underground chapels, flash photography is not permitted and the curator on seeing the cameras immediately said ‘you can take photographs anywhere you like, just no tripod no flash please’.

Shirley was able to hand-hold the shot below using the 18-250mm Sigma OS zoom at 18mm and f/9 – this aperture is an optimum one for the lens, and also needed to get sharp detail in depth. The shutter speed was 1/8th with auto ISO bumping the sensitivity to 1600. In the past, ISO 1600 film would mean an unusable result and a tripod would be vital for

professional quality imaging in these conditions. Today, ISO 1600 with regular Adobe Camera Raw processing is noise-free (at least from the Alpha 580 used here). Not only that, the cellar down the stair was unlit and two stops darker than the original. The very bottom of the stair was dodged with +2.25 stops extra exposure fading to +0.9 in a circle covering the passage. So parts of the shot were exposed, in effect, at ISO 8000 and still don't show grainy noise.

The new sensors, and general improvement in digital processing, combine to make photography practical in almost lighting conditions with or without flash or a tripod. In Matera we spend a fair time underground or out and about after



dark, and our hand-held Alpha and NEX cameras delivered the goods. Shirley didn't risk her 580 when climbing up into the cave above – famous from Monty Python's *Life of Brian*. We guess the ‘just a naughty boy’ wave is a fitting farewell for our last Photoworld article...

– David & Shirley Kilpatrick



## Call the Photostore



Adrian Paul at the Photostore can obtain almost any accessory you need for your Alpha system camera. Lost a flash shoe cover? Or just want to get one for your new camera which came without? Call Adrian – the same goes for lens caps, body caps, flash ‘feet’, AC adaptors, battery packs, lens hoods, cases, straps, LCD protectors, eyepiece magnifiers, LCD hoods, hand grips... If it's a Sony accessory Adrian can obtain it for you. He also has stocks of Minolta and Konica Minolta items. Photostore has its own web forum with former Minolta expert Bernard Petticrew as resident guru.

**01132 448664**  
[www.photostore-uk.com](http://www.photostore-uk.com)



**Wester Ross and Durness**  
*(two centre trip)*  
**Can be combined with Isle of Skye for discount £50 – see below**  
 Sunday 2 October to Sunday 9 October 2011. 7 nights.

This trip takes us to some of the most remote landscape in the U.K. Our first centre is Dundonnell, at the end of Little Loch Broom, in Wester Ross. We will spend three nights there before travelling to one of the most northern parts of Scotland for another four nights. Here the beaches in the Durness area make outstanding subjects for the camera, with rocky outcrops in dramatic settings. The surging surf can be spectacular, with translucent green rollers crashing onto the golden sands. Travel will be by air to Inverness, and thence by minibus.

**Price £895 (deposit £150)**  
**Single supplement £95. (8 places)**  
*Price includes, dinner B&B and packed lunches at Dundonnell, and dinner B&B at our second location plus minibus travel. It does not include cost of flights. The price is based on shared en suite twin rooms. A supplement is payable for single occupancy. Flights are to Inverness, and onward travel by minibus.*

**Isle of Skye and the Applecross Peninsula**  
 Sunday 9 October to Tuesday 18 October. 9 nights Guest House/Hotel based.

Skye has been in every Quest programme since our foundation in 1993 and remains one of our most popular destinations. The "Misty Isle" is surely one of the most beautiful parts of the United Kingdom, full of mood and mountains, rivers, bays and lochs. There is all that the landscape photographer could want - but Skye does not give it up that easily, as it is well known for the fickleness of its weather. But the weather makes the mood, and magic moments are never far away - if only the photographer is in the right place at the right time! This year, the trip has been extended to include the dramatic Applecross peninsula.

We will, as usual, be based at The Skye Picture House, near Broadford. This is now under new ownership, but we are promised the same level of service as has been provided by Steve & Gill Terry over the past 17 years. The guest house is situated in a stunning location, at the edge of a loch, with superb views, especially for the morning sunrise. Otters and seals can sometimes be seen. A talk by photog-

rapher Ken Bryan, who lives on Skye, will be arranged if he is available.

We will fly to Inverness (EasyJet from Gatwick or Luton and other airports). You will be met at the airport for the minibus transfer to Skye.

**Price £985 (deposit £200)**  
**Single supplement £90. 8 places.**  
*Cost includes full board accommodation, with packed lunch. The price is based on a shared twin room and a supplement is payable for single occupation. It also includes minibus travel from Inverness airport and on Skye, but not the cost of flights.*

**Turn this holiday into a fantastic 16 nights trip by combining it with the Wester Ross/Durness trip – see above – for a total price of £1780. Deposit £400, single supplement £185.**

**Snowdonia (North Wales)**  
 Saturday 22 October to Saturday 29 October 2011. 7 nights

The stunning mountain landscape of Snowdonia will offer plenty of photographic subjects in a fairly small area, thus minimising the amount of travel needed. We will be centrally based at a hotel in either Capel Curig, or Betws-y-Coed, from which daily excursions into the landscape will be made. David Mills ARPS will be guiding this trip, being eminently qualified for the job. David visits Snowdonia several times a year and knows it intimately, thus enabling us to maximise our photographic opportunities.

Travel will be by minibus, and where practical, collection and drop off will be at, or near, your home.

**Price £875 (deposit £150)**  
**Single supplement £90**  
*Price includes minibus travel to Wales and throughout the week. It also includes dinner, B&B accommodation. Price quoted is for sharing a twin room and a supplement is payable for single occupation, subject to availability.*

**Autumn Impressions with Colin Westgate**  
 1 day, at Sheffield Park, Sussex,  
 Friday 4 November 2011

Learn how to produce beautiful impressionistic images of the superb autumn colour in the lovely Sheffield Park gardens, well known for the variety of its exotic trees and spectacular autumn colours. These are at their best at this time of the year and by the use of various diffusion methods, you are guaranteed to get some lovely pictures. This has often been described as 'painterly' – they are certainly distinctive. After an initial discussion and demonstration of the techniques, the day will be spent photographing in the Park.

**Price £58 (deposit £20).**  
**10 places. Park entrance fees (where applicable) and refreshments on arrival included**

**North East India, (in collaboration with Colin Summers)**  
 12/30 November 2011. 18 nights. 6 places only.

At last, we are able to offer our long awaited trip to India – and it promises to be something very special. It will be led by Colin Summers, whose experience of dealing with the people of India, and travelling in that country, will be invaluable. This 18 nights trip will provide variety of people and landscape, from the second largest city Kolkata, to spiritual Varanasi and to the Himalayan areas of Darjeeling and the lesser-known Sikkim, where entry is by permit.

The trip will start in Kolkata (Calcutta), India's second largest city, in which we will experience life there first hand and up close, where the bustling streets and alleyways will provide countless opportunities for the camera. From there, we will travel by overnight sleeper to the fascinating Varanasi, situated on the banks of the sacred Ganges, where people pray, bathe, do their laundry and burn the dead on the renowned ghats. From sunrise to sunset, there will be much to take in!

The next stage will be a flight to Bagdogra, from where we will go by jeep up the winding hill road to Darjeeling. This former British hill station straddles a steep mountain ridge covered in tea plantations. Here

we will find ourselves surrounded by people from all over the eastern Himalayas, including Tibetans, who find refuge in the city. The views down the mountain valleys, often with mist, are magnificent and on clear days the peaks of Kanchenjunga can be seen.

From Darjeeling, we will travel by road to the once independent kingdom of Sikkim, known as one of the last Himalayan 'Shangri-La's'. Permits are still necessary to enter this area close to the Chinese border and these will be obtained in advance. The population of this tiny state are very friendly and with its beautiful mountain vistas and fresh clean air, it is the perfect place to spend a few days prior to flying back to Kolkata and home.

This is not a 'whistle stop' tour and three full days will be spent in each location to give plenty of time to absorb the atmosphere of each place and take photographs. Allowing for flights and internal travel, the whole trip will be for 18 nights.

Colin Summers is an experienced traveller and documentary photographer, and has spent a great deal of time in the Far East and Asia. He has recently completed a commission for Lepira in India. His people relationship skills will ensure that we have the very best opportunities for photography in an unobtrusive way, which is one reason why the number of participants is being kept to just six. Unlike some other operators, who take far larger groups, our photography will be less invasive and there will be much more time for personal attention and guidance.

Please see Colin's web site **www.colinsummers.com/gallery** for some of his pictures from India.

**Price £2495 (deposit £500).**  
**Single supplement £450. 6 places only.** *Cost includes all accommodation (B&B basis,) internal flight and all travel in India, but excludes flight to/from India. Cost of meals is not included. The supplement for single occupation is high as most hotels charge for the room, whether occupied by one or two people.*



# Quest Workshops 2011

**Colin Westgate's QUEST workshops, sponsored by Photoworld, are based in Essex. Telephone 01206 384315 or email [questphoto@btinternet.com](mailto:questphoto@btinternet.com). See all the trips and workshops for the year at [www.questphoto.co.uk](http://www.questphoto.co.uk) which has been redesigned with loads of extra info and images**



# photo training overseas

goes back  
to  
its roots

## **Photo Training Overseas**

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*and navigate to*

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## **FANTASTIC SPEAKER LINE-UP**

**PTO** are delighted to announce a fantastic line-up of speakers combining established 'star' names alongside fresh talent to the seminar circuit. We are delighted to welcome:

**KENNETH LINGE** – from Utah, USA but born in Norway, an exceptional talent operating in the areas of beauty, wedding, portrait and fashion.

**STUART WOOD** – is rated amongst the best of the UK's people and lifestyle photographers

**ZIBA SALEHI** – from Tehran in Iran. Ziba has a design background and specialises in weddings using varied locations to create her images.

**BELLA WEST** – a talented and highly regarded photographer of people

**DAVE WALL** – a welcome return for Dave this time to talk about Adobe Lightroom workflows.

**SEAN CONBOY** – a talented architectural photographer who travels the globe creating his stunning images. Explore the ways of exploiting architecture for your social and portrait images.

**CLARE LOUISE** – a perfectionist in everything she does. On this course she will major on her highly acclaimed 'fantasy' image-making techniques.

**KEITH TRAINOR** – Keith established *Event Portraits* in 1996 and his company is renowned for training in top quality corporate event photography.

## **Delegate rate only: £845**

– these prices are valid until 30 September 2011. Includes return flights; transfers; in-flight meals; 20 kgs of luggage; all regular Master Classes and evening seminars; Gala Awards event; all-inclusive board. Non-delegate rate **only: £645** and includes all the above except regular Master Classes.

**Optional Super Master Classes on the final day at a supplement.**

## **29 January 5 February 2012**

## **What HAPPENS Next**

Well if you want to join the ever increasing number of delegates attending PTO then we suggest you book now. This course is normally fully booked by the end of September each year. All delegate bookings will receive a superbly useful gift celebrating our 25th year of overseas training courses. For more delegate feedback go to Facebook and log onto groups - Photo Training Overseas

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

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