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Digital SLR Photography

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DISCOVER NATURE

ROSS HODDINOTT & BEN HALL DISCUSS THEIR LATEST BOOK 52 ASSIGNMENTS: NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTO EXPEDITION

South Wales uncovered

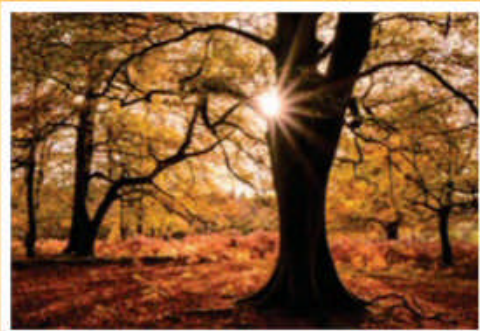
ADAM BURTON SHARES THE SECRETS
OF ONE OF THE MOST PHOTOGENIC
AND VARIED LOCATIONS IN THE UK

50+

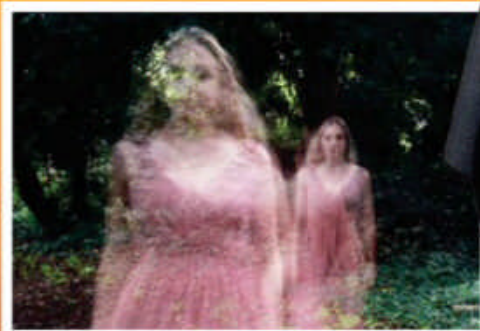
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Welcome



WELCOME TO THE NOVEMBER 2020 issue of *Digital SLR*

Photography. As we go to press, the autumn equinox has arrived, signalling the end of summer and the start of arguably the most popular season for landscape photographers. Over the next few weeks, we'll be witness to the amazing transformation of foliage from lush greens to glorious gold. With the days getting shorter

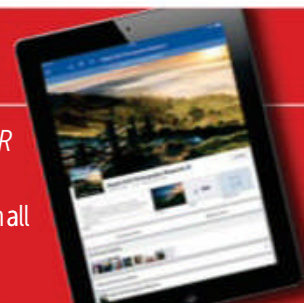
and the weather becoming volatile, it's the perfect time to head out to capture scenes of gold filled with magical light and sensuous mood. In this month's *Photo Expert* (page 54) regular contributor Ross Hoddinott provides us with 15 of his favourite tips to help you capture your best autumnal images. Ross is also featured in our *Big Interview* (page 74), where he and top wildlife photographer Ben Hall talk about their latest book, *52 Assignments: Nature Photography*. With Halloween not far away, we thought we'd add a little spooky shooting into our *Photo Skills* ensemble, so if you're a fan of the macabre, try creating your own ghostly images using Caroline Schmidt's advice on page 30. If you're faint-hearted, don't worry, we've conventional subjects too, including still-lives and cityscapes. We wish you a great month of photography. All the best!

Daniel Lezano Editor



Join a growing community

JOIN CLOSE TO 600,000 FOLLOWERS! Get online and interact with the experts at *Digital SLR Photography*. You can follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/digitalslrphoto), tweet us on Twitter (@digitalslrphoto) or email us (enquiries@dslrphotomag.co.uk) to keep up to date with all that's going on in photography. Don't miss our blog, too, at: www.digitalslrphoto.com.



ON THIS MONTH'S COVER...

Our stunning cover image of two Great Crested Grebes in golden dawn light was captured by leading wildlife photographer Ben Hall. We speak to Ben and Ross Hoddinott about their latest book, *52 Assignments: Nature Photography*, in this month's Big Interview, starting on p74.



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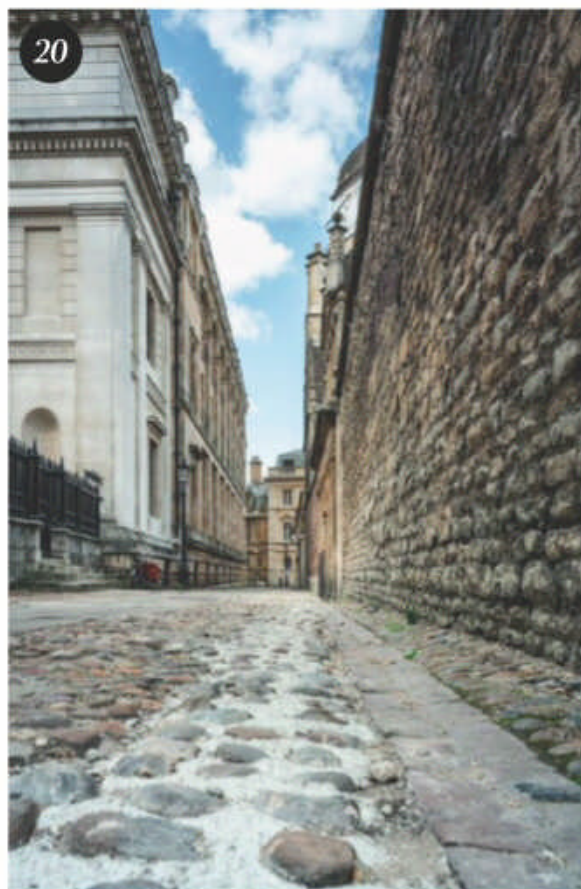
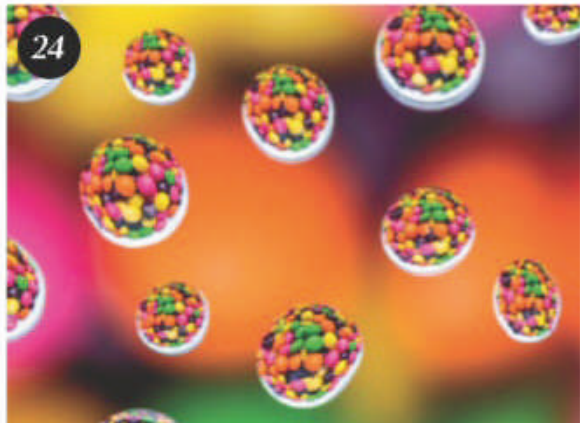


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OUR TEAM OF PHOTO EXPERTS



Daniel Lezano

With around 35 years' experience as a photographer and over 25 years on photo magazines, editor Lezano is passionate about photography, in particular portraits.



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Helen is living the dream, having given up a full-time job to live in Cornwall and become a professional landscape photographer. helendixonphotography.co.uk



Adam Burton LANDSCAPES

One of the UK's leading landscape photographers and author of four books, Adam shoots throughout the UK and runs international workshops. adamburtonphotography.com



Brett Harkness PORTRAITS

You either want to be photographed by him or shoot like him. A master of portraits, fashion and weddings, Brett runs regular photo workshops. brettharknessphotography.com



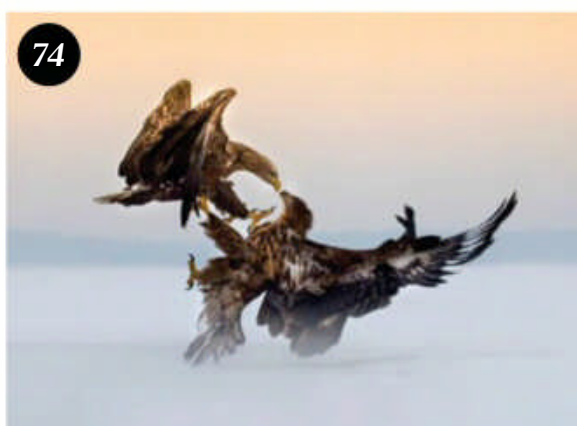
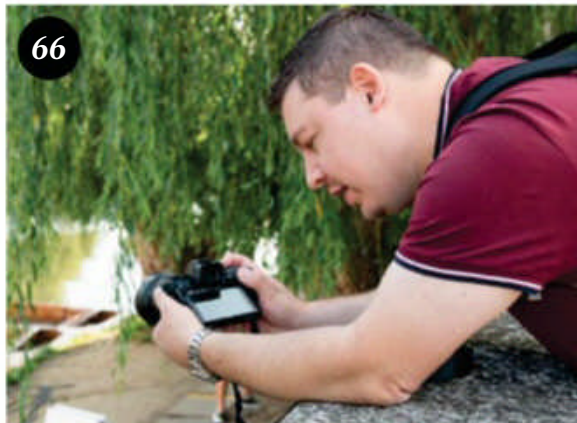
Mark Bauer LANDSCAPES

One of the UK's leading landscape photographers and a celebrated author, Mark enjoys photographing the south west of England. markbauerphotography.com



Angela Nicholson TESTS

Angela is a well respected editor, writer and reviewer with close to 20 years' experience testing cameras, optics and accessories. She tests the Canon EOS R6 on page 98.



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Portfolio

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PHOTO

Scarth Gap by Royce Meckin

www.instagram.com/royce__06/

"This is a less photographed view of the beautiful Buttermere on my way up Haystacks via Scarth gap with a group of friends. As I was obviously making my way up the path, one of my friends advised me to turn around to see the stunning light. I grabbed a few shots and then it was gone. It goes to show you should often check out what's going on behind you as well as in front."

Pentax K1 with Pentax 28-105mm f/3.5-5.6 lens. Exposure: 1/400sec at f/7.1 (ISO 100).







Crummock Vista by Royce Meckin

www.instagram.com/royce__06/

(Above) "Taken from the summit of Loweswater Fell overlooking Buttermere and Crummock in Cumbria, this image was shot the same day as the Whiteoak Beck image (right). The conditions were promising for patchy light and a chance of rain. Unfortunately, the rain never materialised but I had dramatic clouds instead."

Pentax K1 with Pentax 28-105mm f/3.5-5.6 lens. Exposure: 1/160sec at f/7.1 (ISO 100).

Buttermere Squall by Royce Meckin

(Centre right) "This is one of my favourite shots from my many visits to Buttermere, with Char cottage again nestled in there. This morning I made a last minute decision to head out before going to work on a back shift and unusually for me I sat and waited for a shot, rather than hunting one out. The light and weather was changing so quickly but I managed to keep dry."

Pentax K1 with Tamron 70-200mm f/2.8 lens. Exposure: 1/200sec at f/7.1 (ISO 100).



Char Cottage by Royce Meckin

(Below right) "This is a shot of Char Cottage that I had tried to get numerous times before, failing due to choppy water or lack of knowledge and ability when starting out. Thankfully, after lockdown was eased this was my first port of call and the conditions were ideal. The evening light only comes down the valley in the height of summer so makes a rarer photo of a popular scene."

Pentax K1 with Pentax 28-105mm f/3.5-5.6 lens. Exposure: 1/10sec at f/10 (ISO 100).



Whiteoak Beck by Royce Meckin

(Left) "This little fell is one of my favourites due to its short walk to the top and 180° views from its peak, which makes it my go-to fell when wanting a walk when I'm short of time. Once up there the light seems to fall perfectly on the surrounding fells all year round meaning I've never failed to get a shot I like."

Pentax K1 with Pentax 28-105mm f/3.5-5.6 lens. Exposure: 1/640sec at f/7.1 (ISO 100).



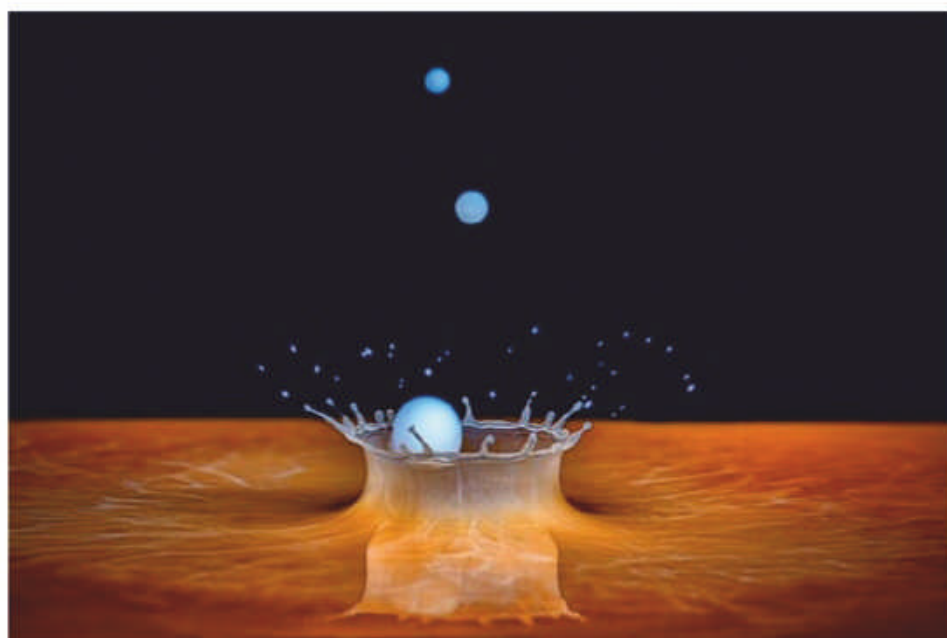
The Rock Pigeon by Michael McKenney

splashartbymike.com

(Above) "Albuquerque is home to thousands of pigeons, but it was still a surprise when this figure appeared from colliding drops of lightly-coloured water. I used two flash units set at 1/128 power, which is my usual set-up, to light from behind in a darkened room, giving me an effective exposure of 1/20000sec."

Canon EOS 5DS R with EF 180mm f/3.5L macro lens. Exposure: 1.6 seconds at f/11 (ISO 200).

Splashdown by Michael McKenney



(Left) "Food colouring was used in a water and milk mixture to create this image. A simple crown shape was created by the first drop that landed in the catch receptacle. Other drops are visible as they make their way down to the crown. If I had snapped a single micro-second later, this image would have taken on a different shape entirely and this image would have been lost forever."

Canon EOS 5DS R with EF 180mm f/3.5L macro lens. Exposure: 1.6 seconds at f/11 (ISO 200).

Cosmic Splash by Michael McKenney



(Below left) "This stellar figure is the result of a milk-drop collision, and unlike the other photographs within this portfolio that have been created with food colouring, the blue colour was created by a coloured gel on the flash units. The moving liquid drops provided the energy to create a cosmic-like disturbance in the catch receptacle, which was also filled with milk."

Canon EOS 5DS R with EF 100mm f/2.8L macro lens. Exposure: 2.5 seconds at f/16 (ISO 640).

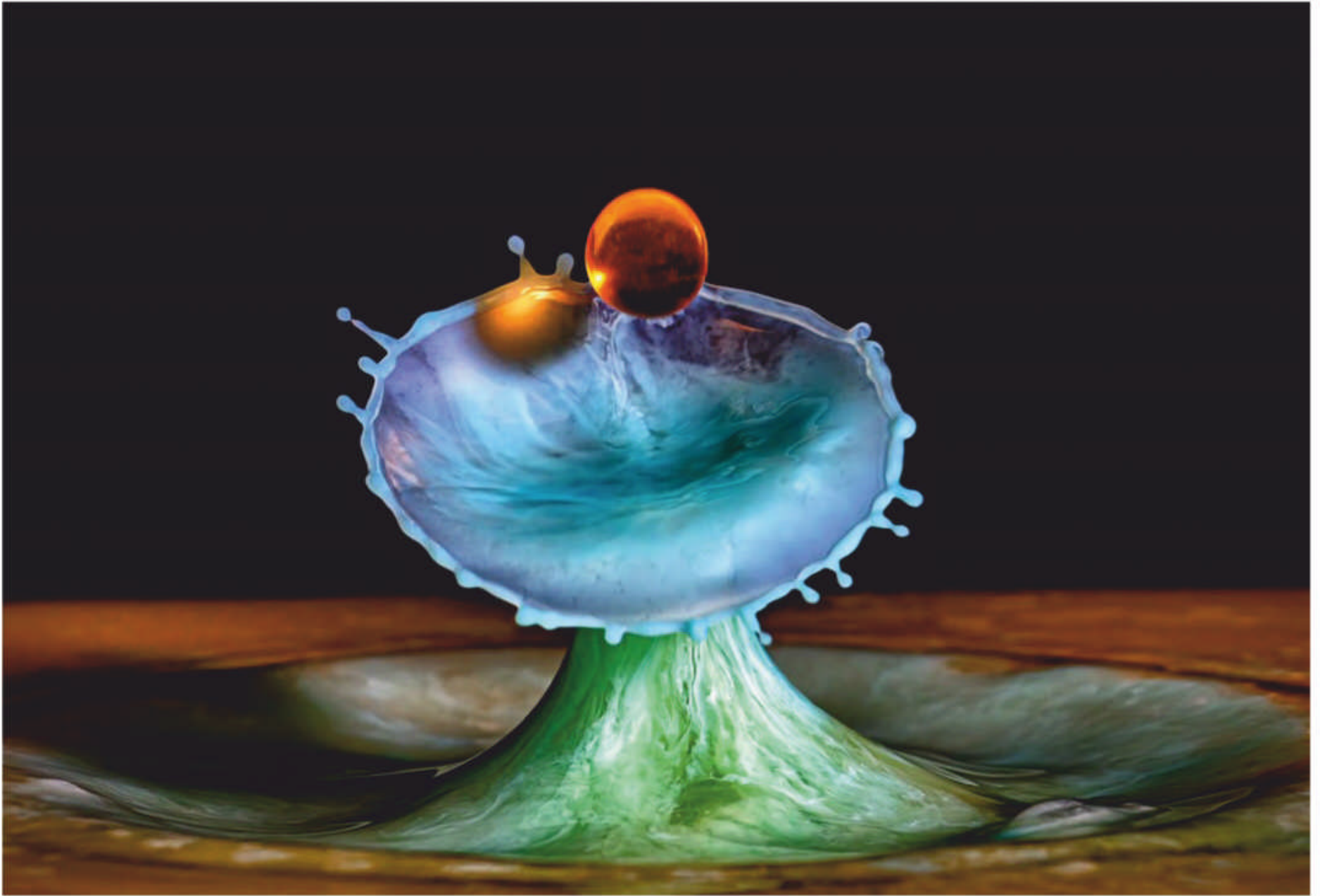
Old Faithful by Michael McKenney

(Right) "A pressurised burst of water and milk shot up from the catch basin to create this image. Overhead falling drops were also a water and milk mixture coloured with food colouring. All splash images are unique and can never be duplicated because of the ever-changing variables involved in the creation of the images."

Canon EOS 5DS R with Laowa 24mm f/14 macro probe lens. Exposure: One second at f/22 (ISO 400).







An Illuminated Shadow by Michael McKenney

splashartbymike.com

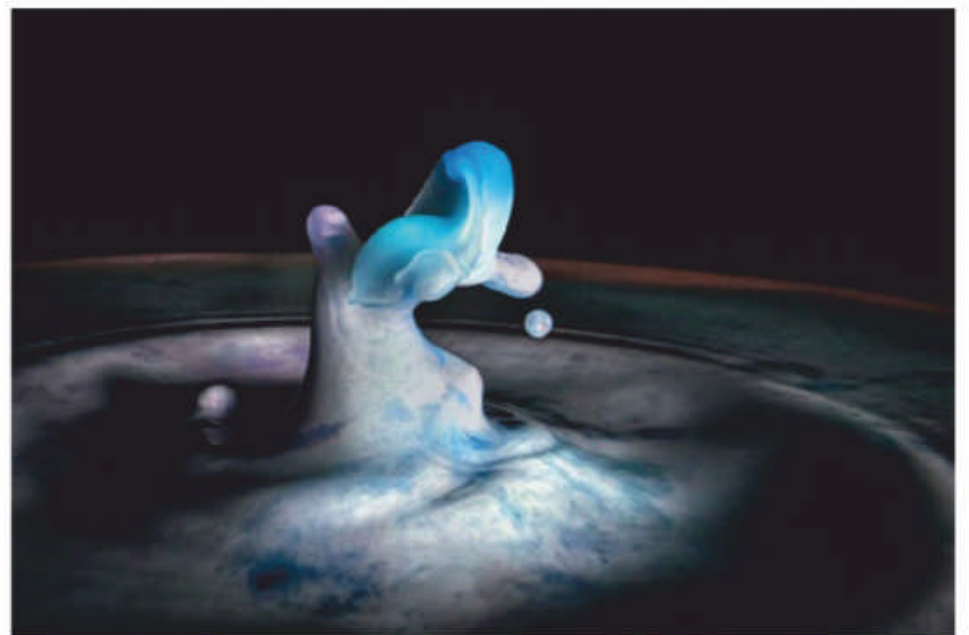
(Above) "The mushroom shape in this shot was created by the first two drops of a water and milk collision falling into the catch receptacle, which was also filled with a water and milk mixture. The third drop has created a shadow on the top edge of the mushroom. Three different colours were used."

Canon EOS 5DS R with EF 180mm f/3.5 lens. Exposure: 1.6 seconds at f/16 (ISO 200).

The Baby Elephant by Michael McKenney

(Right) "A photographer can choose which liquids to use for a drop collision and colour those liquids any way they choose, but it is still impossible to predict what the results might be. In this case, I see the water-milk drop collision having taken the shape of a baby elephant. What one person sees in an image though may be entirely different from another's perception of that same image."

Canon EOS 5DS R with Laowa 24mm f/14 macro probe lens. Exposure: One second at f/22 (ISO 320).



The Catch by Michael McKenney

(Below right) "Many people see a vase or a cup in this image, which was created by the first two drops colliding into a catch receptacle filled with a water and milk mixture. The third drop is 'caught' by the figure made by the first two drops."

Canon EOS 5DS R with EF 180 f/3.5 macro lens. Exposure: Two seconds at f/14 (ISO 250).

Star Gazer by Michael McKenney

(Left) "Covid-19 has caused many photographers to look for alternative ways to create unique images away from groups of people. Splash photography has been the solution for some. Many of the stunning, stop-motion images created during splash photography invoke feelings of peaceful melancholy, which is the case for 'Star Gazer'. It is a water and milk collision that has resulted in a lone, human-like figure staring out into a starry night sky."

Canon EOS 5DS R with Laowa 24mm f/14 macro probe lens. Exposure: 1.6 seconds at f/22 (ISO 400).



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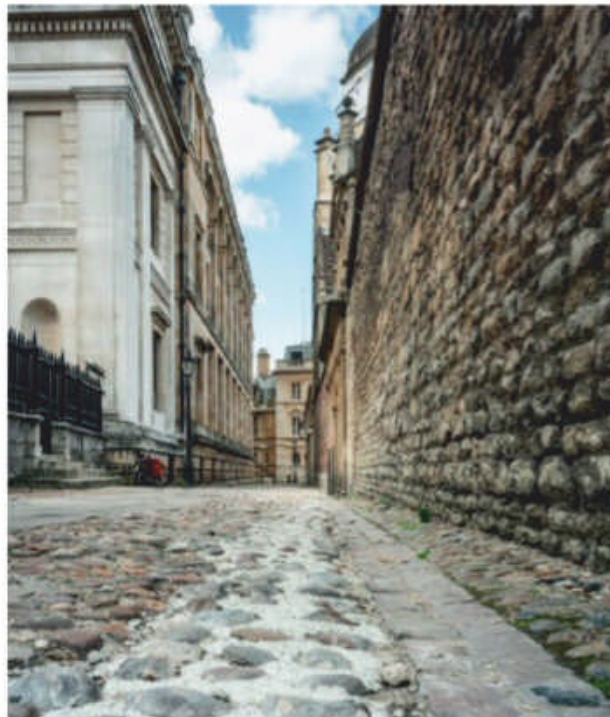
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PHOTO SKILLS

IDEAS & ADVICE FOR BETTER PHOTOS



p16: CREATIVE IDEAS THAT GET TO THE POINT



p20: SKILLS FOR NEW VIEWPOINTS AND FRESH EYES

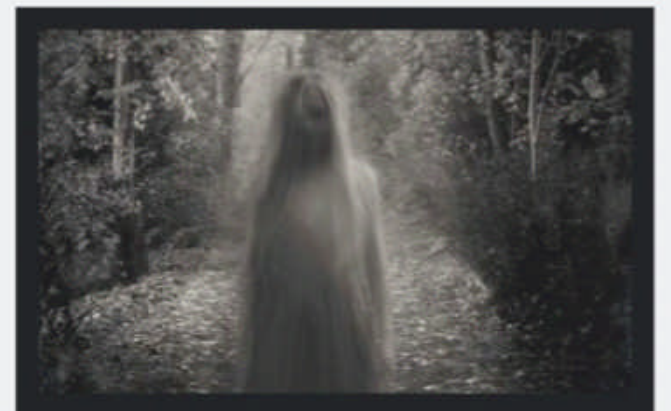


p24: SWEET SUCCESS WITH ABSTRACT STILL-LIFE

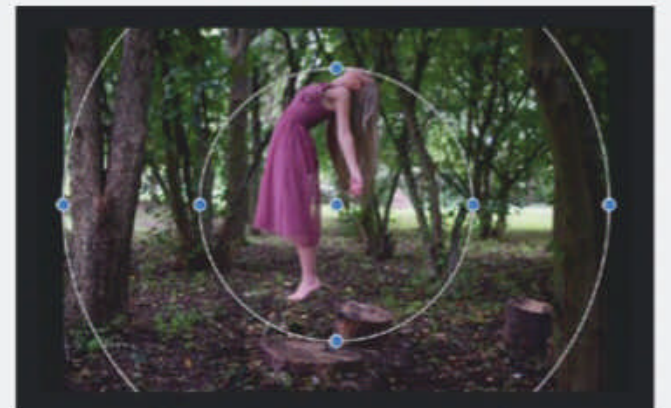


p28: HAUNTING TECHNIQUES FOR HALLOWEEN

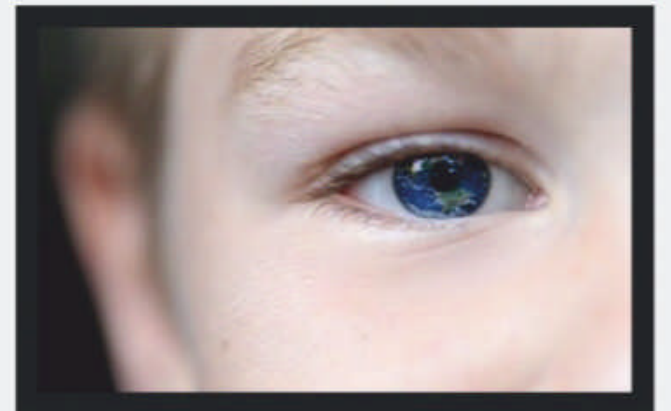
EDITING SKILLS



p32: EERIE EDITS FOR BONE-CHILLING PORTRAITS



p34: A LEVITATION TECHNIQUE TO LIFT YOUR SPIRITS



p36: SEE THE WORLD THROUGH THEIR EYES



CREATIVE PENCIL ART

COLOURING PENCILS ARE NOT JUST A RAINY-DAY
STAPLE FOR CHILDREN – BUY A BOX TO EXPLORE WHAT
COLOURFUL STILL-LIFE POTENTIAL AND HOURS OF
PLAY THEY CAN OFFER PHOTOGRAPHERS TOO

CAMERA: NIKON D750 / LENS: TOKINA 100MM F/2.8



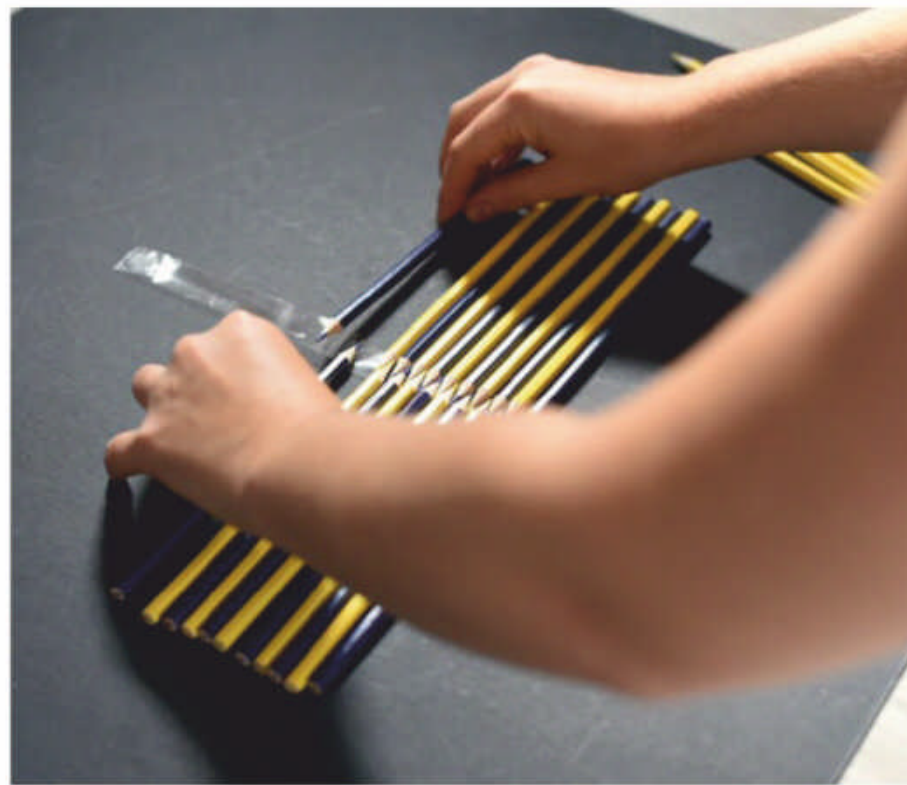
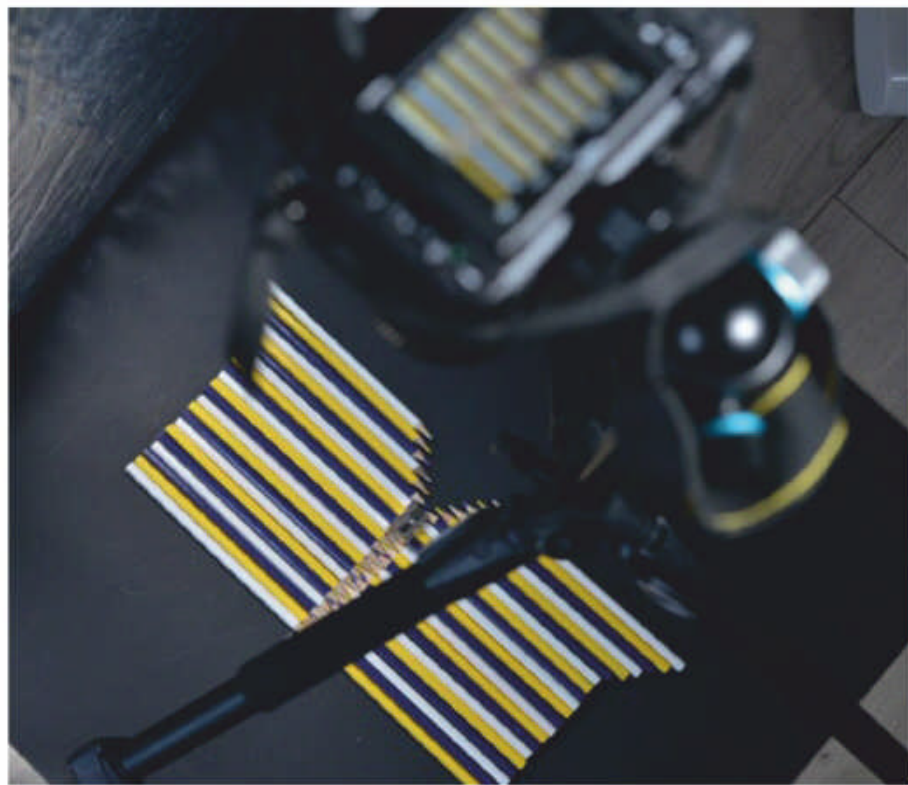
IF YOU READ last issue's *Photo Expert* by pro photographer Ross Hoddinott, you'll already have an understanding about the power colour has in photographs. Bold colours and patterns can be found almost everywhere you look, both natural and man-made, and when isolated with a close-focusing lens they can make for compelling abstracts and still-life photographs.

Colouring pencils are often overlooked as they're such common household subjects,

but they're versatile and not only work well as vibrant props but allow you to explore the impact of combining contrasting or complementary hues and shades.

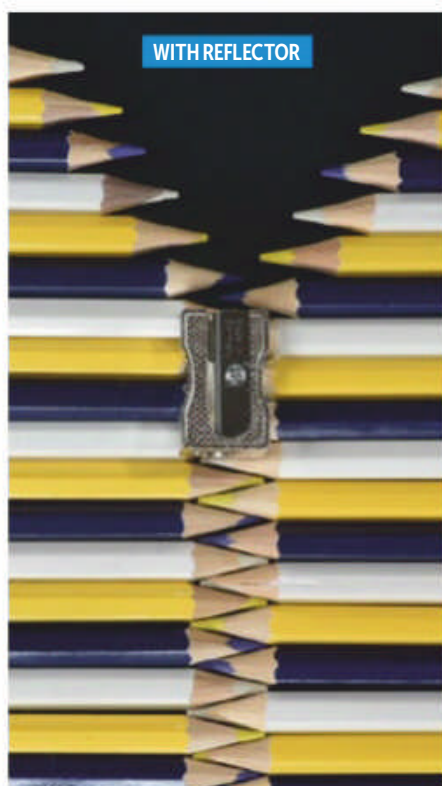
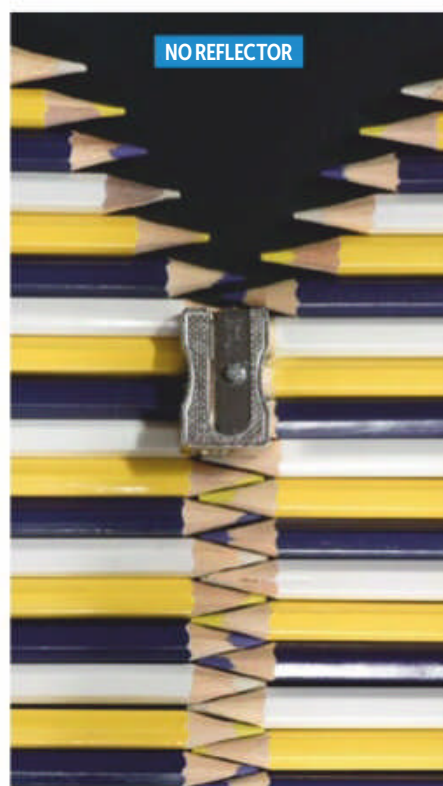
As we enter what is many photographers' favourite season, most admired for its vibrant and warm hues, there will hopefully be plenty of opportunity for outdoor photography before a more monochrome winter sets in. However, autumn can also be one of the year's wettest seasons so having a colourful

indoor still-life like this in your back-pocket means you won't have to stop shooting. As close-up photography is very unforgiving, still-life ideas like these can be enough to keep you busy for minutes, hours and even days – they're an exercise in patience, attention to detail and creativity that calls on solid composition, pin-point focusing and design skills without having to leave the house. So, grab a colour wheel and a stack of colouring pencils, and let's get shooting.

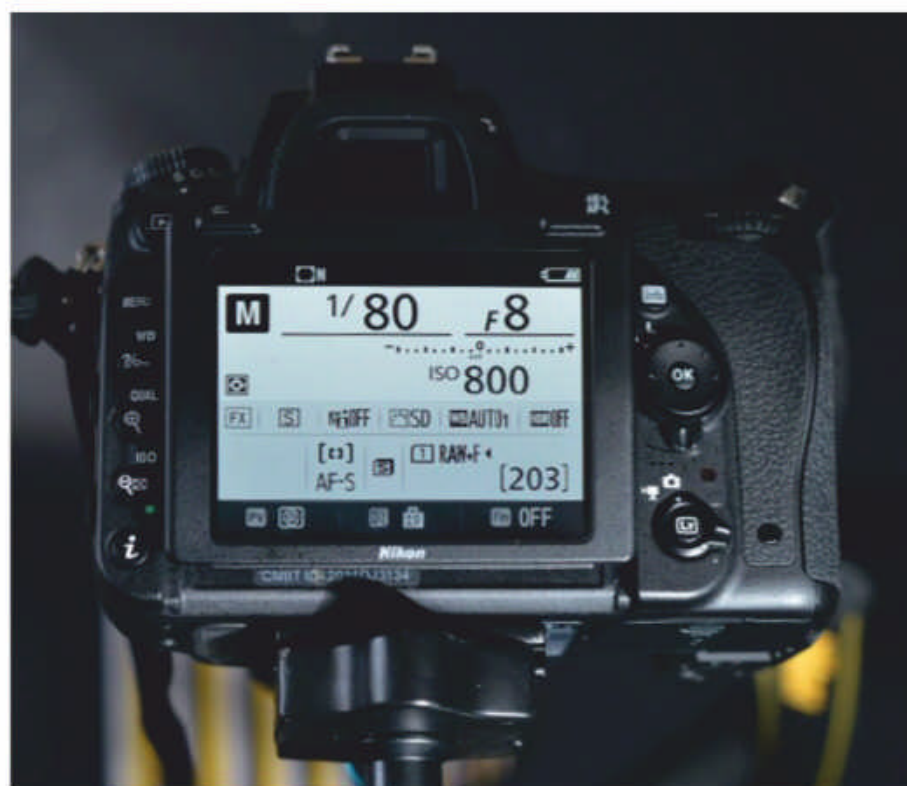


1 SET-UP: A dark background like a large sheet of black card or dark floorboards is ideal for this set-up, which is best positioned under a large window for soft, low-contrast lighting. It's important to use a new pack of colouring pencils unless you want to make extra work for yourself sharpening pencils consistently or erasing flaws in post-production. Try to use a new metal pencil sharpener as the point of focus, too, as a macro lens will pick up the slightest of dirt and marks.

2 COMPOSITION: Take some time to consider your colour combination and the pattern you want to create before interlocking pencil tips; you'll need in the region of 40-50 pencils. Interlace the pencils points so that they lay flush to each other with minimal gaps and try to align the edges of the wood casing for straight lines. It can help to use a strip of double-sided sticky tape to keep them in position, too. Carefully and evenly graduate the pencils away from the top of the sharpener.



3 LIGHTING: Diffused, even lighting like window light makes colours more vibrant compared to a hard light of higher contrast, which can leave some colours looking washed and uneven if you're not careful. If the set-up is side-lit, use a reflector on the opposite side of the light source to help fill in shadows cast by the sharpener. Position the camera overhead and use LiveView to help refine the composition; keep the camera parallel to the set-up to maximise depth-of-field.



4 CAMERA SETTINGS: Set manual or aperture-priority mode and dial in f/8 or smaller to achieve sufficient depth-of-field. You may need to use a tripod if your exposure is too long to shoot handheld, especially as you'll need to slightly underexpose to retain a darker background. A remote release or the self-timer mode can help you to avoid introducing camera shake, too. Play with apertures and camera distance to find the best balance of sharpness for your macro shots.

SHARPENING YOUR SKILLS

Pay close attention to the tiniest of details, like the alignment of props, shadows and unwanted marks, as they have a big impact.

Exposure: 1/25sec at f/10 (ISO 800)



LOW-LEVEL CITYSCAPES

CAPTURE THE CITY FROM A MOUSE'S EYE VIEW USING A MINI-TRIPOD TO GET AS LOW TO THE GROUND AS POSSIBLE. JAMES ABBOTT GUIDES YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS

CAMERA: SONY ALPHA 7R III / LENS: SONY FE 16-35MM F/2.8 GM

POUNDING THE PAVEMENT is a common activity for photographers seeking out enticing compositions of both new and well-known locations. One of the most difficult aspects of shooting popular locations is that there's often a tried-and-tested formula for getting the 'money shot', but simply replicating something you've seen before is rarely as satisfying as shooting a well-known location from a new and unusual angle.

One way to change your shots is to vary the viewpoint of the camera; it could be as simple as finding a different angle, shooting from higher up than usual or even close to the ground. In this technique, we're going to focus on shooting low to the ground because of the dynamic and indeed unusual results it produces of honey-pot locations such as Senate House Passage in Cambridge, seen here from a low angle.

Kit-wise, you can use a standard lens, but you'll be able to capture a wider field-of-view with an ultra wide-angle zoom, such as a 10-24mm on

APS-C or 16-35mm full-frame. Filters are also useful – ideally a polariser to help maintain the blue of the sky and a soft graduated ND to retain sky detail, without darkening buildings too much when shooting in narrow streets. Other than this, a table-top tripod is also extremely useful.

Mini-tripods are those that are small enough to fit in your pocket. Not only are they useful for a variety of photographic subjects, they're incredibly lightweight and compact, which means they're great to carry when a full-size or even travel tripod is out of the question.

The mini-tripod used here was an Andoer table-top tripod – it features an Arca Swiss head so L brackets can be used with it, but other mini-tripods are available from Joby, Manfrotto and Vanguard to name but a few. Mini-tripods make this technique much easier to shoot because you're immediately low to the ground, but you can also insert the centre-column of a full-size tripod upside down to secure the camera low to the ground, albeit upside down. ►





1 SET UP: Attach your camera to your tripod and compose the shot. With the camera so low to the ground it can be incredibly difficult to compose using the LCD screen, so an element of trial and error is essential. Use the virtual horizon to ensure the camera is level and take test shots to assess composition. If this doesn't work, you may need to cover the camera to see the screen and you can focus on the brighter elements of the scene to assist with composition.



2 USE FILTERS: Filters are always useful for cityscape photography and for this technique the humble polarising filter is a great way to help maintain the blue of the sky. Sometimes this is enough, especially if the street is brightly lit, but if not a soft graduated ND filter can maintain sky detail when the ground is a few stops darker than the sky, which is often the case. A soft ND grad is ideal because it will have a lesser effect on buildings than a medium or hard grad.



3 CAMERA SETTINGS: Shoot in aperture-priority with an aperture around f/11 at ISO at 100. This will provide a reasonably large depth-of-field, but the area immediately in front will be slightly out of focus once the lens is focused. It's not a problem and actually looks better with the immediate foreground slightly out of focus because it stops the viewers' eye from focusing on the foreground when the mid-ground and background are the focal points of the image.



4 FOCUS AND ADJUST: Manually focus as you would for any landscape or cityscape image – one-third of the way into the scene beyond the foreground you want to be sharp. Although, as previously mentioned, the ground just in front of the camera will be slightly out of focus. Next, use the LCD's live histogram to assess exposure and apply exposure compensation, or take a test shot and check the histogram. This shot needed -1/3EV to maintain sky detail.

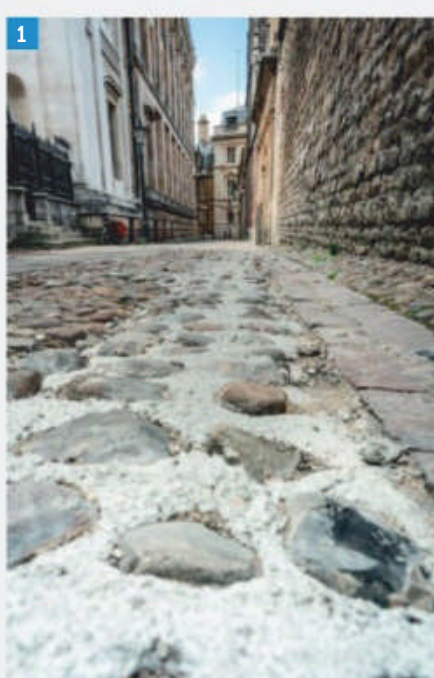


5 USE THE SELF-TIMER: To release the shutter, you can use a shutter remote – wireless models are better so you don't have to stoop down for the cable. But an equally effective method is to use the camera self-timer. Set the timer to a two-second delay and take multiple shots with or without people in the scene. If it's busy, you may have to wait patiently for a clear scene or if your desired location is nearly always busy, shoot at sunrise instead to avoid the crowds.

GETTING IT RIGHT IN-CAMERA

1) TOO MUCH FOREGROUND:

In this image, the camera was tilting forwards so too much pavement was included in the shot's foreground and distortion is visible in the vertical lines at the back of the scene.



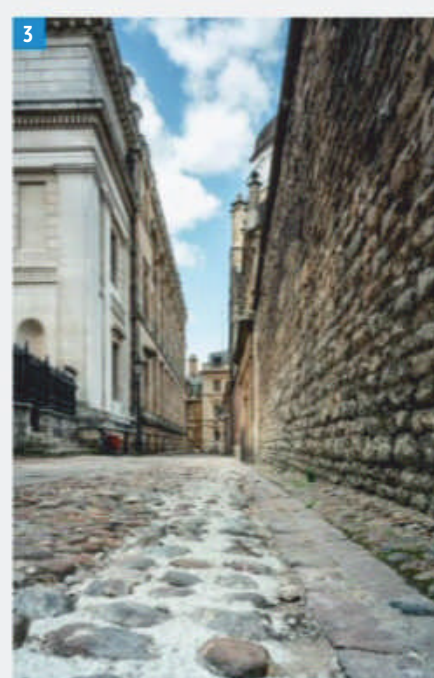
2) STANDARD TRIPOD HEIGHT:

Shooting with a full-size tripod at 'standard' height has resulted in a perfectly good image, but it lacks the dynamism of the shot taken low to the ground.



3) THE PERFECT BALANCE:

The image taken with the camera on a mini-tripod has produced the most interesting result, balancing the characteristics of the two shots that didn't work.



HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

A vari-angle LCD is invaluable with low-level shots so, if you have one, use it with LiveView to make it easier.

Exposure: 1/6sec at f/13 (ISO100)





LIQUID LENSES

TURN LIQUID DROPLETS INTO MINIATURE LENSES THAT ISOLATE AND MAGNIFY COLOURFUL SUBJECTS. JAMES ABBOTT SHOWS YOU HOW TO SHOOT THIS FUN MACRO TECHNIQUE...

CAMERA: SONY ALPHA 7R IV / LENS: SONY FE 90MM F/2.8 MACRO G OSS

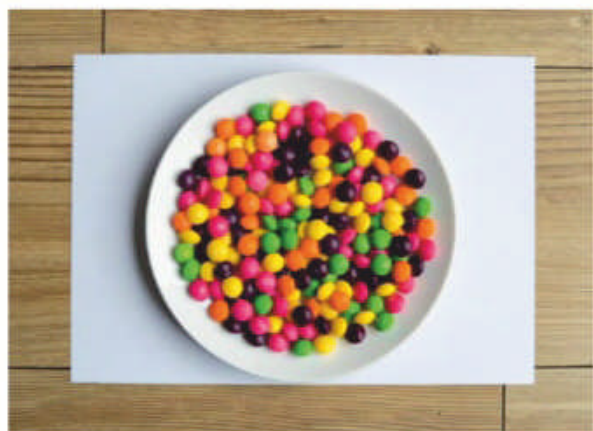
WATER AND MACRO photography are a popular combination. Whether sprayed onto subjects to replicate dew, capturing high-speed water droplets as they crash on a liquid surface or using droplets as the subject themselves, there are seemingly countless ways water can be incorporated into close-up photography. In this technique, we're going to focus on the latter using the effects of refraction.

Refraction is the change in the direction of light when it passes from one medium to another, such as from air to water, and is why when you drop a pencil into a glass of water the section poking out of the water is out of line with the section underwater. It's because the light waves move more slowly through water than through air.

You can apply this to macro photography by placing water or glycerine droplets onto a small sheet of clear Perspex or glass, which causes each droplet to essentially become a fisheye lens and bend the subject

below it into sharp focus. By focusing on these droplets so that the subject falls out of focus in the background, we can create a macro image that reveals a visually exciting combination of elements. Use a bright and colourful subject such as sweets, and you're on to a winning formula.

For this technique, you need a macro lens or close-up filters, a reversing ring or extensions tubes to use on a standard lens. The latter is problematic though because of the extremely shallow depth-of-field extension tubes produce, even at medium to small apertures. Beyond this, you'll need a tripod, an A4 sheet of Perspex or glass, a small plate, a sheet of white paper, a large bag of colourful, round sweets like Skittles and something to elevate the Perspex above the plate. A pipette is also extremely useful for creating the droplets, and you can either use water or glycerine to create them. Glycerine, pipettes and clear Perspex can be purchased inexpensively from eBay. ▶



1 ARRANGE THE SWEETS: Place a sheet of white A4 paper on the floor with a small plate on top in the centre. Pour your large family-size bag of sweets onto the plate and arrange them so that they're suitably mixed up and covering the central area of the plate. The sheet of paper is used to stop any minor colour casts in the shot being caused by the colour of the flooring.



2 RAISE THE PERSPEX: Find a way to support the sheet of Perspex or glass roughly 20cm above the plate of sweets. Here, I used Duplo bricks to create four pillars – they make it quick and easy to adjust the height, and they don't block out the essential window light. If you don't have access to Duplo bricks, you could use books or plastic tubs to support the Perspex.



3 PLACE THE DROPLETS: Whilst water does work it's much more prone to the surface tension breaking and the droplets becoming small puddles. Glycerine is a much thicker liquid but behaves in a similar way to water, but holds the surface tension. The disadvantage is that if you make a mess placing the drops, it's harder to clean up. Here, I carefully used a pipette to apply.



4 CAREFUL FOCUSING: With slow shutter speeds due to shooting indoors with window light, you'll need a tripod with an articulating centre-column or to insert the centre-column upside down for a low angle with the camera looking overhead. Attach the camera, compose and focus the shot manually using LiveView magnified into one of the larger central droplets.



5 CAMERA SETTINGS: Set the camera to aperture-priority at f/11 with ISO at 100. Even with this narrow aperture, the sweets in the background will fall out of focus and the depth-of-field will maintain the sharpness of most of the liquid drops. Set the self-timer to a five-second delay or use a remote release to fire the shutter to help avoid any camera shake. Set White Balance to Daylight and use multi-zone metering.

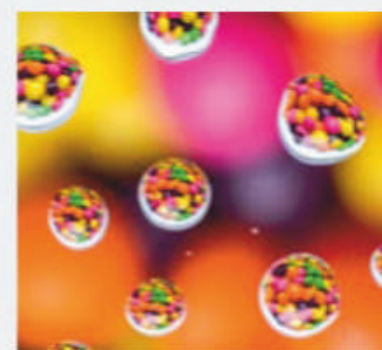


6 CONTROL EXPOSURE: Depending on the camera you have, turn on the live histogram in LiveView, or if your camera doesn't have this functionality take a test shot and view the histogram of the reviewed image. Use this to assess exposure and apply exposure compensation to lighten or darken the exposure as required. For this image, the exposure compensation was increased from +0.3EV to +0.7EV.

SHARPNESS PROBLEMS



● **APERTURE TOO WIDE:** In this image the sweets in the centre of one of the glycerine drops is sharp, but with the aperture set to just f/2.8 the depth-of-field is so shallow that not even the whole droplet is in focus. This completely ruins the effect and is why the aperture needs to be set to f/11 to ensure the droplets are sharp from the centre to the edge.



● **CAMERA SHAKE:** When shooting indoors, especially on hard floors, and even when using a shutter remote or self-timer to release the shutter, camera shake can be a problem because of how your movements make the camera vibrate. When releasing the remote or waiting for the self-timer to finish, remain as still as possible.

SWEET SUCCESS!

With enough depth-of-field, careful composition and precise focusing, this technique can work a treat.

Exposure: 0.5 seconds at f/11 (ISO 100)





CAPTURE GHOSTS ON CAMERA

GET INTO THE SPIRIT OF HALLOWEEN WITH A LONG-EXPOSURE PORTRAIT TECHNIQUE
THAT'S SURE TO GIVE YOU GOOSEBUMPS. CAROLINE SCHMIDT SHOWS YOU HOW...

CAMERA: NIKON D750 / LENS: SIGMA 35MM F/1.4 ART

ALL HALLOWS' EVE is not for the faint of heart or to everyone's taste. Some people like a big scare, the fun of dressing up and trick or treating, or embracing the darker side of photography by shooting spooky portraits. For those that find the October 31st 'holiday' offensive, we do hope you see this technique in the spirit it's meant to be – a little bit of spooky fun for those who want to try it.

Shooting effective Halloween portraits does take more than a frightful costume and low-key lighting, though, so it's worth a go if only to challenge your in-camera skills. This particular technique, for instance, is achieved completely in camera using a long exposure and finished up on page 32 with some enhancing – but not essential – post-production. Your equipment list is short, too: a tripod, camera and lens. A remote release

can be useful when working with long exposures and a solid ND filter can be beneficial for controlling daylight as well.

The special effect does take some practice and perseverance, and looks great in colour, but if you want to know how to enhance the effect with texture and an aged black & white treatment be sure to turn the page. We've also another spooky editing technique on page 34 you won't want to miss.



1 YOUR LOCATION: Choose an eerie spot with atmosphere such as a derelict building or dark woodland – the darker the better as it will make achieving long exposures easier and the 'ghosts' easier to see, too. Whilst you do not need to shoot after dark for this technique to work, we do recommend shooting as late in the day as you can and in a dark location to control the ambient light. If conditions are still too bright, you could use a solid ND filter or a polarising filter to artificially extend your exposure without causing images to overexpose.



2 SET UP: Plan how you want your final image to look when styling your model. For a black & white conversion you'll need your subject dressed in light or midtone-coloured clothes to contrast against the dark background; floaty fabrics or period dress also add to the effect. Almost any lens will work for this shoot but bear in mind social distancing and while a wide-angle lens will give your subject more scope for moving within the frame, you may need to shoot at a closer range than a standard lens to avoid them looking too far away.



3 CAMERA SETTINGS: You need to control your shutter speed using shutter-priority mode or manual mode. Dial in your lowest ISO rating and a mid to small aperture; here I fluctuated between f/11 and f/14. You'll need a shutter speed of at least two seconds long but aim for as long as possible to give your subject time to move during the exposure. Lock focus on your subject using single-point AF or manual focus. As you're using a tripod, a small aperture and your subject will be rendered translucent, focusing is the least of your concerns.



4 CAPTURE MOVEMENT: The speed and the direction in which your subject moves as well as your shutter speed combined determines the final result. If they move too fast or the exposure is too long, they may not be recorded in the image at all; if they move across the frame, you'll end up with streaks (see above); if they don't move enough or the exposure is too short, they'll be too visible. I found the best results came from the subject moving towards the camera slowly, stopping completely intermittently before travelling forwards again.

DON'T GIVE UP THE GHOST

Counting the seconds so the subject walks slowly for one, stops for one, walks for one and then stops again worked well.

Exposure: Three seconds at f/11 (ISO Lo 1.0)

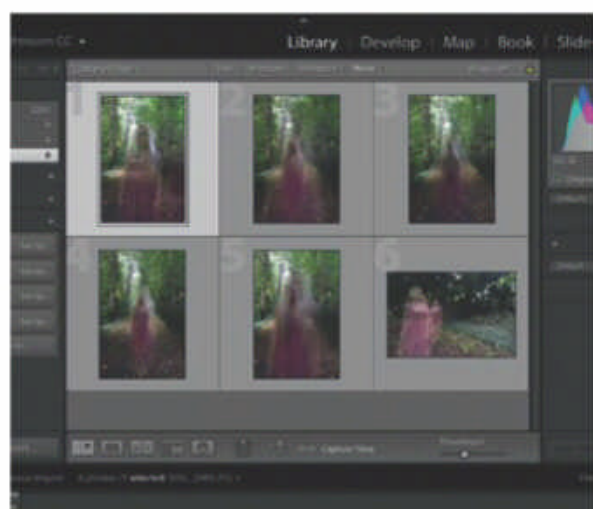


Enhance the horror!

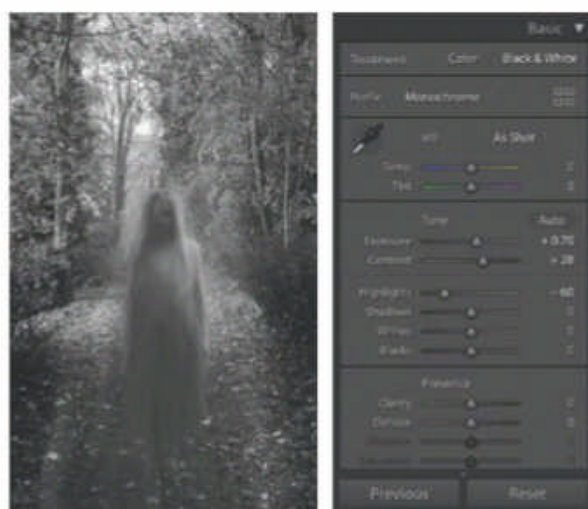
CAROLINE SCHMIDT SHARES SOME OPTIONAL TWEAKS TO MAKE YOUR CHILLING HALLOWEEN PORTRAIT EVEN CREEPIER

WHAT IS IT about 18th Century photographs that give us the creeps? For me, it's the combination of their stern-looking faces, period dress and the photo's aged appearance that makes old film portraits especially eerie. For others it's because the people in the pictures are no longer alive but, whatever the reason, weathered film photos done right are enough to give anyone goosebumps.

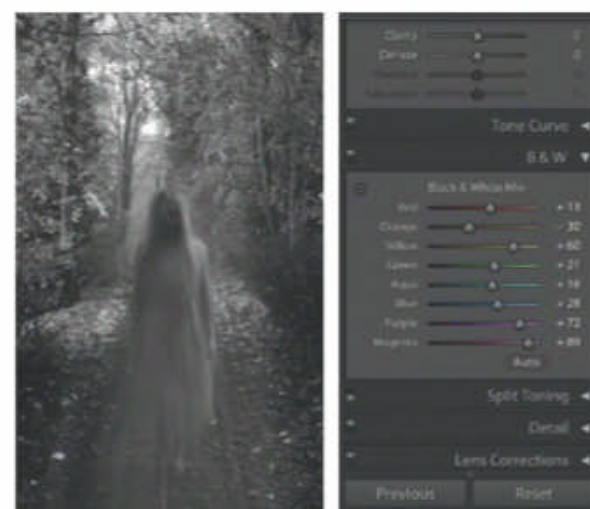
Whilst most of this editing is done in Lightroom Classic CC, the final step is in Photoshop but can be done using almost any other software that has the capabilities of Layers and Blend Modes, such as Affinity Photo or Photoshop Elements. Lightroom has many superpowers but merging images, unless a HDR image, is not one of them and to apply texture you need to be able to blend. If you've got your exposure spot-on in-camera there's probably very little for you to do to your image if you wish to keep it in colour. But this tutorial will show you how to create an aged black & white image and it works best if your subject is dressed in a contrasting tone to their surroundings. For instance, here her blonde hair is a feature and the dusty pink dress is light enough to create some separation from the darker woodland.



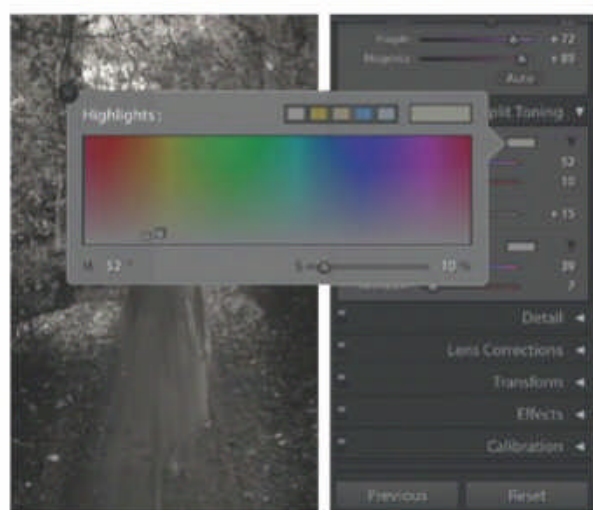
1 OPEN ALL YOUR IMAGES: Pick your favourite images from the shoot and open them all in Lightroom to see how this treatment works differently depending on the image. You only need to apply the steps to one image, then select all the files and click **Photo>Sync Settings** to apply the edits automatically to all the images. Save them as copies so as not to overwrite the coloured versions.



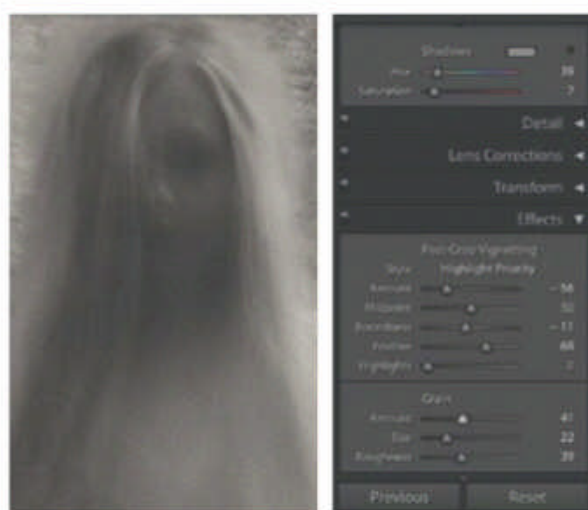
2 START WITH THE BASICS: Start by clicking **Black & White** (located next to Treatment) to turn the image monochrome. You'll still have the colour channels to adjust but you'll be 'seeing' in b&w. Next, visit the **Basics** tab where you'll find all the usual essentials such as Exposure, Contrast and Highlights, so make what tweaks you need. Try reducing **Clarity** slightly to soften details and the 'ghost' further.



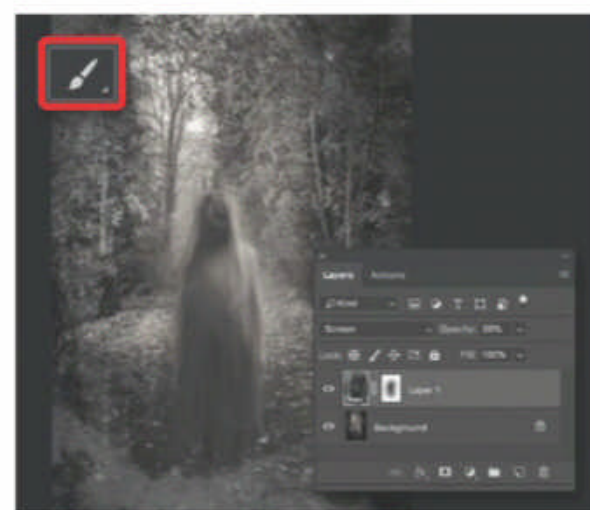
3 BE MORE PRECISE: Under the **B&W** tab, you'll find a range of colour channels that allow you to isolate the tonality of that colour. For instance, by increasing Green and Yellow, the foliage lightens like you'd expect from an infrared image; Purple and Magenta target her dress; and Orange darkens her skin tones and adds some more shadow detail. Find the balance for your images.



4 SPLIT-TONE: By split-toning the highlights and shadows, you can add a variable colour tint like sepia without it looking like an overpowering wash of colour. To do this, click on the colour swatch next to **Highlights** to select your warm but muted tone (you can also use the **Hue** slider to do this) and do the same for the **Shadows**. The **Balance** slider gives weight to shadows or highlights.



5 ADD NOISE AND VIGNETTE: Film photographs used to be riddled with noise, artefacts and often vignetting so it seems suitable to 'dirty' up our clean digital files. Under **Effects**, use the **Post-Crop Vignetting** features to refine the appearance – subtle and soft is often best. Next, increase the **Noise Amount** slider but keep the size small. This will degrade the quality of your image but that's okay here.



6 OPEN IN PHOTOSHOP: To add some texture and framing, go to **Photo>Edit In>(choose software)**. Add your film textured layer over the top of your portrait, using the **Move Tool** to resize, and then change the **Blend Mode** to either **Lighten** or **Screen** to fade the image. You may want to add a Layer Mask and use the Brush Tool to remove the texture from parts of the portrait, too.



TOPTIP

Where can I get textures from?
Whilst you can shoot your own, a quick Google search will bring up lots of options for downloadable textures of all styles. This one was free to download from Lostandtaken.com

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

A quick and dirty black & white conversion will transform already creepy images into bone-chilling portraits this Halloween.

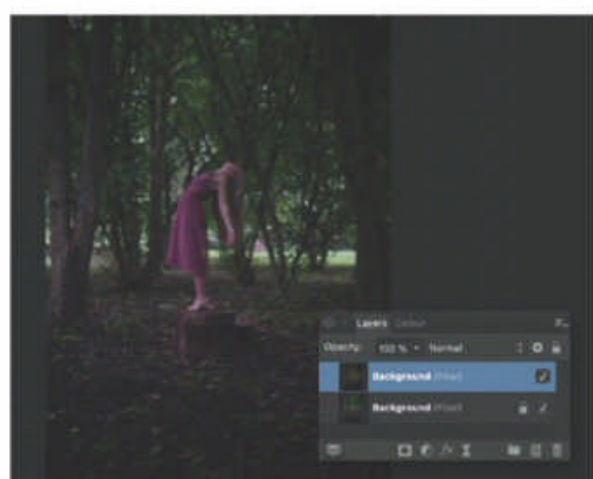
Rise to the occasion

LEARN HOW TO SIMPLY LIFT YOUR SPIRITS WITH A TWO-SHOT BLEND THAT LEAVES THE VIEWER WONDERING HOW IT'S DONE

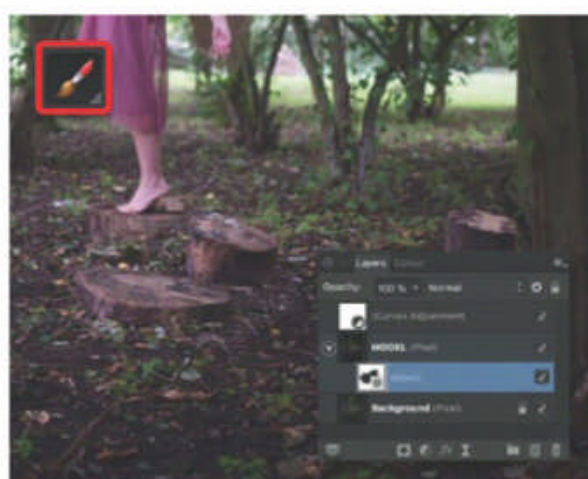
LEVITATING TECHNIQUES ARE as old as they are popular and they never seem to fall out of favour, especially around All Hallows' Eve. Creating the illusion of something or someone floating off the ground doesn't need to appear haunting, it's a versatile and magical technique that could be applied to many a set-up from still-life to superhero children's portraits. No matter your approach, the technique remains largely unchanged – both in and out of camera. Essentially, you need two exposures: one of the subject elevated by a prop and the second is just a scene-setter with the prop and person removed – the consistent elements in both images will be the exposure settings, focusing and the camera's position,

which is why a tripod is vital. It's then a case of overlaying the frames and erasing the prop to be replaced by the scene-setter. Sounds easy, and it is, but there are a few pointers that can help make the image look more 'realistic'. Your prop, for instance: if you're hanging objects, use a thin but strong wire-like fishing line as it's easiest to hide when editing. If you're levitating a person, you need to watch the position of their feet as they'd naturally relax and point downwards if floating. Here the subject was positioned with her heels perched on a brick to create the illusion, otherwise she would have been hovering flat-footed. Similarly,

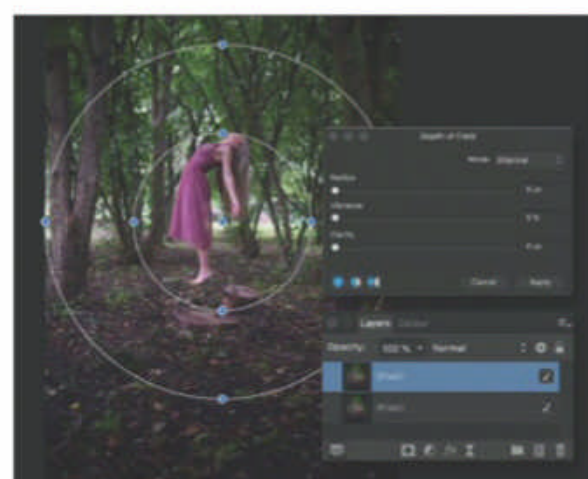
if you're wanting to lay the subject down flat on a table make sure their clothing drapes correctly to avoid any tell-tale flat edges once the table has been edited out. Using a low shooting angle can help to emphasise the height of floating subjects, too, and locking focus manually with the same aperture on the same spot in all the frames will help with merging images later.



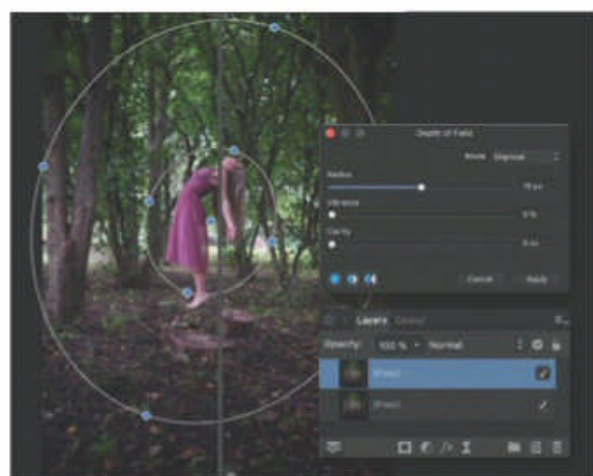
1 OVERLAY YOUR IMAGES: Choose two images – your scene-setter and your best shot of the subject – open them both in your editing software, which in this case is Affinity Photo. Click on your portrait and then **Edit>Copy**, then on the background image and click **Edit>Paste** to put them in the same Layers palette. If needed, click the **Adjustments** icon and use **Curves** to improve the exposure.



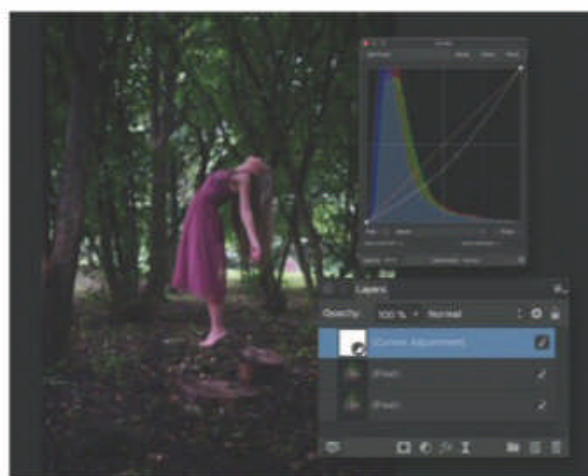
2 ADD A MASK LAYER: Double-click on your portrait layer and rename it to avoid confusion, then click the **Mask** layer. Zoom into the image so as to focus on the prop and select the **Paint Brush Tool**. You want to select **Black** paint and to do this, go to **Window>Studio>Colour**. In the **Options** bar, select an appropriate size brush to carefully remove the prop elevating them.



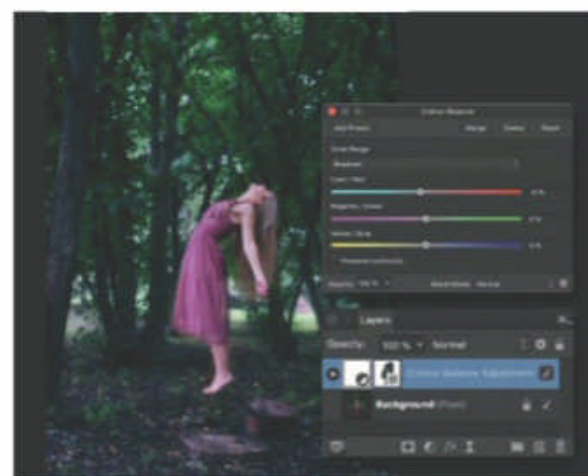
3 REFINE & BLUR: Switch to **White** paint to make corrections and adjust the size of the brush to target the details more precisely around the feet. When finished, select all the layers and go to **Document>Flatten** and then **Layer>Duplicate**. With this new layer selected, go to **Filter>Blur>Depth Of Field Blur**. This is optional but blurring the background more can help the subject to stand out.



4 ADJUST THE BLUR: Use the anchor points to position the central anchor over your subject to isolate your point of sharpness. Move the inner circle to target your focal point and the outer circle to adjust the shape and breadth of the blur. Set **Elliptical** blur and adjust the **Amount** slider to increase softness. To preview the effect, select the split-screen icons at the bottom of the dialog box.



5 CROP & POP: Use the **Crop Tool** to tighten your composition, if needed, and then add a **Curves** adjustment level and pull down the centre of the curve (the midtones) slightly to darken the image. Being an Adjustment Layer, you can then use the **Paint Brush Tool** with **Black** paint to carefully remove this adjustment from the subject, helping them to 'pop' from their surroundings.



6 TONING: A quick and easy way to adjust the colours in an image is to use a **Colour Balance** adjustment layer as you can target the highlights, midtones and shadows independently, then use the **Mask** to remove edits from the subject. Here, the Midtones were cooled by adding Blue and Green and Cyan to the Shadows, but it's all removed from the subject to keep skin tone natural.

SHOOTING TIPS

Use a tripod
Set the lens to manual focus
Keep the camera settings the same for all your shots
Try a low shooting angle to exaggerate their height
Avoid flat feet: pointed toes are the way to go



TRICKS TO ELEVATE YOUR PHOTOS

There are so many ways you can apply this technique to a huge range of images that levitating is a year-round source of fun once you know the tricks behind the shots.

See the world through their eyes

A SIMPLE IMAGE WITH A POWERFUL UNDERTONE GIVEN THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS. CAROLINE SCHMIDT SHOWS YOU HOW TO RECREATE IT

WITH CHILDREN HAVING gone back to school after five months of turmoil and uncertainty, into their new 'normal' classroom activities, new rules and social distancing from friends, it's not a simple life our children lead. They see so much, hear so much and understand not quite as much but their bravery, resilience and adaptability over recent months should not be undervalued. For those of us who are parents or grandparents, these mini-adults have probably been one of our biggest concerns during the pandemic and that's why this technique rang so true and topical.

To literally see the world through their eyes, you need to first photograph their eye and that's simple. Use a macro lens so you can fill the image area as much as possible with the section of their face (for this image, a 100mm macro lens was used) and select single-point

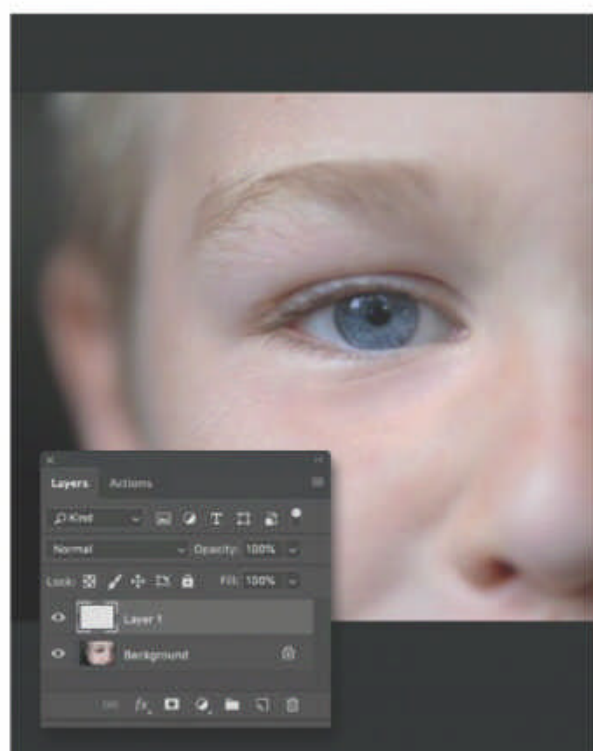
© NASA/GSFC/NOAA/USGS/PUBLIC DOMAIN



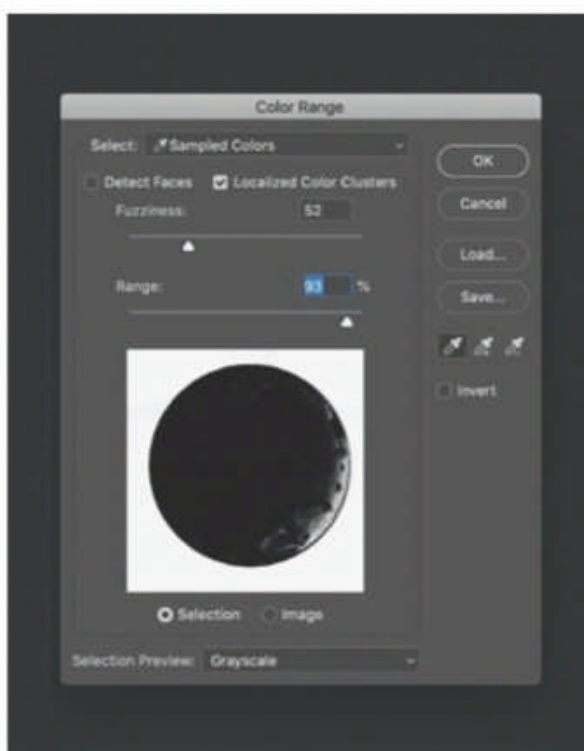
AF to focus on their pupil, be careful not to focus on their eye lashes as depth-of-field will be shallow. Having them face a window is the easiest lighting option, but if you want clean catchlights consider using a studio set-up. Set aperture-priority mode and a mid-aperture depending on what you want in focus – here I used f/4 as I just wanted the

eye to be sharp and the nose soft so as not to distract the viewer. Take a few frames as you want their eyes to be sufficiently open to see as much of the iris as possible, but without them looking like a deer in headlights – it may take a few tries to strike the balance.

Once you have some options, pop on to the NASA.gov image library and download one of the blue marble photos that have minimal cloud coverage – most images permit for personal and instructional use (not commercial) but check the specific usage rights. You're now ready to go.



1 RETOUCH YOUR PORTRAIT: Begin by editing your portrait; having used a macro lens, all the tiny blemishes and pores will be visible. It's another reason why frontal lighting is preferred, especially if you're working with teens who might have pimples, as side-lighting can be unforgiving. Add a new empty layer to your Layer's palette and use a combination of the **Clone Stamp Tool** and the **Healing Brush Tool** to even out the skin tone and remove obvious marks. Make sure in the Options bar, **Sample** is set to **All Layers**, too. You might also like to use the **Brush Tool**, with a very low **Opacity**, to sample an area of skin near the undereye (click **alt** to sample) and to even out any undereye bags.



2 SELECT THE WORLD: Open your image of the Earth in Photoshop. Generally, NASA's images are against a black background (a benefit of shooting into space) so selecting the globe should be fairly easy and there are a number of ways you can do it. The Lasso Tool and Quick Selection Tool along with the Select and Mask function are options but here we try Color Range (**Select>Color Range**). Use **Sampled Colors** and select **Selection** so you can see the coloured background, you'll see your selection in real-time on your main image too. Increase the **Range** slider towards 100% but reduce the **Fuzziness** slider to around 50% once you think you've selected all the grey areas in the background. Click **OK**.



3 REFINE THE SELECTION: Back in the main body of Photoshop, you should see marching ants around your selected background. Go to **Select>Inverse**. At the bottom of the Layer's palette, click **Create a new layer**, then on the selection go to **Edit>Copy**. Click back on to the empty layer and go to **Edit>Paste**. You can click the eye icon next to the Background layer to turn the original image off, allowing you to preview the selection. Here there's a dark rim from pulling the Fuzziness slider down too far, which in effect feathers the edges, but I'm not concerned as it's minimal and can be removed in step 5. Save your new world selection. Then click **Edit>Copy**, click onto your portrait and then **Edit>Paste**.

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

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fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

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18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

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We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>

IT'S ALL IN THE EYES

You're almost done. Cropping can tighten the composition and accentuate the focus on the eye, but this is down to personal taste.



4 ADJUST THE WORLD: With the Earth now on your portrait, use the **Move Tool** with the **Shift** key pressed to resize it proportional to the eye. Reducing the layer's **Opacity** slider to **70%** can help you to see the outline of the eye more easily. Next go to **Edit > Transform > Warp** and manipulate the shape of the planet to fit within the edges of the iris. By doing this, you get to keep more of the image in the eye as opposed to losing it under the eye lid. Before you click the **Tick** to commit to your transform command, change the **Blend Mode** of your world layer to **Overlay** so you can refine any warping. You want to try to do all transform commands at once as they're nondestructive until you commit to them.



5 REFINE YOUR EYE: You might still have some visibly hard edges or areas around the iris that don't blend perfectly with the world, but there's an easy fix. With the world layer still selected, click the **Add Vector/Layer Mask** button the bottom of the Layers palette. Select the **Brush Tool** and set the **Foreground Color** to **Black**, then zoom into the eye **400%** by clicking **cmd** and **+** (Mac) / **ctrl** and **+** (PC). The properties of the Brush Tool should be a **mid-opacity** and **0% Hardness** to keep the edges soft. Now slowly and carefully remove any overlapping areas of the world on the eye lids and whites of the eye. You may even want to lightly brush over the catchlights to make the effect look more realistic.



6 TONAL ADJUSTMENTS: Right now, the contrast and high saturation of the world, which is a side effect of the **Overlay** blend mode, jars with the low-contrast skin tone. To increase the contrast and depth of the face without increasing the colour saturation, add a **Black & White** adjustment layer either by clicking on the **Create new fill or adjustment layer** icon at the bottom of the Layers palette or going to **Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Black & White**. Change that layer's **Blend Mode** to **Soft Light**. The effect will be very strong so pull back the layer's **Opacity** slider to about **50%** to reintroduce softness. Using the **Brush Tool** on the Adjustment Layer's **Layer Mask**, remove the effect from the eye.

Eternal Spring of the Mind by Elena Paraskeva



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EVER MISUNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF OPEN UP AND PPI, OR ARE UNSURE WHAT TERMS LIKE RESAMPLING AND SELECTIVE FOCUS RELATE TO? THE WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY IS RIFE WITH ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS AND TECHNICALITIES THAT CAN MAKE UNDERSTANDING ALL ITS TERMS DIFFICULT AT BEST. EVERY MONTH IN THIS SERIES, WE'LL BE BUSTING THE JARGON FOR ALL THE MOST COMMON TERMS IN OUR PHOTOGRAPHY DICTIONARY. **THIS MONTH WE COVER O-S** ▶

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O is for...



O is for Optical...

● **OPTICAL VIEWFINDER:**

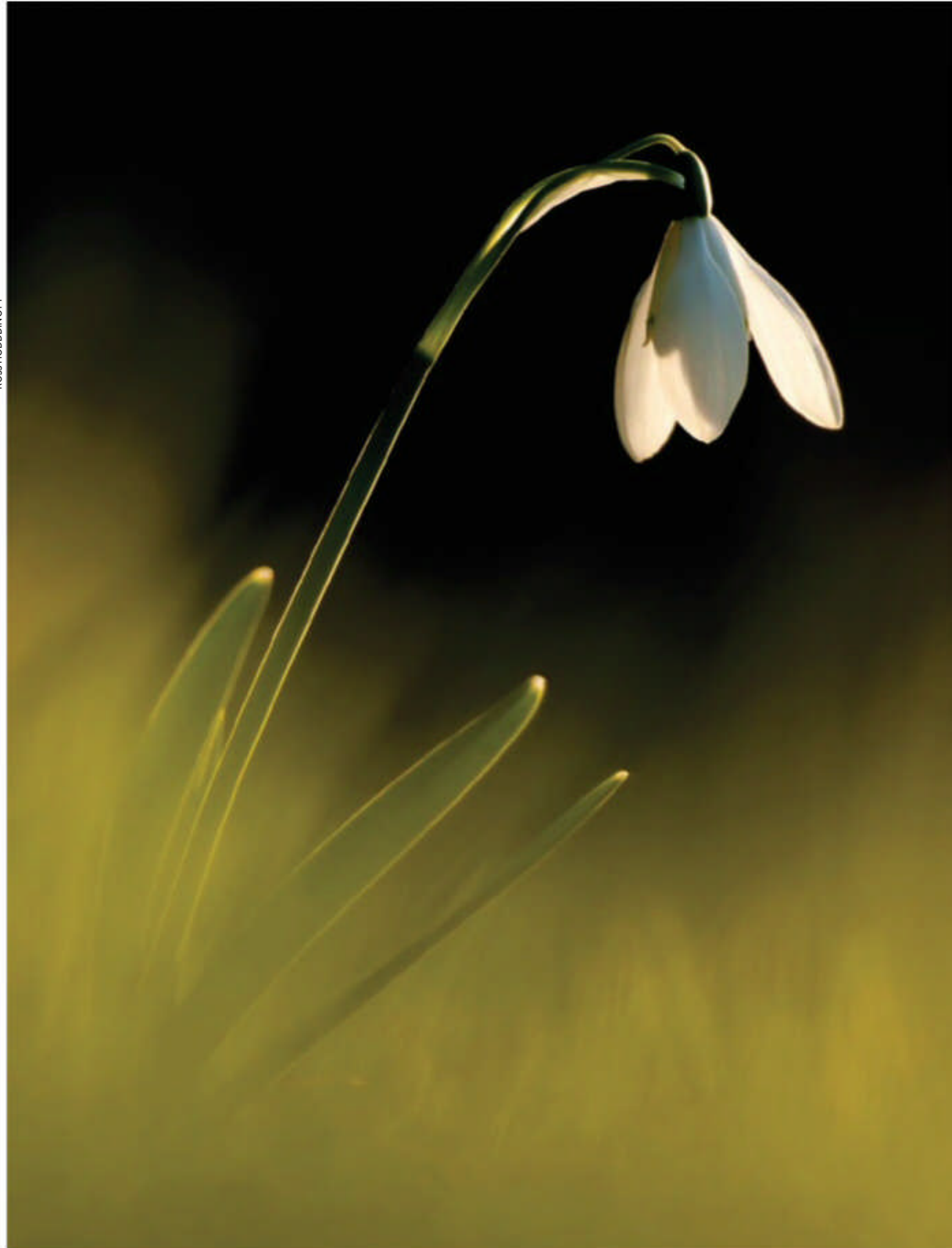
It's an oldie but goodie, the optical viewfinder is the traditional but still a beloved way of composing photographs. When you're looking through an optical viewfinder you're seeing the scene as it's reflected off your camera's mirror and flipped the right way up by its prism. Even though most DSLRs feature LiveView, optical viewfinders remain popular. Mirrorless cameras offer electronic viewfinders.

● **OPTICAL ZOOM:** Otherwise known as a zoom lens or parfocal lens, this type of optic changes the magnification ratio as you adjust the focal length. You can adjust your focal length by turning the ring on the lens barrel. After zooming, always be sure to focus. DSLRs use optical zooms but camera phones, bridge and compact cameras use digital zooms.

● **OPTICAL RESOLUTION:**

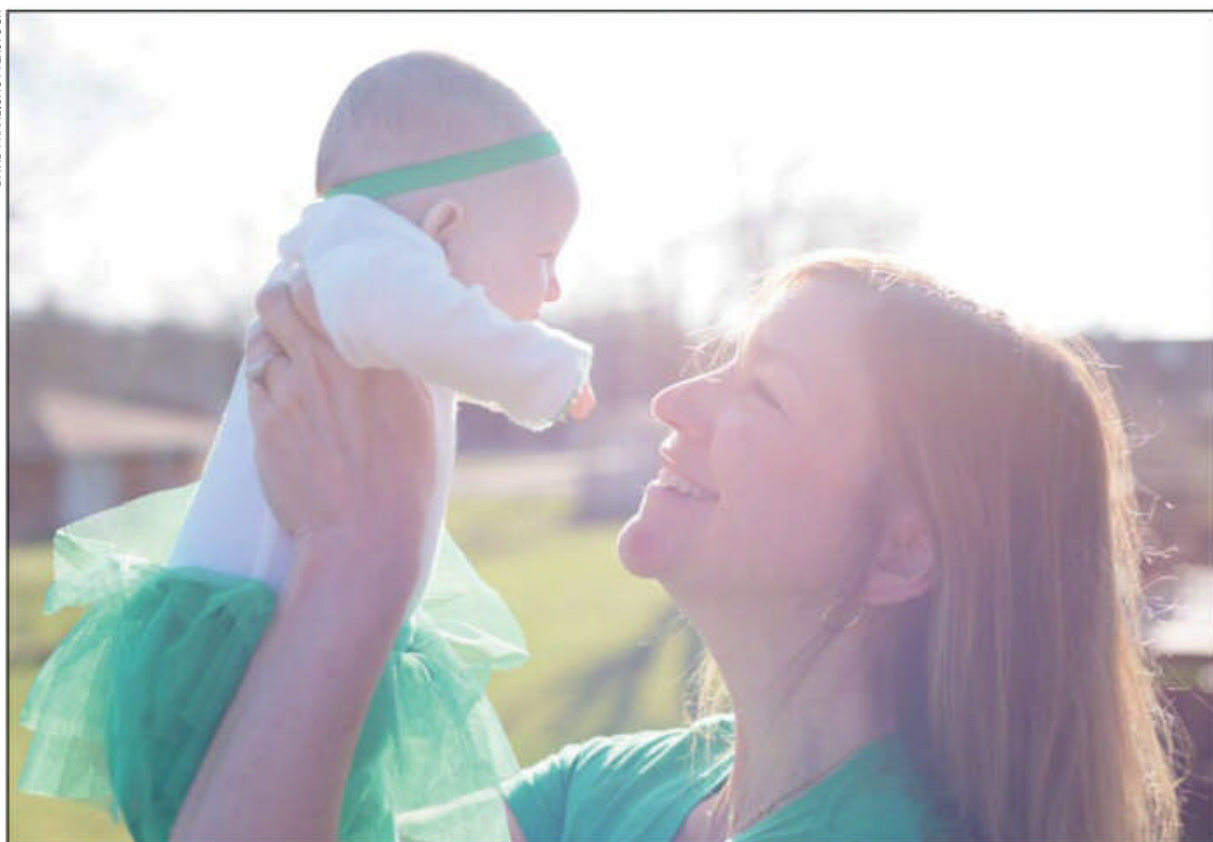
The resolution at which a sensor captures an image and indicates the level of detail it is able to record.

ROSS HODDINOTT



OPEN UP: When told to 'open up', it most commonly means to set your aperture to a larger f/stop for a shallower depth-of-field and brighter exposure, such as switching from f/4 to f/2.8. It is the opposite to closing or stopping down your lens, which is when you select a smaller aperture to reduce the amount of light passing through and to increase depth-of-field.

DAVID PRAHL/SHUTTERSTOCK



OVEREXPOSURE: 'Blown-out' highlights, white-washed midtones and no sign of shadows is a good indication that your image is overexposed. It happens when the exposure value is higher than it should be causing too much light to be recorded and detail being lost in the highlights, as it falls outside of the sensor's dynamic range.



OLED: An OLED (Organic Light Emitting Diode) microdisplay is used in mirrorless cameras as electronic viewfinders and differ from a standard LED display. An OLED does not require a backlight and provides higher contrast. It uses red, green and blue LEDs unlike LCD screens, which use coloured filters on a backlight.

OOF (OUT OF FOCUS):

While it can refer to areas of shallow depth-of-field, OOF usually means you have not focused correctly.

Program mode

Program AE is one of a camera's fully-automatic exposure modes, indicated on the exposure dial as P. In program mode, the camera decides on the shutter speed and aperture combination but, unlike Full Auto mode, the user can affect the exposure by adjusting the ISO rating or by setting exposure compensation.

P is for...

PICTBRIDGE: PictBridge is the industry standard that allows you to print directly from a digital camera to a printer if both the camera and printer are PictBridge-compatible.

PROOF: A print proof is an early version of an artwork prior to production to check for accuracy and to assess what the final print will look like. Photographers often provide a set of proofs to clients as part of their selling process to help clients to select their images before products are produced. These proofs can be tangible or digital, viewable via an online gallery or as downloads, but either way almost always feature a semi-transparent watermark to protect the copyright.

PIN-CUSHIONING: A type of distortion that can make images appear pinched, pin-cushioning is mostly witnessed in cheap telephoto zoom lenses but can be corrected during editing. It's opposite is barrel distortion, which causes an image to bow outwards from the centre.

PAINTING WITH LIGHT: As a creative lighting technique, painting with light is broad and brilliant for almost any subject matter. By combining a long exposure with a continuous light source, such as a torch, strip lights or light-painting brushes, you can 'paint' your subject with light for the duration of the exposure, gradually building up its luminosity for a soft quality of light. It's a technique best used when there's no, or very little, ambient light that could affect the overall exposure. It's a popular approach for illuminating foreground interest for star trails or images of the Milky Way.

P is for...



PANCAKE LENS: It's a colloquial term for any lens that's shorter than it is wide. They're usually prime lenses and much smaller and lighter than a standard lens. Offering excellent value for money, pancake lenses boast a fast, maximum aperture and suit a variety of subject matter. Good examples are a Canon 40mm f/2.8 STM, Nikon 50mm f/1.8D and Sony 35mm f/2.8.

Greats of photography

Martin **Parr** (1952-present)

A British documentary photographer, Parr is best known for his satirical and anthropological look at British life. He focuses on leisure, consumption and communication as he examines our country's national characteristics.

Irving **Penn** (1917-2009)

An American photographer considered to be one of the greats of the 20th Century.

While Penn is celebrated as a *Vogue* photographer for more than 60 years, he's also known for revolutionising still-life photography for the advertising industry and pioneering platinum printing. Before his death, he established The Irving Penn Foundation.

PIXELS AND PPI: Pixels are known as picture elements and are the smallest components of a digital image – little squares of colour that become visible if you zoom into them. A camera's resolution indicates the number of these pixels on an imaging sensor and therefore in the pictures you capture. Typically, the higher the pixel count, the higher the image quality. Pixel density is measured by PPI (Pixels Per Inch). A 300ppi image is higher quality than a 72ppi image.

PHOTOBOMB: That annoying but humorous person (or animal) who deliberately or unintentionally enters the frame of your carefully-composed photograph the moment you fire the shutter is your 'photobomber'.



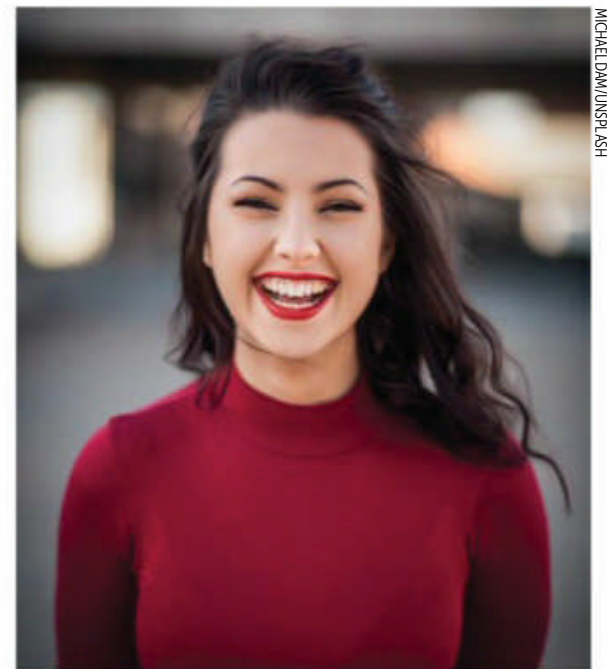
PHOTOSHOPPED: Like so many well-known brands that become the archetype of a product or technique, Adobe Photoshop is that for editing. Despite a plethora of highly capable alternative editing software available, Photoshop is still considered the gold-standard for professional editing. When you hear the term it's been 'photoshopped' they often mean it's been heavily retouched or digitally manipulated to look the way it does.



PRIME LENSES: Lenses with a fixed focal length are known as prime lenses. They do not offer a variable focal length, unlike a zoom lens, so to change your subject's magnification or composition you must physically move closer or farther away. Most primes lenses are also 'fast' lenses that feature maximum apertures of f/2.8 or wider, others start at f/4, and are generally exceptionally sharp. A popular entry-level prime is the 50mm f/1.8 but primes can go as wide as 20mm and as long as 600mm.

Panning

To capture a moving subject sharply whilst rendering the background full of motion blur you need to practise panning. It's a tricky technique to master but worth spending the time on; you need to swivel the camera horizontally in line with the subject's movement, while using shutter-priority mode with a slow shutter speed – how slow depends on the speed of your subject. For instance, you need a faster shutter speed for a race car than you will a cyclist. Use continuous shooting mode and steady yourself to minimise any tilting of the camera, then shoot as you swivel from the hips with your arms locked to your side as you track the subject across the frame.



MICHAEL DAM/INSPIRASH

PORTRAIT: The art of portraiture in photography dates back to the 19th Century and involves posing people in front of a scene or plain backdrop before working to capture their true likeness. Anyone can take a shot of a person but it takes skill to create a portrait. You need to understand colour, skin tone, lighting, exposure, perspective, depth-of-field and not to mention post-production. Portraits are known to tell the truth but also lie, all depending on the approach, style and intention of the photographer.

PIXELISATION: The deterioration of a low-resolution image caused by a lack of pixels, resulting in individual pixels becoming visible and therefore image quality appearing low. Printing an image at a low DPI will result in the image becoming pixelated, as can dramatically enlarging an image. Pixelisation is often used, however, to censor images so that details in a picture are obscured.

TONE G/PI/INSPIRASH

PERSPECTIVE: By controlling perspective, you can create a sense of depth in 2D images by making subjects appear larger or smaller, nearer or farther, than they actually are. You can control perspective through your lens choice, shooting angle and shooting distance. Wide-angle lenses, for instance, are known for elongating perspective, which can enhance the appearance of depth – great for landscapes, buildings and for utilising converging verticals, but not for most portraits. These benefit from a telephoto's foreshortening or a 50mm's more natural perspective. A tilt-shift lens is known as a perspective-control lens as it allows you to tilt the angle of the optical path relative to the sensor. By tilting the lens, you can get greater control over depth-of-field whilst the shift function allows you to counteract the convergence of straight lines.



MATTEO KUTUPA/INSPIRASH

P is for...

POCKETWIZARD: A brand of radio slave used for off-camera flash photography, PocketWizards were so popular that it became synonymous with the product genre. The slaves allow a flash to be fired remotely by attaching a radio transmitter to the camera's hotshoe and a receiver to the off-camera flash or studioflash. It was one of the first brands to integrate TTL metering and can be fired from several hundred metres apart, making them popular to use on location. PocketWizards are still deemed the gold standard by professionals but there are a number of cheaper brands, such as Yonguno, that have emerged with similar specifications but priced for the masses.



PSD FILE: Like JPEG and TIFF, PSD is a file format but is native to Photoshop and stands for Photoshop Document. Photographs edited in Photoshop usually comprise Layers that influence the look of the final image. When saved as a JPEG, the image Layers and the edits are lost during compression. By saving a version of the image as a .PSD file, you save all the Layer content and selections you've made so you can return to it at a later date. The drawback is that PSD files can reach several megabytes, if not gigabytes in size.



ROSS HODDINOTT

POLARISING FILTERS: When light reflects off non-metallic surfaces like water it causes glare, which can reduce contrast, desaturate colour and interfere with reflections. A circular polarising filter attaches to a lens's filter thread and can be rotated to vary the strength of absorbed polarised light to eliminate glare, control reflections and saturate colours. Polarising filters are best used approximately 90° to the sun and are dense enough to absorb up to two stops of light, meaning they also extend exposures. It's considered an essential piece of kit if photographing woodlands, water or blue skies as the effect cannot be replicated in post-production. As polarisation is affected by your shooting position, wide-angle lenses can reveal areas of uneven polarisation.



LOK YIU CHEUNG/INSPLASH

PANORAMA: When you simply can't squeeze an epic scene into a single frame, or you get too much edge distortion from your ultra wide-angle lens, your best approach is a panorama. You can elongate your field-of-view as wide as you like, even 360°, with this approach, vertically and horizontally if you wish. With your camera secured to a tripod, and ideally using a head with a panoramic action for smooth and level movements, you take a series of frames ensuring they're overlapped to aid stitching the shots together in post-production. Sometimes, to get the best from your panorama, you need to shoot long and many rather than wide and few, in other words exchange your ultra wide-angle lens for a long lens. By using a telephoto lens, you expand your field-of-view but without the distortion from a wide-angle lens. Panoramas are commonly created to accommodate sweeping landscapes, cityscapes and architecture.

POINT AND SHOOT: A term often used for fully automated cameras needing little intervention from a user. Typically associated with compact cameras or entry-level DSLRs set to Full Auto mode, all the user needs to do is compose the image and press the shutter button – the camera computes the rest of the settings.

Rule-of-thirds

A core compositional device that involves dividing a scene into a three-column grid horizontally and vertically, which in turn creates four power points on which to place your focal point. It's a guideline that helps to compose off-centre subjects in a visually pleasing way. Many DSLRs feature an optional overlay of the rule-of-thirds to help with composing images using the LCD monitor.



ROSS HODDINOTT

R is for...

RIG: A camera rig is a piece of equipment that helps to stabilise your camera so you can capture seemingly impossible images. Rigs are often used for action photography to secure and stabilise a camera to a moving car.

RESIZE: To resize your images means to either change the dimensions or size. You can do this by accessing Image Size in your chosen editing software, although this should be done carefully so not to affect image quality (see resampling) or you can use the Crop Tool to change your aspect ratio e.g from 8x10in to 8x8in.

RGB: Red, green and blue are the three primary colours of light and the channels that make up the RGB colour gamut, as when mixed can produce a broad array of colours. Most cameras and editing profiles begin as RGB, but you can change it to Adobe RGB or sRGB for wider gamuts or CMYK, standing for Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black, which are the primary colours of pigment and used for printing images.

THOMAS STEPHAN / UNSPLASH



RANGEFINDER CAMERA: It's not just its good looks but its focusing mechanism that makes a rangefinder so special. It works by overlaying a 'ghost' image of the scene, which when you turn the focusing ring brings the two images into alignment for a sharp shot. Some rangefinders are built-in, some sit in the hotshoe and others are coupled to the focusing mechanism. They first appeared in the early part of the 20th Century and grew in popularity during the 1930s to 1970s, but fell out of favour with the dawn of single-lens reflex cameras (SLRs). Their attractive style have been adopted by some mirrorless cameras by the likes of Fujifilm with its X-Pro series and with Leica's digital rangefinder cameras.

REFLECTOR: A reflector is a lighting modifier that does what it says on the tin but that tin can come in various shapes, sizes and types. Essentially any reflective material that bounces light onto a subject to fill in shadows is a 'reflector', such as stainless steel, glass, concrete, tin foil or a white piece of paper. Reflectors are the most popular type of lighting aid and comprise reflective material stretched over a frame. These types of reflectors come in many sizes, some need a stand while others can be handheld. There are three main finishes that affect the strength, warmth and quality of the reflected light: white, silver and metal-effect (e.g Sunfire). There are plenty of choices to suit all budgets, which is why they're such popular



R is for...

RESOLUTION: The resolution of your stills and video indicates the number of pixels (points of colour) that make up your images. Full HD resolution is typically 1080p and print resolution is 300 to 600dpi (dots per inch) – the bigger the print, the higher the print resolution needs to be. Higher resolution images mean more detail per inch of image space.

RENDERING: The term render, or the process of rendering, refers to the processing of image information as it become viewable. When you apply edits in post-production you wait to see the results after it renders. With mirrorless cameras, the information from the imaging sensor needs to be rendered in the electronic viewfinder or LCD monitor before you can see it.

RESAMPLING: It's the process of adding and removing pixels during post-production – you can upsample (add pixels) or downsample (remove pixels), which ultimately affects the file size and the number of pixels and detail. It's not a simple process without affecting image quality and requires an algorithm to do it correctly.



ADAM BURTON

RAW FORMAT: Think of Raw files as digital negatives – it's a 'raw' unedited image format containing the maximum data your camera can capture but is unrefined and not print-ready. They're unsharpened and unprocessed, unlike JPEGs, which is your job to do using Raw conversion software such as Affinity Photo or Adobe Camera Raw. It's the only file format that provides images containing the full power of your camera in terms of detail, image size and dynamic range. These uncompressed images let you recover tonal detail, change White Balance and make exposure changes post-capture without damaging image quality – something that's impossible to do with other file types. Every manufacturer has their own file extensions: Nikon has NEF, Canon CR2 and Sony has ARW, etc but you can convert these to a universal lossless file type called DNG.



ROSS HODDINOTT

REMOTE CAPTURES: When you operate your camera's shutter remotely, without physically depressing the shutter button, this is called a remote capture. You can do this using a wireless remote release, cable release or even a smartphone app via a Wi-Fi connection, such as Nikon's Snapbridge or Canon's Camera Connect. It's an invaluable tool when you want to be away from your camera, such as during wildlife photography, long exposures or in low light, when the press of the shutter button is enough to introduce camera shake. A wireless camera remote release works via a transmitter and receiver attached but some use an infrared beam, while others use a radio frequency.

RED-EYE EFFECT: When pupils render red in photographs it's because a burst of direct flash is reflecting light off the retina and back down the lens. It's usually only an issue if the flash is too close to the lens, such as with a DSLR's built-in flash or a compact camera. You can get around it by having the subject not look at the camera, by attaching a flashgun to put distance between the lens and the light, increasing the ambient light or using red-eye removal when editing.

RETOUCHING: When you hear 'retouching', you think portraits but retouching is actually an umbrella term that encompasses any editing post-capture, from removing dust and dirt from an image, unsightly objects or people from landscapes to polishing portraits that grace the pages of magazines and advertisements. Retouching is an artform in itself, taking skill and practice to do well, but is of equal importance to the art of digital photography these days.



ANDREY ARKUSHIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Ringlights

There are two main types of ring light. Both are designed to give even, shadowless illumination, but are very different in design. A ringflash surrounds the barrel of a lens and is used primarily in macro photography. An LED ringlight uses several small LED lights to provide a continuous light source. There are smaller versions that provide an alternative to using a ringflash, while much larger versions are available for use in portrait photography.

Greats of photography

Rankin (1966–present)

John Rankin, who works under the name Rankin, is a British portrait and fashion photographer and now filmmaker. He's best known as a founder of *Dazed and Confused* magazine, photographing Queen Elizabeth II, models such as Kate Moss and celebrities such as Madonna.

Man Ray (1890–1976)

An American visual artist who contributed to the Dada and Surrealist movements. He was the first person to experiment with camera-less photography and is well known for his photograms, dubbed rayographs.

RACKING FOCUS: If you ever shoot video with your DSLR you've probably tried to 'rack' focus. It's when you play with depth-of-field by changing the focusing plane during a continuous shot to focus on something beyond the initial point of focus.



RIM LIGHT: When a subject is backlit by the sun or flash, creating a halo effect, this is rim lighting. Sometimes the subject is exposed to shadow and rendered a silhouette against this rim light, other times it's combined with a fill light to open up those shadows. It's commonly used to separate a dark subject from a dark background.

ALEXANDERS VIRIDOV/SHUTTERSTOCK



REMBRANDT LIGHTING: A classic and dramatic lighting technique taken from the Dutch painter Rembrandt. Based on a single-light set-up and short-lighting technique, the key light is set up approximately 45° to the subject's nose. The key to recognising you've achieved the Rembrandt lighting is the triangle of light that becomes visible under the eye farthest from the key light.

S is for...



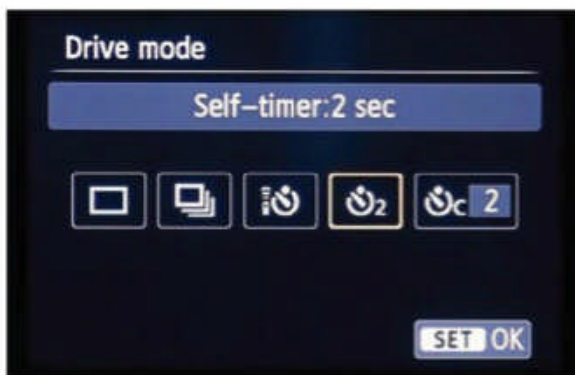
SILENT WAVE MOTOR (SWM):

Nikon lenses with its sonic AF system feature this motor, providing it with high-speed, ultra-quiet autofocus, which can be identified by the letter 'S' (e.g AF-S). It's particularly beneficial in super telephoto lenses where autofocus speed, accuracy and low noise are important, such as with wildlife photography. Canon's equivalent to SWM is its USM (Ultrasonic Motor); Sony's is Hyper Sonic Motor (HSM); and Tamron is Ultra Silent Drive (USD), for instance, and all work on the same principle of vibrating metal rings. Nikon has also introduced AF-P, which stands for pulse and is even quieter and smoother than AF-S and intended for shooting video (see 'stepping motor' below).

STEPPING MOTOR: Usually seen as the abbreviation STM on certain lenses, a stepping motor is a simple mechanical structure that allows a lens to operate quietly, smoothly and quickly. It converts digital pulses into mechanical rotation and a large number of pulses will rotate the lens fully and smoothly. It's beneficial for video shooting when operational noise needs to be minimal.



SOFT-FOCUS LENS: This is not the same as an image being out of focus. Soft focus is a lens flaw and happens when images become blurred due to spherical aberrations. A soft-focus lens deliberately introduces such flaws to blur details whilst retaining sharp edges. Think 1940s Hollywood glamour portraits that don't have a dreamlike soft-focus haze, designed to hide blemishes. You can try to replicate the look with an optical soft-focus filter.



SELF-TIMER MODE: No remote, no problem. One feature nearly every camera has is a self-timer facility that lets you fire a camera hands-free. Sometimes it's buried within a camera's menu system, sometimes it's accessible via the main body, but nearly all cameras let you select a delay such as five or ten seconds as well as specify the number of frames you want it to fire. To trigger the self-timer, you compose and focus your shot then press the shutter button, which initiates the timer countdown.

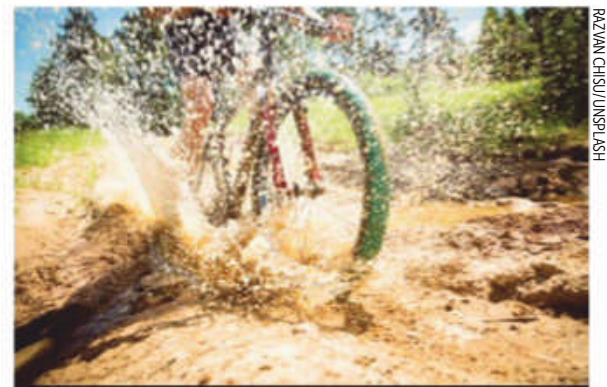
STROBIST: Originating from a blog by David Hobby (strobist.com), the term 'Strobist' is now used as a name for photographers who use off-camera flash regularly and creatively.

SNAPSHOT: A mindless press of the shutter with little consideration for composition, creativity or control over camera settings. Snapshot is usually the byproduct of 'point and shoot'.

SATURATION: Colour saturation is indicative of how vibrant and intense colours are – it is one of three elements along with hue and value. Unsaturated colours can appear grey if they are reduced too much.

Street photography

Simply put, street photography is the visual documentation of everyday life and unsuspecting humans. It's a form of candid photography that generally occurs in public places and taken of unaware strangers. Good street photography is engaging, crafted using environmental factors to aid composition and often plays with light and shadow beautifully – they're not mere snapshots, but portraits with purpose. The discreet technique of shooting from the hip is commonly used in street photography, as are small mirrorless cameras, in order to stay invisible to subjects.



SHUTTER SPEED: It's the setting that controls your exposure time and is one of three core features in the exposure triangle to influence your overall exposure. Your shutter speed determines how long your shutter remains open, which combined with your aperture helps determine how much light reaches the camera's sensor. Shutter speed is measured in fractions of a second such as 1/30sec and 1/100sec until you reach whole seconds in length. If you want to freeze motion, you need to choose a shutter speed that's fast enough to stop it in its tracks so as to sharply record the subject, for instance a person walking might need 1/125 to 1/150sec but an animal running or a bird in flight might need up to 1/2000sec to eliminate movement. Your shutter speed can introduce the appearance of movement, too, such as dragging the shutter to capture moving cars as streaks of light, blurring a receding tide or panning a moving subject. The slower the shutter speed, the more light that's allowed into the lens; the faster the shutter speed, the less light reaches the sensor, so your exposure has to be carefully balanced with your aperture and ISO rating to ensure a correctly exposed image.

Most cameras enable you to adjust your shutter speed in one-third, one-half and full-stop increments. For instance, 1/30sec to 1/60sec is a full stop as the shutter speed approximately halves, as does 1/125sec to 1/250sec and 1/250sec to 1/500sec. Between these full stops are half stops, such as 1/45sec, 1/180sec and 1/350sec but more commonly seen are 1/3 stops such as 1/30sec, 1/40sec, 1/50sec, 1/60sec, 1/80sec, 1/100sec, 1/125sec, 1/180sec, 1/200sec, 1/250sec, 1/320sec, 1/400sec, 1/500sec and so on.

Most cameras feature shutter speeds as fast as 1/4000sec – some as fast as 1/8000sec – and as slow as 30 seconds. Some also feature a Bulb or Time mode, which allows you to manually control exposures longer than 30 seconds. Without a tripod, your shutter speed should not exceed your focal length. For instance, if shooting with a 50mm, your shutter speed should stay above 1/50sec to avoid introducing camera shake; 200mm, 1/200sec; 500mm, 1/500sec and so on – it's the Reciprocal Rule.

SOFTBOX: One of the most popular lighting modifiers for portraits and still-life alike, a softbox comes in all shapes and sizes to fit off-camera flash or studioflash, but essentially have the same purpose of softening the output and giving a smooth gradient between light and shadow. Before reaching the subject, it bounces the light off its internal reflective surface before diffusing it through a semi-transparent material for an even, soft quality of light. As a rule-of-thumb, choose a softbox that's a similar size to the subject you're photographing, for instance for a headshot you might benefit from a softbox in the region of 18 to 24in; for full-body portraits you might need to use multiple softboxes. As a sub-species of square softboxes you've also got stripboxes and octoboxes.



S is for...

SEPIA: A warm, monochrome tint that gives images an aged look. In film photography, sepia was the product of print toning a black & white image for warmth. Some photographers still like to recreate the duotoned tint digitally in post-production.

Greats of photography

Sebastião **Salgado** (1944-present)

A Brazilian photographer, Salgado is one of the most widely respected and celebrated social documentary photographers of all time. His images are beautiful and yet laden with political purpose, exposing the social and environmental issues on our planet.

Cindy **Sherman** (1954-present)

She's an American feminist photographer and filmmaker who's renowned in the art world for her self-portraits that critique gender and identity. She's famous for using her own body in her work and often addressing issues like sexual stereotypes.

Harvey **Stein** (1941-present)

Currently a teacher at the International Center of Photography in New York, Stein is a documentary photographer, curator and lecturer with countless exhibitions under his belt – 86 one-person and more than 165 group shows across America and Europe.

SD/SDHC/SDXC CARDS:

These memory cards are small but mighty flash storage devices and are capable of keeping up to 2TB of data. SD (Secure Digital) cards have a fairly low capacity of 128MB to 2GB, which is not particularly suitable for the giant file sizes produced by recent DSLRs. The SDHC versions are higher capacity alternatives offering from 4GB to 32GB. SDXC stands for SD Extended Capacity, which range from 64GB to 2TB. Some more expensive DSLRs offer two SD card slots to increase the amount of storage. Take note of their read/write speeds, too, as you'll want the fastest cards possible if you're shooting a high volume of images in burst mode, such as with sports or wildlife, to avoid images bottle-necking in the camera's buffer memory as you wait for them to write to your memory card.



CAROLINE SCHMIDT

SELECTIVE FOCUS: A simple yet creative technique well worth the time to perfect if you enjoy using shallow depth-of-field, selective focusing (or differential focusing) is when you bypass the camera's preference to focus on what's closest to the lens by specifying your area of focus anywhere within the frame. By using single-point AF with your camera's four-way control, or focus-lock, you can isolate your focal point and throw everything else out of focus. It's ideal if you want to highlight a subject in the middle-ground and to shoot past foreground interest. It can be applied to pretty much any subject but is most popular with still-life, macro and portraits.



ANDREW PEEBLE/UNSP/LASH

STAR TRAILS: As the Earth continuously rotates on its axis, when you use a long exposure to photograph stars you won't capture stars but rather their trails as they rotate around Polaris. As the camera cannot track the movement of stars without specialist equipment, it stays static as the hours pass by and the stars move in an arc. To capture their trails, you need to use Bulb mode with an exposure between 30 minutes and three-hours long. You can use shorter exposures of 30 seconds in shutter-priority mode but you'd need to shoot tens if not hundreds of images using an intervalometer to be stacked in editing software such as StarStaX.



MAURO GREGGIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

SLOW-SYNC FLASH: Otherwise known as rear-curtain sync, with this flash mode you're telling the camera to fire the flash during a long exposure. In effect, you'll momentarily freeze a subject sharp with flash and then the slow shutter speed will gather the ambient light so to better balance with the flash exposure. This often means recording motion blur in the background too. You often have two options: rear-curtain sync and front-curtain sync, which sets the flash to fire at the end or start of the exposure, respectively. If there's movement in the scene, use rear-curtain sync as motion blur travels behind the subject instead of in front, which appears more natural.

SYNC CORD: As long as you don't mind navigating extra cables, a sync cord is a reliable and cost-effective alternative to trigger off-camera flash. This dedicated cable directly connects a studio flash head with a DSLR so when the shutter is fired, the flashes are triggered simultaneously.

SHARPNESS: Soft, critical, pin-point, out of focus are all adjectives that depict an image or focal point's clarity of detail. Images need to have an area that is in focus to be considered sharp.

SILHOUETTE: When a subject is backlit and you expose for lighter areas of the scene, that subject will almost always be recorded in silhouette as the camera underexposes it. It's a simple technique to use and results in graphic images so long as the subject has a strong outline.



SCREW-IN FILTER: A cheaper alternative to a slot-in filter system but the least versatile of the two, screw-in filters – as they sound – screw onto the front of a lens. As a result, you may need to buy the same filter type, such as a polarising filter, multiple times to fit the different filter threads of your lenses. A slot-in system, on the other hand, means you buy one type of filter and use adaptor rings to fit the filter holder to various lenses. There are a few uses that are best suited to a screw-in design, for instance a UV filter is often used to permanently protect the front element of a lens and circular polarisers can be rotated to vary polarisation. LEE filters, Hoya and Marumi are some of the most popular brands to produce screw-in filters.

S is for Shutter...

● **SHUTTER CURTAIN:** Whether film or digital, cameras have two mechanical shutter curtains – a front and a rear – that opens to allow light in and closes to block light out, in effect beginning and ending the exposure. Many cameras now feature an electronic front-curtain shutter (EFCS), designed to eliminate camera shake from the shutter mechanism opening, known as shutter shock. Shutter shock is more obvious in higher resolution cameras. With EFCS, the front curtain is opened but the exposure is then started electronically and ended mechanically with the rear-curtain shutter to reduce the risk of camera shake from the shutter opening at the start of the exposure.

● **SHUTTER-PRIORITY MODE:** Shown on your exposure mode dial as S or Tv, shutter-priority mode prioritises your shutter speed over your aperture. It's a semi-automatic exposure mode that lets you set the shutter speed and ISO but the camera sets the aperture, meaning you do not have control over depth-of-field. It's the best mode, next to manual, when movement is a priority, whether that's freezing a moving subject or capturing a long exposure image.

● **SHUTTER LAG:** The time between you pressing the shutter button and the camera opening the shutter is called the shutter lag or shutter delay. It takes time for the camera to perform its various functions such as calculating exposure, focusing and recording the image to a memory card, and by time we mean a fraction of a second. But every millisecond counts in photography so you can help yourself by taking a moment to pre-focus before fully depressing the shutter button to take the shot.

● **SHUTTER COUNT:** A camera's shutter count, or shutter actuation, is an indication of a camera's lifespan based on how many photographs it's taken. Most entry-level shutters can reach a minimum of 150,000, and professional models 300,000, before showing signs of wear and tear. It's not only the shutter count that determines a camera's lifespan, though, servicing and environmental conditions are important too. To check your shutter count you could manually read the EXIF data or take a photo and upload it to camerashuttercount.com.

S is for...



SENSOR SIZE: At the heart of your camera is this solid-state device that captures light to form an image. The sensor uses millions of light-sensitive spots called photosites to record the light and colour information. The larger a sensor, the more light and information is recorded in an image, which usually delivers better dynamic range, increased detail and depth-of-field as well as less noise and improved low-light performance. There are two main sensor sizes in DSLRs: full-frame (equivalent to 35mm) and APS-C (with a crop factor of 1.5x or 1.6x, depending on the camera brand). In-between there's the APS-H sensor and even smaller Micro Four-Thirds. Your sensor size also has an affect on focal lengths too; you have to multiply a focal length by the sensor's crop factor to get the effective focal length. For example, a 50mm lens used with an APS-C sensor with a 1.5x crop has an equivalent focal length of 75mm.



SUBJECT DISTANCE: When photographers speak about subject distance they're referring to the space between the camera lens and the subject. Subject-to-camera distance is important as it helps you to identify the aperture you need to use for the depth-of-field you want to obtain. Similarly, your subject-to-background distance is an important factor if you want the background to fall off into soft focus. The point at which you focus the lens determines where the area of sharpness begins and ends – approximately it's about one-third in front of your point of focus and two-thirds behind. It's why if you use a wide aperture, such as f/2.8 on a subject a few metres away, you can still end up getting them entirely in focus; if you use f/2.8 on a subject mere feet from you then you may find you only get a small area sharp.



STUDIO & STUDIO LIGHTING: A studio can be any enclosed space that provides a controlled environment in which to take photographs, typically still-life or portraits. Both studioflash and natural-light studios should contain resources to sculpt, modify and control the light falling within the studio and on the subject. Most studios contain multiple light sources, modifiers and backgrounds, whether that's decorated walls, fabric or paper backgrounds on a roll. Studio lighting could be in the form of continuous lights or studioflash, typically powered by a mains outlet. A basic studioflash set-up consists of two flash heads with softboxes or umbrellas but upgrading modifiers and adding more lights expands creative potential. Elinchrom, Bowens and Profoto are all popular brands.

SELFIE: Rightly or wrongly, Selfie is now a word in the Oxford dictionary that was coined from the huge popularity of smartphone self-portraits and their use in social media.

SKYLIGHT FILTER: A Skylight filter is mainly used to protect the front of a lens from damage, dust and finger prints like a UV filter is. Unlike UV filters that are clear, Skylight filters do come with a slight pink-orange tint that can add warmth to tones in a picture.

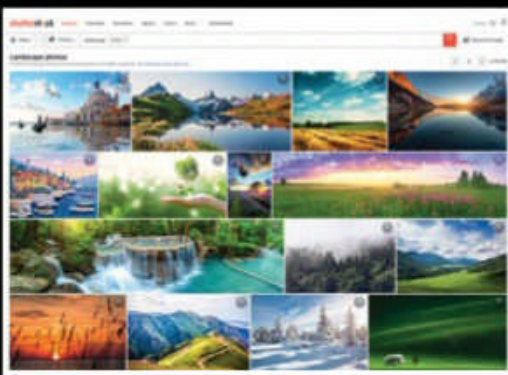
SCENE MODES: Along with Full Auto mode, many entry-level cameras offer automatic Scene modes that bias particular camera settings to certain subject matters. For instance, in Landscape mode the camera will automatically set a small aperture; Portrait mode a wide aperture; Night mode a high ISO. They're each fully automated but tailored to suit the most popular photo types.



Spot metering

Unlike multi-zone metering that takes exposure readings from various segments of the image area, spot metering mode takes a single reading from a very precise spot. That area might be in the centre of the frame or linked to your active AF point so that you meter and focus from the same area. It's simple to use and you always know what you're metering from, although it will only be 1-3% of the visible image area, so you cannot afford to be inaccurate.

LEE FROST



STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY:

An online marketplace where anyone can licence or buy images, stock libraries feature photographs from hundreds of photographers. They're called 'stock' because they're used for a variety of purposes – editorial and commercial – and not shot to a specific brief but licensed for specific uses. Popular images are of people at work, travel destinations and lifestyle photography. Macrostock agencies such as Getty Images and Corbis sell high-quality images by established photographers; Microstock agencies, such as iStockphoto and Shutterstock, are open to almost anyone and sell stock to the masses at a low cost.



STOP: Exposure is measured in stops – full stops, half stops and third stops. A full stop doubles or halves the amount of light in an exposure. By increasing the exposure by one stop, you're capturing twice as much light. You can do this by opening your aperture, slowing your shutter speed or adjusting your ISO sensitivity, and the reverse if you want to halve the amount of light. To keep the exposure the same, you need to counterbalance any exposure changes you make. For instance, if you want to increase your depth-of-field by closing your aperture a stop, for instance from f/5.6 to f/8, you'll either double your ISO (e.g from ISO 200 to 400) or slow the shutter speed (e.g 1/250sec to 1/125sec) in order to keep the exposure the same.

SENSOR PLANE: Otherwise known as your focal plane. As the surface of your sensor is flat, to maximise depth-of-field at any given aperture you need to ensure your camera's sensor is parallel to the subject. If it's at even the slightest angle, you'll find depth-of-field will fall off much faster. For instance, you could use f/2.8 to get a front-facing portrait sharp from eyes to ears but if you position them in a three-quarter pose, you'll likely only get one eye – at best – sharp.

SENSITIVITY: Normally used in relation to the ISO rating, sensitivity indicates how 'sensitive' the imaging sensor is to the light it receives. The higher the ISO rating, the more sensitive the sensor is to the light that your aperture and shutter speed allows in. High ISO sensitivities are used in low light when you need the sensor to be especially sensitive to the limited light it receives. Conversely, a high ISO in strong ambient lighting can result in an overexposed image.



PHOTO
EXPERT

Autumn

FOR MANY OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHERS, AUTUMN IS THE TIME OF YEAR THAT THEY MOST EAGERLY ANTICIPATE. NATURE PROVIDES US WITH SO MUCH COLOUR AND ATMOSPHERE DURING THE 'FALL'. SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE VIBRANT COLOUR, ATMOSPHERIC SUNLIGHT AND FASCINATING FUNGI. IT'S THE SEASON OF DEWY, MISTY MORNINGS, FIERY FOLIAGE, CHANGEABLE WEATHER AND DRAMATIC SKIES. PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND AND ROSS HODDINOTT SHARES A HANDFUL OF HIS FAVOURITE PHOTO SUBJECTS, TOGETHER WITH SEASONAL EXPERT TIPS, TO HELP INSPIRE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY THIS SEASON

Words & images: ROSS HODDINOTT



OUR EXPERT

Ross Hoddinott

Ross is one of the UK's leading outdoor photographers. Based in the picturesque south west of England, it's no surprise he is passionate about coastal and landscape photography.

Ross is a multi-award winning professional photographer and author – his books include *The Landscape Photography Workshop* and *The Art of Landscape Photography*. His next book, *52 Assignments: Nature* is out now.

Ross is also an ambassador for Nikon UK and Manfrotto. For more on Ross Hoddinott and the workshops he leads, visit:

www.rosshoddinott.co.uk and
www.dawn2duskphotography.co.uk





1 **Shoot woodland interiors:** This is surely the very best time of year to head into the woods. The leaf canopy is ablaze with fiery hues as the green pigment within leaves (chlorophyll) breaks down to reveal a palette of reds, oranges and yellows. The best of autumnal colour tends to appear in late October and early November, but this naturally depends on where you live. Meanwhile, peak colour can change one year to the next. Ancient, deciduous woodland will provide the best photo opportunities, boasting gnarled, shapely trees full of character, which photographers can use to harness their compositions. Bright, but diffused sunlight suits woodland photography when used with a polarising filter, which will eliminate glare and reflections and restore natural, saturated colours. Consider using footpaths or fallen boughs as lead-in lines or foreground interest. To give autumnal scenes extra 'oomph' and warmth, select a warmer colour temperature – for example, use Cloudy or Shade White Balance presets.



3 **Get reflective:** Autumn is a great time of year to head to a water's edge. With the landscape so full of colour and atmosphere, it's the perfect season to shoot reflections, which have the power to dramatically enhance an image with strong foreground interest. For mirror-like reflections to occur on pools, ponds and larger bodies of water, you need a still, windless day. Keep an eye on the forecast and venture out on a day when the predicted wind speed is below 8kph (5mph). It is typically stillest around dawn, so get up early and head to the shore when you might be lucky enough to catch some morning mist, too, for added atmosphere. Reflections tend to be darker than the main subject, so you may want to attach a graduated ND filter to keep the scene's exposure balanced. By placing the horizon centrally across the frame you can create symmetry between the background and foreground, whilst a polarising filter can strengthen the appearance of reflections by removing glare.



2

Fun with fungi: Mushrooms and toadstools are some of the most obvious autumnal subjects. As summer's warmth collides with the cool, dampness of autumn, the conditions are ideal for weird and wonderful fungi to appear on tree stumps and amongst the leaf litter. Ancient woodland tends to be a hotspot for fungi, so it's yet another reason to visit a local forest this season. Fungi come in all shapes and sizes, but many are quite small in stature, so a macro lens is recommended – or at least a close-up attachment of some variety. They do have a habit of growing in low, awkward places so a groundsheet can be useful. Woodlands are dark places, so expect to work in restricted light. Use a tripod with low-level capability for a worm's-eye viewpoint. Use a reflector or LED light for extra illumination and a shallow depth-of-field to keep background clutter diffused.



4

Shoot a starburst: When shooting towards the sun with a narrow aperture, sun flare becomes what's fondly known as a starburst. It's when the sun – or any bright point of light – is transformed into a near-perfect star due to the light waves bending or spreading, otherwise known as diffraction. The smaller the aperture, the more light diffracts, so a small f/stop in the region of f/22 is usually the best choice for such effects but a bit of experimentation might be needed. The number of points in each starburst is related to the number of aperture blades in the lens's construction. Typically, the more blades the better. Some lenses create better bursts than others, so trial different lenses in your system to see which creates the most appealing effect. Try partly obscuring the sun behind a solid object, like a tree, to control the flare and to help the rays stand proud against the darker surroundings. Although diffraction will soften image quality overall, it is justified in this instance due to the creative effect.



5

Over the rainbow: Those post-rainfall phenomena have the ability to bring the blandest of scenes alive and add impact to the most foreboding of skies. Rainbows, however, are not an everyday occurrence and rarely appear just where you want them to, making them a challenging subject. They form when sunlight passes through rain, turning raindrops into tiny prisms. They occur directly opposite the sun so can be easy to predict. Autumn is a good time of year for rainbows as the weather is so changeable, so if sunshine and showers are forecast, head out with your camera. They can be fleeting, so be prepared to work quickly. Attach a lens hood to protect the front of the lens and keep a lens cloth handy to wipe away any raindrops. Used carefully, a polarising filter can intensify a rainbow and a wide-angle lens can capture the full arc, but (with the sun directly behind you) be careful that your own shadow doesn't creep into the composition.

6

Dewy cobwebs: As the atmosphere is cool and moist it is not uncommon to wake up to heavy dew on an autumnal morning. Foliage and insects will be smothered with tiny beads of water that glisten like jewels and highlight the most intricate of spiders' webs. To record a web sharp throughout, place as much of the subject parallel to the camera to fall within the plane of focus. Use a small aperture, like f/11 or f/16, but try to exclude any distracting vegetation from the background. To achieve more abstract results, place your camera at an angle to the web and select a large aperture – in the region of f/2.8 or f/4 – to highlight just a few droplets or a single strand. Ideally, use a tripod and be careful not to knock the web (or any vegetation supporting it) when setting up. While webs alone create great shots, don't overlook their creators – autumn is a great time of year to photograph spiders. Garden, orb weaver and wasp spiders are particularly photogenic.



A photograph of a stag with large, velvet-covered antlers standing in a forest. The stag is facing the camera, and its body is covered in brown fur. The background is a dense forest of tall, thin trees with green foliage. The lighting is soft, suggesting early morning or late evening. The stag is standing on a mossy log or ground.

7 *Park life:* Autumn is one of the best times of year to photograph deer. The rutting season is now in full flow, so if you visit a local deer park, you are sure to see lots of action. Stags, with impressive antlers, will be bellowing and battling for supremacy. At big parks like Richmond, in London, and Bradgate, in Leicestershire, deer are very accessible and accustomed to people. A focal length in the region of 300mm to 400mm will allow you to capture frame-filling results from a safe, responsible distance. For the most atmospheric images, visit early morning when there is mist, or late evening when the light is golden and dramatic. If shooting within woodland, use tree trunks to frame animals and increase the ISO to maintain a practical shutter speed in poor light. A monopod can be the best type of support when shooting deer, being lightweight and easy to manoeuvre.





8

Go nuts: When you use natural foods, like nuts and seeds, to entice wildlife closer to your camera, it's a technique known as 'baiting'. You can easily set up a feeding station in your garden to draw subjects to a pre-defined spot, or place a little hoard of nuts in your local park or woodland to attract for squirrels and birds to your photogenic location. Once you've baited your area, position yourself close by with camera at the ready. A collapsible, pop-up hide is a great help when doing this, disguising your whereabouts and movements from your subject. Visit www.wildlifewatchingsupplies.co.uk for options. A focal length upwards of 300mm is normally best. Select your camera's continuous shooting mode so that you can fire a fast burst of images in order to capture the action.



9

Morning mist: A wonderfully moody condition for photography, mist is best shot in autumn. The atmosphere is moist, and temperatures can drop significantly overnight.

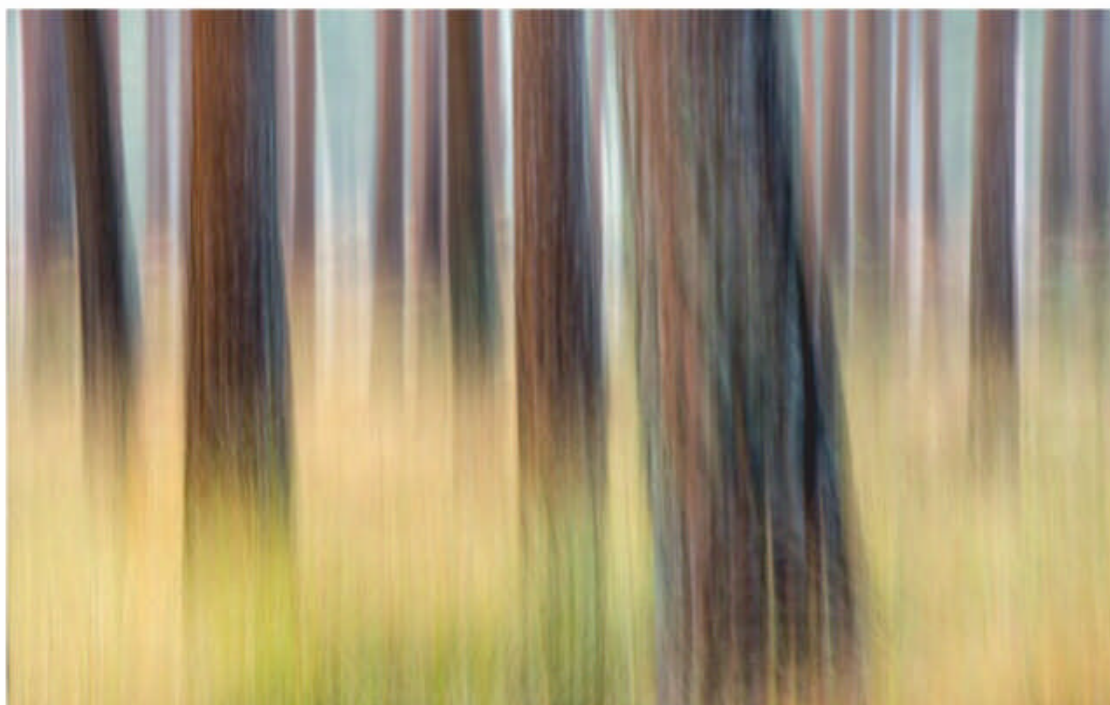
A clear, cool night together with a low wind speed will often result in radiation fog forming so keep an eye on the local weather forecast. An early start is important if you wish to capture the best of the conditions before dew and mist evaporate in the heat of the morning sunshine. Set your alarm early and reach your chosen viewpoint before sunrise. Mist has the ability to simplify and soften the landscape, which when combined with autumnal scenery has the ability to produce very special images. Whilst wide-angle lenses are ideal for low viewpoints near large bodies of water, longer lenses foreshorten perspective making them ideal for higher viewpoints and when you want to isolate shapes, layers and points of interest within the landscape, like a tree, deer or birds. The brightness of mist can fool metering systems into underexposure, too, so keep an eye on the histogram and apply positive exposure compensation as required.



10

Get creative: Nowhere does it say you have to record your subject conventionally. Instead, get arty this autumn and use some creative techniques to produce abstract results.

For example, if you are using a zoom lens, rotate the zoom ring during the exposure for a zoom-burst effect. Also try your hand at Intentional Camera Motion (ICM), which is when you move the camera while the shutter is open to blur your subject. An exposure in the region of one second is a good starting point and autumn trees provide the type of colour and contrast that suits this technique. Your camera's multiple exposure mode can create different effects, too, or mimic the Orton Effect by sandwiching together a sharp and out-of-focus frame to create a bright, dream-like glow. Creative techniques like this often require a good degree of trial and error, so be prepared to take a series of shots before you achieve the results you want and have some fun!



11

Head to the coast: Although trees and woodland are undoubtedly autumn's headline act, don't overlook the coast. As the season changes, and the weather grows cooler and less settled, the coast becomes less crowded. Stormy weather blowing in from the sea brings impressive, crashing waves and moody skies. Parts of some coastal cliff tops are still carpeted with flowering gorse, heather and scorched grasses that glow in golden sunlight. In late autumn, beaches can be deserted and boast large expanses of virgin sand and shapely tidal pools. Wrap up warm, pull on your wellies, and get onto the beach. Push the feet of your tripod firmly into the sand for stability and try using solid ND filters to creatively blur the motion of the tide as it laps in and drags out. The shorter days means getting up for dawn, or staying out until after sunset, is a far more appealing prospect. As you will know, these are the best times of the day to capture moody coastal views.

12

Harvest time: Autumn is harvest time, making it one of the best seasons to visit and photograph rolling countryside. Rural landscapes can get overlooked by landscape photographers, yet they are full of picture potential. During autumn, look for strong shapes, patterns and textures within the landscape, like straw and hay bales, stooks and plough lines. Elevated viewpoints can provide good views for telephoto shots, allowing photographers to capture the patchwork effect fields create. Low morning or late evening sunlight is typically best, adding warmth and dramatic long shadows to the countryside.



14

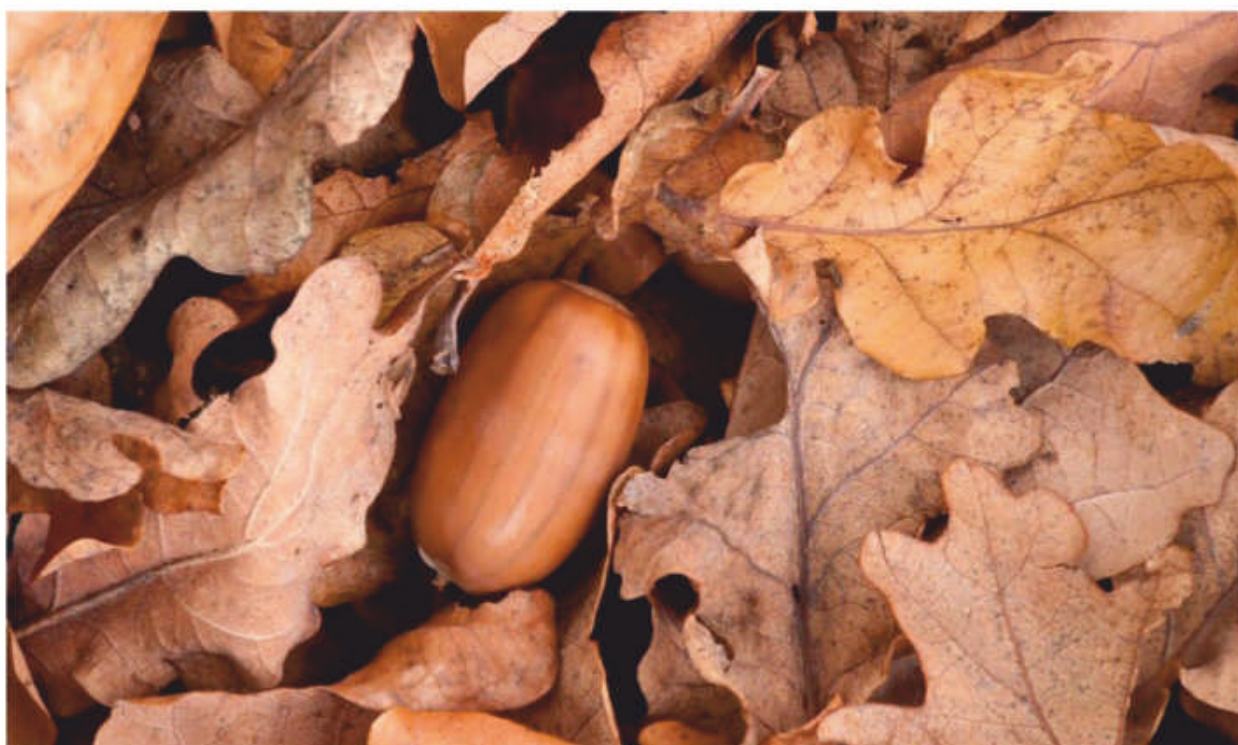
Visit an arboretum: This is the perfect time to plan a day trip to a local arboretum. Places like Westonbirt, in Gloucestershire, and Winkworth, in Surrey, are now ablaze with seasonal colour. Arboretums are home to vast collections of trees, including acers and other species that are at their very best during the fall. Carry a good range of focal lengths with you as you will want to capture wide-angle, environmental shots of trees, along with close-ups of individual leaves using a macro or a telephoto lens. Backlighting often suits fall foliage best as it highlights details and their vibrance. So, if you visit on an overcast day, consider collecting a handful of fallen leaves to take home and photograph them on a lightbox later. Maple leaves are arguably the most shapely, colourful and photogenic.





13

Embrace the weather: Autumn is renowned for its unpredictable weather – glorious sunshine can quickly give way to heavy downpours, while fog and frost are not uncommon. This is good news for outdoor photographers as the most photogenic conditions occur when the weather is in transition, and autumn tends to provide moody skies, transient light and mixed weather conditions. Don't hide away indoors if the forecast looks a bit 'iffy'; wrap up warm, don your waterproofs and take photos instead. Ensure your gear is protected from the weather by investing in a waterproof cover or rain sleeve and keep a lens cloth close to hand to wipe away raindrops or moisture from your lens or filters. Capturing transient light requires time and patience: identify your viewpoint and composition and then wait. Watch the clouds' movements and wait for a gap to move towards the sun and be ready to trigger the shutter as light dances across the landscape.



15

Autumn fruits: Right now you will find no shortage of berries, nuts and seeds to photograph as we enter the year's harvest time.

Conkers, acorns, fir cones and photogenic seed heads provide great close-up potential, with lots of fine detail, colour and interest to highlight. It is likely you will need to arrange and create your composition, although sometimes things fall so naturally into place that you won't need to tamper with what you find. When required, collect subjects and assemble them to create a pleasing composition or pattern, and then fill the frame to maximise the impact of your subject's colour or shape. Soft, even sunlight is typically best for this type of close-up, so to maximise visible detail and saturation on sunny days, shoot within the shade of a tree or use a diffuser to reduce contrast.



OUR EXPERT: *James Abbott*



James is a professional landscape and portrait photographer based in Cambridge. With a love of travel and the outdoors, he frequently visits locations around the UK to expand his portfolio and create photographic tutorials for beginners and advanced photographers.

James's kit: Sony A7R III, Sony FE 16-35mm f/2.8 GM, Sony FE 70-200mm f/4 G, NiSi filters system, Vanguard Alta Pro 2 263CB tripod and Mindshift Backlight 26 backpack.

OUR READER: *Chris Moss*



Chris provides IT Consultancy and runs a web design business. He's had a passion for photography since university, which was re-ignited after starting a young family.

Chris enjoys macro, landscape and portrait photography of his children as they grow up.

Chris's kit: As part of the 50mm Cambridge cityscape challenge, Chris's kit was limited to his Nikon Z 6, Nikon Z 50mm f/1.8, K&F Concept travel tripod and an unbranded remote release.

CITY STREETS

CITYSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY IS A MUCH WIDER GENRE THAN IT FIRST APPEARS AS THERE ARE MANY POSSIBLE APPROACHES. WE CHALLENGED ONE READER TO CAPTURE THE ICONIC CITY OF CAMBRIDGE USING SEVERAL TECHNIQUES AND NOTHING MORE THAN HIS CAMERA, A 50MM LENS AND A TRIPOD FOR WHEN LIGHT LEVELS DROPPED IN THE EVENING

CAMBRIDGE IS A historical city that needs little introduction, thanks to its worldwide reputation as an educational centre of excellence and its iconic architecture, not to mention many links to history and science. But while much of what the city is most famous for occurs behind closed doors, the city streets are hugely popular with both domestic and international tourists, and in normal times tens of thousands of photos will be taken in and around the city every day.

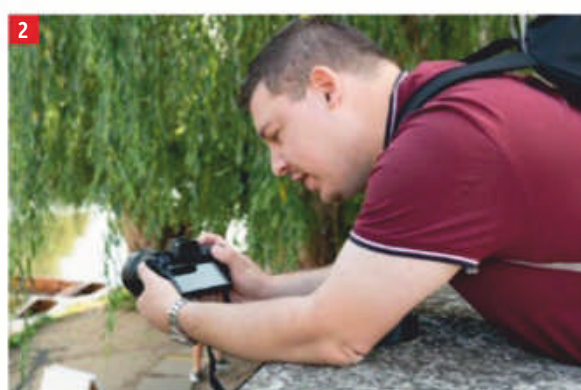
The city is undoubtedly a beautiful place and one that's a joy to walk around and soak up, but while it's picturesque, it's not

necessarily the easiest city for photographers to shoot because there are no hills from which to capture sweeping vistas or even buildings that stand out from the rest. This certainly doesn't mean that it's impossible to shoot great cityscapes of Cambridge, though; by focusing on the narrow streets, the action that takes place within them and some visually interesting landmarks, there are many opportunities if you're motivated enough to pound the streets to discover them.

With sunrise still early and opportunities for shooting it from within the city limited, the plan was to meet in the middle of the

day and shoot until sunset. Professional photographer James Abbott and reader Chris Moss, who had never been to Cambridge before, were limited to using just one lens – a 50mm f/1.8 – along with completing three challenges that drew on completely different skillsets.

Despite the limitation of using a single prime lens and three totally different approaches to capturing city images, Chris's results are visually and technically interesting and his creativity was never put into question. In fact, it thrived and pushed him to think on his feet and experiment, so let's see how he got on... ►



CHALLENGE 1: DETAILS

Meeting in a city usually requires one of us to hold a giant sign saying 'over here, it's me!' to distinguish us from the crowds, but the silver-lining to these dark times is that the city is significantly quieter than usual. Chris and I quickly found each other near my very secret parking area that avoids the extortionate parking charges that Cambridge is infamous for.

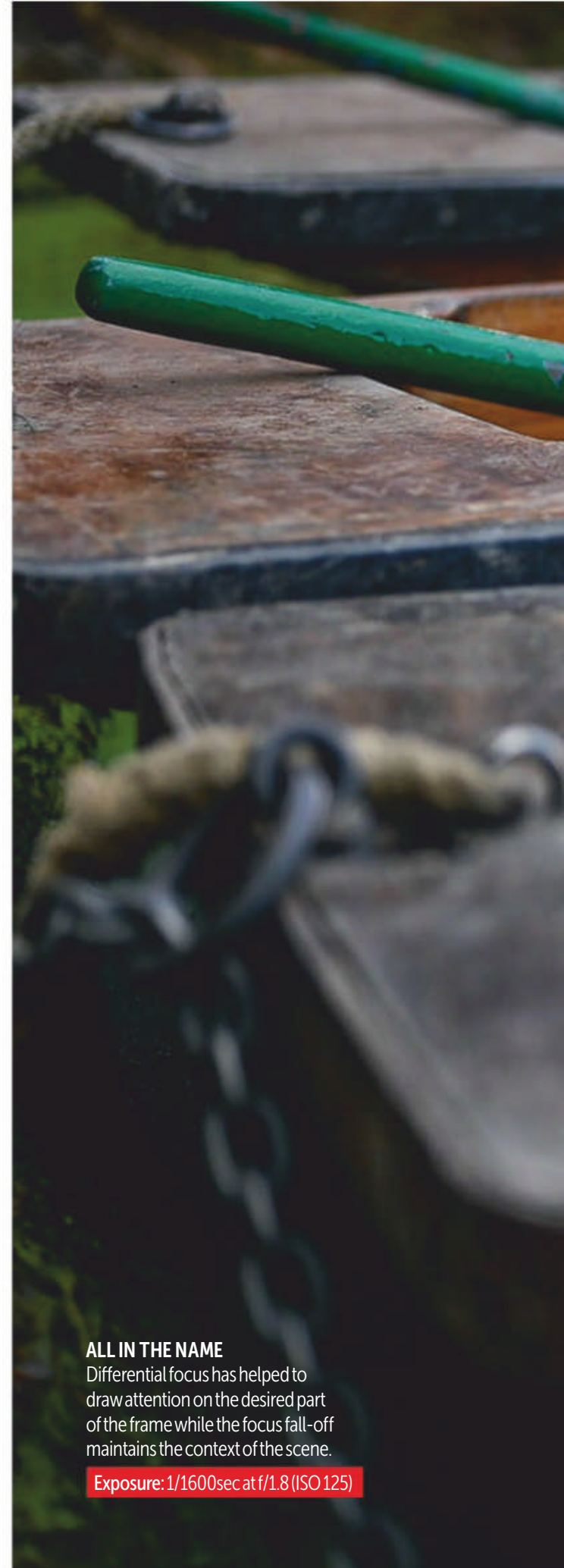
We made the 15-minute walk into the city centre and discussed the plan for the day. Chris was feeling slightly strange about only having a single lens to use, but I explained that only using a 50mm would in many ways be much better than using a zoom or having multiple lenses because of its wider aperture. You can still 'zoom' with your feet and it means you can travel light. Chris had a small backpack to carry a some personal items but he didn't feel the need to have a dedicated camera bag with such limited kit.

We arrived at King's Parade in front of King's College and wandered around while I explained that the first challenge was to focus on the details that make Cambridge so charming. It was a warm-up exercise to get him used to working with a 50mm lens but also looking at how a city is the sum of all its parts, from grand building to its easily-missed, character-filled details.

When you think of Cambridge, the objects that spring immediately to mind are bikes

and punts, so Chris naturally found himself drawn to these. He started off capturing tighter detail shots using differential focus to highlight different parts of classically styled bikes, so things like seats, horns and baskets. There's only so much time that you can spend on this way of shooting, so I suggested that we look for some lone bikes against plain backgrounds to get a few wider shots, and took Chris to a place where I was certain we'd find what we were looking for.

We wandered down to where I was thinking, and passed the famous singing bin man, who Chris grabbed a few shots of, and found that there were a couple of lone bikes where I had expected there to be; the first was a blue bike against a dark wall and the second was a green bike that was almost the same tone as the bush above and was leaning against a lighter wall. The second of the two bikes was the more interesting shot on a subtle level.



ALL IN THE NAME

Differential focus has helped to draw attention on the desired part of the frame while the focus fall-off maintains the context of the scene.

Exposure: 1/1600sec at f/1.8 (ISO 125)



We were coming to the end of the first challenge so I suggested we walk down to the river to find some packed punts to shoot. When we arrived, it turned out that this particular punt hire didn't lock its punts together in an interesting way so we headed across town to the mill pool to find what we were looking for. Chris spent about 20 minutes shooting a variety of images before we headed back into the city centre. ►



1) Chris used Live View to compose a low shot. 2) Shooting from a higher viewpoint. 3) Shooting at f/1.8 in aperture-priority for a shallow depth-of-field. 4) Dialling in settings to lengthen exposure time. 5) Chris captures a variety of bike details and wider shots to capture a sense of place.

CHALLENGE 1 *Pro verdict*

"The first challenge was extremely relaxed and allowed Chris to ease into the format of the workshop, as well as helping us to do a recce of the city centre to see where we might want to shoot later in the day. Details aren't an exciting subject but this doesn't mean that you can't use a variety of techniques to make them look more interesting, and Chris didn't hesitate to use differential focus and different focus points to experiment with emphasising different points of interest on a single subject. It was strange for Chris to limit himself with a single lens, but he quickly grew into the challenge. Well done!"



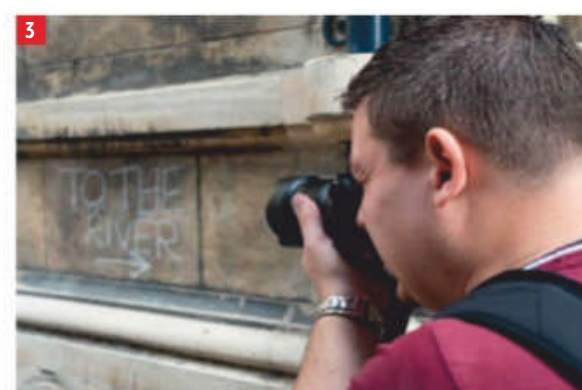
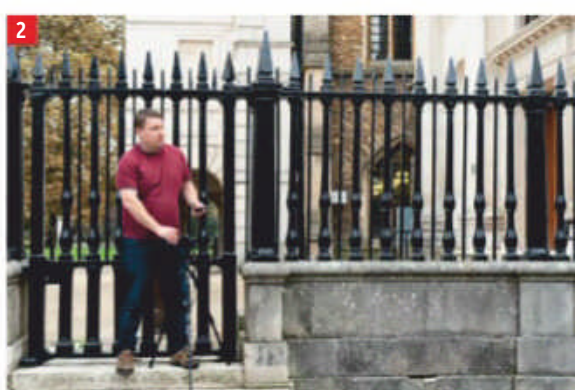
CHALLENGE 2: MOVEMENT

During the first challenge, Chris had become interested in the KEEP LEFT signs stencilled onto the floor to guide shoppers to maintain social distancing, although completely pointless because few people were paying attention to them. Chris noticed this and began capturing abstract images of people walking against the instruction and took some interesting shots that straddled both challenge one and two by incorporating detail and movement.

Chris kept shooting these when the opportunity arose, but we now positioned ourselves next to Gonville and Caius College, where we would see a steady stream of cyclists passing so Chris could put his panning skills to the test. We discussed the technique and Chris said that he had tried panning before but with limited success, so I gave him a recipe of settings and a few tips to fast track him to success.

When panning, it's best to shoot in shutter-priority so that you can set the shutter speed and the camera will take care of the aperture. I asked Chris to set this mode with ISO at 100, shutter speed at 1/30sec and continuous AF to track the moving subjects so to ensure the cyclists remain sharp. I also asked him to turn on the IBIS in his Nikon Z 6 to help stabilise shots.

When panning cyclists travelling at what you might call a normal speed, a shutter speed of 1/15sec or 1/30sec are usually ideal, so Chris experimented with both



options to see which provided a sharp cyclist with enough motion blur behind, and 1/30sec was indeed perfect so he stuck with this setting, applying just a small amount of exposure compensation, and continued shooting.

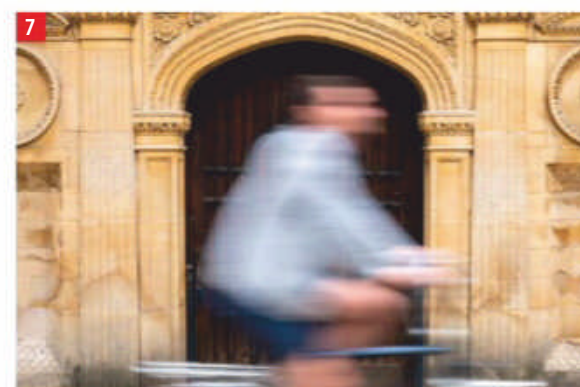
With these settings, Chris' technique was looking great, with nice sharp subjects and plenty of background blur, but the problem he was having was with timing and composition; he was capturing the cyclist either too early or too late so their



DYNAMIC MOVEMENT

Cambridge is the perfect place to capture panning shots of cyclists and Chris quickly perfected his technique.

Exposure: 1/30sec at f/7.1 (ISO 125)



1) Panning passing cyclists. 2) Chris waits for cyclists to capture subject blur against a sharp backdrop. 3) Focusing on foreground detail. 4) Assessing results on the LCD. 5) Hiding away in a doorway to be less conspicuous. 6) Focusing on the foreground with a shallow depth-of-field. 7) Focusing on subject blur for a different approach.

CHALLENGE 2 *Pro verdict*

"Panning is an advanced technique that always provides instant gratification because you achieve a highly dynamic effect in-camera. Chris quickly got to grips with the technical side of things and was capturing technically competent images, but his composition and timing needed a little more work. With just a few tweaks he was capturing great panning shots that formed the backbone of the challenge, with equally interesting shots freezing the movement of cyclists and also pedestrians with the images that crossover this and the previous challenge. Overall a highly successful challenge that allowed Chris to develop some solid skills."

angle in the frame was wrong, and in some cases they were too small in the frame. I suggested that Chris release the shutter at a specific point as the cyclists passed, and his hit rate began to creep up.

Once Chris was confident he had a selection of shots that worked, we moved onto a different technique. I asked him to switch to aperture-priority mode and to set f/1.8 and ISO 400 to create a faster shutter speed so as to freeze cyclists' movement. The aperture and ISO combination resulted in 1/800sec, which was perfect.

This approach to capturing movement was so that Chris could include context from the environment. By focusing on the writing on the wall at a wide aperture, he had a sharp foreground with a soft but with still a recognisable background. When a cyclist rode into the frame, Chris was then able to fire off the shutter to capture a frozen subject blurred by shallow depth-of-field. Since Chris was around a corner and couldn't see cyclists approaching, I stood on the road to let him know when to shoot and the process worked reasonably well. ►



CHALLENGE 3: SUNSET

With the pedometer on my watch telling me that we'd already walked over 20,000 steps, we decided to take a quick and well-deserved break before embarking on the third challenge. At this point it was 5.30pm, so we had a generous two whole hours until sunset – a first for me to have so much time to lead the third challenge – but knowing how quickly time can ebb away, I wasn't willing to fall into the trap of relaxing.

The first planned location in the run-up to sunset was Trinity Lane, which is a famous old lane running between college buildings with iconic chimneys on the roofs of the student accommodation on the right. As we made our way there, the light coming down Senate House Passage looked amazing, so Chris quickly grabbed a hand-held shot without any filters that worked well once it had been processed.

After a minute or so, we arrived at Trinity Lane and Chris grabbed some silhouette shots of the chimneys against the interesting sky. Once he'd finished, I suggested he also grab the components for a HDR shot so he set up the autobracketing feature on his Z 6 to take five exposures at one-stop increments. He grabbed a couple of sets before we packed up and made the walk to the other side of town where we would shoot the Mathematical Bridge, ideally with a punt or two on the River Cam.

As we approached the bridge we'd be shooting from, the light was looking much better than it would at sunset since the sun

was higher in the sky and was gently lighting the buildings on the right of the scene. Using his tripod would have cost Chris valuable time, so I suggested that he use his jumper to support the camera and shoot bracketed exposures again to maintain sky detail. Chris took a few shots and as we could see a few punts approaching from roughly 30m away, so didn't have to wait long. This was lucky because punts can add interest to shots of the Mathematical Bridge by removing the static characteristics of the scene.

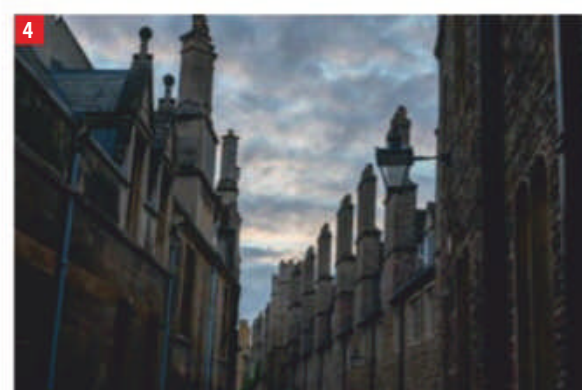
Two of the punts passed beneath the bridge we were standing on, but one turned to go back the way it came so this gave Chris time to make sure his settings were right for the final few shots at this location. Once the punt began passing beneath the bridge, I signalled to Chris to begin shooting and reminded him of the best point of focus to ensure a large depth-of-field while shooting at f/11. Although there was movement in the scene with the lone punt passing under the bridge, Chris's processing has successfully removed any ghosting and the result was a natural-looking HDR image.

We had enough shots for the final challenge, but there was one final spot I wanted to visit on the way back to where we'd parked – the public bridge to the back and side of Trinity College where you can get great views of the river in each direction, although looking south is the better of the two. Chris quickly grabbed an HDR shot of the river view and one looking down Garret Hostel Lane towards Trinity before we packed up and walked back to our cars. ●

A FAMOUS LANDMARK

The Mathematical Bridge always looks best when there's a punt in the scene to add a human element to the shot.

Exposure: 1/30sec at f/11 (ISO 1000)



CHALLENGE 3 Pro verdict

"Throughout the day, Chris remained extremely receptive to advice and blended this with his existing knowledge, which was limited with regards to cityscape photography but a solid foundation to build upon. The third challenge touched mainly on HDR, which is something Chris had tried previously meaning we could concentrate more on the compositional aspect of shots. Chris worked quickly to capture light as it changed – a challenge his usual subjects don't present. Overall he did a great job."



5

1) Capturing as many locations as possible in the run-up to sunset. 2) Chris rests his camera on a bridge. 3) Setting up the camera to shoot bracketed exposures for HDR. 4) Trinity Lane in HDR to maintain detail throughout the high contrast scene. 5) The last shot of the day as the streets grew even quieter.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY: *Chris Moss*



"Visiting Cambridge provided many new and exciting opportunities to capture the details that make Cambridge such a beautiful location. Having never visited the city before, I became engrossed by its character, even during these unusual times making it much quieter than normal, according to James. The second, and my favourite, challenge allowed me to explore panning and slow shutter speed techniques, which are very different from my experience shooting macro. My confidence improved throughout the day, particularly as James helped with composition and improving my technique. I'd love to re-visit Cambridge to have another go!"

Words: DANIEL LEZANO

NATURE UNCOVERED

DO YOUR NATURE IMAGES LACK IMPACT, INNOVATION AND IDEAS? IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO GIVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY A SHOT IN THE ARM, THEN LOOK NO FURTHER THAN BEN HALL AND ROSS HODDINOTT'S LATEST TITLE, *52 ASSIGNMENTS: NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY*. THIS NEW PUBLICATION HAS A FRESH AND FUN PROJECT FOR EVERY WEEK OR THE YEAR AND AIMS TO GET YOUR CREATIVE JUICES AND ENTHUSIASM WELL AND TRULY FLOWING. DANIEL LEZANO TALKS TO THE AUTHORS ABOUT THE INSPIRATION FOR THE BOOK AND THE CHALLENGES OF COAUTHORING... ►





COLLABORATIONS SEEM TO be the big thing at the moment. The download charts are full of artists pooling their skills – and now this trend appears to be spreading to photography projects, too. And why not? Most photographers are specialists in niche areas – you can't be good at everything – so by working together, photographers with different skillsets and expertise can produce a far more comprehensive and competent piece of work. It's the reason why Ben and Ross decided to work together on this assignments title, rather than go it alone.

Ben and Ross are two of the UK's best-known nature snappers and will already be familiar to readers of *Digital SLR Photography* as both are long-standing contributors to the magazine. Together, they have more awards for their photography than you can shake a stick at. However, they tend to shoot very contrasting subjects. Ben is recognised for his sublime and communitive images of birds and mammals, with an instinct for using the subject's

environment to tell stories. Meanwhile, Ross is renowned for highlighting the beauty and design of much smaller, miniature subjects – secretive little creatures that are often hidden beneath our feet. While their preferred subjects and styles might differ, they share a passion for nature and a recognisable flair and class. Between them they have an extensive knowledge of shooting all things wild, which is why this latest collaboration makes so much sense.

The new Covid world that we will live in requires me to talk to the two photographers through Zoom call, rather than face to face, but while that feels slightly odd and awkward at first, we are soon laughing and chatting openly. Both guys are very laid back and refreshingly easy to speak to – clearly neither take themselves too seriously. Before long we get on to the subject of how the two photographers first got to know each other. Ben goes on to explain: “We briefly spoke at the inaugural British Wildlife Photography Awards around ten years ago. We were both category winners that year and managed to grab ▶









“We recognised that the subjects we shot, and our individual styles and personalities, were very complementary”

a quick conversation among all the chaos and bubbly. Then, a couple of years later, we worked together on a large multimedia conservation project called 2020 Vision and just got on really well. Nature photographers are so accustomed to working alone, that it can be quite a shock to the system to actually work with someone else. But Ross and I have plenty in common besides our passion for nature, conservation and photography. We both discovered photography as kids and pursued careers within the industry at a young age. We are the same generation, with wives in similar professions and with kids of similar ages. We just clicked immediately, if you will excuse the pun.” Ross continues: “A few years later I was asked to lead a workshop to the Galapagos Islands, which is a dream destination for any nature lover or photographer. The tour operator wanted another tutor and I immediately championed Ben, as he is such a creative guy and an excellent technician and tutor. We ended up doing two tours to the archipelago

over two years, and they are among the best trips I’ve ever run. Not only was it an amazing experience to photograph the islands’ extraordinary and unique wildlife, but Ben and I became really good mates. We recognised that the subjects we shot, and our individual styles and personalities, were very complementary and, over a few pints one night, we came up with the idea of coauthoring *The Wildlife Photography Workshop*, which was published in 2013. The title sold well, and in several languages, and I think we realised that collaborating on certain projects benefited us both.”

Ben lives in Cheshire, while Ross is based in north Cornwall, so does the distance between them complicate things when working on a project together, such as their new book, *52 Assignments: Nature Photography*? “It’s surprisingly easy, actually,” Ross explains. “We try to meet up in person initially to do a bit of brain storming, but then we just chat via Skype. The Assignments book is part of a series ▶





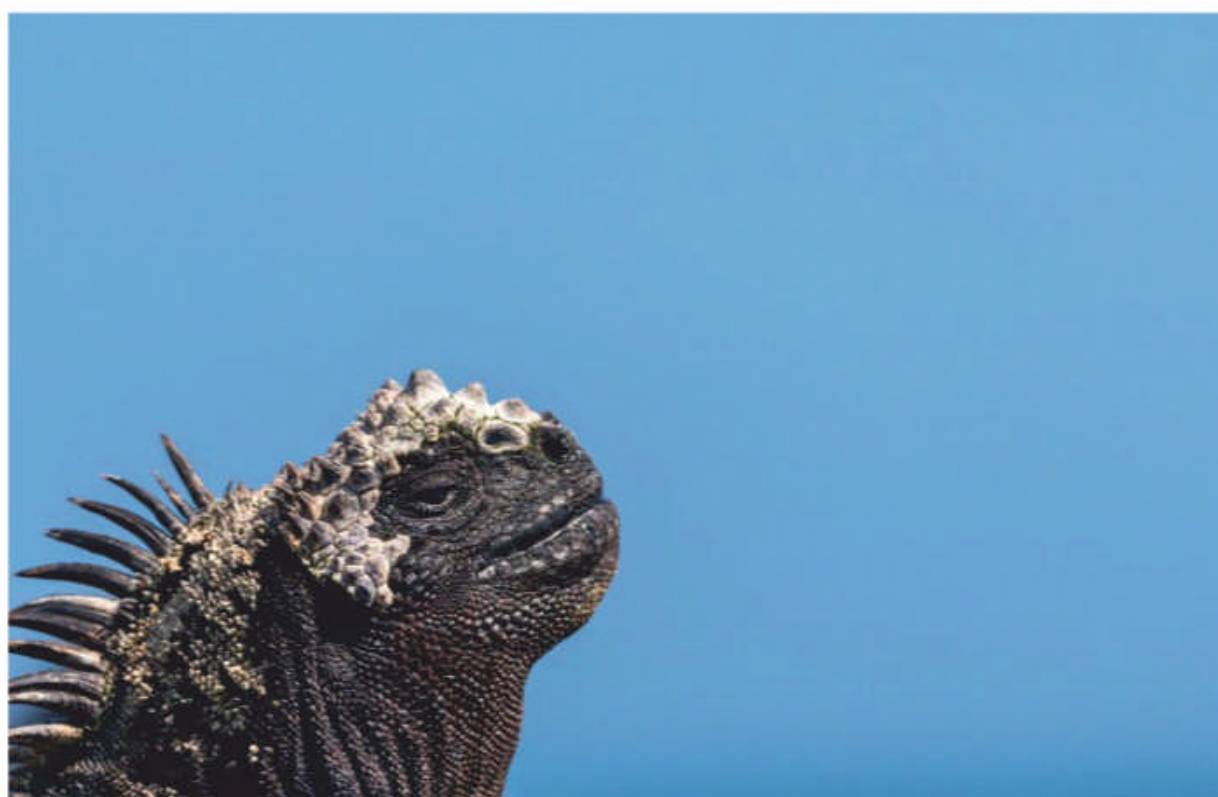
“Like almost every professional photographer today, both Ross and I earn a decent chunk of our income through tuition”

created by our publisher, Ammonite Press, so there is an existing formula and structure, which made our lives easier. We compiled a list of around 60 potential projects, which we then refined to 52 together with the publisher and editor. Once we had our final list of assignments, we split them equally between us. We did this like you might select a football team in the playground, taking it in turns to pick the projects we wanted to do until we both had 26 assignments each to write and illustrate. We then just lock ourselves away in our respective offices and prepare material in readiness for the deadline” Ben adds. “We regularly exchange messages and compare chunks of text to ensure consistency and avoid repetition. And occasionally we will ask each other for a specific shot to illustrate a specific

technique. However, overall, it is a fairly straightforward process. We both have quite similar writing styles, which helps the book flow well. I don’t think it is obvious at all that it is written by two people.”

Ben and Ross completed the material earlier in the year, before all our lives were turned upside down by the pandemic. I’m curious to know how their lives as nature photographers have changed over the past few months. “It’s been such a difficult time for everyone, hasn’t it?”, Ben says. “Like almost every professional photographer today, both Ross and I earn a decent chunk of our income through tuition, but all our workshops had to be cancelled throughout spring and for most of the summer. Meanwhile, trips have had to be cancelled and personal projects put on pause due to ►





“You are far more likely to capture unique or innovative images of nature by working regularly and closely with local species”

MORE ON THE BOOK...

52 ASSIGNMENTS: NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

RRP: £12.99/Ammonite Press

52 Assignments: Nature Photography is a collection of mini photographic workshops and an inspirational guide to putting the creativity back into your craft. It is handbook sized, so small enough to fit into your backpack and carry with you while you are out shooting. It is filled with a year's worth of weekly projects and ideas for composing and creating eye-catching nature photography in all its forms. Whether that is building your own hide, setting up a feeding station, shooting macro, creating beautiful animal silhouettes or capturing birds in flight or focusing on natural textures. By the time you complete the final assignment, you will feel more creative and motivated to explore the natural world around you. At £12.99 it's the perfect stocking filler for any photographer this Christmas. Buy online at Amazon or at: www.rosshoddinott.co.uk/shop.



the restrictions on travel. Obviously, that has had a financial impact, but then who hasn't been adversely affected by Covid-19? It's been one crazy, surreal year.” Ross goes on to explain: “I co-run Dawn 2 Dusk Photography, which specialises in photography workshops. Ben is one of our tutors. Lockdown created a huge logistical headache, trying to rearrange courses, communicate with hotels, and keep clients informed and reassured. It's been a balancing act trying to juggle a mountain of admin, home-schooling kids, while also trying to do some work and photography to keep pennies trickling in. Yes, it's been

tricky, but our families are happy and healthy, and that really is the bottom line. 2020 has taught us all to get our priorities straight. And there have been positives too. Ben and I both enjoy working close to home and developing an intimate knowledge of local subjects. You are far more likely to capture unique or innovative images of nature by working regularly and closely with local species as you develop a clear understanding of their behaviour and environment.” Working close to home is just one of the assignments Ben and Ross set readers in the book, and the topic seems particularly apt this year of all years. ▶







“Nature photography is such a competitive arena today, with an abundance of good photographers, all trying to make a name”

Both photographers have received recognition for their nature images in the UK and internationally, so I can't help but inquire what the key ingredient is that makes an award-winning image? “That is such a tricky question to answer”, Ben responds. “Often it is a combination of things. It might be unusual behaviour, atmosphere and mood created by the light, season or conditions.” “Originality always helps images stand out to the judges,” Ross adds, “so a creative or unconventional approach is important – don't try to simply replicate other images or previous winners.”

As we chat, I flick through a copy of the book. The quality of the imagery and artistry jumps out and the authors cover such a huge and diverse range of subjects, ideas and techniques. It really is a neat, cleanly designed little book that is sure to get your creative juices flowing. The projects don't have to be done in any particular order and

some of the assignments are longer-term projects, while others can take just hours to complete. It's a book that you can dip in and out of – a real achievement, but what's next for the pair? I ask Ben and Ross if they have plans for any other future projects. Ross answers: “Nature photography is such a competitive arena today, with an abundance of good photographers, all trying to make a name. I think we both recognise that you can be stronger working together than alone. And while we have no immediate plans to coauthor another book, we do enjoy working together and I'm sure we will collaborate again on other projects.” Ben adds: “Meanwhile, we hope to run more workshops together over the next few years. Coronavirus has rather wrecked the plans we had for a few overseas workshops we'd been discussing. However, there is plenty to shoot in the UK while we wait for things to settle down and travel restrictions to ease again.”

SOUTH WALES

With Adam Burton

DESPITE ITS RELATIVELY MODEST PROPORTIONS, WALES CERTAINLY DOES NOT SUFFER FROM A LACK OF PHOTOGENIC LOCATIONS. QUITE THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE AS THE LAND OF DRAGONS IS BRIMMING WITH FABULOUS SCENERY, FROM RUGGED MOUNTAINS AND ROLLING GREEN HILLS TO DRAMATIC COASTLINES. WHILE THE NORTH OF THE COUNTRY IS BEST KNOWN FOR THE MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS OF SNOWDONIA, AND THE WEST FOR ITS FABULOUS COASTLINE IN PEMBROKESHIRE, SOUTH WALES COMPRISES ELEMENTS OF BOTH WITH SIMILAR TERRAIN OFFERING UP A BEAUTIFUL PACKAGE OF BOTH SEASCAPES AND LANDSCAPES TO ENTICE EVERY VISITING PHOTOGRAPHER

SOUTH WALES







IT MAY NOT have the lure of the Lake District, the charms of Cornwall or the seduction of Skye, but what South Wales does offer is an incredible variety of locations to photograph, all relatively close in proximity. And, unlike many of the better known photogenic locations in the UK, are for the most part easily accessible by a network of excellent roads.

If you based yourself just to the south of the Brecon Beacons National Park, it would be quite possible to access every location described in this article within an hour's drive. Although, with so much to see and do in each area, it would be preferable to put aside enough time to have several bases. Alternatively, bearing in mind how simple South Wales is to reach for many people, why not make several shorter trips to fully explore each area?

Whether you decide on one big trip or several smaller excursions, there is a lot to see and shoot in this area, so be sure to allocate enough time. A week-long trip will give you a good taste of the region; alternatively, several long weekends will be perfect for exploring the areas covered here.

Although there is so much to see, for the purposes of simplification I have split South Wales into three geographic areas: the Brecon Beacons, the Gower Peninsula and the Glamorgan Heritage coast.

Brecon Beacons

One of three National Parks in Wales, the Brecon Beacons cover a vast area in South Wales – around 520 square miles. Much of the landscape consists of wild mountain ranges, but in between lie some of the finest rolling countryside to be found anywhere in Britain. Thanks to a good road network, the eastern half of the National Park is the most accessible. The towns of Brecon, Crickhowell or Abergavenny all situated along the A40 offer excellent bases for exploring the area.

The Brecon Beacons National Park consists of three mountain ranges, with names designed to confuse! There is the Brecon Beacons in the middle, the Black

BIOGRAPHY



Adam Burton is one of the UK's leading professional landscape photographers. Photographer, teacher and author with over 15 years experience working within the photography

industry, Adam has photographed many of the world's beautiful natural areas and specialises in the landscapes of the UK, particularly southwest England. Entirely self-taught, Adam's style has developed organically through photographing the wide variety of landscapes and seascapes found within the UK. His bold, colourful landscapes are always in-demand; his client list includes many prestigious organisations such as National Geographic, Ford and The AA. www.adamburtonphotography.co.uk

- 1) Llyn y Fan Fach viewed from the walk up to the summit of Picws Du. 2) Aerial vista of Carreg Cennen Castle at dawn. 3) Tranquil dawn at Llangorse Lake in the Brecon Beacons. 4) Hawthorns and rolling countryside of the Usk Valley.

Mountains to the east and the Black Mountain to the west. If you are seeking solitude with miles of wilderness all to yourself, head over to the Black Mountain. The twin lakes of Llyn y Fan Fawr and in particular Llyn y Fan Fach make excellent locations to explore. The latter is in a beautiful setting, nestled in a horseshoe in the shadow of Picws Du, the second highest mountain in the Carmarthen Fans.

Further to the west, perched on the summit of a rocky outcrop close to the border of the National Park, Carreg Cennen is one of Wales' most spectacularly positioned castles. Yet, in a land so famous for its ancient fortresses, Carreg Cennen rarely gets a mention. There are various vistas where the castle can be photographed from both near and far. For the very best view pack your telephoto zoom and drive up the little mountain road to the south east of the castle.

Returning east towards the Brecon Beacons, it's well worth stopping off near the village of Ystradfellte to experience some of

DID YOU KNOW?

The SAS use the Brecon Beacons as a key training area due to its remoteness and harsh, unpredictable weather.





Wales's best waterfalls. Aptly nicknamed Waterfall Country, this area is blessed with a plethora of beautiful large cascades, and makes the perfect destination to head to on dull, overcast and even rainy days. Most of the waterfalls can be found in close proximity along two rivers, the Nedd Fechan and the Afon Mellte, including the famous Sgwd yr Eira falls that you can walk behind.

After visiting Ystradfellte, head towards Brecon initially on the A3059 before turning onto the A470. Soon after passing the Beacons Reservoir on your left, turn right into the large car park. This is the main starting point for the walk up to the summit of Pen y Fan, at 886m it's the highest mountain in southern Britain. Despite its height, Pen y Fan is a fairly simple mountain for most to summit as the route involves a slow continuous slog along a well maintained path. It's a right of passage amongst the Welsh, and as a result you are likely to share the journey with a continuous flow of walkers all heading to the summit.

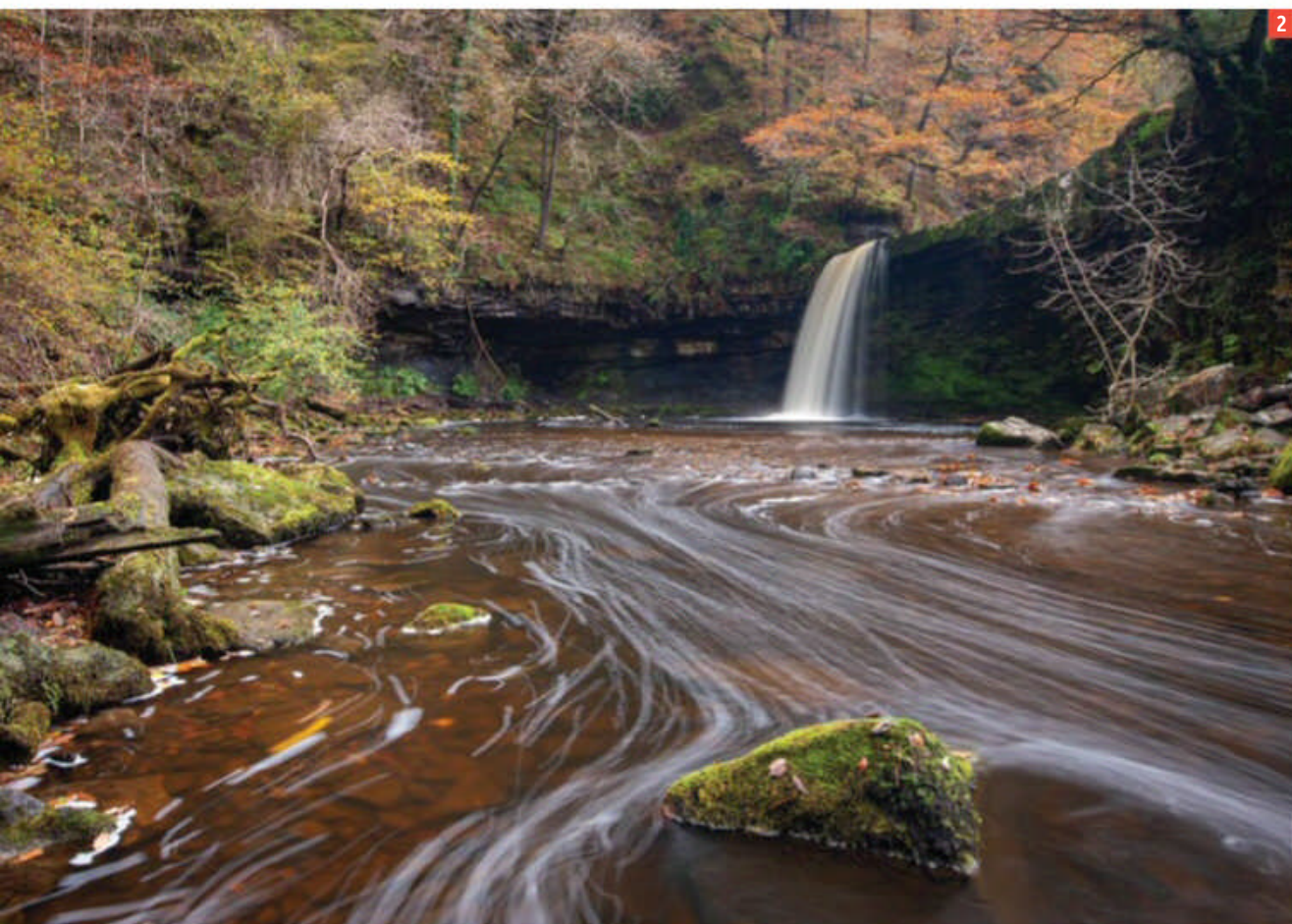
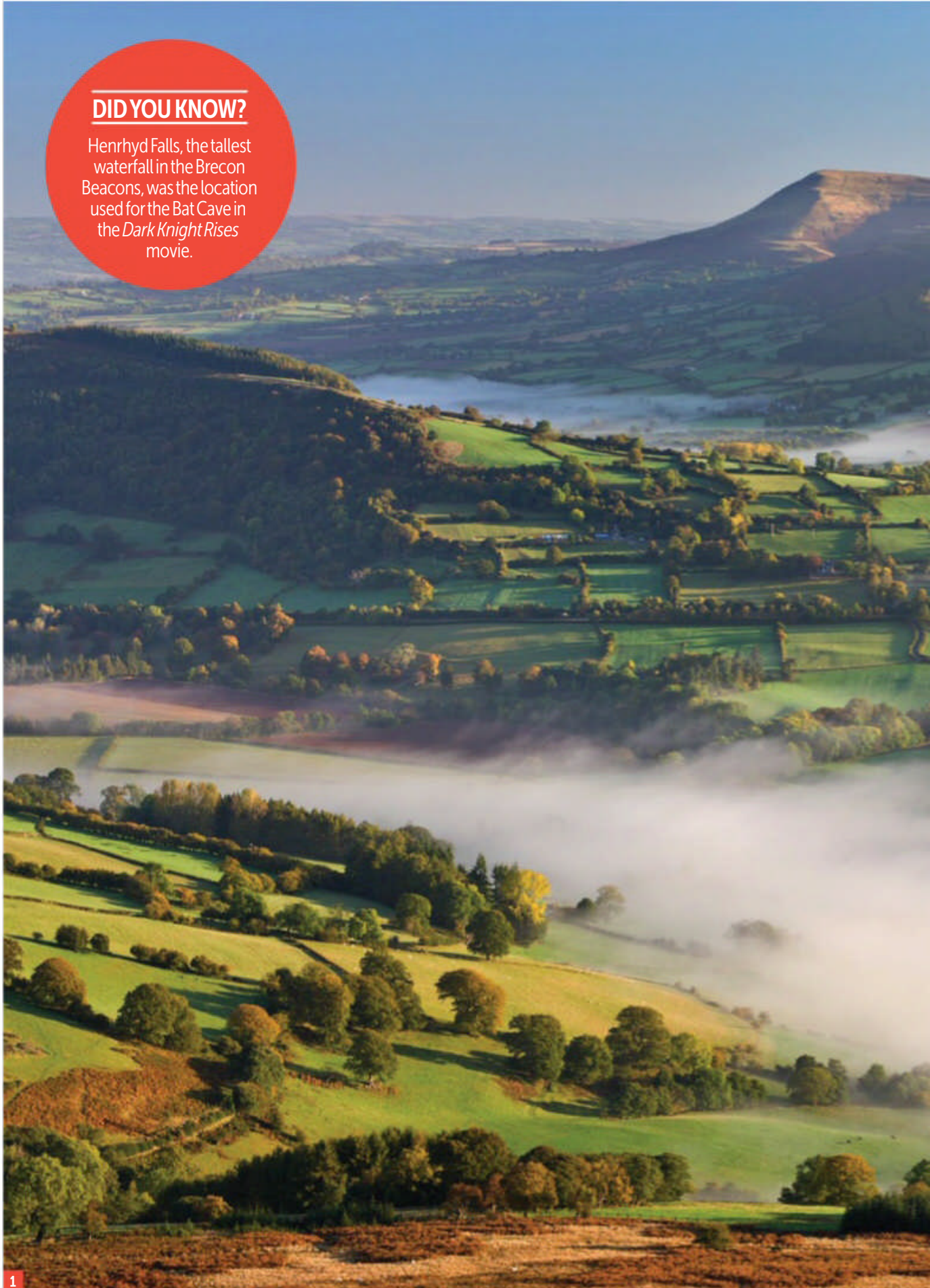
The views from the top are spectacular, and well worth the effort. Like all the mountains in the National Park, Pen y Fan and its sister peak Corn Du have flat summits, making ideal locations to set up a tripod on, providing of course it's not blowing a gale!

Many of the most photogenic spots within the National Park can be found just to the east of the Brecon Beacons range, in the Usk Valley. The rolling countryside vistas here are delightful, and with the surrounding hills and mountains there are plenty of opportunities to find high vantage points to shoot down over the patchwork fields. If you can drag yourself out of bed early enough on a cool still morning, head up to one of the nearby hills armed with your telephoto zoom, and

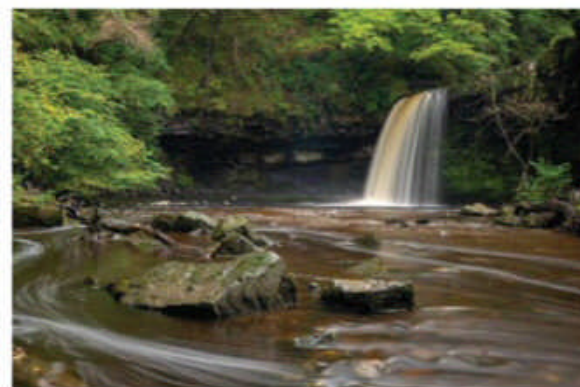
1) Morning mist hanging low in the Usk Valley. 2) Along exposure of the Sgwd Gwladus waterfall. 3) The abandoned quarry below the Llangattock Escarpment. 4) Canal boat moored up on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. 5) An inversion hides Llangorse Lake below a cloud of mist at dawn.

DID YOU KNOW?

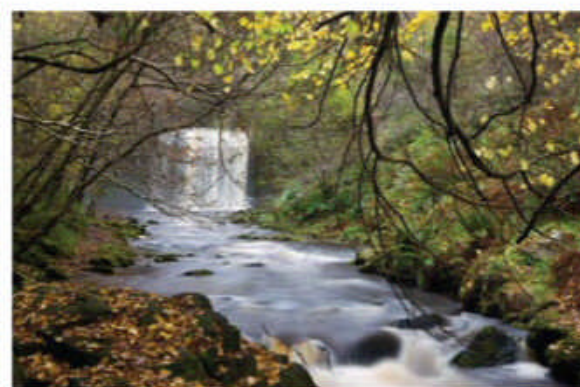
Henrhyd Falls, the tallest waterfall in the Brecon Beacons, was the location used for the Bat Cave in the *Dark Knight Rises* movie.



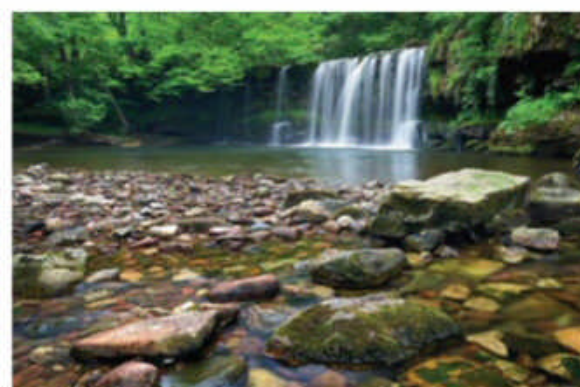
BRECON BEACONS WATERFALLS



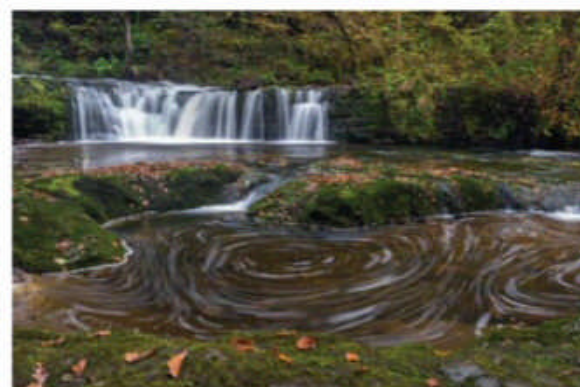
● **SGWD GWLADUS (THE LADY FALL):** Situated on the Afon (River) Pyrddin, this elegant waterfall is a favourite amongst photographers. The water cascades from a high ledge and falls into a wide shallow riverbed. You can set up on either side of the river and use exposures of several seconds to record the bubbles as streaks in the water.



● **SGWD YR EIRA (FALLS OF SNOW):** Probably the most well known waterfall in the Brecon Beacons, and famous for being the waterfall that you can walk behind, Sgwd yr Eira is very beautiful. Located on the Afon (River) Mellte, the waterfall is not the easiest to reach, with a two-mile walk through hilly woodland from the nearest car park.



● **SGWD DDWLI UCHAF (UPPER GUSHING FALLS):** Similar in appearance to Sgwd yr Eira, this grand waterfall on the Nedd Fechan river is a simple ten-minute walk from the car park at Pont Melin-fach. The waterfall looks great as a subject in its own right, or when photographed as a backdrop to a wide-angle rushing river image.

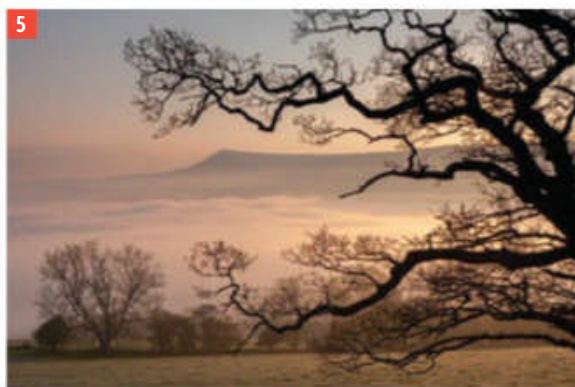


● **SGWD DDWLI ISAF (LOWER GUSHING FALLS):** The lower falls are another ten to 15 minutes from Sgwd Ddwli Uchaf, so can be easily photographed on the same trip. There are two sets of falls here: the lower being small but more photogenic due to moss-covered ledges on the riverbed, which can make great foreground subjects.



shoot the landscape below as it's immersed in the magical beauty of morning mist.

When in the area, be sure to pay a visit to Llangorse Lake. South Wales's largest natural lake is a wonderful place to while away a few hours with the camera. At the north end of the lake, near the Sailing Club, there is a wide choice of subject matter to fill foregrounds in wide-angle compositions. There are usually rowing boats and small fishing boats pulled up along several jetties, plus a couple of wooden jetties, which always make compelling subjects. Most interestingly, look out for the reconstructed crannog (an ancient building built on an artificial island).



The real crannog is situated just offshore, believed to have been constructed in 916AD as a home for the King of Brycheiniog.

Just to the south of the A40, running roughly parallel with the River Usk, the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal offers a pretty and peaceful place to wander with your camera. The canal is extremely photogenic along its course, and looks especially pleasing on still days when the calm water is reflective. There are too many places to describe here, but if you are looking for a couple of photogenic spots where the canal passes through, try the village of Llangattock or Talybont on Usk. ►

Gower Peninsula

The beautiful Gower Peninsula, near Swansea, has long been highly regarded for its lovely coastal scenery. In 1956, it became the UK's very first area to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

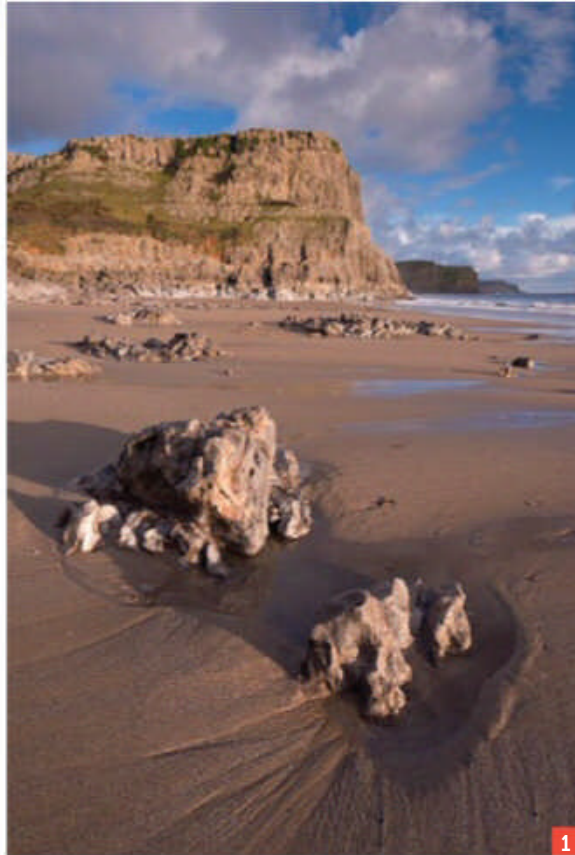
At only 70 square miles in area, the peninsula is fairly compact and therefore pretty easy to get around. From a photographic perspective the south and west coasts are the most appealing, with miles of dramatic limestone cliffs and some incredibly beautiful beaches.

Most of the Gower's photographic highlights are clustered around a small area in the south-west corner of the peninsula, near the village of Rhossili. Conveniently, a hotel right on the cliff tops here makes a perfect base to stay while exploring the area. The hotel overlooks the sweeping golden expanse of Rhossili Bay, one of the finest beaches in all of Wales.

Just metres from the hotel and National Trust car park, the cliff top view of the beach is breathtaking, and shouldn't be missed. Rarely do you find such a glorious opportunity to shoot incredible scenery with so little effort. Below you the beach stretches

ADAM BURTON'S WORKSHOPS

Adam is a highly experienced and enthusiastic workshop leader, with over 25 years' experience teaching groups and individuals. He has been leading photographic workshops for over ten years to destinations all over the UK and internationally, including Canada, USA and the Faroe Islands. With a patient, friendly and not overly-technical approach, Adam is the ideal tutor to help develop your photography. If you would like to find out more details of workshops Adam is leading, please visit his website at: www.adamburtonphotography.com



for almost three miles northwards in an unbroken golden expanse, with continuous breakers rolling in off the Atlantic.

Once your appetite has been whetted, head down the footpath and onto the beach itself, and wander over to the wooden object poking up out of the sand. On an otherwise empty expanse of beach, it's hard to miss the skeletal remains of the shipwreck *Helvetia*, which ran aground here in 1887. The shipwreck is incredibly photogenic, bearing more than a passing resemblance to a dragon's head emerging from the sand.

After shooting Rhossili, return to the cliff top car park and walk along the headland, all the way to the Worms Head viewpoint



DID YOU KNOW?

In 1823, in a cave close to Mewslade Bay, a scientist found the remains of a Paleolithic human skeleton. Known as the Red Lady, the bones are in fact from a young male believed to have died around 34,000 years ago.



near the Old Coastguard Station. From here, Worms Head looks like an island at high tides or is connected to the mainland via a huge rocky ledge when the tide is low.

You can walk down the cliff footpath here to shoot low-level seascapes looking out towards Worms Head, or alternatively turn left and continue walking for another 15 minutes to reach Fall Bay. If you decide to walk the extra distance to reach Fall Bay, you will be in for a treat. The coast comprises a series of angular ledges extending into the sea, with a dramatic backdrop of limestone cliffs across the bay into the distance.

Less than a mile along the coast from here is another highlight of the Gower Peninsula, Mewslade Bay. To appreciate everything that Mewslade has to offer, you really need to visit during a low tide. At this time, the beach consists of pointed rocks emerging from golden sand, with fascinating angular cliffs towering above. Mewslade is incredibly unusual, and the geology unique to this area.

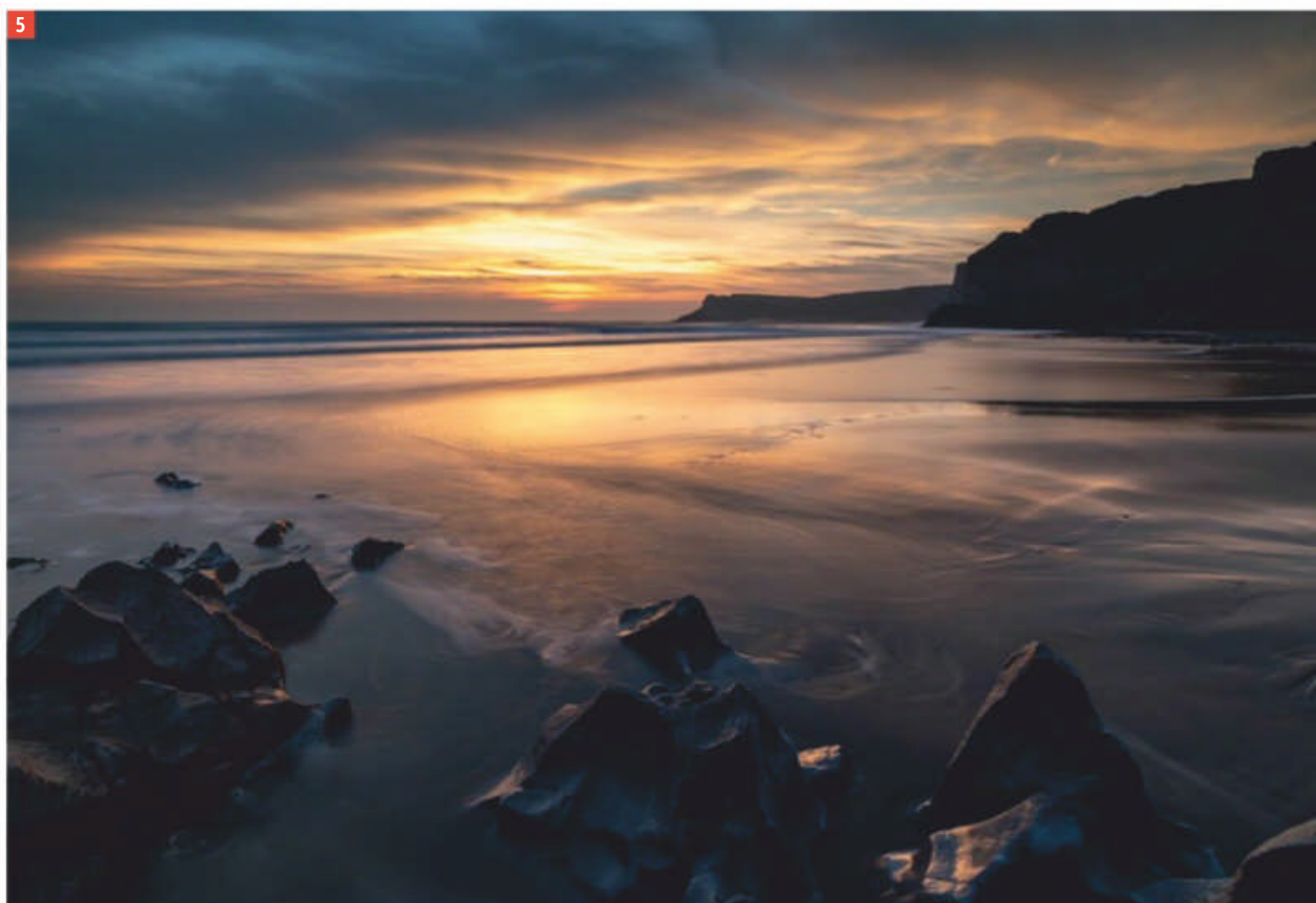
Although most of the photographic highlights can be found in the south-west corner, the whole south coast is worthy of exploration. From Mewslade the cliffs are

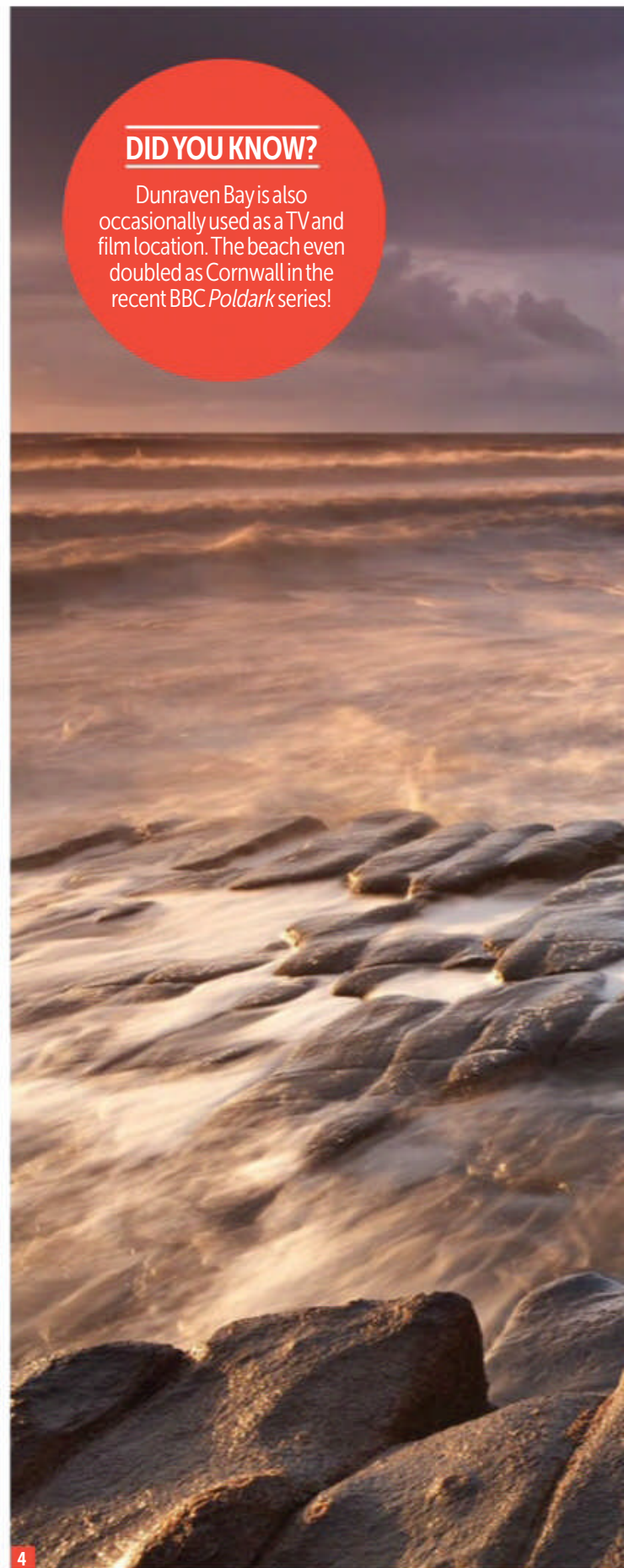
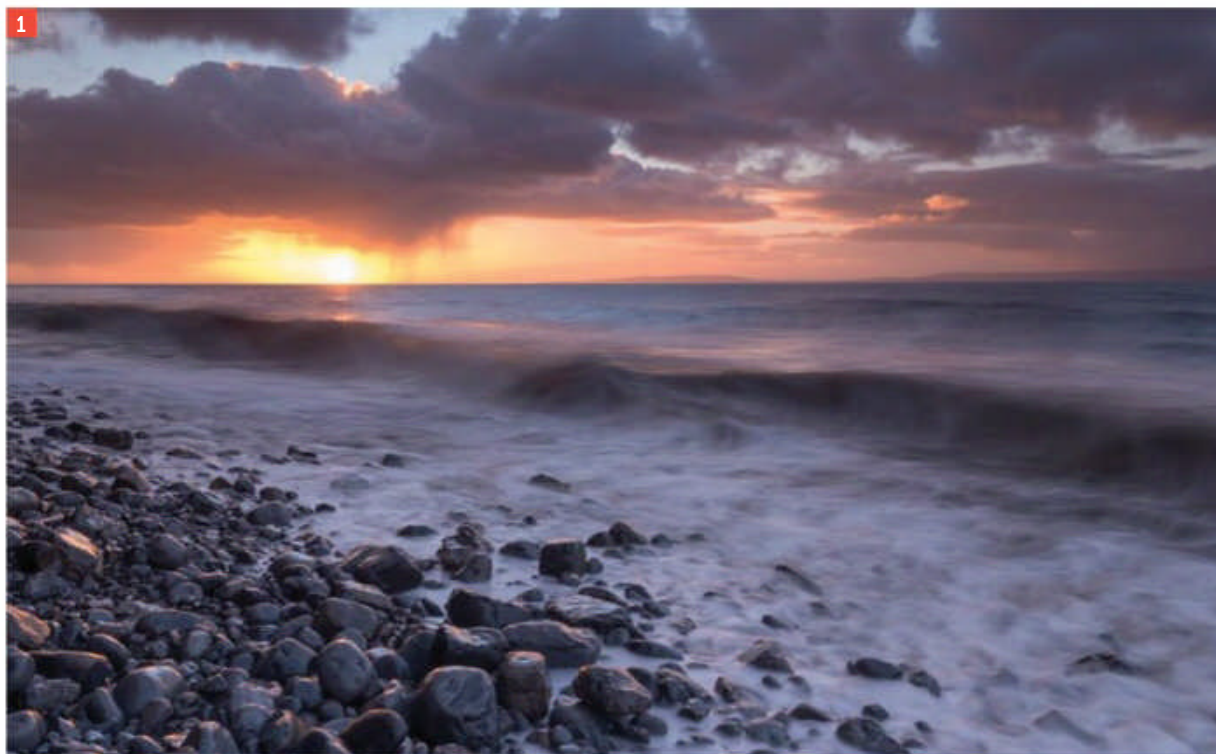


1) Rocks on the beach at Fall Bay on the Gower Peninsula. 2) An enormous rusty anchor near Worm's Head. 3) The sweeping expanse of Rhossili Bay from the clifftop viewpoint. 4) Mumbles lighthouse photographed from the rocky shores of Bracelet Bay. 5) Beautiful sunset above Mewslade Bay.

high and unbroken all the way to Port Eynon, where the cliffs give way to a sandy beach. Around the next headland, just past Oxwich Bay Beach, set time aside to visit beautiful Three Cliffs Bay. The further east you venture, the farmland thins out to be replaced by residential areas. Soon you will have reached Mumbles, on the outskirts of Swansea.

Here, right at the eastern tip of the peninsula, Bracelet Bay is worthy of a mention, particularly if you are looking for a location to shoot sunrise. The beach here faces eastwards towards Mumbles Lighthouse, and presents opportunities to capture the sun rising over the sea in the winter months. Regardless of tide levels, the beach makes a great location for a spot of photography. If the tide is low there is a lot of sand, but plenty of rocky ledges too, while at high tide the water is pushed right up to the larger ledges high up the beach, presenting excellent opportunities for wide-angle shots. ►





DID YOU KNOW?

Dunraven Bay is also occasionally used as a TV and film location. The beach even doubled as Cornwall in the recent BBC *Poldark* series!

Glamorgan Heritage Coast

Although the Glamorgan coast is only a short drive south east from Gower, the landscape has a very different feel to it. The limestone cliffs all along this coastline are very distinctive, consisting of golden horizontal layers. Below these cliffs, a multitude of eroded ledges stretch out towards the sea, making perfect subjects for seascapes.

The Heritage Coast stretches for a mere 14 miles eastwards from Porthcawl, and for much of that distance the steep cliffs run continuously without much access to the shore below. However, the few areas where the cliffs do fall away provide access to some of the most photogenic beaches to be found anywhere in Wales.

Probably the most well known of these beaches is Dunraven Bay. If you like shooting wide-angle seascapes, Dunraven will provide you with all the foreground you could hope to find. Smooth, wave-eroded ledges can be found high up on the eastern side of the beach, while some very different pock-marked ledges frequent the western side. In-between, a wide stretch of golden sand is broken occasionally by tidal pools, which are perfect for reflecting colourful sunsets.

An equally impressive location can be found at Nash Point, just a short distance along the coast. A toll road provides access to a small cliff top parking area, from here take a path down towards the shore. Nash Point benefits from very similar geology to Dunraven Bay, but with far less sand and more rocky ledges. It's most distinguishing feature is the unusual triangular cliff that makes a fabulous backdrop to any picture.

Lesser known is the wonderful beach near

- 1) Stormy sunrise above Llantwit Major beach at high tide.
- 2) Looking along the distinctive golden limestone cliffs of Nash Point.
- 3) Low tide at Traeth Bach near Dunraven Bay.
- 4) Wave-eroded limestone ledges at Dunraven Bay.

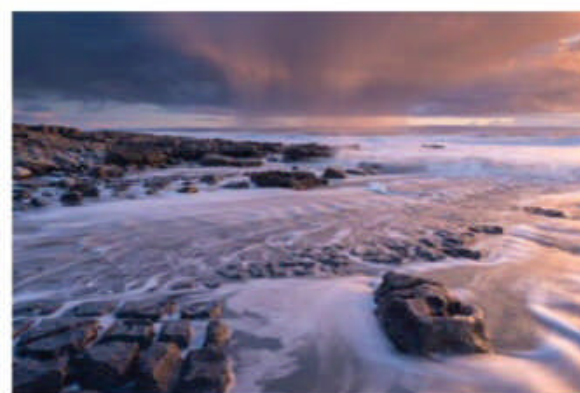
the village of Llantwit Major. As with the other locations along this stretch of coast, the cliffs have the same distinctive golden layers with eroded ledges below. What makes Llantwit Major beach special is that it faces eastwards, so makes a perfect location to shoot sunrise.

Whichever beach you decide to head to, pay attention to the tide. The tidal range here is enormous, and at high tide all of the beaches are mostly covered. Sometimes low tide can be just as problematic, with the mass of exposed ledges making compositions busy and confusing. It's best to visit during a mid-tide, ideally when it's retreating to save any risk of becoming cut off. ●

BEST BEACHES TO SHOOT SUNSET



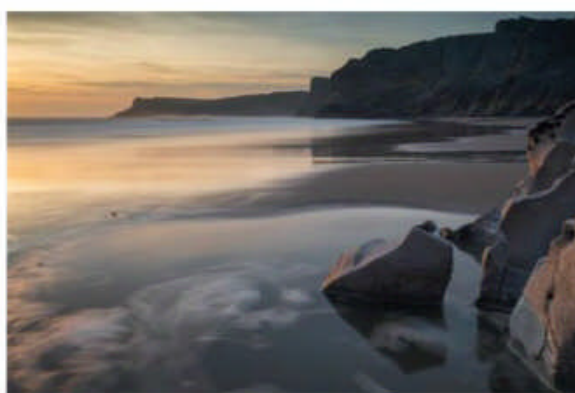
● **RHOSSILI BEACH:** This wide expanse of sandy beach faces westwards towards the Worm's Head peninsula and is therefore ideally placed for shooting sunsets. The best subject on the beach is the shipwreck, *Helvetia*, but plan your visit for a retreating tide to avoid the sand around the shipwreck being spoilt by many footprints.



● **NASH POINT:** Tide permitting, the wide ledges of Nash Point provide opportunities to shoot the sun setting over the sea at any time of year. Alternatively, arrange your composition to capture the low, late sunlight turning the layered cliffs to gold. For the best compositions, head to the southern side of the beach.



● **DUNRAVEN BAY:** Dunraven Bay really does have it all for seascape photography, but for sunset it's hard to beat shooting up close to one of the beach's tidal pools. There should be numerous pools all over the sandy area of beach, each formed around a huge rectangular rock chunk, which fell long ago from the cliffs above.



● **MEWSLADE BEACH:** Beautiful Mewslade faces roughly southwards so is best photographed at sunset in winter as the sun descends to the south west. Head to the beach when the tides are lower and retreating to avoid the risk of being cut off. Try to create compositions that include some of Mewslade's fascinating and unusual rocks.



● **PORTHCAWL:** Porthcawl may appear to be a seaside resort with little to offer a photographer but, below the sea front, the beach is packed with rocky ledges and interesting geology. With a wide area to explore, there are opportunities to shoot sunset throughout the year. Avoid high tides when the ledges are mostly submerged.

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Gear

PHOTO KIT TESTED & RATED BY EXPERTS

CANON EOS R6

CANON'S LATEST ENTHUSIAST-LEVEL MIRRORLESS MODEL PROVES TO BE AN EXCELLENT CHOICE FOR STILLS AND VIDEO, IF YOU CAN GET OVER ITS RESOLUTION OF 'ONLY' 20.1-MEGAPIXELS



Plus

SOFTWARE TEST: Is Skylum's Aurora HDR the best software for High Dynamic Range images? *Page 102*

MINI TESTS: We rate Pgytech's OneMo backpack and Black Rapid's Delta sling strap *Page 105*

CANON EOS R6

It's much more affordable than the R5 announced at the same time but does the R6 have enough of what we want?
Angela Nicholson takes it for a spin

Test: ANGELA NICHOLSON

SPECIFICATIONS

Price: £2,449 (body only)

Image sensor: Full-frame CMOS

Lens mount: Canon RF mount

Resolution: 20.1-megapixels

Maximum image resolution: 5472x3648 pixels

AF system: Dual Pixel CMOS AF II phase detection with 6,072 points

Metering: 384-zone TTL using image sensor: Evaluative, Partial, Spot, Centre-weighted

ISO range: Auto + ISO 100-102,400; expands to 50-204,800 for stills

Shutter speeds: 1/8000sec-30 seconds and Bulb
Continuous frame rate: 20 frames-per-second (fps) with electronic shutter, 12fps with mechanical shutter

LCD: 3in 1.62million-dot vari-angle touchscreen

Finder: 0.5in 3.69million-dot OLED electronic viewfinder

Storage: Dual SDXC UHS-II

Size: 138.4x97.5x88.4mm

Weight: 680g (including battery and card)

Website: www.canon.co.uk

CANON ANNOUNCED THE EOS R6 at the same time as the EOS R5. While both are full-frame mirrorless cameras with lots of features in common, the EOS R6 has a 20.1-megapixel sensor, whereas the R5 has an effective pixel count of 45-million pixels. Crucially, the EOS R6 also costs £1,750 less than the R5, which means it will appeal to more photographers. It also has some very impressive credentials, not least a very similar sensor design to Canon's flagship DSLR, the EOS-1D X Mark III.

Like the EOS R5, the EOS R6 has a magnesium alloy chassis behind its polycarbonate and glass resin outer shell. It's also weather-sealed to the same level as the Canon EOS 6D Mark II. Overall, it has a nice solid feel with most of the controls you need within easy reach. Front and rear dials on the top-plate and a large wheel on the rear let you adjust settings quickly and easily when the camera is held to your eye.

In addition, there's a joystick on the back of the camera that allows you to select the AF point you want to use while you're looking in the viewfinder. I have quite large hands for my height and gender but I found the joystick a bit of a stretch for my thumb. It means I have to adjust my grip on the



Above & right: The Canon EOS R6 is a very well made model with a very logical control layout. The hinged LCD monitor makes it easy to use LiveView at unusual angles.

camera to move from one AF point to another. It's not major issue as the EOS R6 isn't the sort of camera that you're likely to use one-handed, but worth noting.

As it has a 0.5in-type screen, the EOS R6's viewfinder seems nice and big while the 3.69-million dots provide a detailed view with accurate exposure and colour. Although fast-moving subjects seem to move jerkily when the display performance is set to 'Power saving', it's still possible to follow them in the viewfinder. Switching to the 'Smooth' setting gives the movement a more natural appearance.

On the back of the camera there's a 3in 1.62-million-dot touchscreen mounted on a vari-angle hinge. This enables you to see the image when composing low or high-level shots in landscape or portrait orientation.

As usual, Canon has done a great job of combining touch control with button and dial control. If you prefer, you can scroll through the menu and make setting selections using the navigation pad on the back on the camera, but you can also tap on options that you want to set. It really speeds up using the menu.

There's no avoiding a lengthy menu with a camera that has as many features as the EOS R6, but in addition to the Quick menu that's accessed by pressing the Q button on the back of the camera, the main menu has a customisable 'My Menu' section. This has up



to six tabs, each with up to six items and it's well worth giving some thought as to how you organise the features that you want to access via this route. For example, I found it helped to group together some of the autofocus features in one tab and some video-centric features in another.

Thanks to its sensor design, coupled with the DIGIC X processing engine, the Canon EOS R6 has a native sensitivity range of ISO 100-102400 for stills. This can be expanded to ISO 50-204800. While I wouldn't choose to use ISO 102400 unless absolutely necessary, the results are amongst the best I've seen at that setting. There's quite bit of noise in the Raw files and the JPEGs are rather smooth, but there's no banding and the colours are true. As a rule, however, I would aim to make ISO 51200 the maximum sensitivity setting. At ISO 25600 and below, noise is controlled very well and there's a good level of detail.

As the EOS R6's sensor has Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS AF II structure there's phase detection autofocus with 6,072 points spread across the whole area. That means you can use the AF system with subjects



Exposure: 1/125sec at f/14 (ISO 100)

close to the edge of the image frame. There's also Subject-detection with tracking, which can be combined with Eye-detection and set to look for humans or animals. What's more it works with video or stills, even at the maximum continuous shooting rate of 20fps with the electronic shutter and 12fps with the mechanical shutter.

The EOS R6's Subject-detection and Eye-detection is amazingly good, it's stunning how small the eyes can be in the frame and it will detect them. It can also spot black eyes in black feathers or fur and follow them around the frame and towards or away from the camera. And it doesn't need good light, I was able to focus on someone's eyes as they walked towards me in the dark.

While the EOS R6 doesn't have the 8K video capability of the EOS R5, it's capable of capturing superb-quality 4K video at up to 60p. At 25p there's a slight crop (1.07x or 1.19x with the Digital IS on) and if you push the frame rate to 60p there's a 1.52x crop.

Even without the digital stabilisation activated, the EOS R6's in-body stabilisation does a great job of making handheld footage watchable – I even have some good clips shot through the window of a moving train while I was standing holding the camera. Unfortunately, however, heat generation is an issue.

After shooting a 30min 4K clip, the camera showed its heat warning a few minutes into a second clip and it cut out after recording 7:30 minutes. After a short period of cooling, the camera was able to record again but it cut out after less than ten minutes. If you mainly shoot in short bursts, or Full-HD it may not be a problem, but if you want to record a lengthy interview it could be significant issue, so it may well be worth investigating this problem online before purchase.

Overall, the EOS R6 is a fine choice if both stills and video are important and you're happy with its 20.1-megapixel resolution.



IN-BODY IMAGE STABILISATION

Like many recent cameras, the Canon EOS R6 has in-body image stabilisation (IBIS) that shifts the image sensor to compensate for accidental camera movements. This five-axis system can work in tandem with the optical stabilisation built in to some RF lenses (except the RF 600mm f/11 IS STM or RF 800mm f/11 IS STM) to give a class-leading shutter speed compensation of up to 8EV. I wasn't able to reach that level of compensation but when shooting at 70mm the IS was able to get around a third of images sharp when handholding one-second exposures.

CLOSEST RIVALS

- **SONY A7 III:** At £1,749 body only, this 24-megapixel full-frame mirrorless camera is a great all-rounder and has an excellent AF system, but the menu is rather complex.
- **NIKON Z 6:** An attractively priced (£1,549 body only) 24-megapixel full-frame mirrorless camera with lovely handling and excellent control layout. It also delivers superb images.
- **PANASONIC LUMIX S5:** It's only recently announced and yet to be tested but at £1,789 body only or £2,079 with the 20-60mm lens, this 24.2-megapixel L-mount full-frame model with a vari-angle touchscreen is an enticing alternative, with an impressive video specification.

VERDICT

While 20.1-megapixels doesn't sound a lot by some standards, the EOS R6's images are bigger than A3 size at 300ppi. They also have an excellent level of detail, great colour and superb noise control. The most impressive feature is the AF system that's simply brilliant with moving subjects. It's also capable of producing very high quality video, but the limitations to the 4K video recording caused by heat generation are a concern.

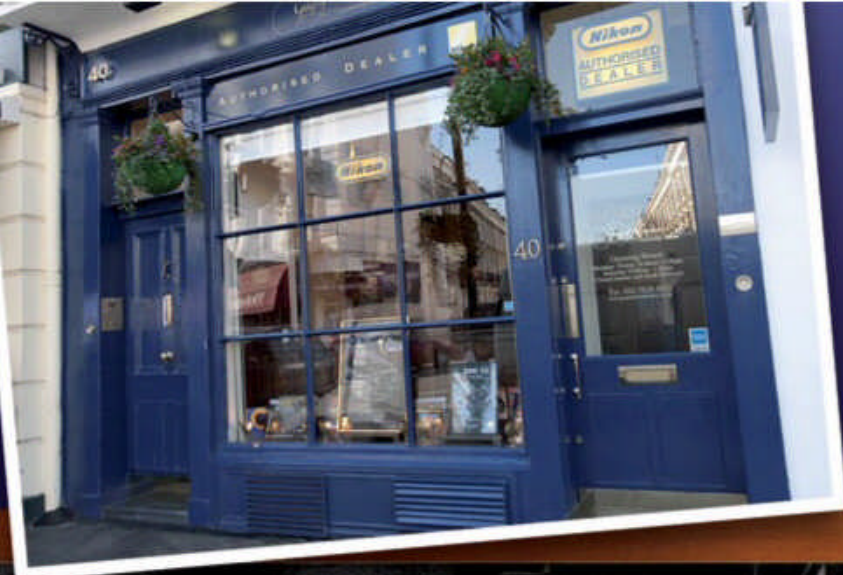
Handling	19/20
Ease of use	18/20
Features	18/20
Performance	18/20
Value	18/20
Overall	91/100



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SKYLUM AURORA HDR 2019

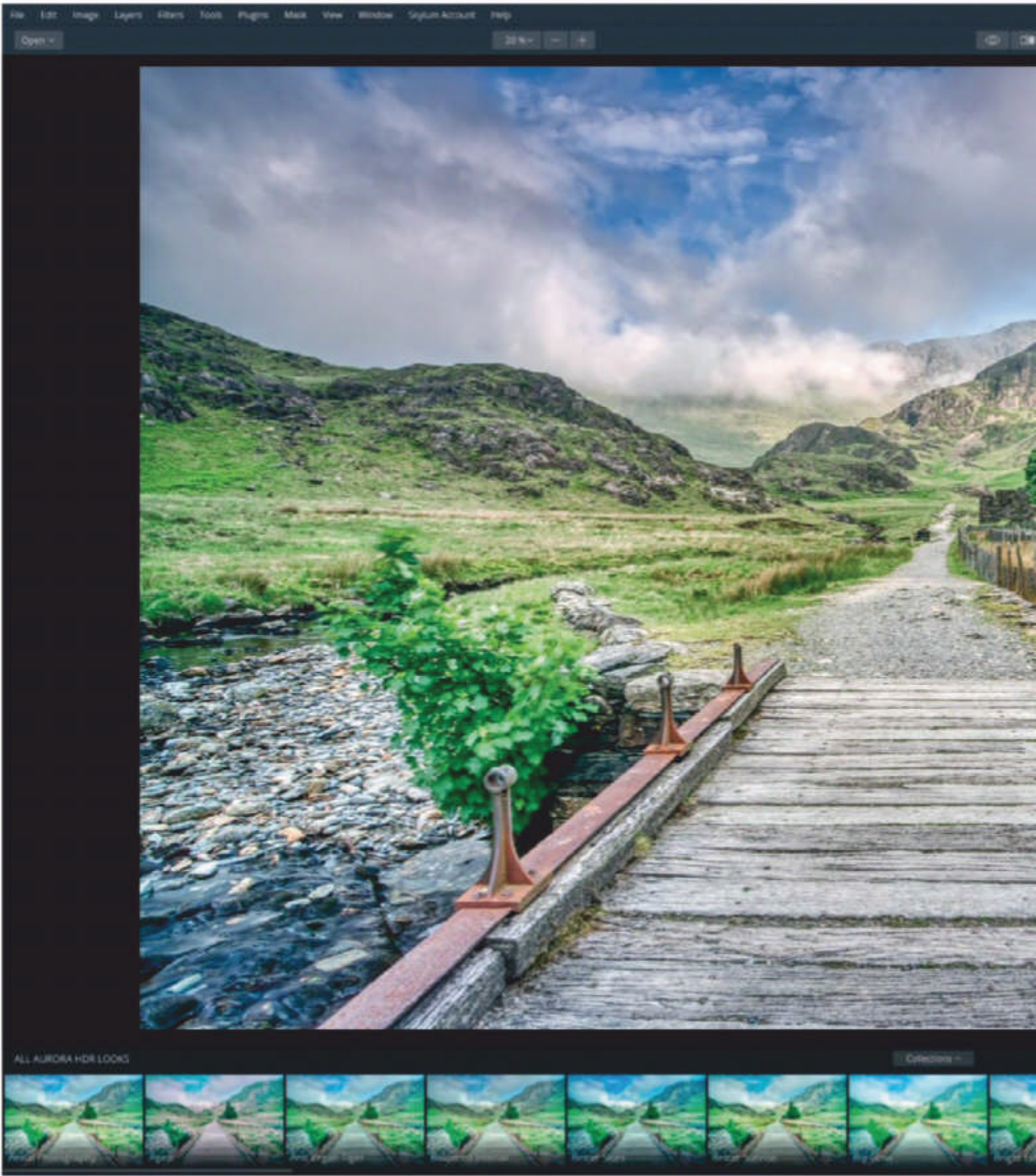
Powerful HDR processing software
with features that are suitable for
both beginners and experts

Test: JAMES ABBOTT

SPECIFICATION
Price: £92 (upgrade price upon application)
Mac: Model: Early 2010 or newer.
MacOS: 10.11 or higher. RAM: 8GB or more
Disk space: 10GB free space
Windows: Graphics: Open GL 3.3 or later compatible
Processor: Intel Core i5 or above. OS: Windows 7
or higher (only x64-bit OS). RAM: 8GB or more
Disk space: 10GB free space
Website: www.skylum.com

HDR SOFTWARE SEEMS to come and go, perhaps because some options simply aren't as effective as they could be, while others can be highly effective but incredibly difficult to use. So, in an ideal world, what we need is a balance between these two characteristics – ease of use and effective results, and with Aurora HDR 2019 that's pretty much what we get.

The software can be as easy to use as you want it to be with a large number of presets that can be used in their entirety to process HDR images, or used as a starting point from which manual adjustments can be made. And for more advanced users of the software, you can also make fully manual adjustments using many controls comparable to Raw editing software, including localised adjustments and even luminosity masks.



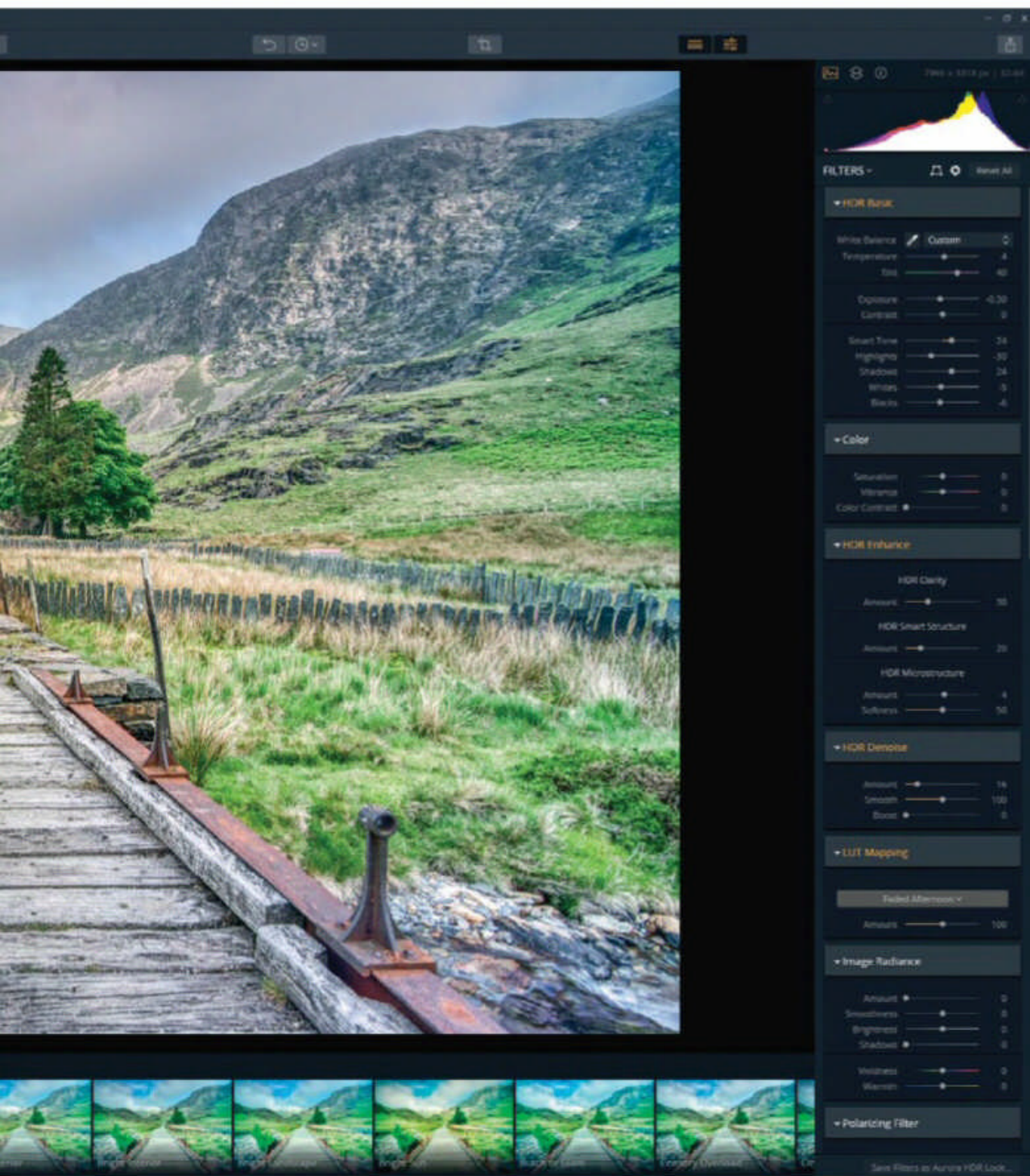
The results of Aurora HDR 2019 range from completely natural all the way to in your face grungy HDR with strong use of clarity and structure, and all this is with the promise of no halos or artefacts as a result of artificial intelligence. The software also works standalone or as a plug-in for Apple Photos, Photoshop, Elements and Lightroom, so it can fit seamlessly into your existing editing workflow.

USEABILITY AND PERFORMANCE: The Aurora HDR 2019 interface looks much like any other editing software with a large image window in the centre, control panels to the right, the main menu and the ability to open the Aurora HDR Looks Panel, which are presets at the bottom of the interface. The HDR Looks themselves can serve as either an endpoint for editing images for beginners or as a starting point for more advanced users who intend to refine the effects using the manual controls on the right.

HDR Looks are a matter of personal taste, they certainly won't be for everyone. But with presets created by Skylum covering basic looks, subjects and styles, as well as presets created by well-known HDR photographers Trey Ratcliffe, Serge Remelli and Randy VanDuinen, there are a huge amount of options available to experiment with.

The software is relatively easy to navigate and control and any users of software such as Adobe Lightroom, Affinity Photo or Skylum's Luminar 4 will find themselves in familiar ground, with the control panel on the right employing slider-based controls. There are, of course, controls specific to HDR processing, but for the most part detail recovery is performed using Shadows, Highlights, Whites and Blacks sliders and localised adjustments such as the Brush, Radial Mask and Gradient Mask. This means that no knowledge of tone compression





VERDICT



As far as HDR software goes, Skylum has created one of the best options available for both Mac and Windows PCs. Thanks to an intuitive interface and excellent image quality, the software is suitable for all ability levels, although the more familiar you become with the software the more you can naturally get from it. The manual controls and localised adjustments that can be applied on Layers are where you can really take control of processing.

In terms of performance, Aurora HDR 2019 runs well and the ability to also install it as a plug-in for Apple Photos, Photoshop, Elements and Lightroom is extremely useful for integrating the software into your existing image editing workflow. Using the software standalone, however, is a simple way of working and doesn't impact negatively on the workflow.

At £92 for a perpetual license of Aurora HDR 2019, it's certainly not the cheapest option available but you only need to pay for it once. And in terms of features, usability and image quality, it's money well spent if HDR photography is something you enjoy. And while Lightroom is capable of processing excellent HDR images, Aurora HDR 2019 has the edge, so with a free trial available for download, it's worth trying.

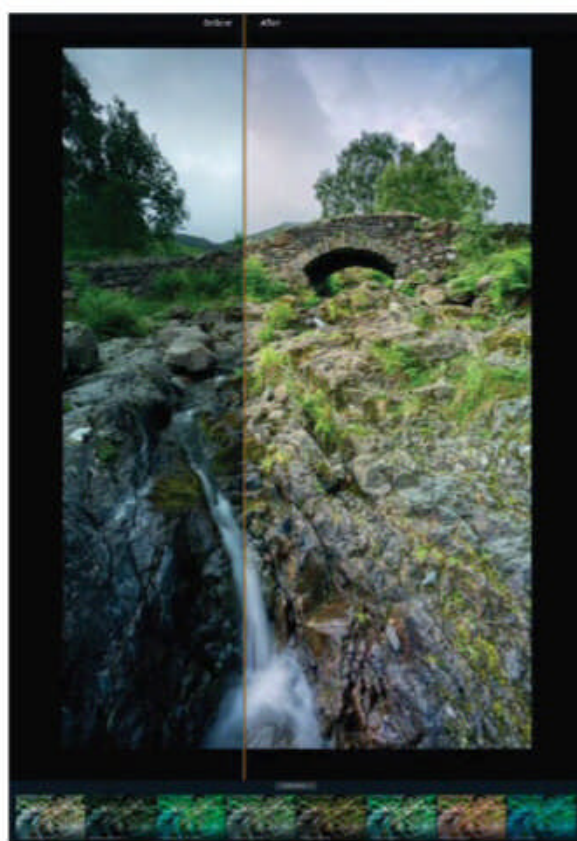
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Features	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★☆
Value for money	★★★★☆
Overall	★★★★★

Above: Aurora HDR 2019 is one of the most fully-featured software options designed specifically for processing HDR images. Controls are on par with Raw processing software and provide the ability to create natural-looking images or the strong grungy look that some photographers prefer.

controls is required and that taking images from looking natural to a strong HDR is an incredibly simple process.

Software performance is good with no slowdowns or major issues, although sometimes there can be a slight delay between applying an adjustment and the result rendering on the image in the image window. Also, controls such as White Balance are sensitive, so you may find that the amounts you need to input when working with Raw files are lower than required in other software.

● **FEATURES AND IMAGE QUALITY:** The software benefits from a new Quantum engine, which is the algorithm behind the software powered by artificial intelligence, and helps to prevent problems typical of HDR, such as halos and artefacts, from occurring in images. This certainly works well, and it's pretty much impossible to push images so far that they suffer from these problems. Overall, image quality is fantastic, particularly when working with Raw files, which naturally provide a much greater level of image data to work with. Although you can also process bracketed JPEGs and TIFFs, as



well as creating HDR style results from single exposures opened in the software.

HDR specific controls include HDR enhance for controlling clarity and structure, HDR Denoise for reducing noise and HDR Details Boost which apply a kind of sharpening effect to different types of detail in images. As well as all the standard



controls for adjusting images there's also the ability to apply LUTs for colour effects and Color Toning (split-toning), which both help you to achieve more unique looks. One tool that's unfortunately missing is a healing brush for removing dust spots when working with Raw files, but these can be removed in other software.

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Above and left: The Pgytech OneMo is a versatile backpack and includes a pouch.

Pgytech OneMo backpack

A backpack with removable pouch designed for camera and drone outfits

Test: DANIEL LEZANO

SPECIFICATION
Guide Price: Around £199
External dimensions (backpack): 480x320x230mm
Internal dimensions (backpack): 470x300x170mm
Laptop compartment: 385x270x26mm
External dimensions (pouch): 270x180x120mm
Internal dimensions (pouch): 260x150x115mm
Capacity (backpack): 25-30 litres
Capacity (pouch): Five litres
Weight (backpack): 2.1kg
Weight (pouch): 0.4kg
Website: www.pgytech.com

YOU MOST LIKELY haven't heard of Pgytech – I hadn't until this Chinese brand contacted me about its OneMo backpack. It's the product of a successful Kickstarter campaign, with its founders being a group of experienced photographers wanting to create a storage solution that meets all their requirements. I have to say on having used this bag for a number of weeks, I'm very impressed.

The OneMo's main compartment has a versatile inner design for housing a camera or drone outfit, along with a 15in laptop in a slip-in section. It uses thin but hard ribbed dividers to customise the space to suit your outfit. You can easily fit a couple of camera bodies and half a dozen lenses, or a smaller camera kit and drone or gimbal. Along with the main zipper to reveal the entire main section, there are two side-access entry-points too. When unzipped, you'll find these entry areas contain a pocket for a wallet/purse in one and three spare battery pouches (with useful sliding red/green

charge indicators) on the other. Inside the backpack is a pouch that can be removed and used around the waist or over the shoulder – it's big enough to hold a camera body and an extra lens for when you travel light. On the OneMo's front is a very large pocket that can hold additional items such as clothing and be expanded if required. This allows the backpack to have a very useful maximum capacity of 30 litres with the pouch giving an extra five litres, too. You'll also find lots of loops and straps around the bag for attaching smaller items too.

The build quality of the OneMo is excellent – the polyester fibre exterior is scratch- and water-resistant (a separate rain cover is included for when conditions take a serious turn for the worse) and the zippers are very high quality. The comfort rating is excellent as well – the harness and thick straps ensure the backpack stays tight to the body, with air vents to reduce the amount of heat and sweat on your back.

The size and features of the OneMo make it an excellent choice for the modern photographer who uses different types of kit, but is also suitable for more traditional users too.

VERDICT

You'll normally find lots of faults with a first-generation product, but that's not the case with Pgytech's OneMo. It's design is clearly well thought out and its quality and comfort is excellent. It's also priced very competitively too. Well worth a try!

OVERALL



BLACKRAPID DELTA CAMERA SLING

Sling strap for DSLRs and mirrorless / For right- and left-handed users

Test: DANIEL LEZANO

SPECIFICATION
Guide price: £75
Strap length: 167cm
Length (shoulder to opposite hip): Max. 81cm
Weight: 162 grams
Included: Carabiner, LockStar Breathe accessory, FastenR5 connector, safety tether, storage case
Website: www.phototeq.com

I have to admit it took me a long time to warm to sling straps. For years I hung my camera over my shoulder using a traditional wide Optech strap. However, a couple of years ago I tried out a BlackRapid sling strap and was surprised by the benefits it offered. Along with walking with the camera hanging loose against my torso so I had both hands free, the camera could be raised to the eye quicker than when it was attached a standard strap.

The Delta Sling is one of BlackRapid's latest products, designed to be fast and secure in use with DSLRs or mirrorless cameras. The shoulder pad is long and thick and its straight design provides a high degree of comfort whether used over the left or right shoulder. Nylon loops allow for accessories to be fitted in the future. The camera attaches via the tripod bush to a circular mounting plate that fits to a thick and strong carabiner. While its unnerving at first to release your hold on the camera so that it hangs down, you'll soon get to trust it. To keep the camera in your favoured position, the strap has two spring-loaded cam locks to prevent it slipping along the strap. Available in black or black/coyote finishes, the Delta proves to be a versatile, comfortable and secure shoulder strap, although a small drop in price would make it even better value.



VERDICT

If you like the idea of being able to keep your hands free but have your camera easily accessible, then a sling strap is a great option. The Black Rapid Delta is very well made, versatile and comfortable in use – it's well worth consideration.

OVERALL



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Digital cameras: Our favourite models under £1,500

Looking to buy your first camera or an upgraded model? Here's nine of our most highly-rated DSLRs and mirrorless models

DIGITAL SLR

NIKON D3400

Guide price: £499 with AF-P18-55mm VR
Image sensor: APS-C / 24.2-megapixels
Website: www.nikon.co.uk

One of the best value entry-level DSLRs on the scene – keep an eye out for the standard kit on offer at main photo retailers for under £420! It features 11-point AF and a 24.2-megapixel APS-C sensor that delivers excellent results. It's small and light and has a neat Guide Mode for beginners.



TESTED: APRIL 2019 **RATING 86/100**

DIGITAL SLR

CANON EOS 250D

Guide price: £559 with 18-55mm IS STM
Image sensor: APS-C / 24.1-megapixels
Website: www.canon.co.uk

Canon has a long history of producing excellent entry-level DSLRs and this one continues the trend, although a drop in price would be welcomed. The nine-point AF system is basic but the excellent 24.1-megapixel APS-C sensor and 4K video capability makes it a good starter model.



TESTED: OCTOBER 2019 **RATING 84/100**

DIGITAL SLR

NIKON D5600

Guide price: £579 with AF-P18-55mm VR
Image sensor: APS-C / 24.2-megapixels
Website: www.nikon.co.uk

This is one of the best upper entry-level models currently available. It's lightweight at only 465 grams but is nicely put together. It has an excellent specification but is also easy to use, making it a good choice of camera for beginners looking for a model they can advance their skills with.



TESTED: AUGUST 2017 **RATING 88/100**

DIGITAL SLR

CANON EOS 77D

Guide price: £699 with EF-S18-55mm STM
Image sensor: APS-C / 24.2-megapixels
Website: www.canon.co.uk

This is an excellent upper entry-level model that will suit beginners and enthusiasts alike. Build quality is excellent, with Canon's familiar control layout making it easy to operate, even for novices. The sensor delivers high-quality stills and Full HD video and boasts responsive Dual Pixel AF.




TESTED: JULY 2017 **RATING 89/100**

MIRRORLESS

FUJIFILM X-T200

Guide price: £749 with AF15-45mm
Image sensor: APS-C / 24.2-megapixels
Website: www.fujifilm.co.uk

This recent update of the X-T100 proves to be one of the best entry-level models available. As well as being a fine stills camera, it's also a solid choice for video shooting, in particular for vloggers. Only downsides are a few handling niggles and noise levels at higher ISO ratings.



TESTED: AUGUST 2020 **RATING 89/100**

MIRRORLESS

FUJIFILM X-T30

Guide price: £899 with XC18-55mm
Image sensor: APS-C / 26.1-megapixels
Website: www.fujifilm.co.uk

This mid-range mirrorless model is one of our favourite cameras under £1,000. Beneath the stunning retro design you'll discover a camera packed with features including a brilliant APS-C sensor and X-Processor Pro 4 imaging engine that delivers stunning images and 4K video.



TESTED: MAY 2019 **RATING 92/100**

DIGITAL SLR

NIKON D7500

Guide price: £899 (body only)
Image sensor: APS-C / 20.9-megapixels
Website: www.nikon.co.uk

If you're in the market for an advanced DSLR and aren't bothered by full-frame, then the D7500 should be on your shortlist. It's smaller, lighter and more affordable than the popular D500, but delivers similar high image quality thanks to using the same sensor. A great all-round camera.



TESTED: SEPTEMBER 2017 **RATING 91/100**

MIRRORLESS

PANASONIC LUMIX G9

Guide price: £899 (body only)
Sensor: Micro Four-Thirds / 20.3-megapixels
Website: www.panasonic.co.uk

Based on the excellent LUMIX GH5 but with more emphasis on stills photography than video, a major price drop makes it great value. Speed is at the heart of the G9, with a 20 frames-per-second shooting mode and fast and responsive AF. A great choice if you regularly shoot wildlife or action.



TESTED: MARCH 2018 **RATING 93/100**

MIRRORLESS

FUJIFILM X-T4

Guide price: £1,549 (body only)
Image sensor: APS-C / 26.1-megapixels
Website: www.fujifilm.co.uk

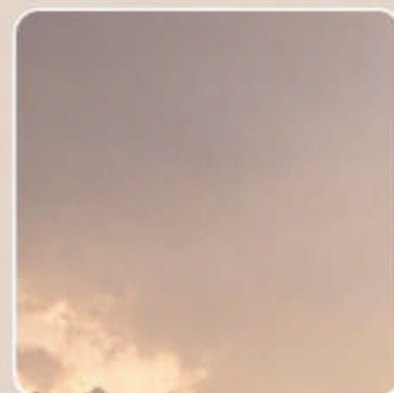
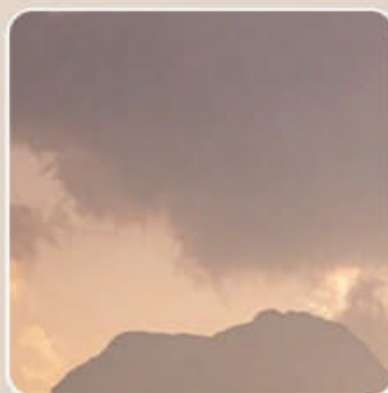
It may sport the same APS-C sensor as its predecessor, but this updated flagship model boasts a wealth of improvements – in particular to its AF system, as well as the addition of body-integral image stabilisation – that helps make it one of the best cameras on the market.



TESTED: SEPTEMBER 2020 **RATING 93/100**

If you're looking to buy a camera, check out the offers from the UK's best photo dealers in this issue for the very best prices





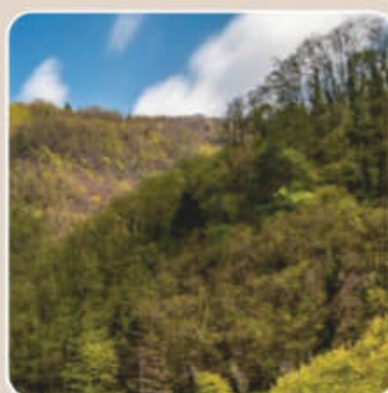
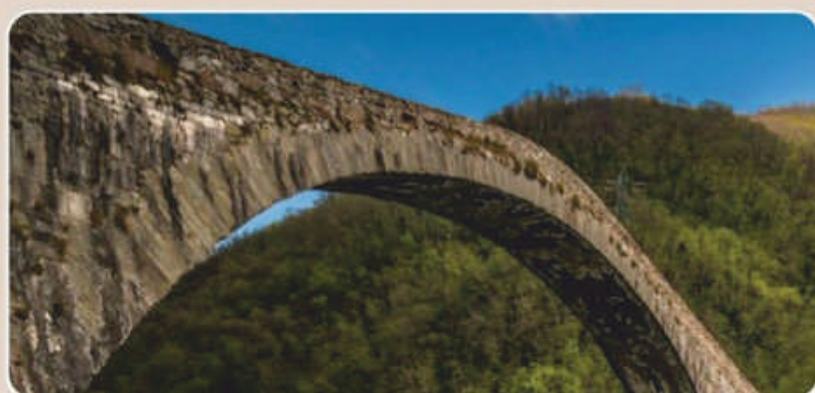
£1360

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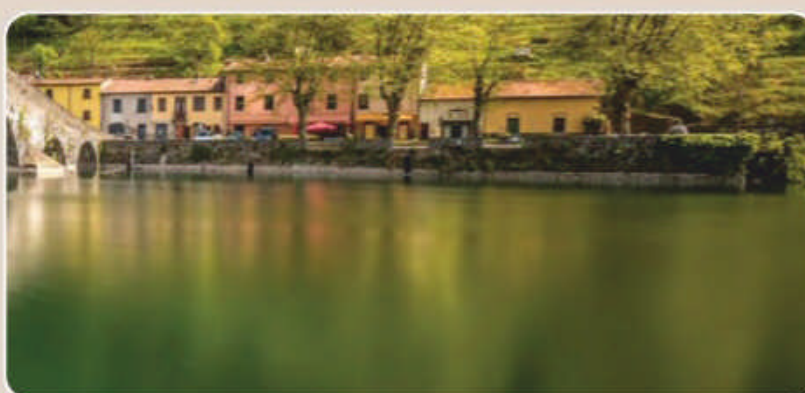
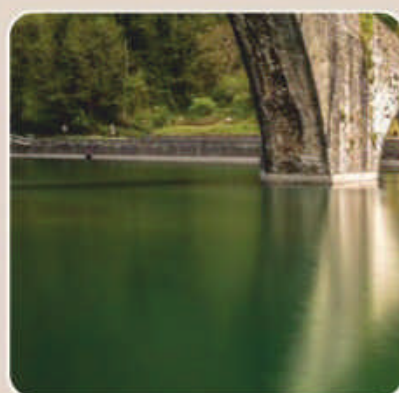
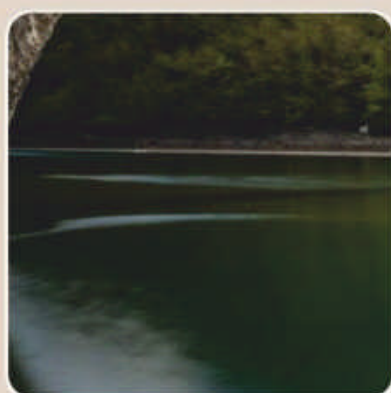


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Essential photo accessories: Tripods

Every photographer should own a lightweight and sturdy tripod. We highlight our favourite models

MANFROTTO ELEMENTS MII

Guide price: £115

Leg sections: Four Weight: 1.55kg

Website: www.manfrotto.co.uk

This aluminium tripod is one of the best budget models available. Small enough to be used as a travel tripod, it comes supplied with a good quality ball head with a payload up to 8kg. It's a sturdy model that uses twist-locks for fast and easy set-up and has a maximum height of 160cm.



TESTED: OCTOBER 2020 **RATING** ★★★★★

BENRO SLIM TALL TSL08CLN00 KIT

Guide price: £140

Leg sections: Four Weight: 1.09kg

Website: www.benroeu.com

The limited-edition version of the TSL08CN00 offering an additional 18cm of height, making it more suitable for tall users. It's light weight and relatively compact size makes it a good choice for travel as well as standard use. It has a stored length of 55.1cm and maximum height of 135cm.



TESTED: MARCH 2020 **RATING** ★★★★★

BENRO GOPLUS CLASSIC TGP17C

Guide price: £170

Leg sections: Three Weight: 1.38kg

Website: www.benroeu.com

An older model but still available in limited quantity at far less than its original price (£309). Boasts really useful and well implemented features to go with a high overall performance and modest weight, including an articulating centre-column and monopod facility.



TESTED: NOVEMBER 2017 **RATING** ★★★★★

BENRO TRAVEL ANGEL FTA18CV0

Guide price: £269

Leg sections: Four Weight: 1.5kg (inc head)

Website: www.benroeu.com

This is a compact and lightweight travel tripod (with monopod option), offering good support and just enough height (121cm, extendable to 145cm) for most. It closes down to 44cm for easy storage. The supplied V0E ball head is no more than average, which is a little disappointing.



TESTED: JULY 2016 **RATING** ★★★★★

MANFROTTO MT055 CXPRO4

Guide price: £299

Leg sections: Four Weight: 2.1kg

Website: www.manfrotto.co.uk

Manfrotto's renowned 055-series has changed a lot over the years but has always delivered high performance. This version adds welcome new features, including a tilting centre-column and heavy duty Quick Power Locks. Excellent stability, even at its maximum height of 140cm.



TESTED: NOVEMBER 2017 **RATING** ★★★★★

MANFROTTO GT BEFREE XPRO CARBON

Guide price: £299

Leg sections: Four Weight: 1.74kg (inc head)

Website: www.manfrotto.co.uk

Travel tripods are one of the most popular types of camera support and this model is one of the best. Aimed at enthusiasts and professionals, it sports a solid build and an excellent range of features, including a neat centre-column mechanism. The supplied 496 ball head is excellent too.



TESTED: JANUARY 2020 **RATING** ★★★★★

GITZO GT2545T WITH 1382QD HEAD

Guide price: £619

Leg sections: Four Weight: 1.48kg

Website: www.gitzo.co.uk

The price is high but this exceptional travel tripod from Gitzo could possibly be the one and only tripod you'll ever need. Construction is sublime, as is handling, while the 1382QD ball head is first rate too. Stored it measures 44cm, increasing to 129cm (153cm with column raised).



TESTED: JULY 2016 **RATING** ★★★★★

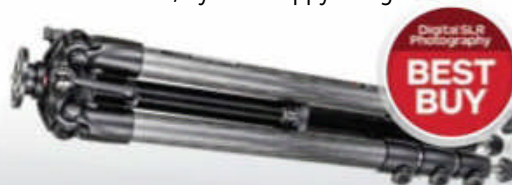
MANFROTTO MT057C4-G

Guide price: £649

Leg sections: Four Weight: 3.75kg

Website: www.manfrotto.co.uk

A top of the range tripod with stability at its core, at the expense of additional weight. It is very well engineered, with great strength and a maximum height of 182cm that can be raised to 206cm via the geared column. Ideal for the studio or outdoors, if you're happy to lug it about.



TESTED: NOVEMBER 2016 **RATING** ★★★★★

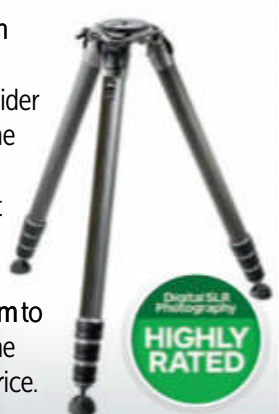
GITZO SYSTEMATIC 5543XLS SERIES 5 XL

Guide price: £999

Leg sections: Four Weight: 3.1kg

Website: www.gitzo.co.uk

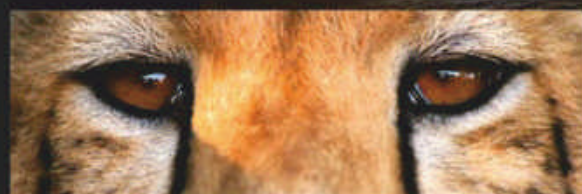
Professionals requiring an extremely rigid yet lightweight support consider this model to be one of the best. The G-Lock twist-action locks are fast and easy to use, while the chunky legs extend from a min. height of 10cm to a maximum of 198cm. The ultimate in stability, at a price.



TESTED: FEBRUARY 2019 **RATING** ★★★★★

If you're looking to buy a tripod, check out the offers from the UK's best photo dealers in this issue for the very best prices





Photographers on Safari

www.photographersonsafari.com

✉ info@photographersonsafari.com



Ospreys Workshop in Rutland - Morning and Evening Sessions Combined £299

May 21 PM combined with May 22 AM, July 16 PM combined with July 17 AM;
AM and PM sessions in specialist Osprey hide a few miles from Rutland Water's resident Ospreys. Provides the best opportunity in the whole of England to photograph Ospreys catching live trout. 10,000 trout in one pond 100 feet by 50 feet. Exclusive use of 6 person hide. Tips and tuition from experienced photographer to assist you throughout both sessions plus classroom reviews after second session to show you how to work your photos to their best advantage. Breakfast included. See website for examples of photos from 2019.

Small Mammals, Insects & Reptiles in Northumberland £199

June 4th; Indoor studio set-ups ensuring professional quality photos of stunning subjects. Studio lighting set up for you. No flashguns required. Cameras and lenses can be loaned without charge. Innovative set-ups to maximise your opportunities. Max 3 persons. Harvest Mice, Red Eyed Tree Frogs, Praying Mantis, Locust, Bearded Dragon, Scorpion, Tarantula, Snakes, Lizards, Crested Gecko etc.

Golden Eagle Experience in Leicestershire £89

May 3rd, August 3rd; Golden Eagle will fly, and perch in carefully chosen natural settings. Jesses hidden for static shots. Controlled flying. Also selection from; Owls, Buzzard, Hawks, Goshawk Max. 8 photographers.

Cheetahs, Lions, Foxes, Birds of Prey, Cambs. £129

May 2nd, Aug 1st; Privileged access to Cheetahs, Malayan Tigers, White Tiger & Corsac Foxes. The Cheetah & Tiger enclosures are not mowed for enhanced photographic opportunities. Private Displays by various Birds of Prey, both static & flying. Jesses hidden for static shots. Barn Owl, Eagle Owl and Red-Tailed Hawk etc.

Amazing Bat Photos & Learn Fill-in Flash Techniques £139

April 14th, 28th; Oxfordshire. Take amazing bat photos, plus learn how to use balanced fill-in flash on wildlife subjects in different lighting conditions. Max 4 persons. Free loan of Canon digital camera and flash if req'd.

Basic One-to-One Photo editing Workshop in Rutland £160

March 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, 19. April 1, 2, 7, 8, 9. May 5, 6, 7
Bring your own photographs to our new studio in Rutland. Learn how to improve your photos at your own pace. No other photographers will be present on the day. One-to-One tuition. This will be a day of learning basic techniques that will teach you how to improve your own collection of photographs. It is not a Photoshop Masterclass. We will demonstrate basic editing that will apply to many programs. Bring your Raw or JPEG photos and we will work through them together. You will be amazed at what you can do.

**Gift Vouchers available for any Workshop or for any Monetary Value.
These Experiences make Wonderful Gifts for that Special Occasion.**

Foxes, Otters, Wildcats, Badgers & more, Surrey. £163

July 6, 7th; Inside enclosures 'til sunset. Also Owls, Snakes, Badgers, Polecats, Weasels, Stoats, Hedgehog, Harvest Mice & various Deer. 2 sessions with the foxes, sometimes only inches away from you. inside enclosures with Foxes, Otters, Scottish Wildcats. Badgers GUARANTEED. No fences or wires to shoot through.

Small Cats Workshop, Welwyn, Herts. £119

April 12th, May 10th; Privileged access to Snow Leopards, Amur Leopards, Pumas, Caracal, Leopard Cat, Lynx, Servals, Golden Cat, Jaguarundi, Cheetahs, Asian Wildcat. As featured on Animal Planet. Small groups.

Bass Rock Gannets £199

June 7th, 12th, 21st; Private boat. Exclusive use of island for just 9 photographers. 50,000 pairs of nesting gannets and 55,000 non-breeders on one small island. 4.5 hours photography. Amazing close-ups & fantastic flight shots. An amazing sight that you will never forget. David Attenborough's 7th wonder of the world.

Gannets diving off Bass Rock £99

June 8th, 22nd; Fantastic workshop. We sail round Bass Rock without landing on the island. A whole hour of throwing fish into the sea for the Gannets to catch. Amazing diving shots. 1,000+ dives. Tuition.

Farne Islands Puffins (Over 4 hrs photography) £85

June 6th, 13th, 17th, 20th; 20 species of birds. 50,000 puffins. Guillemots, Razorbills, Shag, Arctic Tern colony etc. You will get unbelievably close to some of the species. Get that much sought after shot of Puffins with their beaks crammed full of sand eels. Tips and Tuition. Approximately 4 hours photography.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot (2) with Short Eared Owl, Northumberland. £139

June 11th, 19th; Amazing day's photography of adult and baby owls. Probably the best Birds of Prey shoot in UK. Short Eared Owl and Snowy Owl. We will take two of the birds down to beautiful, little known waterfall. This will provide a unique backdrop for your subjects. Fantastic natural woodland surroundings. We will photograph up to 10 different species of birds, mainly British. Maximum 8 photographers.

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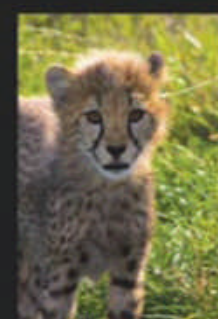
White Horses in the Camargue 2021 + new extension highly recommended

Animals in Snow in Montana 2022

South Africa Reflection Pools & Big 5 Safari 2020 & 2021

Humpback Whales & Black Bears in Alaska's Inside Passage 2022

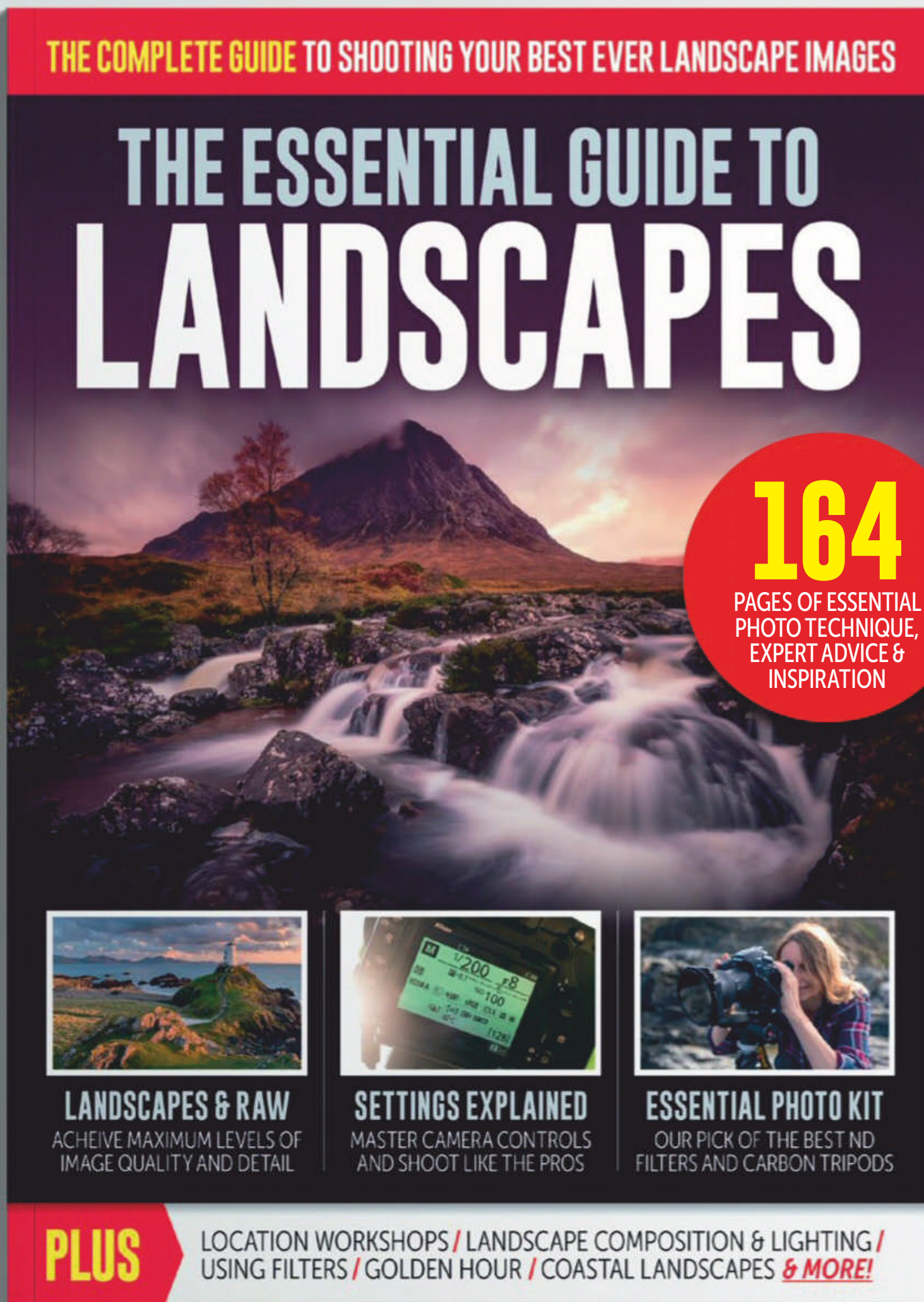
Falklands Islands Tour in January 2022



For more information, please visit the website or call John Wright on 01664 474040 or 07779 648850 (preferred). We will be most happy to discuss any workshop in detail, or to send more detailed leaflets to anyone without internet access. Photographers on Safari, West End Studios, 55 Stapleford Road, Whissendine, Oakham, Rutland. LE15 7HF

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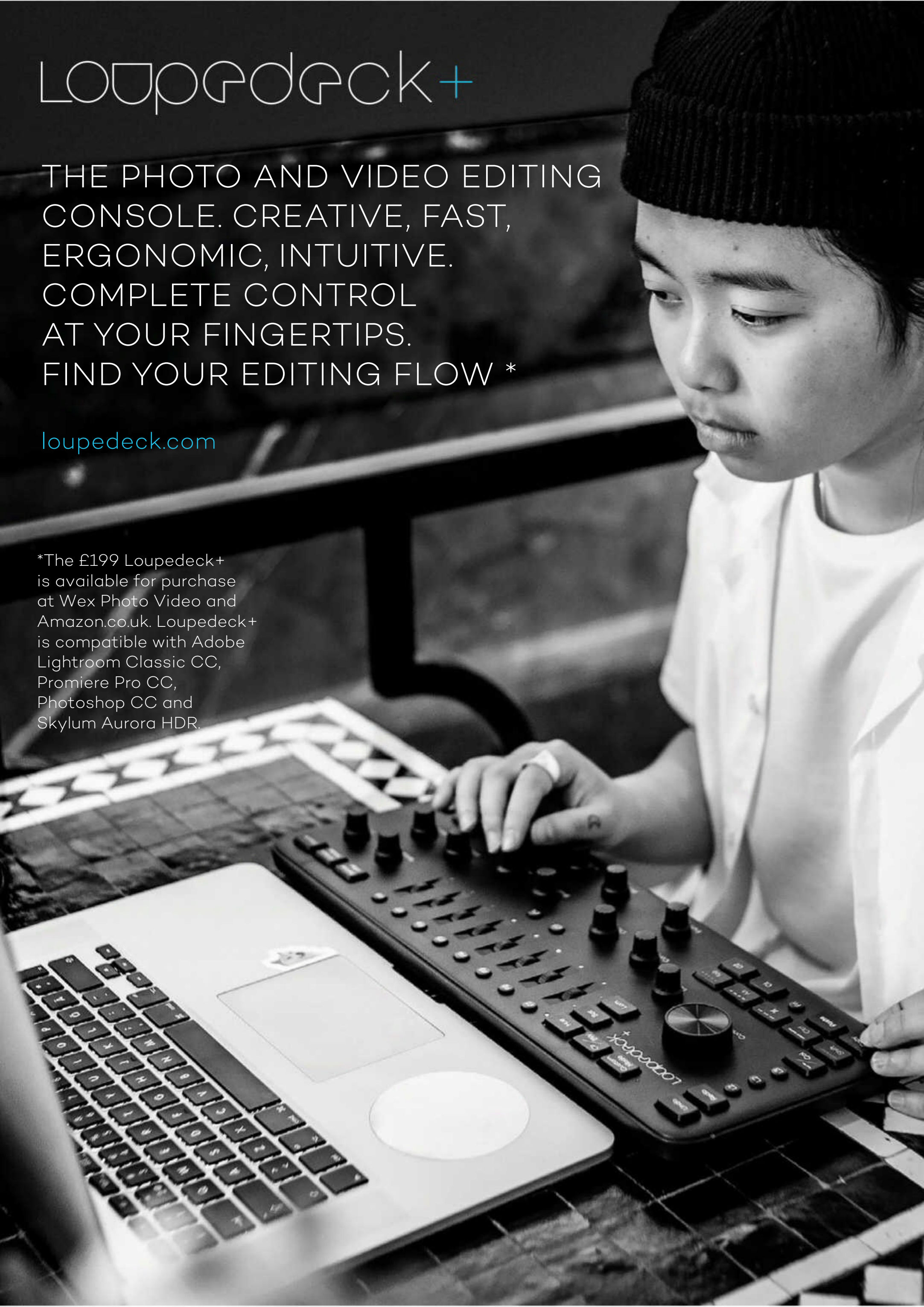
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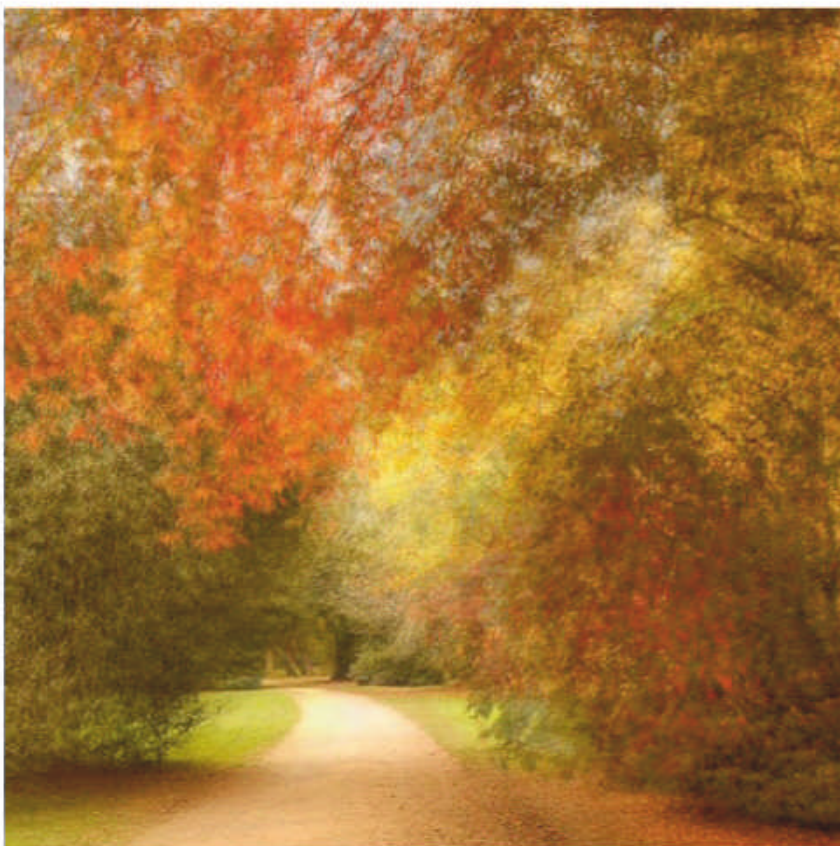
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(workshop participant October 2019)

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Plus

PHOTO SKILLS

From light trails to creative still-lives, we've a range of camera and editing techniques for you to try this month

CANON EOS R5

How does Canon's professional mirrorless model compare to rivals? And is it a better buy than the EOS R6 tested this month?

GIFTS GUIDE

It's hard to think that Christmas isn't far away! We offer ideas on what every photographer might want



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