

FILM FIRST!

A FURTHER VOLUME OF EXPLORATIONS USING VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAMERAS. 2012



THE FIFTH REPORT

THE FIFTH REPORT

“Welcome to the fifth of my diaries documenting my various activities and experiments using cameras from my ever expanding collection.

It's been a mixed year since my ankle injury, a difficult return to work and continuing bouts of ill health. I returned to Prestwood Steam Rally in July of 2011 and had a wonderful weekend talking to visitors about cameras. I incorporated my ongoing Stereo Photography project work in the exhibit and was very encouraged by the enthusiasm visitors showed with the viewers and example pictures. Of the 'Viewmaster' generation myself I had been aware as a child of the magic of stereo pictures. It hadn't occurred to me that there was now a generation of young adults and children who had never had that experience. It was very gratifying to see them experience it for the first time. Stereo and High Definition Television and Film are the subjects of current commercial marketing so it will be interesting to see how people consolidate their attitudes to that with still stereo photography.

I had incorporated the first half of my documentation of Stereo Photography in the fourth Journal. I have included the second half in this volume. As I managed to purchase some additional Stereo cameras and viewers as the project progressed it did pan out a little longer than I intended – but it is better for it.

At £700 a Hasselblad appeared in a new shop featuring second hand gear and after about three weeks of prevaricating I decided to buy it, spending some of my hard-earned savings. As you will find out in the journal the experience from then on was a roller coaster ride.

Some interesting things have been happening in the world of photography in the last couple of years. Alongside the ever progressing array of digital cameras in shop windows strange multi-coloured plastic cameras have appeared – many coming from Russia – most of them taking 120 rollfilm – supplied with processing and printing paid – and at very high prices (around £50). The first camera I ever remember using was a Diana – a plastic camera which unbelievably has now been reintroduced with the £50 price tag. If it appears in a car boot sale it's worth 50p. Another interesting development – Polaroid cameras and the return of freshly produced type 600 Print packs.

On the down-side my plans to exhibit at Prestwood Steam Rally 2012 were thwarted by the weather. The ground was washed out and it was cancelled at the eleventh hour. But on the up-side I managed to fulfil a long held wish to present a lecture on the history of photography in the 20th century. The event at a local historical society was so successful that I was recommended to repeat it for another local society where it was received even more enthusiastically.



Setley Woods, Lymington, March 2009. Olympus OM1md 35mm Camera (1974)



Primrose, Setley Woods, Lymington, March 2009, Olympus OM1md



The River Chess at Chesham, Olympus OM1md Camera. March 2009

In the '60's and through to the '70's Press Photographers tended to use either Twin Lens Rolleiflexes or, for action work, professional grade Nikons or Canons – F and F1s respectively. The 35mm Single lens reflexes were big, heavy, bulky and noisy but they were reliable and of proven quality. The Olympus company was known for microscopes, small 35mm ½ frame cameras, the Trip35 and a range of indifferent 35mm single lens reflexes.

Then they launched the OM1 – and press photographers the world over went ballistic. Overnight they adopted the new camera which was small, light, very easy to use with a brilliant viewfinder, rugged and reliable and had a range of lenses that produced pictures of unbelievable sharpness and contrast. A legend was born.

Two of these have come into my possession. Steve Moore, a work colleague gave me the model used here. It is an OM1md, the second of the OM series produced. The original OM1 was produced only for a short period in the '70's before it was modified with a base-plate linkage that allowed an accessory motor drive to be used. So the second and more numerous version was created carrying the md suffix to indicate Motor Drive capability.



The Olympus OM1md 35mm Single Lens Reflex 1974

What Steve handed me was a pristine body only with its removable ground glass focussing screen missing. A trip down to my local camera shop (still in existence and selling digital cameras like there was no tomorrow) yielded a focussing screen (free!) and some lenses (expensive).

The camera was very conventional to handle in use. The main departure from the classic layout pioneered by Asahi in the Pentax concerned the arrangement of the shutter speed setting which was round the collar of the lens throat rather than on a dial on the top right of the camera – the knob here being reserved for the film speed settings for the Through-the-Lens exposure system.

And, as to the sharpness and clarity of the famed Olympus lenses – I checked the prints and negatives when they were processed and yes – they really are as good as the legends say.



Hurst Beach, Lymington. March 2009. Olympus OM1md.



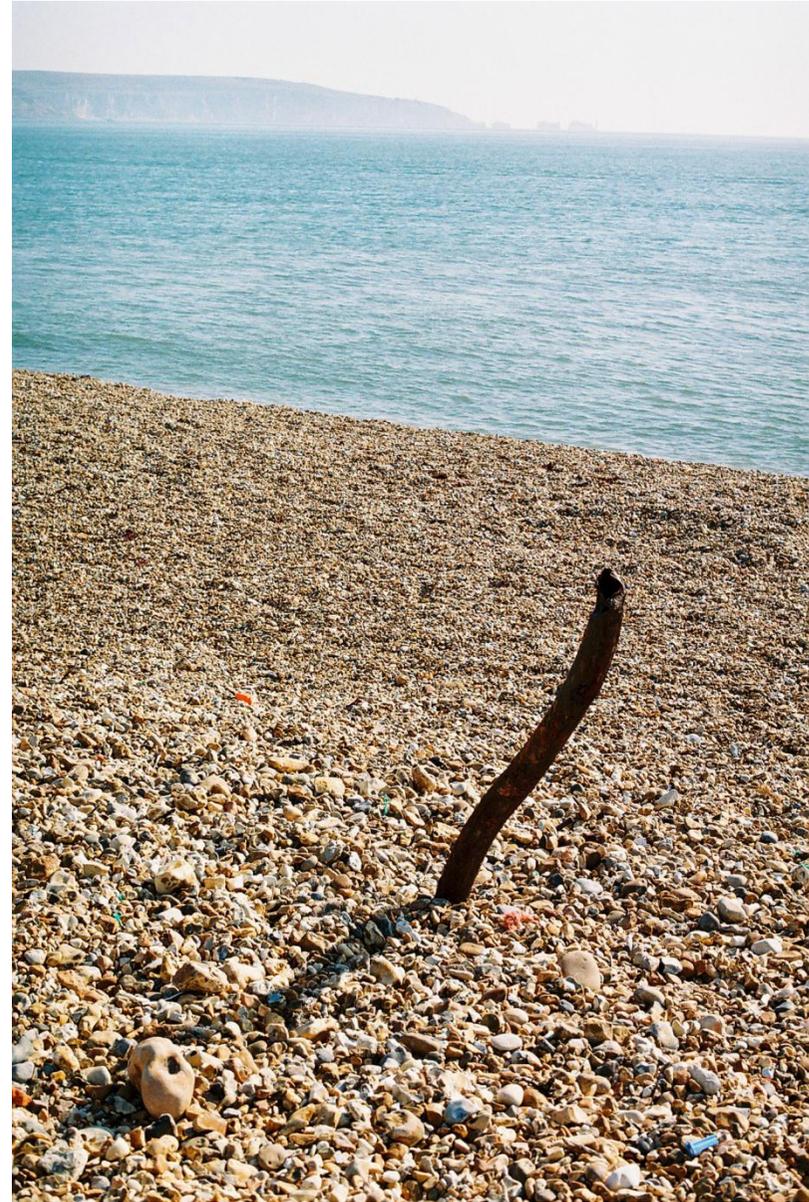
Lymington, March 2009. Olympus OM1md.



Lyminster, March 2009. Olympus OM1md 35mm camera.



Setley Wood, March 2009 Olympus OM1md



Lymington, March 2009 Olympus OM1md.



St. John's and War Memorial, Ashley Green, Buckinghamshire. Minox B sub-miniature Camera 1958



Schoolhouse, Ashley Green, Buckinghamshire. Minox B sub-miniature Camera

Ever since I started collecting cameras seriously I have wanted a Minox. When I was Eighteen I almost bought one along with some processing equipment, but decided against it. I managed to find a good example of a Minox B at a camera fair two years ago. I waited a long time however to purchase some film – on line.

The original – of a completely ground-breaking new design by Walter Zapp – was produced in Rega, Latvia in 1937. The territory was invaded by Germany in the war and post-war production was moved to Germany where the camera continued its evolution well into the 1970's. It uses a format of 8x11mm on 9.5mm wide film wound into minute plastic cassettes. Made universally famous as a spy camera in one of the early James Bond movies, The camera achieved a popularity sufficient for the format and cassettes to be used by other sum-miniature camera manufacturers. The wonderfully ergonomic body shunt method used for cocking the shutter and winding on the film was adopted in particular for some models using Kodak's miniature 110 Instamatic cassettes and compact 35mm camera designs well into the 1980's until motorised film advance and electronic shutters began to dominate.

The Model B of the '60's sports shutter speeds from ½ sec to 1/1000th which operates a robust blade shutter that sweeps over a precision 15mm f3.5 Complan lens. A scaled focus wheel also sits on top of the brushed aluminium body. There is no aperture adjustment because, believe it or not, at 15mm f3.5 provides almost unlimited depth of field. What distinguishes the 'B' model from earlier ones was the integration of a selenium cell exposure meter in the design. The needle based meter is coupled directly to the shutter speed setting unless the film compartment is opened where it can be adjusted when uncoupled to correct for different film speeds. This is an elegant if somewhat perplexing way of setting the exposure meter up, almost

impossible to work out using basic common sense (my usual method) unless you read the instruction manual – available on line. You cannot change the film speed until you change films – but then why would you want to. Good eyesight is needed to read the shutter and focus markings but – apart from that – the camera is easy to use. The frame counter is similarly illegible and is reset between films using the film advance body shunt mechanism until the counter is zeroed.



The Entrance to St. John's Church, Ashley Green. Minox B Sub-Miniature Camera 1958



The Minox B Sub-Miniature Camera 1958

In use up at Ashley Green the Minox was very straight forward. The viewfinder is adequate, the film winding very straight forward by simply collapsing and re-opening the camera body and the shutter release comes easy to hand. It takes a little effort to remember to hold the camera top and bottom – like a sandwich – and not bring one hand across the front. In that lies the danger of inadvertently covering the lens with a finger.

No focus adjustment is needed for most pictures but I did try some close-ups and found it quite difficult to match the focus scale to my estimate of the camera distance. It shows how difficult it can be to perform what is effectively Macro-photography without the advantage of through-the-lens viewfinding.

Thanks to the intrepid efforts of Craig at work a perfect processed film appeared in my hands which I then cut a mask for and placed in my new film scanner. Several attempts were needed to get scan results that were in focus, even and streak free. At 8x11mm the negatives were at the very limit of what the scanner could handle. As you can see from the results we managed to get there in the end.



St. John's Church and Ashley Green, Minox B Sub-Miniature Camera.



St. John's Church, Ashley Green, Buckinghamshire. Minox B Sub-Miniature Camera.



Harrow Campus, University of Westminster. February 2012. Canon EOS850 (1988) with Tamron 28-200mm Super Zoom Lens.



Harrow Campus, University of Westminster. February 2012. Canon EOS850 (1988) with Tamron 28-200mm Super Zoom Lens

Some while before I staged my first camera exhibition my Father in Law handed me a Canon EOS 850 camera. He had looked after it well and used it on several occasions to take some very nice pictures whilst on holiday with his wife. However he couldn't use it any more. An accident where he had dropped something on it in the boot of his car had damaged the lens – a low specification f3.5 35 to 70mm auto focus – which failed to focus in any respect as a result.

Whilst my Father in Law moved on I stored the camera. Later I saw a Canon fit Tamron Auto focus 28-200mm super zoom lens on sale at a good price and bought it. Recently I decided to put it onto the camera, now one of several EOS bodies I had acquired, and run off a film.

The reason was mainly to test the shutter. I had found out that the EOS series of film cameras from Canon were prone, after a certain age, to glue leakage which affected the reliability of the vertical drop blade construction. This camera had evidently held up well however as the three pictures of the Harrow building site show.

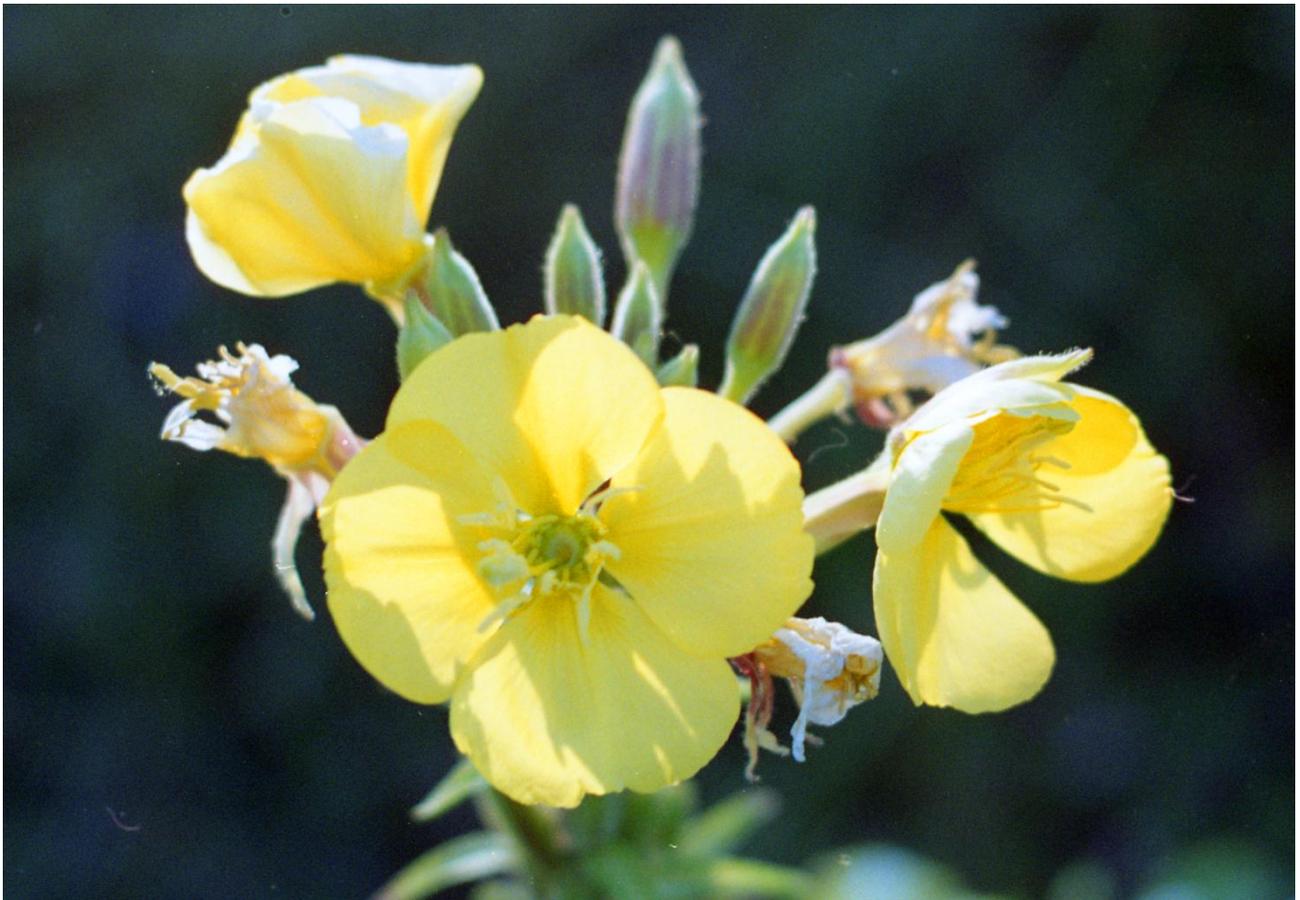
My Father in Law was not one to want to concern himself with the technicalities of photography if the camera was capable of doing that for him. His choice of the EOS 850 fitted the bill. It is the most automatic of the series with auto focus, aperture and shutter choice and no choice of program modes. As with all of the series loading the camera and shutting the back initiates the complete run out of the film into the opposite film chamber. As the pictures are taken they retreat back inside the cassette. Thus the accidental opening of the camera back does not result in the loss of every picture so far taken. – Useful for my Father in Law who was prone to the occasional accident.



Harrow Campus, University of Westminster. February 2012. Canon EOS850 (1988) with Tamron 28-200mm Super Zoom Lens



*(Left) The Canon EOS 850 auto focus fully automatic 35mm Single Lens Reflex Camera 1988
(Right) The Canon F1 Single Lens Reflex Camera 1971*



Oxwich Bay, Wales, Easter 2011. Canon F1 35mm Single Lens Reflex Camera with 75-200mm FD zoom lens.



Oxwich Bay, Wales, Easter 2011. Canon F1 35mm Camera with 75-200mm FD zoom lens.



Oxwich Bay, Wales, Easter 2011. Canon F1 35mm with 75-200mm FD zoom lens.



Great Yarmouth, August 2011. Canon F1 35mm SLR Camera with 75-200mm Canon FD Zoom Lens



Greyhound Stadium, Great Yarmouth, August 2011. Canon F1 35mm SLR Camera with 75-200mm Canon FD Zoom Lens



Great Yarmouth Beach, August 2011, Canon F1 SLR Camera with 50mm Standard Lens.

The two great post-war players in the camera market in Japan, revitalised by The USA following the war, were Nikon (Nippon) and Canon. Canon produced their early cameras designed around the German Leicas – and were Leica compatible. After some initial forays into the Single Lens Reflex market – including a model with a fixed semi-silvered mirror – they found themselves face with a landmark professional grade camera from their main competitor: The Nikon F.

In response they produced from 1971 the Canon F1. This was a heavily built, precision engineered robust ‘system’ camera designed to appeal to professional photographers. It had, as well as a wide range of interchangeable lenses, interchangeable viewfinders, film backs, focussing screens and motor drive options.

The pictures here were taken with the second of the two examples in my collection. It is battered on the top plate and well used but mechanically it is in perfect working order. The same is not true of the first one I came across which has damaged prism lock catches, a lens flange distance that does not allow for focussing at infinity and a damaged self timer. At a wedding in Wales at Easter I took some pictures at the picturesque bay and surrounding countryside. I used an excellent FD 75-200mm zoom lens that I had bought on the net for £30. The camera also got a good run-out on our main holiday in Norfolk in August.

Of very conventional layout the camera was easy to use with all of the controls falling familiarly to hand. My biggest problem, specifically at Great Yarmouth Greyhound Stadium was fading light in the early evening. It left me trying to juggle slim depth of field with slow shutter speeds and danger of camera shake and subject movement. Of about 30 pictures maybe about seven were technically acceptable. But a conventional SLR camera with a fast film and a tele-zoom lens provided the perfect combination for the Air show later in the holiday.



B17 Flying Fortress, American 2nd W.W. Long-Range Bomber 'Sally B', Rusham Air Show August 2011 Canon F1 with 75-200mm zoom lens.



De Havilland Bi-Plane 1st W.W. replica, Rusham Air Show, Canon F1 with 75-200mm zoom lens.



Rusham Air Show, August 2011. Canon F1 SLR Camera



Rusham Air Show August 2011 Canon F1 SLR Camera



Douglas DC3 at Rusham Air Show, August 2011 Canon F1 SLR Camera.



View of 'The Hale', Wendover, Buckinghamshire. May, 2011. Werra Mat 35mm camera.

The first part of this project on stereo photography was included in my 4th journal. I have included the second and concluding part in this following volume. As I continued, I began to think about exploring other options in stereo photography and viewing. For want of a better term I am going to refer to the next technique as 'displacement' stereo.

I have no justification for coining this term. Certainly I would not be the first person to explore the possibilities of using a single one-lens camera for shooting stereo just by moving the camera position in relation to a static subject, but I don't know of anyone else who has defined it.

The possibilities for this occurred to me following a holiday in Normandy in 1989, long before I started seriously collecting cameras or even thinking about these photographic journals. By chance I had a camera loaded with transparency film and took some pictures of a particularly picturesque country landscape whilst on a walk.

Following one picture I walked a few feet further on and took another of the same scene. Critics will say (quite justifiably) that I was over-shooting. When I viewed the processed transparencies back home I noticed the relationship between the pictures and put them into two cheap single slide viewers - one for each eye. I managed to get a significant stereo effect of a strength that allowed the perception of depth of bushes in the very far distance.

Obviously the subject matter has to be static if there is going to be a time shift while a camera is moved from one position to another. This means that the technique is best applied to landscapes. Foreground hedgerow is also a hazard when lining pictures up. It changes far too much to be resolveable in the viewer. But a shift of a couple of feet between the two pictures will give an incredible amount of depth to middle and far distanced objects and show the landscape in a new way.



Left and right pictures of Normandy Countryside 1989. Unidentified single camera. From Kodachrome Transparencies.

I had a two-pole strategy for updating this idea. The first was to purchase some new cheap slide viewers (easily obtained via the net) and mount them together so that they made an easily used stereo viewer.

I did this by laying some Velcro foam onto a thin strip of card and sticking some Velcro hook to the base of each viewer. I was able to easily adjust the angles of the viewers when I mounted them on the card strip which also had the advantage, because of its flexibility, of being adjustable for each person using the arrangement. By flexing the horizontal and vertical aspects of the viewers in relation to each other every user can find the point at which they can fuse the two images.



Left: The home-build stereo slide viewer made of two proprietary slide viewers mounted on a flexible cardboard strip using stick-on 'Velcro'. Right: The Werramat German 35mm camera from th '60's.

The second part of this exercise was obviously to load up a camera with some new 35mm transparency film and start shooting some current landscapes to test out the technique.

One camera I had picked up recently was a beautiful Werramat from the 1960's. This camera was of exceptional precision West German build with an unusual design which incorporated the film advance and shutter tension action in a rotary grip surrounding the lens barrel. In design terms this was an innovation over the conventional method of using a top-plate mounted knob or lever – or even a base-mounted one as with the Kodak Retina Reflex. It leaves the top plate with a visually pleasing sheer brushed metal finish with a recessed shutter release. The conical appearance of the lens however tends to make the camera appear unbalanced. This is quickly rectified by screwing on the lens hood which immediately restores the cameras appearance.



Left and Right aspect photographs, The Hale, Wendover, Buckinghamshire. Werramat 35mm camera with transparency film.

In the field the camera is a little unsettling to use initially. The rotary film advance action is rather fierce and I managed to tear the first film I ran through when it jammed in the cassette. About two thirds of the film were recoverable but I had to use a dark bag to retrieve the damaged film. Further films on a subsequent visit loaded and passed through the camera without incident. By then I had worked out how to set the base-plate frame counter and rewind latch – an arrangement made confusing due to the setting point having rubbed off the base of the camera during its former life.

Shooting transparencies is a little more risky than shooting negative film. For a start the exposure has to be exact. Negative film has a great deal of latitude – particularly concerning over-exposure. Slide film on the other hand is very sensitive to over-exposure where the highlights immediately begin to bleach out. The Werramat appeared to have a perfectly reliable coupled exposure meter but, as with most of the older cameras that I test, I preferred to rely on my trusty Weston V which I am at least used to.

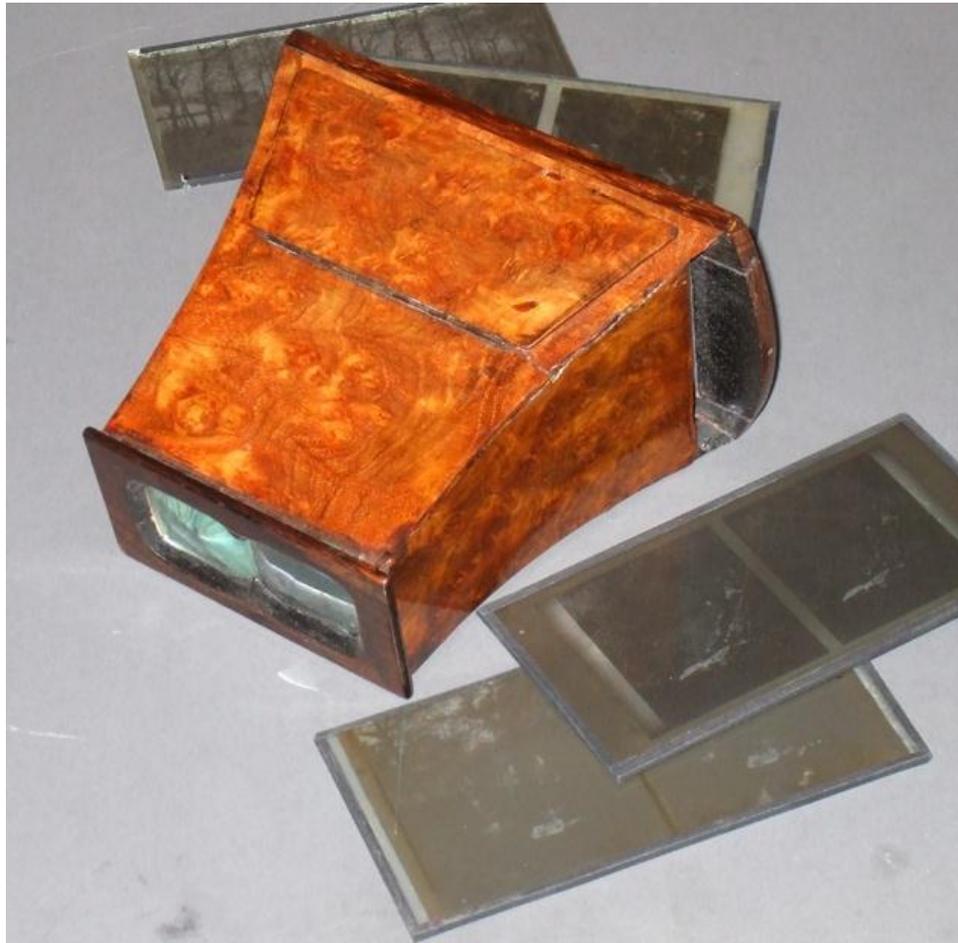
The other feature of slides, particularly if they are going to be viewed directly as slides and not through printed media, is that there is no chance of post production manipulation, such as colour and contrast correction – or most importantly re-cropping – as is the case with prints. Care is needed when doing stereo pairs using this technique to pick reference points in the distance of the view being shot that can be used to fix the boundaries for both pictures. In particular the horizon must be in the same vertical position for the two pictures otherwise it will be very difficult to resolve the pictures into a stereo pair.



Wendover, Buckinghamshire. One of a Stereo pair. Werramat 35mm Camera.

I gave in to temptation beyond reason and attended a camera fair in May, coming away with an absolutely beautiful walnut Victorian stereo viewer and some contemporaneous slides to view with it.

Unlike the Cavender Camerascope, This viewer had optics which opened out to a viewing field of eight centimetres square for each eye. I picked a group of black and white glass transparencies of an Edwardian Shooting Party which worked well in the viewer – which also turned out to be a great hit at my recent display at Prestwood Steam Rally.



Victorian Walnut Stereo Viewer and Slides. Manufacturer unknown. Circa 18



Black and White stereo Slide of Edwardian Shooting Party. Camera and Photographer Unknown. Glass mounted Sandwich .

The walnut viewer is also rather versatile. A top plate hinges out with a mirror section to direct light into the body of the viewer so that it can be used to view printed or card-backed stereo pairs in addition to its main function as a transmitted light (or slide) viewer.

I tried this late at night with some printed up colour pairs and found the shadows cast across the viewing field a real hindrance. The problem of course was that I was using a concentrated beam of lamp light to direct down into the viewer. Waiting for daylight and with diffuse cloudy skylight being reflected down into the viewer the results were much better and again the pictures came alive. Being able to view prints 8cm square also meant that the tonal quality of what I was able to print up exceeded that of the much smaller prints that I could make for the Cavender Camerascope.

Let's hear it for the Victorians! They knew what they were doing with stereo.



The Hale, Wendover, Buckinghamshire. Werramat 35mm Camera. June 2011. Stereo pair composited for viewing in Victorian Stereo-scope.

I thought my excursion into stereo photography would originally end here. But during the course of the project one of my trustworthy camera suppliers Sue (she will be glad to at last get a mention) found me an Edixa Stereo camera in very good condition.

At last I had a stereo camera using a non-obsolete film format – 35mm – and of the precision German manufacture so characteristic of the fifties and early sixties. It has a lens separation of three inches which I hoped would give an enhanced stereo effect and had all of the control missing from the basic Coronet Stereo camera – Variable aperture, a full range of shutter speeds and linked focussing. Everything on it seemed to work fine except the built in exposure meter – but that didn't worry me.

The one thing missing was a rewind knob. Opening the camera up however I found that the spigot and spring which engage the film cassette were still present. I figured that I could load and thread the camera without problems – the only thing I would need to do would be to unload the camera in the dark. Since I had a cloth dark bag designed for exactly this type of task I wasn't worried.



The Edixa 35mm Stereo Camera circa 1954

With our summer holiday in Norfolk coming up I decided to pack this camera, along with the dark bag, and give it a work out. Needless to say the activity did not go as planned and I found out just what the particular problems with this camera were.



Museum Restaurant, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, August 2011. Stereo Pair. Edixa Stereo Camera



Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, August 2011. Stereo Pair, Edixa Stereo Camera.

Loading and preparing the camera was straightforward. The viewfinder was reasonable giving an accurate representation of the square 24mm format that the camera produced. In use it attracted some interest and admiration from passers by intrigued by the double lens. They didn't realise how old the camera was – in many respects it could pass for a modern 'specialist' digital camera.



My wife – Helene checks out the 'Sick Man' in a Joke Shop, Great Yarmouth Edixa Stereo.

But the shutter? Oh dear! Sometimes it would fire, sometimes not. Over the course of several days I realised that it worked more reliably in hot weather, but if it didn't fire I still had to

wind the film on since it was coupled to the shutter release and I couldn't try another exposure at the same film position. I grimly resigned myself to a wastage ratio of about 66%.

Then there was the frame separation. With three inches from one frame to the next I wondered how the camera managed the exposures. Surely it would interleave the exposures from one shot to the next to fill the gap – maybe it did it twice? I wasn't sure. After each exposure I tentatively moved the lever wind until it stopped. Sometimes it seemed to travel a longer distance than others. I was vaguely uneasy.

After some fancy finger work inside the dark bag after shooting the first film (and don't think that didn't attract some attention when done at an outside restaurant table in the high street), I retrieved the film cassette intact and trooped it to the local Boots chemist which still thankfully offered a twenty four hour process and print service.

I explained carefully to the young counter assistant that the film needed careful handling since it came from a stereo camera and instead of having a conventional format of 24mm x 36mm on 35mm film it had a format of 24mm square – a bit like the 126 instamatic, so it would need careful cutting so as not to slice through frames and that there may be some frame overlap which would require careful line-up on printing.



Wroxham High Street, Norfolk, August 2011. Stereo pair, Edixa Stereo Camera.

She stared at me open-mouthed until I finished, swallowed hard then said that maybe she would go and fetch the manager to deal with this. When I got the results the next day it was evident that some of my instructions at least had been followed. They had not cut through any exposures. Other than that however it was evident that their automatic scanner had not been up to the task of handling randomly spaced negatives with large areas of nothing in between, then many other exposures, as I feared, overlapping.

Abandoning the washed-out prints I opted for process only for the other films I shot, relieving the evident pain and panic I had caused at Boots if not saving myself much actual money.

I looked for activity and some depth in the subjects I chose to shoot with the Edixa. I anticipated that with its option of fast shutter speeds I could at last shoot some movement and dynamism in the constant flow of people moving up and down Great Yarmouth's main shopping parade. I was right. The picturesque and gaudy seaside atmosphere lent itself well to stereo coverage with many foreground features such as benches and display turrets to accentuate the depth of the perspective the street itself created. I have picked one or two of the best examples here which I have composed specifically for the Victorian Stereo Viewer.

Although the original pictures were square the final results are, as you will notice, frequently portrait in shape. This was necessitated by the overlapping exposures which rendered the sides of many of the frames un-useable. Once they were masked out however, well conformed pairs could be created in Photoshop.



Roy's Department Store, Wroxham, Norfolk, August 2011. Edixa Stereo Camera

These are some of the most successful stereo pictures I have managed to capture, despite the problems of the Edixa camera. What makes them good is the capturing of actual people, unaware of being photographed and in movement, frozen in time and the depth of space. Neither the Coronet, nor twin camera shooting really have the capability of operating with the freedom of movement necessary for such documenting of life.

What is evident from these results is that the Edixa is definitely worth getting stripped down, cleaned and repaired. Hopefully the shutter and frame spacing functions will then be reliable. Certainly the lens quality approaches that of contemporaneous cameras of the time such as the Kodak Retinas.



Wroxham, Norfolk, August 2011. Edixa Stereo Camera.

Well, that's it for this stereo project. It extended a little beyond what I had originally envisaged, largely because of the acquisition of the Victorian Stereo Viewer and Edixa camera both of which occurred after I started the project.

I have been able to explore successfully the readily available Stereo technologies applicable to the use of standard types of cameras and displayable through a printed medium. Other techniques can only work through the use of projection, television or (in the case of lenticular stereo) by using specific substrates and post production systems.

And, with the migration of television viewing away from the traditional analogue systems to open ended digital systems, high definition stereo viewing is now available to the consumer. I picked up a DVD display box only very recently which had a lenticular stereo image on the face of exceptional quality.

The one avenue that I have still to approach concerns the creation of false stereo effects (for want of a better term) – by that I mean the generation of a stereo effect from just one picture. Given that the impression of the nearness of an object is derived from an increased separation between the elements of the left and right views, it therefore follows that by duplicating a single image and stretching and shifting parts of the image graphically in relation to each other across the two images, a stereo effect can be obtained. But the result will always be contrived. But that of course is another project.’



Chesham Town, February 2012. Nikon Nuvis APS Camera. 1995

The last innovation that the Kodak company brought to the market place in the era of film based photography was the APS (Advanced Photo System) film format. After the debacle of the short lived disc film and cameras Kodak redeemed themselves with a system that introduced several landmark innovations – some of which were adopted in digital camera designs that followed shortly. It was the rapid ascendancy of digital photography which led to the untimely end of the APS format, and film altogether in the popular photography market.

As with all of Kodak’s innovations in film formats, other manufacturers soon started to produce cameras to support it. It may be no coincidence that the size of the APS format is almost identical to that of the current digital sensor arrays. But a close look at the best of the APS camera designs shows just how uncannily similar they are to the generic designs in the compact digital camera market.

A close look at the beautiful Nikon Nuvis ‘S’ proves the point. About the size of a packet of 20 cigarettes it has a well finished brushed steel finish and a slide cover which powers up the battery operated camera. The APS film is just popped in. It does not need threading by the user. Film loading, frame advance and rewind is all motorised and automatic. A beautiful 3:1 motorized auto focus zoom lens extends out of the body and a direct viewfinder is synchronised with it.

Three different formats are available from standard through to panoramic. Again the framing corrects for this choice in the viewfinder. Date and title information can be imprinted and multi exposure modes are available with the built in flash. A small Liquid Crystal Display shows the camera's status. All of these features will be familiar to the user of any modern compact digital camera.



Chesham Town, February 2012. Nikon Nuvis 'S' APS Camera 1995

I picked up this camera for £5 in a bin in a camera shop in Watford. It came in a shipping box as a refurbished item direct from Nikon with an original instruction book. I already had plenty of APS film – the correct battery cost another £2.50.

Luckily it seems that most high street print shops that still process 35mm film are also happy to do APS film but the film is not sleeved after processing and printing but stored inside the original cassette. Aware of this I remembered at the last minute to get the shop to scan the film as I would not be able to do it easily myself. As you can see I took full advantage of the 3:1 zoom lens to get some nice results.



Chesham Town, February 2012. Nikon Nuvis 'S' APS Camera 1995



Chesham Town, February 2012. Nikon Nuvis 'S' APS Camera 1995



The Nikon Nuvis 'S' APS camera from 1995



The Canon EOS IX APS camera from 2000



Arlington Court, Somerset, August 2012 Canon EOS IX APS Camera

Let's stay with the APS format for a while. I picked up the Canon EOS IX in Tottenham Court Road, London in June this year. This cost me considerably more than the Nikon Nuvis and didn't come with a lens. But I was taken by the unusual body shape. I found out in the shop that it took the standard EOS auto focus lenses and found that it appeared to work well with the Ultrasonic AF lens I had originally bought with an EOS50e.

As a fully featured automatic Single Lens Reflex camera the IX is characterized by having a low profile viewfinder prism housing and a dominant enlarged circular lens mounting. It has all of the multi-format choice, auto-exposure and auto film handling features of the Nikon with the advantages of interchangeable lenses and reflex viewfinding typical of a standard 35mm SLR.

Very easy to use, I had to remember that, with the smaller format of APS the wide angle characteristic of the lens if it were operating on a 35mm camera would be reduced, but the telephoto aspect of the zoom lens would be enhanced. No problems about close up focussing and picture composition either. The single lens reflex concept is particularly useful for both telephoto and close up focusing and I have included a couple of pictures here which prove the point.



Arlington Court, Somerset, August 2012 Canon EOS IX APS Camera



Arlington Court, Somerset, August 2012 Canon EOS IX APS Camera



Water Slide, Date, Photographer and Location unknown. Fuji DL 800 zoom 1995



Date, Location and Photographer unknown. Ricoh KR10 Single Lens Reflex Camera 1980



Date, Location and Photographer unknown. Ricoh KR10 Single Lens Reflex Camera 1980

One of the supplementary benefits of collecting old cameras is that occasionally you find an exposed film in the back of the camera. Viewing the processed results opens an unexpected window, not just onto the past but onto people's private lives, the way they record their activities and how they relate to each other and events. Sometimes they are conventional views, landscapes or portraits. Sometimes they are quirky like the picture of the fighting pheasants above.

Some that I came across felt private with clearly identifiable pictures of individuals. I didn't feel happy reproducing those so I have stuck to views and other subjects. Unusually one film I came across from a small underwater-housed camera contained what was clearly a specific photographic project – the aim being to record the derelict parts of Chatsworth.

One frequently wonders why the films were not processed. Was the camera left in a drawer and forgotten about when a new digital camera was bought? Did something else happen on the holiday when the camera was used that caused the family to want to forget about it, so the film was never processed? Who knows?



Basking Seals, Location, Date and Photographer unknown. Pentax ME Super 1980 (also below)





Left to right – The Bosch Underwater Camera circa 1990, The Fuji DL800, 1995 and the Pentax ME Super of 1980.

A little bit about the cameras: Three of these were picked up at a car boot sale this August in Somerset for ridiculously small amounts of money. The Bosch is a conventional construction budget compact 35mm camera fitted with a 28mm wide angle lens suitable for use underwater. The camera is permanently fused into a tough clear plastic housing with a hinged rubber sealed water-tight back. The shutter release, film wind on and retract, viewfinder and flash arming controls are all ingeniously exteriorised. In addition a frame viewfinder ideal for underwater use is mounted on top. – A nice basic camera then but a very unusual choice for the photographic recording of (very) downtown Chatsworth.



Chatsworth. Date and Photographer unknown. Bosch underwater camera c.1990



Chatsworth. Date and Photographer unknown. Bosch underwater camera c.1990

By contrast to the Bosch, the Fuji DL800 zoom is a much fuller-featured 35mm compact from around 1995. It is fully automatic with a 2:1 auto focus zoom, auto exposure and a drop-load mechanism (DL in its name) for the film cassette which was completely automatically managed from that point on. The film inside contained many personal pictures so I have included only one from the camera – that of the water slide.

The Pentax ME Super is an example of the new generation of Single Lens Reflex cameras that Asahi designed to replace the first series. From the earliest Asahiflex through the highly successful landmark 'S' series, the Spotmatic series that followed with Through-the-Lens metering and on to the bayonet lens mount 'K' series the Pentax camera had remained essentially the same shape, size and basic layout. The last of the series – the K1000 – remained as incredibly popular as any of the earlier models.

But the impact of the Olympus OM1 and the rise of electronic shutter and aperture systems along with computerized management of metering and multi-programmes prompted the company to radically rethink their basic designs. The M camera series is much smaller and lighter, has extensive viewfinder display of camera settings and has push button control settings rather than the conventional dial. The 2 pictures of basking seals shown here were taken with one of several that I have obtained. – By whom I don't know.



Chatsworth. Date and Photographer unknown. Bosch underwater camera c.1990

The Ricoh KR10 is a superbly built 35mm Single Lens Reflex from Japan in very good condition that I picked up also at the car boot sale, It came in a gadget bag with some lenses, plenty of filters and a very useful hand grip for the huge price of about £20. With a Cadmium Sulphide through-the-lens meter it is fully auto with manual over-ride on exposure. The shutter is fully electronically governed and it takes Pentax 'K' mount lenses of which I have several. So I have plans to give the camera a good run out later on. In the mean time two pictures here are included taken by its last user: A mountain escapement and the picture of two pheasants sparring.



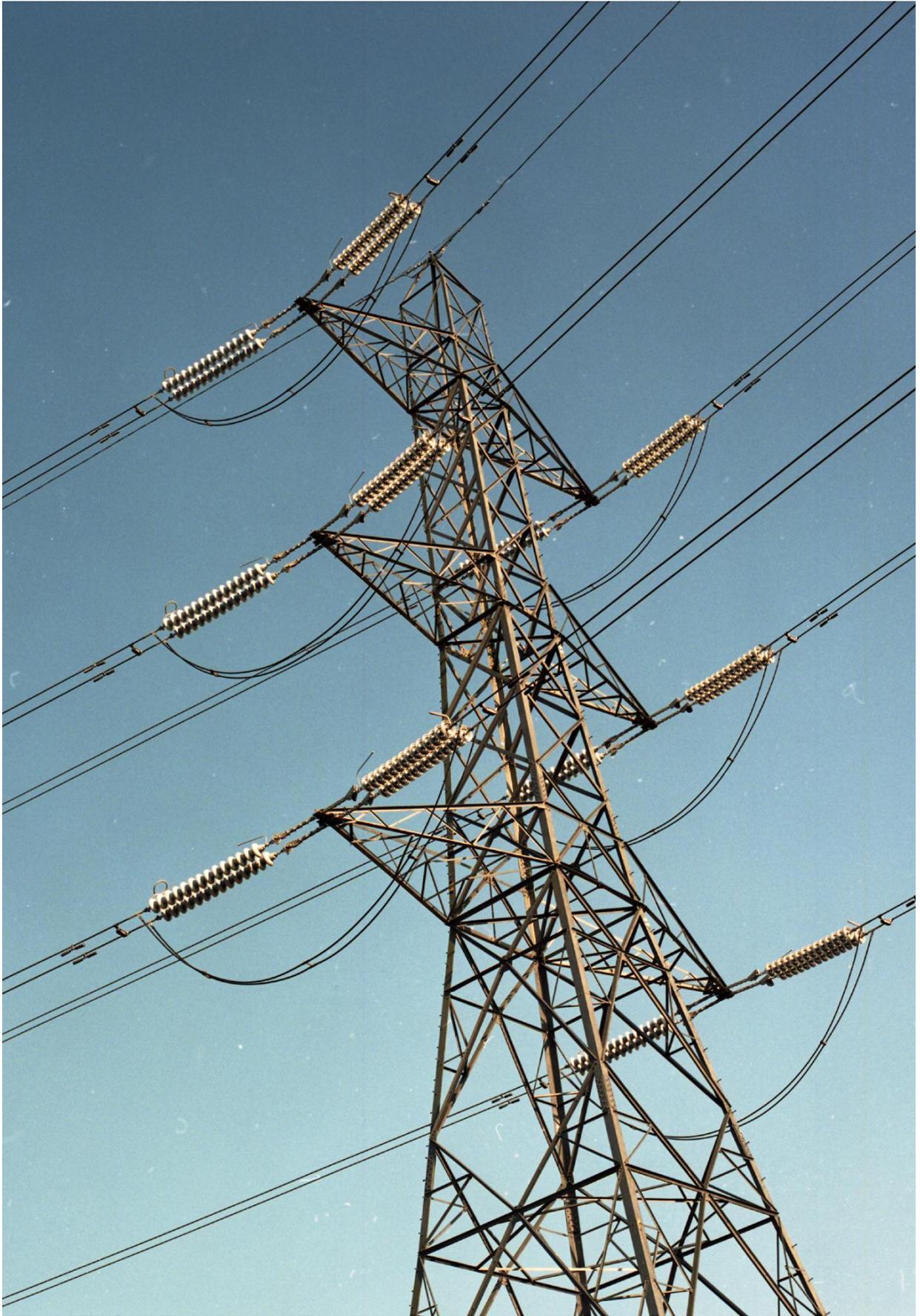
The Ricoh KR10 SLR Camera 1980



Hasselblad 500cm 1970



Bushey Arches, Watford, Herts. February 2012. Hasselblad 2000fc SLR Camera, 80mm lens.



Bushey Arches, Watford, Herts. February 2012 Hasselblad 2000fc SLR with 80mm lens.



Bushey Arches, Watford, Herts. February 2012 Hasselblad 2000fc SLR with 80mm lens.

I have always wanted a Hasselblad. They are without doubt the ‘Rolls Royce’ of medium format cameras in the same way that ‘Leica’ were the same for 35mm. Working as a Photographer in my first job straight from school I used a Mamiya RB67. This was heavy, noisy and over complex in operation. Hasselblads by comparison were much lighter and smaller, ultra precision manufacture from Sweden with the very best lenses from Zeiss in Germany. And there was that name – ‘Hasselblad’.

30 years elapsed and I saw a 2000FC model for sale in Watford for £700. A long dormant hunger awakened and clawed at my stomach. I decided to spend some of my savings on it.



Middle Wallop Army Air Transport Museum, Wiltshire, August 2012. Hasselblad 500CM with 55mm Wide Angle Lens.



Middle Wallop Army Air Transport Museum, Wiltshire, August 2012. Hasselblad 500CM with 55mm Wide Angle Lens.

The 2000FC was a later model of Hasselblad with a titanium focal plane shutter with a top speed of $1/2000^{\text{th}}$ second. I bought it with an immaculate Zeiss 80mm Planar lens with its own built in leaf shutter which works up to $1/500^{\text{th}}$ second. Shutterless lenses were created for the 2000FC but if the Compur shutter in the lens was present then the camera could be used with either. Care has to be taken to set both shutters correctly otherwise no exposure will happen because the two shutters would fire out of synchronization. I worked the shutter mechanisms and film wind over in the shop and noticed that it felt particularly stiff right at the end of its travel. I asked the assistant about it and he wasn't sure about the action either but the camera obviously worked so I bought it with a 6 month guarantee.



Helene with Echo, Quantock Hills, Somerset, August 2012. Hasselblad 500CM with 55mm Wide Angle Lens.

Helene was beginning to get quite frustrated as I continued to work the camera shutter over and over again while we had lunch. “If you don’t stop doing that it’ll break!” she said more than once. I was pre-occupied. It still didn’t feel quite right.

I ran a test film through at home. No problems. We went to Bushey Arches and I ran off another film quite successfully.

Scanning the films back home I enlarged the pictures in Photoshop. My word! The sharpness of these famed Zeiss lenses was truly as the legends tell. It really did hold through countless degrees of magnification. I had read somewhere that Carl Zeiss had increased the precision of the lenses for Hasselblads beyond even their normal faultless quality to meet the Swedish company's demands. I thought it was just a story. But here was the proof.

Gleefully I started to set the camera up to load another film. And the film wind jammed!



Regent's Park Crescent, London, July 2012. Hasselblad 500CM with 180mm lens.



Harrow Campus of the University of Westminster. July 2012. Hasselblad 500CM with 80mm Lens.

A month and several phone calls later the camera shop had to admit that the camera body was un-repairable and I got my money back. I was up £700 but down one Hasselblad. A week later and a further £200 the poorer I was the proud owner of an earlier but perfect model –the 500CM. This is a simpler design of body with no shutter built in. The shutter resides solely in the lens with the mechanisms in the camera body being restricted to a film wind linkage, a non-return mirror and a baffle which closes to protect the film plane when the shutter is open for viewfinding. This model was the most famous and long-lived of the Hasselblad models. On holiday in Somerset in August it worked like a dream. And, yes, those Zeiss lenses really are that good.



Watchet Harbour, Somerset, August 2012. Hasselblad 500CM with 55mm Wide Angle lens.

That's it for this fifth volume of photographs, ramblings and experiments. Looking at my computer files I see that there are many cameras that I had intended to feature in this journal – the photographs are sitting there waiting to be edited. But I don't want to make each of these booklets too big otherwise they won't fit in the binder. So I'll have to sift through the pictures and include them in my next booklet – number six. Plus, of course I have some more cameras, some of them recent acquisitions, that I am itching to try out.'



Harrow Campus of the University of Westminster, July 2012. Hasselblad 500CM 80mm lens.