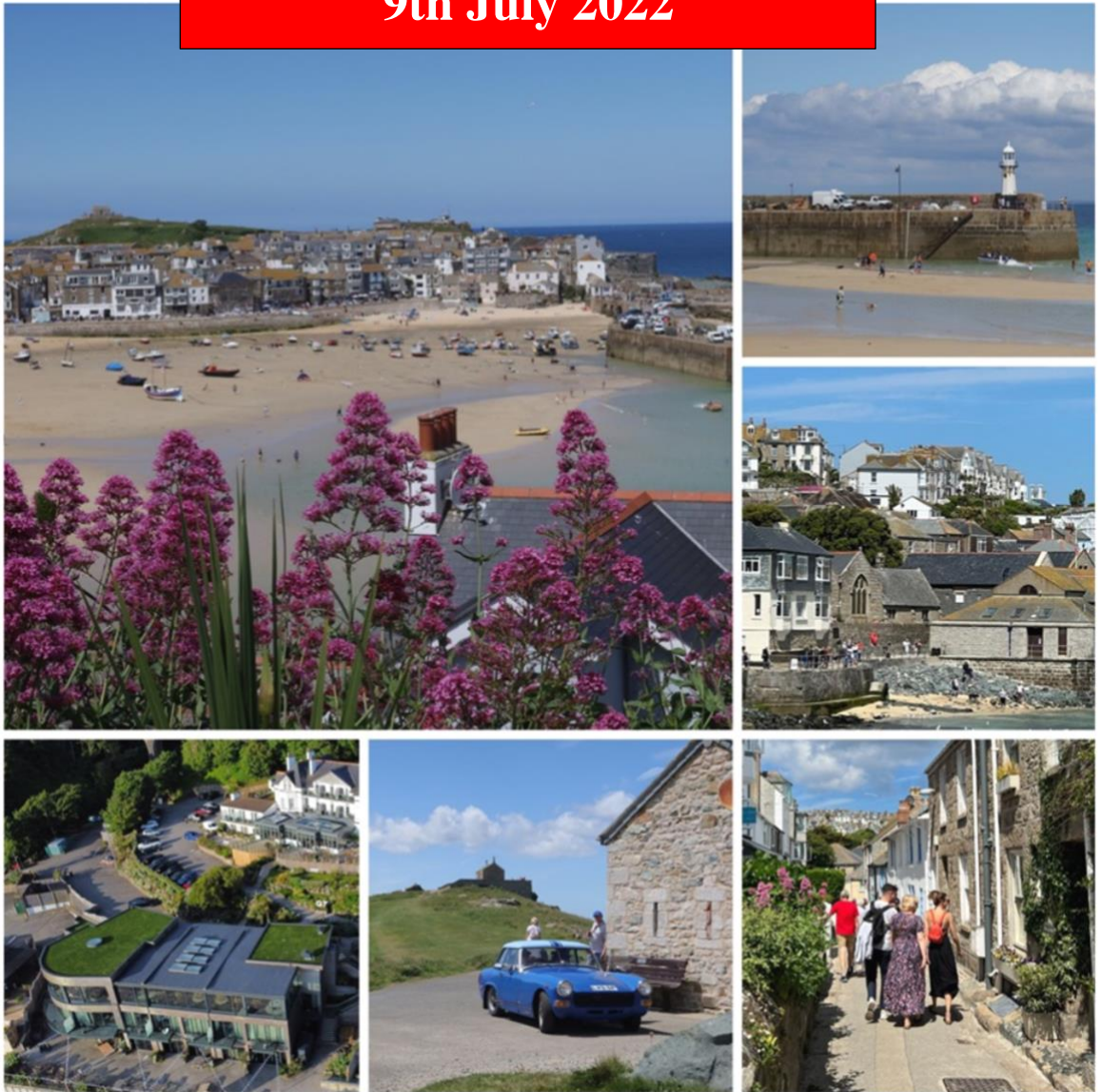


# Newsletter for week ending 9th July 2022



Collage produced using Pixlr Smartphone App using iPhone 13 Pro Images

## A few Days Break

In early June we did manage to get a few days away in the lovely seaside town of St Ives in Cornwall. Even then it was very busy in the narrow streets and I have heard that it is almost impossible to move there in the peak summer months of July and August.

I did manage to get the DJI mini 2 drone up for a couple of flights and the Carbis Bay hotel, which was the venue last year for the G7 summit, is the bottom left hand image of the collage.

I had intended to get more aerial views of the island and the harbour but time was against us. Hopefully when we go back in September I will have more time. For once I just took one small compact camera – the Canon G7x mk3 to capture all the images. Being a 20 megapixel, 1 inch sensor and 4.2x optical zoom did help.



**7Artisans 60mm F2.8 Macro Lens Review**



**7Artisans 60mm F2.8 Macro Lens**

For my birthday present contributions I decided to purchase this mk1 version of the 60mm F2.8 macro lens – just £159 on Amazon UK.

The 7Artisans 60mm f/2.8 Macro lens is available in all the popular camera mounts. I purchased the Canon EOS M mount. It comes from a small Chinese firm in Shenzhen who's been specializing in mirrorless camera lenses lately. The 60mm f/2.8 is a manual focus only lens, and designed for the APS-C form factor.

Being fully manual the lens doesn't have electrical contacts so you don't get any lens EXIF data with your images.

The optical design is 8 elements in 7 groups, with no special glass elements. The aperture is 10-bladed and gives a pleasing round shaped bokeh.

The focus ring moves from infinity to the minimum focus of 0.26m in almost 270°. But the infinity to 0.6m section of that is completed in less than 20°. So, a lot of focus movement below 2 feet, but toward infinity focus is quite tricky. Focus breathing is very minimal even at infinity setting. The depth of field markings are engraved for f/4, f/8, and f/16.

The aperture ring is de-clicked (smooth in operation) and has markings every stop from f/2.8 to f/16. The focus is on the large front ring on the lens and aperture is the back ring.

Unique to this lens is a retracting lens hood. While the barrel of the lens is 60mm in diameter, the front element of the lens has a 39mm filter ring on it and that element retracts well into the lens body. When the lens is focused at macro distances (as shown in my image above), the hood extends out from the front of the lens.

I measured the working distance at 1:1 as a respectable 5" (127mm) from the front of the tube – it can be removed to prevent scaring insects away.

The build quality of this lens is high for the price with all metal construction that brings this fairly small lens (3.9" long, or 100mm) to 550g in weight.

Performance: Sharpness: the centre sharpness is very good wide open, and this extends across most of the frame. Close up performance is actually slightly better than longer distance performance.

This lens was definitely designed for macro work, with 1:1 giving the best images. By f/4 this lens is a sharp edge to edge, and probably hitting a sweet spot at f/5.6.

Vignetting: some slight vignetting becomes mostly ignorable by f/8.

Chromatic Aberration: Some visible CA when shooting wide open, but this dies off quickly enough as you reduce aperture.

Flare: If the lens has a weakness, it's flare and noticeable with backlit objects. This is true whether the hood is screwed in or not.

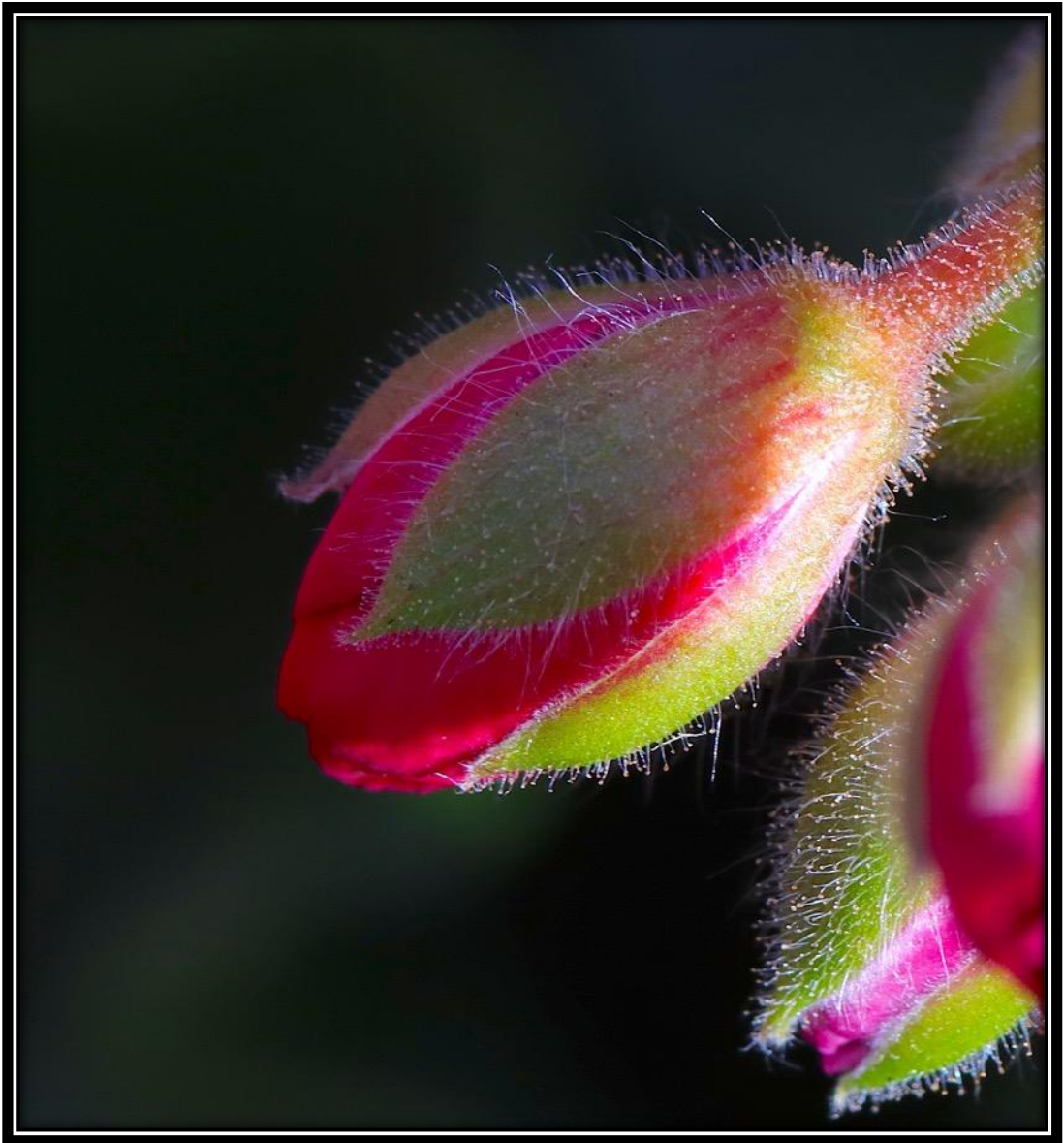
Bokeh: The highlight blur circles have definite brighter rims to them but no colouration. The aperture diaphragm actually seems to be better composed and more circular than a lot of big name lenses manage,

Overall, this lens has very pleasant bokeh.

Overall, for the money, I'm pleased with this lens and adds much needed macro facilities to my EOS M cameras.



*Using 4K video stacking I created this image using the 7artisans lens at F4*



*Geranium bud with 7Artisans lens at f5.6*

Using sunlight as the light source 1/250 sec @ ISO 400 and hand held with Canon EOS M6 mk2 I was able to capture a single bud of this geranium plant.

Using the LCD screen to judge focus was difficult, maybe the EOS M50 with its EVF would be better for the next shots although it doesn't have the same 30MP sensor to give the extra resolution.

Being manual focus the rocking to and fro technique is needed to find the correct focus point and even then several images must be captured to ensure at least one will have the correct focus.



*1/640 @ ISO 400 lens set at F4*



*1/320 @ ISO 400 lens set at F4*



My solution to the lack of EVF on the Canon EOS M6 mkII is to use the magnifying hood similar to this one <https://amzn.to/3y7DADc> as the original one, bought many years ago, is no longer available.

The hood swings up to allow the touch screen to be accessed if needed. It has an Arca style plate so it can be used with a tripod quick release plate.

It gives a third point of stability using the eyecup to your eye and a much more pleasing view of the image being captured – important as this lens doesn't have image stabilisation. I am considering the electronic EVF for this camera and will look out one from eBay etc as I don't want to pay the new price of £249 for it.

Update: I just bought one from CEX at ½ price.



## Versatile Monopod Design



This is the Cobra 2 round base monopod from iFootage.com

The model that I have is the RB-A300 which has an extended height of 151cms. It stands on a 30cms circular metal base which has a felted pad on the underside.

It extends in 3 sections from the minimum height of 61cms.

The extendable sections have very secure leg buckles which do not slip with a considerable load placed upon them. The monopod is rated at 10Kgs and weighs 1.4Kg

The base of the monopod has a 3/8-16 threaded mounting hole and the top of the monopod has a spring loaded 1/4-20 or 3/8-16 thread to attach ball heads, 3-way heads or video heads.

You can also mount any other adaptor such as phone, Microphone or lighting adaptor. With some ingenuity you can even mount the pole the other way up so the thinner sections are at the top and use it as a microphone stand.

It is a great space saver over a tripod when used in a small studio such as mine. The addition of a 5Kg barbel weight placed on the base ensures stability and less likely of a topple with a camera and lens attached. It is currently £68 or 79\$ however it seems to be sold out frequently. A shorter version is also available standing just 56cm tall when extended.



As the monopod has a 3/8-16 threaded spigot at the base I was also able to attach the fold-up foot from a previous monopod increasing the use to outdoors as well.

The Fuji XT-3 is shown mounted on a ball head on this monopod.

A quick release foot for this monopod is also available from iFootage.com





I made an adaptor to firmly clamp a 2.5Kg barbel weight between the bottom of the monopod and the 30cm metal base.

This extra weight prevents the likelihood of toppling of the camera when mounted on the top of the monopod.

By reversing the monopod the thinner sections are at the top making it more suitable to act as a microphone or small LED panel light stand.



**The Lure Of Infra-Red Photography.**



*Images taken with the TZ40 that I modified to shoot Infra-red only.*

At this time of year when the trees are in full leaf it is great to go out and shoot some pictures with an infra-red modified camera.

As infra-red is reflected from the grass and tree leaves it gives the images a look of freshly fallen snow or frost.

As the skies are blue, emitting less IR and mainly UV light they appear almost dark grey or black.

With the right cloud formations this can make for some really dramatic landscapes.

Some people prefer the pink/red coloured images straight from the camera however I prefer to shoot in the Black and White Photostyle within the camera to get the correct tonal look from my images.

I did a couple videos about how to convert the Panasonic travel zoom camera to shoot infra-red a few years ago on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/frtOxryDTo8>

With just a few basic tools, and if you take your time, it is possible to do this conversion quite cheaply and you will enjoy some really fantastic views of the world from a different colour.

### **Keeping it Simple**



*St Ives, Smeaton's Pier*

It is still surprising the number of emails that I receive asking for specific photographic set ups for shooting certain scenes like the Northern Lights, exotic locations or Safaris.

There is no magic formula, no ideal camera photo style or exposure mode that can help you get perfect exposures in any given scene or lighting scenario.

Only experience and the basic understanding of how images are formed can help you get the right exposure. Getting the right composition, viewpoint or human interest takes more skill.



*St Ives Harbour*

Looking at the first statement exposure, in my simple world, is just about aperture and shutter speed.

I do not consider ISO as part of my consideration as, wherever possible, I will set my cameras at the lowest (base or native ISO), to ensure the best condition to achieve the greatest tonal range (aka dynamic range) and the lowest image noise.

That leaves aperture and shutter speed, and if the exposure meter is affected by an imbalance of foreground or background brightness, exposure compensation.

With the smaller 1-2/3inch sensor cameras we already have, at least, 5 stops of full frame aperture equivalent depth of field.

So taking the fact that the camera lens is probably the sharpest at 1 stop below the maximum aperture (say F4) then this has the equivalent depth of field as F16 on a full frame sensor camera given the same focal length.

So with aperture set at F4 (using aperture priority mode “A”) all that remains is to preview the camera determined shutter speed by half depressing the shutter button and observing the value on the LCD or in the EVF.

Now comes a little assessment on your part.

If the subject is static – that is there is no movement in the image (especially close to the camera) such as a still life, landscape or portrait where the subject can keep still then you can comfortably allow the camera to use a shutter speed in the order of 1/60sec or 1/30sec at a push.

Some cameras can actually capture surprisingly sharp images at 1/8 sec when optical stabilisation is optimal.

If you observe a shutter speed that is longer than this then you have to make a choice. Either increase ISO by 3 stops (maximum on 1-2/3 inch sensor = ISO 800) or find some way of increasing the available light if indoors – moving the subject closer to a window, adding bounce flash or using a mechanical device such as tripod or monopod the add extra stability during the exposure. Even placing the camera on a solid surface and propping it up to get the desired composition may help.



*Heavy backlight needing exposure compensation to prevent under exposure in the shadows.*

If there is any movement within the scene then the tried and tested method of setting a shutter speed equal or faster than the reciprocal of the lens focal length (equivalent) should be used.

So for example if you have the camera zoomed out to 600mm EFL then at least 1/640 second should be your target speed.

Of course this may mean that ISO has to be raised in order to obtain this value.

You may not be able to open the aperture to a wider value in order to reduce the ISO and remember optical image stabilisation has no effect on subject motion blue where the subject is in motion.

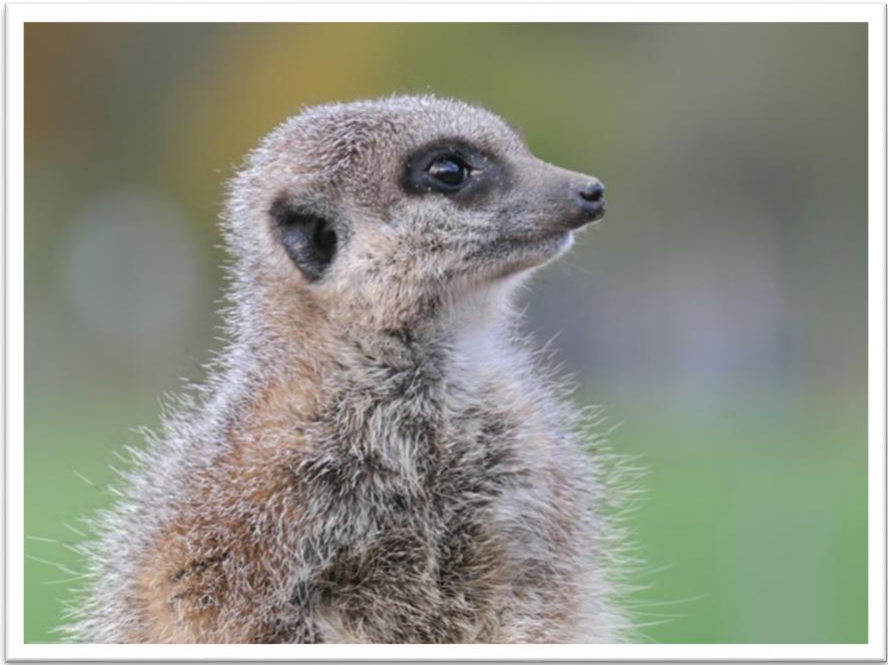
So image noise will be the resulting outcome of shooting at this focal length.

Again unless flash can be used to “freeze” any action, or if lighting cannot be improved, then not even a tripod or monopod is going to be of any help here.

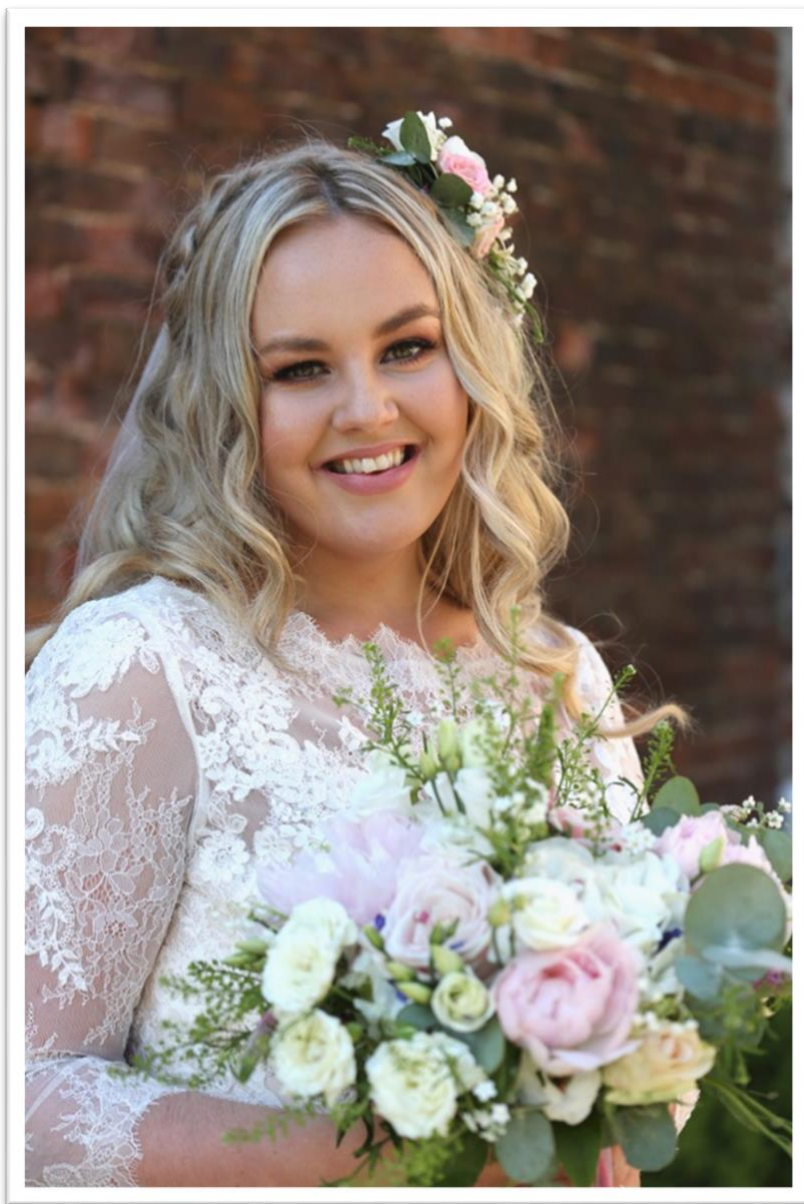
If you find yourself having to shoot in these conditions often, then consideration of a larger sensor format such as micro four third or APS-C might be worth considering.



The image above was captured with a Panasonic Lumix TZ40 travel zoom camera. The cross-lighting was perfect and I waited until a group of skiers assembled to assess how they were going to descend into the valley below. I feel the image is a good example of how, given the right lighting, even the smaller sensor cameras can deliver outstanding images. Also, in this case, having the interest of the image placed central in the frame and positioning myself so the skiers were also central in the frame generally goes against good composition but it is the shot that envisioned to create this dramatic shot.



The image of the meerkat was framed to give more space in front of it than behind. This allows image to stand out more by creating a sense of imbalance. Shooting at full telephoto on the FZ300/330 and F2.8 allowed the background to blur considerably thus isolating it from an otherwise cluttered space.



I salute all wedding photographers who have not only the technical skills to capture often impossible tonal ranges but also a skill in being able to pose their clients and present them with a beautiful portfolio. My full frame 5D mkIII and 24-105mm L series lens allowed me to capture some nice, candid shots, at my son's wedding back in 2018.

So until the next newsletter 27<sup>th</sup> August, thanks for reading.

*Graham*