

Newsletter for Week Ending 19th May 2018

Well, Saturday 5th May was thankfully one of the hottest May Bank holidays on record.

The sun was shining from dawn until dusk and the temperatures were in the low 20's.

The cherry blossom trees were in full floral extravagance and all the other trees in nice green leaf, our son Oliver had the perfect day for his wedding to Samantha.

The venue was unfortunately situated just off the main motorway network into the seaside resort of Blackpool and the usual 4 miles of queuing traffic meant journey times were overly long.

Still we got there with just one half hour to spare and I managed to set up my FZ2500 on a monopod (with feet) to record the actual marriage ceremony and I had it controlled wirelessly using the Panasonic image app.

I had a short rifle mic plus an omnidirectional audio recorder to capture the audio.

Everything was going well until my 16-month-old grandson decided to get off his chair walk over to the camera and start shaking it.

Having just spent £450 to have it repaired I had visions of it tumbling to the ground and destroying the lens. Fortunately, my daughter managed to save it and returned him to his seat.

However, two minutes later he repeated the visit to the camera and managed to rotate it so that the camera was now facing into the gathered guests so I missed the most important parts of the actual ceremony!

The full sun meant that lighting contrast was very high, a nightmare for wedding photographers!

I had planned to shoot most of my "behind the scenes" shots and video with my iPhone X but I soon recognised the lighting contrast was going to be a severe challenge so I shot all the main stills with my Canon 5D mk3 and the 24-105mm L IS lens, 70-200mm L IS lens and the 50mm F1.4 for indoors.

I shot RAW plus large JPEG to cover the large dynamic range that would be needed to capture the detail in the bride's dress.



Oliver and Samantha (I found an area in shade for this shot)



Using the 70-200mm at F8 I positioned Samantha with the sunshine directly behind her but decided against fill flash for this very natural portrait.



For this image taken under the cherry tree, which meant they were in full shade, I added on camera TTL flash to lift the heavy shadows and bring out the detail in Samantha's dress.

I was not acting as the "official wedding photographer" and in no way, did I want to interfere with the job that she was doing.

I think she was very new to this business and very badly needed an assistant to help with gathering the family and guests for their photos, arrange the poses and ensure the dress was seen at its best.

I think she was just shooting "from the hip" and missed some of the "traditional" family groupings (my wife and I were not taken with our son nor with Samantha).

A lot of her shots were in full sun and she looked to be using a couple of mid-range Nikon cameras with basic kit standard and zoom lenses. I haven't seen any of her images yet but I think there will need to be some heavy processing done to bring the images to a good standard.

As an example, I shot the following image of Samantha in the kind of pose that the photographer was arranging with full sun raking across Samantha's face. With RAW plus JPEG capture I was able to recover the dark side of Samantha's face and pull out the detail in the dress that was in the full sunlight.

The first image is the processed RAW file and the second is the OOC JPEG with my usual processing.



I think you can see that even though I carefully processed the RAW file there is very little advantage over the out of camera JPEG that I processed using my usual technique. I deliberately exposed to capture the highlights without clipping and then boosted the shadows from the slightly underexposure.

Below is the JPEG without processing.



As you can see by “exposing to the right” to protect the highlights the shadows become underexposed and must be lifted in post processing.

In some cases, using a high ISO the noise will also increase in these areas but at ISO 125 the noise is hardly evident. Posing females with cross lighting is generally not recommended as even the flawless of skins will not be captured without some evidence of pores etc. Better to turn away from the sun and use some form of fill lighting.

For the next shot, on the following page, I had Samantha stand back into the shadows and the light reflecting from the stone floor in front of her was enough to give some very soft frontal lighting.

I think this is my favourite image from the day!

1/800sec, F4 @ ISO 250 (70-200mm lens at 70mm)



In contrast, I tried using the iPhone X for some of the outside shots. The default colour from the camera is very saturated, which apparently quite a few people like. I find it too saturated – especially in the blues and greens. The following image was taken using the HDR mode. 1/1200sec F1.8 @ ISO 20



In contrast, indoors the camera did a pretty good job. Here I used a shot in portrait mode to blur the background (1/20 sec F2.4 @ ISO 160)



It was very interesting to observe that apart from the photographer and mine there was only two other guests who had bridge cameras, everyone else was shooting with their smartphones and by the end of the evening Oliver and Samantha's social media pages were full of images uploaded from these guest's cameras.

That is where I think the power of this type of photography lives. People aren't particularly bothered about editing the images shot (obvious from some of the images posted) and just want to send their images almost as immediately as they captured them.

Until traditional camera makers can offer this facility (not like Lumix club sharing via Wi-Fi) I think they will have a hard time convincing people to move away from smartphones for general snapshot photography.

So, in summary of the days shooting experience with a smartphone and a DSLR I can say that even though the weight and size of the DSLR was obvious it justified itself in getting excellent quality images. The iPhone X, using the default camera app, is far too saturated for my taste. I also found the lack of aspect ratio adjustment was annoying as the camera always shoots in the native aspect ratio of 4:3 and you cannot judge where, say a 16:9 crop would be on that image. The lack of flash power for indoor shots was also a concern, the small pin point LED flash light just gave sharp shadows when used for portraits.

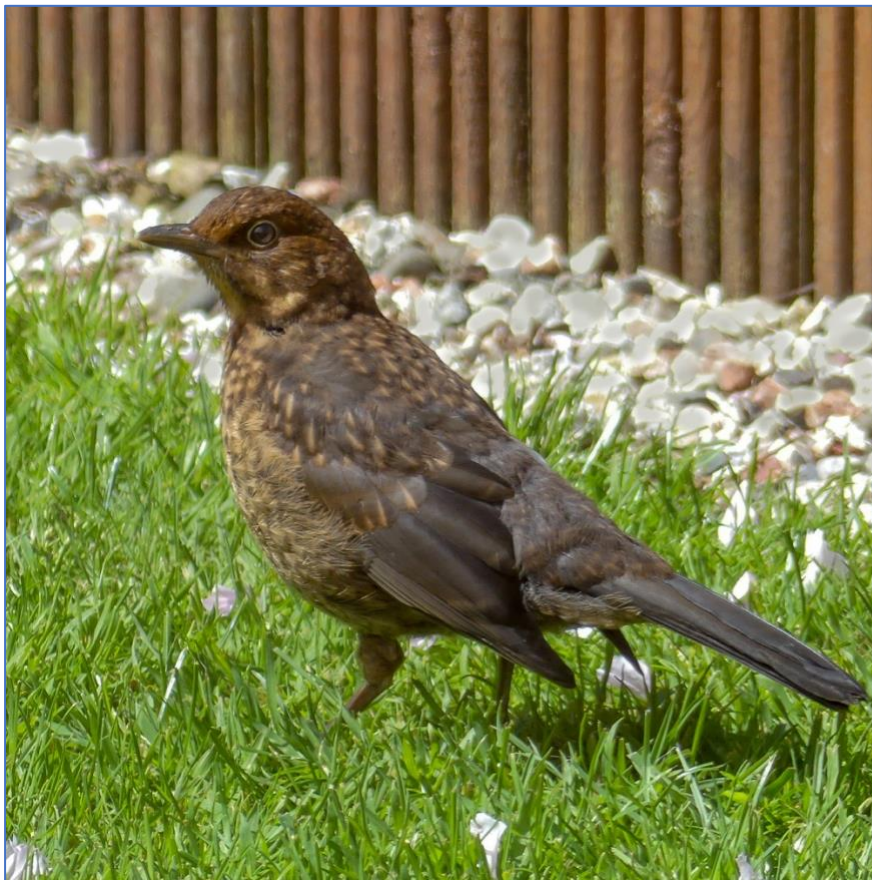
I will explore shooting with different camera apps like Lightroom mobile which gives the option to shoot DNG format. I also have 645Pro which also allows the aspect ratio to be set as well as a set of film simulations.



Shooting Through Glass

Whilst I was sitting in the conservatory taking a minute after doing some digging in the garden I noticed a juvenile blackbird hopping around the garden enjoying the worms and insects that had been disturbed as I had walked around.

I knew my FZ330 was already loaded with a freshly charged battery and had a memory card in it so I dashed into my study to pick up the camera and hoped that the bird will still be there when I returned. It was and I quickly set the camera to f3.2 and ISO 100 and then had to zoom to almost 600mm to get a large enough image size. I was having to shoot at an angle through the double-glazed windows so I chose a spot where the inside reflections from objects on the window sill were minimal. I took several images as it stayed in the same spot for a good half minute or so. Exposure was 1/320sec



It then moved to the back of the garden and into partial shade and was parallel to the windows.



So, if you shoot to minimise reflections on the glass you can get decent images without distortion and even though my windows are K-shield glass with a very fine metallic film there doesn't appear to be any colour shift. I later noticed another one with the mother bird in attendance. I hope they return and I will be ready with a larger sensor camera (Panasonic G9) with 450mm lens to see if I can better the shots.

EU citizens, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) but will affect everyone in my mailing list!

IMPORTANT: This only applies to, and will affect, anyone whose email address is registered in the European region. (as determined by your internet provider IP address) but I may have to unsubscribe everyone to set this in place as the tools available are limited for segmented mailing.

Under the new data protection laws from the 25th May 2018 I can only email those people who reside within the EU who have specifically "opted in" to receive my newsletter.

Under the new rules I have had to certify the use of any information collected from you is used only with your consent.

As this is only a newsletter and not a business situation I do not hold any more information other than your registered name, email address and date of signing i.e. I do not have credit card details or other personal information other than which is included on the sign-up form.

Mailchimp (who host this newsletter) will have access to this data as well as your actual location and your computers IP address. I personally do not use any of the information that you provide for any other use other than provide the link that allows Mailchimp to forward my newsletter to you.

To comply with the new data protection, I am obliged to ensure that you have agreed to receiving emails from me.

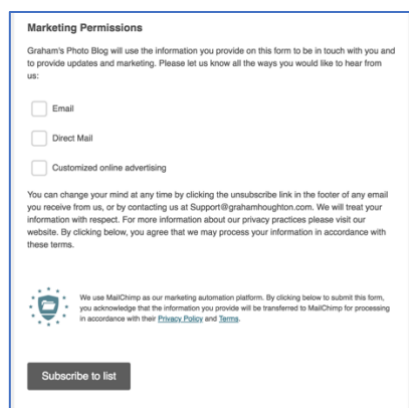
To do this I must **UNSUBSCRIBE** everyone before the next newsletter is sent.

I propose to do this on Thursday 24th May 2018.

If you are within the EU, or your email is registered in the EU, then after this newsletter unless you re-subscribe using the new GDPR compliant form which collects your consent for me to email you then you will no longer receive this newsletter!

As 48% of the recipients of my newsletter are from the EU this is a substantial chunk of subscribers to lose and I do hope that you will re-subscribe to continue receiving this newsletter and the technical information that it contains.

Please re-submit the new sign up form **after the 25rd May and before the next newsletter publication due 2nd June 2018.**



This is how the new sign up form will look.

You need to tick the Email box to certify that you have opted in to receive emails from me.

I do not use Direct Mail or on line advertising but Mailchimp may do - so only tick those boxes if you are happy to receive this.

Selecting Focus Points for Difficult shots



When you are faced with a situation like in the image opposite where the robin is deep within the tree branches it is often difficult to get the subject in focus as the autofocus system may decide that the tree branches have a higher contrast than your subject and assume that this is your intended point of interest giving you an out of focus subject!

There are a couple of ways to dealing with this scenario and depending upon your camera type one may be more suited to getting the focus more quickly than the others.

With cameras like the FZ200 the most convenient way is to use single area AF and set the size and position of the focus target to be the smallest and set centrally. To take the shot centre the focus target on the subject press and hold the shutter button half way down to lock focus and then recompose the shot. Press the shutter fully to capture the image.

With cameras with a touch screen it is far easier to swing out the LCD screen and use your finger, or thumb, to select the focus position whilst using the EVF.

You can quickly track your subject using this method.

You can also use the AE/AF lock button by programming the button to be AF only and then using this to lock focus on your subject, the shutter button then only affects exposure and not focus.

To refocus you will need to press the AF/AE button again to unlock the focus and then press it again to set the new focus.

Manual focus is also an option although it is not as fast or precise on the FZ200/300/330.

Dealing with High Saturation iPhone Images



This image is typical of the oversaturated colours that Apple set as the defaults for their iPhone cameras.

Supposedly to match the expectation of users in wanted rich, vivid colours.

For me it is just a little too vibrant and I wanted to find some application that would allow the parameters like saturation to be controlled.

As there is no control of the image parameters of the Apple Camera "App" I began to look at other "apps" that are available for the IOS devices and tested them to see just how much control was available by using them.

I have tried Adobe Lightroom CC mobile (which is a free app) and 645 Pro by Jag which is £3.99. Both allow customisation of the colour in terms of saturation. They also can be used to generate DNG or TIFF images.

Here is a comparison of the default Apple Camera App (fixed at 4:3 aspect ratio) and one from 645 pro with Fuji X32 film simulation filter applied.



Apple Camera App



645 PRO WITH FUJI X32 Film Type Simulation



Default Apple Camera App



Lightroom Mobile TIFF-JPEG conversion

I have a new video showing these two apps [Smartphone photography for photographers](#)

Understanding the Function of the AF/AE Lock Button on FZ200



To clarify the operation of the AE/AF lock/FN2 operation of the FZ200 in the setup menu just allows the button to be either AF/AE lock OR FN2 which can then have other functions assigned to it in the CUST SET MEM option.

By default, the button is AF/AE lock and the actual mode is set in the REC set up menu where it can be AF/AE lock, AF only or AE only.

If you want to use the button to lock both the focus and the exposure that are not changed when you press the shutter button, then set it to AF/AE lock. It will stay locked until you press the button again to release the settings.

Similarly, if you set AF only then the AF/AE lock button will set the focus but the shutter button will set exposure, the focus will not change.

If you set AE lock, then the shutter button will set focus but exposure will stay locked until you press the button again

So, if you are shooting a series of picture where you want the same exposure then AE lock is a good choice as the camera will still focus on pressing the shutter button. In this way, any slight change in subject position does not cause the camera to change the exposure causing dark and light images.

All Work and No Play!



After our son's wedding on the 5th May I had to get back to finishing the decking project that I started last November!

This consisted of a small extension area which offers a "safer" play area for our youngest grandchild when he comes to our house and wants to play outside.

He already has tried to exit from the decking to the garden by swinging on the deck lighting which now needs to be straightened! I may need to make a very definite exit to the garden from the decking.

When I get back from my trip to Arran on the 24th May I will need to apply stain to the whole decking area if the weather stays fine.

Thus, I have not been able to do much for this newsletter or any of the planned tutorials but I have 5 days on Arran and I have got a list of topics that I want to cover whilst I am up there.

I have some new photographic accessories that I also want to test and review.

I hope that you will re-subscribe on the 24th May to keep receiving the newsletter

Graham