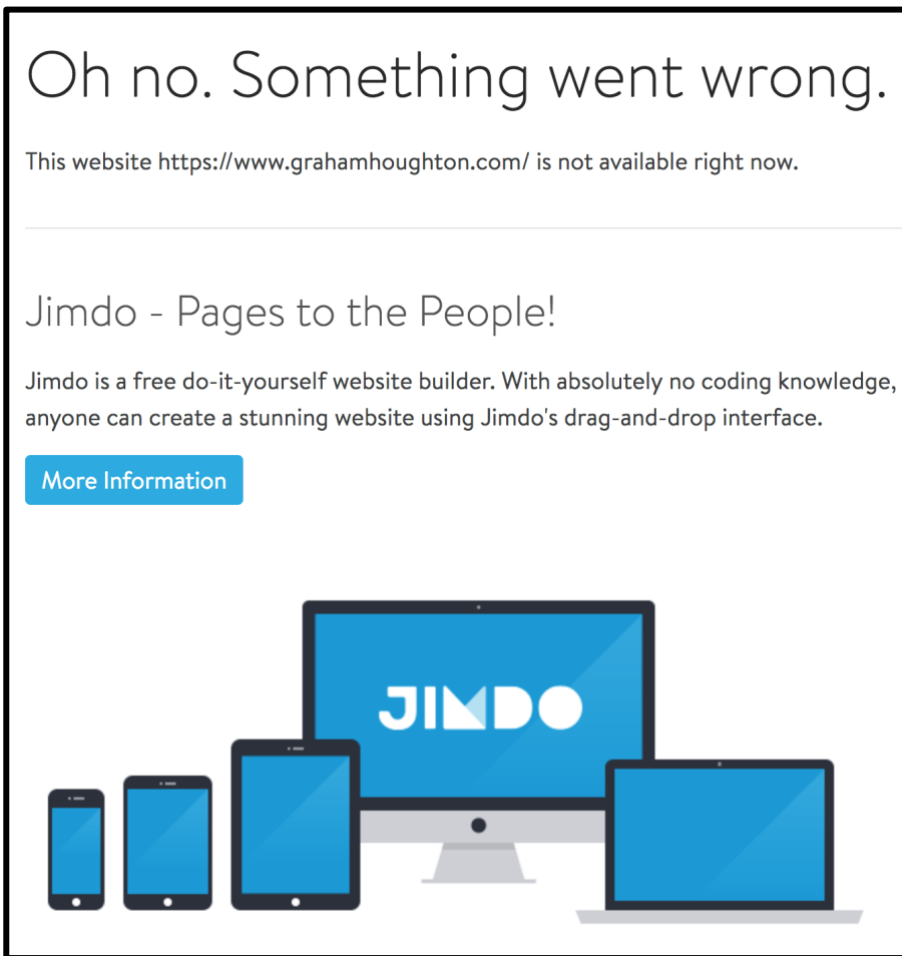


Of Banks, PayPal and Jimdo



On Wednesday 31st May 2018 because of a dispute between my bank, PayPal and my webhost, Jimdo took my www.grahamhoughton.com website offline.

As Jimdo do not offer telephone support, only via email, I contacted them on Thursday to try and resolve the situation. I received no response so raised a second ticket request on Friday. I also posted a message on their Facebook page.

Not only could I not post up the 2nd June newsletter but potential purchasers of my FZ300 e-book could not do so.

I also contacted my bank (Barclays) to see if they could help resolve the direct debit situation and again got no response until the last 2 hours of their 48-hour target for resolution.

Customer service these days is a far cry from what I was used to when I was in employment 10 years ago. I have banked with Barclays for 54 years; our local branch has been closed recently so we must trek out to another town if we want face to face communication.

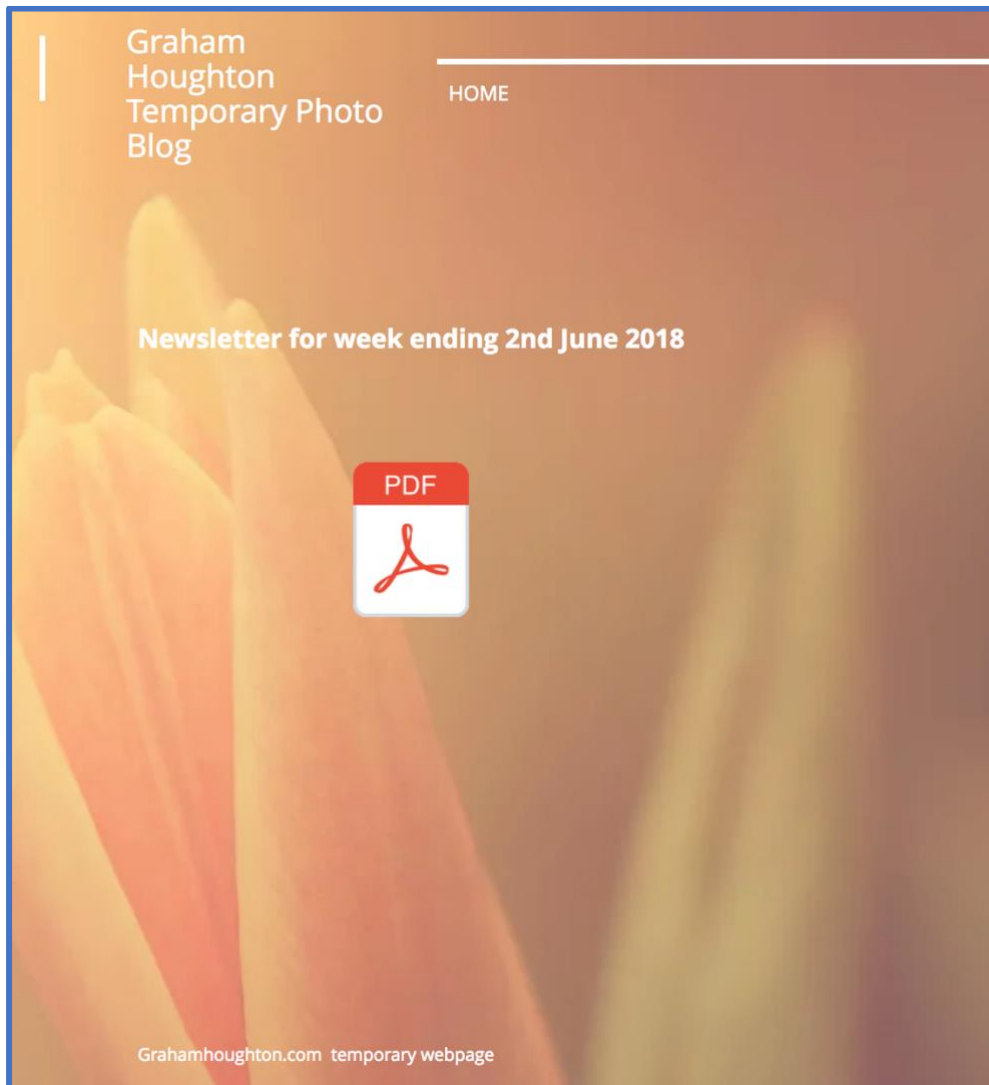
After this last episode, it has led me to the quest to find another bank who still offer some element of local presence rather than everything being email or text oriented.

I was also made aware of a program that would back up current websites so that they could be transferred to another host and that is what I will be considering soon. Jimdo just don't have the 24/7 customer support that is a must these days.

Considering what they charge it is simply just not good enough.

I thank you for your support, and patience during this situation.

Feedback about my WIX Temporary Website



With my photoblog website being taken off-line by Jimdo I needed the facility to deliver the 2nd June Newsletter so I chose the WIX web program to facilitate this.

One of the benefits, as pointed out by a few people, was the fact that the PDF opened inline and didn't need the file downloaded to your computer to view it. Although the files are usually under 5MB in size some people do not want to keep the file on their computers.

I have found a program that would allow me to insert the same in-line PDF viewer into the Jimdo page. If I ever get my main site back I may try this.

My feeling now though is to migrate my files from the Jimdo server to another web host. Six days' downtime for my web site, although not a critical site, is totally unacceptable – not even a response from my two support tickets until day 5!

Finally, the website was reloaded after I agreed to my payment again until the dispute is concluded.

However, during the reloading some of the file links did not work – the download for my FZ300/FZ300 user's guide PDF and some of the files in the download section.

I have uploaded new files to the one that I have been notified about and the ones that I have discovered myself.

As Jimdo don't provide any facility back up your files (thus making it easy to move to other webhosts) the dream of moving my entire site to another webhost is going to take a lot of work to turn into reality.

What I will do is to start a free website on Wordpress and start to build the new website as time permits and then when domain renewal is due in December 2018 I will look at switching to Wordpress paid option and stop the Jimdo site.

A New Development from Yongnuo Looks Interesting

Back in 2014 Sony introduced their QX1 and QX30 lens cameras which clipped onto your smartphone. The idea was that these larger sensor cameras would give smartphone users better image quality yet not have the bulk of a camera body to contend with.

I bought the QX1 but I never used it to any great degree. It still sits in my book shelf. Both cameras were flops for Sony.

Yongnuo have made a bold decision to introduce a micro four thirds version of this the YN43.



The advantage, say Yongnuo, is that it has the appeal of interchangeable lenses. This is something the Sony cameras did not have (only optical zoom).

Now, the Yongnuo lens camera supports Canon EF-EFS lenses which seems a strange choice since there are hundreds of Panasonic/Olympus micro four thirds lenses on the market.

Details are still very “sketchy” as to what features the smartphone app will have and just what control will be available. No indication as to whether it support video or 4K video yet.

I do like this concept and gives a little more flexibility and extends the usefulness of the Canon lenses in my possession.

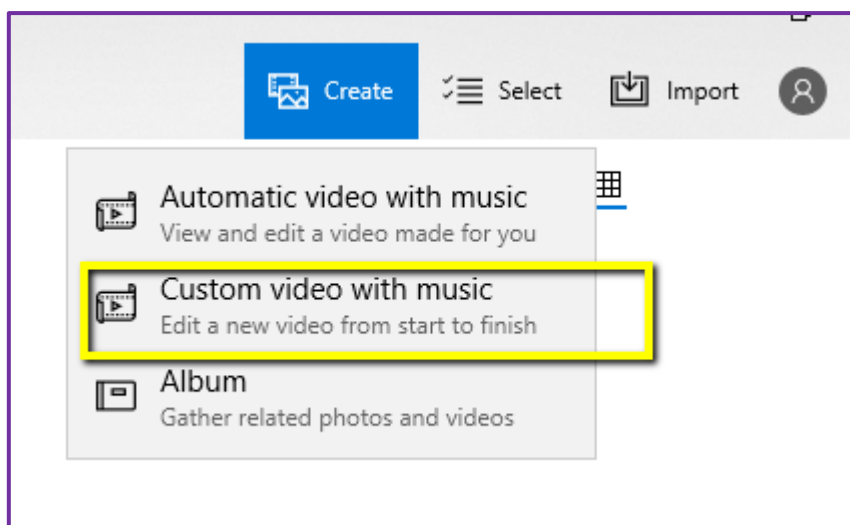
What would be fantastic would be an EVF on the lens camera body as I personally still prefer an EVF over the LCD for composing and shooting.

I'll be watching the Yongnuo website for more details of the launch date and price of the camera.

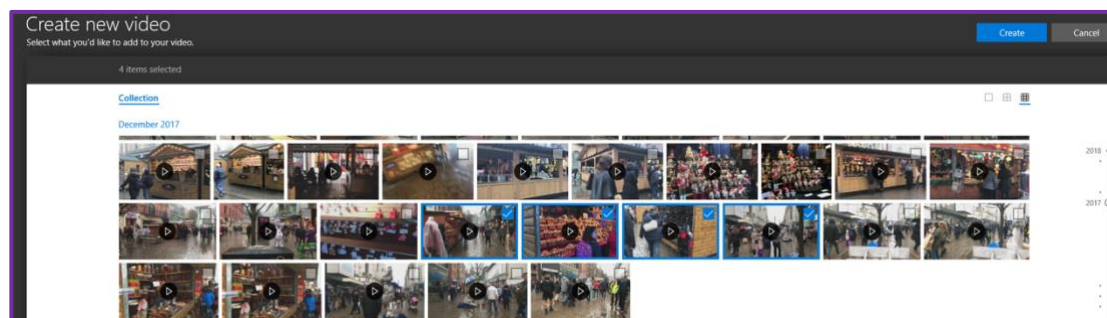
Windows Photos Program Edits Video Clips!

Since the demise of Windows Movie Maker and Windows Live services, which included the updated movie maker program, with later versions of Windows there has been a void in a simple video editor that would allow the trimming of clips, joining clips, adding titles, adding effects and rendering out to common formats.

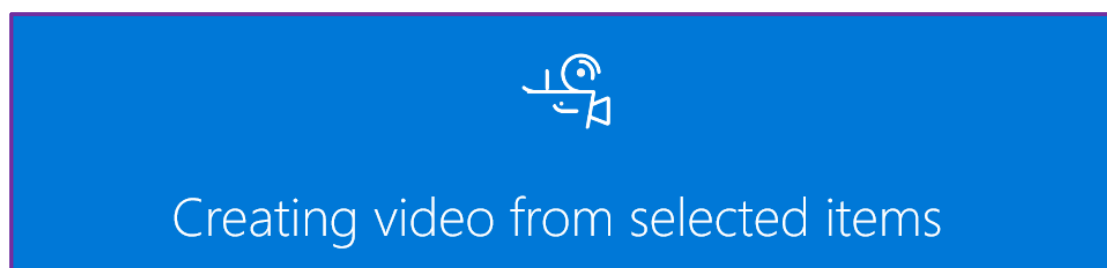
It is not well known but the new Photos program in Windows 10 does in fact support basic video editing.



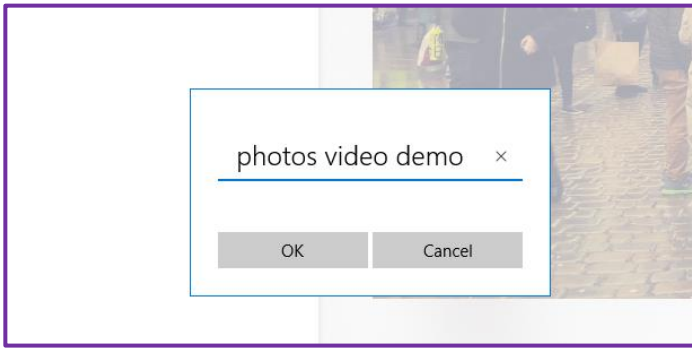
Begin by selecting Custom video with music from the Create Menu



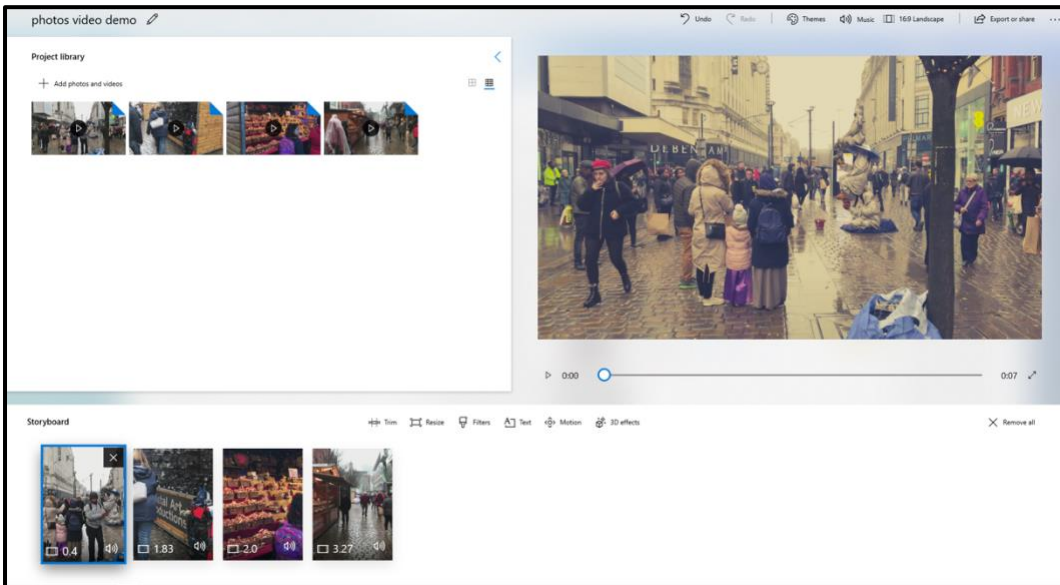
From your presented files select the video clips/images that you want to add



The program begins to assemble your files

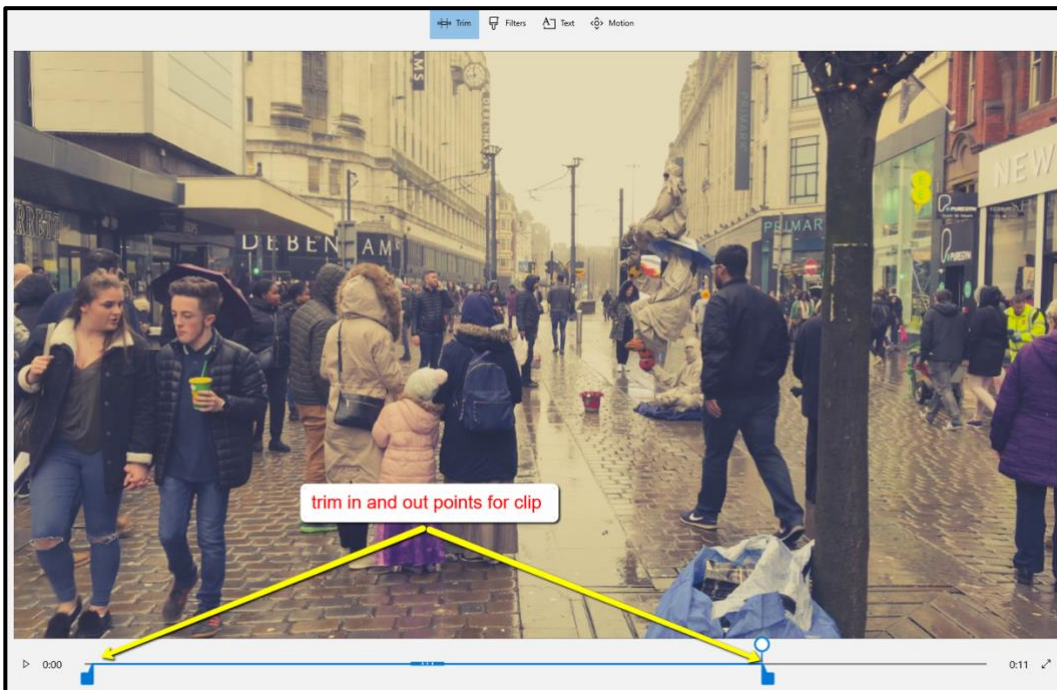


Begin by adding the title for the project.

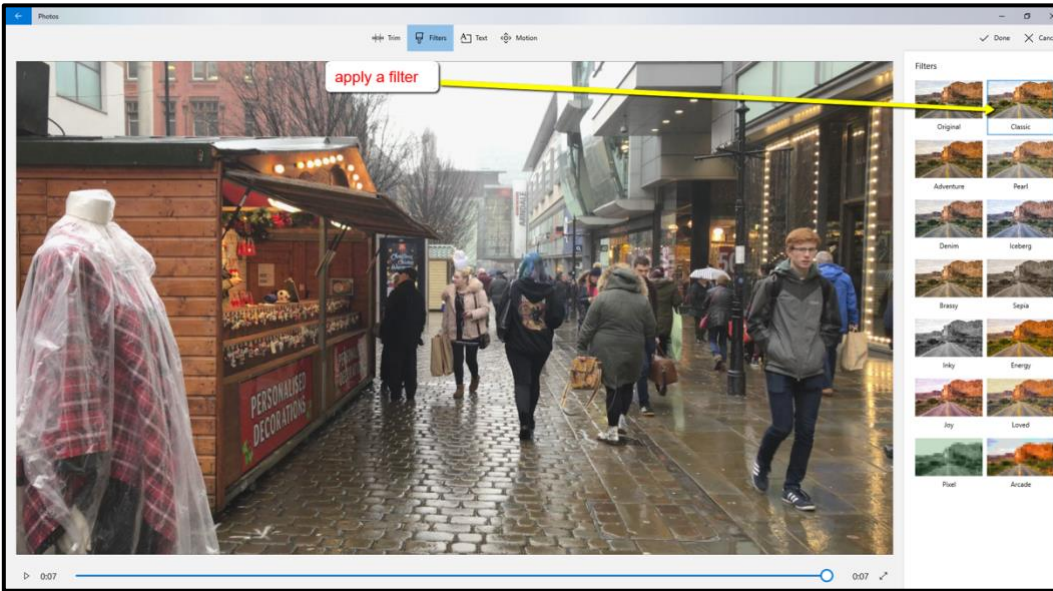


Your clips/images are shown on a “basic timeline” at the bottom of the screen.

You can re-order them as your project needs or add/delete from the timeline.



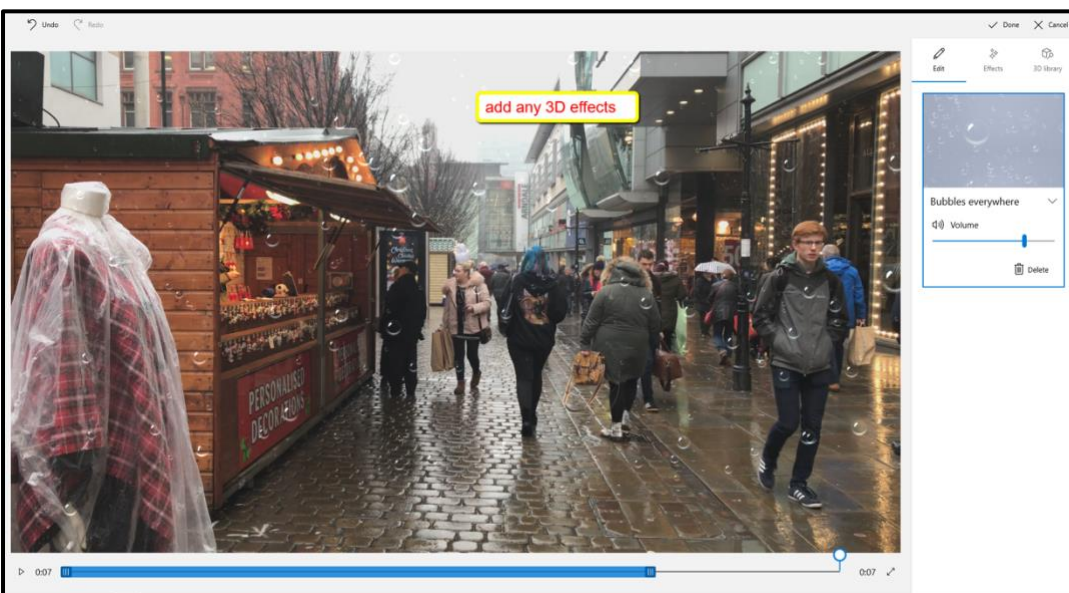
For each of the clips you can trim the clips by removing material from the start and/or end of the clips by using the trim points.



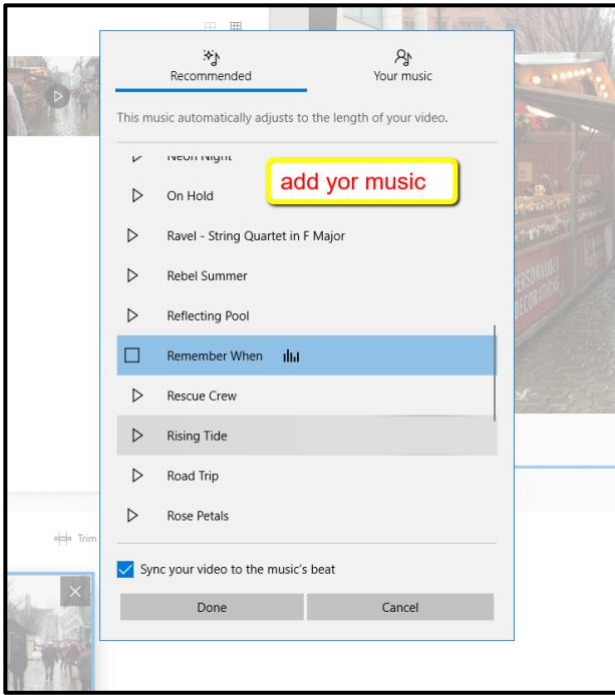
For each of the clips you can add any of the preset filters to the clips



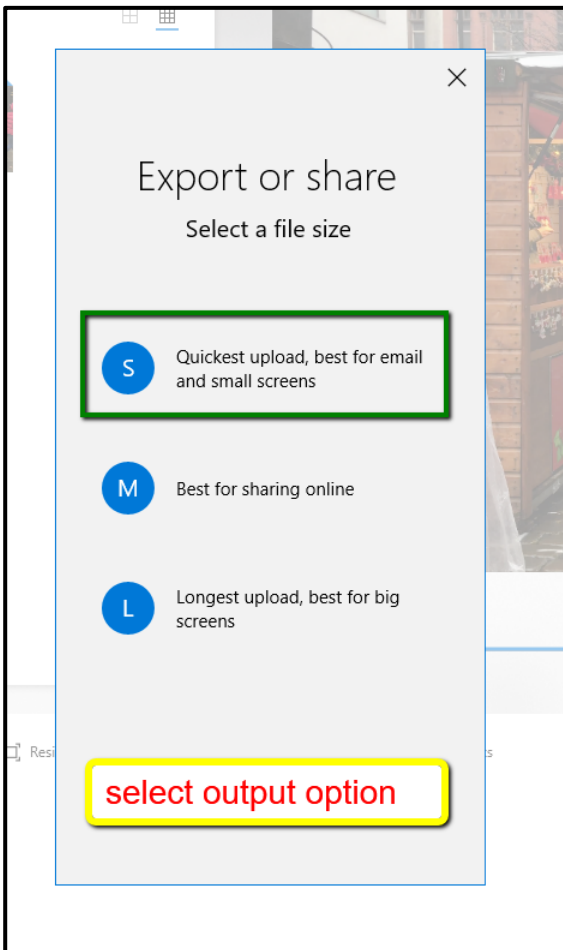
You can add a basic/animated title to the video



There are also several 3D effects (like bubbles, balloons and fireworks etc.,) that you can add to your clips'



You can also add library, or your own, music to the video.

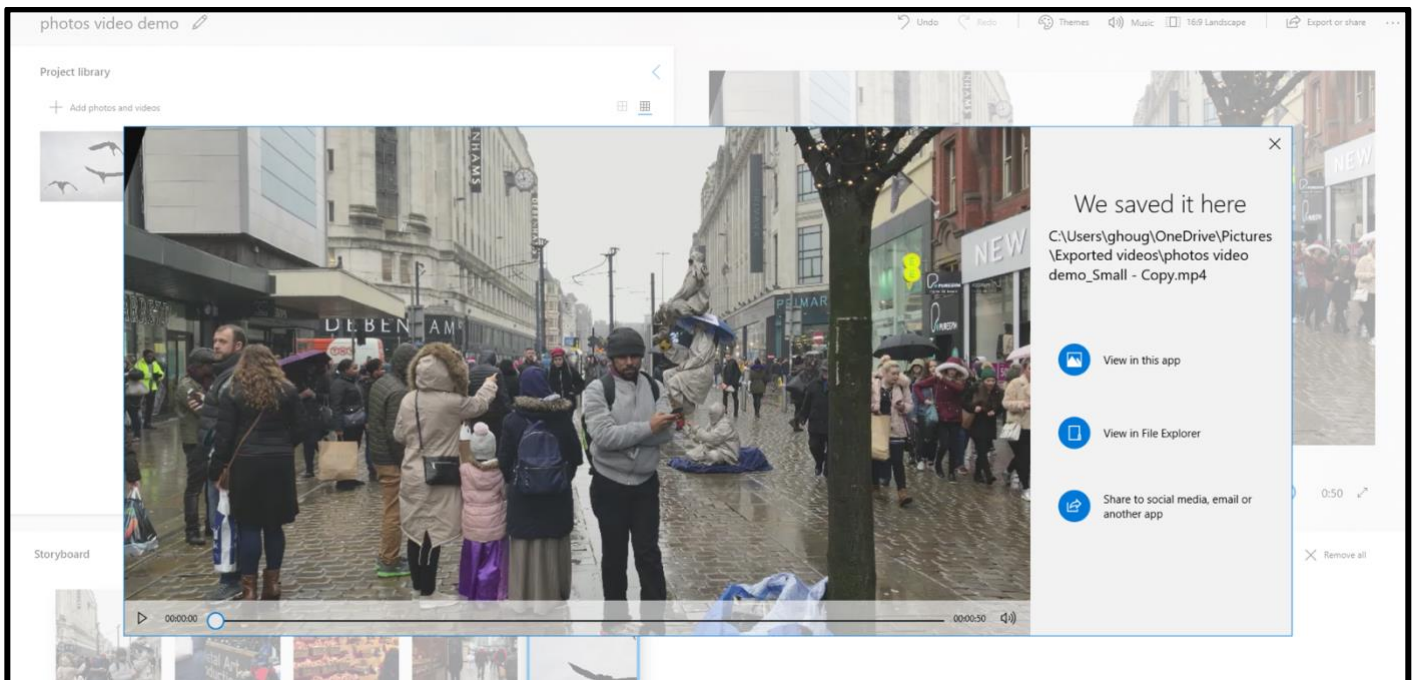


Once your project is complete you can then render the video into one of three options

Email or small screen

Online sharing

Best quality



When your project is complete you will see the options available to view it.

So, this simple program allows you to try video editing with very little/no previous experience of video editing and can help you create better video compilations from your captured images and video clips.

I have made a short demo video made with the Photos Program and it is available in the [download section](#) of my photoblog

What is Post Processing?

Back in the days of film when a lot of amateur photographers had their own black and white darkrooms and processed their own films “post processing” literally meant “developing the latent image that was formed on the silver halide crystals within the photographic emulsion of the film. This latent image only became visible after processing in a “developer” solution.



A typical black and white film developing kit.

You quickly gained in depth knowledge about different types of developers and how they affected both the grain and acutance of the image. You could “push” film which had been underexposed, but sometimes at the expense of image grain.

So, this is where I believe the term post processing started.

But what about our modern digital camera, how does post processing affect the image quality?

Well every digital camera has the image gathering sensor at the heart of the process. Every sensor has just one sensitivity to light referred to as the “base or Natural ISO.”

Every other ISO value is just a way of denoting just how much signal amplification is taking place for the electrical signal, which is proportional to the light falling on each pixel, to be sufficient to give a correctly exposed image.

In my analogy to a radio receiver, if you tune to a station that is a fair distance from the receiver the signal received by the aerial is considerably smaller than the signal received by a transmitting station that is nearer to the receiver. So, for you to hear that station with the same volume as the closer station you need to turn up the “volume” control. This volume control is part of the radio receiver amplifier system – our ISO amplification.

Of course, as you amplify this weak signal you will also amplify the “noise” that is also being picked up by the aerial from local interference, atmospheric signals and other radio stations if the receiver rejection circuits are not optimised. This noise is readily heard as hiss and pops along with the actual radio signal. In our digital camera, the noise is additional, random, pixel information which shows up as granularity in our image.

So, what can we do to reduce the amount of noise. Well with the radio receiver we might add a higher gain, or longer aerial wire to increase the signal level going into the receiver – thus requiring less amplification and thus an associated reduction in background noise.

In our digital camera, we can gather more light by using a faster lens (i.e. one with a larger aperture if the camera has interchangeable lenses) or we can extend the amount of time that the light falls onto the sensor – i.e. extend the shutter time.

If we simply increase the ISO all that we are doing is amplifying both the signal (from the light) and the noise (from the sensor and other electronic components in the image processing system).

By increasing the ISO, we increase the image noise and at the same time we reduce the effective dynamic range that the system can provide.

The range of highlights to shadow detail tones that can be captured will be reduced. The more the ISO is increased the more that the dynamic range is reduced. In fact, for every increase in ISO equivalent to 1 f-stop we also lose 1 f-stop in dynamic range.

The RAW data from the sensor is what is converted into our visual image. In much the same way that our latent image needed developing in the silver halide film emulsion so the RAW digital data needs to be processed by a RAW conversion program to produce an image that we can view – normally a JPEG or TIFF file format.

Arguably, with a correctly exposed image there is plenty of data to allow shadows to be pushed or lightened (akin to local ISO being raised in that area) or for the highlight data to be recovered (if the maximum value in the analogue to digital converter has not resulted in the maximum digital value being generated). This would mean that the highlights are “clipped” and can never be recovered.

All digital cameras have a RAW to JPEG processing engine which is there to provide the visual image from the sensor output.

In all cases, this JPEG processor has options for adjusting the way in which this image is developed.

In the case of Panasonic cameras this is implemented by the Photostyle choice and the associated parameters for contrast, saturation sharpness and noise reduction.

Also, the image may be adjusted for the highlight and shadow regions by selecting different curves for amplification (or reduction). Other digital manipulations for edge sharpness (i.Resolution) and dynamic range (i.Dynamic or HDR setting) may also be applied.

So, in our digital world the “post processing” refers to the conversion of the RAW data from the sensor to the production of a visible image of typically either the DNG, JPEG or TIFF format.

Many will argue that RAW processing with Lightroom or similar RAW conversion will ultimately give you the very best resulting image but the actual process used will depend upon the need of the photographer and intended use of the image.

In many cases, out of camera JPEG images are more than adequate to meet photographer's needs.

Addition processing of JPEG images can be used to get best results especially if things like sharpness and noise reduction are turned off (or reduced) in camera.

Another Look at IOS Smartphone Camera APPS

As you know I've been taking a serious look at smartphone photography recently just to see how the technology is advancing with these devices.

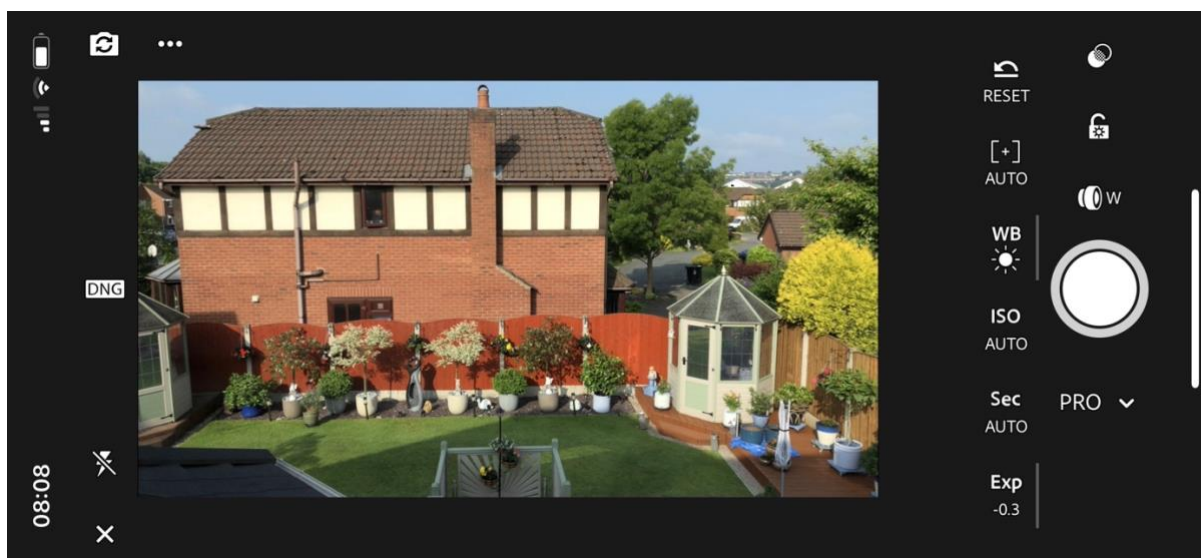
From the results that I have obtained from my iPhones from the iPhone 5 to my latest iPhone X the results have been quite encouraging. The only areas that I feel that they do suffer is in bright sunshine where highlight blow out seems to be happening in most shots unless you use an app that allows some form of exposure compensation.

For most of my shots I have been using the 645Pro app or Lightroom mobile as these allow quite a bit of in camera adjustment plus the option to save the RAW file (as DNG).

The interfaces are quite different:



the 645 pro app set for Kodacolor2 film type and 16:9 format

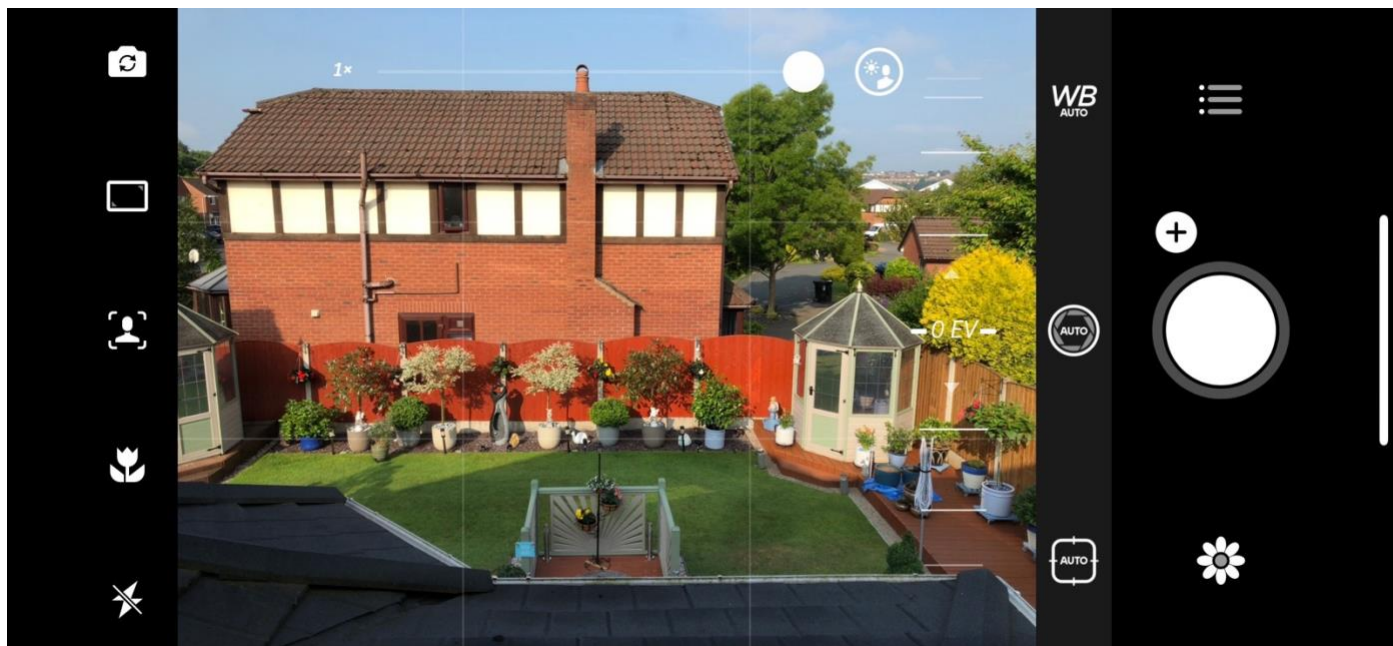


Lightroom Mobile

As you can see the 645Pro app does give a lot of visual feedback as to your current settings and very quick access to features like the self-timer and exposure compensation.

Lightroom mobile has a much simpler interface with some of the features hidden behind the PRO drop down option but it does give quick access to exposure compensation.

I have been alerted to another app called Camera + by David Price from the USA.



Again, at just £1.99 in the UK APP store it provides a very clean looking interface.

Exposure compensation is also easily achieved with a slider at the centre of the right-hand side of the screen.

There is some indication from DPreview that this app is going to be updated to Camera 2 - although the initial reviews are looking very unfavourable for it!

I'll be doing a comparison between each of these apps very shortly.

The SLOW watch

Not exactly photography related but I came across the concept of the "SLOW Watch"



This one-handed watch was designed by Christopher and Corvin from Germany.

From their press material:

The core of the slow watch is the 24 hour one-hand concept.

A 24 hour one-hand watch allows you to see the entire day in one view and experience time in natural way. This fundamentally changes the way you look at your watch and it will give you a much better consciousness about the progression of your day.

This way of showing the time is inspired by the original clocks that were based on the sun clock. Those early clocks indeed had only one hand and displayed all 24 hours. You can still see them on some old church towers. Only when people's lives became busier and busier they felt a need to create this unnatural split of the day in two 12-hour halves and break each hour down in to 60 minutes. That's when we started to chase the minutes and get stressed by time.

So being the guy that I am I looked at the concept and thought it was distinctive but VERY PRICEY. So, with an old watch I decided to make my own version.

As the "hour" hand is normally shorter and doesn't extend to the markings on the dial that would allow more precise reading of the time I cut the minute hand just at the mounting hole and then superglued it on top on the hour hand to extend it more towards the outer dial.

As with the "real" slow watch time setting is always done by rotating the hand clockwise to the correct time and not going anticlockwise as this introduces some "backlash" and timing inaccuracy. Reading the time from the one hand is surprisingly easy. At the dial marks, which correspond to the minute marks, the time is at 12 minutes. By subdividing the division between the marks, you can estimate the time to within 1 – 2 minutes.

After all the idea of the watch is to SLOW down. After all, does it matter if it is 8.05 or 8.06 am?



My "SLOW WATCH".

I'll be trying other hand from £-land watches to see if I can get the hands nearer the outside of the dial for easier reading. I may refit the seconds' hand just to give an indication that it is working and not to detract from the simplistic idea.

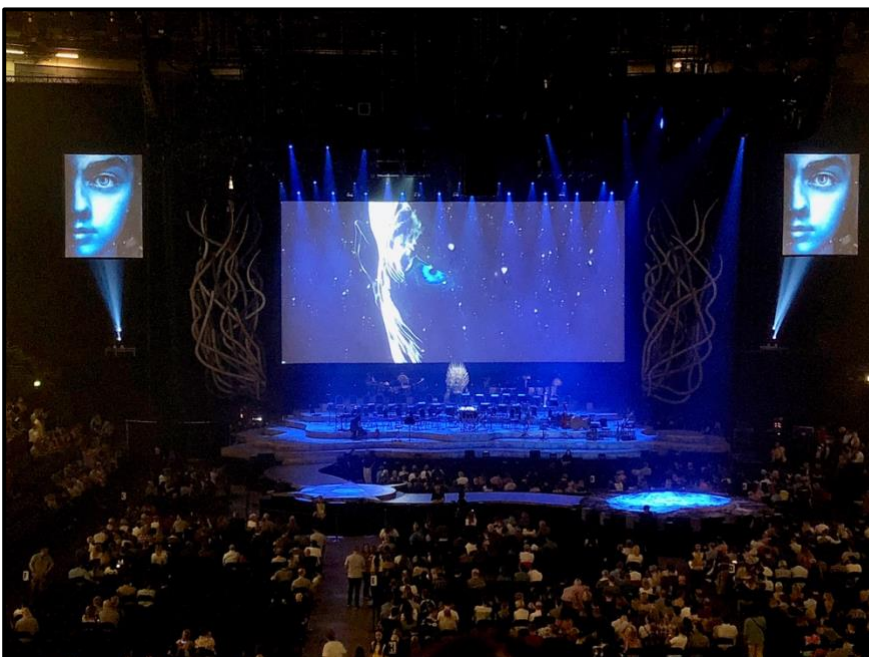
Concert Photography

I had the pleasure of attending the Game of Thrones Live Concert Experience at the Manchester Evening News Arena (M.E.N) courtesy of my son. MEN is a very large venue and the main stage is “a long way” from the back of the arena. It’s been a few years since I last attended a concert (Tangerine Dream at the Manchester Lowrie theatre) and I remember being politely not to take pictures by one of the staff who had seen the LCD screen of the TZ40 in the dark!



iPhone X RAW 1/15 sec f1.8 ISO 1000 (Solo violinist with long flowing skirt hoisted 60 feet into the air)

I was surprised at the number of people (probably hundreds!) taking smartphone pictures at this event, and glancing over the shoulder of the two girls in front of me, who were editing and uploading straight to Instagram within seconds of taking them. This is such the power of smartphone photography. Not only with the multiple exposure noise reduction to get better low light images but the power and speed of the editing programs running on these devices now is outstanding. I took a couple of images to test the RAW output from the camera for subsequent editing.



Large screen for the HBO outtakes from the seasons 1-7 used during the concert.



The Decking, Final Instalment!

I finally got the gravel boards fitted and gravel filled between the lawn and the decking. All the 3 deck areas have now been treated and stained so hopefully that will be the last of the project for this year. I'm hoping that a light hosing down of the decking before winter will be all that is needed and then a next spring a wash down with deck & patio cleaner to remove any green that may have developed during the winter.

For this birds eye shot I used my Mavic Pro, quickly getting it airborne and capturing this image from a height of about 12 metres. We also pressure jetted the block paviour front driveway which just leaves the back of the house to be cleaned (and maybe the rendering will need another coat of stone paint) Such is the joy? of a 30-year-old house which will now start to need some annual maintenance to prevent further deterioration and becoming shabby – which has already happened to other property on the estate whose owners just haven't bothered to keep on top of the need to clean and paint etc.

Maybe now I can get some decent "photography time" at last!

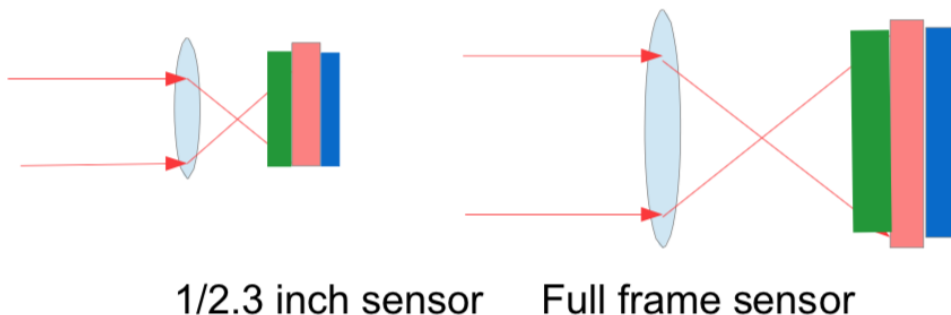
Small Sensors Give Greater Depth of Field Myth

One of the often-quoted expressions that I hear in so many camera reviews is that smaller sensors deliver greater depth of field. The actual physical size of the sensor does NOT affect the depth of field.

One can argue that pixel density does affect the size of the "Airy disk or the circles of confusion" that determines the appearance of the out of focus areas.

What does directly affect the depth of field is size of the output pupil size of the image forming lens. The imaging circle from the lens covers the camera sensor.

The size of this imaging circle will define the optics of the lens.
 The smaller the imaging circle the smaller the exit diameter of the rear element of the camera lens.
 Therefore small sensors like those in mobile phones have very small lenses; sensors like those in full frame cameras need larger lenses to create this image circle. This leads us nicely into how smaller sensors have more DOF (depth of field) or conversely why full frame cameras can produce extremely shallow DOF images.



The image focused by the lens, shown by the red-light ray paths is what will be “in sharp focus” on the sensor surface (red bar). The parts of the image which are farther away would be focused within the position shown by the green bars and those parts nearer by the position within the blue bars. The depth of these two focus zones is much smaller in the case of the smaller lens element. Therefore for the smaller lens the distance of this focus plane depth is nearer the sensor and thus appears to be sharper than the same image focal position with the larger lens. The physics definition refers to this as the “circle of confusion” and it is this which determines the DOF, or apparent depth of sharpness of the respective images. The “quality” of this out of focus area is sometimes called “bokeh” or the Japanese for confusion.



The parts of the image which are sharply focused at the sensor surface compared with the appearance of the objects which are either in front or behind of the principal point of focus give rise to this “out of focus” look. It is determined by two just elements, the lens focal length and its aperture not by sensor size!