

## Newsletter for Week Ending 30th June 2018

### Your Feedback on the Last Newsletter

[the newsletter](#) (inline PDF as requested to save downloading)

or [the usual download](#) - just select the PDF for the 16th June

In the previous newsletter, I included an “in line” PDF version as well as the usual download file as this was requested after I had made the temporary website with WIX after my own website was taken offline by Jimdo after a payment dispute!

A few of you responded by stating that the in-line version rendered the text too small to read without zooming in thus losing the image sizes etc. I didn't have an issue with it on my iPhone so I'm wondering if any of you have a similar issue in reading this newsletter if viewed with the in-line viewer?

### Panoramic Landscapes



So, what's so unusual with the landscape image shown above? Well it's made up of 15 individual images formed via a five-image wide and three image high matrix.

If I was to shoot this image with a suitably wide angle lens to get the field of view, then the distant scenery would be very small and the foreground exaggerated due to the nature of the lens.

By using a “normal” 50mm lens the view is as natural as our eyes perceive the scene.

However, the field of view would be very limited. So, by stitching together these images we get a “natural view with the correct perspective covering the field of view that we desired!

To get consistency of exposure everything is in the manual mode. This is of course shutter speed, aperture, ISO, Sunny WB pre-set and a fixed focus point.

The lens was a 17-55mm lens set at 50mm f2.8

I began by fixing my focus point on the large oak tree (left in the image) and from the exposure reading in A mode set these values into the M mode.

To capture the images (hand-held) I began by sweeping across the scene with the camera held in portrait mode from left to right allowing a slight overlap in the images.

To do this I visually noted what was in the frame at the right-hand side and then made sure that this was at the left-hand side for the next shot. Having made 5 horizontal images, I then dropped the camera angle to give me a similarly overlapped image and then swept the image from right to left until the 5 images were captured and then dropped the camera angle again to complete the foreground detail.



By having the fixed focal point when the images are stitched together the appearance is totally natural. I have a short video which details the basic technique for this [here on YouTube](#) or click the image below.



The technique can be improved using a tripod and a gimbal head so that the camera can be turned about the lens nodal point thus giving a better set of images to be stitched in Photoshop without any perspective changes etc. I will be demonstrating the technique in a upcoming video.

The technique can be used with smartphones and if you have one with the 50mm equivalent focal length (like the iPhone 8 and X) then you can achieve excellent overlaps for stitching in post-production.



*an iPhone X sample created from 3 images and the 58mm EFL lens*

The panorama mode on the iPhone is very good and as you can see in this tortuous stitching test image below the iPhone software has stitched it together perfectly. This is a 16:9 crop from a panorama taken using the 58mm EFL (x2) lens which yields a very natural perspective.



I can see no stitching errors in the grass in the foreground. I tried to pan the camera about the central axis rather than by panning with my body, as is suggested, whether this helps to produce the image with better overlap and regions that are easier to combine. I must test the two methods more scientifically!

## Progression as a Photographer

I regularly get asked to review people's images with the request to find out if the user's images are any good!

This is always a difficult call. Firstly, even trying to remain unbiased about the image content there is always a natural tendency to favour subjects that we like ourselves. I hope that I provide constructive feedback if you do submit images. I'd rather be honest with you rather than give you false feedback if the image, in my opinion, needs extra work doing to it in post processing or to be shot with a better composition etc.

I'm wary that for some people the technical effort of getting a memorable image is of no interest. They much prefer to capture an image that will help them to recall the place, time or event that prompted them to capture that moment in time. I hope through my videos that the process of understanding how to get better images without too much technical emphasis has been of help to these people.

The best advice I can give you as you progress with your photography is to study other people's images of similar topics. Sites like [www.500px](http://www.500px) have some great images that set good benchmarks as to what to aim for.

You will quickly get a feel for how your images compare.

You can progress as a photographer quickly. Getting to the point of understanding your camera, the basics of exposure and how light affects the outcome will happen quickly (especially if you follow my YouTube tutorials- shameless plug!).

So, with this knowledge you will be able to take images with the correct exposure, correct white balance, colour saturation and sharpness etc. but they may still not be what you might consider great images.

Progressing to the point where you can previsualise the final output image, get the best composition by adopting any of the "standard" rules of composition – like the basic rule of thirds and looking for the best angle to make this composition as strong as possible may take quite a long time.



Remember you don't need the top of the range camera to capture great images. The previous image was captured with my TZ60 travel zoom.

There will be many failures along the way. Be brutal in your image collection – delete the weakest images from your collection.

Use the star method to rate each of your images and you can track your progress from 1 star to 5 star images. Don't ask family and friends for their opinion of your images – they will almost always like them!

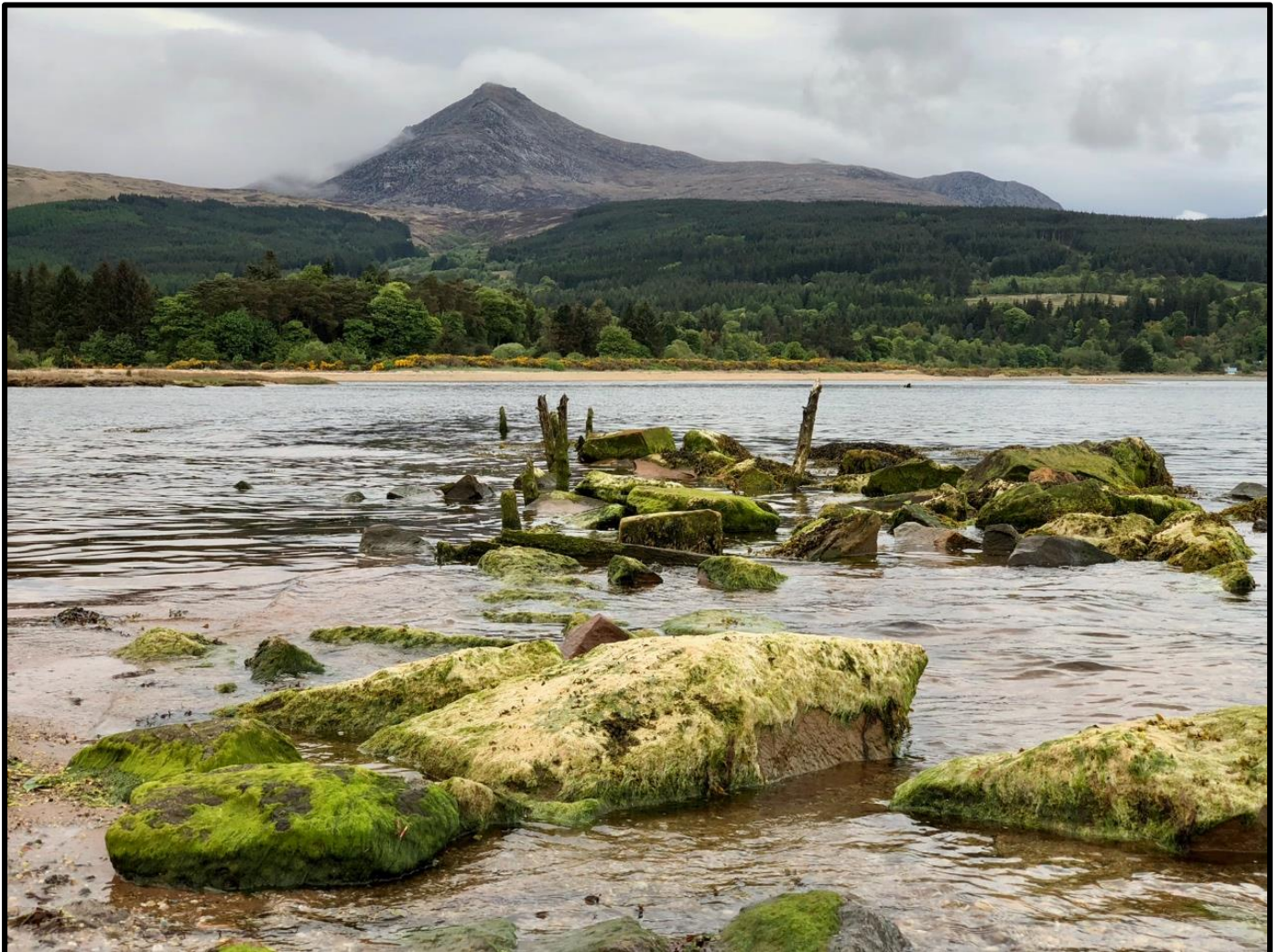
I cannot recommend sites that give critique on your images, some require you to critique a few images before you can even get feedback on yours. In my experience the ratings on these sites are poor with lots of inferior images – something that you don't want to emulate.

You will know when you have a winning image – they tend to just stand out!

Whatever your personal style is just keep going out there and taking lots of images. Analyse those which works and more importantly why the ones that get rejected have failed!

Never give up, but do enjoy your photography.

It can even be your smartphone that gets great images for you!



### **A Photographic Record of a Scene that No Longer Exists**

Some time back I shot some images of the world famous "Wigan Pier" made famous by George Orwell in his book "the road to Wigan Pier".

One of my favourite images from this collection is shown below.



It features a traditional coal miner statue placed so that it looks like he is admiring the pier. When I drove by there the other day I was horrified to see that the statue had been de-capitated by some low-life scum.

There used to be several of these resin statues around the town and one by one they have been vandalised. It breaks my heart to see such wonderful pieces of art destroyed by mindless individuals. So, with our photography we are preserving old buildings, street scenes, local history and culture that we can use to record these scenes that may not be there for ever.

Sadly, I don't think this one will be replaced either.

For ten seconds of mindless action we have lost years of visitor attractions and the re-generation of the canal and its heritage.

Words escape me when I think of the mindless pond-life who carry out these actions but I hope that someday these people are brought to justice – but I very much doubt they will ever be caught!

### **The Battle of the Bulge!**

Next month is my annual health check-up. Year on year I get the same warnings: - lose weight, reduce sugar intake and take more exercise!

Usually my HBA1C is indicating borderline diabetes class 2, cholesterol is usually over the normal limit and my BMI is over 27.

This has been the case for quite a few years and I keep promising myself that I will do better the next time! I even started, six years ago, a new fitness blog to kick me into doing something public with the hope that this would be the motivation to lose the excess weight, reduce body fat and blood sugar.

There was some success with this method but alas I did not keep up the regime and slowly but surely the weight crept on again and the HBA1C results again started to hit the "action" stage.

This year I have tried to make some effort and lifestyle change. Seeing myself in my YouTube videos sporting a decent pair of "man boobs" was the final catalyst that I needed to embark on a new way of life.

I “hate” the thought of spending time at a gym – I just don’t have the motivation to go there. I love hill walking and try to combine that with some photography. So far this year I have shed 10 lbs and lost a lot of “belly fat” and the “man boobs” are slowly decreasing.

I’ve cut out a lot of sugary food (biscuits and cakes are my real weaknesses) increased the fruit and vegetable proportion and gone for fish and chicken rather than red meat.

I’m having to work hard at the extra exercise bit. Today I cycled the 28 miles return from Blackpool south to Fleetwood (2 seaside towns on the North-West coast of England) on my little foldup cycle in 28-degree C heat. It was hard going – I much prefer my mountain bike but thought the foldup was a better option for getting to locations by car and then cycling.



Half way to Fleetwood and my weight target of 10St 10lbs (7lbs to go still) (iPhone X shot)

I do feel much better for the weight loss; I just hope the diet change has had similar effects on the blood test results. Next month will tell! I’ll let you know.

### **New Videos Coming Soon**

I’ve shot some tutorial videos today at Blackpool but I won’t be able to edit them until early next week.

They are a follow up video on matrix panorama shooting using a dedicated tripod set up.

A review of an active Canon EOS EF/EFS to M4/3 adaptor by Viltrox – the EF-M1.

I also did review at home of a 16 bank AA/AAA rechargeable battery charger which is great if you use a lot of these batteries in your flash guns etc.



New tutorials and reviews - coming soon.



## iPhone Images

Once again the iPhone X has been delivering some great images during my travels. One you “tame” the richly saturated colour of the default camera app the results, to me, are acceptable.



I've also been using the iPhone 8 to video the latest tutorials (shooting in 4K) and again the results have been very acceptable (see previous entry on the new tutorials). I have been using the Rode video micro

microphone and the standard Apple lightning headphone adaptor to input the audio as well as my Samson airline UHF wireless mic couple through a Saramonic mic pre-amp designed for the smartphone. I'll be doing a full tutorial on this very soon.

### **Moorland Blazes**

Here in the UK the weather has been exceptionally hot for over a month now with a result that the moorland has become tinder dry.

A very large fire started on Saddleworth moor, just north of Manchester and has needed the resources of several fire units and now the army to help tackle the blaze and hopefully prevent further loss of property on the moors.

On my journey home, tonight I was horrified to see the local moorland, just two miles from me, well and truly alight. Whether this fire started with a bottle and the magnifying effect of the heat rays or deliberately I do not know but the air was filled with dense smoke which all but blocked out the sun. It's not often we want rain, but now would be a good time!

