

World Cup Fever

It is impossible to live in England without some knowledge of the fact that we have been playing the best football since 1966, the last year that England won the world cup. I'm not a football fan myself but have followed the score of each of their matches. Tonight, Wednesday the 11th July, England for the second time in the competition, face Croatia. The winner of this evenings match will go on to face France in the final on Sunday..... Update: We now know that it will be Croatia, maybe next time?

“In-Camera” EZ Zoom or Post Process Crop?

Sometimes we need just a little bit more magnification of our image. Shooting at the largest size within the selected aspect ratio if we need more magnification we can use the crop tool in post processing to select the image area we need. Normally there is enough pixel data in the image to allow the image to be resized to fit the output screen size without loss of quality.

There is another way to do this “in-camera” giving immediate results without any more post processing. This is achieved using EZ Zoom (found in the REC set up screen). Choose the highest image EZ option to limit the amount of quality loss.

In my example below the first image is the 8M EZ size (16:9 aspect ratio setup) and the second image is the 9M full size image enlarged to the same degree.

Both images are enlarged to the same output size.



If you look very closely at the 8M EZ image the dust spots on the cherub are sharper than the full size 9M image. The “in-camera” JPEG processing that is providing the crop and re-size facility is giving a superb result.

I've used this method lots of times with the FZ200/300 cameras when I needed just a little extra image size. It can be combined with the i.Zoom option but image quality will suffer as a result of using this extra digital zoom.



The two images shown full size. You can see the extra magnification that the EZ (upper image) yields compared to the lower full size image.

This is a good solution if you just want a slightly higher magnification for smaller prints or web/social media type applications.

Recording High Quality Audio during Video Recording on Smartphones

We have seen in my last two YouTube videos just how good the video can be from modern smartphones like the iPhone 8/x or the Google pixel phone. 4k resolution yields some fantastic quality. To give your viewers the best possible experience it is necessary to capture “good” audio along with this video. Now you would think that connecting an external microphone to the smartphone would be relatively straightforward but believe me it is not that straightforward. With the Android smartphone, they mostly have a 3.5mm headphone socket whereas the new iPhones have the new lightning connector to replace the socket. Apple do provide a Lightning to audio adapter by which you can connect some microphones. The actual audio connector features a TRRS (tip, ring, ring, sleeve) contact so ordinary TRS (tip, ring, sleeve) style microphones will not work without a further adaptor to being fitted to convert the TRRS to TRS. This is shown in the image below.



Of course, these extra connectors add the possibility of introducing loss of connection and noise.



You can get microphones which do have the TRRS connector (such as the lavalier mic shown opposite) and these will plug directly into the adaptor. The camera will recognise the fact that a headset mic has been attached

Lavalier mic with TRS connector



The “standard” TRS mic will need to be connected using the TRRS to TRS adaptor.

Wireless mic with TRS connection



By the same connection hardware my Samson Airline wireless mic works with the adaptor. However, my Sennheiser wireless system is not recognised by the adaptor and the iPhone will not switch over from the internal mic to the headset mic. A different solution is needed for this setup.



Using the camera connection kit to provide the USB connection into which a USB audio adaptor can be fitted.



With the USB audio adaptor fitted to the camera connection kit the possibility of using studio grade condenser microphones is possible if you want to get great audio for voice overs etc.

If you need to connect XLR type microphones, which normally require 48-volt phantom power, you will need to have some device to power the microphone and provide the audio output to use with the smartphone. I use Saramonic units to provide this function. I did a full review of these units with audio tests of various microphones [here on Youtube](#)



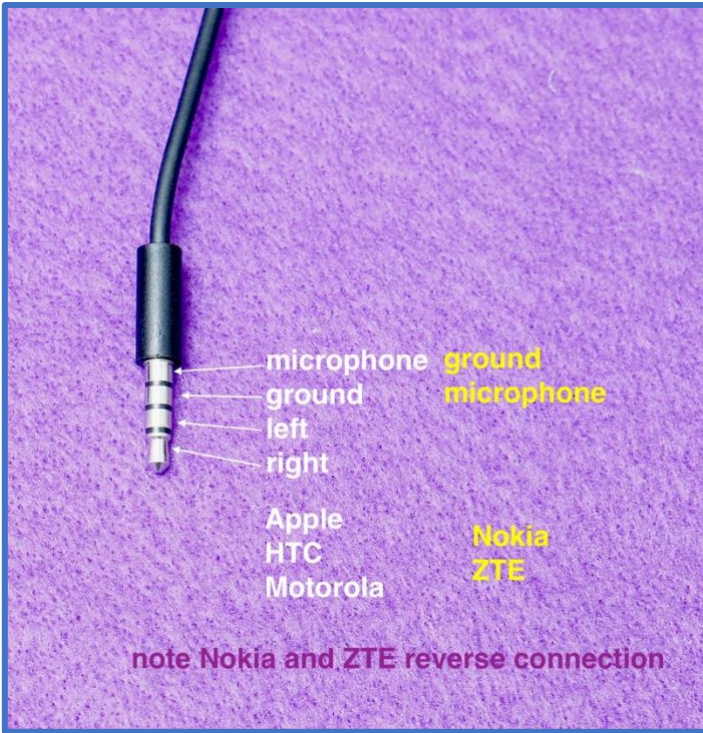


This is the two XLR input adaptor, the Smart rig+ and the BM-100 condenser microphone. The output can be switched from TRRS to TRS to suite camera or smartphone needs. It can provide 48v phantom power if needed.

To expand on the various connectors available here's my images of them.



TS is normally for mono mics
 TRS for stereo headphone and microphones (self or host powered)
 TRRS for combined headphone and microphone for use with smartphones etc.



This is how the signal wires are connected to the TRRS plug.
 Note the difference in the Nokia/ZTE smartphone compared to the Apple/HTC/Motorola one!



I have a new video showing how to get better audio for your video productions on [YouTube](#) as part of the series “smartphone photography for photographers”

Hyper focal Point Focusing with Bridge Cameras

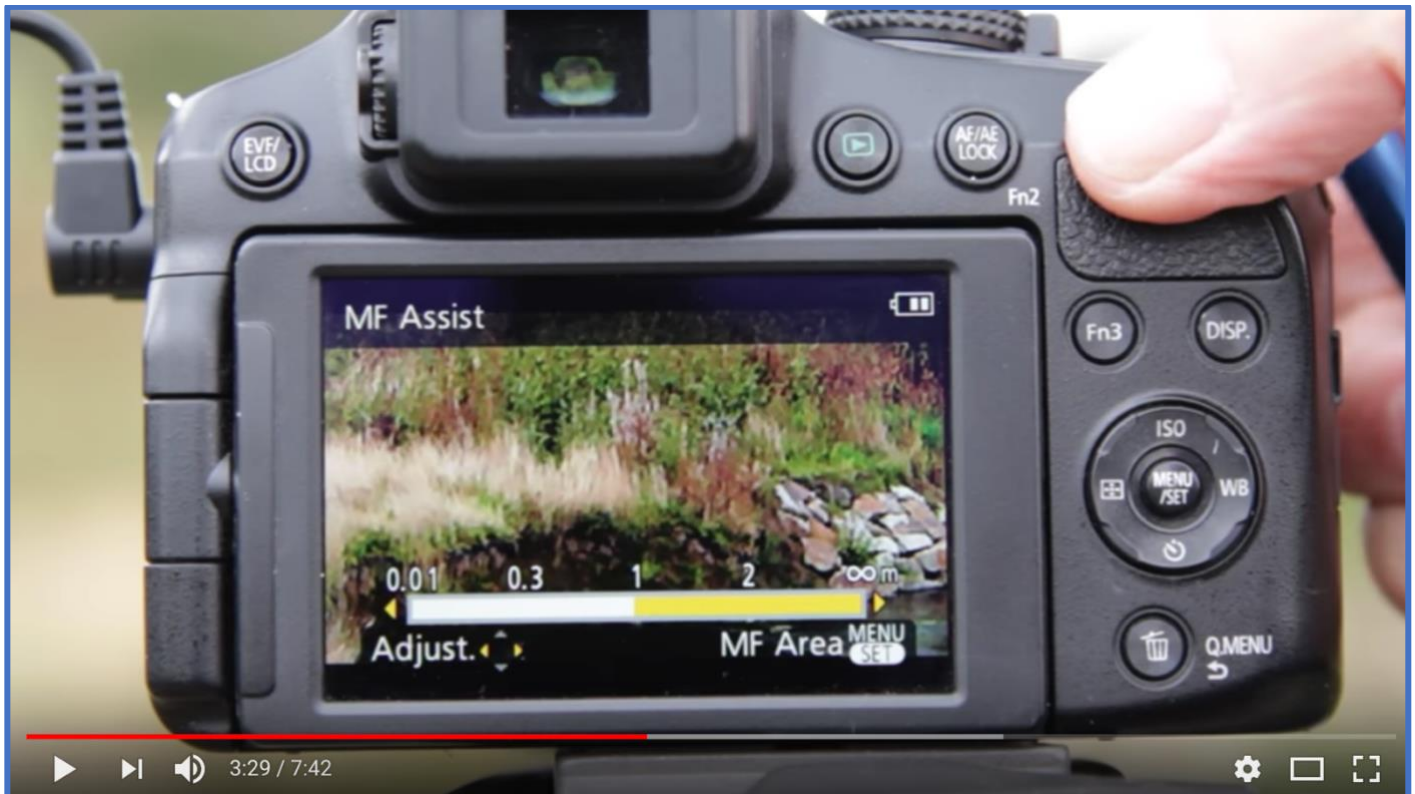
I was asked during the week to explain how to use the “hyper focal” distance method of shooting with the FZ300/330 camera.

Hyper focal shooting relies on the idea that setting the camera to this distance will give images that are “acceptably sharp” with the greatest depth of field in the image. That is there will be more of the image in focus than just setting the focus at infinity, for example.

Well unlike the previous camera, the FZ200, which had a very useful indicator built into the manual focussing scale to show the range of acceptable focus for any given aperture and lens focal length the FZ300/330 no longer has this facility.

On the FZ200 it was a simple matter of aligning the furthest distance on the yellow bar to the infinity mark on the scale and everything from the start of the yellow bar to infinity would be in focus.

If you want to know more about this method I did a full tutorial on this for the FZ200 [here on YouTube](#)



at 3.20 in the video I show how to use this indicator scale to set this point

Making matters worse the FZ300/330 no longer shows the actual focus distance in metres (or feet depending upon camera sales region).

Let's look at what hyper focal focussing means.

It is, what is referred to as, the “*Circle of Confusion*” that defines how much defocus blur is acceptable in the image.

In the “film emulsion days”, it was a size of 30 microns (combined result of both film, development & typical lenses).

This value of 30 microns is still used in hyper focal tables, and apps, found on the internet today however for our modern digital camera, the circle of confusion, is now determined largely by the sensor pixel size.

As a very approximate “rule of thumb” you can set the camera to a focus point which is about 1/3rd of the way into the image. Make an estimation of this point in your composition and then set the manual focus to this point.

Do this once you have set the focal length of the lens for your composition as focal length, followed by aperture, will determine this point.

For street photography with the lens set to its widest zoom of 24mm EFL then if you set the focus indicator almost to the red infinity mark on the manual focus scale you will have about 1 metre (3ft 3inch) to infinity that will be acceptably sharp in the resulting image.

When I first “published” this method I had a lot of sceptical viewers saying that the method just didn't work for them. I suspect that they did not pay attention to the point that the focus and zoom set points are lost if the camera goes into its sleep mode.

It is essential to set the focus and zoom resume features to “ON” so that these positions are memorised by the camera when it sleeps and you again wake it up by pressing the shutter button.

I did a subsequent follow up video of this method to show how it does work, again [here on YouTube](#)



Selected to Review Luminar 2018 Photo Editing Software



Luminar 2018 photo editor

During the week, I was contacted by Skylum to ask if I would be interested in carrying out a review and creating a tutorial for their new photo editing software Luminar 2018.

As you may recall I have been using affinity photo on my Mac and iPad pro for a few months but I do find myself dropping back into Photoshop as I find that such more intuitive to use.

Maybe because I have grown up with Photoshop through its various guises that I am just more comfortable using it. On the PC I use the “smart photo editor” by anthropics when I want to do a very quick edit of an image and maybe add a border or frame to an image as this program is ideal for that. I use Lightroom occasionally but again I never progressed into using local adjustments etc.

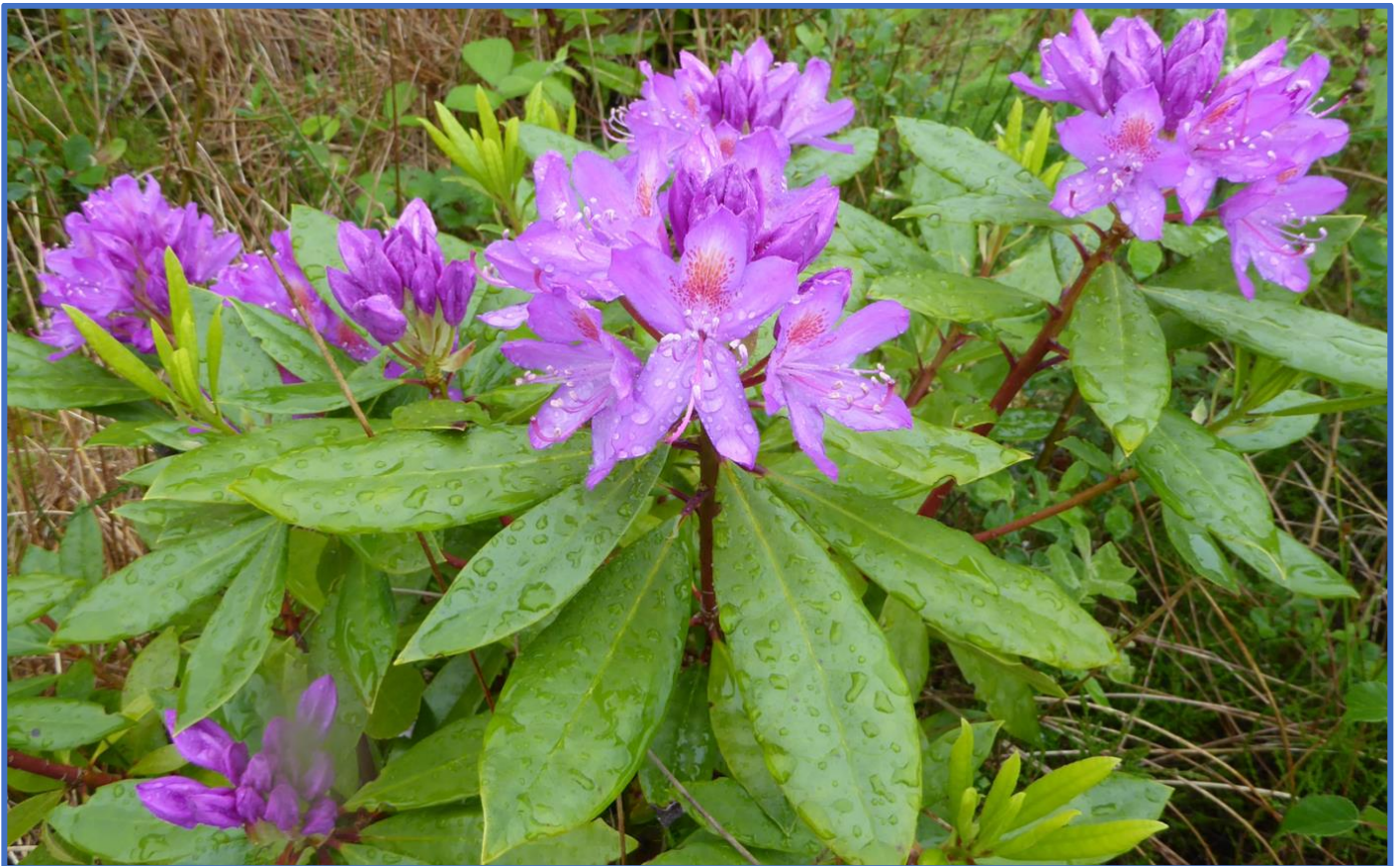
I have kept the Adobe CC subscription running but often wonder if it is worth it when I no longer do any heavy image editing these days.

The Luminar 2018 program looks quite interesting and I have agreed to review it for them. As soon as I get the software to download I’ll give you my first impressions of this program.

You can see the program and try it for [free here](#). It is available for both PC and Mac.

Rain, at Last

After over 5 weeks of temperatures in the mid to high 20’s (C) and no rainfall, extensive moorland fires and nights of poor sleep due to the heat it finally rained today!



I’ve never been so happy to feel raindrops on my head and rushed out to capture the images of the raindrops on the rhododendron bush in the garden.

The water butts are now full again and the garden refreshed.

The parched lawn having turned brown will now start to recover again and the threat of a hose pipe ban may be lifted.

Of course, it can stop raining now and let’s have the summer back – never happy are we!

Capturing Flying Insects with Bridge Cameras

Many people scorn at us bridge camera users citing them as “toy” cameras and it is thought that capturing images of sporting events, surfing, football and insects in flight are well out of the possibility with these cameras.



Well I've captured many a flying insect, just in sunlight, with the FZ300/330 using just single shot mode, not even high speed burst. It would be even easier to set 4K photo mode and a high shutter speed to get a still image with remarkable clarity but there's no challenge in that.

April Daly (on Facebook) also has some fantastic images also captured with her FZ330 so it is possible. Using the AF macro mode, 600mm (full optical zoom) F4 and ISO 100 just timing and patience is the key to capturing these types of images. Watch out for patterns in the insect's behaviour to predict its next move! Be prepared to bin an awful lot though! Even modest amounts of i.Zoom (up to x1.5 or 900mm EFL) give images with plenty of detail like the butterfly I shot using this method from about 1 metre away as in the hot weather they were not staying still for long.



An all Smartphone Wedding Event

Last weekend we were guests at one the friends of my wife, daughter's wedding. With 160 sit down guests for the ceremony and meal and another 100 or so for the evening session it was quite a "do". It was obvious that the guests who were taking video and images of the event were all using smartphones!



At times the professional photographer (using both a Canon 5Dmk3 and 5Dmk4) turned around to see may be 10 or so people lined up to take “his shot”.

Now for most of these guests the images were very acceptable and were quickly posted onto social media like Instagram and Facebook. I did take quite a few shots in as many lighting situations as I could just to add to my knowledge of how the later iPhone generation of cameras performed.

In high contrast light with deep shadows and bright highlights I still found the tendency for the camera to overexpose and blow out the highlights.



In deep shade the images tended to look very “grainy” due to the high ISO employed but I’m sure that most would be very happy with the images if they were presented with them.





My newsletter subscription list has now exceeded the 2000 that my account allows so I have had to unsubscribe 12 users to “post” this one.

I did send out an email to 110 people who have been enrolled for over 2 years that the Mailchimp reporting system claimed had not opened, or clicked on any link, in the last 10 newsletters. I had a few replies asking to be kept active so I have kept those in the list for this posting.

If you do find that you no longer wish to follow me with the newsletter, then please do unsubscribe by clicking on the unsubscribe option at the base of the email (not in this pdf).

If you do decide to unsubscribe, because you have changed camera systems or no longer interested, thank you for taking the time to view my content and I do hope that you did learn something from the content over the years.