Beckham Digital

March 2015 Newsletter

PicturesToExe - London Calling – New Individual Video Tutorial

London Calling is a slide show made following a visit to the UK in the latter part of 2014, which can be viewed via the link above. A few days ago I received a very nice email asking some questions about that presentation and I have include those questions below in blue. A few lines of text would not do justice to the Monochrome conversion, so I have created a tutorial on the Black and White conversion, the colour and how the opening titles were created in PicturesToExe. Click the Video Tutorial link above for that.

- How was the scrolling title text at beginning and end achieved?

PicturesToExe is a great program, but what I have said many times is that when combined with an image editor and a little creative thought, it becomes much more powerful. It was Photoshop that I used to create the opening titles, but Photoshop Elements would be OK too. Three parts make up the titles and I show them below and we demonstrate them in the video.

First we need the basic monochrome image completed with that splash of colour. We also need a transparent cut-out of the telephone box door. This was able to be achieved without any selections being manually made. We can simply use the mask that was already created to reveal the strategic colour. We deal with these techniques in The Video

The telephone box door was then saved as a Png file to retain the transparent nature of the image. In PicturesToExe Object and Animation screen the main image needs to be added first, then the text and then the telephone box. A sandwich of the text between the other two images.

From the viewers point of view the titles now appear to be inside the telephone box, but because each of the 3 parts are on their own layer, it allows us to animate the text independently of the other layers so that the opening title appears to be coming out of the telephone box. The text

also contains a little distortion so it comes out of the box with a slight pan, but also looks like it stretches out to its full width. The end of the sequence was a simple reverse of the start. We deal with the whole technique in _our video_. Creating the image and the work in PTE

- **What settings in PTE were used to produce the quick transitions?**

Many of the slide changes were in fact straight cuts, meaning no transition at all. This option was selected via Slide Options > Quick Transition. In some of the transitions I used a 0.3 Dissolve, because a straight cut didn't work so well, but to some degree you have to allow your eyes and ears tell you what is right.

- **How were the dramatic colours achieved? These really stand out against the dark black & white backgrounds. Was this effect produced by 'colour popping' and then applying an elliptical marquee tool over the centre of the image, feathering the edges and then darkening the areas outside the ellipse to give a vignette effect?**

What you describe is more or less right. The problem we have when photographing in dull conditions is a lack of contrast, so to give the impact and contrast we need in Black and White I worked every image through _Adobe Camera Raw as a Monochrome_. Then created a second copy with the dramatic colour. Layers and Layer Masks allowed me to bring through the colour just where I wanted it.

Much of the vignetting was done in Camera Raw using the Radial Filter, but you have that in Lightroom too.

- **Another unrelated issue - the videos attached to the February newsletter comprise of two files - an application (.exe) file and a 'PTShow File'.**

In fact they were not videos attached to February Newsletter, they were PicturesToExe executable files, which is the best way to view presentations. However, some anti-virus programs see

executable files as a threat when they clearly are not. So PicturesToExe have included a publish option called Safe Executable File for the Internet.   When we select that option, the executable file is created in ZIP with a digital signature. That digital signature should prevent virus programs from falsely identifying a slide show as a virus.

When you unzip the folder, the two files inside must be kept together. They are a pair, but it's the blue icon here that you need to click to launch the slide show, even though it appears to be the smaller of the two files.

New Tutorials - How to Win Competitions – or at least improve your photography - New Tutorial Category

Yes, I know, it's the same heading I used in the February Newsletter, so let me explain. It turns out I inspired myself and over the past weeks and I have been recording a set of video tutorials on this subject.

Of course the How to Win title is a bit tongue in cheek and aimed at Camera Club members who want to do better.

001 How to Win - Introduction	014 Set Subject Competitions
002 Camera Club Competitions	015 Sloping Horizons and Verticals
003 What are Judges looking for?	016 Over Sharpening Images
004 Composition - The Rule of Thirds	017 Getting Images Sharp
005 Other Composition Rules	018 Presentation of your projected image
006 Planning and Collections	019 Twelve point checklist
007 Image Size and Aspect Ratio	020 Technique Tip - Format Change
008 Don't compete with yourself	021 Technique Tip - Content Aware Scale
009 Over - Cropping	022 Technique Tip - Crop Presets
010 Colour Problems	023 Technique Tip - Reduce Noise
011 Weak Edges	024 Technique Tip - Ground Level Shots
012 Blemishes and Distractions	025 Technique Tip - Avoid Photo Fashion
013 Clarity and Contrast	Lightroom 5 - Our Tutorial Intro Video

There are 25 Videos (shown above) with an average running time of 10 minutes each. The whole thing would run for almost 4 hours and I have created a series of videos on the topics judges raise time after time. How to spot the problems and put them right before the judge tells you what we really need to do. Click the links below and watch our introduction presentation

Tutorial Disk version HERE – Tutorial Download Version HERE

Free Video - Colour Balance

I have had great difficulties this month trying to get our March 2015 newsletter video uploaded and ready to be linked to our newsletter. We (The Beckham's) are experiencing a line fault at the telephone exchange and that is seriously curtailing what we can do on line and is even hitting our emails too. The line fault, which we were told was caused by the recent Cyclone, makes uploading a 40MB video file impossible. Unfortunately, the line fault will not be fixed until the 18th March at the earliest.

So, the only thing I can do is to link you to one of our earlier newsletter videos from May 2013. That video is already up in the clouds and can be accessed easily. It deals with the subject of colour balance. Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible.

Restoration - Here is a subject we don't hear much about these days, but it is one that has a lot of merits for the person restoring the picture.

In the early days of Photoshop many people thought they could make a living restoring old photographs and adverts sprung up everywhere, with before and after examples.

However, there was a flaw in that idea and it was the fact that Photoshop made the tools to repair old photos so easy, that soon everyone could achieve the same results.

In addition, when you have completed the restoration, you do have a picture that looks better than it did when it was created. You also have a picture that is now in electronic form that can be shared amongst the family and quite often it is these images that are valued mostly. Our example top right was taken 81 years ago as my mother as a little girl of about 6 is sitting on the edge of the stage on the left. My Grandmother stands behind her.

The image lacked corners, was hanging by a thread down the centre and had creases and mould all over it. The restoration transforms it and this was done before the days of the Healing Brush and the Spot Healing Brush. Just copy and paste and old faithful, the Clone Tool.

Some of the spotting out of blemishes can be tedious, but we don't have to do all the work in one sitting. Your family will be more appreciative of an old picture like this fully restored and printed than almost any other and you can learn a lot too. Definitely a win, win , win situation.

PicturesToExe Slide Shows - As photographers, we all create far more images than we can ever hope to use or display. Some of us did back in film days, let along the digital age. For many photographers, they improve the presentation of their images via a PicturesToExe Slide Show. Like all things creative, we like to think that everything we do is a masterpiece with a wide appeal to others.

If only that were true ! Most of us, if we are honest will recognise that when we look back some years after creating a slide show it is far easier to judge its appeal. When I do any demo's and have the ability to select a couple of sequences for a clubs entertainment, I find there are some slide shows that I just don't play any more.

What that is telling me is that this slide show does not now meet the standard that I wish to show to others. The question I ask myself is, did it ever have that longevity that I had no doubt about at

the time it was created? Was my judgement coloured by that creative mist that floats down over our senses and prevents us from seeing clearly.

Sometimes it takes a day or so to clear, sometimes a few months, but it's not until years later that we can see what we created crystal clear and without any sign of that creative mist over our senses.

Well, that's life I suppose and best we look forward rather than back eh? Having said that I have looked back on some of my old slide shows and contrary to what I usually find, there are some that I still like as much as the day I created them.

One is Red Balloons and I invite you to take a look via the link on the left. I did enter this into a competition, but at the time it stood out from general AV, because of the animation and I believe the judges felt that video had been included, which there isn't of course. There is always a danger that in this particular case the mist hasn't yet cleared for me?

Quick Links to all our Latest Slide Shows

Loco's in Steam

Infra-Red Presentation/tutorial

London Calling

Our UK Introduction Presentation

The Fire Trail

Inclement Weather (Scotland)

Invisible Light

Quick Links to Video Tutorials

Lightroom 5

Photoshop CC – Disks

Photoshop CC – Downloads

All other Photoshop Tutorials (other versions CS-3, CS-4, CS-5, CS-6, Lightroom)
Lightroom

PicturesToExe Tutorials

Slide Show Demo's