Beckham Digital

Nov 2015

Canon 5Ds
50.6 MP camera

Free Video
The Histogram

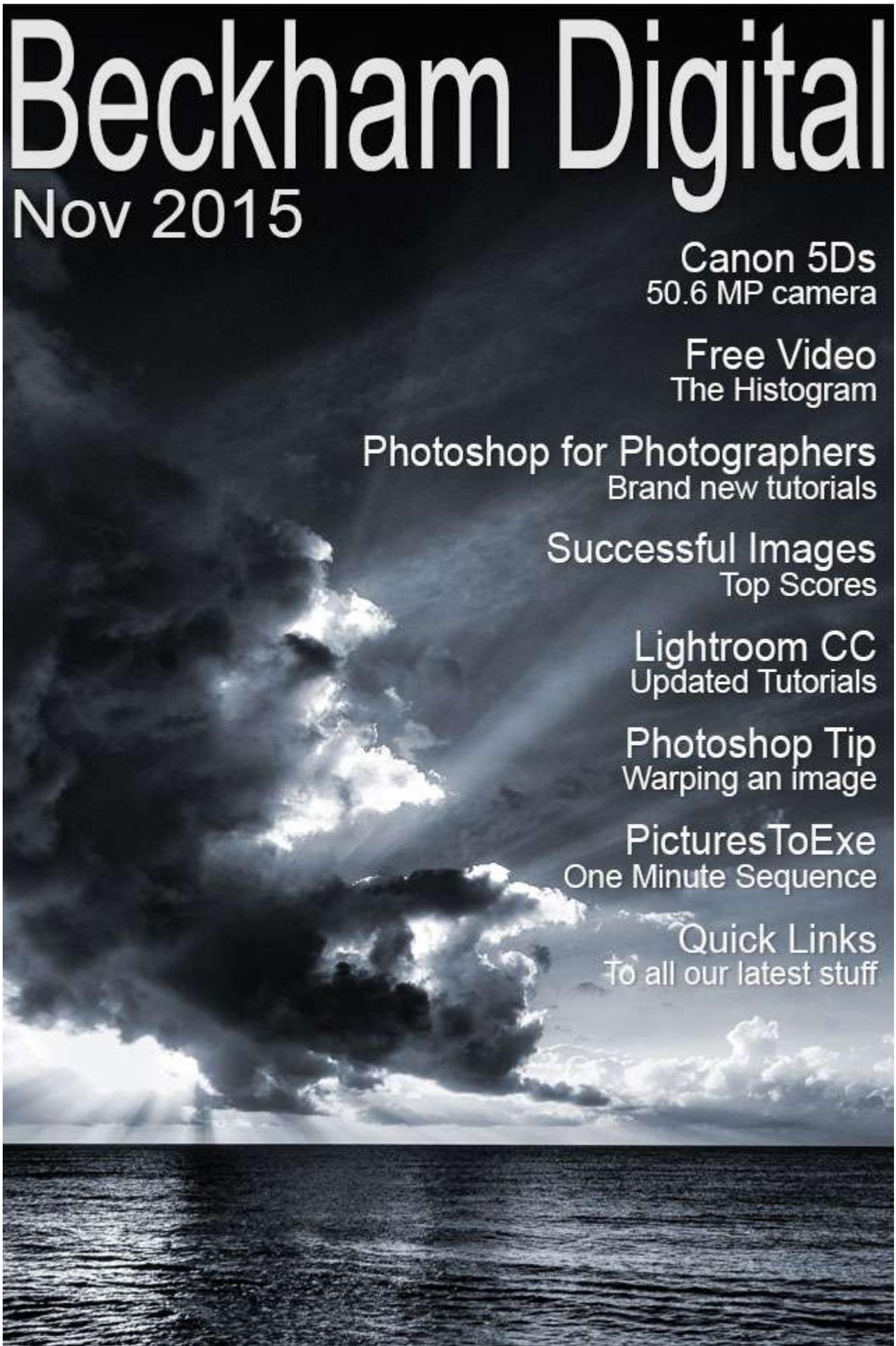Photoshop for Photographers
Brand new tutorials

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One Minute Sequence

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Welcome to our November Newsletter – Well, for the past 8-10 weeks I have been working hard to produce the next generation of Photoshop videos, so my own Camera hasn't seen the light of day for some time, which I must remedy very soon, because my shutter finger is getting itchy.

My Infra-red Photography still has the same momentum it had right at the start over a year ago, apart from these past few weeks of course.

Our newsletter cover is an Infra-red shot and so is the image above. For those who are not aware, I am using a converted Canon 5D Mk 2, which was converted for me by Camera Clinic of Melbourne. A converted camera is easy to handle and hand hold. This shot above was 500th @ f8 at 200iso.

Infra-red Photography

New Tutorials - Photoshop for Photographers 2016 for PC and Mac

Photoshop for Photographers is a whole course about learning Photoshop. There are 7 sections and 80+ videos that will take you comprehensively through the learning of Photoshop. In previous tutorials we have always tried to keep the core parts of Photoshop as isolated and separated from each other as possible. Core parts like basic manipulations of Jpeg images, Layers and Layer Masks, shooting and manipulating Raw images, making Selections. This was done to help the learning process.

That approach has served us well, but now we need to move on. The benefits of shooting and manipulating raw files has evolved to a point where it's just too great to ignore, even for someone just starting out with Photography and Photoshop. Many of the manipulations we need to make

can be difficult or even impossible to achieve with Jpeg images, but not with Raw images. The latitude of Raw images is so great that the serious photographer cannot ignore that.

If I were taking anyone through a one to one learning plan for Photoshop, Raw editing would be in there from the start, because it's easier to get great results with raw than it is with Jpegs. Raw editing is the core part of Photoshop and we have recorded brand new tutorials to reflect that.


As usual I have done my best to make the videos as interesting and creative as I can by using real life projects with great images. So, not only do I offer video instruction, but creative ideas too, both from an image point of view and creative use of the Photoshop tools

The videos are shorter and therefore more focused, but as a result there are more of them. As usual our tutorials in this Photoshop for Photographers set are presented in a logical learning order, both individually and in the various parts of which there are 7. The first of which contains 12 videos running for 120 minutes and I offer Part 1 to you free.

However, you may want to view our Main Introduction or view our Main Introduction PDF to this new set of tutorials first, plus the Introduction to Part one, which is free.

I ask you to remember that this set of videos constitutes almost 2 months work and the result is over 80 videos. Watched back to back they would run for 17 hours, but we don't recommend that.

Take it slow and steady, starting with Part 1 which is free to download.
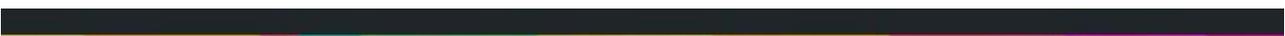
Free Video – The Histogram – Your Compass towards better Image Editing.

A good photographer confided in me recently that they didn't really understand the Histogram or where it fitted into their image editing. They said that they effectively ignored it as they felt they didn't need a graph to tell them what they could see with their own eyes.

Well, I have been working with the histogram for as long as I can remember and I have found one thing I cannot do all the time is rely on my eyes. In fact, more often than not when I think I have an image right, the histogram tells me there is more in the picture to be had.

More what you may ask? More contrast, colour and therefore appeal. Our eyes fool us all the time.
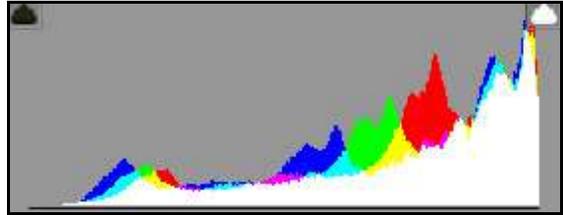
The Histogram is something we will learn in time without any effort on our part, but we can speed up that process by paying more attention to the histogram. But why should we? Can't we just make our judgements on colour, contrast and appeal simply by looking at the image?

No, often we can't! We can get close to the optimum contrast and from time to time we will hit the right spot without the histogram, but our eyes let us down more often than not. Most people when shown the image below, feel it's acceptable. It does look OK when isolated and viewed on its own.

Yet, when we allow the Histogram to guide us to the right sliders and the right amount of editing

we see the image below. Its only when we see that one, that we then realise that the one above is really quite dull and lifeless.

The Histogram is your compass and it will tell you which sliders you need to visit (Photoshop ACR or Lightroom) and even how far you can move those sliders too, so its not something just for the experienced. The image below has no clipping or burnout at all and we know that because the histogram and the clipping warning in Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom tells us that.

We need to become comfortable and understand the correlation between the Histogram and what we are seeing in our image. We mustn't follow the Histogram blindly, because some images will make the Histogram look totally wrong. A black cat shot in a dark corner (low key images) or a white cat in the snow (High key images) are good examples.

As long as our image doesn't fall into one of those two extremes, we could cover the image up on our screen and manipulate it to pretty good result, just by looking at the histogram alone. So, the Histogram can more helpfull to us than we give it credit for and its worth our attention.

In fact even a beginner to image editing needs to understand the Histogram, because it's far more of a help than a hidernance.

Download the Video from Here.

PicturesToExe - Free Trial

It seems a long time now since I reported any changes to our favourite slide show software and I know that Wnsoft are working hard to not only improve the software, but also make it Mac compatible. Something I know many Mac users can't wait for.

For those who have not used this software yet, but would like to try it. You can do so completely free from our link just above.

The software installs and uninstalls without any dramas, so you can feel perfectly safe to give it a try. The trial is in fact a full copy of the software and it's the product key that makes a trial version a final version, so you don't even have to download it twice. I timed the download on a moderate broadband connection a few minutes ago and it took just 60 seconds to appear on my desktop ready to install.

Our latest Slide Shows

I was recently asked to judge a one minute AV competition for Redlands Camera Club in Brisbane and was surrpised to see the club received 27 entries, a really great result. A great idea too. At first I thought 60 seconds was too restrictive, but it certainly does focus the mind and makes the author think about how to use those 60 seconds.

I was inspired enough to try one myself – It's Just a Minute PC - It's Just a Minute Mac

Lightroom Creative Cloud – Updates for 2015/16

Last year I launched a comprehensive range of Lightroom videos and in the past few days I have brought that up to date by adding new tutorials to the ones already included.

Included now are videos on *High Dynamic Range Photography – Making a Panorama - Auto Masking – The new De Haze tool and the Lightroom CC slide show options.*

For any of our customers who bought this set of tutorials in the past year, I offer these updates free of charge, but I can only offer them as a download. Please contact us via E-Mail and we will

send you a link to these videos with our compliments.

So, we now have around 59 videos under the three main core functions of Lightroom. The Library Module, The Develop Module and the Export Module.

A comprehensive range of videos for anyone wanting to get the best from Lightroom Creative Cloud and create great images

Photoshop Presentation Tip – Warp an Image

Many photographers have a need to use Photoshop for the presentation of their images in a variety of ways. One of those is to add warped effects.

Open an image and in the layers palette remove the layer lock. This effectively unlocks or separates the Canvas from the image itself. Select your Free Transform tool from the edit menu (Ctrl+T) and adjust the size of the image to be smaller than your canvas.

With the Transform tool still in place click the icon shown here on the left of these three icons.

This opens up the Warp options and the shape left is easily created. Don't forget that once you create the shape you want, Layer Styles (FX) can also be added.

Here I have added a drop shadow and a stroked line in white to pick out the image from the neutral background.

Recent Successful Images

The image below by Carol was taken with a Sony RX10. 125 iso F14 @ 400th of a second shutter speed. The zoom focal length range of the RX10 is 28-200, but this shot was taken at a 73mm zoom setting. Pelicans are a common bird in Australia, rather like Swans would be in the UK.

With regard to photographic competitions it should be remembered that the judge will have seen hundreds if not thousands of Swans, Pelicans and other common wildlife. So, if you're going to enter an image of a common subject it has to have something a little different to make it stand out from the crowd.

The composition and crop of this image is what gives it that little extra and the way the birds are

forming that asymmetrical shape. It was certainly enough for Carol to score top marks in a recent competition.

The Old Car – We found a lot of old rusty American cars on our recent trip to North Queensland.

This shot was taken with a Canon 1Ds Mk3 from a tripod. 100 iso – f16 @ an 8th of a second shutter

speed. The exposure was compensated so that is was taken 1 stop less than the camera would have given. This was to compensate for all the darker tones in the shot.

Those darker tones can fool the camera into giving more exposure than was really needed. The location was one of those places where you could spend hours finding all sorts of interesting images among the old decaying vehicles. In these situations I like to work from a tripod so I have the full range of shutter and aperture settings at my disposal.

If not, then we will always be fighting camera shake and depth of field issues. The image scored 9 in an open competition, which I was pleased with.

What makes a successful image and how do you improve your chances in Camera Club Competitions? There is no one single answer to that question, but we have addressed it comprehensively in our How to Win Tutorials

The New Canon 5DS – 50.6 mega-pixel camera – by Cris Muggeridge

One of my friends at Noosa Photo Club has recently bought the new Canon Camera and I asked him to let me have his views:-

Cris said : I have finally taken the step from my ageing 5D mk2 and decided to go for the the Canon 5Ds. It was a bit scary in many ways especially the price and concerns about needing more computing power to handle those 50MP.

A little bit of saving took care of the first and the second proved unfounded as my 5 year old Mac-book pro with 8 gig of ram seems to handle the images well. As I have only had the camera a short time, I am still familiarising myself with the camera, but my first impressions are:

The inbuilt level in the viewfinder is a real bonus and the focusing is such a giant step on from the Canon 5D Mk2. The low light performance exceeds the 5D Mk2 and the focusing while in live view is also better.

The camera has a multiple mirror lock up function, HDR, noise reduction by using multiple shots and a big increase in bracketing exposure capabilities. However, it can still churns out 5 frames a second. There is also the ability to set different aspect ratios and a neat little button so you don't knock the mode dial off your preferred settings.

That is the main stuff that I have found to be of benefit, (not withstanding 50 MB images), there is more that I will explore in the future. As the camera menu system and controls are similar to the Canon 7D, becoming accustomed to them was a fairly easy transition.

Canon 5DS @ 100%
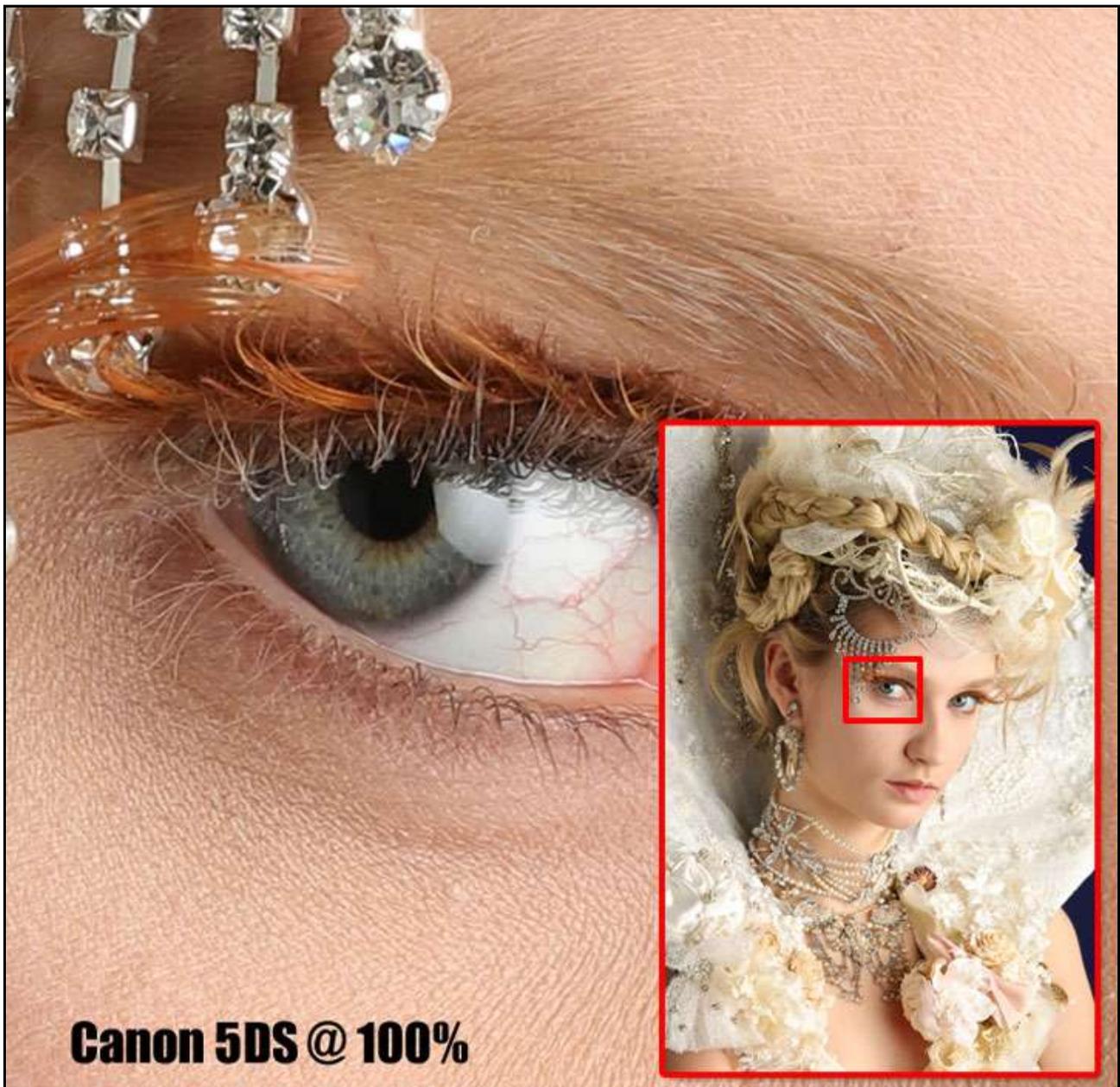
Turning it on and taking pictures, the shutter has a very different sound, it feels soft and measured. I have yet to be disappointed with any of my existing lens on the new camera. My only real disappointment comes from my own sloppy technique *(I know this as I have a tried proven scientific measuring tool, my Wife Debbie)*. She can shoot far lower shutter speeds than I can and her photos are always sharp. However with a little more care and preparation I have overcome this.

The results are in and so far I am very pleased with the improvement over the Canon 5D Mk2. Aside from the better focusing and metering, the colour rendition, contrast and dynamic range does seem markedly better. This means that the ability to recover detail in both highlights and shadows is surprisingly easy.

One of the bonus's of having such large file sizes is that when you downsize they seems to gain sharpness and lose noise all by themselves. Yes, I am using a tripod a lot more, I have become far

more discerning with my focus points and my awareness of shutter speed. Due to the 50 mega-pixel capture of this camera, the level of forgiveness for bad technique is very small, but that's not the cameras fault.

Yes, it's a lot of camera and a big step up from the 5D Mk2, but was it worth it? Hell yes once you feel and hear that shutter it's all over. I still have to admit to myself that I bought it for selfish reasons as my scientific measurement tool *(Debbie)* still gets great shots from her 7D.

Editors Note:- Cris takes great pictures of birds, many of them in flight, so it will be interesting to see his results over the new few months. I am sure he will allow me to show you one or two.

Quick Links to all our Latest Slide Shows

Scotland – A Brief Moment in Time

Cold War Scrapyard

Contrast

Loco's in Steam

Infra-Red Presentation/tutorial

London Calling

Our UK Introduction Presentation

The Fire Trail

Inclement Weather (Scotland)

Invisible Light

Many More here

Quick Links to Video Tutorials

Photoshop CC – Disks

Photoshop CC – Downloads

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

Lightroom

PicturesToExe Tutorials

Quick Link to All our PDFs

Digital Infra-Red

What can Photoshop's Bridge do for me

+ More

Quick Links to Slide Show Demo's

Adding a thin outline to your images

Creating Stylish Backgrounds

Creating a Matt Frame with Images

Creating a Matt frame with animation

Creating and applying distressed edges

Free Fonts no demo, but this is a free Video

Text on a Path

Using Images as your titles

Create Titles combined with your images

Creating and using Masks

Creating the Third Image

Differential Focus

Creating a Moving Route Line on a map