



“From the Ordinary to the Extra Ordinary”



In 2017 as a direct result of requests from camera clubs I developed the first of a pair of talks, Smart Shooter Part 1 “Beyond Auto Mode - Taking creative control of your camera”. This is now one of my most popular talks and the aim is to provide advice on how to take creative control of your camera working with the controls on your camera and the installed computer. More details are on my website.

Following the success of this talk I was encouraged to develop this talk looking further at more advanced aspects. In particular how shooting digital differs from shooting film and what options we have. This talk entitled Smart Shooting Part 2 – “From the ordinary to the extraordinary”. This talk launched in 2019 is the result.

Anyone can take absolutely superb photographs, but the first step is leaving the auto mode setting on your camera behind and learning how even the basic controls. The second, and often omitted step, is to understand how the differences in digital shooting can make these photographs even better.

I shot film for 40 odd years but was first introduced to these ideas in a talk by Thomas Knoll in 2006 principally about signal to noise ratios in digital photography. You may recognize Thomas’s name he is the original author of Adobe Photoshop™, and the author of Camera RAW™. Although I had shot digital for a number of years and was in touch with many of the developers on digital cameras through a lifelong friend, who was the then technical director of one of the leading camera manufacturers, Thomas expanded on something that had not occurred to me before. Once I started thinking about it made perfect sense and has changed my shooting in digital ever since. If you are prepared to examine and try this fundamental shift in thinking, then your photographs will improve markedly. In my workshops and talks I have always introduced these ideas and concepts but now as we have more and more powerful digital cameras they are more important than ever. As we strive to produce sharper, cleaner, clearer more noise free images they are a key tool in our digital shooting tool box. You can perform miracles in PhotoShop™ but – to coin a very old phrase “you can’t make a silk purse out of a sows ear” - getting things right in camera is the very best place to start.

This talk builds on the ideas discussed and explored in the earlier talk – Smart Shooting Part 1 “Beyond Auto Mode - Taking creative control of your camera”- and extends to starting by looking at how digital shooting differs from film. This is very important and often overlooked as we assume digital cameras are just film cameras with a digital sensor instead of a film. We can and do continue to use our digital cameras (mirrored or mirrorless) in the same way as we did our film cameras. However even though the basic controls are the same, if we are to get the best from them, we need to understand this fundamental difference more clearly. Just as photographers like Ansel Adams encouraged us to expose film in particular ways to get the best from it we need to understand how digital cameras can help us to manage exposure to get sharper, cleaner, clearer and more noise free pictures. These concepts may seem more complex but the presentation is designed to take experienced shooters forward in their journey in photography as well challenge and stretch newer members who may have heard the first talk or had help in your club and be taking their first steps to take control of their cameras.

The talk lasts about 2 hours including a 10 minute break in the middle. I bring prints along to illustrate the techniques I discuss and explore them using clear concise illustrated and animated explanations which I leave behind as a digital download for members to explore after I leave.

Bob Brind-Surch

