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## Jaguar Photographic Society

Website: [www.jaguarps.co.uk](http://www.jaguarps.co.uk)  
Email: [jaguarphotosociety@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jaguarphotosociety@yahoo.co.uk)

Meetings: Weds evenings from 20:00  
Jaguar Social Club, Chorley Way, Coventry

Cover Image: Scott Wiggins taken at a club meeting to JRCS Falconry.

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# COMMENT

Welcome to the first of what I hope will be a regular digital newsletter for the society. This e-zine has taken a bit of work to get off the ground and I must give thanks to everyone who has contributed an article or photographs.

For future editions I will be asking members who wishes to volunteer images to do so as another means of sharing their photographs with each other and hopefully to a greater audience.

In this inaugural issue I've taken a look at mixing my photography up a little whilst Helen and Matt talk about their visit to Scotland. Tony meanwhile is sharing the secrets of one of his favourite digital darkroom techniques.

Tops Shops will not be featuring paid advertisements, rather think of them as recommendations from your fellow members. One of us will have either visited, bought from or learnt from one of the companies listed and feels happy to recommend it to you as worth considering.

Please bear with me while I get to grips with digital publishing but I think this is a great way for us to promote ourselves in the community and further afield.

If you have downloaded this from our website and are an enthusiastic photographer please do consider coming to visit us. I'm sure you will find us a friendly bunch. Equally, drop us a line and let us know what you think of the e-zine.

May the light be kind.

Best wishes,

Scott

Secretary

# DIARY DATES

- June**
- 6th     A review of images from our visits & practical meetings
- 13th    Coombe Abbey Photographic Treasure Hunt
- 20th    An evening at Lapworth along the canal
- 24th    (Sun) Birds of Prey trip to JRCS Falconry £25 per person from 13:00hrs. Names to Helen please.
- 27th    End of season meal (Venue: Wing Wah)

We then begin our Summer hiatus although there are a number of practical days being planned.

- September**
- 5th     The New Season Commences

# TRIPS

- July**
- TBC     Cotswold Day Trip

- August**
- 18th    (Sat) Northampton Balloon Festival incl Night Flight

- September**
- 8th     (Sat) The Victory Show, Cosford £15 per person

Look out for more details on our meeting nights or via the weekly email.







# FRESH FRAME

Scott Wiggins

As some of you may know, I've been one of the photographers at the Coventry Blaze for a number of seasons now. This season I've also been photographing the development team as well who play two tiers down from the senior team. Whilst the standard isn't quite as high, they play with just as much passion and determination.

It's been a great season for me as the game is a slightly slower pace and once I've got some images for the web and the team programme I'm free to go pretty much anywhere, especially as the arena behind the team benches isn't used. I've been able to experiment with different lenses and to photograph different settings and styles of images such as portraits on the team bench or detail type shots. It's also meant I've been able to work on solving a couple of problems some parts of the arena gives me, particularly where the light isn't as consistent.

The image here was an experiment in building layers up within the image, yet still allowing the image to be used in a magazine context. Shots such as this can only happen when the play is in the corner of the rink and the chance will only be there for a few seconds.

So if you've a favourite subject you like to photograph, consider mixing things up from time to time. Try a different focal length or experiment with your camera setup to see if you can improve your images. Will a different lens give you a new perspective? Does shooting wide give you a different perspective to a tightly framed image?

If you regularly take part in a sports team or club can you get permission to take photos in return for some images? Most sports teams or clubs really like fresh good quality images for promotional use and most participants love photographs of themselves so there could be a chance to sell a few images too.

Canon 1D IV  
70-200 at 95mm  
Manual, ISO2500  
1/400th at f2.8



# DIGITAL DARKROOM

Tony Cartwright

For this first newsletter Tony has a look at what you might probably call his favourite technique... The Vignette.

It has been noted that on occasions I do add vignettes to my photographs! Maybe I watch too much Top Gear, or maybe I just have weird eyesight, but I often find empty corners of a picture very distracting. I like having the primary subject in a photograph thrown into a sort of spotlight for extra emphasis.

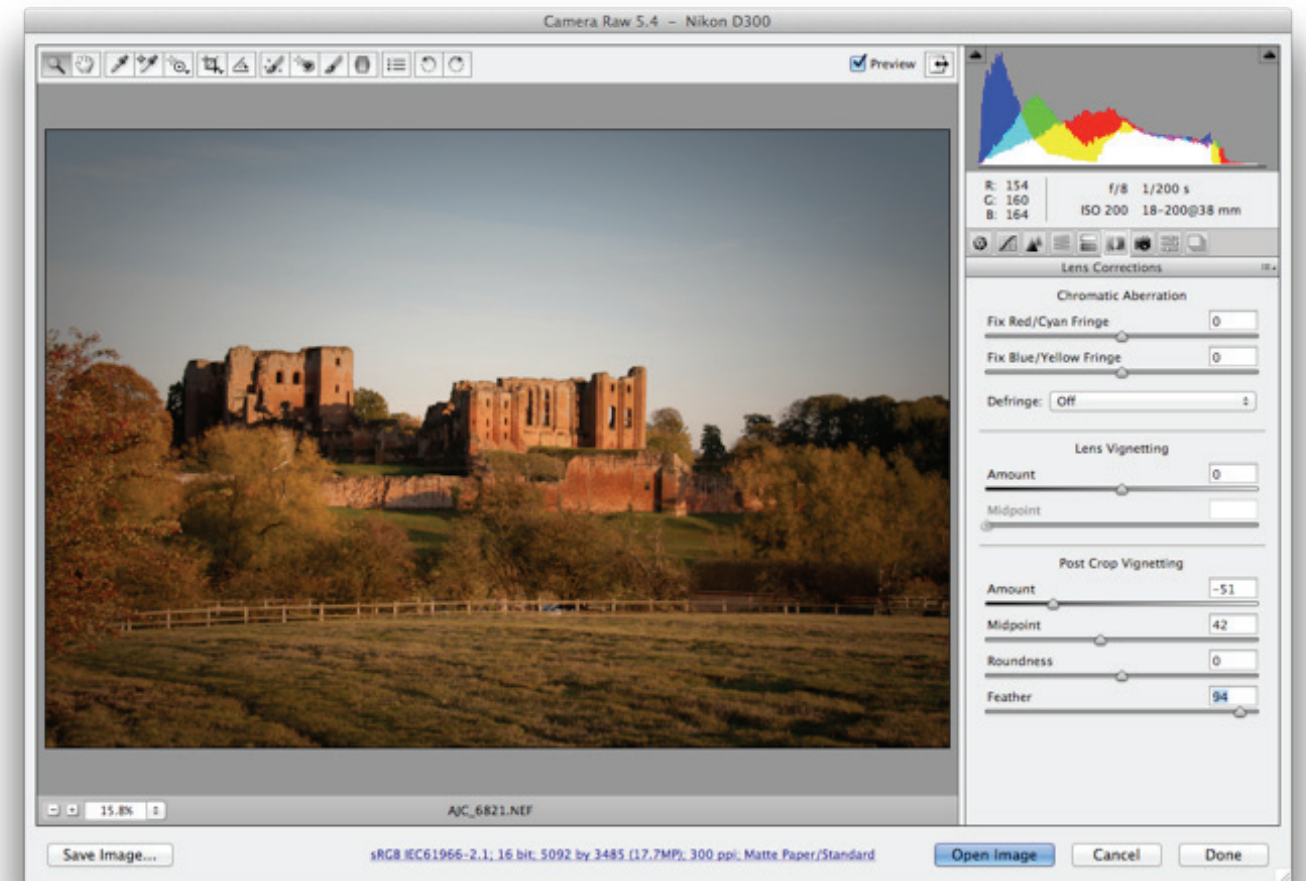
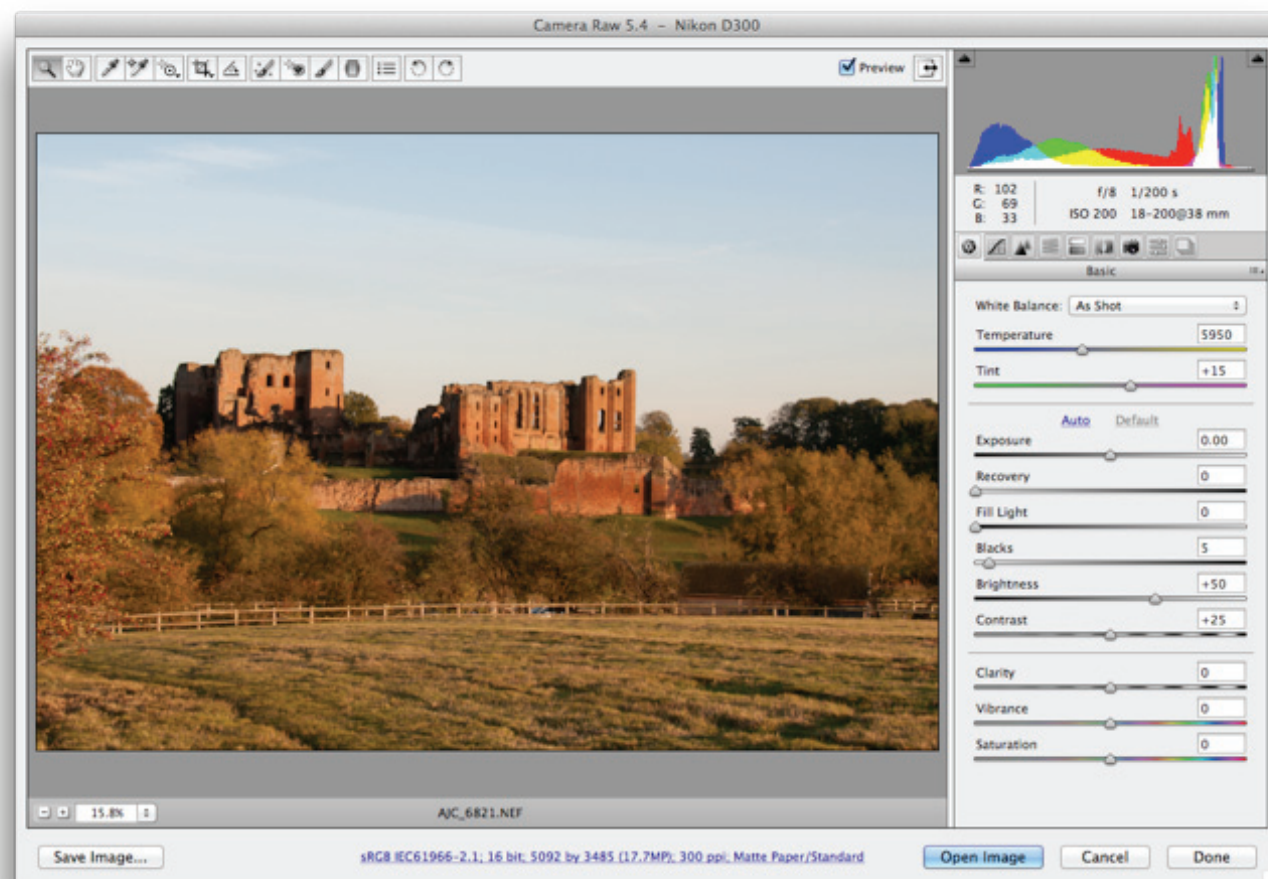
For me it is a rare event that the natural lighting alone provides the right balance in a picture, and I almost always use some level of post processing to burn in or hold back bits of the picture to get the feeling I want to create.

Currently I use Photoshop CS4, which comes with the Camera Raw plug in – a necessary bit of software to pre process RAW files prior to opening in Photoshop. I think the tools in Lightroom are very similar. But I have got used to this one so stick with it (it's cheaper too!). Camera Raw is very powerful and can do almost everything you need

to polish a picture, from cropping, straightening, colour balance, sharpening, etc., it even has brushes for localised touches and for spot removal and minor corrections. But the tool I want to show is the Vignette tool.

The following picture is a fairly humble snap of the ubiquitous Kenilworth Castle, opened in Camera Raw.

You can see the sky is quite uniform and empty, and the grass in the foreground is a bit bland. But the lighting on the castle is quite nice from the evening sun. I've applied no corrections to it except for a slight crop to get the balance right. Otherwise those are the standard settings Raw always opens up with. It's also taken the colour temperature settings my camera chose when the shot was taken.



But for this picture I chose to pull up the shadows in the castle a bit, using the "Fill Light" tool (about 18 points in this case) – you need care with this tool - too much and the picture can become very flat. I could also use local corrections with brushes but the fill light is so much easier.

Having done that I wanted to get a bit more drama into the sky and foreground so a bit of the old vignette tool seemed appropriate. The next frame shows the picture with both these applied, and for me it's become much more interesting. I've dialled in quite a lot to emphasise the technique, -50points (positive gives a lightening vignette, negative gives darkening), but also softened it a lot with the feather slider on almost maximum.

As a result my eyes seem much less likely to wander out of the edges of the photograph, from the sky or the foreground grass, and the lighting on the castle, is more emphasised.

As with all things Photoshop, there are multitudinous different ways of achieving everything! But I find this way incredibly simple

and effective, and it's completely reversible too if you don't like it or change your mind at a later date – the mods just stay in the associated .xmp file so the base Raw file remains untouched.

Probably if I was going to do anything important with this picture, I would back off the vignette a smidge, try to clone out the car behind the fence (look closely in the middle), and I might mess about with the colour balance a bit, but otherwise that's about it.



# ON LOCATION

Words: Helen Jackson & Images: Matt Garside



January saw Matt and I make a long journey north to stay at Caelaverock Wildlife and Wetland Trust reserve for a long weekend of photography with Natures Images. Caelaverock is the winter home of the entire Svalbard population of Barnacle Geese (around 30,000 of them) along with hundreds of Whooper Swans with a myriad of other overwintering birds and roe deer.

We'd been concerned about the weather in the week running up to the trip with everything from gales and torrential rain to snow forecast. Luckily we had near perfect conditions, cold frosty mornings and bright sunny days. We arrived at the reserve a little earlier than planned. Spotting a bird feeder with a plethora of finches in the car park we decided to grab our cameras, and sat on a bank opposite the feeder to dust off some cobwebs before the course started. Having taken the plunge and invested in some Benro Gimbal heads before the trip it was good to get a feel for them. We were both pleasantly surprised at how much easier it was to track the birds with smooth panning and tilting capability without the weight of the lens tipping forward. The Benro BH2 heads don't have the inbuilt damping of the Wimberley heads, but at £200 less than the real McCoy this was a reasonable compromise for us.

We were soon joined by the rest of the course and then headed off to the Farmhouse to settle into our rooms and grab some lunch before setting out onto the reserve. An added bonus was discovering that Danny Green had joined our trip as well as

Mark Sisson, so we had two expert guides.

As a general rule for wildlife photography you want to be shooting with your aperture wide open to maximise your shutter speed, and to be using the Servo focussing mode (AI Servo on Canon Cameras) Think about the composition of your images when selecting which focus point to choose, often your focus will be on the animal's eye rather than the centre of its body.

Friday afternoon concentrated on the Whooper Swans, they're fed twice a day on the reserve so we had the opportunity to watch them flying in and their clown-like landings with feet outstretched acting as airbrakes. Care needs to be taken photographing white birds on dark water – you may need to adjust your exposure compensation to under expose slightly to stop the highlights blowing. We ended the day in the Saltcot Merse Observatory, watching the geese fly back out the estuary after spending the day grazing further inland. Returning to the farmhouse we had the added bonus of watching badgers and a fox enjoying the peanuts hidden by the wardens under logs and bricks in front of the conservatory.

Saturday saw us return to the observatory at first light ready to photograph the geese as they flew inland, the sight of thousands of geese taking off against the sunrise was fantastic. Inevitably shooting at both dawn and dusk presents challenges to your camera. You'll need to shoot with your lens wide open, and your ISO cranked to

the max. Keep an eye on your shutter speeds – if you want your geese to be sharp you may even find that switching your camera to manual mode is needed. Remember to keep an eye on your exposures especially if you're shooting scenes with differing amounts of light, and if like mine, your camera struggles at high ISOs, drop it back down as soon as you have enough light. I spent the afternoon watching the geese graze on the edge of the reserve. It's amazing to see them up close, and astonishing just how quickly they move when grazing. In the evening we travelled further north to take photos of a nearby starling roost. Unfortunately the starlings had moved from their roosting site of a few days earlier, but we were still able to see their amazing flight patterns. It's really something to observe if you have the chance.

Sunday saw us take a break from the reserve after some dawn swan photography, and head inland for a day of bird of prey photography – we worked with a Barn Owl, Merlin and Golden Eagle, and learnt the lesson that when photography requires you to be up to your shins in bog, in winter, neoprene lined wellies are the way forward! We all got some good shots though, and I was grateful for Danny lending me his 1Dmk4 after my camera

Whooper Swan - 40D, AV, 500mm, f4 1/500th ISO 200  
Merlin - 40D, AV, 500mm f8 1/50th ISO 400

decided it didn't want to focus properly.

For our final day we spent more time with the swans, enjoying capturing their post breakfast preening sessions. Next I sat myself (On frozen ground – taking a camping matt would have made for a more comfortable resting place) next to the fence at the T junction between the paths waiting for the Yellowhammers to make an appearance. It was a lengthy wait, but just as the sun coming over the bank they appeared, bathed in beautiful light. Getting down low helps to reduce your predatory appearance to small birds, and gives you a much better angle to photograph from. We then moved onto Dumfries to try our hand at capturing some backlit seagulls circling over the river – surprisingly tricky to keep them in your viewfinder, they're deceptively quick. Our trip finished with another attempt to capture the starlings, this time we were rewarded with a bigger murmuration against a stunning sunset. This was a fantastic end to a great trip.

We hired a 500mm lens through The Flash Centre in Birmingham to share on the trip – this is a great way to get access to a long lens without breaking the bank.





# THE CAMERA BAG

### Permajet Ultra Pearl Paper

Permajet’s Ultra Pearl has been out for a couple of years now and provides a good compromise between a traditional pearl paper and a grainy photographic paper. It works equally well on both colour or black and white images where the grain can really give an image some character.

The grainy nature of the paper is such that it would make scanning of the paper very difficult. This may be advantageous in some circumstances. It is a fairly reasonable weight at 295 gsm.

I find it great for higher ISO images as the grain can also help hide a little sensor noise. The paper isn’t truly archival but it is a great every day paper and certainly more than good enough for competition entries.

Cost:  
A4 (pk 25) - £12.95  
A3 (pk25) - £22.95  
[www.permajet.com](http://www.permajet.com)

DigitalPhoto

Ultra Pearl 295

A highly pronounced Pearl surface inkjet paper with a a super 295gsm photo weight base. The UV protective microporous coating assures instant dry properties with dye or pigment inks and unrivalled scratch resistance qualities, truly emulating the pearl prints you get from the lab. Ideal for all colour and monochrome printing work.

100% INK-JET COMPATIBLE

Weight 295gsm

### Hot Shoe Spirit Level

These little gizmos have been around for a few years now and are an excellent way of keeping your horizons level or indeed the camera straight.

I find them a real bonus when shooting landscapes as you can ensure your horizons are straight. They can also be useful when shooting architecture because if the camera is level, there is less chance of converging verticals.

The only thing I will say is that I have lost a couple over the years so it’s sometimes worth carrying two.

Cost: from £3 plus postage  
[www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk)



### The Photography Book Vol 1

Scott Kelby

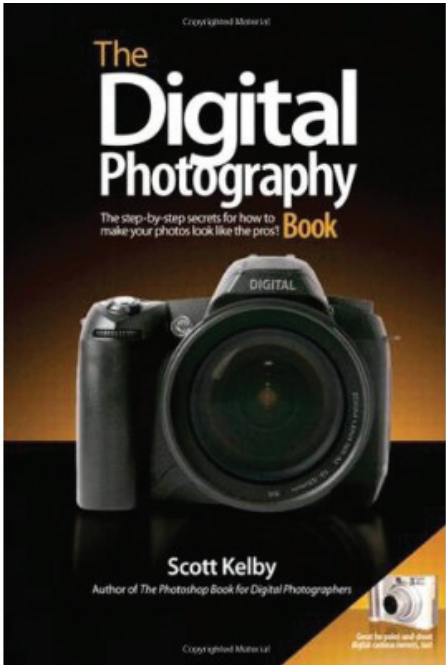
This book has been around for a few years now, in fact Volume 4 is due out soon. However it is probably one of the best books for a novice photographer or indeed someone who just wishes to expand their repertoire.

The book is broken down into sections by topic and Scott in his usual style offers suggestions for ways to ‘get the shot.’ Don’t expect lots of photographic theory or techno mumbo-jumbo. The book is written more in the style of if I wanted to shoot this, how would you do it?

Each volume is a standalone book in its own right so you don’t have to buy them in order.

I still look at mine from time to time and is my usual recommendation for anyone wanting to get a book on photography.

Cost: £8.81 plus P&P  
Level: Novice - Intermediate  
[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)



# TOP SHOPS

### Jaguar Social Club

Room hire at our regular meeting place  
[www.jaguarclub.co.uk](http://www.jaguarclub.co.uk)

### Lakeland Photographic Holidays

[www.lakelandphotohols.com](http://www.lakelandphotohols.com)  
If you want a fantastic week of photography and sumptuous homecooked food then look no further.

### Premier Ink

[www.premier-ink.co.uk](http://www.premier-ink.co.uk)  
Not just a supplier of ink cartridges and paper. They have a whole range of brands including Think Tank & Kata bags, Westcott & Lastolite lighting kit and a whole range of accessories. They’re very competitive for memory cards and batteries too. Well worth a look.

### Permajet Ink and Papers

[www.permajet.com](http://www.permajet.com)  
Permajet have a great name and reputation in both photographic paper and also their ECO-FLO ink-sets.

Wildlife photography trips & workshops: UK, Europe & beyond

Natures Images

[www.natures-images.co.uk](http://www.natures-images.co.uk)



# LAST GLANCE



I guess I'm an Italophile. There's something about the landscapes, the architecture the colour of the buildings and of course the lighting you seem to get around the Mediterranean. Not to mention the food and wine! Krys and I had been to Italy on many occasions for holidays and I had been for work, but we never seem to tire of it. This trip was just a short, 3 day, visit to Florence for the first time. I did have in mind some pictures I wanted – all about the iconic Ponte Vecchio. I took loads but could never get into the right position to get what I really wanted. A boat at night is probably what is needed, but there's no such thing on the Arno.

The weather was really kind to us for late October, and this shot of the Ponte alla Carraria really just appeared in front of me. I had dismissed the view earlier when the sun was higher as being rather flat and boring, but as the sun dropped, the colour temperature went down too, giving lovely warm tones accentuating the colour of the buildings and throwing the bridge into almost silhouette. It's true about the "golden hour".

The shot is hand held, at ISO 400, 1/320s at f6.3, with my wide angle lens set at 24mm to get lots of sky in., although I cropped it down to a slightly more panoramic shape later. I always shoot using Raw and rarely use filters on the camera– I never seem to have the time to sort them out. But Raw has the amazing ability to pull detail out of the shadows (of course it might be something to do with what Nikon call Active D light which is meant to help in high contrast situations, but I've never really tested it). The shot needed only minor tweaking in Photoshop, to pull up the detail a bit in the dark side of the bridge, a little burning in of the top of the sky and immediate foreground, and of course a smidge of vignetting to hold the corners in. I did soften it a bit using Camera Raw negative clarity – it's a bit like the old diffuser filter - I like the way it gives a slightly romantic feel to a picture.

For me it's still not THE shot though. I'm not happy with the tree on the left – it does stop the eye wandering off the bridge but it's a bit heavy and even lightened up it's not very interesting. But I am pleased it's not the usual picture of Florence – most people including me are usually looking the other way - there's a moral there somewhere.

Tony Cartwright

**Jaguar Photographic Society**

Web: [www.jaguarps.co.uk](http://www.jaguarps.co.uk) Email: [jaguarphotosociety@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jaguarphotosociety@yahoo.co.uk)