



# Autumn Newsletter

## October 2012

### Welcome

We are delighted to welcome our new members to the club. We hope that David Harris, Phillip Gates, Robert Goodlad, Bob Sperry, Miranda Wood, Marion Eastland, Janice Vowden and Roger Silvester will enjoy their membership. I would ask the existing members to look out for our new colleagues and help them to integrate into the club.

### Coming Photo Opportunities (with thanks to John Baker & Adrian Harris)

Despite the autumnal weather there are still some very interesting opportunities in the coming weeks.

### South West – ‘Long Distance Trials’ - 2012



Typically Cars and Motorcycles compete over very rough Road and Off Road sections throughout the day and often also at night. The cars especially - Vintage and Modern, are quite something to watch trying to climb virtually impossible hill sections. (Free to Spectate)

Dates	Event Title	Club
14th October	Exmoor Clouds	<a href="#">Minehead</a>
20th October	Ebworth	<a href="#">Stroud</a>
21st October	Tarka	<a href="#">North Devon</a>

28th October	Tamar	<a href="#">L&amp;NCCMC</a>
10th November	Lakeland	<a href="#">VSCC</a>
4th November	Bodmin	<a href="#">Camel Vale</a>
18th November	Hardy	<a href="#">Woolbridge</a>
25th November	Allen	<a href="#">Bristol</a>
25th November	Neil Westcott	<a href="#">Exmoor MC</a>
2nd December	Camel Classic	<a href="#">Camel Vale</a>
4th January 2013	Exeter	<a href="#">MCC</a>
20th January	Clee Hills	<a href="#">MAC</a>
27th January	Exmoor	<a href="#">North Devon</a>
3rd February	Cotswold Clouds	<a href="#">Stroud</a>

If **Steam Locomotives** are your bag then you should know that the loco "Tangmere" is passing through Exeter on Sunday October 28<sup>th</sup> on the 'Atlantic Coast Express Route' (Waterloo-Salisbury-Exeter-Newberry-Paddington).

**The Somerset Carnivals** are worth a look too. Starting on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and ending on November 17<sup>th</sup> they take place in Bridgwater (Nov 3), Weston-Super-Mare (Nov 9), North Petherton (Nov 10), Burnham on Sea (Nov 12), Shepton Mallet (Nov 14), Wells (Nov 15) and Glastonbury (Nov 17). Ann Cook, our lovely speaker last week, spoke about photographing carnivals explaining that they were quite a challenge. Full details are on their website <http://www.somersetcarnivals.co.uk/> .

### **The Exeter Trial**

Going back to motoring, the Exeter Trial takes place in the new year. It is one of the oldest motoring events having started in 1910 and has taken place every year since except for the war years. It starts on the evening of January 4<sup>th</sup> and ends on Saturday January 5<sup>th</sup>. Fingle Bridge and Simms Hill are suggested as good spectator points and full details of how to get there and where to park can be found at [http://www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk/events/exeter\\_spectate.htm](http://www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk/events/exeter_spectate.htm) .

### **A Plea from our President.**

**Please, please, please will every member of the club let Di have TWO images to go to our twin club in Tasmania. Di is looking for at least two from everyone. Everyone is included. Let her have them, either on a disk, emailed to me with a long side of 1400 pixels, or bring a stick to the club the second week in November. We are aiming to send a disk to each other at the end of November.**

### **Lens Hire**

Have you ever wished you had another lens in your bag for that special occasion? A Devon based company called Lens Fetish may be able to help you.

LensFetish ([www.lensfettish.com](http://www.lensfettish.com)) have contacted us with an offer:-

They are a lens rental company based in Devon, and have offered club members a 10% discount on their rental rates. This can be used in addition to the standard 15% discount for hires booked more than 21 days in advance, giving a 25% discount in total.

Take a look at the LensFetish website. It may help you.

## Histograms

Are you one of those photographers who looks at the histogram on the back of your camera or in the corner of your computer screen in your post processing programme and wonders what it really means. It is one of those mysteries of digital photography.

I recently came across one of the most straightforward explanations on a website called 'Digital Photography School' to whom full acknowledgement is given. Here it is :-

A Guest Post by [Darlene Hildebrandt](#).

The histogram is a useful but often misunderstood tool your camera provides to help you get the correct exposure on your images. In this article I'm going we're going to look at how to read it, and use it to your advantage to help you do just that. Getting the best exposure (there is no such thing as the "correct" exposure, as it's all subjective, we'll talk about this more later) in camera should be your goal every time you click the shutter. Using these tips should help you increase your success rate.

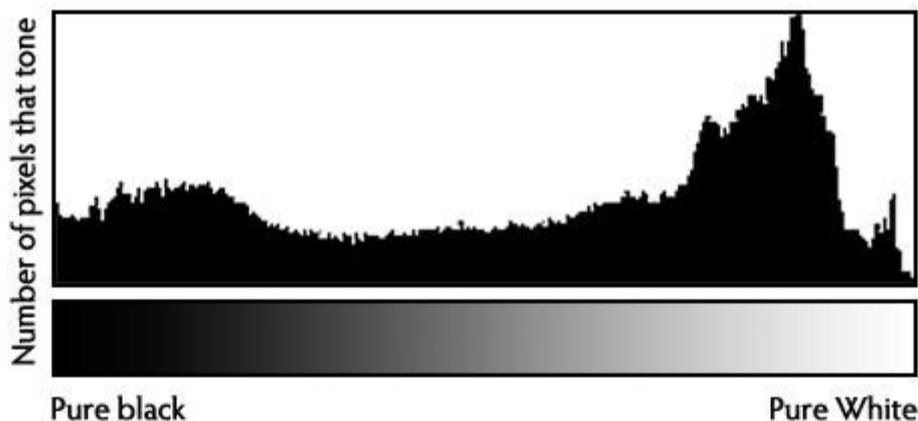
### What is a histogram anyway?

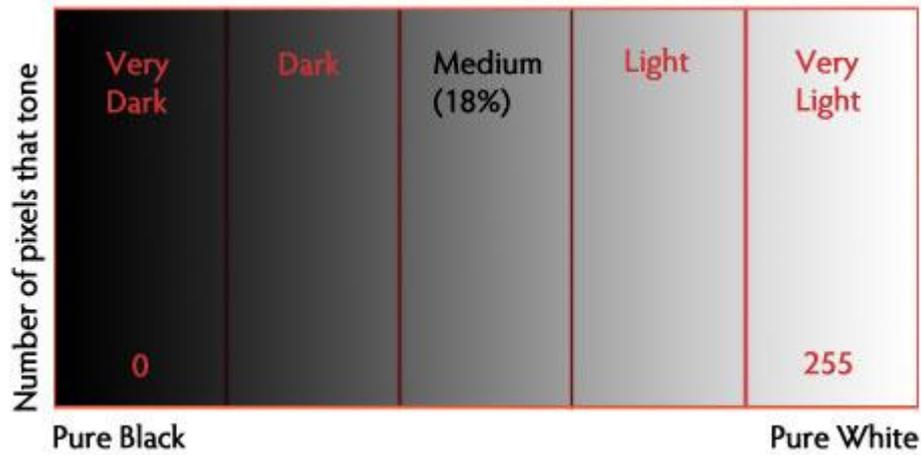
Dictionary definition: *A bar graph of a frequency distribution in which the widths of the bars are proportional to the classes into which the variable has been divided and the heights of the bars are proportional to the class frequencies.*

HUH?! Anyone else confused? But what does it do? How do you read it? Let's have a look!

### How to read the histogram

A histogram is a graphical representation of the pixels exposed in your image. The left side of the graph represents the blacks or shadows, the right side represents the highlights or bright areas, and the middle section is mid-tones (middle or 18% grey). How high the peaks reach represent the number of pixels in that particular tone. Each tone from 0-255 (0 being black and 255 being white) is one pixel wide on the graph, so imagine the histogram as a bar graph all squished together with no spaces between each bar. Have a look at the diagrams below:

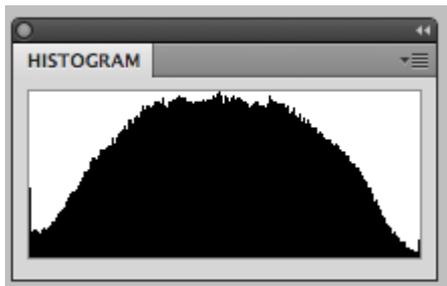




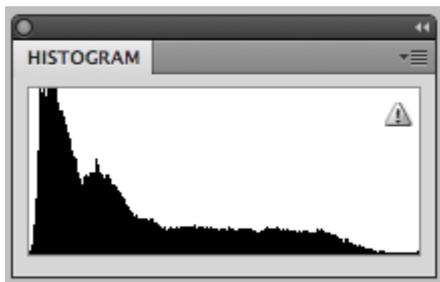
## What can we learn from this histogram?

There are many things we can learn about an image just by looking at the histogram.

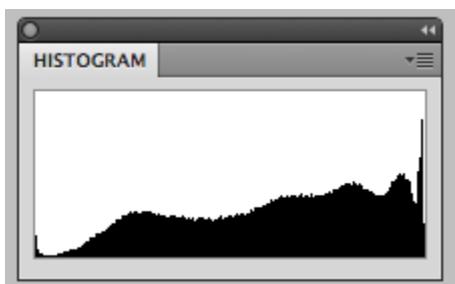
We can tell an image is well exposed if it reaches fully from edge to edge without a space on one side of the graph, and isn't heavily going up one side or the other. In an ideal world, it should just touch the left and right edges, and not spill up the sides, with a nice arch up in the centre. However that doesn't always apply in every situation, for every scene. Here are a few examples:



This is how an ideal histogram might look, evenly distributed, edge to edge, not up the sides



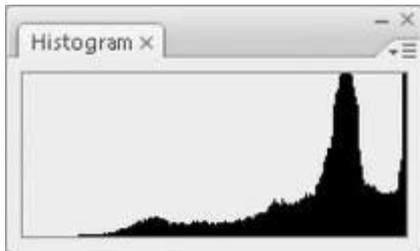
This is a histogram for a dark subject, it is not wrong it is just more shifted to the right to represent the tones of the subject. This might be a black cat on the dark pavement.



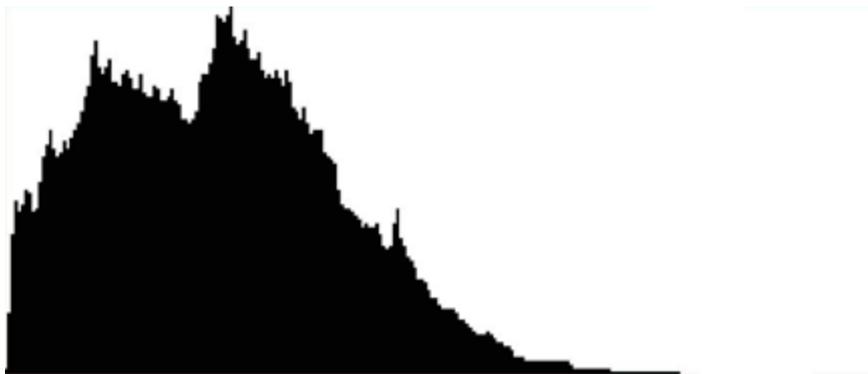
This is a histogram for a light subject (white cat) with mostly light tones in the scene and few dark areas. See how it is shifted to the right now versus the dark subject. This is correct. If you change your exposure on this to make it in the middle you will have grey cat and not a white one.

## When the histogram tells you to adjust your exposure

Gaps on either end indicate you are missing information and your exposure can be shifted safely without losing detail. When your graph is shifted too far in one direction or the other so that it does not even touch the other edge – that means you can safely shift your exposure to cover more of the range of tones. Let's look!



This graph shows an overexposed image, notice the gap on the left side indicating a lack of any blacks represented. It also means you will lose lots of detail in the white areas that may not be recoverable. In this case shift to give your image less exposure and shoot the scene again.

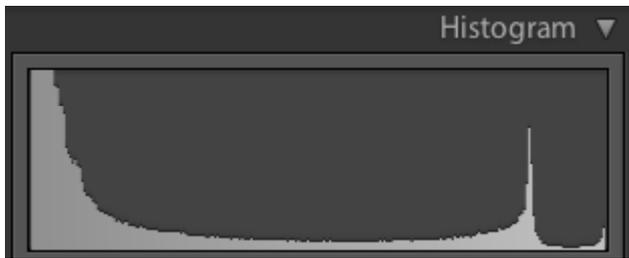


This one shows the opposite. Now we see a gap on the right side of the graph indicating there are no whites represented so the image will be dark, too dark. You can safely give the image more exposure until you see the graph just touch the right edge of the graph.

## What do the spikes up the sides mean?

Spikes up the left or right edge indicate “clipping” of that tone, and loss of detail in that area. Clipped areas are often unrecoverable, especially in the highlight area but it is generally advised to expose so you your graph just touches the right edge and keep your highlight details. It is usually easier to recover some shadow detail and retain a decent image, than try and create highlight detail that isn't there on the file.

In some scenes, however, it may not be possible to keep the graph within an acceptable range. For example, if you are photographing a scene with extreme contrasts such as: a sunset; bright sunlight and deep shadows; or an inside a building where you show outside the windows as well. In all of those cases you will not be able to keep from clipping either your blacks, or whites, or even both.



### High contrast graph

This graph shows an image with extreme contrast, lots of blacks, a spike of white and not much in the middle.

Is it wrong? Can you correct for it?

No it's not wrong. You can't really "correct" for it but you do have a decision to make when you see something like this. Do you shift the graph left and maintain highlight detail, or shift it right and keep shadow detail?

This is no right or wrong here, it's how you interpret the scene before you. If in doubt, shoot both and decide later. The graph above comes from the image below, so as you can see it is not the incorrect exposure at all.

There are no mid-tones in this scene.



Here's another example of a scene that will potentially go off the graph on both ends.



Notice the skylight at the top of the roof is blown out, and the deep shadows have little detail.



Notice in this image the details have been retained in both areas.

Using advanced techniques like image merge/blend, HDR and processing in Lightroom 4 (or PS CS6) you can compress the contrast range of the scene to fit within the histogram and therefore have details in all areas.

In the image above, I've used 4 bracketed images (taken 2 stops apart), and the HDR tone mapping process to bring the dynamic range of the scene down within printable range.

## One more handy thing on your camera – the “blinkies”

To help you establish how far to go in the image brightening direction, most SLR cameras have a setting called “highlight warning”. It will make any overexposed highlights “flash” or blink when you preview your images on your camera screen. Many people affectionately call this, “the blinkies”.



Notice the flashing areas, that means the highlights are being clipped wherever it is flashing.

To do this on a Nikon, preview an image and press the Up or Down buttons (near the OK button) until you see the highlights flashing or outlined. This is the “highlight mode”. If you choose this setting, the camera will remember your setting for the next image you preview. You may need to activate this feature “highlight warnings” in your settings menu first.

To do this with a Canon press “Display” or “Info” button (depends on your model), until they show up on the screen when previewing images. You also may need to turn on this feature in the menu settings. Check your camera’s manual if you aren’t sure where to find it.

### Summary

By using the tools your camera provides for you, it is easier to see how to adjust your image exposure. There is a lot more to know about the histogram, and you can use it when you process your images in Photoshop or Lightroom as well. Keep in mind that if you shoot JPG format, nailing the exposure in camera is even more critical. If you shoot RAW format you have some leeway to make adjustments later, but it’s still a better idea to get it right in the first place. If you are still on the fence about shooting RAW perhaps this article (tongue in cheek name) will help you decide:”[Why shooting raw sucks, shoot jpg!](#)”

*Darlene Hildebrandt is a professional photographer and educator who teaches aspiring amateurs, hobbyists and pros how to improve their photography skills through [online](#)*

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Read more: <http://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-read-and-use-histograms#ixzz28Pe0L22c>