

THE NEW STANDARD

It would be easy to be distracted by the success of the current AF bodies, F5, F100 and F90X (all experiencing strong demand at the time of writing) and overlook the fact Nikon are on a huge high lens-wise. And as Nikkor lenses are selling strongly, so the independent lenses have rather lost any appeal they ever had. Clearly our Nikon-only status means we do not offer such compromises, but our non-Nikon trade-ins show that many are giving up their lenses in favour of our genuine Nikon offerings.

This is good from the point of view of the increased picture quality and enjoyment provided but also it helps fund Nikon's endeavours. The better support we give them, by buying their excellent products, the more money they can put into developing further exciting cameras and lenses. We find fewer Nikon owners are accepting independent flashes, lenses or filters.

The first of the more affordable lenses to show stunning optical



quality was the AF 28-70/3.5-4.5. In time the same technology surfaced in lenses such as the AF 35-105/3.5-4.5D (IF). These both possess the capability to produce high-contrast images and have a similar, almost uncanny, sharpness. The second lens introduced the IF (Internal Focus) designation to the zoom range. As a rule internal focus was a feature of the long prime lenses. Often accompanied by Nikon's ED (Extra-low Dispersion glass).

Normal lenses achieve focus by moving the whole optical array. To focus on closer subjects the lens has to be moved further from the film. As a rule zoom lenses

do not follow this convention and they instead move just the frontal groups of glass to focus. In order to achieve significant displacement this motion is produced by a slow thread-like apparatus known as a helicoid (from the word helix, a spiral). An unfortunate side effect is the rotation this produces; users of polarising filters find this annoying.

Internal focus lenses, as the name implies, move no external parts to focus. We have to pay attention here and not be fooled by the fact that some have

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front ends which move when the lens zooms. Although the technology originated to preserve the balance of long lenses whilst focusing, it has translated well to zooms. The implementation in the AF 24-120/3.5-5.6D (IF) is not the same as the AF 35-105. It shares the short throw focus action but has a rotating ring to control the zoom. This same format appears again in the AF 28-200/3.5-5.6D and AF 28-105/3.5-4.5D.

It is interesting to note the technology that brought us the 28-70/3.5-4.5 was wheeled out in order to make the lens compact (for the benefit of built-in flash) but has bestowed us with great quality and become the standard for the mid-range zooms. The 35-105 presented the first serious challenge to the 28-70 as the standard lens. Since many are taking a zoom lens as a standard these days it is an interesting decision of which range to cover.

The trend has been towards increased range of focal length in one package. Leaving aside the

mega-zoom 28-200, we have seen the 35-70 standard grow to 35-80 and 28-70. The 35-105 was already a well established range and as such counts as more of an alternative standard zoom. Nikon played their trump card by giving us the 24-120 zoom. This lens became the mid-range lens of choice for many. Rave reviews showed that this lens was not an optical compromise.

Nikon had to decide what to do next. Clearly they thought the answer was to shave off a bit of size, range and price. But quite how much of each was revealed when they announced the AF 28-105/3.5-4.5D IF. Having gained a bit of a reputation for doing the improbable Nikon had to add some special ingredient. They included a macro facility worthy of the name.

Having pioneered the macro zoom with the 70-180 Zoom Micro-Nikkor, Nikon have shown us what can be achieved. That said I was most reluctant to share the advance news that the 28-105 would yield almost half life-size

reproduction at closest focus distance. Whilst this is at the 105 end of the zoom the lens can enter macro mode anywhere from 50-105mm; a quick flick of the switch opens up the superior close focus range, whilst leaving distance focusing available.

Although the 28-105 is relatively new it is proving extremely popular. At the outset it was eclipsed by the launch of the F100 but many spotted the 28-105 attached for many of the press shots and the lens is now getting the attention it deserves. It is very sharp, contrasty and distortion is well controlled. The lens takes 62mm filters so those moving from 28-85 or 35-135 are saved additional expense.

The lens is fairly compact at 89mm long. It weighs just 540 grams and feels very well built. Priced at £299.00 it fills the price gap between the 28-70 and 24-120. I think the hardest decision is whether to take the 28-105 or the 24-120. Personal preference and the application to which the lens is put will guide the way.

NIKON CORNUCOPIA

A couple of recent activities at the shop opened my eyes to a very interesting fact. One activity is a project being undertaken to catalogue every single item in the shop to store on our computer system and the second activity is a stock-take. The latter in fact is a very similar activity to the first. Our technical wizard Tony Munday ably aided by his lieutenant and wife Jacki are overseeing the computer project. When

the system is up and running we shall be able to undertake a stock-take not only on Easter Saturday as has been customary but at any second of any minute of any hour of any day.

I can't say I shall miss the labour of a stock-take and very much look forward to the computer system logging in our postal delivery girl Sarah as she walks through the door with our mail and recording her departure with

equal punctiliousness. Perhaps even Mr Gray's morning fruit portion will be logged when it arrives and deleted upon his having consumed it!

Fascinating though this is to see the computer making clerical tasks much simpler, that wasn't what I was referring to when I mentioned that an interesting fact had come to light. That fact was the sheer number and variety of items in the shop.

Those of you who remember Dr. Who and his novel transport called the *Tardis* will recall that it contained a very great deal within a very modest exterior. It seems as if that fictional conveyance has been created for real. We make however no claims that the shop is mobile although we did move about 10 years ago!

Anyone making the journey to London to visit the shop will naturally have in mind seeing Nikon cameras and lenses and they will be entirely correct in that assumption. Three current camera bodies constitute the professional line-up, that is the F5, F3 and F100 or four if like Nikon's sales manager for our area Mark Fury you class the F90X as in that category. Who could disagree, with its formidable reputation and track record? Replaced by the F100, no, definitely not! The other models in the body range i.e. FM2n, F60, F70, FE10 complement the professional models giving an unbeatably comprehensible choice to browser and buyer alike. You won't see every lens in the Nikon/Nikkor range but you'll see many, many of them. Don't rule out getting the opportunity to peer through or purchase the 2000mm f/11 Reflex-Nikkor or 1200-1700mm f/5.6-8 ED Super Zoom telephoto. Both have on occasion been here (even though it took a struggling crew to carry them in!).

They cost about £15,000 and £65,000 respectively... I count 91 lenses in the range of lenses in current manufacture. Heaven knows how many earlier models there were, but lots is sure to be a true description.

Now that's only the bodies and lenses and thus only the half of it! You will see more current

and classic Nikon posters framed and displayed than I can count without missing the publishing date of this *Gazette*. Guessing, I'd say a couple of hundred.



Thirty alone form a record of the Nikon cameras from 1949 up to 1982 and are on view in the historic Nikon section of the shop.

Books are a popular item with Nikon enthusiasts, and almost every title we can lay our hands on is in the book room. Many are camera manuals to deepen your understanding of a particular Nikon model. Some detail and review lenses and accessories, while further ones cover technique, like for instance Heather Angel's *How to Photograph Flowers*, the perfect reference book for those taking part in our jolly jaunts round the gardens of Saint Hill Manor in Sussex when she holds her popular annual workshop with us there this July 17th and 18th.

Did you ever wonder exactly what colour a Nikon filter was? Every one in the range can be viewed "in the flesh" within our walls. Ever ponder why the viewfinder display in your camera doesn't seem as clear as ideal? Nikon's

clever eyesight correction measuring device will unravel that mystery. Ever wonder why locals peer momentarily through our front door in a particular direction then go on their way again? I'm not giving you the answer to that riddle, as Gray Levett wants to write about it!

So if you are interested in mirror or medical lenses or close-up equipment, we have helpful tools to keep in your camera bag, good camera bags, the History of Nikon, the reason some Nikon FM2 models have a dog's portrait engraved on them or why some F3 models mirrors never ever move during shooting, then you are warmly invited to visit us and find out. If that is not possible you can subscribe to our *Grays of Westminster Gazette* and be sure of being kept up-to-date about the world of Nikon. However you make contact you can be sure we will do our best to share our enthusiasm for what the *Guinness Book of Records* calls the largest camera system in the world, Nikon.

by Nick Wynne

WANTED FOR CASH

We urgently require F5, F100, F90X, F90, F70, F601, F3HP, FM2n, FE2 as well as AF-D and AIS Nikkor lenses. Most of the range of Nikon accessories is constantly needed also. Please contact Nick Wynne on telephone no. 0171-828 4925.

A very warm welcome to our May issue.

Our guest writer this month is Thomas Hooley, who is a teacher of Classics at St. Edmund's School, Canterbury, a private co-educational boarding school. As in all public schools his job does not end there, but embraces many extra-curricular activities, including adventure holidays, sport and pastoral care. Evenings and weekends are often taken up with supervising the thirty Canterbury Cathedral choristers who live in the precincts and attend the school by day. It was the unique opportunity gained by being on the inside of all this activity which first got Tom interested in photography.

In the long school holidays he shares his time between his dogs, walking trips, studying modern languages, and travelling – especially in Eastern Europe and Russia – photographing places and people he meets.

HEATHER ANGEL WORKSHOP



Places are filling up quickly for this year's Heather Angel Workshop. Full details appeared in the April issue of the *Gazette* but for new readers, this year we return to Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead, West Sussex former home of best selling author L. Ron Hubbard.

The workshop starts at 9.00am and runs until 5.00pm. Tickets, which include refreshments and lunch, cost £125.00 for the day. There are two dates to choose from, either Saturday 17th or Sunday 18th July 1999.

The schedule for the Workshop is as follows:

09:00 Registration with coffee and tea served on the Manor terrace;

10:00 Inside the Manor, Heather Angel presents **Extending Natural Vision** a stunning illustrated lecture with a broad range of subjects – landscapes, plants, animals and close-ups – giving many tips and explaining why particular equipment was chosen for specific shots;

11:30 A chance to handle a wide range of Nikon equipment and to discuss any equipment related subjects with Mark Fury of Nikon UK, and the staff of Grays of Westminster: Tony Munday, Nick Wynne and Gray Levett. Neal Suckling of Hasselblad (UK) Ltd will also join us with Gitzo tripods, Tim Goldsmith of the Impress Group with Benbo tripods, Geoff Alum from Whitby & Co. with the range of Leatherman multi-tools and Damian Pegutter from Holmes Marketing with Domke bags;

12:30 Lunch in the Pavilion;

13:45 Outdoor photography: Heather will demonstrate lighting techniques and be on hand to handle queries.

15:30 Coffee and tea served on the terrace of the Manor;

16:00 Due to popular demand Tony Munday will give a flash tutorial in the Manor;

17:00 Close. As a special thank you for attending our workshop our hosts at Saint Hill Manor and ourselves would like to invite you to join us for a evening meal.

Competition time! This year we are holding a competition for the best photograph taken during the workshop. Thanks to the generosity of our suppliers we have assembled a splendid prize for the winner. The award presentation will be held later this year. The prize consists of the 105mm f/2.8D AF Micro-Nikkor lens, a Gitzo Monotrek monopod, a Benbo 1 tripod, a Leatherman PST (personal survival multi-tool) and a Domke bag.

Why not join us this year and book today!

In closing I would like to mention our next **An Evening with...** Last November we co-hosted with Saint Hill Manor a very successful evening with the distinguished photographer Sir Simon Marsden in the Great Hall of the Castle there. Following that we were inundated with demands to put on another such event.

We are planning **An Evening with...Graham Hancock** later this year. Graham is a publishing phenomenon. He has single-handedly created the genre of ancient history mystery investigation and is the unparalleled leader in this field. His books have sold in excess of 4 million copies internationally. You may have seen his highly acclaimed and hugely successful Channel Four television series, **Quest for the Lost Civilisation**. If this event appeals to you please register your interest with Gray Levett.

NIKON PRICE LIST

May 1999

Bodies

F5 body	£1,550.00
F100 + MB-15 grip	£1,100.00
F100 body	£1,000.00
F90X Pro (Inc MB-10 grip)	£725.00
F90X body	£640.00
F70 body	£325.00
F70 + 35-80 AF-D	£370.00
F70 QD body	£375.00
F60 + 35-80 AF-D	£299.00
F60 body	£249.00
F3 body	£1,125.00
F3 HP body	£1,225.00
FM2 body, chrome	£400.00
FM2 body, black	£420.00
FM2/T body few left	£949.00
FE10 & 35-70mm Kit	£229.00

Compacts

Zoom 400	£ 99.00
Zoom 600	£129.00
Zoom 800	£199.00

Speedlights

SB-28	£285.00
SB-28 plus SD-8A Kit	£340.00
SB-27	£190.00
SB-22S	£125.00

Leatherman

Micra with case	£30.00
PST with case	£49.00
PST II with case	£59.00
Wave with case	£89.00

Auto Focus Lenses

16mm f2.8 AF-D fisheye	£660.00
18mm f2.8 AF-D	£1,100.00
20mm f2.8 AF-D	£480.00
24mm f2.8 AF-D	£350.00
28mm f2.8 AF-D	£200.00
28mm f1.4 AF-D	£1,400.00
35mm f2 AF-D	£245.00
50mm f1.8 AF	£85.00
50mm f1.4 AF-D	£240.00
85mm f1.4 AF-D IF	£800.00
85mm f1.8 AF-D	£280.00
105mm f2 AF-D DC	£800.00
135mm f2 AF-D DC	£1,050.00
180mm f2.8 AF-D IF-ED	£620.00



300mm f4 AF ED	£950.00
AF-S 300mm f2.8D	£3,500.00
AF-S 400mm f2.8D	£6,400.00
AF-S 500mm f4D	£4,995.00
AF-S 600mm f4D	£6,900.00
60mm f2.8 AF-D Micro	£330.00
105mm f2.8 AF-D Micro	£660.00
200mm f4 AF-D Micro	£1,225.00

Auto Focus Zooms

20-35mm f2.8 AF-D IF	£1,300.00
24-50mm f3.3-4.5 AF-D	£435.00
24-120mm f3.5-5.6 AF-D IF	£385.00
28-70mm f3.5-4.5 AF-D	£240.00
AF-S 28-70mm f2.8D	£1,400.00
28-85mm f3.5-4.5 AF	£450.00
28-105 f3.5-4.5D IF	£299.00
28-200mm f3.5-5.6 AF-D IF	£400.00
35-70mm f2.8 AF-D	£500.00
35-105mm f3.5-4.5 AF-D IF	£230.00
35-135mm f3.5-4.5 AF	£475.00
70-180 f4-5.6D AF Micro	£710.00
70-210mm f4-5.6 AF-D	£340.00
70-300mm f4.-5.6D AF	£240.00
80-200mm f2.8 AF-DN	£760.00
AF-S 80-200mm f2.8D	£1,400.00

All prices include VAT @ 17.5%

SCHOOL REPORTAGE

by Thomas Hooley

Teaching in a boarding school is one of those jobs, a bit like politics, where the dividing line between work and leisure time is indiscernible. There is always something going on – maybe a lot of it behind the backs of the staff? All the activities, as well as the idle moments in between, provide the observant insider with opportunities to create an informal and immediate reportage of life in a school.

35mm equipment is ideal for capturing both busy and quiet moments, unlike the set-piece brochure and marketing shots, which call for a posed, more considered large format approach.

My personal reference is to run a conventional manual-focus Nikon system in parallel with an autofocus set-up, finding that the wider lenses (20mm f/2.8, 24mm f/2.8 & 35mm f/1.4) suit a manual focus technique, encouraging one to get in close and merge quietly with the group for instance on a museum visit or in class. Invisibility is not the idea, but by being in the thick of it one somehow becomes accepted. Once pupils know that you always carry a camera they soon tire of the silly facial expressions that can so easily ruin a photograph.

Here the F3HP camera is a joy to handle with its simple, traditional controls and its 100% viewfinder coverage. It feels just right with or

without the MD-4 motordrive, and its strongly centre-weighted meter makes for speedy assessment of the important parts of the scene.



The wide-angle lenses mentioned are all ultra-sharp even at near distances, benefiting from Nikon's close range correction system (CRC).

In the case of the 20mm and 24mm lenses they are also available to identical optical specification in autofocus versions. Before we leave the subject of manual focus lenses mention must be made of two personal favourites, both razor sharp but rather unfashionable, the 28mm f/2.8 with CRC, focusing as close as 0.2m, and the hallowed 105mm f/2.5, surely one of Nikon's best known and longest running lenses. Both of these make for a lightweight and versatile travelling kit, actually my favourite for foreign travel where low light capability is not

important.

For shooting in any situation, especially when things are happening fast and there is no

time for contemplation of exposure settings, as with animals, small children and competitive sport, the F90X is a superlative performer. It handles well and the controls are simple and logical for such a high-tech camera. The trickier the ambient lighting conditions, the better the matrix metering seems to cope. The same goes for flash; I have had no difficulty with this camera in situations where traditional systems falter. The occasion that springs to mind was a

dark-panelled dining hall full of bright table lamps, white-shirted pupils and highly reflective silver cutlery. Monitor pre-flash from a Nikon Speedlight coupled with a D-series AF lens virtually guaranteed acceptable results here. A very useful lens with the F90X is the AF Zoom-Nikkor 35-70mm f/2.8D, excellent for the kind of general work just mentioned. Portraits and close-range sport and easy work with the AF 85mm f/1.8D, a lens which gives natural perspective and nicely defocused backgrounds. For more serious large-scale sport, such as a soccer match, the AF180mm f/2.8D IF-ED is my lens of choice. Incidentally this lens, though a bit long for my taste for human portrait, is ideal for head and shoulder dog shots. The snippy canine snouts seem to benefit from the foreshortening

effect of longer telephoto lenses such as the 180mm.

Recently I succumbed to the irresistible F5 professional camera, reluctantly trading in my F90 (at Grays of course – and for a good price). Whilst feeling heavier and sturdier the F5 is very well balanced with both long and short lenses. Within days I became an unquestioning fan of this latest technological marvel from Nikon. Photographing a fast-moving football match in poor light, my eyes told me that not even a higher percentage of shots would be acceptable. I had underestimated the powers of the F5's dynamic auto-focus mode; every shot on two rolls of Fuji 800 was sharp enough even though the 180mm had been

wide open, allowing minimum depth of field. More recently when shooting a hurried sequence of my deer hound bitch being chased in the park by a playful Alsatian the F5 proved that the photographer need only concentrate on



composition; the camera and lens held focus till dogs were ten feet away and closing!

Nikon's technical brilliance is easily taken for granted by us

Grays customers. Like most equipment, however, even Nikon gear needs occasional attention. In addition there are always technical queries in new areas of photography to be explored; multi-flash, close-up etc. This is where the combination of Nikon and Grays of Westminster is so effective. The Grays team provide as part of their service back-up an unfailingly informative and enlightened kind of assistance to their customers. It is this dependability which keeps the Nikon experience so exciting, long after the manufacturer's guarantees have expired.

NIKON F2 WANTED FOR CASH!

We are urgently seeking Nikon F2 cameras and equipment in mint or very near condition. In particular: Nikon F2, F2S Photomic, F2SB Photomic, F2A Photomic & F2AS Photomic plus Nikon F2 Data, Nikon F2 High-Speed and F2 Titan (titanium) cameras. We are also seeking MD-2/MB-1 and MD-3/MB-2 motor drives, AH-1 handstraps, MF-2 750 Exposure Backs, SB-7E Speedlight, DA-1 Action finder, DW-1 waist-level finder, DE-1 eye-level prism finder, DP-1, DP-2, DP-3, DP-11 and DP-12 Photomic finders. "Dummy" models and military examples sought too.

Contact Gray Levett on telephone no. 0171-828 4925

HOW TO ORDER

Telephone us on **0171-828 4925** for immediate service. You may use any of the credit, debit or charge cards shown on this page. Please have your card number and expiry date to hand.

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Alternatively, **email** your order to **info@graysofwestminster.co.uk**

Methods of payment

Orders may be paid by card, postal order or cheque. Please make cheques payable to **Grays of Westminster.**



The Nikon Legend - Part LVII

by Gray Levett

One of my favourite cameras is the Nikon L35 AWAf, which means all-weather autofocus. It was first brought to my attention several years ago by one of our customers, Stu Kendall who spoke of it in glowing terms. A few months later I acquired one and having used it ever since I heartily agree with Stu's recommendation. It was introduced in 1986 and it did not exactly set the world alight. After a relatively short period it was discontinued and almost immediately its reputation began to grow and grow.

It is an extremely robust camera (weighing 485g) and is fitted with a 35mm f/2.8 Nikkor lens comprising four elements

in three groups. The great thing about the AWAf is that it is completely waterproof. Nikon literature of the time says you take it along when skiing, fishing, surfing, snow sledding, swimming, windsurfing and even snorkelling! I

have never used it for any of these activities but I have loaned to friends for their holidays without a single worrying moment that they would damage it. It has always returned home after heavy use on the beach and on and in the sea without mishap. The great thing about the AWAf is that no matter how dirty it gets you can wash it off and looks as good as new.

It is very easy to use. Load the film into the camera, (It accepts DX-coded film from ISO 50 to ISO 1600) close the "O" ring sealed back, press the shutter once and the film is automatically threaded. After each shot, the film is automatically advanced to the next exposure. The shutter speed range is 1/8 to 1/430 sec, plus fill-flash function and a self-timer.

If it is too dark to take a picture a red LED (Light Emitting Diode) illuminates to let you know you need flash. By turning the lever positioned on the front of the body down and pointing to the flash symbol the shutter locks until the flash is fully charged. A ready light in the camera's viewfinder alerts you when it is ready to fire.



If underwater photography appeals you can shoot with the AWAf— down to 10 feet (3 metres). However this requires manual focusing and is the only time you must focus manually.

Nikon also produced a version with a data back known as the L35 AWAD, which permits data imprinting of Year/Month/Day, Hour/Minute or no imprint. Both the AWAf and AWAD were available in a choice of colours: black, blue, or orange. Accessories available were the AN-9 wide-strap with float pad and the CS-L35AW grey and blue leatherette carrying case.

We often receive requests for this camera and they are getting difficult to locate. Here we have an excellent camera to start collecting at a reasonable cost but equally importantly one which you can use to get pin sharp results. There is something so reassuringly delightful about the AWAf that I take it along on every trip I make.

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