



# BACK FOCUS

Journal of the Australian Photographic Collectors Society inc.  
Incorporation Registration No. A16888V ABN 55 567 464974

Issue No 100

March, 2016



*Geoff Harrison traces the amazing journey of this camera.*



**Behind these gates, John Fleming discovers a surprising photographic entrepreneur.**

*How many remember The Prudence Jane clothing collection? John Fleming's tireless research has brought to light the fascinating story behind this Australian Icon.*



*John Fleming presents a Cosmopolitan Trio.*



*From Stefan Sztromajer...  
The Moskva 2.*



# THE AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTORS SOCIETY Inc.

Incorporation Reg. No. A16888V

ABN 55 567 464 974

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## Notes from the desk of the Editor:

With this issue, our journal Back Focus has reached a milestone, our **100<sup>th</sup> issue**. And to celebrate the occasion this edition is all colour. Since the late John Keesing and I produced the first Back Focus 24-years ago, back in July, 1992, it's been a constant source of pleasure to work with the various members who have contributed so much over the years. Without this input, none of it would have been possible. Somehow I doubt that I'll make another twenty-four, that would put me well past the 'telegram from the Queen' but, while I'm here, I'll continue to do my best to give members what they want in our journal. Just keep sending me what I need to do it with! I hope you will all enjoy this special issue. Over a number of coming issues, Back Focus will undergo another minor change to assist in the layout of articles. The photo captions will change from 10-point to 8-point in size. I trust this will not cause too much eye strain. The change will be gradual and mixed as to go through the stock in hand and modify all the article layouts would be monumental, a job beyond contemplation! In closing, I would like to dedicate this anniversary issue to one of the best friends I have ever had, my late co-editor, John Keesing. I only wish he had been here to see this **'STOP PRESS' announcement!**



Scanned from Back Focus No 1 when John Keesing (right) and myself introduced Back Focus and ourselves as your new production team.

A committee decision made late November 2015 has decided that from this edition onwards, all editions of Back Focus will be in **full colour**. Another great step forward for our journal.      **Ian Carron. Ed.**

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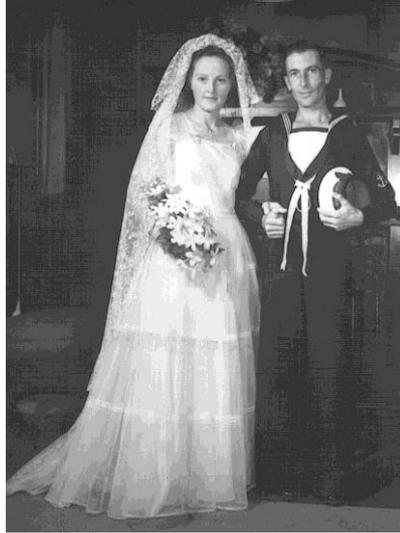
# Prudence Jane

John Fleming

Photographers by their very nature tend also to be entrepreneurs, which goes a long way to explaining why Dick Townley is best known for what he created, rather than by name alone, although he had much in common with America's Peter Gowland: photography, beautiful girls, and publicity. Born Richard Gatward Townley on 28 April 1915 in Melbourne, he became interested in photography



*Pic. 1. Dick Townley in 1941.*



*Pic. 2. Joan and Dick on their wedding day.*

whilst at school but started working life as a clerk. In June 1940 he enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy, (**Pic. 1.**) during which time he met Joan Mary Gibbons, a driver also with the Navy. They announced their engagement on 28 June 1941, the wedding later being photographed by Athol Shmith. (**Pic. 2.**)

When war ended, Dick Townley was discharged from the Navy on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1946. He and Joan now had an infant son (Richard, born 1945) and Dick attended Dookie Agricultural College

whence he obtained a position with British United Dairies as a book keeper/accountant. Photography had by then become a great passion and took up most of his spare time. The couple had their second son, Roger, on 26 February 1947 and by now Dick was working part time taking photographs, all the while becoming increasingly restless with the dairy office position. Joan had multiple skills and was particularly expert with a sewing machine, making most of the children's clothes as well as dresses, etc. for herself and friends. Coming from a Western District pastoral background (her home town was Dunkeld), she also loved driving and cars. On 6 December 1949 the Townleys had their third child, a daughter.

With three children now, the Townleys decided to seek a larger house, maybe further from the city. They resettled in a wonderful 1920s property, 'Calulu', at Montrose in the Dandenong ranges foothills, built on several acres and offering plenty of room for the family in a semi-rural atmosphere. (**Pics 3 & 4.**)

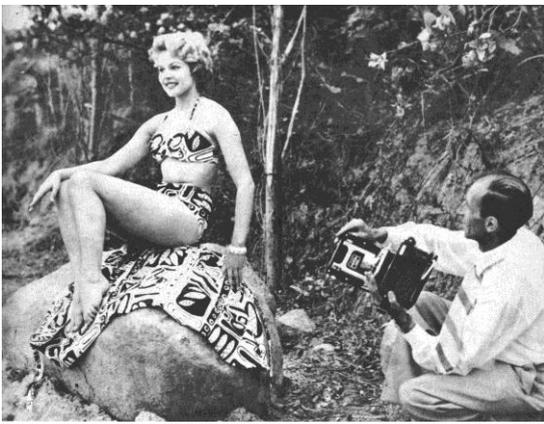


*Pic. 3. 'Calulu', Montrose, in 2014.*



*Pic. 4. Interior of 'Calulu'.*

Model Lyn Gough remembers patting pet goats on their property! It also allowed Dick to build a decent darkroom and Joan space for her increasingly active dressmaking, now a part time business. Not long after settling into 'Calulu', Dick resigned from the dairy firm and made his career as a full time professional photographer. He did the usual work: weddings, portraits, child studies (after all he had three to practise on!) and commercial. A growing speciality was beach girl or 'glamour' work, as there was a universal market for such work. Around 1952, one of his models asked Joan Townley could she make, just from a photo out of an overseas magazine, a new type of swim suit called a bikini. 'Nonie' (Joan's nickname) could make anything and quickly had the garment stitched on her treadle Singer machine. Dick's photos were a sensation, and soon other girls were enquiring, "Where do you buy these two piece garments?" Joan ran off a batch: all sold immediately! That evening the couple decided that here was a business to help support their family,



**Pic. 5.** Dick Townley with Pacemaker Speed Graphic and model Arlene Andrewartha.

**Pic. 6.** Australasian Post magazine during 1950s features 'Calulu' gates.

as they obviously had a product with a growing demand and Dick could promote the garments with his photography. **(Pic. 5.)** A small advertisement placed in *Australasian Post* magazine saw orders flood in, not only from Australia, but South Africa, New Guinea, even one from Glasgow in Scotland! **(Pic. 6.)** The new range of swim and sportswear was named after their daughter, Prudence Jane. They also advertised in *Australian Popular Photography* to cater for other photographers and models seeking glamour and posing wear. **(Pic. 7.)**

**PHOTOGRAPHIC COSTUMES**

- Bikinis
- Lingerie
- Glamour and Pin-up Suits
- Accessories

Send for list. Special garments made to order.

"PRUDENCE JANE"  
MT. DANDENONG ROAD,  
MONTROSE, VIC.

**Pic. 7.** From *Australian Popular Photography* 1957.

History was now being made as, along with Paula Stafford in Queensland, 'Prudence Jane' introduced and popularised the bikini in Australia. With business taking off, Joan had been able to buy a very stylish MG Y tourer and soon became a familiar sight zooming around the hills delivering orders, picking up supplies and shopping. **(Pics. 8 & 9.)** The Townley MG was also entered in

several car club hill climbs at Rob Roy and Templestowe, and at one of these Joan snapped a rear axle shaft!

From around 1956-57, the 'Prudence Jane' business grew rapidly, branching out into glamorous cocktail and evening dresses. Ever the entrepreneur, Dick had obtained as regular clients many of the early female stars of local television variety shows including vocal group The Four Debs, a young Helen Reddy, Dawn Dixon and Pilita, who was a recent arrival from the Philippines. She was a huge star within months and famous for her slinky outfits, many made by 'Prudence Jane'. **(Pic. 10.)** In the then-new Melbourne suburb of Forest Hill they even named a street in her honour!



**Pic. 8.** Candid of a happy Joan with MG Y.



**Pic. 9.** All aboard! A fun family car.

In the then-new Melbourne suburb of Forest Hill they even named a street in her honour!

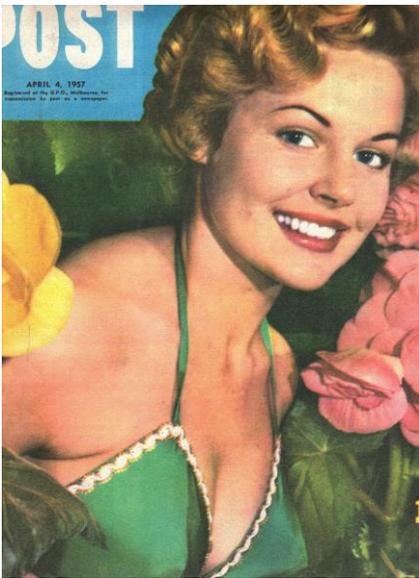


**Pic. 10.** Pilita wears slinky 'Prudence Jane' gown. LP record cover 1959.

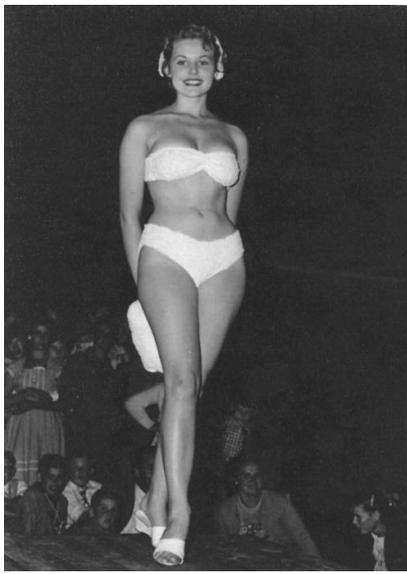
**Pic. 11.** Brochure produced by the Townley's for 'Prudence Jane'.

Dick's photography was mostly 5x4 format at this stage, the first camera being a Pacemaker Speed Graphic. He used fill-in flash to soften the shadows and, like many pros of the day, chose the excellent (but heavy! just under 5 kg) Blaupunkt Reporter. He and Joan produced 'in house' brochures for their garments **(Pic. 11.)** by 1957 gained more publicity by

organising bikini parades at outdoors events and exhibitions such as the Caravan Show, or to a crowd of over 10,000 at the annual Ballarat Begonia Festival. A conservative priest condemned a proposed



**Pic. 12.** Arlene Andrewartha and 'Prudence Jane' bikini, April 1957. Ektachrome by Len Drummond.



**Pic. 13.** Parade at Caravan Show, Arlene Andrewartha 1957. Photo by Dick Townley.

parade in Mildura, claiming it '...a degrading, indecent and un-Christian exhibition'. It wasn't until 1965 when English model Jean Shrimpton ('The Shrimp') appeared at the Melbourne Cup in mini-skirt, minus stockings and hat that similar comments arose! As a photographer Dick had launched a number of girls' careers, including Lyn Gough, and many had subsequently gone overseas to become top international models. In early 1957 a young lass named Arlene Andrewartha had done a few small modelling jobs when Dick asked her to model

swimwear at the Ballarat Begonia festival. This was an enormous success for both 'Prudence Jane' and Arlene's career. Famed *Australasian Post* photographer Len Drummond took 5x4 Ektachromes, one of which featured on the magazine cover for 4 April 1957. **(Pic. 12.)** Arlene participated in the annual Caravan Show parades too, Dick Townley always presenting the models with prints and a 'thank you' card. **(Pic. 13.)** The Speed Graphic had now been joined by a 5x4 Linhof Technika III whilst the powerful Blaupunkt flash remained the best unit to fill shadows or bounce flash indoors. **(Pic. 14.)**

By 1958 the business had totally outgrown the Townley 'Calulu' home, and Dick found the old public dance hall called 'The Glideaway' was available to rent. This was situated at a small road junction known as The Basin, not far from the family home. Benches, sewing machines and the like, were moved in and more staff sought. This gave employment to a number of local women and young girls, many of whom went on to become professional designers or dressmakers. In 1958 the 'Glideaway' building was owned by Harold and Ruby Bennett, so it wasn't surprising their daughters Shirley and Lynette started with 'Prudence Jane'. Shirley, now 77 and living in Queensland, cut and stitched glamorous outfits for some of the TV stars, including Pilita and Helen Reddy. Typically, they were figure-hugging designs, often with a frilly fishtail below. At the new, enlarged premises, business continued to flourish and a new range of children's wear was being made and marketed through the exclusive 'Banbury Cross' shop at 47 Collins Street, Melbourne.



**Pic. 14.** Backstage at a parade. Note the 5x4 Linhof Technika III. Models include Lyn Gough & Arlene Andrewartha.

**BIKINI SWIM SUITS**  
 New Styles for Sun and Sea  
 Prices from £3/10/6  
 Catalogue Available  
 Men's Continental Trunks,  
 £2/10/6.

**PRUDENCE JANE**  
 "CALULU"  
 MT. DANDENONG ROAD,  
 MONTROSE, VICTORIA.

and for that ultra suntan "P.J." models use and recommend.

**Surf Club SUNTAN OIL**



"Romper." £4/14/6; matching jacket, £2/15/-.

**Pic. 15.** The 'Surf Club' suntan oil was a 'Prudence Jane' exclusive.

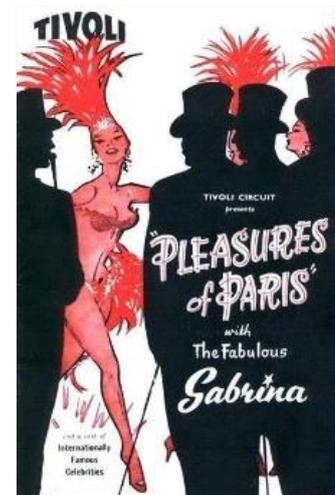
The Townleys had always enjoyed the beach and sailing, and often holidayed on the Victorian Bellarine Peninsular. Dick knew a chemist at Apollo Bay, Len Wilson, and the two men, utilising Len's pharmaceutical knowledge, concocted suntan oil called 'Surf Club'. This was added to the growing 'Prudence Jane' range and advertised along with the swimwear. **(Pic. 15.)** Back home at 'Calulu', Dick's darkroom worked overtime, the only trouble being it was between the only toilet in the house and the main hall. Prue Townley recalls she and brothers Roger and Richard crossing their legs, knocking on the darkroom door and pleading, 'Dad, have you got the light on yet...we're busting and have to go!'

In late 1958 it was announced the remarkable English starlet Sabrina was to tour Australia in a show for the Tivoli theatre circuit. **(Pic. 16.)** A thoroughly charming and non-pretentious young lady (born Norma Ann Sykes), Sabrina had been generously endowed, a fact that assisted her publicity no end. **(Pic. 17.)** When she arrived in Melbourne the TV stations jostled to score interviews and appearances. (The writer recalls being very disappointed that the very night she was scheduled to appear on Bert Newton's 'Late Show' it clashed with my annual end-of-year school concert. I wasn't the only 14 year old schoolboy furious—it was the main topic of our conversation backstage that evening!) Publicity for the Sabrina tour was amazing and



**Pic. 18.** Camera store ad for 8mm 'glamour' film of Sabrina, 1958.

included Cheney Motors supplying a specially-painted pink Vauxhall Cresta with leopard skin patterned upholstery. Some camera stores even advertised 8 mm 'glamour' films of her and the media had a ball. **(Pic. 18.)** Dick Townley saw the business possibilities and arranged to supply swimsuits for Sabrina so she could enjoy the Australian beaches whilst here. This no doubt gave Joan an 'engineering' challenge in design, but hundreds of photographers would have been thankful for the opportunities opened up! **(Pic. 19.)** When it was suggested Sabrina wear 'Prudence Jane', Joan requested a fitting session.



**Pic. 16.** Late 1958 poster advertising Sabrina's show.



**Pic. 17.** Sabrina at home in England.



**Pic. 20.** Photo Digest June 1959. Did they sell any Bell & Howell's though....?

It was early January 1959, and the sleepy hollow of The Basin shimmered in the summer heat, when Ted Harris, aged 13 and on school holidays, glimpsed a vivid pink Vauxhall coming along the Mountain Highway. As it drew closer, followed by several other cars, someone shouted, 'Hey, it's Sabrina,' and within a minute or so kids and adults came out to look. They were right, the big pink Vauxhall, with photographer Laurie Kimber driving, pulled up outside the 'Prudence Jane' factory at the old dance hall. Pandemonium erupted in the little village as word spread and reached a young motor engineer, George Russell. He grabbed a couple of his mates and they set off in his tray truck, others running along and jumping aboard as word spread: 'Sabrina's at Prudence Jane!!' Whilst there, she selected several outfits including the white buttoned red bikini seen in Tom Ramsey's photograph. **(Pic.19)** The visit took place that day whilst the entourage was on their way to the Healesville Native Animal Sanctuary for a publicity photo shoot. In charge of PR was Freda Irving, a former *Argus* journalist who could out drink, out smoke and out swear any male colleague!



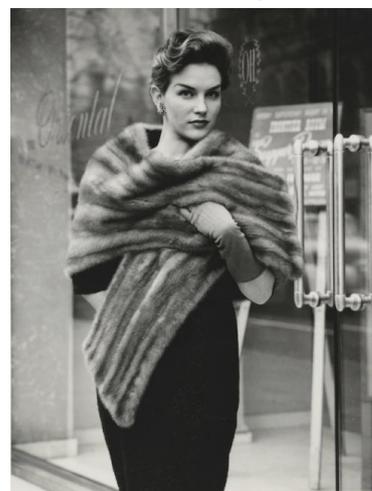
**Pic. 19.** Police escort at surf carnival for Sabrina. Ektachrome by Tom Ramsey.

The Tivoli show 'Pleasures of Paris' toured Australia and, before Sabrina left, the photographic distributors

Sixteen Millimetre Australia Pty Ltd. had her do a Bell & Howell projector advertisement. It remains one of the more memorable photographic promotions! **(Pic. 20.)**

Prue Townley says ‘Sabbie’ was in real life a wonderfully down-to-earth person and away from showbiz enjoyed the simple pleasure of their company. Dick and Joan drove her down to the Geelong surf carnival in the family station wagon, loaded with three kids, toys, and the lot. Sabbie enjoyed the drive and the friendly atmosphere more than anything else. She married, divorced after 10 years, and lives in retirement in Hollywood, USA.

Through 1960 to mid-1961 the Townley Empire continued to expand, and Dick followed his passion of photography now also using 120 format and 35 mm Kodachrome. The year 1962, however, started on a foreboding note: Australia had begun to experience a Credit Squeeze, which would have repercussions right through the entire financial and business sectors. Then a bombshell; a family relative who was the primary financier of ‘Prudence Jane’ suffered business difficulties and could no longer continue. At the same time, increasing disharmony between Joan and Dick saw their marriage start to break up. Sadly, just at the peak of their meteoric success, the Townleys and their ‘Prudence Jane’ venture fell apart and the business was wound up—gone completely by 1963.



*Pic. 21. Lyn Gough, 1960s.  
Photo by Norman Ikin.*

Most of those involved with the Townley business went on to have successful careers. Arlene Andrewartha was chosen as ‘Model of the Year’ in 1958 by the Institute Of Victorian Photographers. She later went on to do television and film work. Lyn Gough was a top fashion model through the 1960’s and photographed by all the leading photographers. **Pic. 21.**

Pilita, after her Australian TV and recording career, returned to the Philippines to wide acclaim there and owns a nightclub in Manila. The ‘Glideaway’ building at The Basin was demolished many years ago and there was talk by local council only recently of naming the area ‘Sabrina Park’ to commemorate that 1959 visit. The specially painted pink Vauxhall



*Pic.22. ‘Calulu’ memories.*

with leopard skin upholstery (registered number GXG-000) finished up in Sydney mid-1959 and was sold at the end of Sabrina’s Australian tour. The rambling property of ‘Calulu’ remains, sympathetically maintained by new owners, although the main gates are now unused due to changed traffic conditions. What famous people would have passed through here? **Pic. 22.**

The Townley’s second son, Roger, followed his father’s photographic interests, becoming fascinated with underwater work in particular. He had a camera and flash housing custom made at the Lusca Engineering works (yes, they also made enlargers) in North Rd, Huntingdale, Victoria. Roger used 35 mm film, a Sunpak 4000 flash and a Zeiss Ikophot meter. He is also a keen yachtsman and, not surprisingly, an enthusiastic MG B owner.



*Pic. 23. Prudence Jane Townley,  
photographed 2015.*

Dick Townley continued his lifelong photography interest in later years, despite the onset of Parkinson’s disease, adopting the Olympus OM 35mm system, and continued to photograph beautiful women. He died aged 84 on 17 July 1999. Joan Townley (‘Nonie’) passed away in 2005.

Today, this astonishingly successful photographic and fashion venture is all but forgotten except for the photographs and memories, and most importantly, the ‘real’ Prudence Jane! **(Pic. 23.)**

# One Camera's Journey

Geoff Harrison

A story about this camera (**Pic. 1.**) that made the long journey from England to New Zealand, Australia and back to England; and in that time was made complete again.



*Pic. 1. Stereo Victo camera.*

Back in 1986 I saw a camera advertised for sale by a bookshop in New Zealand. It was described as a wooden English half-plate camera and I could see from the picture that it was minus a shutter and a lens. It had a wide front panel, which meant it was made for stereo use, so I thought it was worth the asking price of \$99 including postage. When it arrived it was in quite good condition although it was also missing the ground glass, the septum and the tripod turntable. But it had a small brass plate on the front standard that read 'Stereo Victo' and that confirmed it was indeed a stereo camera. It was made about 1908 by Houghton's at Fulbourn Road in Walthamstow, East London. (In 1908 this was the biggest camera factory in Britain and ultimately became Ensign Ltd.)

So I had bought myself a project—and it took quite a few years to complete.



*Pic. 2. Scale on adjustable lens board.*

There were two main reasons why I bought it; I already had in my lens collection a nice brass Wray 5-inch stereo lens and I had been given several wooden lens boards and a stereo shutter by another collector. Luckily the shutter was a perfect fit, as was the adjustable lens panel. The panel was missing the small front scale and I later obtained one from a broken panel. (**Pic 2.**) But I still needed a matching Wray lens so I asked in an issue of the Society's newsletter if any member had one. I still remember the words written to me by John Moorhouse in Adelaide who said,

"You're a lucky man, I have an identical one". When it arrived it was a perfect match, so I had two brass flanges machined to fit and then I mounted the lenses. (**Pic. 3.**)

Also in my box of pieces I had an un-cut lens panel for the stereo shutter that would take a single lens, used when exposing half-plate negatives. It was a couple more years before I found a suitable lens, a Dallmeyer Stigmatic Series II. This completed the lenses that might have been used originally. I had added a tripod turntable (from a junked camera) (**Pic. 4**) and fitted a ground glass as well. Now, after about nine years, the camera was almost complete. (**Pic. 5.**) The only piece still missing was a



*Pic. 3. Stereo lenses and shutter.*



**Pic. 4. Turntable replaced.**



**Pic. 5. Camera with Dallmeyer lens mounted.**

septum, (a removable spring-loaded piece, like a section of bellows that was used to separate the two stereo images, **Pic. 6** shows the slots it fitted into.) I never did obtain a suitable one.



**Pic. 6. Slots for fitting the septum.**

Earlier this year I decided to sell a few cameras from my collection to fund an overseas trip. I had noticed that wooden stereo cameras were fetching quite handsome prices on eBay UK so I listed my Stereo Victo. It was bought by an antique dealer in the UK for £835 (\$1600) so I was well pleased and the camera then made the return journey back to its country of origin.

**But that's not the end of the story....**

A few days ago I saw a stereo camera outfit for auction on eBay UK that seemed to be the same Stereo Victo.

As soon as I looked



closely at the pictures I could see that it was – and the serial numbers of the lenses confirmed it. In addition it was now even more complete. It came with a canvas outfit bag (claimed to be the original!) and three plate holders. But interestingly it had also acquired a new identity, as the small brass nameplate had been replaced. (**Pic. 7.**)

**To quote from the listing:**

*Offered for sale is a very fine stereo field camera outfit with an ivorine plaque which reads:  
The Standard Stereoscopic Company,  
62 Upper Mall, London W.*



**Pic. 7. Last auction photos.**

Now this is obviously a seller's nameplate that quite possibly might have been affixed if they had actually sold this camera. I guess that as I had already made up the camera from many various pieces (that I hoped were of the correct type and period) these latest additions have now finally made the Stereo Victo complete. And at last it has its missing septum. The outfit sold for a very fine price - £1773 (\$3880) and I wonder whether it has now set off on another world trip!

# RARE YCAT TLR

John Fleming

About 12 years ago I was entrusted with a small mechanical repair on an elderly Chinese gentleman's early model Mercedes-Benz. When he returned to collect his car, and probably noticing my framed Institute of Australian Photographers' certificate and a couple of old cameras on the shelf, exclaimed "Ah, you are a photographer too... do you know a lot about cameras?"

I told him my knowledge was reasonable, but always learning. He settled the repair account and asked, as he was leaving, "Are you here Saturday morning, if so, I have a camera to show you".



Pic. 1.

Come the Saturday, mid-morning I heard the burble of his 220SE and he came into the office with a small cardboard box. "See how good you are," he challenged, extracting a twin lens reflex type of camera from the moth-eaten carton. I turned it around for a closer look. What on earth? **Pic. 1.** The camera had similarities to many of that ilk and I thought maybe a trace of Ikoflex... but, what was a 'YCAT'? Then I caught sight of the taking lens... a 73mm, F: 2.6 Zunow! After a few more minutes looking, poking, and prodding I admitted to my smiling friend it was a mystery to me, had never heard of it. **Pic. 2.** His explanation was fascinating.

It seems he had been involved with an import/export firm with branches in several Asian countries in the mid-1950s, including Burma. Around 1956 there were various factions controlling that country, including an old dynasty of great wealth who were despised by the people. Just managing to stay in

power, the King had a son, 12 year old Prince Looflirpa, who had shown an interest in photography and had quickly outgrown the Kinoflex he had been given. My Chinese friend stationed in Rangoon for his firm, was approached to see if something better could be obtained, whilst maintaining the general style of camera which the boy loved. Luck was in for the young Prince as the firm had family contacts direct to Haking. Design parameters were to include focussing lenses and a very high quality taking lens. There also had to be provision for eventual clockwork drive advance too as the Prince Looflirpa had a deformed hand and found that procedure difficult. Finally, the new, modified camera should be named after an exotic Burmese jungle animal. **Pic. 3.**

I was still examining the unusual camera when my friend added the dramatic twist to his tale. "I collected the prince's camera and flew back to Burma with it but the following morning the ruling party, the King & Prince Looflirpa were deposed in a coup, with much civil unrest. They fled to Switzerland". He continued "Our offices were ransacked, and starting to fear for my life, I left on the last flight back to Hong Kong." He concluded "Even possession of anything now connected to the deposed family could be serious, and the YCAT stayed wrapped in the bottom of a suitcase almost forgotten until discovered when I arrived in Australia 30 years ago". Amazing stuff! I dragged my workshop Pentax SV out and used the remaining 4 frames to at least get some photos.

A month later I tried to contact the owner so I could take more detailed shots; alas he had been taken ill the previous week and died as result of a heart complaint. I have no idea where the camera went, and can only surmise what this YCAT with a Zunow optic would be worth nowadays. In retrospect, what a fool I was to let it slip through my hands.



Pic. 2.



Pic. 3.



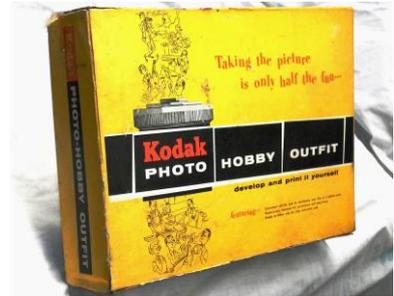
*Emblem of the Union of Burma Boy Scouts of which the prince was a member and from whence the camera derived its name.*

# Kodak PHOTO HOBBY OUTFIT

John Fleming

I had learned to hold the camera steady, focus the lens and set the aperture and shutter speeds (1/25<sup>th</sup> or 1/75<sup>th</sup>!) but there was something more I yearned for in 1957. That wish was about to be fulfilled. It was early and promised to be another typical hot Australian Christmas day. I carefully unwrapped the enticingly large present to reveal a dream come true—something I had admired in the chemist’s shop window for months—my own photo developing & printing kit! (Pic. 1.)

Lifting the lid I was entranced by the beguiling array of ‘technical things’ which promised future excitement beyond imagination...or so it seemed to a 13 year old schoolboy. The wonderful realisation too was no longer would I have to wait 4–5 days to have a film developed and obtain eight contact prints, which also involved two separate trips on my bicycle to the chemist shop and a considerable outlay of my meagre pocket money.



Pic. 1. Exciting treasures within... beautiful packaging.

All these memories came flooding back recently when I found at an APCS market an original ‘Kodak Photo Hobby Outfit’ exactly like the one that had reinforced my passion for photography way back then. These beautifully packaged little D & P kits, aimed probably at the school-age budding photographer, contained absolutely every item needed to develop a 620 or 120 film and then make contact prints from the negative. (Pic. 2.)



Pic. 2. Everything needed is here.

The outfit supplied a stylish Bakelite orange safelight for the paper printing, a wooden contact frame, three 5×7 dishes, a developing tank, developer and fixer in small packages, a measuring beaker, a proper thermometer and stainless steel film clips for hanging up the film to dry and more. (Pic. 3.) Good quality items too...the 5×7 dishes and thermometer went on to spend 25 years in a pro darkroom and are perfect to this day. There was, however, a minor frustration here and there.



Pic. 3. Quality thermometer and ‘Kodaloid’ print masks.

The developing tank was of the ‘apron’ type, a very old idea even by 1957. This apron consisted of a roll of clear acetate or plastic with dimples moulded along each outer edge. The film was then wound up between this apron and placed in the tank; the theory being the dimples maintained a space and stopped the film adhering to it while allowing developer and fixer to circulate. In practice, however, the rotten indentations left clear spots and promoted streaks from uneven development. Simply horrid! After some half–dozen films, I obtained a better, proper spiral tank, a *Hanimex Universal*. All I can think is that the apron system was cheaper to manufacture than an accurate moulded spiral.

After a few weeks of exposing the contact prints to a 60 watt table lamp, from some scrap timber, I built a 1 metre long, narrow box with a globe and switch at one end and a hinged lid at the top, into which I had screwed my wooden printing frame. Now I had a constant distance and a more easily controlled light source that was much more convenient. There was extra expense ahead, however, as my two packets of *Velox* paper and the small packets of chemicals ran out...more trips to the local chemist shop.



Pic. 4. The magic moment...an image!

There was nothing quite like seeing a photo emerge from a blank sheet of paper though. (Pic. 4.) Mr. Kodak, it was like a drug...I was hooked!

# Moskva 2

Stefan Sztromajer

The origin of the **Moskva** series of cameras from the Zeiss Ikonta is similar to the story of the Kiev from the Zeiss Contax. Two things are certain: just after the end of WWII the Russians shifted the Zeiss Ikon plants from the Russian occupied zone in Dresden to Krasnogorsk. As this was part of the war damage reparations, it is not surprising that some skilled workers were taken to help start production of copies of the Ikonta range of cameras. Production began in 1946 at the Krasnogorskij Mechaniczeskij Zavod (the Krasnogorsk Mechanical Plant).

In the beginning the cameras were partly assembled from Zeiss components, so there was no name on the bodies. The camera shown is a copy of a Super Ikonta II 531/2, known in Russia as the **Moskva 2**.

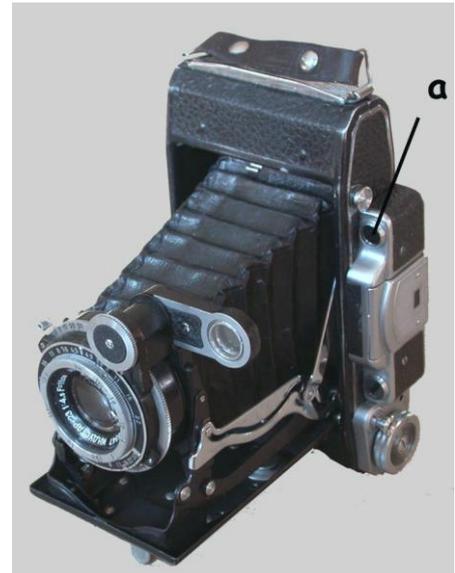


Fig. 1. Moskva 2.

Like its German predecessor, the **Moskva 2** is a high-class, self-erecting, folding camera provided with a rangefinder (see Fig. 1.). It seems strange that the **Moskva** was fitted with an Industar 23 lens, a lens of similar design to, but different focal length, f4.5/110, from its predecessor on the Super Ikonta, which had either a Tessar f4.5/105 or a Tessar f3.5/105. Maybe this was caused by problems in getting glass of a higher refractive index.

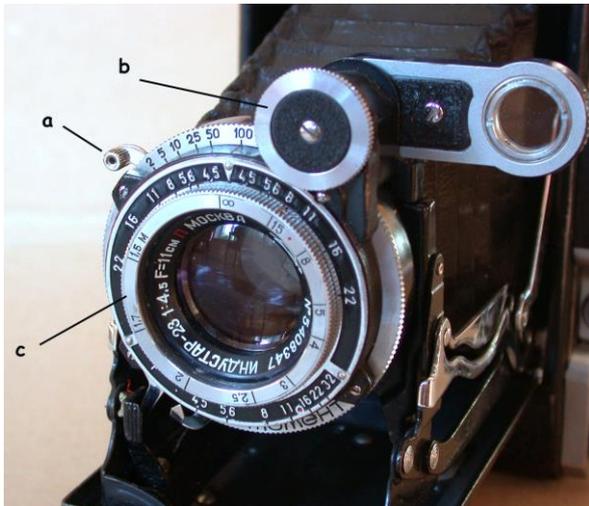


Fig. 2. Focussing detail.

The lens has a built-in 'Moment' leaf shutter, similar to the Compur, but not provided with a self-timer (see Fig. 2.). The shutter is cocked by means of the lever – a.

Focusing is activated by the wheel – b, which is coupled to both the front

lens element – c, and the wedge element of the rangefinder – d. This rotating element (of course, when at the 'open' position as in Fig. 2.) lines up with the window – a (see Fig. 1.). This part of the rangefinder apparatus is hinged like a semaphore: when closing the camera it is in the 'closed' position (see Fig. 3.). The other part of the rangefinder is in the body (see Fig. 4.): the windows – a, and – b.

The shutter, operated by the button – b (see Fig. 5.), cannot be released until the film has been transported to the next frame, as shown by the red dot in the tiny window – c. The shutter button is provided with a cable release thread. Film transportation is observed through the red window – a, at the back of the camera body (Fig. 4.) There is only one window, so there is only the possibility of taking eight frames on 120 roll film, while the Zeiss Super Ikonta II was provided with two windows, which also allowed taking sixteen smaller (6 × 4.5 cm) photos.



Fig. 3. Rangefinder closed.

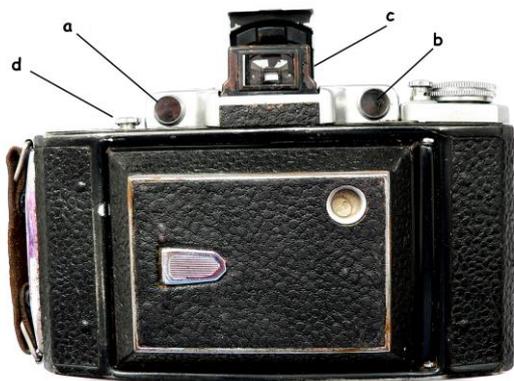


Fig. 4. Range & Viewfinder Windows.

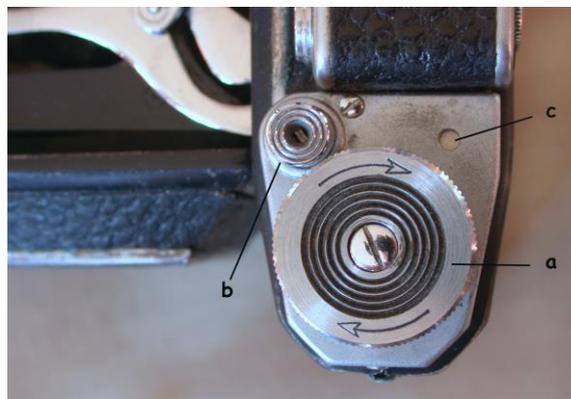


Fig. 5. Shutter release detail.

The viewfinder – c, is opened simultaneously with the front of the camera when the button – d, is pressed. When the viewfinder is closed, the top plate of **Moskva** looks smart, like its predecessor (see Fig. 6.)



Fig. 6. Top deck of camera.

At the back (see Fig. 7.) there is the rangefinder window – a, and, close by, the window for observing the next film frame number – b.

The bottom plate (see Fig. 8.) has a tripod thread – a, and two housings – b, for the film spool axles.



Fig. 7. Rear view of camera.



Fig. 8. Bottom plate features.

In conclusion, the **Moskva 2** was one of the best Russian cameras in those days; in particular its blue-coated lens really had very good optical properties in terms of sharpness and contrast, even at full aperture.

**Letter to the Ed:**

Hi Ian,

On reading the latest edition of Back Focus (#99) I saw a photograph of a familiar face on and on closer reading I did indeed recognize an old friend of mine, Len Lee who was (as the article outlined) co-owner of a well-respected sheet metal products manufacture trading under Lee and Diverall Pty. Ltd.

I had known both Len and his partner Laurie Diverall through my association with the Seventh-day Adventist church in the early50s into the early70s. Len and Laurie were well respected members of the Adventist Church, worshipping in the North Fitzroy, Nunawading and East Prahran churches over those years.

I had more to do with Len because of our interest and love of brass band music. At one stage I was President and Len was Vice President, later President, of the Victorian Advent Brass Band which has a proud history of more than eighty years of continuous performing brass band music.

In the mid-seventies, Len, and I were instrumental (pardon the pun) in getting the Band fitted out with new uniforms, both for day and evening performances. We must have had the right colour combinations because the Advent Brass (as it is now known) has still basically retained the same colour scheme and style.

The band performs regularly during the year at church and fund raising community projects and participates in regular brass band competitions and has received championship awards.

Len and Laurie were thorough gentlemen, as ‘honest as the day is long’-their word and a handshake were their bond. They acted out their faith on a daily basis and you could depend upon them to their last breath. If only more business people small and large could follow their example, our world would be blessed and happier.

Probably thousands of their letter-boxes are still intact and sitting proudly at the front gates of suburban homes in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, testimony to their adherence to quality materials and workmanship at a reasonable price.

Their families can be rightly proud of their loved one’s achievements. Thanks for reviving a lovely memory for me of a valued friendship.

**Ron. H.H. Thomas. Mem #407.**

# The Norton Collection

Geoff Harrison

Drive south from Hobart down the Southern Outlet and in twenty minutes you will arrive at the little town of Margate on the Channel Highway. Just past the shopping centre is the Channel Heritage Centre. **(Pic. 1.)** Originally located in a large shed further south at Snug the museum's contents were moved to the new purpose-built building at Margate in 2012. It is owned by the community and run by volunteers. Larger inside than it looks from the road it is packed full of displays with hundreds of artefacts relating to the Channel area: their history and its many industries such as ship building, fruit growing, scallop fishing, timber milling and carbide manufacturing.



*Pic. 1. Museum entrance.*



*Pic. 2. Display cases.*

Many years ago I had visited the original museum and remembered seeing a couple of display cases of cameras there, so I recently drove down to the Margate museum to see if the cameras were still part of the display. They certainly were – but now there are more than 700 items so they have their own room! **(Pic. 2.)** They are the collection of Don Norton, **(Pic. 3.)** a long-time resident of the

area, who has donated them to the museum.

Don has collected them over a 40-year period, many from the southern Tasmanian area as well as interstate and overseas.



*Pic. 4. Early cameras.*



*Pic. 3. Don Norton, owner, curator, collector.*

They are displayed chronologically as you walk clockwise around the room, starting with plate cameras, **(Pic. 4.)** through roll film folders and box cameras to 35mm SLRs. **(Pic. 5.)** Finally there are some early digitals (sourced from the Margate Tip Shop) and various novelty items.



*Pic. 5. More displays.*

While at first glance there are many commonly found cameras displayed a careful look will find some scarcities. Checking the subminiature section I noticed a **Merlin**, next to it a **Steky** that had the original wooden box and a tele lens complete with its almost never seen viewfinder mask.



*Pic. 6. The PillCam.*



*Additional pics of these excellent displays.*

Don tells me he has many more subminiatures still to be added to the case. Don's wife is a museum volunteer also and she asks me if I had noticed the **PillCam**. I hadn't and she tells me one was prescribed by her doctor (*capsule endoscopy*). So she said to him, 'My husband collects cameras, could I have one for him?' 'They cost \$1000' was the reply, but then the doctor left the room to return shortly saying 'Here is a salesman's sample you can have.'  
**(Pic. 6.)** A neat item for the single use/disposable cameras section!



*Beneath the cover (top left) is a display of Daguerreotypes.*

The museum is open seven days a week, admission is free and it has a cafe serving good coffee and meals. Don attends every Sunday and is always willing to chat about his cameras.  
[www.channelheritagecentre.org.au](http://www.channelheritagecentre.org.au)

# YOU JUST HAVE TO KEEP LOOKING!

Roger Burrows

As a collector your eyes are automatically scanning for photographica, it is just part and parcel of the disease. Even at an antique fair that usually has very little in this line you still look. That is how I



*A Moorcroft Vase.  
Beautifully crafted and  
coloured, a desirable  
collectable.*



*Some Beswick Figurines.*



*Pic 1. So totally out of place!*

I came across these three items tucked in between the Moorcroft vases and platters and the Beswick figurines. (Pics on left.) These three items lay quite out of context with the rest of the wares on display. It was the name Gevaert that had caught my eye of course. (Pic 1.) Arriving home that evening I had a closer look and as you can see these items were from Europe, in fact the Europe of the thirties. With the help of that friendly chap Mr. Google I was able to find that the city of Lwow was in Eastern Poland and like many towns in that area suffered badly from the Nazis heading east, and the Russians heading west. Today the city is called Lviv and is in the western Ukraine.



*Pic.2. One of the Gevaert boxes.*



*Pic. 3.*



*Pic. 4.*



*Pic. 5.*

Translating the address on the processors folders we find that the shop was a photo and radio store at 8 St. Mary's Square in the multi- use building. The ground floors were shops, first floor offices and then apartments above. There are photos of the square under Nazi control and a few others to be found on the Internet. The area had two predominant religions, Catholic and Jewish and so there were some terrible things happening in that area during this time and the look in the eyes of the portrait sitters seems to be full of foreboding. When I sat down to look at these plates I knew I had to print them because to have miraculously survived a war torn Europe and end up on the stall in an antique fair in Ballarat is one heck of a journey. (Pic's 3 – 5.) I cannot help wondering who they were, what was their story and did they survive the war?

Continuing on this theme of looking in the most unlikely venues is the little hand coloured tin type in a sealed plastic bag among some pocket knives. The other tintypes were found on a stall that had ladies jewellery, again in a plastic bag at the back of the display case. (Pic. 6.) The cart-de-visites were bit different. They are from a real antique fair that does have some photographica. These were hidden away in a box so I was pleased to find them. The two tintypes mounted in card to resemble a cart-de-visit in size were made in Ballarat around 1884. They made by Allen and Gove American

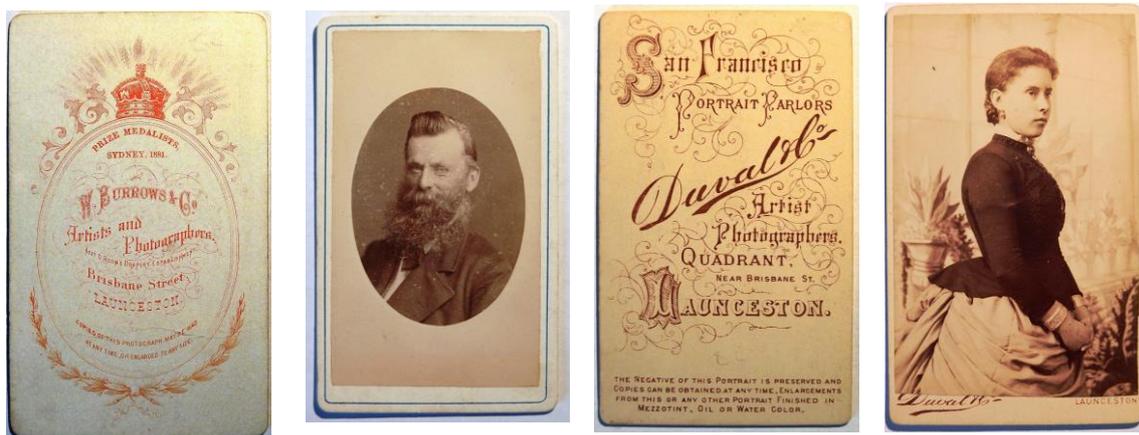
Studios, 6 Sturt St. Ballarat. This was actually a franchise that operated in a few places in Victoria but died out when paper prints became cheaper.



*Pic. 6. Tintypes found amongst ladies jewellery.*

*Carte-de-Visites found.*

*(Left) How could I resist this one from Launceston? (Right) The card from San Francisco Portrait Parlors.*

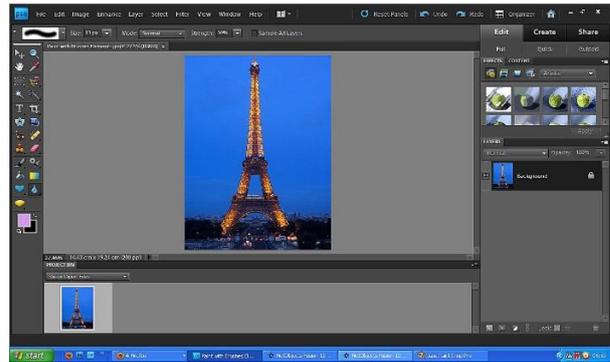


I also found in that box a card by San Francisco Portrait Parlors of Launceston Tasmania. They liked fancy names back then. A couple from J H Roberts, Photographers of Sturt St. Ballarat and one from Richards Studios Ballarat who are still going and another from W Burrows, Artist and Photographer of Launceston. What is the point to this you may ask? Well, all those cards were on a stall owned by a chap from Adelaide who comes over once a year for the March fair. He buys his stock in South Australia. So to find Ballarat and Tasmanian items in his stock was surprising to say the least. As the saying goes, you just have to keep looking.

# Desktop Darkroom.

Ian Carron.

As we move more and more into the world of digital imaging, the conventional darkroom is becoming somewhat obsolete and what used to be accomplished with enlargers, colour-heads, trays and chemicals is now achieved with a mouse and a monitor. Of course the appropriate software is also needed and one of the best known is Photoshop. I personally use Elements (ver. 9) and this will NOT be a PS tutorial but a quick presentation to show just what can be done in this electronic age.



*The Photoshop Elements ver. 9 work screen.*

Many of the photographs presented here are representations of those which I, as editor, receive with article submissions on the odd occasion and have to be corrected before use. Restoration of old and damaged photographs is also a strong point of Photoshop. Many other everyday corrections, such as red-eye removal are also easily made. Other, similar software packages are available, but certainly Photoshop is and remains the benchmark. I have to thank members Geoff Harrison for introducing me to it and Michael Parker for his recent donation of version 9.



*This photo of the Nikkormat:- over exposed, white balance incorrect so colours out of balance.*



*Brightness and contrast corrected. Colour reset correctly, all with a few mouse clicks!*



*This photo lacks overall sharpness including detail in the nameplate. Some colour correction needed.*



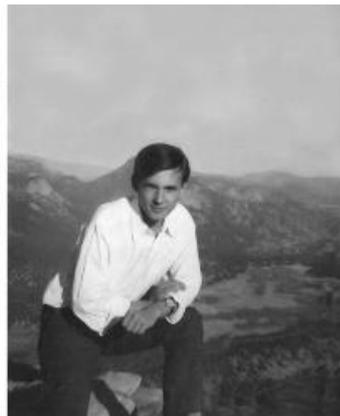
*Dust spots amongst the clouds.*



*A couple of mouse clicks can fix that!*



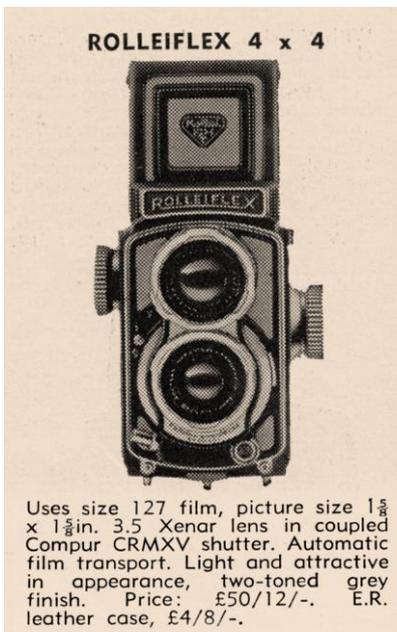
*That precious family memory need restoring? Voila!*



*Tweaking image sharpening enhances that fine detail. Blacks now better.*

The first company to make a 4x4cm twin-lens reflex using 127 roll film was Rollei who offered their **Rolleiflex 44** in 1931. There were four models (with only minor differences) that were manufactured up until 1941. They were also called 'Baby Rolleiflex' and the later models 'Sports Rolleiflex' (**Pic. 1**).

Then in 1957 Rollei introduced the 'Gray Baby' Rolleiflex. This camera helped popularise the 'Superslide' concept that Kodak had promoted when they commenced mounting the square 127-film colour slides in mounts with the same external size as the 35mm mounts. The Baby Rollei (**Pic. 2**) was aimed at photographers who wanted something better than the various Brownie models that Kodak offered in this format. Not only would a larger image than the 24x36mm slides be shown on a screen using a standard 35mm projector but a higher quality image as well.



*Pic. 1. 1938 Sports Rolleiflex.*

Some Japanese camera manufacturers took notice of this and in 1958-59 there were several 127 TLRs on the market made by Minolta, Riken, Topcon, Tougodo, Walz and Yashica. Most of them were close copies of the small Rollei, with some finished in attractive colours. Not all were just 'Rollei replicas' however; Yashica added an exposure meter to their camera, the **Yashica 44 LM** (**Pic. 3**) and Minolta redesigned the body casting when they made their **Miniflex**.



*Pic. 3. Yashica 44 LM.*



*Pic. 4. Minolta Miniflex.*

The Minolta **Miniflex** (**Pic. 4**) was a solid little camera with a two-tone blue-green finish and some interesting design features. Focussing was by a large side-mounted knob and film was advanced by a smaller knob on the opposite side. The film travelled downwards in a straight path from the top down to the lower spool, a method that Minolta claimed gave better film flatness. The tripod mount was not part of the back as usual; instead it was located in a piece of the body casting

(**Pic. 5**). There were two accessory shoes: a standard one on the left and a special one on the right for an eye-level sportsfinder. The camera is held horizontally when using this finder (**Pic. 6**). Approximately 5000 Miniflex cameras were made.



*Pic. 5. Miniflex tripod mount.*

But another Japanese 127 TLR was quite different both in styling and operation from the various Rollei copies. The **Ricohmatic 44** was made by Riken Optical Industries, Ltd., the Tokyo company that

was later named Ricoh. With the front cover in position (**Pic. 7**) it certainly had a different look from any other camera. The translucent plastic cover was claimed to make a carrying case unnecessary, and no case was available. When the focussing hood was opened the hinged cover was released and it swung down out of the way (**Pic. 8**). It could also be removed if it was not needed.



*Pic. 7. Ricohmatic 44 with cover in place.*



*Pic. 6. Miniflex sports-finder.*

Focussing is by the ‘exclusive Ricoh DUO-LEVER method’. Holding the camera in both hands you place a thumb on each lever (**Pic. 9**). The distance, in feet and metres, is shown with coloured numbers in the bottom window.

As well as having a magnifier the hood has an eye-level finder, the ‘exclusive contour type auxiliary finder’\* that is used with both eyes open. The four slits in the hood then show a bright frame line.

At the same time (June 1959), Riken had also released their ‘Rollei copy’ 127 TLR – the **Ricoh Super 44**. So the Ricohmatic was obviously designed for a different type of customer, one who wanted a much simpler camera to use, but again, something better than a Brownie. An added selling point was its price – about half that of a Rollei 4x4.



*Pic. 8. With cover open.*

The Ricohmatic appears to have neither a shutter speed scale nor an aperture scale. For correct exposure you first set your film speed or ‘film index number’ with the help of a table printed on the camera back (**Pic. 10**).

The film index dial has three positions numbered 1, 2, 3; they actually set the shutter speed: 1 is 1/30, 2 is 1/100 and 3 is 1/200. There is an ‘exposure adjustment dial’ that controls the aperture. Moving it enables you to centre a white needle in a small window on top of the front standard. The taking lens is a 6cm Ricoh three-element f3.5, the same lens as used in the Super 44. Above the viewing lens is a window for the coupled selenium cell. Film wind-on is by the good old-fashioned way of observing a number in the rear red window; the shutter is



*Pic. 9. Duo-lever focussing.*

cocked when winding, so there are no double exposures. The accessory hot-shoe accepts a bulb flashgun and the aperture is set according to which bulb and film you are using. The instruction book gives settings for M5 and M2 bulbs. With the exposure adjustment dial set to position M, you match the distance number colour to the scale dot colour.



Pic. 11. Ricohmatic 1962 Advt.

The *Australian Popular Photography Directory for 1961-62* listed the **Ricohmatic 44** (Pic. 11), the **Rollei 4x4** and the **Yashica 44**, along with a 127 SLR the **Komaflex-S**. (Pic. 12). In the 1964 edition there was only the Rollei and in 1967 there weren't any 127 reflex cameras listed.

*Footnote:* The Rollei 4x4 was made in grey until 1963 when the colour was changed to black; it was discontinued in 1968 after a total production of 67,180. Riken also used the Ricohmatic name for a 6x6 TLR, the **Ricohmatic 225**.



Pic. 10. Film speed table.

The Ricohmatic 44 was last advertised for sale in Japan in mid-1960, for by then the short-lived boom in the 4x4 format was diminishing. Other manufacturers had also discontinued their 127 TLR cameras by then. With 35mm SLR cameras like Pentax and Nikon starting to become popular and offering interchangeable lenses, 36 exposures on 35mm film was probably a more attractive and economical choice rather than just 12 exposures using a camera with a fixed lens.



Pic. 12. Komaflex-S.

*\*I have used Ricoh's terms, and some procedures, as they are printed in the Ricohmatic instruction book.*

# A COSMOPOLITAN TRIO

John Fleming

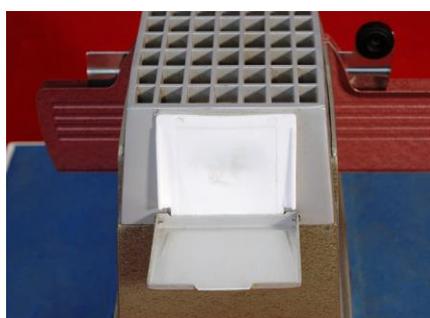
Examining three slide projectors that came my way recently, from three different countries, the staggering design differences became apparent. It would seem each nation stamped their own 'personality' on the product! The first instrument is American, stylish and beautifully crafted from solid metals, anodised or painted very 1950s colours. It is the Bell & Howell 'Project-or-View 500'. (Pic. 1.) A quality piece, this manual change unit incorporates a smoothly-running powerful cooling fan for the big and bright 500 watt old fashioned tungsten bulb. A further feature is an illuminated previewing panel at the rear. (Pic. 2.)



*Pic. 1. Could be a Cadillac or Pontiac... bright chunky styling in metal for Bell & Howell.*



*Pic. 2. At the rear, a built in illuminated panel, hidden by a lift-up lid.*



*Pic. 3. Lower the lid and there's the pre-view screen to place the slide on.*

A metal hinged cover protects this opalescent panel when not in use.

(Pic. 3.) Overall, the style, the colours and solidity all proclaim 'USA'.

The second transparency projector is quite unusual and attractive in a 1940s fashion. It is fabricated

from moulded reddish-brown Bakelite and was, initially, hard to identify. (Pic. 4.)



*Pic. 4. Moulded reddish-brown Bakelite Belirex from East Germany.*

Australia by Hanimex at one time. The lens on this example is an f/3.5 Belistar. A better lens, the Cassar f/2.8, was available too. (Pic. 5.)

A search of early magazines unearthed an advertisement from 1952 confirming it was a Belirex.

Further delving ensued to find this was an East German design that obviously was distributed in

**BELIREX**  
Strip and Slide Projector



This new addition to the low-priced projector field, can be used for either vertical or horizontal strip or slide projection. With Beliscop lens, aspheric condenser, 60 watt projection lamp, sturdy body, the Belirex is available now at most Photo Dealers.

With f2.8 Cassar lens . . . . . £14.0.0  
With f3.5 lens . . . . . £8.8.0

Distributed by

**HANIMEX PTY. LTD.**  
14 KING STREET, SYDNEY  
BX 1928

*Pic. 5. Australian advertisement from Hanimex in 1952.*

The Belirex is moulded in two halves and the modest 100 or 150-watt lamp is accessed via a trap door in the base. It has no fan, nor requires one. Provision is made for projection of single 35 mm slides, and film strips, once so popular, may be displayed using the separate strip carrier and spools. (Pic. 6.) If the film strip has vertical compositions, the entire carrier rotates. (Pic. 7.)



*Pic. 6. The bulbous rear view of the Belirex.*



*Pic. 7. Here the film strip spools are set for the vertical format.*

The 240 volt input pins are within a rounded recess and no earth is required as the Bakelite body is an insulator. Finding a matching round plug was a problem until one day I realised the imported English made Swan brand kettle in the office had one. Fate stepped in here, as some 10 days later that kettle element went open circuit. Presto, I had a matching power plug and lead—and reddish brown too! (**Pic. 8.**) Again, the Belirex is typically European-styled and this economy model perhaps sums up East Germany in 1952.



*Pic. 8. Unusual (for Australia anyway!) round mains power plug on Belirex.*



*Pic. 9. Blast from the past...  
The Hunter from R. F. Hunter and Sons.*



*Pic. 10. Rear view of The Hunter. The 12 volt conversion may be a local modification in the late 1950s.*

The third of our bunch, at first glance, looks 1920s or even earlier. It then comes as a shock to discover this projector was selling in 1956! Fashioned from sheet metal, brass rod, and with a cast aluminium base of unusual shape, it is all black in colour. This is 'The Hunter', distributed by R. F. Hunter and Sons. The example pictured is unusual in being 12 volts, and has alligator clips on the long leads to connect to a car battery or similar. The owner was a missionary during the 1950s in Central Australia and then New Guinea. (**Pic. 9.**) The rear of the projector removes via two milled round nuts to reveal a 12 volt 48 watt auto-type bulb. It gave, on test, a reasonable screen illumination at a moderate distance. There is no cooling blower nor is it required. (**Pic. 10.**) Again, the overall design of this projector seems to proclaim 'Made in England'. Each piece of equipment here has its own style and charm and is, for differing reasons, a part of photographic history.

**Endnote to an article.** Although this is the MARCH edition of Back Focus, it seldom reaches readers till at least the first week of the following month. For the real story behind this one, go to the name of the Burmese prince (on page 10) and **read it backwards!** What one Writer and your Ed do when they decide to take a coffee break!

**John (Deceptive) Fleming and Ian (Illusory) Carron.**



*From Japan to Germany, Geoff Harrison presents a review of 127 film TLRs.*



*John Fleming tells of the unique, one-off, custom built camera he found....and then lost!*



*Tucked away in Tasmania, a fabulous collection can be seen at Margate.*



*John Fleming delights in a near mint discovery at our last market and evokes childhood memories.*



*At another market....Roger Burrows finds something quite out of place.....*