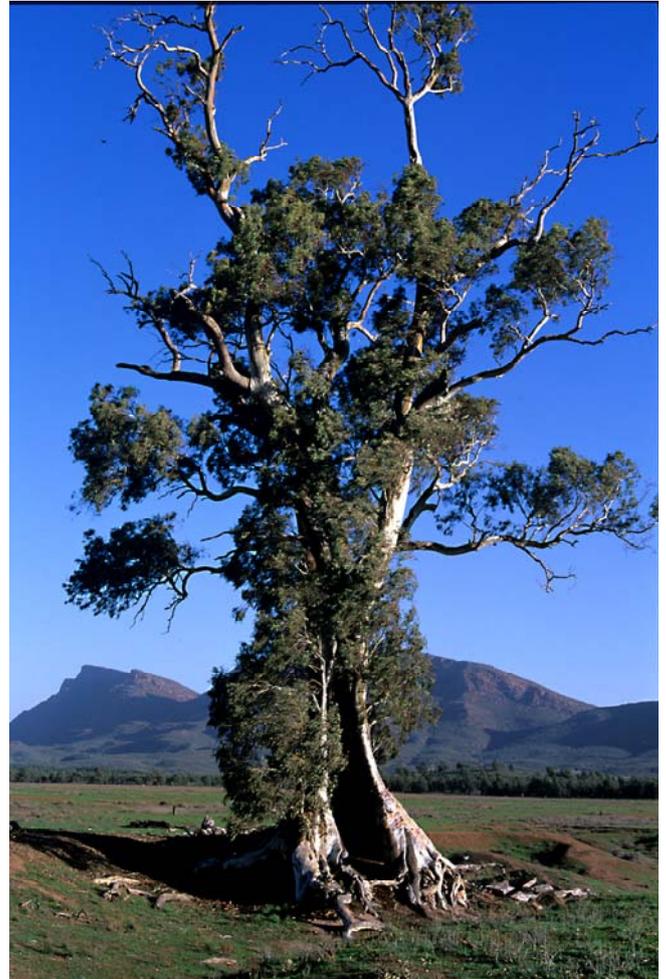


BACK FOCUS

The Journal of the Australian Photographic Collectors Society (Inc)
Incorporation Registration No. A16888V ABN 55 567 464974

Issue No. 75

December, 2009



Tag along with Paul Boon as he takes an outback adventure with a Pentacon 6 (plus an R9, a G10 and his son's Spotmatic F).



THE AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTORS SOCIETY Inc.

Incorporation Reg. No. A16888V

ABN 55 567 464 974

OFFICE BEARERS OF THE SOCIETY

PRESIDENT ALAN KING
VICE PRESIDENT ANDREW HUNTLEY
SECRETARY MARGARET MASON
TREASURER BRIAN HATFIELD
COMMITTEE IAN CARRON
 KEN ANDERSON
 ANDREW KORLAKI
 LYLE CURR
 MARKET ORGANISERS

phone

(03) 5241 2404
 (03) 9576 1635
 (03) 9836 3719
 (03) 9898 2014
 (03) 9435 5659
 (03) 9457 1985
 (03) 9870 7354
 (03) 5221 3445
 Alan King, Ken Anderson.

LIBRARIAN

June Halls

(03)9568 0759 elmore@alphalink.com.au

BACK FOCUS EDITOR IAN CARRON (03 9435 5659)

Editorial Matters & Back Focus Submissions to:-

Ian Carron. 10 Bicton Street. Greensborough. Victoria. 3088 Australia

Email: backfocus@apcsociety.com.au If in doubt, please request details for article format required for submissions.

Society e-mail address: secretary@apcs.asn.au

Web Site: www.apcsociety.com.au

Address all Society correspondence to:-

Margaret Mason. 159 Canterbury Road. Canterbury. Victoria. 3126 Australia

Meetings are held at Australian Model Railway Association. 92 Wills Street. Glen Iris.

Hall Open Midday. Meeting commences approx. 1pm.

Membership Subscription, Local & Overseas \$30.00 per annum

Send Subscriptions to: Brian Hatfield. 4 Mitta Street. Box Hill North. 3129.

All **original** articles are copyright of the authors. Permission may be given to reproduce any **original** Back Focus article by any Society of a non-profit type with similar interests and aims to the Australian Photographic Collectors Society Inc. on application to the editor, as long as a credit is given as to the source of material and a complimentary copy sent to the editor at the Greensborough address. Back Focus is set out by Ian Carron on a Pentium Dual CPU 1.8Ghz IBM compatible computer using Microsoft Word 2000. Printing is out-sourced to Copywise.

Notes from the desk of the Editor:

Of the number of overseas reciprocal journals we receive, one of the better publications has always been *Deja View* from the Photographic Collectors Association of New Zealand. Sadly, they are now feeling the effects of falling membership and lack of article input. Following correspondence between their editor and myself, they are now offering payment for articles and it will be interesting to see if this boosts their input as it did ours. One can only wish them success.

Our input from members remains good and is greatly appreciated. Some new members have already contributed and these will be seen in coming issues. The colour cover spreads from articles, along with a selected article from each issue appearing on our web site, will give you an idea of just how each article *should* look! As I see them as I lay them out on the computer, in full colour before converting to monochrome for Back Focus reproduction. Perhaps one day costs will come down to the point where we can do the full issue in colour. (Dream on!)

Till the next issue, your Editor and Committee wish you all the Best for the Festive Season and a Very Successful Collecting year in 2010. May you find that special treasure you've been wanting!

Ian Carron.

Index to this issue:

Field Trip, Lake Goldsmith.	3	Ihagee Mystique.	4
Geoff Schirmer, a Photographic Journey.	11	Outback with a Pentacon 6.	13
A Different Kind of Pub.	17	October '09 Auction Report.	19
Add Some Colour To Your Collection.	21	Plastic 35's.	23

Field Trip to Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally

Ian Carron

November 1st sadly saw only a handful of members heading to the Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Association's 38-acre site for our field trip. This location, which I believe is the largest of its type in the southern hemisphere, is just packed with anything and everything that runs on steam, most of it working and the sights, smells and sounds of boilers, pistons and whistles, puffing, blowing, gurgling, clunking and shrieking, largely from a bygone age, is one to be experienced.



LtoR. Ian Carron, Jean Cameron, Brian & Pat Howden, Margaret Mason, Alan King and Ian McKenzie.



Demonstration of baking techniques from olden days. Can you spot the anomaly? Answer above the Nagami Camera Service advert in this issue.

The day was almost perfect, bright and sunny but not overly hot. The ice-cream vendors came in handy while strolling around looking for faces we knew, between ducking back to the food hall on the hour, the designated meet-up time(s).

Poor Alan was the last to arrive, having taken a wrong turn and detoured via the Black Stump and the Nanga-Tang! (Hint for a Christmas present there mate, Sat Nav's are great!)



As bright as they are big, these traction engines offer a fascination to young and old and are photogenic.



Massive gears, chains, cogs and cables abound.



Main boiler house, with furnace in background. All in running condition, as can be seen, quite steamy!

This 38-acre site of "boys toys" offers heaps of photographic opportunities and those of us who attended had a most enjoyable day.

When I moved house quite some years back, I cursed the fact I collected cameras and not stamps! Then I met the owners of the traction engine above and learned they have two more at home just like it!

It certainly seems we who collect are a breed peculiar unto ourselves!

THE JHAGEE MYSTIQUE

ANECDOTES FROM AN EXAKTA COLLECTOR

-GEOFF SCHIRMER

It was in the late 1950's that I first set eyes on an Exakta, in a shop window in Adelaide. One of my mates had sung its praises as a 'state of the art' camera – a quality SLR, with excellent optics, interchangeable lenses, a wide range of shutter speeds, an extensive catalogue of accessories, and solidly built. Since my photographic experience had thus far been limited to the family Kodak box camera, I was in awe of the sophistication and potential of this sparkling new Exakta.

It had a character all of its own, with its distinctive trapezoid body, its satin-chrome face-plate, the elegant inscription of the Exakta name, the glossy black enamel ribs supporting the chrome top-plate, as well as the unusual left-handed film advance lever and shutter release. I was also fascinated by the two smaller words etched on the face-plate – Jhagee and Dresden. I surmised that Dresden probably indicated the place of manufacture, but Jhagee remained a mystery. I couldn't even pronounce it.

Since I had little knowledge of photography, and didn't want to make a fool of myself, and couldn't afford the camera at any rate, I didn't venture into the shop. The Exakta became a desirable mystery, to be admired at a distance. I then met a girl, and my thoughts and desires turned to other mysteries.

Some thirty years later, while taking a moment to peruse the tempting objects in Michael's used camera windows in Lonsdale St, Melbourne, I once again found myself gazing at an Exakta in a shop window. It was a Varex IIa (1957), in mint condition, and looked absolutely magnificent. I was comprehensively smitten. Here at last was an opportunity to own an Exakta, to realise the dreams of so long ago. There was a compelling sense of 'seize the day'. Little did I realise that this was just the beginning.



Exakta Varex IIa – 1957.

Around this time I became a member of the Australian Photographic Collectors Society, and borrowed 'Exakta Cameras' – *Clement Aguila and Michel Rouah – Hove 1987* from the APCS Library. It provided an excellent introduction to the history and evolution of Exakta cameras, together with a catalogue of the extensive range of lenses and accessories that have been associated with the famous name.

The 'Jhagee' mystery was solved, being the phonetic rendering of the German initials IHG, which are an abbreviation of Industrie und Handels Gesellschaft (Manufacturing and Trading Company), established by Johan Steenberg at Marcolini Strasse 8, Dresden, in April 1912. The 'J' in 'Jhagee' is the antique script of 'I'. In 1919 the company name was changed to 'Ihagee Kamerawerk Steenberg & Co'.

At the same time I was made aware of the significance of Dresden in the rich history of the German optical and photographic industry, being the location of famous marques such as Ernemann, Wunsche, Huttig, Goltz & Breutmman, Ica, Kochmann, Loeber, Zeiss, Balda, Welta, Certo, Zeh, and others. All of which was shattered by the catastrophic Allied bombing of February 1945. The main Exakta factory in Schandauer Strasse was annihilated, and four other subsidiary factories severely damaged. As a result of bombing and fire, and the subsequent looting, nothing was left of the Ihagee archives and documentation. Stories are told of Ihagee/Exakta machinery and parts falling off Soviet trucks in the snow. Despite the destruction, and the post-war economic and political difficulties, a team of former engineers and workers gradually managed to restore production. All of this was made even more poignant for me when, in my work as a hospital chaplain, I met a woman who had somehow managed to survive the horror of the Dresden bombing, deep in a cellar.

Part of the Exakta mystique is the boldness with which its draughtsmen broke with the photographic establishment of the day, Leica and Contax, and established a radically new benchmark in innovative camera design. *Aguila and Rouah* have this to say:

“The engineers from the firm exercised amazing ingenuity, and Ihagee produced the following world firsts and major contributions to the evolution of modern photography with the Exakta:

1933 – First modern single lens reflex for rollfilm.

1933 – First focal plane shutter with a range of 12 seconds to 1/1000 second, with delayed speeds of up to 6 seconds. This shutter remained unrivalled until 1972-1975.

1934 – First to use a wind-on lever, which was used 10 years later by other manufacturers.

1935 – First camera to have built-in flash sockets connected to contacts activated by the shutter. This system enabled the use of one or several reflectors. Synchronisation on all speeds up to 1/1000 second (depending on the type of bulb).

***1936 – First reflex in the world to use the small 35mm format, the Kine Exakta”.* (p.8)**

Those who seek further detail of the Exakta/Ihagee story are directed to ‘*Exakta Cameras*’ - *Aguila and Rouah*, and ‘*The Exakta Times*’ (a UK periodical) – both available from the APCS Library. And www.google.com > Exakta – provides further information and links.

The Exakta collecting bug crept up on me rather quietly. Maybe that’s how it is for many collectors. We obtain one or two cameras of a particular marque, and *voila* we are hooked. For a time there



***A 1958 ‘embossed’ Exa with
Carl Zeiss Jena f4/20mm Flektogon.***

was just the one – the mint Varex Ila purchased from Michael’s. I must declare that the peculiar satisfaction of collecting historic cameras is enhanced for me when the camera is in excellent condition. Even more so if it is mint - and this was a gem. Then a Varex body in excellent condition came up at an APCS auction in the days when we were based at the Melbourne Camera Club. This was followed by an Exa (1952) at another auction. That was about twenty years ago. Since then the collection has steadily grown.

My experience has been that a large part of the fascination with collecting has to do with the hunt. Having established the foundation of a collection, one’s thoughts

turn to further acquisitions. One, as it were, owes it to the collection to make it as complete as possible. One lives with a list of priorities. One is always on the lookout. One lives with the hope,

with the anticipation, that the next piece of the collection might just be around the corner. And once you manage to acquire a sought after camera or accessory you park it on a shelf, together with all the other, at one time, sought after objects. You glow with satisfaction and achievement for a time. You might quietly let it be known to other collectors that you have managed to acquire another gem. You might even experience a twisted form of satisfaction – perhaps a dash of *schadenfreude* – as you clinically observe their attempts to mask a sudden flush of envy. And then you turn your attention to the next item of desire.

Occasionally the good fortune and serendipity associated with a particular acquisition are as memorable and satisfying as the object itself. On one occasion I saw an advertisement in the Trading Post for ‘Exakta camera and lenses’, the seller being located a considerable distance out into the country. A phone call brought the good news that the goods were still for sale, together with a list of directions to get to a farm. As I negotiated rough roads, and opened and shut numerous farm gates, I hoped that it wouldn’t turn out to be a wild-goose chase. The result was the stuff of dreams – a Varex Ila with *embossed* nameplate (1958), the acclaimed Zeiss Biotar 75mm f1.5 (1947) and a Meyer-Gorlitz Orestegor 200mm f4 (1963) – all mint, and at a modest price. I told the seller they were worth more than he was asking, but they were from his late father’s estate and he was pleased they were going into the hands of someone who valued them and would take care of them. If there had been any doubt before, this stroke of good luck certainly confirmed my commitment to Exakta collecting.

On another occasion I was browsing through a second-hand shop at Cowes on Phillip Island when a number of brown leather camera cases, hanging by their straps from a nail, caught my eye. Among them was a leather case, in excellent condition, with the distinctive Exakta shape. Even more interesting was that the protruding lens cover on the case was rather small and tapered, which suggested an early model, or at least an early lens. The case opened to reveal a pristine Kine Exakta, in mint condition. It was the Version 2 model, with the rectangular waist-level magnifier (1937). The shutter blinds were perfect, and worked at all speeds. Inside the back cover was the name of the seller – ‘Fotohaus Schlottgen Remscheid, Adolf Hitler Strasse 41...’! This would have been sold to someone just prior to WWII. One was left to wonder how it and its owner had survived the war, and how it got to Australia.



Kine Exakta, C1937 with Meyer Gorlitz 105mm.



Exakta VP-B, 1938, with Som Berthiot 150mm.

Soon after that I was lucky enough to come across an early VP Exakta, model B – Version 6 – for 127 film (1938), at an APCS Camberwell Market. It wasn’t cheap, but it was mint, chrome, and working. It is particularly satisfying when a camera of this vintage is found in mint condition. The seller was from Geelong and indicated that it had come from a Western District country estate.

Meanwhile, eBay came into my life. I was at John Keesing’s home one night when he introduced me to this wonderful source of temptation. Checking out the Exakta offerings, we came across a pristine example of the very desirable and relatively rare post-war Exakta 66 (1950). Only around 2500

were made. I wasn't in a position to chase it at the time, however it made me aware of the potential of eBay. Some years later I eventually came across another post-war Exakta 66 on EBay. An elderly gentleman in the States had cared for it for many years, and was selling off his collection. It was near-mint, with a Tessar lens, and working smoothly. I was the successful bidder. Let's say it wasn't a bargain. But when something as rare as this comes along, and in this condition, you just have to make a special effort. Around the same time my good friend Andrew Korlaki presented me with an original Exakta 66 Operator's Manual. Now, that is what I call serendipity - very unexpected good fortune indeed.



Exakta 66.

Over the last few years eBay has also provided the very first of the innovative SLR/VP's – the VP Exakta A – Version 1 - (1933) – designed for use with 127 film. It has also provided an example of the unusual VP Exakta C – Version 1 – (1935), which has provision for the use of a sheet-film plate, as well as the usual 127 roll film. This camera, complete with the viewing screen and a set of sheet-film holders in the original Ihagee satchel, as



Exakta VP-C, 1935 with sheet film holders.



Exa Rheinmetall. 1956.

well as the essential numbered spacer ring between the lens and camera body, came from Gary Cullen – a renowned Canadian Exakta collector. A rare example of the VP Exakta Junior – Version 3 – (chrome 1938) has found its way from Greece. More recently an Exa Rheinmetall Sommerda (1956) has also turned up, from Germany.



Ihagee Patent Klapp Reflex.

Another moment of relative indulgence via eBay has seen the acquisition of an Ihagee Patent Klapp Reflex (1926), a wonderfully innovative example of just how much can be folded into a compact case. When unfolded it is quite an elegant eye-catcher.

By the way, once you have been bitten by the bug, all photographic collecting is relative – isn't it? Relative to how much you really want the object? Relative to how much spare cash you have? Relative to how much you are prepared to sell in

order to scrape up the funds? Relative to how much your son will lend you? Relative to how much of this your wife/esteemed other needs to know about, based on the altruistic ethic “What you don’t know you won’t have to worry about”?

Not that I haven’t been honest with my wife (also known as the Minister for Finance and War). I have made it clear to her that, should I fall off the perch, she is to go to Andrew Korlaki and get him to value and sell the collection – on the understanding that the said collection might be larger and more valuable than she is aware. Memo – I must remember to tell Andrew about this...!

Having gathered together the above, plus a fairly extensive collection of the Varex, Exa, and RTL models, there are still some significant challenges ahead – you might say the holy grail of Exakta collecting:

- The pre-war Exakta 66 – with horizontal body (1938)
- The Night Exakta (1934-1937)
- The Kine Exakta – Version 1 – with round magnifier glass in view-finder (1936)
- The Exakta REAL (1966)

Meanwhile there are many Exakta-fit lenses and accessories to tease the Exaktaphile. *Aguila and Rouah* provide a fascinating documentation of around 180 lenses produced to fit the Exakta. The following is a compressed summary:

- **Angenieux – 20 lenses – from 24/3.5 to 180/4.5**
- **Astro-Berlin – 10 lenses – from 125/2.3 Pantachar to the 2000/10 Astro-Telestan**
- **Dallmeyer-London – 9 lenses – from 100/4.5 to 1000/?**
- **Enna-Munich – 11 lenses – from the 24/4 Lithagon to the 600/5.6 Tele-Ennalyt**
- **Kilfitt-Munich – 9 lenses – from the 40/3.5 MacroKilar to 600/5.6 FernKilar**
- **Meyer Gorlitz – 29 lenses – from the 30/3.5 Lydith to the 500/5.6 Orestegor**
- **Novoflex-Memmingen – 14 lenses – from 35/3.5 to 640/9**
- **Nippon Kogaku-Japan – Nikkor Q 135/3.5**
- **Rodenstock-Munich – 11 lenses – from 30/2.8 Eurygon to the 180/4.5 Rotelar**
- **Schacht-Ulm Donau – 12 lenses – from 35/3.5 Travegon to 200/4 Tele-Travalon**
- **Schneider – 30 lenses – from the 28/4 Curtagon to the 360/5.5 Tele-Xenar**
- **Som Berthiot – 150/5.5 (for VP models)**
- **Steinheil-Munich – 12 lenses – from 35/4.5 Culmigon to 200/3.5 Tele-Quinar**
- **Tewe-Berlin – From 200/3.2 Telagon to the 1000/6.3 Telon**
- **Voigtlander-Braunschweig – the Zoomar 36-82/2.8**
- **Zeiss – 42 lenses – from the 20/3.5 Flektogon to the 300/4 Sonnar, as well as a 1000/5.6 mirror lens (1968), length 510 mm, weight 14 kg.**

Aguila and Rouah add the caveat that this list is by no means complete. An exhaustive list on www.google.com > Exakta > Ihagee and Exakta Products and History > Equipment (cameras, lenses, accessories, manuals, patents) > Exakta Lens List, identifies no less than 2289 lenses produced to fit the Exakta, by 207 manufacturers! One marvels at the magnitude of the Exakta market necessary to generate such a supply.

Many of these lenses continue to be offered on eBay, in particular Zeiss, Schneider, Meyer- Gorlitz, and Steinheil Munchen – as well as Kilfitt and Angenieux, which bring higher prices. A selection of these can bring an extra dimension to an Exakta collection. My first Meyer-Gorlitz was an early 1937 105mm for the Kine Exakta. It has retained a special meaning for me because I found it in a box of odds and ends at the back of a stall at the Prahran Bazaar. You had to be an Exakta collector to know what it was. After



Exakta fit lenses.

careful cleaning it looks great on my Kine Exakta from Phillip Island, a double serendipity if you like. Over the years I have gathered a modest collection of Meyer-Gorlitz, culminating late last year with a mint Orestegor 500 (1965), the monster of the line. There is an attraction about Meyer-Gorlitz lenses – an aesthetic, which makes them look just right on an Exakta.

Even further dimension can be added to an Exakta collection through acquisition of some of the extensive range of accessories. If you wish you can chase down any of the sixteen inter-changeable viewfinders, including the rare and exotic Jubilee model (1961), one of which has been on eBay for many months at US\$150. There is also a magnifying view-finder (1958) with a bayonet attachment, which allows the use of a 50mm lens in place of the magnifying lens. Or you can collect the range of combination light meter/view-finders (3). There are two Ihagee produced attachments to mount an Exakta on a microscope.



Exakta/Ihagee Cell Prism.



*Exakta
On
Microscope.*



Close-Up Bellows.

There are beautifully machined Ihagee close-up rings – two types of close-up bellows – strongly built copying stands – stereoscopic attachments – ten different types of focus screen – as well as technical attachments for medical photography, including endoscopy!

It is one thing to have a collection; it is another thing to display it. For many years a large part of my Exakta collection has been packed away in boxes. A rather odd outcome, I must admit, after all the effort – to say nothing of the cash - that has been expended in such a lengthy and

dedicated search. There has been the occasional outing on the family mantelpiece for favoured pieces – none of which seemed to give much pleasure to the Minister for Finance and War. They just didn't seem to go well with vases of flowers and 'her things'. They were endured, with heavy sighs – and the relief was palpable when they were finally removed and put back in their boxes.

I'm not sure if I should again call it serendipity, but that situation changed when Mr Rudd distributed his first financial stimulus package late last year. By good fortune Mr Harvey Norman had a post-Christmas sale, which produced a considerable reduction on an excellent glass display cabinet, which just happened to fit into a spare space in a second bedroom. It even has remote control lighting. So I now have five shelves of shining Exaktas, plus a selection of lenses and accessories, on display. Not the whole collection. That would take another cabinet, and a possible skirmish with the Minister for Finance and War. It pays not to rush these things. And that leads to the ultimate question – now that the Exakta hunt, in large part, is over (apart from items that are exceptionally rare and exceptionally expensive) – where to now? Continue collecting – or call it a day? And what shall one do with the collection? The bottom line seems to revolve around the question of satisfaction. Until now the satisfaction has been related to the success of the hunt. Where is the sense of satisfaction and achievement now that the hunt is tapering off?

In facing these questions a couple of things have become clear. I have played some part in upholding the Ihagee mystique – in maintaining the history of a camera, which holds a unique position in the evolution of photography. At the same time, in the process of collecting, I have helped to conserve a significant collection of this remarkable marque for posterity. That is satisfaction indeed.

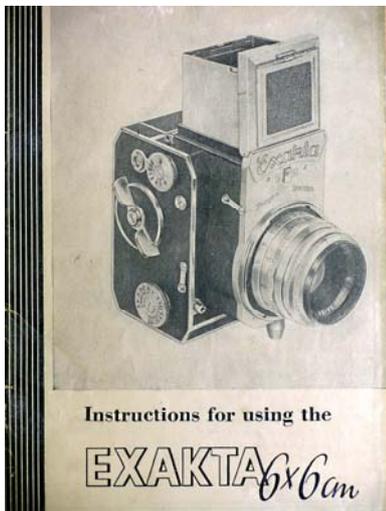
AN IHAGEE ADDENDUM - Geoff Schirmer

Since writing “*The Ihagee Mystique*” I have had the good fortune to acquire a Pre-War Exakta 66 – a rare bird indeed – and even more rare in excellent condition.



Exakta 66 (1950) and Exakta 66 (1938).

It happened this way. Having bid successfully for a copy of Exakta history on eBay, I asked the seller if he happened to be an Exakta collector, at the same time indicating my Exakta interest, as well as my membership of the APCS. The seller replied that he did indeed have a collection of Exaktas which he was gradually selling, and invited me to indicate any Exakta items I was seeking. By return email I sent my list of Exakta desirables – the VP Night-Exakta, the round-window Kine, the pre-war 66, and the Exakta Real.



Original Instructions.

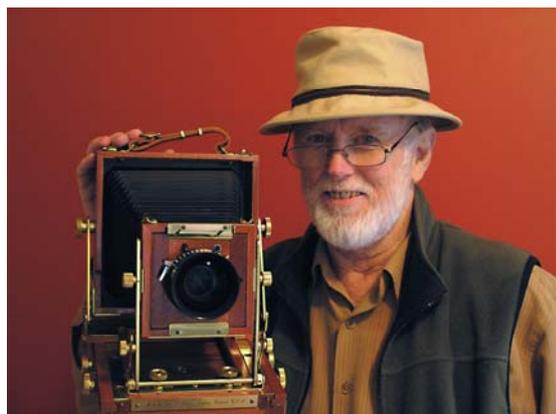
Back came the prompt response that he did indeed have a Pre-War Exakta 66 - Tessar 80mm f2.8 for sale, and that it was in excellent condition, having been serviced in 2002. Attached were a series of photos, which showed that the camera was in remarkable condition indeed. He also provided its history. It had been bought second hand in New York right after WWII by his friend Amadee Landry who had just been discharged. At the time it cost a great deal of money, and Amadee had to take out a loan to pay for it. The camera traveled, together with Amadee and his wife, to Peru and Chile where they worked with a USA funded International Development Agency during the late 40's and early 50's to introduce the latest agricultural, seeding, crop rotation, and irrigation methods. He took all his photographic chemical supplies with him, and worked in colour as well as black and white. After further travels the Exakta 66 passed into the hands of the seller – Bob Locke.

Bob offered the camera to me at a price which represented a favourable deal, but which I could not meet at the time. I put my cards on the table, indicating that I did not have the necessary funds at the moment but, with the selling of expendable items - together with favourable sales from an exhibition of black and white photography at Geelong, I might be able to do business in a couple of months. Bob, bless him, replied to the effect that he was quite willing to wait, and that he in fact preferred to do business this way rather than through eBay and PayPal.

In the interim, through email correspondence, we developed a mutual trust and respect. We sent each other photos, together with anecdotes from our travels. I discovered that Bob lived in Concord – Massachusetts, not far from the City of Boston. I also discovered that he had traveled Down Under in 2007 and, as well as developing a taste for VB, had conducted research into the convict history of a strand of the Locke clan in Tasmania.

Eventually I was able to scrape together enough US dollars, and the deal was done. I told Bob I would send him a copy of the Back Focus issue with the article on *The Ihagee Mystique*, and that it would include an attachment telling the story of how the rare 1939 Exakta 66 found its way to Australia. So, Bob, here it is. As we say in Oz – “Thanks mate”.

Geoff Schirmer – a photographic journey



Geoff Schirmer with large format camera.

The family Kodak Box Brownie 2a 116 was my first contact with photography. I grew up during the austere years of WW2 when the camera was only used for significant family events. Meanwhile my siblings and I spent many enjoyable hours poring over our parents' collection of black and white prints from the 20's and 30's, many featuring a decorative outline, and having "Marchants Studio" stamped on the back.

I can remember spending time as a kid gazing into the display of photographs in the window of the local photographer's shop, and admiring an old

mahogany and brass camera and tripod on display. I can also remember an intriguing whiff of fixer drifting out of the shop. In my late teens one of my friends extolled the virtues of an Exakta. I eventually saw one in the window of a photographic store in Adelaide and was fascinated by its distinctive faceplate, glossy black ribs, and trapezoid design. Being shy and impecunious I took it no further.

In the early years of marriage and family my wife and I bought a Kodak Instamatic and shot slides of kids and holidays. In 1971 I became interested in rock-climbing in the Blue Mountains, and soon discovered that I needed something better than the Instamatic. The subsequent Nikkormat opened up a whole new world. A move to Portland in Western Victoria led to further climbing photography in the Grampians and at Mt Arapiles. With the help of a local professional photographer, Mr Cor Melis, I ventured into black and white. I have vivid recollections of the deep satisfaction experienced in developing my first film and print. At the same time I was attracted to the Bridgewater Peninsula, near Portland, exploring symbols in landscape and nature as metaphors of the human spirit, weathered by, yet enduring the seasons of life. Participation in the Portland Camera Club led to winning the Black and White section of the annual Western Districts Inter-Club Competition in 1974/75. A Kowa Six took me into the world of medium format.



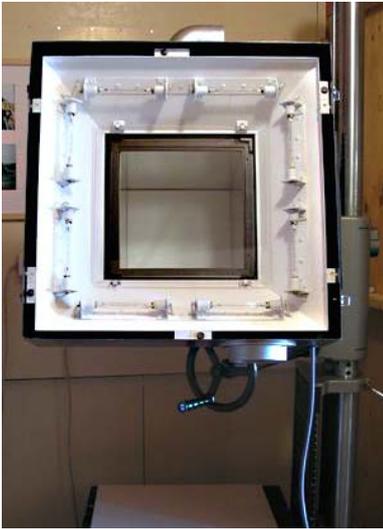
Geoff Schirmer climbing at Mt Arapiles

Photo: Noel Mackenzie



With the Durst L184 and De Vere Colour Head with EIGHT Lamps!

A move to Melbourne in 1978 led to further photography, in black and white as well as colour, during extensive bushwalking and cross-country skiing in the Victorian Alps. In 1987 I joined the Ringwood Black and White Club and, apart from success in the 1988 Annual Open and Set Competitions, it was my good fortune to meet Andrew Korlaki and to benefit from his extraordinary knowledge of photography – as well as to enjoy his generous encouragement and friendship. Andrew introduced me to 4x5, giving me the loan of a MPP. The developing of my first 4x5 negative was another moment of epiphany. Andrew subsequently sold me the MPP, as well as a Durst 4x5 enlarger. The Camera Exchange provided a Rodagon 135 for the Durst, and I picked up a Gerocon 150 for the MPP. I was in large-format heaven. The impact of a snappy 4x5 image on the baseboard took me into yet another world. The MPP was eventually traded for a Zone VI 4x5, which was subsequently fitted with a Nikkor 210mm lens.



Heart of the Beast! Eight Quartz Halogen lamps. Enough wattage in there to light up the MCG!

Andrew also introduced me to collecting, and invited me to join the APCS. My first experience of an APCS auction, at the Melbourne Camera Club, was a revelation. I was stunned by the variety and the history of the photographica up for sale. I also hugely enjoyed the theatre of the occasion, from the banter of the auctioneer to the variations in intensity of the bidding. I became aware of the expression “He must have really wanted that”. Around the same time I found myself once again looking at an Exakta, in Michaels window. This time I grabbed it. I then bid for an Exa at an APCS auction and, behold, I was an Exakta collector.

In 2000 I mustered up the courage to have an exhibition, and made myself known, together with samples of my work, to a gallery in the Dandenongs. The work sold surprisingly well. Since then there have been 9 more exhibitions, with 2 planned for 2010. Each event presents an opportunity to try to take the work to another level. My work has also featured in climbing and skiing publications, as well as Australian and UK magazines.



Coastal Tree - Bridgewater



Afternoon Light



Storm Tree

A few years ago I acquired a Kodak 2D 8x10 through the Trading Post, and the Camera Exchange provided a pristine Fuji 300mm. My thoughts turned to an 8x10 enlarger. I picked up a De Vere 108AF light head, and drew up plans to build my own, acquiring an Apo-Nikkor 300mm from the ever-bountiful Camera Exchange. Then a Durst L184 popped up in the Trading Post at a modest price. I have subsequently fitted the De Vere head to the Durst. It contains 8 x 500watt QH lamps, which I drive through a robust transformer (APCS auction), and throws a great image down onto the baseboard, through the Apo-Nikkor. A Zone VI - 8 x 10 – has found its way from Vancouver to Geelong. My current challenge is to produce some quality 8x10 negatives to feed the monster.

In the Outback with a Pentacon Six

Paul I Boon



Figure 1: My trusty old 60 Series LandCruiser on the way to Lake Mungo. Photographed with a Leica R9 and 35-70 mm Vario-Elmar R lens. Harry, on the right, is a proficient user of his old Pentax Spotmatic F, but is seen here enjoying a chocolate éclair with his sister Sonja.

My work often takes me to odd and remote places, and the last six months has been no exception. I've been running a project on the ecological impacts of tourism on natural ecosystems and, after we'd worked on systems in Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria, recently extended it to include the arid zone of northern South Australia and southern parts of the Northern Territory. I was to be away for 5 weeks for this part of the project, so took my family with me rather than be stuck alone in a series of isolated hotels by myself.

Photographically recording the condition of field sites is always a significant part of my work. Whilst my colleagues use various

little digital things for their photos, I constantly amaze them with a bewildering array of cameras and related paraphernalia whenever we go on field trips together: old (and not so old) Leicas, Canons, Minoltas, Pentaxes and Yashicas, with the odd Nikonos thrown in for the really wet trips. As I was to be away for over a month in one of the most photogenic parts of Australia, I had to give very serious thought to the photographic equipment I'd take. For once I was not limited to what I could carry on a plane or on my back, as we'd be traveling in our trusty old LandCruiser: I could thus take a vast armory of bits and pieces, in a variety of formats. The expedition is shown enjoying morning tea on the road from Mildura to Lake Mungo in Figure 1.

So the title is not quite correct: in fact I was in the Outback with three and a half cameras. The first was my Pentacon Six, along with its 50 mm f4 and 65 mm f2.8 Carl Zeiss Jena Flektogons and a Schneider 80 mm f2.8 Biometar. I've covered these lenses in a previous article in *Back Focus*, No 63. As the Pentacon lacks a light meter, I brought along a hand-held Zeiss Ikophot selenium meter which, like the camera, dates from the 1950s or so.

The second camera system was considerably newer: a R9 Leica with 35-70 f4 Vario-Elmar R (i.e. the Solms zoom lens, not the much less admired Sigma-derived one with the same range of focal lengths but the variable aperture that goes from f 3.5-4.5) and 90 mm f 2 Apo-Summicron R. I used Fuji Velvia 50 in both the Pentacon and Leica.

The third camera was a Canon G10. The Canon is a compact digital with an unnecessarily big 15 MB sensor but, more importantly, a good old-fashioned optical viewfinder.

The half camera was my son's (Harry) Spotmatic F with SMC Takumar 55 mm f1.8. It ranks as only a half, as he was adamant that he wouldn't let me use it. Even when I'd run out of film in both the Pentacon and Leica and the setting sun was creating fabulous images in the sandstone ruins at Fumina (just north of Leigh Creek) and I was pleading to have the Pentax for just one photo, Harry declined by saying "You've got enough cameras Dad". Mind you, this was coming from a lad who had previously asked me "Dad, when you die, can I have your Hasselblad?" The three cameras are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Canon, Leica and Pentacon cameras used in northern South Australia.

Having three cameras that spanned 50 years of the development of photographic instruments proved an interesting experience. The Leica was, as expected, superb. The metering system performed faultlessly and always produced images that were perfectly exposed. Even in the desert with unbelievably strong contrasts in lighting and a tonality that hardly ever conformed to an assumed 18% reflectance, every transparency was exposed

correctly; my attempts at bracketing in conditions that I 'knew' would fool the meter were completely unwarranted. The Vario-Elmar R zoom lens performed as well as I had remembered it did in the past: beautifully contrasty, saturated images with absolutely no flare at all, even when shot into the sun. This lens delivers a very strong, and initially slightly disconcerting, differentiation between the plane in focus and the planes in front and behind. There's an almost etching-like sharpness to the image but still an incredible three-dimensionality: no gently gradating fuzziness between what's in focus and what isn't with this lens. (As an aside, I wonder whether the soft gradation so enjoyed in many older lenses is simply uncorrected spherical aberration?)

The award for staggering image quality, though, must go to the Apo-Summicron R. It is simply the most perfect lens I have ever used. One night I was photographing (into the setting sun) some camels browsing on a mulga-vegetated hillside: every branch was clear, every hair on the camel's nose visible even at f2, every shade and colour perfectly reproduced, and an unbelievable ability to simultaneously hold detail in the shadows and in the highlights. The only problem with the Leica set-up is the weight and bulk of the whole system. Perhaps its value was a bit worrisome too: I was careful never to let it sit in view on the front seat of the unattended LandCruiser, even in a seemingly remote area with no-one about.

But the camera I reached for when I was alone for a moment and really wanted to take photographs was the old Pentacon. It's so simple, so straightforward, so rewarding. Yes, it's a handful to cart about and it's impossible to take a photo quickly or without drawing the perplexed attention of onlookers, marveling that some-one would use such an antiquity instead of a modern digital thingy that can also make phone calls, set your diary and probably also make a cup of tea (sorry, latté for these people) in the more advanced models.

The Schneider Biometar returned startlingly sharp transparencies that are a delight to look at. This is perhaps not a surprise, as I read somewhere recently that the Biometar is simply the original 5-element Carl Zeiss Planar but, because of the old schism between West and East Germany, it wasn't allowed to be called a Planar. Of course, having it made recently by Schneider in the (unified) Germany solved the quality-control problems that may have afflicted the original East German lens. Ditto the 50 mm Flektogon with regard to image quality, and at all apertures. The much older 65 mm Flektogon is a bit soft at open aperture but sharpens up wonderfully at f5.6. And remember that this is a lens that ceased manufacture in the early 1960s, so it's no spring chicken.

Although many people hate the square format of a 6x6 camera, I find it perfect for the photos that I take. Aside from the boringly technical images needed for reports, my flights of photographic fancy extend to photographing trees and, for the big squat River Red Gums, a square format is perfect. Finally, there is much to be said for a waist-level finder and a ground glass to compose on: it's very easy to hold a camera steady while it rests on your (middle-aged) tummy and so much more stable than holding a digital thing at arm's length.

To finish up the Pentacon saga, a good word for the Ikophot light meter. It's never let me down, and is a perfectly designed piece of equipment. How was it that Zeiss could design a photographic tool that was so perfect for its intended purpose in the 1950s, but many modern-day camera makers consistently produce things that are all but unusable? (Like menu-driven protocols to set film speed or aperture in digital cameras.)



Figure 3: Cazneau tree in the Flinders Ranges. Photographed with a Leica R9 and 35-70 mm Vario-Elmar R lens.

So much for the equipment; what about the photos? In the northern parts of South Australia, we spent most time in the northern Flinders and Gammon Ranges and these areas are a photographic wonderland.

We visited the River Red Gum near Wilpena Pound that Harold Cazneaux made famous with his 1937 photograph. It's still there, just as enduring as he had



Figure 4: Ridgetop Tour at Arkaroola. Photographed with a Leica R9 and 90 mm Apo-Summicron R lens.

imagined it to be (Figure 3). As another aside, note that the 3rd Edition of *Cazneaux: The quiet observer* has just been republished by the National Library of Australia. It's a steal at under \$40.

The desert environment is simply stunning in the Flinders and Gammon Ranges, and the Ridgetop Tour (run from Arkaroola Wildrness Resort) is a 'must do'. The day we did the tour was awfully overcast and the light really flat, but somehow this lack of strong shadows made the images so



Figure 5: Lake Mungo.
Photographed with a Leica R9 and 35-70 mm Vario-Elmar R lens.

much better. Perhaps it was a case of Velvia's super-saturated colours compensating for the general flatness of the light, and the overcast weather not creating too much contrast between those bits in the sunlight and those in the shadows. Figure 4 shows what to expect.



Figure 6: Road through northern Flinders Ranges on way to Parachilna and Blinman. *Photographed with a Leica R9 and 35-70 mm Vario-Elmar R lens.*

A few concluding remarks: do the trip up to the Flinders and Gammon Ranges! Stay at Mungo Lodge (120 km west of Mildura, up a good road when it's dry) and marvel at the site of the oldest known example of human ritual burial (known originally as 'Mungo Woman', the skeleton is now more politely called 'Lady Mungo'). The Lake Mungo landscape is shown in Figure 5.

Then mosey up to Broken Hill via the half-dead Darling River and pop into Silverton to see the site where Mad Max 2 was filmed (and see the replica black

Falcon outside the Silverton Hotel). Take the half-bitumen/half-dirt road to Wilpena Pound and the southern Flinders to photograph the best River Red Gums and rock-strewn gorges in southern Australia; mosey up to the north to get to Blinman and Parachilna (Figure 6); continue up the (not too bad, but sometimes corrugated) dirt road to Arkaroola and the Gammon Ranges for a week of photographic indulgence; then head back to civilization via Warraweena (a not-so-good road) and onto the vinous delights of Clare and the civility of Adelaide. And take a real camera with you; otherwise you'll be so disappointed at not being able to do justice to what nature has to offer.

A Different Kind of Pub, South American Style!

Holger Schult

On my recent trip to Buenos Aires a city of 13 million people, I caught up with a friend of mine who I met through the IDCC (Internet Directory of Camera Collectors), Jose Ramón, (he has his web page too now, in English/Spanish.. only (Argentinean cameras), <http://mercatorcameras.googlepages.com/industriaargentina>



El Obelisco at the Plaza de la Republica built in 1936 for the 400th anniversary of the City of Buenos Aires.



City traffic. 10-lanes on each side. Don't even think of driving!

Buenos Aires it is the city where Evita Peron lived and died and the story of her being filmed with Madonna in Buenos Aires. There was a lot of unrest as the Argentinean did not want her to

play the part of Evita, as she is a capitalist and they boycotted the film production and the film crew had to move to a neighbouring country to continue the film production. The film has never been in any of the movie theatres in Argentina. You may be lucky if you find a video of that film... they where "not happy!"

Jose took me to a very unique pub, just out of the city centre. Opened in 2002 as The Buenos Aires Museum of Photography. Alex Simik had the right idea - serve alcohol and food to you while you look around the cameras and exhibits.



(L to R.) Owner, Alex Simik, Jose Ramon, Holger Schult and Nestor, a Minox Collector.

You just HAVE to see this place! I went with two Argentinean friends. We got there at 4pm, and didn't leave till 4am! Well - there was LOTS to see, lots of camera talk, and lots to drink, open 24 hrs.

Founded by advertising photographer Alejandro (Alex) Simik, there are cameras and accessories everywhere. Along the walls, IN the tables, even the drinks fridge is built into a display cabinet! The place is just full of all things photographica - studio cameras, not only cameras manufactured in Argentina, but also accessories, advertising materials etc.



In front of the Pub/Museum.



Myself and Jose.

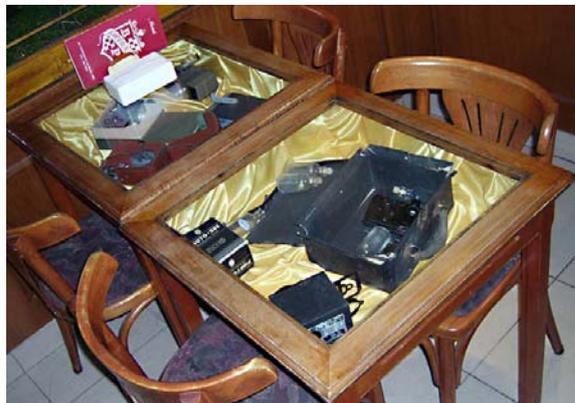
Alex's aim is not just to promote the evolution of photography, but photography itself. The Pub hosts a monthly photo competition, along with lectures and workshops on all aspects of photography, both film based and digital (and yes - they cater to both kinds of photographers- PC and MAC!). There is even a fully equipped studio available for hire.

I was invited to a club meeting, half Spanish half English and there was a lot of restoring going on at that meeting and I was presented with a 360 degree panoramic photo of the area the pub was in.



What a pub! Wall to wall cameras! Heaven for a collector!

In fact the museum has been awarded a rating plaque by the Argentinean government as a treasure to the country, in recognition of both its preservation of the history of photography for the people of Argentina, and for Alex's creation of a unique tourist attraction.



Even the tables have displays.. IN them!



At their meeting. Lots of interesting renovations being done.



At the meeting, I was presented with a nice 360° panorama of the area.



Everywhere you turn, still more cameras.

The problem is if you leave the pub late at night, having had a drink, alcohol is not the problem; the problem is you have to drive through red lights at night as you could be mugged. Never stop at night on a Red light, just look and drive, that rule goes for anywhere in South America.

As I said - if you ever get the chance to go there - do it! And if you don't - have a look at their web site: <http://www.simik.com.ar/museo> It is in Spanish only. Lots of old camera pictures though.

And if you are going to Argentina get in contact with my friend Jose Ramón, very nice guy. He has a very nice collection - he would love to meet other collectors, by email or in person. - and if you're lucky he may even show you some of his collection, but that's another story, to come soon.

October '09 Auction.

Report and Photos, Ian Carron.



Following some much-needed rainy days (remember rain, that wet stuff that falls from the sky?) our small band of happy helpers arrived at the MRH on a fine day to unpack the van and commence set-up.

Pandemonium reigned supreme in the effort to have items sequentially sorted and on display by viewing time and some early arrivals had to be asked to take a seat and be patient until things were ready.

Finally, all the tables were completed with the 283 lots on offer and inspections could begin!



*Thompson Land Camera.
#410 of 500 made, sold for
\$105.*



A broad range of items was available, covering most areas of collecting interests. For those with a weakness for cameras with red bellows, today seemed to be your day, a number of nice examples to choose from. One, a Sanderson in good condition, attracted a minor 'bidding war' between Adrian E and our secretary Margaret and Adrian refused to be intimidated even when Margaret stood up and fixed him with her famous glare! (He won the item!)

However, that's jumping ahead. With inspections finished, lunches partaken of, we preceded with a short

meeting and, as attending members will have seen, our library has now been housed at the MRH hall in recently purchased metal cabinets, making it far more accessible. Max Amos conducted the auction with his usual expertise, with a coffee break being taken half way through.

A nice Nikkormat FT2 outfit w/ Nikkor f1.8/85mm, Nikkor Zoom 35-70mm and a nice range of accessories fetched \$600 and a George Hare Full Plate camera with 3 lenses (not listed in McK's) went for \$260. An Ikonta 523/2 with Novar lens and needing a little TLC found a new owner for \$60 as did a green Werra in VG condition for \$55.

Total sales were just over \$12G and a good day for both attending and absentee bidders.

Letters to the Editor:

Hello Ian,

Just returned home after 3 weeks away and have opened the computer to a great selection of humorous e-mails which have brightened my day considerably. Noted your advice re the publication of my article in BF and have in the last hour collected the 3 copies from the Post Office - and again congratulations on a great mag. The quality of the photographic reproduction is phenomenal. Your expertise in assembling, editing articles, including photos etc, I hope the Society members at large appreciate and value. It is no small task to produce a magazine of this quality and the time consumed is no small consideration either! Congratulations again!

Now like Oliver Twist, "Please Sir can I have some more?" The 3 copies sent have been snapped up (by Cocks' descendents) and I have been asked for a copy by the Local Library, The local Historical Society, the High School Library and the Family History Centre - hence 4 more copies would be great. Would really appreciate this if you could oblige.

Best Regards, **Graham Harmer. #106.** (*Author, Photographers of Kiama, BF #74.*)

G'Day Ian, well mate, congratulations are again in order, my copy of BF was in the box tonite when we got home from shopping, have only had a flick through but it's a beauty, like a good wine it just gets better and better, well done. **Brian Howden. #205.**

G'day Ian, The copies of APCS Backfocus, September issue arrived by post today. Great reading & thanks for your efforts in getting Lichtensteig in print! I will distribute the other copies to those with potential interest. Cheers, **John Hoehn. #360.** Switzerland..... land of Cheese and Swatches.

Dear Ian, I did never dream my modest article so perfectly edited. I will be glad if its idea was partly as good as the edition. THANKS THANKS! Now a few words about history the Enigma secret has been solved by the Polish people. Marian Rejewski, Jerzy Rozycki and Henryk Zygalski. With they collaborators they constructed the copy of Enigma on the second part of January 1933. There is a lot of references proving that statement, if you wished I will send you it. Anyway, on June 24 (1939) just before WW2 begun Alistair Denninston, Alfred Knox and probably Stewart Menzies (under the nick name as Sandwich) from the British Intelligence and Gustav Bertrand from France visited Warsaw and there was an opportunity to test the Polish Enigma copy. Then they were told two Enigma copies were designated for England and for France Intelligence. Its transport was executed by sea to France. On August 16 Bertrand delivered one device to London (Victoria Station) and transferred it to colonel Stewart Menzies. Well, I am afraid the letter is a bit too long, but I believe the Enigma story is interesting. **Stefan Sztromajer. #432**

January 17 Field Trip



For this trip we will be heading to the cool climate in the foothills of the Strzelecki ranges; Korumburra and Coal Creek. For train travellers and those in good voice, a Society bus will start from Dandenong station at 0930, (9.30am or when the little hand is on 9 and the big one is on 12!) or pick up along the way as required and head to Loch with its Antique and Bric-a-Brac shops. The South Gippsland Tourist Railway is an option to travel on to Korumburra for lunch, then to Coal Creek. The

rail track winds through the hills with spectacular views and steep inclines, while Korumburra station is on the heritage list. Coal Creek is a museum dedicated to the history of coal and dates back to 1872. Photo opportunities on this day are boundless. Register your interest with Andrew on 0400 081738 or andrew@korlaki.com by January 10th so we can make the necessary arrangements.



Photo 1. A Klutch of Seven Colourful Kodaks!

the first design and manufactured camera to come out of the London. It is of the box shape made of metal. Taking 120 film giving a 6x9cm image or 2¼" x 3¼". The lens is a Meniscus with built in portrait lens, in front of a Rotary shutter. Camera has two brilliant finders one each for portrait and landscape. The front of the camera has an angled edge and has a raised round plastic lens surround with white lettered Portrait Brownie at the top and No.2 at the bottom. It has a thin aluminum metal line on front, which joins to an oval around finders. Behind the plastic as mentioned earlier is a built in portrait lens moved in place when taking a photo by pulling a lever on the side.

The body is covered in one of seven colours, Red, Blue, Maroon, Dark green, Grey, Brown and Black of leatherette material. It has a black metal trim and handle. The camera had two different winders 1929-31 a Key winder and 1931-35 a knob winder. Inside is a metal film carrier. Lifting a metal clasp opens the back.

I got my first one about 7 years ago in red. My sister was on a working holiday in London and saw one at an antique market. She knew I was collecting old cameras so she

contacted me by phone told me the condition looked good as far as she could see and she described it. Not having one and taking a punt I told her to get it. It cost about 20 pounds. The next one was the black one I got for about \$5 at a camera market. The other colours I bought over the years of various prices, the dearest about \$100.



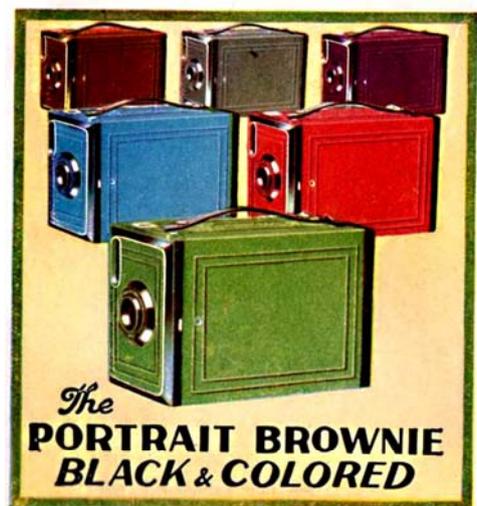
Photo 2. Knob winder, 1929-31.



Photo 3. Knob winder, 1931-35.

Looking at brightening up your camera collection, why not take a look at the wonderful array of coloured box cameras that are available on the market. Companies such as Kodak, Agfa-Ansco, Coronet and Ensign marketed most in the late 1920's to the 50's. The best one's during the 30's when Art deco style was in fashion such as the Kodak Beau Brownie.

The camera I am writing about from my collection is the Kodak No.2 Portrait Brownie camera. This smart looking model was introduced in 1929 and discontinued 1935. It was



Here's a clever idea: A new model Brownie with which crisp, clear "close-ups" can be made just as easily as ordinary views.

For a "close-up," you just press down a small lever which brings an extra lens into position. This lever springs back automatically when the finger is removed. Simple to use and handsome to look at. One of the first cameras from Kodak's new English works—a quality article all through.

Picture size is 2¼ x 3¼ inches. In black, 19/6
In red, green, brown, grey or blue - - 21/6

Photo 4. Original advertising catalogue, c1929 for the new coloured Brownie cameras.

I am lucky enough to have an original advertising poster sign of the camera as well. It came out of an old chemist shop from behind a wall shelf. Not 100% it does have a little bit of mould and a few pot marks but looks great.

When collecting/buying these cameras be aware that they are now between 75-80 years old. Some are found with leatherette shrinking or lifting due to the glue age. The black painted edges sometimes are worn or dented. The top handle can also be dried out or broken. Not much can usually happen to the basic shutter and an airbrush can blow out any dirt. The viewing mirrors can sometimes be loose or losing their silver. These cameras may still be used today as 120 film is still available. (Not sure for how much longer). There are still great examples out there, if you wait.

Coloured versions green and brown are hard to find. Black is also as it was made two years less than the others. I do see Red, Grey and Blue a lot on eBay. I have seen one or two with the original yellow package box with Brownie character on them sell for around \$500. One was from Australia I remember; I think it has gone overseas. These cameras were also imported and sold in Australia. Thanks Lyle.

There is also a very rare Black Modernist covering version released in Nov 1930 UK for Christmas in limited numbers. Otherwise compared to your standard box camera these stand out from the crowd and look great on display.

Happy collecting.

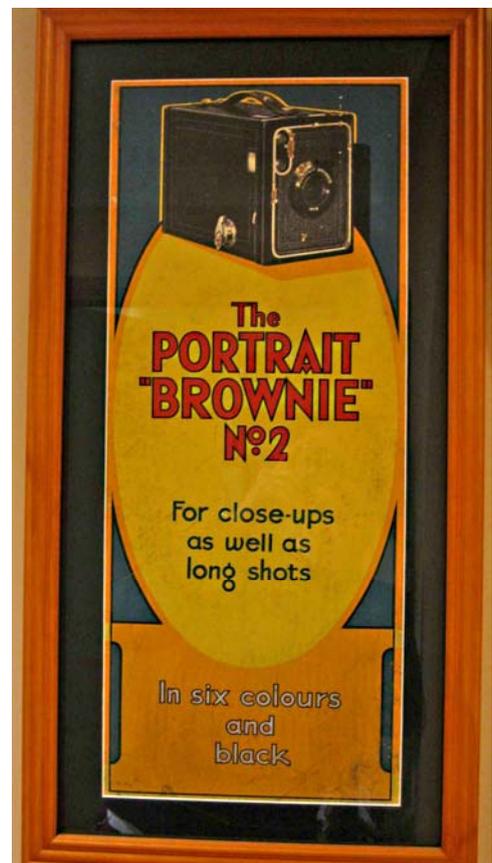
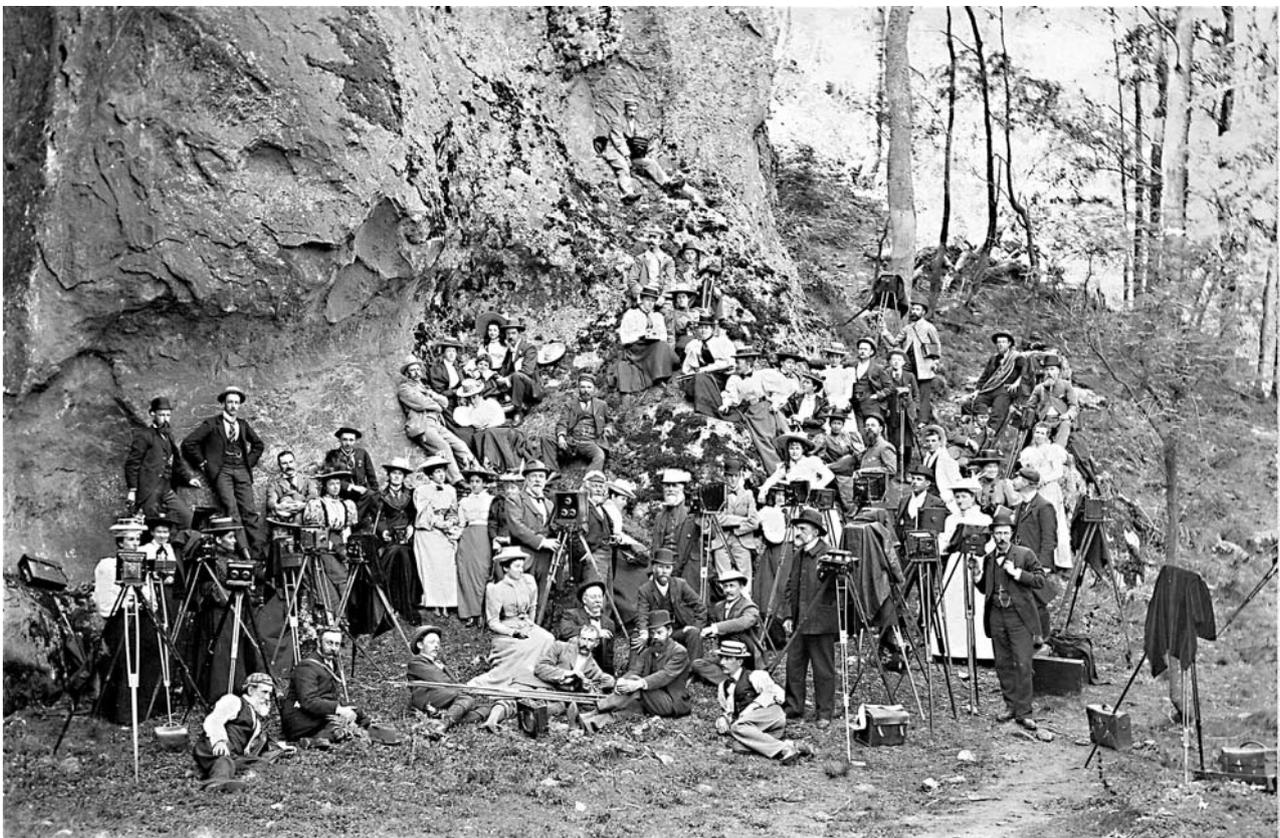


Photo 5. The Advertising Poster obtained from an old chemist shop.



Tom Hellwege submitted this photograph of an early camera club enjoying an outing. Some interesting pieces, now highly collectable, are shown in use. Note the intrepid photographer posed high on the rock face in the centre top of the photograph.

Plastic Kodak 35's, Collectables of the Future?

Text and Photos from Lyle Curr

How many times have you looked in pages of an auction catalogue, or the Photo Trader, or the windows of The Camera Exchange, and wished you had been able to buy cameras off the shelf at their contemporary list prices. What a time we would have if we had a time machine, and could go back to when Thornton Pickards, Contarexes, and Hansa Canons were available “off the shelf”. What a dream!!!!

But we are living in today, and paying the collectors prices for cameras that were bought as useable gear, and worked hard by their owners, or even worse, modified in the back yard, holes drilled and bits added or removed, because the owner did not see this wonderful machine as a collectible. No, it was to be used, and had to be made to suit the needs of its present photographer owner. So we get what's left, and do what we can to put in back the way it was.



The first Kodak 35, the 00 Cartridge Premo, C1916, with paper backed roll film. A modern 35mm cassette included for scale.

Back in the days when I was that obsessed Kodak collector, I used to not only chase the elusive, rare and more esoteric products from the factory of the Great Yellow Father, but based on the philosophy that *I am here now!...* I would buy any and every Kodak I saw, even those modern plastic things coming out of almost every country in Asia.

This finally became a fool's errand, as the proliferation of models made it almost impossible to keep up with them. But I just kept thinking of all those times we, as collectors, wished we had been around and been able to buy our treasures at their “list prices”. So was buying all those plastic Kodaks any different? Will one day way in the future, a collector look at some of these plastic monstrosities and wish he had been where I am now?

Well, lets think about it!!!!

The story of the modern Kodak 35 could be said to have begun in 1916 with the 00 Cartridge Premo tiny box camera. It used non perforated 35mm wide roll film. Over the years Kodak have produced 100's of models and variations in all shapes and sizes, lots of them 35's. Almost all Kodak cameras have been produced with a single philosophy in mind- To be simple and easy to use and that simplicity led to such things as the Box Brownie, and it certainly has become collectible!

The simplicity not only applied to the cameras, but to the film as well. It was with this in mind that the 35mm Retina appeared in 1934. This camera was designed around the “Daylight 35mm Magazine” or 35mm cassette as we know it today.

Kodak continued to produce 35mm cameras which were “simple and easy to use!!” (With the possible exception of the Ektra and Retina Reflexes!!) till the introduction of the 126 “Instamatic” cartridge load cameras. This slowed down the development of the simple and easy to use 35 mm camera and in fact



Original Kodak Retina and an early Kodachrome film. C1935.

Kodak actually ceased production of any type of 35 mm camera from the late 60's.

A lot of those earlier Kodak 35's are now on collectors' shelves.

But the cartridge load systems could not provide the quality of full frame 35mm, and as the technology for the mini lab developed-if you'll pardon the pun- and 35mm cameras proliferated, particularly at the simple and cheap end of the market. The time was ripe for Kodak to return to 35mm camera manufacture.

But the world had changed. Manufacturing costs in the western world were expensive and everything was moving to the third world.



The ID on the original Signet 35.

At home, Kodak was busy logistically supplying the mini labs with paper and chemicals that were being used by other companies' 35mm cameras. But there was a distinct need for simple, easy to use full frame 35's that would provide quality

results for little effort. The Kodak organization as always, set out to fulfill a perceived market need and in early 1984 released 3 new model plastic 35's resurrecting the Kodak Signet name from the 50's, and bearing the Kodak logo. But they were not made in the US. The simplest of the 3 models was the very basic **Signet 35**, with a fixed focus 45mm f8 lens and a single speed (1/60) shutter. There was flash synch. through a hot shoe only and it had manual film advance by thumbwheel. It actually bore no manufacturers ID.



Kodak Signet C1984.

The Signet cameras did not appear in any catalogues that I have seen, and certainly predated the agreement with Kodak and Japanese manufacturer Chinon that bought Kodak back into the full swing of the 35mm sales in 1986. The cameras bore no indication of the country of manufacture-a most unusual feature in itself-but they bear a striking resemblance to a couple of contemporary cameras that appeared in Australia with the Hanimex brand on them and came from the Haking factory in Hong Kong. If this IS where they came from, it was a most unusual arrangement for Kodak!

These 3 cameras are a real mystery as to where they fit into the Kodak scheme of things.

Were they simply marketed in the Far Eastern Regions simply because Kodak wasn't selling enough 35mm film in these areas?? Were they a market test for an already planned more universal release of range of 35mm cameras????

At the time of the Signets release, the word from Kodak in Rochester was that they had no plans for a full range of Kodak 35's in the US!

We may never know the full story of this little foray, but we do know that Kodak went on to return to the 35mm market with the VR series released in 1986, and that the VR series came from manufacturers in a number of Asian countries.

The modern Signets are very uncommon, but they are around here in Australia, indicating that they were only sold in the Far East. If you find one it will probably be cheap, but it is an interesting piece of Kodak history.

That of course is the whole point of this exercise; to show you that there are some VERY INTERESTING, more modern cameras out there that are very collectible and extremely cheap. So if you want to start collecting on a budget you could do worse than to go hunting the post 1986 Kodak 35mm cameras. There is a wide range and as we have seen, some have a great story. We will

look at them in no particular order, but just as they come, just the way you may discover them in your travels on the hunt for cameras.

1996, Kodak has been producing the “Cameo”, a neat little, rounded, aesthetically pleasing camera for a couple of years. But this is the year of the Atlanta Olympics. So a special edition of the motor drive version, the Cameo EX, is produced and packaged to commemorate the Olympic Games. There are not many of these around today and will become quite collectible.

While not strictly 35mm, in late 1991, Canon Inc., Fuji Photo Film Co., Ltd., Eastman Kodak Company, Minolta Co., Ltd., and the Nikon Corporation (the "System Developing Companies") joined in a cooperative research and development venture to explore the possible technologies for a new photo system. This venture resulted in the Advanced Photo System. It still used film, 24mm wide, but like the Kodak Disc, 126 drop in cartridges, and many other film systems and sizes aside from 120 and 35mm has gone by the wayside. The APS cameras are many and



The 1996 Atlanta Olympic Cameo.



The Sydney 2000 Advantix.

varied, and most are not (yet!!!) collectible, but again, an Olympic promo from Kodak is worth having. A pretty simple APS, a Kodak Advantix F 300, but tarted up a bit in silver, a Sydney Olympic logo on it, and special packaging and you have a rather neat year 2000 collectible.

The early “new” Kodak 35s from the mid to late 80’s were very simple cameras, just a box camera really, but taking 35mm film. Some had built in flashes , and maybe 2 apertures to enable use of 100 or 400 ASA (whooooops, sorry) ISO film. But The K4a camera in 3 colours as well as black. A bright red, and bright sky blue, and elegant silver. These are getting less common, particularly in good nick, as the color was just sprayed on and most of them you see today have black showing through the corners and other wear spots. If you see a good one, grab it. You know what happens to coloured cameras on the collector market!



The brick red S100 with original box.

The slightly later S100 was just a more streamlined version of the simple box Kodak modern 35, but it too came in, albeit a more subdued brick red, dark blue and a scarce white version. Probably not as attractive as the bright coloured K4A, but still a coloured camera. The white version appeared in Europe in various guises, and has become eminently collectible already. These are hard to find, and 2 in particular , the “Colors” and the “Elysee” are very attractive cameras. The Colors has all the knobs and controls in bright colored plastic. The Elysee has a



The White S 100 and the “Breeze”

lustrous mother of pearly like finish. There is also a white with pink trim “Breeze “.It is a standard S100 but in this strange livery. I have been unable to track down its origin.

Back to the earlier K series of cameras, in late 1986 Kodak introduced a range of Autofocus 35s. They were larger, more solid cameras, with decent Ektanar lenses. They were made in Japan, and had some quality about them. The VR K 10, K 12 were non standouts in the plethora of compact 35’s of the day, and even the flagship of the fleet, the K 14 Auto everything and even a DATE Back, was not that memorable.....but.....

There was a premium version of the K 14, with the name of Medalist emblazoned upon it. Another famous Kodak name resurrected to give some impetus to an otherwise rather bland camera. The original Medalist was pre war, and known as The Tank. It was a most solid, cast aluminum bodied system camera but designed around 620 film. Hence it did not perform in the sales stakes,



The original Kodak Medalist.



The VR K 14 Medalist version.



Another of the modern Medalists.



If you see this “Medalist “ logo on a plastic modern Kodak 35, take it home with you.

and is a relatively rare collectors item today. The mid 80’s 35mm Medalist is not as impressive in appearance, but could certainly

perform much more photo magic than its pre war ancestor. This promo version of the K 14 is certainly hard to find, and will be eminently collectible as time goes by.

Kodak went on to use the Medalist name on some late 90’s 35mm cameras that came out of China. Watch out for them as you search the junk shops, as while they will probably never be valuable,



The Kodak fx and box.

they are interesting as a promo item, and will always be very scarce.

Lets jump ahead a little .By any other name a mundane, plain black Kodak cheap compact of the mid 90's, made in China by the bootfull.....the Kodak 275. Readily available even today at markets for next to nothing, it will *never* be collectible. But wait, this is NOT one of them. True, it *IS* a Kodak 275, but it's certainly jazzed up. The Kodak fx is colourful with red and yellow fittings and blue in the graphics on the camera. It was made and promoted as a package, and separately you could buy books and projects designed for students to explore various aspects of photography. It did not seem to catch on , and the camera is now not that common, and with its original colourful, Kodak Australasia box, is a great addition to a Kodak or coloured camera collection.



The Star 735-R on its charging dock.

These mid 90's Kodak 35's had become, aside from some very simple models, a typical 35mm compact of the day; black plastic, built in flash, motor wind, and other features depending on model and price. An attempt was made to jazz them up a bit simply by changing the shape, and a couple of curvy bodied models appeared. One of these was the Star 735, but even its strange

shape which it shared with the Star 535 will probably never make it collectible. But ...there *was* a version of the 735..... (The "Star" is optional as all of these xx5 models appeared as Star or not Star, depending on the market in which they were sold).... that will be a true collectible. It is known



My modern Kodak 35's "under glass."

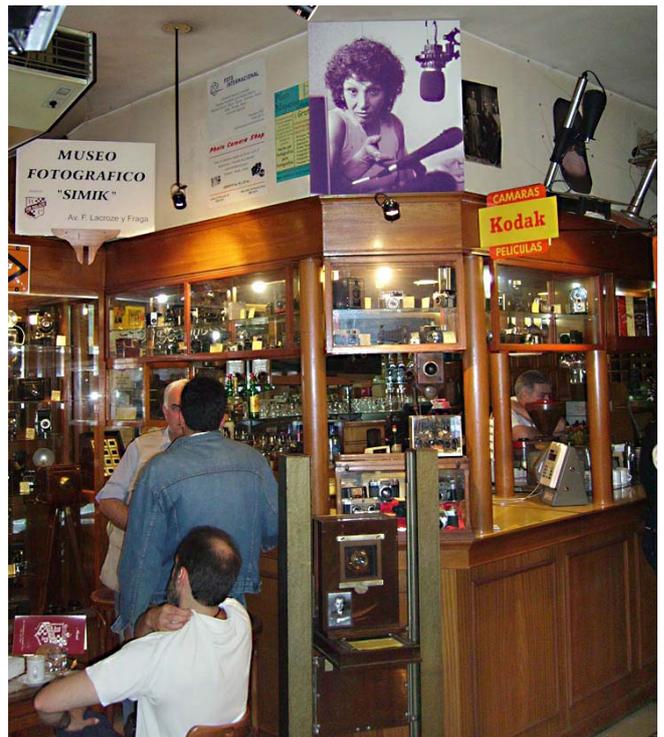
as the Kodak 735-R and was an attempt to free the cheapie compact of the tyranny of the ever present need for changing batteries.. The answer was inbuilt nickel cads, and a charger, which today we would call a "Dock" It was prophetically similar to the charging and other featured docks we have today for your digital cameras. The "R" in the name referring to its capability of being recharged. (Bet you wouldn't have figured *that* out in a million years!!!!)

OK, that's enough of this. There are quite a lot more of these horrendous little beasts that could and will

qualify in years to come as collectibles, and I may even dig out some more one-day and regale you with another tale of their splendour. What about the Kodak Wizen MD-90, or the very latest KB 22 in silver and chrome that looks for all the world like it came out of a show bag as a give-away!! But we'll stop now, and send you out into the markets, antique and junk shops, and 2nd hand shops of the country to find some more treasures to sustain us in our fascinating hobby.

Unfortunately we do not yet have color in Back Focus, so a lot of the attractiveness of these little cameras is lost, and particularly in this last picture. But they do make a most pleasant display on anyone's shelf.

Happy Hunting, Lyle Curr.



Missed by minutes the bargain of the year at the local garage sale? Cleaning your favourite treasure and dropped it?

When Camera Collecting is driving you to drink, Holger Schult has found the pub to drown your worries in!

The problem? It's halfway around the world! And that's yet another reason to reach for a stubby!