

BACK FOCUS

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

Issue No. 82

September, 2011



Michael Parker presents a Miranda history.



*From Han Fokkelman:
Pt 1 of a 3-part series: The Single-8 Story.*



*John Fleming tells how an old Six-16
Brownie Junior revealed some ghosts
from the past.*



*Lyle Curr begins a 4-part series on odd cameras
with the Agfa Super Silette Record.*



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:

In this issue we have articles from two new contributors, **Michael Parker** with a history on **Miranda** and **John Fleming** with a story on how some old family photos were found still in the camera and traced to the (now much older) subjects after half a century.

Lyle Curr, starting with the **Agfa Silette Record**, commences a series on “**Odd Cameras**”, and **Han Fokkelman** begins a treatise on **Single-8**. These two series will run over the coming issues of **Back Focus**.

Another **Ballarat Market** combined with the Ballarat International Foto Biennale (**BIFB**) is now behind us (report inside) and, working under enormous difficulty, our new Market Organiser, **Kevin Saunders** has not only done a credible job, but survived his baptism under fire! A job well done! **Please note** that a **new email address** is applicable to our secretary (secretary@apcsociety.com.au) Very important for absentee auction bid submissions etc.

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WET PLATE STEREO SLIDING BOX CAMERA – REPLICA

Adrian Elshout



Side view showing the detail of workmanship and brass guide.

I enjoy working with wood, so when sometime around 1990 I came across a cardboard box full of “junk” in an antique shop, including two wooden cameras, one of which is a quarter plate Thornton Pickard, I was so taken by the craftsmanship of its construction that I gladly paid \$40 for the lot.

To cut a long story short, this led to my meeting some local Geelong members of the club and the fascination of collecting photographica. Since then I have developed a number of interests in this area, in particular, a passion

for wooden cameras.

The ultimate camera is the Daguerreotype, if you had a loose million or so lying around you might have had a chance of getting one last year, however, I settled for a replica from an auction at Joel’s (see photo next page).

However, sliding box wet plate cameras do come up for sale, (one was purchased by a member at the Joel auction) and over the years I have printed off numerous auctioned items from eBay, as they were at prices beyond my reach I haven’t acquired one.

Now for me the stereo version of the wet plate sliding box camera is the ultimate collectible and would be the crowning glory to my collection. Some have appeared on eBay and I constantly drool over them, consequently, it seemed that I would have to make one.

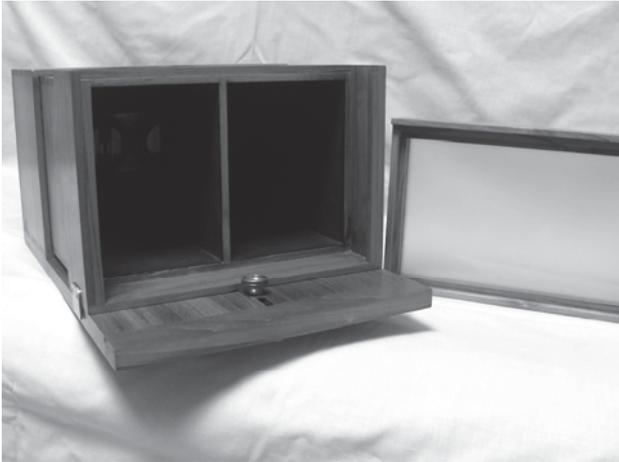


View of rear with focusing screen in place and locking nut.

All stereo cameras have a pair of identical lenses and when restoring a standard stereo view camera, it is just a matter of accumulating enough brass lenses so that if you were lucky you would end up with a matching pair. In the case of wet plate cameras lenses this is nigh on impossible. Having been foolish enough not to purchase a set I came across in England, I snapped up a set at a Leski auction some years ago, a matching unnamed pair with lens cap screwed into a single mounting flange in perfect condition. With the hardest part out of the way, now to do a spot of cabinet making.

It appears that the majority of these cameras were made in France, Britain and the U.S.A. The French and British designs are similar; they differ mainly in the type of guide used to keep the movable rear section lined up with the fixed front. The French generally have wooden guides attached to the base on both sides of the sliding back, which makes for some tricky woodworking, the British have either brass straps screwed to the back or none at all relying on the geometry of the sliding box to keep things in line. I chose the British version, as my Scottish wife would have divorced me if I had made it otherwise.

Using existing images from eBay, I designed the camera and to remain true to the originals, the camera should be made of mahogany and all the joints should be dovetailed. In addition, even though the camera consists of basically three boxes, they have to be perfectly aligned as the back slides into the front and has to be light tight. Now this required access to some good equipment and a degree of craftsmanship, neither of which I possess. But, first I had to get some well seasoned mahogany. I tried timber recyclers, antique parts suppliers and was even tempted to purchase a mahogany wardrobe, hopeless! Finally, in Geelong an importer of Indonesian furniture offered to get me some as he had furniture for sale labeled mahogany, however, it appears some Indonesian timber resembles mahogany in grain structure and with a bit of judicious staining it looks like the real thing. He subsequently let me have a pile of unstained wood from wrecked furniture; however, the wood turns out to be teak.



Screen lifted out showing black stained interior and fixed stereo divider.

Now to find an expert cabinet maker that is not going to charge the earth, as simple as it looks, it was going to take many hours of painstaking work to convert bits of left over furniture into a piece of art as the majority of the wood would have to be machined to 6mm in thickness, cut to size, dovetailed and fitted perfectly together onto a sturdy base.

Every year in Geelong the local wood workers club have an exhibition and sale of members items. One retired gentleman is an expert at making intricate boxes and agreed that he could make the camera provided my pockets were deep enough. Fortunately he was only joking and the

final cost was very reasonable. Considering the poor quality of the teak I left him with, the workmanship is remarkable. The rear slides into the front perfectly with absolutely no friction marks and you can just feel the air compress and suck as you slide it in and out. But it did present a problem, the inside needed to be painted mat black, the perfect fit meant that it could not be painted so I had to use a black stain instead. I cut out the hole in the front for the lens prior to assembly, which made it a lot easier to fit. The brass guides were made and screwed on and the brass-locking nut on the back was sourced from my pile of bits. I decided that instead of trying to make teak look like mahogany, I would leave it as is and have finished the camera off with a light French polish to give it a pleasant glow and a feeling of age. A local glazier cut the focusing glass and I ground it with 1000 grit carborundum powder. Fellow enthusiast Bob Haligon from Perth, has kindly let me have a number of unexposed 13 x 18cm glass plates, consequently my final project will be to make a wet plate replica dark slide to the plate size.

The dimensions of the camera are:

Front Panel exc. the base is 24 x 16.5 cm, the base adds another 1.5cm.

Base is 24 x 36 cm

Camera length when fully extended is 31cm

Screen frame is 22.8 x 15.3 cm

Apart from my initial comments you may wonder why I went to all this trouble. Some of you will have made presentations to groups of the general public or interested friends and there is no better way to demonstrate the development of photography from the camera obscura to more recent times than to display objects relating to mans ingenuity and rapid progress from “watch the birdie”, don’t smile or move until I say you can, to “press the button and we will do the rest”.



Replica Daguerreotype from the Joel auction.

SILVER GHOSTS

John Fleming

About three years ago a colleague was visiting friends at Heyfield in East Gippsland country Victoria and whilst preparing to leave for home noticed something familiar sticking out of a trailer load of junk. The friends once ran a dairy farm, but some time ago found it more lucrative to set up as scrap metal merchants, and the business thrived...you can imagine what farmers and country folk keep!

My colleague took a closer look at the rain-drenched trailer load of junk, and sure enough there was a box camera in one piece. Being as sympathetic as I to early cameras and anything “interesting”, he retrieved it with the scrapper’s blessing, bade his farewells, and headed back to Melbourne. Thus the following Monday morning saw us both gazing at the still damp camera he had set down on the office/lunchroom table of our workshop. He had noted there was a number showing in the ruby window, and as apparently it may still have a film in it, maybe I could unload in the dark on the off chance there could be undeveloped images. Fortunately, any attempt to open the camera at Heyfield was hampered by it being quite damp and stuck together. We placed the salvaged old box on a sheet of newspaper in the warm office to dry out whilst we attended to our chores for the day.

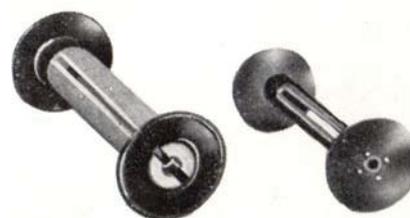
That evening, after a re-energising meal, I took a closer look at the rescued orphan. It was a larger Kodak box camera from pre-war times I guessed, so out came the trusty book of McKeown to hone in on the model. It’s a “SIX-16 BROWNIE JUNIOR” using 616 film to give a negative size of 2 ½ inches x 4 ¼ inches. The Catalog number was B37, and it is typical in having a single meniscus lens with a rotary shutter. Production run was from 1934 to about 1942, and that would also account for the rather pleasant Art Deco faceplate. It was still damp despite drying out for the day, and there certainly was evidence of a film (or just backing paper?) judging from the ruby window. Time to investigate!

With the room blacked out (and I mean “blacked out”...after 5 minutes you still could see nothing... safe enough to open HPS, Isopan Record or Royal X Pan for those with long memories) I attempted to undo the catches, which after a minute or so swung away, and then I remembered to pull the winder out to clear the internal film carrier and started to wriggle the thing apart. Wow, it was sticky from the damp and obvious swelling; after all, many of these things are made from little more than cardboard, thin wood, and bits of tin! Goodness knows how long it had been in the trailer of junk which had been cleared from a nearby farming property homestead and sheds. However, after a few minutes my manipulations persuaded the two halves to part, and I extracted the film carriage. There certainly was film there, the ruby window had been showing “3”, and I began to wind off the film. Again, trouble, as the dampness had glued the film to the frame aperture. Not too much drama though, as some more persuasion had this freed, and I carefully rewound the film back, rather than forward, seeing it was less than half way through. Having had the foresight to have some masking tape on hand on the bench before the lights went out, I sealed the now safely wound roll, and turned the lights on again.

A reasonably modern looking Verichrome Pan film was what I had retrieved. Metal spool as introduced for 620 and 616 back around 1934, to replace the older style wood spools with metal ends. Feeling satisfied I had for the moment “saved” the film, and knowing that it probably hadn’t been fogged previously as



The Six-16 Brownie Junior and film.



THE OLD SPOOL — AND
THE NEW, SMALLER,
ALL-METAL ONE.

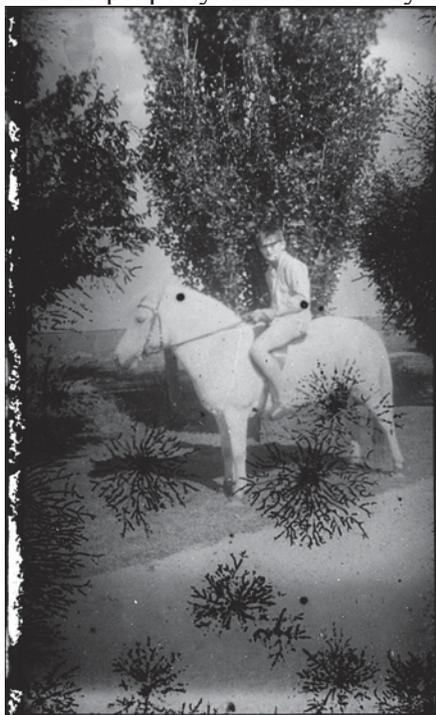
the camera was stuck shut when discovered, I turned my attention to the slightly bedraggled Brownie Junior. Still very damp inside, it was drying out quickly now it was open, and I gave it a gentle wipe and clean and cleaned the glass etc...sort of like rescuing an orphan kitten I suppose, but I can't resist the "save, repair, restore" urge! Amazingly, the shutter still worked...these things are built to last. I left the camera open to dry out fully overnight, and noted, too, how pristine the colourful decal looked inside the camera well known to most of us, which advised using only KODAK film etc. Feeling very satisfied with the evening's salvage operation, I left processing the film for the following day.

Next morning I checked out the Brownie, and noted it had dried out nicely BUT, that lovely decal inside had all but shriveled up! Of course, they were water slide transfers, and I suppose once the dampness dried out, it took the decal with it in the process. It had crossed my mind to photograph the decal full frame, as it was just so beautiful...alas, it had gone before my eyes almost. I hoped this wasn't a bad omen for anything that may be on the yet to be developed film.

That evening I again "blacked out" and ran the good old Microphen, stop bath and fixer up to 70 deg F. in a water bath, then slid the old Verichrome film into a suitably old tank that has the 116/616 setting on the spiral. Estimating that old box cameras usually give a generous exposure (to be sure to be sure) I processed for 6 minutes and ran the film through stop and into the fixer. Now I was getting a bit excited, and after a couple of minutes, undid the tank lid and slowly lifted the reel out...IMAGES!!! Bang, straight back for remainder of fixation, and then onto a wash.

Unrolled from the spiral and hung up, sure enough, two exposures, bit foggy overall and some strange effects at frame edges (maybe due to the rain soaking and old age?) but couldn't wait to do prints.

What we have are three children and a small pony, and fairly obviously taken some years ago judging from the clothing...but, when? I rang the scrap dealer at Heyfield and after telling of the incredible find after processing the film, obtained contact details for the family in the area who once had the property he had recently cleared out for new owners.



Few days later I learned the three kids pictured were at their auntie's farm during school holidays in 1958 when the old camera was put into action. The folk in question are now well into their sixties, and

were stunned to learn the couple of photos had turned up. There is no explanation why the aunt never finished the film, maybe the camera was just put aside and forgotten until our scrap dealer scooped it up into the trailer as part of the sheds and house clearing in 2008?

So, there is another "latent Image" story, which shows how amazing the old technology is. That film would have suffered shockingly hot summers and freezing winters, damp (and finally a drenching on the open trailer) and through it all survived to

reveal an image some 50 years after that Kodak rotary shutter flicked open and closed.

The old SIX-16 BROWNIE JUNIOR was subsequently cleaned up, shutter lubed and it works perfectly. Some research shows Kodak made 616 roll film into the 1960's, so that Verichrome Pan extracted from the camera would have been still reasonably obtainable in 1958, although becoming close to obsolete. Pity about that interior decal though....

HOLD IT STEADY!

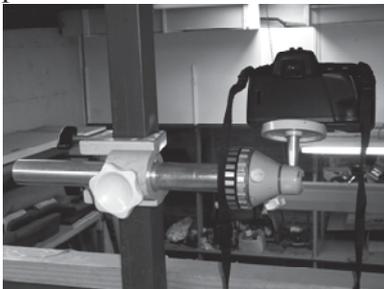
John Fleming

Even in this digital age, many photographs are ruined or less-than-sharp due to camera movement. It takes a very well trained operator to reliably shoot at 100th second or under every time and still match shots taken on a firm stand. All this is compounded as focal lengths are increased over normal, or when working very closely where high magnification is present, to say nothing of depth of field considerations where a millimeter either way is critical. However, a tripod isn't always convenient, nor quite suitable for the locale. Two handy items pictured may suggest further ideas to members.

One of the simplest stands I have was made from an old table microphone base and upright stalk. The bases are usually quite heavy cast metal, and for the table variety, a short (about 150 mm) tubular upright usually has a suitable thread to take a standard camera pan and tilt or ball head. My table mike stand came via a friend who used to run an electronics and P.A. business and this stand is actually ex Victorian Parliament House in Spring Street! Luckily, it has the 3/8-inch thread and my Manfrotto 3 way head went straight on. I also removed the rubber shock-mounting ring under the base (required for microphone work), which enabled the heavy cast base to sit better for camera use. This stand is a beauty for just about anywhere, table or bench tops, any horizontal surface, and not only is easy to carry, it cost nothing. Similar mike stands would be easy to find.



A rather more elaborate affair is stand Number Two, the Linhof clamp. This came to me incomplete via an RAAF Photographic Unit auction out of the Laverton airforce base near Melbourne about 10 years ago. It was lacking any sort of column or clamping screw, but otherwise had potential. I think I paid about \$30 for it, which probably represented about a tenth of the new price, so I was well pleased.



That evening I designed a solid aluminium column to be made for it, 35 mm diameter and 300 mm long, threaded each end tripod thread 1/4 inch Whitworth. There are always small engineering firms or one-man businesses that can do this sort of work. When the column was made a couple of days later, I set to sourcing a suitable clamping screw and knob to lock the short sliding column in the Linhof clamp. The screw (more correctly, bolt) thread was Metric 6 mm x 1 mm pitch, so easy to dig out of my stacks of engineering and auto bits. But, what sort of knob to fit to this bolt? Half an hour scrounging through various boxes of possible sources suddenly unearthed a miracle... what appeared to be a Linhof pattern large knurled knob in ivory colour. Then the origin of said knob dawned... it was a front bucket seat adjuster knob off a 1959 Skoda sedan. INCREDIBLE! It perfectly matches the knobs on other Linhof stuff, including my big Heavy Duty Pro tripod. So I quickly cleaned it up, drilled and tapped the 6 mm bolt into the knob, and it locked the column rock solid when screwed in. Next step was a small "limit screw" tapped in at end of column to alleviate any accidental dropping out of said column with camera attached! Final touch to this whole set-up was finding, a few months later, a suitable Linhof medium duty ball and socket head at one of the A.P.C.S Camberwell Markets for \$25 (thank you old colleague from the 1960's Ron Moodycliffe) and thus it has proven a most handy device to mount any camera on (even a 4x5) in all manner of awkward spots where a tripod was impossible. Both these compact, but very solid camera stands really supplement a tripod, and are particularly convenient to transport and for travel. Whilst Linhof clamps don't turn up often, you can achieve similar result utilizing a solid G clamp and adding tripod screw for pan and tilt head or ball head. In the past I have even just screwed a pan and tilt head to a bit of timber and in turn G clamped the scrap of timber to a stool, ladder or suitable solid object. After all, you usually only get one chance to get the shot, and years later there are always pangs of regret if the image isn't quite sharp.

August Meeting

Report and Photos. Ian Carron

Our general meeting was preceded by a committee meeting at which we brought all sorts of hot water containers etc as replacement of a local power transformer meant power would be out for some time to the area. Fortunately it came back on in time for the general meeting.



Part of the audience watching Karena demonstrate the Gum Bichromate process.

The committee meeting got away to a surprise start when Andrew Korlaki announced that due to personal reasons he would be unable to stay for either the committee or the general meeting (at which he was one of the speakers) and due to increasing business pressures he would have to resign from both his position as Vice President and from the committee also. Subsequently, Ken Anderson has been

appointed to this position, subject to approval by members at the next AGM. With a delayed start and quite an agenda to attend to, we did manage to get through it all in time to start the meeting with a good attendance.



Treating the image in a water bath.



Displaying an image being worked on.

Our other guest speaker of the day, Karena Goldfinch then took the floor to treat us to not only a talk, but also a practical demonstration of the Gum Bichromate method of producing prints. It soon became quite obvious that Karena had put an enormous amount of preparation into this demonstration, involving wet processes and Alan had set up a video camera and

projector so all had a great view of what was happening on the screen behind Karena.

Another thing that became quite obvious was that this was not, to her, just a method of producing images, but a real passion, almost a love affair! I think, like others, I certainly have heard of the Gum Bichromate process, but knew nowt of the mechanics of it and found Karena's talk and demonstration absorbing. Karena went on to tell us and show a couple of examples of how she is now experimenting with the Photo Gravure process.

Certainly one of our more enjoyable meetings and the round of applause at the end seemed to support this view.

The Miranda Camera

Michael Parker

The Miranda camera arrived on the market in 1955, early in the history of Japanese single lens reflex cameras and stayed in production with more than 30 models over 21 years until the end of 1976. Miranda targeted the serious amateur photographer through an attractive level of innovation, flexibility and technological sophistication but was unable to survive against competition from more popular brands. This article provides an overview; if you'd like to find more pictures of individual cameras or to delve further into Miranda history and products, the cited references, especially Peter Naylor's Flickr site and the Miranda Historical Society sites are excellent starting points. Anyone looking for even finer detail might like to follow the links to the Miranda instruction manuals on Mike Butkus' site and the Yahoo group of Miranda collectors and users.

The post war Orion Camera Company

At the end of WW2, many Japanese engineers and technicians previously engaged in war manufacturing were out of work. One such was Akira Ogihara, an engineer with the aeronautical research centre of the University of Tokyo. Ogihara had been engaged in the development of pulse jet engines for a weapon of last resort, a manned flying bomb inspired by the German V 1.



Pic. 1. Mirax reflex housing on Contax.

After the war and during the US occupation, Ogihara stayed at the research centre and with Shintaro Otsuka, both in their mid-20s, set up production of photographic accessories and adaptors particularly for the Contax and Leica. Otsuka was also a research engineer and had been seconded to work on jet compressors during the war. Because of Ogihara's interest in astronomy, his company was named *Orion* after the constellation. Orion was probably best known for the Mirax waist- and eye-level reflex housings for rangefinder cameras (*Pic. 1*). The Mirax came in several versions and the one illustrated is the Mirax B for attaching to Contax and Nikon. This one was produced after the company name change in 1957 and is appropriately labelled as a Miranda product.

The post WW2 photography boom saw in East Germany the beginnings of a trend towards 35mm single lens reflex (slr) cameras. The two rivals were the KW Praktica and the Ihagee Exakta, both developments from pre-war cameras. (*Pic. 2*). By the late 1940s, these cameras were well established in world markets and set the patterns for others to develop their own versions of the 35mm slr.

Japan's first foray into this market was the Asahi optical Company's Asahiflex of 1951; a simple and quiet camera with a compact Leica-style body. (*Pic. 3*.) The Asahiflex followed the Praktica model with a waist-level viewing system and screw mounted lens.

In November 1953, Ogihara and Otsuka started development of a prototype slr to demonstrate a capability in precision manufacturing and to raise funds for full production. They followed the Exakta formula with interchangeable waist-level and pentaprism finder systems and drew on existing designs, particularly Asahiflex and Nicca.



Pic. 2. Exakta and Praktica - the models for post-WW2 slr development.

The prototype **Phoenix** camera (*Pic. 4*) was produced in a record five months in March 1954ⁱ and included the dual lens mounting system used in future production cameras.

The name 'Phoenix' could, as with Orion, have been a reference to the constellation of that nameⁱⁱ or a metaphor for industrial recovery in post-war Japan. In any event, the name had to be abandoned because of a trade mark conflict and was replaced by *Miranda* for all production models. The name *Miranda* may also have reflected Ogihara's interest in astronomy since he would have been well aware of the discovery and naming of the satellite *Miranda* of the planet Uranus in 1948.ⁱⁱⁱ



Pic. 4. The Orion Phoenix prototype with Zunow 50mm f1.9



Pic. 3. The Asahiflex IIB, the 1954 version of the first Japanese 35mm slr.

A path through the Miranda maze

The wide array of Miranda models and the overlaps between them is confusing. The following is a rough guide to the evolution.

From 1955, Miranda produced knob wind cameras designated T, TII, S and ST with varying offerings of shutter speeds. Then from 1958, overlapping with the first series, were lever wind cameras designated A, AII, B, C, D and DR introducing a degree of lens iris automation with a slightly more rounded body shape and instant return mirror in some models.

In the early 1960s, the company's products fell into two streams. The first stream started in 1960 with a new body design for the Automex and the Sensorex range having built-in light meters graduating in 1967 to internal mirror-based CdS cells. The Automex/Sensorex range also introduced two new finder designs incompatible with the first design used by most other models.

The second stream labelled Miranda F, FM, Fv, FvT, G and GT started in 1963 and retained the minor shape change of the D series. These did not have built-in meters but had the option of sophisticated add-on meters culminating in the F and G series with a TTL metering prism.

The Sensomat of 1969 brought the two streams together by retaining the classic shape and viewfinder designs while adopting the mirror-based CdS sensor of the Sensorex. The Sensomat and Sensorex evolved side by side until the arrival in 1975 of the electronic dx3. The last model released was the Miranda EE-2 of 1976.

Early knob wind Mirandas with pre-set lenses

The first production camera, the **Miranda T** of 1955^{iv} (*Pic. 5*) is a sophisticated and compact mirror reflex camera with a 1–1/500 Sec. cloth focal plane shutter set by a rotating dial and slow speed lever. The Miranda T, sometimes designated the Miranda Standard in the US is acknowledged as the second 35mm single lens reflex to come out of Japan and the first Japanese slr to use a pentaprism for eye-level viewing^v. Not bad for a fledgling company! There are three normally

accepted variations in the T-range depending on the manufacturer (Orion or Miranda), the standard lens and the silver/black variations in shutter dial, knobs and prism.

From the beginning, and uniquely among then current and all future 35mm slr's, Miranda offered a dual lens mount inherited from the Mirax reflex housing with a choice of a wide external bayonet similar to the Contax external bayonet mount, or 44mm screw mount. The short lens mount to film



Pic. 5. The first Miranda slr – the Miranda T.

plane distance of 41.5mm^{vi} and Orion adaptors meant that a wide variety of lenses designed for other cameras could be used on Miranda cameras. The early Miranda pre-set lenses used the 44mm screw mount while some adaptors and bellows systems used the bayonet. Bayonet mount lenses and adaptors use the red wedge or line on the mounting panel as an alignment point. The green wedge or line is the alignment point for attaching the Focabell bellows system. The early Orion photographic accessories were easily adapted to the new camera so extension tubes, bellows, microscope adaptors and other accessories were immediately available. In addition to the normal waist-level and prism finders, Miranda developed critical finders with 5x and 15x eyepieces.

(Pic. 6).

Once Ogihara embarked on camera production, the Orion name also had to go possibly because of conflict with *Orionwerk AG* registered in Germany. Only around 1000 Miranda T cameras were marked as coming from the *Orion Camera Co.* and these command high prices on the collector market. In 1957, the company was renamed *Miranda Camera Co.* in keeping with the name of the main product.



Pic. 6. 15x magnifying finder for the Automex.

The **Miranda TII** raised the top shutter speed to 1/1000 Sec. while the **Miranda S** without slow speeds, was sold as an economy model in the US and Australia with waist-level finder. (Pic. 7).



Pic.7. The Miranda S – an economy model without slow speeds.

The final knob wind camera was the **Miranda ST** of 1959 with shutter speeds of 1-1/500 Sec. the same as the original Model T but with the 50mm f2.8 lens of the Miranda S. According to a contemporary review by Paul Wahl: ‘the Miranda is unusually quiet in operation making it ideal for candid, stage and other types of photography where a more noisy mechanism would be a handicap.’

Initial distribution of Miranda cameras was through the Matsushima camera store in Ginza, Tokyo established by Mikami Makoto who had been impressed by the plans for the new camera and provided financial support to Ogihara. In early 1959, distribution was taken over for a time by Riken Optical Industries^{vii} and from 1959 until 1963, Miranda cameras were made only for export mainly through the US Allied Impex Corporation (AiC) the owners of Soligor^{viii}. To round out the connections, in 1960 AiC also took over from Riken Optical Industries as the US distributor of Ricoh cameras. It seems

likely that AiC also took an initial financial stake in Miranda at this time.



MIRANDA A AUTOMATIC

Pic. 8. The Miranda A, the first model with lever wind.

Early Mirandas with lever wind and stop-down lenses

Miranda introduced lever wind for film transport in 1958 in parallel with the last of the knob-wind cameras. The first of the lever wind cameras (Pic. 8) continued with a rotating shutter dial and were designated **Miranda A** usually with a 1/500 Sec. top shutter speed, followed by the **Miranda A-II** with top shutter speed of 1/1000 Sec. and minor changes to the shape and film counter. Then in quick succession came **Mirandas B, C** (a B with a self-timer), **D** and **DR**. With the D-models introduced in 1960, Miranda dropped the top shutter speed to 1/500 Sec. and during 1960 introduced a new more rounded body shape. (Pic. 9). In the later stages of DR production, the script for the Miranda name on the pentaprism and camera body was changed to all capitals.

With the first lever-wind cameras, Miranda also introduced the Pressure Automatic Diaphragm or PAD system, an external coupling as used on the Topcon R, Ihagee Exakta and the KMZ Start, to close the lens diaphragm to a preselected aperture. (Pic.10). An instant return mirror came standard with the B series in 1959 and beyond^{ix}. The connection with Ricoh extended further than distribution since McKeown’s advises that because of production demands, the bodies for the S series and B series were assembled by Riken Optical Industries. Coincidentally, the Miranda S and Miranda B were the only models included in the *Australian Popular Photography* Photographic equipment 1960 Directory. The Miranda S cost £43/15/- with f2.8 preset lens and

No Wonder The Swing's To Miranda! Match the downright luxury of this beauty, the gratifying economy of its price! And it's Automatic! Miranda 'D' 35mm Reflex with automatic f1.9 Miranda-Soligor lens! Lists at \$159.95! Yes, only \$159.95!

Miranda-quality features: instant-return mirror; interchangeability with most popular 35mm lenses; eye-level pentaprism viewing; rapid film advance & rewind; full-speed shutter 1 sec. to 1/1000th sec.; plus quiet, vibration-free operation... typical of Miranda quality!

MIRANDA 'D' 35mm Reflex with automatic f1.9 Miranda-Soligor lens. Speeds: 1 sec. to 1/1000th sec. Instant Return Mirror, etc. Complete price \$299.95.

A complete line of Miranda Accessories available, including: Wide Angle and Telephoto Pre-set and Automatic Lenses from 28mm (f2.8) to 400mm (f5.5) Bellows, Extension Tubes, Lens Filter, Flasher, Critical Focuser, Microscope Adapter, Extension Tubes and Adapters plus Adapters for all interchangeable 35mm lenses.

ALLIED IMPEX CORP.
DISTRIBUTORS IN AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

Oh, that enticing **MIRANDA 'D'**

Pic. 9 - Miranda D advertisement in Dec. 1960 US Modern Photography.

waist-level finder while the Miranda B fell in between the Pentax H2 and Minolta SR-2 at £99/10/- with prism and f1.9 PAD lens.



Pic. 10. Miranda DR with PAD auto diaphragm.

lens formula. Ogihara once again stayed ahead of the pack, probably for the last time, with the 1960 **Automex** range of cameras offering a built-in exposure meter, interchangeable finders and the two mount system for interchangeable lenses.

(*Pic. 11*). The Automex provided full aperture coupled metering initially using a selenium cell in front of the prism^x.

The **Automex II** of 1962 continued with a slightly modified selenium cell and raised the maximum ASA setting from 400 to 1600. The **Automex III** of 1965 introduced a CdS cell mounted on the front of the camera under the rewind lever. The Automex range introduced a non-rotating speed dial and internal aperture stop down mechanism together with a degree of auto exposure through external meter to lens couplings, predating the Nikon AI system. The Automex represents the first major redesign of the Miranda. The lens mounts remained unchanged but the viewfinders were made wider to match the original selenium cell and were not compatible with earlier models.



Pic. 11. Advertisement for the Miranda Automex in Australian Popular Photography Oct. 1962.

Miranda was available in Australia through R. Gunz (Photographics) from the 1950s and in 1962 when other manufacturers were beginning to catch up to Miranda, the Automex with f1.9 lens was advertised for £124/12/3. This price put it head to head with the Canonflex RM of similar specifications at £123/15/- the Nikon F Photomic with CdS meter at £139/17/6 and the Topcon Automatic R III at £131. The Miranda D advertised with prism in the same year was a much more competitive camera at £72/15/- with f1.9 lens and £56/5/- with the f2.8 lens. At this price, it was cheaper than most similar offerings except for Praktica (£49 with auto Tessar f2.8) and Exa. There were no Miranda entries in the *Australian Photography* annual directory for 1965 and there was a short hiatus in Australian imports until Photonic Pty Ltd took over the distributorship.

In the early years at least, the Miranda company or its owners appear to have made decisions to control market distribution of some or all models. The Miranda B of 1959 was imported into Australia but not into the USA or Europe while the Miranda C of 1959 was sold in the US but not in Europe. According to Ivor Matanle (see references), the D-series Miranda starting in 1960 appears to have been the first model marketed in Britain^{xi} and no Miranda camera was distributed for sale in Japan in the period 1959–63. The absence of Miranda entries from the *Australian Photography*

directory in 1963 and a later change of distributor, suggests that the Australian market was also ignored for a short period.

The original design continues with the F & G series

The Ricoh Company Ltd (formerly Riken Optical Industries) launched its first 35mm slr, the Ricoh 35 Flex In 1963. Perhaps it's no coincidence that in the same year, AiC embarked on a program of greater control of Miranda through share purchases.^{xiii} That year also saw a new range of Mirandas starting with the **Model F** (or FB if finished in black) of 1963 with non-rotating speed dial and exposure measurement and control addressed by a variety of add-on and prism-based CdS meters. The original accessory meter for the F is a bulky unit that fits around the shutter dial. **Model FM** has a meter prism added to the original camera, **Model Fv** has Fv engraved next to the lens mount and has a removable shutter dial for attaching a snap-on meter and **Model FvT** came with a TTL prism. At some stage in this progression, Miranda marketed a Model F as an economy model in the UK with the f2.8 lens and a removable shutter speed dial marked only to 1/500 Sec. The Model FB pictured here is an interesting mixture. (*Pic. 12*). It has the removable shutter dial and speed range to 1/1000 Sec. of the Fv but without the Fv engraving. The stop-down knob beside the mirror-box of the early Model F has been removed (although the mechanism and slot remain) and the camera came with the f1.9 Auto Miranda lens with the built-in preview tab of the Fv and G. This camera was purchased in London in the early 1970's and may be an upmarket version of the economy model above.



Pic. 12. The Miranda F/Fv possibly a UK special. The 1-1/1000 shutter speed dial may be removed after turning the screw head in the centre.

This swapping is not possible with the Automex or Sensorex ranges because of their different design. There's no doubt that Miranda, now a Division of AiC, was constantly chasing the holy grail of up-to-the-minute technology but the result would surely have been as confusing for dealers and buyers in the 1960's as it is for collectors now.

The Miranda Sensorex introduces TTL metering

When Miranda adopted the technology to move the meter sensor inside the camera and onto the reflex mirror, the Automex morphed into the **Miranda Sensorex** of 1966. (*Pic. 13*). The built-in through the lens meter initially offered spot readings, moved quickly to average readings and later provided selectable spot and average metering. The CdS sensor located under the mirror is



Pic. 13. The Miranda Sensorex (first model).

activated through a series of transparent slots in the mirror. The original Sensorex continued unchanged for four years; almost a record for Miranda. And the **Sensorex C** of 1970 changed little from the original with an added accessory shoe (not a hot shoe) on the prism and an optional f1.4 50mm lens. The **Sensorex II** of 1971 (*Pic. 14*) continued with only minor changes, mainly by providing a slightly different model prism with a hot shoe and extending the meter range to 3200 ASA.



Pic. 14. The Miranda Sensorex II – note meter coupling arm.

The main change came in 1971 with a top-mounted shutter release and a new set of compact E-series light metal lenses from 28mm to 200mm with internal meter coupling. These lenses allowed the new **Auto Sensorex EE** to do away with the external lens-to-meter coupling seen on previous Sensorex and Automex models and to provide fully automatic shutter priority operation. (*Pic. 15*). The Auto Sensorex EE was the top selling Miranda model^{xiii} and shared a third design of finder with the Sensorex II and Miranda EE-2.

AUTO SENSOREX EE

Automation a magic word, which has come more and more in practice over recent years in many sectors of industry. Also in the camera industry the aim has been to perfect and simplify a camera, by which all functions are fully automated and the user merely has to push a button while the camera does the computation of diaphragm opening and shutter speed versus available light. With this concept in mind, Miranda Camera Co., Ltd. proudly presents the newly developed Auto Sensorex EE fully automatic EE, spot and average light measuring system, interchangeable lenses and viewfinders, battery checker, hot shoe and PC contacts, self-timer, speeds B-1/1000 sec, self resetting frame counter, preview button and many other features, making this camera the perfect system camera. A wide range of accessories is available for the convenience of the user.

Pic. 15 – Extract from the Auto Sensorex EE Brochure.



Pic. 17 – Miranda Sensomat RE.

The Sensomat range combined the classic shape with Sensorex technology

Launched in 1969, the **Sensomat** is an upgrade of the previous model F with the addition of the CdS mirror of the Sensorex and stop-down metering. The Sensomat meter is operated by two buttons next to lens throat and was sold as a budget slr during the 70's. (*Pic. 16*). Sensomat finders are compatible with the D, F and G series and earlier cameras.

How does the **SENSOMAT** brain work.

The CdS lightmeter, which is positioned behind the mirror, is coupled to the ASA film speed dial, and when loading a film, the correct ASA number (or converted DIN) should be set accordingly. Connected to this are the shutter speeds and the diaphragm, balanced, allowing to select the most suitable exposure combination. Where a great deal of depth of field is required, a small lens opening should be selected and exposure adjustment made by the shutter speed. Where speed is essential such as in sports-photography, the shutter speed is to be set first, and exposure setting to be adjusted by the diaphragm.

A needle is constantly visible in the viewfinder for ultimate exposure control.

Pic. 16 - Extract from the Miranda Sensomat brochure.

The **Sensomat RE** meter is operated by a single button on the front of the camera near the lens. (*Pic. 17*). Some versions added a hot shoe on top of the prism. The *Australian Photography*

Directory for 1974 lists the Sensomat RE (\$235 with 50mm f1.8), Sensorex II (\$279 with 50mm f1.8), Sensorex EE (\$319 with 50mm f1.7) and Laborec. At that time, Miranda prices were generally more than those of comparable Topcon, Petri, Ricoh and Fujica models, much the same as Canon FTb, Olympus OM-1, Pentax Spotmatic F and Minolta SR-T101 but cheaper than the Zeiss, Leitz & Nikon offerings. Miranda faced a difficult sell in a competitive market. The **Miranda TM** (also branded as Miranda Pallas TM and Soligor TM) marketed mainly in Germany but also found

in Australia, is a Sensomat RE with the M42 Praktica/Pentax mount in place of the Miranda mounts.

As the only major Japanese 35mm slr manufacturer under foreign (US) ownership, cultural differences in management styles and expectations would be inevitable and in the early 1970s, cracks were beginning to develop. According to one internal commentator^{xiv}:

'The reliability of the camera was also a problem. The new Sensomat RE which used a variable resistor system was failing; the new Sensorex auto was too large and clunky with out of date styling'

Around this time, Miranda introduced the **Sensomat RS**, a reduced specification Sensomat without a meter or depth of field preview and with an f2.8 lens as standard^{xv}. Perhaps this was a stopgap measure while the company dealt with the Sensomat RE problems?



Pic. 18 - Miranda Sensomat REII.

The **Sensomat RE-II** of 1975 (*Pic. 18*) came with full aperture TTL metering and remains in my view, one of the best Miranda cameras. Yet another new range of E lenses designated EC (for compact) was developed for this, the Sensorex EE-2 and the dx-3. The RE-II has a top-mounted shutter release and so unlike its predecessors, can no longer couple with the PAD lenses of an earlier era.

Miranda dx-3

The **Miranda dx-3** of 1975 is a fixed prism compact camera providing full aperture match needle exposure with shutter speed shown in the viewfinder. (*Pic. 19*). The instruction booklet

describes the dx-3 as *'the world's first electronically controlled 35mm SLR camera'* In specification and styling, the dx-3 was Miranda's response to the consumer demand for a fully electronic camera and was in competition with the Olympus OM and Pentax ME series cameras. Unfortunately, there were initial problems with the electronics and poor consumer acceptance. Its release almost coincided with and perhaps precipitated, the end.

The last of the Mirandas

The **Miranda EE-2** released in 1976^{xvi} and derived from the Auto Sensorex EE was the last model camera released by Miranda and the last Miranda with interchangeable viewfinders. It embodies all the exposure automation of earlier cameras and adds a window to the prism finder to show shutter speed. By this time, electronic cameras like the dx-3 were in vogue and most competitors had adopted the Copal square or similar metal shutter while Miranda persisted with a cloth shutter. This updated version of a camera from a different era was not enough to save the company. The Miranda



Pic. 19. Miranda dx-3- the first and only model with a fixed prism.

corporation filed for bankruptcy in Tokyo on 10 December 1976^{xvii} and Miranda camera production immediately stopped. The fate of the US branch of Allied Impex Corporation is unclear. Some sources indicate that it became bankrupt along with or before Miranda, some advise that it was just a shell company by 1976. What we do know is that as late as 1983, AiC Photo Inc. of New York and Canada was taking out full page magazine ads for Soligor lenses.^{xviii}

Miranda lenses

Up to the late 1950s lenses in Miranda mounts, additional to the standard 50mm pre-set or with PAD connection, were confined to 35mm and 135mm offerings although at that time, a wide range of pre-set lenses to suit Exakta and Praktica could easily be used with appropriate adaptors. Towards the end of production, the E-series lenses developed for the Auto Sensorex EE series comprised two versions of a 28mm f2.8, a 35mm f2.8, a 50mm f1.8, a 50mm f1.4, a 105mm f2.8, a 135mm in f3.5 and f2.8 versions, a 180mm f2.8, a 200mm f3.5 and the well respected Macron close-up lens 52mm f2.8. The final series of EC lenses were generally more compact but largely unchanged from the E-series except that Miranda added a new 55mm f3.5 macro lens and an 80-200mm zoom. The 'complete Miranda system' of the early 1970s (Pic. 20) had a bewildering array of lenses and accessories.

The Miranda lens mounts remained the same throughout the 21 years of production, but the internal and external mechanical connections of each lens to meter system and iris diaphragms were liable to change to suit different generations of camera. This and the fragility of some moving parts can cause problems with lens swapping. The Auto Sensorex EE instruction booklet advises that damage may result in mounting the EE lens if the red dot of the lens is inadvertently aligned against the green line on the body of earlier cameras. (The green line or wedge found at the one o'clock position on cameras earlier than the Auto Sensorex EE is the alignment point for bellows attachment). The *Mirandacamera.com* site deals with lens/camera compatibility issues at some length.

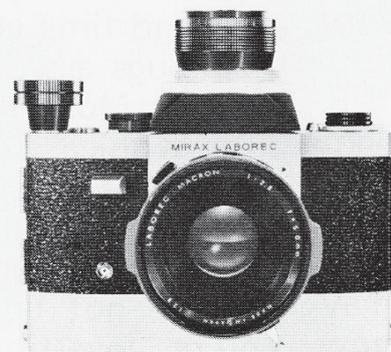
It would appear that none of the standard or accessory lenses were made by the Miranda corporation although the Miranda Society of Japan cites internal documents referring to a lens manufacturing plant opened in August 1969 at Soshigaya with a total lens assembly plant, opened in Ikeda, Nagano Prefecture in October 1970. Whether these plants existed or ever went into production is a matter for speculation and further research. What is known is that contracts for lenses went to Zunow, Ofunar, Arco, Soligor, Tamron (possibly lenses with T prefix), and Kowa (Possibly lenses with K prefix). After the takeover by Allied Impex Corporation, the owners of Soligor, it's likely that most lenses for the Miranda camera were provided by another division of AiC, the Allimatsu Corporation. In marketing brochures, Miranda makes no claim to have developed their lenses, instead states: *'every lens is meticulously tested by Miranda Camera Co. Ltd and only those which meet the ultra strict Miranda standards for quality are accepted.'*

THE COMPLETE MIRANDA SYSTEM



Pic. 20 – The complete 1970s Miranda System.

MIRANDA MIRAX LABOREC



For photo micrography copying and close up photography, supplied as kit consisting of camera body, VF5 interchangeable viewfinder, tubes, exclusive scope meter and cable release. VF5 viewfinder has provision for diopter adjustment. Bright transparent dual hair focusing screen plane shutter with speeds for 1 sec. to 1/125th sec. plus B, shock-proof extra large mirror prevents image cut off, double action cable shutter release, oversize film advance knob. Special Mirax Laborec lens mount with 46mm. thread mount and two bayonet mounts, sensitive scope meter for CdS light measuring through microscope with film speeds of 6 to 1600 ASA and shutter speeds from 16 sec. Price, complete kit: \$169.00. Body only \$115.00.

Pic. 21. Laborec camera entry in Australian Photography 1974 directory.

Scientific Models (Laborec range)

Over the period 1965–1975, Miranda produced a small series of cameras designated Mirax Laborec for laboratory and astronomical use. These generally had knob wind or (later) motor drive, cable release and a limited range of shutter speeds. While they had no inbuilt metering systems, Miranda provided a ‘sensitive scope meter’ for microscopy. Laborecs I and II used a 46mm lens mount and two bayonet mounts. (Pic.21). The final version, the Miranda Laborec III uses the standard Miranda lens mounts and was assembled in Florida using parts, dies and rights purchased after Miranda Camera Co. stopped production.^{xix}

The Miranda rangefinder camera

In 1972, Miranda introduced its first and only offering in the then-popular ‘Olympus Trip’ category. The **Miranda (or Soligor) Sensoret** had a 38 mm f2.8 lens of Tessar design with 4 elements in 3 groups with a CdS cell mounted above the lens. The Sensoret was made with black, red, yellow, grey, green or blue covering and add-on accessory lenses were available.

Other use of the Miranda name

In 1986, the UK firm Dixons contracted Cosina to produce a range of three cameras labelled MIRANDA. These cameras use the Pentax K mount and offer mechanical or electronic shutters with TTL systems having fully auto or auto/manual operation. They have no relationship to the Miranda corporation or AiC. Some 110 and point and shoot cameras of the 1980s from Taiwan also used the Miranda name but had no relationship to the company. (Pic. 22).

Miranda - a user friendly camera

Miranda cameras are easy to use. The early ones are quiet in operation and the available lenses are generally of high quality. Most Miranda models in good condition will make reliable classic users and the lens mounting arrangements with appropriate adaptors, will continue to support just about any slr lens new or old. Pre-cut light seal kits are available on line at least for the EE and EE-2 models and the 40+ year old mirror buffers could do with replacement in most models.

Miranda CdS meters up to the dx-3 use a 1.35 volt mercury 625 or 675 battery. These batteries are no longer in production but the *Mirandacamera.com* site provides some useful options. The Sensomat RE II which I used during the 1980’s fits easily in the hand and the f1.4 lens produces sharp and tonally balanced images. The Yahoo Miranda group (see web sources) has considerable information on using Miranda cameras.

Postscript

Despite up-to-date technology and very good lenses, Miranda never came close to toppling Nikon and Canon in the professional camera field and after the high point of the Automex of 1960, had a tough job to compete with the more popular and equally sophisticated offerings from the larger manufacturers, particularly Asahi, Olympus and Minolta. AiC tried to carve a market niche with eye-catching advertisements, often featuring attractive women in various states of undress. This may have been a marketing blunder since more successful competitors tended to appeal to the gadget-conscious consumer by emphasising detailed technical features of their cameras. Rumours of unreliability would have had an adverse impact on sales as would the wide array of models, changes of ownership and stop-go distribution arrangements. Even so, Miranda deserves an important place in photographica history for a series of firsts, for regular innovation and for constant reinvention in the face of stiff competition.



Pic. 22. “Miranda” point & shoot- no relation!

Photos 5,10,13 & 22 courtesy of Keith Forsey; Photo 6 courtesy of Robert Lane; Photo 4 (Orion Phoenix) is from the website of the Miranda Society of Japan; Photo 8 (Miranda A) is from Wahl, *P Single Lens Reflex Guide* and Photo 19 is courtesy of Jack Price, USA.

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End notes

- ⁱ Mamiya had also produced prototype pentaprism eye-level slr's financed by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the Prismflex of 1951 and the Pentaflex of 1955. Neither went into production.
- ⁱⁱ In 1603 the German astronomer, Johann Bayer of Augsburg, developed twelve new constellations in the southern celestial hemisphere, delineating them from observations and sketches made by the Dutch navigator Petrus Theodori. Among the twelve Bayer constellations is Phoenix, named for the mythical Firebird.
- ⁱⁱⁱ The 27 satellites of Uranus are named after Shakespearian characters. Miranda is the daughter of Prospero in Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*.
- ^{iv} The dates for first manufacture or distribution of individual cameras can be contentious. Camerapedia.wikia.com sets out the dates 1954 for the Phoenix, 1955 for the Miranda T, 1958 for the Miranda A, A2 and B, 1960 for the Automex, and 1971 for the Sensorex EE. The dates quoted in the English translation of the historical section to the dx-3 manual are one year earlier, possibly arising from translation differences between Japanese Shōwa year and Western year terminology. This has led to some confusion, e.g. McKeown's follows the dx-3 document and dates the Orion T from 1954. Hanson & Dierdorff differ from the Mirandacamera.com site by one year on the dates for the Automex II and Sensorex. I have used the Camerapedia.wikia dates in this article and generally follow the dates in the web pages for the Miranda Societies of Japan and USA.
- ^v The Pentaflex of 1955 by Tokiwa Seiki used a mirror based porroprism for eye-level viewing. While it may equal the Miranda T as Japan's first production eye-level slr, the Miranda T retains the title of the first Japanese slr to use a pentaprism. See also note viii below.
- ^{vi} 41.46mm according to the Miranda Society of Japan.
- ^{vii} There is a possibility, reflected in the Miranda Japan page that Riken Optical Industries may have owned or had a controlling interest in Miranda at this time.
- ^{viii} In 1955, Allied Impex Corporation through its trading name *Soligor* was also flirting with the Tokiwa Seiki Co for access to the slr market and had rebranded the Tokiwa Firstflex 35 as a Soligor 35 for sale in the USA.
- ^{ix} According to the Novacon website (see web references), Ogihara and Otsuka had invented the instant return mirror but could not incorporate it into the Miranda T because they had sold the invention to Asahi.
- ^x The Konica F and Kowaflex E of the same period had similarities to the Miranda Automex and had access to the mid-range Japanese market while Miranda was confined to exports. Miranda purchased lenses from Kowa and probably had connections to other brands including through the Riken Corporation. At this delicate stage of Japanese slr development, it's possible that there was some agreement on market sharing.
- ^{xi} Matanle, in *Amateur Photographer* No. 23 August 2000 p. 24
- ^{xii} Miranda Camera Co became a Division of AiC Photo Inc around this time (1963) and according to the Miranda Society of Japan in 1969 AiC achieved 100% control, leading to the departure of the founder and company chairman Akira Ogihara.
- ^{xiii} http://www.mirandacamera.com/_faq/faq1.htm
- ^{xiv} Manheimer p. 4
- ^{xv} Naylor, Peter in his Flickr site (see web sources)
- ^{xvi} According to the Miranda Society of Japan, the Miranda EE-2 was released after the dx-3 and was the last model put on the market before closure.
- ^{xvii} http://www.collection-appareils.fr/miranda/html/miranda_sensorex.php
- ^{xviii} AiC had established a presence in Germany as A.I.C. Phototechnik GmbH in 1968 and this may have insulated them from some of the fallout from the closure of Miranda. In 1993 the German name was changed to Soligor GmbH to reflect the branding of their products. Soligor GmbH is still in operation as a supplier of photographic accessories.
- ^{xix} McKeown p. 691

Author retains copyright of this article

Mission to Ballarat!

Market Report: Kevin Saunders & Ian Carron.



Roy Berryman with usual class offerings.



Tony Hilton surrounded by things mainly Rollei.



*Gold 40th Anniversary Seagull.
\$1000-*

The weekend of 10th and 11th of September saw a large number of us heading the city of Ballarat with its many historical attractions. But, the object of this trip was our market, part of the Ballarat International Foto Biennale (BIFB).

There were 39 sellers and a lot of interest shown by the good number of people looking for that elusive bargain. Despite some cold and blustery weather early in the day, after all it was Ballarat, it was well attended and the sellers I spoke with were happy with the day. The hall also held one of the BIFB photo exhibitions and no doubt some who came to look also stopped to purchase.



*An ETR-S outfit!
Just what were they new?*

22 members and friends attended a dinner on the Saturday night and while the meal did not delight (a different venue next time) it was a great chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones. After the dinner Roger Burrows, one of our members, very kindly offered to give those interested a personal guided tour of the magnificent Mechanics Institute building and their exceptional library, the oldest book dating back to the 1540's.

Sincere thanks to Roger for this.

Also thanks to Margaret Mason and John Millar for manning the ACPS site all day and to John, Lee Harris and the others who voluntarily stepped in to help set up and put away the trestles and chairs. Getting and returning the very heavy trestles from the stage, behind a photograph exhibit, was no easy task.



Kevin and May Saunders.



Happy campers at the dinner! (The "meal" was vet to be served!)

July Auction

Report & photos: Ian Carron



Kevin Saunders and Ken Anderson unpacking during set-up.

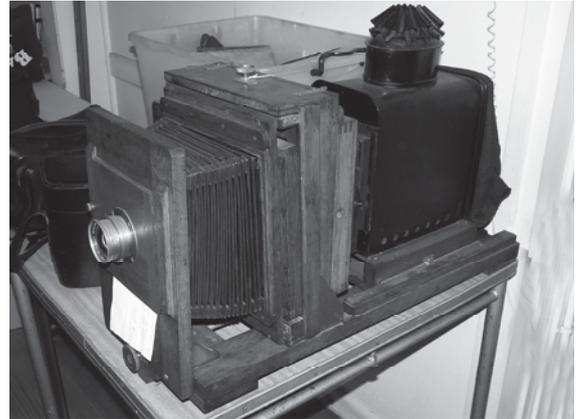


Search carefully, tucked between all the dross lays that odd treasure, just waiting to be found!

With all the boxes, cartons and plastic crates carried inside, unpacking and sorting (read organised chaos) began. Amid the usual cries of “where’s item such and such” and “I can’t find whatever” order slowly emerged from pandemonium. By viewing time, all was finally neatly in place and we were breathing easily once again! By then the urn was hot, the coffee went down well and bless he who brought along that great fruitcake! At the previous committee meeting, we have decided that 400+ items is just too much and future auctions will be limited to a lesser number.

After the viewing, the auction itself started on time at midday and, as usual, our auctioneer extraordinaire was Max Amos who started off by explaining the few simple rules: ‘bid hard, bid strong and don’t even think of leaving before you pay! We know where you live and will come round with a big cricket bat!’ (For

While most of our members were still tucked up in their nice warm beds on this cold, chilly and early Sunday morning, committee members were gathering at the hall to set up tables and chairs and to meet Alan who arrived from Margaret’s with his van loaded with the 411 lots for the days auction.



Thornton Pickard No 6 Enlarger Projector. Working, in VGC. Sold for \$356. I’m sure I saw the new owner carry this out unassisted, a feat on its own deserving of a medal!



(Above and below) Members sorting through the items on offer at the viewing.



our Yankee cousins, that's something akin to a baseball bat with a flat side!) There was also some legal mumbo jumbo we've heard before and a warning of the dire consequences of trying to bid against Margaret!

Then the action was on as Max started knocking items down one after the other. This auction, as usual, had some particularly desirable items amongst the ordinary and the bidding on these proved quite intense. First to attract a strong reaction was #164, a Miniature Speed Graphic in VGC. Along with the usual accessories it also had a 120 RF back, making it a very usable item. With a \$100 reserve, it was finally knocked down to a new (and very pleased) owner at \$700. A Leica 1c Body in good cosmetic condition fetched \$410 to an absentee phone bidder and the following item; a Leica 1g body (c1957-60) overshot the reserve of \$200, selling for \$640.



Leica 1c body, spirited bidding saw it go to a phone bidder for \$410. (Web-site photo.)



Leica 1g body, which rocketed past its \$200 reserve to sell for \$640. (Web-site photo.)

Then came #378, a Leitz lens. A super Angulon-R f4/21mm. With two determined bidders in the hall, this one had Max's head bouncing back and forth like a tennis match spectator as this item took off like a Space Shuttle launch, finally selling for \$520! A well earned round of applause followed. It was a long but successful day with total sales of just over \$21G.



The Leitz Super Angulon-R that really caused a bidding war! (Web-site Photo.)



Andrew Korlaki, Max Amos and Alan King. 'Tis said that Max could coax an Eskimo into bidding for a bucket of ice!

SPECIALBOOK OFFER TO BACK FOCUS READERS:

Member/author John Hoehn is offering 20% off the list price of \$36+p&p. That's just 28.80, plus \$6.95 p&p = \$35.75

The offer will be left open to you for a few weeks and ordering can best be made by cheque to Frank Isbister, 54 Volitans Ave Mt Eliza, Vic 3930. Simply send a cheque with your address to Frank and he will ship the book to you.

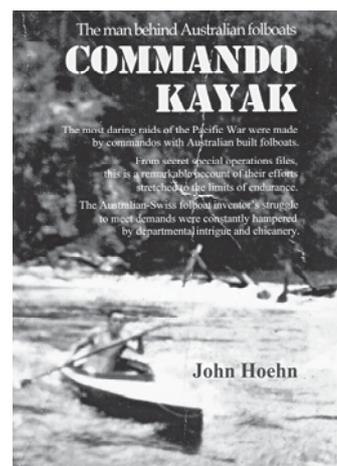
For Kayakists and Militarists this is a unique documentary and compelling story about the amazing success of Australia's wartime top secret commando folboats and their crew. In parts, it reads like a good novel but is 100% factual. The craft had been developed from pre-war sports kayaks proven in raging white waters of Switzerland. At the start of the Pacific War, the military version was tested by Australia's Z Special Force Command off the Queensland coast and in New Guinea. Two were rushed to a secret camp to train commandos for Operation JAYWICK. Those same commandos later paddled in complete darkness to sink 7 enemy ships in Singapore Harbour in 1943.

Every paddle stroke is there. Accounts from actual top brass personalities include the use folboats in surf conditions and Australian Commandos' perfection of the deployment and recovery from submarines in 1972. 87'500 words, 44 graphic images of the sports and military versions, full A4 pages of the **original folboat plans** plus copies of formerly top-secret National and private archived documents tell the story.

The Australian MKIII was highly regarded, having the longest run of any military folboat during WWII. A total of 1024 were ordered by the Defence Department, vastly outnumbering those brought in and used from overseas – a fact that was not generally known until now. One of these original military MKIII folboats will be on display at the Australian War Museum soon.

The book includes 33 of accounts of over 36 Special Operations in the Pacific, including RIMAU (book: Heroes of Rimau), MOSSTROOPS, NADZAB, PYTHON, MENZIES, POLITICIAN, PLATYPUS, COPPER (Book: The Guns of Muschu), SEMUT IVB & CROCODILE - all documented.

Merely for the price of one book, this is a valuable reference for military personnel and all kayak enthusiasts. More information is on the website: www.hirschbooks.net **(As one of the first in on this offer, I can promise you a great read! Ed.)**



Just Something that Caught My Eye.....or

Don't Judge a Book by *Other People's* View of its Cover!

(Part 1 of a 4 part series on Odd Cameras!)

Lyle Curr.

This article is a pure indulgence. In it I am trying to tell you of how I was enamoured of a complete ordinary camera, and in my imagination turned it into a wonderful collectable. But it is about MY thought processes and the weird and sometimes bizarre way MY mind works. I enjoyed writing it; I hope you enjoy reading it!

There are plenty of common, everyday types of cameras to which most of us as 'serious' collectors don't even give a second glance as we pass it in a shop or at a market. Perhaps occasionally we should not be so judgmental. This is the story of just such an instance.....

The Agfa Silette was a relatively simple, low 'spec'd' series of 35mm cameras introduced in 1953. Most of the Silettes were low priced, and therefore sold well, and became a very successful marque for Agfa. While there was the odd model that had better quality lens and shutter combinations, a coupled rangefinder and even built in light meters, it was the basic Silette models that became the success story. Simple and easy to use, they fulfilled the public's view of being a 'good' camera, but were within price reach. The Silette continued in production in one form or another right through to the mid 1970's. But they were the complete antithesis of the collector's camera. They were/are just so bland that no one but the extremely die hard Agfa collector looks at them..... and I must say that is exactly how I too feel about the Agfa Silette. But.....

The subject of this article was acquired with 5 or 6 other cameras I bought as a job lot at the Geelong Trash and Treasure market. I had intended to sell it with a number of other cameras as a 'Collector's Lot' on eBay, but as I started to check it over, there appeared to more to it than I had first thought. In fact, I have now added it to my these days more modest collection, and it looks great on the shelf; and there is much more to it than good looks..... read on!!!!



(1) The camera in question, the Agfa Silette RECORD.

The camera in question is an **Agfa Silette 'Record'**. Aside from carrying the 'Silette' ID, which identified the marque, Agfa used an additional name to distinguish this camera from other models. As with a lot of the larger camera manufacturers, the same name was used for a number of different camera models over the years and here we find 'Record' appearing as it had done on quite a few other Agfa models preceding it.

But really this is not an Agfa history lesson. This is about this one particular camera. Why would someone like me just decide to keep this particular 'common' camera.

What characteristics would an Agfa Silette Record have that makes it a 'keeper'?

Lets have a closer look and in doing so we will probably get the story on what most of us do when we first take a look at a camera. Check out someone 'viewing' a camera at the next Society Auction, and just see how 'THEY' do it! (Pic 1) Firstly of course was just the appearance of this

camera. It is in immaculate condition, always an appealing point. It is quite striking with its nearly all black ‘pro’ look, trimmed with nice, shiny chrome, and there is a shiny clear plastic, but very glassy looking sheet covering the top quarter of the front of the camera wherein is housed the rather fascinating front of the selenium light meter cell. The cell reminded me of the massive light towers at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Each tiny little square of the cell has a little dot in the middle and seems to look out over the lens assembly like those impressive light towers at the “Gee.” **(Pic 2)**



(2) That meter cell.

Then, what is the next thing we do when ‘studying’ a camera; wind it and fire the shutter of course. I had to look for the winding lever, and it’s on the bottom of the Record. The thing that struck me is the very odd shape of the winder. Angles and curves, it looked like there was no way it would rotate without an edge catching somewhere. But it does of course, and quite smoothly too. But while looking for the winder, the layout of the baseplate also captured my interest. LARGE window with exposure counter in it. LARGE rewind button, and

what looked like a LARGE pop out rewind lever. **(Pic 3)**

Having tried the shutter and discovered the interesting baseplate, what is the next thing a collector would do. Open the back of course.... and I really wanted to do that with this camera to see if the winding lever would be released as the back popped open.



(3) The layout of the baseplate with the odd shaped winding lever.



(4) This is what confronts you when looking at how to open the back.

Now operation of the backlatch

is sometimes one of the things that eludes us at first glance on many cameras. On this one there appeared to be no obvious pull, push, turn or lift that did the job. I actually had to look up an online instruction book to make sure I did not damage the camera with my fumbblings. The back latch on the Record is quite unusual and really took my fancy. Quite silly the things that attract us as collectors, but this attribute of the Silette Record actually struck me as being unique. Unique in the sense that I had never seen it before in 40 odd years of camera collecting..... and the method of opening the back has never appeared on any other camera (according to all the research I have been able to do) and therefore I am claiming it as unique.... (Yes, now is the time to put YOUR pen to paper and dash off that indignant letter to the editor telling him that the old Kodak man should stick to what he knows, and leave the rest to some one else, because everyone knows the same system was used to open the back of the Whizbang Six-20 made in Africa in 1937!!!!). But the fact remains the back latch of the Silette Record is like nothing I have ever seen. It requires two fingers to open it, **(Pic 4)** and they must press *simultaneously* on the ends of two latches to release the back. They open in what I can only describe as a butterfly like action, **(Pic 5)** and the back flies open and the winding crank pops out of its socket with a well, uuuuummm, err

a pop! The very normal internal set up for a 35mm camera was actually quite a disappointment after the excitement of trying to *open* the back. (Pic 6)

However, carrying on with what grabbed me about the Record, have a close look at the pic of the backlatch. Lets see you try the procedure while trying to photograph it with the other hand! Yes, I know, I should have used a tripod!

Aside from all that, the Silette Record is actually NOT a common camera. How many of these have you actually seen out in the wilds of the camera hunting jungle. Not many I bet.....



(5) *It does look like a butterfly.*



(6) *Inside looks like any other 60s 35mm compact.*



(7) *The highly polished chrome at the front of the top-plate photographs as black, with some reflections in it. The rest of the top of the camera is a quality brushed chrome.*

But overall, this camera has flair. Its slightly angular shape looks good. The quality of both the shiny and the brushed chrome work is excellent and adds something to the camera's appearance. Even the black plastic shutter release button has a contrasting brushed chrome metal centrepiece; just another little detail to which attention has been paid in creating the look of this camera. The shiny black lens bezel and lens surround with strikingly contrasting silver (Pic 8) lettering looks more than good, it looks

Introduced in 1964, the Silette Record cost about \$70 then, which was quite expensive for a 35mm camera *without* a coupled rangefinder. This probably accounts for its scarceness, as I doubt many were sold at that price. But it did continue in production till 1970, so it must have had something going for it. There is the f/2.8 Color Apotar lens and six speed Prontor 500 LK shutter, with B and delayed action. There are click stop symbols for easy focusing plus a distance scale, but I don't think it was those rather ordinary

specifications that make it a camera that may be of interest to a collector.

The top plate of the Record is also pretty 'normal', but is nicely two toned (shiny and brushed) chrome. It has a standard accessory shoe but also a large and rather neat geometrically patterned meter needle window. Both the top plate and the back of the camera are elegant simplicity, and just add to the classy look of the machine. (Pic 7)



(8) *Even the ID and scales on this camera look great in pro black and bright silver.*

great. All set off by the diamond shaped “Agfa” logo, in classy black and silver on this camera, set opposite the meter cell in that glassy look covered top. (Pic 9)



(9) That glassy looking top half of the front really looks classy.

I am not party to any of the design or development work that went into this or any other model Agfa camera. But I refuse to believe that the designer or design team that worked on this particular model just wanted to get the next Silette into the market. Time and thought, and actual production work has in this case produced a camera that is just different.

Yes, it appears to be a slightly better quality camera than the average Silette, but as a picture-taking machine it is probably no better than any other of the marque. BUT.... it also appears to have been designed ‘outside the square’, and given some features and looks that just elevate it to that next level and move it onto the *collecting* plane.

So if you saw an Agfa Silette Record advertised for sale anywhere, you will think it’s a medium specified, 60s non rangefinder ordinary 35mm camera of very average and dare I say common type, and you would probably just skim over it. Even if you saw it at a market or in a second hand shop you would probably not give it a second glance..... **a fatal reaction** for any collector to virtually **any** camera. ALWAYS take a look, even a second look, because you may only pass that way only once and the one you miss out on is one you will never have. Make sure **YOU** are not the one who misses out!!!!!!!

Happy Hunting, Lyle Curr.

From Emails to the Editor:

For our Hasselblad fans!

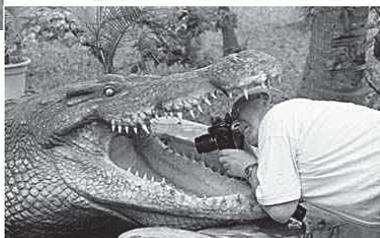
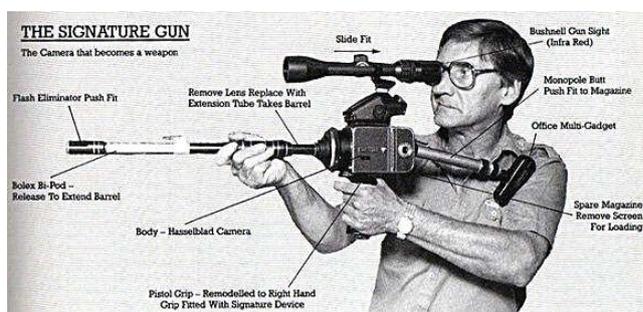


Next time ask me first!

And just how far would YOU go to get the shot you’re after? As far as these lens-men on the right? Perhaps we can arrange a Field Trip to the Werribee Zoo for you?



The ultimate camera to take on a ‘shoot!’ As used by James Bond.



“Can’t beat a good macro setting!”



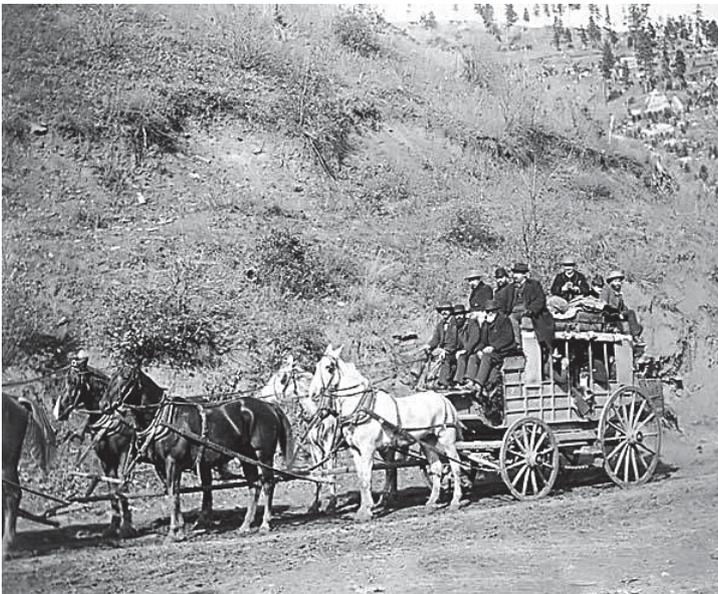
He’s about to get the point!

Letters to the Editor

Ian,

just received the Back Focus. Reading your report, considered with the April Meeting made me sad I could never take part in such a meeting, it made me really jealous. The article by Han Fokkelman seems the most competent, I believe the author gave us the genuine source of the Adox story. I do appreciate the Ricoh article by Herb Parker, in particular his opinion about the SMC Takumar 1.4 lens. By the way, that lens was the second, much improved edition comparing with the former 8 element Takumar. Lot of thanks to Geoff Harrison for the Casca cameras, while as was told about these cameras now for the first time to learn more and had the opportunity to have a look at this strange animal. The Casca cameras seemed to be very costly, I wonder how much were contemporary the Contax II? Recently I try to take some cine films. Unfortunately, the batteries are exhausted, so the first step is the loading. Anyway the camera works properly, when supplied by the loading device. I wonder, if you remember the bygone era when the double Eight was in clock motor powered cameras were in common use? I don't particularly liked processing of these films, however I was probably the first one who did it by himself just after I developed the simplest recipe so it was not too difficult. The simple but important step was the splitting the processed film, so my friend constructed the precise device, so we could start. My first camera was Kodak fitted with the excellent 1.9 focussing lens, while projector was the Kodascope 80. The really beautiful but a bit too noisy set. The most serious problem was the getting the film the only obtainable were the old ones "Process before September 1945". Looking back, it seems strange while the sequence could not be longer then run of the clock motor, or certainly no more than the longitude of the ca 7.5 m of film. Probably in some circumstances it has been the positive property in avoiding the long, boring scenes. When I am looking at my old films it seems strange as the projector's noise and temporary waving makes it a bit primitive, to say nothing when the film breaks (Glue, glue) Anyway it is the only opportunity looking at people and circumstances that are over.

Stefan and Zosia Sztromajer. #432



From a set of historical photos sent by member John Hoehn in Switzerland. Last trip of the famous Deadwood Stage Coach. (Can't spot Calamity Jane anywhere!)

today. Probably many were (are) still OK for portraiture perhaps, but only a few ended up on his "useable" list. They are all pre-1940 era save for one. Kramer suggested these listed had excellent sharpness and performance, even though uncoated and of earlier design.

BAUSCH & LOMB (USA) TESSAR and AERO TESSAR,
KODAK ANASTIGMAT
SCHNEIDER XENAR
CARL ZEISS TESSAR
KODAK COMMERCIAL EKTAR (POST WAR, COATED)

KRAMER REVIEWS OLD LENSES

reported by John Fleming

In the US photographic magazine "Modern Photography" one of the regular contributors was Arthur Kramer. He had a monthly column covering large format and view camera topics entitled "Kramer's View". In one issue for 1969 he took a look at old, pre-war lenses and debated which ones, if any, were still useable by modern standards.

Whilst there have been many brands and types of lens design tried, not too many, in Arthur Kramer's opinion, could be considered acceptably sharp and useable

LEITZ ELMAR
VOIGTLANDER SKOPAR

Fairly select list you will agree, and interesting to see the Kodak Anastigmat included such is on the little German 620 Junior folders etc. From personal experience I can confirm these are quite crisp and surprising performers considering their age and lack of coating.

I am happy to supply copy of the complete Arthur Kramer 1969 article if any member interested and can be contacted on (03) 9877-7754 or email oldercarrepairs@bigpond.com

It had already been known for many years: it was necessary to improve the 8mm system. Changing the film after 7½ m by turning the spools gave a lot of orange fogging and was a brake to get a lot of new amateurs. The number of amateur filming on the consumer market was around 2%. There were experiments with cartridges and turning camera chambers, but that was still experimental.

The question was: Who will do it? Everyone who would introduce a new system on the market needed the permit from Kodak, or in other words: Kodak was, with its Kodachrome worldwide the leader of the market. If you would introduce a system while Kodak did not wish to deliver the Kodachrome, you could forget any success.



The Single-8 cartridge.



'Camera' side of the cartridge.

But in the Fuji camp, they thought that the number of 8mm consumers could rise if you changed the double 8 system to a single 8 system. The idea was to design a cartridge that every film factory could use without paying patent rights. In 1959 already a team was formed that was extended in 1962 with designers of Canon, Konica and Yashica. In 1963, in came: Agfa, Bell & Howell and Kodak. The basic was the Agfa Movex cartridge of 1936. The cartridge was made now of plastic and got an aperture that made it easier to get the film between lens and pressure plate. Both axis were made to transport

the film with the result that you could rewind the film for trick effects. On the side of the camera came a hole like a bow where the camera sense could set the exposure meter on 25 - 200 ASA.

The problem with the Movex cartridge was that it was designed for 10m film instead of the 15m that was normal with the double 8 spool. Fuji solved this problem by using a polyester film instead of the acetate film. This film is thinner and 15m film could be loaded. The other advantages were: the possibilities that the film should tear are less and a thinner film gives less loss of light.

In the beginning of 1964 Kodak left the developers team and, after that 13 Japanese firms and Agfa decided to introduce the new RAPID-8 system on the Olympics of Tokyo.

But when Kodak announced in March 1964 the super 8 format, with around 50% larger picture, they postponed the introduction of the Rapid-8. Now the film was remade for the new format and in 1965 already they came on the market. The Super-8 projector became the code S, so they decided to use the name SINGLE-8 to prevent problems with projection. The films Super-8 and Single-8 have the same size, only the cartridge in the camera is different.

In the beginning there were a lot of Single 8 films. Fuji delivered the R 25 daylight color film and the RT 50 tungsten color film. There were also the 50 and 200 ASA black and white films, but these did not last long and were discontinued. Later, in 1975, they released the RT 200 tungsten color film that replaced the RT 50. This film with its 200 ASA should be the fastest tungsten color film in the world.

Sakura delivered the R 25 color daylight film but stopped soon. Agfa came with the CT 13-8 Single 8, film type S. But that was a short production. The emulsion number was 7882/4143, till November 1966 and is till now the only known Agfa Single 8 film. The problem of Agfa was that it became impossible to perforate the polyester film on the right way. They used the acetate film but

the cartridge became 10m film now. This is the reason that in this time Fuji cameras had a red dot behind the 10m indication. Later it would be done well but Agfa also had also Super 8 cartridges in its program and the word told in those days was that Kodak gave to Agfa a choice: Super 8 or Single 8 but not both. Agfa and Fuji had good color films in their program but after the Rapid failure Agfa did not want to take any risk.



Fujica P 1.

The first Fuji movie cameras were the P1 and Z1. The Fujica P1 was from the beginning a best seller. With a new style, as flat as possible, a non coupled viewfinder, automatic exposure and a fix/focus lens, it was a film box designed around the cartridge. The lens was the Fujinon f1.8-11.5mm.

With a close up lens in front you could come to 45-37 cm. The preset tele lens made the focus two times longer till 23 mm what you could find back in the viewfinder. There were filters like the grey filter, blue filter and the amber filter all in combination with a grey exposure meter preset lens. If you used a filter, the exposure was adjusted. The four-penlight batteries were placed in the grip, where you could also find the meter battery, a PX 14.

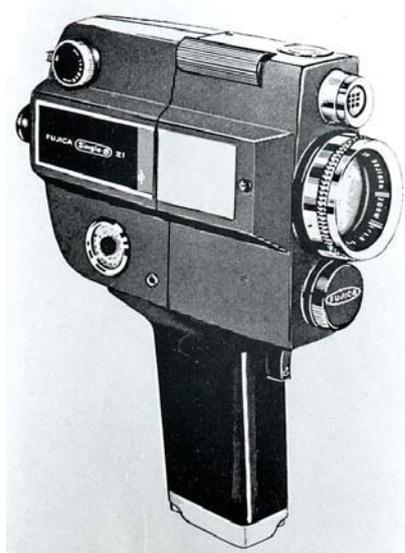
This camera was popular till 1977. Fuji stimulated that with advertising on the Japanese TV targeted to get the mothers filming. Beside its popularity in Japan, this camera was also well received in the UK and Netherlands. A number was made for special purposes. In an underwater housing the camera was connected with a timer, taking one frame each 15-minutes. In this way it was possible to get information about the current flow of rivers. Between 1967 and 1976 came the P 100. It was the same P1 but now with a rewind key. The P 105 is the P 100 with a black front.

Together with the P1, the Z1 was introduced. Here we have to do with the other possibility of the Single 8 system. The speeds were 18 fr/s. and 24 fr./s. plus single frame. The lens was the Fujinon f1.6/9.5-29mm that could be moved by hand turning a roller that was mounted on the top of the camera. It was possible to buy a motor that could be placed on the camera. Focusing was infinity to 1 meter, but with the close up lens you could come to 46cm. The exposure was automatic or manual. For nature photography, there was an electric wire release available. In this case the handgrip was uncoupled and the wire came between handgrip and camera.

Typical detail: there was no possibility to rewind the film. This camera was on the market between 1965 and 1967.

In 1966-1970 the Z 2 was released. The lens was the Fujinon f1.8/8.5-34mm. The viewfinder had a focus wedge. The exposure correction by backlight was 2x and 4x. With this camera the film could be rewound by hand while counting the frames. The segments of the shutter could be changed so it was possible to create special effects, and therefore the cartridge was designed.

The Z2 A Industrial of 1967 was the same camera with a timer that made it possible to make exposures with intervals of 0.6- 1- 2- 3- 6 sec. A scene with this intervals cost 10-12 sec., after that a pause of 1- 2 -5- 10 minutes. A counter told you how many scenes were taken. This MEMOMOTION system was intended to control of moving in short time, and situations in a special time. It was used to observe traffic, in laboratories, hospitals and banks.



Fujica Z 1.

Beside the popular P1 must become another simple camera with zoom lens. It became the P300 that became a bestseller too. It was a simple camera. The lens was the Fujinon f .8/10.5 –27.5mm with a reflex viewfinder. The exposure was automatic but not through the lens, there was a light cell on the top of the camera. On the top of this cell was a knob that, when depressed, the light cell was partially covered. The advantage was that if you took the top of a tower, the light was stopped for a part so the tower was not under exposed.

The lens was to use from inf. till 1.20m. A close up lens could be used till 41cm. The three filters were mounted with a chain to the exposure adapter. The speed was 18 fr./s., there was a possibility to use the camera with the electric distance set. The film could be rewound, but fading was impossible. The P 300 was a mass product and was successful. It appeared in 1967 and was modernised in 1972 to P 300 New that was produced till 1976.



The P 300. another best seller!



Z 600 of 1968.

The Z 600, of 1968, was the first Fuji Single 8 camera that could do all the possibilities that the cartridge could deliver. It was the first camera with exposure metering through the lens that could be found only on the Super 8 cameras. The lens was the Fujinon Z f1.8/8-48mm that could be used by motor or the small hand roller as on the Z 1. The speeds were 18 fr./s/ and 24 fr./s. plus single frame. You could also use the electric wire release. The exposure was automatic or manual. The filters could be regulated on the exposure meter by 2x or 4x. The shutter segments could be

opened for 50%, or 25 % or closed. Fading was possible. All these controls were in the top of the viewfinder. With the press of a rewind knob you could rewind the film with the lever. How much you rewound was given as an indication extra.

Fuji should have made more cameras for the Single 8 system but let us see to other manufacturers first. The Single 8 cartridge made possible that which was lost by the Super 8 cartridge: to rewind the film for special effects. The camera had its own film pressure plate that gave the guarantee that an expensive lens gave its quality. With the Super 8 cartridge it was a simple plate on the cartridge that was held in place by a simple piece of metal, the two reels beside each other often gave in the beginning some out of focus pictures when starting. Fuji and Sakura had good color films but a new system was a risk. But they had a large home market and that was unofficially well protected.

SANKYO

In 1966 Sankyo showed on the Photokina a Single 8 camera that looked like the Super 8 CM. Probably nobody was interested, or they were too expensive, at any rate we did not hear any more about this camera.

CANON

In 1965 the first Single-8 camera appeared: the 518. It had the 14 lenses Zoom C-8 f1.8/9.5-47.5mm. The camera had two speeds: 18 fr./s. and 24 fr./s. The exposure meter could be set for two and four filter stops. There is a reflex viewfinder and the film could be rewound by hand. Four years later, in 1969, appeared the Canon Single 8 518 SV. The rewind has a motor now and the shutter segments



Canon Single 8 518 SV.

could be changed. The speeds were 18, 24 and 36 fr./s. plus single frame. The 36 fr./s. were indicated "slow motion" in red. First they sold the 518 SV on the Asian market only, but where they were sold in Europe or the US is still unknown.



Yashica 30 Single 8 TL

YASHICA

The Yashica Single 8 TL appeared in 1966. 7000 were produced and sold. It was a reflex camera with the Yashinon f1.7/10.5-32mm zoom lens, that was used by hand. It was a simple camera with 18 fr./s. and single frame. This camera with TTL metering, and its higher price, became the competitor of the Fuji P 300, and failed.

KONICA

Among the Single 8 camera players was Konica and, in 1966, entered on two markets. The 3-TL for the popular part of the market and the 6-TL for the semi professional part of the market. The nicest model was the Konica Single 8 6-TL of 1090 gram. It had the Konica V-Hexanon f1.8/8-48mm with motor zoom.

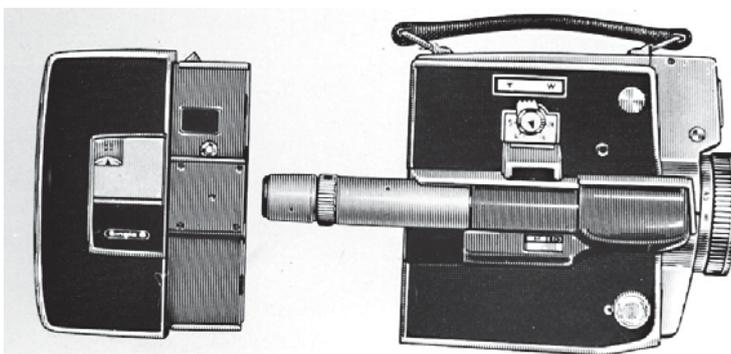
The reflex viewfinder had a focus wedge. The automatic CDS exposure metering was through the lens but the lens openings could be set by hand too. This automatic light exposure was very accurate, thanks to a motor that served the lens stops, so the camera reacted directly to other light conditions. The speeds were 12, 18 and 24 fr./s. plus single frame. If the film was rewound, the lens stops closed the lens totally automatically, so you did not take the risk of double exposure. You could rewind the film totally but the counter gave as maximum 36 frames, after that it counted in feet.

The Konica Single 8 3-TL with its Hexanon f1.8/10.5-32mm was simpler. The speed was 18 fr./s. and single frame. It was possible to rewind the film.



Konica 6-TL.

ELMO



Elmo C 200.

The direction of Elmo had problems with the question: "is it wise to produce a Single 8 camera?" They realized that the lens and the film frame of Super 8 and Single 8 was the same, with the result that they designed a camera that was to use both systems. The rear decided if it is a Super 8 or a Single 8 camera. In 1965 appeared the Elmo C 200 camera that

came on the American market as Honeywell Elmo Duofilmatic. The lens was the Elmo zoom f1.8/9-36mm with motor zoom.

The exposure was to read in the viewfinder with a wedge. The speeds were 18 fr./s and 24 fr/s. plus single frame. The rear was a magazine in which the Single 8 cartridge could be placed. It had its own film counter. The Super-8 cartridge had its own magazine with film counter. Both magazines got their film speed indications from the cartridge and justify the camera exposure meter. The Single 8 magazine gave the possibility to rewind the film.

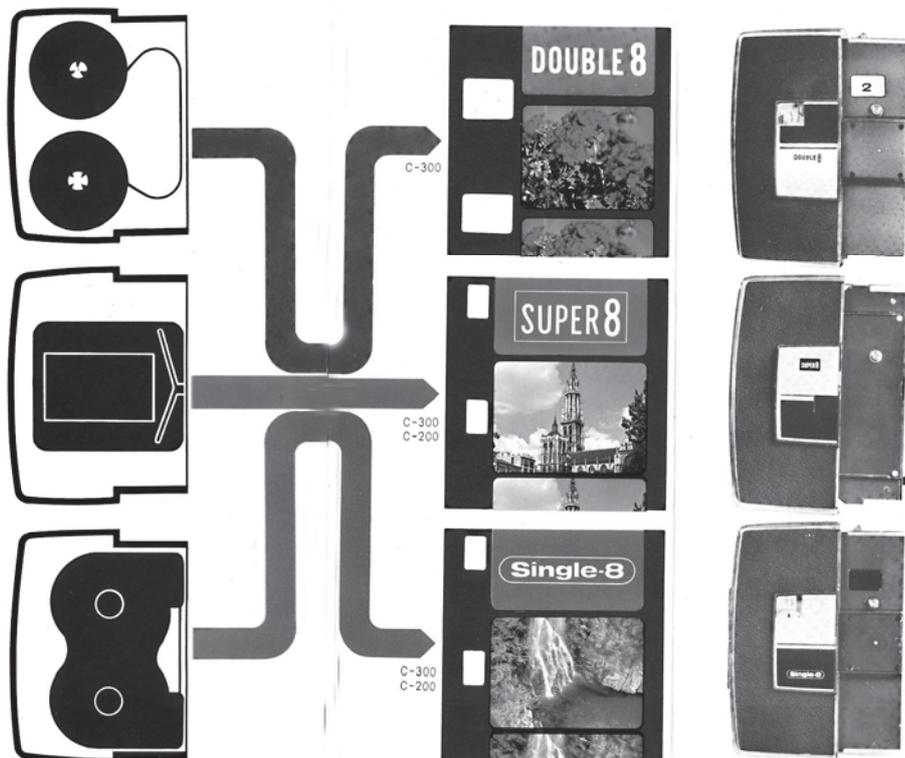


Diagram of the three Elmo magazines.

in the US, Germany, UK and Netherlands. It was not a cheap construction, with the result that in 1967 the Elmo S-140 was brought on the market, the first real Elmo Single 8 camera.

The Elmo S-140 had the Elmo zoom f1.8/9-36mm lens that could be used by hand and motor zoom. It had a reflex viewfinder with wedge. And you could see a red signal at the end of the film. There was a green signal if you rewound the film. The speeds were 18 and 24 fr/s. plus single frame. There was a possibility to use the camera over distance. A tele-converter could be ordered. In 1968 this camera got the name: 8 S-40. In this time also came the 8 S-160 with the zoom lens Elmo zoom f1.8/8-48mm, and the same speeds.

All these Elmo film cameras had to rewind by motor, in the Fuji camera line you will find that later with the ZC 1000.

KOHKA

In the beginning Fuji had problems with the production of its Single 8 cameras. The Japanese market wanted more cameras than they could produce. A part of the production was made by: Original Equipment Manufacturer "Kohka". This firm sold some cameras under its own brand.

KOWA

It is known Kowa had sold some Single 8 cameras on the Japanese market.

A short time later came the Elmo C-300, also known as Honeywell Elmo Trifilmatic, which was designed to use Double 8 films too. The Double 8 spools had their own magazine that was placed at the rear of the camera. With this design it became possible to make the C 300 suitable for spools with Double Super 8.

Seen from the outside it was a strange way of construction, for who would use all these systems together? But this technical tour de force was well liked by many amateurs. Most of these cameras were sold

Part two of this three part series will be in the next issue of Back Focus.

When is a camera not a camera....?

By Brian Howden.

ANSWER... When it's a Camera Lucida (Or a camera obscura), in this story we will deal with the former and in particular it's application to Microscopy.

But hang on, I hear you say! What has all this got to do with photography? Well really nothing other than the fact that the Camera Lucida is also an optical device and it's use pre-dates the advent of photography, It was subsequently phased out as photomicrography took hold but not completely, as we shall see later.

We all know that the Camera Lucida was a device used as a drawing aid by artists, however the type we are concerned with here were used by microscopists as a tool to produce drawings and illustrations of the specimens they were viewing through the microscope and we have probably all seen these beautiful illustrations in very early books on microbiology and microscope use, from around 1855 however mention is made of the possible use of photography to capture the image of these specimens.

But first a bit of history, the Camera Lucida was patented by William Wollaston in 1807, but it is suggested and argued that the Camera Lucida was devised 200 years earlier in 1611 by Johannes Kepler and named the "Dioptrice", but we will let the historians fight over that as it doesn't really concern us.

The term "Camera Lucida" is latin for "Light room" as opposed to the "Camera Obscura" meaning "Dark room" or "Dark chamber" nevertheless the apparatus was very popular in Victorian times.

There are several types of Camera Lucida's for use with the microscope and these were made by all the great optical firms of the day who were producing microscopes, names such as Zeiss Abbe, Leitz, Watson, Beck etc, today however they are quite rare and difficult to locate I believe from what I have read.

The one I have is a Leitz "Zeichenokular", I was told by a friend that it was for sale on eBay, located in Stockholm Sweden, so I put in a bid and won it. (The fact it had "Leitz on it made it a must have didn't it).



Pic 1. A 1930's Zeiss Camera Lucida.

It is different in the way it is designed compared to most of the others, where they clamp to the top of a monocular microscope's eyepiece tube with a swing away eyepiece, filters and prism, a side arm approx 150mm long carries an adjustable mirror see Pic 1

The Leitz approach uses essentially the same elements but is much more compact (No side mirror) with only the contrast filters swinging in and out, see Pic 2.

How does it work?... Well the idea is that you set up your microscope as normal, focusing on the specimen, you then remove the microscope eyepiece and replace it with the Camera Lucida, the Leitz unit just slips straight in and is locked to the tube via a little knurled screw, you then re-check focus.

Now a sheet of drawing paper is placed on the table / bench alongside the microscope and a pencil laid on top of the paper, you now look through the eyepiece to make sure the paper is in place and the point of the pencil can be seen adjacent to the image.

What is occurring is that the tiny mirror within is reflecting the light from the sheet of paper to the prism, which now projects to the eye two images, superimposed one upon the other, you can now hopefully see clearly the specimen and the pencil point, see Pic 3.

You are now able to draw the outline of the image superimposed on the paper, sounds easy doesn't it!....NO, not so, it is really quite a difficult thing to do, I have tried repeatedly and failed miserably, my images resemble something like a child's pre-school drawing, so I take my hat off to the early

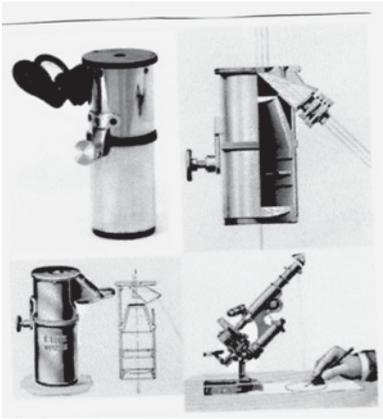
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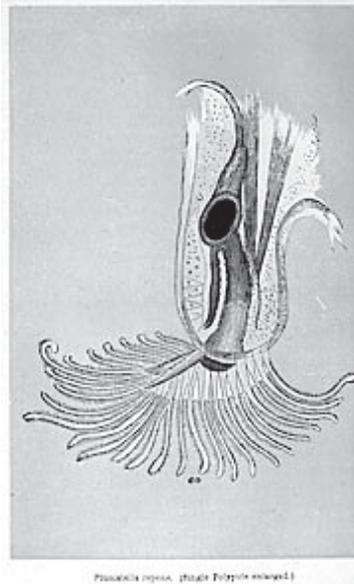


Pic 2. The Leitz, Zeichenokular. (Camera Lucida.)

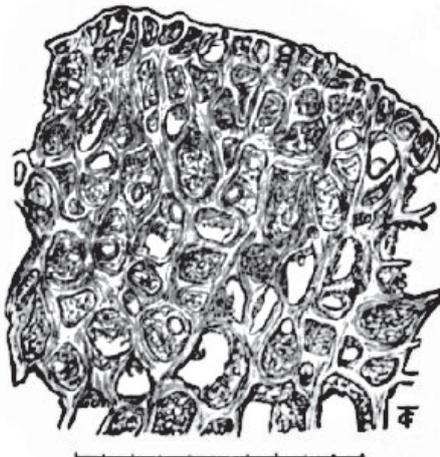
microscopists who produced those wonderful illustrations, a lot of practice would be required to become proficient, see examples in Pic 4 & 5.



Pic 3. How it works.

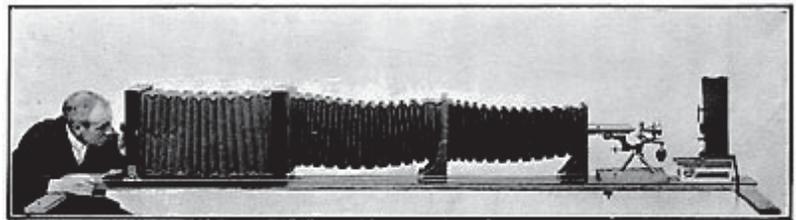


Pic 5. Beautiful drawing and watercolour, a plate from "Marvels of pond life" by H.J. Slack 1891.



Pic 4. An example of the microscopists work.

Mention was made of filters mounted to the Camera Lucida's, These were there to enable the user to alter the contrast and make drawing the image easier.



Pic 7. Photomicrography using a plate camera, from "Nature through microscope and camera" by Richard Kerr. 1905.



Pic 6. The Leitz unit fitted to microscope.

Finally I will just make mention of one other method that drawings could be made of the images from the microscope, this was by the use of a squared graticule fitted in the eyepiece of the microscope, the drawing was then made onto squared tracing paper one square at a time, this way correct proportions were maintained and an accurate drawing produced, a far better result than trying to draw freehand. Having purchased a Leitz Camera Lucida I now had need of a nice brass Leitz microscope to mount it on, now as fate would have it there was coming up an important photographica auction in



Pic 8. A simpler solution, the Leitz "MIKAS" system.

Melbourne, and there listed amongst all the other goodies was not one but two very nice examples of brass Leitz microscopes and well I just had to have one didn't I. See Pic 6.

So there you have it, The Camera that isn't a Camera.

But if you must take photomicrographs you need a setup like that in Pic 7, talk about going to extremes! Or maybe my set up in Pic 8 would be simpler?

A Genuine Mouse "Camera"

by Lyle Curr

Recently I was following up on a collection of cameras that had been offered for sale in the Central Highlands region of Victoria. I had only seen a not very good picture of the "collection" sent to me on the internet, (Pic 1) and while there were a couple of cameras in it that looked promising, I could



Pic 1. One of the pics I had been sent. I have circled the subject of this little piece of fun.

not tell from the pic what was actually there. So I arranged to go and have a look.

It was a nice drive up into the hills. The day was cool and a few showers were about, but the country up in that region is lovely, so it was quite pleasant. (Pic 2 or Alt Pic 2) Arriving at the appointed time and place, I was shown through to a shed with boxes of stuff everywhere. The sort of place one loves to get into. But I was only interested in the cameras.

The owner, who was a pleasant and friendly person, pointed out the boxes of "photographic gear" which unfortunately had all been packed up. But it was fun to go through them, unpacking bits and pieces and never knowing what was going to

pop up next.

The collection had belonged to a rather elderly gent who over the years had been an avid photographer. Now in his nineties, he had to let it all go, and as with most of that generation of photographers, a lot of the stuff he had made or radically adapted and modified himself, to suit his needs of the time.

From a collectors point of view it was very disappointing. From a sociological perspective it was a wonderful story of the life and skill of the old time amateur photographer. Lamentably, that sort of stuff is not the thing collections are made of, and most of it was destined for the tip, or at best the op shop. But there were some nice older books and catalogues, and a few bits of cameras that would be good for parts or restoration and, one complete, virtually unused camera, in its box, that looked rather pretty.

So after the usual friendly haggling, we settled on a price and I drove home with a couple of small boxes of gear.

Unpacking the boxes, with time to now closely examine new acquisitions is always exciting. This time was no exception. Looking through the books, a lovely old developing wallet fell out of one, and a even bigger surprise, a small format Kodak promo pamphlet of 12 pages listing a number of Kodak cameras from the late 1920's was hiding amongst the pages of another.

But I wanted to get to the little unused, boxed camera. It looked like a pressed tin Japanese thing for 127 film, and I had presumed pre war.

I had been completely fooled. I mean it, I really had thought it was a cheaply made early Japanese camera; or perhaps it was wishful thinking. I also felt not a little foolish. My excited anticipation had got the better of me! (Pic 3)

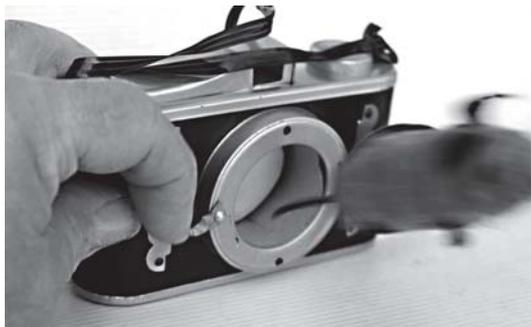


Pic 2. Taken through the windscreen while heading up over the hills. Very foggy.



Pic 3. The Comet Special Camera in its box.

This was not really a camera at all, but a surprise toy. The “shutter button” on the side of the lens surround controls a latch (seen to the left of the fake lens). When you press it, the lens swings open and a spring, covered to resemble a mouse, pops out with the force of a ballistic missile. **(Pic 4)**



Pic 4. Forget the pigs, this spring loaded mouse really flies. The Mouse pops out at quite a high muzzle velocity.

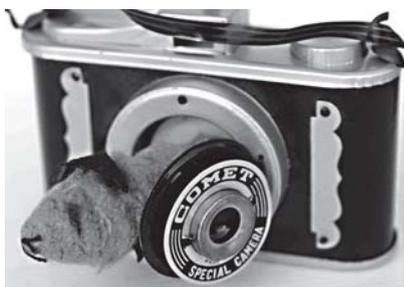
Disappointment settled over me, to be slowly replaced by a rather more pleasant feeling of interest and even pleasure, as I examined this little gadget more closely. While it is I think relatively fragile, it is not poorly made, and it IS Japanese. It is pressed tin, well the top and bottom plates are! The body of the camera is a grained plastic sort of material, and there appears to a wooden block at either end (internally) to which the top and **(Pic 5)** bottom plates are actually nailed; or perhaps pinned would be a better word. There are a couple of rather decorative, fancy pressed plate gray painted ornate panels also pinned to the wooden internal blocks.



Pic 5. The rear. The body is a thin plastic just curved inside flanges on the top and bottom plate.

The “lens” assembly is hinged, and inside the barrel of the body is a cardboard tube, which houses a spring loaded push in squeaking device. This helps propel the “mouse” when it is released, and makes a loud squeak, which can be a shock to an unsuspecting victim.

The mouse itself is actually a coiled spring, with a felt like gray covering, and black felt ears, eyes, mouth, legs and tail. At a glance it actually quite resembles a real mouse. Being a spring as well, it also contributes to the release velocity, and combined with the internal squeaking spring, you get a tremendous speed of ejection.



Pic 7. I had to “stage” this shot in order to get a good look at the mouse!

It’s ridiculous; it’s cheap and nasty; it’s kitch;and it’s **FUN!** **(Pic 7)**

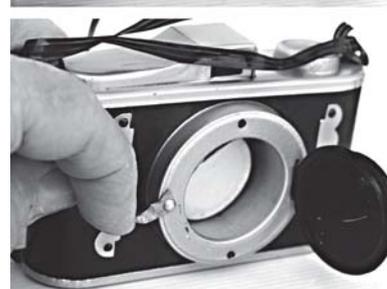
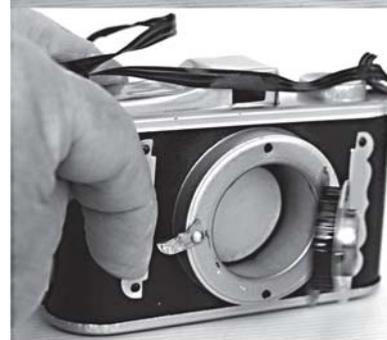
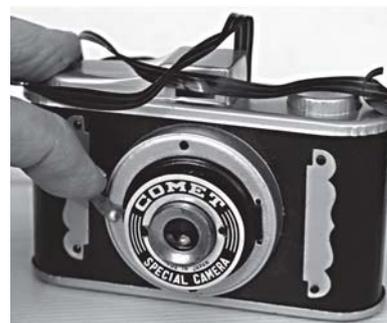
I would suggest it is quite collectible. Formally, it is a Comet Special Camera, Made in Japan. Apparently it is made just post war, so from the late 40’s. It is in remarkably good condition, and works quite well.

It has made my little sojourn to the hills worth while, no matter what you may think.

The photograph of the mouse shooting from the camera took me about 150 goes to finally catch it. The little beggar is so quick all I ever got till the shot you see, was an empty tube, open lens assembly, and the horse, eerrr... mouse, bolted! **(Pic 6)**

Just to add a little to the story, the same company made a Wonder Special Camera, a twin “lensed” Rollei copy? version of the mouse camera, and another version of the Comet that was a squirt “camera”. **(Pic 8)**

Now aren’t you glad you know all that? Look out for one of these. Don’t let Andrew Korlaki and me have all the fun!



Pic 6. This is a selection of the 150 odd pics I took trying to catch the mouse popping out. I finally succeeded.



Pic 8. The “Squirt” version of the Comet Special Camera. Press the shutter release and your “subject” gets a ducking, straight from the “lens”.

OTHER OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS

Herb Parker

As a photographic collector I also occasionally come across some other optical instrument of interest, and whilst these are not cameras I still think they are interesting, and so I thought I'd share the three such instruments I have with readers.



The Swift Binocular Microscope with fitted wooden box.



Close up of substage and condenser, showing black disc.

Item 1 – Swift Microscope: It all started way back in 1965, long before I even became a photographic collector, although I was already a keen photographer. I was temporarily living in England, in New Brighton, Cheshire to be exact, and working for Valvoline in Birkenhead. I happen to be an Industrial Chemist, and one day the Valvoline Chemist, one Peter, consulted me on a deposit he was examining from an engine, which had failed. I said something along the lines that a microscope would be handy to look at the particles in the deposit. His reply: “Oh, I’ve got a microscope, an old thing I picked up at a junk dealer one day for £5, but it’s not much good”. I asked to have a

look at it, and he produced an antique brass binocular microscope made by J. Swift of London, in a fitted wooden box. I was absolutely fascinated! It still worked, albeit only as a monocular microscope, we did look at the deposit and we figured out what it was (I can’t now remember). Peter then said to me: “If you like that old thing so much you can have it”. I could not believe my luck, but gratefully accepted the offer, and the instrument has been gracing some place in my home ever since.

But back to the instrument itself. On the base it bears the inscription “J Swift 43 University St. London WC, and the only other one like it I have ever seen is in the Sydney Powerhouse Museum, albeit in much better condition. As far as I have



Base inscription.

been able to determine it was made around 1870 to 1880, and in its day it would have been a very expensive and highly sophisticated “state of the art” instrument.

As can be seen from the photographs it is a binocular microscope, and according to a microscopy expert I knew at the University of NSW it used a “Wenham Prism” as a beam splitter to give the binocular effect. Sadly that prism is now missing. The substage condenser (which concentrates light coming from the mirror to give a brighter image) is also very interesting, being of a design before Professor Dr. Ernst Abbe (who was a co-founder of Zeiss Ikon) designed the famous Abbe condenser which is still widely used today. It functions as either a conventional or dark ground condenser – by inserting one of two black discs (one can be seen in the photograph) into the path of light any particles under the objective lens show up as specks of light. The stage is both a mechanical stage (i.e. the slide can be moved back and forth or right to left) and a rotating stage, the latter suggesting that this must have also been a polarizing microscope. I have only the one objective, only two matching eyepieces, the fitted wooden box has seen better days, especially inside, there is some corrosion, and some of the controls are so stiff to operate that I am reluctant to do so for fear of stripping a thread, but still I find it quite fascinating.

Item 2 – Reichert Dissecting Microscope. Around 2005, when I was living in Brisbane, a man phoned me from a southern suburb. He was a retired research biologist, he said, he had a lot of

cameras and a microscope and was I interested? Silly question! To cut a long story short my wife and I drove out there to have a look. He was a very nice old gentleman, apparently not in good health, and with his daughter he was clearing out his house to move into retirement accommodation. There was a heap of cameras and a few other bits including a small brass microscope, of which more below. I offered him \$300 for the lot, which he accepted.



Reichert Dissecting Microscope - overall view

I kept a few items, including the brass microscope and a natty little pocket microscope, and sold most of the rest to fellow collectors at Cameraholics. Since I got back nearly all of my \$300 what was left cost me almost nothing.

Now to the little brass microscope. It is inscribed “C. Reichert Wien”, and is a fairly simple affair giving about 30x magnification. There was no stage, and whilst there were fittings for a mirror there was no mirror. A glass stage could be simply made by the local glazer, who could also make me a small round mirror, but I needed something to stick the mirror to. Now whom did I know who could make me a brass carrier for a mirror?

It so happened that I also have a nineteenth century (American) Ansonia “Cottage Clock”, and I had just taken it to the “Clock Hospital” in Albion, Brisbane, for a long overdue overhaul. Eureka! The clockmaker should be able to make that brass mirror carrier. I went to see him,

explained what I wanted, he said: “No problem, say \$30”. The finished result is not quite what it would have looked like originally, but it serves its purpose. Next a visit to the glazier, and that is how the little microscope got to look as it now does in the photograph. As far as I can figure out from the Internet it is a dissecting microscope, also made around 1870 to 1880, and it still works perfectly. It can be used with either transmitted or reflected light, and the lens assembly can be moved over the specimen, either by rotating it about the “spine” of the instrument, or sliding it outwards. I have never seen another instrument anything like it. I have actually used it to examine minute detail on colour slides.

Item 3 – Antique Carl Zeiss Telescope. My wife and I often go to flea markets. I look for cameras of course, but you never know what you might find. On Sunday 6th of June 2010 we were at the Maitland markets. There I saw what looked like a very interesting old brass telescope on a wood and brass tripod. Closer inspection showed it was engraved CARL ZEISS GERMANY, and after a little bargaining I bought it for \$200.

Naturally I had a good look at it when I got it home, and of course tried it out. It has the characteristic patina of old brass, it is beautifully made, and optical performance is excellent. Focusing is by means of the knurled knob under the spotting scope, and it works very, very smoothly. Because of the spotting scope it looks like an astronomical telescope, but magnification is only about 20 times, which seems low for such an instrument. Objective diameter is about 40 mm. There is a “compass rose” attached



vertically with a pointer, which can be used to measure elevation. On the suggestion of a knowledgeable friend I contacted the Zeiss Historica Society. They duly replied, and advised that Zeiss did not start making astronomical telescopes until 1900, that the minimum objective diameter was 60 mm, and that all their scopes were made of brass but enameled white. They had also never seen Carl Zeiss Germany engraved that way before, and they say that Zeiss astronomical telescopes

had Zeiss markings on the lenses, which my instrument does not have. They therefore concluded that they cannot definitely identify it, and that it might be a counterfeit.



Overall view with tripod fully extended.

From other research on the Internet I found out that Zeiss started using their now famous logo in 1904. I know that there was no Germany as such until after 1872, all of which suggests late 19th century manufacture. Another puzzling aspect is the “compass rose”. The rather ornate engraving on it also suggests 19th century, and the fact that East is marked by an E (and not the German O for *Osten*) suggests that it was not made for use in Germany. The pointer at the top of it definitely suggests that it is there to measure elevation, which is consistent with the instrument being used for astronomical observations, but why the points of the compass? Fitted vertically as the “compass rose” is this seems to be superfluous.

So where do I go from there? I accept that I may never know for certain, but the fine optical performance and the fact that it is so well made suggest that the instrument is in fact a Zeiss, but that it was not originally made in this form. My guess is that it started as a normal terrestrial telescope late 19th century, possibly with the tripod, and that someone then fitted a spotting scope to it (which may or may not be Zeiss –

there is no mark on it) for astronomical use. For the same reason a dial was needed to measure elevation, and the “compass rose” fitted the bill as it is also calibrated to 360 degrees. As for the absence of any markings on the lenses the two late 19th century microscopes I have talked about above don’t have such markings either, and there are still no such markings on binoculars to this day.

So it looks to me as if somebody took a Zeiss brass telescope and modified it for use as a low powered astronomical telescope. Who was it? Where did he/they do it? Was it perhaps a Zeiss prototype? Did Zeiss have their own version of Oskar Barnack (for those who don’t know he was a technician with then microscope maker Ernst Leitz, who hand made a camera using 35 mm cine film for his own personal use, which then developed into the famous Leica we all know)? If so how on earth did it get to a flea market in Maitland? I will probably never know, but I love it, it looks great on my shelf with the two microscopes, it works well, and I think I well and truly got my \$200 worth.



Close up of focusing device and “compass rose” inscription.

And the next time I see an interesting and affordable optical device I will snap that up too. I am still hoping to find a nice brass sextant one day.

And there it is. Collecting is all about the chase for that elusive “treasure”, and the joy on finding it is what makes it all worthwhile.



*Did You Miss This Advert?
More than likely you did as the
September referred to is back in 1938!*



*What has Lyle Curr found this time while
'Happily Hunting?' (It's inside!)*



Adrian Elshout tells of his wet plate stereo sliding box camera. A replica!



A good turn up at our July auction saw spirited bidding.



Market day at the Ballarat International Foto Biennale.