

GERRY AND THE COATHANGERS

John Fleming

One of the occasional visitors to the John Shingler Studio in Ashburton was entertainer and local TV star Ron Blaskett, with his ventriloquist doll, the always naughty Gerry Gee. John was a fine musician (flautist) as well as photographer, and knew Ron well. By the 1960's Ron had gained another "character" in the shape of Gerry Gee Junior... a smaller version of the regular doll. Gerry Junior was marketed via the TV show appearances and was made by the Stern Doll Co. in Carlton, Victoria. Lionel Stern had fled from the impending nastiness of 1939 Europe and started a small toy business in Melbourne. **Pic 1.**



*Pic 1. Ron Blaskett & Gerry Gee with Gerry Junior.
Photo by John Shingler, 1962.*

As Gerry Junior sales took off to kids, new ideas were created, including a marvellous bit of marketing; Gerry Gee Junior dressed in Melbourne VFL (Victorian Football League) various club colours. So it was that Lionel Stern dropped into the studio with the new "footy dolls"



PIC 2. Linhof Model III and Heavy Duty Pro tripod, Photo by John Fleming.

and asked for a PR shot of three of them....leaving the rest to our imagination. We usually came up with the goods, so clients trusted us. The job was required by end of that week. Being always busy, it soon came close to the deadline and it was the Friday morning we realized time was short. Looking at the three very limp Gerry Junior dolls, I wondered how on earth to set them up to look interesting. As often happens when the mind is in neutral, a sudden flash of inspiration!

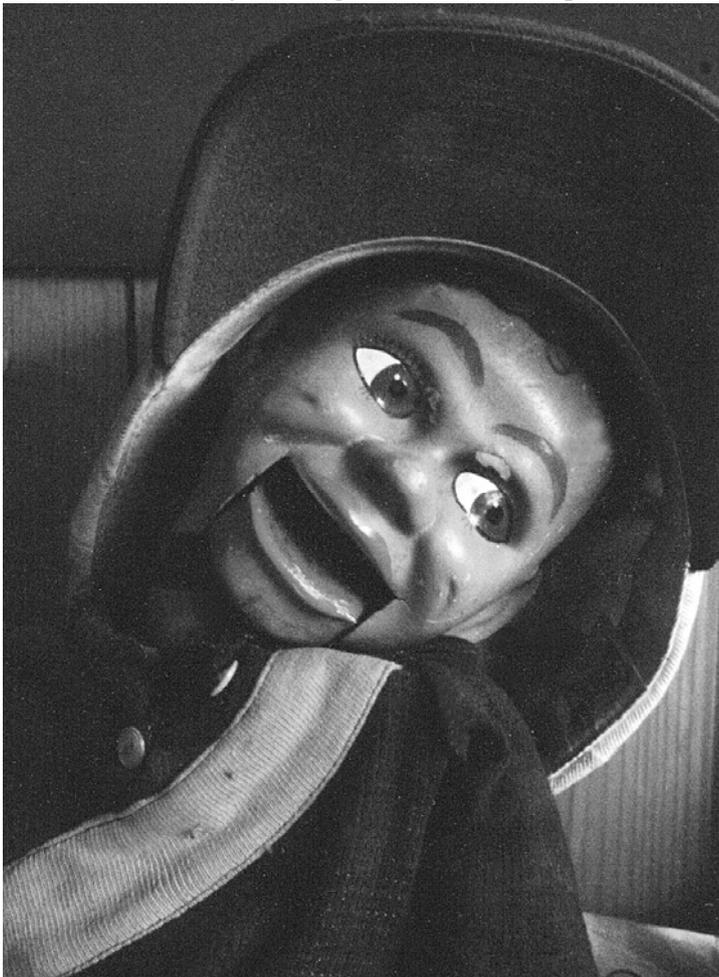
The studio was in a strip shopping centre, and all traders were very friendly and helpful. Visiting the butcher first, I obtained a portion of that fake plastic grass they used to have for window displays, plus a couple of strips of miniature white picket fencing I saw in his "props" box. Next stop was the nearby dry cleaners for a dozen wire coathangers. By now mid morning, so time to get cracking. My Linhof Model III was set up with the 210 mm Schneider Symmar and the scheme was to arrange the Gerry Juniors in a vague pose of playing football. **Pic 2.**

Thinking it would all be done by lunchtime, I laid out the fake grass and set up the white miniature picket fence. A black background was chosen to help hide the various bits of coathanger wire which I also sprayed black and poked into the fake grass. Out with the sidecutters, and started to poke the first pieces of coathanger wire up arms, legs and other unmentionable areas. It took almost an hour to get just one set up...this was going to be fun. By now Norma Neil, our clever and artistic receptionist and colourist came in to help, and together we finally had the little critters posed and ready to go. I had just slid the first "Riteway" (double film holder) in and pulled the darkslide when one B..... Gerry slowly toppled over, taking the other two with him in a mangled heap.



*Pic 3. Gerry Gee Juniors in football attire.
Photo by John Fleming, 1965.*

We carefully rejiggered the setup and just as I went to fire the shutter release, the end one fell backwards over the picket fence...fortunately leaving two this time in position.



Pic 4. Gerry Gee Junior menaces from atop filing cabinet 2011.

Another half hour passed and we had the little chaps (we had another name for them by now!) posed up again. Not wasting any time, I exposed 4 sheets of film (Ilford HP3) and the result was good. Lionel Stern loved it when he called in Saturday morning to collect, and commented, "They have come alive!"

Pic 3. Gerry Gee is now part of Melbourne TV history and the little Gerry Juniors command good prices as collectibles. Ron Blaskett, long retired, but still going strong as of 2011, was featured in a recent book entitled "You and Me and Gerry Gee".

Ironically, in the present business, Gerry Gee Junior continues to haunt me. A few years ago one of our customers rescued a bedraggled Gerry Junior dressed in Richmond football club colours from an industrial rubbish bin. His right foot and entire right arm had gone, and the clothes were grubby, but that cheeky grin was still there. He soon had a rebuilt foot and a new arm, and the clothes were scrubbed up. By chance, a bit later, a miniaturized folding canvas beach chair came our way,

and the little character sits on the filing cabinet in our office leering at all and sundry. **Pic 4.**

DOES YOUR FAVOURITE CAMERA HAVE TO BE MINT?

Keith Head

This is about a camera with personality. Its character comes from the service it must have given previous owners. It's not pretty, but then how would a Rolls Royce look after it had done a couple of million miles? This is an early model Nikon rangefinder camera, which appears to have been used and used and used and used; more than any other camera I have come across. I'm tempted to say that it has been much loved, but who's to say that it didn't finish up much hated.



Photo 1. As cleaned up, without the flash synchroniser.



Photo 2. Three-quarter view, with synchroniser.

Perhaps it was at the bottom of the barrel in some newspaper press room, left for the most junior assistant to take as a backup just in case. But if so, that would only have been towards the end of its career. The fact that it has been used so much testifies that for someone it gave results very much to their liking.



Photo 3. The top deck.



Photo 4. Lens detail.

When I acquired it in 1991 I was not a Nikon collector and knew little **Photo 05** about the brand. My main interest was collecting movie cameras, with a growing interest in Voigtländer and Pentax still cameras. I answered a Trading Post advert for a box of old cameras and found just the kind of “lucky dip” that collectors love to find. Twenty or so dirty cameras rattling around in a dusty old box, offered for sale by a back yard junk dealer. I could see enough of interest in movie cameras alone to quickly agree on the \$100 asking price. Pure bliss is getting such a find home and carefully tackling each item with the cleaning gear¹.

A day or so later I had become a Nikon collector. McKeown

¹ One of the most interesting items was a working Spotmatic in fine condition but with the serial number *ground off*. Why would anyone do such a thing? Wouldn't that be an obvious admission of some kind of guilt? I gave that one away to an innocent young friend who used it for years.

and other reference books had put me straight on the importance of early Nikon rangefinders.



Photo 5. MIOJ engraving (not on lens or viewfinder).

It seemed I had come across one; it might be worn and scruffy, but it was a genuine Nikon M and it had not been converted for flash synch. Its number M6091727 dated it to July 1950.



Pic 6. Where left fingers have rested.

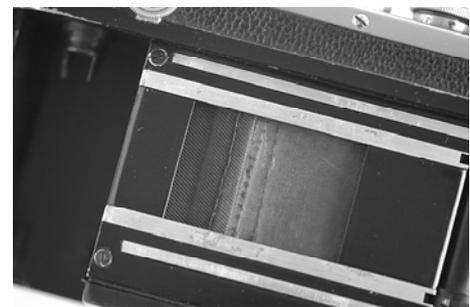
Attached to it were an f3.5/3.5cm wide-angle lens from 1954 and a Varifocal finder. The flash-synched release extension shown in the illustration was not then attached to the Nikon and may have belonged to one of the other cameras in the box. But it has the right Leica type thread, and as the Nikon's release button did not have its

normal screw-on guard, I think it's an appropriate fit on the camera.



Pic 7. Removable back, numbered to match the body, showing brass pressure plate.

To my mind the attraction of the camera lies in its patina of wear



Pic 8. Shutter blind half wound. Aperture is 24mm X 34mm, but you only get 36 shots because each shot is wound on the full eight sprocket holes.

and handling. The leather is worn through to the body at the points your hands fall naturally into place. The black paint has gone from all body corners and from the frame on the removable back. The chrome top-plate shows signs of being straightened out after damage. The shutter curtain looks like it has been repaired with inner tube. The exposure counter has lost its grip and rotates freely. Most impressive of all is the pressure plate – how many films would need to go through a camera to reduce a black pressure plate to shiny brass?

It would be good to say that despite all this the camera still works perfectly, but not true; the shutter is only reliable at the 100 and 200 speeds. Both shutter curtains lag at



Photo 9. Rear and bottom view.

slower speeds, sometimes until your finger is released. The 500 speed sounds great but doesn't let any light through at all. I like to imagine that in its youth this camera was the relied-upon tool of some famous photographer. If, however, you happen to know that it was merely one of a stable of cameras handed out to 1950's street photographers², please don't tell me.

² Actually, I think most of them used Mercury cameras.

LEXA AND FOSTER.... MORE REVEALED.

John Fleming.

Two quite mysterious box cameras seen now and again were made in Melbourne and Sydney around 1949-50. The Melbourne offering was the "LEXA 20". **Pic 1** This was made by a firm of manufacturing jewellers and trade electroplaters, Lexa Manufacturing Co., of 218 Latrobe Street, Melbourne. They began very promptly at end of World War 2, and the first mention appears to be an advertisement in the "Argus" newspaper on the 10th of November 1945. **Pic 2**



Pic 1. The Lexa 20 made circa 1949-50 in Melbourne.

PLATING Specialists. — LEXA MANUFACTURING CO., 218 Latrobe st., Melbourne.
Barrel and still plating, in cadmium nickel, tin, copper, anodizing, and silver. Speciality. Call or phone. F3290 for quotations.

Pic 2. First mention of Lexa Manufacturing Co in Melbourne papers.

Obviously the first aim was to cater for trade electroplating and anodizing, and 10 days later they were advertising for office staff. **Pic 3** Just when the idea evolved to make a camera, or who set the wheels in motion, or why, is unclear. It is possible that import restrictions and local shortages so soon after the war made the proposition attractive. In any case, the small firm was clearly expanding, as indicated by an advertisement in 1946 proclaiming "Capacity available for anodizing, etc". **Pic 4** Around October 1948 Lexa announced they were about to produce a box camera.

GIRL, 16-18 years, wanted by manufacturing jewellery firm, general office work; no Saturday morning. Apply Lexa Manufacturing Co., 218 Latrobe st., Melb.

Pic 3. Staff wanted ads started to appear during 1945.

CAPACITY AVAILABLE. COLOUR ANODIZING. ELECTRO TINNING. OXIDISING.
LEXA MFG. CO., F3290.
218 Latrobe Street.
CITY OF BOX HILL.

Pic 4. Plant rolling along and more work wanted August 1946.

would have had a film carrier too! On the 10th of September 1949, the well-known stationers and booksellers in Melbourne, Robertson & Mullen's, featured the Lexa 20 being available for sale, and cheekily mentions it took Kodak film. **Pic 5**

Just why the Lexa is scarce today becomes clear when you next see the firm was holding a meeting of creditors at end of May 1950. How many cameras were made over that 8 month period from first being advertised at Robertson & Mullen's to falling into financial disaster is unclear... my bet not many. **Pic 6**

The major camera collecting journals suggest in their description of the Lexa most are found minus a film carrier, and it is doubtful if they were ever offered for sale. Well, now we have definite proof some, at least, made it into retail shops. I'm fairly certain they

ROBERTSON & MULLENS LTD.

Booksellers, Stationers, Librarians, Newsagents.
Write to us for Lists of Books by your favourite authors
The out-of-print Book you require may be obtained in our
Secondhand Department.

STATIONERY DEPARTMENT

- "EXACTUS" The smallest and lowest priced adding machine Adds to £99,999. Price 37/6.
- "LEXA" Box Camera. Just arrived! Takes Kodak 120 Film. Special Price only 25/-.
- PEN AND PENCIL SETS, by all recognised makers from £1 1/6 to £16/10/-.
- ROLLED GOLD SWAN FOUNTAIN PEN in special presentation box. A very handsome gift for a lady or gentleman. £13 14 6
- Now is the time to be thinking of your friends overseas We have a very large range of CARDS and MULGA WOOD on display.
- PERPETUAL CALENDAR, with stand and gilt Australian motif. Nicely boxed. Price 7/9. Without motif, 5/6.
- PEN AND LETTER OPENER, on card with greetings from Australia. Price 3/9, 4/3.
- RULERS, 15 varieties of Australian Woods. A very decorative and useful gift. Price 3/6.
- ASH TRAYS, Brass insets. Price 4/3, 7/3. Glass inset with cond view of Melbourne. 7/9.
- INK STANDS, Single 4/11; 16/6; Double 27/6. 28 6. 29 6

107-109-111-113 Elizabeth St., Melbourne.

Pic 5. Lexas advertised in retail stores late 1949.

The end came before July 1950, when a liquidation sale saw the Lexa plant and machinery sold off. Note in the advertisement the mention of "camera dies". Pic 7 Interestingly, Lexas were still being sold around Christmas 1951 by Pinnocks of Sydney! Pic 7A

One overseas camera collecting guide tells of a number of these Lexas turning up new in the mid 1980's, all without film carrier innards. I suspect these came from a hoarded box of those incomplete cameras sold off in 1950, or were spirited away before the company downfall by someone connected with the firm. Mid 1980's is possibly when the, by now quite elderly, person may have died and the estate cleared out.

Meanwhile, around 1949 in Sydney, Foster Instruments had also decided to tool up and manufacture a box camera. This was the "FOSTER SWIFTSHOT", and it came in a range of colours too. Pic 8



Pic 8. A pair of coloured Foster "Swiftshots" from Sydney.

Quite possibly, rather more Fosters were sold to the public than the Melbourne Lexa. One advertisement found appears in a far north Queensland newspaper, and already seems to indicate the camera was being cleared out. Pic 9 A few very early examples were made by Swains Industries.

CAMERA NEWS!
"Swiftshot"
BOX CAMERA

29/11
(COVERED BY RETAIL)

WITH THREE FLAVOURS:
 • Use 35 film.
 • Built-in Color Filter.
 • Two apertures — for dull or bright days.
 • Snap or Time Shutter.

• Best view finders.
 • Fixed (shaded) lens.
 • In Lexa, all metal h a d i, absolutely unbreakable.

The "Swiftshot" Camera, when used, may be offered at the unusually low price only because Harcourt Fell bought, for cash, THE ENTIRE STOCK of a leading Wholesale - Every Camera guaranteed perfect. Money back if not satisfied.

HARCOURT FELL
60 WILLIAM STREET — ROCKHAMPTON

Pic 9. Foster box features in this far North Q'nd newspaper ad 1950.

The firm operated from an upstairs area in a building in Pitt Street, as revealed by an advertisement in the "Sydney Morning Herald" when they required a plant maintenance engineer. Pic 10 Like Lexa in Melbourne though, the end was near. The firm was taken over in late 1951, and camera production ceased. Pic 11 Remaining Foster Swiftshots were seen by the dozens in auction houses and clearing rooms for another 18 months or so. Very likely, the endeavours of Lexa, Foster, and Melbourne's other little effort, the Dalka, all failed due to under financing and also the economic times. The country hadn't quite overcome the turmoil of being at war, and there were shortages of materials, food rationing coupons, electricity and coal and gas strikes. Not a good time to get a new enterprise off the ground! Had they waited until 1952-3, or been able to hang on in business, new post war boom times were beginning. It was, really, a good idea at the wrong time.

WILL of the said deceased.
 "NOTICE to Creditors" is hereby given, that a MEETING of CREDITORS of LEXA MANUFACTURING CO. PTY. LTD will be held in the Board Room, Temple Court, 422 Collins street, Melbourne, on FRIDAY, 26th MAY, 1950, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.
 J. A. GANGE, Director.

SEWING-MACHINES skillfully Repaired.

Pic 6. 26th May 1950...

the end is in sight.

TENDERS.

NOTICE OF SALE BY TENDER.

BUSINESS OF MANUFACTURING JEWELLERS.

TENDERS will be received up to 12 noon on Tuesday, the 27th June, 1950, by Frederick Tennyson Gray, Liquidator of Lexa Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd. (in liquidation), for the PURCHASE of PLANT, MACHINERY, STOCK, and GOODWILL of Lexa Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd. (in liquidation).

The Plant and Machinery Includes:— Hand Screw Presses, Air Compressor, Lapping Machines, Ring Cutters, Exhaust Fans, Spot Welder, Polishing Heads, Silver Baths with Solution, Benches, Tables, Camera Dies, and Sundries.

Schedule of plant and machinery, stock sheets, and forms of tender, with particulars and conditions attached, also orders for inspection, may be obtained on application to the liquidator.

The highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

F. T. GRAY, Chartered Accountant (Aust.), Liquidator of Lexa Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd., 370 Little Collins street, Melbourne, M1448.

Pic 7. The plant and machinery of Lexa advertised on 27th June 1950.

CAMERA Accessories, Films, Changing Bags, Glaziers, Enlargers, Projectors. All on easy terms. PIN-NOCK PHOTO SUPPLIES, 72 Druitt St. BX5989.

SCALES: All Makes, Baby Scales, Sale or Hire. Shop Fittings.

J. W. WEDDERBURN and SONS, 88 Liverpool St. MA3614, M4357. CAMERAS FOR XMAS. Coronet Box Cameras, 38/; Lexa Box 25/; Audax Folding Camera, £4/19/6. PIN-NOCK PHOTO SUPPLIES, 72 Druitt St. BX5989.

Pic 7A. Well known Sydney firm of Pinnocks had Lexas for Christmas 1951!

UTING AVE. CRINCH. QW1151.
TOOLMAKER required for maintenance of small press tools.
FOSTER INSTRUMENTS, 316 Pitt Street, Sydney, Third Floor.
TAILORING: Wanted, Trimmer for Order Tailoring. Good wages and

Pic 10. Foster Instruments operated from upstairs in Pitt. St. Sydney.

Optical, Leather Cos. Expand

Australian Optical, Ltd., and Johnston Leather, Ltd., both announced new purchases yesterday. Australian Optic has bought Foster Instruments Pty., Ltd., and United Optical Corp., Pty., Ltd., both of Sydney, for a total consideration of 67,150 shares of 5/.

Pic 11. The end of Foster. Dozens of new cameras were sold by auction houses.

This isn't the end of the story however-EXCLUSIVELY, "BACK FOCUS" CAN REVEAL THE FOLK BEHIND LEXA MANUFACTURING P/L! The directors of Lexa were John Albert and



Pic 12. John Gange, director of Lexa Manufacturing Co. in 1949.

Nancy Phylis Gange, husband and wife jewellers. John was also an experienced amateur photographer and was known to have covered the occasional wedding. **Pic 12** This no doubt goes part way to explaining how the "Lexa 20" came about.

John and Nancy met in the early 1930's whilst both were working for Rodd (Australia) Ltd in St. Kilda. This firm was manufacturing jewellers and also made cutlery, which is how some may remember the name right into the 1950's. John had a taste for smart cars too, and we have a photo of him in his delightful little Austin 7 Sports. **Pic 13** John lived with his parents firstly at Caulfield, later he and Nancy moved to Bentleigh. They had a daughter, Peggy.

During World War 2, John Gange did electroplating work etc for the war effort, and this probably explains how he was able to quickly start up when peace arrived.

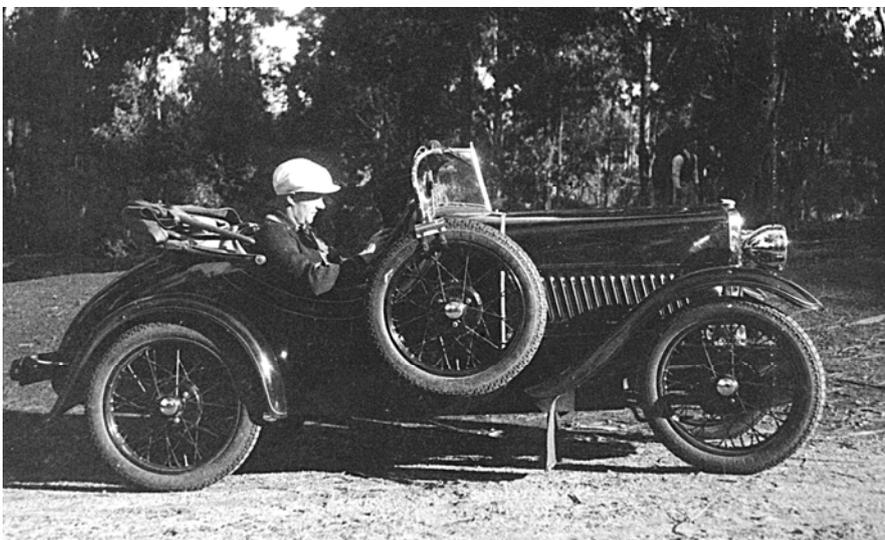
Daughter Peggy actually worked for about 18 months in the Latrobe Street office of Lexa Manufacturing Co...it was her first job! She

recalls the box camera being made but had almost forgotten about it until I spoke with her recently and mentioned it. She was amazed they still surface now and again, and that they were even sold new in Sydney in 1950-51.

After the collapse of Lexa Manufacturing Co., John and Nancy Gange started afresh, renting a small workroom in Hardware Street in the heart of Melbourne.

The firm was renamed LEGA PTY LTD, and they later moved to 37 Greeves St. St Kilda, right next to RODDS, where they had first met 25 years earlier! **Pic 14** The final move was a short distance away to a small factory at 24 William St, Balaclava.

Lega specialized in marcasite watch cases and other jewellery, but, alas, the "LEXA 20" box camera never resurfaced.



Pic 13. John in his smart Austin 7 Sports, mid 1930's.

LEGA PTY LTD
 MANUFACTURERS OF
 "LEGA"
 MARCASITE WATCH CASES
 & JEWELLERY
 GENT'S WATER-RESISTANT WATCH CASES.
 37 Greeves St., St. Kilda. 94 3866
 94 3872

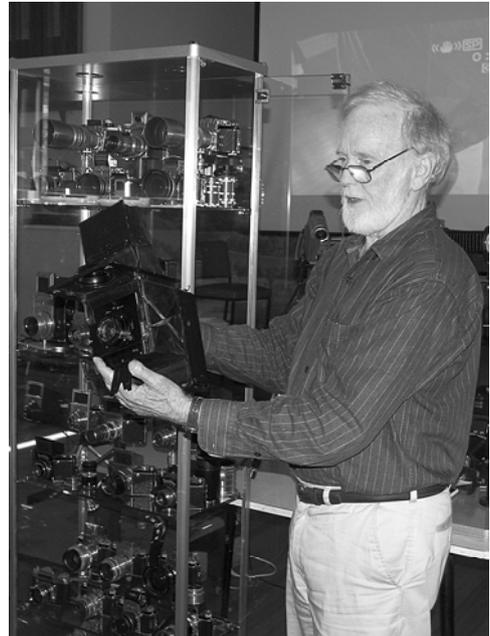
Pic 14. Lega Pty Ltd advertising in 1961, next door to RODD (Australia).

April Meeting....

And Guest Speaker **Geoff Schirmer** spoke on **Ihagee-Exakta** to mark the Centenary of founding in Dresden in April 1912, and Johan Steenberg, a Dutch immigrant to Germany who rose from a purveyor of fine fabrics to found a camera dynasty!

To assist illustrate his talk; Geoff also moved what looked like a massive amount of his collection to the MRH, including a lovely glass display case to help show it off. This included many rare pieces that he has collected over the years. Some amusing tales were related on the ways in which a few of these items found their way into his collection!

What better than to show some of these items, of which Geoff himself has supplied the images. (Ed.)



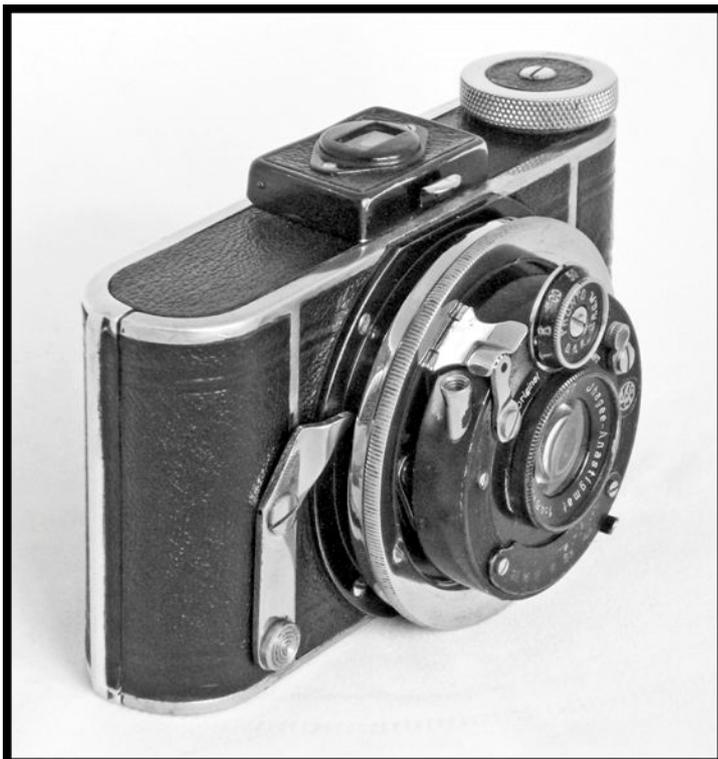
Geoff Schirmer during his talk.



Exakta 66, Pre-war (1939) and Post-war (1953).



Range of Exakta fit lenses.



Ihagee Parvola. (1932.)



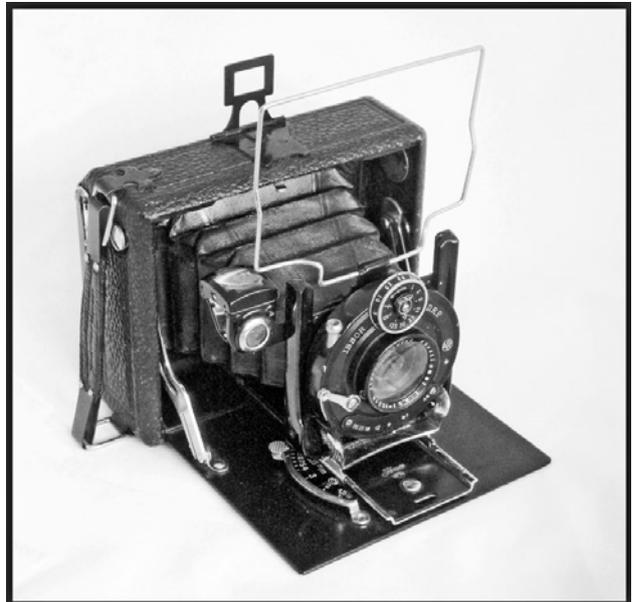
Exakta Angenieux - Meter Viewer. (1957.)



Part of Geoff's collection in showcase.



Night Exakta. (1937.)



Ihagee Venus. 1932.)



Exa w/Flektogon f/20mm. (1960.)

VALE Bruce Grayling and Jack Tuma.

Sadly we report the passing of member, **Bruce Grayling**, on April 21st. Bruce had been a member since 1977 and a regular attendee at meetings. His collecting interests seemed quite broad, described in our database as 'general, long list on file'. Bruce will be sadly missed and our condolences go to his sons Michael and Garry, daughter Annette and extended family. **Ed.**

The photographic fraternity lost yet another studio photographer on Saturday 10th March 2012 with the passing of **Jack Tuma**, proprietor of "Hermes" Studios, 356 Neerim Rd, Carnegie in Melbourne. Jack opened the studio in 1954, and traded until his retirement in 1998.



Jack Tuma

After WW2, Jack arrived from Czechoslovakia, with hand luggage and his Leica. He initially worked with the Victorian S.E.C (electricity company), and then started as part time assistant with Dickinson-Monteath Studios in Collins Street. In 1953 he left to start his own business, and ran his Carnegie studio until a heart attack forced retirement in 1998.

John Fleming.

The Pentaka 8.

Stefan Sztromajer



Fig 1. Pentaka 8



Fig 2.



Fig 3.

Probably the maker was very proud of the Pentaka, as the camera has been signed as the “best quality” at its body and the lens. Fig’s 1, 2, 3, & 4 and even presented on the postage stamp, Fig. 5.



Fig 4.

Looking at the front of the Pentaka we’ll see the finder window, the lens and the run switch selector. The finder window is marked with the two concentric frames that suggest not only the standard lens could be applied, Fig. 6.



Fig 5.

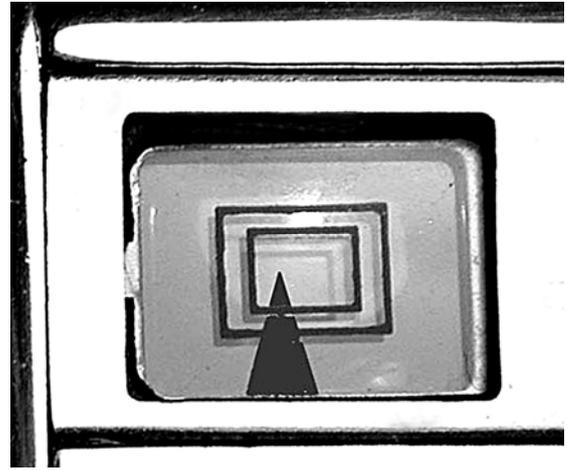


Fig 6.

That is provided inside with the red pointer that appears just at the beginning of the film until the first 30cm. film has been transported, and then disappears. When the film is loaded (of course not in the darkroom) its very first footage is exposed, so the designer wished to avoid the amateur operator against beginning the filming too early. After exposing ca 7.5m while the first half of film is exposed the pointer appears, informing the next half should be finished. The lens, one of the best contemporary produced, the Zeiss Biotar (strange marked as Jena B 1:2, F12.5) is provided with the bayonet mount Fig. 7.

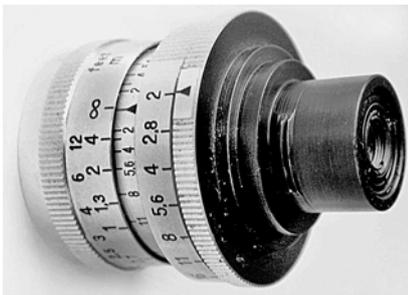


Fig 7.

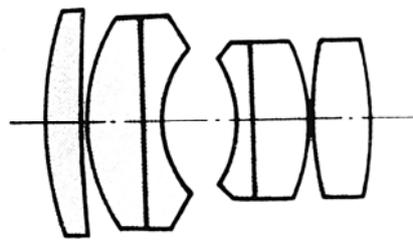


Fig 8.



Fig 9.

The optical construction of the Biotar lens is shown in Fig. 8. The mount of the standard lens enables focussing as close as 25cm. Fig. 9. Of course, such a facility develops the parallax problem. To solve it the designer introduced the original solution: the finder is provided with the disk, with the holes, corresponding with the focussing distances, 0.25m, 0.5m, 1.0m and Inf. Fig's. 10, 11, 12 & 13.



Fig 10.

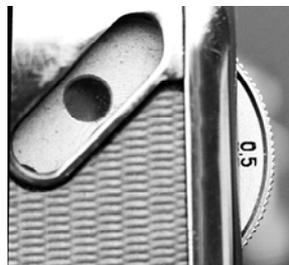


Fig 11.



Fig 12.



Fig 13.

Owing to the bayonet mount, Fig.7, there could be applied the other lenses: short tele lens, the Zeiss Biotar f2/25 Fig. 14, and the real tele, the Zeiss Sonnar f2.8/40. Fig. 15.

Its optical construction is shown in Fig.16. The run selector placed just below the lens Fig. 17 serves for setting the normal run L, the continuous run and E for the single images. In the centre of the selector the release button, provided with the cable thread is placed.



Fig 14.



Fig 15.

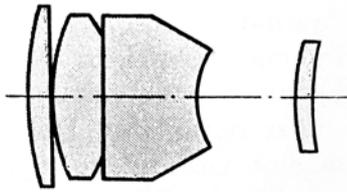


Fig 16.

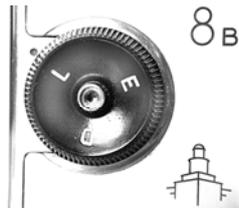


Fig 17.

At the rear side of the camera body there is the counter window that informs about the exposed footage. Fig's 20 & 21. Opposite to the modern cameras, the counter needs setting just after loading camera at the "A" position by means of the small knob just under the speed-setting knob Fig.18. ('A' for Anfang, meaning begin in German, 'E' for Ende – the end).

The guillotine shutter could be set for four speeds, 8, 16, 24 and 48 frames/sec. by means of the setting knob, placed at the left side of the body, Fig.18. The drive consists on the spring clock motor; wound by means of the key on the right side of the camera. Stops within are installed to limit the winding and the run-off to protect the spring, firstly against overstrain and secondly for a steady frequency of frames within the spring's run. Owing to my hard personal experience, while the actual object seemed to be very important, so the sequence was too long the result presented horrible overexposed scene. The Pentaka is additionally equipped with the sound signal that sounds after every 2 sec of film run.

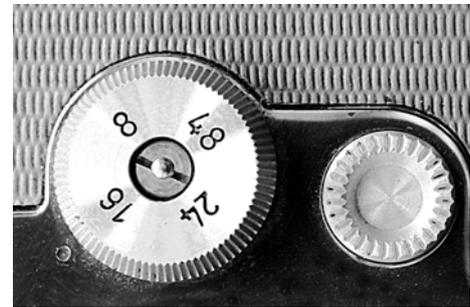


Fig 18.

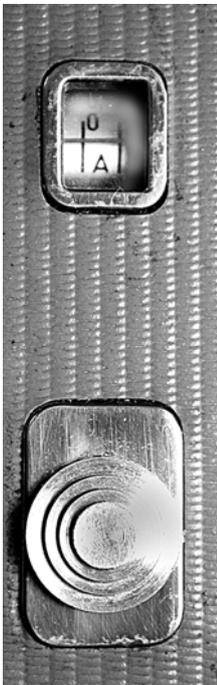


Fig 19.

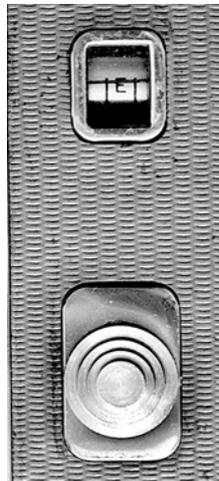


Fig 20.

As mentioned, in the finder appears the warning red flag that disappears after transporting the "lazy" 30 cm of film. Then the counter shows "0" that shows the filming could be started. The counter shows every 50cm. of exposed film (Fig. 22). After ca 7.5 of film run, the red mark appears in the finder window, showing the total footage (or its half) is exposed. Before loading the camera is opened by means of the button at the back side of its body, placed just under the counter window, (Fig. 19). After the camera is opened, the film chamber shows the film gate, provided with the pressure plate and the axles, the upper for unexposed film spool, while the second for the take-up. Fig's 22 & 23.

As the film is of "double eight" mode, after its first run (7.5m) the operator has to change the spools over to expose the second half. That is why the original spool sold with the camera is marked with the Pentakon sign (to warn against processing the film that is only half exposed. Fig.24.)

The film channel, made of die cast aluminium alloy, is carefully designed and is particularly helpful for the film loading to say nothing about easy removing of the particles of gelatine so often appearing in that place. Fig.25. At the rear on the left, Fig.26, there are the three tables. At the top the exposure of the filming speed, the calculator computing the demanded aperture, depending on the filming speed, while the third one presents the influence of the applied filter on the proper exposure.

The next “luxury” is the capability in rewinding back the exposed film for getting some “professional” effects by means of the crank, fitted to the tiny threaded axle. During normal use the axle is covered, while the rewind transport is in need, the cover is replaced, so the crank could be fitted. Fig’s 27, 28, 29 & 30. Underneath is the old type of tripod thread. Fig. 31.

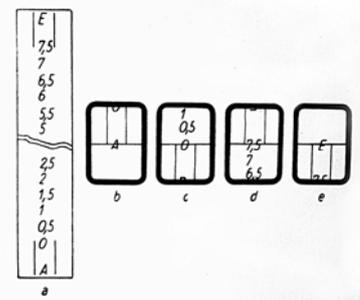


Fig 21.

The Pentaka was provided with the luxury, genuine leather case Fig. 32 that has been fitted with an exposure calculator on its



Fig 22.

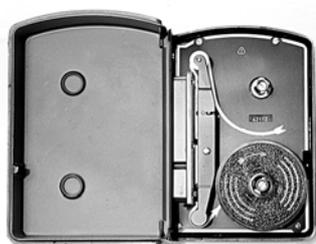


Fig 23.

left side.



Fig 24.

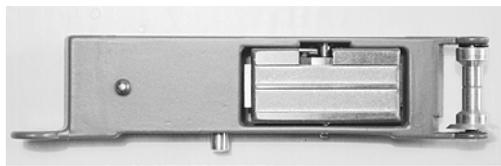


Fig 25.



Fig 28.



Fig 26.

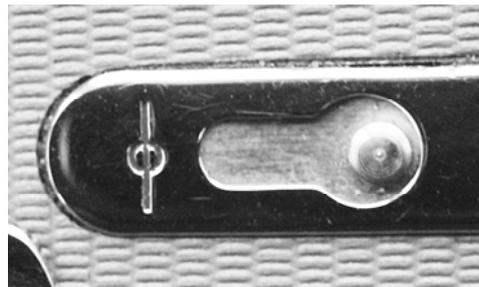


Fig 27.



Fig 29.

Concluding, the Pentaka 8 could be considered as a good working tool, that fulfils all the demands of the skilled amateur, however a bit “old fashioned” in comparison with the better known, high class cameras. I dare say there were not many eight’s fitted with such excellent lenses to say nothing about its sturdy construction. Considering my own experience I dare say it was one of the best “Eight” cameras I ever used.



Fig 30.



Fig 31.



Fig 32.

The main problem was the opportunity in buying it, as it was not very costly, considering the quality; the number of cameras produced (as with many other goods in those times) was much lower than that of potential customers.

Unfortunately, there was a minor point, concerned with the both tele-lenses: the prices. These lenses were so costly compared to the camera and its standard lens, that only a very few of the happy Pentaka owners could get them. Probably that is why those lenses are so rare. The dimensions and weight of the camera are as follows; 125mm x 85m x 60mm, weight 880g with the standard lens, without film.

Just another Japanese 60's rangefinder- or is it?

Odd Cameras. Part 4.

Lyle Curr

This is another of those cameras that falls into the relatively common category, and is rarely given a second look at the market or 2nd hand shop as the “serious” collector goes about his business looking for “good stuff.” But it is one of those cameras that look good, and when one takes the time to actually examine it, one is presented with quite a few features that make it a little unusual. So when I found this one, I put it on my shelf, and will now share with you the reasons why.

There it was, sitting on a stall at a larger outdoor antique market. I picked it up, and even then I may have just left it except that attached to the carry strap of the camera case were two other brown leather cases, both also branded “Fujica” and one looked like it contained a lens! There was also a roll of Fuji 35mm film. **(Pic 1)** What really intrigued me was the extra lens and A LOT more about that later.



Pic 1. How could a camera collector go past this interesting looking ensemble?

The camera in question was a relatively common **Fujica 35-SE**. Made by the Fuji Photo Film Co., the Fujica 35-SE was one of a series of Fujica 35s that appeared in the late 50's and early 60's. In fact the Fuji Photo Film Co. as its name suggests, made film (mainly for commercial movies) and photo paper and chemicals, from its foundation in 1934 till well after WWII, when it began camera manufacture. Its earlier cameras were mainly copies of European pre war folders, but into the mid 50's with experience and quality improving, the 35mm cameras came along. The Fujica 35-SE



Pic 2. Looks just like any other 50s Japanese Rangefinder 35. Maybe a little prettier?

appeared in 1959. Most references list it at 1960-61, but I have seen an ad from Modern Photography October 1959 listing it for sale in the US for \$99.95. It looks very much like any other common Japanese rangefinder camera of the era, but lets look at it a little more closely from a collectors perspective. **(Pic 2)**

Judging from recent Society Auction results, Japanese rangefinders of the 50's and 60's appear to be increasing in desirability and value over recent times. A search of eBay confirms this is very much so here in Australia, and is beginning to happen on the international market too, particularly in Asian countries. The Fujica 35-SE should help increase a little of that interest. It is equipped with a quality 5-element Fujinon f2.8 45mm lens in a Fuji Synchro MXL shutter. The shutter is cocked with a normal single stroke-winding lever on the bottom of the camera. This lever also incorporates a film type reminder dial.... and that's about when any similarity to either other “similar” cameras, or indeed what would be considered “normal” operation ends!

The lens is focused using a *coupled* rangefinder, which is operated by a *wheel* that falls neatly under the right thumb as you hold the camera. Looking through the combined rangefinder/viewfinder, a gold split image with plenty of contrast shows when you are in focus. **(Pic 3)** But in the viewfinder as well is an easily visible very bright frame which actually moves up and down as you focus, giving *automatic* parallax correction over the entire focusing range..... and not finished with focusing



Pic 3. Really high contrast gold frame and split image in the viewfinder.

yet.... on the camera top plate is a rotating insert that allows you to read of depth of field for the aperture / shutter speed settings you have made. **(Pic 4)**

The camera contains a coupled selenium (no batteries required) light meter. The match needle can be seen on the top of the camera in Pic 4. But setting that needle...oh no, its not just a question of moving the shutter speed and/or the aperture settings. Well it is, but, there are any number of settings that will give you the correct exposure from light coming into the large meter honeycomb window on the front of the camera. You will also notice the easily read display windows for shutter speed and aperture values on the lens barrel, but how do you make those correct settings? Those



Pic 4. The focusing wheel, and the rotating Depth of Field Scale. The meter window is also shown here.

settings are made with 3, yes 3 separate *coupled* rotating black rings on the lens barrel. **(Pic 5)** In my research on this camera, I came across this quote from a well known French photographer and collector which translated, I think says “But the 3 rings which turn with strange relations between them leave me perplexed.” I could not have expressed it better myself, and am not going to attempt to explain the relationship between them or try to detail the operation of the 3 rings. Suffice to say



Pic 5. The 3 black rings that set shutter speed, aperture and correct exposure. The black button on the left enables the film speed to be set independently of the other rings, but from there on, if you want to know how the 3 rings are related, look up the instruction book for this camera on the internet. Good luck! To the right is the lever that enables you to uncouple the meter.

they are all coupled to the meter. The inside one sets the film speed; it has a black plastic pullout knob that enables it to be used independently if necessary. The middle one immediately out from it sets aperture **and/or** shutter speed; it has a knurled chrome knob. The third ring out near the end of the lens barrel also sets the shutter speed **and/or** the aperture, and it is turned by using just the knurling cut into the outside. That little meter needle runs backwards and forwards like a shunting engine, and getting it centred using the 3 setting rings is a task for a very long, rainy afternoon! I have read the instruction book page on how to make these settings, and if YOU would like to know how they work, YOU go and read the instruction book too! It appears to be able to deliver aperture

priority auto exposure. All this without a battery as the selenium cell used to power the light meter galvanometer needle also moves an (internal) lever selecting different f stops in auto mode. Fuji Photo Film Co. must have some inkling that the coupled meter settings may cause some consternation, as you will see in Pic 5 to the right of the lens on the front of the camera a little push lever. This actually allows you to *uncouple* the meter, and use any aperture/shutter settings you like. The camera is *always* in auto mode otherwise, and those 3 rings are all in play! Believe me, this uncoupling control is one button this camera really needs.

A little more conventionally, but still slightly better done than usual, as well as the winding lever the base of the camera holds the *very easy to read* exposure counter and rewind button... and there is also a very large, solid tripod bush, with a circular leather insert. **(Pic 6)** Is the leather insert just



Pic 6. The camera base. Leather trimmed tripod bush? The exposure counter has a magnifying glass cover, making it easy to read.... except it's on the bottom of the camera!

for decoration or does it provide a little extra grip friction when the tripod is attached? The rewind crank is on the END of the camera; a little out of the ordinary, but has been seen on other cameras. The time delay lever, flash synch setting lever and coax flash contact are all grouped together on the side of the lens assembly. **(Pic 7)** Internally the camera is totally conventional and is just a typical 50's 35mm like the rest of the many. **(Pic 8)**

It seems that with this camera most design conventions of the day have been thrown out or just completely ignored. Unfortunately this example is not in top quality cosmetic condition, but it all works, and it is a rather lovely camera.



Pic 8. Internally it looks pretty boring.

The camera I think is unconventional enough, but the arrangement of the front of the lens housing and filter ring thread seems to indicate that there may be more to this than meets the eye. The lens takes a standard 35.5mm screw in filter. I know this because there was a nice little Hoya Skylight filter in the little leather case, branded Fujica, which was attached to the carry strap of the camera. I assume that there was originally a lens hood of the same size in there at one stage, but that has long gone. I fitted the little filter to the front of the lens. But there is still a very much larger in diameter and longer lens surround protruding from the front of where the lens ends. Is there a purpose to this? Well the only thing I could think of was a built in lens hood? **(Pic 9)** Don't laugh, it actually could serve that purpose if the lens was a very wide angle, say 24-28mm, but it's a 45mm. So it must be something else.

Now when I was buying this camera, there was also that other large leather case that certainly did contain an extra lens. The lens is huge, and measures 72mm across the front element. Having had much less use than the camera as it looks nearly new, the Fuji Photo Film Co. Ltd **Tele Attachment Lens 7.5mm** is as much a work of the designers art as the camera is. It has



Pic7. The more conventional arrangement of the time delay and flash synch levers, and coax flash socket. The folding rewind crank can be seen on the top, side of the camera.



Pic 9. The front-end arrangement of the lens. Obviously designed to accommodate add ons.



Pic 10. That front end arrangement with a VERY LARGE tele-converter on the end.

a long, deep base with a 35.5mm screw thread (what a surprise!) *almost* at the base. The rear element actually protrudes below the screw mount. There is no way you can attach the auxiliary lens to the camera with a filter in place on the standard lens. The large tele converter screws into place smoothly, and looks spectacular on the camera. The elongated protruding chrome lens barrel now comes into play but appears to be merely decorative which is not surprising on this camera given all its other little quirks and foibles. **(Pic 10)** The lens is fitted with a superbly brushed chrome push on lens cap, and a very well machined screw on end cap. **(Pic 10a)**

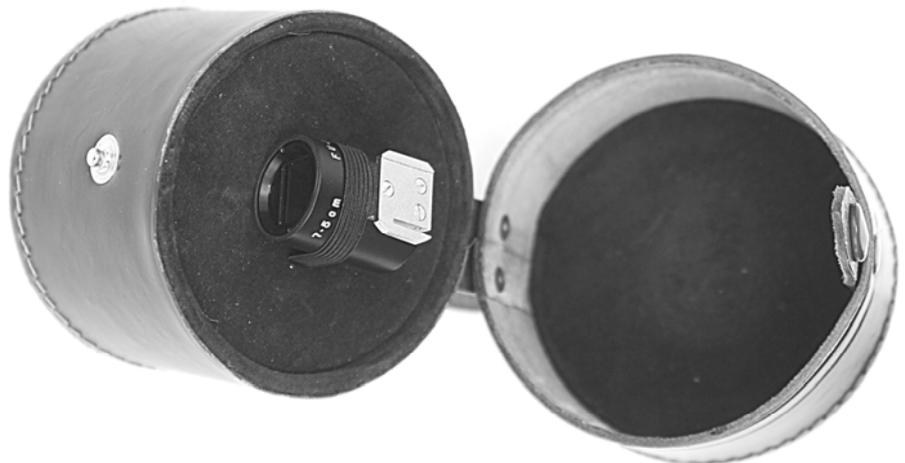


Pic 10a. The lens with the lovely brushed chrome cap.



Pic 11. Camera, converter, and auxiliary viewfinder.

Of course the adding of the 75mm tele-converter AND its supplied auxiliary viewfinder makes a very impressive display. **(Pic 11)** The auxiliary viewfinder is supplied and fitted in the same case as the converter lens. It provides a reasonably accurate rendition of the 30° angle of view of the lens. It has a normal magnification of view that is masked to 7.5cm, so it approximates a 50mm lens on that camera with the cropped image. No bright lines, just a nice clean view. There is no parallax correction with this finder. Usually the little finders are much harder to find (pardon the pun) than the lenses with most of these converter sets. But the Fujica separate casing of each lens, *with* its finder in the case, seems to have helped that situation. The only 3 of these 75mm add-ons I have seen have all had their finders with them. **(Pic 12)**



Pic 12. The lens is in the case, and the finder is firmly fixed to the cap, which fits neatly into the lens case.

Apparently there was also a 3.5cm wide-angle attachment made, and it came with a parallax correcting auxiliary viewfinder. I have never seen one of these 3.5cm Fujica converters. The 2 converter lenses were made and sold separately, not as a set as with most other Japanese rangefinders of the day. Just another variation from the norm.

The Fujica 35 SE from 1961; just another Japanese rangefinder from an era when the Japanese rangefinder was the Box Brownie of the “serious amateur” and are so plentiful and urbane that they will never be collectable? *YOU* be the judge.

Letters to the Editor:

A While-You-Wait Camera still in use!

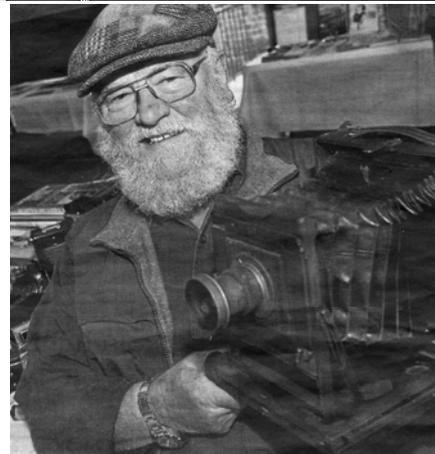
Internet Tip from Rod Reynolds shows a fascinating video at <http://vimeo.com/32748604> of the complete process of a “while-you-wait” Afghan photographer working his craft. Well worth seeing as it’s most detailed.



Ballarat Member Roger Burrows proved highly popular recently when he attended an exhibition staged by The Central Highlands Historical Association in teaching children the value of history without the use of a textbook.

Apparently the event was highly successful, with some 120 pupils from five schools across the region attending on the final day of the Festival.

Pictured on the right is Roger with a 1904 Thornton Pickard while at the History Festival and we appreciate the kind permission from The Courier of Ballarat in allowing us to reprint details of their article and the photograph.



Ian,

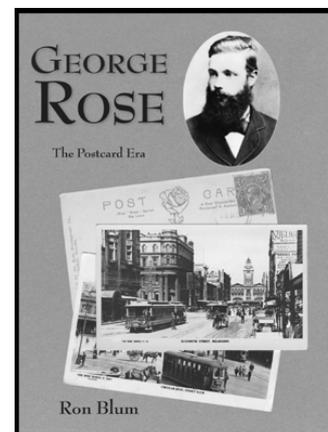
Your publication is impressive, and well written (and/or well edited). I like the **full-page spacing and the readable font size**. Also, articles seem well researched, and the photographs are reproduced with clarity. Because of the limited scope of the ‘Quarterly’, getting material can sometimes be daunting, so I can’t be too demanding about image quality...unfortunately.

John Fleming’s article on colouring prints was especially interesting, as I have never attempted anything further than sepia toning. Another article, “Kramer Reviews Old Lenses,” is also of interest, as several of the reviewed lenses were used on Graflex cameras. Would it be possible to publish his article in the ‘Quarterly’?

Ken Metcalf, Editor, ‘Graflex Historic Quarterly’.

Readers interested in things “Graphic” can visit Ken’s excellent magazine at <http://graflex.org/GHQ/>

From Marcel Safier: There is a paucity of good reference material on Australian photographic postcards so the recent publication of a new title is most welcome news. Ron Blum of South Australia, one of Australia’s leading collectors of stereoviews and the work of George Rose has assembled a definitive reference work “George Rose. The Postcard Era”, a companion volume to his previous book “George Rose. Australia’s Master Stereographer” and in the process he has made a further important contribution to Australia’s photographic history.



George Rose started his photographic career around 1880, establishing the Rose Stereograph Company and he produced a wide array of stereoviews for the Australian and foreign markets. Rose switched his attention to postcards in 1912 specialising in real photographic varieties produced in his facility in Armadale, Victoria and the firm (now under the management of the Cutts family since the 1930s), continued to make them until 1967 when they switched to colour printed postcards.

This new softcover book of some 260 pages is profusely illustrated with over 500 postcards reproduced in high quality including many choice views from around Australia. It chronicles the life of George Rose and his firm with interesting insights into its postcard production including the printing cards for other publishers, the Defence Department and even the production of cigarette cards. The illustrations extend the book’s appeal beyond merely the postcard and photographic fraternities, to those interested in Australian social, transportation and architectural history.

A companion CD “Rose Series Postcard Listings” contains over 18 000 titles in numerical order as well as an alphabetical listing of towns organised by state, clearly too large to have been included in the book but an invaluable resource and in digital format it can be readily searched. I can recommend Ron’s book without hesitation and such works of dedication and hard effort deserve support and may perhaps inspire others to further chronicle Australia’s postcard past. Further details including sample pages can be found on www.ronblum.com.au. The book costs \$58.00 and the companion CD is \$10 plus \$12 for postage.

Thank you Ian for the sterling job you do. While not concerned in still cameras myself (gasp!), I *still* enjoy the reading and of course anything filmy or projectory is a bonus for me. **Best – David. #475**

David Donaldson. ph 61 8 8344 7055 Find me, and links in cinemantiquities, on Facebook Inaugural Director, Sydney Film Festival 1954--- “Come On, Let’s Go” - J.P.McGowan, Hollywood’s First Australian.

TRIAL BAY...A POSTSCRIPT.

John Fleming.

Following on from Gustav Dehle's World War 1 Trial Bay Gaol internment camp story in the March "Back Focus", two further photographs have surfaced. Taken in 1938, these show an aged and broken Gustav Dehle shortly before his death. **Pic 1 and 2.**



Pics 1 & 2. Two fine studies of Gustav Dehle by Leica II (D) and window light.

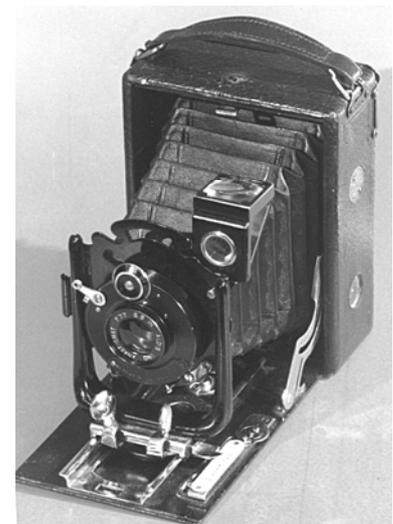
After the First war, and his release from detention, Gustav found his dairy food business had been dismantled and he also faced the simmering resentment to Germans right through the 1920's. He lived until his death in very ordinary circumstances and was never again able to regain full employment. Originally living at 1 Chaucer Avenue, Canterbury, Melbourne, he and his wife Alberta ("Bertie") and son Chris moved to 14 Rostrevor Parade, Surrey Hills, where he died in June 1938. The photographer of these two interior natural light portraits was Chris Dehle, using his Leica II (D). *Prints from the Spencer Tempest Warman Collection.*

"KLITO" BY HOUGHTON

John Fleming.

Around 1984 a friend purchased at a garage sale this smart folding ¼ plate as a curio for his living room shelf. It was complete but had a totally fractured bed strut. Knowing I was a photographer and had engineering interests, he asked could it be fixed.

Examining it, I removed the broken strut and traced onto a scrap of same gauge stainless steel. Three very full evenings later, using the jeweler's piercing saw and fine files, then rolling over one top edge, I had a strut! Carefully drilling the pivot hole and finally polishing with "Brasso", the strut was fitted and matched exactly the nickel plated right hand one. A clean and polish of camera body and bellows with black shoe polish, check and clean lens and shutter was next. To conclude, I made a ground glass for the frame by using engineers' fine lapping compound between two sheets of thin glass. It matted up beautifully....give it a try sometime! Years of photo studio framing had taught me how to cut glass, so that was done and job finished. Not having a dark slide that would fit, I loaded in the darkroom a piece of 3 1/4 inch x 4 1/4 inch sheet of HP4 cut down from 4x5, backed on the outside by piece of black thin cardboard. Slid into back of camera and taped along edges (all still in the dark) I then went outside and fired off an exposure. Developed and printed, it looked quite good, so I gave the camera and an actual photo it took back to a very happy owner. Before doing so though, took a quick record shot of my handywork. **Pic 1.** Houghton's were pioneers in Britain, being agents for Daguerre, later they incorporated Sanderson and Butcher, then Ensign and Ross. In the mid 1950's they were swallowed up by the Rank Organization and production ceased.



Pic 1 Houghton "Klito" ¼ plate, 1912-20. Aldis Uno Anastigmat f:7.7, 5.5 inch (140 mm) Everset shutter 1/25-1/50-1/100-B-T.

THE FIRST WOBBLY SHOTS.

John Fleming

Forget Dustin Hoffman and Mrs. Robinson in “The Graduate”, I was only seven years old when seduced by our next door neighbour Miss. Aberton back in 1951! I suppose having revealed this you now want the lurid details.....

It was one of those long hot summers creeping toward Christmas, I was recovering from some childhood illness rife at the time (Measles, Chicken Pox, Bubonic Plague?) and whilst now fairly well, it was deemed pointless to send me back to school for the last week before holidays. So there I was idling time away that Friday in the backyard and noticed Miss. Aberton from next door coming through the side gate. She asked if I was feeling better and handed me a mysterious package adding “This is for being a good boy”. Little did I realise the seduction had begun.

I thanked her and rushed inside to show my mother, shredding the brown paper package as I breathlessly dumped it on the kitchen table to reveal a shiny new Kodak Box Brownie camera and a Verichrome 620 film. This was sensational for a young lad in 1951, and both Mum and I studied the enticing leatherette clad box whilst we sweltered in the mid afternoon heat. I must now reveal Miss. Aberton was a dear old spinster, maybe in her mid 70’s, and the “seduction” was the gift of that entrancing device, A CAMERA! I wanted to start taking photos, but Mum thought better to wait for my father to come home and show how to load and use it. Dad arrived home, exhausted after a short walk from the train station, and placed his suspiciously heavy-looking kitbag (caused by six bottles of Fosters Lager) on the table. He looked at the sparkling new Brownie and suggested I was a lucky boy to get an early Christmas present and that we would load the film and take some shots in the morning. That night I slept with the prized magic box near my bed, having earlier opened it up and inhaled the superb, exotic aroma of lacquer, glue and leatherette that emanates from Kodak Box cameras. Frankincense, Sandalwood and Myrrh indeed! I was well and truly ensnared from that very day by the Mistress Photography.



My first photograph December 1951.

The Saturday dawned hot and cloudless with the dreaded North wind that always put my mother on edge, although she pronounced it would be at least a good washing and clothes drying day. After breakfast, Dad opened the Six-20 Brownie (a Kodak London 1946-53 Model D, without flash synch) and showed me how to extract the film carriage and carefully break the gummed paper seal on the film and hold it whilst loading so it didn’t unwind and get spoilt by light. The back was snapped shut, and it was handed to me with a flourish and instructions to (1) Slowly wind on until Number 1 came into the red window and (2) Hold it very steady when you press the button. By this time back fence neighbour Tom Culph, a genial chief signalman with the railways, called in to share a cool beer before tackling grass cutting with the hand mower (the Victa motor mower was yet to be invented). Thus my opportunity to snap my first ever photograph, and with my very own camera too. Amazingly, I still have most of the Velox contact prints off that first roll, although the negs have long gone, possibly consumed as rolled up “innards” in smoke or stink bombs during our slightly later homemade fireworks phase.

So here rendered for posterity is a record of a blistering hot day with a strong North wind blowing the washing in the background whilst two World War 2 returned servicemen with young families and new homes settle down for a refreshing cold beer. The date is a few days before Christmas 1951, the place suburban Ashburton, Melbourne Australia. Despite dire warnings to hold the

camera still, I suppose for a 7 year old, vided up with the thrill of the first camera, and the Brownie's lazy 1/30th second shutter speed, with the lone meniscus lens element fixed on "infinity", it is a wonder any image at all resulted. The backgrounds are hilarious...truly "cinema verite"! Nevertheless, the camera told the truth. It was many months later I discovered the pull-out slide for close-ups at about 6 feet...nobody had alerted me to that refinement.



I get into the act, including Dad's shadow!



Mum's the word.



A good example of camera movement.

Soon after we returned to school in 1952, I actually obtained my first paid commission with the Box Brownie. Mrs. Woodley from across the road asked if I could bring my camera over and photograph her cherub Dennis (we nicknamed him "Dennis the Menace") whilst he was uncharacteristically scrubbed clean and his hair combed with the kiss-curl resembling Bill Haley. I got the shot, and received 1 Shilling for the job. This equated to several good ice creams or almost half the cost of another Verichrome film.

Over the next few years quite a few rolls went through the Brownie Box Model D, and the last time I set eyes on it was in September 1958, after an epic cycle ride to Ferntree Gully National Park, when I gave it to a school mate, Brian Coolahan.

I had graduated to something better, having taken over my father's 1938 Kodak/Nagel-Werk Junior 620 folder.

From that I learned much more about the technical side, and it is a treasured little camera I still have that deserves more attention in a future issue. However, that delightful gift "box" from Miss. Aberton started me on a life-long love affair of photography and everything photographic from which I hope never to recover.



Better composition by 1953. Graeme Arthur with his new popgun. Note the letterbox!



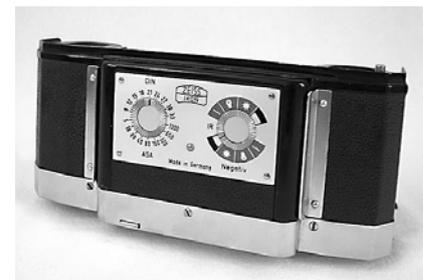
Brian Coolahan and the Brownie D in 1958.

Only a few 35mm cameras have been designed which allow you the convenience of changing films in the middle of a roll without rewinding. Perhaps it was too difficult to do, or was there no perceived need for this feature? Probably both back in the 1930s and 40s. But it was done. One way of achieving this was to make a camera with an interchangeable back as the film holder. The first one to offer film interchangeability was the Kodak Ektra in 1941, a coupled-rangefinder camera with interchangeable backs and lenses. Later came the Mamiya Magazine 35 (1957), the Zeiss Contaflex (1959), the Zeiss Contarex (1960), the Rolleiflex SL2000F (1981) and the Rolleiflex 3003 (1985) – all of them used interchangeable backs. Zeiss listed their backs as accessories, as their cameras could also be used with a normal back that was removable; the others were true magazine cameras because they could only be used with their interchangeable backs in position.

(photos 1, 2, 3, 4.)



2. Mamiya Magazine 35.



3. Contaflex Magazine Back.



But one designer took a different approach . . .



4. Rollei SL2000F.

1. Kodak Ektra + Magazine. Prior to 1953 the film manufacturer Adox Fotowerke of Frankfurt am Main in Germany had marketed cameras made by other manufacturers, mainly Wirgin, which were re-branded as Adox. In that year they established their own factory for camera production. This was situated about 40km away at Wiesbaden, where they initially made folding roll-film cameras. Then late in 1956 they introduced an entirely new concept in 35mm cameras, the

Adox 300. (photo 5) This was a fixed-lens viewfinder camera where the film was loaded into a magazine that was placed into the camera body. This magazine is actually just like a camera back that accepts standard 35mm cassettes, as it has a film transport sprocket, takeup spool, film plane guide, pressure plate, cassette chamber, frame counter and rewind key. (photos 6, 7)



5. The Adox 300.

After closing the camera's back door the action of locking the door, by the key on the base, opens the magazine's dark slide allowing exposures on the film as usual. The magazine is now connected to the winding mechanism in the camera body via one slotted drive disc. Film winds from right to left and emulsion side out. A separate sprocket moves the frame counter (which shows the number of exposures remaining) that is visible through a window on the camera top. (photo 8) A smaller window in the camera back allows you to see the magazine's two reminder dials which you can set for film speed, 5 to 400 ASA, and film type. (photo 9) Magazines can be exchanged at any time without lost frames (see Footnote 2) as the counter is not reset until a fresh film is loaded.



6. Magazines front and back.



7. Magazine open showing film plane.



8. Film counter window.

The camera and magazines have a real quality appearance, the camera body has smooth satin chrome parts and attractive grained black covering. **(photo 10)** It feels solid and is very well made; especially considering this was the first 35mm camera that Adox had manufactured themselves. It was no lightweight, loaded and ready to use the camera weighed 855g. The well-designed magazine is made of cast alloy and pressed metal and has a fine black crackle-enamel finish. **(photo 11)** Its dark slide is thin flexible stainless steel that rotates partly around the takeup spool when withdrawn. **(photo 12)** A lock situated between the two drive discs ensures the left rotating disc cannot be moved when out of the camera back so the darkslide can't open. **(photo 13)** A pin in the camera body unlocks this when the magazine is in place. Four machined studs around the film opening



9. Camera back closed showing window.

butt against four studs around the lens opening in the camera body to correctly locate the magazine and film plane. **(photos 14, 15)** The camera back door has a pressure plate to hold the magazine in place securely.



10. Adox 300 - quality chrome finish.



11. Magazines top and bottom.

The magazine chamber in the die-cast alloy camera body has only two moving parts; they are the bladed drivers that engage the slotted magazine discs. **(photo 16)** The left one rotates as the back is locked or unlocked and moves the darkslide. The

right one rotates the film advance sprockets. Film winding is via the rapid-wind lever on the front of the camera. This action also tensions the shutter and operates the double exposure prevention interlock. (photo 17)



12. Darkslide open and closed.



13. Drive discs.



14. Camera magazine chamber.



15. Magazine in position.



16. Drive blades.



18. Meter dial, meter button, interlock override lever.



17. Wind lever, meter window.

Adox offered a choice of lenses and shutters: a Steinheil Cassar f2.8 45mm lens and a Schneider Xenar f2.8 45mm lens, both in either a Compur-Rapid or a Synchro-Compur shutter. Lenses are non-interchangeable and have rotating front-cell focussing. An uncoupled Bewi Automat light meter is built into the top plate. When you press and hold a button on the back its dial rotates to display a Light Value number for exposure.

(photo 18) You then have to set this value on the shutter.

A diffusing cover could be fitted to the meter window for incident light readings. The viewfinder is quite large and bright but does not have parallax correction.

Early bodies were marked 'Dr C. Schleussner Fotowerke GmbH' and 'Made in Germany' on the top plate, with the serial number in the accessory shoe. Later bodies had 'ADOX Fotowerke Dr C. Schleussner GmbH' on the top plate, 'Made in Germany' and the serial number are on the rear of the bottom plate.

In addition to the conventional ever-ready case Adox offered a smaller case that could be fitted on to the camera case strap, it held a spare magazine and two filters. There was a window in it so you could see what type of film was loaded. The Adox 300 was also supplied in a handsome brown leather carrying case lined with red velvet, with spaces for four filters and complete with three magazines. (photo 19)



19. Outfit case.

The concept of a camera system where the user could switch emulsions quickly and easily was timely in 1957 as color film was being used more while black & white was still popular with users who did their own processing. (As were those sweet Adox fine-grained films that I remember!) But the magazines were its main, and probably its only, selling feature; although the rapid film wind might be another for some users. Unfortunately the Adox 300 lacked lens interchangeability and a coupled rangefinder. Both these features would probably have been necessary for successful marketing and export sales.

30 THE BRITISH JOURNAL ALMANAC (1957) ADVERTISEMENTS

The camera with a **DUAL** purpose

ADOX 300
BLACK & WHITE
TO
COLOUR

in a few seconds
using
only
one
camera

This new 35-mm. camera with its interchangeable magazine system is a revolutionary advance in miniature design. It permits the taking of four pictures, in a matter of seconds, ON FOUR DIFFERENT TYPES OF FILM to suit the subjects to be taken. The interchangeable magazine, which contains the film advance mechanism and frame counter, is light-proof and automatically closes when the magazines are changed. A built-in exposure meter is incorporated in the body of the camera and all controls are easily operated.

TECHNICAL FEATURES INCLUDE
Steinheil Cassar f/2.8 lens in exposure values, Synchron-Compur shutter, fully synchronised, self-timer, speeds 1-1/500 sec. or Schneider f/2.8 Xenar lens in exposure values, Compur Rapid shutter, synchronised, self-timer, speeds 1-1/500 sec. Biotin Bevel 4 automatic photo-electric exposure meter, Optical viewfinder, rapid film wind and double exposure prevention device.

Now available with Steinheil Cassar lens.
Next year also with the Schneider Xenar lens. 69 gns

PRICE
Available now in Steinheil Cassar f/2.8 with one magazine and hand-made leather case. 59 gns
Spare magazine 9½ gns
Handmade leather case for magazine 37/6

LUMINOS LIMITED

20. BJA Advertisement 1957.

In the UK market Adox had to compete mainly with some other German 35mm cameras. The import of many German cameras into UK was still restricted, this paragraph is from the Zeiss distributor's advertisement in the BJA of 1957: *The following cameras are import restricted. Licences are granted from time to time by the Board of Trade but do not cover more than a fraction of demand.* They listed the Contaflex I at £82 and a Contaflex IV with meter at £109. The British-made Leica copy the Reid was priced at £126. The Adox 300 was advertised with a Cassar lens, one magazine and a hand made leather case for 59 guineas (guineas! - remember them?) that's £64.9.0 and with purchase tax added it's about £90 (photo 20)

In the 1958 BJA the Adox 300 was advertised as "Now available with Xenar lens, 69 guineas". Two Japanese cameras were advertised for the first time also: the Pentax at £102 and the Nikon S2 at £235. In the US market Adox had to compete against the similarly priced Leica, Canon, Nikon, Zeiss, Voigtländer and other 35mm cameras of that time. Japanese makers had already established sales offices in the US where a Pentax was priced at US\$150 in 1957.

McKeowen (p.10) has details on the **Adox 500**. This seems to me to be the camera that the Adox 300 should have been, as it featured interchangeable lenses, a coupled light meter, a coupled rangefinder and a bright-frame finder. The 1958 prototype was never put into production.

Footnote 1 -

To quote McKeowen: *After Adox stopped making the film magazines, the production tools were bought by Leitz. The Leitz produced magazines are marked "Ernst Leitz Wetzlar Germany" and were for the Orthomat microscope camera. They are nearly identical to the Adox marked magazines. Black, white or olive.* The patent number on these magazines, shown in photo 21 had been assigned to Adox. The Orthomat camera was used with the Ortholux and later the Orthoplan microscope. The magazines made it handy for using different films to photograph the same microscope slide (e.g. black-and-white and a color transparency).

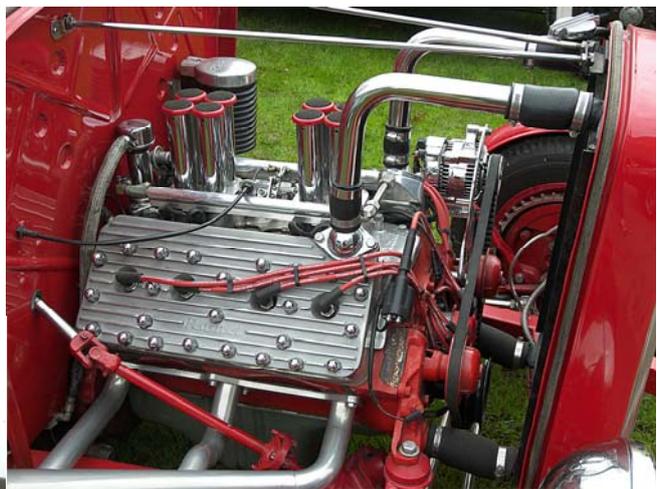


21. Leitz Orthomat Magazine.

Footnote 2 -

I bought this camera as a non-working item as it would not wind and the back could not be opened. There was a magazine inside and the counter indicated that the film had 36 frames exposed. **It is most important to know the procedure for changing magazines and removing a completely exposed one.** When the shutter is cocked the back is locked and cannot be opened, magazines may only be removed after an exposure and before the wind lever is operated again. However after the last exposure on a roll the wind lever will not move and the camera back is locked. On the rear of the top plate there is a shutter interlock override lever. This has to be pushed up and held while the wind lever is operated. Now the shutter can be fired (with the lens cap on) the back becomes unlocked and with a slight push on the door it will pop open so you can remove the magazine; the film could be rewound later. Having a spare loaded magazine handy meant you could change films quicker than rewinding and reloading a film cassette in the usual way.

Images from May Field trip: Yarra Glen- A Cavalcade of Transport.



Photos by Ian Carron.