

USEFUL CONTACTS

There is an enormous difference in the retail prices of photographic equipment BUT there is generally a very sound underlying reason for being **WARY** of the **CHEAPEST** prices. Where specific equipment is referred to below a comment has been added as a guide to whether “bargains” are actually what they appear to be at first sight.

Learning **OPPORTUNITIES** have been included to a very limited extent due to restricted personal experience. However, members of the Group have a collective store of experience which can be drawn on during meetings.

CAMERAS.

1. CHESHAM CAMERAS *tel:- 01494 791370.*

This is placed at the top of the list because it is the most local high street photographic equipment supplier who carries an extensive range of both **FILM** and **DIGITAL** equipment. BUT very importantly, when you buy locally you will receive face to face help with choice to suit your needs and you will be able to ask for advice **AFTER THE SALE** without fear of having to speak to a “voice in India” or engage in any other tortuous process of making verbal contact via telephone call centres or by e-mail.

2. JESSOPS General Enquiries *tel:- 0845 458 7000 e-mail:- sales@jessops.com*

This retailer is included because they are probably the biggest in the UK at the present time and therefore have the widest possible range of equipment and purchasing facilities. They have retail shops in many high streets, the nearest being Watford, Hemel Hempstead and High Wycombe.

3. PIX MANIA.COM

This is one of the cheapest **MAIL ORDER** suppliers BUT it is based in France. Overseas suppliers are quite common both for new and secondhand equipment especially on *e-bay*, be careful, you will be dealing at arms length which presents a whole lot of different problems when you need help and advice.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLIES.

PAPERS for printing.

CONSUMABLE MADNESS *tel: 08000 644 222*

An unbeatable, UK based, efficient supplier for Ink Jet papers at the most competitive prices.

They also supply **INKS**. Always remember it is as expensive in ink use with printing as it is with paper, and with the cheaper papers a lot more expensive for the ink usage element.

7 DAY SHOP (Based in GUERNSEY)

This organization is just one of a number of Channel Islands based suppliers who feature VAT free prices, (MX2 is another) which, when added to an already very

competitive price structure for Branded OEM goods, are a price comparison must, before you commit to any large outlay of cash.

This organization, and other similar people, offer the widest range of photographic equipment and consumables but only offer a very limited range of cameras though they are very competitively priced.

MEDIA CARDS and FLASH DRIVES.

Competition is fierce amongst suppliers of these devices and hence prices can range from too cheap to too expensive. The best advice is to shop around BUT seek guidance from Group members who have personal experience they are prepared to share with you.

Certain manufacturers names are of 'gold' standard and can be relied upon for performance and usable life while other names are obscure and although highly competitively priced may offer superb value or turn out to be expensive junk. Take care and seek advice.

INK CARTRIDGES.

This is one of the most expensive ongoing costs incurred by Digital Photography. The soundest advice on this subject is as follows.

If you want the very best results in the knowledge that when something appears to be wrong you can seek help in the knowledge that there will be NO EXCUSE for the manufacturer of your printer to hide behind, then CHOOSE Original Equipment Supplies to match the machine e.g. use EPSON papers and inks in Epson printers, likewise with HP, Canon etc.

That said, when you have the experience and/or gage abandon to be confident of knowing what you are doing, it is quite OK to experiment with "non original" products.

CARTRIDGE WORLD Amersham. Provides a cartridge REFILL SERVICE and speaking from personal experience, offers a very good quality service at a fraction of the cost of OEM cartridges.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.

Summer School courses, short courses at weekends also weekly learning sessions are all available in the local area on both film and digital photography from Beginners to Advanced.

There is probably no better/speedier way to gain knowledge and confidence as a Beginner than to attend a course specifically geared to beginners needs. The tutor will be attuned to the difficulties you are meeting with and will know the easiest and most effective manner by which to impart the knowledge and ability you need to make progress at a rapid pace.

1. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ADULT LEARNING. Enquiries, bookings tel :- 0845 045 40 40

a) **Missenden Abbey.** Courses here are run throughout the year from single days to weekends and residential week long Summer School experiences.

b) **Bucks Adult Learning.** e-mail:- studentenquiries@buckscc.gov.uk

Several Learning Centres exist within the Chilterns District where Digital Photography courses are held throughout the academic year on a one day per week basis.

2. WORKERS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (South Bucks and Berkshire) tel:- 01634 298600. also 0800 328 1060.

A quaint throw back to an earlier age The WEA nevertheless offer courses throughout the region where Digital, Film and Art related courses can be attended.

3. PHOTOGRAPHY DIGITAL & ART COURSES and WORKSHOPS by JOHN CREDLAND tel:- 01280 813641.

A number of Group members have experienced the relaxed and amusing personality and techniques John uses while running his courses across the whole spectrum of abilities of his students. His services cover predetermined courses at venues across the region also one to one tutorials in a location of your choosing e.g. your own home. John is also a stalwart feature of The Missenden Abbey Summer School and has been delivering highly entertaining and most enjoyable experiences for many years to students who re-enroll on his same courses for several years running.

4. CHILTERN U3A.

In the recent past courses for Digital Beginners have been run “in house” by David Pearson , they have proven so popular that over subscribing has become a limiting feature.

David may be contacted at Group meetings with enquiries about future course plans.

BOOKS & SOFTWARE.

1. GOOGLE.

Known for its excellent ‘Search Engine’ facilities, also offers a PHOTOGRAPHY MANIPULATIVE SOFTWARE programme as a FREE download. This is named **PICASA and can be downloaded for FREE by simply typing in Picasa to the “search” box in GOOGLE.**

By no means as sophisticated as the popular Adobe and Correl software packages BUT it costs nothing and is an excellent first step situation for Beginners to gain practice and understanding of what can be done to digital images once uploaded to your computer.

2. AMAZON.CO.UK

This is an excellent and competitively priced supplier of both NEW and SECONDHAND books and software.

For beginners who have exhausted their enthusiasm for Picasa they could do worse than upgrade to **PAINT SHOP PRO #7 (Anniversary Edition)** BUT it will have to be obtained secondhand as it has long since been superseded by versions #8#9#10 and now #11.

Place a WANTED AD on Amazon’s web site and see what offers turn up.

You may prefer to take a first step towards PHOTOSHOP, the print trade standard.

This you can do by installing **Photoshop ELEMENTS v5** @ around £70, user familiarity with this simplified version will aid your progressive upgrade onto full **PHOTOSHOP** @ £600+

BOOKS are very much a personal matter, however, most Digital books are written by “Experts”

and in my own experience, are only able to be followed and understood by “Experts” There is an exception which is a good reference manual no matter what level of skill you have as a digital photographer **DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHERS HANDBOOK** by **Tom Ang** and published by **Dorling Kindersley** as **ISBN 1 4053 0529 0**.

This book is extremely well and appropriately illustrated, it epitomizes the expression *“a picture is worth a thousand words”*

SOFTWARE is best chosen after much careful consideration also advice and help from people with experience who have been down the path of deciding which is most suitable to their needs. Do **NOT** fall for the statement that **THIS IS THE BEST THERE IS**. It may well be **BUT** do you want to become a ‘professional’ or simply a competent amateur. The trade standard **PHOTOSHOP CS** is typically in excess of £600 in a retail store, secondhand **PSP #7** should cost no more than £20 and is capable of most needs of the average amateur.

GET SAFE ONLINE.ORG is a web site offering advice on how to avoid and deal with spam, viruses and hackers. This site has recently been circulated by Thames Valley Police as a recommendation for Neighbourhood Watch participants so must be considered good advice.