Beckham Digital

Jan 2019

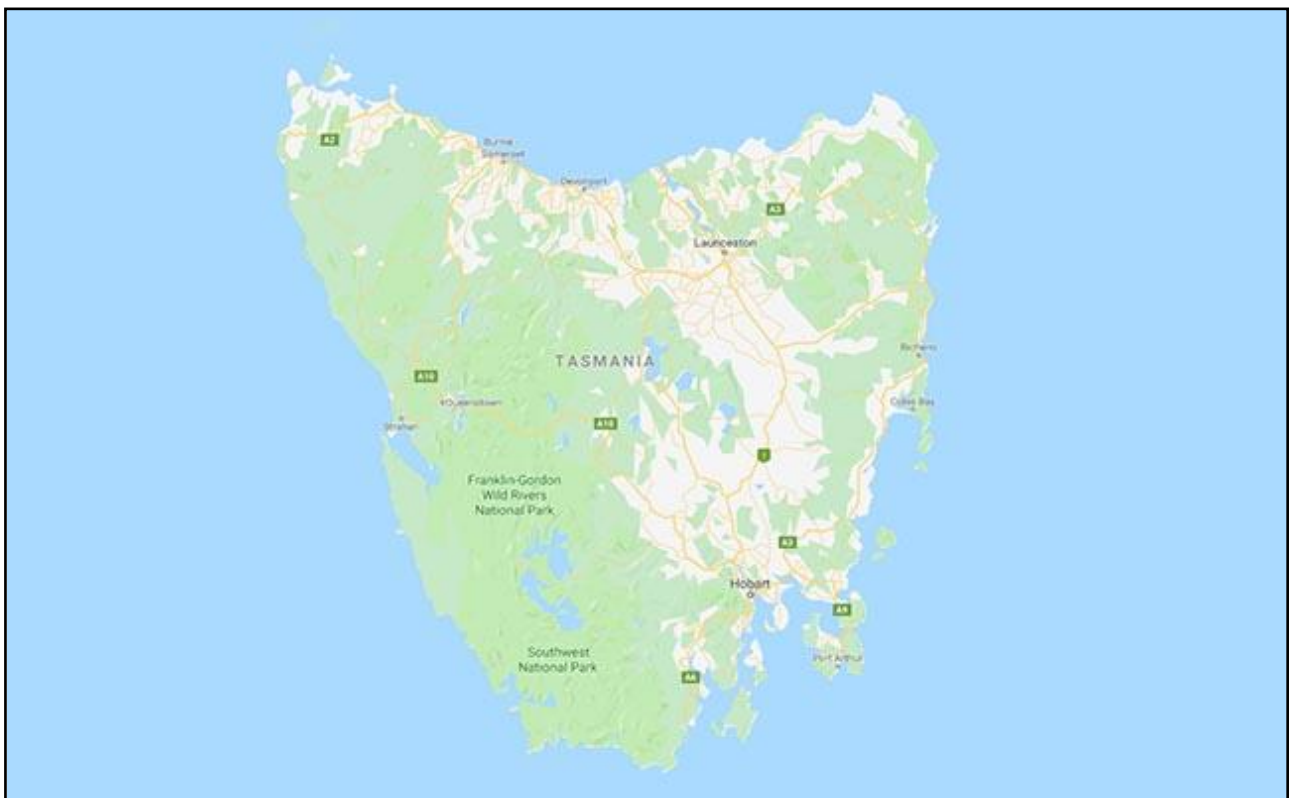## Happy New Year to one and all.

Lots going on for us now as we continue working on the new website I spoke about last month. The work was put on hold over the Christmas and New Year, but we should be back on track soon.

Photographic Trip

A little later in the year we have planned a road trip from the Sunshine Coast of Australia, down to Sydney, then onto Melbourne. That is a little under 2000 kilometres (1200mls) and we expect that to take us around 10 days. Of course, we will be capturing as many pictures as we can on the trip.

We'll stop often for two nights so we get a chance to see the places we are passing through. In Melbourne we then take the car on board ship for a 9-hour crossing of the Bass Strait to Tasmania. Tasmania is the Island State of Australia and its roughly heart-shaped, with a maximum length and width of about 320 kilometres (200 miles) The landscape looks particularly appealing to photographers and we are all inspired when we visit new places.

We also have some new photographic toys to take with us, so read on below.

As we make our trip, I will post information in the Miscellaneous section of our Forum, so anyone who would like to follow our travel can do so.

Mavic Pro 2 Drone

It was around this time last year that I started to talk about drone photography when my son brought his drone over from the UK. Those who know me will also know I'm not easily impressed by technology. After all, our fancy cameras are just a tool to do a job like many others, but I was taken with the capabilities of the drone.
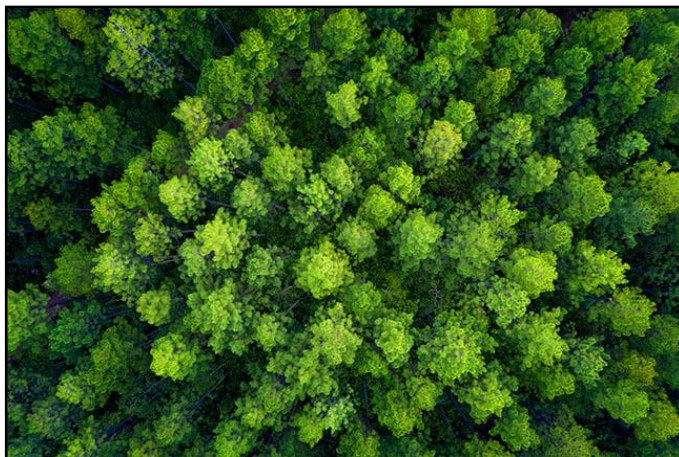
I wasn't quite so keen on the 12MP camera on the drone, but this year DJI Mavic launched the Mavic Pro 2 with a 20MP camera. As you may have guessed I have spent some of the kid's inheritance and purchased one.

I must laugh when I hear people describe themselves or others as drone pilots, talk about big yourself up. These things fly themselves, they really do and all it requires is a little care and common sense and many photo opportunities open.

The maiden flight went without a hitch, but I took the opportunity to test the "come home" button. Before you take off, the drone uses navigation satellites to map its position. It sets its home point and marks it on a map. You must fly your drone only as far as you can see it, but if you lose track of it, you can hit the home button on the controller, and it returns to its take off point. In my test the drone came back without any help from me at all.

I only took a few pictures because the first flight was more about learning the controls of the drone and less about the photography.

However, it will be interesting to have the drone for our trip to Tasmania where we can hopefully capture something a little different.

I have noticed that as usual there are many dissenters who are calling for all sorts of bans and restrictions on the use of drones. If we banned everything that someone somewhere has abused or disapproved of none of us would be doing anything at all would we?

There are some great apps for the smart phone that tells you where you can fly and where you can't. They also advise about any restrictions and only a Moron would fly near an airport. Sadly, Morons are not a figment of our imagination.

I'm not into selfies, but could not resist this shot of the "Drone Pilot" and "Spotter"

Canon 5D MK4

I've also purchased a new camera. It was 11 years since I bought an SLR and felt it was time to take advantage of what technology has to offer. What's wrong with my Canon 1DS MK 3 you may ask?

Well, nothing, it's still going strong and I've yet to decide if I will part with it or keep it and use it to prop the door open. As if I could relegate such an old faithful friend to a task like that, it should stand on a pedestal in a prominent position, with a gold plaque beneath :-)

Some of you may know I was seriously tempted to buy the Canon 50MP 5DSr and I have been in a dilemma and internal debate about it for about a year. Those 50 million Pixels were tempting, but there's no doubt that this 50Mp camera is more a niche camera and from an operation/technology point of view not quite so good as the Mk4.

I know I can squeeze more quality than most out of my 20MP cameras, so an upgrade to a 30MP Mk4 will improve that and it could be argued that 50MP may have been a little overkill. It would be a great camera for those who do a lot of cropping in post processing, but I don't. I've always been pretty good at composing in the camera and filling the frame.

So, the decision has been made and I have already paired the 5D MK4 with my smart phone so I can see the LCD display and fire the shutter remotely from the phone. Will I use that a lot? Probably not, but in the past with bird photography that would have been a great help.

I also like the touch screen focusing, which will be great when the camera in on the tripod and I'm viewing live screen mode. So, we have a great trip planned and new gear to use while away so plenty to talk about through the year, I think.

UK Trip in Late 2019

We have also started to give some serious thought to a return trip to the UK towards the end of 2019 or early 2020. So, maybe we can catch up with some old friends and family, but also grab a few pictures too. More about these plans as the year rolls on.

By the way, The last time we came back to the UK, I did make a slide show called **Contrast** where I compared the UK to Australia from a visual point of view.

View it on YouTube HERE

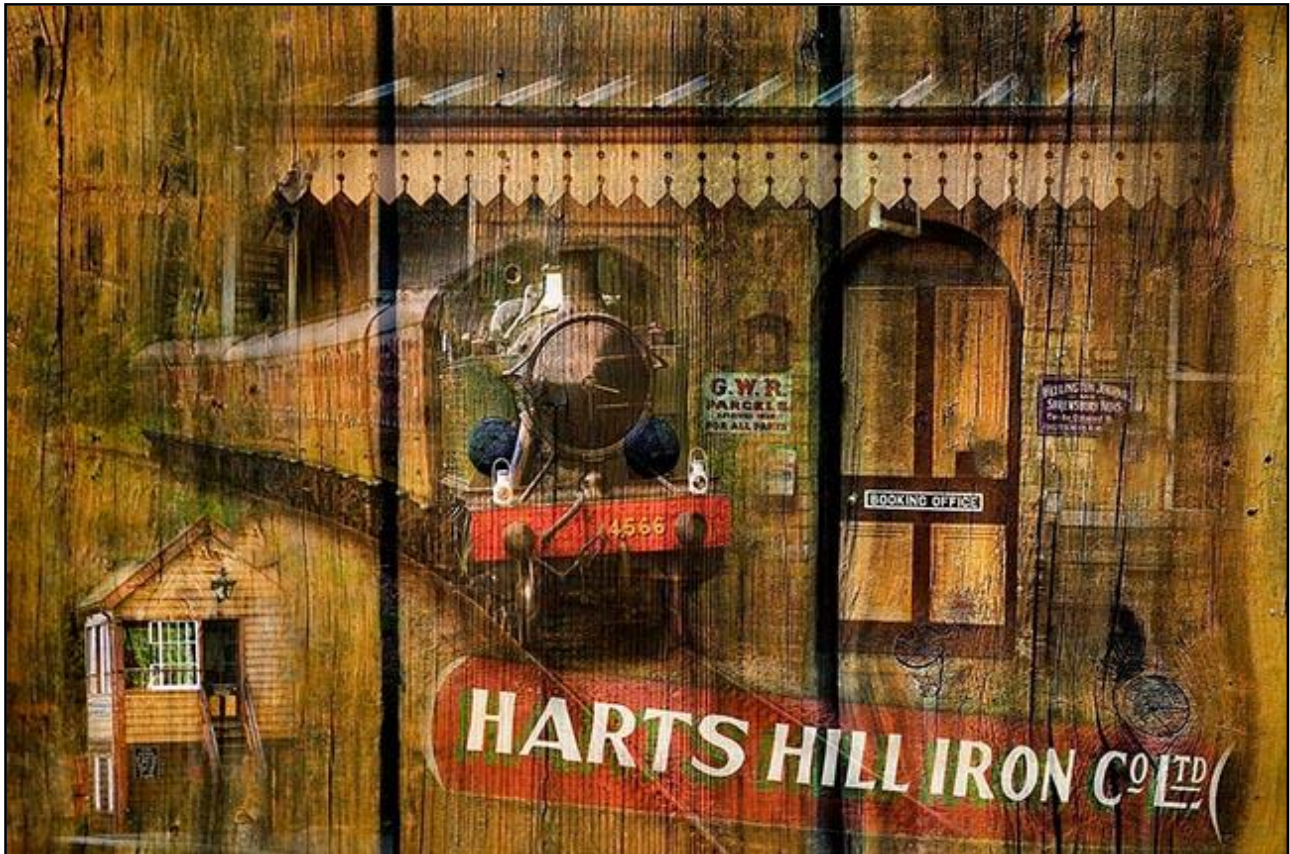Download it HERE

PicturesToExe 10 for Mac

Igor Kokarev, the creator of PicturesToExe was asked recently if the new version of the software would include a **Mac version** when it is launched later this year.

Igor said: - *Yes, we're developing both versions together now. Windows and*

Mac versions of PTE 10 both have 80% of common cross-platform code now. It means that if we add a new window like Project Options for Windows version of PTE 10, it's already compatible with a Mac.

The difference is only on low level - OpenGL on Mac and DirectX on Windows, differences in the File list, in file functions. A Beta version for Mac will appear later than PC version, because we need to write the final Mac specific code.

So, PicturesToExe 10 (PTE) will appear slightly before the Mac version, but I suspect Mac users who have been waiting patiently for PTE will be pleased to hear there is a growing light at the end of the tunnel.

Here are some major features to look forward to with PTE 10:

- New fast video decoders with hardware acceleration for smooth playback of video clips. We tried to provide smooth playback of 60p video clips in real time.

- New video encoders with hardware acceleration (works faster in 3-5 times).

- Dark mode of the graphical interface (classical Light theme is also available).
- Hardware accelerated graphical interface of PTE Slide List, Timeline and File List should work faster and smoother on screens with high resolution. We created this technology to make a cross-platform code for PTE 10.

- Themes of Slide Styles. A theme is a group of several Slide Styles which can be applied to many slides (according to rules set by an author)

- We plan to add Text Effects (Animations).

Of course, this is not the final list of all improvements of PTE 10. There will be other new features and improvements which will be announced with first public Beta version.

PTE 10 for Windows will be 32-bit. We plan 64-bit version later after release of 64-bit Mac version. However even 32-bit version of PTE 10 will be able use 4 GB of memory instead of 2 GB in PTE 9.

So, 2019 looks like being an interesting year for our photography and our image presentation.

Forum Apology

Those trying to access our Photographic Forum over the Christmas period may have been disappointed. We had major problems with our server, which caused a multitude of issues. One of which was each page taking 20 seconds or more to load.

Eventually the site was moved to a new server, so I guess the problem that arose was a serious one where hardware failed. Our Photographic and Audio-Visual forum is now back up and running well, so, if you're not a member, why not give it a try.

We also took the opportunity to add SSL to the forum for added security.

PicturesToExe Video - Fine Lines or Borders

A topic appeared on an AV forum recently about fine lines around our images and it appeared about the time I was looking for a video topic. So, I borrowed the idea and here we look at using Photoshop to create an edge effect, then we demonstrate how we apply it.

We also look at how quickly and easily we can adjust the line for multiple images in one operation when we change our mind, which we often do right?

Other image editors like Elements will be suitable for this technique. Of course, it can be considered an AV technique, but it also has important uses in general image presentation too

View on YouTube HERE

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