

Grays of Westminster®

GAZETTE

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THE PERIODICAL FOR THE NIKON DEVOTEE

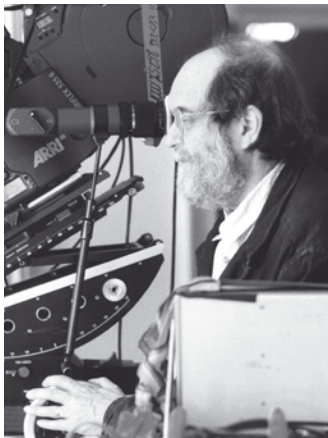
CRACKING *the* GRAYS OF WESTMINSTER CODE

by Gillian Greenwood

Everybody loves a mystery. Agatha Christie, the world's best-known mystery writer, has sold, at a conservative estimate, over a billion copies of her books in the English language and another billion in over forty-five foreign languages.

From the mysteries of legendary civilizations such as Ancient Lemuria or Atlantis through to the statues of Easter Island and the Great Pyramid of Giza, a mystery is something that transcends the rational, something that is unfathomable, unknowable or unexplainable.

But mysteries are always there for the solving – curiosity after all has its own purpose for existing – and even more than mysteries we like to have answers.



Photograph by Manuel Harlan

When I was asked to write a history of *Grays of Westminster* in 2003 I wanted to fully understand the mystery of their extraordinary success. Why did individuals such as the late, legendary film-director Stanley Kubrick, the celebrity photographer Richard Young, or Oscar-winning companies such as Aardman Animations of Wallace and Gromit fame, shop there? Why did their worldwide client-base, which now approaches the 30,000 mark, contain so many customers who had, over the twenty years since

their inception, continued to enthusiastically endorse them time and time again?

Were *Grays of Westminster* especially blessed by the gods? What immortal hand was there? What fearful symmetry?

Did they in fact possess some kind of mystical code?

My many and persistent questions as to their own and indeed Nikon's success as a brand were answered and the book was researched, compiled and completed.

The publication of *Grays of Westminster...In the Company of Legends* in 2004, and its launch at Quaglino's in St James's by distinguished actor and client, David Suchet, was the culmination of celebrating

the ascendancy of a company that had in fact already become a phenomena in the photographic world. Furthermore, even then *Grays of Westminster* were not only a company of legends but also a company of awards. From *Practical Photographer People's Choice Dealer of the Year Award*, to *Amateur Photographer Dealer of the Year Award*, *Buying Cameras Dealer of the Year Award*, to a stunning crystal trophy to commemorate their outstanding contribution in promoting the Nikon system, which was presented by Nikon UK Ltd. and Nikon Corporation Japan in October 2003, *Grays of Westminster* had over the years received a vast catalogue of acknowledgements, accolades and prizes.

Moving down the time-line of key photographic retailers and photography itself with its many evolutions and changes over the last few years through to the present time, *Grays of Westminster's* continued unflagging success posed yet more curiosity. Their extraordinary growth and expansion has continued and seems unstoppable (they have experienced a 68% increase in business in the past two years), and in the aftermath of their latest very significant achievement award, I wanted to find how and why they have continued to be such an exceptional international success story.



This latest special achievement award, a beautiful crystal trophy of the world, awarded by Nikon UK and Nikon Japan in March 2007, celebrates not only Nikon's affirmation of the unique landmark expansion and exceptional growth of *Grays of Westminster*, but is just as importantly, a reflection of the satisfaction and support of both their UK and their overseas clients.

Simon Coleman General Manager of Nikon U.K. Limited said of this special achievement award: "Nikon take great pleasure in presenting *Grays of Westminster* this

award in recognition of their unprecedented sales of Nikon equipment over the past year. Their customer service is exceptional; such excellence having only been achieved through complete dedication and commitment to the Nikon brand."



Simon Coleman, General Manager of Nikon U.K. presenting Gray Levett with the award for unprecedented sales.



So what is the mysterious *Grays of Westminster* Code?

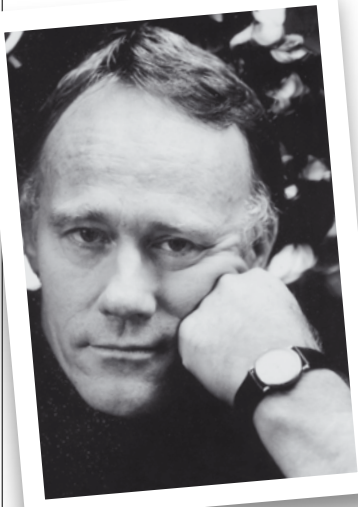
First of all, *Grays of Westminster* offer a Nikon retail experience that is probably the most comprehensive in Europe. As Garry Coward-Williams, Group Magazines' Editor for IPC recently stated: "*Grays of Westminster is a place to go where customers can 'talk the language of Nikon with people who speak it as if it were their mother tongue.'*"

In order to provide such a fully comprehensive service with near-universal stock, they have at hand perhaps the world's widest range of Nikon equipment. They have continued to follow the policy of stocking every possible Nikon camera and accessory they are able to, and through their unique international connections regularly source kit that might otherwise be unavailable.

In the short period of time since *In The Company of Legends* was published, *Grays of Westminster* have fully expanded their premises and added a whole new refurbished second-hand Nikon department to their company, which is brimming with a vast collection of second-hand kit of the finest quality in mainly mint or near-mint condition. This combination of new and second-hand departments dedicated to Nikon, on separate floors of the same premises, together with an unrivalled accessory department means that they are able to provide photographers with the ultimate experience and the ultimate choice. Furthermore, their prices are competitive!

Secondly, *Grays of Westminster* have a unique customer policy. Because of their extensive array of new and second-hand bodies, lenses and accessories, they are able to offer equipment and personal assistance to an all-inclusive range of customers. From young people with limited budgets who need photographic advice and counsel, to professional photographers, keen enthusiasts, or specialists in the field of Science and Industry (including Cinematography, Forensics, Architecture, Entomology, Medicine) *Grays of Westminster* can provide a bespoke service for all Nikon users in a distraction-free environment. And they are so certain of the Nikon Product that new Nikon equipment they supply comes with a special two-year warranty (both bodies and lenses.)

Finally, in spite of their fully expanded premises, and taking on a much larger team of staff to deal with the much increased business, *Grays of Westminster* have managed to retain their unique ambience in an elegant yet comfortable atmosphere coupled with their legendary old-world style. Speed of service does not conflict with exemplary customer care, absolute professionalism or attention to detail. Their staff are highly knowledgeable yet friendly and relaxed in their approach, and new customers can gain an introduction to the Nikon system whilst long-standing clients can have their questions comprehensively answered about a specific piece of kit. The concept of customer service is of unwavering service to others, that service being a privilege rather than a chore. Furthermore, any of their customers in the U.K. or worldwide can call upon over a hundred years of combined photographic expertise and their queries can be dealt with in one of six languages and with effortless competence.

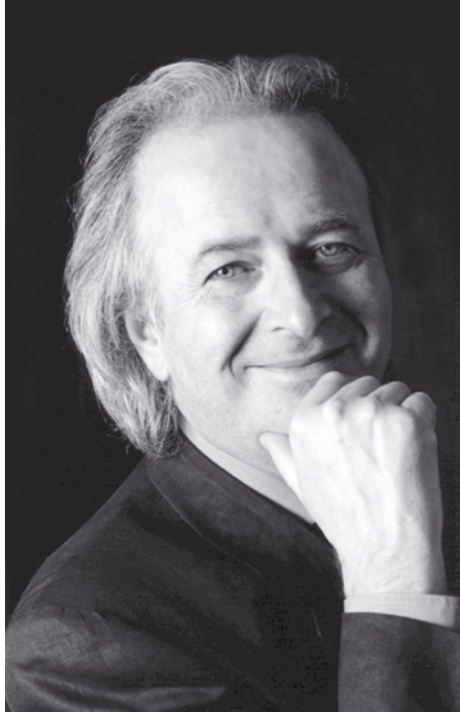


Perhaps long-term *Grays of Westminster* client Graham Hancock, eminent presenter of the Channel 4 Documentaries *Heaven's Mirror: Quest for the Lost Civilisation*, and *Underworld: Flooded Kingdoms of the Ice Age*, who is also the international best-selling author of thought-provoking pre-history who-dunnits such as *The Sign and the Seal*, *Fingerprints of the Gods*, *Heaven's Mirror*, and *Underworld*, couldn't have stated it more aptly when he said:

"Grays of Westminster are simply the best: best for service, best for their insider knowledge of Nikon cameras and lenses, best for their love of photography, best for their communication skills, best for friendliness and empathy, best for reliability, and best for the sheer professionalism and panache with which they go about their business." ■



Gillian Greenwood is the Production and Features Editor of *Nikon Owner* magazine and author of *In the Company of Legends* a history of *Grays of Westminster*. She is currently working on a political thriller.



Photograph by Paul Dawson

Here we are once again with the summer issue of the *Grays of Westminster Gazette* in which I traditionally welcome customers old and new. So welcome to this issue.

I often reflect upon the odd things that shape one's life: the things that have a profound effect without one really knowing it. My interest in photography and Nikon in particular was ignited after I saw Michelangelo Antonioni's movie *Blow-Up* in which David Hemmings plays Thomas, a very successful, yet bored English fashion photographer. The film has been described as a baffling, beautiful critique of the 'Swinging London' of the 1960s. I have held *Blow-Up* in some affection since that time.

When I was in my teens my interests were broadly divided into music, photography, reading and the movies. I read voraciously and I carried a camera with me wherever I went. In those far-off days I walked almost everywhere, every evening and every weekend; covering seven to ten miles per day was not unusual. Walking enables you see things that others speeding past in their cars or motorbikes do not. I took roll after roll of film, shooting rock bands in sweaty clubs between the South Coast and London and would then escape into the forests or wander the ancient paths of the Dorset coastline to photograph landscapes and old buildings. I enjoyed myself immensely but had little idea what the future held except that somehow photography and music would, I hoped, become a part of it.

David Hemmings in *Blow Up*

Blow-Up was released during an extraordinary period of cultural change. The music of the mid nineteen-sixties was new and exciting – bands like The Yardbirds were making waves, as was a band called The Soul Agents who became local heroes especially after they introduced a new singer called Rod Stewart. It was Rod Stewart himself who sneaked my cousin and myself into the gigs in our home town by the improbable assertion that we were roadies. One bouncer at a club said "What! In school uniforms?", "They don't earn

anything!" came the jocular response from Rod and the bouncer/doorman waved us through. I was determined to capture this atmosphere on film and reasoned that perhaps the equipment I desired might be more affordable if I worked in a camera shop.

My first job in the photographic world was at Hartle Photographic, a camera shop in Bournemouth. The proprietor was not only knowledgeable in the area of cameras and photography, but possessed an old-fashioned psyche that pursued with absolute conviction the concept of pre-Second World War methods of dealing with customers. He worked like a drill sergeant himself and put his staff through a similar regime, involving us in daily cleaning, dusting, and presentation, as well as making sure the clientele were treated with respect and given good service.

The hardest part of this apprenticeship for me was the daily quiz. He would walk up unannounced and say something like 'Focal plane shutter' – Definition?' If you had the slightest lag in responding with the correct answer it was off to the nearest photographic dictionary and you just went back and forth between study and reciting the answer until you had it right. These daily trials and tribulations went on for nearly a year, and for the rebel in me this was a hard bullet to bite. Added to this curmudgeonly attitude was his absolute rule of showing the customers impeccable manners and unflappable professionalism at all times. I cursed him each time I was kept late trying to locate the answer to some arcane photographic question when I would rather have been outside shooting pictures! Then about a year later, something unexpected happened. I had decided to move to London and went for a job interview at a photographic shop in W1. I was questioned intensively and my responses were immediate, confident and without hesitation; all the studying of photographic nomenclature, the drilling on the key elements of dealing with clients, and the training of how to provide a professional service had suddenly clicked into place. I realised that my old much-cursed boss had given me a precious gift. He had made me competent in a subject I had had little prior knowledge of, and as a result I knew I could pretty much deal with any query.

For the record my old boss's name was Mr. Hartle. He did have a first name but I would never have dreamed of using it (even behind his back) and even today I cannot bring myself to call him by his first name. Somehow it would not be right. It might break just the spell!



WELCOME ABOARD!

I would like to introduce you to our three newest members of staff. Ladies being first, allow me to introduce you to Tabitha Hardy.

RADAR LOVE

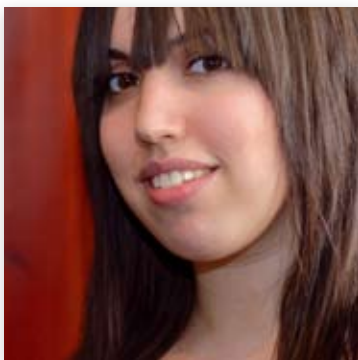


As well as being part of the professional sales team, Tabitha Hardy is the staff-training executive at *Grays of Westminster*. She worked for a number of years as a sales, promotion and marketing director which was followed, more recently, by several years as the executive director of an organisation

that dealt specifically with the needs of celebrities and artists throughout the United Kingdom. Within *Grays of Westminster* in her capacity as sales-training executive, Tabitha works with the setting up and organizing of in-house training for the staff. As such, she deals very closely with all aspects of training the sales team in a variety of areas including customer relations as well as the establishment of new members of staff in their jobs.

Why the title Radar Love? Some of you may recall the American television series *M*A*S*H*, a medical drama/black comedy. The show followed a team of doctors and support staff stationed at the 4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital in Korea during the Korean War. One of the show's main characters was Corporal Walter "Radar" O'Reilly. He was nicknamed Radar because of his unnerving ability to know about things before they happened. Tabitha has displayed this ability on numerous occasions seeming to know what you need about the same time as the thought enters your head. She is affectionately known as Radar here because time and again she has displayed this same unique ability.

A YOUNG FASHIONED GIRL



Natalie Burns has been working at *Grays of Westminster* for four years in many different capacities. She currently works as a member of the professional sales staff and although she is the youngest member of the sales team, she has had an avid interest in cameras and photography since her early teens. She studied

fashion and design for a number of years and continues to be inspired and intrigued by fashion and its province. This was perhaps a catalyst for her initial interest in photography and she found that understanding the mechanics and functions of it greatly assisted her with her own design work. However, cameras and photography have now become a source of major interest for her.

Natalie explains why she enjoys her job: "At *Grays of Westminster*, we all work tremendously well as a team and I enormously enjoy working in such a friendly and productive atmosphere."

THE ITALIAN'S JOB



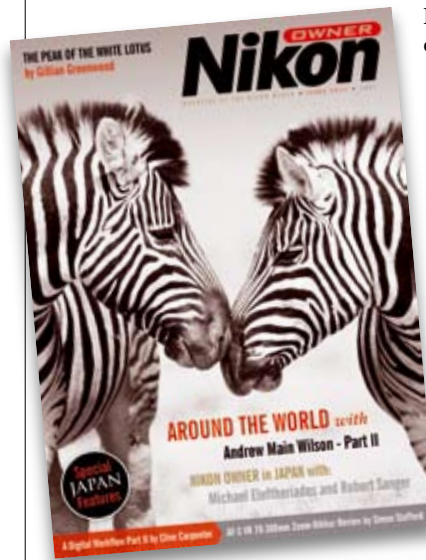
Our newest member of the sales staff is Stefano Barozzi. Stefano was born in Lecco, near Milan in Northern Italy. His interest and enthusiasm for photography began at the age of eighteen while studying photography as part of his degree course in Stage Design at the Belle Arti Academy in Milan, Italy.

After graduating from this course, he worked in Italy for the next ten years as an editor of visual effects for commercials in television. He has been living in London for the past eight months, and is currently studying street-fashion photography at the London College of Communication. One of his main interests is 'travel photography' and his work has been published in *V&S* magazine in Italy and recently in *Nikon Owner* magazine. He has travelled widely and taken photographs in many countries throughout the world, including Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Cuba, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Stefano's website: www.aperture32.com

Speaking of staff websites, Toni Kowal who runs our Science and Industry Department has just created his website: www.nipponcamera.com

NIKON OWNER MAGAZINE



If you have ever thought of taking out a subscription to *Nikon Owner* magazine then now is the time. Turn to page 15 for a very special gift for new subscribers only.

As the ripening summer moves onward I wish you a cornucopia of photographic opportunities and if we can assist you in anyway in this respect you have only to contact us. All of our staff stand ready to serve you. Until then Happy Trails...

Gray Levett

Definitions: 'Focal Plane Shutter: One of the two main types of shutter and used universally in 35mm SLR cameras, positioned behind the lens and slightly in front of the focal plane; the shutter consists of either cloth or metal blades. When the camera is fired a slit travels across the image either vertically or horizontally. The width and speed of the slit determines the duration of the exposure.

THE ABC & D OF THE D2Xs, D200 & D80



SIMON STAFFORD presents a comprehensive overview of these three best-selling digital SLRs.

The current line up of Nikon D-SLR cameras appears to provide a well-defined classification of models for the professional, advanced enthusiast and hobby photographer alike. However, the specification of each model provides features that may well appeal to each user group. Simon Stafford draws some comparisons between the D2Xs, D200, and D80.

I am often asked by many photographers which camera they should choose, and putting aside the price differential, why one might be chosen in preference to another. The answer, eventually, must be a decision made by the individual based on their own specific requirements, which only they can know.

It is important to remember that cameras are tools designed to help you interpret and record light; it is the skill of the photographer who uses them that determines, ultimately, the success of a photograph. In order to help you make an informed decision as to which model may best suit your requirements, the aim of this article is to highlight the major differences between the D2Xs, D200, and D80; it is not intended as a comparative review of their performance, nor as a place to reproduce the full specification of each camera as this is available, widely, elsewhere.

■ AVAILABLE ON THE D2Xs: MISSING FROM THE D200 & D80

- ▶ High-speed crop mode (HSC)
- ▶ Ambient light sensor to assist automatic white balance control for both ambient and flash illumination
- ▶ Multi-CAM 2000 autofocus sensor (the D200 and D80 use the Multi-CAM 1000 autofocus sensor).
- ▶ Secondary shutter release, command dials, and AF-ON button for shooting in the vertical (portrait) format within an integrated grip
- ▶ Interchangeable focusing screens. The camera supplied with B-type clear screen marked with AF sensor areas, there is an optional E-type screen marked with grid pattern
- ▶ Built-in voice memo recording feature
- ▶ Support of D-TTL flash exposure control with some earlier Nikon Speedlights (SB-28DX, DB-80DX and SB-50DX)



**SEE PAGE 12 FOR INFORMATION ON
SIMON STAFFORD'S MAGIC LANTERN GUIDES
ON THE D80 AND D200**

■ AVAILABLE ON THE D200 & D80: MISSING FROM THE D2Xs

- ▶ Built-in Speedlight flash unit that can operate as the master flash in multiple i-TTL wireless lighting configurations
- ▶ Optional, detachable battery pack grip
- ▶ Fixed focusing screen with user selectable viewfinder grid display (set from Custom Setting menu)
- ▶ Audible warning for self-timer activation and focus confirmation (in Single-servo AF with focus priority selected)

Note: Addition of the MB-D200 grip to the D200, or MB-D80 grip to the D80 camera body provides a secondary shutter release, command dials, and AF-ON button for shooting in the vertical (portrait) format.

■ AVAILABLE ON THE D2Xs & D200: MISSING FROM THE D80

- ▶ Ability to record uncompressed NEF Raw files
- ▶ Nikon's proven 1,005-pixel RGB sensor for metering ambient and flash exposure
- ▶ Metal alloy chassis
- ▶ Both models use CompactFlash memory cards; there is no option to use Secure Digital (SD) memory cards
- ▶ Group dynamic AF-area mode (the D200 also allows selection of focus areas; either 11 in normal mode, or 7 in wide mode)
- ▶ Exposure bracketing sequences of up to nine exposures
- ▶ Maximum shooting speed of five frames per second; the D2Xs is capable of eight frames per second in its High-speed Crop mode
- ▶ 1/8000 second top shutter speed and 1/250 second maximum flash sync speed, plus support for High-speed FP flash sync mode
- ▶ Mirror lock-up function to help reduce the effect of internal camera vibration due to reflex mirror movement
- ▶ 10-pin terminal for connecting the wide range of Nikon remote release / control devices, and a standard PC socket for connecting a flash unit
- ▶ Offers compatibility between Matrix metering and non-CPU type Nikkor lenses (requires lens focal length and maximum aperture value to be entered manually on camera).
- ▶ Support for both wireless transmitter (D2Xs – WT-2/2A, and D200 – WT-3/3A), and compatible GPS units

■ AVAILABLE ON THE D80:

- ▶ Ability to record compressed NEF Raw files only
- ▶ 420-pixel RGB sensor for metering ambient and flash exposure
- ▶ Body constructed from polycarbonate material
- ▶ Uses Secure Digital (SD) memory cards but does not support the SDHC version 2.00 specification to allow use of high capacity SD cards (i.e. over 2GB). There is no option to use CompactFlash memory cards.
- ▶ Only the central autofocus sensing area can be set to provide either normal, or wide coverage
- ▶ Auto-area AF mode that enables the camera to select which autofocus sensing area to use, without apply a closest subject priority
- ▶ Exposure bracketing sequences of either two, or three exposures
- ▶ Maximum shooting speed of three frames per second
- ▶ 1/4000 second top shutter speed and 1/200 second maximum flash sync speed, plus support for High-speed FP flash sync mode
- ▶ Dedicated terminal for the Nikon MC-DC1 remote release cable
- ▶ A variety of in-camera processing abilities, including the ability to apply adjustments to sharpening level and tone (contrast) curve response with images recorded in the black & white mode, plus in-camera virtual filtration to emulate black & white contrast control filters (red, orange, yellow, and green). The new Retouch menu introduces some limited virtual filtration for colour (81a, Skylight) plus the option to shift the colour balance in-camera increasing, or decreasing red, green blue and magenta, D-lighting to improve rendition of shadow and highlights, red-eye correction, in-camera conversion of colour images to black & white, or emulation of a sepia, or cyanotype toning, and in-camera image cropping





D2Xs – DX-format
23.6mm x 15.8mm

CMOS sensor with 12.4 million effective pixels (5.49 micron pixel pitch), which produces a full resolution of 4,288 x 2,828 pixels, and a reduced angle of view equivalent to 1.5x focal length of lenses used with 135-format 35mm film. Can also be set to use the central area of the sensor only with 6.87 million effective pixels in Hi-Speed Crop mode (produces a reduced angle of view equivalent to 2x focal length of 135-format lenses).

D200 & D80 – the two models share what is essentially the same Nikon DX-format 23.6mm x 15.8mm CCD sensor with 10.2 million effective pixels (6.05 micron pixel pitch), which produces a full resolution of 3,872 x 2,592 pixels and a reduced angle of view equivalent to 1.5x focal length of lenses used with 135-format 35mm film. The difference lies in the way the signal is moved off the sensor to the analogue to digital converter (ADC); the D200 uses a four-channel system to move the signal with sufficient speed to permit the camera's highest frame rate of 5 fps, whereas the more pedestrian D80 uses a two-channel system, as its shutter only cycles at a maximum rate of 3 fps.

■ COMPRESSED / UNCOMPRESSED NEF RAW

The D2Xs and D200 are capable of recording both uncompressed and compressed NEF Raw files; in the manuals to these two cameras it states in respect of compressed NEF Raw files: "Images are compressed by about 40-50% with little drop in quality". The D80 is only capable of recording compressed NEF Raw files.

For most intents and purposes you would be very hard-pressed to detect the difference between a photograph of a scene recorded using an uncompressed NEF Raw file, and a compressed NEF Raw file, even if the image was subjected to a gross level of enlargement. The only circumstances likely to reveal a noticeable difference between the two file types is if you apply a significant level of sharpening, or a major shift of contrast and/or colour during post-processing, in which case imaging artifacts may become more apparent with the compressed NEF Raw file, particularly in areas of continuous tone such as a clear blue sky.

■ SENSITIVITY

D2Xs has an ISO range of 100-800 in 1/3, 1/2 or 1 EV step increments, plus high gain settings of (Hi-0.3) at 1/3EV, (Hi-0.5) at 1/2EV, (Hi-0.7) at 2/3EV and (Hi-1) at 1EV above 800 (equivalent to ISO 1600), plus (Hi-2) at 2EV above 800 (equivalent to ISO 3200).

Both the D200 and D80 offer an identical range of sensitivity (ISO) settings from 100 to 1600 in 1/3, 1/2 or 1 EV step increments, plus three high-gain settings (Hi-0.3) at 1/3EV above 1600 (equivalent to ISO 2000) and (Hi-0.7) at 2/3EV above 1600 (equivalent to ISO 2500), and (Hi-1.0) at 1EV above 1600 (equivalent to ISO 3200). The sensitivity setting is displayed in the viewfinder of the D2Xs and D200 but not the D80.



■ "On price alone the D200 is exceptionally good value, offering as it does many of the functions and features found on the D2Xs, at about one third of the cost."

■ *“The D2Xs offers an exceptional build-quality and is sufficiently robust to withstand heavy daily use in the most demanding conditions, the D200 also has a very high build-quality, and is well-sealed against ingress of moisture and dust. In this respect the D80, whilst still robust, cannot be placed in the same class as the D2Xs, or D200 but then it was not designed to meet the same high build-quality.”*



■ METERING

The D2Xs and D200 use Nikon’s proven 1,005-pixel RGB sensor for metering ambient and flash exposure. The D80 uses the same 420-pixel sensor as the D50 camera, although the data processing algorithms have been updated and improved. All models support the same metering patterns: Nikon’s Matrix Metering II, plus centre-weighted and spot-metering. However, since the D80 detects less information compared with the more numerous photosites on the metering sensor of the D2Xs and D200, it is possible in certain extreme lighting situations, for example – scenes that contain a high-level of contrast, that the level of its exposure accuracy may be reduced.

■ SHUTTER / BUFFER

The D2Xs has a shutter unit that is tested to well over 150,000 cycles. It has a shutter lag of 37ms without mirror lock-up, just 2ms with mirror lock-up, and a mirror blackout time of 80ms (all times provided by Nikon Corporation). A top shutter speed of 1/8000th second, and maximum flash sync speed of 1/250th second. Auto FP High-Speed Sync is supported with either an SB-800, SB-600 or SB-R200 Speedlight, providing full TTL flash exposure control at shutter up to 1/8000th second.

An alternative shutter unit, which is tested to in excess of 100,000 cycles, is fitted in the D200; it has a shutter lag of 50ms without mirror lock-up, and a mirror blackout time of 105ms (times provided by Nikon Corporation). A top shutter speed of 1/8000th second, and maximum flash sync speed of 1/250th second. The D200 also supports Auto FP High-Speed Sync with either the SB-800, SB-600 or SB-R200 Speedlight, providing full TTL flash exposure control at shutter up to 1/8000th second.

The D80 uses yet another different shutter unit to the D2Xs and D200 models. It offers a shutter lag of 80ms without mirror lock-up, and a mirror blackout time of 105ms (times provided by Nikon Corporation). A top shutter speed of 1/4000th second, and maximum flash sync speed of 1/200th second. Again, the D80 supports the Auto FP High-Speed Sync mode, so full TTL flash exposure control is available at up to 1/4000th second, when used with either the SB-800, SB-600 or SB-R200.

At its full resolution the D2Xs has a maximum shooting rate of 5 frames per second (fps); the camera’s buffer memory has capacity for up to 22 full-resolution JPEG (Large / Fine), or 17 NEF Raw (uncompressed) files. In its Hi-Speed Crop mode, the camera can cycle at up to 8 fps, with a buffer capacity for 38 JPEG (Large / Fine), or 29 NEF (uncompressed) files. The buffer memory of the D200 allows the camera to sustain a shooting rate of 5 fps at its full-resolution for up to 37 JPEG (Large / Fine), or 22 NEF raw (uncompressed) files. The frame rate remains unaltered with addition of MB-D200 grip. The D80 does not have the same legs as its two larger siblings, so it is restricted to a maximum frame rate of 3 fps at its full resolution and the buffer memory permits shooting up to 23 JPEG (Large / Fine), or just 6 NEF Raw (uncompressed) files. Again, the frame rate remains unaltered with addition of MB-D80 grip.

■ VIEWFINDER

One distinct advantage of the D2Xs is that it shows approximately 100% coverage of the frame area, so there are no surprises with compositions having elements appear in them that were not visible in the viewfinder. The optical system of the viewfinder provides a magnification of 0.86x, and an eye-point from the viewfinder eyepiece of 19.9mm (-1m⁻¹).



The D200 and D80 use identical viewfinder optics that provide a rather more restricted view of approximately 95% coverage of the frame area, with a magnification of 0.94x, and an eye-point of 19.5mm (-1m-1). Both models use the same LCD mask system to display the focus screen markings and warning information. The only difference occurs when the Wide-area AF option is selected, as the focus sensing area bracket display changes accordingly (seven areas shown in the D200, only the central area shown in the D80).

■ AUTOFOCUS

The D2Xs uses the Nikon Multi-CAM2000 autofocus sensor that provides 11 autofocus sensing areas; three of these are cross-type sensors, 6 have a 'T' configuration, the other two are line-type sensors; the central nine sensing areas are arranged in a horizontal oblong, grid-shaped pattern and are sensitive to detail in both vertical and horizontal orientations, while the two outermost line-type sensors arranged on the central horizontal axis, to the left and right of the central grid, are only sensitive to detail in the same orientation as the long side of the frame (the same system is used in the D2Hs and F6 cameras). In Hi-Speed Crop mode, the two outer sensors are not used, regardless of the AF pattern or AF mode selected, as they fall outside the area of the CCD sensor used for imaging.

The AF systems of D200 and D80 cameras use the Multi-CAM1000 autofocus sensor (i.e. they both have half the number of sensing points as the D2Xs). The seven autofocus sensing areas of this sensor are arranged in a horizontally elongated diamond shaped pattern, and an electronic masking system is employed to further sub-divide the two sensing areas immediately to the left and right of the central sensing area into three autonomous areas, providing both cameras with a total of 11 individual focusing points. The D200 also allows the three focusing points in these two focus sensing areas to be combined, providing the user with the option of either an 11-area (Normal), or 7-area (Wide) AF coverage. The D80 only has an option to extend the area of coverage of its central autofocus sensing area. In both models only the central sensing area is a cross-type sensitive to detail in both vertical and horizontal orientations, the remaining sensing areas are line-types only, and therefore only sensitive to detail perpendicular to their orientation.

■ BATTERY / POWER

The D2Xs is powered by a single, rechargeable 11.1V, 2500mAh EN-EL4a Lithium-Ion battery; battery information screen

in the camera shows charge remaining in 1% increments, number of frames shot since the last charge, service life indicator and calibration status. The camera has an external power terminal for the EH-6 mains AC power adapter.

Both the D200 and D80 are powered by a single, rechargeable 7.4V, 1500mAh EN-EL3e Lithium-Ion battery; a battery information screen shows charge remaining in 1% increments, number of frames shot since the last charge, service life indicator and calibration status. The optional MB-D200 and MB-D80 both accept two EN-EL3e batteries, which doubles the shooting capacity; they can also accept six AA size batteries, as a short-term back-up option. The D200 has an external power terminal for the EH-6 mains AC power adapter, whilst the D80 uses the EH-5 mains AC adapter.

■ ACCESSORIES

Probably the most useful accessory for any of the three cameras discussed here is a spare battery: totally dependent on electrical power the last thing you will want to happen is be caught on location with one of these cameras and an exhausted battery! The D2Xs can only accept a single EN-EL4a battery in its integrated grip, so to extend its shooting capacity carrying a spare makes sense. Likewise the D200 and D80 can accept a single EN-EL3e battery, which due to its lower capacity compared with the EN-EL4a, and the fact that these two models generate almost as much data in each image file as the D2Xs, means that battery life is noticeably shorter. You have the option of carrying a spare, or adding the appropriate battery grip that can accommodate two EN-EL3e batteries or as a back-up six AA sized batteries.



Since all three models are fully compatible with the Nikon Creative Lighting System (CLS), including wireless, TTL control of multiple SB-800, SB-600, or SB-R200 Speedlights, adding one or more of these flash units will increase their potential significantly. The built-in Speedlight of the D200 and D80 can be used to act as a command unit for wireless flash control but the D2Xs will require either an SB-800 to act as the command unit, or the dedicated SU-800 wireless TTL flash commander unit.

Finally, to extract the most from any of these cameras you will want to shoot using the NEF Raw file format; for full compatibility in post-processing, Nikon's unique Nikon Capture NX software provides total control over image files (note Nikon Capture 4 does not support NEF Raw files from the D2Xs).

■ SUMMARY

The D2Xs offers an exceptional build-quality and is sufficiently robust to withstand heavy daily use in the most demanding conditions, the D200 also has a very high build-quality, and is well-sealed against ingress of moisture and dust. In this respect the D80, whilst still robust, cannot be placed in the same class as the D2Xs or D200 but then it was not designed to meet the same high build-quality.

The AF system of the D2Xs is significantly different from the one used in the D200 and D80; in low-light and low-contrast conditions or with rapidly moving subjects, its array of 3 cross-type, 6 T-type, and 2 line-type sensors will inevitably be able to outperform the other two models with their single cross-type and 10 line-type sensors. Allied to the AF performance is the Hi-speed crop mode available with the D2Xs only. Its narrower angle-of-view and increased frame rate could prove to be a major advantage over the D200 and D80 when photographing sport, action, and wildlife.

The D2Xs cannot compete with the D200 and D80 in terms of overall size, so if your requirement is for a small, lighter weight camera either of these two models will fit the bill, and choice will be determined by their respective specifications and feature-set. However, it is worth noting that with the MB-D200 attached, the D200 has a higher profile than the D2Xs!

The specification of the D2Xs sets it ahead of the other two models, although in some areas only by a whisker when compared with the D200. Plus both these models offer support for Matrix metering with non-CPU type lenses, so it is possible to use them with manual focus Nikkor lenses; the TTL metering system of the D80 does not function when a non-CPU lens is attached to the camera. That said, personally I do not believe the D200 makes an ideal choice as a back-up camera to the D2Xs as there are a number of significant differences, particularly the AF system and the HSC mode. Changing from one model to the other rapidly is not going to be conducive to intuitive camera control. If you are considering purchasing a D2Xs, along with a D200 as a back-up body, you may wish to consider getting a pair of either model rather than one of each to ensure continuity of handling.

The D200 and D80 share the same autofocus sensor (although the D80 has a restricted ability in terms of wide-area coverage), viewfinder optics, and monitor screen, and small details such as the modest difference in flash sync speed and the upper limit of the shutter speed range are unlikely to make much impact on any decision-making process. However, to some users, the inability of the D80 to record uncompressed NEF raw files, or to save images to a CompactFlash card, which would require them to invest in a set of SD cards or use accessories such as the ML-3 Infrared remote shutter release and WT-3 wireless transmitter, may be significant.

■ *“Ultimately, all three cameras are capable of producing outstanding results”*



The automatic white balance option of the D2Xs has the additional benefit of the ambient light sensor, which in mixed lighting conditions, including flash photography, may enable the camera to produce a more accurate white balance value than the D200, or D80, which lack this feature.

The 100% viewfinder image of the D2Xs will be a necessity for those photographers who need to compose with accuracy to the very edge of the frame. The restricted 95% view offered by the other two models may well catch users out, as unseen elements can encroach within the periphery of the image area.

The greater capacity of the EN-EL4a battery will probably result in a higher shooting capacity compared with either the D200 or D80 powered by a single EN-EL3e battery. However, use of the MB-D200 / MB-D80 battery grip, combined with a pair of EN-EL3e batteries will probably tip the balance back the other way.

On price alone the D200 is exceptionally good value, offering as it does many of the functions and features found on the D2Xs, at about one third of the cost. However, if you need the unique features of the latter there is only one choice. Equally the D80 offers a very competitive price point compared to the D200, and again offers many of its features and functions. That said, the professional aspirations of the D200 stand out clearly, its faster handling, speed of performance, particularly the frame rate and buffer capacity, and compatibility with a much wider range of Nikon accessories does set it apart from the D80, making it a more capable and adaptable tool.

Ultimately, all three cameras are capable of producing outstanding results (provided they are used with the highest quality lenses) but which model is right for you is, as ever, a question of selecting the right tool for the job! ■

■ *“The D2Xs cannot compete with the D200 and D80 in terms of overall size, so if your requirement is for a small, lighter weight camera either of these two models will fit the bill”*

D2Xs

D200

D80

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Although these two models have been discontinued this title continues to sell and sell, due no doubt to the demand from the second-hand market. The most recent edition of this highly popular book updates the author's guide to the Nikon D70 digital SLR and includes full details of the D70s. The book consists of over 230 pages packed with information and tips on how to get the most out of the D70 and D70s, and includes numerous pictures that Simon Stafford shot with the camera.

The book has proved to be extremely popular and has already reached its fourth re-printing. The first print run sold out in less than eight weeks! **£14.95 plus £3.05 postage & packing within the UK.**



MAGIC LANTERN GUIDE: NIKON AF SPEEDLIGHT SYSTEM BY SIMON STAFFORD

Nikon produces probably the most sophisticated portable flash system currently available. The core components, the SB-800, SB-600, and SB-R200 Speedlights support Nikon's Creative Lighting System, which offers features such as i-TTL flash exposure control, Advanced Wireless Lighting system, automatic FP High-speed flash synchronization, and Flash Value lock.

Regardless of whether you use a Nikon film or digital camera, this book shows you how to master not only the contemporary flash equipment and its operating modes but also covers, in detail, the use of other recent Nikon Speedlights. Providing in-depth advice and information on flash modes, flash terminology, and the varied features and functions of flash equipment not available in the manufacturer's manuals, this book helps to explain every facet of the modern Nikon Speedlight system. Comprising 288 pages, the book also encompasses a course on the basics of using flash, and describes a variety of specialized flash techniques, making it an essential reference for any photographer who uses flash. **£14.95 plus £3.05 postage & packing within the UK.**



MAGIC LANTERN GUIDE: NIKON D80 BY SIMON STAFFORD

The Nikon D80 has replaced the hugely successful Nikon D70/70s models. Sporting many of the features and functions found on the Nikon D200 it provides enthusiast photographers with a camera that has a high specification. Incorporating a modified version of the 10.2 mega-pixel Nikon DX-format CCD sensor, eleven point auto-focusing system, 3D Colour Matrix

metering II used in the D200, and full compatibility with the Nikon Speedlight Creative Lighting System, the D80 sets a new standard in its class.

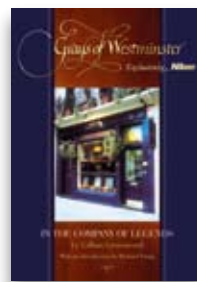
The book has 336 pages, and comes with a laminated quick reference card; packed with information explaining how to use the camera to its maximum potential, it contains plenty of hints and tips that you will not find in the manual, together with numerous pictures that the author has taken using the camera. **£14.95 plus £3.05 postage & packing within the UK.**



MAGIC LANTERN GUIDE: NIKON D200 BY SIMON STAFFORD

The Nikon D200 is the successor to the venerable D100 model. Packed with many of the features and functions found on the Nikon's 'flagship' digital SLR camera, the D200, it provides professionals and serious enthusiast photographers with a camera that has a very high specification. Incorporating a newly developed 10.2 mega-pixel Nikon DX-format CCD sensor, eleven point auto-focusing system, with Nikon's renowned 3D Colour Matrix metering II system, and full compatibility with the Nikon Speedlight Creative Lighting System, including support for wireless, TTL control of remote flash units using its built-in Speedlight, the D200 sets a new standard in its class.

This book is supplied with a laminated quick reference card, and is packed with information explaining how to use the camera to its maximum potential; containing plenty of hints and tips that you will not find in the manual, it includes pictures that the author has taken using the camera. **£14.95 plus £3.05 postage & packing within the UK.**



GRAYS OF WESTMINSTER: IN THE COMPANY OF LEGENDS BY GILLIAN GREENWOOD

Gillian Greenwood's superb, illustrated account of the history of *Grays of Westminster* and the history of the Nikon camera brand. The anecdotal style of the book provides an in-depth understanding of *Grays of Westminster*, telling the story of *Grays of Westminster's* development from its modest beginnings as a mail-order company to its present incarnation. **Normal Price £25.00, Special price £15.00! Hardcover: 144 pages, 103 illustrations, many in colour.**

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AN UPDATE *from* ANI KOWAL

– Grays of Westminster's Assistant Sales Director

The last six months has sped by. April was a landmark for me, two very happy years spent working at Grays of Westminster thus far!! As always I would like to thank all of our customers, those new to us and those who have faithfully stuck with us over the last 20 plus years! Your custom is much appreciated.

I would like to start by mentioning my favourite story of the last few months: Mission NOT Impossible...FM3A. It began in March 2007 with an email from Mr. & Mrs. Potter in Australia:



"Would you be able to help me at all with a Nikon FM3A silver body camera? We are desperately seeking one for our son's 21st birthday later this year, and so far have not been successful in locating one, especially here in Australia! We now know that they were discontinued some time ago, but have our fingers crossed that we may be able to turn one up. Your business was recommended by another U.K. retailer as being the best stocked Nikon shop in the U.K., and any information that you can give us will be gratefully received."

We happened to have a beautiful second-hand FM3A camera in mint condition, boxed and looking like new, so after a few emails to the Potter household, reassuring them that our guarantee would be valid in Australia, the camera was sold. A remarkably touching email was sent in return:

"Ani, you may never really understand the 'preciousness' of what you have been able to do for us with this camera...We have very much appreciated the extraordinary lengths that you have gone to in helping us in what was beginning to seem an impossible task. It is very heartening that such 'service' can still be found. I literally sent dozens of e-mails world-wide in our at times very frustrating quest for the FM3A, and really only had useful responses from two U.K. businesses: Paul Winter, who recommended Grays, and of course from you yourself. Enquiries via the Internet, and especially from afar, may perhaps be easily dismissed by some as a matter of (in)convenience, but ours was a desperate mission(!), and we are grateful to you for the successful outcome. We shall have an interesting tale to tell re the purchase of 'our' revered Nikon FM3A in December when our son opens his parcel!"

Here at Grays of Westminster customer service really is important to all of us and we strive to be as helpful as possible all of the time.

We have all settled into our bigger shop space and have also expanded in other ways over the last few months. The email newsletter/special offers update that I write every two weeks now gets sent out to thousands of our customers (if you wish to subscribe please email me ani@graysofwestminster.com with 'subscribe to newsletter' as the subject heading).

The second-hand department is constantly growing and our second-hand sales have also been rising steadily. All second-hand equipment from us comes with a full one-year guarantee and we try and keep stock that is in really beautiful condition. In addition to general Nikon equipment and SLR cameras, I believe we carry the largest stock of Nikon accessories in Europe and perhaps even beyond. From 10-pin remote release dust covers, LCD covers, filters and straps to lens hoods (black and grey finish, where appropriate), camera cases and battery holders – we try to have it all, and we usually do!

So please, do not hesitate to call us if you have any Nikon needs!

With my kindest regards,

Ani

Second-hand Department, Lower Ground Floor

Photograph by Michael Eleftheriades



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- Gemology
- Entomology¹
- Medicine (including Diagnostics, Cosmetic Surgery & Dentistry)

Individuals and their particular abilities are often at the forefront of a variety of services from design through to production and retail. To spearhead our expertise, our specialist Toni Kowal has been ideally placed to source and supply the finest Nikon equipment to the Forensic Imaging Industry, Cinematography, Higher Education and Research, Instrument

Manufacture etc., etc.. Toni Kowal commenced his training with a degree in Physics (under the professorship of Samuel Tolansky, the father of Multiple Beam Interferometry), went on to complete his postgraduate work in Applied Optics at Imperial College and then broadened his scope with a degree in Japanese at the School of Oriental and African studies.

If you have a particular optical application that Nikon lenses and/or cameras would address



Toni Kowal

then please contact Toni Kowal who would be delighted to discuss your requirements and solutions to your problems, as well as being able to bring a product and knowledge focus to a subject which few (if any) retailers or re-sellers of optical equipment anywhere else in the world could muster.

At *Grays of Westminster* we have employed a philosophy of stocking every available Nikon camera and accessory in order to provide an unrivalled service. We seek to source the unavailable through unique international connections. Currently we believe we have the largest range of new and second-hand manual focus Nikkor lenses for immediate delivery (these are particularly favoured by industrial/scientific users) and include the 8mm ultra-wide and the 105mm UV Nikkors made with Fluorspar elements – items almost impossible to source through other retail sources.



Toni Kowal is available by telephone on 020 7828 4925 or via email info@graysofwestminster.com Monday to Friday from 10.00 a.m. until 5.30 p.m..

¹Entomology: a branch of zoology that deals with insects



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28-200mm f/3.5-5.6D, 35-70mm f/2.8D 70-300mm f/4-5.6D ED, 80-200mm f/2.8D 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6D ED AF VR

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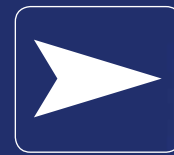
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