

## NEW AF-S LENSES

A while back we mentioned the arrival of the new AF-S Zoom Nikkor 80-200/2.8D IF-ED, to give it its full, if wordy, title. The lens has been with us since the end of last year and is proving very attractive. The lens itself is an entirely new optic and incorporates a great chunk of Nikon's optical technology.

The first part of the name, AF-S, tells us the lens has Nikon's exclusive Silent Wave motor. This is the second-generation motor if we overlook the motorised lenses made for the Nikon F3AF in the early eighties. The motor is an improvement on the original AF-I coreless design. This new motor uses a kind of piezo technology that leads to a very quiet and yet powerful design. The lack of any gear train helps maintain the hush.

Aside from the quietness the Silent Wave motor leads to rapid focusing. This is of some use for quick shots of stationary subjects but really comes into its own for focus tracking. Nikon long ago mastered the art of good focus tracking. The key is the powerful processors (computers) that work full time to monitor the progress of the subject, predict where it is



going and at what speed, and most importantly instruct the lens to ensure sharp shots.

Whilst the last paragraph might sound perfectly normal, Nikon make a point of mentioning it because not all AF systems work in this way. Some will stop calculating for a while when driving the lens to the newly calculated position for example, losing time and accuracy in the process.

So whilst a normal AF Nikkor will do an impressive job of focus tracking, the new Silent Wave lenses will unleash the camera's true capabilities. Using the AF-S 80-200 at 200mm (attached to the new F100) I found the camera would happily activate tracking

mode and follow a pedestrian at about sixty feet. This degree of responsiveness is new. If the camera has a hunch that it has a moving subject to follow it really needs a fast reaction from the lens to get confirmation it has made the right decision. If the lens cannot respond that quickly the camera might give up tracking.

The Silent Wave technology also has other advantages. The ability to switch to manual focus with no apparent delay, just by turning the ring, for example. And unlike some other makes the

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lens consumes no power during manual focusing. Naturally the lenses can be used manually on non-AF bodies.

Perhaps one of the strongest reasons to upgrade to this version of the 80-200/2.8 is the ability to maintain AF with a teleconverter. The TC-20E 2x converter will produce a useful 160-400/5.6 zoom. Focus speed is still impressive, as is the focus tracking. An alternative is the TC-14E 1.4x converter with just a one stop light-loss giving 112-280 at f/4. This opens up attractive possibilities for wildlife and sports photographers. I can see this lens and a 'doubler' (TC-20E) being the lens to reach for when the subject is too close to allow use of the AF-S 500/4.

Nikon have used an internal focus (IF) design which means the front and rear parts of the lens remain still whilst the central groups of elements move to shift the focus. The ED that follows the IF-designation shows Nikon have employed their renowned extra-low dispersion glass. Nikon pioneered this many years back to give improved sharpness on longer focal length lenses. Nikon have tucked five ED elements among the 80-200's 18 pieces of glass that make up its construction. Minimum focus distance of just 1.5 metres is possible with this system.

The D part of the lens designation means the lens is capable of relaying the focus distance data to a compatible camera body. Cameras such as the F60 and F5 use this data to varying degrees. The ambient light metering systems on the current AF models all use the data to modify their matrix metering decisions.

Cameras from the F70 up even use the data, in combination with tiny pre-

flashes, to provide a higher level of flash performance.

Clever touches like the virtually circular aperture to give a pleasant blur pattern are the icing on the cake. On a purely practical level the lens is extremely well put together. The super build and strong, yet lightweight, materials ensure the lens is tough. The neatly laid out focus lock buttons show Nikon have applied their excellent



knowledge of ergonomics. The detachable tripod attachment (about 130 grams) shows they are trying to keep everyone happy, whatever their preference.

Even the lens hood is a work of art. It is a large cut away design, scalloped to provide maximum shading without intruding on the picture area (vignetting). This hood is included by the way, as is the fitted lens case. There is even a dedicated hood (HN-34) for use with the 77mm circular polariser.

Speaking of 77mm filters gives me an opportunity to link to the next lens I wish to mention. The 80-200 has a close relative, the new AF-S 28-70/2.8D IF-ED, which also uses this filter size. So we have a trio of f/2.8 lenses, 20-

35/2.8D being the third, all of which employ the same filter size.

Yes, Nikon have employed their famous ED glass in a standard (focal length) zoom, for the first time. This lens is another Nikon masterpiece, like its big brother. The strong metal construction, ED elements (2 of 15), virtually circular aperture, dedicated cut-away lens hood, rotating zoom action are all modelled on the 80-200. Where it deviates is the use of an aspherical lens element at the front. This is a purely glass element, by the way, not a glass/plastic hybrid like some of the less expensive lenses.

The decision to put the Silent Wave motor in such a short focal length is an interesting one. I guess that having thrown all their other goodies at the lens Nikon thought they might as well go the whole hog. Certainly it will do the lens no harm. The increase in size and cost would be no barrier on such a high performance optic. And when Nikon mention the AF-S motors have up to twice the power and lens driving speed of the some competitive products we can assume they have their eye on you know who.

Physically the AF-S 28-70 is about the same diameter as the 80-200, just under 90mm but is about 120mm long instead of just over 200mm. The lenses weigh 935 grams and 1580 grams respectively. Whilst we have received and sold a few shipments of the AF-S 80-200/2.8 we have yet to see the AF-S 28-70/2.8 shipment at the time of writing. Price is pencilled in at £1400.00 inc. VAT. Please feel free to call, as this is a provisional figure.

*by Tony Munday*

# NEARLY NEW

The memorable Mr Harold Wilson made some fairly adventurous remarks about how the purchasing power of the British pound would always be just fine. This will be remembered as the "Pound in your Pocket" speech.

As a young man I found that my pocket was the very last place that my pound stayed for very long. In all fairness that was more due to my economic policies than Mr. Wilson's! Anyhow, the judgement of history following that famous utterance was that in practice, some years for purchases of overseas goods (Nikon of course included) seemed expensive while others represented the rare phenomenon of extra special value. Last year and the year before seemed about middle of the road, with Nikon purchasers offering good value for such a high quality product and the range of products steadily growing in the usual tantalising manner.

Fate, however, was preparing to deal a blow and for once it wasn't of the stuffed eelskin variety (a device containing sand used by Victorian villains to stun their victims). No, instead, the learned remarks about the strong pound, the weak yen, the wobbling Transylvanian rouble all meaning that life was about to (again!) lose another wee piece of its glister, the opposite was the case.

Hooray! For the Nikon

enthusiast prices were reducing, typically I suppose by 20% or so if you look at the list in this *Gazette*. Well, cancel my readership of the Cynics Society if you will, but I think this is just marvellous, cause for jubilation and a happy opportunity to expand our Nikon kits, our photographic activities and (here I risk being accused of Wilsonian extravagance of expression) our lives! Hey ho for hobbies!



This happy phenomenon on the matter of reduced Nikon new prices applies equally to the purchaser of secondhand items. I should mention that should you be unfamiliar with the Grays of Westminster approach to secondhand, an approximate alternative definition would be "nearly new". Very many of our customers lead busy lives, a majority not as professional photographers. The Nikon outfit is their treat, an entrance point to their recreation. That said, it is surprising how their best laid plans can go awry on occasion. The carefully selected quartet of fixed focal length lenses remain little used as circumstances

reveal zooms to be what is suitable. Or the increasing busyness of life means that the second camera body for black and white isn't used as planned. The lovely close up kit can't be spared time for due to this and that reason.

All this means that part exchange facilities must be offered to our customers as their Nikon needs change from time to time. All can benefit from the very high standards we apply to the quality of our secondhand goods. Naturally prices of these have come down in response to lowering new prices and now is an excellent time to reassess the cost of that long wished for project, the long lens for wildlife use or transport photography, the perfect lens for flowers, children, antiques. The choice is yours!

From a cost point of view there hasn't ever been a better time. Remember that the 1-year guarantee that we offer on our secondhand Nikon is what others offer on their new Nikon!

*by Nick Wynne*

# NEW WAVE LEATHERMAN

The response to my article in the last issue about our now stocking Leatherman multi-tools has been very enthusiastic with orders coming in every day! It seems I am not the only person to have realised how good they are as I am reliably informed that GQ magazine as well as one of the Sunday papers both carried articles in praise of these multi-purpose tools. It is therefore with delight that I can let you know that we have now added the latest tool from Leatherman, the Wave model, to our range.

The Wave represents the pinnacle of Leatherman's commitment to produce the best multi-purpose tool on the market. They seem to have thought of everything. The handles are perfectly smooth and more round making the Wave comfortable to hold and use. The locking clip-

point knife and serrated blades can be opened and closed without opening the tool with just one hand. The saw and file also open from the outside with a little help from your other hand.



They have packed in just about everything you could think of in

the way of useful tools. There are: wire cutters, hard wire cutters, standard pliers, needle nose pliers, clip-point knife blade, wood saw, diamond-coated file, serrated knife blade, Phillips screwdriver, large screwdriver, wire stripper, can/bottle opener, scissors, medium screwdriver, small screwdriver, extra-small screwdriver and a lanyard attachment. You get all these features yet the Wave only weighs 8 oz (224 grams). It is 4 inches (10 cm) long and is made of 100% stainless steel.

The Wave costs £95.00 and is now available from Grays of Westminster. Now that I have the pleasure of handling the Wave I am wondering how long I will hold out before adding it to my camera bag!

*by Gray Levett*

## GRAYS SECONDHAND NIKON STOCK

Every month Grays of Westminster publishes a double-page advert in Practical Photography magazine. This includes a huge range of secondhand Nikon stock of both contemporary and early Nikon equipment.

Each secondhand item is graded and described in detail along with its cosmetic condition. You will also find new Nikon listed along with our large range of books on the Nikon system.

secondhand stock list can be downloaded from our website at:

[www.graysofwestminster.co.uk](http://www.graysofwestminster.co.uk)



## GAZETTE BACK ISSUES SERVICE

We receive a large number of requests for back issues of the *Gazette*. We can supply all back issues at a cost of £1.50 post free in the UK.

Some early issues are out-of-print but we can supply high quality photocopies.

We will be happy to provide a quote for postage & packing costs to all parts of the world.

# NIKON F100

Whenever we get a new model in the range there is a brief period of confusion. It is like any unexpected guest arriving. We often start off by looking at the newcomer using the familiar cameras as a point of reference. Obviously the F5-like looks of the F100 make this an easy task. Then, when we have got the idea that they are similar under control, we can have a look at how they differ and build up the separate identities.

At the time of writing we encounter people in either of the first two phases. As yet the F100 has not been fully assimilated into the line-up. Although I have said it before, it bears repeating that this is no F90X replacement. That is not to say that the F100 would not be a logical step, more to stress the fact the F90X has

moved towards the more affordable end of the market and the F100 appears as the current £1000 Nikon.

What we do know is that there is no typical F100 buyer. Some come from other brands, some (the majority, currently) have F90X and take the F100 on as a replacement or second body, and we have F5 owners doing the same. Interestingly we are experiencing increased demand for new F90X and F5 at the same time. And the trade-ins are finding new homes rapidly too. I think spoilt for choice is a fair comment.

This feels like a repeat of late '94 when the F90X arrived to very favourable reception. The magazines are just starting to review the F100 so I feel we will

have to give them a while to acclimatise. The F100 does not fail to impress, but in use the camera presents clever little touches that the design team incorporated. It might be the placement of a control, like the duplicate command wheel on the MB-15 grip or the way the bar chart flashes in manual mode when we exceed the lower range of the light meter's capability. Long term use is the only way to gain this.

We have so far (mid-Feb) shifted the first four shipments. Having been advised to expect the strong demand to stay ahead of supply for the first year we are pleased with our supplies so far. Please contact us for a brochure or any information you require.

## BY SOME MIRACLE...

By some miracle we have managed to secure a strictly limited quantity of brand new Nikon F5 50th Anniversary cameras.

This fascinating model ceased production in 1998 almost as soon as it had begun. Nikon produced a total of 3000 units for world-wide distribution. The Japanese market received 2000 of these and the remainder were distributed throughout the rest of the world. No more will ever be produced and this is certain to go down as a classic in Nikon history

and something very much to be desired in any collection.

The timing of this models production celebrates 50 years of the company's involvement in cameras. It arrives in a special presentation box. The outer surfaces of the box are a mottled light grey. Opening it reveals a striking gold lining. The camera and a neck strap bearing a special inscription nestle in the padded interior. The top covers which form the shoulders of the camera are a special metallic colour with a slight bronze tinge. Grey is the

colour of the special BF-1A body cap and is also the colour used instead of the bright red flash fitted to the hand grip of the standard offering. The familiar titanium cover remains black; that said, it is a less matt black. Gone is the familiar Nikon logo, replaced with the former Nikon logo; the script is styled to match that of the first rangefinder camera the Nikon I of 1948. The discreet Nippon Kogaku triangle shape logo appears on the battery pack rear. Contact us immediately to avoid

# SALE PRICES

## BODIES

F5	£1,550.00
F100 + MB-15	£1,100.00
F100	£1,000.00
F90X Pro (Inc MB-10 Grip)	£725.00
F90X	£640.00
F70	£325.00
F70 + 35-80 AF-D	£370.00
F70 QD	£375.00
F60 + 35-80	£299.00
F60	£249.00
F50	£225.00
F50 QD	£275.00
F50 + 35-80 AF-D	£275.00
F50 QD + 35-80 AF-D	£320.00
F3	£1,125.00
F3 HP	£1,225.00
FM2 Chrome	£400.00
FM2 Black	£420.00
FM2/T few left	£949.00
FE10 & 35-70mm Kit	£229.00

## AUTO FOCUS LENSES

16mm f2.8 AF-D fisheye	£660.00
18mm f2.8 AF-D	£1,100.00
20mm f2.8 AF-D	£480.00
24mm f2.8 AF-D	£350.00
28mm f2.8 AF-D	£200.00
28mm f1.4 AF-D	£1,400.00
35mm f2 AF-D	£245.00
50mm f1.8 AF	£85.00
50mm f1.4 AF-D	£240.00
85mm f1.4 AF-D IF	£800.00
85mm f1.8 AF-D	£280.00
105mm f2 AF-D DC	£800.00
135mm f2 AF-D DC	£1,050.00
180mm f2.8 AF-D IF-ED	£620.00
300mm f4 AF	£950.00
AF-S 300mm f2.8D	£3,500.00
AF-S 400mm f2.8D	£6,400.00
AF-S 500mm f4D	£4,995.00
AF-S 600mm f4D	£6,900.00
60mm f2.8 AF-D Micro	£330.00
105mm f2.8 AF-D Micro	£660.00
200mm f4 AF-D Micro	£1,225.00

## AUTO FOCUS ZOOMS

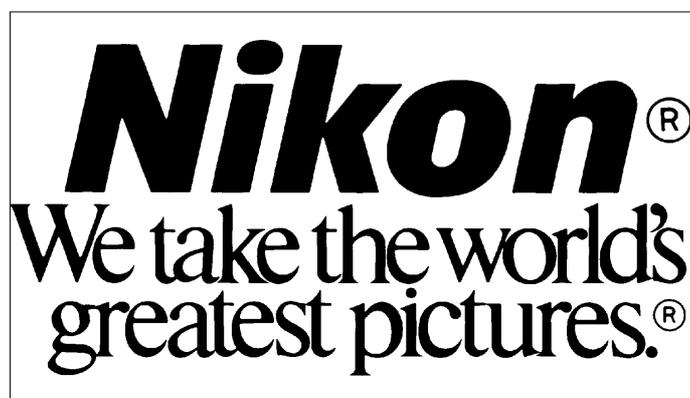
20-35mm f2.8 AF-D IF	£1,300.00
24-50mm f3.3-4.5 AF-D	£435.00
24-120mm f3.5-5.6 AF-D IF	£385.00
28-70mm f3.5-4.5 AF-D	£240.00
28-85mm f3.5-4.5 AF	£450.00
28-105 f3.5-4.5D IF	£299.00
28-200mm f3.5-5.6 AF-D IF	£400.00
35-70mm f2.8 AF-D	£500.00
35-80mm f4-5.6 AF-D	£135.00
35-105mm f3.5-4.5 AF-D IF	£270.00
35-135mm f3.5-4.5 AF	£475.00
70-180 f4-5.6D AF Micro	£710.00
70-210mm f4-5.6 AF-D	£340.00
70-300mm f4-.5.6D AF	£240.00
80-200mm f2.8 AF-DN	£760.00
AF-S 80-200mm f2.8D	£1,400.00

## COMPACTS

Zoom 600	£129.00
Zoom 800	£199.00
Zoom 310	£129.00
Zoom 310 QD	£199.00

## SPEEDLIGHTS

SB-28	£285.00
SB-28 plus SD-8A Kit	£340.00
SB-27	£190.00



# HEATHER ANGEL WORKSHOP

## JULY 1999

We are delighted to announce that the Heather Angel Workshops at beautiful Saint Hill Manor former home of best selling author L. Ron Hubbard will take place on 17th & 18th July 1999 and are now taking bookings.



A prolific author and educator, award-winning photographer Heather Angel has written 44 books and tutors workshops on both sides of the Atlantic. Heather has travelled the globe, from the poles to the tropics, to photograph plants and animals in their native habitats. At our workshop she will reveal some of the secrets that have helped her shoot thousands of extraordinary photographs, no matter how harsh the environment or how challenging the subject.

Mark Fury from Nikon UK along with Grays of Westminster staff will be on hand to demonstrate Nikon equipment and answer any of your technical enquiries regarding it. This popular feature of the workshop will enable you to handle all manner of Nikon equipment from the super telephoto lenses and all of the Micro-Nikkors to the fisheyes, wide angles and new zooms. We will also have available the flagship F5 and

the stunning new F100 camera as well as other models.

An innovation since last years successful workshops is that we will be offering a very special prize for the best photograph taken during the weekend's activities. More details on this point in a future issue.

Additionally, in response to popular demand, the subject of flash photography will be covered in a tutorial run by our Tony Munday at an appropriate stage on each day.

The workshop starts at 9.00am and runs until 5.00pm. Tickets including refreshment cost £125.00



each. We are limiting attendance to 35 people each day. Don't wait too long before reserving a place since many who attended last year have already booked for 1999. Incidentally, some people book tickets for friends or family. Please contact Gray Levett by telephone: 0171-828 4925, fax: 0171-976 5783 or by e-mail: [gray.levett@graysofwestminster.co.uk](mailto:gray.levett@graysofwestminster.co.uk) or by letter post.

## HOW TO ORDER

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Orders may be paid by card, postal order or cheque. Please make cheques payable to **Grays of Westminster.**



# *The Nikon Legend - Part LV*

## *by Gray Levett*

Several years ago we hosted a very successful Nikon Day in Churton Street. The staff of Nikon turned up weighed down with a huge range of equipment.

The camera that immediately attracted my attention was the NASA F3. This is a modified Nikon F3 for use in NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) space shuttle. Many of you will no doubt be aware that NASA have been using Nikon 35mm single lens reflex cameras for many years starting with a specially prepared Nikon F in 1971. It is a matter of proud record no Nikon has suffered structural damage from the intense vibration of blast off; nor have they jammed or had any

problem that affected their performance. Nikon was one of the few things on the Space Shuttle that didn't have a backup system!

The NASA F3 that Nikon brought along to the show was in fact a Dummy model used for displays and trade shows. As you know we always strive to bring to your attention the rare Nikon items.

At first glance the NASA F3 appeared to similar to the model you would purchase straight off the shelf. However, on closer inspection there are a vast number of differences. Starting off with the base of the permanently attached motor drive you can just see (in our photograph) the chrome quick mounting plate. There is no serial number nor is the "F3" model designation present. Nikon is engraved on the left hand side of the finder eyepiece at the rear of the camera rather than the right hand side. There is no leather covering on either the black painted camera body or the motor drive s there is on the earth bound models.

The motor drive's film counter goes up to "72". From what I understand NASA used a thin based film to ensure they would get as many shots as possible per load without having to resort to a bulk film back. Perhaps they had second thoughts on this as I have since seen a special 250 exposure back which was created for use with this model.

Other smaller differences that stand out are that all the fittings are black such as the PC sync socket, lens release button, shutter release and depth of field



preview control as well as the shutter speed dial and exposure compensation locks. The neck strap lugs have been omitted. The frame counter window is round and has glass covering offering a strong magnification of the frame numbers. The multiple exposure lever is missing and there is no shutter release lock.

Another difference is the special large power connector on the right hand side of the motor drive housing. There are of course many other differences between the NASA F3 and the normal model but unfortunately I do not have the camera to hand. I am relying on my memory and what information I have managed to unearth from the our archives.

I don't know if you will be able to read the designation around the matte-black lens in our photograph. It is 35mm f/1.4 Nikkor-N.C Auto! Nikon chose a pre-AI lens (note the scalloped focusing barrel) repainted it black and gave it serial no. 90000. The eagle eyed among you will have probably spotted that this lens has been converted it to AI (Automatic Aperture Indexing). One day I hope to have the NASA F3 on loan for a while so that you too can see what a wonderful camera it is.

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