

Fran's Helpful Hints

To Flash or not to Flash

Is that the question? Apologies to W.S.

Flash can be a very useful photographic tool. It can enhance an image, or equally, ruin it.

Many of today's Digital compact and SLR cameras have built-in electronic flash units making spontaneous shots in darkened situations possible.

However one needs to know when to use this "photo assist" device and when to turn it off.

Used *incorrectly*, flash can cause harsh shadows and flat overexposed areas. Sometimes an external flash unit, held to one side and used at the same time as the built in flash, can soften hard lines and shadows.

There are several types of flash, here are a couple.

- **External flash** linked to the camera with sync. Cord which fires when the shutter operates.
- **External flash** unit not linked with sync. cord but which operates in sync. with the shutter. This is called a "slave" unit
- **Ring flash**. This is a small flash which is fitted around the front of the lens, but it can give rather flat lighting. This light can be livened up by using a reflector board.

Bounced flash is very useful. One needs to be able to point the flash head towards a white ceiling or a large white photographic umbrella. This should light the image softly. Make sure that the reflector, ceiling or umbrella is **white** or there will be a colour cast on the image which will match the colour of the area where the flash was pointing. eg. green ceiling. = green image, In portraits green [or any other cast] skin tones do not look good.

Suggestion.

Flash can be used to freeze motion of a person or highlight an object during time exposure and can give stunning results.

Painting with light [using a torch] and a flash unit is great fun, so try it.

For best results, check your camera books for details on the flash unit on your equipment and **practice**



Some text edited from "The Photo" with thanks. Other text and images Fran Cross.