

ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 07-Jul-11 06:26 AM GMT

I have been hugely impressed by others' blogs, so thought I might add my own contribution

My aim is flying shots – must have lost contact with the stick! and hopefully will have wings spread to show clearly either upper or lower wings – or both

the quality of the resultant pics will be nothing like as sharp as any of the shots elsewhere on this site, as elucidated on my entry under 'flight shots', so dont expect scale-perfect masterpieces

I am keen to develop this line of attack – my latest idea is to shoot in fish-eye to properly show the environment of the butterfly as well s the insect any suggestions gratefully received

i start with some misery....

Jun 29th

walked locally and saw huge numbers of tortoisehells and meadow browns on blackberry, at side of potato field. Lovely evening, loads of butterflies as we left, crop sprayer seen on field

returned 48 hours later – lovely morning, sunny, hot, and not one butterfly to be seen!!!!

and none till you got at least 3 fields away

then plenty

very sobering!!!

June 2nd

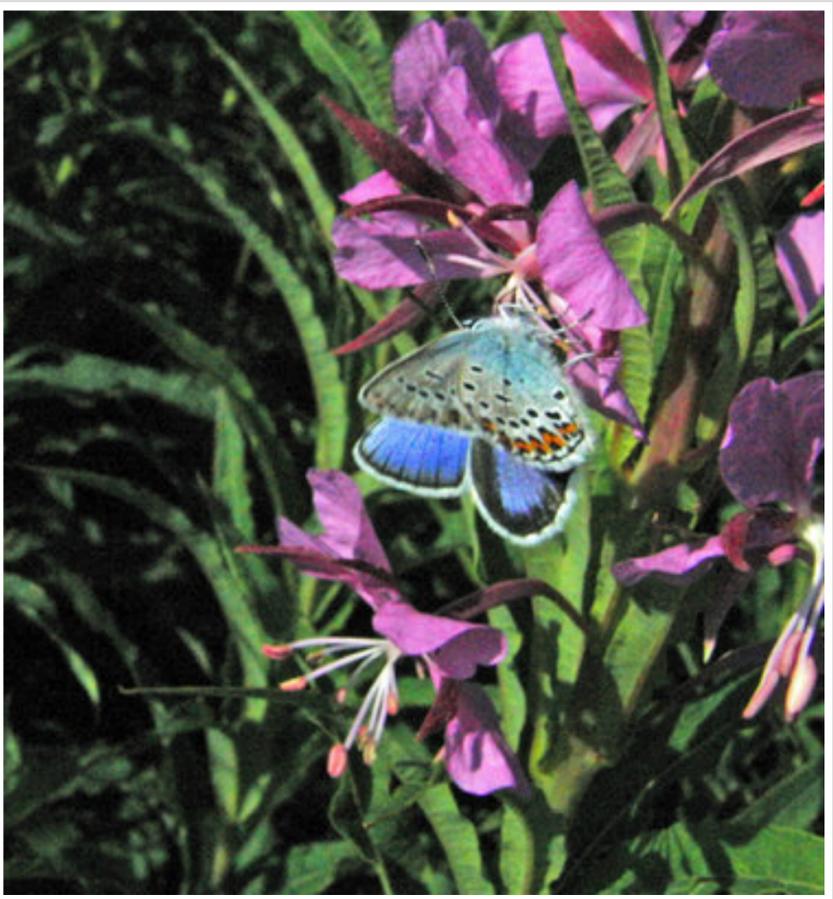
Prees heath first, for silver studded blues – loads of them, within yards of carpark. Gippos now exduded by 1m3 concrete blocks

last visited site on pushbikes 35 years ago – not much changed!

fired off a few hundred shots, before camera refused to go above 1/2000 sec. played with all buttons, got it working, fired off another 500, and then realised that picture size had been set at 700k not 7mega

so nice shots of comma and lovely fish-eyes of SS blues all low quality, dustbin fodder! – so had to spend another 20 mins catching shots again before coffee and a short drive to Whixall Moss after large Heaths





Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 07-Jul-11 07:47 PM GMT

Whixhall Moss

still sunny, loads of ringlets and meadow browns along the path to the moss
first large heath within 100 yards of start of moss, and good pic first blast
and then realise what a challenge they are, dropping for a couple of seconds only when its sunny
they linger when the clouds go in – but not much use for flight shots
option is to sit and wait focused and await sun to appear – and then refocus to accommodate the exposure change and hope
I did try chasing one away from the path – up to my waist in a second – managed to hold onto the tussocks to stop going up to my neck – dodgy area!
but very pretty and huge numbers of dragonflies – worth a longer visit
due to reluctance of LHs to pose, I tried pre-focusing at around 2 foot and tried to hit the trigger when I had one in the frame – un-successful, but a
technique worth experimenting with (which could be done with a DSLR for high quality flight pics
I tried this idea on my return treck, and got an interesting mating attempt by a ringlet on a meadow brown – half decent result, so will try this again on
mating pairs





Re: ronniethepoo

by Wurzel, 07-Jul-11 08:26 PM GMT

That final shot of Ringlet is great! I've been toying with the idea of buying a High Speed camcorder (you can get HD, hand held ones for about £220) and then trying to nick one screen shot of the flying butterfly 😊 – but as I'm still using my kit lens perhaps I'll wait until after I've got a macro lens.

Have a goodun
Wurzel

Re: ronniethepoo

by Zonda, 08-Jul-11 12:25 AM GMT

Each to his own! 😊

Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 08-Jul-11 05:05 AM GMT

[quote="Wurzel" I've been toying with the idea of buying a High Speed camcorder (you can get HD, hand held ones for about £220) and then trying to nick one screen shot of the flying butterfly 😊 – but as I'm still using my kit lens perhaps I'll wait until after I've got a macro lens.

hi wurzel

it's a nice idea – my camera does 3 mb pics – so @ 25 fps that's 75 mb per second

my HD runs at 1mb sec – so has to be much less detail

I guess compression comes into this – and this is where my tech knowledge fails

anyone know the real score??

at the end of the day the proof of the pudding is in the pics – I will try some HD stills and see what the result is

Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 09-Jul-11 01:37 AM GMT

"Zonda" wrote:

Each to his own! 😊

Couldnt agree more, Zonda. i think it great that there are so many possibilities other than the classic photograph on the stick. Moreover, for me there is much more than just the photography – having gone back to butterflies after 45 years of abstinence, I now have the facility of websites like this to lead me to the killer places, which now are now mostly havens isolated in the midst of spoilt countryside. But great to find these reserves, and ditto to have the technology that allows one to discover the likes of high speed flight – I particularly like the way the wings flex – something you never appreciate from stills. The other benefit of a website like this is the opportunity to converse with like-minded enthusiasts, and to learn from the experiences of others.

Re: ronniethepoo

by Philzoid, 09-Jul-11 01:57 AM GMT

I like your pictures Ronnie but whenever I've got them I've always considered them as the ones that got away (basically they've been accidents, but impressive none the less). I suppose when you've explored all the 'normal pose shots' the next logical challenge would be to photo them in their element, on the wing?



I particularly like this one as you can see the way the wings flex.

All my pictures are taken hand held with a little point and shoot digital camera (out of affordability not choice) I aspire, one day to get to Zonda, the foto meisters standard 🍷 Until then flight pictures will continue to be a novelty.

Re: ronniethepoo

by Michaeljf, 09-Jul-11 02:51 AM GMT

ronniethepoo,

I wouldn't think too much about using an HD camcorder. Remember we discussed this some time back when you first came on board? I have a good HD camcorder (Panasonic) and you can take still shots from any sequence if you load up the video to your computer. The still shots are quite nice, say about 1 to 2 megabyte, but the camcorder isn't good for 'filling' the butterfly in the screen. So although you can get 50 fps and a fast shutter from this camcorder, once you've chopped the image down to get a better size image of the butterfly the quality of size of image isn't that good (about 850 x 700 pixels, for example). *You* might get better results with a good camcorder, but I think what you're getting already is pretty good and probably a better path to stick with 😊

As an aside, the single image taken from a sequence would be quite good with a large object, say a picture of a whole person in sport etc. Still not as good as a good SLR, but then the best SLR's only take about 10 FPS and are expensive.

Michael

Re: ronniethepoo

by MikeOxon, 09-Jul-11 03:24 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

I've been toying with the idea of buying a High Speed camcorder

For several years, Casio have been producing a range of high-speed still cameras with frame rates up to 40 fps. They don't seem to do much marketing and I don't know anyone who has used one, but there is a review at <http://www.dpreview.com/reviews/q110sup.../page3.asp> A web search shows that there are several other Casio models, including quite small compacts, with the high speed feature.

Mike

Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 09-Jul-11 06:13 AM GMT

"Philzoid"I like your pictures Ronnie but whenever I've got them I've always considered them as the ones that got away (basically they've been accidents, but impressive none the less). I suppose when you've explored all the 'normal pose shots' the next logical challenge would be to photo them in their element, on the wing?[attachment=0 wrote: DSCF2395a Zoom.jpg[/attachment:2702xtmk]

Hi philzoid

you've lost me completely here!

I have purposely not explored all the 'pose' shots as they are exactly that – static shots which may be technically near-perfect, the challenge being the photographic perfection rather than the interest of the image (I presume) For example, this site features dozens of marsh frits that all look basically the same, with different backgrounds/flowers, and different degrees of photographic excellence (usually stunning, it must be said) every shot I do is specifically **non**-accidental – I take a sequence at 40 fps commencing at rest, with the aim of getting a nice picture in flight – I bin the stationary shots

the short-coming of this is that most butterflies adopt an 'escape' flight initially to get them out of the rough, before adopting a more-level flight pattern

the problem with this level flight is that by the time they have achieved this, their position is entirely unpredictable and with such high shutter speeds the wide aperture gives such a narrow depth of field that the chances of getting good focus are minimal – so most of my pics are in 'escape' mode

I usually get 3 or 4 frames per 'fly-away', and half-decent focus in perhaps 20% of fly-aways – of which maybe 20% have a useful wing position for sure the achievement of good focus is 'accidental' in that the flight trajectory is guessed, and my way of trying to achieve my goal is to take hundreds of frames in the hope that some will be reasonably in focus – but until someone comes up with a better way, I know no other my camera does actually take quite nice stick shots, at iso 100, 1/250 shutter speed and moderate to small aperture – it's just I choose to try something I find more challenging – as has been stated, each to his own! The problem with poor definition in these pics is a limitation of the technology, which I am trying to use up by doing silly things likeshooting at a focal length of 20mm. I have not resorted to syned flash as I wish to get 'natural' shots without that sort of faffing around

and back to your 'logical challenge', my pics are all of butterflies just so – in their element, on the wing!
or am I missing something?

Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 09-Jul-11 06:22 AM GMT

"Michaeljf" wrote:

ronniethepoo,

I wouldn't think too much about using an HD camcorder. Remember we discussed this some time back when you first came on board?

sure do – wasn't intending to go that route – just to try to get comparisons to demonstrate what I suspect – and you know – thanks for you contribution

Re: ronniethepoo

by Gibster, 09-Jul-11 06:49 AM GMT

ronniethepoo...I like your style, dude. I'm impressed. 😎

Re: ronniethepoo

by Piers, 09-Jul-11 07:29 AM GMT

What Gibster said. Your shots are very interesting indeed. Keep it up, Pooh.

Piers.

Re: ronniethepoo

by Michaeljf, 09-Jul-11 07:58 AM GMT

"MikeOxon" wrote:

For several years, Casio have been producing a range of high-speed still cameras with frame rates up to 40 fps. They don't seem to do much marketing and I don't know anyone who has used one. Mike

Well, I have. I've got a casio Exilim that takes shots at 40 fps. The Exilim pro1 (I think it was) was the only make that took 50 fps, but the other models stop shooting after 30fps even though they're shooting at 40fps (if that makes sense). I bought one because I also do golf photography.

The Exilim's are excellent in that although the shutter works slightly differently than an SLR (if indeed it is really a shutter on the exilim: you can turn the sound options down and it's actually silent, so there probably isn't a shutter as such). Your problem is that it isn't a macro, so no matter the fps, it's not going to be as good as a macro with less fps. Not surprisingly, money is one thing that makes a difference with SLR's and macros. Though I've seen some great shots on here with Canon bridge cameras (Guy Padfield) and 300mm lenses (Zonda, I think).

Beware of some all-in-ones that also state a lot of FPS but don't mention they don't have high shutter speed options – you need both. I can't remember the make but there was one line of cameras that sounded great for the FPS but you couldn't get above about 800th of a second shutter speed. The casio Exilims can go up to 4000th fps if I remember correctly (golf swings need about 2000FPS to stop a Driver clubhead at impact and a Hummingbird Hawkmoth shot needs a faster FPS, so I presume a flying butterfly also needs that sort of speed).

Sorry if that's a bit techy. 😊😂

Michael

Re: ronniethepoo

by celery, 09-Jul-11 09:02 AM GMT

It's a big thumbs up from me on these photos too – it's great to see something different 😊

Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 09-Jul-11 06:14 PM GMT

thanks for the kind comments

"Michaeljf" wrote:

Beware of some all-in-ones that also state a lot of FPS but don't mention they don't have high shutter speed options – you need both. I can't remember the make but there was one line of cameras that sounded great for the FPS but you couldn't get above about 800th of a second shutter speed. The casio Exilims can go up to 4000th fps if I remember correctly (golf swings need about 2000FPS to stop a Driver clubhead at impact and a Hummingbird Hawkmoth shot needs a faster FPS, so I presume a flying butterfly also needs that sort of speed).

Michael

these are shot on an exilim, Michael. their first model did 50 fps, the next 40 fps – and they have compacts now that have the same 'engine'. Mine goes up to 1/10,000 sec, you really need 3200th for most butterflies, 1/2500 for big floppy jobs, 4000th + for skippers

the other real issue is the pre-roll – without that, there's no way of getting the action with fast fliers – except for predictable behaviour, as FisheE mentioned previously

unless you wait prefocused over a flower (or hot-on female)

if you are chasing moving butties and shoot and hope, you then have a depth of field problem, which is where expensive lenses and high pixel counts will help,

5 fps seems to be max for DSLRs, (though I think there is a sony that does 7) so you would need plenty of butterflies and patience – as detailed above, I usually manage 4 or 5 frames with the butterfly in it, so at 40 fps that is 1/8th second – with luck you might get just one frame per fly-past with 5fps but if you get it right, with a quality macro lens and 10 megapixels, the quality should blow my pics away!

someone please try it, and if you can get it right I will have to invest in a new camera!!

Re: ronniethepoo

by Philzoid, 09-Jul-11 07:15 PM GMT

"ronniethepoo" wrote:

Hi philzoid

you've lost me completely here!

I have purposely not explored all the 'pose' shots as they are exactly that – static shots which may be technically near-perfect, the challenge being the photographic perfection rather than the interest of the image (I presume)

Hi Ronniethepoo I apologise for mis-understanding your purpose 😞 For me, a non-technical novice (and perhaps for others like myself who may be reading this) the challenge *is* to get good "on the Stick" pictures. In the process of doing this we may or may not graduate onto taking pictures such as butterflies on the wing. In the meantime our quests for the former do get occasional 'accidents' which are nonetheless interesting if not deliberate 😊 Perhaps a new thread under identification of the "ones that got away I.D please"?

Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 10-Jul-11 02:05 AM GMT

"Philzoid" wrote:

"ronniethepoo" wrote:

Hi philzoid

you've lost me completely here!

I have purposely not explored all the 'pose' shots as they are exactly that – static shots which may be technically near-perfect, the challenge being the photographic perfection rather than the interest of the image (I presume)

Hi Ronniethepoo I apologise for mis-understanding your purpose 😞 For me, a non-technical novice (and perhaps for others like myself who may be reading this) the challenge *is* to get good "on the Stick" pictures. ?

no problems philzoid

Firstly I'm no technical expert myself – I just enjoy playing, nor do I belittle the stick shots – as I've said, some are quite brilliant – and beyond my equipment and expertise

it's just i've chosen to go in a different direction which offers me more interest

the biggest key to my successes (as I see them) is finding places heaving with butterflies – which is where i so appreciate what this website offers and having an exilim camera which has the functions i need – my main photographic interest was leaping fish shots – (I am a fisherman), but then i realised what i could get with the camera, and went back to my childhood passion

the exilim is only a point and shoot – it just needs a few settings en route

Re: ronniethepoo

by Michaeljf, 10-Jul-11 05:05 AM GMT

"ronniethepoo" wrote:

5 fps seems to be max for DSLRs, (though I think there is a sony that does 7)

Hi ronniethepoo (!)

The number of FPS in DSLR's is unfortunately linked to price. I use Canon cameras, and I think the 7D body that I have shoots 8 or 8.5FPS but that body is around £600 plus. The EOS 1D mark III which I used to have (a beautiful camera, but a bit bulky) was the one that shot 10FPS but this cost just under £3,000 at the time (it took me a while to save up for that! 😞). I'm intrigued by the fact you're using the Exilim and really out to try mine out sometime. Interesting also what you say about the speed needed – it was in excess of what I expected, and just shows that you have to adapt to the learning curve for your 'specialised' shots. I've always thought that the Exilim cameras were great value and they do take good single shots. 😊 If you're looking at Cameras on Amazon normally you can see the 'Specs' page which often has the FPS. As expected the £500 DSLR bodies normally are between 2.5–and 5FPS as standard.

I understand completely about the depth-of-field problem. I do think I'd have to take a lot of hit-and-miss shots before getting an DSLR photo that improves on yours. 😊

Michael

Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 14-Jul-11 04:52 AM GMT

michael

my exilim cost 500 new, but as they got longer in the tooth they dropped to only £180!!! – so just £5 per fps!!!

the speed issue is intriguing, as the end goal is definition

i can only go by my own results – my next project is to go through my 'best' shots and see what the common denominator is, as I am not sure about the interplay between pixel counts, lens sharpness at different focal lengths, and iso settings – I'm sure ylu will be able to get away with a slower shot with a higher quality lens, tho I cant justify or explain that

I will add a pic to todays diary to show what I get when I allow speed to drop (due to lack of sun!) – a common blue at 1/2000

so todays diary!!

currently on the isle of coll in the inner hebrides

lovely weather (see the sunshine figure for tیره0

big surprise yesterday – large heaths!! – but no camera

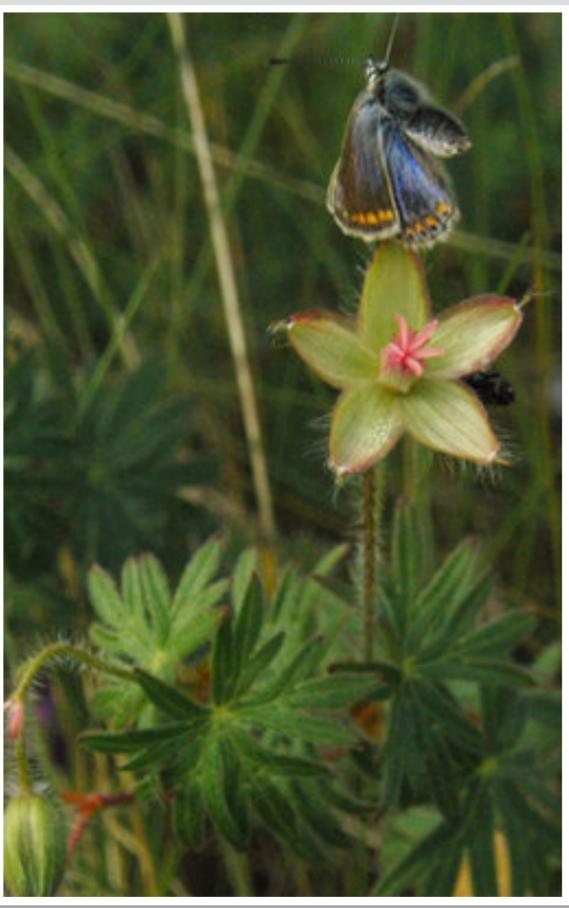
no problem, great forecast today – but today arrived with greater winds – and no large heaths

anyway, lovely walk across the machair – which is alkaline grassland created by the calcium carbonate from blown shellsand (LH's on the peat bogs farther north!!)

loads of common blues, and quite a few meadow browns but not much else aprt from one small heath – species list is sparse here!

occasional LH's and whites passed on the road

tried to get a blue with a fish-eye shot to show the fantabulous flower meadows, bloody cranesbill, vetches, pyramidal orchids, clovers and much more but no joy – but I include a machair shot without a butterfly just to illustrate



female common blue



male common blue taking off



bloody cranesbill, pyramidal orchid : machair in full bloom



only 1/2000 sec

Re: ronniethepoo

by ronniethepoo, 16-Jul-11 04:18 PM GMT

"Michaeljf" wrote:

"ronniethepoo" wrote:

I do think I'd have to take a lot of hit-and-miss shots before getting an DSLR photo that improves on yours.

Michael

Michael

my technique i hugely hit and miss – the main thing is to have loads of butties and to keep shooting – it is really a chance game the way I play it
I have looked to try and find my picture data, but cant find it once on the computer – can anyone help?
one thing i have noticed is that some of the nicer shots are slightly underexposed – which i think is a function of picture aesthetics,(it shows up the iridescence better) and the fact that I am probably squeezing a bit extra out of the exposure, be it speed or narrower aperture
your comment about exilim stills got me thinking – and I'm even more confused now
look at the pic (1/2000) that preceded the blurred flying blue – not DSLR quality but OK – if I could get this clarity on my flight shots, I would be happy – but I cant
and this was taken at a (slow) flight exposure! – so I cant blame my picture quaity on that
my only other thought here is that when they are flying, they are very much 3 dimensional, whereas we tend to take still shots either open winged or closed wings – in which case the whole butterfly is mostly perpendicular to the point of aim
and easier to get more of the object within the depth of field
do get shooting with your exilim – it is great fun, and would be good to compare notes
and do try the "pre-focus mating butterfly technique" with your DSLR – I would love to see what can be achieved



Re: ronniethepoo

by Michaeljf, 17-Jul-11 02:21 AM GMT

"ronniethepoo" wrote:

my only other thought here is that when they are flying, they are very much 3 dimensional, whereas we tend to take still shots either open winged or closed wings – in which case the whole butterfly is mostly perpendicular to the point of aim and easier to get more of the object within the depth of field

Hi Ronniethepoo (can we have something shorter to name you?!) 😊

I've no doubt you're right – this is part of the reason why it is easier to get a butterfly in good focus across the wings if their wings are open and you are looking straight at the butterfly – the wings are all in the same 'plane of view'. The other problem is that once the butterflies are flying they are often going in and out of a very small plane of focus. I would agree about better shots being underexposed – of which you are more likely to do when shooting at fast speeds. This also depends on the camera – not all cameras give the same results, even if you are using the same make. I have a Canon 50D and a Canon 7D and the Canon 7 D needs to be set at one stop underexposed as standard, the 50D at 'normal' light levels. As soon as I'm photographing a dark butterfly I normally stop down again unless the butterfly is on very light ground, in which case the camera will always 'underexpose' more on it's semi-manual settings (i.e. automatic or 'program' mode). This is part of the reason why folks sometimes get better butterfly shots when the butterfly is on stony ground etc, because the camera is automatically shooting more 'underexposed' than normal.

Regarding the Exilim details after taking the shot, put your mouse over an uploaded photograph, right click on the mouse and you will see 'Properties' – this will have three options – General / Security / Details – and under the 'details' tag you should have the shooting information (you may have to scroll down) .

Michael