East SIG Report – July 2016

The July meeting opened with **Frank Maher** welcomed members, followed by Q&A with **George Skarbek**.

Q: While travelling I use a portable hard drive to save all my photos. When I looked at the drive back on my desktop PC, there are no files shown. When I checked properties it showed zero bytes. Is there anything I can do to recover the photos?

A: The cause could be that the hard drive is dead, there's been a disk crash or possibly a failure in the boot sector and directory. If the directory's gone then you won't be able to find anything. Firstly I'd suggest you try doing a disk repair. Do this in file explorer by right clicking on the faulty drive and select Properties. Select the Tools tab and click on "Error Checking".

However your best bet is likely to be the recovery tools found on Hiren's boot disk. (http://www.hirensbootcd.org/). Download the ISO file and burn it to CD. Boot your PC from the CD (set the BIOS to boot from the CD if the CD does not boot first) and try the Recovery Tools. If the data is very important there are services available that will recover lost data on hard drives but these are very expensive.

Q: I need to free up space on my hard disk so I can add more files. What should I do?

A: Firstly empty the recycle bin as this will help to free up space. Before you do this you should select "Show Hidden files" as these may also be in the recycle bin and would not normally be deleted. Following that will you need to delve deeper using "Disk Clean-up". In file explorer select the drive, right click and select Properties, then under the General tab click on "Disk Clean-up".

Q: When a friend did a recent Windows 10 upgrade, one of his photos has been used as a screen saver. How did this happen?

A: You can select images for your Desktop wallpaper via the Personalize menu. To find the location of Windows wallpaper images, open File Explorer and navigate to C:\Windows\Web. There, you'll find separate folders labelled Wallpaper and Screen.
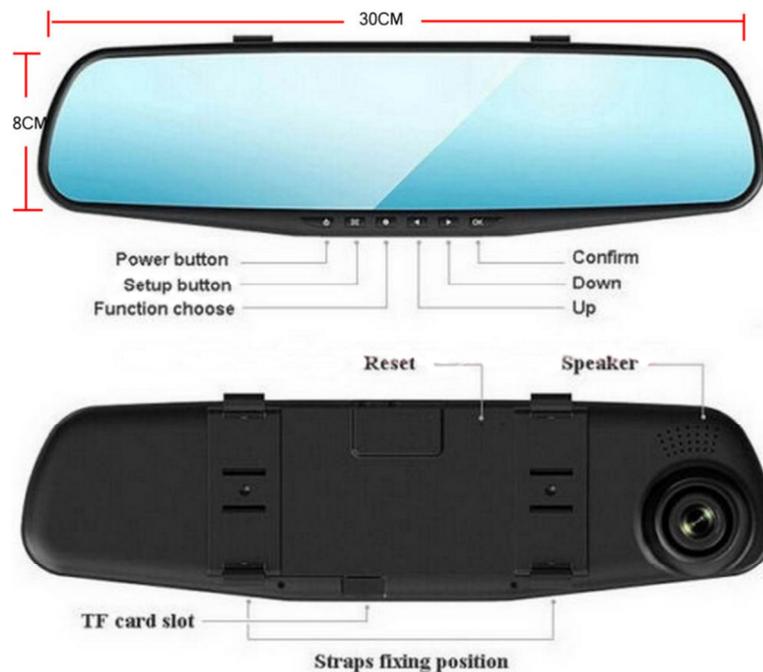
Q: I have a lot of negatives that I wish to convert to prints (Positives). It seems to be a very laborious process using the Negative or Invert functions of a number of programs I've tried. These programs only partly do the job as you then have to spend a lot of time readjusting settings to get the correct colours. I've used the Invert function on negatives that have a brown tint and the positives end up blueish in colour. Is there any way, system or program that will convert negatives to positives perhaps with only a few final minor adjustments?

A: There would be a number of programs that should be able to do this. GIMP which will be demonstrated latter should be able to do what you want. Scanning software usually is able to scan a negative and convert it to a positive. Photoshop Elements and PaintDotNet will also invert an image. If you are using Photoshop, Nik add-ons give phenomenal results. (Google now call this add-on the Nik Collection https://www.google.com/nikcollection/). Nik add-ons used to cost around $450, Google then bought the program and charged less than half that cost. In the last few months Google are offering it for free. Nik add-ons can be used with Photoshop Elements 9 onwards and a number of other programs so check the website above. There are numerous pre-sets that can be set once you determine the required adjustments. I recommend anyone scanning negatives spend 10 seconds cleaning the negatives first before scanning, rather than 10 minutes of editing the image afterwards.

[Audience Member] The multimedia SIG purchased a Kaiser Baas Photo & Negative scanner that does an excellent job of scanning negatives to positives. This is available for loan to SIG members.

Next up **Dave Botherway** played a short video on the upcoming census to be held on the 9th August. It is anticipated that 65% of records will be completed online for this census.

Dave then demonstrated a dual camera dashcam he recently purchased for his vehicle. The dashcam features both front and rear cameras, the latter feature the reason for the purchase. The forward facing camera is easily mounted as it clips over the car's rear vision mirror. The dashcam mirror is wider than a cars normal rear vision mirror so as not to obscure the forward facing camera lens located at one end. (See Image) This is a much neater arrangement visually than dashcams that use suction caps that attach to the windscreen.

When the vehicle is started the cameras image is displayed on the right side of the mirror. The display only lasts for 30 second to ensure the camera is recording and aimed correctly. After the 30 seconds the display then disappears from view to give a useable full width rear vision mirror. Dave found that on his car the extra wide mirror blocked movement of the vehicles sun visor.

The rear facing camera operates in a similar manner to the forward facing camera and is of lower resolution. Again the display only lasts for 30 second which limits the time one has to reverse a vehicle. Dave has found a work around for this. Videos from the dashcam although not sharp would be good enough in the event of an accident.

Features of the dashcam are: forward and rear facing cameras, 1080p video recording (front camera only), 170 degree field of view, 4:3 screen display, loop recording, G-sensor (which retains videos when sudden jolts occur) and the ability to lock any videos one may wish to retain.

Prices on the internet varied considerably for what appeared to be the same model as the one purchased. Dave's No Name model A-33B ranged from $286 (America) to $60 (eBay).

After the break Barry Horn gave a presentation on the graphics program GIMP version 2.8. GIMP or GNU Image Manipulation Program is a free program that has most of the functions of Photoshop Elements, including Layers. Rather than showcase the various features available, Barry concentrated on one of the most useful tool, "The Clone Tool". Barry uses this tool for serious photo editing and for light hearted photo editing for a local newsletter he prepares. Barry demonstrated the use of the different size and types of brushes available and the various alignment techniques of the Clone Tool. The GIMP interface differs from Photoshop but once familiar with it, users will find GIMP is a very useful and powerful free photo editing program.

Neil Muller