



Viewpoint Kevin Meredith

Drone photography is becoming popular with enthusiast photographers, but is it a disaster waiting to happen?

If you want the creative edge over other photographers, having a different viewpoint is a massive advantage – which is why drone photography is very tempting. Although still in their infancy, drones have recently dropped in price and so are affordable to hobbyists. A DJI Phantom, for example, can be bought for less than £400. However, if you are flying a drone for fun, be careful, as it might be easier than you think to fall foul of the law. In April, the first person in the UK was prosecuted for dangerous and illegal flying of an unmanned aircraft, and incurred a fine and court fees of £4,300. Suddenly, £400 for a drone is not so cheap.

As an amateur/hobbyist photographer, it's quite common to be offered occasional work on the side – it all helps to supplement what can be a very expensive pastime. If you're a budding drone photographer, you're probably going to be offered extra jobs quite regularly, as people want their event or property documented from unique viewpoints. But be warned: as soon as you accept money for your drone photos or footage, it becomes a commercial venture. If you are using a drone for commercial purposes, you will need a Basic National UAS Certificate and permission from the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) in addition to public liability insurance. Without all this, you could get into legal hot water.

'As soon as you accept money for your drone photos it becomes a commercial venture'

Maybe I'm paranoid, but when I see drones flying over crowds at events, I just imagine what it would feel like to have one drop on my head from 50ft [15m] or feel the rotor blades hit my face as it flies out of control. I know this is not exactly scientific data, but I did a search for 'drone crash' on YouTube and it came back with 396,000 videos. More worryingly, when I started to type 'drone crash', one of the predictive search results was 'drone crashes into crowd'. The majority of UK drone videos seem to be breaking the CAA's rules that state drones should not come within 150m of large crowds or 50m from a person or building.

It will be interesting to see what happens with drones and the law because, as they become cheaper, more people will use them for work and leisure. On the flip side, though, they might eventually shrink to the size of an insect so safety won't be a concern.

Keep watching the skies.

Watch out for a feature in a future issue of AP dealing with the ethics and legalities of drone photography

Reaching new heights: drone photography is becoming increasingly popular around Britain



Kevin Meredith is an obsessive documentary photographer and author of several instructional books. He has a passion for passing on his knowledge and regularly runs workshops in Brighton and sometimes further afield

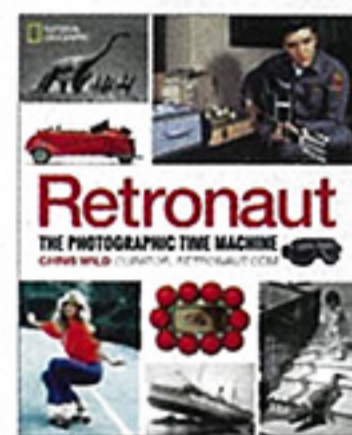
New Books

The latest and best books from the world of photography. By Oliver Atwell



Retronaut: The Photographic Time Machine

by Chris Wild, National Geographic, £20, hardback, 352 pages, ISBN 978-1-4261-383-0



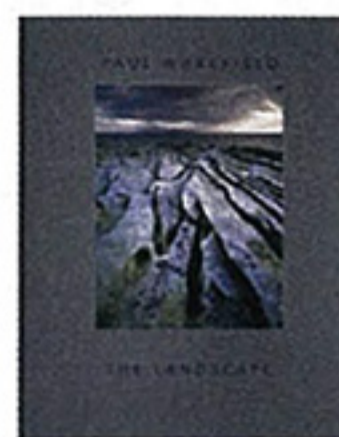
RETRONAUT began life as a staggeringly weird yet engaging blog looking at pictures from the past. That may not sound so appealing, but these were images that seemed to suggest a version of the present that has spun out of all control. Pictures of celebrities

before they found fame sat next to the past's own predictions of what our present would look like. Needless to say, those predictions were a little off-kilter.

Kitsch, weird and frightening all sit together as one happy family, often in the same image. This volume, *Retronaut: The Photographic Time Machine*, brings together a variety of the best photographs from the blog and goes some way to giving you a feel for the site. It's perhaps not as exciting as the blog – one of the big appeals is logging on each day and seeing what's new – but it's still a great volume and well worth a look. ★★★★★

The Landscape

by Paul Wakefield, Envisage Books, £48.50, hardback, 128 pages, ISBN 978-0-95647-649-4



SHORELINES, rockscapes, drylands, woodlands and snow are all subjects we often see within the genre of landscape photography, but it takes a real talent to make these subjects appear as if they are locations that we have never laid eyes on.

Paul Wakefield's images are never less than beautiful. This is thanks largely to his use of a large-format sheet-film camera, which gives his photographs a near-limitless depth of field. Of course, the detail is exceptional and the colours that inhabit his locations swim on the page. It also helps that the book is beautifully produced, with everything from the front cover to the quality of paper top dollar. If you're looking for some inspiration in your own landscape images, there are very few photographers better than this.

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