MINOX MEMO

The Journal Of The Minox Historical Society

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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2, SERIES 2 SPRING / 2002

Through a Chinese Arch – LX / Minocolor Pro 100 -- Peter D. Zimmerman

A Letter From Your President

Peter D. Zimmerman
President

Dear Fellow Minoxers:

This is the President's Letter that should have appeared in the first issue of the Memo and would have if September 11 hadn't happened, and if my office at the US Senate hadn't been evacuated a few weeks later because of the anthrax contamination in the next building (which is physically joined to my own). The horrible incidents of last fall had me putting in far too long days with much too little energy to write.

I am delighted to be the first president of MHS, and am even happier that so many Minoxers have gathered together to celebrate the cameras we love, the company that makes them, and the grand old engineer who invented the first Minox more than 60 years ago in a vanished world. The capabilities of the Minox 8x11 cameras are legendary, whether you're thinking of the marvelous ability to capture an image on a tiny scrap of film and then enlarge it to fill a wall, or whether you have in mind the more nefarious image of Minox as a spy

camera in the hands of Oleg Penkovskiy, John Walker, or Helen MacInnes's heroine in her novel North from Rome.

It is surprising that so long after it was first produced today's subminiature Minoxes still bear more than a passing resemblance to the Ur-Minox first built in Estonia or the Riga Minox produced in Valsts Elektrotekiska Fabrik in Latvia. It is proof of the true genius of Walter Zapp's engineering.

We all know that the modern Minox company has seen its ups and downs, a couple of bankruptcies, some historic poor management, and a corporate life in danger for the last 20 years or more. But no longer. The new incarnation of the firm in Wetzlar, Germany, is run by camera people, not tobacconists, and is led by Thorsten Kortemeier, a man with skills in marketing and design as well. I think we can look forward to many more years of exciting Minox products which members of the MHS will use, study, and chronicle for the Memo.

And speaking of new products, I am extremely proud to announce the special edition MHS version of the classic Minox EC, the lightest Minox ever made. Minox GmbH has agreed to make a special production run of 100 ECs in honor of MHS. The new camera will be engraved with the MHS "maus" logo to commemorate the founding of the Society. We are still in the process of negotiating with Minox the exact package we will be able to offer, but I can tell you it will be splendid – and we also expect that it will be quite affordable. I'll have final word for you by the next issue of the Memo; if we finish up the discussions sooner, there will be a special Minox Flash.

This is Minox GmbH's first special edition camera dedicated specifically to a Minox club. As such, it's an instant collectible, but we chose the camera and design because the EC is such a great picture taker.

And that, I think, is enough breathtaking news from the MHS president's desk for this issue.

Good Minoxing!

In this Minox Memo

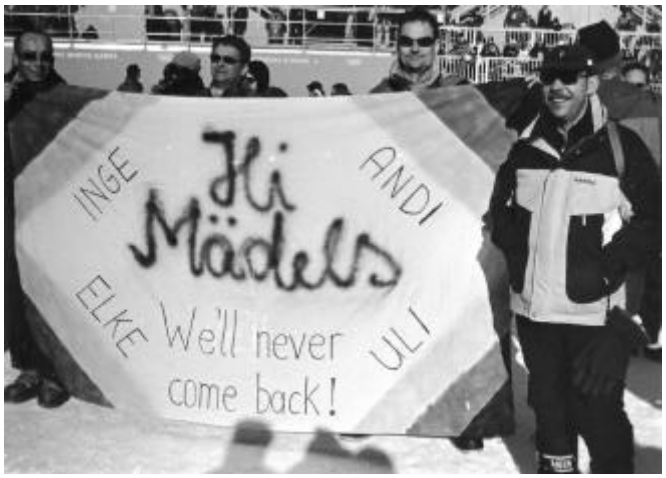
Minoxing the Games

Charles F. Trentelman
Editor In Chief

The question was inevitably tinged with a hint of suspicion.

"What is this, sir?" You know, spoken in that firm-polite way cops have of talking when they think you're homicidal and don't want to set you off.

"A camera," I would say. But they are holding a small metal object about the size of a cigarette lighter, with no openings.



Four Germans with a message they hope their wives will see on TV: "Hi Gals, We'll never come back."

Forerunners at the women's downhill take a break after testing the course for the racers.

"Can you turn it on please?" Did he just step back slightly? Did he just look for his supervisor?

"Sure," I always said brightly. "You pull it open like this, that little dot is the shutter, this is the release button, it goes off like this" and another frame of my carefully hand-cut film would die in the interest of national security.

So it went, day after day.

Covering the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City and around Utah with a Minox was always interesting. My job as a newspaper reporter took me to Snowbasin Ski Resort, near Ogden, site of the downhill Alpine events.

One of the most intensely guarded human gatherings since the Manhattan Project, the games brought together a few thousand superbly trained athletes and many more thousand rent-a-cops to run security who had no idea what they were looking at most of the time, but every day us news media types had to empty our pockets, shake out or zippers, open our many bags, raise our hands and try to explain to them that the hundreds of mysterious objects we carried were not bombs or nuclear devices, all while thousands stacked up behind us.

It was a daily ritual. I swear the magnetometer was set to detect news reporters, not metal.

My Minox was easy, actually. Everyone believed it was a camera when I told them it was. Why? I have no idea. It looked like nothing they'd ever seen. It never buzzed or flashed or produced a picture. They just took my word for it.

I guess I could have said it was a digital tape recorder but then they might have wanted to hear it work. I toyed briefly with saying it was a cigarette lighter, but no, I couldn't demonstrate that either. So I always said "It's a camera," and wasted another frame. That always seemed to work, although they never asked to see a print.

Why my measuring chain got through I'll never know. They'd never read James Bond, I guess.

Fun and Games at the Mag and Bag aside, the Minox turned out to be the ideal camera for the task. I was heavily dressed against the cold, carrying a laptop computer, and didn't need another bulky object to haul around. Even my Leica M seemed more trouble than it was worth.

But a couple of finger-sized cameras, one for ASA 25 and one for ASA 1600, were ideal. I took my two III-S cameras and added an Olympus XA as a bow to 35mm (loaded with Ilford XP2) and carried the whole mess in a belt pack.

People were always fascinated that the things were even cameras, although I suspect many thought my Minox was just some sort of obscure viewing device. Then again, with the multitude of weird looking digital cameras around, the Minox doesn't stick out that much any more

The flag is American, but the band was Austrian, and well lubricated at that.

in some respects. There are some digital cameras not much larger.

Observations about shooting at ski resorts at the 6,000 foot/2000 meter level: One would think that the "sunny 16" rule would require very high shutter speeds because of all the snow, but I actually found myself having to use a one-stop overexposure, shooting at 1/200 for sunlit surfaces and 1/100 for shadow areas despite all the white snow acting as a reflector. Many times there were so many bodies around the snow was blocked off and the image surface I wanted to shoot was very dimly lit.

Why? The air at 6000 feet is thinner and shadows, especially with a sharply tilted winter sun, are very dark. It was a high contrast situation anyway, and the shadows would go black on my film.

Self portrait with sleeping ski fans during a break in the racing.

As a result, I found images shot with an orange filter -- an attempt to get detail on the snow -- were more contrasty than I was used to. I had to use a 1 1/2 contrast filter to flatten them out a bit. Many others shot with some overexposure or at 1/200 came out very good, easily printed.

The chief advantage of the cameras was that, once set for a good exposure, I could point and shoot easily, adjusting only focus as needed, which made for quick response when a situation presented itself.

People usually smiled, too, if not at the games going on around us, then at the sight of someone pointing a tiny silver object at them and going through all the motions of taking a picture.

Or so I said. Only my secret masters in Moscow know for sure.

The Oly-Appeal of Minox

John Watson
Vice President / Technology Manager

During the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City I had the wonderful opportunity to go to several events. One of these was the men's bobsled finals.

After a significant hike up the mountain, I found a good spot on turn 6.

Apparently I had good instincts as there were two professional photographers set up there, using Nikon D1-X's, 400mm lenses and all. These are $5,000 professional digital rigs.

I began to chat with them, finding out that one's name was Bill Frakes who was shooting for Sports Illustrated, and the other was Steve Dykes with Rocky Mountain News. Both were very interesting and nice to get to know. Frankly they made the fun event that much more enjoyable.

That also just made things that much more humorous.

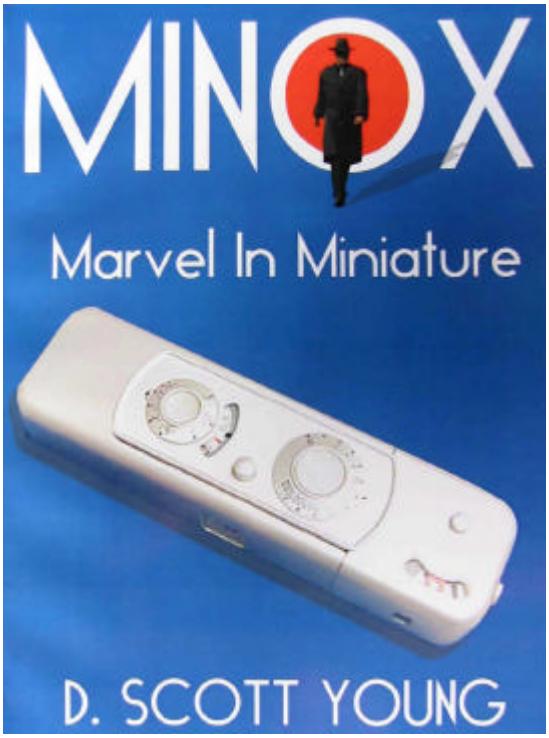
Despite the myriad of very professional cameras and credentials, and disregarding the massive lenses leaning up against the railing that should have had their own zip-code, ignoring the beautiful photos showing up on the screens on their D1x's, everyone wanted to talk to me!

Believe me, I am not that interesting.

The conversations almost universally began, "Is that a CAMERA?" And that was just my Minox EC's. When I broke out the "B", well I finally put it away so I could actually shoot some pictures with the EC and at least minimize the number of questions.

Naturally everyone assumed they were digital. I would then explain that, no, in fact they use film. I would then be compelled to pull out a roll from under the many layers of clothing that were keeping me from freezing, only to be greeted with "No way!"

Anyone who has shot a Minox in any type of a public place has had this experience. From the stare that



Large format, soft cover, 193pp, illustrated b&w

Minox - Marvel in Miniature By D. Scott Young

The first new book on Minox cameras in years, this delightful exploration of Walter Zapp's most enduring design triumph, the Minox 8 x 11 camera, shatters forever the myth of the Minox as solely a spy camera. A comprehensive history of the inventor, his cameras and the Minox camera are nicely set against the backdrop of world events, with comparative views of other subminiature cameras to clearly illustrate the place the Minox occupied in history, as well as its impact. Covering every model of Minox subminiature camera and most accessories through to the year 2000, this book will be an invaluable reference to both researcher and collector alike.

A personal interview and correspondence with the inventor himself, as well as reproductions of articles and letters written by Zapp provide the reader with a unique insight into his design philosophy, his motivation and his reaction to his camera earning an international reputation as one of the premier tools of the espionage trade.

New and experienced users of these cameras will relish the user's guide, complete with camera and accessory operating instructions and a primer on beginning photography aimed at new shooters. Every facet of photography, particularly Minox photography, from film selection and loading to darkroom processing and printing is clearly introduced.

The most reasonably priced Minox book to come along in years, **Minox - Marvel in Miniature** can be ordered directly from the publisher for US $15.00, via the Internet at www.1stbooks.com. It can be purchased in any fine book store such as Barnes & Noble, Waldenbooks, B. Dalton and others; simply inquire at the counter if it is not on the shelf. International orders can be handled by Petra Keller at www.camerabooks.com.

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continues even as the individual walks ten feet past you, to the full on interrogation, I was experiencing it all over and over.

Let's face it, it is part of the fun.

My little black EC was able to overshadow tens of thousands of dollars in top of the line equipment and no less than 4 Pulitzer Prizes!

Yes, it was the camera.

But it was MY camera!

Confessions of A Minox Shooter

Ernest Murphy
Honolulu, Hawaii USA

(Editor's Note: Ernest Murphy uses a variety of Minox cameras, including the 35mmm models. He will be contributing an occasional discussion of what they can do and why he likes them. This is his first.)

My own very amateur photography has, in the last couple of years, moved toward smaller and easier-to-carry equipment, taking advantage of old and new technologies with the aim of maintaining high image quality.

I now combine Minox 35mm and submini cameras and one of the smallest consumer-grade digital cameras for everything I photograph. All my equipment can go anywhere I go, compactly and easily.

I've started using a Canon S100 digital Elph (Ixus in some countries) and have begun selling off my 35mm film gear. I'm keeping my Minox 35GL, B and C, because I enjoy using Minoxes so much and they meet my portability and image-quality requirements. I believe recent advances in film quality make subminiature Minoxes more useful for general photography than they ever have been. Let me explain ...

The digital Elph is, in format if not in physical size, a subminiature camera, with the same wide-open depth-of-focus advantages the submini Minoxes have. Its zoom-lens focal length is in the 5-to-10mm range, roughly equivalent to a 35-to-70mm lens on a 35mm-format film camera. (The subminiature Minoxes have 15mm lenses.) The high cost of producing larger photo

"chips" -- the digital camera's equivalent of film – is why many consumer digital cameras are de facto subminis.

I began using subminiature Minoxes several years ago because of the advent of Minocolor Pro 100 film, actually Fuji Reala 100 packaged and sold by Minox. This product makes it possible for me to obtain very high-quality, fine-grain color pictures from a submini Minox using commercially sold and processed film.

Many people enjoy slitting, loading and developing Kodak Tech Pan and its ultra-fine-grain, high-resolution cousins. Many others do not. With Minocolor Pro 100, we can obtain much better images than were previously possible from Minox submini cameras using commercially sold and processed film of equivalent film speed.

I love my Minox 35GL as a street shooter because its toy-like, plasticky looks make it utterly unthreatening to people I point it at. As an optical machine for making high-quality images, it's as good as my Leicas and Nikons. It is, of course, more portable although less flexible. Some Minox 35 models are more reliable than others. A Web search on the words Minox 35 will tell you which ones. A Minox 35 is, for my kind of shooting, my "large-format" camera because 35mm film quality has made such tremendous advances in the last decade or so. The Minox 35s, of course, can take advantage of the huge range of excellent films available for 35mm cameras.

This combination of cameras gives me almost everything I need for the way I shoot. It lacks telephoto capability, something I've never used much anyway. I still sorely miss the ultra-wide-angle lenses I used with my Nikons and Leicas. I can still do excellent close-ups of reasonably-lit flowers, but not the true-macro rain-forest and jungle shoots I used to do with 10 to 30 pounds of bulky equipment.

MINOX GERMANY

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But I'm a middle-aged guy now, and I do much less jungle-trekking than when I was younger. Now my entire photographic equipage, including a Minox tripod, weighs at most 2.5 pounds (1.2 kilos), usually less because I seldom carry all four cameras and the Minox tripod. I won't sell my heavy Gitzo tripod, though. Nothing beats the crazy looks I get when I set up that monster and mount on it a camera the size of a chocolate bar.

I hope to see Minox create a digital camera the size and shape of Minox subminiatures. The necessary electronic technology is not yet physically small enough, and neither are existing digital data-storage media. But electronics components continue to get smaller and more powerful, so I'm optimistic. As for tiny, high-resolution optics, well, Minox wrote the book on those.

Tech Tips: A Simple EC Repair

John Watson
Vice President / Technology Manager

Oh, no.

I did it again.

To another camera.

You see I have broken the cardinal rule of any precision machine, "Don't force it!"

Well, I forced it.

Twice now.

The first time was my relatively new ECX. Ouch! This time it was my venerable EC.

In some ways I am glad it happened to my EC. I would never have ventured into the innards of my ECX, but my EC is another story. It is very much a user, and most likely would not be worth what a DAG repair would cost. This really lubricates the gears of curiosity.

A little background information may help here.
You see I reload my own film with a Minox slitter, and cartridges purchased from Minox Processing Laboratories. Generally this is an easy way to go. The problem comes when, in reloading, I crimp the end of the film to make it easier to roll on the dowel before I put it into the cassette. This little crimp also gives me a tug when I shoot to the end of the roll so I know to quit and not roll all the film into the other side of the cassette. Every once in a while when I place the cap on, rather than moving the crimp to the side, the cap actually compresses the film. This prevents the easy rotation of the film in the feed spool, and puts an excessive load on the take-up head.

So, I go to advance the film and I feel resistance. Being the optimist I am, I thought I could just get past that initial tension. I then squeezed the camera closed causing my difficulty. I did this to my ECX, and now my EC.

I then had two otherwise pristine, but still very dead cameras.

Breaking out my micro-screwdriver set, I laid out some lens cleaning cloths to place parts on (these are REALLY small cameras!) and proceeded to do a post mortem on my EC. Generally I would recommend a white terry cloth towel as an appropriate surface, but I didn't have one handy.

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Standard warnings here!

Rule one on repairs: DO NOT blame me if you mess up your camera! It was broken before you tore into it, so it is obviously not my problem. If you are not comfortable with a jeweler's screwdriver set, send it to a professional.

Rule two on repairs is, "Do no harm."

Rule three is, "If you are in over your head, STOP!"
******

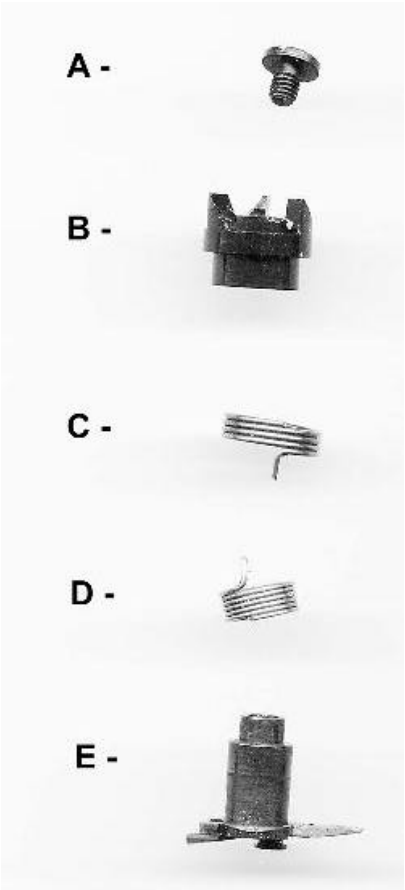
Now, as to my EC (look at the pictures and follow along):

Without getting into a tangential article; WOW! The combination of ingenuity and simplicity is amazing in this wee beastie. When I opened it I expected a whole ratchet and gear system, and all the complexity that is inherent with that. In reality, simplicity rules. Look at the drive train that I managed to foil. All of five parts, and not a gear in the ratchet.

Here is how it works:

Part E goes through the board, into the film chamber. (It does not need to be removed to fix the problem.) Part D goes into part B, piercing it with the bent part of the spring. Part C seats in around part E on the board, with

the bent part of the spring connecting through a hole. The B/D assembly is then placed over part E, seating into part C. The whole thing is secured by the screw, part A.



What happens is when you push the shell of the camera in to cock it, part E is rotated, tightening part D, and taking the whole assembly with it. As you pull the shell out, part E rotates the other way, but spring C tightens, spring D loosens. This allows part E to rotate, while holding the teeth (part B) in place.

My problem originated with the smaller spring, part D. When the extra tension was placed on it, the bent part partially straightened, releasing its grip on the head. This meant that the advance didn't advance the film anymore.

All it took to fix it was re-bending the spring to perpendicular, and reseating it in the head properly. When it was all reassembled, everything worked properly. The same process fixed my ECX.

If you couldn't follow all my part A's into part B's, just remove the screw and straighten the smaller spring. If you put it back together properly, your problem is solved.

So the lesson here is don't force it. If you do manage to force it, one screw and a bent spring will solve your problem.

It's simple repair that can save a trip to the shop.

Enjoy!

A Hybrid Enlarger

Peter "Pixel Pete" Martin

First off, I have to admit that I love the design and build quality of the Minox type III enlarger. Using it with graded black and white paper in my darkroom is a joy. But, printing variable contrast black and white or color images is not so pleasant. Sure, you can use a standard photo enlarger for printing Minox negatives, but the setup has lots of compromises.

For example, a Beseler 4X5 enlarger can work, using a Minox sized carrier. There are quite a few drawbacks to the setup however. First, focusing with the standard darkroom enlarger is quiet a challenge, due to the very small movements necessary, and the coarseness of the most larger format focusing mechanisms. Even using a very sophisticated grain focuser, I found it quite difficult to achieve repeatable, accurate totally, sharp focus. Furthermore, the lens needs to be stopped down a bit for maximum performance. Even at 5X7" prints, this moves the exposure times well into the minutes range rather than the seconds range that I am accustomed to. I'm also not to satisfied with the large negative carriers, as they need a bit of machine work to thin out the carrier so that the edges of the projected image were not vignetting the projected image. It's also very difficult to position the film in the carrier compared to the Minox III enlarger setup. But with a standard enlarger, you do get the advantage of a place to put variable contrast filters, a colorhead, and true diffusion enlarging which are not available on the Minox enlarger. The Minox enlarger solution was not giving me what I wanted, so I began to explore alternatives.

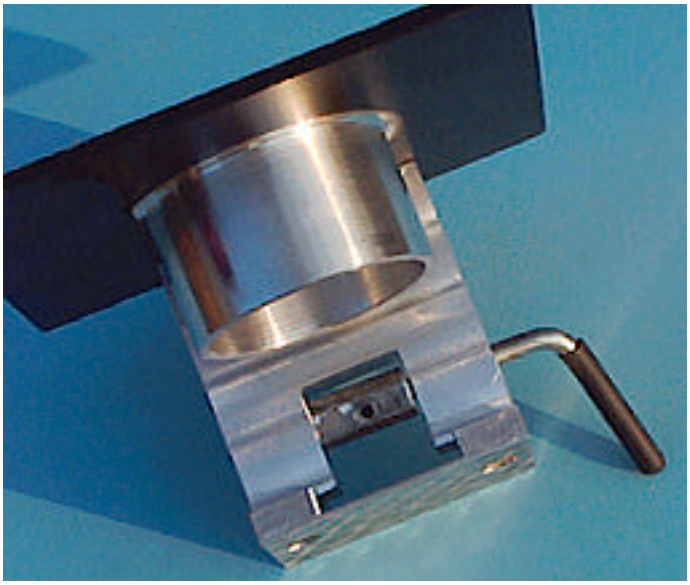
The Minox III enlarger has a very nice "modular" lens, negative stage and condenser component. If one loosens the tension on the negative clamping lever, the whole assembly can slide out of the enlarger by pulling the lens unit forward. This gives one access to the condenser (it removes by pressing and rotating the condenser), and to the negative masks. If you are careful, it also makes possible the use of carefully cut variable contrast filters above the negative for printing VC B&W prints.

The "big idea" finally came to me while looking at this assembly by itself, off the enlarger. What I was holding was basically an "enla head" for a Minox negative. All I needed was to make a fixture that would allow the Minox lens module to accurately attach to a standard lens board. Luckily, my motorcycle engineering connections came to the rescue; I was able to describe to my

machinist motorcycle mentor enough of my quest so that with considerable design, R&D, and careful production machining, a suitable fixture was created. The design of this fixture involves fitting an extension tube to the Beseler lens board (to space the assembly to clear the Beseler lens pivot, and create a mating surface for the top of the Minox condenser), and then make a stand off with a cam lever clamp which will allow you to position and clamp the negative. Once this is done, you can use the Minox assembly (with no modification to the Minox unit, so you can still put the whole plot back in your Minox III enlarger!) as an "enla head".

The benefits are: bigger enlarging compared to a 25mm lens (I haven't found a shorter non Minox enlarging lens), bigger aperture (Minox lens is always 3.5) for shorter exposure, ability to use colorhead and big VC filters, vastly improved focusing due to the Minox focusing mount, and much easier positioning of the negatives while printing. Due to the use of condenser and diffusers in the system, I call it a "confuser" head....

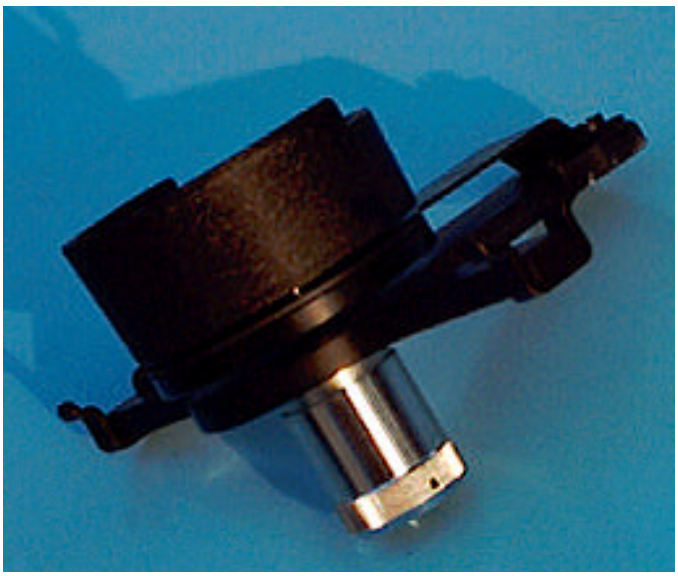
Here are some pictures and descriptive information.



Pic. 1. The Clamping Mechanism

Pic. 1 - Here is the clamping lever mechanism. It pushes on this top spring, and forces the upper and lower pieces together, thus holding the negative in place.

Pic. 2 - Here is the Minox III condenser, neg stage, and lens. No modification is necessary on this component. This picture is just for identification. Note spring strap on

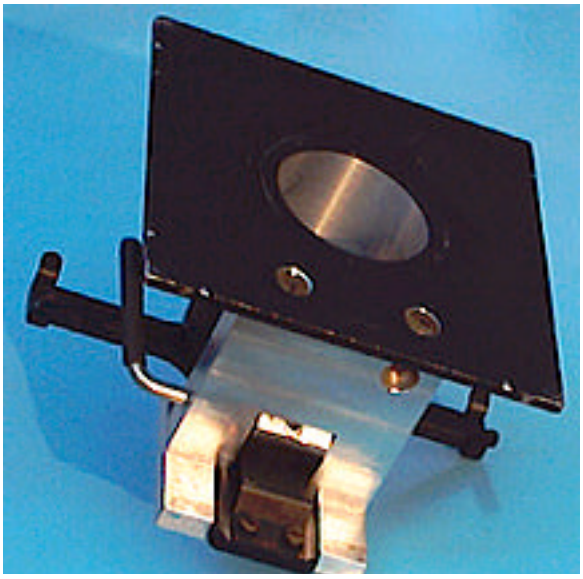


Pic. 2. The Minox III Condenser

top of the actual lensboard. Pressure on this strap by the clamp forces the two components, upper and lower into contact with the negative. By pressing down on the condenser and turning, the condenser will release, and allow cleaning of the lens, and access to the negative carriers. One can now make a full frame carrier if you wish, by very carefully filing out the hole in the two carrier components.

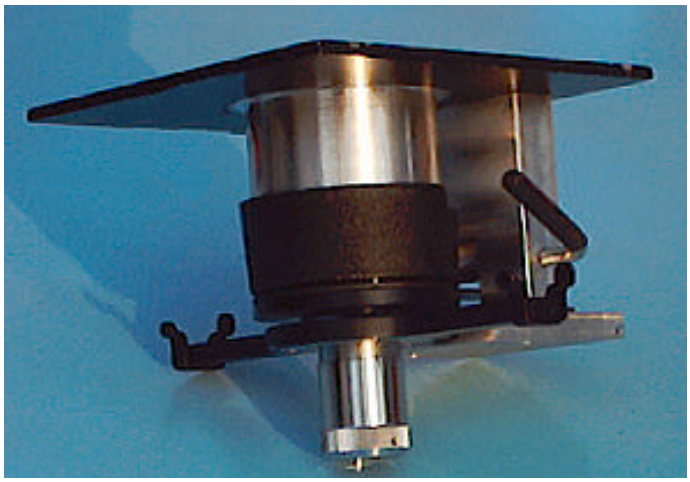
Pic. 3 The Fixture

Pic. 3 - Here is the fixture, without the Minox component in place, mounted to standard Beseler lens board. Note clamping lever, rotation causes cam on lever to compress the upper, condenser component against the lower lensboard component.



Pic. 4. Rear View of Fixture

Pic. 4 - Here is a rear view of the fixture with the Minox component in place. Note the two attaching screws that hold the fixture to the lensboard.



Pic. 5. The Complete Assembly

Pic. 5 - Here is the complete assembly. This is now ready to use. I cover the gap between the upper silver tube and the top of the condenser with heavy gage tinfoil, thus trapping all the light to the inside of the lens tube.

Those with Beseler 4X5 condenser head enlargers can use the resistrol to control the amount of light coming through the lens, those using a colorhead of course can use neutral density to control the amount of light. In either case however, having too much light is not likely to be a frequent problem.

For more information about these enlarger heads, please contact pixelpete@aol.com.

Gigabitfilm: Test Results From a Minox B

Mark Hahn

In January 2001, Gigabitfilm was announced and shortly thereafter became available on the German market. In the first year after its release nearly every major photographic magazine ran at least some descriptive article on Gigabitfilm and the newsgroups on the INTERNET went wild. It was touted by some, including the manufacturer, as the highest resolution and finest grained pictorial film ever produced and by others as blatant and dishonest fraud. If the manufacturer's claims turned out to be true, it seemed that Gigabitfilm would certainly be one of the best choices for B&W Minox photography.

Figure 1

Gigabitfilm is a special emulsion film that is packaged with a proprietary developer. It costs around $8 per 35mm roll which is in line with Kodak Technical Pan Film and Technidol developer. Many reviewers were quick to speculate that Gigabitfilm was actually repackaged Agfa Copex microfilm, and I tend to agree with this

determination after inspecting the films. Gigabitfilm refuses to reveal the source of their film, only saying that it is manufactured in Belgium.

My personal opinion is that it doesn't really matter what the actual emulsion is so long as the results are as promised.

The biggest problem I faced was getting some of the film in the U.S. because there is still no U.S. distributor. I was able to mail order it directly from Foto Impex in Berlin. I slit the film down to 9.2mm using my homemade flatbed film slitter and loaded up a number of Minox cassettes. My intent was to test the film under my typical shooting conditions and not to perform a rigorous film and resolution test.

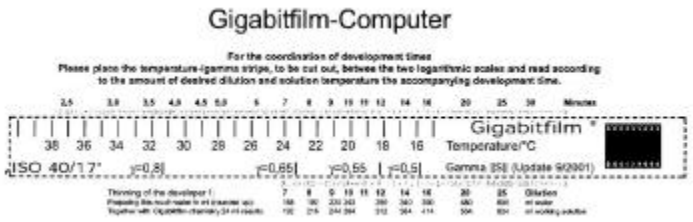


Figure 2

For my first test of the film I loaded my Minox B, put it in a belt case and headed out on my mountain bike along Fantasy Island, the renowned Tucson area mountain biking trail. I took all my shots handheld and metered them using the Minox B's built in light meter with almost no adjustments. The inaccuracies in my metering technique essentially resulted in an informal test of the film's latitude which actually seemed fairly well matched to the Minox B's meter.

Per the film's data sheet, I chose to develop at 26C for a gamma of .56 as recommended for optimum pictorial photography. One thing that is very nice about the data sheet is that it includes a paper slide rule type computer to calculate the resulting gamma value for any combination of developer temperature and dilution (see Figure 2). The data sheet also tells you that the film has an "antistatic" coating which may result in small visible spots on the negatives. The data sheet goes on to suggest removing the antistatic coating and spots using acetone.

Just as you'd expect from a microfilm, the negatives appeared fairly thin on the completely clear base. After inspecting them with a loupe, I noticed a fair number of spots on the negatives and decided to take Gigabit's advice and clean the negatives with acetone, after which the film base immediately became streaked. No matter

Figure 3

what I did I could not remove the streaks so I will strongly advise against anyone cleaning this film with acetone.

I developed all the prints from the film anyway and found that until I went to enlargements of 8x10 and larger the streaks weren't that apparent. What was immediately apparent was that the film had extremely fine grain (as promised) and was also very low in contrast.

The contrast was a bit too low in my opinion as I felt the prints were somewhat flat, even when I tried to pump them up using some variable contrast filters. My preferred film/developer combination for use in any Minox 8x11 camera is Kodak's Technical Pan Film and Photographer's Formulary TD-3 which is a combination that is much more contrasty, so my assessment of the prints may be just a matter of taste. Qualitatively, I would rate Gigabitfilm as being slightly finer grained than Technical Pan, which is to say that it is astounding.

Figures 3 and 4 show both a sample from the first test roll and a detail from that photo to show the grain structure.

Figure 4

After these impressive, but slightly flat results I decided to bump up the gamma to .65 on my second test roll. For location I chose the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, a very popular and photogenic site where there are always plenty of serious photographers out shooting with their "big guns." On this day I ended up talking to a fellow photographer who was dragging around a large suitcase full of Mamiya gear. Watching him bump along the trails with his heavy load made me appreciate my tiny Minox B hiding in my pocket all the more.

Figures 5 and 6 show a sample from test roll two and a detail from that photo.

Developing for the higher gamma gave the second set of photos a little more punch than the first set. I still feel that they are a little flat but like any other new film that you try, Gigabitfilm will require some fine tuning of the development process before you can get the best possible results. Based on my initial test results I think it is obvious that Gigabitfilm could be a very useful B&W film for the Minox enthusiast, especially when low contrast results are required.

www.geocities.com/markhahn2000
email: markhahn2000@yahoo.com
All photos by Mark Hahn

Figure 5

Figure 6

Minox Web Watch

D. Scott Young
Secretary / Treasurer

The Minoxography Community is what French Minox lover Nicolas Maufrais joyfully calls his web site at http://www.minoxography.org and a glance at some of the contributors bears this out. This is truly an international gathering of Minox enthusiasts, both 8 x 11 and 35mm alike.

This site is one of the cleanest, most thoughtfully laid out and visually eye catching that I have seen. The index page is updated often and gives you immediate feedback on the latest additions to the site. An arresting, three-picture top bar gives you a continuously rotating look at photographs in the individual member's galleries.

Links at the top of the page for Forum, Galleries, Tips, Specs, History and Links are self explanatory. Of particular note are the Forum and Galleries sections; the Forum is broken down into several message posting sections, one each devoted to 8 x 11, 35mm, general, etc. I am amazed at some of the unusual questions and truly informative answers that show up here. It has been an invaluable resource to me on many an occasion and is highly recommended.

The Galleries are broken down into 35mm and 8x11, with each member being allocated 10 photographs. The addition of a Guest Book to each gallery is a thoughtful touch and greatly appreciated. The photographs showcased here are nothing short of beautiful, uniformly demonstrating some of the very best of what these cameras are capable of, as well as the skills of the individual photographers themselves.

It is clearly apparent that a lot of love's labor has been invested in this site. Bookmark this site. You'll want to visit often.

Minox Memo
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Review: Minox CD ROMs

John Watson
Vice President / Technology Manager

Shoppers who spend a significant amount of time online see offers for informational CD's. Ranging from "Spy on anyone", and "Sell anything on eBay", to "This CD is banned", sellers with CD burners are ready to sell you their secrets. These CDs can contain valuable information and links to other sources, but they can also contain plagiarized information stolen from authors who get no benefit if you buy them.

The Minox community is not immune from this problem.

About six months ago one of the first in this group started showing up on eBay. This CD was not only almost 100% plagiarized, but it was taken from some of the most prominent sites in the Minox community without any permission or credit. This was such a blatant rip-off that the creator didn't even bother to change the formatting when he dragged and dropped the information into his Word document.

Needless to say the original authors, as well as Minox GmbH were not amused. Some curt letters stopped the CD's rather quickly.

Lately there has been another CD for sale up on eBay called "The Electronic Celebration of Minox." How does it compare?

Better, but not by much.

Large quantities of the information on this CD are taken from the Minox Processing Laboratories site. Others are obviously promotional photos from Minox GmbH, and many of the manuals are downloaded PDFs from Minox's site. Speaking with Don Thayer of MPL on the phone, he denied any permission had been granted to use the materials from his site.

The one thing about this CD is that there is SOME original content, but it is mostly poor quality shots of cameras, and information that is available elsewhere for free.

One other problem is the media used for the CD. It is a black CD that looks quite interesting, but is not compatible with all CD readers. There have been several reports of the CD not working on various computers due to compatibility issues.

When the author was contacted his initial reply was, "… if you could tell me what the files in question are it would be easier for me to understand your comments… "

"…I am pleased to hear about a review, but I would give you one word of caution regardless of whether your review is positive or negative about it. Only 25 of the CD's were made and that is all that will be made. I only am selling 2 more and then the sale is over. I just don't want people to assume there in an unlimited supply or write me to purchase more since they will not be made available..."

No response was received when links to the relevant plagiarized information were emailed.

The concept of a complete resource CD is very appealing to most Minox collectors. There is a tremendous amount of information that can be difficult or expensive to get. This difficulty can cause people to take advantage of collectors with bogus CDs.

Unfortunately, the effort to do it correctly can be enormous. The copyright permissions necessary can be difficult to obtain, and getting a significant enough base of information is time consuming and expensive. I hope one day these challenges can be economically surmounted.

So, to the big question. Should you buy it?

No.

It neither adds anything of real value that is new to the collective base of Minox knowledge, nor provides a compelling organizational structure to available information available elsewhere. You are also providing support to a copyright violator.

If you want the screensavers, download one of the myriads of free screensaver creation programs and take the half hour to make your own.

Then buy two more film mailers with the money you saved, and go shoot some pictures!

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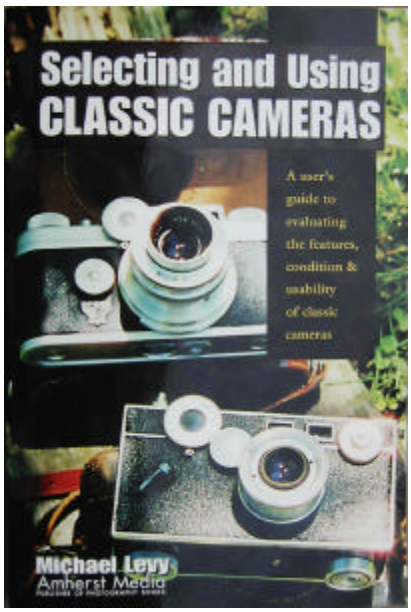
to purchase these and more through the end of June 2002!

Book Review: Selecting and Using Classic Cameras

D. Scott Young
Secretary / Treasurer

Michael Levy
2002, Amherst Media , Inc., Buffalo, NY
ISBN # 1-58428-054-9
Softcover, 6" x 9", 190pp
B&W photo-illustrated

Michael Levy has been taking photographs since 1946, according to his biographical notes, when he was given a simple plastic box camera that took 127 size roll film. His love of photography has never left him, as is evident in his fond yet honest descriptions of a wide variety of classic cameras profiled in "Selecting and Using Classic Cameras".



This book is not intended to be a definitive collector's catalogue or guide to prices. Instead, this book introduces the excitement and fun of collecting, and more importantly, using classic cameras to those who might never have thought of it otherwise. In that regard, his book is a great success because he clearly and eloquently presents the field of collecting in layman's terms, in an engaging, humorous and direct manner that makes the book very entertaining.

Classic cameras, broadly defined, are cameras made in the period from about 1920 to 1965; they are mechanical in operation, although built in electric light meters are found in many of them. Within this broad definition can be found view cameras, press, box, folding bellows, rangefinder, Single and Twin Lens Reflex types, Polaroid instant cameras and even the tiny Minox, Minolta, Mamiya, Stecky and Tessina subminiature cameras. All of these types are lovingly described in this book.

Michael begins with chapters covering the basics: Why to collect and use them, an excellent chapter on Where to look, thoroughly covering stores, swap markets and the Internet, among other sources; learning resources on classic cameras and ending with basics of what to look for when examining a potential purchase. From there, he launches into chapters devoted to each of the main types of classic camera.

This is where the fun starts. Each chapter introduces a particular type of camera, briefly placing it in historical perspective, and peppering the writing with pointed, personal experiences that will be extremely helpful to the new enthusiast. Most enjoyable are the numerous high quality black and white photographs throughout the book showing the surprisingly good to excellent quality of some of these old classics and their lenses. Written and photographic contributions by Jonathan Blumb and Nolan Woodbury greatly enhance the book, with Jonathan adding expertise on the Leica cameras and Nolan adding commentary and wonderful photographs of vintage motorcycles taken with his twin lens reflex cameras.

Chapter 12 is a short but very interesting coverage of subminiature classics, with heavy emphasis on Minox. By the definition of a classic, the Minox line would end with the Model B as far as the book goes, so Model C and later are only given passing mention. Again, it is clear the Michael has a passion for these cameras as well, as he freely comments on his Minox cameras as being "the most noticed camera I use". These personal observations and others like them do much to make the book as appealing as it is.

This is a very easy to read, and very entertaining as well as informative work, and should enjoy great success. I learned a lot from this book; I recommend it as mandatory reading for anyone considering or just starting out in the exciting field of collecting and using classic cameras.

What is it?

John Watson
Vice President / Technology Manager

Photo by Gerald McMullon

Known as a “cold shoe” flash adapter, this unit came in two forms and was produced from the mid 50’s to the early 70’s.

Rather than the current version of flash adapter that fits over the flash nipple end creating a “hot shoe”, this unit was designed to fit on the chain socket. This meant that to synchronize with the camera, a cable with a PC plug would be connected on the other side of the camera.

Two variants were available. Above shows the lever release type. With this style a lever is rotated to lock the bayonet into the camera’s chain receptacle, firmly affixing the adapter. Another type had fixed studs on opposite corners instead of the lever, these locked by merely impeding the rotation of the camera beyond locking. No Minox logo is present on either model, though they are stamped with “Made in Germany” on the side.

In either case getting a good lock between the unit and the camera can be an act of real patience.

One further use of the cold shoe adapter was to attach third party accessories to the camera, while still being able to use the Minox flash. By attaching to the opposite end, range finders and other non-synchronized accessories could be used relatively easily.

While they have been out of production for thirty or so years, they do show up from time to time. Because of the bayonet connector, they are usually fairly easy to spot as a true Minox accessory.

Photo Contest Ends Early

As a young organization, the Minox Historical Society is still searching for what it wants to do and how it wants to do it. Like any new venture, it is going to discover that some things work and some don't.

Which brings us to the photo contest announced in the first issue of Minox Memo and several editions of the Flash.

We thought the prospect of winning a new Minox EC was pretty good and would attract many entries. Apparently, however, this is going to fall into the "don't work" category.

So far only one person has entered. We are sure you agree that a contest with only one entry isn't much of a contest. Why the rest of you have held back -- maybe you think everyone else's work is so wonderful? – we don't know, but there it is.

So the contest is, for now, cancelled. The single entry receives a nice consolation prize and we will be searching around for other things to do.

We welcome any ideas the members might have. Feel free to contact me any time.

Charles Trentelman
Editor in Chief