

WCPHA Newsletter May 2017



Notice of AGM & May Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will be on May 3, 2017 at the Hillcrest Community centre in room MP328 at 7:30. We will hear reports and elect an executive. Prior to this, at 7PM, there will be an extended minimart so we can buy and sell. Bring a few things. Please set up on a table or counter around the room's outside. Following the AGM there will be a limited show and tell and a continuation of the minimart.

2017 Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Confirmation of Meeting Notice and Quorum
3. President's message
4. Treasurer's report
5. Election of Officers
6. New Societies Act
7. Any other business
8. Adjournment

President's Message

It was a difficult year for the club. We lost a friend and member in Tom Abrahamsson. Tom Park is now just Tom. We no longer will learn of prototypes from Cosina. The knowledge he carried, while not gone, is dispersed. As well, the greatest camera swap in North American the April Vancouver Camera Show at the Cameron Community centre did not run. We all appear to be shooting less film.

Still the roll of film is not exhausted. A smaller swap meets tide us over. Historical processes are being revived. Kodak is re-launching Ektachrome. April's Capture Photo Festival should be admired for its scale with over eighty events. I see more vintage SLRs in use but that may be a factor of me hanging out on Main Street. Hipsters may save film.

It was at Tom A's memorial I became optimistic. Stephen Gandy's comments reminded me how far I have come in my enjoyment of the esoterica of cameras and photography. Much has happened since I first read the early pages of Cameraquest in late 1997. I am grateful to the WCPHA and to each of you for enabling my learnings.

The Calendar

The [Capture Photography Festival](#) held many events of interest to the WCPHA. Of note Phillip Chin, club member, will [demonstrate tintypes](#) on April 30. As well there are videos on demand for streaming from the [Knowledge Network](#). See listing below for titles and expiry dates.

- **Apr 30, 2017**, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm, Talk, Free (RVSP via [Link](#)), Shadbolt Centre "Henri Robideau and Phillip Chin: The Art of Photography"

Vancouver artist Henri Robideau delivers the lecture “My 50th Year in Photography,” followed by a tintype photography demonstration by Phillip Chin. Chin will demonstrate how this historical process captures an image directly on a metal plate using a 150 year old chemical formula and a large format camera. This slow, meticulous, hand-crafted process offers a depth and beauty to portraiture not found through any other photographic process.

- **On Demand.** The following photography documentaries listed below are available for on-demand streaming during the 2017 Capture Photography Festival at Knowledge.ca:
 - [Ansel Adams](#) (until May 4, 4AM)
 - [Annie Leibovitz](#): Life through a Lens (until May 13, 3AM)
 - [Bill Cunningham New York](#) (until July 15, 3AM)
 - [C.D. Hoy](#): Portraits from the Frontier
 - [Chasing Ice](#) (until May 21, 3AM)
 - [Chasing Wild Horses](#) (until May 14, 1AM)
 - [Dorothea Lange](#): Grab a Hunk of Lightning (until May 7, 1AM)
 - [Finding Vivian Maier](#) (until May 5, 12AM)
 - [Foncie's Photos](#) (More than just documentary in link)
 - [Jeff Wall](#): In Order to Make a Picture (until May 4, 12AM)
 - [Mugshot](#)
 - [Photographing Africa](#) (until May 4, 12AM)
 - Snapshot: [Fred Herzog](#)
 - Snapshot: [Greg Girard](#) (Also see his [website](#))
 - [Time Zero](#): The Last Year of Polaroid Film (until May 6, 3AM)

The Collector – MPP Microcord

Micro Precision Products, the erstwhile British optical company that died in Thatcher's UK, made the Microcord, a knob-wound 6×6 TLR, from 1951 to 1958. This was a major innovation for MPP; all its earlier cameras had been large-format.

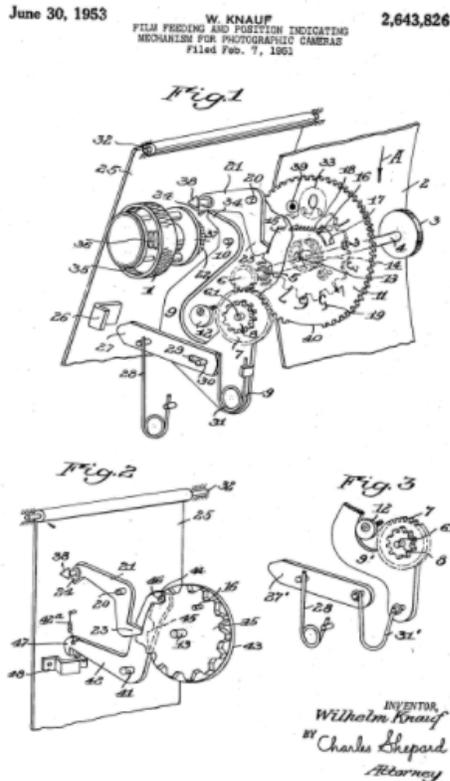
They built the **Microcord Mk I** in 1951 but held it back until the British Industries Fair of 1952. Its design was based on that of the Rolleicord; A J Dell, then in charge of photographic products for MPP (and later the company head) had acquired a Rolleicord and taken it to pieces to learn from and improve upon it. The camera has a pair of 77.5mm f/3.5 Ross Xpress lenses, made by Ross and assembled and collimated by MPP. The taking lens has four elements, the viewing lens three. The lens performs very differently from other Ross lenses sold as Xpress.

The Microcord has an eight-speed Epsilon shutter, made by Barnet Ensign Ross, complete with a "T" setting. When advancing the film, the user tracks the frame position via a red window. The Microcord Mk I (and not the Mk II) has "a focusing hood incorporating a special reflector to enable eye level viewing". An innovation The Collector has never used. The 1952 Nov 12 issue of the British magazine *Amateur Photographer* concluded its report on tests of the camera with "the Microcord's standard



of performance is as high if not higher than any camera of this negative size that we have yet handled."

MPP introduced the **Microcord Mk II** in 1954. The changes included a **Prontor** SVS shutter, with DXM settings lacking "T" setting; and film winding is semi-automated and there is no red window. The hood has a pop-up mirror for careful focusing, and also can be converted to a "direct vision" sports viewfinder.



The earliest Microcord Mk II camera zero their film counter when the back is opened. As this design infringed a patent of **Franke and Heidecke**, MPP changed this to a design in which the counter returned to zero when the back was closed.¹ Despite a recall of the earliest cameras rare unconverted examples may remain. Despite this ingenious work around the film counter is the most troublesome aspect of surviving Microcords.

MPP provided a service to convert customers' Mk I to have the new Prontor shutter, and also did other conversions, e.g. from the vulnerable external flash connections of the Mk I to the sunken connections of the Mk II. Because of this, and because only the later examples of the Mk II have the escutcheon under the taking lens marked for the shutter rather than with "Kingston on Thames" (the place of manufacture, as marked on all unaltered examples of the Mk I), the mistaken rumour has arisen that there exists a "Mk 1½". The same people will tell you they enjoy the Traveling Wilburys' "Second Album"

In 1958 MPP replaced the Microcord Mk II with the **Microflex**. Rumour had it that editor's exam at the *British Journal of Photography* included loading this camera without the instructions. The secret was to be half cut; and that isn't a reference to the film or backing.

Editor's Note. *The Collector has provided a Microcord for display at the next meeting's show and tell. About. The Collector believes ale or a strong caffeinated beverage helps everyone better assess the value of somewhat collectable camera. Keep collecting.*

¹ Note from president. See claims 1, 2, and 10 in Knauf Wilhelm, 1949 "Film feeding and position indicating mechanism for photographic cameras" US Patent No. 2643826 A, priority date 1949 Feb 23, file date 1951 Feb 7, issue date 1953 Jun 30. Assignee Rollei Werke Franke Heidecke. C.f., Knauf Wilhelm, 1949 "Rollfilmkamera mit Filmfoerderwerk" German Patent No. 877248, file date 1949 Feb 24, issue date 1953 Nov 5. N.B. I found no UK patent in my search.