



Picture plus

Using PhotoDeluxe, Ken McMahon shows how easy it is to make more of your photos.

PhotoDeluxe 2.0, free on our cover CD this month, is perfect for photo projects. It has a great range of easy, guided activities for the beginner while the advanced mode offers some of the powerful tools found in Adobe Photoshop. Even if you want to dive straight in at the deep end, the guided activities are a great source of ideas for everything from cards and calendars to photomontages.

In this workshop, we're going to take an unimposing holiday snap, improve the quality so that it's bright and punchy, cut out the main subject from the background and add a more interesting backdrop. Finally, we'll add some text so that it's ready for printing onto anything from a greetings card to a T-shirt.

A quick piece of advice though: when performing any kind of photo manipulation it's always a good idea to make a copy of your original image. This way you'll feel free to play around to your heart's content, while retaining an unaltered version should things not go entirely to plan.



➔ **Fig 1** Here you need to adjust the brightness and contrast until you see some improvement in the image. If you've scanned from a print you'll probably need to increase the contrast a little. If you're using a digital camera you may need to decrease it. But don't overdo it. Even if your photo is very flat and washed out you should only make minor adjustments with these settings. If you need to adjust a scanned photo by

more than 50 percent you should consider rescanning with different settings. You can do quick before and after comparisons by checking and unchecking the preview box.

➔ **Fig 2** Next is colour balancing, which can be a tricky business. If you're interested, you can experiment with the sliders to see the effect of adding red, green or blue — adding all three has no effect and adding any two is the same as removing the third.



➔ **Fig 3** If your picture has a strong colour cast, you can remove it by using the colour balance but if this is too confusing click 'done' and go to 'fix colour' on the touch-up tab. The variations button shows you the effect of adding more red blue and green to the image.

➔ **Fig 4** There is one last thing to do before we move on to cutting out the background but you won't find it on any of the tabs so you will have to turn on one of PhotoDeluxe's advanced features; long menus. These give you access to all the tools and commands from the menu bar. Go to the file menu and select 'preferences, long menus' and the menu bar will expand to offer you more options. Then, from the quality menu select 'sharpen', or use the [ctr-1] keyboard shortcut. Now this is where the real fun begins:

- Click the special effects button and



from the collage tab select the 'change backgrounds' button.

- Click the 'smartselect' button on the select tab and position the crosshair cursor somewhere on the edge of the image you want to cut from the background. As carefully as you can, trace around the outline of your cut-out image and you will see the 'smartselect' marquee follow the edges.

➔ **Fig 5** The 'smartselect' tool works by identifying contrasting edges so, to make things easier to begin with, pick an area where the edge of your subject contrasts strongly with the background. If the 'smartselect' tool runs into trouble getting the right bits where there isn't so much of a contrast, put down frequent



anchor points by clicking with the left mouse button. Try to select more of the image than you need. In other words, rather than cut bits of your subject off, include some of the unwanted background as you can always get rid of it later with the eraser tool.

➔ **Fig 6** When you get back to where you started cutting, the 'OK' cursor will appear; click to complete the selection and then press the 'delete background'



button. You should now have a reasonably accurate cut-out but there will be a few remaining nooks and crannies that you may not have been able to reach. To remove these, click on the erase button and select one of the brushes from the palette. The size will depend on how much extraneous background still remains but in any case make sure to select one of the soft-edged brushes to avoid nasty jagged edges.

- You may now discover that your cut-out has a fringe around it where there is still some unwanted background. You can clean up, as before, by using the eraser which you'll find in the tools menu.

➔ **Fig 8** You can add as many backgrounds as you like. Each one is treated as a separate layer and can be turned on, or off, rearranged and edited independently of the main subject, which remains on the topmost layer.

- First, turn on the layers palette by selecting 'show layers' from the 'view' menu. You will see three layers: a topmost, empty, text layer; then the layer with your cut-out subject; and your background picture.

- To add further layers, just drag an image from the Easyphoto browser onto

the PhotoDeluxe 2 edit window, resize and position it and then press return. Now, if all you can see is the new image, don't worry, it hasn't obliterated everything. As you can see from the layers palette, your previous image is still there, beneath the new picture.

- Now position the new picture layer at the bottom of the stack by clicking on its layer at the top of the layers

palette and dragging it to the bottom.

➔ **Fig 9** Now it has disappeared because it is obscured by your original background on the layer above. To turn this layer off, click on the eye icon next to it and the new layer below will be revealed.

You can experiment by adding as many new background layers as you like and switching them on and off to create new compositions. By double-clicking on a layer in the palette you will be able to change its opacity and its

blend mode. Now we are going to add some drop shadow text.

- Click on the text tool — the T on the menu bar at the top of the edit window — to open the text dialogue box. Type in your text and select a font from the pulldown menu, and a colour. Pick something that contrasts well with the background.

- Drag the handles to size and position the text. Make sure the 'eye' icon is present on the top text layer in the layers palette or you won't be able to see it.
- Once the text is in position, select 'duplicate' from the edit menu, then



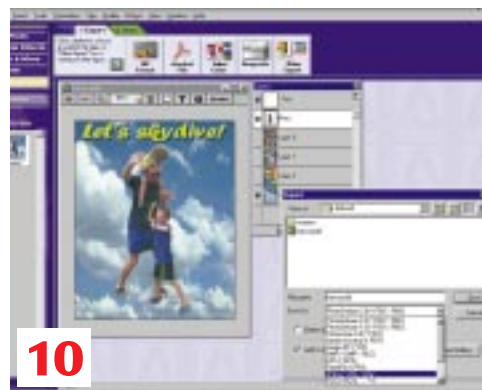
double-click on the duplicate text and change the colour to a suitably dark drop shadow hue.

- Finally, click on the 'object order' menu — the one next to the text button that looks like two sheets of paper — and choose 'send to back'. If you have difficulty selecting the text, turn the other layers off to get a clearer view.



➔ **Fig 7** You're now ready to add the background. Click on the 'add background' tab, then, unless you plan to use your own background image, click on the 'sample photo' button. This will open the Easyphoto browser. There are plenty of background images from which to choose but if you can't find what you're looking for in the background category, try 'scenes':

- Double-click your chosen background to place it behind your subject. Click the 'resize' tab, drag and reposition your subject if needs be and click the 'done' tab.



➔ **Fig 10** Finally, click the 'send' button to save your image. There are plenty of options. You can save it as a gif or jpeg for inclusion on a web page, create an HTML web page, an Acrobat pdf, a screensaver, wallpaper or embed it in an email. When saved, the image is flattened using only the visible layers. So, you can quickly save several different versions simply by turning off one background layer, turning on another and re-saving.

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