

The PHSC E-MAIL

Volume 4-2, Supplement to Photographic Canadiana, May+ 2004
The Photographic Historical Society of Canada



THIS SUNDAY, MAY 30th

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

CANADA'S LARGEST
PHOTOGRAPHICA
FAIR - SINCE
1974

THE BIG ONE!

SUNDAY
MAY 30, 2004
10 am to 3 pm

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Cameras, Lenses, Darkroom Equipment
Digital Cameras, Motion Picture, Video,
Books, Images, Optical Instruments, etc.



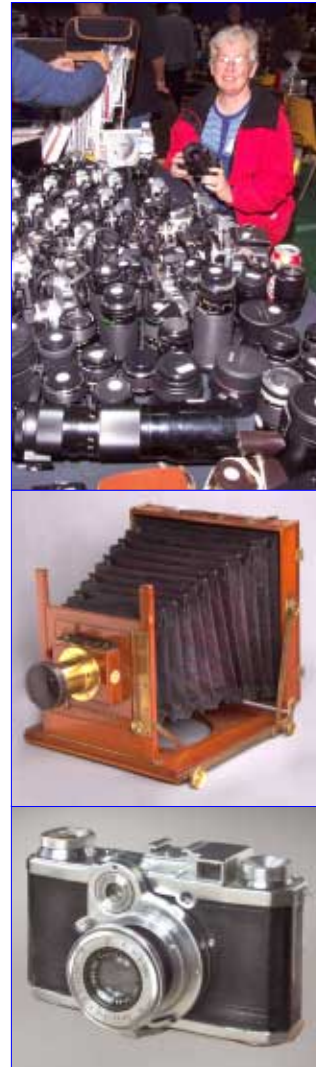
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Admission \$7.00 with coupon \$5.00

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PHOTOGRAPHICA FAIR

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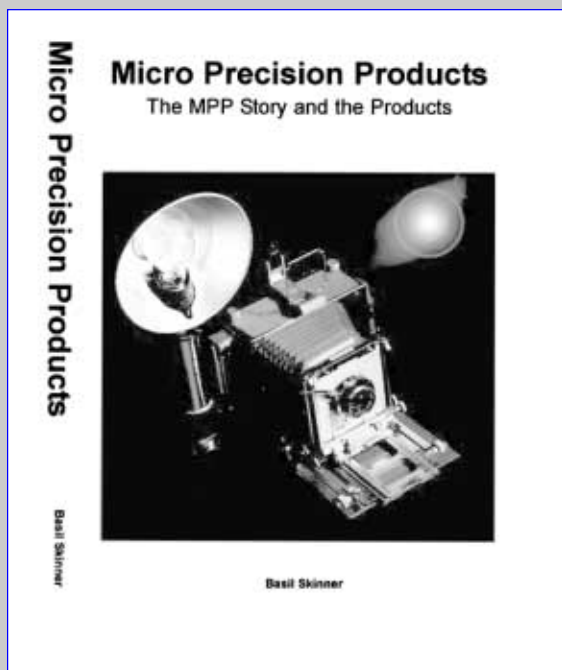
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The Book Shelf

Micro Precision Products: The MPP Story and the Products

by Basil Skinner

Published by MPP Publications, 6 Aylwin Close, St Columb Minor, Newquay, Cornwall, TR7 3EF, United Kingdom
ISBN 0 9546070 1 5, May 2004,
£22.50 plus postage and packing £6.00 (USA and Canada)



MPP cameras were known by a whole generation of professional photographers during the 1950s and 1960s. Mention the *MPP Technical*, *Microcord* and *Microflex* cameras and the chances are most professionals would have handled and used at least one of them. Today the cameras are still in demand by amateur photographers and camera collectors. In this new book Basil Skinner traces the history of the company and describes its cameras and accessory products.

MPP was formed in 1941 but it was under the direction of A J "Jimmy" Dell that the company produced its most famous products and established itself as one of the few post war British camera makers until its demise in 1982.

Basil Skinner's book records the history of the company from its formation and describes some of the staff who worked for the firm and how it manufactured its products at its Kingston-on-Thames factory and later in Wandsworth, London. Chapters describe in detail each of the firm's cameras from the *Micro-Technical* and *Micro-Press* cameras through the *Microcord* and *Microflex* twin lens reflexes and their *Prison*, stereoscopic and monorail cameras. The company's enlargers, tripods and photographic accessories are also described and extensively illustrated.

The book brings together many years of research including interviews with A. J. Dell, MPP staff and users of the cameras. It will appeal to users and collectors of MPP cameras and equipment as a great reference tool.



On The Trail of the CONTAX Volume 1

by Hans-Jürgen Kuc

Published by Wittig Books,
Softcover, 21 x 25 cm,
ISBN 3-930359-36-7, 256 pages

The first part of Hans-Jürgen Kuc's Contax History appeared in 1981, while the present book has been available in German since 1991. This, however, is the first complete version in English and is well worth both expenditure and the wait.



The book is exceptionally well illustrated with contemporary pictures, advertisements, publicity material and patent drawings. They are carefully chosen to illuminate rather than merely decorate the text.

Chapters cover: *The Development of the Contax*, *The Shutter*, etc but also *Zeiss Ikon and the Nazi Regime*, *Special Lenses* and even *Unrealised Inventions*. Although concentrating on one camera and its accessories, the author sets the story firmly in the context of contemporary technology and overall development of the Zeiss Ikon company.

The most remarkable aspect of the book is the sheer quantity and variety of detailed research that has gone into its creation. The author has something fresh to say about almost all aspects of the subject. Even where work has been duplicated, the results are thought provoking.

Writing of the company's reaction to Nazi policies Kuc says, "Today we know that the company directors opposed the regime and managed to protect many Jewish employees." But it would be fascinating to know *how we know*.

—Reviewed by David Balfour
Photographica World

A SECOND LOOK by Robert Carter

The report for our February 2004 meeting showed Maureen Patz of Burlington, displaying an unusual shaped camera bristling with three flash-bulb attachments. It was described as a Simmon Omega Super Press camera (rebadged Koni-Omega 200).

More information has surfaced from our files with James W. (Jim) Simmons quoting the following excerpts from the original manual of the *KONI-OMEGA "RAPID."*

"This camera was conceived and designed by the engineering department of Simmon Brothers Inc. in Long Island City, NY and was later re-engineered and manufactured by Konishiroku Photo Industry Co. Ltd. in Tokyo, Japan.

"The story behind the *Koni-Omega 'Rapid'* is as follows: The original *Omega 120* was developed at the suggestion of the U.S. Navy in the 40s (produced in USA). It was a technical success but a commercial disappointment, thus it was discontinued in 1958. Increased production costs caused the Simmon Brothers to look abroad to manufacture its successor, the *K-O 'Rapid.'* The result was they found an agreeable manufacturer in Japan.

"The difference between the *Rapid* and the *100* or the *Rapid M* and the *200* is but a minor cosmetic change. During the late 50s-early 60s the U.S. Congress passed a law that all government agencies must use items manufactured, in part, in the USA – and that brought about the *Beseler Topcon Super D* (*Topcon RE Super*), the *Omega 100* (*Koni-Omega Rapid*), the *Omega 200* (*Koni-Omega 200*), *Honeywell's Pentax Spotmatic* (*Pentax Spotmatic*), etc. This was still going on in the late 70s and early 80s when *Exakta 35mm* cameras became *Beseler Topcon Cameras*.

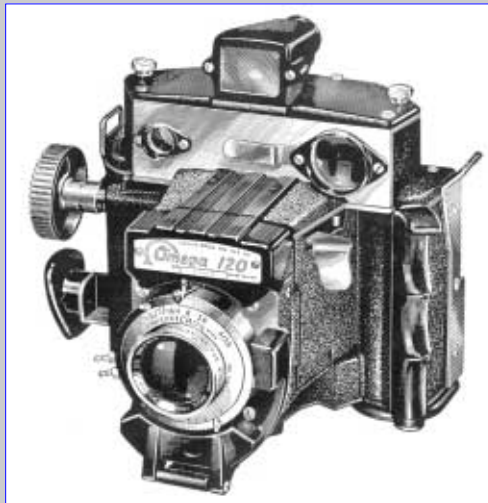


MAUREEN PATZ

"The difference in the lenses is much the same with *Koni-Omegas* becoming *Omegas* by simply changing the lens ring.

"All cameras and lenses were manufactured in Japan by Konishiroku Photo Industry Co., Ltd. Some minor assembly (just enough needed to meet the demand of the law) of the *Omega 100* and *200* was completed in the States. The same is true for the lens.

"There is really but one camera – the *Koni-Omega* made and sold throughout the world but known as the *Omega* in the USA."



A full page advertisement by Simmon Bros., Inc in the July 1954 issue of *U.S. Camera* "introduces" the all-new *Omega 120* with a selling price of \$239.50. Editor Ed Hannigan gave a two page investigative report on the new camera, commenting:

"Presaging what may become the trend of camera design for the future, the *Omega 120* is somewhat startling to the beholder at first sight. This rather unusual piece of equipment was never intended for eye appeal – as most other cameras usually are. Simmon Bros., Inc. of Long Island City, N.Y. has been known since 1935 as the maker of the famous line of *Omega enlargers*. They have been known for "engi-

neering" the equipment they produce. So it is with the *Omega 120*. It has been "engineered" from the ground up. Each of its features has its own integral attributes which help make the camera be more than of average interest.

"The *Omicron* lens of 90 mm. focal length was especially made for the camera and contains new rare-earth high-index glass. It is a sharp cutting optic giving excellent definition all the way into the corners of the 2 1/4x 2 3/4" negative area. This format is in the ratio of 4:5, a proportion that matches those of enlarging papers to eliminate waste and aid composition.

"Focusing the *Omega 120* is facilitated by an oversize knob extending from the right side while critical focusing is assured by a super-sized magnifying rangefinder.

"A pull-out, push-in plunger lever at the bottom rear of the camera couples together film advance, shutter cocking, advance of film counter and insertion of a new flash bulb to the special holder (if so equipped).

"The long-stroke release lever for smooth triggering of the shutter also activates a plunger which forces the film pressure plate against the film during exposure (normally the plate is retracted for frictionless advance of the film).

"The functional design of the camera includes a pistol grip on the camera body permitting a relaxed, yet firm, hold. A different grip was available for large hands.

"What the future holds in the way of photo equipment design no one can accurately predict. It will be of great interest five or ten years from now to look back and see exactly what influences the *Omega 120* may have generated in engineering and design of cameras. Certainly, some of the new features of this camera will find acceptance and use. And, that should be good for photography!"

Links to additional information:
<http://www.peterlanczak.de/koni.htm>
and also check http://www.koni-omega.org/KO_Archive/KoniData/msg00075.html

SEE NEXT PAGE

Introducing the **ONE** camera
that automatically produces sharper pictures
easier and faster...



omega 120



Weight: 2 lbs. 9 oz.
4 x 5 picture quality
on 120 roll film

FEATURES THAT MAKE THE OMEGA 120 THE ONE CAMERA FOR YOU

- ① Finest available 90mm f/3.5 lens of highest resolving power, especially designed by Wollensak, in scientifically designed camera produces sharper pictures.
- ② Oversize, bright and super-sensitive rangefinder for easier and faster focusing, sharper pictures.
- ③ Automatic film pressure plate insures film flatness of all exposures for consistently sharper pictures.
- ④ 2¼ x 2¾" neg. size, 4:5 proportion. 9 exposures on No. 120 film. Matches proportions of enlarging paper for easy composition and sharper pictures.
- ⑤ Human engineered all metal camera body and controls give you steady, natural, two-hand operation for sharp pictures, easy handling, and fast action.
- ⑥ Fully automatic for effortless, errorless operation and for rapid-sequence and rapid-action photography of superior picture quality.

Created for better photography
by the manufacturers of famous Omega and
Automega photographic enlargers



OMEGAFLASH ATTACHMENT

Permits six automatic flash exposures in rapid sequence; synchronized to both shutter and Autofilm Transport . . . **\$49.50**

Advances and improvements in camera optics have progressed much more rapidly than improvements in camera design. As a result, cameras often fail to produce, with consistency, the fine picture quality of which the lens itself is capable. The OMEGA 120 CAMERA was designed to solve this problem effectively—producing uniformly superior results, of 4 x 5 picture quality on 120 film, automatically and consistently! Its new design also makes it extremely simple to operate, facilitates easy, rapid-sequence photography even under difficult conditions. Camera exclusive of accessories, but including Federal Excise Tax . . . \$239.50.

write for free folder Completely illustrated, showing all the Omega 120 features. Dept. USC-7.



SIMMON BROS., INC.
30-28 Starr Ave., Long Island City 1, N.Y.

Coming Events

May 28th, 2004 (Friday), A lecture by photojournalist Rita Leistner begins at 7:00PM in the Velma Rogers Graham Theater, 333 Bloor St. East, Toronto (S/E corner of Jarvis and Bloor Sts). This is an opportunity to see pictures of Iraq and hear personal insights from Rita Leistner, a Canadian photojournalist who has spent much of the past year in that war-torn country.

May 29th & 30th, 2004, The Ontario Historical Society is holding its Annual Book Sale at the John McKenzie House, 34 Parkview Ave., Willowdale from 10:00AM to 4:00PM each day. **Friday, May 28th** is the special **Collectors Night Book Sale**, 7:00PM to 9:00PM with a \$10 charge to have the first chance to purchase books prior to the weekend sale.

May 29th to July 10th 2004, The Stephen Bulger Gallery, 1026 Queen St. West, Toronto presents the first solo exhibition of photographs by Ian MacPherson. Born in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia he turned his camera to documenting the changing face of Saint John in the mid 1960s. He moved to Toronto in 1966 then on to London in 1968. The exhibition includes images from the East Coast and Ontario with a strong focus on environmental portraits.

May 30th, 2004 (Sunday), Annual PHSC Spring Fair will be at The Soccer Centre, 7601 Martin Grove Rd. Woodbridge. Opens 10am. For table registration contact Mark Singer, (905) 762-9031 or string@outer-net.com

June 7th, 2004 (Monday), A special meeting to explore *Railroad History* at the Steam Whistle Brewery - The Roundhouse is scheduled for 5:30PM to 8:00PM with Bruce Bell, popular history columnist for the St. Lawrence & Downtown Neighbourhood Community Bulletin. He will take you back to the days of yore when the roots of Toronto was abuzz with the sounds of the railroad. Tickets are \$15.00 for lecture, tour and samples.

To September 6th, The Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1 Rideau Canal, Ottawa is exhibiting the photographs of John Massey in *The House That Jack Built*. Since the late 1970s, John Massey's work has involved the transformation of material and perception, first through construction of models and more recently through photographs. The exhibition features twelve multiple-print series, comprising mainly gelatin silver prints from the past two decades.

October 3rd, 2004 (Sunday), The annual PHSC Fall Fair will change its location as it moves closer to the city. Public transportation and ease of parking have been considered in selecting facilities. Wait for details.

October 24th, 2004 (Sunday), The 33rd Annual MiPHS Photographica Trade Show will again be held at Novi, Michigan. See their website at www.miphs.org/

EXHIBIT OF M.O. HAMMOND

The Archives of Ontario presents a virtual exhibit featuring the work of noted Toronto journalist, writer and amateur photographer, M.O. Hammond. Selected images (from 13,000 prints and negatives, 1896-1934) are accompanied by entries from Hammond's personal diaries. See it at www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/exhibits/hammond/index.html

REBORN AS A WEBSITE

George Layne sends a message to say that the International Kodak Historical Society has been re-born as a website. The Society is devoted to spreading the word through pictures and stories of the history of the Eastman Kodak Company, its products and its role in the development of photography in America. The first edition of the site includes a story of Leslie Williams of Rochester in 1918. The story is told through pictures in his personal photo album rescued from Ebay, one page at a time. You can join, free, by sending a message while visiting the site at www.kodakhistoricalsociety.org

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

The Canadian National Exhibition is bringing the tradition of competitions back to the fair. Starting with the 3rd Annual John Withrow Photo Competition, winning photographs will be exhibited in the Arts, Crafts and Hobbies Pavilion for the duration of the 18-day fair, Aug. 20 – Sept. 6, 2004. Separate competitions are held for adults (18+) and youths (ages 12-17) with four categories: 1. Monuments/Architectural Features /Cityscapes); 2. People; 3. Landscapes /Scenics and 4. Animals /Wildlife. Entry fee of \$4.00 for youths and \$5.00 for adults. Prizes are \$100 for First Place; \$50.00 for Second Place and A Magic Pass to the CNE grounds for Third Place. Deadline is August 1st, 2004. For entry form and information see www.theex.com

OBITUARIES

We are remiss in not noting earlier the passing of some of our friends who have been supporters of the Society over the years.

Harold H. Stein passed away earlier this year. He joined the PHSC in 1976 and held membership #101.

Maurice Zubatkin, long time Secretary and Treasurer for the Zeiss Historica Society has passed away. He was the glue that held everyone together for 15 years. At the request of his wife, Maurice's collection of film products (plates and film boxes) and light meters is seeking a home – individual or institution. Contact Ingubas@otonline.net

Ralph Vincent Farr, in his 87th year died February 11th, 2004. Vince spent years reporting for newspapers in Toronto, Barrie and Peterborough. In retirement he enthusiastically pursued his interest in nature photography and collecting antique camera equipment.

Advertisements

Wanted

Michael Gilbert needs a 16.5 inch DAGOR lens for his 12 x 20 inch view camera. Contact at michael@pcop.net or leave at (416) 923-1995.