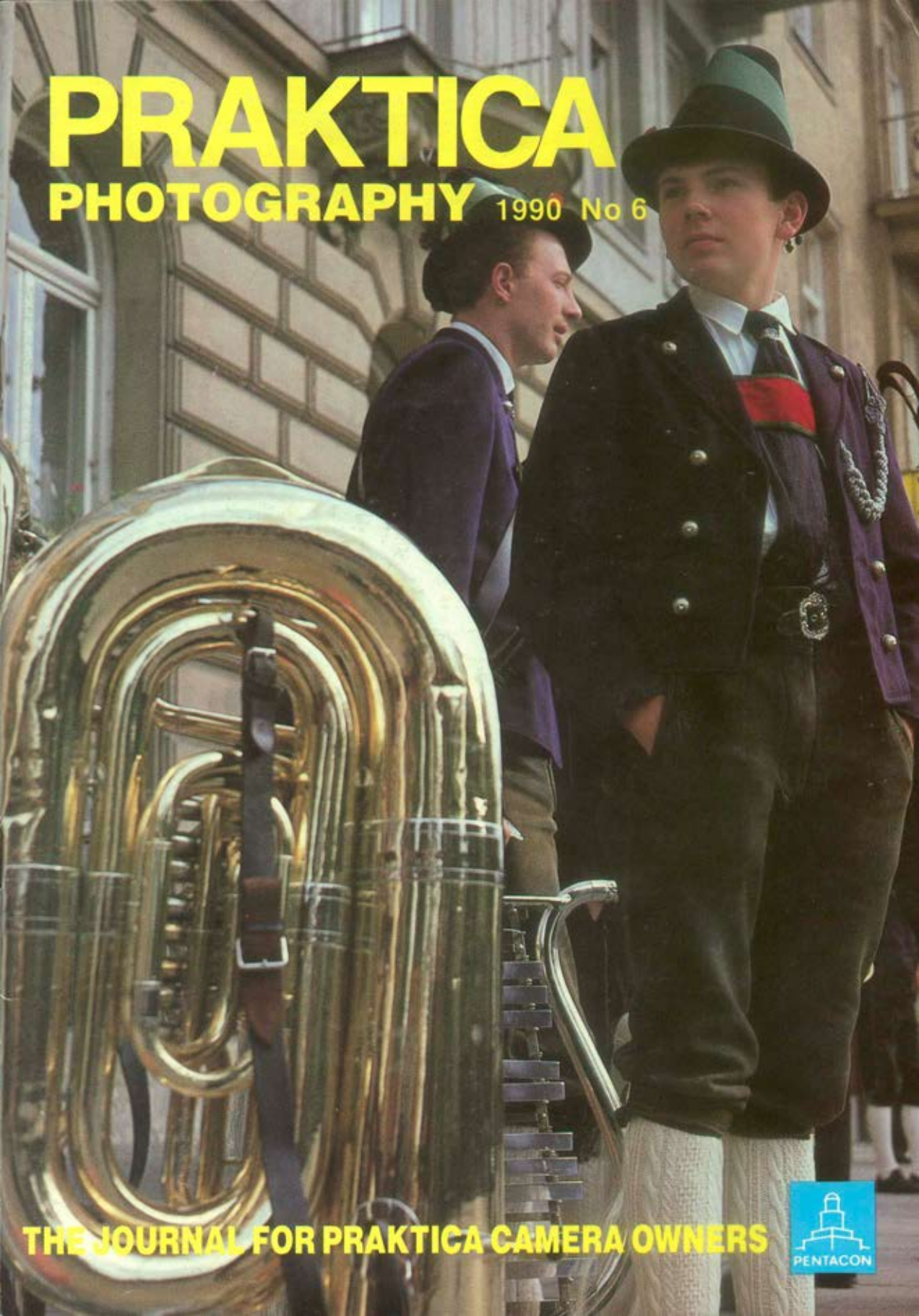


PRAKTICA

PHOTOGRAPHY 1990 No 6



THE JOURNAL FOR PRAKTICA CAMERA OWNERS



PRAKTIKA

PHOTOGRAPHY

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THE JOURNAL OF THE PENTAICON CLUB

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COVER PICTURE: 'A Bit of Brass'.
Bandsmen in Munich. Pentaicon-Six
camera with standard lens, Agfa CT18 film.
Photograph by Ray Wood.

DRESDEN SUNSET

THE BERLIN WALL is down; the GDR is no more; and a great name will soon fade into history.

It is our sad duty to report that the famous Pentaicon factory in Dresden is shortly to close; and with it, unless something unexpected happens, the end of Praktika.

It is also with even more regret that we now have to announce the end of the Pentaicon Club, and with it the final issue of *Praktika Photography* – the magazine that many thousands of Club members enjoyed and cherished. This, then – the Nov/Dec 1990 edition – is the last copy to find its way through your letter-box; and it comes to you with a heavy heart.

Believe it or not, the magazine has been with us for no less than 17 years! It was in July 1974 that the very first copy was sent out to enthusiastic members of the newly-formed Pentaicon Club, and since that time it seemed to go from strength to strength. The many letters we received proved that we were giving the 'customers' the type of material they wanted.

The sad fact is, without help from C.Z. Scientific Ltd (who continued to give us much-needed financial assistance over the years) it would have been impossible for us to keep up the high standard of production and printing with our low subscription rates. This help is no longer available. We did not enjoy the normal revenue from the sale of advertising space, and therefore we had little to fall back on.

So: from all of us at the Pentaicon Club headquarters in Redhill it is farewell. And may you still enjoy your Praktika photography for many years to come.

P.S. Praktika cameras, spares and service will still be available from C.Z. Scientific Instruments Ltd.

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Please include your membership number on all correspondence.

The Pentacon-Six Story (5)

*The fifth in a six-part series of articles
by Dr Trevor R. Allin, tracing the history of
the famous Pentacon-Six camera.*

The Exakta 66

The Exakta 66 is a medium-format single-lens reflex camera largely based on the Pentacon-Six. In Part 4 of this series, we looked in detail at the body and the range of lenses available for this new camera.

We now continue by looking at the TTL metering prism, the bellows, specialist bellows lenses and other accessories.

TTL Metering Prism

The TTL metering prism is designed to work with the full range of Schneider/Kreuznach lenses, as well as with the bellows and extension tubes. As indicated in Part 4, the shutter speed selected is transferred automatically to the metering prism, which extends further forward than the Pentacon-Six prism, and has a front plate which extends down to an arc just above the lens mount. In the bottom surface of this front plate are nine miniature buttons, which are depressed in turn by a cam on the aperture ring of the eight non-bellows Schneider/Kreuznach lenses, thereby transferring automatically the selected aperture value to the meter and enabling open aperture metering at all times.

An LCD readout on the top outside surface of the prism and to the left of the image within the prism shows all apertures, and a pointer indicates which one has been selected. Plus and minus signals indicate over and under exposure. When they are replaced by a

0, the correct exposure has been set. One may of course also change the shutter speed at any time to obtain a correct exposure setting, and this is taken into account by the meter immediately.

A push button on the top of the prism turns the meter on. After about twenty seconds it turns itself off automatically, to conserve the battery. Personally, I find this often too short a time to compose and select the exposure.

Before excited Pentacon-Six owners dash out to buy this excellent prism, I should point out three things:

1. The carrying strap lugs on the Pentacon-Six lens throat prevent installing the Exakta 66 prism on the Pentacon-Six. Of course, most Pentacon-Six owners do not use these lugs, but carry the camera in its ever-ready case, which has its own strap. The lugs could therefore possibly be removed.

2. However the TTL meter will not work unless it is in contact with the shutter speed contact pins. There is no manual way of transferring this information to the meter.

3. Pentacon-Six owners may wish to buy an Exakta 66 body with the TTL metering prism, with the intention of using their Carl Zeiss Jena and Pentacon lenses, and it must be said that all these lenses will fit perfectly on to the Exakta 66 body and that the fully automatic diaphragm pin will function normally to stop the lens down when the shutter is fired (although the 500mm Pentacon, with its wider base, cannot be fitted when



Left: The Exakta 66 and the Pentacon-Six TL, each with its own metering pentaprism. The Exakta 66 is here fitted with the outstanding 50mm Carl Zeiss Jena Flektogon wide-angle lens, while the Pentacon-Six TL has its standard lens.

the Exakta TTL prism is in place). However, the Exakta TTL prism does not offer stop-down metering, and aperture values cannot be simply transferred to the meter by adding a suitable cam to the lens aperture ring, as Carl Zeiss Jena and Pentacon aperture rings have their largest aperture (smallest number, e.g., f/2.8) at the right of the aperture ring, while the Schneider/Kreuznach lenses have their largest aperture at the left.

For example, if a Carl Zeiss or Pentacon lens is set at f/8, and the user wants to open up to f/5.6, he/she has to rotate the ring to the left, whereas if a Schneider/Kreuznach lens is set at f/8 and the user wishes to open up to f/5.6 he/she has to rotate the ring to the right. A cam on the aperture ring would therefore transmit the wrong values to the meter.

There must be a solution to this problem; perhaps the direction of action of the aperture ring on Carl Zeiss Jena and Pentacon lenses could be reversed; or the metering prism could be simply modified to accept stop-down metering. The author of this article would welcome helpful suggestions from other members of the Pentacon Club!

Bellows and Special Lenses

The newly-designed bellows are particularly welcome. They have a square cross-section (as has become standard with bellows from other manufacturers), and are a lot more compact than the octagonal Pentacon bellows. They apparently incorporate automatic connection of the lens diaphragm pin to the camera body, obviating the need to use a Z-ring and double cable release, and they have an integral focusing slide rail.

All Pentacon-Six and Exakta 66 lenses can be used with these bellows, and there are also four special bellows lenses, which cannot be connected directly to the camera body.



Above: Rear view of the metering prism, showing the film speed setting dial and the button that turns the meter on. The LCD readout shows that f/5.6 has been selected on the lens, and the 0 underneath the aperture numbers shows that this would give a correct exposure. Photograph courtesy of Exakta Foto GmbH, West Germany.

ever, as the top specification screen is supplied as standard with the body, I can see little need to change screens, unless a lot of work is planned with very long lenses (when the focusing wedges black out).

The right-angle finder for use with the metering prism is essentially the same as the one supplied for the Pentacon-Six, although the finish matches the

Lens Name	Max aperture & focal length mm	Angle of view deg.	Magnification range ×	Front ring thread for screw-in attachments	Dimensions Diameter × length mm	Weight g	
Symmar-SF	f/5.6/135	32		M 49×0.75	ø59×50.5	250	
Symmar-S	f/5.6/180	24.5		M 62×0.75	ø61×64	350	
M-Componon	f/4/28		2.7-5.54		ø39×25	65	Close-up lens
M-Componon	f/4/50		1.04-2.54		ø39×28	75	Close-up lens

The two Symmar lenses already have a world-wide reputation for unbeatable quality, and when attached to the Exakta 66 bellows they permit focusing from ultra close-up to infinity. The two Componon lenses are also of the highest quality. They are designed to give the greatest possible magnification of the tiniest objects.

There is also a method for transferring the selected aperture value to the metering prism, but I have so far been unable to find these bellows with any supplier, and therefore cannot give further details.

Other Accessories

There is a set of automatic extension tubes, and the viewfinder screens are now mounted in a black plastic frame that makes removal easier than with the Pentacon-Six. Three fresnel screens are available: fine matt, fine matt with microprism centre, and fine matt with microprism centre and focusing wedges. How-

style of the new camera. The focusing attachment that magnifies the central portion of the viewfinder image for critical focusing is unchanged from the Pentacon-Six version, and there is an accessory shoe that could hold a flash remote sensor (but who would want to mount a flashgun itself so near to the lens?)

All viewfinder accessories have the standard Pentacon-Six mount (round, with big 'ears').

The 60mm, 80mm, 150mm and 250mm lenses all accept the same 67mm diameter screw-in filters and all the lenses designed for use directly on the camera body (except the shift lens) have an outside bayonet on the front of the lens to accept a lens hood.

Prices and availability

A high quality medium format camera is not cheap, and the Exakta 66 is no exception. Praktica users may be surprised by the price of this camera. However, an Exakta 66 body costs less than many of the all-



Left: The bellows with incorporated focusing slide. Here the standard lens is seen complete with the smart and sturdy lens hood that clicks on to the bayonet mount on the outside of its front ring. Photograph courtesy of Exakta Foto GmbH, West Germany.

electronic auto-focus 35mm camera bodies from other top manufacturers, and it is even substantially cheaper than most other medium-format cameras. It is not, however, in the price bracket that was occupied by the Pentacon-Six, when it was available new in this country.

If you had previously considered acquiring an Exakta 66, but were deterred by the price, it could be worth contacting the importers, George Elliot, in Westerham, Kent, for an up-to-date price list, as they recently decided to sell direct to the public, which has enabled them to reduce the prices for all items substantially.

The TTL metering prism costs approximately the same as the camera body, which adds considerably to the basic price, unless you are happy to work with the (excellent) waist-level finder and a hand-held meter – the approach preferred by many professionals.

Lenses for medium-format cameras are generally very expensive, and many of the Schneider/Kreuznach lenses are also available for Hasselblad and other top-quality medium-format cameras. Prices are appropriate for professional photographers. In other words, most amateurs would find them prohibitively expensive. However, in their Exakta 66 version, these lenses are some 30% cheaper than when they are supplied for other medium-format cameras, most of which require a shutter to be built into every lens.

Exakta's publicity inexplicably advertises their pro-

duct as 'a camera for men'. Yet this camera weighs considerably less than most other medium-format cameras currently available. It would be a shame if it only became a sort of male jewellery, as it is capable of the highest possible photographic results. As the medium-format camera with the quietest shutter (along with the Pentacon-Six!), it is also ideal for wildlife and nature photography and for use in theatres and concerts.

In the next article in this series we shall look in detail at one of the zoom lenses for the Exakta 66 and the Pentacon-Six.



Right: One of the auto extension tubes. Exakta's publicity announces that aperture values are transferred to the metering prism, but the tube in this photograph supplied courtesy of the Exakta Foto GmbH in Germany looks like a standard Pentacon-Six automatic tube that provides fully automatic diaphragm operation by connecting the lens diaphragm pin with the stop-down lever in the body, but has no facility for transferring the selected aperture.