



# Photographica Digest

Western Photographic Historical Society

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## Notice

The Pima County Medical Society (PCMS) has informed us that due to the sale of their building to the Tucson Medical Center (TMC) their meeting room will no longer be available after our regular September meeting. The WPHS board is actively seeking a new venue. There are several acceptable candidates and the final selection will be made and announced before the regular October meeting.

## Kodak Flash Bantam

*R. A. Suomala*

Back in the 1950's the gracious lady who would become my wife and has remained so for the past 57 years took her whole weeks paycheck plus and bought a Kodak Flash Bantam which she



presented to me on Christmas eve. How can anyone not love this kind of woman?

Sometime in the 1970's I had this camera rebuilt by Kodak at a cost that exceeded the original price. By the 1980's I had completely transitioned to 35mm SLR's and the supply of 828 film<sup>1</sup> dwindled so I reluctantly sold the camera to a collector.

The 828 format uses the same basic film stock as 135 film but the film lacks the sprocket holes of 135. The 828 image format is 40 × 28 mm. This provides a 30% larger image compared to 135's standard 24 × 36 mm, yet on the same film stock. Because Kodak targeted 828 at a lower-end consumer market, the film provided only eight exposures per roll. The 828 film originally has one perforation per frame and uses a backing paper with frame numbers that can be seen through a colored window on the back of the camera. The original folding Bantams utilized the single perforation to stop

the film at the correct location. One has to press a button on the back to wind the film to the next frame. This is a thinking persons camera as there is no double exposure prevention.

Kodak ceased production of 828 film in 1985. The Traid Fotron camera sold in the late 1960's used 828 format film. This film was enclosed in a proprietary pop-in cartridge that the consumer returned to Traid for processing. The Fotron was a classic scam with door to door salesmen peddling them for 5-10times what they were worth.

I always found that the eight exposures tended to make me much more selective in deciding what pictures to take, unlike today's digital cameras that tend to produce quantity over quality. When wandering about with a small camera in my pocket (like the Olympus XA) I very rarely shot all 20-36 exposures on 35 mm film before processing.

At a recent WPHS meeting I noticed a Flash Bantam on one of the tables and decided to renew my acquaintance with this truly pocket sized film camera

This particular camera had an inoperative shutter but the lens and bellows looked OK. I recently read an article detailing the repair of this camera's shutter on the Internet<sup>2</sup> so I decided to take a shot at it.

Removing the front focusing lens element was easy. Removing the next element was more complicated. The article describes it this way.

"Next remove the center lens element. This element simply unscrews, but there are no spanner slots or holes and then lens is likely to be very tight. Use solvent on the threads to loosen them. I had to file two slots in the

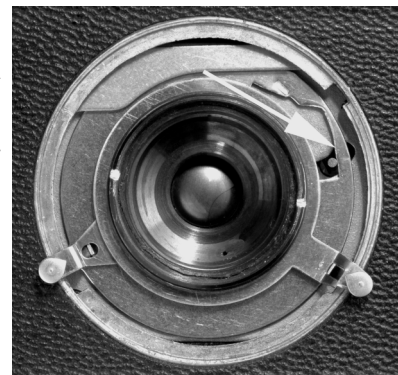


Figure 1

*continued on page 2*

*continued from page 1*

flange in order to use a spanner wrench before I could get the lens out. Try using a friction tool first".

My friction tool did not work so I filed the slots (see figure 1), used a little acetone and a lens spanner wrench to remove the lens.

The shutter assembly was quite dirty. A little solvent was used to remove the visible contamination. A miniscule amount of my favorite lubricant, Breakfree CLP<sup>3</sup>, was applied to the pivot pin pins indicated with arrows in figure 2. A touch of shutter grease applied to the speed setting cam (arrow in figure 1) will help keep the shutter working properly.

There seemed to be quite a bit of hand fitting of the parts that made me a little uneasy regarding the results of my efforts. But all was right with the world when the shutter was tested. The 1/25 second speed was right on. The 1/50 and 1/100 second speeds were approximately less than 0.2 stop fast while the 1/300 second speed was 0.5 stop fast. It's a little fast but it will most likely slow up over time.

Now I have to bite the bullet and buy some film at about \$20 per roll (4). Just thinking of all the hundreds of 828 film spools I discarded makes me gag.

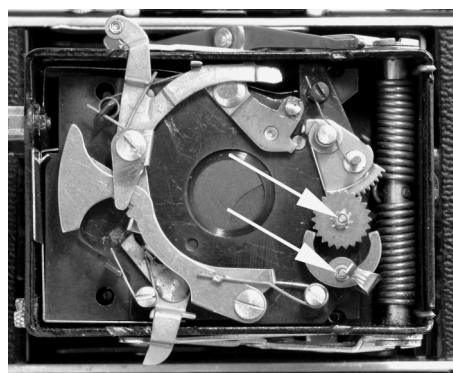


Figure 2

<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/828\\_film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/828_film)

<sup>2</sup> [www.daniel.mitchell.name/cameras/index.php?page=fbantam&WEBMGR=4d89d711dc13cf31246d02170bcdfa92](http://www.daniel.mitchell.name/cameras/index.php?page=fbantam&WEBMGR=4d89d711dc13cf31246d02170bcdfa92)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.break-free.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.centralcamera.com/Film/Film-for-Older-Cameras/index-s-orderby-sd-0-pg-2.html>

## Flexora

*Ron Kuykendall*

As some of you know, there are some types of cameras I go ga-ga over. Usually German pre-war to the 50's- simple designs and simple manufacturing technology with one of the range of excellent three or four element lenses from Enna, Schneider, Rodenstock, Laack, Steiner and several others. Most were very competent optical firms making glass for the diverse fields of science, but had some interest in photography. These lenses usually appeared as upgraded models or special order versions of lesser lensed bodies sold to a wider market.

Such were the various German TLR's of the 50's- mostly based on the Merkel/Richter design of the late 1930's—Reflecta, Reflekta, and others. These were sturdy stamped, rectangular metal bodies with helical focusing on a single lens plate, advance knob on the upper right side with a red window to advance film, no interlocks or fancy frame counters, and with aperture and speed controls on the lens assembly. I think every lens maker in Germany put its brand on at least one of these cameras. Due to the design of the simple focusing plate for both lenses, a range of lenses or lens types, could be easily mounted at the factory, allowing offering on the marketplace over a wide range of

## WESTERN PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Camera & Photographica Show

Sunday, March 20, 2016, 9:30 AM until 2 PM

**Buy - Sell - Trade - Browse**

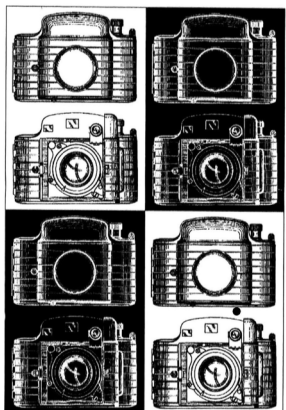
#### Admission:

Regular Admission \$5  
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WPHS Members FREE

#### We Offer:

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prices. Today, on eBay you can find a wide range of very useable 120 TLR's with a wide range of lens types, including Tessars.

In the midst of all these offerings, I found a Lipca (post war Richter- another interesting story) Flexora. This was the last of the Merkel designed cameras for Richter. Flexora's were available Enna 3- element Ennar or Ennatar or the 4- element Ennagon. The Ennagon was one

of the sharpest series of lenses the 50's. Shutters were Pronitor Vario S or SVS - 300 to 1, T, B. The camera is simple, natural to use, with the normal hooded reflex finder. There is a surprise in the eye-level finder, a fold out peep-hole rear finder with a wire frame collapsed

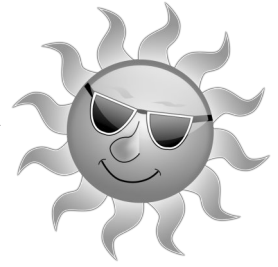


into the front of the reflex finder body - very simple and very effective especially for fast action photography. Loading is similar to a box camera- a film carrier removes from the back, film is loaded into the carrier, and the assembly is inserted into the back of the camera ready to advance to the first frame. Shutter release is on the right side of the lens assembly, all settings are visible from the front of the camera. No surprises, just very solid, simple engineering. Focus is by a helical lever below the lens, in position to focus with the left hand while holding the camera and leaving the right to make the exposure adjustments, release the shutter and advance the film. The one I have sits on a shelf with a full set of accessories ready for use- especially of those desert flowers that suddenly pop out and may be gone in a day.

Lipca provided a full set of close-up and filter accessories. A very nice picture-taker that became lost in the flood of Japanese cameras, including the Ricoh TLR series based on the same Merkel/ Richter design.

## Summer Break Ends

The monthly meetings start again on September 3<sup>rd</sup>.



**www.wphsociety.org**

Western Photographic Historical Society

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[www.wphsociety.org](http://www.wphsociety.org)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS AND EXHIBITS

- Sep 3<sup>rd</sup> Ron Kuykendall and friends will present a program devoted to the Universal Camera Company and its products.
- Oct 1<sup>st</sup> Regular monthly meeting at a new location. Program and location to be announced in the next issue of the *Photographica Digest*.
- Oct 24<sup>th</sup> WPHS Board of Directors 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter meeting.
- Mar 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 WPHS Camera and Photographica Show, Hotel Tucson City Center (Inn Suites), 475 N Granada Avenue, Tucson, AZ, From 9:30 AM to 2 PM.

We'd like your help in developing new programs especially product presentations. Please contact Robert Suomala, Program Chair, at 520-399-2796.

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### Next WPHS Meeting September 3<sup>rd</sup>

Join us one last at the Pima County Medical Society Building located at 5199 E. Farness Drive, Tucson. Take Grant to Rosemont (turn South), then turn East on Farness Drive to 5199 on the left.

Consignment and member camera sales, show and tell and a brief lecture are featured every month meetings run from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

**All are welcome!**

WPHS is a non-profit  
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