

PHOTOGRAPHING FUNGI — 5

GORDON DICKSON

COLOUR PROBLEMS



A. *Lactarius rufus* taken on a wet September day without a filter. Kodachrome 25, 35 mm lens, at f22. Exposure automatic (about 10 secs.)



B. The same specimen photographed immediately afterwards using a polarising filter rotated to give maximum extinction and increasing the exposure two times. Other details as above.

RECIPROCITY FAILURE

Long exposures such as have been suggested may affect the colour balance of the film: very simply the different colours in the emulsion do not respond equally to light. Manufacturers try to make the balance correct at short exposures. Clearly the dark areas of the picture get less exposure than the light areas and this is where the defect becomes apparent; Kodachrome 25 tends to over-emphasise the blue end of the spectrum at the expense of the red. Wet, dark leaves in particular show a gun metal blue reflection. Kodak recommend the use of a colour-correction filter (CC10Magenta) but, of course, it does affect the **whole** of the picture not just the

shadows and I have not found it very helpful. The answer for me is to make sure that I increase the exposure by the reflector recommended in a previous article. This alone goes a long way to eliminating the problem. When the exposure is in excess of one minute, however, flash can be used to **assist** the exposure, either as a little light from a small flash gun directed at the background alone or by the use of an umbrella and flash to illuminate the whole area. The method will be described when we discuss indoor photography. In the former case no increase in exposure above that already calculated will be needed, as only the shadows are being illuminated.

INTERPRETATIONS OF COLOUR

Certain flowers and fungi contain colours which affect the film in a way different from that in which they affect the eye; in particular the blue *Ipomoea* species and the blue Himalayan poppy (*Mecanopsis*) are well known to disappoint. In fungi, the Blewit (*Lepista nuda*) and The Deceiver (*Laccaria laccata*) are affected, among others. All become markedly pink on film. This can be remedied by using a **CC10Blue** filter with no extra increase in exposure. Of course, the whole picture is again affected but it is surprising how little this notices — even the grass does not appear to be blue and you have real Blewits, not 'Pinkits'!

POLARISATION

Light reflected from lost surfaces (especially when wet) is polarised and the resulting sheen goes a long way to hiding the true colour. An enormous improvement can be made by the use of a polarising filter, though this demands a large increase in exposure which may be as much as two and a half stops. Your TTL meter will take care of that but if the exposure is already a long one it is worth doubling it to allow for reciprocity failure. A word of warning — if the fungus has a slimy cap rotate the polarising filter to leave a little surface reflection or you will make it appear quite dry.

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