

# Clipping Pictures in Windows

by Gerald Fitton

## Introduction

I guess we've all been brought up to take pictures with a film camera. Our children (or grandchildren) may never use one! Digital cameras are rapidly replacing film cameras and with them comes a whole new picture taking technique.

## Processing

One of the most obvious benefits of using a digital camera is that it doesn't matter if a lot of the snaps you take are complete rubbish. You can delete them and concentrate on the good ones. After deleting the rubbish your next step is to process the good ones. Processing can be used to make pictures lighter or to get rid of a rosy, green or blue tinge caused by having a wrong white balance. In this article I shall concentrate on Clipping on a Windows machine.

## FinePix Viewer

If you have a Windows machine then you can use the software which comes with your digital camera for clipping. Bundled with my Fuji FinePix F700 camera there is an excellent piece of software called FinePix Viewer. With this software I can not only rotate images but also I can adjust the image quality, get rid of red eye, add text and clip the picture, all without losing the !Exif information (more about other forms of processing in another article).



## Clipping using FinePix Viewer

You don't need to try to Save this picture to study it. I have included it with all the 'clipping' pictures and provided an html link to the folder containing it and all the other pictures of this article. Those pictures will appear in a separate folder window and you can load them with another application, such as Paint Shop Pro, if you wish to study any of the pictures in detail.

In the screenshot should be able to see a white rectangle with eight drag handles. This is the rectangle containing what will become the clipped picture. Just below it on the left you will see a thumbnail of the clipped content and a couple of small dialogue boxes showing the width and height of the current white rectangle.



On the bottom right of the large screenshot above you will the Undo box. This is very useful if you make a mistake. You can go back and clip the picture slightly differently.

## The Eden Project

The Eden Project is located near St Austell in Cornwall. It is a most interesting tourist attraction. In August 2005, as part of my grandfather duties, I was commissioned to pick up my grandson from a short holiday with old friends in Cornwall. A friend and I took the opportunity to make a second visit to this site. It had been developed since we saw it sometime in May 2005.



One of the two main domes is very hot and tropical, we'd been there before so we gave it a miss this time. I took the picture shown above in the more temperate zone dome.

## **Selections**

If you look at the two FinePix screenshots shown in the Exif section on the next page you will see that the size of the original picture in pixels is 2832 x 2128 and that by using the grab handles I adjusted the clip (is it a statue or a sculpture?) to the 528 x 944 pixel picture below.



I was able to have several attempts at the selection, cropping a bit more off each time, then executing Undo and cropping again until I had exactly what I wanted. Because I used Undo every time, the original picture was not degraded by the JPEG compression process.

## Exif

My best guess at this acronym is "Exchangeable Image File". The important thing to me (and to you) is not so much the words the acronym stands for but what it is and does.

My camera, like most quality cameras, stores information as part of a JPEG file in Exif format about the snaps it takes. This may have the wrong form of words because it may be that Exif is a form of (a sub-category of) JPEG file! Anyway, have a look at the two screenshots below.



This screenshot on the left shows the Exif data for the original Eden picture before clipping. The screenshot on the right shows the Exif data for the clipped picture.

You will see that I took this 6MP picture with a FUJIFILM FinePix F700 at F 5.7 with a shutter speed of 1/300 second. I took the picture at 15:50:15 on 22/08/2005. This accords with my memory of the event.

I copied the pictures from my camera to my computer and then looked at the properties of the JPEG file using the Exif reader built into FinePix Viewer. Let me emphasise that all this Exif data is contained within the camera (and computer) JPEG file.

The FinePix Viewer program preserves the Exif data in the selection. The Exif data from the 'statue' is shown in the screenshot on the right. This feature can be very useful if you want to keep track of the camera settings for each of your pictures.

I have made a couple of slight modifications to the original Exif Data File.

Using the FinePix Viewer I added some copyright data ("Gerald L Fitton" and "Abacus Training") and a few comments to the original [eden00.jpg] file before I cropped it and saved the cropped selection. Although you don't see it in the data above I saved the file as a TIFF format file rather than the JPEG whilst I was doing all the processing because TIFF files, although much larger, do preserve the quality of the picture better than JPEG.

TIFF files have the advantage that they do not lose information when they are reloaded and resaved. TIFF is generally a better format than JPEG if you need to keep loading and saving slightly different variations of the picture as you work on it. Of course, "Undo" can be very useful and is a feature of nearly all Windows programs.

## **Picture CDs**

This is a subject I shall leave until another day. However, at this point it is relevant to say that as far as I know DVD players which play CDs containing photos require the JPEG format and don't work with TIFF format files. The relevance of this is that however you process your sprites or TIFF files you will need to save as JPEG in order to display them on your TV set from a photo CD.

On this AVLine CD you will find an article by T.O.M.S. about the preparation of JPEG files for a CD which is to be displayed on a standard 625 line TV.

## **In Summary**

FinePix Viewer is a free utility which comes with all FujiFilm FinePix cameras. Nearly all the digital cameras I have seen do come with software which can be used for cropping photographs whilst preserving all the Exif data.

FinePix Viewer, like the free software which comes with digital cameras of all major makes, can be used to add text, remove red eye, correct tints caused by an incorrect white balance, adjust saturation, contrast and hue, and generally make your pictures better.

Get to know your camera software. It can be very useful.