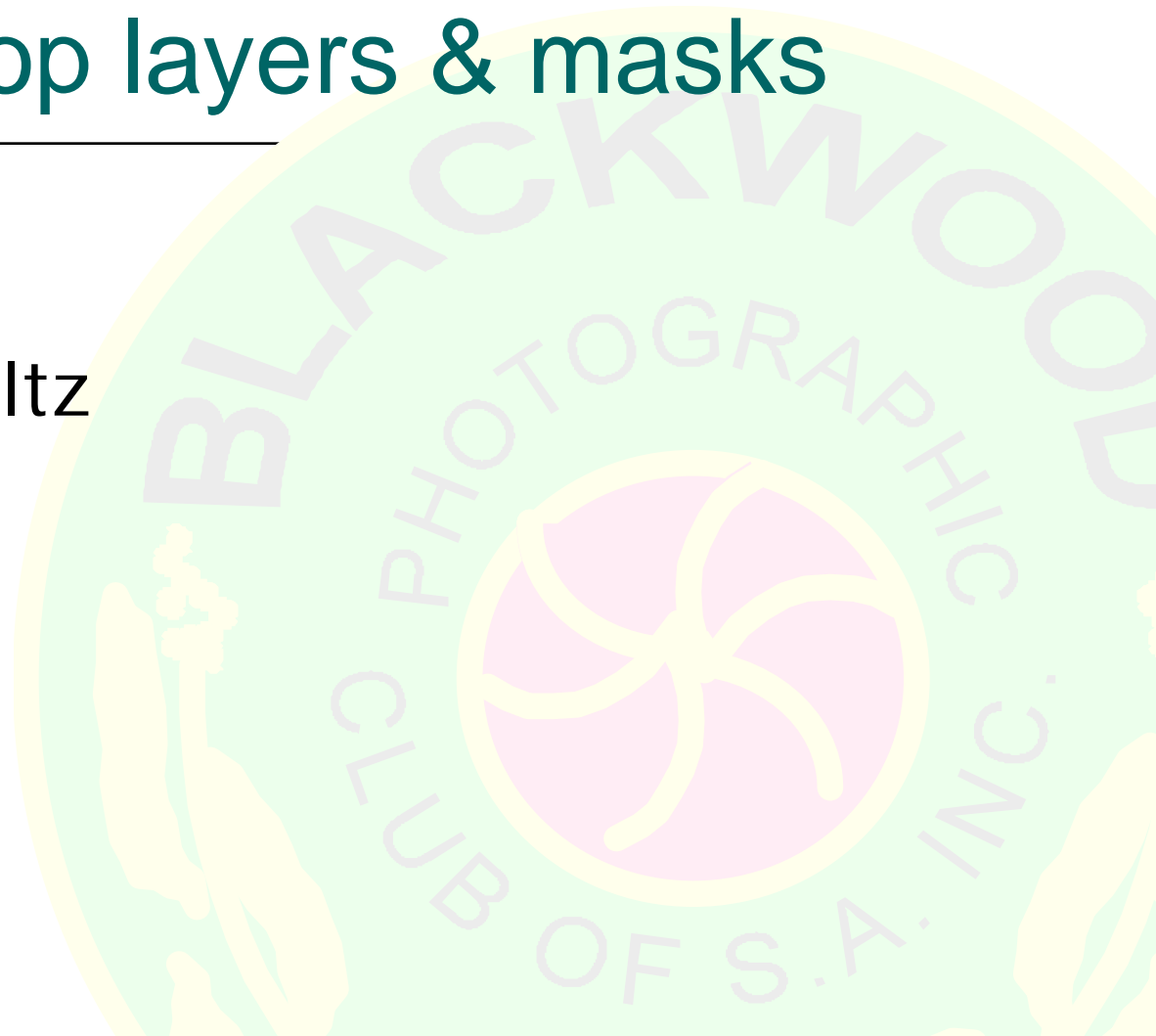




Photoshop layers & masks

Chris Schultz



What's a layer and a layer mask?

- Photoshop Layers
 - Images stacked on each other to give a composite image
- Adjustment layers
 - Non-destructive (if PSD) adjustment of image
- Photoshop masks
 - Hides a component of an image
- Layer mask
 - Hides parts of an image – based on a mask
 - black regions are retained parts
 - White regions are hidden parts



Masking tools

- Brush mask
 - Use a paint brush to paint where the mask will be used
- Magic wand
- Colour range selection
 - Best with high contrast images
 - Useful for complex borders
- Colour channels
 - Most complex but deals with complex borders very well
- You can combine these to create the final mask

Layer buttons



Delete

New layer

New group

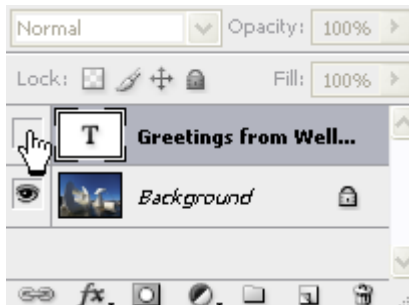
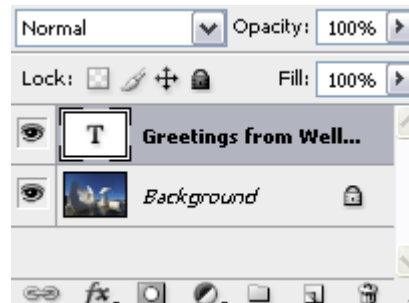
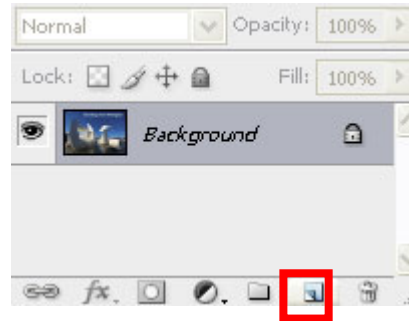
New Fill or Adjustment layer

Layer mask

Add layer style

Play with Layers

- Create a layer on an image
- Add some text to the layer
- Hide the layer



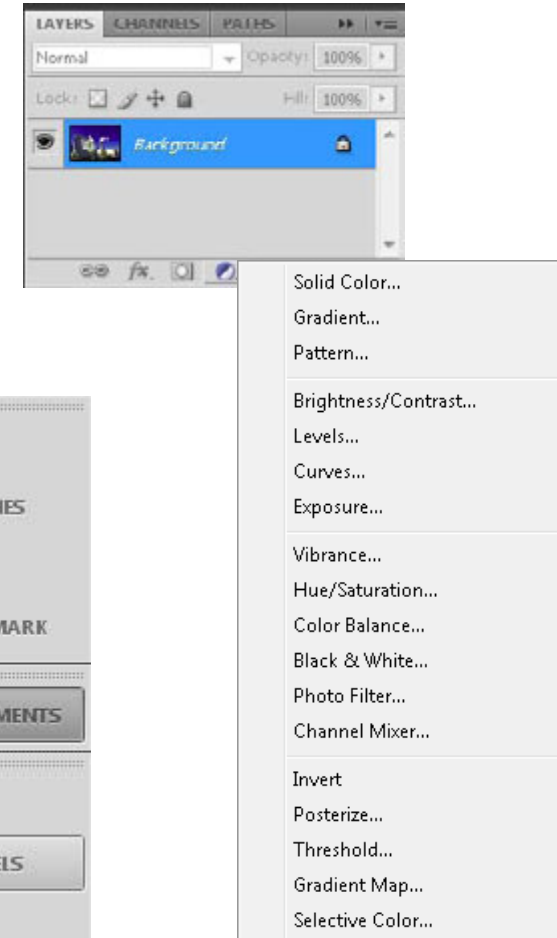


Adjustment Layers

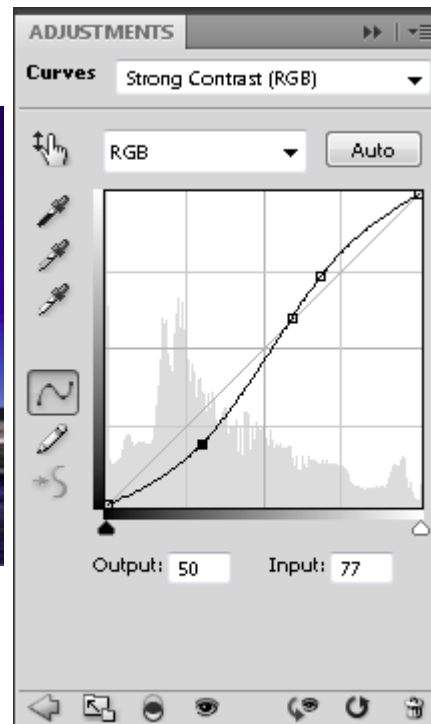
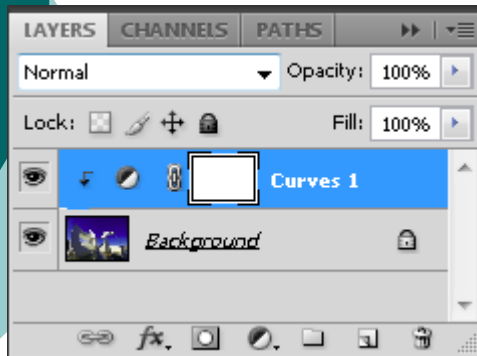
- Applies changes to main image such as:
 - Selective colour
 - Hue saturation
 - Curves
 - Levels
 - Soft Light
- Edit is not permanent until flattened
- Can save image as .PSD & changes can be undone or added to!

Create the adjustment layer

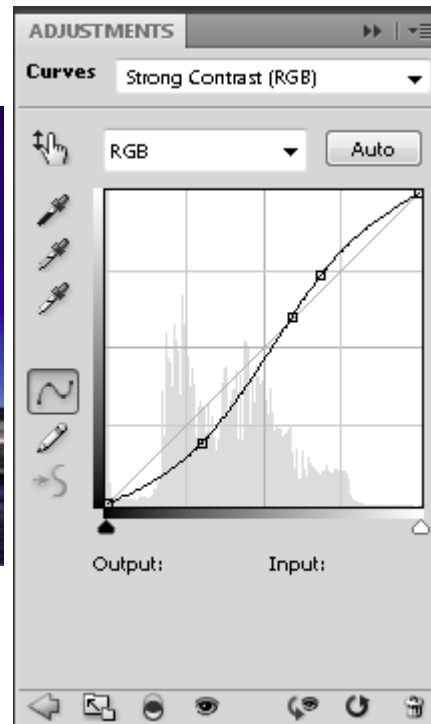
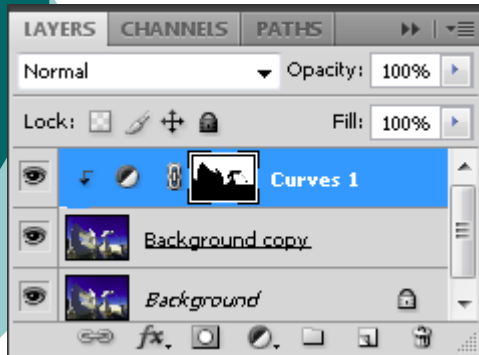
- Open an image
- Use Layers palette and click **Adjustment layer**



Adjustment layer – the whole image



Adjustment layer – a selection



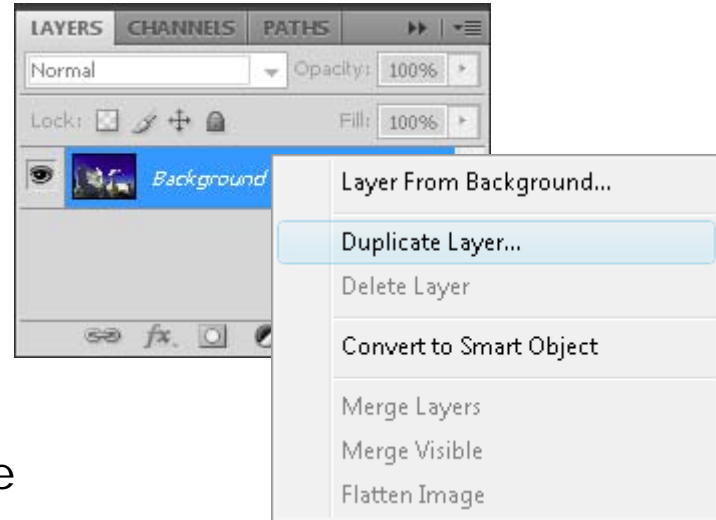


About layer masks

- Lets you combine two images
- Only use shades of grey
- Black is retained = show foreground
- White is opaque = hide background
- Edges need work if not sharp – soft edges are best (eg Gaussian filter)

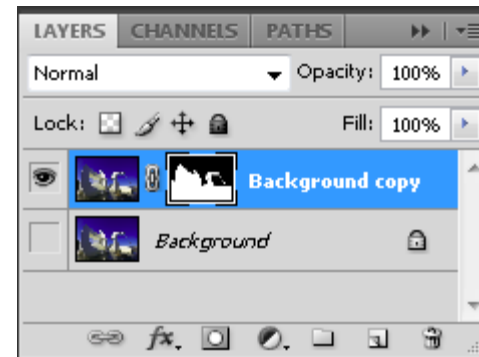
Create a layer mask

- Have the foreground image open
- Duplicate the foreground layer
- Use one of the masking tools (this one used the magic wand) to select/paint the area you want to show through – either paint or fill with black



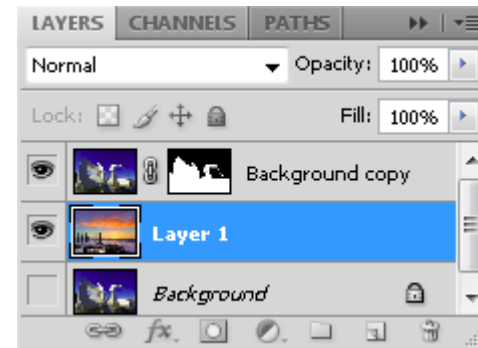
Create a layer mask - 2

- Invert the selection
(Shift Control I)
- Click on the Layer mask button on the image
(hide background to check it)
- Adjust the final mask with a combination of tools
- This leaves some complex areas
(eg sky in water spray)



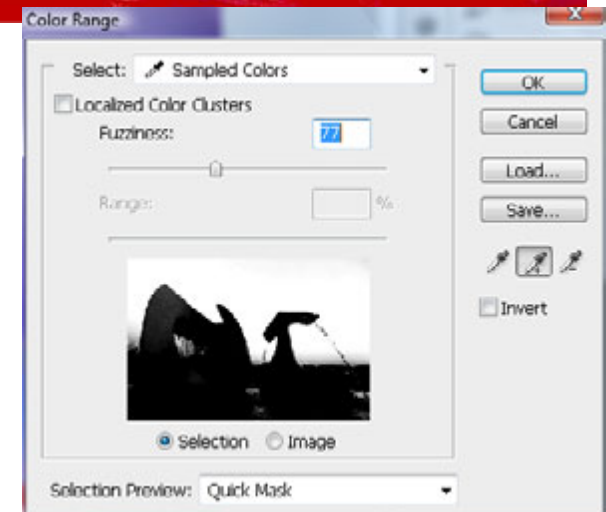
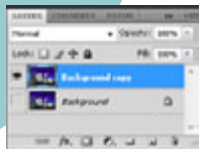
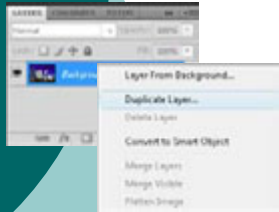
Create a layer mask - 3

- Create a new layer above the original background
- Paste the new background into it
- Scale as required
- Can be used with adjustment layers



Layer mask with Channels

- Create a duplicate layer (**Control J**) of the main image & then hide the main image
 - **Select > Colour range**
 - **Selection Preview > Gray scale**
- Mask the image
 - Adjust **Fuzziness** until most of the wanted image is black
 - Add other colours with the + **eyedropper**



Layer mask with Channels

Reduce the grain in the selection

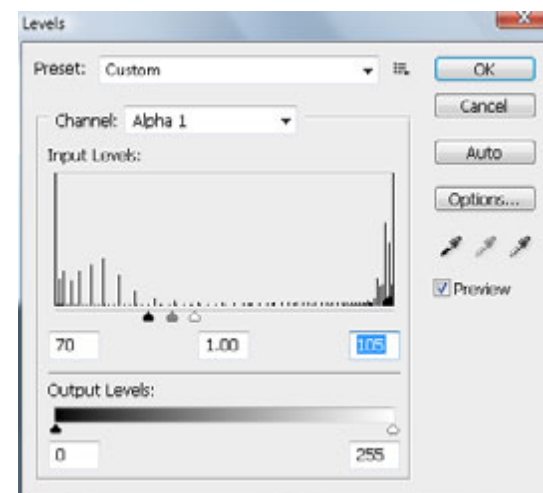
- Select the Channels palette
- Click **Save selection as channel**
- Deselect (**Control D**) & select the Alpha channel created
- The greys are retained and will need to be adjusted



Layer mask with Channels

Increase the blacks

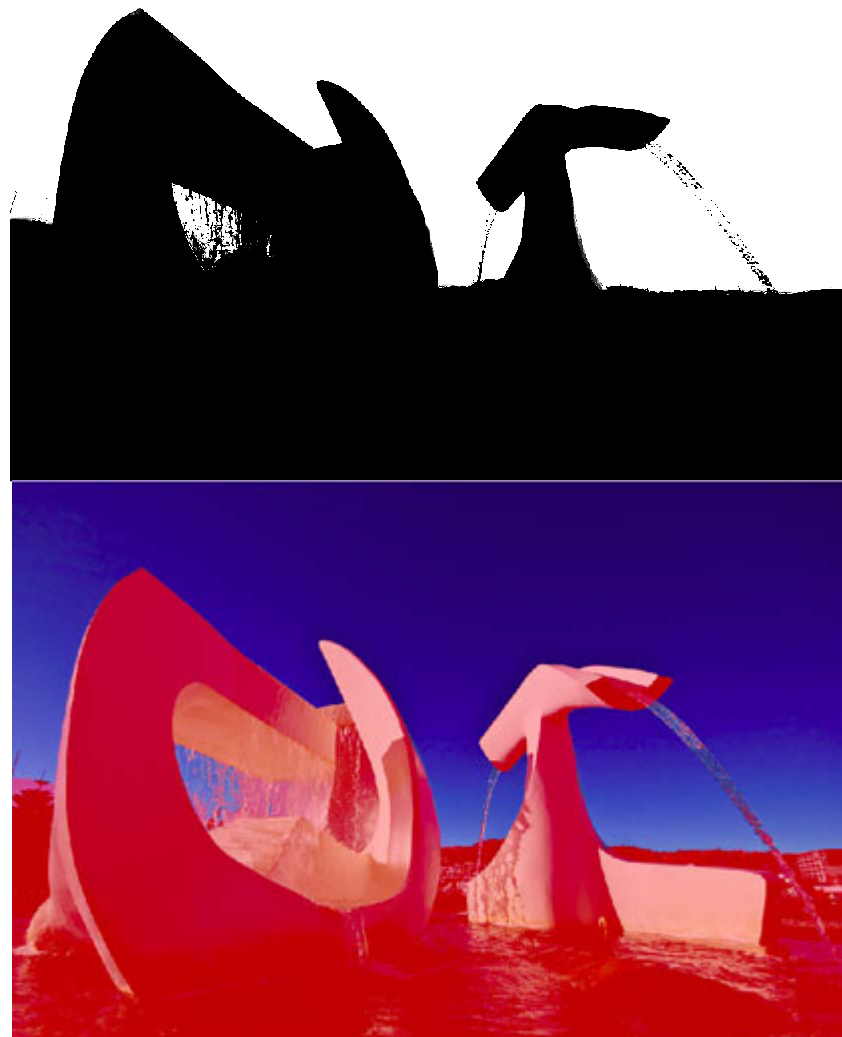
- Select Alpha channel
- Click **Image>Adjustments>Levels**
- Slide level markers
 - black retains image detail
 - White discards unwanted background
- This should remove most of the noise
- Other methods available such as Dodge/Burn brush



Layer mask with Channels

Fine tune the selection

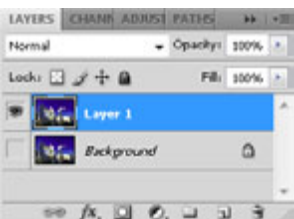
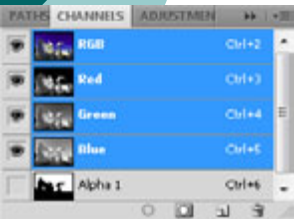
- Select a brush (B) with a hard edge
- Paint areas you want masked out
 - Zoom in if required
 - Retain - black brush
 - Remove - white brush
 - Check what is retained by clicking RGB in the channels
- Use a Gaussian blur to clean edges



Layer mask with Channels

Remove the background

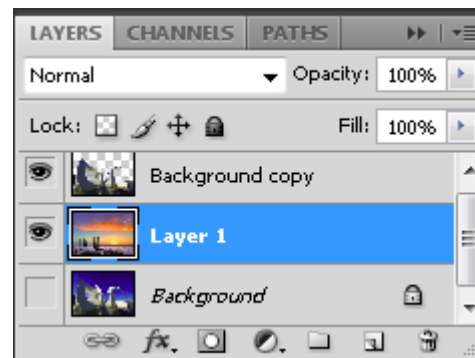
- Hold Control key & click Alpha channel to show selection
- Hide the Alpha channel
- Select the RGB channel
- Select the layers palette again
- Choose the duplicate layer (hide the background)
- Press DEL key to delete it!
- Repeat for any other areas



Layer mask with Channels

Add the new background

- Create a new layer *above* the original background
- Paste the new background into it
- Scale/adjust as required





References

- <http://www.photoshopcafe.com/tutorials/masking/masking.htm>
- <http://layersmagazine.com/compositing-images-using-channels-in-photoshop.html>
- <http://layersmagazine.com/compositing-images-using-channels-in-photoshop-part-2.html>
- <http://layersmagazine.com/remove-elements-from-a-photo-in-photoshop-cs4.html>