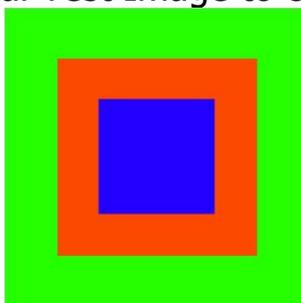


Converting a colour image to B&W The DEREK DOAR METHOD

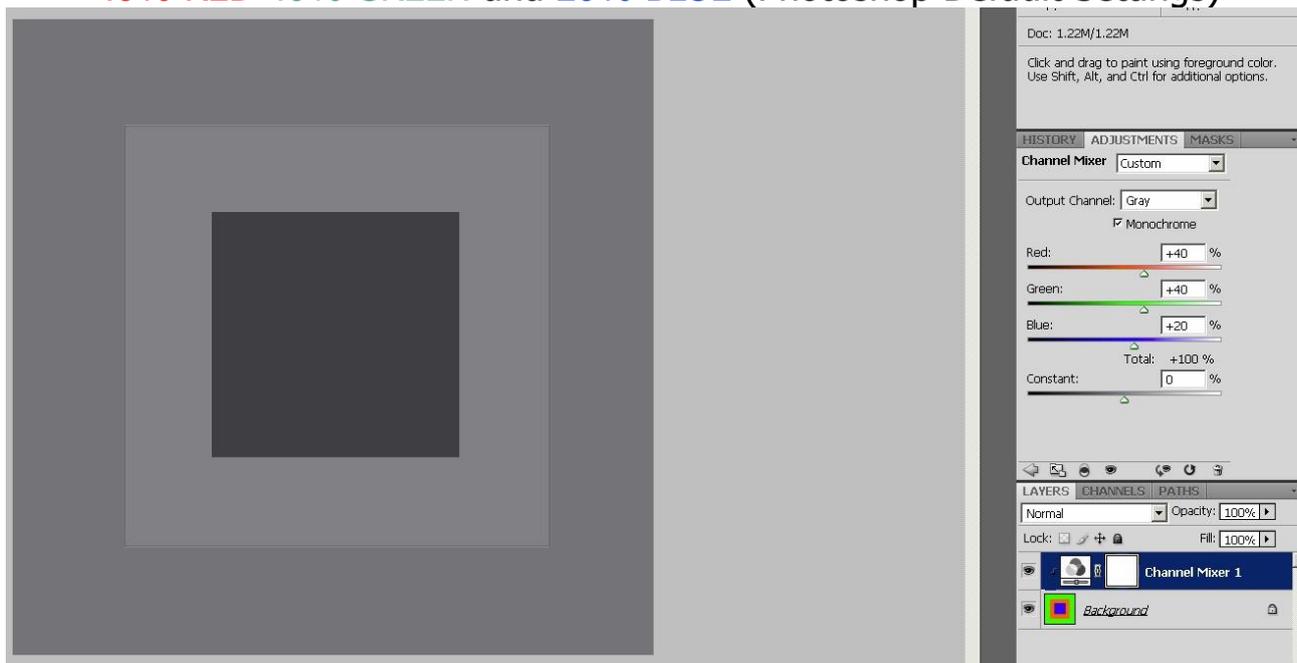
This Tutorial will show you my way of converting colour images to Black & White, using RGB Channel Mixer and Hue and Saturation layers to modify the tonal range. There are many ways that an image can be converted from colour to black & white and this is a way in which specific tones of grey can be targeted and changed to another tone of grey, thus giving more control over the final image.

Let's look at Channel mixer settings before we start the conversion Tutorial

Original Test Image to convert

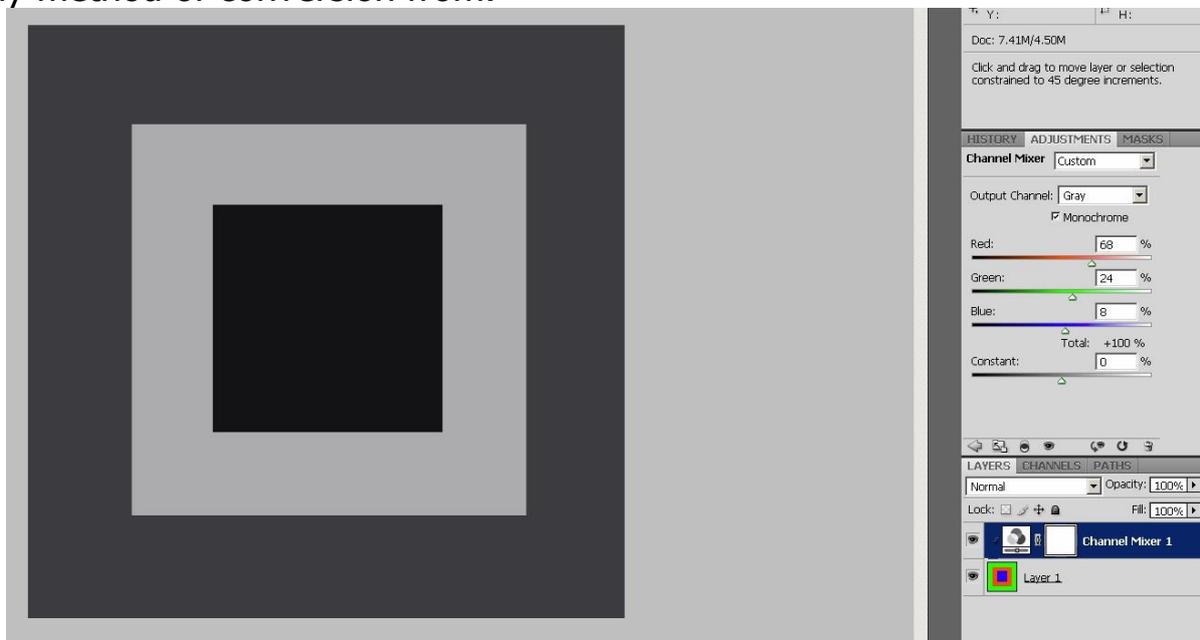


Converted via Channel Mixer using
40% RED 40% GREEN and 20% BLUE (Photoshop Default Settings)



Converted via Channel Mixer using **68% RED** **24% GREEN** and **8% BLUE**
(My Preferred Settings for general images)

The tones are now better separated and provide better base settings, from which to start my method of conversion from.



Each colour has a monochromatic tone, so if we change the colour we change the tone. In this tutorial we use Hue and Saturation Layers to change areas of colour, hence areas of tone.

Note on Channel mixer settings.

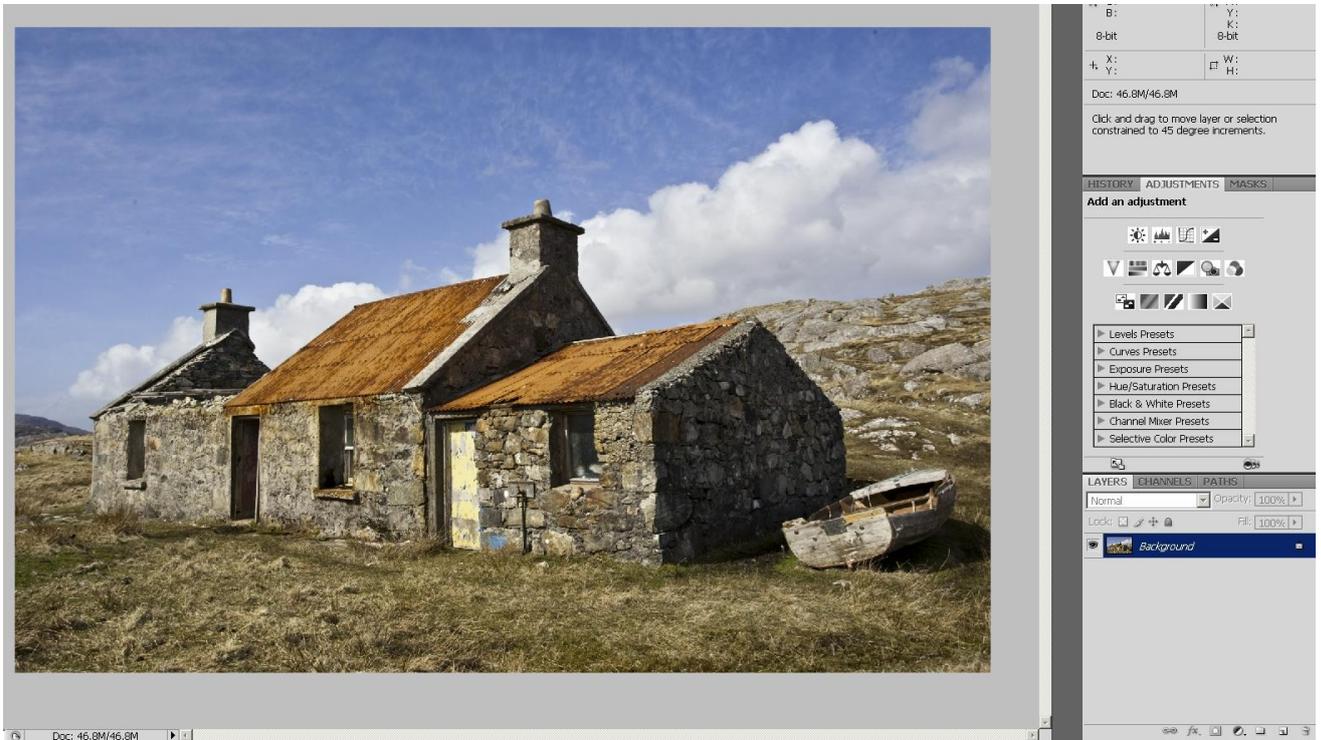
Photoshop default: **40% RED** **40% GREEN** and **20% BLUE**

My Preferred Settings for general images: **68% RED** **24% GREEN** and **8% BLUE**

My Preferred Settings for Landscape Images finished in Nik Silver Effex: **100% RED**

START OF THE TUTORIAL

1. Open the colour image that you wish to convert to B&W.



2. Add a curves layer and adjust to your taste (you can always modify when the conversion is complete.)



3. Add a Channel Mixer Adjustment Layer

by selecting **Layer/New Adjustment Layer/Channel Mixer**, and tick the Monochrome box.



You will now be presented with a B&W image with the Photoshop default settings of **40% RED** **40% GREEN** and **20% BLUE** that could look good, but we can now modify to look even better. You have total control over the mixing of all channels to produce the tonal range that you require for each individual print.

PLEASE NOTE *It is important that the channel mixer layer **MUST** be the **TOP LAYER** and any curves layer, **MUST** be underneath the Channel Mixer Layer. I have found on occasions that if the curves layer is the top layer, it can actually impart a tinge of colour to the final image.*

Set the controls to achieve your required starting tonal range.

To start with I would recommend that you find out by trial and error how each channel affects the finished print.

A good starting point for me I feel is **68% RED** **24% GREEN** and **8% BLUE** but I may modify these settings, depending on the image.

It may seem like guesswork but once you get the hang of it, you will see how you can adjust the overall starting tones of the print to your liking.

Note that the slider labelled **Constant** is used to control the brightness of the image once you have set the tonal range to your liking.

(Don't adjust this unless you have to, and then only after you have achieved the tonal range you require)

Also note that you can save any Channel Mixer Profile by clicking Save and naming it e.g. **Abandoned Dwelling**. You can then use this profile on another image by clicking on LOAD and selecting the profile called **Abandoned Dwelling**.

4. When you are satisfied with the image click on ok



Although this image may look ok, there is always room for improvement
We could modify the SKY, the ROOF and the GRASS to get better tonal separation and here is how we do it.

5. Create a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer for each tone you intend to adjust using

Layer / New Adjustment Layer / Hue/Saturation.

These layers **MUST** be directly under the Channel Adjustment Layer and this can be achieved by highlighting the layer directly underneath the Channel Adjustment Layer and creating them whilst this layer is selected.

I suggest that you re-name any adjustment layers as you create them.

(Double left clicking on the name allows re-naming to be done)

On this image I will name one adjustment layer SKY the second one ROOF and the third one GRASS

6. (You can add more adjustment layers as you go along if you require to alter the tones in other areas.)



7. Select the hue and saturation layer we named SKY Click on the selection and then select the sky tone (colour) that you wish to change.
(It is sometimes easier to select the exact colour/tone by switching off the Channel Mixer Layer and selecting the colour viewing in colour, then switching back on the Channel Mixer Layer to make the change in B&W.)



(In earlier versions of Photoshop select in the dropdown menu any colour but Master and click select the sky tone that you wish to change)

- 8.** By using the HUE slider or the Saturation Slider or a combination of both, change the selected area to the tone that you want (I have made the sky darker on this image)



9. View the colour changes.

By turning off the Channel Mixer, we can view what area has been affected and the colour change



Here we have darkened the sky, but it has also affected the blue in the clouds making some areas of the clouds too dark.

10. Mask the area that we didn't want to change

by selecting the brush tool and painting on the SKY Hue and Saturation white Layer Mask in black on the areas that we didn't

want to change we can restrict the area in which the colour, (hence tone) change takes place

11. Here is the image after masking by painting in black on the Layer Mask. Note that the clouds now after masking and note the black on the layer mask



TIP If you want to see what you have masked, and to make sure that you don't miss areas that you want to mask, press the backslash key (\) and you will see the masked area in red (see image below)



12. Check the final tonal change in Black and White by making the Channel Mixer Layer visible again



13. Carry out the same method for each Adjustment Layer Here is the **ROOF** darkened and all other areas masked using the Hue and Saturation layer mask Viewed in B&W



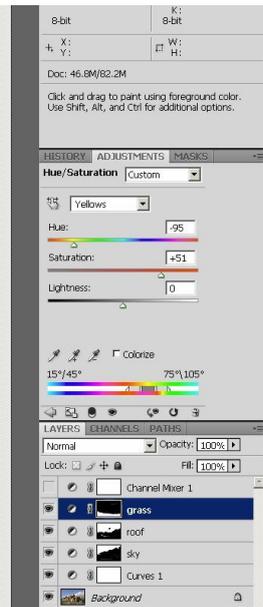
Viewed in colour (Channel mixer layer switched off)



14. Here are the GRASS layer changes. Viewed in B&W.



Viewed in colour.



15. Finishing Touches.

The tonal conversion is complete, but to complete the image it needs.

(a) Sharpening.

(b) Some dodging on the grass.

(See [Photoshop Tutorial 4](#) on my website on how to do this)

(c) A tweak to the Curves layer.

16. Image BEFORE finishing touches.



17. Image AFTER finishing touches of a little dodging to lighten the grass around the building.



Important

To achieve maximum control when manipulating images using multiple Hue and Saturation Layers, it is vital that on each Hue and Saturation Layer you **MUST** mask **EVERYTHING** that you do not want to change

Start Image using Photoshop default Channel Mixer



Finished converted Image



PLEASE READ ON

IMPORTANT NOTE:

My conversion to B&W is continually changing.

I currently use Nik Silver Efex Pro to complete the conversion as follows.

- A. Use my method to Modify the tones as you want them (but do no finishing touches) This means that Silver Efex Pro has a better starting image which means a better end image with less work.

END IMAGE FROM MY CONVERSION METHOD (WITH NO FINISHING TOUCHES)

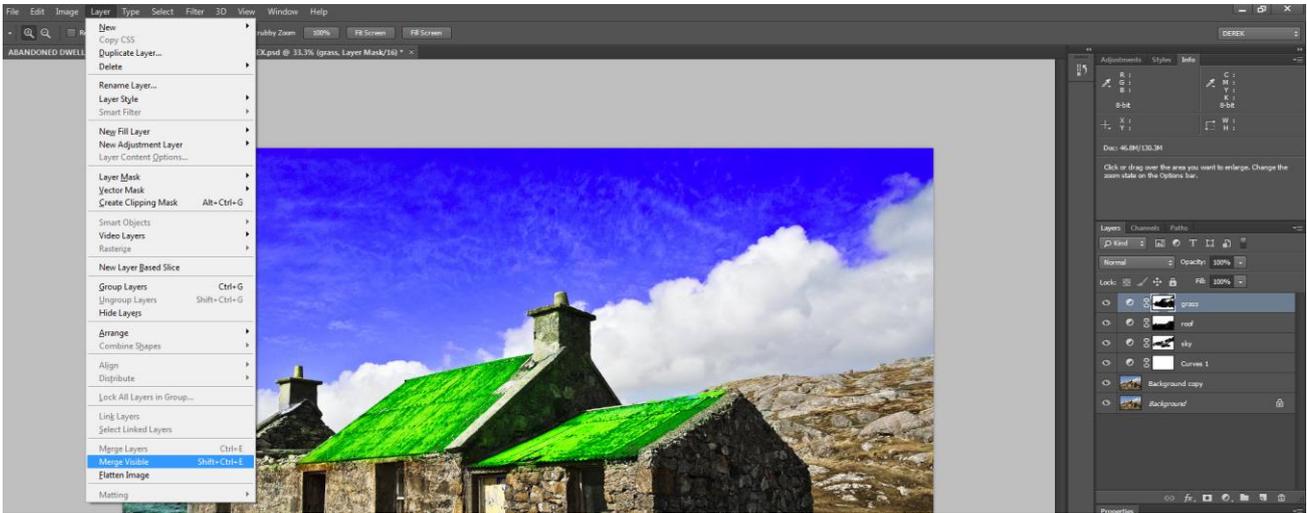


- B. Discard the Chanel Mixer Layer.
(THE CHANEL MIXER LAYER HAS NOW BEEN DISCARDED)

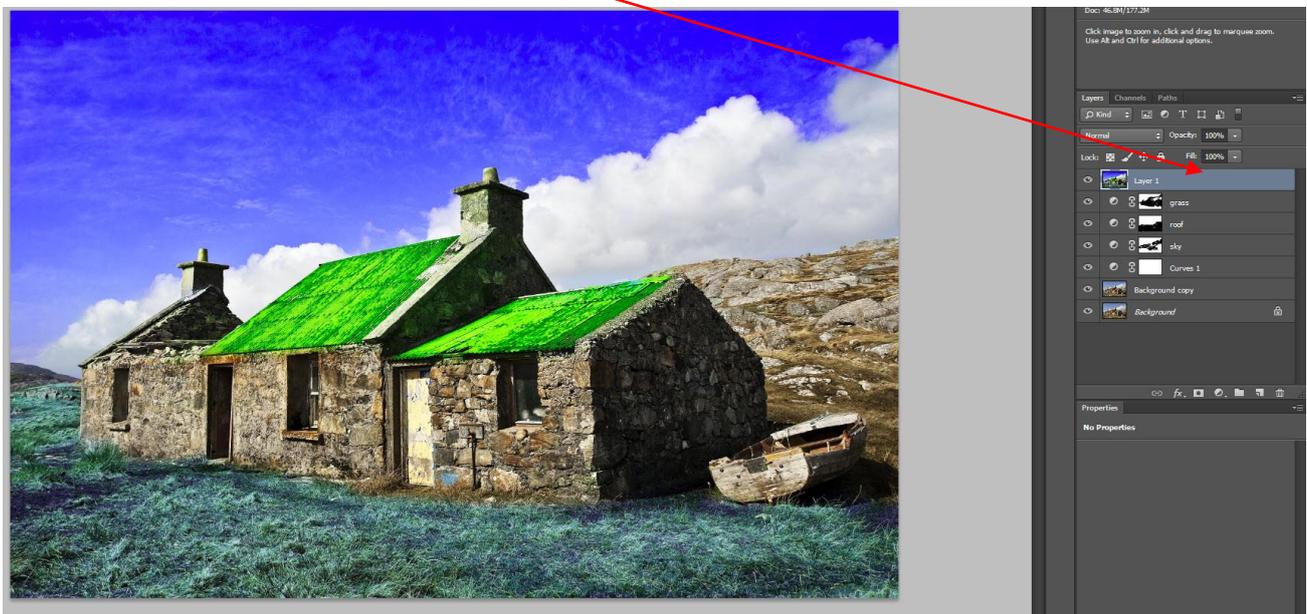


C. Create a Merge visible Layer

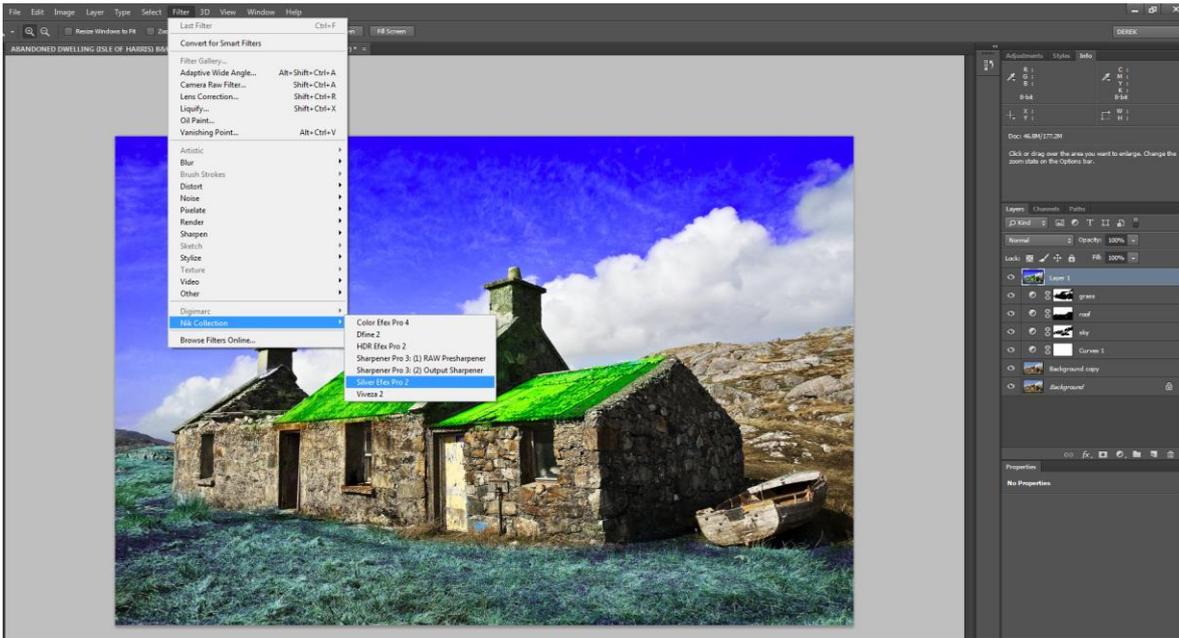
Select the top layer, hold down the Alt key and click on **Layer/ Merge Visible**



You should now see a new layer appear consisting of all the other layers merged



D. Apply the Nik Silver Efex Filter to the Merge visible Layer.



You are now ready to complete the conversion to B&W using Nik Silver Efex Pro.



NOTE:

If you are a landscape photographer, manipulating images containing blue skies, I would suggest selecting **100% RED** in channel mixer and then select the **RED** filter in Nik Silver Efex Pro.

This will enable you to more effectively darken blue skies.

E. ORIGINAL TONES (UNSHARPENED)



F. AFTER MY METHOD, PREPARED FOR SILVER EFEX PRO (UNSHARPENED)



G. MY METHOD, FINISHED IN SILVER EFEX PRO (UNSHARPENED)



I do hope that you found this tutorial useful.

Derek Doar

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