

The Big Benro “Loch Down” Review: Tripods and Filter Systems



“Loch down” view from where we live in Sconser on the Isle of Skye



Typical set up of Sony A7R II and Zeiss Batis 25mm on Benro GD3WH on the Benro TMA27C. Benro FH100m2 filter holder, 3 stop soft GND and 3 stop GND and CPL



A recent sunset from our decking. Keeping it local during lock down

Locked down at our home on Skye has given us plenty of time to reflect and review things. Being on a sea loch with views across to the Island of Raasay has meant photography has continued but on a more local basis.

My wife Bridgette and I are usually out in the mountains on a daily basis so this has taken a bit of getting used to. Being next to a sea loch, we've been referring to our confinement as "loch down."

We've still been getting photos on a daily basis but there has also been time for writing articles, sorting out photos and catching up on things. Here's a few thoughts on the gear we use. Benro as a brand figures large in our choice. Both of us have Benro tripods. Our styles vary, Bridgette more shooting from the hip in a run and gun style, my photos are more composed and considered. Thus I'm a big tripod and filter user.

Gear used by us;

Tripods: Benro TMA27C
Benro TMA28C

Heads: Benro B1
Benro GD3WH

Filters: All Benro and a range of NDs, GNDs and CPLs mainly using the FH100m2 filter holder.



Sunrise on the south ridge of Sgurr na Banachdich. To be in place for sunrise meant a 3 hour ascent in the dark using head torches

Since I'm writing this review and am the main user of Benro gear then it will be mainly from my perspective but with a few inputs from Bridgette. As a mountain guide and photographer, I work in a harsh environment, a bit of a torture test for photography gear. Highly abrasive gabbro rock, scree slopes and cliffs, snow, rain and high winds and to round it all off the Cuillin mountains rise from the sea. Thus we can add salt water and sand to the mix. It's a harsh environment and any gear used by me must do the job, be simple to use and robust.

When reviewing new gear it's hard to be able to comment meaningfully about durability and how it will last in the long term. I'm pleased to say the Benro gear has been put through it's paces and emerged with flying colours, much of it used daily for almost three years. To me, tripods and filters are tools, to be used not kept in boxes and mollycoddled. I don't mind using gear, scratching and abusing it so long as it continues to do it's job.

The tripods are both very similar but Bridgette definitely prefers the TMA28C and me the TMA27C. Here's a few vital statistics;

	TMA27C	TMA28C
Weight	1.42kg	1.54kg
Max Load	14kg	14kg
Min Height	38.5cm	31cm
Max Height	162cm	155.5cm
Folded Length	38.5cm	31cm

The main differences between the two are the number of leg sections, the 27C having 2 and the 28C having 3. This explains the weight differences and also the folded lengths. I prefer the lighter weight of the 27C but better still is the reduced number of leg sections. This means the tripod is much sturdier, stiffer and the lower leg sections are significantly bigger diameter. I also like that it's easier and quicker to deploy the tripod.

Conversely, Bridgette prefers the smaller packed size and the ability to get closer to the ground for close up nature photos. The TMA27C is noticeably larger and initially I thought this might be problematic in the mountains but the advantages have proved more beneficial than the larger folded size.

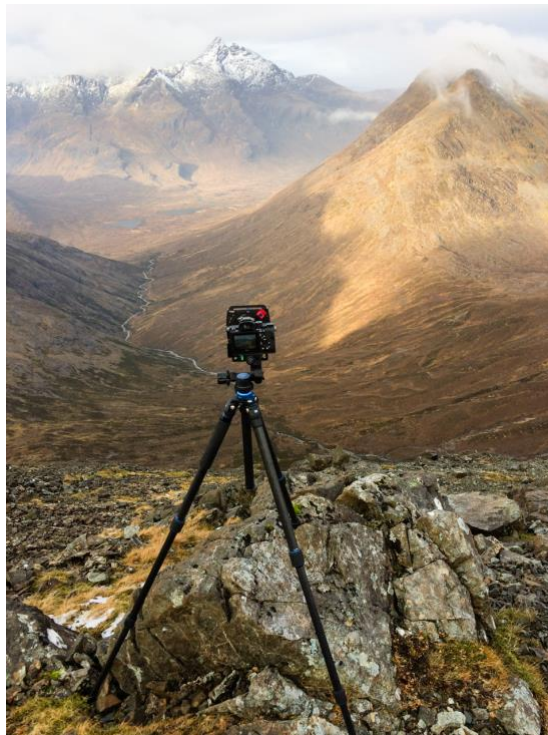
Both tripods have similar build and features. It was good to see a bunch of accessories included as standard;

- Spiked feet as an option to the installed rubber feet. Useful on grass, snow etc.
- 2 allen keys and a spanner so you have all necessary tools to tighten and loosen things.
- Padded carrying strap and also a padded carry case. This a nice touch and good for transporting and storing but something I personally wouldn't use in the field. Usually the tripod is just strapped to the outside of my rucksack
- Instructions.
- Best of all a short central column to replace the long one that is fitted as standard. I don't often extend the central column much, if at all, because it makes the camera a lot less stable. A short column would save weight and allow for shots from very close to the ground. This is a favourite feature for Bridgette.

The Benro Mach 3 collection is billed as their most advanced combining classic design with cutting edge materials. In this case, carbon fibre legs using Benro's signature 9 layers to maximise the strength to weight ratio. All metal components, which are mainly magnesium alloy to reduce weight, are doubly protected by anodising and a powdercoating which not only look pretty cool but increases corrosion resistance. Straight out of the box you'll notice the build quality. Everything feels well engineered, smooth and secure. The legs operate very smoothly. The twist locks feel great, very smooth and quick to operate. The locking is very positive and I like the moisture and dust seals to help keep damaging elements entering the legs. The tripods looks the business with dark 9X carbon fibre legs and Benro trademark blue highlights and feels really well made but now to the important question of how they performed in the field. The fact that Bridgette and I have been using them for close to three years should tell you all you need to know. I remember being told a long time ago that I don't suffer fools gladly and I suspect this is even more so with gear and equipment. It either does the job or it goes.



Benro TMA28C & B1 Ballhead a few years ago on Sgurr Dubh an Da Bheinn



2020 set up just prior to lockdown started. TMA27C, GD3WH and FH100M2 filter system



TMA 27C and GD3WH on left and TMA28C and B1 Ballhead on the right



Photo gives a good idea of the folded sizes of the two tripods and also the size/bulk of the B1 versus the GD3WH. Note top tripod has rubber feet as preferred by Bridgette whilst I prefer the metal spikes. Both options supplied with each tripod

Below are a few photos and the stories behind them show the sort of environment I work in and the exacting demands I have for my gear.



One shot I have been dreaming of for literally years was the sunrise lighting up the Bhashtier Tooth high on the Cuillin Ridge and I have been there many times but never has the light been right. I went up one day in the snow in December but it was too cloudy for any sunrise to be visible despite the forecast. Next day I went again. First outing for the Benro TMA28C, another 3 hour struggle in deep snow in the dark and nearly 900m of ascent over rough terrain. This time the stars were all aligned and a glorious glow lit the edge of the tooth but literally only for a minute or so. I was head down in a knackered state plodding up steep snow when I saw the glow out of the corner of my eye and knew I had to be quick. Flung down my rucksack, grabbed the tripod from it and A7 from it's chest pouch and carefully picked my way across the steep slope conscious of how silly it would be to end up sliding down to the coire below with a camera and tripod when there were ice axe and crampons in my rucksack. The legs extended smoothly and I kicked down the snow for a solid platform and shot 5 shots. So ephemeral was the light that the glow was only visible in the first 3 shots. As certain as I could be that I had got a stonking good shot, I continued up to Bealach nan Lice and enjoyed a flask of hot coffee whilst hoping the clouds that had rolled in would clear.



The Cuillin at dawn. The vivid colours are known as The Belt of Venus or an antitwilight arch, an atmospheric phenomena visible shortly before sunrise or after sunset

The above photo summarises why I need dependable gear that is easy to use. To be in place pre sunrise, I had to walk and climb for two and a half hours in the dark using crampons and ice axe, the way lit only by the stars and my head torch. Then in winds approaching 65 miles per hour I had to set up camera and tripod wearing gloves to try and keep my fingers warm since with the windchill factored in the temperature must have been about minus 20. The wind was so strong at times that I literally couldn't stand up and had to shelter behind rocks.

With the tripod as low as possible to the snow, I had to literally lay down leaning on top of it to have any chance of getting a steady shot. Remarkably the photo is a stitch of 6 photos and all turned out sharp due to the tripod. Praise indeed.

Tripod Summary

What we really like;

- The tripod and head do what they are designed to do, hold the camera and lens steady even in very windy, adverse conditions
- Intuitive to set up in dark etc
- Foam on leg not only warmer to hold in the cold but bigger diameter and easier to pick up when wearing gloves.
- Other manufacturers possibly use them, but new to me was the safety lock on the tripod head which means a quick release has to be pulled to release the camera/tripod plate/L bracket etc. Very easy to use and a great addition to prevent expensive camera gear accidentally falling off. I like it a lot and have become so used to using it that when I have used clients' tripods which don't have this feature then I still instinctively go through the motions of releasing it.
- Dust/dirt resistant collars on legs to prevent ingress of dirt etc. I like these a lot. Also the rubber twist locks are nice and chunky and easily operated when wearing gloves. Love how easy tripods are to disassemble and clean, something I'm meticulous about especially if the legs have been in the sea or got muddy/dusty.
- Cost/performance ratio. Benro tripods are very similar to the Gitzo range with which I am very familiar. Gitzo seem to be recognised as perhaps the premier tripod producer

but this does come at a cost and typically a similar Benro product probably costs half or less than it's Gitzo equivalent. I know that to a certain extent you do get what you pay for but in this case I can't help but think a large part of what you are paying for is the name rather than any quantum leap in quality.

Things that could be improved:

- Have some sort of dual rubber feet/metal spikes which perhaps has metal spikes with a rubber cap which could be screwed on if wanted/needed. I've seen various similar items on ebay but it would be great if these came as standard.
- A personal bugbear for me, and this goes for most makes of tripod, is the fiddly nature of the hook below the centre column for hanging a bag or other weight to add stability. Quite often I'll be high up in the mountains pre dawn and waiting for sunset and the cold will be intense and I'll be wearing gloves. It would be fantastic if this hook could be made chunkier and more glove friendly.
- The short replacement central column which is included is really useful but sadly lacks the hook of the standard column mentioned above. This is understandable but it's presumably mainly designed for use to get the camera as close as possible to the ground for macro shots. However, in the mountains I rarely need to raise the centre column and would love to just take the short column but don't because it doesn't have a hook which I invariably use.

It speaks volumes that the negative points are so few compared to the positives. When I first did review the Benro gear almost three years ago, I did say it seemed robust and well made but I had to add the proviso that only time will tell. Despite operating in a tough environment on a daily basis, I can say there's been no problems what so ever. It's definitely fit for purpose and although looking a bit scratched and battered, it's still working faultlessly.

The B1 Ballhead and GD3WH

	Weight	Dimensions
B1	0.36kg	87 x 90 x 90
GD3WH	0.74kg	145 x 139 x 109mm

Bridgette swears by the B1 whilst I never leave home without the GD3WH. The ball head is very smooth and all movements very fluid. Very sturdy especially for size and weight. The B1 Ballhead has large control knobs; the Pan Lock controls horizontal rotation, there is a friction control to adjust the tightness of the main control which releases/locks the ballhead. Everything works slickly and as it should.

The GD3WH is a bit of a ground breaker. Size, cost and especially it's weight are all very good. Until the advent of the GD3WH, Manfrotto pretty much had the market sewn up with a variety of models but none seemed ideal and there were lots of reports of design flaws, repairs and replacements. The only alternative was the mega expensive and complex Arca Swiss D4. All bases were covered; light weight, well designed, compact, durable, competitively priced but unfortunately it was impossible

to get all these concepts in a single model so priorities had to be made. Then Benro entered the market.

Benro state the weight as 740g but on electronic scales I measured them as 692g albeit without the swiss arca plate since I always use a L bracket on my camera. It's closest competitor is probably the Manfrotto 410 with a cost of £242, a weight of 1220g and capable of a maximum load of 5kg.

Until the GD3WH entered the battle, I wasn't really interested in a geared head and was more than happy with the B1 ballhead. However, once I started to use the GD3WH, I soon became a convert and never really looked back. A couple of times on big mountain trips, I've taken the B1 to save weight and bulk but as soon as photography started each time I regretted it.

First impressions of the GD3WH were extremely favourable. It arrived in a trademark Benro blue box and the head itself was encased in a hefty foam cut out that looked well capable of shaking off anything that the most heavy handed courier could deal out.



Instructions, an allen key and a blue Arca swiss plate were all present alongside the head itself which appeared to be a triumph of engineering, design and aesthetics. 10 out of 10 for eye candy appeal. Now I'm not normally drawn to mechanical things but the combination of it's utility and the precision engineering compelled me to try it out immediately on the pier outside our house.





Benro's GD3WH compared to Manfrotto's 410

In a single word, what I love about the GD3WH is “precision.” The ability to adjust each individual plane separately in minute increments. A geared head allows you to fine tune the composition and frame your shot perfectly. The primary function of a geared head is to let the photographer make large or small incremental changes to composition in an easy yet precise manner.

Ballheads have a lot of positives; light and compact, easy to use, relatively cheap. The down side is having to adjust and get right all 3 axes of movement at once and even the best can droop slightly as they are tightened up. I accepted the negatives in return for the light weight and bulk but have suffered frustration both trying to set up the composition correctly and even worse looking at a computer monitor and seeing wonky horizons or converging verticals.

- It feels surprisingly light compared to the Manfrotto which weighs in at 1220g so a fair saving. Good to know when you are backpacking long distances and every gram counts. It might not sound a lot but with one head in each hand then the difference seems huge.
- The Benro is much more compact and looks quite diminutive side by side with the Manfrotto yet can take a maximum load of 6 rather than 5kg. The 410 looks and feels more agricultural, almost over engineered. The Manfrotto plate system seems massive compared to the industry standard Arca Swiss of the GD3WH. This Arca Swiss compatibility of the Benro is a huge plus and means I can easily use my L bracket without having to cobble up some form of adapter to the Manfrotto system.
- Everything operates very smoothly and the whole thing feels like a premium product. Robust is the word that springs to mind. Controls on the GD3WH feel much smoother and more ergonomically designed.
- The clutch control that enables you to disengage the gears and make large changes of angle works really well and makes for a rapid initial set up of composition.
- The Benro has 3 bubble levels, one on each axis as opposed to the single level on the Manfrotto.
- Constructed of magnesium alloy, everything feels precisely engineered and the controls are very smooth to operate.
- The control knobs for the 3 different axes of adjustment are very positive yet easy to adjust by very small increments; despite being so easy to adjust, the controls are totally secure so no accidental knocking of the tripod or a casual brushing of them will not alter the chosen composition.
- Twist locks on each axis are spring loaded and allow for fast, smooth adjustments.

- It is so easy to fine tune a composition whilst looking at the screen/viewfinder, something that can be frustrating with a ball head in my experience.
- Such ease of use and precision certainly motivates me get things right in camera and once you are used to the dual controls it is easy to disengage the gears to make large sweeping movements then re engage to fine tune the composition. This soon becomes second nature although to start with, I must admit, I felt like a second world war sailor desperately trying to train an anti aircraft gun on a fast approaching enemy plane. Now I find it doesn't take much longer than with a ballhead and the end results are nearer to in camera perfection so less editing time required.
- The degree scales are useful and I find myself able to try one composition, take a note of the angle then try another with the knowledge that I can quickly and easily return to the first if necessary.
- Like other Benro heads it has the added safety of having to pull as well as twist the knob to release the camera from the head. A great safety feature that works well.

The GD3WH looks the business but looks counts for little when you are out in the field and a photo opportunity presents itself. So how does it perform in the field, or in my case, up a mountain?

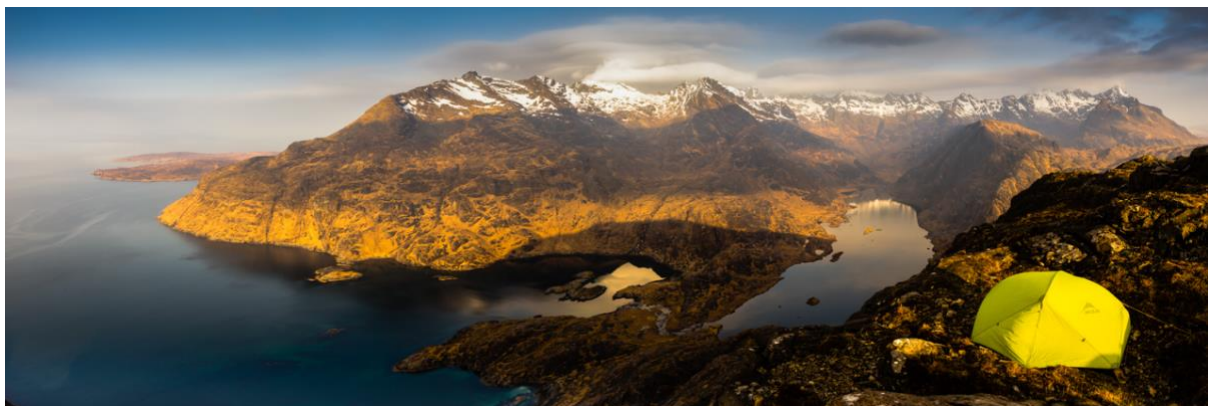
Having had the head for over two years, it has become a valued companion. When it first arrived, I suspected I'd do the review then simply revert to using a small ballhead. The extra weight and bulk were off putting to say the least to one used to carrying the minimum into the mountains. Once I'd tried the GD3WH and really got used to the precision, it was inevitable that I wasn't going back to a ball head. Previously I'd owned a Manfrotto one and a client on a workshop had a Manfrotto 410 so were able to make some comparisons.



Benro GD3WH & Manfrotto 410 in the field, well on the summit of Sgurr na Stri



GD3WH and TMA27C on Sgurr na Stri



View from Sgurr na Stri to the Cuillin Ridge

The Benro GD3WH has all the benefits of the Manfrotto 410 with none of the negatives. It is smaller, lighter, smooth to operate and cheaper. Best of all it is rock solid once set up and the controls are easier to use and more comfortable.

When I first reviewed the GD3WH, as with most of my reviews, I did express potential concerns about the long term durability and robustness of the head. After two years of abuse, or in my case it probably amounts to abuse, the head is still going strong. Sure, it has some superficial scratches and bashes but nothing that's impacted on it's working. I'd been worried it might be overly complex, fragile or susceptible to dust and damp getting into the gear mechanism. Such fears were totally unfounded and despite always being on the outside of my pack in all weathers and being subjected to dust, dirt and water, it still works as well as on the first day.

Benro Filters



Benro filter holder and filters in use lochside

Whilst Benro are an established name in the world of tripods and heads, they are new kids on the block with their filters.

Filters, like tripods, are like the Marmite of the photography world. Love them or loathe them, every photographer has an opinion. Bridgette hardly uses filters whilst I'm a big fan and keen to get things as right as possible in camera. Having had the Benro filters for two years means they've had some serious testing.

Over the years I've owned or had access to Lee, Nisi, Kase as well as H & Y Filters but the Benro are my preferred. To me, usability is the bench mark. Nowadays, most quality filters achieve or exceed a reasonable standard of quantifiable criteria like colour neutrality and clarity. Once you're above a certain reasonable standard then higher numbers are just a bragging point to a certain extent, more for pixel peepers than real world photographers.

As long as there's minimal/no bad colour casts, flare, the filter is optically true and doesn't soften the image you're taking with an expensive lens, then I'm happy. Once these standards are met then my priority is usability. High in the mountains, I'm looking for a system that's easy to set up and use, is secure and safe and can be done wearing gloves.

Usability is where the Benro FH100m2 system really scores and to my mind it's one of the easiest to use and very secure. It is bulkier and heavier than some rival systems but it's very strong and I can testify that it will survive a lot of abuse.

The Benro system is very comprehensive and two tiered with budget resin filters and the simple FG100 filter holder versus the FH100M2 and Master Series glass filters. The Universal Series Resin Filters are described as “budget friendly.” Resin is less resistant to scratches but also less likely to break if dropped. The optical properties aren’t as good as the glass master filters. Master Series Filters are made from the renowned German Schott glass before being coated to a high standard that ensures colour neutrality. Schott glass provides a superior optical performance, and high light transmission. A special coating is added both to reduce reflections from the filter’s surface and any glare between the lens and filter. The anti-reflection coating neutralises infrared light waves meaning low colour shift and high light transmission. A multi layered nano coating provides an anti scratch coating and it’s hydrophobic properties help keep the surface free from dust, dirt and especially water drops. Apparently every Master Series filter is tested by hand to ensure it’s optical qualities.



The FG100 holder is much simpler, lighter and a bit smaller but to my mind feel decidedly inferior. Partly this is due to it’s plastic construction but mainly because I am so used to the easier handling and security offered by the FH100M2 and the filter frame system



FH100M2 filter holder showing plastic filter caddies holding glass Master Filters

Where the FH100M2 filter holder really differs is that the filters are held in plastic frames or caddies with teeth along the sides. The caddies slide into the filter holder and the teeth engage with a geared wheel and gnarled knob which can raise or lower each of the filters individually in the three sets of slots.



A wide range of filters are available including Circular Polarisers, Neutral Density and Graduated Neutral Density in both hard and soft. The CPL will screw into the filter holder behind the slots where the filters go and can be rotated by means of a wheel on the rear.





More loch side testing for the FH100M2

Using The FH100M2 system

Firstly an adaptor ring screws into the front of the lens then the filter holder is attached. This is a very positive action which I much prefer to the Lee. The red catch on the right retracts to let the holder slide over the adaptor ring then when released slides back to prevent the holder coming off. The blue knob is then tightened up to provide a very secure fit. Yes, I know it's bad practice and probably asking for trouble but I am more than happy to walk around with a small fortune's worth of filters on the front of the lens. Friends and clients all seemed to know someone who had experienced disasters with the Lee system.

The FH100 M2 is a precision engineered work of art, an aluminium frame with a protective black coating and close fitting plastic guide rails to secure the filters and prevent the ingress of any light. AN 82mm CPL screws neatly into the holder so the polariser is behind the square filters. This seems a fantastic arrangement and whilst not an original Benro idea, does seem far superior to the Lee system. Lee 's CPL is a large 105mm which clips to the front of the filter holder. It needs to be large to prevent vignetting and the large size makes it an expensive item. The Benro CPL has a lot of plus points; lots of photographers liked the huge knurled wheel to turn the filter. This to the rear of the filter holder and the wheel is easily accessed and provides control which is easily accessed even with gloved hands. Both the Nisi and Kase systems I saw had a similar set up with only a very small wheel which seemed quite fiddly by comparison. However, I did like the magnetic attachment of the Kase CPL making it a breeze to fit or remove. The Benro system with it's large faff free wheel is by far the easiest to use but I'd love to see a mark two version with magnetic rather than screw in attachment.

The FH100 M2 is robust and I like that. It feels bomb proof and definitely an improvement on the plastic Lee holders. Kase and Nisi produce nice aluminium holders that look well made and durable but the Benro feels a level above albeit this is offset by added bulk and weight. If this is a concern then Benro also make the FG100 holder which is lighter, smaller, more streamlined with less features.

Whilst not unique to Benro, the system uses "Filter Frames." These are black plastic frames into which the glass/resin filters are fitted. At first this just seemed an added complication but now I really like this feature which is similar to the mega expensive Wine Country Camera "Filter Vaults" but at a much more reasonable cost. These Filter Frames serve a variety of purposes; - The main advertised advantage is that the sides of the frames is toothed and these teeth can be engaged with a cog on the Filter Holder. The red knob on the rear of the filter holder can be used to engage the teeth in any one of the 3 slots which accept the filter frames and used to precisely raise or lower graduate filters to get the exact position desired. Lots of photographers who saw this thought it a brilliant idea and lamented it not being available in other systems apart from the Wine Country range.

- Help eliminate internal reflections caused by any light entering via the edge of the filter - Provide a level of protection both for when in transit or if dropped.

- The filter frames are easy enough to load the glass into but if possible get a couple of extra so you aren't constantly faffing around switching glass. The holder comes with one 100 x 100mm and one 100 x 150mm filter frames but I asked for a few extra.

- The filter frames will hold any 2mm thick filters of the requisite dimensions so you can easily transition from an existing system to save initial outlay.

- I love that the frames have to be slid in from the top and have a stop so they cannot be pushed right through or drop out something that seems blindingly obvious but will save a lot of expensive accidents.

- To my mind, the most useful is that you can handle the filters without actually touching the glass thus avoiding smeary finger prints. Also the frame makes for much more secure handling especially in the cold/wet and if wearing gloves. Glass is only too slippery and easy to drop but the plastic frames provide a good grip especially with the "handle" above the locking slot.

The filter frames genuinely add security to potentially fragile glass filters. Whilst Benro make no special claims for the strength of the glass filters, they are very strong as I can attest to, having dropped a couple quite a distance onto rocks. Corners of the filter frames have been marked by this but I'm sure the glass would have broken without the frame.

In the field, the Benro system has proved robust with no sign of wear, tear or damage. Although seemingly initially complex, once you get used to the system it is incredibly quick to set up and very secure. Having used the system a lot in both bad weather and in water margin areas like coastlines and waterfalls, I really appreciate the nano coating on the filters. I have no way of knowing it's longevity but over 2 years of use

and abuse it has continued working to shed water and dirt just like it did when new. Water just beads up on the coating and both water and any smears/dirt are easily wiped off. I can be heavy on my gear and getting the photo is more important to me than cosetting my gear. The coating still looks pristine on the CPL and square filters. The filter holder has a few light marks and scratches but nothing very significant. The glass filters come in nice soft fabric pouches in rugged plastic boxes. What the system does lack is a dedicated filter pouch sized to accept the filters when in the filter frames but Benro are working on this.

As a side note, make sure the CPL is screwed in properly. Initially I hadn't screwed it in completely and it must have gradually worked its way out to such an extent that I couldn't slide the filter adjacent to it in or out. This necessitated removing the plastic rails from the front, removing the filter and tightening the now accessible CPL. Probably just a stupid error on my part and something that hasn't happened since. Note to Benro the FH100 kit didn't include an allen key but luckily I had one the correct size. Perhaps something to include in the future?

Pros

- + No discernible colour casts or shifts
- + The glass filters show no discernible loss of resolution even when stacked
- + Robust build and well engineered design
- + Placement of CPL behind filters and with a very easy to use controls + Mechanical vertical adjustment system
- + Choice of resin or glass
- + Nano coating works well
- + No flare or reflections noticed
- + A comprehensive system
- + Filter frames offer a degree of protection and facilitate finger print free handling

Cons

- The system is competitively priced but still not cheap
- No dedicated filter pouch available but Benro are on the case (pun definitely intended)
- No allen key for tightening/loosening/removing the frame guided on the holder
- To add/remove CPL you have to take out any filter frames/filters and remove the filter holder so a bit fiddly and time consuming in a fast developing light situation.

NB Benro have now launched an FH100M3 which has a CPL held in by magnets which promises to be easier to use. Also the mark 3 version can use 82 or 95mm diameter CPLs to avoid vignetting in wide angle lenses such as the Sony 16-35mm G which I have recently bought.



Summary

Having used Benro gear for almost three years, both Bridgette and I have been more than happy with it. Our styles may vary but here's a few photos by us both.



Bridgette on the Isle of Lewis



Lenticular clouds over the Red Cuillin. We live on the far side of the hill on the left



Low angle photo by Bridgette with me in the background



One of my favourite photos. It was taken during a two day trip when we spent the night in an icicle fringed cave (see separate photo). View across Coire Lagan at sunset to the Inaccessible Pinnacle catching the last rays of light



Icicle clad cave and home for the night



Bridgette on the Isle of Lewis with Benro TMA28C and B1



Sun setting behind the Cuillin Ridge. Photo taken from the hills behind where we live



Another typical low down shot by Bridgette

Photo from Sgurr na Stri showing the main peaks with Munros in bold type (NB Sgurr Alasdair is hidden beyond An Sgurr Dubh Mór)
Gaelic forms provided by **Alnmean-Àite na h-Alba**

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The Cuillin Ridge

The Cuillin Ridge from Sgurr na Stri.
This has been printed 2.5 metres wide and shows the importance of a sturdy tripod



Bridgette and the Benro tripods on Lewis



B1 ball head on TMA28C with FH100M2



Set up for the shot below



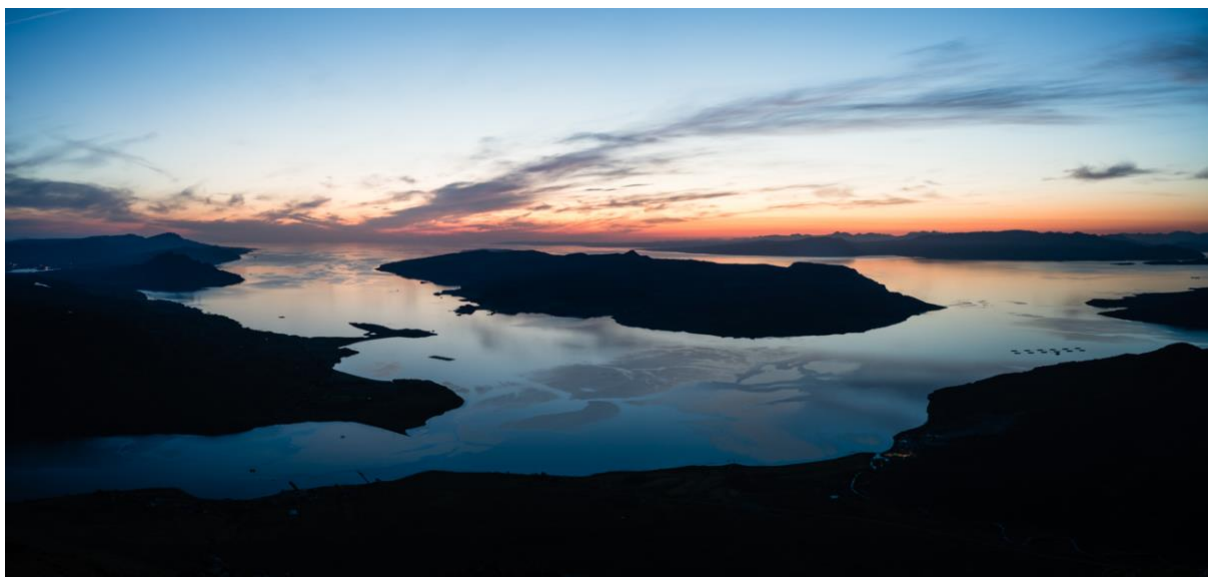
View to Marsco and Sgurr nan Gillean

Since restrictions for lock down in Scotland relaxed on May 29th we've been able to drive 5 miles and go into the hills. A huge relief and some great photo opportunities as our lochside lockdown relaxed.



Sunrise in the Red Cuillin. View from Ben Dearg Mhor

The above photo was taken within walking distance of our house, albeit a two hour ascent in the dark. For 12 weeks of lock down we'd stared up at this hill every hour of every day. It was a huge relief when things eased off and in Scotland people were allowed to go into the hills within five miles of their home. Perfect for us with hills literally on our doorstep.



Sunrise from Glamaig, the hill behind where we live



Sunrise and Sgurr nan Gillean

A three mile drive and a two hour walk from our house. Another ascent in the dark but well worth the effort. A real sense of freedom and escape after lockdown eased a bit.



The last light of day on the Red Cuillin and Bla Bheinn. Another walk from our house

Bridgette and I feel very lucky. Not just due to our living the dream life style, the location where we live but because of all the people we have met, friends we have made through climbing, photography and the Cuillin. We feel privileged that companies like

Benro send us gear to use and review. We both use Benro tripods and I use Benro filters extensively and after three years of use there are very few things we'd change about any of their gear.

Sure it would be great if the tripods were half the weight and twice as stable, oh and dirt cheap. But in reality, with physics and such, weight and stability are trade offs. Benro tripods are top quality products and good value for money, fighting well above their perceived price bracket.

The Benro filter system is nearly perfect for my use and I really can't understand why it isn't more widely known and why Benro don't big it up and promote it more. I'm looking forward to seeing the new FH100m3 filter holder which should resolve any issues I have.

Many thanks to everyone at Benro UK for making the gear and making it available to Bridgette and me. Much appreciated.

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