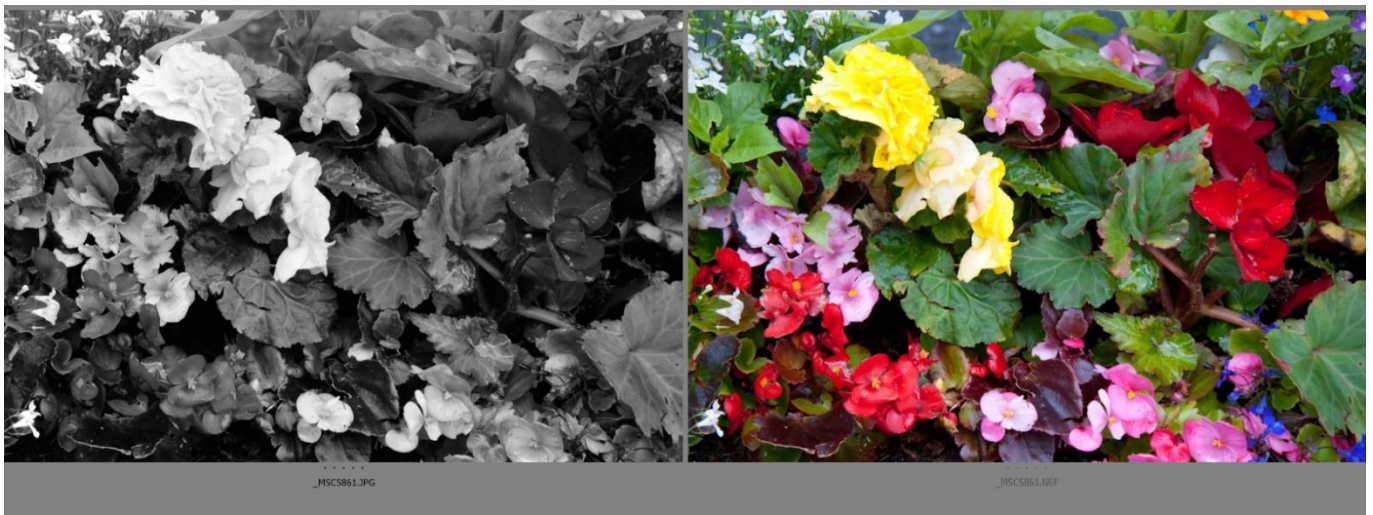


## Black & White Photography

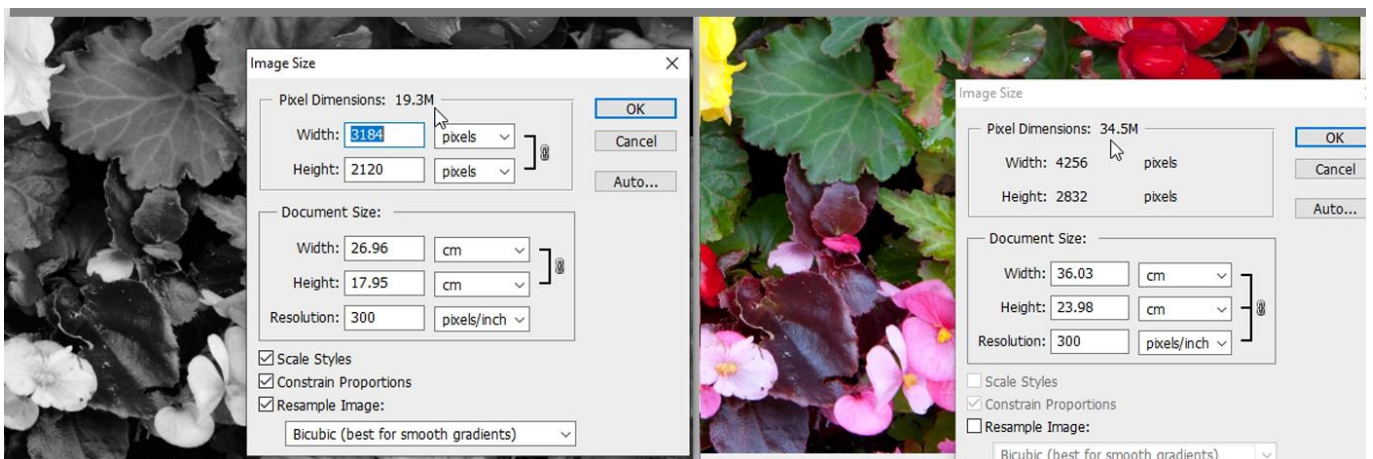
Typically, Black & White works best with strong, simple shapes rather than fine detail. Good sources of ideas for subjects that will work well in B&W are books and magazines.

In the camera you can take a photo as B&W or in colour.

Setting the camera controls to 'Raw + JPEG' gives you 2 files, a BW .jpg and a camera Raw which is still in colour. When reviewing the picture in the camera, you see the .JPG in black and white and this can be useful in assessing if the subject suits BW in the first place.



The .jpg is processed by the camera's software so you have little control over how that is done which may not suit you.



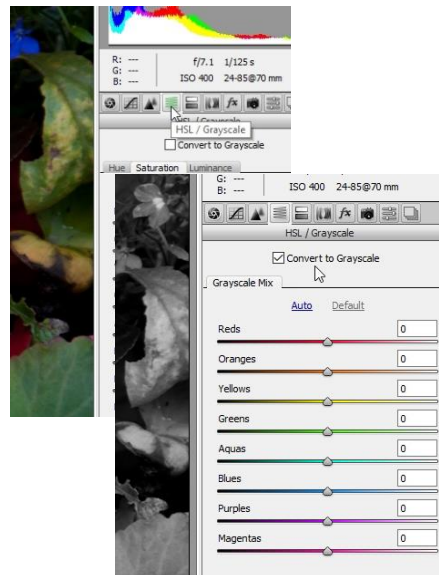
Looking at the Image size shows that, because of the way the processing is carried out, the B&W .jpg is much smaller than the raw file. This may not matter for viewing on screen, but it does mean that it is only suitable for a smaller print.

**(NB** This is from my Nikon D700 – your camera may be different, and different in-camera .jpg settings for size and quality will affect these figures as well).

In the example shown, the BW image shows another snag – it is difficult to spot some of the flowers. The tonality is not quite right.

So, use the camera Raw file. Opening it in Adobe's Raw Converter does allow creation of a Grayscale image, using the 'HSL' box.

Tick the 'Convert to Grayscale' box. The picture becomes B&W and then, moving the sliders around in the Grayscale Mix allows alterations in the brightness of individual colours.



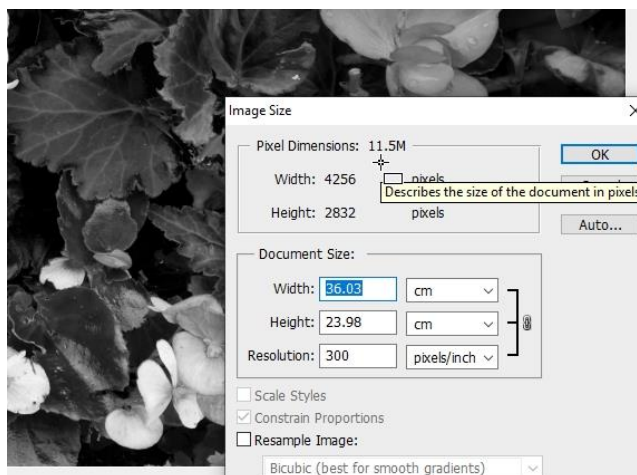
Before

After changing Grayscale Mix



But.

**But.** Look at the image size. Now it is a Grayscale image. All colour information is gone and the print size possible has reduced significantly.

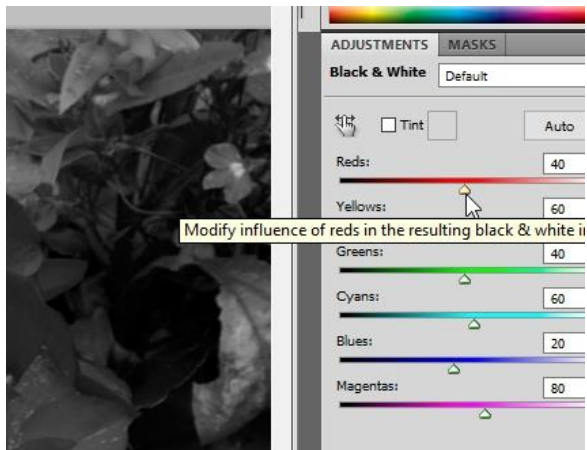
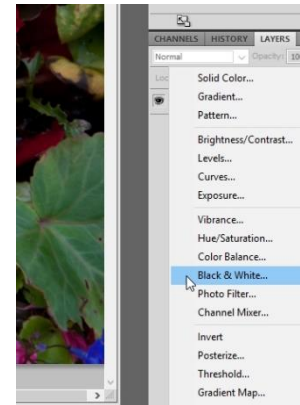


The way round this problem is to use Photoshop (or Elements, or Lightroom).

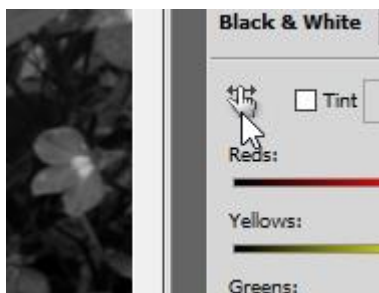
Adjust the Raw file as necessary (in the Converter) with regard to contrast, then open in Photoshop.

Use the *Black and White adjustment* and look at the dialogue box.

There are a number of presets available up at the top. These can be useful, but the real fun, as always, starts with the sliders.



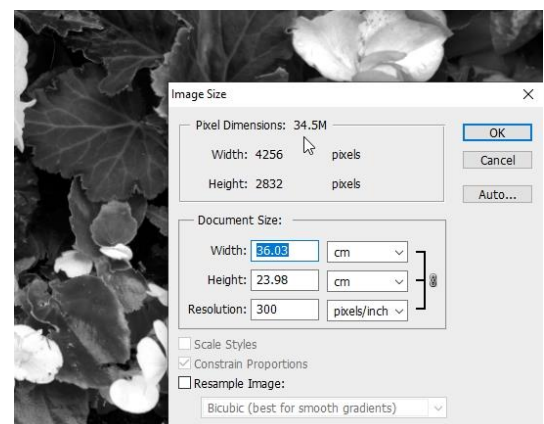
Move each colour slider in turn and see the effect on the image.



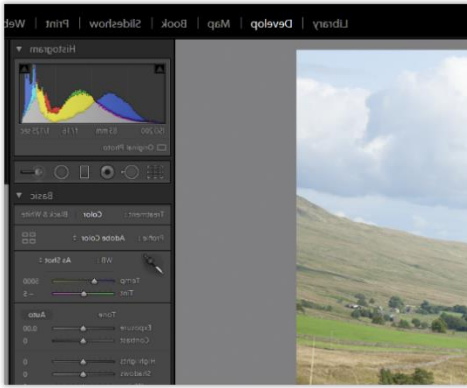
Or, to make a specific tone in the image lighter (or darker), click on the hand symbol, move the cursor on to that tone in the image and slide the cursor left to darken it, or right to lighten.



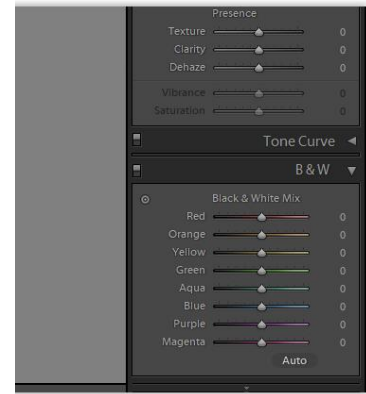
When you are happy with your result, save it. The image size using this method has not been reduced. A big print is still possible.



Lightroom behaves slightly differently,



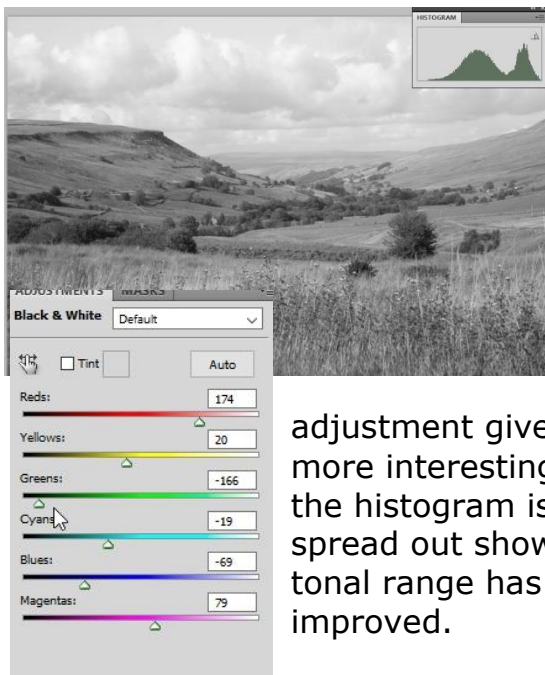
On the 'Develop' screen, there is the option to use Colour (Default) or BW. Choosing BW brings up a dialogue box similar to the BW adjustment in Photoshop and the process for changing tones is the same.



The good news here is that the file stays at its full size. That's one complication less to deal with!

Meanwhile back in my more familiar Photoshop:

This landscape lacks punch. The B&W photo is definitely flat but before we look at general contrast changes, we can use the B&W controls to alter the relative tones in the image.



Looking at the histogram before we start, there are two main clumps of pixels – one in the middle for the flat grey landscape and the other to the right, representing the sky. No wonder the picture is dull.

Using the sliders in the B&W adjustment gives a much more interesting result and the histogram is much more spread out showing that the tonal range has been much improved.



However, we need not stop there. We can carry on adding expression and mood with levels or curves in Photoshop to really get the point across.

