

Picture Perfect. 2 Clone – Margaret Smith

This photo of the Titanic Museum in Belfast was Rod's entry to our Annual Print Competition. The judge liked the image but said, "Crop the seat and sign on the left, to remove the small areas of white we are drawn to. These done carefully, the edge of the building can still be retained".



So, we try that and it works. The seat and sign are gone. However, the balance of the image has now changed



and the building is now too close to the edge of the picture.

An alternative way to remove the unwanted (and un-noticed at the time of taking) is to **clone** it out.

The '**Clone Stamp Tool**' is the tool for eliminating blemishes and scratches on photos, for getting rid of unwanted details or when restoring old and damaged pictures. It works by copying from one part of a picture (called the **source point**) and pasting on to a different part of the image.

It is usually more useful to zoom in on the relevant part of the image to better see what you are doing.



To set your source point, position the cursor where you want to copy from, hold down '**Alt**' and left click. Then release the '**Alt**' key.

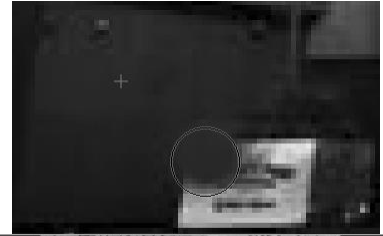


To apply the cloning, left click on the area you want to change. As the tool is used, a cross appears on the image to mark the area which is being copied. You can paint with the clone stamp by holding down the left button while moving the mouse.

It is a good idea to set new source points quite frequently – this gives a better result and means that if you make a mistake you don't have to go back to the beginning and start all over again.

Here is the photo with the offending elements cloned out.

However, it is often the case that once an area has been cloned out, other elements of the image become more apparent, and you may want to clone these out too! e.g. in this image, perhaps we can take out the hut on the left, or the railings on the right.



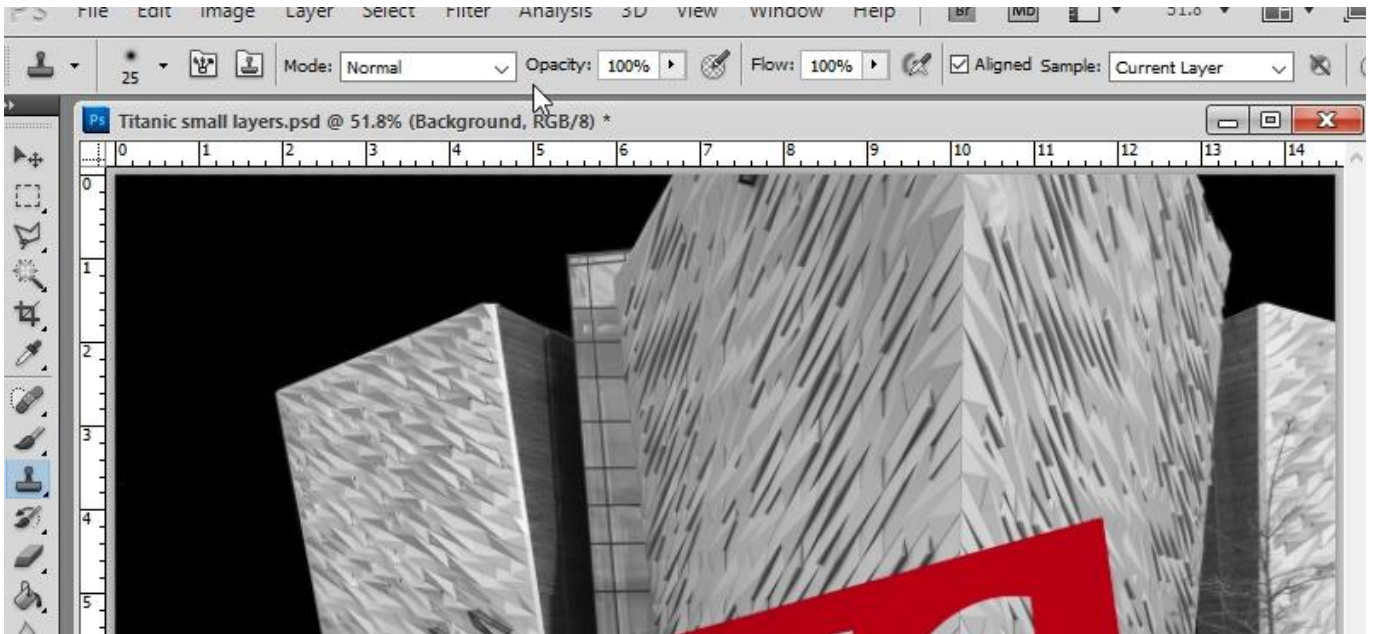
This is where careful consideration of the balance of the picture and the intentions of the photographer are paramount.

Rod's chosen final version is this one where the steps and shadowy buildings on the left have been retained, but the railings to the right are gone.



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The very top part of the Photoshop screen is the '**Options Bar**' and this changes depending on which tool is being used, to give allow further control.



The clone tool shows an options bar that allows selection of different '**brush**' sizes. A fairly small softish round one is usually best. For most purposes, '**normal**' is the best blending mode (but by all means try out the others).

'**Aligned**' means that the area being copied from stays in the same relative position to the stamp – uncheck this and the sampling point stays in the same place. If you have created layers, then keeping the '**use all layers**' box active means that information from all of the layers is being sampled.

You can clone from one layer to another within an image, or even between pictures.

Make a selection to limit the area covered by the clone stamp if the shapes involved are awkward or intricate.

If the brush starts painting a strange blue bubble-like pattern, you have clicked on the 'Pattern Stamp Tool' instead. Go back to the toolbox and pick up the right tool.

Remember. Don't work on the original picture. It's easy to mess up with cloning and if you **Save** by mistake, the original is gone forever! Work on a copy or use the **Save As...** command

NOTE

These "Picture Perfect..." notes all use **CS5**, my current version of photoshop, but the tools and techniques explored are common to just about any reasonable photo-editing software.