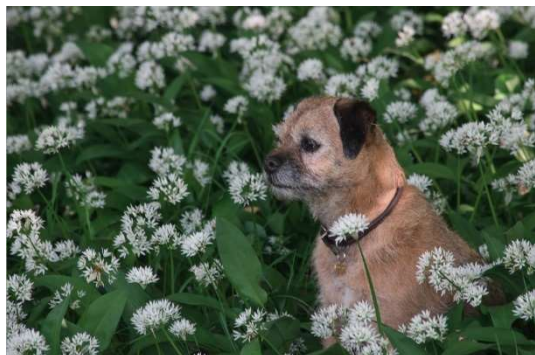


Picture Perfect - 4 Local Control

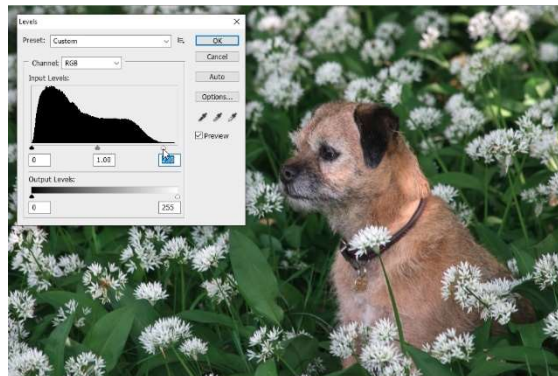
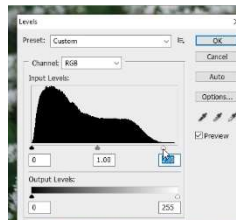
Picture Perfect 3 looked at altering the overall brightness and contrast of an image. Now we'll see the difference that can be made by changing only parts of the picture, i.e. **local control**. As always, the first step is to decide what and why anything should be altered. If it's fine, leave it as it is!



Sarah's May picture "At one with Nature" evokes the month beautifully. The cropping and any necessary cloning have already been done but perhaps the contrast could be a little stronger?

Looking at the **levels** box shows space at the right side of the histogram so pulling the

right slider along to where the graph starts, lightens the whites, thus increasing the contrast.



However, the dog, Tickle, is perhaps not quite visible enough so we can emphasise her a little. To do this we need to isolate just that part of the picture,

For this we will use the **selection tools**. These are at the top of the toolbox. Each of them has advantages and disadvantages and, as with the other 'tools' in the box, the '**Options**' bar gives information about the range of ways the tool can be used.

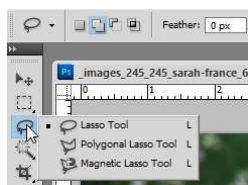
Tools Overview

1 The Marquee Tools

Click on the image; hold down the left mouse button and drag to create a selection. A dotted line box opens up behind the cursor. When the mouse button is released the dotted lines change into the 'marching ants' that indicate a **selection** has been made.



2 The Lasso tools



Lasso tools are used to draw a line around the area to be selected.

The ordinary **lasso** tool simply follows the line of the cursor as you draw. Click on the image where the line is to start, hold down the left mouse button and move the mouse to encircle the desired area. As soon as the mouse button is released, the loop closes.

The **polygonal lasso** draws straight lines between mouse clicks. Click where you want the selection to start. Move to a new position and click again to create an '**anchor point**'. Carry on clicking round until you are back near the start. Then double-click to make the loop close.

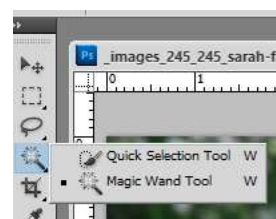
Incorrect anchor points can be removed by pressing the 'delete' key on the keyboard.

The **magnetic lasso** detects edges within a specific distance from the cursor. After you have clicked the cursor on the starting point, which must be on a clearly defined edge, it clings to that edge. It is most satisfactory when the edge is easy to follow e.g. light clothing against a darker background. Its sensitivity can be changed in the **Width** and **Edge Contrast** boxes in the Options Bar. You can click to create extra anchor points to keep the line on track.

3 The Magic Wand

Picks out pixels of similar colour or tone. Click inside the area you want and the marching ants of a selection appear. In the Options Bar, you can specify a colour value or a tolerance – low tolerance picks out colours which are very similar, a higher value gives a broader range – often good for skies.

Use the '**add to selection**' () choice and click around to pick up stray parts of the photo that should be included.



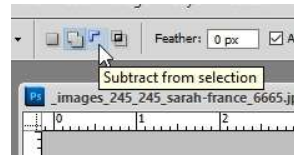
Select>Deselect to remove the selection and get rid of the marching ants

Select>Inverse to choose the rest of the picture instead of the selected area.

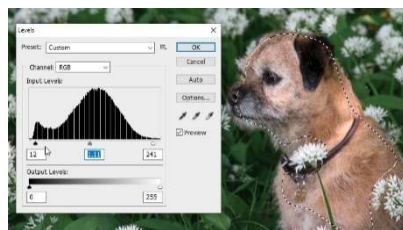
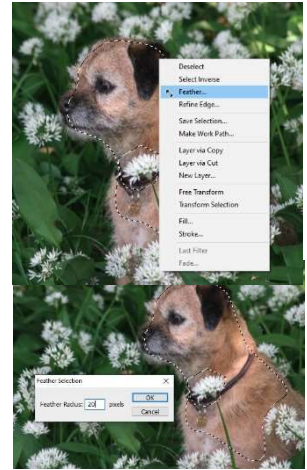
Back to Sarah's photo. Use the polygonal lasso to pick out the dog. Keeping the selection well inside the animal's outline avoids any 'halo' effect.



But the flower beside the dog's collar should not be changed, so to remove that from the selection, choose **Subtract from selection** in the **Options** bar.



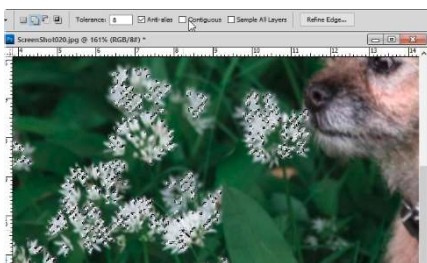
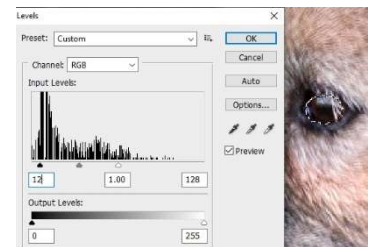
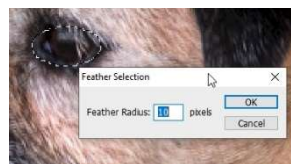
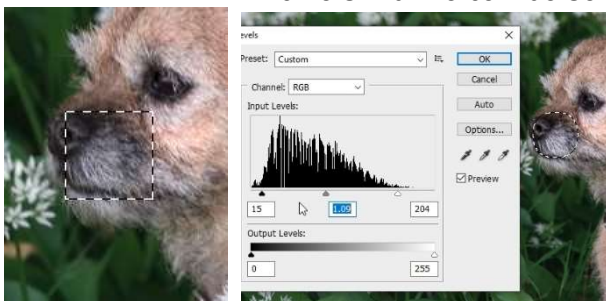
Then lasso the flower and it will no longer be part of the selection. It is important to soften the selection edges to prevent it looking like a cardboard cut-out. Do this by **feathering**: either use the **Selection** menu and choose **modify>feather**, or, more quickly, right-click in the selected area and choose **feather** from the drop-down menu. The amount to feather by varies according to the size of the selection and the size on the image file, so it can be a bit of trial and error. Here, 20 pixels seems about right.



Now, when **levels** is used again, the changes only happen inside the selected area. The end sliders are moved a little closer together to increase contrast and the central one slightly to the left to brighten it up.

And, of course, we needn't stop there!

Tickle's muzzle can be selected, feathered and lightened and brightened and so can her eye – less feathering here, because it's a much smaller area.



And you can keep going...

Use the magic wand to pick out the white wild garlic, unchecking **contiguous** so that all the whites in the image are chosen and use a very small feathering to keep things subtle. Now levels lightens all the flowers.



And finally, I see that Tickle's nose is bit too close to one of the flowers, so a bit of cloning there gives a bit of separation.





Before

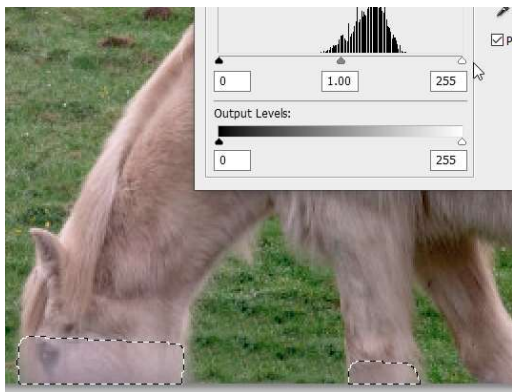


After

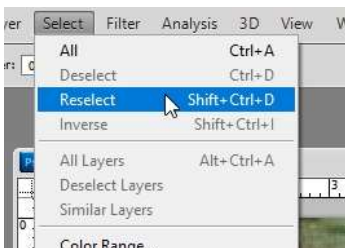
The changes made to this picture have not been profound, but this sort of tweaking can make a useful difference to an image.

* * *

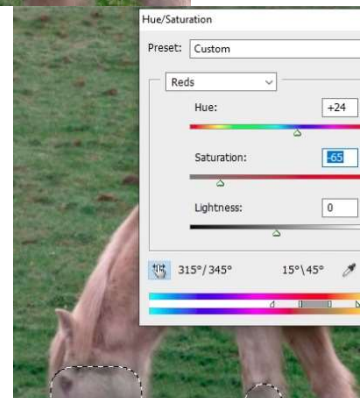
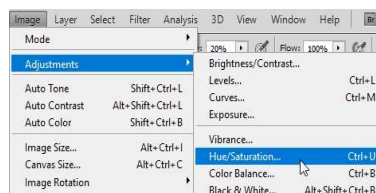
Now, let's get back to Nick's picture from last time. We left it like this with a softening and lack of contrast in the lower left corner, caused by the out-of-focus fence,



Selecting the problem area and using **levels** does solve the contrast problem, but creates an unfortunate colour cast – a slight reddish tinge.



Address this by re-selecting and using the Hue & Saturation control to desaturate the reds until the area looks OK





Again, as with Sarah's photo, selecting the eye and giving it more definition using levels, completes the process.

Find more about changing colours on the SPG website in the Members Information area, Hints & Tips – *Processing; Hue & Saturation*

Save it for later! - you can save a selection if you may want to use it again. Do this as '**Select>Save Selection**'. To re-load it, **Select>Load Selection**

Some frustrating messages that may appear on your screen when making selections:

Warning – 'no pixels were selected' If you are using the **'lasso'** tool the loop closes automatically when the left mouse button is not held down, sometimes before any pixels have been selected at all. Make sure you complete the 'loop' all in one go.

Warning – 'no pixels were selected' If you're working with layers, check that you are working in the correct one.

'Warning – 'no pixels were more than 50% selected...' ...The area you are trying to select may be too small – try a slightly larger one. Alternatively, the amount of 'feather' you have chosen may be too high – reduce the amount of feathering.

You have carefully selected a complex area. You click the mouse to adjust it a little and your selection vanishes. When the **options** bar (the one immediately above the top bar of your picture) has '**make a new selection**' chosen, clicking the mouse begins a new selection which removes the previous one. Use **Edit>Step Backwards**, or go back a step in the history palette until your selection re-appears, then choose **add** or **subtract** as appropriate.

Other things won't work – levels, eraser etc have no effect. All tools and most operations apply only to the selected areas. If the area you want to work on is outside this, nothing happens. Get rid of the selection – '**Select>Deselect**' – or switch to what you thought you had selected in the first place – '**Select>Inverse**'.

Your screen is covered with criss-crossing lines and you can't get rid of them. Press the **Esc** (Escape) key top left of the keyboard

There are other ways to isolate area of an image and Adobe has some excellent tutorials on these. For example:

Refine edge <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJrvihPXLTo>

Pen tool <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1lkxxNUiml>