

Chaotic Times

Organised Chaos Newsletter

"Creating SPACE -
Restoring ORDER"

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Storage of photos



Dear Friends of Organised Chaos

Welcome to the August edition of **Chaotic Times!**

The exceptionally hot weather, coupled with friends and family having their summer holidays, got me thinking about photographs and their storage.

Cast your mind back, really not *that* far, and everyone used a camera that had film in it. That film allowed you to take either 12, 24 or 36 shots, without ever previewing the image, of course. When the film was used up, it had to be taken to either a photographic shop, or chemist, for printing. Chances are, that when you got back your packet of 36 prints, some of them weren't exactly great - but you'd just paid for them all, so it was highly unlikely that you would have discarded any.

A far cry from hitting the 'trash' button on your digital camera, these days!



So, not surprisingly, most families have ended up with a legacy of family photos, mainly prints, but there are boxes of slides too. All taking up valuable storage space in the home.

The main objective, back then was to have your best prints neatly labelled and displayed in albums. But often the volume of photos taken presented a simply overwhelming task. The photos stayed in their original wallets, languishing at the back of cupboards and drawers.

Of course, many photo collections contain photos that have a strong emotional connection for the owners, and this is perfectly understandable.

As with any form of decluttering, sorting through your collection of photos is about keeping those which are important to you and parting with those that are not.

So, how do you go about doing that?



Before you can decide which to keep and store, you really do need to go through them, and make some tough decisions. This is the perfect job for a weekend when it's just too hot to be out of doors!

My advice is to sort them into 'themed' piles. Such as those featuring your children's activities and accomplishments, pets, holidays, and so on.

Alternatively you can try to sort by year, although this might have to involve a bit of guesswork!

Some years ago I helped my mum sort through my dad's old slides, as she needed some space in her sideboard. With the help of a hand held slide viewer we established that most slides were holiday shots, and lots of them were views. She decided she would only keep slides with family members. So out went all the mountain views and New Forest ponies! You will more than likely find that the passing of time has influenced how you feel about shots that are of random views, or where you have several similar versions, enabling you to part with a sizeable number.

Having whittled down the number of photos you want to keep, you need to then decide how to store them. Albums are great if you want to show the photos to friends and family. Or, you might consider scanning them, for a modern solution to the problem. If you still have quite a lot, then this [photo storage box from Boots](#) might be a good solution. It will hold up to 700 6" x 4" prints and can be divided into sections.



What about photo heirlooms?

If you have photos that you want to survive the ravages of time, then you need to consider more specialised storage.

Light, dust, moisture, chemicals, and fluctuating temperatures are all potential enemies of photos you may wish to keep for posterity. Such photos are of course invaluable for anyone tracing their family history. So, remember, being temporary custodian of historic family archive material, is quite a responsibility.

I'm pleased to say I've found a company that supplies archival quality storage for photos, documents and a host of other items. 'Conservation by Design' supply conservation professionals and a host of well known museums, including The V&A, The British Library and The Science Museum. Their [Timecare Collection](#) is aimed at the domestic market and is very affordable. I'm hoping to find out more about this company soon and will of course keep you updated.

Don't forget, the [Organised Chaos](#) ethos is to declutter what is no longer meaningful, but to store those things that you cherish, in whatever way is most appropriate.

So, in conclusion - keep your 'snaps' in something like the Boots photo storage box - keep your treasured photos in something designed to protect them.

I love this quote from the 'Timecare Collection' website, "*Only shoes get protected in shoe boxes. Photos, letters, documents and other precious items need something better*"

Oh, and in case you were wondering, the photos were scanned by my cousin who holds our family collection of photos - I'll be suggesting he checks out the 'Timecare Collection' for protecting the originals. The handwritten notes were made by my great-aunt Mabel!

*Best regards,
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