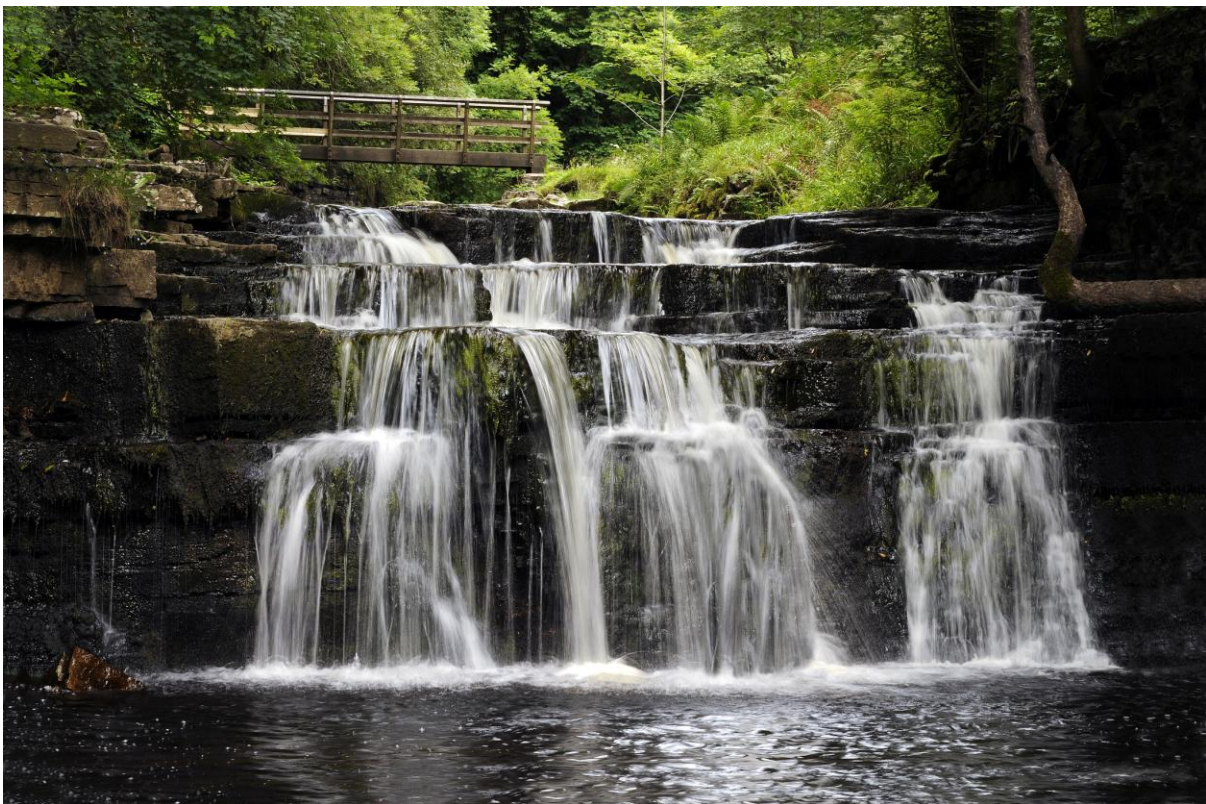


## Masterclass – Ashgill, near Garrigill

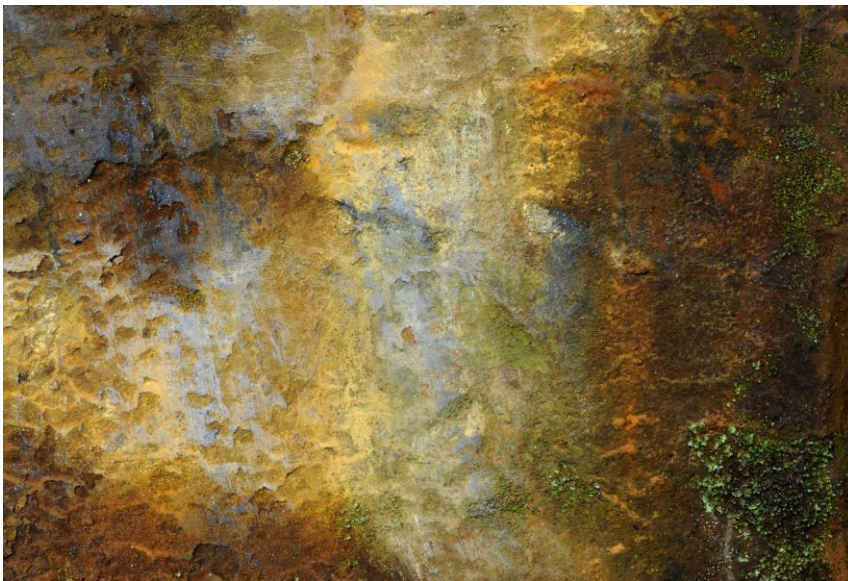
It is curious how many of the places I have chosen for my last two years of Masterclasses have been on the extreme borders of Cumbria, as if the county boundary has been drawn by someone wanting to further favour the delights of this already fortunate county. For my latest Masterclass I was within a whisker of both County Durham and Northumberland when I visited Ashgill, on the Middleton in Teesdale road from Alston. Durham of course has High Force, but much less known and visited are the Ashgill waterfalls where the principal fall plunges dramatically under a road bridge which must be crossed by many drivers hell bent on getting to the Lakes and oblivious to the excitements below. The main waterfall is one of those magical few where you can walk and view it from behind, but for my main photo this month I chose the falls slightly downstream.

The crucial factor when photographing waterfalls is the camera shutter speed. At the end of the day it's a matter of personal taste, but most photographers like to use a slow shutter speed to give a feel of flowing water. 'Freezing' the water with a fast shutter speed, where individual drops can be seen, ends up looking a bit jerky to my mind. I can't suggest a perfect shutter speed - too many factors are involved. For example how fast the water is actually flowing, (how much water is in the river), whether the viewpoint shows water flowing towards the camera or flowing past sideways – that will make the water look faster. As rough guidelines, photos turn out better when there is not too much water flowing and when the weather is cloudy rather than sunny. Using a longer lens works well when looking towards 'stepped' falls. One problem though – which I haven't managed to avoid – is overexposed white areas where there are concentrations of moving water. One final bit of advice – the Ashgill falls are terrific, but seriously slippery. Take a tripod and use it for support - in every way.



I used a longer length lens (focal length 90mm) on my Nikon D300 and a shutter speed of 1/8<sup>th</sup> second. A tripod was essential.

The main Ashgill waterfall, hidden beneath the road bridge. I have used a shutter speed of 1/5<sup>th</sup> second with a wide angle lens of 16mm, the camera supported on a tripod.



The rock face behind the main fall, as one might expect in a geologically interesting area, made a detailed study in colours.