# Group Shot Panoramic

When you have a group shot to take it can be difficult to get everyone in sharp focus as they can be different distances from your camera. If you have time to take a few pictures this little technique may help.

We are going to take a series of shots of a group and stitch them together in Photoshop, then sort out the distortions and any missing areas.

Normally when we take a series of shots to make panoramics we recommend using a tripod, don't use too wide a lens, overlap each shot by about 20% and shoot in portrait mode otherwise the panoramic can be long and thin.

For this tutorial I broke most of these rules! Photoshop is getting so good at stitching shots that I just hand-held these, but still overlapped each shot by at least 20%.

First, find your images and open them into Adobe Camera RAW. Here I have selected 4 images. We want to adjust the first image only. I used the settings below but this will be different for different images.
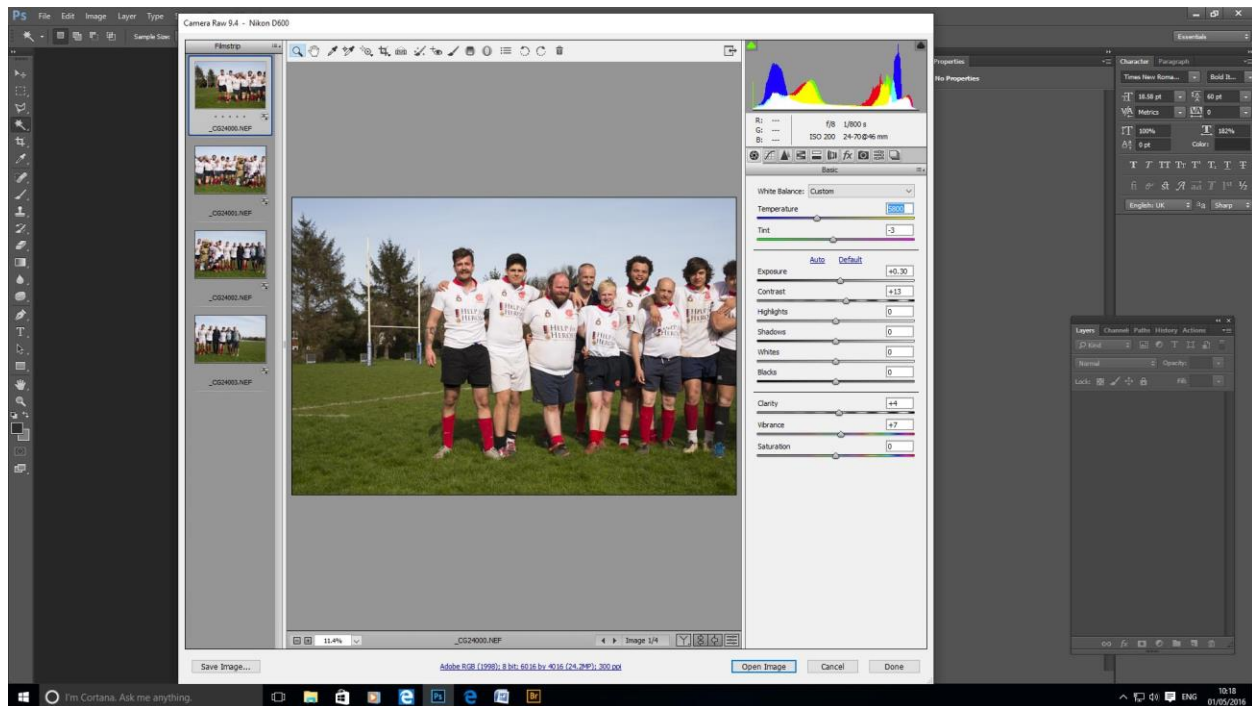
 Now I want to apply these settings to the other images. With the first image selected Shift+click on the last pic, click Cntl+A, or use the little arrow beside where it says 'Filmstrip' to give the fly-out menu and choose Select All. Then use the fly-out menu and choose Sync Settings (Alt+S) and when the Synchronise menu pops up click OK. This gives all the changes you made to the first image to the other three.

I explained that the sun was over to the right-hand side so the images got brighter going from left to right. I was shooting in aperture priority so the exposure changed slightly for each image. I clicked on the last pic and brought the exposure down slightly. Then I lowered the exposure on the 2 middle images to a lesser amount until it looked to have a similar exposure to the first image.

I then saved these images as DNG (Digital negative) files using the Save Images button on the bottom left. After they saved, I clicked Done to get out of Adobe Camera RAW.
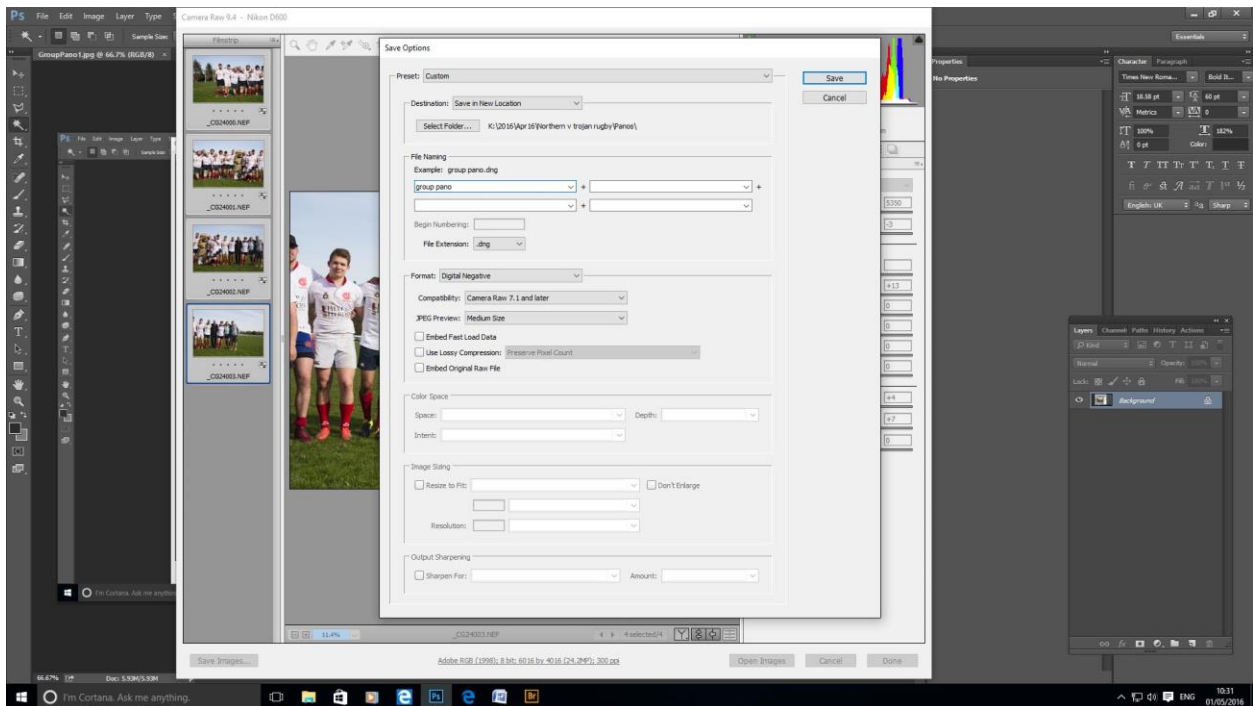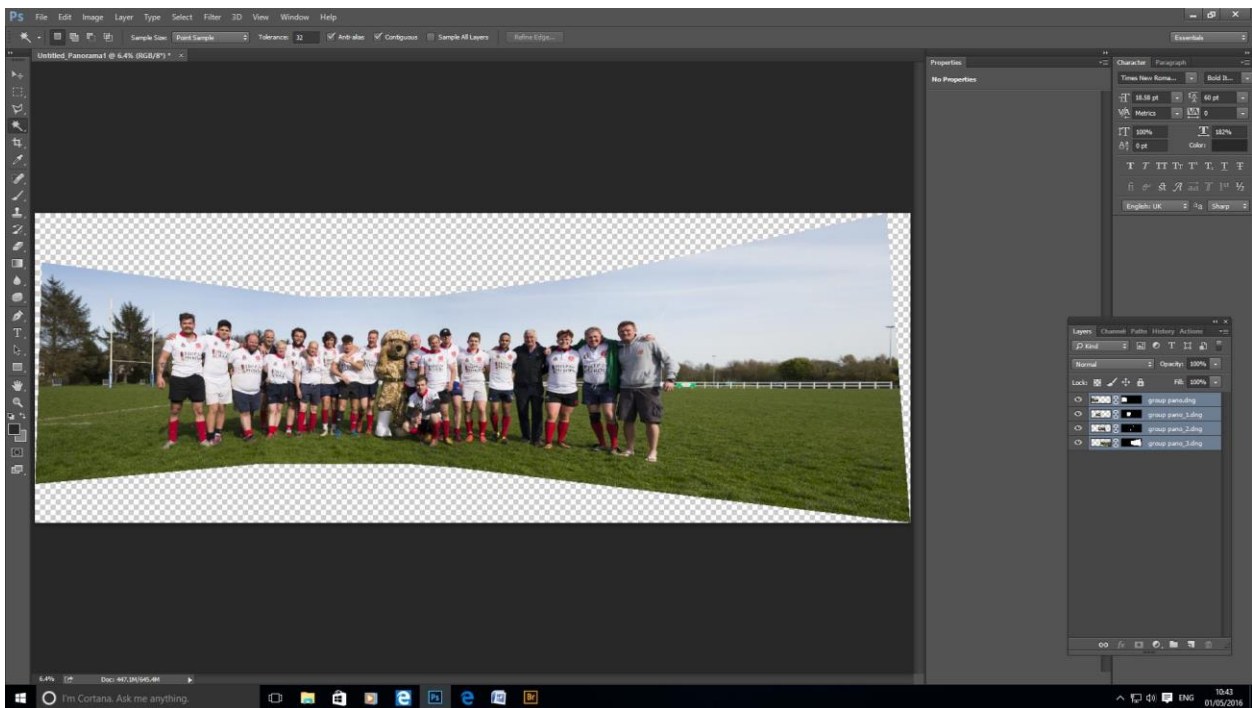

In Photoshop I went to File>Automate>Photomerge

I used the browse to find the DNG files and used the Auto setting and Blend Images Together.
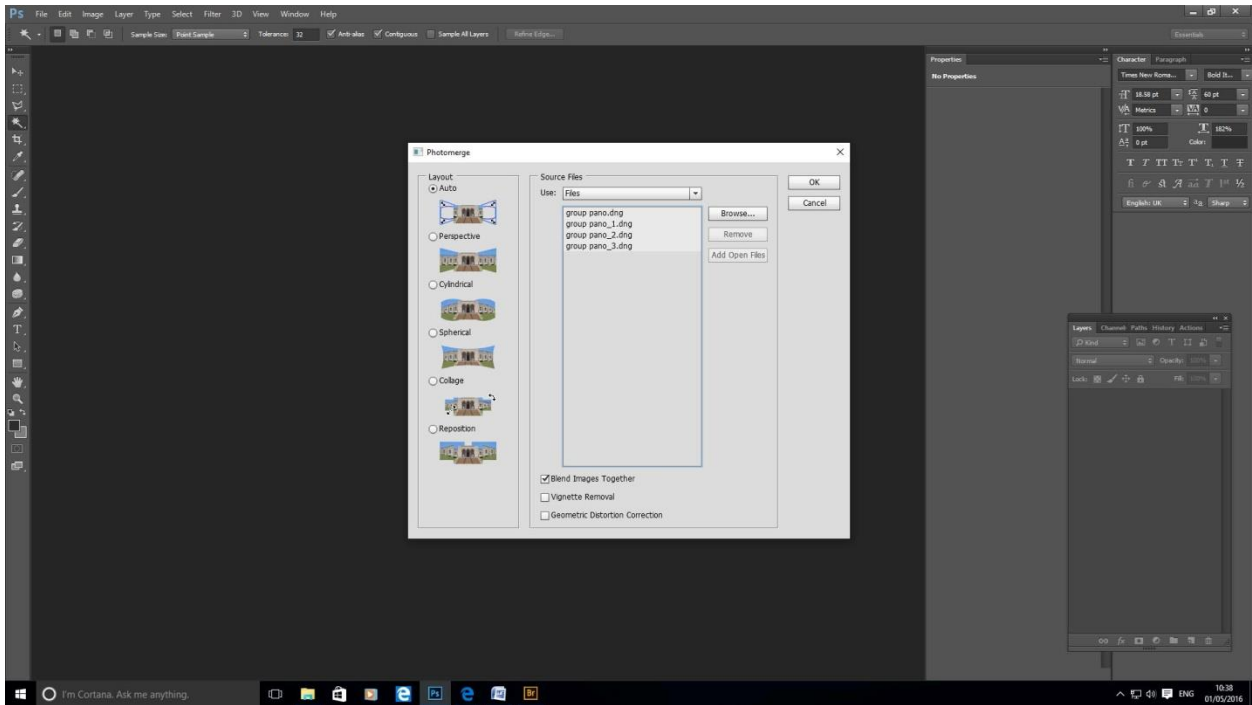
This gives a really well blended but distorted image. Zoom in to make sure there are no errors in the blending.

Now I'm going to crop the sides I don't want from the left and right-hand sides.

Remember this file is MASSIVE so before you go any further flatten the image and make the size something more usable. I made the image 12in wide at 300ppi.

The next step is to sort out the distortion.

Filter>Lens Correction. Under the customs tab you have sliders which will correct different types of distortion. Pushing the Geometric distortion slider to the left sorts the 'pincushion' distortion. The image also has had a little vertical and horizontal perspective correction applied.
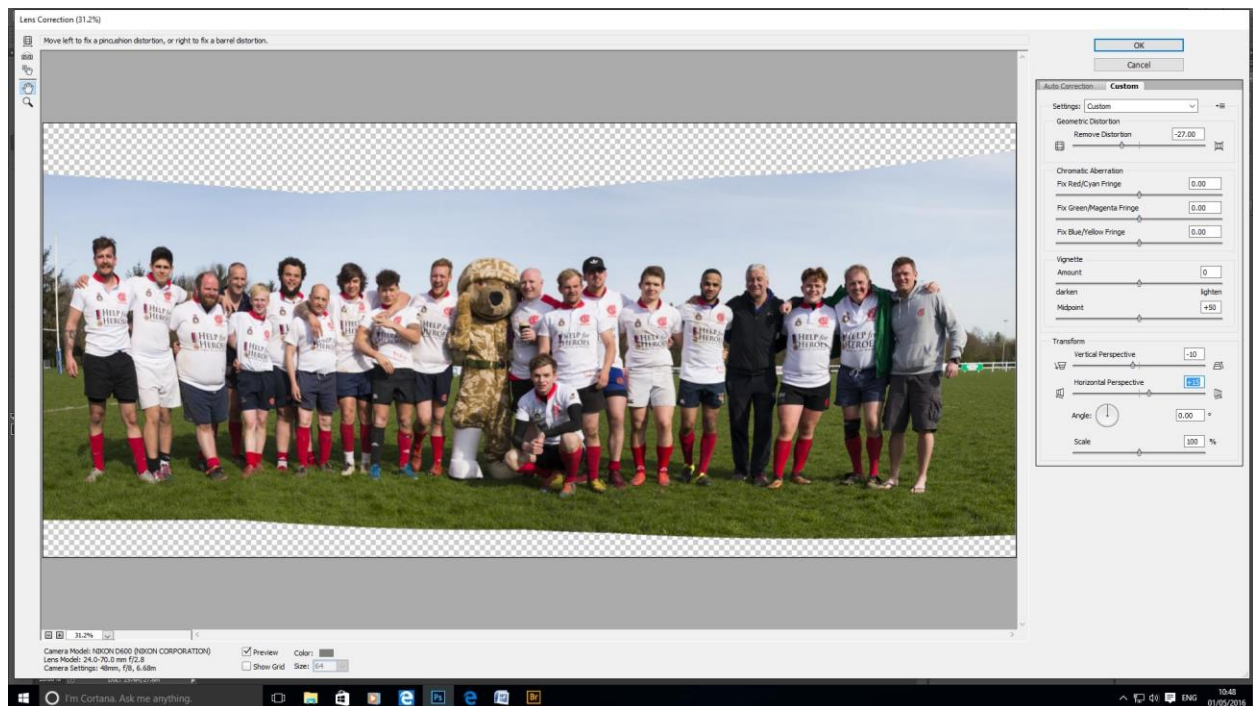
Click OK when you are happy and Photoshop will do its thing!

Now, to tidy up the top and bottom of the image. Before going any further I make a duplicate layer to work on (Cntl+J).

Select the crop tool and move the top and bottom handles inwards. If you feel that you need to add more sky or foreground grass this is easily done by making a selection which includes the 'missing' piece of sky or grass. Edit>Fill and choose Content Aware. Any parts which need fixing can be touched up with the clone stamp tool, patch tool or healing brush.

Done!