Lightroom Bitesize: Snapshots

This little tool in Lightroom is often overlooked. It shouldn't be.

On most occasions post-processing goes reasonably smoothly and the image ends up looking just as you planned. There are occasions though when you really don't know how an image is going to evolve – you get so far and think it looks OK but you want to try a few more adjustments just to see what happens.

The trouble is that if the additional adjustments don't work you then have to re-trace your steps back by using the 'history' tool and trying to remember the point at which it looked OK.

Note: This is particularly useful if you have an image that looks good in colour but then you want to see how it looks with a monochrome conversion. Just save the colour version as a snapshot and you can go right back to it with a click of a button if you can't make the monochrome version work.

But there is another way – creating a snapshot.

A snapshot is just a saved version of the image at a particular state that you liked so that you can (if you want to) go back to that state. Numerous snapshots can be made of the same image as you go through the post-processing and, because it isn't an actual copy of the image, it takes up very little space on your hard drive.

There are two ways of creating a snapshot. Let's explore both:

1) **The snapshots panel**

Whilst in the Develop module, the Snapshots panel is on the left-hand side.
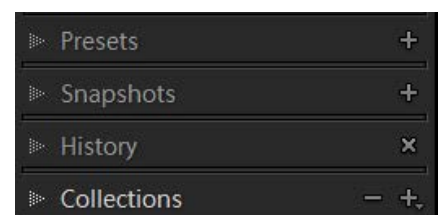
When you get to a stage in your post-processing that you would like to save as a snapshot, just press the '**+**' button to the right.
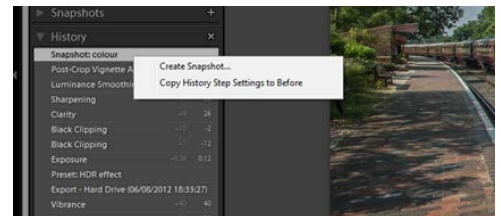
A dialog box will open. By default it give the snapshot a name using the current date and time but you can give the snapshot a name of your choice
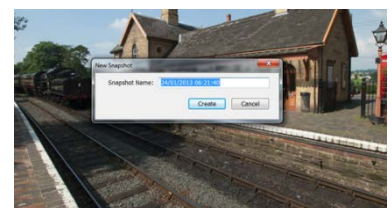
2) __The history panel__

Just keep the history panel open and, when you get to a stage in your post-processing that you would like to save as a snapshot, just right-click on the last history step and choose 'create snapshot'.

The benefit of using this method is that it automatically assigns the snapshot with the name of the history step. You can change it if you want to but it does save a little time.
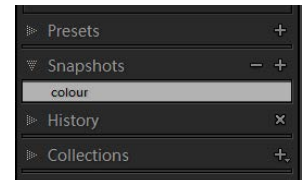
The only odd thing about snapshots is that they are listed in alphabetical order rather than in creation order (a mistake in my opinion). Therefore if you want to force them into creation order you will need to add 01, 02, etc at the front of the name of each snapshot as you make them.

As an example, let's look at this image:
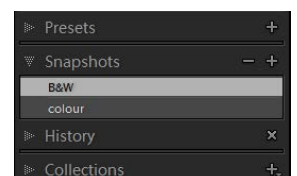
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First we'll process it for a colour version and save it as a snapshot named 'colour':

Now we'll try a black & white version, and save it as a snapshot called 'B&W'

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Presets +
Snapshots − +
  B&W
  colour
  crop 4x3
History ×
Collections +

Now well go back to the 'colour' snapshot (by just clicking on the 'colour' snapshot button) and crop it to an aspect ratio 4x3 and save it as a snapshot called 'crop 4x3'

Presets +
Snapshots − +
  B&W
  colour
  crop 4x3
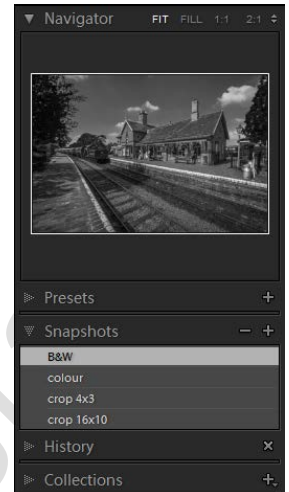 crop 16x10
History ×
Collections +
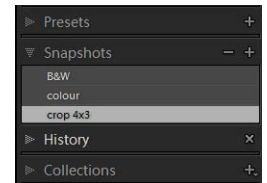
Now we'll crop it to an aspect ratio of 16x10 and save it as a snapshot called 'crop 16x10'
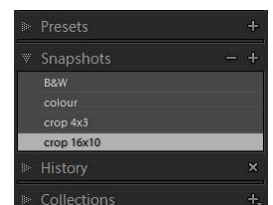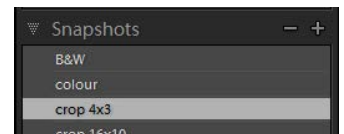
So now we have 4 snapshots and we can go to any of those states with just a click of a mouse button.

If you hover your mouse over any snapshot the navigator pane above will show you a preview of how it looks.

If you want to delete a snapshot, just click on it and then click on the minus (-) symbol.

If you found this tutorial useful please let me know by leaving a comment on my Facebook page (or just 'Like' it) at https://www.facebook.com/johnhallettphotographs/ . Thanks