

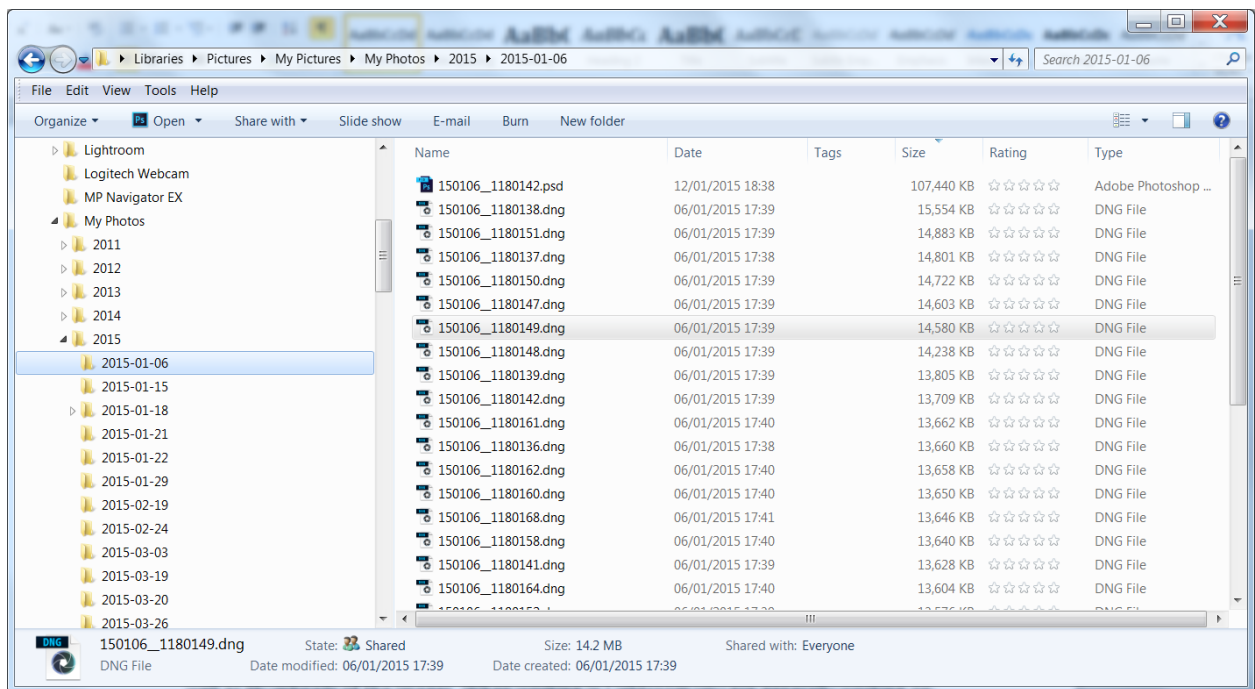
Image library management – Lightroom

This paper is a BREIF introduction to Image management using Lightroom. This is not exhaustive list and not the only way many of the processes below can be done. This simply reflects my way, my level of knowledge of LR, which is limited to the functions I use and is in no way an exhaustive list. Having said that, my LR Catalogue currently contains 42500+ image files, so I do use it a lot, although I'd welcome anyone giving me any tips on more efficient use – we never know everything!

Physical storage

1st things you need to decide on – where to store, naming convention used, backups etc. How you want to physically store your images on your Disks.

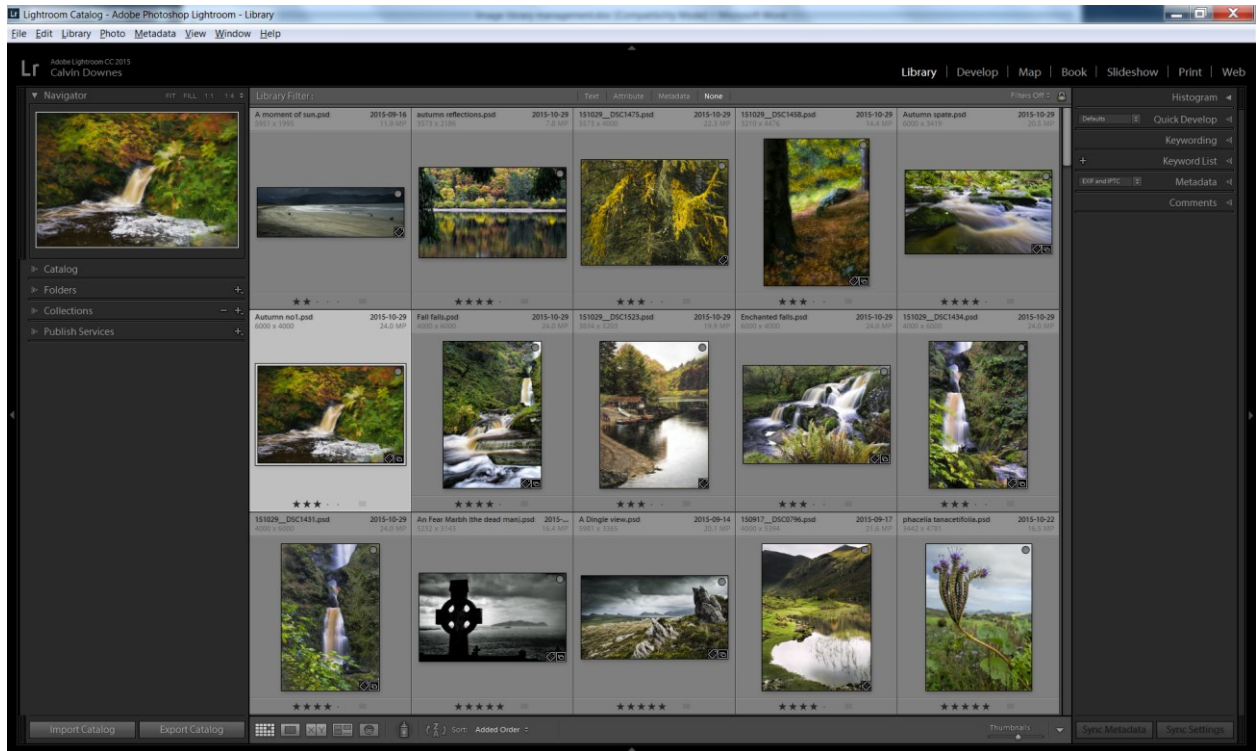
Let's assume you store to your main drive and want images grouped by date image taken (as that gives you a logical/sensible structure to build your library from and retrieve images by) something like below –



Let's also assume you will use Lightroom to 'manage' your image library/collection.

By 'manage' I mean carry out all the functions necessary to logically group your images for future retrieval and provide mechanisms to enable you to take whatever actions you need to on your chosen images.

Some basics about Lightroom.



Above is the standard LR window presented when you open LR.

On the left is the NAVIGATOR panel to enable you to navigate through your catalogue - the folders & collections that have been registered in LR.

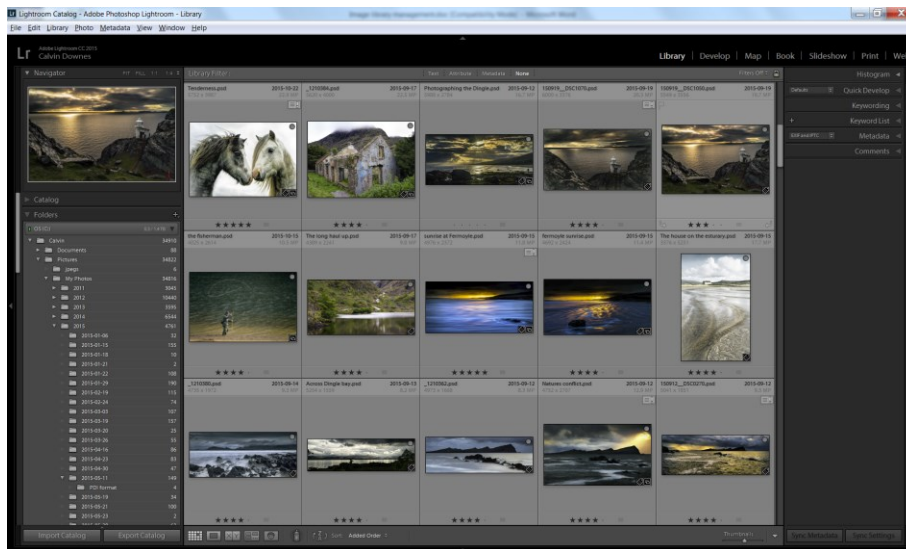
On the right is the IMAGE FUNCTION panel (not sure what it is called officially!) that has various functions relating to the selected image/s e.g. Keywords, metadata etc.

In the centre is the view of all the images selected by the selection/filtering you have set. This can be changed to give different size views of the images, comparisons etc. The information displayed around the thumbnail about the image file can also be altered to suit your requirements.

At the very top are the LR module options to select what LR module you want to work in (for this paper we are looking at LIBRARY only).

1. Lightroom creates a '**Catalogue**' of your physical images (like a database) containing all the information you have set Lightroom up to hold on each image registered/catalogued as well as thumbnails of the images. When organising your catalogue images in Lightroom you are generally working on the 'catalogue', not the 'physical image file' stored on your computer. Only if you pick specific functions that change or move the image do you add/delete/move or change the physical image file (via Lightroom).

A Catalogue is a REGISTER (sort of database) of your images held in 'physical locations' (usually on your hard disk) (see below example). You specify which 'folders/files' are to be included/registered in your catalogue. They could be folders on Internal or external disks or media.



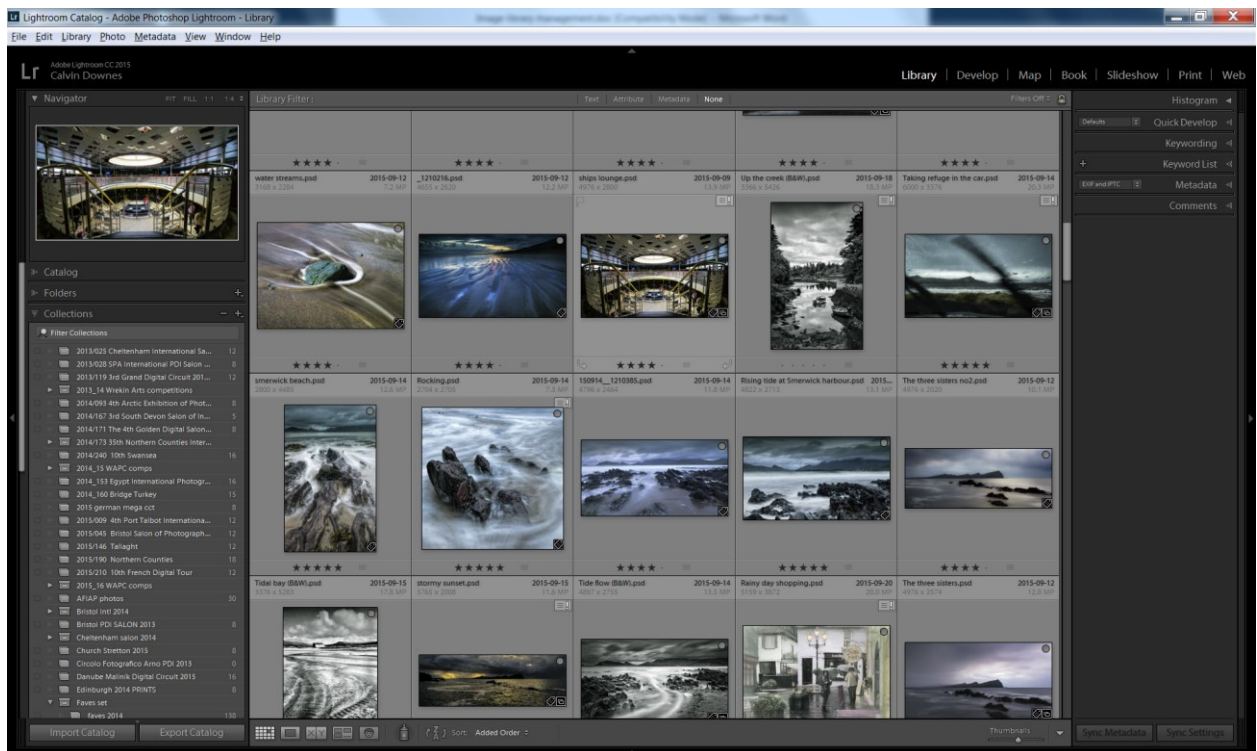
In my case I have a top folder called MY Photos that contains subfolders for each year and within those, subfolders for each date a picture was taken. When I upload my images from card my process always loads the images in this folder/structure and automatically includes them in my LR Catalogue.

2. Lightroom has the concept of '**COLLECTIONS**' as another means of 'grouping' your images (see below).

Collections are collections/groupings of image files. They appear just as images in the folders, but are actually 'pointers' to the original image and location. Collections do not hold 'physical' files (although it appears that way to you), they simply hold 'pointers' to the physical file stored elsewhere in the catalogue, that the Collection displays.

This means for example, you can create a PHYSICAL FOLDER called PDI to hold all your PDI formatted images registered to your Lightroom Catalogue, so they are all in one physical location for quick retrieval, AND you can create a 'Collection' for say 2nd Merit PDI that you drop the specific PDI files from PDI folder, into. This doesn't create another file, it is a 'pointer' to the PDI file in the PDI folder, so anytime you change the original it is reflected in your 'collection'. You now have ability to keep record of images you have used for different competitions/purposes, without having to replicate the image.

Some COLLECTIONS are created by default in Lightroom e.g. Last import, 5 star images etc. and you can set up 'Smart collections' which are 'Auto collections' based on some criteria you set. (SEE LATER FOR SETTING UP A COLLECTION and see below for sample of my collections).



3. Lightroom has a '**PUBLICATIONS Service**' collection in the catalogue to enable you to create 'collections' for 'automated' Publication to various Social media if you wish.

My 'IMPORT' workflow (as an example of how the Import of images can work) –

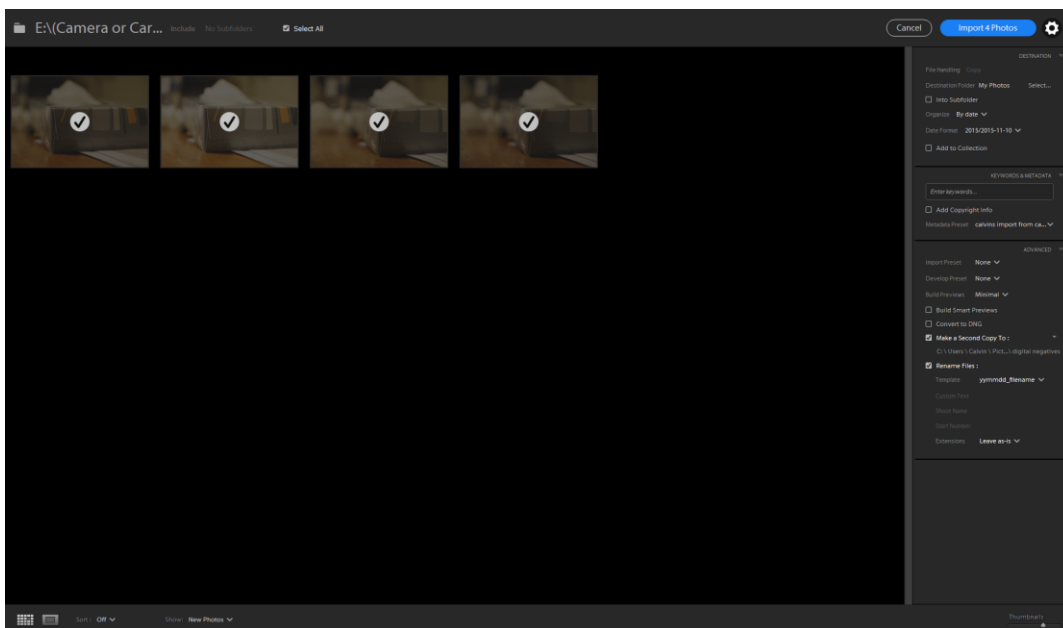
Purpose –

- a. Select the images to be copied from Card to PC.
- b. Set any specific metadata for each image e.g. Copyright and/or Keywords for later ease of retrieval.
- c. Set any 'develop settings' for the images as loaded.
- d. Set Destination location for the images
- e. Set whether to make 2nd copy of 'digital negatives' and to where.
- f. Physically copy the images from Card to computer store.
- g. Register the imported images in the Lightroom Catalogue.
- h. Do an initial scan of the imported images setting Reject flag or using Stars to identify those I feel it's worth spending time on. You can then Remove (from LR catalogue) or delete or simply leave the 'rejects' and select just those you identified for future viewing and processing.

- i. Whilst scanning also set any keywords you want specific to the image e.g. whilst you may have set Keyword on Import as WALES, that specific image may be of a tree and you have a keyword for TREES to be able to select them quickly. So associate the TREES keyword with the image also.

Steps -

1. Remove memory card from Camera and put in PC card reader.
At this point some people have lightroom start automatically to 'IMPORT', but it's up to you – it can be a pain if you use a memory card for any other reason and LR always starts!
2. Start Lightroom if not already started and select the IMPORT button at the bottom of the Navigator panel on left.
Depending on the version of Lightroom you are using a different 'interface' will appear, but you need to select the Card reader if not already done. This then loads thumbnails of the images for display and selection/deselection for the full image import. It also shows the 'Import panel' to display/alter your 'Import settings' see below –



You can individually deselect/select images from the import.

3. IMPORT SETTINGS PANEL

This is where you specify the settings required for the import.

You can set up Preset Imports to save time and I believe all versions default to the last import setting used (which can be easily overridden).

- a) DESTINATION - Where the images are to be physically stored i.e. Drive/Folders and the format to name the new folders.

b) Keywords and Metadata – Here you can enter keywords to help identify these images being uploaded, later on.

Remember the keywords entered will be applied to all the images being uploaded in this Import.

METADATA preset – This is where you say what metadata you want included and anything specific to you e.g. Copyright. Again, you can save the setting as a preset, which can be applied every time or not.

c) ADVANCED -

i) Import preset – this is the preset you set up previously or you can set up a new one. Using a preset means your IMPORT process is consistent and repeated – good thing for Library organisation!

ii) Develop preset – presets from the develop module that can be set to apply to all the images being imported.

iii) Convert to DNG – Raw files go through the Raw converter and are reformatted into Adobe's own Raw format (rather than your Camera model format)

NOTE – when importing RAW images/files into lightroom, they automatically go through Raw conversion (provided your camera raw format is supported by Adobe) – you don't need to put them through a Raw converter unless you subsequently want to use the adjustment controls in the converter rather than adjustment tools in PS or Lightroom Develop module. Advantages of DNG? – I believe the file size is smaller; you are no longer reliant on the availability of your Camera make/model Raw converter to open the files (but you are reliant on PS to be able to open DNG files!)

iv) Make 2nd copy – Useful if you create a 'Digital negative' folder for external backup of original files. Image files are simply copied to the destination without any changes at all.

v) Rename files – Camera manufacturers pick convoluted naming for the image files which once in a library are pretty meaningless. This facility gives the option to rename the files to something more meaningful to you, when they are uploaded.

4. When all settings done (or checked), press Import button and LR applies the settings you specified to all the images in the Import.

LR then displays the images imported in the display window.

5. Categorising options.

There are numerous ways to 'categorise' your images, so I'll only cover the basics.

A) KEYWORDS – These are specific words/phrases that you can 'attach' to individual images that allow you to retrieve them as a group (they could be from anywhere in your library) e.g. Family, Animals, Trees, Shropshire etc.

Using the right hand panel in the Library module you can select existing keywords for individual or selections of images or create new keywords or nested ones e.g. Shropshire as main keyword and SHREWSBURY as a 'nested keyword'.

B) ATTRIBUTES – You can assign 'rating stars', Colours and flag to selected images. Each attribute can be searched for independently or in combination.

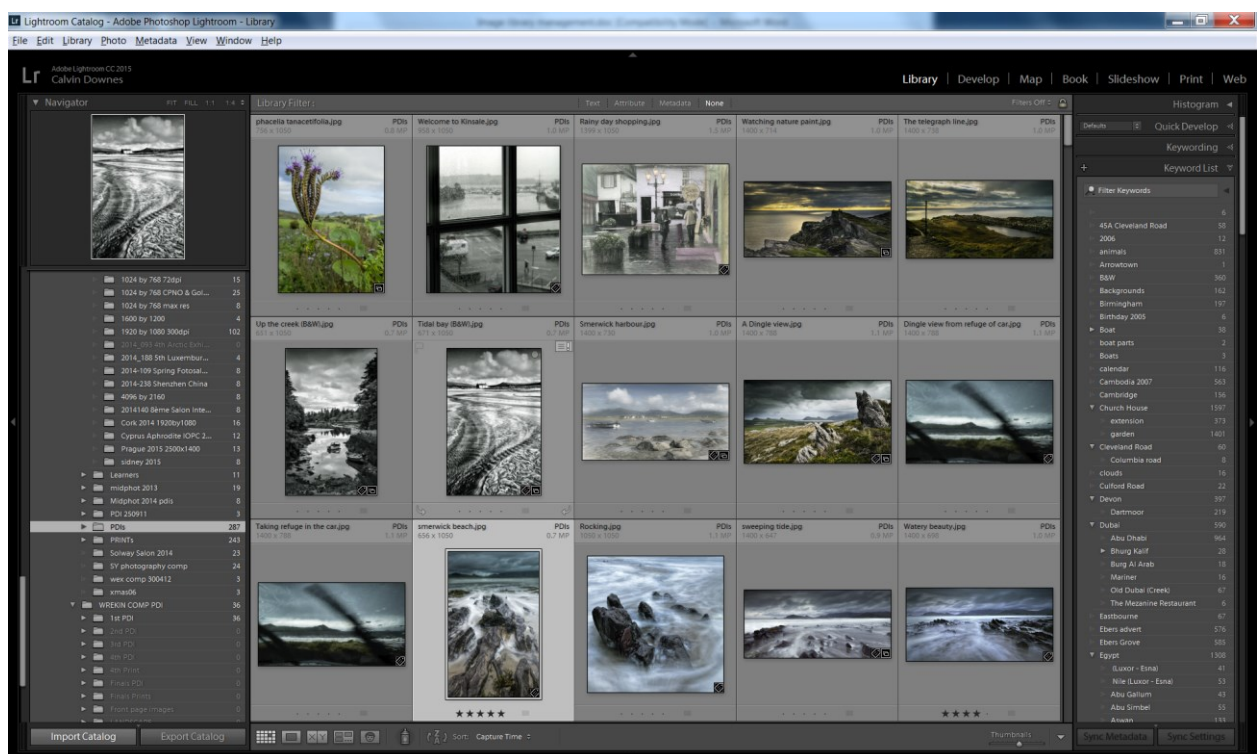
Flags are often used to do 1st filter on your images (to delete those you don't want to keep – reject flag). Stars can be used to indicate your rating of images and likewise colours.

When you add these 'attributes' to metadata, file name & keywords, you can see there are

numerous ways to categorise or group your images (these are markers you place against the image in the LR catalogue, they don't alter where images are physically stored).

Search & Filters

This section covers methods of selecting and filtering the images you want to view. You may well want to view specific groups of images within a folder or images from across different folders.



1. Folders – Shown in the Navigator panel (left hand). Usually the 1st level of 'selection' is at folder level – select the folder you want to see (in this case PDIs folder). You can see there are 287 images in this folder (registered in LR). With no 'filtering' (see below) all 287 are displayed.

2. KEYWORDS – Keywords give you a means of grouping images together by subject, chosen/specified by yourself. You can select all the images with a specific keyword or multiple keywords.

When you select on Keyword (in the right panel), all the images in the **Catalogue**, with that keyword will be displayed.

Say now I wanted to narrow down the images I wanted to see within the selected displayed images (whether selected from folder, catalogue or keyword selection)

3. FILTERS - At the top of the screen there is a 'Filter bar'. This is where you specify any filtering of images you have selected (are viewing).

Filters always work within a selected folder (and its sub-folders), Catalogue level or within Keyword groups, so you are filtering within the 'grouping/selection' that is 'active'.

On the right hand side of the Filter bar there is a dropdown list of preset filters to use and/or you can set your own.

In the centre are the main Filter categories -

a) TEXT – This enables you to filter the images viewed by specifying some text to search for in Filenames and Metadata. Commonly used to find all the PSD files (Photoshop Digital file) for example.

b) ATTRIBUTE – This enables you to filter based on attributes you have previously given images i.e. Star rating, Colour, flag.

c) METADATA – enables you to filter based on the metadata e.g. specific lens used, Aperture etc.

d) NONE – Turns off (resets) the filters.

NOTE – you can combine all the above filters (except none!) to narrow down even further.

Further File management facilities –

1. FOLDER SYNCHRONISATION –

If you add an image file to a folder that has been Registered in LR (is part of your catalogue), directly i.e. not through LR import process, it (the image file) doesn't automatically show up in LR in that folder. This is because LR knows nothing about it. The image file has to be 'registered' in LR. This is done by SYNCHRONISING the folder (you are synching the LR registered folder with the OS folder (on your disk).

Synchronisation will identify files that are not registered in LR within the folder to be synched and run IMPORT to register them. In this case LR knows you are importing from a specific folder so you don't need to select it again as the source. All the same facilities of the IMPORT method from Card applies here also.

So let's say you want to edit an image in PS and when finished save it as a PSD file (a new physical file). Subject to the way it was opened and saved, when you return to LR, you may not see it, just the original image you edited, as LR doesn't know of the existence of this new PSD file. This is where you need to Synchronise the folder in order for LR to register the new file in its catalogue and make it visible in LR.

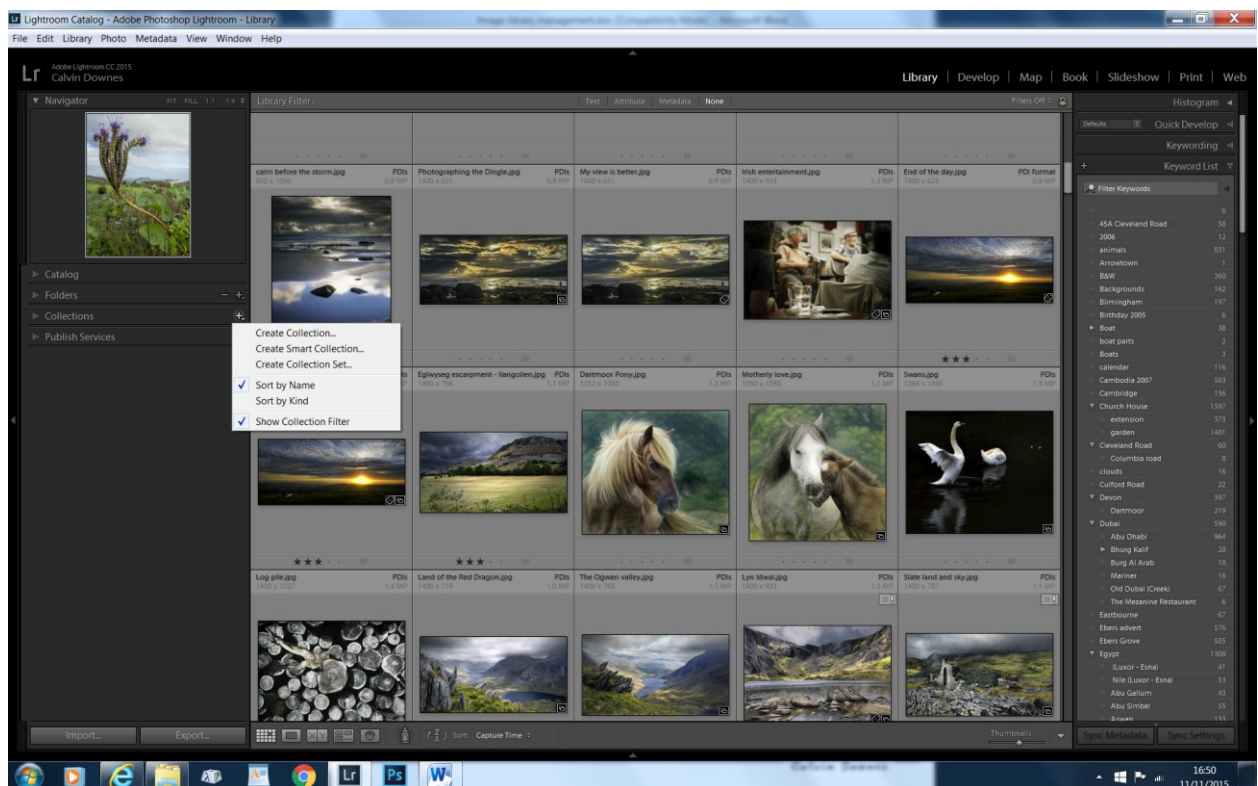
2. You can REMOVE an image file from your catalogue. This 'de-registers' the file in LR, it DOESN'T delete the file from your disk.
3. You can DELETE an image file (or number of them). This DOES delete the image file completely from LR and your disk.

4. You can move images files (or folders) from one folder to another. This will also move them on your PHYSICAL store.
5. You can EXPORT image files. There are many options when exporting in terms of format, size, sharpening, where etc.
E.G. Export is used to resize, reformat, add watermark for images on the Club website. It uses a preset Export setting so it only requires pressing 1 key (for this step in the process). It is often used when sending images via email, to quickly create a small JPEG that can be emailed.
6. To edit an image file in another product e.g. PS, Elements Topaz etc. You Right click on the image and select EDIT IN option from the pop-up list that displays all the editors you have installed that LR can call. Select it and the editor will be opened with that image.
When finished, close the editor (or jump to the LR Window leaving the editor open) which returns you to LR.

CREATING A COLLECTION –

Read section on Collections above as to what they are and what for.

To create a collection, in the Navigator panel (left hand) click on the + symbol next to the COLLECTIONS header row (see below)



The Pop-up window gives options to create a new Collection, a sub-collection, a collection set (grouped collections) and a Smart collection (an auto collection).

Just select the option and then complete the boxes presented (name of collection etc.). Once set up

you can just drag image files from any folders into the collection.

You can also set a specific collection as the 'Target collection'. This would be the collection you use most often e.g. you may have a FAVES collection which holds all the images you feel are your best. You can register an image in the 'Target collection' by right clicking on the image and selecting 'Add to target collection' – a quicker method.