What is "Bridge"?
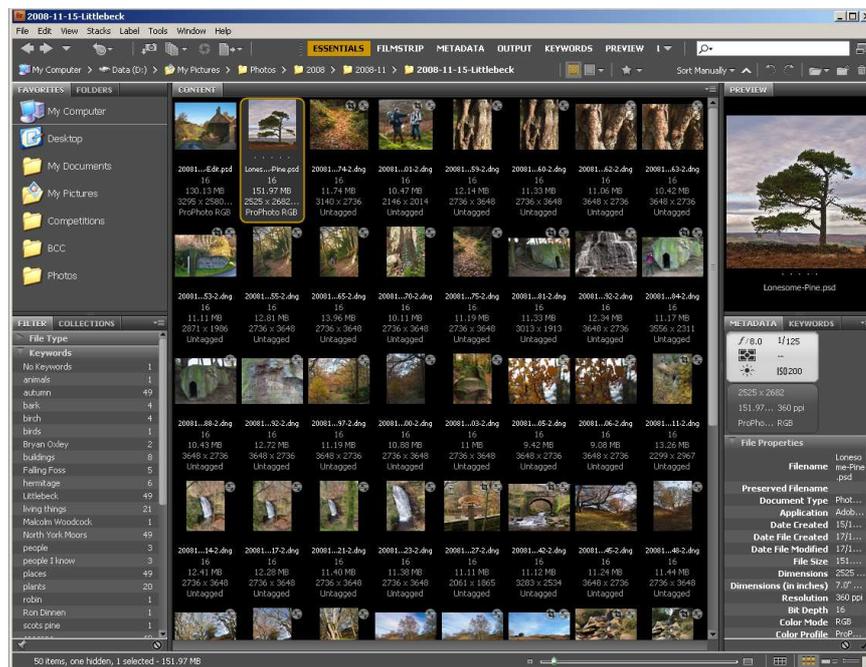
"The Bridge" is according to its makers, Adobe:

"a powerful, easy-to-use media manager for visual people, letting you easily organize, browse, locate, and view creative assets."

Photoshop 7 introduced "File browser" and this evolved into Bridge which made its first appearance in Photoshop CS2.
Bridge cannot be obtained as an individual program but rather it comes as part of the Adobe Creative Suite. In other words, if you buy Photoshop from version CS2 onwards, then Bridge is included. Mac users who have later versions of Adobe Photoshop Elements will also have Bridge.

One of the many faces of Bridge.

This is the CS4 version.

Why should I bother using Bridge?

- Bridge offers far more facilities than a standard file-browser.
- Image files can be shown in different sized thumbnails, slide shows or lists.
- Bridge allows "previews" of a wide range of file types, not only images but also documents, pdf files, movie files, sound files, etc.
- Bridge facilitates organisation of image files by means of coloured labels (customisable) and star ratings, keywords and the ability to read and manipulate the data embedded within an image file.
- Files can be sorted and searched very flexibly.
- Bridge includes utilities for batch renaming and batch manipulation of files.
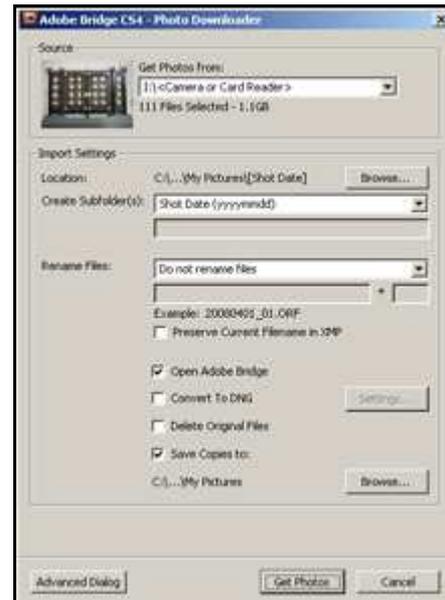
Workflow example

In this run-through, we assume that we have a large number of images from a photo shoot. The aim is to transfer these from a memory card into a folder on the computer, assign some keywords and copyright data, rename them and produce some derivative files for specific purposes.

For example, you may have taken Raw files and need small jpg files for e-mail and also larger psd files for editing. No problem – Bridge to the rescue!
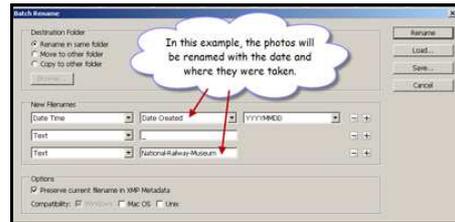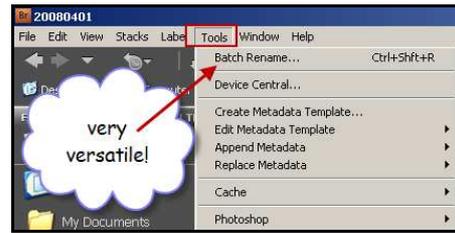
Get images from card

1. Connect the card reader and card of images to the computer.

2. In Bridge, choose File > Get Photos from Camera.

3. In this example, 111 files are to be transferred, saved in a subfolder in "My Pictures".

4. Once the files are transferred, Bridge will display them.
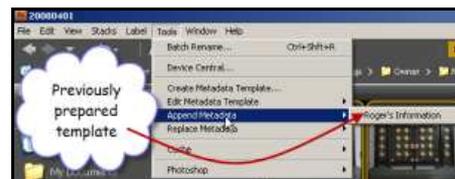

Transfer complete

Batch rename the images	1. Select the images you wish to rename. If this is all of them, the shortcut Ctrl A can be used. 2. Choose Tools > Batch Rename
	3. Having the date when the photo was taken, in the order Year Month Day, makes sorting by time very easy. 4. As they were all taken at the same place, this is added to the filename.
Add copyright & other metadata	1. Using Tools > Create Metadata Template, information such as the Photographer's name and Copyright can be saved to a template.
	2. Select all the images shortcut - Ctrl A 3. Choose Tools > Append Metadata
Add keywords	1. From the menu bar, choose: Window > Workspace > Keywords
	Since all of these images were taken at the Railway Museum in York, we'll add the keywords "York" & "Railway Museum" NB The keywords "York" and "Railway Museum" have been previously defined.

2. Select all of the images –
   Ctrl A

3. To assign the keywords to
   all of the selected images,
   click in the two boxes so
   that they are ticked.

Producing copies of the images

In this example, we will produce some full-size files in Photoshop (psd) format and some smaller jpegs that would be suitable for e-mail.

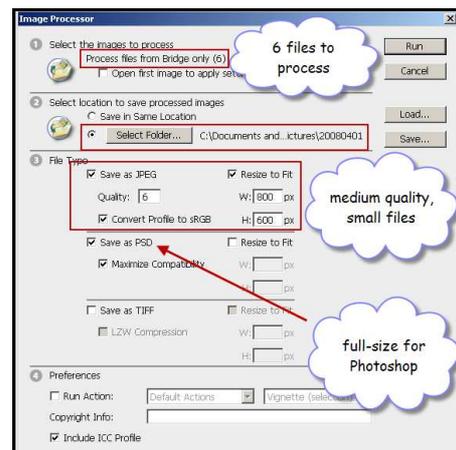We use "Image Processor" for this task:

1. Select the images to be
   converted.

2. From the menu bar,
   choose:
   Tools > Photoshop >
   Image Processor

3. Photoshop opens then the
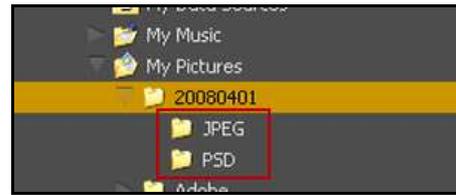   Image Processor dialogue
   box appears:

The Image processor shows
that we have selected 6 files
to convert.

For e-mail, we've chosen
mid-quality, and to resize to a
convenient size for viewing
on-screen. sRGB is the best
option for on-screen viewing.

For PSD, the files are left full-
size.

Once the Image Processor has finished its work, we find that there are now two new folders containing the derivative files.

Of course, the originals are left unchanged.

Bridge workspaces

As you will have found if you've followed this workflow, Bridge offers a variety of workspaces, each of which is easily customised to your own requirements. Customised workspaces can be saved.

The size of the panes can be changed by moving the mouse over the dividing line then click-and-drag the boundary.

Two of the workspaces provided in CS4 Bridge.