

# GCSE Photography

## Unit One—Burning Wire Wool.

The effect shown below was created by burning wire wool and spinning it rapidly at night to create this stunning effect.

The equipment on the right is an example of how you might set this up. Wire wool is stuffed into the whisk, which is then attached to a secure cable. This allows the whisk to be swung through the air without danger to anyone in the immediate vicinity. The wire wool is then lit, a butane lighter works very well for this, and swung in a circle. As the burning wire wool travels through the air it burns considerably hotter as more oxygen passes through the equipment (much like blowing or using bellows on a fire). As the wire wool burns and sparks, pieces break off and fly through the air, often bounc-



ing when the hit the floor or a hard surface.

Some experimentation is needed for the exposure, but a shutter speed of between 5 and 10 seconds is required to produce enough sparks to add interest to the final photograph.

Apertures can they be adjusted

to create the correct exposure.

This example, by Phil Sproson is particularly effective as the landscape it is situated in adds a natural beauty to the photograph.

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Wire Wool Burning Experiment.

The photograph below was taken at 9:50 pm on 5th June 2013.  
It was taken on the towpath of the Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal.

The camera was set up on a tripod with an Infra Red trigger. Focua and exposure were both on manual—ISO was 100.

After waiting for the light levels to drop enough for an 8 second exposure at F16, the shot was taken.

The Wire Wool was tied to a length of wire and lit with a gas lighter. The shot below was the fourth exposure made a series of six. After the sixth exposure, although the light level was much better (ie darker), the wind had picked up and it was no longer possible to ignite the wire wool.

Use a miniature butane gas torch to light the wire wool.

Shoot in RAW so that the white balance can be easily altered. This would allow me to change the colour of the sparks from their natural red colour, to a more pleasing whiter colour.

