

Creating a Multi-Image Contact Sheet with Faststone Image Viewer

Microsoft Windows - Freeware for Private use

Image Browser - Converter - Batch resizer - Editor - Print Manager

This free Programme is far more extensive than its name “Image Viewer” implies. With substantial and easy to use features many everyday tasks also become easy.

- The Programme supports all Major Graphic formats and most popular Raw formats.
- It's a comprehensive Image editor with Colour, Lighting, Sharpening, Resizing and Crop tools, plus many useful Graphic, Publishing, Printing and Export tools.
- With a choice of intuitive screen layouts and skins, it is easy to customise and use.
- There is an initial settings page, allowing the user to set the main screen views, controls, save and search format, Thumbnails size and shape, Printing and more.
- It lacks Layer capability but with it's many utilities it is a superb image editor, the following exercise will use Faststone to generate a Contact sheet from images.
- Next Creating a multiple images Contact sheet**

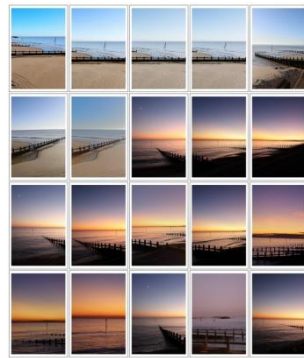
Creating a Multi image Contact Sheet

- Creating a Contact sheet is comparable to tiling a floor. It is necessary to know the shape and size of the floor and the tiles, to work out how many tiles are needed and the best pattern for them!
- Easy ? Well yes, as long as allowances are made for grouting and doorways etc
- With images it's a similar calculation. The task is to fit a set number of images onto a given sheet of say A4 or A3 paper, or into a shape suitable for a Webpage or other Publication. As with a floor it must include spacing around the images (tiles) and include any margins required.
- This article is written to show how to fit 20 images into a compact and tidy shape, using a matrix of 5x4 or 4x5 images to achieve this whilst retaining a suitably symmetrical layout.
- The final shape will depend on the Images aspect ratio and orientation. The images below show some of the possible arrangements

TIP Ensure the size of required thumbnails times the number of spaces either way fits within the required shape. **Final size and fit can also be adjusted with margins and spacing.**



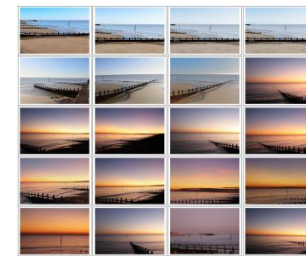
4x3 aspect Portrait mode



3x2 aspect Portrait mode



Square

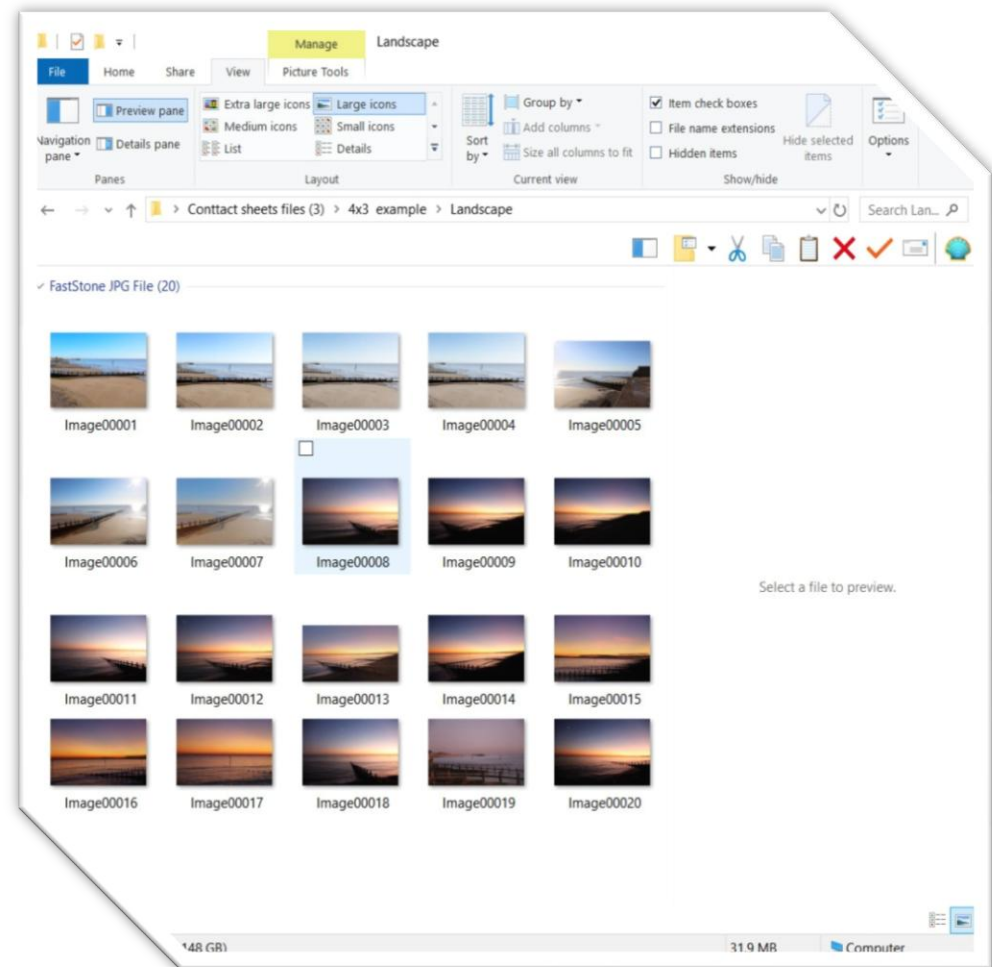


3x2 aspect Landscape mode

- **NEXT** - Commonly used 4x3 Landscape images are used to create the example Contact Sheet

First Steps - Selection of photos and sizing.

- Find, in Windows the 20 Photos required, prepared as 4x3 aspect ratio Landscape Images.
- It will be necessary to decide how to arrange these Images on the Contact Sheet.
- The choice is 5 across x 4 down or 4 across x 5 down, and sets the final sheet size and shape.
- An A4 page aspect ratio is about 1.4 :1. For this exercise, a Landscape Contact Sheet 5 images across by 4 down is the initial design choice.
- Assuming a final thumbnail size of 4cm x 3cm, (for easy calculation) then 20 spaced accordingly will fit neatly into a 20 x 12cm space.
- Allow 1cm extra in total, for spaces between the thumbnails and margins (0.1 cm all round) plus another 2cm for the header or footer gives a **minimum page size of 21 x 15cm.**



Next – Selecting the Images and opening the Contact sheet's settings page to insert the Data and Sizing's.

Faststone's Opening Page

Chosen view showing folder and thumbnails with the selected layout with the fly-outs at the top of page.

Further necessary icons and fly outs are on any selected dropdown screens

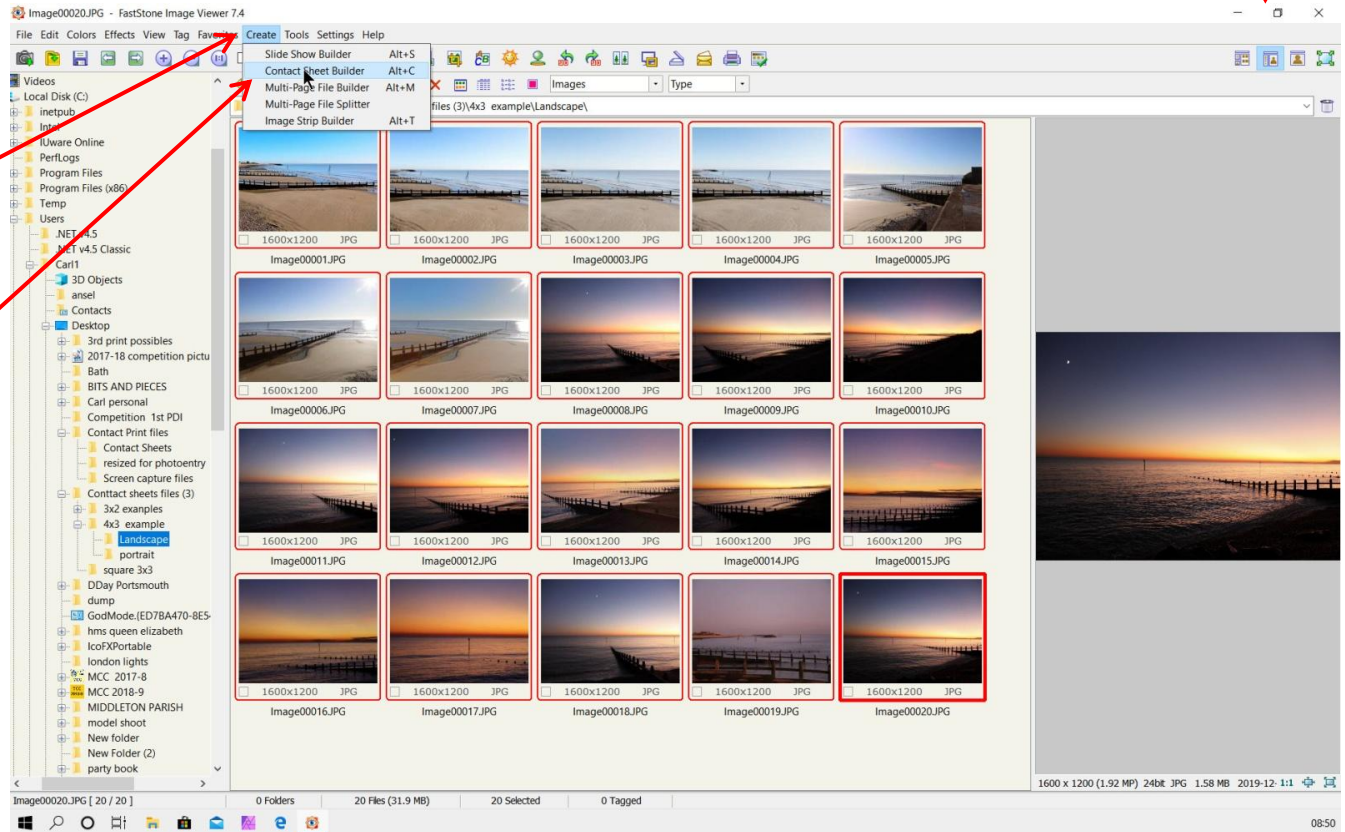
If faststone is opened from single image, and it's full screen, click return to display all folder's thumbnails

Select required images.
Use Shift, and select with
Mouse to highlight images
(Outlined in red)

Find Create

Open drop down menu.
Scroll to Contact sheet
builder.

Select and open.



Now all is ready build the contact sheet

Where it all happens

Fill in the form with the format **you exactly want**, spacing, title (Caption) etc and its done. You have full control of the Contact Page layout titling etc.

Set the overall sheet size dimensions, including margins and thumbnails as estimated on Page 2.

Set the sheet Margins and Header

Set the number of Thumbnails across and down. Set margins around them

Set background effects later. Leave as default. no Border, no Caption, Colour or Shadow. *Check filing order is correct*

The screenshot shows the 'Contact Sheet Builder - 20 file(s)' window. At the top, there are three tabs: 'File List', 'Settings', and 'Preview'. The 'Settings' tab is active. The interface is divided into several sections:

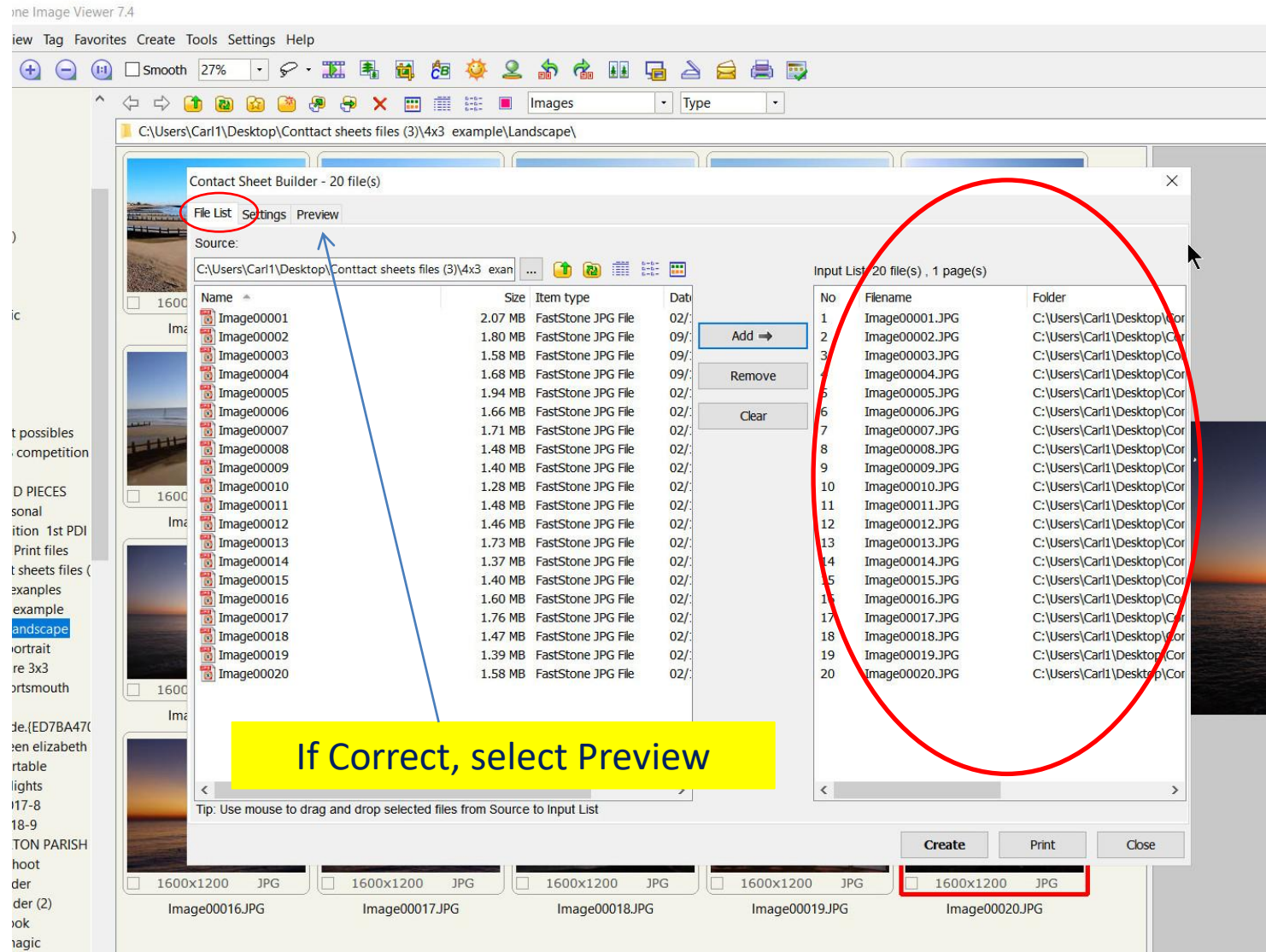
- Sheet:** Includes fields for Width (21.00), Height (15.00), Unit (cm), and DPI (300). Below this are Margins (Left: 0.1, Top: 2.1, Right: 0.1, Bottom: 0.1) and a Background Color field.
- Header:** Includes fields for Left, Center, and Right text, and a Font selection button. A large font preview 'AaBbYyZz' is shown below.
- Thumbnail:** Includes fields for Columns (5), Rows (4), Spacing (0.1), and a Filing Order dropdown set to 'Across, then down'. There are also checkboxes for Border, Shadow, and Auto Rotate.
- Output:** Includes a Format dropdown (JPEG Images), Quality (90), a Folder selection field, and a Filename field (ContactSheet_###).

Annotations include:

- A red box around the 'File List', 'Settings', and 'Preview' tabs with an arrow pointing to the 'Settings' tab.
- A red box around the 'Sheet' section with an arrow pointing to the 'Size' field.
- A red box around the 'Margins' field with an arrow pointing to it.
- A red box around the 'Thumbnail' section with an arrow pointing to the 'Columns' and 'Rows' fields.
- A red box around the 'Output' section with an arrow pointing to the 'Folder' field.
- A yellow callout box pointing to the 'Header' section with the text: 'Leave these options Blank for now but try it later see the ... at right side for title placements'.
- A yellow callout box pointing to the 'Output' section with the text: 'Choose where to put result (if left blank it will default to original folder)'.

Select **File list or Preview** at top to see if all is loaded correctly

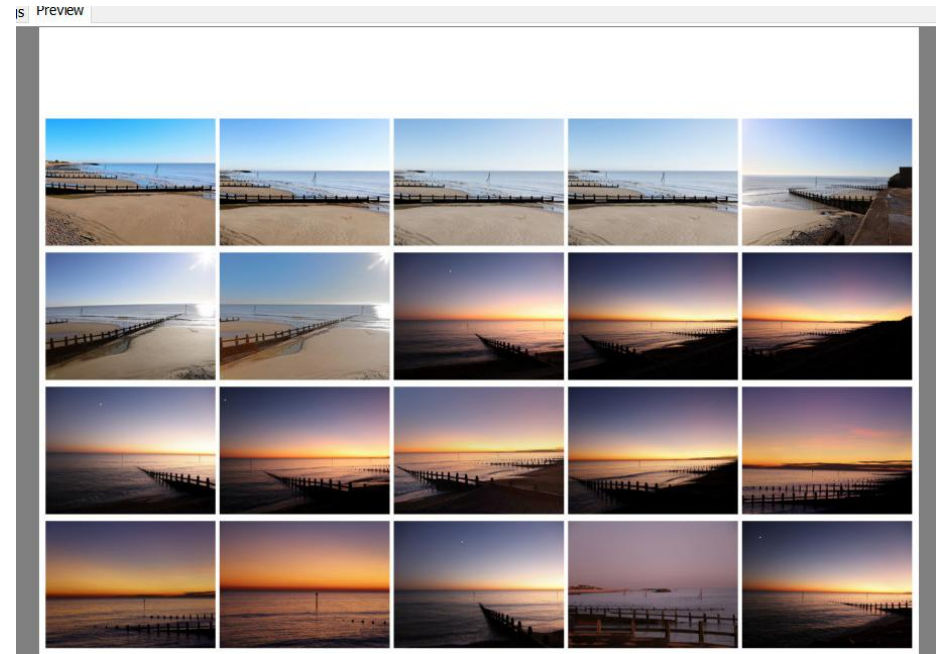
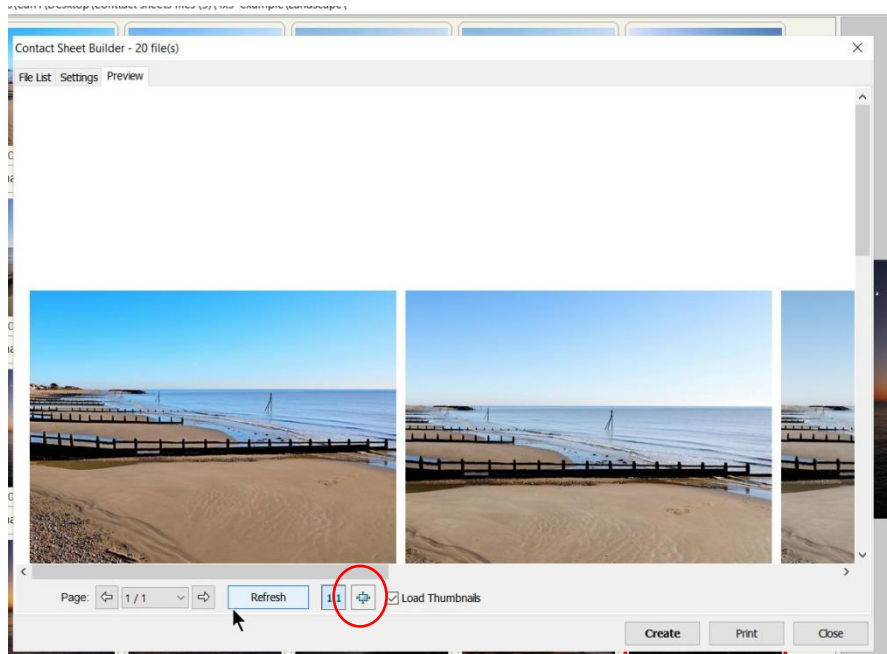
If **“FileList”** was selected then this is the expected Page View showing your selected images in the right-hand pane



Next Design Preview

Preview sheet

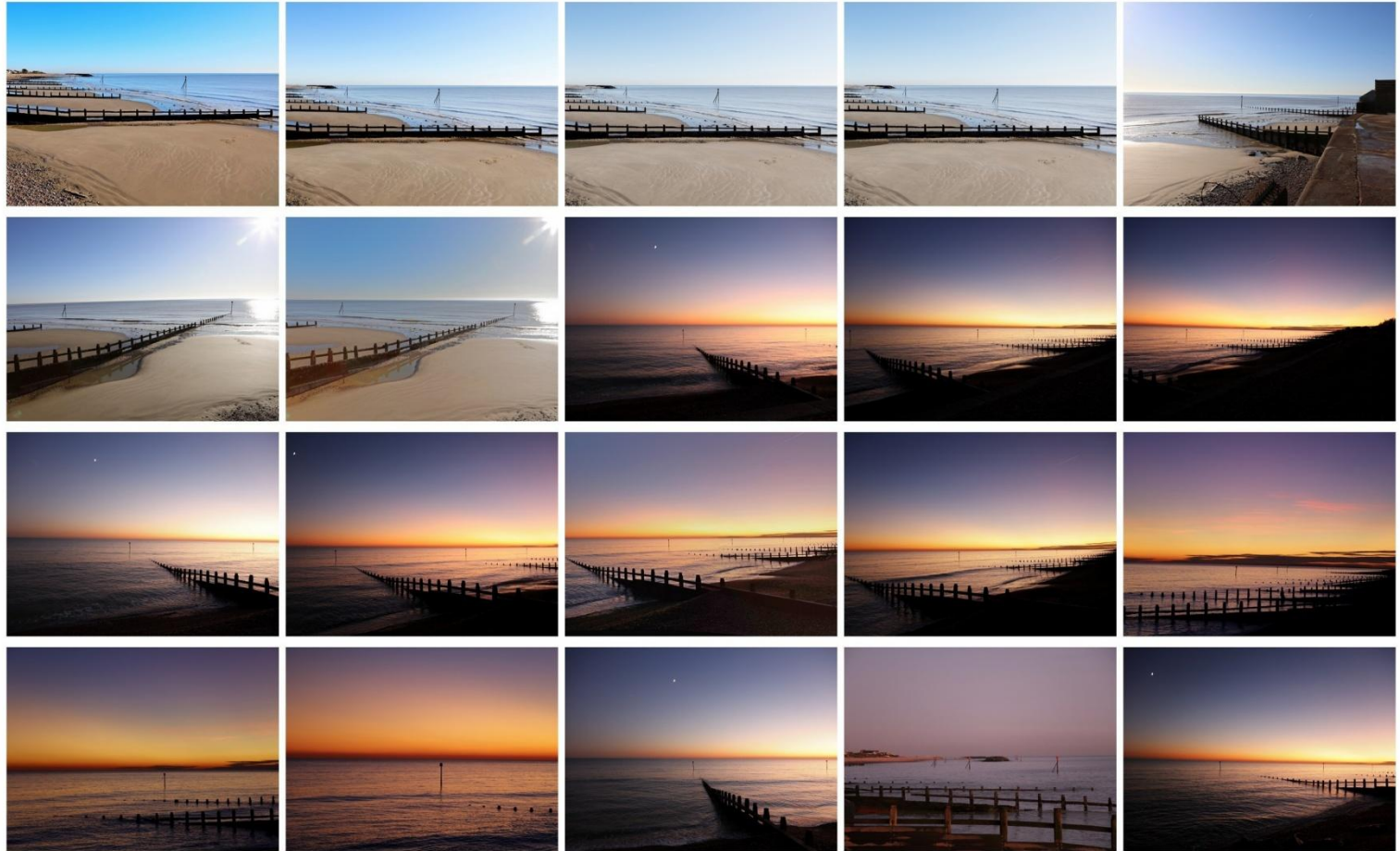
If just part of the selection shows, then use the “fit to screen” button **circled** below the image. Check the full contact sheet is correct - second image below



If you are happy with your preview with spacing and margins etc then hit create. Located on bottom right of preview page. Your file will automatically be saved in pre-chosen file and the folder with contact sheets displayed on screen.

Here is the Contact Sheet A border has been added to outline the sheet for convenience and viewing , note the space for a header as required this can be predetermined and filled on the setup page if required.

PLACE HEADER HERE?



Next same images on a 4 wide x 5 deep sheet- changed just sheet size and column and rows!

The Other View

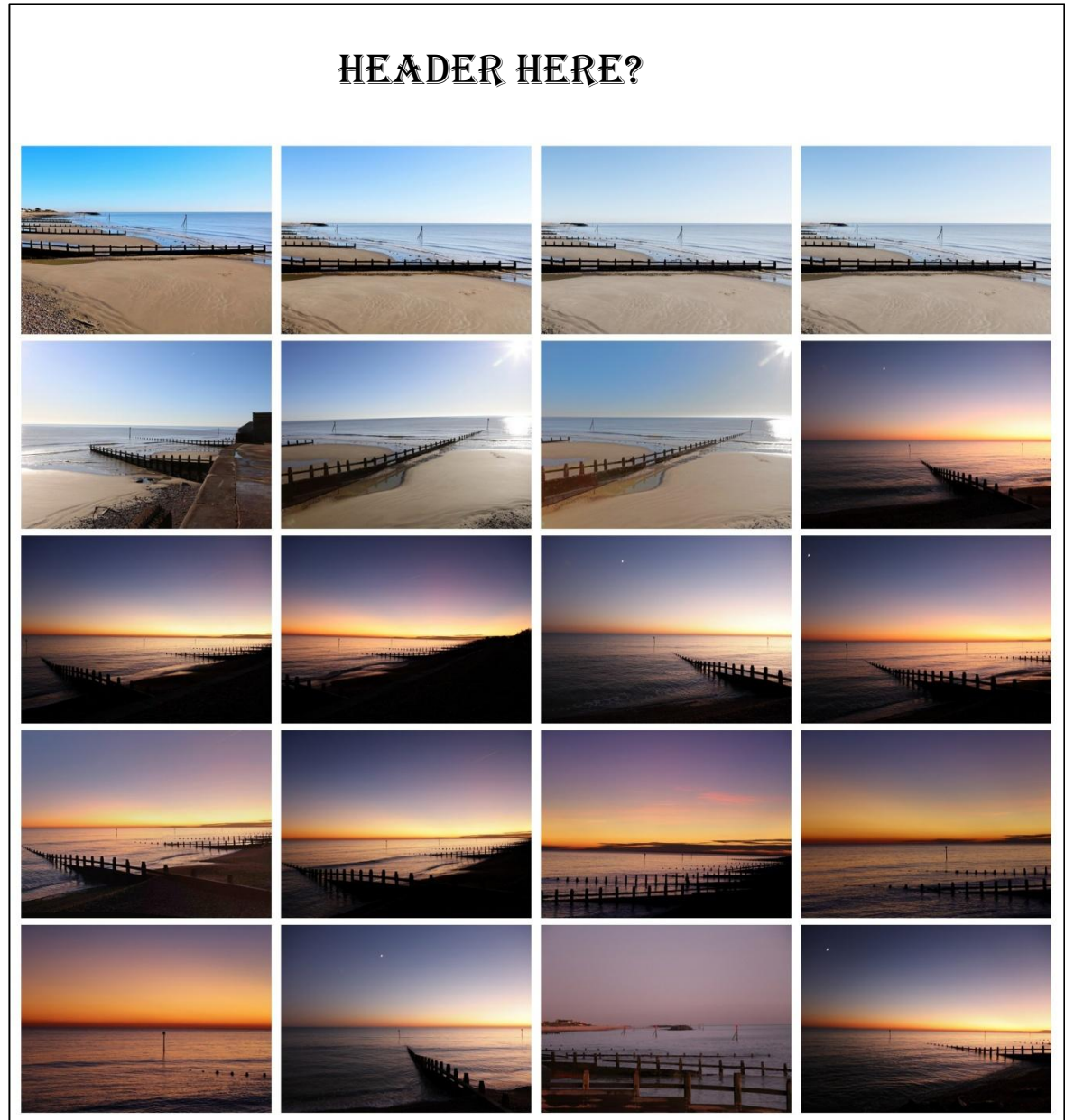
Well did you work it out successfully? This format has worked out as a 16cm wide x 17 cm high Contact Sheet.

Reducing Header by 1cm, the sheet would be 16cm square!

The Title could as easily be at the bottom if required, just Swap the header and footer dimensions on the Setup page.

Try activating a border around the Thumbnails – Allow for any extra spacing required !

One other way to present 20 Images follows:



20 + 1 images on a 7 x 3 matrix

Use an image, Text or Logo as a space filler.

It is possible to add a blank or text box
between thumbnails to adjust the matrix
spacing for a specific layout.

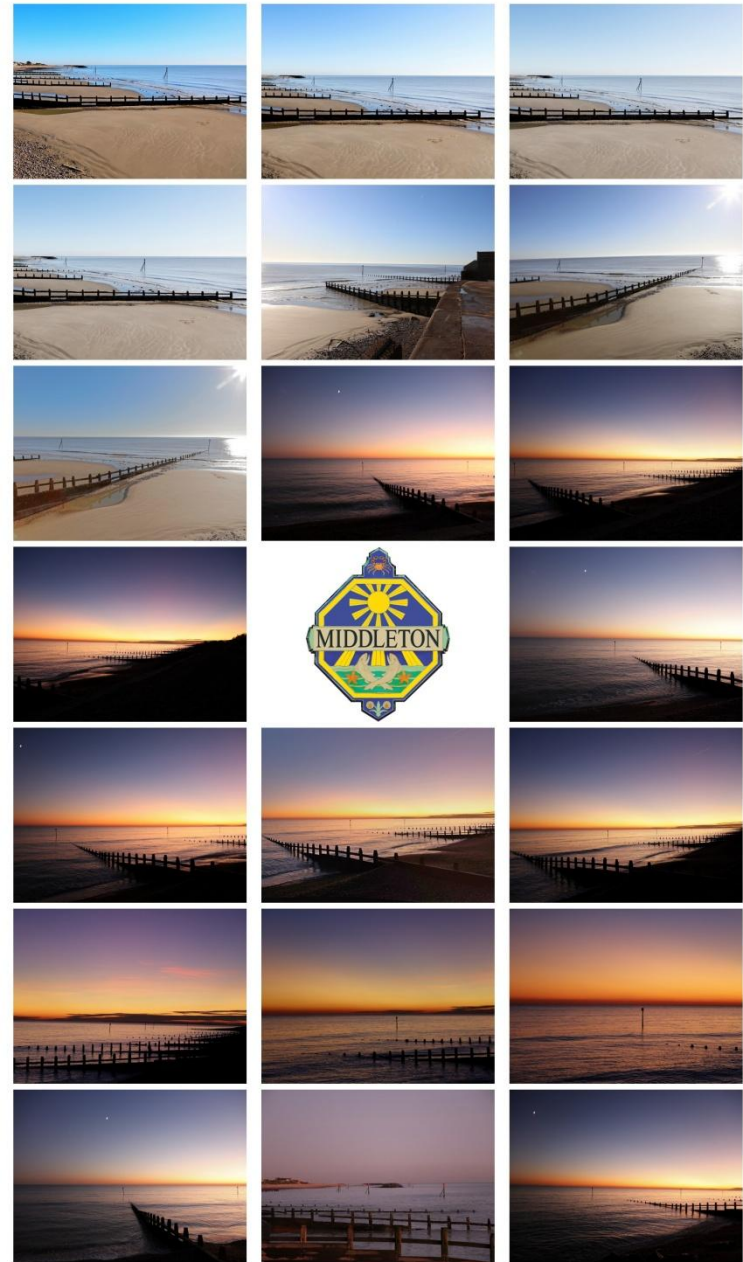
There are many possibilities.

**This presentation covers the basics, there are
many more adjustments and refinements on
the contact sheet designer page**

Try them – One at a time. Add shadows—
Outline borders of Page and Thumbnails
Background colours - Legends and Title,
On the Sheet and below the Images

**It's all there and its Free!
Tutorial is Finished.**

Something to try later follows!



Something to try when you have mastered the settings

- The sheets below contain the same 16 images. The chosen images have very differing sizes and aspect ratios. Sheet 1 was as it came out from a random selection The second sheet was carefully laid out so that images with similar aspects were grouped in columns or rows, two images, the Monkey! and the girl were cropped to be portrait and square . A background infill was added.– That’s all - Not always feasible to reorder the images but nice if one can.
- Size in Pixels is not an issue as the programme takes care of that. The original image size is shown titled with the image number below each thumbnail.

