# APhotos

PUTTING IN A NEW SKY

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- This technique can be done in any photo editor which can use layers. For this demonstration I used Photoshop Elements 9 but any later programmes will work just as well.

- You will need a picture with a sky you don't like and another with a superior sky. The new sky should suit the background picture in terms of colour, time of day, etc.

- If you're using Elements you'll need to be in Full Edit mode, not Quick or Guided.

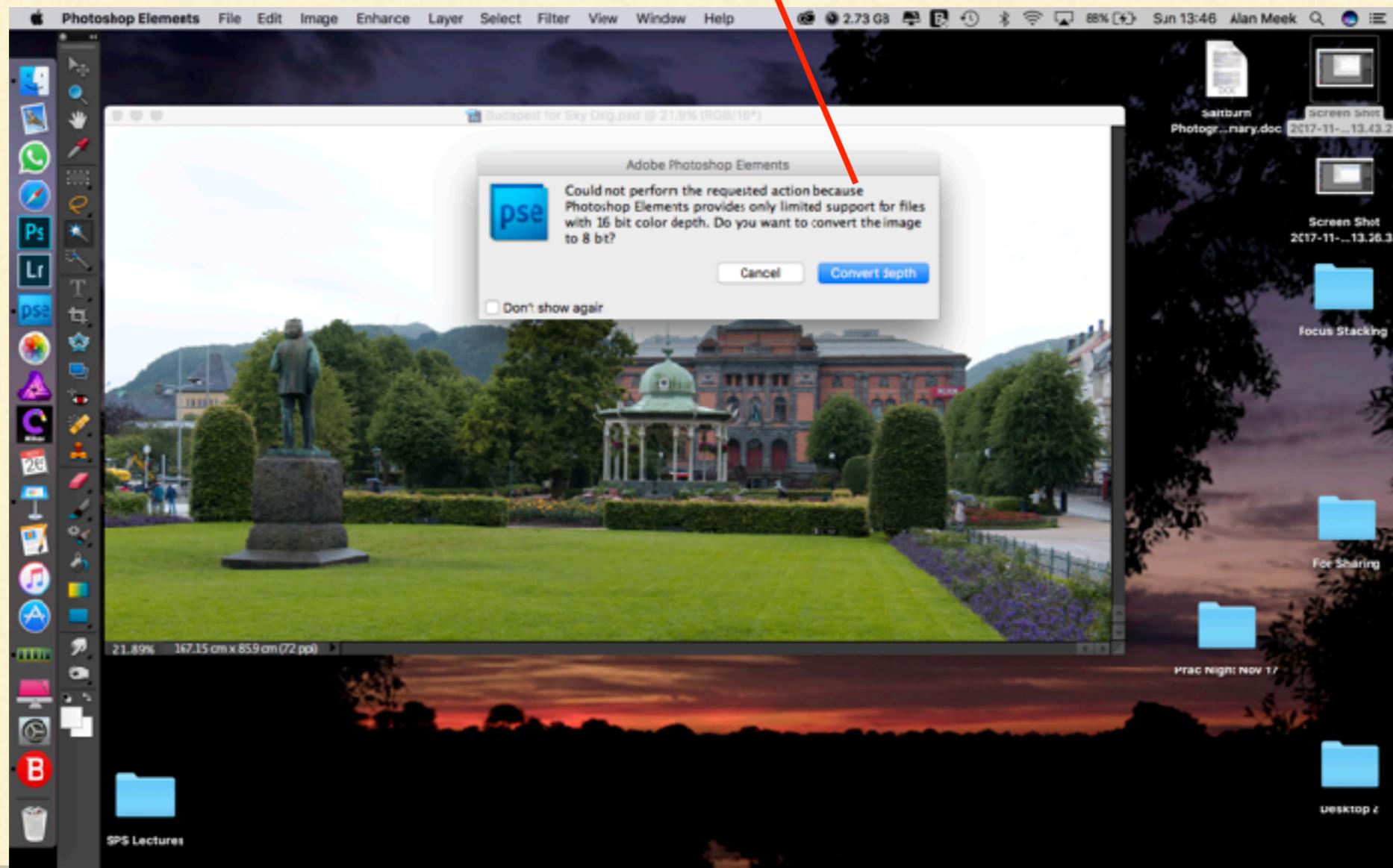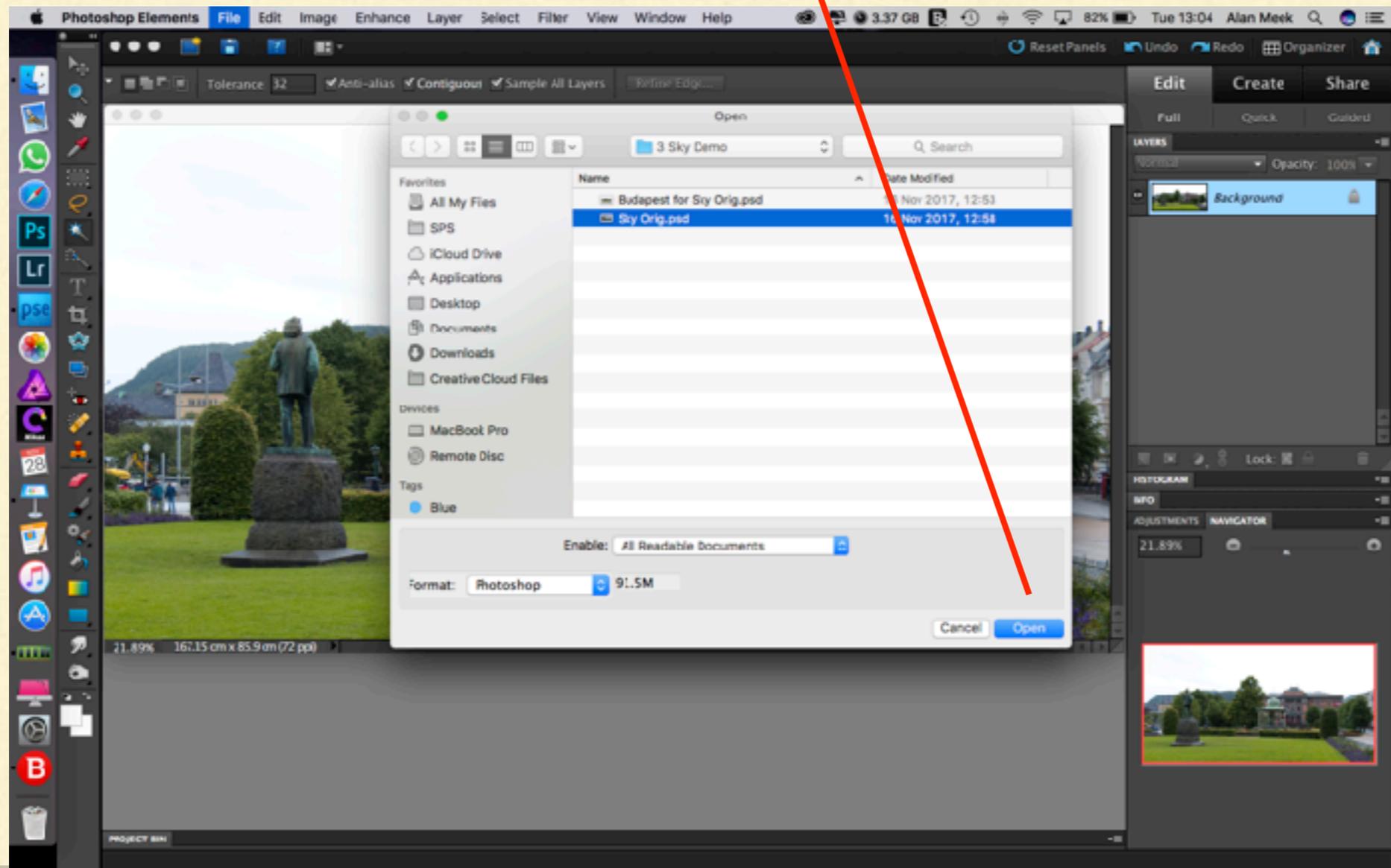- First, find your background picture on your computer, maybe via File / Open.
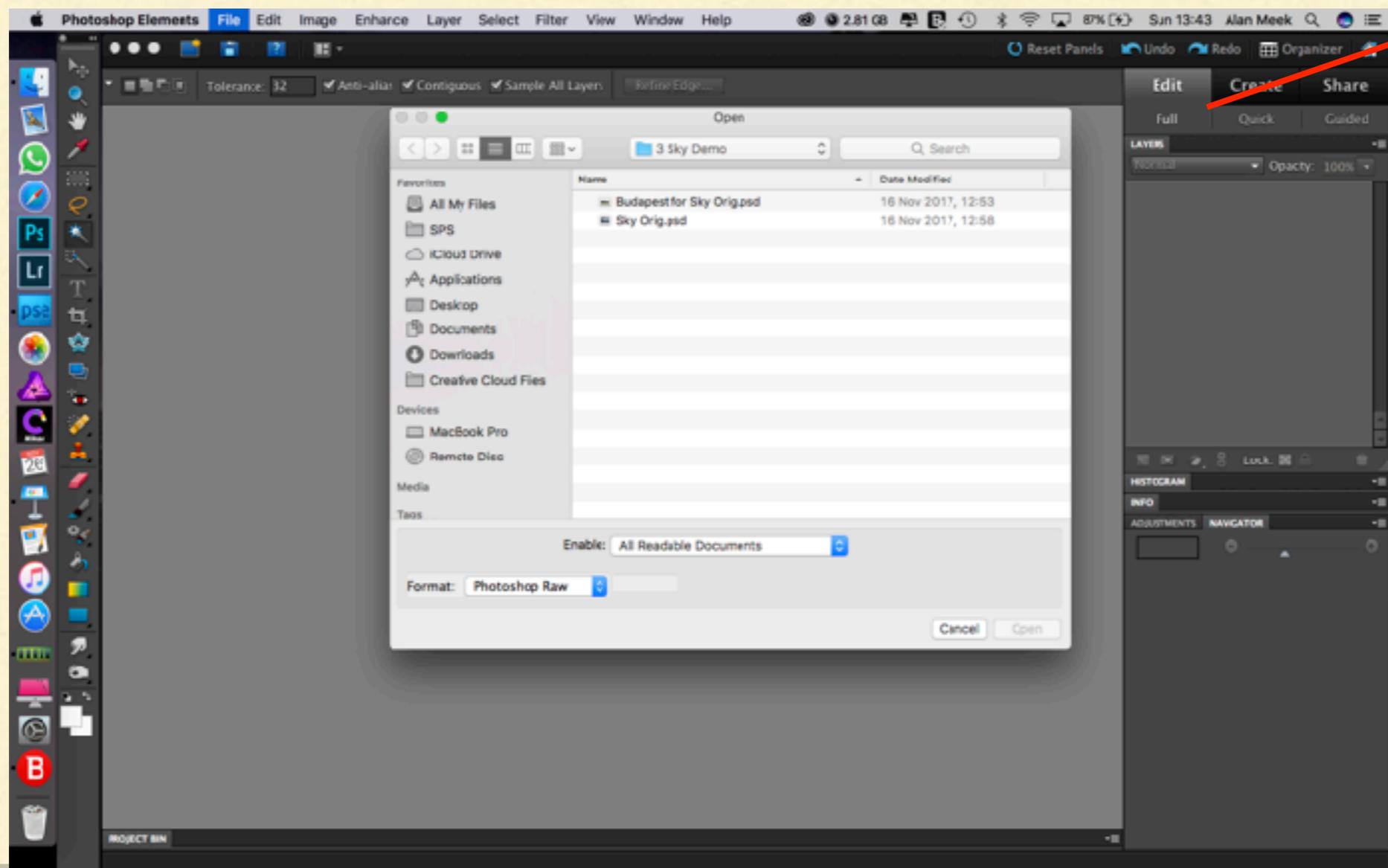
Full

■ Select it and click "Open".
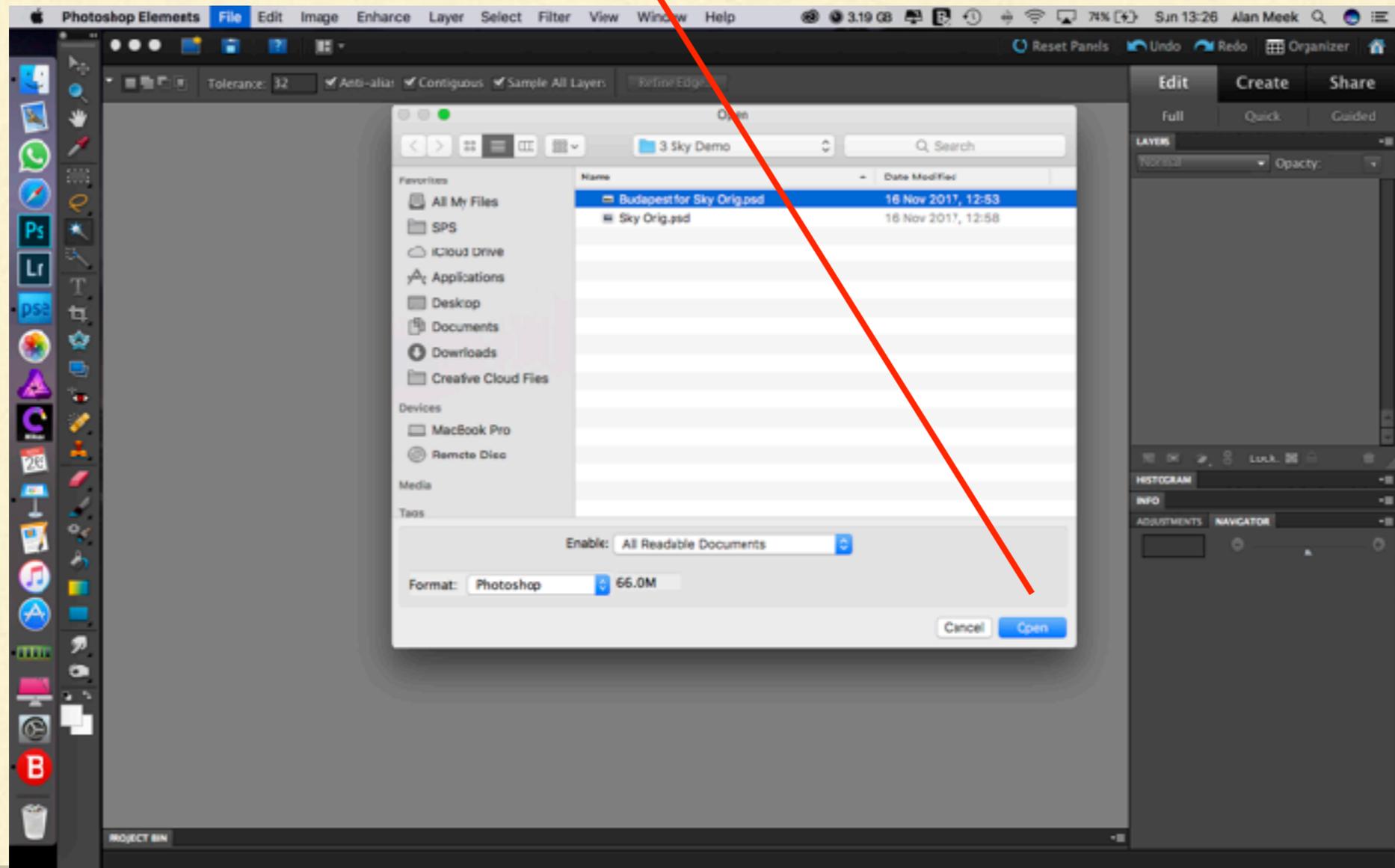
- Elements 9 can't handle high colour count pictures. If you get this message just click "Convert depth".
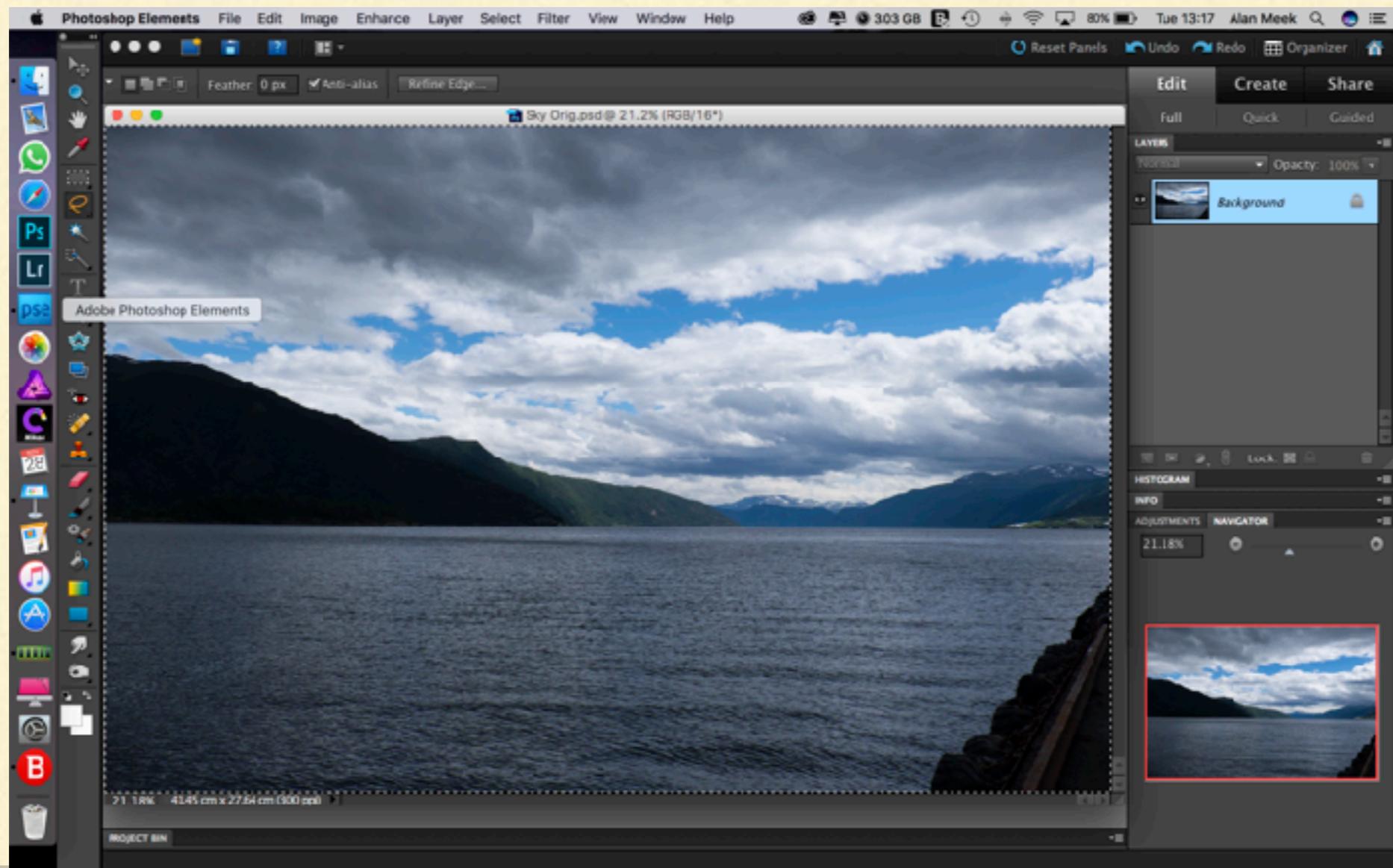
- If you don't, just carry on.

Now you need to open your sky photo. Again use "File / Open", select the sky file and click "Open".

■ The sky image opens in a separate window. Select the whole image either via "Select / All " or with the keyboard shortcut "Control + A".
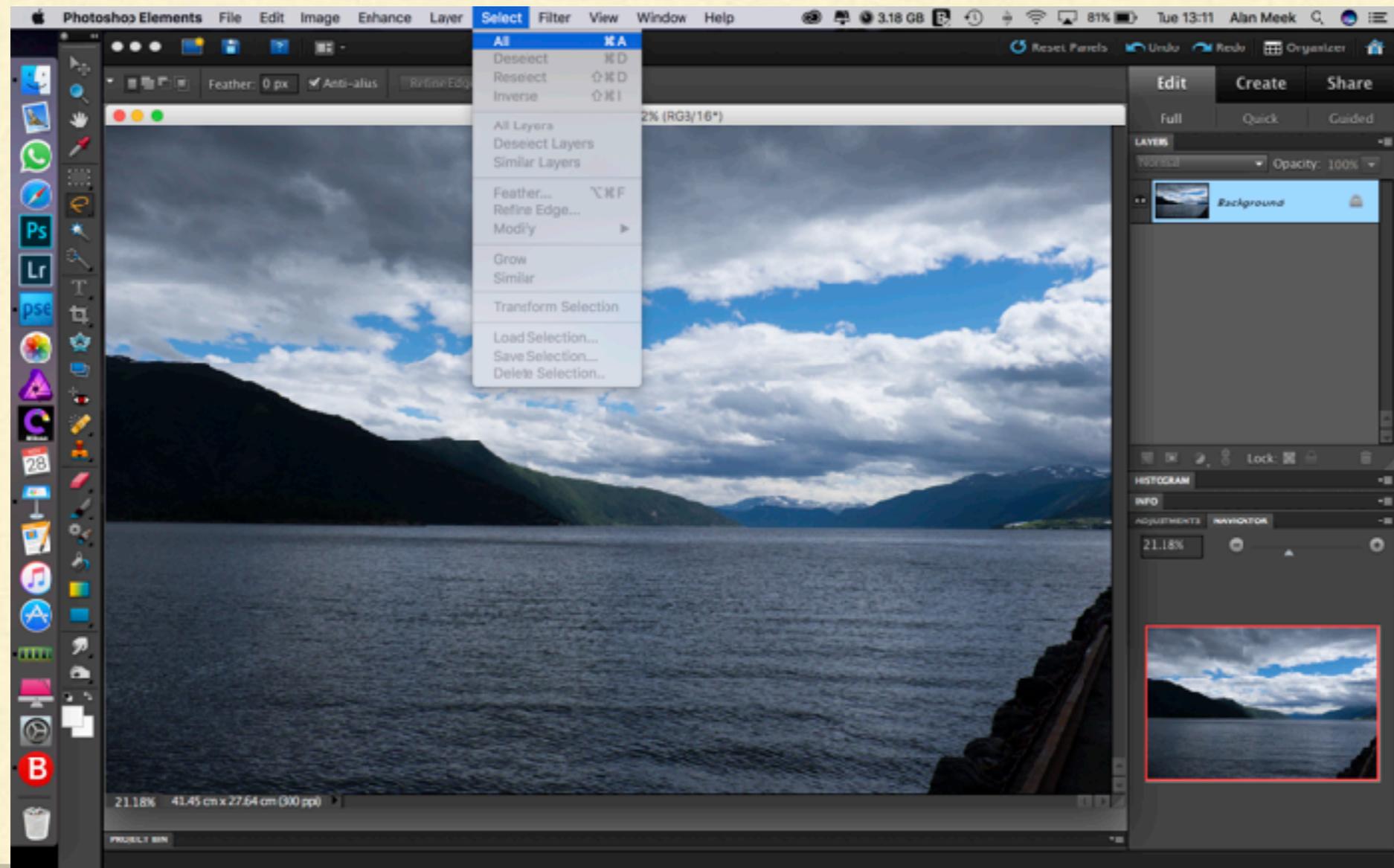
You'll notice that there are marching ants all around the image. Now copy it via "Edit / Copy" or shortcut "Control + C".

- You can minimise or delete the sky image now and we can see the background image again.

- At this point there is only one layer, called "Background". Paste the sky on top via "Edit / Paste" or shortcut "Control + V".
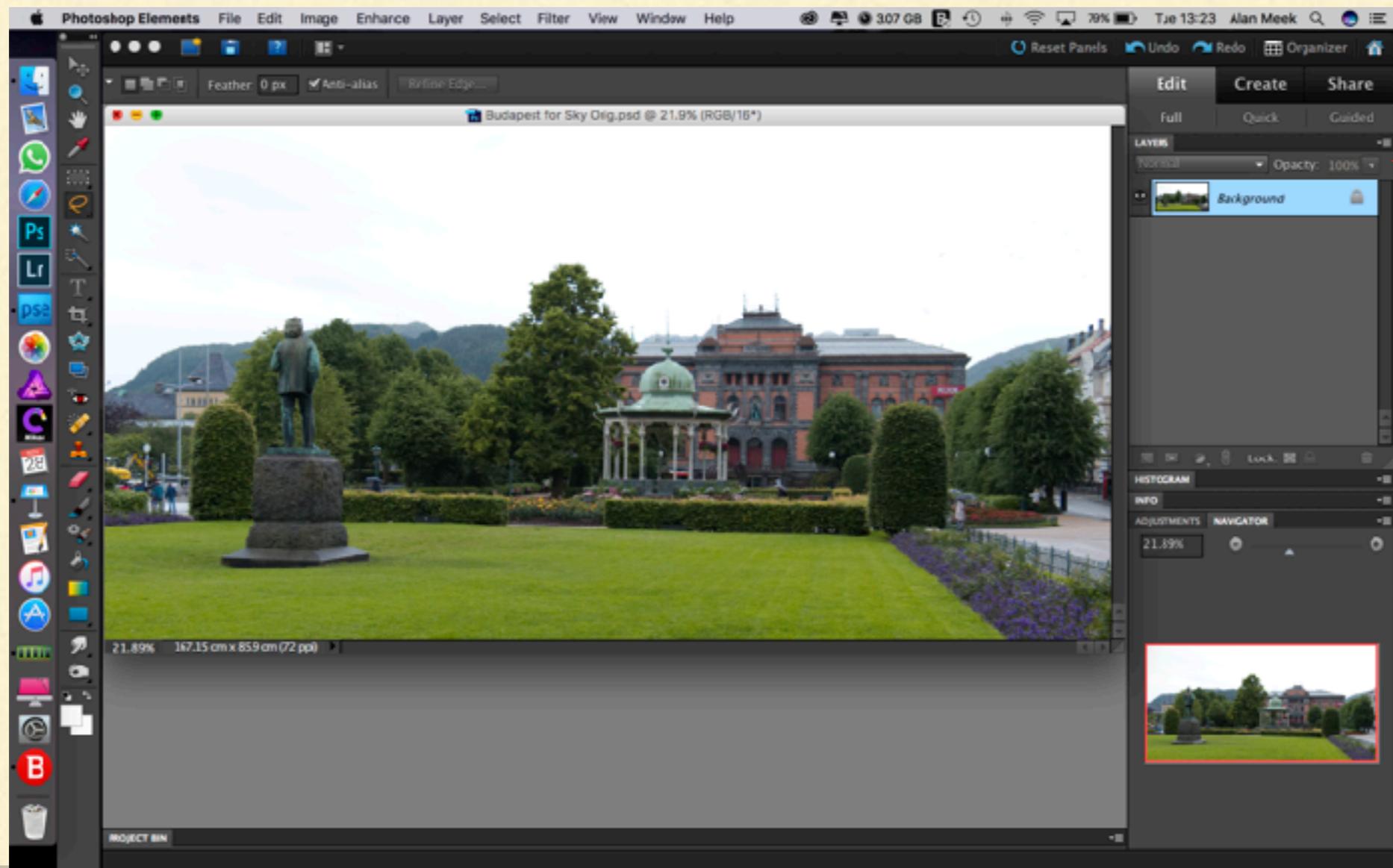
- Now we can only see the sky but we know the background is still there, hidden in the layer stack by the sky on top, which has called itself "Layer 1".
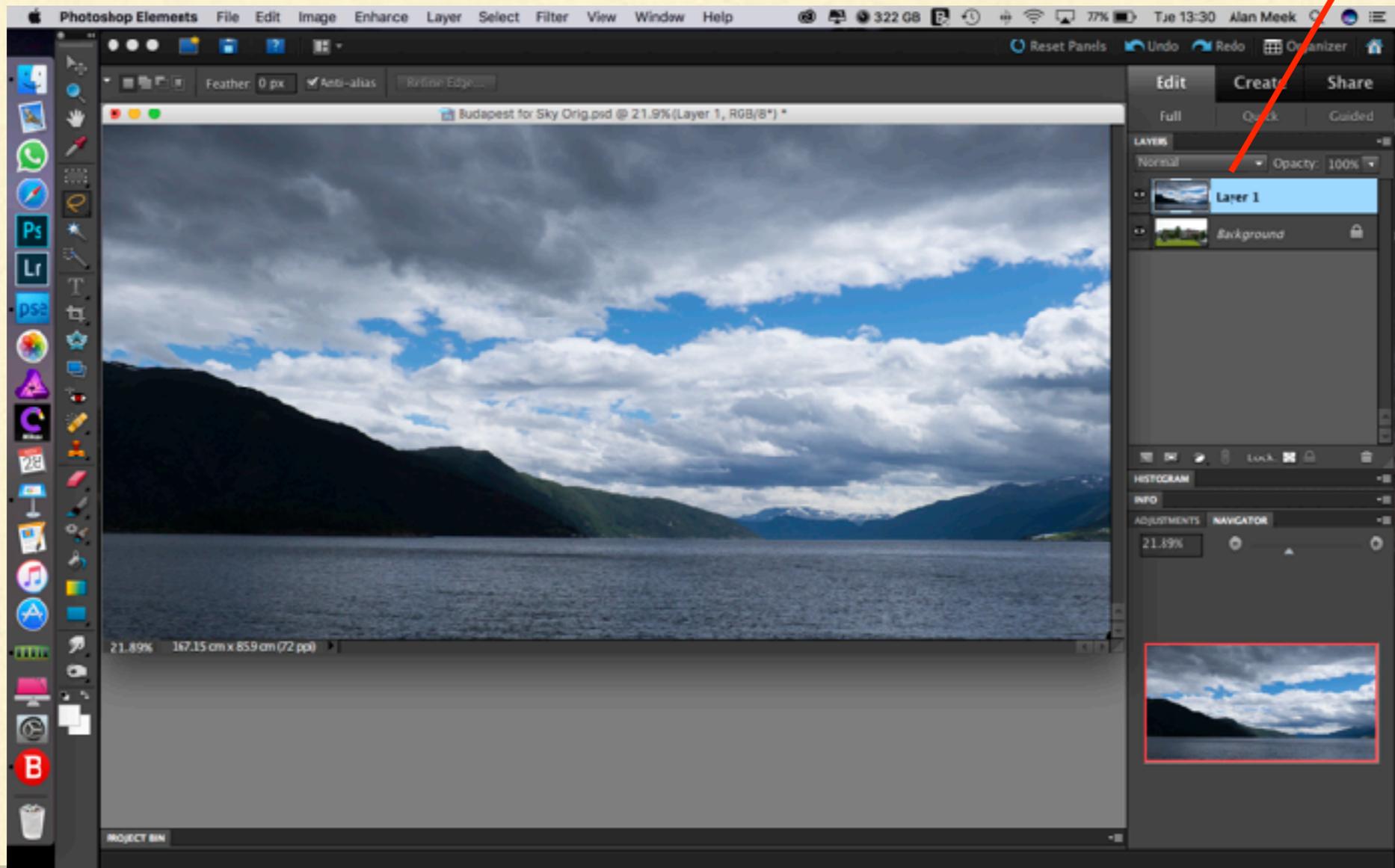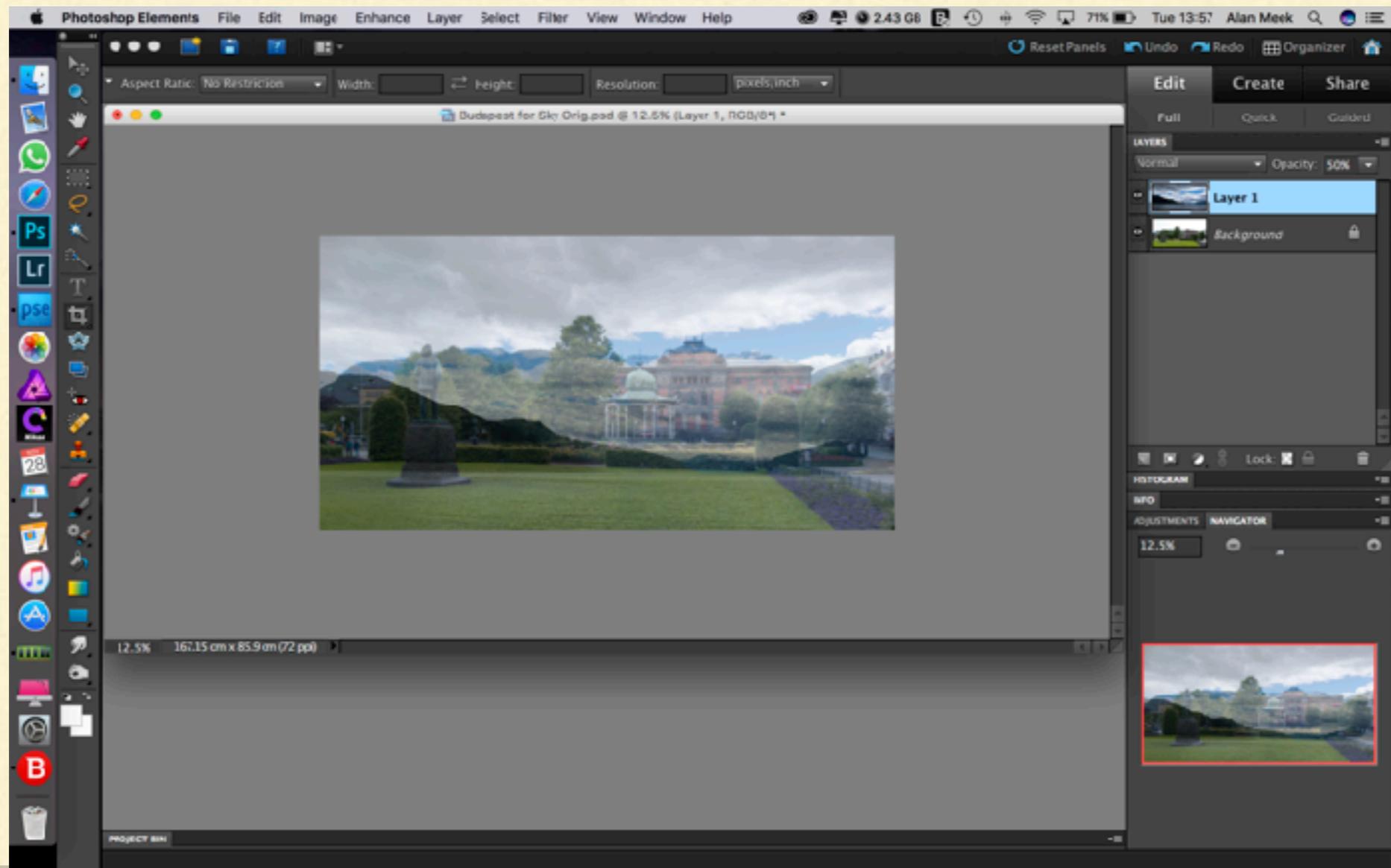
- To place the sky we need to see both images, so make the sky a bit transparent. Ensure the sky layer is selected (it's blue). Above it is "Opacity: 100%". Click on the down-pointing arrow next to it and drag the slider left to about 50%.
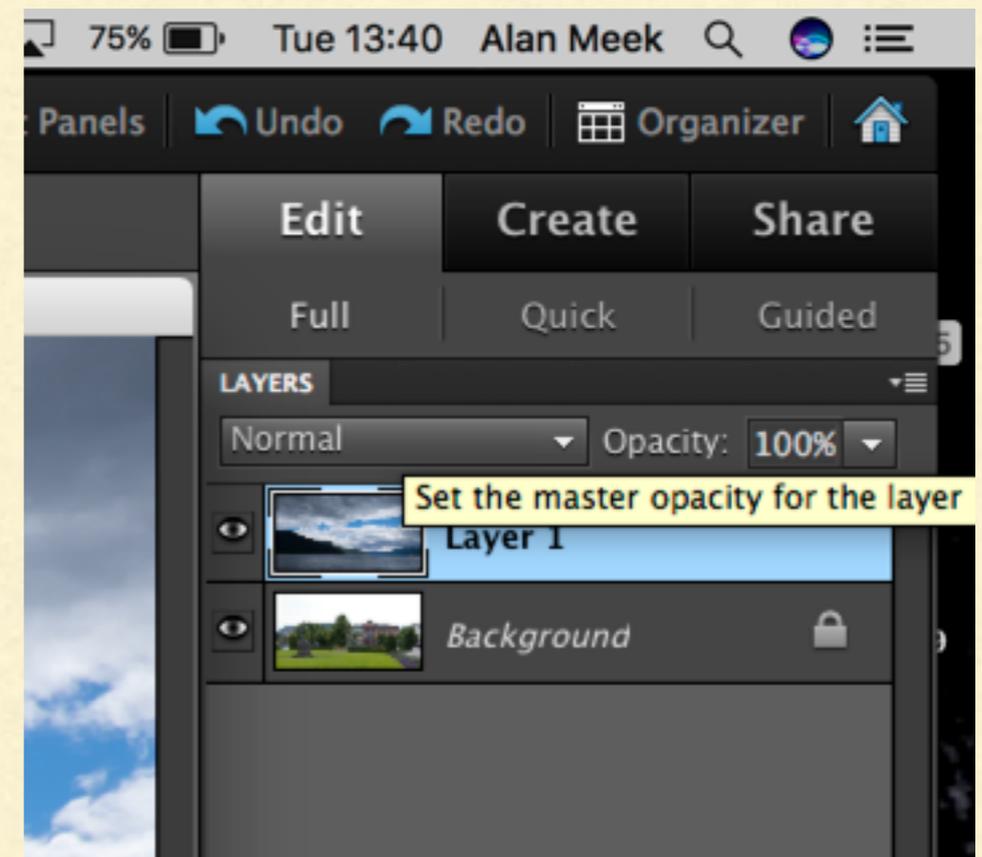
■ You'll see this.
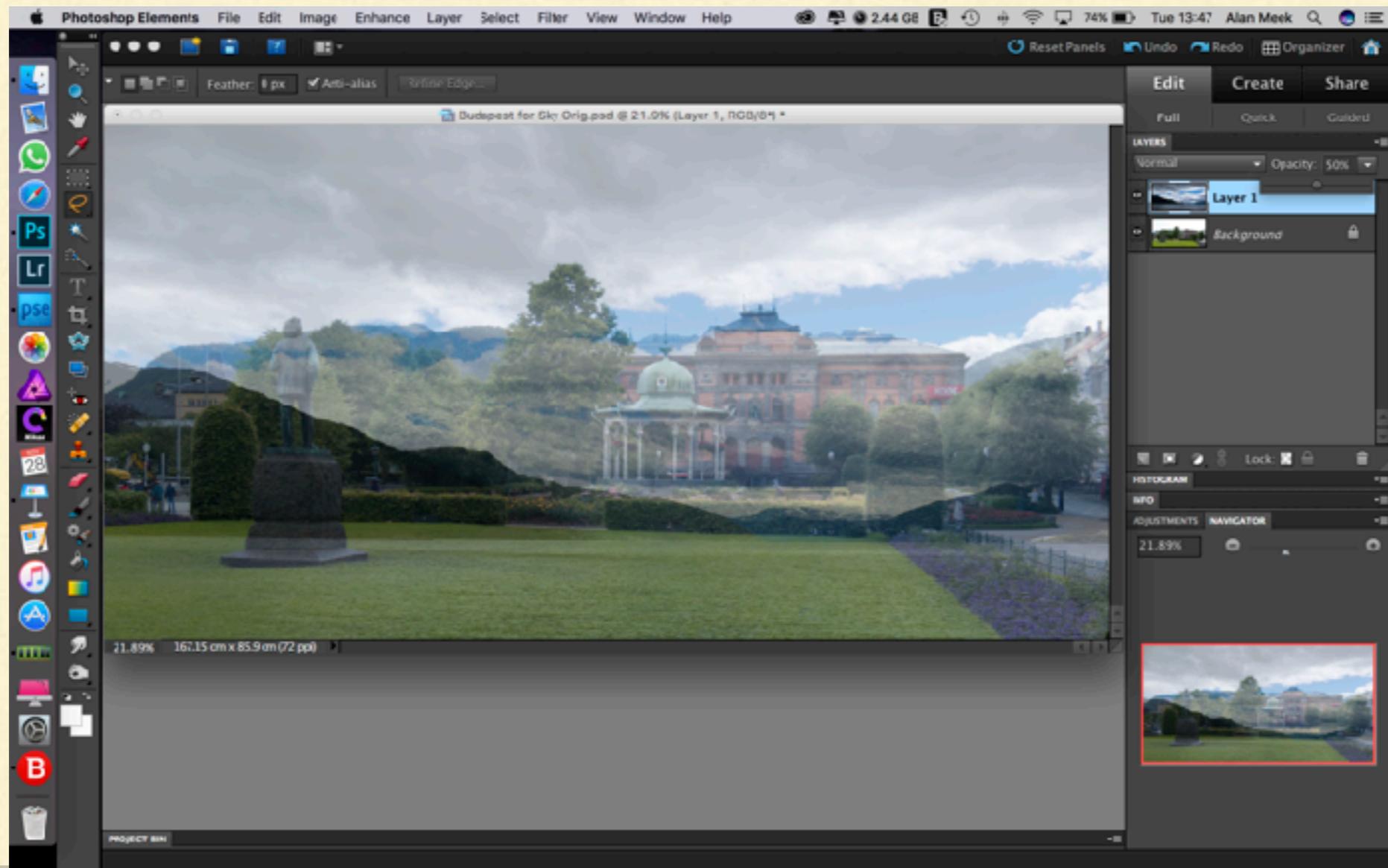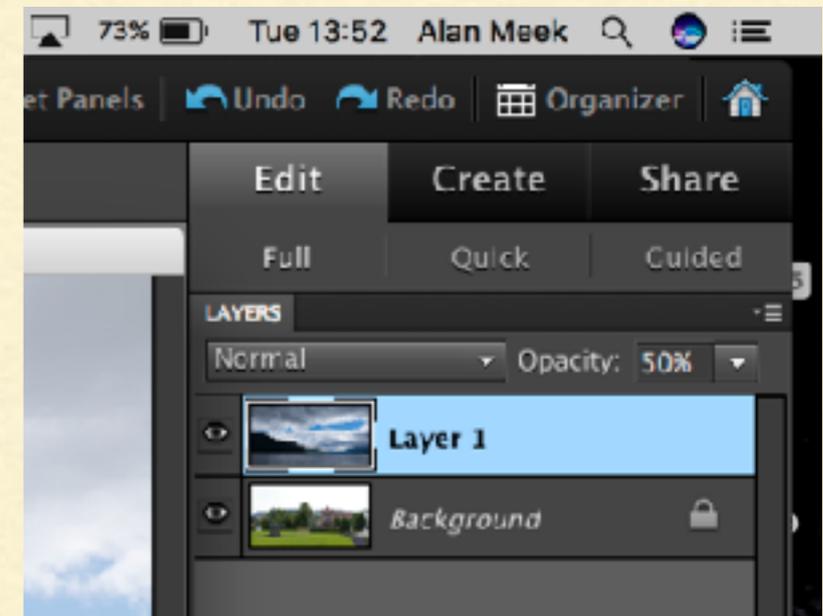
- For now we could do with some space so reduce magnification to 10-15%. Choose the "Move" tool from the left tool bar.

- Clicking and dragging in the centre of the image lets you move it about. Clicking and dragging in the corner lets you resize it.

- To rotate it click on a corner, place the cursor just outside that corner then click and drag. Or you can click and drag the tiny circle under the centre of the image.
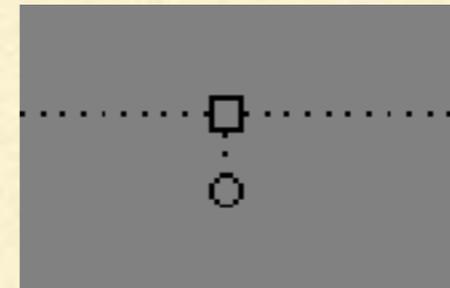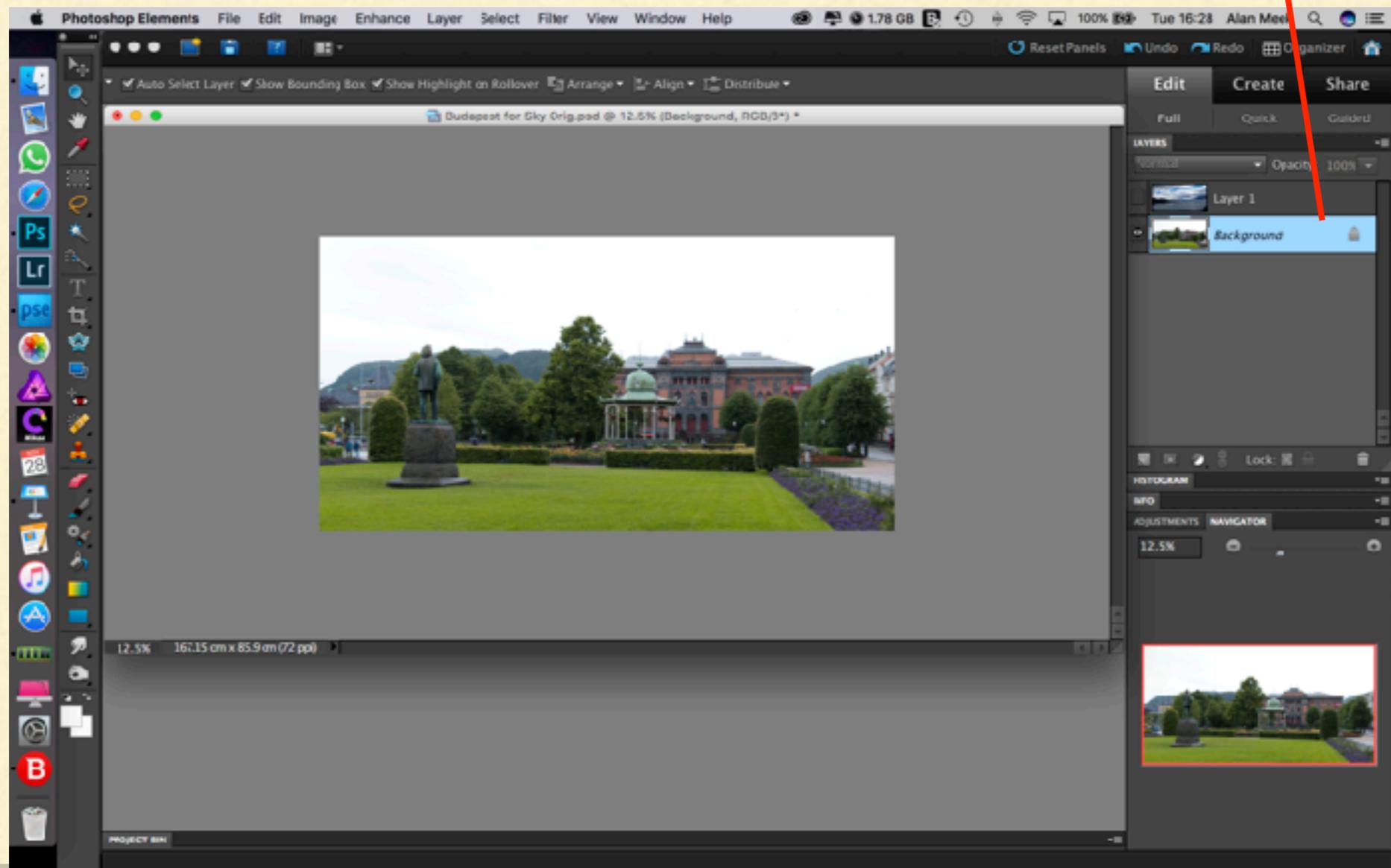
You may get a small green tick and red cross below the image so you can cancel or approve the new changes. When you're happy click on the green tick.
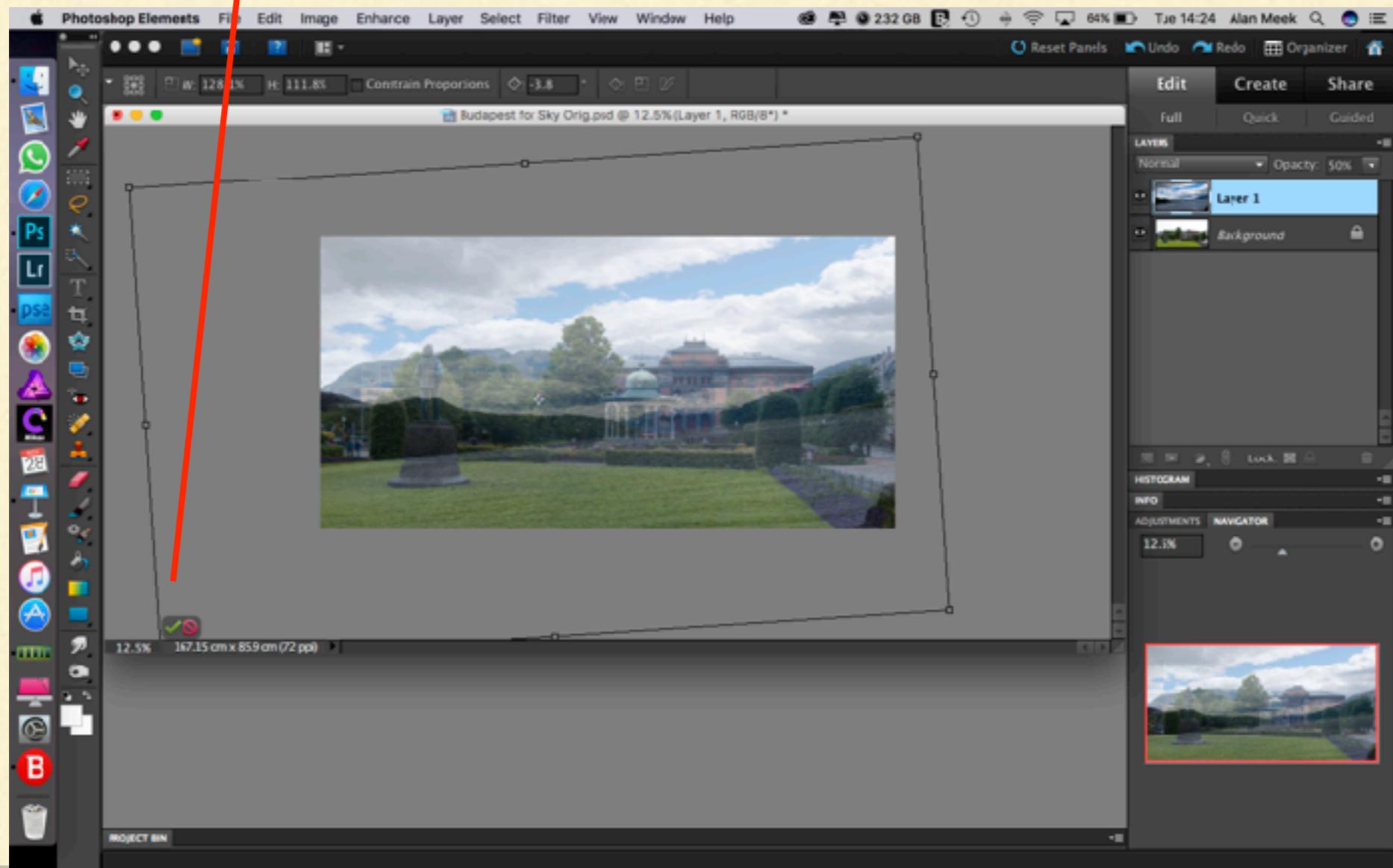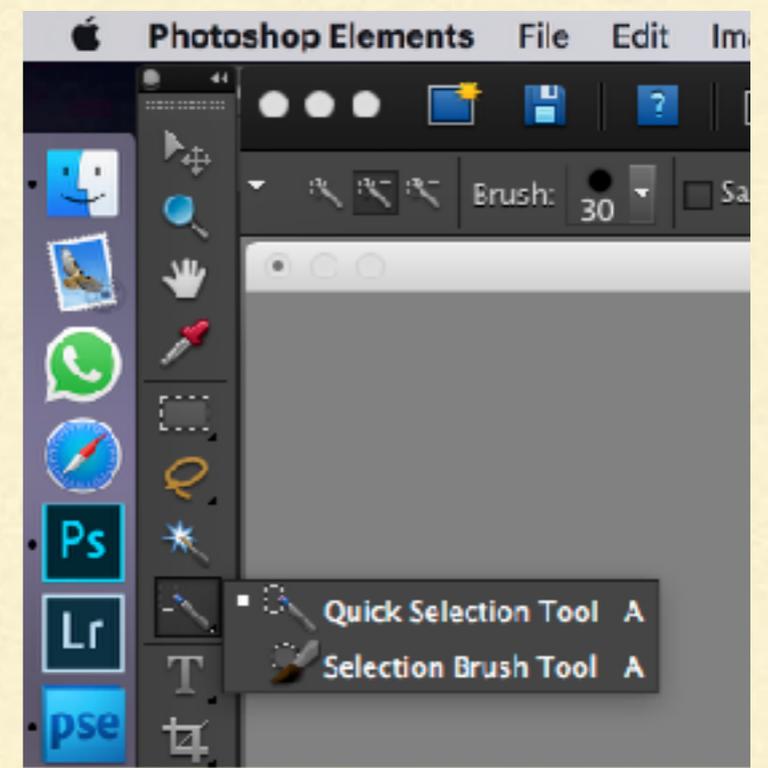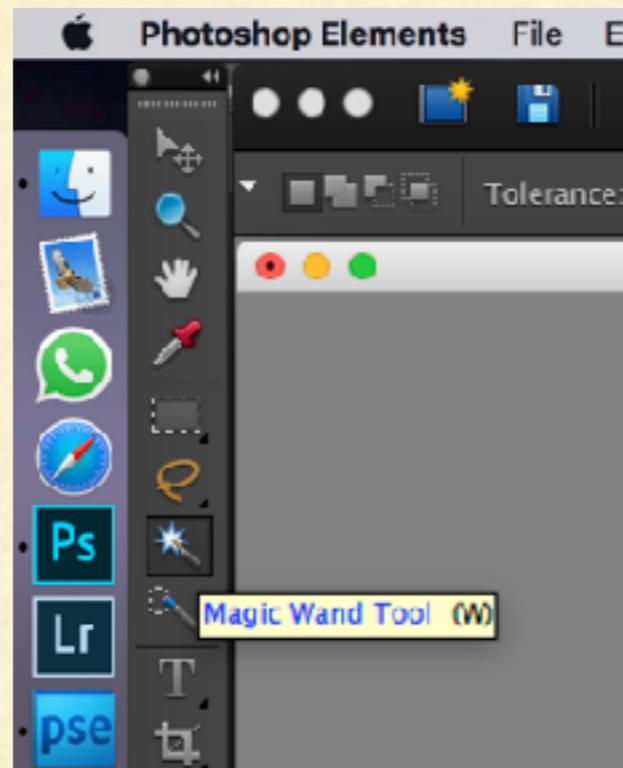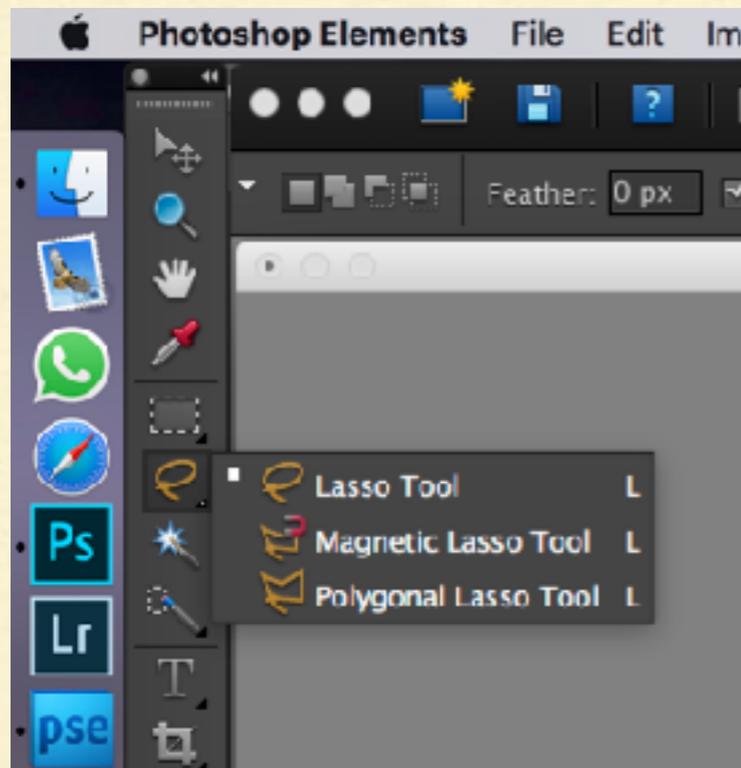
- Now we have to select the sky area of the background picture.

- First, make the sky layer invisible by clicking on the eye next to "Layer 1".
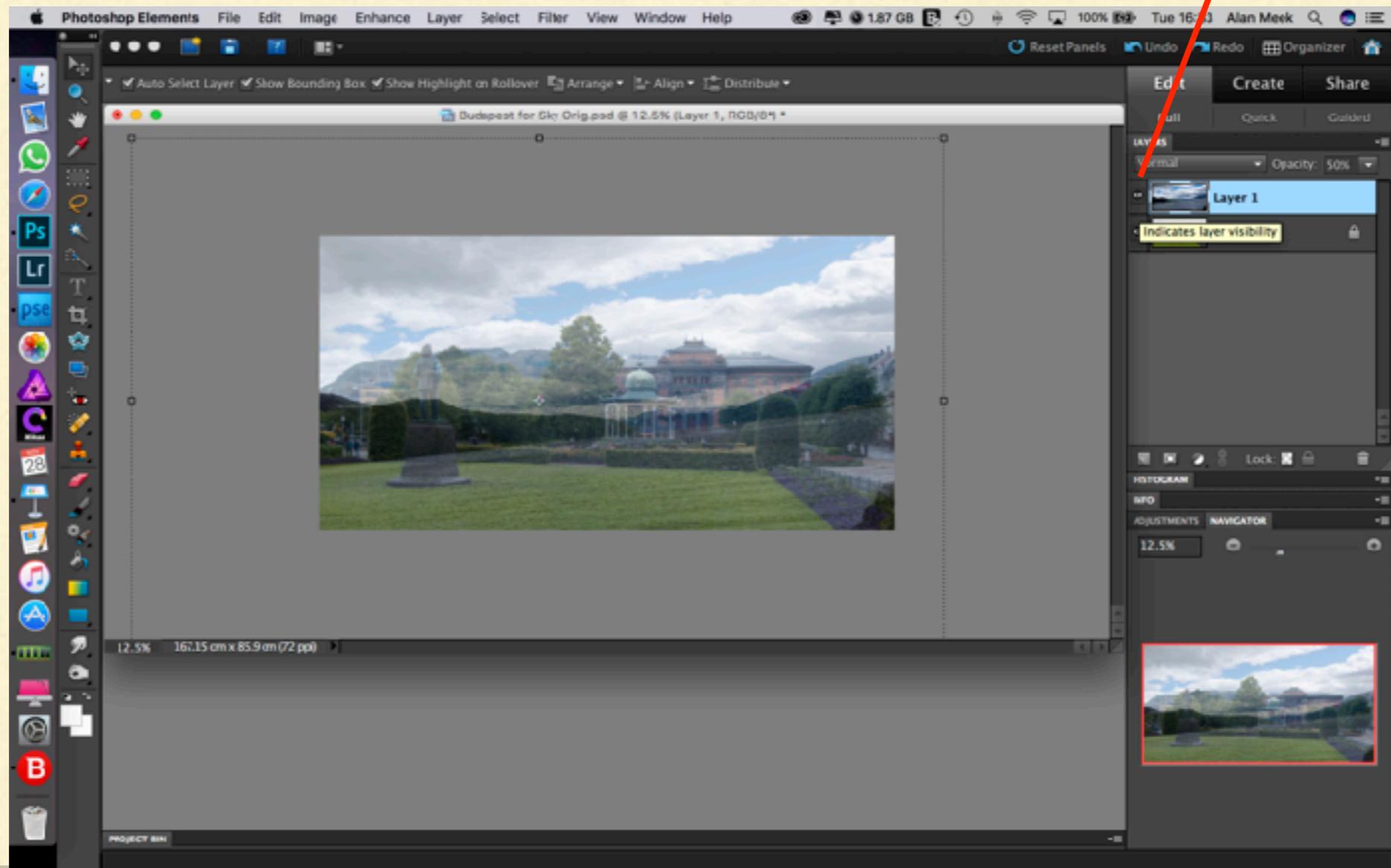
- The sky disappears.

- Now click on the Background to select it. The bar turns blue.

- There are many ways to select an area, enough for a presentation of their own. They are in the tool bar on the left.


- For a very plain sky like this I chose the "Magic Wand" tool. You can always tidy up imperfections with the "Lasso" tool.

- Before selecting anything make sure that "Sample All Layers" at the top is ticked. This ensures that you're selecting the new sky as well as the old one.

- Choose the "Magic Wand" tool, move it into the sky area and click. The marching ants will show where you've selected.
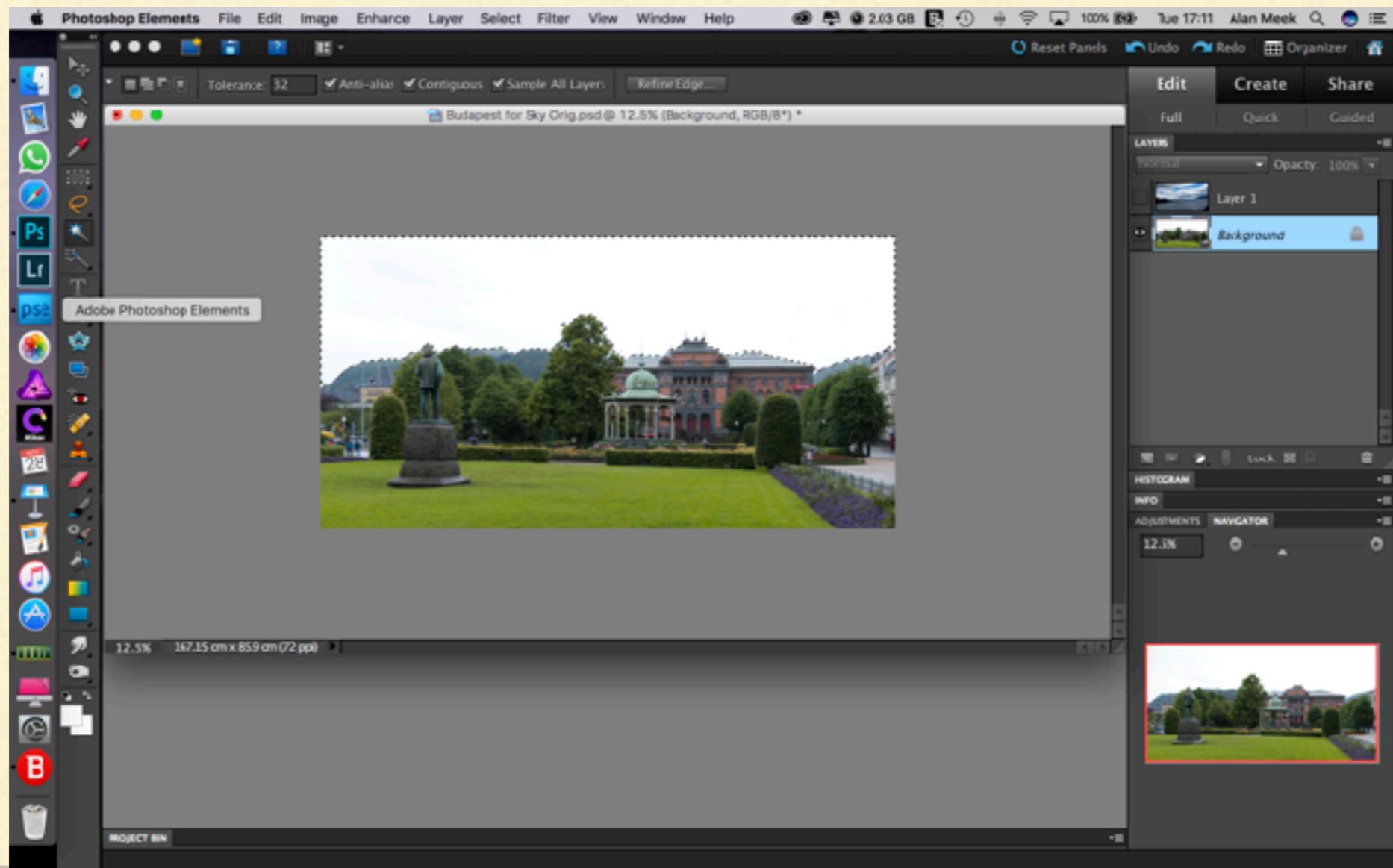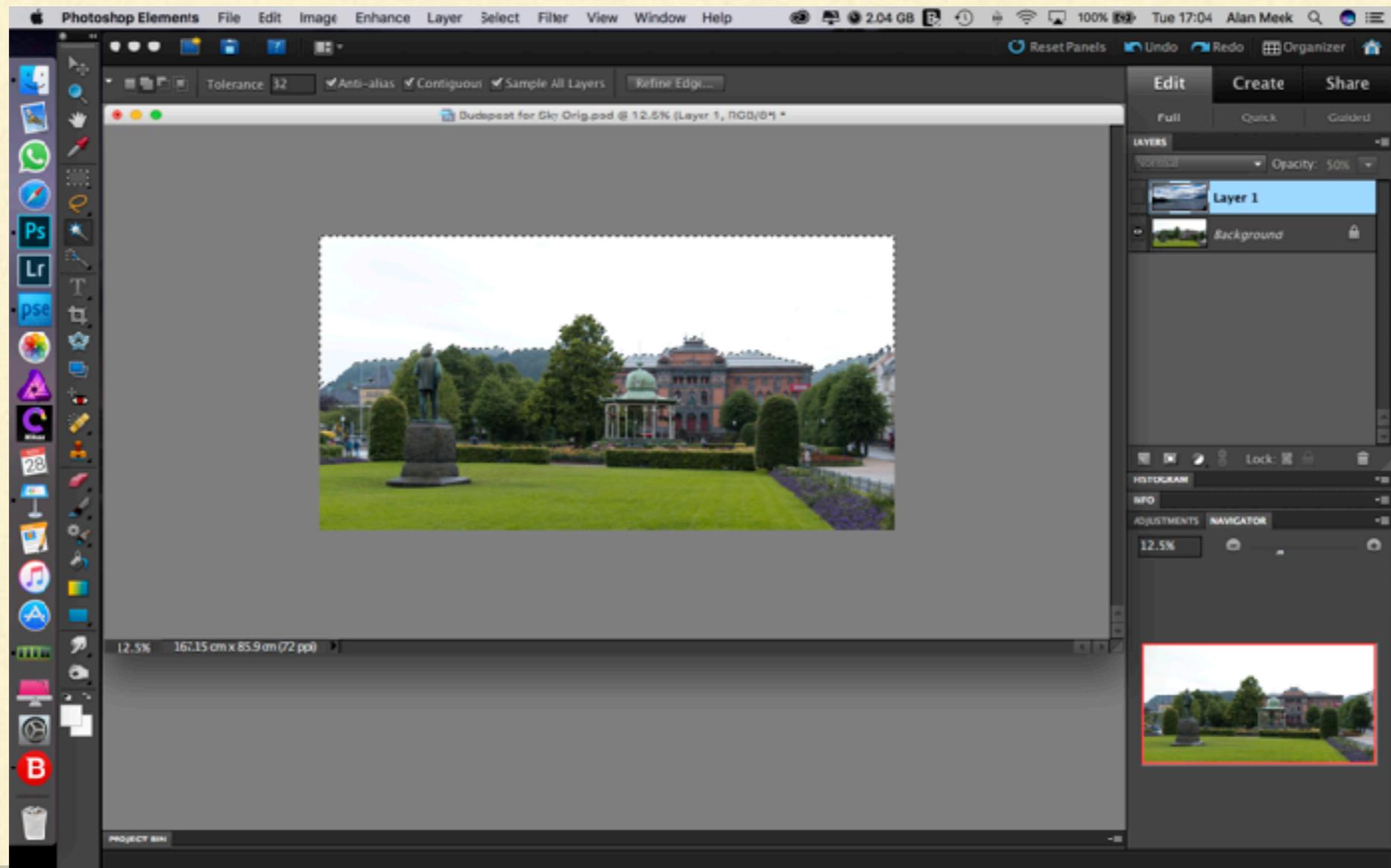
- If you wish you can help the edges of the new sky blend into the background picture a bit.

- Click on "Refine Edge" at the top.
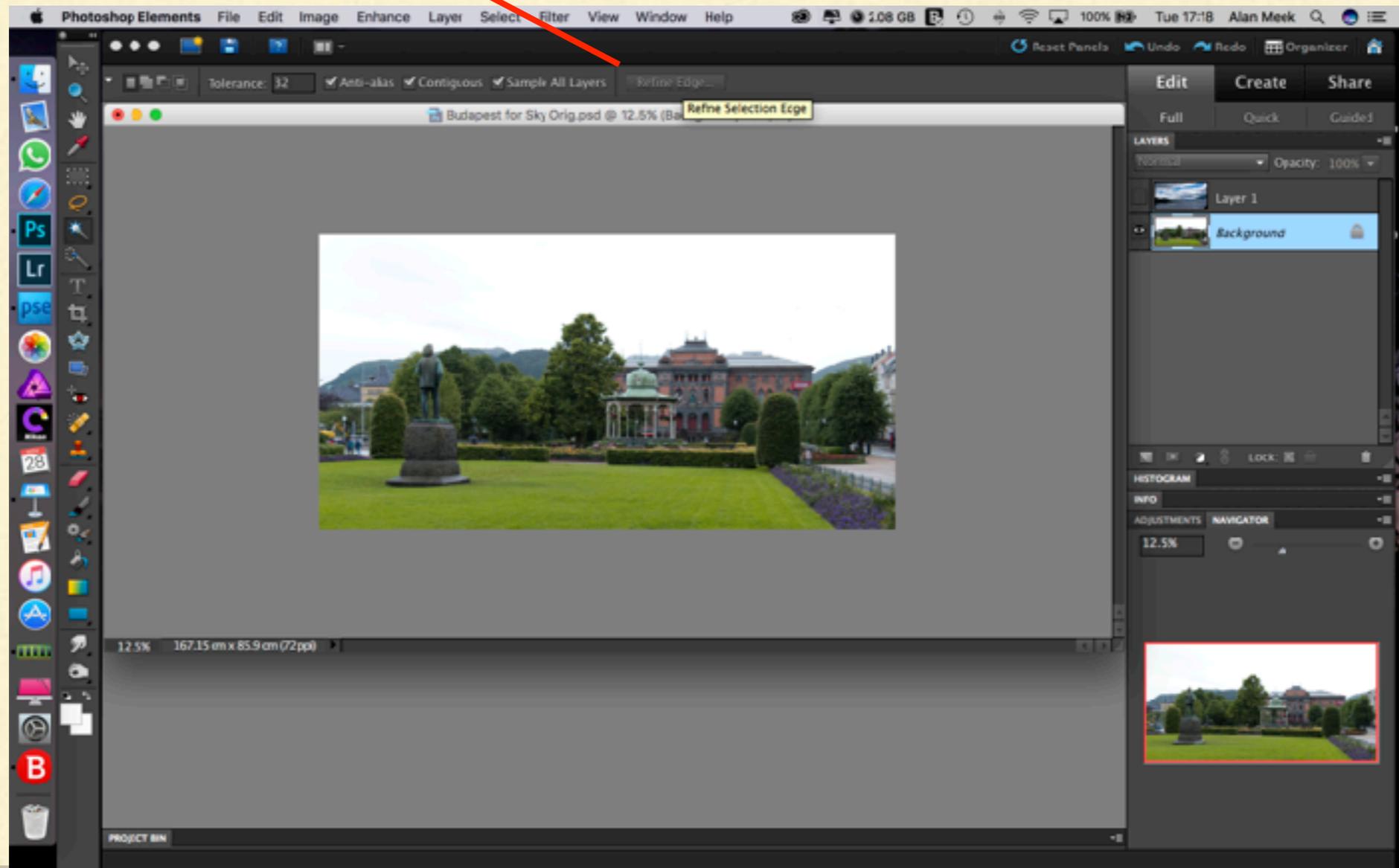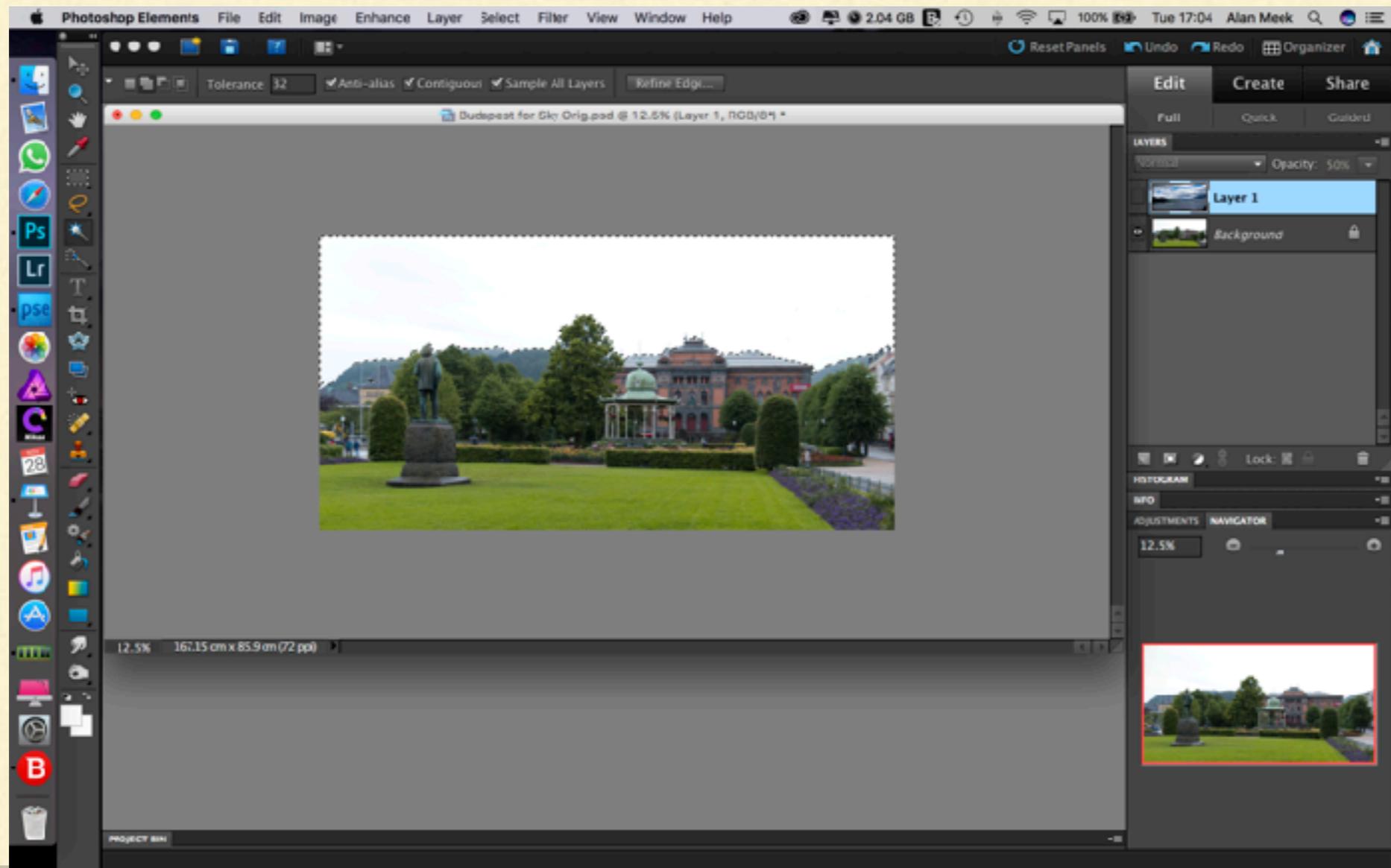
- In the new window set "Feather" (Soften selection edge) to somewhere between 1 and 2 then click "OK".
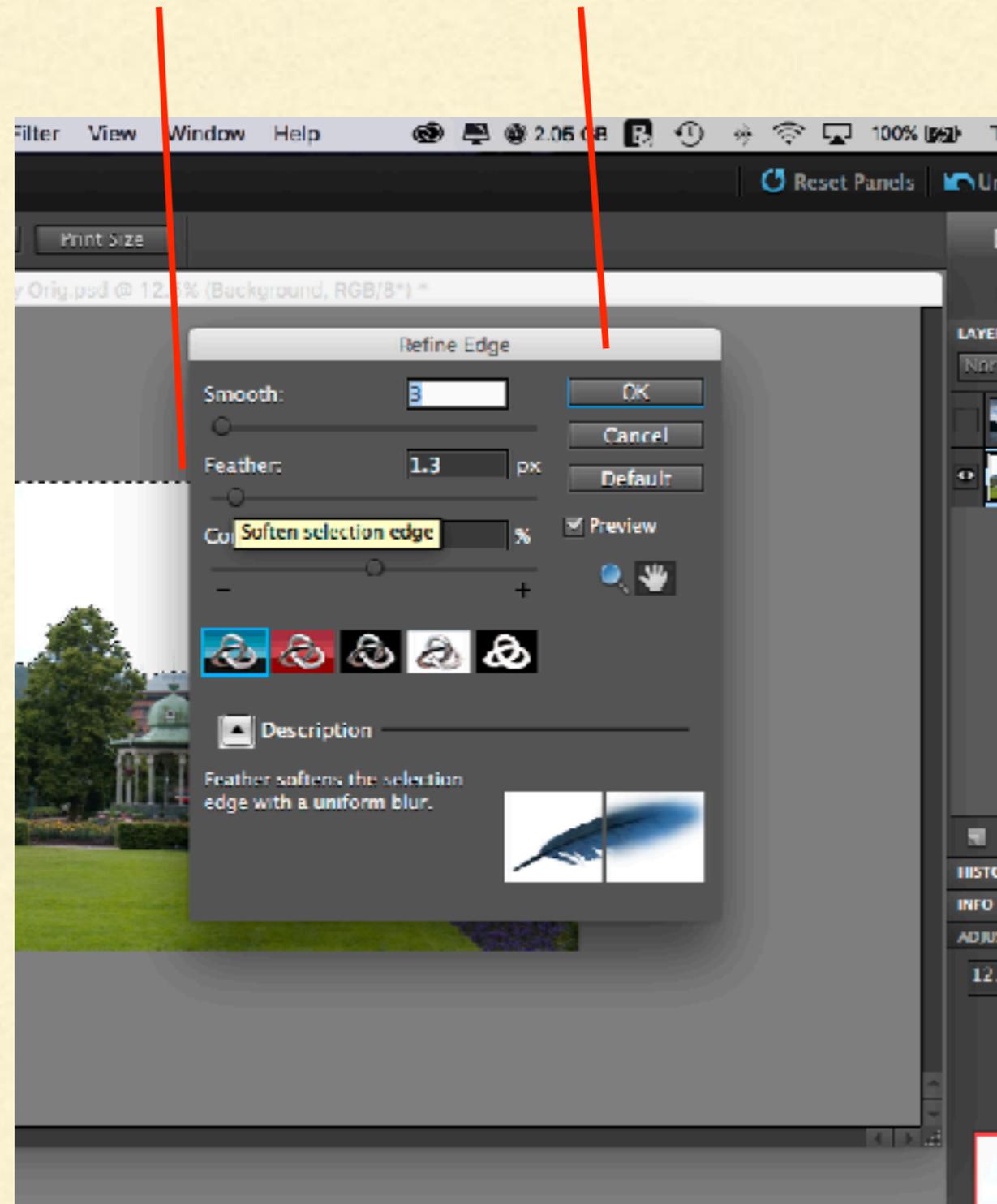
- Now select "Layer 1" so that its bar is blue.

- Next we're going to place a mask over the bits of the new sky that we don't want to show.

- Now select "Layer 1" so that its bar is blue.

- Next we're going to place a mask over the bits of the new sky that we don't want to show.

- Click on the icon which looks like a grey square with a white disc inside it. It's called "Add layer mask".
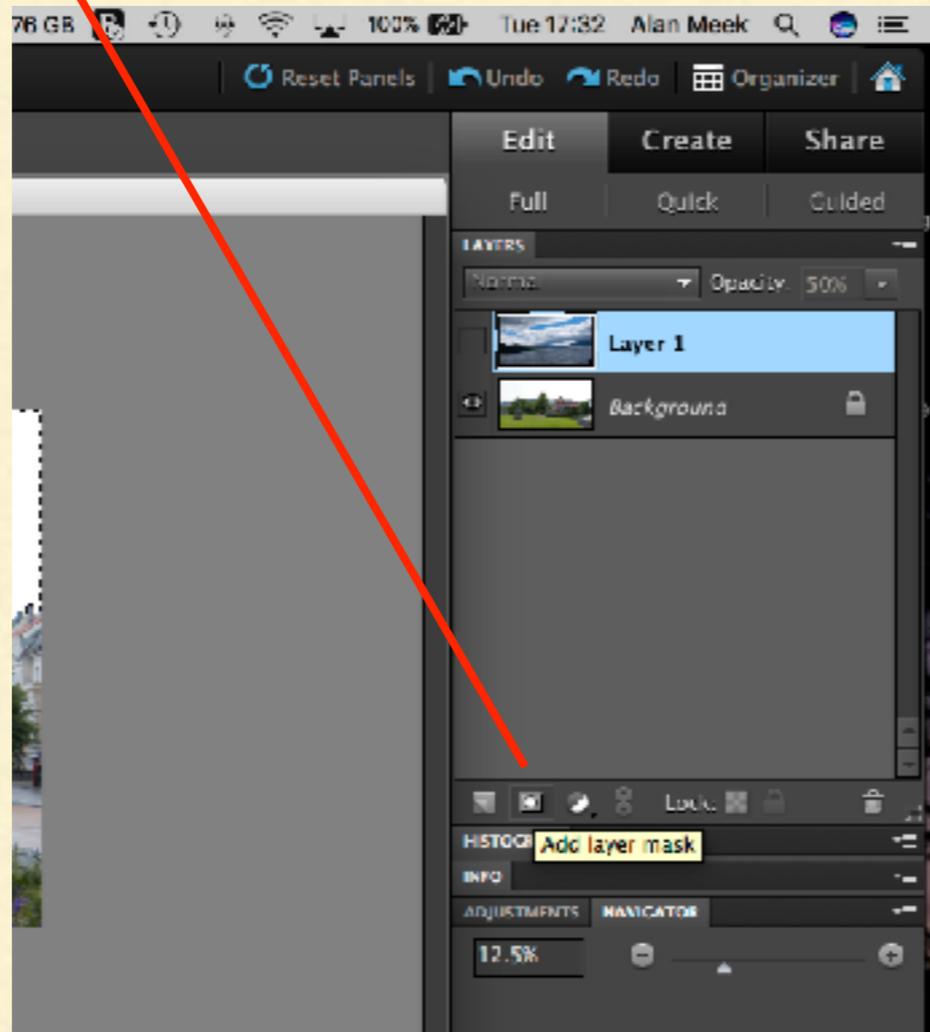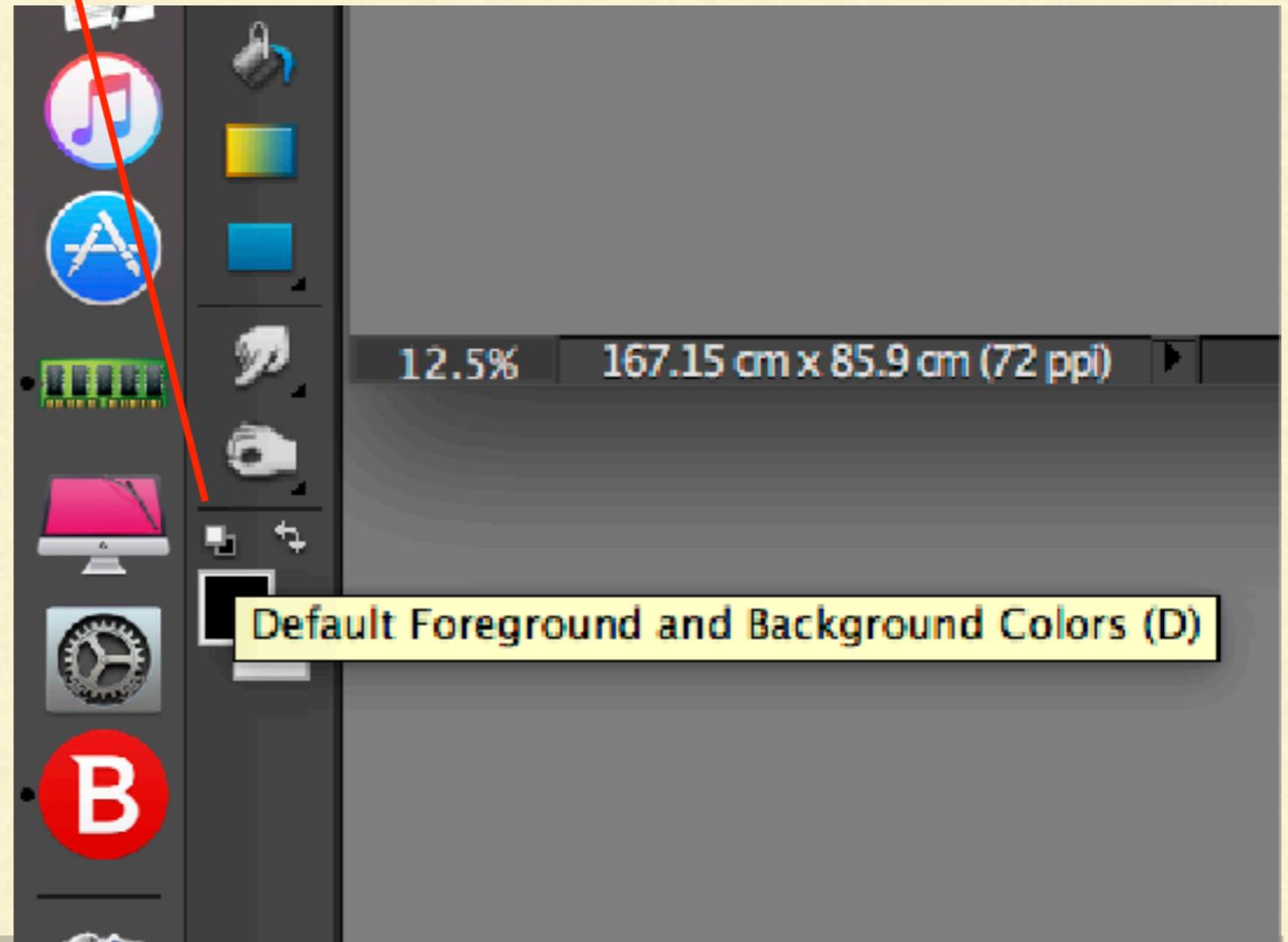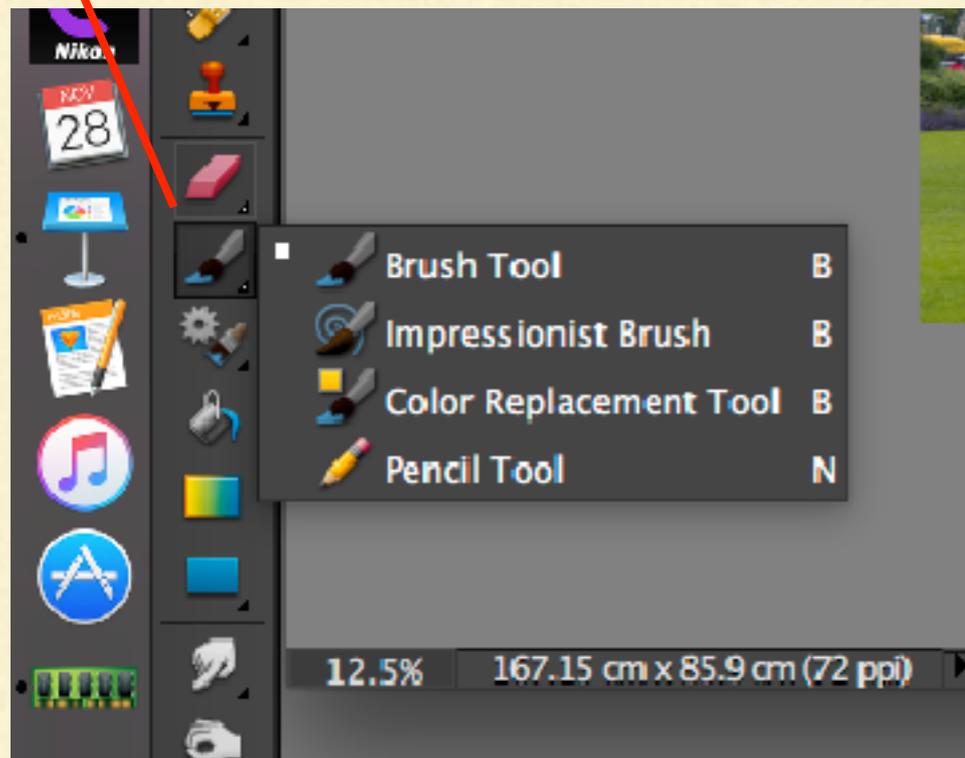
- You'll see a black and white image on the "Layer 1" layer. Any of the image behind the white will show but any of the image behind the black will stay hidden.

- Now for the magic !   Click on the eye for "Layer 1" and the new sky will appear.
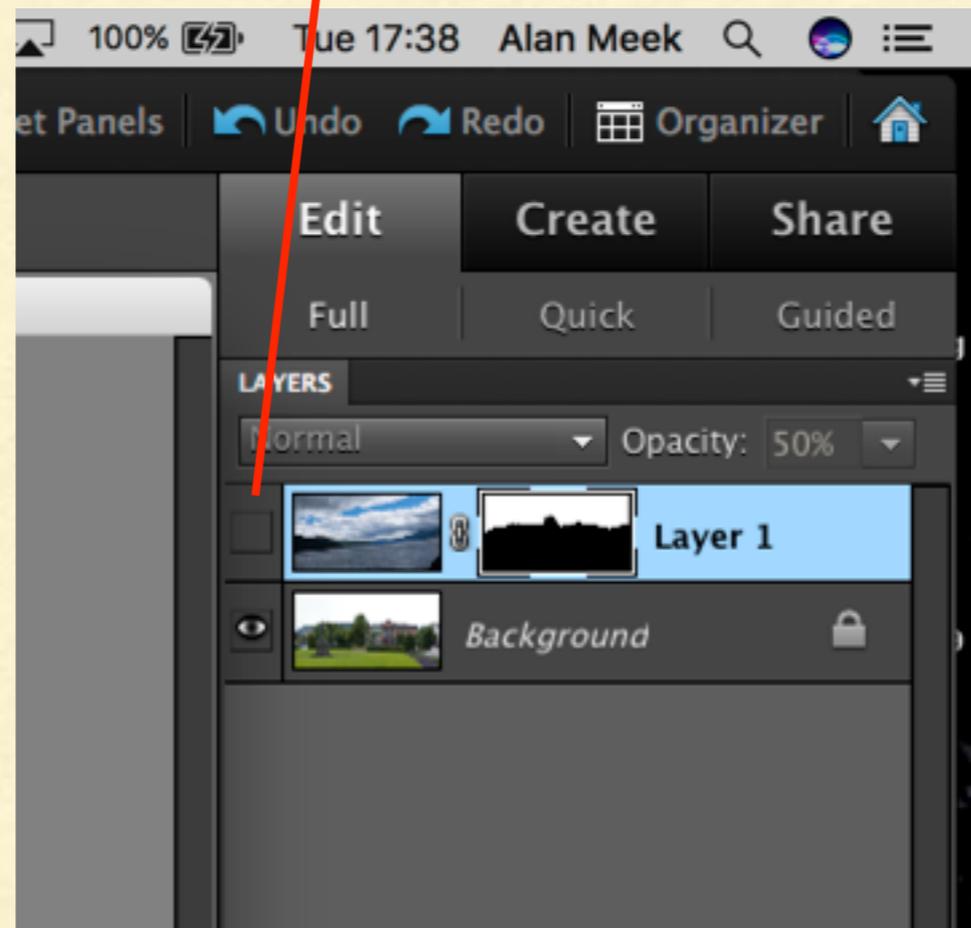
TA DAH !!
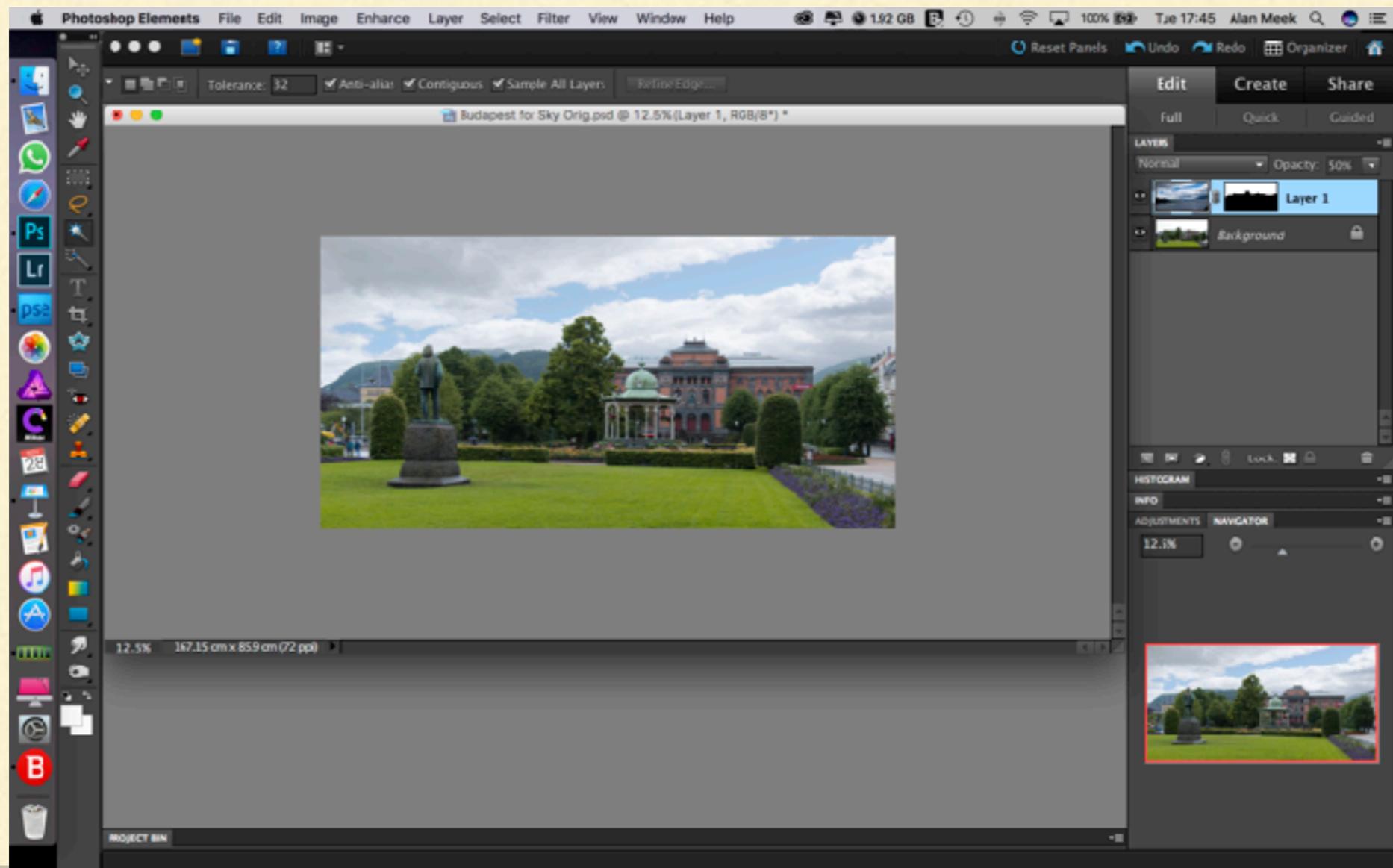
- If you need to alter the shape of a layer mask it's quite simple. Choose the "Brush" tool from the bar on the left.

- You will want to paint on the mask in black or white. Set the default by clicking on the tiny white square above the squares at the bottom of the tool bar.

Brush Tool	B
Impressionist Brush	B
Color Replacement Tool	B
Pencil Tool	N

12.5%   167.15 cm x 85.9 cm (72 ppi)

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Default Foreground and Background Colors (D)

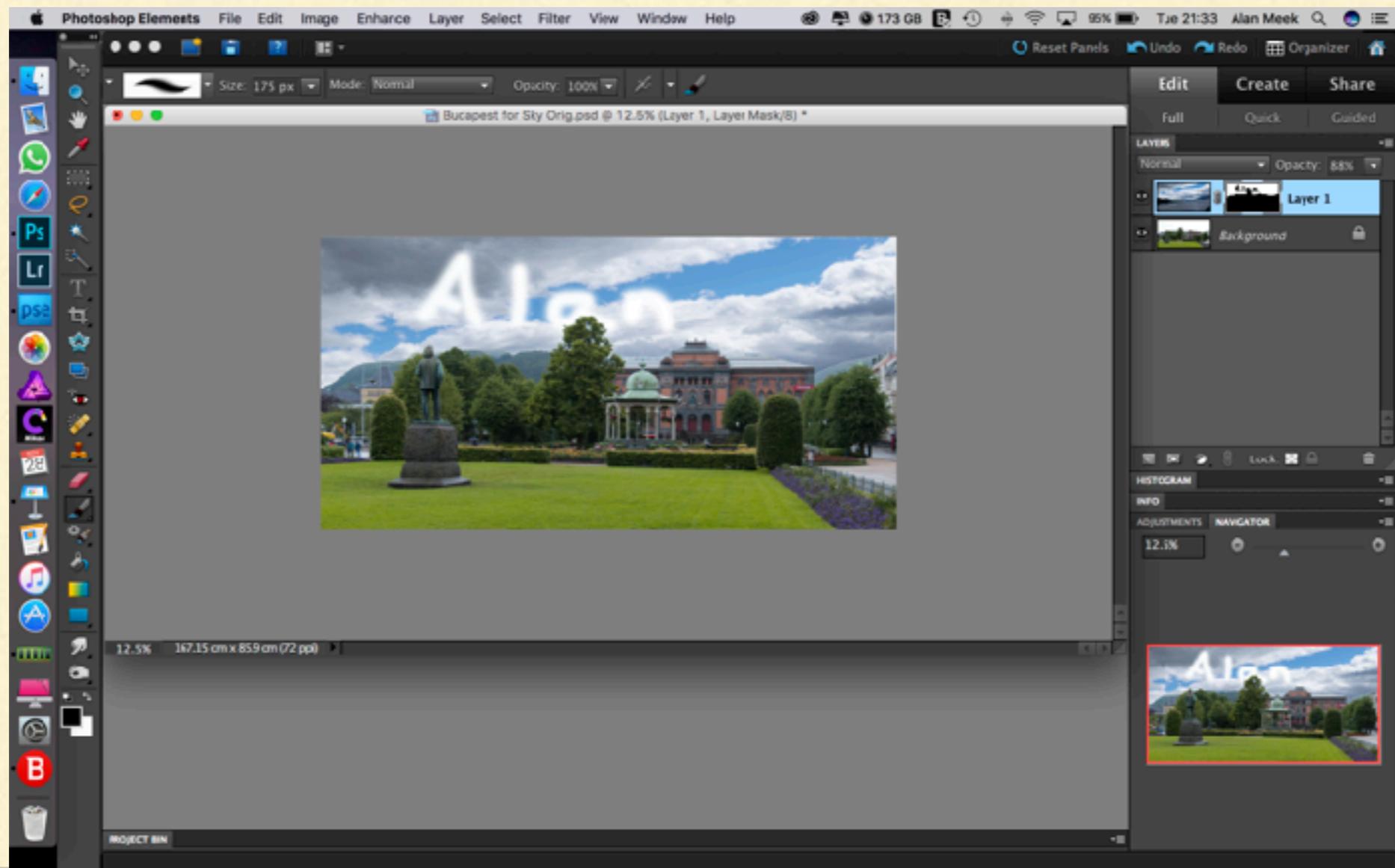- Painting black on the mask will hide that part of the image. Painting white will remove the mask and show the image.

- The front square indicates the paint colour, in this case black. To swap to white click on the double-arrow icon.
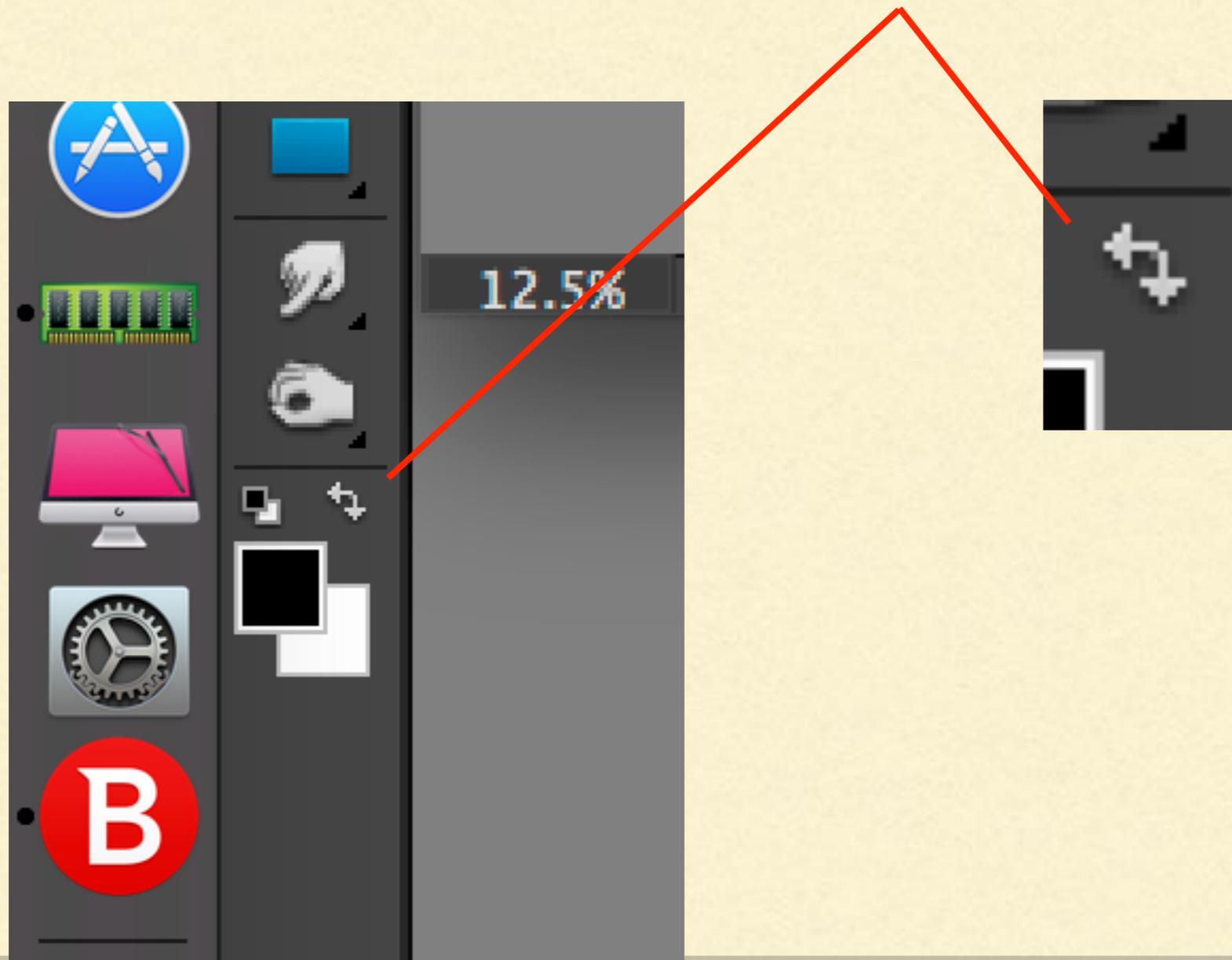
- Now click on the "Layer mask thumbnail" on Layer 1. A frame will appear round it to show it's selected.
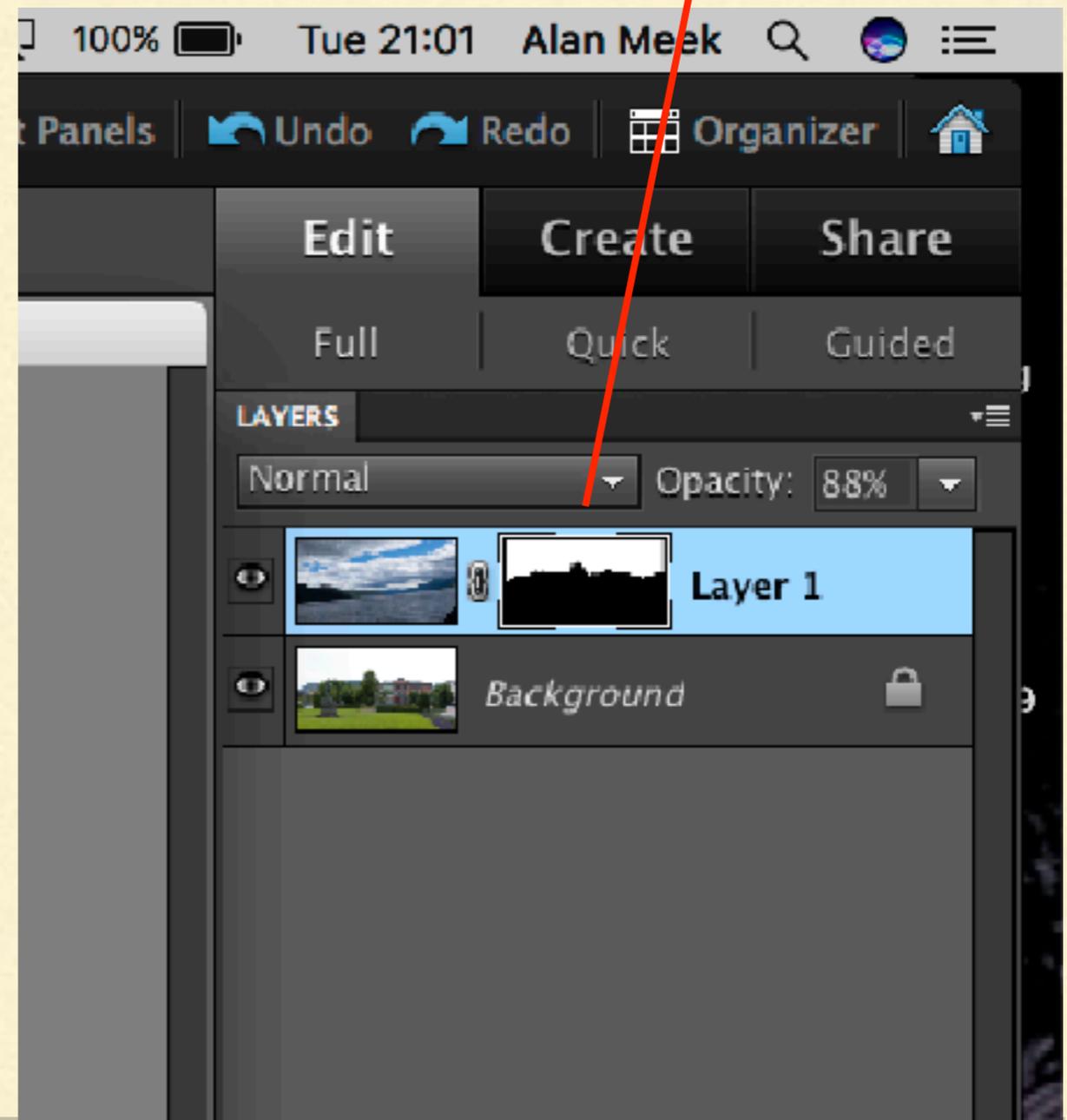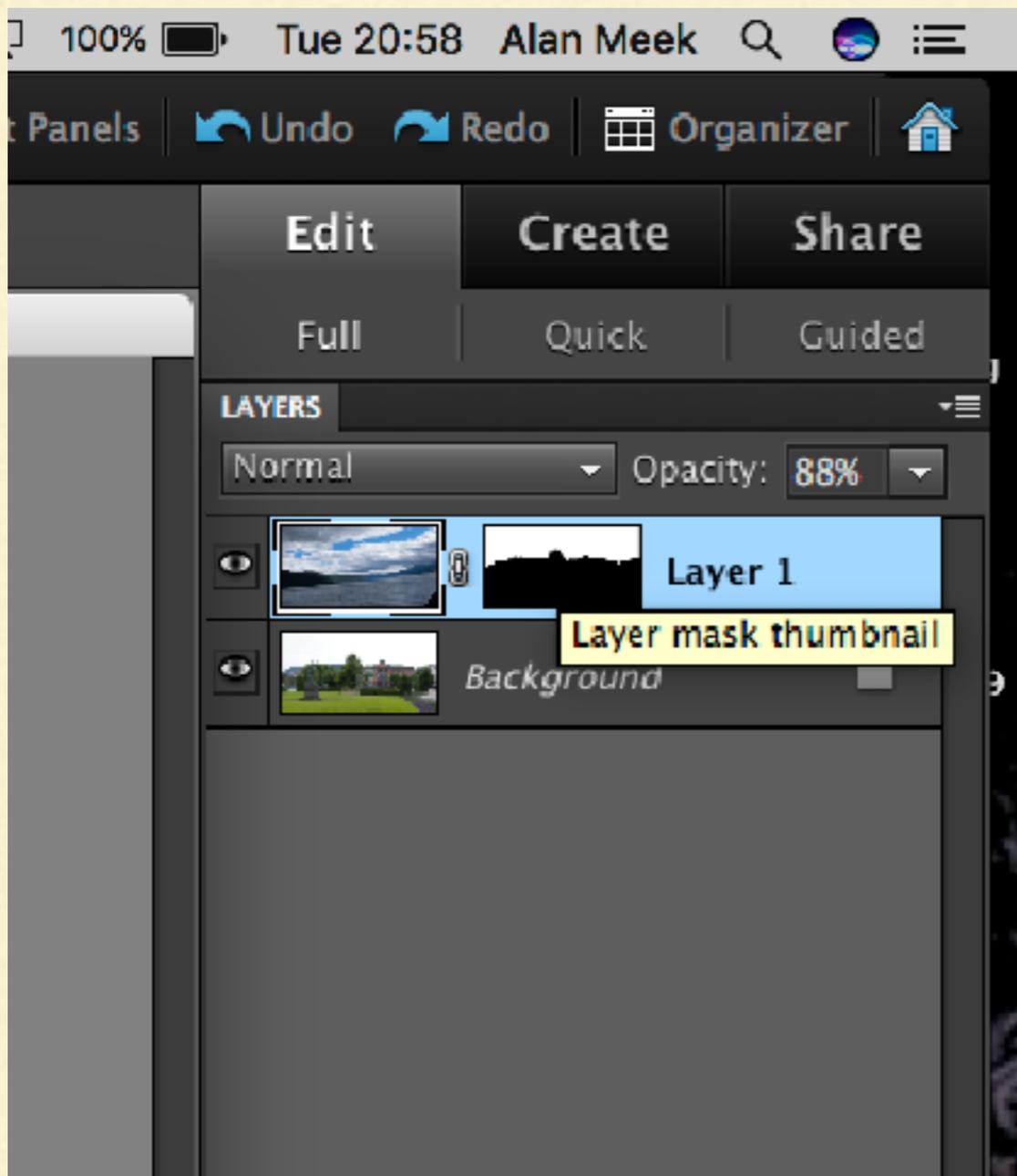
Paoint on the main picture. Like this.

- By altering the opacity of the sky layer you can make the new sky match the overall scene.

- Finally save your new creation. If you save it as a Photoshop (PSD) file all the layers will be preserved so you can make adjustments in future. Saved as a jpg file you lose that option.
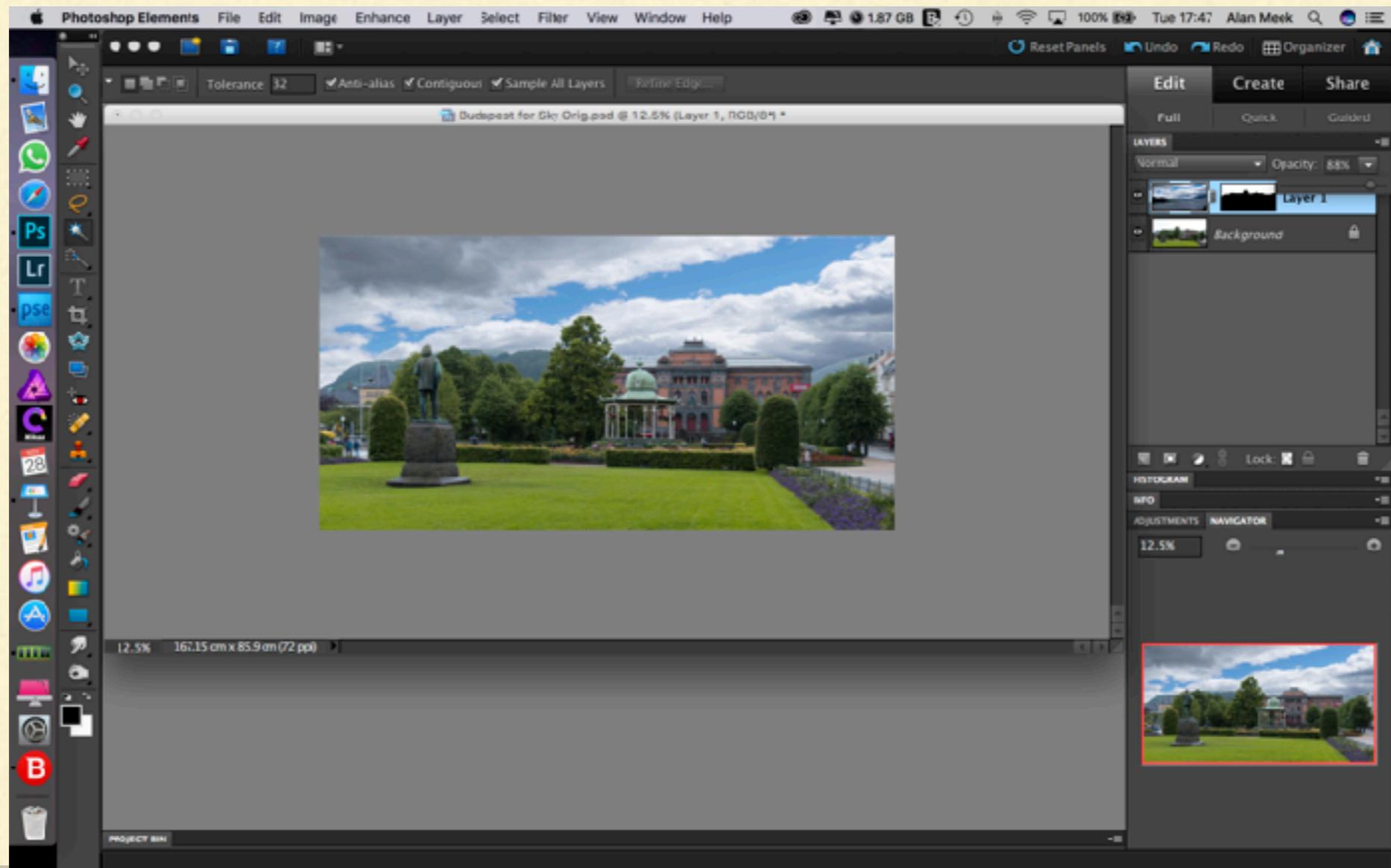
- That's it. Experiment. As long as you don't save your changes over the original file you can't damage anything.