

TRAVEL LOG

The Journal of the RPS Travel Group

Issue 73, July 2016



Notes from the Chair

Colin Howard

Welcome! This is my chance to introduce myself as the new chair of your committee. My first pleasant ask is to thank Liz Rhodes for all her efforts as Chairman over the past six or more years. Liz has steered the group through considerable changes, mostly in response to the ever-expanding membership and our move into the electronic communications age, exercising skill and judgment whenever necessary and keeping us all on the straight and narrow.

Thanks must also go to Keith Pointon who has retired as Secretary. This is a task not always visible to the broader membership, but an important one nevertheless, keeping abreast of the membership, organising the inevitable paperwork, and liaising with Bath. But those of you who have a momentary concern that a revolution is afoot need not fear, as both Liz and Keith remain members of the committee to ensure our enthusiasm remains channelled to the benefit of all members. I must also thank Aline Hopkins who has stood down as Trip Co-ordinator: again this is a role needing considerable effort behind the scenes but I know all who have been on trips organised by Aline are extremely grateful for all her hard work in planning stunning, yet affordable, itineraries. Perhaps less known is that her eagle eye has been used to advantage in proof-reading many an issue of Travel Log over the past few years. As a consequence of these changes, John Riley and Gerald Griffin have stepped up to the plate and taken over the editing and production of Travel Log, respectively.

But what of the future? I firmly believe that the group should cater as far as possible for all levels of ability, recognising that travel has become ever more accessible. It has never been easier to take pictures of the places we visit, but to capture the spirit of a place still requires technical ability, thought and patience. Thus in the coming year we will be organising more workshops and short trips that focus on improving those skills. The

committee recognises that all trips entail a considerable amount of a cash outlay and we will be looking at ways to make trips for members more affordable, with more short weekends and trips within the UK. All trips are aimed at those among you who are perhaps hesitant to participate in the group's trips and events. Several members have expressed reluctance to come on trips as their photography is somehow "not as good" as others at any one event – let me assure you that if you enjoy your photography you are definitely going to enjoy the company of others, whether you aspire to a distinction or simply want to record where you have been to share with friends and family. We all learn from each other, no matter if we are novices or have been taking pictures for years. It is a first step we all have had to take, but once taken the enjoyment of our photography increases immensely, new friends are made, and new avenues for enjoying photography open up before you.

However, we must not lose sight that many of you are overseas. This year we video streamed our Springboard to Success event to enable those of you distant to the UK to also feel involved. Please let us have your feedback as to your opinion of this initiative. Thanks to John Curgenvin, this event was very successful and I can announce that a similar event will be held at the Runnymede Hotel on Saturday March 25th 2017 – our principal speaker will be Joe Cornish, a renowned landscape photographer.

There is often much discussion about what is travel photography: get ten photographers in a room and they will come up with twelve definitions. To me, it is pure and simple. A good travel picture for me is one that conveys the emotion I felt at the time and is good enough to go on my wall, inviting repeated viewing. I do hope that aspiration will reach out to all of you as we progress over the next months.

Travel safely!

Colin Howard.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Having previously offered to be one of the team of Travel Group volunteers, I was delighted to be approached to take on the role of Travel Log Editor a few days before this year's AGM. I was extremely encouraged at the meeting that so many wished to see the production of the Journal continued in a hard copy format. This enables us to share our members' photography in the tangible world of print – a deserved place for these exciting images.

This obviously requires your input in the form of travel images & text, but I know from personal experience that sometimes our words do not always convey the true emotion of the photographs we capture. I would therefore encourage you to submit images that convey the magic of the moment, along with a minimal amount of supporting text. This could be as simple as location notes, techniques deployed, or camera, lens and settings. The only must is your name. This will provide us with the opportunity to produce a gallery covering a wide range of travel locations and ideas.

One problem I have encountered is finding a suitable cover photo, so please forgive me on this occasion for using a picture taken by a fellow travel group member – a member for whom I carry the bags on our travels. I would encourage you all to send in your submissions for the cover photo of the next issue, including a brief description of what, when and where.

Returning to my opening theme of being a member of a team, this publication would not have arrived on your doorstep if it were not for the help and support of our new Chair Colin Howard, and the genius of our publishing expert Gerald Griffin.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Colin and Gerald, and of course you for all your outstanding contributions.

John Riley

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Cover Picture

Golden Spires of the Catherine Palace

Linda Riley LRPS

The Catherine Palace, one of St. Petersburg's most popular visitor attractions, is named after Catherine I (the wife of Peter the Great), who ruled Russia for two years following her husband's death.

Originally a modest two-storey building, commissioned by Peter for Catherine in 1717, the Catherine Palace owes its awesome grandeur to their daughter, Empress Elizabeth. It took over 100kg of gold to decorate the palace exteriors, an excess that was deplored by Catherine the Great when she discovered the amount that had been lavished on the building.

The Digital Image Competition 2016

Keith Pointon

The competition this year attracted the largest entry since it became digital, there were 190 images submitted by 48 members, almost doubling the entry in previous years, it was judged by Roger Reynolds.

All who entered are to be commended. The standard was high. We hope that the competition will continue to grow and encourage everybody to enter next year. It is easy, just send the images by email to the organiser with the completed entry form.

Asia, at 38% of entries topped the location list of the images and gained 60% of the awards. North America was second with 20% of entries and 27% of awards. Third was Africa with 10%, and 0% respectively.

Roger Reynolds Hon. FRPS writes:

There was a good entry for this year's competition and selecting the final shortlist of winners was a difficult task. Due to the high number of excellent images it meant that some great shots did not make it into the final awards. In making the final selection I did try and include a variety of approaches and locations in order to encompass the diversity of work submitted.

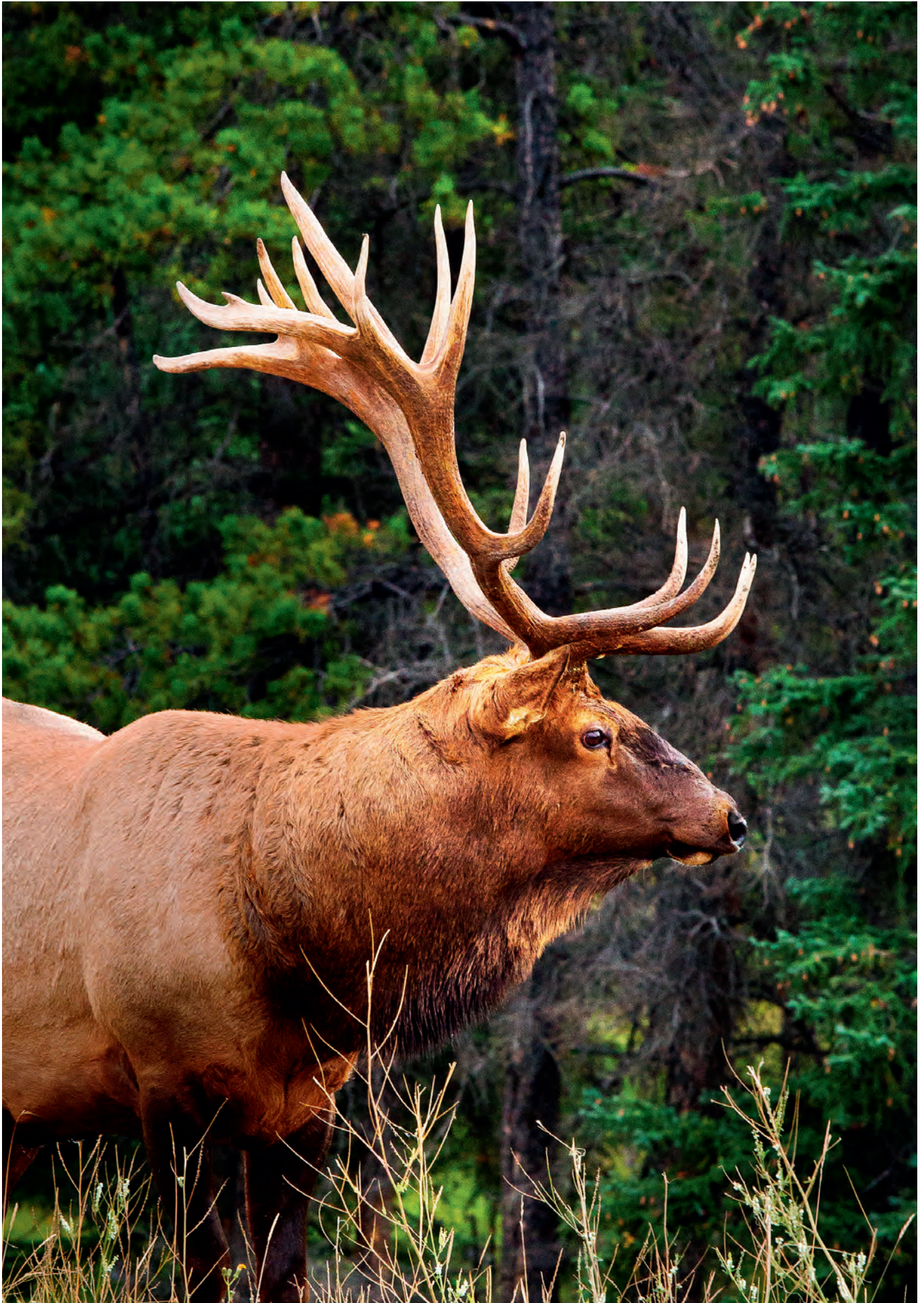
Throughout the whole entry there were few that did not deliver a sense of travel, although many had excellent pictorial content there were a few which could have been classed as purely pictorial in approach. In the main it was the technical delivery, timing and design that let images down and those who submit need to hone this aspect of delivery as in some cases it spoilt super shots. When entering any competition it

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contact the editor. Views of contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Travel Group or The Royal Photographic Society.
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October. Please send your submissions to the Editor. editortravel@rps.org All aspects of travel photography are welcomed from articles of adventures, both home and abroad, to reports of events or exhibitions and individual images of note.



MY TRIP TO CANADA

Aline Hopkins LRPS

The expression 'four seasons in one day' certainly applies in Western Canada. Our group experienced all weathers, particularly on the day we crossed the Icefields Parkway. Falling snow and tourists with umbrellas made for more interesting pictures than the nearby scenic view, which was almost a white-out.

In Calgary the atmosphere was smoky, due to the widespread fires in the US. We arrived just ahead of a storm, luckily, and overnight it blew away the smoke, so we awoke to clear skies and sunshine. We headed north-west and began to explore Banff National Park, an area of dramatic mountains and turquoise glacial lakes. From our hotel in Canmore we had incredible views of the famous Three Sisters mountain range, which at dawn presented a colourful panorama.

Our hopes for good images of Lake Louise at dawn were foiled by a very wet morning, but later, when the rain cleared, we could see why this is an iconic spot. In Whistler we enjoyed a journey on the world's highest and longest cable car span, which whilst offering fantastic views, was a little scary. We saw numerous marmots –

their shrieking whistle gave rise to the name 'Whistler'. There were bears in the area, as John Hunt reports:

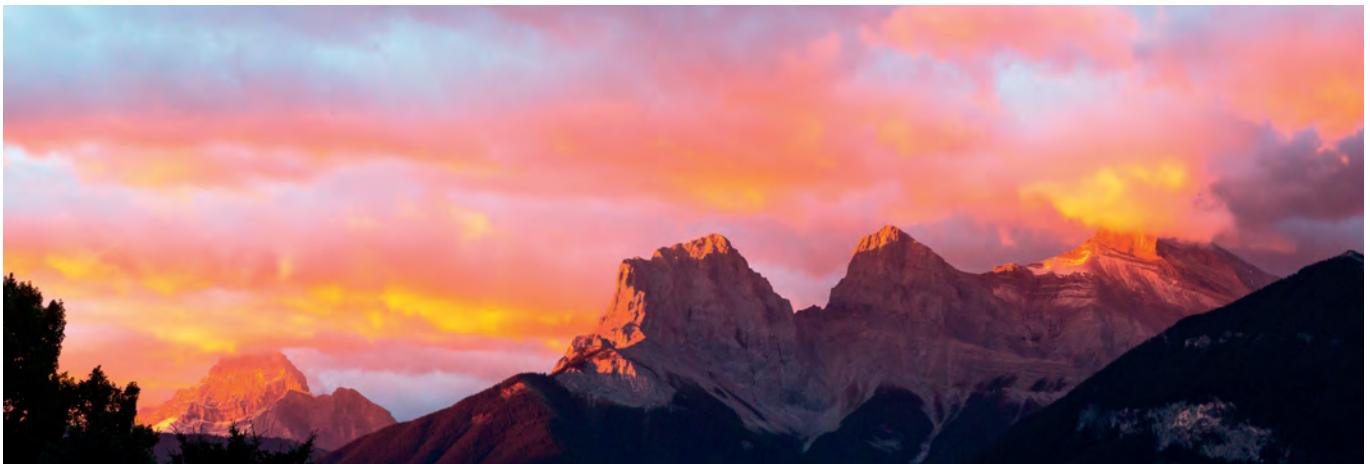
'I was out walking along a country footpath not far from the centre of Whistler when around the corner came a Black Bear. We both stopped and I am thinking, can I get the camera out of my backpack? The bear stood up on its back legs looking intently at me before it turned around and trotted off. I quickly got the camera out and made after him but he had disappeared and the opportunity was lost. The moral of the story is - even though you may be close to town always have your camera in hand ready for the shot of a lifetime.'

We travelled by ferry to Vancouver Island, where we took boat excursions hoping to see both bears and whales. We were not disappointed. We saw two brown bears on different beaches, both searching for food amongst the rocks. One devoured a crab while we watched, then moved on to barnacles and took a 'comfort break' on the beach, totally ignoring our presence. From Victoria we went whale watching and saw a humpback whale with a juvenile, at least three pods and two solo orcas (killer whales), and a fin whale, not usually seen in that part of

the world. The city of Vancouver offered up some interesting skyscraper reflections, and we enjoyed a visit to the Granville Island Public Market before heading to the airport to fly home.

This route may be one of the world's most scenic, it certainly offers a variety of magnificent landscapes and the wild feel of the area is mainly unaffected by the touristic developments in some of the towns. Overall an extremely enjoyable trip.

Postscript: On the whale watching trip the guide asked to look at my pictures on the camera screen as one participant had thought he'd seen a fishing net caught on a whale's tail. When I got home I looked through the pictures and thought that there was indeed a line on the tail of an orca. I sent the image to the boat operator recounting the story, and about a week later had a reply which said that their highly experienced captain had taken a look and was sure it was kelp, as the whales often played with it, flicking it around with their tails. I have included this picture so you can see for yourself. Okay, I know it isn't pin sharp so don't e-mail me – rocky boat – but I liked the story very much.









HIDDEN SINGAPORE

Rob C Kershaw ARPS

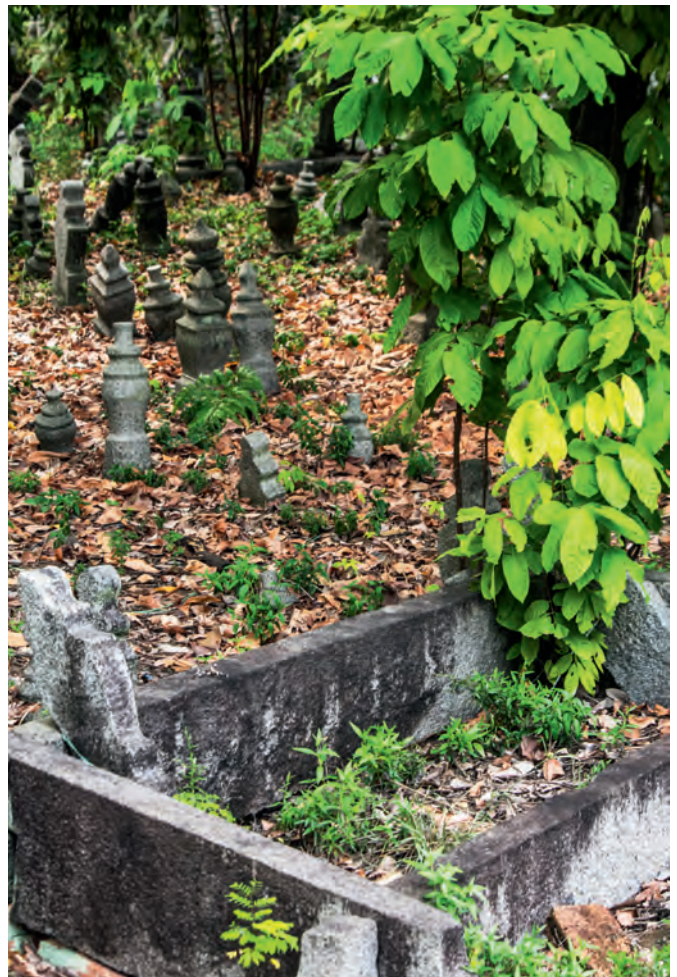
I have spent a great deal of time over the last 30 or so years in Asia, mainly on business trips. During that time I have built up a large collection of images from the region. My most recent trips have been to Tokyo, Hong Kong and Singapore where I have met members of the local Overseas Chapters. In fact, the Swiss Chapter, of which I am a member, held a joint exhibition in Tokyo last February, with the Japanese Chapter and I was fortunate enough to be present at the opening. However, for this submission I thought I would present something a little different, from my visit to Singapore last October.

Singapore has a fascinating diversity of cultures living together on a small island just north of the equator.

From Indian to Chinese, Arab to Malay as well as Colonial parts of its past are all well represented by the people and architecture. One should also not forget the ultra-modern buildings of the present. I have many images of all these aspects, but for a different perspective I have chosen to present what is probably a little known corner, at least to the visitor, close to the Arab Quarter.

Kampong Glam Cemetery is something of a derelict wilderness in the city, which I happened upon during a walkabout. The last resting place of Malay royalty, the graves and monuments have fallen into ruin and are overgrown, creating an almost jungle environment and an atmospheric feel of the past. It has a certain tranquil beauty.

There are rumours that the site will be developed and another link with the past will be submerged under concrete in the name of progress, as is often the case in Asia today.







For more information see: <https://thelongwindingroad.wordpress.com/tag/old-malay-cemetery/>
GPS co-ordinates 1,18.2312N 103,51.5379E Website: www.robckershawphotography.com



INDIA

**A new
adventure
and a new
beginning**

David E Balaam

I have been interested in many things, but it was not until my pending retirement four years ago I started to explore these interests in more depth. These included writing, travelling, fishing and photography. I wrote my first novel at that time, and to my surprise have now published three books.

Photography has always been of interest, but having now been taught the fundamental principles, I realise I was ignorant of the real pleasure it can bring when using the right equipment.

So, using the excuse to give myself a retirement present, I did a lot of research and bought a Nikon D5100 with lenses; a 18mm-55mm f3.5, a 35mm f1.8 and a 55mm-300mm f4, but had no idea how to use them. Keeping with the retirement programme (and excuse), I booked a ten day photographic holiday with Frui to visit Kerala (although ten days was not enough and stayed for another week).

Anyone who has been to India will, I am sure, tell you of the wonderful photo opportunities to be found. It's a cliché I know, but most of the population love to be photographed, especially the children. The Frui programme took in five destinations that allowed us to try out nearly every camera technique possible. Our tutor and guide was a professional photographer named Filip Gierlinski who gave us assignments each day (it was not

all relaxing), but made the experience fun and very informative. As I mentioned, the children especially are wonderful to shoot, but not all of them will smile for you, as seen in one picture but then others, as clearly demonstrated will.

We travelled through the vast waterways of Alappuzha on houseboats and discovered the backwaters and swamps tourist seldom see. Life on the water's edge was a mixture of women washing utensils, men fishing, and children swimming.

One, very early, morning we set off to photograph the sunrise over the tea-plantations at one of the highest viewpoints in the area – the Kolukkumalai tea estate at over 7,000 metres above sea level. The roads were very rough, but the old Land Rovers served us well. The early start was worth the journey – magnificent mountains to the east and soft undulating hills to the west. Walking through the vast plantation, we took in further spectacular scenery – tea hedges as far as the eye could see. The old tea factory and processing mill is now a museum where we saw a fine range of seventy-five-year-old English machinery, still in working order.

In the bustling town of Munnar, street photography was a must. Everything was on show, although identifying some of the produce was not always obvious. One of my favourite shots is of a garland maker. This lovely gentleman just

stopped for a couple of seconds, looked straight down the lens, and then moved on. I got just one frame, but it has served me well at my local camera club. At a quieter end of town I photographed a couple of guys catching up on the latest news. I thought this scene was so peaceful.

I mentioned I stayed on another week, and discovered the delights of staying with a local family in Fort Cochin. In that final week I experienced an elephant festival that my tuk-tuk driver recommended, and found myself in a throng of several thousand pilgrims paying homage to these much respected animals. Churches in Kerala are a glorious mix of Mosques and white walled Christian churches but I had no idea the state was fifty percent Catholic, and many of these old buildings are a legacy from the Portuguese rule. I followed a street procession one day and revelled in the colours and the music as it snaked around town from one church to another. At a local theatre I was allowed to quietly observe the actors applying their make-up for a traditional play.

One of the main tourist attractions is the Chinese Fishing Nets, hanging out over the Arabian Sea. I think these are best seen at sunset – I hope you agree.

Since that 'baptism by fire' four years ago, I have joined the RPS and my local club Epsom CC, and have learnt a lot, thanks to some very kind and passionate people.

<http://www.rps.org/my-rps/portfolio>;

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/cdgmorton/>; <http://davidbalaam-books.co.uk/>













Rob Morgan, ARPS, tells us

HOW TO AVOID THE CROWDS AT ANGOR WAT

In February 2016, after doing a brilliant photo tour in Myanmar, I spent four nights at Siem Reap in Cambodia on my way home. Well, I was in the area – what was I to do? My aim was to photograph the numerous temples of Angkor.

One or two other people had the same idea. I've coped with the crowds in Prague, Venice and Florence, but they were nothing by comparison with the hordes intent on seeing Angkor Wat. Granted, I did happen to be there during Lunar New Year. No problem, I thought, they don't actually celebrate it in Cambodia. What I hadn't considered was that now there is a middle class in China, they are out travelling en masse at holiday times and Angkor Wat is just down the road.

Fortunately I had a plan. Four nights equals four early mornings plus four late afternoons: eight times when the light should be gorgeous and the tourists elsewhere. From the internet I learnt how to avoid the crowds. Well before I got there I lined up a tuk-tuk driver and knew what I wanted to see. I had correctly guessed that if photos were my priority I would not need a guide to slow me down. Nor did I need a car, though a couple of mornings were very cold and breezy in the tuk-tuk (a wind-proof coat was essential).

On the first afternoon I bought my pass. At 6 a.m. on Day 2, my valet tuk-tuk arrived and we were at Preah Khan by 6.45 a.m. The young man there checking tickets told me I had won the prize – I was the first one there. By 7.30 a.m. the first coach-load had arrived, but by 8 a.m. I was out, very pleased with myself. After a stop for breakfast we went to Bayon. Aaaaargh! By now it was 10 a.m. and the hordes were all over this place like ants at a picnic. You may know Bayon as the ruin with a hundred-odd carved faces. I hardly noticed them amongst the sea of other faces. Fortunately I returned late that afternoon near tourist dinner-time and almost had the place to myself.

The only hitch to my plan was at Ta Prohm (known for the large tree roots twisting through the ruins) which didn't open till 7.30 a.m. However, even there, there were enough courtyards to explore alone before the tour guides stopped talking. Even at Angkor Wat itself, hundreds of tourists stopped at the left lily pond waiting for the sun to rise (why only the left one? The right one gives equally good reflections). That left all the inner areas to explore without the selfie brigade. It was not all serious work. One afternoon my tuk-tuk driver suggested we start later the next morning 'at eight o'clock'. I was still chuckling at this expression of Cambodian humour when he picked me up at six.



A VISIT TO THE PITCAIRN ISLANDS



Robert Akester LRPS

In November 2015, my wife and I were lucky enough to be able to visit Pitcairn Island. We were on an expedition cruise from Tahiti to Easter Island on board the National Geographic Orion, with about 100 other fortunate passengers.

In January 1790, a group of nine mutineers from HMS Bounty, together with six men and twelve women from Tahiti, landed on the uninhabited island of Pitcairn. It suited their purposes perfectly, having been misplaced on the maps of the time, making it less likely that they would be found and brought to justice. They stripped the Bounty of anything they could use and then burned it, to make their discovery even less likely. The wreck can still be seen under the water in what is now called Bounty Bay. Their plan worked to the extent that several ships visited the island without spotting they were there. Nevertheless, within nine years, two of the women had died in accidents, and internal disputes had led to the murder of all the Tahitian men and all but two of the original mutineers!

The Pitcairn group comprises four islands, each with a very different character. Pitcairn Island itself rises to

over 1,400 feet, while Ducie Atoll is only a few feet high. The third island, Henderson, is a raised coral atoll, lifted above the sea by pressure from volcanic activity beneath, and characterised by 50-foot-high cliffs surrounding a fairly flat central area. Pitcairn Islanders visit that island to collect miro wood for carving curios, but it is otherwise uninhabited, despite being much larger than Pitcairn (6 miles by 3 compared with 2 by 1). We were unable to land either there or on Ducie, as a result of the high seas. The fourth island, Oeno, is quite tiny and we did not visit it. The seas around the islands were designated in 2015 by the British Government (whose territory it remains) as the world's biggest marine protected area, at 322,000 square miles.

There was, at first, some doubt about our ability to land on Pitcairn itself as the seas were quite rough, with some waves as high as 3 metres.

Bounty Bay, the original landing point of the mutineers and the main harbour, was unusable in these conditions. Fortunately they had made good progress in constructing a new, alternative harbour on the other side of the island, and it was decided to try landing there with our Zodiacs. This was still a very tricky operation, both on leaving the ship – boarding the Zodiacs at just the right moment before a big wave changed the relative levels too much – and disembarking onto the island's jetty, where some waves were breaking right over the top. In fact, thanks to the skill of the crew, about 60 guests made it to the shore and back without incident.

We then had the choice of walking across the island (about 1,000 feet up

and then down again) or taking a ride on the back of one of the islanders' quad bikes up and down the baked mud track. A paved road is planned, but not started yet. The settlement of Adamstown currently contains some 50 residents; much less than the peak population of 233 in 1937. Although there is a large schoolhouse in Adamstown there is currently only one child on the island.

The islanders, many descended from the mutineers, had laid out tables of Pitcairn crafts and souvenirs to buy as well as giving us the opportunity to buy and post cards, which most people did. The little museum was somewhat haphazardly arranged, but interesting, with relics from the Bounty as well as historical items from the island's more

recent past. Most of the time, however, was spent walking to view the wildlife, graveyard, boathouse and dramatic scenery of this surprisingly beautiful place. It was exciting to be able to set foot on an island that was so remote, and that had such a resonant history. Though we had a full day there and though the island is so small I still failed to find the time to visit many of its wilder parts.

For those who had not risked the bumpy seas to go ashore, the mayor, a youngish man educated in New Zealand, had spent the day on our ship talking to the guests. He remained on board while the ship circumnavigated the island, leaving as we started our barbecue dinner in the ship's outside cafe at the end of an unusual day.











Small island at the end of the world

Pia Thommes LRPS

You are going where? was the question following our announcement that we would spend our honeymoon in Tasmania. However, with plenty of outdoor activities and adventures, this little island to the south of Australia ticked all the boxes for us.

Indeed we were not to be disappointed: when the big metal tube touched down in the small airport of Hobart after 30 hours of flight, it took us less than an hour's drive to arrive at the most wonderful and unspoilt beach. While my husband Dave fell into a deep sleep, I had my first dip in the Tasmanian Sea.

We had rented a small car, which carried a Tasmanian number plate with the slogan 'Tasmania – Explore the possibilities' and we followed that motto wherever we could. Our route took us roughly around the east and north of the island, followed by a cut through the mountainous inner, and ending up on Bruny Island. The roads we followed were twisty and slow, but perfect for exploration, and stopping wherever we found a spot we fancied. We stayed mostly in B&B's, many off the beaten track and at the end of several miles of dirt roads. This also gave us the opportunity to encounter wildlife, often right on our doorstep. The 'natives' were not shy, wallabies showed us their joeys, echidnas toddled over our feet, and wombats didn't move away when we stepped over them while they were grazing.

The first part of the journey was dominated by the beautiful beaches of the Tasman Peninsula, Maria Island, and Freycinet National Park. Most of them were completely deserted, and due to the steepness of the sand, together with majestic waves, they were much more suited to photography than swimming. The round granite boulders covered in bright red lichen contrasted with the green water, blue sky and white sand – a paradise for photographers. Along the east coast we visited a few vineries and stocked up with delicious wine, similar in character to New Zealand ones, which we drank in the evenings while enjoying the tranquillity.

Further to the north, the landscape changed and looked amazingly European, some of the vistas could have been in the Black Forest: lush green fields with black and white cows, the only difference was that the trees of the forest and at the sides of the road were eucalyptus and not oak. Along the north coast we followed one of the few dual-carriageway roads that got us quickly to Stanley, almost at the end of the world. From there we set off on a cruise of the Arthur River, into the dense and untouched temperate rainforest. We stopped at the westernmost spot of Tasmania, and were greeted by a beating wind and waves that crashed upon the shore with amazing force. From here the next landmass due west was Patagonia.

The next stop was in the middle of the temperate

rainforest close to the beautiful Leven Canyon. An uninterrupted canopy of forest stretched as far as the eye could see. Tall, straight trees were interspersed with shady gullies populated with tree ferns, which brought some brightness into the dark forest with their light green fronds. We were staying in wooden cabins, and at dusk watched platypus floating in the tranquil river. At night the outside lights were turned on and pieces of chicken and sheep nuts were placed on the ground. We spent until deep into the night watching animals feasting on the plenty; first pademelons – a small species of wallaby – then possums and quolls, and finally the elusive Tasmanian devils. The population of Tasmanian devils is currently threatened by a transmissible tumour disease and large efforts are being taken to save the remaining population.

As much as we were reluctant to leave the rain forest paradise, we were looking forward to the next highlight of the trip – Cradle Mountain National Park. Again we were staying in cabins, but more luxurious ones, which even had a Jacuzzi in the middle of the room! Heaven at the end of a long day spent walking in the mountains. We were so lucky that Dove Lake and Cradle Mountain showed themselves in the best light; bright warm sunshine and reflections on the clear, but tannin stained water. Walking was rewarding as new vistas opened up around every corner and boardwalks made dealing with boggy ground a pleasure.

The next stage of the trip got us back to the west coast to the small town of Strahan, stuck in a time warp somewhere in colonial times. Located next to a huge bay, it would have been a welcome refuge for ships coming in from Patagonia. Strahan is home to the longest running play in Australia; performed there for the last 20 years, it tells the story of convicts that escaped from Sarah Island in the bay.

Only 30 miles further inland was Queenstown, an old mining town. The hills around there have been mined for two centuries, the hillsides were deforested, and the bare earth was coloured in a wonderful palette of mineral stains – beauty in the destruction. The drive took us further east through densely forested National Parks, and past Lake St. Clair.

Finally we took the ferry to Bruny Island, situated south of Hobart. It actually consisted of two islands connected by an isthmus called the Neck, which was only slightly wider than the dirt road that went across it. At sunset we went to the lighthouse at its southern end, and there was only the ocean between us and Antarctica. We also took a speedboat out along the coastline, taking in some of Australia's highest sea cliffs, blowholes, arches, sea stacks, and dolerite columns; eventually leading us to several small islands covered in seals. Back on the mainland, we spent another day in Huon Forest before we ended up back in Hobart; it felt very loud and busy after so many days in solitude.







Wallingford Wanderings

Andrew Barrow ARPS

7th – 9th October 2016

I detest standing up and speaking in front of a crowd. Nervous eye ticks, sweaty palms, and dry throat – I get it all. It doesn't matter how many times I practice, how religiously I stick to the script, the whole experience just terrifies me. A ridiculous set of circumstances I admit, but it happens every time.

The next time is likely to be in October, in front of the esteemed masses of the travel group – for I am hosting the photo weekend you might have seen listed.

My attempt at being cool, calm and suitably humorous, will probably see my opening remarks congratulating all those gathered in the 17th Century Town Hall for making it in alive! For Wallingford, according to several online statistics I've glanced at, is the murder capital of the UK. Forget 1970's New York, or the drug centres of Columbia and Mexico – this quaint market town, nestling up against the Thames with the picturesque Chiltern Hills acting as a backdrop, is a regular setting for a murder, sometimes on a weekly basis, it appears!

You might know Wallingford better as Causton of course; with certain inspectors and sidekicks finding deadly rivalries behind the wisteria, jealousy and adultery among the leafy lanes, and twitching net curtains amongst the thatched cottages and Victorian vicarages. Please don't get me started on this being the haunt of Agatha Christie from 1934. It is also just a stone's throw from Oxford and good ol' Morse.

So if you do come to Wallingford, please remember to pack some body-amour or a Kevlar vest amongst the wide-angle lens and the neutral density filters. Indeed, I do hope you come, for I've spent an age organising the weekend.

Have a look at the itinerary; let me know which strands you would like to join – whether it's a leisurely riverside walk with me or a jaunt out with our esteemed leader Liz (also a local resident). Maybe you would prefer to go 'off-piste' (in which case drop me a line with what you like and I can offer some suggestions). There are also sessions with Damian

Ward, an amazing local photographer who produces wonderful woodland images. Where I see a jumble of branches, he manages to find really cool compositions.

There is a loose theme for the weekend – one of food. The guest speaker is my long-time friend Jeanne Horak-Druif. South African born, but a resident of London, Jeanne plans a talk on food photography in a travel and cultural context, which promises to be entertaining and information-packed with plenty of technical titbits scattered throughout. Jeanne has travelled extensively in pursuit of culinary and travel stories and photos for her blog. If she doesn't mention the trip to Bulgaria we undertook last year please do prompt her; for it is a tale of local gangsters and politicians, ridiculously good wine, foggy days, and restaurants with piped music and oddly unvarying food.

The best of Wallingford's local pubs and eateries are included in the itinerary – none are hugely expensive if you have budget constraints – and we have a possibility of visiting the local vineyard. The Friday evening buffet promises a real treat too, as I've picked a local caterer to indulge us with some great food.

Over the weekend I hope I've covered a full range of photographic opportunities and interests that the town and surrounds can offer – history from Saxon times to the English Civil War, Dick Turpin and Black Bess, a huge castle site, local markets, church interiors, great food, superb local beer and wine, taking in landscapes, woodlands, arboretums, riversides and great sunsets (hopefully). All it needs is a few good people to share it all with and I hope that will be you. So please do join us in Wallingford this October. Just don't be surprised over the weened if you discover the odd corpse in a hedgerow, or a vital murder clue carelessly dropped in a church yard...

PDFs of the itinerary options and a booking form are available for download via the Travel Group section of the RPS website.





DIGITAL FORUM WINNERS

1st: Margaret Hocking ARPS PLAY SCHOOL (Page 32)

I have been to the Gambia in association with a small local charity which sponsors children's education. Last year I found the children playing "School". The teacher was Awa, but I don't know what the lesson was!

2nd: Nigel Plant ARPS COMMUTING VIETNAM (Opposite)

When you live on the Mekong, getting to work often means paddling your own canoe!

3rd: Brian Pearce FRPS THE HEDJAZ RAILWAY (Page 32)

This was built by the Ottoman Empire to transport pilgrims from Damascus to Medina and opened in stages from 1908. This picture shows the train approaching the station at Neesib (near Deraa in Syria).



The Digital Image Competition 2016

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should be understood that technical deficiencies are always going to let an entry down, where aesthetics are always open to interpretation so by getting the first aspect correct everyone stands a chance. All those who entered are to be commended for making the effort. Many locations brought back memories of location I know well. However a good deal gave me a new insight into locations I did not know. I feel sure that not everyone will agree with my choices but that is the nature of photography. Whatever your view please join with me and congratulate those who have at least convince me that they are worthy of an award. There are some super images in the final mix.

1st: Brother and Sister India, Alison Morris ARPS

I felt that this was a stunning image and captured the essence of village life in India. The quality is superb and all of the necessary ingredients are within the frame to tell the story. The henna marking on the wall that clinch the deal and in particular the smiley and sad faces that echo the two small children's demeanour.

2nd: Iguassu Falls, Moonbow, Brazil, John Hammons ARPS

This is a powerful landscape that ticks all of the boxes for me with the slow shutter speeds creating the real sense of the powerful flow of the water as it cascades over the fall and swirls and eddy's below creating a real ethereal feel. This is countermanded by the bright colours of the rainbow.

3rd: In the Nursery, Jon Allanson LRPS

My first thought when I saw this image was of the late great Alan Millward FRPS. Like his images the photographer here has capture the vivacity and innocence of these small children. For me the life in the children's eyes get to the heart of the matter making us instantly smile and share the joy of the occasion.



