



The
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Society

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Travel Log

Newsletter of the Travel Group



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RPS Travel Group

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Travel Log – Your Newsletter!

Do you have images languishing in your computer, never to be seen by others save friends and family, or perhaps your camera club? Now is a good time to think about putting together an article for *Travel Log*! There is nothing quite like the sense of achievement of seeing your work in print, and knowing that others in the Travel Group can also enjoy the fruits of your efforts.

All articles on travel photography, long or short, are welcome. Instructions for submissions are to be found below.

Travel Log is published by the Travel Group of the Royal Photographic Society three times a year: in January, May and September.

Contributions are welcome on all aspects of travel and travel photography. Full articles typically contain five to six images selected from those submitted, plus an accompanying text describing aspects of the journey and any technical issues encountered. It is worth noting that a mix of landscape and portrait images is useful. The layout of the text and images in the publishing software often means that it is necessary to crop pictures in order to balance the layout so images with a fair amount of open space surrounding the main subject work particularly well. It is also worth bearing in mind that images with much detail loose impact on the printed page as the final printed version is inevitably smaller than a print.

Many members are not comfortable with writing lengthy text: if this is the case, please contact the Editor who will be glad to assist. All text is copy edited and proof-read by another member of the Travel Group committee.

Shorter submissions are also welcome as well as articles describing photographic exhibitions with a strong travel theme or reviews of techniques, etc. of particular value to fellow travel photographers. Both colour and monochrome images are acceptable.

There is always a need for strong images for the **front cover**. It is not necessary to submit an article for an image to be considered for the cover, although it should be borne in mind that the cover image must have impact and be technically

perfect.

Copy for articles can be sent on CD or by email in Word, RTF or TXT format. Digital image files are preferred.

Digital files should be in JPEG format, minimum resolution 300dpi, and adjusted to produce an image file of not more than 5 megabyte (5mB). Many cameras produce files of a lower resolution, adequate for many purposes including projection, but much lower than the resolution required for printing.

Users of Photoshop can find the necessary option under the Image/Image Size menu. If you are uncertain how to adjust image properties, please contact the Editor for advice.

If you wish to submit prints, please contact the Editor before dispatch.

Travel Log accepts **advertisements**. Advertisers should contact the Editor by email at the address opposite.

Receipt of all submissions will be sent by email. Unless specifically requested material will not be returned.

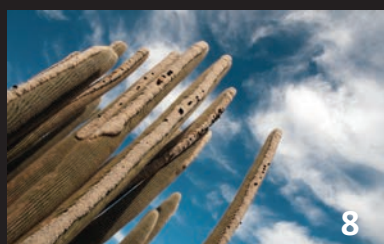
Please send all material to the Editor, Colin R. Howard, 11 Nightingale Way, Hereford HR1 2NQ.

The **deadlines** are 1st April (May issue), 1st July (September issue) and 1st November (January issue).

The small print

No payment is made for articles used and whilst every care is taken the Editor, Production or the Travel Group do not accept liability for any damage to photographic material submitted. The views expressed in articles are those of the contributor, and not of the Travel Group or Editor.

The Travel Group and the Royal Photographic Society do not recommend any tours or services nor accept any liability whatsoever for members who may make bookings with, or purchases from, any companies or individuals who advertise in *Travel Log* or are mentioned in published articles.



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Note from the Editor

Members may note that the publication schedule for *Travel Log's* three issues a year has been changed slightly to January, May and September. **The deadline for the January 2014 issue is 1st November 2013.**

Apologies ... to Jonathan Ratnage and Keith Pointon. In the May issue I incorrectly labelled the medal winning image on page 18. This should, of course, have been "**Bronze medal winner Keith Pointon's evocative image of the Aurora Borealis ...**" The text is correct, in that of course Jonathan won the Silver medal with his image taken at O'Hare Airport, Chicago, featured on the back cover of the January 2013 issue of *Travel Log*.

Dates for Your Diary

10th - 11th May 2014 Travel Group Spring Weekend, Ludlow, Shropshire

7th - 14th June 2014 Trip to Northumberland



Chairman's Chatter

Liz Rhodes

Welcome to this issue of Travel Log. Both Colin, the Editor, and I hope that you find it worthwhile reading as it is one of the few ways in which we can communicate with you, the members. To this end, I have taken to yet again wondering what it is members want from the Travel Group and can only surmise that since there are no complaints we must be doing something right!

But I can't help thinking that there are more things that we should be doing and so I am delighted to say that I have recently had discussions with the Organiser for the South East Region, Terry McGhie about putting on some joint events in that Region, including an Exhibition. Plans are still being finalised but information will be sent out via e-mail and will also be on the website and in the *Journal*. In this context, a trip to Rye is planned for 20th October.

I believe one of the things that members want to achieve is a Distinction. You will see in this issue, therefore, a successful 'F' panel by James Frost and it is intended that subsequent issues will feature a successful 'A' or 'F' panel so that you are able to see what it takes to put one together. In this context it gives me great pleasure to congratulate Colin Howard and Richard Lewis on successfully gaining their ARPS in recent months.

Plans are well advanced for the Spring Weekend 2014, which will be held in the beautiful market town of Ludlow: Colin and Keith have written a piece on Ludlow (page 5) for you to enjoy and entice those of you yet to come to a Spring Weekend to make your plans as early as possible.

As for further afield in 2014, Aline Hopkins is busy planning for travel group trips to Yellowstone Park in the USA and, nearer to home, a week next June in Northumberland. More details on page 19: please let Aline know whether you would be interested in joining either, or even both!

Thanks to all who have submitted articles for this issue. There is always a need for more and it is an opportunity for you to share your travelling experiences with others, not to mention your photographs. Nor does it have to be about somewhere far away: some would say that you start to travel the moment you set foot outside your door and who knows what you might discover just beyond your doorstep!

Happy Travelling!

Remnants of the Berlin Wall, by Tony Cutler - more in January 2014 issue of Travel Log





Ludlow, the Capital of the Marches

Colin Howard ARPS and Keith Pointon LRPS

Our venue for the Spring Weekend in 2014 is Ludlow, situated in the south of Shropshire and a few miles to the east of the Welsh border. We hope this short article will entice as many members as possible to plan on joining what is anticipated as being not only a feast of travel photography, but also a chance to capture photographically this charming and thriving town.

Ludlow occupies a central position on the Welsh borders, the historical frontier between England and Wales, lying as it does half way between Chester to the north and Chepstow to the south. Its people have played a pivotal role over the centuries, often determining the course of history. For most of the 16th and 17th Centuries, Ludlow was the administrative capital of Wales.

The town lies near the southern edge of a varied topographical area of outstanding natural beauty known as the Shropshire uplands. There are excellent views of the surrounding hills from the tower of the parish church and from the battlements of Ludlow Castle that dominates the east bank of the River Teme

as it flows around the old town centre.

The early history of Ludlow was dominated by a burgeoning cloth industry, taking full advantage of available water-power provided by the Teme. But its importance as a trading centre increased over the years, and today Ludlow has a thriving market bordered by narrow streets with many individual shops and business. Much of the trade together with the importance of local agriculture is represented in the varied and colourful stained glass windows of St Lawrence's church. Begun in the 13th Century the tower was added circa 1450-1470.

Ludlow became a royal residence in the time of Edward IV, the royal offspring being frequently dispatched to the Wesh Marches to avoid the many London plagues of the time, as well as keeping them away from aspirants for the English crown. The Princes of the Tower spent their childhood years at Ludlow Castle: Prince Edward received news of his father's death whilst there and duly acceded to the throne as Edward V - but was never crowned. Followers of recent TV series about the Tudors and the Wars of the Roses will be familiar with Ludlow as being the place the eldest son of Henry VII was consigned to together with his bride, Catherine of Aragon. The demise of

Below: Ludlow Castle at dawn



Arthur, of course, led to the marriage of Catherine to Henry VIII.

There are many delightful buildings to explore in addition to the Castle. This is “black and white” territory, with many buildings displaying timber frames painted black framing white plaster walls. A good example is *The Feathers Hotel*, the planned venue for our annual Spring Weekend dinner. The Assembly Rooms are of a later, Victorian vintage, and hence of a very different style: these will be the venue for our meeting, just a short footfall away from both market and castle.

A list of accommodation is available from Keith Pointon (bagpoint@aol.com) - book early as there is a festival taking place at the same time as our weekend. A provisional programme will appear in the January 2014 issue of *Travel Log*.

For further information on Ludlow and the surrounding countryside, visit www.ludlow.org.uk.

For those readers who would like to delve more into the history of Ludlow, *The Concise History of Ludlow* by David Lloyd is recommended (Merlin Unwin Books, Ludlow, £9.99, ISBN 1-873674-42-2).



Top Right: The Feathers Hotel, the venue for the Spring Weekend dinner

Right: The Assembly Rooms, the venue for our meeting

Below: St Lawrence's church and the town at sunrise





Top left: Crimean canon, Ludlow Castle walls

Top Right and Middle: Ludlow market

Bottom left: Narrow lanes in the town centre

Lower Right: Tomb of Dame Mary Eure in St Lawrence's church



Lanzarote, the Volcanic Island

Paul Bather, ARPS, AFIAP

Lanzarote, the easternmost island of the Canary Islands, is the fourth largest of the Canaries and is some 125 km off the coast of Africa. It measures 37 miles North to South and 15 miles east to west. The island has a population of 140,000 people most of whom live in and around the capital of Arrecife where the airport is situated.

The landscape has been shaped and inspired by volcanic eruptions over many millions of years, the last significant event being in 1730. There is, on average, only 16 days of rain a year, the average temperature on the island being 20 degrees.

I have visited Lanzarote on a number of occasions, staying in and around Playa Blanca on the south coast. During my visits I regularly visit the Jardin De Cactus which is situated on the east of the island some 10 miles north of the capital. It is easily reached by road and well served by bus transport.

The gardens which were formally a quarry were inspired by Cesar Manrique, a Lanzarote artist born in 1919 who studied art in New York, Paris and Madrid before returning to settle in Lanzarote in the 1960s. Upon his return to Lanzarote he used his influence to ensure that local traditions were respected and promoted as local authorities planned for an increase in tourism and his influence can still be seen all over the island. The Jardin De Cactus have 1400 varieties of Cactus with over 10,000 displayed in the garden which is overlooked by a restored working windmill.

Also worth visiting is El Golfo on the south west coast. El Golfo was once a harbour but volcanic eruptions created a bar that now divides a small lagoon from the sea: here volcanic minerals and algae mix to give the water an intense emerald colour.

A short drive away is Los Hervideros with a series of caves and blow holes caused by the sea eroding the lava. It is worthwhile to walk along the cliffs and watch the waves crash into the caves from one of the many natural view points.

All of these locations can easily be reached by car and are certainly worth a visit!



Above: Cactus Garden windmill

Below: View from Los Hervideros





Above: On the path to El Golfo

Right: Los Hervideros - incoming wave

Below: Playa Blanca





The Takeaway People of Hong Kong

Brian Pearce FRPS

Although Hong Kong has over 7 million people compressed into a very small land area, along the eastern coast of the Territory, there are a string of abandoned villages. These are hidden between high ridges, nestling in the deep valleys and now rapidly reverting to sub tropical jungle.

Here were the homes of some of the minority Hakka people who migrated into the area in the 18th Century from northern China. Even now, there are no roads connecting these villages to the rest of Hong Kong: the villagers travelled mostly by local ferry (kai do) to the market town of Sha Tau Kok or walked by stone paved footpaths over the mountain of Tiu Tang Lung to Luk Keng (Deer's Neck) village where there is a road head - a journey that took 2 to 3 hours. When Hong Kong underwent its economic miracle between 1950 and 1980, these villages were left behind as the people could not get to work in the new factory towns. Instead, taking advantage of the liberal emigration rules of the time, they moved to various commonwealth countries, particularly Britain (where they set up a string of Chinese takeaways distant from the traditional China Towns of London, Liverpool and Manchester) and British North Borneo (now the state of Sabah in Malaysia).

The younger people emigrated, locking up their houses ready for their return and leaving the elderly to look after the village living on remittances sent from abroad. A number of traditional houses were rebuilt with a second storey from the money generated, but agriculture declined generally leading to a gradual abandonment of the settlements. The rice padis were left untended and the orchards of lai chi trees and oranges were gradually abandoned. Their small black cattle went feral and herds can still be found in the area today.

However, the emigrants, while making visits, never moved back, and the older people moved into Old People's Homes in the distant towns and eventually died. Gradually the villages became depopulated. Now whole villages such as Sam A Tsuen (Three Family Village), Lai Chi Wo (Orchard of the Lai Chi Trees), So Lo Pun (Stop the Compass! - presumably from the iron deposits in the surrounding mountains) and Yung Shue Au (Banyan Tree Pass) lie wholly or partially in ruins.

When I first went to live in Hong Kong in 1973, there was a population large enough in the area for the village school in Sam A Tsuen to have one class and the



Yung Shue Au village, abandoned in 1995

shop at Lai Chi Wo still functioned. But by the mid 1980s there were just a handful of elderly people living at Lai Chi Wo and one couple hanging on at Yung Shue Au. When the ferry stopped that was the end, and now apart from a couple of small cafes for hikers, the area is empty. The padis have overgrown, the jungle has spread out from the fung shui woods behind the villages and nature is fast taking over. Wild boar (always a problem for eating the crops) have proliferated with the increased jungle cover, and the ever present snake population now has an increased habitat. The area is also a haven for many varieties of birds and for many wild orchids. The staff of Plover Cove Country Park keep a couple of major trails clear but most of the village paths have disappeared.

The houses were built of traditional Chinese rammed earth walls, sometimes with a frontage of black bricks. Roofs were of red pine rafters with terra cotta tiles. Electricity (and telephones) arrived far too late in the 1980s and some villages never had piped water but continued to use the local stream. With 100 inches of rain often falling in the 6-month wet season, any minor breach in the earth walls rapidly became catastrophic. The pine beetle, which has destroyed most of Hong Kong's pine woods, has eaten into the rafters with the result that roofs have progressively collapsed, until the houses have become just heaps of mud, broken rafters



Top Left: Kitchen interior, Yung Shue Au, 2009

Top Right: Villager, Lai Chi Wo, 1985

Above Middle: Rice threshing machine, Yung Shue Au, 1995

Above right: Abandoned So Lo Pun, 1987

and tiles. The cattle, trying to avoid heavy rainstorms and Hong Kong's many typhoons, have battered in the doors to find shelter and damaged the house interiors. Despite this, where houses still stand there is a wealth of furniture and possessions inside - the whole area is like some giant folk museum, frozen in time.

The emigrants sometimes return for the 10-yearly Ta

Chiu (Purification) ceremonies when the district is cleansed from evil spirits who have accumulated in that period: otherwise, the villages are deserted. The villagers of So Lo Pun have sold out to a company currently building a golf course (access only by jet boat) and the Country Parks Authority has established a superb Nature Trail round Lai Chi Wo. But pedestrian access remains a 2 to 3 hour hike over rough ground and the area is still Hong Kong's best kept secret.

Pictures taken in the 1980's were shot on a Mudan (*Peony*) Chinese-made Twin Lens Reflex camera. All subsequent photographs were taken on one or other of my Rolleiflex Twin Lens Reflex cameras.



Top left: Do not enter! Yung Shue Au, 1995.

Top right: Worshipping the Earth God, To Tei Yan, 1993.

Middle left: Hurrican lamp, Yung Shue Au, 2009

Middle right: Interior, Sam A Tsuen, 1992

Bottom left: Returning from market, Lai Chi Wo, 1985



Obtaining A Fellowship in Travel

James Frost FRPS

Although Hazel, my wife, and I travel as much as we can, it is Burma and the Burmese people that is our passion for travel. As a country, I became aware of Burma from my grandfather, who fought there, but never spoke of it. I have his Burma Star and a cinema ticket from Rangoon in 1945. It was a country that we first visited almost fifteen years ago, and have returned every couple of years as the country has opened up. We know about the politics and the struggles, but it is the Burmese that we love.

We have always been welcomed, both as travellers and as camera toting 'snappers'. Having attained my ARPS in 2005, I wanted Burma to be the subject of my travel panel for a Fellowship. I wanted to show some aspect of a country that is changing, but steeped in history. I concentrated on the Bagan area and the people around it. There are many excellent photographers who have taken pictures in Bagan, from Steve McCurry HonFRPS to Hazel Mason ARPS (my wife). I wanted my panel to have the inside shot of a temple as the centre image without a person visible. This was to represent the

timelessness of a site that is visited by many, just to see the architecture. I however wanted the remaining images to be about the Burmese rather than the temples. Most Burmese people are Buddhist and many have been educated though monastery schools, even if most do not remain as monks into adulthood. I wanted a number of the pictures to have some aspect of modernity in them, even though, on initial glance, they could look timeless.

Almost all of the digital work was in Lightroom with minimal adjustment. They were printed using an Epson 2880 printer with Permaget continuous inks on Epson Traditional paper. The change to continuous ink allowed for a substantial saving so that many prints could be made before a final one was settled upon. I did receive the benefit of a Fellowship advisory day in Edinburgh, where Roger Reynolds HonFRPS and Sandy Cleland FRPS were at hand with advice. The final selection was mine and Hazel's, and she could have submitted a similar panel of probably superior images.'

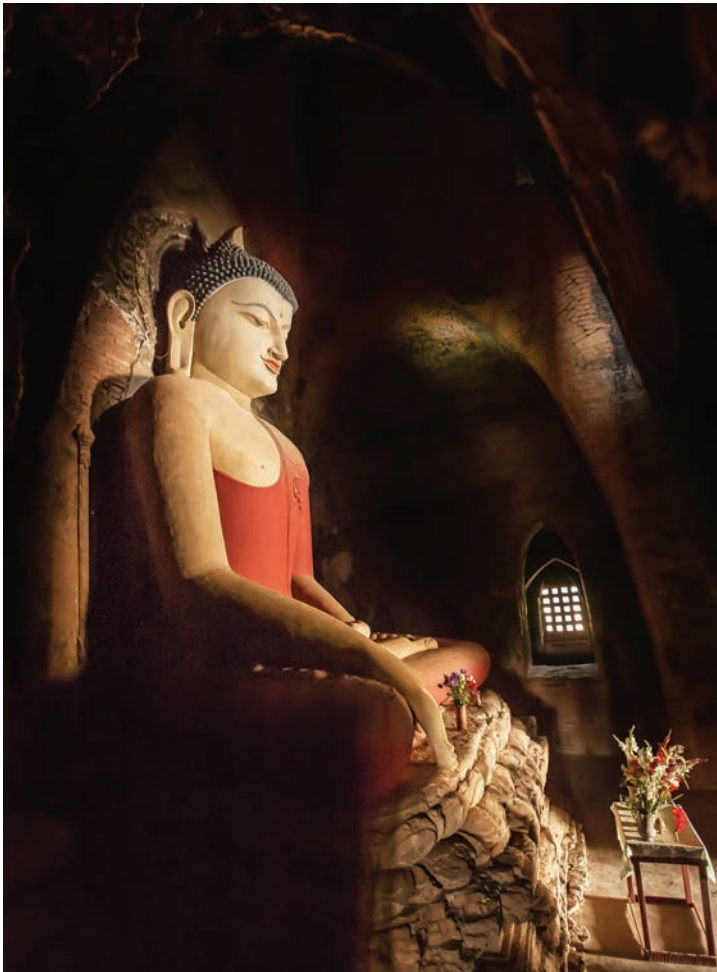
Below: James' hanging plan

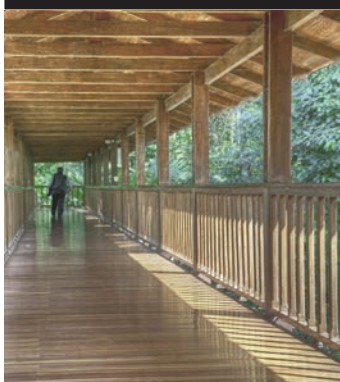




All pictures by James Frost, FRPS







Trip Report - Costa Rica, January 2013

Aline Hopkins and Fellow Travellers

Costa Ricans have an expression about their country - 'Pura Vida - pure life'. Situated between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean sea, the country has perfect conditions for an abundance of life - tropical rain forests, cooler cloud forests, exotic plants, flowers, hundreds of bird species, butterflies, lizards, frogs, monkeys and other animals, many of which we saw and photographed on the tour..

Our tour at the end of January took us to four different areas - cloud forest, rain forest, tropical lowlands, and the foothills of the Arenal Volcano. On our first day we were lucky to spot two Resplendent Quetzals as they carved out a nest in the side of a tree. This is a very colourful bird and just one of many colourful birds we were to see on the tour. There were also colourful frogs such as the Blue Jeans Frog - red with blue legs, the red-eyed bright green Gaudy Leaf Frog, and the Black and Green Dart Frog. A bright yellow Eyelash Pit Viper stayed very still as we took turns to photograph it. On one path we were lucky not to be caught up in a huge swarm of army ants which took several minutes to cross the path in front of us.

Abundant vegetation gave us many subjects - flowers, bark, leaf patterns and shadows. Two river trips allowed us to photograph caiman, crocodiles, monkeys and people enjoying life on the river.

Perhaps the most memorable part of the tour was the abundance of hummingbirds - fabulous iridescent flying jewels, which seemed to be everywhere, buzzing noisily around flowers and the bird feeders at all the hotels. Wonderful to watch but difficult to photograph!

The Arenal Volcano is one of the world's most active volcanoes, and fortunately it did not erupt while we were there, which some people were disappointed about (not me!).

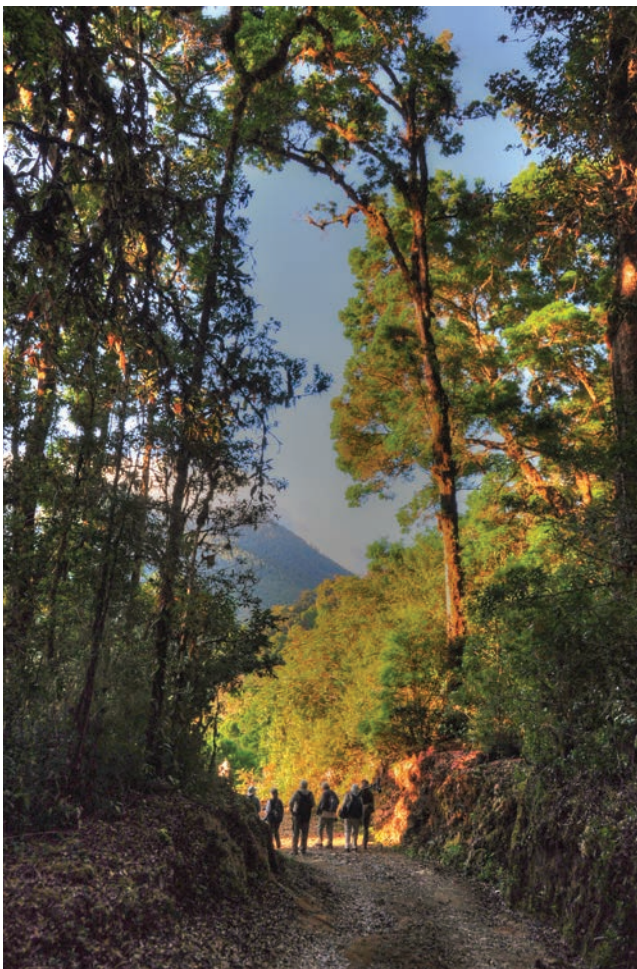
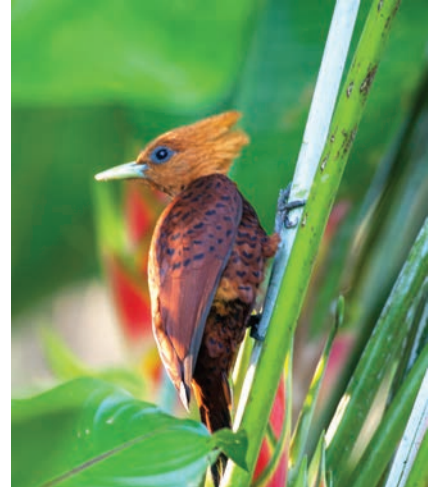
For a country the size of Wales, Costa Rica has an incredible variety of scenery, vegetation and wildlife. The people are friendly and welcoming, and the food marvellous. I, for one, can't wait to go there again!

Thanks must go to Keith Offord, our tour leader and organiser. Without Keith's extensive knowledge of the area and wildlife we would not have seen many of the species we did see, and he was very generous with photographic help and advice.

Thanks also to the participants who contributed pictures for this article, and for the Flickr site which anyone interested can look at if they want to see more of the pictures from the tour - look for 'RPS Costa Rica'.

Below: On the road to San Jose







*Photographs by Jenny Esse, Aline Hopkins,
Sally Phipps Hornby and Liz Rhodes*





Forthcoming Trips

Aline Hopkins

Following the results of the questionnaire distributed at the Spring Weekend, I am looking into organising a trip to Yellowstone and surrounding areas, possibly in September 2014. As flight costs are not yet available, I have been unable to estimate the cost, but it will probably be in the region/in excess of £3,500. This will also depend on how many people sign up for the trip, so I would appreciate it if people who are definitely interested in a visit to Yellowstone would send me an e-mail so that I may have some idea of likely numbers.

In the UK, Northumbria came top of the list. After consulting tide tables for the area, with a view to visiting Holy Island, the week of 7th to 14th of June 2014 (Saturday to Saturday) has been chosen. It is proposed

that the trip be centred around Bamburgh, and that people arrange their own accommodation and transport. Please let me know if you plan to go so that I can keep in touch to arrange meeting places, dinners and days out. Northumbria has many picturesque castles and historic sites, as well as dramatic landscapes. People will be able to do their own thing if they wish, rather than join in any of the group activities. Please let me know if you intend to come by e-mailing me at alinehopkins@btinternet.com

Finally, there are still a few places left on the trip to Burma: there are three departures in February and March. Please contact Keith Pointon directly if you are interested (01588 640592: bagpoint@aol.com).



Left: Bamburgh Castle, by Stuart Thompson

Above: Yellowstone hot springs, by Colin Howard

Digital Forum - Round 24 Result

Taken by James Frost, FRPS, who comments "These magnificent animals exist in the extreme conditions of Yellowstone. This shot gives the sense of place, making it a travel image."



Would you like to join the Digital Forum?

The Digital Forum consists of a group of like-minded photographers who are also members of the travel group. The aim is to be a forum for its members to upload their images to, and then receive constructive criticism on that image. The Folio is only accessible by those who are a member of the group and as such it takes the form of a digital blog.

Once a quarter an image is uploaded by each member on to the digital blog. Everyone then comments on the images on the blog, and scores awarded. The image with the highest marks is then published in *Travel Log*. Currently, there approximately 10 members who contribute on a regular basis. The only criterion is that each image must be on a travel related theme. All members of the RPS travel group are welcome to join the group and Hazel Mason is happy to answer any questions: if you would like to join, please send an email to: hazel.mason39@btinternet.com

The Travel Group Website? This is now located at <http://www.rps.org/travel>

Back copies of *Travel Log* in pdf format can be obtained from the Editor. You will find details of events and Travel Group activities on the RPS website. There is also the opportunity to display your own portfolio of travel photographs.

