

Hebridean Triptych © Alex Hare

Submissions

The copy date for submissions to the next newsletter is Friday 23rd October 2020. Please note that it may be necessary to hold some submissions for a future newsletter.

If you have an idea for an article, please send a brief synopsis of the purpose and content of the piece.

Please submit your images as jpeg attachments, sized to 72 dpi with 1200 pixels along the longest edge and borderless.

Do not embed images in an e mail.

Please send all submissions to:

landscapenews@rps.org

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EDITORIAL

At the time of writing it is mid-august and the weather is poor from a photographer's point of view. To make matters worse Nikon, amongst other camera manufactures, was badly hit by the covid-19 virus and the measures that governments around the world took to try and lessen the virus's impact. In February, I ordered a 70-200 mm lens for my Nikon Z7 and was hoping to use it extensively when lockdown eased and I would have done. I was told that it should be delivered to the retailer (name withheld to spare their embarrassment) within a month. Alas I have now been told that it **might** be in the UK by the end of August. Nikon blame the virus for their inability to get their products out to their retail customers. Ah well, its possible that I can try it out on the Autumn trees as the leaves turn brown.

During the lockdown I set myself the target of getting all my images catalogued in Adobe Lightroom Classic. With just under 12,000 images haphazardly loaded into Lightroom - some named sensibly but most just named by the camera that I used to take the shot. Some had keywords, some had star ratings many had neither. It was a huge and tedious task which took over 10 weeks to complete. However it gave a smug sense of satisfaction especially when I was talking to photographer friends whom I discovered had been even less organised than I had been before I saw the light! Ironically doing the organising also made me thoroughly familiar with my images, almost to the point that I don't need them to be catalogued. I am proud to say that post the cataloguing of my images I have systematically catalogued new images as I loaded them into Lightroom so I am reformed.

I often wonder about the motivation of photographers. What is it that persuades us to spend often substantial amounts of money to acquire complicated equipment and then to spend long hours trying to achieve good quality images. Of course in days gone by the investment of time and money was even greater when we spent time in darkrooms messing with unpleasant chemicals and celluloid and paper - all to produce the images we had captured in the camera. I can still recall to this day the smell of developer on my hands although it has been more than 30 years since I set foot in the blacked out bathroom that I used as a darkroom. (Even then we had a separate toilet so at least I was not disturbed by family members needing to go to the loo.) Of course the cost has come down dramatically - my last film camera, a Canon A1 cost about about £1,200 if I remember correctly whereas a modern top of the range digital camera costs double that.



Ely Cathedral

However the camera (and lenses) is the only significant cost. No D&P costs, no film to buy and no equipment to develop and print except a computer and printer which are used for other things and not devoted exclusively to photography. We are so lucky today! But do we get better results? In my case the answer is occasionally. I certainly take a lot more pictures because I get several hundred shots on a memory card at zero cost, but do I get more good pictures - I am not at all sure! I think it was Ansel Adams who said that “twelve significant photographs in any one year was a good crop” but he, of course, was using a plate camera so the process was more cumbersome and expensive and he would not have been able to go out for a days shoot and come back with 250 images either because of the physical portability or the cost. It was in 1957 speaking about the economy, Harold Macmillan said “We have never had it so good!” However he could have been talking about photography today. Of course we are not at a technological end point. Things will continue to develop, improve, and get cheaper in real terms but we have come a long way from the plate camera to the Nikon Z7!



Matera, Puglia, Southern Italy

Both Images © Peter Fortune

Chair Chat

By Richard Ellis, Landscape SIG Chair

Much has been written on Covid 19 and its impact on the world. A frequently heard refrain is “when things return to normal” This is something the committee have been grappling with as we plan out the programme for late 2020 and early 2021. We have concluded that there will be no sudden return to pre-Covid 19 times and thus have planned our programme accordingly.

Many positive comments have been made about the programme and people have requested that ‘zooming’ continues. Consequently, a programme of speakers via Zoom has been set up with a target frequency of at least one per month. This minimum frequency is driven by resources in the committee and by the availability of good speakers. One positive of the current programme is that our international members have been able to join activities. We have also taken advantage of the situation to invite international speakers to share their work. Our first international speaker Theo Bosboom shared his work “Shaped by the Sea” to great acclaim. Speakers are now lined up from Nova Scotia and South Africa for November and December respectively.

It is not yet clear when HQ will reopen, consequently our Speakers’ Day and AGM for 2021 will now take place via Zoom. This will enable all members to participate and share in some exciting photography. More details will be released closer to the time (6 March 2021) but in the meantime please save the date.

The virtual workshops based around a location and the practical workshops such as book making have proved a huge hit with many selling out in hours. These will be extended and take place throughout the winter months. The RPS has now allowed us to organise physical meetings outdoors with appropriate precautions and the programme has restarted. For details of these and all other events please check out our [website](#).

Switching the programme from a physical presence to digital, over lockdown, has been a huge amount of work. The committee have worked really hard, sourcing speakers, sorting out technology, ensuring payments are made and generally tackling the myriad of tasks that go with an undertaking such as this. To put this effort in perspective the SIG offered over 1100 tickets to various events during lockdown. I am very grateful to them all for the hard work they have put in and thankful for their commitment. Our membership recently hit 900 members making us the 4th largest SIG so it is nice to see that their work has been appreciated.



I had my first meeting with the new CEO Evan Dawson and was able to share with him our view of where the RPS should be heading to deliver on issues important to us as a SIG. Evan is currently shaping the strategy for the organisation and we look forward to hearing from him in due course.

For many of us the easing of restrictions combined with the shortening days and the onset of autumn will mean that we are able to get out more and explore the landscape once again. I hope that you will all take the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of what surrounds us and to capture some wonderful images.

Take care

Richard



YOU'RE FOR THE CHOP; THE POWER OF CROPPING

by Alex Hare

One of the few things that remains fairly unchanged in photography is the aspect ratio we capture our work on. From 35mm film to full frame sensors, the 'shape' of the photo we receive back from the lab (remember them...?) or following import of the data is fixed at the time of capture and yet it isn't always ideal for the photo in question.

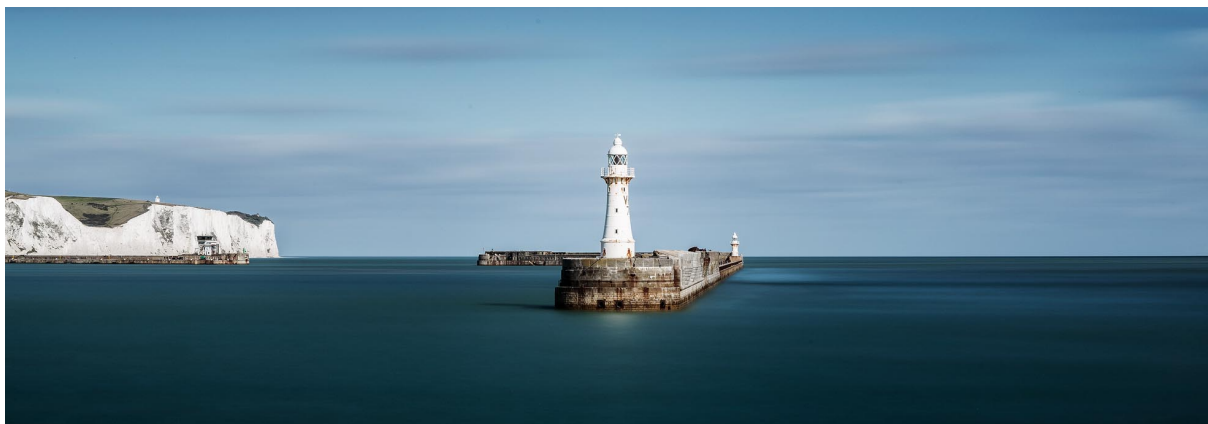
I find myself using the crop tool in my software (Lightroom or Photoshop) ever more as I find myself reviewing my backlog of images and searching for prints to use in my handmade photo books and greetings cards.

I appreciate that the crop tool is hardly going to be a revelation to anyone but it might be something that we can use more and more to our advantage if we were looking to either 1) improve the impact of what came straight from the camera and/or 2) we want to make best use of the photo as a final outcome, from a print to a bookmark to a greetings card to a website display.

I have two basic approaches to cropping; first is 'can I make my photo look better by choosing a particular type of crop' and secondly, 'can I crop it to make it work as a print or in a photo book'?

Taking these in turn, I am forever tinkering with my photos looking to both extract as many versions as I can from my images, seeking a crop that will improve the overall strength of the image.

I tend to stick to the 'standard' crop options, from 1:1, 4:5, 16:9 and 1:3 (aka 6x17). These are tried and tested and, indeed, film cameras could take film at these aspect ratios and be printed well.



Some photos just seem to work with all these crops and provide a series of very satisfying outcomes that are distinctly different despite being the same original photo.

Take this view of the outer harbour at Dover. It's come out just fine as a standard full frame shot but applying various crop options I found it also yielded some very pleasing alternatives. Perhaps the pano will work on a narrow wall space whereas the 5:4 will be better used on a more square space, such as over a fireplace.



In contrast to this shot, if we take this gorgeous view over the Kent countryside, I find the really engaging part of the image concentrated in the middle section of the shot and the excess 'space' top and bottom comprised of what I call 'supporting material' that window dresses the main action. However, there is more of this supporting material than I need and, and, frankly, it's not all necessary to the success of the image.





Here, both a 16:9 and 6:17 crop has produced two much more satisfactory results by trimming out that little bit of material which served little essential visual purpose.

Looking now at the options for cropping where we have prints in mind, cropping goes hand in hand with the craft of designing our handmade books and cards. A 3:2 ratio image from the camera is actually somewhat cumbersome to incorporate into a book and leaves little room for 'padding' with a mount or white border in a card so, often, a 1:1 square or 4:5 ratio image works much better.

Of course the issue is; can we trim our work down to fit these aspect ratios without undermining the image or losing something important? The answer, of course, is that it is a case by case issue to consider with each photo but rarely do I find a photo can't be cropped even slightly without ruining it and, more often than not, it turns out to be something of an improvement on the original!

Below are some examples of how I've used my photos in various handmade books I've made on the workshops I run which are all cropped to some extent or another to suit this final outcome with my work.





I hope this has encouraged you to re-consider the crop tool in relation to your work and to see if, before you hit 'save' whether there's some opportunity to apply a crop for good effect on your work, whatever your intended use of it might be.

About Alex Hare

Alex Hare is a landscape photographer and author of forthcoming title 'Photographing Kent'. Alex organises exciting photo tours providing more than just the usual location based tour. His website has full details and offers E-Books & Video Training. He works on commercial projects with businesses and major tourism brands and writes regularly in the photographic press.

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All images © Alex Hare





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THE LAKE DISTRICT IN NOVEMBER: A PERSONAL VIEW

By Ingrid Popplewell

I love the Lake District and have visited at least once a year for most of my adult life.

The focus of the visits has been walking and getting high up in the mountains to enjoy the solitude and the wilderness. I always have a camera with me to try and capture these special moments and it was my frustration at not being able to communicate my feelings for these beautiful mountain landscapes that made me seek out my first landscape photography workshop.



Near St John's in the Vale

Through this and subsequent workshops I was introduced to the work of David Ward.

I have read and re-read David Ward's books 'Landscape Within' and 'Landscape Beyond' and have thought a great deal about what he has written. His first book Landscape Within: Insights and Inspiration for Photographers, investigates the creative goals of landscape photography and how to achieve them.



Derwentwater from Surprise View



Why are we driven to make images, how do we feel when viewing a landscape and how do we evoke the same emotional response in the viewer? Are we aiming for a ‘work of art’ rather than a ‘snapshot’ of reality? David Ward talks about how an image can connote more than it denotes and so it becomes more meaningful for the photographer and the viewer. I really like the following quote from the book:

“Photographs are never wholly mirrors or wholly windows: they are akin to semi-silvered glass upon which a ghostly representation of the photographer’s intent is mingled with a reflection of our concerns through which we see an incomplete world”

He contends that a photograph may lack soul if it states the obviousness of a representation rather than evokes what it might stand for: such as time, solitude, escape. Photography combines the objective and the subjective aiming for the secret ingredient that makes an image transcendent.



Tewet Tarn near Keswick

These pictures were taken over a month in the Lake District in November 2019 when I walked every day and had my camera with me. There were grey days and bright days, rainy days and occasional sunshine. I hope they evoke the quiet atmosphere of late autumn in the Cumbrian mountains.

In *Landscape Beyond*, David Ward explores what he considers to be the essential attributes of a successful photograph: specifically: simplicity, mystery and beauty.

I try to keep these thoughts in mind when I am making pictures.



Near St John in the Vale

This trip will not be my last to this beautiful area and I hope to capture more images of the amazing region. Like most serious Lake District visitors, while enjoying sunny days there I equally enjoy the sometimes moody weather that can inspire and motivate photographers to

achieve wonderful results. To any new potential visitors to the Lake District I would say plan ahead and come prepared - the weather can change in a moment and one needs to have a clear plan as to what to do if it gets bad. Good waterproof clothing and sturdy boots are also important. However, take it from me, the region is more than worth the cost, the planning, and the preparation.



Fleetwith Pike above Buttermere

All Images © Ingrid Popplewell



ENCHANTING EXMOOR

By Sarah Howard

It's not hard to be enchanted by Exmoor. I first visited as a child on a family holiday and remember vividly the dramatic Valley of Rocks, the pretty harbour village of Lynmouth and the ancient clapper bridge; Tarr Steps. I never thought back then that years later I'd be running photography workshops here and it remains one of my favourite regions in the UK for landscape photography.



Travel west one hour from the M5 and you enter a different world. Here, narrow high hedged roads wind their way through lush deep wooded valleys within which lie hidden treasures. There is a softness to the landscape which nestles like a patchwork quilt around impossibly pretty villages. Then, in contrast there is the coastline, in parts

spectacular and dramatic, in others simply charming. Exmoor is a place in which to linger and to absorb.

Exmoor may be one of our smallest national parks, but it is known for its breathtaking beauty and unspoilt countryside. It is no wonder that this area inspired writers the likes of Shelley and Wordsworth. JHB Peel in 'a Portrait of Exmoor' once wrote "I do not know of any comparable area where such wilderness and such softness are so closely interwoven",



summing up Exmoor perfectly. As a photographer, you are really spoilt for choice. Below I've outlined some of the main locations we visit on our workshop each August which is timed to coincide with the flowering of the heather.

One of many ancient rivers; Badgeworthy Water, meanders through the Doone Valley which inspired R D Blackwall to set his novel, Lorna Doone. Here you can really step back in time, as traditional villages such as Allerford and Bossington appear unchanged from more than a century ago.



Tucked away, you'll find the infamous 'Robbers Bridge'; just one of a number of incredibly photogenic ancient packhorse bridges in the area. It's a challenging location being quite contrasty and benefits from an overcast day.

Further east along the coast lies Porlock Weir, which, with its quaint little harbour, possesses a unique charm that just has to be experienced. A walk along the

long stretch of pebble beach eventually brings you to the charming village of Bossington. Along the way, you'll encounter numerous old wooden groynes, many of which have colourful pebbles lodged in between them making for a great photographic subject.

Moving west we reach Countisbury Hill and sweeping views towards the town of Lynton and Lynmouth.

With a small picturesque harbour and backed by woodland, Lynmouth occupies a delightful setting. Nearby, lies one of the most dramatic sections of coastline in the area; the Valley of Rocks. This rugged valley is home to craggy, towering cliffs and dramatic views, as well as wild mountain goats. It is a superb location for sunset, especially after a portion of delicious fish and chips from Lynmouth!



Exmoor is an area offering huge variety as just minutes to the south lies wide open heather moorland. With sweeping views to the ocean it is populated by wild red deer, Exmoor ponies and even highland cattle.



The aptly named 'Punchbowl'; a deep bowl in the landscape which offers a glorious view across to patchwork fields. It's superb for a sunrise.

Tarr Steps is perhaps one of the most famous spots in Exmoor. An ancient clapper bridge spanning the River Barle, it is not easy to photograph. The image was lit well and the trees' leaves needed care to get the colour balance correct.



Above image © Martin Stubbings All other images © Sarah Howard



About Sarah Howard:

Sarah Howard is a professional UK landscape photographer based in the Cotswolds. A passionate traveller and lover of the natural world, she is known for her authentic and faithful style. A frequent contributor to a number of photographic publications, Sarah is currently working on her second book; 'Photographing the Cotswolds' for the FotoVUE series. Sarah undertakes commissions and also supplies editorial & advertising imagery. A regular speaker on the subject of landscape photography, Sarah is also the founder of 'Image Seen', which offers landscape photography workshops and tuition, set among some of the most breathtaking scenery in the UK & Europe.

www.imageseen.co.uk www.sarahhowardphotography.com



EVENTS

Professionally-led events: latest update

In the last newsletter I explained how the group's events programme had adapted to the pandemic and the progressive releasing of lockdown in the different parts of the UK.

Since then the situation has continued to evolve with short-notice announcements from the UK government, local lockdowns and so-on.

With all this going on, our events programme continues to evolve and also to change frequently. Members are therefore urged to rely on details on our web pages, rather than the RPS Journal and e-Journal for up-to-date information.

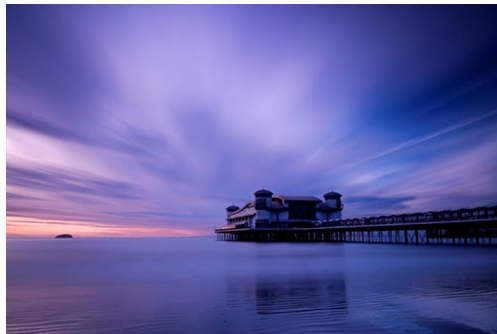
For the time being our events programme comprises the following main types of events:

- **Online talks:** usually held in the evenings approximately once per month. These are lecture-style events with questions and answers at the end.
- **Online workshops:** small group interactive workshops focusing mainly on photographic and processing techniques.
- **Socially distanced on-location workshops:** this new format of workshop is proving very popular and so will continue for the foreseeable future (and maybe beyond). Location briefings are provided via Zoom by a professional workshop leader who knows the location well. They provide suggested itineraries, timings and images of their own for inspiration as well as practical information about car parks, refreshments, toilets etc. Participants are free to visit the location by themselves in their own time before then meeting online again as a group to share results and receive feedback.
- **Traditional on-location workshops:** participants meet on-location with a professional workshop leader. Of course, suitable social distancing measures are taken to ensure the workshop can be conducted safely and all participants are required to comply.

Mark Reeves, Pro-events Manager



Where a price range is quoted for events the price you will be charged is determined by whether you are a member of the Landscape Group, RPS, or neither.



[Long exposures on the N. Somerset Coast](#)



[Night landscapes and astrophotography](#)



[Blea Tarn and the Langdales](#)



[The art of monochrome](#)



[Firle Beacon and the Ouse Valley](#)



[Waterfalls of the Vale of Neath](#)





[Talk: Taming the sea with Jenifer Bunnett](#)



[Talk: Critiquing your Landscape Images](#)



[Moray Coast - Burghead to Lossiemouth](#)



[Talk: A Journey not travelled](#)



QUICK LINKS & AN APPEAL FOR HELP

Easy links to our pages on the RPS website

[Landscape Group Homepage](#)

[What we do](#)

[Events](#)

[Publications](#)

[Committee](#)

[Resources](#)

An Appeal for help!

The Landscape Newsletter is always short of articles and pictures. Anyone who can put together an article on a place visited, a photographic technique or a piece of equipment that they value, we would like to hear about it. Articles should be at least 500 words and pictures should be 1200 pixels along the longest side and at 72 pixels per inch resolution. Images should not be embedded in an e mail but can be sent in a zip file. Please send material to me Peter Fortune at landscapenews@rps.org

The next newsletter will be in November 2020 so send anything as soon as you can. See the front page of this Newsletter.

