

TRAVEL LOG

THE **RPS**
ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

TRAVEL

Special Edition

Women in Travel Photography



The Journal
of the
RPS Travel Group

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When I saw the announcement that a new Special Interest Group (SIG) was being formed, ie 'Women in Photography' (WIP), it got me thinking. I have not seen many articles put forward from women members for publication and in fact hardly any have been published since I took on the role of Editor.

This is why I decided to put forward the idea of this special edition focusing on 'Women in Travel Photography' and I am delighted by the response. I hope that you enjoy this edition as I consider the contributions offer a wide range of personal thought on a variety of topics and locations.

I realise that some members questioned the need for a Women's SIG. I think that publishing this December 2019 journal helps to identify that positive action is sometimes needed to encourage minority groups to come forward to display their work. I think that we all need that extra bit of encouragement from time to time.

Another point that was discussed was 'WIP' is not a 'Genre of Photography' as are all the existing SIGs. I cannot argue with that but is there a rule that states that groups can only be formed to serve a specific photographic style?

This positive and new direction should be welcomed as many realise that The RPS will need to change if it is to attract a younger audience.

So how about a SIG for students and younger people in our society who are creating images at a staggering rate? The figure I found is that over 200 million photos are uploaded to the internet every day.

Possibly a SIG for those with disabilities? A group that could explore activities concentrating on enhancing people's abilities and experiences. I personally find my photography, from capturing to printing, to be very therapeutic. It keeps my brain ticking whilst my bones are aching.

I have also spotted a great initiative from the Yorkshire Region in the Events section of our website. 'Self Help Group' being organised by Robert Helliwell ARPS. I do not know if this is a new idea but it seems a good one to me.

So this brave move made by women who recognised a need may have opened up our thinking on what a SIG can be and perhaps should be.



John Riley LRPS

TRAVEL LOG



THE RPS
ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The Journal of the RPS Travel Group

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The Kun Fu Nuns of Nepal
Safeena Chaudhry



Me & My Camera
Liz Bugg LRPS



Icelandic Adventure
Barbara Bogacka LRPS



Journeying
Sue Hutton



The Road to Santiago de Compostela
Jo Cope



Inspirational
Nicole Condit Duncan



Iranian Footsteps
Pamela Jones LRPS



A Long Weekend in Berlin
Liz Rhodes MBE



Tales of faraway places
Sue O'Connell ARPS,
EFIAP/p, DPAGB, BPE 5*



The world of image
Colleen Rust



Combining a love of travel and photography
Katharina Wand



Colour
Sandra Mason



Gallery

Digital Forum Round 45

Travel Group Tours

Springboard 2019

A View from the Bridge

When John Riley, Editor of Travel Log, suggested that the next edition should feature articles all by women, I immediately thought this was a great idea. Not only would it complement the RPS's '100 Heroines' project but it would also coincide with the setting up of the new 'Women in Photography' Special Interest Group and thereby give some support to their activities. Many might query why all this emphasis on 'women' photographers – after all there have always been plenty out there but they have, in my view, tended to keep their heads below the parapet and just got on with doing what they liked most, taking photographs and travelling. A good example of such a person is Vivien Maier who was 'discovered' a few years ago when someone in the US found a great number of her negatives and prints.

At the same time, there have been many women travellers, such as Isabella Bird, who have taken photographs and made a great contribution to showing others the cultures and lands they travelled through. She is one who put women travellers on the map in the late Victorian era and made her name through the books she subsequently wrote.

Looking through the articles in this edition of Travel Log I am struck by the way the contributors have carried on the tradition of those intrepid early women travellers, going off into places such as Iran, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Borneo and many other places where you might think they would encounter difficulties due to current geopolitics. But as some have mentioned, they have been treated with kindness and courtesy for the most part, and thus able to gain a glimpse of another way of life.

Travel and photography can open up the world and even for those who have travelled a great deal it is always possible to come across the unexpected. I would never have learnt about 'The Kung Fu Nuns of Nepal' and what they do if that article hadn't been submitted. Young women photographers and travellers such as Safeena Chaudhry follow in the tradition of those late 19th and early 20th century women and seek out projects that bring attention to the best and worst of humanity. May they long continue and be encouraged to tell their stories.

Happy travelling!



Liz Rhodes MBE

Cover Photo - Katharina & Camera

A photo of Katharina Wand (Pages 36 - 37) taken by her husband on their Honeymoon.

Grahame Soden ARPS, ABIPP / travelweb@rps.org

THE KUNG FU NUNS OF NEPAL



Safeena Chaudhry



Photographer & Author

Safeena Chaudhry is a London-based photographer, camerawoman and author. Her first solo exhibition 'Women Against Crimes' took place in the summer of 2018 at the Gower St. Gallery and featured a series of portraits of women in Nepal and South Africa who fight against human and wildlife trafficking.

Her greatest teachers have been her solo journeys around the world but one of the most important was when she went to Nepal to meet the Kung Fu Nuns. Here she explains what drew her to travel halfway across the world and why photography should and can make you look beneath the surface.



Against a backdrop of the magnificent mountains of Ramkot, Nepal, the First Order of the Kung Fu Nuns were getting ready for their daily practice. They lined up in rows and executed a series of moves with precision, defiance and with the potential to devastate an opponent. I raised my Nikon D850 to my eye and captured the nuns training with the deceptively deadly fans. This was one of those decisive moments that would change my personal and world view.

I became aware of the Kung Fu Nuns through Twitter and contacted the affiliated charity, Live to Love International. It was a cold February morning in London when I first met with the president of the charity, Carrie Lee, and the UK Manager, Annie Smith. It was my intention to obtain permission to photograph the Nuns for the upcoming Women Against Crimes Exhibition.

When Annie asked me why I was doing the project, I told her that I was seeking strength in women. What I did not tell her was that I was seeking the strength that I could not find in myself. I love to travel, often alone, and I had this incredible opportunity to exhibit in the heart of London. I wanted the exhibition to be bigger than just 'me' and to symbolize courage, adventure and social awareness.

When Carrie Lee granted me access to meet the nuns, I was a little incredulous and nervous, albeit joyful. I had not thought about visiting Nepal before as I had no plans to climb Everest.

The idea behind the initial project was women as warriors and martial arts in general. When I was told that the nuns actively campaign against human trafficking, violence against women and promote gender equality, I felt my heart raise a hand and say, 'I'm in'.

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. Due to poverty, a lack of options and education, children are sold, often unwittingly, into slavery by parents. They are sent to other cities and countries to work in houses, factories, construction sites and to beg. Many are forced into prostitution. There are no official stats for the number of

children trafficked but there is a massive demand in India and the Middle East. Some children and young people are bought by agencies under the guise of being domestic workers. They are not told that they are going into war zones.

I spoke to two of the young nuns who told me of the after-effects of the earthquake and how it hit the economy hard. When they went to villages to administer aid and support, they became aware that children were being trafficked, even more than before. It is why they campaign to educate parents and villagers about gender equality to emphasize and remind them that girls have the same value as boys. Domestic violence is also a huge issue in the region and they hold self-defence workshops to empower women and girls.

After my first visit, when I saw the photograph of the nun with her palm facing to the lens, even I was surprised at its power to say 'Stop! No to Violence Against Women'.

It is not just martial arts and meditation that the nuns spend time developing. Many of them are trained in carpentry, electrical fitting, typing, plumbing and have learnt English. One of the portraits that touched me the most was of the nun in front of the hall where they used to practise, which was annihilated in the earthquake. Their housing was also destroyed, and they spent years living in tents. Each of the photos is a symbol of deeper stories. It is my intention to use my photography to raise awareness of the issues that they campaign for.

What struck me most about the nuns was not just their physical dexterity or their martial arts expertise but their bravery, humility, beauty and devotion. This fight for gender equality is a global one and we each have to find our way to battle with negative and outdated beliefs.

I often find myself in awe of people who are strong and committed to a cause greater than themselves and I found this to be true in the Druk Amitabha Mountain Nunnery. It is with great gratitude that I want to thank Carrie Lee and Annie Smith for allowing me to visit.

To watch the nuns train in Kung Fu and to take their portraits to bring them back to a gallery in London is an immense privilege.







Being a photographer has taught me the importance of focusing and framing either side of the lens. I encountered much self-doubt when I was working on the exhibition but I soon discovered that it is only when I committed to the doing that I defeated doubt.

You can find out more from:

www.kungfununs.org - www.livetolove.org and www.proximitypictures.co.uk





I have a love of travel, pretty much to anywhere in the world. I am never too far away from my camera, wherever I am. I enjoy capturing images of people in their natural surroundings and often the images I take when out and about are the images that I am most pleased with. To catch a smile, a look, a movement, a fleeting moment of joy, says much more to me than a photograph where the person is fully aware that they have a camera in front of them.

Me & My Camera

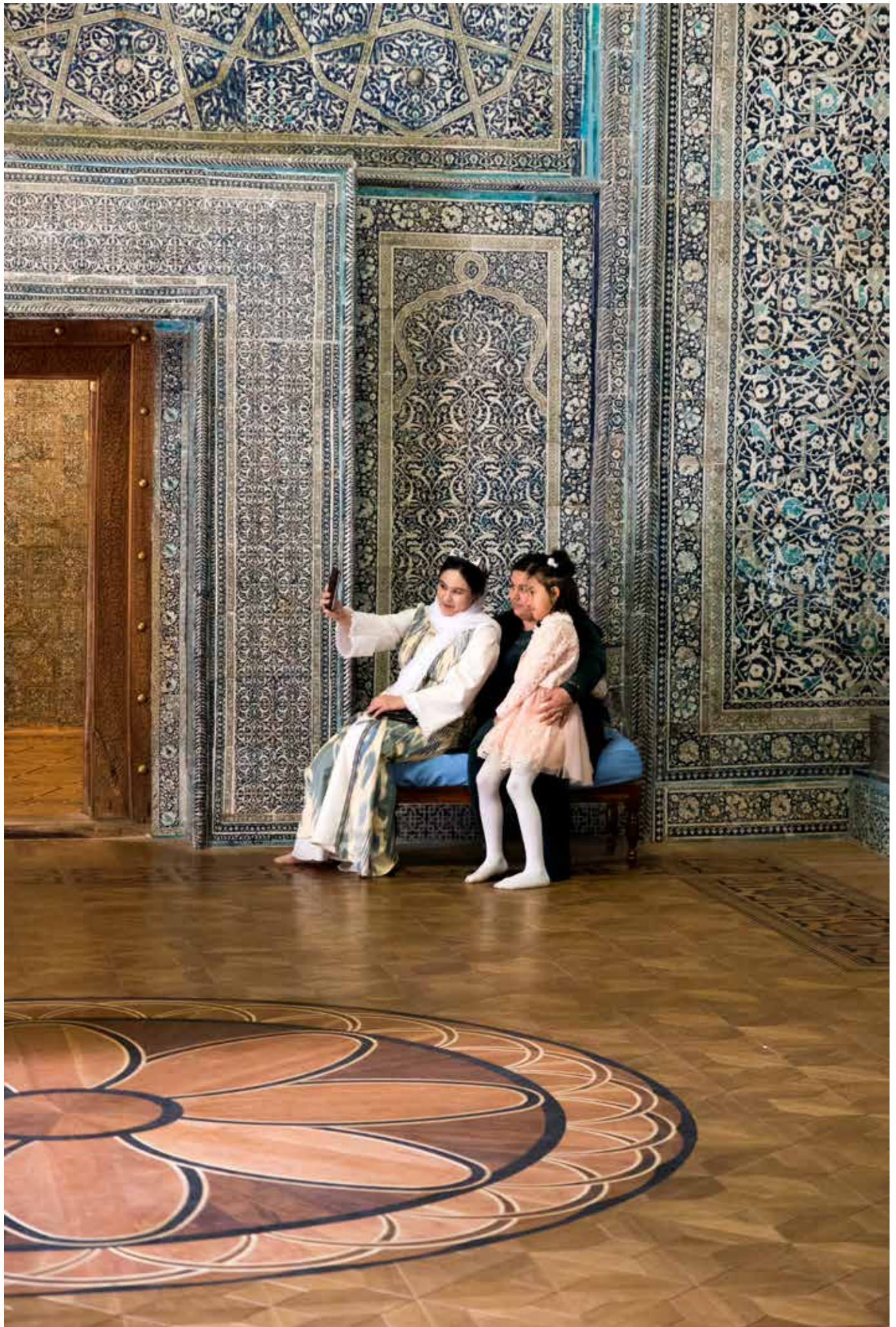


Liz Bugg LRPS

Most of my travels are on organised (non-photographic) tours, either on my own or with a friend. Sometimes I/we stay in one town as an alternative to a tour

I took these three images in Uzbekistan. I think they illustrate that wherever you are in the world, women like to have a day out, catch up on the gossip and take selfies.







Icelandic Adventure



Barbara Bogacka LRPS
<https://www.bbfotoimpresje.com>



At the beginning of March 2018, I joined a small group of amateur photographers on a five-day photo-tour in the South of Iceland. It was run by Haukur Snorrason, a professional photographer, guide and driver in one. Although the daylight was rather short, our days were very long. We were ready at the locations to shoot the sunrise and we were chasing Aurora at midnight. Not much time to sleep, but the excitement of visiting this extraordinary place compensated for the lack of rest.

The UK was covered by snow while it was raining in Iceland. The prospects for the trip were not too good. Many flights were cancelled, including those from Edinburgh to Reykjavik, the route I was to take on Monday, 5 March. On Sunday some of the flights were still not taking off. Fortunately, the weather had improved by Monday and Edinburgh airport was fully functional. I was greeted by Iceland with a beautiful sunset; warm light over the snowy mountains enhanced the varied landscape which I could see from the aeroplane's window. After all, a good start, I thought. Indeed, the

weather surprised all of us. Over the whole week, it was frosty and sunny. Wind added considerable chill, but we were prepared for that.

We travelled by a truck and I was sitting by the driver. This was splendid, as I had all the vast views of rough landscape, mountains covered by snow, mossy lava fields, waterfalls, high rocks and cliffs just in front of my eyes.

Water in various forms is a great feature of Iceland. Snow stays in the tops of the mountains all year round, huge glaciers cover a big part of the land (there are about 300 of them), waterfalls are numerous and dramatic, hot springs bubble away happily providing warmth to the houses all across the country. Sea fjords and bays with floating icebergs add to the diversity of the water bonanza in Iceland.

Although the snow was mainly in the higher parts of the mountains, there was frost and the waterfalls were partially frozen. The frost created various forms of icicles, some hanging down, some stuck to grass or stones. Also, ice was created by water spray falling on

the neighbouring rocks or on grass. Many waterfalls in Iceland are huge and spread on several levels. It was easier to take pictures of some fragments of the waterfalls rather than the whole.

One morning we visited the famous Great Geysir. It erupts very rarely, but the neighbouring hot spring, Strokkur, does at pretty regular, short time intervals. Interestingly, the eruption starts with building a gigantic bubble of hot water which then breaks with enormous impact to about 20-30 meters high. We were photographing the bulb at sunrise and it was great fun trying to get it right.

Other great features of the place are the lava fields and black beaches. Over 500 square kilometres of the thick layer of volcanic lava field, called Eldhraun, hide the tragic story of eruption of the Laki craters in the eighteenth century when thousands of people were killed. Being aware that this may happen again at any time gives a bit of a chill. In fact, seismographs record earthquakes in Iceland every day; fortunately, usually small enough not to be disruptive. In winter the Icelandic horses



add some colour to this very monochromatic place. They are very varied in appearance and in character and are very friendly. On a couple of occasions, we wandered among the horses in their pastures. They are inquisitive creatures and not afraid of people, so it was easy to get close to them, sometimes even a bit too close. I was amazed by their very long fur; they seem well adjusted to the tough conditions they live in.

The penultimate day of the trip was a real treat. After a long walk on the glacier we visited two ice caves. The light in the caves was coming from a few holes in the ice, otherwise it was rather dark. I was fascinated by the colour of ice. It varied from a light aqua to green and blue and then very dark, almost black. Younger ice formations have a lighter colour and the old ones are very dark. The light coming through the holes was illuminating parts of the cave and reflecting from the ice in a playful way.

Every evening we were checking the conditions for the Northern Lights. The sky was clear and full of stars each night, but the Sun was quiet. However, it rewarded us during the last night with high activity and a good display of green light. We were in the area of Jökulsárlón bay and when we noticed the light, we quickly drove towards the bay to photograph the Aurora. It was a powerful feeling to be in this vast landscape with the mountains and the glacier flowing to the bay, all under the starry sky and dancing green ribbons.

Although my visit to Iceland was very short, I came back home enriched by the wonderful experience of this wilderness unspoiled by humans.





Journeying



Sue Hutton LRPS





When I was eight, I resolved that I would go to university and travel. Nowadays one would think there was nothing unusual in that, but for a girl born into a poor working-class family in the mid-1950s, in a neighbourhood devoid of aspiration when only three percent of the population went to university, that was no mean ambition.

Of course, I didn't realise that at the time. As for photography, a camera

was a precious object owned and used by Dad that was bought primarily to take family photos. It never occurred to me to ask to have a go. Women accepted so much more then than they do now.

I did get to Grammar School, much to the family's astonishment, and then to university, where I took a degree in Geology.

After I graduated, I was supremely lucky to be offered a job at the Botswana Geological Survey as

librarian and information officer. Dad gave me his old Rolleiflex. It took colour film and made small square prints.

Things looked up when I married the Survey's Principal Chemist two years later. He had a Practica, which I used while doing geological field work. By then, the director had placed me in charge of Botswana's ERTS-1 (Landsat-1) programme. My job was to distribute the imagery to other government offices for them to analyse and to coordinate the results and write reports to NASA.

The infrared imagery was the most interesting in terms of geology, primarily because vegetation, which shows up strongly in infrared imagery, picks out geological structures. I carried out field investigations locally in Botswana at holidays and weekends and had the opportunity to fly over southeast Botswana. My husband Len, with the help of friends, made a rig which could carry two DSLRs, one with ordinary colour film and the other with colour infrared. I triggered them manually as we flew over structural features in the area of interest.

The most exciting flight was with two UNESCO hydrologists who were coordinating with Len on the geochemistry of the waters of the Okavango Delta in northwest Botswana. We took a light plane from Maun and flew around thunderstorms across the delta to Shakawe. By the time we emerged

from the meeting, the wind had blown the plane from one side of the airstrip to the other. I was able to take photos through the window, sadly of poor quality but a wonderful remembrance of a wonderful place.

At the end of 1991, we moved to Oman, where I stayed until 2000. Ultimately, I became the Information (Intelligence) Expert to the Minister of Water Resources. I was also able to afford to buy my own DSLR, which I'm ashamed to say I could use only in P mode.

I finally took a ten-week course with the OU in 2010. Since then, I have learnt that documentary photography is not necessarily 'Photography.' I have to concede that some photographers naturally have a much more artistic eye than others. I am sure that the debate about 'What is Photography?' let alone 'What is Travel Photography?'

will never end. My own style remains, for good or bad, documentary travel.

Digital photography has opened up so many opportunities for everyone. It's cheaper, more catholic in its reach and has progressed amazingly since I bought my Canon 300D in 2003. I'm amazed at the difference in technical output between cameras now and those released only perhaps 5-6 years ago.

But this also leads me to another question. How much of what is claimed to be 'Travel Photography' is actually 'Tourist Photography?' As photographers, we enrolled on photographic trips where the leader is inevitably compelled to take his party to 'the sights.' A five- or ten-day trip to a foreign country can well produce some wonderful photography but has the photographer truly got under

Muscat Ladies, young girls in Muscat, the old capital of Oman, still free to express themselves joyfully. It changes as they get older.



Exploring the Smartphone, Chefchaouen



the skin of his or her destination? As one article recently asked, how many of the travel photographs on Instagram are essentially of the same place/view/person?

Only by staying in a place for a while can one begin to get a feel for it. And the experience may not be as delightful as the photos from a short-term visit would have it.

I think we should ask ourselves as photographers whether we have unrealistically romantic ideas about our destinations when we take photos on our travels to the East.

My own travels will become more restricted as I get older. Hip and knee replacements restrict mobility, and also access to photographic adventures where the leader is not inclined to tolerate disability. On a journey to Hong Kong last year, I learnt the hard way that a Far Eastern diet cannot meet the needs of a coeliac needing to eat a gluten-free diet. Soy sauce, which is made from wheat, is splashed over everything.

Instead, I am concentrating on a small area of northern Morocco,

where we have been lucky enough to buy an apartment in Tangier overlooking the Mediterranean. Each time I go, I find something new. The region is changing fast. While western tourists might wish for some of the decay of the old Kasbah and medina to be preserved, the Moroccans are alert to a desire for spaciousness and modern ambience. The old is fast giving way to the new, perhaps

to the regret of those American tourists in particular who would wish to relive their literary heritage of the mid twentieth century.

Should you ever get there, the blue washed town of Chefchaouen, a centre for handicraft manufacture in The Rif Mountains some two hours from Tangier, is well worth a visit.





St James Day Mass Santiago

The Road to Santiago de Compostela

*Pilgrim Route 19th-27th July 2018
Jo Cope LRPS*

Ten members of the RPS Travel Group set off with bulging rucksacks—full of camera equipment rather than sleeping bags, carrying memory cards and batteries in place of walking poles and sporting a range of camera straps instead of the pilgrim scallop shell.

We were in the safe hands of Antonio our coach driver and Chris Pollard our trip leader. Chris's knowledge of Spain and everything Spanish is unsurpassed, so we learnt a great deal about sights

along the way, ate superb local food and drank excellent wines from the regions we passed through, always led by Chris's experienced palette. However, a tour with Chris should not be attempted by anyone wanting to diet!

The trip was planned to follow the French Route over the Pyrenees and across Northern Spain with our arrival in Santiago coinciding with St James' Day which is a Galician public holiday. St James is the patron saint of Spain and Galicia. His remains are buried in the cathedral

in Santiago. The pilgrimage started in the Middle Ages when people travelled to St James' Tomb to ask for forgiveness for their sins.

In the main square in front of the cathedral, a mix of religious and state ceremony took place before three large flags dramatically parachuted in. Mass was held for those who queued to get in and a march for Galician independence wove its way through the streets of the old city. All these events provided so much to photograph in just one morning.





Taking a snap shot -Santia

Colin Howard had the original idea for the trip and it proved to be a journey with a huge range of photographic opportunities to suit everyone which I'm sure will lead to hours of sorting, editing and some interesting outcomes.

Themes began to develop as our journey unfolded: interiors, stained glass, street art, architecture, nuns and dogs, to name but a few.

It was this opportunity to create smaller projects within one larger theme that was for me, one of the advantages of the trip. Visiting small villages and large cities gave variety in a short space of time.

We were able to walk a short section of the Camino, treading in the steps of thousands before us. It is not just humans who complete the 500-mile journey but cats and dogs too! For many, including us, the route does not end at Santiago but continues to Cabo Finistere - the end of the world. In the past pilgrims would strip off and burn their clothes on reaching the end. I'm glad to report that nobody brought the RPS into disrepute by doing that! The modern-day equivalent of this ritual is to hang a trinket and take a selfie.

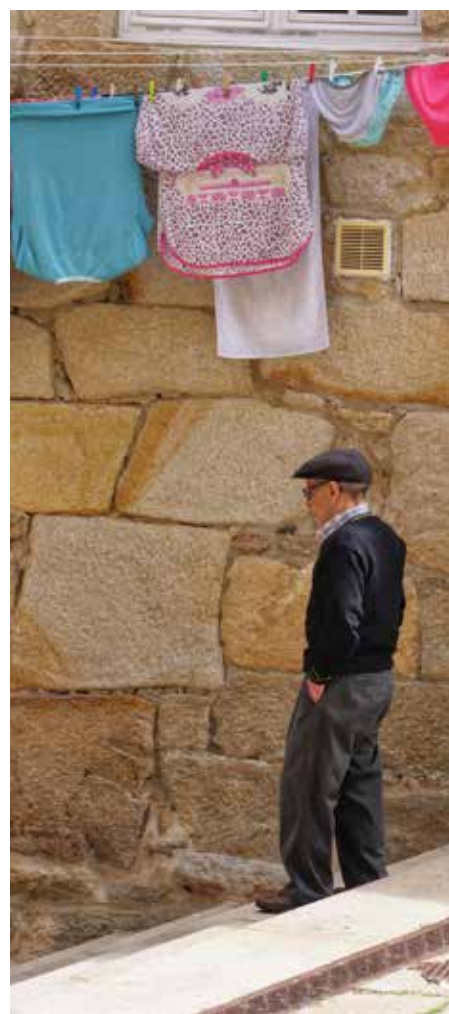
The highlight of the trip for me, apart from the variety of stunning photo opportunities, was experiencing the Camino from start to finish and sharing this in the good company of fellow photographers.



Jo Cope LRPS
Photographer & Author



Rural Festival Burgos



Knickers



Mother and child at health clinic, Yemen by Bernice Condit.

I owe both my love of travel and my love of photography to my grandparents. They took early retirement and turned their photographic hobby into a second career, taking pictures of mission projects and seeing the world. At last count, my grandmother had travelled to 104 countries. Their photographs were used by missionaries and churches to demonstrate the work they were doing at a time when cameras in the field were a luxury. I remember my grandmother's exhibits at the University of Illinois and the Billy Graham Center while my grandfather's landscapes were used in a series of geography text books.

As I frame an image, memories flood back to me of my grandmother standing behind me with her arms around me holding the camera so I could look down into the viewfinder of her Rolleiflex, with its upside-down view of the world.

My grandmother was best known for her black and white photographs of women and children. I always use

her example of talking to the people where we are and asking before I take a photo. I'd prefer to coax a smile instead of making someone angry trying to get a candid shot. I know she would have loved the moment in Kenya this spring when I handed my camera to a group of children and then watched for an hour as they took photographs that showed me their lives.

A sunny day meant my grandfather copying his colour slides in the California sun. I remember him saying purple was always the hardest colour to get right and I think of that every time I'm editing photos with purple in them.

On other days, my grandparents disappeared into the darkroom for hours while we were visiting. When at last we were old enough to be allowed in the darkroom to help, my grandfather taught me to dodge and burn the images he was developing, then moving the print from tray to tray of developing fluid and watching the magic image appear.



Nicole Condit Duncan

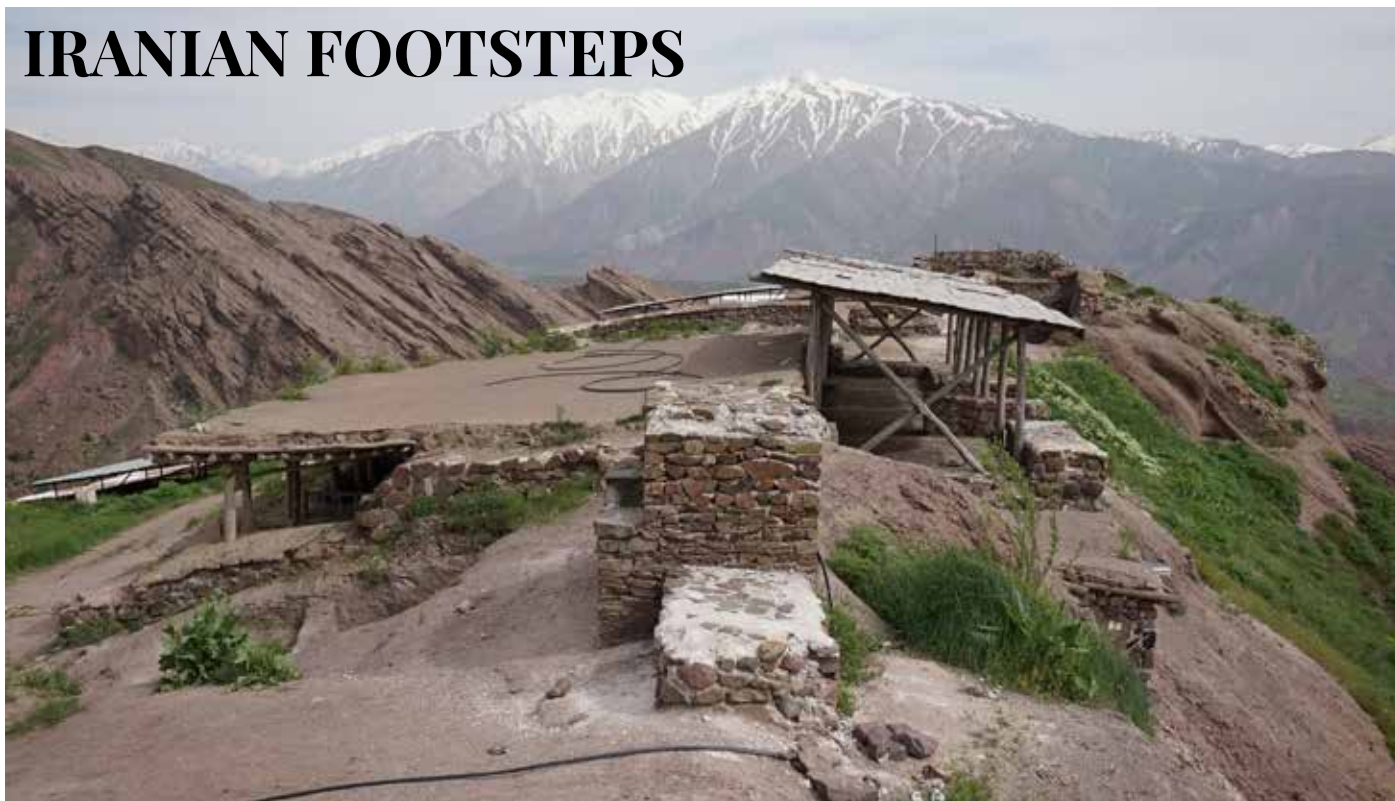
My grandmother also taught me to plan my travels, carefully balancing the pieces that are pre-arranged with the days that aren't so there is some adventure. A map and a plan but not a rigorous timetable. Early on she would send off letters to the hotels in places she knew she needed to book but sometimes there would just be a destination in mind and we would find B&Bs when travelling in Europe. Her round-the-world trips and her trips photographing for missions were different of course. More complex, but looking at the pictures and hearing her stories there was always that sense that while the wider trip was structured, the details of the day and what might happen were often left to chance. How else would she have ended up on the back of a motorbike or taking off in a helicopter with bullets flying.

It is easier now. I can plan a trip in a matter of hours on the internet. I don't need to take hundreds of rolls of film and wait until I get home to see the images. There is also a little less unknown in the world but that doesn't mean that adventure is not always around the corner. Whether it is camping on the ice in Antarctica or a floating cocktail party with a Maharaja in India, I love packing my bags and cameras and waiting to see what develops in front of me. But I miss that magic of watching the magic image emerge on the plain paper in the dark.



Children in SATUBO, Kenya by Nicole Condit Duncan.

IRANIAN FOOTSTEPS



HQ OF THE ASSASSINS

Pamela Jones LRPS



In May 2016 I was going to be in Iran and decided to do a singular side trip which I called "In the footsteps of Freya Stark". Freya was a woman traveller/explorer in the late 1920's and at the age of 37 years travelled extensively throughout the Middle East. She learned Arabic and studied the Koran. When in Iran she went to the Valley of the Assassins. At that time the location was not even on the map. Freya travelled by foot, donkey, camel and car. I only did a small part of what she had done but nevertheless it felt very special and brought home to me just how hard it must have been for her as a woman in that time. In order to achieve my own goal I had to hire a guide as it was not possible to travel completely alone - manoeuvring in Iran is difficult even with guides - and it is not possible to hire a car (or at least was not possible when I went). Surprisingly though, it was not difficult to take photographs as long as I kept away from official sites and nuclear areas. All Iranians seem to photograph like mad - including in mosques - so I almost felt I shot too few! Having a camera certainly helped me fit in rather than stand out, which felt a novel experience.

My route took me to the North of Iran and Alamut Castle (the HQ of the Assassins) was my first location. This ancient fortress had been described by Marco Polo and Freya managed to find it even though it was not even on the map. When I was there the place was deserted apart from goats and the surroundings were very barren. Our western word assassin comes from this region - the whole region had been inhabited by a tribe called Hashshashin (derived from the name of their leader Hassan Sabah). In order to defend their territory they would set cunning traps for invaders. Their castles were perched strategically high on tops of mountains - I visited two of them.

From Alamut I went to Rudkhan Castle - again perched very high but reached by a very steep forest path. Contrastingly Rudkhan is an Iranian tourist destination for days out and I met many people as I walked. People would invite me to join them for lunch, would offer me drinks and sweets and their sandwiches but most touching of all were two young men who I spoke to on the way up: on the way down they passed me and then turned back and said they would like to accompany me for the next mile or so as the path was very difficult (which indeed it was!). So touching, and such friendliness and care. That is just one example of Iranian hospitality which I encountered whilst I was there. Without exception (I am very well travelled, including Indian regions and Burma which I would say are very friendly) this country is the friendliest I have ever experienced and a welcome antidote to the interpretation many Western politicians impart. But then, like the world over, the monsters are never people like you and me, the monster lurks within the institutions of power. No matter the country we are in.



THESE WOMEN OFFERED ME LUNCH

Not withstanding the friendliness of the people and given the title of this article I should not ignore the current position of women in Iran. Iran as a large Muslim country is presented to us in the west as hard line. Indeed the Revolutionary Guard and what I call the "fashion police" are unrelenting and largely recruited from a disenfranchised underclass who now wield a lot of power. Nevertheless Iranian women are very fashion conscious - modern women do not wear Burkas (the black, all over cover) and wear only Hijabs - which can be made from gorgeous patterned silk of their own choosing. The Hijab has only to cover their hair and neck and most Iranian women wear make up. I met some feisty women over there and they do have a feminist movement. Many women are highly educated and work in medicine and law - another myth dispelled. However - it is not a "free" country and the restrictions are undoubtedly there. We are all aware of the plight of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe which highlights the chasm between the regime and the people.

However my trip to Iran just confirmed once again how different the people are to their politicians and how much some politicians do not represent the people! Some of my images I hope portray this human side and the landscape shows some of the majestic geography of this wonderful country.



HERO WORSHIP

A LONG WEEKEND IN BERLIN

Liz Rhodes MBE



"Your own exploration, therefore, has to be personalised; you're doing it for yourself, increasing your own particular knowledge, walking your own eccentric version of the City".

Geoff Nicholson, "The Lost Art of Walking"





I recently came across this quote and immediately felt it resonated with my urge to explore the world and learn from anything I came across as I wandered around a particular place.

I admit to my passion for travelling and wandering whether it be in a City or in a landscape, with photography coming a close second as I try to capture what I have seen as a form of taking memories home with me.

I was able to indulge in these two passions on a long weekend in Berlin back in May. My sister was born there long years ago and she decided to celebrate a big birthday in the city of her birth. I have been to Berlin before but this time, armed with a book of walks, I took myself off to try and get a feel for the city in the 21st century after it's ruinous 20th century history. We stayed in the centre of the city, within easy walking distance of familiar sights such as the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag and a number

of Museums. But I wanted to get away from these 'tourist' sights and so followed a walk that took me off the beaten track and into small streets humming with activity and quiet residential areas with the occasional colourful children's playground, parks and outdoor activity places.

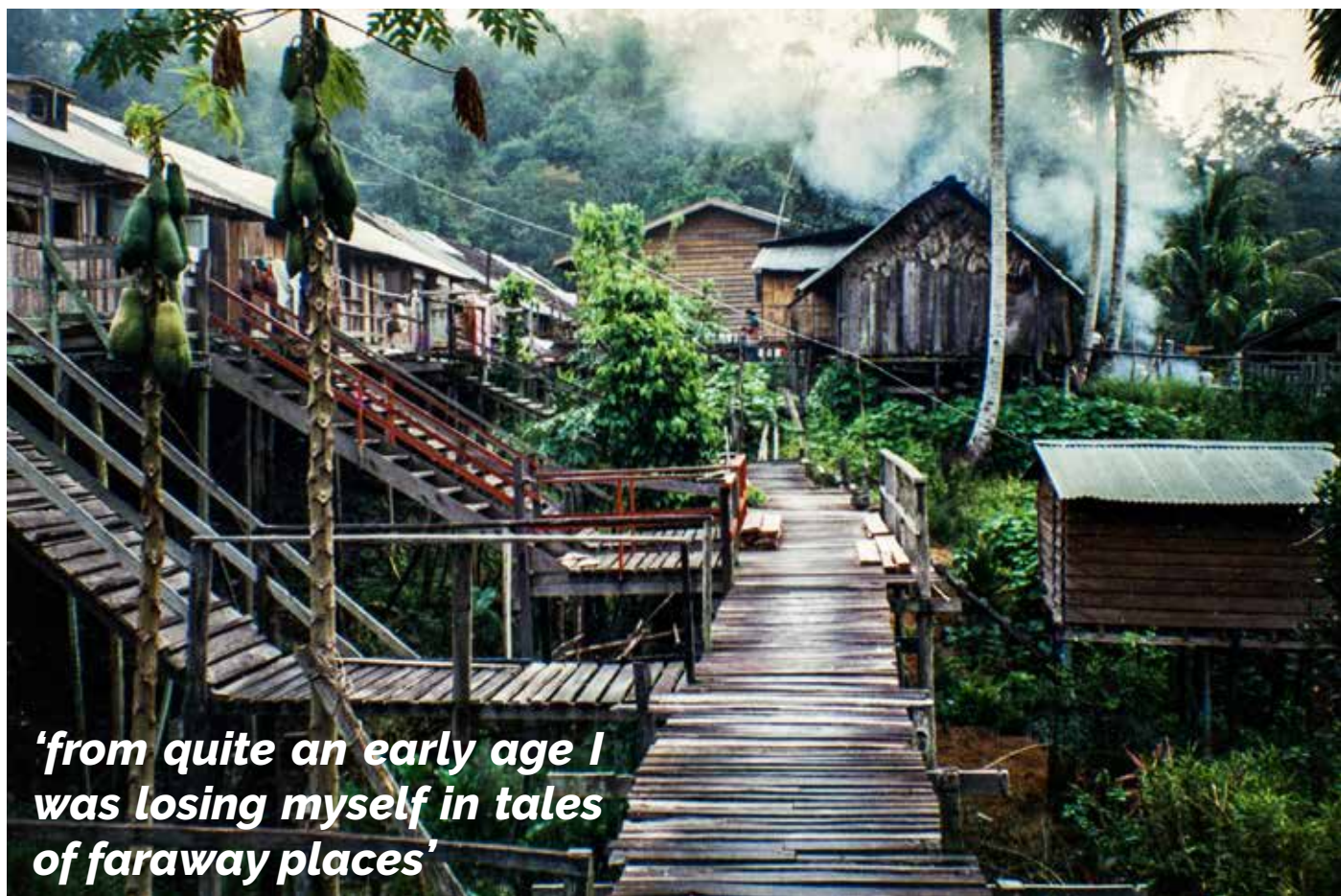
Along my route I came across such diverse reminders of Berlin's past as a Museum to Checkpoint Charlie, the crossing point through the Berlin Wall between East and West, small bronze memorials embedded in pavements that set out the names of Jewish inhabitants who had been sent to concentration camps and a sculpture that showed two children looking west, who had been lucky enough to flee the city in the run-up to the war and four looking east who had not been so lucky. Berlin, it seemed, was coming to terms with its past. In complete contrast, I was struck by the proliferation of Street Art as I wandered around. I had been told

there was a Street Art Gallery, but I didn't have time to find it. Not that it really mattered as I came across such an amazing variety of it and could have spent many more days looking around for it.

Berlin today is a lively cosmopolitan city with much to offer to anyone interested in European history, arts and a lively night life. It is a rather spread-out city, not conventionally beautiful but with some fine architecture and many lakes and forests.

To get to know it well, you need to spend time wandering around it.





Sue O'Connell ARPS, EFIAP/p, DPAGB, BPE 5*
www.sueoconnell.photography

I don't know quite where my passionate love of travel comes from. I led a fairly sheltered existence as a schoolgirl in suburban London. But from quite an early age I was losing myself in tales of faraway places, crossing the Arabian Peninsula with Freya Stark, venturing into Tibet (disguised as a man) with the amazing Alexandra David Neel and revelling in the tales of the intrepid writer, explorer and photographer, Isabella Bird. *

As time went on, family holidays gave way to ramblings, some solo, round the British Isles and remoter corners of Europe but I still yearned for bigger adventures. My lucky break (although I didn't know it at the time) was to train as a teacher of English as a Foreign

language - a career that was to take me far and wide, training teachers or giving presentations at conferences around the world. Best of all it allowed me to work with locals - what better way to get an insider view of a country?

One year I took time off from a conference in Singapore and ended up staying with some (ex) head hunters in Borneo (as you do!) This was a place I'd only read about in dusty geography books, yet here I was, sleeping in a corner of a longhouse, a few feet from a couple of shrunken heads suspended from the ceiling in a net! I remember waking up to a magical dawn mist over the rainforest and thinking "There's nowhere else in the world I want to be at this moment". That experience changed everything. I had a direction and that direction now included photography!

Back home, I signed up for a City and Guilds basic photography course, bought my first SLR and began the never-ending learning curve that is photography. Membership of the local camera club provided a massive injection of enthusiasm and support, while the RPS offered the seemingly unattainable lure of distinctions - oh the elation of achieving that first goal, LRPS! Since then, I've been lucky enough to branch out into other areas of the wonderful world of photography, giving talks and judging, entering salons and competitions.

* see *Isabella Bird: A Photographic Memoir of Travels in China 1894-1896* by my friend and former curator of RPS collections, Debbie Ireland

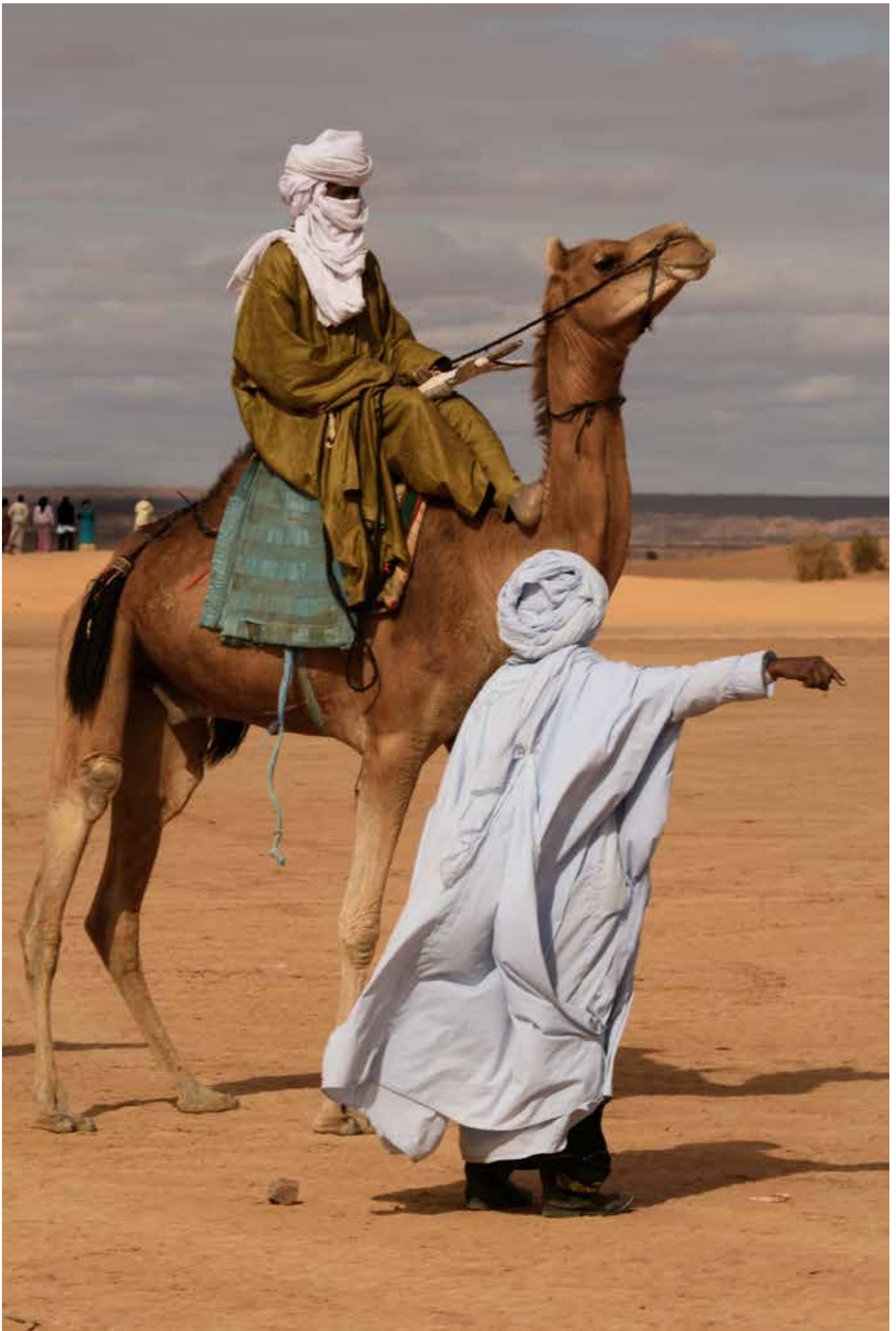
Travel remains my biggest inspiration, and I am still hooked on the remoter destinations. They're not for everyone. Conditions can be uncomfortable, and security can be an issue. People say "You went to Iran? – Why exactly!!!" One answer is that you never know when change will come or how long a way of life will survive. The world is a volatile place. Sadly, some of the countries visited not so long ago are off the travel map now, Libya and Syria to name just a couple. Images from these trips now have a haunting historical dimension.

For me the key element of travel photography is respect. I hate the idea of "stolen" shots which can leave the subject feeling angry, even violated. I always try and ask permission to photograph and if this is refused, acquiesce gracefully (I hope). If granted, I feel it's essential to engage with the subject, if only at the level of smiles and eye contact. Sometimes it's possible to make the arrangement much more reciprocal and in my experience that is when the photography is likely to be both enjoyable and successful.

To give an example, my husband and I once paid a visit to an orphanage in Myanmar which turned out to be a wonderful place providing sanctuary for little girl refugees from the war-torn north. After an initial photo session and chatting with the head nun, I suggested that I would be happy to give an English language lesson to her charges. I had a future visit in mind so was taken aback when, just twenty minutes later, my class was assembled, all 100 of them, and my completely unprepared, unstructured class was on!

The Tetrapylon at Palmyra, Syria – sadly now destroyed





Arriving at the Desert Festival, Libya

We visited several more times after that and were greeted like old friends, rewarded with trusted access “behind the scenes” to observe otherwise private routines, dining, head shaving, and laundry. The relationship thus built between us made this a precious and unforgettable experience quite apart from the resulting images.



Hair care day



With the Head Nun



My class



Braving the Monsoon

On another occasion, we were visiting a big monastery near Mandalay, which is now well on the tourist route unfortunately. Before arriving, I arranged to meet the English teacher, who turned out to be a shy monk with very little English! We spent some time together, looking at his pupil's work, and I gave him some English language books I'd brought along. Later all hell broke loose with the arrival of multiple tourist buses and it seemed all photo opportunities were off, but our new friend quietly led us to a wonderful vantage point and even borrowed my camera to take some unique (if slightly out of focus) insider images.

As a female photographer, and I speak only for myself, I have experienced only kindness and consideration during my travels. I have been in sticky situations, sure, but never felt personally threatened. On the contrary, people have rushed to help when I was unwell, they have welcomed me into their homes and paid for meals (unasked). I have taken risks – accepting a tour of the town from a complete stranger in



Indonesia springs to mind – but the offer was without any strings. Overall, I have seen only the best of human nature.

Over the years my travels have taken me to wonderful far-flung places from Isfahan to Lhasa, the Sahara to the Gobi. But however impressive the sights, it is my encounters with ordinary/extraordinary people that mean the most to me. Looking back over the thousands of images I've taken, the ones I treasure

are not the carefully crafted (or more likely, lucky) shots that may have won prizes. They are images of warm, generous, fascinating friends, their lives so different from mine, smiling back at me across the passage of time.



With colleagues in Cambodia

Table for Eight

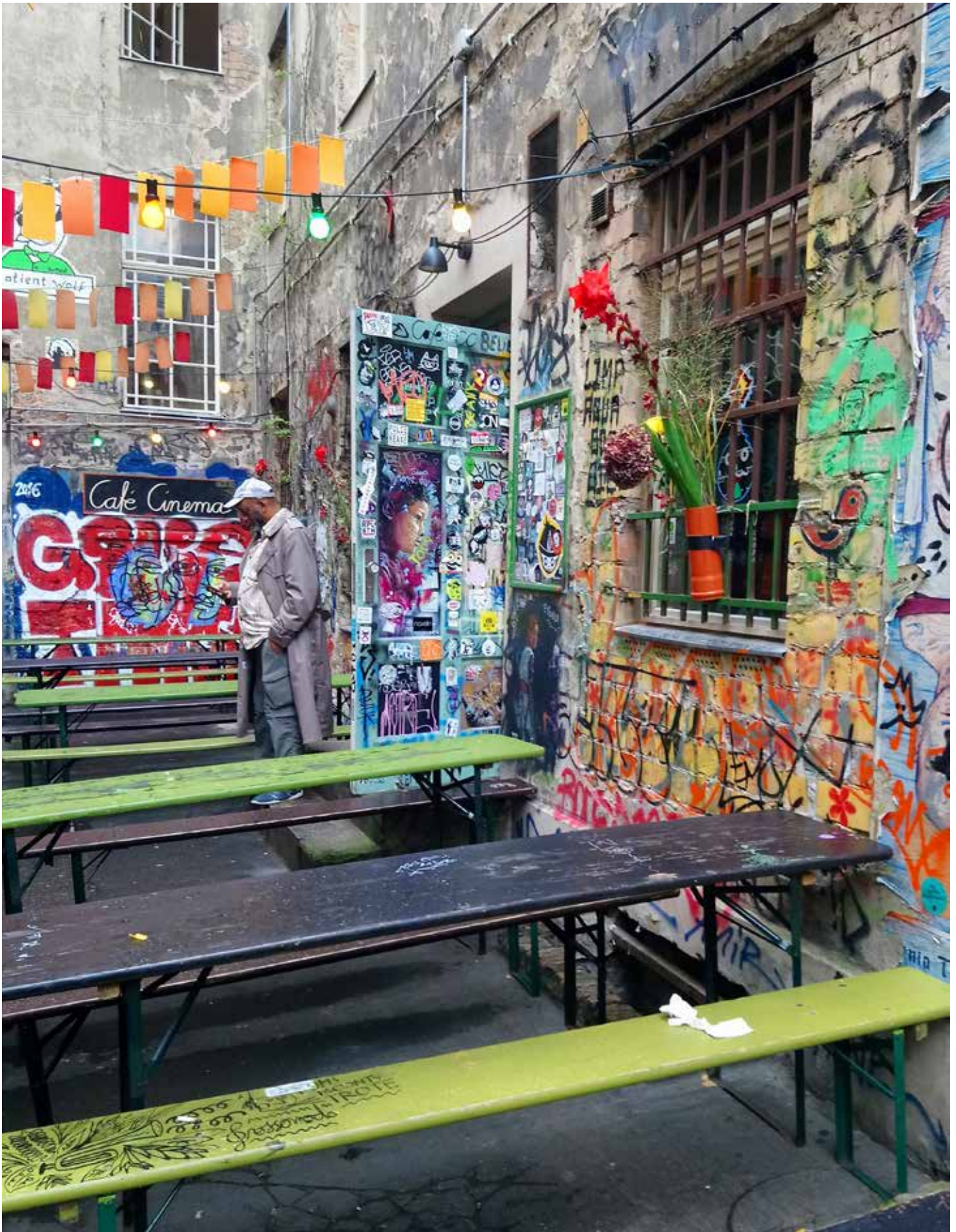




Eagle Hunter

One Two Three Jump





the world of image

I never considered photography as an interest or hobby. It was never taught in art classes at school and I was happy training my artistic eye to sketch and produce purple pineapples and draw reflections through sunglasses. I could even draw Marilyn Monroe and I was happy. Or so I thought.

Nearly 30 years later, I had been clicking away on a tablet camera whilst holidaying in Egypt. I had returned to the world of image. They were not produced via my pencil and paper, but through my lenses. I found I was looking for that "something" in the picture, the viewpoint, the composition of objects in the frame but the magical one, for me, is colour. To find a picture that has all three is a special thing. I soon travelled to Berlin and Cornwall and continued looking.

I sat all excited for a few months and thought, what do I do now? Joining the RPS felt a daunting thing. I was new, with a smartphone/tablet and then I realised I had nothing to lose. If I was not at the right level then I would take the advice and run with it. One day, I would be. Not to set a time frame and to keep sharing travel photos felt a balanced approach.

I entered the Egyptian travel photographs in the Travel Group newsletter and I am now writing this article for the Travel Journal. Tomorrow my next challenge begins as I start the Open University RPS course, a 10 week intensive course on learning my camera and developing my photographic eye. I feel that I am on the way to something bigger and better. To my delight, I have come to realise that much creativity exists out there. I do not have to pigeon hole myself as a photographer or fine artist. I can be both, merge both and much more. The limitations of what I can produce as an artist lay solely in my imagination.



Colleen Rust





Combining a love of travel and photography

Hi – I'm Katharina Wand and I live in Swedish Lapland with my English husband whom I met in Germany (where I'm originally from).



I'm a teacher by profession and teach English/German/Swedish/Special needs and have also devoted time to voluntary work, mainly with the visually impaired. This has often involved me being the "pilot" on a tandem with a visually impaired passenger – one such outing a few years ago was from Berlin to Paris.

I am a passionate traveller, although not usually by tandem, and have over the years visited many

countries in Europe, but also Morocco, Israel, India and Nepal where I was so taken with the people that I have supported the family of my mountain guide ever since by paying the children's school fees. I'm delighted that the eldest son now goes to college.

Over the last few years, I have developed a deeper interest in combining my love of travel with photography. I have a Canon 70d and a smartphone



and, although I love capturing moments on video, I have been tackling the complexities of stills photography more in-depth recently. As part of the training process, I was fortunate to be able to attend a good many professional sporting events as a photographer – this gave me an insight into working under pressure and the opportunity to photograph world-class and Olympic athletes – I also developed a good pair of sharp elbows as competition for space to shoot from can be fierce.

My home in Lapland provides me with plenty of opportunities to photograph landscapes, wildlife and winter sports for which I don't have to travel far, but I do have to remember to wrap up warmly.

This autumn I joined the Travel Group to become inspired by other members' travel photography and destinations.

While in Iran visiting the city of Shiraz I was taken by my guide to see the Nasir al Mulk Mosque, often referred to as the Pink Mosque. This place of worship was built in the latter half of the 19th century during the rule of the Qajar dynasty.

When I approached the building I did not realise the surprise that was waiting for me inside, it looked like many of the others that I had seen so far on the tour. I stepped from a bland outside into a courtyard that exploded with a blast of colour. This inner sanctum had walls resplendent with the most impeccable tiles. Iran is famous for many things and tiles are one of them and they now all seemed to be arranged within the walls of this mosque. I was dumbfounded, which is quite something when you are a chatterbox. Every nook and cranny was filled with intricate patterns and flower designs, exquisite! I had never seen a sight like this before.

I thought it ended there, that was until I went through what seemed

to be some featureless doors. Walking through the opening I found myself in the main indoor area used for prayer. If the tiles blasted into colour on the outside then I had an atomic impact on the inside. The dull unattractive doors let rays of light refract through the different coloured panes of glass inset into the top half of them, causing the most extraordinary rainbow effect into the prayer area. The interior was now covered by this kaleidoscope of coloured light. My mind was now totally blown out of all proportions! I was finding it hard to take it all in.

While inside the prayer area and in the process of letting my mind deflate, an Iranian photographer with antiquated equipment entered followed by a female model dressed in a white robe. I decided to pluck up the courage and asked him for permission to take photographs of his model while he was working, knowing that she would go to various positions within this architectural grandeur which was now enveloped by colour. It was a chance not to

be missed. The sun flowing through the glass elements of the doors had reached its height and my heart was pounding, in anticipation to whether or not I would be allowed. After a lot of arm gestures and with the Iranian photographer speaking in Farsi, myself in English, he agreed with a beaming smile. Careful not to stand in his line of sight or interrupt his work I took my own photographs.

After taking a plethora of images I exhibited just these three, The Woman in White, Colourful Thoughts and The Pink Mosque. They immediately sold. They were not only the first to sell but became my best sellers. This encouraged me to travel and photograph even more than before; I had found my niche.

When I reflect back to this time within the walls of the Pink Mosque I often recall the moment when the photographer smiled... his smile is something that has stayed with me since that day and his generosity will not be forgotten.



The Pink Mosque



The Photographer



The Woman in White



Colourful Thoughts

email rsgmason@gmail.com
web site <http://www.sandramasonphotography.com>



Hordaland

The E16-Fv7 is a famously scenic route to circle in West Norway. Årland is along this road and apart from having one of Norway's many attractive churches it seems much the same as any other small village you just passed in the last 20 miles of mountainous splendour. Atmospheric mist had gripped the area and I couldn't help but sense something more beyond the current visibility. As often the case curiosity and a bit of patience led to my favourite shot of the day. The frozen fjord revealed itself with the morning sun cutting through the haze. Hardly a hint of wind and a staggering amount of snow leaves the whole area muted, just my shoes crunching through the snow. It's a consuming feeling of calm and awe when nature invites you to be a witness to these moments. If you want to travel my advice would be not to rule out the 'off season', sometimes it is anything but.

Lottie Allnatt



The lone horseman - This was taken late in the day at Petra.

Jo Sowden



Linda Riley LRPS

Even the Captain deserves a break.



Just got back from the Arctic

Victoria Stokes





"I saw this monk collecting alms in a Yangon market and was caught by his look of compassion and humility as he received alms from many vendors. I wanted to capture his expression and feel I have achieved this in my image."

Sandra Barrett ARPS



Nuns in Monasteries

The nuns are working and they are quite familiar with their daily work now. This is one of the 2000 monasteries in Mandalay. Young kids come here to study and become qualified monks and nuns. Their first lesson is doing daily trivial work and treating it in an ordinary way. Keeping a peaceful mind is part of their practice. (photographed in monasteries, Mandalay, Burma)

Queenie Liang



The Dancer

Digital Forum Round 45

I am pleased to say that the winner this round is Graham with "Carrying Hay", second place was Sitanath with "Musicians on Desert" and third was Rob Morgan with "Dreams of Bagan"

Congratulations to all.
Hazel Mason FRPS



Carrying Hay

Winner - Graham Vulliamy LRPS

Carrying hay to the kiln to fire terracotta pots in the village of Yandabo on the banks of the river Irrawaddy in Myanmar.

Canon 70D with a Tamron 16-300 mm lens at 173mm; f6.3; 1/160th; iso 200.

Dreams of Bagan

Taken from a balloon over Bagan, Myanmar, in January 2017. I'd been there a year before – then, the balloon went up late so we missed the best light,

A year later and perfect conditions (including a lot of local smoke), wind strength and direction perfect and me thinking about the settings often – it was fantastic. We generally kept really low. Here the layering effect has happened with the low sun coming in from the left.

Canon 60D with Canon 24-15 lens @105 mm, 1/125 sec (shutter priority), ISO 100 at f13.



Musicians on desert

Second place - Sitanath Paul

Music is performed with a vast range of instruments and vocal techniques ranging from singing to rapping; there are solely instrumental pieces, In many cultures, music is an important part of people's way of life, as it plays a key role in religious rituals, rite of passage ceremonies.

Taken in the deserts of Rajasthan, India. There were musicians performing on the sands on a beautiful morning wearing colourful costumes.

Nikon D7000. f 13. 1/640. ISO 200.



Third place

Rob Morgan
ARPS

RPS Travel Group Tours

Dolomites

June 24th – June 29th 2019

The Travel Group is pleased to offer a new tour in conjunction with specialist photography tour operators Light & Land.



Renowned landscape photographer Charlie Waite, founder of Light & Land, will lead a group of up to eight Travel Group members to northern Italy on a six day photographic tour of the Dolomites mountain range in late Spring 2019. As well as leading the group, Charlie will provide tuition and advice on the photographic opportunities that become available.

This one-off itinerary is exclusive to the Travel Group and is not available to the general public.

It will be based in the heart of the Dolomites region, in the town of Colfosco, and is timed to capture not only the spectacular mountain range, but also hopefully the carpets of alpine flowers stretching out beneath it.

For further details and to book, please visit

<https://www.lightandland.co.uk/photography-tours/private-view/rps-travel-group-tour-to-the-dolomites/>

Travel Group Committe Member
Richard Lewis - rlewisuk1@aol.com

Brazil's Northeast

off the beaten track among
dunes and lagoons

16 August 2019 - 26 August 2019



Fly into the dynamic port Recife, with its history of slaving, now renewed as a capital of the arts, especially music and dance.

The tour starts in the nearby centuries-old town Olinda, with historic Portuguese architecture lining cobbled streets.

We then travel on to the remote far north of Brazil and the huge Parnaíba delta. Its islets and lagoons are fabulous bird-watching destinations. Beyond are the surreal dunes and crystalline pools of Lençóis Maranhenses National Park.

A traditional way of life survives in the region's sleepy, riverine fishing communities and small coastal towns.

An optional trip-extension visits the unique rock formations of another National Park, Sete Cidades. This is an adventurous trip, exploring by jeep, boat and 4WD.

From £1,373 pp for a triple room, excluding flights. For further information on pricing please contact Journey Latin America.

Travel Group Committe Member
Bob Akester - bob.akester@btinternet.com



Ways of seeing

In the age of digital photography the production of an image is beyond just the camera, and the distribution of it further than a print. We use cameras, laptops, mobiles... and distribute through Instagram, Facebook and self-publish online. As a commissioner of art in public spaces I have to consider the long-tail use of image and the fact that most people will experience the art through images nowadays, rather than visit the art installation in situ. How it is photographed and reproduced as an image is a key part of our commissioning process for public spaces.



**Guest
Speakers**

SPRINGBOARD 2019

**Guest
Speakers**



In this talk I will be looking at the different ways my photography bridges the gap between art and science.

I will look at how we can use cameras and digital post-production to enhance how we see the world. From using long exposures to capture more detail than our eyes can perceive to infrared photography of light that sits outside the visible spectrum. I will also discuss photographing subtle effects of light, such as capturing the Northern Lights in Iceland and bioluminescence in the lagoons of Florida.

I also use digital technology to build images, taking many elements of the real world and using Photoshop to then create huge panoramic images of painterly landscapes or imagined new worlds. I will share some of the methods I use to create these images and the ideas behind this work.

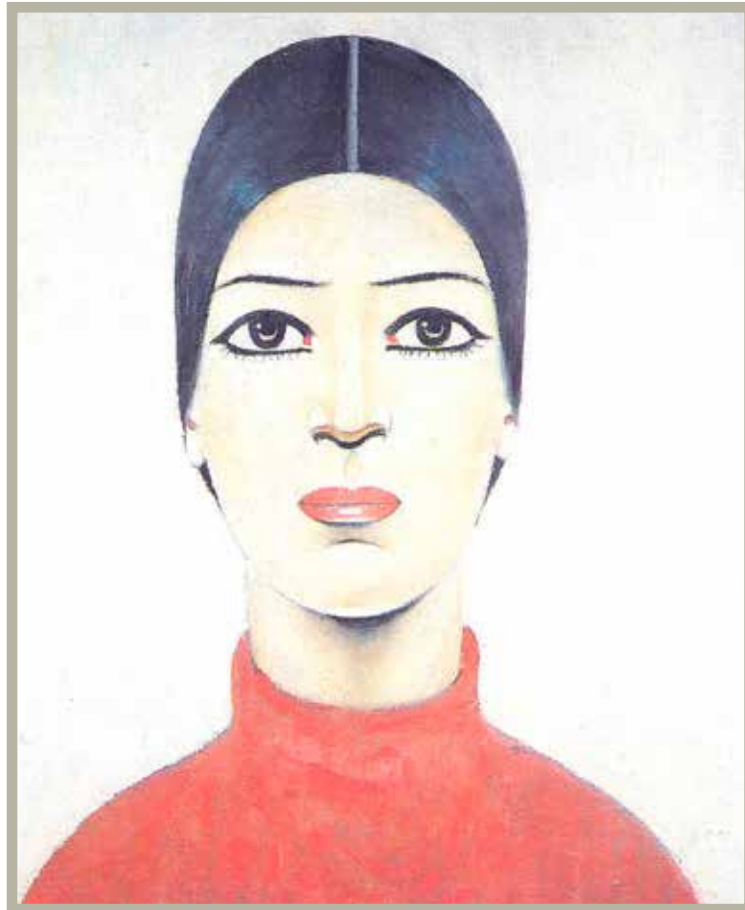
Alongside this I will also look at new ways of showing and sharing photography. Through innovative projection techniques, creating immersive environments for viewing photographs and film, to harnessing social media to share work and engage with an international audience which helps me be part of a global conversation about photography, art and the environment.



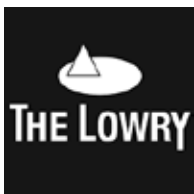
**ARTIST
PHOTOGRAPHER
FILM MAKER**

Andrew Brooks
Photographer

the art and science of photography



Portrait of Ann - L S Lowry
© The Lowry Collection, Salford



Saturday 13 April 2019

The Lowry

Salford Quays

1000 - 1600



PIER EIGHT

A day of Talks, Discussions & Presentations

by

Distinguished Guest Speakers

Lucy Dugate & Andrew Brooks

Print and Projected Image Competitions

RPS Members £45

Non-Members £50

including refreshments and buffet lunch

20 Student places available at £20

SPRINGBOARD 2019