

# TRAVEL LOG

The Journal  
of the  
RPS Travel Group  
Issue 84 Summer 2020

THE **RPS**  
ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

TRAVEL



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**Making Travel Group 'Fit for Purpose'**

Simon Hill FRPS, Trustee and President Elect published an article in the Journal (May 2020) entitled 'We need a radical shift in our sense of purpose'. He also gave a presentation on Zoom to RPS Regions and Group Chairs explaining his 'Fit for Purpose' vision.

Your Travel Group Committee met on 'Teams' and follow-up emails discussing if the current way of working is meeting our member's needs. How can we make Travel Group 'Fit for Purpose'?

This is a difficult period and we have all been affected in one way or another by Covid 19.

We have had to cancel or postpone events, but we do intend that events and activities will return to some form of normality as soon as possible. At present we are a Travel Group that does not Travel but we have a journey ahead that will get us there together.

For as long as I have been a member the question has been 'What is Travel Photography?'

We agreed that, for Distinction purposes there should be a standard against which images and panels are judged. However, should the Travel Group support only the RPS Distinction definition of Travel Photography or is there scope for a more relaxed or creative view of what is Travel Photography, but not depart from the essential truth of any image?

Our starting point was the opening statement on the Travel Group Web Page

*'The Group was formed to promote the enjoyment of travel photography; of trying to capture the spirit of places we visit and sharing that through photography. All our activities have the development of the skills necessary to achieve this at their core.'*

A statement that we all wholeheartedly support but the question is how we put this into practice.

The Monthly Competition is popular and is a way of helping us all develop our skills along with Facebook exchanges. We need to encourage more of both. We are unable to hold any Travel Print Exhibitions, but they will be back. Our Travel Log and the Travel e-Newsletter will continue to be part of what we do to realise our aims.

There was our first 'Travel Advisory Day' on the calendar in Bristol but as with all happenings at RPS House it has been cancelled. We still wish to encourage members to gain a Distinction and there is online help available.

Gaining an RPS Distinction in Travel photography requires a clear understanding of the criteria. 

**TRAVEL LOG**

The Journal of the RPS Travel Group

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**Cover Photo - Liz Bugg APRS**

I do not think as myself as a landscape photographer. I prefer to take photos of people. I thought this image portrayed the scenery which we were seeing and some of our group photographing it.

I think this image is suitable for the Travel Log cover as the trip was arranged by a RPS travel group committee member and members of the group were on the tour. Maybe an advert for members to join future trips organised by the group, when we are allowed. We all enjoyed it. I certainly would not thought of visiting these places. Thank you to our Group Treasurer, Bob for suggesting it.

## TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography which communicates a sense of time and place, either UK and Overseas.

Looking at each in turn:

### Sense of Time

Time of day, many photographers refer to the 'Golden Hour'. When the Sun is close to the horizon on a sunny day, the light appears warmer and softer. The same for seasons when the temperature of the light differs throughout the year.

Also celebrations and festivals often mark a specific day or period of time in the year's calendar.

### Sense of Place

Sense of place is what makes one location different from another, but sense of place also captures the qualities and characteristics – visual, cultural, social, and environmental. One image can convey so much. Beliefs, customs, practices, and behaviour that exist within a population. Wealth, poverty, status and perhaps the most powerful is feeling.

### UK and Overseas

There is a common misconception that travel must be to a foreign country with exotic locations. The RPS Distinction guidelines state 'A Travel submission doesn't have to be of distant place or foreign lands; it may start at home'. In these difficult days it may be the time to look closer to home for your next project.

### RPS Travel Distinction requirements

Manipulation that significantly alters the truth of an image or subject is not permitted. Images must show a true representation of the subject(s).

These requirements are usually referring to post-image manipulation. All committee members agreed that manipulation where sky colours are changed out of recognition and subjects are cut and pasted to form a composite photo have no place in Travel Photography.

### Introducing Creativity

But what about long-established image manipulation way before photoshop?

This is where many photographers apply their creative skills mainly in the use of camera angles and interesting composition.

Basic camera techniques also provide an avenue into exploring a creative approach. The camera lens is there to distort the image. It bends the light.

Photographers make use of this to affect the image. Curves of the wide angle and compression and expansion of space relevant to the focal length and, everyone's favourite, depth of field.

Combine this with shutter speeds and filters and it is perhaps difficult to say what is 'true representation of the subject'.

### Travel Photography

**This** must be one of the most rewarding genres as the Travel Photographer has truly little and usually no control of the situation. It is not about photographing what is there but more about translating the emotion and passion of the moment.

Photographers usually specialise in one genre: portraits, landscape, documentary, wildlife or travel to name but a few. The Travel Photographer can bring together all aspects under one roof, always respecting the Sense of Place that makes Travel Photography distinctive.

### Our Challenge

The Travel Group committee would like to develop a toolkit of events and activities that will provide development opportunities in all these elements. We would like to evolve 'Building Blocks', that will enable the Travel Group to always be 'Fit for Purpose'.

We would value your views on what is needed and perhaps what is no longer needed. Please get in touch and let us know. Our contact details are shown on the website and in Travel Log.



John Riley LRPSTG Chair





Searching for walnuts



## Kyrgyzstan's Fergana Valley

Jo Kearney ARPS

It's the favourite time of year. As the summer heat subsides and the air clears, villagers living on the slopes of Kyrgyzstan's Fergana Range head to the forests to gather walnuts.

Loading their ex-Soviet military jeeps with tarpaulins, blankets and kitchen utensils, they prepare to spend a month living beneath the canopies of the forest.

Kyrgyzstan's fertile Fergana Valley is home to some of the largest intact stands of walnut trees on earth. Legend has it that Alexander the Great, having conquered this region in the 4th Century BC, brought some of the walnuts home with him to Greece and they were subsequently scattered around the Globe.

Families each rent a parcel of land where they set up camp

and spend their days scouring the forest floor for walnuts. The money they earn from selling the nuts at market is around 2-300 US dollars which provides a valuable additional income in a society where the average income is less than \$1,000.

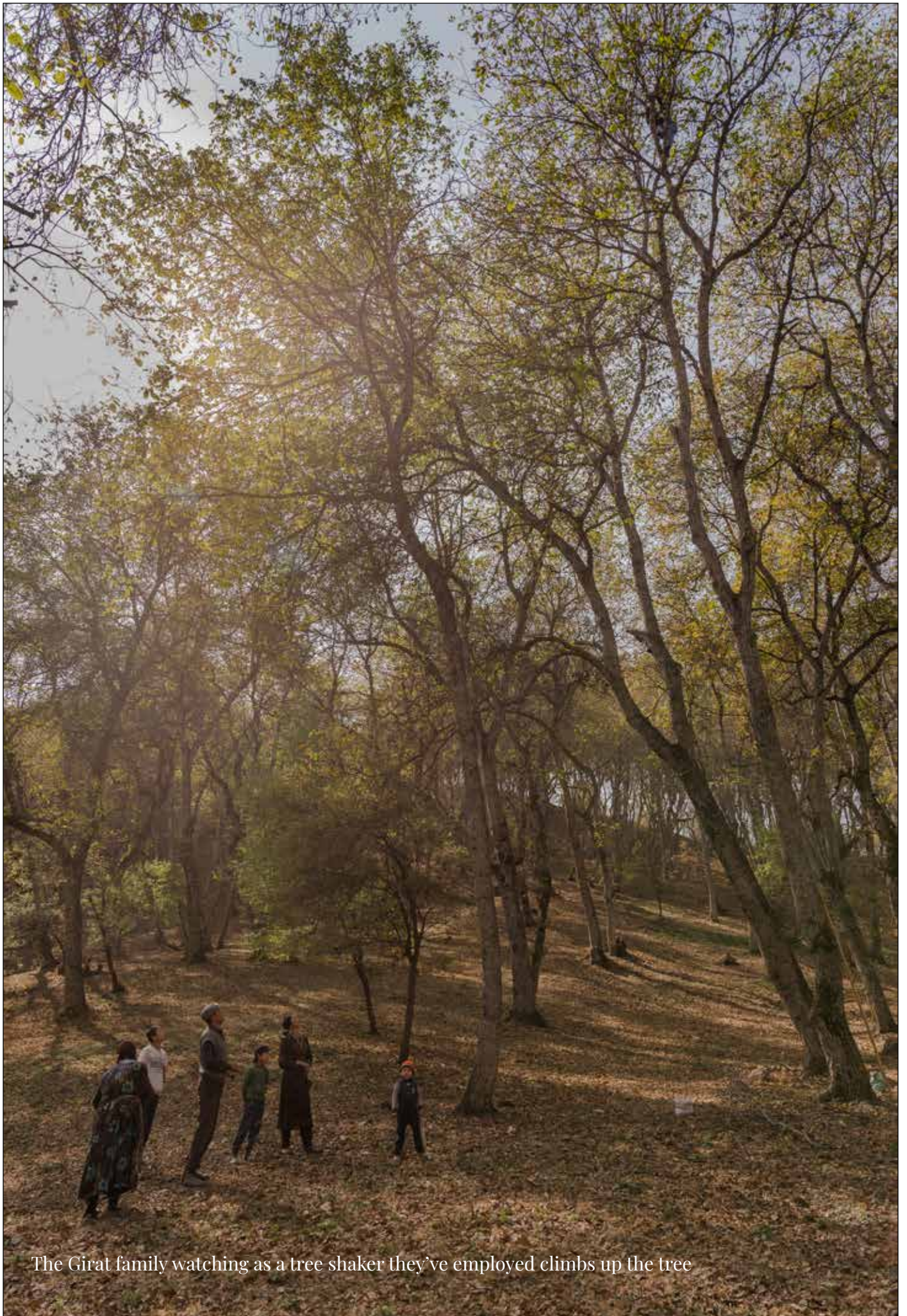
But it's not all hard work. It's treated as a bit of a holiday and children are given a free pass from school. Families from adjoining plots gather together to drink tea and share picnics around open fires and children can be heard laughing and chatting as they run around with cotton bags filled with walnuts.

During Soviet times the forests were owned by the state and workers were employed to pick walnuts which were exported throughout the USSR. After the collapse of communism, and

the hard times that followed, the very survival of the forests was deemed at risk as Russian forest management schemes broke down and people were tempted to fell trees for firewood. People were forced to keep livestock which they let roam uncontrollably in the forests resulting in young saplings being eaten.

Since that time international NGOs and forestry experts have helped to slow the post-Soviet degradation and replace it with a collaborative one that gives more power and a profit incentive to local residents. However, animals do continue to graze in the forests and locals say they don't have the funds to pay for new planting, particularly when late frosts have impacted the harvest for the past 2 years, something they blame on climate change.





The Girat family watching as a tree shaker they've employed climbs up the tree





Maktym Ukubaeva making tea while her daughter Ayana picks walnuts



The harvest





Shiregül collects walnuts



Mirzat and Aknara with their son in the forest





Walnut market



Walnut carpark tradng





Family elder



The Girat family lunch



Young girl



Ranor Girat





# LADAKH

**Julian Cook ARPS**

Ladakh is a sparsely populated mountainous region in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in northern India. My wife, Maha, and I travelled there in April 2019 to tour around the predominantly Buddhist Leh district in the east. This area was very strongly influenced in the past by Tibetan culture and it soon became apparent why it is sometimes called "Little Tibet".

Deep snow in the mountain passes cuts off road transport to Ladakh in the winter. Flying from Delhi into Leh we could tell that we were going somewhere special, the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas, 6,000m high

or more, reaching up to us. Then the wide Indus valley opened up below us on our approach into Leh airport. The small airport is shared between civilian flights and the military: we soon discovered that Ladakh is full of military bases on account of its location within Kashmir.

For most of our time we stayed in the village of Saboo just outside Leh. We were the first guests of the season at the Saboo Resorts hotel and were well looked after by Odpal George ("George"), who as well as owning the hotel was also a film producer in Ladakh. Having flown directly into Leh at an altitude of about 3,500 m, both my

wife and I suffered from altitude sickness in the first evening, but after drinking several cups of a tea made from cardamom, cinnamon and cloves and having a good night's sleep we were fine the next day.

Saboo was a pleasant place to stay in and a good base for visiting sights close to Leh. Elevated above the Indus valley, there were beautiful panoramic views from everywhere in the village, particularly from the ruined hilltop Saboo Castle, across the valley to the Zaskar range of mountains, with the sharp peak of Stok Kangri. At 6,140m is the highest in the area, rising above all the others.





*Panoramic view of the Zaskar mountain range from Saboo Castle.*



*Tsemo Fort and Monastery on top of a hill at Leh.*





*The main facade of Leh Palace in a prominent position overlooking the town of Leh below.*

Leh is the largest town in Ladakh and for centuries was an important stopover and trading post on the Silk Road. The old part of town consists of 17th century mud brick houses and buildings at the foot of Leh Palace. The town has a bustling bazaar at its centre with a wide variety of shops selling items both for local inhabitants and the seasonal influx of tourists. The shops are supplemented by

market and street traders, some of them literally trading from the pavement selling locally grown vegetables and dried apricots.

We visited several historic sites within the vicinity of Leh, starting with the first capital of the kingdom of Ladakh at Shey. Parts of the original 10th century fort were still visible on the hilltop. Adjacent to it was its successor, Shey Palace,

built by King Deldan Namgyal, together with Shey Monastery, in 1655. The tall buildings rose dramatically above the main road and featured numerous wooden balconies with more than a hundred whitewashed stupas scattered across the landscape below. Inside the monastery is an impressive large statue of Shakyamuni Buddha, covered with gold plate.



*Monks congregating for early morning prayers and breakfast at Thiksey Monastery.*



*The main buildings of Thiksey Monastery are situated on top of the hill, while the monks' living quarters are spread out around its side.*



The Ladakhi royal residences were relocated from Shey to the top of a high peak overlooking the present town of Leh at the end of the 16th century. The small complex of simple buildings comprising Tsemo Fort and Monastery, bedecked with colourful prayer flags, remain perched like a bird's nest on the highest part of the mountain. The two-storey temple housed another magnificent large

golden Buddha statue, but this time of Maitreya Buddha.

King Sengge Namgyal built another palace, Leh Palace, and moved his residence there in the early 17th century. The nine-storey mud brick and wood building, containing over 100 rooms, is impressive in its size. It was a precursor to the much larger Potala Palace, the former main

residence of the Dalai Lama at Lhasa in Tibet. Both Shey Palace and Leh Palace were abandoned in the 1830s, when the royal family moved to their current home in Stok, but are well maintained as museums open to the public.

The first functioning monastery we visited was at Hemis which is probably the most famous, and certainly the richest, of all



*The main courtyard of Hemis Monastery.*





*A brightly coloured mural inside Hemis Monastery.*

Ladakh's monasteries. It existed before the 11th century and was re-established by King Sengge Namgyal in 1672 - the Ladakhi royal family continues as a patron. The monastery has a large central courtyard, in which long, vertical prayer flags flutter on poles, with the main prayer hall and temples along one side. The temples are richly decorated and there are abundant colourful murals on the walls. It is claimed by some that a lost gospel about the life of Jesus in Kashmir is secretly preserved inside.

Thiksey Monastery was founded in the mid-15th century and continues to function as a proper monastic community. Thiksey Monastery has twelve storeys and is the largest such structure in central Ladakh, once again strongly resembling the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Located on the side of a hill, its buildings are arranged in an ascending order of importance from the foot of the hill where the monks' living quarters are to the top of the hill where the main monastery buildings are located. Whereas most of the monasteries we visited did not

permit photographs to be taken inside the temple buildings, or of the monks themselves, there were no such restrictions at Thiksey. We spent a very enjoyable time there early in the morning, joining the monks in their prayers and breakfast, being served butter tea by the young novices, and then visiting the living quarters of one of the monks.

We also stopped at the sprawling settlement of Choglamsar, a village inhabited almost entirely by Tibetan refugees. When the Dalai Lama comes to Leh (which





*Head of the three-storey Shakyamuni Buddha statue at Shey Palace.*

he does frequently), he lives in Choglamsar and crowds in excess of 100,000 people gather to listen to him preaching.

The following day we trekked through Saboo village and into the valley beyond. In common with most villages in Ladakh, Saboo is still an agrarian society and its houses had large gardens and vegetable plots with fields stretching further out on the slopes. In April the mountain peaks were still covered with snow, although there was little snow in the valleys. However, the weather was still very cold and it was too soon to plant crops. The countryside looked very bleak and barren, devoid of greenery or any colour other than that of the soil or rock itself.

Passing through the village, we came across an archery competition in a field. The

contestants were clothed in their regalia and we joined them for a mug of butter tea in their marquee accompanied by musicians playing drums and reed instruments outside. Not appearing to be in any hurry to start the competition, we left them and proceeded with our hike. A 4WD from the hotel caught up with us on the trail and the hotel staff erected a shamiana (an Indian ceremonial tent) and served a hot lunch for us in the corner of a field. We continued trekking further up the valley after lunch, passing a Buddhist cemetery and a number of stupas and cairns, and reaching our target altitude of 4,000m before returning to the hotel.

For our final two days we drove westwards out of Leh along the Indus valley towards Srinagar. The beginning of the journey was through dramatic scenery, with mountains towering high above us and deep gorges and ravines

below us. After about 35km we stopped at Nimmu to view the confluence of the Indus and Zaskar rivers, both rivers flowing through wide, deep valleys. Our next stop was at the village of Basgo. The valley was narrower here and lined with jade-green coloured slopes, with snow-capped mountain ranges behind. Basgo was prominent in the early days of Ladakh and the mud brick ruins of its 15th century citadel and adjoining monastery still stand precariously above the cliffs.

The scenery was greener as we drove further along the Indus valley, presumably because the weather was a little milder, and we passed many blossoming apricot trees. Our next stop was at Alchi, home of one of the oldest monasteries in Ladakh, famous in particular for its magnificent and well-preserved 11th or 12th century wall paintings. Unlike





*Confluence of the Zaskar River (from the top) and the Indus River (from the left) at Nimmu.*

other monasteries in Ladakh, Alchi Monastery is situated on lowland rather than on a hilltop. It is no longer a functioning monastery and is maintained, in all essence, as a museum. We ate lunch at one of the few restaurants that was open so early in the season in Alchi, although the menu was fairly limited due to the lack of fresh produce in the winter.

Just before reaching our final destination of Lamayuru, we passed through a striking naturally occurring, but very unusual looking,

clay landscape that is often called "moonland". We stayed overnight in Hotel Moonland in Lamayuru – the hotel was actually still closed for the winter but accommodated us under a special arrangement with our tour operator. There was no heating or kitchen facility in the hotel, but the hotel management found us a heater, cooked us dinner and provided us with a very basic room service.

The following morning, we toured around the hilltop Lamayuru Monastery - empty except for

ourselves and a few monks and villagers who had come to pray there. According to tradition, the monastery was founded following the visit of the 10th century scholar and sage, Naropa. Inside one of the temples you can peer into a small cave where he is said to have sat and meditated. As well as being one of oldest monasteries in Ladakh, Lamayuru is also one of the largest, with around 150 monks currently in residence.

On the return journey to Leh we made a detour at Nurla to the



*Basgo Castle and Monastery perched on top of a rocky crag.*



*Prayer wheels and inscribed mani stones at Lamayuru Monastery.*



village of Tia. Although not featured in any tourist guides, it was a most fascinating place to visit, untouched by any form of tourism. The village consists of stone houses built around a hill surrounded by terraced fields. Access to the houses was along narrow winding alleys, some passing in tunnels under the houses themselves. Some of the houses had small walled yards right next to the house itself, almost defying gravity on the steep sides of the hill, in which a small number of cows were kept, whilst others kept cows in underground chambers.

We had a fabulous time in Ladakh, although in retrospect April was possibly not the month to see the region at its best. However, I think regardless of the season it would be impossible not to visit Ladakh and marvel at its cultural and architectural heritage, its magnificent landscapes, and enjoy the warmth and hospitality of its people.

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An elderly female resident of Tia.





In January we learnt that one of our members, Paul Sansome, won a major award in the Travel Photographer of the Year Competition. In fact, it is the third year running that Paul has featured in this competition's winners. Here, Paul talks about this year's success.

Paul Sansome

# SUCCESS

When the Travel Photographer of the Year announced this year's categories one immediately caught my attention: The Art of Travel. As my work includes both selling photography as artwork and leading photography tours this category really fell into place for me. Also, when I travel, I am always looking for more artistic ways to present an impression of the places visited. The varying of categories each year has meant that this competition always presents interesting photography.

One aspect of such competitions that I appreciate is that they are a driver for me to process new images to the highest standard. However, on this occasion several of this entry are older images that I had already prepared as commercial prints. Nevertheless, I was able to apply enhanced manipulation tools that have been developed since these images were first created.

Requiring eight images, the long process of image selection began. One piece of advice about entering such competitions is to give yourself lots of time. The competition notes said that they were looking for a portfolio that demonstrated different skills so eight head and shoulder portraits, for example, were not going to work here. It is not stipulated but, as with any portfolio, it is really best to have images of the same aspect ratio or at worst to have just two different ones. Winning entries get displayed in major exhibitions so this must be a consideration for judges. Therefore, some work of recomposing potential images into

the common aspect ratio had to be considered. A final consideration was to balance the colour content through the portfolio.

The portfolio included some of my favourite images. The pillar reflection was photographed in Venice's Piazza San Marco during the Acqua Alta flooding. This shot required one of my most recommended pieces of photographer's equipment, a pair of wellies! Of course, that would not usually be on your list of things to pack for your Italian holiday but the flooding is predictable with the tide heights so photographing this was pre-planned.

People usually travel to Iceland for its wilderness landscapes but there is a photogenic gem in its capital, Reykjavik. The architectural abstract is one of hundreds that I have enjoyed taking over many visits to the Harpa concert hall. The Harpa's contemporary architecture offers photographic opportunities from both the inside and outside and is very photographer friendly.

The tea plantation is the most precisely manicured that I have seen and I photographed it in Moc Chau in the North of Vietnam. Vietnam is perhaps better known for its rice terraces and the abstract image of these was taken in Yen Bai province. Both of these images show the graphic, abstract images that give me most pleasure.

A third image from Vietnam is an abstract image of a yellow Chinese fishing net, suspended above the Thu Bon River in Hoi An just as it is lit by the dawn sun. The colourful image of the Taj Mahal is a nine

exposure shot taken with the multi-exposure feature of my Canon 6D mkII. I was watching the succession of people having their photos taken and selfies made with the most iconic building in the background and wanted to give an impression of this activity. Fortunately, the Taj is as popular with Indian visitors as foreign and many will be in their best clothes for the occasion and it is the colour of the saris that makes this image succeed. The couple reflected in a pond is a second taken at the Taj Mahal.

Another of the images is of a grey heron amidst the grasses of a reservoir in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco. This was remarkable because I was already photographing the grasses and their reflections when the heron flew in to complete the scene. This is one of the most misleading photographs that I have taken because it has the appearance of being a cold day when in fact it was taken at midday in blazing heat. The reflection of the featureless, bland sky was perfect for creating that graphic style of image that I aim for.

The competition organisers hosted an awards evening at the impressive new Fuji flagship store in Covent Garden which I spent chatting to other winners from several countries. There are several single shot categories so don't be put off by the challenges of a portfolio entry. My prize was a new Fuji camera and lens, some Paramo clothing and membership of the RPS. Therefore, definitely worth the considerable time spent in refining the entry and staying up half the night on deadline day!









rice field



Taj Mahal





Venice pillars



Taj Mahal Reflection rice field





heron



Harpa





Chinese fishing net



tea patterns





Mount Fitzroy appearing through the clouds





The multi-layered Cuernos del Paine

# A Taste of Patagonia



**Pia Thommes LRPS**

Just before lockdown started a friend and I managed to spend a couple of weeks at the southernmost tip of South America, in Patagonia. We started in Buenos Aries and spent a couple of days in this fascinating

and unexpectedly friendly city before boarding a plane for the 4h flight to El Calafate. On approach to the airport we spotted lakes of the most amazing turquoise colour, green meandering rivers and snow-capped mountains,

an indication of the fascinating scenery that awaited us. After we touched ground we made the first acquaintance with "Vientus Patagonicus" , the Patagonian wind, which was our companion for most of the journey.



Sunset over Seno Ultima Esperanza (last Hope Sound)





Roadside shrine in memory to Gaucho Gil, a folk-saint throughout Patagonia

We picked up a car at the airport and started our adventure. The roads were good and leading us through wide open landscape, along river valleys and along badlands with colourful soil. We met few other cars on the 200 km drive and stopped on many viewpoints along the way. As we had seen from above, the lakes were of an astonishing turquoise green and the snow-capped mountains gave a beautiful contrast, as did the yellow grass, perfect for taking photos.

The small town of El Chalten welcomed us at the end of the afternoon. It is located at the end of the paved road and the main area of accommodation in the northern part of Los Glaciares National Park as well as the starting point for walks to peaks of Cerro Torre and Mount Fitzroy. A short walk, accompanied by condors, led us to a summit overlooking the village located at the confluence of two meandering rivers with the backdrop of the granite peaks and glaciers in between. The town

itself also had lots of photographic interest, as many houses were built in very individual styles and had quirky decorations made of driftwood, metal and other unlikely materials. And a drive on the gravel road along the wide river valley got us deeper into the amazing mountain landscape.

Retracing our steps to El Calafate, a visit to the southern part of Los Glaciares National Park was next on our itinerary. An early morning drive along the shore of Lago



Classical view of Torres del Paine





Iceberg on Lago Argentino

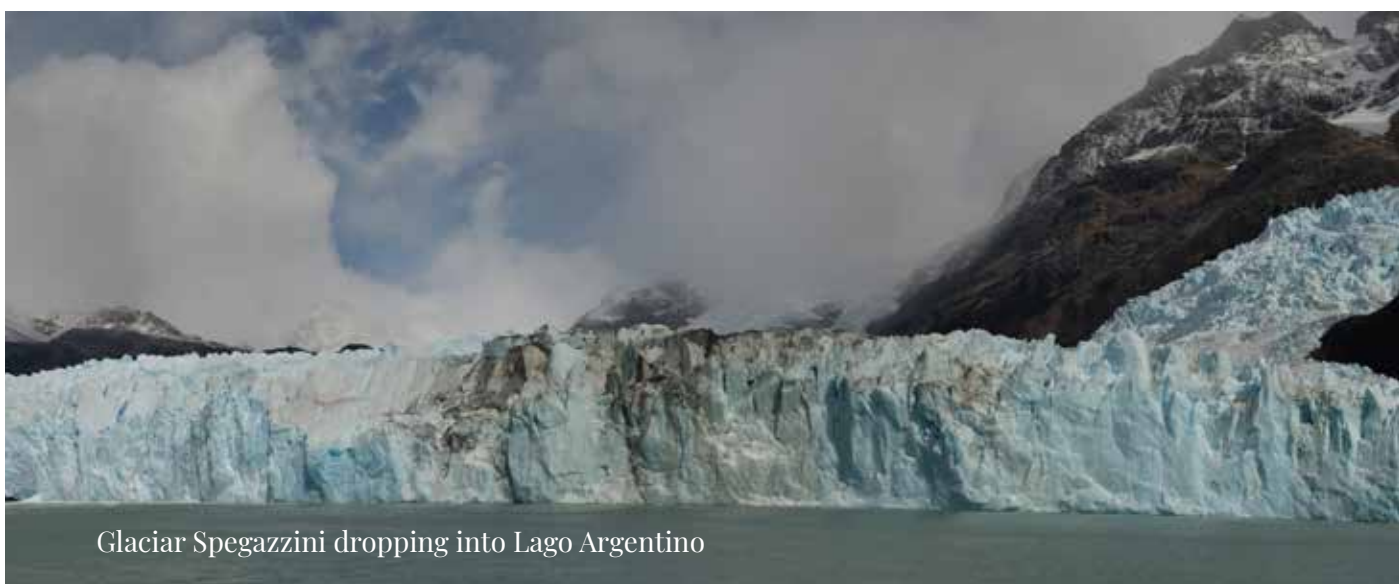
Argentino brought us to the little harbour of Punta Bandera, where we spotted Chilean flamingos. Here we boarded a catamaran for a cruise on the lake, the best way to get close to glaciers and icebergs. Once the sun came through, the icebergs floating in the lake shimmered in shades of green and blue and revealed the most amazing structures. Glaciers were flowing from the mountains into the lake, ending in sheer cliffs of jagged teeth that were tens of metres high. It was noticeable

that the glaciers generated their own clouds that covered them in lacy curtains that were moving backward and forward.

Once back on the shore it was a short drive to the highlight of the National Park, Glaciar Perito Moreno. As we arrived there late in the day, we had the viewing platforms to ourselves and could enjoy the views to our hearts' content. A range of walkways allowed a close view across the waterface-to-face with the masses

of ice. The surface of the glacier was spiky and again a sheer wall of ice broke off to the lake water. The most amazing impression was the noise with which the glacier moved, the sound like gun shots came in short intervals across the water, but hardly could we see anything move.

The fact we had our own means of transport allowed us to explore places off the beaten track; we went for a horse ride on the hills overlooking the lake, discovered



Glaciar Spegazzini dropping into Lago Argentino



The fences were not high enough to keep guanacos out or in



an archaeological site at the lake shore that we had to ourselves, and shared a cup of mate, the strong South American tea, while sitting in the sunshine.

Another long drive got us from El Calafate to the Chilean town of Puerto Natales. While the roads generally were good, the route led us through very remote areas

of grass-covered rolling hills. The single petrol station about halfway was a welcome point of rest for travellers from all directions and means of transport. Along the road we saw plenty of the local wildlife: guanacos that jumped across the fences from standing, Patagonian grey foxes, Darwin's rhea. We also had to cross the border, something we are not used to in

Europe anymore; papers had to be stamped in triplicate, long queues formed at each counter, and fruit was confiscated. Finally arriving in Chile, the landscape appeared quite changed, lush green fields, almost garden-like, white farm buildings with red roofs, orderly fences.

Puerto Natales Waterfront





Puerto Natales is the closest entry point to the wonderful Torres del Paine National Park, but it has also a lot of interest in its own. The harbour on the Magellan Strait changed its character continuously, from mirror images of bright red skies to storm-chopped waves that made the fishermen duck for cover. Although it was a lengthy drive on dirt road to the National Park the approaching mountains gave new surprising views on each corner and we stopped many times. Approaching from the south the Cuernos del Paine with their light and dark bands of rocks became visible over the yellow grass of the pampas. We spent some time walking across pebble-covered terrain in strong wind to Greys Lake,

a glacier lake that was covered in floating icebergs. Towards the evening dark clouds accumulated over the famous Torres del Paine, creating a dramatic atmosphere.

Finally, a short hop on a plane got us to the world's southernmost city, Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, nicknamed Fin de Terra, the end of the world. This small community is the starting point for most Antarctica cruises and many cruise ships were moored in the harbour. Accordingly, there were lots of quirky shops and restaurants, including a tea shop in an old warehouse and Lola, our favourite restaurant on the top of the hill overlooking the harbour. Close to the town we visited the Tierra

Fuego National Park with its many bogs, lakes and sea channels. The End of World Train with its steaming locomotive made for some interesting foreground. A trip on the Beagle Channel under stormy conditions got us close up to cormorants, fur seals and two species of penguins. It also allowed a visit to Estancia Haberton, one of the first immigrant farms which gave us a fascinating impression of life in the early days.

Patagonia was a fascinating and surprisingly accessible place that left us with great memories, a load of photos and the wish to return for more explorations.

Tren del Fin del Mundo





# Digital Forum

The purpose and nature of our Blog is to allow interested members of the travel group to actively participate in constructive consideration and critiques of our images, and to recommend three to be forwarded to the editor for inclusion in Travel Log.

Anyone in the travel group can ask to join, actively submitting an image in alternate months, giving fresh eye appreciations of each other's images and getting genuine helpful comments from fellow Blog members. As such we get and give a personal and impartial appreciation which I trust is also a useful source of images for publication.



**David Portwian ARPS**

## Round 49

### HOMEWARD BOUND

I stayed at Sindanglaut sugar mill for a week as part of an on-going project to document all 50 sugar mills in Java that had estate railways.

One evening, while riding on the front loco in this picture, I saw the potential of this situation. I jumped off and ran ahead (the train was travelling at about 6mph) and got just one side silhouette before I had to rejoin the train. There is a train of 20 cane wagons behind the locos. The railway is 720mm gauge (about 2 feet 4 inches). The front loco is an o-8-oT built by Arnold Jung of Jungenthal, Germany in 1927. The back loco is an o-6-oT built by Orenstein and Koppel in Berlin in 1914. This photo was picture 18 in my FRPS panel.

**Brian Pearce FRPS**



### Companions



These icebergs are floating on Jokulsarlon, a lagoon of one of the glacier outlets of Vatnajokull, a huge icecap in South-East Iceland. It was in February this year on a sunny day. These icebergs are large and, over time, more and more are calving from the toe of the glacier. In fact, over the last year about a half kilometer of the glacier retreated; the speed of melting is astonishing!

Canon 6D II, f/13, 1/125s, ISO 100, lens 70-300mm at 300"

**Barbara Bogacka ARPS**





### **Hungarian Horses**

Hungarian horse show in Kolasin, Hungary. The horsemen were highly talented with great balance and strength as the horses hurtled around the arena. Accidents do happen but thankfully no one was injured. Dust was flying everywhere.

**Rachel Dunsdon**

### **Round 50**

#### **Looking**

"Whilst waiting for my train at Delhi Station I noticed this lad in the carriage of a train opposite. He was looking very curiously at me but I was attracted by the girl staring at him, probably her older brother.

Camera data: Nikon D750 70-200 f2.8 lens at 185mm, 1/100s f5.6 ISO 100"

**Stuart Thompson**



#### **Atlas Mountains Men**

A warmer image for a change! I was browsing my old pictures from Morocco and I came across this one. It was taken near a small village Telouet in the Atlas Mountains. The villages there blend perfectly with the mountains, which are bare and of a very warm red colour. These two men also blend well with their house - a characteristic of the place.

Canon EOS 5D, 75-300 lens at 95mm, f10, 1/400 s, ISO200

**Barbara Bogacka ARPS**





### **Senja Seascape**

Taken in Senja, the second largest island in Norway. Located just north of Lofoten Islands, this is a quieter less well known place. Rocky area called Devils Teeth. Enjoyed wandering around the rock pools. This composition shows the reflections of the mountains in the background.

Canon 5D mark 4, EF 24-105mm, ISO 200, f11, 1/30 sec Tripod.

**Rachel Dunsdon LRPS**

### **Round 51**

### **Deep in Thought**

On a summery morning in the centre of Bratislava, this scene was in startling contrast with the night which was very busy, bustling with jolly parties.

**Barbara Bogacka ARPS**







### **Mutual Traction**

This image was taken in a village in the hills near Kalaw in Myanmar, early one morning. This couple was heading out to work in the nearby fields.

Canon 60D with Canon 24-105 lens @ 70 mm, 1/100 sec, ISO 320 at f5 (aperture priority)

**Robert Morgan ARPS**

## **Call for Contributions**

Your photos and the stories behind them make 'Travel Log' your Journal.

Please send contributions from a single image with a line of text through to a full article that shares your experiences with others.

There are just a couple of things that I would ask of you.

Send your text as a simple text document. Save as \*.doc / \*.docx / \*.rtf / \*.txt / \*.odt

The following format would be extremely helpful: Name\_Distinction\_Article Title.doc

The same for images. I prefer that you send jpegs but of a reasonable size. Min 2200 pixels wide but they must be 300DPI (Dots per Inch). Also include a photo of yourself – this can be smaller.

When saving an image please use Name\_Distinction \_Image Number\_Image Title.jpg  
The Number is the order that it appears in the story.

Most important is not to embed your photos in an email. They often change the file type which makes them unusable. If you have several to send the best way is via Drop Box or a file transfer such as wetransfer.com.

Looking forward to working with you. I will send you a copy to proof before publication.

Take care - John Riley, Editor



# The Digital Image Competition 2020

The total entry for the competition this year was slightly down on last years, 166 against 197 for 2019, as was the number of entrants 41/48. This may reflect the change in timing. An encouraging sign, however, is the increasing number of entries (7) from overseas members, indeed our Gold Medalist this year, Sarah Wouters is from Thailand.

Our Judge this year was Rosemary Willman Hon FRPS and she did a magnificent job, completing the task very quickly and efficiently. Her comments on the competition and the award winners follow:

Thank you for inviting me to be the selector for this year's competition. I am always wary of selecting images at home when they are to be projected, being aware that they may look very different. I have seen images projected in Bristol where the images are very large. I also know that good quality images project extremely well. I have remained aware of this when viewing the images and hope that different viewing environments do not spring unexpected surprise.

I enjoyed looking at the entries and it was good to see that the large range of locations included some from the

UK. It is important to remember that in the context of travel photography we travel when we leave our front doors.

As with many competition entries there were highs and lows as I initially looked at the entries. There were plenty of excellent and interesting images, but some disappointed in terms of their quality, either appearing over-cropped or over-processed. I had a long list of about 65, but looking closer a few were removed due to quality concerns which I did not feel were either at the very highest level or appropriate to the time and place.

I had already been looking for a photographer using a personal approach, perhaps a slightly different take, whether a familiar location or not. To select the awards I tightened up considerably on those criteria to select those which I felt stood out as the very best. By chance they also show a wide range of subjects and approaches that can make a successful travel image.

My congratulations to all the award recipients.

Rosemary Willman Hon FRPS



**Gold - Sarah Wouters - Floating Market, Indonesia**

This image had an immediate strength in both its complexity and simplicity. In particular there is the interaction between two traders toward the top left. Then exploring the image further I saw interesting detail throughout as I moved around the traders and their produce within the simpler framework of their boats. This design of this image is almost destined to have awkward or distracting elements at the edges. This does not, showing the great care taken on location."





**Silver - Lynn Fraser - Rising Tide, Venice, Italy**

St Mark's Square is a much photographed location and sadly not infrequently flooded, but this is a very different image. The decisive moment has been captured with the lady in full stride and in an excellent position, avoiding the major elements of St Giorgio Maggiore and the lamps. Taken in very poor light and 'one of those skies' it conveys the mood of the scene and tells the story very well.



**Bronze - Andrew Gasson - Half Moon Island, Antarctica**

The lone Chinstrap penguin is what makes this image. To me it is unusual to see a single penguin in such a situation and it appears very vulnerable. That vulnerability is emphasised by the choice of a wider angle lens, avoiding the temptation to zoom in as close as possible. For me it is the inclusion of this vast landscape that makes the image so successful.



**Sarah Wouters**

**Fishnet Weavers, Vietnam**

This is a very simple image taken from an effective viewpoint. Their identical hats create a strong visual element and although only one face is visible it is very clear that they are all busy weaving. The inclusion of the elements at the base emphasises the scale of these nets, information about their structure and the vastness of the weaver's task.

**Lynda Golightly**

**Hacking It, London, UK**

This is an interesting shot of a remarkably quiet London Street (either patience or good fortune must have played a part). The colour of the man's clothing works very well against the shop as does the limited colour palette and sharpness throughout. The title could have various interpretations, either Hackett's or a pun on that or the girl on the phone. However, London is in the title.



**Sarah Wouters**

**Dry Colour Fabric, Myanmar**

This is a simple colourful image with the fabrics appearing to have been arranged with a passing photographer in mind. The central action and the green fabric in both top corners link to the grass, also adding to the depth and dynamic feel of the image.



**Sanjoy Sengupta**

**Camel Race Preparation, Oman**

The foreground action in strong sunlight shows the struggle between the camel and the men. From his expression I think the camel is saying 'I'm the boss'. This action contrasts well with the patient, well behaved camels behind, appearing to be waiting for the action to start. The choice of monochrome adds focus to the action.



**Sandy Fothergill**

**Weighing the Duck, Yunnan, China**

This market scene has been captured well, showing the wider market scene in addition to the trader holding the duck. It shows life as it is with everyone engaged with their business and not looking at the camera. It has a topical link to the coronavirus, with the concerns about livestock markets, however, I did not select it for that reason.

**Neil Harris**

**Mahima Dharma Sect call to Evening Prayer, India**

This is a very closely cropped image with a deliberate choice not to include the whole of the bell. The bell chain between the eyes really draws us to the ringer's face and even the strong red post becomes a less significant element than expected. There is a hint of movement of both the bell clapper and chain which indicates that the other man, although apparently staring absently into the distance, appears to be silently responding to the sound of the ringing bell.





**Rachel Dunsdon**

**Sand Storm, Camps Bay, South Africa**

I don't believe there is anything sharp in this image, which for a travel image is unusual. It very well conveys the strong wind in early or late light, showing both movement of the sand and the difficulty being experienced by the lone walker in their rather bent posture and perhaps concerning situation. Well, he was not quite alone as the photographer was there too!

**Alison Riley**

**Night Sewer, Vietnam**

This image conveys calm and a strong sense of concentration on the lady's face. She may be working on fine detail but she certainly has limited light. We have a very slight hint of the place she is working in, and she appears to be working on her own. She takes care in her dress and her hair is neatly tied back. It tells us a lot but also raises questions.



**Daryl Ford**

**The Foot Trimming, Romania**

The Foot trimmer in his traditional costume and with his tool bag beside him are well captured. His blade looks well worn but is no doubt sharper (non photographically ) than it looks. The dog looks alert and ready for action to fetch the next one waiting in the background, showing several aspects of the process within a single image. The light is showing the texture of the both the sheep wool and dogs fur.





**Judy Ford**

**Left Behind, Romania**

This is a sensitive emotional image of this lonely looking older lady. Tension shows in both her hands and her expression and I also notice the bandage on her leg. Looking at her hands she appears to have had a hard working life. From both the image and the title I feel the photographer has respect and sympathy for her situation and sadness, which I share.

Finally let me sign off my seven year tenure as the competition organiser with a few comments and observations.

I have already mentioned that the entries are improving with regard to rules but I wish to emphasize the importance of assigning the correct colour space, labels and sizing, When there are between 150 and 200 it saves a lot of time in recording and cataloguing entries. You also want to know that your images are displayed at their best.

The quality of entries can be extremely variable. Judges have the ability to enlarge images, as do you. Try enlarging your image to 100% and inspecting them, if they show up as unsharp or breaking up, reject them, the judges will!

Look for images that have impact. Each year the entries include innumerable Asian street scenes, all very similar and nothing distinctive. On a similar vein avoid trite subjects, the old lady burdened with kindling, cormorant fishermen of China, leg rowing fishermen of Lake Inle, San Marco and bobbing gondolas and also the Buddhist monks. Images such as these need to be really exceptional to gain favour. Many of these are also staged with the participants expecting remuneration for posing. Look for something different. Our Silver medallist Llyn Fraser illustrates this well, still Venice and St Marco's but a different and distinctive take on the subject.

Many entrants include 4 images that are almost identical. You are then fighting yourself, even if one is good and chosen the judge will probably dismiss the rest; they are looking for variety. This is very well illustrated with this year's Gold medallist, Sarah Wouters, she also achieved 2 highly commended awards, three out of four entries, all with impact and all different, well done!

I have thoroughly enjoyed organising the competition for the last few years and hope to see it thrive in the future. It is a great opportunity for overseas members to participate in a Group event without having to travel to the UK to be involved and I would encourage more to take part. Everyone should strive for quality images that have impact and are different, I believe that it is through competition that we improve as photographers.

**Keith Pointon LRPS**

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Many thanks to Keith for all his years as a Volunteer for Travel Group. He has made the decision to stand down and we wish him well.

He has run many highly successful Trips for the Group and organised the very popular and well-regarded Projected Images Competition.

We hope to see Keith in the future at our events when the world perhaps returns to some form of normality.

This just leaves me to say we need someone to replace him in the valuable role of Trips Coordinator. Could it be you? Look out for announcements of our delayed AGM.

**John Riley LRPS - TG Chair**



# Helsinki 2021

Members may be aware that the Travel Group visit to Helsinki planned for July 2020 unfortunately had to be cancelled in light of travel restrictions resulting from the ongoing pandemic.

However, interest has been expressed in running it again in 2021, and we are pleased to announce our intention to do that.

Presently, it is envisaged that the event will again take place in July and that we would follow the same format and broadly the same itinerary as planned for this year. This includes several aspects of the photogenic city of Helsinki, as well as outlying islands, the Estonian capital Tallinn, and the nearby old wooden city of Porvoo.

A more formal announcement with full details will be made in the coming months, when reservations can be made.

We thank members for their ongoing interest in this trip.

Richard Lewis

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RPS Travel Group



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