

TRAVEL LOG

The Journal
of the
RPS Travel Group

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THE RPS
ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

TRAVEL



Chair

John Riley
travel@rps.org

Secretary

John Speller
travelsecretary@rps.org

Treasurer

Justin Cliffe ARPS
traveltreasurer@rps.org

Digital Communications

Kathryn Phillips ARPS
travelweb@rps.org

Competitions Co-ordinator

Steve Day LRPS
travelcompetitions@rps.org

Trips Co-ordinator

Richard Lewis ARPS
traveltrips@rps.org

Travel Log Editors

John Riley, LRPS
editortravel@rps.org

John Minter
travelsubeditor@rps.org

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The Journal of the RPS Travel Group

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Eighteen months ago, the future of travel photography seemed very uncertain. The Travel Group had so many plans, but most had to be cancelled or postponed in the wake of the pandemic.

On the positive side, we found new and better ways of keeping in touch, and thankfully now are able to plan again for physical events as well as online. The following is a summary of what we have so far.

The Camargue: The "Ultimate Camargue Experience" is planned for October 2021 and has a couple of places available. The May 2022 trip is fully booked.

Windsor: David Short will lead a day's photography - targeted for October 23, 2021.

Iceland 2022: Travel Group member Paul Sansome will lead trips on May 8-15, 2022, to the North of the country, and on May 16-23 to the Westfjords. These are for Travel Group members only.

Helsinki: A free form visit of around 5 days taking in the city and its surrounding areas, as well as a day trip across the Baltic to Tallinn old city in Estonia. Date is to be decided, depending on travel restrictions.

More offers to organise a local trip are always welcome so we can spread our activities to other areas.

Online events have been really successful and such a godsend over the last year. Not only can members join in from the comfort of their own homes, but we are able to include members from across the globe. They are helping us to offer more of what members say they want and not just be a committee-driven group.

We have introduced Share & Chat events, a new idea for this group. These are informal online member gatherings - part structured and part free-form for discussion of selected topics and for participants to share ideas, news, images, experiences, etc. The next is planned for October 17.

The Share & Chat events will alternate, roughly monthly, with our successful online talks. On November 21 Kav Dadfar will speak on using images in publications or in competitions. Kav is a professional travel and landscape photographer whose images are used by many major travel journals. He is also a judge on the Wanderlust Travel Magazine Photography of the Year competition. Then in January, we have David Short on Chernobyl. We encourage as many members as can to join us for these events - for more information, see the website.

The Facebook group of just over 100 members is also a means of sharing ideas and photography and could be very useful. It is a closed group and anyone wanting to join must be seen to be a Travel Group member.

And of course, we have our monthly competition which has proved very popular over the last year and has been developed and grown thanks to the work of our Competitions Coordinator Steve Day.

We are becoming a responsive group, but to make all this and more things that members want to happen, we need members to get involved and help us be more so. If you think you can help, please do get in touch.

Richard Lewis ARPS

Reflections

Dear Members

First, may I apologise for the long delay between this issue and the previous. This is the result of several factors, mainly my visits to our wonderful NHS and time needed to recover from treatment and still feeling unwell.

This leads me to make a plea for a new editor for Travel Log. I have really enjoyed publishing it for the past few years but now is the time to hang up my hat and pass on the job to one of our members. I will of course do my best to help during the transition if needed.

My appreciation goes to John Minter who has worked with me to make sure that the layout and text work together. Working with someone as disorganised as myself cannot be easy.

The plus side of this is that this is a bumper issue and will hopefully include many things that have happened since Travel Log 85 landed on your doorstep.

I was very proud and honoured to be elected as Chair but my health means that I also need to stand down from this role. I wish to thank the committee for taking work off my hands during this period. Richard has done a sterling job as Chair and represented the group at several RPS Meetings.

I wish you all the best for the future, especially in these uncertain times. Has Covid changed the way we will think about travel photography from now on?

Stay safe

John Riley LRPS

Travel Group Chair
Travel Log Editor



If you might be interested in becoming Travel Log Editor please contact me,
John Riley, editortravel@rps.org

Cover photo:- The Restorer



The photo of the "The Restorer" was taken in March 2018. The wall he is restoring is in the Tilya-Kori Madrasa in Registar Square, Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The building was commenced in 1646 and finished in 1660.

The Madrasa is an UNESCO world heritage site and is famous for its gold leaf.

Liz Bugg ARPS

RPS Travel Group



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Projected Images Competition 2021

Judge

Margaret Salisbury, FRPS, MFIAP, FIPF, FSITTP, FSINWP APAGB, AWPf



Judging this Annual Competition was extremely difficult. After viewing nearly 300 images several times my aim was to reduce the top images from which to select the Medals and Awards.

I ended up with 60 images all of which had merit. They were excellent technically and had in one way or another "a sense of place" and fitted into the many categories within Travel photography.

I then chose to reduce to those which were worthy of awards. This resulted in 32 meeting the criteria. From those I made my the final selection of Commended and Medal winners.

Judges Feedback

The Gold Medal was picked out as a "winner" from the first time I saw the image. One of, if not the, most brilliant images of its type I have ever seen. This is a picture I would love to hang on the wall and admire every day. We all have our own personal reactions to images and I will be accused of being biased but apart from the appeal of the subject, this image has massive impact.

The main subject is obvious even without the Title:- "Fire Dragon, Guangdong", the Dragon being the most brightly lit with "Sparklers" surrounding it, the other fireworks and another two models being carried in the procession, which also add to the interest in the subject. The detail in this image is amazing: you can see the straining figures of the men pulling the Dragon, the people in the parade mainly silhouettes surrounded by the atmosphere created by the smoke and fire and even the spectators with their mobile phones and lights can be seen at the base.

All together these elements show the best of this subject and I got the feeling I was actually there, watching and enjoying this event.



Fire Dragon, Guangdong

Fengshun Puzhai Fire Dragon is a traditional folk cultural activity in Meizhou, Guangdong. It consists of burning fire trees (burning smoke racks), burning Yumen (carp jumping over dragon gate), and burning fire dragons. It has a history of 300 years, every Lantern Festival (the 15th of the first lunar month) will be held. The “Puzhai Fire Dragon” is made of iron wire, bamboo, paper, etc., with scales, horns, and claws painted on it. The length of the dragon head to the tail is tens of meters. Thousands of fireworks, firecrackers, and rockets were installed on the dragon’s body, and the gunpowder installed on the dragon’s head and tail is even more numerous. A fire dragon is held by thirty or forty shirtless young men, plus drummers, lobsters, goldfish, etc., and the entire team amounts to more than 200 people. With the participation of more than 50,000 spectators, the scene was very lively and shocking

About the image

First of all I’d like to thank the judge for her comments. I’m glad and surprised to receive the golden award. I have been shooting Fengshun Fire Dragon since 2015. The shooting position could be chosen from the square to the rooftop and image impact are quite different. This photo was taken on the 2019 Lantern Festival and I chose to shoot on the rooftop. The whole event is about 2 hours, but most photographers usually arrive in the afternoon and choose the best shooting location. When the event starts, since there are too many spectators, the scene was actually chaotic. It is not easy to take a good photo and which is a test of the photographer’s on-site reaction. Fengshun Fire Dragon has also been suspended for two years due to COVID-19 but I hope to have the opportunity to shoot this historic festival in a different way soon.



Weng Sang Wong ARPS

SILVER



Business Negotiations, Nizwa, Oman

Judges Feedback

The Silver Medal was awarded to an event in a Market in Oman entitled "Business Negotiations Nizwa": it depicts the "Negotiating Traders" but so much more. It captures brilliantly the expressions on the faces of the traders, shows the action, the situation and the location. The picture takes the viewer into Nizwa and tells the story so we can witness a decisive moment in this cattle market.

The composition is brilliant keeping the important subjects large in the frame but also showing activity in the background and around the image. This image has instant impact but also held my attention for a long time enabling me to enjoy the many aspects of this scene.

This image was taken in the Nizwa cattle market – in the Western Hajar mountains of Oman. This takes place every Friday morning – the market starting at 7.00am and finishing a couple of hours later, in time for sala al Jum'ah, the congregational Friday prayers. The animals are walked around the circular stand at the centre of the market and auctioned off to the highest bidder, a lively scene featuring hundreds of locals, a scattering of tourists and, to quote the Rough Guide, "an overwhelming smell of animal poo".

Justin Cliffe ARPS

Fujifilm X-T2, 16mm f1.4 lens, 1/170 sec at f5.6, ISO 400

I was delighted to learn that I had won the Silver Medal for this image – definitely, for me, a case of being in the right place at the right time!





Wilhelmina Bay

Judges Feedback

The Bronze Medal was awarded to Wilhelmina Bay Antarctica, a wonderful "Sense of place" with the light on the icebergs, the sea and pattern in the sky producing what is not only a beautiful landscape/ seascape but a brilliant Nature image of the animal in its own environment.

The pose of the animal, the technique, sharpness, capturing so much detail, even the blood from a recent meal, caught at exactly the right moment and including enough of location shows the animal off to great advantage. A picture to be enjoyed and admired.

This photo was taken on an expedition cruise to Antarctica. We left the ship once or twice a day on Zodiacs either to go ashore or to see the wildlife at closer range. On this occasion we were able to sit quite close to this seal. It had been feasting on krill, which was still dribbling from its mouth. What adds to the picture for me apart from the light and the mood is the sight of the cathedral sized iceberg behind – the dots of sleeping seals give an idea of its scale. I was of course thrilled that against such strong competition my photo was awarded third prize.

Robert Akester LRPS



PIC 2020



Camel Man, Ladakh
Lorraine Grey LRPS



Life in the Shadow of the Karakoram Mountains
Allan Hartley ARPS



Eid at the Taj Mahal, India
Jeremy Richards



Omo Valley Sundown, Ethiopia
Andrew Wood ARPS



Alpine Church and Matterhorn Zermatt Switzerland
Martin Reece ARPS



Streetwalk UK Durham
L. Golightly



Camel Fair India
Victor Wong ARPS



Tso Moriri Nomad Camp Ladakh
Brian Houghton ARPS



Contrasts on an Indian Beach Goa
Andrew Brochwicz-Lewinski ARPS



Eyes, Guatamala
David Short ARPS



Trader, Muttrah Fish Market Oman
Justin Cliffe ARPS



Sur La Plage Nice France
Conor Donnelly LRP

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED



My Second Home

Catherine Phillips

Gosau am Dachstein in the Austrian Inner Salzkammergut is the place I am privileged to call my second home. In 1997, the "Hallstatt/Dachstein/Salzkammergut region was added to the list of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites on account of its outstanding natural beauty and its time-honoured traditions.

Due to the current health pandemic and the ensuing travel restrictions, I have been unable to visit Gosau since last winter. The lockdown period has provided me with an opportunity, however, to reflect on the many amazing travel experiences I have enjoyed over the years, not least in Austria, and to celebrate the friendships I have established with the local people, and the many cultural experiences I am proud to have been a part of.

The region is renowned for its rich green Alpine pastures, home to cattle grazing throughout the summer months. They are cared for by their owners





who often spend the warmest months of the year in traditional wooden huts nestling on high mountain plateaux.

These huts are often a refuge for hikers, cyclists and walkers, and we have spent many a day and evening with our friends high up on the Plankensteinalm above the Gosau valley. Vehicle access is restricted to the owners and the people who farm the land and take care of the livestock. It is, however, a joy to reach the hut and the awaiting hospitality at the end of a long day's hiking. The refreshments are mostly produced locally, and butter continues to be made by hand.



Leni and Sepp



September each year sees the "driving down" on foot of the cattle from the mountains to the farms in the valley where they will spend the winter. This is always a time of celebration for the local people who traditionally adorn the cattle in garlands of flowers, dress in traditional national costume, and musicians provide entertainment.

The lush green pastureland is set against contrasting rugged rock faces up to 3000m in height. The most famous example is the Dachstein massif (maximum elevation 2995 metres) with its glaciers and network of impressive caves. I have hiked with my family from the

valley to overnight in the Adamek Hut situated on the Dachstein which provides overnight accommodation close to a glacier. This provides a stunning location from which to admire the sunset and perhaps even encounter some wild mountain chamois

In the winter months, Gosau and its neighbouring valleys welcome thousands of visitors to its family ski resort. The winter landscape is simply magical, and those who do not wish to take to the slopes can appreciate the magnificent scenery and clear air in other ways. I enjoy nothing more than joining friends on a day out snow shoe or joining others for a relaxing





drink and chat in the sun outside one of the area's many ski huts which are always popular for some après ski refreshments and entertainment.

Another time-honoured tradition in Gosau is horse-drawn sleigh rides which are popular with tourists and local people alike.

Whatever the season, the region will hopefully, once the world health pandemic has passed, continue to draw the tourists to this region of outstanding natural beauty with its centuries' old history of salt mining and time-honoured ways of life.





Medieval walled town of Aigues-Mortes.

THE CAMARGUE

Julian Cook ARPS

julian@juliancookphotography.co.uk

www.juliancookphotography.co.uk



The Camargue is a natural region in the south of France between Marseille and Montpellier. The River Rhone forms Europe's largest river delta here, a vast plain of over 900 km² in area. About one third of the area comprises of large brine lagoons or etangs, cut off from the sea by sandbars and surrounded by reed-covered marshes.

I have made several photographic trips to the Camargue over the past few years. The Camargue is well known amongst photographers for its "white" horses, however, the region offers much more as a photographic location – medieval towns, salt works, wetlands and nature reserves filled with birds, annual bull and gypsy festivals, and of course the Camargue "cowboys" with their horses and bulls.

Few towns of any size have developed in the Camargue. Its principal town is Arles, located at the extreme north of the delta where the Rhone forks into its two principal branches. The only other

sizeable towns are the medieval fortress town of Aigues-Mortes and Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, the destination of an annual gypsy pilgrimage.

Aigues-Mortes, meaning "dead water", is a striking, walled medieval town sitting on the flat marshes of the Camargue and is one of the purest examples of 13th century military architecture. The town of neatly rectilinear streets is surrounded by defensive walls that stretch for 1,650m and are spectacular in both their height and state of preservation. Inside the walls, the town is filled with outstanding medieval architecture and probably still looks much the same as it did in the Middle Ages.

The Camargue is the most important centre of salt production in the whole of France. Salt has been extracted there from the sea since prehistoric times, and on an industrial scale since the 19th century. Between April and July sea water is brought via channels into shallow pools and allowed to evaporate stage by stage before

being moved to a very shallow drying surface. At the end of the summer the sauniers, or salt workers, harvest the top layer of salt by hand to produce the gourmet fleur de sel. The lower layers are removed mechanically and used for ordinary grades of salt. These lower grades of salt are stacked up into temporary heaps, or canelles, some 7 to 8 metres high which gleam in the bright sun.

The Camargue is the largest wetland in France and is internationally renowned for nature conservation and the protection of birds. The central area of the Camargue around the Etang de Vaccares has been protected as a regional park since 1927. Some 400 species of birds can be observed in the Camargue and the region is an important stopover for hundreds of thousands of birds each year before or after crossing the Mediterranean on their migration between Europe and Africa. Its brine lagoons provide one of the few European habitats for the greater flamingo.



The port of Le Grau-du-Roi at sunrise.

Heaps of salt extracted from the sea, reflected in the shallow water of a salt pan.





Portrait of a gardian.

The men (and, more recently, women) of the Brotherhood of the Camargue Horsemen, commonly known as gardians, have tended herds of horses and bulls in the unfenced coastal region of the Camargue for centuries

and predate the cowboys of the American Wild West. Their traditional tool is a trident - a wooden pole with a small three-pointed metal end - which was developed from 14th century jousting lances.

Working with the bulls and the beautiful white horses of the region is a noble tradition, but economic and social pressures are taking their toll on the professional gardians and their way of life is becoming harder to maintain.

Camargue horses accompanied by a gardian in a shallow lagoon.





Mounted gardians pursuing a Camargue bull.

The Camargue horse is an ancient breed indigenous to the Camargue area and is one of the oldest breeds of horses in the world. They have lived wild for thousands of years in the harsh environment of the Camargue marshes and wetlands. They are often referred

to as "white" horses although are technically grey, that is they have white hair overlying black skin. The Camargue horse is the traditional mount of the gardians who use them for livestock management and also in festivals and games.

Many of the horses live in manades, or semi-feral groups, with minimal intervention by the gardians managing them, although others are raised in elevages, or ranches, with more human involvement.

A gardian galloping through a shallow lagoon.





The abrivado of the bull festival when the gardians process their bulls through the town.

The abrivado of the bull festival with the bulls being taken to the games arena.



The Camargue also has its own breed of cattle that has existed for a long time in the region. The Camargue cattle are hardy animals which thrive on the marshes and are the only European breed capable of living in brackish pastureland. They are relatively small and light and live semi-wild in manades tended by the mounted gardian herders.

The Camargue breed of cattle is principally used for a form of bull-fighting known as the course camarguaise. The bull fights take place in the ancient Roman arena at Arles and throughout villages in the Camargue. Unlike Spanish bullfights where the matador takes the spotlight and the bull is killed, in the course camarguaise the razeteurs (bullfighters) take second place to the bulls and no blood is spilt. The fights are a display of skill and agility and the greatest bulls are highly prized and respected for their performances in the ring.



The bandido of the bull festival when the bulls are galloped out of the town.

Gardians leading the procession of the statue of Saint Sarah into the sea on the first day of the gypsy festival.



The reliquary being lowered into the church at Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer at the beginning of the gypsy festival.



Every year around about the second week of October a week-long festival, called the Fete Votive, is held in the town of Aigues-Mortes. The festival celebrates the end of the summer season during which the gardians take their bulls to games and shows at arenas at various towns in the area. Each day of the festival more-or-less follows the same programme. The gardians meet in a meadow outside Aigues-Mortes with their horses and bulls for an outdoor breakfast. Bulls are then rounded up, 3 or 4 at a time, and encircled by a number of gardians on horseback, are walked down the road to Aigues-Mortes. The streets are lined with spectators to watch the aprivado (arrival) as the bulls are taken through the town to an arena outside the ramparts.

Bull games are held in the arena in the afternoon. The games take the form of bulls chasing men around, or vice versa, with the men trying to get as close to the bulls as

they can, but also running fast to escape when too close. At the end of the afternoon it is time for the bandido (departure) as the bulls are taken back out of the town. In contrast to the aprivado which is at a walking pace, for the bandido two or three gardians flank one bull at a time and they gallop together through the narrow streets. This is as exciting as it dangerous for those watching.

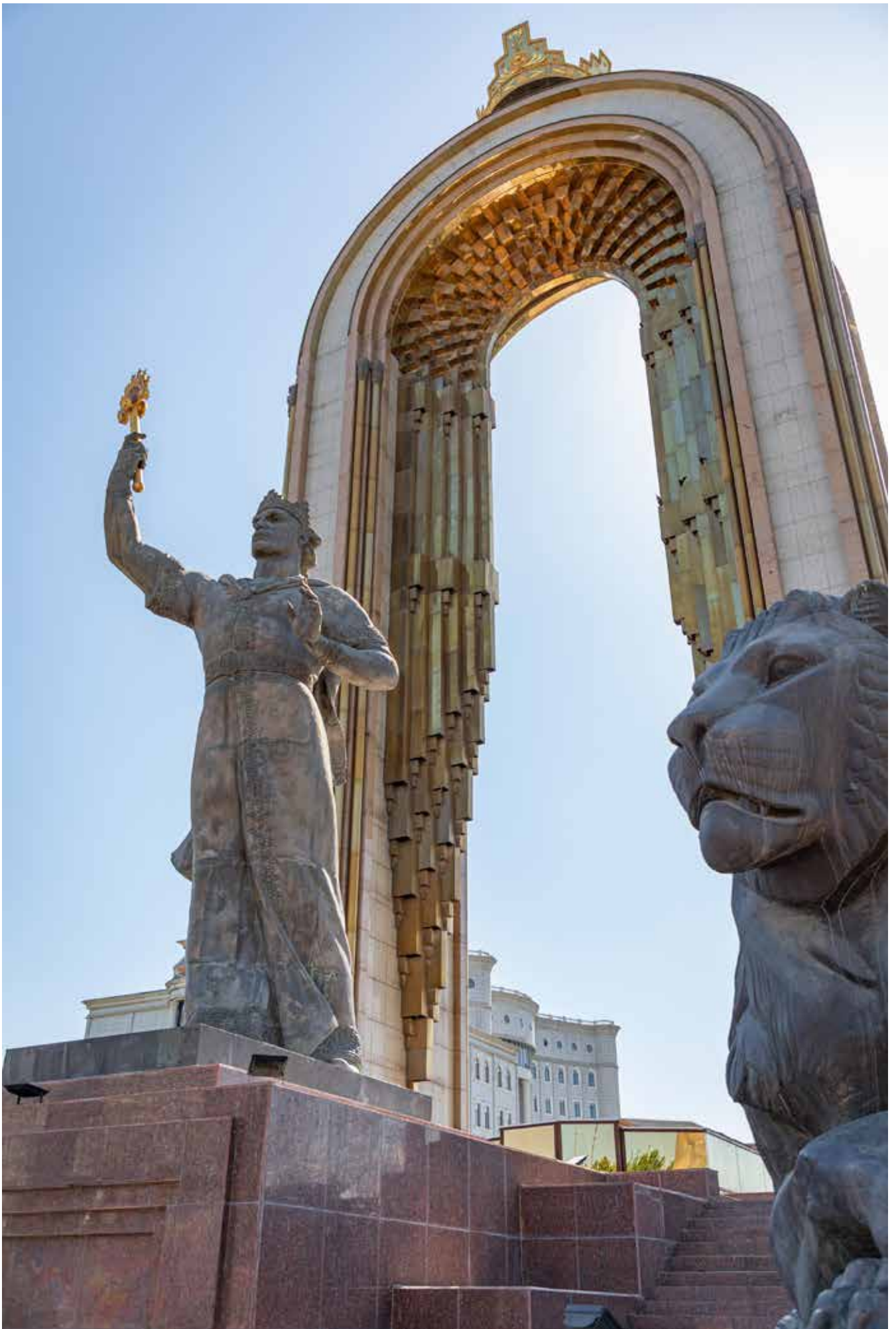
Every year on the 24th and 25th of May a festival takes place in the town of Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. According to legend, the three saints Mary Magdalene, Mary Salome and Mary Jacobe – the first witnesses to the empty tomb after the crucifixion of Jesus – landed here accompanied by their dark-skinned servant Sarah. The town has been a destination for pilgrimages since medieval times and has become a “capital” for gypsies since Saint Sarah’s relics were “discovered” in 1496.

On the 24th May a mass is held in the church in honour of Saint Sarah and the reliquary containing the relics of the saints is lowered by winch from the “High Chapel” into the church below. The statue of Saint Sarah is carried aloft by the gypsies and processed through the streets of the town, accompanied by gardians on horseback, to the sea. The bishop blesses the sea, the region, the pilgrims and the gypsies, before the statue is returned to the church. On the 25th Saints Mary Jacobe and Mary Salome are honoured in a mass and their statues are processed through the streets to the sea, following which the reliquary is raised back to its normal place in the high chapel.

I hope you will agree with me after reading this article that the Camargue has enormous photographic potential and, if you have not already done so, you will visit the region to take advantage of this.

The statues of Saints Mary Jacobe and Mary Salome being blessed in the sea on the second day of the gypsy festival.





Ismail Somoni monument Dushanbe

The Pamir Highway

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

My interest in the borderlands of Central Asia stems from the tangled history of the exploration of the area in the 19th Century, and the intrigue of 'The Great Game' – the cat and mouse game played out between the British who wished to secure the North western borders of the Indian empire, and the expansionist ambitions of the Russian Empire. The early adventurers and explorers were a colourful lot, and often met grizzly ends at the hands of local warlords. Their history is recounted in fascinating books such as Peter Hopkirk's 'The Great Game'.

The Northern boundary of Afghanistan on the Oxus river (now Amu Darya) eventually defined the Southern boundary of the Russian Empire. The adjacent Republics of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan formed part of Russian Turkestan, prior to

the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in 1990 and 1991. Both had periods of upheaval but have settled into relative stability of late.

In 2019 I felt a 'now or never' impulse to get to see this bit of Central Asia, which is coming into another period of change, with the gathering influence of China, their immediate neighbour to the East. The Belt and Road initiative is intended to extend the infrastructure of a new Silk Road across Central Asia towards Europe. The recent suppression of the Uighers in Xinjiang province, directly affects a population with shared ethnicity with those in parts of Kyrgyzstan.

The Pamir highway, the second highest international highway in the world, with a high point of 4655 m., links Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and forms part of the Ancient Silk

Road the historic trading route between China, Central Asia and the West. The term highway puts a gloss on the route, which is mostly a dirt and in places single track road until linking with the Chinese built road in Northern Kyrgyzstan,

I set off on a 15-day trip with 5 others, from France, Canada, and Australia, and flew with Turkish Airlines with an 'open jaw' ticket entering via Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, and leaving via Bishkek the Kyrgyz capital. Travel was arranged with local companies - in Tajikistan by Land cruiser and in Kyrgyzstan in a minibus.

As the trip was not specifically a photographic trip, I decided to keep things as simple as possible, using my Canon 5D Mk4, with a 24-105 f4 zoom, often with a polarising filter, and my unobtrusive Sony RX100 mk3 for in-town and portrait use.



Panj River and the Afghan border - Afghanistan on the right.



Afghan village by Panj River



Yamchun Fort Wakhan corridor

Dushanbe has recently developed as the capital, with many nondescript modern buildings but a fine sense of monumental statuary, and a Palace with, until recently, the tallest freestanding flagpole in the world.

The people are predominately of Persian descent with western features. Though Islam is the main religion, many are Western dressed and Burkas and Hijabs not common.

Entering the territory that borders Afghanistan the Gorno-Badakhshan Oblast requires a separate visa, the border at that point is the Panj river, and the road runs alongside the river with close views into Afghanistan and the track that mirrors the road on the opposite side. Mud brick villages and small groves of cultivated land with wind-break poplars are interspersed with wild and rugged landscapes, with the backdrop

of the Hindu Kush mountains. Occasional yak trains are visible, but little vehicle traffic. We passed through the regional capital, Khorog which is a centre of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community, who owe allegiance to the Aga Khan, who has founded a splendid modern Jamatkhana, a community and religious centre. Heading East the entrance to the Wakhan corridor which forms an isthmus towards Pakistan, is guarded by five ancient forts – including Yamchun fort which dates to the 3rd. Century B.C and has some impressive ruins.

Heading up the Pamir Highway, a largely dirt road that skirts the Pamir river, the countryside becomes wilder and drier and abuts the Chinese border. The capital of this area is Murghob a ramshackle town with a market, housed in shipping containers, and a residual statue of Lenin. The people have noticeably Turkic,

more Mongolian features and the men wear distinctive Kyrgyz hats. Remote dry lake beds are circled by the spectacular Pamir mountains to the East and the road climbs to the very barren Pamir Plateau at over 3500 m altitude. Occasional herds of yak, goats and fat-tailed sheep find the sparse foliage as sufficient

Past the azure blue of Lake Karakul the highest (at 3960 m. it is higher than Lake Titicaca) and coldest lake in Tajikistan, the road then heads to the Tajik border at the Kyzyl Art Pass at 4,280 m., where after a car breakdown we managed an elaborately choreographed crossing of a no-man's land into a snowing Kyrgyzstan. Immediately the land on the Northerly side of the watershed becomes greener and the pastures were populated with herders and horse coming to their summer pastures with their yurts and summer caravans, like railway carriages.



Murgab market conversation



High Pamir plateau



Kyrgyz yurts - Lake Son Kul



Lake Karakul- higher than Lake Titicaca



Yurt roof centrepiece - forming part of the Kyrgyz flag



Highway heading to Pamir mountains



Deserted resort Lake Issy Kul

We stayed by a large reservoir, Lake Toktogul, in a semi derelict resort that had been popular in the Soviet era, but was now neglected, with empty swimming pools and abandoned tennis courts, and then on to Lake Son Kul – a high altitude lake, without an outlet, surrounded by vast grassland plains, with large herds of sheep, goats, cattle and horses We stayed in yurts and got up at dawn, with the first light tipping the surrounding rim of snow covered mountains. We witnessed the milking of mares, from which was made the delicious fermented yoghurt-like drink.

All the high altitude lakes have an intense blueness, which is not exaggerated in photographs.

We skirted the much larger Lake Issy Kul, with further deserted Russian resorts on the now much improved tarmac road, courtesy of the Chinese, and stopped at a lakeside hamlet, where we met an eagle hunter, with his three

female golden eagles, including a youngster that was being trained. It was flown to a lure of fox skin towed by his running son, and was rewarded with a haunch of fresh hare leg. He showed remarkable composure, calming the unhooded young bird. The birds are flown for hunting in Winter, in the mountains, after hares and foxes. Exclusively female birds, they are taken from the nest and trained and used for hunting for several years before being released back to the wild in the remote mountains to breed.

Nearing Bishkek, the Capital, the road became busier and the capital itself is a modern city, which has grown up in recent times, with its own monumental statuary, its own 'White House', its parliamentary building and flagpole. Again there was an impressive variety of Soviet age Statuary and monuments – most poignantly to those dying in the Stalinist Gulags.

Michael Bamford





Kyrgyz Eagle Hunter

FUNCHAL



Robert Akester LRPS

A small island with big landscapes



Funchal harbour sunset



Ponta de São Lourenço



North coast village

Madeira is a small island in the Atlantic, off the coast of Africa, on the same latitude as Barbados. Only 35 miles long and 14 wide (not much bigger than the Isle of Wight) it nevertheless contains an unusual concentration of dramatic landscapes. Its highest point, Mount Ruivo reaches 6,109 feet above sea level, nearly double the height of Hellvellyn. Its terrain varies from desert to thick forest and its coast boasts waterfalls and volcanic rock pools as well as dramatic cliffs. Another key feature is a series of manmade irrigation channels called levadas, which run around the edges of the mountains. These stretch to a total of 1,350 miles, including 25 miles of tunnels. Some require a strong head for heights as they are perched precariously on cliff faces, while others afford more gentle routes through farmed areas.

The island is complemented by a rich cultural heritage, with colourful traditional costumes regularly seen at the frequent festivals. Agapanthus and hydrangea flowers line many of the roads, as well as the national Pride of Madeira (echium). There are several beautiful botanic gardens, where the island's friendly climate encourages a wide variety of plants from around the world.

For the photographer much of this beauty is easily accessible by car or public transport. Grants from the EU have paid for extensive modern roads, with so many tunnels that the locals refer to the island as a Swiss cheese. Nevertheless, although some of the old coastal roads have been closed due to safety issues there are still a number offering a more scenic journey than on the new motorways.



Funchal Flower Festival



Pico do Ariero

Photographic highlights include the following:

Pico do Ariero is slightly lower than Ruivo but has the benefit that it is more accessible by road. It is always something of a gamble when leaving Funchal for the mountains as their peaks are not visible from the coast and may turn out to be in the clouds. Often they reach above the clouds, however, which can add to the scenic qualities.

Eira do Serrado, at nearly 3,600 feet, is a spectacular viewpoint overlooking the 'Nuns' Valley' and surrounded by higher peaks. A small hotel and restaurant is based there, with a balcony to enjoy the view. It is accessible by local bus. The valley is reputed to be the place where nuns escaped to hide from marauding pirates on the coast.

Cabo Girau, the highest sea cliff in Europe, at 1,900 feet, has a glass 'skywalk' overhanging the drop. For views back to Funchal the afternoon is better as the sun moves round.

Ponta de São Lourenço, the easternmost point of the island, is very dry, but boasts interesting endemic plants as well as great views, though these are best enjoyed when taking a 4.6 mile 'there and back' walk from the parking area.

Porto Moniz, at the northwest end of the island is the site of a series of pools in rough black lava.

Palheiro Gardens are less frequented than the Botanic Gardens or Monte Palace Gardens but are well worth a visit. Camelias, roses, and agapanthus flourish there as well as many large specimen trees.



Cabo Girau



Cabo Girau view



North Coast



Porto Moniz

One of the most beautiful drives rises from Ribeira Brava, on the south coast, up a lovely valley surrounded by towering peaks to Encumeada, (over 3,000 feet) before descending again to São Vicente, on the north coast. The north coast itself is very dramatic, and the road from Porto Moniz, via São Vicente, onwards to Ponta Delgada offers a number of photographic opportunities.

Of the many levada walks, one of the best in my opinion is to Caldeirão Verde, which is a pool filled by

a large waterfall; a torch is essential for the several tunnels on this route. A less spectacular though still rewarding walk goes from Ribeiro Frio to Portela, where there is a good viewpoint of the 'Eagle's Rock'. While the levadas give the opportunity for great views without great climbing, a tougher walk for seasoned walkers goes 6.8 miles from Pico Arriero to Pico Ruivo – obviously not recommended if the clouds are on the tops. Some sections have chains attached for handholds.



Palheiro Gardens



Traditional crafts



Funchal old town artwork



Funchal old town artwork

The above list could easily fill a week's stay, but Funchal town, the capital, deserves investigation in its own right. It has retained its castle and many churches and other buildings of historical interest. There is a large covered market (best seen in the early morning) and in the old town a narrow street has had all its doors decorated by local artists.

As tourism is so important to the island the authorities ensure that festivals take place almost every month. Most of these involve music, dance and costume in the streets of Funchal and sometimes also in the island's other towns and villages. The year starts with one of the world's greatest firework displays, ranging over a

full 360 degrees as explosions and colours light the skies from the hills behind Funchal at the same time as the main displays over the harbour. Other festivals of note are the Carnival in February, Flower Festival in April, Classic Cars in May, Wine Festival in August/September and the Christmas lights in December.

For such a small place Madeira packs in a huge amount of interest.

In February 2019 I made my second visit to the Atacama Desert, having previously visited in 2016. In 2016 my visit was outside of the normal tourist season when there were some limitations due to the weather and transportation which impacted on photography. I was determined that I would soon return.

For my second visit I travelled at the tail end of the main tourist season when the weather was fine and transportation to the main areas of photographic interest was available. There are a number of lodges or resorts offering an all inclusive stay inclusive of all meals and drinks along with no shortage of trips.

I elected to stay at Tierra Atacama who, in addition to an all inclusive stay, offered a range of excursions that were flexible enough to facilitate plenty of time for photography. Nearly all of the full day excursions departed very early in the morning arriving when the light was ideally suited. The half day trips usually made the most of the late afternoon light.

The Atacama Desert lies in the north of Chile and is normally accessed by regular flights to Calama. It covers an area of around 128,000 kilometres if the lower slopes of the Andes are included and is one of the driest places on earth. However three weeks prior to my visit it experienced considerable rainfall and was only just becoming navigable once more.

One of the most interesting and unusual excursions was to the El Tatio Geysers, leaving at around 4.00 a.m. to arrive at first light. El Tatio is a large geothermal field, the third largest in the world and is located in the Andes at an elevation of around 4200 metres. The vapour columns from the eighty or so active geysers rise to over 12 metres which, set off against the sun appearing over the horizon, are a photographic delight.

These hot springs eventually form the Rio Salado a major tributary of the Rio Loa and have, in the past, been used for geothermal power production. In 2009 a major accident when a drilling well blew out led to the termination of this project. Some of the drilling and associated equipment remains.

Following plenty of time for photography and a hearty breakfast the journey back to the lodge gave us the opportunity for some wild spotting and we were not disappointed. There were frequent sightings of Vicunas, Foxes, Vizcachas and Andean Ostriches.

No visit to this incredible arid region is complete with a trip to the Salar de Atacama, a vast salt flat that is home to all three of the species of the Flamingo along with Andean Gulls, Highland Chorlo and many other indigenous and migratory birds. With the Cordillera de Domeyko mountain range forming a backdrop, this colourful region which, offers a myriad of photo opportunities. Among the many volcanoes that constitute the Cordillera, Licancanbur and Lascar dominate, the latter being one of the most active volcanoes in Chile.

The near by Cejar Lagoon offered the opportunity to take a swim in the salt concentrated waters where floating and taking in the volcanic surrounds was sublime.

Whilst this much visited area, which has not seen rain for a long as most people remember, is both picturesque and a wildlife haven it is a major source of lithium carbonate. This is used in the manufacture of lithium batteries (the type that we use in our cameras). Brines from beneath the surface of this area are pumped into vast evaporation ponds, where the dry

climate and often windy conditions offer rapid evaporation rendering the salts from which lithium carbonate is extracted. This has decimated large areas of the region.

For many the highlight of their visit is an excursion to Moon Valley, an area of outstanding rock formations and sands making up the Los Flamenco National Reserve. The vast clay and salt structures formed over the millennia are both fascinating and photogenic particularly as the sun sets. There are some remnants from the past here where now rusting equipment was once used in mining of salt.

The short journey to the Cornisas offered splendid views of the Valle de Marte (Mars Valley). At over 2600 metres the walk around the cornice affords many fine vistas with some of the region's volcanoes forming a dramatic backdrop.

Another short drive to Rainbow Valley was to offer a real geological, archaeological and photographic feast. Wonderful colours in the rock, from violet to copper and silver to jade offered many opportunities for picture taking whilst walking through this wonderfully colourful area in the early evening.

The return journey to the lodge took us via the town of Hierbas Buenas where among the rocks there were some natural shelters where pre Columbian petroglyphs were etched to the walls. The intricate images depicted animals and still little understood ancient hidden messages.

The final excursion and for me by far the best was to the Altiplano lagoons. The remote Miscanti and Miniques lagoons were reached following a 90 kilometre journey from San Pedro. The lagoons lie at an altitude in excess of 4000 meters and within the Los Flamencos National Reserve. The surrounding volcanic hills, often snow-capped, formed a colourful backdrop to the exquisitely azure blue of the salt lakes with delightful pastel shades in the surrounding shoreline. The opportunities for endless images abounded and certainly warrant a further visit.



Dennis Anguige FRPS



The Atacama Desert



Altiplanicas Lagoon

Salar de Atacama



Salar de Atacama





Altiplanicas Lagoon



Cejar Lagoon



Rainbow Valley



Moon Valley



The Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane



On the 10th of June 1944 ,10 days after D-Day, a detachment of Waffen SS troops entered the village of Oradour-sur-Glane in the Limousin region of France. The reason for this is unclear, maybe retribution for the kidnap of a German soldier, maybe to find Resistance members, it's not clear. The village was busier than usual as it was the day that the tobacco ration was distributed



The men and women were separated with the men being herded into garages and barns whilst the women and children were 'driven' down the road into the church.



According to survivors there was an explosion at around 4pm which signalled the beginning of the shooting, other accounts state that the church bell was rung. The men in the barns were mowed down by sub machine fire. Soon firing on the women and children commenced and straw and wood was thrown into the church and set on fire causing the people who were still alive to attempt escape, at which point they were also shot.



By 5pm most of the killing was complete, although soldiers searched for fugitives. At 6pm the destruction of the village commenced as the buildings were burned and looted. A total of 642 men, women and children were killed.



On the 13th February 1953, after a long trial, 8 German nationals and 14 French nationals were sentenced in Bordeaux. Two were acquitted, two sentenced to death with the remainder receiving jail sentences. On the 19th February the French National Assembly passed a Bill granting amnesty. This annoyed Germany who felt that if the French were to be pardoned so should the Germans. Those sentenced to death were pardoned and, by 1958, all who had stood trial were free.



After the war it was decided to leave the village as it was, as a memorial to those that had died.



I was born in 1948. Every night as a child my father would tell me of his experiences during WW2 but only the funny or interesting ones. The horrors of North Atlantic Convoys, of D Day, of lost colleagues he kept to himself. It was walking around Oradour that, even after all those years, I gained some insight.

Psychologically, I am not sure I can envision any number above 5 or 6. The idea of 642 dead becomes arithmetic but walking around and seeing their everyday objects, bicycles, cars, sewing machines and most poignant of all the crushed pushchair on the steps of the altar in the church they became real, living, loving normal people.



I have included images of all this, some of which I have toned in sepia and some in monochrome. Some I have left in colour as I felt the vibrant life in the grass contrasted with the desolation around it.

One is also forced to confront the fact that the perpetrators were also people whose moral code was twisted by the events of the time. They were people that in normal times would, in all probability, have been neighbours even friends but who had been distorted by propaganda and racial hatred.

Oradour is a lesson to us all and for all time.

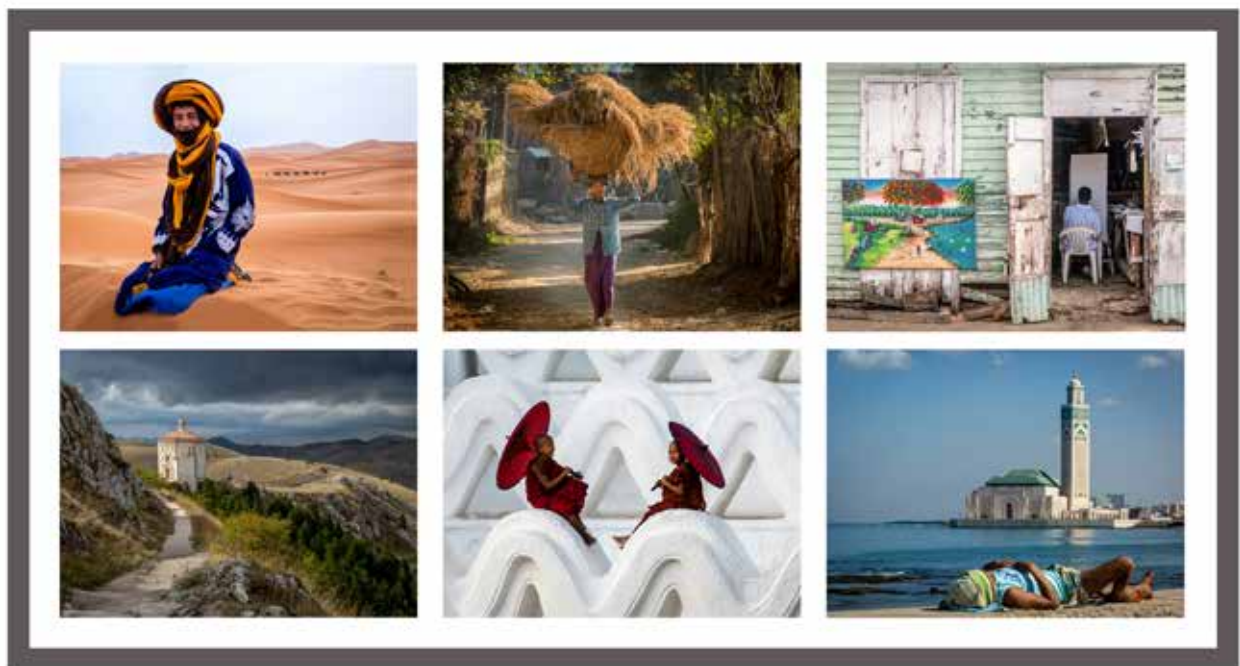


Gareth Hughes LRPS

Travel Photography in Retirement

Words and Photographs

Graham Vulliamy



My Travel Photography
Covid Winter
Lockdown Project

Graham Vulliamy LRPS



My wife and I retired as academics in 2008 and I chose photography as a main retirement hobby. On joining the Royal Photographic Society in 2013 the choice of 'travel' as my specialist group seemed an obvious one. Our joint research had enabled us to travel to, and research in, countries such as Poland, Finland and New Zealand and also to visit many other countries for international conferences. This generated a taste for joint overseas travel that we decided to continue throughout our retirement, beginning with a three-month around-the-world trip in 2009. We have been fortunate in being able to travel extensively since then - mostly in trips organised by ourselves but supplemented with some cruises to more remote locations. However, future travel photography plans came to an abrupt halt with the onset of Covid-19 early in 2020. We had to cancel a scheduled walking trip in the Peloponnese in May and an October trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands.

I have enjoyed documenting our overseas travel trips in a series of photobooks, but we completed our final one, using additional material from local travels, in the Autumn. This left a void and, with the prospect of many months of lockdown over a long Covid winter, I felt that I needed another travel photography project to keep me occupied. It seemed an appropriate moment to reflect upon what I had learned about travel photography over the previous decade and review the thousands of pictures I had taken over this period. Prompted by the fact that I had given a number of lectures to a local camera club on travel photography, I thought that I could combine my ideas on this in a book together with a selection of my photographs and the reproduction of short articles already published by the RPS. The idea was to put together in one volume a summary of my travel photography endeavours in the pre-Covid era.





The book's title - Travel photography in retirement: words and photographs - was chosen at the outset with deliberate irony. On the one hand, it reflected my engagement with a new hobby since retirement. On the other hand, it was to be written during a period of Covid-19 restrictions when the onset of this coronavirus seemed likely to bring about my premature retirement from travel photography as a pursuit. There are several excellent books already available on travel photography. However, these are written for an audience of knowledgeable and experienced photographers. Having begun as a relative beginner myself about a decade ago, I decided that the intended audience for my book should instead be anyone who enjoys taking pictures on their travels as well as photography hobbyists. My intention was to adapt the general principles of travel photography to their use by those on short holiday trips abroad.

The book is structured in three parts (see the Contents page). My first task - very time-consuming but enjoyable - was to review my entire Lightroom collection of thousands of travel photographs. The aim was to select a long list of potential candidates for inclusion in Part II of the book and also to identify pictures which I might use to illustrate the text in Part I. This exercise resulted in massively cutting the size of my Lightroom collection with numerous deletions, but also revealed the occasional picture that I had overlooked in previous searches for our travel photobooks. Some of the photographs that I chose to use in the book were re-edited - especially many of the earlier ones when my own post-processing skills were very limited. I ended up with 193 of my photographs throughout the book from 46 different countries.





Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are directed at a general audience of those who, whilst knowing little of the technicalities of their camera (or smartphone) and consequently using only fully automatic camera settings, nevertheless wish to take pictures that are more interesting and effective than conventional holiday snaps, perhaps with a view to putting the best together in a photobook (see p.13 as an example). The more technical aspects of taking and editing photos are deliberately left until chapter 7, which also includes examples of the use of Lightroom's HDR merge facility and Photoshop's focus stacking facility.

Part II of the book presents a selection of my photographs under the diverse headings that tend to characterise the work of travel photographers. Each page has between two and four photos on it (see p.41 as an example).

The book was completed in February 2021 and I had my own two hard copies delivered (a large A4 and extra-large A3 size!) taking advantage of one of the regular 50% off vouchers that Bonusprint has. However, one of the beauties of the Bonusprint photobook system is that the books can be shared, for free, with anyone else using this link: <https://www.bonusprint.co.uk/view-online-photo-book?widgetId=d473bb97-b707-4c04-acdf-ac1c420f412c>.

My hope is that friends and family might find something of interest in the more personal sections, photographers might find aspects of the accounts of my experiences of use and fellow travelers will find some of the images bring back happy memories of their own visits to different countries. However, whether it is read or not, it provided me with a very satisfying way to spend my time throughout the long winter Covid lockdown and with a product which reminds me of the joy of travel photography.



The Long Road and Short Distance to my ARPS



Justin Cliffe_ARPS

Ever since I first started my photographic journey many years ago, I had aspired to gaining the RPS's Associateship distinction however, it took until about 10 years ago before I finally got round to doing something about it, making a start with my 'L' - the Licentiate award. This I was able to achieve, with a panel of mixed images in 2013, gaining the initials 'LRPS' to put after my name - I was on my way!

After digesting that for a while, I decided to go for my 'A' - the Associateship distinction. My specific interest at the time was in Street photography - however the Documentary Group, of which I was (and still am) a member, did not then have an 'A' qualification, although it does now. So, given that 'travel' begins when you head out of your front door, I decided to go for this distinction as, by then, I was semi-retired and able to travel more freely.

The Place

The first thing to consider was on where I was going to focus my efforts, and my camera. I had noted that many Associates gain their distinctions by going to exotic and far-flung places, however I felt that I needed to be able to return to my selected place easily as I prepared my panel.

I therefore chose the City of London, its Financial District, partly because I knew it well, and partly because it was distinct and had its own identity. It also had the interest of both its architecture - a real mix of old & new buildings side-by-side - and a workforce that ranged from the archetypal 'City-Gent' through to, well, a complete cross-section of society - and all within one square mile. The clinching factor was that this was easily accessible, being just an hour's travel away.

Having been doing Street Photography for a number of years - particularly around the City, I already had quite a lot of material - however I was going to need more if I was to provide sufficient variety in my 15 images. In addition, they were going to need to tone well together, provide a balanced panel and tell the story of the City.

That said, given that travel photography (and therefore my panel needed to) demonstrates 'a sense of the time and place', it was not going to be sufficient to produce just a street photography panel - unless it was very clear where the photographs were taken.

The Format

So, having decided the 'where', the next thing was to consider the 'what' - what format my entry submission should be - a Panel of prints or a series of Projected Digital Images (PDIs). All the advice I'd received and read was that it was better to submit prints, as you're then totally in control of what the Assessors will be assessing - there's no risk of the colours or brightness of the images that you see on your computer screen differing from what the assessors see on their colour corrected screens. An easy decision therefore - it was going to be a print submission.

The next question related to the size of print and mount. As regards the latter, the general recommendation is that these are 20" x 16" or 50cm x 40cm. The print itself can actually be any size - the temptation is to go for larger prints (say A3) however the strong advice that I received was to go with A4 sized paper - any blemishes or imperfections are less likely to be seen at this size.

As an aside, I was fortunate, when I started this process, that the RPS had produced a Distinction Guide 'Everything you need to know about gaining your Associate in Travel Photography' (I'm not sure whether this is still available) which had some useful information as to what would be required, both in terms of print quality and panel presentation. This proved to be a good starting point.

The Statement of Intent

This was one of the most important parts of the submission - a statement of up to 150 words covering what (and where) you intend to capture and present to the panel of assessors.

I kept mine short - 75 words - and, having come up with the wording in the early part of the process, decided to both stick with it and, more importantly, keep referring back to it as I put my panel together.

"Having worked in The Square Mile (London's financial district) for many years, I wanted to try and convey, in this panel of images, what I felt, and still feel, to be the essence and character of 'The City'.

In doing this, I'm looking to show the range of people who work here, both as office workers and the people who work to support them and the environment in which they spend their working day."



The photographs that made up my panel were taken over a series of visits to the City, at differing times of the day and in differing weather conditions. After some initial consideration, all (with the exception of one image) ended up being candid, or 'street', photographs of city workers going about their daily business, whatever that involved.

The City is actually a great place for street photography as everyone is generally so busy rushing from one place to another, usually on their mobile phone – added to which, in the summer months, they are used to tourists wandering around taking pictures.





There's also some great architecture – buildings old and new and a variety of different, but distinctive areas – and all with the space of one square mile.

The one image that was taken away from the City was my central, placing, photograph of the financial district itself, which I took one evening from the viewing gallery at the Tate Modern, on the other side of the Thames. I felt that I needed this type of all-encompassing, scene-setting, image to anchor my panel – and placing it right in the middle was the obvious place.





The Panel

The next stage was to start to prepare my panel - it's often said that this is the 16th image in the set, something that was reiterated consistently at the Advisory Day I attended. Probably more time was spent in getting this right than any other aspect - initially using Lightroom and then by printing small, 6" x 4" prints and shuffling them around - which really helped.

The main thing that I was looking to achieve with my panel was that the images balanced each other, there was a variety of subject matter, colour, and viewpoint - and that, when looked at in isolation, it looked 'right'.

The Advisory Day

Finally, having

- *pulled together and printed an initial selection of 15 A4-sized images*
- *mounted them on 50cm x 40cm off-white mounts*
- *decided on the panel layout,*
- *written my Statement of Intent, and*
- *selected 5-10 additional images*

it was time to attend an Advisory Day. I had gone along, as an observer, to one a year or two prior to my starting this process which proved to be a worthwhile exercise. However now was the time to see, really, whether my prints and my panel were up to scrutiny by the RPS's assessors.

I duly turned up with my 15 mounted prints and a selection of other, non-mounted, images ready to hear where I was, what the considered view was on my submission and what needed to be done to get to the 'A' standard.

There were quite a number of other panels being advised upon - some looked amazing - however there were some where even I could see that some more work was going to be required if they were to reach the required standard.

My turn came and there were some very helpful comments from, and discussion with, the two advisors, the consensus being that I was nearly there subject to my changing a couple of the prints, replacing them with two of my 'reserve' images.

So I went home, booked my Assessment Day - and, taking on board the comments and advice that I'd received, proceeded to work on my panel, re-printing some of the images and making sure that both the print quality and the mounting were as good as they could be.

ARPS Hanging Plan



01



02



03



04



05



06



07



08



09



10



11



12



13



14



15

The Assessment Day

This took place in September 2018 – at the RPS Head Office in Bath. A nerve-racking day, especially when it came to the assessment of my panel.

The assessors sat, listened to my Statement of Intent being read out and considered my panel for a couple of minutes before getting up and closely scrutinising each image – lots of whispering going on between them as the prints were passed around – was this good or bad?

In the end, they sat down and the Chair announced I was unsuccessful but that it was a near miss - there were a couple of images (04 and 07) that let the panel down, not really fitting in or providing the 'sense of place' required for a Travel panel.

I was therefore offered a Referral meaning that I could re-submit the panel, replacing the images in question – with the rest of the panel deemed to be of an acceptable 'A' standard.



ARPS Hanging Plan



01



02



03



04



05



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07



08



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11



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13



14



15

The Second Assessment Day

Six months later, in March 2019, this time in Bristol, I presented my revised panel incorporating the two new images, one of which I had gone out and taken, knowing the type of image I was looking for and how (and where) it would fit with the other images.

This time, as it was a Referral, the Assessors just looked at the two new images, and how they fitted within the panel. After a short deliberation, the Chair announced my name and declared I would be recommended for an Associate distinction. Great relief!

At the same assessment, my fellow Committee Member, Kath Phillips, also had her panel before the assessors and she was successful as well. As she was not there, I was able to take great pleasure in sending her a message to say that she, and I, had both passed.

The Conclusion

A few days later, I duly received an email confirming that I had, indeed, been awarded my Associateship, this was followed a week or so later by my Certificate and the Associate pin-badge.

Gratifyingly, the RPS Journal also featured my submission / panel in the August 2019 issue.

Do I go on to the Fellowship stage and the highly prized 'FRPS'? I don't know – I would need to think about this, and find a suitable location or subject before taking this any further.

Key Points:

- You don't need to travel far to create a 'travel' panel
- A short, sharp and to-the-point Statement of Intent really helps - as much for your benefit, to keep your panel focused, as it is for the assessors.
- Attend the Advisory Days - perhaps initially as an observer but definitely with your draft panel, mine really helped. Take along a diverse selection of other images that can be used to replace any which the assessors feel are not quite up to the standard that's required.
- There's a huge amount of help and support out there – so make good use of it all

I really enjoyed, and benefitted from, the whole process – putting a cohesive panel of images together requires a lot more thought and consideration than accumulating a series of related images. In the end, and after many years, I had achieved my long-standing ambition of gaining the RPS's Associateship distinction – all very satisfying!

You can find me, and more of my images, travel and, recently, local, on the Web and Instagram

www.justincliffe.com

@JustinCliffe.



Intha Fisherman, Inle Lake

LIFE after TRAVEL

John Cucksey. ARPS

I was going to Rwanda early in the new year. I was all set to go, airline tickets purchased, accommodation booked. I had been to sub-Saharan Africa many times and wanted to explore a different area, so I was going to a village at the southern end of Lake Kivu an area of rainforest on the border with the Congo and Burundi and a different wildlife, including many endemics, from that of the savannahs and wetlands elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. It was not to be. Shortly before Christmas I found myself in the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. The end of my overseas travel had come. Travel in Britain ceased not long after.

So it was that my last overseas photographic trip was the Travel Group trip to Burma in early 2014. A most enjoyable trip. (I use the name of Burma because we were in an area of the country populated by Burmese people who I understand still wish to call the country Burma). It was new territory for me, a different culture and a friendly, likeable people.

Before going on the Burma trip I had produced one photobook; I had not been pleased with the result. Not long after my return I was in London and found there was a photographic show on at a huge hotel that I did not know existed down the Edgware Road. There were five firms at the exhibition showing their photobooks. I decided to make a detailed investigation into two of them. I selected Bob Books and produced a book on the Burma trip. This time I was very pleased with the result and some thirty-five plus photobooks later I am still using them.

Bob Books produce a range of books of differing quality prints. I have only used their two top quality papers – Lustre photographic and Glossy photographic papers both with lay flat binding which produce a book of excellent quality photographic prints. Whilst I generally keep the photographs to one page; the lay-flat binding allows a photograph to be spread across two pages and I do not find the resulting fold in any way intrusive and using a double page very suitable for panoramas. Most of my books have been of what Bob Books call landscape size with pages of about 10 X 8 inches with the potential of a panoramic print of 20 X 8 inches. I have also produced a Large landscape size book (rather heavy) which across two pages gives a print of over A3+ size; and several Large square size books which will give you a panoramic print 6 inches wider than an A3 print over a double page. Bob Books have several times increased the maximum number of pages you can have in a book. Landscape books currently have a maximum of 130 pages. I find that about 100 pages is the optimum.

Some of my books include photographs dating back to the 1960s. I have therefore had to scan then – a rather slow and tedious process but my Nikon Coolscan scanner, purchased in 2001, has served me well. I find Kodak print film scans best. Although I am pleased with the book of Falkland wildlife produced from scanning my Falkland slides taken in 1997 and 2001.

My procedure is to process the RAW or scanned image in Lightroom and copy a JPEG image into a folder at actual pixels (100%) which I call for



instance ‘Burma for Book’, always ensuring the the pixel width is 2200 or more. An image of 2200 pixels width give a print of about 7 X 5 inches at a resolution of 300dpi which is the smallest I am likely to want in a book. Just occasionally I have to resize an image, but this only works when the image is sharp.

It is then a simple matter of opening the Bob Books software choosing the book style you want and dragging each photograph from the ‘for book’ folder open on the left of the screen on to the pages of the book on the right of the screen in front of you.

I have looked at the book module in Lightroom but found it complicated and offering no advantage over using the Bob Books software.

Once you have dragged the image onto the page you can size it to fit the page and any other photos you are including on the page by pulling at the corners, you can move them about, overlap photos, crop them, add narrative and titles. There is a ‘traffic lights’ tool to tell you whether the resolution is high enough to obtain a good quality print – a green ball with a tick in; a yellow ball signifies it is not optimal and a red ball with an exclamation mark in it, too low to print adequately. I ensure every photo is marked with a green ball. Hence the 2200-pixel width referred to above.

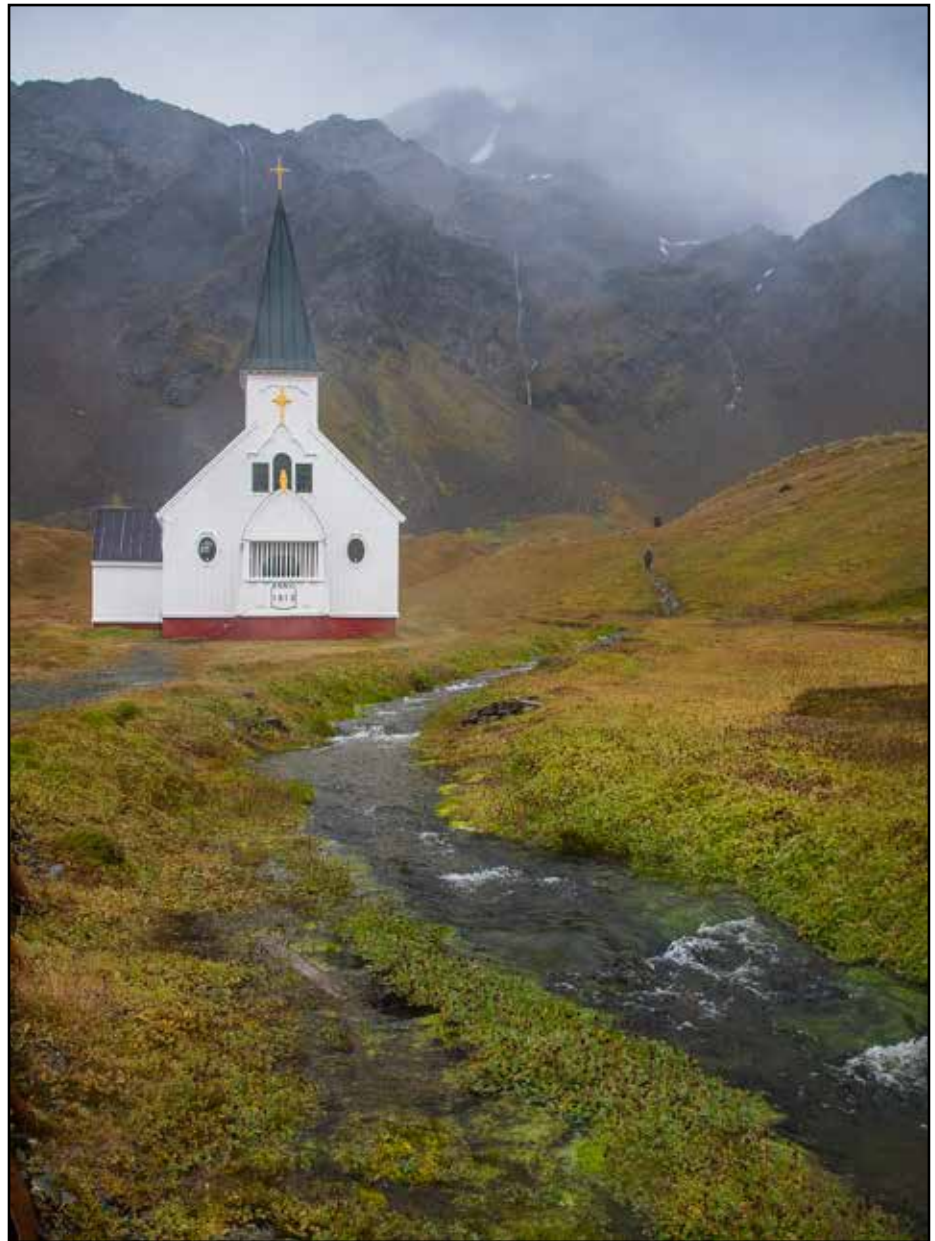
When putting together a photobook you can display on the screen the actual book – the finished product without all the processing tools, link this to a projector and you can use it as a slide show. All you have to do is ensure, in my case, the Bob Books

software is loaded onto the laptop or whatever. You can do this free of charge. One advantage of using the Bob Books software for projection is that if, say, you have more than one picture on a page, you can blow each of them up separately to fill the screen. Another is that your titles and any other narrative provide an immediate prompt to speak to.

I have always sorted my photographs and put them into albums or slide boxes and produced projected slide shows, (mostly PicturesToExe) more recently I have put them into a folder on a memory stick to make a screen or projected show. (Easy to show at camera clubs and Travel group meetings). None of these methods of preserving them for future viewing seem wholly satisfactory. Will anyone ever look at them again?

Whilst I accept that a single photo on its own can be a travel photo, I have always thought that travel photography is about a series of photographs illustrating a subject. Photobooks enable you to do this in a very accessible and lasting way. You have taken the trouble to take the photos so they deserve to be presented well. The thirty plus books I have produced to date fall mainly into three categories - wildlife, travel and family. In many of the wildlife books I have adhered strictly to wildlife and nature photos and included no human element. There are very few of my fellow travellers, one exception being a photograph of a guide at work who won the 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' a few years back.

My favourite book is on 'South Georgia'. Actually, travelling to this stunningly beautiful, uninhabited (except for a few scientists), mountainous, sub-Antarctic Island full of wildlife is an achievement. Much of the time the weather is inhospitable; I was lucky we spent three days sailing up the eastern side of the island and made six landings of three to four hours. Far too short a time to do photographic justice to the island. This book includes both wildlife and travel



Whalers Church, Grytviken



Whaling Plant, Grytviken



King Penguins & Elephant Seals, South Georgia

photos. I attach three photos from the book. 'The Whalers' Church' in Grytviken with the mountains in the background and a stream flowing by. Turn round and face the other way and we see the rusting ruins of the whaling factory representing the island's none too glorious industrial heritage. And a nature photo of three King Penguins walking past some elephant seals. Travel Log is about showing members their travel photos and telling them about them. It may come as a surprise to some members that when I joined the Group at the time of its formation, over thirty

years ago, there were no pictures in the early issues! To accompany this article I am attaching a very small selection of my photographs to be found in these books; not necessarily the best but a few which have some special interest to me.

First my trip to Burma and 'Monk crossing U-Bein Bridge'. I saw this monk coming towards me on this usually crowded bridge, I positioned myself to take him and, as he walked towards me, prayed that no one would come up behind me. His face is not quite sharp and in shadow, but it is a photograph

of Burma I wanted. I find it of further interest as I have a book of photographs taken in India and Burma by Captain Linnaeus Tripe. One of the photographs in this book is a similar view of this bridge, built of teak in 1784 (according to the book), taken in 1855.

Nearly everyone who goes to Burma comes back with a photo of the Intha leg-rowing Fishermen at dawn on Lake Inle - I have. This practice has nearly died out and these men are doing a display for tourists and dress themselves appropriately. It makes photos



Monk on U-Bein Bridge



Samburu Family, Northern Kenya

photographers love. I hoped I could get a genuine fisherman. We had spent the day on the lake and were setting off back to our hotel and getting up speed in our canoe when I spotted, some distance away, this old fisherman prodding the shallow lake to disturb the fish so that he could catch them. Thanks to the

auto focus on my Canon 5D mk.iii I got this one photo, and it is sharp!

When reviewing my old photographs I find that I now like some that I originally rejected. Two such are one of a Samburu family outside their dwelling in northern Kenya and one of the El Castillo

pyramid in Chichen Itza, Mexico. What makes this latter photo is the red figure in the entrance to the temple at the top of the pyramid; but even more exciting is what you see when you enter - a jaguar in the form of a throne, painted red and inlaid with pieces of jade. Sadly, I believe this is now closed to visitors



El Castillo, Chichen Itza, Mexico



Jaguar Throne with inlaid Jade studs, Chichen Itza



Berber Men, Boumalne, Morocco



Ferry Terminal, Ulsta.



The Settlement, Tristan da Cunha.

because the humidity they cause is damaging the fabric. This photo is the one I took in 1961, I took it again in 1988 and this latter photo clearly shows this damage.

Next is a photo taken in Morocco of two Berber men in their traditional dress. I must not ignore Britain and travelling to our most northern isles I feel this photo of the ferry terminal and the treeless country side representative of the Shetlands.

I was less fortunate when visiting the remotest populated island in the world than on my visit to South Georgia. This time I had to spend

three days on the boat looking at the volcanic island of Tristan da Cunha as it was too rough to land. A long lens was the only answer. Here we see the only village on the island known as the 'Settlement' or 'Edinburgh of the Seven Seas'.

Finally, a photo that to me says 'Travel'. Two fellow members of the travel group, Brian and Fiona Brooks, in a vehicle in the Okavango.

I can no longer get about much and take photographs, but I am happily revisiting many of the places I have been to and reviving memories by producing photobooks which bring

the subjects together in an orderly fashion and in the most accessible form.

That I am able to do this owes a lot to the Travel and the Nature groups and the great pleasure I have had over the years going on the events organised by them - tours and trips, attending meetings, talks, other gatherings and participating in exhibitions and competitions. As well as enjoying the company of fellow members who have an interest in travel and nature photography.



Travel'. In the Okavango

I have a large collection of photographs going back many years. The earliest most obvious set is one of several trays of slides of a trip to Mexico in 1960. Taken on Kodachrome they have retained their colour well and I have shown them in recent years at camera clubs. Albums are cumbersome and heavy, trays of slides awkward to handle both take up a lot of space. My solution to the problem is photobooks which are the most recent development in the photographic revolution which has occurred during my life. I have produced about 20 books so far. I have always thought that a single photograph does not really represent a travel situation and that several are required to do this. Photobooks are the perfect answer.

John Cucksey. ARPS

"The travel Blog" is a group of self selecting participants eager to see each other's images.

We submit an image each quarter and write constructive criticisms on all of them.

We hope to learn from the fresh eyes of the members and vote for the best three.

In order to be manageable we limit the numbers of members, and I've been very pleased to see enthusiastic new members recently.

David Portwain ARPS (travel)



At the ATM



'Close to sunset in Essaouira on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. Interesting shadows cast by the ATM queue.'

Canon 5D Mk3 1/800sec at f11

Neil Harris

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My image was made in Millenium Park, Chicago. My main goal was not to have any people standing by this highly popular sculpture so I was there before the park opened at 0600 AM. The bonus of an early shot is the beautiful pre-dawn light and the warmth of the buildings. Although it is not clear from the image, the sculpture is huge - a person can easily walk underneath the structure. The other name for the art sculpture is The Bean.

Stephen McDonald



Cloud Gate at Dawn



2nd Paradise Harbour in Antarctica.

The huts on the left-hand side are Brown Station, run by Argentina, but shut up for the southern winter in March 2020 when I visited. We were very lucky on our expedition ship that we were Covid free, and consequently allowed to disembark in Ushuaia on the 14th March. I was even luckier to get back to the UK after my flight on the 16th with Norwegian from Buenos Aires to Gatwick was cancelled 5 minutes before online check in. Fortunately, I was able to book a 32 hour trip home on Turkish via Istanbul before the Argentinian Borders closed.

Oh for the chance to go travelling again...

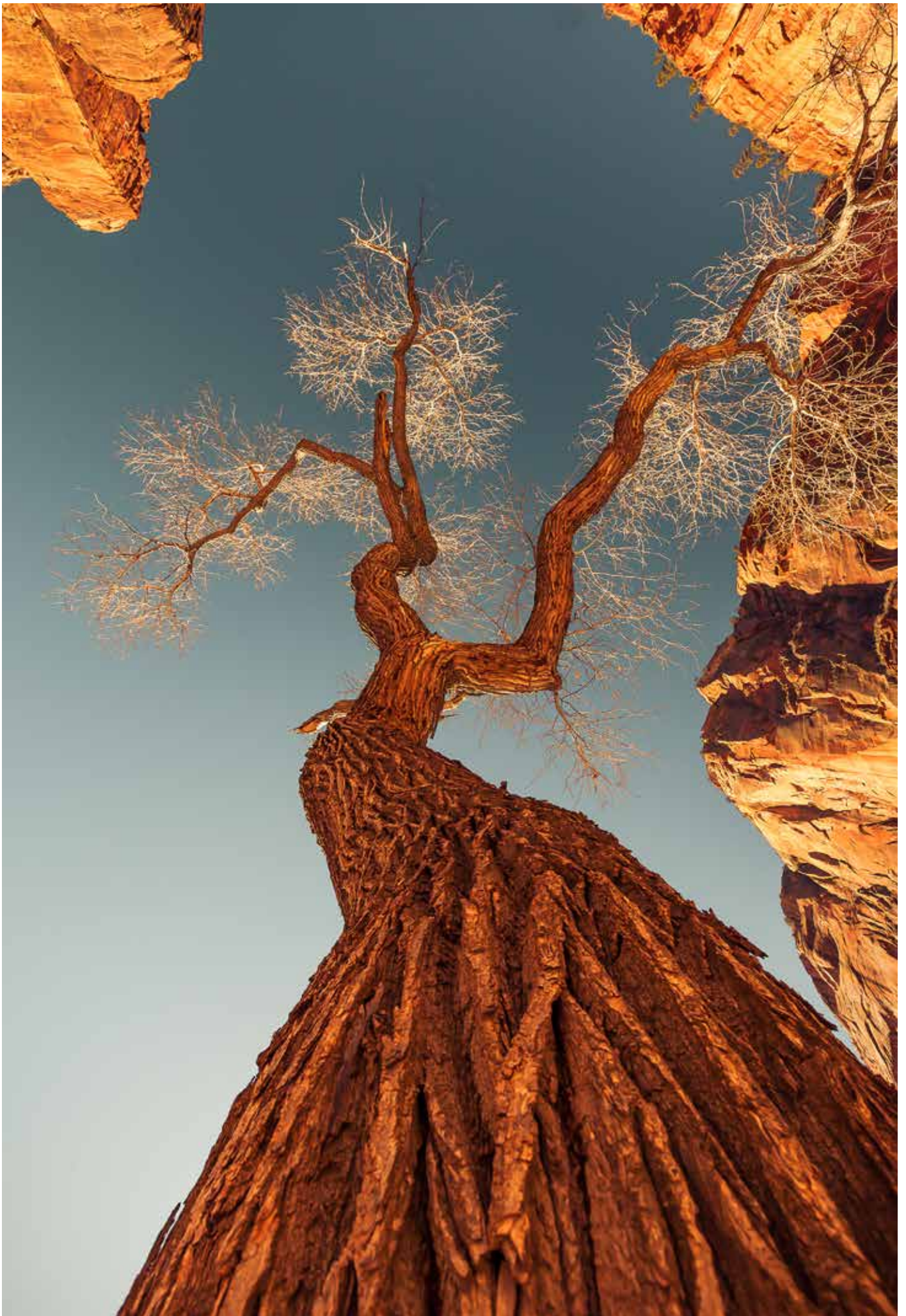
Neil Harris

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1st Looking Up in Zion National Park, Utah

Driving from Bryce Canyon back to Las Vegas we stopped off briefly in Zion National Park. I wish we'd had more time as it is absolutely stunning but had a quick walk around at least. This majestic pine soared above me and the winter light hit the branches and rocks perfectly. Canon 5D Mk II, 16-35mm f/2.8 L, f/10, 1/160, ISO 320, 16mm

Laura Morgan



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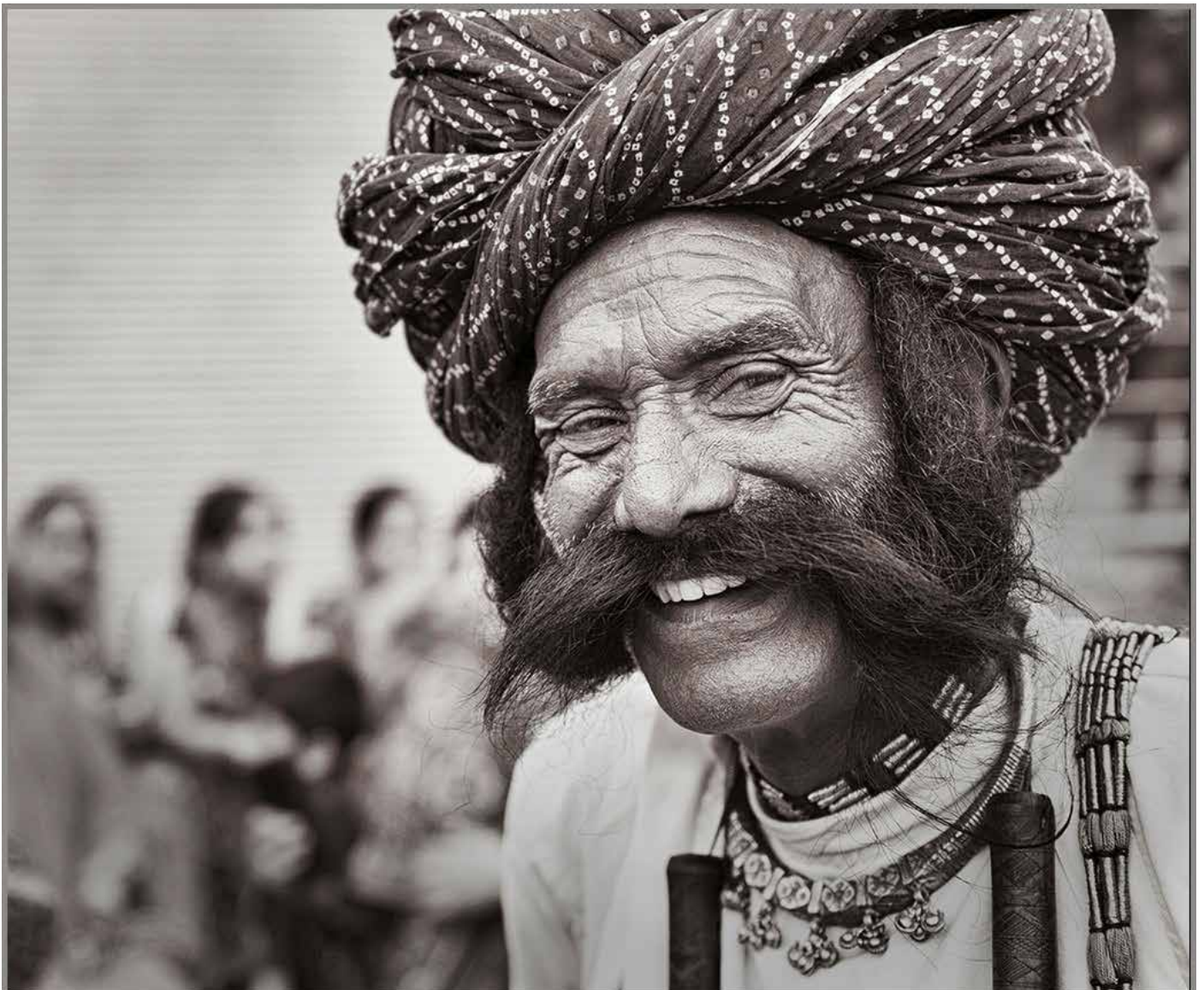
Homage to Nkrumah

David Portwain ARPS (travel)

" I was fortunate to attend one of the annual festivals in Jaipur during a trip to India. Like all such festivals there were several processions with music and dancing. This gentleman was very distinctive with his long hair and moustache arranged under his turban. He was very popular with the tourists and photographers"

Stu Thompson

Leader at Indian Festival



STAYCATION 2021 - BLACKPOOL - John Riley LRPS



Travel Image of the Year 2020

Judged by Margaret Salisbury FRPS.

"The twelve images which won the monthly Travel Group Competition were all excellent images, very different and were from many different Genres, included the required "Sense of Place" and all were worthy winners. Choosing the winner from the twelve was extremely difficult but the January entry taken of the woman on the Railway Line in Vietnam, was outstanding.

An emotive picture of life of these people who live on and beside this Railway line, captured so well the lady cooking with enough of the environment to show the sense of place and told the story so well. The face and expression captured brilliantly on this lined but lovely face. Every element and detail well composed, the bonus for me was the one small area of bright colour of the flames of the fire where she would cook her food. This image really does fit the old saying "One picture is worth a thousand words".



Offering on Rail Street by

It was my final day in Hanoi and I decided to search out Rail Street. Famous for its rail track running through the middle of a built up area in the centre of the city, I was not sure what I would find. What an amazing place.

As I wandered along the track, I came across this lovely lady making her daily offering in the middle of the tracks. She was quite oblivious to my presence and I kept well back from her and lay on the tracks to get down to her level. Fortunately there was nobody else around, so the background was clear. She was focusing on her prayers and was not aware of my presence.

I was delighted to win the January competition. Winning the image of the year is unbelievable. All the monthly winners presented amazing images. I have to thank the Judge and all those involved in the competition for their hard work and am really chuffed at winning the competition.



Alistair Cowan