



In the Lake District © Ingrid Popplewell

Submissions

The copy date for submissions to the next newsletter is Friday 24th July 2020. Please note that it may be necessary to hold some submissions for a future newsletter.

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

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

Do not embed images in an the e mail.

Please send all submissions to:

landscapenews@rps.org

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A Correction

In the May newsletter Kevin Gibbin's name was incorrectly spelt. A corrected version of the newsletter has been uploaded. We are sorry for any distressed caused



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the June edition of the Newsletter. For those who have not read the May edition, my name is Peter Fortune and I have taken over the editorship of the newsletter from Richard Ellis, who as Chair of the Landscape SIG, has more than a big enough job.

In the current situation photography provides big opportunities to reminisce about previous travels and events. In this editorial are just 2 pictures which illustrate this point: Barga Town



and Matera in the Golden Hour. Neither of these would be possible to take at the moment without, at the very least, the photographer having to be quarantined for two weeks on return, but viewing them brings back happy memories.



One good feature of the Lock-down is the ingenuity that organisations have shown to enable events to happen while abiding strictly by the Lock-down rules. The RPS and The Landscape Group are both leading the way in this regard. The RPS held an Extraordinary General Meeting on 29th May on Zoom. Using this system meant that members from far flung locations, not only in the UK could participate in the meeting. Zoom, Skype and other similar systems will no

doubt be a part of the “new norm” when we get there. My own camera club has been holding meetings from the start of the Lockdown on Zoom and will probably continue to hold some Zoom meetings through next season even after, hopefully, the Lockdown is over. To see what the Landscape Group are doing take a look at last month's Newsletter. It lists many online events and there will be more to consider in this edition!

The Lockdown rules **are** being gradually relaxed giving us photographers more opportunities to take pictures outside, which is a very welcome turn of events after the many weeks of lockdown. At the time of writing, (9th June) the summer has started even if nobody told the weather! The next three or so months should be the one of best times for landscape photography, and of course, in the UK at least, there should be lots of opportunities for great pictures.

For many readers the above is by no means the whole story. Photographers love the Scottish Isles and Highlands and find the often bad weather enables them to create really interesting shots. For them, and many others, bad weather presents different challenges and enables the photographer to take a much broader range and variety of pictures. It can also be argued that taking good pictures in warm sunny weather, ideally with a few fluffy white clouds is easier than in bad weather. The bad weather is more challenging to the photographer and this stretches and develops their skills, and arguably it is more likely to make the author of those images a better photographer.

While the Lockdown was comprehensive many Landscape Group events, including the Landscape SIG AGM, had to be cancelled or deferred. As things ease, there is scope for events to be held, although as stated above, events will run online for as long as social distancing is necessary. This is likely to be several months. This means that events might need to be modified and some might still not be possible. Interested readers should keep an eye on the newsletter and the [Landscape Group](#) pages which are part of the RPS website, for announcements.

Both pictures ©Peter Fortune



AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY

Vacancy Website editor


Jim Souper the current website editor has indicated that he will step down from the role at the next AGM in March 2021. I would like to thank Jim for his outstanding contribution to the group. Jim was one of the “founding fathers” of the group and in addition to his role as website editor also edited the newsletter. He oversaw the migration to the new website and has been a key person not only in driving the Landscape SIG website but also in the wider community of editors across the RPS.

We are keen to start the process to find a replacement for Jim and to allow the new person to have some time to work with him and benefit from his expertise.

The job of the Web Editor is to keep the group’s pages on the RPS website up to date and to add new content. The structure and content of the group’s web pages have been built using pre-defined page types and content cards and media (images and documents) uploaded by the Web Editor. The main requirement of the role is a good standard of computer literacy. Some experience of building and maintaining a template-based website might be helpful, but knowledge of web development tools such as html is not required. Training and a comprehensive Website Guide are available.

Additionally, moderation of the group’s Facebook page also falls to the Web Editor.

If you feel you could contribute here please feel free to contact Jim at landscapeweb@rps.org or Richard at landscape@rps.org.



Optimising Image Quality | How and When to Expose to the Right. (by David Rosen)



Here's a fact that may surprise many of you. If you are exposing images correctly, they are likely to look dull, slightly lifeless and lack punch when viewed on your camera's preview screen! Well composed, yes, creatively imagined, definitely, but punchy and with superb shadow detail probably not. The reason for this potentially unsettling paradox lies in the fundamental characteristics of digital images. The reason for aiming to achieve what looks like an unflattering output, is to optimise your raw image files ready for processing. A tried and tested technique known as ETTR or expose to the right, refers to the placement of the image's pixel distribution towards the right hand side of the histogram when calculating exposure. By doing so, you imbue your raw files with the maximum possible amount of image data and encourage a larger dynamic range. Your images will also be able to resolve finer detail, and display less image noise.

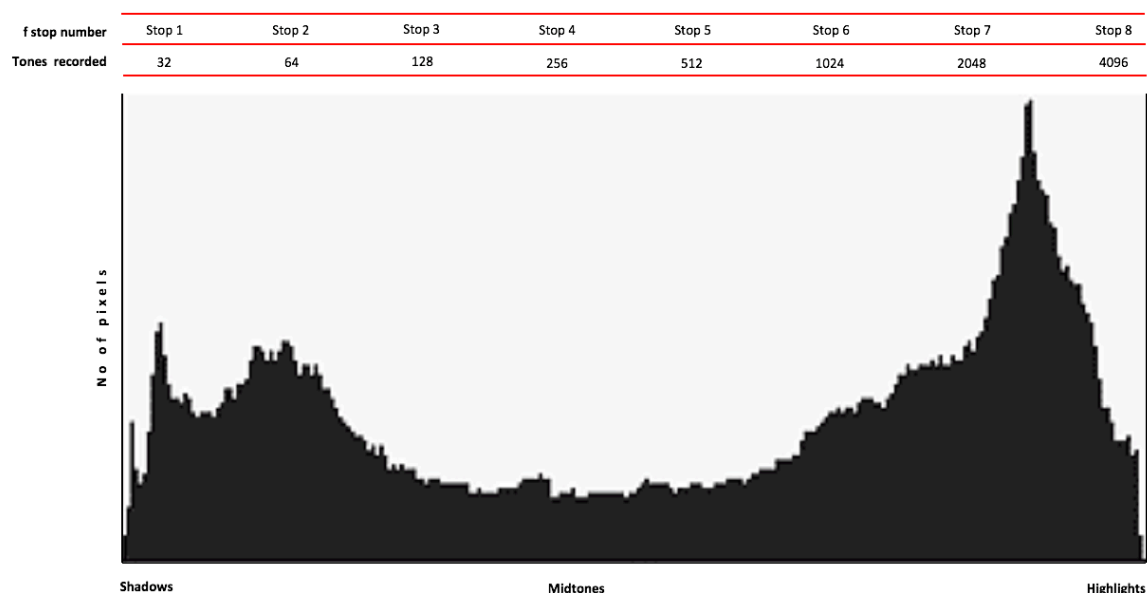
In short, whilst your live view and preview screens may be great for focus checking and composition, they can be a deceptive and misleading way to evaluate your exposure choices.

Exposing to the right, on the other hand, under certain conditions (highlighted later) offers a more sure-fire way to ensure the highest possible image quality. Let's now have a more in-depth look at how exposing to the right improves image quality and when to use it.

Many photographers are familiar with the concept of exposure settings and dynamic range, however often the devil is in the detail. Unfortunately, it's not simply a matter of choosing to shoot in RAW and being familiar with the various exposure options on your camera. Exposure choices, dynamic range and image quality are intricately linked. Their inter-relationship can be influenced at numerous points along the capture-processing journey.

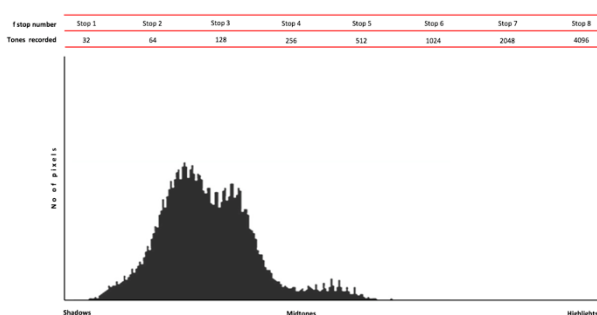
Let's start with the camera's sensor. A typical DSLR CMOS sensor is capable of capturing 12 stops of dynamic range, delivering a 12 bit RAW image file. However what you see on your camera's preview screen is the data derived from a JPEG file created from the RAW file. As we will see later, this can be misleading when the histogram is used to drive the choice of exposure value.

DSLR histograms shows the pixel distribution for the image's 8-bit JPEG, with 4096 tonal levels captured across the luminosity range of the image . However, the ability of image files to accurately render tones is not distributed equally across the dynamic range. As the brightness increases by one stop, so the amount of image information doubles. This stepwise increase in image data means that half the information describing an image is contained in the brightest one twelfth of the camera's histogram. The histogram below of a typical full tonal range image shows how the ability to render tones increases as luminance values increase.



How should this information be used to influence exposure choices to achieve the highest quality RAW files? In practice, there is no simple catch-all formula. In many landscape shoots, the dynamic range of the scene may exceed the camera's sensor forcing the photographer to devise exposure strategies that decrease the dynamic range. In-camera choices might include bracketing, the use of neutral density filters, exposure blending, viewpoint adjustment or deciding to shoot at a different time of day. In other scenarios, the dynamic range may roughly match your camera's sensor capability. The challenge in this case is to carefully calibrate the exposure, in order to encompass the full range of tones within the camera's dynamic range. Both of these scenarios are regularly covered in general discussions regarding exposure and dynamic range and I will not be covering them here. The third scenario however, is where the dynamic range of the scene is less than that of the camera's sensor and you have the option of choosing between several exposure values.

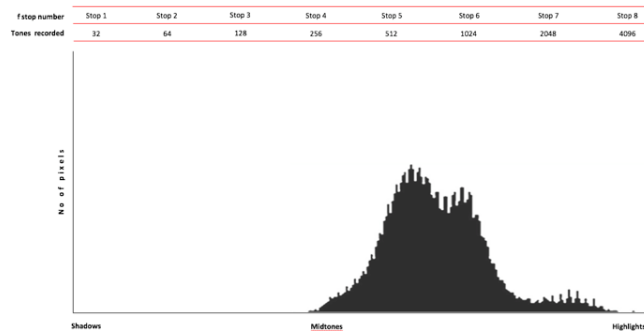
When viewing the camera's preview screen, it is tempting to believe that the exposure that provides the most attractive image on-screen is the best exposure choice. Unfortunately, this tends to encourage the choice of exposures that generate more highly saturated attractive colours and deeper blacks. This leads to histograms that might look something like the one shown below.



The resulting image file will be considerably smaller and is likely to contain far less image information. For example two stops under-exposed as shown in the first histogram, will lead to a reduction of tonal information of around 75%. Increasing the exposure values in Light-

room or Photoshop cannot not make up for this loss of image data. Look carefully at an image processed in this way and you will notice noisy highlights, less well graduated tones and an overall loss of image quality.

If however, you adjust your exposure so that the histogram shifts to the right (taking care not to overshoot and clip the highlights), the full tonal information within the image is retained. As seen in the second histogram, the pixels now reside in the areas containing the most image data. Reducing the exposure or increasing the dynamic range of the image in Photoshop or Lightroom to achieve the desired appearance is now less problematic as you will have ample image data at your disposal.



There is one final piece of the expose to the right jigsaw I eluded to it earlier in the article. It is the way in which DSLR's generate their image previews and histograms. With JPEG's being 8-Bit and the RAW files generated in-camera being approximately 12-bit, the RAW files will contain more information and can render a larger dynamic range. That explains why sometimes you will notice that what is represented as over-exposed in your camera's histogram, can somehow be miraculously salvaged once the raw file is imported into Photoshop or Lightroom.

Whilst this can be a life-saver on some occasions, it does mean that the camera's histogram is sadly inaccurate. In some instances it can underestimate the dynamic range by up to 4 stops (the difference between the dynamic range of the 8-bit JPEG and 12-Bit RAW file). There is however a very crafty workaround that can adjust your camera's histogram so that it more closely mimics the characteristics of your RAW files. Here's how it's done.

You need to go to the 'Picture Style' panel in Canon, or if you have a Nikon it's the 'Picture Control' panel (other makes will have similar sounding panel names). By default, the setting for contrast is set to medium or zero. This is fine for creating JPEG



images, however if you are looking to mimic the enhanced dynamic range of your RAW files within the camera's histogram, you will need to adjust the contrast to its lowest setting. In making this adjustment, you will notice that the histogram in your camera's preview panel will more closely resemble that of the histogram of your RAW file when viewed in Photoshop or Lightroom. This occurs because by creating a lower contrast JPEG preview, you are effectively extending its dynamic range to more closely match that of the RAW file it is seeking to emulate.

One downside is that you will have decreased the contrast of the images in that particular Picture Style or Picture Control setting. However, you can use this particular image profile when you need to ensure a more accurate histogram and use a different picture style or picture control setting (where the contrast has not been adjusted) when you are looking for a more accurate rendering in the image preview.

Some of this may sound a little challenging at first but exposure and dynamic range are fundamental to achieving first class image quality. It is often tempting to sometimes believe that image quality can be achieved by relying on your camera's sophisticated metering systems or believing that you can dig yourself out of a hole in Photoshop or Lightroom. Whilst this may be true on some occasions. On others you will miss the chance of creating a superb high quality image from that much cherished shot.

I am looking to expand on numerous aspects of fine art photography over the coming months. Look out for my upcoming webinars and workshops. You can find my work online at www.davidrosenphotography and @davidrosenphotography In the meantime, I am happy to receive comments, feedback and questions by e.mail at david@davidrosenphotography.com

Stay safe. David

Image and graphics ©David Rosen



A JOURNEY TO SKYE BY STEVE MCDONALD

My name is Steve McDonald and I'm a travel and landscape photographer. Born 20 miles to the West of Glasgow to a Scots Father and English Mother I grew up in Renfrew until I was 19. Following that I moved to Germany where my love of photography really began.



There is a rumour, started by my paternal Grandfather, that our family roots lie on Skye. Are we really a part of Clan McDonald? This has yet to be proven. I have traced my family roots back to the mid 19th century and in 1835 my father's family was living in Greenock. It is possible my ancestors moved to the west coast to find work but I'll have to dig deeper to find more so my research continues. It is this connection that continues to draw me to the isle.

I have visited Skye on a number of occasions over the years. A few of those times I didn't stay for long as the rains were of Biblical proportions. It is not for fun that they dig culverts under the roads to allow the torrential waterfalls to flow unhindered to the open sea, otherwise the tarmac would be continuously washed away.



My last visit to Skye was to celebrate my 60th birthday in 2016. My partner and I decided that a week there in February would be a good time to explore the landscape properly. There would be no crowds and hopefully still some lingering snow on the mountain tops. We based ourselves in a wee but n' ben just outside Hallin on the

west coast. It was an ideal location and a lovely place to relax in front of the open fire at the end of each days shoot.

Our idea was to explore pre-planned areas each day and see what the landscape offered. The weather was of course a critical factor and it generally didn't disappoint. To add to my excitement, I had just bought a new Canon 5Dsr body and I was keen to put this 50 megapixel monster through its paces in the field.

The landscape photos I have included in this essay were made in the regions around Trotternish, The Cullen Hills, Sound of Sleat and Dunvegan. I also climbed part of the Trotternish Ridge to capture my own images of the Old Man of Storr. (Editors note - space limitations prevented all of Steve's superb pictures being included.) The problem came when I saw those particular images on my screen – they were all out of focus! 50 million pixels are extremely small and very sensitive to camera shake. It is not enough to just have the gear on a tripod, the legs have to be made rock steady when shooting, particularly in windier conditions. This was a lesson learned very quickly with this model of camera.



A few blurred shots were the least of my problems as it transpired. At the really pretty Fairy Bridge I decided to go low and use the shallow burn as a lead in line. The tripod was set up right on the edge of the water and suitably stabilised. Then I fumbled my polarising filter and it fell into the burn. As I leaned down to retrieve it I managed to disturb the grassy bank and, yes, you've guessed it, the whole tripod fell into the burn. Moving quickly I got the camera out of the water and tried to dry it out as best I could. I even left it in the airing cupboard at the cottage to speed up the process.

Needless to say Canon were happy to repair my lens but wouldn't touch the body as they couldn't guarantee the work. The end of the story isn't as bad as I had feared. The camera still works and the image quality is excellent. The only function not working properly is the shutter release button! I do however use a remote shutter and the button on my battery grip works just as well. I think I got off lightly and this will be yet another lesson learned.



Going to Skye in low season, whilst a gamble, weather wise, is still my preferred time to visit most locations in Scotland. I was particularly happy to see the last of the winter snows still on the mountain tops and happily the driving was very easy as the roads were quiet. Another benefit is being able to get a table at a restaurant that's open all year – a lot of them aren't.

I shoot mainly in aperture priority at ISO 100 on a tripod and spend time on my composition, an area of photography I have always found to come naturally to me. I use Lee filters and when necessary a polarising filter as I want to create a balanced image in camera. However, using my Lee 'Big Stopper' with the 5Dsr is a challenge to create sharp results. I have to be much more careful for reasons mentioned above. I shoot exclusively in RAW, offering more options in post processing. However, I try not to over-process my images, mainly concentrat-



ing
on keeping highlights and shadows in control, colour boosting and some sharpening.

Apart from the few mishaps I enjoyed my week on Skye. It's a stunning location for landscape photography. I hope my images show just some of the possibilities if you are one of the

few never to have ventured that far north. If you do decide to visit, there is the added benefit of travelling from the south west through Glencoe and Fort William. If you don't want to use the Skye bridge then I can recommend heading to Mallaig which is widely known as one of the most stunning road and rail routes in the world. From Mallaig you can reach Armadale on Skye using the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry.

This will not be my last photography trip to Skye. Perhaps my next visit will also include some time spent researching the origins of my family.

Now that's a journey worth getting excited about.

Steve McDonald



All images ©Steve McDonald



STONEHENGE BY DAVE GLENN



Clouds over the Henge ©Daryl Hutchinson

We held a field trip to Stonehenge at sunrise in early March. The trip was arranged so that we had exclusive access to the stone circle for an hour and a half just before and after sunrise. Given the weather we had at the start of this year, quite a few sleepless nights were spent before the trip, but in the event we needn't have worried! It was rather breezy on the day, but that kept the majority of the cloud at a distance, so we were rewarded with a sun at sunrise!

We met at the Stonehenge Visitor's Centre at 0600 on 8 March and fitted tennis balls to our tripod feet to protect the ground - they also helped us spot each other in the dark! A bus took us the short distance to the circle. Our English Heritage guide, Wendy, was very knowledgeable and gave us a few tips on the best locations to pick. She also very kindly gave us as much time as possible at the site.



The Stones ©Philip Bovey

We arrived there at 0615 - about 20 minutes before sunrise, giving us sufficient time to quickly find a spot and set up. The sun duly put in an appearance at 0635 and we spent the next half hour or more photographing the empty circle with the participants arranging themselves in a large and very orderly horseshoe. Seventeen people joined us for the trip and a wide range of photographic equipment was in use, from mirrorless cameras, DSLRS, medium

format digital, medium format film to large format film!



About half an hour before the end of the trip we moved inside the circle to capture closeups of the stones, which were by then warmly lit in the early morning sun. We left the stones at 07:30 and returned to the Visitor's Centre, walking past the extremely envious next group of visitors.

Inside the Stones © Roger Daines



Later © Fran May

Everyone had a great time on the trip and it was nice to receive some very kind words after the event.

"Thank you for organising the photography at Stonehenge. I really enjoyed the session. I achieved some interesting, unusual shots and even managed to capture the sunrise searing through a gap in the stones. A big 👍 from me!"

".... really enjoyed the time and it was good to meet the Landscape Group. Speaking for myself, I managed to photo nearly all that I had envisaged and with the sun helping. Thank you so much."

"Just a brief e-mail to thank you for all of your excellent organisation this morning - including excellent weather! At least it is a morning that I won't forget in a hurry - every time that I look at three brightly coloured tennis balls!!"

I'd very much like to thank Robert Brittle for helping me lead the event on the day, his hard work was very much appreciated.

If you would be interested in a sunrise shoot (probably in early March), or a sunset shoot (probably in early December) in 2021, please let Dave know at landscapememberevents@rps.org. Please specify which trip (or both!) would be of interest to you so that he can assess the viability of making a booking with English Heritage.

Dave Glenn
Member-led Events Manager for the Landscape Group



Best shot ©John Hayes



EVENTS



[Adventures in Landscape Photography](#) 30th June 20:00 hrs



[Group Critique Session](#) 2nd July
20:15 hrs



[Hyperbole, Exaggeration & Distortion](#) 6th July 20:00 hrs



[Make a hand-made photo book](#) 9th July 09:30 - 16:00 hrs



[A-Z of Printing with Lightroom](#)
13th, 14th & 15th July 09:00 - 11:00 hrs



[Processing landscapes with Lr & Ps](#) 25th June 10:00 - 12:00 & 13:00 - 15:00



[Beyond visible light](#) 21st July
20:00 hrs



[Fine Art Images](#) 29th, 30th June &
1st July 10:00 - 12:30



[Making creative landscape
images](#) 15th, 16th & 17th July 14:00



[Shaped by the sea with Theo
Bosboom](#) 14th July 20:00 hrs



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