

Newsletter

May 2020

Volume 5 Number 4

THE **RPS**  
ROYAL  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY

LANDSCAPE  
GROUP



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## Submissions

The copy date for submissions to the next newsletter is **Friday, 26 June 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 the images in the email.**

Please send all submissions by email to:  
**[landscapenews@rps.org](mailto:landscapenews@rps.org)**

## Editorial

Welcome to the May issue of the newsletter. I realise that this will find you all in different phases of dealing with the Covid 19 situation. To our NHS and other key workers I would like to say a big thank you for all your efforts - it is much appreciated. To those of you who find yourself coping with shielding and social distancing I hope that the newsletter will provide you with items of interest.

I hope you are all getting used to lockdown and using the time to explore different projects and brush up your skills. I have always wanted to learn desktop publishing but never made the time available to do it. Recently I downloaded a copy of Affinity Publisher and set myself the target of producing this newsletter with it. I have had moments of extreme frustration but also joy as I managed to create something and learn the techniques. I have just scratched the surface of the capabilities of the programme but look forward to learning more.

An unexpected benefit of being the newsletter editor is that you get invited to press launches; I was invited to the launch of Charlie Waite's new exhibition in Bosham. This is an exhibition of previously unseen photographs together with some of his old favourites and is entitled '[Hidden Works](#)'. In the exhibition are works hand printed by Charlie.



Sadly just before we were to go to the launch Covid 19 lockdown occurred but we were fortunate to have a virtually view led by the Gallery director and Charlie himself. The exhibition feature some of his work from Cuba



as well as more classical signature images.



Charlie has produced this exhibition by looking for work in his back catalogue which may provide you with inspiration for a new project.

The committee have been busy keeping the website up to date and developing a series of events which do not need us to meet up. Please check these out on the website.

I am delighted to announce that Peter Fortune has agreed to take the role of newsletter editor. I am sure you will all keep sending him articles and photos. We are particularly short of images for the front cover so please if you have an image you would like to share send it to the email on the front page.

We have agreed with the President that we will proceed with the committee in place for 2020 as if we had held the AGM on March 21 2020 and the people been elected. As there was only one candidate for each position we hope that this will not prove too controversial. If you have any questions about this please contact me - [landscape@rps.org](mailto:landscape@rps.org). I have posted the charts we would have used at the AGM on the website and you can also send any questions to the email above. We have planned new AGMs - one for 2021 (March 6 in Bristol) and for 2022 (March 4-6 in Harrogate). Please save the dates in your diary.

I hope that you all remain safe and well.

Best wishes

Richard

Richard Ellis

Chair: Landscape SIG

## Resources

### 30 Days of Photoshop

A free course covering the basics of photoshop at [PHLEARN](https://www.phlearn.com/).

Leica and Nikon both have video tutorials on their sites

The science of happiness - this is the most popular class in the history of Yale.

Seeing through photographs - an overview of the history of photography

Additionally Adobe are running creative seminars which you can find through your subscription or by a web search.



## **Landscape SIG and Covid 19**

As you will be aware the lockdown process led to us postponing all of our programme which involved physically meeting up. I am pleased to report that the committee has risen to the challenge of providing an alternative programme delivered via the web. We have scheduled events about storytelling, creativity, processing and book making with many more events in the planning. One month into the lockdown a very high percentage of the total RPS events organised by the special interest groups are from the Landscape SIG. I would like to thank my fellow committee members for rising to the challenge and providing an excellent programme.

Inevitably a change of this magnitude has raised some questions amongst the members. I think it worthwhile setting out some of what you can expect going forward:

►•Events with speakers are limited to 100 participants. This is due to some practical limitations around email and video conferencing but also to ensure we do not expose our speaker's material to an unlimited audience thus leaving them with no market once lockdown ends. Regrettably recording of speakers will not be permitted due to copyright issues. Some speakers will provide a slide deck afterwards but the decision to do this is up to the individual speaker.

►•Processing events are for small groups of people, this is because the events involve dialogue between the leader and the participants and this does not work in a large group over a video link. We have received some requests for observers to join the sessions but on balance have decided against it as we feel it detracts

from the learning experience of the attendees.

►•We close the booking for webinars 48 hours before the event (unless it sells out) and you will be emailed a link shortly after the booking closes. Please follow the instructions in the email and test out the link ensuring you have the software installed well before the event commences. A panicked email to the organiser one minute before the event starts will not put you in a great space to enjoy the event.

A recent survey has shown that up to 70% of people feel stressed and anxious as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. This has coincided with a noticeable rise in terse emails, which lack even basic courtesies, being sent to committee members. This is neither warranted nor acceptable. We are all volunteers, doing our very best to deliver an exciting, interesting and varied programme in difficult circumstances and our results show we have risen to this challenge.

These terse emails are usually in response to an irritation such as finding an event is fully booked or that the timing of an event does not suit the author's schedule. The committee members have a right to carry out their functions in a respectful environment and this poor behaviour needs to stop. I ask that you all heed this generic request.

Richard Ellis  
Chair, Landscape SIG, RPS





Instagram  
#rpslandscape

The Landscape  
Group Instagram  
account is  
now live.

Tag #rpslandscape  
for a chance  
to be featured  
& don't forget  
to follow us.

## Winter Walk by Gerard Liston

*Thanks for the invite, Roger. I like the idea of seeing the landscape in wintry conditions - so may look out for the February walk'. That brief email at the end of September followed an invitation to repeat an RPS field trip among the hills of the South Pennines. That visit, earlier in the month, had involved half a dozen hardy photographers getting soaked in the morning before the sun appeared to illuminate the landscape ahead of drying out and a pub lunch at the nearby hilltop White House Inn. My wish to see the same area in 'wintry conditions' was granted in February.*

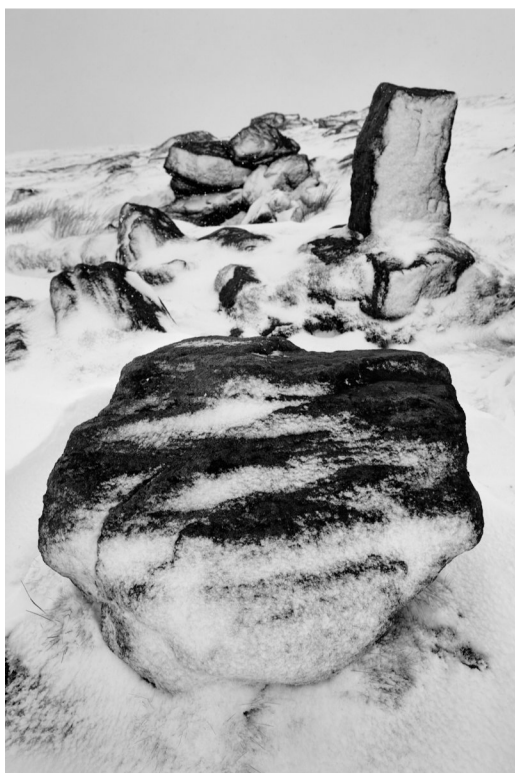


Photographs published in the December issue of the RPS Landscape Group newsletter showed how the group of photographers, led by local guide Roger Styles, captured something of the gritty beauty of the area in Autumn. Living just a few miles down the road, near Mytholmroyd, I am well aware of how lovely it is. Cut through by the Pennine Way, the Millstone Grit escarpment is nearly 500m above sea level and provides stunning views across to Oldham and beyond. As I set off to meet the group in February, I could see that the top was covered in snow. When I arrived at the top, it was near blizzard conditions.

Protecting yourself and keeping warm requires several layers of warm clothing, waterproof outers and a good pair of boots. Keeping snow from covering the camera lens largely involved taking pictures with the wind behind me and moving quickly before returning my hands into warm mitts. The tripod made a brief appearance, before being left in its bag and the camera firmly set at ISO 400.



I often cycle up the steep ascent from Littleborough, just down the valley, in warmer weather. The road winds its way up beneath the rocky outcrops through a few bends, but it is still steep. So, only 5 minutes into my wintry walk and dressed for an arctic expedition, I was astonished to see two lonely cyclists working their way up the hill. I didn't complain of the cold after that.



The path initially works its way alongside a drainage channel, so there were no route-finding problems. But you have to turn off this to walk up a stone-paved section – thought to be of Roman origin – which was completely obscured by the snow but was easy enough to follow up to the Aiggin Stone and cairn, which are said to mark the boundary between Yorkshire and Lancashire. Snow blowing from the East had created

sculptural effects on these and a fast shutter speed helped to stop movement of the snowflakes. I always travel light when it comes to photographic equipment: A Fujifilm XE-3 and two prime lenses of 16mm and 60mm. I really like the 'old school' shutter dial and lens-mounted aperture ring on the Fujifilm body, which makes use of the camera quick and intuitive in testing situations ... such as a blizzard on Blackstone Edge. The wide-angle was left attached most of the time since both this lens and the body cope well with wet conditions. Moving across to the top of Blackstone Edge from the boundary stone involved stepping through knee-deep snowdrifts and into boggy ground obscured by the coating of snow, so not being weighed down by equipment was an advantage.



The view across to Oldham may have been completely hidden by mist and snow, but this added to the drama and aerial perspective. It was exactly what I'd hoped for in my email to Roger. Consistently facing West to avoid having to clean drops from the lens, I found various angles and vistas – some of which were close to what



had filled my viewfinder in the Autumn: Monumental blocks of stone and gaps through the outcrops. Close-ups of icicles dripping from heather across exposed peat and an isolated walker's stile. The only shots that required a change of lens (in the car before heading across the other side of the hillside) were when the snow stopped to reveal clouds skimming across the top of a distant wind farm.



I only joined the RPS last summer, so the Autumn walk organised by Roger

Styles was a great opportunity to meet other members and gain both inspiration and feedback. The Winter walk was a stroke of serendipity that resulted in images I could not have planned. Both have motivated me to get outside and capture more of the landscape on my doorstep.

*All images © Gerard Liston*



## Storm Dennis and a Photographic trip to Torridon

By  
Kevin Gibbin

A friend and I had a relatively long-planned trip to Torridon for a week of Scottish winter photography in mid-February only for this to be beset by a variety of tribulations. Firstly my wife was admitted to hospital shortly before we were due to travel and I then found myself unable to leave her at home as originally planned. Eventually the solution presented itself - she would come with us as the cottage we had booked for the two of us was in reality for four; job done and travel back on schedule. Next snag - my friend suddenly needed urgent medical investigations which involved *inter alia* a scan which was scheduled at short notice on the Monday of the week we were due to be in Scotland. Again a solution - he would travel up by train on the Tuesday and I would collect him from Achnasheen station, half an hour from the cottage.



Then there was Storm Dennis....

But no - this was not the last of the tribulations; on the Monday the scan date was changed to the Wednesday, effectively militating against my friend travelling!

In the event my wife and I spent the week in Torridon, she continuing her recovery and I going out on photo jaunts as conditions allowed.

So how did a week in Scotland during one of the winter's worst storms work out? The answer was really quite well despite Dennis's best efforts, or perhaps because of them.

This was definitely not a week of clear

blue skies and crisp Scottish snow although there was a dusting of snow on the tops and occasional glimpses of blue. But all photographers have to make the best of what is available and hopefully the attached images show what is possible with a bit of effort and perseverance - and a warm car to shelter in at times of worst conditions. The weather theme of the week was wind and rain with hail and sleet thrown in at times for good measure - oh and there were a few clear periods with just wind!



Perhaps the biggest problem was keeping the lens clear of rain and there is no simple solution to this; an umbrella would have been an impossibility in view of the horizontally driving rain, even had the umbrella survived the wind. So what is the answer to this conundrum? Partly expediency - get set up and then quickly uncover the lens and hope; partly planning - don't take pictures into the wind; partly also patience - wait for the weather window.



Often when out in bad weather I think of advice from Doug Chinnery, with whom I have been on a number of



workshops, that these are often the best conditions for making images. Certainly that advice has proved itself in the past. Another bit of Chinnery practical advice which I have adopted is to keep a large chamois leather in my camera bag to cover the camera and lens when in severely wet weather. A really good tip - thanks Doug for both items.



The other bit of invaluable photographic folk-lore is to change what you target as subjects to suit the conditions. Water and waterfalls are difficult subjects in sunny/ bright conditions but make ideal ones when skies are overcast. Mountains can be impressive even in stormy weather. Mist can enhance some subjects. Storm squalls can be really photogenic but a refuge before they actually hit is an even better idea. Sometimes poor conditions suit the production of monochrome images. Which brings me on to processing. Even though many of the mountain photographs were taken in relatively flat light there was still quite a range of contrast due to the snow on the tops so HDR became the order of the day. I use Lightroom as my main software with Photoshop for a limited number of tasks; all the images for this article were "developed" in Lightroom with Nik Silver Efex for the mono conversions.

So what images did I manage to obtain from my week? I hope that the attached examples provide food for thought and exemplify some of the thoughts in the above paragraph.







All images copyright Kevin Gibbin



Do you want to  
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Do you want to  
improve your  
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Join one of our friendly  
photography circles:  
eCritique, print or  
processing.

Contact: Fiona McCowan  
[fiona.rps@icloud.com](mailto:fiona.rps@icloud.com)

Landscape Group



## SOMERSET HIGH TIDES PHOTOGRAPHY COURSE

### Report By Patrick Smith

We met up at the Tesco car park in Burnham on Sea and set off in convoy to our first destination – the sandy beach at Burnham.

The weather was forecast as being quite fair with a possibility of some showers. The one bonus was that the winds had dropped - which was something that was a welcome change from recent stormy conditions.

We set off, clambering up the sandy path with our cameras and tripods and slithered down the other side of the dunes and onto the beach – to be confronted by the strange sight of the iconic Victorian wooden lighthouse, dating back to 1832, standing alone in the sands.

With words of guidance from our group leader Colin Jarvis as to the best camera set up and a warning that the tide was coming in quite fast, we started to frame our shots. It was only a matter of 10 minutes before some of us realised that we needed to rescue camera bags, carelessly left on the sand, from the incoming tide, and that a position that had seemed promising to take a first shot was interrupted by the incoming tide about to reach the top of our wellies!

Having adjusted our positions we were able to get some photos of the lighthouse with long exposure and some good light to work with.

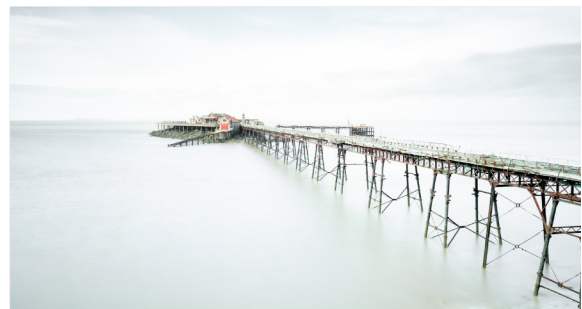
Image by Lindsay  
Southgate



We were then given instructions of our next location in Weston-super-Mare where we wanted to catch the high tide as it started to turn.

The location of the Marine lake at the north end of the town has a slightly bizarre causeway that creates the tidal lake and runs from the shore to a peninsula that sports a range of diverse architecture. At high tide the posts that mark the line of the causeway are just appearing from the water and give an interesting, abstract photo opportunity. As the tide recedes there were other options to photograph – with care, as the freshly exposed jetty and rocks can be slippery.

We welcomed the chance to stop at a café for a break and then move a short way up the coast to the Victorian Birnbeck pier, the only pier in the country which links the mainland to an island – now closed and in disrepair – which makes it a unique and interesting subject to photograph.



Our final destination was a 25-minute drive further north to Clevedon, to photograph the only Victorian Grade 1 pier left in the UK. This elegant structure has long been on my wish list to visit.

The options to photograph the pier were slightly hampered by the steps down to the beach having been closed off to the public, so we looked for alternative angles to shoot the subject. Though these were limited we all managed to achieve some success in achieving our goal.





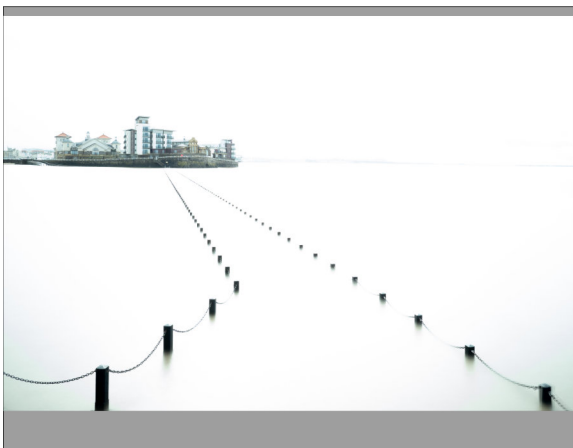
Image by Lindsay Southgate

We then attempted to go onto the pier for some some final long exposure shots but were told that tripods were not allowed on the pier. As a result, we decided to resort to visiting one of the cafes along the front and [some of us] indulged in an excellent Somerset cream tea as compensation!

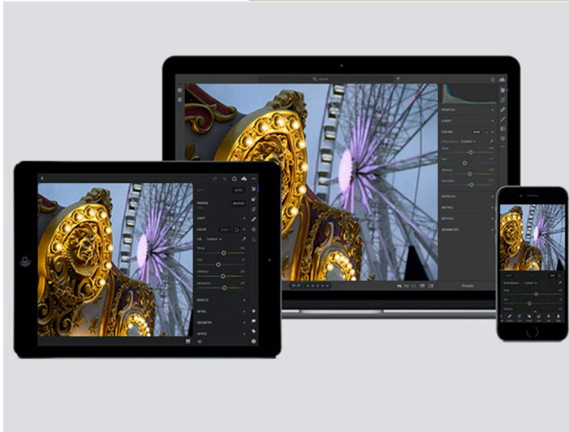
A great day of photography was enjoyed by everyone on the course, helped enormously by Colin's expert advice and knowledge of the locations.



All images © Patrick Smith unless otherwise indicated



# Forthcoming Events



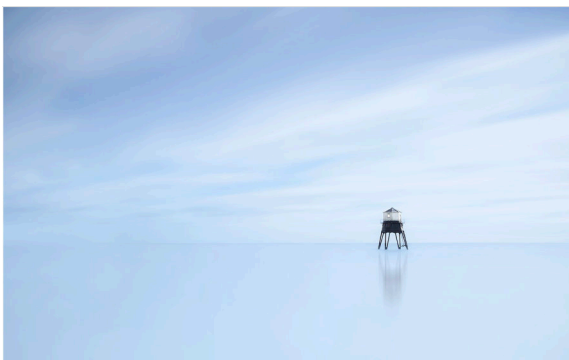
19 May 2020

**[How to be a road warrior with Lightroom](#)**



29 May 2020

**[Different approaches to processing images III](#)**



8,9,10,11 June 2020

**[Envisioning and creating fine art images](#)**



20 May 2020

**[Photography Quiz Night](#)**



1 June 2020

**[Online Portfolio Reviews with Sarah Howard](#)**



8 June 2020

**[Capturing mood and atmosphere in landscapes](#)**





13 June 2020

[Online portfolio review with Mark Banks](#)



15 June 2020

[Journey to an MA in photography](#)



24 June 2020

[Talking pictures with Chris Palmer FRPS](#)



24 July 2020

[Hyperbole, exaggeration and distortion with Steve Gosling](#)



# Webinars

## How to be a star participant

Like any new technology webinars come with their own etiquette – please follow the directions below. If everyone does this you will have a substantially more enjoyable meeting.

- When you receive your link to the webinar test it and make sure you have the software downloaded. There are a number of providers e.g. Zoom, GoToMeeting etc. Make sure you know how to turn off your video and microphone and how to turn on your speakers. There is a test function on Zoom which is accessed by clicking the arrow next to the microphone icon.
- Join the webinar 5 mins before it is due to start.
- Make sure you have muted your microphone and have your video turned off if you are joining a large presentation. If the host turns your microphone and video off please do not turn them back on.
- People tend to have far more problems accessing these events with mobile devices particularly phones so if possible please use a laptop or a desktop.
- Use the chat to let the host know if there is an issue or if you have a substantive question. Refrain from posting, “nice light”, or “beautiful capture” type comments to each image. The chat can either be on or off and if everyone posts comments like this it constantly flashes up on the screen and is distracting to other participants.

# Event Categories

Group A - Events where the event leader has a good knowledge of the location (e.g. good viewpoints, good subjects, good times of day, tides if relevant etc.) and will have ideas about what to do in case of unhelpful weather or light conditions, but does not wish to offer any advice on photography skills or techniques. These events are usually led by volunteer members of the landscape group.

Group B - Events where the event leader has a good knowledge of the location (as in Group A) but is also willing to offer general technical support and advice to inexperienced photographers. The event leader is NOT expected to be an expert but should be sufficiently experienced to pass on knowledge of the basics. These events are usually led by volunteer members of the landscape group.

Group C - Events that focus on a particular skill or technique (such as long exposures, composition or night photography) and/or on getting the best from a particular location. The event leader will have good location knowledge to ensure that the best is made of the prevailing conditions and will be a skilled landscape photographer able to offer tuition at all levels. These events are usually led by professionals but sometimes by volunteer members of the landscape group.

Group D - Workshops that primarily focus on technique where location is a secondary consideration. These may take place indoors or outdoors. The event leader may have limited knowledge of the location but will be experienced and skilled in the topic of the workshop.

# QUICK LINKS

Easy links to our pages on the RPS website

[Landscape Group Homepage](#)

[What we do](#)

[Events](#)

[Publications](#)

[Committee](#)

[Resources](#)