



The
Royal
Photographic
Society

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travel group

travel log

APRIL 2011

ISSUE 58



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by Pia Thommes, LRPS

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Chairman's Chatter

The current turmoil in North Africa and the Middle East may be causing some people to reconsider their travel plans over the next few months and others to consider staying closer to home. It makes me realise that perhaps the 'world is no longer your oyster' as it once was, and coupled with economic hard times, some plans will have to be curtailed. But I don't want to sound gloomy as there is still plenty to explore in our own backyard, as we hope to demonstrate at the Spring Weekend where we have introduced a walk in one of the Derbyshire Dales near Buxton. How many of us, I wonder, really know our own country and have explored it from Land's End to John O'Groats?

The Spring Weekend will soon be upon us and I do hope many of you will be able to attend. We have endeavoured to make it an event that allows more of you to show your images because, rightly or wrongly, I think there needs to be more opportunities for this to happen. After all, why take photographs if all that happens is that they languish on your computer (I'm just as guilty as everyone else on this score!). So it would also be good if more people loaded

some of their images onto the Group's website and shared their travel experiences with others.

This issue of Travel Log seems to have an American bias (a relatively safe travel destination for the moment!) with two articles about trips in New Mexico and Whale Watching in Baja California but there is also one on a well-loved place in Cornwall. What is particularly pleasing is that two of the contributors are first-timers and I hope this will encourage others who have not submitted articles and photographs before to do so previously now. As I have said on many occasions, no articles, no Travel Log!! But this will become a headache for my successor as Editor, Colin Howard, who has very kindly agreed to take over from the next issue. Please do support him.

Finally, you will notice a report on the results of the questionnaire which was undertaken quite a while ago now. The Committee has started to address some of the issues raised – our aim is to ensure the Travel Group offers its members activities in which they can participate and we are always open to new ideas.

Liz Rhodes



Cressbrook Dale in May, by Jonathan Ratnage

SPRING WEEKEND

14-15th MAY 2011,

Buxton

Derbyshire

*preceded by a walk in
Cressbrook Dale on Friday
13th*

**see Back Page for the
Programme**

The results of the questionnaire will be the subject of further discussion at the Spring Weekend in May

Members Questionnaire

--Richard Lewis reports ...

The Travel Group Committee commissioned a questionnaire at the end of 2009 to better understand members' specific wishes pertaining to the group, to develop programmes accordingly and ensure on-going value for membership. It covered several aspects of the group: objectives, why members join, the Spring Weekend, trips, new activities, our website, *Travel Log*, and preparedness to help out. Out of a total group membership of nearly 300, 41 provided responses. Key findings are as follows, together with committee plans to address them.

Objectives. Nearly 50% thought that these were being met "more or less" or better. Key suggestions included: increasing opportunities to improve knowledge/exchange views, refine our programme of activities (consider a Spring Weekend in miniature), initiate discussions on the definition of Travel Photography, provide advice on Distinctions A & F. Liz Rhodes discussed this in Issue 57's Chairman's Chatter, and further details will be made available in due course. For the moment, a number of trips are being planned and discussions are being held with other Groups about joint events focussing on practical advice for obtaining a Distinction.

Why join? By far, members' main reason was to improve their travel photography, followed by participation in trips. Key challenges are to identify opportunities to help a diverse range of members achieve their improvements, and to plan trips that are more widely attractive and affordable. As mentioned above, these two issues are currently being addressed.

Spring Weekend. With only 47 members attending in 2009, the survey covered the event programme, venue, speakers, new topics. Most felt the venue change from Cheltenham to Buxton was successful (the largest single grouping thought it "very successful"). Traditional top-

ics were all considered successful: Main Lectures, Members' Talks, How I got my ARPS, Joan Wakelin Trophy, 15x5 competition, Annual Projected Image competition, Members' Print exhibition. All scored more than 80% for being interesting/useful. Main Lectures and Members' Talks dominated as candidates for "Do more" activities. As is the way with surveys, paradoxically, "Do less" activities were led by 15x5, How I got my ARPS, Members' Talks, and Joan Wakelin, although none scored more than 25%. "Other opportunities" included some interesting suggestions: more practical talks by practising photographers, AV presentations, outdoor sessions, more advice on ARPS and FRPS applications. Some of these points have been taken into account when planning the upcoming Spring Weekend.

Trips. Overseas trips were generally thought enjoyable by the small number that participated - timing and cost being the main reasons others did not. British trips were similarly considered enjoyable. A large number of destinations were suggested for the future. Aline Hopkins has developed some proposals featuring the most popular, which were outlined on the back cover of this issue of *Travel Log*.

New Activities. There were substantial numbers of respondents in favour of an annual exhibition and travel distinction workshops. These are being considered by the committee and proposals will appear on the website in due course.

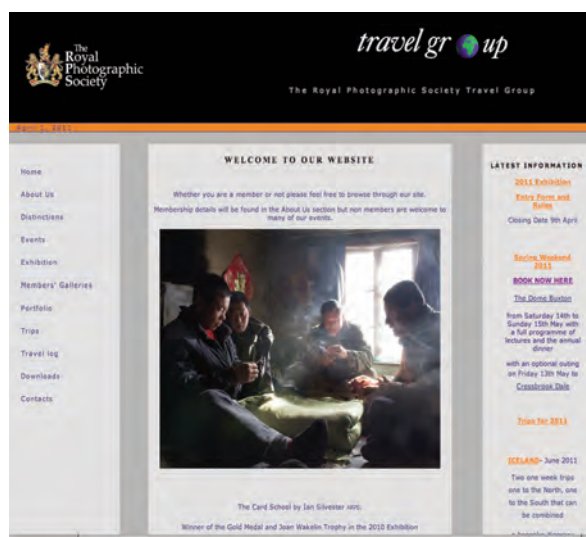
Website. This does not seem to enjoy widespread regular use, but the vast majority think it is good at getting information across. Mainly, people visit to see what's new. Suggestions for improve-

ment include adding a members' forum to seek advice and exchange information, more members' images, and proactive notification of changes. However, it would be great if more members of the Group put up some images on the website so that it becomes more lively and interesting.

Travel Log. This is widely considered to be successful. Changes suggested included a shift from members' holiday experiences toward more emphasis on their photography, provision of travel advice, and offering an online version. A new editor is to take over in the summer who will look to improve the content.

Helping Out. The most favoured offerings were writing articles for *Travel Log* and providing images for uploading onto the group's website. Despite many pleas over time, however, very few members do come forward with articles and photographs so ways need to be found of encouraging more to do so.

The results, and committee plans to address them, will be discussed with members at this year's Spring Weekend. Based on feedback received then and from the membership at large, the committee will refine its plans and progressively roll out changes as soon as feasible.



<http://www.travelgroup.rps.org>

The Baja California Experience

Alex Stephens, ARPS



A bachelor's pad!

Mark Carwardine, a British zoologist, writer, photographer and broadcaster, is involved as most freelance professionals are in a variety of business activities. His business manager is Rachel Aston, a former features editor of the BBC's *Wildlife* magazine. Our group (27 of us – the majority being women) arrived last February in San Diego, to take part in one of these enterprises - a 14 day wildlife cruise. Rachel and Mark conduct this cruise annually aboard the 88 foot *Spirit of Adventure* (a converted dive boat) along the Pacific Coast of Baja California, a peninsula parallel to the coast of north west Mexico, continuing round the southern end into the Sea of Cortez.

The main interest for the majority of guests was the large variety of whales, dolphins, seals and sea lions that occur there, but we also

saw many birds and some fish (including Hammerhead and Thresher sharks). The lucky few with dive qualifications were able to swim with the sea lions.

After settling on board we met in the ship's lounge for a screening of Mark's photographs of the wildlife we were likely to see the following day. This was a treat that became a regular after-dinner event in the days to come.

Early next morning we arrived in the Mexican port of Ensenada where we cleared customs and collected our Mexican tourist cards and permits. Not long after resuming our voyage we began to encounter the wildlife we had come to see. On the horizon a distant whale blew; a sunfish slowly floated past, and as we ploughed on we caught up with a vast gathering of adult and juvenile long-beaked common dolphins (esti-

estimated to number around 200). When they spotted our presence they came over and surrounded the *Spirit of Adventure* so that they might demonstrate their playful skills in porpoising (skimming out and back into the water), swooping hither and thither under the surface, and riding the bow wave. We quickly found that dolphins are the most difficult of animals to photograph because of their speed and unpredictability as to direction. Mark advised that pointing the camera in the general direction of

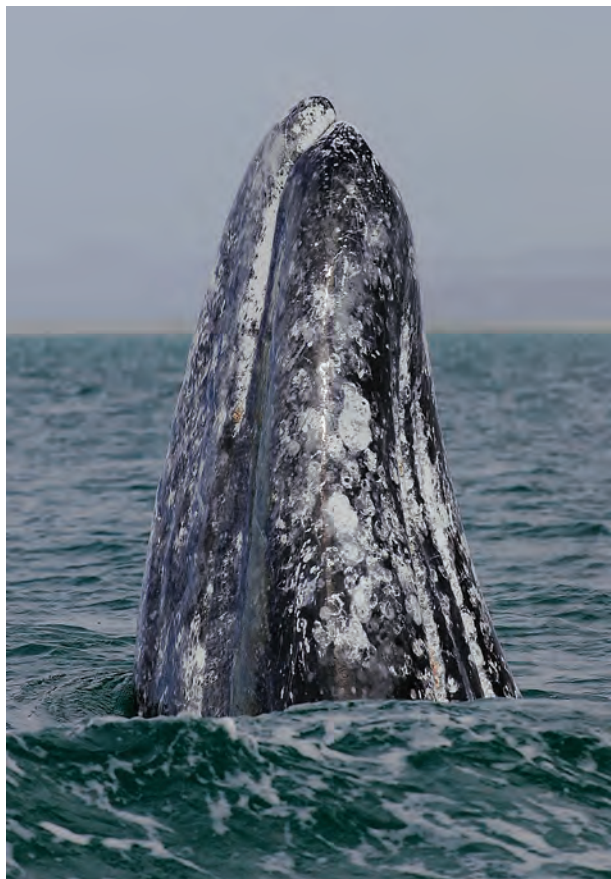
a group and firing away with the motor drive was as an effective a technique as any. Surprisingly, this worked (sometimes!).

The following day we landed on the island of Isla de San Benitos to see the large numbers of northern elephant seals that occupy some of its beaches. They live in groups of up to twenty females with one huge male, whose main occupation was to prevent any of his harem from slipping away and stopping other males from usurping his regal position. It was busy work. We did discover one large, but un-ambitious bachelor seal, who scorned normal behaviour. He had adopted the dusty centre of a nearby fishing village as his bachelor pad. San Benitos also offered a small colony of harbour seals, a number of ospreys nesting on offshore stacks, and a few small flowers and cacti as possible subjects for our cameras.

On the third full day at sea we continued south into San Ignacio Lagoon, where we anchored for the next three days. These days proved to be the highlight of the cruise. Two or three times a day, between coffee snacks and lunch, we transferred to one of three 22 foot 'pangas' (aluminium outboard motorboats), which were operated by three local fishermen. The fishermen are skilled in bringing the pangas close to individual animals among the scores of grey whales that blow, breach, spy-hop, and generally hang out in the lagoon. The particular whales we were looking for are called 'friendlies'. They approach boats and 'nose' them, expecting to be patted and stroked. If one's petting skills do not



A young northern elephant seal



The head of a grey whale

come up to expectations, the friendlies will go off in search of more satisfying experiences. We observed this behaviour late on the third day as my panga returned to the *Spirit of Adventure* after a barren afternoon. One of the other pangas had attracted something of interest, which turned out to be a female grey and her youngster. The whales and passengers seemed to be enjoying a good experience so we headed over to join them. On our arrival the

whales came over to check us over. This turned out to be my best experience with friendlies. They swam around the boat and dived under the keel, then surfaced alongside. As I dangled my hand in the water the youngster swam along the length of the boat, its back brushing the back of my hand. I was surprised how soft it was. If any experience merits the word unforgettable it was surely these three days. The opportunity to observe and photograph these huge animals close enough to see the detail and texture of their skin, and the barnacles that grow on it, is rare.

After leaving San Ignacio, we continued south into Magdalena Bay, well known for the large number of humpback whales found there. We were not sheltered from the Pacific swell, so the pangas carried by the *Spirit of Adventure* could not be used. Instead we used the main and upper decks for shooting which offered our cameras a welcome new point of view. The skipper assumed the responsibility of steering the vessel to positions where we would have

good views of the humpbacks for their brief appearances on the surface. Since they spend much of their time below the surface, this was not an easy task. However, to supplement his stalking skills he had the aid of a helpful technology – sonar. This gave him information on the direction and distance of the whales from the ship as they rose from the depths. Most humpbacks have a white underside, and, because of our height above the waves they could be seen before they surfaced. This gave us a good chance to catch them as they broke the surface.

On the seventh day at sea, we rounded the southern end of Baja Sud and entered the Sea of Cortez. Shortly afterwards we encountered a group of 15 humpbacks. This presented us with the unusual experience of seeing numbers of whales on the surface at the same time. The next performance was staged by a group of mobula rays (called tortillas by the local fishermen). These 3 foot wide rays, related to mantas, eat tiny shrimps visible on the surface. They scooted along the surface flapping their wings and leaping high into the air to perform one or two cartwheels before falling back.

In the evening we anchored near the tall sandstone cliffs of San Jose Island. At Mark's suggestion we were on deck early next morning to witness the formation of a glorious sunrise. The dull grey cliffs of the previous day reflected an intense orange colour that provided a superb background to passing flights of pelicans. After breakfast we landed on the island to find ancient sea shells embedded in the rock at the bottom of the cliffs, and to walk along a pebbled shore strewn with the desiccated remains of exotic reef fish.

Our final two full days were spent cruising the Sea of Cortez photographing and checking the identity of whales as we came across them. In one afternoon we added fin, sperm and blue whales to our growing list. Later a blue female together with its offspring dived at our approach. The skipper followed their descent on the sonar and announced over the ship's 'tannoy' that they had reached a depth of 400 feet and were feeding on a shoal of prawns 60 foot thick.

As our cruise approached its



Porpoises at play alongside

end the skipper turned *Spirit of Adventure's* bow towards Cabo San Lucas, Baja California's southernmost port, where we were to disembark. On the way we called at a couple of large isolated barren rocks; home to some nesting pelicans and Californian sea lions. The experienced divers entered the water here, together with Mark and the skipper, to swim with the sea lions.

I cannot recommend this cruise highly enough. The well-planned arrangements; the unstinted help and attention of Rachel, Mark and the crew; the excellent food and wonderful experiences were universally superb and enjoyed by all.

Rachel can be contacted at
Rachel@markcarwardine.com



The Spirit of Adventure

Then and Now...

Colin Howard



Shanghai, looking East over the HuangPo River, 1984 ...

How many of us have old images languishing in our archives of favorite places visited over many years? One of the fascinations of travel photography is to compare our old photographs with more contemporary images, revealing changes and developments, some subtle enough not to be seen on first viewing but representing the ever-changing environment, whether it be by the weather or by mankind. Here in these two images the development over time is stark. Both were taken from almost the same spot on the world-famous Bund in Shanghai.

Looking east across the River in 1985 all that could be seen were old "go-downs" and small businesses of what is now known as the Pudong area. Now the scene is very different: the Oriental Pearl Tower is recognized worldwide, iconic of all the city of Shanghai has become - dynamic, vibrant and a world class city for business.

Do you have two images that record changes to your favorite place over time? Send them in with up to 250 words describing the place - be they of city, countryside, or even of your own street!



... and 25 years later!

Boats Beaches and Buskers:

*a Sunny Week in
Cornwall*

Andrew Evans, LRPS



Cornwall, the Nation's favorite

St Ives has long been known as the jewel in Cornwall's crown and now it has been voted the UK's best family holiday destination by *Coast* magazine. Like many people last year, we decided to take a holiday in Britain. Renting a house for a week in nearby Carbis Bay proved to be a good option. It had the added advantage that we could take Pepper our schnauser puppy.

There are good road and rail links to Cornwall and as we crossed the Severn Bridge from South Wales to the West country we kept our fingers crossed that the glorious June weather would hold out for the week.

The house was wonderful,

commanding great views out over the bay. You are sometimes taking a risk with self-catering but Beth had done her homework well on the internet and we were all delighted by her find. Our base for the week was great.

St Ives in South West Cornwall is renowned for the quality of its light and artists have long been drawn to the area we now had on our doorstep. Indeed Turner made drawings of the town as early as 1811 and later Whistler found inspiration here. Now there are over twenty galleries to be found in the old town featuring everything from sea painting to jewellery design.

The Tate St Ives has won a growing reputation and offers many different exhibitions throughout the year. Shows featuring both emerging artists and the best of the St Ives School. If you have not been before it is well worth a visit and the gallery's cafe can be recommended.

Another attraction for art lovers is the Barbara Hepworth museum and sculpture garden. This famous artist is brought to life in the house where her studio has been preserved and the garden is a great setting for her work. Also worth visiting is the Leach Pottery established in St Ives since 1920. The famous historic work of Bernard Leach is on display and there is a modern kiln producing ceramics and tableware that can be purchased in the shop.

A stroll around the town can soon give you a feel for the artistic roots of St Ives. The boutique shops and quaint cottages are well worth exploring. The coastal path from Carbis Bay to the town offers great views and its good to breathe in the fresh sea air. The great open vistas out to sea had me reaching for my camera.

I had decided to take with me my Canon Powershot G10 to capture a gentle impression of the area without being weighed down with equipment. Two 2gb memory cards and a battery charger allowed me to work in tune with the pace of a relaxing family holiday.



Summer lunch

There are several advantages in working with a quality digital compact. The first is that you can travel light without heavy tripod and backpack to lug around. Another advantage is that a small camera allows you to remain inconspicuous. The early photojournalists were attracted to their Leica rangefinder cameras for this reason. With nearly everyone clicking away with digital cameras one more does not attract attention. As well as the ability to check images on the screen as you go along you are also far more likely to have your camera with you if it is small and compact. The image quality is also good enough for considered photography.

St Ives is becoming well-known for the fine cuisine available in the area. Self-catering gives you more opportunities to eat out compared to staying in a hotel. Seafood is abundant and you can find everything from Moroccan cuisine to traditional fish and chips.

One of the highlights of our trip was a visit to Porthminster Beach Cafe which the readers of *The Times* voted the best seaside restaurant in the U.K. On a balmy Wednesday evening we sat outside and enjoyed a great meal on the terrace. The location was out of this world and the food proved excellent. With fish a speciality the sea bream proved a good choice and the desserts were wonderful.

A day-trip to Padstow on the North Cornwall coast was also blessed with great weather. Foodies are attracted to the picturesque harbour and crabs and lobsters caught out in the bay can be enjoyed at table later on the same day. Rick Stein the celebrity chef has four restaurants in Padstow as well as a cookery school and a gift shop.

Even mid-week the town was very busy and we were very lucky to find a parking place near the harbour. I always like to photograph street entertainers and you can build

up a local tableau around them if you are patient enough. People watching and candid photography go well together. Fish and chips never taste better than when enjoyed out of paper. Cornish pasties also make great lunch-time snacks especially when warm.

Our week was passing all too quickly and on Friday afternoon we took a drive over to Porthleven. The church at the end gives the town its interesting skyline. It is usually a quiet place and it was nice to wander in peace. A Cornish clotted cream tea was a good way to round off a pleasant visit.

Our week in the beautiful June sunshine was time well spent. On Saturday morning we left the house relaxed, having recharged our batteries. It had been a great holi-

day and ample proof that when you get great weather there are so many places to visit in Britain, all ready to be explored and enjoyed.

St Ives Tourist Information Centre
Tel: 01736 796297



Porthleven



Summer busking

The Different Faces of New Mexico

Pia Thommes, LRPS

My partner Dave and I tend to take a road holiday in the US once a year, often around Easter. Last year Easter was relatively early, so we decided to spend the time in the southern state of New Mexico, hoping that the weather would be more clement than further north. I had been in New Mexico many years ago and remembered well the beautiful light, the clear sky and the altitude.

We started in the capital Albuquerque and drove west from there to Acoma Pueblo (Sky City), one of the oldest inhabited places in the US, founded in the 11th century. After following a single track road from the interstate into the Indian land we ended up at the visitors centre. Access to Acoma is only via a guided tour. Access to the pueblo was difficult as the faces of the mesa are sheer but these days a road leads to the top and a minibus takes the visitors. It's a very quiet place, very few people live there permanently now and only women with a few stalls selling pottery were on the streets.

All around were beautiful views towards amazing rock formations. The walk back into the valley led via a narrow canyon with beautifully sculptured rocks, giving the feel that feet had walked down here for hundreds of years. From here it was a long drive through a mainly arid area to get us closer to our destinations in the south of the state.

This was one of the occasions when looking at the guide book paid



Mission San Esteban Rey, Acoma Pueblo

off, otherwise we would have missed the small town of Lincoln. Its main claim to fame is that it was the stage for a shoot out between several gangs including the infamous Billy the Kid. Today its reputation stems from the fact that little seems to have changed since those days; the shooting is over, but otherwise it could still be the mid-19th century. However, from a photographic point of view it's a paradise, the old houses are well maintained, the gardens tended and the neighbourhoods very much alive. In these early spring days the trees were still without leaves, but the sky was blue and the light has the intrinsic quality that New Mexico is famous for.

After spending several film rolls and memory cards – both of us were shooting film and digital in parallel – we ventured back across the mountains to reach the first highlight of our trip, White Sands National Monument near Alamogordo. By a whim of nature erosion of the nearby mountains led to the formation of the largest gypsum dune field in the world, which covers over 300 square miles of southern New Mexico. Of course humans found an appropriate use for this beautiful, but uninhabited area and it was here that in July 1945 the first atomic bomb was detonated. It's a fantastic landscape to explore: walking in the dunes is quite difficult, but in the valleys the ground is firm and quick progress can be made. As for photography, that's a different matter. The white sand causes the same kind of exposure problems that one encounters with

snow, in particular when the sun is high in the sky. In order to protect our gear from the very fine dust we covered our cameras with rain protectors. But when the sun was going down the whole area was bathed in golden light and the full moon added a magical sheen.

Another day's driving through a variety of mountainous and arid areas brought us to the Texan border to what Dave has added as a 'must' to our list of destinations, the Carlsbad Caverns in the Guadalupe Mountains. It is one of the largest cave systems of the world and visitors entering through the natural entrance must climb 230 metres into the big show cave, a natural limestone chamber



Traditional Native American Pottery

full of stalactites and stalagmites. Again photography faced specific challenges, especially since we couldn't set up tripods in the narrow passages, but also couldn't prop up the cameras on the fragile formations. This is where the digital cameras came to good use with ISOs cranked up and noise reduction at the highest setting. Changing the white balance in the camera created particularly interesting light effects. We spent hours looking at the stones seeing features in their rugged surfaces and trying to photograph them.

So then we were at the southernmost end of New Mexico, hundreds of miles from our next destination in the Rocky Mountains. In the evening light we turned the car north and followed the straightest of roads. Dave was driving and there were stretches when the only evidence that we were moving at all were the changing numbers on the gauge. We started playing the game 'guess how far it is to the next pylon?' and came up with 23 miles. We spent the night in a deserted place on the old route 66 and next day crossed the Rocky Mountains in snow at about 9500 ft – it could not have been more different from the dust swept desert. Finally we reached Taos, a town renowned for its art galleries, the old adobe church that Ansel Adams captured on film and the nearby pueblo.



Carlsbad Caverns

Unfortunately, the occupants of the pueblo were in their annual retreat period and therefore not open to visitors, but we spent a couple of days exploring the Rio Grande valley and the surrounding mountains. This included Ghost Ranch, an area of red sandstone, which inspired Georgia O'Keeffe to paint her brightly coloured images of the West – equally well suited for photography.

Finally we took the side routes towards Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Santa Fe was intriguing through its art galleries and beautifully coherent architecture. From there the route took us to another hidden gem, Bandelier National Monument. The

dramatic cliffs of Frijoles Canyon were created from the ash of massive volcanic eruptions and ancestral pueblo people shaped them into houses and storage areas, which gave us amazing opportunities for exploration. From there it was only a few miles to famous Los Alamos National Laboratory, the birthplace of the first atomic bomb and these days with a very interesting museum.

And then this really was the end of another road trip in the American West, crowned by a last excellent steak in Albuquerque old town.



White Sands National Monument

Must see ... London Street Photography

Taking photographs in the street is often an essential part of travel photography in towns and cities. This genre of photography is undergoing somewhat a Renaissance despite the difficulties posed by over-interpretation of anti-terrorist legislation combined with public sensitivity to the use of cameras in public places. Yet photographs of everyday scenes of people going about their business acquire a historical interest as years pass. This exhibition pulls together a fascinating record of London's communities over a period almost coincident with the developing of the medium as an accessible tool of record.

The collection of over 200 prints contains the work of over 70 photographers and pictorially illustrates the development of London

over the past 150 years into the vibrant multicultural centre it is today. It is fascinating to note just how sharp and clear many of the early prints are, often with subtle movement due to the inevitable slow shutter speeds in use at the time adding a certain dynamism to the final image. Having spent my childhood and teenage years in the East End, these images have a certain personal resonance. I remember well the thick smogs blanketing the city for days on end but life went on. Street life in London has always revolved around its many small businesses and street markets, giving localities a strong sense of community. Work and leisure were equally centred on the street where people lived, with Londoners rarely moving out of their home district for most of their lives. Sadly this era has passed, driven by redevelopment of run down areas and the all-embracing need to accommodate more and more cars.

But it is the photographs from the early decades of the 20th Century that held my attention longest. Looked at individually, they are lacking in formality and the normal rigors of composition, but collectively they give a record of how very different life in the city was a hundred years ago: manual labour

was very much in evidence and the iconic horse-drawn carts and buses somehow give a far greater sense of bustle than ever is conveyed by pictures of modern vehicles.

The exhibition is complemented by two audiovisual presentations further illustrating the work and technique of present-day street photographers. Telling is the comment that we have a whole generation of children not captured on street images owing to the laudable concern as to child welfare, but perhaps this omission will create a gap in our visual knowledge of modern street life for future generations.

This exhibition has proved very popular, attracting long queues at weekends so it is best to go mid-week if you can. The venue is easy to find, being close to the Barbican Centre in the City of London. A catalogue is available of the prints on display: at approximately £15 this represents good value for money, especially given that entrance is free! This is a "Must see" exhibition for all fascinated by street life. And afterwards you can enjoy the rest of the museum's absorbing exhibits outlining how our capital city developed from Roman times to the present day.

Colin Howard.

London Street Photography 1860-2010

is showing at the Museum of London until 4th September, 2011.

Admission free.

Museum of London,
150 London Wall
City of London
EC2Y 5HN

Tel. 0207 001 9844

<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk>

Nearest Underground station:
Barbican on the Circle/Metropolitan
Line



London Street Life by George Reid, copyright Museum of London

Portfolio Circle

The winner of Round 14

Captured from on deck, icebergs of all shapes and sizes were to be seen around off the coast of Greenland. It was very cold despite the bright sunlight, fortunately with no wind increasing the chill factor.

Tom Lloyd.



Thinking of submitting an article to *Travel Log*?

Articles are welcome on all aspects of travel photography.

Please send text as either Microsoft Word or rich text format (rtf) files: text accompanying full feature articles should contain no more than 750 words. Space constraints together with the need to organise articles on the printed page often necessitates some editing of text.

Up to 10 images should ideally be submitted as jpeg digital files, 300dpi resolution with each no larger than 5mb in size. If you wish to send slides or prints, these will be scanned but there may be some loss of image quality. All colour photographs will be converted into a CMYK colour profile prior to printing. Monochrome images are also welcome, again if possible as digital files. All images should be identified by your name and numbered in sequence: importantly, they should be accompanied by a legend for each photograph. It is a good idea to include a selection of both landscape and portrait format images to allow the maximum use of space on the printed page.

Finally, very important! Don't forget to include your email address and an evening telephone number.

All submissions should be sent on a CD-ROM to the Editor (see page 3).

Next submission deadline: 1st June 2011.

Tours Update

*Iceland,
Sri Lanka,
Costa Rica,
The Lakes*

Aline Hopkins



Solfario, Reykjavik

Firstly, may I thank everyone who got in touch following my last article, and especially those of you who have booked on one or more of the planned tours. I have had various suggestions for future tours and I hope people will chat with me about their ideas at the forthcoming weekend in Buxton.

Iceland

The final, detailed itineraries for both Iceland weeks can now be viewed on the Travel Group website.

The dates have been set as:

Week 1 – Saturday 18th June to Saturday 25th June; and

Week 2 – Saturday 25th June – Saturday 2nd July.

The wild and dramatic landscapes of Iceland are incredibly varied. Sheer cliffs rise up from sweeping black sands, with views of glaciers snaking down mountains in the distance. Alpine flowers abound (as do lupins – ask me about those in Buxton!), hundreds of bird species nest there in summer, and the coastal waters are home to various whale and dolphin species.

The highlights of the first week will include the World Heritage Site of Pingvellir, the Geysir geo-thermal area, and the incredible waterfalls of Gullfoss, Seljalandsfoss, and Skógafoss. We will see the Vatnajökull ice cap at

Skaftafell National Park and cross black sands to the rocky outcrop at Ingólfshöfði Cape, home to many birds including puffin, skua and eider duck. We will take a boat ride amongst the icebergs of Jökulsárlón Lagoon, explore the rugged rock formations of Vík, and take a whale watching trip from Reykjavik. As we explore we will see basalt columns, Icelandic horses, traditional Icelandic houses, rainbows created by the spray of waterfalls, tiny flowers, and we will undoubtedly meet various locals eager to share with us their tales of Vikings, Norse gods, elves and trolls.

In the north, snow-capped mountains flank picturesque fjords, where small fishing villages dot the coast. Highlights of the second week will include a visit to a seal colony and a whale watching trip from Húsavík. We can visit a renowned botanical garden in Akureyri, the ‘capital of the north’. We will see Goðafoss, the ‘waterfall of the gods’ and Europe’s largest waterfall, Dettifoss. At Lake Mývatn, we may see many bird species and take a dip in the Mývatn Nature Bath – an outdoor thermal pool. We will cross Sprengisandur, the moon-like centre of the island, to the colourful Landmannalaugar area. Finally we return to Reykjavik and visit the famous Blue Lagoon spa.

Reykjavik is a great place to explore, and no-one can go there

without photographing the Sólvarið at sunset. As we will be there in June, the sun will only set for a short while, giving opportunities for sunset and sunrise pictures in a short space of time!

Sri Lanka

Dates for this tour have been finalised as

20th November to 4th December.

KE Adventure’s Sri Lankan agents have developed a marvellous itinerary, which can be downloaded from the Travel Group website. This tour promises a heady mix of culture, history, scenery, and wildlife safaris.

Starting in the north, we will visit the rock fortress of Sigiriya and enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. We will see the ancient city of Polonnaruwa after taking breakfast on an island in the Parakrama Samudraya. In Minneriya National Park we will see elephants, and we will visit a spice garden in Matale en route to Kandy, where we will visit the Temple of the Tooth. Now in hill country, we will see tea plantations and look for birds on the Randenigala reservoir.

A walk across the Horton Plains will lead us to ‘Worlds End’, where cliffs fall away in a sheer vertical drop of a thousand feet, and see Bakers Falls. We will visit the Elephant Transit Home in

Udawalawe and take a jeep safari in Udawalawe National Park, which as well as elephants, is known for deer, wild boar, buffalo, jackal and leopard. We then move on to Yala National Park for another jeep safari. Yala is home to elephant, leopard, bear, crocodile and wild boar.

In the south we will stay at Weligama Bay, where we can expect to photograph stilt fishermen against the setting sun. From here we will take a whale watching trip and hope to see blue, sperm or even killer whales. Next we head for the Dutch Fort at Galle where the 17th century ramparts still stand. On our way to Colombo we will stop at a turtle hatchery in Kosgoda to see baby turtles before being released into the wild.

If you are interested in booking one of the above trips, please contact me for the booking link and password at alinehopkins@btinternet.net

Costa Rica

A land of misty cloud forests, mountain lodges, biological reserves, coastal plains, beaches, unique ecosystems, tropical lowlands, diverse flora and fauna, sloths, monkeys and peccaries. Home to over 800 species of bird, over 500 species of butterflies, 55 species of snakes and 120 species of mammals.

Add to this an active volcano, gardens, forest trails and a boat ride on the Tarcoles river and that just about covers our tour in Costa Rica.

The remarkably colourful and abundant birdlife is undoubtedly the major highlight of this trip, and perhaps the biggest challenge for photographers. Here we may see iridescent hummingbirds, resplendent quetzal, montezuma oropendolas, and tiger herons, not to men-

tion any number of flycatchers, finches, thrushes, robins, teals, grebes, jacanas, macaws, woodpeckers, owls, kingfishers, hawks, waders and many others.

As the tour is being led by ornithologist Keith Offord, founder of 'Wild Insights', we can expect to learn much about all these species during the tour.

The tour will run in February 2013. Half of the places have already been reserved so if you are interested in going contact me as soon as possible at the e-mail address above.

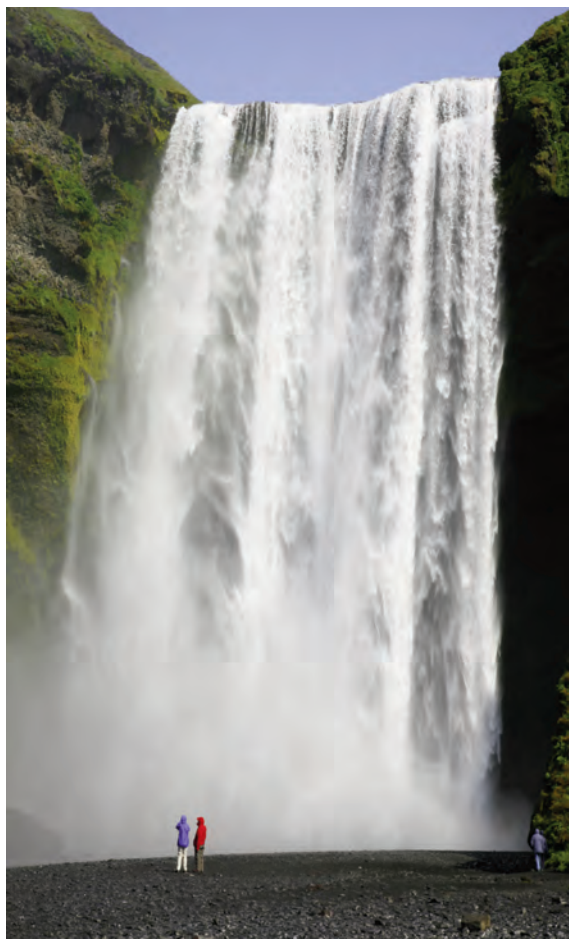
Keswick in Autumn

An informal, relaxed weekend in mid-October exploring the area around Keswick and photographing the autumn colours. Please e-mail me if you are interested in receiving further details.

See you in Buxton!

Aline Hopkins

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Skogafoss, Iceland

travel group

travel log

Publication dates

Travel Log is published by the Travel Group of the Royal Photographic Society three times a year: in April, August and December.

Contributions

Articles and letters are welcome on all aspects of travel and travel photography.

Copy for articles can be sent on CD or by email in Word, RTF or TXT format.

Illustrations can be sent as:

slides

prints - NOT inkjet

on CD or by email as scans or

camera files: files preferably at

300dpi resolution, JPEG for-

mat, maximum size 5mB.

Please enclose a separate list of legends for submitted images.

Note that in accordance with the requirements for travel photography distinctions composite images are unacceptable and will not be used.

Unless specifically requested material will not be returned.

Please send to the Editor at the address on page 3

Copy deadlines

April issue - 1st February

August issue - 1st June

December issue - 1st October

No payment is made for articles used and whilst every care is taken the Editor, Production or the Travel Group do not accept liability for any damage to photographic material submitted. The views expressed in articles are those of the contributor, and not of the Travel Group or Editor.

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Spring Weekend 2011

Friday 13th May - Sunday 15th May 2011

The Dome (University of Derby), Buxton, Derbyshire

Programme

Friday 13th May

9.30 Meet in the village of Litton
Visit to Cressbrook Dale
Jonathan Ratnage

Saturday 14th May

9.45 Chairman's Welcome
Liz Rhodes

10.00 "The Kumbh Mela: the largest Religious
Gathering on our Planet
Tony Smith ARPS

11.00 Coffee Break

11.30 Ten Minute Soapbox
Members presentations on a travel theme
(10 minutes each)
Keith Pointon LRPS

12.30 Independent Lunches

13.45 "How to put together a Blurb book" (tbc)

14.45 Presentation of Group Trips in 2010
Germany, Scotland & Bradford

15.30 Tea Break

16.00 A demonstration of the Travel
Associateship CD
Julian Comrie FRPS - together with members
How I got My "A"

16.45 Response to Questionnaire Results

17.15 Close

19.00 Drinks Reception followed by
Dinner in the Dome

Sunday 15th May

9.00 Chairman's Welcome
Liz Rhodes

9.15 "Photography in the Peak District"
Fran Halsall, BA (Hons), LBIPP

9.45 Projected Image Competition
John Speller

10.45 Coffee Break

11.15 "The Jurassic Coast", an AudioVisual
Presentation by *Ben Osborne*

12.45 Independent Lunches

13.45 Presentation of Distinctions
Rosemary Willman, Hon FRPS

14.00 Ten Minute Soapbox
Members presentations on a travel theme
(10 minutes each)
Keith Pointon LRPS

15.00 Close of Weekend
Liz Rhodes

To Note:

Throughout the weekend a Travel Quiz will be held, with 12 photos to be identified and a prize awarded to the winner.

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Travel Group will be held immediately after the close of the weekend's programme on Sunday 15th May. All members are welcome to attend, whether or not attending the Spring Weekend. A separate notice will be circulated.