

Things we do..

Since the last newsletter, the Group has been active in a number of ways:

- Alison Mees led a safari in Kenya in June;
- David Short led a group 'Walking the Line' in London in July;
- there have been two 'Share and Chat' sessions online;
- Ian Foster has led a photo experience in the Elan Valley;
- the committee has put a programme in place through to October 2025;

and many of you have been hitting the road. We're grateful that some have shared their travels on the Group's Facebook discussion. We've been taken all over the place!

And in all of these activities we've had members involved from more than one country - many of them joining in a Group activity for the first time.

That's a trend we'd love to continue.



Congratulations to Hazel Frost FRPS awarded the Fenton Medal at the 2024 RPS AGM

Since 2012, Hazel has served as an assessor for the Licentiate panel, eventually being appointed as one of its Chairs. With the transition of the assessment process to an online digital format, she was recently selected to act as a Moderator, providing support and oversight to the Licentiate panel. In addition to her work with the Licentiate panel, she has been an assessor for the Travel Associate and Fellowship panels, and in 2020, she was appointed as Chair of the Travel Panel, reflecting her extensive expertise and leadership in these roles.

And, of course, Hazel has provided much support for members of the Travel Group over the years whether in the Blog Critique Group which she led or through individual panel advice within the Distinctions process.

It's good to see her contributions acknowledged in the award of the Fenton Medal 2024.



WALKING THE LINE

London, July 8th 2024

David Short was rapidly into the swing of his new role as Events and Engagement Officer for the Group, organising this London experience. He writes

'On 8th July, seven members of the group met at Bromley-by-Bow tube station for a walk I had organised through the East London landscape. More specifically, we were following a footpath designated 'The Line' which roughly follows the 0-degree line of longitude from Greenwich peninsula to the Olympic Park. I chose to walk the more interesting section south to Greenwich peninsula.

I became interested in this path after seeing a photograph of a sign to 'Here' - 24,859 miles; a line which would take you around the world and back to 'here'.

The Line has several pieces of modern art installations which are interesting to photograph.

The weather was a bit grey; although that rather suited the post-industrial landscape.

The walk and photography were great but the best thing about the day was MEETING others from the group and chatting about photography and travel.

From Greenwich, five of us took an Uber river taxi to Westminster and had drinks and dinner at the wonderful Sherlock Holmes pub near Trafalgar Square.

Whatever your level of photographic skill, meeting up with others and discussing photography is always encouraging and can really inspire.

Thank you to those that attended this walk; and for everyone else in the group, please think about attending a group meeting in the future. I promise that you will get a lot more out of it than simply a few more images on your hard drive!

If anyone has an idea for a walk in their area, please get in touch with me (email travelevents@rps.org) or any of the committee; we want to enable and encourage events all over the UK.





All images taken by participants on the day.
Copyright is with the individual photographer.

A chance meeting in Venice led to Rania Balachouti, one of our overseas members, confirming that she would be in London and able to join the walk. Rania writes:

'This July, when I made it to London to see my daughter who is studying in the UK, I was able to join a tour around London and the Thames to visit places worth photographing together with a small group of fellow members from the RPS. Soon, I realised that the tour was prepared professionally and the choice of venues to visit was well thought in advance. The other members, who became my friends during this tour, were eager to suggest what and how to photograph and point to places of interest. In the course of an afternoon I was able to visit and photograph places I wouldn't find if I were on my own.'

The whole experience concluded in a very British pub, where our little group had a fine time, talking about more than photography. I now plan to ensure that my next visit to the UK coincides with our weekend event in October 2025 and have the opportunity to reconnect with the old friends I already have and make new ones!'

Travel Image of the Month

Congratulations to our winners and thanks to our team of judges.

All their comments can be seen at <https://rps.org/groups/travel/archive-tiom-2024/travel-image-of-the-month-winners-2024/>



June
Sanjoy Sengupta

July
AndreJa Ravnak



August
David Short

A KENYAN SAFARI



Late June saw a few members of the RPS Travel Group on safari in Kenya with Alison Mees. Alison organised a small group of 4 keen photographers to travel to Kenya to capture some of the amazing wildlife it offers. Alison writes: 'Everyone spent the first night in Nairobi, before a morning flight of 45 minutes to Ol Pejeta Conservancy. This conservancy has the most black & white rhino in East Africa, we certainly saw plenty of white rhino, but the black rhino being so shy was difficult to find.'

Due to the heavy rains that Kenya received from November to mid May, the grass was unusually high, which made even a large male lion disappear!

However, we were not disappointed with the variety of wildlife we would come across on our 4 nights in Ol Pejeta. Elephants, big bulls and lovely family groups, giraffe, early morning with the lions, rhino, buffalo herds, both hyena & jackal at dens, a single male cheetah, zebra herds, oryx and the birdlife.

After 4 nights we flew to the Mara - spending 4 nights in Olare Motorogi Conservancy. The conservancy concept works brilliantly with wildlife and local communities, plus fewer vehicles driving around gave us more flexibility.

We came across lions everywhere, which made looking for leopards & cheetah more difficult.

However, we did spend a few hours with a cheetah mum & cub, giving us the opportunity to see how difficult the life of a cheetah is to survive and bring up a cub. In the Mara we saw elephants, giraffe, a puff adder, great birdlife, general game, hippos and sunrises/sunsets.'



The travellers spoke enthusiastically about their visit at our last Share and Chat and they have also written a few comments for this newsletter, They were a mixed group: some had been on safari before, one had even been with Alison once before but one member of the group was a total newbie to the joys of the safari. He thinks this may have made a difference to his approach, writing:

'while everyone else was a bit more selective about what they photographed for me everything was worth shooting (yes, even warthogs...) Seeing all these animals in the wild was an unforgettable experience, but catching playful moments of young lions, cheetah, hyenas and jackals was the highlight for me. And it was not only about mammals, large or small, the variety of beautiful birds was also amazing, from big vultures or eagles to much smaller but very colourful starlings or rollers. I came back with thousands of photos, which will take me months to sort out and process in Lightroom. Which means I will continue to enjoy Kenyan wildlife for a long time!'

Joaquim Capita



The variety of birds was amazing as were all the young animals playing (and preying!) their way through the day.



'Going on safari with Alison Mees for a second time may not have lived up to expectations as we had seemingly seen and done everything the first time (January 2023, Porini camps: Amboseli, Mara, Lion). Far from it, with an additional location (Porini Rhino camp as well as Lion camp) and fellow photographers new to me there were extraordinary shared experiences of the cycle of life to be witnessed. As a psychologist I am always curious about behaviours and relationships. Applying this to wildlife we had, for example, time observing black-backed jackal and spotted hyena families, warthogs, black and white rhinoceroses, herds of elephants, wildebeest, buffalo and zebra, a cheetah hunting both unsuccessfully and successfully for herself and her cub, lions gorging on their kill and a young giraffe trying to give birth (due to her struggles we think this may have resulted in a still birth). Observing interactions we learned how some pairs and wider family groups parent together while others such as the cheetah do not, leaving the female to care for and bring up the cubs. Affectionate greetings between animals illustrated the essential lessons for their futures. With additional engagement in seemingly rough play fighting, we were reminded of the need to be prepared for the hierarchy of predation in order to survive. I noted fewer birds around than on my previous visit, perhaps a seasonal difference or the result of avian flu as Kenya is particularly vulnerable due to migratory birds. My journey learning about camera settings appropriate for wildlife photography (ie. anticipating behaviours, taking account of contexts and adjusting for light at different times of day) continued and was enriched with sage advice and support offered by Alison and my companions.'

Sarah Newton



'I had been on Safari in Kenya in 2019 with Gamewatchers Safaris at their Porini Camps and was delighted that Alison was working with Gamewatchers. When I was there in 2019 it was a very memorable time seeing and photographing the wildlife close up. The tour with Alison easily surpassed this as her knowledge of the wildlife, their habitats and their habits brought everything to life. Working with the Porini Camp drivers/guides she was able to position the jeeps to get the best opportunities for photographs. I am not an "early morning" person so it was tough getting up at 5 am but being in the bush at sunrise to see the animals start their day was truly amazing and made for some great photography that made getting up early well worthwhile. I have some very memorable events from the trip, top of the list has got to be seeing and photographing a Cheetah stalk then chase an Impala and catch it and then how the Cheetah stood watch while her cub ate. Alison's advice from her knowledge of how the Cheetah would react was spot on. Seeing Lions at sunrise with the sun backlighting them made for great photos, albeit a little tricky to get the exposure right. Watching lion cubs playing with each other is amazing, just sitting watching enjoying the moment you almost forget to lift your camera up and record the memory. One shouldn't forget all the other wildlife we enjoyed seeing and photographing: the black and white Rhinoceros, Hyenas, Black backed Jackels, Oryx, Giraffes, Wildebeest, Buffalo, Elephants, Zebra and Hippos which we saw so often, but I confess I'm a "big cat" lover.'

Denis Rigg



'The attraction of this trip was its emphasis on photographing as well as watching the wildlife, offering expert help to raise the standard of my images. Much travel photography includes human interactions, telling the story of a place. Alison offered the chance to observe and record animal interactions which tell their own stories of this unique place. Young lions and cheetahs learning through play how to stalk and pounce on their prey; young elephants testing their strength pushing against a parent; vultures and hyenas patiently waiting to seize their opportunity to snatch some momentarily forgotten morsel of zebra; the stories were different every day and all captivating. Being able to spend as long as we wanted watching the animals, along with Alison's insights into behaviour and her tips on making good images, led to an album that will keep alive superb memories for years to come.'

Maureen Rigg



Opportunities to travel with your camera in 2025

Granada
22-27 March 2025

For details see <https://rps.org/groups/travel/springtime-in-granada/>

Granada is like no other Spanish city. Situated in Andalusia, the southern-most province of Spain against the stunning backdrop of the snowcapped Sierra Nevada, the rivers Genil and Darro conducts the met water through the city. Here in Granada the Arabic influence found throughout most of Spain reaches its zenith.

The city is dominated by the Alhambra, the palace of the last Moorish rulers of Spain prior to their eviction in 1792 by the Catholic rulers Ferdinand and Isabella. The taking of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492 heralded the Spanish expansion that ultimately led to the discovery of the New World. To understand the history of Granada is to understand the history of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Granada was the hometown of Federico Garcia Lorca, arguably the most famous poet and dramatist of 20th century Spain. The house where Lorca grew up can be visited in the Huerta San Vicente. Here looking out from his bedroom window Lorca wrote some of his most famous early poems and plays. If circumstances allow, we will visit his birthplace in Fuente Vaqueros, some 15km from the city. On the Alhambra Hill is the former mansion of his close friend, the composer Manuel de Falla.

Lorca was enamoured by the gypsies living in the Albaicín district, and took a deep interest in flamenco and the gypsy culture. It is hoped to visit a flamenco tablao in Sacramonte, long regarded as the centre of flamenco in Spain.

The Alhambra together with the associated Generalife Gardens are among Spain's most visited attractions. The Nasrid Palace is a 'must see': built by the last Nasrid dynasty, the walls are decorated with intricately carved verses of Arabic poetry and quotes from the Koran.

This tour will be accompanied by Dr. Colin Howard FRPS who has prepared some detailed notes on the location and on accommodation as well as some recommended reading. Alison Mees has investigated flights and is able to manage flights and hotel bookings through her business if you wish. These can be found on the RPS Travel Group website at <https://rps.org/groups/travel/springtime-in-granada/>



March 22-27 2025

**An opportunity to enjoy Granada, its environs, culture and history
with the support of Dr. Colin Howard FRPS.**

Northern Ireland: Belfast and Beyond

16-20 June, 2025

This is a hybrid trip with some organised elements, lots of suggestions for photographic routes and ample opportunity to explore the two cities - Belfast and Londonderry - by yourself.

The programme has been planned by our Travel Log Editor, Patricia Mackey ARPS, who lives in Northern Ireland and was awarded her ARPS for a panel of images from the area.

The trip is limited to eight Travel Group Members and will be based in the centre of Belfast.

There will be a pre and post trip zoom meeting.

Participants will need to arrive in Belfast in time for activities to begin at 9.00a.m on June 16th.

For more information please go to <https://rps.org/groups/travel/northern-ireland-belfast-and-beyond/>

Monday 16th June

Belfast Murals, entries & pubs

A morning Black Taxi tour will provide opportunities to photograph nationalist, loyalist and re-imagined murals that are a legacy of Northern Ireland's history. In the afternoon we will go on a walking tour, which can be done as a group or on your own. We will meet again for dinner.

Tuesday 17 June

Kingdom of Down area

We head south out of the city to the Mourne area. Our exact itinerary may be weather dependant. This will be a day to experience scenic Northern Ireland with potential stops at Inch Abbey, Dundrum Bay, Newcastle (for lunch), Bloody Bridge and Spelga Reservoir. See how the Mountains of Mourne really do sweep down to the sea. The group will stay together, but ample time will be given for solo photography. If there is anything in particular you want to see we may be able to incorporate this into the schedule.

Wednesday 18 June

Derry Walls and Bogside

An early start will find us on the train to Derry. We plan to leave Belfast at 7:20am and return on the 6pm train. Maps will be provided to show you the best photographic locations and you can choose to explore on your own or with the group. The Guildhall and Peace Bridge are a must see! Walk the city walls and photograph the famous murals of the Bogside including the iconic 'You are now entering Free Derry' wall.

Thursday 19 June

Titanic, the Docks and the Maritime Mile

Today is about Belfast's shipping history. You will have an opportunity to photograph the iconic yellow cranes at the famous Harland & Wolff Ship yards. You will see the Thompson Dock where Titanic was built. Those who want can visit the Titanic Museum, the Nomadic and the Pump House.

An after dinner walk through Belfast's Cathedral Quarter to see the entries and alleyways in a different light.



Friday 20 June (Trip ends at lunch time)

St George's Market Area

The last official day of the trip will be spent at St George's Market and the surrounding area. Those who are early risers can get photos of the stall owners arriving, the rest of us will see you there after breakfast!

Activities will be suggested for the days spent in Belfast. Group dinners will be arranged.

Online 'live' presentations

Some years ago now, Chris Coe, Founder of Travel Photographer of the Year (TPOTY) spoke to the Group and as a result of that contact we were able to arrange for the TPOTY exhibition to be shown outside RPS House in Bristol in 2023. At the same time, the committee agreed that those who were awarded RPS membership as part of their TPOTY prize should automatically receive Travel Group membership as well.

As a result I am delighted that we are able to offer two very exciting presentations over the next few months. The first is on 17th November 2024 and I know some have already registered for it.



An architect by practice and profession, AndreJa is also a passionate lover of nature, our planet, and the secrets of the universe. An aesthete and a creative soul across various fields, she doesn't label herself as a photographer—photography is her essential need, a way to capture and preserve the moments of her life.

She has received numerous national and international photography awards and is frequently invited to judge photography competitions. She was honoured with the prestigious TPOTY 2023 title and was twice a finalist in the Sony WPA 2023. In her national photography association, she holds the title of Master Photographer, and internationally she has earned the EFIAP/d1 distinction.

For AndreJa, photography is a way of life, a form of creative relaxation, and a constant source of inspiration. She rarely defines it as work, even when photographing for a specific project.

She believes that photography is created in the mind, the camera merely being a tool to bring that vision to life.

In this presentation, AndreJa will present her favourite destinations where her travel photographs come to life, including those that earned her the title of Travel Photographer of the Year 2023 and membership in the RPS. As we view her photos, she will also share insights about the tools she uses, why she chooses them, and how she works. She will talk about what fascinates her the most and why she feels at home in the world of travel photography.

Register at <https://events.rps.org/en/the-endless-horizons-of-travel-photography-5a2NN26T6BS/overview>

Following this, on January 19th 2025, Matthew William-Ellis will speak to us.

Like AndreJa, Matt has had numerous successes with TPOTY and beyond. You can find out more about Matthew on his website at <https://www.matthewwilliams-ellis.com/about>.

Our next Share and Chat will be on Sunday, 16th February, 2025.

The Travel Group Annual Gathering 2025

When? 11-12 October 2025

Where? Woodland Grange, Royal Leamington Spa

Please put the date in your diary now..

The programme is currently being finalised, but will include a range of speakers and activities to inspire us and help us fulfill the aims which have been the guiding force for the 35 years since the Group was established in 1990:

'to promote the enjoyment and understanding of travel photography: of trying to capture the spirit of places we visit and, through photography, sharing that spirit with others. The Group provides a forum where members can improve their knowledge and exchange views regarding travel photography and related issues..'

We have deliberately chosen a venue which makes it easy for participants to enjoy some down time together as well as having good facilities (and comfortable chairs!) for the speaker sessions.

There are still some small gaps in the programme so if there is anything you would like us to include, please email me at travel@rps.org. While we have used ideas from members who have responded to questionnaires, we know there are more really interesting ideas out there!

Hot off the press

Last week, a group of eleven intrepid photographers enjoyed the Elan Valley with Ian Foster who was able to take advantage of his local connections to gain access to some unusual opportunities.

Yesterday afternoon I received a message from one of the Group to express her appreciation of all that Ian had done to make the visit a success. They had been particularly lucky to be in a dark skies area when the aurora were on show. So here are a couple more tasters of what you get on a Travel Group activity.



Thanks, Ian!

Distinctions Advisory Day

16th November 2024

The RPS East Anglia Region is hosting an in-person Advisory Day for all Distinction Levels on 16th November 2024. It is for digital and print submissions, but panels will be limited to 12, so please book soon to avoid disappointment. The day will be at the 9 Hardman Road, Foxton, Cambridge CB22 6RN

Attending this Advisory Day will give you the opportunity to discuss your portfolio with current panel members in a professional friendly atmosphere.

The advisers present will be Dr. Hazel Frost FRPS, Chair of the Travel Assessment Panel and Moderator of Licentiate Assessments and Dr. James Frost FRPS, who sits on the Documentary and Travel Panels and is an LRPS Assessor.

Although organised by a Region, this event is open to all.

Details are at <https://events.rps.org/en/4LrdQ66/east-anglia-advisory-day-all-distinction-levels-5a2NN26iDm5/overview>

If you do not yet have a panel ready, but you are thinking about it, attending an Advisory Day can be really useful in helping to understand what is needed by hearing what is said about other people's work.

Remember that as a member of the Travel Group you have a FREE annual digital subscription to the award-winning JRNY magazine, founded by Kav Dadfar and Jordan Banks during the COVID years when travel was so restricted for us all.

In order to access the subscription you need to go to <https://jrnymag.com/subscribe/> and when asked for a coupon insert the code you were sent in February.

Should you have any difficulty, or need a reminder please email travel@rps.org



And finally...

THANK YOU - for being part of the Travel Group and for making your contribution to its activities. You can contact most members of the committee by using the email addresses on the [website](#): please feel free to send us your ideas.

As you can see from the events organised this year and those in planning for next year, the committee is determined to find new opportunities for members, whether those be close to home (wherever that might be!) or further afield. We are hoping to arrange more of these events in the future but will need local support in order to make them possible.

Think outside the box with us!