

THE **RPS**
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY



TRAVEL LOG

NEWSLETTER FOR THE TRAVEL GROUP

JUNE 2015 / ISSUE 70

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Cuban Doorway by Lynda Morris LRPS

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Travel Log information

Travel Log is published by the RPS Travel Group three times a year: around February, June and October (contribution deadlines are 1st Dec, 1st May and 1st September, respectively). All contributions should be submitted to the Editor. Items covering any aspect of travel photography are welcome, including inspirational stories, technique, reviews of equipment, exhibitions, books, etc. Copy should be sent as .txt or .doc files by email. Digital images (portrait or landscape orientation) should be supplied by email or through a file sharing platform (such as dropbox or similar) or CD rom. Please rename your photos: YournameSurname_PHOTONAME, CMYK or sRGB colour mode, high resolution (300dpi) jpgs or tifs, file size approx 6MB. For more information, please contact the Editor at editortravel@rps.org.



CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Liz Rhodes MBE

Welcome to all those new members who have joined the Travel Group since the last issue of Travel Log. Numbers continue to grow and I am told there are now 644 members with more joining every month. Whoever you are, I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

This rise in numbers is all very gratifying and has led the Committee to undertake a review of its activities in order to ensure we are providing a range of appropriate events. Though still a work in progress we hope to have the first results of this review available to share with the membership within a couple of months' time.

In the meantime, we recently held the Group's annual Spring Weekend in Ludlow. While the turnout was modest, there were quite a number of new members present and I very much hope they enjoyed the occasion. As one regular attender put it to me, events such as this one, and the trips we organise, encouraged her to go for her 'A' distinction with the result that she was successful. The opportunity to hear good speakers, chat to like-minded people and have some fun, enabled her to develop her photographic ideas and so gain confidence to apply for a Distinction. I hope that this example might encourage others to join some of our events and so make the most of their membership.

As you will see in this issue we have arranged a programme of events for the next 12 months, some in far-flung places, others closer to home and I hope there is something for everyone's taste. But if anyone has any other ideas that we might look into, do please let me know.

RPS VOLUNTEER AWARDS

As you may be aware, the RPS has set up an Awards Scheme for members who volunteer their services to the RPS by sitting on committees, organising events and generally making things happen for the membership to enjoy. Anyone who has served four years or more is eligible and I am pleased to say that Certificates have been presented to some long-standing members of the Travel Group committee: Richard Lewis ARPS, Keith Pointon LRPS, Colin Howard ARPS, Hazel Frost FRPS and John Speller. I thank them all for their contribution to the Group's activities.

Finally, two members of the committee, Richard Lewis and Brian Brooks, stood down at the AGM and I would just like to record my thanks to them for all their help and support over the past few years.

Happy Travelling!

Liz Rhodes
Chairman



EDITOR'S NOTE

Chelin Miller LRPS

There are many ways in which photography can be a rewarding activity, whether we do it professionally or as a hobby. In this issue we learn about different ways to make it even more rewarding: Laura Morgan gives an insight on volunteering for NGOs, John Riley managed to find the perfect job - after retirement. Do you have stories to share? We'd love to hear!

Continuing on the topic of Close To Home, Mike Sasse shares his scanned slides taken over the last 30 years: England seen through the eyes of a traveller. On the other side of the spectrum: globalisation and the latest

technology, Abdela Igmirien delights us with mobile photos taken 'on the move' in north west China.

We've had a fantastic array of events, too many to fit all reports in, so don't forget to check out the website for details and galleries.

I would like to thank all contributors for sharing such wonderful material, for their patience dealing with my several emails to and fro. And special thanks go to Aline Hopkins for proof-reading the finished issue.



EVENT REPORT SPRING WEEKEND 15–17 MAY 2015

By Colin Howard ARPS

This year the Annual Spring Meeting was once again held in Ludlow, an attractive Shropshire market town with plenty of photographic interest for all.

Some five members assembled for a new members' workshop on street photography on the Friday afternoon led by Colin Howard. After a brief talk, each was set free around the town to produce three or more images for critique by the end of the afternoon. Others met at Stokesay Castle to the north of Ludlow for an afternoon visit. Fortunately the weather stayed kind and these two events well prepared attendees for the start of the organised meeting on the Saturday morning.

After a warm welcome from Liz Rhodes, the formal programme began with a talk by Tony Worobiec entitled "Ghosts in the Wilderness Revisited", the wilderness in question being the "badlands" of North Dakota and Montana, a northerly states of the USA bordering Canada where settlers had abandoned homesteads, farm machinery and cars to the elements after failing to scratch a living from the harsh plains. Tony had many stunning images, many originally shot on monochrome film and subsequently hand-tinted. Revisiting favourite places after the passing of the years, Tony has been able to record the slow decay of derelict properties in this often forgotten part of the USA.

The next talk was by Ron Callender who described his love affair with northern Lapland from 1984 onwards: the extent of the deep friendships he had developed with the gold miners of remote parts of northern Finland were palpable in all his photographs of this remote region. He shared much of his knowledge of gold mining and the area surrounding the community of Tankavaara a much dependent upon mining.

The ten minute members' presentations are always popular and this year was no exception. Bob Morgan, an Australian member of the group who has forged links with like-minded hikers around the world gave the first of a series of talks. Bob described the arduous ascent of Kilimanjaro in the company of his "club" of walking companions. This was followed by Andrew Gasson's description of travels from the Altamira desert of northern Chile all the way down to Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn. Brian Pearce then told a photographic story of the life of a small steam locomotive originally photographed by Brian as a working locomotive on a sugar plantation in Central Java, and how the engine turned up on a Welsh small gauge railway close to home. Continuing the

steam locomotive theme, Philip Pound then gave us a concluding talk on the abandoned and not-so abandoned steam locomotives of Cuba.

AV presentations are becoming a favourite way to present trip reports, and this year Aline Hopkins summarised a highly successful trip to northern Norway in January of this year in order to see (and photograph!) the Aurora Borealis. Colin Howard then presented members' shots of the Holy Week processions in the Spanish Andalusian city of Jerez accompanied by a sound track recorded at the time.



Roger Reynolds presents Gold to Helen Shipley by C Howard

The day was brought to a resounding conclusion by a splendidly illustrated talk given by Roger Reynolds, currently Acting Chairman of the Travel Distinctions Panel. Roger took us from some of his favourite locations in the hot tropical climes of India through various parts of North America to the wilds of Yellowstone in the USA in winter. Many images of wildlife were simply stunning and an inspiration to all pursuing wildlife photography as part of their travels.

Sunday started bright and clear as the group gathered once more in the Assembly Rooms of Ludlow for another session of talks by members. This time we began with pictures from Nepal presented by Helen Shipley – a poignant reminder of the current loss those communities are now suffering subsequent to the recent earthquakes.

Mongolia is not often on people's travel calendar but Duncan Locke gave an enticing talk on his pursuit of eagles through the southern and western reaches of this sparsely populated country. Laura Morgan had a different viewpoint as to travel photography, describing how she uses photography as a medium for promoting charitable causes in the poorer parts of the world, such as among the Massai of East Africa. Keith Pointon finished this session describing a trip circumnavigating Spitzbergen.

Afterwards we heard from Richard Watts as to how he achieved his Associateship in travel. Richard stressed the value in attending the RPS distinction advisory days, even if it meant on going to several in order to achieve a successful panel! Roger Reynolds then took over the discussion by presenting four successful panels, each very different in subject but all showing the distinctive qualities need for success. Roger highlighted the importance of technique as well as the necessity to build a panel rather than focus on individual images that, whilst being personal favourites, are not necessarily the best choice when it comes to producing a balanced panel. Much discussion ensued, particularly relating to people

within pictures. Roger stressed the importance of images that are taken to show people within their environment rather than posed portraits: in short, the subject should be behaving as if they were unaware of the photographer's presence.

After another AV presentation from Alison Johnson on the birds and wildlife of Costa Rica, the formal proceedings were brought to a head by the showing of images entered for this year's projected image competition and, of course, the announcement of the winners. Over one hundred pictures were submitted this year, showing a healthy trend in submission numbers. The overall winner, and winner of the Joan Wakelin Trophy, was Helen Shipley with a touching picture of a family in Borneo.

The weekend was concluded by remarks from the Chair, Liz Rhodes, who also took the opportunity to award RPS Certificates of Appreciation to Keith Pointon and Colin Howard.

Visit Colin's website <http://www.colinhoward.co.uk/> and blog <http://colinhoward.org/>



Travel Group Dinner at The Feathers, Ludlow by Rob Morgan

PROJECTED IMAGE COMPETITION (see photos p22)

GOLD

Helen Shipley LRPS, Children of the Long House, Borneo

SILVER

Jane Murphy, Dusk, Masai Mara, Kenya

BRONZE

Roy Morris ARPS AFIAP, Archway, Havana, Cuba

MERIT AWARDS

Lynda Morris LRPS, Cuban Doorway (FRONT COVER)

Tony Smith ARPS, Durga Puja Ceremony, Kolkatta, India

Chris Hammond ARPS, Houses in the Snow, Tromso, Norway

Valerie Duncan ARPS, Follow me, Myanmar

Barrie Parker LRPS, Novice Monks, Myanmar

Roy Morris ARPS AFIAP, The Jeweller, Cuba (BACK COVER)

Roy Morris ARPS AFIAP, Jaisalmer Knife Seller, India

Brian Pearce FRPS, Steam at Minus 20, China

Graeme Reynolds, Texting, Jaipur, India

Keith Pointon LRPS, Midnight Sun, Spitsbergen, Norway

rps.org/special-interest-groups/travel

MEMBERS' DISTINCTIONS

Congratulations to the Travel Group members who received a Distinction since the last issue:

Richard Tickner FRPS

Alison Johnson ARPS

Cyril Deretz ARPS

Laura Knowles LRPS (Distinctions article p13)

June Sharpe LRPS

Susan Leonard LRPS

David James LRPS

Philip Field ARPS

Angela Cook LRPS and

Prof Peter Hudson LRPS



CLOSE TO HOME TRAVEL IN ENGLAND

By Mike Sasse



*Sheep on clapper bridge below Lonscale Fell, north of Keswick, Cumberland
Part of the mountainous area we know as the Lake District.*

For most people, travel in England is by car. In the earlier days of motoring, many journeys were on meandering country roads, and passed through English market towns. In the modern age of the motorway and the by-pass, drivers with a destination to reach may experience little of the countryside or the places along the way. With the advent of satnav, awareness of location is not even a prerequisite for reaching one's destination. So, given the almost universal popularity of foreign holidays, I suspect few people get to appreciate the real beauty and diversity of England as a whole.

It was fascination with the places and landscapes of England that fuelled my interest in photography. English scenes are not for me described in superlatives; rather it is the subtle and infinite variety that inspires my passion. A diverse geology produces a wide range of often localised landscapes and building materials. The country's long and rich history and pre-history leaves its mark on buildings and the landscape alike.

"English scenes, for me, are not described in superlatives; rather it is the subtle and infinite variety that inspires my passion"

Everywhere a different scene awaits the camera. The landscape of the Cotswolds is attractive, although it is the distinctive stone-built villages which often command the greater interest. In the Lake District, the mountainous landscape is the stronger draw, with the buildings more often appreciated as landscape features. Through the lens, I find enjoyment in landscape and buildings in equal measure in the uplands and dales of Yorkshire. In parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, attention is claimed by reminders of our recent industrial past, with towns surrounded by bleak moorland. On the expansive and exhilarating chalk downs of Wiltshire, the landscape sometimes takes second place to the impressive monuments of our prehistory, of which Stonehenge is the best known. In West Cornwall it is a heady mixture of dramatic coastline, gaunt industrial landscapes and prehistoric monuments which defines its uniqueness.

For me, background knowledge is important to understand and appreciate what I photograph, and a sense of place is central to my interest. Seen from this standpoint, the flat expanses of the Fens with their ruler-straight drainage ditches can hold my interest as much as more commonly photographed upland scenes, and industrial townscape compete for my attention with the quintessential English village. Nor does flatness imply uniformity - areas like the Fens and the older and historically richer Romney Marsh in Kent are as different from each other as are the harsh uplands of the Pennines and the softer South Downs.

Another source of variety is seasonal change. The luscious greens and hedgerow blossom of an English spring, or the ripening corn and purple heather of high summer, can be enjoyed and photographed without particular need for identification of place.

By photographing close to home, one can capture fleeting episodes in the yearly cycle, like the height of autumn colour or the uncommon event of snow in Kent and Sussex. Yet, even photographing a hundred or more miles from home it's still possible to react to the forecast of favourable weather, and one can choose the time of year.

Each area presents its own opportunities for images. Even when immersed in spring greenery, you will discover that the woodland of Sherwood Forest and the New Forest are by no means alike. Sense of place really is important.

Some places photograph well in any season, but many seem more photogenic at certain times of the year. The early months are rewarding on the uplands of Wiltshire, for instance, as this highlights the architecture of individual trees and the outlines of tree-crowned hills or prehistoric mounds. Buildings also photograph well at this time, particularly when trees are nearby. Spring is a key season for me – with bare trees and emerging greenery, I find this a useful season for general views, and the fields and hedges of lowland England can be at their best. Early summer I find less attractive for photography, with a more uniform feel to the countryside, but with later summer comes the richer colours of corn and heather, and then the beautiful tones of an English autumn. Variation in soil or crop colours are dependent on season, so a clear crisp late winter day will catch the full richness of dark peaty fenland soils or the red earth of Devon and Nottinghamshire, whilst summer views in East Anglia may be dominated by fields of waving corn.

Coastal scenes are fashioned by geology, so the range of images available along the English coastline is impressive. The rugged headlands of the south-west, the beautiful and highly varied Jurassic Coast in Dorset, and the crumbling cliffs of Suffolk exemplify this great variety. The tides can have a bigger effect on photography than the seasons, and in some locations can be even more important than locality. A total transformation is wrought by the tides in the coastal inlets of North Kent and Essex, where a whole topography in miniature can be glimpsed in the endlessly-changing mudflats as the water recedes and returns.

There is much diversity in the construction materials and architecture of traditional English buildings, be they humble barns and cottages, grand mansions or great cathedrals. English building stones come in an astonishing variety of hues, textures and quality, and wood, brick, slate, thatch and other materials create local variety. With the exception of the grandest buildings, materials were sourced locally until the modern era of mass production and easy transport. In this way a rich tapestry of regional

variation evolved, with great beauty in less visited areas of the country. So the distinctive Cotswold house with cream or buff limestone walls and a darker roof, similarly of limestone, will yield suddenly to orange-brown ironstone walls and cosy thatched roofs as one travels northwards. Dark gritstone buildings in a bleak moorland setting give way just as suddenly to lighter limestone and a greener landscape criss-crossed by dry-stone walls as one travels in the Peak District of Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

The sense of history is everywhere apparent in buildings, no more so than in industrial remains, with haunting ruins where not long ago was bustling activity. The winding gear of former coal mines in Yorkshire, or the workings and industrial buildings of lead mining high in the Pennines, are preserved as memorials to the past, and in many Northern towns the distinctive mill buildings survive intact. In churches can be read the story of England's architecture and history, to be sought out and photographed. From remains dating back fourteen centuries, through solid Norman parish churches and the soaring beauty of Gothic architecture right through to the modern Coventry Cathedral forged in the aftermath of war, England's churches are a joy to behold and to photograph.

I enjoy the luminosity and realism of the projected or back-lit image, and for 30 years I photographed using Kodachrome 64 slide film. Switching to a digital camera in 2009, I digitised my slides, so I have the benefits of projection and the facility of viewing and sharing on computer for all my images. I may be only a light user of post-processing, but I appreciate the ease of organising digital files, and there are other practical advantages to the digital medium (anyone remember straightening slide images manually?).

In the current era of rapid travel and a global outlook, I suspect many photographers do not experience the true variety available through travel in England, often to be found on country lanes or on foot. I count myself fortunate to have been able to enjoy and photograph what England has to offer.



*Late summer in the Wiltshire Downs, near Aldbourne
A lone tree and stubble fields under a stormy sky*



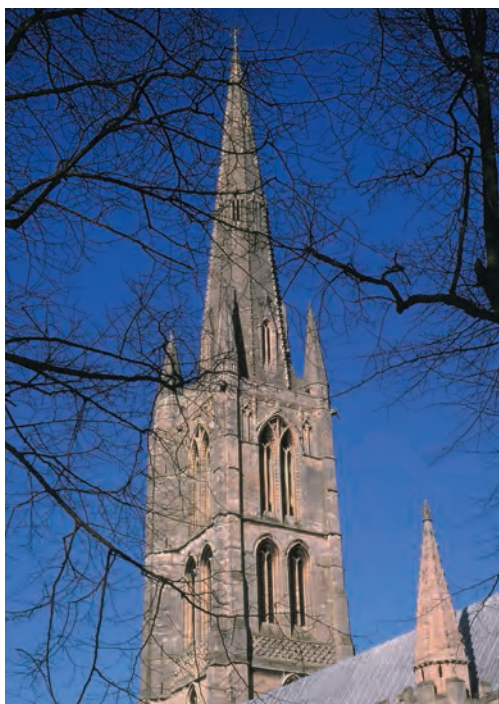
Lamb Inn, Burford, Oxfordshire. A beautiful building with walls and roof of Cotswold limestone.



Bickershaw Colliery, Leigh, Lancashire The winding gear of a coal mine, photographed in 1991 shortly before closure.



Autumn in the New Forest nr. Brockenhurst, Hampshire. The colours of birch and bracken dominate.



*St. Wulfram's Church, Grantham, Lincolnshire.
The magnificent 14th C steeple is one of the finest in the country.*



*Ruined engine house nr. Chacewater, Cornwall.
A relic of the once extensive tin mining industry.*



Marsden, Yorkshire. A textile town in its moorland setting, dominated by the Titanic Mill.



Duntisbourne Leer, Gloucestershire. A lesser known corner of the Cotswolds, with tiny lanes and a ford.



FOCUS ON MEMBERS REWARDING TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

By Laura Morgan



Masai warriors dancing (adumu) at the water project inauguration, Oltepesi

When I retired early from a stressful career with an international energy company I decided to re-engage with my creative side, develop my photography and to travel in a way that allowed me to get to know other cultures. Although I enjoyed these photographic adventures I still felt a lack of purpose and I wondered: "why am I making these images" and more importantly, "why am I here at all"?

Life has a way of solving such dilemmas. When a friend contacted me in 2009 to talk about her charity Testigo Africa, a project to bring clean drinking water to a Masai village, I immediately said "If you need a photographer, just ask me". She did and a month later I was in Arusha, Tanzania. Tracey wanted images to help her fundraising efforts; the area had suffered a terrible drought and water was scarce, livestock dying and food hard find.

It was my first really close encounter with another culture and I was very inexperienced but the warm welcome and friendliness made it a pleasure. The warriors slaughtered and cooked a goat we had paid for and the women prepared vegetables. They sat apart to eat but we were treated as honorary men. We drank tea in mud huts, met Masai of all ages, enjoyed the Masai adumu (dance) and watched the women making beautiful beaded jewellery. I was able to capture it all.

Tracey started the charity to help the women who walked miles every day to collect water, leaving them little time to do anything else. I returned with Tracey in 2012 for the

inauguration of the water supply and to photograph her wedding to Emanuel, a Masai who has become part of her team. They have since established a football academy and a perma-culture project in many villages. Women can now grow enough food to sell in addition to feeding their families.

One of the many rewarding aspects of my second visit was sharing prints from the first trip and noticing how much the women had blossomed with good nutrition and less stressful lives. My images were used in a variety of ways by Testigo: calendars, video presentations, exhibitions and greetings cards. It was a privilege to be involved.

My appetite whetted, I joined a volunteer trip in 2011 with a charity helping prevent human trafficking in the villages of Northern Thailand. We travelled with the director, essentially funding his journey, to isolated villages where he works with village heads to change ingrained attitudes and traditions. The hill tribes comprise immigrants from Myanmar, China and Laos who have for generations lived a frugal existence unacknowledged by Thai authorities. Life is hard and gangs offering loans to families are repaid by the children working in the fields, factories and brothels. The charity approaches the problem with re-education rather than disapproval as the practices have continued for generations. We stayed with families, often sleeping in their beds, ate with them and through our guide were able to get to know them a little. I found it a very difficult trip emotionally, but felt some satisfaction when the charity used many of my images on their website.

Later in 2012 I travelled to Cape Town with Momena Workshops to work with non-profit organisation James House, which supports the township of Mandela Park. An introduction to photojournalism, I was put in touch with James House and had daily critiques of my plans and images from the Momena expert. I had to develop my own resources, work independently and I learned a lot. 250 fully processed images, which were used in their annual report, had to be completed before I left. I also developed a personal project called the "Little Chair" involving clients and staff of James House.

Medellin in Colombia is next for me, to attend another Momena Workshop. I hope to be paired with a non-profit supporting women, to improve my Spanish and further develop my skills. To enrich the experience I always include side trips; going on safari, attending festivals and finding additional opportunities for travel photography. I cannot recommend non-profit work highly enough. It's humbling, rewarding, often challenging and a unique way to connect to the world through your camera lens.

Website: lauramorganphotography.co.uk
Blog: photosforgood.org.uk
facebook.com/pages/Laura-Morgan-Photography/146565008692998

LAURA'S ADVICE

Find a cause you feel passionate about and be clear about your motives for volunteering.

Research non-profit organisations carefully and either contact them directly or look for a company that supports such trips (see links below).

Understand the organisation's expectations, most likely they will want images that reflect their success in helping people, not heart-breaking images of illness or poverty.

Be open, genuine and positive and really connect with the people you meet!

Momena workshops: www.momentaworkshops.com – highly recommended.

Kaya Volunteer: www.kayavolunteer.com – helpful for a first time volunteer but doesn't specialise in photography.

Project Exposure: www.projectexposure.org (I do not have personal experience of this organisation)

Photovoice: www.photovoice.org – participatory photo projects.



The entire goat is cooked, nothing is wasted, Longido



Girl possibly vulnerable to human traffickers, Huay Mang, N Thailand



Grandmother in her home, Mandela Park, Cape Town



Image for the Yellow Bucket campaign, Longido



Collecting water miles away from home, Longido



Painting dried teabags for tourist gifts, Mandela Park, Cape Town



Tracey with Masai women at her wedding, Ngorongoro National Park



DISTINCTIONS HOW I GOT MY “L” - A FAIRY TALE

By Laura Knowles LRPS

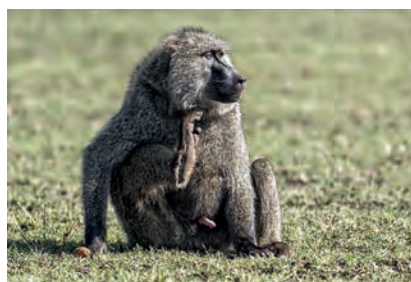
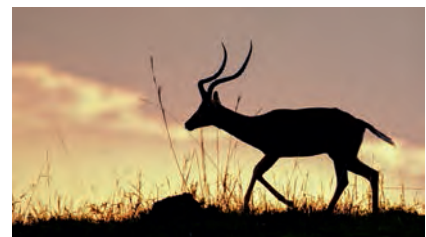
I started photography 4 years ago with varying success, then I joined Whitstable Photographic Group. I had always had a passion for photography and wild life. I joined the RPS Travel Group to help me pursue this, and it did! I travelled to faraway lands and took thousands of pictures and fortunately Whitstable Photographic Group is a Club that loves to show pictures above and beyond competition. But I wanted more... I went to an RPS Advisory Day with a view to trying for an 'L' Distinction.

Oh how confused was I, I needed 10 prints but had to take 15 and then had to end up with an eleventh image? Fortunately one of the Advisors, Richard Walton, helped

unravel this mystery and I eagerly accepted his offer of further advice.

If you are thinking of trying for a Licentiate'ship, go for it. But don't think it a doddle! It is demanding and a big learning curve.

I am very pleased to have gained my Distinction, but also en route I gained much knowledge about how to see a picture in many forms: composition, colour, focus, sharpness and much more. And to boot, a friendship with all those who advised me. So, don't sit and think – Go for it!





MOBILE PHOTOGRAPHY ABDELA IGMIRIEN

By Chelin Miller LRPS (adapted from L'Oeil de la Photographie)

I met Abdela during a photo-walk in 2013 organised by ITERS BEIJING, an Instagram photo-sharing group. I was impressed by his clean and elegant composition, his ability to 'see a picture' wherever he goes, and his gift for establishing an immediate connection with his subjects.

A very talented young photographer, with a strong online presence and following, Abdela has been featured in various French speaking magazines and websites. He enjoys mobile photography because of its instant access, easy sharing, and - in this globalised world - the ability to stay connected with his family and friends all over the world at the touch of a key.

Abdela was born in a small village named Igmir near Tafraoute, Morocco. A topographical engineer by profession, Abdela realised that photography was his true calling. He first travelled to Shanghai to document daily life there, drawing inspiration both from fellow street photographers in the city, as well as from Japanese photographer Daidō Moriyama.

In 2012, Abdela moved to Beijing and found a rich arts scene, which made him want to go further in his work, filling out the background and providing more context. In Beijing, most of the local people he met thought that he was Chinese when he spoke Mandarin, assuming that he was of Uighur ethnicity, the population of Xinjiang in Northwest China. This comparison aroused his curiosity and he decided to travel alone to the Far West of China,

where conflicts between government and the local population persist.

Abdela set out with his camera and iPhone, which he preferred for its simplicity and speed. He arrived in Kashgar, described as the former jewel of the Silk Road, located halfway between Ankara and Beijing, then on to Lake Karakul, 196 kilometers from Kashgar. From there, everything seemed familiar, from the architecture to the clothing of the people he saw in the street. Everyone thought he was from the region. Only here, people spoke not Mandarin but Uighur. When he explained that he was a foreigner, they thought he was from Central Asia, and they knew Morocco as Marrakech. With the help of a friend who spoke the language, Abdela shot a series of color images showing his journey through Uighur country, his encounters, the landscapes, architecture—all the elements bearing a strong resemblance to his region of Morocco. The following images are a selection of his iPhone photos. On Instagram, each of his photographs is accompanied by a story about his encounter with the person or landscape pictured.

You can see more of Abdela's work:

<https://instagram.com/igmirien/> and

www.igmirien.com

<http://tswira.ma/portfolio/igmirien-a-journey-in-the-far-west-china>

<http://www.loeildelaphotographie.com/2015/02/04/portfolio/27161/abdela-igmirien-journey-to-far-west-china>







LUDLOW WEEKEND THROUGH THE EYES OF 2 NEW MEMBERS

By Steve McDonald and Laura Morgan

The Travel Group seemed a perfect fit for two photographers who travel a lot! Steve joined the RPS early 2014 and Laura very recently on Steve's recommendation. It was with happy anticipation we arrived in Ludlow; instructions, agendas and cameras in hand. Laura unceremoniously dropped Steve at Stokesay Castle and rushed to join Colin Howard's Street Photography workshop at The Feathers.

The castle was beautiful but challenging to shoot in very unhelpful light. Steve explored the grounds and the surrounding area for some time returning only to find the rest of the group relaxing over afternoon tea! With no transport, Steve was kindly rescued by Len and Helen and returned to join the others for drinks, energised and inspired. Colin's talk and subsequent critique of the images taken around Ludlow by the new members was useful and encouraging; a positive start to the weekend for Laura and a good introduction to the group.

We decided to attend the weekend to put faces to names, to see what other photographers had been creating and to learn from the vast reservoir of experience the group offers. The weekend certainly delivered; with fascinating Travelogues from members and longer, in-depth presentations by an array of excellent photographers.

The images presented were at once inspiring and daunting, a very high standard to aspire to. Laura took the plunge and talked about her non-profit travel photography, finding that ten minutes was simply too short and Steve took the opportunity to exchange travel experiences with other members.

We learned more about Distinction requirements, helping dispel some of the mystique about the process and rules. A fabulous dinner where we had a chance to chat with everyone and enjoy fine wine and food was also a highlight.

The event was extremely well organised, Keith's technical challenges notwithstanding! The committee members were helpful and available for questions. We enjoyed the camaraderie and the members' warm welcome. Clearly mutual support is an important factor, confirming that joining the group was a wise decision.

The Travel Group is growing fast and always evolving and we look forward to participating. And as for us submitting panels in due course - yes we will!



Purple Row at Stokesay Castle by SMcD



Ludlow Street Photography by LM



Ludlow Street Photography by LM



Stokesay Castle and Pond by SMCd



Ludlow Street Photography by LM

THE JOB OF A LIFETIME

By John Riley

On Monday 16th February 2015 I set sail, together with my wife Linda, for a 15-night cruise aboard Cruise & Maritime ship the 'Marco Polo'. The ship departed Tilbury for a cruise that would take her guests as far as Europe's most Northerly City, Honningsvåg, in search of the Aurora Borealis.

This was not the start of my journey as in the previous year when I was a paying passenger aboard the motor vessel 'Discovery' that was part of the C&M fleet. From Bristol we sailed to Alta, Norway's City of Northern Lights. On our third night at sea an announcement was made from the bridge of the first sighting of the aurora with the immediate result of passengers rushing to get their coats and cameras. I was amongst them but on stepping out onto the observation deck I was greeted by a paparazzi flash barrage. It became obvious that the majority of people would not be getting the results that they were expecting. I spoke to a few people who told me that they had bought the camera especially for the trip but were disappointed as they were unable to get a single image of the phenomenon.

I decided that I would try and help rather than letting many return home without that all important picture. The next morning I called at the office of the Cruise Director and asked if I could perhaps set up a little camera club. He was very positive and said he would find a room in which we could meet and inform guests in the daily programme.

The next day I made my way to the Bridge Room (Card Game not Ship's Bridge) expecting a handful of passengers to attend. Over a hundred out of a total 760 passengers turned up and were unable to get into the room. After a quick rearrangement and shuffling of seats the session was under way. As I had suspected many had tried to photograph the lights but were unsuccessful. Admitting that I was no expert in the techniques required as it was my first attempt at photographing them but showed examples of what I had achieved the previous evening. The only visual aid I had with me was a 10 inch tablet that I held aloft and passed around for people to take a closer look. I had only managed to capture the images by following the guidelines I had researched before leaving. Large aperture wide angle lens, medium ISO and shutter open for up to 30 seconds. I found on average that 20sec – 30 sec with my 10mm f3.5 lens with an ISO of 200 – 400 worked for me. I used a Pentax Kr with a Pentax 10-17mm and a Rokinon 8mm lens.

The biggest challenge came in helping those with compact and bridge cameras that did not have such control over their settings but the majority did manage to get a photo that provided that all important proof

back home that they did see the Aurora Borealis. My main achievement was to reduce the amount of camera flashes at each sighting as "Turn your flash off" became the catchphrase amongst the passengers.

I also organised a little competition, which had a good reception and to my delight within a few days of returning home the company contacted me to ask if I would be a Guest Lecturer on their ships. In the summer we took a cruise around the British Isles and later in the autumn a cruise to Spain and Portugal including Madeira. My job of a lifetime had arrived.

Approaching the age of Seventy I use the phrase of "Job of a Lifetime" because my interest in Photography and Travel date back to my childhood. My father had a camera and encouraged my interest in the subject by helping me to construct pinhole cameras and had taught me to develop film and prints by the age of 12. My first professional commission was the wedding of a neighbour's daughter when I was only 14. I did not realise that it was a professional undertaking but I did get paid for it. No one in the family understands where my interest in the sea stems from, but I remember as a child battling against the choppy waters of the Thames on the Woolwich Free Ferry on days out with my Grandad.

Cruising is a great way to capture nature's phenomena, but also provides an ever changing backdrop providing an abundance of photo opportunities: land, sea, people and places with wildlife all around you. For most work I use a Sigma 18-200mm and carry a compact Fujifilm XF1 to enable me to capture the moment.

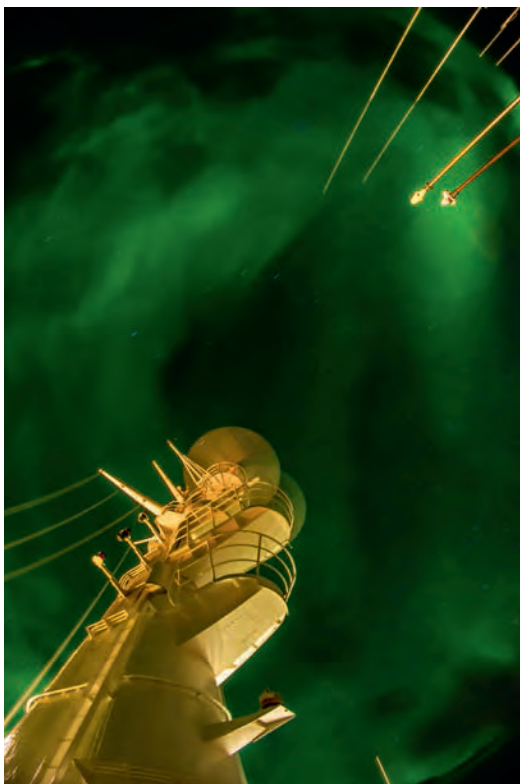
You can see more of John's photographs here:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/johnandlindariley>



Faroe Isles by John Riley



Discovery Port



Northern Lights ove Marco Polo Communications Deck



Lisbon Funicular

EVENT REPORT

TRIP TO NORWAY, JANUARY 2015

By Aline Hopkins LRPS



Aurora Borealis by Aline Hopkins

This trip was titled 'In Search of the Aurora Borealis', and fortunately, we found it! In fact the ten of us who went on this trip saw the Aurora every night of our stay, and what an absolutely amazing spectacle it was.

This year is proving to be one of the best years in many for seeing the Aurora, entirely due to an increase in solar activity – the eleven year 'solar maximum'. Streams of charged particles from the sun hitting the earth's magnetic field give rise to the magnificent display of 'Northern Lights', a dancing, ever-changing, ghostly apparition in the skies above the Arctic Circle.

Some nights the Aurora could be slow to get going, then suddenly a milky-white band would flare up from one horizon to the other. It would eventually fade and another one would appear in a different part of the sky. Sometimes it resembled a shimmering curtain apparently blowing in the wind, and sometimes a halo or corona above us, changing shape as it moved rapidly across the night sky.

Well wrapped up for the cold – minus 10 to minus 15 degrees Celsius or so - we ventured out every night in search of the Aurora. However, that wasn't all we did.

Some people went dog-sledding, some went to meet the Sami people and their reindeer, and some of us went whale watching and saw several humpback whales. We also took a ride up the cable car above Tromsø to watch as the sunlight caught the mountains opposite for the first time this year. One night we ventured up there again to watch and photograph the Aurora dancing over the city.

Every day we experienced the famous 'blue light' of daytime – as the sun had not yet risen above the horizon, the daylight was an interesting kind of twilight which lasted for 6 or 7 hours during the day - and as we were blessed with clear skies, some incredible shades of pink and lilac.

The star of the show however, no pun intended, was the utterly fabulous display of the Aurora Borealis for several hours every night. I have never said 'WOW' so often on any trip, ever. It was incredible.

I can't wait to go again!

For details on forthcoming Travel Group events, check out "Dates for your Diary" further on in this newsletter, and the Travel Group micro-page on the RPS website.



Not quite a sunrise, Tromsø by Chris Hammond



Humpback whale by Duncan Locke



Aurora Borealis by Kit Robinson



EVENT REPORT SPRING WEEKEND COMPETITION

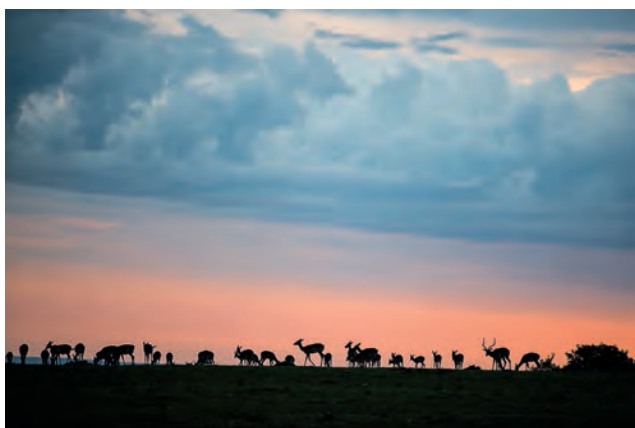
By Keith Pointon LRPS

This year's entry was slightly higher than in previous years with 27 members entering 109 images. By far the largest contingent of entries was from Asia with 45% of the total, Europe was next with 18% closely followed by Central America and the Caribbean with 17 %, North America and South America achieved 7% and 6% respectively while Africa, Australia and Antarctica achieved 4%, 1% and 2% respectively. The judge stated:

"It was a tough task to work through the varied entries and make some tough decisions about the award winners. As a general comment it was surprising that so many of the entries had been captured in Asia, and perhaps disappointing that some of the images submitted were not from closer to home. As a general rule Travel images should not be heavily manipulated, and retain a sense of the place, (i.e. what it's like to be there). Technical issues and over manipulation detracted from the enjoyment of some of the submissions, along with basic problems of framing and composition. The Group is to be congratulated on making my job so difficult!" . (See winners' list p5)



Helen Shipley - Children of the Long House



Jane Murphy - Dusk, Masai Mara



Roy Morris - Archway, Havana



Tony Smith - Durga Puja ceremony



Chris Hammond - Houses in the Snow, Tromso



Valerie Duncan - Follow Me



Roy Morris - Jaisalmer Knife Seller



Brian Pearce - Steam at Minus 20



Barrie Parker - Novice Monks



Graeme Reynolds - Texting at the Amber Fort, Jaipur
rps.org/special-interest-groups/travel



Keith Pointon - Land of the Midnight Sun, Spitsbergen



DESTINATIONS: DENVER TO LAS VEGAS FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWDS

By Pia Thommes LRPS

Road Trips in the United States are one of our favourite ways to spend the holidays and last year we decided to revisit one of the most inspiring regions by travelling through the Rocky Mountains from Denver to Las Vegas. The route took us through 5 National Parks as well as several State and Tribal Parks. With the summer holidays still ongoing and Labor Day during our stay we were prepared to face large numbers of people and the skill would be to try to avoid the masses while still spend time at old and new favourite views. Most of our destinations were in the high mountains and had a beautiful clarity of light, and the rapidly changing weather we encountered towards the end of the summer added excitement.

Our first stop was Rocky Mountain National Park, within easy reach of Denver, but instead of staying in the resort of Estes Park we found a little motel down one of the steep sided valleys leading into the park where we could spend time sitting in a hot tub under the tall conifers. While it was busy in the park, the crowds thinned considerably as soon as we started walking on the trails, be it around one of the many lakes or towards the view points on the ridge road. Driving along the ridge road was a dream, in particular when early in the morning the high summits of more than 14,000ft were covered with a dusting of snow. But also driving up the serpentine in the rain and looking onto rainbows from above was memorable. Following the continental divide on the eastern side we reached the mining town of Leadville and continued driving along the highest peaks of the Rocky Mountains with Mount Elbert, the highest mountain of the continental Rockies in the evening light.

The next National Park was the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, one of the newest and least known National Parks in the US. A steep road allowed exploration of the bottom of the canyon as well as the rim. Photography was very challenging with harsh contrast between the dark bottom of the canyon and the bright light at the rim over 10,000ft. But the play between light and shadow and the clouds migrating over the zigzags of the canyon was magical as was the silver band of the Gunnison River far below.

The onward drive to Telluride and Durango led through fantastic scenery: initially a densely forested valley road with red mountain tops stained by iron, indications of earlier human industry in the form of old railway lines and cable cars, waterfalls that carved their way through tight slots inside the mountain. On the summit plateau we were greeted by another snow storm followed by soft magical light and later on in the valley we drove side by side with the Durango-Silverton Railroad.

The weather was still variable when we reached Mesa Verde National Park and the table top mountains were covered in rainbows. But for the exploration of the ruins the sun was shining bright, making it another challenging, but rewarding area for photography. The best parts were remote areas of the park that could be reached via a cliff top road and where we could explore the ruins on our own in the soft light at end of day.

The drive continued through beautiful red rock country on completely deserted roads to Twin Rock, with an old fashioned trading post beneath the wind shaped rock structures that gave the place its name. Shortly before Mexican Hat we entered Goose Neck State Park, where the San Juan River has carved sinuous curves into the rocks and where we the sun go down without anybody else disturbing the magic.

Monument Valley was busy and even on the approach we had to avoid people posing on the road for the classic view towards the buttes and mesas. To get off the beaten track we hired a photographer guide, which not only gave us access to a 4x4 vehicle, but also allowed us to get to areas normally not open to the public and showed us classic and novel views.

The continuation of the drive towards Arizona brought us through more areas of badlands, which shimmered with colour under the bright sun. We crossed the Colorado River at Navajo Bridges and paddled in it at Lee's Ferry, from where we also could watch the rafts going into the Grand Canyon. The road wound higher and higher from the desert into coniferous forest until we reached the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Although still busy it is much less popular with tourists due to the length of the drive and also its altitude of more than 8000ft. Trails leading straight to the rim made it the perfect spot for watching sunset and sunrise.

The final park to visit was Zion National Park, where we had been several times before, but from which we were still missing one of the highlights: walking down the so-called Narrows, a deep gorge cut into the sandstone. The path was in the river and we walked for 5 hours in the stream until the water became chest high and we had to swim. By now we were familiar with harsh contrasts between sunlight and shadow and the coolness of the gorge made this walk a unique experience.

On the hop to Las Vegas we made a last discovery, the Valley of Fire State Park. This is another area of beautiful white and red rock formations shaped by desert climate and wind and it was completely deserted while we spent the day exploring it – less than 50 miles from the neon lights of the Strip, far from the madding crowd.



Racing the Railway



Snowstorm over Leadville



Colorado River



Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde



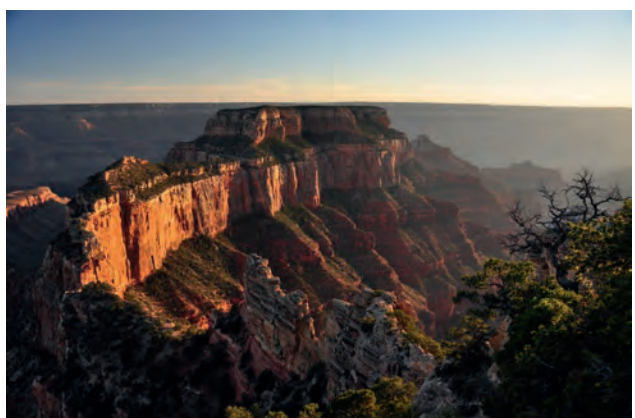
Gooseneck of the San Juan River



Navajo Bridges



Classical Monument Valley



Sunset at Grand Canyon



IS DOURO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WINE REGION IN THE WORLD?

By Colin Smith



A view of Porto from Vila Nova de Gaia

If you could choose one European city to visit with your camera, I doubt that Porto would be your choice. This is a real shame, as it has lots going for it. Porto is easily accessible by plane, with the airport reasonably close to the city centre. It is a very walkable city with everything gravitating to the river. There are lots of old buildings and of course, being Portugal, there are lots of blue and white tiles, a wonderful example of which is the entrance hall of the main railway station. Porto is known historically as the centre of the world's trade for Port and this is something else that makes the city unique. With a healthy number of tourists, street photography opportunities abound.

The icing on the cake, however, photographically speaking is that Porto is at the mouth of the Douro river valley, which forms perhaps the world's most beautiful wine region.

It is an absolutely magical place. The river meanders through steep-sided valleys, there are different views at every bend in the river. Most of the vineyards are terraced, supported by stone walls built laboriously by hand over the centuries, so the landscape has truly been shaped by man. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site protecting over two thousand years of viticultural and cultural history. It is also intensely peaceful.

For the photographer there are glorious sunrise or sunset pictures. You can marvel at the small modern wineries and their buildings, or the tumbledown abandoned farm structures. During winery visits you can find stainless steel tanks or old barrels. And of course there are the centuries-old terrace walls that provide copious photographic opportunities of shapes and textures.

Perhaps the best way to see the Douro is from the train that runs from Porto up river. I can recommend two stops worth exploring. The first is at Pinhao, where you can visit

the winery and new tasting facilities of the port house Dow's. Another great place to stop is Peso da Régua, where there are a number of easily accessible old engines right outside the station.

Whilst in Regua, Casa de Mateus is well worth a visit. This can be accessed by bus up the side of the valley to the small town of Villa Real. The 18th century baroque Casa, or palace, is magnificently over the top stylistically, with some impressively decorative furniture. It is surrounded by extensive, beautifully maintained gardens that contain water features, a tunnel of cedar trees and topiaries.

The focus of the whole Douro region is of course port and wine. Whilst there are places along the river where you can stay, the best place for accommodation, eating and drinking is the city of Porto. All the port producers store their wines by the river and have visitor centres, where you can taste the ports and learn about how they are made. This provides further photo opportunities, a place for great views over the river to the city is at Taylors.

Three or four days should be enough time to do Porto and the Douro justice. One or two days should be spent in the valley exploring it ideally by train or boat. The balance can then be spent visiting the museums and buildings of Porto along with Vila Nova de Gaia which is the hub of the port industry.

Visit Colin's blog <http://grapefan.blogspot.co.uk/> and photos <https://www.flickr.com/photos/csmithphotos>



Casa de Mateus



Rabelo boats used to transport port barrels



Douro panorama from the hills



Barrels of port in Vila Nova de Gaia



Dom Luis I bridge in Porto



DESTINATIONS: WALLINGFORD

Wallingford Wanderings – or how to host a photo walk in your local town

By Andrew Barrow LRPS

As demonstrated in the last issue of Travel Log (No.69), you don't have to go far for photographic inspiration. And, having just run another photo walking tour in my home town, it always amazes me how someone can find a decent image in a street I walk up everyday and barely look at as it is so familiar; or find inspiration in a back alley I thought held little bar railings and rubbish bins.

It must be hanging out with other photographers that gets those creative juices flowing. Of course it's not all plain sailing – the last walkabout began under cloud heavy skies. We met at dawn at Wallingford bridge where the sun was supposed to rise exactly down the street into Crowmarsh. Total cloud cover and rather than a dramatic sunrise the day just sort of yawned into existence.

But the opening couple of hours are just the warm up session; getting to know the participants, their knowledge, how well they know their equipment and just getting them into a 'photographers' frame of mind. A walk along the river to Wallingford Castle (it would have been the 3rd largest in England if Cromwell hadn't taken a few kegs of gunpowder to the ex-Royalist stronghold) and a break of light offered some interest in a potentially interesting depiction of a lone tree, which I thought might be good in black and white. It is important to offer a wide range of subjects – some might find swathes of wild flowers interesting, others the characters in the local market. Regular stops for coffee and food are required, if only by me.

After the warm-up and a coffee onto the 'main event'. I find it highly entertaining if participants are given some tasks. They are of course free to take photos of what they like but aiming for a series of six images, which they can compare with each other, is always looked on as fun. So they are tasked with, for example, to capture a reflection, a texture, a specific colour and so on. I usually insist that one task is to lie down; a fun way to get people looking and move away from the standard eye-level shot.

One task I introduced recently was for each to take a picture in secret, of another participant. One had to take a picture of one using his camera, another of someone from behind, another of someone's hands. The inventiveness in surreptitiously taking a shot of someone's feet was hilarious! Not 'travel' you say but fun and memorable none the less.

Setting up a gallery – only open to the participants – to see and compare their results after the event is important.

It is also good to offer some constructive comments here especially to those who only pick up a camera on high days and holidays; loss of detail in shadow or a blown out, distracting highlight or rogue branch do a lot in improving one's technique. A lot like the regular Digital Portfolio Hazel runs for the Travel Group.

Normally, as the organiser, I rarely take photos myself during these wanderings. Being preoccupied in keeping the herd together, pointing out a particular texture or interesting feature and imparting some local history takes priority and it is what they are paying for.

One has to keep an eye on the participants – have they tired of a particular alley or road? Do they need some guidance on fulfilling the panorama task? Or is a coffee and a slice of cake required? Would some intentional camera movement instruction re-stimulate?

Wallingford is relatively off the beaten track but blessed with an historical centre, the Thames and plenty of countryside within reach (Midsomer Murders is filmed in the area and you might have caught the Adventures of Professor Branestawm on BBC last Christmas, which was also filmed in and around the town). The location is just perfect for a day's photographic wanderings or even a weekend for there is much more to explore.

Nearby is Shillingford Bridge (easier to photograph in my opinion than Wallingford's multi-arched bridge), the iconic St. Peter's Church (usually locked and bolted), the 130 acre Harcourt Arboretum (with wildflower meadows, bluebell woods and grand collection of trees) is just up the road and there is even a local steam railway. Agatha Christie lived in neighbouring Winterbrook (so neighbourly it now runs into Wallingford) and is buried nearby too.

It is the local knowledge that is essential in finding the hidden paths and spots on the river, getting the keys to the church and timing the walk to arrive at the station for a little train jaunt if that is what is required and so on. Members of the Travel Group might not appreciate being set the tasks (although personally I find them fun and enjoy doing them myself) but for those travelling to the town tapping into local knowledge – even if it's for the best places to eat or picnic spots - brings a greater appreciation and depth than simply following a guide book or a tourist office guide.

Visit Andrew's blog: <http://www.spittoon.biz/> and photo gallery: <http://www.andys-scribblings.co.uk/photo>



Swan's Way Little Stoke



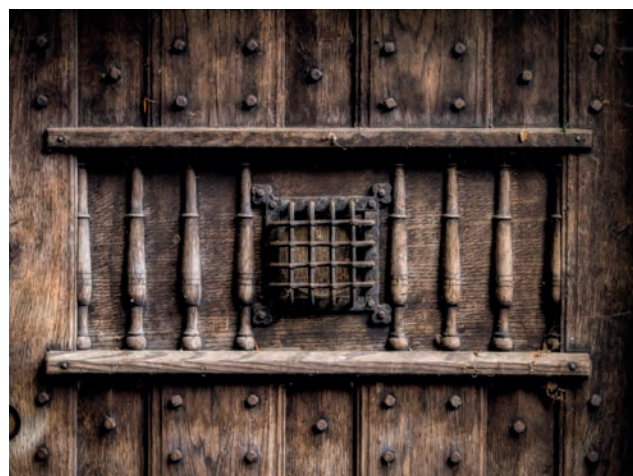
*Boat House at North Stoke, Oxfordshire
taken from the Cholsey side of the River Thames*



River Thames at Shillingford



*Looking towards the altar area from the main door.
Note the small platform in front of the altar used for summer music festivals.*



Around Wallingford



Seasonal rape field, south side of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Oxfordshire.



The Boat House, Shillingford Bridge



St. Peter's Church, Wallingford



Around Wallingford town



Sheep in the Field, Cholsey



Around Wallingford



Around Wallingford



Around Wallingford



Around Wallingford

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - TRAVEL GROUP UPDATE

By Aline Hopkins LRPS

We are now half way through one of the busiest years for the Travel Group, and by the time you read this our third trip of the year will have taken place, to Zambia and Malawi in conjunction with the Book Bus project.

We have several more events coming up this year, the first of which is two days of photography in Durham over the 6th and 7th of August. We have timed this to coincide with an evening of photography being run at Durham Cathedral.

Later in August some of us will be heading to the Canadian Rockies, and at the time of writing there was just one place remaining on this trip.

The Falmouth Oyster Festival should provide some interesting photographic opportunities for members attending our weekend in Cornwall in October, not to mention the impressive scenery and historic places of interest. This takes place from the 9th to the 11th of October.

From 23rd March to 7th April 2016 we will be visiting Japan during the cherry blossom season. We hope there will be blossoms, but it can't be guaranteed! The tour includes Tokyo, Kyoto and the Japanese Alps, among other places.

Also, from 15th to 17th April 2016 we will be holding our Annual Spring Weekend and AGM in the historic spa town of Harrogate.

If you have ever dreamed of visiting the famous Angkor Wat complex, here is your chance – two trips to Cambodia are on offer, the first from the 21st May to the 2nd June, and the second from the 12th to the 24th of November 2016.

Details of all of the above are on the Travel Group website – rps.org/special-interest-groups/travel/events. It is well worth looking at this on a regular basis as other events may be slotted into the programme as they are arranged. Our events only happen because people volunteer to make them happen, and I would particularly like to thank Allan Hartley and Margaret Hocking for organising weekends for the Travel Group, in Conwy and Cornwall respectively. If you would be willing to organise a weekend, or a tour further afield, for the Travel Group, we would love to hear from you.

Or, if you have suggestions for tours or events you would like to see organised by the Travel Group, do contact me – alinehopkins@btinternet.com

DIGITAL FORUM

ROUNDS 31 AND 32

Once a quarter each Forum member uploads one image to the digital blog. Everyone then comments on the images on the blog, and scores are awarded. The image with the highest marks, or a selection of images is then published in Travel Log. The photos in this issue of Travel Log are the winners of Round 31 and Round 32.

Currently there are approximately 22 members of the Forum. Images must have a Travel theme. All members of the RPS Travel Group are welcome to join the Forum, if you are interested in joining, please send an email to Hazel: hazel.mason39@btinternet.com, who will be happy to answer any questions.



*Sleeping in the temple, Hoi An
by Rachel Dunsdon LRPS*



*SFO Whispy Clouds at Tahoe
by Steve McDonald*



Spring Competition Award winning photo (Merit)
by Roy Morris ARPS - The Jeweller, Cuba

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can be requested from the Editor: editortravel@rps.org

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