



THE RPS
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

TRAVEL LOG

The Newsletter of the RPS Travel Group
Issue 71, October 2015



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Contributing to Travel Log

Travel Log is published three times a year: around February, June and October. All contributions should be sent to one of the editors. Items covering all aspects of travel photography are considered: journeys, technique, exhibition and book reviews are all welcome.

Copy should be submitted as either .txt or .doc files by email. Digital images can be submitted either by email or through a file-sharing platform, such as Dropbox. Articles on a CD-ROM should be sent to: C.Howard, 11 Nightingale Way, Hereford HR1 2NQ. Please ensure all images are clearly identified with your name and are high resolution (300dpi) jpeg or tif files, with a file size of approximately 6mb. Images should NOT be over-sharpened. For more information, please contact the editor at editortravel@rps.org. We ask that contributors provide a small picture of themselves for the header and also details of any personal photography website or blog they may wish members to visit.

We are always in need of good, high resolution images for the cover, portrait format please.

Chairman's Chatter

It is a few months now since I returned from the Travel Group trip to Zambia and Malawi but the memories are still etched on my mind, helped no doubt by showing friends the photographs I took. A full account of the trip will be found in my article in this issue but what made the trip stand out for me was the work we did with the Book Bus charity, particularly the photographic project we did with some of the children.

This has led to me to wonder whether there are opportunities to do more of this sort of thing as it is a very rewarding way of sharing ones interest and experience in photography with communities who have had little or no practical contact with it. So, if anyone has any ideas, do please let me know (lizrh@tiscali.co.uk).

You should by now have received an e-mail from me asking for volunteers to either join or help support the Committee in putting on a range of activities for members of the Group. I hope some of you will have responded positively so that we can continue to move forward with our ideas as without further support we may not be in a position to organise them.

On a positive note more members have been sharing some of their travel experiences and you can read accounts of a number of these in the following pages. But we would like to hear from anyone about their travels and, more importantly, see their images which might encourage us to go to places that might not be high on any 'wish list'! The image on the front cover certainly does that for me!

Happy Travelling!

Liz Rhodes



Editors' Note

This month we have a wide variety of articles for members to enjoy, plus news as to future trips and another article on achieving an "A" in travel, this time from David Wareing. We know these articles are appreciated by many members who are working towards a distinction - but we do need a regular flow of such articles, so if you have been successful, please consider writing as to your experience and how you went about it.

A regular comment from members is that they would like to see more about travel in the UK. Given the high proportion of members who reside in the southeast, a future issue of Travel Log will focus on travel to the nation's capital, London. There are few places that offer more scope for the travel photographer to hone their skills, whether it be architectural, street or cityscape images. Given the recent outstanding success of the Bleeding London project organised by the London Region, it would be good to see some work from Travel Group members who have been part of this exciting project!

Another feature we are introducing in this issue is "Cityfocus". an opportunity for you to show some images of your favourite town or city, whether it be abroad or at home. Also, let us know if you have read any interesting books of late relating to travel photography.

We look forward to your pictures!

Don't Forget!

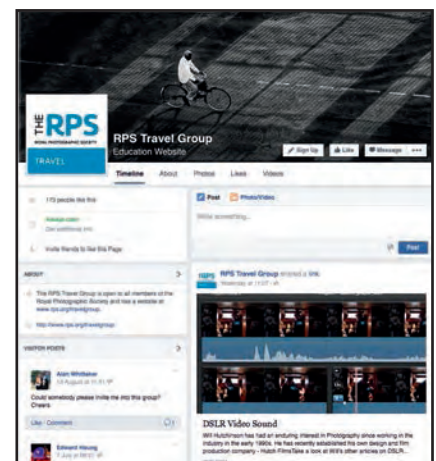
You can now follow the Travel Group on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/rpstravelgroup>

and get up-to-date information on events and trips, etc. on the RPS web-site as well as add your own album:

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

Cover picture: *Javan Festival-goer* by Sue O'Connell, ARPS. Runner-up image in the Travel Photographer of the Year Competition, 2015.



How I got my "A"

David Wareing, ARPS



Thinking of going for an "A" Distinction? It's a decision not to be taken lightly. It needs dedication and in my case careful planning as I'd booked a 16-day tour of Vietnam and Cambodia and 12 months in which to prepare for it. I would probably not go there again so I would need to get all my images in one tour. Was my project doable and would I succeed?

Planning and Naming the Project

The first thing I did was download the RPS Handbook on gaining Distinctions from the RPS website - this proved invaluable. One of the questions that I asked myself was 'Do I get the images first and then write a Statement of Intent after'? It was clear that what I should be doing first was to at least get a title for the project; it could be altered later and by doing this first it gave me considerably more focus on the type of images I needed.

Research

Travel is not just about countries - it's also about their people. My next step was to buy a Baedeker's Guide to Vietnam and a book on Cambodia. I spent quite a lot of time going through both, researching the culture of the countries and

also the places I was to visit on my itinerary. I decided to base my panel on the following: Street Life, Life on the Rivers and Streams and finally Religion. At last I had a title for my Statement of Intent, "The People of Indochina" and I drafted out my Statement.

I was mindful that I was a visitor in their countries and was at all times respectful of their privacy - I noted with horror at times when a large lens was poked in to a person's face; not a good example to follow. Although it can be difficult sometimes to get a good shot of a person on a stall at a market, I always asked permission and if refused, just smiled and walked on. However, most of the people didn't object to having their photograph taken: many would pose for you, but alas, these are not the shots you want, being only suggestive holiday snaps. A much better way is to wait awhile and take a few candids - these are the ones that give the viewer a feeling of being there.

Be aware of your surroundings and look for potential shots. I call them grab shots, they are only there for a moment and on occasions, you may be lucky enough to see a shot and predict its outcome. These are anticipated shots. I was watching an old woman rowing a boat and I could see that she intended

David's Hanging Plan



to moor up alongside another boat. I was in luck, the only place available was very close to me, I had time to check my camera settings and wait. Sure enough, she moored along side the nearby boat, camera was ready, and I framed up and took the photograph. It was one for my panel only fourteen to go.

On arriving home I imported all my images into Lightroom, all three thousand of them, and carefully went through each one by one. I short-listed the strong ones and those of equal density. I worked on my panel for the best part of 12 months, going through my statement and selecting the images I would use; I changed it several times until I was happy with it. I wanted my panel to convey a feeling of “being there” and also to make a photographic statement. I printed and mounted the possible ones taking care not to lose focus of my statement; it’s easily done.

I re-printed some of the images – I did a little competitive work a few years ago, there was an old saying “If you can see a fault so can the judge”. Don’t be tempted to put anything in less than perfect. So, my “Panel” was ready to be critiqued at an Advisory Day.

Advisory Days

I can’t stress this enough. Go to an Advisory Day in your area and get an expert’s opinion: most of all, it is important to take their advice! These are the folk who know travel photography. My panel went up, and after due deliberation by the advisers, I was told, with a small change to the bottom row, to put in for an “A”.

I was still a little unhappy about one of the photographs – it was too fussy and just didn’t seem to sit right. I went through my images again and printed out four substitutes. A friend of mine told me about a Special Advisory Day to be run by the Chair of the Travel Panel, Leo Palmer. Together with a close friend, we drove to York for the Special Advisory Day, being lucky in obtaining the last available places. My panel went up and I was very pleased with the positive comments. However, three of the four substitute images were used to make, as Leo said, a stronger panel. I tweaked my statement of intent, keeping it very much to the point, and on Leo’s recommendation I submitted my panel to Bath. All the work and research had paid off and I had been made an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society!

I hope the above gives you some idea of how I went about going for a Distinction, it was a challenge, but I enjoyed every minute of it. Subsequently I have had the privilege of being invited to speak at Leo Palmer’s Special Advisory Days on more than one occasion.



To see more of David’s photography, go to
<http://www.travelswithmynikon.weebly.com>





Technical Notes.

I bought a Nikon D700 especially for the tour; it can handle low lighting conditions better than my old D300s. My walkabout lens was a Nikon 24-120 f4; I used this for most of the time.

I also had a 70-200 f2.8 with me, and a 17-35 f2.8 for use at Angkor Wat.

Because of the difficult lighting conditions when visiting Angkor Wat (Dark interiors and bright exteriors) I set my camera to auto ISO.

All my images were 12.25 inches on the longest side to fit a mount aperture of 12 inches long, and printed on Ilford Galerie Gold Fibre Silk paper.





A Japan Seldom Seen

Chris Wright, LRPS



As a Blue Badge Tourist Guide I show thousands of Japanese tourists around our beautiful Lake District, and on many occasions I have been asked “Have you ever been to Japan?” I rectified the omission this spring, when I made an extensive tour of that country, ostensibly to make an ‘hanami’ - a cherry-blossom viewing tour - but also to visit attractions with Cumbrian connections and places perhaps less well-known to British visitors.

Of course, there had to be the obligatory visits to famous castles, shrines, temples and gardens, as well as experiencing minshuku, onsen, ryokan and shinkansen - bed & breakfasts, hot spring baths, traditional inns and bullet trains.

My journey began in the last few days of March, just as the cherry blossoms were beginning to bloom in Nagasaki, and I was fortunate to follow the flowering season all the way north, to Aomori, some five weeks later.

It was a glorious day to visit the Peace Park in Nagasaki and to see tour groups being photographed under the Nagasaki Peace Statue, the 1955 10-tonne bronze statue by Kitamura Seibo; to explore the seventeenth-century former Dutch settlement of Dejima; and the reconstructed English and Scottish tradesmen’s houses in Glover Garden. Having seen the latest James Bond film “Skyfall” it was obligatory to take a cruise out to the former coal-mining colony on Takashima (or Gunkanjima - ‘ Battleship Island’) to see some of the filming locations. Another James Bond film location (“Dr. No.”) was Mount Aso, which has the world’s largest caldera, intensively

cultivated due to the rich volcanic soils.

The hot springs around Beppu - which has the world’s heaviest concentration of hot springs - the famed Kannawa “Hells”, of various colours, and an overnight in a ryokan at Miyajima. Seeing the famous red Torii at 6 o’clock in the morning, without a soul about, was magical.

From the Inland Sea I went round the south-west coast of the Sea of Japan to Matsue, then south across country to Okayama, where on a beautiful morning I visited a ‘top’ garden, Korako-en, where hundreds of visitors, including wedding and funeral groups, and many Japanese ladies wearing their colourful Sunday-best kimonos, were enjoying a stroll and viewing the blossoms.

Next day I crossed the beautiful Seto Ohashi Bridge over the Inland Sea to do a circuit of the island of Shikoku, concluding with a stay in the city of Takamatsu. A short taxi ride from my hotel the following morning took me to the glorious Ritsurin-koen for its 8 a.m. opening, to explore before the crowds. I was to do the same early-morning visit at another James Bond film location (“You Only Live Twice”, 1967) Himeji, which had just re-opened - two days earlier - following its five-year, £143m restoration. When I emerged I found the queue was 3 hours long! There were thousands enjoying the castle and the cherry-blossoms, now in full bloom.

Below: The Golden Temple, Kyoto



Another 'top' garden visited was Kenroku-en in Kanazawa, followed in the afternoon by a 1hr local train journey to the flying-saucer shaped Cosmo World, with its fascinating artefacts of space exploration and UFO exhibits.

Much of my-long distance travel was by the famous Shinkansen - "bullet train" - and I was fortunate to travel on its latest incarnation, just released for travel to celebrate JR's (Japan Rail) 40th anniversary. I just happened to miss seeing the newest MAGLEV set a new speed record of 366.6mph/590kph. (Six days later it broke its own record, with a new speed of 374.69mph/603kph).

The hot-spring resort of Atami was a convenient hub from which to explore Hakone and Mt. Fuji and to visit the British Village where there is 'Northern Rock II' - a 15" gauge steam locomotive built by the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Co. in Ravenglass, Cumbria. The Cumbrian ship-building town of Barrow-in-Furness constructed a number of vessels for the Imperial Japanese Navy at the turn of the 20th Century (because Japan didn't have the technology) and I had a personally conducted tour by Captain Greg K. Kouta and Executive Director Hisao Nakatsuka (of the Memorial Ship Preservation Society) of their famous and impressive battleship *Mikasa*, flagship of Admiral Togo, this year celebrating the 110th Anniversary (27 May 1905) of the defeat of Russia's Baltic Fleet.

Four days was spent in Kyoto to see the architectural wonders of Buddhist Ginkaku-ji ('Silver Pavilion'), Kinkaku-ji ('Golden Pavilion') and austere Ryoan-ji; walking cherry blossom decked Tetsugaku-no Michi ('Path of Philosophy') with bridal couples; two days in Nara for Todai-ji and its Daibutsu ('Great Buddha') and the Shinto shrine of Kasuga Taisha. Although I spent three days in Tokyo this was only to see some essential sights and go into the outer suburbs for its interesting architecture and a reproduction of Beatrix Potter's 'Hill Top.'

All in all, I visited a large number of historic sites, three railway museums, five gardens, four shrines, six temples, ten castles, and in 35 days travelled 5252.9km/3264 miles by train.



Top: Peace Statue, Nagasaki
Middle: Sunaday-best!
Bottom: the Torri





Above: New and old - the Shinkansen bullet train (left) and narrow gauge railway, the British Village (right)

Right: the battleship Mikasa



Left: Himeji Castle

An African Adventure Travel Group Trip to Zambia and Malawi

Report by Liz Rhodes

Zambia may not feature high on your list of ‘must see’ places to go to but the trip there last July by a small band of intrepid Travel Group members proved to be rewarding. There have been times when travelling through countries in the developing world that I have felt it would be interesting to try and get an impression of life beneath the surface and put something back into the local community. By doing this it might be possible to get a better “sense of place”. Such an opportunity arose when I came across the ‘Book Bus’ charity, a British organisation that tours schools in parts of Zambia and Malawi encouraging and helping young children to read. This is done with local staff aided by volunteers who go out for 2-3 weeks at a time.

And so the idea was developed for a Travel Group trip that would spend a week volunteering with the Book Bus then have a few days on Safari, ending up with a couple of days R&R by Lake Malawi. At the same time I suggested that perhaps we could do a photographic project that would help the Book Bus highlight its activities. In the event something much more satisfying happened, described below.

An overnight flight from Heathrow via Addis Ababa found us in Lilongwe, capital of Malawi. From there we had a five hour drive west into Zambia, eventually arriving at the Croc Valley Safari Lodge on the banks of the Luangwa River in the south-east of the country. It wasn’t until the following morning that we had an opportunity to take in our surroundings. The river was very wide but very low since the rains had not been as good as they should have been and so much of what one could see was the river bed itself. Nevertheless this did not stop numerous hippos wallowing in what water there was making harrumphing noises. Vervet monkeys were also numerous and eager to pounce on any food that might be available and looking at them close to one could see they had a lot of human characteristics! We were well and truly in the bush and at night



elephants, hippos and baboons wandered through the grounds, not always in a friendly manner.

Our first day was one of acclimatisation, familiarising ourselves with the children’s books we would be working with and generally absorbing the surroundings. Then, on the Monday, it was off to the Kukumbi Primary School for our first encounter with the children. It turned out that day was a public holiday but nevertheless they had all come into school and we were welcomed with great enthusiasm. The plan was to spend each morning at the school and each of our group would work with two groups of 6-8 children, the first in Grade 4, the second in Grade 7. With the Grade 4s we read to them a selection of English children’s books and then got them to read out loud the story themselves. At the end of the week each group read a book in front of the other groups as well as being encouraged to act out some of the story which included doing the ‘cha-cha-cha’. All of this was done sitting under trees in the grounds of the school.

With the children in Grade 7 we did a photographic project. Not many of them had seen a camera before, let alone an ipad, but they quickly grasped the basic mechanics of taking a photograph and over four days they, and we, took photos showing “A Day in My World”. This was a project that the teacher had devised with the local Book Bus co-ordinator, Monica, a Zambian herself, and enabled us to be taken around the village by the children and be shown how they lived, thus giving us an insight into their lives. As Monica had both a lap-top and a printer we were able to print out their photographs and on the final day their images were exhibited in the classroom and they spoke about what they had learnt. From the school’s point of view this project fitted into the subject ‘Technology’ part of their curriculum, despite the fact that

Below: Elephant parade



they did not have computers or other electronic equipment. All teaching was in English and an additional advantage of our presence and activities was that the children heard English spoken by English – and Australian – people.

The following week, some of the group went off on the Safari, while two of us found ourselves in another school for two days. It would seem that the bush telegraph had been working over the weekend as we were asked to do some sort of project with the groups of children there. In short order we came up with another photographic project linked to reading a book about elephants.

This time we printed a number of images showing these magnificent creatures and tried to get them to describe what they saw. A certain amount of shyness was evident, but the girls in particular soon found confidence to answer questions and it was a rewarding experience to see them so enthusiastic about their reading.

The trip ended with a couple of days in a Lodge on the edge of Lake Malawi. Nearby was a village whose livelihood depended on fishing in the Lake. Every morning and evening small boats would head out into the vast expanse of the lake, almost like a sea, and during the day one could see their catch as the fish dried out in the sun along the lake shore. The lake was also used by the locals for their washing, both clothes and



personal, a reminder that in Africa people live very much out in the open. Sunsets over the lake were magical and with a drink in hand, gave an opportunity to reflect on our African experience. It was a totally different world and we had been fortunate enough to see a little of it below the surface and make a small contribution to it. In the words of the Dalai Lama, which I noticed on the walls of a Conservation Project run by two British ex-policemen in Zambia:

“Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water the actions of individuals can have far reaching effects.”





Left top: Andy and his photography group

Left bottom: Laundry day on Lake Malawi

Top: Group 4 presentation

Middle: Group 4 class

Bottom: Sunset, Lake Malawi





My Around the World in 80 Days

Part 1

Aline Hopkins, LRPS

(If I can do it, anyone can!)

"I'm thinking of going around the world," I said to the travel agent.

"When are you thinking of going?" he replied.

"In about three weeks."

"Ah, well, in that case I'd better clear the decks!"

It all started when my nephew, who lives in New York State, invited me to his engagement party. The death of my mother, followed by endless rain over the previous year, had been getting me down, so I thought I could go – and then keep heading west. Why not?

The engagement party was held at the famous Saratoga Springs Racetrack, which was holding a race meeting and celebrating its 150th anniversary at the same time. The party 'suite' turned out to be a two-storey cabin of sorts, which, unfortunately, was on the bend beyond the finishing line, so the only time the horses ran past was after they'd finished the race. One fainted, and a worrying few minutes was spent while it was hosed down and showered with buckets of water; fortunately, it recovered.

The upstairs deck was open but covered, and, on my way up, I did a double-take as I saw a group of nuns going into the next-door suite. A closer look revealed that the suite was filled with priests and nuns, obviously enjoying a day at the races. "Ask them if they've had any good tips from him upstairs," said my sister, hopefully. Not that she'd actually placed any bets, or was likely to.

The next day, some of us headed up to Canada to enjoy a few days' fishing at a very peaceful lakeside spot. The fish were biting, the loons were singing, and the weather was good.

The first stop on my agenda after saying goodbye to my relatives was Chicago, the windy city. My reason for

stopping here was to see an exhibition at the History Museum, of photographs taken by Vivian Maier. She worked as a nanny most of her life but was also a keen photographer. Virtually every day, she took photographs, which lay undiscovered until storage lockers she rented were sold off after her death. The buyers discovered a wealth of incredible street photography, covering around fifty years of Chicago and US history. It's ironic, quite sad in fact, that her images were not made public when she was alive.

After seeing the exhibition, I had lunch in the museum café. Looking up, I was surprised to see planes doing sky-writing. It turned out to be the weekend of the annual Chicago air show, so I went out and enjoyed the spectacle of aerobatic displays, stunt flying and parachutists, all performing over the lake.

Next day, I flew to Rapid City, a small town, its main claim to fame being the statues of American Presidents on every street corner. From here, I took a trip into Custer State Park, where herds of bison roam, and, as I watched them ambling down a hill to a watering hole, I felt very guilty at having eaten buffalo burgers the night before. At the nearby Needles range, a viewpoint offered a vast expanse of tree-filled landscape, stretching as far as the eye could see.

In Rapid City, I joined a coach tour which was heading south. First stop was the Mount Rushmore National Monument, where the heads of Roosevelt, Lincoln, Washington and Jefferson stare unendingly over the hordes of tourists who visit this place every day. Not too far away is the even larger Crazy Horse Memorial, still a work-in-progress, and likely to be so for many years to come.

The nightly rodeo in Cody provided some skilful entertainment as cowboys and cowgirls of all ages rode, or tried to ride, an assortment of horses, oxen, calves (for the children) and steers and showed their skills with the lasso in timed events. They even rode while a raging thunderstorm passed over the arena. But it was a toddler wearing a black Stetson who stole the evening when, in the interval, all the children were invited into the arena to take part in games. This small boy in his large cowboy hat staggered around, repeatedly falling over, losing his hat and putting it back on again, oblivious to what the others were doing. The crowd loved him; he was the star of the show.



Left: Chicago Air Show

The star of our show was next on the itinerary – Yellowstone National Park. I sometimes wonder how many people in the world don't know that Yellowstone is a massive super-volcano, which last erupted about 60,000 years ago. A huge reservoir of magma a few miles below the surface is what gives rise to this area's geo-thermal features – boiling mud pools, hot springs, geysers and colourful terraces of travertine leached from the hot water bubbling up from the ground. Old Faithful, true to its name, erupts a tower of hot water every seventy minutes or so. Nearby, other geysers appeared to be in a constant state of eruption. On a cool morning, the whole area is filled with a steamy mist, fuelled by these numerous geysers dotted about the landscape.

Some people claimed to have seen a bear close to Lake Yellowstone, but all my party saw were a few bison, birds and butterflies. South of Yellowstone is the hugely impressive mountain range known as The Tetons. Rising up sharply from the surrounding plain, these snow-capped peaks must have seemed an insurmountable barrier to early settlers crossing America. A raft trip down the Snake River offered views of these massive grey peaks, and the banks of the river presented us with bald eagles, ospreys and colourful native flowers.

A long day's drive brought us to Salt Lake City, its light-coloured buildings gleaming in the sunlight. A huge amphitheatre was the setting for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's weekly live radio broadcast – an interesting performance to watch and listen to, including a repertoire of good old-fashioned favourites like 'When the Saints go marching in'.

The Salt Lake itself disappointed, though the insect life teeming on its shores attracted an enormous number of gulls and other birds. Nearby was the world's largest copper mine, a vast gash in the mountainside.

It had been good to travel with a varied and interesting group of people. The final dinner was an occasion of mixed emotions, saying goodbye to new-found friends, people who had welcomed this foreigner into their midst with open arms, who had made this trip special and whom I would probably never see again.

Alone once more, I flew to San Francisco and immediately took a trip to Yosemite National Park to seek out the viewpoints made iconic by the famous photographer Ansel Adams. In this wilderness, sheer cliff faces rise up from the valley floor, and, whilst they might look impossible, there were groups of climbers just visible as tiny specks on the face of El Capitan.

The vast bulk of Half Dome, shining brightly but occasionally dappled by shade from clouds overhead, loomed impressively above those of us who rode through the valley floor in the wagons which take tourists around the park.

Because of drought, the famous waterfalls had dried up. A small trickle of water being blown by the wind over Bridal Veil Falls showed how the falls got their name, but in an unimpressive fashion. Fires were raging in various parts of the park, but the valley was untouched. Deer sheltered in the shade, ground squirrels hunted around the car parks, and blue birds flitted through the trees. I felt dwarfed in Muir Woods, where towering redwoods are preserved, some of them several hundred years old. Later, a boat trip around San Francisco Bay offered good views of the famous Golden Gate Bridge and the notorious Alcatraz prison.



Above: Chicago trolley

Below: Americas' Cup race, San Francisco

I was surprised to find that my visit coincided with the start of the America's Cup boat race. Huge catamarans, one representing New Zealand and one the USA, were racing one another in the bay. Throngs of people lined the harbour front to get a good view, and it was incredible to watch these massive boats seemingly flying along the surface of the water on what looked like a hockey stick protruding from underneath the boat.





Sadly, I saw only the first day of racing, as I headed to Los Angeles the following day to take a flight to my next destination, the Cook Islands.

If ever there was a tropical paradise, this is it. I flew to Raratonga and then took a small plane to the atoll of Aitutaki. The large turquoise-coloured lagoon around Aitutaki is bounded by coral reefs and small islands and contains many species of colourful tropical fish. A traditional boat carries visitors out to One Foot Island, where the post office opens for a few hours so that people can have their passports stamped – after, of course, a delicious lunch, a swim in the warm lagoon and a rest under the swaying palm trees on the white sandy beach!

Back on Raratonga, I took the bus which circles the island clockwise, and then anti-clockwise, each trip taking just forty-five minutes. There isn't really a lot to do on Raratonga for someone who can't swim and doesn't sunbathe. A small, beautiful island; time moves slowly here. Chickens range freely around the streets, scuttling out of the way of motor cycles carrying two or three family members. The colourful Sunday market bustles with people, with the flowers on stalls reflected even more colourfully in the flower patterns on the material on the clothes stalls.

Part 2 of Aline's Around the World adventure will appear in the next issue of Travel Log.

Above: The Tetons, Wyoming
Below: Lower Falls, Yellowstone, Wyoming



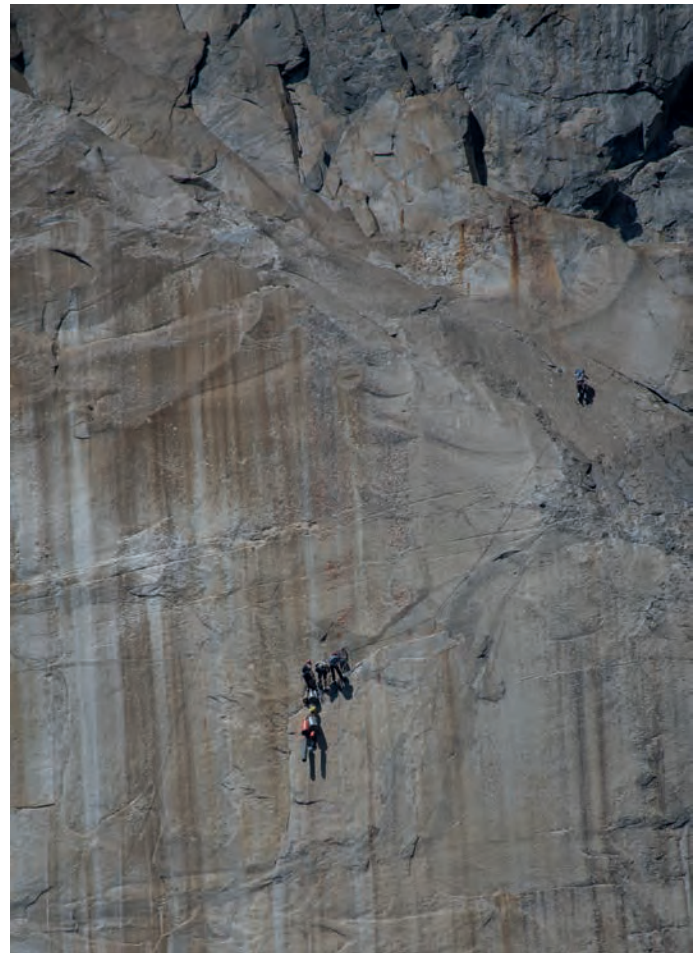


Above: Hanging on!

Top right: Climbers on El Capitan, Yosemite

Bottom left: Snake River and The Tetons

Bottom right: One Foot Island, Aitutaki



Cityfocus: Istanbul

Colin Howard, ARPS

Do you have a favourite city or town, big or small?

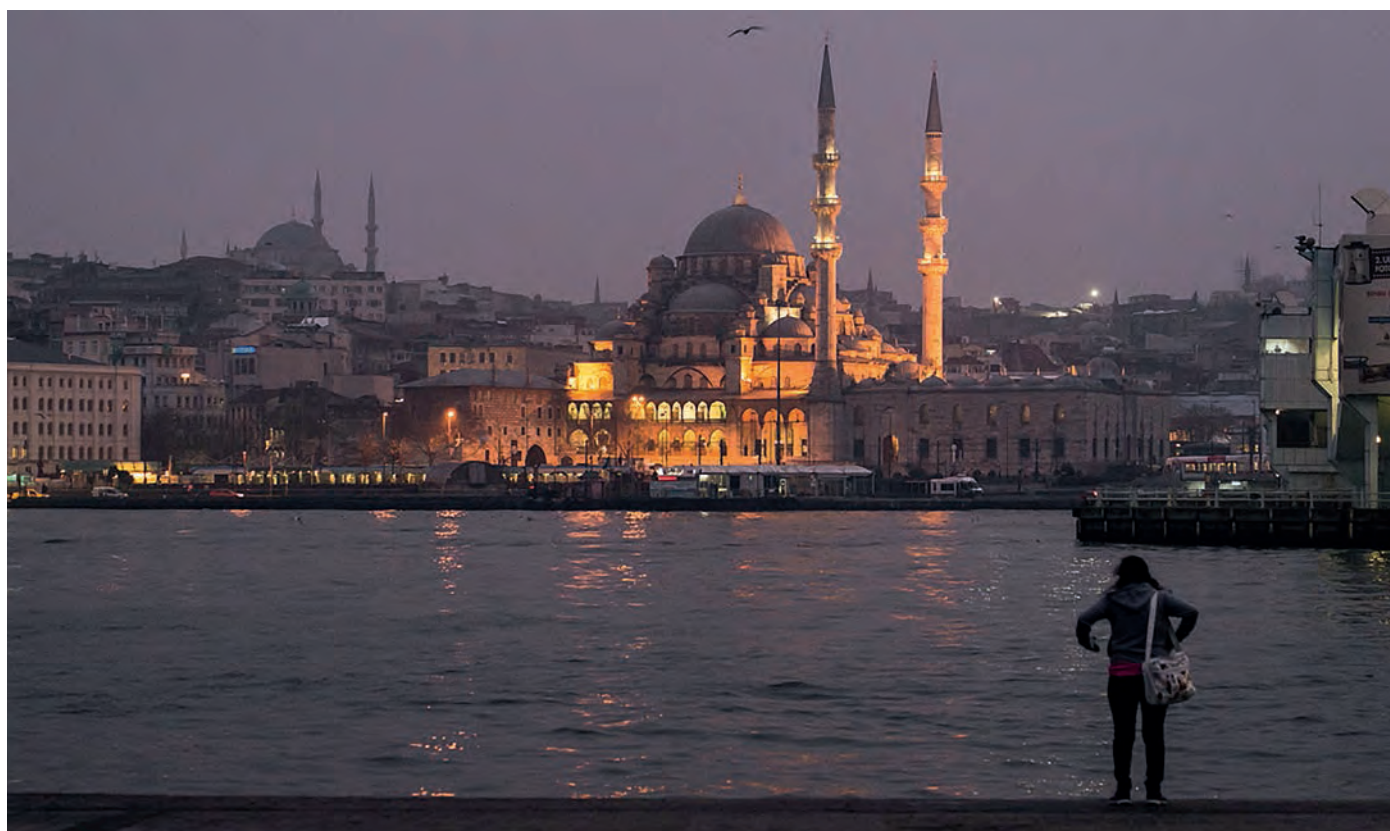
Let the Editors have your pictures!

Situated between Europe and Asia, this city has everything for the travel photographer: water, ancient buildings, stupendous public monuments, and a thriving street market scene. A group of friends and I visited Istanbul last January for a five day visit. This is a good time of the year to visit many cities, with a lack of crowds and hotels plus airlines often offering cheap deals. Despite the cold, the light is often great, with the sun low in the sky giving good moulding to buildings and also offering good opportunities for dawn, dusk and night photography - without having to get up at some unearthly hour in the morning!

Most of these images were taken on my trusty Leica plus a fixed, 35mm lens: I have long gone past the point of lugging a large camera back around towns and cities and prefer to travel light. For morning shoots I use a “traveller” Gitzgo tripod with a ball and socket head. A good tripod is as valuable as a good lens, in my opinion, and the excellent carbon fibre models now available make carrying a tripod much less of a burden.

Right: Hagia Sophia

Below: Suleiman Mosque at dawn





Top left: peanut seller.

Middle left: the Grand Bazaar

Middle right: photographing the Hagia Sophia

Bottom: Beyoglu district.





Clockwise from top left: Beyoglu district, Galata Tower, opening up at dawn.

Thinking of submitting to Travel Log?

Here are eight easy steps by way of guidance:

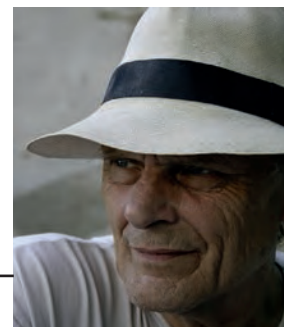
- 1 - Text: up to 750 words, submitted as a .doc or .txt file;
- 2 - Images (up to 12) in jpeg or tiff format, 300dpi, suitable for printing up to 2000px longest length;
- 3 - Include your name in the image titles;
- 4 - A list of image captions;
- 5 - Include an image of yourself for the article header;
- 6 - (Optional): your email together with website URL and/or Facebook page - or indeed URL of any other site you wish members to visit;
- 7 - Let us know if you have a distinction, RPS, PAGB or otherwise;
- 8 - Your telephone contact details for the Editor to contact you if necessary.

Travel Log is YOUR opportunity to share with other members your travel images and experiences. So why not get those files out of the computer and into print!

Iceland: a Different Perspective

Grahame Soden, ARPS

<http://www.grahamesoden.zenfolio.com>



I've been making photographs for a good number of decades now and my photography has become rather predictable. Technically OK but lacking in flair. In summer 2015 my partner Katharina & I set off for a five week trip by car to the Faroes and Iceland. To cut a long story short we drove some 1200 km south from our base in Lapland to Denmark, then took the car ferry north to Iceland, which is at the same latitude as our starting point.

Having our own car, there was no problem with taking loads of gear and, as I wanted to try something a little different with my photography, I took an infrared conversion DSLR and a pinhole "lens" for my standard DSLR body.

Pinhole photography is where our hobby/profession came from via the camera obscura, and has become popular again with those wanting to try something completely different. You can buy a dedicated analogue pinhole camera, make your own DSLR pinhole adapter or buy a ready-made adapter which fits your DSLR in place of the lens. I bought a ready-made one for a few pounds and the results are "interesting" in a dreamy, soft-focus way. Remember, there is no glass involved – the image is just the light from the scene projected onto the sensor through a tiny pinhole. There is nothing to focus and everything in the scene is equally "sharp". Exposure is guesswork. In "sunny 16" conditions try ISO 100 at 1 sec – 2 sec exposure and adjust as necessary. I've gone up to ISO 6400 at 1/20th second without noticing any loss of "quality". Post processing for me just involved some tweaks to levels, exposure and colour saturation. Given the overall softness of pinhole images, sharpening is fairly pointless. I did encounter some pretty strong vignetting to the right hand side of every pinhole image. I don't know what causes this and my attempts to remove it in Photoshop were not a great success so if anyone has any ideas then please let me know!

Any digital camera will take colour infrared photographs with the appropriate filter over the lens, but as the filter has to stop most of the visible light it is very dark – almost a "big stopper". This makes focusing difficult and exposures long. The alternative method, which I opted for, is to have the camera's sensor modified for infrared but the camera will then take only infrared images. Even with a converted body there can still be focussing issues but live-view overcomes them, and I find that giving a full stop of extra exposure works for me. I always shoot in camera RAW. It's the easiest way to improve your photography. If you don't use RAW then you need to create a custom white-balance for your infrared shots and the experts say that living green grass gives a good custom white balance for infrared.

Your infrared images will need post-processing. I use Canon's DPP to get the exposure, sharpness etc. into the right ball-park and then open the resulting 16-bit tiff in Photoshop (CS4) RAW to fine tune. The folder of "final" (are they ever

final?) tiffs are batch converted to jpegs using a Photoshop CS4 "action" and then resized for website/emails etc using another "action". It's slow but it works for me!

I've also experimented with swapping the Red & Blue channels (see pictures on page 23). To try this, open the tiff/jpeg in Photoshop and select "channel mixer" as an adjustment layer. Then, alter the Red channel to "0 Red, 100 Blue" and the Blue channel to "100 Red, 0 Blue". This will put the blue back in the sky, sea etc.

Further experimentation showed that both infrared and pinhole video-clips are possible – I suppose that infrared pinhole video is too. I'm a complete novice at video with a DSLR (or anything else) but for what it's worth I use 25fps and a shutter speed of 1/50th sec and juggle with the ISO or ND filters to get the exposure right.

Iceland is a wonderful banquet, in both gourmet and photographic terms, and a visit is well worth the expense. The keyword for a successful and enjoyable holiday is "early". Iceland has around 1,000,000 visitors a year but only 12,000 letting rooms. If you want a hotel or B&B in specific locations, then you need to book at least six months in advance and the same goes for the car-ferry if you want a decent cabin. Note that Smyril Line, the ferry operators, stipulate a check-in time of anything up to 3 hours before sailing. They are not joking.

If you opt for camping, you don't need to book but it's best to get to the site as early as possible as they fill up rapidly and, by early evening, it can be difficult to find a quiet spot. The popular tourist spots get busy too and it's the early bird who gets the uncluttered photographs!

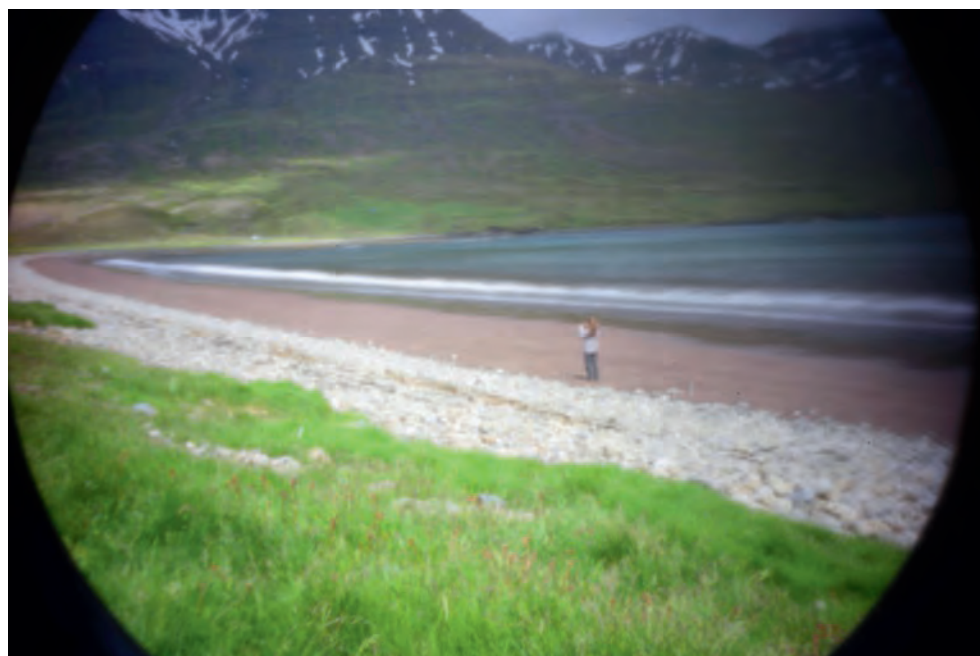
In addition to the photographs here, I took the usual "postcard" shots and you can see them at: photograhame.zenfolio.com

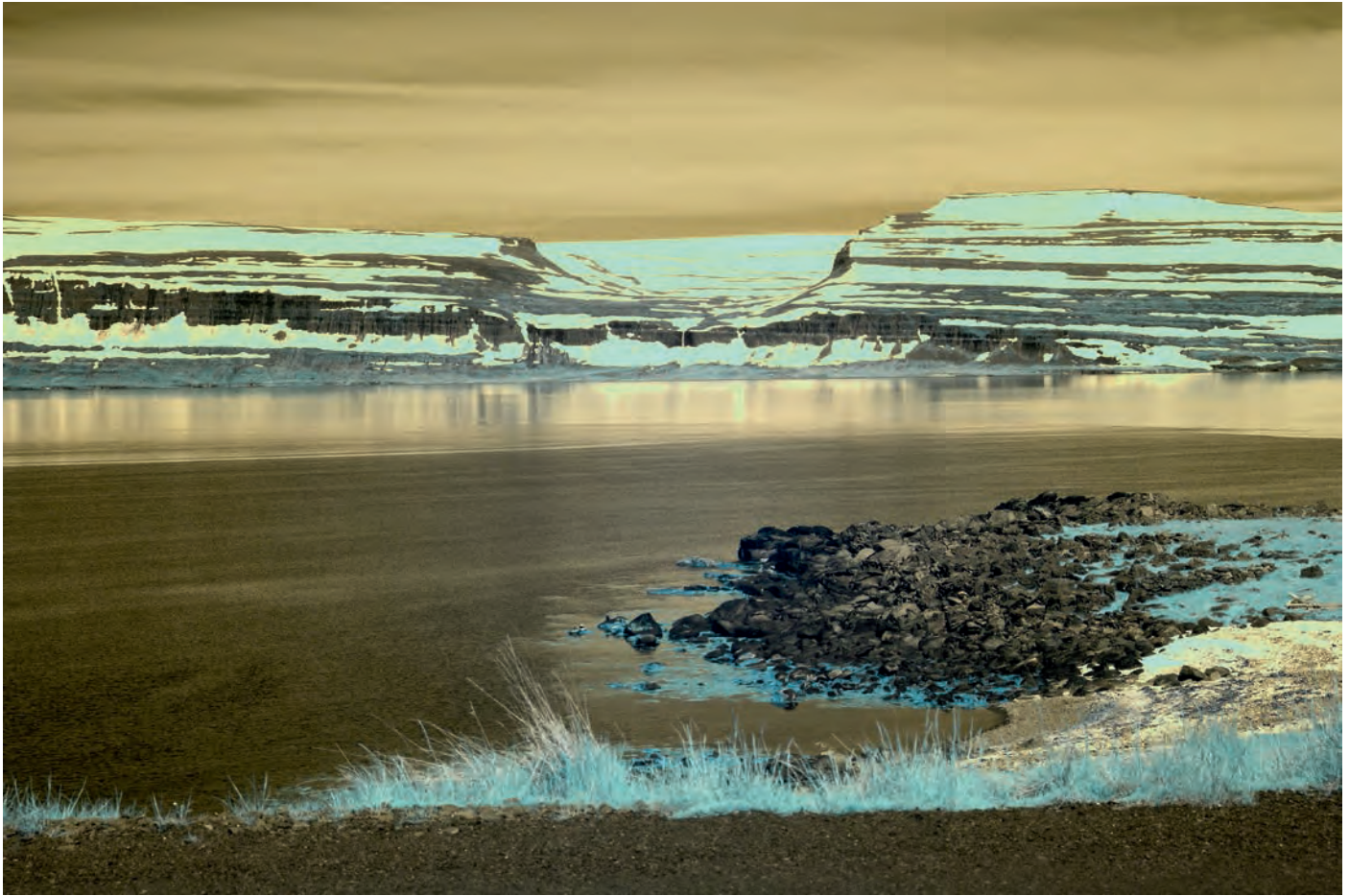


Bottom left (p.21), Top and
Middle:

Pinhole images, East Fjords

Bottom: Infra Red conversion





Top and bottom: experimenting with the red and blue channels in Photoshop



Travel Group Meet in Durham

Report by Colin Howard, ARPS

*"Yet well I love thy mixed and massive piles
Half church of God and half castle against the Scots
And long to roam these venerable aisles
With records stored of deeds long since forgot."*

Sir Walter Scott

These words describing Durham resonate with any visitor. Taking advantage of one of the few evening visits to the Cathedral organised expressly for photographers, a select band of Travel Group members assembled one fine August evening with the purpose of photographing both cathedral and its surrounding city over a couple of days. To those who have yet to discover Durham, the city is dominated by the cathedral, standing as it does high above the surrounding area on a loop of the River Wear. Both city and church are inextricably linked with the university, Durham Castle being the oldest university building in the country. Both the Cathedral and Castle are World Heritage Sites.

The Cathedral is arguably one of the finest examples in Europe of Norman architecture and has remained essentially unchanged in outline and structure since its completion in the early 12th century. The task of photographing the interior is a

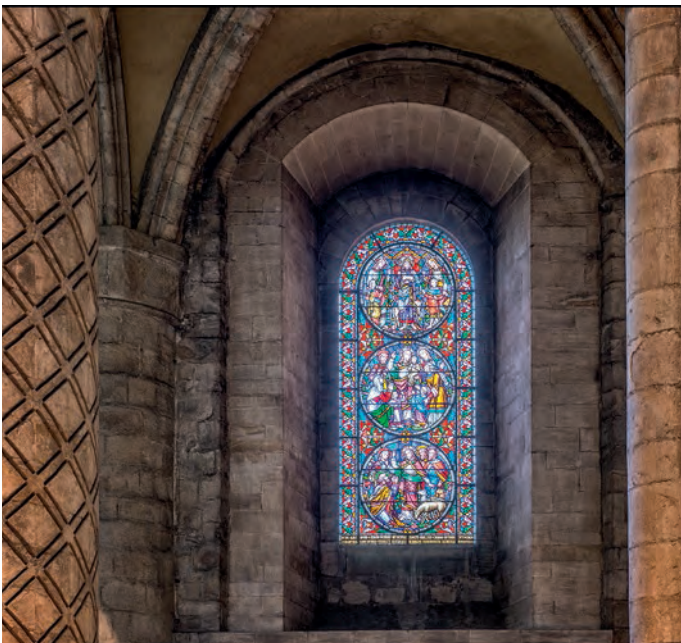
challenge: a tripod is essential and in the summer, what with light streaming in the west windows from the setting sun, anti-septicise careful attention to exposure and contrast.

Here are a few representative pictures from among those who took part. There are plans to repeat these short meets, focusing primarily on towns and cities in the UK. Many members have expressed an enthusiasm to have more travel opportunities closer to home, so if you have a favourite place and would like to host a visit, please contact a member of your committee. There is no organisational commitment needed, save to offer suggestions as to places to photograph and, of course, meet up for refreshment!



Below: View of Durham Cathedral's west front from the River Wear; Above, the Cathedral nave, by Dennis Rigg

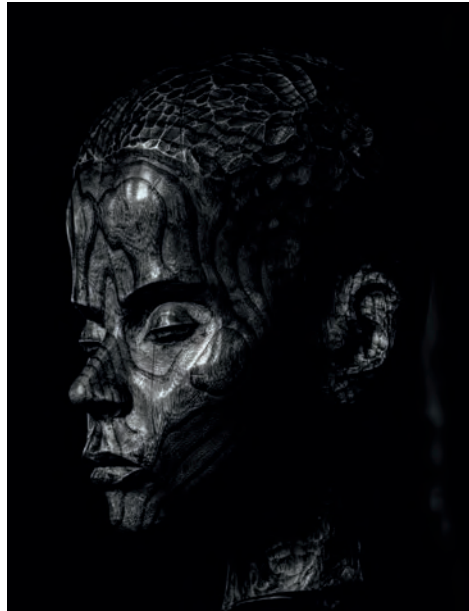




Above: Looking down the aisle to the choir, by Philip Pound LRPS

Left: details of the nave and stained glass; below, canopy over St Cuthbert's tomb, by Jonathan Ratnage





Left and Below: Two statues from the Lady Chapel, by Lyn Newton, LRPS



Above: looking westward; Below, the River Wear, both by Philip Pound, LRPS; Right, Van Mildert College, by Colin Howard, ARPS



Africa - An Unbelievable Lifetime Experience

Penny Furseman

<http://www.pennyfursemantravel.co.uk>



As my flight touched down at Cape Town airport, a lifetime experience with new adventures and wildlife encounters was changing from a dream into reality.

Taking the 'Hop-on Hop-off' bus to discover what Cape Town had to offer, from the revitalised Victoria & Albert Waterfront, to the colourful area of Bo Kaap, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and naturally taking the cable car to the top of Table Mountain. Robbin Island for a day trip which was both emotional and informative, my guide had been one of Nelson Mandela's fellow inmates so this made the visit even more poignant.

Victoria Falls, an awe-inspiring sight and wherever you stood it was impossible to dodge the water spray from the mighty Falls. A small price to pay for the view.

Onwards to Botswana & Namibia to join the Zambezi Queen to cruise the Chobe River, where hundreds of elephants roam the river banks and hippos constantly emerging from the river.

During a water based sundown game drive in a tender boat, where you are so close to all the wildlife you could almost reach out and touch them,... a breathtaking experience, as the tender waited whilst a herd of elephants crossed the river right in front of the boat. One baby elephant was encouraged by its mother and all that could be seen was its trunk poking out of the water.



Along the Garden Route and at Shamwari Reserve wildlife was around every corner with sightings of both white and black rhino as well as lions, Cape buffalo and leopards: the 'Big 5' all up close and personal. A once in a lifetime experience was to witness an elephant trying to avoid feeding a very determined older sibling. Elephants only suckle their offspring for two years, and this older sibling would have been over 3 years old, and it certainly made a great fuss which culminated with the mother feeding both offspring, a rare event.

Being able to walk with two orphaned cheetahs was yet another incredible and unforgettable experience as was the outing for a shark cage dive... But WOW what can you say to a great white shark looking at you through a wire cage!



The final safari was at Thornybush Water Lodge. On just one game drive we sighted elephants, rhino, Cape buffalo and then a spine chilling sighting of a pride of lions with a fresh kill. As if this was not enough, our guide spotted a leopard hiding in the undergrowth on the side of the road. The leopard suddenly pounced on a warthog just as we stopped, dragging it straight up a tree and left it there for safe keeping.

Africa always unexpected, unforgettable and a novice photographer's dream.

Above: Camps Bay

Left: Table Mountain from Robbin Island



Left Top: Bo Kaap

Left, Middle: Victoria And Albert Waterfront, Cape Town

Bottom: elephants by the River Chobe





Top left: White rhinos

Top right: Leopard hiding

Middle right: Cheetahs

Middle below: Pride of lions

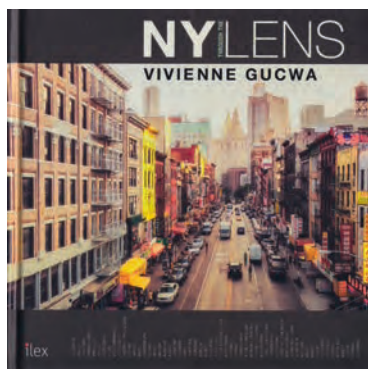
Bottom: Victoria Falls



Book Reviews

Despite the ever escalating use of social media and the internet to show and promote photography, book sales remain buoyant. Browsing photobooks are a good way to find fresh inspiration, tips and techniques, as well as fresh ideas as to new destinations.

If you have a book that you particularly want to share with fellow members, please contact the Editor and let's see if we can make this a regular feature!



New York Through the Lens. Vivienne Gucwa, 2014, Ilex Publications, Lewis, UK, ISBN 978-1-78157-973-2. £20.

New York City is among the top destinations of most photographers. This book is a refreshing look at the Big Apple through the eyes of someone who lives and works in the city. Vivienne Gucwa did not take up photography until five years ago, and equipped only at first with a \$100 point-and-shoot camera started walking the streets. Although she has now upgraded to a more sophisticated model, her images retain a freshness of both perspective and approach. Being a New Yorker, she has been able to get under the skin of this vibrant yet ephemeral American city. Some of the best shots were taken at night or in inclement weather: having visited New York myself in winter, I can appreciate this is no easy task once the thermometer drops below freezing. Although the book could have benefited from more close editing as to the images selected - many being technically less than perfect - the freshness and uninhibited approach to her compositions make for a feeling to jump on the next plane heading over the pond. Just don't take the text too seriously and focus on the images. They are great and an inspiration for all members of the Travel Group that are new to photography and perhaps need a little encouragement to get out there and shoot!

Colin Howard.

Right: Times Square, New York (Colin Howard).



Street Photography Now. Sophie Howarth and Stephen McLaren, 2011, Thames & Hudson, London UK. ISBN 978-0-500-28907-5. £19.95.

There can be few of us that don't at some time indulge in a big dose of street photography whilst on our travels. This book is a compendium of photographs from over 40 photographers, such as Joel Meyerowitz, David Gibson, Martin Parr among others. But this a genre accessible to all of us. It has a long tradition, most notably in the work of French photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson. Images are to be had in parks, shopping malls (if allowed!), at the seaside and in many other public spaces. This book has several well-written introductions to different aspects of street photography accompanied by inspirational images not beyond the scope of most of us if only we had both the opportunity, the patience, and possibly at times, the courage. There is a quirkiness among the photographs that grace these pages, often enhanced by the use of black and white. This book is rapidly becoming 'the' book for those wishing to gain an introduction to street photography and is highly recommended.

Colin Howard.



Forthcoming Trips

Aline Hopkins, LRPS

Our weekend in Cornwall may have already taken place by the time you read this, and I am sure those members attending will have had a good time! Look out for the trip report in the next issue.

This year seems to have gone quickly, and our first trip of 2016 is approaching rapidly. From 23rd March to 7th April we will be visiting Japan during the cherry blossom season. We hope there will be blossom, but it can't be guaranteed! The tour includes Tokyo, Kyoto, Hiroshima and the Japanese Alps, among other places. Japan has much to offer photographically, and no doubt there will be time for a visit to the world's largest photography store in Shinjuku, Tokyo, an experience in itself!

If you have ever dreamed of visiting the famous Angkor Wat complex in Cambodia, 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. These tours are being arranged in association with All Points East who organised our highly successful trips to Myanmar. For further details, contact Keith Pointon (bagpoint@aol.com).

After our successful trip for Holy Week in Jerez, Spain, last Easter, a further trip to Spain has been organised through Christopher Pollard Tours. This trip will be from Tuesday 29th September to Monday 5th October and be focused on a less visited region of Castile to the northeast from Madrid. Based in Soria, there will be great opportunities for both landscape and town photography, accompanied of course by Chris Pollard's liking for great food! There are local street festivities on 1st October as a bonus. For further details, contact Colin Howard (colin.howard@mac.com).

You may recall I had intended to arrange a group booking for Edinburgh to coincide with the Edinburgh Festival, but as there appeared to be minimal interest from members after this was listed in a previous update. Notwithstanding, there has been comments from a number of members to organise more local trips to encompass a wider range of travel photographic interests. These will most likely take the form of organised "meets" whereby a member with local knowledge will host a visit of a few days, with participants organising their own travel and accommodation. The trip to Durham reported elsewhere in this issue was organised in this way and was enjoyed by those who participated. A trip to Wallingford in Oxfordshire is being planned for the autumn of 2016. Other events in the UK are in plan but are not yet finalised, so please keep an eye on the website for details of the Wallingford meet and others 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.

Short visits are also a way to embrace those members who perhaps have not been on a photographic trip before, or perhaps are new to travel photography and would welcome that extra bit of advice and help without making a significant financial outlay.



Top: Cherry blossom (Aline Hopkins).

Lower: Monk collecting alms, Tokyo (Colin Howard).

Looking further ahead, we are already looking to 2017 and suggestions include Denmark, Hong Kong and China. There has been interest in visiting China for some time, but the feeling is at present that arranging the right type of visit will present particular challenges to the group. One option is a combined trip visiting first Hong Kong and then progressing to southern and southwestern China. If any member presently residing in Hong Kong or in China who would like to assist, we would very much like to hear from you!

Cruising is an option we have not really investigated and I would be like to hear whether members might be interested in such things as European river cruises or perhaps a Baltic Capitals cruise. Please get in touch if this would appeal to you.

Our events only happen because people volunteer to make them happen. If you would be willing to organise a week or weekend event in the UK, 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 –

alinelhopkins@btinternet.com

Digital Forum, Round 33 Winner



Delhi Street Stall by Hazel Mason, FRPS:

“This photograph was taken on our recent trip to Delhi. We spent a week just before the Monsoon staying just outside the gates of Old Delhi. We walked everywhere in temperatures in the mid-40s and did about 110 miles in the week. This was one of the many tea stalls in the city and it was here that we would sit and drink tea with the local men. Taken on a Canon EOS 1DX, 24-70 lens, ISO 500 1/160 f4.0.”

If you would like to join the forum, please contact Hazel Mason (hazel.mason39@btinternet.com).
