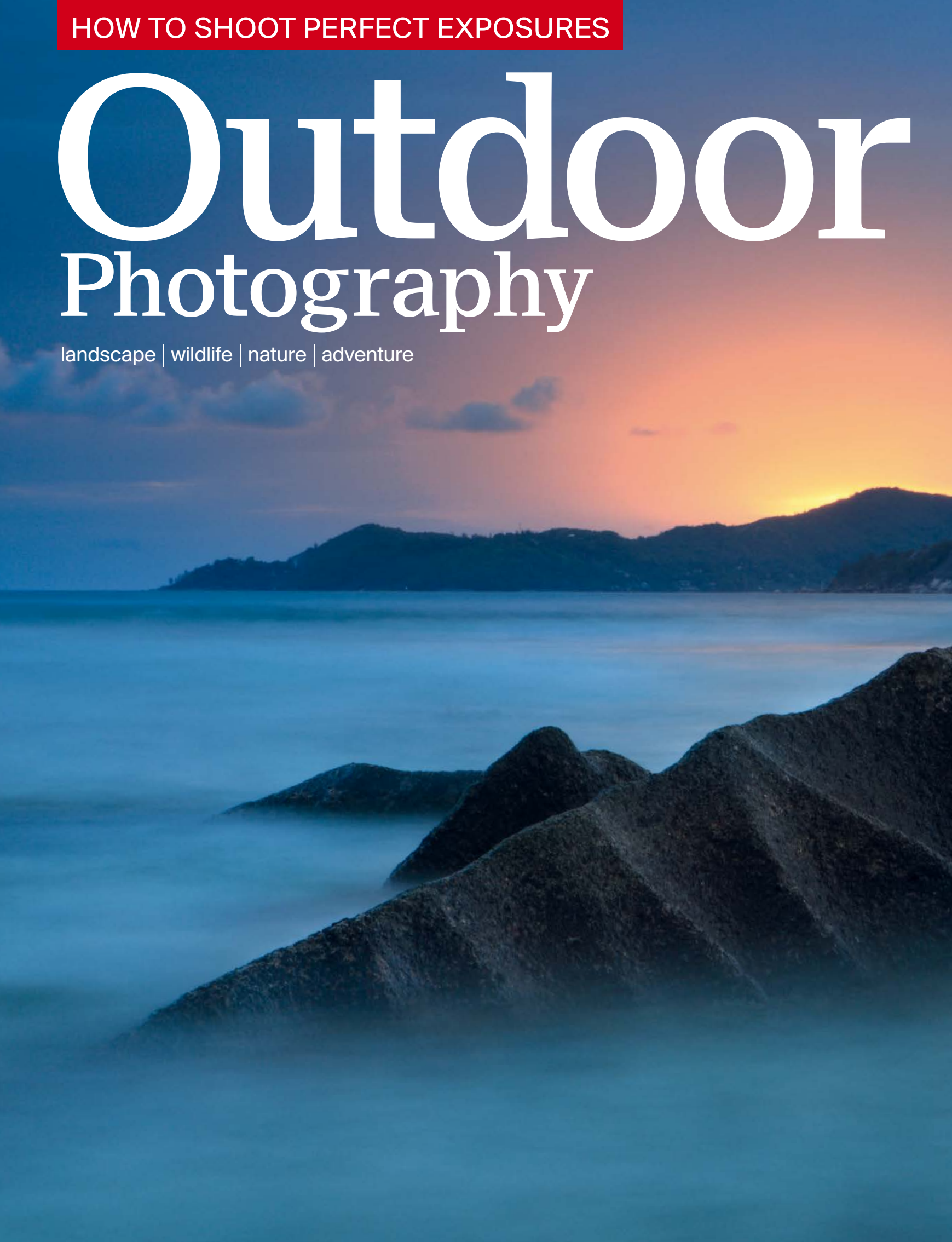


HOW TO SHOOT PERFECT EXPOSURES

Outdoor Photography

landscape | wildlife | nature | adventure







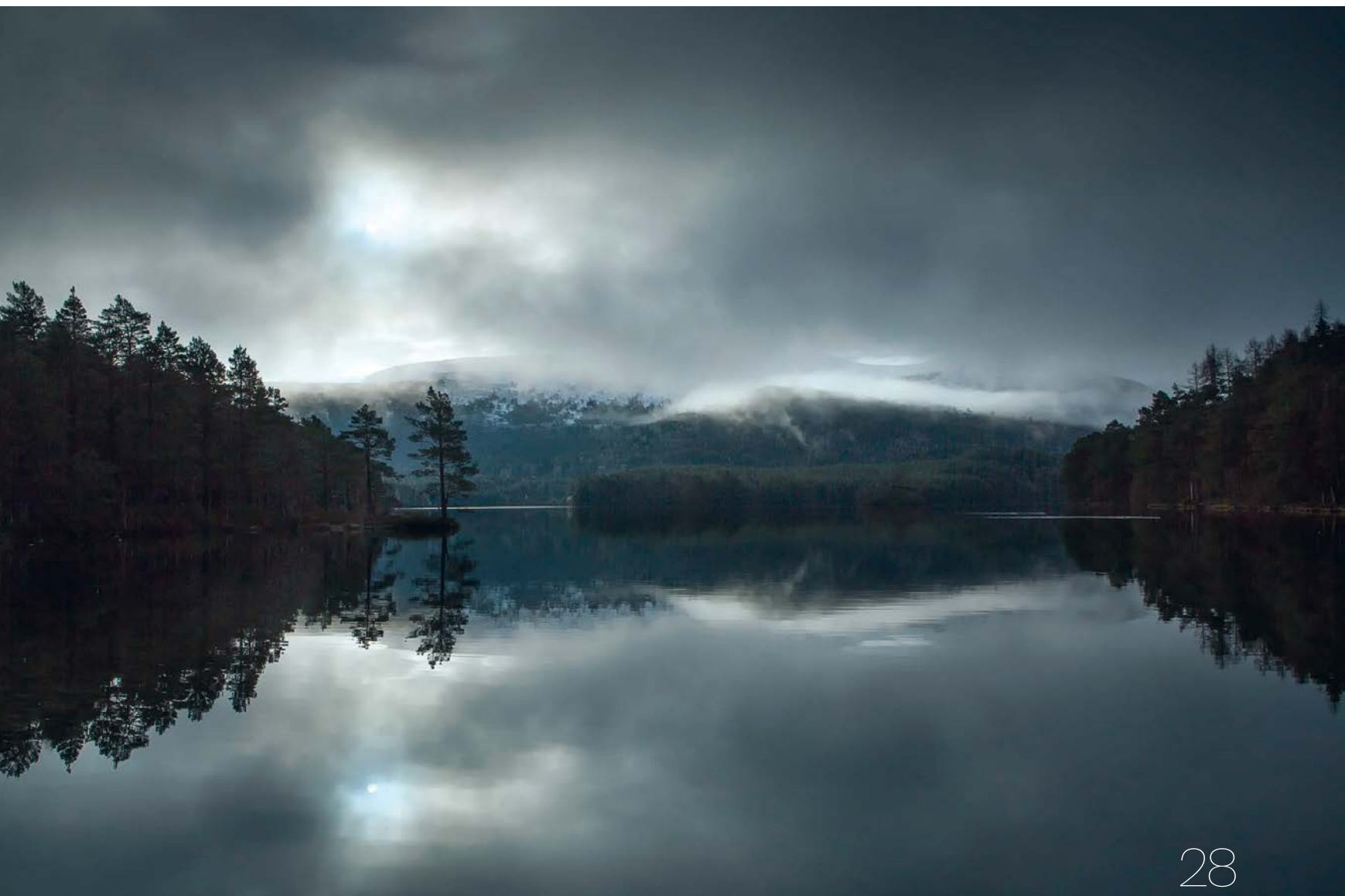
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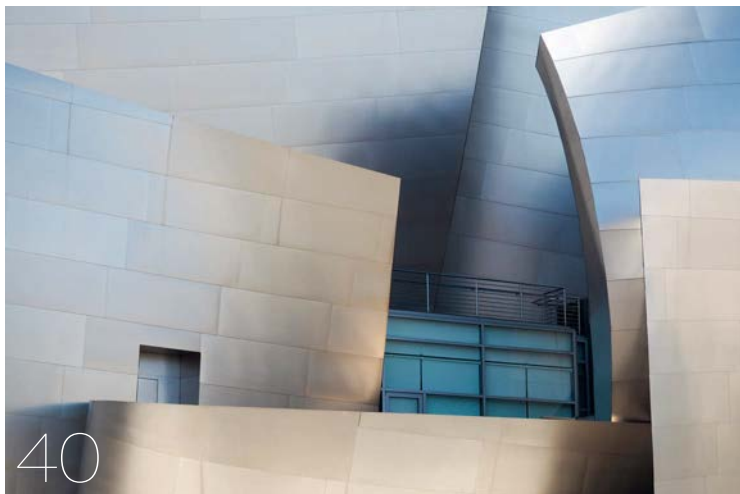
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- » Peter Cairns tells the story of Scotland's pine martens

IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...



COVER

Isabel Diez specialises in landscape photography, which links her two main passions, nature and art. Her subjects range from her beloved Basque coast to the lava flows of Hawaii. Textures, shapes and colours change, but all her landscapes have a strong aesthetic sense. They are evocative, intense and, at times, mysterious. isabeldiez.com



6

Simon Roy is an award-winning wildlife photographer based near York. He has a degree in art and design, and worked as a graphic designer for 10 years before becoming a professional photographer. His images have been highly commended in the British Wildlife Photography Awards and International Garden Photographer of the Year. simonroyphotography.co.uk



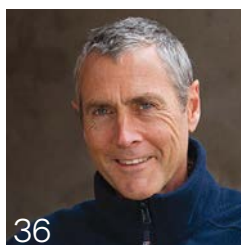
16

Joshua Holko lives in Melbourne, Australia and is a full-time professional nature photographer who specialises in polar subjects. A fully accredited AIPP Master of Photography, he has won countless awards, including being named Global Arctic Photographer of the Year 2015. jholko.com



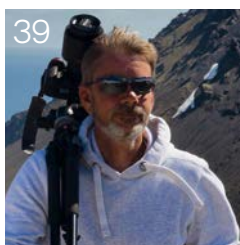
28

Doug Chinnery is a professional outdoor photographer. He leads workshops teaching a diverse range of camera skills, writes about photography, and supplies commercial clients worldwide with his images. dougchinnery.com



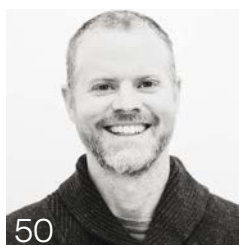
36

Richard Garvey-Williams is an award-winning wildlife and landscape photographer and author. Having spent his childhood in Africa, he relishes opportunities to return and share the experience by leading photographic safaris. Now based in Devon, he also offers tutoring on Dartmoor. richardgarveywilliams.com



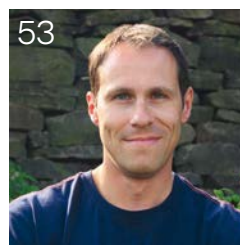
39

Adrian Theze returned to photography a few years ago when he had to give up teaching due to MS. Since then his photographs have been published widely, his Iceland landscapes generating particular interest. He writes a photography blog that has around 30,000 followers. cornwallphotographic.com adriantheze.com



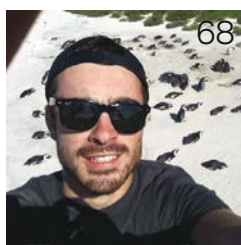
50

Aidan Maccormick is a biologist based in Scotland. His work takes him to the remotest locations of the UK, where he moonlights as a landscape photographer. His passion is for exploring the west coast of Scotland, and one day he hopes to make it to St Kilda. maragorm.com



53

Robert Birkby is a landscape and travel photographer based in Yorkshire. He writes for several magazines worldwide, and supplies images to the travel and tourism industry. robertbirkbyphotography.co.uk



68

Luke Massey is a wildlife photographer and cameraman who has been obsessed with wildlife for as long as he can remember. After a year at university, he decided to take the risk of dropping out to follow his dream of going professional with his photography. His passion is for raising awareness of conservation issues. lmasseyimages.com



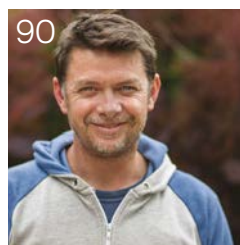
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Tom Way is a professional fine art wildlife photographer based in the UK. He has been awarded in various competitions, with his most recent success being in the European Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2016 competition, with an image of an African lion. tomwayphotography.co.uk



80

Steve Young has been at OP from issue one. His images have appeared in numerous publications and he has written two bird photography books and photo-edited two bird identification guides. He was the overall winner of the 2010 British Wildlife Photography Awards. birdsonfilm.com



90

At the age of five, **Fergus Kennedy** loved messing around in the sea and playing with gadgets. Forty years on, very little has changed. He is a marine biologist and works as a freelance photographer, drone pilot and camera operator for clients such as the BBC and Canon Europe. ferguskennedy.com

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Nick Smith nicksmithphoto.com, **Pete Bridgwood** petebridgwood.com, **Richard Jones** richjones.com, **Ade Gidney**, **Paul Holloway**, **David Eberlin** davideberlin.uk, **Stephen Spraggon** spraggonphotography.co.uk, **Aidan Maccormick** maragorm.com, **Andrew Ray** andrewrayphotography.com, **Nigel Cooke** nigelcookephotography.com, **Laurie Campbell** lauriecampbell.com

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Adventure in photography

It's pretty safe to say these days that any dogma involved in how we go about our photography is likely to be holding us back. For sure, it's fine to still talk about the 'rules' of composition or to insist that using certain types of equipment is critical to being a 'real' photographer, just don't get upset if the number of friends and peers willing to listen to these edicts dwindles rapidly before disappearing altogether.

In this unprecedented age of creative freedom in photography, there are no rules and there is all sorts of gear capable of producing powerful imagery; it just needs imagination. And that, of course, is where we come in. Mixed with a dose of adventure and a playful attitude, imagination can be the key to unlocking exciting new areas to explore in our work. Short exposure times for action shots and tripod mounted landscapes may be ingrained in our psyche, but there's no reason why it always has to be that way. Doug Chinnery (see his feature on mastering exposure on page 28) has built his successful tutoring and

workshop business on his willingness to embrace and experiment with different techniques. I recall talking to Doug some years ago, and he was a little unsettled that he hadn't found his signature 'style' at that point in time, because, as he admitted, he just found too much enjoyment in trying all sorts of creative approaches. He didn't try to limit himself to appease the community, he just kept following his own path, and now his reputation for creating fresh and thought-provoking images across many styles of photography is in fact his style, if it's important to put a label on him.

There's almost no penalty for attempting something unusual when we are shooting, so there is nothing to lose in giving it a go. We can keep the results to ourselves for as long as we want – the Twitterati and leagues of Facebook and Instagram fans can wait. I suspect that, despite our mind's most concerted efforts to resist the urge to branch out, we may just discover it's compelling.





Steve Watkins

GET IN TOUCH

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ON THE COVER

Isabel Díez took this stunning image on La Digue island in the Seychelles.

THE ISSUE at a glance



Joshua Holko reveals why he loves working at the Poles – page 16



Doug Chinnery shows us how to make masterful exposures – page 28



See our favourite images from Travel Photographer of the Year – page 40



Fergus Kennedy puts the Olympus OM-D E-M1 MkII to the test – page 90

Frosty hare

by Simon Roy

A brown hare (*Lepus capensis*) highlighted by the rising sun on a chilly morning. If you look closely you can see the poor thing has frosty whiskers! I arrived at this location just before sunrise and, as forecast, the weather was clear with frost, despite it being well into March. From the edge of the field, I observed several hares resting in a tractor track about 100m away on a rise close to the horizon. I moved very slowly, keeping low, until I reached the track and lay down with my gear just above the frozen ground, hoping the animals might move towards me. While I waited I checked my camera settings and made adjustments as the light improved. Then one of the hares just sat up and started running in my direction, stopping as it realised there was a strange object in its path. I had just enough time to compose and take the shot before the hare turned and ran away. I used the rule of thirds and negative space to improve my composition and a wide aperture to help isolate the subject.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 500mm f/4L IS II USM lens, ISO 200, 1/320sec at f/4.5, Gitzo GT3542LS Series 3 tripod with gimbal head, camouflage scrim net





NEWSROOM

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OTHER NEWS



See your heroes at The Photography Show

The Photography Show returns to the NEC, Birmingham this March, and it is shaping up to be a very exciting event. As well as offering visitors the opportunity to delve into the latest imaging technology (250 leading photography brands will be there, including Fujifilm, Canon, Hasselblad, Nikon, Olympus and Sony), there will also be a host of inspiring talks, not to mention the chance to meet the *Outdoor Photography* team!

A nature photography legend

Some of the world's greatest photographers will be taking to the Super Stage, including Frans Lanting, who will take a retrospective look at his four-decade career. Frans has travelled the world to promote understanding about the planet through his stunning images of nature, so this is sure to be a captivating talk. Other photographers offering insights into their work on the Super Stage include Alex Webb, Albert Watson, Nadav Kander, Jill Furmanovsky, Clive Arrowsmith, David Alan Harvey, Julia Fullerton-Batten and Louis Cole. Tickets for the Super Stage sessions cost £10 each and can be purchased once you have obtained your entry pass (see The Photography Show website, below, for further details).

OPOTY exhibition and awards ceremony

The top images from Outdoor Photographer of the Year will be on display throughout the duration of the show, and on Saturday 18 March (from 1.45-2.30pm) we will reveal the overall winner of the competition on the Live Stage. All the adult category winners have a chance of scooping the top prize: an assignment to capture the drama and action of this year's Fjällräven Polar expedition to the Arctic in April.

*The Photography Show runs from 18-21 March. To book your tickets, go to photographyshow.com. Use code **OPMTPS17** to get a special discount!*

Wex Photographer of the Year revealed

British graphic designer and self-taught photographer Neil Burnell has been named Wex Photographer of the Year 2016. The competition received more than 17,000 entries last year; each week, photographers were invited to enter their best shot from the previous seven days, using the #WexMondays hashtag on Twitter. The best images of the week were selected and awarded points by Wex Photographic's expert panel to create a league table. Neil, who favours landscape photography but also has a passion for macro, amassed the most points throughout the year, including four top spots. He receives £1,500 of Wex Photographic vouchers.

Wex's Technical Editor Matt Higgs said: 'With a careful eye for composition, Neil's clean and modern approach to photography shone throughout his submissions, regularly winning the admiration of the judges. Often breaking scenes down to their most essential elements, his minimalist creations thrived in their simplicity and technical perfection.'

Find out more at wexphotographic.com



Crab spider: one of Neil Burnell's winning submissions.

British Wildlife Photography Awards open for entries

Photographers are invited to enter their best UK wildlife images into 2017's British Wildlife Photography Awards. The prestigious competition, now in its eighth year, offers an overall prize fund worth £20,000 and the chance to be featured in a touring exhibition and published in a stunning book.

A celebration of UK wildlife and a showcase for amateur and professional photographers practising in Britain, the awards help to raise awareness about biodiversity, British species and their habitats. Competition categories range from animal behaviour and urban wildlife to close-up nature and the underwater world. There are also two junior categories and a special award for wildlife filmmakers.

OP Editor's Pick

As the entries are uploaded to the BWPA website we will choose three OP Editor's Pick winners: the first will be chosen from images entered during February and March; the second



© Leslie Beardmore

during April and May; and the third in June. The winning images will be published in *British Wildlife Photography Awards: Collection 8*, and in our BWPA showcase in OP later this year.

OP readers' discount

Until midnight on 31 March 2017, when you purchase a Gold Plan entry on the BWPA website (allowing you to upload any number of images and then submit up to 20 of them into various competition categories), you will receive a £5 discount, dropping the price of your 20 entries from £25 to £20. Simply use the voucher code OPMAR17ZP. All of the fees are fully explained on the BWPA website.

The competition is open until 3 June. To find out more and to enter, please visit bwpawards.org

Kodak to bring back Ektachrome film

Kodak is bringing back one of its most famous film stocks, Ektachrome, five years after it was discontinued. Known for its extremely fine grain, clean colours, tones and contrasts, the colour reversal film was popular among generations of photographers and cinematographers. Over the next 12 months, Kodak will be working to reformulate and manufacture Ektachrome for both stills photography (in 35mm format) and motion picture applications.

'It is such a privilege to reintroduce Kodak Ektachrome film to the photography community,' said Steven Overman, Kodak's chief marketing officer and president of the Consumer and Film Division. 'We are seeing a broad resurgence of excitement about capturing images on film. Kodak is committed to continuing to manufacture film as an irreplaceable medium for image creators to capture their artistic vision. We are proud to help bring back this classic.'

Availability of Kodak Ektachrome is expected later this year. Find out more at kodak.com

Images from the deep

A dramatic photograph of a Pacific man-of-war, shot by Matty Smith in New South Wales, Australia, has scooped the top prize in the 2016 Ocean Art Underwater Photo Contest. The US-based competition, now in its sixth year, attracted thousands of entries from more than 60 countries. Ninety-five underwater photographers were awarded, each receiving a share of the \$75,000 prize package. The final set of images demonstrates some innovative shooting techniques and includes out-of-this-world marine life shots, rarely seen animal behaviour and ocean adventure.

See all the winning images at uwphotographyguide.com/2016-ocean-art-contest-winners



© Jessica Chatburn

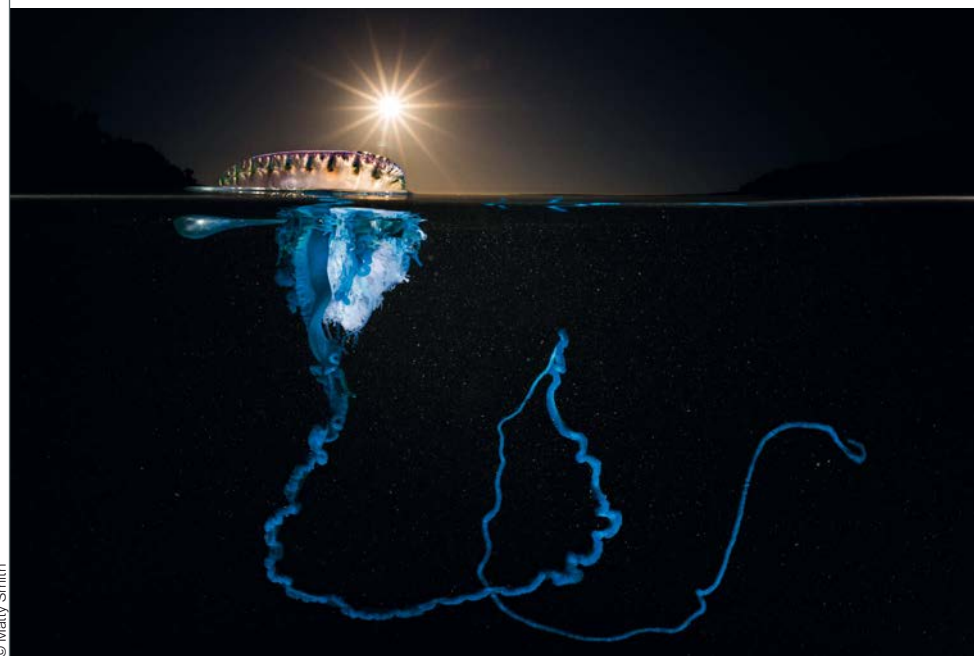
International Images for Science opens

The Royal Photographic Society has launched its 2017 International Images for Science competition. Covering everything from medicine and forensics to nature, engineering and astronomy, the competition is supported by Siemens as part of the Curiosity Project, a three-year programme that aims to engage young people's interest in science and engineering.

The competition is open to everyone, and is free to enter. RPS coordinator Gary Evans said: 'Entrants can have fancy equipment or use a smartphone, it doesn't matter. The important point is to capture your view of science in a way that tells a story to the average person.'

Five cash prizes up to £1,000 will be awarded, and an exhibition of the top 100 entries will tour the UK.

Closing date for submissions is 30 April 2017; enter for free at rps-science.org



© Matty Smith

'Blue Lasso' by Matty Smith took first place in the Wide-Angle category before going on to win Best of Show.

OUT THERE

BOOK OF THE MONTH



© Philippe Garcia

Melrakki: The Icelandic arctic fox

Philippe Garcia

L'Explographe éditions

Hardback, €39

Philippe Garcia has spent thousands of hours watching and photographing the Icelandic arctic fox. This new book is an informative look at the species, and highlights Garcia's ability to capture unusual images that hold a strong emotional connection.

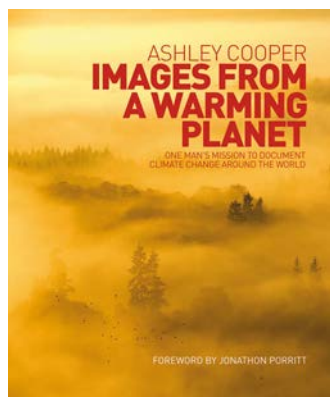
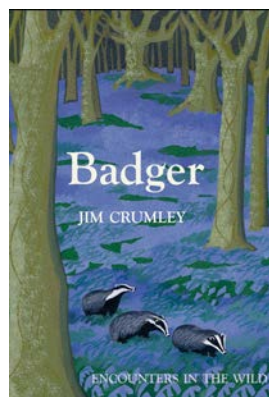
Garcia's passion for and commitment to documenting the fox is clear when looking through this image set, and with this dedication comes an instinctive eye. Often only seen at night, the foxes are shown here during daylight – play fighting, roaming the wilderness and fending off predators – in a rounded portrait of this alluring, elusive animal.



The photographs are supported by Dr Ester Rut Unnsteinsdóttir's fact-driven preface, which lays out the species' diet, habitat, behaviour and breeding habits. Useful information about how to find arctic foxes in Iceland and the conservation efforts over the last 20 years or so to save them is included.

The book's production is also of a high quality, with a heavy paperweight and matt printing complementing the subject matter well. This is a fitting and insightful tribute to one of the north's most enigmatic inhabitants.

The book is available at Philippe Garcia's website: explographe.com



Badger: Encounters in the wild

Jim Crumley

Saraband

978-1-9101-9262-7

Hardback, £10

Badger is part of Jim Crumley's Encounters in the Wild series –

a collection of six pocket-sized books where each focuses on one UK species and gives the author's personal observations of that animal. A gifted nature writer, Crumley fuses autobiography, fact, personal observation and poetry into this book's 61 pages, and you'll be totally absorbed by the first sentence. Published late last year, *Badger* was co-released with *Skylark*; both books are charming, artistic tributes to these creatures.

Images from a Warming Planet: One man's mission to document climate change around the world

Ashley Cooper

Global Warming Images Publishing

978-1-5262-0592-6

Hardback, £40

UK photographer Ashley Cooper set himself a hugely ambitious task: to

document on an international scale the causes and consequences of global warming. To do so, he travelled across five oceans, to more than 30 countries and all seven continents. With a foreword by environmentalist and political writer Jonathon Porritt, the book takes a call-to-action tone. This 411-page tome is divided into 15 main chapters, which cover in detail topics such as impacted flora and fauna, sea level rise and fossil fuels. Despite the daunting and challenging subject matter, *Images from a Warming Planet* remains optimistic and lays out plenty of alternatives that will slow down or even help solve global warming. The photographs act more as illustrative tools to support the text rather than as an artistic interpretation of the world's current state, yet they are still powerful in their own unique way and give a valuable insight into the subject.

FIVE MINUTES WITH...

*We talk to Nicholas Crane about his magnificent new book, **The Making of the British Landscape: From the Ice Age to the present.***

Outdoor Photography Your book begins around 9700 BC and traces how, to the present day, climate, geology and immigration have influenced the altering of the UK's countryside and cities. It is a mammoth subject. What made you want to write about the history of the British landscape?

Nicholas Crane I don't see this as a 'history' but as a 'geographical narrative', a page-turner compiled from places; there are no battles or coronations in this story. I'm interested in the rise and fall of wilderness, in the origins of farming, the source of cities, in the systemic shifts that formed our modern landscapes. I wanted to offer a fresh way of looking at this island; a narrative that binds us all together within a single shore.

OP How do you think your book will benefit landscape photographers?



Long barrows became prevalent around 3800 BC. This is West Kennet, near Avebury, Wiltshire.

NC I learn from landscape photographs and I'd like to return the favour. In my book, I'm offering the long view; the 12,000-year exposure. This is the story of our place; our island. To me, it's the only story that

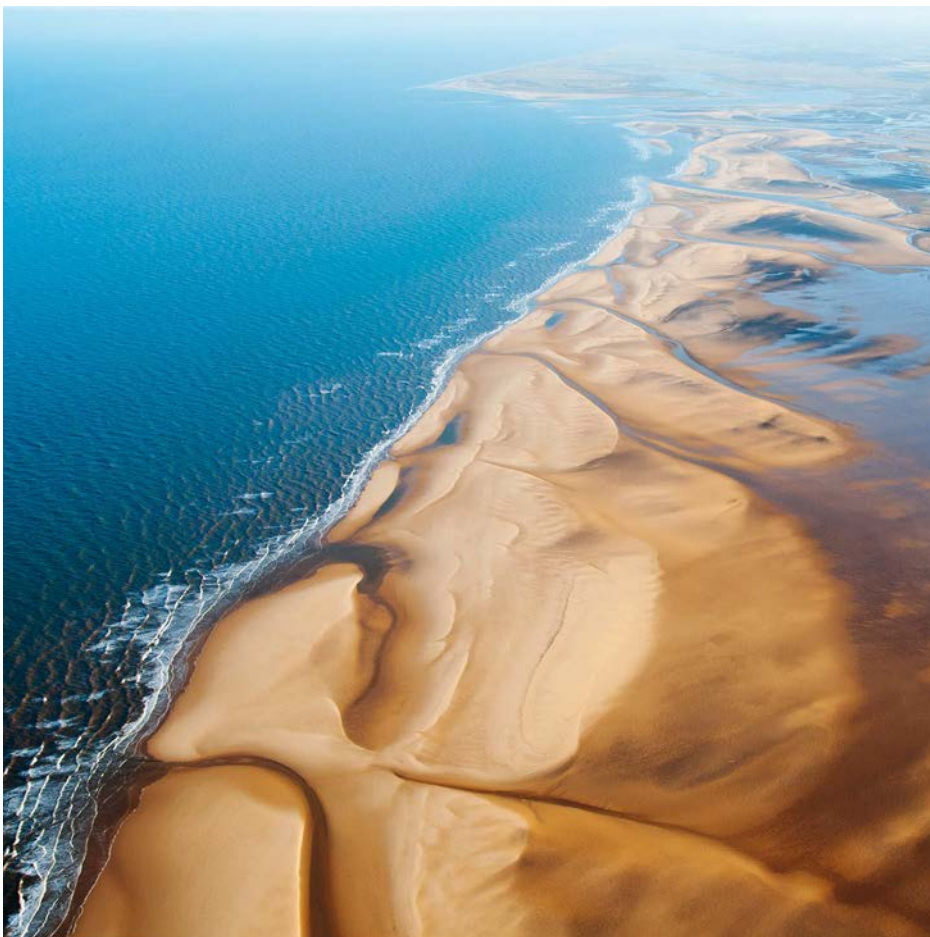
makes sense: the evolution of our habitat from uninhabited ice and tundra to this populous quilt of fields and villages and cities. Landscape photography has a critical role in describing modern geographical tensions between people, place and environment.

OP You write: 'to care about a place, you must know its story.' Do you see yourself more as a storyteller or a geographer?

NC The two are one. Geography is the language and stories are the voice. Geography gave me a way of looking at the world, of grappling with issues as varied as climate change, urbanisation and migration. And stories are the cleanest means of sharing complex issues.

OP As a writer, geographer, presenter, and as president of the Royal Geographical Society, what, for you, makes a landscape photograph stand apart?

NC Truth. A landscape photograph is a portrait of a place. An understanding between photographer and topography. For the last decade or so I've been an avid viewer of the Landscape Photographer of the Year awards, and an admirer of competition founder Charlie Waite. One of Charlie's framed photographs welcomes me to my study at the start of every day. It never fails to fill me with wonder.



The rump of Doggerland. Sandbanks off the coast of north Norfolk.



The Making of the British Landscape: From the Ice Age to the Present is out now
Weidenfeld & Nicholson
978-0-297-85666-5
Hardback, £20
An ebook is also available for £10.99

THE BIG VIEW



© Adrian Warren and Dae Sasitorn

Britain from the Air

» To 28 February

» Station Street, Nottingham

More than 100 stunning aerial photographs of Britain's most breathtaking landscapes can be seen in this major outdoor exhibition. Touring across the UK, Britain from the Air is now on show in Nottingham, with additional images of the area as seen from the air (such as Nottingham Castle and the Old Market Square) included. By telling the story of Britain's geography and history found in natural and human landscapes, the imagery points to man's impact on the land.

rgs.org

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

» To 5 March

» MShed, Bristol

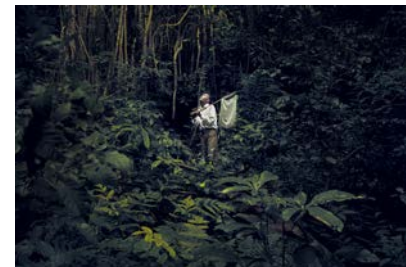
An exhibition of the best images from the 2016 Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition travels to Bristol this early spring. The 100 photographs showcase the beauty and diversity of our natural world and highlight the most exciting contemporary wildlife imagery on an international scale. The competition attracted 361 images when it launched in 1965; this year there were almost 50,000 entries from 96 countries. This must-see exhibition is a celebration of the drama and wonder of nature.

bristolmuseums.org.uk



© Charlie Hamilton James

FROM THE LEFT FIELD



© Evgenia Arbugaeva

Traces of the future: Archaeology of modern science in Africa

» To 26 March

» Nunnery Gallery, London

Art meets anthropology in this innovative exhibition, which explores past, present and future sciences in Africa. Taking visitors deep into the Tanzanian rainforest, artists Evgenia Arbugaeva and Mariele Neudecker display new works and findings from Amani Hill Research Station. Twelve of Arbugaeva's pictures (as seen in *National Geographic*) will be included, as well as three short films and 11 images by Neudecker. Specimens collected in the Tanzanian jungle, in addition to the plethora of equipment the pair used, will also be on show.

bowarts.org/nunnery



© Wolfgang Tillmans

Wolfgang Tillmans

» 15 February to 11 June

» Tate Modern, London

The first exhibition of German fine art photographer Wolfgang Tillmans' work at Tate Modern is a fascinating exploration of the modern world, and it offers visitors plenty of food for thought. Provocative, and unlike anything you are likely to have seen before, Tillmans' work reinterprets representational genres such as portraiture, still life and landscape from a socio-political perspective. Tillmans pushes the boundaries of the photographic form through abstract artworks that range from video and slide projections to musical recordings and sculpture.

tate.org.uk

ADVENTURE FESTIVALS

Banff Mountain Film Festival

» Various locations across the UK

» To 17 May

The 2017 Banff UK film tour promises as much power and adrenaline as previous tours, with two film programmes to choose from. Make sure you're in the front row for *Doing it Scared*, a documentary following climber Paul Pritchard who was left partially paralysed after a catastrophic accident while climbing Tasmania's Totem Pole. The film follows Pritchard 18 years later as he returns to the sea stack to embark on one of the hardest ascents of his life. banff-uk.com



Sheffield Adventure Film Festival

» 17 to 19 March

» Showroom Cinema, Sheffield

Expect high-octane, gripping stories from the world's leading climbers, adventurers and explorers at this year's festival. More than 100 travel, adventure and extreme sports films will be screened: don't miss *Afterglow*, a short documentary about artist, photographer and outdoor swimmer Vivienne Rickman Poole; and *Untethered*, a documentary about the slack-lining and high-lining community in Vancouver, Canada. shaff.co.uk

DON'T MISS!

The Photography Show 2017

» 18-21 March, NEC Birmingham

Photographers from across the UK will head to Birmingham in March for one of the country's biggest annual photo fairs. Along with hundreds of photography and video products on display, an extensive line-up of speakers (including Luke Massey and Karl Holtby) and an array of workshops, don't miss our Outdoor Photographer of the Year exhibition and awards ceremony: the overall winner of our competition will be revealed on the Live Stage on 18 March between 1.45-2.30pm. photographyshow.com

LAST CHANCE TO SEE!

The Island Exhibition

» To 28 February

» Bempton Cliffs, East Yorkshire

Located a mile off the coast of Northumberland, Coquet Island is closed to the public to protect its large colony of nesting seabirds. Through the power of virtual reality, until the end of February, you can experience a 360° view of life among the puffins and terns at the RSPB's Bempton Cliffs reserve. rspb.org.uk

WINTER TALKS TO INSPIRE



Wild Scotland:

A photographic odyssey

» 7pm, 25 March

» Droitwich High School, Worcestershire

Nature and wildlife photographer Mark Hamblin, part of the Scotland: The Big Picture team, will reveal how the ambitious project to document Scotland's rewilding story came about, and what they have achieved so far. droitwichcamera.co.uk

Winter Lecture: About Africa

» 7.30-9pm, 9 March

» Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

Shining fresh light on Africa's past and present, travel photographer Harry Hook tells the epic visual story of the country's urban migration through his stunning imagery. bristolmuseums.org

Into the Abode of Death: Crossing the Empty Quarter of Arabia

» 2.15pm, 9 March

» Renfield Centre, Glasgow

Explorer Mark Evans recounts his aim to recreate the historic journey of Bertram Thomas, who, in 1931, became the first westerner to cross the Empty Quarter. rsgs.org

Miranda Krestovnikoff

» 7.30-10pm, 3 March

» Idle Valley Nature Reserve, Nottinghamshire

Join television presenter, biologist and trained diver Miranda Krestovnikoff as she reveals the wildlife encounters and discoveries she has enjoyed while exploring the UK coastline. attenboroughnaturecentre.co.uk

Peter Holden: Born to Travel

» 7.30pm, 16 February

» ARA Club, Bedford, Bedfordshire

Expert ornithologist Peter Holden MBE shares his extensive knowledge of bird migration and the compelling stories of different species' journeys. rspb.org.uk

Joe Johnstone: On foot across Lake Khuvsgul (Khuvsgul Nuur)

» 7.30pm, 22 March

» Chemistry Theatre, University of Bristol

Mountain guide, adventurer and documentary filmmaker Joe Johnstone talks about his Last Nomad project, a series of his expeditions across the Mongolian wilderness. wildernesslectures.com

Ash Dykes: Surviving Madagascar

» 7pm, 12 March to 19 April

» Various locations across the UK

Adventurer Ash Dykes talks about his record-breaking, world-first crossing of Madagascar, where he trekked 1,600 miles in 155 days and climbed eight of the island's highest mountains along the way. speakersfromtheedge.com

A night of endurance with Ben Saunders and Jake Meyer

» 7.30-10pm, 23 February

» RGS, London

Multiple world-record holders and adventurers Ben Saunders and Jake Meyer, plus special guests, are sure to provide an evening full of exhilarating stories from their most gruelling expeditions. rgs.org

YOUR LETTERS

Write to us! We love getting your views and responses; email claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Winter safety essentials

In response to your 'Quick guide to preparing for winter shoots' feature in the January issue (OP213), I would agree that crampons and an ice axe are essential for mountains in winter – plus proper four-season boots that will take crampons. Just as important, however, is knowing how to use this equipment safely and properly. A winter walking/mountaineering training course with properly qualified guides is recommended before going out to play.

The same goes for a map and compass. These are not magic talismans that will guarantee safety if carried: you do have to know how to use them in difficult conditions, and a mountain in a blizzard is not the time or place to learn. *Cluny MacPherson, via email*

Owls in the spotlight

Having read Andrew Parkinson's article, 'Illuminating images', in the February issue (OP214), I write to give your readers more information on the effect of flash on breeding owls.

Every year over the last 46 years, I have photographed one or all of our nocturnal breeding owls (little, tawny, long-eared and barn), sometimes all four in one season! While all owls are individuals, I can honestly say that the activation of the flash has had no adverse reaction from them.

Where there may be a response is from the sound of the shutter followed by the whining of the flash as it recharges and, of course, the red and green lights that are activated on the rear of the flash head. In respect to the subject, I only ever use one flash head (Metz CT-4) and cover up the back of the flash with tape so that neither the owl nor I can see the illumination. Nocturnal digital photography has taken a massive step forward with the introduction of cameras such as the Canon EOS 7D MkII with its silent shutter facility.

Gordon Yates, via email

ANDREW PARKINSON'S RESPONSE

When it comes to the use of flash to photograph owls, it is impossible to say whether or not it has a detrimental effect on the birds, as there simply isn't a comprehensive body of scientific data to support either position. The limited studies I have read look at the similarity between the way a human's eyes

and an owl's eyes process light; humans can expect to experience 5-20 seconds of 'functional blindness' when exposed to a bright light, so it is fair to assume that that owls' eyes react in the same way (source: audubon.org/news/is-flash-photography-safe-owls). My personal position is always to operate with extreme caution and, as such, in the absence of any compelling data either way, this is why I myself do not undertake this work.

Respecting landowners' property

I feel compelled to write to you to highlight a matter of great concern to me.

I have been a professional photographer for 40 years and run a variety of workshops and photography holidays. One of my most popular holidays is a trip to the Val de Orcia in Tuscany where, among other locations, we photograph the iconic Belvedere farmhouse, which is a private property.

On my latest visit back in October we again headed to the farmhouse and valley to capture the wonderful scene as the sun started to rise. Access is via a farm track (in the UK it would be a bridleway), which gives rights of way through the farmland. As we approached, I discovered the farmer had tied red and white plastic tape along the boundaries of his land (not a pretty sight) to stop photographers (I presume) from trampling his land adjoining the bridleway. Fair enough, I thought, as it was obvious that over the years areas had become well worn where photographers would gather to capture their images.



© Graham Light

I told my group we had to respect the landowner's privacy and stay on the track; before sunrise he drove up in his 4x4 and, in a non-friendly way, clearly indicated that didn't want us to stray on to his land. This barrier did limit our choices a little, but it was still possible to capture some great images. What concerned me more, though, was seeing other photographers (not associated with my group) not only crossing the barriers, but wandering through the landowner's olive groves and across crop fields to get their shots. These photographers were also British, judging by their accents.

If this attitude continues I can see the farmer either planting a tall hedge to obscure the views, or he might even put a high chain link fence to keep photographers out; this would make it almost impossible to get a clear, unobstructed view of the farmhouse.

I would urge all landscape and wildlife photographers to respect the rights of landowners, and not to assume they have the right to wander wherever they want in order to get their images. After all, when we trespass on land we increase the risk of destroying both the environment and the otherwise co-operative relationship we have with the landowners.

I will be returning to Tuscany again this coming October and I hope to see the landscape at its best and not spoiled by a few selfish photographers.

Graham Light, via email

Correction In the Locations Guide section of the February issue (OP214), we incorrectly attributed one of the viewpoints, Hebers Ghyll in West Yorkshire, to David Handson. The photograph and accompanying information is actually by David Henderson. Apologies to both photographers for our error.

March's letter of the month winner, Cluny MacPherson, receives a £100 voucher (plus free p&p) from LumeJet.

LumeJet delivers a professional printing service that provides faithfully reproduced, excellent quality prints of your images. Offering a range of printing sizes up to and including one-metre long panoramic prints and photo books, LumeJet delivers high quality, natural looking and accurate prints on traditional silver halide papers by using a brand new RGB digital print head. [Find out more about LumeJet's print services at lumejet.com](http://lumejet.com)





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f2 Cameracraft, Sept/Oct 2016

**"Seemingly hopeless situations
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Mike McNamee, Prof. Imagemaker June 2016



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In conversation with **Joshua Holko**

Australian landscape and wildlife photographer Joshua Holko is passionate about the polar wilderness environments he records. He refuses to compromise on quality, and his photos are pretty much how they come out of the camera...

Interview by Nick Smith





'My average day starts at seven in the morning and doesn't finish until 10 at night. That's seven days per week, 365 days a year.' Joshua Holko is describing his unstinting commitment to his job as a polar photographer. To say that his attitude is one of 'total immersion' is probably to understate just how much he puts into getting his extraordinary images. And he has to work harder than most because he is brutally hard on himself – to the point of self-flagellation – when it comes to what he is and isn't allowed to do in post-production. He likes to get everything right in-camera, something he inherited from his early days of film, and he's not going to allow digital technology to soften his approach.

Before we get to the images themselves, Joshua is keen to stress just how unglamorous the life of the roving polar photographer really is. As we chat, he's preparing to set off for the White Continent and is speaking from a departure lounge in New York. While there is never any doubt in my mind that he is

completely focused on addressing my questions, I can feel the gravitational field of that great landmass pulling him away from our discussion with an intensity that's palpable. 'You're in and out of airports all the time. You're on planes a lot. It's a life that might look glamorous, but it's actually quite tough.'

It's a price worth paying for Joshua, who clearly recalls enjoying the creative side of photography from a very young age. 'I remember how I used to capture my images on film as a child. It was all film in those days and so there was no instant feedback. But I very much enjoyed that feeling of having captured something from nature without knowing what it was until I got the film back to the lab a week later. I enjoyed being out in nature in Australia where I grew up. Whether I was camping out in the mountains to photograph rock climbing, or recording landscapes, it was always about being outside in nature. I think you have to have that love and passion for nature first and foremost,' because, he says: 'if you're not passionate, you're not going to be able to do good work.'

There's something about the isolation of the polar explorer that goes deep into Joshua's psyche. While his contemporaries were casually conforming to the antipodean stereotype of playing cricket and following Australian Rules football, the aspiring photographer was aware that he was different. 'Look, I couldn't even tell you how many teams there are or what they are called. I live in Melbourne and it is one of the most sports-mad cities in the world. But I've always been a bit of an individual, pursuing solo activities rather than team sports. That's why I was always more interested in photographing rock climbing.' But being different, standing outside the world of team sports, 'was never really that much of an issue. It just felt natural to me to follow my passion for photography.'

As with so many others before him, Joshua's desire to visit the polar regions sprung from a seed planted in his mind by television documentaries. 'But it wasn't until I set foot on the ice that this niche in my photography really clicked into place. In terms of Australian photography, it's also quite a unique niche.' He goes on to say that he can't off the top of his head think of any other Australian photographer who does what he does, making him even more different from his peers. But he sees polar photography as an international community, while being completely unfazed by appearing to be different. He's also unusual in that, unlike other polar photographers, he doesn't feel as though he walks in the footsteps or shadows of the great polar adventurers and photographers of yesteryear. 'I'm driven by my own need to explore these places. Despite which, I'm a believer in looking at the work of others. I buy a lot of books so I can see in what way they are pushing the envelope.'



He is generous in his appreciation of his contemporaries, rating French photographer Vincent Munier highly: 'he's not that well known outside France at the moment, but he's probably one of the best wildlife photographers working today. It's just superb work. And there are some guys in Norway who aren't well known, who are excellent. I think that the standard of work today, especially in Europe, is very, very high.'

A look through Joshua's portfolio reveals an artist seemingly as comfortable with landscape as he is with wildlife. I ask him if this is a fair assessment of his photographic subject matter priorities. 'Yes. In fact I call myself a nature photographer because I do landscape and wildlife. I grew up learning about landscape and

Previous page Gentoo penguins march across the sea ice near the mouth of the Lemaire Channel in Antarctica.

Opposite (top) An iceberg temple emerges from the fog near Red Island in Scoresby Sund, Greenland.

Opposite (bottom) Deep beneath the Vatnajökull glacier in Iceland, glacial melt flows rapidly as sunlight illuminates the scene through a small opening in the ice.

Above (top) A giant petrel takes flight during a snowstorm at Elephant Point in Antarctica.

Above (bottom) Weighing several tonnes, an elephant seal bellows, its breath steaming in the cold air while surrounded by a throng of king penguins.







didn't get into wildlife until later on. But there's something about good wildlife photography that really appeals to me. I think it's actually harder to do than landscape. With landscape you need a great subject with great light and composition. And while the same is true in wildlife, you also need an animal. And the animal needs to be doing something in order to make the photograph interesting. So I find wildlife more challenging, but I certainly enjoy it.' Having competence in both genres ensures that 'there are more possibilities opening up all the time.' This is because if the wildlife isn't in a co-operative frame of mind 'perhaps I can shift gears and do some landscape work.'

There's something about the Australian's work that makes it different from those who do, on the face of it, the same thing. Joshua thinks that if there is a hallmark on his compositions, it's probably due to the way he edits. 'I'm really tough on myself when it comes to editing.' No kidding. This is from his ethical statement on his website; 'All of the photographs are single image captures without HDR or multi-image compositing techniques. No focus-stacking or blending of multiple exposures has been used and there are no overlaid textures or dropped-in skies or foregrounds.' The manifesto continues by explaining that he does so little

post production (although he is a big fan of graduated ND filters on the camera) that there might as well be no software at all. There might be a tweak or two on the noise sliders and any rogue dust spots will be zapped, but when it comes to cloning and manipulation, that's just about it. 'It's just about showing your best work.'

'I could come back from a 10-day trip to the Arctic shooting polar bears with maybe something like 10-15,000 images.' Of these, he'll probably show three or four single images, which is roughly two hundredths of one per cent. 'I'm very picky about what I show, and if it isn't right, it just doesn't see the light of day. These days, people seem to be obsessed with sharing everything on social media, and they'll post their seconds or even thirds. But I think this pulls their work down.' Joshua goes on to explain that this is the sort of 'publish or perish' syndrome created by the unrelenting pressure of maintaining a dynamic presence on social media. 'But I try to resist that.'

Everyone's a photographer these days, says Joshua, and the world is full of substandard material taken by people who aren't really photographers, but are exercising their right to publish work on the wild frontier of the internet. Which means that getting to places where the general population of mobile phone

Previous pages Deep in the highlands of Iceland, a remote track winds through the black volcanic Tephra landscape as green iridescent moss crawls over the fog-covered landscape.

Above A polar bear on the pack ice north of Svalbard devours a recent seal kill under the midnight sun.

photography junkies can't reach has achieved a new significance for him in that he can stay one step ahead of the mediocrity. On the other hand, he is also deeply aware of the privilege associated with visiting the polar regions 'so many times now that I've actually lost count. I'm definitely very lucky to be able to say that.'

His final words are to tell me that he's hoping that his work can go yet further down the environmental conservation route. Antarctica, says Joshua, with a cadence suggesting he's running out of time (he's just about to step on to another plane taking him south for the season), is 'the closest you can get on earth to being on another planet. It's a difficult place to get to. It's certainly the most pristine place on the planet. It's an incredible place. Everyone who goes there for the first time goes there as a tourist, but comes back as an ambassador.'

To see more of Joshua's work's work, visit jholko.com

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Having a consistent process in our approach to photography can help to free the creative artist within each of us. Pete Bridgwood sets out an easy to remember way of focusing on the important elements

I've chosen a simple image this month to illustrate some of the methods we can employ when out shooting to optimise our chances of capturing the best possible image. As an on-location aide memoire, I've created a mnemonic, 'SIMPLE', from the first letter of each element.

S represents Simplicity itself: this can be both a natural characteristic of the scene, or something we can enhance by the way we photograph it. Restricting the colour palette to a maximum of two or three colours, use of symmetry and attention to visual balance are all excellent ways to simplify our composition.

I stands for Interpretation, as a reminder that our photography is unique: it doesn't matter how other photographers have interpreted the location. Of course, we all have our influences, but the one thing that differentiates us creatively and helps us develop a personal style, is to make our own interpretation of the scene.

M is for Movement. This refers to both compositional devices that influence the

visual flow through the image, such as clever use of shapes and lines to create visual paths for the viewer, and the choice of optimum exposure duration to slur the passage of time and convey a more potent sense of energy.

P stands for Placement and Perspective. Composing a photograph involves the distillation of three-dimensional chaotic reality to a more ordered two-dimensional representation. This distillation comprises two important choices. Firstly, placement of the essential compositional elements within the frame of our image, and the simultaneous exclusion of less important or distracting objects. Secondly, choice of viewpoint, which determines the perspective of our image and influences the individual presence and relationships of various compositional elements.

L refers to Lighting. Any discussion about photography wouldn't be complete without mentioning lighting; it is after all the most essential prerequisite for photography. When making an image, however, it's easy to take

lighting for granted. Thinking like a painter and making a conscious effort to observe the way light is falling on our subject can influence our composition, by concentrating our attention on the components of the scene most worthy of emphasis.

E represents Emotion: the most important element of all. Our image can convey the feel of the actual location or an entirely different and manufactured feel, depending on how we choose to process it. The ultimate alchemy in making a photograph, it transcends a simple encapsulation of time and space, creating a single-sensory visual translation of a multi-sensory emotional experience.

Another Place, Crosby, Liverpool, Merseyside.
Fujifilm X-Pro1 with XF 14mm f/2.8 R lens, ISO 200,
6sec at f/11, Lee Seven5 Little Stopper 6-stop near
ND, Manfrotto 055CXP03 tripod with Manfrotto
405 geared head



The Mist Stripe

Spis Castle, Slovakia

LEE Filters 0.6 ND Medium Grad and a LEE Filters Mist Stripe

Nikon D810, Nikkor 24-70 F2.8, 1/4 second at f11 at 100 ISO

The stunning ruins of Spis Castle in eastern Slovakia are perched upon a rocky outcrop towering over the valley and surrounding countryside. Its location is magnificent and the castle itself well worthy of its UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.

I had a great viewpoint from which to shoot the castle and the warm light was gorgeous, but I felt that the whole image needed something to give it an edge, something extra that would make it stand apart.

The LEE Mist Stripe is a filter like no other. It gives an effect that cannot be replicated in post-production. It behaves the way natural mist will when backlit by the sun, it will glow and the image will have a softer more ethereal look. In this image not only does the Mist Stripe help create more mood and atmosphere it is also hiding a messy and distracting foreground.

The effect and drama of the LEE Mist Stripe will vary from focal length to focal length, making the band of mist appear thinner or thicker. Aperture will also play a role in how the mist will look. Focal lengths of about 35mm to 50mm and apertures between f5.6 and f11 will be a good starting point when first using this filter.

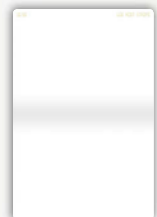
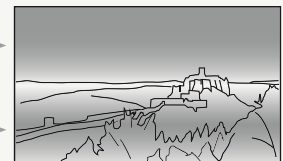
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with Carla Regler



Death Valley including Astro Photography

23 MARCH - 2 APRIL 2017

with David Clapp



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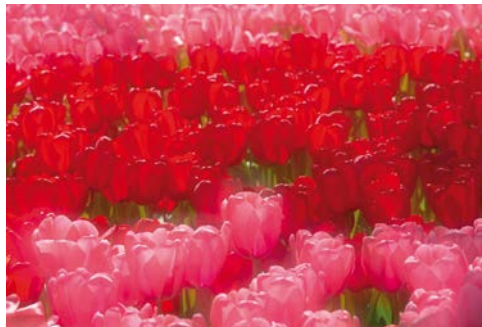
with Andy Farrer



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with Doug Chinnery



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28 **How to master exposure**

36 **Quick guide to... creating simple wildlife images**



UNDERSTANDING EXPOSURE

Doug Chinnery helps you get to grips with your camera's settings

Mastering exposure

A mastery of the fundamentals of exposure not only enables you to capture technically excellent images; it also gives you full control over the creative process. Doug Chinnery shares his expertise to help you get the best results from your photography

What exactly do I mean by 'exposure'? Apart from, of course, that creeping feeling of impending hypothermia while standing for the third hour beside a Scottish loch in winter, waiting for the light. As photographers we use the term interchangeably for several things. 'That's a beautiful exposure', can refer to an image itself. 'I only have three exposures left' can refer to an analogue photographer's film stock, and so on.

What I will be discussing here, however, is the combination and variations of ISO, shutter speed and aperture with light that goes to make an image on a light-sensitive medium.

It is this combination, along with focus and composition, which lies at the very heart of photography. A mastery of these elements, along with a willingness not to be straitjacketed into conventions of a 'correct' exposure, frees the creative potential of our cameras.

SHAKY FOUNDATIONS

While I assume that as a reader of *Outdoor Photography* you are familiar with the 'exposure triangle', it is worth noting that although we might feel we have an understanding of what ISO, aperture and shutter speed are and what they do, in reality, out in the field, many may be failing to really use these functions to their full potential.

By relying heavily on the camera's light meter (and not fully understanding what the meter is measuring or doing), and by working in fully or semi-automatic modes, we could be allowing our cameras to make crucial creative decisions for us. Imagine Leonardo da Vinci allowing someone else to mix his paints or choose his brushes. Imagine Monet painting by numbers. It is unthinkable. Yet, the more we hand over decisions that have an effect on the creative results of our images to the computer in our camera, the closer we move to this kind of scenario.

A good understanding of the way ISO, aperture and shutter speed are linked, and how making a change to one setting has an effect (either negatively or positively) on the other two, is crucial to our creativity. Once we have this firmly in our minds we can work quickly in the field (especially if we can think in terms of 'stops' and make calculations



Fujifilm X-E2 with XF 55-200mm lens at 200mm, ISO 200, 1/170sec at f/8, handheld

using these) and manipulate all three elements to our advantage, playing one off against the others to craft the image we visualise in our mind.

Gone should be the questions, 'what is the "correct" exposure for this?' or 'what settings should I be using?' Very soon those choices will become instinctive. When tricky conditions present themselves (which, let's face it, is more often than not) we will know the potential solution and be able to apply it

quickly, seizing the moment. We will probably find ourselves moving from using more automated modes, such as Aperture Priority to Manual, to allow ourselves full control over exposure with no intervention from the camera. This can seem daunting at first, but is, in reality, liberating. For many, the creative process becomes more absorbing and enjoyable as a result of being fully engaged and responsible for every aspect of making the image.



Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 24-70mm f/2.8 L lens at 25mm, ISO 200, 1/50sec at f/16, 0.9 Lee soft ND grad, tripod

A TECHNICAL APPROACH

I would recommend, when working on a tripod, having a workflow in the field. A repetitive, step-by-step process for making images where all the technical issues are dealt with in a logical order. The benefit to me of this approach is that nothing essential is forgotten, images will be technically correct (if they are poor it will be because the light, the subject or our composition is poor, but at least they will be correctly focused and exposed, with the depth of field we envisaged).

By following exactly the same steps in the same order for every single tripod-based image I make year after year, I found I could work extremely quickly, even in the low light of pre-dawn shoots. Your hands and mind build 'muscle-memory'. Most importantly for me, the steps creating the image become virtually automatic, I perform them almost in the back of my mind, freeing me to concentrate on composition and light, things which, to me, are far more important than anything else in the image. It has helped me avoid those frustrating missed magical moments caused by fumbling about with menus and dials or forgetting an essential

setting in the rush to capture fleeting light.

There are real benefits to using our cameras in manual exposure mode. It forces us to think. The camera no longer intervenes on our behalf and so, after selecting our ISO, we have to make conscious decisions on the aperture and shutter speed we are using. The priority modes, while useful in non-tripod based photography, allow us to lose sight of what is happening with our exposures if we are not concentrating. It is too easy, in aperture priority mode, to select an aperture and then assume the shutter speed the camera is choosing for us will produce an image that captures the soul of what we see before us. (It is true we can use exposure compensation to adjust exposures, but I often find I get lazy or forget to do this in the field.) Yes, we introduce a certain amount of that soul or mood in post-processing, but so much happens at the instant of exposure. It is this moment in time we need to be most aware of what our camera is doing, and try and capture as much of the emotion in the shot that we can at that point. I find working manually helps me achieve this.

A tripod-based workflow

- 1 Set ISO.
- 2 Set aperture (in manual mode).
- 3 Compose using live view.
- 4 With lens in manual focus mode, use camera screen to live view focus (autofocus if you prefer). At this point some cameras (Canons, for example, also let you check depth of field in live view using the depth of field preview button on the camera).
- 5 Position graduated filters, if required.
- 6 Depress shutter release half way to activate light meter gauge in viewfinder or on live view screen (not all cameras will show it on the screen).
- 7 Adjust the shutter speed to bring the indicator needle to the centre of the light meter gauge.
- 8 Fire the shutter (using a remote shutter release).
- 9 Check the histogram, adjust shutter speed (if required) and fire the shutter again – see 'Exposing to the Right (ETTR)' on page 33.

THE TROUBLE WITH LIGHT METERS

Light meters are perhaps one of the most misunderstood features on our cameras. They are ridiculously clever things and we ask them to perform seemingly impossible calculations in fractions of seconds. Yet they are not to be trusted. Use them as a guide but remember that they are almost always misleading. The international standard for programming our light meters, which camera manufacturers have to work with, expects them to set the light meter to underexpose by 6% in ideal conditions. Now 6% is neither here nor there in reality. But when do you work in ideal conditions, with average soft grey light? Not often, I would guess. As the contrast range increases, as conditions get more difficult, the light meter's problems increase. We have told it what ISO to use and usually give it an aperture to work with.

It is then pointed at a scene and makes millions of calculations a second, as light levels fluctuate, in anticipation of us pressing the shutter release. It has to guess what the light levels will be at the instant we fire the shutter, and set the exposure duration at that instant. It is a predictive tool. It is a guess, an educated guess, but a guess nonetheless. Most photographers trust that guess without hesitation.

We also have in the back of our mind that because we are shooting in Raw we can push and pull the file around with abandon, with no consequences. But of course there are consequences to tugging that data about. Lightening pixels in shadows to restore detail soon appears as noise. Pulling detail back from over-bright highlights rarely has the same feel as highlights that have been held

at a more reasonable level. It can be done, yes, but isn't there more satisfaction in being a craftsman in the field rather than a 'bodger' who covers over their mistakes with Polyfilla and thick dollops of gloss?

Far more important to the digital photographer than the light meter is the histogram. Where the light meter is predictive, the histogram is a record of what actually happened when the exposure was made. Being able to read all the aspects of the histogram correctly enables us to understand and trust exactly what is going on in our digital file. It also enables us to get the full power out of the digital sensor, creating the largest digital files our camera is capable of producing. This technique is called Exposing to the Right, or ETTR, and it can be very useful to the digital photographer.

Fujifilm X-Pro1 with XF 18-55mm lens at 39mm, ISO 200, 1/5sec at f/8, tripod





Fujifilm X-E2 with XF 55-200mm lens at 156mm, ISO 200, 1/3500sec at f/4.5, handheld

The files produced are also capable of producing noticeably finer prints due to the amount of data they contain, especially giving us important detail in the shadows. To understand the process of ETTR, see the sidebar on page 33. So, for the technical photographer, I would recommend using the light meter as a guide to get the exposure into roughly the right area only, but from then on trusting the histogram absolutely to fine-tune the image. It is your best friend on the camera.

It is for this reason I always set my camera's light meter to the Evaluative or Matrix setting, which allows it to analyse virtually the entire frame. I almost never

use the Spot or Centre Weighted modes. Evaluative metering allows the camera to give the most accurate reading in most situations and gets us in the right area for an average exposure. Then, using the ETTR method we fine-tune this, doing away with any need to use other metering modes in the vast majority of situations, especially in landscape photography.

Working in this way – having a workflow in the field and using the histogram to guide you to create really large, high quality Raw files from your camera, along with a good understanding of focus and composition – will enable you to produce technically fine, well crafted images of what you see.

Handheld workflow

- 1 Set ISO.
- 2 Set aperture (in aperture priority mode).
- 3 Set lens to autofocus, with just the centre focus spot active.
- 4 Turn image stabilisation on.
- 5 Point the centre of the lens at the object you want to focus on, depress the shutter half way to lock the focus, then, keeping the shutter half depressed, re-frame the shot. This maintains the focus. Remember that when doing this you can move the camera vertically or horizontally but not forwards or backwards, as this will alter the focus distance.
- 6 Once the framing is as you want it in the eyepiece, fire the shutter.
- 7 Check the image on the rear screen.
- 8 If the image needs to be darker or brighter, use exposure compensation to achieve this, and re-shoot.
- 9 In aperture priority mode, using exposure compensation, all you are doing is slowing or speeding up the exposure time. By using positive exposure compensation you are slowing down the exposure and letting more light in (I always think of adding light). When you use negative exposure compensation you are doing the opposite, speeding the shutter up and letting less light in (again, I think of it as subtracting light, as an aide-memoire).



Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS lens with 1.4x extender at 100mm, ISO 200, 2.5sec at f/45, handheld



Fujifilm X-E2 with XF 55-200mm lens at 55mm, ISO 800, 1/90sec at f/5.6, handheld

ANOTHER PATH

While making beautiful, technically crafted photographs is absolutely fine, some find that they can convey little in the way of soul, story or emotion. The images will tend to have full detail in the shadows, and highlights will be bright but not 'blown'. They can be seen as simply beautiful images of locations, enhanced by fine compositions and good light.

For many of us, though, our creativity begins to search for ways to inject something more into our images. Using our understanding of exposure and being willing to stray from convention will allow us to explore this need.

Once we realise that no one is hanging histograms on gallery walls, we can free ourselves of some of the constraints some would place upon us as to what a 'correct' exposure is. I would suggest that a correct exposure is simply one that realises our personal creative vision for an image. It bears no relation to what a light meter or histogram is telling us. Convention tells us shadows have to show detail, and highlights must not

be blown, in the same way that we are told images must be sharp or comply with certain compositional rules. Once we accept this is not necessarily the case, the creative fun can begin.

For me this has resulted in largely abandoning the tripod for most landscape photography, and with that huge change in my way of working I have developed a workflow and new approach for handheld shooting.

I have come to realise that obsessing about file sizes and histograms – while technically correct and the ideal method when working on a tripod making 'classic' images – is not really well suited to creating evocative work that conveys what I feel when I am in the landscape. It was standing between me and my creative vision. I have realised that the high ISO capabilities of modern digital cameras mean I do not need to be tied to a tripod, except for precision macro/ composition work, night photography and long exposure images. I have freed myself from the constraints of the constant need for front-to-back sharpness and am comfortable

shooting at much wider apertures allowing for faster shutter speeds suited to handholding the camera. Once unshackled from the old norms I felt a huge relief.

My new workflow involves using aperture priority and the exposure compensation dial on my mirrorless camera system. I use autofocus and image stabilisation and higher ISO settings along with wider apertures to allow me to work quickly and instinctively in the field. I make more images to compensate for ones where the composition is not quite right or the focus is slightly off. I am prepared to experiment with exposure much more and, horror of horrors, I now rarely look at my histogram. I am looking at how the image appears on the camera's monitor and simply asking myself, 'does this excite me, is this conveying what I am feeling?'. I know I am not getting the biggest Raw file my camera can produce. I am not concerned if I am losing detail in my shadows or blowing my highlights (although I do try not to). The technical considerations have become

secondary. My whole approach is to produce images that move me.

The type of images this style of photography creates will not be to everyone's taste, and that is fine. It is simply a case of choosing a workflow that suits our style and approach. I use both methods depending on the style of image I want to create.

Mastering exposure is all about being in control of ISO, aperture and shutter speed. It is about being willing to manipulate them beyond what the camera or other people tell you is correct. Be prepared to experiment with apertures to influence the shutter speed to create differing effects. Be willing to let go of those old worries about digital noise, and use higher ISO values to get increased shutter speeds when necessary, realising

that noise is not the issue it once was (and we have noise reduction software on the rare occasions we need it). Play with shutter speed in manual mode, not worrying that the light meter might be telling you that you are two, three or even four stops over or under exposing. Rather, look at the results. Ignore the computer. We are the artists. It is the results that matter. Enjoy seeing dark images with little or no shadow detail that convey melancholy, oppression and drama. Revel in bright, sparkling images with blown highlights that speak of joy, freedom and wonder. And, yes, at times, set up the tripod, select f/11 and use ETTR to simply capture a magnificent sweeping landscape in all its natural glory, with detail in the shadows and masterfully held highlights.

Exposing to the Right (ETTR)

- 1 After firing the shutter, check the histogram. In the white histogram, the left-hand side of the graph represents pure black in the image, the right-hand side represents pure white.
- 2 The gaps between the long white lines spread at equidistant intervals across the length of the graph, running from top to bottom, represent full stops of light.
- 3 So, if the histogram finishes at the final line before the right-hand edge, you know the image is one stop underexposed. If this is the case, simply slow the shutter down by one stop (positive exposure compensation if working in aperture priority mode) or, if working in manual, I simply click my shutter speed control wheel three times (each one being a third of a stop) in the direction that slows the shutter speed down.
- 4 Re-take the image and check the histogram again.
- 5 If the light hasn't changed significantly between shots, you should find the histogram is now close to touching the right-hand edge.
- 6 If it is not, simply slow the shutter by one or two thirds of a stop, re-take the shot and check the histogram.
- 7 If the histogram touches the right-hand edge and you get a spike, this indicates overexposure – areas of the image will have gone pure white. If this is not your desired result, speed up the shutter by a third (or relevant amount of stops) and re-take the shot until the histogram is as close to the right-hand edge as possible without creating an overexposure spike.
- 8 Having the 'blinkies' switched on will assist in seeing if overexposure has occurred, where it is in the image and to what extent, so you can make a creative judgment on whether to allow this or not.
- 9 It also pays to take notice of the left-hand edge. If the histogram is touching at the left then you have pure black pixels in the image, indicating a loss of detail in the shadows. If moving the histogram to the right fails to fix this, you may need to use graduated neutral density filters to hold back the highlights to allow a slower shutter speed to be used to pull the detail out of the shadows.
- 10 A technically ideal histogram will see the graph not touching at either the left or right-hand end. What happens in the middle is irrelevant, as the peaks and troughs and where they appear is simply a representation of the tones that the camera is being pointed at. If spikes go out of the top of the histogram, this is also irrelevant.
- 11 Do not strive for the 'bell-shaped curve' that some talk of. This is a mathematically perfect curve but it represents an image with no bright or dark tones, just mid-tones, meaning no contrast. It is likely to be very flat and dull.



Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS lens with 1.4x extender at 230mm, ISO 200, 1/6sec at f/11, tripod



Fujifilm X-E2 with XF 55-200mm lens at 95mm, ISO 800, 1/1800sec at f/5.6, handheld

10 STEPS TO CAPTURING SUCCESSFUL EXPOSURES

1 Set your camera's colour space to Adobe RGB. While this does not apply a colour space to the Raw file (it only does so on the JPEGs, it does produce more accurate histograms.

2 Do not use your camera's monitor to judge exposure. The only accurate way to judge exposure is using the histogram or with a calibrated monitor. Camera monitors are not calibrated. The fact we can change how bright the screen displays on the camera means what we see is almost irrelevant.

3 Have the highlight priority warning switched on in your camera's menu (commonly known as the 'blinkies'). Although some find these distracting when reviewing images, they immediately alert us to blown highlights, and the extent of them. We can then make a judgement as to whether to allow them or to re-shoot, adjusting the exposure accordingly.

4 Remember, when shooting very bright subjects, such as snow or mist, set your camera to overexpose immediately (use positive exposure compensation, usually of at least one stop, often more). This is because your camera's light meter will want to make the bright subject duller and grey.

5 Conversely, if shooting a very dark subject, be prepared to use negative exposure compensation,

as the light meter will want to slow the shutter down too much to brighten the subject up.

6 If your histogram will display the RGB channels as well as the white histogram, switch these on. The white histogram is produced as an average of the RGB channels. In most images it is sufficient to work from the white histogram. However, if you have one strong colour in your image, take great care not to allow the predominant RGB channel to 'blow' (to touch the right-hand side of the graph), as this will result in a loss of detail in that channel. A classic example would be shooting a field of red poppies. Your white histogram may appear well in from the right-hand edge when using the ETTR method, but on checking the red channel you may find it clips the right edge much sooner. This will result in horrible flat red poppies with no detail in the petals. Ensure you speed up the shutter until the red channel doesn't clip, and ignore what the white histogram does. Watch your poppies transform into all their original glory when you get home.

7 It is good practice to work in full stops for aperture: f/2, f/2.8, f/4, f/5.6, f/8, f/11, f/16, f/22. The reason for this becomes evident when calculating exposures. When you 'stop down' to the next (higher) f-number your exposure time will exactly double (if you do not change the ISO

at the same time). Equally, if you 'stop up' to a wider (lower) f-number your exposure time will exactly halve from the previous. Once you start using third stops these calculations become much more complex.

8 I apply the same principle to working with ISO. I work only in full stops – 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600, 3200 and 6400. Again, this makes calculating exposure times, especially for long exposures, very simple, as the doubling/halving principle works with ISO just as it does with aperture.

9 With shutter speed I will work with third stop changes to make minute adjustments to how the image looks and to fine-tune histograms when shooting using the ETTR method. It allows absolute precision in the exposure.

10 Avoid using ISO 50 and other sub-100 ISOs. Generally speaking, these are simulated ISOs designed by camera manufacturers for specific studio situations, and while they will have an effect on exposure time they will also usually sacrifice other aspects of the image, such as highlight information. Only use them if you absolutely must; if you have no other way of slowing the shutter (such as using neutral density filters).

TAKE PART Enter our 'masterful exposures' competition – turn to page 111 for details

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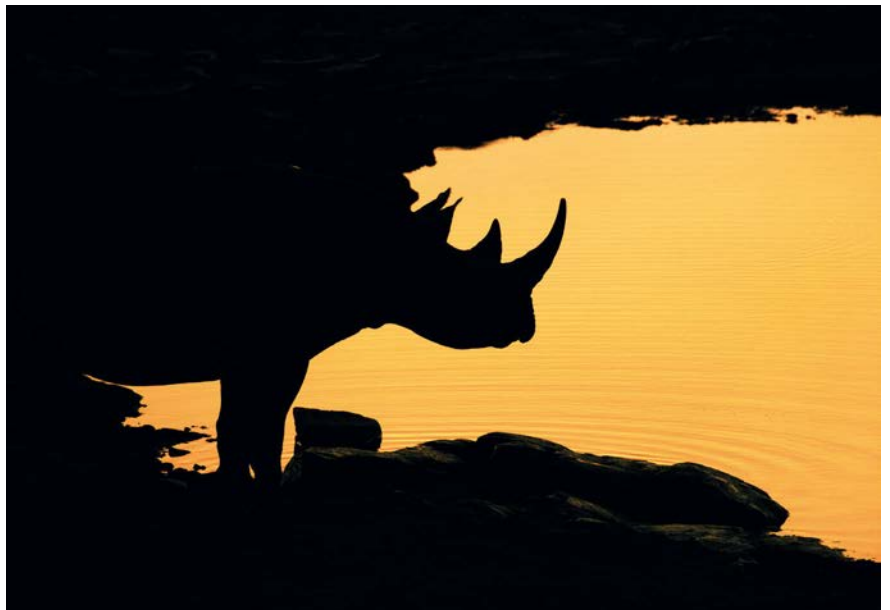
QUICK GUIDE TO... creating simple but powerful wildlife images

'Keep it simple' has long been one of the commandments aspiring photographers are regularly exposed to, and there's good reason for this. In this article, Richard Garvey-Williams looks at how less is often indeed more in the realm of wildlife photography

Much of photography is about communicating something or conveying a message. For wildlife, it may simply be a case of revealing a feature of an animal that you find striking, or some aspect of its behaviour or the environment in which it dwells. Including anything in the frame that does not add to, support or reinforce the statement in some way will only potentially distract or confuse the viewer. The fact that we are exposed to so much photographic imagery now, and that we tend to view it hurriedly, often on small screens, also means that much of our imagery has to be simple to be noticed.

Furthermore, in the context of our complex, modern lifestyles, it can be argued that many of us relish, from time to time, the tranquil oasis that a little simplicity provides. A scene containing just our animal subject and perhaps one or two other related elements, if composed considerately, can have profound impact as a piece of art. The absence of a complex narrative can allow the viewer's imagination to roam more freely.

There is still, of course, also a place for complex, more perceptually-challenging images as a contrast to these, particularly when the intention is to confuse, unsettle or challenge the viewer to look deeper and longer for the message. Studying a photograph and suddenly noticing the tiger's eye peering out at you from dense thicket can certainly get the adrenaline flowing.



Top The morning mist, and shooting into the light, served to create a platform to reveal the beautiful profiles of the great crested grebe and mute swan. The tranquil scene invites viewers to create their own narrative.
Canon EOS 5DS with EF 100-400mm L MkII lens at 400mm, ISO 320, 1/320sec at f/13, monopod

Above In this case, silhouetting the black rhino against water reflecting the golden dusk sky in Namibia has created a simple study of the animal's outline.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 100-400mm L MkII lens at 400mm, ISO 2000, 1/60sec at f/7.1, cable release, tripod

10 ways to simplify your images

A longer focal length might enable you to frame your subject more tightly, eliminating any peripheral distractions, or to zoom right in on a small part of the creature.

A larger aperture to render the foreground and background out of focus will reduce the potential for landscape features to draw the attention away from where it is needed.

Choose locations where you can photograph wildlife out in the open, in uncluttered surroundings. Many species feel more vulnerable in open spaces, so strategies to conceal yourself or habituate them to your presence may be necessary.

Use foreground elements such as trees or rocks in the scene to frame your subject and focus attention where it is needed.

Select a viewpoint that ensures a simple, strong composition that includes just the essential elements in the frame.

Lying down with your lens supported on a beanbag may help by blurring the foreground detail or including more sky as background.

Certain weather conditions can simplify images by creating more uniform or contrasting surroundings. Mist, snow and frost often work well in this regard.

Motion blur can be used for moving animals to create a more uniform backdrop.

Silhouetting by shooting into the light can be a very potent way of simplifying a scene and drawing attention to the outlines and shapes of animals.

Flash or natural light spotlighting the key parts of a creature can also work well by making it stand out against darker surroundings.

Right Catching this great crested grebe as it passed across a small patch of sunlit water, with the exposure set for its sunlit plumage, enabled me to create an almost studio-like portrait of this beautiful bird.
Canon EOS 7D with EF 100-400mm L lens at 350mm, ISO 250, 1/250sec at f/8, handheld

Below In Alaska's Lake Clark National Park, the local grizzlies emerge on to the coastal mudflats during the summer to dig for razor clams. This gave me the ideal opportunity to capture a 'minimal art' depiction of the bears in this open environment.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 500mm f/4 L lens, ISO 250, 1/500sec at f/7.1, tripod





The Norfolk Coast

The North Norfolk Coastline extends 45 miles and boasts some of the most beautiful secluded open beaches in England. In fact the only place in the UK that comes close to this coastal environment are the Highlands of Scotland. A visit here will present an array of coastal photographic opportunities with beautiful harbour villages, vast salt marshes, expansive sandy beaches with mature dunes topped with Marram grasses. This workshop is led by award winning landscape photographer, Jon Gibbs.

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Into the eye of the storm

On an epic winter drive around Iceland, Adrian Theze races against an approaching snowstorm and ferocious winds to shoot an evocative image that captures the full drama of the scene

Hríðarbylur (n. blizzard)

Route One circumnavigates Iceland and I'd set my mind on making the journey round the island, starting and finishing in Reykjavik, in February.

On a previous visit I'd photographed all the major Icelandic landmarks, places we've all become familiar with in photography magazines. I now wanted to explore deeper and experience in winter the less-visited wilderness areas of this beautiful country.

Setting off, I was soon stopped at a police roadblock just outside Reykjavik, where cars were being turned back due to the weather conditions. I was asked where I was going. 'Reykjavik,' I said, before adding 'the long way.' That drew a wry smile from the policeman.

He checked the tyres on my 4WD, an upgrade on the vehicle I had originally booked; an upgrade I came to greatly appreciate on numerous occasions during the trip ahead. Satisfied that my vehicle could handle the conditions, the policeman gave me permission to proceed. I had no idea just what my vehicle needed to be able to cope with, but I was about to find out.

After quite a few miles and several hours of bumping through snow drifts, with the car being buffeted by near hurricane force winds that made the vehicle a little lively to control on the compacted snow and ice, a hole suddenly appeared in the storm and I could see. It was a compelling scene. I still had a long way to go and it was getting late, so I was tempted to keep driving, but I stopped. There was no need to pull off the road, as I hadn't seen another car

for hours. Forgetting my coat and gloves, the biting cold took my breath away as I struggled to open the door against the wind. I knew that I didn't have long to get the photo; the blizzard was advancing at a terrific rate.

Hanging on to my tripod and fumbling with fingers that had already stopped responding to my commands, I managed to take an image. I quickly packed up and clambered back into the car just as the snowstorm hit again. Driving on was only possible by carefully following the yellow markers that line the roads in Iceland. These yellow markers occur every few metres, and in a blizzard like this one you literally make your way from one yellow marker to the next. It was a bit of a white-knuckle journey but I finally made it to the next town.

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

From aerials of icebergs to portraits shot on the streets of Ethiopia, and a serene waterscape closer to home, in the Wirral, the latest TPOTY gives a wonderful insight into life on our planet. Here are some of our favourite images from the competition...



Sonngge Cui, China

Commended, Journeys
& Adventures portfolio

Opposite page Altay prefecture,
Xinjiang, China. At the end of
May, Kazakhs make the journey
through the Altay prefecture for
summer grazing.

*Nikon D3 with 70-200mm lens,
ISO 200, 1/500sec at f/11*

Stephan Fürnrohr, Germany

Commended, Land, Sea, Sky portfolio

Right Disko Bay, Greenland.

Icebergs, captured straight
down 90° from the zenith.

*DJI Zenmuse X5 (MFT) with 15mm
f/1.7 lens, ISO 100, 1/240sec at f/6.3*

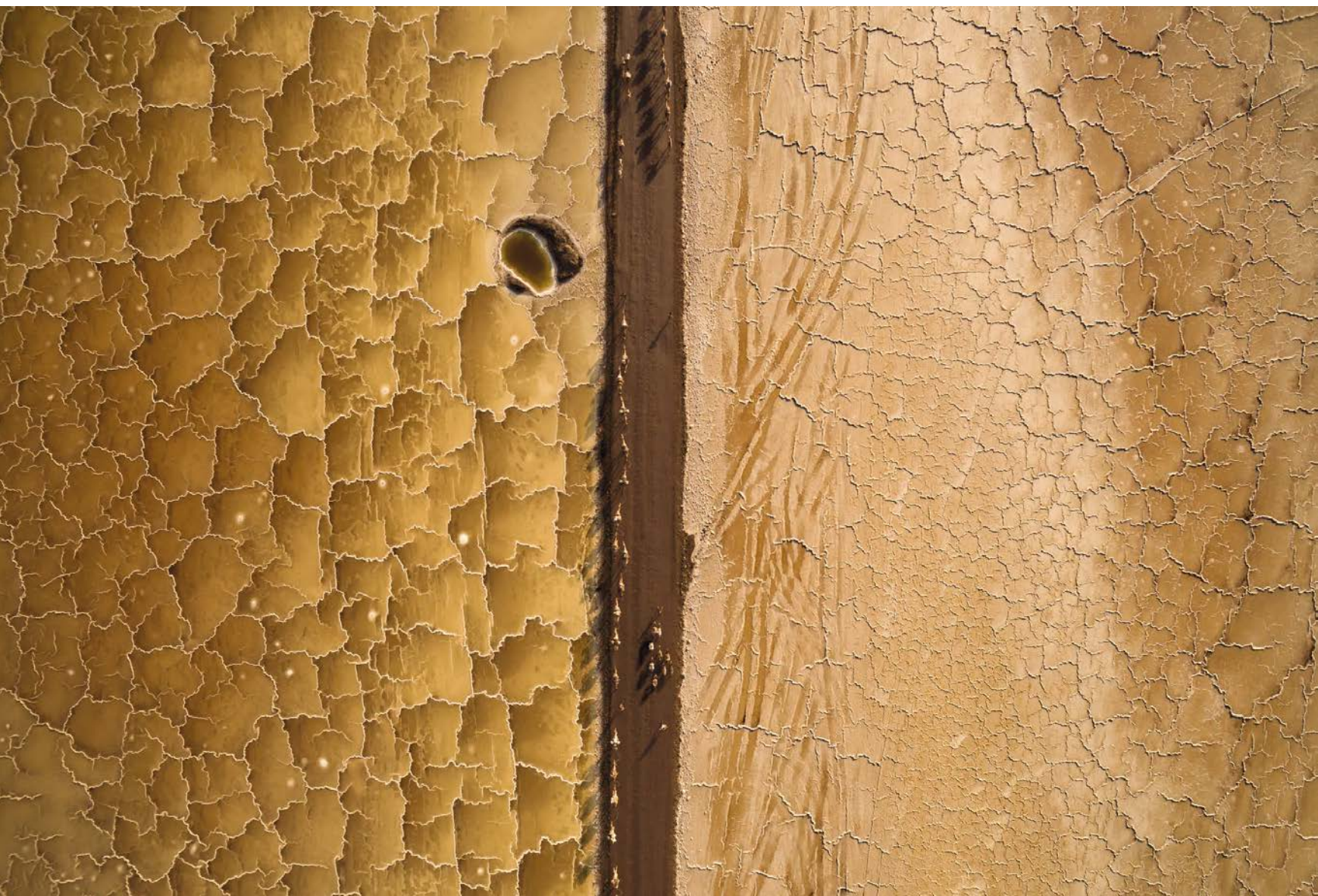
**Marsel van Oosten,
Netherlands**

Special Mention - Mankind

Below Xiapu, Fujian, China. A farm
worker rows out to inspect the nets
of a large crab farm in the sea.

*Nikon D5 with 80-400mm lens,
ISO 800, 1/250sec at f/11*





Joel Santos, Portugal

Winner, Travel Photographer of the Year 2016

Above Salt Desert, Danakil Depression, Afar, Ethiopia. This unique aerial photo shows the salt miners guiding a dromedary and donkey caravan through the desert's unique salt patterns.

DJI Phantom 3 and FC300X with 20.7mm lens, ISO 100, 1/710sec at f/2.8

Left Lake Bosumtwi, Ashanti, Ghana. The meteorite crater the lake sits in is estimated to be 1.07 million years old.

Fujifilm X-Pro 2 with 10-24mm lens, ISO 320, 1/500sec at f/5.6

Panos Laskarakis, Greece

Runner-up, Mankind portfolio

Right Volakas, Falakro Mountain, Greece. Mysterious and ancient celebrations in the forests on the mountain.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 70-200mm lens, ISO 2500, 1/1600sec at f/2.8



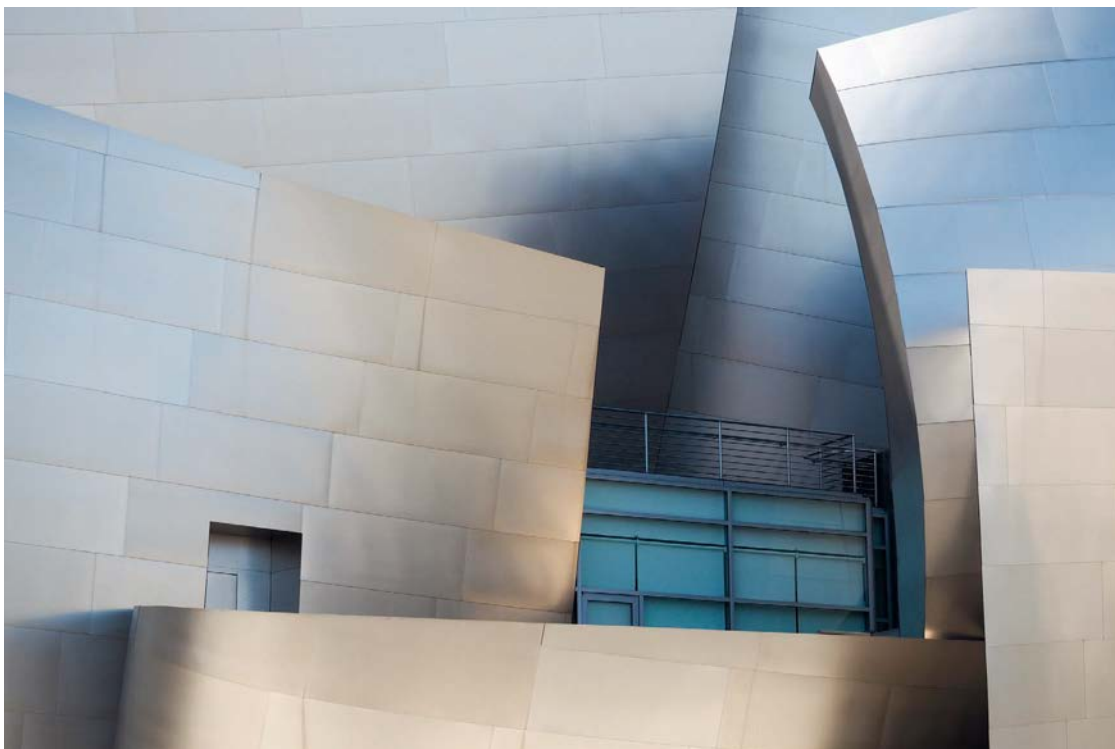
Ye Hongbing, China

Commended, New Talent, Eye to Eye

Below Hamer, Ethiopia. This young boy was making his own entertainment on the colourful streets of Hamer.

Nikon D4S with 24-70mm lens, ISO 640, 1/640sec at f/8





Craig Easton, UK

Winner, Land, Sea, Sky portfolio
Above West Kirby, Wirral, UK.
 A lone Buddhist monk walks around the boundary wall of the West Kirby Marine Lake.
Nikon D3X with 200mm lens, ISO 100, 1/125sec at f/4.5

Neville Morgan, UK

Runner-up, Cities: Architecture & Spaces
Left Los Angeles, USA. Part elevation of the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. It was designed by architect Frank O Gehry.
Olympus OM-DE M10 with 14-42mm lens, ISO 250, 1/320sec at f/9



Beniamino Pisati, Italy

Winner, Journeys & Adventures portfolio

Left Bayankhongor, Mongolia. Horses are present in all aspects of life in Mongolia. A popular saying is: 'A Mongol without a horse is like a bird without wings'. Canon EOS 6D with 30mm lens, ISO 640, 1/1000sec at f/7.1

Timothy Allen, UK

Highly Commended, Mankind portfolio

Below Kalofer, Bulgaria. Jordan's Day celebrations. Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 16-35mm lens, ISO 1600, 1/125sec at f/2.8



The winning images will go on show at TPOTY exhibitions at the UK City of Culture celebrations in Hull from 18 May to 30 June, and at the University of Greenwich, 10 Stockwell Street, London from 4 August to 3 September 2017.

To see all the winning images across all categories, visit the 2016 Winners' Gallery at tpoty.com

The whole story

Photography is a wonderful medium for communicating ideas, yet images that have a strong narrative are often overlooked in favour of those that are deemed more aesthetically pleasing. Niall Benvie explains why it's important to differentiate the two approaches



There are a lot of different stories in this image taken on a foggy day at Vestrahorn in Iceland, including wider ones about nature as a commodity.

Not long ago, a photo tour company my wife and I do work for ran a training week for its guides, old and new, in Iceland. This was not only good fun but it also gave the opportunity for an exchange of experience, knowledge and ideas. I was particularly interested to learn about learning, since it's knowledge that informs how successful you can be as a teacher. I'd assumed that my detailed, analytical explanations of a range of ideas and techniques in photography, using simple language and analogies, was the best way because, as a learner, that method works best for me. I'm what the educational psychologists class as a theorist but it turns out that there are also pragmatists (let's work our way systematically through this); reflectors (I'll just watch and think about it first); and activists (let's give it a go and see what happens). Each benefits from a different approach to teaching. In truth, we're all to a greater or lesser extent a bit of a mixture of these things, depending on what we're learning. That aside, my own experience suggests that the time we are most receptive as learners is when we have a question we need answered so we can move on. When you're new to photography, I think it's a mistake to go and take a workshop straight away. Without questions you need answers to, you'll not learn as deeply; knowledge becomes embedded by application. You just need to go and do it and find out what you don't know.

I had a similar experience when I started to learn Adobe InDesign a few years go; my mentor encouraged me to use it and to come back to him only with specific questions when I got stuck. By doing it this way I remembered every one of those lessons.

In my opinion, though, each subject has something fundamental about it that we need to grasp before we can start to understand it. With InDesign, the breakthrough came when I got the concept of objects. Now that I am learning about field audio recording, with all its parallels to photography, I am getting to grips with the unparalleled idea of an auditory corridor extending behind the subject of the recording. So, what is photography's core idea? I propose this: that pictures are 'of something' or they are 'about something'; pictures that have an expressive intention as opposed to a narrative one. Some pictures are primarily about the appearance of things, others tell a story. It's not that one is right and the other's wrong, one better or worse; simply that these are fundamentally different types of photographs that demand different approaches by the photographer and can't be judged by the same parameters.

A concrete example: I'm standing at the edge of a large colony of lady's slipper orchids in a damp spruce forest in central Estonia. My first instinct is to reach for my longest lens, focus in closely on a backlit slipper and, with aperture wide open, render a largely blurry but rather beautiful impression of lady's slipper. It's a personal statement about what I feel about the subject and how I view it. My principal intention is expressive. But if I'd been commissioned to photograph a story about the orchid, I would want to show the whole plant so readers could see the shape of the leaves and the proportions of the flowers. I'd shoot it with a wideangle lens so that they could see the extent of the colony and the sort of place it grows. I'd certainly want even lighting so that no clues were hidden by shadows, and I might even bring a trowel along to illustrate why the plant has become rare in much of its range. Here, my main intention is a narrative one: to tell the viewer things about the plant that they can't glean from the more personal, expressive approach. Neither is better than the other any more than a knife is better than a fork; they each have their distinctive functions.

You may argue that you've seen plenty of narrative images that are also beautiful, as have I. But that is as a result of serendipity rather than deliberate intent on the part of the photographer since, as we've seen in the example of the orchid, the active choices made to support a particular intention in respect of lens choice, lighting and perspective, profoundly alter the appearance of the final image.

This brings me then to the problem with photography competitions. I've helped to judge a number of national and international ones over the years and I can't recall, except where there was a dedicated story category, being expected to differentiate narrative from expressive images and to judge them separately. But of course you must! If it's ever niggled you that some of the wildlife images in *National Geographic* look a little ropery alongside those in glossy wildlife magazines, it's because their primary intention is to tell a story, not just to look pretty (although they are sometimes both – search online for Steve Winter's photograph of a puma beneath the Hollywood sign).

In truth, narrative images may have dirt under their fingernails and smell a little funny, but it's because they have been doing work and I fear that too often they are overlooked in favour of the visible virtues of the expressive image.

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Holywell Bay, Cornwall by Andrew Ray

ACCESS RATING

These are based around an 'averagely fit' person. Below are loose guidelines to what the ratings mean (N.B. they are assigned by the author and not verified by OP. Walk distances are one-way only):



1/5 Easy access – you can pretty much get straight out of your car and quickly be at the viewpoint via good quality paths.



2/5 Some gentle walking – generally less than a half mile – is involved, which may be on mixed quality paths.



3/5 A walk of up to about two miles, over quite easy terrain.



4/5 Medium length hike – up to about four miles over mixed terrain, possibly with some quite steep gradients.



5/5 The most difficult access. Long hike over challenging terrain (e.g. mountains/summits/steep coastal terrain); or involves travelling over particularly extreme ground (e.g. scrambling on rocks/exposed coastal paths or mountain ridges) over any distance.

LOCATIONS GUIDE

50 Viewpoints of the month

- 1 **Stac a' Phris** Isle of Lewis
- 2 **Urquhart Castle** Highland

54 Viewpoints

- 3 **Scale Force** Cumbria
- 4 **Ben Arthur** Highland
- 5 **River Trent (Bulcote)** Nottinghamshire
- 6 **Allt nan Giubhas** Highland
- 7 **Pen y Fan** Powys
- 8 **Milarrochy Bay** Stirling
- 9 **Holywell Bay** Cornwall
- 10 **Ballintoy Harbour** County Antrim

Map plottings are approximate



Stac a' Phris | Isle of Lewis

During a week-long work trip to the Isle of Lewis, Aidan Maccormick leaves a late afternoon free to focus on photographing one of the island's dramatic sea stacks

Nikon D600
with 24-85mm
lens at 24mm,
ISO 200, 3sec
at f/13, polariser,
3-stop ND grad,
IR remote, tripod

Working as an ecologist I get to travel all over Scotland surveying birds, and almost always have the freedom to take my cameras with me. Last spring I was lucky enough to get some work on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, so I immediately began planning a photographic adventure I hoped to squeeze in on the side.

The Isle of Lewis is far more rugged and austere than its conjoined island twin, the Isle of Harris, to the south. Harris is well known for its white sands and turquoise waters, while cliffs, caves and sea stacks characterise the rocky coastline of Lewis. An impressive example of this is the natural rock arch of Stac a' Phris on the island's north coast – a site I had long known about but had never visited.

Anyone who has been to the Outer Hebrides knows how brutal the weather can be, so when I arrived in late March it was heartening to see a benign forecast with cool but pleasant weather expected for the week ahead. On the morning of my trip to Stac a' Phris I made an early start on bird surveying, leaving the late afternoon free for photography. It was a beautiful morning with a touch of spring

in the air. Golden eagles displayed over the hills while flocks of elegant whooper swans migrated north on a non-stop flight that would take them to their Icelandic breeding grounds.

Heading to the north coast, I resisted the temptation to linger at the beautiful cove of Dail Beag and made the short walk north along the coast. Arriving at the cliff edge for my first view of Stac a' Phris was thrilling. The sea stack is a contorted mess of heavily fractured metamorphic rock, with a natural arch carved out by wave action. The whole structure appears to be in imminent danger of collapsing into the sea with the impact of the next wave.

I explored the cliffs very carefully, without my camera at first, in search of a suitable vantage point. Returning with my equipment, I cautiously set up my tripod on the cliff edge opposite Stac a' Phris to get the best view of the natural sea arch. Choosing portrait orientation with my 24mm lens and pointing the camera downwards pushed the sea stack and horizon to the top of the image. This allowed me to include the jagged rocks and gully directly below, leaving a large portion in the centre to

the frenzied action of the sea. Using this discordant composition I hoped to convey an element of the sublime; that uneasy feeling of mild fear and awe experienced while standing on top of a cliff.

Sunset was brief and unspectacular. Instead of packing my equipment away I continued to photograph as the cool hues began to dominate the scene.

Using a polariser, I was able to cut through the sheen of the wet rocks and bring out the blues and greens of the sea. To soften the sea surface while retaining the sense of energy of the crashing waves, I used a three-stop hard ND graduated filter pushed all the way down. After experimenting with shutter speeds I felt that a three-second exposure gave the best results.

In post-processing I lifted the shadows and used a digital neutral density filter to darken the clouds. Adjusting the white balance compensated for the cool cast from the two filters. Increasing saturation and vibrance brought out the colours of the rock. My final edit was to crop a small section of the sky to further raise the horizon, emphasising the looming presence of Stac a' Phris.

9 miles from Barvas • 21 miles from Stornoway **Access Rating** 



How to get there From Stornoway, take the A857 north towards Barvas before taking the left-hand turn after the petrol station to head west on the A858 through Arnol, Bragar and Shawbost. After Shawbost, look out for the sign for Dail Beag and follow this single-track road all the way to the car park at the very end. From the car park it is about a mile on foot. The footpath follows the fence line north of the bay, then leads alongside a series of white posts. The exact location is indistinct, however, so it's best to navigate using an Ordnance Survey map, walking north along the coast until you reach 'Stac a' Phris' on the map.

What to shoot The cliffs and the sea arch.

Best time of day Dusk and dawn.

Nearest food/drink The Callanish Visitor Centre, Callanish, Isle of Lewis, HS2 9DY, 01851 621422, callanishvisitorcentre.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Loch Roag Guest House, 22a Breasclete, Isle of Lewis, HS2 9EF, 01851 621771, lochroag.com.

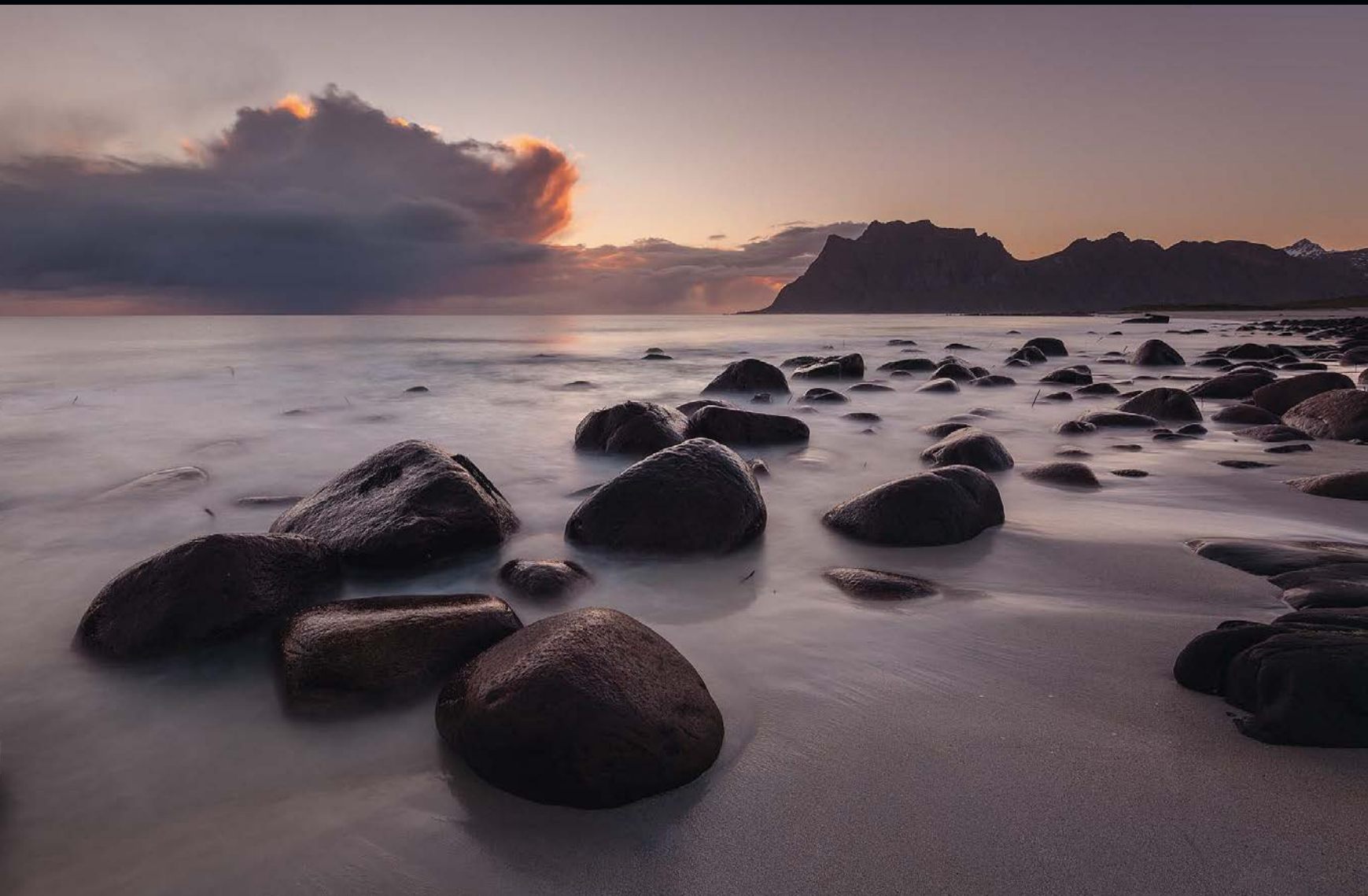
Ordnance Survey map LR 8

Other times of year Midsummer for sunrise illuminating the rocks.

Nearby locations Dail Beag (2 miles); Gearranan Blackhouse Village (5 miles).



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Urquhart Castle | Highland

A mist-filled Loch Ness stops Robert Birkby in his tracks en route to the Cairngorms, and he is thrilled to have the normally busy location virtually to himself

Loch Ness is Britain's largest, and perhaps best known, body of fresh water. Stretching around 23 miles along the Great Glen, and to a depth of 230m, the dark water is mysterious and surrounded by wonderful scenery. The loch is one of the must-see attractions for many visitors to the Highlands, who flock here in summer for the scenic cruises, pleasant villages and the castle, and in the hope of catching a glimpse of a certain monster.

I've visited the Scottish Highlands many times and have extensively photographed the areas to the west and south of Loch Ness, but I had never really been attracted to the loch itself, or Urquhart Castle. The only reason for this I can think of is the location's reputation for tourism, and my desire to venture off the beaten track.

On this particular trip, I was driving from my first destination of the week, in the Kintail region, across the country towards the Cairngorms. It's quite a lengthy journey, and a spectacular one at that. Despite the favourable weather conditions, thanks to a high pressure system over the area, I hadn't left my accommodation particularly early and, perhaps as a result, didn't see any photographic scenes for which I felt I had to screech to a halt. Until reaching Loch Ness, that is. Clouds were hanging on the hills and a light mist was rising from the water, all illuminated by a weak winter sun to my left. A distant Urquhart Castle was mirrored in the loch, appearing and disappearing through the mist.

I stood and watched for a while, as I've driven along this road several times and never given this location a second glance.



I ran back to the car for the camera and attached my trusty telephoto zoom. Because it was so bright I didn't bother with a tripod, and fired a few frames at the maximum focal length of 200mm and with low ISO. Each shot looked quite different due to the swirling and changing mist. I stood at the side of the loch and considered the situation, partly wondering where all the tourists were. Perhaps being early March meant

it was a quiet time of year, but I could only see one person in the area. I also felt privileged to see the mist lingering like this on Loch Ness, as the time was now approaching 11.30am.

Returning home and reflecting on images from this and other trips, it became apparent that my most enjoyable and rewarding photographic sessions have involved serendipity rather than careful planning.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 70-200mm lens at 200mm, ISO 100, 1/400sec at f/5.6, handheld

1.5 miles from Drumnadrochit • 13 miles from Inverness **Access Rating**



How to get there From Inverness, take the A82 south alongside Loch Ness. After about 13 miles there is a small lay-by on the left. Park here then walk along the road a little to find a vantage point through the trees.

What to shoot Urquhart Castle on the rocky headland, birds of prey.

Best time of day Mornings give the best chance of mist on the loch, and the rising sun lights the castle well from the side.

Nearest food/drink The Loch Ness Inn, Lewiston,

Drumnadrochit, IV63 6UW, 01456 450991, staylochness.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Drumbuie Farm, Loch Ness, Drumnadrochit, IV63 6XP, 01456 450634, loch-ness-farm.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn is excellent, as there are a lot of deciduous trees around Loch Ness.

Ordnance Survey map LR 26

Nearby locations River Moriston, Invermoriston (15 miles); Caledonian Canal, Fort Augustus (20 miles).

Scale Force, Cumbria

At 170ft, Scale Force is considered the highest waterfall in the Lake District. Hidden away from view, the scale of this waterfall is only fully appreciated once you scramble up the lower rocks to view it – take care, as it can be slippery. Moss-covered logs and walls provide colourful contrast to the dark rock on either side.

How to get there From the A66 at Portinscale, take the minor road south through Stair and along the Newlands valley, over Newlands Hause and descend into Buttermere. Park in one of the designated car parks in the village. Walk between Crummock and Buttermere for about two miles: Scale Force is found in the lower section of Scale Beck.

What to shoot Long exposures of the waterfalls, moss-covered logs and rocks, wider views of Crummock and Buttermere lakes.

Best time of day Any time of day. Long exposures are effective here, without the difficulty of bright highlights in the scene.

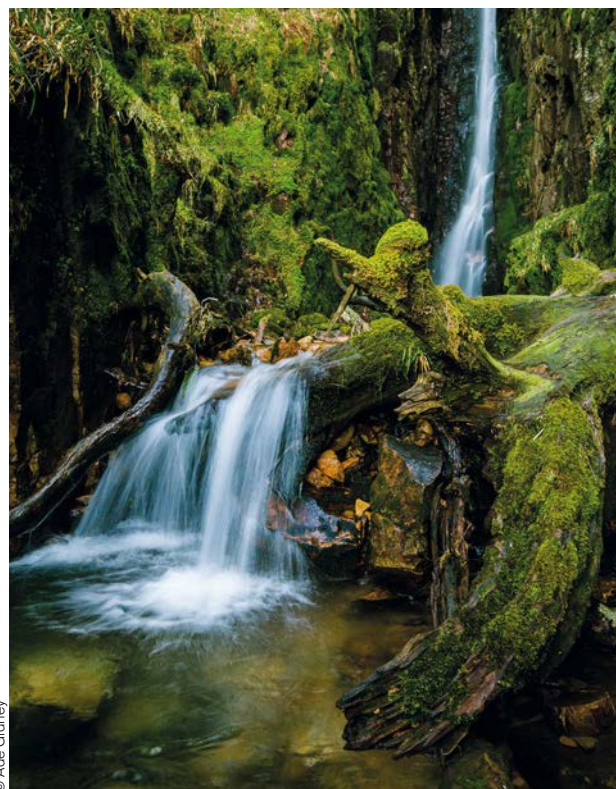
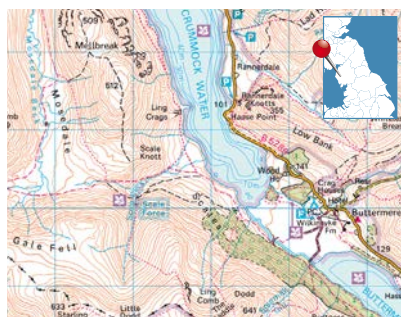
Nearest food/drink The Fish Inn, Buttermere, CA13 9XA, 01768 770253, fishinnbuttermere.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Bridge Hotel, Buttermere, CA13 9UZ, 01768 770252, bridge-hotel.com.

Other times of year Summer provides the longest daylight hours in this dark environment. A hard winter can produce incredible ice falls.

Ordnance Survey map OL 4

Nearby locations Buttermere (2 miles); Borrowdale (7 miles).



© Ade Gidney

10 miles from Keswick • 36 miles from Carlisle **ACCESS RATING** [hiker icon] [hiker icon] [hiker icon] [hiker icon] [hiker icon]

1 mile from Arrochar • 40 miles from Glasgow **ACCESS RATING** [hiker icon] [hiker icon] [hiker icon] [hiker icon] [hiker icon]

Ben Arthur, Highland

Ben Arthur, or 'The Cobbler' as it's more often referred to, in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is a challenging but achievable hike that affords fantastic views of the neighbouring munros and Loch Long below. With the possibility of mixed weather at any time of year, dramatic conditions can lead to great image possibilities throughout the day. The photograph shows the view to Beinn Narnain.



How to get there From Loch Lomond, head north on the A82 and follow the shore until Tarbet. Take the A83 towards Arrochar. Continue on the A83 past Arrochar and around the end of Loch Long. The car park at the start of the walk is situated on the left of the road less than a mile from Arrochar.

What to shoot Epic mountain landscapes and dramatic weather.

Best time of day Dawn and sunrise, or any time with interesting weather.

Nearest food/drink The Village Inn, Main Street, Arrochar, 01301 702279, villaginnarrochar.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Seabank B&B, Arrochar, G83 7AG, 01301 705885, seabankbandb.co.uk.

Other times of year All times of year.

Ordnance Survey map OL 39

Nearby locations Loch Lomond (3 miles); Bridge of Orchy (30 miles).



© Richard J Jones

River Trent (Bulcote), Nottinghamshire

This is one of my favourite local spots and offers plenty of variety, especially when there's mist. I normally cycle from Gunthorpe along the riverbank before sunrise; it is a mist trap when conditions are right. Landscape features include trees, fences and a distant village and church, and there is often lots of bird activity.

How to get there There are two access points, both about the same walking distance. Gunthorpe (Bridge) has ample parking and is easier to find, being located just off the A6097 between Lowdham and the A46 (postcode NG14 7FB). Park and follow the riverside path westwards under the bridge (towards Burton Joyce) for about 20 minutes.



© David Eberlin

The path forks to a footpath and bridleway that leads to Bulcote. You can also park on Old Main Road, Bulcote (NG14 5GU): walk south towards the river (through the farm), turn left at the end and, at the fork, turn right.

What to shoot The riverside location is particularly photogenic when the landscape features are silhouetted at sunrise. There's also a great view upriver to Shelford (with its church).

Best time of day Sunrise at most times of the year has potential, especially if mist

is predicted. Sunset in winter can also work. Early mornings produce some good side-lighting.

Nearest food/drink Unicorn Hotel, Trentside, Gunthorpe, NG14 7FB, 01159 663612, unicornhotelpub.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Unicorn Hotel – as above.

Other times of year The area around the riverbank can be good in any season.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 260

Nearby locations: Clumber Park (20 miles); Sherwood Forest (20 miles).

1 mile from Gunthorpe • 12 miles from Nottingham **ACCESS RATING**

© Paul Holloway

20 miles from Tyndrum • 80 miles from Glasgow

ACCESS RATING

Allt nan Giubhas, Highland

The stream Allt nan Giubhas forms a great leading line to the iconic mountain top Stob Dearg at the western end of Buachaille Etive Mòr. Following its banks as it meanders on its journey towards the river Etive will offer great viewpoints not only to Stob Dearg but also westwards towards the impressive mountain of Sron na Creise.

How to get there Take the A82 north from Tyndrum until you get to the turn-off for the Glencoe Mountain Resort on the left-hand side, about eight miles beyond Bridge of Orchy. Turn off here, and almost immediately there's parking space on the right side of the road next to the bridge over the Allt nan Giubhas.

What to shoot Down the river towards Stob Dearg and straight across the stream towards Sron na Creise.

Best time of day Early morning for first light on Stob Dearg, sunset and twilight.

Nearest food/drink Glencoe Mountain Resort, Kingshouse, Glencoe, PH49 4HZ,



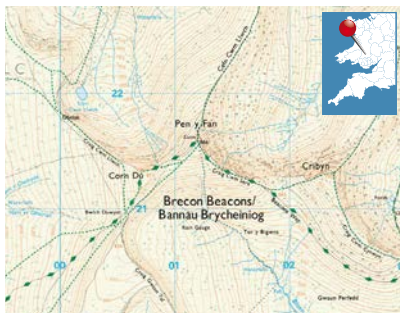
01855 851226, glencoemountain.co.uk/café.

Nearest accommodation Kings House Hotel, Glencoe, PH49 4HY, 01855 851259, kingy.com. Note: the main hotel is closed for renovation in 2017 but a new bunkhouse is open. Otherwise, try the Bridge of Orchy Hotel (bridgeoforchy.co.uk).

Other times of year Any time of year can be good here, though I particularly like September for the heather in bloom and the sun setting behind Stob Dearg.

Ordnance Survey map LR 41

Nearby locations Lochan na h-Achlaise (4 miles); Loch Achtriochtan (8 miles).



© Stephen Spraggan



Pen y Fan, Powys

As the highest peak in southern Britain, the flat summit of Pen y Fan offers commanding views for miles in all directions. In winter it's often coated with snow, but it remains one of the easiest mountains to access on foot with relevant experience. The steep slopes of its northern flanks are a dramatic reminder of the peak's height.

How to get there From Brecon, drive south on the A470 for nine miles. At Pont ar Daf, there is a free car park on the left. A footpath leads up the hill from here for two miles until it reaches Pen y Fan.

What to shoot Wide landscape views, rock formations and the night sky.

Best time of day Dawn, dusk and nighttime.

Nearest food/drink The Tanner's Arms, Defynnog, Brecon, LD3 8SF,

01874 638032, tannersarmspub.com.

Nearest accommodation YHA Brecon Beacons, Libanus, Brecon, LD3 8NH, 0345 371 9029, yha.org.uk.

Other times of year Summer works particularly well, as the morning sun

lights the north face of the peak.

Ordnance Survey map OL 12

Nearby locations Upper Neuadd Reservoir (3 miles); Beacons Reservoir (3 miles).

6.5 miles from Brecon • 42 miles from Cardiff **ACCESS RATING**     

13 miles from Balloch • 24 miles from Glasgow **ACCESS RATING**     



© Aidan MacCormick

Milarrochy Bay, Stirling

The lone oak tree on the eastern shore of Loch Lomond is an iconic feature within Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park. This solitary tree set against an uncluttered background makes a simple yet powerful composition. The water levels vary considerably throughout the year, so the land around the tree isn't always submerged as in this image.

How to get there From Glasgow, head north on the A81 towards Bearsden before taking the A809 road north towards Drymen. Just before Drymen, take the B837 west through Balmaha and look for the Milarrochy Bay car park on your left, after about a mile. The car park has strict opening and closing times that change depending on the season. Alternatively, the site can be reached by walking along the West Highland Way for one and a half miles from Balmaha, where there is 24-hour parking available.

What to shoot The lone oak tree, the loch and shoreline.

Best time of day Dusk and dawn.

Nearest food/drink The Oak Tree Inn, Balmaha, G63 0JQ, 01360 870357, theoaktreeinn.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Oak Tree Inn – as above.

Ordnance Survey map LR 56

Other times of year September for sunset directly behind the tree.

Nearby locations Inchcailloch (2 miles); Conic Hill (3 miles).



Holywell Bay, Cornwall

The mile-long golden sand beach at Holywell Bay is situated in one of the most dramatic coastal settings in Cornwall: it is surrounded by high sand dunes, towering sea stacks, sheer cliffs and the Atlantic Ocean. Photographically, it is at its best when the sun sets behind Carter's Rocks (Gull Rocks) during the spring and autumn months.



How to get there From the Highgate Hill junction on the A30 (14 miles west of Bodmin), follow the A39 towards Newquay for one mile. Take the second exit at the Halloon roundabout, to follow the A392 to where it joins the A3075 at a mini roundabout on the outskirts of Newquay (five miles). Take the first exit, signed Redruth (A3075), and, after two miles, turn right on to an unclassified road, signed Holywell Bay and Cubert. After passing through Holywell village, park in the large pay & display car park at the bottom of the hill, from where the beach can be reached by crossing the road and following a sandy footpath to the bay (one quarter of a mile).

What to shoot Spectacular sea stacks, the highest sand dune system in Britain, sand patterns on the beach, waves thundering in off the Atlantic Ocean.

Best time of day Sunset, or mornings for sunlit images.

Nearest food/drink St Pirans Inn, Holywell Bay, Newquay, TR8 5PP, 01637 830205, stpiransinn.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation St Pirans Inn – as above.

Other times of year The sun also sets behind Carter's Rocks during the autumn months.

Ordnance Survey map LR 200

Nearby locations Newquay Island (6 miles); Perranporth beach (7 miles).

6 miles from Newquay • 12 miles from Truro

ACCESS RATING     

© Andrew Ray



15 miles from Portrush • 60 miles from Belfast ACCESS RATING     

Ballintoy Harbour, County Antrim

Ballintoy Harbour, made famous by its inclusion in the *Game of Thrones* TV series, is a picturesque harbour located on the north Antrim coast. Built from limestone blocks, it was once a hub for north coast fishing, and it boasts fantastic views across to Rathlin Island and Scotland. In addition to its beauty, large sea swells also add drama to the magnificence of Ballintoy.

How to get there From Belfast, take the M2 north. At junction 1, take the A26 towards Antrim/Ballymena/Coleraine. Continue on to the M2 for five miles before merging back on to the A26. After eight and a half miles, turn right on to the A44 towards Ballycastle. After a further eight miles, in the village of Armoy, turn left on to Main Street then turn right on

to Carrowreagh Road. After a further three miles, turn right on to the B147 (all three turns are signposted towards Ballintoy). After three miles, turn right then take an immediate left on to the B147 towards Ballintoy. After a further three miles, turn right on to Whitepark Road. After about one mile you will see signs towards Ballintoy Harbour (left). Follow this road down to the car park.

What to shoot The harbour, beaches, dramatic waves, Elephant Rock (Volcanic Stack) and Ballintoy Church.

Best time of day Sunrise and sunset can work well, but mainly between mid-March and mid-September due to the north-facing aspect of the location.

Nearest food/drink The Smugglers Inn, 306 Whitepark Road, Giants Causeway, Bushmills, BT57 8SL, 028 2073 1577, smugglersinnireland.com.

Nearest accommodation The Smugglers Inn – as above.

Other times of year Winter can be the most dramatic time, with some of the wildest waves on the north coast crashing over the black basalt rocks that surround the harbour.

Ordnance Survey map OSNI Discovery Series (Sheet 5 – Ballycastle)

Nearby locations The Giants Causeway (8 miles); The Dark Hedges (9 miles).

© Nigel Cooke



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POSTAL ENTRY FORM

VIEWPOINTS ☐

My images were all taken in the month of

The name of my location

(We are currently looking for images taken in July, August and September – **please add month to each image filename**)

READER GALLERY ☐

ONE THING THIS MONTH... ☐

MASTERFUL EXPOSURES

Please supply captions and full technical details for each image

LETTERS ☐

WHERE IN THE WORLD? ☐

OP READER DAYS ☐

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VIEWPOINT OF THE MONTH

Your location pictures and words could earn you up to £200! Send us up to 10 of your best digital images or slides from your favourite UK & Irish viewpoints. If they're selected, we will commission you to write up your location.

VIEWPOINTS

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READER GALLERY

Send us your very best outdoor images, and if you're chosen as our winner you'll receive a superb prize. This month's winner received a Case Logic Kontrast Pro-DSLR Backpack worth £129.99. Offering stability and protection from the ground up thanks to its water-resistant DuraBase, this ergonomic backpack stores and protects your pro DSLR and accessories wherever you go.



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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Take on our 'Masterful exposures' photo challenge (see page 111), and as well as the chance of being featured in the July 2017 issue of *OP*, you could also win a Sprayway Mylas jacket worth £140. Available in men's and women's sizes, this light and compressible down jacket will keep you warm and comfortable.



LETTERS

Please send your views, opinions and musings to claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com, or send them online or by post. If your letter is our 'Letter of the Month' you'll win a prize; this month's winner received a £100 voucher from LumeJet. Please limit your letters to 200 words or less and be aware that they may be edited.



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We are always on the lookout for inspiring new features. If you have a great idea for an article then please send a short outline (no more than 60 words), plus five accompanying high-res JPEG images for our consideration.



Where in the world?

If you can tell us the name of the imposing 4,000m mountain pictured above, you could win a superb Tenba DNA Messenger 15 camera bag, worth £125!



WHERE IN THE WORLD?

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POSTAL GUIDE

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When burning your CD, create two folders: one containing TIFF or JPEG – saved at quality 10 or above – files, saved at 300ppi, RGB or CMYK, and MAC compatible; and a second folder with low-res 72ppi JPEG files. Only send 8-bit files (not 16-bit files) and flatten any layers. Add your own name to the image file names. **If sending Viewpoints for multiple months, please add the month to each image filename.** Please write your name and contact details on your CD, or include this information in a text file on the CD. Finally, print off, if you can, a contact sheet of thumbnails of the images included on the CD.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH STICKERS TO YOUR CD

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- 1 Send both low-res and high-res versions of your images
- 2 Add your name to your image filenames
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Please include a SAE if you would like your submission returned.

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WEBSITE SUBMISSIONS

You can send us links to your website, for us to view your general work only. Please note that strictly no correspondence will be entered into regarding website submissions. Send the link to opweb@thegmcgroup.com.

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If you would like an exhibition or event to be included in *Outdoor Photography*, please email Anna Bonita Evans at anna.evans@thegmcgroup.com **at least 10 weeks in advance**. You can also send information to the postal address (right) or submit it online.

NEWS STORIES

Is there a current and time sensitive story you'd like us to cover in our Newsroom pages? Please email details to claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com or submit it online at outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk/contact-us

READER GALLERY

Each month we publish the best images from all those submitted for our Reader Gallery. To find out how to enter your photographs using our easy to use online submission system, turn to page 58. Here is this month's winner and runner-up...



Winner **Roberto Roberti**



My photography is inspired by Japanese visual arts and the concept of *wabi-sabi* – the acceptance of transience and imperfection. I think that every single shot is not just the reproduction of a place but is at the same time the ideal representation of it and a reflection of human emotions. For this reason, I prefer shooting black & white instead of colour, and I also like long exposures and infrared.

I'm also very attracted to work from the Pictorialism movement at the beginning of the 19th century, and I've begun studying digital

negative techniques to reproduce looks similar to older processes such as wet plate collodion and salt paper.

Landscape photography is important to me because it allows me to express my creativity and to relax in the countryside, away from the stress induced by urban life. I think the most important challenge that humanity will face over the coming decades will be to preserve nature from anthropization, when human action converts and impacts our natural spaces. In this sense, photography can play an important role in raising awareness, as the work of Ansel Adams did about the need to protect

the wilderness areas of the United States of America.

I have just finished the creative work for a photography book about the landscapes, traditions and cultures of Sicily, the land of my girlfriend. I have spent three years working on this project and I hope that it will be published (probably self-published) in June 2017. My long-term goal as a photographer is to work for art galleries and magazines.

Hometown Parma, Italy

Occupation Human resources manager

Photography experience 13 years

Opposite Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park, Italy.
Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon EF 17-40mm f/4 lens at 17mm, ISO 400, 1/125sec at f/7

Right Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park, Italy.
Canon EOS 5D MkII with Zeiss Planar T 50mm f/1.4 lens, ISO 2000, 1/4000sec at f/1.4





Runner-up **Graham MacKay**



I have always loved the outdoors but photography is a relatively recent passion. Two years ago I went on a photography workshop trip to the Isle of Skye and have been hooked ever since. During the last year, I have been lucky enough to join a group of Scottish landscape photographers and have learned a lot from sharing images with them and picking up tips from people with much more experience.

The images I enjoy most are those that convey real atmosphere, and that is what I try to capture if I can. I love that photography has taken me to some great places I might not otherwise have seen. Scotland is blessed with such a variety of superb locations and the changeable weather just adds to the challenge.

Hometown Glasgow, Scotland

Occupation Surgeon

Photography experience Two years
grahammackayphotography.com

Above Autumn at Loch Ard in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, Scotland. *Sony Alpha 7R II with FE 70-200mm f/4 lens at 70mm, ISO 100, 1/5sec at f/9*

Send in your best images and win great prizes. This month's winner will receive a superb Case Logic Kontrast Pro-DSLR Backpack, worth £129.99!

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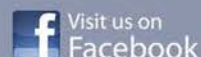
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Tim Taylor

Tim Taylor is a British-Canadian full-time professional expedition photographer specialising in inhospitable far-flung corners of the planet. It's not always an easy life, he says. Nick Smith puts him in the spotlight ...

Above Karakoram mountains, Pakistan. A scientist steps across the glacial melt pouring from within an ice cave while at work on the Yukshin Glacier, as part of the Karakoram Anomaly Project.

Nick Smith How would you describe what you do?

Tim Taylor There are two parts to my work. The first is that of an expedition photographer, documenting climbing and polar missions for magazines and scientific research projects. Then there's my side of things, producing large format fine art prints. I'm a Royal Marine Reserve too, and so I do boat work. But that's all part and parcel of my expedition photography world.

NS What extra skills do expedition photographers need?

TT My main environments and the places that I enjoy working in most are the polar regions and high-altitude

mountains. So you need climbing and skiing skills, and in that respect my time in the marines has served me very well, with months spent inside the Arctic Circle every year. That's where you learn to survive, really. On the climbing side of things the skills are quite specialist.

NS What's the life of an embedded expedition photographer like?

TT It can be very hard work. It depends on how you define the goals from the outset. The first expedition I did was part of a military expedition to Makalu, an 8,000m peak in the Himalayas. The objective there was to put up a new route along the south-east ridge. There is 7km of ridge, most of it above 6,000m, so

it's pretty brutal. As the photographer, you're generally carrying more kit than anyone else. And you're a climber as well, with oxygen bottles and tents.

NS What are the problems with taking photos in these conditions?

TT You generally find that no matter how well everything is planned in the warmth of the tent, when you get out there the other climbers are not particularly willing to model for you again and again. That's fair enough, as it's a harsh environment. You need to get out of bed before the others and get ahead of them on the mountain. It's probably one of the hardest roles on the team.



NS Do you get many problems with kit in these conditions?

TT Well, the cold is a killer for batteries. So you tend to leave your kit outside the tent, but take your batteries in with you to try to keep them warm by wearing them on your body. Cameras and lenses do well, but you don't want to get them cold and then warm again quickly because of condensation issues. That can cause all sorts of dramas. But it's all about good battery management.

NS How do you balance expedition and photography objectives?

TT I'm doing two jobs, but also I'm taking two types of photos. There are the expedition documentary shots and my own fine art shots. It's important to me to do both if I can. If I can produce

something that is artistic and also tells the story, that's really what I am after. There will be certain shots that the sponsors won't be interested in, just as there will be pictures that won't make it to being a fine art print, no matter how essential they are.

NS What came first, the outdoor life or the photography?

TT They grew together organically. My first photography trip was to the Falkland Islands with my father when I was eight, where I was absorbed in adventure and photography. That's what kick-started it and I remember thinking it was pretty awesome. Since then, I've done all sorts of stuff. I was a semi-pro mountain biker for about seven years, and then the marines kicked in.

NS Anything special about your gear?

TT Not really. It's a balance between travelling light and maintaining quality. I have experimented with compact cameras, but it doesn't work for me. Coming back from a trip and being disappointed with the quality of your shots is one of the worst feelings.

Above Makalu, Himalaya, Nepal. Taken 6,400m above sea level on Makalu's knife-edge south-east ridge.

Tim's top tips

One thing I never go on a shoot without is... my Rab down jacket. It has literally kept me alive on numerous occasions. Essential.

My one piece of advice would be to... get the basic survival skills sorted before the photography skills. That's more important than anything else.

Something I try to avoid is... crowds. If there are lots of other people around photographing where I am, then I'm in the wrong place.

Tim's critical moments

To see more of Tim's work visit timtaylorphotography.com

1990 Month-long trip to the Falkland Islands. Fell in love with photography.

2009 First Himalayan expedition. Earned green beret with the Royal Marine Reserves.

2013 Runner Up and Highly Commended in Travel Photographer of The Year awards.

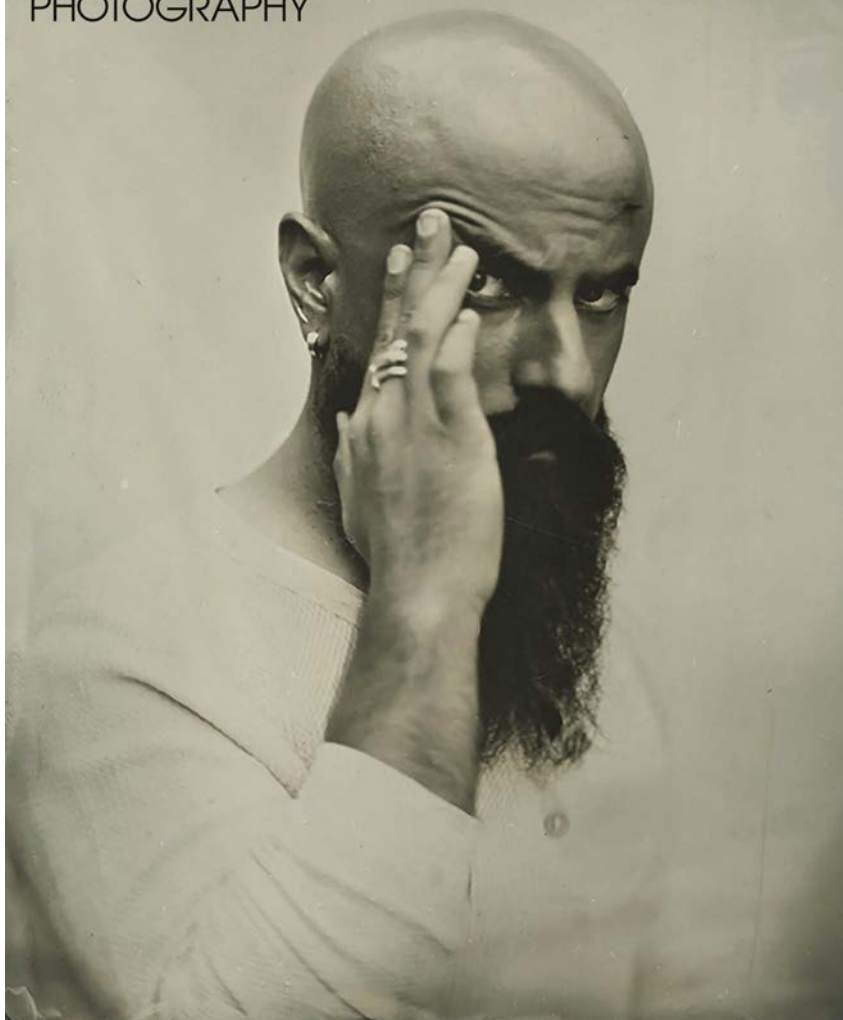
2014 First 8,000m peak. Team photographer for the Makalu 2014 expedition.

2014 First solo exhibition, at the Royal Geographical Society.

2015 Photographer to the Karakoram Anomaly Project, scientific research expedition backed by the RGS.

2016 Led two-month Patagonian expedition.

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NATURE ZONE

DISCOVER

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LIFE IN THE TREETOPS

Rookeries are among Laurie's nature highlights for March

BACK FROM THE BRINK

Friends and family were alarmed when wildlife photographer Luke Massey and writer Katie Stacey announced their plan to head to the scene of the planet's worst nuclear accident, but the lure of exploring this re-emerging wild space in Eastern Europe was too strong to resist



Out of our minibus window, a horse pulling a wooden cart stacked high with hay was being driven onwards along the road, its huge load so overwhelming that we couldn't help but wonder how it stayed put. This picture of rural life seemed to be more fitting of 18th century England – a scene you might expect to find in a Winston Graham *Poldark* novel – but we were rattling and bumping our way from Ukraine's capital Kiev towards Belarus, to a location near the border. Geographically, we could have easily driven straight to our destination from Chernihiv in northern Ukraine, where we had been attending a conference, but the political situation between Ukraine and Belarus is complex and crossing the little spit of Belarus that pierces the direct route was out of the question. Instead we had to take a convoluted detour as we made our way to the location of the world's most catastrophic nuclear accident, Chernobyl.

Prior to the trip, the very thought of our destination sat uncomfortably with our family and friends; 'You aren't going into the zone of alienation are you?' they asked, having read up about Chernobyl since we'd declared our intention to visit there. Another statistic they were keen to quote was that 'Ukrainian officials estimated that the area would not be safe for human life again for another 20,000 years!' Despite their displeasure and concerns with our plan, we had done our own research. The idea to go was initially prompted by an article we read the previous year while in a Spanish café (during a less life threatening project). After an enquiring email to Professor Nick Beresford, the lead scientist named in the article, and a further 12 months of coordinating plans, we finally set out to see the area for ourselves.

Professor Beresford, a radioecologist, has been visiting Chernobyl for more than 20 years. Through the use of trail cameras, he and his

above Raccoon dog in an abandoned village in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone (CEZ).

Canon EOS 400D with Canon 18-55mm lens at 18mm, ISO 400, 1/160sec at f/11, Camtraptions PIR unit, Nikon SB28s speedlight, Benro tripod

opposite, top Cormorants roosting on an old shipping crane, Pripjat, CEZ. *Canon EOS 1DX with Canon 500mm f/4 MkII lens plus 1.4x Converter III, ISO 700, 1/1250sec at f/5.6, Benro tripod with Benro GH2C carbon fibre gimbal head*

opposite, bottom A red deer hind struts across an abandoned road. *Canon EOS 1DX with Canon 500mm f/4 MkII lens plus 1.4x Converter III, ISO 1000, 1/125sec at f/5.6*





colleagues have identified an incredible diversity of wildlife returning to the exclusion zone. Their cameras have not only been picking up the usual suspects of European badger, Eurasian lynx, grey wolf, racoon dog and wild boar, but have also provided photographs of brown bear returning to the zone, and the first evidence of European bison in the Ukrainian side of the zone.

April last year marked the 30th anniversary since the devastating explosion at the nuclear plant, and the majority of news stories and TV programmes that have arisen since the accident have been fear mongering. Among the falsities within the coverage have been tales of two-headed catfish and hyper aggressive wolves, which have helped to paint a picture of a barren wasteland crawling with mutated creatures. However, Professor Beresford's work has shown that where humans have been removed for an extended period, wildlife can reclaim the space and thrive.

Gaining access was no easy feat. With the scientists fearful of what weird and wonderful reports we might conjure up were we to be granted permits, it took a lot of persuasion from us to convince them that the story we wanted to tell was one of hope and the resilience of nature. In time, we all realised that we wanted to tell the same story and share it with the world, and this created the common ground to make our visit possible.

At the first exclusion zone border, 30km from the plant, our passports were inspected with military style rigour before we were ushered through to meet our requisite escorts. Appearing like life-size action men in their matching army fatigues, they greeted us warily, loaded us into a car and drove us into the exclusion zone – an area that covers over two and a half thousand square kilometres. It very quickly became apparent why it has become a wildlife haven. Pine forests flashed by the car windows, followed by deciduous

above The view from the top of a Soviet watchtower into the abandoned buildings below.

Canon EOS 1DX with Samyang 50mm lens, ISO 500, 1/800sec at f/7.1

opposite, top A European elk (moose) and her calf within the CEZ.

Canon EOS 1DX with Canon 500mm f/4 MkII lens, ISO 2000, 1/250 sec at f/4, Benro tripod with Benro GH2C carbon fibre gimbal head

opposite, bottom A black grouse strolls across an abandoned track.

Canon EOS 1DX with Canon 500mm f/4 MkII lens, ISO 500, 1/1250sec at f/4





forests, grasslands, wetlands, rivers, lakes and the ghostly abandoned buildings that are synonymous with the name Chernobyl. With such habitats on offer, it's no wonder creatures are returning.

Along the route to Pripjat we kept a keen eye out for the extraordinary, and it didn't take long to find something special. Eurasian beavers were swimming in the cooling ponds beneath the power plant, where white-tailed eagle and migrating osprey also fish. Endangered Przewalski's horses, red deer and roe deer could be seen grazing contentedly in the grasslands. A Eurasian wolf leapt from the reed beds in surprise at our arrival, while gangly elk loped through woods.

Rather surprisingly, the wildlife is not alone in displaying its resilience to the terrible history of this place; humans are also returning to the land. Known as *Samosely*, or self-settlers, and described by the Russian poet Lina Kostanko as the 'native people of the atomic reservation', they are a small

number of individuals who have illegally returned to the homes they were evacuated from on that fateful day in 1986. Visiting the home of *Samosely* Marie Ilchenko in Kupvata, she told us 'I don't see the radiation, I don't smell the radiation, I don't taste the radiation – radiation doesn't affect me.'

Among the abandoned houses, where chalky bricks crumble, paint peels and roots erupt from the floorboards, swathes of seeding milkweed drape the tall slender fir trees, their canopy letting just a dapple of golden sunlight percolate through. With apple trees bowing under bountiful yields and a backing soundtrack of black woodpeckers yaffling, it's all very Secret Gardenesque. There is something eerie yet magical, sad yet optimistic about the exclusion zone, and it is quite something to witness how the places affected by the cataclysmic events of the disaster have transformed into one of the planet's most impressive natural environments.

above A door hangs ajar on an abandoned house, CEZ.
Canon EOS 1DX with Samyang 50mm lens, ISO 800, 1/800sec at f/4

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AMMONITE
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Life in the Wild

Beachcombing with a camera is a great way to practise the skill of making images out of 'nothing', says Laurie Campbell, and it's also the perfect antidote to fast-paced modern day life

Those of us of a certain age may well remember the 1983 film *Local Hero* by the director Bill Forsyth. It was about a fictitious community in the Scottish Highlands that was about to be radically changed by the construction of an oil terminal by a large North American corporation. Everyone was in favour of the idea except Ben, an elderly character who lived a simple life on the beach in a ramshackle hut made from driftwood, and who appeared to earn his living by beachcombing.

The film gained a near-cult following because of its tongue-in-cheek comedy take on a situation that was almost believable. The character of Ben won through, and even the company's high-flying executive, sent over to persuade the locals, was seen towards the end of the film reminiscing over the alternative way of life he had experienced during his visit to Scotland.

Apart from the film's gentle humour, a big part of its success was the romantic idea of being somewhere that offered a slower, happy-go-lucky way of life. The attraction is perhaps not surprising given that we live in an age where the pace of modern life is driven by consumerism and the desire to collect more and more material possessions that aren't always needed.

Nature photography can be a bit like that too, and I'm not talking here about collecting photo gear, but more about what we choose to photograph. Think of the type of subjects in nature that we see photographed ad-infinitum. Many seem exciting and glamorous, and although I can see the attraction to some extent, I can't help thinking that there is a certain 'must have' element at play here too.

Right Large fronds of seaweed cast up on the shore really lend themselves to being photographed with wideangle lenses. The stems of this furbelows (*Saccorhiza polyschides*) form an important part of the composition, leading away into the background.

Nikon D3x with Nikon 24mm PCE tilt and shift lens, ISO 100, 1sec at f/22, Singh-Ray soft-step, one-stop grad, mirror-lock, cable release, tripod





Beachcombing tips

» Winter is possibly the best time to embark on a spot of beachcombing because it's when most of the biggest storms occur around our coasts; they tend to churn up lots of material from the intertidal zone on the lower shore and cast it up on the beach at high tide. So-called spring tides are high-ranging and occur on a two-week cycle, so anything grounded at the topmost strandline during this time will remain there longest and at least until the next spring tide comes along.

» Some of the more violent storms can rip seaweeds from shallow inshore seabeds and land these on the beaches too. Large deposits of bulky seaweed species such as the various species of kelp (*Laminaria*) can lie for weeks or months and, as they decompose, colonies of invertebrates appear and provide a valuable food source for wading birds. These 'tangles' of seaweed stems and fronds are different shades of browns and reds that present an infinite array of photo opportunities, especially where the 'holdfasts' (the root-like structures that once anchored the stems to rocks on the seabed) are included, because they are testament to the severity of the storm.

» Cloudy or, better still, rainy weather is ideal for photographing seaweeds because contrast is reduced and the colours always appear more saturated when they are wet. In among the seaweed you can often find the remains of small marine animals such as crustaceans and shellfish. Incorporating the patterns of seaweed stems or sections of individual fronds when photographing these creatures provides the perfect backdrop, which can convey as much information as photographing them in a wider landscape.

» The scale and variety of potential subjects washed ashore is enormous, so it pays to be kitted out with a variety of lenses, including wideangle and macro – and a telephoto in case you are distracted by good opportunities to photograph birds or mammals. Tripods are essential for close-up work, so it all adds up, but by following the natural contours of the shore there will be no climbing involved. Besides, this is a leisurely approach to nature photography that is both therapeutic and highly addictive.

Above Seashells such as this prickly cockle (*Acanthocardia echinata*) are among the most frequently photographed subjects by people beachcombing. They may be plentiful but after coming across what I considered to be a good specimen I spent around 30 minutes photographing it. For this image I lay on the ground and selectively focused manually.

Nikon D3X with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR 11 lens with Canon 500D close-up lens, ISO 100, 1/25sec at f/8, mirror-lock, cable release, beanbag

Inevitably, the sites of compelling photography subjects quickly become widely known, some reaching near-viral status on the web. This in turn results in them becoming 'honeypot' sites with all the disadvantages of working shoulder to shoulder with lots of other photographers, paparazzi-style.

This is far removed from what nature photography should be about, and I think it's important to get away to places where we can work simply, practising the art of looking for any subject, however prosaic, where we can indulge our imagination. I call it 'making something out of nothing' – embracing the notion that there are photographs to be had all around us in nature.

Beachcombing with a camera, looking for subjects to photograph in close-up,

seems to me to be the ideal solution.

It has an air of surprise and expectation about it because we are working in an environment where the opportunities change twice a day with the ebb and flow of the tides; there is no way of knowing what subjects will be cast on to the shore by the next tide, waiting to be discovered. With nobody in the UK living more than 70 miles from the coast, it's an opportunity that's open to most of us.

Having sampled the experience of scanning a beach with expectancy, looking for details at our feet, it's then easy to translate that to other habitats. There are always subtle changes in what is available to photograph, throughout the seasons and in different weather and lighting conditions.

WHAT TO SHOOT THIS MONTH...

Laurie's March highlights

▼ **Rooks** (*Corvus frugilegus*), especially those nesting in semi-urban environments such as parks and village greens, can become one of the most trusting of all the crow family in the UK. With deciduous trees still bare, the birds needn't appear big in the frame, so try shooting silhouettes of the rookeries either from below with a fisheye lens, or to one side with a longer lens. Only work on overcast, cloudy days, when colourless grey skies help reduce the scene to simple, monochromatic tones to help capture the atmosphere.

Nikon D2X with Nikon 10.5mm f/2.8 fisheye lens, ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/10, handheld



▲ The male and female flowers of **pussy-willow** (*Salix caprea*) – also known as goat willow, grey or great willow – grow on separate trees in early spring; a phenomenon known as dioecious. The yellow male flowers are bigger and are an early source of nectar for bees and other insects on sunny days. They also make an attractive setting upon which to photograph inactive invertebrates in cooler weather.

Nikon F4S with Nikon 200mm f/4 AF macro lens, Fuji Velvia ISO 50, 1/15sec at f/16, mirror-lock, cable release, tripod



▲ Like all members of the crow family (corvids), **ravens** (*Corvus corax*) are very intelligent and difficult to get close to because they are much persecuted. In some locations, such as well-used picnic sites in the west Highlands, and mountaintops with frequent public access, they can be bolder and routinely swoop down to grab any leftovers as people move away. Windy weather is best for photographing them: it can dictate their direction of approach because they usually always fly into the wind.

Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens and Nikon 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 500, 1/1600sec at f/9, handheld



▲ For a bird that is rarely seen and prefers to skulk around deep in reed beds and dense marshy areas, **water rails** (*Rallus aquaticus*) are more often heard than seen. In the breeding season the calls made by the males are really quite startling; composed of grunts and squeals, they are not unlike the sounds young piglets make. Try listening in advance to calls of any species of birds that you hope to find, and use that knowledge later in the field to help locate your subject.

Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens and Nikon 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 1000, 1/160sec at f/7.1, cable release, tripod, fill-flash

More seasonal subjects...

Flora

Shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*) – a common weed of gardens and 'waste ground', with attractive heart-shaped fruits.

Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) – found in bare, grassy places and sometimes on shingle. Best photographed in sunshine when the flowers are open.

Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) – small shrub with tiny yellow flowers. It is rare in the wild in the UK, but commonly cultivated and planted for ornamental hedging.

Fauna

Buff-tailed bumble bee (*Bombus terrestris*) – a common species throughout the UK that is active in early spring.

Great diving beetle (*Dytiscus marginalis*) – at least the size of a one-pence coin, and a voracious predator of tadpoles.

Common buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) – now widespread across the UK. Watch out for spectacular display flights in early spring.



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World wildlife spectacles

Lesser flamingos, Tanzania

Every year, more than two million lesser flamingos gather at Tanzania's Lake Natron on the floor of the Great Rift Valley. Forming pink clouds over their main breeding site, these tall, elegant birds are very social and are rarely seen alone. Courtship rituals involve head flagging, wing salutes and marching. Visit before the end of March to coincide your trip with the wildebeests' breeding season in the southern Serengeti.

Orangutans, Borneo

In the last 20 years, some 80% of the tropical rainforest on which orangutans depend has been destroyed, causing their numbers to plummet; many experts believe they could be extinct in the wild in less than 25 years. There are several orangutan rehabilitation centres and sanctuaries in Borneo, where you can maximise your chances of a sighting of these endangered animals. It's much more rewarding to see them in their natural environment, however, even though they are harder to see and more distant. March to December is the dry season, and the best time to see orangutans in the wild, and two of the top locations are Danum Valley and the Kinabatangan river.



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Nine great places to see heronries

Visiting a heronry is a great way to see herons in large numbers, and to observe their fascinating behaviour. Birds arrive at their nests in February, and their eggs hatch between March and April. Here are some of the best places in the UK to observe them...

1 Swell Wood, Somerset
The RSPB's Swell Wood reserve in the Somerset Levels is home to south-west England's largest heronry, with more than 100 pairs of grey herons and a small number of little egrets.
rspb.org.uk/swellwood

2 Ellesmere, Shropshire
Heron return each year to Moscow Island on the Mere and begin gathering nesting material in February. It's one of the most accessible heron-viewing spots, and video footage is broadcast live in the visitor centre.
heronwatch.org.uk

3 The Regent's Park, London
Just one mile from Oxford Street, this royal park has one of the largest city-centre heron colonies in Europe; over 20 pairs of grey herons nest near the boating lake each year.
royalparks.org.uk

4 Walthamstow Reservoirs, Greater London
Superb views of grey herons and little egrets can be enjoyed at Walthamstow Reservoirs, without the need for binoculars. Over 100 pairs nest here most years.
walthamstow-wetlands.org.uk

5 Northward Hill, Kent
Boasting the UK's largest heronry, with up to 150 pairs of grey herons and over 100 pairs of little egrets, this RSPB nature reserve promises some excellent

opportunities to observe courtship and nesting behaviour.
rspb.org.uk/northwardhill

6 Coed Llwyn Rhyddid, Vale of Glamorgan
Located one mile north of Hensol forest, this mixed woodland has the third largest heronry in Wales. To book a place on a heron-watching trip, email Rob Parry at the Wildlife Trust for South and West Wales:
r.parry@welshwildlife.org
welshwildlife.org

7 Attenborough Nature Centre and Reserve, Nottinghamshire
The flooded gravel pits and islands are perfect for breeding herons. There are more than 40 nests here, most of which can be easily spotted around Tween Pond.
attenboroughnaturecentre.co.uk

8 Crom, County Fermanagh
Set on the shores of the Upper Lough Erne, Crom Estate has one of the largest heronries in Northern Ireland. The National Trust's 3.5-mile Crom wildlife walk is a great way to explore the area.
nationaltrust.org.uk/crom/trails/crom-wildlife-walk

9 Muncaster Castle, Cumbria
There has been a heronry at Muncaster Castle for centuries; from about 4pm every day, the birds gather on the Cannon Bank to be fed in front of an audience.
muncaster.co.uk

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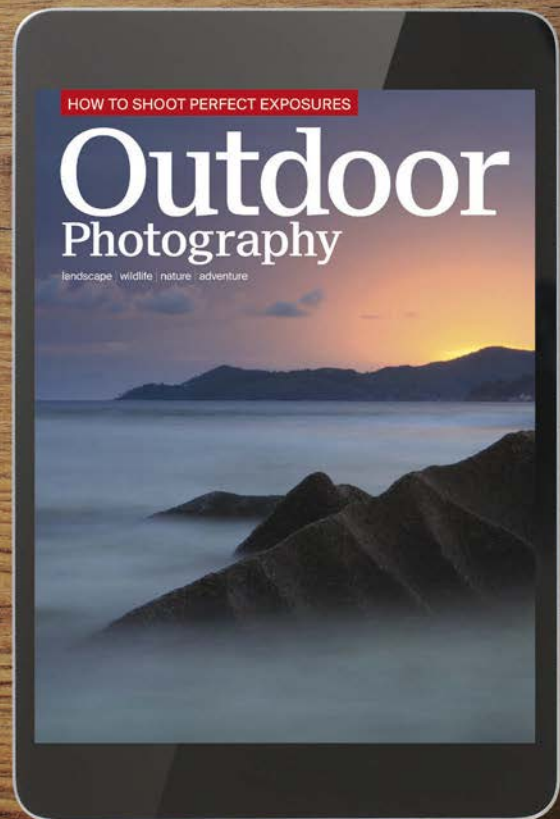



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*Capturing the character of an animal is one of the most important aspects of wildlife photography for **Tom Way**, who is drawn to species that exude spirit and personality...*

There are a few key factors I consider and look for when composing a wildlife image. One, of course, is the light, and another is simplicity. But I often find that the most crucial element in whether the shot is a success or not is portraying the character of the animal. Capturing this will engage the viewer and hopefully provoke an emotional response, whether it is one of love or sadness, joy or fear. Without this important ingredient, the viewer may feel detached and therefore quickly disregard an image.

When photographing my favourite mammals on the African continent I try hard to keep these considerations in mind. Although lions are often depicted as large, aggressive, powerful predators, I wanted to focus on the beauty and majesty of the species. Only by spending plenty of time with your subject can you develop a feel

for the character and then look for a moment when those traits are expressed in a single pose.

When I first saw this large male lion on the plains of the Maasai Mara National Reserve, he was at rest – anyone who has been wildlife watching in Africa will know that lions lounging around are a common sight. When he finally began to move he walked right alongside my vehicle. I followed him through my viewfinder and was pleased when he paused almost the perfect distance away from me, with his handsome head and mane filling the frame. Finding myself so close to this magnificent cat allowed me to more accurately convey his character. By diffusing the background through the use of a wide aperture, the focal point of the image is the lion's face and the bright, staring eye. With portrait images, the eyes

are very important in expressing emotion, so I was thrilled to see this in the image. Being sensitive to and aware of an animal's behaviour and actions can also add to the impact of a photograph. The stance of this lion with his head turned, and the highlighted curve of his spine, emphasises his gracefulness and stature.

The combined power of these elements can be further accentuated when an image is converted to black & white; removing the colour takes away the possibility of any visual distraction they may cause. This leaves the viewer with only the raw emotion of the image and, in turn, empathy with the subject. As a photographer I find I am drawn to animals that visually demonstrate a strong character, and whenever I am in the company of lions I find myself in awe of them.

On the wing

With no choice but to stay at home for a number of weeks following an operation, Steve Young takes the opportunity to acquaint himself with his garden birds, and is thrilled when an unexpected visitor turns up...

Around this time last year I was recovering from a hernia operation, which prevented me from getting out and about. In fact, I was unable to do virtually anything photographically for a couple of months, and I couldn't carry a heavy lens. For the first few weeks I didn't do much apart from watching catch-up television and box sets, or reading, but after a short while I began once again to take an interest in the garden inhabitants.

Before my operation, I'd moved the feeders much closer to the window so that I could use a shorter lens to take photographs. Natural perches were already in place for the birds to land on, and if I sat on the couch and opened the door I could watch to my heart's content. Photography was still a bit difficult, but my D7200 with the new Nikon 300mm f/4 attached was a lightweight combination; by resting the camera on the top of cushions balanced on the arm of the couch, I could actually manage to take a few photos.

Because I was indoors all day, every day, I did get to know what the garden birds' habits were: what time certain species would come in to feed, how many birds were using the garden and the direction from which they approached the feeders were all useful bits of knowledge. I also realised that there wasn't just one sparrowhawk flying in for a 'take-away'; there were actually three different birds – no wonder my house sparrow and goldfinch numbers were decreasing.

One very wet day I was sitting on the couch watching yet another episode of 24 when I glanced out of the window. A movement in next door's silver birch tree made me lift up my binoculars, and there climbing up the trunk was a treecreeper! It was a first record for my garden, and totally unexpected; I just



had to try to photograph it. Hobbling out into the rain in my pyjamas and a dressing gown, I limped down to the bottom of the garden. I managed a few shots, which weren't great, as I was wary about straining too much, but it was superb to see a treecreeper so close and in my garden.

Over the next few weeks I noticed that blue and great tits were beginning to check out nest boxes and were actually starting to collect nesting material. The previous year, a blue tit had torn apart an old flower basket lining, and I'd kept the leftovers for this season's birds. After draping bits of it over a branch near to my window, I settled down and waited to see what would happen – but there were no takers. A couple of days later, however, a blue tit, then a great tit collected some material and flew off with mouthfuls. I'd expected this behaviour from these species, but was surprised when a wren joined in and took nearly all the remaining material in a couple of mouthfuls and then flew to a nest in the ivy-covered trees. The only problem with this bird was that for some reason it wouldn't come down when the windows were open, so I had to take my photographs through the

double-glazing and simply hope for the best in terms of quality.

I can't say I enjoyed my operation, minor though it was compared to what others go through, but the weeks spent at home recovering did enable me to keep a very close eye on the garden visitors. I learnt a lot more about 'my' birds and added treecreeper to the list, which wouldn't have happened otherwise.

Just as I was finishing writing this column I found out that another hernia operation is needed; either a recurrence of the last one or a new one near to where it was... wish me luck...

above Wren: I was a little bit surprised that a wren came to collect my nesting material, but very happy to photograph it, even though it was shot through the window.

below It's not a perfect shot by any means, but it's taken in my garden, in the rain, by a hobbling photographer, so I'm quite pleased.



STEVE'S MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

BIRD OF THE MONTH

It may only be February when you are reading this, but early migrants will already be close to our shores, and one of the earliest is northern wheatear. Southern counties will have their first birds arriving on the coast around now, and even here in north-west England I will be looking for them during the early days of March.

With a black bandit mask, peachy upper breast and grey-blue back with dark wings, male wheatear is a very smart-looking bird. Common breeders in the UK on uplands, they will arrive any time between March and May before moving across the country to their breeding grounds, stopping to feed along the way.

1 Wheatear (male): With its distinctive black bandit mask, male wheatear is a smart-looking bird.

2 Wheatear (female, winter): Although wheatears are to be expected in spring, summer and autumn, they are not usually seen during winter. This female, however, was photographed locally on 31 December a few years ago.



BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP



Checking and cleaning nest boxes is one of those jobs that must be done. It might also be a good time to put up a fresh perch alongside it for the birds to land on. As mentioned in the main article, you can also help the birds by putting out nesting material for them to collect; old hanging baskets can be broken up and scattered around, and the pieces are likely to be found.

Commercial nesting material is available from many bird food retailers if you want to go this far, and bags of moss can be bought as well. I have to confess, though, that I had limited success with the moss I put out last year; it was mostly ignored by the robins that bred locally. I will try again this year, but they may just be an extremely fussy pair!



1 The only shot I managed of one of 'my' robins collecting the moss that I put out for them. I'll try again this year...

2 Birds will be looking for material to line their nests with; an old flower basket was perfect for this blue tit.

3 A coal tit collects moss to line its nest.

LOCATION OF THE MONTH



© Forestry Commission



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Black Wood of Rannoch, Highland

Forming part of the Tay Forest Park, the Black Wood of Rannoch is one of the largest remaining areas of ancient Caledonian pine forest that once covered much of the Scottish Highlands.

Its name might sound dark and sombre, but this vast forest is a magical place that's full of life and colour. As well as being home to beautiful pines and other native trees, some of which are thought to be hundreds of years old, it is rich in plants and wildlife such as deer, pine martens and red squirrels. Some of the birds that inhabit the wood are found nowhere else, or seldom seen elsewhere, including crested tits and Scottish crossbills. Another characterful inhabitant is the capercaillie, famous for its dramatic courtship display.

Location The Black Wood of Rannoch lies on the southern shore of Loch Rannoch, about 30 miles west of Pitlochry.

Access and facilities The wood is easily accessed via a network of paths. Parking is at Carie, where you'll find picnic areas and toilets.

Website scotland.forestry.gov.uk



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Christmas in India was no photographic cracker

Force of circumstance occasionally means we're reduced to using equipment below our pay grade. You can try to make the best of these things but, on holiday in India, Nick Smith discovered that sometimes you're better off without any camera at all...

There are times when we all impose upon ourselves long journeys with tight schedules, but this was ridiculous. The idea was to travel non-stop from the biting cold of the Antarctic Peninsula to the comforting warmth of a sunset-facing beach in India. The former was the venue of an exciting assignment for a national newspaper, where I'd been photographing penguins and abandoned scientific research stations, while the latter was where I was to join my family to celebrate Christmas. For those interested in statistics, my voyage would involve four continents, one ship, five aeroplanes and countless long-distance taxis. But all would be well, because everything was planned down to the last jot and tittle.

The key to arriving in Goa by Christmas Eve was to do 'the switch' in London, where I'd briefly return to my flat, dump the polar gear and swap it for a pre-packed bag of Bermuda shorts and Hawaiian shirts, sandals and sarongs. As sun block and sunglasses were requirements of both adventures, the pit stop seemed to be a triumph of efficiency over a schedule that would put the fear of God into lesser mortals. I'd need to make snap decisions over what camera gear I'd leave behind. But as I have already said, the logistics were nailed down with the accuracy and ruthlessness of a military campaign, and the last thing I was going to do was waste any energy on what could go wrong, because nothing could.

My ship duly docked in Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, on the very tip of Argentina's Tierra del Fuego, and it was but a matter of minutes to clear customs and flag down a taxi that would take me to the somewhat bijou local airfield. From there I flew to Buenos Aires, changed planes and charged north to Madrid. In Spain, I sallied forth as confident as a man with a broad and easy conscience to Gatwick, where my pre-booked minicab awaited me. It was easier than picking apples off a tree, and were I to descend into that ghastly business management jargon, I'd describe the whole affair as being one characterised by an abundance of low-hanging fruit.

'You've got a problem,' quoth the driver Desmond a tad too gleefully for my liking. He'd been fully briefed over a beer or two before I'd set off to Antarctica and was ready to leap into action. 'You see, there's a baggage handlers' strike at Heathrow, and people have been stuck waiting for their plane to take off for three days. They're even putting up marquees to accommodate the overspill.' Thinking that this didn't sound too catastrophic, even for a snowy 23 December at the UK's busiest airport, I was brought back to earth when he told me that what

awaited me was a scene of 'utter carnage. Probably no point even trying.'

I internalised the word 'poppycock' with manly and British reserve, and, as Desmond sat in my kitchen drinking tea, I quickly grabbed what I needed from my polar kitbag and transferred it into my Louis Vuitton valise. 'Don't bother with that,' he chirped: 'it's the guys with check-in luggage that are being held up. Your best chance is to arrive with carry-on only.' Knowing that check-in clerks blanch at hand luggage coming in at more than 10kg, I started to repack, this time under the gun. Metal bodied cameras and long lenses were out of the question and so with the seconds draining away, I decided to take my leather hat, passport and little else. I'd buy a compact camera for my family album snaps if I ever got airborne.

What happened next was quick and efficient. We glided past the cohorts of simultaneously stressed and depressed holidaymakers outside Heathrow, and with nothing more than a backpack to slow me down I breezed through check-in, security and passport control in something like 18 minutes. I was going to catch my flight and the Christmas reunion with my daughter was now a formality. I stopped at one of those electronics shops in the mall that never sell you anything you really need, unclipped the purse to the total of £300, and with my sleek new toy still in the box, munched peanuts all the way to Mumbai, snoozed through a short-haul to Goa, and chatted amiably with the taxi driver who spent the next four hours searching for my beach hut in the tropical sun.

After the longest journey I'd ever undertaken, and after battling with the sort of impedimenta that would have entirely defeated Greek mythological heroes, I arrived at Mandrem beach exhausted to be sure, but overjoyed to see my daughter sporting dolphin-like in the surf before a decidedly pleasant smoked salmon sunset. After greetings and salutations all round, I decided it was time to take some pictures. As my new unfamiliar compact camera sprang into life of sorts, I felt a wild pang of nostalgia for the proper instruments of the trade that were now taking a well-earned rest on my kitchen table in Brixton.

The results were terrible for the same reason that instant coffee granules, powdered milk and saccharine tablets won't make you a satisfying drink. I tried to put a brave face on it. But as I made my tour of temple ruins, night markets and street cricket matches, I came to realise that the word 'compact' has no place in my world, being better reserved for hatchback cars and political alliances.



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GEAR ZONE

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88 **Gearing up**

90 **Camera test**



THE BEST MICRO-FOUR-THIRDS CAMERA YET?

Fergus Kennedy puts the Olympus OM-D E-M1 MkII to the test



Lume Cube

Fitting into the palm of your hand, this miniature light emits an impressive 1,500 lumens of power to help you illuminate nighttime scenes. Compatible with iPhone, Android, GoPro and your DSLR, this handy lighting source is ready for any adventure thanks to its durable, fully waterproof housing. The Lume Cube has a two-hour burn time when set to 50% and is rechargeable via a USB.

Guide price £89.99 (single pack)

intro2020.co.uk



Berghaus Extrem 7000 Belay Parka

Part of Berghaus' relaunched Extrem range of technical clothing for serious winter pursuits, the 7000 Belay Parka is made from Pertex Endurance – a totally windproof outer fabric with high levels of water resistance. Its two large hand-warmer pockets and extra Hydroloft Elite Pro insulation strategically placed around the kidneys will help to keep you warm while you set up or wait for that perfect shot.

Guide price £200

berghaus.com

GEARING UP



BenQ SW320

A wide-gamut monitor that takes image quality to the next level, the SW320 has a 4K, UHD screen with 99% Adobe RGB and 100% sRGB colour space coverage and can support HDR 10 content. The 31.5in monitor includes a 10-bit IPS panel and a 14-bit 3D look-up table to give extraordinary clarity of fine details and textures, as well as realistic colour representation for outdoor and nature photographs.

Guide price £1,250

benq.co.uk



Canon Selphy CP1200

A neat and compact printer great for making reference prints, the wireless Canon Selphy CP1200 is ideal for photographers wanting to work on larger bodies of work such as portfolios or books where you need a quick way to make prints to test layouts or combinations. It's capable of producing 6x4in prints, and you can use the Selphy portably too, thanks to its rechargeable battery pack.

Guide price £99

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Guide price £600 (2TB)

adata.com



Cullman CULight FR60

This shoe mount TTL flash has a guide number of 60 and integrated radio remote control with an operating range of up to 100 metres. Compatible with Canon, Nikon and Sony cameras, the FR60 can rotate 360° horizontally and offers a high-speed sync rate of 1/8000th of a second, a 20-200mm zoom head, an external power socket to support high-voltage battery packs, plus a stroboscopic mode for creative effects.

Guide price £249.99

intro2020.co.uk

Snugpak 2nd Skinz baselayer

Made from Snugpak's breathable, moisture management fabric Coolmax, this garment is ideal for active pursuits thanks to its loose fit and temperature control technology. With long johns to match also available, these baselayers are unisex and come in a range of sizes.

Guide price £20.95

snugpak.com



Slik Lite AL-420

The Slik Lite travel range incorporates an integrated, removable LED torch in the central column – perfect for illuminating your kit bag during low light or nighttime shoots. The lightweight tripod includes Rapid Flip Mechanism locks, allowing the legs to invert 180° for compact portability. Fully extended, the tripod reaches a height of 153cm.

Guide price £142.99

intro2020.co.uk



Panasonic Lumix GH5

A product release to excite videographers far and wide, Panasonic's new flagship for its Lumix range is the world's first mirrorless camera to feature 4K video capture at 60 frames per second. The GH5 also boasts impressive photography capabilities, including a groundbreaking 6K Photo mode that allows you to select an 18MP still frame out of a 30fps burst of 6K video footage, so you will get the exact moment you are after.

Guide price £1,699.99 (body only)

panasonic.com

Olympus OM-D E-M1 MkII

Olympus' new flagship camera puts the micro-four-thirds system at the cutting edge of high-speed shooting with a host of impressive features. Fergus Kennedy puts it through its paces...

Guide price £1,849 (body only)

Contact olympus.co.uk

Olympus had a tough act to follow their very popular and capable micro-four-thirds flagship, the E-M1. On paper, at least, they seem to have pulled it off, with improvements across the board. I was keen to get the camera in my hands and see for myself whether the specs translated into improved performance in the real world.

The camera feels very well made and solid. It's a bit heavier than its predecessor but still neat and very easy on the eye, with retro styling and a plethora of physical buttons and dials. Similarly, the two lenses I tested with it were extremely well built and looked like they could stand up to the elements.

In a foolhardy move, I headed out at dusk having barely glanced at the user manual. Not being entirely familiar with the Olympus way of doing things, this strategy did provoke some frustration. As the light faded and I needed to up the ISO, I found myself pressing buttons almost at random in a desperate attempt to get the camera to do my bidding. The MkII has a seemingly infinite range of customisation options in the menu, which is great for experienced users, but I did find myself wishing there was an obvious button with 'ISO' written

on it. I worked it out in the end. There are of course several ways to quickly change the ISO, but none were obvious on a casual inspection of the outside of the camera. One handy feature here is the lever control immediately to the right of the viewfinder, which can be used to toggle the function of the two main dials, so you can switch between using the thumbwheel for aperture and ISO without taking your eye away from the viewfinder.

Landscape photographers who love to print their work large will appreciate the High Res Mode. Making clever use of the sensor shift technology used for

Phenomenal image stabilisation makes low-light handheld shots a breeze.

Olympus OM-D E-M1 MkII with Olympus M 300mm f/4 lens, ISO 800, 1/125sec at f/4

image stabilisation, the MkII manages to produce a 50MP image from a 20MP sensor by combining several photographs. As such, it's really only suitable for static subjects shot from a tripod, but it certainly works, giving a noticeable boost in resolution.

One of the headline features of the new Olympus is its in-body five-axis image stabilisation. Building on the success of its implementation in the original OM-D E-M1, the new incarnation claims an almost

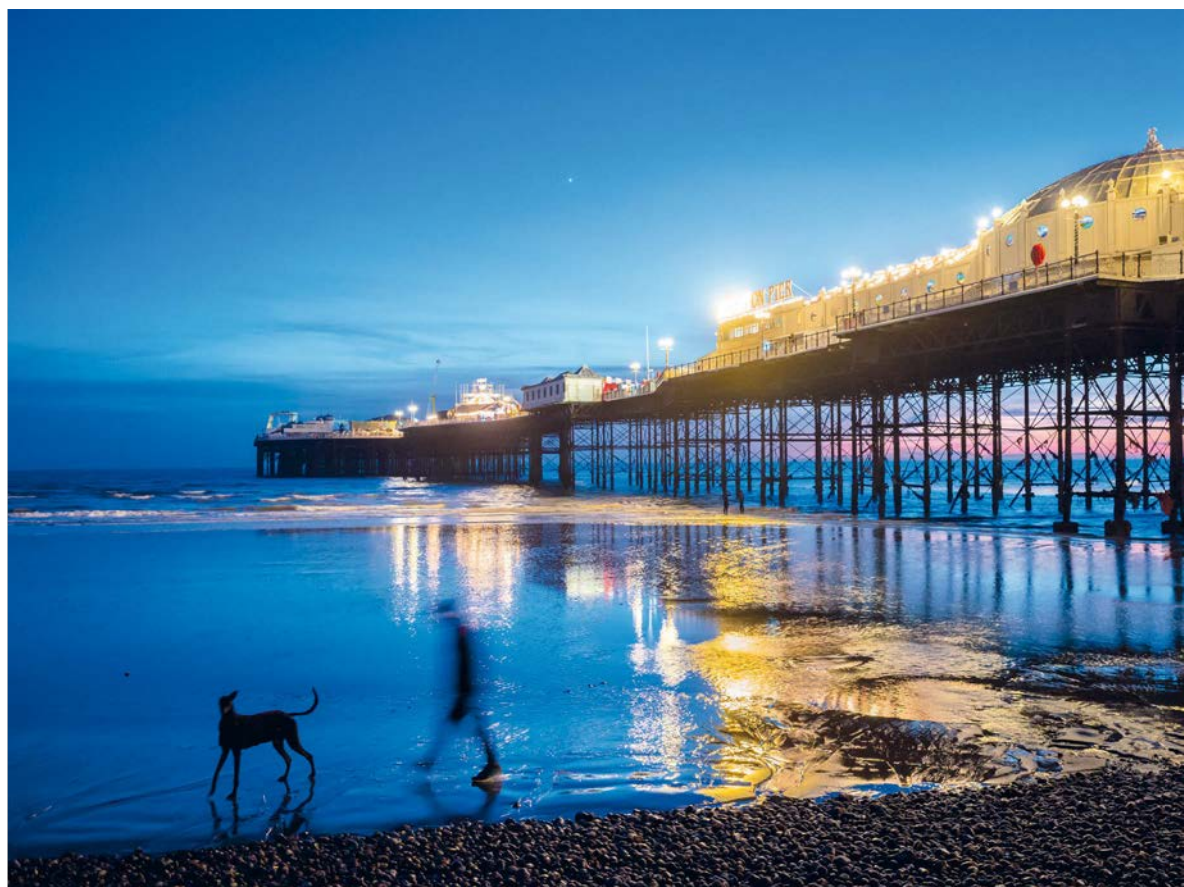


LIKES

- Great image quality from the new 20MP sensor
- Build quality
- Amazing in-body image stabilisation
- 4K video
- 50 MP High Res Mode

DISLIKES

- Socket placement slightly interferes with LCD articulation
- Control interface takes some getting used to





SPECIFICATIONS

Sensor 20MP micro-four-thirds
Resolution 5184 x 3888 pixels
Lens Interchangeable micro-four-thirds
Shutter speed Still image: Bulb, 1/8000-60sec, Electronic shutter max: 1/32000
ISO 200-25600
Viewfinder Electronic
LCD 3in OLED LCD, approx. 1037k pixels, static touch control.
Flash Hotshoe mounted unit
Movie mode Max 2160p (4K) up to 30fps, 1080p at up to 60fps
Card formats SD/SDHC/SDXC
Power Li-ion Battery Pack BLH-1
Size 134 x 91 x 67mm
Weight 574g (body only, with battery)



Above (left) Noise was certainly present in higher ISO shots, particularly when pushing the shadow areas at ISO 3200 or above, but it was fine-grained and easily subdued. Olympus OM-D E-M1 MkII with Olympus M 300mm f/4 lens, ISO 1250, 1/400sec at f/4

Above (right) The in-body IS worked particularly well when combined with longer lenses, such as the fabulous Olympus 300mm f/4 lens. Olympus OM-D E-M1 MkII with Olympus M 300mm f/4 lens, ISO 800, 1/124sec at f/4

miraculous 5.5 stops of stabilisation. This is a big deal for photographers who like to work with minimal gear. It was great to head out on a dusk-to-night shoot with just a small gear bag and no tripod. After shooting for a couple of hours, I have to say the results were very impressive, particularly at longer focal lengths. I certainly had a really good keeper rate shooting handheld at up to one-second shutter speed. You could probably go beyond that if you braced yourself carefully.

The new 20MP sensor produced nice looking images even at higher ISO values, with finer grained noise than its 16MP forebears. It may not quite be in the same league as some of the larger sensor competition, but it's certainly very useable up to and including ISO 3200.

One area that often provokes heated debate is the autofocus on mirrorless cameras versus their DSLR counterparts. The autofocus of the latest generation of mirrorless cameras is indeed very snappy and can, in many respects, rival the performance of DSLRs. Combine this with an impressive frame rate (up to 60fps) and you have the makings of a very handy sports or wildlife camera. In practice, while I found the camera tracked moving subjects pretty well, with really tricky subjects such as birds in flight on a long lens I struggled to keep the subject in frame more than I would with a traditional optical viewfinder. I think this may be due to the very slight lag and inherent refresh rate issues of an electronic viewfinder.

Most of the time it's no problem, but with really fast subjects on long lenses, I still think an optical viewfinder has the edge.

The E-M1 MkII is no slouch in the video department; it shoots detailed 4K video up to a very respectable 237 Mbps bit rate. The very effective image stabilisation, articulated LCD, mic and headphone sockets make it a compelling option for videographers.

VERDICT

Overall, the new Olympus is certainly at the current pinnacle of micro-four-thirds performance. It has outstanding build quality and an ever-growing array of pro-level glass to choose from. The image stabilisation is class-leading and will go some way towards mitigating the effects of a smaller sensor on low-light performance. Its price tag puts it head to head with many leading DSLRs with considerably larger sensors, so your choice will depend on the relative merits of portability versus extreme low-light performance and the need for very high native resolution.

RATINGS

Handling	95%
Performance	95%
Specification	94%
Value	90%

OVERALL
94%

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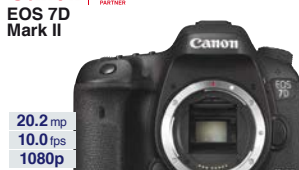


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8.0 fps
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Panasonic



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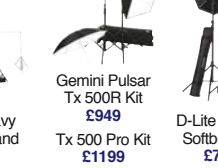
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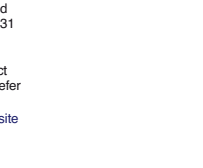
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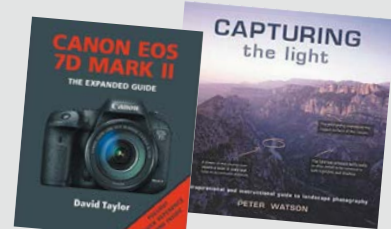
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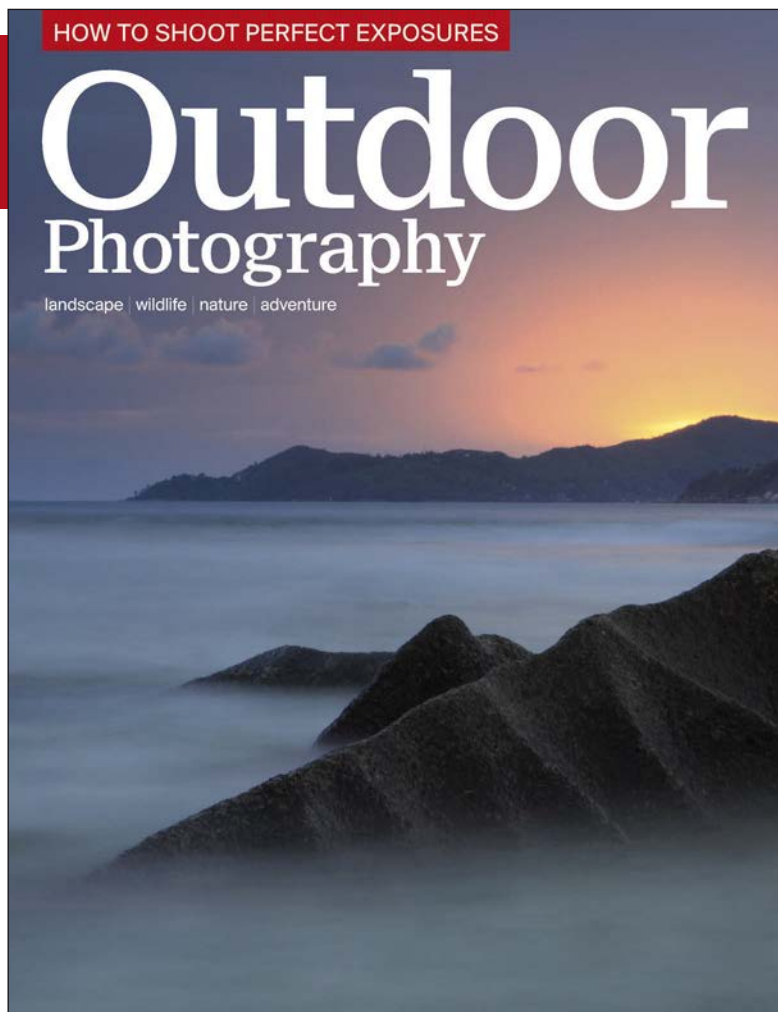


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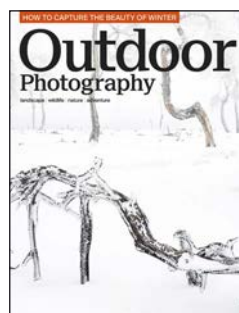
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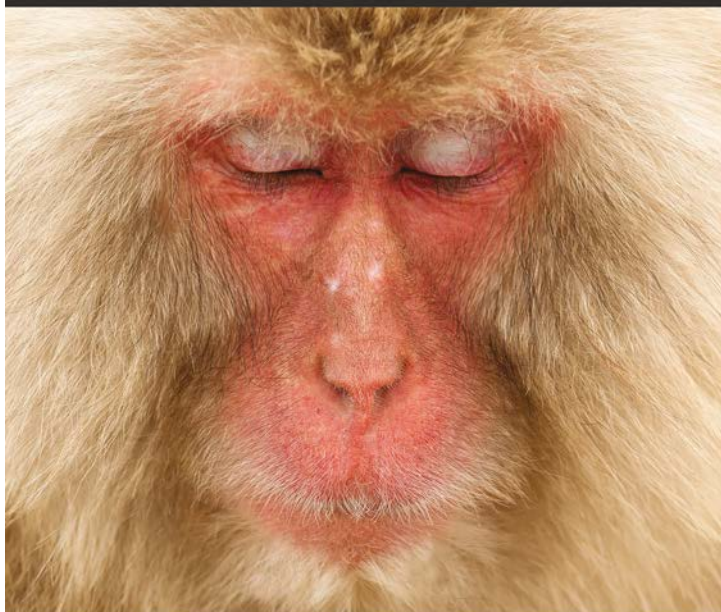
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Keith Weil - Harris and Lewis Workshop October 2016

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Ullapool, Suilven · 11th - 16th (1 Place)

Norfolk Spring Coastal Photography · 23rd - 26th (1 Place)

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SEPTEMBER 2017

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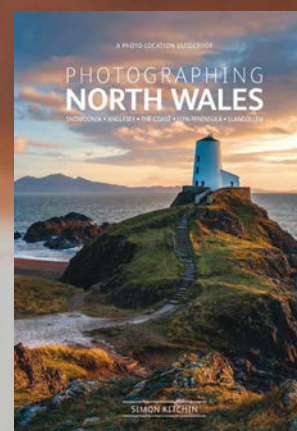
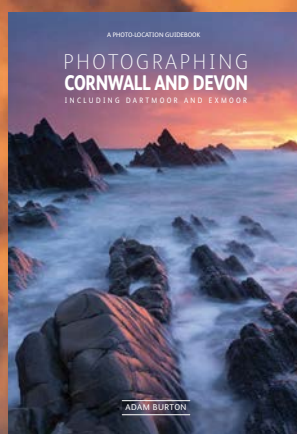
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*The tutors have been supportive in their feedback and I've been encouraged to explore **creative paths** and research that I would never have considered without studying for the degree.*

Photograph and words by student Michael Colvin





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Golden Eagle Experience in Leicestershire 2017 Dates £99

April 9th; Golden Eagle will fly, and perch in carefully chosen natural settings. Jesses hidden for static shots. Controlled flying. Also selection from; Owls, Buzzard, Hawks, Goshawk Max. 8 photographers.

Cheetahs, Lions, Foxes, Birds of Prey, Cambs. £129

April 8th; Privileged access to Cheetahs, Malayan Tigers, White Tiger & Corsac Foxes. The Cheetah & Tiger enclosures are not mowed for enhanced photographic opportunities. Private Displays by various Birds of Prey, both static & flying. Jesses hidden for static shots. Barn Owl, Eagle Owl and Red-Tailed Hawk etc.

Amazing Bat Photos & Learn Fill-in Flash Techniques £139

April 7th; Oxfordshire. Take amazing bat photos, plus learn how to use balanced fill-in flash on wildlife subjects in different lighting conditions. Max 4 persons. Free loan of Canon digital camera and flash if req'd.

Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent £155

April 1st, 22nd; Up close to African Lions, Bengal + Siberian + Sumatran Tigers, Servals, Cheetahs, Pumas, Jungle Cat, Amur & Snow Leopards, Caracal, Lynx, Clouded Leopards, Fishing Cat. Large open photographer-friendly enclosures. UK's most popular photo workshop. Really special photo opportunities from just inches away. White Lion pride in a huge natural enclosure. Max 12 clients.

Big Cats at WHF, Smarden, Kent - Specialist event 6 photographers - incl. Jaguars £199

April 20, 21st, 23rd, May 14th; Full day as above, but with additional space at each enclosure. Time is also put aside to review your photos at lunchtime. One to one tuition throughout this very special day. You will see all the animals as above and you will have more personal interaction with the cats. Now including Jaguar.

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Birds of Prey Workshop, Bedford £119

April 15th, 16th; Private flying displays on pre-determined flightpath helps you to focus on birds in flight. Excellent opportunities with carefully chosen backgrounds. Also static shots in outstanding natural locations. Jesses carefully hidden. This location boasts one of the largest collections of Birds of Prey in the UK. White tailed Sea Eagle, Bald Eagles, Hawks, Owls, Falcons, Kestrels, Buzzards and Long Eared Owl (new).

Foxes, Otters, Wildcats, Badgers & more, Surrey. £159

July 11, 12th; Inside enclosures 'til sunset. Also Owls, Snakes, Badgers, Polecats, Weasels, Stoats, Hedgehog, Harvest Mice & various Deer. 2 sessions with the foxes, sometimes only inches away from you. inside enclosures with Foxes, Otters, Scottish Wildcats. Badgers GUARANTEED. No fences or wires to shoot through.

Small Cats Workshop, Welwyn, Herts. £109

April 3rd, 24th; Privileged access to Snow Leopards, Amur Leopards, Pumas, Caracal, Leopard Cat, Lynx, Servals, Golden Cat, Jaguarundi, Cheetahs, Asian Wildcat. As featured on Animal Planet. Small groups.

Bass Rock Gannets £225

June 9th, June 18th, June 25th; Private boat. Exclusive use of island for just 10 photographers. 50,000 pairs of nesting gannets on one small island. 4.5 hours photography. Amazing close-ups & fantastic flight shots. Large crate of fish fed to gannets as they dive into the sea. An amazing sight that you will never forget.

Gannets diving off Bass Rock £99

June 14th; Fantastic new workshop. We sail round Bass Rock without landing on the island. A whole hour of throwing fish into the sea for the Gannets to catch. Amazing diving shots. 1,000 + dives. Tips & Tuition.

Farne Islands Puffins (Over 5 hrs photography) £89

June 10th, 17th, 24th; 20 species of birds. 50,000 puffins. Guillemots, Razorbills, Shag, Arctic Tern colony etc. You will get unbelievably close to some of the species. Get that much sought after shot of Puffins with their beaks crammed full of sand eels. Tips and Tuition. Approximately 5 hours photography.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot (2) with Short Eared Owl, Northumberland. £139

June 8th, 13th, 16th; Both the falconer and the birds are different to workshop above. Venues are about 20 miles apart. We will take two of the birds down to an amazingly beautiful, little known waterfall. This will provide a unique backdrop for your subjects. The falls are surrounded by trees covered with mosses and lichens. We will photograph up to 10 different species of birds, mainly British. Maximum 8 photographers.

Small Mammals, Insects & Reptiles in BOTH RUTLAND & NORTHUMBERLAND £199

Rutland March 17, 18, 19. Northumberland July 27th, 28th; Indoor studio set-ups ensuring professional quality photos of stunning subjects. Studio lighting set up for you. Triggers to fit your camera supplied. Cameras and lenses can be loaned without charge. Innovative set-ups to maximise your opportunities. Max 4 persons. Harvest Mice, Red Eyed Tree Frogs, Praying Mantis, Bearded Dragon, Scorpion, Tarantula, Snakes, Lizards etc.

Birds of Prey on Lindisfarne (Holy Island) incl. Short Eared Owl £139

June 5th, 6th; New workshop for 2016. Photograph a Short Eared Owl in its natural habitat before continuing with selection from Eagle Owl, Long Eared Owl, Barn Owl, Buzzard, Kestrel, Little Owl, Tawny Owl using boats, Lindisfarne Castle, boat houses & fishing props as backdrops.

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For more information, please visit the website or call John Wright on 01664 474040 or 07779 648850 (preferred). We will be most happy to discuss any workshop in detail, or to send more detailed leaflets to anyone without internet access. Photographers on Safari, West End Studios, 55 Stapleford Road, Whissendine, Oakham, Rutland. LE15 7HF



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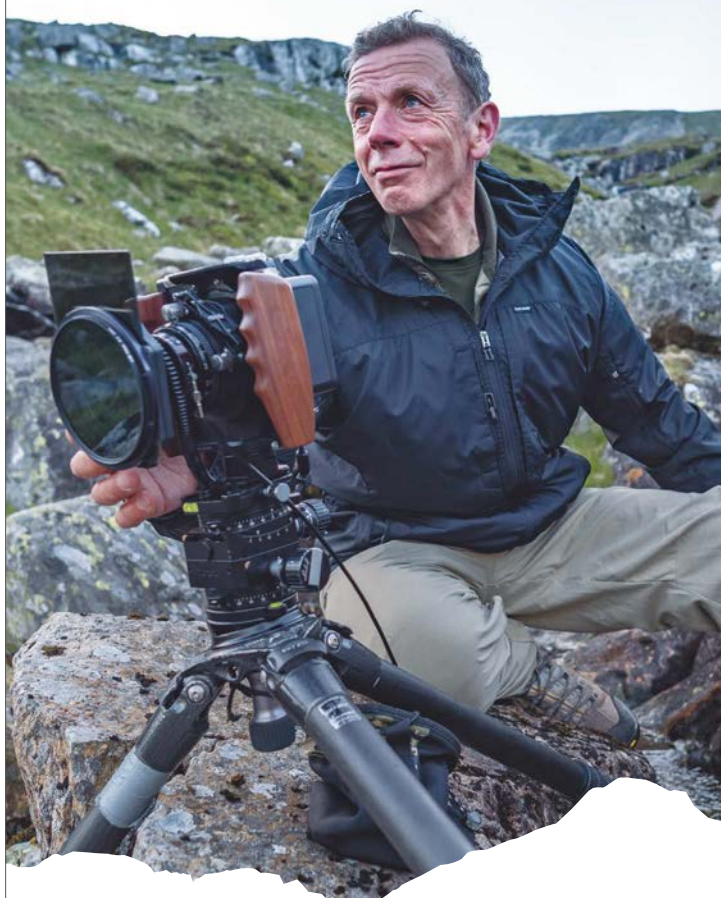


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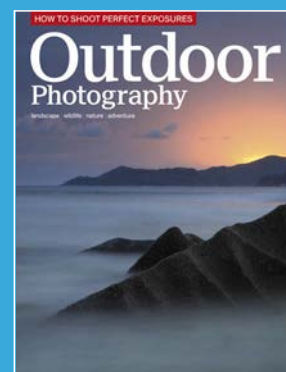


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If you only do one thing this month...

Dramatic light wildlife

In our November issue we asked to see your favourite wildlife images taken in dramatic light, and we were impressed with the results. Here is our winner, who wins a set of Coleman BatteryLock lights, and 14 runners-up...

WINNER

Jonathan Gaunt

Opposite This image of a jay was taken a few years ago from my woodland hide in north Northumberland. This bird was doing its final check of the surrounding area before dropping to the ground to feed. The strong, dappled light was not ideal in the forest setting, but I got a lucky shot just as the bird tilted its head to one side, which lit up the eye while throwing the surrounding area into shadow.

Canon EOS 50D with Canon 70-200mm IS f/4 lens at 200mm, ISO 200, 1/800sec at f/4, beanbag jonathangauntnaturephotography

Sarah Jennings

Above I took this image of a tawny eagle in the Maasai Mara, Kenya. It was a wonderful sunset, and having watched this eagle flying for a while I was thrilled with this shot, which was taken as the bird landed in the acacia tree for the night.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon 100-400mm lens at 400mm, ISO 1250 1/600sec at f/5.6, handheld

Tony Matthews

Left I've often seen hares running along the skyline of this field near Kingsclere in the Hampshire Downs. This individual ran right along the skyline as the moon rose, stopping for just long enough to allow me to get the photograph I wanted.

Canon EOS 1D MkIV with EF 500mm f/4 L IS USM lens, ISO 400, 1/160sec at f/4, Manfrotto tripod





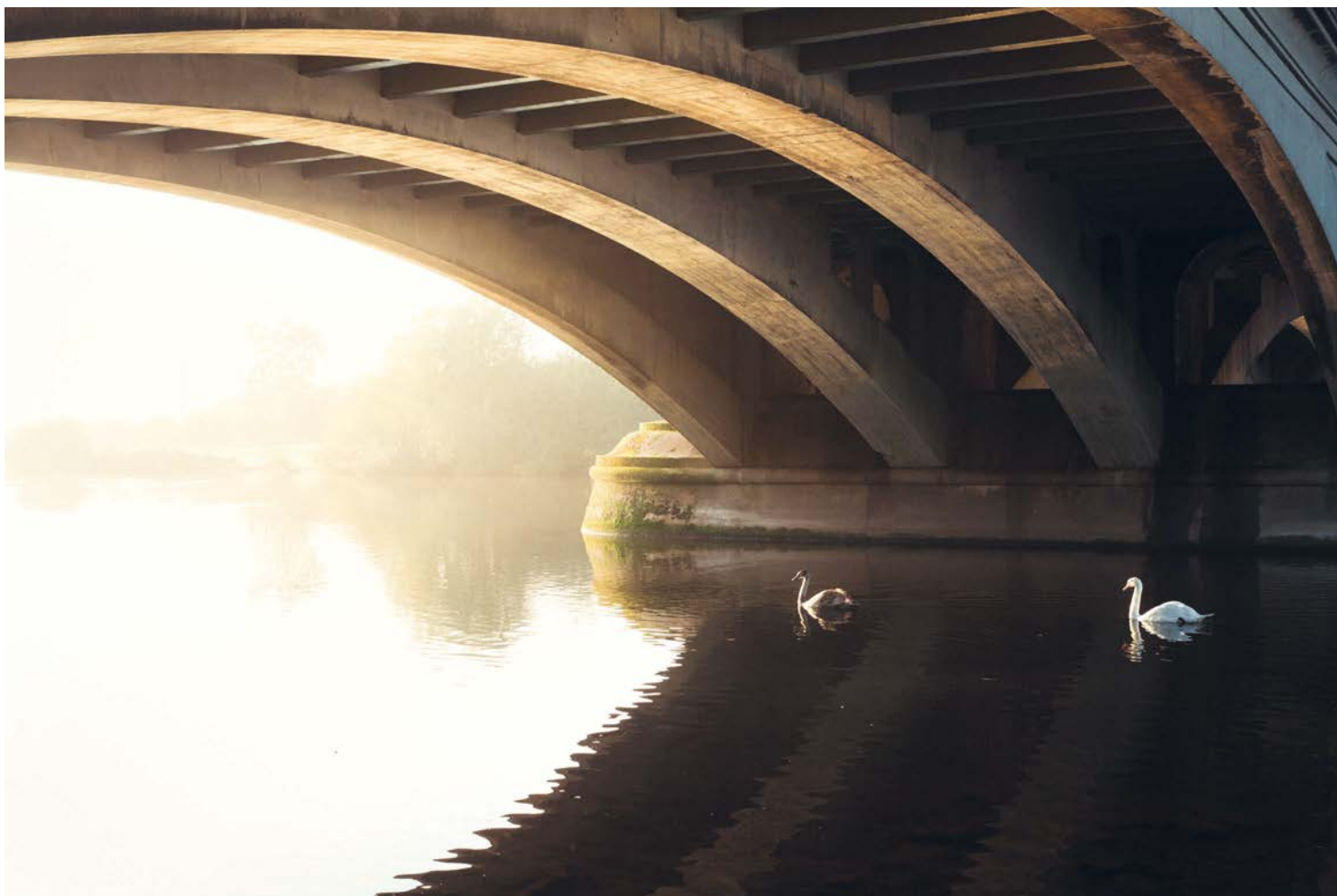
Richie Lort

Above This image of a grey heron was taken on a local walk just outside Bangor, North Down, Northern Ireland, where I walked past two ponds. I was surprised that the heron didn't move while I was setting up, so I took full advantage of the opportunity and the light. Canon EOS 1Ds MkIII with Canon 500mm f/4 lens, ISO 200, 1/1600sec at f/4, Manfrotto tripod with 504 HD head
lovenature0108.wixsite.com

Conor Molloy

Right This shot was taken close to midnight on Flatey Island in Iceland in mid-June, when it never gets truly dark. It's a tiny island and provided lovely backlighting for this redshank when it landed. It surprised me how many shots I needed to take before getting one in which the bird had its beak open. Canon EOS 1DX with Canon 600mm IS II USM lens, ISO 1000, 1/400sec at f/4, Gitzo tripod
conor20images.co.uk





Geraint Evans

Top (left) I had been waiting for an autumn mist before visiting Fountains Abbey deer park in North Yorkshire. The forecast looked promising but I was running late. Driving through the Brimham Rocks area, the sun was rising rapidly, so I decided to cut my losses and stop. Amazingly, within minutes of leaving the car I spotted these roe deer, which seemed willing to model for me. *Nikon D7100 with Nikon 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 lens at 280mm, ISO 200, 1/30sec at f/8, camera balanced on a rock*

André Verboven

Top (right) While sitting on the terrace of my hotel in Andalucía, Spain, I noticed a gecko chasing insects inside one of the terrace lanterns. I ran inside to get my camera, as the silhouette of the gecko seemed an interesting subject. I took several pictures until I noticed the spider in its web outside of the lantern and decided to include that in the picture too. *Nikon D300S with Nikkor 16-80mm lens at 68mm, ISO 200, 1/250sec at f/13, handheld*
facebook.com/andre.verboven.9/photos_all

Chris Dale

Above Seeing some stunning light on my drive to work, I pulled over by the river Trent for 30 minutes' camera time. I was walking back to the car when I decided to try some shots under the bridge. A pair of swans came into view and finished off the shot perfectly. *Canon EOS 6D with Tamron 24-70mm lens at 42mm, ISO 400, 1/125sec at f/6.3, handheld*





Tammy Marlar

Opposite This image was taken towards the end of an exquisite dawn shoot at the beginning of November, when the rutting season is drawing to a close in Richmond Park, London. A friend and I literally stumbled upon this incredible red stag, in a clearing with a large herd of does, bathed in a pool of morning sunlight in front of a patch of dark woodland. I was some distance away, and the stag was positioned on a pretty flat plane, so I was able to use a very shallow depth of field. Combined with a relatively fast shutter speed, this resulted in a picture that brings out the incredibly stark contrast of bright light and deep shade.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM lens at 200mm, ISO 100, 1/500sec at f/3.5

tammymarlar.com

Mark Rutley

Top The photograph is from a collection of images taken on a four-day safari in Tsavo National Park, Kenya. We were returning to Kilaguni Lodge for the evening when these two giraffes seemed to appear from nowhere. With Mount Kilimanjaro in the background, I managed to bag a few shots.

Canon EOS 7D with Canon 24-105mm lens at 100mm, ISO 400, 1/100sec at f/4.5, polariser, beanbag resting on vehicle roof



Rita Daubeney

Centre I was in Amboseli National Park, Kenya, which is renowned for its elephants. Huge herds come down from the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro early each morning to feed. On this particular morning there was an unusual amount of mist, the light was amazing and the elephant had an egret on its back. I underexposed to capture the silhouette and enhance the light.

Canon EOS 7D MkII with Canon 100-400mm MkII lens at 400mm, ISO 400, 1/1250sec at f/8, beanbag, taken from a vehicle



Martin Griffett

Bottom During the deer rut in Richmond Park, London, I found this fallow deer buck walking in the open. As he stopped to look in my direction I captured his outline in the mist against a brightening sky. I chose a wide aperture to add to the soft feel created by the mist.

Fujifilm X-T1 with XF 60mm lens, ISO 400, 1/1250sec at f/2.8, tripod

Ric Harding

Below This photograph was taken late one evening in Amboseli National Park, Kenya. Amboseli is often very dry and the herds of animals were creating a lot of dust as they walked past. I thought that the setting sun produced some very evocative conditions and opted to shoot *contre-jour* to capture the atmosphere of the scene.

Nikon D70 with Nikkor 80-400mm VR lens at 240mm, ISO 200, 1/1600sec at f/9, beanbag

Phil Selby

Bottom Skomer Island, off the Pembrokeshire coast in Wales, is a truly magical haven for ground-nesting birds. In late spring the island comes alive with the sights and sounds of puffins busily toing and froing between their nesting sites and the sea. Luckily, my overnight stay coincided with some glorious late evening sunlight, which beautifully backlit the puffins as they manoeuvred in to land.

Canon EOS 7D MkII with EF 300mm f/2.8 IS II lens, ISO 1600, 1/2000sec at f/4, tripod

Kasia Nowak

Opposite The image was taken in Bushy Park in south-west London. I was photographing the full moon setting a few minutes before sunrise, and the fading light gave it a warm yellow hue. Several stags passed in front of the camera but were too fast to photograph. This curious individual stopped and conveniently posed to allow for an exposure longer than one second.

Nikon D800 with Nikkor 70-300mm VR lens at 195mm, ISO 100, 1.6sec at f/8, 0.6 ND grad, tripod kasianowak.com





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Check out Doug Chinnery's excellent article on mastering exposure on page 28 and then send us your best images for a chance to be published in our July issue. To submit your images, head to outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk/submissions. Closing date for entries is 29 March 2017. See page 58 for full details.

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If you can tell us the name of the imposing 4,000m mountain pictured above, you could win a superb Tenba DNA Messenger 15 camera bag, worth £125!

NEW! ONLINE ENTRY

Where is it?

The mountain region shown above has UNESCO World Heritage status for its rich collection of plants and wildlife. But is it:

- a) **Cradle Mountain, Tasmania**
- b) **Audenberg, South Africa**
- c) **Mount Kinabalu, Malaysian Borneo**

The answer and the winner's name will be revealed in OP218 (on sale 4 May 2017). You can enter the competition online at outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk/c/win, using 'Mountain215' as the code, or send your answer to opcomp@thegmcgroup.com, stating 'Mountain215' as the subject. Alternatively, drop it in the post to: Where in the world - 'Mountain215', OP, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN. Deadline for entries is midnight on 29 March 2017.

THIS MONTH'S PRIZE

A Tenba DNA Messenger 15

WORTH
£125!

This month we've teamed up with Tenba to give away a versatile and stylish Tenba DNA Messenger 15 camera bag, worth £125.

Ideal for photographers wanting the option of a smaller pack to carry lighter kit, this bag puts durability at the top of its priority list. Made from all-weather, rugged and water-repellent Helix fabric, the Tenba DNA Messenger 15 is designed to provide year-round protection for your gear. It features a top zipper to give you quick access to kit, while Fidlock magnetic clips make opening and closing the bag easy – even when wearing gloves. With room to store a DSLR or mirrorless camera and up to three 70-200mm lenses, the DNA Messenger 15 also holds a 15in laptop. It's the world's first messenger bag to feature quiet Velcro, so it can be opened silently, making it perfect for wildlife photographers.

Find out more at tenba.com



DECEMBER ISSUE WINNER

In our December issue, we asked you to name the extraordinary glacial landscape shown in the image. The correct answer is:

a) Lemaire Channel, Antarctica



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Richard Glynne Jones, from Conwy, is the winner of the Manfrotto XPRO 5-Section monopod. Congratulations!



CHRIS SIMMONS PHOTOGRAPHY

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“ all in all this course is a rare find. Chris pitches his teaching to your skill level so you always feel comfortable with the instruction. The whole experience was uplifting, relaxing and fun. Chris and his partner Sam's hospitality, great conversation and humour made for a lovely stay in Cornwall. I'm sure I will be back again.

So if you are looking for a great photographic experience at any level, I would strongly recommend this superb package.



READ [DR. RICHARD PATERSON'S](#) FULL REVIEW ON THE WEBSITE

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