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15/12/2016	LGW	MS Nordnorge	£899 ^{PP}	£937 ^{PP}
20/02/2016	BRS	MS Trollfjord	£899 ^{PP}	£937 ^{PP}
19/03/2017	EMA	MS Nordkapp	£899 ^{PP}	£937 ^{PP}
Date	Airport	Ship	Inside	Outside from
12 Day Classic Round (Including flights)				
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Embrace the negative

Before we continue, I should clarify that I am not about to suggest we find ways to love any negative feedback we get about our work (oh, how the pervasive and invasive world of social media has helped breathe life into that aspect of photography), or ask you to give a hug to the nearest roll of camera film you can lay your hands on.

No, the negative I am encouraging people to befriend is the space variety. Those lovely, big, seemingly empty areas in our compositions that may leave some viewers thinking it's a shame the photographer couldn't find something interesting to put in that part of the image.

It takes a brave soul to look at a scene engaging enough to want to take a photograph of it, and then frame it with the 'juicy' bit filling perhaps less than a quarter of the whole picture. It is worth trying though. If you look at the work of some of the greatest exponents of landscape and wildlife photography, such as Michael Kenna and Vincent Munier, then it would take a hardline viewer to not see that those grand spaces of what appears

to be nothingness are actually full of something quite magical. It's almost impossible to put what that magic is into words, but the closest I can come is to say it allows the viewer's imagination a place to be in the image. And we all know the power of our imaginations. Given a place to explore, they will create all sorts of stories and wonder that likely go far beyond the expectations of the photographer who took the photo in the first place.

Of course, it is not an element we can mindlessly include in our work and expect it to succeed. It takes great knowledge, skill and care to use negative space effectively, but with some time, patience and repeated effort it can help bring our imagery to a completely new level.

It is human nature to focus closely on the main action in any scene, but I think we can all have fun by stepping back, taking a big breath and seeing what the area around the principal subject can add to our experience of the photographs we make.



Steve Watkins

GET IN TOUCH

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ON THE COVER



David Baker took this stunning coastal image on the Isle of Harris.

THE ISSUE at a glance



London wildlife photographer Matthew Maran talks to OP – page 16



David Baker reveals his creative secrets for coastal images – page 28



Will Burrard-Lucas shows us how to use wildlife camera traps – page 36



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IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...



COVER + 28

David Baker is a photoblogger specialising in seascape and forest photography. He is drawn to the flow of the sea and the ever-changing combination of shore, sea and sky. His first book, *Sea Fever*, was published by Triplekite and received critical acclaim. David was the overall winner of Outdoor Photographer of the Year in 2012.
milouvision.com



16

Matthew Maran is an award-winning photographer who has recently been focusing on the wildlife and landscapes of Hampstead Heath in north London. He has photographed the heath's habitats and animals – both familiar and rare – for a new photography book that has just been published.
matthewmaran.com



16+41+64+83

Nick Smith is a writer and photographer specialising in travel and environmental issues. He is a contributing editor on the *Explorers Journal* and is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.
nicksmithphoto.com



24

Pete Bridgwood is a fine art landscape photographer and writer. He is fascinated by the creative foundations of landscape photography and passionate about exploring the emotional elements of the art.
petebridgwood.com



36

Will Burrard-Lucas is a professional wildlife photographer from the UK. He uses technology and innovation to photograph wild animals in new ways. He recently founded Camtraptions, a company that develops devices for remote and camera trap photography.
burrard-lucas.com



39

Jeremy Flint is an award-winning photographer, based in Oxford. He has recently won the 2016 National Geographic Traveller UK Photo Contest and is passionate about photography involving landscapes, travel and adventure. He offers one-to-one photo tuition.
jeremyflintphotography.com



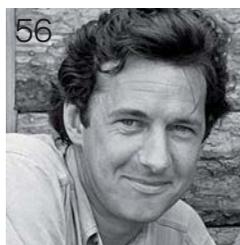
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Paul Holloway works part time as a teacher, and lives in the village of Callander at the gateway to the Scottish Highlands. He spends as much time as he can out photographing, and being a keen hillwalker he enjoys combining both pursuits.
paulhollowayphotography.co.uk



51

David Chapman is a landscape and wildlife photographer based in Cornwall, with 11 books to his name. He has just completed a one-year commission photographing Land's End and is leading a weekend workshop there in February.
davidchapman.org.uk



56

Paul Harris trained as a photojournalist. He is passionate about storytelling through his travel, adventure and documentary imagery; balancing the road less travelled with the spirit of the land and its peoples. Paul is a sought-after tutor, and leads photo tours for Wild Photography Holidays.
paulharrisphotography.com



74

With more than 30 years' experience of photographing Scottish wildlife, **Laurie Campbell's** creative aim is simple, to share his passion for Scotland's landscapes, flora and fauna. He regularly leads nature photography workshops, and his images are widely published.
lauriecampbell.com



79

Sandra Price is an award-winning wildlife photographer living in Argyll. She travels throughout the UK; preferring remote places to photograph wild animals in their natural environment. Back home pine martens are Sandra's passion, and she runs photographic workshops with these endearing characters.
sandr PRICEphotography.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 and camera operator for clients such as the BBC and Canon Europe.
ferguskennedy.com

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Chris Davis chrisdavis-photography.com, **Mark Helliwell** markhelliwell.com, **James Osmond** jamesosmond.co.uk, **Izabela Janusz** facebook.com/IzabelaJanuszPhotography, **Aiden Maccormick** maragorm.com, **Steve Irwin**, **Carlton Doudney**, **Ron Evans** ronevans.co.uk, **Steve Young** birdsonfilm.com

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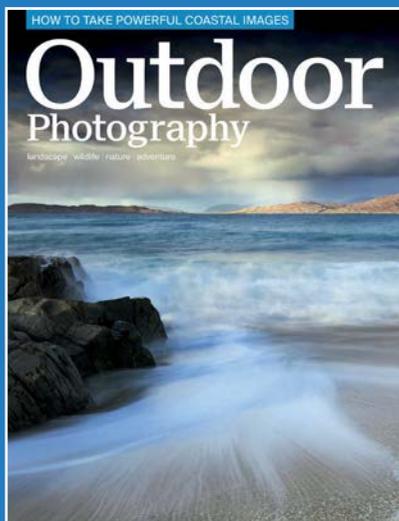
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(One day Workshop £195)
Saturday 19th November 2016

Jurassic Coast Dorset
(One day Workshop £195)
Sunday 20th November 2016



Glencoe Scotland
(Weekend Workshop £725)
Friday 27th January to
Sunday 29th January 2017

LEE Filters have teamed up with leading landscape photographer Jeremy Walker for a number of exclusive photographic workshops.

Ideally suited to photographers who wish to learn more about the use of filters, these extensive workshops will be limited to just eight photographers and will concentrate on all the key elements of landscape photography.



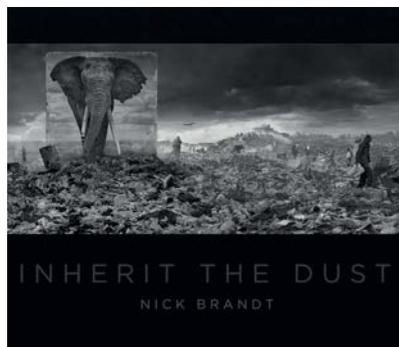
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For further information visit www.leefilters.com or for booking details please contact Jeremy on 01935 872537 or info@jeremywalker.co.uk





Quarry with Lion, 2015 © Nick Brandt, courtesy of Atlas Gallery, London



Quarry with Lion, 2015

by Nick Brandt

Quarry with Lion is from British photographer Nick Brandt's powerful new series, *Inherit the Dust*. The panoramic images show life-sized panels of species that Brandt has placed in areas of Kenya where the animals used to roam, but no longer do. The series is currently on display at venues around the world, including at Sweden's Fotografiska until 11 September.

The accompanying hardback book, *Inherit the Dust*, published by Edwynn Houk Editions, is available now and costs £45.

nickbrandt.com

NEWSROOM

CONSERVATION NEW LAUNCHES COMPETITIONS OUTDOORS TECHNOLOGY OTHER NEWS

South Downs wins dark sky reserve status

The South Downs National Park has become the world's eleventh dark sky reserve. Awarded by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), the accreditation recognises areas that possess an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specially protected for its natural, scientific, cultural or educational importance. The new dark sky area has been named Moore's Reserve in honour of the late astronomer and broadcaster Sir Patrick Moore.

J Scott Feierabend, Executive Director of the IDA, said: 'We are pleased to announce the designation of the South Downs National Park as an IDA dark sky reserve. It is remarkable that a true dark-sky experience remains within reach of nearly 17 million people in Greater London and south-east England, and it is testament to the hard work of South Downs staff and the area's residents for keeping it that way.'

South Downs Ranger Dan Oakley and a group of dedicated volunteers have spent the past three years mapping out the quality of night skies across the national park. Oakley said: 'With southern England under threat from losing its last few patches of properly dark skies, this is a statement that the skies of the South Downs are worth protecting. With around two million people living within three miles of the national park, the reserve will be one of the most accessible in the world and



© SDNPA/Sean Lewis

certainly one of the most cared for.'

Plans to create the reserve have received support from over 70 parish, town and county councils and other organisations, with more than 1,300 people signing up to a dark skies pledge.

Rural Affairs Minister Rory Stewart said: 'This is a wonderful project. A dark night sky – a glimpse of the stars – is an extraordinary thing, and an increasingly rare experience in a crowded urban

world. The South Downs National Park is bringing communities not just an opportunity to see the English countryside at its finest, but also stars far beyond our planet.'

The South Downs National Park Authority is currently putting together a programme of stargazing events for winter. For details, and to discover some of the best night-time photography spots, head to southdowns.gov.uk/darkskies.

above Halnaker Windmill by moonlight, near Chichester in West Sussex.

below The Milky Way, visible in the sky above Hampshire.

Dark sky reserve facts and figures

More than 25,000 individual measurements have been taken across the South Downs National Park and used to map sky quality.

Sixty-six per cent of the national park has Bronze Level skies, meaning they offer people, plants and animals a respite from an otherwise degraded nocturnal environment.

There are approximately 2,700 streetlights in the whole of the national park. Local lighting authorities have been replacing these over time so that they are compliant with the IDA's stringent standards.

The South Downs is the UK's third international dark sky reserve; Exmoor and the Brecon Beacons national parks were awarded the status in 2011 and 2013, respectively.



© Chris Nesbit

Competition time

Now open for entries, here are four major international photo competitions to challenge your skills and creativity...

For those who love to record their globetrotting adventures, the **Travel Photographer of the Year** competition, open until 1 October 2016, has a range of categories and themes to inspire, plus a prize package worth around £30,000. The overall winner will be chosen from all entrants who submit at least two portfolios. tpoty.com

If you love to shoot all things botanical, look no further than **International Garden Photographer of the Year**. With a top prize of £7,500, plus the chance to have your image featured in the accompanying book and exhibition, the competition has eight different categories including the Beauty of Plants, Wildlife in the Garden and Wildflower



© Petar Sabol, 2016 Sony World Photography Awards

Landscapes. Enter by 4 September. igpoty.com

The Syngenta Photography Award provides photographers with an opportunity to highlight global challenges through compelling images. This year's theme, Grow-Conserve, invites photographs that explore the economic, social and technological issues that arise as a result of population growth. The free-to-enter award is open for submissions until 22 August. syngentaphoto.com

Finally, photographers are invited to enter their work for free into the **Sony World Photography Awards**. In addition to the Open, Youth, Professional and Student Focus competitions, the hunt is also on to find Britain's best photographer in the UK National award. Closing dates are as follows: Student Focus: 5 December; Open and Youth: 5 January 2017; Professional: 10 January 2017. A revamped website promises a simpler entry process. worldphoto.org

A window on the world

Three workmen look through the window at their gravel-crushing workplace in Chittagong, Bangladesh. The photograph, by Faisal Azim, has been shortlisted in this year's Atkins CIWEM Environmental Photographer of the Year, and is one of 60 images now on show at the Royal Geographical Society in London until 21 August. *For details of the exhibition, head to rgs.org*



© Faisal Azim

NUMBER CRUNCH

5 mammal species – sun bears, elephants, rhinos, tigers and pangolins – are the focus of a new campaign that invites the public to help tackle the illegal trade in wildlife. Using the Wildlife Witness smartphone app, people can submit images and data of suspicious items on sale, such as rhino horn, potentially helping enforcement agencies. Find out more and download the app at wildlifewitness.net.

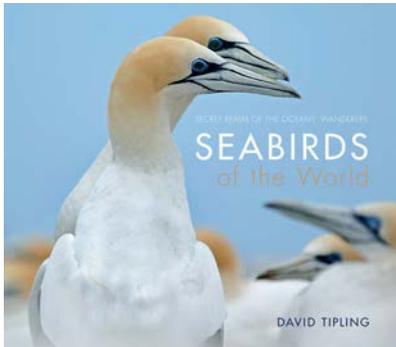
755 – the number of Raw megapixels in Lytro's latest light field camera. Designed for film and television, the Lytro Cinema can capture 300fps and boasts 'the highest resolution video sensor ever designed'. Enabling shots that were previously impossible to achieve, the impressive system removes the need for a green screen and promises to change the world of visual effects. To see how it works, visit lytro.com/cinema.



© Adrov Andriy/Shutterstock.com

5,796 stag beetles were counted by volunteers in the UK last year in the annual Great Stag Hunt. Coordinated by the People's Trust for Endangered Species, the survey, now in its 21st year, aims to give a wider picture of stag beetle populations across the country. Emerging as adults from mid-May, most are found flying at dusk in parks, gardens and woodland edges, mainly in southern England – record your sightings at ptes.org/stagbeetles.

OUT THERE



BOOK OF THE MONTH

Seabirds of the World: Secret realm of the oceans' wanderers

David Tipling
New Holland
978-19215176-7-9
Hardback, £16.99

In the opening sentences of David Tipling's introduction, his lifelong passion and admiration for seabirds is as clear as the horizon on a bright sunny day. For the last 30 years the British wildlife photographer has journeyed from Antarctica to the Arctic to scope out unusual images of marine-based birds, and the very best are showcased here. The 150 images are divided into five chapters relating to the birds' behaviour and routines: At Sea, The Mating Game, Family Life, Seabird Cities and Survival. It's largely a book to inspire, although those wanting practical knowledge will find the technical details section of interest, where Tipling has specified the camera settings used for each image.

Iceland

Fokion Zissiadis
teNeues
978-3-8327331-9-3
Hardcover, £550

An expensive limited edition photography book, Fokion Zissiadis' *Iceland* captures the rugged, breath-

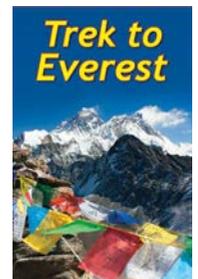


taking beauty of this Nordic island through a muted colour palette and remarkable clarity. Zissiadis' background in architecture clearly influences his photography, seen through his boldly graphic imagery where shape and form dominate each frame. It's a high quality book, but the scenes chosen for inclusion will be very familiar to those who already know the country from a photographer's perspective.

Trek to Everest

Max Landsberg and Jacquetta Megarry
Rucksack Readers
978-1-8984817-2-0
Paperback, £12.99

Ideal for trekkers planning to go to Everest Base Camp, this illustrated guidebook is useful preparation for your trip. Profits from the book go to Mountain People, a charity that helps people living in mountainous areas.



FIVE MINUTES WITH...

Charles Cramer, James Osmond, Valda Bailey and David Breen.

Triplekite Publishing established its Discovery series to showcase work not normally reproduced in book form. We chat to the latest three photographers to release their beautiful, high-quality landscape photography books, plus one of the two-person team behind Triplekite Publishing...

© James Osmond



© Charles Cramer



© Valda Bailey



Charles Cramer has been visiting Yosemite National Park in the US for 40 years. In *Yosemite* he shows lesser-known areas, often highlighting the details that make up the vistas.

James Osmond's *Mud/Sand* presents his exploration of the mudflats and salt marshes of the Bristol Channel, a landscape rich with ephemeral patterns.

Valda Bailey is interested in the shapes and forms found in nature. *Fragile* showcases her creativity and the techniques she uses to interpret the landscape.

Outdoor Photography Tell us about some of the artistic discoveries or decisions you made during your project...

Charles Cramer I was initially attracted to the big, iconic scenes of Yosemite, but I tired of them and turned my attention to the more intimate details. I also discovered what kind of light works best with various subjects, and started my love affair with trees.

James Osmond The decision to work in black & white came very early on, as a lot of the Raw files looked monochromatic. This also meant I could work in different conditions without the set looking disparate. I'd been experimenting with splitting panoramas into diptychs, so it was nice to use that technique in some spreads.

Valda Bailey There were no obvious creative decisions I can think of while shooting; the work was a slow evolution of ideas. I worked with the publishers on the book's layout; plus it was fascinating to visit the printers and see the pages rolling off the press – it also enabled me to make small colour adjustments.

OP You each wrote your book's introduction; how did you find expressing your vision in words?

CC I find that writing can help in recreating the circumstances of making a particular image. But, ultimately, the photograph should be able to stand on its

own. As Ansel Adams said, 'A true photograph need not be explained, nor can it be contained in words.'

JO This was definitely the toughest part and I procrastinated a lot. That said, I find if you just start to write down your honest thought processes and experiences, the words soon flow.

VB I think it's helpful for any project to think about and subsequently verbalise exactly what one is trying to portray. The act of having to articulate one's ideas necessitates the organisation of thoughts and objectives. I wouldn't say it was an easy task, but it was certainly a valuable one.

OP What have you learned about your photography during the creation of your book?

CC Having images on adjacent pages is very different from seeing individual prints. Pairing pictures can bring out similarities or differences in unexpected ways. The excellent people at Triplekite did the sequencing, and

I'm delighted with the results.

JO It's been a real pleasure to concentrate on photography for its own sake. I do a lot of commissioned work so it's been great to rid myself of those restraints and produce a load of spectacularly uncommercial images. I feel quite proud of it.

VB I've learned how hard it is to be truly objective about one's own photography – images I wouldn't have included were voted in by those I respect. The book is one of a series and it took great discipline to be constrained by a predetermined format. Both were useful lessons.

OP Being the publisher, what have you learned from working with these three photographers?

David Breen We learned from our earliest books that every photographer has a unique way of working. For instance Charles, James and I spoke little but Valda and I had regular contact – both approaches are fine for us.

Each hardback book costs £18.50 and is available from triplekite.co.uk/book-shop. Special editions, which include a signed A3 print of the cover image, are also available for £55.

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Above Orchid cuckoo bee (*Exaerete frontalis*) by Levon Biss.

THE BIG VIEW

Microsculpture: The insect portraiture of Levon Biss

To 30 October

Museum of Natural History, Oxford

Each photograph in Levon Biss' new project is made up of around 8,000 individual images to reveal the array of sculptural forms visible in insects at a microscopic level.

Large in format (the biggest being up to three metres wide), the photographs have breathtaking clarity thanks to Biss lighting and photographing each segment of the insect separately.

Talking about the process, he says, 'I photograph the insect in approximately 30 different sections, where each is lit differently with strobe lights to bring out the micro-sculptural beauty of that particular section of the body. The process continues until I have covered the whole surface area.' When choosing

specimens to use, Biss worked closely with Dr James Hogan, an entomologist in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History's Life Collections, resulting in a project that shows the powerful effect created when art and science combine.

The insects themselves are exhibited alongside each image, highlighting how a transformation of scale offers a unique and enlightening viewing experience. You can see a video about the project at microsculpture.net.
oym.ox.ac.uk

A Love Letter to Dartmoor

To 17 August

Dartmoor National Park Visitor Centre, Princetown, Devon

Last year Jo Bradford set herself a challenge: to photograph the nature and landscapes of Dartmoor every day for a year. Shooting exclusively on an



© Jo Bradford

iPhone, Bradford published the results on her social media feeds as the project developed, and her number of followers soon grew from 100 to more than 50,000. Keen to highlight the variety of beautiful subjects found in Dartmoor, she has produced a diverse collection of images, with subjects such as ancient stone structures, wild ponies, long views of tors and valleys, cloudy skies, bluebells, heather, rivers and woodland. To find out more about Bradford's photo project, go to greenislandstudios.co.uk/project/5515.
visitdartmoor.gov.uk

Ferus

1 to 31 July

The Grant Bradley Gallery, Bristol

Third-year photography students from Falmouth University exhibit their final-year projects in Bristol this July. Looking at the current state of the natural world in a variety of different media, including large-format prints, in-depth photo-books and short films, the works tell stories of rewilding, extinction, global warming, pollution and hunting.
grantbradleygallery.co.uk

Captured at Kew

To 4 September

Kew Gardens, London

Some of the most beautiful images taken at Kew, from past and current International Garden Photographer of the Year competitions, are now on show in the grounds of Kew Gardens. The outdoor display, situated close to the Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art, will include a map showing where the featured images were taken, encouraging visitors to relate the works to their own experiences at Kew.
kew.org



Kew palm; house window © Jocelyn Horsfall



© Steve Race

COASTAL EVENTS AROUND THE UK

It's National Marine Week from 25 July to 9 August, so to celebrate we've picked out six events happening around the UK coast to inspire you

Walking with Gannets at Bempton Cliffs

» 11am, various dates from 24 July to 9 October
» RSPB Bempton Cliffs, East Riding of Yorkshire
Home to the UK's largest mainland gannet colony, Bempton Cliffs near Bridlington is the ideal place to see this species. RSPB guides will be on hand to offer information about mating rituals, how they dive for food and where they migrate to. Tickets cost £3. To book, call 01260 422212.
rspb.org.uk

Return of the Ocean Wanderer: Manx shearwater boat trip

» 7pm to 10pm, 28 July
» Isle of Rum Community Hall, Inner Hebrides
Take a boat trip around the remote Isle of Rum to witness a colony of Manx shearwaters before they migrate in autumn. The birds gather in huge rafts before returning to their mountainside burrows after dark, and there are plenty of photo opportunities during this evening event. Tickets cost £20. To book, call 01687 462026.
nnr-scotland.org.uk

Whale and Dolphin Watch

» 1pm to 3pm, 23 July
» South Walney, Cumbria
In collaboration with the Sea Watch Foundation, you can take part in Cumbria Wildlife Trust's survey to understand more about whales, dolphins and harbour porpoises. The two-hour boat trip begins at St Bees beach, and there are lots of opportunities to take pictures. The boat trips are free, but donations are welcome. To book your place, call 01539 816300.
cumbriawildlifetrust.org

Crossing the Sands

» 1.30pm to 4.30pm, 3 July
» Shore Car Park, Aberogwen, Gwynedd
Explore Bangor's Traeth Lafan nature reserve at low tide with guides from the Natural Resources Wales organisation. Meeting at the Welsh Wildlife Trust's Spinnies reserve, you can catch sightings of the reserve's array of birdlife, including kingfishers. Book your free place by emailing Chris Allen at allen229@btinternet.com
wildlifetrusts.org

Magor Marsh and Coastal Walk

» 10am to 3pm, 17 July
» Magor Marsh Nature Reserve, Gwent
A 10km-walk with members of Magor Marsh nature reserve (near Newport) and the Lower Wye Ramblers club. The route leads across the Gwent Levels to Redwick, and then back along the sea wall, with views across the Severn Estuary and plenty of wildlife. To book a free place on the walk, email info@gwentwildlife.org.
wildlifetrusts.org

Seals of Walney workshop

11am to 2.30pm, 20 August
South Walney, Cumbria
Learn about the UK's native seals and how to survey them in their natural environment. The event is split into two parts: a classroom learning session followed by observation of the seals. The workshop is free, but donations are welcome. Book your place by calling 01539 816300.
cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk

YOUR LETTERS

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

Into the wild wood

I am very much an amateur when it comes to photography, and as an avid reader of *Outdoor Photography* I've always loved the wildlife images on display. I've also always been a little envious, as all I'd ever been able to capture is the birds on my garden feeder! I know it takes great skill and expertise to get truly outstanding wildlife shots, but it's something I really wanted to try.

So, borrowing a camouflage jacket and trousers I made my way to some woodland where I was told there was a badger sett. I found a spot that I thought was suitable and, with my camera ready, I sat and waited. During the next three hours or so, the chorus of birds was amazing, with the sound of pheasants, wood pigeons, crows and smaller birds; even a woodpecker

could be heard. A young stag walked past me, eating the grass and shrubbery – he was totally oblivious to my presence. I thought that surely the sound of my heart thumping would scare him off? But he went about his business and was gone. A grey squirrel soon appeared with a mouthful of moss. I watched as he made his way closer to me, but with one leap he was off and had scarpered high up into the trees above me. Then the badgers appeared, four adults and a youngster.



© Barbara Elliot

As they ventured out I was amazed at just how close they came to me, seemingly unaware of my presence. By then the light was too poor and I made my way home.

In hindsight, I don't think I had the best vantage point, but for my first ever attempt I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I left with a new respect for the experts and their dedication, knowledge and patience, which enables them to capture some magnificent wildlife images.

Barbara Elliot, via email

Location inspiration

In the May edition (OP204), the Locations Guide included Porth Nanven cove in Cornwall. By coincidence, we were booked to stay at a cottage there, so the article was really inspirational. I spent a few evenings out with my camera, sitting among the boulders at sunset and taking in the majesty of the evening sky. I thought it would be good to show that your advice is taken



© Adrian Wood

seriously, and to send in some examples of the results. We see the perfect images in *OP* as the starting point, but not the images they inspire – the occasional inclusion of readers' pictures would show how successful the magazine can be. Adrian Wood, via the *OP* website

Ed's comment *Hi Adrian, that's great that Andrew Ray's Porth Nanven cove viewpoint gave you some inspiration. Our Locations Guide section is open for submissions from all photographers, amateur or professional, so please feel free to send your own viewpoints so we can consider them for publication. Submission details can be found on page 84.*

Horses for courses

Niall Benvie begins his Opinion feature (OP205) by saying that the worst way to view photographs is via a mobile phone. It's not ideal, but it is a quick and easy method and is a way of finding images that we may want to view later on a larger screen when we have the opportunity to do so.

He moves on to say that mobile photography encourages a lack of thought and craft.

When I was in my teens I was cajoled to join a camera club where the prevailing issue was the ability to produce a grain-free picture. The chairman would, on special occasions, bring along his 10-year-old 20x16in prints of wrinkly old men with pipes and we were encouraged – no, required – to admire the grain-free appearance as the holy grail of photography.

To take a good photo we do not need Raw, we do not need ultra-wide or super-long lenses. We need an artistic eye, some form of camera and a vision of what we want to produce. Let's not go down the old road of thinking you can only produce what Niall calls 'snaps' with simpler cameras – it's horses for courses. I use a crop-sensor DSLR, 35mm film rangefinder and two medium format models, and I get as much pleasure, and think as much about the image, from producing photos from any of my cameras. David Lawrence, via email

August's letter of the month winner, Barbara Elliot, receives three superb books from Triplekite Publishing, together worth £55.50.

This month we have teamed up with Triplekite Publishing to give away all three books from its new series: *Fragile* by Valda Bailey, *Yosemite* by Charles Cramer and *Mud/Sand* by James Osmond. Set up and run by David Breen and Dav Thomas, Triplekite is dedicated to producing high quality fine art landscape photography books, and its latest releases are no exception. To find out more about Triplekite's collection of photography books, visit triplekite.co.uk/book-shop, and read our mini interview on page 11.



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Above Kestrel and London skyline. Right Great crested grebe with mayfly, Hampstead Heath.

In conversation with **Matthew Maran**

For London-based wildlife and landscape photographer Matt Maran, the journey into the world of the professional has been as much a voyage of self-discovery and determination as it has been about taking photographs

Interview by Nick Smith

'I have had other jobs that have always kept me afloat,' says Matt Maran referring to when he once supplemented his income as a fledgling photographer with landscape gardening and small-scale building projects. Today the word 'landscape' is much more likely to refer to his visual output. As he celebrates the publication of his second book – *Hampstead Heath, London's Countryside* – Maran is now firmly on the side of the photographic fence where the signposts read 'full-time professional.'

It all started for Maran in his late teens when he came back from Africa 'with all these images, and I thought that this was it. Everyone was going to want my work and I'm going to make lots of money.' In that, Maran admits, 'I was a bit naive and green.' The bucket of

cold-water moment was when he attended a travel photography seminar in London, where the speaker informed the young and ambitious Maran that he couldn't make a living from travel photography. 'I left the seminar really disgruntled. Obviously, this was a warning of how tough things can be. But what he taught me was that here we were at the beginning of the digital revolution and the elitism had gone out of photography. We had all suddenly become photographers and the days of making a living from stock were over.' But there were options: public speaking, leading tours, self-publishing. 'I've slowly been chipping away at all that for a while, now.' The 39-year-old, London-based photographer doesn't claim to have yet reached the heights of 'earning rock'n'roll money. But

I'm keeping my head above water. That's nice.'

It wasn't until 2010 that Maran became a full-time pro, and the decade and a half that has elapsed since his entry into that world is literally bookended by his earlier monograph, *Vancouver Island*, and his current output on London's urban wilderness, *Hampstead Heath*. Recalling his first book, Maran says that it came about from extensive travel in his twenties. 'One of the ways I could afford to do that was to live at my mum's and pay a peppercorn rent.' He laughs at this point, presumably because the admission is not one most feel comfortable with, 'but it meant that I could save a load of cash from the landscape gardening, and I travelled a lot to south-east Asia and South America.' A trip to north America took the photographer to





Vancouver Island on Canada's west coast: 'I went over there and I fell in love with the place. The scenery is unbelievable, and there are bears, whales, eagles. At the time, I'd just been taken on by Nature Picture Library, and that was one of the steps to becoming a pro.'

Encouraged by one of the staff at the library, Maran was given a significant piece of advice, which has stayed with him ever since. 'I was told that if you really want to get good at this, you have to either specialise in one subject such as an animal, or one area. And I thought that Vancouver Island would be a good place to base myself.' The impecunious Maran then blagged extensive time on a whale-watching boat in exchange for his pictures, and the project was underway. 'I didn't have a plan to do a book. I just wanted to photograph something different. Then I realised that the imagery I was getting from the boat was quite good.' Not content with floating photography, he then struck a deal with a young pilot, which allowed him to get aerial shots. 'It just grew and grew. Then I looked to see what had been published about Vancouver Island, and there was surprisingly little, especially with an



Above and bottom left Ancient oak tree, and porcelain fungus, Hampstead Heath. *Overleaf* City view at dawn.

exclusive wildlife and landscape focus.'

Maran, whose youthful optimism had yet to be reined in by the harsh reality of publishing, thought that a book deal was simply a matter of inevitability. 'But after writing to about 15 publishers I realised that no-one was going to take on the idea commercially.' And so, in what has now become the time-honoured tradition, Maran decided to do it himself. 'I was terrified at the thought of having to pay for the publication of a coffee table book.' But in the process, he discovered two things. First, that there was more creative latitude. And second, he could control distribution. Realising that a million people a year visit that region of Canada, he didn't need to go global. Before long, the first print run had sold through, and when a luxury hotel decided to put a copy of *Vancouver Island* in every one of its rooms, the success of the project was virtually assured.

Having learned some important lessons publishing his first book, the Hampstead Heath book was a lot easier. 'So rather than get all the words and pictures together and then deciding what to do with them, I started out with a plan,

working on the layout well over a year ago. With the new book divided into seasons I could see, for example, if one section needed more material.'

One of the main advantages of working on the Heath is that, living in Tottenham, Maran is only 20 minutes away from his subject matter. Having sledged there in the winter snow of his childhood, he feels a strong personal and emotional connection with the place. 'When I was doing the Vancouver Island book, I'd only ever go there to shoot photographs and it was a long, expensive journey. But with Hampstead Heath, I've photographed there all my life, and so it's nice to work on a project closer to home.' He was also inspired by the fact that, at least when he started work on the Heath, urban wildlife photography was an undersubscribed genre. 'It's not so much now. But it seems everybody still wants to go to India and Antarctica if they can afford it. But why not try to do a good project on your doorstep?'

When Maran started the project, he once again used content as a bartering tool to get permissions to photograph. 'The authorities went for it and I started to photograph there

regularly.' Initially, he was less than enthusiastic, however. 'I was quite down about it. I'd just come off this exciting project of photographing mountains and bears. Then I was working with pigeons and squirrels. But I'm definitely a big project guy, and the more I went there, the more I found that I could uncover hidden aspects of a place. Then I started to discover where the kestrels and kingfishers were. But it's more than just photography. You become this person who engages with a place and builds relationships with the people there.' Maran says that he wanted to do something different. 'Lots of people photograph the Heath. But in terms of really good landscape photography, it's all pretty thin. Hopefully, my work will stand the test of time.'

Although Maran works exclusively in digital these days, he still has fond memories of his early days in the darkroom and has a particular affection for the manual and technical side of image production. 'These days there's a lot of instant gratification from digital. But I am pleased that I went through that pre-digital process, which was a lot harder.' Maran studied







Above Bald eagle, Barkley Sound, Vancouver Island. *Below* Black bear, Clayoquot Sound, Vancouver Island.

photography at school, before going on to the London College of Printing, where he produced much of his work in a basement. 'There was no natural light down there and the course was very much studio-based. But I was much more interested in natural light and the outdoors. I grew up watching David Attenborough and *Big Cat Diary*, and I think for someone growing up in the city, the wilderness was something that was really important. Then I did this yearlong Land Rover trip through Africa, and since then I've never looked back.'

Maran has come a long way since those heady teenage Africa safaris. 'I am a very determined person,' he says. 'Today, I have a lot more confidence as a person and as a photographer. I'm tenacious, although I still have doubts. It's not a smooth journey, but it is one I am very passionate about.'

To see more of Matt's work, go to matthewmaran.com. Hampstead Heath, London's Countryside is published by Hemisphere Publishing and costs £30.



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Searching for solace following the loss of his mother, Pete Bridgwood heads to a location close to where he grew up and works instinctively to capture an image inspired by her

This month I'm in a melancholic mood. I said goodbye to Mum for the last time two weeks ago. I had the privilege of spending several days by her side as she lay there dying in the hospice. As she took her last breath, I held her hand, told her I loved her, that everything would be okay, to go and see Dad.

On the day my father died six years ago, Mum wanted to be on her own, which left me feeling a little lost, directionless. I ventured out with my camera and made an image of the lighthouse at Spurn Point near Hull. I instinctively shot it using a very alternative style to usual; using very high ISO to intentionally create noise and produce a 'grainy', high contrast, dark, dramatic image. I now have that photograph hanging on my wall at home and it's very special to me because every time I look at it I'm reminded of Dad.

Having experienced such comfort from that photograph, when Mum died I naturally wanted to make another image: one that will bring back memories of her whenever I see it. This time, I chose to create an image with a more direct relationship. This statue is just a few hundred metres from the house I grew up in: I spent most of my formative years playing in these woods, developing a deep love for nature that was to last a lifetime.

I made my image after sunset as the crepuscular colours faded into dusk. With the camera mounted on the tripod, I spent some time deciding on my composition using the geared head to make fine adjustments until the statue was positioned appropriately. I chose a rendering style that felt sympathetic to my melancholic state: underexposed and relatively low-key with a heavy black silhouette

anchoring a smeared indigo and violet twilight sky. The Lee Little-Stopper offers the perfect solution to texturise dynamic elements in landscapes at dusk: it provides six stops of near neutral density, enabling a long exposure of 15 seconds to blur the cloudscape.

There is a primitive human need to purify our spirit in times of grief: we call the process 'catharsis', and the release of such strong emotion through art is what defines it. When life doesn't go according to plan, photography can be profoundly therapeutic.

*'The Monument', Tittensor, Staffordshire.
Fujifilm X-Pro2 with Fujinon XF 18-55mm f/2.8-4
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WAVES OF INSPIRATION

David Baker's masterclass on capturing powerful coastal images



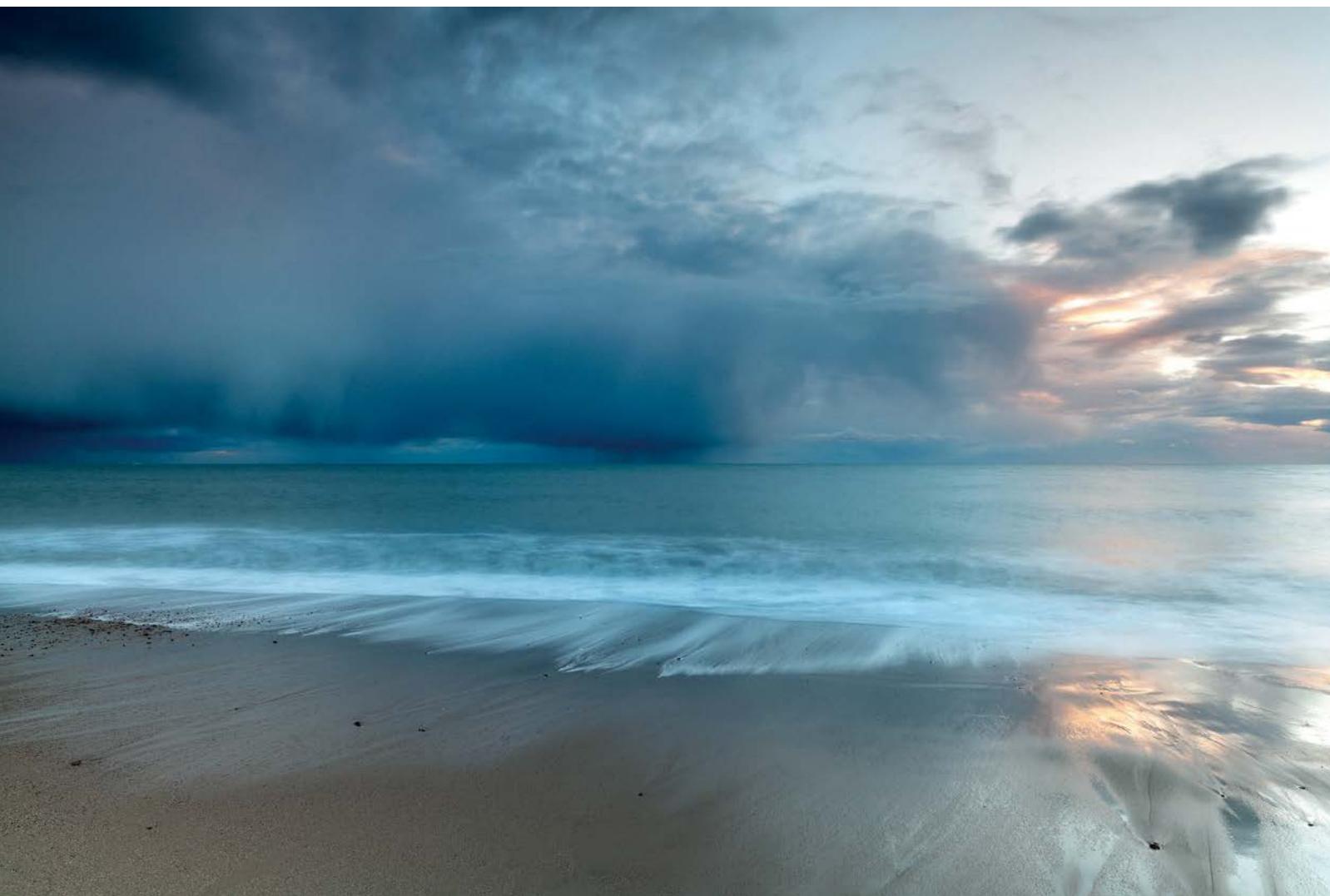
How to master the art of coastal photography

*Few places are more exhilarating to photograph than coastal locations. Full of drama, unspoilt beauty and endless variety, it's no wonder we are drawn to the sea. **David Baker** heads to the water's edge to show you how to capture evocative images*

First there's the sound. A muffled roar, perhaps, the muted clatter of stones knocking together or a swoosh of water against shingle or sand. You hear the calls of gulls from above; you feel the wind running through the dune grass as you approach. And now you see the expanse of beach, the strand line, the horizon and the sky. How is the sea today? Wild with crashing waves, or sublime and smooth?

The sea, and the way it moves, reflects and glows, has long transfixed and inspired artists and photographers who feel a compelling need to capture its many moods. Elemental and always in a state of flux, the sea is at the edge of change and transforms in colour depending on the weather and the light.

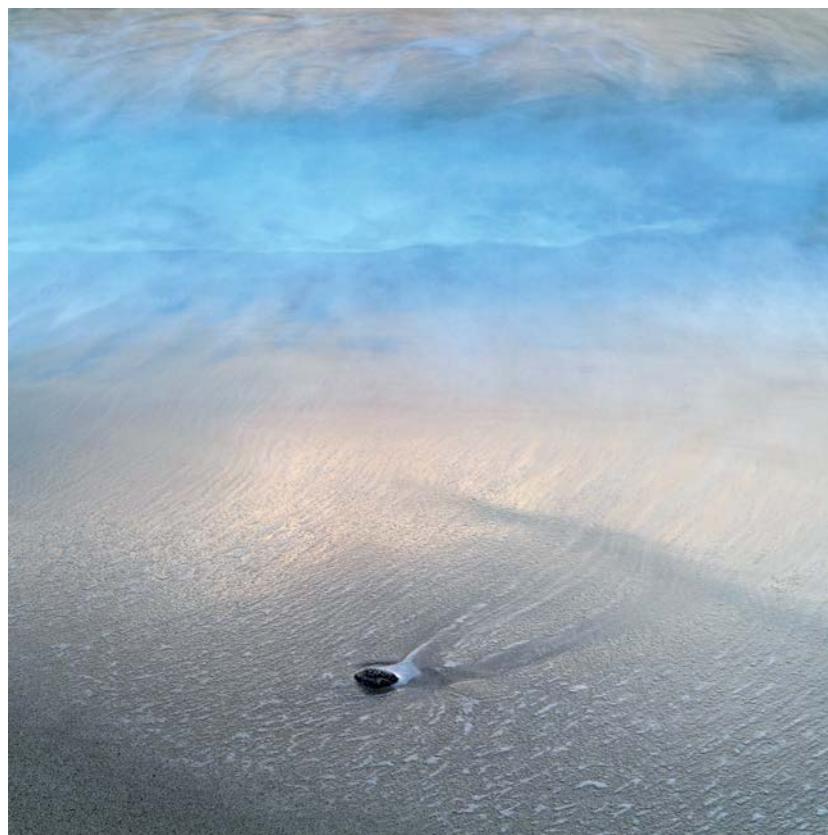
In this article I aim to explore what the sea means to me, how I interpret it and use it as a sounding board. Hopefully I will provide you with inspiration to engage with the sea in your own personal way, to tell new stories.



SHORE, SEA AND SKY

I live in Southampton, Hampshire, and while it's next to the sea, it is an industrial maritime landscape characterised by docks, marinas and an oil refinery. The first real open stretch of coastline is to the west: the shingle beach at Milford on Sea; the first sandy ones are further away, at Southbourne in Dorset and, to the east, at West Wittering in West Sussex.

Excluding the Isle of Wight, there is nothing on the horizon along the coast here; no photogenic rocks, islands or cliff coast, just three bands: the beach, the sea and the sky. As such, there is a challenge to construct new and inventive interpretations, and it is the ever-changing possibilities that come from the combination of shore, sea and sky that engage me.



Opposite page Southbourne 3.2. Canon EOS 5DS R with 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 50, 3.2sec at f/11, filters, tripod

Above Solent Beach. Getting to know 'your' part of the landscape is invaluable in terms of assessing the nature of light, the tides and the way the coast changes. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 50, 4sec at f/11, filters, tripod

Left Hebridean Stone. Sublime light at Dhail Beag on Lewis, Outer Hebrides – one of my favourite beaches. Canon EOS 5D MkII with 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 2sec at f/10, filters, tripod

Marine (Dorset).

Power and energy at the Dorset coast. High winds just after dawn in February with the sea crashing against the Mupe rocks.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 70-300mm lens at 300mm, ISO 100, 1/640sec at f/8, handheld

Transformation

I am very interested in the idea that the coast is at the edge of change. To illustrate this, consider the beach as a variable boundary between the maritime and the terrestrial landscape. The beach is the most accessible way of reaching the shoreline and it is a place where, for much of the time, very little seems to happen. The tide comes, the tide goes. People arrive to pass the time, usually enjoying leisure activities. But at the same time the beach is a place where a real transformation takes place. The tides create a shifting interaction between sea and land as part of the shore is revealed and then submerged. The boundary between sea and land is ever changing, and consequently the beach is a space that's neither wholly terrestrial nor completely maritime.

There is of course the physical existence of the beach, and as photographers we may also be transformed simply by our very presence on it. It is the potential of this physical and thoughtful transformation that inspires me. Something draws us to the coast. Perhaps it's because we are an island nation and the sea is a resource and a pathway, disappearing into the horizon, connecting with other lands and other peoples. It may also be considered a protective space. In some ways, the sea may present two extremes: an unwelcoming wilderness, or one that is familiar and reassuring. Ideas such as these and the interactions that come as a result are worth exploring.

I am not a painter. The way that I interpret the coast and how I respond to it emotionally is realised through

my photography. There is a constant challenge to turn the experience of being at the coast for, say, an hour into a single two-dimensional image. How can we capture the form and beauty, the sound, the power, the energy, the wild wind, the smell and the sting of salt on our skin?

Perhaps this can be achieved by visualising the inherent qualities of the sea, possibly as an abstract, looking at form and texture. We may take a more creative approach, going beyond documentary realism and taking a leap of imagination. I am engaged by pictorial representations of the sea, and also by subsequent personal and constructed interpretations. Fluid and ever changing; what a fantastic medium the sea is for the communication of ideas and experience.





FORMS, SHAPES AND PATTERNS

My coastal photography principally falls into one of three themes: the Sea Fever series, Wave Trails and No Locale images.

'Sea Fever'

In my Sea Fever series (see images above and right) waves are turned into near-abstract forms, retaining just enough detail to make them recognisable. The project began as an interpretation of the close affinity between sea and sky and developed into exploring wave forms against a cloudless sky. Through these images I aim to reinforce a sense of wilderness, isolation, power and energy.

I look for relationships between the waves and aim to have at least a 'stack' of foreground or a central wave across the frame and I really love a crest at the back of an image. I like a fair amount of blur, and rear sharpness is of no concern. For many of the images, I've



Above (top) North Uist Waves.

Using a long focal length to record the shapes and lines of the waves often results in an abstract image.
Canon EOS 5DS R with 100-400mm lens at 400mm, ISO 100, 1/160sec at f/7.1, tripod

Above Lewis Sea.

Again, a lower viewpoint was chosen to hide the horizon. This is all about wave power, energy and the wild sea.
Canon EOS 5D MkII with 70-300mm lens at 300mm, ISO 100, 0.4sec at f/8, filters, tripod



focused on the crest of the immediate wave stacks, with everything beyond decreasing in sharpness.

I've found that an exposure time of 0.3 or 0.4 seconds is appropriate for capturing my vision of textures in windy seas. At two seconds, for example, much of the wave detail is stripped, although such an exposure is excellent for recording wave trails. I usually use a Lee 0.9 ND filter and reverse a 0.9 grad filter to help get the exposure down to a respectable amount.

I'm not concerned about getting these seascapes pin-sharp, but I do want to show the shapes and textures of the waves. On occasion I tend to underexpose to help the sky retain some detail – I like a dark image despite the potential for introducing noise. A lens at 300mm or 400mm allows me to get visually into the sea.

'Wave Trails'

In my Wave Trails images (see opposite page), the sea is recorded across the beach or around rocks or other stationary anchor points such as groynes. Often just sand and sea feature so that the trails are the principal focus.

There are many different ways to record wave trails and it's always worth experimenting with filtration, shutter speed and focal length to capture the effect that you want. If you have a cloudless sky it's often worth being bold with the wave trail shapes, and that may mean a longer exposure. On occasion, a shorter shutter speed may work for a heavily clouded sky.

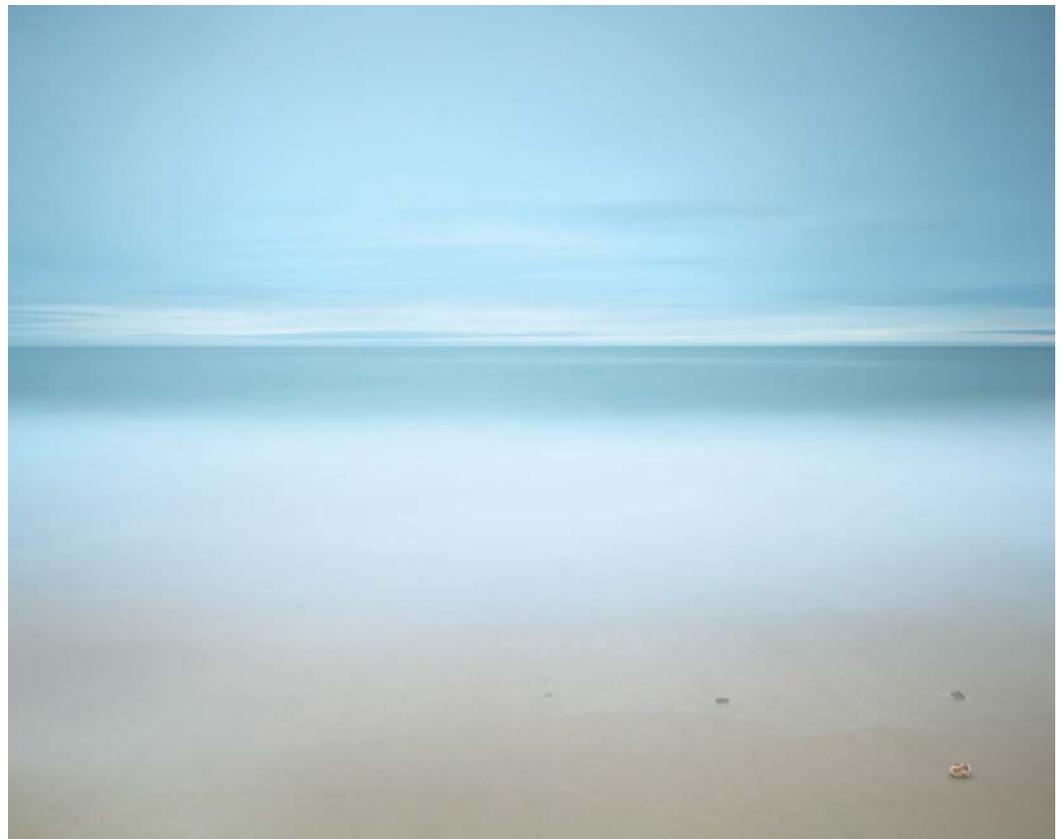
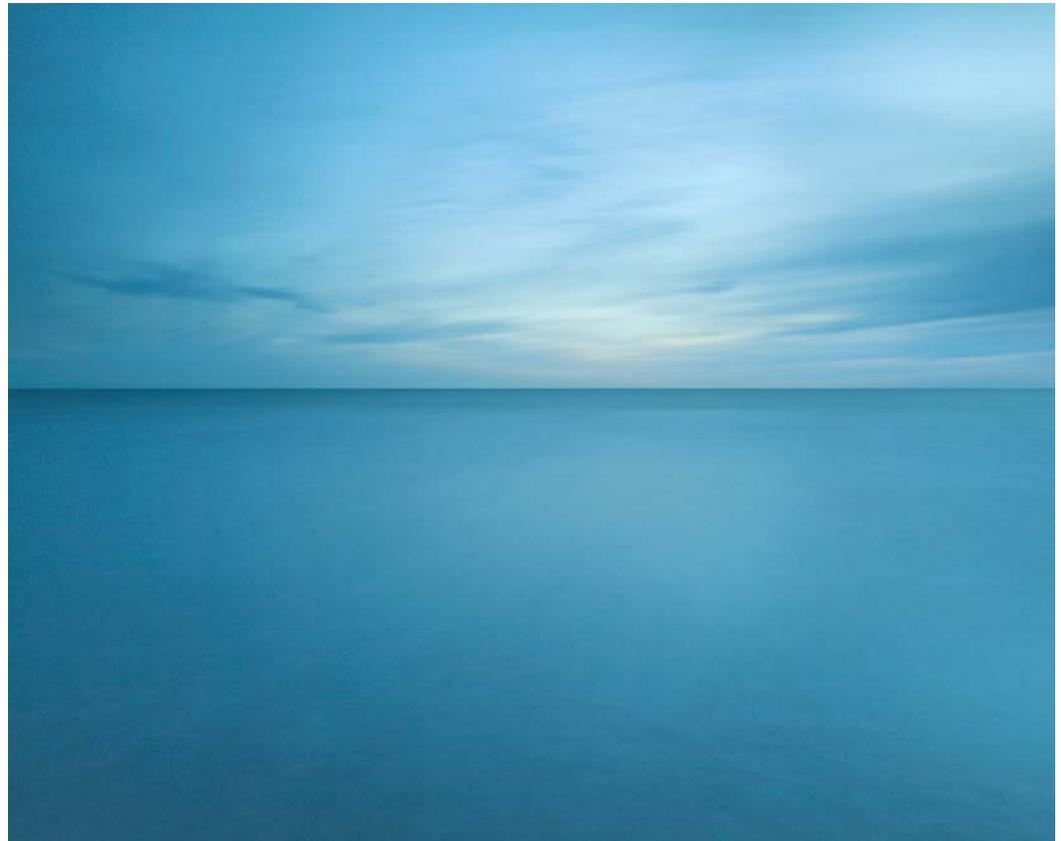
Generally I look for a wave coming in, perhaps lapping around the tripod spikes, and then I wait for half a second or so for the water to recede before firing the shutter. One good aspect about my local beach at Southbourne is that there are no distractions on the horizon and, aside from the sea defences, it's all about the patterns in the sand, the sea the clouds. There are undulations at the shoreline between the sea groynes and, using a shutter speed of 0.3 to 15 seconds, these can produce successful results.

No Locale

It is often the case that coastal imagery has something manmade within the frame, such as sea defences, a pier or some form of structure. While this can help to anchor an image, I often like a 'purer' seascape, without the suggestion of human interaction to obscure the space. Consequently, I want to create images made solely of air and water, with no trace of man's presence.

With my No Locale images (see images on the right), I'm looking for a more ethereal quality, which I achieve by smoothing any textures in the sea and the sky. Very long exposure times of at least 100 seconds are effective to minimise form and texture, and in low light conditions exposure times of 400 seconds are not unusual. For me, these images are about peace, quietness, tranquility and an attempt to render the sea as sublime.

Where these images were taken is not important, as they have no bearing on the locale. They have no topographical references, as I'm really seeking an elemental theme. With these I aim to communicate the essence of the sea.



Opposite (top)
Southbourne 2.5.
*Canon EOS 5D MkII
with 24-70mm lens at
24mm, ISO 100, 2.5sec
at f/2.8, filters, tripod*

Opposite (bottom)
Bracklesham Bay.
*Canon EOS 5D MkII
with 17-40mm lens
at 17mm, ISO 50, 2sec
at f/11, filters, tripod*

Above (top)
Bracklesham Bay 240.
*Canon EOS 5D MkII
with 24mm TSE lens,
ISO 100, 240sec
at f/8, filters, tripod*

Above
Southbourne 121.
*Canon EOS 5D MkII
with 24mm TSE lens,
ISO 100, 121sec at f/8,
filters, tripod*

COMPOSITION AND LIGHT

Compositional aids such as lead-in lines, and the use of 'Z' shapes and foreground interest are always helpful, although I would suggest that you concentrate on what excites and engages you. If something doesn't communicate, it often doesn't move us. Respond to the sea and interpret it in your own unique way, because of what it means to you, and allow your emotional response to tell you what interests you. Be creative, look for impact and try to evoke emotion.

Confining yourself to early and late-hour coastal work does not guarantee the making of a great image. You can often photograph seascapes throughout the day with the possibility of good results. This really requires a number of conditions – for example, what you want to achieve, your required atmospheric conditions, the relationships of lines and forms in the shapes or perhaps a tonal range.

Getting to know 'your' part of the coastal landscape is invaluable in terms of assessing and recording the changeable nature of light, the tides and the way the coast evolves and changes. See it in the wonderful dawn light – it's sometimes worth an exceptionally early start. But also see it on the cusp of evening into night or during the high sunny days of the late summer, or chase storm fronts so that you can shoot during the changeover in weather patterns.

DAVID'S ESSENTIAL TIPS

Be bold and experiment. Try different techniques to capture the dynamics of the coast.

Aim to create a sensory experience. Take images that depict wilderness, isolation, power and energy.

Explore graphic shapes, perhaps by seeing in monochrome.

Set yourself a project as a wrapper for the photographs.

Try shooting a sequence of images.

Take inspiration from coastal writing.



Top Gulls and Snow Shower.

Confining yourself to coastal work early and late in the day does not guarantee the making of a great image. You can often photograph seascapes throughout the day with the possibility of great results at any time. This really depends on what you want to achieve; for example, the required atmospheric conditions or the relationships of lines and forms in the shapes.

Canon EOS 5DS R with 24-70mm lens at 35mm, ISO 100, 6sec at f/11, filters, tripod

Bottom Rock and Rain.

This image was taken at Milton beach on South Uist in the Outer Hebrides. It's a wild and windy place, and on this day rain was coming in from the Atlantic. A square crop centrally divides the elements; the dark mass of the rock is diagonally offset by the slither of light sea under the heavy rain clouds – one effect of using filters and predicting how the sea is likely to be captured.

Canon EOS 5DS R with 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 30sec at f/16, filters, tripod

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QUICK GUIDE TO... Using wildlife camera traps

Whether you want to document elusive animals in remote locations or capture candid shots of nocturnal species in your garden, camera traps can enable you to photograph wildlife in exciting new ways. Will Burrard-Lucas shows you how

In recent years the technology to set up a high-quality DSLR camera trap has become easier to use and more accessible. This has led to a rapid increase in the number of wildlife photographers – both amateur and professional – using camera traps to push the boundaries of their art.

Camera traps offer a number of unique advantages. Firstly, they can be left out for a long time, increasing your chances of photographing super-shy or rare animals; secondly, you can set up complex, studio-like lighting to take stunning images of nocturnal creatures; and thirdly, you can have one or more camera traps working for you while you go off and take ‘normal’ photographs, allowing you to increase your output.



ESSENTIAL GEAR

So, what do you need to set up your first DSLR camera trap? Well, this is the perfect opportunity to dig out that old camera that you don't use anymore. An entry-level DSLR with a kit lens is a great starting point.



Next, you need a way of detecting when an animal is in front of the camera. There are two types of sensors commonly used for this: beam-breaks and PIR motion sensors. I prefer PIR sensors because they are much easier to set up and more energy efficient. I wasn't able to find a user-friendly passive infrared (PIR) sensor when I first started out, so I developed my own (you can find my PIR sensors at camtraptions.com). If you prefer a beam-break sensor then the TrailMaster TM1550 is the most widely used device.

Now you need to illuminate your shot. The simplest way to do this is to use a single flash connected to your camera with a standard off-camera flash cord. It is important to get your flash away from the camera because this reduces red-eye and gives you more natural looking shadows.

If you want to experiment with more advanced lighting then you can use two or more flashes to fill in shadows and to illuminate different parts of the scene. When using multiple flashes, you will need to set their power output manually. It is easiest to connect the flashes to the camera using wireless flash triggers.

Finally, you need to think about protecting your equipment from wild animals and the elements. If you're happy to do a bit of DIY then you can modify a waterproof Pelican case to protect your camera. Simply cut a hole for the lens and use silicon sealant to attach a window and a length of pipe over the lens. For the window you can use a cheap lens filter. If you don't want to build this yourself then you can get a strong metal camera housing from Camtraptions. To waterproof my flashes I usually just use clear plastic food bags.

Top left A black rhino, photographed in North Luangwa National Park, Zambia.

Bottom left and top right Will sets up a camera trap in Liuwa Plain National Park, Zambia, which was used to take the porcupine image shown above right.

Below A busy waterhole in Namibia. This image was taken as part of an assignment for WWF to document wildlife in the remote Zambezi region.



Learn more! Download Will's free beginners' guide to camera traps and watch a video tutorial at camtraptions.com/learn



POWERING YOUR CAMERA TRAP

Camera traps need to be left for as long as possible to maximise your chances of success. This means you need to select equipment and settings that conserve battery life.

Firstly, you need to set your camera to power-off after around a minute or 30 seconds. The camera will then 'wake up' and take a photo when it receives a signal from the sensor.

Flashes can be more difficult. Most flashes take a few seconds to charge when they wake and therefore they may not fire when your camera takes the first photo. To get round this, you might have to disable the flash's power-save mode. The downside of this is that the flash will often drain its batteries over the course of a single night. If you don't want to change your flash batteries every 12 hours then you have two options: either find or build an external power source for your flash or use a flash that holds its charge even when sleeping.

Some old Nikon flashes hold their charge very well. This means they may last several weeks on one set of batteries. The most cost-effective flash of this sort is the Nikon SB-28, which you can find on eBay (note that the DX version does not work as well). If you would like to use a Canon camera to fire a Nikon flash then there are wireless triggers that can be utilised for this purpose.

SETTINGS

There is quite an art to setting your camera to automatically capture well-exposed photos during the day and at night. To get you started, the following settings usually work quite well:

- » Set your camera to manual exposure mode.
- » Use a shutter speed of 1/250th of a second; this is fast enough to freeze motion (any faster and your flashes may not sync).
- » An aperture of f/11 will give you plenty of depth of field.
- » Switch your ISO to auto. If possible, limit the maximum ISO to 800 or 1600 so that you don't get too much noise.
- » Use single shot mode; this will avoid strobe-flashing nocturnal creatures.
- » Focus manually on the point where the animal is likely to be detected by your sensor.
- » Set the flash output manually so that the scene is correctly exposed at night – use the trial and error approach!

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Off track in Deadvlei

The surreal desert landscape of Deadvlei in Namibia is a photographer's paradise, but it's not a good place to get lost, as Jeremy Flint discovered recently when he came close to spending the night there

There are few landscapes that can compete with those of Namibia. Lonely dirt tracks snake to the horizon and expose you to a wilderness of vast spaces and granite peaks. The Sossusvlei valley, with towering red dunes that constantly change shape and colour with the shifting sands and light, has become an icon. The neighbouring Deadvlei clay pan is dotted with striking dead camel thorn trees that have stood for thousands of years. It feels as if you are on another planet.

I had always wanted to capture images of Sossusvlei and Deadvlei and decided to visit them as part of a nine-day self-drive tour. The plan was to spend the afternoon in the valley taking photographs before dark, and then head back in time for last orders with my wife at the hotel restaurant. Travelling light, I had a half-filled bottle of water in my bag, and no snacks.

Sossusvlei and Deadvlei are located at the end of a 40-mile road from Sesriem, followed by a three-mile track accessible only by four-wheel

drives. Arriving at the clay pan following a one-and-a-half-mile walk, it became evident I had the place to myself. I had always wanted to photograph the night sky over Deadvlei, so would stay after sunset to realise my dream.

As the Milky Way appeared in the night sky, I exposed a couple of frames before packing up and heading back by the light of my head torch. Unfortunately the wind had picked up and the footprints I'd followed on the way had mostly disappeared. Undeterred, I headed towards a dune I'd located as a landmark that I thought would take me to my vehicle. By now, however, the dune I was aiming towards was barely visible and looked identical to the one on its left. After 20 minutes I still hadn't arrived at the car.

I knew that mine was the last vehicle and that no one else would be coming out that night. In the worst-case scenario I would have to wait until the morning and listen out for cars to find my way back to the dirt road.

I became increasingly concerned, so kept my mind busy, and decided not to sit down or go to sleep. I hoped my wife would raise the alarm.

After two hours, a faint light appeared on the horizon and then came the sound of a vehicle, but without warning it was gone – I would just have to spend the night out here alone. Then the light reappeared and this time was much brighter. I flashed my head torch towards it, repeatedly shouted 'hello' and walked towards its source. Ten minutes later I was greeted by two guys from the hotel – I have never been happier to see anyone in my life. One of them was the driver of the shuttle bus who dropped me at my car, and he had remembered where I was going. At around 9pm he had told my wife he was concerned and was going to look for me.

Later I learnt how lucky I was: the hotel manager said I could have encountered wild dogs and even lions. Valuable lessons were learnt and another of my nine lives was gone.





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© Venetia Dearden

Lessons learned in the line of duty

In the decade that Nick Smith has been writing for Outdoor Photography he has interviewed more than 100 photographers. Here, he shares valuable insights he's gathered from his conversations with some of the most creative camera folk of our generation...

It's been 10 years since I first took up the quill to write for *Outdoor Photography*. It may not be much in Earth time, but in the world of the journalist it's almost unheard of to have such a lengthy stint on a single publication. In that time, by my rough calculations on the back of an envelope, I've written more than a quarter of a million words and contributed well over 250 articles. More than 100 of these have been interviews with photographers, and to say that

I've learned a lot from them is to take a serious diversion into the world of understatement.

As I write, I have spread around me some 130 copies of the magazine. I can see that the covers have changed dramatically in style and the technology we deploy has evolved out of all recognition. But one thing remains constant: the people behind the imagery. In that decade, I have interviewed some of the greats of outdoor photography, from Eric Valli to Yann Arthus-

Bertrand, to photographers of promise, taking their first steps into a highly competitive world. Some – including Rob Fraser, Nick Danziger and Martin Hartley – regularly achieve new plateaux in their art, which means that I've interviewed them more than once. Others go about their business in an inconspicuous way, where their moment in the magazine might well be the first and the last time we hear from them as they develop their style and execute



© Martin Hartley

'Martin Hartley took me into the gritty world of expedition photography. Out on the icecap, the photographer is often the unsung hero. Not always even officially part of the team, it's a hard life'

their work in a world of their own. From polar aces to wildlife wizards, travel aficionados to street-style gurus, I've covered a huge range of material. And it all has one thing in common. Sheer excellence.

Looking back to a time when I had long hair and still had clearly defined ambitions of being the next Keith Richards, I remember my first interview was with the very brilliant Venetia Dearden, who was to assist me in establishing a blueprint for the scores of interviews that followed. I deliberately chose Dearden because I had worked with her before and knew she had a refreshing outlook on photography. More importantly, I knew she would be patient as I established a format for talking to artists who were necessarily communicating in a medium – words – that was often a second string to their creative output. Although I'd not expected her

to discuss cameras or software, I was surprised when she told me that the most important of her observations was that to have any chance of success, be it creatively or commercially, was 'to be true to oneself'. Over the decade that followed, I was to hear variations on the theme from virtually every photographer I met. Avoid the obvious, make cliché your enemy, walk a path less trodden and don't take too much notice of what other people are doing. Dearden's simple image of a pair of red shoes on a cliff top is a constant reminder to me that the route to originality is one of daring and self-belief.

Picking up a copy of *Outdoor Photography* at random, I can see that in November 2010 I talked with polar photographer Martin Hartley, who took me into the gritty world of expedition photography. Out on the icecap, the photographer is often the unsung hero.

Not always even officially part of the team, it's a hard life. You cover more ground and carry more gear, says Hartley, who confided in me something unexpected. 'Sometimes it makes a change to shoot weddings.' Surely some mistake? 'Why not? I'm a photographer. It's all about the photography.' Also in the polar world, Doug Allan, perhaps best known as a cameraman on David Attenborough's iconic wildlife documentary series, cut his teeth as a stills photographer and can't quite kick the habit. Sue Flood, one of the few women polar adventure photographers I met, thought that determination was the key to what she did. Her pictures portray something sedate and serene about cold places, but having travelled to the North Pole with her, I can say without fear of contradiction that there's nothing sedate or serene about the hostility of the environment she works in.

In August 2013 there's one of my favourite interviews, with veteran swinging 6os togger Anthony Howarth. I spent an enlightening weekend at Tony's house in Bordeaux listening to his endless anecdotes about the days before digital. He's never shot a frame professionally on digital and he was keen to express to me the innovation that characterised his generation. He mounted gun-sights on his camera, improvised remote photography by attaching gear to surfboards and pioneered aerial travel photography at a time when people thought it could only be used for reconnaissance. Expert exponent of the pinhole camera, Nick Livesey ventured into the mountains of Chile with only the most primitive of technology, while fine artist Susan Derges explained how she makes pictures with lensless photography. Earlier this year I spoke with the Launstein family collective of wildlife photographers, who as a team are bringing a fresh approach to depicting Canada's nature. Peter Mallet was one of the few street photographers to get a mention; his work brings a sharp, fresh take on the travel genre that, sadly, rarely makes it into print these days.

When it comes to what makes a good photograph, we have surprisingly diverse opinions. Working in human documentary,

Nick Danziger thinks that 'good photography can very much change people's lives.' In the world of wildlife, Tony Dilger says that 'the best shots take your breath away because they reveal something you didn't know.' Former Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year Fergus Gill is on the lookout to portray 'some of the character of the animal'. Slovenian landscape maestro Matjaž Krivic works almost exclusively in the panoramic format because he believes that 'when we see horizontal panoramas we look at photography differently.' American fine artist Stuart Klipper prefers that format too, but doesn't go beyond saying that his reason is because 'they're wider.' As an advocate for African wildlife, Chris Martin thinks that if you don't pay something back to the environment 'you don't really deserve to be there in the first place.' Former Travel Photographer of the Year, Cat Vinton is sure that photographs work best 'if there's an empathic feeling: you can feel like you've been there, or you could go there. Or you are there.'

Over the years I realised that, quite apart from hearing their stories and finding out what made them tick, there were three things I really wanted to know from each and every one of my subjects. First, what did they always take into the field with them? (I never go without a lighter,

knife and a stack of US dollars). Second, what advice would they give to someone starting out as a photographer? (I've always wanted to answer this one, and my answer would be: 'if you're going to give up, give up now. But if you're not going to give up, then don't. Ever.'). And third, what do you try to avoid most? (With me, it's mosquitoes every time).

Listening to the answers provided me with the funniest moment of the decade, when nighttime photographer (and former Buzzcocks drummer) John Maher told me he tried to avoid taking his dog out on a shoot with him because it gets bored and chews his car seats. Since John now makes a living restoring vintage Volkswagens, you can see why he feels that way. Fine art photographer Jono Renton won't go out in the field without 'my analogue accessories, like filters' because he likes to get everything right in the camera. Leading American adventure photographer Lucas Gilman likes to avoid 'hostile rebels, deadly snakes, flash floods and getting kidnapped,' while offering as his one piece of advice: 'be ready for success.'

Meanwhile, former professional cricketer turned global photographer Ian Schemper is desperate to avoid the red tape that goes with getting permissions: 'being hassled by authority just sucks the life out of you.' Author Jon Sparks



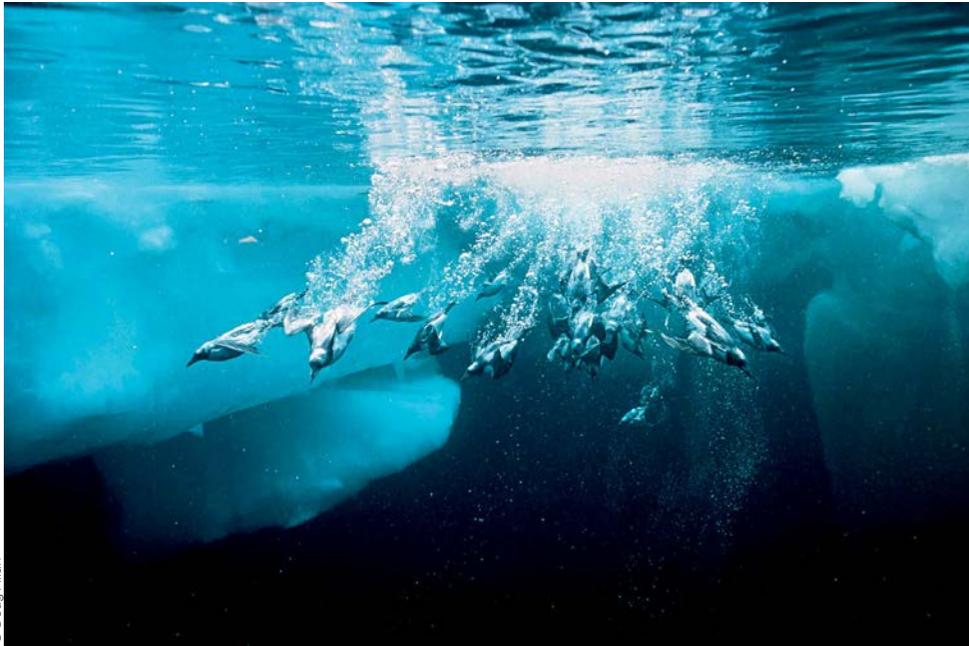
© Cat Vinton



© Ian Schemper



© Yann Arthus-Bertrand



© Doug Allan



© Chris Martin

Photographers in a nutshell: what we have in common

Reading back through the decade of interviews, I found a number of themes kept emerging. Whether we are wildlife, landscape, adventure or documentary photographers, a broader picture emerges, clear and sharp.

All photographers have different views on how to approach their subject, different techniques and, vitally, different ways of assessing their success.

Equipment is only one part of a complex mix and quite often far less important than simply being outdoors, looking for opportunities.

The biggest enemy to good photography is cliché. It's a trap that has been mentioned to me by nearly everyone and is the stuff of nightmares.

At least half of the photographers out there are self-taught. This is probably the single biggest factor in accounting for the diversity on offer.

Very few photographers are satisfied with their work – a phenomenon that drives us to keep learning. In most cases this is false modesty.

Because half of my interviewees are amateurs or semi-pros there is a tendency to photograph close to home in order to cut down travel time.

We are split over the value of photo competitions. We love them and hate them equally. We love them when we win and hate them when we don't.

Even the most experienced and most accomplished of professionals still find photography difficult and post-production is the bane of our lives.

Photographers are nice people. There is near universal respect for the work of others, no matter where we might be on our journey to success.

'As an advocate for African wildlife, Chris Martin thinks that if you don't pay something back to the environment "you don't really deserve to be there in the first place."

dislikes photographs when they 'look like you've simply ticked a box', but is cheered up by his favourite beanbag that he routinely uses instead of 'lugging a tripod around.' Another pinhole specialist, Steve Gosling, won't go out into the field without his iPhone because 'it's got a viewfinder, spot meter and a range of apps for sun position, tide times and weather forecasts.' Environmental photographer Yves Adams wants to avoid the day when he sees any of the 'animals I photograph becoming extinct.'

And so, just like in the balcony scene of

Monty Python's *Life of Brian*, we're all different, except for when we're not (have a look at the box on the right to see the 10 things we have in common). But if I were to take just one thing away from my meetings with these photographers over the past decade it would be this... actually, I'm going to leave it in the hands of one of my heroes, the legendary French mountain photographer Eric Valli, to speak for me: 'You must love what you photograph. If you do not love what you photograph, how can you protect it?'



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Tresaith, Ceredigion by Ron Evans

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

48 Viewpoints of the month

- 1 Am Bodach Highland
- 2 Sennen Cove Cornwall

52 Viewpoints

- 3 Holywell Bay Cornwall
- 4 Ramshaw Rocks Staffordshire
- 5 Slioch Highland
- 6 Hergest Ridge Herefordshire/Powys
- 7 Croyd Bay Devon
- 8 Ronachan Bay Argyll and Bute
- 9 Tears Point Swansea
- 10 Tresaith Ceredigion



Map plottings are approximate

Am Bodach | Highland

Planning and preparation pay off for Paul Holloway atop the mighty Aonach Eagach ridge, when the elements come together to produce a spectacular light show that accentuates the drama of the mountains

Am Bodach lies at the eastern end of the Aonach Eagach, the craggy, notched ridge that forms the northern wall of Glencoe. The Aonach Eagach is usually regarded as the most difficult horizontal 'scrambling' ridge in mainland Scotland; not something I would fancy undertaking with all my camera gear. The ascent of Am Bodach itself presents no problems to the confident walker, however. Am Bodach means 'the Old Man' in Gaelic, which pretty much sums up how I felt after the unrelenting steep walk up the path to the top in the heat of a glorious summer afternoon. It is an energy sapping ascent, but well worth the effort because the view down Glencoe and across to the dramatic northern ridges of Bidean nam Bian (the Three Sisters) is stunning.

This was the view I was planning to photograph because, during the summer months, the sun sets in the north-west and late evening light falls across the glen and on to the mountain ridges. The composition I had in mind used the boulder-strewn grassy flank of Am Bodach in the foreground with the line of the spur of the outlying sharp ridge (which goes by the name of the Chancellor) leading the eye directly towards the mountains on the other side of the glen.

I had tried the same shot two years earlier but my hopes of some late

golden light had faded behind a wall of cloud on the western horizon. On this occasion, however, although there was a bank of cloud building from the south, to the west the cloud was broken with tantalising breaks for the sun to come through. Shafts of sunlight came and went as the evening progressed, intermittently lighting up the foreground and the background, but never both at once.

Setting up my tripod and attaching the cable release to the camera, I started photographing, fitting a 3-stop ND grad to prevent the bright areas in the sky from burning out. A small aperture of f/14 kept everything sharp. Checking the histogram, there was still some burnout in the brightest area of sky, so I reduced the exposure until the 'blinkies' disappeared. Working in aperture priority mode meant that exposure compensation changed the shutter speed, not the aperture. I fine-tuned my composition, moving higher up the slope so the line of the Chancellor wouldn't break the edge of Loch Achtriochtan further down the glen.

With about 20 minutes until sunset I finally got what I was looking for: a flood of golden sidelight across the foreground slope and the hills further down the glen. I couldn't have wished for better conditions, and the finger of light on the outlying ridge of the Chancellor



5 miles from Glencoe village • 90 miles from Glasgow **Access Rating**



How to get there From Glencoe village, take the A82 eastwards up through the glen for five miles to the lay-by on the left-hand side of the road, about 300m before the cottage of Allt na Reigh. Here you'll see the path ascending the flanks of Am Bodach. The path is good but it is steep most of the way to the top.

What to shoot Views across to the Three Sisters, down the glen to Loch Achtriochtan and up the glen towards Buachaille Etive Beag.

Best time of day First light and last light in summer will give good light on the hills opposite.

Nearest food/drink Glencoe Café, Glencoe Village, PH49 4HP, 01855 811168, glencoe cafe.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Clachaig Inn, Glencoe, PH49 4HX, 01855 811252, clachaig.com.

Other times of year All year round is good here. Around the autumn and spring equinoxes, the sun sets straight down the glen.

Ordnance Survey map LR 41

Nearby locations Buachaille Etive Mòr (5 miles); Rannoch Moor (10 miles).



made for a much stronger leading line. With composition and exposure already worked out I was able to shoot quickly, which was just as well because the light faded as quickly as it had appeared. Patiently, I waited for more light to break through, but the cloud that had steadily been building now filled in the western horizon. I knew the show was over for the day.

As I picked my way carefully down the hill in the gathering twilight, I felt the glow of satisfaction that comes when providence works in your favour

and all the elements in a scene come together to create a fleeting moment of beauty. One of the definitions of the word 'providence' is a timely preparation for future eventualities. There is surely a large element of this in landscape photography. You prepare by researching the location and where the light will fall, and by making sure you have all the kit you need. And then, after setting up, you just wait and see what happens, aware and responsive to the changing light and weather unfolding before you.

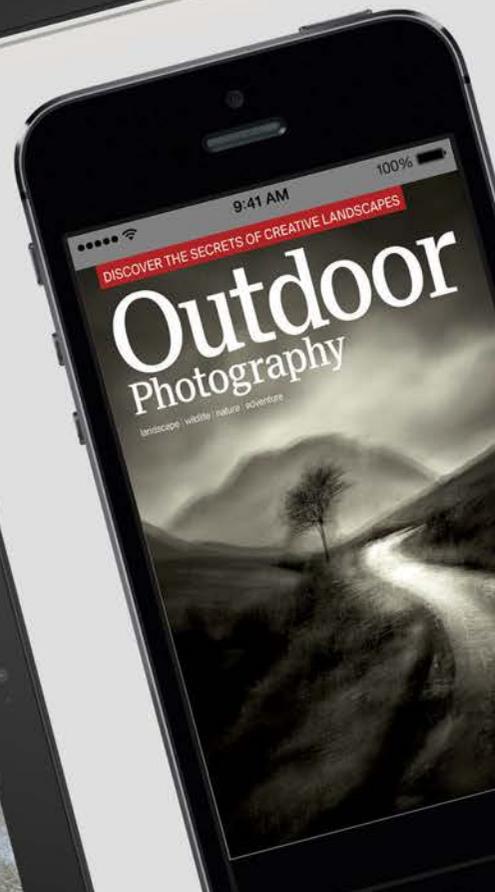
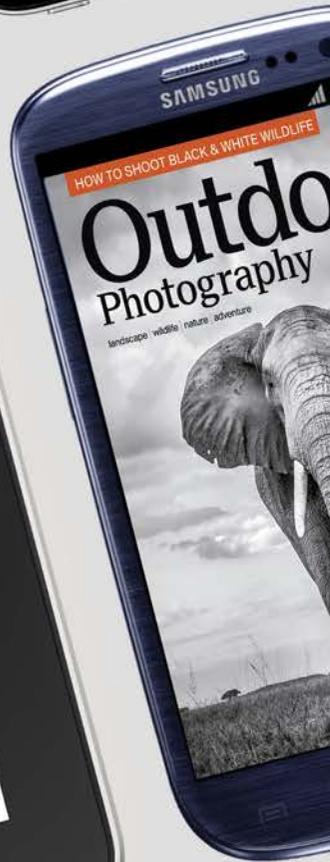
*Sony A7r with
16-35mm f/4 lens
at 16mm, ISO 100,
1/5sec at f/14,
3-stop ND grad,
cable release,
tripod*

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Sennen Cove | Cornwall

Keen to capture warm evening light on the rugged Cornish coast, David Chapman heads along the South West Coast Path and enjoys an impressive view towards Land's End

The three-mile walk from Sennen Cove to Land's End is one of the most popular in Cornwall, with the rugged cliffs resisting the force of the Atlantic. During spring and early summer, the beautiful wildflowers are a big attraction. It's also a great place for wildlife. Out to sea you might spot basking sharks and bottlenose dolphins, and there are even occasional whale sightings. On land, there is always the chance of seeing a chough or two, as well as ravens and peregrine falcons.

The cliffs here are high, so it is very important not to get too close to the edge. A sturdy tripod is essential because the winds can be severe.

I chose the lookout at Sennen Cove for this photograph. Standing on top of Mayon Cliff, about half a mile uphill from the cove, it gives a commanding view of the coast to the north and south-west. With the sun setting roughly in the west during August, there is a great opportunity to capture the warm light on the cliffs as well as some colour in the sky.

The granite rocks of the headland offer a sharp contrast to the softer texture

of the sea, which gave me a good chance to experiment with shutter speeds.

I used a 6-stop ND filter for this photo, which enabled an exposure of eight seconds, creating an appropriate level of movement in the water. I didn't like the effect of the long exposure on the

clouds, however. So, with the camera in exactly the same position, I took a second exposure with a much faster shutter speed and found the sharp edges to the well-defined clouds to be much more pleasing. Once at home, I merged the two photos to create this result.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 8sec at f/13, 6-stop ND filter, cable release, tripod; second image: ISO 200, 0.5sec at f/5.6

10 miles from Penzance • 36 miles from Truro **Access Rating**

How to get there Take the A30 from Penzance west towards Land's End. Turn right at the mini-roundabout to Sennen Cove. Follow this road to the small car park by the breakwater at the far end of Sennen Cove. From here, take the coast path south for about half a mile.

What to shoot From the lookout there is a view north to Sennen, with Cape Cornwall in the distance; you can use the rocks and footpath to lead the eye into the scene. Looking south-west (as in this photo) the view is of Land's End, with the distinctive sea stack known as the Irish Lady in the foreground.

Best time of day Sunset.

Nearest food/drink Old Success Inn, Cove Hill, Sennen Cove, TR19 7DG,



01736 871232, oldsucccess.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Old Success Inn – as above.

Other times of year Late spring and early summer for wildflowers.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 102

Nearby locations Land's End (2 miles); Porth Nanven (7 miles).

LOCATIONS GUIDE

VIEWPOINTS

Holywell Bay, Cornwall

Holywell Bay is a great location on the North Atlantic coast of Cornwall, with easy access from a nearby National Trust car park. There's a sweeping sandy beach, towering dunes, a headland and some distant rocks out to sea, which all make for interesting compositions. The tide here goes out quite a long way, so you can stay a few hours and get many different types of shots if you time it right.

How to get there From Newquay, head out of town on the A3058, turning left at the roundabout on to the A392 (Trevemper Road). At the next roundabout, turn right to join the A3075 and follow the road for a few miles before turning right on to High Lanes/Holywell Road. Follow this towards the coast, until you reach the National Trust car park right at the end.

What to shoot Sand dunes and grasses, headland, long exposures of waves on the beach, distant rocks out at sea and, as the tide recedes, patterns in the sand.

Best time of day Evenings for sunset shoots, as the beach faces north-west.

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

Nearest accommodation Highfields at Crantock, Halwyn Road, Crantock, TR8 5TR, 01637 830744, highfieldsatcrantock.co.uk. There is plenty of accommodation in the area, especially in Newquay, but book early as it can get very busy in summer.

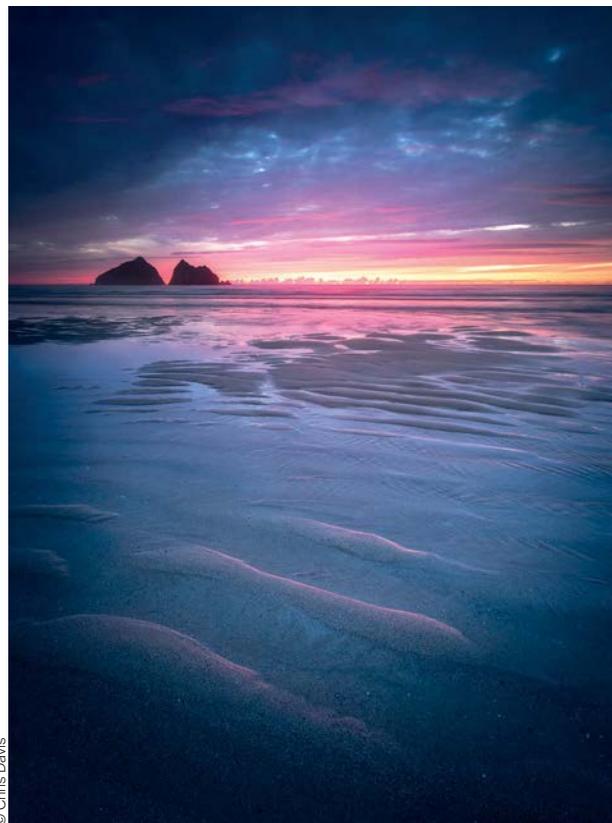
Other times of year All year round, but early summer is good for wildflowers.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 106

Nearby locations Bedruthan Steps (11 miles); Godrevy Lighthouse (20 miles).



© Chris Davis



6 miles from Newquay • 13 miles from Truro **Access rating**

5 miles from Leek • 16 miles from Stoke-on-Trent **Access rating**

Ramshaw Rocks, Staffordshire

Ramshaw Rocks, together with nearby Hen Cloud and the Roaches, forms a large gritstone escarpment on the south-western edge of the Peak District, and is now owned by the national park authority. The rocks show extensive weathering, which has given rise to a variety of shapes. One of these formations is known as 'The Winking Man'.

How to get there Ramshaw Rocks is just off the A53 Buxton to Leek road. From Leek, continue on the A53 towards Buxton, and take the left turning just after the two turnings for Upper Hulme (there is a house on the corner of the road). Follow the road up the hill and, after the right bend, park in the lay-by on the left. Cross over the road and take one of the footpaths to the top of the ridge.

What to shoot This location offers both wide vistas and close-up opportunities of rocks and wildflowers, as well as

moorland birds. There are many weird and wonderful rock shapes to include as the main subject, with the backdrop of Hen Cloud, the Roaches and Tittesworth reservoir in the distance. Hen Cloud in particular is covered with purple heather in August.

Best time of day This particular location suits sunset, but Hen Cloud and the Roaches opposite suit all times of day.

Nearest food/drink Roaches Tea Rooms, Roach Road, Upper Hulme, Leek, ST13 8TY, 01538 300345, roachestearooms.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Three Horseshoes, Buxton Road, Blackshaw Moor, Leek, ST13 8TW, 01538 300296, 3shoesinn.co.uk.

Other times of year All times of year are good here.

Ordnance Survey map OL 24

Nearby locations The Roaches and Roach End (2 miles); Earl Sterndale for views of Chrome Hill (8 miles).



© Mark Hellwell



Slioch, Highland

Slioch (the Spear) is a mountain that sits like a high sentinel at the lower end of Loch Maree, offering a wealth of photo opportunities. It's a long walk in through woodland, followed by a climb up through Coire Tuill Bhain, but once you're standing on the Torridonian sandstone of the upper reaches, the panoramic views are amazing.

How to get there From Inverness, take the A9 north. At Tore roundabout, take the A835 to Garve and, shortly after, take the turning for the A832 to Achnasheen. At the roundabout, continue along the A832 until just before Kinlochewe, turning up a small road to Incheril, where there is a car park.

What to shoot Sweeping views of the Torridon mountains, the Fisherfield hills and viewpoints along the length of Loch Maree with its small islands.

Best time of day Sunrise and sunset are good from the summit.

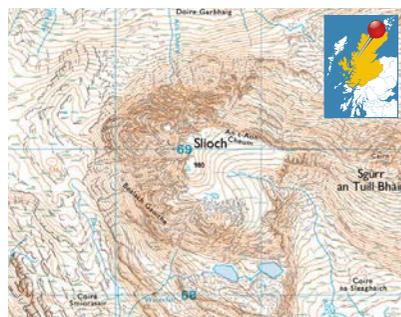
Nearest food/drink Whistle Stop Café, Old Village Hall, Kinlochewe, IV22 2PE. 01445 760423.

Nearest accommodation Kinlochewe Hotel, Kinlochewe, IV22 2PA, 01445 760253, kinlochewehotel.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn for the colourful foliage around Loch Maree, winter for snow.

Ordnance Survey map LR 19

Nearby locations Loch Maree (10 miles); Beinn Eighe (11 miles).



© Carlton Doudney



39 miles from Dingwall • 50 miles from Inverness

Access rating

1 mile from Kington • 22 miles from Hereford

Access rating

Hergest Ridge, Herefordshire/Powys

This elongated hill traverses the border between England and Wales, with the Offa's Dyke Path, one of Britain's national trails, following the border along the ridgeline. The view east is over the rolling patchwork countryside of Herefordshire, while the view west into Wales is more contoured with hills and valleys.

How to get there From Kington town centre, head west towards the A44, signposted for Rhayader. Follow the brown signs to Hergest Croft gardens, take a left on to Ridgebourne Road and continue past the gardens to a dead end. Park here, and go through the gate on to the Offa's Dyke Path up Hergest Ridge.

What to shoot On the summit there is an isolated clump of monkey-puzzle trees. On one side there are panoramic views of the Welsh hills, and in the other direction, rolling countryside.

Best time of day This is an ideal location at dawn or dusk. Being high up, it has uninterrupted views to the east and west.

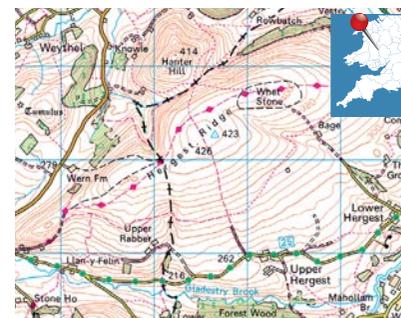
Nearest food/drink The Oxford Arms, Duke Street, Kington, HR5 3DR, 01544 230322, the-oxford-arms.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Bench Mark B&B, 21 Church Street, Kington, HR5 3BE, 01544 231994, thebenchmarkbnb.co.uk.

Other times of year The views would be lovely in autumn with the golden hues of the foliage. Similarly, a blanket of winter snow would transform the scene.

Ordnance Survey map LR 148

Nearby locations Hay Bluff (19 miles); Elan Valley (30 miles)



© James Osmond



© Izabela Janusz

Croyde Bay, Devon

Croyde Bay lies within the North Devon Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a stone's throw from Braunton Burrows – the largest sand dune system in England. In summer, the bay is usually crowded with surfers. This shot was taken at the end of the day, with the setting sun illuminating the golden sand.



How to get there From Barnstaple, take the A361 towards Braunton. When you reach Braunton, turn left on to the B3231 towards Croyde and follow the road all the way to the village. There are campsites all around; cutting through one of them, you will reach Croyde Bay. The closest to the bay is the Surfer's Paradise campsite. From there it's only a few minutes' walk.

What to shoot Sand dunes, waves, coastline and surfers.

Best time of day Evening and sunset, as the beach faces west.

Nearest food/drink Blue Groove

Restaurant, 2 Hobbs Hill, Croyde, EX33 1LZ, 01271 890111, blue-groove.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Dessy's B&B and Self Catering, Sandy Hollow, 20 Sandy Way, Croyde, EX33 1PP, 01271 890556, dessys-croyde.co.uk.

Other times of year Any time can be interesting. Visit in autumn for dramatic skies and the chance of mist, and winter for frost/snow and pink-hued skies.

Ordnance Survey map LR 180

Nearby locations Saunton Sands (2 miles); Exmoor National Park (15 miles).

10 miles from Barnstaple • 55 miles from Exeter

Access rating



Ronachan Bay, Argyll and Bute

The west coast of the Kintyre peninsula stretches for over 30 miles with several long, sandy beaches. The northern section of the peninsula has a couple of secluded bays where seals like to bask on the rocks just offshore. The west-facing bays are perfect viewpoints to capture sunsets over Islay and the Paps of Jura.

How to get there From Oban, take the A816 south to Lochgilphead and then the A83 south through Tarbert. Keep heading towards Campbeltown, and a couple of miles after passing through the village of Clachan there is a small car park on the seaward side. From here, a short footpath leads straight to the beach.

What to shoot Seascapes, wildflowers and sunbathing seals.

Best time of day Late summer evenings.

Nearest food/drink Argyll Hotel, Bellochantuy, Campbeltown, PA28 6QE, 01583 421212, argyllhotelkintyre.co.uk.

12 miles from Tarbert • 62 miles from Oban Access rating



© Aidan Maccormick

Nearest accommodation Argyll Hotel – as above.

Ordnance Survey map LR 62

Other times of year Autumn is a good

time to visit, when the stormy seas provide a dramatic backdrop.

Nearby locations West Loch Tarbert (10 miles); Gigha (12 miles).



© Steve Irwin



Tears Point, Swansea

At the western end of the fantastic Gower Peninsula, Tears Point rises above the Atlantic Ocean. Its dramatic limestone layers form curving bands that overlook the tidal island of Worm's Head to the west and Fall Bay and Mewslade Bay to the east. It is part of a national nature reserve. Scenery, sea and wildlife – what more could you want?

How to get there From Swansea, head west along the Gower on the A4118. At Scurlage, turn right on to the B4247 and follow this to Rhossili where parking is available in the National Trust car park. Once parked, follow the coast path west.

Where the footpath branches, take the southern path that leads to Tears Point.
What to shoot The dramatic coastline, and wildlife such as seals and seabirds.
Best time of day Late afternoon/evening. High tide is best when looking west, as Worm's Head becomes an island; mid to low tide is preferable when looking east across Fall Bay and Mewslade Bay.
Nearest food/drink The Bay Bistro,

Rhossili, Gower, SA3 1PL, 01792 390519, thebaybistro.co.uk.
Nearest accommodation The Worm's Head Hotel, Rhossili, Gower, SA3 1PP, 01792 390512, thewormshead.co.uk.
Other times of year Any time of year.
Ordnance Survey map Explorer 164
Nearby locations Worm's Head (0.6 miles via tidal causeway); Rhossili Bay (1 mile).

1 mile from Rhossili • 19 miles from Swansea **Access rating**

9 miles from Cardigan • 13 miles from New Quay **Access rating**



© Ron Evans



Tresaith, Ceredigion

Set in a small, sheltered sandy bay, Tresaith beach often has a tropical feel in settled weather, while at other times westerly winds bring much more dramatic scenes of waves crashing against cliffs and rocks. The waterfall at the northern end of the bay was created many millennia ago, when a glacier blocked and diverted the route of the river Saith, causing it to cascade directly on to the beach.

How to get there Turn off the A487 Cardigan to Aberystwyth road between Tanygroes and Sarnau, signposted for Tresaith and Penbryn.
What to shoot Coastal views and wildlife.
Best time of day Any time is good, but later in the day offers good opportunities

for photographing sunset, as the bay faces west. Conditions for the waterfall vary depending on the weather and the state of the tide.
Nearest food/drink The Ship Inn, Tresaith, Cardigan, SA43 2JL, 01239 811816, sabrain.com.

Nearest accommodation The Ship Inn – as above.
Other times of the year The wildflowers are stunning in late spring.
Ordnance Survey map Explorer 198
Nearby locations Penbryn (1.5 miles); Llangrannog (4.4 miles).

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Follow me, follow you

*Whatever direction our photography takes, it is likely that we will draw on others for advice and take inspiration from a wide range of sources along the way. No matter how individual the stories we seek to tell, **Paul Harris** believes that the guiding lights in our lives have a key role to play*

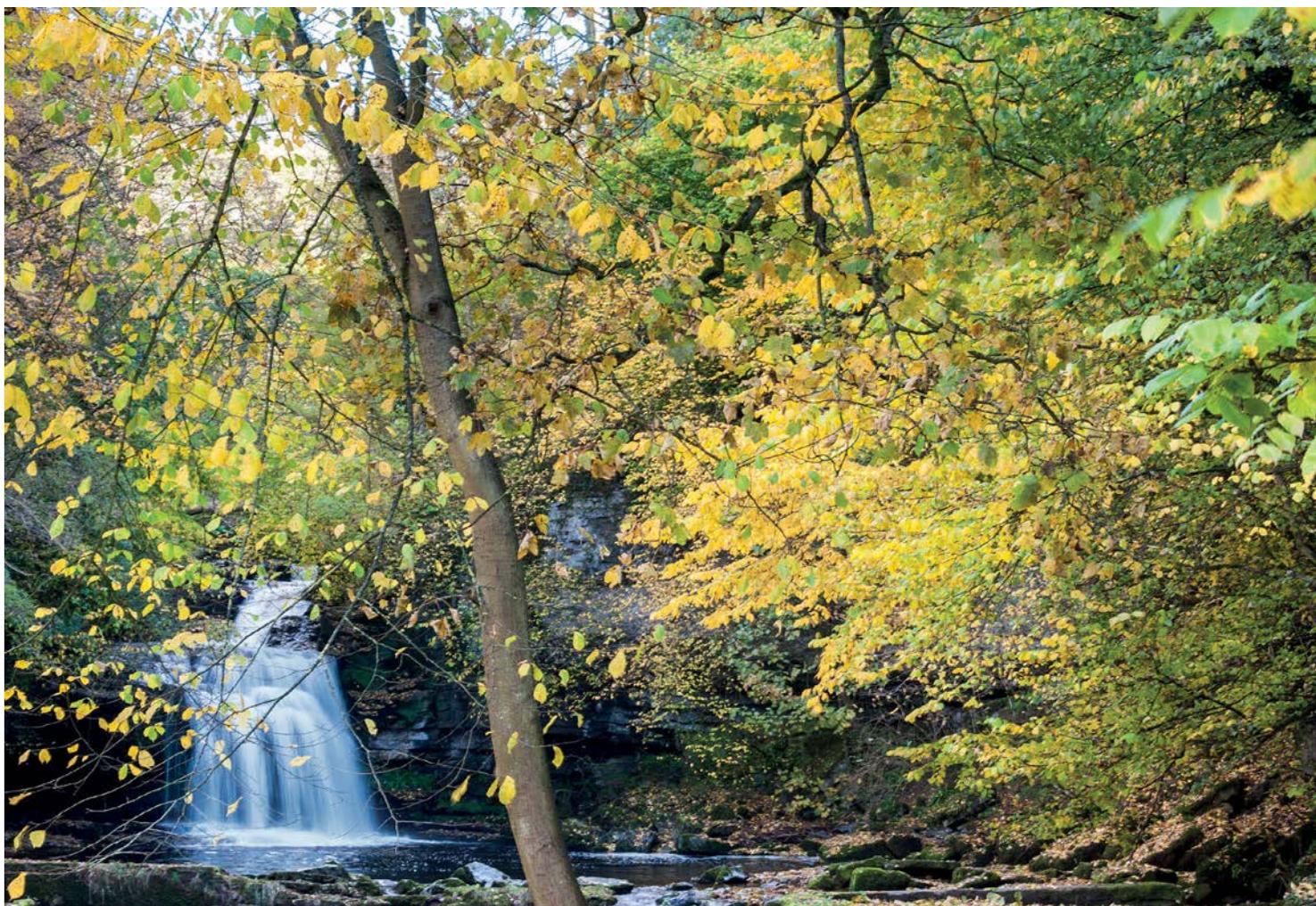
Wandering down a hidden ginnel in the heart of Gion, Kyoto's revered geisha district, my head is still spinning from daily doses of a samurai soap opera I have become mildly obsessed with. I don't have the slightest interest in home-grown soaps, but here they have a wildly entertaining 'keystone cops' atmosphere about them. And in an odd way they are helping to guide me through certain complexities of local culture that I am grappling with. A book of paintings of oriental gardens from my mother's extensive horticultural library and Felice Beato's exquisite hand-coloured photographic portraits from 19th-century Japan had been the catalyst for my initial visit. Twenty years on, I am in a state of enjoyment and confusion,

photographing these gardens on commission for a travel client and at the same time delving into a personal project on the importance of water in Japanese culture. There are, I discover, more than 15 different words in Japanese to describe the flow of water, which seems a little excessive but is typical of their attention to detail.

During that three-week spell in Kyoto, I was to get invaluable help from many quarters with language, logistics and red tape, including Matsuo Bashō, the 17th-century poet whose simple three-line haikus and wandering spirit helped to clear my head long enough to develop some visual building blocks with which to create my story. How we gather these elements and overcome technical or aesthetic obstacles

along the way varies considerably, but the chances are that at some point we have a real or imaginary guide. It could be a long forgotten book of illustrations, a passing comment from a bus passenger or a chance meeting with a formidable village chief or fellow artist that set you on your way.

A common spark is the attainment of your first proper camera. Frustrated by worthless images from a Kodak Instamatic, I pestered my gentle uncle who finally gave in and donated his ageing Voigtländer rangefinder to the cause on my 18th birthday. But I imagine the seed was already sown long before then, as various relatives, friends and teachers gave me the opportunity to experience the outdoors



Left Kyoto, Japan. Above West Burton waterfall, Yorkshire Dales.

and the wider world, instilling curiosity and engagement.

In my previous column I discussed those serendipitous moments that lead a photographer to a point of connection with the subject, hopefully resulting in an image that satisfies a craving and elicits emotion in others that perhaps they were not expecting. Isn't that the holy grail of why we pursue this craft?

It has proved to be the case many times for photographers just starting out as well as those who have been following their passion for many years. There is no quick fix. Some study, some assist and others remain purposefully ignorant of photography around them (not easy to do) and just absorb their surroundings until its treasures are revealed. In the latter category was my friend Neil, who I got to know a few years ago while quietly roaming the industrial landscapes of Teesside and making forays into the Yorkshire Dales. I was quickly drawn to his ephemeral and honest black & white images. Still relatively new to photography, he gladly accepted the compliment but was worried about whether he was doing it right. He needn't have worried. His images were very personal,

but I suggested he take a look at the work of other photographers, which he eventually did, but first he wanted more time to pursue his own vision.

Starting out nearly three decades ago, I was fortunate to spend two years studying documentary photography at Newport College of Art and Design in south Wales. Whether your passion was for landscapes, sports or nursing, it was a palpable interest in the world and your desire to document, rather than having a presentable portfolio, that garnered one of the oversubscribed places. The subject matter was not important. The purpose was to develop the skills needed to be a communicator, whether or not you wanted to pursue photography as a career. There were no rules as to what you photographed. I followed stories on the things that interested me at the time – the effect of water in the landscape; tattoo artists in the Welsh valleys; local community theatre in Cardiff.

Once let out into the real world, and like anyone surviving as a freelancer, I had to combine the commercial with the personal. I probably devoured more books, galleries and

magazines than was healthy. Seminal works such as *The Grand Trunk Road* by Raghurib Singh, *Mountain Light* by Galen Rowell and *The Horsemen of Afghanistan* by Roland Michaud, inspired and informed, but they were only the precursor to what I hoped to capture and experience first-hand on my own travels and expeditions. These guides, in all their forms, have an extremely important role to play, just as long as they are not allowed to 'wag the dog'.

Talking of canines, the training of search and rescue dogs in Snowdonia was one of the last projects I covered before graduation. It was cathartic and hugely influential for me. Not only did it allow me to spend time in mountains I loved and knew well; it was also fascinating to watch the dogs at work in pursuit of lost souls. I even offered myself up as a volunteer 'body' for them to find. Likely the dogs were blissfully unaware of their importance and value. To them, it was a huge game, following the scent at the end of which would hopefully be an extremely grateful, if exhausted but live human being. To me, the dogs and their handlers exemplified that perfect combination of guide, adventure and individual achievement.



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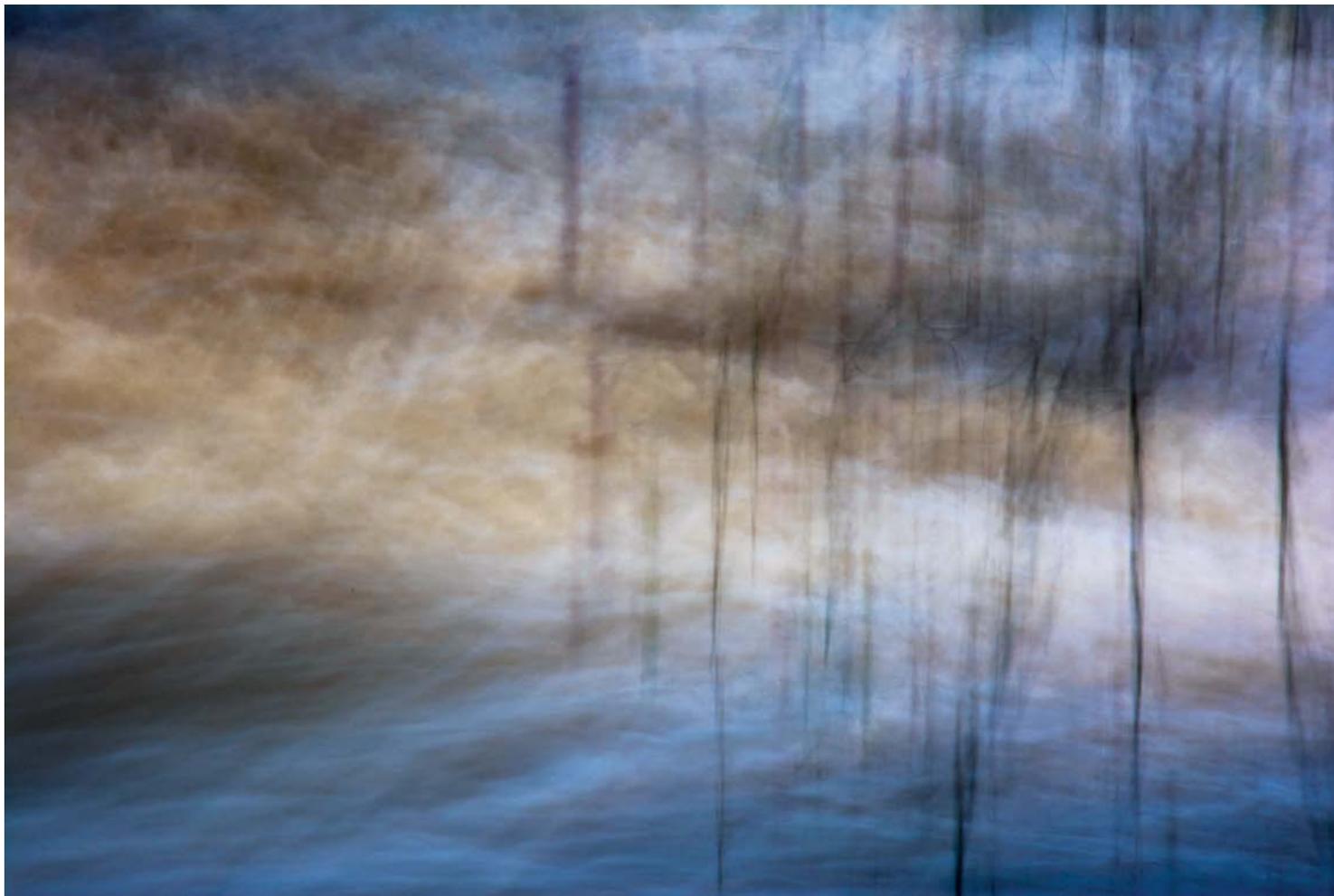
COMBINING A SPOTTING SCOPE AND A CAMERA **CAPTURING THE WONDER OF NATURE**

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READER GALLERY

Each month we publish the very best images from all those submitted for our Reader Gallery.

Turn to page 84 to find out how to enter your work. Here's this month's winner and our runner-up



Winner **Gilly Hopson**

My interest in photography was first sparked during visits to my uncle in North Yorkshire when I was in my teens. I was totally captivated by the stunning landscape, and my uncle, himself a very gifted photographer and artist, quickly realised he had an enthusiastic pupil on his hands. He taught me so much about photography and was also an excellent (and very honest!) critic of my work.

I find my inspiration in the beauty of nature and view my photography as an art form; therefore, many of my images have an ethereal and painterly feel to them. Other aspects of my work are influenced by my fascination for old, ruined buildings and the way in which nature so often claims them for its own, blending them seamlessly into the landscape. I have also recently discovered the joys of creating images

using intentional camera movement (ICM), especially with water and trees. Combine all this with my love of Britain's many ancient and sacred sites, which I often portray in my work, and you have my style: a somewhat strange mix of fine art and natural landscape, touching on the Gothic!

I now have over 25 years' experience in the field of photography. At one point I had a long break from it due to work and family commitments and feared I would lose my enthusiasm entirely, but since moving to Dorset five years ago my interest has been re-awakened.

Thanks to my very supportive partner I now concentrate fully on photography, and my ambition is to begin one-to-one tuition and workshops solely for women. I would also love to win a major photography competition.

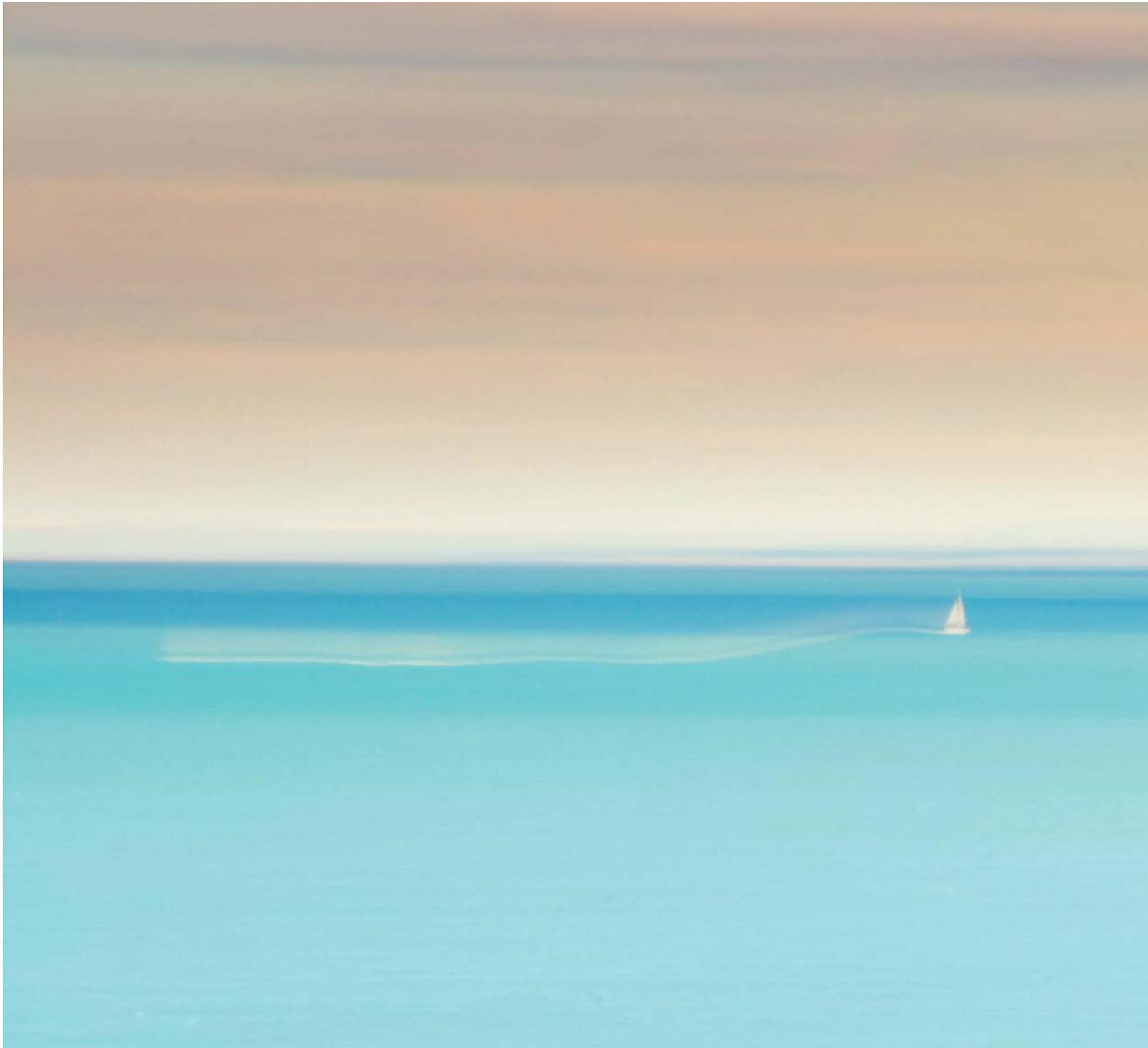
I regularly display my images locally, and also sell my work at art, craft and garden fairs.

Hometown Winterborne Whitechurch, Dorset
Occupation Full-time photographer
Photographic experience Over 25 years

*atmosphereimages
photography.co.uk*

'River and Reeds'

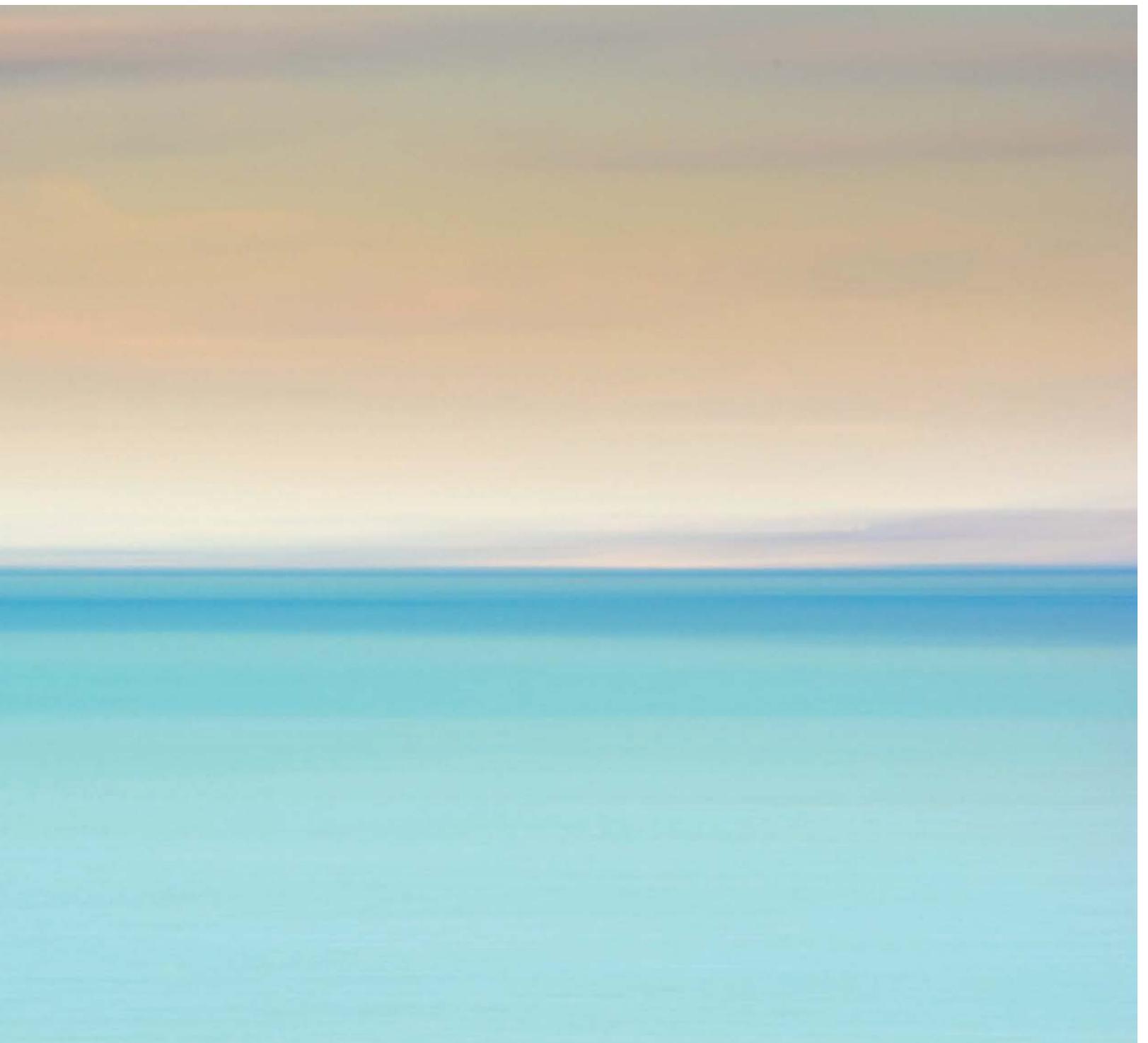
After a spate of heavy winter rain, the river Stour in Dorset had burst its banks. The noise of the water thundering over the weir at the mill was deafening, and I was trying to keep my equipment from becoming drenched with spray. I wanted to capture the drama of the scene and the fragility of the reeds, so used ICM. *Nikon D7100 with 18-105mm lens at 105mm, ISO 100, 4sec at f/36, ND filter*



'We are Sailing'

I had intended to take some shots of Old Harry Rocks, Dorset, but my attention was diverted by the sight of a yacht sailing across the amazingly blue sea; I decided it was the perfect opportunity for an ICM shot. It was an extremely windy day, but I managed to capture the image without throwing myself and my equipment over the edge of the cliff! I particularly love the sense of movement as the yacht wends its way towards the Isle of Wight in the distance.

*Nikon D7100 with 18-105mm lens at 105mm,
ISO 100, 1sec at f/25, ND grad*





Runner-up **Mat Robinson**

I'm not sure when I became a photographer. I remember being fascinated with an Ansel Adams photocard book from the age of four, but I only really started taking

photography seriously when I got hold of my first DSLR in 2010, 18 years later. It evolved from there and I soon found photography dominating many aspects of my life.

I've always loved big views. I was brought up in Richmond, North Yorkshire, so I was lucky to spend plenty of time in the Yorkshire Dales throughout my childhood. I guess my style has evolved to match that, chasing the wider views. I'm sure that some would class a lot of my work as cheesy and a bit clichéd, but they are the views that lure most of us in

in the first place, so why change? I'm continually drawn to eye-catching moments and love using the sun itself as a compositional element, rather than simply a source of light. Overall, though, when it comes to landscapes I tend to shoot a bit of everything.

For the past three years I've produced the cover for the official Yorkshire Dales annual guide, together with some internal images, and I work with Visit Peak District as one of their destination photography partners. I also run landscape photography workshops and have a permanent exhibition in the Penny Pot Café in Edale, Derbyshire.

I finished my PhD in cosmology last October, and now I hope to fulfil my aim of becoming a full-time photographer. It's a simple ambition, but one I'm sure many of us share.

Hometown York

Occupation Maths and physics tutor and part-time photographer
Photographic experience Six years
matrobinsonphoto.co.uk

Millstone Edge, Peak District. I was actually running a workshop around the Burbage Valley area when I took this. It was raining continuously and I think, more than anything on this day, the clients learnt never to give up. We headed away from the woods to find a wider view, and nature gave us this spectacular moment. I managed this lone shot while the others were snapping away.
Canon EOS 5D MkII with 17-40mm f/4 lens at 17mm, ISO 400, 1/5sec at f/16, MeFoto Roadtrip tripod

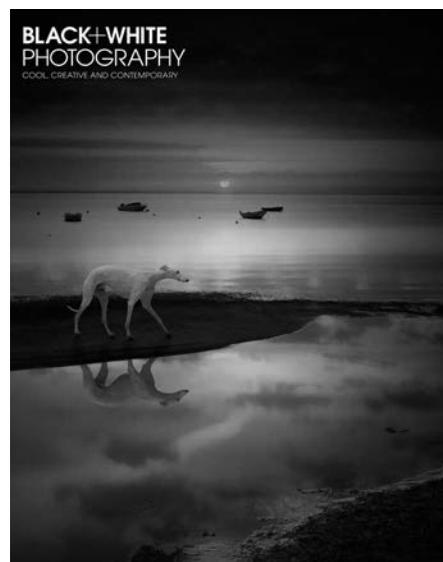
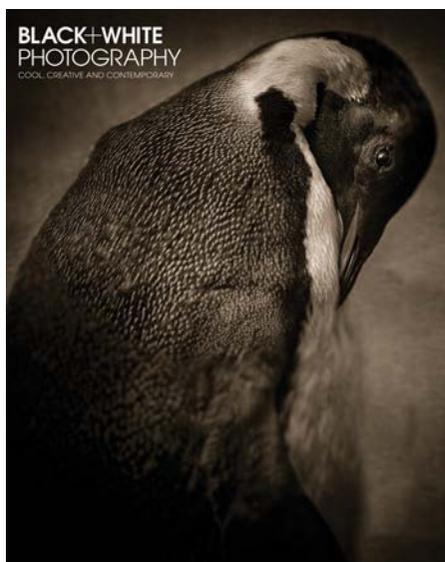
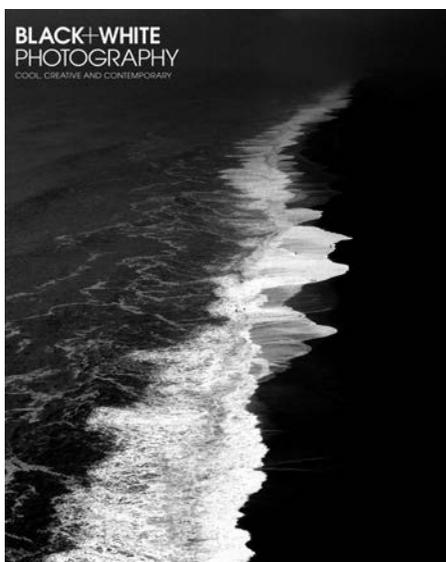
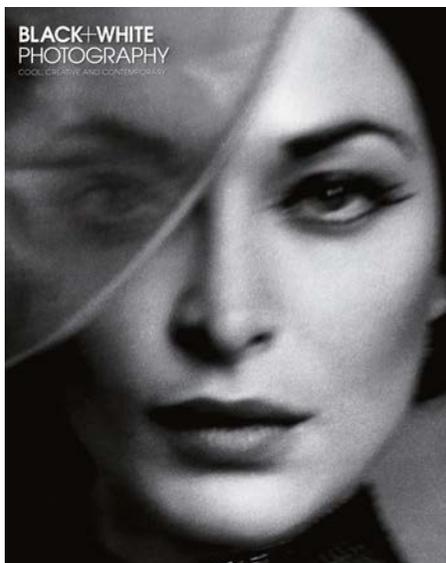
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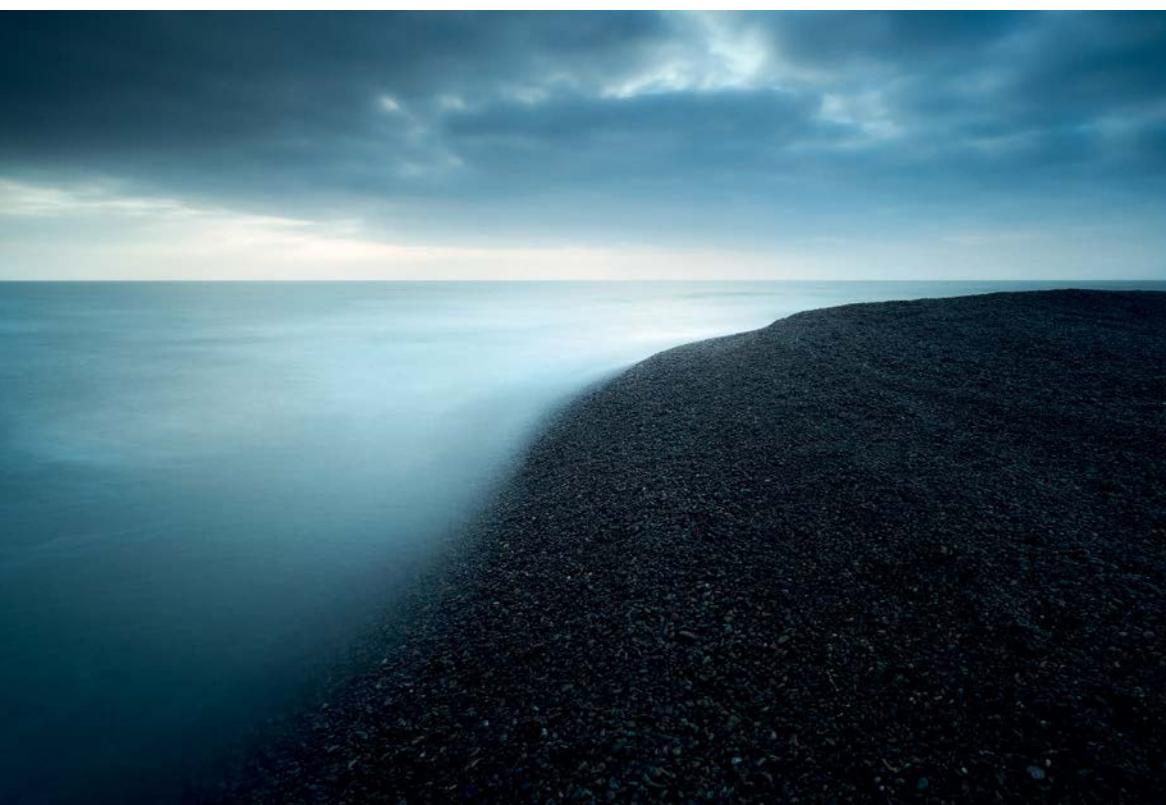
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Lee Acaster

East Anglia based graphic designer Lee Acaster is also a highly successful landscape photographer who doesn't like his day job to exert too much influence over his photography. Nick Smith puts him in the spotlight...



NS You've successfully raised your profile via competitions recently. Are you relatively new to photography?
LA I did a bit of photography at college 20 years ago, but I became more serious about it after I did a course in landscapes back in 2011. In between, I am a graphic designer working mainly on DVD, games and music sleeves. I think probably 98 per cent of photographers have similar careers!

NS How would you describe the style of your work?

LA First, I'm much more interested in trying to get across a mood rather than a realistic pictorial representation of what I can see. So it's more about the atmosphere and narrative of the photo. I like to try to put an element of unease or drama into my work, too. A lot of my images are quite dark and sombre, I suppose. I'm an optimistic person, but the atmosphere where I live (on the Norfolk/Suffolk border) is like those old Victorian ghost stories. The landscape can be quite sinister. It's very beautiful but not very nice. Perhaps there's a bit of Gothic fantasy in there.

NS Does your work as a graphic designer influence your post-production?

LA I have an open mind. It's all about the image. I don't really care too much about how I get there, but I do like to get it right in the camera, which is why I tend to take a lot of variations of my shots. I have all the digital skills because of my job, but because I use them all day in a professional context I try to stay away from too much of that when it comes to my photography. I enjoy my job, but it doesn't give me the creative release that photography does.

NS Your photography seems to concentrate on your local landscapes...

LA Apart from one or two trips a year it's all Norfolk and Suffolk basically. I live on the border of those two counties, and so if something's within



an hour of me then that's just about right. I moved here from London about five years ago, but I'm from Yorkshire originally. The part of Yorkshire I'm from is very flat and arable and it's quite similar here. I like the starkness and openness of that. Flat horizons, huge skies. And so the light becomes more important than the details.

NS Does East Anglia feel like a big change from London?

LA Yes. I'm much more aware of the natural ambience here. In the city you lose touch with the seasons because it's so built up and you only really notice the extremes of weather. Here, you can be much more in tune with the differences between morning and evening. I'm a nature lover and so I'm happier when I'm out in the landscape. Wild horses wouldn't make me go back now.

NS But you've decided to remain an amateur?

LA Very much so. I have a young family and I run a business, so my photography is restricted to two or three mornings a week before work. But the upside is that because I don't need to make money, I can shoot for myself. Because my work is very sombre, I can't exactly see it hanging on many café walls.

NS But you still enter a lot of photography competitions?

LA Yes, I do. But I enter them in quite a speculative way because, really; I don't care that much about the outcome. It's nice to know that other people like your work, but I do it for me, really.

NS What's the long-term plan?

LA My work seems to have a few different styles and I think that's

because there's no particular aim, or rather there is a lot of freedom. That's because I don't need to make money from the photography. Although I'd love to spend all day taking photographs, the idea of becoming a professional doesn't appeal to me at all. If I was shooting to pay the mortgage or because I was on commission, I think that would take a lot of pleasure out of it.

Top left Shingle Street, Suffolk.

Bottom left Fishing huts at Winterton-On-Sea, Norfolk.

Above Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk.

Lee's top tips

One thing I never go on a shoot without is... a destination in mind. If you don't know where you're going it can all go horribly wrong.

My one piece of advice would be to... not to listen to too much advice. Shoot what appeals to you, rather than what you think will appeal to others.

Something I try to avoid is... the obvious. I try to look into things a bit deeper than that.

Lee's critical moments

To see more of Lee's work, visit leecaster.com

2011 Attended first landscape photography workshop.

2013 Had first images published.

2014 Various competition successes, including overall winner of British Wildlife Photographer of the Year.

2015 Held first exhibition and had images commended in Outdoor Photographer of the Year and Landscape Photographer of the Year for second year running.

Carla Regler

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Loch Etive from Ben Cruachan summit, Glencoe, Argyll.

THIS LAND

We are fortunate in Britain to have a wonderful variety of landscapes, and photographer Joe Cornish and writer Roly Smith have brought together their own personal favourite geological locations in this stunning new book. Here's just a handful of the 50 inspiring places they chose

To journey across Britain from the east to the west coast is to travel 500 million years back in time. The extraordinary diversity of British geology means that this time-travelling experience transports you back into the unfathomable depths of geological time, to the very dawn of Planet Earth.

It should be emphasised that *This Land* does not constitute a 'Best of Britain', or any other kind of arbitrary listing. Rather, it is a considered personal extract from the thousands of places from which Britain is formed, an extract that aims to represent the variety and scope of the British landscape. It is essentially a personal choice, one that allows both writer and photographer to reflect on experiences in places that have defined our sense of what landscape itself can be.

A sprinkling of anecdotes tell of the experiences the authors have had in reaching and enjoying these places,

and there's some background information on their geology, history and wildlife.

A word should perhaps be said about the title. 'This Land' has references to Woody Guthrie's unofficial American national anthem, 'This Land is Your Land', written in 1940. But it also encapsulates the wide-ranging nature of Joe Cornish and Roly Smith's choices, which are designed to appeal to all who agree with them that we are privileged to live in one of the most diverse, historic and beautiful landscapes on the planet.

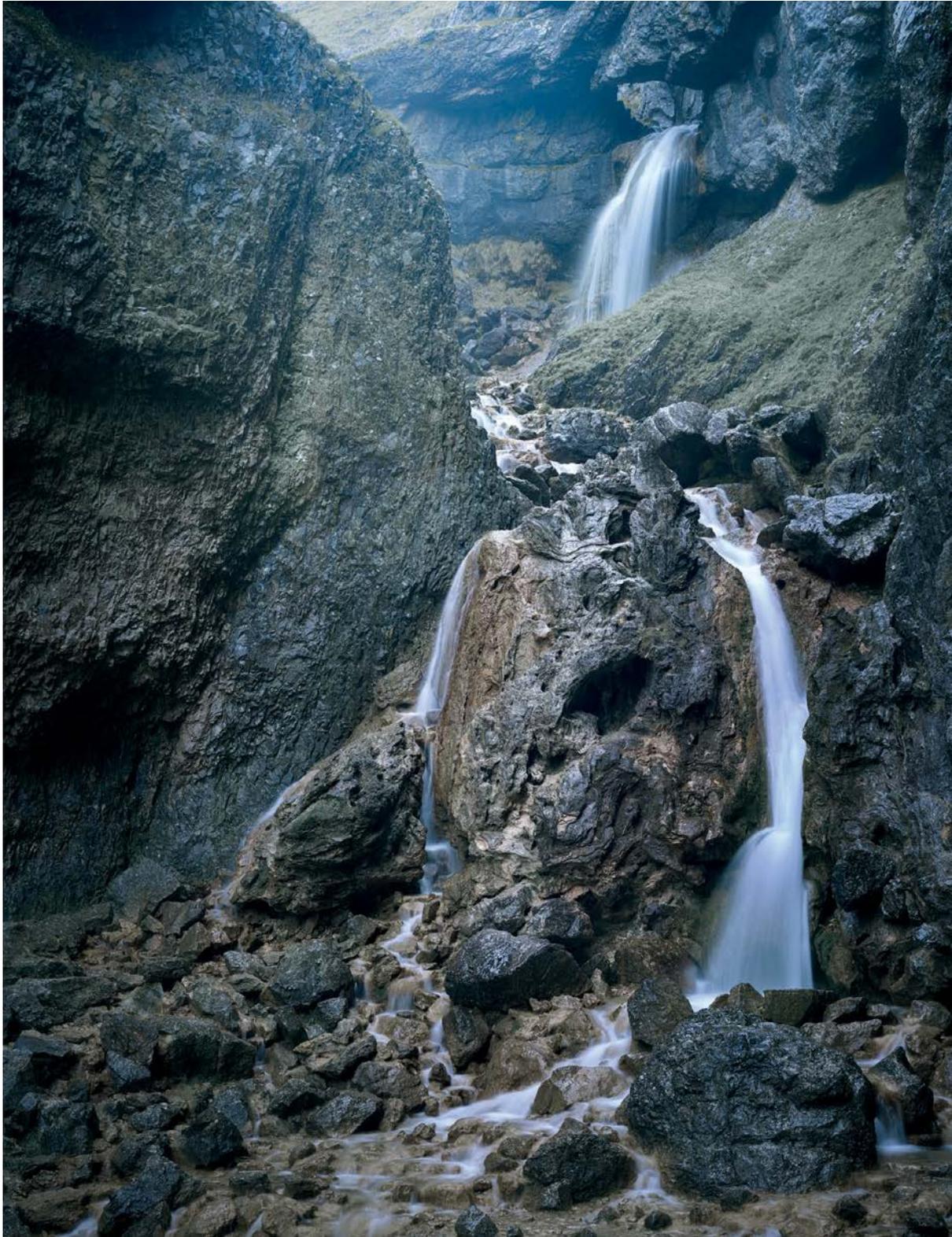
It should be made clear that to see these sublime landscapes, it is often necessary to wander far beyond the beaten track. You will sometimes need to walk – as Nancy Newhall so memorably put it in *This is the American Earth* (1960) – 'where only the wind has walked before' to really appreciate and savour 'This Land'.

PHOTO SHOWCASE



The two Buachailles from Lochan Urr, Glencoe, Argyll.

'I'll never forget my first encounter with Buachaille Etive Mòr, that rocky epitome of mountain grandeur that stands sentinel at the eastern entrance to Glencoe,' says Roly Smith. 'It was 50 years ago, and I was in a party of four friends from our East Anglia village, on holiday to Scotland for the first time and all crammed into our "sturdy and dependable", sit-up and beg, 1949 Ford Popular. As we approached Kingshouse, the Buachaille burst into view – a perfect cone granite riven with dark gullies and soaring ridges that led to a temptingly pointed summit.'



Gordale Scar, Yorkshire Dales.

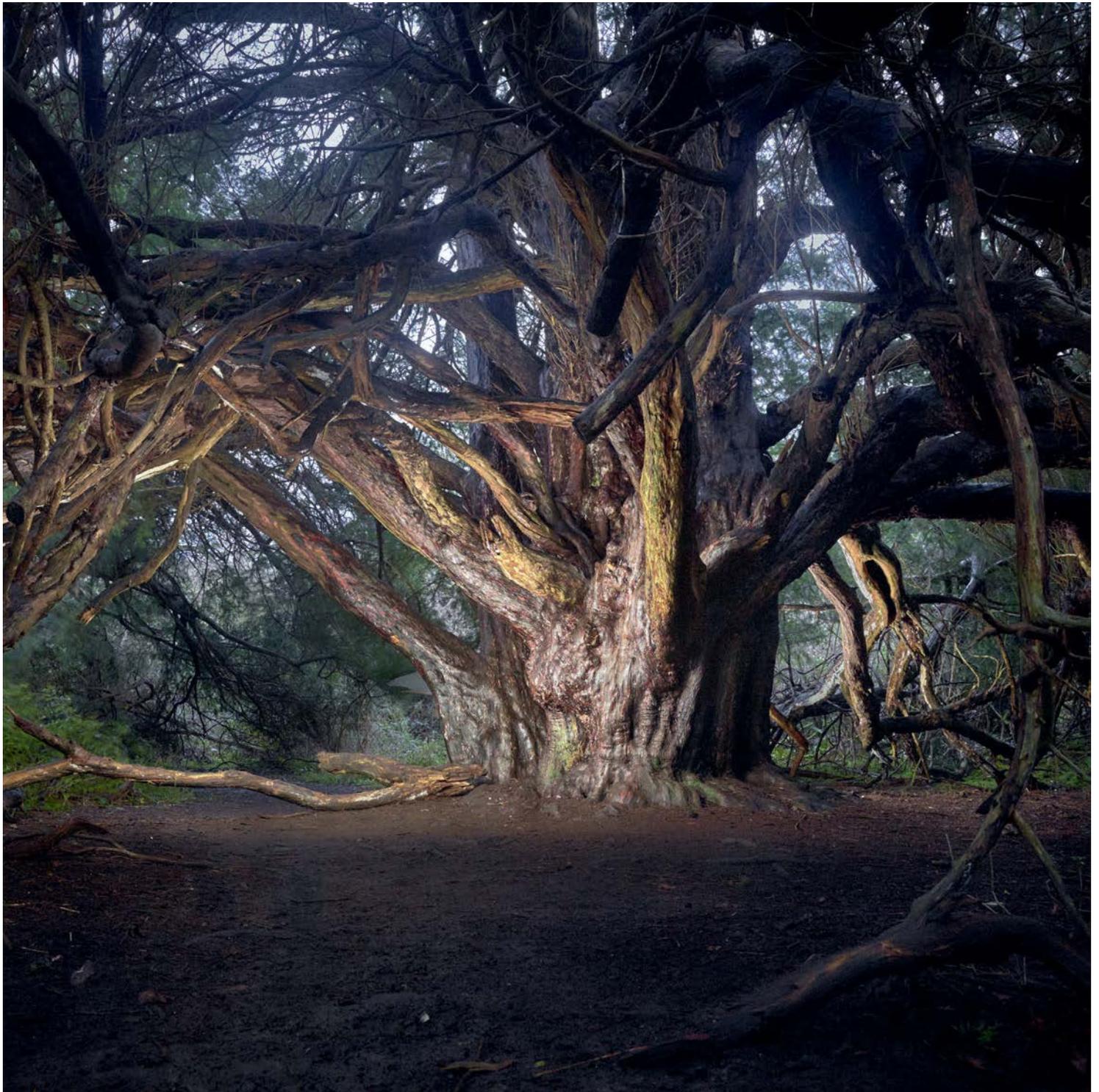
James Ward's massive 1815 painting of Gordale Scar in London's Tate gallery is considered by many to be a masterpiece of the philosophy of the sublime in English Romantic painting. Working in the last years of the Napoleonic Wars, Ward set out to depict a primordial national landscape. The threat of war is conveyed by the boiling clouds in the stormy skies above and the dark, impending walls of limestone, and the twin waterfalls at the centre of the gorge add a dramatic flash of light and movement. Ward deliberately emphasised the height and scale of the cliffs by subtly manipulating his perspective.

PHOTO SHOWCASE



Beinn Eighe and Liathach, Upper Loch Torridon, Highland.

It is a tough five-mile walk in from Glen Torridon to reach Choire Mhic Fhearchair (pronounced 'Corry Veek Errecher'): surely one of the grandest and most imposing sights in the Scottish Highlands. Its 380m-high face is riven by deep gullies into three huge bastions; giving it the popular name of Triple Buttress. The lower halves of these tremendous buttresses are banded with horizontal layers of red sandstone, and the upper half with shining white quartzite.

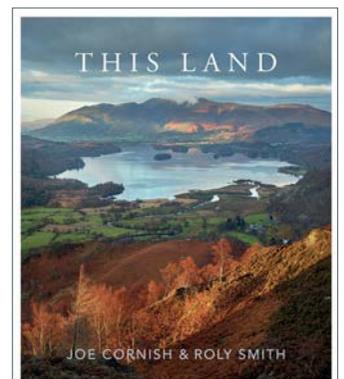


Kingley Bottom, West Sussex.

Kingley Bottom is tucked away in a chalky fold of Stoke Down and Bow Hill, near the village of West Stoke about three miles to the north-west of Chichester. The secret, dark and brooding forest of yews is said to be the largest and finest in Europe. A walk through these incredibly ancient trees transports you through a magical, fairy-tale, Arthur Rackham landscape of tortured, twisted trunks and dark, cave-like clearings, where you half expect to see Rackham's sweet-winged fairies or wizened gnomes peeping out. This venerable yew shown here may be into its second millennium.

All images by Joe Cornish

*This Land, with
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Joe Cornish and
words by Roly
Smith, is published
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NATURE ZONE

DISCOVER

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Life in the wild

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photo guide

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with nature

80 **Steve Young's**
On the wing



WHEN ARE SNAKES ACTIVE?

Laurie Campbell advises on the best times to capture British reptiles



Life in the Wild

When it comes to photographing nature, sometimes the experience of simply being in the moment is more valuable than anything our cameras can record, as Laurie Campbell found recently when he was tasked with capturing images of the Isle of Rum's Manx shearwaters

My first experience of the sound of a Manx shearwater colony in full flow came some years ago when I was in a rock hide I'd constructed overlooking a golden eagle eyrie on the Isle of Rum. I was almost halfway through a year-long commission from Scottish Natural Heritage to photograph the plants and wildlife on this diamond-shaped national nature reserve, which, at 60 square miles, is the largest in the group of the four islands known as the Small Isles in the Inner Hebrides.

Golden eagles were a priority species to photograph, and because I was working alone I needed to enter the hide at night to avoid being seen. It had been a gruelling two-and-a-half hour trek carrying a 120-pound pack containing everything



Above Admittedly this is not a particularly inspiring photograph, but it was a challenge just to focus on this Manx shearwater in near dark conditions with only a red headlamp.
Nikon F5 with 70-180mm f/4.5 Nikon macro lens, Fuji Provia ISO 100, 1/125sec at f/8, flash

Left The boulder-strewn hillside of Hallival presented lots of choice of rock shapes to experiment with, and I worked until it was almost dark to shoot as many different compositions as I could.
Nikon F5 with 17-35mm f/2.8 lens, Fuji Velvia ISO 50, 1/30sec at f/16, polariser, mirror-lock, cable release, tripod

I would need to spend three days and nights in the hide, but I had reasoned that it was better to make one big effort to haul the extra kit required for a longer stay, rather than repeat the experience with a little less gear three times over.

As I settled into the comfort of my sleeping bag on the floor of the hide, the eerie sound of Manx shearwaters calling from the nearby mountain of Hallival started. I soon began to appreciate why the Norsemen who had visited Rum centuries earlier had named a neighbouring peak in the Rum Cuillin 'Trollval', meaning 'Hill of the Trolls'.

Photographing the shearwaters was another priority for my commission, and I returned to the island the following month, this time with my family. On a sunny July afternoon, but with a mixed weather forecast, my eldest son Ben and I set off into the mountains. We arrived at the bealach between Hallival and Barkeval and pitched our bivi tents before exploring the surrounding area for signs of shearwaters and to photograph their nesting burrows, which they only return to at night.

After dinner, the sky looked ominous and a high wind picked up. With the start of a heavy shower we retreated to a low-slung wooden refuge hut used by researchers. It was secured to the ground with wire cables, and even the low door was reduced to half-height to enhance the structural integrity of the building. This was not without good reason because over the next 16 hours we experienced some of the worst that



Scottish weather can muster at altitude in summer.

After the storm passed we made our way back down the mountain to Kinloch Castle where my wife, Margaret, and younger son Callum were staying. The rainfall had been so severe that the track to Harris on the other side of the island had been badly washed out and was barely navigable with our Land Rover Defender two days later.

It was to be another five weeks before I could return to the Rum shearwater colony and photograph

them. My coverage of the birds was competent, but little more than record shots; as sometimes happens when photographing nature, the images didn't quite compare with the experience of simply being there. Sitting alone on the terraces of Hallival watching the moon rise over the Skye Cuillin in the distance, and listening to the cacophony of howls, screams and shrieks from all round, I felt the urge to share the experience so I telephoned Margaret at 2am. She was not amused. She should, of course, simply have been there.

Above The view at dawn to Skye from the Rum Cuillin and over Kinloch Bay. *Nikon F5 with Nikon 80-200mm AF f/2.8 lens, Fuji Velvia ISO 50, 1/60sec at f/11, mirror-lock, cable release, tripod*

More about Rum's 'manxies'

» With over 60,000 pairs, the Manx shearwater colony on Rum is thought to contain around one third of the world's population of these seabirds. Although their scientific/Latin name is *Puffinus puffinus*, they bear no relationship to Atlantic puffins; they are actually from the family of 'tube-billed' seabirds, which includes fulmars and albatrosses. Like these bigger and more robust species, Manx shearwaters can cover huge distances with very little effort, by gliding low over the sea. They need to, because these are migratory birds that breed in the UK and Europe but spend the winter in the South Atlantic, mostly off the coasts of Brazil and Argentina. Given that

many Manx shearwaters can live beyond 50 years, it has been estimated that some individuals will clock up well over one million miles on migration alone.

» Being vulnerable to attack from gulls and raptors, Manx shearwaters only return to their nesting burrows in the mountains under the cover of darkness, and this explains why they rely so much on sound; they produce an array of bizarre vocalisations to communicate with each other. During the day, Manx shearwaters spend their time out at sea, often in great rafts; when seen in flight this has earned them the term 'sea midges' in reference to the dense

swarms of biting insects for which Rum is also renowned.

» Inhabited for centuries, much of the landscape of Rum is fairly barren, having been stripped of tree cover. There is an ongoing project to restore the island's wooded areas, however, and well over one million trees have been planted around Kinloch Glen in the east. The most fertile parts of the interior and mountain slopes are in fact around the shearwater colonies, where generations of birds have deposited large amounts of nutrient-rich droppings, creating fertile areas known locally as the 'shearwater greens'.

WHAT TO SHOOT THIS MONTH...

Laurie's August highlights



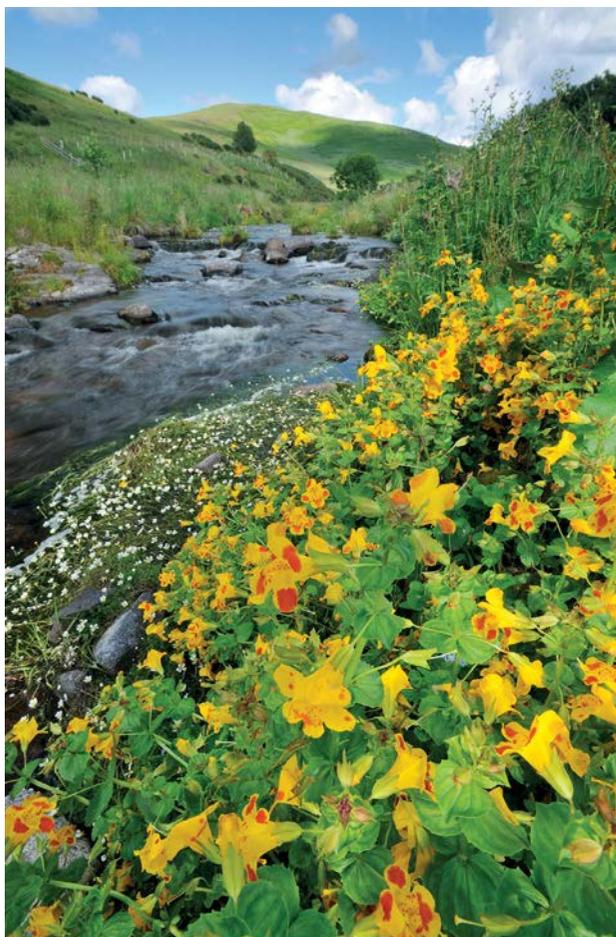
▲ With long summer days and hopefully high temperatures to match, you may be forgiven for thinking that this is a good time to look for basking reptiles to photograph. Well, this is not exactly the case. Although all six species of UK reptiles are active in warm weather, because they are cold-blooded they are only able to regulate their body temperature through their surroundings. Too hot, and they risk overheating and must retreat to cover – so it follows that it is best to avoid looking for reptiles in the middle of the hottest days.

Nikon D4 with Voigtlander 120mm f/2.5 macro lens, ISO 250, 1/400sec at f/4, handheld



▲ The **red admiral butterfly** (*Vanessa atalanta*) is one of the largest species in the UK to still be seen on the wing from now until September. They are fairly catholic in the species of plants they feed on, which is probably just as well because the choice of native plants flowering diminishes rapidly as late summer moves to early autumn. A welcome bonus for insects such as butterflies, bumblebees and hoverflies is the presence of many species of cultivated plants to be found in gardens. Of these, the flowers of the 'ice plant' is one of the best to watch.

Nikon D4 with Sigma 15mm f/2.8 diagonal fisheye, ISO 640, 1/160sec at f/16, handheld



◀ **Blood-drop emlets** (*Mimulus luteus*) may seem a sinister-sounding name for a plant, but it is actually fairly innocuous, apart from the fact that it isn't strictly native and has established itself on the banks of our rivers, streams and freshwater wetlands. Sometimes called the monkeyflower, a variation of this plant has plain yellow flowers, lacking the red spots.

Nikon D3X with 17-35mm f/2.8 lens at 17mm, ISO 200, 1/5sec at f/20, polariser, cable release, tripod

▲ The calves of **red deer** (*Cervus elaphus*) born in June are now highly mobile and will have lost their spotted coat markings long ago. They remain close to their mothers, who are very protective of them, so there is scope to photograph them interacting with other hinds in defence of their calves. If you see any signs of such behaviour, stay with them to record any action.

Nikon D3S with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 500, 1/500sec at f/4.5, beanbag, stalked

More seasonal subjects...

Flora

Sea aster (*Aster tripolium*) – a purple-flowered member of the daisy family that's found mainly on the upper shore of saltmarshes.

Great bindweed (*Calystegia sylvatica*) – a creeping, climbing plant of hedgerows with large trumpet-shaped white flowers.

Grass of parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) – a wildflower that grows in clusters with white flowers atop tall stalks.

Fauna

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) – primarily a summer visitor that drops in on wetlands to feed to refuel before heading south to its wintering grounds.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) – distinctive wading birds that gather on the coast in summer and roost in large numbers at high tide.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) – from now until mid-September, these congregate in flocks with house martins.



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World wildlife spectacles

Polar bears, Norway

Lying between mainland Norway and the North Pole, Svalbard is one of Europe's last great wildernesses. A land of vast ice sheets, beautiful fjords and dramatic mountains, the archipelago has more polar bears than people, and is a great place to see them in their natural habitat. Most wildlife tours and safaris take place between May and September, when the perpetual sunlight of summer brings even more magic to the elemental landscapes. As well as polar bears, you're likely to see reindeer, arctic foxes, walrus and seals.

Southern right whales, South Africa

Every year, thousands of southern right whales migrate from their icy feeding grounds in Antarctica, arriving in the warm coastal waters off the Western Cape of South Africa from June. The peak calving season is July and August, but whales can be seen through September and October. The seaside town of Hermanus on the south coast is one of the main

places where whales raise their calves just off of the shoreline. The Western Cape is one of the few places in the world where you can enjoy land-based whale watching, but if you want to get even closer, a number of cruises are available.



Ken C. Moore/Shutterstock.com

Summer nature experiences to inspire

Following on from last month, here are seven more top summer nature experiences the UK has to offer...

1 Meet Cardigan Bay's resident dolphins

Join researchers as they survey the resident bottlenose dolphins of Wales' largest bay. Leaving from New Quay, the boat trips are between one and eight hours in length, and adult tickets cost from £15. Passenger numbers are limited to 12, so there's plenty of room to move around the boat and take photos.

dolphinsurveyboattrips.co.uk

2 Explore a Chilterns beauty spot after dark

On a sunny summer's day, Aston Rowant nature reserve in the Chilterns is full of wildflowers and butterflies, but after dark there's the chance of seeing something a bit different: when conditions are right (still, warm evenings are best, preferably with a crescent moon) dozens of female glow-worms light up the grassland as they try to attract a mate.

chilternsaonb.org



3 Discover Northern Ireland's wild Antrim coast

The Giant's Causeway is world-famous for its basalt columns, but take a few steps beyond the geological tourist attraction to discover a wealth of wildlife – from colourful lichens and rare wildflowers, to birds such as fulmars, oystercatchers and rock pipits. It's also great for rockpooling: limpets, sea anemones and cushion starfish are just a few of the creatures you might encounter.

nationaltrust.org.uk/giants-causeway

4 Take a boat trip to the Bay of Biscay

Enjoy a whale and dolphin watching cruise from Portsmouth or Plymouth to the Bay of Biscay. More than

30 species of cetaceans have been recorded in the rich waters of the bay, including bottlenose dolphins, fin whales and sperm whales. It's also a hotspot for seabirds such as shearwaters, gannets and storm petrels.

brittany-ferries.co.uk/offers/mini-cruises



Martin Fowler/Shutterstock.com

5 Put your dragonfly ID skills to the test

A mosaic of wetland habitats in the Lee Valley Country Park, Cornmill Meadows in Essex is home to an array of dragonflies and damselflies. Stroll along the paths of the Dragonfly Sanctuary on a sunny day in August and you're likely to see most of the 21 species that breed here.

visitleevalley.org.uk

6 Get a unique perspective on bats

For a unique nature experience, join Wildlife Trust guides on a Bat Punt Safari on the river Cam in Cambridge. Taking place on Friday evenings and selected Saturday evenings throughout summer, the tours include the use of electronic bat detectors. Tickets cost £20 for adults and £15 for children under 16, and 50% of proceeds go directly to the local Wildlife Trust.

wildlifebcn.org/events/bat-punting-safaris

7 Go otter spotting in western Scotland

The wild and remote Morvern peninsula in Argyll is one of the best places in the country to see otters during daylight hours. Visit the shores of Loch Aline on the

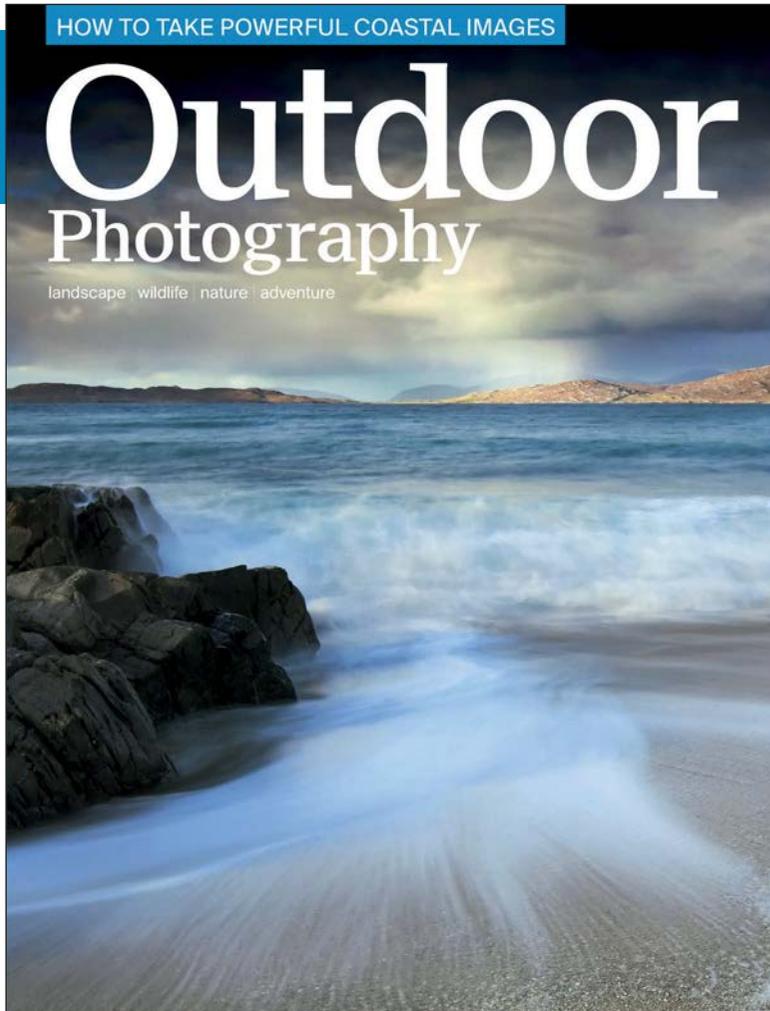


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Ardtornish Estate in August and you might be lucky enough to see families with their cubs.

ardtornish.co.uk

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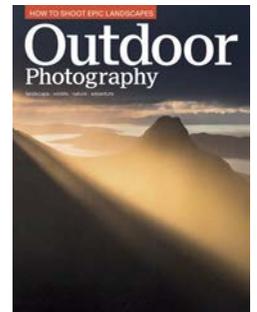
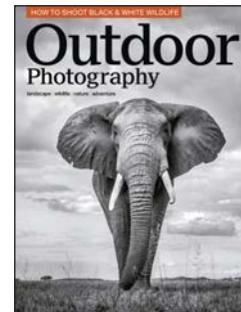
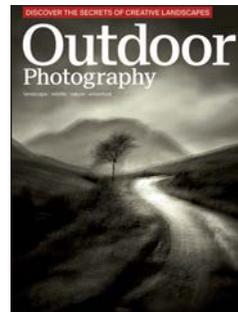
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A4995



Notoriously secretive, the pine marten is one of the trickiest animals to see in the wild in the UK, let alone photograph, but Argyll-based Sandra Price has created a collection of fabulous images that capture all aspects of their behaviour. Here, she reveals why a healthy wildlife obsession has been the key to her success

‘So, what are your hobbies and interests?’ the gentleman asked in a soft Scottish drawl. I paused before replying. ‘Well, I have a passion for nature and an obsession with wildlife photography.’ With a broad smile I was offered assurance; ‘Ah, well you will be at home here. We have red squirrels, deer, buzzards, pine martens...’ It’s been three years since I got the job on the idyllic Scottish estate where I now live and work, and I still cannot recall the end of his sentence; the mention of pine martens had set my heart and mind racing.

In that interview situation I had hesitated to use the word ‘obsession’, as some people are uneasy with such emotive language, but there was no other word that I could have used. In order to start trying to learn about pine martens, one of the UK’s most elusive creatures, obsession was a prerequisite. It has been my

friend and foe, the cause of laughter, frustration and tears. It has brought me intimacy, knowledge, respect and, ultimately, images.

One evening, with golden rays of sun warming my shoulders, I explored the woods; light was going to form the basis of this particular project. Pine martens are generally nocturnal; therefore my aim of photographing them in their natural habitat in daylight, and without the aid of remote triggers or flash, was challenging to say the least. The site I eventually found was centred on an old oak tree, adorned with lush green ferns, half fallen branches and, above all, the potential of catching the sumptuous light created by those famous Scottish west coast sunsets.

Sitting in my hide I watched in amazement as three energetic pine marten kits clambered over each other and their mother, who had brought them for an evening outing. One stood

on its back legs and sniffed the air, aware of my presence but impervious to it; the time and effort I had put into the project had come to fruition. Despite all my planning, however, the one thing I hadn’t considered was the speed of their movement. With three young martens scampering around tree trunks and clambering over branches, it was very difficult to know not only where to point my lens, but also where to look! The fun factor was immense and I frequently had to put my hand across my mouth to stifle giggles as each pine marten seemed to try to surpass the others’ antics.

Each year I spend in the region of 300 hours in my woodland hide watching these enigmatic characters, continually witnessing behaviour I have never seen before. This has led to an evolving collection of images; my obsession continues to drive my photography.



On the wing

A rare Sabine's gull draws Steve Young back to a site he has been visiting for more than two decades, and he is treated to some wonderful views of the bird in flight

Whenever I visit Pennington Flash Country Park in Leigh, Greater Manchester, memories come flooding back of days spent trying to photograph a mega-rare black-faced bunting back in 1994. Eventually I ended up with a great series of images, taken from a converted litter bin that the warden and I had set up in a private part of the park.

The bin is probably still hidden to this day, rotting away in the undergrowth. In a way, this sadly mirrors Pennington Flash itself; the wildlife is hardly monitored these days due to cutbacks. In 1994 there were at least seven full-time rangers, plus a couple of part-timers. Now there are none. The feeding station is a shadow of its former self and fishermen use parts of the reserve that were formerly designated for wildlife. No-one is around to check on anything.

My visit there last summer was not to use the overgrown feeding station or to wander down memory lane; it was to photograph a rare Sabine's gull that had been found the previous day on the large main lake. Sabine's gull is an ocean species usually seen in the UK during autumn gales, when migrating birds are blown off course. The presence of one of these rare gulls on an inland lake, in full summer breeding plumage, was a rare occurrence and a photographic opportunity not to be missed.

Due to the size of the lake, I did wonder how close the gull was going to be. I'd seen a few photos that captured it quite well, but birds can feed wherever they want and I could only hope I'd be able to take some nice shots. My worries were quickly dispelled when I joined a small crowd alongside the lake and saw the gull feeding on the water just 30 yards away.

Sabine's is a lovely looking gull and for a short while I just enjoyed the views and watched the bird, which is characterised by a grey head and a dark bill with a yellow tip. But when it

started flying – displaying its distinctive wing pattern of grey, black and white – I stopped looking and started shooting in earnest; opportunities to photograph this species in breeding plumage at close range don't happen very often.

Handholding my 500mm lens (I still find this easier than using a tripod for flight shots), and with VR and AF both working beautifully, I took a series of shots as the bird gave a close fly-past, banked and then came back again. These were the only flight shots I managed, as the rest of the time the gull was sitting among black-headed gulls on the water.

As I walked back to the car I couldn't help thinking back to my 1994 visits and how advanced equipment has become since then. Returning home, I checked my old diaries to find that I had taken my first images of the bunting using my manual focus 600mm f/5.6 Nikkor lens with 2x and 1.4x converters. Later shots from the litter bin hide were taken with just the 1.4x added. That old 600mm was wonderful, but I would have struggled using it for handheld flight shots of the Sabine's gull.



Above Sabine's gull has a distinctive upperwing pattern, with a mixture of grey, black and white forming a 'W' pattern across the spread wing.

Below The gull's underwing is totally different, being just plain white.

STEVE'S AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

BIRD OF THE MONTH

The **redshank** is often known as the sentinel of the marshes because it has a habit of calling an alert to all other species when it spots a predator (or, frustratingly, a camera lens).

A common breeder in the UK, it is an easy bird to see but more difficult to photograph due to its alertness. Virtually all of my images of redshank have been taken from a hide of some sort, either a permanent one at a reserve or from a car.

With red legs and red base to the bill, it is a distinctive bird. Juveniles can look different to adults, however, with yellow legs and pale edgings to the feathers, and they can be mistaken for rarer species such as wood sandpiper or the very rare lesser yellowlegs.

Redshanks are sociable birds and during winter they will flock together, often joining other wader species at high tide roosts when feeding grounds are covered.

1 This redshank is all set for the breeding season, in fresh plumage with barring on the underparts. **2** Note the fresh pale edgings to the feathers and paler leg colour on this juvenile bird. **3** During winter, redshank will roost with other species of waders, but they are always on the alert and will be the first to fly if disturbed.



BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP

I was reminded of the magic of live mealworms the other day when I put out my usual early morning handful for 'my' blackbirds. No sooner had I turned round to walk back to the house when a starling descended and collected about a dozen in its bill before flying off – so it must have young to feed somewhere nearby!

It returned almost immediately, closely followed by two others, and the worms were gone in a matter of seconds. Not one to miss a photo opportunity, I grabbed my camera with 300mm lens and threw a few more worms out in a better spot, trying to take something slightly different. It was good fun and provided the bird with food for its young, and me with a series of images.

It's important not to make the birds totally reliant on food put out for them, so feed them a maximum of twice a day, in the morning and evening, to supplement the foods they find naturally. Be aware that live mealworms don't stay fresh for too long, so try to keep them cool; the fridge is good but sometimes using it for this purpose doesn't go down too well with other family members.

1 I wanted something different for this shot and concentrated on the mealworms, leaving the starling and the background out of focus.

2 A more conventional shot showing the starling collecting the worms to take to its nest.

LOCATION OF THE MONTH

Rutland Water Nature Reserve, Rutland

Created in the 1970s, Rutland Water has become one of the most important wildfowl sanctuaries in the UK, with internationally significant numbers of birds such as gadwalls and shovelers. It is perhaps most famous for its ospreys, however, which are undoubtedly the main attraction at the reserve during the summer months. These impressive birds of prey have been breeding at Rutland since 2001 following a successful reintroduction programme. Several pairs now nest here, and between April and September they are regularly seen fishing over the reservoir.

As well as numerous lagoons and ponds, habitats include meadows, grassland and woodland, supporting a variety of species. And with 31 birdwatching hides and several nature trails, Rutland is well equipped for wildlife viewing. The reserve also plays host to the superb annual Birdfair, which runs from 19-21 August this year.

Location The nature reserve is found at the western end of Rutland Water reservoir, to the east of Oakham, in the county of Rutland.

Opening times The nature reserve is open daily from 9am to 5pm during the summer months.

Entry fee Access to the reserve (including car parking) costs £5.70 for adults, £4.50 for concessions and £3.30 for children under 16. Four-day permits (£16) and family tickets (£15.50) are also available.



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NEXT MONTH

OP208 ON SALE 28 JULY

HOW TO MASTER THE ART OF COLOUR

Wildlife of the Scottish Highlands

Interview with adventure guru Kamil Tamiola

Nikon D500: we test this speedy new DSLR



The Earth seen in suspended animation

For many of us, the chance to do a spot of low-altitude aerial photography from a light aircraft or even a helicopter might seem to be the holy grail of fantastic opportunity. But a hot air balloon is literally something else, says Nick Smith

As with most people, I don't often get the chance to see the Earth from above. As photographers, we travel the world from time to time, seated beside scratched and foggy portholes in aluminium cigar-tube fuselages of noisy passenger airliners, powered by kerosene-fuelled internal combustion engines. But to get aloft in a lighter-than-air balloon, wafting along on one of the most elemental of scientific principles, seems to me to be the organic food of the world of aviation. To drift in the light zephyrs of the firmament, silently and without vibration, is one of the great experiences in life. Not only that: it's a pretty good way to take photos of the world as we so rarely see it.

Ever since I first saw that magnificent painting of a balloon's shadow on an empty beach sailing towards the open ocean, I have been spellbound by the possibility of a balloon safari of my own. The painting – simply entitled 'Shadow' – first came into the public's imagination when it was reproduced on the cover of a popular anthology of contemporary poetry, which I read while still a young Oxford undergraduate in the 1980s. The book was edited by Andrew Motion, the man who was later to become Poet Laureate. The artist was Michael Andrews who, with something of a photographer's eye, had produced a highly unusual and technically extraordinary image that, as with all the best paintings, asked more questions than it would ever answer. I couldn't possibly know where the balloon was going, but I knew I was going there myself.

And so to find myself in Egypt suspended over Luxor, held up by nothing more than a giant silk envelope of hot air, not tethered like one of those ghastly sight-seeing balloons, but blown whither the wind willed, was something I never thought could be put into words. For those of you unfamiliar with takeoff, it is a ghostly experience where the balloon does not rise, but the earth falls away. In a helicopter you feel like a conker on the end of a string, tensely awaiting the next installment of battle. But in a balloon, you feel like a bird. I could hear the cattle lowing beneath on the banks of the Nile and smell the charcoal fires as coffee was brewed in the cool of the misty, early morning. Below, the majestic river's irrigated banks snaked through the Sahara like a green ribbon fluttering in the breeze, while above I clicked away, the sun low on the horizon, with the balloon casting a long shadow across the sands.

I'd been told that one of the great things about living in the villages beneath the flight path of the balloons heading

for the Valley of the Kings was the continual harvest of sunglasses and cameras that routinely fall to the ground from above. Although living an agrarian life of simplicity and economic modesty, the farmers who tilled the silty riverine fields all had Ray-Bans, expensive compact cameras, smartphones and iPods. In times of antiquity it once rained frogs and locusts. Today, it is electronic gadgets that fall to earth. 'If it has a strap, put it around your neck and if it doesn't, put it in your pocket', warned my guide as I scrambled into the open wicker basket. 'Once you get in the air, things have a strange habit of falling to the ground, and you'll never get them back.'

It turns out that, while significant, the risk of losing your camera is chicken feed compared with the bigger picture. Before my departure for Egypt I'd been to seek advice from one of the most exciting balloonists of the modern age, polar explorer David Hempleman-Adams. In 2000, Hemptie famously became the first man to fly over the North Pole in a balloon, following in the footsteps of the ill-fated attempt by Salomon Andrée a century before him. Hempleman-Adams was also the first to cross the Atlantic in an open wicker basket Rozière balloon and has since broken endurance records in helium balloons. So, he's got the hang of it and knows whereof he speaks. His one bit of advice to me was related to the fact that once aloft, budding aeronauts cannot resist the temptation to climb out of the basket, under the impression that they are still on the ground. Given that this tends to happen at high altitude when the brain is starved of oxygen, you can see why Hempleman-Adams takes the precaution of tying his ankle to the basket interior with a sturdy rope. Given that my relationship with heights is at best rocky, I didn't feel that the polar adventurer had done much to encourage me.

And yet my aerial voyage was a more gentle one than my adventurer friend was used to. There were no dramas and nothing was lost. To float above the ruins of a civilisation that never got to an altitude higher than the apex of a pyramid was a humbling experience.

I came to earth with a bump, because there's no other way of landing a balloon. And as I tumbled out of the basket as it roughly bumped along in the sand, it seemed a small price to pay for an unforgettable journey. After a few moments, a four-wheel drive appeared and I was ferried back to my hotel, all the while anxious to see if my take on that famous painting was going to live up to expectations. Of course, it had.

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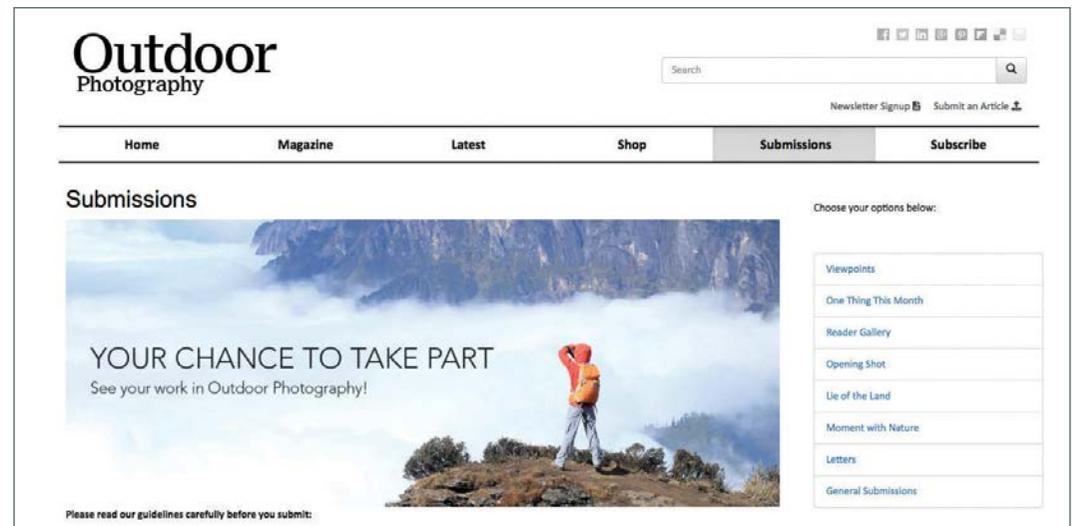
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WHERE IS IT?
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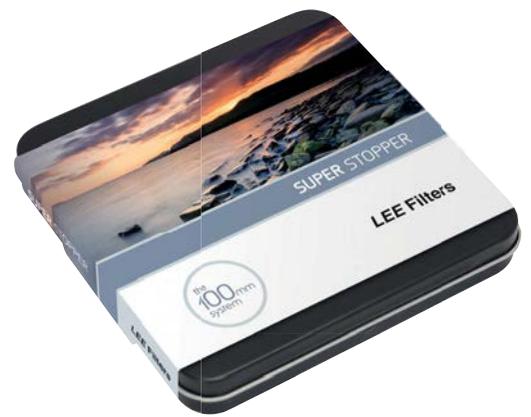
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store.cooph.com



Lee Filters 100mm Super Stopper

Achieving longer exposures, even in harsh midday light, is possible with the new Super Stopper – the strongest ND filter in the firm's range. Made from high-quality optical glass with a filter factor of 3,200 and a density of 4.5, giving 15 stops of light reduction. Available for the 100mm, Seven5 and SW150 lines.

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leefilters.com

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coleman.eu/uk



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Guide price: £130
fjallraven.co.uk





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kenro.co.uk



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Ideal for photographers who need quick access to their camera, this holster has multiple carrying options: shoulder, front, chest, pack and belt. Available in a variety of sizes, the Multi-Mount Holster 50 holds a Pro DSLR and one standard zoom lens. It's designed and manufactured to MindShift Gear's exacting standards.

Guide price £105.76
snapperstuff.com (UK distributor)

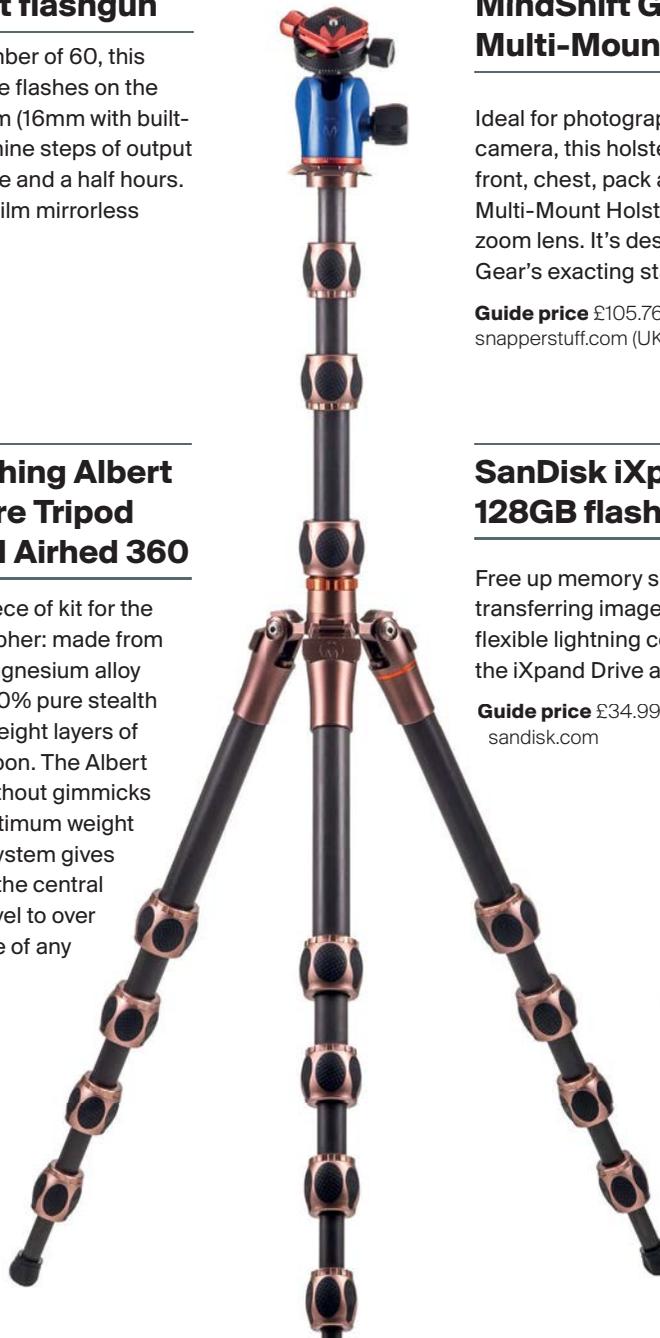


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Guide price £399
3leggedthing.com



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sandisk.com



Fuji X-Pro2

Featuring a brand new sensor, improved autofocus and a unique hybrid viewfinder, the Fuji X-Pro2 claims to be a significant upgrade to its popular predecessor. Fergus Kennedy finds out if it delivers

Guide price £1,349 (body only)

Contact fuji.co.uk



I've been told that not reading the instruction manual before you start using a new gadget is a particularly male trait. I prefer to think of it as a deliberate strategy of the discerning gear tester. Whatever the truth, I found myself coming a little unstuck during my first outing with the X-Pro2. In short, I made a lot of mistakes and found myself more than a little confused.

Rapidly changing light added to the sense of urgency as I fumbled with an unfamiliar setup. Part of my frustration came from the clever hybrid viewfinder. In optical mode the overall field of view doesn't change when you swap lenses, but a rectangular frame overlay indicates your framing. With longer lenses, this becomes a pretty small proportion of the viewfinder window, and the parallax effect means the position of the rectangle shifts as you focus. Cue a series of badly framed photos.

Thankfully, even without the instruction manual I soon discovered that the small lever under my right index finger toggled between optical and electronic viewfinder modes, and the EVF provided a much more accurate guide to framing. On the minus side, I did find the EVF quite contrasty, and in scenes with very deep shadows this sometimes inhibited accurate framing.

The Fuji viewfinder is perhaps an acquired taste, but for many this classic rangefinder styling is a big part of the X-Pro2's appeal. The top plate has a large dual-purpose dial; by pressing and twisting its central button you can set shutter speed (or put it on auto) and by lifting and turning it you can set ISO (or, again, put it on auto). Also on the top plate are the shutter button, with power switch surround, and an exposure compensation dial (take care not to inadvertently knock this!). Aperture is set

with a traditional ring on the lens barrel.

Having become a bit more familiar with the camera, I headed to the top of the South Downs, where a sky full of multicoloured paragliders drifting among fluffy white clouds provided an excellent opportunity to test the X-Pro2's autofocus. This proved reasonably snappy and, in continuous mode, worked well for the paragliders, although the AF did start to struggle with fast-moving birds in flight – but then so do most non-DSLRs, to be fair.

The focus point selection system was a joy to use. On the front of the camera there is a button that brings up the focus point in the viewfinder. You can move this with the joystick on the back and select one of 273 focus points (yep, I counted them!). A switch on the front of the camera shifts between manual focus, single shot autofocus and continuous autofocus; in manual focus there are various focus aid options, such as a split image, or a digital zoom with coloured peaking.

Image quality is really very good. Shooting Raw images, I found it easy to pull back blown highlights and bring hidden details out of the shadows. Being old enough to remember shooting on

The Velvia film simulation brings punchy colours to landscape photos. *Fuji X-Pro2 with 14mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 200, 1/180sec at f/3.6*



LIKES

- Great image quality from the 24MP sensor
- Excellent choice of Fuji lenses
- Well thought out ergonomics
- Retro styling
- Film simulation modes

DISLIKES

- No headphone socket
- Hybrid viewfinder may take some getting used to



TECH SPEC

Sensor 24MP micro-four-thirds
Resolution 6000 x 4000 pixels
Lens Interchangeable Fuji X-mount
Shutter speed 1/8000-30sec; electronic shutter: up to 1/32000
ISO 200-12800 (100-51200 in extended range)
Viewfinder Electronic/optical hybrid
LCD 3in fixed (3:2) 1.62m-dot (900 x 600 pixels)
Flash None/hotshoe
Movie mode Maximum 1080p up to 60fps
Card formats SD/SDHC/SDXC dual card slot
Power NP-W126 lithium-ion
Size 141 x 83 x 56 mm
Weight 495g (body only, with battery)



Clockwise from top-left
 Autofocus was snappy for slow-moving subjects.
Fuji X-Pro2 with 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 lens at 400mm, ISO 1600, 1/1100sec at f/6.4

Moody monochrome grain from the Acros film simulation.
Fuji X-Pro2 with 35mm f/1.4 lens, ISO 2500, 1/15sec at f/1.4

A sea of colour in the woods.
Fuji X-Pro2 with 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 lens at 347mm, ISO 200, 1/50sec at f/5.6

A long zoom lens picked out details in the landscape.
Fuji X-Pro2 with 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 lens at 252mm, ISO 200, 1/350sec at f/5.6

film, I enjoyed the film simulation modes. The punchy, saturated look of Velvia or the more muted tones of Provia were favourites with landscape photographers of the pre-digital era. Acros gives a grainy black & white rendition, which I tried in the streets at night. Whichever you choose, the profile isn't baked into the Raw files so you're still free to tinker to your heart's content. High ISO performance was up there with most modern DSLRs, being very usable at ISO 6400, with some minor noise reduction required in post-processing.

Turning to the optics, Fuji has a growing stable of excellent lenses including some lovely fast primes; being optimised for the APS-C sized sensor, these are considerably smaller and lighter than the full-frame equivalents. I tried Fuji's very nicely built 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 R LM OIS WR and it produced extremely sharp images, but I couldn't help feeling that the X-Pro2 isn't the ideal camera body if your bread and butter is long lens work. To me, it felt much more at home with a shorter wide or mid-range prime or zoom lens; there are plenty of those in the Fuji range.

VERDICT

In short, I found that using the camera involved more of a learning curve than many compact system cameras, but once you're in tune with its peculiarities, the Fuji grows on you. There's a certain authenticity about the camera that seems to connect you to the mechanics of photography, and once you're used to it, the optical viewfinder works nicely with wide to mid-range lenses. I'd recommend the X-Pro2 for street, travel and landscape work and for photographers who are prepared to devote a little time to developing that special photographer-camera bond.

RATINGS

Handling	93%
Performance	95%
Specification	96%
Value	90%

OVERALL
94%

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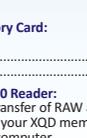
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CANON LENSES

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24mm f/1.4L Mk II USM	See Web	300mm f/2.8L USM IS II	£4,799.00	24-70mm f/2.8L II USM	See Web
24mm f/2.8 IS USM	£455.00	300mm f/4.0L USM IS	See Web	24-70mm f/4.0L IS USM	See Web
EF-S 24mm f/2.8 STM	£127.00	400mm f/2.8L USM IS II	£7,698.00	24-105mm f/4.0L IS USM	£727.00
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35mm f/2.0 IS USM	See Web	800mm f/5.6L IS USM	£9,899.00	70-200mm f/2.8L USM	See Web
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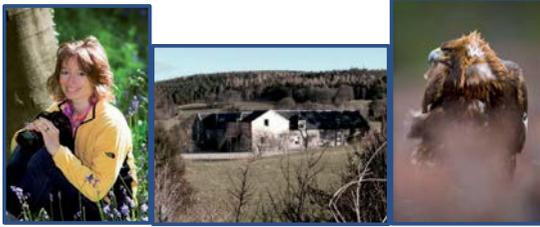
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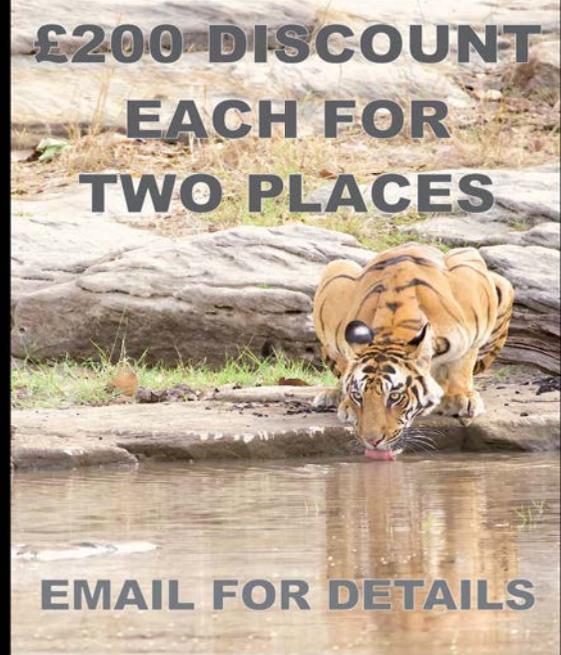
For more information, or to reserve your place, please contact
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Assynt/Ullapool
20th-25th (1 Place)

March 2017
Isle of Skye
21st-25th (1 Place)

May 2017
Assynt/Torridon
11th - 16th (1 Place)

September 2017
Isle of Harris/Lewis
Sept 30th - 7th (2 Places)

October 2017
Lake District Autumn Classics 1
Oct 20th - 22nd (1 Place)

Lake District Autumn Classics 2
Oct 23rd - 25th (2 Places)

Iceland Tour Dates for 2017
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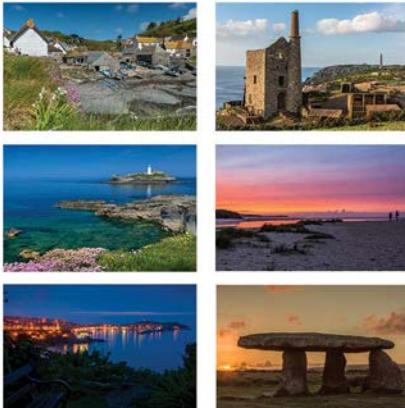
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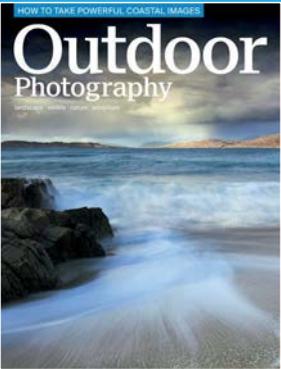
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Golden Eagle Experience in Leicestershire 2016 Dates £99
Aug 27th; Golden Eagle will fly, and perch in natural settings. Jesses hidden for static shots. Controlled flying. Barn Owl with mouse plus selection from; Owls, Buzzard, Hawks, Goshawk Max. 8 photographers.

Cheetahs, Lions, Foxes, Birds of Prey, Cambs. £119

Aug 14th; Privileged access to Cheetahs, Bengal Tiger, 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

Aug 19th; Oxfordshire. Take amazing bat photos. 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

July 2nd; 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 in Kent - Specialist event 6 photographers - incl. Jaguar £199

July 7th, July 8th; 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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Gorillas & African Safari Experience, Port Lympne £155

July 3rd, July 17th; 3 gorilla sessions. No wires, fences or bars throughout the day. Clean backgrounds plus Privileged Access. Photograph at eye level over moat. Huge male silverbacks + family group. Private VIP Safari for 2.5 hours. Rhinos, Wildebeest, Eland, Zebras, Giraffes, Buffalo, Ostriches, various Deer.

Birds of Prey Workshop, Bedford £99

August 20th; 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. £145

July 11, 13, 14, 15; 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.

Small Cats Workshop, Welwyn, Herts. £99

July 4; 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.

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

July 24th; 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 NEW WORKSHOP £199

July 21st, 23rd; 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, Locust, Beardeed Dragon, Scorpion, Tarantula, Snakes, Lizards etc.

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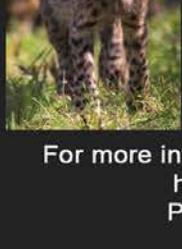
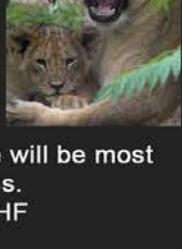
Landscapes & Wildlife Tour in Moab, USA

Costa Rica, Scotland Wildlife, Tigers in India

NEW DESTINATIONS ABROAD 2017 & 2018

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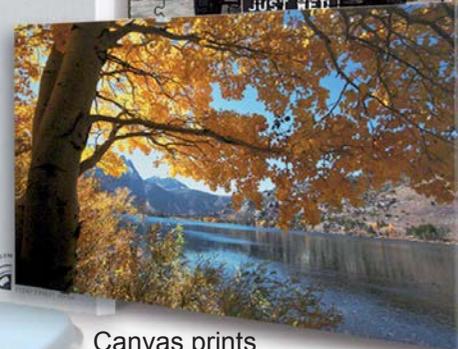
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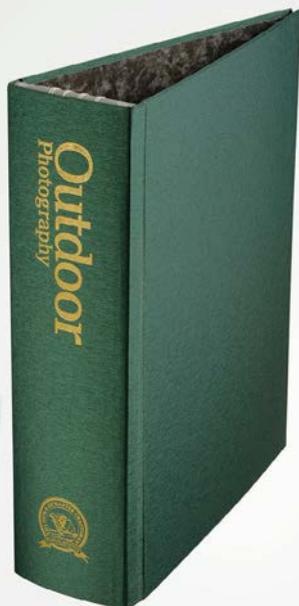
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CLASSIFIEDS

If you only do one thing this month...

Close-up and macro nature

In our April issue we invited you to send us your best close-up and macro photographs, and we were bowled over by the quantity and the quality of the entries. Here's the winner of the Joby GorillaPod Focus tripod with Ball Head X and a Joby Pro Sling Strap, plus our 13 runners-up...



Winner **Tammy Marlar**

Above I took this shot at the Wex Lens Show in London at the end of April. There was a macro setup featuring some insects, including this chap, a giant rainforest mantis from Australia. The pinks, oranges and yellows on his body were incredibly vibrant against the beautifully lit green backdrop and very well-framed by the arch of darker foliage. Despite the external lighting, I still had to use quite a high ISO in conjunction

with an f/8 aperture so that I could capture some of the incredible detail on his thorax and front legs. His expression and his body language made me think of a reluctant actor who has been thrust centre stage, but who would have been much happier waiting in the wings!
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM lens, ISO 1250, 1/125sec at f/8, lighting and backdrop by Wild Arena tammymarlar.com



Daniel Bridge

Above A foggy day at Hanningfield reservoir in Essex was great for atmospheric shots, and I loved the look of this piece of barbed wire festooned with wet spider's web. I like the dark, contrasty look the Lightroom preset (my own concoction) gave me.

Pentax K-3 with 100mm DF-A WR macro lens, ISO 400, 1/6sec at f/13, tripod
danielbridge.co.uk

Andrew Sorrell

Left This was taken in the beautiful gardens of Chateau Villandry in the Loire region of France. The spiral of the snail against the colour and texture of the dry stem caught my eye, particularly because the side of the snail rather than its base was stuck to the stem.

Canon EOS 50D with Canon EF 28-200mm lens at 200mm, ISO 100, 1/200sec at f/8

Andy Holliman

Below This plant, which I found in a greenhouse at Kew Gardens, London, had a lot of texture in its leaves. I used a relatively long shutter speed and moved the camera along the lines of the leaves to create a softer and less literal feel to the image.

Nikon D750 with Nikon 28-300mm lens at 300mm, ISO 100, 0.6sec at f/36, handheld

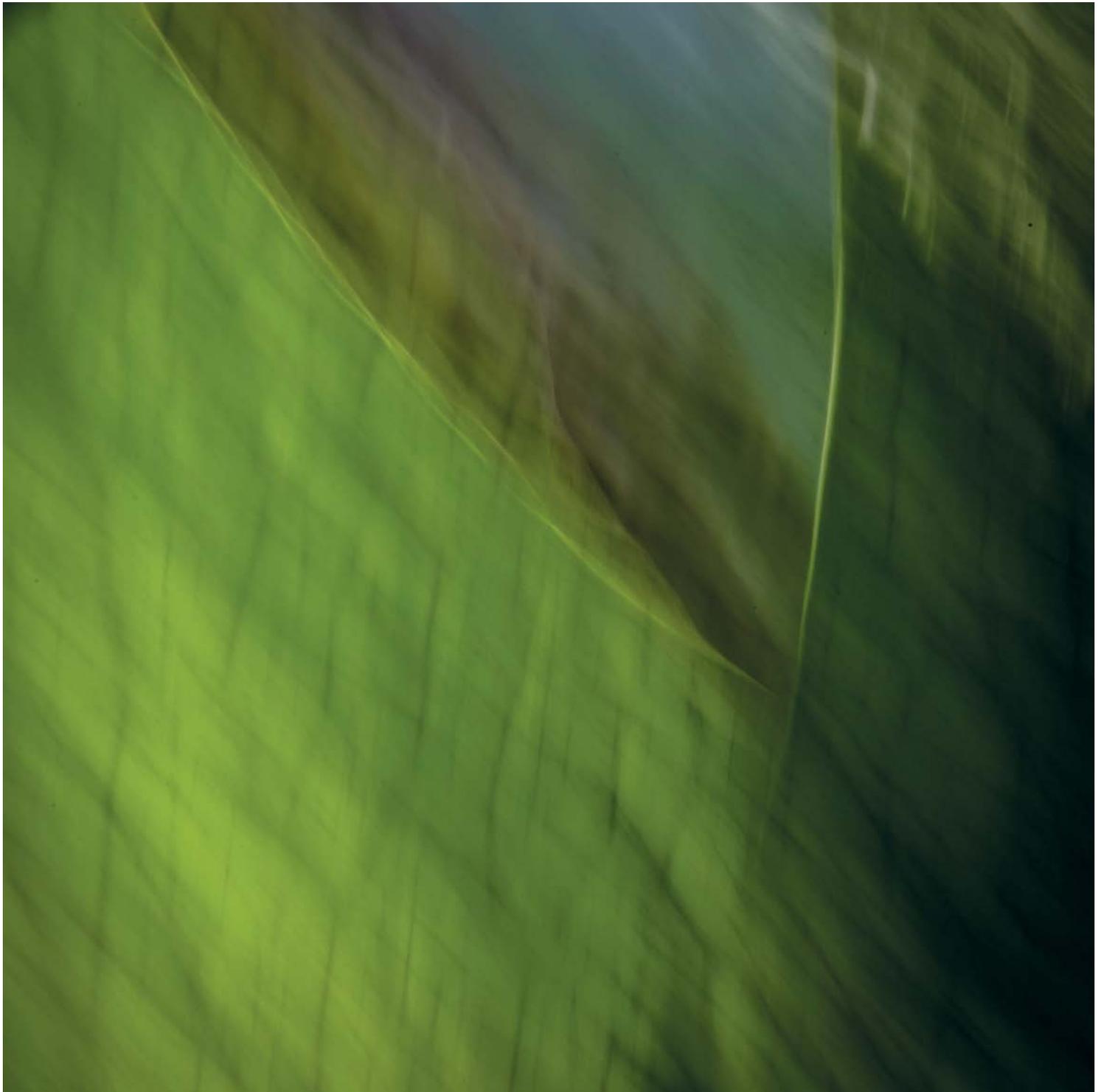
Carolyne Barber

Opposite, top I captured this beautiful, inquisitive damselfly very early one morning while it was still cool. It was perched on some grass that had a nice curve shape.

*Nikon D7000 with Nikon 60mm lens, ISO 200, 1/250sec at f/5
carolynebarberphotography.org.uk*

Gregory van den Top

Opposite, bottom Fungi are among the most photographed subjects in autumn. For a long time I had an image in mind of some fungus sporophytes and the moon in the background. This time, however, I used my phone's flashlight as a way to mimic the moon. It was only after taking the picture that I discovered the little spider on top of the mushroom. *Canon EOS 70D with Sigma 105mm f/2.8 OS HSM lens and 1.4x teleconverter at 147mm, ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/4, tripod*







Graham Hobbs

Left Male spiders are justifiably cautious when approaching females, which are often much bigger and only too willing to make a meal of them. Their cautiousness is quite useful for photographers, as it gives plenty of time to line the shot up. It's still technically quite difficult, however, because of their fast, darting movements and the shaking of the web, which takes them in and out of focus. I watched this pair for about 10 minutes and took quite a few shots; this one being one of the best in terms of showing the tentative approach. The male spider did survive on this occasion. *Pentax K-3 with Pentax-F SMC 100mm macro lens, ISO 800, 1/250sec at f/11, handheld*
grahamhobbs.com

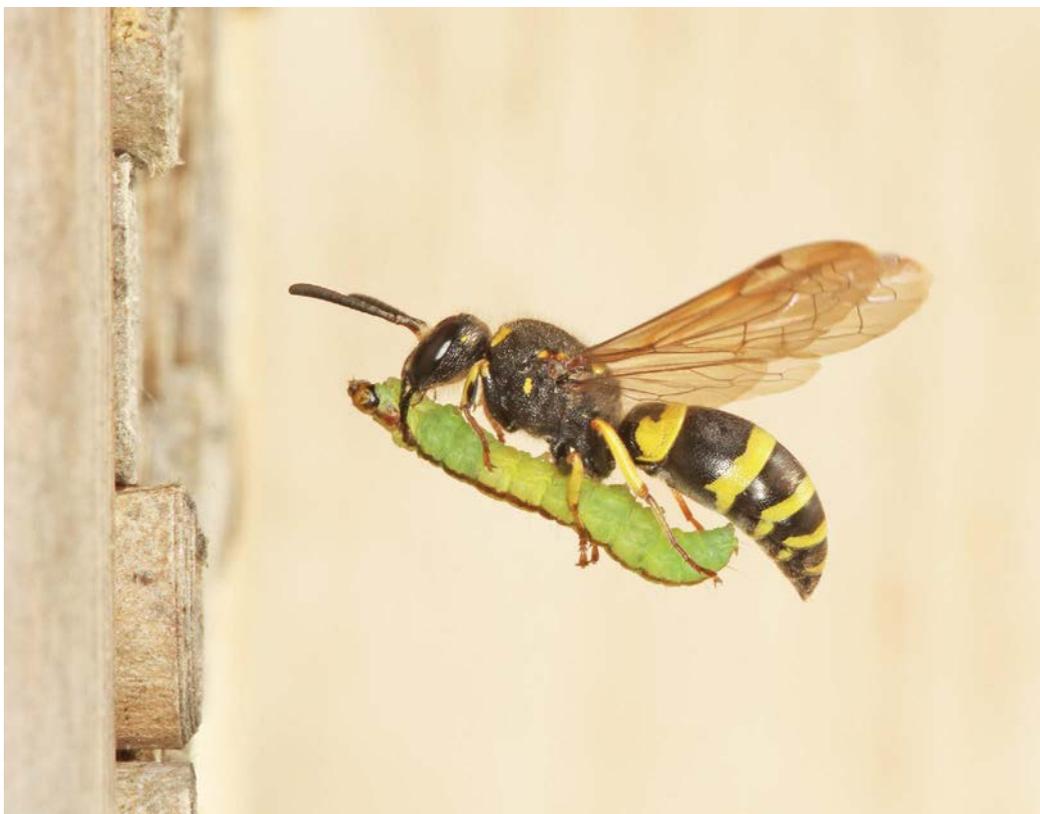
Dylan Nardini

Left, bottom This was taken in the shadows of the gardens at Brodick Castle on the Isle of Arran, during a family holiday. I was experimenting with infrared while the kids played in the beautiful grounds of the estate, and was attracted to the spots of spring light falling on the new growth that clung to the bark of the tree. *Nikon D80 (IR converted) with Nikon 24-70mm lens at 48mm, ISO 125, 1/125sec at f/11, polariser, handheld, converted to black & white in Silver Efex Pro 2*
dylannardini.com



Catherine Bullen

Opposite, top left Just before the end of the snowdrop season I went out to capture a few last shots of the flowers for this year. I came across this clump and chose to use a shallow depth of field, emphasising the flower heads. *Nikon D300 with Tamron 180mm macro lens, ISO 200, 1/200sec at f/4, cable release, Giottos tripod*
catherinebullen.co.uk



Helen Holt

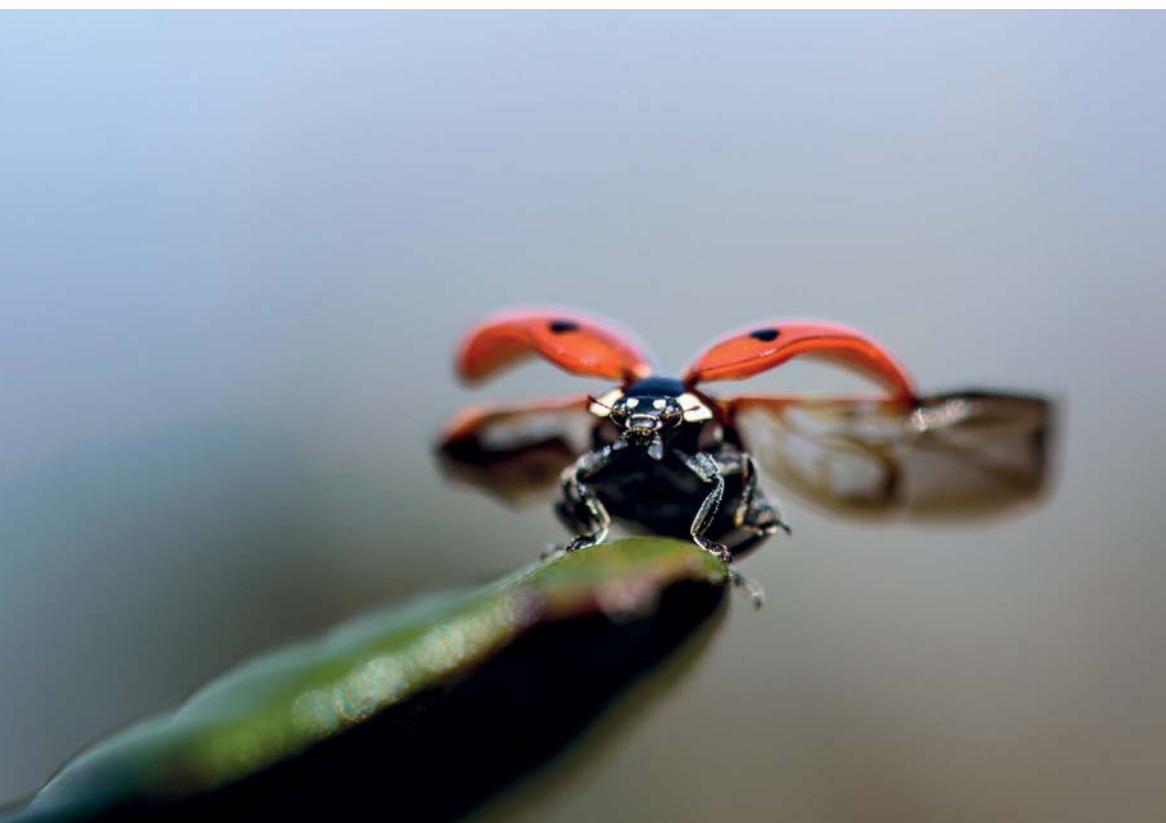
Above right This photograph of an iris was taken to show the angles of the flower, with the petals shooting from the centre of the plant. I also wanted to reveal the white and yellow markings on the petal.

Nikon D7100 with Tamron 60mm f/2 macro lens, ISO 800, 1/125sec at f/4.5

Jeremy Early

Left The image shows a solitary mason wasp (*Ancistrocerus nigricornis*) approaching her nest in an insect box, carrying a micro-moth caterpillar; it was photographed in my garden. This species of wasp measures 10mm in length and can catch seven caterpillars for each of the five or so cells in each of her nests. This wasp is declining nationally but turns up annually in my garden in Reigate, Surrey.

Canon EOS 7D with 180mm macro lens, ISO 320, 1/250sec at f/16, Canon MT-24EX Macro Twin Lite, Manfrotto tripod
natureconservationimaging.com



John Overton

Above Longhorn beetle (*Stenocorus meridiens*), photographed in a churchyard in Suffolk. I loved the way the beetle climbed through the grass – it was so acrobatic. I would normally photograph an insect of this size with flash to get maximum depth of field (f/16), but this subject benefitted from the bright, sunlit background.

Pentax K-5 with Pentax f/2.8 100mm macro lens, ISO 400, 1/100sec at f/10, handheld

Martin Tosh

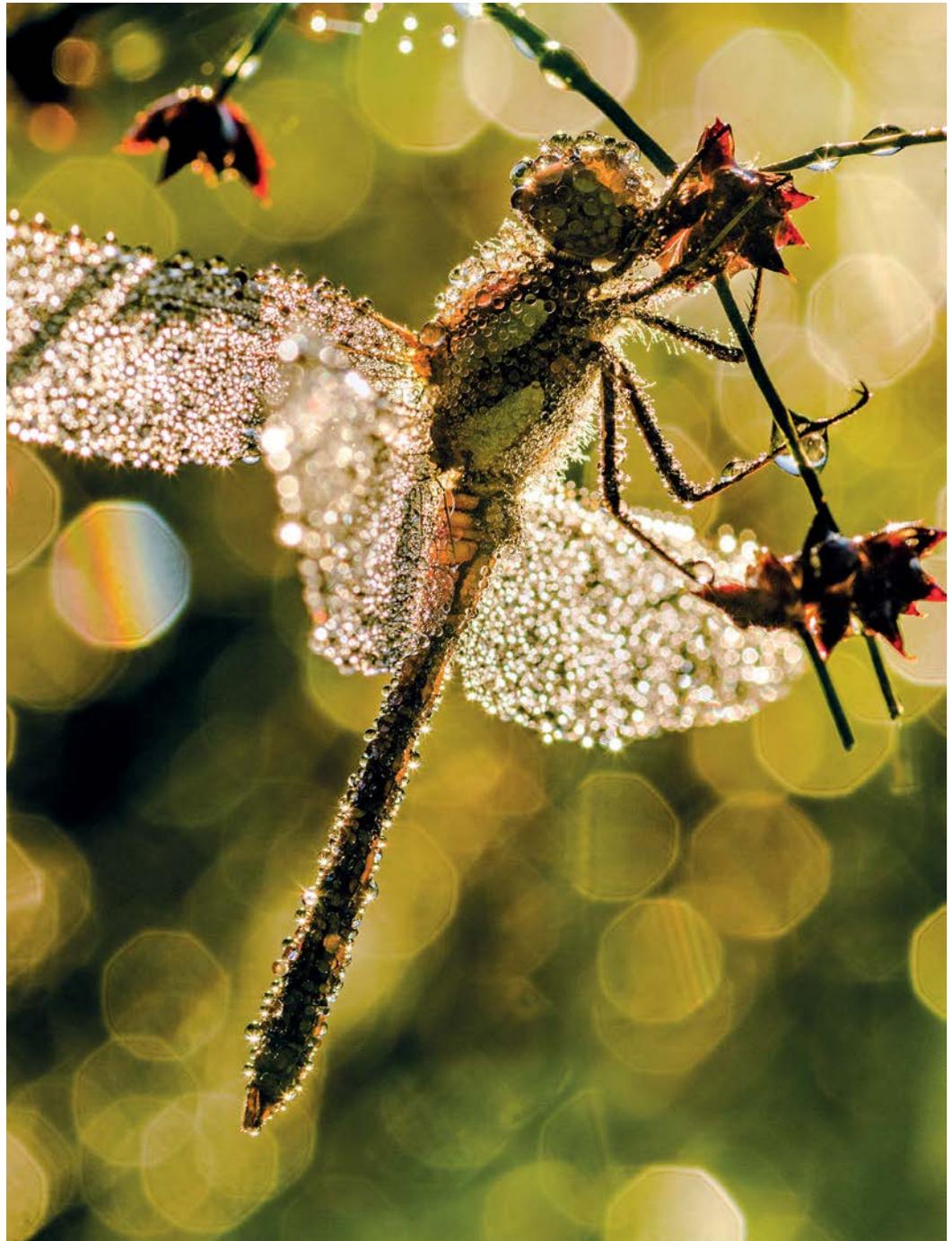
Left This was taken while I was helping my wife make macro photos in our garden. She spotted the ladybird on a bush but wasn't tall enough to reach; I stood on tiptoe on two bricks, and was rewarded with a takeoff moment. I nearly fell off my perch in excitement but fired off five frames before the insect was gone.

Nikon D750 with Nikkor 105mm micro lens, ISO 200, 1/640sec at f/8, Nikon R1 Wireless Close-Up Speedlight kit, handheld photography-by-tosh.com

Steve Palmer

Right On a frosty morning in late September I came across a frost-covered dragonfly. Excitedly, I opened my camera backpack only to discover I had forgotten my macro lens. After a two-mile dash home, I realised how out of shape I was! Arriving back as the sun was rising, I found the dragonfly had started to defrost and was covered in sparkling droplets of water.

Pentax K30 with 100mm macro lens, ISO 400, 1/500sec at f/10, handheld
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Closing date for entries is 31 August 2016. See page 84 for full details.

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- b) **Great Meteoron, Greece**
- c) **Taung Kalat, Burma**

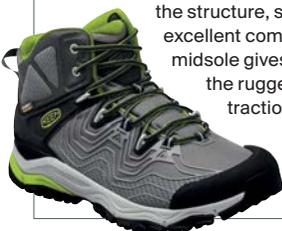
The correct answer and the winner's name will be published in OP210 (on sale 22 September 2016). Enter online at outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk/c/win, using 'monastery 207' as the code, or send your answer to opcomp@thegmcgroup.com, stating 'Monastery' as the subject. Alternatively, you can drop it in the post to: Where in the world - 'Monastery', OP, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN. Deadline for entries is midnight on 16 August 2016.

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MAY ISSUE WINNER

In the May issue, we asked you to tell us the name of the wonderful area of lakes and mountains shown in the image. The correct answer is:

c) San Carlos de Barriloche, Argentina



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