

INSIDE: HOW TO SHOOT GREAT ANIMAL PORTRAITS

Outdoor Photography

landscape | wildlife | nature | adventure



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ON CELEBRATING NATURE

As we all become increasingly aware of climate change and the devastating effects it is having on the world around us, we have become more focused on the causes behind it all. On page 16-22 you will find Sue Cunningham's story of photographing the indigenous people of the Xingu river tributary in South America's Amazon basin and how her journey led her to a deep appreciation of the Amazon's environmental problems.

It's stories like this that make us even more aware of the importance of global co-operation in everything we do.

As landscape photographers we are acutely aware of nature and its forces and the importance of what we convey with our images, which hopefully

make viewers think, and appreciate and respect nature in all its forms.

One of the greatest ways to celebrate nature is to focus on the colours we see around us. On page 25 Pete Bridgwood talks of his love of colour and how modern technology has brought many possibilities for enhancement of our images. On pages 36-37 Niall Benvie looks at how split toning, once the domain of black & white photography, can now produce wonderful results in colour.

Finally, let's not forget about the seeming chaos of nature – on page 50-51 Rachael Talibart finds pattern and unpredictability in the pounding waves of Nazaré's beaches in Portugal and learns to accept life as it comes.



ON THE COVER
This wonderful picture
was taken by Joe Cornish

GET IN TOUCH

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IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...



Niall Benvie has photographed and written about the natural world and our relationship with it, professionally, for over 20 years. He is co-founder of the international photography project *Meet Your Neighbours*.
niallbenvie.com



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



With more than 40 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



Andrew Child is a Dorset-based photographer who enjoys the contrast in the Dorset landscape from the wild coast of Portland to the inland valleys and farmland of the Cranborne Chase. Any spare time he will be out with his photo equipment trying to get the next 'perfect shot'.
dorsetgallery.com



Sue Cunningham is an experienced photojournalist who has been documenting Brazil's indigenous people for over 20 years. Her work has appeared in books and exhibitions in the UK, Brazil and elsewhere. She also lectures at British universities.
ipcst.org



Graham Dunn is a fine art landscape photographer based in Sheffield. He has published books on the Peak District and north Norfolk and enjoys running friendly workshops on a one-to-one and small group basis.
grahamdunn.co.uk



Richard Garvey-Williams is a fine art nature photographer and author of books on photography. Having spent his childhood in Africa, he relishes opportunities to return and share his experience through leading photography safaris.
richardgarveywilliams.com



Alan Howe is a landscape photographer based in south Devon and shoots mainly on Dartmoor as well as the south Devon coast. He has published in many photographic magazines and runs one-to-one workshops. He is a Kase Filters UK Pro Partner.
devonlandscapephotography.co.uk/w



Simon Roy is an award-winning wildlife photographer based in Yorkshire. His work has been published widely and has been highly commended in the British Wildlife Photography Awards, Bird Photographer of the Year and International Garden Photographer of the Year.
simonroyphotography.co.uk



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



Rachael Talibart is a fine art photographer with a passion for capturing images of the sea. She is the owner of f11 Workshops, providing one-day photography workshops in Surrey, Sussex and London. Rachael also exhibits frequently and is an experienced public speaker.
rachaeltalibart.com



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

ALSO IN OP THIS MONTH

Matthew Cattell (matthewcattellphotography.com), **Elliott Coleman** (elliottcolemanphoto.com), **Stewart Mckeown** (stewartmckeown.photography), **Alan Novelli** (alannovelli.co.uk), **Chris Parker** (flickr.com/photos/chris-parker), **Edyta Rice**

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Andean landscape by Gaston Francisco

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OTHER NEWS

Bird extinction rates reduced

A new study suggests that current conservation programs have reduced the global extinction rate of birds by 40 per cent. Rather than considering 'just the final step of that [extinction] process by counting numbers of species lost in historical times', which is how most previous studies have measured extinction rates, the research published in *The Royal Society's Biology Letters* 'observed trajectories through IUCN Red List extinction risk categories for all bird species globally over 28 years'.

Using a complex mathematical model, the team looked at species moving from Least Concern to Near Threatened to Vulnerable, and so on, as well as those that had actually become extinct. According to Birdlife International, whose Chief Scientist, Dr Stuart Butchart, was one of the co-authors of the study, the results showed that 'thanks to conservation over the last three decades, Critically Endangered species are now twice as likely to improve in status and move to a lower threat category as they are to deteriorate and become extinct'.

However, while this is good news for critically endangered species facing extinction, the research also noted that more needs to be done to prevent 'species at low risk from moving to higher risk categories' and that 'it would be more effective to prevent species with healthy

populations from becoming threatened in the first place. That way, there would be fewer species in immediate need of urgent – and often costly and difficult – conservation efforts'.

Indeed, another of the study's findings 'suggests that during the next 500 years...471 species may go extinct', with 109 of those species currently holding Least Concern status (the lowest risk) on the IUCN Red List. By way of an example, Birdwatch International highlights how 'the seeds of this disquieting trend are already being sown: this year, the Pale-throated barbet *Gymnobucco vernayi* jumped up two threat categories, from Least Concern to Vulnerable, due to a recent upsurge in commercial logging and banana farming destroying its Angolan highland forest home'.

The full report can be accessed for free by Fellows of the Royal Society at royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsbl.2019.0633, where you can also subscribe, purchase the article or apply for a free trial subscription.



With no confirmed sightings of Spix's macaw since the year 2000, the species was declared extinct in the wild in 2018. Habitat loss was one of the principle factors.

© Christina Li / Shutterstock.com



© Cody Cobb

RPS winners unveiled

American photographer Cody Cobb has been declared the overall award winner of the Royal Photographic Society's 162nd International Photography Exhibition, for his series of 'stark landscapes made during periods of extended solitude'. Entitled *Strange Land*, 'Cobb immerses himself in the American West for weeks at a time, stripped of basic human comforts and isolated within unfamiliar terrain', a process that enables him to capture 'the emotion of the land as much as the topography'. Cobb's work was selected from almost 1,400 entries from 62 countries, and six of his images will now feature in a touring exhibition comprising 43 international photographers. For tour dates, and to see the rest of the winning entries, visit rps.org/ipe162.

Drones under fire

Photographers using drones could be affected by new legislation that seeks to give new powers to the police. At the time of writing, the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill is set to head to the House of Lords for final consideration before becoming law. The bill is designed to 'give police forces across the country new powers to tackle the misuse of unmanned aircraft, including drones' and will allow the police 'to land, inspect and seize drones if an offence has been committed and a warrant is secured'. As a result, 'drone users could also face an on the spot fine for certain offences, such as failing to provide evidence that they have the correct permissions and exemptions if found to be flying their device too high or too close to buildings, or failing to provide evidence of competency or registration'. This places even more pressure on photographers using drones to ensure they keep up to date with the rules and regulations surrounding where, when and how you can fly a drone.



© Valentin Valkov / Shutterstock.com

NEWS IN NUMBERS

© PJ Photography / Shutterstock.com



1064 Figures released by the Woodland Trust show that 'the number of ancient woods under threat in the UK from built development has topped the thousand mark for the first time since records began'. The Trust revealed that 801 live planning applications and 263 areas 'outlined for future development' are putting '1064 ancient woodlands at risk of damage or destruction', with the HS2 railway project accounting for at least 108 of these. More at woodlandtrust.org.uk.

1 It's potentially bad news for film photographers travelling by air this year, due to the increased use of Computed Tomography (CT) scanners to scan carry-on luggage. According to tests by Kodak Professional at John F Kennedy Airport in New York, just a single pass through this type of scanner is enough to cause significant fogging on ISO 400 film and a loss of shadow detail. Not all airports use the new scanners, and slower speed films may show less degradation, but to be safe, the simplest advice is to request a hand inspection of *any* film you wish to carry on the plane with you.

4 Following the launch of its Laowa 4mm f/2.8 fisheye lens in the second half of 2019 (see *Newsroom*, OP249), Chinese lens manufacturer Venus Optics has announced that the extreme wideangle optic will now be available in a wider range of lens mount options. Originally available solely for the Micro Four Thirds mount, the ultra-wide lens – which boasts a 210-degree viewing angle – can now be purchased with a Fujifilm X, Sony E or Canon EOS M lens mount as well. See venuslens.net for more.



© Greg Lecoeur / Best of Show, Ocean Art 2019

Ocean Art 2019 winners revealed

The results are in for one of the world's largest underwater photography contests, with French photographer Greg Lecoeur taking Best of Show for his striking shot of a crabeater seal. Greg explains that 'during an expedition on a small sailboat, we explored the Antarctica peninsula by diving below the surface. Although the conditions were extreme, with a temperature of -1°C, we documented extraordinary marine fauna at home in a fragile ecosystem, such as this crabeater seal. We also saw leopard seals, gentoo

penguins, Antarctica fur seals, and Weddell seals. All these marine animals are affected by global warming with the melting of the ice.'

Now in its eighth year, the 2019 contest featured two new categories – conservation and blackwater diving – as well as a Rising Star award, and received entries from photographers in 78 countries. To find out more about the competition and see the rest of the stunning underwater winners, head over to uwphotographyguide.com/ocean-art-contest-winners-2019.

© Pete Rowbottom, Overall winner, Landscape Photographer of the Year 2018



LPOTY returns

Landscape Photographer of the Year (LPOTY) is returning for its 13th year, inviting photographers of all levels to showcase their skills. Founded by the renowned landscaper, Charlie Waite, the competition is split into two classes – adults and under 18s – with four categories in each. In addition, there are four Special Awards for adult entrants, plus a portfolio category for younger entrants. A prize fund of more than £20,000 is up for grabs, 'including £10,000 for the overall winner and additional special awards', with the winning entries and highly commended images appearing in an awards book and exhibition.

As with previous years, entry fees apply: adults pay £9.99 for a single image, £24.99 for up to eight images and £34.99 for up to 20 images, while young photographers can enter their first five images for free, then pay £9.99 for additional bundles of five pictures. The closing date for entries is midnight on 5 April; register, enter and find out more at lpoty.co.uk.

New variable ND filters land

Moment – 'the outfitter for photographers and filmmakers' – has unveiled a brace of variable ND filters. Available in 67mm, 77mm and 82mm screw-in sizes (as well as a dedicated model for DJI Mavic drones), the filters are available in two strengths, covering 2-5 stops (ND4-32) and 6-9 stops (ND64-512). The camera filters use German Schott B270 Pro Cinema Glass 'for superior optical clarity', while the drone filters use Fused Silica Glass, and they are all mounted in an 'aerospace grade' metal frame that makes them light and robust. Usefully, the camera filters feature laser-etched markings so you can see the setting you have dialled in from behind the camera. The filters are available now, with prices starting at US\$149.99 for the camera versions and US\$79.99 for the Mavic 2 variants. Discover more and order at shopmoment.com.

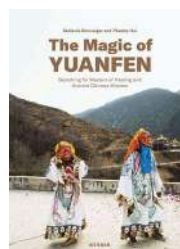


© Moment

OUT THERE

BOOKS

EDITED BY SCOTT TEAGLE



The Magic of Yuanfen

Stefanie Schweiger and Phoebe Hui

978-3-7356-0648-8

Hardback, €35

kerberverlag.com

Photographer Stefanie Schweiger and author

Phoebe Hui set out in search of ancient wisdom, hidden worlds, alternative medicine and spiritual faith in China. In words and images they tell their stories about encounters with Chinese masters of healing and lore. Their paths lead them to Buddhist secret societies, shamans, hermits, Taoists, herbalists, Tibetan doctors, feng shui experts and monks. They discuss if the wisdom passed down for thousands of years can be reconciled with contemporary Chinese life. The book lays out a nuanced panorama of China's diverse beliefs, many of which are virtually unknown in the West. This book explores the deepest and oldest traditions of Chinese spiritualists. The photography is an exquisite journey of discovery across the country and the spirituality of its people and there is a wealth of learning here for any keen photographer.



The Nevada Test Site

Emmet Gowin

978-0-691-19603-9

Hardback, £40

press.princeton.edu

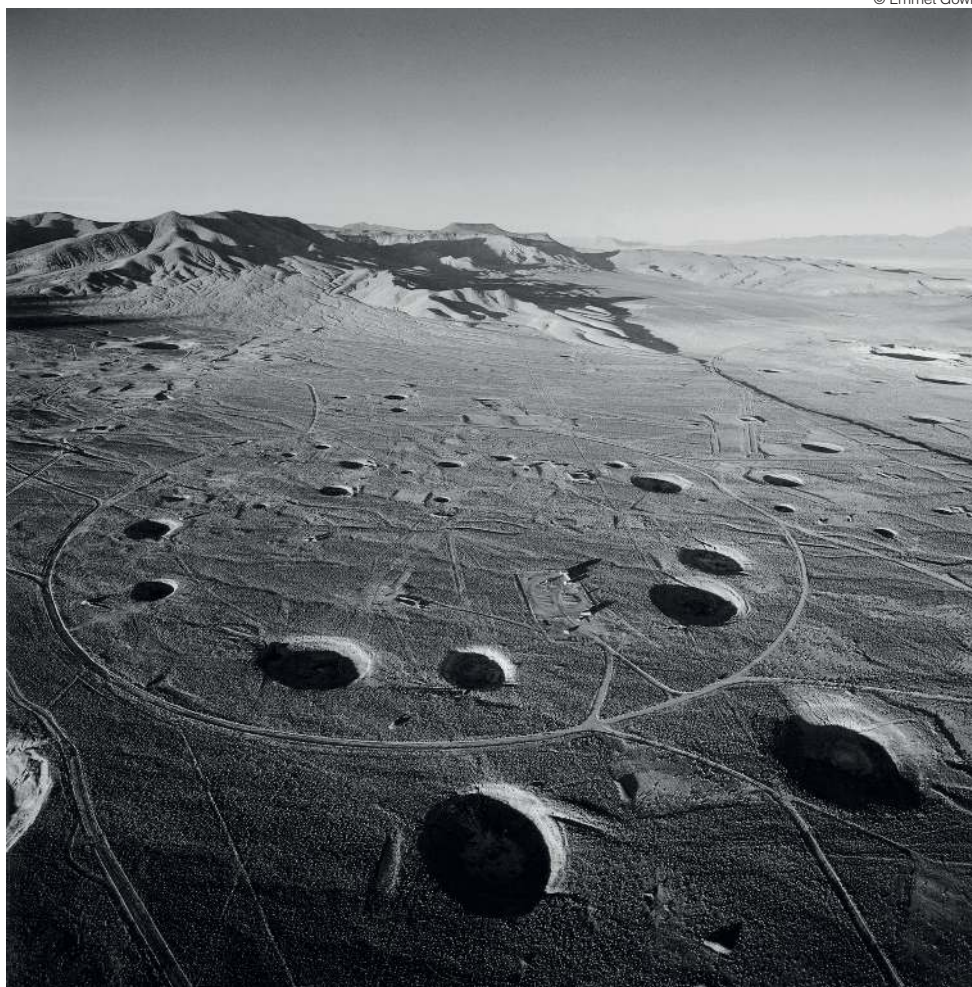
The Nevada Test Site

first looks to be an aerial catalogue of desert plains

scarred and marked by mankind – the damage done to the Nevada desert by nuclear bomb tests. The book reports that more nuclear bombs have been detonated in America than in any other country in the world. Between 1951 and 1992 the Nevada National Security Test Site was the primary location for these activities, withstanding more than a thousand nuclear tests that left swaths of the American south-west resembling the moon.

However, reading through Gowin's own essay, you realise there is far more contained in these images. As he says: 'From this perspective, a landscape I had seen extensively in media coverage appeared to me wildly new and unused, its secrets untouched. I also found that from the air places and subjects usually forbidden or inaccessible were now fully visible, with a scope and wholeness that a close-up or ground view could never provide.'

Gowin describes the history of his work at the site, including his decade-long efforts to secure entry to the Nevada test site. He recalls the desolation and emptiness of the desert flats yet feeling the intangible weight of history calling through the disfigured landscape. For this book, Gowin has revisited his original negatives made in 1996 and 1997. Three-quarters of the pictures have not been published before.



© Emmet Gowin



Stories From the Deep

Ken O'Sullivan

978-0-7171-8652-5

€16.99

gillbooks.ie

Ken O'Sullivan is a documentary filmmaker and ocean conservationist. His book

reflects on his life-sustaining connection to the sea from his childhood home on Fenit Island to his urgent concern for the current climate crisis in the world's oceans. *Stories From The Deep* is a captivating memoir of the author's rekindling

love for the sea, as he leaves the grinding chores of financial trading floors and embraces his yearning to return to Ireland's west coast.

This book is beautifully written and features delightful photographs. Breathtaking underwater images appear in stunning double-page spreads. I also have to note the print quality of this book, which is excellent considering the absorbent paper used, achieving lovely rich colours for the underwater fauna.

This is a book that anyone who has lived near the coast anywhere in the world will understand. As O'Sullivan muses: 'The sea stays with you'.



© Ken O'Sullivan



Legendary broadcaster Sir David Attenborough

Protecting the planet

A new film by Sir David Attenborough is to go on show at cinemas for one night only.

David Attenborough: A Life on our Planet is a documentary in which the celebrated naturalist addresses some of the biggest challenges facing life on Earth. Attenborough, aged 93, will discuss how our unique world is under threat and how we can put it right.

The film will be broadcast to cinemas across the UK on 16 April. It can also be seen in the Netherlands, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, with screenings to follow in Australia and New Zealand. Tickets are on sale at attenborough.film. The film will be shown later on Netflix.



Brothertoft Hall, 2019
by Paul Hart

Spirit of place

Pictures by landscape photographer Paul Hart can be seen in a new book published in the spring.

The book, called *Reclaimed*, completes a three-part series on the Fens in East Anglia that began with *Farmed* and was followed by *Drained*. Special editions of all three books will be available at Photo London in May, where publishers Dewi Lewis will host an author signing session.

An exhibition of prints from all three series will be on display at Fen Ditton Gallery in Cambridge on 18 and 19 April. The weekend event will also feature an in conversation between Paul Hart, Dewi Lewis and curator Amanda Game.



Big names at the Photography Show

This year's Photography Show at Birmingham's NEC runs from March 14-17 and features an array of talks, demos and masterclasses on topics ranging from photographing the night sky, getting the best out of your camera and increasing your followers on Instagram.

The event offers something for everyone from the novice hobbyist to the seasoned professional and showcases industry trends and the best and newest kit from some of the world's biggest brands. Over four days more than 32,000 working photographers and enthusiasts will visit the show to pick up tips from the experts, attending talks, masterclasses and live demonstrations across an array of disciplines.

Award-winning photographer and entrepreneur Chase Jarvis is the speaker on the Super Stage on Saturday. Also speaking will be Magnum photographer Susan Meiselas, who will discuss her documentary work on human

rights issues. Award-winning cinematographer Gavin Free will present two sessions and there will also be appearances from rock photographer Ross Halfin, portrait artist Juno Calypso and fine art photographer Brooke Shaden.

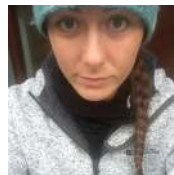
Masterclasses and talks run throughout the show and include basic tutorials on camera settings and exposures, composition and editing techniques through to lessons in maintaining artistic integrity in commercial work. There are talks on landscape, travel, wildlife and adventure from the likes of Tom Mason, Jeremy Walker and Karl Holtby; plus tips for surviving in the photography world by Tesni Ward.

A host of other attractions include galleries, demonstrations of kit from exhibitors, with all the major brands represented, and the chance to meet and mingle with like-minded photographers.

» For more information and to buy tickets visit photographyshow.com



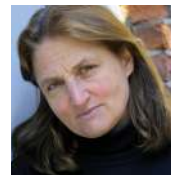
Chase Jarvis



Tesni Ward



Ross Halfin



Susan Meiselas



THE BIG VIEW

© Don McCullin / Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth



A small river that runs through my village in Somerset by Don McCullin.

THE LATEST EXHIBITIONS

DON MCCULLIN: THE STILLNESS OF LIFE

Landscape photographs by one of the greats of photography can be seen in a new exhibition. Sir Don McCullin CBE is best known as a war photographer but he is also acclaimed for his meditative landscape work.

The new exhibition at Hauser & Wirth Somerset in Bruton presents more than 70 of his landscapes created throughout his career. The show includes pictures taken in Northumberland, Cambridgeshire and Scotland, as well as the open farmland of Somerset, where McCullin lives. There are pictures documenting the remains of the Roman Empire, including the ancient site of Palmyra, and a series of still lifes composed in McCullin's garden shed. Also on display are three unseen Arctic landscapes taken on a trip to Svalbard in 2019.

Born in 1935, McCullin grew up in London but was evacuated to Somerset during the Blitz. Over the following decades he travelled around the world, often to remote locations

and dangerous situations. Between 1966 and 1984 some of his most powerful pictures appeared in the *Sunday Times Magazine* and in 1993 he was given a CBE for his contribution to photojournalism.

Throughout his career he has retained a love of landscapes and has often referred to the British countryside as his greatest salvation. This new exhibition reveals his search for peace in a troubled world.

» *Don McCullin: The Stillness of Life runs at Hauser & Wirth Somerset in Bruton (Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm) until 4 May.*

MANDY WILLIAMS: A STRANGE AND FAMILIAR SEA

This collection from long-form landscape specialist Mandy Williams brings together work from three series that explore the mysterious pull of the sea.

The images in *Beyond Land* are shot at a causeway, only revealed at low tide. They

show a collective march to the water's edge – an observation of our innate connection to water and a metaphor for our post-referendum times.

Sea Level and *Frame* were shot in Worthing, where Mandy lived as a teenager, and focus on the beach shelters along the promenade. *Sea Level* documents the sea at high tide, viewed through shelter windows. Dust and neglect becomes part of the image, reflecting the sense of melancholy that runs through many seaside towns.

Frame captures people as they walk by the shelters, their bodies barely discernible as they pass the central arms of the frame or are swept along by the wind. The textures of the environment at that moment are imprinted on the figure.

» *Mandy Williams: A Strange and Familiar Sea runs at Worthing Museum & Art Gallery in West Sussex (Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm) until 23 May.*



© The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust

BREAKING AWAY: MODERNISM IN PHOTOGRAPHY SINCE WORLD WAR 1

Ansel Adams' magnificent picture *Clearing Winter Storm*, 1940 is among the photographs now on show at the Richard Nagy Gallery in London.

Breaking Away: Modernism in Photography Since World War 1 features rare pictures by Bill Brandt, Harry Callahan, Imogen Cunningham, Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Dorothea Lange, Edward Steichen, Edward Weston and a host of others. The show is put together by collector and gallerist Richard Nagy and vintage photography expert Michael Shapiro.

» *Breaking Away: Modernism in Photography Since World War 1* is presented by Michael Shapiro Photographs and Richard Nagy Ltd and runs at the Richard Nagy Gallery in Old Bond Street, London, until 27 March.



Beyond Land 10 by Mandy Williams

© Mandy Williams

SOCIAL HUB

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Constructive criticism

I am writing regarding 'The enemy within' by Daniel Wretham (OP252).

I have never really used social media for my pictures, mainly for the reasons that Daniel has quite rightly alluded to in his article, and agree that the best part of photography is often the 'chase'. Not wanting to sound unsociable, but a day on the hills without seeing any other folk can only be described as heaven (for them as well as me!), even if the shutter remains unused.

In my humble opinion and experience, a far better way to have your images seen and critiqued is to join your local camera club. I joined Selby CC last year and have experienced all the highs and lows of club 'competitions', and both the wrath and praise of judges and my fellow members. The main thing is not to think of them as competitive, but as an avenue to get constructive and useful criticism to help improve your work. It is fair to say that I have made major improvements to my photography since joining. Indeed, I have now learned that the crop tool is my best friend (although the one most often recommended by my fellow members is the 'delete' button!).

David Henderson

OP says: *There's no doubt that camera clubs are a great way of meeting like-minded people and getting great feedback about your*

photography. However, I wouldn't discount social media entirely. Platforms such as Instagram are a great way of presenting your work to the world and getting comments from a global audience. You can get far more feedback and opinions than a single camera club could ever give you, although admittedly it can be something of a double-edged sword: for all the useful comments and tips you pick up there is a lot more 'noise' in the form of Likes, which might boost your ego, but will not directly improve your skills.

Location guidelines?

I am writing to you with regard to the Pines Island photograph and narrative in the January issue of OP (OP252). It's a lovely shot, and Ryszard Lomnicki provides a lot of detail about the venue, the setup and execution of the shot. What he fails to mention, though, is that he's had to Photoshop out the power lines and associated supporting structures that run straight across the scene. I have nothing against that, but anyone visiting this location will not see the scene as depicted.

We hear endless debate about image manipulation, and I am neither for nor against – as long as we are honest about what have done to our images when putting them into the public domain like this. I realise that OP cannot check every single image submitted, but it would be nice to see some guidelines governing this type of submission.

David Foster

OP says: *As I'm sure you'll appreciate, unless we know the location ourselves (which many times we don't), it's impossible for us to know if any retouching has gone on without the photographer telling us, or it's particularly obvious. Which means we have to rely on the information they give, and while one photographer might highlight the type of retouching you describe, another might think of it as just 'part of the processing' and omit mentioning it. However, you make a very good point and we will add a line to the brief that gets sent out, asking photographers to detail any significant manipulation or retouching.*

Where in the world?

I returned to buying OP last year in search of inspiration, and it has not failed to deliver. However, one niggle that I have is that some photographs do not have information about where they were taken. The January 2020 issue (OP252) was particularly afflicted. The article on 'Photographing winter mountains' was very inspiring, but not one of the images had details of where it was taken. Similarly, Daniel Wretham's article, 'The enemy within', had a stunning header picture, but again no location information. If this is a conscious choice by the photographers, I would really like to know why?

Keith Ratcliffe

LETTER OF THE MONTH

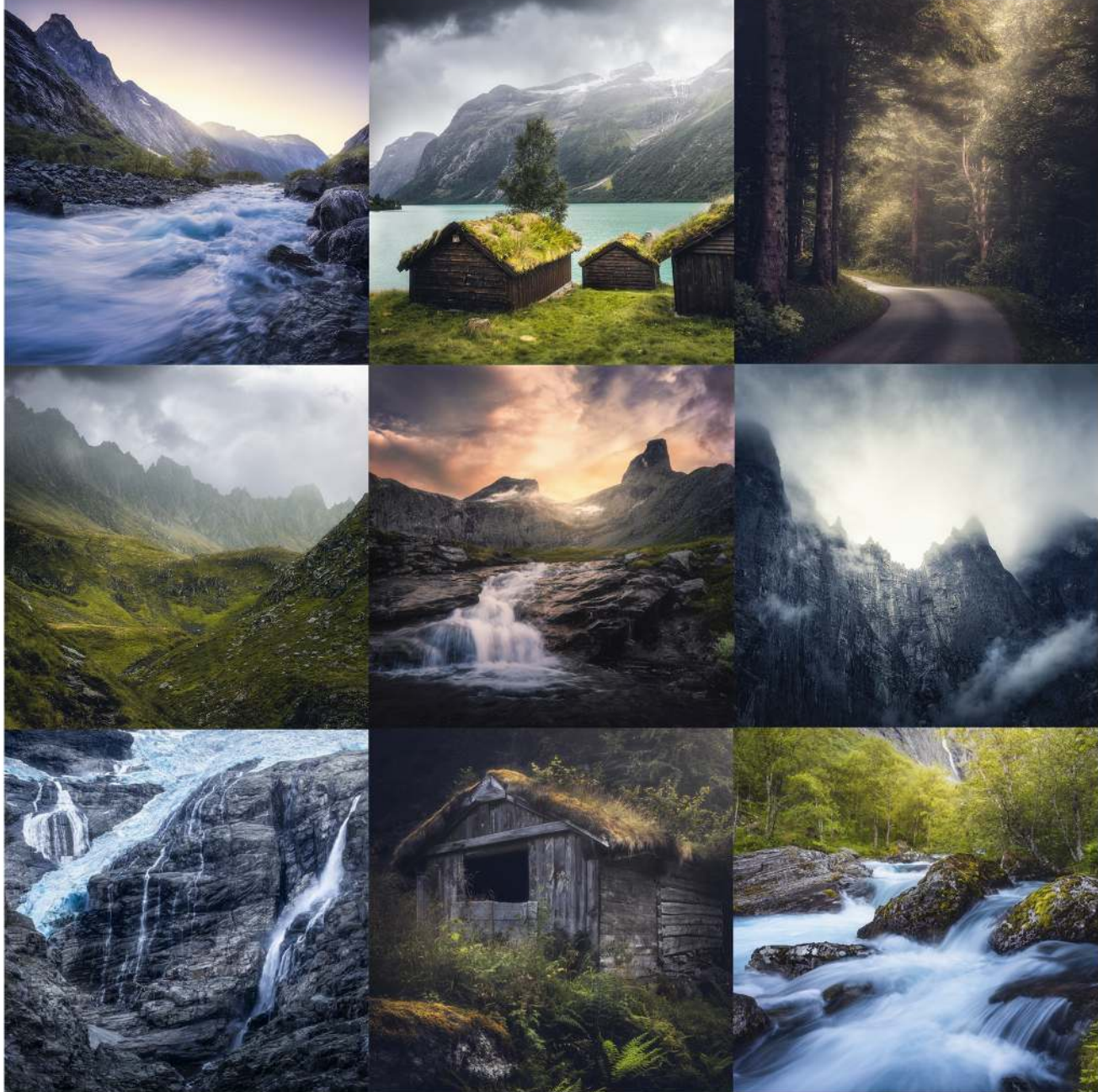
April's letter of the month winner receives a pair of Extremities Sirocco Gloves, worth £45.

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IN CONVERSATION WITH

Sue Cunningham

Sue Cunningham has spent most of her career photographing the indigenous people of the Xingu river tributary in South America's Amazon basin. Here she talks about how the search for her images has led her to a deep appreciation of the Amazon's environmental problems.

Interview by Nick Smith



‘I never take more than one picture. I’m not a clicker,’ says Sue Cunningham. ‘I’ll walk around talking to people for hours. I’ll sit with them with my camera on my back, not even thinking of taking a photograph. Maybe the light changes, or the conversation changes... then I’ll swing my camera around to take my shot. By this time, when they look at me, they know what I’m going to do.’ Sue mimes the gestures of people backing off from a photographer or stepping forward to engage with the process. ‘Have you caught it or not? If you haven’t, the moment is gone, so there’s no point taking another.’

By ‘they’, Sue means the indigenous people of the Xingu river tributary in the Amazon basin. She’s been photographing tribal people in the region since graduating from São Paulo University in the 1980s. Although she has been a commercial photographer, photojournalist and picture library owner during different phases of her career, London-based Sue keeps going back to the Amazon. Her new book, *Spirit of the Amazon*, is not only a celebration of a lifetime as an advocate for the tribal people of the place, but

one of the most complete and comprehensive visual records on the subject. It is also a book with a heartfelt call to action for the West to take notice of the fate of these people.

‘When I look back at some of the photos of the people of the Xingu river – and because I’ve been photographing them for so long – I think there’s a whole story here that should be told,’ she says. This story is, in fact, two parallel narratives of how her subject and photography have developed over time. It was when Sue came to the realisation that she should be putting her work ‘together into some kind of shape’ that the idea for *Spirit of the Amazon* took flight.

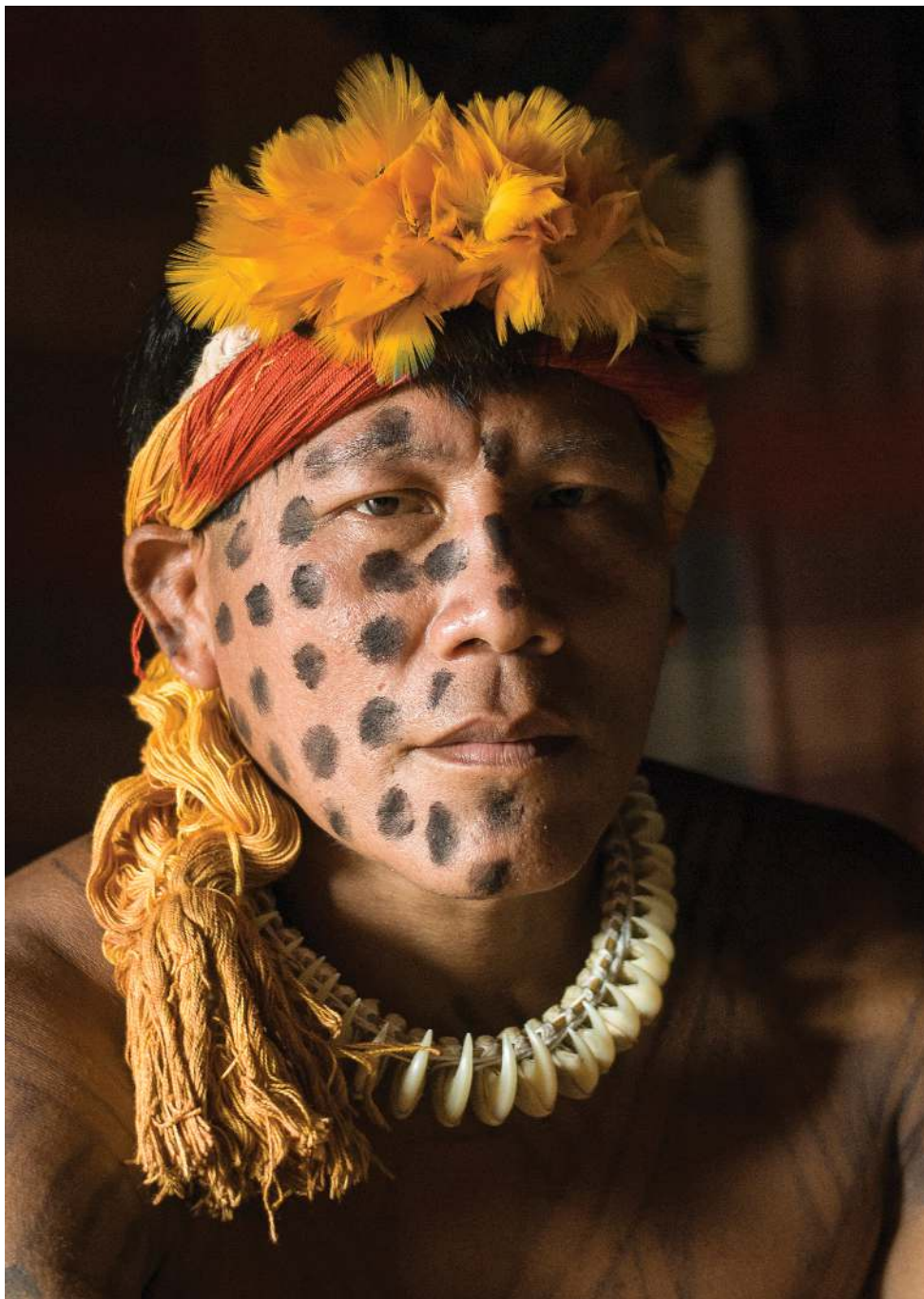
While much of its content centres on the Heart of Brazil Expedition that she undertook a decade ago with her husband Patrick (who wrote the words for the book), the project in effect started in 1985, when Sue first took her camera deep into the Amazon. Since then, she’s been back to Brazil more times than she can remember, travelling there several times a year, often for many months at a time. *Spirit of the Amazon* is an accumulation of the British photographer’s knowledge,

Above Villages in the Xinguano culture are built in a circle, with a men’s house at the centre. The circular patio of Piyulaga is a multi-purpose area for ceremonies, *huka-huka* wrestling and football.

Opposite When the government prohibited the Kayapo from selling macaw feather headresses Tumre Kayapo (left) made one from plastic straws; Kokoreti’s is from a non-endangered parrot. Tumre also has a fake Louis Vuitton bag! Brasília.

discoveries, explorations and friendships that have accrued over her entire adult life.

While she has photographed tribes throughout the whole of Brazil, Sue’s work predominantly concentrates on the Xingu river area of the Amazon, which is ‘the size of Spain’, she says. ‘I started off doing photo commissions for mining magazines, shooting all sorts of crazy non-indigenous industrial subjects. This is what got me around the Amazon. But it was only when I got to meet some of the tribal people that I thought: “My God, there’s so much more of a story here.” The Xingu has been the heartbeat of my career.’



Photographing remote people isn't easy, particularly if they're not used to the modern world or simply want to be left alone. 'You can't just walk into their village and tell them: "Say cheese". The whole thing is based on an expedition we did in 2007 after we won an award from the Royal Geographical Society. That was when we realised we were in a position to do the entire length of the river, meet all these people and actually see what was going on.' Their epic expedition included travelling more than 1,500 miles by boat, negotiating 250 miles of rapids and visiting 48 villages over a six-month period. It was the first time outsiders had undertaken this journey since the late 1980s and – despite knowing that there might be danger ahead – the husband-and-wife photographer-writer duo undertook it alone and unarmed.

One of the more demanding aspects of the expedition was getting the required approvals and clearances. 'We had to have all these meetings with Indian agencies, environment people and the military, just so we could get permission to do it. In one of these meetings we were looking at maps when one of the officials said: "Wait a minute I want to bring someone in here." So, he makes a call and we can hear: "Look I've got these bloody terrible people here that want to do an expedition." So, in walks Megaron, the administrator of the Indigenous Park, which is the first part of the river. He's someone I've known for a very long time, and because he knew the tribal people and the elders, he was able to tell people what we were going to do.'



Left (top) Yawapi Kamaiura killed a jaguar when it attacked him, earning the spiritual right to identify with it by wearing its claws as a necklace and painting his face to recall the animal's markings.

Left (below) People from the whole of the Upper Xingu came together for a *Kuarup* (funeral rite) ceremony in Matipu village to mark the liberation of the dead person's spirit from the material world.

Opposite (top left) The intricate art of face painting is done in the Kayapo by the women. Here, Ngeiboro and Bekonire are completing their art with highlights of red urucum. Metuktire village.

Opposite (middle left) Watatakalu Yawalapiti putting the finishing touches to an *atujua* mask used in a healing ceremony.

Opposite (top right) The exact method of washing manioc varies from village to village. DabayuYudja uses a bowl-shaped sieve when she prepares it. Tuba Tuba village.

Opposite (below) Bekwyikyti Kayapo is pulling a thorn from the hand of a spider monkey (*Ateles paniscus*), just one of the astonishing array of animals kept as pets by the Kayapo. Bau village.





Left Chief Raoni Metuktire is an indefatigable campaigner for the rights of his people and the preservation of their forests. He uses the power of his traditional Kayapo oration when he confronts powerful politicians. He has been known to bang his war-club on the desk of the president of Brazil.

Right Chief Jakalo Kuikuro led a team to the International Indigenous Games to show the world how strong the indigenous culture in the Xingu continues to be, despite growing pressures.

From that point, the expedition really started to take shape, especially as their hired boatman knew a lot of people of the forest too. Yet despite this invaluable help, the bureaucracy and red tape that confronted the Cunninghams in the initial stages was colossal – ‘you’ve got to take a sense of humour with you’.

Something else the photographer must do, says Sue, is ‘strip yourself of every preconception, because every village is different, and within each village every person is different, with different

personalities. As with anywhere, there will be those who are friendly and those who are shy or less easy to get to know.’

Sue says that to engage with her subjects, ‘you’ve got to really open up, look into their eyes, as if to say: “Here I am.” If you don’t, the shutters come down and you can say goodbye to taking any meaningful photographs.’

The expedition and its photography cannot be separated in Sue’s mind. While she accepts that one of her main priorities while in the



Amazon was to 'get photos', she also says it is more a case of wanting to transmit their story to a wider public. "That's what people in every village asked us – to tell their story. But it's a huge trust thing. To get to the point where I could take photos, we had to spend time showing them who we really were."

The 'story' is essentially about the threat that the indigenous people feel from the encroachment of the modern world on to their homelands. 'We'd say: "Look, we're here to help

you. What message is it you want us to take back?" There's one picture in the book where there's a whole row of villagers. Women, naked, standing in body paint from head to toe, and men with their war clubs, all saying: "We don't want invasions on our land."

For Sue, the beauty of digital capture is that it forms an instant bond with the people she is photographing. In the early days she was working with film, and the time it took to get film back to the lab for processing and

everything that went with it created a disconnect between the subject and photographer. But with digital 'you can say, "here is the picture". Back in 1985, when I didn't know if I'd ever go back to the same places again, I made prints to take with me just in case I saw these people again. Some of them still have the prints I left with them all that time ago. Digital is much more of a sharing experience.'

Digital or film, the actual technology is of only slight importance to Sue, who says that



she's 'more interested in the plight of the people themselves'. She goes on to describe the destruction brought about by enormous farms – some the size of a British county – that surround the Amazon. 'When they want to expand, they don't care – they just expand. They buy extra land or they just invade the forest, which is the easiest and cheapest way of doing this.' Such destruction has now reached the borders of the indigenous homelands.

Some of the headwaters of the Xingu are also outside protected areas, exposing them to agritoxins, contaminants from gold mining, cattle farming and even effluent from eco-lodges 'that they just throw into the river', all of which has an environmental impact downstream. 'I remember right at the beginning drinking the water and I was never ill. But if you tested it today, you wouldn't dream of drinking it. This is their story. What they are saying is that their culture is strong, and they are standing up to this. But if they go, the forest will fall, and the rest of the world will suffer. Why? Because of the effect it will have on global climate.'

Sue has always believed that photography can make a difference to this story, because 'it's always a photo that changes the way people think. Photography raises awareness.' But this awareness can only come from getting the right image of the right subject and that's 'down to the people themselves. If they are aware of what you are trying to do for them, they will be more likely to give you a face, an expression, a powerful image. That's really what I'm looking for.'

Left (top) After loggers have felled all the valuable trees the remaining vegetation is burned. The ashes provide limited nutrients for coarse cattle pasture, but these are quickly depleted.

Left (below) Local officials and politicians tacitly encourage gold mining even though it is illegal. The miners use high-pressure hoses which choke the rivers with sediment. The toxic mercury they use to extract the gold poisons the whole food chain.



***Spirit of the Amazon* by Sue and Patrick Cunningham is published by Papadakis, priced at £40.**

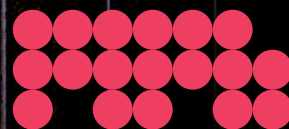
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Colours are to the photographer what flavours are to the chef: they make or break a shot. So says Pete Bridgwood as he cooks up this month's image

To my mind, the single most wonderful thing – and also the most important thing – about a colour photograph is the way that the colours are rendered. Of course, we need to photograph a captivating subject and we need to frame a thoughtful composition, but the colour palette has a profound impact on how the image is perceived.

Camera manufacturers understand this paradigm; they all have carefully designed algorithms to translate the analogue input from a scene into a digital representation, with a colour palette characteristic of a certain style. Until we have something akin to Adobe Lightroom built into our cameras to allow real-time full-gamut split toning and colour grading on location, switching on your camera's 'advanced' or 'art' filters is one way of stretching your creativity and opening up your mind to alternative colour possibilities.

I love shooting Jpegs using the inbuilt profiles or 'advanced filters' of the X-Pro2, and one of the huge advantages of mirrorless cameras is that we're presented with a close approximation of the final results in the electronic viewfinder. This provides a more immersive experience than using the LCD display, because our concentration can be more easily focused entirely on the task at hand.

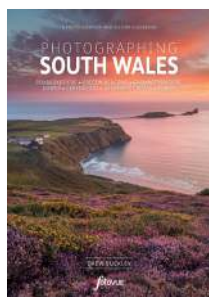
I still use Raw files for my final renders, but when the camera is set to shoot both file types simultaneously, the stylised 'filtered' Jpeg colours are presented in real time through the electronic viewfinder. While I'm still on location this enables me to visualise a variety of styles with which I might finally render the scene. Profiles and 'art filters' are therefore valuable modern tools to aid the age-old process of visualisation.

My photograph of this little golf green was made in the middle of the day with the 'Toy Camera' filter selected on my X-Pro2. Back in my studio, both the filtered Jpeg and the unfiltered Raw file were opened side-by-side in Lightroom and I used the Jpeg to provide a starting point for my rendering of the Raw file. After creating a reasonably accurate duplicate I made several adjustments to improve the image, keeping the heavy vignette, but choosing the Adobe Vintage or profile to provide the filmic palette.

Cleveland Way, Ravenscar,
Scarborough, North Yorkshire.
*Fujifilm X-Pro2 with XF18-55mm f/2.8-4 R LM
OIS lens at 35mm, ISO 200, 8sec at f/11, LEE
Big Stopper, 2-stop ND grad filter, processed
using Adobe Lightroom with Vintage 01 profile*

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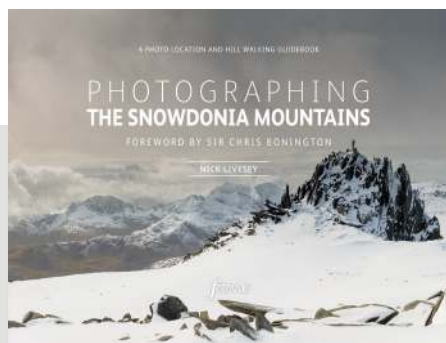
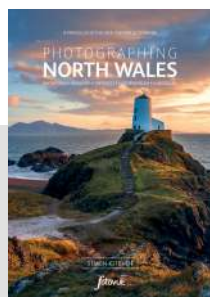
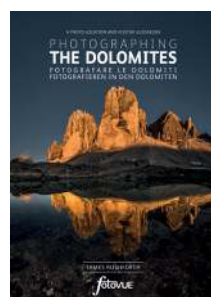
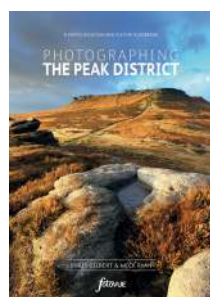
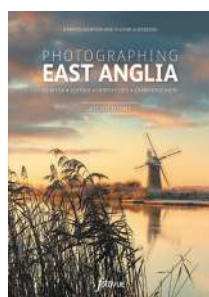
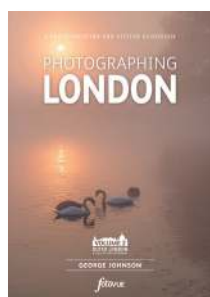
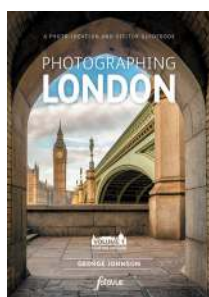
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ANIMAL ATTRACTION...

Richard Garvey-Williams prepares to capture the ideal animal portrayal

LEARNING ZONE

Animal portraits with impact

Richard Garvey-Williams looks at the ingredients needed for potent wildlife portraits and how you can give your shots added strength



Human portrait photography typically aims to capture the personality of the subject, helped in no small part by the careful use of lighting, backdrops and poses. This type of shot will often depict only the face – or the head and shoulders – of the subject, but it can also encompass the whole person, and might even include the wider surroundings or other elements that tell us more about the individual.

Similar considerations apply when photographing animal subjects. Strong animal portraits tend to not only reveal the unique physical characteristics and anatomy of the subject, but also frequently give insights into their character and livelihood. In this way they are not only highly informative, but also frequently emotive. However, before you rush to point your camera at a creature and trigger the shutter, a number of considerations need to be taken into account.

Above The slight tilt of the head, the smears of blood around her lips and the attendant flies all add to this portrait of a lioness in the Maasai Mara. Canon EOS 7D with 500mm lens, ISO 250, 1/4000sec at f/4

WHAT YOU SAY AND SHOW

A good starting point with your animal portraits is to consider what it is you want to say about the species, or indeed a particular individual. What are its unique traits? What is it that interests you or captures your attention? If you have a group of animals, take your time to look around and select an individual that best illustrates these features. You can then go on to contemplate how you might effectively reveal these aspects through your viewing angle, focal length and the timing of your shot. Technical considerations regarding where you focus and your choice of aperture (to ensure an appropriate depth of field) also come into the reckoning.

Although a portrait can depict the whole animal, many focus attention on a smaller part of the creature, usually the face or head and shoulders. Any cropping usually needs to be done boldly, though, so it is clear to the viewer that this was your intention. Merely

cropping off the tail, hind-legs or lower third of your subject won't work, for example – you are more likely to get away with cutting the animal in half or just including the head and shoulders in the frame.

Precision is important, so ask yourself if you are including parts of the animal that aren't necessary for what you wish to convey, as these will potentially detract from or weaken the message. A poorly framed image will leave your viewers wondering what you wanted them to look at.

Below (left) The strong catch light in the eye of this captive alpaca and the stark contrast relative to the dark background gives this portrait extra impact. *Canon EOS 5D with 100-400mm lens at 170mm, ISO 500, 1/200sec at f/5*

Below (right) Including this fallow deer's adversary in the background provides a little context, explaining the swollen right eye and damaged antler. *Canon EOS 7D with 500mm lens and 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 320, 1/500sec at f/5.6, tripod*

PRO TIPS

Your point of focus is critical. Being relational beings, we invariably direct our attention to the eyes, 'the windows of the soul'. Therefore, it is usually important that these can be seen clearly and in good light. Spot focusing on the nearest eye is usually the way to go.

If the eye is not in the centre of the frame, focusing and then recomposing runs the risk of a slight loss of focus due to the swaying or other movement of your subject's or your own body. It is often better to focus using an off-centre focus point and to release the shutter as soon as focus is achieved.

Catch lights formed by light reflections in the eyes will provide added impact. Waiting for a slight tilting or rising of the head is often worthwhile, or you could consider using fill-in flash to generate these if it is appropriate to your subject and setting.



LEARNING ZONE



TIMING

The angle of the head and face, and direction of the look can make all the difference to a portrait, so the timing of your shot is critical. It is important to constantly monitor your subject's posture, gaze and body language, and to be ready to capture the 'decisive' moment when it all comes together. Look for quirky or humorous expressions, or ones that might appear to suggest pride, love, fear, aggression, submission, inquisitiveness, cuteness or peace, among others.

Strong images also frequently arise when there is a sense of a relationship or connection between you, the photographer, and your subject. Direct eye contact with the lens can help create powerful, intimate and emotive images, so capturing the moment when your subject's gaze meets your own works well. Of course, ethical considerations come into play here, and it is important not to provoke a reaction by getting too close or disturbing the animal in any way.

Although not always noticeable at the time of capture, flicks of the ears to ward off flies or blinks of the eyelid or nictitating membrane (the inner eyelid) can ruin a shot, so it is often worth firing off a few frames at critical moments to reduce the chances of this.

Left (top) These three images were taken split seconds apart, but show the importance of timing. The one with the buffalo looking straight at the camera is the most effective and is helped by the oxpecker looking across towards the buffalo's face. Canon EOS 5D with 500mm lens and 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 250, 1/250sec at f/8, beanbag

Left The slightly startled look in the eye of this topi in Kenya, and the fact that the nearest ear flipped back for a split second, helped give this portrait added appeal. Canon EOS 7D with 500mm lens, ISO 320, 1/500sec at f/5.6

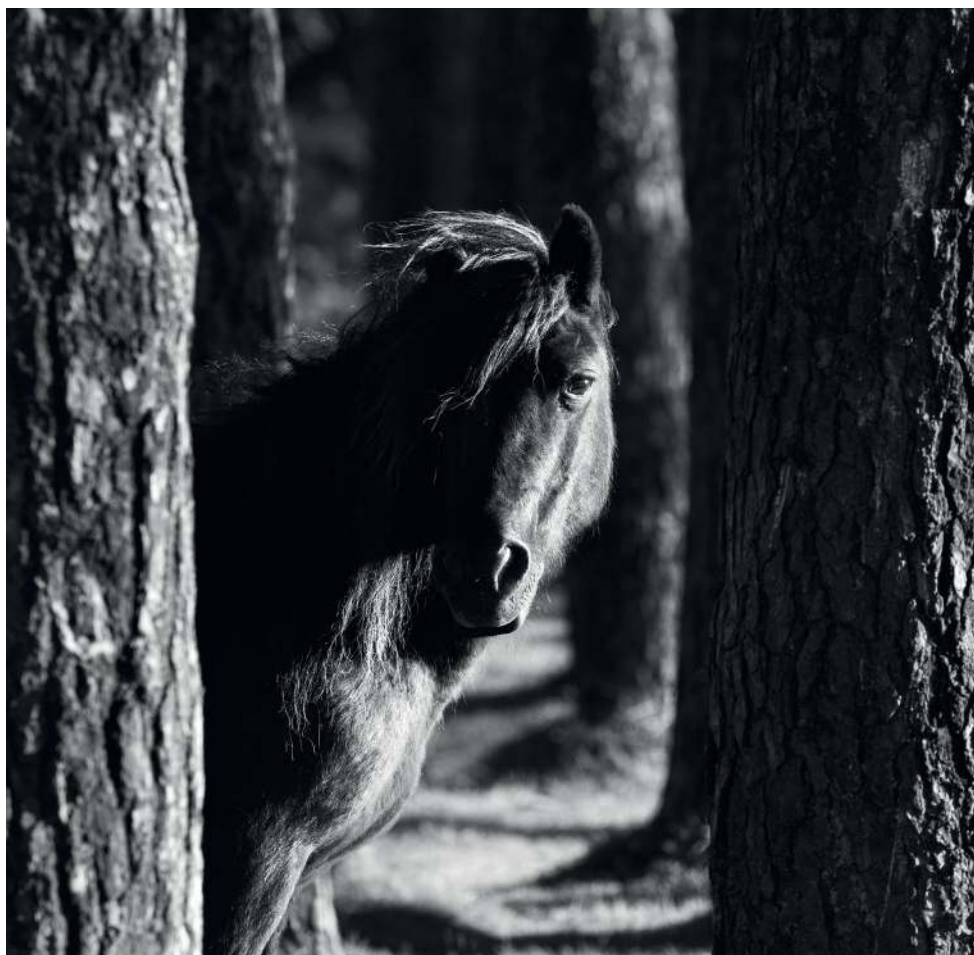


LIGHTING

Unlike a studio photographer, we tend not to have absolute control over the quality and intensity of the light we use. However, the same principles apply to wildlife portraits as they do to human portraits, so it's important to try and make the most of the light on offer to support your shots.

Intense mid-day light rarely works, as it creates extreme contrast and tends to leave your subject's eyes in deep shadow. When the sun is lower in the sky there are opportunities for front, back or side lighting, all of which have their potential benefits. Back lighting might help draw attention to an animal's fur or feathers through a 'rim-lighting' effect, for example, whereas side lighting can emphasise skin textures and reveal an animal's form. Meanwhile, angled shafts of light breaking through forested areas can be used as 'spotlights', which can give you a beautifully lit subject set against a dark background.

Overcast days can also work well for wildlife portraits. The soft, diffuse light can be ideal for illuminating a face more evenly, revealing detail in areas that would otherwise be in shadow. The subtleties of the colouration of your subject can also become more apparent under softer lighting.



Above This portrait of a Dartmoor pony is helped by the framing provided by the trees and the 'spotlight' provided by the light entering the wooded area. *Canon EOS 5D with 100-400mm lens at 360mm, ISO 400, 1/200sec at f/9*

Right I photographed this speckled bush cricket on a conservatory window using a twin-light flash. The fall-off of the light simplified the image, with the cricket appearing to be taking an interest in its reflection. *Canon EOS 7D with 105mm macro lens, ISO 250, 1/160sec at f/14, twin-light flash*

PRO TIPS

If you have a very specific end result in mind consider the timing of your shoot in relation to the season, time of day or forecast weather conditions. Each of these can influence the quality and direction of the light that you are likely to experience.

If you are using a hide, plan the position based on the 'best' light. A degree of trial and error may be necessary.





BACKGROUNDS

In many respects the background for a portrait is as important as the subject, as it provides the backdrop or 'stage' for your shot. However, unless there is a message to convey through features in the background, you won't want it drawing attention away from the animal itself. Move around and select a position that provides you with a relatively blank canvas that – ideally – complements your subject in terms of colour and tone.

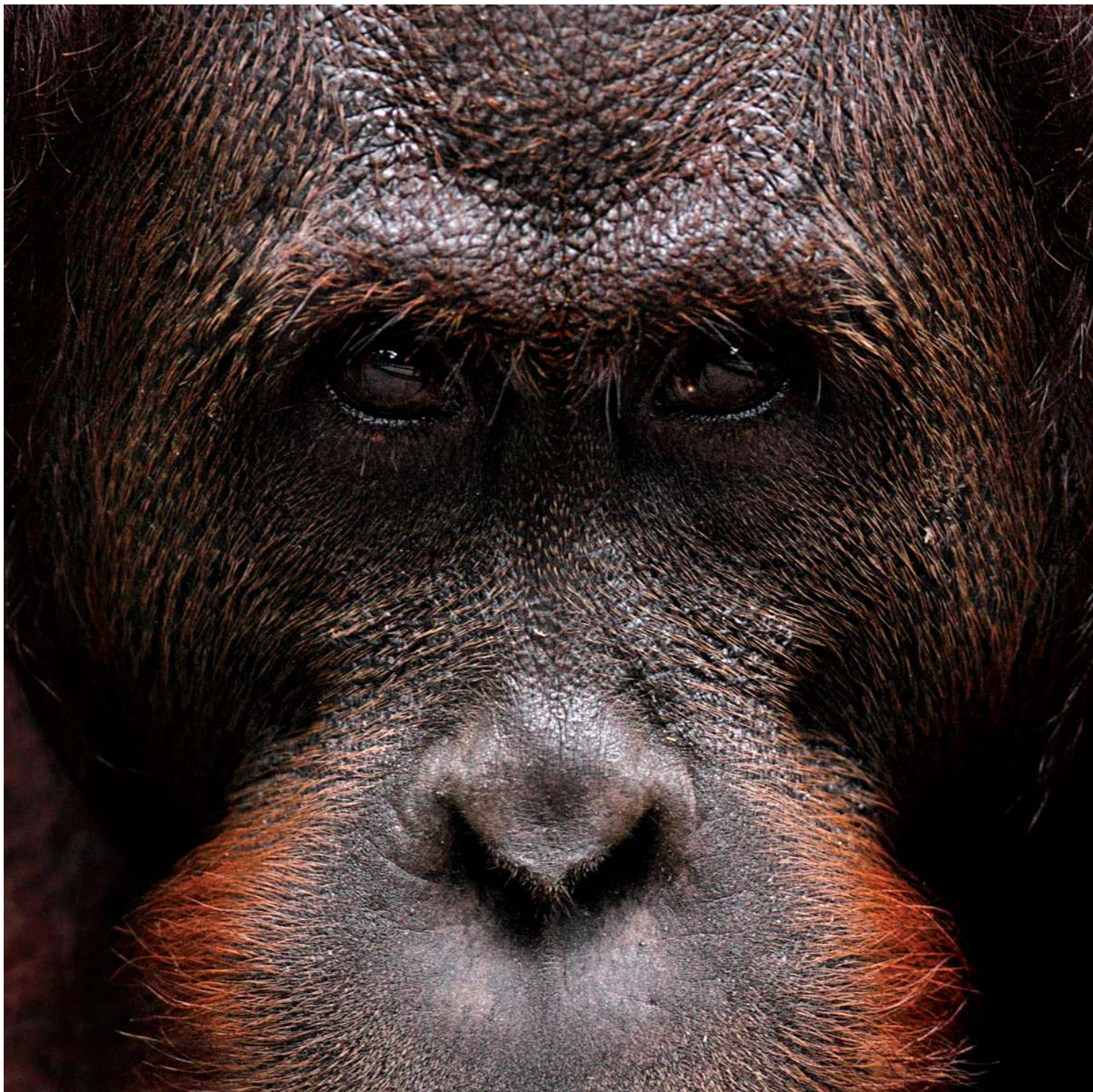
Beware of strong background colours, such as bright yellows and reds, as these 'advancing' colours can be particularly distracting. Lighter tones also tend to draw the eye, which is often a problem when photographing animals in tree canopies, where patches of overexposed sky are revealed through gaps in the foliage beyond. In this situation a tighter crop might be the answer.

Conversely, a darker background will often help your subject stand out. Blurring the background can also help remove potential distractions, as well as leading to a softer colouration and patterning of the backdrop, so opt for the widest aperture that provides sufficient depth of field to keep the critical features of your subject sharply in focus. A telephoto lens with a fast maximum aperture can be an advantage here, as is a camera with a full-frame sensor.



Top Part of the success of this portrait of a male lion in the Serengeti comes from the fact that the textures and colours in the background mimic the lion's mane so well. *Canon EOS 5D with 100-400mm lens at 312mm, ISO 400, 1/250sec at f/6.3, beanbag*

Right Orange and blue are complementary colours, which accounts for some of the appeal of this portrait of a Scottish highland cow photographed from low down against a blue sky. *Canon EOS 5D with 100-400mm lens at 220mm, ISO 160, 1/250sec at f/5*



Centring the triangle formed by the eyes and nose and filling the frame seemed appropriate for this intimate portrait of an orangutan in Borneo. *Canon EOS 50D with 500mm lens, ISO 250, 1/400sec at f/4, monopod*

POSITIONING

In a lot of our outdoor photographs we avoid placing key elements bang in the middle of our frame. However, many portraits deliberately put the subject in the centre of the frame, as this helps direct the viewer's attention straight to the eyes or face, and encourage them to stay there. It is also a good strategy when we want to emphasise the roundness or symmetry of a face.

There are also good reasons why we might choose to place the subject

off-centre instead. For example, if the animal is gazing to one side it often helps to offset them to allow more space for them to gaze into. Also, when there are a number of relatively defined elements, lines or patterns within the make up of the subject itself, or brought in through the inclusion of other features around about, it can often be worth offsetting these to create a sense of balance or to encourage the viewer's eyes to roam around the image.

PRO TIP

If you can get very close without causing stress to your subject, using a wideangle lens or even a fisheye lens may provide a portrait with a difference. Alternatively, consider setting your camera up in advance and triggering it remotely when your anticipated subject moves into the required position.

Right Including a fair portion of this giraffe's neck and positioning its face high in the frame helped to convey a sense of its height. Canon EOS 7D with 100-400mm lens at 100mm, ISO 250, 1/320sec at f/5.6



STEPS FOR SUCCESS

Observe your subject and decide what it is you want to convey through your portrait. Choose an appropriate individual and concentrate your attention and focus on it, waiting for that special moment.

Look for lighting, angles and crops that will draw attention to the animal's key features and show them off most effectively.

Be precise in your own positioning, taking into account how it influences the background and the light falling on your subject.

Make sure you have a pleasing angle of view. Shooting at the same level as your subject often provides a real sense of connection with that animal, but don't be afraid to look for new and creative angles as well.

Check that you have selected an aperture that ensures sharpness in the animal's important features, as well as the required degree of blurring to the background.

Sharpness is of paramount importance, so check your shutter speed and use a beanbag or other support to avoid camera shake.

Make sure that your point of focus is on the critical part of your subject (often the eyes) and keep re-checking it to accommodate any slight movement of your subject or camera.

Concentrate and be patient, always ready to gently squeeze the shutter-release button. Consider firing off a short burst of shots at the critical moments.

Always remember to put the welfare of the animal first.

When you process your shots, consider using subtle and precise localised adjustments to help certain features stand out and to remove distractions. Lightening shadow areas, particularly around the eyes, adding a subtle vignette or converting to monochrome might be appropriate.

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QUICK GUIDE TO...

Split toning

If you think that split toning is only for black and white photography, think again.

Niall Benvie explains its applications and practice in colour images



When photographers think of contrast, it is usually in the context of tonality – of light and dark. The higher the contrast, the greater the difference between the highlights and shadows in the picture, and we're all aware of how altering an image's tonal contrast can change its mood.

There is another sort of contrast, though: the contrast between warm and cool hues in the picture. By making an already warm hue – one towards the yellow end of the spectrum – more yellow, and one at the cool end of the spectrum more blue, we create a contrast that is independent of tonality. This can be especially useful if the lighting is very flat and doesn't offer much in the way of tonal difference.

Pretty much every TV drama or movie you've seen in the last two decades will have employed

split toning (which is also known as colour grading) to a greater or lesser extent. Nordic noir crime dramas, such as *Wallander* and *Trapped*, use it to create a sinister mood, while in film its use is best known – and perhaps most evident – in the *Matrix* franchise. Not only does split toning provide a particular mood, but the so-called 'cream and teal' grading creates a contrast that helps actors stand out on otherwise dark, low-contrast sets.

With photography, split toning isn't simply a way to get your pictures noticed, but a means of giving your photographs a polished edge or emphasising a mood in a way that you cannot achieve with an ungraded process. No one understands communication better than moviemakers so perhaps it's worth borrowing from their playbook now and again?

Above Taken half an hour after sunset, this scene from Islay's west coast had a strong blue cast to it. I used colour grading to create contrast between highlight areas and darker ones, introducing a warmer cast into bright parts of the sea and sky and a cyan one into the shadowy rocks.

Opposite (top left and right) In this picture made on Islay's Singing Sands beach, colour grading using a pre-set I made in Exposure X gave a more accentuated look.

Opposite (below left and right) Split toning is good for emphasising a quality of otherness in photographs – creating a disconnect from our everyday experience and perception of things.



Before

Grading in Lightroom

Split toning has been available as a Develop module option in Lightroom for years and is remarkably useful for everyday colour grading. Lightroom identifies the highlights and shadows and makes it easy to introduce contrasting colour casts into each area. As a starting point, click on the swatches box adjacent to Highlights and select one of the warm presets. Once you've selected a Hue that you're happy with (around 35° is a good place to start) you can control how saturated it is using the other slider. Repeat the process for the Shadows, this time selecting a bluish swatch.

You can determine what constitutes a 'highlight' and a 'shadow' by moving the Balance slider. The further you move it to the



After

right, the darker a shadow has to be for it to be affected by the Shadow settings. For regular photographs – where you are after a straight representation of the subject – subtle colour grading may be enough to give your images a hard-to-define, but undeniably refined edge.

Matching mood and subject

If you're considering applying some 'heavy duty' grading to create a mood, there needs to be a good reason for doing it. Why do you want to change the picture this way? What narrative purpose does it serve? Does the subject merit the sort of treatment you want to apply? Just liking a grading look isn't a defensible reason for making the change.

The look of 'otherness' – of distancing the subject from our everyday experience of it – that grading creates is often inappropriate when the picture's theme is positive. However, if you want to suggest menace from an approaching storm or a wild ocean hammering the coast, for example, split toning can emphasise that. There can also be wistfulness to the look that harmonises with themes of decay or abandonment, although like a lot of creative choices in photography you will need to apply common sense to your creative intent.



After



Before

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DEPARTURE DATES & COACH PICK UP POINTS

NORTH EAST

Monday 7th September

Darlington, Newton Aycliffe, Bishop Auckland, Spennymoor, Ferryhill Village, West Cornforth, Coxhoe, Durham, Chester-le-Street, Consett

NORTH WEST

Thursday 2nd July

Oldham, Royton, Rochdale, Heywood, Bury, Bolton, Darwen, Blackburn

Wednesday 16th September

Bromborough, Birkenhead, Wallasey, Liverpool, Maghull, Formby, Southport, Charnock Richard Services

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

Wednesday 22nd July

Grimsby, Immingham, Scunthorpe

Wednesday 22nd July

Doncaster, Goole, Selby, York, Harrogate, Ripon, Leeming Bar

Sunday 2nd August

Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley, Wakefield, Normanton, Castleford, Pontefract

EAST MIDLANDS

Saturday 18th July

Rushden, Wellingborough, Northampton, Daventry

Saturday 18th July

Beeston, Nottingham, Bulwell, Hucknall, Mansfield, Worksop

Wednesday 22nd July

Leicester, Groby, Markfield, Coalville, Ashby De La Zouch, Swadlincote, Burton on Trent, Uttoxeter

Sunday 2nd August

Long Eaton, Derby, Ripley, Alfreton, Clay Cross, Chesterfield

Thursday 3rd September

Soham, Ely, Chatteris, March, Wisbech, Long Sutton, Gedney, Holbeach, Spalding, Bourne

WEST MIDLANDS

Wednesday 22nd July

Leicester, Groby, Markfield, Coalville, Ashby De La Zouch, Swadlincote, Burton on Trent, Uttoxeter

Wednesday 16th September

Hereford (Brandon), Hereford, Leominster, Ludlow, Craven Arms, Church Stretton, Shrewsbury, Telford, Telford Services

WALES

Wednesday 30th September

Port Talbot, Swansea, Neath, Glyn Neath, Hirwaun, Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil

EAST ENGLAND

Thursday 3rd September

Soham, Ely, Chatteris, March, Wisbech, Long Sutton, Gedney, Holbeach, Spalding, Bourne

Thursday 3rd September

Gillingham, Chatham, Rochester, Strood, Gravesend, Northfleet, Dartford, Birchanger Services

Sunday 20th September

St Albans, Harpenden, Luton, Dunstable, Bedford

Wednesday 30th September

Sheerness (Kent), Sittingbourne, Maidstone, Birchanger Services

SOUTH EAST

Saturday 18th July

Southampton (West End), Southampton (Bitterne), Southampton (Soton), Basingstoke, Newbury

Sunday 2nd August

Havant, Portsmouth, Fareham, Southampton (West End)

Thursday 3rd September

Gillingham, Chatham, Rochester, Strood, Gravesend, Northfleet, Dartford, Birchanger Services

Wednesday 30th September

Sheerness (Kent), Sittingbourne, Maidstone, Birchanger Services

SOUTH WEST

Thursday 2nd July

Frome, Warminster, Westbury, Trowbridge, Melksham, Corsham

Wednesday 29th July

Chippenham, Corsham, Bath, Chipping Sodbury, Yate, Nailsworth, Stroud

Sunday 20th September

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Under pressure

It is easy to fall into the trap of questioning our creative efforts and piling pressure on ourselves to succeed, but as Graham Dunn explains, there are ways that we can all avoid these self-induced stresses



Despite living among a wealth of beauty in the great outdoors, we are equally surrounded by ever-increasing pressures on all fronts. Day-to-day life rapidly fills our minds with busyness and stress, whether it's work and finances, the rollercoaster ride of family life, what foods we must or mustn't eat, or even which side of the political landscape we lean towards.

There is more than enough to consume us entirely, but when we add photography (personal rather than paid work), this brings an additional set of pressures. Am I getting out enough? Why do I always miss the best conditions? Is my portfolio broad enough? Am I travelling to enough far-flung and exotic locations? Am I creating the right sort of images? How will they be received on social media?

However, it's incredibly important to lift some of these pressures off ourselves – not just to unleash creativity, but also to look after our mental health. There has long been talk of photographing 'for yourself', and

this is something that I'm finally starting to grasp. All too often in the past I would treat photographic outings as some sort of competition. If I arrived at a location and noticed the presence of 'rival' photographers, I would somehow need to 'beat' them and come up with the best image from those particular conditions so that I felt my outing had been worthwhile. It seems foolish now, but it really did take me years to realise that it's OK to go out and enjoy the moment for myself; that it is not all one big contest. And realising that was really quite liberating!

Another 'light bulb' moment can be the realisation that your locality has the potential to be just as fruitful – photographically speaking – as awe-inspiring hotspots in distant lands. It's often said that concentrating on what is nearby can produce strong work, and when I finally acknowledged that, it was another pressure lifted. I now look forward to visiting local hotspots rather than pining for more exotic scenes.

These musings all stem from revisiting this particular image from Higger Tor in the Peak District, which is on my doorstep. I'd had a lean few weeks photographing for myself, so when a window of opportunity arose I grabbed it. Time was short, so I wasn't going to get far, but I didn't mind that I was revisiting a location I'd been to countless times previously. I didn't mind how many other photographers had posted glorious images from the same location, or that I'd need to avoid other tripod-wielding early-risers who were also keen to make the most of the conditions. I was just happy to be there with my son at the weekend, drinking in what I had in front of me.

As landscape photographers we are destined for a lifetime of wistful looks through panes of glass as amazing light and skies pass up by, but we mustn't let the pressure or the guilt of missed opportunities get the better of us. Learning to appreciate what is around us at any given moment is vital: just being out in the elements can be a huge pressure release.



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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 is involved (generally less than a half mile), 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

Beinn Narnain, Argyll and Bute, by Chris Hoskins

40 Viewpoints of the month

- 1 Ynys Lochlyn Ceredigion
- 2 King's Wood Kent

44 Viewpoints

- 3 Bienn Narnain Argyll and Bute
- 4 Bruna Fea Orkney Islands
- 5 Badbury Clump Oxfordshire
- 6 Haystacks Cumbria
- 7 Sycamore Gap Northumberland
- 8 Loch Uisg Argyll and Bute
- 9 Bracklesham Bay West Sussex
- 10 Ullswater Cumbria

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Map plottings are approximate



Ynys Lochtyn, Ceredigion

With a free morning and fair weather forecast, Elliott Coleman heads to the west coast of Wales in search of a stunning sunrise

A short walk to the north of the small coastal village of Llangrannog, and guarded by the towering rounded hill of Pen Y Badell, lies the quartz-laden outcrop and small tidal island of Ynys Lochtyn. Once home to an early Celtic Iron Age settlement and promontory fort, Ynys Lochtyn is now better known for its grazing ponies and dolphin spotting on warm summer evenings.

I must admit that very little planning went into this image: I had a free Sunday morning and on Saturday evening my weather app predicted fair weather, a scattering of high clouds and the chance of a colourful sunrise. I opened up PhotoPills and after a little scrolling up and down the coastline, chose Ynys Lochtyn as an interesting-looking location. The biggest challenge of this shot would be

getting out of bed at 3:30am for a 5:00am sunrise. That 3:30am alarm call is when I have a serious conversation with myself about the merits of stamp collecting as a hobby, instead of photography, but once I'm up and out, dawn is most definitely my favourite time of day.

On arrival at Llangrannog, I headed on to the beach and followed the coastal path up from the best ice cream shop in Wales. It's not a very long walk, but the initial climb is fairly steep, as it rises above Llangrannog and onto the cliff tops. Following the footpath for approximately half a mile I arrived at the base of Pen Y Badell, at which point you can look for a composition from the coast path, head down on to Ynys Lochtyn or continue around the base of the hill to then follow the road to the top for an elevated view.

12 miles from Cardigan • 55 miles from Swansea

ACCESS RATING     

How to get there Take the A487 north-east from Cardigan for approximately 10 miles to the village of Brynhofnant. Turn left on to the B4334 and follow the road for two miles to Llangrannog. There is pay and display parking in the village and a few on-street spaces, but these are limited, so get there early (especially in the summer months). The coastal path starts beside the Caffi Patio ice

cream shop; follow the footpath up and along the cliff tops until you reach Ynys Lochtyn.

What to shoot Ynys Lochtyn from a number of points along the coast path or from the top of Pen Y Badell for a bird's-eye view. Walk out on to the headland for magnificent cliff tops, caves and natural arches that can't be seen from the coast path.

Best time of day Sunrise or sunset.

Food/drink Pentre Arms, Llangrannog, SA44 6SN, 01239 654345, pentrearms.co.uk.

Accommodation As above.

Other times of year Autumn is good for sunsets.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 198

Nearby locations Cenarth Falls (12 miles); Welsh Wildlife centre, Cardigan (16 miles).



Should you choose to head down on to Ynys Lochtyn you will be rewarded with cliff-top views of caves, rock formations and a natural arch that can't be seen from the footpath above.

I opted for a viewpoint just off the



main coast path. I was drawn to the various triangles that lead the eye from the bottom right of the frame on to Ynys Lochtyn and out to the horizon. I initially made a 50sec exposure to smooth out the water and show some movement in the clouds, but after

reviewing the image I decided that the sky looked better without any movement. As a result, another exposure was made for the sky, this time at 0.6sec without filters, and the two exposures were blended in Photoshop to produce the final image.

Canon EOS 6D with Canon EF 16-35mm f/4L IS USM lens at 16mm, ISO 100, two blended exposures (foreground: 50sec at f/16, sky: 0.6sec), two-stop hard ND grad filter, six-stop ND filter, tripod

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Nikon D810 with Samyang 135mm lens, ISO 64, 1/60sec at f/2.2, polarising filter, tripod

King's Wood, Kent

Stewart Mckeown makes a return visit to one of Kent's largest ancient woodlands to photograph the stunning bluebell display

The 1,500-acre King's Wood is located in the Kent Downs AONB, and is managed by the Forestry Commission and the Kent Stour Countryside Partnership. Found to the east of the village of Challock, the forest has a mix of broad-leaved and coniferous trees, with a diverse range of flora and fauna that can be explored via an array of trails and well-maintained paths. Historically, King's Wood was a royal hunting

ground frequented by Henry VIII, and herds of fallow deer still roam here today.

I have been visiting the wood for years, specifically during the spring months when the bluebells are out. My day job usually limits my photography to evenings and the weekends, but I have tended to shoot here at dawn as well, as the optimal time to capture bluebells might only last for a few weeks. Fortunately, the

start of bluebell season when I took this shot coincided with the Easter bank holiday, so I had the chance of a few extra nights in the woods.

The vast size of King's Wood means it can take a few exploratory trips to find promising areas to shoot, but from my previous visits I knew of an area close to the northern boundary of the forest that would get unimpeded golden light if I was lucky. As I parked in the village of Molash and made my way into the forest via Pound Lane I could see that the woods were probably a week away from their prime; the bluebell carpet was a little patchy and the woodland canopy was quite bare, but I was determined to make use of this bonus outing.

As I walked along the trails through the bluebells a tree with a fresh set of green leaves drew my attention. The low golden light had started to penetrate the woods, illuminating its leaves and side-lighting its trunk, which helped separate this particular tree from the darker background. With my 135mm f/2 lens attached I shuffled around to find the best angle I could, taking care not to trample any flowers. I set up my tripod and with Live View engaged I focused manually on the tree. A shallow depth of field allowed me to blur the background to further isolate the tree and also reduce the foreground bluebells to a pleasing haze. Finally, I added my landscape polariser to reduce glare and strengthen the vibrant colours – it certainly wasn't a bad way to spend Good Friday!

6 miles from Ashford • 11 miles from Canterbury **ACCESS RATING**     

How to get there Follow the A28 north-east from Ashford towards Canterbury, passing over the M20. At the roundabout junction with the A2070, take the first exit on to the A28 and continue for two and a half miles to a staggered crossroads. Turn left on to White Hill, signed Challock. A small car park is one and a quarter miles on the right, with the main King's Wood car park half a mile



further. Alternatively you can continue to Challock, turn right at the roundabout on to the A252 and park in the village of Molash, entering King's Wood via Pound Lane.

What to shoot Bluebell woodland; macro/close-up shots; fallow deer; adders.

Best time of day Dawn or sunset for the long shadows of trees on the bluebell carpet.

Food/drink Halfway House, The Crossroads, Canterbury Road, Challock, TN25 4BB, 01233 740258, halfwayhousechallock.co.uk.

Accommodation The Woolpack Inn, The Street, Chilham, CT4 8DL, 01227 730351, woolpackchilham.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn for changing leaves, fungi and mist.

Ordnance Survey map LR 189

Nearby locations Oare Marshes (10 miles); Reculver (22 miles).

Beinn Narnain, Argyll and Bute

Set in the heart of the Arrochar Alps, Beinn Narnain is a fantastic hike, especially when coupled with nearby Beinn Ime or The Cobbler. From the flanks of the mountain, Ben Lomond strikes an imposing figure to the east, and watching the sunrise over the Trossachs makes the walk well worth the effort.

How to get there Follow the A82 north from Glasgow, along the west shore of Loch Lomond to Tarbet, where you turn left on to the A83. Follow the road round to Succoth, parking in the obvious car park at the west side of the bay. A short distance south of the car park entrance – on the opposite side of the road – is a footpath signed Argyll Forest Park. A map



© Chris Hoskins



is essential for following the path up the south-eastern flank of Beinn Narnain.

What to shoot The Trossachs and Ben Lomond to the east; Loch Long to the south; The Cobbler to the west. Plenty of rocky outcrops and mountain flora for more intimate landscapes.

Best time of day Early morning for east-facing views; late evening and sunset for west-facing views.

Food/drink Arrochar Tea Room, Craigard, A83, Arrochar, G83 7AA, 07585 709772, arrochartearoom.co.uk.

Accommodation Ben Bhuela (B&B), Arrochar, G83 7AP, 01301 702184.

Other times of year This part of the country is amazing at all times of the year.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 364

Nearby locations Loch Lomond (1 mile); Rest and be Thankful (6 miles).

1½ miles from Arrochar • 38 miles from Glasgow **ACCESS RATING**

32 miles from Thurso • 110 miles from Inverness **ACCESS RATING**

Bruna Fea, Orkney Islands

Stromness is a picturesque coastal village to the west of Mainland, the largest of the Orkney Islands. The hills of the island of Hoy to the west serve as an impressive backdrop when Stromness is viewed from Brunu Fae, and if you're lucky there may still be snow on the distant peaks.

How to get there Follow the A9 for 110 miles from Inverness to Thurso, where you take the Northlink ferry to Stromness. On leaving the ferry

terminal, turn right on to Ferry Road (A965) towards Kirkwall, and after half a mile – at the roundabout – turn right on to Cairnston Road. Continue for roughly half a mile and park in the small lorry park on the right, at the base of the hill. Walk up the road for quarter of a mile more and turn left on to the track to Brunu Fae.

What to shoot Panoramic images of Stromness, with the island of Hoy as a backdrop.

Best time of day Winter or spring

mornings, when there is the possibility of snow on the hills and the ferry is coming and going.

Nearest food/drink Julia's Cafe and Bistro, Ferry Road, Stromness, KW16 3AE, 01856 850 904, juliascafe.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Orca Hotel, 76 Victoria Street, Stromness, KW16 3BS, 01856 850447, orcahotel.moonfruit.com.

Other times of year Morning at any time of year, as Stromness and Hoy face east.

Ordnance Survey map LR 6

Nearby locations Warebeth beach (2 miles); Yesnaby cliffs (6 miles).



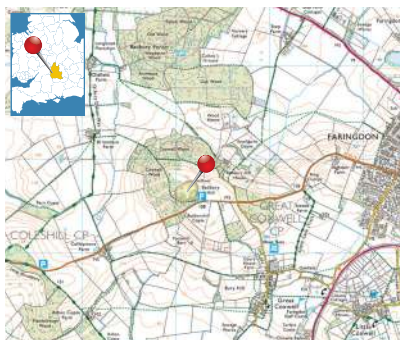
© Mark Ferguson



Badbury Clump, Oxfordshire

According to legend, the remains of the Iron Age hill fort that sits on top of Badbury Hill was the site of a fierce battle between the Celts and Anglo-Saxons, and King Arthur himself led the Celts to victory. Today, the area known as Badbury Clump is famous for its bluebells and beech trees.

How to get there From the A419 north-east of Swindon, take the A361 (Highworth Road) for three miles to Highworth. Follow signs for the B4019 and Faringdon, and continue for just over four miles to Badbury Clump car park. Parking is free for National Trust members; charges apply to non-members.



© Anna Stowe

What to shoot The bluebells are the star attraction, but there's also plenty of woodland wildlife to look out for.

Best time of day Early morning, as the open edge of the hill faces east.

Food/drink The Radnor Arms, Colehill, SN6 7PR, 01793 766667, theradnorarms.co.uk.

Accommodation Buscot Manor,

Buscot, SN7 8DA, 07973 831690, buscot-manor-gb.book.direct.

Other times of year Autumn, when the beech trees turn golden.

Ordnance Survey map LR 163

Nearby locations Great Coxwell Barn (¾ mile); Uffington White Horse (10 miles).

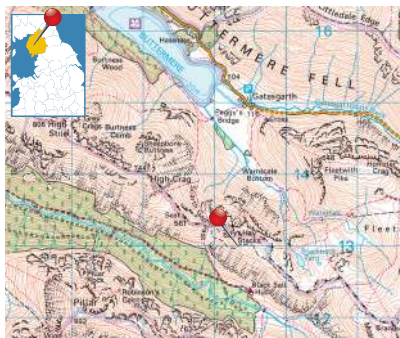
11 miles from Swindon • 54 miles from Bristol **ACCESS RATING**     

12 miles from Keswick • 39 miles from Carlisle **ACCESS RATING**     

Haystacks, Cumbria

Haystacks is a relatively small mountain in the Lake District, with some challenging rocky terrain close to its summit. It is also the favourite fell of Alfred Wainwright, whose ashes were scattered at the nearby Innominate Tarn. The peak rewards you with some stunning views across both Buttermere and the Ennerdale valley.

How to get there Take the B5289 (Borrowdale Road) south from Keswick, following it for 11½ miles to the small hamlet of Gatesgarth, where you will find ample parking. From here, walk west past the farm and across the head of



Buttermere, before turning south on to the bridleway that will lead you up Scarth Gap Pass. At Scarth Gap turn left on to the path to the summit of Haystacks.

What to shoot Dramatic rocky outcrops; valley views; nearby tarns.

Best time of day Sunset is great, but sunrise will also work.

Food/drink The Bridge Hotel, Buttermere, CA13 9UZ, 017687 70252,

bridge-hotel.com.

Accommodation As above.

Other times of year An excellent fell at all times of year thanks to 360-degree views, but some of the higher fells may block the sun at sunrise or sunset at certain times of year.

Ordnance Survey map OL 4

Nearby locations Fleetwith Pike (2 miles); Buttermere (2 miles).

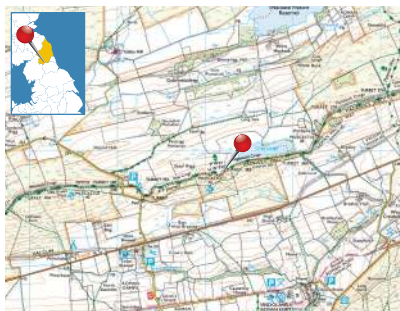


© James Grant

Sycamore Gap, Northumberland

Sycamore Gap is one of the most photogenic sections of Hadrian's Wall, as the wall is displayed at its finest and clings precariously to steep-sided hills. This location features a famous sycamore tree in a dramatic dip in the line of the wall, and featured in the film *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves* – the views from here are amazing.

How to get there Head north from Hexham on the B6531 for one and a half miles to meet the A69. Turn left towards Carlisle and Haydon Bridge, and continue for nine and a half miles before turning right, signed Once Brewed and Hadrian's Wall. After 350m, take the left turn and follow the road for just over one mile to a T-junction. Turn right and



continue for one mile to Once Brewed. Cross the staggered crossroads and park in the Steel Rigg car park half a mile further on. Sycamore Gap is roughly half a mile east along Hadrian's Wall.

What to shoot The wall snaking along the steeply undulating hills; a ruined milecastle; the sycamore tree.

Best time of day Hadrian's Wall runs east-to-west, so the best modelling light is found early in the morning and in the evening. The middle of the day works if

shooting the tree as a subject, or after the sun has gone down for silhouettes.

Food/drink Twice Brewed Inn, Bardon Mill, NE47 7AN, 01434 344534, twicebrewedinn.co.uk.

Accommodation As above.

Other times of year This is a great spot any time of year, as the colours of the grasses bordering the wall change with the seasons.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 43

Nearby locations Crag Lough (¼ mile);

14 miles from Hexham • 25 miles from Carlisle **ACCESS RATING**

11 miles from Craignure • 23 miles from Oban **ACCESS RATING**

Loch Uisg, Argyll and Bute

This relatively unknown, but picturesque loch on the Isle of Mull is found approximately one mile inland from Lochbuie on the island's south coast. The road runs along the northern shore of the loch, passing Kinlochspelve church, the castle-like Craig Ben Lodge and many beautiful Scots pine trees.

How to get there From Oban, take the ferry to Craignure. Head south on the A849 and after six miles turn left on to a minor road signed Lochbuie and Croggan. Follow the road for about seven miles, passing Loch Spelve, until you reach the head of Loch Uisg.

What to shoot Rhododendrons, bracken-covered hillsides, Scots pine

trees, Kinlochspelve church and the beautifully situated Craig Ben Lodge.

Best time of day The loch runs east to west, so is great at sunrise or sunset.

Food/drink The Old Post Office, Lochbuie, Isle of Mull, 01680 814153, oldpostofficelochbuie.co.uk.

Accommodation Old Mill Cottage, Lochdon, Isle of Mull, PA64 6AP, 01680 812 442, oldmillmull.co.uk.

Other times of year The colours in autumn are magnificent; winter is great if the road is accessible.

Ordnance Survey map LR 49

Nearby locations Lochbuie (1 mile); Loch Spelve (1 mile).



Bracklesham Bay, West Sussex

Bracklesham Bay is the quieter neighbour to the popular and often busy sands at West Wittering. The scalloped shingle beach gives way steeply to sand at low tide, with the Isle of Wight prominent on the horizon. In good visibility the Spinnaker Tower at Portsmouth is visible to the west.

How to get there From the roundabout junction of the A27 and A286 to the south of Chichester, take the A286 (Stockbridge Road), signed Witterings. After four miles, turn left at the roundabout on to the B2198 (Bell Lane), signed Bracklesham. Continue for two miles until you arrive at the seafront. Turn left on to East Bracklesham Drive and immediately



© Matthew Cattell

enter the car park on the right.

What to shoot Waves breaking and receding on the steep shingle bank; timber sea defences and markers; storms approaching from the English Channel.

Best time of day As the shoreline is orientated south-west, this location works better throughout the afternoon up to sunset.

Food/drink Billy's on the Beach, Bracklesham Lane, Bracklesham Bay,

PO20 8JH, 01243 670373, billysonthebeach.co.uk.

Accommodation Willow House (B&B), Piggery Hall Lane, West Wittering, PO20 8PZ, 07708 736940, willowhousebedandbreakfast.com.

Other times of year On warm, windy days it is popular with kite surfers and windsurfers.

Ordnance Survey map OL 8

Nearby locations West Wittering (3 miles); Bosham (10 miles).

9 miles from Chichester • 22 miles from Portsmouth **ACCESS RATING**

17 miles from Ambleside • 19 miles from Keswick **ACCESS RATING**

Ullswater, Cumbria

Pooley Bridge boathouse is probably the most photographed boathouse in the entire Lake District. However, while it is very accessible (you can park directly opposite) you have to jump down into the boggy reeds to get any sort of foreground, so wellies are a distinct advantage. If you're not that agile you can still shoot from the road, but take care, as there's no pavement on this busy, narrow road.

How to get there Head north-east from Ambleside on Kirkstone Road (a narrow, single-track road) to meet the A592, which takes you north to Ullswater. The boathouse sits at the northern tip of the lake, roughly 250m before the junction of



the A592 and B5320 at Pooley Bridge. There is a small layby directly opposite the boathouse, or you can park at the pay and display car park in Pooley Bridge and walk back (although there is no pavement along much of this stretch of road).

What to shoot Classic view of the hills, with semi-submerged rocks in the foreground. A bit further down the road is a broken jetty that is also worth investigating.

Best time of day The boathouse faces east, so is the perfect location for sunrise

and early morning shots.

Food/drink Sun Inn, Pooley Bridge, CA10 2NN, 017684 86205, suninnpooleybridge.co.uk.

Accommodation The Ullswater View, Watermillock, CA11 0JP, 017684 86286, theullswaterview.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn, due to the colour of the leaves and grasses.

Ordnance Survey map OL 5

Nearby locations Lowther castle and gardens (4 miles); Aira Force (5½ miles).



© Edyta Rice

A little chaos

Chaos theory explores complex systems that are unpredictable and impossible to describe completely. Yet within this maelstrom, order may still be perceived, as Rachael Talibart explains

'Strange attractors' is a term used to describe patterns within chaos. They never repeat themselves exactly and they never allow an observer to predict accurately what will happen, but they display a degree of order that suggests underlying laws not yet known. With apologies to scientists and mathematicians for the simplicity of my interpretation, this co-existence of pattern and unpredictability is a potent idea for an artist.

I had cause to ponder the theory of chaos during a recent trip to Nazaré in Portugal. Nazaré is famous for having huge waves. Funnelled by an underwater canyon, its winter swell attracts big wave surfers from all over the world. I'd been planning to photograph these irresistible seas for some time and had blocked off two weekends, just in case. I scoured the surf forecast for weeks, and as the second of my available weekends approached, things looked promising. I also had a shiny new lens that would allow me up to 400mm of reach – this was going to be fun!



Wave Portrait I

A flurry of last-minute bookings and I was on my way. I arrived in the dark, but the next morning saw me on the beach, eagerly watching some of the most beautiful waves I've ever seen. I was rather excited. Looking for my usual low point of view, to make the waves look even bigger, I lay down on the beach. I was focusing on a big rock a short distance out that was being pummelled by the breakers and I was getting in the zone.

My concentration on the rock meant I overlooked a closer wave, though. The next thing I knew I was underwater, and – more importantly – so was my camera. Now, I'm the first person to warn against taking silly risks at the coast, and I ought perhaps to clarify that I wasn't in any physical danger – the wave didn't drag me at all and if I had been standing up it wouldn't have bothered me. But I wasn't and – you guessed it – my camera died. After three years of photographing storms without ever complaining, the Nazaré surf proved too much for it.

This was the first half hour of my long-anticipated trip and all my pre-visualised compositions had to be abandoned. So much for planning! Now I was only able to use my backup equipment, which I'd really brought with me for video, so I had to think again. After a change of camera gear (and clothes), I decided to place myself on the headland instead of the beach. Pointing almost vertically down on the waves as they passed, the scale of the surf was less discernible, but I started to notice fascinating patterns on the waves' surface: billowing green crests roiled like nebulae, white stripes trailed behind waves like clouds streaking a blue sky and crashing foam erupted



Surf Study X

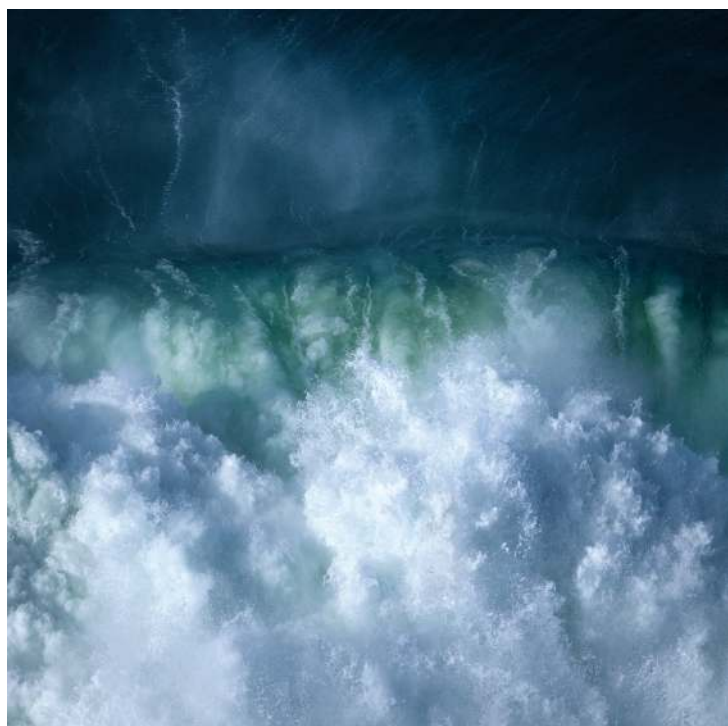
like volcanoes. The waves were outwardly similar, but viewed more closely, they were beautiful and unpredictable individuals, as unique as snowflakes. I perceived a connection with chaos theory and decided to capture intimate portraits of the waves – watery ‘strange attractors’ connected by colour, light and focal length, but unique in their chaotic complexity. As humans, we seek to catalogue, to find systems, causation and explanations that help us to make sense of our world and make it feel safer, more known, less strange. The ocean – surely one of the most chaotic of systems – defies the attempt. Using the term even less scientifically now, waves are strange attractors. We know they’re dangerous and unpredictable, but we still head to the coast to watch them, surf them, even lie down in front of them.

It’s a paradox, much like the term ‘strange attractors’ itself. W H Auden described the ocean as a desert, which initially seems an odd metaphor for something so very *wet*. But, like the desert, the sea is inimical to our survival, even more so in fact, for we are land-dwellers. Perhaps it is the sea’s very strangeness that attracts us: to contemplate the sea is to confront the unknown. It is not an experience we humans always find comfortable, but it is also utterly compelling.

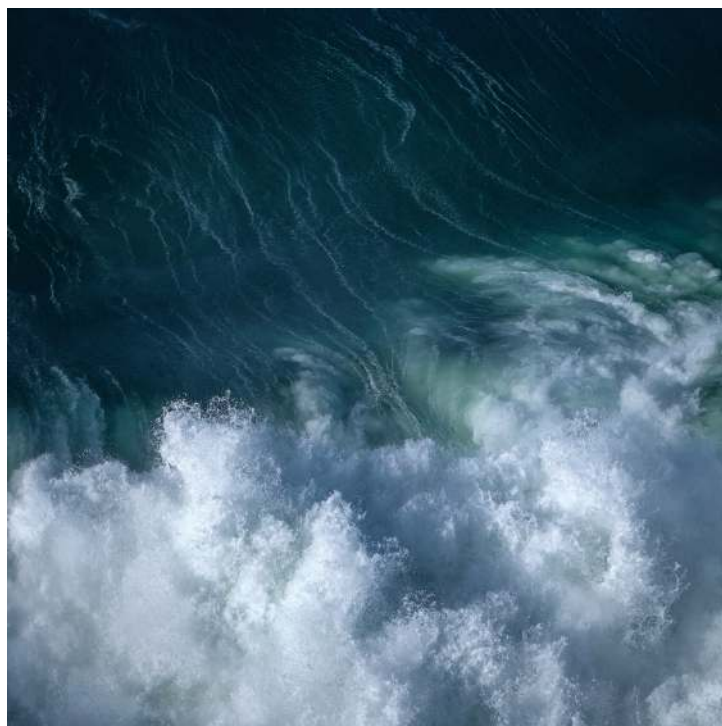
I’m planning a return trip to Nazaré with my main camera (now repaired at great cost) and my slightly less shiny new lens, but I am still happy with the portfolio I brought home from that first, unexpectedly eventful visit. Would I have made these pictures if I hadn’t lost my camera? Probably not. Sometimes, a bit of chaos can be a good thing.



Surf Study IV



Surf Study V



Surf Study VI

Alan Howe

Devon-based Alan Howe is a semi-professional British landscaper with a classic 'no-frills' approach to his compositions. Nick Smith puts him in the spotlight

Nick Smith: What came first, the outdoors or the photography?

Alan Howe: The outdoors. I've been cycling and into motorbikes for years. I don't like being stuck indoors – more than a couple of days and I get frustrated and I've just got to get out. I'm not sure how I got into photography to be honest, but when I switched to digital a decade ago, I really started to discover it again. I thought: 'Well, I've got all this on

my doorstep. Let's go out and explore it, take pictures of it and share it with people.'

NS: You describe yourself as a 'local' landscape photographer...

AH: Yes, but I've found in the past that if you concentrate too much on your local area, you get bored with it. So every now and then I'll go somewhere different. That reignites the spark and you get to see your local landscape with

fresh eyes. I don't go far, though – I've lived in Devon all my life and I'm discovering places every day. I'm always asking: 'What's over that hill? What's around the corner?'

NS: How do you describe your style?

AH: I shoot what I see. It's as simple as that. I spend a lot of time scouting and moving about so I can find a composition where the foreground, midground and background all work together. Some of it's a compromise, but that's what I do. Also, I like to get everything right in the camera. I know when I've got the shot right, which means that I only have to do a minimal amount of processing, if any. I want the final image to be as natural as I can get it.

NS: How much of your work involves exploring the landscape?

AH: When I'm thinking about shooting, I'm trying not to do what everyone else is doing and hope that my work is different enough to keep the viewer's interest and stand out. I guess that's why exploring is such a big part of what I do – showing there's more out there. There's so much out there that people don't see. You've just got to walk a bit further.

NS: What are the advantages of being a semi-pro photographer?

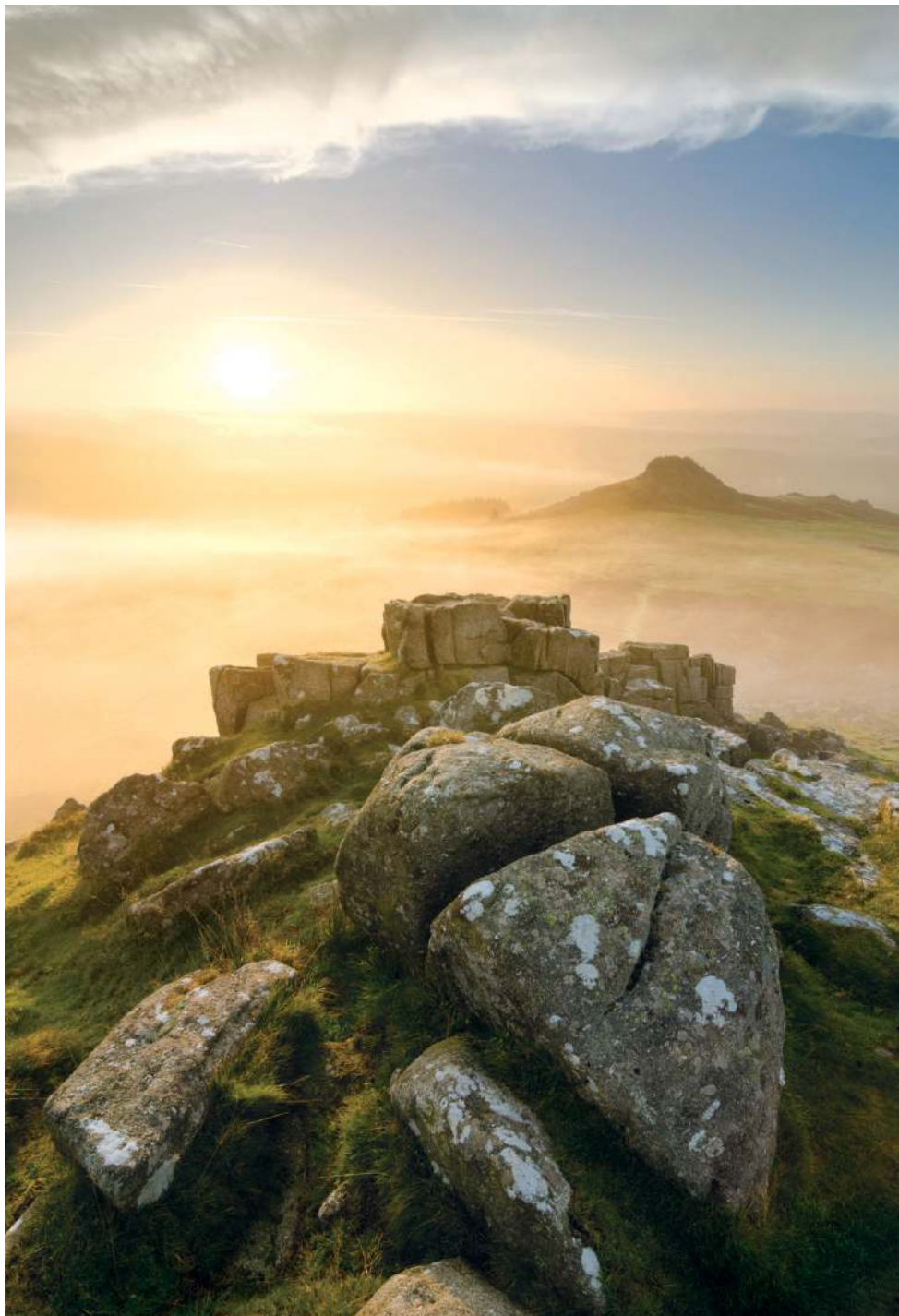
AH: I'm a carpenter by trade, so the creative side of making things appeals to me. In my carpentry I'm in pursuit of perfection and with my photography I also want everything to be as right as I can get it. In terms of being semi-professional, the beauty of my job is that I'm self-employed, which means that I'm free to finish whenever I want. If it's looking good for a decent sunrise I can go out and shoot

Left Leather tor in the mist. We sat waiting for the sunrise as the mist swirled around our feet. Nikon D7000 with Tokina 11-16mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 100, 1/6sec at f/11

Opposite (top) Wading pylons of Devon. I was greeted by this view on the way home from a morning shoot. Nikon D7000 with Nikon 80-200mm f/2.8 ED lens, ISO 200, 1/500sec at f/5.6

Opposite (middle) Godrevy lighthouse from the Knavocks. Nikon D7000 with Tokina 11-16mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 100, 30sec at f/11

Opposite (below) Sunrise on the red planet. As the sun got higher everything turned orange. Sony A450 with Tokina 11-16mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 200, 1/18sec at f/11



that and go to work afterwards. I've got plenty of flexibility, so I'm out with the cameras as often as I can be.

NS: What stage are you at with your photography now?

AH: Well, I've made a lot of mistakes in the past and I definitely hit a plateau for a while, but I think it's improving at the moment. I can't really say why that is, but it's something to do with the fact that I'm enjoying it more now. Part of the problem is that you get put under so much pressure by social media that you start to doubt yourself, but now I feel that the pressure is off.

NS: What are you looking for in your compositions?

AH: Getting the light right and all the elements in just the right place. It's one of those things that's difficult to explain, but when it all lines up and ticks all the boxes, you know you've got it right. I like to work first thing in the morning or late in the afternoon simply because of the quality of the light. Mornings are my favourite: it's the peace and quiet. The light is clearer, and that's when you get the shadows and mists that appeal to me.

NS: So, plenty of early starts, then...

AH: Especially in the summer if you've got to walk a bit – sometimes you've got to get up at two in the morning.

NS: What do you think makes a great landscape photograph?

AH: It's an emotion or a feeling that flicks a switch for me. What I'm trying to do is draw the viewer in and put them into the landscape, whether it is serene or misty or stormy. I want the viewer to feel what I was feeling, and for the majority of the time that's peace.

Alan's top tips

One thing I never go on a shoot without is...

my rucksack. I keep all my gear in it ready to go, which means I never have to hunt for missing batteries or lenses.

My one piece of advice would be to...

give yourself plenty of time. I'm usually at my chosen location an hour before sunrise or sunset, which gives me time to enjoy the environment properly.

Something I try to avoid is...

bailing out too early. Even so, I've lost count of the times I've been walking back to the car and the light has turned.



Alan's critical moments

To see more of Alan's work visit devonlandscapephotography.co.uk.

2010 Made the change to digital and really got started on landscapes.

2011 First published photo – 'Image of the Month' in *Photography Monthly*.

2013 Began to take landscape photography seriously.

2013 First talk at a camera club and first magazine cover image.

2015 Met landscape photographer Phil Starkey (his partner; see In the spotlight, OP254).

2018 Invited to represent Kase Filters as a Pro Partner.

NEXT MONTH

OP256 May 2020

On sale 2 April

How to shoot great panoramics

Superb landscapes by Julian Calverley

A Quick Guide to photographing transparencies

Brilliant pictures from the Travel Photographer
of the Year competition



The photo that took six weeks to take

Sometimes, to get the shot we want, we need to invest what seems like a disproportionate amount of time. But, says Nick Smith, the experience can be an enriching one – and not just in terms of photography

Whether we are the sleekest professional or the most casual amateur, at some point in our photographic careers almost all of us will hear the call to take our camera to Zanzibar. And why not? It's a great way to experience the entire continent of Africa on one tiny equatorial island. What makes the place so special is that you can get to anywhere from anywhere in a day, and you can photograph everything. Well, almost everything.

Once you get to where you want to go, more special still is that the locals are unfailingly friendly. Admittedly, there will be times when their unlimited enthusiasm for making visitors feel welcome can be tedious, but they mean well and, since Zanzibar is their island, it seems only fair to take this incidental minor hassle in the same good-natured spirit with which it is given.

These were the circumstances I enjoyed on my first visit, way back in the last century, long before I ever dreamed of taking up photography seriously. Armed with a compact camera that required bizarre cartridges of 110 film, I clicked away. Although what eventually came out of the instrument was unambiguously awful, these prints were also fantastic memories of what had been one of my first serious forays into the more distant corners of the world. Preserved before me were the white coral strands, exotic coconut palms and smoked salmon sunsets.

Back then I had insufficient self-awareness to know just how bad these shots truly were. It wasn't until much later that I came to the rueful realisation that my images were also identical to those that anyone on a similar adventure could have taken, providing they knew one end of a camera from the other. Rather than becoming deflated by this revelation, I found myself wanting to achieve more with my photography and it soon was my ambition to take the sort of photos you see in travel magazines. Had I been possessed of a more evolved version of this self-awareness I would have dedicated my future to producing the sort of photos that you don't see in travel magazines, and get them published for the heck of it.

To have any hope in the enterprise, a photographer friend told me over a pint in Soho's Dog & Duck that I'd need to become a much, much better photographer. He didn't mean shelling out thousands on decent gear ('although it wouldn't hurt') or even deepening my knowledge about what all those buttons on my camera actually did, but radically restructuring my approach to the way I thought about photography. 'You have to get the viewer more engaged in your images,' he said, 'and one of

the best ways I know to do that is to stop stealing shots and wait for them to be given to you.' The main reason Hunter disliked my work so intensely, it transpired, was that it was *surreptitious* (he used the word 'sneaky'). 'Get to know people,' he said. 'Spend time with them,' he said. 'Wait for them to relax and want to be photographed.'

Of course, anyone can take that classic photo of the women seaweed farmers of Jambiani from the shore. All you need is a long lens pointing out from an elevated viewpoint and the scene will write its own script: women in brightly coloured batik sarongs wading among the purple seaweed plantations in a turquoise lagoon, beyond which lies the inky indigo of the Indian ocean, stretching to the distant horizon where it meets a tropical sky of cerulean blue. It's a wonderful image, and I can hardly blame those intrepid souls that travel to Zanzibar for unashamedly filling their boots. But, as I said, I wanted more. On my subsequent visits to the island I wasn't going to pilfer long-range potshots – I wanted to tell their story.

A few years later, on my first evening in Jambiani, a local man wearing a comical nautical cap approached me, introduced himself as the Captain and offered to take me fishing in the lagoon for a few dollars. I like fishing and I reasoned that, were I to spend a day with the Captain, I might uncover some valuable inside information. The following day, as we sailed into the lagoon past the seaweed farmers, the Captain explained that these women would never let me photograph them at close quarters. The reason for this, he told me, was that they'd lost their patience with voyeuristic westerners and their expensive cameras. Feeling culturally exploited, as well as simply irritated, they had shut up shop. Besides, there was nothing in it for them. Not even a word of thanks.

I put the matter sadly out of my mind and resumed my stay in Jambiani, settling into the rhythm of fishing with the Captain most days, or teaching English at the local shanty school, picking up a few words of Swahili along the way. After six languid weeks, I announced to the Captain that I must return home to Blighty for 'operational reasons' (I'd run out of money). Much to my surprise, he wondered if I'd be interested in helping the women bring in the seaweed harvest before I went. He also offered me the chance to photograph them. Taken aback, I replied that I was under the impression this was impossible, to which he answered: 'You teach our kids English and play football with them. Let's go.' And with that, the most unexpected of photographic opportunities presented itself.



International Garden Photographer of the Year

*Pictures from around the world were submitted to this year's IGPOTY.
Here we share some of the best photographs from the big competition.*



Opposite (top)
Albert Ceolan

Overall winner

The Dolomites, South Tyrol, Italy

This photograph documents the natural destruction of the pine forest by storm Vaia in late October 2018. Wind speeds peaked at over 120mph, which led to the felling of over 14 million trees and claimed 17 human lives. In the background stands the magnificent Mount Catinaccio, bearing witness to the storm at just under 3,000m high.

Nikon D4S, Nikon 24-70mm lens, 1/125sec at f/11, ISO 1600

Opposite (below)
Anne Neiwand

Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park, South Australia, Australia

This amazing individual specimen of *Xanthorrhoea* (grass tree) is endemic to the harsh conditions in South Australia. I chose to create a panoramic image to incorporate more of the landscape and emphasise the connection between every plant and our planet.

Nikon D850, Zeiss Otus 85mm lens, 6sec at f/16, ISO 64

Right (top)
Jacky Parker

New Forest Lavender Farm, Wiltshire, England

I saw this beautiful, late summer flowering *Rudbeckia* at the New Forest Lavender Gardens in Landford, near Salisbury, and knew I had to capture it. Its orange colour perfectly reflected the beginning of autumn.

Nikon D750, Nikon 105mm macro lens, 1/1000sec at f/3.2, ISO 320

Right (middle)
Philip Shorrock

London, England

The Millennium Bridge had nearby wildflower planting, including *Papaver* (poppy) and *Centaurea* (cornflower), which created a meadow feel within a busy city.

Canon EOS 1200D, Canon 18-55mm lens, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 100

Right (below)
Evgeniya Vlasova

Průhonice Park, Prague, Czech Republic

I captured this golden autumn scene at the shore of the small river Botič in Průhonice Park which included an old tall spruce tree, plus yellow and red hues of autumn foliage. It is one of my most soulful places to visit and is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Czech National Historic Landmark.

Nikon D300, Nikon 16-85mm lens, 1/5sec at f/18, ISO 100



PHOTO SHOWCASE



Left (top)

Thorsten Scheuermann

**North Cascades National Park,
Washington, United States**

The light of dawn on the horizon was enough to make the burnt autumn colour of the *Larix* (larch) trees in the North Cascades Mountains glow.

Nikon D810, Tamron 17-35mm lens, 15sec at f/11, ISO 6

Left (middle)

Simon Lea

Kidderminster, England

The floral displays of wild *Papaver* (poppies) are always abundant in the West Midlands. Though the locations of the fields change you can almost always guarantee a poppy field will pop up relatively close by. I chose to capture at sunrise so I had the location all to myself.

*Nikon D750, Nikon 24-85mm lens and
Tamron 70-300mm lens, 1/60sec to 1/8sec
at f/8 to f/16, ISO 100 to ISO 200*



Left (below)

Jim Turner

**Brookside Gardens, Silver Spring,
Maryland, United States**

This bee was standing on the anther of a *Lilium* flower and the longer it stayed, the more it became clothed in the red grains of pollen. *Augochlorella aurata* are known as sweat bees and reach up to 7mm in length. They will sting if provoked.

*Nikon D500, Nikon 105mm macro
lens, 1/250sec at f/11, ISO 200*

Opposite (top left)

Dianne English

Kilaben Bay, New South Wales, Australia

This cosmos flower once grew in my garden; I gathered it and pressed it. I created the background separately by using polarised ice photographed on a light pad.

*Olympus OM-D E-M5 Mark II, Olympus
12-50mm lens, 1/25sec at f/6.3, ISO 250*



Opposite (top right)

Michael Barbieri

Mantua, Lombardy, Italy

This *Papilio machaon* (Old World swallowtail) butterfly is one of the most beautiful butterflies in Italy. I photographed it at rest, in the glow of the morning sun.

*Canon EOS 700D, Tamron 90mm
macro lens, 1/15sec at f/8, ISO 100*

Opposite (below)

Zhigang Li

**Napahai Wetland Nature Reserve,
Diqing, Yunnan, China**

The Napahai Nature Reserve which is a winter resting spot for migratory birds as well as a summer pasture for herdsmen. It was spring when I captured this pastoral scene.

*Canon EOS 5D Mark II, Canon 100-
400mm lens, 1/320sec at f/13, ISO 200*

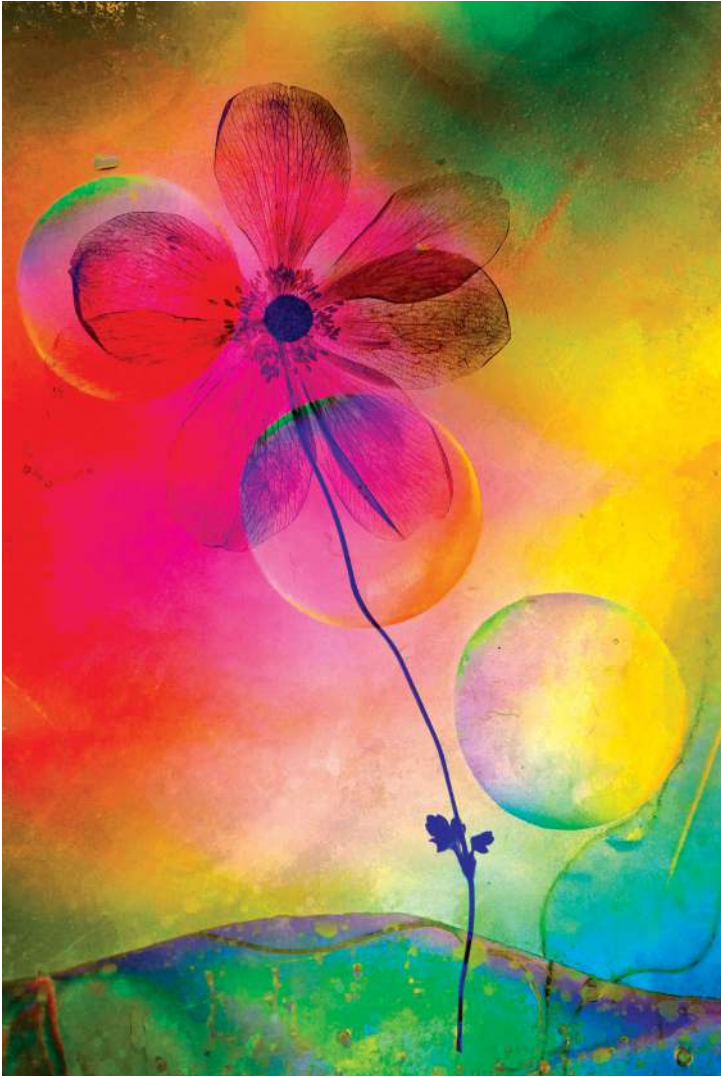


PHOTO SHOWCASE



Top (left)
Henrik Spranz

Pazin, Istria, Croatia

I captured a chance morning meeting between these two *Aporia crataegi* (black-veined white butterflies) as they perched on a flower head of *Dianthus carthusianorum* subsp. *sanguineus*. Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Sigma 180mm macro lens, 1/1000sec at f/4, ISO 500

Top (right)
Kevin Siyuan

Otaru, Hokkaido, Japan

I photographed these two *Allium* flower heads, planted outside an ordinary Japanese home in the city of Otaru. The balanced mix of colour, composition and texture of the plants and building provided a painterly feel to this scene. Canon EOS R, Canon 24-105mm lens, 1/160sec at f/4.5, ISO 400

Below (left)
Chris Mills

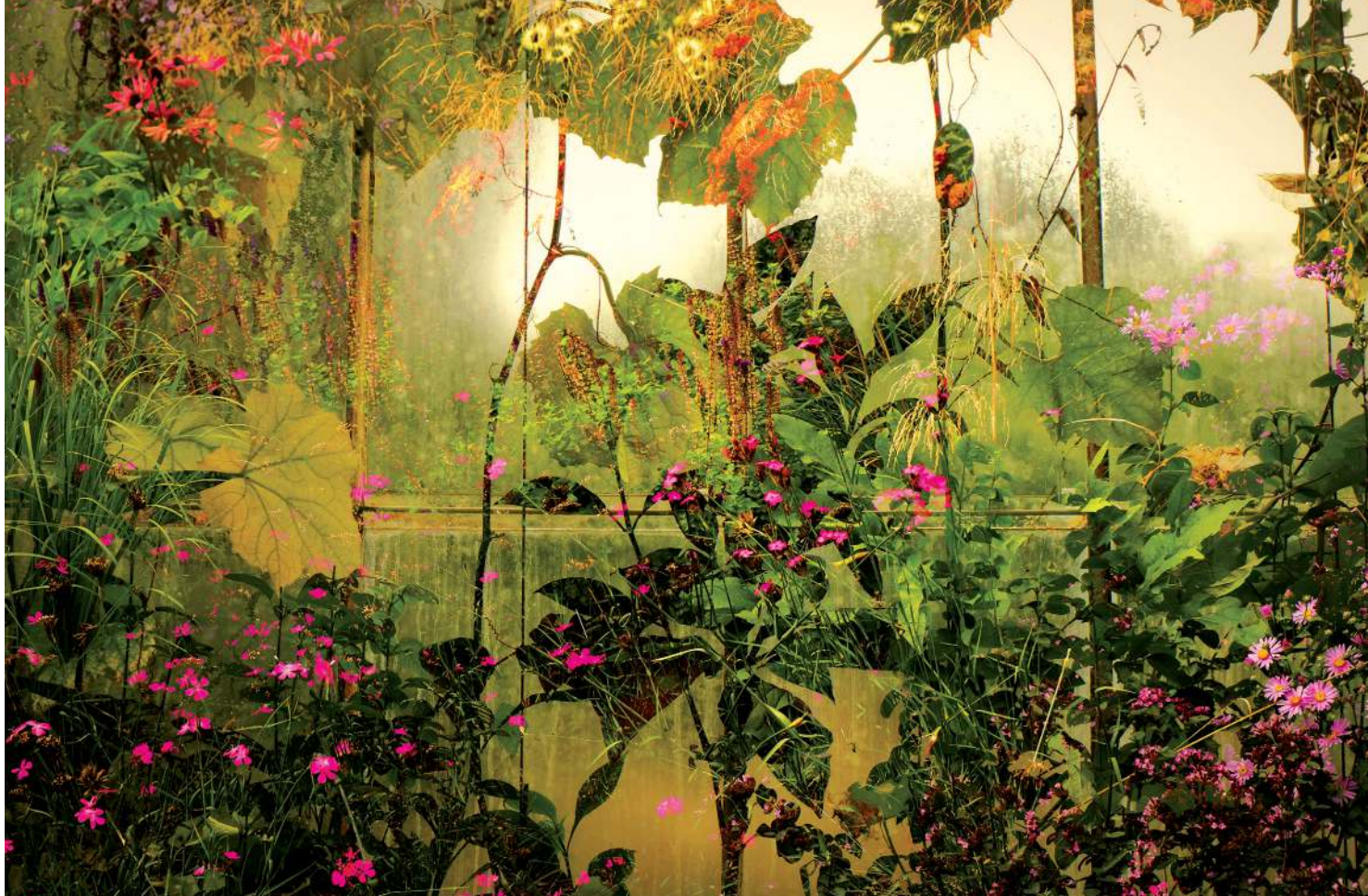
Ashfield Gardens, Worcestershire, England

I suffer with my mental health including agoraphobia and didn't leave the house until I started volunteering at this organic garden several years ago. Canon EOS 7D Mark II, Sigma 105mm macro lens, 1/250sec at f/4.5, ISO 100

Below (right)
Nel Talen

Meppel, The Netherlands

This abstract photograph was created using pressed poppy flower heads and their seeds, then placing them on to a lightbox. I captured multiple exposures and added an aged textured background to finish the image. Canon EOS R, Canon 100mm macro lens, 1/40sec at f/7.1, ISO 400



Top

Carolyn Barber

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England

This is a double exposure taken both inside and outside of the Waterlily House, the resulting image produced a canopy of flowers around the window that reminded me of floral curtains.

FujiFilm X-E1, FujiFilm 50mm

lens, 1/25sec at f/16, ISO 200

Right (middle)

Thorsten Scheuermann

Louisiana, United States

A stately *Taxodium distichum* (swamp cypress) tree stood at home on a calm, autumn afternoon in the wetlands surrounded by a ring of their characteristic roots or – as I like to call them – knees above water.

Nikon D810, Nikon 70-200mm

lens, 1.5sec at f/13, ISO 100



Right (below)

Paul Mitchell

Dorney Rowing Lake, Berkshire, England

My local park is a riot of colour in the winter months. On this one occasion I was captivated by the contrast of the colour and shapes provided by the stems of *Cornus* (dogwood) with the many *Dipsacus* (teasel) seedheads on display nearby.

Nikon D810, Nikon 70-200mm

lens, 1/15sec at f/4, ISO 64

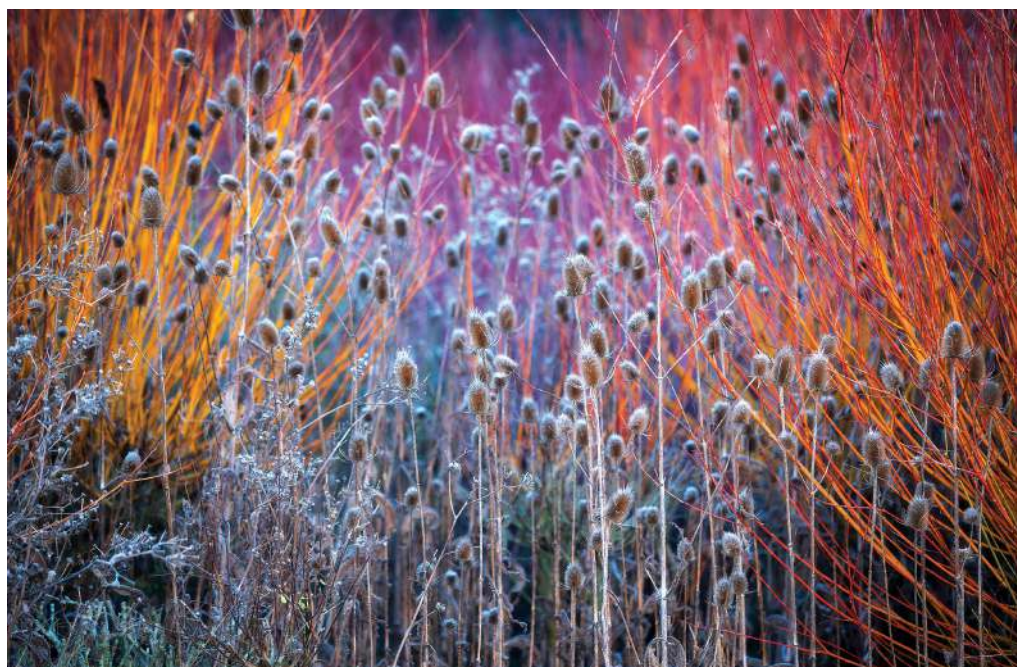


PHOTO SHOWCASE



Left (top)

Tianyi Yu

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England

The afternoon sunlight passed through the glasshouse panes and illuminated the mist, colouring the Palm House in gaseous hues of yellow and blue. One can almost breathe in the heavy, enchanting atmosphere.

Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon 16-35mm lens, 1/100sec at f/5, ISO 200

Left (middle)

Petar Sabol

Goričan, Croatia

I photographed this ornate *Orthetrum coerulescens* (male keeled skimmer) dragonfly whilst it rested on a vibrant echinacea flower in a garden. Having a garden full of flowers not only attracts many butterfly species but also other insects like dragonflies, especially if there is a pond.

Sony α7R Mark III, Sigma 180mm macro lens, 1/30sec at f/8, ISO 200



Below (left)

Dick Hawkes

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England

The *Helianthus* (sunflower) planted in the Agius Evolution Garden attract bees who help the process of pollination, as demonstrated by the pollen visible on this bee.

Olympus OM-D E-M1, Olympus 300mm lens, 1/2000sec at f/4, ISO 800

Below (right)

Maggie Lambert

Scarborough Art Gallery, North Yorkshire, England

Scarborough Art Gallery was reflected in the garden's fish pond, which created an intriguing mix of hard and fluid surfaces and various textures, overlaid by the shapes of pondweed and fishes. I converted the image to negative colour to further enhance the dreamlike nature of the image.

Fujifilm X30, Fujifilm 28-112mm lens, 1/170sec at f/5, ISO 400



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READER GALLERY

Each month we publish the best images from those submitted for our Reader Gallery. Turn to page 64 to find out how to enter your work using our online system. Here is this month's winner...

Winner **Andrew Child**



My interest in photography started 42 years ago. After starting my first job I saved up and bought a 35mm SLR camera and lens, and I was hooked. I enjoyed being out in the countryside in the various seasons, trying to get the perfect shot, and the advent of digital cameras allowed me to push my photography to the next level.

I have since created a website to showcase my work and started a range of greeting cards that I sell at art and craft shows that I organise. The Dorsetgallery Art & Craft Shows are now in their 11th year and are held at Wareham Town Hall in Dorset at various times of year. I have also had a number of exhibitions at local galleries (and a garden centre), which have resulted in sales of my pictures. Each sale

gives me a real buzz, as it's nice to think that someone else likes what you have created.

My favourite time to photograph is sunrise, as I enjoy being out at this peaceful time of the day (or, as my long-suffering wife puts it, 'going out in the middle of the night'). I like to try and get the shot right in the camera, so there's minimal work needed on the computer and I just have one goal: to get a better picture tomorrow than the one I took yesterday. An example of this is the Cranborne Chase barn image shown here (*page 70*). I had taken a number of shots at this location a few years earlier, but they weren't quite to my liking. So every February I would go up to the same field and check what was growing there. It was four years before rapeseed was planted again, but when it was I kept an eye on the field so I could time my shot to perfection.

Above River Stour, Dorset

This was one of those pictures where I was in the right place at the right time. I had been photographing the river at dawn, and had got some good pictures, but as I was walking back to the car I turned round and noticed everything had gone orange. I quickly changed my lens and shot this sunrise scene.

Pentax K10D with Sigma 135-400mm lens at 190mm, ISO 100, 1/750sec at f/6.7

Hometown Poole.

Occupation Customer advisor at a car accident repair centre.

Photographic experience 42 years.
dorsetgallery.com



Long Mynd, Shropshire

This was taken from the Long Mynd in Shropshire. I had walked up the road from Church Stretton and when I reached the top of the hill it had turned very foggy. I nearly turned round and went back to the place where I was staying, but I thought it might be worth continuing. I'm glad I did!

*Pentax K-3 with Sigma 17-70mm lens at 35mm,
ISO 100, 1/125sec at f/5*



Badbury Rings, Dorset

These beech trees are just a few miles from my home. I visited them on a misty morning and when the sun suddenly broke through the mist it gave me this great shot.

Pentax K-3 with Sigma 17-70mm lens at 35mm, ISO 100, 1/200sec at f/7.1.



Cranborne Chase, Dorset

The barn at Wyke Down in the Cranborne Chase AONB is a popular spot for photographers. I had been keeping a watch on this field to make sure the rapeseed was at its best and with this shot I think I got that. The weather was perfect too!

*Pentax K-3 with Tamron 90mm lens,
ISO 100, 1/160sec at f/7.1*

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NATURE ZONE

DISCOVER

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photo guide

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with nature

80 **Steve Young:**
On the wing



WAKE UP CALL...

Laurie Campbell reminds us to feed hungry hedgehogs this spring

Dumfries and Galloway

For many people, the lofty peaks and deep glens of the Highlands typify Scotland, but as Laurie Campbell explains, there is plenty of stunning wildlife to be found elsewhere in the country

I'm composing this month's column in mid-January, just a few days before a good friend arrives from Germany. Bernd loves Scotland, and has visited us at least once a year in each of the 22 years that we have known each other.

As usual, we plan to head off for several days on a field trip to photograph wildlife and just about anything else in the natural world. Apart from the odd outing to locations around my home in the Scottish Borders to photograph the likes of otters, barn owls, badgers or the great seabird colonies of the Bass Rock and the Farne Islands, we always tend to head north to the Highlands. It's as if I'm on a mission to introduce him to all the key locations I've worked throughout my career.

This time, instead of travelling north up the A9, we shall be heading west to Dumfries and Galloway, which is an area that I am still discovering myself. To date I have mostly visited the region to work on commissions, photographing everything from bats to belted Galloway cattle, rather than making exploratory visits for myself. I have also been

there to give presentations of my work to wildlife groups, such as the RSPB, and each time I visited I would be stunned by the number of people who would attend, even in locations that weren't particularly close to any large centres of population.

Notably, almost everyone I spoke to at these events – and at others where I wasn't presenting – was usually extremely enthusiastic and knowledgeable about nature. It's not difficult to understand why, because much of the landscape in the region is rich and varied. Although there is a fair amount of agriculture, it is more wildlife-friendly than where I live in the Eastern Borders, where there is little tolerance for leaving boggy patches, scrub and 'untidy' pockets of ground in a more intensively farmed landscape.

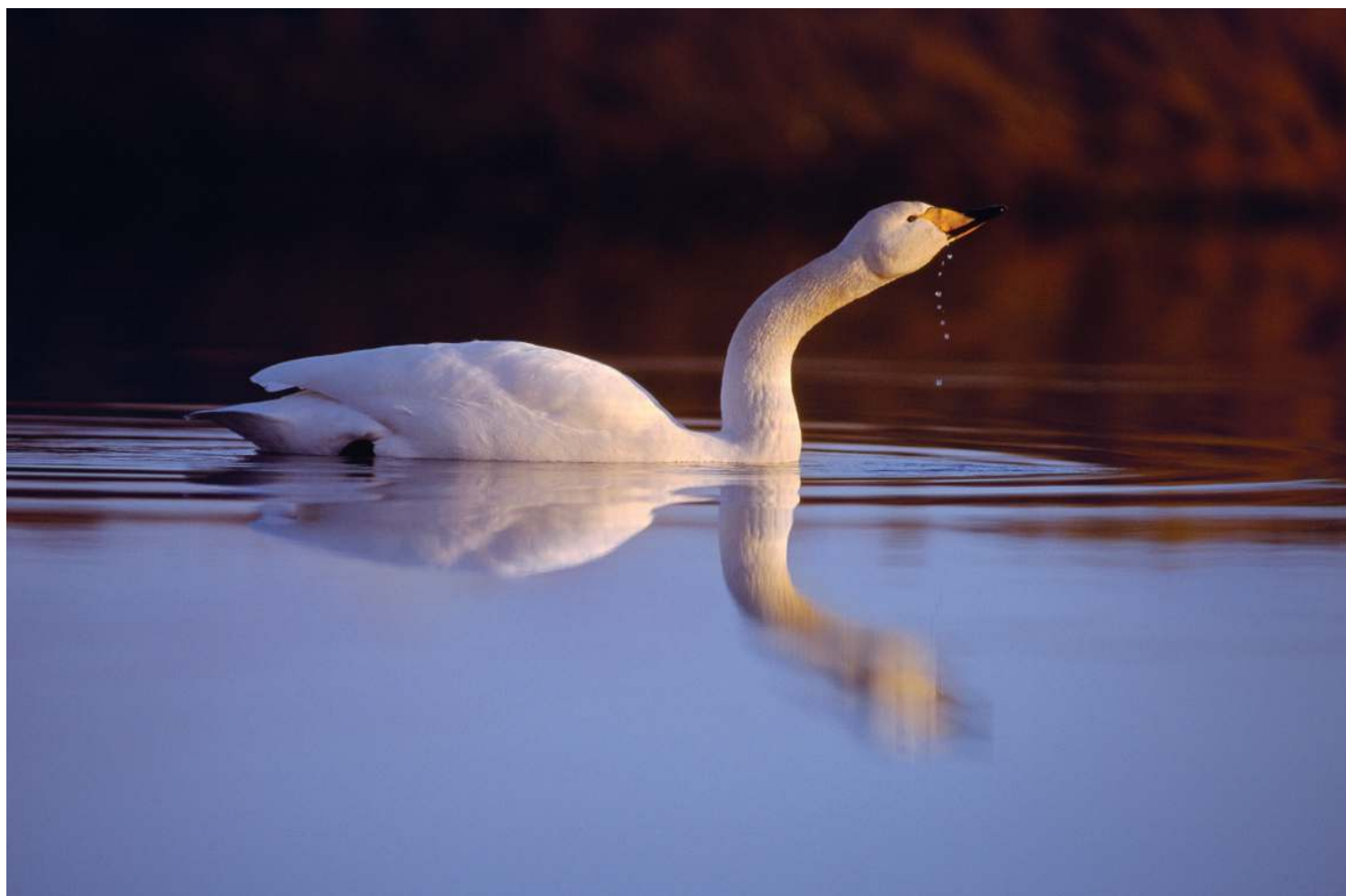
The first stop on our forthcoming road trip will be at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's reserve at Caerlaverock, near Dumfries. This is a location I know well and at this time of year it will be teeming with wildfowl. On a previous visit I got chatting to a local on the

subject of visitor numbers, and told him that I'd often heard people saying they knew the region has a wealth of wildlife and planned to visit, but never quite get around to doing so. He agreed and mentioned that many people

Below Photographed on a calm winter afternoon and with little action, I didn't need to use an especially fast shutter speed to capture this serene scene of a whooper swan. *Nikon F5 with Nikon f/4 manual focus lens, Fujichrome Provia 100 film (at ISO 100), 1/250sec at f/5.6, tripod*

Opposite (top) There are two tower hides at Caerlaverock, both of which offer encompassing views and the possibility to show the depth and spacing of grazing barnacle geese. *Nikon D300 with Nikon 500mm f/4 AF-S lens, ISO 200, 1/200sec at f/10, beanbag, cable release*

Opposite (below) This photograph of a drake mallard was taken after I noticed a succession of birds reacting to the wardens putting out grain for the birds on the main pond at Caerlaverock. *Nikon D5 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens with 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 640, 1/1600sec at f/7.1, handheld*





drop in to Caerlaverock to break their journey 'on their way to Scotland'. Caerlaverock is, of course, already in Scotland, but it's safe to assume that in the minds of these visitors, 'Scotland' is seen more as a land of wild and rugged landscapes.

However, and perhaps unsurprisingly given the local enthusiasm, there are a good number of activities promoting nature in Dumfries

and Galloway, as a quick search online reveals. Perhaps most notable is the month-long Dumfries and Galloway Wild Spring Festival that runs from 5 April to 5 May. This family-friendly festival features more than 100 separate events and is billed as Scotland's largest and longest-running festival of its kind – just one of many reasons for nature photographers to visit this lesser-known gem.

Nature tips

» The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust's reserve at Caerlaverock is only a 20-minute drive from Dumfries and has a good selection of photography friendly hides. The star attraction is the 40,000-strong population of barnacle geese from Svalbard that overwinter on the Solway Firth. There are also whooper swans, duck species and I have seen foxes and roe deer here.

» Adjoining Caerlaverock is the Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve, 90 per cent of which is flooded at high tide. The mudflats and saltmarsh provide rich pickings for wading birds and waterfowl.

» West of Dumfries lies the Galloway Kite Trail, created following the successful reintroduction of red kites in 2001. At Bellymack Farm near Laurieston the birds are fed at 3pm each day. Further west in Galloway Forest Park is a red deer range, with scattered groups of ridiculously approachable feral goats along the route.

» Further west again is the RSPB's Wood of Cree reserve, the largest intact area of ancient native wood in southern Scotland.

» Other highlights include ospreys at Threave, black guillemots at Portpatrick and the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project in the hills near Moffat.



WHAT TO SHOOT THIS MONTH...

Laurie's April highlights



It has been widely publicised that **hedgehog** (*Erinaceus europaeus*) numbers are plummeting throughout the UK, although the exact reason for this is not yet known. If spring arrives early, mild weather can mean that hedgehogs will emerge from hibernation and immediately start looking for food. If you are lucky enough to have a wildlife-friendly garden visited by hedgehogs, then it is worth laying out specially formulated hedgehog food that is available from garden centres and pet shops, in areas most suitable for photographing them.

Nikon D3 with Nikon 200-400mm f/4 AF-S lens at 300mm, ISO 200, 1/2000sec at f/5, beanbag placed on the ground



With soil temperatures rising in the warmer weather, many of what some gardeners refer to as 'weeds' are starting to appear. We are increasingly realising the value of these plants for wildlife, particularly invertebrates that benefit from these early sources of nectar. Viewed in close-up, many of these plants are very attractive, such as **shepherd's purse** (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), which flowers all year round. A single plant can produce two to three thousand seeds from its heart-shaped pods. These are arranged in neat rows along the stem and are what gives this plant its name.

Nikon F4S with Nikon 200mm f/4 AF macro lens, Fujichrome Velvia 50 film (at ISO 50), 1/30sec at f/11, tripod, mirror-lock, cable release



One of the earliest flowers to emerge through the leaf litter of a woodland floor in spring is the **lesser celandine** (*Ranunculus ficaria*). Its flowering period is between January and April and it prefers damp conditions, so can also be found by paths, tracks, stream banks, ditches and shady hedgerows. The bright yellow, star-shaped flowers are hard to miss, but in places where the plant grows in profusion it can be a challenge to get whole patches of them in focus; using a tilt and shift lens or focus-stacking are two possible solutions.

Nikon D3X with Nikon 200mm f/4 AF macro lens, ISO 100, 1/4sec at f/32, tripod, mirror-lock, cable release



Pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) are a non-native species introduced as a game bird. With the shooting season for this quarry species ending on 1 February, many will have survived and will be making their presence known through their behaviour in the breeding season. Males patrol a territory – mostly at around dawn and dusk – and emit a piercing crowing call in combination with a rapid wing-flapping motion. This is to signal to any hens in the area and to tell rival males that he is claiming his territory.

Nikon D3 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens and Nikon 1.4x teleconverter, ISO 640, 1/1250sec at f/7.1, beanbag from car window

More seasonal subjects

Flora

Cherry plum (*Prunus cerasifera*) – this introduced shrub is frequently used in urban planting and is easily confused with the very similar native **blackthorn** (*Prunus spinosa*).

Spring snowflake (*Leucojum vernum*) – a rare flower with foliage resembling a snowdrop, but with white, bell-shaped flowers. Occurs in parts of Cornwall, East Anglia, Cumbria and St Andrews.

Lesser periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) – a native trailing plant with pale blue flowers that can be found growing in woodland and hedgerbanks.

Fauna

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) – difficult to spot because of its skulking habits when feeding, but unmistakable when in full song. Aim to identify favourite song posts, then set up a hide and wait.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – easily confused with **willow warblers** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), chiffchaffs may have darker legs and a slightly paler eye stripe, but it is their call that differentiates the two species and from which they get their name.

Dippers (*Cinclus cinclus*) – early nesters, but before building is in full swing, take time to try and photograph their courting behaviour, which includes ‘upward posturing’ and ‘wing shivering’.



© Thorsten Spoerlein / Shutterstock.com

Snow leopards, India

Let's be honest: you are not going to step off the plane in Leh and find yourself tripping over snow leopards. However, being in the Ladakh region in the western Himalayas at this time of year will at least give you a chance of spotting one of these iconic cats in the wild. With winter lingering into March, the leopards are restricted to lower altitudes and their tracks are more easily seen in the snow, creating a win-win situation for photographers and their guides. Hemis National Park, to the south of Leh, has the highest density of these elusive animals and is (unsurprisingly) where you will find a number of companies and individuals offering snow leopard photography expeditions. Be warned though: Leh is more than 3,500m above sea level, and you will be working at higher elevations still, so altitude sickness is a very real danger. Combine this with the need to carry ultra-long (and heavy) lenses and it is hardly surprising that some tour operators offer ‘camera porters’ to help lighten your load.

Bald ibis, Morocco

The bald ibis might not be the prettiest bird on the block, but it is definitely something of an avian success story. In the mid 1990s there were

fewer than 60 breeding pairs in the wild, but in 2018 – following years of extensive conservation efforts and a bumper breeding season delivering more than 100 fledglings – the bird's status was ‘downgraded’ from critically endangered to endangered. There are now more than 700 birds flying free, with almost all to be found in southern Morocco (there is thought to be one small colony in Syria). Souss-Massa National Park holds three of the country's four bald ibis colonies, making it the go-to destination for wildlife photographers. You can find local guides in the nearby cities of Ait Melloul and Agadir, but you need to shop around (and haggle) to get the best deal.



© Hemer Danke / Shutterstock.com

Spring blooms

A sure sign of spring is the increasing number of flowers in our gardens. However, while you may have a modest floral display of your own, a formal park or botanic garden will typically offer an increased variety and quantity of spring blooms. Here are five top locations to get you started.

1 Logan Botanic Garden, Dumfries & Galloway

Billed as ‘Scotland's most exotic garden’, Logan Botanic Garden, near Stranraer, packs in plants from countries including New Zealand, Australia, Chile and South Africa. At this time of year the magnolias and camellias will be in full bloom, providing explosions of colour.

rbge.org.uk/visit/logan-botanic-garden/

2 Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire

Covering more than 3,800 acres, Clumber Park offers plenty to aim your lens at in spring. When it comes to spring flowers, there is a plethora of daffodils and hyacinths in the Pleasure Grounds, but the flowering nectarine and peach trees in the Long Range glasshouse offer something a little less expected.

nationaltrust.org.uk/clumber-park

3 Greenwich Park, London

The cherry blossom season can start in March and last through to May. It all depends on the temperature, with a mild spring leading to early blooms and a cold snap leaving them until later. There are plenty of parks in London (and elsewhere) that provide dazzling displays, but the Japanese-style cherry blossom ‘tunnel’ in Greenwich Park is particularly impressive.

royalparks.org.uk/parks/greenwich-park

4 Clandon Park, Surrey

Clandon Park, east of Guildford, celebrates the humble daffodil with an expansive and cheerful yellow meadow of blooms. The 4th Earl of Onslow is said to have 3,000 bulbs of 22 varieties of daffodil in 1904, making this one of the country's most impressive collections.

nationaltrust.org.uk/clandon-park

5 Lanhydrock, Cornwall

Off the A30, just south of Bodmin, Lanhydrock is well known for its large collection of magnolias, the oldest of which dates back more than 200 years. Time your trip to coincide with more than 3,000 tulips blooming in the formal garden and a carpet of bluebells in the woodland garden.

nationaltrust.org.uk/lanhydrock

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Project roe

One of Simon Roy's favourite projects has been working with the roe deer at a local woodland, hoping to capture these elusive mammals in the bluebells that carpet the landscape each spring

My project started on a fine morning a few years ago, while I was photographing bluebells in a clearing between the trees. Something caught my eye and a beautiful female deer moved silently into the sea of blue. I was using a wideangle lens on a full-frame camera mounted on a tripod and facing the wrong direction, so there was no way to make a shot – attempting to do so would have disturbed the doe and ruined the moment. The deer paused briefly and then faded away.

I remember it as a lucky encounter, rather than a missed opportunity, but the scene stayed with me and so began 'Project Roe'. The bluebells only display for a few weeks, from late April into May – when the bracken pushes through and takes the light – so I visited whenever I could and walked many

miles, tracking the deer and their preferred routes through the dense woodland.

A long history of persecution has made the roe very wary of humans, so I took certain measures to increase my chances. As deer have a superb sense of smell I showered without soap or shampoo and wore clothes that were clean, but not freshly washed. I arrived at the location before sunrise and moved slowly and silently into the area where I expected the animals to be, camouflaging myself and my gear, and using trees and foliage to help me blend in. However, despite all my efforts I had two fruitless springs, with only rare and distant sightings of the deer and nothing to show for my early starts and long days.

It was early May, in the third year, when I finally got my chance. I arrived at dawn

and waited for hours, with only the midges and mosquitoes as company. Somewhere out of the blue I heard the deer barking in nervous conversation and then a young doe emerged from the distant trees and moved slowly into the bluebells in front of me. I lined a single focal point between her eyes and fired one shot, then she was gone.

This has probably been my most demanding, but rewarding photographic project. I have had to be patient and tenacious, often spending whole days isolated among the trees. I return to the woods each April with new hopes and ideas and, as my knowledge of the deer has improved, so have my chances. I now have longer, more intimate encounters and have captured some very special images along the way.





On the wing

As an unexpected visitor arrives at his local park, Steve Young takes the opportunity to fill his memory cards with some seasonal images

I've seen and photographed Iceland gulls many times over the years during the winter; in various harbours along the Scottish coast, at rubbish tips, on lakes where birds come to bathe and preen, and occasionally I've snapped them on a beach. However, I hadn't photographed them in a local park and didn't really expect to, so it came as a bit of a surprise to hear of one at my park last March that was showing very well.

I felt obliged to pop along one morning to have a look and sat in the middle of the lake was indeed an Iceland gull, surrounded by a few lesser black-backed and herring gulls,

with coots and mallards swimming closely by. It was a lovely looking bird – a second year individual, but still very bright and white, with some markings on the wing and tail, but white primaries and a pale eye.

Armed with a 300mm lens and some seed and bread I settled down at the water's edge. I needn't have brought any bird food, though, as the local park users regularly throw scraps to the birds and today was no different. Bread was thrown by children, parents and grandparents, and the ducks, coots and gulls came over. All apart from the Iceland gull, which stubbornly refused to move, and instead

sat and preened in the middle of the lake.

But it was only a matter of time before my patience paid off, and finally it could no longer resist seeing what the other gulls were enjoying. It flew over to have a look, coming too close to fit in the frame on the first fly-past, but when it started to turn to come around again I pressed the shutter release for a nice series of upperwing shots. Another flight sequence saw it fly above the flowering daffodils, which made for a different type of image that showed the time of year it was taken. Eventually the gull landed on the water at close range and fought for the bread with the other birds, sometimes succeeding, other times not, as it was driven away by the regular lesser black-backed and herring gulls.

Over the next couple of hours I took several hundred shots (expensive in the old days of film, but a joy nowadays) and was quite happy with a selection of them. As the gull had a rest I wandered away and was rewarded with a coot fight close to shore; these aggressive displays are a regular occurrence with this species and today they were close enough for a decent series of shots.

It was hard to leave a showy Iceland gull behind, but I was pleased with my photos and knew that if I stayed I would just be repeating them again. I would also have had to sort through even more images when I got home, so it was definitely time to go!

Above The Iceland gull showed very well, frequently circling around before landing among other gulls on the lake. In this shot it had just been pursued by a lesser black-backed gull and was banking frantically away.

Below left For the first time I photographed an Iceland gull with daffodils as a backdrop.

Below right An added bonus on the day was these two coots putting on a splendid fighting display that even stopped members of the public as they walked past.



BIRD OF THE MONTH

If the blue tit were a rare bird there would be crowds gathering to watch this little beauty, but because it is one of our most common garden birds we forget how attractive and entertaining photographing them can be. Blue tits come readily to a variety of foods in feeders and will pose for photographs. Perch set-ups are good to use, as this species is incredibly inquisitive when it

comes to searching out food; peanuts wedged in a crevice will easily be found and they will cling on to virtually everything while flitting around. They love nest boxes and spring can be spent watching a pair going to and fro, first building a nest and then bringing food for the young. If you haven't already done so, put a box up for next year, hope it is chosen and sit back and enjoy.



Left Nuts in shells have fallen out of favour in recent years, with loose nuts in feeders preferred, but watching blue (and great) tits clinging to the shells while breaking another one open to grab a nut is very entertaining.

Right Blue tits are acrobatic feeders, often hanging upside down, as in this shot.



BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP



Early spring is a good time to try and photograph the mute swan's courtship display. Having already established territories, males and females will be going through their elaborate rituals before mating. This includes much neck stretching and preening, and rising out of the water while facing each other, often forming a heart-shape with their necks and bills (this makes for a really interesting image if you can manage it). Remember that you will be photographing white birds, so be prepared to underexpose slightly to retain more detail in

Left During their courtship display the pair will swim close together, keeping their necks almost alongside each other. *Centre* Neck preening and bill 'kissing' then takes place... *Right* ...and if you are lucky they will face each other, rise out of the water and create this heart shape with their necks and bills. Or, more likely, they will turn away from the camera at the critical moment!

the plumage; a lot can be fixed at the processing stage these days, but it's much more satisfying to get it right on the day!

LOCATION OF THE MONTH

© Richard Semik / Shutterstock.com



Rathlin Island

Located off the north-east tip of Northern Ireland, Rathlin Island sits just two and a half miles from the mainland, and a mere 14 miles west of Scotland's Kintyre peninsula. Despite its diminutive size, the island is home to Northern Ireland's largest seabird colony, with tens of thousands of breeding birds, including puffin, guillemot, kittiwake, razorbill and fulmar. The RSPB's West Light Seabird Centre provides a cliff-top view of the birds, as well as a viewing platform lower down. You also stand a chance of seeing one of the island's more unusual mammals – the blonde-coloured 'golden hare', which is unique to Rathlin.

Getting there A daily ferry service (see rathlinballycastleferry.com) runs from Ballycastle on the mainland with a passenger-only service that takes 20 minutes and a car ferry that takes 45 minutes. However, vehicle access is restricted unless you are working on the island, disabled or staying for at least six nights and have a permit, so it is likely you will need to leave your car behind. Once on Rathlin, the RSPB site is four miles west of the harbour and ferry terminal, which is a good 90-minute walk, so you may prefer to make use of the island's taxi and minibus services. Alternatively, you can take a bicycle on the ferry (for an additional charge) or hire one on arrival and ride across the island.

Entry fee Adult £5; child £2.50; RSPB members, under 5s and first child enter for free.

Opening times Open from 1 April to 15 September (see website for more details).

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GEAR ZONE

ACQUIRE

86 **Gearing up**

84 **Gearing up:** Jackets

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INTELLIGENT FISH FINDING...

PowerVision: taking images underwater with the PowerDolphin drone



Komperdell FXP Folding Pole

There should be no problem finding space in the backpack for the new Komperdell FXP series of next generation folding walking poles. They are 30% lighter than previous models and pack down to just 37cm. When released the pole deploys on its own and provides a solid connection between all three parts that is not dependent on a cord, which means they do not rattle. They are made from ultra-lightweight carbon, with aluminium joints and the tungsten tips and ice baskets mean these walking aids can be used all year round.

Guide price £149.95

komperdell.com



Think Tank Retrospective Backpack 15L

Designed for adventure travel photography, the Retrospective Backpack features rugged canvas treated with Durable Water Repellent. The bag offers top and rear access to camera gear and a dedicated pocket for a 15in laptop. There's a zippered pocket for valuables, a tripod attachment and water bottle pockets. Inside is space for a DSLR, laptop and several lenses.

Guide price £229

snapperstuff.com

GEARING UP



PowerDolphin drone

The PowerDolphin is an intelligent, multifunctional water drone from PowerVision. With the ability to capture impressive 4K high-definition images, intelligent fish finding functionality and search and rescue support, the PowerDolphin has been designed for underwater wildlife photographers, water sports enthusiasts, fishermen and emergency support services. It's equipped with a unique dual-joint rotation 4K camera covering 215°. Shoot above the water level up to 80° and tilt down to shoot below water at -135°. The 4K high-definition images and footage can be sent wirelessly to a mobile phone through the Vision+ companion app, from a distance of 1,000m. Accompanying the dual-joint rotation camera, the front lights have four adjustable brightness levels, which rotate in balance with the camera, to shoot well-illuminated photos in different types of water. It can travel at 5m per second in the water (twice the speed of the fastest human) and has a two-hour battery life.

Guide price £695

powervision.me



Tamron 20mm f/2.8 Di III OSD M1:2

New full-frame lens for Sony E-mount cameras. The wideangle f/2.8 lens incorporates moisture-resistant construction to protect against inclement conditions and offers a 1:2 macro facility.

Guide price £399.99

tamron.eu



Goshawk 2EX

The Goshawk 2EX is a practical, full-featured, durable, technical two-man tent, designed for adventurers. The extended front porch space, with side door, is ideal for storage or performing daily tasks during inclement weather. The tent also has a smaller rear porch with two side doors.

The transverse inner ensures each occupant has access to their own porch and outer door. Large front and rear vents aid airflow to minimise condensation.

Made of high performance materials, the tent's flat pole sleeve design reduces resistance to wind and helps shed rain as well as preventing the build-up of snow. Although large, the tent is easy and quick to pitch. It weighs 4.4kg and measures 46x22cm when packed.

Guide price £436

robens.co.uk



EIZO Colouredge CS2410

New monitor designed for photographers, illustrators and digital media creators. The CS2410 has a 24in screen and covers 100% of the sRGB gamut. It features a Digital Uniformity Equaliser for optimum backlight luminance uniformity across the screen.

Guide price £429

eizocolour.com

Think Tank Road Warrior Kit

Keep your cables, cards, batteries and other small items accessible and to hand with the Think Tank Road Warrior Kit. Designed to look after the bits and pieces that so often go missing at the wrong time, the kit contains a small travel pouch, battery holder, clear cable manager case and a pack of Red Whips ties. Even the most conscientious of photographers may find themselves scrabbling around in the bottom of a camera bag for a spare memory card or battery from time to time. This pack helps you keep those items within easy reach, rather than in a tangled mess in the boot of the car.

Guide price £56

snapperstuff.co.uk



Canon EOS-1DX MkIII

Canon's new flagship camera is designed for pro-level wildlife and sports photographers. It boasts a newly developed DIGIC X processor, a 20.1MP full-frame CMOS sensor, and blistering shooting speeds of 16fps in OVF and 20fps in live view.

A new AF system provides three times the number of AF points as its predecessor. The ISO range is now 100 to 102400 (expandable 50 to 819200). The camera is the first EOS model to support High Efficiency Image File format, which enables images to be saved in a file the equivalent size as a Jpeg with less compression artefacts. It also uses the next generation of memory cards, with CFexpress providing write speeds three times faster than CFast cards and making it possible to shoot bursts of 1,000 Raw images. The magnesium alloy body is built to withstand extreme weather conditions. Other features include built-in Wi-fi, Bluetooth and GPS, plus buttons on the back that light up for shooting in dimly-lit conditions.

Guide price £6,499.99 (body only)

canon.co.uk



GEARING UP JACKETS

Winter may be behind us, but every outdoor photographer needs to ensure he or she is protected from the elements, especially in the changeable spring conditions. All but the very-best prepared will have a tale of being caught out by Mother Nature, and being left cold, wet and miserable, and you don't have to be in the Highlands, or halfway up an Alp to experience the capriciousness of the climate. The sun may be shining as you step out of the door, but when it clouds over, the wind picks up and the rain sets in, you will regret not having a warm and functional jacket as you wait for the perfect shot, so let's take a look at some high-tech options.



Patagonia Tres 3-in-1

1

Patagonia's Tres 3-in-1 is an all-rounder that can be worn as either a waterproof breathable shell, an insulated jacket or an insulated coat (by combining both elements). The waterproof outer shell has a two-way zip and removable hood, plus a microfleece-lined collar and chin flap. The generous hand-warmer pockets have zips, as well as magnetic snap-flap closures for easy access, although it is worth noting that the women's version – which is longer and more fitted – lacks these snap-flaps. The outer also boasts two chest pockets. The quilted inner jacket features four more pockets: two hand-warmers, an inside pocket and a zippered chest pocket that – on the men's jacket – doubles as a stuff sack.

Guide price £550
eu.patagonia.com

Finisterre Rainbird

2

Manufactured from 100 per cent recycled fluorocarbon-free polyester, the Rainbird jacket is Finisterre's most versatile and greenest waterproof to date, and the company describe it as 'one of the most accessible and sustainable waterproof jackets found anywhere on the market'. It is soft and lightweight, with a water-repellent shell and taped seams, and it provides both stretch and excellent breathability, which is ideal when you're setting up to shoot. Two zippered pockets will keep your essential filters to hand, while Velcro cuffs and a cord-adjustable collar and hem will ensure you stay dry. It is available in men's and women's versions, and in colder conditions can be paired with the lightweight, windproof and insulated slim-fit Nimbus jacket (guide price £165).

Guide price £110
finisterre.com



Jack Wolfskin Jasper 3-in-1

3

If you are looking for an outer shell and lining in a single package, then Jack Wolfskin's Jasper 3-in-1 is an excellent option, which offers warmth, comfort and mobility at a good price – but the components can be bought separately. The outer shell Jasper jacket is waterproof and windproof, yet still breathable, with zipped vents under the arms, a stretch panel on the back for added mobility and plenty of pockets that will allow you to keep essentials close at hand. The Texapore fabric is soft and low on rustle, useful for wildlife photographers, while inside there is a removable mid-weight Nanuk 200 fleece, which not only adds extra warmth to the jacket, but also can be worn on its own.

Guide price £240
jack-wolfskin.co.uk

Berghaus Hillwalker InterActive

4

The Hillwalker InterActive is the ideal jacket for changeable weather, as it is waterproof and breathable, with a substantial, yet easily rolled away hood. With the option to zip a compatible mid-layer fleece inside the shell on colder days it will not only keep you protected come rain or shine, but also warm on chilly sunrise and sunset sorties. The Gore-Tex fabric offers durability and reliable tear resistance, and also has a soft handle, so there's less potential to disturb the wildlife if you are shooting in nature. The fit for both the men's and women's versions is flattering, although with only two hand-warmer pockets you will need a bag or backpack to carry your kit.

Guide price £165
berghaus.com



4

North Face Mountain Murdo

5

If warmth is your priority, the men's Mountain Murdo is a great option, thanks to its goose down insulation and Gore-Tex shell. Although it doesn't offer the versatility of a 3-in-1, the jacket's moisture-wicking properties mean that you won't overheat if it ends up being milder than expected, and while it is not a specialist rain jacket, it will also keep you dry in all but the worst conditions. Despite its great thermal properties, the coat is not too bulky, and with four external pockets (plus an interior zip pocket), it may be well suited to photographers who like to travel light, carrying their equipment in their pockets rather than a bag.

Guide price £550
thenorthface.co.uk



6



5

Fjällräven Vidda Pro

6

Fjällräven designs its products with what it calls 'traditional Swedish trekking culture in mind', and the Vidda Pro jacket is no exception. The versatile jacket – which is available in male and female versions – is made of hardwearing G-1000 Eco fabric, which can be adapted to suit the weather conditions using the company's Greenland Wax. Simply apply more wax to increase the jacket's wind or water resistance, or wash the wax out for a cooler, more breathable garment. The Vidda Pro has eight pockets for your kit, with smart gear loops in the front pockets, and as there are no shoulder seams there should be minimal risk of chafing when carrying heavy camera bags.

Guide price £260
fjallraven.co.uk



7

Canada Goose Photojournalist Jacket

7

Created with the help of professional photographers 'to stand up to the changing climates and situations they often find themselves in' and provide plenty of storage, this jacket is crafted from Tri-Durance SS fabric which is windproof, water resistant and breathable. Thanks to its four-way stretch, the Photojournalist Jacket offers a good range of movement, with reinforced shoulders to take

the strain of kit bags and ten pockets (eight exterior and two interior). The reflective strips on the chest pockets, back and collar can be seen as a pro or a con depending on what and where you are shooting, and you may want to pair the lightweight jacket with a liner in cold conditions.

Guide price £725
canadagoose.com

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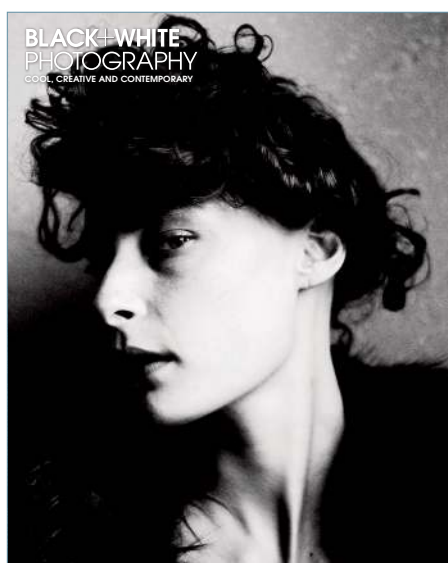
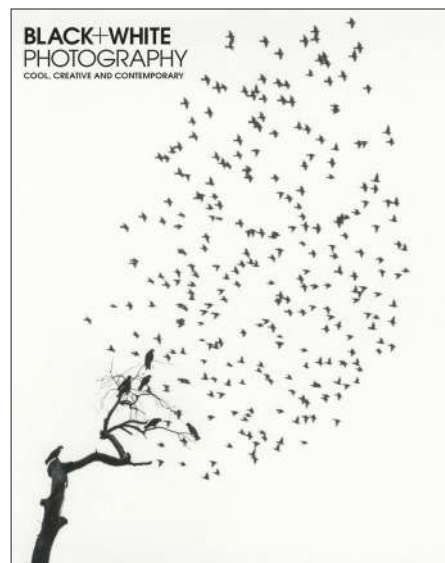
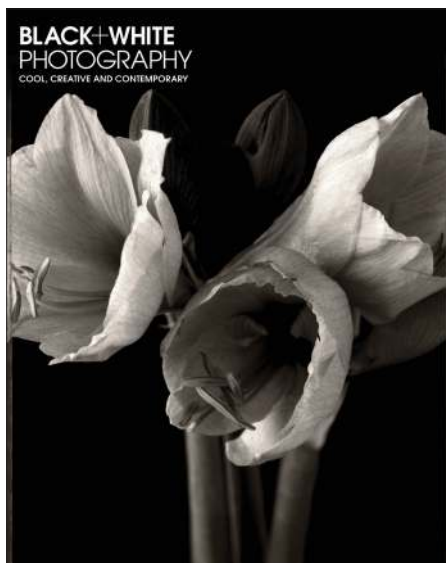
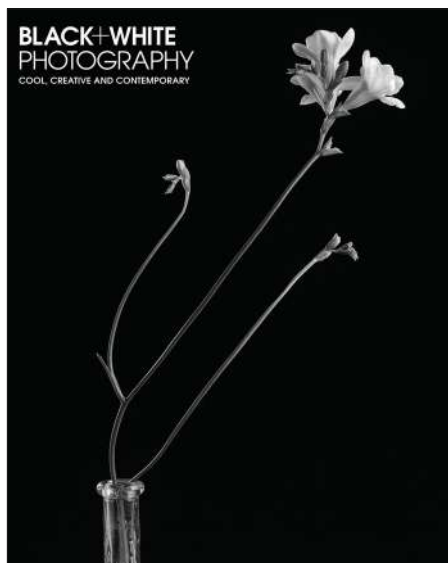
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200 F4.....	£199
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14 ext tube.....	£20
25 ext tube.....	£20
14 auto ext tube.....	£29

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May 2nd, Aug 1st; Special access. Static & in-flight bird shots. Cheetahs & Tigers in superb natural settings. Malayan and White Bengal Tiger. Maned Wolf, Lynx and Corsac Foxes. £129

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May 3rd, August 3rd; Max 8 persons. Static & flying of Golden Eagle in stunning location. Other birds from Owls, Hawks, Goshawk £89

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

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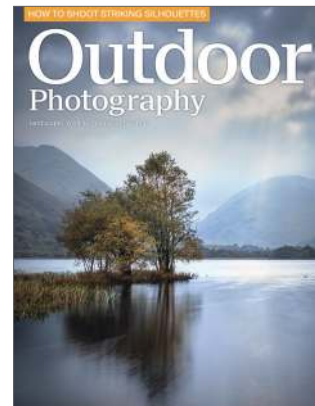
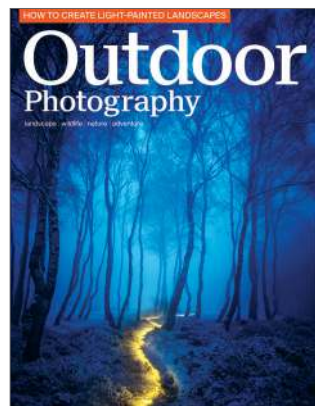
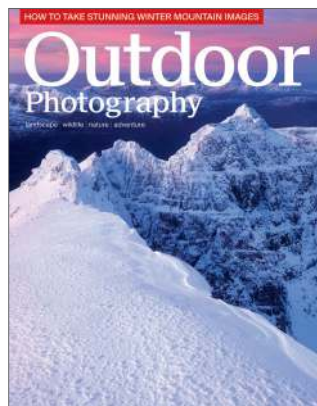
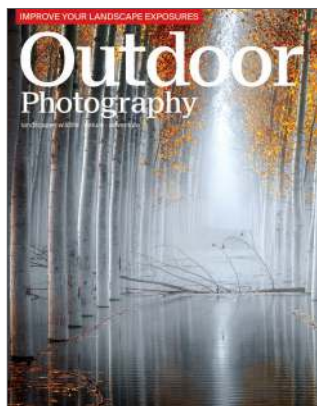
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Harris & Lewis October 2019
Small Groups in Classic Locations



"Thank you for an enjoyable as well as informative workshop despite the wrong kind of weather. Don't know quite how you always seemed to find us something worth photographing. I do feel much more confident with filters now."

Krysia Kotowska Assynt January 2020



Gary Groucutt Photography Workshops

Isle of Skye September 2018



Gary Groucutt Photography Workshops

Scotland Winter Highlands January 2017



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18th- 25th(1 place)

£1,495.00

May 2020

Lake District
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£695.00

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Yorkshire Dales & Coast
5th-10th (1 place)

£945.00

Eigg and Small Isles
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£1,295.00

October 2020

Harris & Lewis
3rd-10th(2 places)

£1,495.00

October 2020

Lake District Autumn
23-25th(1 Place)

Lake District Autumn
26-28th(1 Place)

Oct/November 2020

Lake District Autumn
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If you only do one thing this month...

Landscape Exposures

In our December issue (OP 251) we asked you to submit your best pictures that showed great control of exposure. The winning picture was taken by David Eberlin, who wins a superb Chrome Niko Camera Backpack worth £170. Well done also to the runners-up. You can see their superb work over the following pages.



Above WINNER David Eberlin

This was a misty morning at one of my favourite haunts a mile up river from where I live in Nottinghamshire. The geese were circling and the sun streaking through the trees. I used the tree to reduce the contrast in the scene but allowed the trees to go into silhouette, then just took quite a few frames as the geese flew by. This was my favourite.

Fujifilm X-T3 with lens at 50.5mm, ISO 200, 1/350sec at f/5.6, handheld
daveeberlin.uk

Opposite (top) Lars Fridh

I think green is difficult to get properly exposed and image-processed. I got a challenge during an early May morning when the first light was rinsing through the mist and down over the rolling meadow landscape with its juvenile and crisp greenery. On the horizon, haze came in from the Baltic Sea. I have processed and reworked this image several times over the years, as I learned more about image processing.

Nikon D800E with AF-S 35mm f/1.4 lens, ISO 100, 1/25sec at f/13, tripod
Instagram @lars.fridh,
Instagram @lars.fridh_infrared

Opposite (below) Todor Tilev

With my family we went on holiday to Dingle Peninsula in Ireland. We stopped at Coumeenoo Beach, where I took this picture.

Fujifilm X-T10 with 50-230mm Fujifilm lens at 144mm, ISO 200, 1/550sec at f/9, handheld
todortilev.com





Left (top) Geraint Evans

I walked an alternative to the usual Fairfield Horseshoe from Brothers Water over St Sunday's Crag, Fairfield to Little Hart Crag, descending High Hartsop Dodd as the sun dropped through the Kirkstone Pass illuminating the fells of Hartsop Dodd and High Street beyond. The light show meant a rest was in order and a longer lens before I descended into the gloom.

Nikon D810 with Tamron 70-200mm lens at 160mm, ISO 64, 1/120sec at f/8, handheld flickr.com/photos/126232476@N06

Left (middle) Keith Brooke

The challenge with this shot was to correctly expose for the dynamic range from dark tree trunks to bright autumn sunlight filtering through the trees, but also to find a shutter speed that froze the detail of the leaves while allowing enough ICM to capture the atmosphere of the beautiful Forêt d'Andaine National Park in Normandy, France.

Nikon D5600 with 17-55mm at 50mm, ISO 200, 1/250sec at f/32 instagram.com/colourblindkeith



Left (below) Malcolm Blenkey

The brooding sky on the fells around Helvellyn in the Lake District was the thing that first attracted me to this scene. I waited for a burst of light through the clouds to light the foreground trees to add further drama to the landscape, making sure I held all the detail in the shadows and highlights.

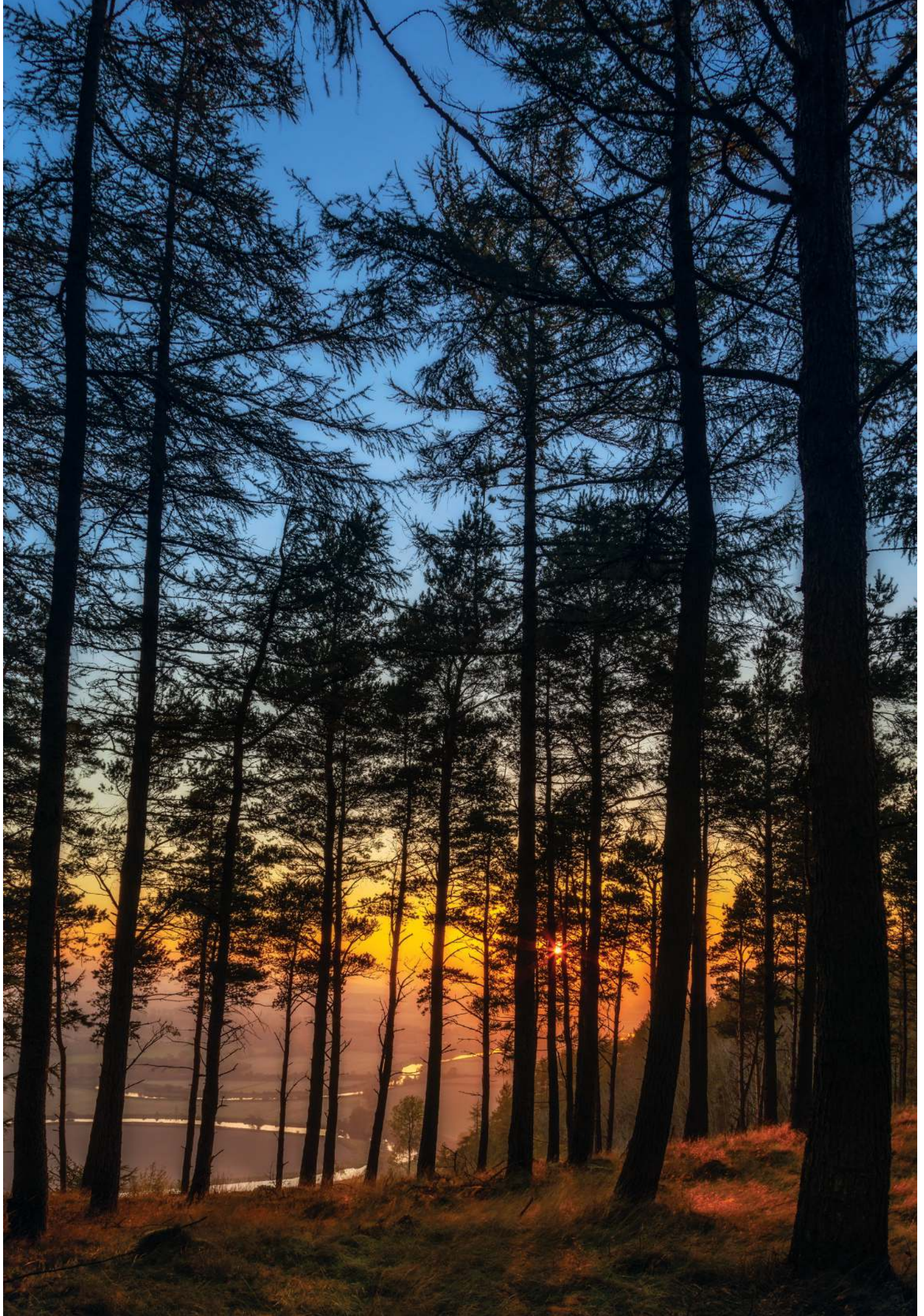
Canon 5D MkII, Canon EF 24-105mm f/4L lens at 85mm, ISO 100, 1/200sec at f/16, tripod, 2-stop ND grad filter mblenkeyphotos.co.uk



Opposite Richard Freeman

I was on Moncreiffe Hill in Scotland attempting to find images looking east towards Dundee and not having much luck. The cloudless sky was a hindrance and also the haze. However from the lower of the two iron age fort sites, in the opposite direction, I saw the setting sun catching the river with orange and gold sky above. The tall pines obscured the bland sky, and I shot wide so I could correct the verticals in post-production.

Canon 5D MkIV with Canon EF 24-105mm f/2.8L lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/11, tripod richardfreemanfoto.com





Left Peter Bucek

Following a very snowy night in the Slovakian High Tatras mountains, I woke up to find a winter wonderland, all white, covered in fresh powdery snow and frost. This scenery is overlooking one of the larger mountain lakes in the area, with the painterly composition of trees near the frozen bank. As it was still snowing at the time, I had to constantly hide my camera under my jacket as I walked the landscape. *Canon EOS 80D with Canon 70-200 f/4 IS USM lens, ISO 100, 1/500sec at f/7.1, handheld*

Opposite (top) Luke Smith

This was taken in Rydal Water in the Lake District and was challenging to expose correctly as the water was reflecting the light harshly which makes the trees a lot brighter than they actually were. *Canon EOS 700D with EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM lens at 105mm, ISO 100, 1/400sec at f/2.8, tripod*
ldssmith11.wixsite.com/luke-smith

Opposite (bottom) Martin Rooimans

It was the last day of our holiday and we decided to climb Snowdon. Twenty years ago we went up by train with our son and walked down. Now we decided to go up via Miners' Track. On top we were completely covered in clouds with no visibility at all but at one moment there was a gap and then the image was taken. *Pentax K-5 with Sigma 17-70mm lens at 19mm, ISO 250, 1/60sec at f/7.1*





Left (top) **Geoff Smithson**

I was walking along Winnats Pass when the light changed suddenly. I looked towards Castleton and saw the clouds had parted and bathed the sides of the pass in gorgeous light. I quickly took a few shots and exposed for the clouds to make sure the highlights were not blown out. I managed to capture some dramatic light over the pass.

Canon 7D with Sigma 18-250mm lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 1/125sec at f/11, polariser, handheld



Left (middle) **David Queenan**

I found this wildflower meadow near the Binns estate in West Lothian, Scotland. The tower on the hill is a folly and was commissioned by Sir James Dalrymple in 1825 and legend has it that it was the result of a bet to see which gentleman of the area could spend £100 in the most pointless but witty way. I blended two exposures in Photoshop to capture the wide dynamic range in this image – one for the sky and one for the field.

Fujifilm X-T3 with XF16-55mm lens at 20mm, ISO 160, 1/60sec at f/11, tripod
dqphotography.com



Left (below) **Geoff Kell**

A very blustery day over Ullswater led to fast moving clouds and brief light-breaks. I exposed for the highlights and used a fast shutter speed as, despite a tripod, there was still a risk of wind-rock. Luckily my sensor captured enough exposure detail to be able to process the image from a single file despite the high contrast range.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 70-200mm f/4L lens at 78mm, ISO 400 1/1600sec at f/11, tripod
flickr.com/photos/148444916@N05

Opposite (top) **Selwyn Dennis**

Travelling through south-west Ireland in November we noticed this spectacular scene catching the reflections of the recent snow on the mountain top. I managed this shot handheld as there wasn't time to erect a tripod.

Canon EOS 70D with 15-85mm lens at 15mm ISO 500, 1/200sec at f/7.1

Opposite (below) **Curtis Welsh**

Autumn misty morning with a frost made me get up and make the most of these conditions by St Boswells in the Scottish Borders.

Olympus OM-D E-M1 MkII with 12-100mm lens at 12mm, ISO 200, 1/50sec at f/22, tripod
curtiswelshphotography.co.uk





Above **John Porter**

This panorama was taken in the Ódáðahraun (Holuhraun) lava field in the Northern Highlands of Iceland, looking towards Askja. It was a perfect winter's morning with the clear light in Iceland capturing all the detail of the distant volcanic peaks.

Canon EOS 1DX MkII with EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L II IS USM lens at 220mm, ISO 100, 1/10sec at f/11, tripod. Panoramic image of 8 stitched images.

jdpphotos.co.uk





Opposite (below) **Alan Carter**

This image shows the Aiguille du Tacul above the Mer de Glace in the Chamonix Alps. The issue with exposure involved the balance between the dark clouds and the bright snow.

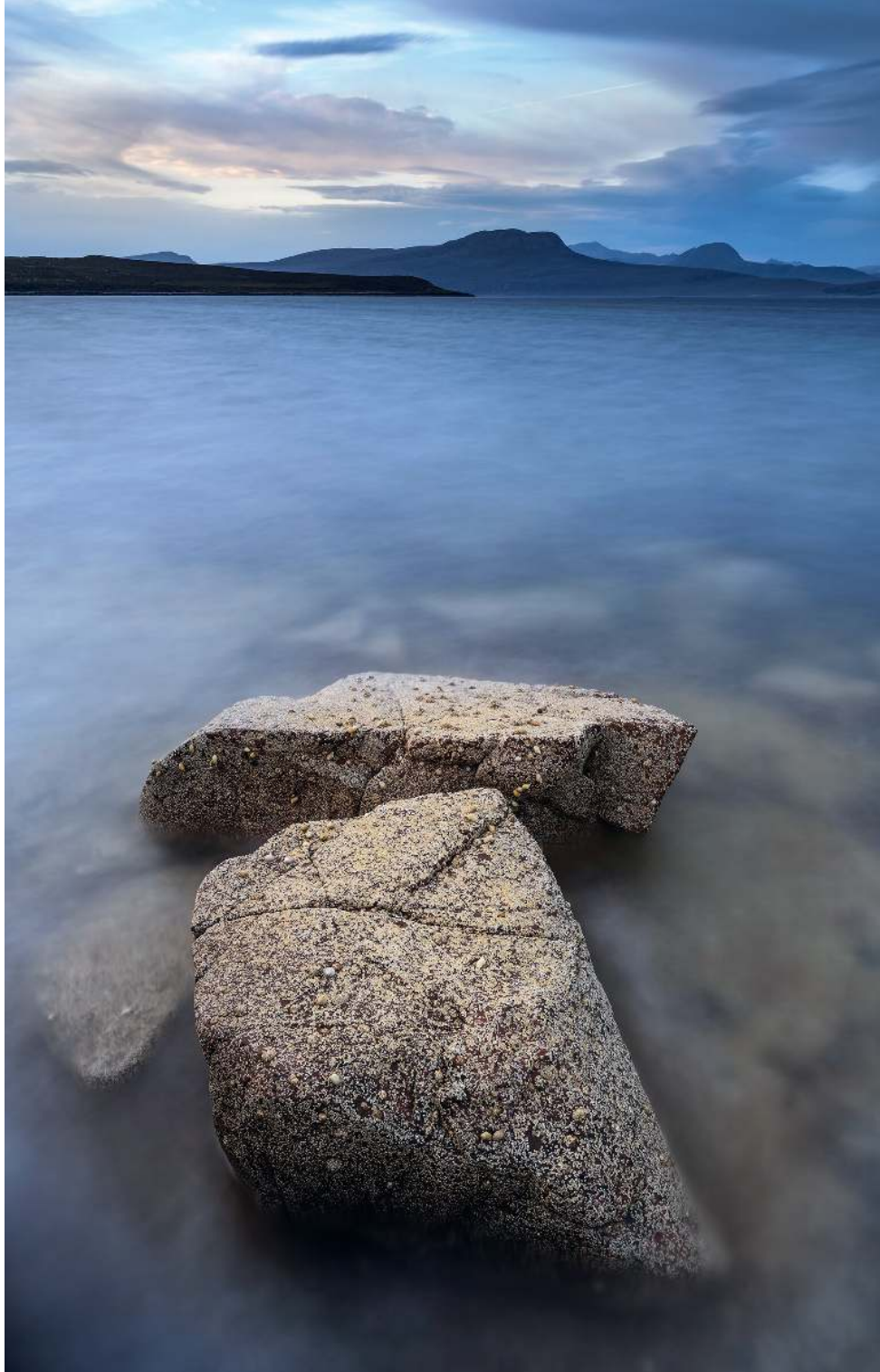
Nikon D7000 with 18-70mm lens at 48mm, ISO 200, 1/500sec at f/13, handheld

Below **Jackie Matear**

The snowstorms came one after another during my stay in the Lofoten Islands. On this particular afternoon, the incoming storm created a natural reverse graduated filter effect on the horizon. I composed the image so the curve of the bay at Haukland Beach led the eye to the mountains on the other side of the bay.

Canon EOS 5D Mk II with EF 17-40mm f/4 L USM lens at 26mm, ISO 100, 1.6sec at f/11, Lee 0.6ND soft graduated filter, tripod





Left (top) Mark Lawrence

On a calm September morning the water lapped gently at some exposed rocks on the north-west coast of Scotland. An exposure long enough to smooth but not lose all the texture of the water allowed a focus on the rocks.

Nikon D850 with Nikon 24mm f/3.5 PC-E lens, ISO 64, 30sec at f/13 with 10-stop ND filter, tripod

Left (below) Eliska Copland

In this picture is the view up Loch Broom from Ullapool harbour. Ullapool is a village of 1,500 inhabitants in the Scottish Highlands. Up north in December the nights are long, days short and sun is a precious sight. This photo was taken from our cottage on New Year's Eve as I sat at the window waiting for the last sunrise of 2019.

Google Pixel 3, ISO 227, 1/50sec at f/1.8, handheld

Opposite (top) Richard Lizzimore

The image was taken from just below the summit on Cadair Idris in Wales at sunrise in November. I had walked up the night before hoping to scout out compositions and shoot the sunset but the cloud shrouded the summit the whole day. In the morning that cloud still hadn't lifted and I was preparing to head down when the cloud suddenly broke. I had a window of 10 minutes before the cloud closed in again, but managed to find this composition overlooking Llyn Cau.

*Nikon D810 with 16-35mm lens at 22mm, ISO 640, 1/15sec at f/14, tripod
500px.com/rizzimore*

Opposite (below) Chris Beesley

This was taken on the last full day of my trip to Iceland last January – we were travelling back towards Reykjavík on the ring road and were passing Skógafoss, one of Iceland's most popular tourist attractions, just as the golden hour started. This provided some beautiful golden light on the falls, which was also being reflected off the water and along with the snow helped balance the exposure. The shot was composed using a wide-telephoto to use the leading lines of the water's edge, but also to keep the tourist figures at the waterfall reasonably distant and small, showing the immense height of this waterfall. A polariser and 6-stop ND filter were used to lengthen the exposure – which not only smoothed the water but gave a slightly ghostly appearance to the distant figures.

*Pentax K-1 with 24-70mm lens at 27mm, ISO 100, 13sec at f/14, tripod
flickr.com/fancithat/*





Your next challenge

ENTER ONLINE NOW!

Animal portraits

Strong animal portraits can celebrate the beauty of wildlife and bring out the unique character of the animals. We want to see your best animal portraits. They could be of an individual or a group. See the article by Richard Garvey-Williams on page 28 for inspiring ideas and advice.

The winning picture and the best of the runners-up will be published in the July issue of *Outdoor Photography* (OP 258), which goes on sale on 28 May 2020.

To submit your images to the competition, go to outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk/submissions. The closing date for entries is midnight 2 April 2020. See page 64 for more details and terms and conditions.



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The winner of this month's 'Animal Portraits' photography competition will not only see their image published in *Outdoor Photography*, but will also receive a Vango Radiate Heat Mat. New for 2020, the Vango Radiate Heat Mat can be used on its own or inside any sleeping bag. It's great for keeping warm on an evening shoot or a late summer expedition. The Heat Mat has been designed with a Graphene panel and four heat settings to achieve the ultimate level of comfort for you. Out on a full day shoot? The Heat Mat charging port is compatible with any power bank, making it perfect for snuggling up inside your sleeping bag on those chillier nights away from home. Made using Polaire Soft Touch fabric, the mat is machine washable and stores away into a small travel pouch, ready to use on adventures time and time again.

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Where in the world?

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Where is it?

This spectacular stretch of coast boasts towering cliffs, carved into jagged peaks by streams and waterfalls. Inaccessible by car, visitors can view the cliffs from the sea or embark on a strenuous hike. But is it:

- a) Na Pali Coast, Kauai, Hawaii
- b) Milford Sound, New Zealand
- c) Torres del Paine, Patagonia, Chile

The answer and the winner's name will be revealed in OP 258 (on sale 28/5/2020).

You can enter the competition online at www.outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk, using Cliffs258 as the code, or send your answer to opcomp@thegmcgroup.com, stating Cliffs258 as the subject. Alternatively, drop it in the post to: Where in the World – Cliffs258, Outdoor Photography, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1XN.

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JANUARY ISSUE WINNER

In our January issue, we asked you to identify the imposing fortress city in the image below.

The correct answer is:

b) Aigues-Mortes, France



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Congratulations to our winner!

Colin Hicks from St Albans, Hertfordshire, is the winner of a pair of Keen Explore Mid WP hiking boots worth £100!



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