

The Journal of the RPS Travel Group
Issue 92 | Summer 2024

TRAVEL LOG



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Travel Log



The Journal of the RPS Travel Group

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A note from the Editorial Team

I can't quite believe that this is the sixth issue of the Travel Log the editorial team has worked on together. We have managed to get a very efficient system up and running. A project plan is developed for each issue with the names of contributors and the articles they have offered to write. This is updated regularly to keep track of progress. Articles come into the Editor where the images are downloaded and the words are shared with the Sub-editor to undertake an initial proofread of the words. Articles are then divided between the Editor and Co-editor to produce draft layouts. These are then shared with the original contributor and after a small amount of back and forth these are signed off as complete.

The Editor then combines the articles into a master document. The template for the master document is often started prior to articles being submitted. A colour scheme is selected based on the image chosen for the front cover. This scheme is carried throughout the document to add consistency.

Additional content such as image galleries, either from the competition or from travel trips, is collated by the Editor as is the information contained on the penultimate page and back cover.

Once the document is almost complete it is sent to the Chair of the Travel Group so she can use it to write her notes. Finally, the complete version is sent to the Sub-editor to undertake a final proof to pick up on any remaining errors or typos that have occurred when transferring the information from its original submission format into the In-design software. It is then signed off by the Editor for print and distribution.

That is not quite the end of the process. Quotes are obtained from the printer for printing the appropriate number of copies and for postal distribution costs (UK and overseas).

Finally, as it is being distributed a digital copy of the journal is uploaded to the RPS Travel section of the website. This is done following the request of members who like both formats available.

Although there is quite a bit of work involved in the process, I suspect the most challenging part is for the people writing the articles and selecting their images. Travel Log would not be possible without the content provided by our members. It is genuinely a pleasure to read these and design Travel Log around them. Please keep them coming!

Regards from the
Travel Log Editor
editortravel@rps.org
Summer 2024



Cover photo by
Tim Rubidge LRPS

Samburu woman at the Umoja
village, Kenya, displaying her
ushanga beaded jewellery



A note from our Chair



First of all, let me congratulate our editorial team on the great job they have done with this edition of Travel Log. I'm always impressed that they manage this alongside full-time jobs. And let me express the thanks of readers to those who contribute to the magazine: some with great regularity, others once or twice, but always with fascinating stories to lure us to more and more interesting places. I confess that I had never heard of at least one of the destinations described in this edition - I'll leave you to guess which!

Since the last edition of Travel Log, we have held a very successful conference day in Bristol and have been encouraged by those who attended to further develop some of the themes linking sustainability and travel photography in future events, so the likelihood is that in Autumn 2025 we will do just that. Personally, I shall be sorry to lose RPS House as a venue: for us over the past two years it has meant that our conference-style events have had really good tech support and local resources with the front of house team, especially, providing great support, making it much easier for those of us organising the event also to enjoy its content.

Although the weekend was a highly valued by those who attended, it is a matter of regret for me that more members of the Group do not actively engage with our events. I often think that if we understood better why members join the Group, we would be better equipped to plan programmes of events that meet their needs.

So what does the RPS mean to you? Why are you a member? Why, indeed, have you chosen to join the Travel Group? Is it simply that you have been awarded a Distinction and want to maintain that recognition? Do you value the publications? Or the events? I know why I joined the Group, but I often wonder about other members. David Short, our new Engagement and Events Officer, in thanking the organisers for the 'Travel Photography - the Future'

event, wrote on Facebook 'An excellent, thought-provoking day and, of course, the chance to talk to others about the the best things in life - travel and photography!' Did you join the group to enjoy the 'best things in life'? If so, how can we help you to do so more and what can you offer to help us make the same enjoyment possible for others? We have had useful guidance from those who came to the Bristol event: but we'd love to balance that with views of those who were not able to attend - or didn't feel the topics were sufficiently interesting to make the effort - so that we can incorporate them as we plan ahead. These are not rhetorical questions!

Helpful ideas to travel@rps.org will be much appreciated.

In our last edition, I mentioned that while in Venice I had a chance meeting with a Group member from Greece. I'm delighted to say that she contacted us when she was coming to the UK and David was able to arrange our recent 'Walk the Line' event so that she could meet some other members and share photographic experiences. For me that demonstrated how communication helps the Group gain involvement. How can we extend this good practice to other locations?

Continuing the collaboration with other Groups and Regions that started at Aston in 2022, the Travel Group is delighted to sponsor an award at the 2024 National AV Championships run by the RPS AV Group. If you are an AV worker you might like to enter and everyone is welcome to attend the weekend in Leeds in September

The Group is at its liveliest and most effective when there is discussion involving a wide range of members. The Travel team need your ideas if we are to develop WITH our members.

Kath
Kathryn Phillips ARPS
Chair RPS Travel Group
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Judge's Comments

PHOTO CREDIT: DHIR SATISH



About the judge

Judging this year's competition was Jay Charnock FRPS, a longtime member of the Group with vast experience as a photographic judge.

Introducing her comments she explained how she approached the task



Having blithely agreed to judge the Travel Group competition for 2024, I began to question my sanity when faced with the images!

Judges, despite what you may think, are human, and bring to the table their experiences, likes, dislikes, personal foibles and a catalogue of catchy one liners when regarding the technical aspects of an image. This is, after all, a photography competition, and an idiosyncratic approach to composition, cropping, exposure etc. can be tolerated up to a point. In other words, judging can be quite a subjective exercise once the technical bits are disposed of.

The Travel Group website mentions the 'spirit of place' and this, importantly, is what speaks to me; the feeling of connection will be different for everyone and can be quite difficult to articulate, so it must be a personal choice. The images chosen have, for me, resonated with that extra something that sets them apart from the majority - passion.

To paraphrase Minor White: 'photograph what's there - and what else is there'. For me, it is that 'what else' which makes all the difference. The spirit speaks.

The rule, or better, the conventions of photography, like composition, are not always the most important thing. After you've considered them, whether you've 'obeyed' them or not, your output is an image, and how you react to that image depends on who you are.

It's a purely subjective exercise. So I've chosen photographs which speak to me. So what am I looking for? I'm looking for a bit of photographic perfection in there, and that is the right sort of composition, you're doing the right thing, whatever that is.

After that it comes to how the image affects me as a person. Because it affects every one of you in a different way. Because you are bringing to these pictures all your prejudices, all your foibles, and all manner of things to do with your personality.

So how you react to it is who you are. It's a subjective exercise. I've chosen those pictures which speak to me. What do they speak of? As travel images they must have a sense of place, okay. And they all have that, and they have a spirit of place, a sense of what you're looking at.

These are images that speak to me somehow a bit more deeply, okay? A sense of place and a spirit of place. Now that's defined by you, who you are, how you actually observe the photograph, and how you react to it.

So these are my personal choices, and I make no excuses. I've chosen these images because they spoke to me. When you look at a photograph, you are looking at it subjectively. Okay, you could look and say, oh, rubbish. That's actually a rubbish composition. Look at those wonky lines there. But ultimately, how does it feel? And that to me is important.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL

Judge's feedback

My choice for the Gold Medal breaks all the rules - it's vivid, there's a person standing at the centre... Why not? What struck me is that everything is moving except that central still figure: the embodiment of the central stillness of Buddhism. He's posed. That's OK. Note the orange trainers!

This appealed to me as an image which has a very clear sense of place and as an authentic illustration of the spirit of the place - it appealed as the embodiment of the central spot of stillness within that Buddhists seek.

Bodnath Stupa, Kathmandu, Nepal by Wang Seng Wong ARPS



Silver

Judge's feedback

'Such isolation - very much showing a sense of place and the spirit of the place - bleak, abandoned. How could people have lived there? How could they exist in this world of nothingness? Sheer loneliness. The atmosphere and feeling of this image appeal to me.'

Abandoned Whaling Station by Rachel Dunsdon ARPS



Judge's feedback

Image taken in Baku is of the Heydar Aliyev Centre. Azerbaijan is described as the eastern end of Europe and the western end of Asia. I enjoyed the clean, dramatic lines and the placing of the woman, without mobile phone, was in exactly the right position. Despite the figure being quite small, the visual weight balanced the composition beautifully.

Curve, Azerbaijan by Yasser Alaa Mobarak LRPS



Highly Commended



Diwali Prayers, Bangladesh
Brian Houghton ARPS



Evening shopping, Hanoi
Laura Morgan LRPS



Empty state store, Matanzas, Cuba
Jo Kearney ARPS



Fishing at Dawn, Istanbul
Colin Howard FRPS

Travel Image of the Year 2024

Highly Commended



Hilltop Church, Slovenia
Ngar Shun Victor Wong FRPS



Peanut Harmony, Kisoro, Republic of Uganda, Africa
Thomas Andy Branson



The House Keeper and The Goats, Joghpur
Andrew Albert Flannigan ARPS



Zimbabwean Sunset, Hwange National Park
Margaret Hocking ARPS

Travel Image of the Year 2024

Highly Commended



Storm Clouds over Eilean Donan Castle, Scotland
Kathryn Phillips ARPS



Downtown at Dawn, Dubai
Viren Bhatia LRPS



Lego Brick Living, Canary Wharf
Peter Range



Li River Sunrise, Li River
Weng Sang Wong ARPS

Highly Commended



Dohyolri, Nagoya
Dan Bronish ARPS



The final act, India
Lynda Golightly LRPS

Travel Image of the Year 2024
Highly Commended



Camel Herder, Jaisalmer
Andrew Albert Flannigan ARPS

Travel Image of the Year 2024

Highly Commended



Alfama Stairways, Lisbon, Portugal
Justin Cliff ARPS



On the Run, Oman
Sanjoy Sengupta LRPS

Travel Image of the Year 2024

Highly Commended



The Taj Mahal, Agra
Andrew Albert Flannigan ARPS

Travel Image of the Year 2024
Highly Commended



Venice Select, Venice
Dan Waller ARPS



Woman at her home, a former revolutionary bar where she has a curtained cubicle
Jo Kearney ARPS



Image: The peak of Everest (8,848 m), the tallest mountain in the world above sea level, as seen on the approach to Everest Base Camp.

TREKKING TO EVEREST



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
Julian Cook ARPS

My wife, Maha, and I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, in August 2017 (Travel Log, Issue 79, August 2018). Some of our friends asked us afterwards which mountain we would climb next. Although I have no aspiration of climbing Mount Everest, I thought about trekking to Everest Base Camp and after much trepidation we eventually went in October 2023.

Travelling to the Khumbu (or Everest) region of Nepal is a journey in itself. We flew from London via Doha to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, where we spent a couple of days visiting some of its splendid World Heritage Sites. There are no proper roads to Lukla, the gateway to the Himalayas, and so the only way to arrive is by air. It was quite exciting landing in our STOL¹ aircraft on the very short runway at Lukla Airport. Surrounded by mountains at an elevation of 2,840 m, this airport is one of the most dangerous in the world.

We ate dal bhat for lunch in Lukla, consisting of lentil soup (dal), steamed rice (bhat), vegetable curry, sauteed greens, pickles, curd and poppadum. This became one of our staple meals on the trek – all the lodges and restaurants along the way had the same menu, which offered a lot of choice, but this was one of our favourites. I became quite partial to fresh ginger, lemon and honey tea along the way too.

¹ Short Take-off and Landing

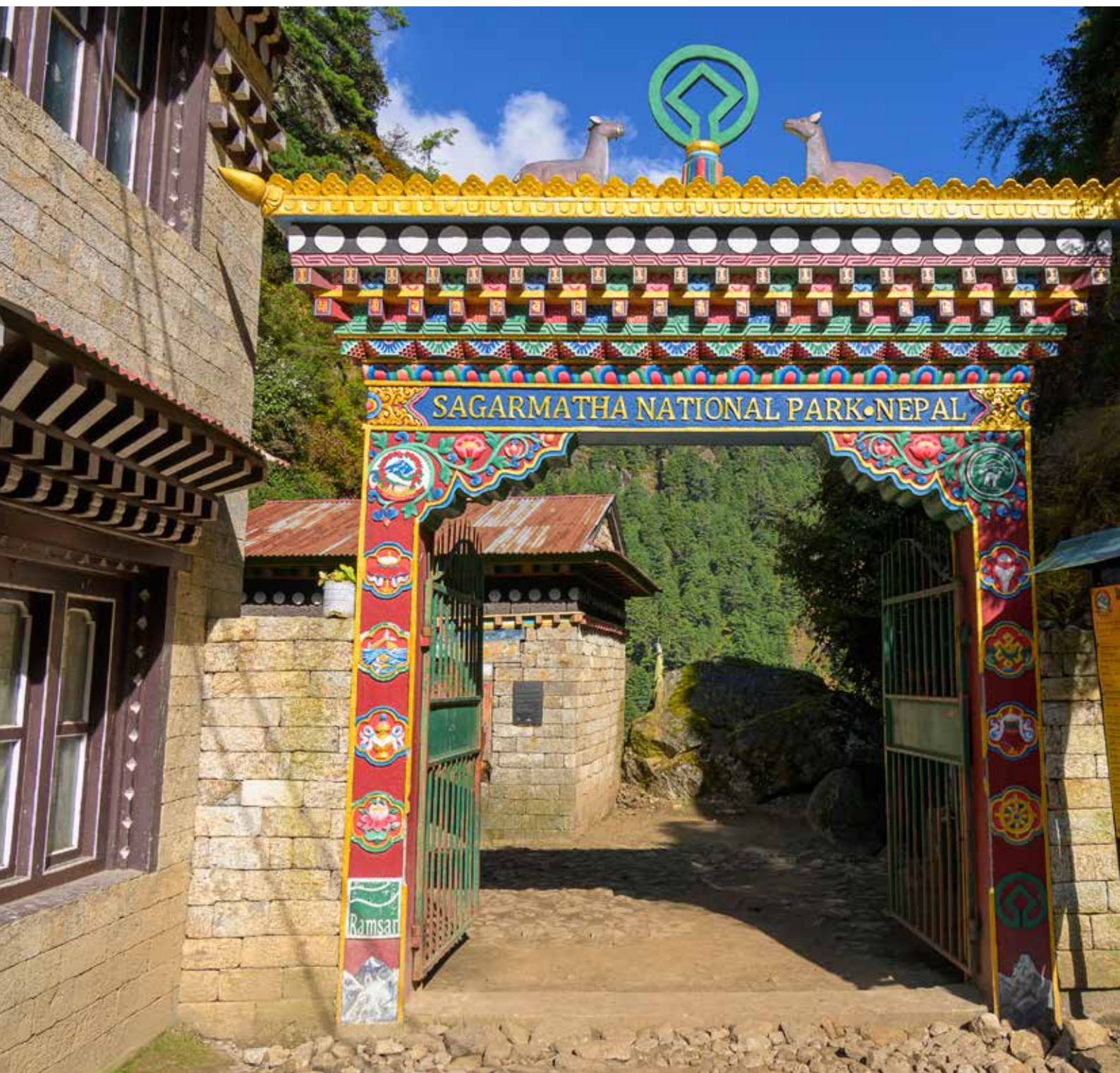


Image: The entrance gate at Jorsalle into the Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park.

We began trekking after lunch, walking from Lukla to Monjo through pine and rhododendron forest and several small villages. This first session was quite a shock to the system, but after that we knew what to expect and even when the trail became more difficult, we kept going as strong as ever. The lodge we stayed in at Monjo was one of the best we experienced during the trek. They became noticeably worse the further we trekked, but this was hardly surprising since everything had to be carried along the Everest trail either by porters or pack animals (mules or dzos). None of the lodges on the trek had heated bedrooms, the only heating was in the dining room from a stove burning dried dzo dung, and then only at breakfast and dinner times.



We left the village of Monjo in the morning, passing through the gate marking the entrance to the Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park. We walked alongside the stunningly beautiful Dudh Koshi river - called the Milk River in English on account of its white colour. We encountered many suspension footbridges over rivers and ravines along the route, but the Hillary Suspension Bridge over the Dudh Koshi river was the most spectacular and nerve-wracking to cross. This bridge is over 140 m long and 125 m above the river, bouncing up and down as you walk across it.

We stayed in Namche for the next 2 nights to acclimatise to the increasing altitude. Namche is surrounded by high snow-capped mountain peaks and is the largest town in the Khumbu, serving as a hub for climbers and trekkers. We walked around the town taking photographs and shopping for souvenirs and a few last-minute supplies. Namche had quite a buzz to it and a feeling of anticipation and expectation for what lay ahead, something that Lukla had lacked.

Image: The currently used Hillary Suspension Bridge is the higher of these two bridges above the fast-flowing Dudh Koshi or Milk River.





Image: The town of Namche is built in a horseshoe shape around the sides of the hills. The snow-capped mountain behind the town is Kongde Ri (6,187 m).

The hill out of Namche was very steep. Not long after reaching the top we were rewarded for our efforts with our first view of Mount Everest. I was thrilled to see Everest with my own eyes for the first time, even if it was 25 km away. The air in the Himalayas was absolutely clear and the mountains were perfectly visible. We sat on the terrace of the Everest View Hotel, at an altitude of 3,880m the highest hotel in the world, enjoying a morning coffee whilst being mesmerised by the magnificent view in front of us.



We took a detour off the main trekking route to visit the village of Khumjung which had the atmosphere of an authentic village where people had lived and worked for generations rather than one built in more recent times just to service the tourist trade. The Tibetan style Khumjung Monastery had been built by early local Sherpas and is the second oldest in Khumbu. It was filled inside with colourful Buddhist sculptures and artwork, and what was purported to be a Yeti scalp.

After crossing the Dudh Koshi river once again, we had a long tough uphill climb through the pine forest for 3½ hours until we reached Tengboche on top of a high ridge. The highlight here was visiting Tengboche Monastery, the largest monastery in the Khumbu region of Nepal. Entering the inner sanctum and listening to the monks chanting was a special moment, but one where photography was unfortunately prohibited. We continued to the village of Pangboche, one of the oldest settlements in Khumbu, where we stayed overnight.

We followed the course of the Imja Khola river the next morning in a very rocky valley strewn with large boulders. The wind started to pick up towards the end of the morning making it feel cold even in the sunshine – a phenomenon that would happen regularly over the next few days. Our destination for the day was Dingboche, a relatively large Sherpa village of about 200 inhabitants and the last village with a permanent population along the Everest trekking route. Curiously, at 4,410m altitude, it is home to one of the world's highest billiard parlours!

Image: The Syanboche Viewpoint provided us with our first view of Everest (8,848 m) behind the Nuptse-Lhotse ridge with the peak of Lhotse (8,516 m) to its right.





Image: The Tibetan style Khumjung Monastery is the second oldest monastery in the Khumbu region.

We stayed for 2 nights in Dingboche, hiking for a couple of hours up a nearby hill on the second day to aid our acclimatisation to the high altitude. The lodge here was the last one with any degree of comfort before reaching Everest Base Camp, although the water pipes froze at night because it was so cold.

We headed northwards out of Dingboche towards Lobuche, over very barren ground with just a few small bushes and extremely short grass. The trek after lunch was uphill along a steep and rocky path. After 1½ hours we arrived at the Everest Memorial at Chukpi Lhara. Dotted with chortens, cairns, prayer flags and plaques the area is a memorial dedicated to the hundreds of Sherpas and climbers who have died on Everest and other mountains in the region. Afterwards we walked along a path, running parallel to the Khumbu Glacier, through a very rocky area almost completely devoid of any vegetation.

The lodge at the small settlement of Lobuche was very basic, with a very small bedroom, a couple of shared toilets and a couple of shared washbasins. There was no running water anywhere and the solar powered lighting was switched off after dinner. It was very cold at night, but we managed to keep warm by sleeping in our outdoor clothes, including gloves and hats, in sleeping bags covered with thick blankets.

The following day marked the culmination of our adventure, the day we would finally reach Everest Base Camp. We set off from Lobuche early in the morning, initially up a steady steep hill and then up and over three consecutive ridges. The trail here was very rough, covered with rocks and boulders, and was possibly the toughest section that we encountered on the whole trek. There was no vegetation at all, effectively a desert with just rocks everywhere. After about 3 hours of walking, we came to the side of the Khumbu Glacier. This is the world's highest glacier, starting high up on Everest, but was unlike any glacier I had seen before, almost completely covered over by a thick layer of rocky moraine with little visible ice.

Image: A chorten and a wall of mani stones in front of the main buildings of Tengboche Monastery, the largest monastery in the region.





Image: The Khumbu Icefall is in the centre of this photograph, with the moraine-covered Khumbu Glacier “flowing” out of the bottom right corner.



Image: Gorakshep is the last settlement on the Everest Base Camp trekking trail.



We continued walking to the small settlement of Gorakshep, the last one on the trekking route, and after lunch set off on the final leg of our journey to Everest Base Camp. Although only 2½ km away it took us 3 hours to walk there, a particularly strenuous ordeal over boulders and moraine. The terrain we crossed would have been tough anywhere, let alone with the low oxygen levels at over 5,000 m altitude where you felt breathless after climbing every few steps. I might have been one of the slowest people on the trek, but at least I made it all the way under my own steam – others, much younger than myself, had to ride the last part on horseback or, suffering from altitude sickness, had to be evacuated out of the mountains by helicopter.

Although Mount Everest is not visible from Everest Base Camp itself, we had superb views of its peak on the way there. We eventually arrived triumphantly and jubilantly at a large rock daubed in painted letters which appeared to mark the “official” location of Everest Base Camp (5,364 m). After taking time to reflect upon what we had accomplished, we turned around and walked back to Gorakshep where we stayed overnight. It was very cold at night and the facilities in the lodge were very poor – it was certainly the worst of all the lodges we had stayed in – but we still managed. We went to sleep, exhausted, but with a great sense of achievement and relief that the hardest part of the trek was over.

The return trek back to Lukla mostly followed the same route that we had previously taken to Everest Base Camp but in the opposite direction. It had taken us 9 days, including 2 days of acclimatisation, to walk from Lukla to Everest Base Camp, but it took only 4 days to walk back, covering a distance of about 65 km each way. Although physically demanding, trekking in the highest mountain range in the world was a fantastic experience. I would certainly like to go trekking again, but probably not for such a long distance or at such high altitudes next time.

Image: The obligatory selfie of my wife and myself celebrating our arrival at Everest Base Camp.



Travel Group Monthly Competition 2024 - Winners



JANUARY
Backstreet Cook
Bundi India
Ian O'Neill



FEBRUARY
Storytime
Cuba
Barbara Fleming



MARCH
Bagmati
David Huggett



APRIL
Salvina walking home
Transylvania
Daryl Ford



MAY
Tavira
Portugal
Andrew Flannigan



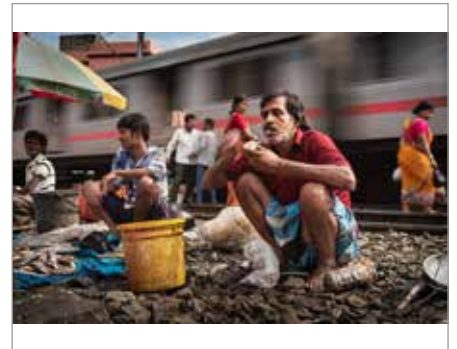
JUNE
Bakery in Uzbekistan
Graham Vulliamy



JULY
Shechen Monastery
Kathmandu, Nepal
Yasser Alaa Mobarak



AUGUST
Sariskoy from Hill,
Lofoten, Norway
George Pearson



SEPTEMBER
Smoke Break
Kolkata Railway Community
David Huggett



OCTOBER
Life in Havana,
Cuba
Jo Kearney



NOVEMBER
Lesa working in Japan,
March 2023
David Cummings



DECEMBER
Camel Herder, Tar Desert,
Rajasthan, India
Andrew Flannigan

OVERALL WINNER
Lesa working in Japan, March 2023
David Cummings ARPS

Selecting this as the best of the monthly competition winners for 2023, our judge, Jay Charnock FRPS said:

This is timeless. We know it was taken in 2023 but it could have been taken in the 1920s, 1930s or any time since. And it appealed to me because its timelessness and simplicity tell a story. The image is very carefully and cleverly put together with the photographer absolutely central looking through to the mountains beyond. It's deceptively simple and appealed to me because it is so atmospheric.





Sun & snow

Tranquil Moments

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Rob Kershaw PhD ARPS





Winter at Schwarzsee

I've lived in Switzerland for some time now and I am always looking for different viewpoints from which to present this beautiful country and enjoy the tranquillity of the moment.

Switzerland welcomes millions of visitors from around the world each year, but the images presented here are perhaps not necessarily on the main tourist track.

The fork is a well-known landmark in Vevey which is situated in the lake opposite the Alimentarium food museum. It was put in place in 1995 as a temporary structure but has stayed by popular demand. This shot was taken early one evening as the sun was going down creating the light on the fork and beautiful reflections of the clouds over Lac Lemman. Beyond are the mountains of Canton Valais.

Winter at Schwarzsee (Black Lake) with its new feature, a wooden walkway, in the foreground is a location I visit quite often. What attracted me to this scene was the mist over the mountains in late November. Very popular with locals, this beautiful lake, situated at 1046m in the Prealps of Canton Fribourg, is perhaps less well known to tourists.

The ice crystal rainbow over the Silberhorn (3695m) in the Bernese Alps is created when ice crystals act as a prism and by the refraction of the sunlight create a coloured circumhorizon arc. They form high in the atmosphere and are relatively rare, so I was pleased to capture this phenomenon.



The Fork



Top: Ice crystal rainbow; Bottom: Tranquility

Tranquillity was taken at Allaman Plage on the shores of Lac Lemman, and on this day there was a very interesting and unusual cloud formation which produced beautiful reflections on the calm surface of the lake. Lac Lemman, also known as Lake Geneva, is fed by the Rhone and lies between France and Switzerland. It is 73km long and at its widest 14km.



Sailing on Lac de Gruyere

Lac de Gruyère is a favourite location about 20 minutes from home and this particular shot was taken on a beautiful day when there was a lone yacht on the lake with a backdrop of autumn colours and reflections. The lake, in Canton Fribourg, is a man-made reservoir created in 1948 to supply both drinking water and hydroelectricity.



The area between Vevey and Lausanne is part of the UNESCO World Heritage site: the Lavaux Vineyard Terraces as the name suggests is full of vineyards stretching along the shores and slopes above Lac Lemán. The present terraces date back to the 11th century. The photo Vineyards, Lake and Mountains was taken in the autumn as the leaves from the vines started to turn to yellow whilst in the distance early snow can be seen on the mountains.

Vineyards lake and mountains



Winter tree



Driving around the countryside close to home I spotted a wonderful winter tree with the sun shining through a gap between the trunks as it rose above the distant hillside. Just had to stop and take Sun & Snow, the opening image!



Some images can work better in black and white and Winter Trees was taken in the Emmental region of Canton Bern. I was taken by the stark lone tree set against the snow and dramatic sky which produced an interesting shadow.



Looking out from Moléson

Looking out from Moléson, a mountain of 2002m close to the medieval town of Gruyères in Canton Fribourg, the light on quite a dramatic day picked out the bowl below the adjacent mountain ridge.

Alpine hillside is another shot from the Emmental. I particularly liked the way the lines of trees and the undulating hillside produced an interesting composition guiding one through the scene from top to bottom of the landscape.

All the photographs were shot on Pentax cameras in RAW mode which allowed me to make appropriate alterations to the original DNG files.

This article has previously been published in Creative Eye.

robckershawphotography.com



Alpine hillside



TALES FROM MOROCCO

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
VALERIE MATHER ARPS



Tea Ceremony

The Moroccan tea ceremony is very important in the country's culture. The ceremony is often used to welcome guests into one's home. The tea itself is a symbol of hospitality and friendship. The Moroccan people are welcoming in their attitude to strangers to their country. Conversely however, being photographed is not generally welcomed, and in public spaces can often be met with resistance. Tact and discretion are essential qualities for the avid street photographer here.

Boatyard, Essaouira



Essaouira

Whilst tourism plays an important role in the economy of Morocco, in areas such as Essaouira the fishing industry is vital and is the heart of this place.



Moroccan father and son watch the catch of the day brought in, Essaouira

Elkhorbat shadows



Dying Oases

Drought, made worse by intensive farming systems, is causing a crisis throughout Morocco. In the remote village of Elkhorbat the desert seeks to reclaim the land while children play at a dying oasis.



Children play in dying oasis, Elkhorbat

Nomads

The Berber nomadic way of life continues in the traditional way in the Atlas Mountains and everything that concerns daily life remains authentic. However, social activists are keen to ensure that children of nomadic families have access to education. This means persuading families to remain settled in one location rather than moving with the seasons. Though not a wealthy country, Morocco wants to modernise and give its people opportunities. But if these changes come to pass then these proud people and their children will be the last nomads of Morocco.



Nomad Berber, Todra Dam



Wife of Nomad Goat Herder, Todra Dam



Nomad Goat Herder, Todra Dam



Nomad Goat Herder, Todra Dam



Daughter of Nomad Berber, Todra Dam



Son of Nomad Goat Herder, Todra Dam

Rissani Market

If you want to see the real souks of Morocco, then you need to head to the more remote areas rather than the somewhat touristy City of Marrakech. My favourite was the market at Rissani with its beautiful light and where our small group were the only Westerners present. Here was the real Morocco: colourful, chaotic, aggressive and affectionate, bartering and socialising. Whilst we weren't welcomed by the locals (Moroccans do not enjoy being photographed) it was a privilege to witness a community so different from my own.







Tanneries

Fez in Morocco is home to three ancient tanneries, the largest of which is over a thousand years old. This old art of working with leather uses manual labour only and requires no modern machinery. The process, using pigeon droppings and cow urine, is the same as that used during the Middle Ages. Visiting this UNESCO heritage site, one is overwhelmed by the strong smell and grateful for the mint leaves that are handed to visitors.





Chefchaouen

The famous 'Blue City', painted blue so that it could be closer to heaven, is inevitably touristy these days. However, spend time in the quieter parts or go early or late in the day and candid moments can be found. Or simply photograph the many strays.



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Travel Photography or Holiday Snaps

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
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Image 1: Lavender Bay, Sydney Harbour

When people ask me what sort of photographs I take, I tend to fall back on the label of travel photographer because that's what I spend most of my photographic life doing. Friends who seek a little jocularly call my images 'holiday snaps' because they think that such an assertion borders on an insult. To some extent, it does but once the initial outrage subsides, a deeper dive into these polarized views can be instructive.

Travel photography is frequently described as portraying a sense of place. Immediately there's a paradox because a sense of place carries no implication of travel! A sense of place is actually a well-established concept in human geography, though a clear definition for the photographer is elusive. One of my favourite interpretations is that it expresses the essential character and spirit of a location i.e. what makes it special or unique, which may include not only physical features but cultural identity too. And a sense of place can be seen as easily at home as it can on exotic overseas tours which still begs the question of what travel photography is really all about.

I once gave a talk on travel photography at my local camera club. For me, travel photography mostly encompasses the 2 genres of landscapes/cityscapes/seascapes and street photography though contextual portraits, wildlife and architectural subjects sometimes fall within my definition too. The talk covered visits to far-off lands and appeared to go well until one member of the audience asked why I didn't spend more time on travel photography in the UK. The answer didn't strike me until later: one's home country is too familiar. It doesn't excite in the same way as finding and experiencing new landscapes and cultures. That's not just my opinion, its biology. The familiar

is pushed to the back of the brain where it is processed subconsciously. This is more efficient and is the reason we often can't remember the details of a regular journey, say to work or the shops.

New experiences, however, require the generation of new connections in the brain. When we arrive in a new place, our senses are heightened and the unfamiliar becomes a source of photographic interest. Now we're back in 'holiday snap' mode. Everywhere we look, there's something different and exciting. Quick: raise that camera to the eye and capture it! On one occasion, I attended a photographic assessment of travel submissions. The assessor exclaimed indignantly of one image: 'that's not a travel photograph. It looks like you've taken it from your hotel bedroom window!'

My own version of a 'hotel bedroom window' shot is shown in [Image 1]. Does that convey a sense of place? It's Lavender Bay in Sydney harbour on the opposite side of the bridge from the opera house, so it has some very distinct physical features.

The sense of spirit and drama is heightened by choosing a blue-hour timing. It makes me want to be there. But hang on. I was there! I remember the sounds and the atmosphere. And actually, it's quite difficult for me as the photographer to separate all of that emotive content from the purely visual cues. Have I done a good enough job as a photographer, so that a viewer who wasn't there gets some of the emotive experience nevertheless? That image was actually planned a year in advance with a careful choice of hotel and a request to the management for a room on a high floor on the correct side. After arrival, some 4 attempts were made to get the blue-hour timing right together with technical issues on highlight control. A bedroom window shot indeed!



Image 2: Rural Life, Udaipur



Image 3: Chicken Production, Delhi

So, I propose that for an image to be classified as a travel image, it not only has to capture a sense of place but those elements are going to be unfamiliar to the photographer i.e. the photographer has travelled outside of their home territory. Not only that, but the photographer must assume that the viewer (or judge/assessor) is also outside of their home territory. At best that's presumptuous; at worst, it's somewhat arrogant: "I've been to places that you could never possibly have visited." Yet the plethora of travel programmes featuring Joanna Lumley, Michael Palin, James May et al. indicate that there's a substantial appetite for the unfamiliar. And just like those programmes, the job of the photographer is to convey that sense of the unfamiliar as strongly as they can.

The requirement to include the unfamiliar, however, is somewhat subjective. I once entered an image in a camera club competition similar to the one shown [Image 2]. It clearly depicts a child living in a neighbourhood which is not very well off. This is what I would classify as a contextual portrait. The torn clothes are included as is the doorway of a building behind him. The powerful element is the fly in the eye. The judge said: "I don't agree with photographers who depict poverty. I'm going to mark this one down." What this judge was doing was applying standards and ethics, formed by his own experiences and upbringing, and in doing so, demonstrating the limited extent to which he had travelled. As with other specialisms, we do rely to some extent on the judge or viewer 'getting it'. Judges and assessors are also supposed to set aside their personal views but on the other hand, the fact that the image evoked a strong reaction was for me, a success.

Another example shows a chicken production line in an open shopfront on a street in Delhi [Image 3]. The activity conveys the sense of place and it is certainly unfamiliar to most western audiences, the engagement with the viewer made more intense by the somewhat gruesome subject matter. And perhaps surprisingly, good travel images do appear to work across national boundaries. One only has to look at the winners in international events like TPOTY and the FIAP-accredited competitions.

What makes a good travel image?

If we accept that a travel image contains the elements of a sense of place and a depiction of the unfamiliar, more than likely captured by a photographer who has travelled outside their home territory, the follow-on question becomes 'what makes a good travel image?' I need to address this before returning to the subject of holiday snaps. It goes without saying that the clearer the photographer has captured the remarkable sense of place (in effect, the story) the stronger the travel image will be deemed to be. The photographer will endeavour to use all the skills of their craft to ensure that the viewer engages with the subject, and technical competence is taken as read. The more creative the approach, the more likely it is to attract attention.

Good travel photography will also follow the good practice of the genre. Good landscapes have commonly accepted principles. They include a foreground, a middle ground and a background to give a greater sense of depth to the image with leading lines connecting the three. Lighting will generally be directional to provide modelling to the features and the composition of the various features, lines and colours in the image will be conscious choices.

Street photography, typically defined as capturing everyday life in a public place, similarly has good practice principles. The subject of the image should be clear and may include supporting actors. The contextual setting should be included without cropping too tightly around the subject yet the background should be unobtrusive with care taken to separate the subject elements. There may be a strong element of 'the decisive moment' to press the shutter to capture a fleeting expression or a moment of action.

In all cases, the photographer will be using their knowledge of the craft, applying compositional techniques and appropriate post-processing to help guide the attention of the viewer to that sense of place – the so-called 'photographer input'.

With current equipment, be that DSLRs or camera phones (but perhaps especially camera phones which now incorporate significant post processing capabilities such as automated HDR and focus stacking), ensuring technical excellence is now more of an oversight function by the photographer. The camera will do well what it thinks is best which makes everything much simpler but the photographer still needs to ensure that their intent is being fulfilled.

Finding good travel images

We might now have a good idea of how to make a strong travel image but finding subject matter in the first place is something of a different skill. In my view (which closely follows the approach of David DuChemin (a professional travel and environmental photographer who is well known to many through his prolific writing and training materials), it comes down to three main things: research, pre-visualisation and what I'm going to call 'managed serendipity'. The idea to travel might come from a variety of sources such as attendance at a festival, a famous (bucket list) destination, a visit to distant relatives, a personal research project or a too-good-to-turn-down travel offer. It doesn't matter. The next step is to convert the idea into visual possibilities, ideally with some coherence between them. That's the research and with access to a wide variety of online resources, it's relatively simple to do. I have a shortlist of those who I consider to be

good travel photographers but I also look at holiday company websites and conduct general searches using Google Images. Usually that will provide a shortlist of my favourite shots which I will then research further to find out where they were taken from, how to get there and any tips on time of day etc. This one thing on its own will produce remarkably different shots from those who take standard coach tours to famous landmarks. In my view, good travel photography is nigh-on impossible on a standard group tour (not photographer-specific tours).

Copying what others have done might feel like plagiarism but I'm always surprised how two photographers can stand side-by-side at the same location and still produce quite different images. Plus, there is little in the world which hasn't been photographed by someone else. What we as individuals are looking to do is to build on the work of others, which is pretty much how the creative world operates anyway: innovation usually needs a seed.

For our chosen location and some knowledge of where to take the photograph from and at what time of day, we can start to pre-visualise what we want to capture and to build a travel itinerary around it and other images in the same overall locality. Those pre-visualised images may in fact define the itinerary and if one is travelling with



Image 4: Street Cobbler, Delhi

others, accusations that a holiday is being driven entirely by photography can soon follow. After many years of following this approach, I can agree that there is some truth in that, but it is also true that travelling to some of the sights which have been suggested by the research, using different locations to everyone else results in a much richer holiday experience. And after all, travel is all about that richness of experience.

With all the research and planning completed, it's off to the chosen destination. Although, as mentioned earlier, it is very tempting with our heightened senses to set off with camera out immediately on arrival, from a point of view of capturing good travel images, it helps to get a feel for a place. If you have time, just explore and get lost. Even leave the camera behind, if you can bear it (though we all know that's the time you'll find the best image ever!) This is my 'managed serendipity' and there are, I suggest, three ingredients to this:

1. Allow the brain time to rationalise the sensory overload otherwise one becomes completely reactive and the results reflect this. Anyone who has walked down Chandni Chowk in old Delhi (the main street leading up to the Red Fort) will recognise the sensory onslaught of colour, heat, blaring horns, bustle of thousands of people, dust in the throat, incessant requests from street vendors and overpowering smells. Where to start photographically?

2. Make use of the fact that you have a plan. This takes the pressure off and anything in addition to the planned images is a bonus. It's an oddity but having a focus (even if the planned images are in a different geographical location) means that the brain is better tuned in to recognise related opportunities. This early phase also enables the identification of subjects that you might want to come back to and if the itinerary allows, schedule time for a second pass. One of my past pre-visualisations has been an Indian street cobbler surrounded by his tools. It took me about five attempts on five separate occasions to get a version of this I was satisfied with [Image 4] and I have heard of photographers spending a whole day just to get the one street shot with all the elements in the right place.
3. Don't follow the herd. Away from the crowds and the main tourist spots, the pace is slower, people are (mostly) happy to engage with the lone photographer and common cliches are more easily avoided. The Cambodian Girl [Image 5] is one such example. I came across her pushing her bike down this rural lane and seeing the potential, asked to take her picture. With her face framed by the handlebars, tatty green dungarees and those piercing eyes, it's one of my favourite images. And whilst she as a subject was not planned, being in the right environment to capture such shots most definitely was.



Image 5: Cambodian Girl

What about those holiday snaps?

So, now we know how to make a great travel image, what about those holiday snaps? Note the word 'make'. Great photographic images are usually 'made' with the photographer painstakingly identifying and assembling the constituent parts. 'Snaps' on the other hand imply a more immediate process: a process which is reactive to circumstances rather than planned, in fact the very antithesis of the 'made' image. There is less likely to be any conscious identification of the sense of place and the unfamiliar, and even two photographers setting out on the same exploratory walk with one having done their planning and pre-visualisation are still likely to see different opportunities.

A comparison between the made image and the reactive approach is shown in Table 1. So, does a reactive approach have any merit at all? Do professionals and advanced amateurs ever take reactive shots? By definition, reactive shots are in the here and now. They have evoked the senses at that particular moment and they provide the evidence that we have been there with the ultimate evidence being the selfie. They often carry the purpose of being a record shot which can be shown to friends and family and which will later trigger all the senses to re-experience the visit. The primary audience for this type of shot is the photographer themselves.

ASPECT	SNAPSHOT	IMAGE
Preparation	None	Pre-visualised and researched
Camera	Set to Auto or Program	More deliberate control of exposure and focus
Viewpoint	Head height, where you stand	Tries different options
Composition	Subconscious	Deliberate choices
Lighting	As available at the time	Changes position, subject and/or time of day to bring the scene to life
Timing	Immediate	Prepared to wait (for weather, people, action)
Purpose	Appealed at the time	Has a 'story' in mind

Table 1: Made versus reactive (snapshot) images

The reactive approach also carries an implication that less photographic skill has been applied: that composition has been substantially neglected and even technical quality in terms of focus and exposure may be less than ideal. But advanced amateurs and professionals are a snifty lot and it's too easy to dismiss the 'snap' as a product with low quality.

The holiday snap does, I believe, have a purpose for the serious photographer. For those who have visited the Taj Mahal, who has not wanted to take the image of the mausoleum through the east gate on arrival, framed by the arch? We know that everyone else has done it so it is no longer unfamiliar. But incrementally, shots are free so why not? You'll never use them for serious purposes but again, they help the brain to tune in. By taking the images that you know you don't want, you move more quickly to the ones that you do want – maybe not this visit but the next time.

In reality, life is not quite so polarised. Photographers can have lazy days and our compositional brains may be asleep for some of those made shots. That may not quite make the result a holiday snap but there's a risk of attracting the 'hotel bedroom window' type of comment. Conversely, photographers who have taken the time to learn their craft but happen to be on a group tour from their cruise ship, won't neglect their storytelling experience or disengage their compositional skills, even if the opportunity to plan and explore is constrained. The difference then between a 'made' image and the holiday snap is more one of intent, even if the results may be hard to distinguish!

Author's credentials

Peter Walmsley has gained the LRPS, CPAGB and EFIAP accreditations. He has travelled extensively, particularly to Asia, including living in Delhi for two years with frequent extended visits to Afghanistan and has published a book of images taken in some 40 different Indian towns and cities entitled 'A Picture of India'. From September 2021 – November 2023, he was a trustee of the Royal Photographic Society.

In 2020, Peter won the international TPOTY competition in the Colours of Life category with an image taken in a flower market in Bengaluru. He is a previous editorial contributor to the 1x magazine, is a level 2 judge with the Southern Counties Photographic Federation of the PAGB, and gives frequent talks on travel photography, most recently as a cruise ship speaker with Fred Olsen. In his day job he has provided commercial oversight to overseas aid delivery for the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, training colleagues to document their work through visual storytelling and leading photographic tours in Delhi.

A trip to Bissago Island

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
Liz Bugg ARPS





My Christmas and New Year were spent on a unique Hurtigruten expeditions cruise to West Africa. Unlike traditional cruises, there was no commercial entertainment. Instead, each night, the expedition team would enlighten us about our next destination. We disembarked with either a dry or wet landing to go on an excursion. The ship docked at a harbour for dry landings, allowing us to walk off. Wet landings, on the other hand, involved a zodiac ride to the beach. Our itinerary included Senegal, Cape Verde, the Bissagos Islands, Gambia, and a return to Senegal.

One excursion was to the Bissagos Islands, a rarely-visited corner of the world where ancient customs and traditions have been preserved.

The Bissagos Islands archipelago has 88 islands, which are about 65km from the mainland of Guinea-Bissau. About 20 of the islands are uninhabited. One of the islands we visited was Carvala, which we arrived at by zodiac boat, landing on the beach. It was about a 10-minute walk to the village, where we were met by the local community. Very few tourists visit the island; this was a memorable opportunity to experience the culture. The community still follows ancestral traditions and considers the natural world sacred.

We knew from the talk the previous evening that we would see a dance display. I was pleasantly surprised; it was not what I had expected. The dancers were accompanied by musicians playing traditional musical instruments, and they used storytelling and elements of nature to demonstrate their culture and heritage. After the formal dance display, villagers of all ages joined together, dancing in a relaxed and spontaneous manner.

My images show the village huts, the formal dances, the masks and musicians and the spontaneous and joyful community dancing.

















I would like to thank the RPS travel group committee for organising the weekend in April. The workshop on Sunday led by Judy Ford was particularly useful, as without her help and guidance in writing and choosing the photos I wouldn't have been able to produce this article.

Forty Four Hours in Fes

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Rob Morgan ARPS



Morocco is simply a wonderful place to visit. It has vibrant cities, a great variety of magnificent landscapes and so much history. Casablanca, Rabat, the blue city of Chefchaouen, the edge of the Sahara Desert, Dades and other gorges, and Essaouira are all great places to visit. The only place I'd recommend not bothering with is central Marrakech, as it is heaving with tourists and that attracts other people determined to annoy. But even there, once away from the tourist hotspots or up in the nearby Atlas Mountains the people are a delight.

There is so much to see, experience and photograph in Morocco, that the thought of describing my whole trip is a little overwhelming. So let me limit this article to the city of Fes. As part of a two-week photography tour, I was in Fes for less than two whole days. But it was a highlight because most of that time was spent in and around the old city, 'the Medina of Fes'.

The medina in Fes is the largest in the world and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its 'streets' are not streets as we understand the word; rather, they are a labyrinth of narrow alleys. A guide is definitely required. On our arrival into Fes, we had lunch in a palatial riad. Then we went over the road and it was 'goodbye traffic' as we headed straight into the souks (marketplaces) in the medina. Clothing areas, food areas, craft areas were all there. The areas with butchers were not for the faint hearted: such a contrast with how we in the western world are detached from the processes involved in meat reaching our shopping baskets. All goods deliveries in the medina are by handcarts or on the backs of donkeys, so it was important to listen for the calls and stand clear.

*Next page clockwise from top left:
Medina corridor; Medina alleyway;
Fes city walls*

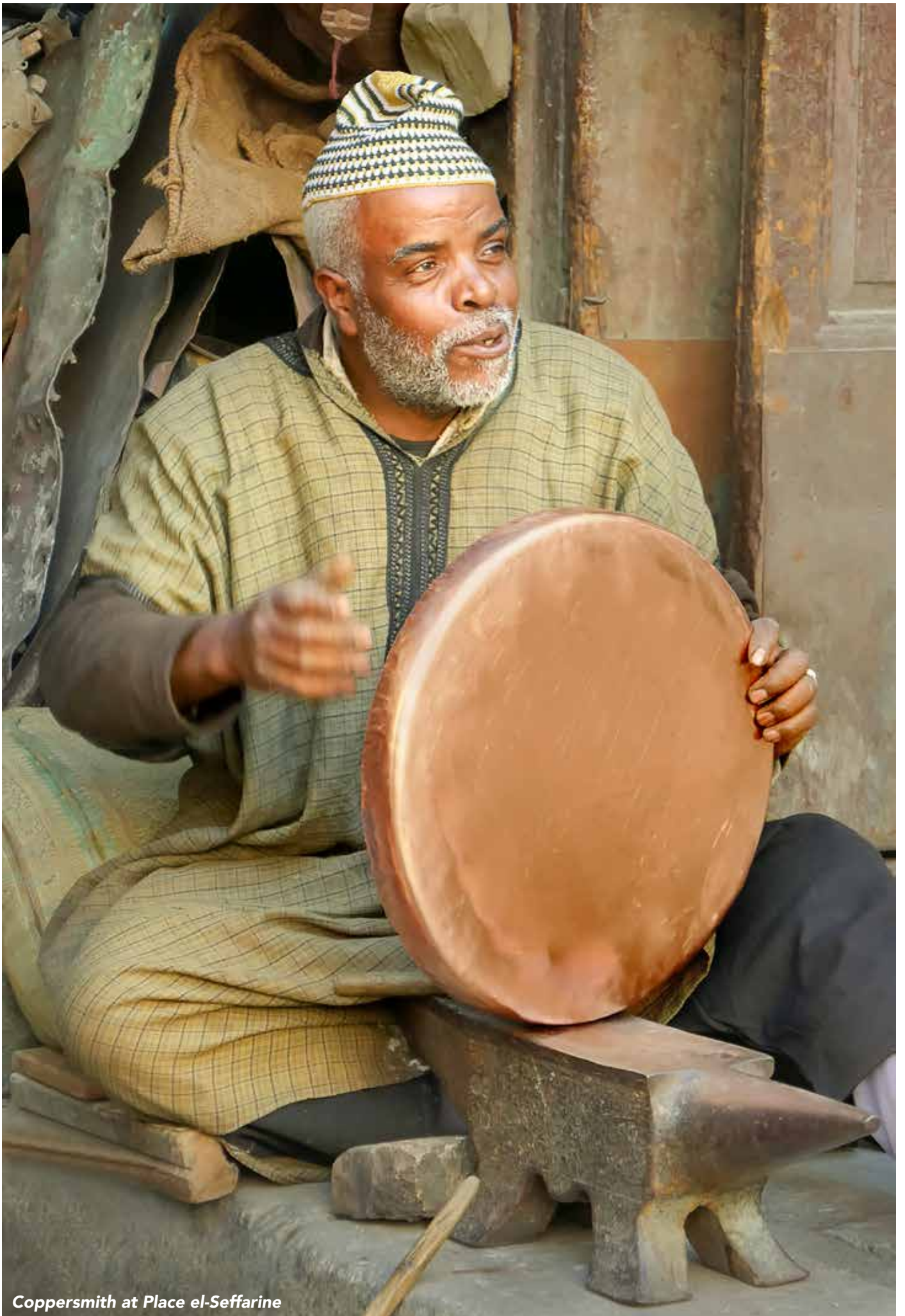




Before long we arrived at the Chouara Tannery. This is the largest of three tanneries in Fes and dates back to around the early 12th century. We were offered fresh mint leaves to hold near our noses but strangely the tannery smell was extremely mild. Somewhat in the style of approaching Xian's Terracotta Warriors, I approached the parapet at the tannery viewing area in anticipation and there below us unfolded a colourful maze of vats where goat, sheep and other hides were being dyed. It was fairly quiet when we arrived, though still with a few people working. Beyond the round and colourful dyeing vats are white, square vats where the softening process starts in a series of white liquids that contain cow urine, pigeon poo, caustic quicklime, salt and other noxious delights. Our visit was a little late in the day and the shadow of adjacent buildings was extending across the vats. I decided I had to return the next day. Idriss, our wonderful guide for the whole tour, organised for another guide to take me back there when much more of the area was in sunshine. This time I could take my time, for which I was well rewarded. No one else joined me on this revisit; I recall they went to a suburban shopping centre, of all places.

*Opposite page: Overview of Chouara Tannery in Fes;
This page: Tannery talk*





Coppersmith at Place el-Seffarine



Looking over the Fes Medina



It was Ramadan and I think my guide was glad when our excursion back through the medina maze finished and I could make my way to the hotel. He could then get home and take it easy until sunset. Our hotel, Riad Salam Fes was in a former mansion, built in the riad style with interior courtyard gardens. All very grand and picturesque at courtyard level, but of course all the windows look into the courtyards, rather than out to the world. Or in the case of cell no. 18 in which my bed was located, there was no actual window: I had to venture out onto a small dark balcony to glimpse the courtyard below. It was potluck amongst us whether we got a window, an air conditioner that worked or plumbing that functioned in a timely manner. Nonetheless, these hotel-led inconveniences did not detract from the wonderful experiences I had in and around the Medina of Fes.



*Opposite page from top to bottom:
Dar el-Makhzen Royal Palace repairs;
A Medina courier
This page clockwise from top left:
Fresh Dates; Riad Salam Fes; Butcher in the Medina*





Mechrey

The village that goes with the flow

**WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Mike Longhurst FRPS**

The average fishing village can usually deal with rising and falling tides. Houses on stilts are a familiar solution, or simply on land with the boats drawn up on the beach. However, the fishermen around the Tonle Sap lake in central Cambodia have a double problem: not only does the water level rise dramatically in the wet season, but because the land is so low-lying, it also covers a far wider area. So fishing communities that rely on static nets can end up many miles from both nets and fish. And with few tracks and massive areas of swamps, getting about on land is not easy.

*Images: Top - Supported by oil drums and plastic bottles;
Opposite page top - Each family tends its own nets; Bottom - Enough washing baskets*



The solution is simple for the people of Mechrey – just put your house on oil drums, bales of bamboo, or even on plastic bottles and let it move in all dimensions - vertically as the water rises and laterally towards the fish as water levels fall. We visited Mechrey towards the end of the dry season, so the houses, school, church and shops looked invitingly close to dry land, but in a couple of months' time, that land would be far away. To reach the village, we had to drive about 5km closer than we would in the rainy season, precariously on a crumbling dirt track along the top of dykes separating streams and inlets through the swamp. Only then could we board a boat and make the last few kilometres down the slow-moving Sankey river to the village.

With life expectancy of only 40 and infant mortality very high – 47% will not reach 5 years old – it was clearly not the healthiest of places to be, but the people seemed content with their almost unique lives. Everyone goes everywhere by boat and even very young children can paddle the typical long canoes, even if they can't use the long outboard motors. As we saw no life vests, or water wings, and only occasional child barriers, we have to assume drowning accounts for at least some of the infant mortality.



A series of buildings moored together serve as the school and a polite notice asks tourists not to disturb lessons by coming on board to take photographs or give gifts. There is a pagoda on land where we boarded the boat, but that is several kilometres upstream and most Buddhists seem to have their own home shrines. The smartest looking building in the village is the Catholic church, and the houses, arranged in line right and left along the inlet, seem to range from high to low status. At the lower end, there seems to be no privacy and one can see right through them. Towards the higher end, a solar panel mounted flat on the apex of the roof provides some electricity, otherwise there are no utilities of any kind. Mechrey has only recently become a location for ecotourism, which it is hoped will help the community. One is not allowed to stop anywhere; to do so, would be invading someone's personal space, but with most houses so open, one can easily see and even photograph much of the lifestyle. The villagers seemed to appreciate our presence and smiled and waved if they were not simply getting on with their lives.

*Images: Opposite page - With life expectancy of 40, older people tend to be a rare sight;
This page - A school classroom*



With temperatures approaching 40 C while we were there, most chores are done either on a flat porch at the front of the house, or on boats moored in front. Babies tend to be born about 25km away in the lovely town of Siem Reap, famous for Angkor Wat and other amazing temples. Every other building in the village seems to sell something, so it functions as a normal village apart from the fact that nipping to the shops is something you do on your boat, rather than on foot. Oh, and when the local tearaway roars through the village, he not only wakes everyone with the noise, but also gives them a good shaking with his bow wave.

Images: This page - Cat lovers; Opposite page top - Preparing fish; Bottom - The local cafe







Arabian Nights, Iraq

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Donatas Gričius



Baghdad. 5 am. From the narrow aeroplane windows, I was amazed at the distinct landscape. It was dry and flat, with some date palm trees along kilometres of dusty roads. As we exited the aeroplane, the humid Arabic morning wind mixed with the noise of passengers and nerve-wracking anticipation was accelerating my pulse. I was still trying to understand where I was and what came next.

Arrivals. A long line of passengers waiting to cross the passport control. I could see from far away several officers in brown uniforms, thick moustaches, and suspicious looks. They seemed surprised to see a European tourist accompanied by an Iraqi wife. I was relieved to see another tourist waiting in line to get a visa upon arrival looking as scared and nervous as I was.

Suha, my wife, spoke in Arabic with the officer, explaining the reason for my visit while he was flicking through the pages of my passport. I thought my stamps from India, Malaysia, Turkey, and many other countries would make him understand that I was just a tourist eager to visit this place. I had a full-page sticker on my passport with an Iraqi visa, obtained months ago and approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq. While the visa on arrival is available for British or European tourists, I wanted to ensure this journey went smoothly, as it was the first time I was entering the country I always dreamed of exploring. The officer took a last look at me, smiled, put a stamp on my passport, and gestured with his hand to get in.

From now on, I was in the hands of Suha, who was swiftly navigating the airport. We sat in a minibus packed with six other passengers. It was the only way to get out of the airport for a small fee. The alternative was a private taxi, but it was not worth the money as the journey was less than 10 minutes to the main entrance, where my wife's friends Noor and Ammar were impatiently waiting for us. The minibus was packed tight with people speaking in Iraqi dialect. Cash was passed from one hand to another to pay the driver. Just ten minutes and we'll be outside the airport.

Suha explained that it is a routine procedure to enter the airport; there is parking for visitors, and then, people take a taxi or this type of shared bus to pass all the checkpoints. There are not many checks on the exit, but we'll see more on our way back in seven days.

Finally, we reached the parking lot where all the passengers had exited the airport. Suha's friends were waiting for us; I could see their smiles from

far away. Suha ran to hug them and I shook hands with Ammar, who welcomed us with a friendly smile. Like many other men I saw this early morning in the airport, he had a thick moustache. Noor had a lovely, warm smile and was thrilled to meet us finally. I was unsure how to greet, hug, give her a handshake, or just stand and smile, but she led the way with the hug.

Sitting on the passenger's seat, listening to Arabic talk and laughter in the car, my eyes glimpsed the landscape as we drove to Baghdad. I could understand one or two words in Arabic, but it was clear that the conversation was about the long wait at the airport, passport checks, and our arrival. Ammar spoke a little in English, asked small questions, and was eager to converse. Noor or Suha translated some of the things they had been talking about, while my eyes were all on the landscape, catching a quick glimpse of giant sword statues along the road. A world that I had only imagined is now turning into a reality.

We were heading to Al-Rusafa, one of the nine districts of Baghdad on the east side of the legendary river Tigris. As Noor explained, the river divides Baghdad into two main parts; on the east side is Al-Rusafa and on the west side is Karkh. My friends live in Karada, the oldest district on the east side.

And there it was, the river Tigris. All the stories I read about this ancient river, a natural connection with Mesopotamian history, a heartbeat of the past Sumerian civilisation. Today, its light brown colour running through Baghdad is dividing the city's two distinct areas. Crossing the bridge, we entered the oldest part of Al-Rusafa. Dusty roads, electric wires above two or three-floor aged houses, with palm trees on the side, in between a view of Tigris. Bronze sculptures along the road on the bankside represent popular Arabic Thousand and One Nights stories.

Military checkpoints and heavily armed soldiers patrolling the streets are reminders of the city's tumultuous situation. Because Iraq had several years without significant conflict, it was a safe place to visit, but it was still better to keep the guard; the situation could change as quickly as the wind. The conversation in the car shifted from Arabic to English, mixed with loud laughter and infectious energy. They mentioned every important house or monument we passed, proudly showing me the calm city as it awakened for our first day in Iraq's capital.



Men stitching clothes in Souq Al-Saray

We reached my friend's house deep inside Karada, between narrow dusty streets—a gated two-floor building with an entrance dividing the house in two. One side was where Noor's family lived, and her parents occupied the other side. It is common in Iraq for families to live with their parents as the prices of property are similar or even more expensive than in the UK.

Inside the house, Noor's parents waited for us, an older but very energetic couple who hugged warmly; their hospitality was palpable as they invited us to join them for tea and some sweets. While everyone in the house was fasting and observing Ramadan, they ensured that we didn't, as we had been travelling and needed to refresh.

Traditional Arabic paintings, wooden furniture, warm carpets to relax the feet, and Shisha close to the sofa. It was an Arabic-style house preserving the conventional building and its history. Inside was cool, with the air conditioner operating almost 24/7, as outside was 24C at 8 am. It gets scorching in April and summer, with some temperature drops at night, when Iraqis go out, and the city comes alive. Ammar and Noor, my newly met friends who had known Suha since their teenage years, became my guides and guardians. With no time to waste in the house, we headed to the streets, with so much to see and places to visit during our short visit.

Our exploration began at the Souq Al-Saray, a mesmerising maze of narrow alleys teeming with vendors. Here, amidst the clamour of commerce, one could sense the echoes of the ancient Silk Road, where merchants once exchanged spices, textiles, precious stones, leather, metalwork, and agricultural products such as dates, figs, and grains. It was a sensory overload – the sight of intricate jewellery, the touch of handwoven fabrics, the sound of Arabic voices, and the smell of spices.

Amid the chaos and people walking in all directions, a glimpse of calmness: I found a man sitting in his small shop, concentrated on his task of patching clothes. The shop had a sign written in Arabic on a wooden plate, an old vintage TV, and a pile of suits and garments waiting to be fixed by its skilful master. Artisans' tradition is to repair clothes instead of buying new suits or pants, but this is slowly disappearing with the growing demand for new and cheaper options from neighbouring countries or China.

Baghdad was more than just a centre of trade and literature. It was a city adorned with vibrant art, from expansive murals on building facades to intricate paintings in cafes and homes. Art was a language that spoke fervently in Baghdad, telling stories of a bygone era and lives and landscapes transformed by time and history. It was not just for viewing but an invitation to understand the Iraqi soul - proud, resilient, and rich in heritage.



Souq Al- Safeer, copper market



Images: Top left - Souq Al-Safeer, copper market; right and bottom - Souq Al-Saray



Not far from the Souq, Al-Mutanabbi Street, named after one of Iraq's most revered poets, was a sanctuary of Arab literature. Suha explained the booksellers' commitment to their trade. "If they don't have a book, they'll find it for you," she said. And indeed, the street was a testament to the Iraqi reverence for knowledge and the Arabic written word.

To rest after our intense visit to the city's old Souq, we crossed the river Tigris and made our way to a local grill restaurant with a large, air-cooled terrace along the river. No reservations were needed; Ammar was warmly greeted by restaurant staff, as it was his regular place for a grilled meal or to spend time enjoying tea and smoking Shisha. The hosts ordered freshly grilled shish kebab with vegetables on the side and several dips of hummus and baba ghanoush on the table for lunch. Ammar was never empty-handed; he shared the Shisha with me. We did not talk much, but sitting close to each other, exchanging a few words, sharing the meal and laughing was more than enough to bond. All the food and drinks were for Suha and me while Ammar and Noor fasted, patiently waiting for the time of Iftar, right after sunset when they broke their fasting at home.

The next day Ammar introduced me to his cousin who was ready to dedicate his entire day to show me the most iconic places of Baghdad.

First stop, a local, well-known restaurant for its typical Iraqi breakfast. It was partially empty during Ramadan, but my host made a point for us to start the day with black tea, an unmissable egg and minced lamb dish, another dish with lamb and potatoes in tomato sauce and a third dish with bread soaked in a broth and topped with an omelette on top. Three local dishes just so I could try the variety, accompanied by warm smiles and

looks of the restaurant owner, the staff and a family who occasionally turned up to check on us.

Baghdad is a city famous for large-scale monuments commissioned by Saddam Hussein. One of the iconic monuments is Al-Shaheed, also known as Martyr's Memorial, representing the Iraqi soldiers who died in the Iran-Iraq War. Two giant turquoise half-domes with a tall metallic Iraqi flag resting close to a lake and far removed from the city give a sense of tranquillity, inviting reflection. Its size and scale symbolised decisive leadership during the Saddam era. I was taken to the underground area of the monument to admire the walls that surrounded the whole area with names of every Iraqi who died during the war. I was told the story of a family who tried to take one of the large square pieces from the wall with their son's name engraved. While walking and observing the scale of this place with thousands of names written on the wall, resting in silence, images of the Iraq war I had seen on the TV came to me. Very different from the Baghdad I have seen today. Hopefully, history won't repeat itself, and the city will have the chance to finally recover from its ashes and to become once again the place of culture, art, literature, and of course... delicious food.

As a traveller, I don't ask or pay to get access to places I should not be, avoiding situations where I'm not welcome. My local friends and hosts guide me and eagerly show me the city, a place they feel very passionate about and proud to take me. I was lucky to get inside the Shia Islamic Mosque and shrine Al-Kazimiyya. Is one of the most important places of worship for Shia believers, located in the Kādhimayn suburb of Baghdad. A nearby bridge separates it from Sunni's iconic Abu Hanifa Mosque in the al-Adhamiyah district of northern Baghdad. A single religion divided by the bridge crossing the Tigris River was still a place of tension.



Al-Shaheed Monument
Wall below the monument with the names of martyrs



After passing all the security checks and leaving my camera inside the locker, I was blown away by the mosque's grandiosity. A place of silence and reflection. Inside, I was shown the tombs of Imams where people lined to touch by hand and leave, whispering the prayers. Separated from the women's section, men prayed along the tall columns, some alone and others in small groups. At some point, I was left alone to explore the place while my friends prayed. I felt privileged to be there, honoured to witness the place of worship of millions of Islamic believers, a sacred place adorned by gold and Islamic art.

When we left, Ammar's cousin made a gesture by buying me a silver tasbeeh bracelet with beads engraved with the names of Allah. It was a souvenir and a reminder of this spiritual experience for me. I observed many men, including my friend, carrying the bracelet, constantly moving their fingers along the beads. As I got my own, I felt more connected to Iraqi culture. While exploring the city's sights, I lived a day in Baghdad like a local, full of moments engraved in my memory. The warmth of Iraqi hospitality shone brightest during Ramadan. Iftar, the breaking of the fast, was a daily celebration, a time for families and friends to gather and share not just food but stories, laughter, and a sense of community.

My wife and I were honoured to join Noor's family for these occasions. The meal's centrepiece was often Masgouf, a traditional Baghdadi fish dish. I had the privilege of sourcing the fish, witnessing its journey from the fish vendor to the fire pit, traditionally smoked, and finally to the table, accompanied by fresh bread called Samoon, a local favourite.

The nights in Baghdad took on a life of their own. As the city broke its fast, the streets buzzed with energy. Families and friends flocked to restaurants and social clubs, creating a tapestry of light and sound. With its sprawling gardens and diverse facilities, places like Coral Palace became nocturnal havens where people connected over food, Shisha, and music. Amidst this, Ammar's simple question: "Are you hungry?" often led us on culinary adventures, sampling the best of Baghdadi street food – from the crunchiest falafel to the most succulent kebab.

The rhythm of Baghdad was one of resilience and routine. Each day, people navigated their lives with a quiet determination, balancing the demands of work and the solemnity of Ramadan. The city's troubled history receded in these moments, revealing a spirit undimmed by adversity.

As I sat sipping Arabic coffee among the city's bustling streets, my thoughts wandered about my decade-long journey. It had been ten years since I embarked on a global adventure, leading me to cross continents I always dreamed of visiting. This journey was not just about the places but about the people I met, the cultures I experienced, and the love I found.

Throughout history, the human spirit has been driven by an innate urge to explore, to venture beyond familiar horizons and delve into the unknown. This yearning for exploration is a quest for new landscapes and a journey towards self-discovery and connection with the broader world. The stories of fellow travellers often act as catalysts, igniting our curiosity and encouraging us to embrace our adventures.

Consider the Silk Road, an ancient trade route network stretching across the Middle East and Asia. It wasn't merely a conduit for commerce; it was a tapestry of cultural exchange where empires rose and stories flourished. Marco Polo's legendary travels along this route are a testament to the transformative power of exploration. His tales of distant lands and diverse cultures have captivated generations, exemplifying how travel can expand our understanding of the world and its myriad peoples.

Paulo Coelho's "The Alchemist" is unique among the many narratives that have inspired me. The tale of a young Spanish shepherd's journey to Egypt in search of treasure speaks to the heart of every traveller. It's a story about learning the ways of the world, overcoming adversity, and discovering love along the way. The protagonist's journey mirrors the journey of every traveller who seeks physical destinations and the treasures of experience, knowledge, and personal growth.

I share my story with the hope that it will spark a similar desire in you—to step out of your comfort zone, explore places less travelled, and embrace the unfamiliar with an open heart.



Donatas Gricius is a travel photographer and author of "Unpacking - a global journey" available to purchase on Amazon.



Al-Mutanabbi Statue
Al-Mutanabbi was a famous Abbasid-era Arabian poet, still widely read in today's Arab world

Stranded in Samburu Sands

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Tim Rubidge LRPS



The omens were good. The plane taking me to Nairobi was half-empty and we landed spot on time. Though I knew the difference in temperatures between a wet, grey UK and along the equator, it still came as something of a shock. I had a couple of days before going north and so arranged a Maasai guide to show me the forests around the city. The arboretum was quiet save, here and there, for the vocal praying of several small informal congregations. The shade of the dense Karura forest, its waterfall and the caves, offered some respite from the heat but my planned acclimatisation was very far from effective. And the omens turned when my driver from the previous visit sent a text message saying he was coming down with one of his periodic bouts of malaria and could not make it. However, he promised to arrange a replacement and two days later I was on my way.

The early morning city was already stifling and the traffic chaotic and busy, but the drivers seemed oddly accommodating to each other even if there appeared to be no consistently observed rules at junctions. We drove on past garish-painted trucks and buses with pious dedications. "I am the way" and "Trust in the Lord" both seemed quite appropriate. We passed by Thika - there really were flame trees on the verges - and stopped at Nanyuki. Bustling with shoppers amid

the road-side stalls and the wares laid out on the ground in the dust, it was easy to spot the weather-beaten ex-pats of the tea plantations whose manner seemed just a trifle too confident. There was, too, a scattering of pale-skinned, tattooed young men in crumpled shorts making for the KFC; British soldiers on their training rotation in the bush. Pushing on north, the Europeans had disappeared and Mount Kenya was off to the right. It is easy to forget the altitude along the East African Rift and the peak seemed only a distant hillock even if its rocks were patched with snow while we below baked at 30C. Isiolo came next and the Islamic influence from Somalia was plain in the shoppers often in hijabs and occasionally in all-enveloping black burkas, the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer and the unfettered half-dozen camels loping disdainfully down the main road. Beyond the town, the roadside verges were broad and shorn neatly through the combined efforts of workers wielding long pangas like one-handed 9-irons and the many herds of goats, each under the guardianship of a boy yet to enter his teens. We reached our destination mid-afternoon. Archer's Post in itself has little to commend. To say that it has the sense of the frontier is to grace it with a certain status. But it was not for the Post that I was here but for the Reserves that sit along the banks of the Ewaso Nyiro: Samburu, Buffalo Spring and Shaba.



My Maasai guide in Karura Forest

The next morning, after breakfast of omelette, mandazis, watermelon and a fresh juice I could not identify, I was in Samburu watching a bustard vainly displaying for the mate that was nowhere to be found. Impala and oryx grazed on, unimpressed by the bird's ostentatious parading. I had deliberately eschewed the luxury safari camps with their laid-on game drives. The unpretentious little van, driven by Frederick, Luo pharmacist in his other life, was all mine with its panoramic view from below the elevated roof panel. My choice had initially been driven by my antisocial aversion to travelling in a group but also by my reluctance to spend money on creature comforts. But it was also vindicated as a posh Landcruiser came past while I was watching a herd of a dozen giraffes. Its seven seated occupants craned their necks and leant over, across and around each other to catch a glimpse of the rump of a distant elephant disappearing into the acacia thicket.

More than a dozen giraffes shared a meal on the riverbank foliage. The calves splayed their legs to drink from the river whose level was almost perceptibly falling. They then trotted after their colleagues who had crossed towards our vantage point. Reaching that further bank, they all stopped and, seeming to change their collective mind, chased each other back to the far side. Giraffes appear as if they must be awkward and gangly on their spindly legs and their bodies appear almost small, sprouting long limbs and a tiny head up high at the end of the neck. But from closer one appreciates their bulk. As the group skittered back through the low water, their running was paradoxically rapid yet seemingly in an elegant slow motion. Stranger still is to see them contentedly munching through the acacia trees, wrapping their black tongues around needle-like thorns the size of grandma's knitting pins.



Female elephants encircling the babies

It is perhaps the elephants that are the highlight of Samburu. The previous year I had sat for hours with Caleb, my driver and ex-tracker for trophy hunters, perched atop the riverbank while more than eighty elephants - bulls, calves and cows - variously bellowed, play-fought, courted, wallowed and splashed in the mud and water and at the forest edge on the far bank. This time we were closer still. We had stumbled on a small group resting in the shade of a thicket. The sand here was sharp and glassy and, as we began to move off, the van bogged down to the rear axle. We could do nothing but wait in the sun for the group to amble away whenever the two babies chose to wake from their afternoon nap. After an hour or so the little ones stretched to their feet and the compact protective circle of elephants eased. The matriarch wandered off and, in single file, the herd followed after her with surprisingly silent footsteps. Half an hour later, a vehicle, brightly labelled with the emblem of a safari camp, turned up with passengers vainly searching for a glimpse of elephant. It seemed churlish to tell them that I had had the pleasure of spending more than an hour with them not twenty metres away.

Buffalo Spring is just across the river. For the animals, it is just another part of their range. It appears from a distance to be more lush than Samburu but this is an illusion. Under foot it is all gravel, sand and rock and the tussocks of drying

grass push up hopefully. After all, here I was at the edge of the Chalbi Desert (Travel Log 91, 30-39). Giraffe were eating from the treetops here, too, and gerenuk antelopes were standing on their hind legs stretching their own long necks as high as they could reach. The elephants had by now all crossed over the river but a family of five cheetahs, two adults and three cubs, was taking refuge from the sun in the shade of trees festooned with weaver bird nests. A couple of vehicles came and went but we stayed for an hour watching the cubs' desultory play. Mostly, the adults stayed alert, scanning the savannah for small antelope or something else that might be tasty.

Like his colleague of last year, Frederick would sometimes lurch off the track seemingly of his own accord. But this time, rather than finding a lion or a gerenuk, as the sun went down he only found a hidden sandy gully. The van drove itself down into the sand until its steel bumper was buried and one of the rear wheels was in the air. Embarrassed, Frederick struggled manfully but unsuccessfully, and it required the cheerful help of two Samburu morans to get us out with a scream from the engine and clouds of sand, dust and gravel. With an insouciance that would have impressed Victorian explorers, the honeymoon couple from London in the warriors' vehicle watched on, each with a cold Tusker lager from out of their icebox.



Cheetah on the watch for prey



The moran rescue service



In Britain, we take our arcane rituals for granted and as normal – even Morris dancing and Sunday afternoon cricket – but travel forces one to consider customs which appear bizarre or even cruel to our sensibilities. Nevertheless, in their environmental context they may have important community or even survival value. I think I now understand the rituals I had watched in Ethiopia where the young men of the Hamar people whip willing young women and those of the Himba with their tradition of polygamous temporary spouses for travellers

- which was not availed to me. But female genital mutilation (FGM), as well as circumcision of boys, is common here and more difficult to understand.

My lodging at Archer's Post was the Waso Camp run by the impressive matriarch, Rebecca Lolosoli. In addition to the camp for travellers, she leads the way in providing a refuge village for girls and women fleeing FGM, forced marriage or domestic abuse. And she also supports a number of women raped by British soldiers who are, as a



Samburu women leading their own lives in umoja

consequence, ostracised and abandoned by their families and communities without recompense from the Army. One can visit the women's village, Umoja, and I did so with some trepidation as I have always thought that such cultural displays smack of exploitation and voyeurism. But, being the only visitor, I could ask all my questions and really begin to understand the courage and resourcefulness of Rebecca and her ladies. In this safe and secure village, the women have nurtured a truly communal and independent society. They deserve our support.

Turkana tribesmen, for example, had lately stolen their small herd of cattle and the local police, despite their rifles, could not help. In the village, the women make the traditional and spectacular beaded ushanga jewellery by hand. It is very similar to that of the Maasai with whom the Samburu share the Nilotic Maa language. Christine, my guide for the morning, explained that half of the proceeds go to the woman who made the item bought and the other half adds to the community fund supporting basic facilities and health services and education. In the little school, infants-age children brought up speaking Maa in their bomas have their Swahili polished and begin learning English. The village, no tourist trap, is a self-supporting haven: Umoja, after all, translates as "unity".

The next day we briefly travelled further north to the foothills of Mount Ololokwe. Frederick had, till then, never ventured further north than Archer's Post and I was a little taken aback when he asked me if it was safe! An armed escort can be de rigueur for the adventurous few who trek up the mountain, but I wished only to see it from a little closer as a massif rising out of the distant haze. On the verge, a boy dressed in a vivid red wrap and golden scarf, adorned with ushanga at the wrist and forehead, and sporting a broad-bladed knife, watched

over the family's goats. We were shortly back and jolting, lurching and bumping across Shaba Reserve. Candidly, Shaba was something of a disappointment to me in there being fewer signs of wildlife and the tracks are even rougher than is the norm in savannah reserves. The "highlight" was enlisting the muscle power of eight Park rangers who put aside their assault rifles to push us out of another sand-trap. After deploying his troops, the burly, laughing sergeant, whose uniform gilet was festooned with extra magazines, told me he planned soon to take a break from hunting poachers and visit his friends in Blackburn! All the while we were watched by a short-toed snake eagle.

It is tempting to think that a week in a van taking pictures is a restful past-time. It certainly is not. Sitting gripping on to any convenient fixture while the van bounces, sways and bumps over every boulder requires more than a little stamina. And then, all in temperatures above 30C, there is constantly standing up and sitting down poking a heavy 500mm zoom lens through the roof or swapping it for the shorter one. Still, there is always the welcoming thought of the cold Tusker (£2 a half litre!) waiting back at the camp.

This is one rhino safe from poachers





What do those eyes reveal?

My visit around Archer's Post was over and, with an afternoon to fill before a 03.00 am return flight, I dropped in to Nairobi's National Park which, uniquely, sits in the very outskirts of the capital city. I had been disappointed with my pictures of lions the previous year in the Maasai Mara. It had been disappointing that on this trip, too, I had seen nary a one nor a rhino. But the Nairobi Park provided that last minute consolation with a lion and a pair of rhinos, the last wild animals of my journey.

I must express thanks to Caleb, Frederick, Nailantei and Christine who guided and educated me, cheerfully putting up with my many and often intrusive questions and my requests to be driven into inaccessible places. This was a self-arranged and economy photo-safari and cost all-in about £2,500 contrasting with the twice as much or more of a commercial group safari. If Members wish to know more of the logistics, they can ask directly via my website, www.timrubidge.com. However, I should add that I have no connection with, nor interest in, any commercial company or undertaking. I can make no warranted recommendation but will be happy to share my experience.

Africa is closer, more accessible and even more rewarding than you might think.

RPS Travel Group Trips 2025

PHOTO CREDIT: PATRICIA MACKEY

Northern Ireland

Monday 16 June 2025 - 4+ nights

Organised by the RPS Travel Group

More detailed information on this trip can be found on the RPS Website rps.org/groups/travel

Cost

Direct payment of hotel (approx £500 for 4 nights) and flights, plus all food and subsistence. Pre trip costs payable to the travel group will be for a Black Taxi Murals Tour and to hire of a mini bus for two excursions outside of Belfast (to the City of Derry and the Kingdom of Down area.

Activities will be suggested for the days spent in Belfast. Group dinners can be arranged.

If you are interested in this future Travel Group trip please email Patricia Mackey to help with planning arrangements. editortravel@rps.org

Belfast and Beyond

Draft Itinerary

Day 1: Belfast Murals, entries & pubs (Black Taxi Tour*)

Day 2: Kingdom of Down area (Mini Bus*)

Day 3: Derry - Walls and Bogside (Mini Bus*)

Day 4: Titanic, the Docks and St George's Market.

The order of the proposed activities is still being developed. Costs of additional activities are indicative. Finalised information will be available on the RPS Travel Group website in September 2024.

PHOTO CREDIT: PATRICIA MACKEY

The RPS Travel Group & You

Forthcoming events

Events are advertised on the website, e-news, Facebook and via specific broadcasts from the Travel Group.

SHARE & CHAT - 15 September 2024

TRIP 8-11 October 2024 -
Photographing the Elan Valley

WORKSHOP 28 October 2024 -
Savernake Forest with Jeremy Walker

SHARE & CHAT - 17 November 2024

Travel Group AGM - 17 May 2025

TRIP 2025 - Northern Ireland (June 2025)

****HOLD THE DATE****

11-12 October 2025

Travel Group Autumn **EVENT**

Find out about upcoming events

[rps.org/groups/travel/
future-travel-group-events/](https://rps.org/groups/travel/future-travel-group-events/)

Savernake Forest in Autumn, October 28th 2024



with Jeremy Walker.

The Savernake Forest is a captivating, ancient woodland located near Marlborough in Wiltshire. As one of the oldest forests in the country, it offers a rich and diverse environment for photography. Whether you're capturing its ancient trees, (several are over 1000 years old), exploring its hidden pathways, or observing its wildlife, the forest offers opportunity for every photographer. Shooting the forest on a golden, crisp autumnal day is a truly enchanting experience. With its diverse tree species and sprawling landscapes, the forest transforms into a vibrant tapestry of colours during the autumn months.

The cost - from £60

Book via RPS Website event.rps.org

Photographing the Elan Valley 8-11 October 2024



Three days in one of Wales' most beautiful areas will provide opportunities for a wide range of photographic styles and interests - from the dams and the landscape around, through birdlife to the night sky.

Led by an experienced Travel Group member, who knows the area well, and based at the Elan Valley Hotel within the Elan Estate with exclusive use of the hotel, this time in mid-Wales offers an opportunity for many different types of photography.

The hotel has 9 rooms, most are double or twin, so can be either sole occupancy or shared. There will be a reduction for shared rooms.

The cost - £650 - includes half board accommodation and all activities.

Book via RPS Website event.rps.org

RPS AV Group Event - 28 & 29 September 2024

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2024 NAVC
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Bryan Stubbs ARPS
Tony Collinson LRPS DPAGB
Jeff Mansell CPAGB/AV

<https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/navc/>

28 & 29 September, 2024
LEEDS Trinity University

The RPS Travel Group is awarding a trophy for an AV that excels in its depiction of Travel Photography.

For more information about this event visit the AV Group via the RPS Website rps.org/groups/audio-visual/navc/