

o u t d o o r
FOCUS

the quarterly journal of the OWPG | **summer 2018**



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From the editor...

David Taylor

One swallow doesn't make a summer, but spotting the first hosepipe ban story of the year is surely a good indication that summer is finally here. It's not all good news of course. Clear blue skies and a blazing sun aren't ideal conditions for aesthetically pleasing photography, for instance. But the warmth and long days of summer are welcome nevertheless.

In this issue of OF we say hello to two new OWPG members, explore the intricacies of current copyright law and how it affects photographers, talk to Michael Gove about his role as Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and discover the importance of a Mr Fixit when in the Himalaya.

If you'd like to contribute to Outdoor Focus please send an email with your article idea to me at davidtphoto@gmail.com. The copy deadline for the autumn edition of OF is 15 August.

1 JUN	Sunrise time 04.48 Sunrise direction 52°	1 JUL	Sunrise time 04.47 Sunrise direction 50°	1 AUG	Sunrise time 05.24 Sunrise direction 59°
	Sunset time 21.08 Sunset direction 309°		Sunset time 21.20 Sunset direction 310°		Sunset time 20.48 Sunset direction 301°
15 JUN	Sunrise time 04.42 Sunrise direction 49°	15 JUL	Sunrise time 05.01 Sunrise direction 53°	15 AUG	Sunrise time 05.46 Sunrise direction 66°
	Sunset time 21.19 Sunset direction 311°		Sunset time 21.11 Sunset direction 307°		Sunset time 20.22 Sunset direction 294°

Sunset/Sunrise times and direction correct for London. Times for April 1 onwards are BST

Moon phases

Third Quarter 6 June	New 13 June	First Quarter 20 June
Full 28 June	Third Quarter 6 July	New 13 July
First Quarter 19 July	Full 27 July	Third Quarter 4 August
New 11 August	First Quarter 18 August	Full 26 August

Meteor showers
Delta Aquariids 27-28 July
Perseids 12-13 August



Summer's cover star Simon Whaley

Boats on Morston Creek, near Morston Quay, North Norfolk

Website | www.simonwhaley.co.uk

New members



Tom Fay

Tom is a British writer and teacher based in Osaka, and has been living in Japan for well over a decade.

Growing up in the hills of North Wales, the mountains of Snowdonia were his first outdoor 'love', and he still returns to walk there year after year. He has since hiked and climbed in many places including Scotland, Iceland, China, South Korea, New Zealand, the Himalayas and throughout every corner of Japan.

Tom writes mainly about travel and the outdoors for various media outlets, and is working on the first English-language guidebook to the Japan Alps and Mt. Fuji.

www.thomasfay.com



Adam Redshaw

Having started his love affair with the outdoors and walking, he took up geocaching almost ten years ago. With his new-found passion he wanted to read up on the activity and learn more and sought out a magazine. With no magazine available he launched his own! This gave him a way to combine his adventure with a love of photography and writing. Now he also does public speaking and is part way to getting approval as a drone operator recognised by the CAA.

Adam spends a lot of time traveling around the UK blogging and vlogging about all kinds of outdoor activities.

www.ukcachemag.com

Dorothy Unsworth (1928-2018)

Just ten months after the death of OWPG past President, Walt Unsworth was announced, his widow Dorothy has also died.

Although not a member of the Guild herself, it was Dorothy's unwavering support and encouragement that enabled Walt to devote so much time to Guild business. Having met on a school bus when they were both teenagers they married, raised two children, and enjoyed a long and devoted partnership. Walt might have been the 'front man' who became a successful editor, author and publisher, but a large part of that success was due to Dorothy's steady hand. She was his

rock. Quiet and unassuming she was the foundation upon which Walt built his career. It was Dorothy who acted as his chauffeur, driving him to and from his walks and climbs, who kept the home together when he was away, and when she retired from teaching, it was she who ran the Cicerone office in order that Walt could juggle his many other commitments. Dorothy would be at Walt's side at outdoor trade shows and the annual London Book Show, her warmth and gentle demeanour providing a homely counterbalance to the show's backdrop of business hype. To those of us who got to know her through Walt, Dorothy Unsworth was a loving motherly figure who emerged from the shadows with a welcoming smile that will not be forgotten.



Words Kev Reynolds
Photo Roly Smith

AGM

Details of this year's OWPG AGM weekend are now online: www.bit.ly/OWPG-AGM.

The weekend runs from Friday 12 October to Sunday 14. Accommodation for the weekend is the Simonsbath House Hotel, Simonsbath, Minehead TA24 7SH. (tel: 01643 831259, website: www.simonsbathhouse.co.uk.)

Activities planned for the weekend include a brief history of gin, a tour of Simonsbath with an Exmoor National Park guide, and a Dark sky presentation with Tim Wetherell, of Exmoor Stargazers.

An accommodation booking form can be downloaded via www.bit.ly/Simonsbath, the activities form using www.bit.ly/AGM-activities.



Making use of Oddities

Hamish Brown delves into his cabinet of curiosities...



Orcadian girls dressed as Clydesdale horses



Blackwater Reservoir's Celtic cross



Writers and photographers don't waste 'material' so, after decades of exploring Scotland, I had a fair collection of 'the weird and wonderful' encountered and it seemed natural to turn this into a book. I already had done a study of Scottish gravestones for the same reason. Not a few of the oddest of oddities proved to be in kirkyards.

I've twice-recorded people dying on April 31 and one (Kirkwall Cathedral) on February 30 – an error of the month it proved. And what of the lad George Ramsay whose stone by the Elephant Rock near Montrose notes, 'Born 1859. Died 1840'? The humour can be unintentional. In Perth a lady put the words 'Rest in Peace' at the top of her husband's stone then, at the foot, after his details, 'Until I come.' (I assume it was unintentional!)

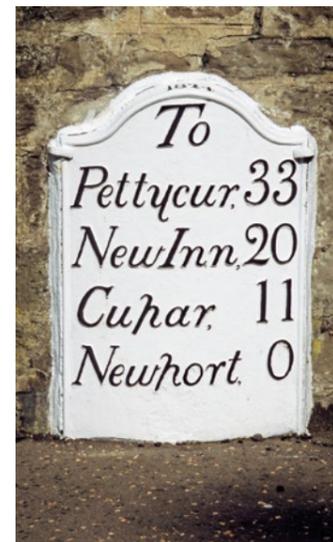
I had heard of the Boys Ploughing Match in Orkney so made a point of landing in St. Margaret's Hope on a third Saturday in August. On the Sands o' Wright miniature ploughs see the sands turned by boys in fierce competition. What was not expected was seeing the competition of the girls: dressing up as Clydesdale horses.

Off the north shore of the Blackwater Reservoir strong walkers will find a

Celtic cross, marked as monument, the map (OS Landranger 41: 265613). This very remote spot made the monument a real puzzle. I wasted many hours not finding out. *Years* later in a glory hole of a shop in Stromness in Shetland I came on a book where his story was told in execrable doggerel, worthy of McGonagall. (When I reached the end of stanza seventeen I found it was by McGonagall.) 'Friends of humanity, of high and low degree, / I pray ye all come listen to me; / And truly I will relate to ye, / The tragic fate of the Rev Alexander Heriot Mackonochie'. The poor man had had some sort of breakdown and was visiting the Bishop of Argyle when he disappeared when out on a walk. Quite a story of searching the wilds – in 1887.

Crimond is a village on the A90 Fraserburgh to Peterhead road and is most famous for the tune to which Psalm 23 is often sung. The oddity however is the kirk's clock, inscribed 'The hour is coming' which takes on some irony as the face shows an hour of 61 minutes. The last 5 minutes marking was inadvertently given 6, and when corrected in 1949 there was such an outcry the mistake was reinstated.

When I lived in Kinghorn it was in a part of the town with the old River



Are we nearly there yet? Ferry slip milestone in Newport

Forth ferry port of Pettycur, a name which still appears on milestones across Fife to Newport on the River Tay. To make sure you have arrived at the ferry slip the stone shows, 'Pettycur, 33...Newport, 0'. My local museum in Kirkcaldy has a collection of furniture made of coal. (Queen Victoria bought some.) But Fife's best curiosity is Britain's oldest Via Ferrata (a claim falsely made for some more recent efforts). This has pegs and wires and cut-out bucket steps round the cliffs of Kincaig Point. I'd visions of Victorian ladies in their long skirts and unethical hats on the wires but it proved to be a 1929 creation. The date was finally cleared when an old lady telephoned and explained that she, as a young girl, had helped drag the chains along the sands from Elie.

Perhaps my favourite oddity has to be the Great Polish Map of Scotland, a memorial made by Polish people to their wartime Scottish partner. The HQ of their forces was at what is now the Barony Castle Hotel at Eddleston, near Peebles. Imagine a football-pitch-sized oval sunk six foot in the ground containing a scale model of Scotland, the model's landscape surrounded by water for the 'sea'. Over the years this became overgrown and forgotten but,

rediscovered, has had immense labour by volunteers to see it restored. In May 2018 it has an 'official' opening with the Polish Ambassador, Scotland's First Minister and other bigwigs present. Curious? Go to www.facebook.com/mapascotland; www.mapascotland.org.

Incidentally, taking a gravestone addicted friend to see 'Mapa Scotland', I diverted to Temple where the unique ruined Templar Church graveyard had an obelisk to a Rev James Goldie on which his will is described in great detail.

And, having started with graveyards, let me end with quite the oddest inscription I've seen. Every word of what follows is on a table stone in a wee cemetery below Esha Ness in a remote corner of the Shetland Mainland. I feel quite sorry for Laurence Tulloch. (A few years later he moved shop to Aberdeen.) The stone is to a Donald Robertson who died in 1848.

'He was a peaceable, quiet man and to all appearances a quiet Christian. His death was very much regretted which was caused by the stupidity of Laurence Tulloch in Clothister who sold him nitrate instead of Epsom Salts by which he was killed in the space of five hours after taking a dose of it.'

These notes are based on Hamish's book: *The Oldest Post Office in the World and Other Scottish Oddities* published by Sandstone Press. Also available from Sandstone Press are his first three classics: *Hamish's Mountain Walk* (the Munros in a single trip); *Hamish's Groat's End Walk* (the first foot-link of the highest summits of Scotland, England, Wales & Ireland, and their 3000ers – a pre-technology period piece now); and *Climbing the Corbetts*. Most recently published, *Walking the Song*, collected articles etc from a lifetime of people, places and experiences. He has also edited: *Tom Weir, an Anthology* for Sandstone Press.

Gallery

This month's theme:
Rock around the clock



RUDOLF ABRAHAM / Lofoten islands, Norway

Mountains above the Reinefjord, in the Lofoten islands, in Norway's far north – one of the most beautiful landscapes I know. The buildings in the foreground are rorbuer (wooden fishermen's cottages). This was taken several years ago, on my first visit to Lofoten – evenings were spent chasing northern lights, daytimes were spent photographing astonishing white sand beaches, or (as in this case) photographing and generally enjoying the view from the wooden terrace of the cottage I was staying in. For this shot I used an old, manual focus 16mm fisheye (Nikkor 16/3.5 to be precise), with the horizon line placed across the centre of the frame to minimise distortion.

www.rudolfabraham.co.uk



MARK GILLIGAN / Bow Fell

I love Bow Fell in the lakes. I don't know why I just do.

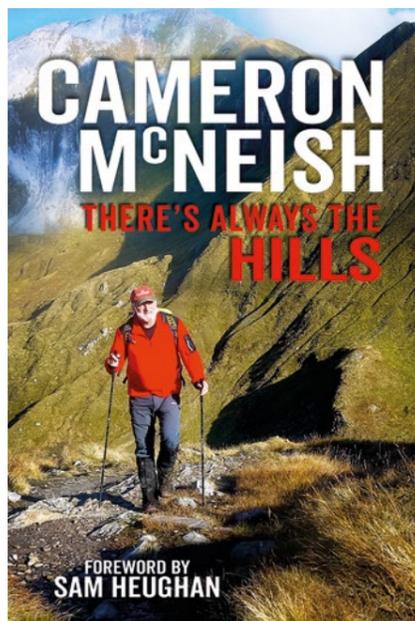
So distinctive, this impressive lump of pointy rock towers above the Upper Esk. Yet view from the Langdale's and it almost assumes an anonymity. I had wanted to capture a shot of it, at dusk when the light 'letter boxes' just below the summit.

It actually took me several years to get this which included many trips sat on Birker Fell. For me it was worth all the wait.

www.wastwaterphotography.co.uk

Next issue's theme **Where the wild things are**

Book reviews *Roly Smith*



There's Always the Hills

Cameron McNeish
Sandstone Press, £19.99 (hb)

Head the one about the Scotsman, the Welshman and the Englishman? Well if you haven't you don't know much about the history of *The Great Outdoors* (the magazine, that is).

They – Cameron McNeish, Peter Evans and Roger Smith – worked together on the title for several years after McNeish became editor in 1990. The strange story of how that came about is related in McNeish's revealing autobiography.

McNeish was a keen rock climber at the time and editor of *Climber*, but was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the way the sport was going. "Climbing walls were being built all over the country and many climbers were treating them like gyms," he writes. "Others had virtually given up climbing outside and, along with the explosion of climbing walls, inevitably came competition climbing."

So after he and Evans had enjoyed a glorious autumn afternoon's climbing on the Etive Slabs on Beinn Trilleachan in 1989, Evans, then editor of *The Great*

Outdoors and admittedly a better climber than McNeish, jokingly suggested that maybe they should swap jobs.

The rest, as they say, is history. McNeish became the campaigning editor of *The Great Outdoors* in 1990 and transformed it into the serious hillwalking and backpacking magazine it is today.

McNeish's honest and sincere autobiography is filled with the names of the people who have influenced his life – from John Muir and Henry Thoreau to Chris Brasher (who gave him the title), Tom Weir and Bill Murray.

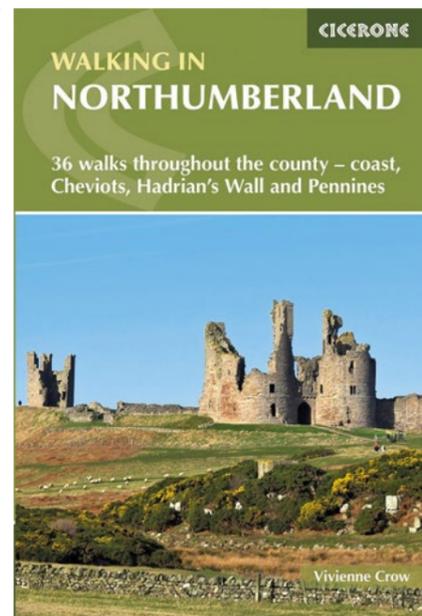
But the interesting personal narrative of how McNeish graduated from a promising junior athlete and later youth hostel warden into one of Scotland's most respected outdoor voices is interrupted by detailed route descriptions of some of the long walks he has completed. These range from expeditions through the great inselberg mountains of Torridon and the 'Rough Bounds' of Knoydart, to a proposed Scottish National Trail from the Borders to Cape Wrath and treks through the Alps, Jordan and the Himalayas.

McNeish's transformation from magazine editor to TV personality is thoroughly explored but in the final analysis, it is his enduring love of and respect for the Scottish mountains which shines through on every page. His final advice, particularly apposite after an acute foot arch problem was eventually diagnosed: "Go and enjoy (the hills) while you can, before age and infirmity rob you. Love and respect them and they will be kind to you, offering far more than you can give."

Walking in Northumberland

Vivienne Crow
Cicerone Press, £12.95 (pb)

Northumberland has been described as England's Empty Quarter, but there can be few other counties with as much history crammed into every corner. From its glorious



castle-crowned coast to Hadrian's Wall snaking across the neck of England, the past is close to the surface wherever you may wander.

Add to that the wild, rugged landscapes of The Cheviots, the Simonside Hills and the desolate north Pennines, Northumberland surely has something for everyone.

So this thorough and comprehensive updating and revision of Alan Hall's previous Northumberland title for Cicerone, first published in 1998, is especially welcome. And with such a prolific and knowledgeable guide as Vivienne Crow, you know you can't go far wrong.

The new guide is up to the usual high standard we expect of her and of her publishers. Clear, Ordnance Survey mapping is matched by the author's crisp and informative prose, making this the ideal companion to walking in the Empty Quarter.

The only blot on the Northumberland landscape – the enormous regimented forestry of Kielder – is generously afforded five walks. But only the 12-mile Deadwater and Peel Fell ramble escapes from the ugly scum of forestry surrounding the reservoir to give you a real taste of GM Trevelyan's "land of far horizons."



Kinder Scout: The People's Mountain

Ed Douglas and John Beatty
Vertebrate Publishing, £19.95 (pb)

Kinder Scout is probably the most walked-on mountain in Britain, chiefly because of its geographical situation as the highest ground between the teeming industrial cities of Sheffield and Manchester.

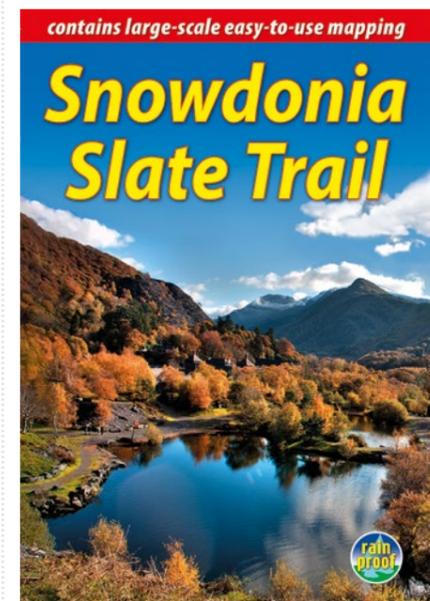
But it's true to say that most walkers either love or hate Kinder. The sainted Alfred Wainwright certainly fell in to the latter category, but many others, including the authors of this long-awaited book, find the sense of freedom given by its unique mix of bleak blanket bog and diadem of stunning gritstone outcrops irresistible.

So this sumptuous if rather unwieldy new offering from Vertebrate is very much a hymn of praise to the Peak's highest summit. But it is not so much the story of "the people's mountain" promised by the title, but much more of a personal testament by the author and photographer about what Kinder means to them.

Beatty's moody and magnificent photographs are grouped together in sections in a rather old-fashioned, 1950s style, and Douglas's text, which takes the form of a backpacking journey across the plateau with many distractions, is presented in solid, hard-to-read, blocks of text.

Of course, Kinder is assured an iconic status in the history of the fight for access as being the scene of the celebrated Mass Trespass of 1932 and this event is covered

in a revisionist light. But the outstanding work of the National Trust and the Moors for the Future Partnership in restoring Kinder's blanket bogs gets scant mention. There is more vegetation and wildlife on Kinder now than has been seen in thirty years and this surely is also a cause for celebration.



Snowdonia Slate Trail

Aled Owen
Rucksack Readers, £12.99 (pb)

This new, 83-mile circuit of the main Snowdon massif, from Bangor on the Irish Sea coast and reaching as far inland as Llan Ffestiniog, was developed over four years by the Cwm Penmachno Community Action Group.

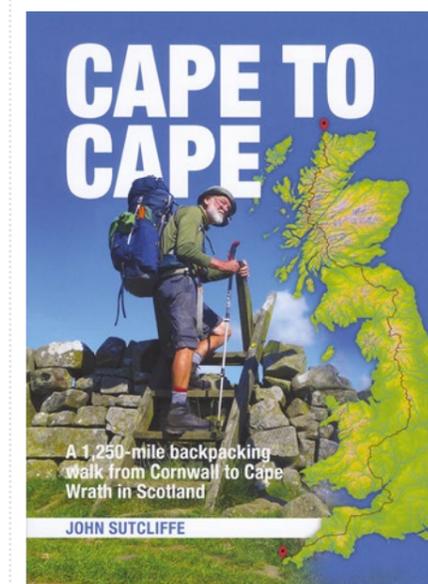
The distinctive blue-grey slate of Snowdonia which once roofed the world is the central theme, so it's appropriate the guide is written by a man born and raised near Bethesda and who lived in a remote quarry village for many years.

The slate quarrying industry is examined in detail, and the re-birth of the slate-tip surrounded village of Blaenau Ffestiniog, sadly but understandably excluded from the Snowdonia National Park when it was set up in 1951, is celebrated,

along with many other attractions along the route, including the great slate galleries of Dinorwig and the Ffestiniog Railway.

It could equally be called the Slate Sculpture Trail with stunning structures at places like Blaenau Ffestiniog, on the access road to Penrhyn quarry in Nant Ffrancon and at the end of the trail in Bethesda.

But the most lasting monument must be to the nearly 3,000 slate workers who toiled, often in appallingly-dangerous underground conditions, and who made such an important contribution to the landscape and culture of this part of North Wales.



Cape to Cape

John Sutcliffe
Vertebrate, £17.99 (pb)

Exploration geologist John Sutcliffe, who'd spent the last few years in Peru, was fast approaching his 70th birthday, and was longing for the hills of home.

So he planned this new route, a blistering 1,250 miles from Cape Cornwall through Wales, the Pennines, Southern Uplands and the west of Scotland, to Cape Wrath at the north-westerly point of the

continues overleaf...

mainland, using where possible the network of long distance trails.

The choice of his route, as might be expected, was heavily influenced by geology. Not for him, for example, was the dreary moorland underlain by the “dreary” Caithness Sandstone, which would have taken him to the more traditional far northern finishing point of John O’Groats.

Instead, he plumped for the much more interesting geology of Ardgour, Knoydart, Torridon and Sutherland in the North West Highlands to finish at the ancient cliffs of twisted gneiss and layered sandstones of Cape Wrath, which he describes as providing “a very dramatic and abrupt end” to his long walk.

And he decided to start his 100-day backpacking trek not from the traditional but over-populous Land’s End, but from the wild and beautiful black slates and haunted tin mines of Cape Cornwall.

There was, of course, also the irresistible attraction of linking Britain’s only two true capes – which incidentally gave him a catchy title for his book!

Illustrated by the author’s own photography, at first glance this seems like a “what-I-did-on-my-holidays” diary. But beneath that it tells the story of one man’s journey to reconnect with his hills of home.



The Mountain Hut Book

Kev Reynolds
Cicerone, £14.95 (pb)

Who better than veteran mountain trekker Kev Reynolds to expand on the joys of staying in a mountain hut? This latest celebration from Cicerone is a worthy companion to Phoebe Smith’s *Book of the Bothy*, a compendium of British bothies published in 2015.

But in this new book, the

author doesn’t just stick to the better-known mountain huts of the Alps, although they are pretty comprehensively covered by a directory of Alpine huts, profiles of 10 of his favourites, and outlines of 10 hut-to-hut walking tours.

Reynolds also mentions bothies, huts and lodges way beyond the Alps, extending to the Himalaya, the Pyrenees, the Atlas Mountains of Morocco and even to the Appalachians and Canadian Rockies.

So what is the attraction of staying in a hut, where the accommodation can range, as the author rightly states, from hovels to hotels? Reynolds says he’s with Guild president Chris Bonington, who describes the: “...anticipatory excitement in a crowded hut, in its Babel of different languages, chance encounters with old acquaintances swilling wine and coffee, the packed communal bunks and the intensity of the early morning start.”

The “unspoken mystique” that huts were not for ordinary mountain walkers is dispelled by the author, and hopes his book will unravel some of this mystery, and illustrate “...the way in which mountain huts can be truly sociable places in which to spend a night or two in the most magical of locations, to enjoy wild nature at its very best, with spectacular views and a peace unknown in the valleys.”

But just as photography has changed, so has copyright law. There have been three revisions in the last 100 years – in 1911, 1956 and 1988. Each time the law was updated, changes were made to copyright ownership and copyright duration.

But, good news! Under the the *Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988*, artists and photographers enjoy the most creator-friendly copyright legislation to date.

Who owns the copyright?

Well, it depends on when the photograph was taken. Before the 1988 law, photographers didn’t always own the copyright in their work automatically. In the previous copyright laws, if the photograph was commissioned by someone, it would be the commissioner – not the photographer – who owned the copyright in that photograph.

The 1911 law also had a provision that the person or company who owned the negatives – remember those? – at the time they were made was ‘considered to be’ the author of the photograph.

Copyright reform in 1988 changed this, recognising the importance of rights staying with creators. Since the 1988 law, copyright is now owned generally by the person who created the work, or by an employer if the work is created in the course of employment.

How long does copyright last?

For photographs taken after the 1988 Act became law – on 1 August 1989 – copyright will last for the life of the creator plus seventy years. But many photographers may have works produced under the previous copyright regime. The previous laws only gave a copyright term of fifty years after the photograph was taken. To deal with this shift, the law made extra provisions depending on factors such as whether the photos were published, or the date the photographer died.

If you are a photographer, or the beneficiary of a photographer, and the photographs were taken before 1989, you can figure out when copyright expires based on the following, issued by DACS (www.bit.ly/DACS-copyright):

Photographs taken on or after 1 January 1996

These are automatically protected for the life of the photographer plus seventy years.

Photographs taken on or after 1 August 1989 but before or on 31 December 1995

These were originally protected under the 1988 Act for the life of the photographer plus fifty years. Copyright in these works has now been extended by the 1995 Regulations and are now protected for the life of the photographer plus seventy years.

Photographs taken between 1 June 1957 and 31 July 1989

The length of copyright protection for photographs created in this period depends on whether they had been published as at 1 August 1989.

(a) Photographs published before 1 August 1989

Where the photographer died more than twenty years

before publication, copyright will expire fifty years after first publication. In all other cases, copyright will expire seventy years after the death of the photographer.

(b) Photographs which remained unpublished as at 1 August 1989

Where the photographer died before 1 January 1969, copyright expires on 31 December 2039. In all other cases, copyright will expire seventy years after the death of the photographer.

Photographs made before 1st June 1957

These photographs were originally protected for a period of fifty years from the end of the calendar year in which they were taken (regardless of whether they were published).

If the photograph was still in copyright as of 1 July 1995 however, the period of copyright was extended to the life of the photographer plus seventy years. If copyright protection had expired before 1 July 1995, there was still the chance to “revive” the photograph. An eligible photograph would then be protected by the new term, i.e. the photographer’s life plus seventy years.

DACS and Payback

All the above is based on information issued by the Design and Artists Copyright Society. Any ‘photographic’ Guild member who is not already subscribed to DACS should rectify that as soon as possible. It’s no big deal and will earn you cash in the form of what they call ‘Payback’.

Payback is an annual scheme run by DACS which distributes royalties to visual artists and estates for the re-use of their copyright-protected work in UK books, magazines and TV programmes.

It’s worth it! In 2017, 38,000 artists received a share of over £4 million.

Copyright advice for members

As a Copyright Licensing or Artist’s Resale Right member of DACS you can take advantage of their free copyright advice service for these members.

Disclaimer The content of this article is offered as a general guide to the issues surrounding copyright and is not intended to apply to individual circumstances. It does not constitute legal advice, it is not a substitute for independent legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. You should seek specialist advice for any specific circumstances.

This article is prepared (with permission) using material supplied by DACS, 33 Old Bethnal Green Road, London E2 6AA. Tel: 020 7336 8811; www.dacs.org.uk. It is drawn from an original DACS Newsletter feature *Copyright uncovered: What do I need to know about copyright and photographers?*



I don’t consider myself to be a professional photographer, just a photographer who takes pictures – hopefully to a professional standard – to accompany my words.

But I still have a keen interest in protecting my pictures, not least because they provide income both for me, now, and my family once I’ve shuffled off into the sunset.

Things are changing in the photographic world. I’m

of an age that allows me to remember a time when the most popular camera was the Kodak Brownie, and the farthest anyone went for holidays was either Rhyl or the Isle of Man. Today, it may well be true that more photographs are taken on mobiles than on high-end cameras! I hesitate to suggest that any self-respecting professional photographer would use pictures taken on a mobile, but a couple of my Samsung pictures have already appeared in print... no self-respect, see.



Environmental Talk

Rob Yorke finds out if the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs can deliver his ambitions for the English countryside post-Brexit

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Rob Yorke, OWPG member and independent rural commentator, secured a wide-ranging interview on behalf of BBC Countryfile Magazine with Michael Gove on places he likes to walk, farming, rewilding, hen harriers, uplands, neonicotinoids, food imports, glyphosate, animal welfare, woodland, Defra and what the countryside might look like in 25 years' time. 'In between the lines, it's as interesting to note what this astute politician couldn't answer; as to the stuff he did answer in my interview' says Rob.

(Rob Yorke) Firstly, what are your personal connections to rural Britain and where do you love to walk?

(Michael Gove) Both sides of my family have connections to fishing and the sea and when I was growing up I would spend weekends in the countryside around Aberdeen. I'm particularly fond of a place called Cruden Bay, where you have Slains Castle, which helped inspire Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and that rugged coastline is dear to me. I'm very fond of Chobham Common in my Surrey constituency, which has wonderful heathland. Also, I quite like the big skies of East Norfolk. And I love east Somerset, an area of dairy farming, rolling hills – a classic West Country landscape.

You are the first secretary of state to address both Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) and its alternative the Oxford Real Farming Conference (ORFC). Why?

It's a bit like the Edinburgh Festival and the Fringe; the OFC is an established institution, bringing together some of the most thoughtful and progressive people, asking themselves questions about the future of food, farming and the countryside.

The ORFC represents those who are interested in a more organic approach, and what I found encouraging were those who don't have a farming background but who want to work on the land – often

in a small-scale way – to produce food for which there is a growing market. The other thing about ORFC is the sense of enthusiasm for the possibility of change and so the two complement one another, like a father and son (or Brian and Adam from *The Archers*).

Brexit is likely the end of land-based subsidies for farming, to be replaced by funding support for public goods. What results do you believe could be delivered?

There needs to be public investment in the countryside. We're consulting on a system whereby farmers/landowners/land managers are paid for public goods, and helped to provide food. The existing Common Agricultural Policy led to some perverse outcomes with a desire to just drive up yield, not thinking of the countryside holistically. A few trees in farmland is currently regarded as an impediment, detracting from the amount of subsidy received. But we know that trees in farmland contribute to soil health, to providing a habitat for biodiversity. It will also, and I don't apologise for it, make the countryside more beautiful. Provided the support is shaped in the right way, what we want to do is go with the grain of what the majority of farmers want to do, but also what the British public want and value in our countryside.

You recently said you'd like to 'return cultivated land to wildflower meadows or other more natural states' – that hints at roughing up or rewilding some of the land, while intensifying productivity elsewhere with possible increase in food imports and even food prices.

I think we can have a virtuous cycle. Graham Harvey in his book *Grass Fed Nation* makes the case of meadows being part of mixed farms producing high-quality food. And as a country we're increasingly moving in the direction of valuing quality and asking about

provenance, so that direction of travel is both in tune with what's good for the environment but also where the demand for food will be.

But, you're right, it's also the case that there are technological breakthroughs where we can increase productivity through precision techniques applied to the soil, meaning inputs are less, cost to the farmer is less, but productivity overall is greater.

The most progressive and best farmers can do more, yes, but in the remote uplands it's harder to do that.

There's a particular fragility to farming in the uplands and obviously there are very thoughtful people who've argued that when it comes to the uplands we should go for a sort of full-scale rewilding. My view is that there may be parts of the uplands that are suitable for rewilding. But it's also the case that there are other parts where we need to support traditional farming and I think it would be wrong for anyone who's responsible for our countryside to allow that type of farming to be threatened.

I took issue when you said in a previous interview: "there are no tensions between productive farming and care for the natural world" with one obvious tension being the use of agro-chemicals.

Yes, that's a fair point.

If agro-chemicals such as neonics are banned, as you've suggested, what's the balance, in the face of increasing crop disease, between regulation, innovation, investment in research and development?

We should be guided by the science. The science initially indicated that perhaps the EU were going too far on neonics – now we've got better scientific evidence, we need to go further. So far the science indicates that glyphosate does not have the harmful effects that some attribute to it, and it is a valuable tool in minimal

or no-till cultivation, so I'm behind its continued use. But in the future we may find different ways of developing crop protection, such as through advances in genetics. A more scientifically effective and precise approach towards chemicals should be encouraged within innovation aiming, ultimately, to enhance soil health.

We get very emotional about animal welfare whereas wildlife conservation is a completely separate issue. Should the Government take a stronger role in framing complex narratives, rather than leaving it to campaigners, charities, trade unions, NGOs and media?

Yes, I think so. These issues, quite understandably, always excite strong feelings. People are passionate about animal welfare, people care about our wildlife, so you're always going to have individuals and organisations who will articulate the case for action. But I do think Government's role should be to say these are assets that we value. We should take pride, as the Scottish Government has in fostering the reintroduction of the golden eagle, in encouraging the return of the beaver to British shores because they're not economic decisions, they're decisions about making our country a more attractive place from every point of view. The Government exists in order to make nations better places for their citizens, for the next generation.

The Hen Harrier Action Plan has recently involved Natural England issuing a trial licence for brood management. It's a complex subject for many people. Could the Government help frame this contentious issue?

Yes. I think that there is a role for Government but also more broadly the DEFRA family. We're very lucky in this department to have people who have chosen to work here because the issues the department deals with are issues

...we know that trees in farmland contribute to soil health, to providing a habitat for biodiversity

...they're decisions about making our country a more attractive place from every point of view



that they deeply care about. So one of the things I want to be able to do is to provide them with a platform to make a difference.

There was a Government U-turn seven years ago on the forest sell-off. Shouldn't the Forestry Commission, not Woodland Trust, be leading on large-scale planting such as the Northern Forest?

The first thing to say is that the Woodland Trust does a fantastic job and the Northern Forest is a great idea. But there's much more that all of us can do and we have an ambition as a government to plant 11 million trees in the lifetime of this parliament, and that will require action by the Forestry Commission, by landowners and...

Who's going to pay for that?
I've asked to look at what the existing incentives are and the existing impediments. And we're thinking of trying to support agro-forestry projects.

Money is tight and there are many Government departments demanding investment: NHS, education, housing etc. Does DEFRA fear its budgets being cut by the Treasury?

The Prime Minister has shown great leadership on environmental issues, not least the launch of the 25-year plan with the first speech by the Prime Minister on the environment for more than ten years. So we respect the Treasury, because every penny is taxpayers' money and we mustn't be profligate or wasteful. But we don't fear it, we think the Treasury understands the importance of investing in the environment, because you can't have a healthy economy without a healthy environment and we need to take a more responsible approach on everything from plastics to soils.

The trade deals that come out of Brexit will fundamentally shape how the UK

countryside looks. Is there nothing we can do until the trade deals come out?

Organisations, such as Natural England, are already working with landowners to restore habitats and enhance their management. As alluded to in the 25-year environment plan, we want to follow on from Sir John Lawton's recommendations to make space for nature, connect habitats at a landscape scale, which will ensure we can see wildlife return. Some of the countryside stewardship schemes are already returning farmland birds in numbers and also I'd like to think about how we can sensitively reintroduce and support native species.

In 25 years' time, if you were flying over the UK, how would you describe the changes you can see below?

What I hope you will see is more mixed farming, more livestock in parts of the country that we might not have seen in such numbers before, and we'll see a more varied landscape, so slightly fewer fields of cereal and significantly more grassland pasture, trees, hedgerows, copses and woods with more wildlife as a result. Heathland in a healthy condition and, along our coastline, restoration of the wetlands, which provide vital habitat to waders. And I hope that what we'll also see are people visiting, enjoying and appreciating the countryside and its natural beauty.

Rob interviewed the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under cover of a piece for *BBC Countryfile Magazine*. Rob has also been working on collaborative conservation projects, such as getting land managers to work closer together and being braver on saving curlew with habitat management alongside targeted wildlife management. He's due to interview the first female president of NFU – Minette Batters – at the Hay Festival on the 24 May and continues to seek dialogue with varied interests within a countryside about to undertake great change.

Bivvy Bower

James Forrest takes a walk on the wild side

'They are the best of nights: they are the worst of nights.' Fellow guild member Ronald Turnbull's observation on sleeping wild in his excellent *The Book of the Bivvy* got me thinking about my own somewhat hit and miss wild camping 'career.' Or is that mainly

miss? I jotted down some thoughts, as my brain nerve-endings sparked, and somehow this is what I ended up with: the seventeen stages of a (calamitous) wild camping adventure. Can anyone relate?

- 1 Arrive at your destination, full of energy and zest for life. 'We're off on an epic adventure!'
- 2 Spread out all of the outdoorsy gear you own around the car before stuffing it randomly into your selection of thirteen differently coloured dry bags.



- 3 Test the weight of your backpack. 'OMG. There is no way I'm carrying that up a mountain.'
- 4 Recklessly ditch gear that you later end up desperately needing. 'Can I get away with no poles for my tent?'
- 5 Set off with initial enthusiasm. 'This is actually not too bad.'
- 6 Five minutes later chronic back pain is kicking in.
- 7 Get absolutely destroyed by the driving rain, howling winds and sub-zero temperatures.
- 8 Spend hours searching for the perfect camping spot, only to run out of sunlight and settle for somewhere totally average. 'Right, it's a choice between that swamp, this sheep toilet or that boulder field.'
- 9 Set up tent (usually in the rain). Everything you own is wet.

- 10 Boil up a 'dinner' you probably wouldn't feed to your dog.
- 11 Sit and stare at a fire for four hours, absolutely mesmerised by the flames. Everything you own smells of smoke.
- 12 Have a horrendous night's sleep, during which you continually slide down your sleeping mat.



- 13 Wake up, drink four Nescafé 3-in-1 coffees, eat porridge (any other type of breakfast is strictly banned on wild camping trips) and then de-camp.
- 14 Daydream continually about a hot shower, warm bed and hearty meal.
- 15 Eventually arrive back at your car, looking dishevelled, weather-beaten, a shadow of your former self. 'I look, and feel, like a hobo.'
- 16 Head off feeling more than ready to return to civilisation.
- 17 Spend two minutes at home. All memory of the hardships disappears instantly and already you're romanticising the wild camping life - the wilderness, the fresh air, the freedom. 'When can I get out again?'

Some of the countryside stewardship schemes are already returning farmland birds in numbers...

Kev Reynolds meets Mr Fixit on the slopes of the Himalaya

If you're planning to organise a Himalayan expedition you'd be advised to get yourself a Mr Fixit, someone who knows his way around the mind-numbing bureaucracy of the East; someone who can hire a reliable crew of Sherpas, cook and porters, find fuel when there's no fuel to be had, and arrange a flight when all flights are booked; someone who knows who to know, where to go and what to do when things go wrong. And believe me, the one guarantee you can bet on in the Himalaya, is that something will go wrong. That's when your Mr Fixit proves his worth.

I found mine by sheer fluke. In the summer of 1994 I was making a crossing of the Ötztal Alps with my wife when we arrived one afternoon at the Braunschweiger Hut, perched on a rocky island on the edge of glaciers. Pushing open the boot room door the first person we saw was a Sherpa. I blinked twice, then gave him a Namaste. 'Where are you from?' I asked. 'Kathmandu,' he replied. 'No – where's your village?' 'In Solu district,' he said. 'Where in Solu district?' 'Some place called Junbesi.'

'Junbesi! Do you know Ang Chokpa?'

The Sherpa's eyes popped – 'How do you know Ang Chokpa?' So I told him: 'I stayed in his lodge last October!' And with that Kirken Sherpa and I began a friendship that has lasted more than twenty years, during which time we've made numerous expeditions together, and I've come to recognise him as the ultimate Mr Fixit. Find yourself in a tight spot in a dodgy location, and there's no-one better to be with; no-one better than he to find a solution to a problem; no-one more able to get you out of a hole, to turn disaster into triumph – as I know to my benefit.

He once chartered a plane to fly eight of us to a remote meadow where we were met by our twenty-five man crew who had taken two weeks to get there: two days and nights on a broken down bus, then on foot for twelve days – after which we made our way into the real back-of-beyond on the northern side of the Himalayan divide. After ten days our doctor went sick and had to return to Kathmandu. No chance of a rescue helicopter where we were, but within an hour Kirken had organised his evacuation with porters and Sherpa escorts. All ended well.

Another time we were heading for Kanchenjunga during the Maoist insurgency. Knowing our long bus journey to the trailhead was likely to be blocked by armed rebel gangs, he hired a tough Maoist supporter as our driver. As a result no road block held us up for more than ten minutes.

At the end of the expedition we'd arranged for a plane to collect us from the Suketar airstrip – then just a sloping meadow above the Tamur River. Clouds were down on the allotted day and without being able to see the meadow, the pilot turned back. We hoped he'd return next day, but that night the heavens opened and the airstrip was waterlogged. No plane could possibly land on that, but we were due to fly home in 24 hours and tension was rising. Somehow Kirken got hold of a satellite phone and called a young helicopter pilot who owed him a favour. We made it out just in time...

Kirken's brother-in-law joined us once for a trek to Everest. Tsewan was the strongest, fittest, most

able of all the crew, and he and Kirken made a perfect team, but one afternoon he collapsed with a heart attack. Fortunately we were able to get him to the first aid post at Pheriche where he was given oxygen while we called for a rescue helicopter. Meanwhile Kirken summoned friends and family in Kathmandu to arrange his hospital treatment until he could get back to take charge. He saved Tsewan's life.

One year Kirken and I made an exploration of Nepal's Farthest West with five of his crew to act as porters. It was not a commercial venture, for he and I shared costs throughout. As the only map available at the time missed out a whole valley system and at least one 6000 metre mountain, we decided to do without. As a result we were lost for days at a time. I mean, well and truly lost. And it was liberating!

We also ran out of food, but came to a poor grubby village a thousand miles from anywhere (so it seemed), where the locals were hospitable and generous in providing us with a feast of potatoes and boiled eggs. Surrounding us as we ate, they also gave Kirken a fever and me TB. Not that we knew it at the time, in fact my TB was not diagnosed for many years. But that's another story...

Days blurred into one as our journey continued. I became weaker, coughing and spluttering from dawn till dusk, but tended with care by my Sherpa friend and the lads who shouldered the heavy loads, we made it at last to our destination where, once again, my Mr Fixit managed to conjure up a flight to get us home.

Years later, my lungs shot, I thought my Himalayan days were over, but an email arrived from Kathmandu. 'Mugu to be open,' it read. 'Porters are hard to find there, but mules carry loads. Where mules can go, so can a horse. I'll get you one. When shall we go?'

Ah! Kirken the tempter, he knows me too well! Mugu was virtually the last of the untrod places and I could hardly resist. So gathering a few friends, my wife and I set off once more for Kathmandu where we were hung about with garlands of marigolds before heading for the lost land of Mugu. There, an unsuspecting horse was waiting to take me over a series of 4000 metre passes on my Himalayan farewell.

Only my Mr Fixit would have thought of that.

Kirken Sherpa

