

# Expressions

Conversations in landscape photography



JOURNAL 1

# Expressions

Conversations in landscape photography



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# JOURNAL 1

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**Journal** NOUN

A record of what you have done, descriptions or thoughts, written over a period of time.

I hear you ask, *"What is this journal all about?"* Reading the above definition is a good start. Photography in its simplest form is recording what is in front of us. By pressing the shutter, we collect a sliver of light, which in turn is a moment frozen in time. We then have to ask ourselves why we do this in the first place. There was that passing impetus that resulted in us placing a frame around a subject, excluding its surroundings, and making an exposure.

This leads us onto descriptions and thoughts, and it is here where the conversation begins. Our thoughts directly influence how we see any subject. They may be reflections on what we thought of a place before we arrived, or our individual response when the interaction took place, either way, they stir up emotion and connection. So where does that leave description? The final image could be regarded as the photographer's description. They present to us what they wanted us to see.

The journey of photography has several pivotal stages through which it passes. As mentioned, the moment the exposure was made, the creation of the image and the photographer's interpretation of that image. After this, the photographer's job is done. But thoughts and descriptions do not end there. We have to ask the question, do photographs speak to us or do we provide the photograph with our own description or interpretation?

This is an important factor to consider, and one which adds another dimension to photography. If we take a situation where three photographers visit a location and, more importantly, are free to photograph it in any way they choose, it is almost certain that what, and more importantly how they saw it, will result in very different images. The same applies to the viewer of photographs. Regardless of how the photographer has skilfully edited the image to portray the subject as they saw fit, the viewer can, and often will, form their own interpretation.

This is one of the wonders of photography. The translations of reality into different versions are infinite, and along with that, deeply fascinating, and this is where conversations begin. This journal, and the journals that follow, will invite thought, conversation and inspiration. As photographers, we often focus our efforts on getting to places, making compositions and then progressing to the finished image, but this is often where the journey stops. There may be sharing on social media or the entering of club competitions, but there should be more than that. We want to talk about locations and experiences, trials and tribulations, along with how and why photographers work in the way they do. These journals are for you to escape from the world around you, nestle into a world of other images, and form your own opinion. The journals will also be a celebration of the exploration in photography, an opportunity to see through other's eyes, and to sow seeds of thought into the minds of the reader.

We will be releasing four journals a year looking at work from varying places and environments, touching on technique and approaches, as well as discussing thoughts and opinions. The journals are for everyone and please feel free to share with fellow photographers wherever they may be. You can copy and share this link <https://www.aspect2i.co.uk/journal>.

Now, let the conversation begin...





# The end of the day for sunrise

*by Paul Gallagher*

# The end of the day for sunrise

by Paul Gallagher

I think it improbable that any of us do not adhere to, or occasionally practice the use of formulas in our work. It is almost impossible, as more often than not, we seek out the work of other practitioners as inspiration and consciously, or unconsciously, recollect a particular 'style' or essence in their work. At worst this can result in a photographer whose main pursuit is to create the same, and sometimes, in the very same locations.

The application of these formulas is first indelibly placed in our minds when we are learning our craft. If you refer to any beginners learning material it will set out the 80:20 rule or the rule of thirds for example. Whilst it is not a cardinal sin to apply these techniques, it is with equal measure often beneficial for us to discount them in the pursuit of creativity and originality in our work.



© Incoming Storm, Iceland by Paul Gallagher

Trends in photography come and go like tides. We don't have to cast our minds back too far to remember seeing the majority of coastal images whose waters were rendered silky smooth, often with a perfectly placed pier or groynes protruding from them. The introduction of high-density neutral density filters sent people running to the beach and another formula was born. Intentional camera movement and multiple exposure have, over the past few years, gained favour. Complex images and sometimes almost complete abstract creations, save for the occasional recognisable shape, are now ubiquitous.

There is, I believe, nothing at all wrong with any of the above, and I too have enjoyed many a happy hour pacing a beach seeking out the right foreground that I know will disappear into the ethereal smooth waters of the swelling sea. I have also gained immeasurable pleasure seeing woodlands I know intimately transformed into splashes of colour and shapes turned the literal into a new form of abstract expression.

Freedom of exploration is a 'rule' I endeavour to pursue in my own work, desperately trying to push back against the parts of my mind that are saying to me that it shouldn't be done that way. In short, I do not think there should be any 'rules' in any art. The word 'rule' should be replaced with 'guidance', and lightly applied like seasoning to a dish, too much of which, often spoils it all together.



© Approaching Storm, Sutherland, Scotland by Paul Gallagher

One formula that is almost endemic, pursued vigorously and is considered sacrosanct in landscape photography is photographing during sunrise and sunset hours. The 'Golden Hour' appears to be the elixir to any landscape photographer's concerns. Regardless of what the day can throw at you, if you get out there before the sun appears on the horizon, or equally, be ready to watch it dip below it at the end of the day, you will surely get a photograph that will continue to bring a ray of light into your collection of images.



© Sunrise, Yellow Mountain, China by Paul Gallagher

Many landscape photographers love dawn and dusk. The soft warm light and raking shadows that seemingly transform the ordinary into staggering beauty. There is a tangible excitement about going out in the dark, walking to your vantage point and setting up your gear, peering into the distance, gradually seeing the sky lighten and glow. The conversation of location and timing the night before is a precursor, followed by charging batteries and getting ready for the big exit the next morning under the cover of darkness. It is not a new or recent phenomenon at all. Photographing at this time of day has been used as a formula for decades and was certainly very useful during the times of slide film when the most popular Fuji Velvia only had a dynamic range of between 3 and 5 stops which dawn and dusk light offers. To try to photograph with slide film at any other times of the day was almost impossible due to the limitations of the film. Today we have much more freedom as many modern digital cameras have a dynamic range of up to 15 stops!! To landscape photographers, the 'golden hour' has become a ritual, a sacrament. It is an opportunity to grasp the very best of what the day can offer you, and it is one that must not be missed.

Open the pages of virtually any photography magazine, find the landscape section, and more often than not you are faced with images that have been taken at either end of the day. One of the obvious reasons for this is that light towards the middle of the day can be considered harsh, flat and direct.



© Vestrahorn, Iceland by Paul Gallagher

I believe it is a state of mind we have been trained to behold, but one which has two rather negative effects. Firstly, the presence of dawn or dusk light does not guarantee a good composition, and in fact, many photographers seem to be reliant on what the light is doing to create for them giving little consideration to the subject as they believe it will be rendered perfect simply because the photograph was made at dawn or dusk. I have seen literally hundreds of images over the years that, if analysed for creative content, structure and compositional balance, would be described as dreary if it was not for the warmth of a sunset. Yes, I do believe light alone can make a photograph appealing but it's what it is reflected from, the subject matter, that should play the most important role.

My second point is the often obstinate belief that after the sun has risen the pursuit of photography will become second rate as you are then working in inferior light that will render the landscape ineligible of exploration. I have known photographers to sit most of the day out patiently awaiting the sun to lower in the sky primed for the second of the day's chapters of workable light. To me, this mindful mantra is depriving many photographers of an abundance of opportunities merely because they are convinced of the outcome of their work using daytime light.





© Dark Woodland, Wester Ross, Scotland by Paul Gallagher

I have on many occasions been in the highlands of Scotland when the sky is a blanket of grey and a fine drizzle seems intent on dousing my clothing and kit. This is as about as far removed from a clear morning sunrise as can be imagined and is often viewed by landscape photographers as ‘terrible light’. No one is denying that these conditions are somewhat challenging, but when you allow yourself to see the subtle colours of soaked woodland grasses or the glisten of wet bark of a beech tree, then formulas begin to dissolve. Beauty is evidently all around us waiting to be ‘seen’.

There is one mantra I hold true. “Where there is light, we can make photographs”. The camera simply collects reflected light, and regardless of the angle of the sun or the conditions of the skies, we should allow ourselves to see the landscape for what it is. I have enjoyed the low clouds passing over the mountains of the Italian Dolomites bereft of a ray of sun and photographed the mountain spires in all their glory. I recall kneeling on the prairie lands of Montana beneath the searing heat in the middle of the day surrounded by brittle-dry grasses, beyond which was a collapsing schoolhouse sun-bleached over decades. If I had considered either of these situations inconceivable because of the light conditions I would have denied myself the photographs and the memories, they will support.



© The Italian Dolomites by Paul Gallagher

Call it prosaic or formulaic, but using the same approach can only serve to make your work repetitive which is fertile territory for dissatisfaction. As mentioned, it is a state of mind that offers comfort but should be challenged, and in turn, allow yourself greater freedom of expression. So, is it the end of the day for sunrise? I don't think it needs to be, but it should be put to bed sometimes and allowed a lie in.



© Abandoned School House, Montana, USA by Paul Gallagher



# The Italian Dolomites

*by Michael Pilkington*



# The Italian Dolomites

*by Michael Pilkington*

**T**his dramatic landscape is practically on our doorstep. Well, just a few hours flying time away. I have been going there since 2017 and have to say I never tire of it. In fact, my photographic spoils get richer and richer with every visit. This is because the light and weather are quite changeable. From one day to the next, or even one hour to the next, clouds can clear allowing the sun to cast rays of light upon the landscape. Clouds can be moody and turbulent, and as the mountains are so high (or the clouds so low) you are often witness to them swirling around the craggy peaks hiding them one minute, and then slowly revealing them next.

What sets this area apart for me is the ability to experience these dramatic peaks from every angle. You can take a car into the very heart of the mountains on mountain passes that consist of many switchbacks clinging to the vertical valley walls, below which, you can see down into the bowels of the valley floor many hundreds of metres away in the shadows where you began your journey. If this wasn't enough, taking a cable car to the very peaks provides you with the most exceptional sights. They literally are breath-taking, and it is difficult to control your excitement as you look through the viewfinder. The urge to just snap away, pointing your camera every which way, is very strong and you really have to take your time and consider what you are doing. A big vista will not just manifest itself as an awesome image, depth of field and composition are supremely important and can be easily overlooked in an adrenalin fuelled moment. Sadly, I have discovered the product of being over excited on more than one occasion!

Autumn is a good time to visit. This area is dominated by Larch and unlike their UK counterparts, they turn a vibrant orange as they ready for the winter snows. Silver Birch are also on the turn during this season offering brilliant yellows against the more mundane monoculture of conifers. The time of year and altitude means that you are often working with strong directional light that delivers moments to catch these trees gloriously back or side lit.

The Dolomites are a UNESCO World Heritage Site, meaning they are considered to be of 'outstanding universal value'. Of that I have no doubt, and as a landscape photographer it simply brings me joy to be in this truly awesome landscape.



© Italian Dolomites by Michael Pilkington





© Larch in Autumn Colours, Italian Dolomites by Michael Pilkington



© Lost in cloud, Italian Dolomites by Michael Pilkington



© Threatening Skies, Italian Dolomites by Michael Pilkington





© Fog over lake, Italian Dolomites by Michael Pilkington



© Italian Dolomites I by Michael Pilkington





© Italian Dolomites II by Michael Pilkington



© Silver Birch by Michael Pilkington



© Larch on Ridge by Michael Pilkington





© Italian Dolomites III by Michael Pilkington



© Italian Dolomites VI by Michael Pilkington





© Italian Dolomites VII by Michael Pilkington

# Featured Photographer: Chris Cullen

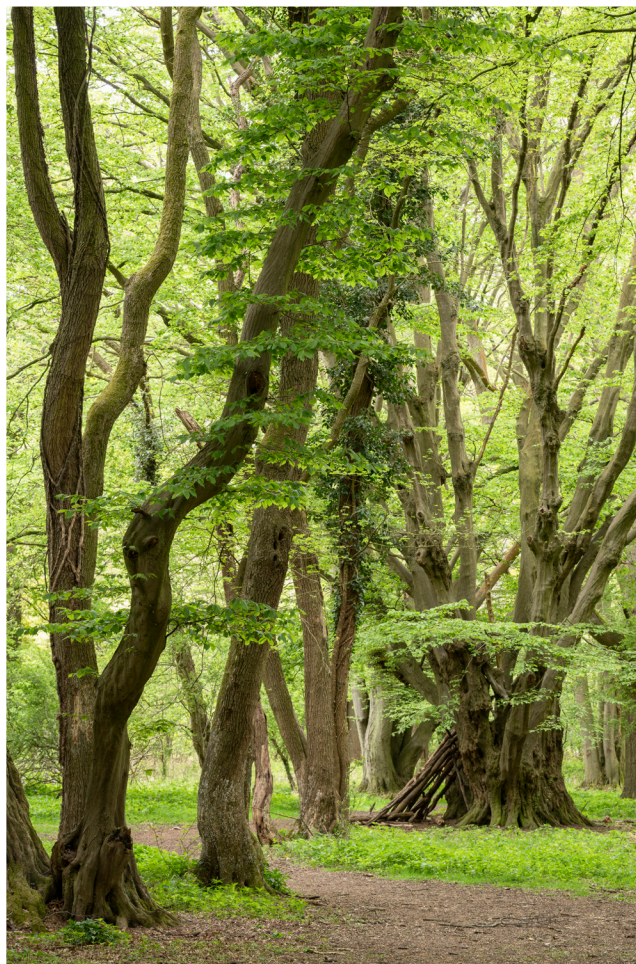
*Interview by Paul Gallagher*

## Chris Cullen

*Interview by Paul Gallagher*

As part of us all seeing through the eyes of other photographers, understanding what inspires them, and giving them the opportunity to share their experiences with us, this section will be about just that. We should embrace any opportunity to look at the work of others. It may be photography or even another art form, but seeing how they communicate and understanding the narrative in their work is always positive, progressive and seeds ideas that can become inspiring in our own photography.

Our first featured photographer is Chris Cullen. For many years Chris used photography as a means of escaping the busy day to day life of being a doctor. Now Chris has retired and dedicates much more time to his passion for landscape photography both in the UK and internationally. Through a series of explorative questions, we see how Chris changed direction in his landscape photography and developed an adoration for woodland photography.



© Narrow Leaf Limes by Chris Cullen



***When and how did you discover photography as a passion?***

My first interest in photography started when I was about 10. I was given an old Box Brownie camera and I still have a few of the negatives. I progressed through a series of cameras like anyone of my age probably did. I used a 126 format Instamatic for a few years, then a 35mm Zeiss Ikon.

It was my younger brothers deep love of photography that triggered me to look further. He told me about photographers like Bill Brandt, Ansel Adams etc. My own, deeper interest took off with a much easier to use Olympus compact and I shot a lot of transparency film. I visited the USA on a solo trip in 1981 and was blown away by the landscape in places like the Grand Canyon. Inevitably, I later bought a SLR which I used for 25 years until I switched to digital. A busy career combined with having a young family meant that my photography was very much put on the 'back burner' until about 15 years ago.

I have always loved the outdoors - particularly wild places. Landscape photography then evolved into a passion as I felt the need to record what I was seeing and experiencing in my outdoor adventures.



© Trees in Snow by Chris Cullen

***Woodland is often regarded as a difficult subject to photograph. Given its challenges, what attracts you to woodlands?***

Coastal landscape photography was my primary interest for a long time. I bought a copy of Joe Cornish's "Scotland's Coast" and was simply stunned by its beauty. I grew up very close to the incredibly beautiful East Lothian coast of Scotland. That and the North West coast of the Highlands became my happy hunting ground for several years.



I have lived in a village in Suffolk for 30 years. Though the coast is beautiful in Suffolk it lacks the rich diversity in rocks, cliffs, geology and drama of Scotland's coast. The rural area around me offers a number of small areas of local woodland which are mainly unmanaged, wild and very chaotic. The chaos had always intrigued me, but I had never taken the step of investigating it properly with a camera.

About 6 years ago, a certain Paul Gallagher suggested that I should consider broadening my photographic horizons and try my hand at woodland. I was fairly well versed in coastal work. The ability to get low and close, to simplify the view and distil it down to essentials, aided by slightly prolonged shutter speeds, made the making of reasonably strong coastal landscapes and seascapes not that hard to achieve.

Woodland is so very different. There is no convenient water / land transition to rely on for a simple composition. There is no horizon to balance the view - just branches and trunks chaotically stretching in all directions. I found simplification was not straightforward. The important decision of what to include, and probably more important, what to exclude became much harder to make.

It is this huge complexity that makes woodland photography appeal to me. It's a bit like George Mallory's reply when asked why he wanted to climb Everest - 'because it is there!' I wake up in the morning, open the curtains, and because I am fortunate to live where I do, woodland is there in front of me, challenging me to try to capture the essence of what I love about woodlands.



© Woodland Study by Chris Cullen

***Given there are many different types of woodland, which attract you the most and why?***

Most of my local woodland is very wild, unmanaged and scrubby. Full sized mature trees are a rarity. The larger, managed woodlands near me are mainly coppiced. This is a traditional form of management but doesn't result in woodland that is very appealing to the photographer. Further afield in Suffolk there are some very large plantation conifer forests. These are nothing like natural deciduous woodlands. But there are pockets of very ancient woodland if you know where to look. My favourite is a small wood of very ancient oak trees which I have been visiting for many years now. These ancient woods have many giants, contorted oak trees that have been left unmanaged for hundreds of years. This dense environment is the epitome of chaos. Dead and dying trees are all around, left untouched. Huge oak tree limbs lie on the ground, slowly weathering over years to become pale skeletons. Great tangles of bracken, holly, birch and rowan make access and movement about the woodland difficult. All this chaos makes the area very challenging but also all the more rewarding when you manage to capture some of the essence of this very ancient place. I have completely fallen in love with and in awe of this woodland and its essence of majestic history.



© Ancient Woodland Suffolk by Chris Cullen

***What's conditions of light and weather would most inspire you to head out with your camera?***

Generally, I find woodland photography on very sunny days challenging because of the contrast it creates so I try to avoid them. I do a lot of infrared work too, and I find that infrared copes much better in high contrast conditions as the dynamic range in infrared is narrower and allows greater latitude for interpretation of the tones of the scene in post-processing. I usually wait for days with at least some cloud. For convenience I tend to avoid rainy days, but exploring woodland just after rain can be a very magical experience. I find that transient light or slightly overcast are best for me. Late afternoon light can be wonderful as the sun is lower and rakes through the trees where shadow and subject become fascinating.



***What would you describe as the greatest challenge in making photographs of woodland and how do you overcome it?***

Apart from strong, direct sunlight, the biggest challenge by far is working with the complexity of the environment. I try to distil a composition into a balanced, geometrically cohesive image. For many shots I aim to have some rhythm or feeling of flow and movement in a scene. For example, I might align tree branches so that they have a degree of synchronicity in their shapes. Combining those ideas with the need to make decisions about what else to include or exclude is challenging. After a recent talk by Michael Pilkington, I have started to think more about including 'avenues' in my work. Avenues are carefully considered gaps between trees through which the viewer's eye may explore. I have always tried to consider how a viewer's eye might navigate through a finished image, but the concept of avenues really appeals to me as a way of giving the viewer a feeling of looking 'through' an image as opposed to simply looking at it.



© Sunrise by Chris Cullen

***Are there any woodlands you still aspire to visit and why?***

Some areas of woodland have been on my 'bucket list' for a long time. For decades I longed to visit the wooded areas along the Yosemite Valley. At last, I did visit Yosemite this year and it didn't disappoint, and I am already craving to return.

There are a lot of woodland areas in Cumbria I'd like to visit at some point. Most of all, I intend to explore some of the ancient Atlantic oak woodlands on the West coast of Scotland. I am entranced by the lushness of them, with trees dripping in rich lichen and verdant mosses everywhere. The woodlands in Scotland around Oban and the Ardnamurchan Peninsula are a must and I have to visit soon! To sum up, I have many years of woodland exploration to keep me busy!



© Tree Study Suffolk by Chris Cullen





© Moss covered Trees, Scotland by Chris Cullen



# Winter in Montana, USA

*by Michael Pilkington*

# Winter in Montana, USA

*by Michael Pilkington*

Winter in northern Montana, USA is characterized by very cold temperatures and heavy snowfall, a contrast to the hot dry summers. This was my first visit to the area, and to be honest, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. It is somewhat difficult to picture an open flat landscape veiled in a blanket of snow and conjure up what could be appealing to a photographer. What I encountered was a fabulous winter landscape.

It was very cold when we visited, becoming progressively colder as the tour progressed from West to East getting well below -20 Celsius in places. This temperature may seem very cold, but the drier air makes it much more tolerable, and as usual, there is no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothing. So, dressed in my heavy winter layers made it quite acceptable.

This landscape is dominated by great rolling plains running to distant horizons. It is simply vast. Roads run in straight lines for mile upon mile with snow-laden fields each side punctuated by buildings, trees and fences. In some ways, it is a minimalistic landscape with the snow reflecting the ever-changing hues of the sky above emphasising a sense of distance and infinity. It is something that you would only experience in a few places in the world where the skies and the land seamlessly coexist.

In addition to the great rolling plains, a dominant feature of the landscape are the Cottonwood trees. These trees are ubiquitous and can be found along rivers, streams, and other water bodies, as they can survive the heat of the long summers close to wetter environments. They are also known for their ability to stabilize stream banks and help prevent erosion. Coupled with below freezing temperatures you can often witness magnificent rime ice crystals covering every branch and twig glistening in the sun adding to the sense of a winter wonderland. On occasions a stiff breeze would travel across the plains and make the ice crystals airborne creating a powder of rainbow colours as it was carried away into the distance.

As you travel across the plains, you encounter many abandoned buildings; farmsteads, barns, churches and schoolhouses to name a few. During the 19th century, European settlers moved into the region, enticed by factors such as the Homestead Act, which offered free land to those willing to settle and cultivate it. However, extreme weather conditions and primitive farming practices led to catastrophic crop failures, soil erosion and ultimately to the collapse of these communities. People had no choice other than to abandon their homes essentially leaving everything except what they could carry.

It is a landscape that I found truly fascinating and unique, a landscape that I hope to revisit time and time again.





© Snowfields, Montana by Michael Pilkington



© Cottonwoods in Snow, Montana by Michael Pilkington





© Rime, Montana by Michael Pilkington





© Disused Farmhouse, Montana by Michael Pilkington





© Abandoned Truck, Montana by Michael Pilkington



© Highway, Montana by Michael Pilkington





© Grain Silo, Montana by Michael Pilkington



© Open Plains, Montana by Michael Pilkington



© Montana Fields by Michael Pilkington





© Old Grain Elevator, Montana by Michael Pilkington



© Abandoned School House, Montana by Michael Pilkington



© Montana Farm by Michael Pilkington





© Rime covered trees I, Montana by Michael Pilkington



# How I got the shot: Shooting into the sun

*by Michael Pilkington*

## How I got the shot: Shooting into the sun

by Michael Pilkington

I was taking a number of images on my iPhone and, as usual, continued to marvel at how it can handle images with extreme dynamic range and, in particular, shooting into the sun. Shooting into the sun, unless it was obscured by a tree canopy for example, was something I always avoided when using my DSLR and even then, it was difficult to expose correctly. I thought this was limiting and prevented me from exploring certain situations. So, I set about how to replicate this on my Nikon D850.



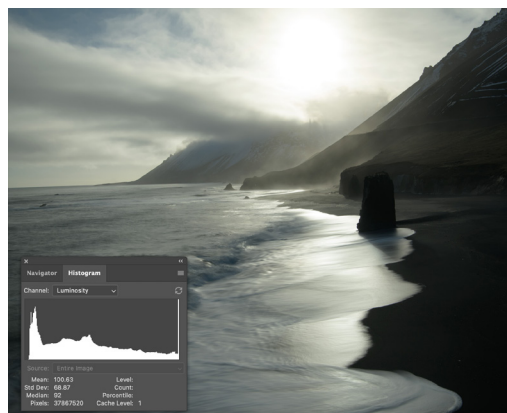
© East Coast, Iceland by Michael Pilkington

The key to success in this regard is understanding that you can clip the whites but to what extent? Let's look at an example taken in Iceland earlier this year.

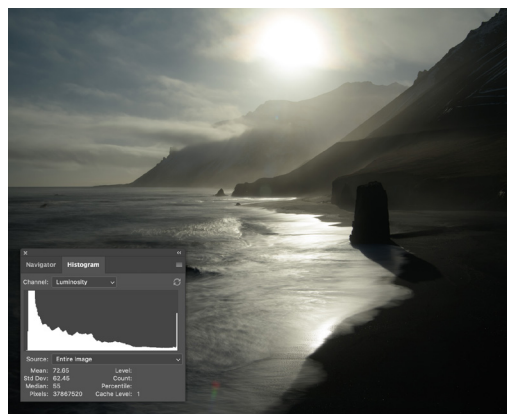
I did use a heavy graduated filter to try and manage the sun and surrounding bright sky. I also used a 10 stop neutral density filter to try and extend the exposure time to smooth out the waves a little. In practice, it was necessary to take a number of different exposures to try and find the optimum histogram distribution. Firstly, avoiding clipping the blacks (as you are effectively forced to under expose and push the histogram a long way to the left) and secondly to have the sun correctly 'exposed'. What this means is that you are seeking to have the sun appear as a recognisable orb and not lost in the surrounding bright sky in the final image.



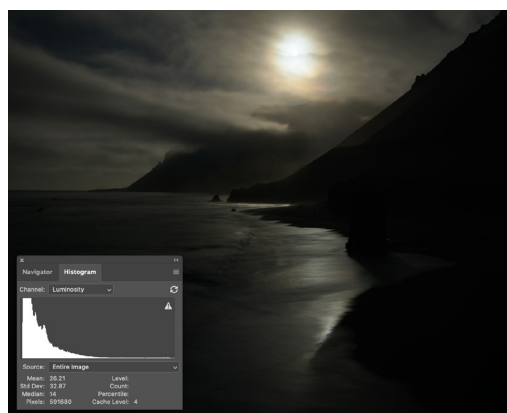
In this first attempt, my main concern was the density of the shadows in the rocks, sea stacks and sand that were all black. To remedy this, I exposed more to the right and, as a result of that the sun and sky surrounding it has become over exposed and any definition of the sun has been lost. You can also see from the histogram that there is quite a lot of clipping in the whites but the blacks are not clipped.



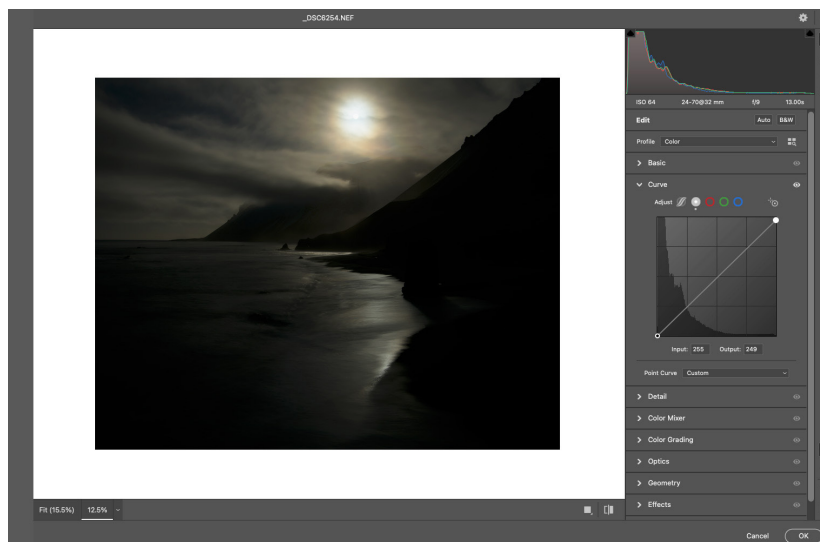
My second attempt was much better, but I still felt that the sun was not being shown as an orb, still being lost in the adjacent bright sky. The amount of clipping in the whites has reduced, but I was still being mindful and concerned at how much I was pushing the histogram to the left. Nonetheless, the blacks were still not clipping.



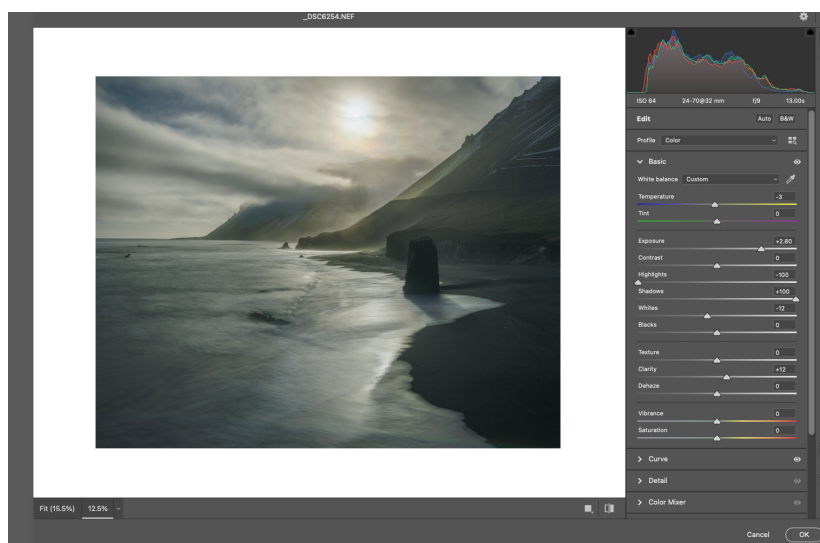
On my final attempt, I threw caution to the wind and exposed as far as possible to the left without clipping the blacks. The histogram looks fine in this image as the whites are not clipped, though on the back of the camera they were showing as clipped and the highlight warning was flashing madly! The highlight warning function can, in fact, be a great aid, as the highlight warning is usually in red and you can easily determine if you have limited the clipping to the orb of the sun alone.



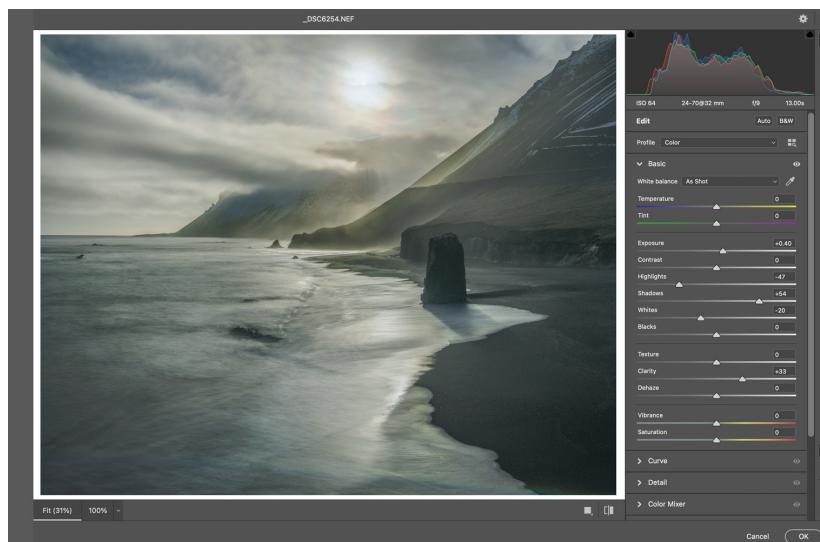
Now I had the final RAW file and it was a matter of post processing the image correctly in either Lightroom or Adobe Camera Raw (ACR). The first step was to peg the whites using the curve in ACR or Lightroom. This prevents any further over exposure of the highlights. To do this you use a point curve and move the white point down the right hand axis. In this case I set a value of 249 from the starting point of 255.



Now we are ready to apply some adjustments in post processing. Clearly the image is underexposed. You can increase this as much as you want as the whites have been pegged (in the previous step) which will bring light into the image and importantly lift the shadows. I have also reduced highlights which helps reveal the orb of the sun and used the shadow slider to lift the darker areas even further. Notice how the histogram (ie the distribution of light) has been greatly redistributed in the image. The image is now starting to look how I wanted it to be and more importantly how I saw it in the field.



I opened the image in Photoshop and then created a stamp layer. Next, I put the image back into ACR to bring down further the highlights and whites and also lift the shadows. Finally, a little bit of clarity was applied to separate the mid tones. It is important to note that this was done at the end of the process because you will have more leverage. This is because all the previous actions taken have redistributed the tones into the middle of the histogram (ie. the mid tones).



So, there we have it. It is not a complicated process but having the knowledge of what can be done in post processing informed what can be done in the field. This is often the case, being familiar with the tools in Lightroom/ACR and Photoshop can open up new and different opportunities in your creative pursuits.

You can find another example of controlling the white point and processing a file shooting into the sun on our YouTube video at <https://youtu.be/M0sH0W1uNN4>.





# Clouds & Undulations, The Scottish Borders

*by Paul Gallagher*

# Clouds & Undulations, The Scottish Borders

by Paul Gallagher

Looking is not seeing, and the ability to allow ourselves to see as a photographer is often challenging. We look out across landscapes and seek various aspects that may form a composition, but more often than not, we are simply looking. When we 'see' something, a connection is made. We are stopped, and what we were looking at seems to make sense and it is often a moment of lucid pleasure. Something feels complete.



© Clouds and Undulations - Scottish Borders by Paul Gallagher

The Borders of Scotland hold a simple beauty that could challenge the rugged Highlands in photographic appeal, gentle rolling hills, mature tree lined lanes and a tranquillity that seems to be inwardly absorbed the longer you stay. My tendency whilst there is to allow myself the freedom to slowly drive many miles of country lanes, follow footpaths across farm fields, and sit and stare.

You will not be afforded the opportunity to capture the high grandeur of the mountain ranges with storms pushing up the glen, or the sea swells smashing against the rocky shoreline. Instead, you have to let the landscape be itself, and let yourself be at one with it. Imagine waiting patiently for a wild animal to appear. You may be aware of its habitat and visit it, but you will have to exercise patience until the creature reveals itself to you. This is how to photograph the Scottish Borders.

Like many other times I had visited, I was driving, stopping, and walking, and there was a gentle breeze, just enough bend the grasses at my boots and help the clouds on their way. The light moved with the

clouds. Never strong light, but a milky, soft light that warmed my face as I closed my eyes and turned toward the sun. It was late afternoon, and the sun was graciously heading towards the horizon and occasionally it would push out from behind the clouds and transform young planted fields of crops into smooth sinuous undulations. If I recall, I only made three exposures then placed my camera back into its bag and sat there for a while longer. There was little more to be done.



## End note

We hope that you have enjoyed our first edition of Expressions and we have left you looking forward to the next issue in a few months time which we will automatically send you if you are subscribed to our newsletter and journal. Our Journal is all about inviting a conversation about photography, sharing passions and carving out new directions in our work.

In all the years we have been running tours, sat at a dinner table in the evening with a group, they were never bereft of conversation. All the time we hear photographers sharing travel tales, print tips and planning to go to new places to try different locations. The conversation is endless, and we want to hear from you.

If you feel inclined to comment on what you have read or you have something to add, then we invite you to get in touch. You may have had an experience you would like to share that you know others would be fascinated to hear, or you may want to contribute as a featured photographer or submit an article. The way we see it, a conversation should always go both ways, so follow the email link below feel free to drop us a line with your thoughts or equally leave a comment on our **Facebook** or **Instagram** pages.

Lastly, if you have any photography friends who you think would like to read Expressions, please tell them to head to our Aspect2i website where they can download their own copy entirely free via [aspect2i.co.uk/journal](http://aspect2i.co.uk/journal).

We hope to hear from you soon and what you have to say!

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