The travel category is fast becoming one of the most popular with members when deciding which direction to take when working towards the Associateship and Fellowship distinctions.

This does not come as any great surprise as the travel section is, in my opinion, the natural route for the majority of all round photographers to take towards distinctions. No high level of specialist knowledge or creative innovation is required. They never come in wrong however a competent photographer who has gained a Licentiateship and is looking for a route to the Associateship would be well advised to consider the travel category.

In the past there was a misconception that travel photography meant journeys to far flung places to capture saffron clad monks burning incense under prayer flags on a mountain top.

This is of course part of travel photography but by no means the only part. Travel photography is above all capturing a sense of the time and place, a location or an event. The place in question can be on your doorstep, your local town or city or foreign fields. They are all part of travel photography.

Travel photography for the Associateship and Fellowship revolves around a clearly defined statement of intent. Although the distinctions handbook states that a statement can be up to 150 words I believe the one sentence objective statement is a sound starting point. It helps to clarify for the photographer exactly what they intend to present. The best statements are short, sharp and unambitious. They can include the “why” and the “how” but they are of secondary importance. The all-important “what” is the most important factor…..what the photographer intends to capture and present to the panel of assessors. In travel the “where” is also an important factor in the statement.

The first step is to write down a well-defined objective statement. Don’t be tempted, at any stage, to describe your panel print by print. An overview statement is what is required in order to focus your attention and that of the assessment panel on what you are presenting.

Travel images are not holiday snaps. They are images that tell a story about a defined objective.

How exotic the location or how difficult the images were to obtain is of no consequence. Images captured locally which support the objective statement are the equal of anything taken further afield. That said don’t be put off working on a project with a foreign location. There is nothing wrong with this approach; however plan well ahead and try to capture all your images during your visit or a return trip may well be necessary to complete your panel.
Let’s look at three recently achieved Associateship panels.

**Sylvia Slaven ARPS – Panel Hanging Plan**

In September 2010 Sylvia Slaven spent five days on the Isle of Skye. She was captivated by the beauty and drama of the island. The ever changing weather and lighting conditions did justice to the grandeur and wildness of the landscape.

Sylvia’s statement of intent was to capture and recreate the essence of Skye and to convey the emotional awe and wonder that inspired her during her visit.

**Elgol – Loch Scavaig**

An awesome landscape painted with dramatic light; an image which sums up Sylvia’s feelings about the island.
She was careful not to be repetitive and made sure she showed different lighting conditions that supported her statement. As ever in landscape photography the most important ingredient is the quality of light falling on the land.

Sylvia captured this with aplomb and achieved her objective.

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Pak Ming Yeung ARPS – Panel Hanging Plan

Pak Ming Yeung, a member from Hong Kong, through his work visited many countries both modern and underdeveloped. Being a photographer he was interested in the people, animals, light and landscape of the places he visited. He became determined to document them in a photographic record.

Usually submissions in the travel category tend to be fifteen images from one location, country or event; however this is not an essential requirement.

Pak Ming decided to capture and submit three sets of five images. One set the animals of Africa in their natural environment, a second set the landscape patterns of a Chinese fishing village and the third life being lived by the people of Nepal.

He concisely defined his objective and submitted his panel in a non-conventional but very attractive layout.

His images were not random snapshots but careful compositions of travel photography supporting the statement of intent. Their design and presentation was clearly the work of a
Stuart Crump visited Cuba with a photographic project in mind. His statement reads:

“In 1959 Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba and in 1962 the United States imposed an embargo on the country. Since that time many things have remained unchanged.

Fidel Casto and his brother Raúl, who took over power in 2006, are now over 80 years of age. There is therefore little doubt that Cuba will undergo major changes in the next few years. I therefore decided to travel to Cuba to try and capture some images that reflect their present way of life.

I will never forget my visit and I hope that my images of Cuba have done justice to the country as it is today.”
This is an image with a strong story telling element and an excellent example of life being lived without any posing for the camera.

Competently photographed and superbly post processed and printed on fine art glossy paper the panel looked quite stunning.

Stuart’s “fly on the wall” approach on many of the images worked to good effect and showed live being lived and a very personal impression of Cuba.

Stuart was recommended for his Associateship at the September 2012 assessment.

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Although the three panels are very different they all show genuine travel photography that capture a sense of time and place. They underline the great variety, flexibility and possibilities that travel photography can offer. It can cover an event, a journey or a specified location showing people living their lives, animals, landscape, architecture….virtually everything.

In terms of distinctions it is without doubt a highly recommended route to follow.

Leo Palmer FRPS (Travel Panel Chair)