

My 2008 by John Pannell

A very busy and demanding year for me. Keeping busy at work, especially busy with family and not so much time for play. In all a sad but special and a memorable year.

Travel

Siberia - I always enjoy when I get a chance to mix business with pleasure. Travelling by train through Siberia on a photography assignment was most rewarding. Mid January I travelled via Moscow to the Ural mountains where I went husky dog sledging with a famous (in their field) dog trainer. A few days later in Siberia I explored the town of Ekaterinburg in minus 25c. Then passing around the lovely frozen Lake Bakel into north China to visit the Harbin Ice Festival. Vast buildings carved out ice blocks. Beautiful in the day light and lit up at night. I found taking photographs of the ice festival very challenging – not for technical reasons but because my fingers were so cold & numb without gloves. Beijing was also cold but lots of activity as they prepared for the 2008 Olympics.



France - It still amazes me that Paris is only 2.5 hours from London and great for short breaks, especially when you have a friend that can loan you an apartment for a few nights in Amiens not far from Paris. A lovely friendly town, a good selection of fresh food markets and warm weather for the time of the year.

Romania - A good friend of mine got married twice in May - but to the same person. The first in Rochester, UK and then the second in Baia Mare, Romania. A wonderful Romanian experience with the celebrations lasting a few days with the main event full on from 2pm till 6am on the Saturday with too much food, drink and dancing. This offered a good chance to practice my wedding photography.

Spain - visiting friends at their new specially build home near Alicante with a chance for some shopping and socialising before a sudden rush home.

Sri Lanka & India - a pre-Christmas break visiting friends in Colombo to exchange gifts, exploring and then on to Goa to relax before returning to a gloomy wet London. Sri-Lanka is a fabulous country with friendly people and is now on my "must visit again" list.

Photography

With my fathers poor health I did not do as much formal photography as I had planned, other than my Siberia assignment and a couple of weddings. If time allows, I plan to do more photography in 2009 to monetise my hobbies. It is always rewarding to see smiles on clients faces when I use my skills to create memories for others.

Family Events



This year was the year I said farewell to my beloved father who had several months of being rushed to hospital many times with deteriorating heart problems. My mother and I were more relaxed when he was moved to a care home for his final few months. He fell asleep on 22nd September whilst I was away in Spain. Earlier in the year we did manage to celebrate my engagement to Nimmi plus visit the house where my father was born 89 years prior. After plenty of white chocolate, red wine, supporting Watford FC and 61 years of marriage, he had a wonderful life which was celebrated by almost 300 people who bade him farewell to a peaceful & pain free rest.

What's on my Mind

Enjoy life to the full. Travel to experience the world and appreciate our fortune even in times of hardship. Eat well and look after your body. Although not into sport, I do enjoy a good walk and aim to go swimming twice a week. Turn the telly off more often and do something more rewarding. Love and friendship is a wonderful experience, whether giving or receiving. Take time out to make others happy and spend quality time with special people whilst you have the chance. Tomorrow is another day which no one can foresee what will come.

And in our world of plenty ~ We can spread a smile of joy~ Say a prayer ~ pray for the other ones. Have yourself a merry little Christmas ~ Let your heart be light ~ Next year all our troubles will be out of sight..

I do wish you a Happy New Year and good health to you, your family and friends.