



# Snow *wonder*

Husband and wife team Alistair and Jan Campbell saw the world as Royal Navy photographers, but these days their best pictures may be found just a short stroll from their Cheshire home

WORDS BY **HOWARD BRADBURY** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALISTAIR AND JAN CAMPBELL**



Left: Coddington,  
Cheshire  
Right: Chester



**T**hese beautiful winter scenes are testament to the talents of photographers Alistair and Jan Campbell.

But capturing great gardens and chilly countryside in all their winter finery requires a delicate balance of weather and light...and getting there before someone clomps through all that virgin snow.

'You're asking for all these things to come together - a cold, sunny winter's day where's it's just snowed and no-one's

trodden in it,' says Alistair. 'It's difficult to get all those things together.'

But sometimes fate is kind and you find the perfect mixture of light, weather and landscape virtually on your doorstep, such as the pictures of a frosty tree and a stream beneath a pale winter sun, both taken close to the couple's home in Coddington.

Alistair and Jan have toured every city in the UK to take the photographs for their business UK City Images ([www.ukcityimages.com](http://www.ukcityimages.com)), which supplies what they hope are the most attractive and

positive images for books, newspapers, magazines and websites.

The likes of Bath, Exeter and Chester are a gift to the photographer. But, says Jan: 'Places like Bradford were probably more challenging, but they've still got nice aspects to them. Sunderland was a bit of a challenge, but it's got beautiful parks and gardens. Everywhere has to be given an opportunity.'

The couple are also building up a stock of rural images, and are big fans of what Britain has to offer the photographer. ➤





Above: Farndon

‘A lot of photographers think you have to travel - go to exotic places,’ says Alistair. ‘I always believe it’s at your back door.’

Alistair, aged 57, and Jan, aged 48, met through their work as Royal Navy photographers. Jan, from Irby, Wirral, weighed up the possibility of going to art college before opting for the Royal Navy and photography. She rose through the ranks to become the Lieutenant Commander in charge of all defence photography for the Army, Royal Navy and RAF.

Alistair, who hails from Glasgow, carried a camera in the Falklands War and the first Gulf War, received the British Empire Medal for his work in Operation Safe Haven, protecting Kurds in northern Iraq in 1991, and a commendation for his part in anti-drug operations in the jungles of Belize. The job took him to the high seas, deserts and arctic wastes, ten years of his service being with the Royal Marines.

‘No matter whether you’re a chef or a driver in the military, you always carry a weapon,’ he says.

So in the Falklands, he was carrying grenades as well as cameras, and choosing his moment when to deploy each of those things.

‘It’s not just about taking nice photographs, it’s about intelligence-gathering, everything from making sure a weapons system is firing properly to educational support, and then there’s public relations,’ he says. ‘I live as a Royal Navy photographer. >

**Festive fun**

Why do birds fly south in the winter?

See crossword page for the answer



Ness Botanic Gardens, Wirral



Capesthorpe Hall





Cholmondeley  
Castle

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Lights in Chester  
Below: River Dee



Above: Alistair & Jan Campbell  
Photograph by James Cundill

After 33 years' service, having turned 50, Alistair left to set up the business, later joined by Jan.

'We work as a team,' he says. 'We have two cameras with different lenses, so we swap cameras. Sometimes it's difficult to tell who took which photograph.'

Jan admits the odd artistic difference, but agrees with Alistair: 'If one of us sees a good shot, we'll say "Come over here". There's no competitiveness between us, no elbows at dawn. It's working as a team, and that's our military background - you weren't out to better each other, you were out to work together. By contrast, we were at the Braemar Highland Games this year and there were 25 to 30 press photographers - all out for themselves.'

See [www.ukcityimages.com](http://www.ukcityimages.com) for more of Alistair and Jan Campbell's photographs and video.

