

The “Beast from the East”

March 5, 2018

Yes, I know we have heard this term from the media over and over in the last few days and yes, we all thought the weather had been exaggerated. However in the end loads, if not piles of it did arrive all over the country and even here in Norfolk . In fact villages in Norfolk were cut off by drifts metres high. It was an unexpected and unprecedented event! Norfolk and Suffolk rarely experience such amounts of snow and freezing temperatures, and this is unlikely to be repeated for another 30 years. Norfolk does not have huge mountains or rivers cascading through deep valleys showcasing winter conditions with full dramatic effect. It does, though, have large expanses of often bleak and bare landscape that can make for some marvellous minimalist photos.



Chedgrave drifts

I was pleased to find close to home the above scene featuring three telegraph poles and an abandoned piece of farm machinery. The snow blowing around the poles conveyed the atmosphere of the Norfolk farmland. Similarly with the black and white photo below.



Bare

Later on in the week I managed to make it down to Reedham Ferry. Very few cars were able to and I have to say anyone of thinking of buying a huge four by four, think again and buy a Panda 4 by 4; they make it through all it seems. Perhaps that's why the Italians drive them in the mountains? Anyway enough of the car ad and back to the Reedham area. This area is only 3 feet above sea level in places so has some of the flattest landscapes in Norfolk. The river Yare runs through it and often spills its water over the banks. I found the place quite magical as by Saturday the wind had dropped and all was still. The reeds found their feet in snow and ice and in the distance signs of river life were just visible. The pale and muted colour palette of this photo I think typifies the Norfolk countryside in winter.



A slightly more quirky photo of still more reeds is featured below. I particularly like the reeds at the front of the frame of this photo. It reminds me of a pencil sketch.



All the above were shot hand-held with the Fuji xt2 using either the 16-55mm or 55-200mm lens. Its very unusual for me not to use my tripod but you have to adapt to the environment you are working in so a higher iso and shutter speed made life a lot easier. The heavy Nikon 810 that i love so much was also swapped for a lighter camera.

So for me, the 'Beast from the East' provided many opportunities close to home to capture some real winter photography away from the jaw dropping mountainous sense so often posted on social media sites. Looking for small detail and matching tones and colours can create a photo that conveys a sense of emotion about the landscape and I hope I managed to capture this within these photos.

