

Snapping the snappers

For his latest photography book, photographer Robin Weaver turned his attention to photographers themselves – with fascinating and entertaining results, writes Jenny White



► Posing with the Royal Family at Madame Tussauds, London, 2007

WELSH photographer Robin Weaver perfectly captures the peculiar poses, amusing expressions and entertaining antics of photographers and their subjects in his latest book, *Snappers*. From gawky grins in Rome to wayward hairdos on windswept Skye, Pontypool-born Weaver focuses on the peculiarities of posing for pictures and the “photograph faces” of the selfie-stick snappers.

Weaver, whose travel and documentary work takes him all over the world, says: “From the Victorian photographer beneath his black cloth to the 21st-century ‘snapper’ with a selfie stick, photographers have probably always appeared a little eccentric to the casual observer. This is what I aim to portray in this book.”

Weaver first started documenting his fellow photographers in 2007 and soon found that their subjects were just as interesting.

“Most people with a camera pointed at them put on their ‘photograph face’, the image of themselves that they want to present to the world. When the age of the ‘selfie’ arrived, this added a whole new dimension to my collection,” he says.

“It may be that, in these pictures, I am gently poking fun at my subjects – but I always remind myself that I am like them, another ‘snapper’. In a way, I’m laughing at myself!”

Weaver, whose previous book *A Different Country* portrays life in south Wales in the 1970s, began his career at the *South Wales Argus* and has since travelled widely as a travel photographer.

“Some of the most memorable moments were in February/March 2020 when I toured both the north and south islands of New Zealand in a campervan, pitching overnight in remote spots among mountains or by beautiful lakes,



► The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Piazza Venezia, Rome, Italy, 2019

appreciating just what opportunities my work affords me, opportunities which I probably wouldn’t get in any other job,” he says. “It helps that my wife is a travel editor and writer, and that we can often work together.”

His very first photograph for *Snappers* was one he took at Madame Tussauds in London, where he was amused to see people posing with the waxworks of the Royal Family.



► A Buddhist monk taking photos in George Street, Sydney, Australia, 2020



► Tourists posing for a photo with aboriginal street performers, Circular Quay, Sydney, Australia, 2020



► Posing for a photographs outside the ‘Smallest House in Great Britain’, Conwy, Wales, 2011



► The Colosseum, Rome, Italy, 2019



► First Mountain, Grindelwald, Switzerland, 2017

“I am looking for something quirky, funny expressions or poses, either by the photographer and/or their subject

“That picture made me want to pursue that theme and to look for more people posing in amusing ways and pulling funny faces,” he says.

Most of the people in his *Snappers* collection were photographed unawares.

“I am surprised that people rarely noticed what I was doing,” he says.

“When I am among a crowd of tourists and they’re all taking pictures, I become invisible. I become one of them, so I find that I can photograph people freely without them noticing – though I have occasionally asked people when it was really necessary.”

“I am looking for something quirky, funny expressions or poses, either by the photographer and/or their subject. Sometimes the photographer has an interesting approach.”

“It’s that relationship between the photographer and their subjects and other photographers and the tourists around them that captivates me – the

juxtaposition of people in a crowd and capturing them in a pleasing composition.”

The collection also reflects his love of travel, which began in the 1970s with trips across the US and Australia.

“Travelling is always inspirational,” he says. “When you go somewhere new and different, experience new situations, see the way in which other people live, it is easy to find that motivation.”

“Conversely, when you spend a lot of time somewhere, you have to train yourself to look harder and to see things because of that familiar, usual, background.”

Now that *Snappers* has been released, Robin intends to revisit his extensive archive of photographs from his long career.

“Since *A Different Country* was published in 2015, I’ve been contacted by people from all over the world who have had some connection to many of the pictures, so I’m currently going through my

vast number of files finding other pictures that I think will fascinate people,” he says.

“I am also working on a Peak District project; the approach is not to produce a particularly pretty book, but a volume of pictures which shows some of the contrasts between the beautiful landscapes and the workaday – washing lines and wheelie bins in picturesque stone villages, abandoned farm buildings and all.”

In the meantime, he dedicates *Snappers* to all “snappers” out there, and the motives that drive them to take their photographs.

“For myself, it is an urge to document the world around me, to record the everyday moments we often take for granted.”

“In the ordinary, I like to find the extraordinary,” he says.

■ *Snappers* is available from www.blurb.co.uk/b/10401992-snappers



► The Angel of the North, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, England, 2018