

● Scottish
● Photographers



NOTES Winter 2008/9



Alina Kisina recently visited her native Ukraine and was surprised to find herself, for a change, on the outside looking in.

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While donations are no substitute for new members they are always very welcome. There is a list of members on the back cover. Please report errors or omissions and accept our apologies. Some members have requested anonymity.

Cover image by Alicia Bruce from her exhibition at Aberdeen Art Centre where she was Artist in Residence last year. Original in colour.

Feedback loop: after Kenny Hunter.

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Contacting *Scottish Photographers*
www.scottish-photographers.com
info@scottish-photographers.com

Organiser and Editor:
Sandy Sharp 33 Avon Street Motherwell ML1 3AA
01698 262313 sandesharp@scottishnet.co.uk

Accountant:
Stewart Shaw 13 Mount Stuart Street Glasgow G41 3YL
0141 632 8926 stewart.shaw@mypostoffice.co.uk

Webmaster
George Logan Balmoon Cottage Cargill PH2 6DS
01250 883211 george@scottish-photography.co.uk

WELCOME TO THE WINTER edition of NOTES for *Scottish Photographers*. It is now 2009 and we head off into the 'blue yonder', as the tram conductress in a Bud Neil cartoon used to declare — on the road to Auchinshuggle.

On the *Events* page there is a heartfelt letter from Matt Sillars concerning the 'Homecoming' event. Will this affair be all golf and Highland Games? Or a thoughtful celebration of the Scottish diaspora? Photography has a unique function far beyond the making of pretty pictures. It is the perfect medium for observing and commenting on contemporary events. It would be good to see some serious bodies of work emerging and we look to *Scottish Photographers* to lead the way. To quote the Bard; and why not, it is his birthday bash . . .

*"That I, for poor old Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a song at least . . ."*

And please respond to George Logan's plea for material for the web site.

Photography is still one of the best kept secrets in the art world. Consult any arts listing and you will find that photography is conspicuous by its absence. The reason lies both with commercial gallery owners and photographers. The proprietor of one Scottish 'art' gallery we know is in no doubt why he doesn't exhibit photographs. "Ah cannae sell them!" An honest business like response. Sadly, most gallery owners we speak to seem to be quite unenlightened regarding both the history and nature of photography and the fact that there really is a thriving commercial side to photography.

As for photographers, the venues for their exhibitions are frequently pubs and

cafes and corridors. This is a well tried way of exhibiting which, famously, the Impressionists used. But the need to for small independent galleries and spaces which allow for work to be made and shown without the pressure of sales has never been greater. If you are a professional photographer or bookshop owner or dentist or restaurateur why not set aside a proper empty, dedicated space, a real space, for showing photography? Some already do. And forget the Arts Council and funding bodies and expenses, *just do it for the love of it*.

During the last year not a month has passed by without there being an enterprising exhibition by a *Scottish Photographer*. Galleries as far away as Japan and the USA have shown their work, often in response to notices in SPEM and NOTES. We have always felt that exhibitions by individuals are more valuable than group exhibitions featuring unconnected selections of work.

In this issue there is featured the work of two 'new generation' photographers who are recent graduates of *Edinburgh College of Art*. These two young photographers came along to Inversnaid last year as invited guests. Both Caroline Douglas and Zoe Gibson showed examples of their work and a small tantalising selection appears in the colour pages. *Scottish Photographers* has always concentrated on 'matter' rather than 'material' and we tend to be, mercifully, spared discussions of developers and cameras and printers and papers at portfolio sessions. Clearly the emphasis in the colleges is also on 'matter' and the recent presentations we have seen have been refreshing and have always generated interesting responses.

Not quite a member of the emerging generation any more but Thomas Joshua

Cooper seems to have the secret of eternal youth. Thomas is invested in more life and concentration of energy and gifts than almost anyone we know. Just returned from the North Pole (yes!), Thomas gave a fascinating lecture in Glasgow recently and Stewart Shaw duly reports. Colin Wishart was a founder member of the late lamented *Lightworks* based in Dundee and continues to produce thoughtful work in spite of his full time work as an architect. He generously responded to an appeal with images made in Berlin, his adopted twin city. A fascinating thing about Scottish photography is the way in which, on the one hand, non Scots have come here to made work and on the other hand the Scots themselves have gone abroad. So Thomas Cooper, an adopted Scot, goes to the South Atlantic and Colin Wishart goes to Berlin. And Alina Kisina first of all comes to Edinburgh to make pictures — and then returns to observe her feelings towards her native Ukraine. Elsewhere Douglas Thomson takes his Holga to Florence, Keith Ingham has been in his attic and Roddy Simpson retraced the steps of the blessed Raymond Moore. Enjoy Winter.

Sandy Sharp

Inversnaid 2009

The Inversnaid weekend this year will be from Friday 1st - Sunday 3rd May. The cost, full board with en suite, is £138. Details from:

Roger Farnham:
11 Kelvin Drive
Glasgow G20 8QG
0141 946 7979
RFarnham@skm.co.uk

Please book through Roger and not directly to Inversnaid. The latest Inversnaid programme for 2009 can be seen at www.inversnaidphoto.com

Alina Kisina: The City of Home



Kiev was the home I wanted to escape for years yet leaving did not break my mental and spiritual bond with the city.

While revisiting it through my Patterns of Kiev series I am not looking for a clear definition of the place and the people but turn inwards, establishing the poetics as my reaction against the shallowness of its new commodity culture, while equally looking to express a sense of belonging and care.

It is my subjective reaction to its complex and constantly changing environment, as well as an intimate record of my own self-examination.

Alina Kisina
www.alinakisina.co.uk



Alina Kisina: The City of Home





*I'm not sure whether I am really Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet . . . ?
but I love Ukraine and sometimes it breaks my heart , sometimes it
inspires me...*

*At the first glance this photograph might seem like a sentimental
reaction, but the memory of an orthodox community with its ritualis-
tic feel really burned itself into my imagination. This photograph
doesn't celebrate the individual and hopefully the more you look at it
the more layers you see.*

Alina Kisina

Alina Kisina: The City of Home



PEACE

Keith Ingham: August Bank Holiday 1941

"This is a moment which one wants every child to have: secure in the hands of their parents, they begin to see and strive to understand the world outside their still small circle of experience, a world unfocussed and seen only partially, but full of potential excitement and interest."

On going through some of my late father's papers recently I found, in amongst the files on family history, his stamp collection, family papers and boxes of camera club photographs, a folder. It is charcoal plastic and says "Paterson negative file 35" in small, white, sans serif script in the bottom right hand corner. Very plain; very Design Centre. Inside are a dozen or so pages of negative strips and, amongst those, three or four pages of larger negatives: two and a quarter square. These are images that he sorted out from the rest to be found by me later on.

Scanning revealed ten photographs of a happy family outing to the seaside. It seems to be St Anne's-on-Sea, just south of Blackpool, and the group embraces my paternal grandparents and mother with my sister, who looks to be about 3-years old. There are plenty of folk around enjoying the sun, so it is likely to be August Bank Holiday in 1941, several years before I was born. They sit on a form on the pier, in deckchairs on the beach, venture out on the boating lake and go for a paddle. My father is keen to record his pretty and lively little girl in the midst of his family on a happy day.

So far, so common place. The photos have, of course, enormous personal resonance for me and take the viewer to another world of less affluence, narrower horizons, and a



break from a life circumscribed by war time and the working man and woman's routine of manual labour and leisure revolving around family and the Wesleyan chapel.

But there is one image that, for me, transcends the everyday and the specificity of my family and its circumstances. At first glance it might be considered a failure. In my imagination I can see clearly my father hunched over the viewfinder of his twin lens reflex, paddling backwards with his trousers rolled up, struggling

to focus on the wee girl whose attention was everywhere and who was bored with being photographed all day. Just as he had it right he pressed the shutter – a fraction of a second after her attention was drawn to something more interesting.

This is a moment which one wants every child to have: secure in the hands of their parents, they begin to see and strive to understand the world outside their still small circle of experience, a world unfocussed and seen only partially, but full of potential excitement and interest.

An accident, maybe, but not a failure.

Keith Ingham

Stewart Shaw: Thomas Joshua Cooper at Glasgow Film Theatre

TOWARDS THE END of October last year I joined a capacity audience at Glasgow Film Theatre for one of Glasgow School of Art's periodic public lectures. Usually the speaker is a visiting guest lecturer, but on this occasion the attraction was the School's own Professor of Fine Art, Thomas Joshua Cooper, talking publicly about his work for the first time in ten years. The lecture was based on his ongoing epic project "The World's Edge: The Atlantic Basin Project" which involves travelling to, and photographing, the distant and remote corners of the earth which encircle the Atlantic Ocean.

Addressing an auditorium full of students and members of the public could not be more different to the remote and unpopulated locations where he made most of his work, and he confessed to a little nervousness, but as he spoke and warmed to his theme his enthusiasm and energy came through and he talked fluently, eloquently and passionately for over an hour. The topics included his early life and influences; a conversation with the aging Man Ray in Paris; his working methods in the field; but mostly he talked about the project which has occupied most of his life for the last ten years.

His interest in the history of place combined with an admiration for the great 16th century navigator Ferdinand Magellan led to a desire to travel to, and photograph, the historic and significant sites and the most extreme points



High Noon - The Caribbean Sea

Cabo San Roman, day two
Peninsula de Paraguana
Falcon Venezuela, 2005

The Northeast-most point of Continental South America

of land around the Atlantic Ocean. The first part of the project, point of no return, focused on the Old World, Europe and the of Africa, making pictures at the Atlantic edge of these continents but looking out to sea towards the New World of the Americas. Note the terminology: Cooper is very clear that he does not take or snap photographs, but eschewing the documentary or pictorial approach to landscape-

... he stood with his back to the land, looking out to sea, but this time looking east back towards the Old World.

he makes pictures – he is an artist. Working slowly with an antique, almost obsolete camera (a 7"x 5" Agfa dating from 1898) he looks, studies, thinks and gazes at a location before finally exposing a single sheet of film. There is no safety net – no way of checking if the exposure was successful until it is

developed, far from the place it was made. The resultant photograph does not describe or represent the place it was made, but rather suggests a history, a feeling or perhaps an emotion evoked by the location. The success of this initial stage of his grand project, resulting in an exhibition and book (2004), paved the way, or perhaps as the title point of no return suggests, made it inevitable that he continued to the next stage.

Phase two of the Project saw Cooper following the

path of history as he re-discovered the New World. With Ojo de Agua (eye of the water), named after one of the sites he photographed on the coast of Brazil, he worked in several sites on the South American coast and offshore islands such as the Falklands, including the wild and stormy tip of the continent. Again he stood with his back to the land, looking out to sea, but this time looking east back towards the Old World. This part of the project resulted

in a further exhibition and publication, and the last plate in Ojo de Agua - Eye of the Water (2006) taken at Cape Horn looking south shows a stormy sea with the white surf somehow, magically, forming a clear arrow pointing to

his next location, Antarctica. If this part of the project created some hardships and difficulties (and it did) then the next phase, at the Arctic and Antarctic were much worse, and was undoubtedly the hardest part of the whole project. In Dante's Inferno, the circles of ice are below those of fire.



The Caribbean Sea

Iguana Point, #3, St John
The Island of Tobago, 2005

Very near the North-most point of the Island

The third part of the Project, TRUE – The Polar Pictures is not due for exhibition and publication until May 2009, at the London gallery Haunch of Venison, but we were treated to a preview of some of the hard-won images. Clearly the extreme environmental conditions and difficulty of access created real problems for this phase of the Project: temperatures of -40°F at the South Pole, and locations like Primehead Point which are so remote that more people have stood on the Moon than on that place. Cooper even managed to identify three new sites previously unmapped in the area, and now officially recognised by the authorities. In an environment where one mistake can be lethal, the Inuit dictum applies: "We do not believe – we fear." Nothing can be taken for granted. The whole project, once complete, will eventually be brought together in one large Atlas of Emptiness and Extremity. Unlike other atlases which indicate and name places, this one will show us what these sites look like, or perhaps more exactly feel like.

In the final part of his lecture Cooper, aware that the majority of his audience were young artists in the making, was anxious to pass on his knowledge; something useful to them in their own practice. As is often the case this may be stated simply, but can be very hard to follow in practice. His approach to his art, and he says life in general, is to go flat out. He also showed two photographs which had inspired him. The first, a nineteenth century carte de visite depicted a mother and child, but



The Caribbean Sea

Iguana Point #2, St John
The Island of Tobago, 2005

Very near the North-most point of the Island

with the long exposure time the child had been unable to keep still and the resultant movement had blurred the image. The mother trying, unsuccessfully, to hold still the wriggling child brought to mind Cooper's own photographs of an ocean in constant movement washing and crashing against a

Standing alone, in his own words "bewildered and amazed" . . .

still and tethered coastline, and perhaps also Cooper's own restless spirit. The second photograph he showed was from Robert Frank's book *The Lines of my Hand* (1989). An indistinct and snowy coastline, probably in Nova Scotia, with the superimposed handwritten inscription *HOLD STILL Keep going*. Cooper had certainly done both: making his photographs involved plenty of contemplation, and his working methods, self-imposed since the 1960's, of working outdoors making a

single exposure with the same camera remained unchanged as he struggled onward, overcoming practical difficulties and making sacrifices to complete this body of work.

In our technologically advanced world we take instant communication and rapid and affordable transport for granted throughout the populated world, often giving the appearance of a shrinking globe with distant lands and people

seeming ever nearer. But Thomas Cooper, with his antique equipment and drive to seek out the most remote and hard to reach places on earth, seems to be going the other way – making it larger. Standing alone, in his own words "bewildered and amazed," in one of these locations, uninhabited, unknown even to locals and possibly even uncharted, without the benefit of easy communications and a long way from home, the world must seem a vast place indeed.

Stewart Shaw

Thomas Joshua Cooper is represented by The Haunch of Venison
6 Haunch of Venison Yard
London W1K 5ES
www.haunchofvenison.com

The latest part of "*The World's Edge: The Atlantic Basin Project*" will open in The Haunch of Venison in Spring 2009.



*Looking towards Antarctica
Drake Passage*

*Cabo de Hornos - Cape Horn, #1
Isla Hornos - The Island of Horn
Islas Hermite, Antartica Chilena
Chile, 2006*

The South-most point of all South America

Caroline Douglas and Zoe Gibson

Caroline Douglas and Zoe Gibson are the latest new generation photographers to be invited to Inversnaid by Scottish Photographers. These young photographers, lent to us by Edinburgh College of Art, once again provided refreshing and stimulating sessions in which they showed and talked about some of the work which they had made during their years of study.

'Show Homes'

'Show Homes' is a series of constructed images that questions the functionality of modern interiors. By constructing miniature sets that resemble the style of rooms shown in lifestyle magazines I aim to suggest that whilst these designs are aesthetically pleasing, it would be a challenge to any person to inhabit this space and maintain its calming serenity. By adding any personal items, decorative or essential interrupts the balance of the design, however I feel that it is these objects, collected throughout our lives and experiences that give a house a personality and an element of individuality.

'Family Portrait'

Reading has always been an important part of my life. My parent's both worked in bookselling for a long time and my sister and I were brought up with many stories and always reading. Reading is a great way of getting children to develop their understanding of language and to help them develop their imagination, however in contemporary culture, with the explosion of technology, especially television and video games, reading is becoming a rare pastime.

I asked each member of my family to choose a selection of books that have had an impact on them somehow, or that have significance to them. I have included a selection of images from the series, including images from my mother and father's choices and one of my own. I hoped that by presenting this series of images that I would be able to convey a portrait that was more than skin deep and aimed to show more about the subject's personality and character.

Zoe Gibson

'Come Together' The Photobooth

The project is an assembled collection of self-portraits taken at the Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Arts between 2005-07. It required the active participation of the sitters, who themselves 'made' the pictures. Couples were invited into a personally constructed 'Photobooth' and asked to take two pictures of themselves in the enclosed space - the first, looking at the camera, the second, kissing. I remained outside the booth for the duration of this process. By providing the subjects with their own private space in the self-enclosed booth, the couples were given an essential degree of autonomy. Free from the

potentially intimidating presence of the photographer, a platform is provided for the subjects to bring their unique individualism to the images.

(The Photobooth is ideally exhibited in its entirety as a slide projection. Work in Progress: 2005-08)

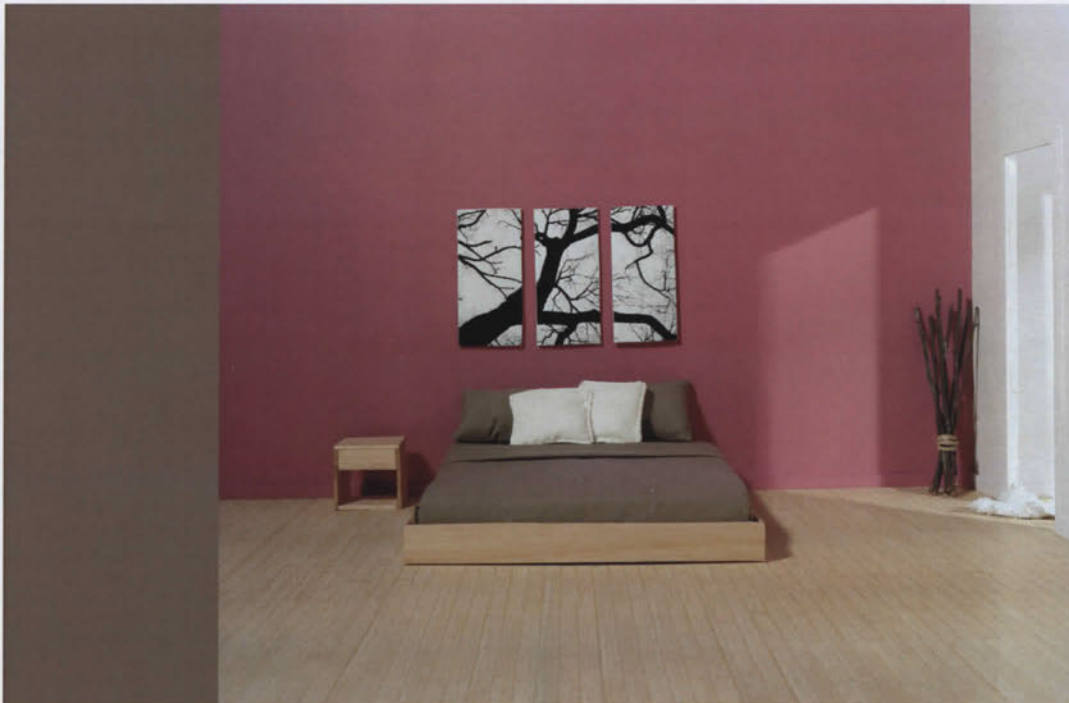
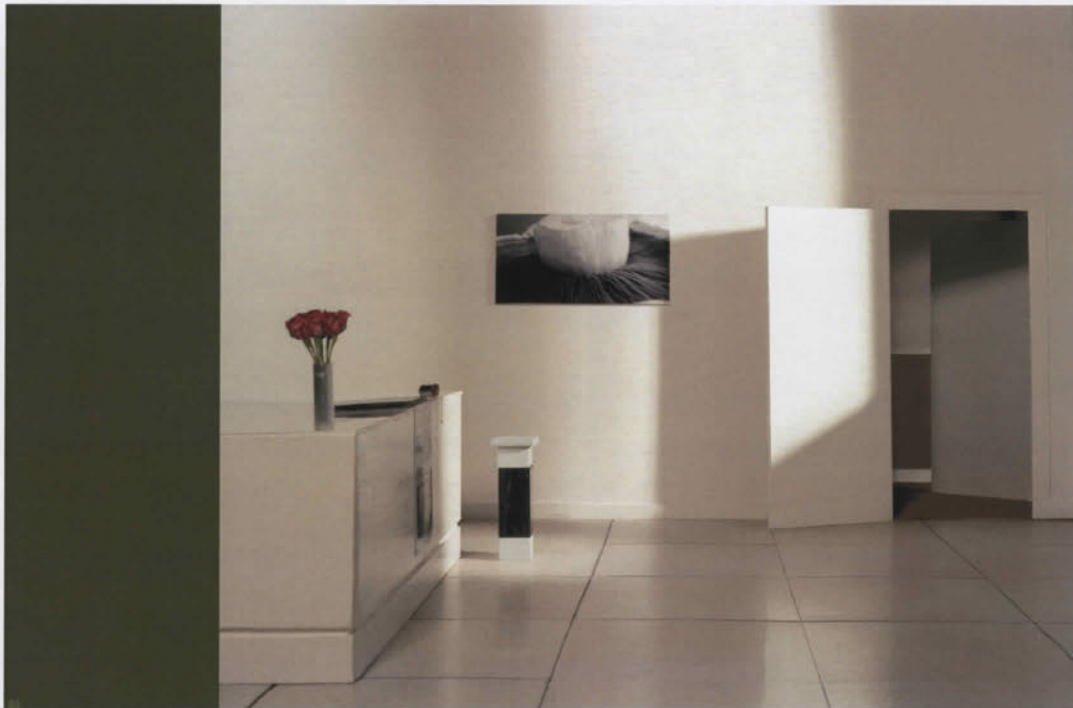
Caroline Douglas

"The result is a charming yet profound series of self portraits which comment on the nature of relationships and the human condition".¹

"The joys sadness, anxiety and sometimes harsh reality of relationships have long been the subject of Nan Goldin's work. Her unsophisticated approach is matched by Caroline Douglas, whose Photobooth images, taken by the sitters themselves, make a wry comment on the nature of relationships today."²

¹ Review of The Photobooth by David Williams, Excerpt taken from Intimate, Publication Galerie Weissraum, Japan (2006)

² Review of The Photobooth by David Patterson. Excerpt from Face a Faces, Portraits/Self Portraits, contemporary European Portrait Photography, produced by Association Française d'Action Artistique, Paris. City Arts Centre, Exhibition Catalogue, Edinburgh (2006)



Caroline Douglas: Come Together - *The Photobooth*



Caroline Douglas: Come Together - *The Photobooth*





This random sequence of photographs is distilled from many visits to Berlin, a city which has become a second home to me over the past six years or so. The images selected for reproduction here are essentially unrelated, as much of my more coherent work from this period has already been published or exhibited, most prominently perhaps the collection "Reaching Into The Light" which derived inspiration from Daniel Libeskind's astonishing Jewish Museum the interior of which I was fortunate enough to photograph just before the building was fully completed and formally opened. The photographs comprising "Reaching Into The Light" were first exhibited in Dundee Contemporary Arts in 2000, followed by a small selection published in "Inscape No.43".

My travels to Berlin have also resulted in collaborative image/text works with my German friend Edda Hofmann, however one of those collaborations, "Altar" comprises a study of the abandoned and ruinous modernist masterpiece of St Peter's Seminary at Cardross near Glasgow. This work was exhibited in "Imagination's Chamber" an exhibition put together at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen for the annual conference of the Scottish Word and Image Group, with an extract later reproduced in "Inscape No.53".

A parallel body of work from recent years is "A Place Apart" which emerged from a commission to photograph Frank Gehry's cancer patient care centre "Maggie's Dundee". The idea for a commemorative, limited-edition artist book, ventured as a contribution to the Maggie Keswick Jencks Cancer Caring Centres Trust, was derived only from personal experience, however much of the inspiration for its creative realisation came from my dear friend Thomas A Clark who contributed the eponymous poem which gently unfolds within. The little book is intended to interpret the distinct presence and purpose of this unique building, set apart as it is from the huge hospital complex; a place where patients and their families can come for support and information following the trauma of cancer diagnosis.

Apart from these offerings, my colour installation photographs of the late Ian Hamilton Finlay's neon poems were selected by the Victoria Miro Gallery to illustrate "Remembrance", the limited edition catalogue for the first commemorative exhibition of Finlay's work, mounted in London on the anniversary of his death, which was only the second showing of this luminous collection since the Crawford Centre, St Andrews first brought it to public view in 1993.

Colin Fraser Wishart



Unser Engel (A Gesture of Hope):

A secluded corner of St Hedwig's Cemetery in Berlin, regarded as the oldest Catholic graveyard in the city. It was almost dark when my friend Edda insistently led me over to this ravaged angel she had found, so we worked swiftly together in the gathering gloom to compose this portrayal of "our angel".



Berlin Wall (St Hedwig's Cemetery):

Lost to the world under the darkcloth, I had been contemplating this Edenic view on the other side of a surviving fragment of the Berlin Wall for some time until, satisfied I suppose, I at last emerged into the soft, warm evening light. It was only then I looked down to find Edda innocently lying asleep on the grass in this peaceful place where, fifteen years before, she would have been unhesitatingly shot on sight.

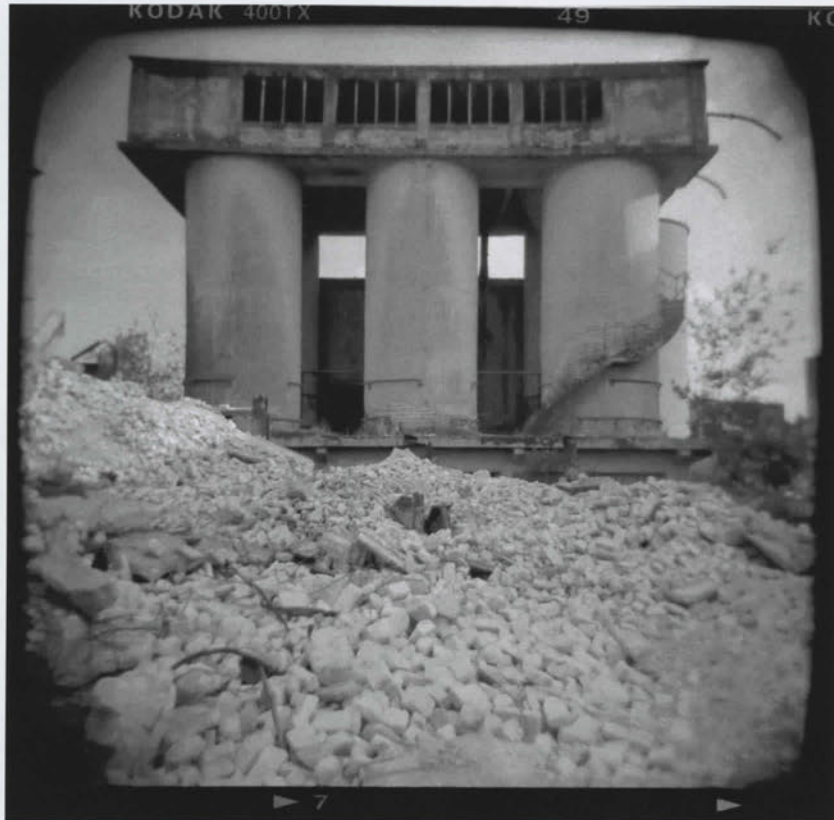
Colin Fraser Wishart: Berlin



Planterwald 1 & 2:

Treptow Park, a rambling woody urban sanctuary beside the Spree, is almost unchanged from the old days of Ost Berlin and is where the austere, massive marble monument to the Soviet Army of Liberation is to be found. Also located within this vast park is "Planterwald" which, in its heyday, was a fairground and pleasure park providing relief from the threats and deprivation of daily life in the DDR. It is now ruinous and forlorn, with its uncertain future being stringently guarded by random patrols of neo-Stasi security guards which makes access to photograph the life-size fibreglass dinosaurs, and other eerie relics abandoned within, a very risky undertaking indeed; as Edda, Aglaya, and I found out on repeated covert forays into this desolate, magical wilderness which Edda remembered being taken to as child.

The Ferris Wheel is composed from a safe distance following a forced retreat from the dinosaurs. The inflatable Circus Tent, however, is here seen through a partially obscuring frame of mesh fencing in a photograph made under the resentful eye of a security guard who, with tethered Rottweiler, had accosted me only moments beforehand. Once a place of vibrant colour, pulsating light, happy laughter and childhood wonderment, it here assumes a sinister, arachnidan presence although, as I discovered last Summer, it has since burned down.



Fabrik:

Another of Edda's finds! This time, a former cement factory in a remote setting outside the city close to ancient brick limekilns familiar as a location for "Faraway So Close" the film which became Wim Wenders' angelic sequel to his masterful "Wings of Desire". I made this photograph with my "Holga" a crazy, plastic 6x6 Chinese toy camera which lets the light in, with only some of it coming through the lens! The camera was a wonderful surprise gift from a lovely friend in the Scottish photographic community who, several years ago, brought it back from an excursion she made to Maine Photographic Workshops.



A Rose in a Window:

The rose was a gift of welcome from my dearest friend. Aglaya is a native of Russia, born in Klin and brought up in Moscow. Like myself, she is an architect, who has lived in Berlin for some years now and was holding this rose as she stood awaiting my arrival at the airport one morning. The following morning, I photographed it in the window of my room in her flat in Berlin-Lichtenberg.

Roddy Simpson: In the footsteps of Raymond Moore



The inclusion of Raymond Moore's photograph Galloway 1979 in *Autumn Notes* prompted me to see if I could find the location as *Notes* arrived shortly before I was about to spend a week in Galloway. Moore's work has fascinated me for years although I can't explain why or analyse his images. I just find them so absorbing. It is perhaps the highest compliment that what he is communicating can only be done visually or photographically.

When so much incoherent verbiage is written about photography by critics and so called cultural commentators it is refreshing just to enjoy a photograph without having to articulate why.

It was summed up so well by the great Scottish photographer James Craig Annan (1864-1946) who wrote:

"If a picture has any real merit as an aesthetic work, it should touch a sympathetic chord in the intelligence of the observer, and give him pleasure....but if it does not, no amount of argument will enable him to realise and enjoy the artistic intention of the producer, because the aim of the pic-

ture is not to demonstrate any theory or fact, but to excite a certain sensory pleasure..." [1]

In looking for the location of Moore's photograph I initially thought it might be difficult but it does show road signs which can just about be read. Although one of the roads has since been re-classified, it was fairly straightforward to find the roundabout at Port William, a village on the Wigtownshire coast. There have been changes since Moore made his photograph but I feel the ingredients that attracted him are still there, although my re-visiting is more literal.

There were a few surprises, not least that the viewpoint was the middle of the road, but perhaps there was less traffic in 1979. The sign for "Maxwell Park" was very clear as it is in Moore's photograph and had obviously been renewed in the same style and behind the wall at the top, where there is a gate, are playing fields. Port William was planned and built by Sir William Maxwell in about 1776 and he modestly named it after himself. A later descendant was the writer Gavin Maxwell who grew up

in the area. The pole in Moore's photograph that he has been cut off at the top, is a weathervane, appropriate for a port. But what most surprised me was the view in the other direction. For some reason, I had thought of Galloway 1979 as being rural, or at the very least on the fringe of any settlement, but it is in the middle of the village. It had been a very revealing and worthwhile experience and a homage to Moore rather than adding to my understanding of why I enjoy his photographs.

[1] William Buchanan, Editor, J Craig Annan, *Selected Texts and Bibliography*, Clio Press, Oxford, 1994, page 91. From J Craig Annan's address to the exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society 1900.

Roddy Simpson is a member of SSHoP and editor of the newsletter SSHoP Talk. You can find information about SSHoP, the Scottish Society for the History of Photography, on its web site www.sshop.arts.gla.ac.uk

For recent information about Ray Moore you can go to a number of web sites such as *Weeping Ash*. www.weepingash.co.uk/new/photos/raymo/48-rmintro.

Peter Fenton: *Cyperus Alterniflora*



Cyperus Alterniflora

The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.

Henry Miller

Every blade of grass has its angel that bends over it and whispers, 'grow, grow.'

Talmud

As soon as I moved to Shildaig on the west coast, I looked for a garden where I could go and take pictures. I had been increasingly drawn to taking pictures of flowers and plants since I had returned to the UK from Bangladesh where I had been working and taking pictures of the aftermath of cyclones and floods. I wanted also to develop a relationship with a garden as we were living in rented accommodation and I was missing my allotment!

Attadale Garden near Strathcarron supplied more than I could have wished for. Nicky Macpherson, the owner, is also an artist and someone who related immediately to both my images and my intention and gave me unlimited access. I tried to take images that said something to me, but also reflected how I felt in the garden. These have become more and more abstract and I have also tended to get closer and closer to my subjects. Maybe this is a response to being surrounded by breathtaking scenery in the Torridon Hills

and feeling completely unable to capture any emotional essence of that on paper. In particular I became fascinated by particular plants, not the most impressive or striking, but the ones I felt an attraction to. *Cyperus Alterniflora* is a grass that likes to be by the water. After I had found it once, I noticed it all over the place. Even in the greenhouse inside a wine bottle filled with water because to propagate, the flowerhead bends down into the stream where roots grow. Then the flowerhead separates from the main plant, floats down the stream and attaches itself further downstream. The gardeners know this and so take the flowerhead off and put it in a bottle of water to grow more plants.

All the time questions of change, impermanence, beauty, spirit, life, death, peace, tranquility swirled around my head and are reflected in these images. The experience of my father having liver cancer also made its own imprint on the images. The first pictures tended to be in

colour and then the Torridon Smokehouse, famous locally for its smoked salmon, moved down into the village leaving a small, dark room with sink and two worktops, ideal for an improvised darkroom. So, I begged and borrowed equipment found in people's attics and began to print. It was great to exhibit recently with fellow Scottish Photographers (Northern cell) at Inchmore Gallery but opportunities to do this are few and far between (anyone wanting to read more on this read review posted on www). There is still a way to go in what I want to achieve in my photography. What is the point in printing, then scanning and making small books – which is what I have tended to do. What ways can you get your printed images into the public domain? Is there life outside the garden and what can I add to it? Hopefully I may get some answers at some point but will both enjoy and be frustrated by the searching.

Peter Fenton



Douglas Thomson: A Holga in Florence



On two recent trips to Florence I decided I would try to capture some of the most iconic sights in a way which would provide a different take on the subject, something which might present an image which could have been taken any time in the last hundred years. With this aim in mind I experimented with my Holga 'toy' camera. This camera is gloriously low tech, devoid of any resemblance to fine optics with its plastic lens and yet retains a quality all of its own.

The lion from the Loggia dei Lanzi is the symbol of renaissance Florence, a symbol of strength and security.

The Duomo - Santa Maria del Fiore, with its dome forever defining the Florentine skyline, designed by Brunelleschi and completed in 1463.

One of the bells from within the Campanile.

Douglas Thomson

Icons of Scottish Photography: John Charity



John Charity

During the Clipping at Locha'Bhraoin, Wester Ross 1988

2008 WAS A LIVELY year in the exhibiting front for *Scottish Photographers*. Here is a brief run down of some events with apologies to anyone who may be missed out.

Tina Vanderwerf, our Dutch member was pleased that the RSA selected her photographs. "It really was an honour to be in the same show as Thomas Joshua Cooper, who was elected RSA!" The Royal Academy in London also selected one of Tina's photographs or their Summer exhibition and she showed in the enterprising Mussel Inn in Glasgow.

For sheer enterprise the North Group led by the redoubtable Matt Sillars ("Run like a Marxist cell") must take the honours. The group, who meet regularly from Inverness to Skye, put on a show in the Inchmore Gallery, near Beaulieu. Anne Thomson, Eileen Fitzpatrick, Caroline Dear, Matt Sillars, Peter Fenton, and Martin Elder, took part.

An announcement in SPEM led to an American adventure for Caroline Parkinson who mailed: "I responded to the TEOE Exchange to Arizona which went out in the mailings. The return exchange is about to happen when the two Americans land with us. We are going to do a joint show in Phoenix in March 2009 and then it is my job to get a place to show the 80 images in Edinburgh in June". Also in the US, Melanie Sims was in the Joyce Gordon Gallery in Oakland California. Also very far away was Vanessa Wenwieser. She took part in a UK- Japan artists exchange group exhibition in Osaka in October. Keith Ingham had several enterprising shows in Glasgow including one with neon lights, in the Collins. Anne Crabbe, John Rhodes, Robin Coutts, Peter Hallam and John Kemplay all showed work somewhere in the soft underbelly of the Kingdom. Hugh Walker's Cambodia pictures were hung at the Edinburgh Festival while Alina Kisina has just finished a show of beautiful

images made during a recent return visit to her native Ukraine. These were shown in the Scotland-Russia Institute in Edinburgh.

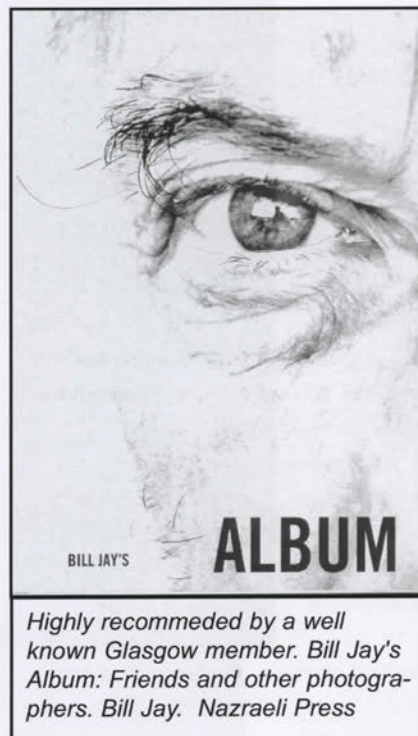
Robin Gillanders was featured in the Autumn NOTES and the exhibition of the images he made in the footsteps of Edwin Muir, Orkney poet and translator of Kafka amongst other things, toured the Highlands. Alicia Bruce had a residency in Aberdeen which resulted in an exhibition in Aberdeen Arts Centre. Alex Boyd, who was also featured in the Autumn NOTES had his Sonnets for Scotland, inspired by Edwin Morgan, shown in the Arches in Glasgow and on the other side of the country Roddy Simpson's show 'Thresholds' was in the Fine Art Library of the Edinburgh Central Library. Simon Nicholas White showed his almost abstract 'Naturesques' (his word) in the RGI Gallery in Glasgow. Inevitably there was a Goldsmith show with Peter's 'The Moss' at the Corridor Gallery in Lochgelly.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Lord Caplan who was one of our members. Philip attributed the success of his striking colour photography to a defect in his sight, possibly a form of colour blindness. He was a wise and perceptive commentator at print appraisals. A former High Court appeal judge he presided at the Piper Alpha inquiry and, famously, jailed Tommy Sheridan for contempt of court.

Donald Stewart organised a splendid two day workshop on bookmaking led by John Blakemore in Stills and Carl Radford ran a workshop on alternative processes with Kerik Koulis. We were delighted to hear that David Gillanders was a winner of a Getty Award for 2008! The BJ wrote: "Getty Images congratulates Eugene Richards, Lynsey Addario and David Gillanders for their outstanding documentary photography proposals. These winners will receive grants of \$20,000 each to complete the work that they have proposed". Kevin

O'Brien recently opened a new gallery, *Fine Art-Images-Gallery* in Church Street Eyemouth. He writes: "I want you to let *Scottish Photographers* know that the coffee & tea is always hot and to come in and say hello when passing."

www.fineart-images-gallery.co.uk



Highly recommended by a well known Glasgow member. Bill Jay's Album: Friends and other photographers. Bill Jay. Nazraeli Press

Portfolio Sessions

Occasional portfolio sessions are held in several centres. Communication by e-mail.

Inverness: Contact is Matt Sillars
mattsillars@gmail.com

Glasgow at Street Level
carl@scottishmonochrome.co.uk Next one is Thursday 5th February from 6.45pm

Fife: Contact is Peter Goldsmith
p.a.goldsmith@lineone.net and
jenni@redcabinstudio

Edinburgh: Contact David Buchanan
davidbphoto@yahoo.co.uk Meetings in *Stills* as announced in e mailings.

From: George Logan:

Scottish Photographer's web site.

To maintain the popularity of our website it is very important that members contribute on a regular basis, not just images for the Gallery but also news and reviews.

For the Gallery we are looking for a small selection of images that come together as a concise well considered set. Even if from a larger body of work, look for a good edit, if from a larger set then we can mention that. We are not looking for a best of. Nor are we interested in any 'technical' experiments, its the finished work that's important not how you got there.

SP does not have any 'selection committee' for members wishing to have work on the gallery pages. You will just have to accept the skill of George Logan as picture editor. Submit 3 (tripych) to 10 images preferably from an existing and cohesive body of work but work in progress also considered. All images should be saved as RGB Hi Res JPG's sized at 72 dpi with the longest side of 800px. Minimal sharpening. Larger and tif files will be accepted but please not too large. Also a very short artist's statement if you wish, titles etc. Images should be trimmed precisely, so please do not leave a tiny sliver at the edges that will then have to be tidied up for you.

If you've been to an exhibition then we would like to see a review, good bad reasons why, etc. Also reviews of books and magazines. A section on the new website has also been put aside for equipment reviews, not in depth reviews of cameras but more general items that you have come across and would like to share.

Remember to also notify us of any forthcoming exhibitions, that will be distributed via SPEN and Notes.

If the above comes across as overly strict it is not intended as such and we look forward to seeing a wide variety of photography!

George Logan

From: Matt Sillars:

Homecoming Scotland 2009: An SP response?

I have been watching with interest the development of Homecoming Scotland 2009 since Aase Goldsmith alerted me to its existence in the middle of 2008. It is a yearlong celebration of Scotland in the year that Robert Burns would be 250!

Regardless of my concern about the ideology that drives such events and the way that they tend to reinforce stereotypical ways of thinking - even when they purport to be doing the opposite - I feel that there is an opportunity for Scottish Photographers to respond to the underlying issues that the event highlights - good and bad - and come together to share their feelings and thoughts.

I am totally against 'themes', as we are not a camera club. However, I am certain there are many people whose photography is, or could be, deliberately constructed through a response to the world they see around them. I tend to tackle quite large political themes in my photography - hence my interest in the Homecoming Event and I suspect there are pictorialists, portrait specialists, documentary, travel photographers, fine artists, natural history, etc, etc, that have something to say, in their own way, about the contemporary Scottish 'landscape'. Labels of course are always problematic - they present challenges in their own right. However, the event is following the tried and trusted method of having a photo competition, 'judged by experts'. Sadly I do not feel that this will get us very far! *I propose that we have a Photographic Day of Action, where all interested photographers come together somewhere in the Central Belt and have a giant 'portfolio' session, letting others see our individual responses.* There be will be no judging, no reviews, no group exhibition, no framing costs, simply a chance to see a visual response to the issues that each

photographer feels are embedded in the Homecoming Event or in contemporary Scotland. I would not expect the photographs to all be reportage - I would expect that people will have a lot to say in lots of different ways and that this needs an outlet.

I am happy to act as a central contact, but would like to co-opt a couple of helpers. However, this will not be a committee! I feel strongly that facilitation of the event is the only thing we should do. Like many SP people I reject the control and influence that committees have over the outcomes of events.

If you are interested please send me a note of interest, my e-mail address is: matt.sillars@gmail.com If you do not have e-mail please write to me at: 26 Drumdyre Road, Dingwall, IV15 9RW. I will create a mailing list take it from there. Have a look at the Homecoming Web site to get a flavour of the event www.homecomingscotland2009.com

Matt Sillars

The Brilliance of Photography

The *Contemporary Group of the Royal Photographic Society* is organising a weekend event with eight major name photographers talking about their personal photographic projects and the role of contemporary art photography today and in the past. This prestigious event will be held at the Cheltenham Film Studios on Saturday and Sunday 23rd-24th May 2009. A print appraisal session for a number of our attendee's work is also planned for the Saturday evening. A book sales table with several of the speaker's published books is planned. The speakers will include Gerry Badger, Stephen Gill, John Blakemore, Richard Sadler, Peter Kennard, Bill Jackson, Daniel Meadows and Paul Hill.

Contact - Avril Harris, Group events organiser,
92 Old Park Ridings, Grange Park, London,
N21 2ES
e-mail avrilrharris@blueyonder.co.uk

Scottish Photographers
Life Member Thomas Joshua Cooper

Anke Addy Aboyne Chris Adie North Berwick Alan Aitchison Lochwinnoch John Alexander Broughty Ferry Allan Allison Glasgow Denis Alyshev Glasgow Marion Archibald Burntisland Roland Ashcroft Longforgan Susan Baker Glasgow Geoff Banks Aberdeen James Baster Edinburgh Colin Benson Edinburgh Ian Biggar Dumfries Andy Biggs Elswick Richard Bingham Bonnyrigg William Bishop London Val Bissland Bearsden Alan Borthwick Perth Sheila Borthwick Perth Allan Bovill Edinburgh Alex Boyd Glasgow Keith Brame Edinburgh David Bromwich Dunblane Alicia Bruce Edinburgh David Bruce Helensburgh David Buchanan Edinburgh William Buchanan Edinburgh Ronald Burns Upton Robert Burns Glasgow Irene Cadenhead Edinburgh Gordon Cairns Glasgow Gordon Cameron Edinburgh Lee-Ann Cardle Forbes Colin Cavers Lauder Lin Chay Glasgow Derek Christie Edinburgh Therese Christie Edinburgh Al Clark Abernethy Lesley-Anne Clark Glasgow Julie Close Scotlandwell Alastair Cochrane Avoch Joel Conn Glasgow Scott Cook Dunfermline Robin Coutts Waterloooville Mike Cowling Glasgow Anne Crabbe Chesham Gordon Croft Lower Largo Caroline Dear Portree Margaret Diamond Glasgow Alan Dimmick Glasgow Stan Dodd Chelmsford William Doig Glasgow Craig Dorrall Milngavie Gordon Doughty Achnamara Caroline Douglas Edinburgh Catherine Drain Kilsyth Stan Duncan Rotherham Martin Elder Culbokie Bill Ellis Warrington Ian Fairgrieve Inverness Roger Farnham Glasgow Peter Fenton Strathcarron Ed Fielding Perth William Fisher Glasgow Eileen Fitzpatrick Forbes Felicity Fullwood Glasgow Abigail Fraser Edinburgh Sam Gardener Staffin Tony Gardner Aberfeldy Zoe Gibson Edinburgh David Gillanders Houston Robin Gillanders Edinburgh Aase GoldsmithLargoward Peter Goldsmith Largoward Andre GoulaincourtInversnaid Colin Gray Glasgow Suzy Gray Kilmuir Jenni Gudgeon Cupar Peter Hallam Morton Avril Harris Enfield Gordon Harrison Achnasheen Janet Healy Cumbernauld Meg Heggie Glenrothes Niall Henderson Menstrie Joyce Henry Giffnock John Hobson Edinburgh Nick Holmes Mull Keith Ingham Glasgow Hilary Jackson Torrance Colin Jago Glenelg Jakob Jakobsson Milngavie Tony Jenkinson Lossiemouth Kate Jo Inverkip Vaughan Judge Inverkip Eric Judlin Glasgow John Kemplay Chipping Campden Virginia Khuri London Ian King Inversnaid James Kinloch Tayvallich Alina Kisina Edinburgh Tomasz Kotowski Edinburgh Robert Laidlaw Bo'ness Peter Lane Forest TownThomas Law Bearsden Elizabeth Lawrence Balfour Nikki Leadbetter Menstrie Kevin Lelland Glasgow Gordon Lemant Falkirk Chris Leslie Glasgow George Logan Cargill Suzie Long Wicklewood Clare Lorenz Edinburgh Patricia Macdonald Mussleburgh Douglas Mackie Edinburgh Fin Macrae Tain Douglas McBride Killin Graeme Magee Edinburgh Harry Magee Glasgow Frances McCourt Glasgow Sarah Mackay Glasgow Jamie McAteer Edinburgh Ray McKenzie Milton of Campsie Iain McLean Glasgow Michael Maclean Glasgow John McMeekin Paisley Steve McQueen Glasgow Jim Mailer Cupar Graham Marsden Nairn Don Marsh Glasgow Fergus Mather Wick Allan May Bearsden Douglas May Edinburgh Ian Melville Glasgow Tony Middleton Cannock Robin Miller Drumnadrochit Bill Millett Rutherglen David Mitchell Dunfermline Bob Moore Avoch Chris Morris Bishops Philip Morrow Cumbernauld Roy Myers East Linton Tom Normand St Andrews Kevin O'BrienLeven David Ogden Balmullo Caroline Parkinson Edinburgh Alan Paterson Glasgow Peacock Visual Arts Aberdeen Tim Peat Muir of Ord Michael Peterson Lerwick Robert Pew Motherwell Fiona Porteous Alva James Stuart Porter Edinburgh Stephen Pounder Dundee Keith Price Lairg Carl Radford Blantyre Hazel Rae Portree Bruce Rattray Camberley Martin Reekie Ballater David Rees Lairg John Rhodes Salisbury Chantal Riekel London Jonathan Robertson Cupar Roy Robertson Newport on Tay Simon Robinson Kirkpatrick Richard Sadler Monmouth Gordon Saunders Glasgow Scottish Arts Council Edinburgh Lenka Sedlackova Czech Republic Mike Shanahan Haslemere Sandy Sharp Motherwell Stewart Shaw Glasgow Madelaine Shepherd Edinburgh Matt Sillars Dingwall John Simpson Dunblane Roddy Simpson Linlithgow Melanie Sims Bearsden Mike Smith Inverness Richard Smith Portree Craig Snedden Glenrothes Source Magazine Belfast Philip Spain Glasgow Jill Staples Bolney Shelagh Steele West Calder Alex Stephen Prestwick Donald Stewart Kinross Stills Gallery Edinburgh Street Level Glasgow Stefan Syrowatka Cork Clare Terris Dalgety Bay Norma Louise Thallon London David Third Keith Anne Thomson Forbes Douglas Thomson Stonehouse Michael Thomson Hamilton Elisabet Thorin Linlithgow Nigel Thorp Glasgow Tom Urie Motherwell Tina Vanderwerf Netherlands Hugh Walker Glasgow Robert Walker Kinross Stuart Walker Kemnay David Wallace Perth Clive Walton Edinburgh Vanessa Wenweiser Glasgow Simon Nicholas White Edinburgh Pete White Bridge of Dee Colin Wishart Pittenweem Veronika Woodroffe Victoria BC Canada Paul Wotton Killearn Sandy Wotton Killearn Ariadne Xenou Athens Russ Young Santa Fe

info@scottish-photographers.com www.scottish-photographers.com

Scottish Photographers 33 Avon Street Motherwell ML1 3AA

01698 262313 sandesharp@scottishnet.co.uk