



● Scottish  
● Photographers

NOTES Winter 2010/11

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Cover: **Patricia Macdonald**. The '*mur eagarra gorm*' / '*serrated blue rampart*' of *An Cuilithionn* / the Cuillin, with *Blàbheinn* / Blaven behind – 'wild land' with strong cultural resonances – *an t-Eilean Sgitheanach* / the Isle of Skye.

# *Scottish Photographers is a network of independent photographers in Scotland.*

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## **Contents**

4	Editorial
6	<b>Wojtek Kutyla:</b> In their own way. Image of my grand parents.
14	<b>Edward Jones:</b> Spotlight Elvis is in the Airport
16	<b>Patricia and Angus Macdonald:</b> The Hebrides
24	Edward Weston at City Art Centre Edinburgh
25	<b>Rowan Lear:</b> <i>This is what creates every adventure</i>
32	<b>Alex Boyd:</b> Edwin Morgan
34	<b>Stewart Shaw:</b> Money Matters
35	<b>Sandy Sharp:</b> Equus Burchelli
36	<b>Donald Stewart:</b> Photographers of the Western Isles
38	Events and News





Welcome to the latest NOTES which began its life before the Great Freeze and which may appear a little later than usual due to that hoary old excuse - 'circumstances beyond our control'. It is hoped that it will entertain, educate and amuse, to misquote Lord Reith. It represents a very broad range of photographic practice and will succeed in its purpose if there are submissions that are loved and loathed.

There was an innocence about the web pictures of **Wojtek Kutyla** which we looked at in response to his prompting, something of the style of a newspaper cartoon or the music of Janacek (who loved cartoons). The photography of Eastern Europe is quite *sui generis* as was seen in a recent Street Level exhibition and also in publications, sadly not widely available. Wojtek's stark images and spare text complement each other in a very fresh manner. 'To be honest, it's not much of a picture' said **Edward Jones** of his historic picture of Elvis! He seemed to be quietly amused at the idea of this particular picture being in the Spotlight and his wry musings on meeting Elvis are a sobering reminder that the work of a newspaper photographer is a thousand miles away from that of the makers of 'personal work' which grace so much contemporary photography. They also remind us that sometimes a bad picture might actually be a good picture . . .

It is astonishing to think that two monumental landscape projects are underway in Edinburgh and Glasgow. While Thomas Joshua Cooper, Captain Ahab like, stalks the Atlantic Ocean, **Patricia and Angus Macdonald**, in their light Cessna 127 aircraft, photograph the Hebrides in a no less determined mission. It is difficult, if your only aerial view has only ever been from the aisle seat in a 747, to imagine what it must be like to quarter the landscape, eagle like, with a viewfinder.

Patricia emphasises that these are not pictorial images or images of a wilderness but images of 'a cultural landscape' for there is strangely little of the deceptively empty Hebridean landscape that today is without some cultural alterations. Patricia and Angus Macdonald lecture at the University of Edinburgh where Angus is Professor of Architectural Studies.

**Rowan Lear** is a recent graduate of Napier University and took part in the Street Level graduate show *Futureproof*. She chose to examine 'the ways in which we read and understand photographs' by presenting found family snaps with her own captions. It was such an unusual project that we couldn't resist asking Rowan to share her thoughts with our readers. **Alex Boyd's** *Sonnets of Scotland* (shown in the Autumn NOTES 2008) owe their origin to the poems of the same name by the late Edwin Morgan, 'Makar' (National Poet of Scotland). Alex visited Edwin in Glasgow and made a portrait of the celebrated poet with an interesting sideways look at Thomas Carlyle and Julia Margaret Cameron. As a result of miscounting a blank page was found. Editors, like nature, abhor a vacuum and it has been filled by this writer. Such blatant self promotion should not be repeated. At least not very often.

**Stewart Shaw** presents money matters (it does) in the form of a pie chart, the only really understandable way to do it. The subscription for *Scottish Photographers* has been unchanged since 2003 and in that time the cost of postage has doubled, the number of pages has doubled and colour has been introduced (paid for pro rata). Ends have always met thanks to donations from generous members. However it is time that more colour work was used, in spite of the fact that a fair number of *Scottish Photographers* are able and enthusiastic mono-

chrome workers. It has been frustrating to have to restrict the number of colour pages in recent issues, including this one. We hope that the increase to £15.00 will not be off putting and will enable a wider selection of current members' work to be shown.

*Scottish Photographers* events have always aimed to be technique free zones, or at any rate the ones which this writer has led. We have always sided with Capa who said that he would 'rather have have a strong image that is technically poor than vice versa', something to remember if you are coming along to a portfolio meeting. It is too much to say that anyone can make a decent print - although they probably could if they put their mind to it. But not everyone can make a strong image and that is much more valuable thing. Work that appears at our meetings is often of astonishingly original imagination and rarely do discussions get bogged down in technicalities. If you have never been to a meeting before then do consider coming along in 2011. When your work is seen by other people it can give great pleasure as well as often taking on a whole new meaning for its maker.

We always look forward to hearing from our reader-photographers though it has to be said that it is often non-photographers who say interesting things about the medium. David Hockney, for instance, says that 'the landscape doesn't look a bit like a photograph'. Or does it? Perhaps you could get in touch and wind us up.

That's the way it is.

**Sandy Sharp**

## Wojtek Kutyla: In their own way - images of my grandparents

My grandparents live in a small, one bedroom apartment on the east border of Poland. Their life oscillates around the living room table, as they don't move as much as they used to. And all is covered in cigarette smoke. As grandpa says, they are keeping themselves alive by arguing, smoking and drinking apple juice. They lead a rather peaceful, sleepy life and they enjoy it a lot – in their own, sometimes unusual, way.

I wanted to spend the time with them to understand them better; to get some of their stories and to build an image I could remember for a long time. I am not sure if I can follow most of their decisions and I don't think they fully understand me either. But I think that at the end of my visit I got closer to them.

**Wojtek Kutyla**

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Six o'clock in the morning, Life starts at the tiny flat of my grandparents.





A glass of apple juice a day keeps you healthy.







My 'future wedding gift', cheap encyclopaedia tomes.

Private stash of Russian cigarettes bought from a local dealer.

Family photos in an old chocolate box.





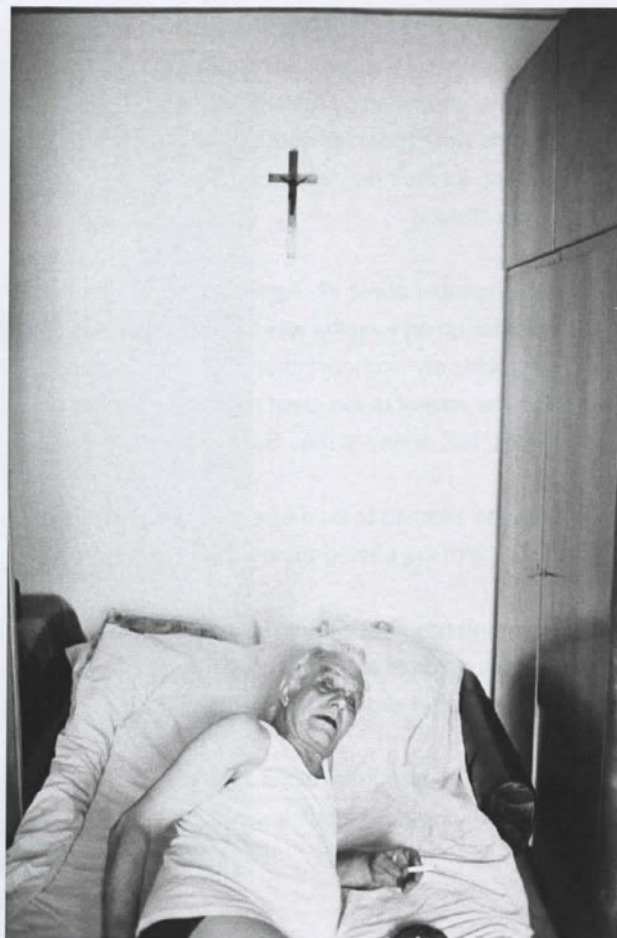
Shopping. Sometimes grandpa cannot remember what he came for, but he knows all the sales ladies by name.







Stories of the past.



Time for bed. My grandparents are not very religious, the cross is there because it is a tradition.

## Spotlight: Edward Jones

What is there to say about this photograph? Not a lot, really. Elvis Presley stopping off, briefly, at Prestwick airport on a journey between Germany and America, towards the end of his period of army service over fifty years ago. A photo opportunity, before that phrase had been invented, organised by the U.S. military. It had been hastily arranged and relatively few of his fans were there for what turned out to be Elvis's only visit to Great Britain. The picture was taken for the now defunct Bulletin newspaper with a Rolleiflex camera and straight flash. That's about it.

What do I remember about it? Again, not a lot. I remember being annoyed about having to go to Prestwick on an evening when I was rather hoping for a quiet spell in the office. Indolence is probably my strongest character trait. I remember one of the office girls being excited about the advent of the great man and asking if she could go on the trip with me. She did. And that, too, annoyed me. Such idolatry.

As for Elvis, he seemed to be a nice guy, being friendly, courteous and co-operative with his admirers and with the photographers who were there.

This photograph has kept cropping up from time to time over the intervening years. To be honest, it's not much of a picture. If it were not for the famous subject it would be nothing. There must be better pictures than this hidden in my back catalogue. Surely.

Still, it might be of use to historians in the future as documentary evidence that those feet did once walk upon our green and pleasant land.

**Edward Jones**



ELVIS PRESLEY AT PRESTWICK AIRPORT, MARCH 1960,  
ON HIS WAY HOME TO THE STATES TO BE DEMOBBED

Spotlight



Edward Jones Copyright The Herald

*Na h-Eileanan* – the islands of the Hebrides – lie in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Highland Scotland, on Eurasia's extreme north-western edge: due west, the first landfall is the coast of Labrador in Canada. The trope of 'the edge' is intense, creative, demanding, dangerous, a liminal zone – the threshold of the 'not-yet-known' in place, time, mental state or ways of living. One important theme of the book is an exploration of key features of living in an environment 'at the edge', as variously defined and in the light of cultural changes through time.

Another major theme is that of the formation and characteristics of a 'cultural landscape'. The Hebrides have long been celebrated for the dramatically 'wild' and 'sublime' character of many of their landscapes – which have provided, from at least the eighteenth century onwards, a physically exhilarating and spiritually uplifting aesthetic experience for visitors. However, the islands have never been – either in ecological or in cultural terms – a 'wilderness' since the end of the last ice age. The archipelago is, on the contrary, a unique and complex 'cultural landscape', made up today of many traces (some obvious, some cryptic) from both past and present of interactions between the Hebridean environment – its geology, geomorphology, climate and ecology – and the activities of its human inhabitants. The combined result of such processes, taking place in time as well as in space, has been referred to as the landscape 'palimpsest' – an ancient manuscript that has been imperfectly erased and written upon many times.

Since the past is at times – although not always – 'a foreign country [where] they do things differently', the meanings of many of the inscriptions from the past on the composite manuscript of the land may be difficult to understand, even when they can be clearly seen. Sometimes, if the markings are partly obscured, they can also be hard to read at all, let alone interpret, from a

viewpoint on the ground. From the air – especially at some times of year and in some directions of light – the physical forms of the traces that exist, the ways in which they relate to each other in space, and the order in which they overlie each other (in time), can usually be more clearly seen than from ground level. The problem of interpretation often remains, however, especially in the light of awareness that the past may be not only a 'foreign country', but one 'whose features are shaped by our predilections'.

In this book, we have used a combination of aerial photographs (made over a period of about twenty years), other imagery, and different types of text in an attempt to describe and interpret – through a sequence of glimpses in time and space – key aspects of the development and significance of the cultural landscape of the Hebrides. The book takes the reader on a journey, not only among the islands, but also into the layers of evidence, visible on the surface of the land, which partially reveal the actions that have contributed to the present-day landscape being as it is. This physical evidence – itself a kind of text – is considered alongside samplings from other textual sources which help to illuminate it, 'populating' or 're-populating' it with the thoughts of those who have cared about environment and inhabitants.

The book concludes with a brief look at some current and possible future influences on the cultural landscape in the form of new initiatives for communities, types of agriculture, renewable energy projects, and the regeneration of ecologically wounded 'wet-desert' areas, and of lost woodland and other biodiverse habitats, benefiting both people and nature, increasing life at the edge.

Patricia & Angus Macdonald, December 2010  
[www.aerographica.org.uk](http://www.aerographica.org.uk)

At the edge: surf on the western shores of the Atlantic outlier islands of *Heidhsgeir* / Heisker / the Monach Isles, in the ocean west of *na h-Eileanan Siar* / the Western Isles, with the hills of *Uibhist a Tuath* / North Uist on the horizon. The low-lying islands are an ancient cultural landscape, established on the semi-natural, fertile, shell-sand '*machair*' pastureland which covers them, and which still supports sheep; they were inhabited until 1948 – the remains of the houses of the *baile* / hamlet cluster are visible on the easternmost island (in the distance here). The islands are today one of the most important breeding grounds in the world for Atlantic seals. The 1864 brick tower lighthouse on the westernmost island of *Seileigh* / Shillay, shut down in 1942, was re-lit in 2008 as part of the policy of encouraging shipping to use sea-lanes west of the Hebrides rather than the Minch, following the wreck of the oil tanker *Braer* off the Shetland Islands in 1993.



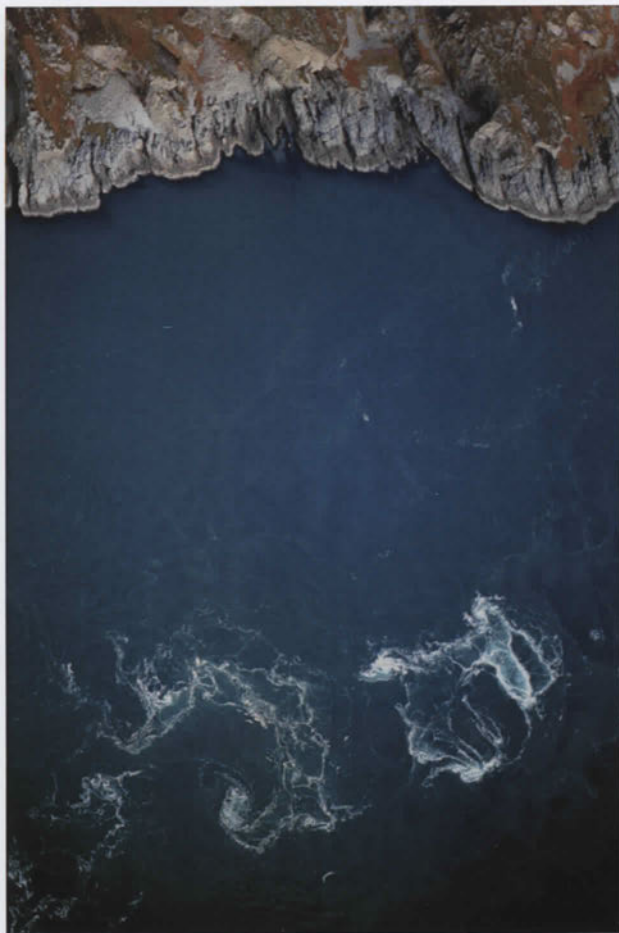




Apparently enigmatic human traces at Loch Scolpaig, *Uibhist a Tuath* / North Uist, a small *machair* loch, the level of which depends on both tide and rainfall, as it was the subject of an early-nineteenth-century 'improver's drainage scheme connecting it to the sea; a sheep *fang* / fank (enclosure) at the foot of the picture is, for this reason, semi-submerged at the present level of the lochan. The octangular building is a nineteenth-century folly built on the site of a much earlier dun (fortified dwelling) which formed a round island in the lochan.

A typical multi-layered Hebridean cultural landscape: material evidence of large-scale farming having replaced small joint-tenancy run-rig settlements south of Kilmuir, *Tròndairnish / Trotternish, an t-Eilean Sgitheanach / Skye*. The rectangular boundary wall of the 'stone park' (enclosed field for animals), perhaps built using stones from the structures of an older hamlet, is superimposed on the 'lazy beds' and traces of the settlement foundations of an earlier landscape, and on another straight wall of intermediate date.





Left: The demanding and dangerous environment 'at the edge': turbulent waters of the notorious 'whirlpool' in the Gulf of *Coire Bhreacain* / Corryvreckan, with the inhospitable rocky coast of *Sgarba* / Scarba behind.

Opposite: The northern channel and North Ford Causeway, *na Fadhlaidhean* / the Uist Fords, looking eastwards towards *Eubhal* / Eaval from above the tidal inlet of *Beul an Toim* and the sands of *an Oitir Mhòr*, which separate the island of *Uibhist a Tuath* / North Uist (and the small island of *Griomasaigh* / Grimsay off its south coast) from that of *Beinn na Fadhlaidhean* / Benbecula. The North and South Fords, and the tidal flats between North Uist and Grimsay, are now crossed by causeways; these have greatly improved communication in the islands and given general access to ferry terminals in North and South Uist and the ex-World War II airfield on Benbecula. The North Ford Causeway (opened in 1960, and seen in the distance at top right) is the longest causeway in the Western Isles and includes three bridges, two of which allow for boats to reach the main channels. The old North Ford which the causeway replaced could only be crossed at low tide with the help of expert guides, who often had to find new routes after winter storms had moved the sandbanks.

The images on pages 17 – 21 are from *The Hebrides: An aerial view of a cultural landscape* by Angus & Patricia Macdonald (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2010).







**Opposite:** From the exhibition '*An Oir: na h-Eileanan*' / 'Edge: Hebrides':

**Triptych #2: 'Sound / island':**

Tide races: [left] *Caol Muile* / Sound of Mull; [centre] *An Doras Mòr* / 'the great door' between *Garbh Reisa* and Craignish Point, *Caol Ìle* / Sound of Islay; [right] Deep channel, *na Fadhlachan* / the Uist Fords, *na h-Eileanan Siar* / the Western Isles.

The exhibition 'Edge: Hebrides' is loosely linked to the book *The Hebrides: An aerial view of a cultural landscape*, and deals with some of the same themes, although it uses the aerial imagery in an entirely different way (for a discussion of this, see 'Patricia Macdonald: Edge: Hebrides: Patricia Macdonald in conversation with James Lawson', in *Portfolio: the catalogue of contemporary photography in Britain*, 2010, 52, pp 32-37). It was commissioned by a consortium consisting of the National Galleries of Scotland, the Highland Council and the Scottish Government. It was first shown in 2009 in Brussels, in Scotland House (the Scottish Government's European HQ) and in the European Parliament, and then toured in 2010 to Highland Council galleries including Inverness Museum and Art Gallery. Further tours are planned in Scotland and in continental Europe.



It was a surprising haven of tranquillity among the tumult of the Edinburgh Festival, with subdued lighting and surrounded by wonderful photographs. I couldn't believe how quiet the City Art Centre was for the Edward Weston exhibition with the Festival in full swing but for most of my couple of hours there it was me and the attendants. It was in marked contrast to other photographic exhibitions there and especially that of Weston's friend and contemporary Ansel Adams a couple of years ago. Weston does not have the same level of popularity as Adams but is one of the major figures of twentieth century photography.

Weston's range is well demonstrated in this exhibition which covers all of his long career, starting with his soft focus pictorialist images and showing how his style evolved. There is a particular intimacy about the photographs displayed because they are predominantly vintage prints by the photographer himself and this gives a direct contact to Weston, as they are how he wanted them to appear. As they mostly look to be contact prints they also have a wonderful richness of tone and detail.

Two series of images stood out for me and these are emblematic of Weston. First there are his still lifes, especially of vegetables and shells which are so tactile and sculptural. The intensity that Weston put into creating these photographs transforms ordinary objects, and imbues them with form and feeling. The other group is his nudes which are again tactile and sculptural with a fluidity of form and although the compositions hint at a detachment because there are very rarely the faces of the subjects and certainly no eye contact, there is an emotional involvement derived from the intimate relationship between the models and the photographer.

The outstanding image is of Charis Wilson who later became Weston's



Edward Weston: Nude 1936

second wife. She sits cross legged and head bowed, with her hair neatly parted, resting on one knee and her hands clasped around the other. If I was ever on the equivalent of Desert Island Discs where you could choose photographs instead of records, this would be one of my eight choices. It felt a privilege seeing so many classic and historically important photographs in their original form, with the quietness and subdued lighting making it almost reverential.

As part of the exhibition there is a video with interviews with Charis Wilson who is still alive in her 90s, and it is revealing about her relationship with Weston and how this came through in the photographs.

One disappointment was that there was not a season ticket for this exhibition as there have been for others at the City Art Centre, especially as it is difficult to fully appreciate everything on one visit. However, now being into the bus pass category, £5 for a return visit was well worth paying.

**Roddy Simpson**

***This is what creates every adventure*** is an exploration of the relationship between photographs and memory. Digging through my own family albums and boxes of photographs, the images from my childhood appear unfamiliar. With growing frustration I noted that my mother barely appeared in any of them and large periods of time were unaccounted for. Photographs behave, as Roland Barthes once put it, as 'counter-memories'. They elicit acts of recollection which construct childhood memories of falsity and fallacy.

In search of veracity, I turned instead to found photographs, those discarded or abandoned by their previous owners, and found in car boot sales, internet auctions and junk shops. Often I find a photograph that will stop me in my tracks, and demand closer attention. It ignites a sort of 'punctum'; one of recognition and identification. By recognising a detail or a face or an expression, I begin to project my memories onto the photograph, rather than allow the photograph to control what I remember.

I decided to take ownership of these images and my memories by writing short captions to bind them together. The responses to these photographs are not an exercise in nostalgia, but impart the discovery of a family member, event or experience in the images. Where our own photographs and albums reduce our lives to a series of isolated events, responding to found photographs

reflects the fluidity of memory and offers a more intuitive way to remember the past.

Furthermore, by focussing on the relationship between viewer and image, my project examines the ways in which we read and understand photographs. Photographic meaning is not solely derived from the original setting, subjects and composition, but is created in the instant and the space where our mind meets the photographic image. This is what creates every adventure.

Rowan Lear

**Rowan Lear** is a photographic artist living and working in Edinburgh. She continues to develop ideas and practice for *this is what creates every adventure*, and is engaged in photography and film production and related writing, research, teaching and archiving.

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[www.rowanlear.co.uk](http://www.rowanlear.co.uk)  
[emailme@rowanlear.co.uk](mailto:emailme@rowanlear.co.uk)



The girl in costume who frowns at me from a photograph. My mother's mother.



They asked me to  
choose your name,  
but all I could  
think of were Enid  
Blyton characters.

You had no idea what I was going through  
the morning that we left.





The water crashed at the kitchen window and puddles spread on the floor.



You cried and cried on the front steps of the house. It was a week before they realised your arm was broken.



The first time I realised what it meant to die.



"She's slender, you're stocky."



Men I wrote letters to but never met in person.



I raced you until you ran faster than me.





"You're special. You're  
not like the others."



An uncle I only remember  
from photographs.

[www.thisiswhatcreateseveryadventure.co.uk](http://www.thisiswhatcreateseveryadventure.co.uk)

[www.rowanlear.co.uk](http://www.rowanlear.co.uk)

[emailme@rowanlear.co.uk](mailto:emailme@rowanlear.co.uk)



I made waterways and rivers and channels in the sand.  
"You'll make an excellent plumber!"

# Alex Boyd: Sonnets from Scotland

In 2010 I first made contact with the poet and Professor James McGonigal, who was both a colleague, and a close friend of the 'Makar' (National Poet of Scotland) Edwin Morgan. By this stage in his 89th year, Edwin Morgan was now in a care home in Glasgow, and acting as an intermediary, Jim was happy to relay messages between myself and EM regarding projects I was working on which took inspiration from the poet's work.

Jim told EM about my Sonnets photographic project which owed its name to one of my favourite collections of his poetry 'Sonnets from Scotland' published in 1984, the year of my birth. Although frail, Eddie was still creative, and was putting the last touches on his final collection of poems 'Dreams and other Nightmares'. Eddie was also still keen to meet and encourage young artists and poets. A meeting was arranged, and soon I was sitting in Eddie's room discussing with him the images I had been making over the past few years.

During that first visit I also made a portrait of the poet which took inspiration from an image of Thomas Carlyle by Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron. It would later be used on the cover of his biography 'Beyond the Last Dragon' written by Jim, which includes this short and fitting description of my tribute to EM:

"Sonnets is a haunting series of Scottish landscapes with a single figure, not seek  
ing to illustrate Edwin Morgan's work in any sense but to respond to it in a different  
medium. Similar structural elements in each picture play the role of octave/sestet or  
rhyme in the sonnet form of which the poet was so fond." \*

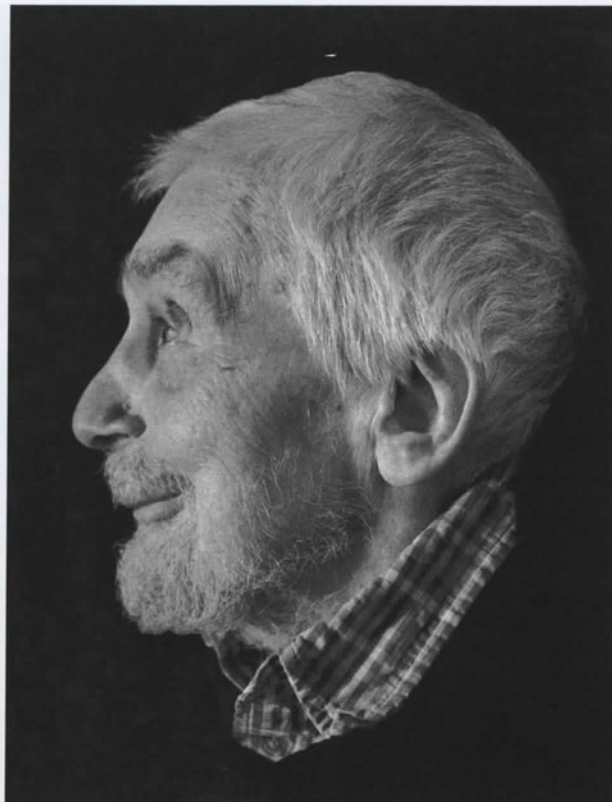
I was greatly saddened when he passed away in August of 2010, but I am glad that I had the chance to work with such an inspirational figure, and arguably one of Scotland's greatest sons, the last of the canonical big seven.

Alex Boyd

\*McGonigal, Jim: *Beyond the Last Dragon* – Sandstone Press (pp.434-435)

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Edwin Morgan 1920 - 2010

# Stewart Shaw: Money Matters

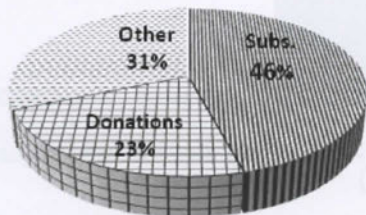
I am sure that many of you will not be too interested in the following details, but in the absence of formal accounts I felt that you should have a few details of our finances. The other reason is that for the first time ever we are going to increase the annual subscription. We have managed to hold the £10 standard subscription since our humble beginnings away back in 2002, but inevitably our costs have risen in that time and now we have to address the shortfall in funding. From 1st January 2011 the standard subscription will be £15.00, with concessions at £7.50 and overseas members will pay £20.00 to offset the additional cost of posting S.P. Notes airmail. We feel that this is still affordable to most and represents fair value.

I know you are all visual people, so rather than present tables of boring figures I have prepared a couple of charts to illustrate where our money comes from (you!) and how we use it. All figures refer to the year ended 31st December 2010.

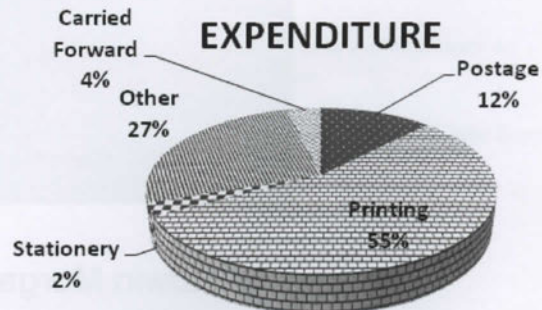
As you can see the bulk of our income comes in the form of subscriptions, though the additional donations provided by many generous members are a very important part of our income. "Other" income and expenditure refers mainly to our Paul Hill events held in Glasgow and Edinburgh during the year, plus other small items of income such as bank interest received. Virtually all the expenditure relates to printing, wrapping and posting our magazine, Notes, to you the membership. Costs are kept to a minimum; Notes is printed at the most economical place we could find and at a size where postage costs are not excessive, and all labour is provided free of charge by volunteers. Several people put in a lot of work to ensure the success of Scottish Photographers, and we hope you will continue to support us in 2011.

Stewart Shaw

## INCOME



## EXPENDITURE

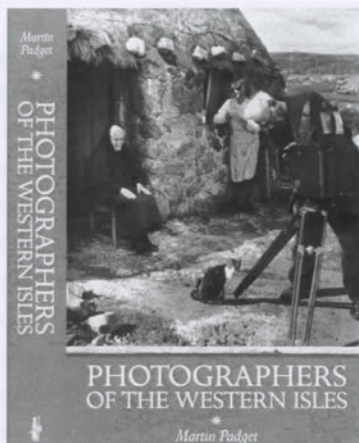




Carcase of a wild animal, probably Zebra (*Equus burchelli*), found near Hamilton.



# Book Review: Photographers of the Western Isles: Martin Padgett



It would perhaps be more correct to title this book – Photography in the Western Isles. While it is true that it deals with many of the eminent photographers who have sojourned in the Isles the main thrust of the book is not photographic. The majority of the text deals with the social, economic and political history of these islands as well as the mythology which surrounds them and their people. This is a trend which may be seen in many recent

photo historical books. The book covers photography and the author's view of its perceived impact on the island and the islanders. It contains short biographies of some of the eminent photographers involved such as Paul Strand, George Washington Wilson and such recent luminaries as Gus Wylie and Calum Angus Mackay plus thoughts on the nature and impact of their work. These appear to me to be a means to an end, as the author is more interested in the social history of the islands and in the way that artists, writers and photographers have created an image of the islands and its peoples which has been largely self-sustaining over many years. This mythology, apart from being untrue, shows two faces. We have the tough, resolute and simple living islanders scraping an existence at the margins of the "civilised" world – the "Adam and Eve" syndrome. On the other hand we have the lazy, indolent and greedy islanders always



Gus Wylie: Crofter, Tote, Skye.

ready to try to pull a fast one on the unsuspecting and gullible visitor rather than do an honest day's work for fair recompense. Both of these interpretations of the islanders' characteristics exist side by side. As the author correctly points out, neither is wholly true of the islanders any more than it would be of any human population. However it is well evidenced in the book that the relatively recent formation of local historical societies throughout the islands, many of which make considerable use of their photographic archives, has played a significant role in allowing the islanders to gain in self-awareness and self-confidence relating to the islands, the past generations and their own society.

I do find some of the author's comments on specific images and photographers both naïve and unjustified. This, I think, being due to his being a senior lecturer in English as opposed to a photohistorian. He appears

to forget that many of his subjects were professionals whose livelihoods depended on selling their work for the best possible price. It is a matter of complete irrelevance if the selling price was equal to the wages of a crofter for several months. Similarly Paul Strand is castigated for espousing the socialist dream of the early 20th century that through art and literature the world could be changed for the better and be more egalitarian. How many of the readers of this will recall their dreams of the 60s when we too thought we could change the world and its social order. Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changing" was not just another pop song then. The author does make some very valid points about those photographers from without the islands trying to impose their own view of the islands on to their images by their choice of subject matter. However this is a problem common to all photographers and few would debate that what we photograph is as much determined by who we are and what we believe as what sits before our cameras.

As an amateur historian I thoroughly enjoyed this book and found the sections dealing with St Kilda and Calum Angus Mackay particularly interesting; the latter being based on a number of interviews which the author had conducted with Calum. There were also some very illuminating and entertaining background details on some of those whose portraits are well known to many of us. However at £30 a copy members would have to be sure that they would get similar enjoyment and useful background from this as I did before venturing to their local bookstore.

**Donald Stewart**



Paul Strand : Archie MacDonald, South Uist



## Portfolio 1988 - 2010

As if it wasn't bad enough to lose Beyond Words and Borders and the City Classics CD shop in Glasgow, *Portfolio* magazine has now gone. Actually 'Magazine' is an understatement for such a lavishly produced publication and the title on the cover always had it as *Contemporary Photography in Britain*.



It wasn't always so. The first *Portfolio* was entirely in black and white and was published in 1988 at the end of the eighties, that surprisingly active decade for photography in Scotland. It contained an article about Ruth Stirling whose exhibition, *Passages*, opened Portfolio, the gallery, during the Edinburgh Festival that year. There were two whole A4 pages of Listings, photographic exhibitions in apparently every town and city in the land, something that is quite unknown today. Murray Johnston interviewed Lindsay Gordon (Art Director at the then Scottish Arts Council), Roberta McGrath reviewed books by Joseph McKenzie and Oscar Marzaroli and there was an advert for an inspirational Thomas Joshua Cooper workshop at Hospitalfield. The final edition, #52, has work from Patricia McDonald, Dalziel + Scullion, Sarah Lynch and Richard Learoyd maintaining a Scottish connection but as befits a British magazine most of the contributors have come from furth of the border.

The loss of the Jerwood Award, heavily supported by Portfolio has been another blow to photography. Back numbers of Portfolio are available from [www.portfoliocatalogue.com](http://www.portfoliocatalogue.com)

There have been recent exhibitions from **Aglaya Polomarchuk** in Berlin, **Stefan Syrowatka** in London, **Iain McLean** on the Holy Isle, Arran, **Douglas McBride** at the Scottish Crannog Centre and also the Lyceum, Edinburgh. **Elisabet Thorin** and **Harry Magee** had pictures in the RGI exhibition in the Mitchell Library while **Tina Vanderwerf** had work in the RSA Open exhibition and The Discerning Eye Exhibition in the Mall in London. **Anne Crabbe** exhibited 'Stuff of Dreams' in Watford, **Caroline Dear** took part in Conserving Ecologies at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh during December and **Madeleine Shepherd** showed cyanotypes in the RM Art Gallery in Edinburgh.

Award winning photographer **Alicia Bruce** spent the summer of 2010 collaborating with residents of the Menie estate, an area of natural beauty situated 20 minutes north of Aberdeen. The residents' homes are under threat of compulsory purchase as Trump International starts construction of a golf course, hotel, and housing development with plans to re-name Menie 'The Great Dunes of Scotland'. The exhibition presents a humane story about people and place, an observance of conflicted territory and those who inhabit it. Exhibition runs 15 January - 26 February

More books, blogs and web sites continue to appear. The director Michael Prince has made a short film for the BBC about **Alex Boyd's** 'Sonnets': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqoB7bnd26o>. **Virginia Khuri** has published her 'Seven Generations' project begun more than twenty years ago! She had to wait for the last grandchild (one of the Seventh generation) to be born. You can see a few pages of it on: <http://www.blurb.com/books/1605819>. Interesting to see that Blurb is so popular - even names like Brian Griffin and Paul Caponigro appear in their



lists. **David Gillanders** lets us know that he has set up a web blog to share his experiences with Wet Plate Collodion work. He uploads videos and images as the work evolves. [www.Davidjgillanders.wordpress.com](http://www.Davidjgillanders.wordpress.com). **Andrea Ingram** has a very entertaining site with blogs, Boxes and Bellows, [www.bboxesbellows.blogspot](http://www.bboxesbellows.blogspot). **George Logan's** site, [www.scottish-photography.co.uk](http://www.scottish-photography.co.uk), is a highly professional one with a thoughtful blog in spite of its name - 'Occasional Ramblings with a Camera'

toiled to his wise ruminations on photography and life.

**Paul Hill's** book, *Corridor of Uncertainty* has been published. 400 copies are available, 64 pages with 57 colour plates, £35.00 plus £4.99. A Collector's edition of 100 including an inkjet print costs £95.00 plus £4.99. Contact Dewi Lewis at [www.dewilewispublishing.com](http://www.dewilewispublishing.com).

**News of exhibitions, events web sites, blogs and books can be given an airing on our web site and SPEM. Contact [info@jamiemcateer.co.uk](mailto:info@jamiemcateer.co.uk) or [info@scottish-photographers.com](mailto:info@scottish-photographers.com). with full and accurate information that can be copied and pasted.**

The 'BJ', the British Journal of Photography, is a veritable institution and has recently been relaunched as a monthly magazine for a reasonable £15.00 per quarter. If you are a travel photographer or a fan of the National Geographic and don't take the BJ then you will have missed the valedictory article about the last roll of Kodachrome which Kodak presented to Steve McCurry and which he exposed with tender loving care.

While we wait with bated breath for news of a photography gallery in FifeSpace and the latest incarnation of the Scottish Photography Centre we are pleased to report that the *Hidden Lane Gallery* in Glasgow is thriving. The connection with Margaret Watkins is a strong and important one and with a seemingly endless archive of unprinted negatives, one which will hopefully keep **Robert Burns** in his dark room for a long time.

We are sad to record the deaths of **Alex Sharp** and **Tommy Law**. Tommy Law was a kenspeckle figure in the Glasgow club circuit and it is taken as read that if there is a Leica Club in heaven then Tommy will already have joined it. Alex Sharp was a photographer and master potter whose life frankly deserves a book, especially his work with Japanese potters. As well as his valuable skills in construction, those of us who volunteered to build the first Street Level were privileged to listen as we

## Portfolio Sessions

Bring along work, at any stage and in any form, to show to others.  
Discussion, advice and nonsense in equal measure.

GLASGOW: Meetings in Street Level from 6.45pm.  
Carl Radford [carl@carls-gallery.co.uk](mailto:carl@carls-gallery.co.uk). Meetings on the first Thursdays in February, June, September and November

INVERNESS: Matt Sillars: [matt.sillars@gmail.com](mailto:matt.sillars@gmail.com).

FIFE: Jenni Gudgeon: [jenni@redcabinstudio.co.uk](mailto:jenni@redcabinstudio.co.uk)  
30 January from 1.00 at Dunshalt Village Hall, near Auchtermuchty

EDINBURGH: Meetings in Stills, Cockburn Street 7pm  
David Buchanan [davidbphoto@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:davidbphoto@yahoo.co.uk)  
Next meeting Tuesday 22 Mar 2011



I got out the best china.  
"What a good granddaughter!"

Rowan Lear: 'This is what creates every adventure'.