British photography from the Thatcher years

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The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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Conservative "midsummer madness" party, from *The Cost of Living*. 1987-89

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BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE THATCHER YEARS

Within the last decade photography in Britain has experienced a renaissance. Throughout the twentieth century, the tradition of British photography has been plagued by a kind of fitfulness, and to a postwar American audience, photography in Britain appeared to consist of the work of Bill Brandt (1904-1983) and, to slightly more knowledgeable viewers, Roger Mayne (b. 1929) and Tony Ray-Jones (1941-1972). In 1973 John Szarkowski, director of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, described the situation from an American perspective when he wrote in *Looking at Photographs*:

> *For purposes of approximate truth, it might be said that the photographic tradition died in England sometime around 1905. . . . When [Bill] Brandt returned to London in the thirties, England had forgotten its rich photographic past, and showed no signs of seeking a photographic present.* [1]

While this statement caused something of a flap within the British photographic establishment, the truth it contained was not ignored. At the time Szarkowski's words were read as a chastening voice from outside, and subsequent writing about British photography by the British often included a reference to the comment, an accurate description of the state of British photography until 1970.[2] Of course commercial and artistic photographs were being made in Britain throughout the twentieth century, however they lacked a cohesive and visible context: they had not been organized into collections, published in books, orchestrated as exhibitions, or analyzed in doctoral theses.

Since 1980 British photography has assumed a new and vital identity. The work currently being produced varies greatly and parallels developments throughout the 1970s in the United States and elsewhere, and it includes photographs of studio constructions, darkroom manipulations, and choreographed narratives. But the tradition in British photography that has been most strongly developed in the last decade is that of the "social documentary." This work is about the quality of life in contemporary Britain. It is the result of a confluence of cultural and historical circumstances that occurred throughout the 1970s and came to fruition in the economic and social climate generated by the policies and legislation of the government of Margaret Thatcher, who became Britain's Prime Minister in 1979 and retired late in 1990.

Mrs. Thatcher and the Conservative party were reelected in 1983 and 1987, making her the Prime Minister who led the British people longer than anyone else in the twentieth century. She emerged as the boldest challenger to what she considered the destructive excess of Britain's welfare state, which requires high levels of taxation and ubiquitous state intervention. After moving Britain toward an American-style market economy in her first two terms, Thatcher introduced a series of cutbacks in education, public housing, and health-care benefits during her third term that undermined the welfare system established in the 1940s on the principle of "freedom from want."[3]

While conditions of poverty are endemic to any society, and the economic disparities between the classes in England existed long before the leadership of Margaret

Thatcher, the new cutbacks rendered those at the bottom of the economic scale more abject.[4] It is also true that since the election of Thatcher the middle class has increased significantly in Britain, so that an ever-expanding group now enjoys the comforts previously available only to a much smaller segment of the population. These changes in the quality of British life are profound, and touch the core of the identity of the British as citizens. They have affected as well those photographers committed to extending the tradition of social documentary photography.

Although current British social documentary photography began to evolve in the 1960s and came to fruition in the 1980s, to the American viewer it seemed to develop overnight. For the most part, this work was seen for the first time in America in books that became available beginning in the early 1980s. Since books of photographs usually involve a long period of preparation, these were to the discerning reader evidence of how intently, and for how long, British photographers had been enlivening their medium. Chris Killip published *In Flagrante* in 1988. Although he began the project in 1976, it took him thirteen years to complete the work and publish the book to his satisfaction. The photographers whose work is included here—Killip, Graham Smith, John Davies, Martin Parr, and Paul Graham—have among them published twelve books since 1980.

In 1976 British photography critic Gerry Badger published "On British Photography: Some Personal Thoughts," a thorough and insightful account of British photography, in *Untitled*, the bulletin of the Friends of Photography in Carmel, California.[5] Badger's article provided a fairly complete overview and interpretation of the photographic tradition in Britain. It described the British attitude toward photography as an art form, and analyzed the forces that affected British photography through the 1970s and, ultimately, the 1980s.

According to Badger, one of the major difficulties in forming a coherent British photographic tradition in the twentieth century was the lack of acceptance of the medium as an art form. While this attitude had prevailed in many countries, including the United States, the environment was more inhospitable, and for a longer period of time, in Britain. From the turn of the century until the 1970s British galleries and museums rarely mounted photography exhibitions and very few photography books were published. It was not until 1966 that *Shadow and Light*, a retrospective volume of Bill Brandt's photographs, was published. There was no authoritative voice in Britain from which photographers might learn or against which they might react. There existed, for example, no moral support of photography, such as that provided to some degree in the United States by The Museum of Modern Art, which started collecting photographs in 1930, and by George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, which began its photography collection in 1949. Nor did Britain have the benefit, as did Americans, of the work of such pioneering figures as Alfred Stieglitz and Beaumont Newhall.[6] It was not until 1976 that London's Victoria and Albert Museum created the new position of Assistant Keeper of Photographs. The Royal Photographic Society, founded in 1853 as The Photographic Society of London, held its collections in several largely inaccessible locations until they reassembled them in 1971.

The second major obstacle, as Badger saw it, and one not so unusual within the ragged history of the medium, was the reluctance to accept what he termed the "straight photographic aesthetic" over the aesthetics of "the traditional, academic, graphic media."[7] He defined "straight" as "the employment of the raw, basically mechanistic recording faculty of the camera, though with an expressive rather than functional end in mind." By the second half of the twentieth century this aesthetic had been confined in England to the pages of newspapers and magazines such as *The Picture Post*, *Weekly Illustrated*, and *The Daily Mirror*:

> *The documentary tradition... was confined in the main to the mass circulation journals, the product of a hard-edged and hard-boiled system which remained principally the province of the* player, *the working professional.*[8]

In the 1920s and 1930s the magazines provided new opportunities for photographers, but in time the pressures and restrictions of group journalism curtailed the photographer's creative power. Photographs were used to illustrate particular ideas of the editors, and their look was determined by the graphics of the two-page spread. This unsympathetic milieu worked against the possibility of the photographer either regarding himself as an artist, or being accepted as one.

One photographer whose personal work survived the obligations of his career as a photojournalist was Tony Ray-Jones (1941-1972). During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Ray-Jones, after studying in the United States with Alexey Brodovitch, returned to England and documented various aspects of English life. Ray-Jones's view went beyond the surface of photographic description to express a wonder and fascination with British mores. His work was widely reproduced and eventually published in a monograph, *A Day Off* (1974). Having identified in his pictures that which is particularly English, he was perceived as an *English* photographer, and to the generation of British photographers born at the end of World War II, his life and work were a particular inspiration. Among other photojournalists who emerged as independent voices during the 1960s were Donald McCullin and Chris Steele-Perkins.

In Britain the high-art tradition of photography was historically the province of amateurs and was securely based in Britain's rich literary tradition. In the nineteenth century it included the allegorical photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron, Oscar Rejlander, Henry Peach Robinson, and the illustrations of Peter Henry Emerson. In the twentieth century the elaborately arranged portraits of Cecil Beaton and pictures by other society photographers such as Lord Snowden comprised its ranks.

Nevertheless, documentary photography has had a long, continuous tradition in Great Britain. In the nineteenth century British photographers documented life in the countries England ruled. They made portraits, architectural views, and topographical studies for sale in Great Britain to an avid audience whose insatiable curiosity for information and whose passion for collecting were well-served by photography. So intense was England's desire for a photographic record of "the other" and the experiences of Britons overseas, that as early as 1855 it was recommended that British cadets assigned to India be instructed in photography. The documentation of "the other" was not restricted to those on distant shores. England's economic system, grounded in the hierarchy of social class, fueled the impulse to observe those outside one's particular and familiar social station.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, photographer John Thomson and writer Adolphe Smith published the first major sociological text about British life to be illustrated with photographs, *Street Life in London* (1877). A classic of social reform, this nongovernment project was published in twelve monthly installments at a price the workers, who were depicted in its pages, could afford. The authors' intention was to portray the working conditions, homes, and families of a variety of laborers, including pushcart peddlers and dustmen. For the most part the occupations were of a "dead-end, soul-fatiguing kind."[9] Around the same time Dr. Thomas Bernardo, who ran schools and homes for destitute and wayward children, used photographs to identify his wards and displayed them as an aid to raise funds for his social work.

This use of photography to observe and record others continued into the twentieth century. Mass Observation was a project conceived in 1937 by a group of upper-middle-class intellectuals, including several anthropologists. Their idea was to observe the British people as they "really" were, as opposed to the way they were represented by the mass media and in the rhetoric of politicians. Eventually Mass Observation attracted 1,500 observers, mainly writers, painters, poets, sociologists, and a handful of photographers. Reports by the group were published by Faber (*May the Twelfth*, a survey of the British on Coronation Day 1937) and Penguin (*Britain by Mass Observation*, 1939). Photographs by Mass Observation were published in *The Picture Post*.

Most notable among the precursors to contemporary social documentary work are the photographs by Bill Brandt. Made in the 1930s in London, Newcastle, and Sheffield, in the homes of coal miners and the English upper-class, they were published as *The English at Home* (1936). Brandt was a major force in British photography, and his influence cannot be overestimated. Born in Germany in 1904 (his father was a British subject), the son of cultured parents who gave young Brandt and his brother drawing lessons, he decided in 1927 to become a photographer. After training with a portrait photographer in Vienna, Brandt worked in the studio of Man Ray in Paris for about three months in 1929. There he was introduced to the films of the French Surrealists and the photographs of Atget. Returning to England in 1931, he worked as a photojournalist. Brandt's photographs are characterized by chiaroscuro printing techniques and the integration of a realistic style with theatrical illusion. As a photographic artist in Britain, Brandt was an anomaly. Perhaps it is

the consistency of his vision across a range of subjects—portraiture, studies of the English classes, landscapes—and his studies of the female nude, published as *Perspectives of Nudes* (1967), that established for Britons the idea of a photographer as a creative force. Brandt's life and work as an artist set an example for subsequent generations of British photographers.

A variety of sources and influences led to a resurgence of serious photographic activity in Britain after nearly half a century. *Creative Camera* magazine was founded in the mid-1960s.[10] The March 1967 issue stated the purpose of the magazine: "to present the best of international creative photography," and contained a portfolio of photographs by Alvin Langdon Coburn, work by Aaron Siskind, three Polish photographers, and several Britons. It has continued to bring to a British audience the photographs of a diverse group of significant figures from photography's history—Eugène Atget, Edward Weston, Harry Callahan, Paul Strand, and a generous representation of newer work by radical visionaries such as Lee Friedlander and Diane Arbus.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s *Creative Camera* presented several important Museum of Modern Art projects. (It should be reiterated here that the museum's program regarding photography was unique, and that its commitment to the medium, although limited, was unmatched by that of any other art institution. By default its voice was the only institutional one speaking.) Szarkowski's 1966 book *The Photographer's Eye*, widely regarded as the medium's best primer of the "straight photographic aesthetic," was excerpted in text and pictures in the July 1967 issue of *Creative Camera*. Peter Bunnell, former associate curator at The Museum of Modern Art, published his article "Photographs for Collectors" in the January 1969 issue. The next month Szarkowski's article "Photography in the Mass Media" was published, and in the same issue, Bunnell's article "Photographer as Printmaker." "Photo Eye of the 20s," an exhibition organized for the museum by Beaumont Newhall, the department's first curator, was presented in the October 1970 issue. As *Creative Camera* and the British photographic establishment began to form identities of their own, it became less essential for the magazine to report the Department of Photography's activities with such regularity.

In addition to the museum's publication program, as it appeared in the pages of *Creative Camera*, the exhibitions of the museum's Department of Photography figured prominently in the introduction of a straight photographic aesthetic within the British photographic community. In 1969 Szarkowski mounted the first retrospective exhibition of the photographs of Bill Brandt. The exhibition, the first photography show to be sponsored by the Arts Council of Great Britain, traveled to the Hayward Gallery in London in 1970 and toured over the next year to some eleven venues across Britain including stops in Newport, Newcastle, Aberdeen, Middlesborough and Oxford. It was not until this moment that Brandt's position in British photographic history was secured. Among the exhibitions organized by the museum that traveled to England in the 1970s was "New Photography USA," which arrived at The Photographers' Gallery in 1972. It included work from the museum's "New Documents" show by photographers Lee Friedlander, Diane Arbus, and Garry Winogrand, as well as work by Bruce Davidson, Ray Metzger, Jerry Uelsmann, and others. It was seen in Sheffield, London, and Cambridge. Other Museum of Modern Art exhibitions that were brought to London in the 1970s included "Lee Friedlander" (1974), "Walker Evans" in 1976, and "Edward Weston" in 1977.

In 1970 The Photographers' Gallery opened in the heart of London under the direction of Sue Davies, and through the exhibition and sale of the work of a wide range of international photographers, it helped create an audience for photography in England. Over the past two decades the gallery has held some 150 major exhibitions, as well as countless smaller shows. The photographs of Walker Evans, W. Eugene Smith, Florence Henri, William Klein, Imogen Cunningham, Helen Levitt, and hundreds more have been on view there. Among the thematic exhibitions were "Concerned Photographers I" (1971), "The Press Show" (1973), "European Color" (1978), and "Modern British Photography" (1981). Many of the exhibitions in this eclectic roster of shows traveled throughout England under the auspices of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

With the creation of The Photographers' Gallery and the inauguration of photography exhibitions at the Victoria and Albert Museum, British photographers had the opportunity to see the quality of vintage prints and to understand and be rejuvenated by the achievements

of their predecessors. Additionally, the experiments of their contemporaries could be seen as a challenge. Photographers encountered new ideas about print quality, and by seeing photographs on a wall, scale and sequence could be considered for a space other than that of magazine pages.

Other galleries and exhibition spaces for photography opened during the 1970s, including the Half Moon Gallery, later Camerawork, in London and the Impressions Gallery in York. One that had a decidedly positive influence on the continuation of a social documentary tradition of photography was the Side Gallery in Newcastle. It was organized in 1977 by Amber Associates, a group of photographers and filmmakers, among them Chris Killip and Graham Smith, who had been working in the North East of England since 1970-71. The function of the photo gallery was "to encourage local photographers, and indeed others of merit from outside the region, to work in the North East on projects, exhibitions and commissions with the support of the Side."[11]

As a result, a regional archive was formed through the purchase of this commissioned work. In addition to exhibiting the photographs of historical figures such as Brandt, Sander, and Evans, the gallery showed the work of contemporary documentary photographers including Ian MacDonald, Markéta Luskačová, Paul Trevor, and Magnum photographers Gilles Peress and Susan Meiselas, and many others. The Side Gallery has been responsible for touring dozens of the exhibitions it commissioned and/or organized.

The final ingredient needed in the formula for a British photographic renaissance was money. The Arts Council of Great Britain, a government agency similar to the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States, appointed a photography officer in the early 1970s. Over the next twenty years the Arts Council provided subsidies to publish books, funded exhibitions, and commissioned dozens of photographers to make pictures in Britain.

While the photographs reproduced here are "social documentary" in nature, it is important to distinguish them from traditional social documentary photography. The essential difference is one of intention: the work of traditional documentarians was conceived in order to precipitate a change in the social order; however, the work of the photographers included here is not. If asked directly whether the purpose of their work is to bring about social reform, each of these photographers would reply that it is not, but that if such change would occur because of their photographs, they would be glad to see it.

This transition in intention might be better understood if it is compared to a similar one that occurred in the United States at the end of the 1960s. The "New Documents" exhibition, organized in 1967 by John Szarkowski at The Museum of Modern Art, presented the work of Arbus, Friedlander, and Winogrand. According to Szarkowski, the photographs included in the show represented a shift in the use of documentary photography from social reform to more personal ends: "Their aim has been not to reform life, but to know it."[12] The exhibition established the "documentary" approach of these photographers as a means of personal expression, and was a watershed event in the development of postwar photography. (Photographs by Arbus, Friedlander, and Winogrand from the same period were included in Szarkowski's exhibition "New Photography USA," which traveled to England in 1972.) Just as the work of the photographers in "New Documents" reflected the effects of broader social issues, the work reproduced in *British Photography from the Thatcher Years* concerns public issues (unemployment, use of the land, and social mores); yet the photographs in both exhibitions originate from each photographer's intuitions about what is most worth looking at.

The current radical changes in British life have charged these photographers with an artistic mandate to look closely at the people and at the landscape in which they live. While the earlier British documentarians photographed the "other," those outside their social class, and generally of a station less fortunate than theirs, these photographers embrace what is closest to them. Their work reflects an affection for their country and fellow citizens that is unflinching in its description of the country's most extreme ills and the complex manifestations of economic change that are restructuring its society.

The second factor that differentiates their photographs from the work of previous generations is a loss of faith in the power of what has come to be understood as traditional documentary photography. The American

Lewis Hine is regarded as preeminent among social documentarians. Hine made pictures of workers and the effects of brutal working conditions specifically to improve their lives by changing the laws that determined how they were treated. As documents, Hine's photographs appear to be uninflected by his opinions and to provide irrefutable evidence of unfair labor practices. The seemingly effortless style of Hine's documentary photographs belie the intelligence, talent, and intuition required to make them. Many of the clichéd, simplistic photographs made in the name of social reform within subsequent documentary work owe much to a misunderstanding of the complexities of Hine's work. While the work reproduced here is a link in the chain of British social documentary photography, its place in photography's history reflects a more sophisticated understanding of how photography can be used, and how complicated modern social issues are. For Hine and other early documentary photographers, social problems were clearly defined, making obvious the path to improvement. In this new British work the world described is often a place where the victims are not only victims, but perpetrators. It is not easy to point a finger. It is the complexity of current British society that is manifested in the new British social documentary work.

In a 1987 article in *The New York Times* about the state of Britain under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, Howell Raines wrote:

> *One effect has been an uneven distribution along a "North-South divide" that cleaves England into two distinct regions of decline and prosperity. The old industrial cities of central and northern England are pockets of decay, while London and the "home counties" of southeast England surf along on the lead wave of the Thatcher boom.*[13]

Chris Killip photographs in Newcastle and Graham Smith makes pictures in Middlesbrough, both in northeastern England, a "region of decline." In 1980 the Arts Council of Great Britain published Killip's first book of photographs, *Isle of Man*. Killip, who was raised on the Isle of Man and so has an intimate knowledge of his subject, offers a photographic portrait of life there and of the staunch moral fiber of its people. When it was published a decade ago, the book called attention to a way of life that was passing. For Killip the Isle of Man is a place where generations of families have farmed the land and sustained the traditions of his forbearers with dignity and grace. In his introduction, the social commentator and novelist John Berger describes their way of life as being under threat from wealthy outsiders who purchase the island's houses and land as tax write-offs. The pictures follow the ideas developed by Paul Strand in his photographic series on the people and town of Luzzara, Italy, published in the early 1950s. Strand's profound respect for the people in front of his camera led him to make portraits that for the most part are devoid of personality. His subjects appear dignified, but rather lifeless, as though they are demonstrating someone else's idea of who they are.

Killip describes the harsh beauty of the landscape of the Isle of Man movingly. Although he is honorable in his intentions and respectful of his subjects, the people described in his pictures look as though they might have been called in from central casting. They wear the costume of the farmer, the inevitable cap and sweater, and bear the wrinkles and pride of the hard-working, but they do not seem to possess an identifiable individuality. One may attribute the limited success of the photographs to Killip's youth: he began the project in 1970, when he was twenty-four.

Killip's 1988 book, *In Flagrante*, also has as its nominal subject a specific people and place. However, the two books differ significantly in the way the photographs tell a story. As a book of photographs the *Isle of Man* is quite conventional. The photographs are presented in standard monographic fashion, one picture to a page, each picture the same size. They are sequenced by alternating pictures of the land with pictures of the people. The meaning created by this order inextricably binds the people to the place, even though one rarely sees any people in the landscape.

In Flagrante uses a similar but more sophisticated documentary style to express Killip's anger. The result is a bitter poem. In Killip's view Newcastle is a place of unrelenting despair where an irrevocable, unidentifiable force has undermined the individual lives pictured. In his photographs we see punk boys smashed against each other in a brainless, frenzied dance of fury; a young girl, whose face is older than her years, plays with a hula-hoop in a debris-littered landscape; a rain-drenched gaggle of protestors waits during the 1974 coal miners'

strike. Nearly half of the fifty pictures include children or adolescents; the remainder are of adults, the place itself, or its details. The narrative of the book—determined by the selection and sequence of pictures—is woven in a complex interlocking of pictures.

The children who dominate the pages of *In Flagrante* stand little chance of a future different from the realized lives of their parents. Whatever glimmer of innocence and pleasure we catch in their faces is obliterated by succeeding pictures of hopeless teens and adults. We are persuaded that the emblematic weight of each picture represents the failure of those with power to contend with the terrible reality of a post-industrial Britain. The cumulative work is Killip's cry of rage, a deeply original expression of his commitment as a social documentary photographer.

The question is what happened between the publication of *Isle of Man* in 1980, and *In Flagrante* in 1988 to encourage Killip's photographic development. Killip cites the 1974 miner's strike, which broke the back of the miner's union, as the event that galvanized him politically. But for Killip and the other photographers in this catalogue, what transpired was not only personal but universal: Britain's photographic scene evolved in response to the changes in the political and social environment. Killip projects himself into the story by placing his shadow in the first and last pictures of the book. By doing so, he compels us to consider these pictures and their story as a fiction and as an expression of himself as much as he wants them to stand for a testament to life in post-industrial England.

It has been held by many social-documentary photographers that it is necessary to know the people one photographs: the photographer should live among his subjects and befriend them, gaining thereby an intimate knowledge that will do justice to the place or people photographed. This idea discounts the successes of such photographers as Robert Frank and Garry Winogrand, whose best pictures were often made away from home, in alien settings they were passing through. They made pictures that, although candid, precisely defined the character of the place they were visiting. It is nevertheless true that a trust between photographer and subject, whether instantaneous or developed over time, allows the subject to reveal something of his inner self to the photographer, and ultimately to the viewer.

The cast of characters in the photographs of Graham Smith are his friends and relations, including his mother and father. For over a decade, Smith has photographed in Middlesbrough, England, where he was born and raised. In a statement referring to this work, Smith wrote that his photographs are an attempt to understand the people who have surrounded him throughout his life, and, in turn, to know himself: "It might be that I'm using the camera as a way of looking at friends, family, people from their past, and, in turn, my background."[14]

Like the other photographers connected to the Side Gallery, Smith strongly believes that in order to make pictures with conviction it is essential to know his subjects. In 1979 Smith wrote the following for a catalogue that included his photographs,

> *The group I worked with (Amber Associates) has for the last ten years concerned itself with creating a lifestyle around independent film and photographic production in the North East. The keystone of our production is "commitment" to a chosen region (with emphasis on the working class). The style is unashamedly documentary in its basis. We maintain that documentary can be extremely personal and feel it unfortunate that the word has become synonymous with factual journalism. We see ourselves as artists working within that tradition which might be described as a "creative interpretation of reality."*[15]

The photographs in Smith's documentation of this depressed, disadvantaged community in northeastern England include a variety of subjects: people at work and on the street, and later at leisure, enjoying themselves in the local pub—a stage on which the drama of their individual lives is played out. As Smith sees it, the pubs are used "by those who live on the edge, whose future is the next good time, the next good drink."[16] There imagination is released, a rousing good argument is held, and personas are temporarily transformed. One of the photographs in this series, *The Commercial, South Bank, Middlesbrough*, shows two men and a woman seated at a table. Their delicately held cigarettes, braced between fingers a bit too cautiously, and their half-closed eyes, are details of the oblivion that sets in

after many drinks. The woman, centered between them and with her arm resting on the man to her left, bears a faint resemblance to Elizabeth Taylor in the 1950s. The face of the man recalls that of Robert Mitchum. In conversation Smith affectionately refers to the picture by using the names of these Hollywood stars. The allusion is not without meaning, for it refers to the pursuit of identity, and the dreams, large and small, we all hold.

There is a pervasive physicality in these pubs that is reflected in Smith's use of a large-format camera and its flash attachment. The worn edges of a table, the details of a pattern, the glints of light on drinking glasses, and wrinkles of skin are drawn with fidelity in his prints. As photographic description, they comprise a kind of evidence of the experience in the pub, a public place where seeing and being seen and animated social interaction prevail. As a group, the pictures achieve a sense of intense, compacted longing that strains against its surroundings. In *The Dreams All Gone, Irish Club, Middlesbrough*, a young woman looks at the camera with an expression of despair as a drunken man weighs heavily on her shoulder. Although pretty and young, her entrapment appears complete.

Until 1981 John Davies photographed the natural landscape of the British Isles, particularly in remote areas such as the West Coast of Ireland. Davies studied photography at the Trent Polytechnic in Nottingham, England, with Thomas Joshua Cooper, a follower of the American photographer and teacher Minor White. The subjects of White's photographs made from 1950 to the 1970s were never chosen for their literal meaning, but for the congruence White found between his emotions and the form he discovered in his pictures. The landscape—the nominal subject of many of White's and Cooper's photographs—was also a symbol of their emotions. This led to a mystification of the landscape, and of photography. While Davies rejected the White/Cooper approach to subject matter upon graduating from college in 1974, he continued to photograph the English landscape untouched by man. Davies has said:

> *I thought I was committing a political act in making pictures in which I wanted people to experience this respect for the land, a respect which people like Margaret Thatcher don't seem to have. But I decided to get away from this Romantic landscape because I felt the pictures were mostly appreciated by viewers who appreciate that sort of thing anyway.*[17]

In 1981 Davies received a fellowship that took him to Sheffield, a major urban center in central England, where his interest in the urban landscape began. Since then his subject has continued to be the uneasy relationship between the bucolic English countryside and its cities and towns, and to the architectural remnants of post-industrial England. In the broadest sense, Davies's photographs describe a landscape in constant transition, a landscape that is relevant because it is the one in which we live, the one with which we must reckon. While Davies says the motivation for this early work was political, the pictures themselves have no overt political content. His photographs made since 1981, however, indicate a sharp eye for the telling details of economic change and society's adjustment, or attempt to accommodate its manifestations.

In order to describe this accommodation Davies employs two important tactics. The first is to use a large-format camera, which combines a seamless description with great detail. The second is to make his pictures from a high vantage point so that the perspective is one in which the viewer stands at middle distance. Davies says:

> *You could see how things work in relationship to one another, whereas down in the street all you can see is buildings around you, you can't see what is behind or whether there is a railway behind houses unless you walk around. From a high view point you can see all these things at once. Not in as much detail, but you can see them as symbols of things.*[18]

The middle-distance viewpoint also creates the sense that one is seeing things objectively—getting the full story. Also, the large-format camera appears to describe without prejudice. The discordance is fully seen and felt when one compares the details. In Davies's photographs each detail within the frame is given equal visual weight, creating a sense of overall harmony between nature and man.

In the foreground of his photograph *Durham Ox Public House, Sheffield, Yorkshire, 1981* we see a lone pub, the architectural stalwart of British social life, at the intersection of two superhighways, covered by the great shadow of a series of immense buildings. At the

middle of the picture, raked by bright sun, is a sprawling urban landscape dotted with high-rise apartment blocks. Above the city, which fills the frame to the horizon line, we see an expansive, bright sky. Our initial impression is of breathtaking beauty and grandeur. When we look into the picture's details, however, we pause. The city is like an ocean enveloping the countryside, razing everything in its path. The pub stands like a bastion, its existence threatened by its solitary location. Since it is no longer in a neighborhood, the pub's only clients are those people who race the superhighways lining its sides.

Like the American photographer Robert Adams, whose subject is also the relationship between people and their landscape, Davies believes the landscape will endure. By bringing our attention to the places in which we live, he shows us in his photographs how we have accommodated our needs to the natural integrity of the land, or how we have failed to do so.

Martin Parr, who studied photography at the Manchester Polytechnic, cites the publication of several of Chris Killip's photographs from the *In Flagrante* project in *Creative Camera* as the event that excited him to greater confidence as a social documentary photographer. Parr has published five books of his own photographs, each characterized by a persistently dry sense of humor as indicated by their titles: *The Last Resort* (1986), a study of Britons at the seaside; *The Cost of Living* (1989), a study of Britain's expanding middle class; and *Bad Weather* (1982), photographs of Britons coping with the country's often inclement weather conditions.[19] The humor of Parr's photographs is in sync with the British literary tradition of satirical writers, including Jonathan Swift, William Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, and Evelyn Waugh, whose caustic wit lampooned England's social hypocrisy, landed aristocracy, and political institutions.

The most striking aspect of Parr's work, when considered within the tradition of social documentary photography, is that it is in color. While color had been used by a few social documentarians in the past, the unreliability of the materials discouraged most photographers interested in documenting the "truth" from using it. The color rendered was inaccurate to the point of being surreal, especially when compared to the real world. Additionally, documentary photographs were in black and white because they were made for publication, and the technology of color reproduction was unreliable. Until the early 1970s color was used in advertising and nature photography, not because it more accurately described these subjects, but because it made them alluring and hyperreal.

It was in the 1970s that color film and printing papers began to improve in response to an expanding amateur market of snapshooters, and a younger generation of serious photographers, who lacked the skepticism of their predecessors, began to experiment with its possibilities. The movies, which had been persuasively made in color since the 1940s, and color television, available to the general public since the 1960s, influenced their enthusiasm. To this younger group, color offered a more accurate description of contemporary life. To a photographer such as Parr it was essential to the meaning of his pictures.

Parr's subject, Britain's middle class, is especially suited to description in color. Clothes, shopping bags, newly built houses, furniture, and food take on a vitality not available with black-and-white film. The seductiveness of their absolute newness charge Parr's work with the energy of his protagonists' pursuits. His vivid colors describe with precision the new-found materialism of contemporary Britons as they spend their money and pursue their recreation. The middle class is a relatively new subject within photography. Previous generations of social documentarians were more interested in the extremes of economic classes, either the very rich or the very poor, largely because of their potential for drama and exoticism. Brandt's 1930s London project includes photographs of the middle class, but it is those of the upper and lower we most remember.

As Britain's middle class expands, more people can afford the amenities that contribute to a comfortable life, and the system devises methods of how they might spend their money. As more and more people immerse themselves in middle-class comfort, the stakes are escalated and aspirations turn from mere material goods to other rewards of the upwardly mobile: status through club memberships, social activities, and education. While Parr's photographs document these phenomena, he does not lose track of the individual. The photograph of the young public (private) school boy being

embraced by his mother describes a delicate young man in uniform who looks at the camera with a steadfast, insolent gaze as though to say, "I've got it made, and you, dear viewer, do not." Another of his uniformed species stands to his left, suggesting that this young man exists in other varieties.

The worry on the profiled face of the young father surrounded by his wife and children expresses the weight of all fathers who feel concern for their families. He and his charges appear stranded in the landscape of a newly created housing project. The men who built it appear at ease inside one of the houses; the father and his family wait outside the gates, so to speak, seeking and debating asylum.

It is important that a sense of the individual emerges in Parr's pictures, otherwise we might regard these photographs merely as a satire of increasingly self-centered contemporary life. By locating the individual within the cultural and economic conditions that engulf this new middle class, Parr poses challenging questions. How do we come to terms with new-found prosperity? What are our values? In documenting this new society, not yet weary of its opportunities, Parr thrusts the question back to the individual viewer of his pictures (most likely a member of the middle class) who must decide for himself or herself how they will be a player.

As the youngest of the photographers whose work is included in the exhibition, Paul Graham has strayed farthest from the conventional vocabulary of social-documentary photography. In a sense his relative youth has given him the option to exercise artistic license. In addition to making his photographs in color, Graham has printed them in radically varying sizes (from 8 by 10 inches to 60 by 45 inches), and thought of them less as discrete objects to be appreciated individually, than as an installation to be experienced as an environment.

Like many other photographers of his generation, Graham's photographs are conceived as wall pictures rather than for reproduction in books or magazines, the traditional venue for social documentary work. While the exhibition of documentary photographs in galleries and museums appears contradictory to the aim of social documentary photographers—the dissemination of their work to the widest possible audience—it is partially resolved by their persistence in publishing their photographs in books. More importantly, in this series of photographs made in Northern Ireland Graham has attempted to consider his subject obliquely, rather than head-on, and by so doing has risked obscuring his intention.

In the past Graham has worked in a fairly conventional manner. His book *Beyond Caring* (1986) is a straightforward documentation of the demoralizing conditions in social service offices across Britain. While the photographs are also in color, and are printed up to 27 by 35 inches, the subject is readily accessible. His book *Troubled Land* (1987) makes a somewhat greater demand on the viewer. Each picture in this series of color photographs of the landscape of Northern Ireland bears traces of the conflict between the various factions of the I.R.A., the Catholic population, the Protestant population, and the occupying British forces. Upon first viewing, these pictures of the pastoral countryside are benign and lovely to look at. Closer inspection reveals, however, evidence of prior violence, the continuing British presence, or simply recognition of the omnipresence of the relentless conflict. For example, a panoramic view of a distant coastal town, Warrenpoint, is seen from the vantage point of an approaching road. The photograph includes, in the near distance, an army stop-and-search of a passenger car. This activity is a small detail in the larger picture. In fact, the subject of these photographs is Northern Ireland's enduring physical beauty, where life continues despite a ubiquitous violence. As an English photographer working in Northern Ireland, Graham is an outsider. As an English citizen whose government has occupied Ireland on and off for centuries, his responsibility is clear. He takes his role of photographer-as-citizen seriously; it is, in fact a prime motivator of his work.

The photographs in the series *In Umbra Res* ("in the shadow of it") are a logical artistic progression for Graham, who has steadily moved away from straight documentary pictures toward photographs whose meanings are locked in their symbolic potential. The subjects of the sixteen pictures in the project are common enough—among them, a man looking up, a worn countertop, and a commercial wedding portrait in a shop window. It is not their ordinariness that is of particular interest: most of photography is about looking at the ordinary. It is the casualness with which Graham pho-

tographs them. His pictures are often out of focus, or partially blurred. The lighting is usually available light and therefore minimal, or it is supplied by the camera's flash, and therefore hyperbolic. The result is a series of pictures that are both intuitive and expressionistic. As viewers, we feel we are seeing the immediate and overall impression the subject has made on Graham, and, at the same time, the symbolic content—the stereotypical characters and style of the photographs—seem to objectify Graham's inner experience. In the photograph of the green countertop, the foreground of the picture is out of focus, leading the viewer to the sharply defined portion of the counter where, among the names, numbers, and other notations is etched the word "religion." The picture of bricks pressed between the pavement and the skid is purely symbolic. The young woman feverishly inhaling her cigarette expresses the anxiety implicit in other photographs in the series. The overall impression made by these pictures is one of an omnipresent tension that has crept into the very fiber of a place in which daily life is permeated by an insidious, unseen enemy.

While these photographs are, for the most part, inspired by Britain's particular social condition, they reflect the creative power of a photography that looks at the world directly. It is heartening to know there is a younger generation of Britons working in this style—Anna Fox, Tom Wood, Paul Reas, and Nick Waplington, to name but four. Theirs is a photographic lifeline based in the origins of the medium.

The five photographers whose work is reproduced here are united by their exploration of life in Britain today. They bring to their work radically different intuitions about what is to be photographed. As a generation they formed their individual styles of working during a time when photography in Britain was again being reconsidered as an art form. Their effort has required a fierce commitment, independence, and a faith in the potentials of the medium.

NOTES

1. John Szarkowski, *Looking at Photographs* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1973), p. 120.

2. See Gerry Badger, "On British Photography: Some Personal Thoughts," *Untitled*, no. 14 (Carmel: Friends of Photography, 1978), pp. 43-61. An updated and revised version of this account was published by Badger in 1989 as *Through the Looking Glass: Photographic Art in Britain 1945-1989*, in a catalogue published in conjunction with an exhibition held in 1989 at the Barbican Art Gallery, London.

3. According to *The New York Times*, cutbacks in funding for the National Health Service, England's most venerated social service institution, put 680,000 people on waiting lists for surgery as of December 1987, 100 of Britain's 192 district's health authorities were running out of money, and 3,500 hospital beds were closed during the same time. By 1987 unemployment had tripled to three million, almost 11 percent of the population. Cited in "Bowing to Foes, Thatcher Backs Health Fund," *The New York Times*, December 17, 1987, p. A18.

4. The government cut back a system that educates 93 percent of British children; provides free health care to all who want it; and supplies home nursing, meals, and free heat to elderly pensioners.

5. Badger, "On British Photography," pp. 43-61.

6. Alfred Stieglitz (American, 1864-1946) was among the most significant influences in American cultural life in the period before World War II. He was editor of *CameraWork*, director of the 291 Gallery and, later, of The Intimate Gallery and An American Place. However, it is as a photographer that his place among twentieth-century artists is firmly established. Beaumont Newhall (American, born 1908) was the cofounder, along with Ansel Adams, and the first curator of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1940-1943), and the curator and director of the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York (1958-1971). His catalog for the first survey exhibition of the history of photography, *Photography 1839-1937* (now in its fifth edition), has served as the classic text on the subject.

7. Badger, "On British Photography," pp. 43-61.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Publisher's note to 1969 edition of *Street Life in London*. Text by Adolphe Smith, photographs by John Thompson. Originally published in 1877, reprinted in 1969 by Benjamin Blom, Inc., New York and London (n.p.).

10. It was published by Colin Osman and edited by Bill Jay. Until 1968 it was called *Camera Owner*.

11. Brochure published by the Side Photographic Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne [n.d.].

12. John Szarkowski, exhibition wall label for "New Documents," February 28-May 7, 1967.

13. "Thatcher's Goal: A Changed Britain," Howell Raines, *The New York Times*, May 13, 1987.

14. Quoted in Gerry Badger and John Benton-Harris, *Through the Looking Glass: Photographic Art in Britain 1945-1989*, catalogue of the exhibition (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1989), p. 195.

15. Quoted in Paul Hill, Angela Kelly, John Tagg, *Three Perspectives on Photography*, catalogue of the exhibition (London: Hayward Gallery, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1979), p. 36.

16. Badger, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 195.

17. Quoted in an interview with Susan Butler, "Landscapes in Transition," *Creative Camera* (London), no. 251 (November 1985), pp. 16-23.

18. *Ibid.*

19. The photographs by Parr in the exhibition that accompanies this catalogue are selected from two bodies of work: *The Last Resort* and *The Cost of Living*.

PLATES

CHRIS KILLIP

GRAHAM SMITH

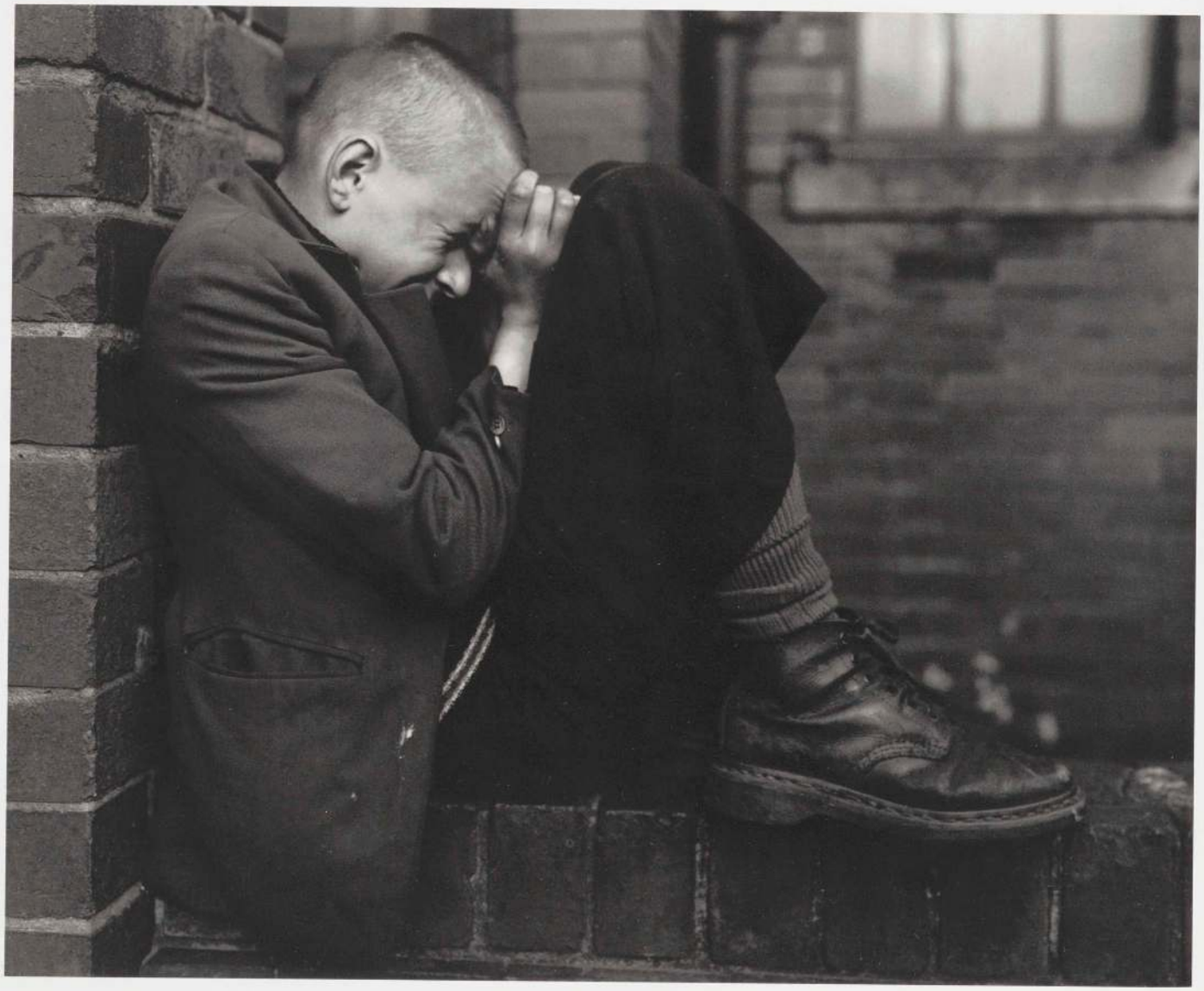
JOHN DAVIES

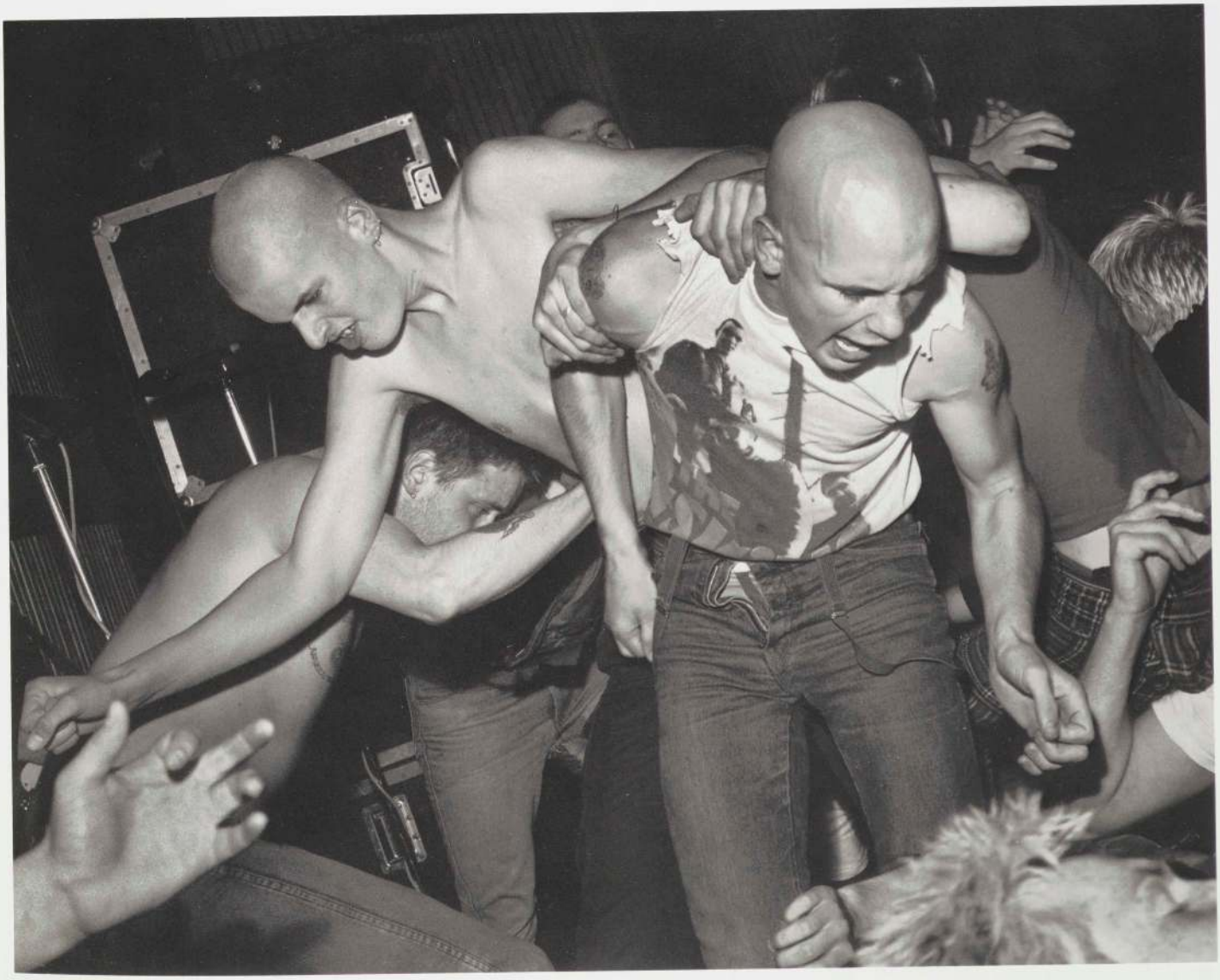
MARTIN PARR

PAUL GRAHAM

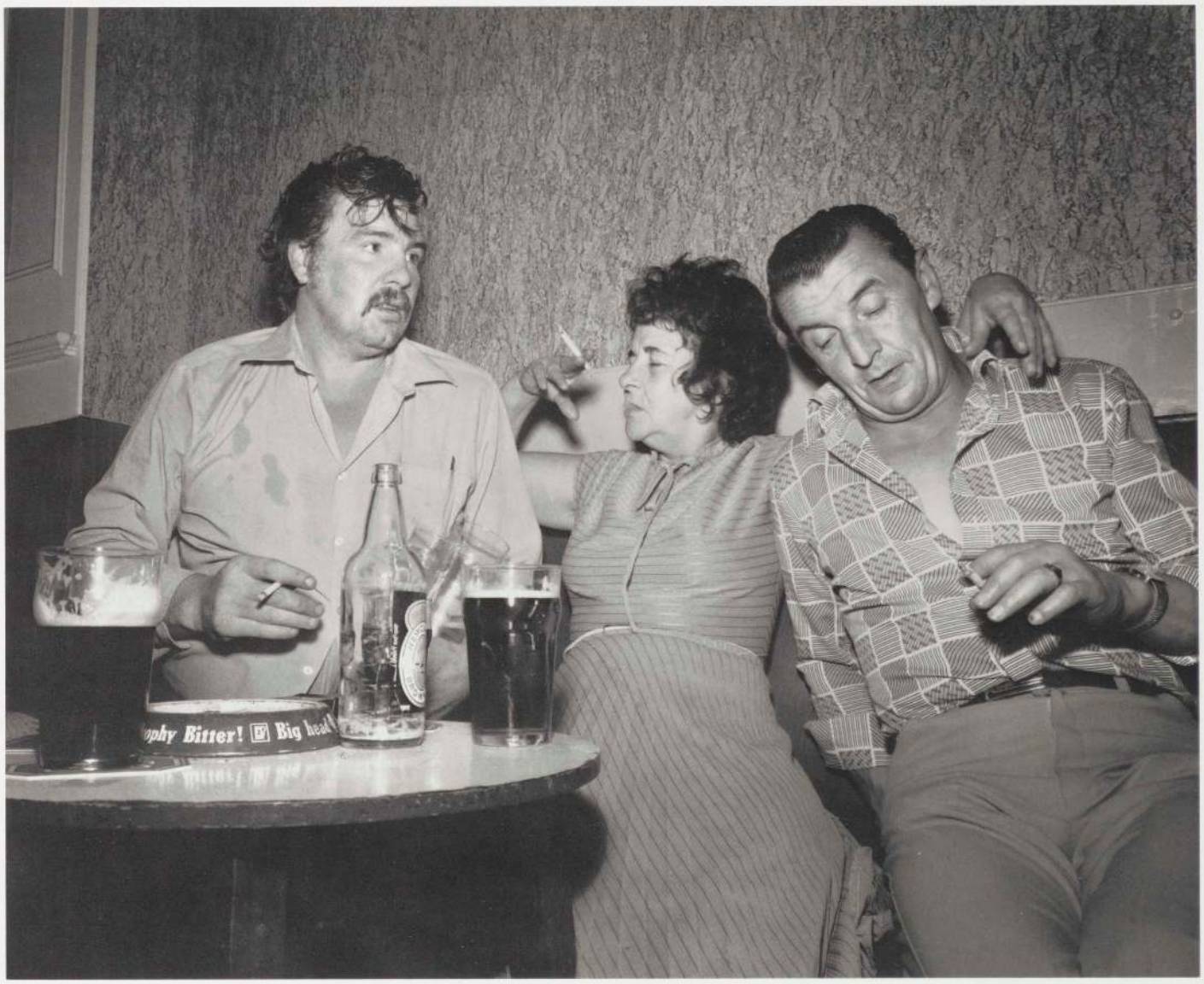
CHRIS KILLIP

These photographs were taken in the North of England, 1976-87.





GRAHAM SMITH *The Commercial Pub. 1980-90*


Bitter!
Big


At any time

JOHN DAVIES

Site of Groesfaen Colliery, Deri, Mid Glamorgan. 1984

The colliery, which was sunk at the beginning of 1900, was closed in 1968. A reclamation scheme began in 1975 to remove the workings and to relandscape the huge waste heaps. Transatlantic airliners use the nearby Brecon Beacons as an air traffic turning point.

Allotments overlooking Easington, County Durham. 1983

Before the coal industry was nationalized in the 1940s many mining villages, like Easington, were built without gardens. The hillier areas around Easington were turned into allotments.

Agecroft Power Station, Salford, Greater Manchester. 1983

Beyond the cooling towers is Agecroft Colliery, which provides fuel for this coal-fired electricity-generating station. The recreation grounds are owned by the C.E.G.B. for their workers.

Netherthorpe Housing Estate, Sheffield, Yorkshire. 1981

This housing estate was built in the 1960s. The area in front of the tower blocks was purchased by the City in 1887 and is part of the Crookes Moor Recreation Grounds.

Durham Ox Public House, Sheffield, Yorkshire. 1981

In the shadow of Hyde Park Flats, the public house was left isolated due to the housing clearance schemes of the 1950s. It now stands next to the A57 Parkway, linking Sheffield to the M1 Motorway.

"Bowling Greens," Heaton Norris Park, Stockport, Cheshire. 1988

In 1872 the Parks Regulation Act was passed by Parliament to encourage local government to create public parks and open spaces. This was seen as a way to improve the health of the people living in densely populated areas and, in particular, the areas dominated by the factory systems of the Industrial Revolution. The Heaton Norris Recreation Grounds was opened in 1896.

MARTIN PARR

Photographs from the series The Cost of Living. *1987-89*

Bristol grammar school

Royal Commonwealth Society "function for a summer evening"

Strawberry tea

Dinner party

Conservative "midsummer madness" party

Garden Open Day

PAUL GRAHAM

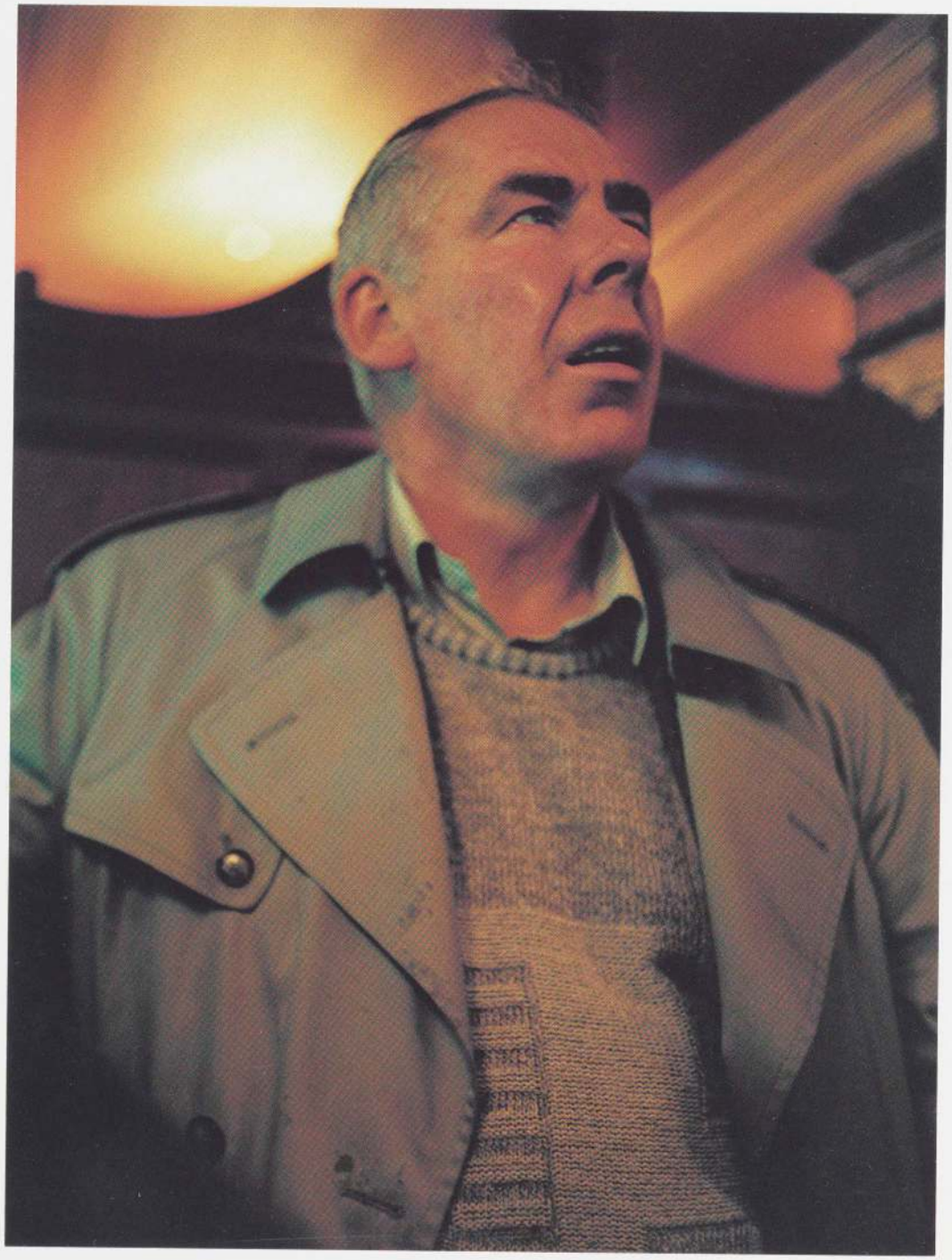
From In Umbra Res: Sixteen Photographs of Northern Ireland. *1990*

Wedding photograph, Belfast

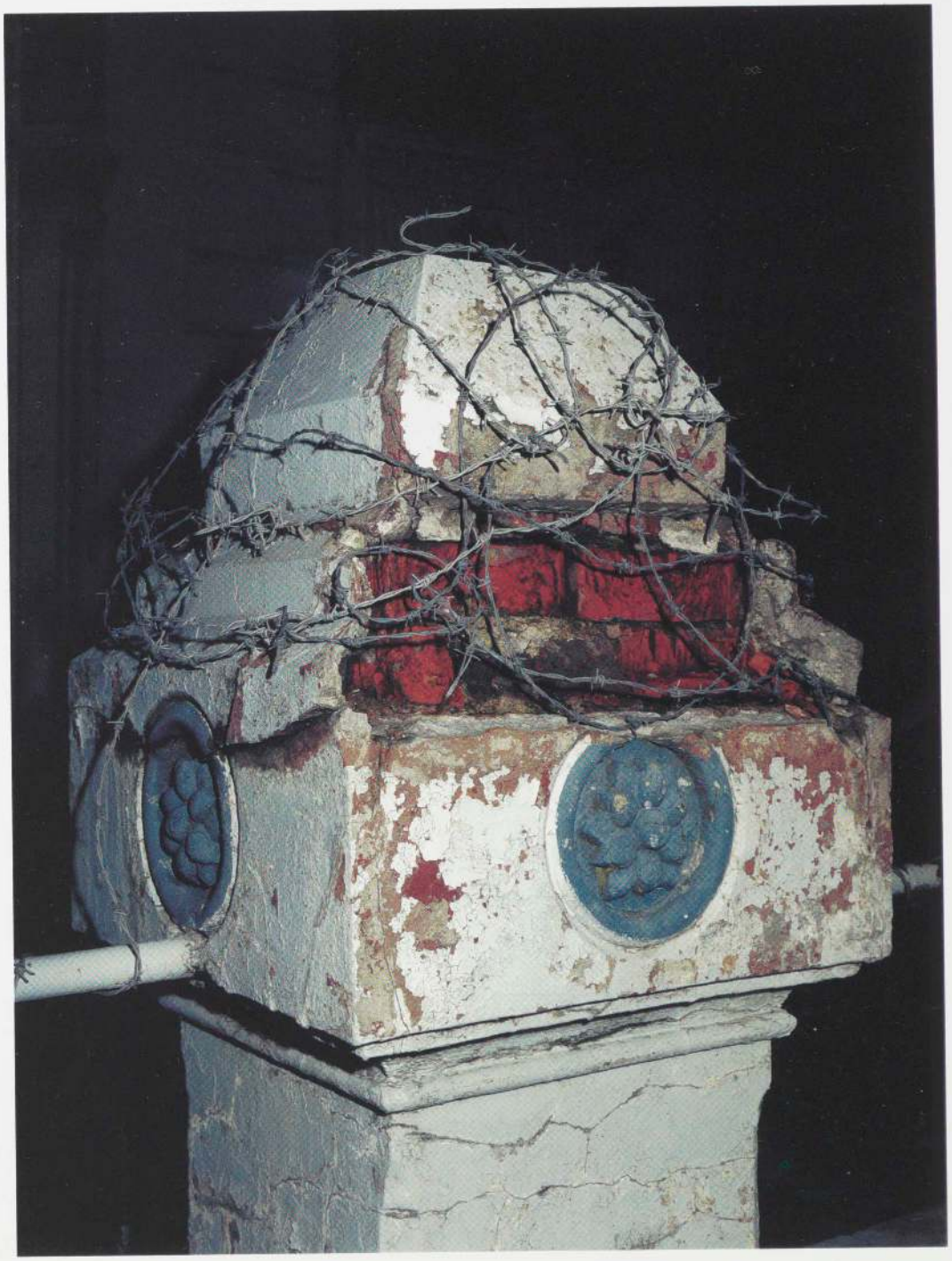
Woman smoking cigarette. Belfast

"Religion" graffiti on telephone table, Job Centre, Belfast

Bricks under skip, Belfast



Man watching T.V. news broadcast of lynching, Belfast



Wire on post, Belfast

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

CHRIS KILLIP

Born on Isle of Man, England, 1946.

1963-69 Photographic assistant, London.

1969 Freelance photographer.

1969-71 Photographing in Isle of Man.

1977-78 Director, Side Gallery, Newcastle, England.

1979-80 Photographer in Residence, University of Cardiff, Wales.

1981- Resident in Newcastle, England.

AWARDS

1973-74 Arts Council of Great Britain Photography Awards.

1975-76 Northern Arts Photography Fellow.

1977 Arts Council of Great Britain Bursary Award.

1989 Henri Cartier-Bresson Award, Paris.

ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

1977 "North-East of England," Side Gallery, Newcastle, England.

1980-82 "Isle of Man," ACGB tour.

1983 "Askam and Skinningrove," Side Gallery, Newcastle, England.

1984 "Seacoal," Side Gallery, Newcastle, England.

Photographs, Photo Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.

1985 "Another Country," Serpentine Gallery, London.

1986 "Another Country," Art Institute of Chicago.

National Museum of Photography, Bradford, England.

1988 "In Flagrante," Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Landes Museum, Munster, West Germany.

Museum Het Princessehof, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

1989 "In Flagrante," Miró Museum, Barcelona.

"Working at Pirelli," Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

1990 I.V.A.M. Valencia, Spain.

Palais de Tokyo, Paris.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1973 "Two Views," The Photographers' Gallery, London.

1977 "Concerning Photography," The Photographers' Gallery, London.

1980 "Old and Modern Masters of Photography," Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

1985 "Quelques Anglais," Centre Nationale de la Photographie, Paris.

1986 "British Contemporary Photography: Coming of Age," Houston Foto Festival, Wilhelm Gallery, Houston. (tour)

1987 Graz, Austria.

1988 Musée des Beaux Arts, Nantes, France.

"Towards a Bigger Picture," Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

1989 "Towards a Bigger Picture," Tate Gallery, Liverpool.

"The Art of Photography," Royal Academy of Art, London.

Badger, Gerry, and John Benton-Harris. "Through the Looking Glass: Photographic Art in Britain 1945-1989." Barbican Art Gallery, London.

1990 "Photography Until Now," The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

1972 "Chris Killip T.T. week visitors--The Isle of Man." *Creative Camera*, no. 91 (January 1972), pp. 458-63. (photo essay)

1976 *British Image 2*, London: Arts Council of Great Britain.

1978 *Camera Mainichi*, Tokyo.

1980 Steele-Perkins, Chris, ed. *About 70 Photographs*. London: Arts Council of Great Britain.

1981 Jeffrey, Ian. *Photography: A Concise History*. London: Thames and Hudson.

1983 Haworth-Booth, Mark. "Closely Observed Photographs." *Camera Austria*, no. 11/12, 1983, pp. 37-44.

1986 Haworth-Booth, Mark. "Chris Killip: Scenes from Another Country." *Aperture*, no. 103 (Summer 1986), pp. 16-31.

"Chris Killip." *Camera International Paris*, no. 9 (Winter 1986), pp. 40-49. (photo essay)

1988 Badger, Gerry. "We are Making a New World: Chris Killip's 'In Flagrante,'" in Peter Turner and Gerry Badger, eds., *Photo Texts*. London: Travelling Light, pp. 142-47.

BOOKS BY KILLIP

1980 *Isle of Man*. London: Arts Council of Great Britain/ A. Zwemmer Ltd.

1988 *In Flagrante*. London: Martin Secker & Warburg, Ltd., and Paris: Editions Nathan.

COLLECTIONS

Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Arts Council of Great Britain, London

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

University of Texas, Austin

Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

National Gallery of Australia

British Council, London

GRAHAM SMITH

Born in Middlesbrough, England, 1947.

For the last ten years I have photographed in Middlesbrough, nowhere else. Like my parents I was born and brought up in the town. My father, mother, stepfather, and their friends are all good drinkers, and they have always used the same few pubs, which we consider to be the best in Middlesbrough. They are used by those who live on the edge, whose future is the next good time, the next good drink. It's never clear to me why I photograph in these pubs. It might be that I'm using the camera as a way of looking at friends, family, people from their past and, in turn, my background. The truth might be that the camera is just an extension of my drinking arm.

JOHN DAVIES

Born in Sedgefield, County Durham, England, 1949.

1974 Graduated from Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham, England.

1976 Photographer for Sotheby's, London.

1978-81 Lecturer in Photography, Blackpool College of Art, Blackpool, England.

1982 Working and living in Manchester and Stockport, England.

1985-89 Visiting lecturer in Photography, West Surrey College of Art, West Surrey, England.

1986-90 Chair of "Counter Image," Film, Video and Photography workshop, Manchester.

1989 Visiting lecturer in Photography at Nottingham Polytechnic, Nottingham, England.

AWARDS

1975-78 Four Art Council of Great Britain awards.

1981 Photographic Fellowship, Sheffield Polytechnic, Sheffield, England.

ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

1976 The Photographers' Gallery, London.

1977 The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.

1978 The Arts Council Gallery, Belfast.

1979 The Gallery of Photography, Dublin.

"West Coast of Ireland," The Photographic Gallery, Southampton, England. (tour)

Side Gallery, Newcastle, England.

1980 Albert Street Workshop, Hebden Bridge, England.

1981 "Landscapes" of Cumbria, Side Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. (tour)

Impressions Gallery of Photography, York, England.

The Gallery of Photography, Dublin.

Salzburg College, Salzburg.

1982 Uppermill Photographic Gallery, Oldham, England.

"Above and Beyond," Untitled Gallery, Sheffield, England. (tour)

Brewery Arts Centre, Kendel, England.

Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool.

The Jerusalem Theater, Jerusalem.

1983 "Durham Coalfield," Side Gallery, Newcastle, England.

"Durham Coalfield," Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York.

"The Intimate Eye," A Moment in Time Gallery, Toronto.

1985 "The Rhymney Valley," Northlight Gallery, Tempe, Arizona.

"On the Edge of White Peak," Buxton Art Gallery and Museum, Buxton, England.

"Brunel's Kingdom," Watershed, Bristol, England.

1987 "A Green and Pleasant Land," The Photographers' Gallery, London.

"Skylines," Viewpoint, Salford's Photographic Centre, England.

1988 XYZ Gallery, Ghent, Belgium.

L'Atelier Photographique de St-Cyprien, Toulouse, France.

"Taking Stock," Stockport Art Gallery, Stockport, England.

1989 Forum Stadpark, Graz, Austria.

1990 Counter Image, Manchester.

Centro de Estudos Fotograficos, Vigo, Spain.

1991 "Phase II, Broadgate," The Photographers' Gallery, London.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1976 "Private Views," Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham, England. (tour)

1978 Grundy House Museum, Blackpool, England.

1979 Chester Arts Centre, Chester, England.

Manchester Polytechnic Library, Manchester.

1980 "A Sense of Ireland: Three Views," Swiss Cottage Library, London.

1980 Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama.

1982 "Presences of Nature," Carlise Museum and Art Gallery, England.

Side Gallery, Druridge Bay, Northumberland, England.

1983 "The Prosaic Landscape," Ffotogallery, Cardiff, Wales.

"Art and Landscape," Rochdale Art Gallery, Rochdale, England.

1984 "Britain in 1984," The Photographers' Gallery, London. (tour: The National Museum of Film and Photography, Bradford, England)

"The Sky Show," The Cambridge Darkroom, Cambridge, England.

1985 Centre National de la Photographie, Paris.

"Brunel's Kingdom," Watershed, Bristol, England.

"Connections," Cornerhouse, Manchester, and Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool

1986 "British Contemporary Photography: Coming of Age," Houston Foto Festival, Wilheim Gallery, Houston. (tour)

Columbia College Gallery, Chicago.

"Tomorrow," Royal Festival Hall, London.

Perspektief Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

"New Acquisitions," Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

1987 "The Wall," Impressions Gallery, York, England.

"Poignant Sources," Artspace, San Francisco; Granit, Centre d'Action Culturelle (CAC), Belfort, France.

Musée de la Photographie, Charleroi, Belgium.

The Art Gallery of the Saidye Bronfman Centre, Montreal.

1988 XYZ Gallery, Ghent, Belgium.

Granit, Centre d'Action Culturelle (CAC), Belfort, France.

Musée des Beaux Arts, Nantes, France.

Mission Photographique de la DATAR, Paris.

"Towards a Bigger Picture," Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

1989 Mission Photographique Transmanche, Centre Regional de la Photographie Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France.

Granit, Centre d'Action Culturelle, Belfort, France.

Ruhrlandmuseum, Essen, West Germany.

"Through the Looking Glass: Photographic Art in Britain 1945-1989," Barbican Art Gallery, London.

"The Art of Photography," Royal Academy of Art, London.

1990 Lia Rumma Gallery, Naples.

Zelda Cheadle Gallery, London.

Association of Catalan Architects, Barcelona.

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1976 *British Journal of Photography*, February 1976.

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1977 *British Journal of Photography Annual 1977*. London: Henry Greenwoood and Co.

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1980 Steele-Perkins, Chris, ed. *About 70 Photographs*. London: Arts Council of Great Britain.

1981 Powell, Rob. "'The Fishing Industry,' by Nick Hedges and Landscapes by JohnDavies at the Side Gallery, Newcastle." *British Journal of Photography*, vol. 128, no. 6290 (February 13, 1981), pp. 178-79.

1982 Clement, James. "Landscape: the Yorkshire Group." *British Journal of Photography Annual 1982*. London: Henry Greenwoood and Co., pp. 22-23.

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1985 Butler, Susan. "Landscapes in Transition: John Davies Interviewed by Susan Butler." *Creative Camera*, no. 251 (November 1985), pp.16-24.

1986 "The Wall." *Creative Camera*, no. 9 (1986), pp.22-27. (photo essay)

1988 Powell, Rob. "After the Smoke: Photography in Post-Industrial Britain." *Camera Austria*, no. 28 (1988), pp. 44-55.

Titterington, Chris. "Landscape and the Fall." *Aperture*, no. 113 (Winter 1988), pp. 10-19.

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Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Musée de la Photographie, Charleroi, Belgium

Perspektief Gallery, Rotterdam

Side Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England

National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, Bradford

The Photographers' Gallery, London

Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool

Rochdale Art Gallery, Rochdale, England

Buxton Art Gallery and Museum, Buxton, England

Ffotogallery, Cardiff, Wales

Rhymney Valley District Council

National Library of Wales

Manchester City Art Gallery, Manchester

Granit, Centre d'Action Culturelle (CAC), Belfort, France

Stockport Art Gallery, Stockport, England

Centre Régional de la Photographie Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France

Ruhrlandmuseum, Essen, West Germany

Association of Catalan Architects, Barcelona

MARTIN PARR

Born in Epsom, London, 1952.

1970-73 Studied photography at Manchester Polytechnic, Manchester.

1975-82 Visiting lecturer at National College of Art and Design, Dublin, and Chelsea School of Art, England.

1982-84 Visiting lecturer at School of Documentary Photography, Newport, England.

1982- Visiting lecturer at West Surrey College of Art and Design, Farnham, England.

1988- Nominee for Magnum Agency.

AWARDS

1975 Arts Council of Great Britain Photography Award.

1976 Arts Council of Great Britain Photography Award.

1979 Arts Council of Great Britain Photography Award.

ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

1976 "Beauty Spots." Impressions Gallery. (tour)

1977 The Photographers' Gallery, London.

1981 "The Non Conformists." Camerawork, London.

1985 International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

Fotograficentrum, Stockholm.

1986 Museum Folkwang, Essen, West Germany.

Manifestation, Amsterdam.

1987 International Center for Photography/Midtown, New York.

"Spending Time." National Centre of Photography, Paris. (tour)

1988 Kodak Gallery, Tokyo and Osaka.

1989 Spectrum Gallery, Hanover, West Germany.

"One Day Trip." Museum Grand Rue, Boulogne.

"The Cost of Living," Royal Photographic Society, Bath, England. (tour)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1978 "Personal Views 1860-1977," British Council touring exhibition.

Fotomania Gallery, Barcelona, Spain.

"Art for Society," Whitechapel Art Gallery, London.

1979 "Three Perspectives on Photography," Hayward Gallery, London.

1981 "New Work in Britain," The Photographers' Gallery, London.

1983 International Photography Festival, Malmo, Sweden.

1984 "British Photographic Art," Geology Museum, Peking, PRC.

"Parks and Gardens," commissioned exhibition on the parks of Merseyside, Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool.

1985 "Quelques Anglais," Centre Nationale de la Photographie, Paris.

1986 "British Contemporary Photography: Coming of Age," Houston Foto Festival, Wilheim Gallery, Houston. (tour)

"New Documents," Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago.

1987 "Mysterious Coincidences," The Photographers' Gallery, London.

"Inscriptions and Inventions," British Council touring exhibition.

1988 "A British View," Museum fur Gestaltung, Zürich.

1989 "Through the Looking Glass: Photographic Art in Britain 1945-1989," Barbican Art Gallery, London.

"The Art of Photography," Royal Academy of Art, London.

Foto Biennale, Enschede, The Netherlands.

ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

1974 "Photographs by Martin Parr." *Creative Camera*, no. 120, June 1974, pp. 206-11. (photo essay)

1978 "Beauty Spots." *Creative Camera Collection 5*, pp. 113-23.

1979 "Three Perspectives on Photography," Arts Council of Great Britain, London, pp. 32-35.

1982 "Photographes Contemporains en Europe," *Contrejour*, pp. 62-65.

Dumont Foto 4: Fotografie in Europa heute. Koln: Dumont Buchverlag.

1983 Chiaramonte, Giovanni. *Immagini della Fotografia Europea Contemporanea*. Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book.

"Internationell Fotofestival," Malmo, Sweden, pp. 32-33.

1984 "Nuova Fotografia Inglese," *Mazzotta*, pp. 67-73.

Watt, Dave and Neil Hanson. "And the North." *Creative Camera*, no. 229 (January 1984), pp. 1218-44.

1985 *Torino Fotografia 85*. Modena: Edizioni Panini. (exhibition catalogue)

1986 "Foto 86," Amsterdam, pp. 114-16.

"Ireland: A Week in the Life of a Nation." *Century*, pp. 22-25, 36-37, 60-61, 76-77, 172, 186-87, 222-23, 228-29.

"Fifty Years of Modern Colour Photography, 1936-1986." *Photokina*, p. 258.

"2nd Fotobienal Vigo 1986," Spain, pp. 71-79.

"Connections," *Cornerhouse/Open Eye* U.K., pp. 12-20.

1987 Turner, Peter. *History of Photography*. London: Hamlyn, pp. 168-69.

Inscriptions and Inventions: British Photography in the 1980s. London: British Council, pp. 20-21. (exhibition catalogue)

1988 *Mysterious Coincidences: New British Colour Photography*. London: The Photographers' Gallery, p. 48. (exhibition catalogue)

1989 *Foto Biennale Enschede*. Enschede, The Netherlands, pp. 24-25.

"Le Invenzioni dello Sguardo. AEM Milan," 5 photographers' interpretations of Milan at night. (9 plates)

Weaver, Mike, ed. *The Art of Photography 1839-1989*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (exhibition catalogue)

Through the Looking Glass: Photographic Art in Britain 1945-1989. London: Barbican Art Gallery, pp. 50-51. (exhibition catalogue)

BOOKS BY PARR

1982 *Bad Weather*. London: Zwemmers.

1983 *Calderdale Photographs*. Catalogue by Calderdale Council.

1984 *A Fair Day*. Wallasey, Merseyside: Promenade Press.

Prescot Now and Then. Merseyside: Merseyside County Council.

1986 *The Last Resort*. Wallasey, Merseyside: Promenade Press.

The Actual Boot: The Photographic Postcard 1900-1920. Jolly Editorial (with Jack Stasiack).

1989 *One Day Trip*. Catalogue by Editions de la Difference, Centre Regional de la Photographie, Nord Pas-de-Calais, France.

1989 *The Cost of Living*. Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications.

COLLECTIONS

Arts Council of Great Britain

Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Calderdale Council, Great Britain

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia

PAUL GRAHAM

Born in Stafford, England, 1956.

1962-77 Educated at schools in Harlow, Essex, and at Bristol University, to obtain B.Sc. (honors) in Microbiology.

1977-84 Self-employed.

AWARDS

1979 Arts Council Major Award in Photography.

1980 South West Arts Major Award.

1982 Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship, USA.

1983 "And the North" Photography Commission.

"Real Fire" Photography Commission.

1984 "Britain in 1984" Photography Commission.

1985 Photographer-in-Residence, Medway Township.

GLAA Visual Arts Award.

1986 Arts Council Publications Award.

GLC Publications Award, London.

1987 International Center of Photography Young Photographers Award, New York.

Hayward Gallery Commission, London.

Channel 4/Arts Council Video Bursary.

1988 The Eugene W. Smith Memorial Fellowship, New York.

1989 Fellowship in Photography, National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television, Bradford, England.

ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

1979 Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol.

1980 Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.

1981 Bristol Arts Centre, Bristol.

Plymouth Arts Centre, Plymouth.

1983 The Photographers' Gallery, London. (tour: UK)

Ffotogallery, Cardiff, Wales.

1984 Axiom Centre for the Arts, Cheltenham, England.

Museum Comunali, Rimini, Italy.

1985 Medway in Transition, Medway, Kent, England.

1986 National Museum of Photography (tour: Birmingham, Kendal, Cheltenham, Cardiff).

The Photographers' Gallery, London.

Watershed Gallery, Bristol.

1987 Jones Troyer Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Arles Rencontre, Arles, France.

Kodak Gallery, Tokyo.

FNAC Les Halles, Paris.

Stills Gallery, Edinburgh.

Cornerhouse Arts Centre, Manchester.

Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, Wales.

1988 PPOW Gallery, New York.

Museum Het Princessehof, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

1989 Galerie Claire Burrus, Paris.

Centre Régional de la Photographie, Douchy.

Fotobienale Enschede 1989, Enschede, The Netherlands.

1990 Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London.

Esther Schipper, Cologne, West Germany.

National Museum of Photography, Bradford, England.

XPO Galerie, Hamburg, West Germany.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1979 "New British Photography," Meyer Gallery, New York.

1980 "British Colour Photography," The Photographers' Gallery, London.

Salford International Photography Festival. (tour)

1981 "In Colour," Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England. (tour)

1982 "Houses and Homes," Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, and ICA, London.

"Recent Developments in British Photography," Hansard Gallery, Southampton. (international tour)

"Nine British Photographers," British Council, Italy.

1983 "And the North," Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal. (tour)

1984 "Real Fire," SFAS Commissions exhibition.

"Britain in 1984," The Photographers' Gallery, London and National Photography Museum, Bradford, England.

"South West Survey," Watershed, Bristol, England.

1985 "European Photography 1985," Frankfurt, West Germany.

1986 "British Contemporary Photography: Coming of Age," Houston Foto Festival, Wilheim Gallery, Houston. (tour)

"The New British Document," Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago.

"Force of Circumstance," PPOW Gallery, New York.

"Modern Colour Photography," Photokina, Frankfurt, West Germany.

"Recent Acquisitions," Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

1987 "New Photography 3," The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

"New British Photography," Modern Arts Museum, Tampere, Finland.

"Recent Histories." Hayward Gallery, London.

"Future of Photography," Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C.

"Mysterious Coincidences," The Photographers' Gallery, London.

"Recent Acquisitions," The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

"Konigreich," Forum Stadtpark, Austria.

"Attitudes to Ireland," Orchard Gallery, Londonderry, England.

"Troisième Triennale," Musée de la Photographie, Belgium.

"Open Exhibition," Whitechapel Gallery, London.

Spectrum Gallery, Prengel Museum, Hanover, West Germany.

1988 "A British View," Museum fur Gestaltung, Zürich.

"Third Fotobienal," Vigo, Spain.

"Camouflage," Curt Marcus Gallery, New York.

"Selected Images," Riverside Studios, London.

"Recent British Photography," XYZ Gallery, Ghent, Belgium.

"Towards a Bigger Picture," Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

1989 "The Art of Photography 1839-1989," Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. (tour: Royal Academy, London; Australian National Gallery, Canberra)

"Through the Looking Glass: Photographic Art in Britain 1945-1989," Barbican Art Gallery, London.

"Hot Spots," Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York.

"Towards a Bigger Picture," Tate Gallery, Liverpool.

"Corporate Identities," Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester.

"Framed," Artspace, San Francisco.

1990 Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London.

XPO Galerie, Hamburg, West Germany.

ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

1980 *British Journal of Photography Annual 1980*. London: Henry Greenwood and Co.

Recent British Colour Photography. London: The Photographers' Gallery. (exhibition catalogue)

1981 *In Colour*. Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England. (exhibition catalogue)

1982 *Houses and Homes*. Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, and Institute of Contemporary Art, London. (exhibition catalogue)

Strategies: Recent Developments in British Photography: An Exhibition. John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton. (exhibition catalogue)

1984 *Britain in 1984*. The Photographers' Gallery, London. (exhibition catalogue)

Watt, Dave and Neil Hanson. "And the North." *Creative Camera*, no. 229 (January 1984), pp. 1218-44.

1987 *Mysterious Coincidences: New British Colour Photography*. The Photographers' Gallery, London. (exhibition catalogue)

1988 Hagen, Charles and Nan Richardson, eds. "British Photography: Towards a Bigger Picture." *Aperture*, no. 113 (Winter 1988), p. 27.

1989 Saltz, Jerry. "The Scene of the Crime: Paul Graham's 'Republican Parade,' Stabane, 1986." *Arts Magazine*, vol. 65, no. 5 (January 1989), pp. 13-14.

Weaver, Mike, ed. *The Art of Photography 1839-1989*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (exhibition catalogue)

Through the Looking Glass: Photographic Art in Britain 1945-1989. London: Barbican Art Gallery. (exhibition catalogue)

BOOKS BY GRAHAM

1983 *A1 - The Great North Road*. London: Grey Editions/Arts Council.

1986 *Beyond Caring*. London: Grey Editions/GLC.

1987 *Troubled Land: The Social Landscape of Northern Ireland*. London: Grey Editions with Cornerhouse Publications.

1990 *In Umbra Res: Sixteen Photographs of Northern Ireland*. London: The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, in association with Bradford and Ilkley Community College and Cornerhouse Publications.

COLLECTIONS

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

CCA/Seagrams Corporation, New York

Modern Arts Museum, Tampere, Finland

Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Arts Council of Great Britain, London

British Council, London

National Museum of Photography, Bradford, England

Museum Communali, Rimini, Italy

Musée de la Photographie, Charleroi, Belgium

Private Collections in the USA, Europe and Japan

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—Susan Kismaric

BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY
FROM THE THATCHER YEARS

Susan Kismaric

The five artists whose works are illustrated in this catalogue—Chris Killip, Graham Smith, John Davies, Martin Parr, and Paul Graham—are representative of a new approach to social documentary photography. These photographers have lost faith in the simpler solutions and programmatic political stances of earlier documentarians. Their commitment is to the description of the world at hand, to their intuitive sense of the quality of lives lived in Newcastle and Middlesbrough in the depressed northeast of England, in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere in Britain's vast post-industrial landscape. Included are a background essay on the development of British documentary photography, and exhibition and publication chronologies for the photographers.

56 pages; 18 black-and white, 12 color photographs

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