

# 40TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

# ROADS TO WIGAN PIER

RUSSELL BOYCE, HUW DAVIES, JULIAN GERMAIN, GRAHAM HALL, JOHN KEMP, TIM SMITH

28 SEPTEMBER 2012 TO 5 JANUARY 2013

Impressions Gallery opened in a room above a shop in York in November 1972 and moved to Bradford in 2007. As one of the first specialist photography galleries in Europe we have gone on to play a vital role in promoting photography and have had a huge impact on the development of photographic culture in Britain and beyond.

To mark our 40th birthday we have selected an exhibition from our archive, first shown in October 1984. Taking as their starting point George Orwell's seminal book *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), a sociological investigation into bleak living conditions of the working class in Yorkshire and Lancashire, six newly graduated students were commissioned to document social aspects of the North of England.

**Russell Boyce** photographed Hull's fishing dockland and its community. He concentrated on a one-parent family, thereby using Orwell's example of quoting an individual's struggle as a call for social change.

**Huw Davies'** work looked at industries that had grown up along the Leeds to Liverpool Canal. His portraits reflect people's alienation as a result of the demise of these industries.

**Julian Germain** documented deprivation in Wigan and Rochdale, as the result of automation on labour-intensive industries and the direct effects this process had on a number of individuals made jobless.

**Graham Hall** concentrated on both striking and working miners in Nottinghamshire and Wigan. He recorded working practices which had remained unchanged since Orwell's observations in the 1930s.

**John Kemp** was concerned with environmental poverty and presented Wigan, Burnley, Rochdale and Bradford as a 'northern wasteland' destroyed by the influence of the new, yet impersonal, housing estates.

**Tim Smith** looked at housing and local industries of Sheffield. High rises, hailed as revolutionary, soon became regarded as a legacy of misguided thinking, with the majority of residents unemployed due to changes to traditional steel industries.

The exhibition presents the photographers' original prints, mounts and text with quotes from Orwell's observations on class and unemployment.

These photographs of Orwellian dystopia show the northern urban landscape and its people on the brink of social and cultural change, and what it is like to have "the dull, evil cloud of unemployment hanging over you". Today, in these times of economic hardship *Roads to Wigan Pier* serves as a relevant reminder that, perhaps, we should not forget the symbols of poverty and neglect of the recent past.

**To find out more** browse our Reading Table, or come to our related events. To make a booking please visit our Welcome Desk or call 01274 737843.

### ***Where did the years go? Symposium***

Saturday 10 November 2012, 2.00pm to 4.30pm

The exhibiting photographers will discuss their current thinking on photography and their thirty-year career trajectory.

Early bird ticket £3.00 on the day £5.00

### ***Archive Connections***

Saturday 8 December 2012, 2.00pm to 3.00pm

Anne McNeill, Director Impressions Gallery and Brian Liddy, Curator, National Media Museum will discuss the gallery's role in British photography and its connections with the museum's photographic archive.

Event at National Media Museum.

FREE, booking advised.

### ***Director's Talk***

Saturday 8 December 2012, 3.30pm to 4.30pm

Join Impressions Director Anne McNeill to hear about her selection of our 40th anniversary exhibition and the gallery's role in British photography over the last 40 years.

Free event, booking advised.

### **Artist Information**

**Russell Boyce** joined Reuters as a staff photographer in 1988, he went on to be the Deputy Chief Photographer for UK and Ireland and is now the Global Editor, News Projects, Pictures at this agency where he runs the daily picture file from Asia. Boyce has worked in war zones and covered international politics and is lead editor at major sporting events such as the FIFA World Cup, 2010 and London 2012 Olympics.

After *Roads to Wigan Pier* **Huw Davies** continued to work on a number of documentary photography projects, such as *Unwatched Operations* Impressions Gallery 1986 and *Home from Home* Cross Channel Photographic Mission (now Photoworks) 1993 before concentrating on filmmaking. Over the last 20 years he has undertaken commissions for the BBC, Discovery Channel and Screen Scotland. In 2004 he co-founded the Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival and was its Artistic Director for four years. He is currently the Professor of Lens Media and Dean of the faculty of Arts, Design and Technology at The University of Derby.

**Julian Germain** gained an MA in photography from Royal College of Art London, 1987. He has published numerous books, including 'For every sixty minutes angry, you lose sixty seconds of happiness'. Other Impressions shows include *Steelworks*, which toured UK and abroad. He gained critical acclaim with *In Soccer Wonderland* which toured internationally from 1992 to 2001 to venues in Tokyo, Brazil, Chile and the Netherlands. Germain's work features in this year's Brighton Photo Biennale.

[www.juliangermain.com](http://www.juliangermain.com)

**Tim Smith** is a photographer based in Bradford. He is a member of international photojournalist agency Panos Pictures, specialising in global social issues. Throughout the 1990s he covered northern England for The Observer, as well as commissions for The Independent and Guardian. His latest publication *The Grand Trunk Road – From Delhi to the Khyber Pass* was The Observer's Photography Book of the Month, March 2011. This year he was commissioned for *The Space*, the Arts Council England and BBC's new experimental digital arts channel, to make four films that combine portraits from Bradford's *Belle Vue Studio* his pictures of Bradford's Asian communities shot during the 1980s.

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

**John Kemp** graduated with a BA in Photographic Studies from The University of Derby in 1985 and went on to teach Photography and Critical Studies in Further and Higher Education as well as leading adult education courses. Over the years, Kemp has taken on increasing amounts of freelance photography work including commissions by private and commercial clients. He still actively pursues his own photographic passions focusing primarily on rural and urban landscape subjects.

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

**Graham Hall's** career evolved dramatically following his involvement in *Roads to Wigan Pier*. As a cameraman for the BBC, he assisted in the production of a wide range of programmes from *Top of the Pops* to *Only Fools and Horses* before moving into recruitment and leading a trainee placement scheme for the recruitment of cameramen. After 23 years, Hall left in 2008 after 23 years and worked as a recruiter for a diverse range of organisations from banks to the charities. He currently recruits pilots for Virgin Atlantic. He continues professional camerawork on an intermittent basis and recently contributed to the coverage of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Also showing in the Studio ***The Way We Were***

*The Way We Were* is a selection of over 75 original posters from the first twenty years of Impressions Gallery.

Established in 1972, we were one of the first independent contemporary photography galleries in Europe. For the last forty years we have supported and encouraged artists who have challenged and changed photography. We have often been the first gallery to show work that new photographers went on to be known for. Included are posters from some early exhibitions by Daniel Meadows, Martin Parr and Fay Godwin.

There are also posters of retrospectives of historic work Sir Cecil Beaton, August Sander, and colour work from the Farm Security Association (FSA).

Throughout our history we have taken risks and shown work that is perceived to be difficult, such as *Ecstatic Antibodies*, the first artistic response to the AIDS crisis and *Drum*, 1950s photographs from pre-apartheid South Africa.

*The Way We Were* demonstrates the groundbreaking impact that Impressions Gallery has had on photographic culture in Britain since 1972 and reflects the changing face of design and typography in the 1970s and 80s.

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