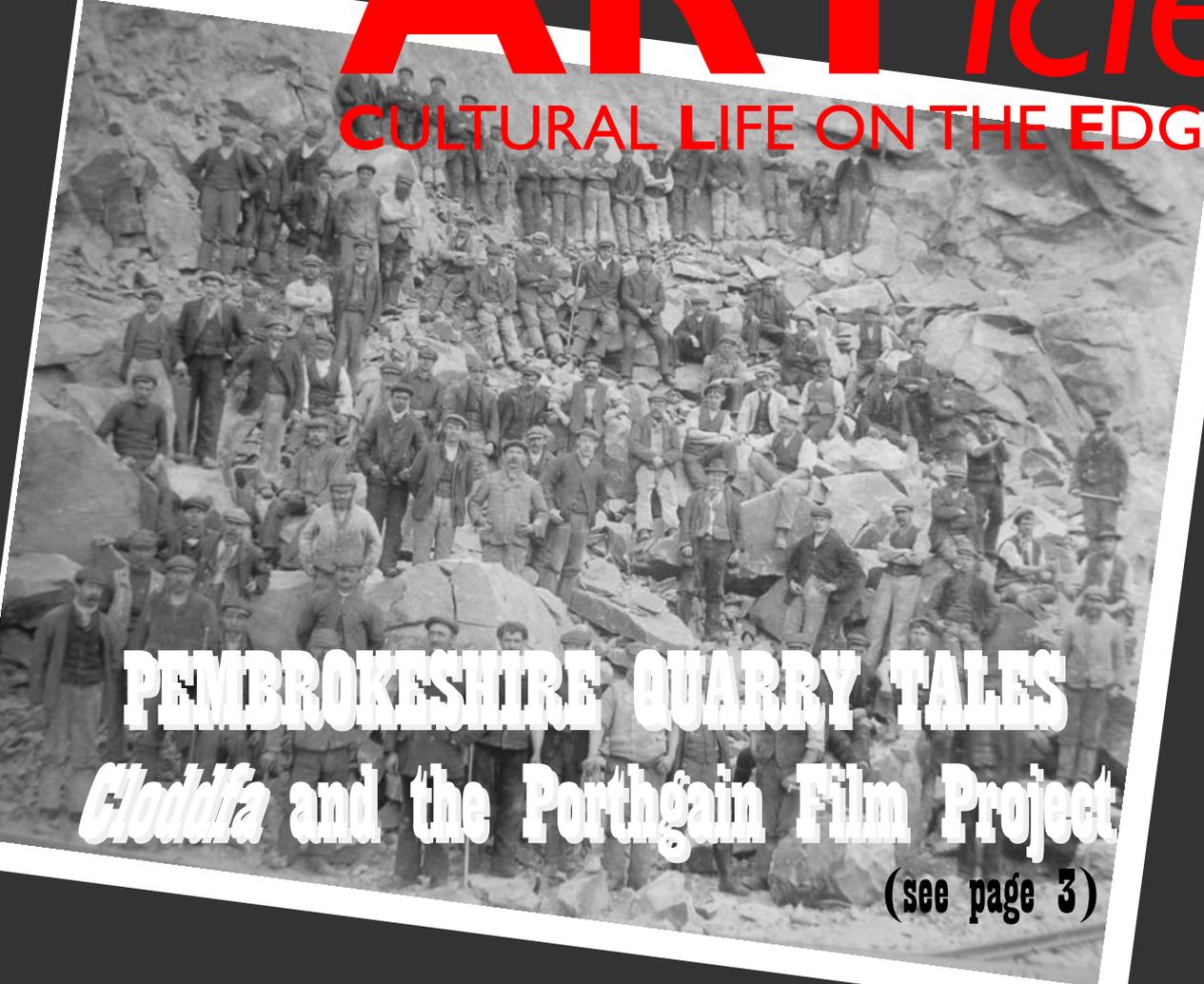


# ARTicle

CULTURAL LIFE ON THE EDGE



**PEMBROKESHIRE QUARRY TALES**  
*Cloddfa* and the Porthgain Film Project  
(see page 3)

Porthgain Quarrymen, 1908 © The Roy Lewis Collection

## **THE PHOTOGRAPHY ISSUE:**

*LANDSCAPE of Ideas – IDEAS of Landscape*

**VIEW-FINDERS:** *Conceptual Landscape Photography*  
3 artists profiled by HEATHER BENNETT photographer

**TROUBLED LANDSCAPE:** *Paul Graham's Images*  
SIOBHÁN DORAN photographer

**BOOK REVIEW:** *David Wilson's Pembrokeshire*

# LANDSCAPE of Ideas

## Ideas of LANDSCAPE

**‘... this old photograph ... touches me: it is quite simply *there* that I should like to live ... For me, photographs of landscape (urban or country) must be *habitable*, not *visitable*.’**

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 1980

In this issue, we concentrate on Landscape Photography. This is a field of the visual arts in which Pembrokeshire abounds – but what is it that makes a good landscape photograph? Is it that, as French philosopher Barthes contended in his final work, *Camera Lucida*, it induces a longing to *be there* that somehow slips between the ideal and the prosaic? Barthes said: ‘I do not dream of some extravagant site’, yet equally, ‘I do not intend to buy a house according to the views of a real-estate agency’. One thing appears clear: it is the *idea* – the thinking – behind a good landscape photograph that is crucial.

Profiling a trio of the county’s leading photographic artists, fellow-photographer Heather Bennett describes three distinct ways of thinking about the landscape – leading to radically differing images. Lisa Gabrielle Whitfield reveals the hidden aspects of such a water-dependent landscape; Gary Llewellyn finds expression through the use of light and tone. Chris Tancock, perhaps, expresses something that all three subscribe to: the assertion that he ‘photographs ideas, not the scene’. All of them go beyond the merely attractive ‘postcard’ view, to produce powerful and fascinating images of the landscapes of this special corner of the British Isles.



‘Newgale Storm’

© Heather Bennett

Also powerful are David Wilson’s black-and-white images of sometimes derelict and forlorn Pembrokeshire scenes. In the preface to a new book of his photographs (reviewed here), broadcaster Jamie Owen describes the feeling of a ‘bolt down my spine’ produced by one of David’s arresting images.

The opening comments of Roland Barthes (based on an evocative photograph of a timeless Mediterranean scene) are a rare shot of nostalgia in an otherwise clear-eyed treatise on the art of photography. No such wistfulness could be ascribed to the landscape photographs of leading British artist Paul Graham, whose seemingly innocuous scenes of Northern Irish landscapes contain within them clues to the contested nature of the land itself. Irish-born photographer Siobhán Doran contributes a short appraisal of Graham's work on this other 'cultural edge' of the United Kingdom.

## ERRATUM

In the editorial column to our first edition, we mistakenly referred to St Davids-based artist David Dixon as 'Peter Dixon'. Apologies to David and fellow-artist Freya Dixon, of the Albion Gallery, Albion House, Nun Street, St Davids.

## *CLODDFA: a Porthgain Participatory Event and a Film Installation* RUTH JONES

*Cloddfa* is a collaborative art project between artists Ruth Jones and Andrea Williams, focusing on the disused Porthgain granite quarry, which will lead to a film installation to be exhibited for the first time in Howard Gardens Gallery, Cardiff in February 2010. The granite quarry is a fascinating site to work with because traces of its history are visible in the hewed rock and in the remains of the brick buildings that formed part of the working operation. Today, grass is growing over the rocks, and birds are nesting in the crevices created by the quarrying. The quarry is 'in between' its past as an industrial site and its present as an ecological site and a place of leisure and curiosity. The film hopes to evoke this infusion of historical, cultural and geographical resonances.

The artists are looking for 80 men (or women dressed as men) to take part in the recreation of a photograph of the quarry workers from 1908 (see cover) to be included in the film.

Would you like to take part? If so, you will need:

1. To be available on Saturday 5th September 2009 between 11.30 am and 2.30 pm.
2. To be surefooted and able to walk to the granite quarry from Porthgain House (half a mile).
3. To wear sturdy boots and grey clothes similar to the ones depicted in the photograph (trousers, shirt, jacket or waistcoat, cloth cap – these will be provided if you don't have some of the items).
4. Real moustaches are a bonus, but not essential!

Refreshments will be provided for all involved in the Sloop Inn at Porthgain after filming. Please let Ruth Jones know if you would like to participate or have any questions about this project: 07980 901807, or [ruthljones@hotmail.com](mailto:ruthljones@hotmail.com)

The project has received funding from an Artists Newsletter Collaborative Bursary and from the Arts Humanities Research Council.

# VIEW-FINDERS

## *Conceptual Landscape Photography*

Conceptual landscape photography is an image or series of images based on a thought or idea where this concept is more important than, but integral to, the finished work. Often it is an exploration that becomes both a body of work and the driving force behind it, and stems from a need to communicate that concept to those who see it.

Pembrokeshire with its diversity of light, weather, geographical features and spiritual depth draws many creative people to settle here. This is a short article, and so only three such photographers, each with an image of their work, can be featured. A book may follow, which will expand on this.

**Lisa Gabrielle Whitfeld** was born in Poole, Dorset and from childhood has travelled throughout the world. Her siblings are all involved in photography in one way or another. Lisa discovered Pembrokeshire in 2001, when her parents moved here, and, 18 months ago, she took over Celtic Images Gallery at Hilton Court, where other landscape photographers are showcased as well as her own imaginative approach to the genre. See [ww.celticimages.co.uk](http://ww.celticimages.co.uk) or telephone 01437 711 110.

Although Lisa has worked worldwide, she chose to explore this area photographically because she finds it 'exotic'. Her interest in diving led her to a fascination with the idea that what exists beneath the surface is hidden from a casual observer but is as important and interesting as any surface landscape. It is



a hidden world that is not accessible to everyone, but with the correct equipment and knowledge Lisa is able to take others with her to experience this magical element of Pembrokeshire. The image featured here, 'Lily and the Bridge', illustrates this clearly, showing as it does Bosherton Lily Ponds half below and half above the surface. 'The conscious and subconscious world around us ...'

'Lily and the Bridge'

© Lisa Gabrielle Whitfeld

# HEATHER BENNETT *photographer*



'A Sentence', from *Beating the Bounds*

© Chris Tancock

**Chris Tancock** was born in Devon in 1957. He studied photography at Trent Polytechnic and went on to work for two decades in documentary, and then architectural interior, photography for various magazines. He has been based at Nolton Haven in Pembrokeshire for many years, and since 2003 has worked exclusively as a Fine Art Photographer.

Chris is captivated by Pembrokeshire's ever-changing light and the way it affects the story told by individual components of the landscape. He finds the county full of secrets, particularly the quiet, deserted inland areas. He says, 'I photograph ideas, not the scene' and likens his work to literature where images build into sentences, paragraphs, chapters and, ultimately, novels.

Always seeking to weave a complex relationship between his subject matter and the viewer, he is profoundly committed to long-term projects which map the continual physical and emotional changes taking place around him.

I found him to be a true well-spring of creativity and hope for the Fine Art field.

This image is one from his *Beating the Bounds* project and is a 'sentence' – it is part of a small event in the larger event being photographed over a period of years. Contact him through [www.christancock.co.uk](http://www.christancock.co.uk) or telephone 01437 710 589.

# Conceptual Landscape Photography

## VIEW-FINDERS

**Gary Llewellyn** was born in Pembrokeshire in 1978. His father encouraged an interest in photography from an early age, and so when Gary took a Masters in Environmental Education – an element of which relied on photographic evidence – he could call on this knowledge. Returning to the county, he collected a portfolio of local images which he rapidly discarded as ‘chocolate box’, going on to explore and market a different concept. He has now opened Llewellyn’s Gallery in Sovereign House, Milford Haven. See [www.garyllewellyn.co.uk](http://www.garyllewellyn.co.uk) or telephone 01646 697 282 or 07812 996934.



‘Boulder Glaze’

© Gary Llewellyn

After university, Gary was drawn back here by close family and the dream which is Pembrokeshire. He is driven by the need to fit light and content together to make an exact composition. He visualizes an image in its totality before going out into the landscape, but is fully aware of the need to adapt according to time of day, weather and light. One strand of his body of work explores the emotional atmosphere created by images taken at low light, and another the tonal ranges of colour and how they interact. The image shown here is ‘Boulder Glaze’ – a slow exposure with camera held near the ground, creating an emotional response of being connected right to the water and the wet, glowing rocks.

Each of these artists differs in their conceptual approach, but are similar in their desire to explore the boundaries of photography and to push those to a space that communicates not just landscape as a picture but as a way to illustrate how we as humans are connected to the world around us. Lisa takes us below the surface of our world, Chris breaks up whole images – either into a series of works or into a single statement that is more than landscape, lit in a way that is dictated by the subject itself – and Gary fills the frame with ever-expanding images drawing the viewer to become part of Pembrokeshire itself.

**Heather Bennett**

# tone arranger

## Book Review

### Pembrokeshire

by David Wilson

112pp, Graffeg, £25.00



Photographer David Wilson was born in Haverfordwest and now lives in Llangwm. His main body of work centres on landscapes of Pembrokeshire, and this striking new hardback volume from Cardiff-based publishers Graffeg features 50 of these images in large-format black and white. Wilson's conceptual approach to the book is, in his own words, 'about photographing the parts which people ordinarily wouldn't search out'. He comments: 'There are secret parts to Pembrokeshire which if you find them are absolutely stunning'.

His images are often stark – relying on tonal 'shock' to hold and intrigue the viewer – something that, for this reviewer at least, seems to work far more compellingly on the printed page than while perusing his images on a gallery wall or in an exhibition browser.



'Sheep at the foot of Foel Drygarn' © David Wilson

The power of black-and-white photography holds good, the lack of colour rendering the images both present and archetypal: the photograph of sheep in the Preselis is 'now' – but also hundreds of years ago. To that extent, some of the works in this book not only constitute fine art but are of lasting documentary value as well, creating a historical 'trail' for the future. The approach also renders familiar subjects in a new light – literally so in the case of the limewashed walls of Treleddy Fawr and Manorbier Church tower, which glow against a subtly dark sky.

My only quibble is the 'rotated' layout of the only two portrait-format pictures in the book, which sits oddly with the rest – although even here, the larger size thereby afforded to these images adds impact to the unnervingly close-up shot of a bull's head. This collection of images forms part of a vanguard of work by local fine-art photographers seeking to show Pembrokeshire not only as a 'holiday' centre but also an area of lasting natural beauty and spirituality.

*Available from Graffeg and Amazon, the book will be in print from early September.*

*ISBN 9781905582358. Size 300m x 250mm.*

**Ian McDonald**

# TROUBLED LANDSCAPES

## *The Photography of* **PAUL GRAHAM**

**'Stripped of their titles, Graham's images constitute a 'place' we can look to, a natural mystery that changes with the wind but at the same time is ours to decipher – a breath of fresh air perhaps? It comes down to a choice of which way you choose to see the world.'**

*Andrew Wilson, History and the Thinking Photograph*

The first work by Paul Graham (b. 1956) that I ever came across was from his series *Untitled (Cease-fire)*, taken during the early 1990s cessation of hostilities in Northern Ireland. *Bogside, Derry, Cease-fire April 1994* was one of nine landscape views taken in famous trouble spots in the Province during the first week of the IRA ceasefire in that month. I was captured and intrigued by Graham's act of turning the camera to the sky, the titling, the tiny cards bearing the location of the photographs and the reference to the 'Cease-fire' itself. Graham's seductive way of drawing one into a situation is done with such ease that I was momentarily stunned that a situation so complex could be expressed so beautifully, yet with such ambiguity, by a landscape photograph.

Nonetheless, landscapes are a common theme in the work of this artist, more generally known for his large-format colour photographs documenting the often bleak emptiness of late-20th-century British life. Indeed, the images comprising Graham's 1987 series *Troubled Land*, taken over several trips to Northern Ireland between 1984 and 1987, appear at first sight to be straightforward landscape photographs – some very painterly. They are, however, among his most controversial works, and on close examination their various layers of meaning come forward. Graham says of this work:



'Union Jack flag in tree, County Tyrone', 1985  
© Paul Graham

***The photographs seduce you into viewing them simply as landscapes which accounts for people's desire to engage with them. But they are booby-trapped and launch the viewer into another area altogether ... If you don't delve any deeper, you might see only the flags, signs and graffiti.***

***But these symbols should also be read within the context of the landscape in which they reside, the union flag in the richest and most fertile lands, the Irish tricolour against the rockier and hillier ground.***

# SIOBHÁN DORAN *photographer*

*Troubled Land* depicts ordinary countryside and suburban landscapes, which, superficially, could be taken anywhere in the British Isles. The images are embedded with metaphors, however, and as a result there is an absence of 'certainty' within these photographs. Graham shows the Irish Troubles in the context of a place where the land itself is open to interpretation.

Graham's photograph *Roundabout, Andersonstown, Belfast, 1984*, was his breakthrough for this body of work – and was captured entirely by accident. His time spent in Northern Ireland up to that moment had resulted in his repeatedly returning with pictures 'identical to those on the front pages of the newspaper'. Finally, Graham was stopped by an army patrol, questioned and told not to take any photographs. As the patrol moved away, he took the photograph spon-



'Republican Parade, Strabane', 1986

© Paul Graham

taneously without looking. It was when he was looking through his negatives back in his studio that he realised it was for him 'the only interesting negative out of two months' work.' The photograph at first appears to depict nothing more than a run-down suburban crossroads. But when it is explored more carefully, the viewer becomes aware of the details – the posters positioned high on the light poles to avoid easy interference, nationalist graffiti on the railing, smashed kerbstones and the soldier running away from the roundabout. All this is embedded into a seemingly ordinary scene. Graham says of this photograph: 'So the inventory isn't actually correct, what appears to be ordinary is quite extraordinary, and perhaps more interestingly the opposite is also true, the adoption of the extraordinary into the ordinary fabric of the place.'

**Siobhán Doran**

# HIGHLIGHTS

## ARTicle RECOMMENDS for the AUTUMN

- Local artist/publishing phenomenon Jackie Morris has two new books coming out in Autumn: *Tell Me a Dragon*, written by Jackie and published by Frances Lincoln, will appear in September; *Starlight Sailor*, written by James Mayhew and illustrated by Jackie, will be published in October by Barefoot Books. See [www.jackiemorris.co.uk](http://www.jackiemorris.co.uk) Jackie will be promoting her work at the 60th Cheltenham Literary Festival in October: 'Write On!: Tell me a Dragon with Jackie Morris' will be at St Andrews Church, Cheltenham on Saturday 17 October at 11am. To book a seat, call the Festival Box Office on 00 44 (0)844 576 8970 or log on to [www.cheltenhamfestivals.com](http://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com)
- Milford Haven's Waterfront Gallery plays host to an exhibition of paintings by Welsh artist Meriel Jane Thomas from 5 September – 18 October. For further details, see [www.thewaterfrontgallery.co.uk](http://www.thewaterfrontgallery.co.uk) or call 00 44 (0)1646 695699.
- Solva-based renaissance man, Cuban artist Raul Speek will be presenting a unique musical event at St Davids Cathedral on 19 September. 'Pembrokeshire Weather Report', is a concert reflecting the unreliability of the weather in Pembrokeshire. It is a piece for piano and a small ensemble orchestra – including music for brass and organ, poetry and a soprano singer – a 'portrait of Pembrokeshire'. For details go to [www.raulspeek.co.uk](http://www.raulspeek.co.uk) or call 00 44 (0)1437 721907.
- In their new home at Tenby's White Lion Street Gallery, Art Matters' September exhibition showcases the fascinating work of Colin Finn, in a culmination of his last 10 years of painting. You are invited to meet Colin in the gallery at the opening on Saturday 5 September from 2.00 – 4.00 pm. See [www.artmatters.org.uk](http://www.artmatters.org.uk) or call 00 44 (0)1834 843375. Colin will also be giving a brief talk about his life and work on Monday 21 September as part of the:
- Tenby Arts Festival, which runs from 19 – 26 September. For a programme, visit the following link: [www.tenbyartsfest.co.uk/tenbyartsfestivalprogramme.asp](http://www.tenbyartsfest.co.uk/tenbyartsfestivalprogramme.asp)



Raul Speek  
© H Bennett

## LOOKING FORWARD

### EVENTS

- The Big Draw is the UK's major event to get everyone sketching. It will be taking place all over the country, and at a variety of locations around Pembrokeshire, in October. See [www.campaignfordrawing.org.uk](http://www.campaignfordrawing.org.uk) for information.
- Not content with the book-based events above, Jackie Morris also has an exhibition coming up at The Cloisters Gallery, St Davids Cathedral Refectory. 'Jackie Morris – Paintings' runs from 1 December 2009 – 4 January 2010. Click on 'Visitors' on the cathedral website [www.stdavids cathedral.org.uk](http://www.stdavids cathedral.org.uk) or call 00 44 (0)1437 720204.
- Tenby Museum & Art Gallery's annual Christmas exhibition, showcasing local artists, opens on 23 November and runs until 16 December. For details, contact 01834 842809.



Hare Circle (Snowdrops)  
© Jackie Morris

## NEXT ISSUE of ARTicle

will be looking at Public Art and the artistic links between West Wales and the Republic of Ireland. ARTicle WINTER will be out at the beginning of December.

### LISTINGS

- Information on Oriely Parc's events can be found on [www.orielyparc.co.uk](http://www.orielyparc.co.uk) or by calling 00 44 (0)1437 720392.
- Western Telegraph*, weekly local newspaper, out on Wednesdays, also [www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/leisure](http://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/leisure)
- Pembrokeshire Life*, published monthly.
- Pembrokeshire Country Living*, six editions published each year.
- Arts Council Wales lists events happening in Pembrokeshire at [www.acw-ccc.org.uk](http://www.acw-ccc.org.uk)
- Arts events can also be found in the listings of [www.visitpembrokeshire.com](http://www.visitpembrokeshire.com) and [www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southwest](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southwest)
- And if you want to track down the artists yourselves, see Pembrokeshire County Council's Art and Craft Guide 2009 available to pick up throughout the county and to download on [www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk) (type 'Pembrokeshire Art and Craft Guide' into the search box).

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