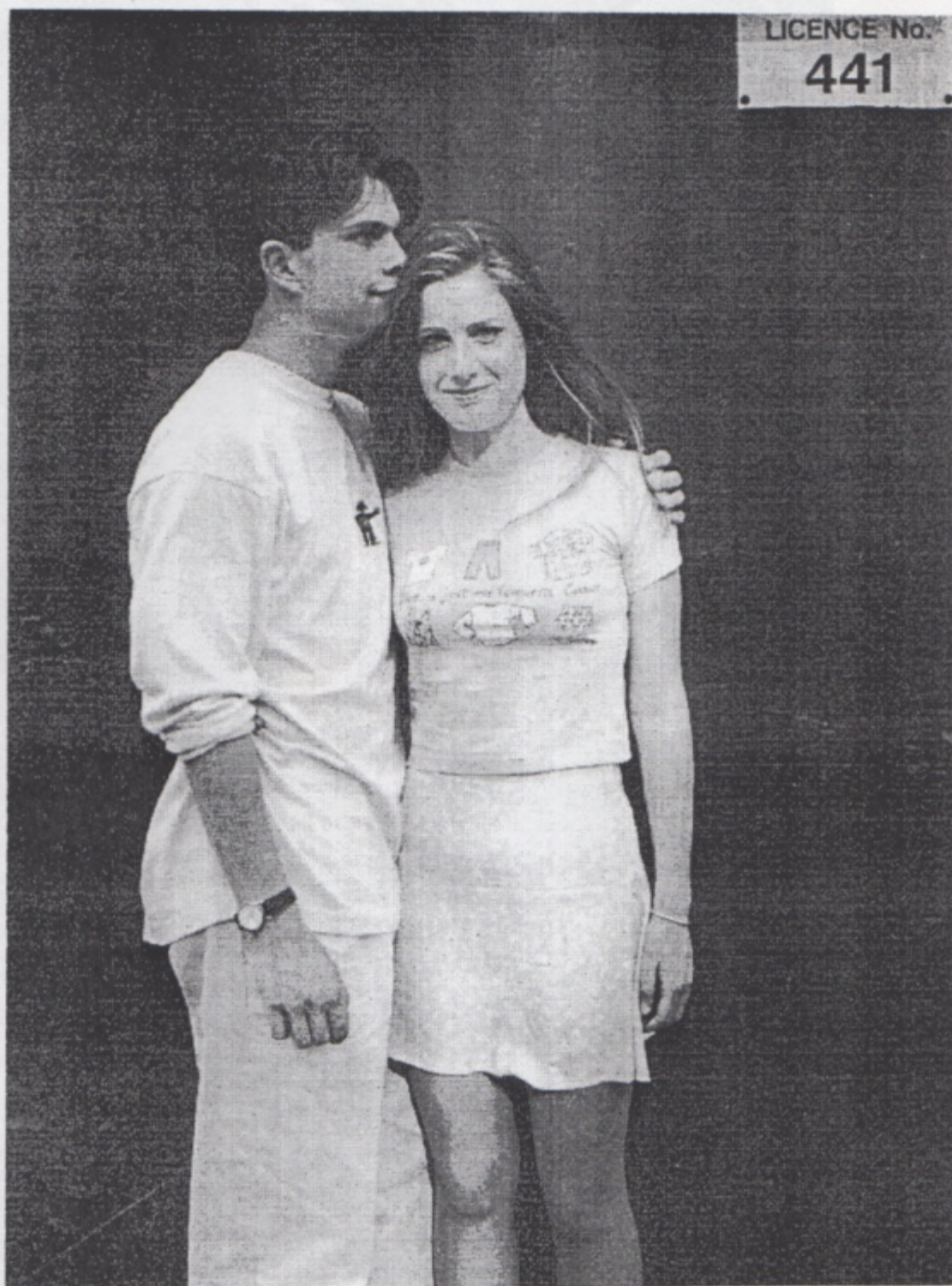


# LIPSERVICE

JOURNAL OF LONDON  
INDEPENDENT  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
NOV 1996

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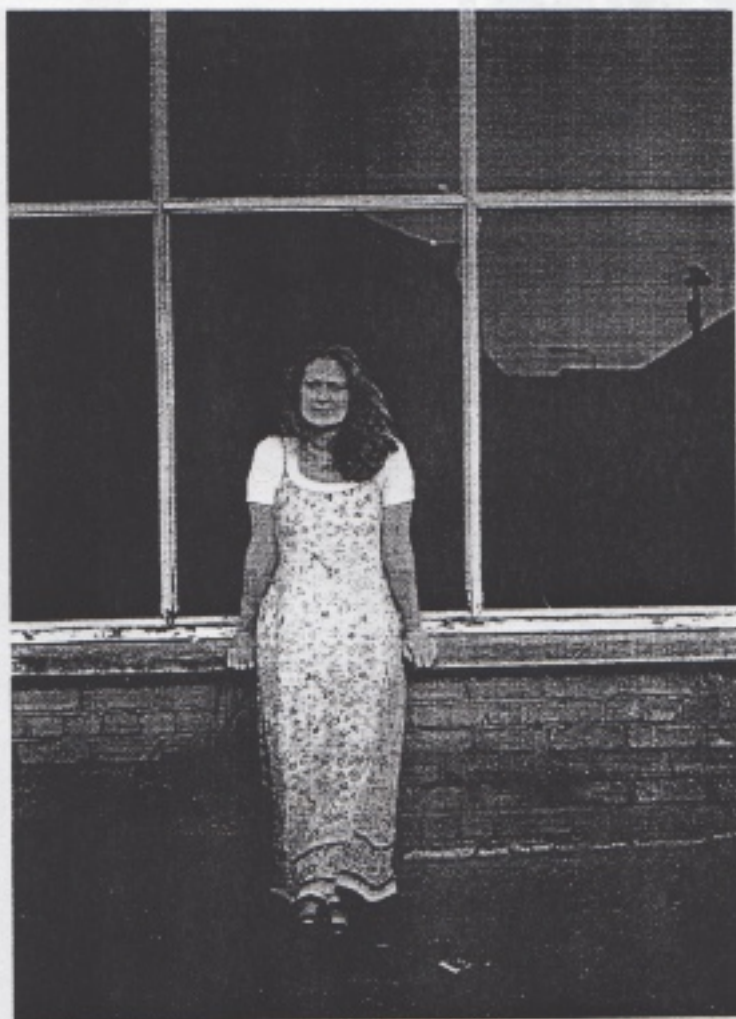
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Matthew Rake

# Londoners



Londoners, by reputation, don't hang out. We're too busy getting from A to B, we like to keep ourselves to ourselves, and we don't talk to strangers.



TS Eliot wrote famously and depressingly of Londoners in *The Wasteland*:

"A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
I had not thought death had undone so many,  
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,  
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet."



Over the last two years I have started talking to strangers, asking them if I could take their photo. Londoners smoking in front of the office, waiting in front of the tube station, drinking in front of the pub. Mostly they say yes. Mostly they fix their eyes on the camera. Four of the yeses are shown here.

# Panoramic Photography

Peter Marshall

*A little information about panoramic photography together with my usual bias! And some of my pictures.*

One of the great mysteries to me on first coming to photography was the often heard assertion that the standard lens is the one that most closely approaches our normal way of seeing things. It seemed patently absurd that the limited rectangle that this presents in any way resembles the apparently unbounded space of our visual sensations, though of course the perspective produced by a normal lens at normal subject distances appears more natural to us than that of an extreme wide-angle or long focus lens. (Those who have seen Paul Trevor's powerfully direct street portraits taken in the City of London and Spitalfields using a standard lens at its closest focusing distance will have seen a graphic illustration of the effect of subject distance which produces strong 'wide-angle distortion' in many of these pictures.)

It has always seemed to me that the panoramic photograph most strongly represents the way that we see things, and that these pictures provide a different experi-

ence to that of looking at an ordinary photograph. From a normal viewing distance we cannot take in all of a panoramic at once but need to scan it - in some respects in a similar way that we do an actual scene. Of course we also scan normal aspect photographs, but with a different need and intention, or rather without the added necessity imposed by the extreme width of the picture. We often use the term panoramic to apply loosely to any picture with a width to height ratio of more than about 2:1. Here we are thinking solely of the format of the print, and many such pictures that I see do not appear to me as panoramic but simply as excessively cropped normal views. For a proper panoramic effect the picture must incorporate an extreme wide angle of view - perhaps a horizontal angle of around 90° or more. For me at least the format ratio is a secondary consideration.

My first panoramics were constructed from a series of normal views pasted together to give a 180° or greater view. These involved setting up the camera on a tripod with the centre of the lens carefully over the point of rotation. A tripod with built in spirit levels is almost essential for this. Using a 50mm or longer lens makes it possible to join up

the pictures more or less perfectly. (Many variations on such pasted up pictures or joiners were popular with amateur photographers and also in some fine art photography long before Mr Hockney got in on the act. Perhaps the most famous panorama taken by this method is the large format one of San Francisco before the earthquake.) When I acquired a 35mm shift lens it was possible to take two pictures centres 22mm apart giving an effective format of 24 x 58mm. However the angle of view was still disappointing. A shift lens with a wider angle of view was available but at a price. It also had a large and poorly protected front element which would not last long in my hands.

After these primitive attempts (including one or two faked panoramas which took advantage of the fact that the corner of one building or edge of a post could segue apparently seamlessly to another time or place) I decided that I had to graduate to a real panoramic camera. Most people whose work I had seen published (notably Josef Sudek's splendid work in and around Prague, but also a growing number of younger American photographers) seemed mainly to involve either rare and valuable antique equipment or even more fabulously expensive and



FROM A SERIES ON NORTH KENT LANDSCAPES

ORIGINALS OF ALL PICTURES P4-5  
IN COLOUR





often specially engineered modern precision equipment requiring a hefty mortgage. The intrepid of course build their own, and those less with less manual sinistosity than me may care to obtain *Panoptic Photography Experiments* by M.Dusariez, L.Pieroux & L.Larsen available from Michel Dusariez, 14 Avenue Capitaine Piret - B-1150, BRUSSELS, Belgium (Fax 32 2 512 68 29), which, for 800 Belgian Francs, apparently gives directions on making some very interesting cameras (see <http://www.wordsandpictures.com/iapp> for some examples.)

My first panoramic camera was a throwaway one - Kodak's Stretch35 - which used a masked down 35mm format and a surprisingly sharp 25mm plastic lens. The 36 x 13mm 200ASA Kodacolor negative not surprisingly gave rather soft results beyond about 10 inches long, and just 12 exposures seemed exces-

sively mean of Kodak. The price was more or less right but the 72° angle of view was too low. However this - or rather around five of them - was the tool for my first real completed panoramic project, a series of images in the eastern suburbs of Paris during a very hot and sunny 1990 summer. Of course I could get similar (but sharper) results using a normal 35mm camera with an extreme wide angle lens and cropping to panoramic format in the enlarger, but somehow this throwaway little carton was more fun although an affront to my ecological principles. (I had intended to reuse the 'cameras' by reloading, but this proved too fiddly in practice.) Using a normal camera gave an important advantage in providing the effect of a rising or falling front by the position of cropping, but did not overcome the problem of negative size. A very slow film - such as 25ASA - could help. Moving to medium format was not really

possible as there seemed at the time to be no extreme wide-angles available, and anything even slightly ultra cost the earth.

A little reading (there wasn't much I could find - a few pictorial monographs, one general book and a number of articles) established that there were two or three main types of camera. Firstly cameras which simply had a panoramic aspect film holder and an extreme wide angle lens. These produced typical distortion towards the edges of the picture with circular objects being stretched to ellipses etc. Mainly they were purpose built roll film cameras, although similar angle of view could be obtained with extreme wide-angle lenses (such as the more recent 45 and 47mm ultrawides) fitted to normal 5x4 cameras, so long as a bag bellows would allow the front and rear standards to be moved sufficiently close together. With some cameras of





this type the angle of view was disappointingly narrow, though a few were in the over 100° class. The second type of cameras used a slit shutter. In most the lens rotated, projecting an image as it did so onto the film arranged around it on a cylindrical path centred on the lens, though some appeared more complex. Having the lens at the centre of the cylinder of film gives a constant lens to film distance and so no elongation at the edges; however the curvature of the film results in a loss of rectilinear drawing, producing a typical 'cigar' shape in pictures. (Arguably a more 'accurate' view, as it both correctly reproduces the inverse proportionality between image size and actual distance from the lens and also gives equal distances on film for the same horizontal angle across the whole picture; but just not conforming to the curious way our mind constructs a curiously viewpoint independent three dimensional space.)

This type was available for both roll and 35mm film, and generally produced pictures with a horizontal angle of view from 130° to 360° and above. It is also the camera type familiar with some for those long school photographs which gave fast runners the opportunity to appear on both ends - the school staff seated centrally in the middle being powerless to prevent such tricks.

At this stage I spent a lot of time looking at both the equipment (when I could find any to look at) and also pictures taken with the various cameras. My final choice of a rotating lens version was based partly on price but also on a preference for the wider angle of view such cameras give. Although a roll film version would have no doubt improved the technical quality of my work, the cameras were heavier and bulkier and much more expensive. In any case I find 120 film a real pain in the

neck. A negative size of 59x24mm (21 exposures on a 36 x film) seemed essentially medium, despite being on 35mm film. Its only serious apparent defect was the very limited range of shutter speeds (1/15, 1/125 and 1/250 only) and apertures. At the time the Widelux was one of the cheapest available (I kicked myself for not buying a Russian Horizon - a similar design - years ago when these were around £35, these are still occasionally to be found new or second-hand but seldom in the UK). Since then a range of Noblex models have appeared, handled by Teamwork which in some respects are superior to the Widelux.

Learning to use this new Widelux was not too easy. Most of my early pictures were disappointing, particularly if I tried the camera off tripod, with fingers on one of both sides and madly curving horizons. Gradually I learnt the necessity to always







look at the spirit level and regard the viewfinder as largely superfluous - the two arrows on the camera body are rather more accurate! Of course there are occasions when the camera can be used away from the strictly horizontal, but these are unusual. The hardest aspect of composition was getting things to work in the foreground which otherwise was gapingly empty. I was fortunate early on to pick one subject - the Docklands Light Railway extension then under construction from Poplar to Beckton which suited the format admirably. It was probably solely the desire to get more practice in the use of the camera that drove me out of bed at eight on a foggy February day and to believe a weather forecast that promised it would clear later. I froze for an hour or two around Canning Town exposing a few 400ASA rolls at 1/15 of a second before abandoning work and making my way home. Al-

though not my own favourite from the project it has been a very successful image, especially in the 2000 magazine and on the web.

After six months with black and white film I felt sufficiently confident to try colour negative on a number of projects and since then I have worked almost exclusively with this. My next project was on the City of London and produced a few more successful pictures, some of which have been used and published a few times. Several were sold to the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (the IRA did me a favour here by demolishing some of the scenes I had photographed). Since then I've worked with the camera on projects on the River Thames, revisited the now extended Docklands Light Railway using colour, and, in possibly my most successful work to date, followed the Greenwich Meridian north from Greenwich to Chingford. I've also worked a little on events such as the Lord

Mayors Show and Notting Hill Carnival, though in these situations the limitation of a fixed focus camera sometimes becomes apparent, as foreground figures are always out of focus, whether you like it or not. (One of the carnival pictures is about to be used as part of an exhibition backdrop in the Museum of London.)

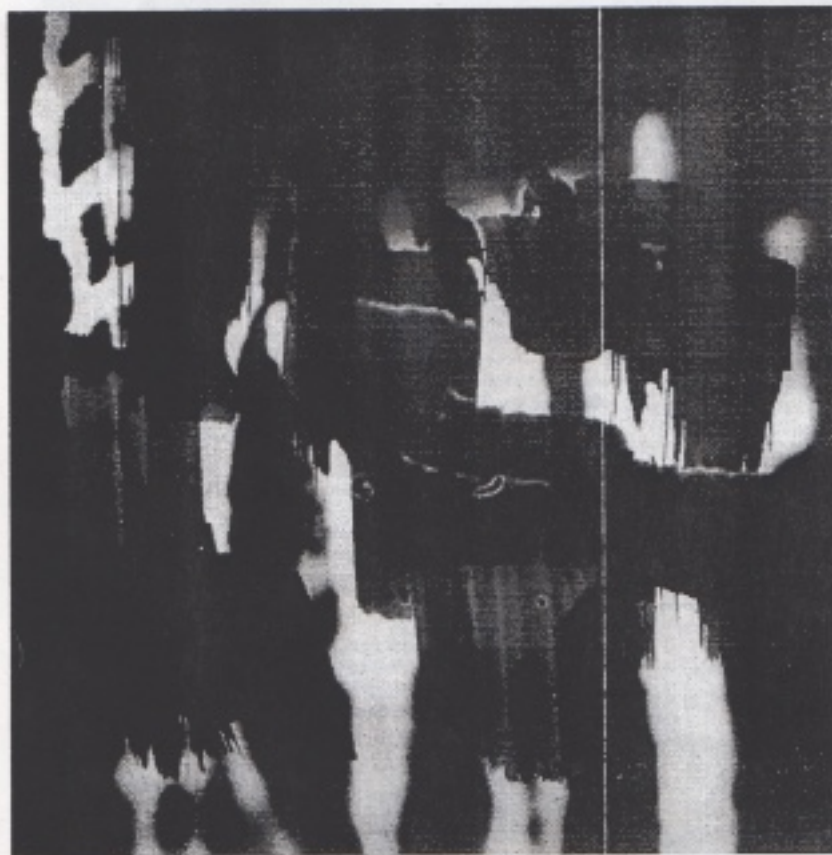
Some of the work from the Meridian will be on show at the Barbican Library in January 1997. I also hope it will be involved in various ways in the celebrations around the approaching Millennium. Together with others of my pictures this work is also visible on the internet at the Greenwich 2000 site:

<http://www.greenwich2000.com> and on Fixing Shadows. Shortly I hope to have rather more of my London work visible on the net and will include some panoramics both from the City and the DLR.



## Nick Barker

recently took part along with 16 other photographers in the *Images with a Twist* at the Photo-Arty gallery in Southgate. The exhibition incorporated a wide range of techniques including: Photogram, Photo-etching, Hand and Computer Manipulations, Solarization, Liquid Emulsion and a variety of tonings, unique processes and effects



**Black Poppies:** hand manipulated Cibachrome photogram, 41x41cm, Edition of 10

Black Poppies having been shown at the Dolphin Square Exhibition Sept-Oct (presented by the City of Westminster Arts Council) has now moved along with another ten of his works to the *Printmakers Exhibition* at Will's Art Warehouse, Fulham (until Nov 24, tel 0171 373 8787.)

Three of the works can also be seen at the Lateral Arts website, <http://www.larts.co.uk>



# ALONE WITH HORSELL COMMON

Martin Bowman

Martin's exhibition of photographs of Horsell Common took place at Woking Library from 21 October to 2 November, and was put on in association with Woking Borough Council, supported by Surrey County Council and was a part of Woking's War of the Worlds Celebrations.



## News

### Martin Bowman

Woking has a few claims to distinction, notably its Mosque and Railway Station, and, a few miles down the track a fine Victorian cemetery at Brookwood, to which the daily funeral express of the London Necropolis Company ran for many years from its Lambeth terminus in Westminster Bridge Rd. H G Wells apparently thought the area ripe for alien invasion and it is hard to disagree.

Now it can add that it has been the subject and location of an exhibition by a UP member, although unfortunately the details arrived too late for inclusion in the September issue.

### Edward Bowman

Edward Bowman is to exhibit photographs and computer images based on a work entitled *'Past Tense': Variations on a Theme of Loss* at the Bradford Museum of Photography, Film & Television from 6 April - 7 July 1997. This work is part of a project connected with this MA degree work at the University of Westminster.

### Four on London

This show by four London based documentary photographers, Paul Baldesare, Peter Marshall, Michael Seaborn and David Trainer is at the Barbican Library Foyer from 8 - 30 Jan.

### Future Vision

Congratulations to Julia Dogra-Brazell for having her work selected for *Future Vision*, the Annual Open Exhibition on show at the Photographers' Gallery from 15 Nov to 18 Jan.

### IPSE EVENTS

Mark Power, whose work *The Shipping Forecast* is published this month and exhibited in Brighton in January will be running a workshop at Micklepage on 15 March, and there will be a members weekend on 10-11 May. Details from Jill Staples (01444 881891) for all IPSE events. IPSE evenings continue monthly at Jill's home in Bolney and also in the Tunbridge Wells, Midhurst and Portsmouth areas.

# Janet Hall

Janet has played the major role in the organisation of LIP's activities over the last 10 years, and is certainly a familiar figure to all members.

Yet she is surprisingly diffident about showing others her photographs.

There are probably quite a few members who have never seen any of her pictures, and some may wonder if given all the time she puts into the organisation she has any left to take pictures.

Here is just a little glimpse of what we have been missing, a few of her splendid dance photographs.



DANCE UNBETWA - THE FULE. RANDY WARSZAW DANCE COMPANY - PRAGUE ANCHOR  
L TO R: BILL YOUNG, RANDY WARSZAW, SUGAN BLANKENSDP.





# DIARY CELEBRATING IMAGES

See your programme for more details of these events, charges and how to book for them. Don't leave it until the last minute as popular events book up fast.

## DEC 1996

3 Talk: Italian Photography; PG; 7.00  
17 Christmas Party, Drill Hall, 7.30

## JAN 1997

14 Talk: Greg Lucas PG 7.00  
27 & 30: Exhibition Submissions

## FEB

2 Symposium: Dewi Lewis PG 11.00  
10 & 13 Collect submissions  
15 Workshop: Making a Book  
Jane Reese, Nautilus, 10.00

## MARCH

1 Blotak, Drill Hall, 2.30  
8-9 Workshop: Alt Printing  
Mike Ware, Brunel, 10.30  
18 Talk: Graham Rawle PG 7.00

## APRIL

12 Exhibition Starts, Swiss Cottage  
20 Symposium: Harriet Logan, PG 11.00

## MAY

10 Exhibition closes  
20 Talk: Ian Walker PG 7.00  
25 Symposium: Bill Jay PG 11.00

## JUNE

21 Blotak 7.30 Drill Hall

As 1997 marks LIP's 10th anniversary the committee hope that this year's exhibition will be a special event in the life of LIP, showing the full range of work by members.

Swiss Cottage Library is probably the largest and best known exhibition venue in London which is available for group shows such as ours. It regularly hosts exhibitions including some of well-known artists, and is an excellent space for showing our work with a large number of library users as well as those coming specially to see the shows. The surrounding area has probably the highest concentration of buyers of contemporary art in the UK.

## LOCAL MONTHLY MEETINGS

These will now replace the central monthly meetings and are held in various parts of London.

At these meetings members will be free to talk about each others work or to plan a local exhibition, or work towards a major LIP exhibition for the Millennium if this materialises.

The structure, content, times, dates and frequency and any charges for use of premises are for the individual groups to decide. Contact the coordinators:

**Quentin Ball**, 1 Summerland Gardens,  
N10 3QN - 0181 444 5505  
**Yoke Matze**, 11 Thomcombe Rd, E.  
Dulwich, SE22 - 0181 693 8107  
**Sarah Thelwall**, 36 King's Keep,  
Beaufort Rd, Kingston 01812551309  
**Graeme Webb**, 37 Cadwallon Rd, SE9  
3PX - 0181 850 4771  
**Alison Williams**, 21b Greenhill Rd,  
Harrow, HA1 1LD - 0181 427 0268

Sarah Thelwall, our new Exhibitions Organiser, has written to members with directions for submitting work. Mounted, but unframed prints should be delivered to 29 Lexham Gardens from noon - 2pm on 27 Jan or between 6pm - 8pm on 30 Jan (or, no doubt at other times by arrangement for those of us who can never make the times set!)

Following the selection meeting you will then need to collect the work (10 Feb, 12-2 or 13 Feb, 6-8) and frame the selected prints ready to deliver to the gallery as advised for the show.

Up to 10 prints can be submitted, together with the submission fee of £10. You will have to pay a further £5 hanging fee for each print selected.

These fees go some way towards meeting the roughly £750 total cost of the four week exhibition at the gallery.

## PARTY

be there Dec 17 at the  
Drill Hall at 7.30.  
Don't miss it!

All LIP members are welcome to any these meetings

Programme Secretary Janet Hall - 0181 847 5989

LIPSERVICE appears three times yearly, normally in March, September and November.

Please send details of any events or projects you are involved in, articles of photographic interest, gossip, humour, comment, reviews etc to the editor.

Peter Marshall 31 Budebury Rd STAINES Middx TW18 2AZ

☎ 01784 456474

email: petermarshall@cix.compulink.co.uk

Text should preferably be submitted either on disk (PC disk format, Word, RTF or text files) or as good typed/printed copy.

12 Original prints, colour photocopies or good quality printed reproductions are acceptable but must be smaller than A4