**Why I Take Photographs**

I have no profound reasons for being a photographer apart from that it answers a very deep need in me for self expression and it, and writing, are the only means I have for answering that call. I know I am terribly old fashioned as I still use slide film and my main subject matter is landscapes but perhaps, as a Chemistry Undergraduate, there is a little part of me that likes the fact that chemistry is still central to the whole process of taking a picture. But also, and more importantly I think, I like the fact that the final image will not be exactly as the one I see at the moment that I trip the shutter and that to make the final photograph work I have to try and ‘see’ the world as the film sees it and to exploit that it doesn’t ‘see’ quite like me. As for my love of landscapes I think that is twofold, I develop a deep, and surprisingly for an uber rationalistic atheist, almost pagan attachment to particular places. I have always done this even as a very small child and I want, through my photography, to show the essence of the places that I love as I experience them. So, to this end I will go back time and time again to the same places until I get somewhere near showing what I feel about them. One example of this is the Photograph of Cardinham Water on the opening page of the website. This was a place that I discovered when we, as a family, first moved to Cornwall and my children used to play within the stream. The place came to represent many things for me; childhood, a certain mysterious hidden quality that many Cornish places had, the sense that given time nature will reclaim everything as part of this landscape had once been quarried but it now impossible to tell which was manmade and which was natural as it was all so entirely sylvan. Trying to convey all this in a 35mm piece of plastic took me many, many attempts but I do now feel that, at last, justice has been done.

The other aspect of why landscape photography is important to me is hinted at in the last paragraph. You see it gives me a chance, temporarily at least, to escape from my own rational worldview and re-enter the world before that particular Pandora’s Box was opened. Now, as in the myth, I cannot return everything back into the Box, and to be quite honest I don’t regret having opened it in the first place but I do have a sense of loss because the world was a more intensely, exciting place when I believed that God was in his Heaven, the Dead sometimes walked and that great monsters lurked within the depths of Scottish Lochs. So to that end I try to see the places that I love now as they would have appeared to me when I was a child and then I use the camera to recreate the intensity of the child’s worldview.