

sdt Interview

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FLASH, BANG, WHALLOP

Snapper Steve Drury comes out of the shadows

(Our man: Bob Coxley)

He was a music photographer in the 80's (who did a spell with the Melody Maker), and was noted as a professional insomniac as he went from gig to gig capturing great shots - he was was enthusiasm personified. Then it all went quiet, whilst his contemporaries took the glory. Now years later, Steve DT stands on the precipice of yet more adventures.



I first became aware of Steve Drury when he photographed my band 'the Assassins' for a London fanzine. During the session, it soon became apparent to me that his photo ideas far out-weighed the talent of our soon to be extinguished band. No band was too big nor too small for his concentration. Today our roles are reversed. I'm here as a cyber journalist and he's in the hot seat. Recently I had stumbled on his Music Photo web site ([Steve Drury Music Photographer](#)), (formerly at Geocities) which displays many fine examples of his talents, and was intrigued. I hadn't spoken to him for years and wasn't even sure he'd remember me, but I wanted to find out where this man from Sheffield had been for the last few years.

We met up in a local studio. This morning, the DJ on the radio said that it was going to be the hottest day of the year. Who'd have guessed it, as I'm sat in the studio's darkroom with Steve Drury-Thurgood. Now I know why photographers don't have suntans. And Steve DT was the very picture of anaemic health. "I'm a night bird".

First of all, he was able to clarify the confusing change to his name, "I had extended the name several years ago, and had always intended to use it once I moved away from the music scene". One could almost describe it as the "new and improved" model. His last stab at the music world was the body of work which was published within Mick Mercer's book "Gothic Rock" [1991]. This included the beautiful Peter Murphy - striking the pose of a matador, and the inspired flying Party Day photo. The latter being the most original in the book. "Also I had produced for Party Day another one, which was based on the story of Icarus".



I asked him if he knew about the 'All About Eve' feature that was in the Record Collector sometime ago, where the writer had actually said that you had taken the best shot of them ever. "Yeah, I'd heard about that, but didn't know who the writer was or which photo they were referring to, as I was able to shoot them several times. However, I suspect it was the one they had used for a



sticker/flyer. One evening at an AAE gig, my girlfriend came back from a visit to the toilet, and said " You're not going to believe what I've just seen?" Well my mind boggled at first, but then she told me that the toilet was covered 'wall-to-wall' with this new sticker... of one of my photos. This was my first exhibition space!"

So why did you move away from the music scene? "I had grown weary of the one dimensional people within the biz, basically it sucked".

Needing to recharge his batteries, he moved to Brighton and settled for those cobweb removing sea breezes. "We lived on a hill and on a bad day, you couldn't stand up." I was surprised to hear that he sold his cameras and didn't even own one for about three years. Even to the point of having to borrow a Kodak instamatic for his honeymoon. Nevertheless, these were not quite his wilderness years, as he preferred to bury himself in the darkroom. "It was good to take stock of myself".



This all changed when he returned to London. And in 1998, had an exhibition entitled "So you want to be a tourist?" his first main departure from music. And best described as an insight into the toils of being a tourist: the exploration, the excitement, the ecstasy and not forgetting . . . the exhaustion. What was the response to it? "OK, but it all happened a bit too quick. Firstly a friend of mine pulled out of a commitment at the last minute, and suggested that I did the two weeks with a recent reportage piece that I'd just completed. The venue

liked the photos, and a few days later they were on the wall. Unfortunately due to the short time, I really couldn't get much publicity for it. But nevertheless it was fun."

If you've left music, why did you create the Geocities site. Isn't it all a bit too nostalgic?

"Well firstly, it's not nostalgic, but factual and a bit eclectic. It has none of this 'best band ever crap'. And secondly, these were important bands that I was fortunate to cover, (from 'Def Leppard to Bauhaus' - it's certainly diverse). Also, I'm continually amazed when I find a photo of mine being used somewhere. Only the other day, I ran across one of my Wolfhounds promo photos being featured rather prominently on a site. Things like that make you think it mattered and that they were enjoyed.



So is Steve Drury-Thurgood content to stay in the darkroom?



Hardly. Steve continues to add to the Geocities site. But for the foreseeable future, the major change will be the addition of his own domain site, as yet unnamed. The content for the new site will be more contemporary and varied, and will include theatre, experimental, social documentary, nude and there will also be an 'ecard' section. "Yeah, that's me having fun." And just when you'd thought he'd moved away from music; he'll be contributing to a new music book on 80's Sheffield, and will be putting together two CD compilations on Party Day - from its track listing to the sleeve notes. "It's all the fault of some American that I've got to know over the last year, and I thought the project was a good idea." And then there's one other project, which sounds most intriguing, that of putting together his own book on erotic imagery. "It's not a departure from anything, maybe a deviation, but that's me!"

So is this 'the moment'? "Well I don't know about that, I'm hardly a young pup anymore, and even though life seems to have won a few rounds, I'm still standing and having fun." So expect to see his name turn up in various places. This guy has more tributaries than the Nile.