

**BODLEIAN LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**  
**NEWS RELEASE**

## **Britain then and now captured in unique exhibition by pioneering documentary photographer Daniel Meadows**

*Daniel Meadows: Now and Then*, 4 October – 24 November 2019  
Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries Oxford

An exhibition of still photographs and moving images by iconic British documentary photographer Daniel Meadows will be on display at the Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, from 4 October to 24 November. The exhibition, providing a retrospective of Daniel Meadows' work, is taking place to celebrate Meadows' complete archives coming to the Bodleian Libraries, and is supported by The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation.

Daniel Meadows, a pioneer of contemporary British documentary practice, has been celebrating what he calls 'the felt life of the great ordinary' for almost half a century. Always challenging the status quo, he has worked collaboratively, fashioning from his encounters with strangers across England, a nation's story both magical and familiar.

Fiercely independent, Meadows devised many of his own creative processes. He first ran a free portrait studio in Manchester's Moss Side in 1972. Then he travelled 10,000 miles in a converted double-decker bus, the *Free Photographic Omnibus*, setting up impromptu portrait sessions in towns and cities across the country's heartland.

The title *Now and Then* reflects the dimension of Meadows' work which has involved him photographing his subjects across long intervals in their lives. These photographs — children, adults, couples captured in the 1970s and again in the 1990s — along with their many connected stories, have made a very important contribution to documentary journalism in our lifetime.

The exhibition features:

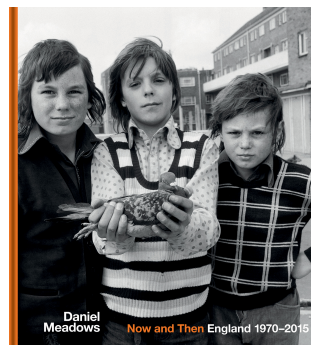
- a set of 34 portrait photographs, arranged in pairs, each depicting the same people separated by an interval of c. 25 years between the 1970s and the 1990s. These were captured as part of Meadows' *Free Photographic Omnibus* project.
- 16 short digital stories made using material from across Meadows' archive — letters, newspaper cuttings, journals, diaries, negatives, contact sheets and audio recordings — shown on touch screens in a custom-built video-booth.

Richard Ovenden, Bodley's Librarian said, 'Daniel Meadows is one of Britain's national treasures. He is one of our great documentary photographers. His work is both concerned and humane, and engages individuals and communities thoughtfully and sympathetically. His body of work, stretching for almost fifty years, charts major social changes in Britain, but always has the lives and lived experiences of people at its heart. *Daniel Meadows: Now and Then* through his photographs, videos and other material from his archive, provides Daniel's unique perspective on British society in recent decades. We are truly honoured to have been gifted his archive which will be a major resource for scholars, and an inspiration for photographers.'

Visitors can also hear about Meadows' work in an upcoming talk at the Weston Library entitled 'Now and Then' as he shares stories from his encounters with strangers, recounts his own experience of the lives of others, and explains his continued curiosity about the people he met which led him to revisit

many of his subjects. 'Now and Then', Friday 18 October at 8pm. For more information or to book visit: [www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson)

The accompanying book, *Now and Then: England 1970-2015*, is an anthology that samples the full range of Meadows' documentary projects over his 45-year career and includes both portraits of people and the work they did, portraying the English landscape and many now long-forgotten trades such as the engineer for a steam driven cotton mill and the steeplejack.



Daniel Meadows' photographs have been exhibited widely with solo shows at the Institute of Contemporary Arts London (1975), Camerawork Gallery (1978), the Photographers' Gallery (1987) and a touring retrospective from the National Science and Media Museum (2011). Group shows include Tate Britain (2007) and Hayward Gallery Touring (2008).

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#### NOTES TO EDITORS

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**Daniel Meadows: Now and Then: England 1970-2015** by Bodleian Library Publishing (hardback, 160 pages, 259 x 237 mm, 4 colour and 105 b&w illustrations, ISBN: 9781851245338, £25) is available to pre-order online at <https://bodleianshop.co.uk/collections/coming-soon/products/now-and-then-england-1970-2015> and will be available in all good bookshops from 4 October 2019. For a review copy, please contact Emma O'Brien at [emma@obryen.co.uk](mailto:emma@obryen.co.uk) or 07505 695641.

#### About the Bodleian Libraries

The Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford is the largest university library system in the United Kingdom. It includes the principal University library – the Bodleian Library – which has been a legal deposit library for 400 years; as well as 27 libraries across Oxford including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, over 80,000 e-journals and outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera. Members of the public can explore the collections via the Bodleian's online image portal at [digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk](http://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk) or by visiting the exhibition galleries in the Bodleian's Weston Library. For more information, visit [www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk).