

Southsiders : Portraits of a Community begins today

What links Ian Rankin's favourite record shop, Preston Street Primary School's lollipop lady and a disability activist who won't allow anything to come between her and a good book?

They all feature in **Southsiders: Portraits of a Community** an artistic project by photographer Peter Dibdin launching today at 2:00pm in the University of Edinburgh's Inspace Gallery, Crichton Street. Nine of the 32 photographic portraits which make up the project will be exhibited outdoors in The Causey (West Crosscauseway) until 5 October. The project is one of the first in the UK to receive a Heritage Lottery Fund All Our Stories grant to help people explore, share and celebrate their local heritage.



Thirty-eight Southsiders are pictured in locations of special significance to them and their stories are recorded in sound. The portraits, sound clips and transcripts of the fascinating and often surprising stories behind the images can be found at www.edinburghsouthsiders.co.uk and in the free special edition publication which also launches today. The artwork on the pavement has been designed and installed by renowned artist Tom Barnett as a special commission for the project to signpost all the portraits in the space.



Disability activist Caroline Barr has lived in the Southside for 18 years. She began campaigning for dips in the kerbs that were stopping her getting where she wanted to go, notably Newington Library. She invited local Councillor Steve Burgess

to come with her to the library – and persuaded him to sit in her mobility buggy while she, as she puts it, “hobbled along.”

“He came off the road pretty shaken up and a bit traumatised,” she remembers. As a result, the kerbs at the library have been altered. “I think that photographs have a lot to offer because it’s not until people actually visually see the issue that the penny drops.”


Portraits of Caroline and 37 other people representing the Southside community, their stories and memories of the area feature in this photographic and sound project which celebrates the sense of belonging and discusses perceptions of Southsider identity.

Peter Dibdin said:- “What these photographs do offer is my sincere interpretation, a slice of my own community, and an essence of what it is to be part of this amazing pocket of Edinburgh. Rather than choosing to display the images in a gallery against a white wall, the portraits here are framed by the Southside itself, so the buildings become part of the exhibition.”



“We are delighted to be involved in such a project,” says David Wood, Chair of The Causey Development Trust. “Southsiders: Portrait of a Community is a great way to generate discussion about who the Southsiders are and to increase interest and pride in this lively and distinct part of Edinburgh. We hope that the experience of this project will encourage others to see the potential of The Causey as a place for people and events and to come to us with ideas for their own heritage projects.”

The Causey Development Trust (CDT) was awarded funding for the **Southsiders: Portrait of a Community** project by the Heritage Lottery Fund's All Our Stories programme, Foundation Scotland, The Cray Trust and the City of Edinburgh Council Business Partnerships Project. Support has also been generously provided by McRobb Display, Leslie Deans & Co, Sharman and Co, Laurence Smith & Son, the Living Memory Association, 56 North Bar & Restaurant and Greenmantle Pub.
www.edinburghsouthsiders.co.uk

 **CDT** was set up in 2007 as The West Crosscauseway Association and renamed in 2011. It was formed to temporarily transform The Causey, originally an historic meeting place but now an uninspiring traffic island, into a tropical island for the SIX CITIES' Design Festival. Following that success CDT has continued to promote learning and enjoyment for individuals resident or employed in the area and to pursue a permanent transformation of The Causey into a vibrant place for people and events. It is a grassroots initiative led by a steering group of local people. www.thecausey.org The last time we heard about The Causey they were hosting a light night in 2011 on the traffic island which is where the photograph above was taken.