

## Introduction

John Darwell

The following pictures, and the cover photograph, are taken from two different ongoing series that explore the changing aspects of the rivers of contemporary North England. These cold rivers shock the onlooker with moments of repulsive pollution and enigmatic beauty – enigmatic, for what exactly are the chemical or natural processes that make us look again?

John Darwell, whose gripping series on the feel of depression (“A Black Dog Came Calling,” 2008; see [www.johndarwell.com](http://www.johndarwell.com)) proves that he knows how to convey disorientation and disturbance, stages an intimate confrontation with the weird, uncomfortable, and sometimes lovely corrupted new landscapes we have not yet come to terms with.

In many of the pictures in these series, Darwell experiments with the nature of photographic seeing through differential focus.

This is what John Darwell tells us about his wanderings alongside River Petterill, and his series

One Hundred Yards:

Twice a day for the past ten years, with my companion Barney the dog, I’ve walked a circular route along this small stretch of river close to my home in northern England, often in the pouring rain, frequently in the freezing pitch dark.

I calculate that, taking occasional absences into account, we’ve walked this route approximately nine thousand times.

The river is a favourite spot for the dumping and burning of stolen cars or for junkies to hang out; but is also used by dog walkers (myself included) fisherman (ditto) and as an adventure playground for the local kids. It is also a haven for wildlife of all descriptions.

It can be a forbidding and even dangerous place, especially in the depths of winter, but just occasionally it can look like this.

This is an ongoing body of work that looks to this river as a magical location that stands, often overlooked, mere yards away from a busy Motorway and large housing estate, that will eventually bring together all aspects of this location.

John Darwell  
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