

Photography group trip to Paddy's Hole (2024/05/07)

Report by Pete Redgrave

On a grey and murky morning members of the photography group assembled on the narrow, mostly single-track dead-end road leading to the South Gare lighthouse on the Tees estuary. Professional photographers I think would call the location, an 'industrial seascape.' The scene is captured by not exactly luxurious pleasure and fishing boats moored in Paddy's Hole, a side inlet off the estuary.



Across the dead-end road, serried ranks of mostly green huts of the South Gare Fishermans Huts Association clustered against marram-covered dunes. The dwellings were protected by a bold sign from the South Gare Fishermans Association declaring "PRIVATE LAND NO DOGS ALLOWED" – dogs and fish don't mix well ? One of the huts had broken rank and seemed to

be attempting an escape over the dunes.



In this atmospheric place there was plenty to catch the photographers' eye; including, a large tanker being ushered into port by three powerful tug-boats, a gentleman repairing a marine engine, a man walking his dog, piles of lobster pots (given recent news on dredger-related disturbance of toxic sediment, I'm not sure I would pick Teemouth lobster from the menu), abstract patterns of weathered drift wood and beach boulders, lichen covered stones, peeling paint on rotting boats, and a beautiful purple iris. One item sadly missing was the enormous defunct steel works (or was it part of the Billingham chemical complex) – all now gone. Battalions of bulldozers, earth scrapers, and land flatteners have created a smooth waste land on which the ultra-modern Teesside Free Port will be, or might be, situated. So, in memory of past glory:



Time waits for no photographer, so after a satisfactory period of clicking, the group repaired to an energy saving café on Redcar seafront for coffee and a bite. Some commented we were unlucky the sun appeared only as we were leaving South Gare. But who wants to see an industrial seascape on a bright and cheerful spring morning – the ambience would be all wrong.

Our next outing will be on Tuesday 4th June to visit Hadrian's Wall close to Twice Brewed.