



Astley Ainslie Community Trust

STUDIES*in*
PHOTOGRAPHY

Press Release

3 September 2020

New Journal Highlights Importance of City Greenspaces

- Links Between Nature, Community, and Wellbeing are Crucial

The **Astley Ainslie Community Trust (AACT)** and **Studies in Photography** are pleased to announce the launch of a new journal, *Leaves*, which addresses timely issues of nature, community, and wellbeing through a creative lens.

The journal has been motivated by the forthcoming sale of the Astley Ainslie Hospital site, located in the south of Edinburgh. As a place of healing for several centuries, Astley Ainslie is an important greenspace in the heart of the city. The journal helps highlight AACT's aims to achieve community ownership of the land, as an important place to be retained for the benefit of the people of Edinburgh.

The first issue of *Leaves* features contributions from poets, scientists, curators and photographers including Robin Harper, Kathleen Jamie, and Norman McBeath. Striking photographs of the natural world accompany poems and articles on subjects such as the history of the Astley Ainslie site and the therapeutic and educational advantages of engaging directly with nature.

The publication is edited by Sara Stevenson – cultural historian and former Chief Curator of Photography at the National Galleries of Scotland – who is a member of the AACT Executive Committee.

On the question of the journal's inspiration and focus, Sara comments: "City greenspaces are key to people's mental and physical wellbeing. AACT is looking to retain the Astley Ainslie site as a community asset and a unique environment.

"The *Leaves* Journal is a celebration of this vision and it is particularly pertinent to highlight this during a global pandemic, when problems like air pollution, mental and physical health have been brought to the fore as a result of national lockdowns."

The journal is available to purchase online from the websites of both AACT (aact.scot) and Studies in Photography (studiesinphotography.com). A limited number of copies are also available to buy at independent retailers in Edinburgh, including the Edinburgh Bookshop on Bruntsfield Place. Copies are priced at £10 (exc. P&P).

Ends

For more information please contact:

Studies in Photography Alex Hamilton
Email: alexanderfremihamilton@gmail.com
Tel: 07779223580

AACT Tim Orr
Email: torr0071@gmail.com
Tel: 07767220964

Notes to editors:

About the Astley Ainslie Community Trust

The Astley Ainslie Community Trust (AACT) was founded to achieve community ownership of the Astley Ainslie Hospital site, situated in the Grange area of southern Edinburgh. AACT aims to build on the intention of David Ainslie's original bequest, which recognised that healthy communities need intimate connections with land and nature. Health and wellbeing are essential to the success of the NHS, and the Trust will keep these at the heart of its proposals, which include greenspace for therapeutic uses, education and recreation; an active and open community hub; and affordable housing.

About Studies in Photography

Studies in Photography is the publishing wing of the Scottish Society for the History of Photography (SSHOP). The society was established in 1983 with a key objective in mind: to further interest, understanding, and appreciation of both historic and contemporary photography. To that end, SSHOP organises lectures, workshops, visits to private collections, launch events, and exhibitions. SSHOP also publishes a bi-annual journal, *Studies in Photography*, which includes articles, interviews, and book reviews of Scottish and international interest.

Photographs, available on request, are of Sara Stevenson and Alex Hamilton, editors of the new journal, *Leaves*, taken in the grounds of Astley Ainslie. Photograph by Kat Axemo.