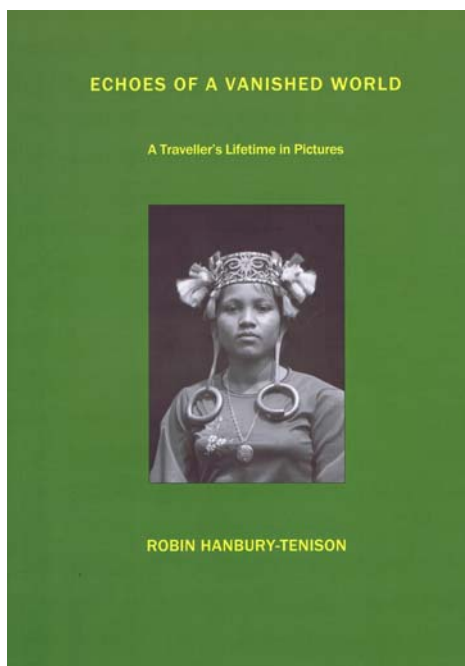


# Echoes of a Vanished World: A Traveller's Lifetime in Pictures

## Robin Hanbury-Tenison

### PRESS RELEASE



Tinjar River, Sarawak, Borneo 1976

Olivier Exhibition Space, the National Theatre  
14 January – 10 March, 2013

Robin Hanbury-Tenison, the 'greatest explorer of the last twenty years' (*Sunday Times*, 1982) is also one of the founders of Survival International. As such, he has been a tireless champion of the rights of tribal peoples and, in the early years of his travels, a reluctant photographer, of their homelands as they were eroded by the modern world, since he preferred to look, listen and try to understand.

The prints on show are a result of an idea of his good friend, the artist and neighbour Graham Ovenden who had known that Robin had photographed extensively while on his travels. Graham is co-owner of Garage Press and he suggested that they explore Robin's personal archive of photographs and diaries to see if there was enough material to make a book devoted largely to his photographs. They were surprised at the quality and quantity of the works they unearthed. Graham thought Robin had a "camera eye for form and moment", but aesthetic satisfaction aside, the imagery and diary entries communicated his deeply felt humanity for his fellow beings. Many of the images had not been looked at for fifty years! The exhibition and books are borne out of this collaboration.

*"his images speak directly to us in a voice that is fresh and clear. There is nothing self-conscious or patronizing about his photographs, or his prose. Instead there is deep admiration, a sense of wonder, respect and a desire to share what he sees with a world that has grown increasingly out of touch with the things that really matter". "This stunning archive is not just a portal into a series of vanished places. It is not just a collection of stories, or even just a memoir of an era of exploration. It is a reminder of what we share, as human beings, with the rest of the world."*

Joanne Harris, author of *Chocolat*.

In the summer of 1957 Robin set out on an adventure to make the first overland drive from London to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in a battered World War II Jeep, which gave up in Colombo. Thereafter he travelled by cargo boat, through Indo-China to Borneo and worked his passage across the Pacific. During the journey he wandered through Persia, Afghanistan and India. He has returned to Borneo many times since, on many expeditions.

The exhibition also includes artefacts from Robin Hanbury-Tenison's collection. These objects were given to him on his many travels as gestures of friendship and simple generosity by remote tribal people during the 50s, 60s and 70s. The objects were made, worn and used by the givers, and were often precious to them. Having been given these beautiful things and enjoyed having them, he now wants to give something back to those who made them. And so they will be sold in aid of Survival International, so that the proceeds are used to support the donors' descendants and help them retain their land and culture. As a record a separate book has been published to document the objects.

Robin Hanbury-Tenison, OBE, (76) is a Founder and President of Survival International, the world's leading organisation supporting tribal peoples. He has been on over 30 expeditions, including as leader of the Royal Geographical Society's largest expedition, taking 115 scientists to study the rainforests of Sarawak. This research and his book, "Mulu: the Rainforest", started the international concern for tropical rainforests.

On Survival's behalf he has led several overseas missions, including visiting 33 Indian tribes as a guest of the Brazilian government in 1971; Indians of the Darien in Panama and Colombia in 1972; tribes of the outer islands of Indonesia in 1974 and 1975; leading an investigation into excessive logging in Sarawak in 1988; assessing the status of the indigenous peoples of eastern Siberia in 1992 and 1994; and to NE India in 1995; to the Bushmen of the Kalahari in 1980 and 2005; to various Indian groups in Paraguay in 2012. Taken from: <http://www.robinsbooks.co.uk/>.

#### **Publications details:**

*Echoes of a Vanished World: A Traveller's Lifetime in Pictures* by Robin Hanbury-Tenison

Introduction by Joanne Harris

Hard & Soft covers, portrait format, 11.75 x 8.6" (29.6x22cm)

113 pages, 106 B&W photographs

Published by Garage Press

Softback £14.99 & hardback £34.99 (plus post & packing)

&

*Beauty Freely Given: A Universal Truth*, Artefacts from the Collection of Robin Hanbury-Tenison

Foreword by Graham Ovenden

58 pages, 44 colour plates

Published by Garage Press

Softback £14.99 (plus post & packing)

&

Boxed set of the two above softbacks £32.00 (plus post & packing)

Available from <http://nickyakehurst.com/photographers/RobinHanburyTenison/publications.html>

#### **Exhibition details:**

*Echoes of a Vanished World: a Traveller's Lifetime in Pictures* by Robin Hanbury-Tenison

14 January – 10 March 2013

Olivier Exhibition Space

National Theatre

South Bank, London

SE1 9PX

<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover/exhibitions/echoes-of-a-vanished-world>

.....

#### **NOTE TO EDITORS**

This is a touring exhibition and is being coordinated by Akehurst Creative Management and is a rare opportunity to purchase books and prints for the first time. For further information on the exhibition availability, photographs, books and exhibition contact: Nicky Akehurst, E: [na@nickyakehurst.com](mailto:na@nickyakehurst.com), T: 020 3012 0056

For information on Robin Hanbury-Tenison visit: <http://www.robinsbooks.co.uk/> For interviews E: [robin@cabilla.co.uk](mailto:robin@cabilla.co.uk), T: 01208 821 224

Details of talks, book signing and events will be announced nearer to the show, please check National Theatre, Nicky Akehurst or Robin Hanbury-Tenison's website for further information.