

CAPTURE THE LAND

RUNRIG CALENDAR
PHOTOGRAPHER, ANDY HALL,
REVEALS THE ART OF
LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY. HIS
PHOTOGRAPHS GO A LONG WAY
TO EXPLAINING THE IMPACT
THAT THE LAND MAKES IN
RUNRIG'S MUSIC.

Words & Photographs: Andy Hall.



IT IS NOT ALWAYS AN EASY TASK TO WRITE about something which you do instinctively. The writing of this article for *The Wire* has been a process of re-discovery for me, bringing order to a random collection of key ideas which are very important to me and which, in many ways, have shaped my life over the past twenty years. Many of these thoughts have been embedded in my subconscious and I'm grateful to Runrig to have been given the opportunity to bring them to the surface.

My love of landscape photography is matched only with my love of Scotland. I am fascinated with the effect that Scotland has on its people, not only native and adopted Scots, but friends of Scotland. It is a country of beauty, diversity, cultural and industrial heritage, human achievement and long-lasting friendships. These are recurring themes in the song writing of Calum and Rory. Scotland is a place of many facets and my photographic passion is exploring the often-undefinable, emotional and spiritual connection between the land and its people.

In October 2002, I published *A Sense of Belonging to Scotland*: the favourite places of Scottish personalities. In it, I photographed the locations in Scotland that are special to some of its best known people from a variety of genres. The concept was for me to photograph these places in as atmospheric conditions as I could and, with the resultant photographs beside them, everyone would write about why these places are so meaningful to them. Although I was in control of the photography, of which I'm very proud, the accompanying writing by the people themselves was a revelation to me and it illustrates how important the Scottish landscape is to so many people.

Many of the key ideas inherent in a love of the Scottish landscape are encapsulated in the words of these people whom I chose because of my respect and admiration for them. I can find echoes of my own feelings woven through their descriptions. (*Bottom, left*) An example of this is Donnie Munro who chose Beall, in Portree, a beautiful spot looking across towards Raasay. He describes the place and its relevance to him in a lyrical way that will be familiar to Runrig fans,

"Here, in the stillness of time, is a settled feel of all that has gone before, and a sense of scale that seems, at least for a moment, to make sense of all things."

The two key features that intrigue me in landscape photography are light and time. I am constantly aware of my temporary presence on a landscape that has endured for millions of years. A feeling of being a visitor for a short period of time. I'm often conscious that I'm capturing an image which takes all the elements of the landscape that I'm viewing and freezing them in a moment of time, the exact details of which will never be repeated. (*Right*) An excellent example of the enduring quality of time and its relationship with Scotland's landscape appears in *A Sense of*



Belonging to Scotland. In it, I have taken the picture that perhaps I am most proud of, Buachaille Etive Mor by Moonlight, for Ally McCoist. In the shortest description in the book, Ally shows a real understanding of the enduring significance of the landscape when he says,

"Glencoe is my favourite place because, as you can see from the photograph, time has no relevance."

I've spoken to Ally about this and he felt that, after several attempts, this simple statement condensed everything that he wanted to say about this alluring place. It is perfectly put.

▲ **BUACHAILLE ETIVE MOR
BY MOONLIGHT**
GLENCOE, SCOTLAND
Taken for Ally McCoist.

◀ **TOWARDS RAASAY
FROM BEALL**
BY PORTREE, SKYE
Taken for Donnie Munro.