

## PHOTO BOOTH

The view from *The New Yorker's* photo department.



May 29, 2012

# Roger Mayne's Street Life

Posted by [Jessie Wender](#)

A photographer for over sixty years, [Roger Mayne](#) is best known for his post-war studies of London neighborhoods. On a sunny Saturday in May, 1956, Mayne happened onto Southam Street—"a wonderful street, full of life"—which quickly became one of his favorite locations. "My pattern of work was to concentrate on half a dozen favorite streets, one of which was a mews fifty yards round the corner from where I lived," Mayne told me. "My approach is visual rather than storytelling—I am a documentary rather than a journalistic photographer," he said. "I have always had a habit of seeing and looking."

I told Mayne that I was struck by the prevalence of children in his work. "I was drawn to the poorer areas, and there the children were very much in evidence," he said. "The street was their playground. They were keen to be photographed, and the first photograph had to be of them gawping, 'Put our picture in the paper,' before they went back to what they were doing. Teenagers were also keen to show off and be photographed. What I looked for was action—something like a game of street football."