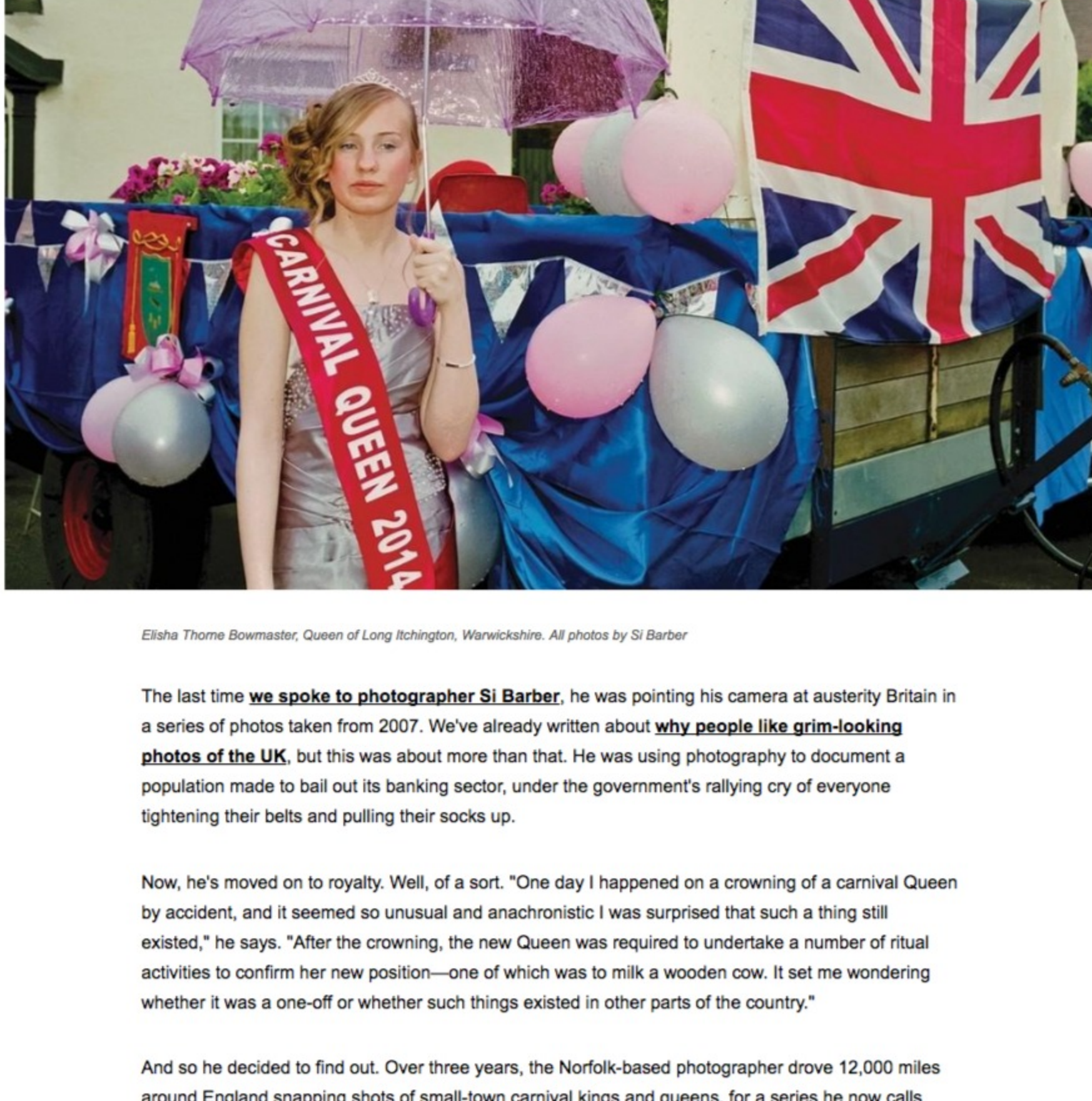
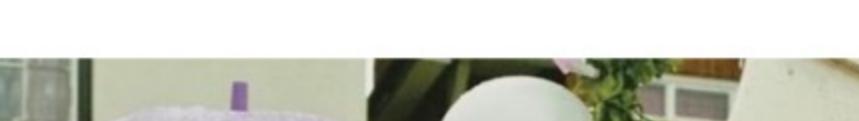


Glorious Photos of Small Town Carnival Kings and Queens

June 13, 2016

PHOTOS BY TShePO MOKOENA



Elsha Thome Bowmaster, Queen of Long Rington, Warwickshire. All photos by Si Barber

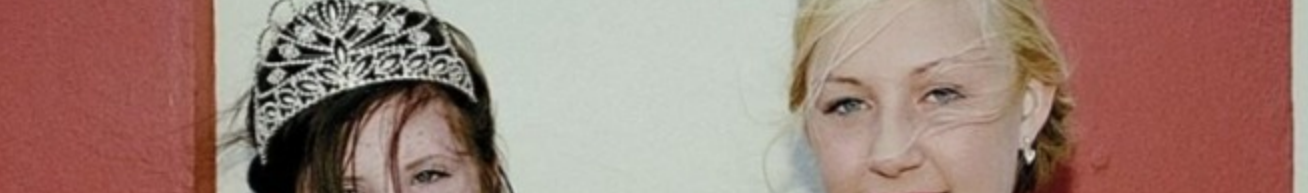
The last time we spoke to photographer Si Barber, he was pointing his camera at austerity Britain in a series of photos taken from 2007. We've already written about why people like grim-looking photos of the UK, but this was about more than that. He was using photography to document a population made to bail out its banking sector, under the government's rallying cry of everyone tightening their belts and pulling their socks up.

Now, he's moved on to royalty. Well, of a sort. "One day I happened on a crowning of a carnival Queen by accident, and it seemed so unusual and anachronistic I was surprised that such a thing still existed," he says. "After the crowning, the new Queen was required to undertake a number of ritual activities to confirm her new position—one of which was to milk a wooden cow. It set me wondering whether it was a one-off or whether such things existed in other parts of the country."

And so he decided to find out. Over three years, the Norfolk-based photographer drove 12,000 miles around England snapping shots of small-town carnival kings and queens, for a series he now calls **Queens of Lesser Realms**.

"Years ago every small village and town had an annual carnival usually with a king or a queen nominated by the community," he says, "but they began to die off as society became more mobile and with the advent of television and other distractions. The recession in 2008 and the advent of social media dealt them another blow, and they now only tend to exist in isolated rural areas and places with a strong sense of community."

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Along the way he saw some weird things—a teenage boy dressed as a "member of the Gestapo, complete with knee length boots and a Swastika armband"—and met a load of the eccentric, devoted characters and carnival royalty.

"I decided to stop when I had shot ninety kings and queens as it would dovetail nicely with the Queen's 90th birthday," he says. "It seemed to come to a natural conclusion. I sent a copy to Buckingham Palace in time for her birthday, but I didn't get a thank you. Maybe that was because I pointed out that whereas she inherited her crown and privileges, the carnival kings and queens have to earn theirs by doing goods works in their neighborhood."

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Check out more of Barber's photos from the series below



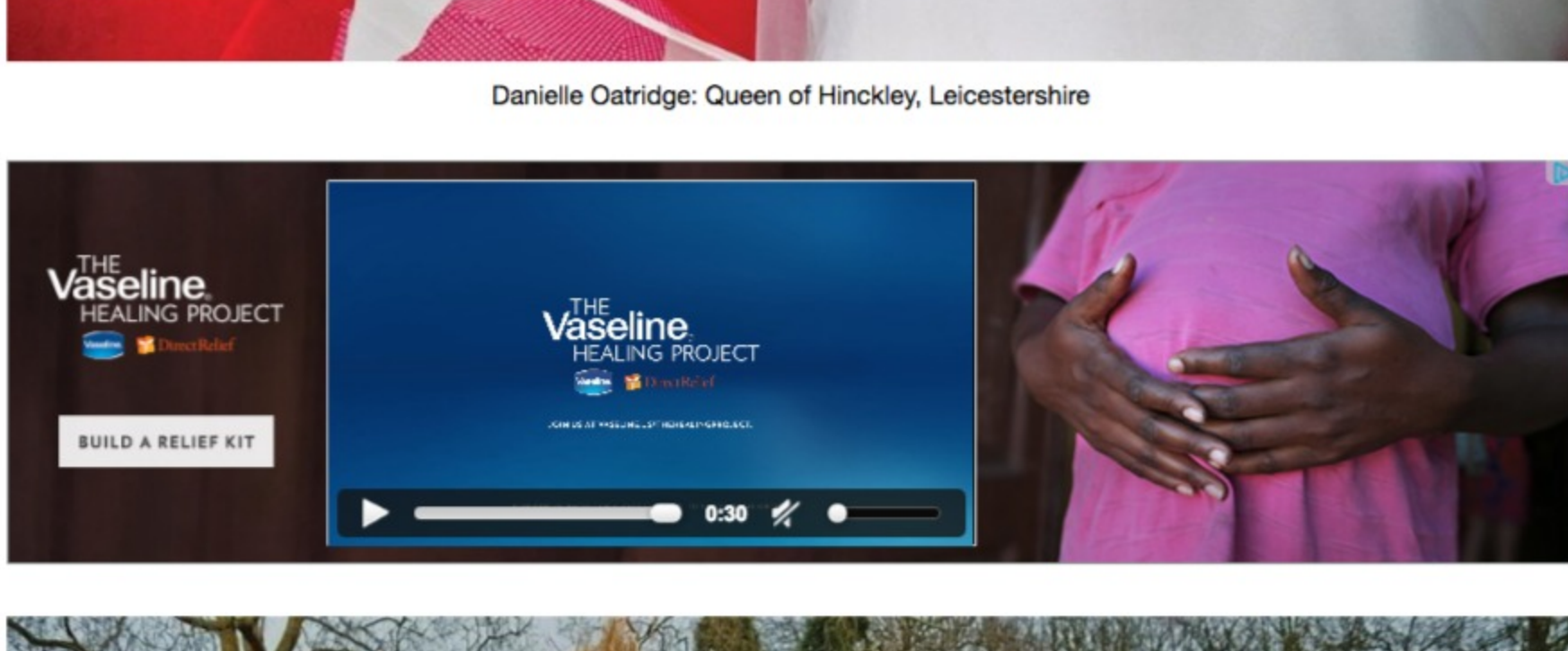
Chloe Brazier, Queen of Skagness, Lincolnshire attended by Princess Jessica Davis and Rosebud Kimberley Ellis.



Two ladies attending the Cromer carnival parade in Norfolk await the arrival of the Queen.



Danielle Outridge: Queen of Hinckley, Leicestershire



Ian Curtis, Mayor of Ramsey, Huntingdonshire leads the Strawbeast towards the plough to bless the coming agricultural year in 2015.



Hannah Osborne, Queen of Aldbrough, with attendants Bonnie Butterworth, Ellie Philpot, and Matilda Salter. They are accompanied by Aldbrough Mayor, Councillor Sara Fox.



King of the Roma Gypsies of England, Ladislav Stojk

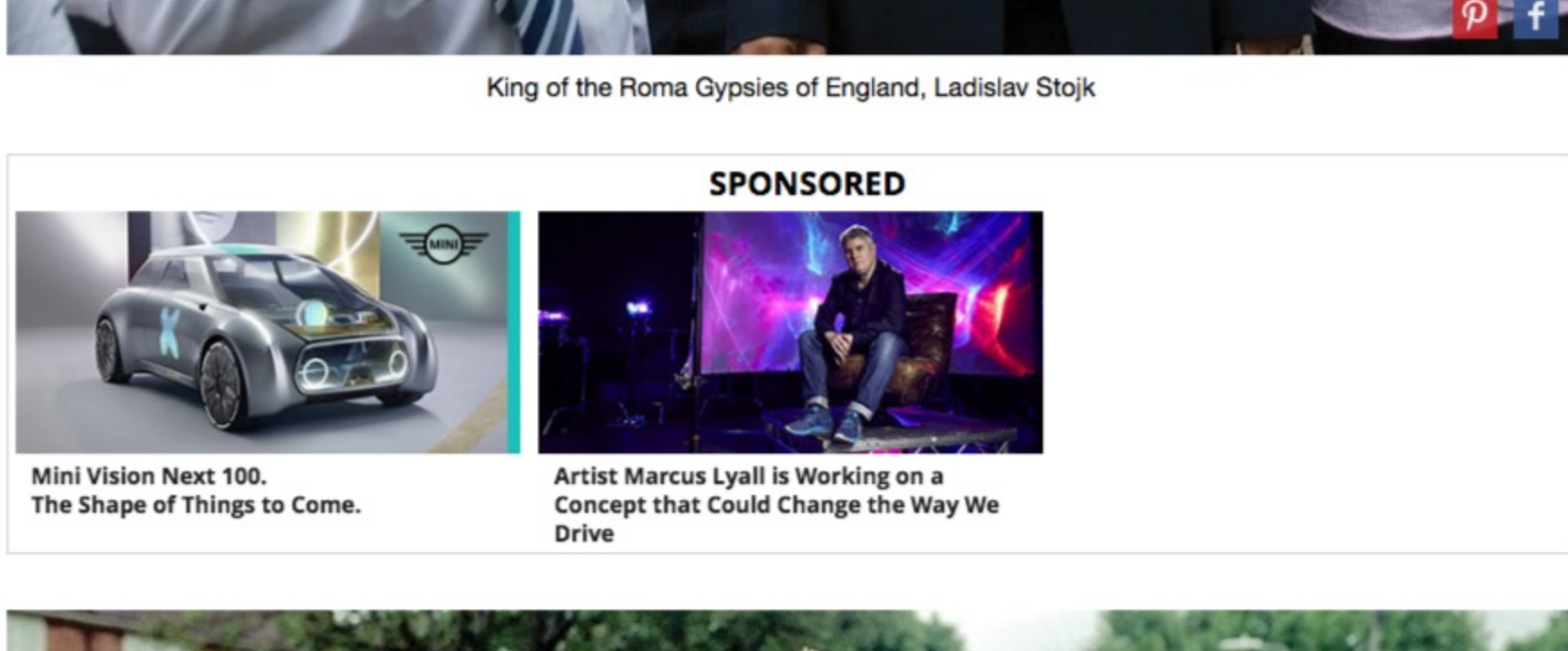
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Queen of Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, Sophie Brewer, with Deputy Queen Anna Roberts, Senior Princess Coral Murphy, Junior Princess Carmen Plummer, Junior Princess Kelsey Gilmour



The Rt Revd Jonathan Meyrick, Suffragan Bishop of Lynn, blessing the King's Lynn Mart, Norfolk in 2013. The mart was established by royal charter in 1573.



Shannon-Chelsey Kennedy, 2014 Derbyshire Arthritis Research Queen



Hornsey Carnival Queen Lauren Black, Princess Elijaye Dankwa-Brown, and Princess Paris Minta



Wednesday Bachelor, Queen of Wymondham, Norfolk is escorted by Mayor Colin Foulger. They are chauffeured by Mr. Mike Collins in his Bentley S3.



Saint George of England greets a customer at Auntie Pam's sweet shop in Suffolk in 2014

TOPICS: photos, British, Simon Barber, Photography, photography interview, TShepo Mokoena, Si Barber, england, uk, carnival, royalty, queens of lesser realms, VICE UK, post-photos, evergreen



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