

WPS COMPETITION SECRETARY'S REPORT SEASON 2015-16

1. INTERNAL COMPETITIONS

The monthly league competitions this year followed a similar pattern to last year in that Beginners are a lot more inconsistent in their entries than the advanced workers but overall the same number of people are entering the competitions during the season. For example, on a single competition evening, in the Beginners group, approximately 75% of people that will ultimately enter a competition do so; whereas in the advanced group 90% will enter on a regular basis.

The table below shows the changes in entries in each class in each year by medium between 2013-14 and this season. There was quite a dramatic increase from 2013-14 to 2014-15 and then fairly steady in the last two seasons.

Medium	Season	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	TOTAL
PRINTS	2013-14	25	26	28	79
	2014-15	33	29	33	95
	2015-16	29	31	30	90
PDIs	2013-14	22	26	29	77
	2014-15	30	29	30	89
	2015-16	32	30	28	90

The mono competition was again very popular and the judge managed to get through all of the first and second choices for those people that had brought them in.

The Society evening was also as popular as ever with a great variety of images on show from portraits to creative work and plenty of humour to close the evening.

2. EXTERNAL COMPETITIONS

A. SCPF

At the start of this season Winchester had been promoted in both prints and PDIs of the SCPF inter-club League competitions. At the end of the 2014-15 season, in the PDIs we were promoted from division 3 to 2 and in prints from division 2 to 1. So the first objective, as it was for Leicester City, was to at least maintain our positions and not get relegated. In the end, again like Leicester, we achieved a lot more. In the PDIs we ended up in second place and so have been promoted to the first division for the 2016-17 season and in the prints we came second place to overall winners Chichester. Both very creditable and impressive performances. So we start the 2016-17 season in Division 1 for both the prints and PDIs which, bearing in mind the size of the Society is where we should be.

In the SCPF Exhibition, held in the Salisbury library in January, we also excelled by gaining first place for our print panel, not something we've done for a very long time.

B. Victory Trophy

The Victory Trophy is a friendly competition between ourselves, Southampton and New Forest. For more than 20 years we had bravely and stoically entered this competition and at the end of the evening put on a brave and stoic face as we came second to Southampton. A change of rules that I instigated two years ago to make the competition more open with images from a broader base of photographers has changed that with Winchester winning the last two competitions and are now defending our trophy again.

3. JUDGES

Despite additional training and guidance judging continues to be a very variable process. Appreciation of images however is, as in any art form, a very personal and subjective experience so inevitably we may disagree with a judge's approach and final conclusions.

The SCPF maintain a list of judges that are available for booking for internal competition. These judges are classified into three levels based on their experience and competency. Additionally, I keep my own notes of what sort of evening we get from a judge so that I can make informed decisions about who to invite back the next season. Our season comprises about 17 competitions so there are a lot of judges to secure. My philosophy is to secure the best, the Level 3, judges for the important competitions:

- The first of the season
- The last in each monthly league
- The Image of the Year
- The SCPF league matches

After that I think it's incumbent on a club the size of Winchester to spread our requests around and so I pick a selection of level 2, level 1 and a newly qualified judge or two. This helps to give judges a chance to practice their art.

The judges' co-ordinator, Ken Scott, has also just introduced a new process to provide a more formal and structured review of a judge's performance on the evening. I expect your new Competition Secretary will introduce that to our club next season.

4. CONCLUSION

I've enjoyed my time as Competition Secretary but I have to say it is a lot more challenging and complex than I thought it would be so I give a lot of respect and thanks to my predecessor Phil George, who performed the role diligently for 25 years.

I have recommended to the committee that in the future the role would be better served with a small team of people lead by an overall Competition Secretary. I'm sure that my successors will do an equally sterling and diligent job.