

## **WPS AGM MAY 31<sup>ST</sup> 2016 PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The society has, in my opinion, enjoyed a very successful year which has provided excellent value for our membership.

The highlight for me has been the variety and quality of our visiting speakers who were assembled by David McKibbin during his brief reign as programme secretary and who, I am sure everyone will agree, did an outstanding job. The highlight of the highlights was undoubtedly the presentation from Joe McNally which was exceptional in every sense. So much so, that many of our members took the time to remark just how much they had enjoyed it. A number suggested that perhaps the society should consider giving some recognition to Joe in the form of an external honorary membership. This suggestion was taken to the committee who discussed it and decided to do just that, with the result that, both Joe and his wife, Anne Cahill, an accomplished photographer in her own right, were invited to accept an honorary membership which they were both flattered and delighted to do. Certificates have been posted to them.

I have been fortunate this year to have the backing of an exceptional committee of very hard working and dedicated members. You will in due course hear from our Secretary and Communications guru Ann Erkut who has worked relentlessly on producing newsletters and newsflashes as well as dealing with committee minutes and generally ensuring that the rest of us fulfil our respective roles. Graham Barber has shouldered an enormous amount of work in his role as Treasurer and also Membership Secretary and he will be reporting to you separately.

Gordon Brown has just completed his third year as Competition Secretary which also involves a significant amount of hard work and he will shortly describe just how successful this year has been both internally and externally.

Jason Reeves has taken over the role of Programme Secretary and later on this evening he will outline what is in store for next season.

Gerard Carlin in his position as IT Secretary has managed the website throughout the year, despite not always enjoying the best of health, to put it mildly, and we are all very grateful to him for his continued efforts in this extremely important role.

We have also been extremely fortunate in having three very dedicated and energetic Members' Representatives on the Committee. Sarah Walton, Sarah Strange and Nick Townley have all worked very hard and brought an enormous amount of energy and good ideas to our committee meetings.

Louise Brown leaves the committee this year having completed a 3 year stint as Vice President, President and Immediate Past President. She has certainly made a huge impact on the society during her period of office. Not only has she undertaken the usual leadership roles and responsibilities but she has managed to instigate and run our hugely successful and inaugural National Exhibition which is now in its second year. Louise has also initiated and run a Distinctions Group which has seen two members gain an ARPS and eleven gain an LRPS.

For the first time this year our Annual Print Exhibition has been for members only to give as many members as possible the opportunity to have their work seen by the wider public. This has been organised once again by Ron Foulkes and his team who have done a splendid job in the process. I attended the Judging Day when 3 judges looked through a total of 714 images. The whole operation ran very smoothly and finished spot on time. Very impressive!

Our other special interest groups, the AV Group and the Panels Group have continued to meet regularly. They have produced some interesting and creative work throughout the year which the rest of us have been privileged to watch at two separate presentation evenings.

The evergreen Barbara Lambert has taken over the AV group and Martin Farrow has taken over the day to day running of the Panels Group from Anne Ruffell who ran it for a hell of a long time.

Separate reports have been prepared and circulated by all these group leaders and organisers and I do not propose to extend proceedings unnecessarily by reading these out.

Several workshops have been held during the year and these have been coordinated by Chris Gillard and run by different members with specialist skills in number of areas. Chris has battled manfully with the data processing of the entries and results of both our exhibitions which has been a herculean task at times owing to the complex and somewhat “buggy” nature of the software we use.

We do have other helpers who toil away in less visible roles and we are very grateful to Keith Taylor and Jude Blackman who deal with refreshments and procurement of supplies organising the rota.

Peter Orr has gamely stepped into the vacant position of projectionist and has had to deal with a number of issues arising out of the blue. I shall never forget his dedication to the cause of PDI imaging when he spent his wedding anniversary explaining exactly how to size and name digital files for our PDI league competitions while his wife waited in the wings.

At every meeting we have a need for lighting and enhanced audio facilities and this responsibility has been managed by Tony Weler who inhabits his own little world in the control room at the back of the auditorium. Tony has thrown himself into this role with enormous enthusiasm and irrespective of how early I have arrived for a meeting, Tony has always been in his box getting ready. I think he may have a bed stashed away in the room somewhere and occasionally arrives the night before to make sure that everything is in place.

One person that I have not mentioned is Eric Blake, our current Vice President. Eric has provided a great deal of moral support to me during the year and he has been an important ally and sounding board for me throughout the year.

A great asset enjoyed by this society is our strength in depth and we have that in spades.

We shall shortly hear from Graham with his finance and membership report in which he will expound on the sound position that the society enjoys.

The Society is in such a good financial position that the Committee were impelled to develop a business plan for the next 3 years with a view to utilising the increasing reserves for the benefit of all the members.

We did of course need to find out exactly what the wishes of our members might be in this regard and subsequently produced a questionnaire for that very purpose. We also decided to use this opportunity to invite comments on how the society is run, what we are doing right and what we could do to improve.

I was astounded when we had a total of 132 completed responses which is an excellent survey sample in anyone's terms. The task of analysing all this data fell to Gerard who manfully bent to the task and produced the summary that you have all seen via the website. This data has informed the final part of the business plan that has been developed by Graham, almost single handedly, with some input from the committee and a small number of non-committee members who formed part a focus group.

This business plan has been distributed and Graham will discuss it in outline during his presentation.

Finally, may I say that despite my trepidation that I expressed in September, I have enjoyed my time as President due in no small part to the support from the committee but also to all the members who have been a most appreciative, knowledgeable and attentive audience throughout the year. Thank you all very much indeed.

Steve Green

President. 2015 - 2016