

President's report for the AGM May 2017

When I was appointed as President last year, I clearly remember Steve Green giving me some advice . . ‘just wing it’. I hope members appreciate that there hasn’t been much ‘winging’. With enormous help from the committee, this year has been another incredibly successful year. I have felt extremely proud to have witnessed numerous events that reflect WPS as being the most successful and vibrant club in the south and I am positive this momentum will continue.

Programme – **Jason Reeve**’s intention for this season’s programme was ‘diversity’ and he clearly achieved his ambition. We had a few unorthodox speakers this season - notably Anton Page (microscopes), Heather Buckley (street), David Shaw (human stories) and Nick Marsh (forensics) who all provided fascinating insights into their own genres of photography. I think all members will remember the extent to which Danny Green was prepared to ‘rough it’ – three and a half months, sleeping by the riverbank with otters in order to capture those rare moments. So many superb pictures, a real highlight of the year. David Noton also provided another memorable night of stunning imagery, flying around the continents, and concluding ‘all I want from a trip is one good image’ He certainly demonstrated numerous images the likes of which we all strive to take...a superb night. We must give a special thanks to Lilian Hobbs for her fascinating member’s evening.

Thank you, Jason for achieving your objective – you have excelled. Next season, Jason has organized speakers covering subjects including smart phones, cultural heritage, travel, sports, macro, marine wildlife, coasts, landscapes, documentary, portraits, abstract, and a road trip.

Just before Christmas we had a surprise announcement when Hampshire County Council advised we could not use the Discovery Centre during January. Fortunately, led by Graham Barber, our Treasurer, the committee and members rallied round to find an alternative venue. It was a frank reminder how lucky we are to have use of the DC. Thank you to everyone involved in the seamless transition to Ashburton Hall.

Another major highlight was of course winning the SCPF Division one. We stopped short of an open top bus parading around Winchester, but hopefully everyone enjoyed the celebrations; again I felt very proud. My thanks to **Peter Orr**, our Competition Secretary for his help not only throughout the year in supervising our monthly competitions but making sure we had the best representation for the SCPF league.

That same evening, our assiduous Treasurer, **Graham Barber** was justifiably awarded Honorary Life Membership. Graham takes on so many additional tasks and ensures the WPS is run efficiently; we all owe Graham huge thanks.

We have also witnessed the sad loss of two members, **Les Nicholson** and **George Walsh**. Both will be greatly missed and have left indelible impressions on many members. The Committee has agreed to designate a new cup in honour of George whose membership spanned a remarkable sixty years culminating in Hon. Life President.

The **Distinctions Group** led by **Louise Brown** continues to be very successful. We now have 26 LRPS, 12 ARPS, 3 FRPS, 3 CPAGB, 8 DPAGB and 1 MPAGB. Louise is now actively leading a group towards their ARPS and I look forward to hearing of their successful panels in the new year.

The **Annual Print Exhibition** was another huge logistical team achievement. **Ron Foulkes** has organised these with military precision and has now prepared **Chris Smith** to lead a band of helpers for next season. My sincere thanks to all involved; this really was a superb team effort and a magnificent exhibition.

The second **Winchester National Exhibition** brought considerable funds into the Society. We received 3,346 images from 413 entrants. WNE is affiliated to the British Photographic Exhibitions which rewards successful entrants with BPE Crowns for acceptances into their exhibitions throughout the UK. My personal thanks to Louise Brown for her considerable effort in managing this annual event and of course to her team - **Viv Brett, Chris Gillard, Mike Roe and John Greenwood**. John has taken over the Exhibition Co-ordinator's role and I wish him every success.

Education - A new initiative this year was to organise and run subsidised classes for members. Topics ranged from camera controls and technique, to taking portraits, and using Photoshop and Lightroom. The classes proved popular, with several being a sell-out. More classes are being planned for next year, and Keith Taylor would like ideas for new topics. Significant contributions came from **Keith Taylor, Helen Bonner and Peter Orr**...fantastic efforts, well done.

Workshops – As a response to the results of last season's questionnaire, more workshops were on offer, led both by volunteer members and professionals – all of which were full to capacity. With seven monthly workshops covering a spread of topics, we saw the introduction of the 'New Members' Night', which brought together newer members and enabled them to integrate into a club of our size.

We had the invaluable and ever-popular print-mounting evening by Louise Brown; we saw Roger Dixey create a PDI composite image; Peter Orr taught us some of the complexities of Lightroom; Gareth and Kate Jones gave us good ideas for posing people highlighting the good and the bad; Peter, Pete and Paul delivered a very informative night, sharing their knowledge and experience of bird photography, theory and practical.

The workshops culminated in the 'hands on' night where we had water droplets (with Chris Gillard) next to a table of frogs (with Peter Whieldon) (luckily the frogs did not jump into the water), with Sally Golden standing guard over the table of field mice while Sam Whieldon handled the barn owl, tawny owl and kestrel – all mice accounted for at the end of the evening!

We also had two day workshops with Andrew Appleton and a follow-up by David McKibbin, which provided a real insight into working with models and how difficult it can be to get that real wow picture.

A huge thank you to all involved for their time, effort and enthusiasm, and to those who attended, and a special thanks to **Sarah Strange** for organising these incredibly popular activities.

IT Secretary and Web Architect's Report -This year has seen the successful migration of our web site from our previous server host to our new one. This required a significant amount of work in upgrading and testing prior to the migration.

We also implemented a security (SSL) certificate for our web site. As well as making our site more secure, it has the additional bonus of maintaining our Google search ranking. We often come on the first page of a Google search for 'Winchester and photograph'. Well done **Gerard** for keeping us safe!

The AV Group, which has been led by **Barbara Lambert** for two years, have produced some stunning sequences. These take some considerable time and effort to compile and I must commend all contributors over the years. Unfortunately, the WPS Group has a dwindling membership, despite frequent publicity via the newsletter and regular emails to group members. Barbara is standing down as Group Leader after the May meeting. Unless a new leader comes forward and we attract new members, the group will no longer be viable.

The Panels Group lead by **Martin Farrow** has had another successful year despite a slight reduction in attendees in the latter half of the season. I do hope this group continues as the Panels Night has always been special as WPS members reveal insights into their personal lives.

The Beginners' Group has benefitted from the experience of **Gordon Brown**, who has passed on a considerable amount of expertise, guidance and WPS knowledge. I'm happy to report that he will continue this well-supported activity next season, as the feedback has been extremely positive. Super job Gordon.

The Enhanced Reality Group, led by **Roger Dixey**, has seen many of his imaginative techniques broken down into easy to follow, simple steps. His workshops are very informative and give step by step guidance on how he creates the masterpieces we've all seen from Roger. Hopefully, greater support will see this flourish next season. Thank you, Roger.

Steve Cooper, our **Digital Image Secretary**, also deserves a commendation for his stealth-like professionalism. Each projection evening runs smoothly; we rarely notice his considerable efforts behind the scenes, and even when there has been a slight hiccup, he has managed to fix it in next to no time.

Tony Weler continues to work incredibly hard at ensuring he always provides the ultimate sound solution for our speakers and the intermezzo, such is his dedication...thanks Tony.

Ann Erkut is putting away her pencil and relinquishing her role as Secretary, but will continue in her role as Communications Secretary and edit the superbly presented weekly newsletter. Thank you, Ann, for the numerous hours spent compiling the committee/AGM reports etc.

The **Members Reps, Sarah Strange, Glyn Paton and Dereck Hickman**, have all made significant contributions to the smooth running of WPS. Thanks team.

As many of you know, Peter Orr will not be renewing his membership next season, so that he can pursue his FRPS, London gallery exhibition, international salons, internet competitions, more Getty library entries and the development of his workshop/training activities.

Peter has kindly offered to continue with his WPS training activities and intends to pay us a visit on our speakers' evenings.

He has made a significant contribution to the club not only as Competition Secretary but also in supporting our training activities. The quality of his images has been outstanding and I'm certain his professionalism will lead to success in his achievement of his photographic goals. Peter, you will be sadly missed, but I look forward to seeing Peter Orr FRPS and visiting at least one of your exhibitions in the near future. I and the membership wish you 'good luck' in all your future ventures.

A special thanks to **Keith Taylor and Jude Blackman** (and volunteers) for all the tea, chocolate and coffees. We missed those hot drinks at Ashburton.

And finally, I would like to thank the committee for their considerable efforts and wish **Nick Townley** all the best for next season. I am positive he will be more than capable of taking WPS to even higher plains. And of course a huge thank you to our fantastic members, without whom we would not exist. I've thoroughly enjoyed being your president and wish you and WPS all the best for the future.

Best Regards

Eric Blake LRPS

President 2016-2017