

## WPS AGM JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup> 2019. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Glyn Paton

I have been a member of Winchester Photographic Society now for six seasons and this has easily been my best and favourite season. The reason for this is that as President I get to see everything that this fantastic society does. As President you get to understand the depth, breadth and sheer quality of the club.

Let me take as an example WPS's Facebook group. As president it is my role to find the "favourite" picture of the month, the one with most "likes". Scrolling through a month's worth of Facebook entries and counting the number of thumbs up and smiley faces didn't, I admit fill me with unalloyed joy. But it turned out I was wrong, very wrong. A trawl through our own Facebook pages tells you an awful lot about our society. You get to see posts about:

Member's holidays to exotic locations! From tranquil Greek beaches to far-flung Asia and the Far East. We even had a visit to Africa's Ethiopia. But more symptomatic of the society are requests for help or advice always met with overwhelmingly helpful responses. There are posts of relevant photographic articles, or giving notice of or recommendations for exhibitions etc. Photographic hints and tips. You will always find humour, sometimes politics of the day; Climate Change and Brexit. But unfailingly you will find great photographs; ranging from Corn Buntings to Chernobyl, from Goodwood racetrack to owls perched on Pete Whieldon's head!

WPS's Facebook group is a real treasure trove and a testament to how helpful our members are and how varied and vibrant the society is.

Another symptom of this, if that's the word, is the sheer number of activities. This season over the 30 weeks of the year there were nearly 100 activities! That is astounding, an average of two extra events per week. You could be at WPS 3 nights/days a week!!!

Another thing, as President, that I get to see are the attendance figures for each week. They do make for interesting reading, so here's the top five. Our Autumn and Spring lectures, Joe McNally and Tim Flach, were as you'd expect the most popular, with Joe talking to a full capacity audience. Paul Sansome and Tony Worobiec were next followed by our own Pete Whieldon. Honorary mentions, just outside the top 5, should be made for Paul Davison and our own President!

I have cheated a bit because back in October PDI Round 1 crept into the top five. Which brings me to competitions. Ah those heady innocent days of the first competition of year. Your best picture saved up and honed over the summer, what could possibly go wrong! But your first doubts creep in when you see the judge! Hopes fade and die as the PDI preview starts, why are there so many bleeping good photographers in the Society!

On a slightly more serious note let's look at competition attendances. Print competition attendance was steady throughout the year with numbers hovering around the mid-eighties. The first 3 PDI competitions had attendances of mid to high nineties, but popularity waned a bit for the last two. So, for all the comments about competitions their attendance stays steady and ranks well throughout the season.

My motto or theme for this season was "Step up to the next level" and to that end we ran a PAGB Advisory day in October. It was a very successful day, largely due to the organisational skills and hard work put in by **Pat Goodall**. Over 30 potential entrants had their images appraised by 5 experienced judges. So, thanks to Pat and everyone else who helped to make it such a successful day. In fact, it was so successful that SCPF, on behalf of PAGB, have asked us to run another one, if we get enough recruits **Jill North** will organise this. We have also had some PAGB awards in the society this year at Distinction and Certificate level. In the spirit of variety and choice there may well be a PAGB distinctions group, next season, run on the lines of Louise's RPS distinctions groups.

### **Members 2019 Survey**

In March all members were asked to complete a survey/questionnaire asking for their views on the running of the society. Firstly, thank you to all members who completed it. Your views **will be taken into account**, as they were in last survey in 2016.

The questions fell into two broad categories: those that asked for marks out of ten in terms of satisfaction rating, referred to as the quantitative questions and those that asked for members opinions in text. Many thanks to the survey team and particularly its leader **Nick Townley**. They spent several evenings honing the questions to produce the thing of beauty that was this year's survey!

I would like to make a special mention of **Gerard Carlin** who surmounted all the technical difficulties in getting this out to and back from members and then engaged in the challenge of analysing the results data into understandable and interpretable information. Many thanks, I know that this took a long time a lot of commitment.

### **Show quantitative information**

### **Survey Text Answers**

Having reviewed the quantitative data, it's now time for the qualitative data, the text comments. There were nearly 700 individual responses in the text boxes, thank you for all this information. So many comments though, do provide a challenge in organising them all, here the thanks go to **Adrian Binney** who tirelessly went through all 700 comments and categorised them. That's an accountant's forensic eye for you! By and large comments were positive and helpful and there were a pleasing number of complimentary comments.

The two areas that drew most comments were training and unsurprisingly, competitions.

What are we going to with these 700 comments? Divided by category each section will be sent to the appropriate person in the society e.g. competition related comments to Gordon Brown and training related to Keith Taylor. Each of these “owners” will be asked to report to the committee with an action plan on how they plan to address the points raised by the you the members.

Your answers do make a difference as shown by the response of the committee to the survey in 2016. Training was increased as were the number of trips and outings all in response to your comments

As you have seen from the quantitative analysis, we are doing a lot right at present and I do not foresee any radical changes as a result of the survey answers, rather a bit of honing and fine-tuning.

### **Day to day running of the Society**

Now onto the next section of my report.

First, I want to thank all the committee members for their dedication and hard work. Running a society of 200 members is not always easy and is certainly NOT trivial. These are volunteers who freely give their time, effort and commitment to keeping **this** the best society in the south of England thank you.

We have three new Committee Members Reps, this year **Eleanor Coke, Carey Wall** and **Tony Smith**. Each of them has in their own different and distinctive ways made significant contributions to the smooth running of WPS, taking on responsibilities when gaps became apparent. Thank you, Committee Reps.,

**Programme** – I have already spoken about this year’s programme of speakers, it was exceptional, thank you **Gavin Bowyer**. Getting and co-ordinating these high-level speakers is no mean feat and Gavin was stretched to his limit when Tim Flach had to re-arrange several times.

The highlight though, and the one that brought in a full capacity crowd was Jo McNally. I said at the time we sometimes have speakers who write books, this is a speaker that has books written about him! Great Time/Life photographers. An exceptional evening with a remarkable man.

Tim Flach was another highlight with his unique take on wildlife photography. Once again, we were very lucky to get Tim as he is much in demand and is spending much of his time working with the BBC.

I am not going to go through all the speakers, but will mention just two, Mark Whitfield food photographer extra-ordinaire with his sub-urban almost self-effacing style. He spends his

day photographing the most sophisticated, expensive and delicious morsels, but often chooses to ignore these in preference for a greasy spoon nosh-up! Matt Doggett, the underwater photographer, showed us what is under the waves at our local beaches of Bournemouth and Poole. There were shots of great beauty and ecological relevance.

I'd like to make special mention of the Tim Pile visit. It was an extra-ordinary day at Littleton. We had an insight into his nude photography, his mastery of photoshop and his dedication to his hobby. Hobby, as incredibly he still works full-time!

Once again, our homegrown talents **Paul Davison and Pete Whieldon** gave great presentations. Pete's bravery, hardiness in all climates and excellent photography were on full display. In Africa, Pete swam with white sharks, tracked bears in frozen landscapes and he also showed us his growing menagerie of birds, amphibians and mammals.

Paul Davison was back by popular demand and once again we saw pictures from Bangladesh and the harsh working conditions of the ship breaking yards and wrecked aqua parks in Vietnam. Paul left till last his tale of the whale hunters of Lamalera. Controversial but captivating. Brilliant photography

### **External Competitions SCPF**

This season's experience in the SCPF Division one, was a different one for us. We had been top of the league two years in a row, so perhaps it was our turn for a change in fortune. In the print league our results from the judges were week on week disappointing. This year's nail-biting end to the season wasn't whether we would finish top, but rather whether we would be relegated or not. We managed to hang on and avoided relegation by a couple of points. Those supporting Southampton FC would be used to this sort of end of season drama.

The PDI results were steady, if not spectacular and we retained a comfortable mid-table position. My thanks to **Gordon Brown**, our Competition Secretary for hosting the selection evening and his management of our various competitions throughout the season.

### **Distinctions Group.**

**Louise Brown** runs two Distinctions Groups, one covering the Licentiate ('L') level and one for the Associate ('A') level.

The 'L' group is the most active with around 30 members signed up, though only about 10-12 typically attend the bi-monthly meetings. Only two members have submitted panels for assessment this season, both of whom have been successful.

The 'A' group meets just three times a year and is a smaller group of about 15 members. Progress on panels evolves slowly and members often change direction even after pursuing a topic for some time. Overall another successful year; there has been four

LRPS awards and two ARPS awards this season. Successful panels were shown on the evening of the Print Exhibition Opening.

## **Exhibitions**

The Annual Print Exhibition is the enormously important public face of the Society. **Geoff Sharman** took over the role and he and his team have managed the logistical challenge which such an event entails. It was my first time at the judging day, and it is quite an occasion. The co-ordination and prior planning are formidable. Well done Geoff and to all his team.

The Winchester National Exhibition is now firmly established in the BPE Calendar and its success brings considerable funds to the Society. My thanks to ex-President **Nick Townley** and of course to his dedicated team for managing this annual event. Entries for the fifth Winchester National Exhibition of Projected Digital Images are now open and we hope, as in previous years, to attract an entry in excess of 3000 images.

We specifically try to make the classes relevant to the sort of images Society members produce, with an emphasis on Pictorial, Nature and Landscapes while still providing a Creative class, popular amongst many British Photographic Exhibitions entrants, with whom we are affiliated.

## **Education**

Thanks to **Keith Taylor**, who organised another busy training year, providing eight classes on camera technique and eight on post production. There was also a class on photography and Social Media.

Most classes were given by Helen Bonnor and Peter Orr, with Lilian Hobbs and Keith Taylor also helping. The classes are subsidised by the Society, and most were well attended.

Classes cater for all levels, although the more advanced classes proved the most popular this year. If you have ideas for classes, please speak to **Keith Taylor** who is Training Coordinator.

## **Workshops**

The season's dozen or so WPS Workshops included Night Shooting at Southampton Docks, Infra-Red Photography and High-Speed flash with Waterdrops held at Littleton. The most popular Workshop of the year was (is, they are so popular they are still going on!) Pete Whieldons' Birds and Owls sessions with over 40 WPS members attending over 4 nights. We expect to see a lot of Owls..... The Outings included visits to Brownsea Island for some spectacular Red Squirrel encounters, a sunny Macro visit to the Test Valley, a Photo Walk

around Salisbury and the Rooftops of London. Further Outings will be held during the summer months, keep an eye on the Newsletter for details as they are arranged.

Thank you to all who participated and all who assisted in organising the workshops and outings.

As always please let Trevor know if you have outings or workshops ideas or wish to arrange an outing of your own. Plans for the next few months include a Dragonfly Hunt and a photo walk around Romsey as well as another WPS day in London.

### **The Beginners' Group**

The Beginners' Group under the leadership of **Gordon Brown** ran again this season following a now well-established pattern of meetings and content. They meet monthly with each meeting following a similar agenda of:

Discussion of recent events, general questions and specific topics, review of the images from the previous month's challenge and a talk on a specific aspect of photography such as aperture, composition, lenses etc.

The meetings this year have typically had between 6 and 12 attendees.

### **The Improvers' Group**

This is the brainchild of **Brian Holloway**. He created it from some ex-Beginners who wanted to carry on meeting in a small, safe group. Brian nurtured the growth of the group and its photographers into the popular event it is today. Currently run by **Carey Wall** with expert guidance from Tony Large and Eric Blake, the aim is to challenge members to broaden their photography, moving outside their comfort zone. The group enjoys a monthly challenge followed by a critical review of their work at a subsequent meeting. It has seen the standard of photography steadily improve over the year and this is evident in recent successes in the WPS league competitions and print exhibition.

### **Website**

I would like to offer particular thanks to **Gerard Carlin** our IT Secretary and Web Architect – Most of us just see and use the WPS web site without appreciating the amount of work which goes into it. This includes managing the frequent software updates. For 2018/2019 there were 14 updates for the CMS alone. Gerard's involvement in the WPS 2019 Survey has been mentioned. It was a major piece of work from design, build, implementation and analysis. Of our 200 members 161 took part.

Working with **Adrian Walmsley**, Gerard also had to ensure we were compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). They put in place a new set of WPS Policies regarding our Privacy, use of personal data and Cookies. Other changes continue as required.

Thank you, Gerard, for all this time consuming but largely unseen work

### **The Panels Group**

Run by **Martin Farrow** this has had another successful year with all meetings well supported. The year began with the ever-popular presentation to the Society, at which 15 diverse panels were well received by the members. We had a wide variety of challenging topics throughout the year, with between 6 to 10 panels being presented on each. The topics were: Age, Sound, Around the Home, Speed and Symmetry (this coming July)

The group continues to help members working towards distinctions panels and has also become more of a forum for showing pictures to fellow members without the pressures of analysis and judging - as there are NO RULES!

Having led the group for 6 years, Martin Farrow is stepping down. The leadership will be taken on by **Chris Morris**. Thank you Martin I know you will continue to support this group on a regular basis.

### **The Enhanced Reality Group**

The Enhanced Reality Group, now completing its second year, is led by **Roger Dixey**. It has seen detailed demonstrations of the workflow used by Roger to create his distinctive images and given us the tools and motivation to make winning pictures! The enhanced reality group has been very popular this season, covering the more fundamental areas of photoshop for new members to the group but also looked at more advanced techniques of blending and combining images. A special class for those who want to make composite images or just give their final image that extra something!

### **Projected Images**

**Steven Cooper**, our Digital Projected Image Secretary also deserves recognition for his dedication and IT skills which ensure that the evenings run smoothly. He is needed every Tuesday, but particularly for competitions and talks. It is a lot of work and pressure which he always manages with patience and a smile. This year members have improved greatly in correctly sizing and naming their PDI's please keep that up members! Thank you, Steven.

### **Handbooks and Catalogues**

Besides the best photographic society in the south we also have the best handbook. Like the editor small but high quality! Thanks to **Viv Brett** for editing and collating the various articles and images required to produce this. Viv is being helped this year by **Miranda Johnson**.

Viv, working with **Tim Lever** also produces catalogues for our two exhibitions, the print and National exhibitions.

## **Communications**

**Trevor Morecraft** took over the role of Communications Secretary this year, he produces the weekly newsletter. Every Sunday evening, we receive a colourful, informative, inventive and humorous newsletter. It is a great publication and has transformed my idea of a newsletter. Many thanks Trevor, great stuff

## **Catering**

On the catering front I would like to thank **Keith Taylor** for leading and **Jude Blackman** for organising the supplies and of course all the volunteers without whom our refreshments wouldn't be delivered in a timely manner. Keith is stepping down this year, many thanks for your help.

And now onto my two senior officers. First, **Adrian Binney** the Secretary. I have already spoken about his diligence and hard work, and he brings these qualities to this role, keeping us on track and legal! Thank you, Adrian. **Graham Barber's** official title is Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Anyone who is on the committee, let alone President, knows how important Graham is to the Society. He is the go-to man for information, background and advice. On a Tuesday he sits quietly in the shadows but make no mistake his contribution to the society, over a number of years is indispensable. I don't know what we'd do without him! Graham, thank you.

And finally, I would like to thank my Vice President **Gavin Bowyer** for his support and the hard work he has put in this year. I am sure that he will be a popular and committed President, more than capable of steering our Society to even better things.

As I said at the beginning of this, I have enjoyed every minute of my role this year. I am very proud and honoured to have been President of this quite remarkable society. Thank you

**Glyn Paton LRPS, CPAGB**

**President 2018-2019**