

# **Winchester Photographic Society AGM 2008**

## **Presidents Report**

The 2007-08 year has seen further growth to 131 members at which point we closed the Society and opened a waiting list. Some on this list also attend meetings from time to time and pay the standard guest charge of £2 per evening.

I had intended at this point to mention that in response to the numerous complaints about car parking, room cleanliness and damaged seating etc. here at Peter Symonds; we would be moving our weekly venue to the Performance Hall at the Discovery Centre. However the security of tenure is not quite yet finalised and there are a few minor issues to be sorted out. For members who have not seen the new Performance Hall, I urge you to take a look if you can. It provides seating for 180 people and with all the facilities that we now enjoy at P.S. plus free car parking after 18.00 hrs at the Tower Street car park, just five minutes walk from the D.C. It is clean, modern, fully air conditioned and complete with screen and digital projector of similar specification to our own but we can use our's if we wish. It also has it's own sound system.

We may be able to announce this change of venue during the summer recess.

If history repeats itself, and I am sure that it will, then there will be membership places available for those on the waiting list next season....but take my advice and register as early as you can before we start again next September to be sure.

We started the season in financial deficit due to the extraordinary exhibition costs from the previous year which were posted during 2007/8. I must mention Andrew Golden, for all his hard work and midnight oil burning during the production of the handbook. Thank you Andrew.

We have held six committee meetings over the year. All meetings were held at my house at Michelmersh, at no cost to the Society. The meetings were lively but we usually managed to reach agreement unanimously and I can only recall one or two occasions where a vote was needed to move forward. There was much laughter amongst the serious business and I recall one hot balmy summer evening (the committee do work on your

behalf in the “closed” season!) when it was necessary to have the French doors open and James in particular was introduced to the blood curdling howl of a fox vixen in the copse immediately next door! Who said that the countryside was peaceful!

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members for both travelling out to the sticks for our meetings and for your un-equivocal support to myself throughout the year. I simply could not have done my job without you and your valued support. .

I have also attended numerous working party meetings and meetings with the City and County authorities, all mid week as they like their week-ends at home!

We have also had some serious issues to deal with and it goes with the territory of being President to deal with these. We have had several infringements at monthly competitions of the Rule mentioned on page 18 of the handbook, **“The intention and spirit of these competitions is for work being shown to receive it’s first constructive criticism”** etc. This is not a new rule and has been a part of the Society’s culture for many years. Due to the numbers of entrants and time available before competition evenings it is quite impossible for entries to be vetted prior to judging. This has meant that on several occasions, ranking entries have subsequently been penalised, always an unpleasant situation for both the member concerned and the officers of the Society who have to enforce the rules.

By far the most serious infringement occurred however not at a monthly competition but at an SPF external print competition, when an opposing club protested Winchester’s entry. They had previously entered an identical print to that entered by a WPS member. The member concerned had apparently entered identical prints with both our Society and another club. Winchester were penalised by losing ALL the points from that particular round in the SPF championship. I had several email and telephone exchanges, also a personal meeting with the SPF President, but the die was cast and there was no going back for the SPF.

We shall of course tighten up our procedures to ensure that members are responsible for meeting the rules when entering SPF work in future.

These problems aside, we have had some excellent speakers including some of our own members. I have always tried to write to every good speaker after the event.....not

bothering with the not so good speakers, of which fortunately we haven't had too many this year! Thank you Joy, I know how much time is required to prepare the programme and then chiivy the speakers up the day before. We have enjoyed a really interesting programme this year.

As we all know we were forced to move the Annual Exhibition this year to a new venue. This brought many new challenges and also some opportunities for our 75<sup>th</sup> Exhibition. I hope that you all enjoyed it. The public certainly seemed to appreciate it judging by the record attendance. We learned an awful lot during the judging and also whilst preparing the exhibition. The benefits of this experience will certainly be handed on to the new Exhibition Secretary to smooth his path for next year.

We all owe Roger Buchanan a debt of gratitude for his organisational ability in sometimes adverse situations. Roger tackled these challenges with tact and diplomacy when required but head on when the situation demanded it! Always with a smile though. Thank you again Roger for a job very well done. Thanks too to the willing army of people who helped Roger.

So now the time has almost come for me to stand down in favour of Ron Foulkes our new President. This will occur later this evening, a week earlier than is this Society's tradition as Ron will be away on his pre-arranged holidays next week.

Thank you the membership for allowing me to be your President this year and for giving me your much appreciated support throughout the year. Your help in preparing the room on Tuesday evenings did not go un-noticed either and I think that I have therefore managed most evenings to more or less run on time....thank you so very much.

I have had an absolute ball!

**- Ends -**