Are you ever surprised by your Club?

I’ve tried to be careful not to write too much about my own Club when editing the newsletter - but there was one week this Summer and one development this year that I hope you won’t mind me sharing.....

One day in July, I was pleased to find DIGIT, the magazine of the RPS Digital Imaging Group, plop through the door - it provided a good excuse to stop what I was doing, have a cup of coffee and a good read.

The first thing I came across was an eight page article by our Vice-Chairman, Sadiq Norat, describing a workshop on Splash Photography which he had run a couple of years ago. Some of you will remember an image by Marilyn Taylor of a hand with very bright red nails splashing through water - that was taken as a result of the workshop and there was all the work that Sadiq had done for the Club shared with the whole RPS Digital Imaging Group.

As I flicked further through I saw a familiar image. You may well recognise it, too. It was taken by Mike Reed, another WandCCC member in one of Liverpool’s cathedrals maybe three years ago. Why was that there? It had been chosen by a non-photographer who was writing about the interpretation of imagery.

Our Club is heavily involved in the Thames Valley Digital Imaging Group and it’s good to see this recognition.

The very next day the RPS Journal for July arrived - and there was a four page spread featuring images from my own successful ARPS panel.

Quite the week for Windlesham and Camberley with so much coverage in the RPS!

The following month, of course, I was able to enjoy Justin (Cliffe of Woking Photographic Society)’s feature with his London images.

They’re definitely worth seeing if you have a chance.

Earlier in the year I had been asked by a senior administrator in our local hospital if there was any way the Club could help with an image they needed. There was a need for a very simple image on a wall in the mental health emergency waiting room. It needed to be calming and to have no elements that could provoke violent emotions. I put the request to the club and they sent 60 images from which one was chosen.

But from acorns, come mighty oaks: we now have another photograph used in the other large hospital in the Trust and are waiting for a third, much more complex image, to be installed in a treatment room in the second hospital.

Also, a small group of photographers from the Club, led by the vision of one of the members, has also been given access to all of the hospitals with a view to creating a collage illustrating the many faces of the NHS. We had to be careful what images we took and were amazed at some of the things we were allowed to photograph.

We hope that the outcomes will be useful to the Trust and we know that there is now a good working relationship where are assured that we will help if we can.

Yes! They even found things to photograph on the ceiling!!!
Our President considers

Dates for the Diary

First of all, a few dates for the diary:

- SPA Inter-Club Print Competition*
  Entries close for Biennial Exhibition
  (which will be displayed at Guildford House Gallery 3-15 April)
- SPA Inter-Club PDI Competition*
- Saturday 02 May 2020

*The closing date for entries to these competitions is two weeks beforehand. We all know how much effort David Chilverton, our Competitions Officer, puts into these competitions so please make sure you get your entry in on time and, for the prints, make sure they are properly labelled and in the right order. When the PDI shown to the audience is different from the print or the title which is read out it’s almost always because a print hasn’t been put in the right order.

Please note that, as notified to clubs previously, the 2020 May PDI has been moved from its usual date because the May Bank Holiday has been moved from the first Monday in May to Friday 8 May mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day and we didn’t want to hold the competition on a Bank Holiday weekend as we guessed a number of attendees would be likely to have other commitments.

PAGB Inter-Federation Championship

The 2019 PAGB Inter-Federation Championship was held in June and the SPA did well. For a small federation within the fifteen PAGB federations (many have twice the number of clubs we do) our performance was very creditable:

- Colour Prints - we retained 5th
- Mono Prints - we retained 12th
- Open PDI - we improved from 10th to 7th
- Natures PDI - we improved from 9th to 7th

Individual successes worthy of note were Graham Johnston from Godalming who won an individual Judges Medal and Ben Cartlidge from Epsom who was awarded a PAGB Ribbon. Graham put together our entry for the competition with Rosemary Wilman, the Chair of the Judges Committee, for which congratulations

See Graham’s article on pages 6-7 for more information and some images.

Congratulations

Those SPA club members who are also RPS members will have seen two SPA club members recently featured in the RPS Journal with their successful ARPS panels. Kath Phillips (our Newsletter Editor) and the Chair of Windlesham & Camberley was featured in the July edition with her panel of images from Jerusalem’s Old City and Justin Cliffe, Immediate Past President of Woking, was featured in the August edition with his panel on The City of London. Congratulations to them both on their success. On the subject of success, I would also like to congratulate Rosemary Wilman, the Chair of our Judges and Lectures Committee on her recent ABPE award and John Hoskins, our Treasurer, on his recent BFPE* award.

David Smith
Who’s Who?

Soon after I started to edit the newsletter, I decided that it would be good to feature some of the Committee members who work 'behind the scenes' making things happen. One such is John Hoskins.

Getting involved: the first approach

It was in August 2013 when I received a cagey phone call from Tony Riley, then on the SPA Committee. He said that the SPA Treasurer had resigned and they needed someone urgently, partly because the club subscription season was about to start. Might I be interested? We met over lunch. It was then that I discovered that he thought I was a qualified accountant. No, I said. However, I had been Molesey PC’s treasurer for 14 years and had a lot of experience on accounts from my time at the Bank of England where I had received training in analysing bank accounts, and from my degree in Economics and Business Studies which included a year of accountancy. After some testing questions, he thought I would be up to the job, subject to the rest of the Committee approving. A Committee meeting was imminent and I duly attended at which I was gratefully co-opted to the role. I said I would do it for a year and then review my commitment to it, but six years later I find I am still the treasurer.

Learning the ropes

The next job was for me to see Rob Bonfield, the outgoing treasurer, to be shown the Excel spreadsheet used for the accounts and other documents, and try to get on top of a much more complex set of accounts than I was used to at my club. I gradually got on top of the 30 column spreadsheet which Rob had designed, which produces the income and expenditure account and balance sheet automatically. Well done Rob! With the club subscription exercise imminent, where about £4000 was due to be collected from the 50 clubs, I decided to stop sending out the letters and invoices by post and sent them by email, and did the same a few months later when we had the other major exercise where the clubs send the premium for their Public Liability Insurance, which involves collecting around £1800 to be passed on to the PAGB insurance brokers. The other main change in procedure was introducing online banking, making it far easier for me to pay committee expenses and receive payments from clubs.

Developments

The main changes in my time have been in the way we have calculated each club's annual subscription, and accepting that we had accumulated over the years more money than we really needed. Previously, all clubs with more than 20 members paid the same subscription, and we have several clubs with over 100 members, some well over! Instead we have introduced a system where part of the subscription is based on the number of members, in addition to a flat rate for all clubs. The second major change involved us raising less in subscriptions than we need to at least break even, funding part of our expenses out of existing funds. We still have a little way to go before subscriptions will have to go up to a level where they at least cover annual expenditure.

I have certainly enjoyed my time as Treasurer on the Committee, as well as being able to contribute in other areas, and have found it a fulfilling thing to do in my retirement.

My photographic journey

As for photography, I began aged 7, some time in the 1950s, when given a Kodak Brownie 127. People said I took good pictures, and didn’t cut off their heads! I progressed to a basic 35mm East German camera and later on to my first SLR – a second hand EXA IIa with a 50mm lens which took sharp pictures but needed a separate exposure meter. One picture I took with it, on mono Ilford FP3 film, in 1968, was good enough to produce a print years later and was accepted in a Smethwick International in the early 2000s!

I bought new Pentax Spottmatic, which had a built in exposure meter. From there I bought various cameras before settling on Nikon.

I have to say my favourite all time camera was the Nikon F3HP – a classic pro level film camera. I went digital in 2009 with a D300 and now have a D750.

I moved to East Molesey in 1995 and joined my first camera club there, Molesey PC. I had early success and had a judge’s award in the 1996 SPA Biennial with a print from a negative taken a decade before. Before long, I had developed an interest in mono prints, and began entering exhibitions in 2002, being lucky enough to get a Gold Medal in my first, the Cotswold Monochrome – recently sadly defunct.

For the next 15 years, I continued to enter mono prints in all areas of the PAGB and SPA competitions, and more locally, with Conundrum especially successful, and a similar style, largely in London, with the advent of titling rear monitors proving very useful for candid pictures. Galleries have proved to be a happy hunting ground, with Conundrum especially successful, and several successful pictures taken in the tubes.

That left the big one – an Associateship of the RPS. I had developed a style in mono prints which lent itself to a cohesive panel, with people in spaces such as galleries and tube stations, and I was very pleased to be awarded it.

Since then, I have continued to take pictures in a similar style, largely in London, with the advent of titling rear monitors proving very useful for candid pictures. Galleries have proved to be a happy hunting ground, with Conundrum especially successful, and several successful pictures taken in the tubes.

Conundrum
©John Hoskins

The Tube Travellers
©John Hoskins

Thanks, John, for all you do - even being at Warwick every year with refunds ready!
Representing the Federation in PAGB Competitions

In every season - in PAGB (Photographic Alliance of Great Britain) terms, every calendar year - there are a number of major Inter-Federation competitions. Here Graham Johnston describes the selection process and the results from the 2019 competition. Thanks are due to Graham and Rosemary for the difficult task they take on in selecting and organising our entries - and which they accomplish so well.

One of the major national photographic competitions is the PAGB Inter-Federation Competition, and is held annually each July. As its name implies, it is a competition organised and run by the PAGB between all the various federations (SPA being one).

The competition is hosted by federations in turn, and visitors are normally welcome to attend the judging. In July 2018 the hosts were the Kent Federation, this year the Midland Counties, while in 2020 the competition will be held by the Lancashire & Cheshire Federation.

The competition is broken down into 4 categories – Colour Prints, Monochrome Prints, Open PDI and Nature PDI. Suitable nature prints can be entered in the Colour Print category.

A minimum of 10 images and a maximum of 30 images may be entered into each category, with the proviso that an image has not been entered in a previous Inter-Fed Competition and also that it is not too similar to another image entered into a different category from the same photographer. Additionally, there must be no more than 3 images in each category by any one photographer.

The SPA entry is determined initially by Rosemary Wilman and myself. We assess images which have been entered into the most recent SPA Inter-Club Print and PDI competitions, and also entries to the Biennial Exhibition in every alternate year. Clubs are also invited to submit further images for consideration. We then produce a shortlist of suitable contenders. Having got that far, we then invite one or more SPA judges to join us to finalise our entry of 120 images. This year our President David Smith kindly helped.

For the competition itself, three PAGB approved judges have the task of assessing all entries from all federations, using the usual 2-5 scoring system. For obvious reasons no work from a judge is eligible! All scores are then aggregated for each federation, and the order of merit is decided on the total of the 15 highest scoring images in each category. A trophy is then presented to the federation which wins each category.

As well as awards for federations, there are also awards for successful images. The judges collectively award a Gold Medal for their chosen best image in each of the 4 categories. In addition each judge awards a Silver Medal and two Ribbons to images of their choice in each category.

And then a Print Exhibition is organised which is displayed by rota in various locations. The Exhibition includes all the print awards plus additional prints chosen from those with the highest scores, making a total of approx 150 prints. Likewise an Exhibition of projected Open and Nature images is organised.

For a small federation within the PAGB (many federations have twice the number of clubs that we do) our SPA performance this year was very creditable. In Colour Prints we retained 5th (out of 15 federations), in Monochrome Prints we retained 12th, in Open PDI we improved from 10th to 7th, while in Nature PDI we improved from 9th to 7th.

Three individual performances were worthy of note.

I (Graham Johnston) was fortunate to be awarded an Individual Judge’s Silver Medal. I understand the last SPA member to win such a medal was the late Len Deeley a few years ago, also from Godalming!

Maro Itoje about to score
© Graham Johnston

And Ben Carrick from Epsom was awarded a PAGB Ribbon.

Arctic Fox, Winter Coat
© Ben Carrick

We had a total 19 images accepted for the PAGB Exhibitions, including 6 from Godalming (of which 4 were from David Hughes), 4 from Epsom and 3 from Bookham.

Red Fox Hunting
© David Hughes

One of the four images by David accepted for the PAGB Exhibition

We look forward to continued and hopefully improved success in future years.

Graham Johnston
PAGB Competition Liaison Officer
Congratulations...

To Roger Hoyle of Windlesham and Camberley Camera Club on being awarded ARPS in September with a panel of Natural History images and to John Hoskins of Molesey on achieving BPE3.

Please let us know when members of your Club achieve distinctions. We’d love to celebrate their success.

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Diary

19 October 2019
SPA AGM and Individual Competitions

23 November
SPA Inter-Club Print Championship

Although it looks a long way away, 31st January will be here before we know it and the entry period for the SPA Biennial Exhibition 2020 will be closed. So start thinking now what you can submit for selection - and encourage other Club members, too. Let's see the talent that's among us.

I am hoping this year to produce a newsletter after the Inter-Club competition with results of the Individual competitions and the Inter-Club Print Championship. There may be Christmas activities you'd like to publicise or perhaps your Club has some interesting good practice to share as we had in the May edition. You can send anything for publication to me at newsletter@surreypa.org.uk. Please send it before 23 November as I will aim for late November publication.