

Regional Organisers Report

RPS South West Region – AGM 21 February 2021 -Via Zoom

“May you live in interesting times” so goes the old Chinese curse and I think 2020 has proved it to be effectively interesting and cursed and that in turn has forced us as a region into new and often innovative ways of working.

But before reviewing other aspects of the year, I must reflect on the loss of a number of long-standing members such as Eric Cawsey and none more so than our valued committee colleague and former President of the Royal Photographic Society John Page Hon FRPS my sympathies and thoughts go out to all those families and friends of all the members who have passed in the last year.

2020 started well enough with Carol and Graham holding their now traditional “Blow away the Cobwebs” event down in Cornwall in early January.

In February, we held the AGM and had a fascinating talk by regional member and former Reuters editor Greg Bos and we were able to squeeze in a weekend visit to Bristol before “lockdown”.

For the rest of the year technology in the form of Zoom ensured we were still able to secure the services of some excellent speakers Sue Brown a double FRPS kicked off our programme superbly in July and it was equally well brought to a conclusion in November by Ken Holland ARPS, DPAGB. In between we had Chris Porsz narrating his stories of documenting the streets of Peterborough over the last 40 years in his first ever Zoom presentation. Plus, the unforgettable “Dragon in Monochrome” an inspiring and entertaining evening with Margaret Salisbury FRPS, MFIAP, FIPF, FSITTP, FSINWP, AWPf, APAGB.

Regional Membership has fallen from 500 at the beginning of the year to 461 at the time of writing. The regional membership was canvassed during July when the membership was also at 461 as to what if any interest they had in regional events.

41 had previously opted out of email contact.

Of the 420 contacted 57 replied affirmatively that they are interested in attending some form of regional event whether via Zoom, or physical events when Covid and the government permit, including talks, field events and receiving e-bulletins and the newsletters. While this is a disappointingly low level, I will still endeavour over the next twelve months to continue to find more interesting and inspirational speakers. With the advent of Zoom we have had the advantage of being joined online by members in the remoter parts of the region, but also by attendees from other regions and across the world. So, it is intended to include some Zoom talks in future programmes even when hopefully we return to some kind of social normality.

Committee and Volunteers this year three very longstanding committee members stand down after a quite incredible combined total of 73 years’ service – Mick Medley 25 years Joy Medley and Martin Howse both 24 years. I am very grateful for their help and support to me during my tenure as Regional Organiser which I have greatly appreciated. Additionally,

during the year sadly, the West Cornwall Group was disbanded and Vivien Howse stepped down from her role as organiser after interest in the group had waned. I hope they will all now have more time for their own photography and I will look forward to them all advancing and submitting successful distinctions panels shortly.

Also as reported last year Di Wilkins has stood down from The Visual Arts Group and did so with a splendid programme in her last year which included Paul Sanders, Polina Plotnikova and Mark Reeves. So, a big thank-you to Di for the tremendous job she has done.

Newsletter during the year we did not produce a printed newsletter, this was simply because of the cost and the very limited revenue stream we had during the pandemic. It is hoped that our new editor Julia Hobday will be able to produce us a bumper issue during the first quarter with the full programme of 2021 events.

So, we move on lets us hope for a better year for everyone.

Tim Sanders LRPS

Regional Organiser