
From: [Evan Dawson](#)

Sent: 11 December 2020 18:52

Subject: Snapshot - No.18

Dear RPS trustees, staff, volunteers and friends

I'm writing this email to you having just emerged from our staff online **Christmas party**. It was hosted by **Kate**, who led us all in a terrific (if rather silly) quiz. Everyone assembled on a zoom call, but we then worked in small teams on Teams - very clever. There were some technical hitches, but on the whole it worked really well - particularly the last round, which was a scavenger hunt to fetch things from around our houses. Thanks so much to Kate for organising this. It's been a very challenging year for everyone, and I can see that staff and volunteers have really pulled together brilliantly, and deserve a good break for Christmas. Not long to go now...

Last **Saturday**, a very different but equally successful online gathering took place. Led by our trustee team, we assembled a group of 65 people from around the organisation to discuss the proposals being made to our **governance** arrangements (more details of these [here](#) if you've not seen them yet). There were really really insightful conversations, and we are refining the proposals as a result. This is a continuing process, and it's great to see so many people involved in getting it right, ensuring the RPS's structures are really fit for the future.

On **Monday**, my week started as usual with a relay of talking to all managers. I then had a more detailed meeting with **Simon B** about membership data and strategy; and with **Heather** about the latest draft of our emerging strategy. I also had a terrific conversation with a young photographer who is interested in joining our **Critical Friends** group, which we hope to launch early next year.

On **Tuesday** morning, we had a trustees strategy group meeting (led by **Heather**), to start putting some details on the structure, which is now ready for us to share, to get more opinions. During the afternoon, we had an **all-staff meeting**, so I took the opportunity to share it with them, and their feedback was very positive - with some useful suggestions made to refine it, of course. We also talked about our plans to re-open the building (we're aiming for 23 January, pending the pandemic review on 16 Dec), and **Gary** showed us the INCREDIBLE winning photographs from the recent **Science Competition**. I also spent some time with **Sally**, to understand much more about her great plans and philosophy for the exhibitions programme over the next year and beyond.

On **Wednesday**, I had a holiday day - which I spent mostly digging up my garden for a new shed; and also preparing a musical Christmas treat, which I hope to share with you next week....

Yesterday, we had a full **board meeting**. The previous one was only six weeks ago, but it was amazing to see how much ground we'd covered. They gave me a thorough grilling (the honeymoon period is over it seems!), but I'm still hugely impressed by the way this trustee team is working so hard to ensure the RPS can address its various problems, and launch a dynamic new strategy next year. I would also like to mention the sterling work done by **Nikki** to manage our accounts and systems. We would be lost without her.

In the afternoon, I spoke with some **Distinctions** panel members, together with **Andy**, and learned much more about the experience of leading assessments. It's tremendous how these have continued during lockdown, but it's clearly been a big change in workflow. We all really appreciate the

commitment and expertise of the many photographers who help make Distinctions such a highly-regarded and quality assured process for applicants.

Today, I spent much of the morning completing a paper on income generation for the board, and then met with **Mike Taylor** to catch up on governance and much more. He was looking very well, and sends everyone his best wishes. Then this afternoon, **Kate** led our Christmas party, as you know....

Some good news from **Simon B** this week. He has secured 99 new members through a partnership with NicheCom, who represent estate agent photographers. This is an affiliate deal, and I understand he has more of these in the pipeline. Well done indeed.

We also had some very nice feedback about the new-look (award winning) **Journal**:

Bonjour, I am Jacques Dubochet, Nobel laureate in chemistry in 2017 with Richard Henderson and Joachim Frank. Following this nomination you offered me the status of an honorary member of the RPS. Since then I receive every month your marvellous journal. Each month it is a discovery and a pleasure.

Congratulation and thanks, Jacques Dubochet

and

At first I thought the new Journal was nothing more than added negative space, and even contemplated measuring all the white space to compare it to the number of added pages. As I read the journal for the second time it occurred to me that I was in fact reading it twice for the first time. The chaos is gone, and the magazine is much easier to read, it just appears more relaxed, thank you from an octogenarian member that has no contact with RPS beyond the journal.

Jon Fishback, ARPS

I also wanted to share these links to archived articles on the RPS website, which **Emily** assembled. Some of these are amongst our most inspiring articles recently, and if you've got some spare time, I would strongly recommend you browse through:

<https://rps.org/news/journal/colin-prior-diptychs-unite-bird-eggs-with-habitats/>

<https://rps.org/news/bristol/2020/september/our-pandemic-journey-in-pictures/>

<https://rps.org/news/bristol/2020/june/tips-for-project-creation-with-nicholas-j-r-white/>

<https://rps.org/news/bristol/2020/october/rps-awards-2020/>

<https://rps.org/news/bristol/2020/may/tips-for-project-creation-with-cocoa-laney/>

<https://rps.org/news/bristol/2020/july/rps-fellow-wins-potato-photographer-of-the-year-2020/>

<https://rps.org/news/bristol/2020/july/kickstarter-campaign-carolyn-mendelsohn/>

<https://rps.org/news/chapters/germany/2020/2020-september/isle-of-fehmarn/>

Finally, I would like to share two areas of the website that have recently been overhauled, thanks to great efforts by volunteers (working with **Emily**).

Firstly, the **Digital Imaging Group** website, worked on by web editor **Sue Hutton**:

<https://rps.org/groups/digital-imaging/>

And also the beautiful new **Sri Lanka** pages, prepared by its web editor **Romesh**:

<https://rps.org/chapters/srilanka>

Next week will be my last week before Christmas. I'll be in the office on Tuesday, and attending the online RepCom meeting on Thursday.

I hope you're enjoying my weekly *Snapshots*. Please do send me anything you'd like me to share. **I would be grateful if chairs and ROs could circulate this to their group members, if appropriate - and if you are receiving this indirectly, do drop me a line if you'd like me to add your email to the circulation list.**

As always, please keep in touch, and do let me know if you'd like to discuss anything.

Happy weekendening!

Evan

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