

# **RPS Contemporary Group**

## **Annual General Meeting 2020**

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 10.30am at Royal photographic Society, Bristol.

Minutes: Romney Tansley (RT)

### **1. Welcome and apologies.**

There were 12 members present. The Chair, Avril Harris welcomed everyone to the meeting, the following apologies were noted from Tom Owens, Tessa Mills, Duncan Unsworth, Sean Goodhart, Rod Fry, Brian Steptoe and Richard Draper.

### **2. Minutes of the AGM 13th October 2018**

The minutes were agreed, as proposed by Alan Cameron (AC), and seconded by Patricia Ruddle (PR). There were no matters arising.

### **3. Reports**

#### **Chair's Report (as circulated)**

We last had an AGM in October 2018 which is a long time ago. Unfortunately our 2019 AGM had to be cancelled as Chris Steele-Perkins was offered work in Japan which clashed with our dates, as a result we now have the AGM in March 2019 with, yet again, a speaker cancelling at short notice due to work. These are the risks one takes when asking working photographers to speak well ahead of the day.

In 2018 we had Paola Leonardi to speak, as is often the case I regret that more members didn't attend as her talk was extremely interesting and entertaining. To walk the borders of volatile countries in one's spare time, talk to the people and record their experiences is quite admirable.

This past year the Contemporary Group regions have been active with meetings and exhibitions. Paul Ashley, as editor of our Journal, has kept the high standards expected. Working together are Romney Tansley as editor and Ken Holland, production design, to produce Concept on time.

The committee has undertaken some major changes this year. Howard Fisher stood down as Secretary and his place has been taken by Romney Tansley, Peter Ellis, due to health problems, stood down as deputy chair and his place has been taken by Avijit Datta, Alan Cameron will be taking over from me as Chair. Rod Fry has stood down due to health problems and Adrian Hough has taken over from him in the South West. Anne Crabbe, after many years has also stood down. Those taking over official roles need to be officially voted in during this meeting.

The Postal Portfolio has room for more members, if you would like to submit work to the box and view the work of other members please contact Duncan Unsworth who was unable to attend today as he is working.

I wish the members of the almost new committee success in the future and the hope that they will be able to provide our members with an interesting programme.

The Chair spoke of messages having to be sent out to members centrally, on account of the stipulations of the GDPR.

David Grimshaw (DG) said we can do this ourselves via the email addresses we hold in the membership list which is kept by the Secretary. In terms of GDPR we already have permission to use that address because everyone on the list has agreed to it being used for contact purposes and we are a membership organisation. What we must not do is disclose any individual email address to another member. In practice this means creating a contact list and sending out the email via the bcc field.

## **Postal Portfolios Report**

Duncan Unsworth was unable to attend as he is working. The Chair said that there had been three postal portfolio but there is now only one and it has room for more members.

Duncan is planning a weekend at Missendon Abbey. It will run from Friday evening 4th September to Sunday lunchtime 6th September (Covid 19 permitting). Anyone thinking of joining would be welcome to come for all or part of the weekend. Contact Duncan for further information.

PR suggested that there should be an article about these in Concept.

RT suggested that CG might consider setting up an email circle where pictures are circulated within the group by email then members comments are similarly circulated. The Visual Art Group runs several email circles with great success. AC spoke in support as a member of one of these, as is RT.

## **Treasurer's Report by David Grimshaw (as circulated – see next 2 pages)**

DJG reported on his inability to access the CG bank account electronically. Barclays have not enabled this despite repeated overtures. He has contacted the Society requesting a move to another bank, but with no progress on this so far.

Most of our expenditure goes on the costs of producing the Contemporary Photography journal. This results in CG charging a higher membership fee than any other SIG. Can these costs be reduced in any way? Would using a franking machine help? The Historical Group does this for their journal thereby reducing costs.

We presently enjoy a very large bank balance yet are able to cover all costs from revenues. Though each of us should be claiming our expenses (where appropriate) if we want to waive these, we should claim and then Gift Aid the amount to the RPS so they can gain the tax benefit.

## Financial Report, 2019

For: AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020, held at the RPS in Bristol

### Introduction

This is my first financial report as Treasurer, having taken on the role at the AGM in October 2018. This report covers the calendar (financial) year 2019.

### Banking Issues at RPS

The RPS have used Barclays Bank for several years, however new volunteers cannot be issued with cheque books. Despite repeated attempts by myself and the RPS to give me electronic access to the bank account all attempts have failed. Therefore, I do not have online access to the account and cannot make payments. All these transactions must go through the RPS. The RPS have considered a move to another bank but have decided to stay with Barclays for the time being. I continue to have concerns about Barclays from both an ethical and environmental (climate change) point of view and would like to see more effort to change banks.

On a more positive note we have set up an electronic system of sharing bank statements and transaction spreadsheets, thus avoiding posting paper copies. Electronic copies will be available from 2019 onwards by any future treasurer using the generic email address:

[contemporarytreasurer@rps.org](mailto:contemporarytreasurer@rps.org)

### Summary of Key Facts

- At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 there was a closing balance of £10596.99
- At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 there was a closing balance of £11032.85
- Total income for 2019 was: £6851.16 (see Table 1 for details).
- Total expenditure for 2019 was: £6415.30 (see Table 2 for details).
- Net surplus for 2019 was: £495.78

### Commentary on 2019 Financial Position

Overall the year ended with a surplus, largely due to no costs being incurred for hosting events. The health of the accounts is almost entirely due to the membership subscriptions.

### Outlook for 2020 Financial Position

We start the year with a higher balance compared to the start of 2019. The main risk to our finances is a potential decline in members. It is vital to keep the membership numbers and try to find ways to increase it.

**Table 1: Analysis of Income**

	Other	Financing	Grand Total
VAT refund		£33.01	£33.01
Other	£41.00		£41.00
Member Subs		£6,777.15	£6,777.15
Tickets	£0.00		£0.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£41.00</b>	<b>£6,810.16</b>	<b>£6,851.16</b>

Notes:

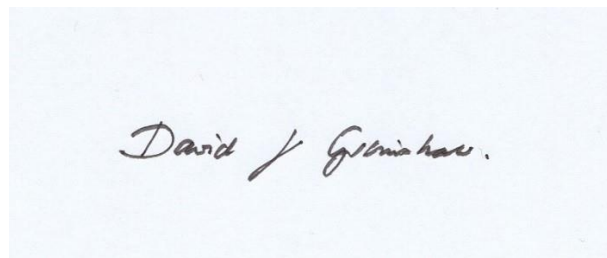
1. Member subs represent 99.4% of income.
2. There were no events held during the year.

**Table 2: Analysis of Expenditure**

	Admin	Printing	Committee	Grand Total
Postage	£2,994.53			£2,994.53
Printing		£3,124.83		£3,124.83
Travel (blank)			£220.95	£220.95
Stationery	£54.69			£54.69
Subsistence			£14.30	£14.30
Bank & PayPal Charges	£6.00			£6.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£3,055.22</b>	<b>£3,124.83</b>	<b>£235.25</b>	<b>£6,415.30</b>

Notes:

1. The cost of the Journal (postage and printing) represents 95.4% of expenditure.
2. Admin costs for the year account for the remaining expenditure, covering welcome letters to new members, bank charges and one committee meeting.



Dr David J. Grimshaw MA, ARPS

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## Webmaster's Report by Sean Goodhart (as circulated)

Since the last report to the SIG at the AGM in March 2019 I have to say that productivity is down a little. My role at work has seen me travelling a great deal, with little time at home I've really been "ticking over" the Contemporary web pages. Brian has kindly helped with materials for blogs.

### New RPS website

Most of you will know that the RPS changed the way its website is hosted at the latter part of 2019. This did take quite a lot of time to get to grips with. It's a novel way of building a website – it uses a content management system from Umbraco which requires images to be uploaded, connected to a range of different kinds of objects which are then connected in to "cards" which then can be linked in to web pages. Attending a training session did help me get over the initial "oh my, this is not web development in the old fashioned sense I'm used to" (thankfully the RPS hosted one of these late one evening, I think I joined remotely from Spain). As an infrequent user it takes me a few minutes to figure it out again each time I have to add something to the site! That said Emily, the RPS web admin, has said we have a great looking group page (I bet she says that to all the web admins!).

<https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/>

**Blogs** – I can only remember one from the old website; with that now decommissioned I have no way of going back and checking

- March 2019 – a blog on the Format event at Derby
- November 2019 – a blog on the Martin Parr Foundation photobook weekend  
<https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2019/november/congregation/>
- January 2020 – a blog on the London Art Fair  
<https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2020/january/london-art-fair-2020/>

### Event postings

As ever, please ensure that you let me know about any group meetings so that I can create entries on the rps.org site – this is the only way they find themselves in the official RPS Events listing that appears in the Journal.

### Instagram page for Contemporary SIG

Instagram hashtag #rpscontemporarygroup created after the AGM in 2017.

In July 2018 we created the Instagram group @RPSContemporary, which is now getting some traction with followers and people linking their posts via the hashtag and "mentions".

<https://www.instagram.com/rpscontemporary/>

	images posted	followers
October 2018	14	80
March 2019	22	638
March 2020	41	1142

Today, 2020-03-07 we now have 1,142 followers on Instagram. I have been choosing images through the year myself, feedback from people added to the gallery has been positive. If anyone spots a great contemporary photographer on Instagram please let me know and I can link to one of their images.

If Contemporary SIG members are Instagram users and choose to put the hashtag #rpscontemporarygroup in the text describing their image I will find this and can choose to re-post (“regram”) the image on our “feed”.

I’d be very happy if people recommend images I should be posting, plus checking out images tagged with #rpscontemporarygroup. Once highlighted I can deal with the technicalities.

## E-publications

I moved the archive of back issues of Concept to a new location on the new website

<https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/e-news-archive/>

The archive for the Contemporary Photography Journal also moved

<https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/journal-archive/>

The teams working on these publications are helpfully keeping me fed with the new versions as they are published. I do need to “pretty up” the archive pages and will work on that in the next year.

## Gallery

I’ve asked for help from rps.org on creating a Showcase Gallery once again. I downloaded and have all the images from the old site safely stored. In the absence of an object in the new Umbraco system that makes it easy for me I have made a start on a more traditional html approach which I can link in the images. Finding time to get this working is a problem.

## Report by Brian Steptoe (as circulated)

I am writing this on World Book Day, which is particularly relevant due to my interest in photobooks. Recent purchases include ‘The New Londoners’ by Chris Steele-Perkins and ‘East Ended’ by Dougie Wallace. I have reviewed three books in the Group Journal over the last year: ‘Caspian’, by Chloe Dewe Mathews, who spoke at a recent Group meeting, ‘I Walk toward the Sun, which is Always Going Down’, by Alan Huck and ‘The Eighth Day’, by Gao Shan, which was the winning photobook of the year at Paris-Photo in November 2019. I plan to review a book about Andy Warhol in the forthcoming Journal.

I continue to design the Group Journal layout in collaboration with our editor Paul and arrange printing, using [www.printed.com](http://www.printed.com) who offer reduced rates to charities such as the RPS.

During the year I have visited several exhibitions, including by Martin Parr at the National Portrait Gallery and Photo 50 at the London Art Fair, which featured work by ten women photographers over the age of 50, curated by Laura Noble.

I attended a seminar at the Martin Parr Foundation on ‘British Photography in the 1980s’. There were five speakers. Anna Fox presented her published project ‘Workstations’, Jem Southam took attendees through his journey shown in his book ‘The Red River’. Karen Knorr showed her projects ‘Gentlemen’, about London gentlemen’s clubs and ‘Belgravia’, plus more recent work ‘Indian Song’. Paul Graham

showed his 'A1 North Road' series, his work taken in DHSS benefit claim offices and 'Troubled Land', made during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Chris Killip presented his work made in the North East, particularly the sea coalers, originally published in 1988, titled 'In Flagrate', and reprinted by Steidl in 2015.

I have submitted an article about photobooks to the RPS Journal with input from Michael Pritchard, but this has not yet been published. I continue to lobby the RPS Distinctions Department about creating distinctions on the subject. I regularly send items to Sean for publication on our Group section of the RPS website.

## **4. Election of Officers**

Alan Cameron proposed as Chair by PR and Paul Ashley (PA)

Avijit Datta proposed as Deputy Chair by AC and PA

Romney Tansley proposed as Secretary by Ken Holland and AD

All agreed unanimously.

## **5. Election of committee members already standing**

Agreed unanimously.

## **6. Comment by Alan Cameron**

As Chair, Alan presented a book and a card as gifts from the Committee to Avril for all her good work over 10 years as Chair.

## **7. Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch, to be followed by a presentation by Teresa Eng on her work published in her three photobooks. That to be followed by a review of members' work by Teresa Eng.