

RO report 2023 for the SE RPS region

Hello, and I hope you have managed to read this report online

After saying we are back in line with the normal timetable of events in March 2022, we have slipped again to October 1st this year. The main reason for this was the unavailability of financial data until July 2023 for 2022. This was caused by the changeover to the new CRM system.

I am therefore going to cover the whole of 2022 and the first 2 quarters of 2023:

1. Finance

2. Our events in 2022 and 2023 to date and the move to DIG

3. Results of the online survey and what is our focus for the future

4. Volunteers

1. Finance

At the AGM last year, we said we were going to use some of our positive bank balance to buy 10 cameras for Positive View to use with their 10 students who participate in every course. (You will hear more about Positive View from Andrew, their CEO, later today) This was finally endorsed by the then RPS CEO, Evan Dawson, and we did indeed present the cameras to Andrew on 24/03/2022. This cost us £6185 and Andrew tells me they have been in great demand ever since.

As you have just seen in the Finance report, we still have a positive balance of over £16,000 in our bank account at the end June 2023. We had over £19,000 at the beginning of 2022, prompting the idea of donating the cameras to Positive View. Is this balance too much? I personally think so, but given the state of flux inside the RPS at the moment, I would venture it is not a good time to repeat our philanthropic gesture.

You may well have noticed that all our events now are being ticketed on Billetto. This is a website similar to Eventbrite. It costs us money to have our paid events on there, but it is so simple and, in my opinion, pays dividends in firstly the time taken to set it up, and secondly the response time to get a ticket compared to the RPS system. The implementation of CRM has been disruptive to say the least and viewed through my former project eyes, a disaster for the RPS. The departure of both Evan Dawson and Tracy Marshall-Grant was one human consequence for the RPS and I still am unsure of timings and benefits over a year later from the original completion date.

Our philosophy for the future will be to break even on events, which as you hear, are now much reduced in frequency.

2. Our events in 2022 and 2023 to date and the move to DIG

2022 saw a big change we organise our events. It was clear to us that the massive success of all the online events presented by Celia Henderson on Photoshop and Joe Houghton on mainly Lightroom, throughout 2021 and into 2022, changed the focus of our region. Quite simply, our demographic was not regional anymore, but national and even international.

I have to say that advertising anything nationally for a region is not easy. Bristol send out their workshops every month to all members but we have no such avenue to go down. (I understand that CRM might fix this). DIG, on the other hand is a national organisation and have built up their own database of people wanting to be informed about online events.

It therefore seemed more sensible for all of our online offerings to be sourced via DIG. This transfer happened in October 2022, and Celia made her last broadcast on 25/10/22 with a talk on *Layer Masks: A lot more than conceal and reveal*. DIG have managed the transition very well and I am pleased to say the workshops remain well attended and even more interesting. I like to think we changed the way some of the RPS worked during the Pandemic sharing good practice with those best suited.

3. Results of the online survey and what is our focus for the future

Over June/July we carried out an online survey to see what our members wanted. Here are the key results:

1. Disappointingly there were only 53 responses from over 700 members
2. Over 80% of the respondents live in Sussex and Surrey, with Kent way down. If this is indicative, then the epicentre of the region is around Horsham/Crawley area.
3. Over 75% of the respondents already have a distinction
4. About 45% of the respondents were already working towards a distinction, with L/A/F being equally distributed. Out of these a surprisingly high proportion prefer print as a medium for submission
5. For those working towards a distinction, out of the 26 responses, online and F2F advisory events were the highest need recorded, however this needs to be seen in context of the low response
6. From the list of what events would people be interested in, the short answer is all of the F2F events we are currently doing or have done in the past. This is essentially pre-processing, in other words taking images in areas like Coastal, Street, Flower, Wildlife and Woodland.
7. The age demographic from 47 responses is 72% over 65 and almost 98% over 50. This is not news to us!

Where do we go from here?

1. If we keep targeting the same RPS membership demographic for our F2F events we are likely to get low attendance. We will therefore also target non RPS members and hope that might lead to membership
2. We will advertise using Facebook photo groups. There is a SE Facebook group.
3. We will continue to offer pre-processing events Face to Face. These will either be walks with cameras, (click events), or specifically led with a professional tutor.
4. There will be very few workshops via Zoom following the transition to DIG running these
5. We will continue to use Billetto until the RPS system is seen to work
6. We will abandon planning any F2F ARPS and LRPS advisory days. We will pursue planning only an online LRPS advisory day
7. We now have far fewer events to manage and run with transfer of most Zoom events to DIG.

4. We are desperately short of volunteers; please help

You will see that this plea has not gone unheeded. There are 2 new names on our list to bring fresh ideas and impetus to our committee.

Finally, I would like to give a public vote of thanks to one of our members who has left the committee. Roger Crocombe was instrumental in setting up the highly successful series

of Photoshop workshops starring our very own Celia Henderson. Roger also gave many talks on various aspects of Lightroom, all free of charge. I shall miss his inputs into our various discussions. Roger is currently recovering from a serious illness and we wish him all the very best.

John Gough

RPS SE RO

12/09/2023