

DRAFT

THE **RPS**
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

**LONDON
REGION**

RPS London Region AGM 2025

Item 5: Regional Organiser's Report

David Hicks

• RO's Report – Overview

■ Organisation

- The London Region 'Official' Region Team remained stable during 2024
- David Hicks as Regional Organiser
- Judy Hicks, Mike Psyllides & Roger Towell as Co-Deputy Regional Organisers
- Jennette Russell as Treasurer.
- Roger Towell as Secretary (**)
- *+ the volunteers in our “Core Team”, who with those above are key to the Region’s ability to “do things” and it’s success.*

■ Region Organised Activities

- We held **122** events in the year – with a total attendance of **2,109**
- **461** people attended one or more events; average just under 5 events per person

** **NOTE:** A new terms of reference (TOR) for Community Groups (Regions, SIGs and Chapters) required a “Secretary” as part of the Committee. If between election years, the Committee could co-opt a person into the Secretary role. (Next London Region Committee elections due at the 2027 AGM.)

- **RO's Report – Contribution of
Volunteers' Core Team**

- Each Volunteer (singly or jointly) runs one or more of our regular activities
 - Photowalks / fieldtrips – Roger Towell; Julian Rouse; Fred Barrington; Judy Hicks, David Hicks;
 - Book Group “Bookworms” – Jenny Hurstfield;
 - Distinctions: L & A Advisories & Study Group – Mike Psyllides & Brian Connolly;
 - Local “groups” – N, SW and Zoom facilitated and managed by Judy Hicks, David Hicks: - SE Group by Mike Psyllides, Julian Rouse, Mike Walker.
 - CaféArt Mentoring Group – led by Julian Rouse with Judy Hicks, Pat Simmons, Fred Barrington as Mentors
- Ongoing support roles essential to maintain contact with Members
 - “Events” Edith Templeton
 - “Capital Letter” etc. – Judy Hicks & Roger Towell
 - Memberships (Members) – Martin Gandy
 - Project – Joanne Segars

Plus others who undertake a variety of tasks and activities to support the Region and us in the Core Team, such as: finding and booking venues; stewarding exhibitions; “running the bar”.

RO's Report – Events' Calendar

▪ Regular Monthly (same “day”)

- SE London (1st Monday) – Pett’s Wood In Person
- London-wide Zoom (Alternative 1st Wednesday and 1st Thursday). Zoom for all
- North London (2nd Monday) – Highbury & Islington In Person (**)
- SW London (2nd Tuesday) – Putney In Person (**)
- “Distinctions” Study Group (2nd Thursday) – Zoom
- Street Photowalk (2nd Saturday) – around London
- Bookworms (3rd Monday) – Highbury & Islington In Person (**)
- Midweek Explorers Photowalk (3rd week) - around London
- Landscape Fieldtrips (4th week) –around the Home Counties, and London for “cityscapes”

▪ RPS London-CafeArt Photography Mentoring Group

- Two Saturday afternoons per month followed by Zoom feedback a week later

(**) These three events have move location to another nearby pub.

RO's Report – Special Events

- **Exhibitions and visits (field trips)**
 - January – RPS London- CafeArt Photography Mentoring Group annual exhibition (Putney Library)
 - January – Hitchin and Diane Arbus Exhibition
 - February – Advisory Day LRPS + ARPS (Canada Water Library)
 - March – LRMPE annual members' print exhibition (Espacio Gallery)
 - May – Visit to Supreme Court's building (Parliament Square)
 - August – pop-up (one-day) exhibition of Tower Hamlets cemetery (around the cemetery)
 - September – SW group's Red|White|Blue Exhibition (Putney Library)
 - October – Visit to Buddhist Temple, Wimbledon
 - October – Visit to Royal Geographic Society's photo archive (South Kensington)
 - November – Sustainable London Project Exhibition (fourcorners gallery)

- **RO's Report Events Details:**

- 122 (121 / 180) Events or Meetups in 2024(2023 / 2022):
attendances of 2,109 (1,880 / 2,639) by 461 (382 / 483) individuals

EVENT TYPE	No. of Events	Attendances
Regular Micro-Groups		
Bookworms, N SW, SE & Zoom	57	963
London Street, Midweek Explorers, & Landscape	33	539
Distinctions Advisory Days, Study Groups etc.		
Advisory Days	1	24
Study Group	10	52
One Off Events, Workshops & Exhibitions	21	531
TOTAL	122	2,109

• RO's Report – Membership growth

▪ Region's Membership

- Saw an increase in Membership over the year from 1,065 (end December 2023) to **1,174** at the end of December 2024
- This was made up of a “loss” of **196** (existing) and a “gain” of **305** (new) members
- A net gain of **109** = **10%** growth

▪ Region's Membership Trends

- London's membership was in the range 1,300 – 1,350 from early 2016 until end 2019. Then, by April 2022 it had fallen steadily to about 1,060. This drop was in line with general RPS Membership decline.
- Since mid-2022 to July 2024, it remained consistently around 1,060 – range 1,050 to 1,070.
- After July, London Region Membership has grown steadily by **103** over the 5 months.
- The end December number of **1,174** is the highest since August 2020.
- **This gain is largely due the social media marketing campaign by HQ.**

Congratulations to those London Region Members who had a successful Distinctions Assessment in 2024

LRPS = 7

ARPS = 3

- **RO's Report**

- **London Region Members' Print Exhibition 2024**

- We held three selection days in January 2023 and 105 London Members had images in the Exhibition in the Espacio Gallery 20th to 24th March 2024.
- Each London Member who submitted work, had one image hung on the wall for the Exhibition – plus a second image on a rolling digital display
- **The exhibition also included 20 images from the RPS London-CafeArt Photography Mentoring Group Exhibition**

- **Grown in participation each year**

- First year (2017 for 2018) – 44 Members put forward images
- 2018 for 2019 = 49 – and changed to selection by participants
- 2019 for 2020 = 55
- 2020 for 2021 = 61
- 2021 for 2022 = 108 (post pandemic)
- 2022 for 2023 = 98
- 2024 = 105
- 2025 = xxx

■ Sustainable London

- It was confirmed at the 2024 AGM, that documenting various aspects of sustainability would be the topic for the 2024 project.
- Joanne Segars had the idea, developed the concept and led the project with support from all the photographers
- Initially, some 40 photographers indicated interest, but only about 30 began to develop their projects.
- In the end, 25 photographers contributed 33 projects which resulted in an exhibition in fourcorners gallery, Bethnal Green in November
- Topics covered may areas of sustainability including recycling; green spaces; greening the environment; green transport; pollution; unnecessary lighting; and the challenges of lack of affordable housing. Of particular interest :-
 - Turning coffee cups into high-quality paper; making beer from surplus bread; turning plastic waste into milk bottles; preventing food waste; and personal ways to recycle.
- For 2025, a repeat exhibition is planned for March in Kingston; and we also plan to produce a book of the projects.

Cafe Art

- RPS London Regions has continued to support CafeArt with their MyWorld/ MyLondon calendar competition / photography project involving people who are homeless or suffering the after effects of homelessness
- The Calendar project ran in its usual form; images were taken using single use cameras and the RO helped shortlist images for the public vote, layout of calendar, and handing out of prizes to the winners
- The RPS London-CafeArt Photography Mentoring Group is separate from the MyWorld / MyLondon calendar project and is for people who are homeless or suffering the effects of homelessness grew in membership and strength over the year
- The programme is run by Julian with support from Judy, Fred and Pat as mentors
- It has a field trip (typically) two Saturdays per month with a feedback / educational Zoom a week later.
- The field trips have included charitable concession tickets to e.g. Kew gardens and London Zoo.
- A donation campaign raised over £5,000 which enabled the group to acquire 12 no. Fuji XT-30 cameras and lenses with the additional generous support of Fujifilm
- An exhibition of photographs by mentorees was on display in Putney Library for three weeks in January 2024
- The 2025 Exhibition is on display here (at Brixton Library) today

RO's Report

- **Administration and interface to HQ**
- Event Booking System
 - The biggest challenge has been the limited functionality of the new HQ CRM system and its Blackthorn events module. We have continued to use Eventbrite for the majority of events with some duplicated on Blackthorn with link to Eventbrite event.
 - Although Blackthorn is probably acceptable for creating events and ticketing, it fails (as yet) to provide the necessary tools to manage an event:-
 - Two upgrades are promised for 2025. The delayed upgrade from summer 2024, is expected early in 2025. and a second later in the year.
- Website (CMS / Umbraco)
 - Again an upgrade is anticipated later in 2025 to make the layout of the website more accessible for Members and non-members
- Enhance terms of reference for Community groups (Regions, SIGs, Chapters)
 - These seek to establish the same organisational structure across all groups – which has challenges as the Regions are very varied!
- Financial Management
 - HQ consolidated bank accounts held by Regions and also by SIGs in the summer
 - A more robust budget process was launched for Regions which has been a learning experience for all. The value of any deficit contribution from HQ now needs to be negotiated each year.

■ Financial Overview

- We aim to run most of our events either free or income-cost neutral. We try to get as many venues as possible free or nominal charge.
- The main exception is the annual London Region Members Print Exhibition, where the Region pays for the gallery hire and participants pay the costs of printing and mounting.
- Other exceptions are: -
 - Annual Project Exhibition:- the Region pays a proportion of the gallery hire and participants pay for the rest
 - Advisory Days: - In person are cost neutral; online make a surplus towards other distinctions related events in London
 - Local Meetings: - if there is a hire charge, we ask for a contribution of £2.00 per person towards the hire costs over the year.
- RPS London-CafeArt Photography Mentoring Group is extracurricular to normal Region activities and is funded by donations.
- As a result of this approach, the deficit (funded from HQ) is around £2k to £2.5k per year.

■ Summary

- In 2024 we stopped using the “Hybrid” model for our meetings; four (SE London, North London, SW London and Bookworms) were in-person. Only one (London Zoom) continued on Zoom only
- Online Study Group has continued to be popular and successful.
- Photo-walks are extremely popular: groups are normally fully booked
- We only had one Distinctions Advisory Day for LRPS & ARPS at the start of the year.
- The RPS London-CafeArt Photography Mentoring Group continues as in-person fieldtrips followed by online feedback
- London Region Membership has increased from 1,065 to 1,171 over the year.
- The volunteer team has not only remained stable but has gained two new members.
- RPS HQ, other Regions and SIGS have continued their programme of talks with high profile photographers and a particularly strong series of talks and events relating to the distinctions programme. **We endeavour to complement these, not compete with them!**
- **During the year, Vincenzo took over our Instagram account which has greatly increased our views and we have paid for some promotions.**

- **RO's Report – and finally**

- The Region is run entirely by volunteers with support from a small staff at HQ.
- This year has been particularly difficult for both volunteers and HQ staff due to the continuing major problems with implementation of HQ's new CRM system – particularly the Blackthorn events sub-system.
- This led to difficulties in finding, booking and paying for events. London Region, in line with others, developed work arounds and continues to use Eventbrite for bookings until the new sub-systems is running smoothly.
- Our aims as Regional Organisers are to:
 - to support the strategic aims of the RPS in bringing photography to a wide audience. We do this through running 'open' groups and activities, through our projects and exhibitions.
 - To engage with the London Region Membership and welcome non-Members
 - Most importantly, to help you enjoy and improve your photography (if you wish!) in the company of like-minded individuals
 - And to have fun!

We hope that amongst our varied programme there is and has been something for everyone during the year.

- **And now for your questions**
 1. Vote to accept RO's Report
 2. Proposer / Seconder
 3. Vote (For / Against / Abstain)