Another year has seemed to fly-past and I am indebted to the committee and all the other volunteers for their help and support during the year. The committee have put in a lot of hard work behind the scenes to ensure we are able to hold the events that we do and to make sure that they run smoothly. But I will be returning to the committee and other volunteers under item 12 on the agenda so will not dwell longer here.

This year three key contributors have decided to step-down - Joy Medley who has meticulously managed our finances as treasurer resigned from this role at the end of 2019, but is still be prepared to stay on the committee without portfolio. Our newsletter editor Vivien Howse has also stood down during the year although she is still continuing to facilitate the West Cornwall Group. Vivien also recruited a very able replacement in Julia Hobday who I am very happy to welcome aboard. Rod Fry was forced to resign from his many responsibilities within the RPS due to ill health and Adrian Hough has taken over his role as organiser for the Contemporary Group in the region. So special thanks are due for all their hard work in these roles over the years and also to those members who have stepped up to take on the future responsibilities.

Before moving on I would like to mention Di Wilkins who for personal reasons will not be able to carry on organising the Visual Arts Group after the current year 2020, so please if there is anyone willing to consider this role please let Di know, as it is always better to be able to shadow the role before taking over.

I would also like to thank Graham Hodgson and Carol Ballenger for getting the new year off to a good start with their annual “Blow away the Cobwebs” event.

I thank everyone who has contributed their efforts over the year to aid in the success of the region.

How well did the year go: membership of the region was 502 at the last AGM and now stands at 499. The region has run 2 Distinctions Advisory Days, 5 Lectures and 4 Field Trips during 2019 not including those events organised by the VA Group and the Contemporary Group. Overall attendance at events has been disappointing and we have struggled financially to break-even with nearly all the lectures. However, we made a profit on the Guy Edwardes day which was close to selling out, the profits coming from the 50% attendance by non-members. While the field trip to Somerset Speedway was sold out within a day of going live. Rob and Lisa and their staff at the Dolphin merit mention as they have continued to provide us with a friendly and convivial venue for our events. In the wider RPS, HQ has successfully moved from Bath to the Paintworks in Bristol. For anyone wishing to see the new building our field trip to Bristol is now live on the website. Our volunteer support to the region has changed again during the year and the post is now filled very ably by Kate Constance who it is hoped will be able to join us at the AGM. The new website has gone live during the year and as may be expected there are some early teething problems that are being addressed. Looking forward, we have a number of workshops and field trips which are already on the website and there are a few more plus guest speakers still in the pipeline. Our biennial South West Region Photographic Exhibition is on-going at Torre Abbey and if you have not gone yet, is well worth a visit – normal Torre Abbey entrance charges apply.

In signing off I would say the region is all about its members so it is up to you to influence the committee as to what type of event or speaker you would like to see – so please speak to any of us with your ideas.