

## The Annual General Meeting of the RPS Contemporary Special Interest Group

23rd March 2026  
19:00

1. Welcome and apologies - 22 members present, apologies received from Donata Rogozik, Burak Oğuz and Neil Goodwin.
2. Minutes of 2025 AGM - previously posted online, on the Contemporary SIG website. Acceptance proposed by Sean Goodhart, seconded by Alan Cameron
3. Matters arising - none noted.
4. Officers ' reports - reports from the local groups operating in South West, Central, East Anglia, North, North West and Scotland were all lodged in the Contemporary OneDrive, and will be published on the website. Spoken reports were given by Tom Owens (Chair), Sean Goodhart (Web), Alan Cameron (Finance), and Nigel Corby (Postal Portfolio). Approval of the accounts for 2025 were proposed by Sean Goodhart, and seconded by Steven Whittaker.
5. Elections - Polls were held online
  - Group Secretary (ratify Steven Whittaker ARPS, coopted 2026) - 20 in favour, 1 abstention.
  - Group Engagement & Events Officer (ratify Donata Rogozik, coopted 2025) - 21 in favour.
  - Group Chair - Sean Goodhart was the only applicant - 20 in favour, 1 abstention.
6. Deputy for Group Finance Officer - Alan's intention is to stand down next year, so the Committee were looking for a volunteer to step up to shadow for this year, and subsequently take over from next year. Adrian Hough put himself forward from the floor.
7. 2026/27 Subscription - no change recommended.

8. Q&A - Nick Linnett asked if Sean was continuing as webmaster, as well as Chair. Sean replied that as the current RPS web / events system was so archaic and disconnected he would be loathe to dump that job on someone new, but that it was anticipated/hoped that the RPS may be considering a new web/sales platform partner, and if that were to pass then that would be an ideal time to pass on to someone new. In the meantime Sean will continue in both roles, but will be glad to get help as required.
9. AOCB - tributes were paid to Tom, in this his last meeting as Contemporary Chair, and also one of his last RPS meetings, as sadly he intends not renewing his membership. It was particularly noted that Tom's direct and focussed leadership will be missed, as he selflessly and professionally negotiated the changes and challenges that exist within the RPS central organisation on behalf of the Contemporary SIG. Sean concluded the meeting by looking forward to his time as Chair, and asked everyone to feedback on what they may want us to do better, or even just do.
10. AGM 2027 - 10th March, by zoom.

Meeting concluded at 19:30

## Chair Contemporary Group AGM report 2026

This is my last report as Chair of the SIG. I am standing down at this AGM after three years in post.

Those three years have seen huge changes in the organisation resulting in a massive throughput of staff including working with two CEOs in the period.

This year began with the knowledge that the CEO had handed in his notice and there was a very professional body of work that both I and Sean Goodhart had worked on defining user requirements for Events & Ticketing that was being pushed for sign-off. Other Chairs and Secretaries had also contributed to this document. The response from HQ was woeful and I would not sign off on the paltry offering of improvements offered by HQ, preferring to wait for the new CEO to take it on board. Sadly, that has not happened either and the document and due dates has been pushed very much to the right, but the user stories it would seem have been used for requests to tender for a replacement website.

On a positive note, our membership exceeded 400 in February, and our Contemporary Photography journal goes from strength to strength under the editorship of Paul Ashley. Portfolio boxes have also had a re-energised re-birth under Nigel Corby's guidance. We also said goodbye to Christine Pinnington, layout editor and said hello to Rolf Kraehenbuehl and Burak Oguz to replace her.

Regional activity groups have continued to do their own thing and mostly that is a good thing, but unfortunately before Christmas, the CEO had to step in and advise me that Dr Datta was still attending Contemporary North meetings despite having been banned for life from the RPS, reduced on appeal to 5 years before even the previous Chair took up the role. It grieves me that despite my requests several times that the inclusion of non-RPS people in events was not permitted, it was ignored. In this case, it turns out that the 5-year clock had not started as he had not acknowledged the reduction in his sentence. I had no idea he had been expelled but I should not have had to hear this way. Going forward I think it is only right that when the baton hands to a new Chair, any such matters like this are disclosed.

A result of the inclusion of work by Dr Datta in a book created by members was the banning of it from promotion because of this flagrant breach of the rules.

We said goodbye to two sterling committee members during the year, Mike Kitson Events Secretary and Tim Hancock Group Secretary, who were replaced by Donata Rogozik and Steve Whittaker. I am very grateful for them stepping up, and the very varied and exciting raft of speakers they have already delivered and have lined up for you.

I am also standing down at this AGM.

In my time as Chair, and of East Anglia Activity Organiser, roles I never volunteered for but was asked to take on by previous Chairs, I have believed in

serving the members of the SIG to the best of my abilities. Abilities and skills learned from many years managing change in Public and Private organisations. As with all things managerial, nothing is new and many re-brandings take place. The concept of **Servant Leadership** is one of those brandings or collating of skills that I tried to bring to managing this SIG and to representing members interests at MemCom.

These are the attributes required for Servant Leadership:

**Person of Character:** Acts with integrity, humility, and ethics, prioritising doing the right thing over personal gain.

**Puts People First:** Shows genuine care, supports growth, and prioritizes the needs of others.

**Skilled Communicator:** Listens earnestly, demonstrates empathy, and communicates with clarity and purpose.

**Compassionate Collaborator:** Builds strong, inclusive relationships, fosters teamwork, and manages conflict constructively.

**Foresight:** Anticipates future possibilities and potential outcomes, using past experiences to guide current decisions.

**Systems Thinker:** Understands the "big picture" balancing operational details with strategic, long-term goals.

**Lead with Moral Authority:** Sets a positive, ethical example, leading through influence and shared power rather than coercion.

Only you, the members can decide how well I performed these requirements.

My reasons for stepping down are primarily due to the disclosure of sensitive information about proposed changes to the Distinctions framework. This Damascene moment happened over the late summer Bank Holiday weekend after very strong requests from a few members of MemCom who were privy to earlier disclosure to release these documents. My reaction to the content was and still is visceral. The content of the documents was security labelled, and I am not permitted to let you know what the proposals were, but they had been in gestation for at least 8 months and I would suggest longer.

The embargo is strange. We are a member-based charity, but I do not know what came first, the charitable status or the membership, and I pointed out the posit that I could have a member of my committee involved and they would not be disclosed nor would they be permitted to have any discourse with me on the content either. Well, it turns out that there is indeed another member of the Contemporary SIG involved with the inner circle. This became evident in a forwarded email.

In my opinion, there is likely to be a drastic impact upon this SIG if the very advanced proposals see the light of day. My main reason for departing both the SIG and the RPS when I let my membership lapse is the lack of consultation with me as Chair when these proposals were first posited. Change management should involve full stakeholder engagement even with potential victims as early as possible in the process. It is my belief that consultation should have taken place very early on. It may have taken place but as far as I know, no one person other than the discovered member was consulted.

Despite my concerns and my decision to leave that has been made clear to the committee since August last, you will be in very capable hands by endorsing Sean Goodhart as your new Chair. Sean does a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes that few people are aware of so I would ask you all to support him as he steers this group through the very choppy waters that lay ahead.

Thank you all for endorsing me as your Chair for the last three years. The existence of the Contemporary SIG was the only reason I joined the RPS in 2013.

Tom Owens ARPS  
March 2026



## Financial Report, 2025

For: AGM on 23rd March 2026 convened via video conference.

### Introduction

This report covers the calendar (financial) year 2025. With the move out of Fenton House and the rapid turnover of staff, things in Headquarters have been fluid, but the Finance section continues to provide good service.

Individual bank accounts for Regions and Special Interest Groups have been merged with the number of accounts to be managed being reduced to 10 from as many as 40. This means that our net worth is now notional.

Below are the accounts prepared on a cash basis in the format required by HQ.

### Accounts for the year to 31st December 2025

|                          | <b>2025</b>   | <b>2024</b>   |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                          | TOTAL         | TOTAL         |
| <b>INCOME</b>            |               |               |
| Group Subs               | £9,293        | £7,441        |
| Other Income             | £12           | £61           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>      | <b>£9,305</b> | <b>£7,502</b> |
| <b>EXPENDITURE</b>       |               |               |
| Speakers fees & expenses | £60           | £350          |
| Newsletter production    | £2,655        | £2,512        |
| Postage                  | £2,583        | £2,406        |
| IT & Website             | £437          | £413          |
| Other Costs              | £0            | £500          |
| Management Fees          | £1,169        | £579          |
| <b>TOTAL COSTS</b>       | <b>£6,905</b> | <b>£6,760</b> |
| <b>NET INCOME/COSTS</b>  | <b>£2,400</b> | <b>£742</b>   |

### Balance sheet at 31st December 2025

|   |                   |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Opening Bank Balance                          | £11,396.72        | £10,654.77        |
| Plus Surplus for the year                     | £2,400.41         | £741.95           |
| <b>Notional Balance at 31st December 2025</b> | <b>£13,797.13</b> | <b>£11,396.72</b> |
| <b>Net worth of Group</b>                     | <b>£13,797.13</b> | <b>£11,396.72</b> |

## **Commentary on 2025 Financial Position**

I have created the accounts for 2025 on a cash basis as shown above with the previous year's accounts included for comparison. The item "Other Costs" from 2024 was a donation to the Eamonn McCabe Bursary fund.

The decision was taken by the committee to reduce the number of issues of Contemporary Photography from three to two but with increased pagination ensuring that we include the work of the same number of photographers as we had with four issues. Even with these measures cost of printing and postage have risen by 6.5%. At present these costs remain sustainable.

Management fees charged by HQ to the Group continue and, at the time of writing in February, we have yet to be informed of the rate for 2026. These are on a per capita basis based on membership of the group in December of the previous year. Numbers are slightly down this year from 375 to 365, though I believe that the number in February is 402. In summary I expect Management Fees to stay at around the same level as for 2025.

### **Prospects for 2026**

The financial position of the RPS continues as a cause for concern, but the sale of Fenton House may provide more free cash to run the Society. The loss on the exercise has, however, contributed to some turmoil and services are suffering as staff have left.

In budgeting for 2026 I assumed total fees of approximately £10,000 based on all members paying £25 in the year, and if we have no further expenditure we will have another surplus. The committee is actively seeking ways to engage with more photographers and this will give rise to more costs for, amongst other things, speakers to the group. We have sufficient funds that we could run another event such as "The Fens at Risk" that we held three years ago.

With our current financial position and forecast expenditure, I consider that we should maintain annual subscriptions at £25 from 1st January 2026 in order to maintain our reserves.



Dr Alan R Cameron PhD, ARPS

**Finance Officer RPS Contemporary Special Interest Group**

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

## Events Secretary report AGM 2026

### Talk Programme (April 2025 – March 2026)

Between April 2025 and March 2026, the Event Coordinator organised a programme of eight talks. One talk was cancelled and one postponed.

#### Speakers:

- Lee-Ann Olwage
- Hamish Gill — postponed
- Matthew Gammon FRPS — cancelled
- Dewi Lewis (Dewi Lewis Publishing)
- JJ Jordan
- Catherine Grivas
- Anastasia Potekhina FRPS
- Helen Rowlands

The talks are promoted through a range of communication channels, including the group website, email mailers, and social media platforms. Two mailers are issued for each event: the first approximately three to four weeks prior to the talk, and a reminder two days before the event.

The Event Coordinator works closely with the RPS Contemporary Group webmaster, the social media coordinator, and the RPS Volunteering Team to ensure effective promotion of the programme.

Registration for individual talks ranges from 50 to 150 participants, with an average attendance of 51 attendees.

Donata Rogozik

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The Royal Photographic Society

Contemporary Group Engagement & Events Officer

## Group Communications Officer/Webmaster report for AGM 2026

In the year since the last AGM (and the time of writing this brief update) I've created 59 group wide and local group events in the Salesforce/Blackthorn system. Anyone can find Contemporary Group events via this link <https://events.rps.org/en/?search=Contemporary%20Group>; we also keep the current events summarised on our homepage <https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/>

Some attending the AGM may remember that last year, together with other SIG and Region team members, we have developed a requirements document intended for use by the HQ team to drive improvements for users of the Salesforce/Blackthorn system – both “insiders”, the general membership and public browsing. It has been very disappointing, almost radio silence, from the HQ team – apparently they are executing improvements based on some of the feedback, but the expected dialog and collaboration with developers has not happened. It does feel that the basics are now more reliable – when I create events now they at least publish correctly and take bookings – that was hit and miss in previous years.

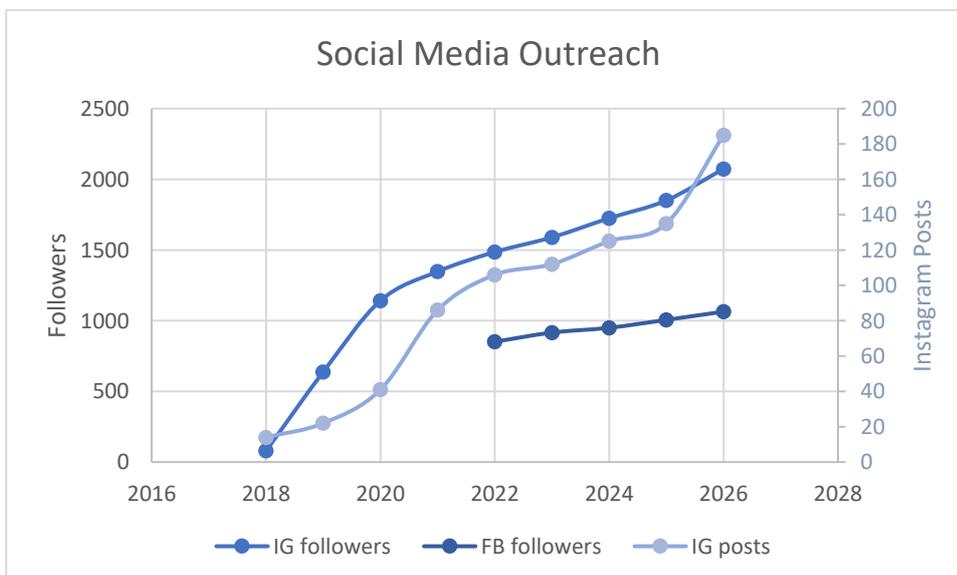
Our site continues to grow as a useful hub of information on contemporary photographers:

- We have the library of recordings of the “in conversation” events <https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/contemporary-youtube/>,
- The archive of our e-news “Concept” <https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/e-news-archive/>,
- The group journal “Contemporary Photography” <https://rps.org/groups/contemporary/journal-archive/>.
- The *Contemporary Special Interest Groups Around the UK* section is growing well – thanks to the regional organisers and their teams producing interesting output as Zines which are easy to link to the website.

### Social Media

It is very pleasing to report that Burak Oğuz joined the committee this year to help with social media outreach, he can be contacted via [contemporarymedia@rps.org](mailto:contemporarymedia@rps.org). Burak is not only helping with the Instagram and Facebook pages, he's picked up the work on the layout of the Concept newsletter.

Instagram and Facebook are the channels we're using, engagement on these channels far exceeds our actual RPS membership. The “takeovers” that Burak has organized with Carol Olerud, Rolf Kraehenbuehl, Anastasia Potekhina, Mark Tamer and Karolina Maria Dudek have significantly improved the “interestingness” of our Instagram feed.



<https://www.instagram.com/rpscontemporary/> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RPSContemporary>

## **RPS Central Contemporary / Documentary Group**

### **March 2026**

Thanks to the posting of our online meeting details on the Contemporary Group's events listings, we've picked up several new members. Some have only attended once, but a few have stayed, buoying our regular numbers. A 'normal' meeting consists of about 12 or so attendees, with between 4 and 6 members sharing a current or past project: some asking for advice, some simply showcasing work people are proud of, and others posing photographic or philosophical questions for the group. There's always something to make us think.

We are in the middle of our second Chain Photo Challenge, where members send in an image and then receive another, anonymous, image in return. Each time, we've had about three months to respond to this image in any way we choose. The results are then shared across a couple of our regular monthly online meetings, with the participants explaining their thinking as well as revealing the images they have taken. Results have included single images, photographic experiments, full blown projects, and 'musings'. It's always a delight when the original photographer is present at the reveal, to both explain their own image, as well as comment on what they've just seen and heard.

These have been our most successful and enjoyable group projects to date, with at least a dozen photographers taking part each time. Before this one is over, members are already asking for a third to be scheduled.

## Southwest Contemporary Group Report 2025

Contemporary Photography is unconstrained by subject matter but, in simple terms, has to be photography **about** something rather than photography of something. It's a question of what the photograph is about rather than what it is of and this may not be apparent merely by looking at the image.

I've included this short reminder because it has been very important when looking at the various images that we have shared at our meetings, whether they have been books, prints (both inkjet and darkroom), projected images or 'zines'. These images have included: Modern-day relics of 1939-45; Imitations of the work of famous artists; The nature of spaces; Glass; Intertidal spaces; the coordination of mind and body with rhythms; Landlines; Dismantling of cardboard boxes; Derelict buildings, both outside and inside; Tessellations; Natural features and recent artifacts which can be said to speak; An exploration of Art, Photography, Galleries and the observer in a series of three books; Landscapes both colour and monochrome; Skulls; An Asian family in the West Midlands; Who is a Stranger; A Recreation of The Grand Tour; Street Photography; Messing around with other people's photographs; An unsuccessful Fellowship submission of Statues in a Garden... and more.

We met three times, all in person, and the numbers attending varied between eight and eleven which makes the wide range of material and subject matter quite remarkable. Criticism is always intended to be constructive and we have only a minimal interest in the equipment that was used, limited mainly to whether it was analogue or digital and the format.

This might give the impression that we use lots of long and pretentious words to philosophize, but reality suggests the opposite. The images are the important part and whilst words are often essential, unless they can be understood by everyone without difficulty then they are pointless. Humour also plays a significant part in the meetings, and it is traditional to finish with one or two presentations which combine a light-hearted approach with asking wider questions about some aspect of photography.

Finally, this report has to include a record of the death of Martin Howes ARPS a long-time member of the Contemporary Group and a former Convenor of Contemporary Southwest and Chair of the Southwest Region. His modestly presented darkroom monochrome prints from medium format negatives were both superb in quality (both content and printing) and an inspiration to us all.

Adrian Hough ARPS

## **Contemporary North**

We continue to meet monthly, alternating between Zoom and In person. Our meetings fluctuate between 15 and 25 members. (Summer break July and August)

Last year was a good year for us what with several new members joining.

Something that has resulted from North is that friendships have formed outside the scheduled Activity meetings. Members have got together to meet for a day out which always includes lunch and taking photos. These can then be shared at our meetings. A gratifying result.

In 2026 we have embarked on another book project after the very successful *Water* book. Members have the year to produce a panel on the theme *Impermanence*. Also, members voted to have a meeting devoted to street photography. To help us think “street” we are organising a day out in Sheffield.

Finally, I’m very pleased to say a big thank you to those members who are always ready to help me; I couldn’t make North the success that it is without them. Huge thanks to Lyn Newton who prepares our Newsletter *Showcase* every month.

Patricia A Ruddle ARPS

## **East Anglia Contemporary Group AGM report 2025-2026**

**The EACG has carried on much as before with monthly meetings held using Zoom on the first Thursday of each month.**

**Our meetings are open to any member of the RPS to attend and we do not charge fees or incur expenses.**

**The group is a small one that works to interpreting themes and creating a Zine about twice per year and these are all uploaded and viewable on the RPS Contemporary microsite.**

**All Zines are produced as PDF documents and also as booklet format on ISSUU.**

**After 11 years of running this group, I am standing down at this AGM.**

**My reasons for stepping down are primarily the same as for stepping down as Chair of the SIG and my decision not to renew my membership in May 2026. Owing to the fact that as Chair, I have access to embargoed information that I am not allowed to discuss with anyone, I am not at liberty to disclose the real reasons for my departure.**

**It is time for a younger member to take over the reins, and I hope someone will step up to the challenge.**

**It has been a challenge stimulating a gaggle of photographers to produce 'thinking photography' but on the whole, the outcomes have been worth it.**

**Tom Owens ARPS  
March 2026**

## Contemporary NW

### Report for 2025

This year we have had five meetings in person and Zoom meetings between these. Between four and twelve members attended each session.

#### Meetings

##### Print discussion meeting - January

Only four members attended our meeting in Samlesbury - somewhat disappointing and for 2026 we moved to Preston and 12 people attended. At that meeting we decided to move all our face-to-face meetings to places on the railway network, A policy that seems to have worked well.

##### Manchester - March

Nine members attended our walk around north central Manchester taking the opportunity to enjoy some street photography, see the Daily Express Building and visit Anita Street - originally Sanitary Street, being the first street in the city to have toilets included with each house. The meeting included a lively lunch at the food court in the old Meat Market and a walk through the streets nearby.

##### Halifax May

We spread this over two days so that seven members could meet, enjoying the Piece Hall and the streets of the town. On the second visit we were able to get access to the Town Hall and enjoy the magnificent Victorian architecture.

Halifax is a fascinating town with lots to see. Of course the Piece Hall is probably the best known, but other highlights include the Market Hall, Halifax Minster and the Town Hall.

We were hoping for the wide view of the courtyard at the Piece Hall only to find that it had become a building site for the temporary staging for the Halifax Summer Festival.

##### Rochdale 18th September

Ken Rowlatt LRPS kindly organised access for us the main areas of the newly refurbished Town Hall. Six members attended and we spent an excellent morning inside the hall followed by a fine lunch in the café.

##### Bradford 7th November

Though Bradford is out of the region, we felt that we should make an effort to visit the UK City of Culture 2025 as it is accessible by train.

Again six members turned up and this time we welcomed two new members to our group, meeting for coffee and cakes before visiting Impressions gallery



with its excellent exhibitions highlighting the multicultural nature of the city. We followed on with street photography including visits to Waterstones in the old Wool Exchange and the area round the theatres.

### **Zines**

I have created zines for all the meeting held this year. They are all available on Issu. Thank you to our members for contributing images. Details are as follows:

Manchester in March [https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2025/november/cnw\\_man\\_march/](https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2025/november/cnw_man_march/)

Halifax in May [https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2025/december/cnw\\_hal\\_may/](https://rps.org/news/groups/contemporary/2025/december/cnw_hal_may/)

Links from our website and pdfs are to follow, but direct ISSU links for Rochdale and Bradford are here:

Rochdale September [https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/contemporary\\_nw\\_rochdale\\_2025](https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/contemporary_nw_rochdale_2025)

Bradford in November [https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/contemporary\\_nw\\_bradford\\_2025](https://issuu.com/royalphotographicsociety/docs/contemporary_nw_bradford_2025)

We aim to continue the process of meetings in person and on line for 2026.

Alan Cameron ARPS  
Regional Organiser  
[contemporarynw@rps.org](mailto:contemporarynw@rps.org)



## RPS Contemporary / Documentary - Scotland 2025

The small but active group up here in Scotland continues to have their regular contact, and gentle growth. The email list is currently to 17 members, and we have another 11 RPS guests who have opted on to the list, and the hope is that some of those will be encouraged to join either Contemporary, or Documentary...and that has been the case so far.

The numbers attending events is encouragingly decent, whether that be in person or online. In 2025 we had Days Oot in Edinburgh (May and August), Glasgow (June), Aberdeen (August), Stirling (September), and Dundee (December) and each day we produced an e-zine to showcase the diversity of vision of our members present.

We had online nights in January, February, October, November and December and they were a mix of Labhairt Beag, Book Club, and talks (external and member-led). These nights are especially attractive due to the geographical spread of members in Scotland, but have also been regularly attended by other RPS members across the UK and abroad too.

Looking forward we seem to be settling on monthly meetings, with the winter ones being online, and the rest of the year having Days Oot to coincide with exhibitions or photographic events and spread as evenly about Scotland as we can so that everyone has at least one event close-ish to them.

Steven Whittaker ARPS

## **RPS Contemporary Postal Portfolio – for 2026 AGM**

The Contemporary Postal Portfolio provides opportunities for members of the Contemporary SIG to view and comment on prints and books made by members and to receive feedback on their own work. We currently have 16 members and two circuits of boxes – one circuit has five boxes in circulation and the other has four boxes. The original circuit has been in existence for over 20 years.

Members find it a stimulating and encouraging means of sharing their photography with others and enjoy seeing and handling work in the form of prints. When a box arrives through the post they add a piece of their own work, be it a single print or a series of prints or even perhaps a book. They can also view the work of other members, read the comments which have been made and add their own comments. The suggested turnaround time for boxes is two to three weeks. Once a member has finished with a box, it is sent to the next person on the circuit.

In addition to the circuits, we have meetings over Zoom at four to six week intervals for those members able to attend. We show and discuss work and other topics members want to raise. Every third meeting is given over to discussion of a published photography book chosen by a member.

The Postal Portfolio would welcome new members. Anyone interested in joining or wanting further information, should contact the Coordinator, Nigel Corby, at [contemporarypostal@rps.org](mailto:contemporarypostal@rps.org)

*Nigel Corby*

*Coordinator, Contemporary Postal Portfolio*