

ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY SOUTH WEST REGION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY 23th FEBRUARY 2020

10.30am Dolphin Hotel, Bovey Tracey

Committee Present: Tim Sanders, Margaret Hocking, Martin Howse, John Page, John Widdows, Sylvia Wilson

Attendees: Carol Ballenger, Greg Bos, Kate Constance, Janet Downes, John Downes, Hans Gebauer, Mary Gebauer, Graham Hodgson, Vivien Howse, Andrew Parslow Suzanne Parsons, Lynda Piper, Pam Stirling, George Webb, Michael Woodhead, Diana Wynn.

1. Apologies: Mike Brown, Rachel Brown, Rod Fry, Marcia Fry, Julia Hobday, Adrian Hough, Margaret Martin, Joy Medley, Mick Medley, Muriel Somerfield, Anna Stevenson, Di Wilkins.

2. Minutes of 2019 RPS SW Region AGM – The minutes were posted online (SW Region website) and accepted / signed. (Proposed by Vivien Howse & Seconded by Graham Hodgson)

3. Matters Arising from 2019 Minutes – None.

4. South West Region - Regional Organiser's Report - Tim Sanders

This year three contributors have stepped down from various responsibilities:- Joy Medley as Treasurer, although she will continue to serve on the committee; Vivien Howse as Newsletter editor who will be replaced by Julia Hobday; Rod Fry as organiser of the Contemporary & Conceptual Group who will be replaced by Andrew Hough; and Di Wilkins as organiser of the Visual Art group, so we are looking for a new VA organiser. Tim thanked them for all their hard work over the years and also those stepping in to replace them. The SW Regional events in 2019 were varied and successful although attendance at some were disappointing. The RPS Volunteer support at HQ has changed and is now Kate Constance. The SW Region Members' Biennial Exhibition is currently at Torre Abbey Museum and Gallery (11th January until 23rd March).

(See Appendix 1 for detailed RO Report)

5. South West Region - Treasurer's Report 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2019 – Joy Medley

Current balance is £5374.59, an increase of ~ £1000 more than last year. We had no capital spend just the normal travel expenses for committee, speakers' fees and any accommodation, plus Dainton Storage for any equipment. Head Office contribution to the SW Region was ~£5 less this year. We reclaim VAT where possible (e.g. mileage with petrol receipt, & any cancellation of booking within 2 weeks of event). Costs for treasurer have declined due to online banking due to online bookings but we will always welcome people paying at the door. Joy informed us that she will be handing over to Sylvia after 10 years in the role as treasurer.

(See Appendix 2 for detailed Treasurer's Report)

6. South West Region - Webmaster's Report – Mick Medley

The new RPS website went live in November 2019. Many members as well as Mick found many aspects such as layout, navigation and searching difficult. Fortunately Mick linked up with the German Chapter Organiser (Chris Renk) and thanks to his help Mick is now more familiar with the new website.

(See Appendix 3 for detailed Webmaster's Report)

7. South West Region - Distinction Advisory Days Reports – Martin Howse & Sylvia Wilson

The region had two successful Distinction Advisory days, the first in April with 15 members bringing panels and the second in November with 19 panels.

(See Appendix 4 for detailed Advisory Days reports)

8. SW Region Biennial Members' Exhibition – John Widdows

The current situation with the Biennial Exhibition was summarised. Previously the SW region Exhibition was held at the RD&E Hospital in Exeter but their Healthcare Arts Organiser retired and was not replaced, so we had to search for another venue willing and able to host our exhibition for 2-3 months. Torre Abbey Museum and Gallery was very positive about hosting our biennial exhibition in Jan-Mar 2020. The prints are now framed and mounted and on display at Torre Abbey.

(See Appendix 5 for detailed report)

9. SW Region Special Interest Group Reports

9a. Contemporary & Conceptual Group – Adrian Hough

Adrian took over from Rod Fry about 18 months earlier than expected in May 2019 due to Rod's bout of ill-health. The group of about 10 members meet three times a year and spend a day sharing and reviewing their varied and distinctive work.

9b. Visual Art Group –

This year there were four meetings:- a) 2 member's days where members presented and discussed their prints and b) 2 days when speakers from outside the region presented their work.

9c. West Cornwall Group – Vivien Howse

The group living in the far west of the region meet bi-monthly near Redruth. Members look at their own work and discuss the work of other photographers. There is a mindfulness workshop arranged in April with the landscape photographer Paul Sanders and another exhibition of the group's work planned for 2021.

9d. Travelling Portfolios – Margaret Hocking

Three postal portfolios (two General & one Mono) are in circulation with 7 to 9 members in each. Members' images are sent round and folio members then critique / comment on them in a friendly way.

(see Appendix 6 for detailed reports for Special Interest Groups)

10 & 11. Election of Regional Organiser, Deputy Regional Organiser and Committee

These elections were all rolled into one and those standing for re-election were all duly elected. Joy Medley will be replaced by Sylvia Wilson as treasurer and Maggie Martin was elected as a new committee member. Rod Fry has stepped down from the SW Region committee after supporting the region for many years. His hard work over the years was very much appreciated by all members. (Proposed: Michael Woodhead; Seconded: Pam Stirling)

12. Volunteering Update

Kate Constance from RPS HQ was visiting the SW Region AGM in her role as the new Volunteer representative. Tim emphasised that the RPS Regions and the Special Interest Groups are run by volunteers providing essential work in order for them to function.

Tim emphasised the length of voluntary service of members of the committee by providing a humorous listing of some of the major events of the year when they were first elected on to the committee (John Page in 1982; Mick Medley in 1996; Joy Medley & Martin Howse in 1997; Margaret Hocking in 2008; John Widdows in 2009; Sylvia Wilson in 2011; Vivien Howse as Newsletter editor in 2014).

13. Items for Discussion with the Committee

a. Rod Fry suggested that the SW Region should invite a speaker from the Historical Society to provide a different approach and perspective. John Page also recommended that we invite a speaker from the RPS and / or the Bruton Gallery. There was a show of hands indicating that the majority were in agreement.

b. Pam Stirling highlighted that Don McCullin has an exhibition of his photographs at the Bruton Gallery until the end of March.

c. Margaret Hocking raised the topic of the new RPS Website saying that she found it difficult to use. Many other members were in agreement.

15. Date of Next Year's AGM – 21st February 2021

Meeting Closed at 11.15

Appendix 1. South West Regional Organiser's Report (Tim Sanders)

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.

Appendix 2. South West Region AGM Treasurer's report for 2019 AGM (Joy Medley)

Financial period was from 1st January – 31st December 2019. Our current balance for the region is £5374.59, an increase of about £1000 over the same time last year. We have had no capital spend this year, just the normal travel expenses for committee members, speakers' fees and accommodation in some cases, plus the Dainton Storage costs for storing our equipment. We have only paid for one Newsletter this year instead of the usual two, so perhaps Bristol have got a bit behind and we may get 3 in 2020. Our Head Office contribution was just under £5 less than last year, but we did have some events which gave us a decent return, against some that cost us money. We keep the spreadsheet detailing all income and expenditure, and reclaim VAT where possible, therefore claiming mileage with petrol receipts does help with a small return on VAT. We have also not returned the full ticket amount if somebody cancels attending an event within a couple of weeks of the event, which currently is a £5 admin fee. Costs for the treasurer have significantly reduced this year, also helped by online bookings, as it means no travel costs are incurred going to the bank, now that cash and cheques can be paid in at the Post Office which is very close. May I just reiterate that booking online is much simpler for us, incurs less cost and saves having to collect cash on the door or bank cheques for those who did book early enough. We will always welcome people who pay at the door but would prefer online payment as it means we know how many are coming instead of cancelling an event due to lack of numbers and finding 10 people were going to pay at the door. Finally, I am giving up the treasurer position, in fact it was handed over at the end of December in order for the new treasurer to start the year in January 2020. I have held the position for around 10 years and now think the time has come to hand it over. I thank everyone for their help and support during this time and wish Sylvia the best of luck in the role.

Appendix 3. South West Region - Webmaster report (Mick Medley)

It has been quite a year for the website techies, of which I have now found out, I am not one. The old website carried on without any updating etc until the new version went live on the 26th November. This was after much work by Emily and Lowri, congratulations to them both, for continuing to help me, and hopefully some others, I don't think I was the only one, having problems, with training sessions. I admit to being totally bemused by the new incarnation, managing to achieve very little in the initial stages. Then a saviour, by the name of Chris Renk, who mentored me to get at least a start and to get some info onto our Regional site. Chris is the German Chapter Organiser who has untold patience and speaks excellent English. He did actually build up the initial items on our website, with me adding content as I was able. I am now pleased to say that I can now put on events to the site, fill in news pages, and generally update information, but I still have Chris in the background should I need help. The basics are now there, not as tidy as some of the Regions but in time I will look to make it more dynamic. Having been around the new site, and constantly trying to do things I have found my way around it reasonably well, but I understand from several people that they find it difficult to navigate, and the fear is that if you do not keep trying people will be put off and stop using it, which would be very sad after all the work to create it. As has been said, it needed to be "cleaner" and easier to navigate and I feel sure that with use it will become easier. I have to admit to nearly giving up on it at one time, but Chris keep me at it, never complaining at my never ending questions, and whilst not 100% comfortable yet, I am getting there. This coming year will become easier for webmasters and users and please do feed me with any information you feel may be useful to our wider Region. News pages have now replaced blogs so reports on events will appear as news, so please do send me images and comments if you have attended an event. I believe, but don't shoot the messenger, that in time there will be a manual for users of the website to help you all along. I apologise for not being able to be with you on AGM day, but I have a photographic day at RAF Bruntingthorpe with my son, his Christmas present but I could not let him go on his own to photograph 4 iconic jet aircraft over an afternoon and evening.

Appendix 4. SW Region Distinction Advisory Days (Martin Howse & Sylvia Wilson)

April Advisory Day (Martin Howse)

This event attracted 25 spectators with 15 people bringing panels. Originally we had 19 but 4 people cancelled. The split was, 11 Licentiate and 4 at Associateship level, 3 Fine Art and one not sure, possibly Contemporary and Conceptual.

Our advisors were Martin Addison FRPS, making a welcome return to our Region and Paul Mitchell FRPS, his first Advisory Day in our Region.

November 9th Advisory Day (Sylvia Wilson)

In the first instance the bookings for the November Advisory Day were very slow but speeded up in the summer with a flurry of spectator bookings in the last month.

In all there were 35 observers and 20 people booked to bring panels, 19 of whom actually attended. Sue Brown FRICS, Tony Worobiec FRICS, Ken Holland ARPS were the assessors, and were able to consider L and A panels. This was my first Advisory Day at the helm and a huge thank you to the team that supported me, especially Martin and Joy who kept me in check to ensure we were on the same page.

Appendix 5. Report on RPS South West Region Members' Biennial Exhibition

Previous RPS SW Region Members' Exhibitions have been held at RD&E hospital in Exeter. However following the retirement of Stephen Pettit-Smith of Exeter HealthCare Arts, his post was not replaced and they are no longer holding exhibitions. Therefore we had to find a replacement venue for our biennial exhibition. I visited Torre Abbey Museum and Gallery in February 2019 and viewed the proposed gallery and considered it an excellent venue. In addition I received a very positive response from Torre Abbey staff. We agreed suitable dates for the exhibition at the beginning of 2020. Information about the exhibition was sent out to members in spring 2019 via the SW Newsletter and the SW Region website with a final print collection date of 9th November. As the deadline approached I was concerned about the lack of response with several members saying 'what exhibition?' I then asked committee members and several photographic clubs to inform / remind RPS members about the exhibition. Thirty four members submitted prints providing a diverse range of images and a very high standard of photography. After selection and framing in December a small group of us had a very enjoyable day assisting Torre Abbey staff to sort and hang the prints in early January. I would encourage all members to visit the exhibition which started on 11th January and will run until the 22nd March 2020.

Appendix 6. Special Interest Groups

a South West Region - Contemporary Group Report (Adrian Hough ARPS)

The South-west Contemporary Group met three times during 2019 with a typical attendance of around ten members at each meeting. In the report for 2018 Rod Fry, the convenor of the Group, had indicated that he would be looking for a successor as Group Convenor and I had already mentioned to Rod that I would be prepared to consider taking this on when I retired from full-time employment, probably towards the end of 2020. However, due to Rod suffering a bout of ill-health, I took on the role of Convenor in May some eighteen months earlier than expected. Fortunately Rod's health has improved and he remains an active member of the Group.

At present, the Group is focussed largely on three meetings each year which are currently all held mid-way between Plymouth and Exeter. At every meeting we deal with any necessary business as quickly as possible and then spend the day sharing our work and enjoying an excellent lunch. Our particular skills and styles vary considerably and are all quite recognisable. Criticism is always gentle and constructive and despite attending my first meeting, a few years ago, with some trepidation, I have always felt welcome and valued.

Any members who don't currently attend the meetings but would like to give it a try, please get in touch and I will let you have the details.

b. South West Region - Visual Art Group Report

No full report available

c. South West Region - West Group (Vivien Howse ARPS)

This group meets bi-monthly at Heartlands near Pool, Redruth for those members who live in the far west of the region or who are visiting it.

This year has been another interesting year looking at our own work and discussing various other photographers and their ways of working. We have had several new members join us and a few others having to leave for various reasons but overall we maintain a steady and lively attendance.

We have a mindfulness day workshop arranged for April with renowned landscape photographer, Paul Sanders to be held in Sennen/Penwith. If anyone would like a place please contact me for details.

We hope to put on another exhibition of our work at Heartlands in 2021 with all our members participating. Further details of that to follow.

d. South West Region - Print folios (Margaret Hocking ARPS)

There continue to be three print folios in circulation in the region with 7 to 9 members in each. Two of them are general – in other words members can submit anything and the third is purely mono, but I would remind you that this can be digital *or* analogue. The images are sent round the relevant circle in a bag either by hand or by post. Folio members enjoy commenting on each other's prints and seeing the comments on their own work. These are a critique, not a judgement and although people make their views known it is always done in a friendly way. There is room for a few more members; if you are interested please contact me on bosrowynek@btinternet.com . Either I or any folio members present today will be able to answer any questions you may have.

Possible 2020 / 2021 Events suggested by Members

- 1 'Blow away the cobwebs' (Hayle) with Graham Hodgson & Carol Ballenger – Jan 2021
- 2 Vivien Howse requested more events / field trips in the far west of the region
- 3 Visit to Fairground museum near Launceston
- 4 Westcountry wildlife site

5 Golitha Falls near Liskeard

6 Kynance Cove

7 Topsham – Goat walk & RSPB reserve (Mick & Joy Medley)

8 Port Elliot estate & St Germans Church + Lynher River (Janet Downes)

Speakers suggested by John Page –

Mark Haworth-Booth – Past curator at V&A

Colin Ford – National Portrait Gallery & Bradford Science & Media museum

Brian Liddy – Bodleian Library, RPS, Bradford Science & Media museum