

Documentary Group
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held
14:00 on 7 April 2019 at “Hercules Pillars”

Apologies had been received from:

Vincenzo Albano	Simon Maddison
Charles Ashton	Valerie Mather
Keith Bamber	Valerie McManus
Gillian Birbeck	Gavril Morariu
Janey Devine	Patsy Southwell
Peter Dixon	Lionel Squire
Howard Fisher	John Stephenson
Edward Forster	Ian Tasker
Alan Graham	Jeanette Thomson
Harry Hall	Heather Wagstaff
Ray Hamilton	John Walker
Maggie Jary	Rosemary Wilman
Sam Johnson	Ian Wright
Philip Joyce	Sue Wright Uppington
John Kay	Michael Yeung
Rolf Kraehenbuehl	

In attendance were:

Mark Phillips - Chairman	Kathryn Alkins
Justin Cliffe -Treasurer	Alan Larson
David Barnes - Secretary	Natali Robinson
Dave Thorp – Decisive Moment Editor	Judy Hicks
Steven Powell – web manager	David Hicks
David Gleave	Mike Longhurst
Jean Jameson	Gordana Johnson
Chris Jepson	Hna Mu
Graham Land	Tianxing Bai
Dawn Clifford	Quentin Ball
	Bill Yates

1.	<p>Welcome and Minutes of the 2018 AGM</p> <p>The chairman asked if there were any apologies for absence other than those who had previously indicated such. There were none.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous AGM had been distributed with the meeting notice, were agreed without change by those present and signed by the Chairman.</p>
2.	<p>Report from the Chair</p> <p>The Chairman read his report. A copy of the text is appended to these minutes at page 4.</p> <p>Acceptance of the report was proposed by Graham Land, seconded by David Hicks and carried <i>nem con</i>.</p>
3.	<p>DG Finances</p> <p>Justin Cliffe presented his treasurers’ report which he had distributed at the meeting. A copy of the text is attached beginning at page 5.</p> <p>Acceptance of the above was proposed by David Hicks, seconded by Graham Land and carried <i>nem con</i>.</p>

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	In reply to the question as to why DG has the amount of cash shown Justin explained that it was needed to cover anticipated cost of DPotY which is planned to be exhibited in multiple locations and opened to non-RPS members in future years. The action agreed at the 2018 AGM to reduce our annual subscription to £10 was intended to reduce the level of funds held.
4.	<p>Membership</p> <p>The Secretary read a brief report on membership numbers. The report is attached at page 8.</p> <p>There was some discussion on how we might increase DG membership especially of younger people. The Chairman said that this has already been discussed by the committee and was the subject of ongoing work.</p>
5.	<p>Decisive Moment update</p> <p>Jhy Turley was thanked for his contribution in getting Decisive Moment up and running. Jhy had resigned from the committee to pursue his quest for the North Pole of Inaccessibility. David Thorp had taken on the role of editor and presented his report. The report can be found beginning at page 9.</p>
6.	<p>Election of the 2019/2020 Committee</p> <p>The Chairman thanked committee members for their support.</p> <p>The Secretary read out the only nomination that had been received which was for Harry Hall nominated by Peter Dixon seconded by Edward Forster. Bill Yates proposed and Graham Land seconded the acceptance of the nomination. That proposal was carried with a request that a role for Harry Hall be defined.</p> <p>There were no nominations for any of the committee roles.</p> <p>The Chairman said that members of 2018/2019 committee were prepared to continue. This was proposed and seconded from the floor and carried <i>nem con</i>.</p> <p>The Committee was elected as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mark Phillips – Chairman b) Justin Cliffe – Treasurer c) David Barnes – Secretary d) David Thorp – Decisive Moment e) Steven Powell – web site management
7.	<p>Election of representative to the Society’s Advisory Board</p> <p>Mark Philips was proposed for this role. The proposal was accepted by the meeting.</p>
8.	<p>Proposed revised definition of Documentary Photography</p> <p>The Chairman introduced a proposal to amend the definition of documentary within the group’s constitution. A draft of the proposal had been distributed with the meeting notice.</p> <p>The Chairman explained that he expected the distinction process to change in the near future and that the proposed definition would be more inline with the revised distinctions than our current definition.</p> <p>The wording of the proposal was discussed at length with proposals from the floor for modifications that simplified and clarified what had been distributed.</p> <p>The meeting agreed a revised definition which was read out by the Chairman. The revised definition showing revisions is attached at page 13.</p>

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9.	Any Other Business Concern was expressed at the possible negative impact on RPS Members of making a future DPotY open to non-RPS members. This concern was noted. The Committee will consider a “competition within a competition” exclusively for RPS Members.
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The formal meeting closed at 14:52 and was followed by a number of project presentations by members.

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AGM 2019 - Chair's Report

Since taking over as Chair in April 2018, I have been focussed on ensuring the regional sub-groups remain viable and helping get the DPOTY up and running. These were identified in the Survey we completed in early 2018 and acted upon from the AGM.

In response to the feedback, we have established a monthly newsletter. Which goes out on the months that Decisive Moment is not published. Thank you to Steve Powell for making this happen. We also have a new editor for Decisive Moment. Due to personal commitments, Jhy Turley had to step down towards the end of 2018, but Dave Thorp has stepped in and ensured the DM continues to be a first-class production. It has evolved a little, so that we have stronger themes to issues and are able to show more extensive bodies of work, bringing it closer to top class professional journals.

DPOTY 2019

As mentioned, we are kicking off Documentary Photographer of the Year 2019 later this month. It will be hosted by thePrintSpace, but we have simplified the entry process and rules. These will be posted on the competition website in the next week or so. We continue to run an online bi-monthly competition.

Regional Activities

As reported our membership has fallen, and this is consistent with most other special interest groups, except for Landscape, so maybe it simply reflects the overall RPS Membership trend. A key to addressing this is to ensure we put things on members want and can attend. That requires us to provide local events. I am pleased that we have now established a new sub-group in York and are working to re-establish a sub-group in East Anglia and possibly one in the Western Region. Where it makes sense, we will do this in collaboration with similar interest groups like Contemporary. Rather than set up a sub-group, it is hoped we can also work with the London region to put on more documentary focussed activities. We currently have sub-groups in Southern, South East, East Midlands, York, Northern, and soon East Anglia.

There has also been interest in getting reviews and feedback on personal documentary projects and we are looking at ways to do this, possibly also engaging groups outside the RPS and targeting younger photographers. Last year with Travel we hosted a number of workshops (with Janie Devine and with Graham Wilson), which were popular and will look to put similar events on.

I'd like to finish by thanking all current and recent Committee Members, Regional Co-ordinators, sub-editors and other volunteers for their help and support. Thank you!

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RPS - Documentary Group

Treasurer’s Report, FYE 31st December 2018

We started 2018 with a bank balance of £18,030.11, and ended it, after our various activities, with £25,321.60 – an increase of £7,291.49 over the course of the year.

Attached, there is a breakdown of our Income and Expenditure, showing the 5 DG workshops that were held during the year, the two Focus workshops (the second of which takes place this September) and various other items involved with the running of the Group.

As can be seen, our underlying source of funding comes from Members Subscriptions (£7,307) which, according to the Committee’s long-stated objective, is to be used for the benefit of the Documentary Group membership.

This means subsidising our various events and the activities (including our biennial Documentary Photographer of the Year / ‘DPotY’ competition) required to run the Group, to the following extent:

<u>Finance Summary</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Members Subs	£7,306.74	£7,751.25
HO Financing / VAT Refund	£89.69	£89.94
Pre-pyts for 2018/19 Workshops	£2,475.00	£300.00
<i>less</i>		
DPotY	£0.00	(£2,114.11)
Decisive Moment	(£856.38)	(£705.46)
Workshops Subsidy	(£817.79)	(£139.20)
Bi-monthly Competition	£0.00	(£219.76)
Regional Meetings	(£358.19)	(£310.80)
Admin, Travel etc	(£547.58)	(£1,295.61)
Increase in bank balance	£7,291.49	£3,356.25

The increase in our bank balance (£7,291.49) is attributable to the pre-payments for the next Focus Workshop in September (£2,475.00) and there being no costs this year for DPotY – together representing £7,945.36.

Our highly acclaimed eMagazine, Decisive Moment, cost £856.38, most of which was the annual subscription fees to Issuu, our platform for the magazine although it does also include the cost of printing and mailing copies to our key interviewees.

Funding required for our events was up on the year, as we held more workshops during the year, whilst that required to support our regional meetings was minimal.

So, a successful year financially and we remain comfortably funded.

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2019 – Year to Date

This year, the reduction in annual subscriptions from £15.00 to £10.00 p.a, approved at last year's AGM will, obviously have an effect on our income – effectively reducing our Members Subs by a third. Assuming an unchanged membership, this would equate to a reduction of £2,435 in 2019.

If we add an assumed costs of £5,000 for DPoTY this year and take away the pre-payments for the Focus Bradford workshop, this would leave us with around £15,500 at the end of 2019 – a small decrease in where we were at the end of 2018.

Our other events are expected, broadly, to be self-financing and so, with our existing membership subscriptions and healthy bank balance of around £24,000 (after stripping out the Focus Bradford income), we remain in a strong financial position and our growing membership should help ensure that we remain so.

Justin Cliffe LRPS
Hon Treasurer
Documentary Group

2nd April, 2019

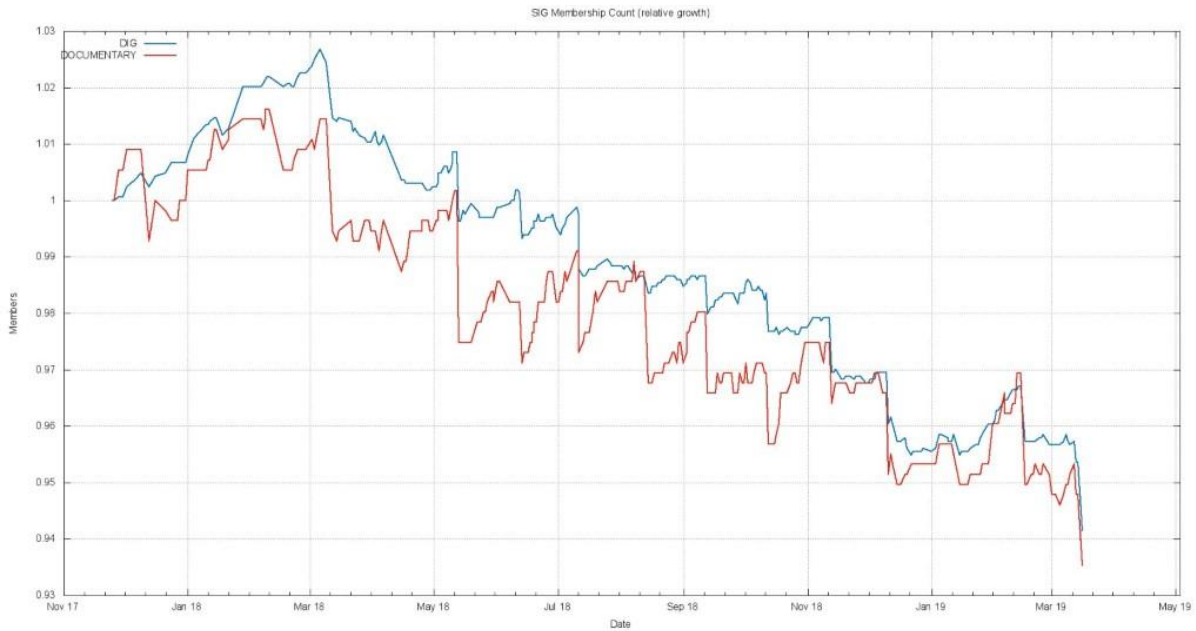
Updated on February 24, 2020

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Membership

There has been a significant reduction in our membership since the 2018 AGM. At that time, we had about 550 members. At last count (March 2019) we have about 460 members. In March 2018, the Secretary reported that the majority of our members were aged between 50 and 80. It is not possible for us to compare this with the RPS total membership.

The decline in our membership is similar to that of other Special Interest Groups. The chart below shows a comparison of Documentary Group with Digital Imaging Group. It has not been possible to determine the cause of this reduction in the number of members.



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2019 AGM – Decisive Moment Update

David Thorp

Wrap up of 2018

The 2018 AGM DM report reported that, starting with the March 2018 issue, we would loosely focus each issue on a specific genre of documentary photography. The reasons were two-fold. Firstly, documentary is such a broad subject, it is interesting to see how our membership interprets the sub-genres. Secondly this help us give each issue a direction we can build on. The hope was that we can encourage our members to contribute both written pieces and projects that align with their personal interests.

The March 2018 edition covered social documentary photography and included an interview with Emma Chetcuti, director of Multistory; a range of projects from seven Documentary Group members and an interview with David Hurn.

The June 2018 edition focused on street photography and included an interview with Hans Eijkelboom; Images from the Doc Group Flickr group; features on the topic by Chris Jennings ARPS and Ryan Hardman plus a piece on photobooks and other resources; a review of the Magnum street photography course and a look back at Visa Pour l'Image exhibitions. Seven projects from members were also featured.

'The Archive' was the focus for the September 2018 edition. Mo Connelly LRPS interviewed Sefton Samuels FRPS; Stephen Taylor showed images from his forgotten Birmingham archive; projects from 5 members and a review of Visa Pour l'Image 2018. This edition also covered the project 'Refocusing Perspectives: Then and Now Photography of the First World War', a partnership venture that brought together two academics from the University of Exeter with a group of volunteers from across the RPS SIGs.

Jhy Turley ARPS stood down after this edition and I took over in October 2018.

The December 2018 edition had an environmental and cultural theme and included an interview with Simon Roberts HonFRPS and features on The European Green Belt (The Green Ribbon – Hanna-Katrina Jędrasz), repair culture (Unbroken - Mark A Phillips ARPS), and the arctic environment (Lastpole Expedition – Jhy Turley ARPS). The edition featured projects from 4 members and featured the '209 Women' exhibition and the group project '100 Years On – Images from 11 Nov 2018'.

The Decisive Moment has been a high-quality publication for a long time and Jhy Turley's work has made it an easy project to take on as editor. Graham Wilson, and more recently Lyn Newton, as the sub-editors are what holds it together. I would encourage all members to consider contributing, either project of their own or identifying others in the world of photography to feature.

2019 and beyond

The use of themes to focus each edition is useful from a production point of view and so far for 2019 we have Women in Photography (March); Photography Education and Learning (Spread over June and September). We aim for 4 features for each publication including an interview with a prominent figure in the world of documentary photography. Projects from members can be on any theme which allows them to be published in a timely fashion. DM also publishes the bi-monthly competition winners and uses some of the images submitted for the competition elsewhere in the journal.

In general, we will try and use The Decisive Moment to support the aims of The Society and the Documentary Group/Sub-Groups. The addition of an events section, close liaison with the Newsletter and reports from sub-groups are aimed to help with this. Features can be from or about photographers (and others in the industry) outside the RPS to broaden our reach.

There have been some improvements to the Issuu publishing platform which allows the publication and individual features to be shared and discovered outside of the membership more easily. These

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were adopted for the December 2018 edition and from the statistics it appears that even a low level of sharing on social media can have a significant positive effect on readership.

The March 2019 edition has just been published and the intent is to follow up on some of the photographers mentioned in the features in later editions.


Appendix:

Statistics – Figures are for all time but most ‘reads’ occur in the first 2-3 months of publication.


Statistics for RPS The Decisive Moment - Edition 14 - December 2018

 <p>This publication was made publicly available on Jan 6 2019.</p>	829 Reads	10,343 Impressions
	0:07:42 Average Time Spent	4.4 days Read Time
	1 Likes	6 Publication Shares
	2 Times Stacked	64 Link-outs

Statistics for RPS The Decisive Moment - Edition 13 - September 2018

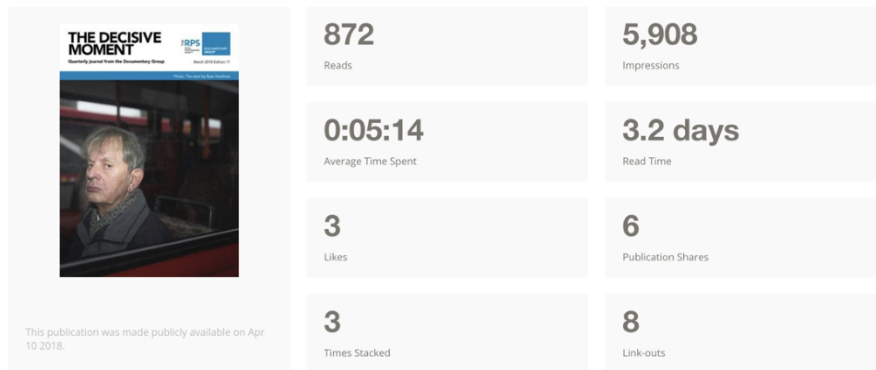
 <p>This publication was made publicly available on Oct 10 2018.</p>	567 Reads	4,704 Impressions
	0:06:54 Average Time Spent	2.7 days Read Time
	0 Likes	0 Publication Shares
	2 Times Stacked	6 Link-outs

Statistics for RPS The Decisive Moment - Edition 12 - June 2018

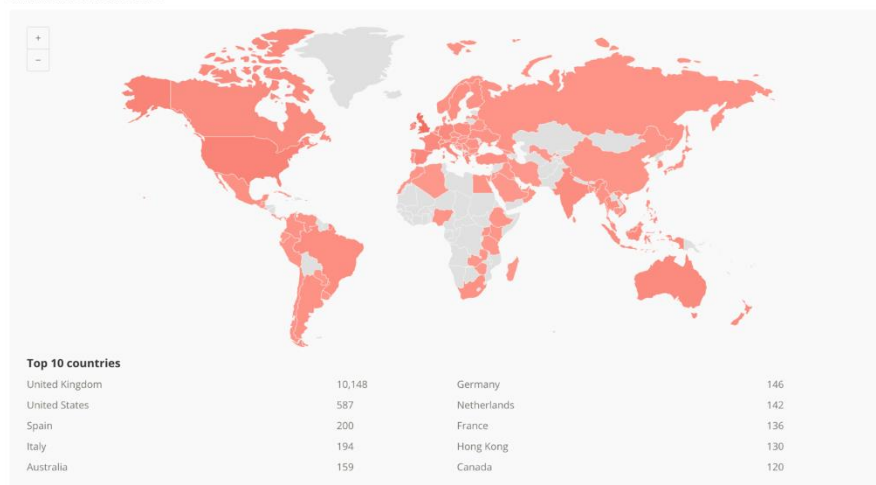
 <p>This publication was made publicly available on Jul 20 2018.</p>	735 Reads	5,672 Impressions
	0:06:49 Average Time Spent	3.5 days Read Time
	0 Likes	5 Publication Shares
	4 Times Stacked	22 Link-outs

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Statistics for **RPS The Decisive Moment - Edition 11 - March 2018**

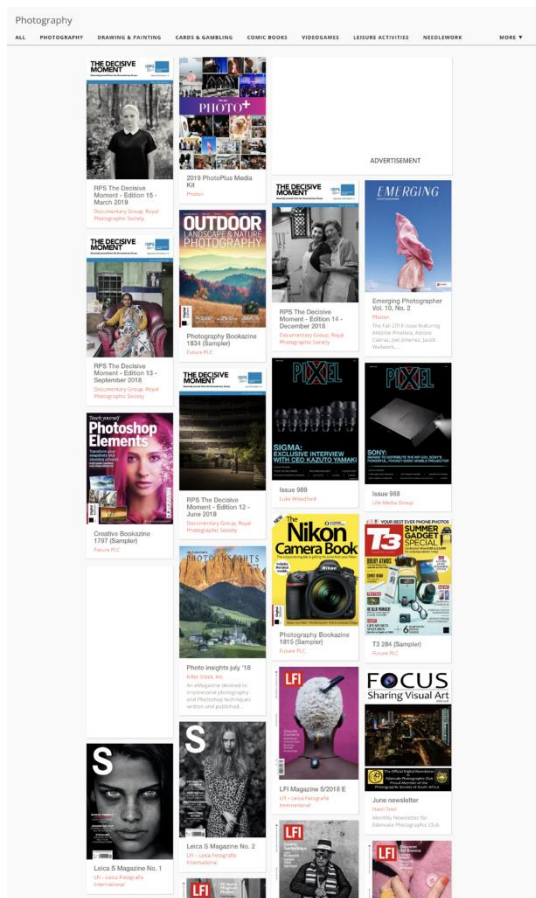


Readers Around the World



The Decisive Moment on Issuu

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Proposal to amend the definition of 'documentary within the groups constitution.

The RPS Documentary Group's current definition, in the Constitution is:

Documentary photography chronicles everyday life in the broadest possible way, as well as topical events and photography which preserves the present for the future. It is typically found in professional photojournalism and real life reportage, but importantly for us, it is an amateur, artistic, or academic pursuit. The photographer attempts to produce truthful, objective, and usually candid photography of a particular subject, often of people.

Feedback received reflects that this lies too much on the traditions of recording and photojournalism, leaving limited scope for modern practice and more interpretive work. Furthermore, it describes documentary as 'objective' which almost by definition is not possible. It is therefore proposed to revise the definition. The rest of the constitution remains unchanged.

Revised definition and preamble

Documentary photography as a practice spans a range of approaches, so makes precise definition difficult. Taken literally, all forms of photography can be described as documentary, in that they document someone, something or some place. As a working definition, the Documentary SIG uses the following:

Documentary photography communicates a clear narrative through visual literacy. It can be applied to the photographic documentation of social, cultural, historical and political events.

Documentary photographers' work always has an intent; whether that is to represent daily life, explore a specific subject, deepen our thinking, or influence our opinions.

~~*Each story may be told through a single image or a collection, and may draw on multiple media, or be one of many presented either individually or in concert. Stories may be evidential or interpretative, realistic or stylised; and while most work is contemporaneous, it may draw on the past to create its narrative.*~~

Amendments above (highlighted text change and removed section / strikethrough) agreed at AGM, 7 April 2019.