

Chair's Report 2023/24 for AGM

It has been a trying year as there have been a lot of changes at RPS headquarters which many feel not for the better. The RPS is short of money and this is impacting on the groups. The new CEO has changed all our terms of reference, a lot of the changes could not apply to us, so in the end they were modified. But after that we were told that we were to lose twenty per cent of our funds and more in the autumn to fund repairs to the inadequate CRM system. (Do we not already pay substantial fees to the Society and our members pay extra to be a group member?)

We are however still running web talks and in person events for our group members. In April 2023 we had an in person event to the Glasgow museums, organised by Roger Farnham, where we saw photographic collections and also visited an artists' co-operative. The visit was varied and very well organised.

In August we had an in person visit to Stonyhurst College, which I organised, to see their various photographic collections and to browse albums which included photographs by Roger Fenton and also others which showed photographs of the Nares Antarctic expedition.

On October 6th Ed Bylina organised a visit to the Bradford Industrial Museum to view their photo archives and see an exhibition of industrial photography.

The next visit was to Derby, organised by Geoff Blackwell, to see the Winter's Studio, which has been continuously in business since 1852. Here we also had a talk from Simon Vaughn, the archivist of the Alexandra Palace Television Society, on the early years of television and in particular about Desmond Robert Campbell, "Cam", "the father of television lighting"

We had our H&D lecture from Tony Richards, the senior technician in charge of advanced heritage imaging at the John Rylands Library and University of Manchester Research Institute, in September. This is a biennial lecture in honour of Hurter & Driffield who worked out the first reliable emulsion speed rating system (the system is still in use as ISO on digital cameras today).

Tony Richards also practises the wet collodion process and has given us a talk on his work and I hope we will visit his studio sometime soon.

We have continued to run our series of online talks with curators of photographic collections which are live and recorded. These are well attended and with very

interesting and of varied subjects. One of these was from the British Library on the work of Fay Godwin, this was very popular.

In Dec 2023 we had talks from John Ashton of the Bradford Industrial Museum on a community heritage archive.

We had a talk from Jo Gane on electro plating in Birmingham for Daguerreotype plates, and recently we have had a talk about Alex Ledingham, photographic artist of Grantown-on-Spey in the Cairngorms, which encouraged early tourism in the area.

Our first talk of 2024 was from Victoria Millar of Northern Ireland on the collection of Ulster photographer W A Green "Ulster in Days gone by" from a collection at the Ulster Folk Museum.

Recently we have had an event in Oxford at the Bodleian Library. Julia Margaret Cameron "Letters from Life" celebrating Colin Ford's ninetieth birthday. This was directed by Kathleen McLaughlin from Los Angeles and involved people reading some of Cameron's letters to and from her famous friends.

Gilly Read FRPS

Historical Group Chair.