**Royal Photographic Society SW Region**

**AGM 20th February 2022 (Zoom meeting)**

**List of Attendees:-** (Committee) Tim Sanders, John Widdows Margaret Hocking, Adrian Hough.

**Also attending: -** Paul Evans, Martin Howse, Vivien Howse, Hans Gebauer, Mary Gebauer, Michael Woodhead, Pamela Stirling, Graham Cooper, Alex Tymków, Pamela Stirling, Suzanne Parsons. N=15

**Apologies for absence**:- Apologies: - Diana Wynn, Mick Medley, Joy Medley, Kirsten Peake, Lynda Piper, Ken Holland, Dennis Knowles, Lois Wakeman, Kate Harman, Anne Whiteley, Lesley Treloar, Muriel Somerfield, Diane Wilkins, Rod Fry

1. **Minutes of the RPS SW Region AGM 2021**
2. **Any Matters Arising from 2021 AGM Minutes :-**

None. Proposed: Margaret Hocking; Seconded: Michael Woodhead

1. **Regional Organiser’s Report :-** Tim Sanders

2021 had several presentations via Zoom (Brian Northmore, Simon Sugden, Jason Bell (Visual Art Group), Three outdoor visits to Poltimore House were the only field trips in 2021. Regional membership declined slightly from 461 to 459.We did not produce a Newsletter due to the high costs of printing. It was replaced by an email version. Tim announced that he will be stepping down with Paul Evans as a new nominee for RO. (Full Report – See Appendix A)

1. **Treasurer’s Report :-** Tim Sanders

Because of lack of chargeable activity during the period there was little monetary movement.

Income came from HQ with the annual stipend of £1.45 per member equalling £669.90 and a small VAT reclaim. Gross income £1105.48

Equally expenditure was mainly taken up by the Zoom subscription £120 and rental of the Dainton storage facility £384 cumulative gross expenditure was £1,289

1. **Contemporary Group Report** :- Adrian Hough

The group (10-15 members) maintained their tradition of meeting three times per year using Zoom and lasting 3 hours. The group delved into the ‘meaning’ present in a diversity of subjects such as:- contents of shopping trolleys, history of seaside photography, today’s litter, product labels with no indication of contents, do contemporary monochrome images of Wolverhampton look as if taken in 1930s, photographing all visitors to a house during one day, conversations with trees, sights and sounds of a building site, comparing similar themes in London and Cornwall, ruined villages of Dartmoor, and comparison of old and new images of locations in Venice. During the year two members of the Contemporary Group were awarded RPS Distinctions, in addition to one Associateship (Adrian Hough) and one Fellowship (Ken Holland).

In response to a question from John Widdows about the definition of Contemporary Photography, Adrian Hough drew attention to the RPS Contemporary Group’s website where he has written a detailed definition of Conceptual and Contemporary Photography. As the SW Group generally meet in member’s homes that limits the number of participants at their meetings. (Full Report – see Appendix B)

1. **Travelling Print Folios Report :-** Margaret Hocking

The circulation of Print folios, by hand or post, continued during the Covid pandemic. Three folios are still circulated. Two are General and one is purely Mono (either digital or analogue).

(Full Report – see Appendix C)

1. **Visual Arts Group :-** Di Wilkins

VA Group continued for another year with an excellent presentation by Jason Bell via Zoom. However, with the resignation of Di Wilkins as organiser and with no-one volunteering to take her place, we had to return the SW Region VA funds back to the national VA Group.

1. **Election of Committee**

The existing committee members (Margaret Hocking - Folios, Adrian Hough - Contemporary,

Tim Sanders – Treasurer, John Widdows – Secretary & Equipment) were all re-elected.

Proposed by Martin Howse Seconded by Vivien Howse

The election of the Committee and New Regional Organiser (Item 11) were all carried unanimously with no abstentions and no votes against.

1. **Items presented to Committee for Discussion**
2. The RPS SW Region AGM always seems to clash with the Western Region’s Digital Imaging Group AGM, so it was agreed that we will leave deciding the date of our AGM until we learn of the DIG AGM date. Response by Tim Sanders.
3. Lois Wakeman asked – What is the relationship between the SW Region and Special Interest Groups (SIG)? Adrian Hough stated that it is part of the national RPS Contemporary Group.
4. RPS member has stated:- “Reading Mick’s report on the web site, his frustration at the opaque information architecture and navigation is shared by many of us. The site looks lovely, but for a member looking for info on their region or SIG, the organisation is quite hopeless. (I used to do this stuff for blue chip companies and government in my prime – and the RPS site is definitely at the worst end of usability). No site should need a user guide to find information, or force me to resort to search to find obvious things. I know it is no fault of the region and you probably have little effective influence nationally – but it is shameful that the RPS probably spent £1000s or £10000s to get such a turkey – a triumph of form over function that would make the Bauhaus cringe! “
5. The SW Region website is now dormant due to lack of support from HQ.

All regions and SIGs appear to have raised this with the RPS but there has been no response. Adrian Hough commented that he knew of many complaints about the site and that action had been promised by Evan Dawson (RPS CEO).

1. **Election of new Regional Organiser**

Paul Evans was nominated and was elected as the new R.O. Proposed by Tim Sanders Seconded by Martin Howse.

Paul Evans then introduced himself and provided a brief summary of his past career beginning in Accounting / Finance, then a period in Maritime activities and finally the Maritime and Coastguard Agency at Dover. He retired and returned to Cornwall.

He joined the RPS two years ago and is a member of the Analogue and Nature Special Interest Groups. He is planning to start work on RPS Distinctions using the Photobook route.

1. **AOB**

Now elected, Paul is keen to sort out a suitable venue for SW Region meetings, to go to RPS HQ in Bristol to meet key people, to better understand the region and its membership and to get members to meet socially as well as photographically after a long period of lock down due to Covid.

A new venue for our RPS SW Regional meetings etc needs to be identified now that the previous venue (Dolphin Hotel at Bovey Tracey) has been sold. This was briefly discussed and various suggestions made. One that was viewed favourably by many at the AGM was Okement Centre at Okehampton on the A30 (£25 for 3h). Another suggested venue was Bovey Tracey Golf Club which Martin Howse stated had been used previously as a venue. However, there was no mention of Mick Medley exploring the venue. But it was suggested that Mick was a good source of advice and would possibly offer general advice if he could.

Okement Centre appeared to be a strong option particularly for reasons of easy access by members living in the region from east Devon to west Cornwall. Paul with support from the committee and other members will try to get a plan together.

Committee meetings via Zoom is valuable without the need to travel.

Re-establishing the w/e away during the winter / early spring period was raised, highlighting some of the previous locations (Carbis Bay, Portland, Ilfracombe, Swanage and others). We would welcome ideas from SW members.

John Widdows, on behalf of all SW Region RPS Members, thanked Tim Sanders for his hard work over many years as Regional Organiser, particularly as it coincided with the last two years of the Covid pandemic.

Margaret Hocking also congratulated Paul Evans on his election as RO.

1. **Date for next SW Region AGM in 2023**

The SW Region AGM usually clashes with the Western Region Digital Imaging Group meeting, so it was decided to wait to find out when their meeting will be held and then announce the date of our AGM.

Meeting closed at 11.25.

**Appendix A**

**RPS South West Region – AGM 20 February 2022 - Via Zoom**

**Regional Organiser’s Report :- Tim Sanders**

If 2020 proved challenging then 2021 proved equally so, with some of our traditional events falling off of the calendar.

2021 started well enough with South West member Brian Northmore’s Zoom talk “On Dartmoor” and this was a sold-out event. We had scheduled for Brian to lead a walk on Dartmoor in March unfortunately that fell foul of the pandemic regulations and was cancelled.

Early February we had a new talent in Simon Sugden talking about his images of “Derelict Britain – Beauty in Decay” and the publication of his book by the same name.

In February, we held the AGM and we were happily able to welcome the RPS President Simon Hill to the meeting who firstly was able to offer a vote of thanks to long standing volunteers who stood down at the AGM after a quite incredible combined total of 73 years’ service – Mick Medley 25 years Joy Medley and Martin Howse both 24 years. I am very grateful for their help and support to me during my tenure as Regional Organiser which I have greatly appreciated. Additionally, during the year sadly, the West Cornwall Group was disbanded and Vivien Howse stepped down from her role as organiser after interest in the group had waned.

Simon then went onto deliver fascinating talk on his photographic career before the meeting drew to a close.

Undoubtably the highlight of the year was the Jason Bell talk arranged by Di Wilkins for the Visual Arts Group and jointly funded by the region.

By mid-year however feedback from members suggested they were suffering Zoom fatigue and the proposal of a members meeting to show and discuss images that we thought we might term “coffee time” brought only one positive response as being of any interest.

So, we moved on and three field trips to Poltimore House were arranged and proved popular and were sold out each time.

**Regional Membership** 461 at the time of the last AGM and at the time of writing is now reduced to 458.

**Newsletter** during the year we again did not produce a printed newsletter, this was simply because of the cost and the very limited revenue stream we have had during the pandemic.

So, as we move into 2022, I now step down as RO. We have a new nominee in Paul Evans and I wish him well in the post and like everyone else will look forward to the publication of an exciting new programme of events once he has settled into the post.

**Appendix B**

**RPS South West Region – AGM 20th February 2022**

**Contemporary Group Report for 2021 :- Adrian Hough ARPS**

The Southwest Contemporary Group has continued with its tradition of meeting three times during the year. All the meetings this year were held by Zoom with a typical attendance of around ten members and the meetings lasting some three hours with a short break to collect a cup of tea or similar (at least that’s what everyone said that they were drinking from their mugs!) It had been hoped to meet in person during October but the rapidly changing situation resulted in a late move to the computer screen.

Nevertheless, our images have continued to delve into the meaning present in all sorts of subjects from the mundane to the esoteric. I’m not going to try and list everything but simply pick out some of the highlights. My apologies if anyone feels that I have omitted to mention their masterpiece!

One early exploration involved a consideration of the history of seaside photography and what this could tell us about both social attitudes and photographic interest. Another posed the question of what litter (or garbage) could tell us about life in the present day from the perspective of a future archaeologist (a garbologist). Taking a totally different direction, it was noted that many consumer products (such as teas and coffee) carry labels which rely on pattern recognition as they do not mention the actual nature of the contents – this was then explored via photographs of the packaging.

What can photographs of shopping trolleys tell us about contemporary society? Can contemporary monochrome photographs of Wolverhampton masquerade as shots taken in the 1930s and what does this tell us about Wolverhampton? What do photographs of all the visitors (including tradespeople) who visited a house during lockdown tell us about the photographer? Conversations with trees. The sights and sounds of a building site. A comparison of similar themes in London and Cornwall. Ruined villages of Dartmoor and their context. Photographing the locations shown in old photographs and discovering what this might tell is. A retrospective of Venice.

Finally, during the year, two members of the Contemporary Group who attend our meetings were awarded Society Distinctions, although I am aware that there were other regional members of the Group who received similar awards. The second half of the year saw Ken Holland awarded a Fellowship for his monochrome prints of Seale Hayne after the Dame Hannah Rogers Trust vacated the buildings. ‘When Hannah Left Home’ was a moving and acutely observed study of what remained after the community had gone. Earlier in the year Adrian Hough was awarded an Associateship for colour prints of Greenland, contrasting the transience of human occupation with the ancient bedrock. Although we have examined both sets of images on-line we all await the day when we can look at the actual prints. To paraphrase a certain writer from two thousand years ago, ‘Now we see in a computer screen darkly, but in the future we shall see face to face.’

**Appendix C**

**RPS South West Region – AGM 20th February 2022**

**Travelling Print folios Report :- Margaret Hocking**

The Print folios have continued to circulate during the pandemic. In these days of Zoom it has been the one way in which members have been able to view prints, and this has been much appreciated. We did have a blip towards the end of 2021 when two of the bags in Folio B went missing. Luckily they have now been found and are continuing to circulate. There are still three 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 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, I will be happy to answer any questions you have. My email address is on the website.