

# President's Report - 2014/15

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*Louise Brown May 2015*

Taking on the role of President of this flourishing society has been a great honour and the year has turned out to be one of much activity and great success for the Society with its largest membership ever.

When I started back in the summer of last year I already knew some of the aims I hoped to achieve during my year, and I'm pleased to say that, with the support and hardwork of the committee, these have all been set into motion - most notably, better communication, a friendlier welcome for new members, and encouragement to formally develop one's photography.

## **Communication**

I believe communication is vital – it is what makes us feel 'part' of something, it keeps everyone involved - and a weekly Newsletter was an initiative I was very keen to establish. Tony Smith, when he was programme secretary, introduced a couple of newsletters, and our Treasurer, Graham, has been using newsletters to communicate to new and potential members, so with Graham's help Ann and I were able to quickly establish a template for a weekly newsletter, which gradually Ann has taken on completely and appears to be enjoying her new journalistic outlet! There was some scepticism that we would be able to keep it going on a weekly basis, but we don't seem to have had any difficulty at all filling it – in fact we sometimes have too much to cover. It takes considerable time and effort to put together, but the results speak for themselves – thank you very much Ann for taking this on and doing it so very well.

The Society Desk, another new initiative this year, provides a physical focal point and a place to find out and question everything that is going on. Although we have a rota within the Committee for manning the Society Desk, it is probably Graham who you are most familiar, in the hot seat week after week, for which I am extremely grateful. Thank you, Graham.

Hand in hand with communication is organisation and planning ahead, and this season the committee has spent considerable time trying to bring things into line, such as the fire procedures, health and safety records, and the efficiency and re-organisation of the committee itself.

## **Friendly Welcome**

Several years ago it was reported to me that in the past members had left the Society because it had been unfriendly and cliquy. That was such a shock to hear, as it hadn't been my experience, but I was aware how easily that mentality can take over in a club. Thankfully that reputation has been dwindling, but we must never lose sight of the fact that in a club of our size, we have to work hard to keep everyone involved and feeling welcome. As you all know, I strongly believe that you get out what you put in. With thanks to great initiatives from the committee I believe we have made a real effort this year to welcome warmly all new members, especially those joining in the first half of the season, with our Meet & Greet policy and the New Members Welcome Area. Earlier in the season many of us enjoyed the second Skittles Evening, organised by David McKibbin, which I hope will be repeated next year. And

during the forthcoming summer break there will be a number of summer activities for members, to be announced in the newsletter. In an initiative to encourage members to participate more with the running of the Society, we recently held a recruitment drive, and from that 30 members have stepped forward with help in a variety of areas – thank you to each of you; I hope you will get a lot out of your new roles – rest assured the rest of the membership will benefit from your assistance!

### **Photographic Encouragement**

My last aim, of encouragement in photography, has probably been best represented by the start of the Distinctions Group. As a club I felt we have a large membership, but a disproportionately small number of photographic distinction holders; at the time, not one FRPS, the highest level. Sadly, we still haven't had anyone achieve this accolade this season, but the Distinctions Group is pushing from the bottom up! We currently have 15 members working towards their licentiate level of the Royal Photographic Society (LRPS), the entry level distinction, with at least five hoping to achieve this in the next couple of months. I intend to carry on with this group next season, hoping to entice even more of you to rise to the challenge.

### **Reports**

In place of each Committee member, and others, coming up to read out their reports, all of which you will have been directed to on the website, I shall summarise their main points.

*... (when presenting this report at the AGM a summary will follow) ...*

### Additionally

The new PDI exhibition, the Winchester National Exhibition, for which I took over the organisation in October after Simon May left the Society is well under way with entries being received as we speak, up until the end of June. I am ably helped in this task by Mike Roe, Viv Brett and Chris Gillard. We have joined British National Exhibitions (BPE) and this exhibition is now one of the 22 national exhibitions which they support and for which they award BPE Crowns to the photographers with accepted entries. Judging will take place in July and the exhibition of images will be shown to our members on 15<sup>th</sup> September with a further public viewing on 19<sup>th</sup> September here in the Performance Hall, as well as via our website.

Back in October the Society was invited to take part in the Hyde900 local history group's annual activities and we were asked to put on a small exhibition of prints of local images, especially with a King Alfred connection. Ann Erkut helped me organise this event, thank you Ann. We have also managed to secure a permanent display space in the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, kindly organized by Jill North – thank you Jill - where eight prints are displayed at any one time, usually for a 2 month period. And, as has become customary, we continued to take space at the Littleton Show in September, kindly organized by George Walsh and Jim Denness – thank you George and Jim. All these initiatives help to publicise Winchester Photographic Society amongst the local area and along with the main exhibition, generate new members.

### **Final Thanks**

Will be given to committee members and others who have helped to keep the Society running this season.

Louise Brown  
President 2014/15