



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2 September 2014

Woodbridge Camera Club's fourth annual general meeting is the culmination of a year during which the Club has made great steps forward, both in terms of broadening our activities and the standard of photographic skills displayed by members.

It has been a busy year for the Steering Group, which I have been pleased to chair, as we have tried to provide an interesting programme of speakers, competitions, tutorials and practical evenings at our Club nights, while at the same time introducing new activities and innovations. I hope that the good attendance at our meetings and the enthusiasm displayed by members is an indication that we have largely been successful.

During the year we have been fortunate to hear presentations from some excellent speakers: Tim Bowden, who told us about his work as a food photographer; Andrew Cockrill, a renowned dance photographer, about his life in photography; and, standing in at short notice, Jason Avery, who spoke about infra-red photography. Steering Group member, Steve Mecrow, also gave us a presentation on macro photography, and four of our members showed us examples of their work at a member's showcase evening.

Members had the opportunity to get their cameras out and polish their skills at a light workshop, led by Sally Parkinson in December, and a "Colours of Woodbridge" assignment in June. I think that both events were greatly enjoyed by those who took part.

Last October we were invited by Wickham Market and Framlingham Camera Clubs to join them in a "3-way Photo Battle", a revival of an annual event that they used to hold with the original Woodbridge Camera Club. This was a little daunting for us as it was our first experience of having our photographs judged by an accredited EAF judge, but we came a creditable second. We will be trying to build on this by taking part in this year's event on 17 October, and in 2015 it will be our turn to host.

The "3-way Photo Battle" having given us the taste for competition, we have since invited accredited judges to adjudicate at our own competitions: a PDI competition with the subject "Time"; and a print competition "Reflections". Congratulations to John Pollard and Charmian Berry, who were judged to have produced the best images in these.

I would also like to congratulate Sarah Bynom for having her photograph "Maina, a Fijian Nurse" selected for the annual EAF Exhibition this year.

Our own annual exhibition, the third to be held in the Shire Hall, was a great success and we welcomed around 150 visitors over the 2 days. The general consensus was that the standard of the images on display goes up every year, which is born out by the positive comments left in the visitor's book. Thanks must go to all members who submitted images, those who volunteered for stewarding and other duties, and those who brought food along to the evening reception, which I think was enjoyed by all. Special thanks to Sarah, who had the massive job of coordinating everything for the reception.

Winner of the best photograph at the exhibition, selected by Andrew Cockrill, was Janice Poulson with her image "Taking a Shower".

Each year we learn from our experience of the exhibition, with the aim of improving the event for the following year. Two things we must consider for the future are whether we have outgrown the Shire Hall and need a larger venue, and the need for better quality display screens. If any member can help with either of these please speak to a member of the Steering Group.

One of our greatest successes this year has been the launch of our website, which has received some very favourable comments, both from members and other who have looked at it. The content of the website is not cast in stone, so if any member has any ideas about what they would like to see there, don't be shy – please let us know.

Every member has the opportunity to submit their own images to be displayed in the Gallery section of the website, and so far 24 members have taken advantage of that. I would encourage all those of you who have not yet done so, to put together a selection of your images to be included, to let members and other visitors to the website see what you have done.

Unfortunately we have suffered one failure during the year: our lottery bid for the purchase of a laptop computer and digital projector was turned down, which was a disappointment as I know that other clubs have been successful with similar bids. We still desperately need our own projector for presentations and PDI competitions, but I think we will have to settle for a lower specification model that we can afford from Club funds, rather than the "Rolls-Royce" data projector that we had hoped to buy.

During the past year we have added a light box to our arsenal of equipment (thanks to Peter Skeet for constructing it), so perhaps during the forthcoming year we will be able to add a projector.

Other things for the future – I think we would like to continue to grow our membership and possibly find a larger venue with facilities for providing tea and coffee. However, having said that, the library serves us well at present as the room is pleasant and parking is easy. Another thing to explore is the possibility of special interest groups that get together separately from the main Club meetings. These could cover specific areas of photography such as lighting or Photoshop, or matters of local interest such as the Whisstocks group that Peter and others are already getting involved with.

However, it's your club, so please make your views known if you would like to see specific things happening.

During the year I have been supported by an excellent Steering Group and I would like to express my thanks to Sarah, Charmian, Steve, Martin, Peter and more recently John, who joined us as a co-opted member of the group. Also Maria, who left us part way through the year. Special thanks to Steve who stood in for me as Chairman while I was unavoidably detained in foreign parts. They have all worked tirelessly and I am pleased that all have decided to stand again for the new Steering Group.

I must also thank all members for their support during the year and I hope that the Steering Group is running the Club the way you would wish.

Richard Brown
September 2014