

Regional Organiser's Notes

It seems very odd to think that this is the last paper newsletter I will be sending out as the East Anglia Regional Organiser. Five years – six, if you count the period when I was shadowing my predecessor, Joy Hancock FRPS – have simply flown by, and I'm now in the process of passing the baton to my successor. Since my time as RO is almost up, I thought it might be interesting to look back on the period with the benefit of 20:20 hindsight.

When Joy took the reins, I think it's fair to say that she inherited a Region which was pretty well moribund. With the help of a few dedicated individuals she managed to pull the Region up by its own bootstraps, and soon had a regular programme of well attended events. When I was asked in the summer of 2012 whether I would consider becoming RO, it was clear that I would be taking on a "going concern". My wife thought I was completely crackers to consider such a job while I was still in full time employment; and, to be fair, she was probably right. Having said that, the old adage about "if you want something doing, ask a busy person" seems to have held true. I did make a promise to her at the time, however, that I would do the job for no more than five years. Why five? Well, it's long enough to make one's mark in a position, but hopefully not so long that everything becomes repetitive and stale. Only history will tell whether I've got this right, but I was determined to keep my promise whatever happened.

During my time as RO I have tried to build on the very solid platform handed to me by Joy, whilst also introducing some innovations of my own. Some were relatively simple, such as moving the Exhibition Selection to May and combining it with the AGM. Not only did this result in a significant increase in the number of entries to the Regional Exhibition, but it also meant that the AGM attendance list reached double figures for the first time in ages! The Region has hosted several other RPS Exhibitions and allowed our own Exhibition to travel far more widely than before. We have also run regular joint meetings with other RPS Groups, and those with the Digital Imaging and Creative Groups have become annual events.

From my point of view, probably the most significant innovation was to introduce at least one event during every year which would be completely free to everyone – member and non-member alike. In 2014 this took the form of a whole day of scientific photography, held as part of Cambridge University's annual Science Festival. In 2015 John Hooton FRPS visited us from Cork in the Irish Republic, and in 2016 it was Susan Brown FRPS from Devon. This year we had the double-act of Dan Hartman, a naturalist from the USA, and Roger Reynolds HonFRPS, where we recorded the highest ever attendance at a Regional meeting: 115. It has been wonderful to be able to put on events for so many people, and I cannot

think of a better way of utilising the operating surplus we make from our other activities.

I can now reveal that the 2018 sponsored event will be held on March 11th, and this time it features Ken Lennox HonFRPS. Ken is now officially retired, but during his life he was a press photographer for several national newspapers, ending up as picture editor for *The Star*, *The Sun* and *News of the World*. He is probably best known as a photographer of the Royal Family, however, and was particularly associated with Princess Diana. Ken has also covered a number of wars, as well as both celebrity and sports photography. He has won *British Press Photographer of the Year* on no fewer than four occasions, as well as *Royal Photographer of the Year* and *Sports Photographer of the Year*. Quite a CV, in other words, and I'm absolutely delighted that he will be the East Anglia sponsored lecturer during my final year as RO.

Not everything has been a huge success during my time in office, of course, so it's probably worth reflecting on the downs as well as the ups. There was the famous occasion when an RPS speaker came to cover a two-hour evening slot, but managed to finish after only forty minutes. Then there were the "wash out" field trips where the weather managed to conspire against us, irrespective of the chosen season. Probably the most surprising failure was a talk by the renowned documentary photo-journalist, Alison Baskerville, which attracted only two bookings and had to be cancelled. Failures were the exception rather than the rule, though, and I have been lucky enough to preside over some thoroughly memorable and enjoyable events.

I haven't mentioned RPS Distinctions yet, but they have played a huge part in my time as RO. We have held at least two Advisory Days every year, including a Fellowship Day and an experimental "Nature Day". We have also hosted three LRPS Assessments in the Region, and it has been wonderful to see so many Regional members progress through our Advisory Days to achieve their Distinctions at one of our Assessments. We have also started to run informal Distinctions Workshops, and another is planned for next year on October 14th.

While in a retrospective mood, I would really like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals who have regularly rolled up their collective sleeves in order to help at Regional events. I can't mention everyone by name, unfortunately, but there are a small number who I would like to thank personally for their contribution during my period as RO. John Thompson ARPS provided valuable continuity with the Joy Hancock era, and has been a financial rock in his rôle as Treasurer. Moira Ellice ARPS has completely transformed the way in which Exhibitions are handled, bringing exciting new work into the Region and discovering superb new venues. Liz

Hale LRPS and Pat Frost LRPS have masterminded the catering during the past five years, and I don't know what I'd have done without them. Starve, probably. Not to be outdone, their other halves – Allan Hale ARPS and Mike Frost – have also worked like troupers at our events, picking up any job which needed to be done. Finally, there is one individual without whom I simply wouldn't have been able to operate. She was Deputy RO during Joy's tenure, and agreed to remain in the job when I took over. She has kept me on the straight and narrow for five years (no mean feat), and has always "mucked in" when there is work to be done. Her reputation for planning field trips – sometimes many months in advance – which end up being held on days with torrential rain is well deserved, and I really don't know how she does it. I'm talking about Ann Miles FRPS, of course, and I'm incredibly grateful to her for all the support she's given me over the years.

Speaking of helpers, when Mark Stimpson LRPS takes over from me in May 2018, some of the events will be held at the Costessey Centre near his native Norwich. Just as I was lucky enough to have an army of people to call on for our Foxton meetings, Mark will need help for the meetings held in Norfolk. If you'd like to help, or simply want to find out more about what is involved, then please get in touch with me and I'll be delighted to pass your details on to Mark.

So what next? What will I do having given up as Regional Organiser? Well, I'm afraid you won't be getting rid of me completely as I'm in the process of joining the LRPS Distinctions Panel. Distinctions – or, to be more exact, the process of helping individuals to believe in themselves sufficiently so that they are able to achieve them – are very close to my heart. Advisory Days have always been my favourite events in the Regional calendar, and I'm very much looking forward to being able to continue this work – albeit on the other side of the fence. It will be wonderful to be able to concentrate on the photography, for once, without having to worry about whether there we've put enough chairs out or struggling to fix problems with the PA system. As the saying goes: bring it on!

Ian Wilson ARPS

Regional Organiser

2018 Events

Saturday 10th February

Inaugural Meeting, The Costessey Centre

This is being held at The Costessey Centre, 1 Longwater Lane, Costessey, Norwich, NR8 5AH. Details and cost TBA.

Sunday 11th March

Ken Lennox HonFRPS

This is being held at Foxton Village Hall, Hardman Road, Foxton, CB22 6RN, from approximately 11:00 to 16:00. Ken is a legendary photojournalist and newspaper picture editor who has won many press awards during his career. He is probably best known for his work as a Royal photographer, especially with Princess Diana. This event is being sponsored by the Region, so entry is **free for everyone**.

Sunday 8th April

Distinctions Advisory Day

LRPS and ARPS (all categories). This is being held at Foxton Village Hall from approximately 10:30 to 16:30. Cost is £15 for RPS members submitting work, £20 for non-members submitting work, and £10 for observers.

Sunday 13th May

Regional Exhibition Selection and AGM

This is being held at Foxton Village Hall, Hardman Road, Foxton, CB22 6RN, from approximately 10:30 to 16:30. Entry is **free**, but there a small fee to enter the exhibition.

Sunday 3rd June

Joint meeting with the Digital Imaging Group

This is being held at The Costessey Centre, 1 Longwater Lane, Costessey, Norwich, NR8 5AH. Details and cost TBA.

Sunday 2nd September

Lecture or Outing

Details and venue TBA.

Sunday 14th October

Distinctions Workshop

This is being held at Foxton Village Hall, Hardman Road, Foxton, CB22 6RN, from approximately 10:30 to 16:30. The workshop will comprise an introduction for people who are new to RPS Distinctions, as well as offering informal help for those who wish to bring work for appraisal for either the LRPS or ARPS Distinction. Details and cost TBA.

Sunday 4th November

Distinctions Advisory Day

LRPS and ARPS (all categories). This is being held at The Costessey Centre, 1 Longwater Lane, Costessey, Norwich, NR8 5AH, from approximately 10:30 to 16:30. Cost is £15 for RPS members submitting work, £20 for non-members submitting work, and £10 for observers.

