

1. The past year

I'm sure I'm one of thousands, if not millions, who are saying what a strange year that was!

Our last meeting in St Georges was on 28/2/20 with Sue showing her panel and Wendy Kennet teaching us about textures. I remember this because the next week was due to be Tony Bentley, but he didn't want to come because he was especially at risk.

I think many camera clubs then went 1 of 2 ways. They did what they could to continue or they just left it and said we'll wait and see. I am proud to say that we chose the former and on 5/5/20 we had our first Zoom meeting. We also made the evenings free to anyone.

Over the summer we had 10 meetings every 2 weeks, with an informal themed competition every time and events like Photoshop demos, videos, a quiz, and even an outing. During this time we also had an EGM, and this was interesting inasmuch we said we would leave 2021 open in case we could meet again.

As it happens, of course, we are still not allowed to meet and the full season of 2020-21 has been via Zoom. I believe in many ways it has been very successful, apart from the big disadvantage of the true social interaction that means so much to everyone.

The one really big advantage is we were able to get speakers from all over the place, even the USA.

Not only speakers but also judges. I have really enjoyed the different judges and their individual personalities. I might not agree with all their comments but I think it was so refreshing to hear new people.

12 external speakers

Abstract photography with Colin Westgate
Taking an idea from creation, capture to competition with Ross McKelvey
Flower panels - creating and judging with Polina Plotnikova
Improving your photography by Martin Patten with Martin Patten
X-ray photography with Nick Veasy
Long exposure photography with Derek Michelski
Reality is Overrated with Katherine Knee
Patagonia with Julian Elliot
Safaris with Kathryn Haylett
Let's talk creative with Diane Sneddon
Coastal Photography with Alison Taylor
Fine art photography with Brooks Jensen USA

Judges

Gareth Martin
Pat Couder
Paul Parkinson
nigelonline@mac.com
Paul Dunmall
Kylie Martin
Daan Olivier
Ray Bridges
Lorraine Robins
Diane Sneddon

We even managed a couple of outings, and with members' presentations, a quiz this made up the season. There was a lack of members' individual presentations this year but if I'm honest, it was easier to get external speakers to talk via zoom.

There were 4*2 rounds of our standard competitions.

There were 2 more externally judged competitions

There were 2 internal competitions

2. Next year

Where does that leave us for the next year? What do we mean by next year? These are my thoughts:

Summer season

1. We should have a summer season, either every 2 or 4 weeks, starting in May, free of charge
2. For the summer season, more content and organisation responsibility needs to be taken by the membership, with the rest organised by myself and Melanie

Next season

1. I believe we should offer a hybrid meeting for next season.
 - This means it would take place in a hall or online, or both
 - The speaker or judge could attend in person or online
 - The membership would have the choice of attending in person or online

So, for example, if we are able to meet in person in 2021, we would meet in Sandgate library, which has excellent internet. Those who wanted to attend in person, could, and those wanting to stay at home, could join via Zoom, broadcast from Sandgate.

2. The hybrid format allows us to get excellent speakers again, but I do think we should have around 2-3 internally led presentations. (I do not mean image presentations, but talks and teaching)
3. The last Monday or thereabouts will be an outdoor meeting
4. There was a questionnaire carried out in May/June last year. This is available on the website. We, as a committee, will be guided by this questionnaire. This means:
 - Roughly speaking, the competitions for next season will stay as they are, (although there is to be 1 less round due to timings), as the current format was given a significant thumbs up
 - The themes will come from the submissions in the questionnaire
 - We will try to arrange outings to places in the questionnaire
5. Due to uncertainty, we will keep the subs at £15/half season

3. Other

We are not a large club and really need about 40 members to function well, so we will be trying to recruit members. We did make contact with other clubs in the area as we thought there might be synergies to be achieved together but this was not very fruitful

Boulstone was a victim of lockdown, and do we do hope to re-start this initiative which should culminate in an exhibition of prints, hopefully at the Kent Battle of Britain Museum Trust in Hawkinge.

Lastly, thanks to Simon for his efforts on Boulstone and the exhibition over Xmas.

Thank you to the committee for your efforts

Most of all, many thanks for the tireless work put in by Melanie, (with Michael in the background), without whom this club would not be what it is.