

President's Speech

Exmouth Photo Group 50th Anniversary

I hope everyone enjoyed their meal.
Shortly there will be cake!
But you need to put up with me for a couple of minutes first.

50 years ago the Exmouth Photo Group was formed, holding its inaugural meeting on 12th September 1969. It was opened by Tony Langmead who became the first ever club Chairman and I'm very pleased that he's able to be with us today.

Back then a handful of Exmouth Camera Club members had become disillusioned and wanted a club with a more practical bias to meetings, with an emphasis on members taking part and helping to further each other's work. This ethos should sound familiar to most of you today.

Founding members: Tony Langmead, John Stredwick, Peter Dawson, Leonard Wills, John Hinman, Roger Beatie.

These people became the founding members of the Exmouth Photo Group (which had an annual subscription of £2!). They were clearly successful in building up a solid membership because at the very first AGM (11th Sept 1970) it stood at 37 (with 25 attending). However, shortly afterwards there is a record of half a dozen being written to and reminded that they weren't fulfilling their obligation to produce work! Some of you will remember John Stredwick being very hot on this.

That AGM took a little longer than they do now, having started at 7:45 and ending at 10:05.

By the time I joined in 1975 it was a thriving club with a membership ranging from teenagers through each generation and with diverse backgrounds and interests. Those of you that like to socialise in the pub after meetings should note that a small group of us who were then in our 20's started this practice (some are here today). We did however get home a little later back then - often after 2am. The routine was Photo Group, pub (where we'd have 5 or 6 drinks), chip shop and then take in turns each week going back to one another's houses to eat and socialise further.

I could pick out numerous events we've been involved in over the years, like the Police and Dartmoor Rescue Group being called to find Peter Dawson and Cyril Morrey lost on the Moor and a couple of members being prosecuted for trespassing on the railway when we walked to Lymptone one evening, but I'll just mention a few things of note and try to keep it short.

In 1989 we held our 20th Anniversary celebration with an evening meal. Any guesses as to where? Yes, here at the Devoncourt when the cost was £8.50.

Five years later (5th Aug 1994) we held our 25th with an exhibition and buffet at the Leisure Centre. Many of you were there too. A record of the event and details of our membership, which stood at 38, is in the folder if you haven't seen it yet. There's also the very first EPG annual programme in there.

In 2000 we undertook the Millennium Project by photographing just about every street in Exmouth and providing the complete record to the Devon Archive. 20 years on we are about to do it again.

After 50 years where are we today? Your Photo Group has a long history and reputation for being amongst the most successful in the region. For example; we've regularly been successful, or at least done well, in the annual Devon Clubs Battle (which we started), the Annual WCPF Members Exhibitions and projected image competitions (originally slides and now digital), the South Devon League, the Horseshoe Trophy and we sometimes beat Exeter in the Mix and Match competition.

Quite a few members now hold distinctions (RPS, PAGB, FIAP, etc.), some of whom are in the process of working towards another one and other members are working towards their first one. Wherever possible we try to help each other attain goals such as these.

We have a thriving Audio Visual Group which meets every month, with some keen members who enter International, National and Regional events. Two of our members are amongst the top workers in the country.

We are now combining our Print and Digital Groups to form what we are calling the PoP Group (Print or Project Group).

All of these activities are geared to fulfilling that central aim from 50 years ago to "help further each other's work".

We are privileged to be members of the Exmouth Photo Group.

Thank you all for being with us today, especially our guests – who are welcome to re-join ☺.

(Note: remember to thank Ian, Maurice, Stella (cake) and Committee).

Finally, thanks to our founder members who didn't know it at the time but they formed the best photography club in the area, and here's to the next 50 years!

John Perriam ARPS DPAGB AFIAP
Hon. President

30th August 2019