

New President's Speech 2017

Good evening everyone. It gives me great pleasure to take on the role of President of the Sheffield Photographic Society for 2017-18.

My first job is to thank our outgoing President Anne Turner. She has had a very successful year and led the club with great energy, enthusiasm and humour. She's even managed to make housekeeping notices entertaining at times. Whether it's been managing Society meetings and events, chairing Council meetings, welcoming guest speakers, judges, visitors or new members; she has acted as a great ambassador for the club. The weekly Wednesday newsletters, which she initiated, have been a fantastic addition to communications within the club and have helped everyone to feel more included. Ladies and gentleman, I would ask you all to join with me in thanking Anne in the usual way.

When Anne asked me to take on the role of President Elect, I felt really honoured. It is a privilege to become the President of such a long-established and successful club. I remember seeing one of the Club's exhibitions in the Botanical Gardens before I joined and wishing I could take photographs as good as they were. Little did I think when I joined the Club seven years ago, with limited photographic experience and a cheapish bridge camera, that I would one day be President.

So, my aims for the Club this year are simple and cover both internal and external issues.

Internally, to continue to encourage members to take a full part in all the club's activities. We have a reputation as being a friendly and welcoming club and I hope that those who have joined recently have found this and that new members will soon be made feel part of the club. There is always someone ready to give advice and pass on tips.

There will be lots of opportunities for members to show and share their work e.g. the Winter Garden exhibition, the Ken Doney competition, the Members' Print Competition, the Annual Exhibition, members' nights and the Forum Competition.

We have some great speakers' evenings lined up for this year, covering topics as wide ranging as theatre photography, using a smart phone camera and surrealism. Mike Smith has also booked some prestigious speakers such as, John Hooton on tour from Ireland, Mark Littlejohn, Doug Chinnery and Alan Stopher, the President of the YPU. So congratulations to Mike on putting together a fantastic programme in this, his first year in the role. I would like us all to thank him in advance in the usual way.

Externally, I want to see Sheffield PS continue to flourish in the wider photographic community. We already make a substantial number of entries into the YPU competitions and in May 2018 we are hosting the YPU exhibition. This will bring great prestige to the club and the city and we expect many visitors. John Scholey has already put many plans in place but there is still much to do. He will need help and support from all of us over the year.

With Colin New's encouragement we also send more and more entries to the London Salon, with increasing success.

Richard Hall has taken on the role of External Competitions organiser and again there are opportunities via him to enter inter-club competitions, like the North Cheshire.

Please continue to support them by submitting images.

We have also been more widely represented in the local press, with dedicated monthly pages in the Sheffield Telegraph and individual entries in the “In Focus” page. Both these initiatives have helped raise our profile across the city.

Even if you are not competitive and don't like your work being judged openly, there are plenty of opportunities to develop skills, such as by listening to guest speakers' and judges' comments. The critique groups are now well established and these have proved a very effective way of sharing ideas in a supportive environment. The Forum is also a good place to display images and ask for feedback. So let's hope these outlets continue to flourish.

For most people in the club, however, photography is a hobby, rather than for chasing honours, and as many of our professional speakers remind us – it should remain fun. You take photographs for yourself, photographs you like, not to please judges.

This is the last meeting on the programme but we have lots more on offer. We have the summer dinner at City College on June 15th and Pat has put together a varied summer outings programme. We have days out in Lincoln and Trentham Gardens and lots of local walks, usually ending up in a pub. It's a great way of getting to know people in the club better, picking up tips and collecting new images.

I want mention my choice for the theme night this year so you can start collecting images over the summer. The theme is “Light” – a subject which should offer lots of photographic possibilities, I hope.

I would like to announce that Jim Charlton has agreed to be President Elect and take over the role of President in a year's time. Jim has been a member of the Club for several years and was President around 10 years ago. He is a skilled photographer and has given us several fascinating presentations. I know that he will make an excellent President.

Finally, I'd like to end with a couple of quotes about photography.

The first by the famous American street photographer, Elliott Erwitt.

“To me, photography is an art of observation. It's about finding something interesting in an ordinary place... I've found it has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them.”

The second by another American photographer, Imogen Cunningham.

“Which of my photographs is my favourite? The one I'm going to take tomorrow.”

Enjoy your photography this summer and see you in September.

Thank you.

