

External Competitions

Durham Photographic Society takes part in several competitions with other clubs on an annual basis.

The NCPF Championship

This is a competition, held in February each year, between clubs who are members of the Northern Counties Photographic Federation and for a number of years it has been hosted by Washington Camera Club. Typically, fifteen to twenty clubs from our region are involved and, as this is an open event where any member of any club can attend, it is a great opportunity to meet fellow enthusiasts from other societies.

There are two sections, one for prints and one for projected digital images. Each club enters twenty pictures in each section and these are assessed by three judges. In the prints section, the pictures are displayed in turn and each judge gives a mark of between 2 and 5 – so each picture gets a mark of between 6 (rare) and 15 (also rare). The judges use an electronic system where they press a button to register their marks. The winner is the club with the highest total after all the prints have been seen.

The same method is used in the projected images section.

The NCPF uses this competition to select its representatives in the national print and PDI competitions run by the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain. The top two clubs in the print section go on to compete in the PAGB's Print Club Championships, held each October at Connah's Quay, North Wales. The two highest-scoring clubs in PDI go forward to the PAGB PDI Championships, which are held at Warwick University in July.

DPS has been successful in these competitions in the past, going to Warwick on several occasions and to Connah's Quay once.

The NCPF Annual Competitions

While the NCPF Championship is a club competition, the Annual Competitions are basically for individuals (although clubs do pick up awards too). The judging of the Annual Competitions is a closed event, and, unlike the Championship, is not open to general viewing.

There are sections for colour prints, monochrome prints and projected images; in addition, a photographer can enter as a beginner or in the open competition. There are individual awards for the best images in the categories of Portrait, Landscape, Nature and Creativity – although photographers don't have to enter pictures into those specific categories; they simply enter the colour, mono or PDI sections and the judges sort out which image is the best portrait, or landscape, etc.

This is one competition where there are no pictures 'rejected' by a team of selectors – all pictures brought in for this event will be judged. Once all the pictures have been collected, however, our selectors do pick six images from each section to represent us in the 'club competitions'.

A photographer may enter up to three images in each of the colour print, mono print and PDI sections (or up to two in each of the Beginners' competitions).

When the results of the Annual Competitions are posted, individual entries may have an “A” or a “P” printed next to them. These have been “chosen for the Alliance” or “chosen for the Portfolio”. What this means is explained as follows.

The NCPF takes part in inter-federation competitions (organised each year by the PAGB) for both prints and PDI. Once the NCPF Annual Competition judges have made their assessments all the images are looked at again by a different set of NCPF judges. These then select the pictures for the “Alliance entry” – the two dozen or so images from each section that will represent the NCPF in the national inter-federation competitions. It goes without saying that it is quite an achievement to have a picture chosen for the Alliance. (It is also interesting to note that occasionally pictures which have done badly in the original competition have later been selected for the Alliance – which says a lot about the subjectivity of judging!).

The “P” is for “Portfolio”. The entry is looked over by yet another set of judges. Their task is to pick out pictures which, although they may not be competition winners, are interesting as images and which are representative of the kind of work being produced by the clubs of the Federation.

The Annual Competition winning images and the pictures chosen for the Alliance and the Portfolio are put onto DVD and provide an evening’s entertainment later in the Society’s year.

The GB Cup

Established by the PAGB in 2008, this is a club competition which any club in the country can enter. It provides a rare opportunity to compete against many clubs nationwide, without having to go through a qualification process such as the NCPF Championship. It is for projected digital images only and it has Open and Nature sections. The club selects 15 images for the Open section and up to 21 in Nature with a maximum of four images per member and three images per member in the respective sections.

Again, the judging of this event (in February each year) is closed from general viewing and takes place outside our region – we receive the results by email.

The Wear Area Battle

This event is for clubs from our particular subsection of the NCPF, the Wear Area – which takes in societies such as Sunderland, Consett and Bishop Auckland, to name but a few. It has been hosted by Washington Camera Club for many years and has moved from being a slide competition to being PDI only. Providing the images for this event is not such a headache for our selectors as each club only has to provide five pictures. Marks are awarded by an NCPF judge and the winning club receives a handsome “Miner’s Lamp” trophy.