

Welcome to the club – guidance for new members

Durham is a big club which may be a little daunting at first if you don't know anyone. However, you will find our members friendly and helpful people with a wide diversity of photography interests and experience levels. We hope you quickly find like-minded people to enjoy the social and photography aspects. Remember, many of your fellow members are new to the club also.

You will find detailed information in your copy of the DPS printed programme which includes a calendar of club night events, competitions, general and competition rules. There is also a list of officers and committee members, any of which will be pleased to help and advise you. Also available at www.d-p-s.org.uk

COMMUNICATE NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

These are via “Announcements” on club nights, on the notice board at the club and on the Blog of the DPS website. The Blog also has news of exhibitions, competition winners, dates of events popular with photographers (Hot Dates), and more.

THE PROGRAMME

The Programme Secretary strives to schedule varied and interesting club night events with top speakers. There should be something for everyone. If you have ideas, suggestions or general feedback, please feel free to speak to the Programme Secretary.

Some of the most popular evenings are Members Nights for which you may like to volunteer!

COMPETITIONS

We have an exciting, varied and time honoured programme of competitions. Many members enjoy the competitive element while others simply see the opportunity to have a public showing of their work with feedback from the judges (and fellow members). Either way, everyone is grateful if you enter because you are providing the entertainment for the evening.

The first step is to study the rules of each competition plus the separate general competition rules which are in your programme. If you are new to photography there is a print competition specifically for less experienced workers – the Print Progress B competition.

You will also find a downloadable quick reference guide to competitions, a useful competition tracker spreadsheet and a guide on to how to prepare images for digital projection and web in *Downloads* on the DPS website.

EXHIBITIONS

The jewel in the crown is our Annual Exhibition in the Galilee Chapel, Durham Cathedral in July. As a member you have the right to show prints that will be seen by visitors from all over the world. We also normally have an exhibition of prints every year in the Botanic Gardens where 47 members can show one piece of their work. We also hold mini exhibitions in local libraries. In addition we have other themed exhibitions from time to time in the Town Hall entrance gallery and elsewhere. For the Annual exhibition, prints can be mounted in either 20x16 inch or 40x50 cm mounts. The Town Hall and Botanic Gardens ones need to be 20x16 inch to fit the frames.

ASSIGNMENT GROUP OUTINGS

Every month or so, this group of members (any member can join) descend on a different location and simply take pictures. There is a follow up meeting where prints are shown and discussed. As well as the enjoyment and challenge of photography with fellow enthusiasts, and the undoubted learning experience, there is also the opportunity to get to know people better, and perhaps experience photography different from your norm.

There are galleries of images taken at the assignment group outings. Click on Assignments on the home page of the DPS website to see more.

DAYS OUT WITH FELLOW MEMBERS

Completely informally, you will find fellow members at popular events such as Whitby Goth Festival, Pickering Wartime Weekend and the like. In time you will find members with the same interests and it's good to share transport. Other examples include the Farne Islands in the summer, steam events, sporting events – the list is endless. Note that dates for events popular with photographers are published in the Hot Dates items on the Blog as well as the club notice board.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE COMMUNITY

For some considerable time individual members and groups of members have photographed for Durham institutions and charities such as Durham Cathedral, Durham Light Infantry Association, Bikewise, Durham Miners' Gala and St Cuthbert's Hospice. Ask if you'd like to know more.

DIGITAL PROCESSING NIGHTS

There is a meeting once a month (except in January and August), usually the first Wednesday, where Photoshop and Lightroom demonstrations are given and is open to all members. There is no charge. If you are a complete beginner it's a good idea to get some basic training first by going to night classes or by following tutorials that are widely available in photography magazines and on line.

THE WEBSITE

You will find a great deal of interest including galleries, member profiles and a *story behind the picture* collection. The website is constantly being updated and any changes are listed under *Latest Updates*. If you have a non-commercial photography website yourself a link can be posted. To keep abreast of club activities and the wider photography world it's a good idea also to regularly check out the Blog section for the latest news

PHOTO FORUMS

These are a great way to show pictures, and receive and give feedback. We currently have five thriving portfolio groups:

i-witness: a group of around 15 members

The Aperture Group: the newest group

dpsdigital: open to all DPS members

Victoria: a long standing group of around 15 members

Eyefetch: for enthusiasts of black and white photography – a group of around 15 members

HOW IT WORKS:

A. Monthly arrangement, e.g. *i-witness* and *the Aperture Group*: members post one picture each in the 1st half of every month and comment on all the pictures in the second half.

B. Ad-lib arrangement, e.g. *dpsdigital*, *Victoria* and *Eyefetch*: members post images and comments whenever they like.

Dpsdigital is open to all DPS members. Simply contact John Brown to receive your user name and password and away you go.

i-witness and *Aperture Group* are closed at the moment but if you would like your name on the waiting list, contact Neil Maughan or John Cogan respectively.

Victoria and *Eyefetch* membership is by invitation. Contact John Brown for more information.

You can set up your own photo forum of like-minded members, perhaps with specialist interests. You will need an administrator. John or Neil will advise what is entailed.

NCPF & PAGB

Durham Photographic Society belongs to a federation of northern clubs, The Northern Counties Photographic Federation, which in turn forms part of The Photographic Alliance of Great Britain.

Our NCPF membership gives us access to competition judges, lecturers and more. There are also inter-club competitions which we enter. Successful clubs at this level go on to compete at PAGB events. There is also a GB Cup run by the PAGB.

The PAGB also give Awards of Photographic Merit (CPAGB, DPAGB, MPAGB).

News and information from the PAGB is via newsletters, *e-news of the PAGB*. These also now appear on the PAGB website. You can still subscribe to receive directly by email:

www.pagbnews.co.uk/ewssubform.html.

The NCPF updated their website in 2011 and you will find a great deal of interest:

www.ncpf.org

You will find a full description of inter-club competitions we enter in *Downloads* on the website

INTERNATIONAL SALONS

The most local is the Northern Counties International Salon of Photography which is run by the NCPF. Increasingly, members are actively entering their work in Salons across the world and having success.

You will find useful articles and reports by Neil Maughan on the Blog and in the quick links section at the bottom of the Blog page

DISTINCTIONS

Many members are enjoying the challenge of gaining photography distinctions (and letters after their name!) and can advise. A useful guide can be found on the NCPF website in the Knowledge section: <http://www.ncpf.org.uk/index.php?id=knowledge-base-distinctions>

EQUIPMENT LOANS

We currently have a Spyder 3 monitor calibrator and a Nikon 1V ED film/slide scanner. These are available on free loan to members. Simply put your name down if there is a waiting list.

VOLUNTEERING

The Society is run by the committee, all volunteers, backed up by a veritable legion of other volunteers. There are many ways you can get involved so please feel free, if you would like to, to help in any way you can. On the other hand, it is perfectly OK not to volunteer for anything! Just being a member is valued and is enough.

FAQs

Does the Society offer training?

We do not run courses (not in our remit) but there are numerous opportunities to learn and improve your skills by virtue of the many activities of the club

Does the Society offer technical or photography advice?

There is a wealth and diversity of knowledge and experience amongst the membership and you will find fellow members only too pleased to help. Simply ask any committee member and they will introduce you to the right people. In addition, we are developing a "Help Desk" concept which we hope will include a database of member expertise.

Is there a portrait group (or wildlife or landscape etc)?

Not at the moment but any such group could be set up if there is enough member interest. Currently, regular special interest group meetings, extra to the programme, are the popular Digital nights and the Assignment group outings. In 2011 there were workshops exclusive to DPS members at the Swinton Birds of Prey centre which may be repeated.

How do I re-size digital images for competitions and the website?

In 2012 we have purchased a state of the art projector and high spec laptop to deliver outstanding projected image quality for the viewing enjoyment of members. Image size is now 1400x1050 px for projection though still 1024x768 px for web. Exactly how to do it can be found in Downloads on the Home page of the DPS website.

What about AV?

The digital revolution has opened up new possibilities. A number of members are enthusiastic practitioners of audio visual shows and most years we have a members AV night in the programme.

Does anyone offer advice about publishing books?

It is becoming easier to self- publish photography books on line and a number of members can advise.

Is there kit snobbery at the club?

From time to time, you read criticism in the photographic press of clubs where members are made to feel inferior because of the cameras they own. It is all nonsense and we can say we've never come across this here! At this club people are using everything from mobile phones to iPads, to compacts, to 5x4! However, SLRs are always popular and you may come across friendly banter between, for instance, Nikon and Canon users. A number of our members also contribute to the thriving Pentax User Forum, and all the other popular brands are represented. So if brand loyalty is your thing you will find plenty of fellow enthusiasts.