



Lancashire & Cheshire Photographic Union

State of the Union Questionnaire Feedback

September 2001

Introduction

In March 2001, the Executive Committee met to discuss the various issues raised by the "State of the Union" questionnaire survey. This resulted in a number of changes being introduced in the way the L&CPU provide services to clubs. These have been reported in our Federation newsletter, Focal Points.

The Committee also asked me to put together a document containing helpful advice for clubs. In order to do this it was necessary to go back to some of the clubs who had reported successes in various activities and ask them to supply more detail about specific successes. This has resulted in a number of case studies being compiled. Keith Suddaby has provided an example of setting up a group for young photographers and also setting up a Judges' Charter, the latter with a section by David Marsh. Bob Dennis gives an account of a successful local association of photographic clubs and Helen Sloman (South Manchester CC) tells how her club is successful in attracting and retaining members.

The information on grant applications was put together by myself from information from the Internet and with help from members of Stalybridge PC and Mid Cheshire CC.

I hope that you will find the following pages helpful and encouraging.

Christine Widdall CPAGB

Is your membership declining?

Many clubs are reporting a year on year fall in membership numbers. But some clubs in our Federation continue to thrive. I asked one such club from my own area to tell us why they are doing so well. Below is the case study they provided.

South Manchester Camera Club (SMCC) – Why are they so popular?

Why do camera clubs have problems attracting members? Do you really have to ask? "Boring, stuffy and over-technical - basically just a clique for opinionated experts to show off" - is a common perception of photographic societies. Camera clubs tend to be heavily male dominated and lacking in younger members. When this is combined with old-fashioned attitudes, it's hardly surprising they have an image problem! Clubs have been criticised for overemphasising competition within the club, promoting rivalry and politics and discouraging beginners. Why would anyone want to sit in a dark hall watching slideshows, when far more modern and exciting presentations and discussion groups are open to all on the internet?!

This view of camera clubs is one that SMCC has taken pains to dispel. Its success in attracting and keeping members is due to two key factors: accessibility to the public, and the friendly and enthusiastic atmosphere within the club.

Have a Modern Outlook

Despite being a well-established club, founded nearly 50 years ago back in 1952, SMCC is very forward thinking.

They have fully embraced the art of digital imaging and digital prints are accepted in all internal club competitions. Experimentation with new techniques is encouraged - they are definitely not stuck in the dark ages! The club has its own website, regularly updated, with information about the club, details of upcoming events and examples of members' work. Many new members have discovered the club via the website, and this openness is critical to attracting new members.

Be Welcoming to New Members & Beginners

Because they understand that attending a camera club meeting for the first time can be intimidating, the club goes out of its way to make new members feel welcome. Every club meeting starts with a welcome to newcomers, and new members are introduced with a profile published in the club's quarterly magazine. Competitions are split into beginners and advanced sections to give everyone a chance of success, and with the emphasis on the artistic rather than the purely technical side of photography, no-one is blinded by science and techno-babble.

Organise a Varied Programme of Events

SMCC meets throughout the year, instead of stopping for the summer as many clubs do. The monthly competitions the club runs are open, not restricting members to a single subject. This gives them the freedom to pursue their own interests. The club also delivers a wide variety of events, inviting speakers from the fields of wildlife, world-travel, journalism, landscapes, and digital-imaging specialists, to name but a few. Members are given the opportunity to produce their own slideshows, and workshops are run where everyone has the chance to get involved.

Be Active!

Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm and success breeds success. SMCC is full of keen photographers, busy producing work, displaying in exhibitions and entering competitions on a regular basis. This has the benefit of inspiring other club members, and also boosts the reputation of the club, making it an organisation to which people are proud to belong. Success in regional and national competitions gives the club another advantage – exposure in magazines and the local press. When last year SMCC won “Camera Club of the Year” and one of its members was awarded the “Amateur photographer of the year” in Amateur Photographer Magazine, several articles were run in local newspapers as well as in the magazine itself. This free publicity for the club can only help bring it to the attention of potential new members, and the more talent recruited into the club, the more chance of success it has in future competitions.

Be Friendly & Encouraging!

South Manchester Camera Club is about helping people to develop their talent and share their work and ideas, whether they are beginners or established experts. Its friendly atmosphere and energy ensures people keep coming back for more.

So, what makes SMCC so popular? In a nutshell – its members. Without all their hard work, it would not be the thriving organisation it is today.

Helen Sloman - Publicity Secretary SMCC

More suggestions for attracting members

Here is another selection of ideas:

Summer Schools

Many clubs take a break during the summer months. If you have members willing and your venue is available, consider running short courses in photography for the local community during the summer recess. It might just bring in some new members!

Sponsorship

Have you considered asking local firms to sponsor club activities? How about setting up a sponsored photographic competition for members of the general public. Try getting a local newspaper to sponsor this by advertising the event free

of charge and perhaps supplying judges from their photojournalism department.

Prizes might be provided by local businesses; the advertising in the newspaper should, of course, mention their names.

Your club could also offer a year's free membership to the winners.

Exhibitions

Finding a suitable Exhibition venue is not easy. However, holding exhibitions in places which are visited by members of the general public is one way to publicise your activities and hopefully gain members. One thing is for certain - if prospective members don't know of your existence, they won't join!

It is generally a good idea to have stewards from the club available at all times the Exhibition is open, to encourage prospective members to come along to meetings. This is also helped by having publicity material available to take away - be sure it makes your club look welcoming and that it contains the times and venue of your meetings as well as information about activities. Involve visitors in the exhibition - ask them to vote for their favourite work.

Try local libraries and shopping malls; some clubs have reported success in attracting members by exhibiting work in such places. Visitor centres at local nature reserves are often keen to put up a print display, especially if the subject matter is relevant e.g. local landscapes and nature photographs. You might be able to combine such an Exhibition with talks on photographic techniques in the evenings.

Ask the local newspaper to publicise your exhibition - at least one newspaper in the Greater Manchester area gives their local clubs a full page spread of pictures from the exhibition each year.

Chris Widdall CPAGB

A Judges' Charter

Happy with your Judges?

Perhaps you do have the odd meeting where you feel that there could be a little improvement in the way the judging went. Do you remember the suggestion at the first 'Big Day' that a Judges' Charter might help? Did your club take this up? Does your club still use a 'Judges' Charter'? It was drawn up on the simple premise that an evening of judging is a contract of involvement. A judge should agree to do what the club wants, and a club should be clear about what this is. Otherwise there is a recipe for misunderstanding and much worse (oh! the tales that could be told...)

So, just to remind you, here is a copy of the draft 'Judges' Charter' which was made available to all clubs three seasons ago. The hope is that clubs will think each point through and produce a specific tailor-made Charter, and give it in advance to all their judges. Equally, the hope is that judges will ask for such clarification so that they can comply with what is looked for on the evening. Why not do it? Well, of course, you are entirely happy with your judges, aren't you?

JUDGES CHARTER _____ P.S./C.C.

(delete or insert exactly as your club wishes)

The purpose of this sheet is to let you know clearly what our club / society would like, and to obtain your agreement in order to help your judging.

1. We would like to you to judge our _____ competition on _____

We estimate _____ prints and _____ slides in total.

2. Our club's rules and definitions for this competition are enclosed, or can be clarified by our competition secretary. Please use these in your judging.

3. We have the following sections in our club:

- (a) Beginners / General Members / Intermediate / Advanced / others
- (b) covering monochrome prints / colour prints / digital prints / general slides / nature slides / others
- (c) we do / do not distinguish between home processed and trade processed.

4. Please select a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in each section.

5. Please also award in each section several Very Highly Commended / Highly Commended/Commended

6. In our club we do not require marks or please mark out of 10, using $\frac{1}{2}$ marks or please mark out of 20, using full marks / $\frac{1}{2}$ marks or other

7. Please award the top mark to the 1st, one step less to the 2nd, and one step less to the 3rd. The "commendeds" (VHC / HC / C) should then follow or other _____

8. As your marks contribute to club trophies, we need to have consistency across our season. Please mark over the full range available i.e. 1 to 10, or 1 to 20 or in the Beginners' Section, mark from 5 to 10 / from 10 to 20 or in all Sections mark from 5 to 10 / from 10 to 20 or in all Sections mark from to 10 / from to 20

9. Please "spread" your marks reasonably evenly across our club's entries, so that at each level of mark there is approximately the same number of photographs.

10. Our club agrees with the L&CPU's "Questions to be addressed by the Judge" (copies available from L&CPU).

11. We also agree that all pictures should be judged only against the standard presented in each section, looking at each picture equally fairly, whatever its type or subject.

12. Our members welcome perceptive and constructive comments. Please remember that we do encourage learners and hopefuls to try out their work.

We do hope that you can help us, and we enclose the normal booking form with specific details.

To _____ Competition Secretary P.S. / C.C.

Of _____ PS/CC

I accept your invitation to judge on _____

and I am happy to comply with your club's requirements /or I have these comments:-

Signed _____

Date _____

Keith Suddaby FRPS MPAGB AFIAP

Questions to be addressed by the Judge

1. What did the author set out to show the viewer? Did he use the following to maximise the message in the end product?

2. Viewpoint selection and subject arrangement within the picture space.

3. Suitability of lighting.

4. Where appropriate the timing (instant of time) of exposure.

5. Use of photographic controls to get the desired effect.

6. The technical quality of the final picture e.g. print quality

7. Framing and presentation.

8. Where appropriate, the conveyance of mood, atmosphere, character or design elements.

9. The overall appearance of the final product. Has it done what the author intended?"

10. At the highest level, is there individuality / an author's style

*All the above should be judged at a level commensurate with the worker's stated ability
e.g. Beginner; Intermediate or Advanced*

David Marsh FRPS APAGB

Working Together - the Wirral Photographic Association

In 1990 a meeting was held in Birkenhead with reps from all nine Wirral affiliated clubs.

The original reason for it was a suggestion to stage a joint print exhibition. That exhibition was deemed not feasible at that time.

However, what did come from the meeting was a decision for all Wirral clubs to co-operate in joint ventures. Also to produce a newsletter dedicated to Wirral clubs and their members, to report their successes, to encourage their members, to advertise our joint ventures and supply information of interest to local photographers. (I'm not sure how, but a certain Bob Dennis was given the job of Editor of the newsletter. I still am, now getting Vol.12 No.1 ready for September.)

The nine clubs jointly funded the newsletter and its duplication. (It is now paid for by the Association.)

At the time the combined Membership of the nine clubs was around 500. Currently we have seven clubs with a combined membership of 270 and falling!

In 1990 each club put in £10 to float the organisation. Ever since we have been having trouble trying not to make profits. (Mind you when we launched the Wirral Slide Exhibition we needed the money to get going until entrance and advertising revenues started to roll in.)

The main ethos of the group was that we could take on ventures which if they failed could cripple a single club but not a group of nine.

Our season's activities started with

- 1 A slide competition (The Wirral Trophy) between the nine clubs with a three judge panel using silent scoring machine. The main rule being that slides entered must not have ever been seen outside their own club.

- 2 Joint showing of the L&CPU A/V show

- 3 An annual Sunday seminar each November with nationally well known speakers.

A couple of years later we added

- 4 An annual International Lecture each February. We finance the speakers travel and accommodation and split the profits with the Birkenhead International Salon as a sponsor.

In 1997 I suggested that as Southport was the only North West National Open Exhibition, we should launch one in Wirral. We formed a steering group which led to a Committee and we staged the first one in 1998 having been accepted into the British Photographic Exhibition (BPE) circuit and enjoyed our acceptances counting towards the BPE Crown Award scheme. We have now staged it four times and it is going from strength to strength.

Why has the Wirral Photographic Association worked so well? Firstly, Wirral is a fairly easily defined geographical area. We are extremely fortunate to have nine clubs originally (which is now seven) in such a relatively small area. It is also an area in which the people are feverishly proud of Wirral. (God's country!) We are also fortunate that we have so many good photographers and so many organisers. Our representation on the L&CPU Executive Committee shows this and the last three Presidents - speaks volumes.

The newsletter, the 'Wirral Photo News', has been produced continually since 1990 and extols the virtues of Wirral clubs and Wirral members. We record all our club and individual successes. We advertise our events. We are extremely proud that we have an International and a National here in Wirral.

We have flown in speakers from Belgium, France, Austria, Holland, Switzerland, Malta plus all parts of the UK to lecture here in Wirral.

The strength really is that we are well organised and not afraid to go for the best. It is no use doing things that one club could take on if you want to get a good audience to an event it must be bigger than that.

Wirral is very prominent in L&CPU matters. An example is that the L&CPU Exhibition is in Wirral this year, as is the Knock-Out. Heswall won the overall trophy in this year's L&CPU Annual Competitions and the current President is from Wirral.

Check out how many images from Wirral are in this coming seasons folios.

62 prints out of 351 (17.66%)

28 slides out of 200 (14.00%)

90 images out of 551 (16.33%)

That's from an area with 7 clubs (6.7% of the L&CPU) and less than 10% in membership numbers.

The Wirral P.A. only has three Officers: President, Treasurer, Secretary.

We have about three Representatives meetings (Max) per year and they are attended by the Officers plus up to 2 reps per club. The Seminar Organiser and the Newsletter Editor come from those reps.

There is a Wirral Slide Exhibition Committee of seven who meet independently of the main group and report back to them, although they make their own decisions regarding the Exhibition. These seven, usually with one or two helpers on adjudication day, run the whole Exhibition from start to finish.

We believe that things run smoothly and better if run by the minimum needed.

If any other group of clubs within the L&CPU wish to set up a similar Association and need any help or guidance, we would be only too happy to oblige.

Bob Dennis CPAGB BPE*

Applying for grants through the National Lottery

The National Lottery was established by Parliament to raise money for worthwhile causes. The good causes it supports are the arts, sport, charities, heritage, and the new health, education and environment cause. The following bodies in England award grants:

1. The Sports Council of England
2. The Arts Council of England
3. The National Lottery Charities Board
4. The Heritage Lottery Fund
5. The New Opportunities Fund

Photographic clubs are most likely to fall into the domain of the Charities Board and Arts Council.

1. The Charities Board

The main role of the Charities Board is to meet the need of those at greatest disadvantage in society and to improve the quality of life in the community. The operating name for the Charities Board is the *Community Fund*.

Grants may be awarded to Registered Charities and voluntary or community groups which meet the Board's criteria. In order to comply with its eligibility rules, your organisation must be established for charitable, philanthropic or benevolent purposes. This is determined "on the basis of its constitutional document, rather than on the work it does or plans to do". If your club is registered with the Charity Commission, it will automatically be eligible to apply for a grant. However, many other organisations are eligible to apply.

There are also established policies about which kind of projects the Community Fund will support. The North West Strategic Plan covers the areas of Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside. It contains some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. The plan identifies a number of priorities for funding over the next three years, including projects that benefit the long-term unemployed, ethnic minority communities, disabled people, abused people, children and older people. The top priorities for 2001-2002 are rural disadvantage, refugees, black and ethnic minorities, and older people.

For more information, contact the National Lottery Charities Board. Write to:

The National Lottery Charities Board
St Vincent House
16 Suffolk Street
London SW1Y 4NL

Phone: 0207 747 5299
Email: enquiries@nlcb.org.uk
Website: www.nlcb.org.uk

The Community Fund North West Regional Office can be contacted at:

Dallam Court
Dallam Lane
Warrington
WA2 7LU

Phone: 01925 626800
Email: enquiries.nw@community-fund.org.uk

Further information can also be obtained from the Community Fund Website at www.community-fund.org.uk

2. The Arts Councils

There are four Arts Councils responsible for the distribution of Good Causes money to support arts projects in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively. Their aim is to help people to enjoy and take part in a broad range of arts activities. A new scheme called "Arts 4 everyone" will place particular emphasis on projects which support and develop the talents of young people.

The Arts Council of England can be contacted at:

14 Great Peter Street
London SW1P 3NQ

Tel: 0207 312 0123

Email: lottery.com@artscouncils.org.uk

Each Arts Council supports Regional Arts Boards. There are ten English Regional Arts Boards which organises the Regional Arts Lottery Programme. Each Board has a list of priorities and criteria against which applications are assessed.

The North West Arts Board

All applications made to the Regional Arts Lottery Programme are assessed against the following five national criteria:

- Quality of artistic and educational activities including plans for the involvement of artists.
- Public benefit offered by the project including access, plans for marketing, impact and value for money.
- Ability and commitment of the organisation in the management of the project.
- Meeting the aims of the programme and its contribution to regional priorities.
- Financial viability of the project and its future impact on the organisation.

One of these criteria refers to regional priorities identified by each Regional Arts Board. These priorities influence the advice given to applicants as well as how applications are assessed. Your project will not need to fulfil all of the regional priorities and applications meeting more than one priority will not be treated more favourably than those which address a single priority effectively.

The North West Arts Board's priorities are currently as follows:

Access:

- Community groups working with professional artists.
- Projects that strengthen links between communities and mainstream arts provision.
- Improving or establishing arts facilities in areas with little or no adequate provision.
- Projects that involve communities from low-income neighbourhoods.

Education:

- Projects that use the arts to encourage lifelong learning and to benefit the wider community. Particular emphasis will be placed on projects in low-income neighbourhoods that involve sustainable partnerships between arts, education and community groups.

Production and Distribution:

- Creation and presentation of high quality work in all art-forms.
- Developing programmes, distribution networks, markets and audiences to promote arts of the highest quality.
- Touring within the region, especially to under-served geographic areas, or of under-represented art-forms.
- Good practice in public art with priority given to projects where Lottery capital investment represents less than 25% of the total cost.

Investment in Artists:

- The creative, professional and economic development of artists and the creative industries, including support for facilities and resources managed by artists themselves.
- Artist residencies and mentoring programmes.

Organisational Development:

- Strategically significant arts organisations.
- Artist-led organisations.
- Arts organisations working in art-forms with an underdeveloped infrastructure or in areas of the region with a low base of arts activity.
- Arts organisations that work in or with communities from low-income neighbourhoods.
- Arts organisations led by or working with people of African, African-Caribbean, South Asian or Chinese descent.
- Arts organisations led by or working with disabled people.

The North West Arts Board expects the potential demand from good and eligible projects to exceed the funds available. The assessment of applications will therefore also take into account the following considerations:

- Whether applications are from areas of the region or communities that have comparatively less arts activity and/or have had relatively low benefit from the Arts Lottery in the past.
- The extent to which applications can demonstrate strong commitment from other partners with the potential for sustainable longer-term arts development.
- Maximising the number of beneficiaries by supporting a significant proportion of smaller one-year projects.

All applicants are strongly advised to contact North West Arts Board before submitting their application.

North West Arts Board,
Manchester House,
22 Bridge Street,
Manchester M3 3AB
Tel 0161 827 9247

Application Forms/Guidance

The criteria for obtaining funding can be found at www.art.org.uk/directory/funding/index.html

Application forms and guidance notes can be downloaded from www.arts.org.uk/funding/ralp/index.html

3. Other Sources of grants under the National Lottery Good Causes schemes

Funding is also available for sports, heritage and "new opportunities" projects. These grants are less likely to fall within the reach of the average photographic club. However the Heritage Lottery Fund might be worth looking at.

Heritage funding supports projects with the aim of "improving the quality of life by safeguarding the heritage of buildings, objects and the environment..." One area of the Heritage Lottery Fund's work is in supporting historic library collections and archives, including photographic, sound and film archives. More information can be found by going to the main Lottery site at

www.national-lottery.co.uk/causes/index.html

and following the links to the appropriate boards.

Grants from Local Authorities/Organisations

It is worth approaching your Local Authority to see what grants are currently available for projects in your area. Local councils may have an officer who could provide help and advice in making grant applications.

A directory of organisations and charitable trusts may be available at your local library. Ask your local librarian for help in identifying such sources of grants.

Example

A small Cheshire club have benefited on an annual basis from grants awarded by their local Borough Council. The amounts have varied between £80 and £120. They have to meet the criteria of their local voluntary arts council, which works through the Borough Council, and are required to be a member of this body to qualify for grants (they pay an annual membership fee of £5).

It may be worthwhile approaching your own Local Authority to see what they have to offer small groups in your area.

How will your application be interpreted?

In the box below are some observations on grant applications for Lottery Funds from a parallel organisation, the British Federation of Film Societies, North-West Group - by their Secretary, Chris Coffey. Maybe you can detect some similarities with our own organisation?

As some of you may be considering funding applications, let us see what the funding body might interpret from your application:

We need a new projector and DVD player to show films to our members.

"They will keep the equipment in a cardboard box for three hundred and fifty odd days a year."

We need a new projector and DVD player to show films to our members.

"They don't refer to any other group in their community who also might benefit, so their main objective will be to keep the equipment in a cardboard box for three hundred and fifty odd days a year."

We need a new projector and DVD player to show films to our members.

"There is no reference to any local authority arts or community officers they have consulted who may know groups willing to work with their local film society to see films or documentary videos, which would obviously jeopardise their real aim - keeping the equipment in a cardboard box for three hundred and fifty odd days a year."

We need a new projector and DVD player to show films to our members.

"We will keep the equipment in a cardboard box for three hundred and fifty odd days a year. Yes, we know our bid is almost double that for comparable groups, but you must appreciate that if you are keeping a cardboard box in your home for three hundred and fifty odd days a year, you want something valuable in it."

We need a new projector and DVD player to show films to our members.

"The lamps last 3000 hours so at 30 hours a year it should last our society until the 22nd century, with careful storage of that cardboard box."

We need a new projector and DVD player to show films to our members.

"Of course we cannot make a joint bid with a neighbouring society. We know we meet on different nights, but can you imagine the inconvenience of taking the cardboard boxes around? It's much worse than lugging them from home to venue!"

The objects for which the Federation is established are to advance the education of the public in film as an art and as a medium for information, education and social enlightenment; and to promote the study of film.

"Sod all that. It's inconvenient. We are happy as we are. We need a new projector and DVD player to show films to our members."

We can utilise our meetings as combined arts events.

"We can use the DVD player to play a Scottish Country Dancing CD while people are arriving and taking their seats. This will not attract new members we don't want, and thus we can maintain our objective: that we need a new projector and DVD player to show films to our members ... when it's not in a cardboard box."

Chris's serious advice on grant applications is good sense:

"Have someone neutral, preferably a non-member of your society, read your application. Make sure you know who is responsible for the arts within your local authority and make sure you have discussed the options fully with them, so that they are aware of both your existence and ideas. You don't have to take their advice, but it helps.

Your local Arts Board may give you a comprehensive contact list for all the local authorities in your area and quite often will discuss an application with their local authority connections, to help them decide where their limited funding should be directed to do the most good.

Remember the funding bodies have areas they must prioritise and it helps them if you can help them with one of their stated aims.

You don't have an automatic right to public, charitable or lottery funds. It is never enough to say "we are worthy".

If you can show that some aspect of what you do meets one or more of their objectives to some degree, you may be in with a chance. Most grant giving bodies can only help a small percentage of those they would like to support.

Even if you are a strong candidate you may not make this year's quota. Keep trying. Talk to the officers concerned about how you might make yourselves even stronger candidates in the next round of applications."

In Conclusion

Another small Cheshire club has had great success in attracting grant awards. Their advice is that your grant application will stand a greater chance of success if:

√.....there is already money buttonholed for projects in your particular area. Approach your Local Authority for advice.

√.....you have a project which fits the priorities chosen by the awarding body. Look at the priorities set for your area and see how you can fulfil them.

√.....your project benefits the whole community. It's OK to make a wish list of equipment you need for your particular club, but unless you can devise a project which uses that equipment for the benefit of the wider community, you won't impress.

√.....you already have a track record of working with your local community.

√.....you are good at networking. Join organisations within your local authority area; make yourselves known to local dignitaries and politicians; get them on your side; put ideas in their heads.

√.....you keep working at it. Have a go, don't give up at the first hurdle. See how your application can be better tailored to meet the requirements.

Chris Widdall CPAGB

Below is a working example of a community based project led by Keith Suddaby of Southport PS.

Setting up a Young Photographers' Group

Here are practical experiences from the Sefton / Southport area. We hope that you may be interested in some aspects as a possibility for your community.

1. In connection with the Southport Open Exhibition, Sefton Council asked that a "Young Photographer Competition" be started, and they gave initial grants (£200 - £250) for this purpose.

2. Note that this "Young Photographer Competition" consists largely of en-prints and small sizes (many are mounted by Southport P.S. before display).

3. Entries have increased each year from 48 in 1997 to 170 in 2001.

4. It is judged by the Picture Editor of the "Liverpool Echo" group.

5. There are small cash prizes and shields, in under 18, and under 14 groups.

6. These prints are very popular with the viewing public, and

numbers of Gallery visitors have gone up since it was included.

7. The youngsters add a lot of joy to the Opening occasion, and are warmly appreciated by the civic authority.

8. Entries were obtained first from a local school where a Southport P.S. member taught, and had formed an "after-school" photo group, and also from the Sefton Youth Service – teenagers who have, over the years, been given free films and free disposable cameras donated through Southport P.S.

9. After 2 years, the possibility of forming a young photographers group was discussed with the Mayor. He made a separate grant from the Mayor's Fund, and SNAPPERS was formed (Sefton's Newest Amateur Photographers).

10. SNAPPERS is separate from Southport P.S., although members of Southport P.S. contribute strongly to its running. Initially all young photographers who had entered the Southport Exhibition had the chance to join, and there are two families whose children have had much encouragement from exhibition successes who are founder members (age now up to 14).

11. Otherwise SNAPPERS started at the initially supportive primary school, meeting there monthly from 6.15 to 7.00 pm before the Southport P.S. club night. This meant that often the visiting speaker at Southport P.S. could also talk to the youngsters – everyone involved has greatly enjoyed this. At other times, Southport P.S. members have shown work.

12. The essential each month is a competition for "the Mayor's Monthly Medal", with certificates too. Invariably the winning picture is published in the local paper with a report. The monthly competitions are judged on the night by a Southport member, and certificates are written and presented to take home. There are different set themes each month.

13. A separate primary school asked Southport P.S. to lead photography as part of a year end Arts Festival fortnight. Members from Southport P.S. helped up to 160 children from age 4 to 11 to take photos (first a shot of the child, then the next 3 or 4 frames taken by that child). This was voted especially popular by the children, and it was repeated this year. As a result, the SNAPPERS meetings have been moved to this second school.

14. In the summer, three evening outings have been arranged, on condition that each child is accompanied by a parent, taking pictures in the Botanic Gardens, by the canal, around Southport, and at the funfair.

15. Some parents have, as a result, joined Southport P.S., and all the parents have commented on how the children have learned to take better and better photographs. Several have bought digital cameras and have had help from Southport P.S. members.

16. Altogether some 30 children and their parents have already benefitted from SNAPPERS, and the children now pay 50p per meeting towards costs.

Keith Suddaby FRPS MPAGB AFIAP