



DAVENTRY PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



The Daventry Photographic Society formerly

The Ford Camera Club *Judy Jennings*

Origins

On Thursday 22nd September 1988 a meeting of about 12 people was held to set up the Ford Camera Club. A previous group, less formal, had formed in 1984 but had now ceased to exist. On October 6th 1988 the attached photo and article appeared in the Daventry Weekly Express asking for new members. Despite its title club membership was not confined to Ford employees but was open to the population of the Daventry area. This meeting resulted in the establishment of a club of around 15-20 members. A constitution was drawn up which bears a strong resemblance to the one we have today.

Premises

Meetings were originally held in the Ford Sports and Social Club main clubroom but in 1998 with the help of the Ford Maintenance Team a portakabin, formerly a garage, was installed for the club to use. This housed the darkroom, studio backdrops and lighting equipment all available for individual use. With the increasing development and use of digital photography the club also obtained several computers which were permanently set up by the youngest club member Dan Hyde who was following in the tradition of both his father and grandfather Karl and Ernie Hyde.

The development of the Ford site later necessitated the demolition of the Social Club premises and our clubroom. In 2010, after considering the suitability of a number of premises in Daventry, the committee settled on the Mayfield Park Sports and Social Club where we are still located to this day and the connection with the Ford Company was removed from the club name. Our first meetings were held in the smaller room used for committee meetings and other activities but increasing numbers necessitated a move to the main clubroom.

Meetings and Activities

The first meetings were held fortnightly on Tuesdays but as the numbers interested in digital photography grew an additional meeting was introduced on alternate Mondays. It was eventually agreed to combine the meetings and so the club began to meet weekly on Tuesday evenings. As the club developed the membership increased and, in 2018, it now averages 40 members.

Competitions have always been an important part of the club programme and continue to be held on a monthly basis. Various judging systems have been tried. Originally members entered in 1 of 3 classes - Starters, Improvers and Experts. Judging was by those members present who ranked the entries in order. This became unwieldy so ranking was introduced for the first 3 entries only. It was still possible to vote for your own entry and this was abandoned in favour of the judge being selected on the night from those who had not entered the competition. Nowadays all competitions are judged by external judges validated by the Midland Counties Photographic Federation (MCPF).

Exhibitions also play an important part in club life. Early exhibitions were held around Christmas in the main Social Club centre with general members choosing their best picture to display. Bi-annual exhibitions were then held in the town library and this has now become an annual event.

The club has been involved in the Daventry Arts Festival since its inception in 2012 and its work has been shown in a number of local churches.

As the club grew the looser structure became more formalised and an annual programme was developed as we have today. In 2008 the club was awarded a lottery grant which funded a digital projector, laptop and screen. This enabled a broader range of topics and presentations to be delivered. The website was set up in 2009 increasing the club's public presence and showcasing members work to a larger audience. Most new members still make initial contact through the website.

From its beginning club members have also participated in site visits to locations of photographic interest. An early and memorable one was to the Northampton Lift Tower. Members were taken up to the top by lift but access to the outside viewing area meant a daunting climb up a vertical wall ladder. The most recent outing was to Delapre Abbey in Northampton for a 'light painting' experience.

In the course of compiling this short history I have had the pleasure of talking to members past and present, two of whom appeared in that original newspaper photo. My thanks go to:-

- Chris Bowerman (who responded to that article and saved the cutting) former Secretary, Competition Secretary and Life Member.
- John Lewis, former Chairman for 10 years and Life Member.
- Jerry Thompson, founder member and former Treasurer for almost 20 years.
- Trevor Healey, former Chairman for over 10 years and Life Member.
- Les Weatherley former Chairman and founder member

... and to all those current club members who have shared information.

*Please send any additional information or corrections to me Judy Jennings
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