

## Reflex Survey 2022. Chair's Report to Members

**1.0: Introduction.** It being two years since the last survey and with sufficient time now spent in our post-covid isolation for new patterns to arise it was decided that the membership be asked for its input to inform pending and future decisions about the club. A survey was constructed by the chair based on the previous surveys of 2017, 2018 and 2020 and links distributed via e-mail and the club's internal Facebook page, the survey being live between 24<sup>th</sup> August and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

**1.1:** The membership is approximately half what it was pre-pandemic and in the new season may well decline further. This has put some strain on the club finances, though currently not problematic (though amounting to a small deficit for last season) it is not as it once was and this has been reflected in the membership fee and fee structure. This pretty much a problem across the country and certainly there are clubs locally whose position is likely more precarious than ours. Some will be better. Ours is the position we can most easily affect and, I would assert, the one most relevant to us as a club, obviously. It is important that the membership understand our situation and this includes restating who we are as Reflex Camera Club. I am glad to be able to report that the club membership remains very positive overall about itself.

**2.0: The best thing about Reflex is:** Over all the surveys that we have conducted the essential friendliness and spirit of interest and co-operation amongst equals remains its key features (below and Appendix A)



**3.0: The thing I would change about the club is:** Although this speaks mostly to the programme the overall response is positive regarding the programme as is. The aim of including this question is to generate ideas. It should be noted that the programme runs 12 to 18 months ahead by necessity. This is normal for Camera Clubs around the country. What follows is some background to the broader issues, and indicate demands on resources. CF Appendix B.

**3.1:** Popular is the idea of more member participation. This, though favoured, is difficult to arrange because of a lack of volunteers. Help is available for those of you want to contribute, but not sure how to go about it. Talk to Ian Gearing or Steve Britton. We will make space in the programme.

**3.2:** Outside speakers have been a favourite recurring theme and certainly expanding opportunities through Zoom have been very successful as we do not, broadly speaking, have a travel-to factor in play. Attending speakers are also popular. The overarching issue is their cost in both cases. Some come free or for petrol money, but this is not always the case. With diminished numbers and an expensive venue that doesn't leave a lot of wriggle room. However, and using camera club contacts through the UK clubs Facebook Group, the odd bit of luck and a lot of research, Steve has come up with some very good speakers. If you can help in any way then all help is gratefully received. This remains a priority and will be expanded when possible.

**3.3:** Training and education. Pre-pandemic the club was making progress towards formalising the training elements, but much, structurally, not least the decline in membership (again something that appears to be a feature of clubs around the UK) has called a temporary halt. The idea was to create a path for those who may wish to take a qualifications path. Currently the club does not have the resources to pursue that, however the idea is parked rather than abandoned.

**3.3.1:** There is an informal guidance plan offered to new members which came into being at the tail end of last season. This is based getting more from their camera and is offered around tea break for 3 – 4 weeks. Purely voluntary it is something that can be expanded if enough people get involved.

**3.3.2:** Zoom content has been very well received and the current format is proving popular. The structure will stay the same for the foreseeable future, but may be forced to change based on the size of the membership and cost of physical meetings in terms of what the school charge for the hire of the hall.

**4.0:** Competitions remain popular, the most recorded reason for entering is to get feedback and certainly this is a very valuable development tool which is also well acknowledged. The reasons for non-participation are individual, however, coaching is available for those who want it on entering and selecting photographs, see Maurice or Ian.

**5.0:** Members were asked to order 23 categories of photography according to their own preferences. This produced an ordered list of overall club preferences, which can be used to inform the programme. That is not to say that programme content only represents the most popular options. We have had a broad programme which has gradually expanded over the years in terms of what we cover.

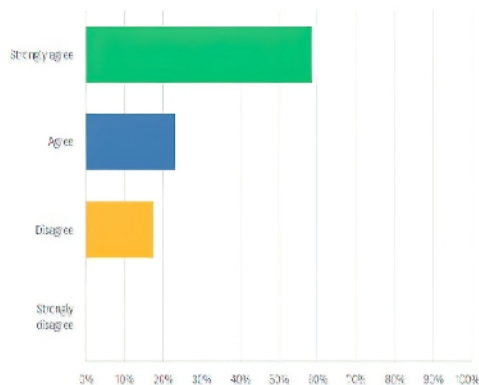
The figures that were collected are weighted according to where in the collective average they rank. There isn't any great shift from the last time this survey was done and the top five are:

- 1) Landscape
- 2) Architecture
- 3) Animals/Wildlife
- 4) Macro
- 5) Abstract.

They almost certainly won't be yours but at least three of your preferences probably appear. The full list and percentage weightings are to be found in Appendix D.

**6.0** Zoom does have a place in the clubs programme, is generally well thought of and continues to play a central part in the programme. Given the economic situation and the shrinkage in member numbers this role may expand, though no decisions have been made yet and the membership will be consulted before any major structural changes. This does not mean that what we have is set in stone.

Zoom plays an important role in the programme.



**6.1** Drilling down a little into the responses to the positive aspects of Zoom (nationally Zoom has become a feature of practically all camera clubs) in terms of what we could do more of using it for tutorials and increasing interaction with guest speakers and club members featured (Appendix E).

**6.2** On the less popular aspect of Zoom there were no strong patterns (Appendix F). It should be noted that, where speakers usually come with recommendations via the UK camera club pages on Facebook, not everyone has been to a club who participates on there and, especially in the early days it was a question of pot luck. Steve Poulson on becoming a professional photographer (delivered at the school) was actually the first time Steve had talked to a camera club, so there are still some opportunities to be had out there for fresh inputs. Instruction/training was suggested and certainly is a key reason we come to a camera club in the first place, however this is more of a challenge remotely, though not impossible and will be taken note of.

**6.3** The physical meeting aspects are still the most important parts of the club to most members – though Zoom has certainly helped expand the membership (Appendix G). More of editing and speakers was a repeating theme, though it should be born in mind that the difference in editing suites make this difficult when we have tried this before though editing on the evening and in groups is a possible solution. The current balance is not an issue and the reason for survey's like this is to create some guidance and ideas, which it has. Tuition in general is not specific to the method of attendance and there is an appetite for it. The problem remains lack of volunteers and or affordable speakers. A suggestion has been made for more off site meetings, and some of these are already in hand, certainly there can be elements of training incorporated in those too, but, this needs to be developed.

**6.4** The balance of what we do is, broadly, not an issue with the membership, though of course each of us has things we don't much care for (Appendix H). The general spectrum of the topics covered in the past and planned in the coming season is broad and is developing and, as such, some things will go better than others. As for getting more members involved there is, as has often been stated, help available. The biggest step is the first one and no one is expecting someone to take on a whole evening on their first attempt. Take a favourite photograph and decide about it what it is that you like. That is the start. Why it has impact. Its story. Discuss it with someone. That is your first step.

## **Appendix A**

The best thing about Reflex is

Socialising

Friendly club, a good level of photographers.

The mix people and no stuffy airs and graces

It's members

Variety of activities

Gets me out of the house and meet up with like minded people

The welcome I received when I first joined. The practical sessions with a wide range of subjects.

The current facilities are also excellent.

A local meeting place for those that have a shared interest in photography

Willingness of members to assist others

Friendly welcoming atmosphere, helpful club members

Friendliness

Making friends

The friendships formed, The top-notch teaching from members and visitors, and the practical nights

Facilities

Local

friendly atmosphere, willingness to muck in

Members.

## Appendix B

The thing I would change about the club is

Increase frequency of speakers  
More diversity needed, that I believe  
would improve the overall level,  
competition and friendliness of the  
club.  
Few more speakers if we can afford  
them  
More speakers  
Improve demographic variety

Happy with the program  
Get more members involved in  
perhaps running a practical session or  
even giving them opportunity to talk  
about their images and what inspires  
them even if it's for 10 minutes

Nothing  
More subject diversity to to in to  
account everyone's needs. Training  
programs to assist new members to  
understand photography at their level  
when joining

Nothing  
Nothing  
Reduce the subscription fee, especially  
for unwaged and over 65's  
Attract new Members somehow.  
Have two nights a month at the club  
and two nights on Zoom to cut rising  
costs of hall hire  
Nothing springs immediately to mind  
Program



## **Appendix C**

### **Competitions**

#### ***I enter competitions to***

Get feedback from the various judges in order to improve my photography skills.

Encourage competition

Obtain constructive criticism on my photography

Find out what the judge feels about my photos and hopefully to achieve some advice.

To try and win or at least get placed, lol and to learn how to improve my images from the the judges perspective

Show my work

Learn

Make up the numbers, get feedback

Get feedback on my images

#### ***I don't enter competitions because***

I should enter but don't have suitable images and have other interest

Not interested

Sometimes due to lack of confidence

#### ***I no longer enter because***

Lacking enthusiasm.

## Appendix D

Club favoured genres.

Landscape	6.92%
Architecture	6.57%
Animals/Wildlife	6.23%
Macro	5.88%
Abstract	5.54%
Environmental	5.19%
Long exposure	5.19%
Astro	4.84%
Documentary	4.84%
Event	4.84%
Portrait (People)	4.84%
Head shot	4.50%
Drone	4.15%
Fashion	4.15%
Motor vehicle	4.15%
Food	3.46%
Street	3.46%
Still life	3.11%
Weather	3.11%
Pets	2.77%
Product	2.77%
Sports	2.42%
Wedding	1.04%

The percentages are small because there are 23 categories, based on Adobe's 28 genres of photography (see here <https://adobe.ly/3BvK5SV>) which was slightly condensed around sub genres that could commonly be held to be different. It is taken from the weighted averages generated by SurveyMonkey.

## Appendix E

I would like to see more of on Zoom

N/A

Yes

No I think we do enough in the programme

Editing and speakers

Tutorials

Once a month is fine if more information is needed then there is UTube

Once a month for me is enough on Zoom. I am able to get to the venue

It has its place but only for certain things - meeting in person is important

Training, inspirational speakers

More speakers who have an instructional element rather than just displaying their photographs

Happy as it stands

N/a

Q&A sessions to help newbies (and us old fogies, lol) on subjects like editing and how to sessions

Every thing

Wildlife and architectural

Activities we can't cover or don't cover in the hall

Nothing





## **Appendix F**

I would like to see less of on Zoom

N/A

no I think it is fine as is

N/A

N/A

Happy with once a month

NO!

Use when needed for suitable meetings where face to face in person isn't possible

N/A

Nothing

N/A

Can not think of anything as we seem to do very well on Zoom with our different nights

Boring things

Photoshop explanation, but would be happy with a generic approach to photo editing not specific to any one package

Nothing so far, really enjoyed the varied programme

No zoom

## Appendix G

I would like to see more in physical meetings

Expert advice on composition and editing

Yes

no good balance

Speakers who inspire and are thought provoking, that said holiday snappers have their place given the current level in the club and many new members won't have seen The Venice Masked Bal

Outside meetings

Has to be viewed in the context of club finance

I think the balance is right during the calendar year. However, more meet ups to various places would be good.

We meet once a week so that's fine

Instruction followed by practical but in small groups

Members showing areas that they have an interest in, trips they have been on etc.

Happy with things as they stand

Practicals

Talks, practicals, and maybe just a social evening (twice a year on top of our Christmas get together)

New ways of photography

Basics of camera controls covering things like AV TV and ISO ie how to get of auto and why. Also a studio event would be nice

Club members taking all or part of the evening.

Photography.

## **Appendix H**

I would like to see less of

Desk top photography

Mix it all up

no happy with balance as it is

Free for all shoots and more direction on practical nights

N/a

Happy with the balance

NO!

No because this is what the club is based on

N/A

Nothing

Portraiture

Speakers

Nothing to add

Still life

Nothing

Nothing springs to mind

No.