

Join the club

Every month, we find out about a different club or society in the county and what they get up to. This time round, the spotlight falls on Carshalton Camera Club, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary later this year Interview by Caroline Harrap

Person interviewed: John Dye

Joined because: 'I had recently moved into the area and, having lived in central London pretty much all my life, had developed a fear that I was being outcast into a suburban cultural wasteland when we moved to Carshalton. I wanted to find a club that made me feel part of the local community, gave me an outlet for my passion in photography and had the spark of providing friendly competition. Carshalton Camera Club meets all criteria and is on my doorstep.'

When was the club set up?

In 1952, Band-Corporal Peter Stroud, of the famous 3rd (The King's Own) Hussars, was back in England from service in Germany where he had set up a regimental camera club. Peter was surprised to find that there was no similar club in the Carshalton area and so the Carshalton Camera Club was born. Nearly 60 years later, new members are still joining. Carshalton is a very creative area. A walk around the town reveals a variety of galleries and shops providing a window for local artistic talent. The club's members reflect the imagination and individualism of the area.

How many members do you have?

At the moment, we have around 50, but new members are always welcome.

Where and when do you meet?

At the Ruskin Hall in Ruskin Road, Carshalton, every Monday at 8pm with doors open at 7.30pm (between September and July). The club also organises ad hoc trips and walks between these times. A full programme of events can be found here: carshaltoncameraclub.org.uk/events.

What's the best thing about being a member of the club?

For me, it was the warm welcome I got when I first arrived and the help and advice members are always willing to give to each other. Members are at very different stages in developing their photography skills, and the club acts as a great forum for learning photographic techniques. That may be tips on using a camera itself, or making the most out of processing tools such as Photoshop.

Do you find being surrounded by like-minded individuals inspiring?

Very much so. Seeing the high quality of work produced by members really gives me something to aspire to. Members are always investigating new techniques and pushing boundaries and are happy to share their discoveries. Almost every week, I see something that I would like to try, or an idea I would like to develop. I am currently dabbling with audio visual (AV) presentations, and thanks to members' help have gone from not knowing what AV stood for, to producing clips on YouTube. The annual exhibition, where members display their best work from the year, is an incredibly eclectic event, well-attended by the local community. It is easy to forget, as you take in the wonderful array of images, that most people at the club are not professional photographers.

Have you got links to other clubs?

Carshalton Camera Club is a member of Surrey Photographic Association and through them affiliated to the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain. We are also a member of the Federation of South London Photographic Societies, and recently won the prestigious Alex Falk Trophy in the final of an inter-club competition for printed images. Also, a number of members are increasingly

making use of the internet, showcasing their images on sites such as FlickrR.

What's the most interesting story from the group's history?

The first ever meeting of the club was held at the Fox and Hounds in Carshalton High Street in November 1952. Thereafter, the club went on to meet at a number of different halls, including for many years in neighbouring Wallington until returning to Carshalton, at its present venue, in April 2007. As the club prepares to enjoy its diamond anniversary later this year, a visit is being planned back to the same pub. It will be just one of a number of celebratory events to mark the occasion, which will see a number of impressive speakers and fantastic photographic images.

...and the funniest?

Well, for me personally, it has to be my first visit to the camera club. I was surprised to find so many women as members, and that their weight seemed to be a little bit more than average. I soon realised that I had mistakenly walked into the weight watchers club next door. With my portly frame, I didn't seem out of place. I did consider staying, but think I made the right decision to move across to the Camera Club.

When is your next event that is open to potential new members?

People are always welcome to come along to our Monday evening meetings.

Describe your club in five words...

It's a 'friendly, enthusiastic, innovative, diamond club'!

■ For more details about **Carshalton Camera Club**, and becoming a member, pay a visit to their website at carshaltoncameraclub.org.uk



The members of Carshalton Camera Club offer a very warm welcome to local photographers of all standards (Photo: Pete Gardner)