

So you have joined Wakefield Camera Club? Just what have you become a member of?

It may seem a silly question, but do you really know what you are now a part of?

Let me try and tell you about our organization.

Wakefield Camera Club was founded in 1891 (in the 1920s it was Wakefield Photographic Society, take a look at the pewter bowl we use on raffle nights), so we have a little history behind us. At present (Nov. 2011) we have 96 members, including 3 life members. Every member is also made a member of Wakefield City Club (so you are a part of the Working Man's Club Organization and you should have been given a membership card by our Treasurer).

OK, so you are in a group of 96 photographers, but that group is also a member of the **Yorkshire Photographic Union (YPU)**, that costs us about £140 per year, look at the balance sheet at the AGM. What is the YPU? It's just another club really; it is made up of 66 clubs like Wakefield Camera Club. If they all had 96 members (they don't) that would be $96 \times 66 = 6336$ photographers (now that's more like a respectable group!).

OK, so there are over 6,000 of us, all trying to be better photographers, but let's not stop there. The YPU is one of 15 Groups that form part of the **Photographic Alliance of Great Britain (PAGB)**. So, $6000 \times 15 = 90,000$ (I know my figures are based on a lot of assumptions about membership numbers in each federation, but it's still a lot of people taking pictures).

OK, I bet you can guess what's coming next! The PAGB is one of 88 members of the **Federation Internationale de L'Art Photographique (FIAP)**. So, $90,000 \times 88 = 7,920,000$ members!!! That means that more than one in every thousand people on the planet are members of our club ;o).

"PHOTOGRAPHERS OF THE WORLD UNITE " Yes, I know there are more errors in my arithmetic than the Greek debt, but our club still has more members than some counties have people.

Let's look at each stage in turn.

Wakefield Camera Club, we offer you about 50 evenings out per year, 3 free prints, a chance to buy items of clothing with our logo on ;o) and as much good/bad/indifferent advice as you care to take. Each year we have 5 Clubman competitions, 1 annual print, 1 annual digital, 1 audio visual and 4 un-mounted A4 competitions. You are entitled to borrow our calibration device, but best of all meet other photographers and exchange ideas. If you have a question any member of the committee will be more than willing to point you in the right direction to get an answer. Also check out our web site: www.wakefieldcameraclub.org.uk you are entitled to your own page on that site, we have a Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wakefield-Camera-Club/144003125654443> and provided you tell us your email address, you will receive a weekly eNewsletter.

Yorkshire Photographic Union, (YPU) Founded in 1899 with Wakefield CC as one of the 12 founder members, the organization provides a list of judges for club competitions, a list of lecturers, as well as an Annual conference and exhibition. Other events are organized throughout the year, notably a weekend of photography and workshops. The annual exhibition is worth attending and is hosted by individual clubs within the YPU. Wakefield last hosted the event in 1984. All members of affiliated clubs (that's you) are invited to submit work through their own club (Wakefield CC) and each year about 1500 prints and a similar number of digital images are submitted from the 66 clubs. From these 200 prints and 200 digital images are selected by a panel of 3 judges and these are put on display at a suitable venue at or near the Annual Conference. The rules and classes are available on the YPU web site: <http://www.ypu.org.uk/> the web site also runs an on line digital monthly competition, free to enter for club members, with a prize of your own web page on the YPU web site.

Photographic Alliance of Great Britain (PAGB), founded in 1930, is made up of 15 Federations, one of which is the YPU. They set the rules that are followed by most clubs, an example that you may be aware of is the recommended size of exhibition mount. It was 16" by 20", but has now been changed to 40cm by 50cm. The PAGB also organise inter-federation competitions and each federation submits work or nominates clubs within their federation to submit work (Wakefield was invited to submit projected images in 2011). The PAGB also bestow awards for meritorious service, the APAGB and exceptionally the HonPAGB with the J S Lancaster Medal. Both of these are for service to the PAGB or one of the Federations. For photographic ability they also make awards, the CPAGB (Credit), DPAGB (Distinction) and the MPAGB (Master).

Let's look at what you have to do to gain an award for photographic merit. First there is a pre-qualification requirement, for the CPAGB you need to have supported your federation (YPU) by submitting prints or digital images to the annual exhibition for at least 2 years in the last 10 (they do not need to have been selected for the exhibition). You then need 10 prints mounted 40cm x 50cm or 10 digital images that are capable of winning in club competitions. You request a place at a place at a PAGB Awards Workshop if one is available, (it helps to have a potential PAGB judge look at your work). You then request a place at an awards assessment day (this costs you £60). On the assessment day the prints or digital images will be mixed with the other submissions and a panel of six judges will each give them a mark between 2 and 5 (this is done electronically). The total possible mark is 300 for your 10 images and a pass mark is 200. The images are judged on a first time viewing and are often on display to the judges for 10 seconds or less.

For a DPAGB the procedure is the same, but you need 15 images and these need to be of a standard that could be expected to gain an award at federation level (YPU). The total possible mark is 450 for your 15 images and a pass mark is 300. The CPAGB and the DPAGB are not normally judged on the same day, this ensures that the two standards do not confuse the judges.

For a MPAGB you need to have already gained a DPAGB. You need 20 images that would be expected to gain an award at national level. The total possible mark is 600, and for your 20 images a pass is 450 (I have not got the arithmetic wrong. You need to average 22.5 per print for the M).

If you would like to keep up to date with what is happening with the PAGB, then you can subscribe to an eNewsletter at: <http://www.pagb-photography-uk.co.uk/index.htm> it's free.

Federation Internationale de L'Art Photographique (FIAP) PAGB is a member of FIAP, which is an International Federation whose members are national photographic Federations, one per country. Formed in 1950 with the concept of a worldwide international body devoted to promoting and encouraging photographic art in all its aspects, without consideration of political, ideological or racial interference, it was the brain child of Dr M Van de Wijer from Belgium. Currently some 86 countries are what are known as Operational Members (or National Federations) of FIAP, representing well over a million photographers. Its web site is: www.fiap.net/index-en.php.

FIAP has no employees; everybody involved in the organisation, from the President down, gives his or her services on a voluntary basis; only actual expenses are ever paid.

Organisation:-

While the organisation is run by a Directory Board, the Congress is FIAP's most important body. It meets every other year, each time in a different country and determines FIAP policies. Every Operational Member has one vote. Congress also acts as a meeting place for international photography. They are occasions where delegates can study new ideas, create and renew contacts, exchange news and views.

Because of the large number of languages in its member countries FIAP does not publish a journal. Instead, communications are sent out to all member societies, by the Secretary General, by the Services and by the Commissions. These include reports of meetings, texts of general interest, news, list of Patronised Salons, regulations, etc, which are then published in Member Societies journals, bulletins, newsletters as appropriate. Important work is done by the FIAP Commissions. These are committees of specialists studying international problems in different fields. These are commissions for monochrome photography, colour photography, audio-visual, nature photography, stereo photography, copyright, and some others.

FIAP Liaison Officers

Each Operational Member appoints a "FIAP Liaison Officer" as the principle link between them and FIAP's Officials. Whilst Scotland and Wales are members of PAGB, they are also Operational Members of FIAP in their own right as separate countries.

OK, so let's get really big headed and think about "International Recognition"

Awarding FIAP distinctions is regulated by document 299: photographs/diapositives and document 300: audiovisual works.

FIAP distinctions can be accorded for artistic achievements:

The distinctions:

- AFIAP (Artiste FIAP)
- EFIAP (Excellence FIAP)

are mainly based on the number of acceptances the candidate has obtained in international salons with FIAP patronage.

The photographer that has obtained the EFIAP distinction may continue taking part in competitions and obtain successively the distinctions:

- EFIAP/B: Excellence FIAP Bronze
- EFIAP/S: Excellence FIAP Silver
- EFIAP/G: Excellence FIAP Gold
- EFIAP/P: Excellence FIAP Platinum.

The distinction:

- MFIAP: (Master FIAP)

can be obtained only by holders of the EFIAP distinction:

The candidate must submit a complete curriculum vitae and a portfolio of 20 prints (monochrome or colour).

FIAP distinctions can be accorded for exceptional services.

ESFIAP: Excellence for Services Rendered to FIAP

HonEFIAP: Honorary Excellence FIAP.

All applications for FIAP distinctions must be made through the national federations and these are considered responsible for checking the information given.

Applications must be made using forms, available from FIAP.

The federations are urged to assemble various applications and present these to FIAP once a year.

All works: photographs, diapositives or AV-series are to be sent to the FIAP Collections Service together with the appropriate forms, again certified by the national federation.

OK, so we have come back down to earth and accepted that a FIAP award is unlikely ;o).

There is one other set of awards that you will have seen;-

LRPS, ARPS, FRPS.

These are awarded to members of the **Royal Photographic Society (RPS)**

In the winter months of 1851/1852 a provisional committee was formed with a view to organising a photographic society in London. A catalyst to the project was an exhibition of over seven hundred photographs in the gallery of the Society of Arts, which was of great general interest.

A public meeting was held on Thursday 20 January 1853 and The Photographic Society was formed using mainly the Society of Arts for its meetings. In 1874 the name was changed to the Photographic Society of Great Britain to reflect its growing importance and twenty years later it became The Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain with the permission of Queen Victoria, which was maintained by subsequent Monarchs. The Society was granted a Royal Charter in July 2004.

The RPS is probably the most respected independent photographic group in the world. Its awards are recognized in every branch of photography and in every country. Today it has branches in every continent.

So, let's look at the awards;-

Licentiate of the Royal Photographic Society (LRPS) this is awarded for a panel of 10 images (usually arranged in two rows of five), they should display a full understanding of photographic technique and equipment. The panel is judged as a whole and should be balanced. Attending an awards workshop is almost a must, if you intend to get the balance right. Though the LRPS is considered the lowest of the RPS awards, I think a little differently. It requires a different set of skills to produce your LRPS panel than those needed for your ARPS panel. The 'L' proves you fully understand photography, the 'A' just establishes that you have a personal style. I maintain that everyone should 'do the L' first before proceeding to the 'A'.

Associate of the Royal Photographic Society (ARPS) this requires a panel of 15 images (usually arranged in three rows of five), it goes without saying that print quality, exposure and lighting need to be correct. You need to submit a statement of less than 150 words explaining what you are trying to demonstrate with your panel. The statement is important as the panel is judged against that. Unlike the 'L' the 'A' selection committees are divided into different areas of photography;- John Gardner's ARPS was judged by the Natural History panel, John Bickerdike's ARPS was judged by the Travel panel, Andy Davis's was judged by the Professional & Applied panel and my own by the Arts panel.

Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society (FRPS) this is the highest award offered by the Royal and requires 20 superlative images in a well balanced panel that display a distinct style of your own. As with the 'A' you need a statement explaining what you are trying to show. The panel has to be first passed by your ARPS selection panel and endorsed by them. It is then judged 'in camera' (no one is allowed to watch) by the full FRPS panel of judges. If you get an 'F' you are at the top of your game in photography. Take a look at their web site;- <http://www.rps.org/>

So, as a new member of Wakefield Camera Club what else are you likely to hear us talking about? One competition that many of us enter each year is the Wath Salon, this is organised by Dearne Valley Camera Club and attracts as many entries as the YPU annual exhibition. Just type Wath Salon into Google and take a look.

You will also hear members talking about 'Focus', this is an annual trade show held each March at the National Exhibition Centre Birmingham. Again just type 'Focus on Imaging' into Google and you will find all the answers. It's the one event where I buy my photographic equipment.

OK, so now you know as much as I do ;o). I remember my first visit to Wakefield Camera Club, that was in 1974, you sit at the back, have no idea who is who, no idea what you should do, or who you should talk to! Yes I felt like that as well, so how do you get involved and become a member of the 'in group'? It's easy once you try, just come and talk to any of us, ask us questions – I once had to learn what an 'F Stop' was. If you see people disappearing under the stage, feel free to come and help, we can always use an extra pair of hands.

David Kershaw ARPS CPAGB

Wakefield Camera Club Secretary
(The Ugly One with a Beard & Glasses)