



NCPF - Club Support Newsletter

Issue 3



To all Club Members!

December 2023

As we approach Christmas and the end of 2023, the long-awaited next issue of the NCPF's Club Support Newsletter is now in your inbox... and what a corker this one is!

Thank you to everyone who has provided positive feedback and encouragement. As we mentioned before, the purpose of these newsletters is to help clubs be sustainable for the future. This is by finding ways to promote clubs and grow membership and by suggesting ideas for a cost effective but exciting and interesting programme.

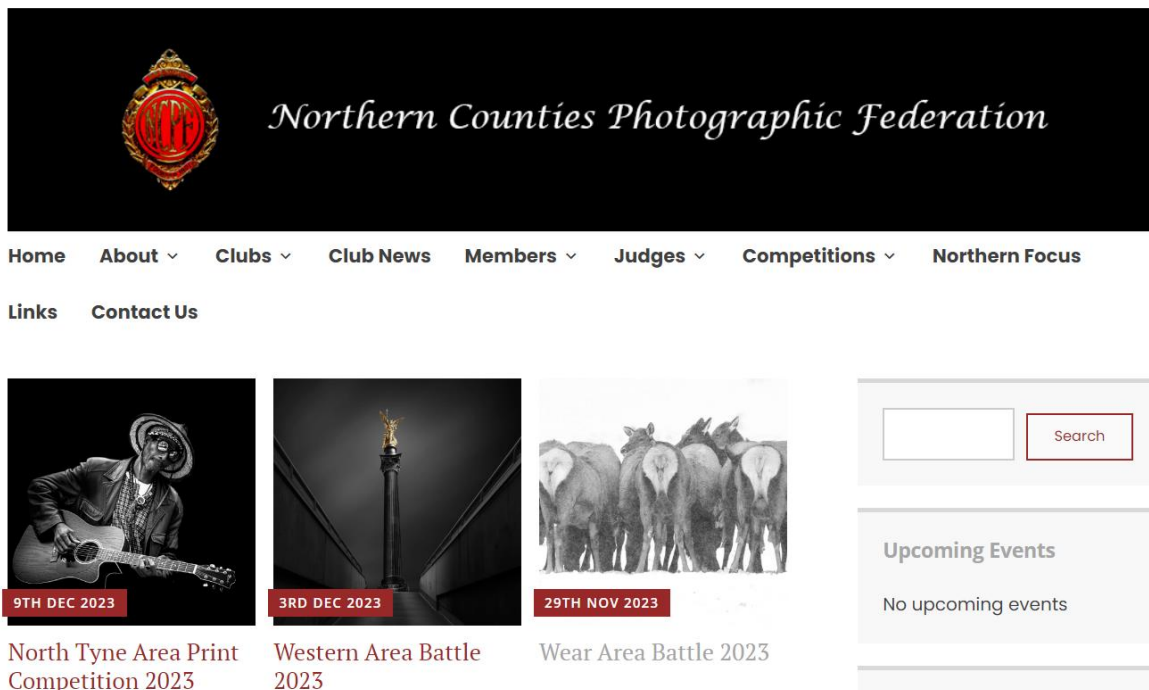
This month we have a fine selection of articles for you:

- The first one is about the new look NCPF website which provides a wealth of resources and for you and your club.
- Sitting alongside that are some ideas for encouraging new members for 2024 and suggestions about membership fees.
- We then have a few suggestions about club nights and other ideas for gatherings.
- Finally in this edition is our main article. It is the second part of the interview with Peter Stevens - again about encouraging new membership of the club and looking after new members and old members alike.

Please read on...

NCPF new look web site

This should be bookmarked on your internet home page!



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Northern Counties Photographic Federation. At the top left is a crest with the letters 'NCPF' inside. To the right of the crest, the text 'Northern Counties Photographic Federation' is written in a white serif font. Below this is a navigation menu with the following items: Home, About (with a dropdown arrow), Clubs (with a dropdown arrow), Club News, Members (with a dropdown arrow), Judges (with a dropdown arrow), Competitions (with a dropdown arrow), and Northern Focus. Below the navigation menu are two links: Links and Contact Us. The main content area features three featured articles, each with a photograph and a date in a red box: 'North Tyne Area Print Competition 2023' (9TH DEC 2023) with a photo of a man playing a guitar; 'Western Area Battle 2023' (3RD DEC 2023) with a photo of a trophy; and 'Wear Area Battle 2023' (29TH NOV 2023) with a photo of a group of sheep. To the right of these articles is a search bar with a 'Search' button. Below the search bar is a section titled 'Upcoming Events' which currently displays 'No upcoming events'.

The website is “under new management” and has a new look and feel. It is a wealth of information for clubs and members alike - please take time to have a look round and subscribe to the site. This means that you’ll receive notifications when new information is posted. www.ncpf.org.uk

To subscribe:
go to the bottom right corner of the home page and
pop in your email address.

Receive new posts from the NCPF directly to your Inbox by entering your email address and clicking the Subscribe button below. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Opportunities for new member recruitment

Whether people have received a new camera or phone for Christmas or make a New Year resolution to take more interesting photographs, your camera club is the ideal place for them!

So why not get the message out to your local community and invite them to the club? We have put together two adverts which we hope will inspire you to use or adapt for your parish news, community paper, Facebook page or notice board. These are below and word versions are available from our page on the NCPF web site.

It's often difficult to know what to do regarding membership fees for people who join mid-season. One suggestion is to charge "half- price", but why not charge full price in January for new members and that could also include their next year's fee? That way, you will probably have them as members next year too!

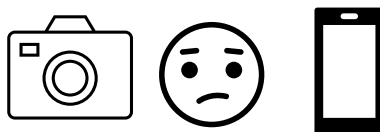
What's your New Year resolution?

Would you like to take more interesting photos on your phone or camera?

Why not come along to your local camera club and find out a bit more about photography – tips and tricks, ideas, and inspiration. XYZ Camera club are a group of friendly photographers – from novices to those with many years of experience.

*We meet weekly on a Sonyday at 7.30pm Canon House, Nikontown.
Please do come along and see us.*

Did you receive a new camera or phone with a camera for Christmas?



Looking for help and ideas on photography?

Why not join your local camera club and become part of a friendly group of enthusiasts? Photography clubs are all about inspiring you to get out and use your camera, try new skills and techniques and share ideas and images.

Whilst we don't offer formal training, we have members who are happy to guide beginners with help and advice.

XYZ Camera Club meets Sonyday evenings from 7.30 at Canon House in Nikontown.

Why not come along and see what we do?

Special membership rates available from January 2024.

Club nights and beyond– ideas

In the last edition we mentioned competition review evenings where members have the chance to chat through the feedback from judges, explain why, where and when they took their pictures and possibly do some live editing of images.

Here are some more ideas:

- Do you have a **club What's app group**? This can be really useful – but only if it is limited to club activities and not lots of gossip and chit chat (though that does have a place)! It's a good way of advising of changes to club nights, news items and local events which may offer photographic opportunities.
- **Joint club nights.** Is there a neighbouring club where you buddy up for the evening? This could mean that you show a selection of each other's images, or it could allow you to hire a speaker for the evening who you would normally find a bit too expensive on your own. Lectures on Zoom can also be shared with clubs having the same meeting night as yours and would halve the costs.
- **Members questionnaire.** Online or paper, this is a good way of getting feedback on the club and ideas from members for future areas of focus.
- **Events.** Coffee mornings, an evening at the pub or a pizza night. Meeting up outside of the club-night is another way to develop the social and friendly side to your club.

Spreading the word!

Part 2 of an interview with Peter Stevens from Tynemouth PS.

If you missed the first part it is available here: <https://ncpf.org.uk/clubsupport/>)

The NCPF Club Support and Development Group was formed with the aim of trying to bring together ideas and strategies to help clubs weather the present difficulties. One of the Group's members is Alan Forster is also the current President of Tynemouth PS. During meetings Alan spoke of difficulties the club were experiencing, namely membership numbers and running costs.

In an attempt to address these issues Tynemouth decided to form a subcommittee which included Peter Stevens. Peter had a working career in various aspects of marketing and customer management. This experience in marketing was to prove very useful for Tynemouth, who set about using some of this know-how to boost membership numbers and alleviate financial pressures.

Hearing the story from Alan we thought this might be of interest to other clubs and decided we could perhaps conduct an interview with Peter and Alan to uncover their secrets! The resulting interview is transcribed below.

This is part 2.

Gerry: So, what sort of practical measures did you use to set the plan in motion then Peter.

Peter: We've actually put a number of things in place, but there's more to go. The most important one is that the very first stage of creating awareness in a population. What we're doing in effect is waving our hands and shouting 'hey we're here', we've got to make people aware of us and until that happens there's no chance of them joining us.

There are a few fundamentally important things like the website. With the website people can find us under their own steam, we don't have to go and find them. I think social media is becoming more important and interestingly can attract a younger demographic. We have accounts with Facebook and Instagram and are planning to give Twitter a try.

We also have plans to hold more frequent exhibitions and to show these in multiple locations. Our annual exhibition is typically shown in one location for a limited period, but there is no reason why this shouldn't 'go on tour'. We want to get into events or speaking engagements that are occurring in the community. The key point in doing this is that we get seen more often and have the chance to capture the contact details of people interested in joining.

Gerry: I think Alan mentioned that you had put posters up in local shop windows and at the likes of Tynemouth market. Has that been successful?

Peter: Yes, the posters in shop windows are a quick and easy way to get started and they do work. It's easy to assume people walk straight past them without looking but we in fact have a number of loyal members whose first contact with us was via a poster.

We're just about to have a stall at the busy, weekend Tynemouth Market. This will be a great opportunity to be seen by many people and introduce ourselves to potential members.

Gerry: I'm a bit intrigued as to how you go about harvesting the contact details from people e Peter, what sort of cunning methodology do you use to do that.

Peter: Its straightforward really. The website is really key. If someone is interested in photography and is actively looking for a club, then they will find us on our website. But also, at events or exhibitions, we will have an A5 leaflet which describes the club, and a contact sheet where people can give their details and we will then follow up.

Gerry: So, has your website got some sort of form that prospective members can complete.

Peter: Yes. There is a 'Contact Us' section where people can request more information. But more than that. We've made small but important changes to the website in the light of this project to make it easy for prospective members to quickly learn more about us. For example, we clearly say on the home page that if you're interested in photography take a look here, go

to our programme, go to events, go to contact details for information, and that sign posting really makes a difference. It's not rocket science, but we work hard not to put barriers in the way.

Gerry: So, basically when anyone from the club goes out and about, they take with them some marketing material and hand it out.

Peter: Absolutely. When we hold events like an exhibition or the market stall or when we have the chance to speak at an event, we hand out a nice little leaflet and there's always a contact form where people can leave their details.

The conversation moved on to discuss measures taken with a view to retaining new members once joined up. Alan explained that the club had now managed to attract 7 - 8 new members this year, some of whom are novices who would benefit from help with basic camera craft. The club arranges these over and above the normal programme, via a number of Special Interest Groups organising practical advice, or photo walks. The web site also includes links to useful content where they could self-learn and see inspirational photography. This was all done with the overall strategy. Another important thing to mention is that at each committee meeting we have a report showing the figures for current membership, new enquiries and any departures, so we can track how we're doing.

Gerry: Just touching on another aspect of retaining new members, have you delegated anyone specifically within the society with the responsibility for meeting and greeting when anyone new walks through the door to explain them what it's all about.

Peter: The Chairman and Vice Chairman are particularly watchful and quickly welcome new faces, but all the members and all the committee share that responsibility. One of the points I want to make is that we don't see this recruitment exercise as a special project. This process has got to be embedded into business as usual and become what we do as a matter of course. We've got to move to being a member focused organisation. This doesn't happen overnight, but the membership must be at the heart of everything we do.

Gerry: I don't know if you would agree with this Peter but my experience is that if you get a new member, if you can get them to participate in the clubs activities as quickly as possible, then once they're involved your chances of retaining them go up massively, so the sooner you can get them entering competitions or taking part in days out or whatever activities the club is doing then you're in with a shout. The ones that sit week after week but don't actually ever get involved - they are the risky ones, the flight risks for want of a better word.

Peter: Yes, you're right, I'm sure that's true. But I think some of the quiet ones (and indeed the active ones) gain significant benefits from the social aspect of being in a club. When I think about my enjoyment of camera clubs one of the benefits is certainly making a bunch of new friends who I can have a good chat with every week. It's really important when a new member joins that they can form friendships and get to know one or two people is key.

Gerry: This brings on another question, in your quest to bring in new members and promote the club I suppose it's easy to lose sight of the interest of the present membership and I suppose you've got to give consideration to keeping them happy as well as part of the overall

retention strategy, and I was wondering are you finding the existing membership wholly supportive of what you're doing.

Peter: Yes, I believe they are, and I have been encouraged by the number of members that have come forward wanting to get involved.

Gerry: What sounds encouraging to me as an outsider is that you've obviously got people within your club who've got the drive and the enthusiasm to take things forward. So, I think it sounds pretty healthy, but what I was going to ask as a final question Peter, if there was only one thing you would recommend to other clubs that would give them the maximum bang for the buck is there anything that particularly springs to mind.

Peter: It's that first stage of creating awareness. The four stages are an integrated pathway, but you can't do any of that unless you first of all make yourself known. That happens through the website, through social media, through getting in front of people at things like our market stall event, or through speakers or exhibitions. Have a brochure or leaflet and contact form at hand. Don't just sit back and wait for people to find you, put yourself in front of them. I think that's the key.

The End.

And finally

Thank you for reading this newsletter. Please look out for the next issue which will be available in the new year.

If you've got experience of things that work to help reduce club costs or encourage new members, and if you'd like to get involved with the NCPF please let us know.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2024!

*Gerald Chamberlin, Alan Forster, Jo Knight, John Smith (Chair),
Richard Speirs & Debra Taylor*

NCPF Club Support and Development Group