

Early in 2003 we asked HPS Life and Founding Member Gwen Blackwood to record her recollections of the society's history from it's inception to the present day...

On April 9, 1968 a group of people interested in forming a camera club met at the Bellerive Library Hall in Cambridge Road and the formation of a club was discussed. As the club was to meet on the Eastern Shore, the name Eastern Shore Camera Club (ESCC) was chosen although members came from various suburbs.

In 1968 the Hobart area had the Southern Tasmanian Photographic Society (STPS, the oldest Tasmanian Photographic Society and still in existence), Cadbury Camera Club, The Zinc Works Camera Club, The Royal Hobart Hospital Doctor's Club and later the University Camera Club. New Norfolk also had a club and Hobart had a Cine Club at about that time.

The first ESCC President was Russell McKinnon, a local clergyman; Vice President was Graeme Woolley; Secretary / Treasurer was David Hann, a lawyer who drew up the club constitution and oversaw its incorporation and Denis Leppard was the sole committee member.

There were competitions for monochrome prints and colour slides each month. Four slides and / or monochrome prints could be entered by each member. A handicap method of scoring for the aggregate award in December was devised. It favoured those who entered all the competitions, and that brought entries from nearly every member monthly.

By 1977 monochrome prints had very few entrants and in 1978 only two people entered colour prints. By 1979 no prints were being entered so the print section lapsed.

Entries were getting less, so in 1976 as a light-hearted competition to arouse interest Amy and Harold Acton introduced Mini-Comps for slides. Every other month (between set subject competitions) the mini-comp slides could be brought on the meeting night and some willing (or less willing) soul who hadn't brought an entry was called upon to judge there and then. This increased entries substantially and trained some able judges as well.

The greatest support and help to the ESCC in its early days came from Cliff Flaws, George Billing, Phyl Ingram, Frank Ingram and others from the STPS and Cadbury Camera Club. The ranks of competition judges included such notables as local newspaper photographers Don Stephens, Jim Burns and Len Carter; airman and wilderness photographer J Reid, wilderness photographer Olegas Truchanas, city photographers Geoff Bester and S Millington whilst our very own Tom Badcock was greatly respected for his critiques.

Judges and lecturers were plentiful and their quality was inspirational. Fewer people travelled overseas in those times and their shows were usually very interesting.

In the club's early years a member, Dave Abbot, who was a gifted photographer in monochrome and slides, was also a metal worker and he made the club trophies for some years. They were small, camera-shaped trophies coloured gold, silver and bronze with the details engraved on their backs.

There were annual club outings. Some were to Oatlands, Richmond, Risdon Brook Dam, Snug Falls and New Norfolk. One of the members, Ken McKinnon, was a forecaster at the Weather Bureau, but his predictions for a suitable time for each outing weren't always accurate.

In recent years our club has had Sunday Strolls about once a month. Sometimes the "strolls" have become marathons, but some good photos and enjoyable fellowships have resulted. Weekend trips to Cradle Mountain, Bruny Island, Tasman Peninsula, Flinders Island and Maria Island have all been enjoyed and proven fruitful. Some brave members partook of a boat trip around Maria Island in 2001, which resulted in many photos of seals and very few lost breakfasts.

In earlier years a social evening was held each January, and a progressive dinner was once held, whilst our 25th anniversary dinner was held at the Acton's home.

For a few years meetings were held at the former Bellerive Library in Clarence Street, but repairs were needed there so we met in the science room at Rosny College - a map was needed to find the room, whilst in one corner a skeleton grinned grimly at the gathered group. The absence of supper facilities mandated a move to the Bayfield Street Medical

Centre - this was entirely suitable but later only groups connected with health were able to meet there. The new Tasman library opened in Bligh Street in the mid-80s so we settled there, first in a small room and later expanding to the double room we occupy now.

From the very beginning we have been a member of the Tasmanian Photographic Federation (TPF) which had been formed to bring together the seventeen camera clubs of Tasmania so that by seeing other clubs' work and having quarterly (latterly tri-annual) meetings with club and individual competitions the standard of photography in Tasmania would improve. There were guest lecturers, workshops, a judge's school and very pleasant outings which enabled us to see many interesting parts of Tasmania. Our club had turns at hosting these meetings and continues to do so in conjunction with the other southern clubs.

At various times club members have been President, Secretary, committee members and delegates to the Tasmanian Photographic Federation. Cadbury's Camera Club (now defunct) gave a perpetual trophy for the TPF to award to the club with the highest score in the inter-club competitions for each year and our club has won it on occasion. The trophy for the most points for monochrome prints has also been won by our members (although of late Steve Brookes and Mike Calder have been concentrating on other areas). Some members have been placegetters in the Photographer of the Year competitions. Our TPF delegates deserve thanks for all the time they have given to represent the club. The late Tom Badcock warrants special thanks for his longstanding and outstanding service as both an office bearer of and delegate to the TPF for the club.

We have supplied committee members and other helpers for the last three Australian Photographic Society conventions (APSCons) held in Hobart. Some of our members joined the APS from very early in the club's life. Graeme Woolley was soon gaining awards and acceptances in national and international exhibitions with Tom Badcock and Gwen Blackwood soon joining him. Since then Mike Calder has gained top photographic honours whilst Ian Robertson, Laki Anagnostis and Leanne Cowen are climbing the honours ladder. A few other members have begun to travel this road with success - hardly unexpected given the overall standard of work the club can turn out.

In 1999 and 2001 we were invited to hold exhibitions of photography in the Clarence Municipality Schoolhouse Gallery, both of which resulted in impressive displays. These successes formed a large part of the decision to hold our recent major exhibitions at Mawson Place on the Hobart waterfront.

By the late 1980s slide and mini-comp entries were decreasing and it was realised that small commercial colour prints were very popular so a Small Print competition was introduced, first in the clubs and then in the TPF competitions. By December 1994 competitions had settled into four groups; Slides, Monochrome Prints, Large Colour and Small Prints.

At around the same time there was an increase of members in a younger age group largely due to Adult Education tutors who recommended our club to their pupils. The club was (and still is) most grateful for this help. The new generation brought new ideas and a great interest in digital photography. Classes are being held to teach these methods to those who wish to learn more about them.

So strongly did the winds of change blow that after great debate the club's name was changed in 2002 to the Hobart Photographic Society with a website set up and a logo devised. The club continues to grow and from humble beginnings we are now Tasmania's largest photographic club.