

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ALLIANCE AWARD FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Citation for Eric Bennett

Eric Bennett became a member of Alton Camera Club during the 1962/63 season, soon after the foundation of the Club. In more than 50 years as a member, he has not only played a key role not only in the successful organisation of the Club, but has also ensured that the Club has kept pace with new technology and techniques to attract new members. A long-serving and hard-working member of the Club's committee, he later became the Club's representative at the Southern Photographic Federation in 1994 and has subsequently been a council member of the SPF since 2006 where his responsibilities include updating the SPF section of the PAGB handbook.

Throughout his membership, Eric has always contributed through his energy, enthusiasm and competence. Having joined the Club's committee in the mid-1960s, in 1967 he became the editor of the then club magazine, 'Highlight' and presided over its development and expansion. Over the years this evolved into an electronic monthly newsletter, which he still edits and remains the principal medium for communicating news and information to other members.

In 1973 Eric founded the Audio-Visual group within the club and his work excels in this area. He is always willing to show newer members how to develop an interesting and professional AV presentation. In 1993 Eric became the Club's Programme Secretary, in which role he continued until 2009. During this period he developed a wide range of contacts with interesting speakers and judges, to the lasting benefit of the Club.

Because of his interest in local history, Eric is well known at the town's museum because he safeguards the Club's archive of historic photographs of Alton. He has fostered this relationship by helping museum staff with scanning of old images, including glass plate, and by organising the Millennium display, in which he went around Alton in 2000 and produced a very long collage showing the frontages along the main streets. This display continues to be a major draw at the Club's public displays and exhibitions, including the October 2012 photographic display by the Club in the town's Allen Gallery. This too was organised by Eric and was the best attended exhibition at the gallery in recent years.

Eric's organisational ability and enthusiasm were further demonstrated by two other major undertakings. For eight years he jointly ran the Club's annual 'safari' competition - a photographic treasure hunt requiring commitment of much time and effort. Secondly he was instrumental in 2006 in obtaining the Club's National Lottery grant of £7500; he identified the equipment needed, successfully completed and

submitted the grant application, and then sourced and purchased the laptops and projector.

During his time as a club member Eric has found time to keep up with his photography, making the transition from film and darkroom to digital and software with great success. He has, on various occasions, won all the major internal club competitions; he once again won the Club's AV competition in 2013. By way of helping less experienced or able photographers, he assists the Disabled Photographers Association in its events and is an active supporter of beginners' sessions open to the public, to encourage local people to take up photography and consider joining Alton Camera Club. The last year has seen a doubling of Club membership, with many new recruits coming from these beginners' sessions.

Eric continues as a member of the club committee and is a trusted source of knowledge and common-sense advice. His experience, calm manner, and sense of humour coupled with amusing anecdotes about photography and photographers make him a very popular and cherished club and committee member and he acts as an excellent ambassador for his Club and Federation.

We unreservedly recommend Eric Bennett as thoroughly deserving consideration for the Photographic Alliance Award for Meritorious Service.

Record of Service

1962	Joined Alton Camera Club (ACC)
Mid-1960s	Elected to committee of ACC
1967-today	Editor of ACC's printed monthly magazine 'Highlight and subsequently electronic newsletter
1973-today	Founded and ran ACC's Audio-Visual Group
1993-2009	Programme Secretary of ACC, with additional responsibility for numerous events including 2000 Millennium collection of images of Alton and two-yearly public exhibitions of Club photography
1994-today	ACC's club representative at Southern Photographic Federation
2006	Responsible for ACC's successful National Lottery grant application
2006-today	Member of Southern Photographic Federation's Council
2009-today	ACC committee member responsible for AV
2012	Organiser of ACC public exhibition at Allen Gallery