

# 100 Years of Bournemouth Photographic Society

The Society was founded on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1910 and meetings were held at the Bournemouth Natural Science Society Premises in Christchurch Road shortly after formation.

Membership in the beginning was exclusive to doctors, clergymen and professionals as photography was beyond the means of most people at that time. Miss Penrice founded the club in 1910 and by 1922 the membership was 125 with an annual subscription of 10 shillings.

It flourished throughout the years with membership achieving 140 in the 1950's and 60's. As more clubs were created both locally and nationally, regular inter-club competitions were held and Bournemouth over the years had a reputation for high quality work and won many competitions.

The 50th anniversary of the club was marked by a party at the Durlston Court Hotel with the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress as guests of honour. The meetings were still held in the Bournemouth Natural Science Society building at this time.

International exhibitions were run by the club attracting entries from all over the world and regular trips were taken to places of photographic interest all over the UK. Coaches and accommodation were chartered and there was never a problem filling the spaces as the camaraderie of the members made this not just a photographic club but one with close knit social ties. In the eighties photography began to change with the advent of the cine camera and although club membership reduced the club continued to meet and compete with excellent results.

The challenge for any club is to adapt to changing conditions and the move away from the darkroom into digital imaging was made successfully. Photography is now open to the mass market and manipulation of images is very often used. The club was able to deal with these changes and indeed was one of the first clubs to purchase a digital projector with the help of lottery money.

We had been meeting at St Michaels Church Hall in Bournemouth for many years but the area we used as a car park changed ownership and we were forced to look for a new venue. Returning to our roots at the Bournemouth Natural Science Society building seemed a good option but the hall was too big for our much smaller club. There was no atmosphere in the hall and it proved to be not warm enough in winter. Membership was falling all the time as we competed with too many clubs in the Bournemouth and Poole area.

We approached the Bournemouth Electric Camera Club with a view to merging with them. They were sympathetic to our problems and a successful merger has taken place. Hopefully we will jointly become a very successful club.