



NEWSLETTER

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APCS NEWSLETTER No.100 –April 2020

Nothing is normal at the moment

If times were normal this newsletter would have been reminding you that next Sunday was the members-only auction, providing a link to the catalogue and highlighting some of the exciting items that are available. And only a few weeks ago we were planning just that. But it is not to be, and we will all have to wait for a while to see the Voigtlander specials, some rare brass lenses etc that are now in storage. We can't even have a social meeting.

But in these modern times with technology providing all sorts of communications we can talk to each other and even have on-line meetings between a few people. So, get on the phone and talk to each other – swap Skype addresses and set up some show and tell sessions, and generally try to make up for the fact that organised events are off for the time being.

This is Newsletter No 100 – This format for the newsletters started in September 2007 – prior to that the newsletters were what became Back Focus. It was going to be a special celebratory edition but unfortunately it is special for all the wrong reasons. Nevertheless it is our way of keeping in touch.

There is an innovation – all newsletters are available from an index which you can access from the “newsletter” page on the website. If you feel nostalgic you might download a few and read them. And before anyone complains – there was no “No.30” – someone could not count back in 2013!

Corona Virus COVID19 – an update on the APCS position

It is a feature of the present times that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be the headline in the newsletter for many months. Only a couple of weeks ago there was optimistic hope that some sort of normality would be achieved by mid-June. But that “normality” is now one of cancelled and deferred events, with absolutely no certainty about when that will change, and every indication that the old normal won't be until late in 2020 if not well into 2021.

So the current list of changes looks like the following:

- **The APCS Members-only Auction scheduled for the 19th April is CANCELLED.**
- **The Adelaide Public Market that was scheduled for the 3rd May is CANCELLED.**
- **The Members-only Market scheduled for the 17th May – CANCELLED.**

- **The AGM scheduled for 21st June – DEFERRED to a date to be determined. (see below)**
- **The Members only Auction scheduled for 19th July – CANCELLED**
- **Members-only market and social event scheduled for 16th August – IN DOUBT – watch for announcements**
- **Public Market scheduled for 20th September – IN DOUBT – watch for announcements**
- **The program for the remainder of the year is now subject to new planning.**

By far the greater part of our membership is in the age group that is likely to be affected adversely by the virus. We will be modifying our program to minimise the threat of infection, perhaps a bit more conservatively than the official position. Announcements will be made on the APCS webpage: www.apcsociety.com.au and on the APCS Facebook page as well as in the newsletters. It is increasingly a case that we have to look after ourselves, and clearly, isolation is probably the best policy. This is new territory and at least for the time being we are feeling our way through it. To stay safe we will curtail what we used to do to support our collections. Quoting the Manager of “Photographica” (USA):

“There are cameras to die for, but none worth dying for!”

Buying and Selling Photographic Items

Events facilitating buying and selling photographic items are simply off for the time being globally, with no certainty of a change to that reality in the foreseeable future. Maybe techniques like eBay and on-line auctions will emerge that meet the expectations and requirements of collectors but it will take time for such techniques to emerge and for people to have the confidence that they are appropriate for our needs. The APCS is now forced into a position of looking for alternative ways of marketing these goods.

Ideas of on-line auctions etc have been contemplated but there are a few inhibitors against going down that path. The alternative of an extended Members-only Market is similarly impossible under the current restrictions.

An option exists to deal with items that have a specific value that is acceptable to the vendors – setting prices and listing the items in the Classified advertisements in the APCS Newsletter. The sale is then managed between individual members. The catalogue effectively becomes part of the newsletter and will have linked photographs of the major items.

A problem for many members is that prices and demand are highly volatile at the best of times and we will need to find a very special crystal ball to discover what the appropriate prices should be. Of course, there is the added complex issue that prices are usually determined by competing interest and knowledge of the condition of the items on offer. Buyers want to determine those details first hand and rarely accept the opinion of others. Price recommendations that are found in reference books and on-line are not reliable indicators for the present – they rely on historic reported data and there is plenty of evidence of manipulation.

For the APCS, the markets and auctions provide a major part of the revenue that allows the APCS to operate. We have resources that will allow a low revenue period for a while but eventually if this method of selling becomes normal then we will have to think again about how we operate financially.

Communication with members

A key issue in any communications with members that relies on electronic means is that we have addresses for everyone. Please notify us if your email address changes – send an email to web@apcsociety.com.au including your name – so that we can communicate effectively.

We know that there are about a dozen members who have not provided us with email addresses – we will be contacting them by phone from time to time as a way of keeping them informed. The newsletter (including back copies) are available electronically from the Members' page on the APCS website.

The APCS AGM in June

The AGM scheduled for June is certain to be deferred, and even without rule changes can be as late as the end of October. There is no certainty that we will be able to hold a conventional meeting and if that is not possible then we have some alternatives to consider. An obvious one is to run the AGM electronically. More about that in future newsletters.

We do need to fill a couple of committee vacancies ASAP, and to consider the election of all members of the Committee in the AGM process. Give some thought on how you could contribute and note that all members throughout the world can be part of the committee as we expect that all committee business will be on-line for this next year. Technology is coming to our aid and modern conferencing software will be used.

Back Focus – current plans

The next issue of Back Focus is going to be a bit different from past formats, and the APCS schedule still has the potential to change. Members can expect copies in the mail early in June. It will be a much larger issue than usual, making up for the loss of an issue in 2019 and a reduction in the number of issues in 2020. The full index is still being determined but will include a series of short presentations on interesting cameras that were shown to members at the February meeting, Part 2 of a series on cameras that were innovative, some shorter articles that have been received but not yet published, and a major article on the practical side of using legacy lenses – reviewed now that very high resolution mirrorless cameras are available. This article summarises the performance of over 50 classical lenses

with about 50mm focal lengths made in the last 120 years, predominantly for the same format as the latest digital cameras, including measured details on various degradations. Spoiler alert: Those results show that none of the classical lenses are better than the emerging new designs – even the cheaper ones – when corrected by the software in modern cameras.

This issue will also contain the APCS annual report for the year ended 31st May 2020, along with some administration matters – reminding members that subscriptions are due from 31st May – still at \$30.

It is estimated that this issue will have over 100 pages of material and will be presented as a high quality publication that people will want to keep.

Back Focus can't exist without good articles. Remember that we are a collecting society – write up your speciality and share your enthusiasm with the rest of the membership – you never can tell what might be hiding out there and current owners don't know what you are really enthusiastic about – it might bring you that elusive model or example that you have been chasing for years.

Membership renewals

It is not too early to renew your membership for 2020-2021, and thank you to the members who have already renewed their membership for the next year. They become due at the end of May and the fee of \$30 can be paid by a direct deposit into the bank account:

Account name: Australian Photographic Collectors' Society. BSB: 083166 – Account: 515315423 and be certain to put your name or membership number in the reference field.

Or you can send a cheque to the Treasurer P.O.Box126, KANGAROO GROUND, VIC 3097

If any of your details have changed please let us know. Download the membership form from the website <http://www.apcsociety.com.au/membership.html> and include it with your cheque, or email the changes to the Treasurer or to web@apcsociety.com.au

Magazine exchanges

The APCS has magazine exchange relationships with other societies of like nature and in the past, copies were usually located in the APCS library. Modern trends towards having such items on-line (and permission from the original societies) allows us to make those copies directly available to you from our website.

The 2020 copies of "Snap Shots" from the Photographic Historical Society of New England can be found at:

www.apcsociety.com.au/PHSNE/2020-01_snap-shots_web.pdf

www.apcsociety.com.au/PHSNE/2020-02_snap-shots_web.pdf

www.apcsociety.com.au/PHSNE/2020-03_snap-shots_web.pdf

www.apcsociety.com.au/PHSNE/2020-04_snap-shots_web.pdf

And from the Photographic Historical Society of Canada:

www.apcsociety.com.au/PHSC_NEWS_2020_04.pdf

Of course, we have permission from those societies to reproduce their newsletters – just as they can reproduce what we publish as well.

Auctions and Markets around the World

The APCS is not the only camera collecting organisation that has effectively gone into recess as a result of the pandemic. The effect of this on our hobby and interests is uncharted territory, and it will probably be quite some time before we discover what the result will be. We know that collecting cameras has been affected in recent times by a general drift away from collecting and towards trading – and there are several theories and opinions around what that should be.

A practical issue is that it will take time before a significant change is evident and there is little doubt that many collectors will be unlikely to trade while there is so much uncertainty. Consider your own thinking about this... What are you doing about your collection? What do you want to do? Is it time to divest yourself of your collection (or investment) depending on why you have so many old cameras?

Vendors who were planning to submit articles for the next auction have stated that they are prepared to wait out the crisis. That might be a common thought.

A Webinar on the dating of photographs

Rather late notice but on Wednesday 15th April 1-2pm AEST, the National Library of Australia is running a webinar on-line on the subject of finding and dating old photographs. This is a free event and you can register by going to: <https://www.nla.gov.au/event/finding-and-dating-photographs-webinar> This is one of a series of initiatives by the NLA to move towards on-line operations in general.

Government advice on COVID-19

There are a lot of internet sites that give all sorts of opinions and advice on the COVID-19 situation. The official Australian Government reference is the main start page which you can see at <https://www.australia.gov.au/>. There is a lot of specific advice and reference material on that site via links to other pages.

Classified Advertisements

You can place classified advertisements in these pages. Send an email to adverts@apcsociety.com.au including a JPG photo if you wish. Rather than include your name and contact details we can add an enquiry code and pass information on to you – then you can deal directly with the responders – your decision. At present there is no charge for this service. For the time being keep the text down to under 50 words per item.