

When I joined the Edinburgh Photographic Society (EPS) in 2021, I was exclusively interested in the present and the future; i.e., what is on today and what do I need to plan or prepare for, in the way of meetings and competitions, in the days and weeks ahead. It wasn't until my 2<sup>nd</sup> season that I started to ask myself the questions around the club's past; the almost existential question around how did we get here! When I went in search for answers, I came across the 'History' section of the EPS website which provided me with a brief introduction to its illustrious history; written by Peter Stubbs, it begins:

"1861 was the year that Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the USA. It was the year that the American Civil War began. In Edinburgh this was the year that the One o'clock Gun was set up at Edinburgh Castle and the foundation stone was laid for the Royal Scottish Museum. It was also the year that Edinburgh Photographic Society was founded".

Fast forward a couple of years, and it wasn't until I heard of Peters' passing, in December 2023, that I really took an interest in his work again. There was talk within the Society that, without him as a custodian for his work, it could be lost; a hard drive gets damaged, a website domain doesn't get renewed, and all of a sudden, the legacy is gone! I did not fully comprehend what was being discussed at that point, and to get clarity I returned to the EPS site to take another look at the 'History' page he had written. At the foot of the page was a rather innocuous statement "For even more ... click here", the gateway into Peter's historical account of the EPS which in itself is but a part of his larger historical project 'EdinPhoto'.

Looking back, it was a bit of an iceberg moment for me; what appeared on the surface as a 'brief introduction' belies the mass of narrative, data, and analysis that is contained within his historical research site [www.edinphoto.org](http://www.edinphoto.org). The site takes you on a journey through time with particular focus on Photography (EPS, Edinburgh's Photographers, and an Early History of Photography), and his many and varied points of general interest (Leith, Transport, photos, etc.). His meticulous research brought him into contact with many hundreds and possibly thousands of people, both locally and across the globe; the common interest being a remembrance of the people and places that had shaped their own lives in some way big or small. The community that he drew together was quite incredible; his passion and website were a catalyst to drawing people together to share experience, information, and memory. I cannot begin to imagine the time that he must have devoted to the creation and maintenance of his project; it's simply staggering and not something that can be done without tremendous passion and commitment.

In creating this document, I needed a 'content boundary' around what to include and what to leave out; which as it turned out was not as easy as it initially sounded due to the large amounts of information recorded and the relative complexity in structure of the original site. The intent of this particular document was to focus purely on the EPS history and where possible I have linked internal sections of this document as they were intended on Peter's site. In the event that there were references being made to areas that I felt were out with the scope of this document, I have provided the hyperlink that will take you to the intended external site although there is no guarantee that these links will remain intact over time.

In recognition for his research into the History of Photography in Edinburgh alone, he was awarded Fellow of the Royal Society of Photography (FRPS) in 2005; for those not familiar with the RPS, this is their highest form of membership distinction.

As I went through his site it was evident that some links had become 'broken'; furthermore, the website domain was due to expire in which case the site in its original format would be lost. It has since been extended by Peter's family for 2024 but the underlying risk of the site disappearing still remains. Peter himself saw the risk of having his site as the 'single source' of information and wisely chose to back it

up to the 'Internet Archive' <https://web.archive.org/web/20231031020301/http://edinphoto.org.uk/> Hopefully, through this site, and a copy held by the British Library (to be confirmed), his legacy will be remain available to those that are interested.

Even though these 'back-up' sites exist I thought there would be merit in creating a document backup so that it mimics the content of EPS section of his site. At the outset, I identified two primary benefits in creating the document version; firstly, it is now available through the EPS website so that visitors may take a look directly into the Society's history without the need to navigate through an external archive site. The second and perhaps main benefit is that we now have a historical record independent of the web platform on which it was built which in turn allows us to supplement and add to the history captured by Peter. So, on that note, please reach out if you have an interest in history and have a little time to spare; we are looking for members to help bring our historical records up to date!

On a personal note, I hope that you enjoy this version of Peter's site; it has been both my pleasure and privilege to have completed an edit into the format presented for you. Please feel free to reach out if you come across an error in content, in how this document internally links, etc. and I will endeavour to update this and republish it through the EPS website.

David Ferguson

<https://www.edinburghphotographicsociety.co.uk/wp/about/history/>

EPS Outing to Cadzow Forrest - 1877



Edinburgh Photographic Society – Office Bearers – 1903



## A History of the Edinburgh Photographic Society

by

Peter Stubbs

1945 - 2023

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