



The History of BCG

“Competition Evening – November 2nd 1953”

The competition evening on Monday 2nd November 1953 was something special. 17 members of the Ipswich Photographic Society (IPS) had trekked to Brisbane to witness the judging. The Ipswich Photographic Society was active in the early decades of the century but had disbanded. The club was re-established in 1953 and had quickly bonded with BCG. This evening's BCG meeting was being held in the V.A.D. Rooms above the St. James Theatre on the corner of Albert and Elizabeth Streets. The V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment) Rooms were initially focussed on providing services to returned soldiers but over time had become the venue for a broad range of social activities. BCG meetings were held in the V.A.D. Rooms during 1953. The St. James Theatre building was later refurbished to become the Paris Theatre in 1965 and then demolished in 1986 to make way for the Myer Centre. Today, the V.A.D. Rooms that hosted BCG meetings is space somewhere within the Myer Centre.

The BCG President Dr. Angus Buchanan opened the meeting. He welcomed the Ipswich visitors. There were also 55 BCG members present. An apology letter from Miss Hobday was tabled. Miss Hobday reported that she was progressing favourably and hoped to be back at BCG very soon. Some club business was conducted. A motion was put forward that in 1954 that there be three subjects on the monthly competition agenda and not just the current two of “Set” and “Open”. The additional one would be “Portrait”. The motion was carried unanimously. It was also proposed and passed unanimously that the Royal Geographical Society Rooms in Ann Street be the proposed venue of a BCG Print Exhibition. The Royal Geographical Society Rooms would in fact soon become the official meeting place of BCG commencing January 1954.

The judging had commenced in one area of the V.A.D. rooms while some BCG members continued with other club business. Many of the Ipswich visitors huddled around judges Mr. Ralph Gregory and Mr. Garth Grant-Thomson to better hear their knowledgeable deliberations. The November 1953 contest theme was “Flowers”. There were two competition Grades in BCG at that time – A and B. The A Grade Set winner was Tom Scrusse. The B Grade Set winner was Mr. A.L. Smith. Mr. A.L. Smith's print was also chosen by the judges as the “Print of the Month”. This was the second month in a row that B Grader A.L. Smith had won “Print of the Month”. His “Landscape/Seascape” entry in October 1953 had also won.

The records show that after club business and the judging had ended, tea and biscuits was enjoyed by all. The meeting closed. Those club members and visitors who had travelled by car to this BCG evening would have found abundant and free parking in Albert Street. It was, after all, 1953.

Mr. Garth Grant-Thomson

Mr. Ralph Gregory



During November the Ipswich Camera Club members visited Brisbane, where they watched Mr. Ralph Gregory, A.R.P.S., and Mr. Garth Grant-Thomson, A.R.P.S., judging the November contest for the Brisbane Camera Group.

(Photograph: Wallace Reid)

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This photograph was taken by BCG member (and Kodak employee) Wally Reid at the BCG competition evening of the 2nd November 1953. It was published in the Australasian Photo Review in February 1954. Ralph Gregory is to the right of the easel and holding a print. Garth Grant-Thomson is to the left of Ralph Gregory and his head is framed by the upper part of the easel. It is most likely that Garth is holding the scoring sheet in his hand.