



Young people's photo competition - Bradford

We know (as perhaps do many other Civic Societies) that our membership in general is made up of people “of mature years” and is overwhelmingly white. How could we encourage more young people to become aware of Bradford Civic Society and how could we raise our profile among Bradford’s ethnic communities? One of our members suggested a young people’s photographic competition and our secretary, Mandy Oates, volunteered to organise it.

We had received a grant from Grassroots of £5000, most of which went towards setting up our new website (www.bradfordcivicsociety.co.uk), but there was some left to fund this project. Mandy sent a flier to every school and college in the Bradford district and then followed this up with email and phone calls to the places most likely to be interested. Within a month she had a good number of photographs and we set about organising an exhibition of these and then laid out £1000 for a handsome calendar to be produced.

The theme of the competition was “Celebrating Bradford’s Architecture” and the youngsters involved were encouraged to photograph city centre buildings which they found particularly beautiful. Fortunately, despite the efforts of vandals masquerading as town planners to destroy Bradford’s architectural heritage, the city still retains buildings of outstanding beauty, particularly from the Victorian era, and many of these were featured in the photographs. But some striking pictures of more modern buildings were also submitted. The overall quality was very high and it made one’s jaw drop in wonder and admiration noting that some of the photographers were a mere seven years old, (the oldest was only seventeen). Most of the competitors were from Bradford’s Asian communities.

On 13th November 2010 the Lord Mayor of Bradford, Councillor Peter Hill, formally opened an exhibition of the best photographs. This was in the Pop Up Gallery in Centenary Square in the middle of Bradford. The exhibition ran for the rest of the month. Because the Pop Up Gallery was the venue in mid-November for Bradford Council’s regeneration summit, assorted politicians and other influential movers and shakers were able to view the exhibition, thus raising Bradford Civic Society’s profile.

The winning entrants were published in Bradford Civic Society’s rather impressive calendar for 2011, which is entitled “Fresh Eyes on our City.” Our paid-up members all received a complimentary copy of the calendar and we sold the remainder to anyone who wanted one for £10.

And the impact? We got good coverage in the local press and the calendar sold well. And we intend to get some junior branches of Bradford Civic Society launched in four or

five Bradford inner-city primary schools, so that they can respond to the theme of “Love where you live”. We are hoping to produce a Civic Society starter/support pack for the schools’ use, but whether we can do any of this will depend on getting some funding to support the project.

A last word from Mandy: *“A project like this is eminently feasible but it takes time and a certain amount of doggedness to get a result. Schools are busy place and you are unlikely to get a response without a bit of badgering.”*

Alan Hall
Chair
Bradford Civic Society
Alanhallteacher@aol.com

Civic Voice comment

Other civic societies Bradford Civic Society’s lead and are taking forward the idea of a photography competition as a part of Civic Day. If you want to follow this lead, Civic Voice has developed a ten-step guide to organising a photography competition, informed by the many societies across the country who have conducted one in the past. Running a Photography Competition is available at [http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/Briefing -
running a photography competition.pdf](http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/Briefing-_running_a_photography_competition.pdf)