

J.F. (Frank) Hinchcliff

- *Hugh Scott*



Frank Hinchcliff was a Foundation Member of the Photographic Society of New Zealand; a Foundation and Life Member of the Nelson Photographic Society; a founding member, and first President and Patron of the Waikanae Camera Club (now the Kapiti Photographic Society).

Born in 1911, he was given a 120 Kodak Box Brownie for his 12th birthday and soon developed a love of photography. Early interests were in portraits and photojournalism, and for the rest of his life human interest and the "story" were features of his photography.

Frank trained as a chemist, eventually owning Ancells Pharmacy in Nelson until he retired to Waikanae. The photo counter at Ancells became a casual meeting place for photographers to receive advice and encouragement from Frank. He was never afraid to experiment with new chemicals or processes. In earlier years one section of the ceiling in the lounge of the Hinchcliff home was constantly darkened by the effects of igniting flash powder.

From the early 1950s Frank achieved significant competitive success. His portrait, "Prelude" was champion print at the 1952 National Salon.

International recognition also came, through his entries in salons around the world. Frank received the gold medal at the 1973 PSA International Exhibition in San Francisco for best human interest colour slide. He continued to achieve success in salons and competitions throughout his life.

He loved cameras and any kind of photographic equipment, beginning a collection in 1944 that is now the J.F. Hinchcliff Collection on display at the Millenium Museum in Te Awanga, near Napier. He also "rescued" a number of 19th century cameras which are now held by the Nelson Provincial Museum. Cameras from pre-WWI were his main interest. He tried all kinds of cameras, but Leicas remained his favourites.

He was a strong supporter of camera clubs. He was involved in reviving Nelson Photographic Society in 1944 and served several terms as its president. When he retired he joined the Levin Camera Club and later founded the Waikanae Camera Club, serving as President and then Patron. He was participating in the club until he died. These clubs remember Frank's generosity and encouragement. We were always able to rely on him for support and wise advice.

Frank's generosity is illustrated by his gift of a projector to NPS in 1958. When the society purchased a new projector, the committee, not knowing its origin, offered the old one back to Frank for \$50. He made no comment.

In many ways PSNZ owes the Davies Natural History Award to Frank. The award, commemorating William C. Davies of the Cawthron Institute, was run by the Nelson Photographic Society until 1955. Matheson Beaumont recalls that Frank was instrumental in NPS giving the award over to PSNZ to administer.

Frank will always be remembered both for his skill and for the encouraging way he shared his passion with so many people. After a long and active life, he died in 2004 at his home in Waikanae. At the time of his passing, Frank was survived by 3 children, 10 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.