

George Pollock FRPS

The Audio Visual community has lost one of its founding fathers, Sir George Frederick Pollock, Bt., MA, FRSA, HonFRPS, HonPAGB, MPAGB, EFIAP, who sadly died on 30th May 2016, aged 87 years.

Several members of the group have contributed to this memorial, can I thank them all. In reducing this article to a manageable size, I have, inevitably, edited some contributions. However, I have put all contributions, in full, on the AV part of the RPS website. (rps.org/special-interest-groups/audio-visual/about/sir-george-pollock-memories).

"George Pollock was born on 13th August 1928 in Paris to a British father and French mother. He was educated at Eton College, Windsor, and undertook national service during 1947-49. He read Biology and Law at Trinity College, Cambridge gaining a BA in 1953 and MA in 1957. He then practised as a solicitor for six years, before retiring to become, in 1963, an artist-photographer. It was photography in its various



forms that occupied the remainder of his life. He invented a method of making abstract colour photographs using controlled light, originally through glass, in 1962, which he named 'Vitrographs'."

(rps.org/news/2016/june/sir-george-pollock)

"Everyone who has ever been seriously interested in amateur AV in the UK owes a debt of gratitude to Sir George Pollock. He was responsible for or involved in virtually every initiative from the earliest days of slide-tape in this country. George was one of the prime movers in getting AV started in the UK in the late 1960s, along with the late Ray Beaumont-Craggs and the late Michael Tickner. Being half-French and a keen Francophile, George was in close contact with AV activities on the continent, such as the festivals in Epinal and Vichy, which had already been running for several years."

(Richard Brown)

As we know, AV needs the ability to control the relative brightness of two images. At the start, hands were 'waved' in front of two projectors and then a number of 'Heath Robinson' devices were created. But David Pollock, George's son, reminds us that...

"...there was no commercial fader available when he started making AV's, which is how the Purlock DuoFade came about. He approached designer and engineer David Purslow and together they designed and built the DuoFade. It took some time to come up with the perfect shape for the blades to create smooth dissolves. Dad then started selling the DuoFade commercially (in 1972) and many amateur AV enthusiasts cut their teeth using one. It was only later that systems for fading the bulbs in the projectors came in.



Secondly the invention of the DuoFade allowed Dad to create and present his Visual Concerts. These were AV shows prior to the Pollock Peepshows. They were well received not just in the UK but also in South Africa and Australia. In Melbourne in 1972 he performed a Visual Concert at the then relatively new Art Centre to over 800 people. It was the Visual Concerts that attracted the eye of Olympus Cameras that eventually lead to the creation of the Peepshows to coincide with the launch of the Olympus OM1.

(David Pollock)

As well as their tremendous input into the enthusiast side of AV, George and Doreen were also evangelists for the medium in the public arena through their Pollock's Peepshow presentations, which they toured around large venues throughout the UK. We tend to think of widescreen AV as being a digital innovation, but George and Doreen were doing widescreen shows with twin ten-foot back-projection screens over forty years ago."

(Richard Brown)

POLLOCK'S PANORAMIC PEEPSHOW

HOW TO MAKE A SEQUENCE

A light-hearted look at the techniques, trials and tribulations of making a slide-tape sequence.



Pollock's Panoramic Peepshow is an audio-visual spectacular presented by Sir George and Lady Doreen Pollock, with sponsorship from Practical Photography, Agfa-Gevaert Ltd, Olympus (UK) Ltd and Audio-Visual Equipment Ltd.

It features two-screen back projection using four projectors, with tape-actuated dissolves controlled by 2 AVE Convars, plus high-fidelity sound. The programme is taken from the sequences described on these pages.



WESTINGHOUSE CAMERA CLUB
PRESENTS

POLLOCK'S

PANORAMIC

PEEPSHOW

Programme

<u>Title</u>	<u>No. of Slides</u>	<u>Time</u>
1. Divina	124	8 m. 30 s.
2. Leith Hill the Hard Way	116	6 m.
3. Xanadu	68	4 m. 15 s.
4. This Great New Age	288	25 m.
5. The Bath Project	68	6 m. 20 s.
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	664	50 m. 5 s.

INTERVAL

10 m.

Presentation of Cheque to Cheshire Foundation Home.

6. How to make a Sequence	90	6 m. 20 s.
7. Round the World	104	9 m.
8. The Sound of Silence	60	3 m.
9. Tonga	252	18 m. 30 s.
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	506	36 m. 50 s.

Show - Grand Total 1,170 slides 1 hr. 27 m.

Sir George F. Pollock, Bt., F.R.P.S. F.I.L.P.,
Lady Doreen Pollock, F.R.P.S.

Netherwood, Stones Lane,
Westcott, DORKING,
Surrey.
Dorking (0306) 81641

Clive Rathband organised one such show and remembers... " This was a spectacular presentation - two large back projection screens filled the front of the stage and there was stereo sound. We had a packed house of 400 people and raised a lot of money for a local cancer charity - despite the fact that George and Doreen's fee was £50 and we only charged 35p for a ticket!



Clive Rathband, Sir George, Lady Doreen,,, (1975)

It was Sir George, who at an earlier event, captivated Clive. "...It was my first exposure to AV and I was fascinated by the effects produced. Soon after, I attended an all-day workshop given by George at Trowbridge College and was captivated by the artistic potential of the Purlock DuoFade. I started saving for a second projector, the DuoFade and a Tape recorder. George was an absolute master of the DuoFade and could produce effects that no one else could, but, we had great fun trying to emulate his skill."

(Clive Rathband)

Jill Hiron, George's daughter, was also highly involved in his photography. "My first photographic memory of my father was aged 6, in 1961, watching the magic of a photograph appear in the developing tank in Dad's makeshift

darkroom in our attic. The photographs themselves weren't of as much interest to me as the captivating way they appeared on the paper; it wasn't until later that I came to appreciate Dad's (and Mum's) talents. By the time I was 14 I was acting as an occasional 'roadie' for Mum and Dad, helping them to load the car at home, travel to the venue then helping them to set up first the Visual Concerts then later the Pollock's Pictorial Peepshows. It was hard work, especially lugging those huge AR3 speakers around, but also loads of fun.

I had a brief dalliance with AV in my late teens and early twenties (I wonder whose influence that was!) but then marriage and children took over so I rather lost touch with the AV world, but I always had a private preview of all Mum and Dad's new sequences; what you might call the privilege of position!

I'm enormously grateful for the grounding in artistic photography that both my parents gave me and introducing me to the beauty of light."

Geoff Noxon recalls - "Sir George Pollock lived dangerously. I recall he piloted a hang-glider for one of his sequences, photographed his blazing car by a French roadside, and even became President of the RPS (1978-80)! I don't recall the circumstances but he had to be rebuilt with various prostheses so, when he came back into circulation, I addressed him with my invented sobriquet: 'The Bionic Baronet'."

In 1983 Sir George collated RPS Journal articles and memories of the early days of AV, before the AV Group was formed. The publication starts:

"1969 (March Journal) "Welcome to Diaporama" by Ray Beaumont-Craggs. Report on a meeting organised by the Motion Picture Group in the Great Room of the Royal Society of Arts on 18th December 1968. Meeting was made possible by the loan of equipment by Michael Tickner..."

"Ray Beaumont-Craggs (Paris) awarded Fellowship in Kinematography on the basis of work shown at the R.S.A. meeting"

"1971 - RPS subscription £6.30

Jan - (Council proceedings) The suggestion of Sir George Pollock that a new class of Associateship and Fellowship should be created to cover Audio-Visual Presentations was referred to the Fellowship and Associateship Co-ordinating Committee.

Feb - "Mr. J.E.P. Bardsley reported...the draft regulations for these sections were approved.."

Though not noted by Sir George, the first 'Slide-Sound-Sequences' distinctions were Fellowships, awarded to Richard Tucker and John Podmore, approved by Council on 8th November 1971.

Skipping through to June 1972 we see the first Associateships, which were awarded to J.E. Barnard (Worthing), David Burns (Crowborough), R.E. Holmes (Loughborough) and J.M.McCormack (London).

(rps.org/special-interest-groups/audio-visual/about/sir-george-pollock-memories)

George became "... the founder-Chairman of the A and F panel, which began assessing applications in 1971. George was also a driving force behind the creation of the RPS Audio Visual Group, which grew out of the AV Newsletter which Lady Doreen had started in 1976."

(Richard Brown)

Lady Doreen was very much the instigator of AV News, George notes... "my recollection is that she mentioned the idea one day when we were driving home from an event in East Anglia." Lady Doreen was herself a very keen AV producer and gained an FRPS for her work.

"In 1976 George and Doreen started the 'RPS AV Newsletter', rates £1.50/year for members and £3 for non-members and, in 1977, Council approved the formation of the RPS AV Group. The first meeting called on those interested to get in touch with Lady Pollock at Netherwood, Stones



Lane, Dorking, Surrey, telephone Dorking 5447 or, if no reply, Dorking 81641. (What went on at the second address one wonders?)

The Honorary Secretary of the Group was Brian Bower, another subsequent President of The Royal Photographic Society. Technical Notes in the Newsletter were provided by Geoff Noxon, 4 pages with diagrams covering Slide Jamming; Proliferation of mains plugs; Control Track; Twinkle

Switch; Snatched slide changes and speculation on the future use of liquid crystals to make a Duo-Fade without moving parts (comment by Sir G: That'll be the day!) - If only he'd known then about computers!..."

(Robert Albright)

The RPS Obituary notes..."He joined the Society in 1963 and gained two Fellowships (1965, 1993). He sat on the Society's Council from 1969 until 1994 and served as the Society's President (1978-1980). He received a Fenton Medal for his services to the Society in 1984. In addition to Council, the Society's Distinction Panels also benefited from Pollock's expertise. He sat for nine years on the Pictorial Panel and eighteen years on the Slide-Sound Sequences (later, Audio-Visual) Panel. Under his guidance Audio-Visual work grew in prominence within the Society with a specialist AV Group, the creation of the RPS International AV Festival and the specialist distinction panel. The Doreen and George Pollock medal was created by the AV Group to commemorate his efforts. ..."

The Medal, named in their honour, is awarded at up to five AV festivals each year. It is awarded to a sequence from the 'best first time entrant' or 'newcomer' and is intended to motivate new AV workers. The first recipient, for his entry in the RPS Nationals in 2007, was John Smith, with 'The Messiah'.



Richard Brown observes..."On a personal level, people who didn't know him tended to imagine that George was somewhat aloof and rather pompous. As he once said to me "Because I have a title, people think I must live in a mansion and drive a Rolls-Royce". In fact, he did neither. George was approachable, helpful and encouraging, especially to those just

starting out on their own AV journey. His waspish sense of humour and tremendous store of personal anecdotes made him a wonderful dinner or travelling companion."

Edgar and Linda Gibbs also remember... "After a day attending an RPS Assessment Day in Bath, we had arranged to call in and see Sir George, on our way home to Cardiff, "just for a cup of tea" and chat about the day's events. After a lovely welcome, we sat in his lounge and Sir George listened intently whilst we told him about the AV sequences we had seen that day. He then disappeared into the kitchen and returned wheeling in his trolley loaded up with various delicious looking cakes and mouth-watering biscuits. With a lovely smile, George said "a little of what you fancy..."

Robert Albright also visited regularly. "When visiting Sir George in more recent times, he loved to be kept up to date with Society affairs. It became possible to show AVs on his television rather than the previous method of setting up a projector. This in itself, however, became an event of drama and tension lest the unfortunate visitor lost George's preferred TV settings. He would sit in his favourite chair pressing all the buttons on the remote control until nothing worked at all.

One learnt through experience to let the storm pass, which it usually did after a few minutes, and then to gently prise the remote control away from him so as to establish the correct settings. He particularly disliked the necessary insertion of a cable in the back of the television to transmit the signal from laptop to TV. I think he regarded it as some form of black magic which would lay a curse on all future attempts to watch his beloved Wimbledon Tennis."

George continued with his photography, but did not move into digital AVs for various reasons. However, fairly recently, Joan Ryder-Rathband helped George digitise one of his earlier sound-slide-sequences.

"One day Joan offered to digitise one of his slide-tape based AVs and George suggested his sequence entitled '*Gloria*'. Joan and I scanned the slides and Joan did the post processing, and resized the images to get the registration right. She did this with a great feeling of trepidation, knowing how fussy George was on the precise alignment of the images. The music he had used was on cassette and was unavailable. We found it on the Internet and downloaded it. The day came when we went to George's house to put the final touches to the AV using PTE, as we felt it had to be

his production and not our interpretation. George took to it like a duck to water. He loved the effects and transitions and squealed with delight at the rolling colour changes he could create. The dissolves and third images were so much more effective, he said, without the brief delay during the slide change. Just imagine what he could have produced if PTE had come a little earlier and been compatible with his Mac computer?"

(Clive Rathband)

Over the years Sir George had a huge impact in the UK, but also in Europe and in South Africa. So it is fitting that he entered this newly converted sequence into a competition, with a theme which had been his lifelong photographic passion. Jeff Morris from South Africa notes... "Probably one of the last competitions he entered was the South African AV Makers' "International Year of Light" festival with this sequence. "Gloria" was awarded the Director's choice."

So many people have paid tribute to his influence on starting them on the path, or progressing them in AV. Suzanne Gregory remembers..." Howard and I went to a public AV show at North Cheshire Photographic Society where Sir George and Lady Doreen were the speakers. He showed his "Triptych" sequences. I knew then that making sequences was what I wanted to do. I was hooked."

Howard Wilson speaks for so many.." If it had not been for Sir George, I am sure that many people - like me - would have never ventured into the world of AV. We should all be very grateful and offer a small prayer for his abilities, achievements and encouragement over many, many years."

Sir George Pollock will be sadly missed by the whole AV community.

