



e-news

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SIR GEORGE F. POLLOCK Bt. MA FRSA HonFRPS HonPAGB MPAGB EFIAP

by Robert Albright FRPS



An early passion for Sir George was the emerging discipline of Audio-Visual production, building on the work of the French pioneers in the medium and the early British contributions by Ray Beaumont-Craggs in Paris and Michael Tickner in England. In particular, George promoted AV in The Royal Photographic Society; he prepared a booklet in 1993 on 'RPS AV Before the AV Group, 1968-1977'.

As early as January 1971 George had proposed to The RPS Council that a new class of Associate and Fellowship be created to cover Audio Visual Presentations. This was approved the following month with the first awards being made in 1972. In 1974 the annual subscription was £9.00; the Annual Dinner (at The Savoy) cost £6 (including VAT), wine extra. Those were the days.

The Slide Sound Panel, as it was then known, was Chaired by George and included Edwin Appleton (a subsequent President of The Society), Ray Beaumont-Craggs, Mrs Pat Whitehouse, Michael Tickner and Richard Tucker. The assessment panel attended a public six-projector show in New Zealand House and awarded a Fellowship on the spot to Matheson Beaumont.

There was no commercial fader available when George 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. In 1972 George started selling the DuoFade commercially 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.

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The invention of the DuoFade allowed George 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 and led eventually, in 1975, to the creation of the Pollock's Pictorial Peepshow to coincide with the launch of the Olympus OM1 - a minimum audience of 150 was required and a 'fee on request'.

In 1976 George and Doreen started the 'RPS AV Newsletter', rates £1.50 per year for members and £3 for non-members, and in 1977 the RPS 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!

At the time a lively debate took place in the pages of the Newsletter. Letter from Eric Sainsbury: 'I disagree with Michael Tickner; pictures are paramount; if photography is to be the poor relation of profound thoughts and trick recording, then the medium is not for me.' Michael Tickner subsequently replied: 'I look forward to the day when montages try to say something instead of pallid trivialities which are in danger of becoming the hallmark of diaporama in the UK.' Plus ca Change!

Another letter from Leslie Miller; 'Slide Sound Sequences are entertainment, not art; the audience has rights.'

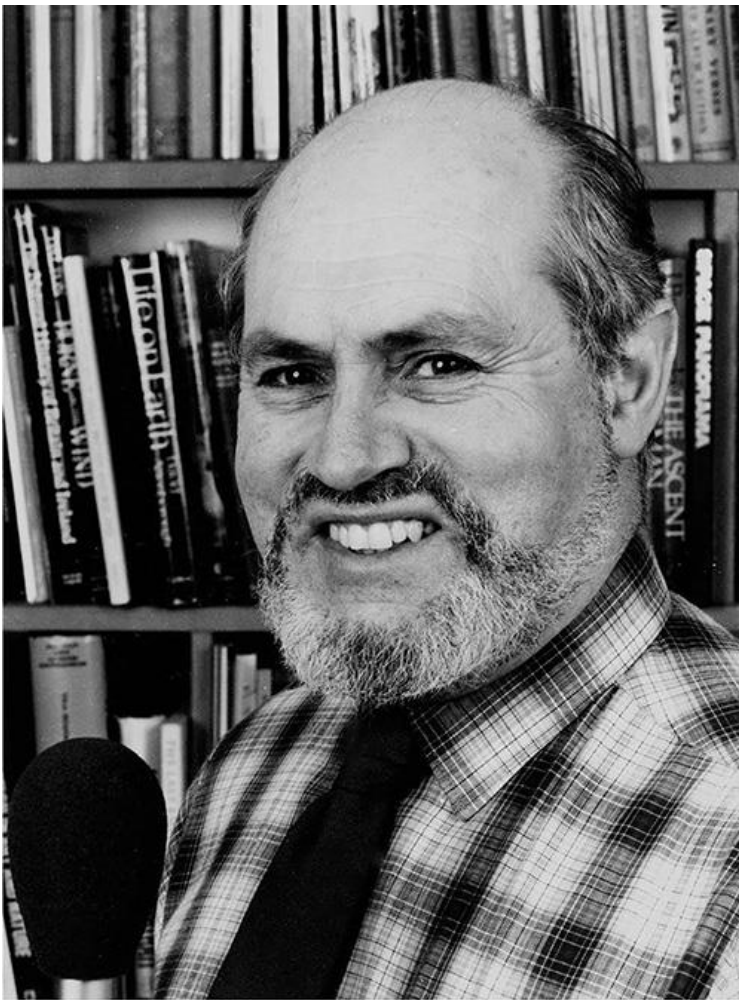
Sir George was instrumental in the creation of The RPS International AV Festival in 1976. The Grand Prix Trophy that is awarded to the winner was designed by Lord David Linley, the son of Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon, and was purchased for the Festival in 1990. Arthur Rackham who donated the money to make the purchase, recalls that in those days the RPS meetings were held at Princes Gate in London and that visiting speakers were required to wear dinner jackets when giving lectures!

Today, the Grand Prix Trophy is kept at Fenton House, and because of its value the winner only gets to be photographed with it rather than to keep it. A plaque, also kept at Fenton House, was subsequently commissioned from Lord Linley to record the names of the winners.

When I visited Sir George in more recent times, he loved to be kept up to date with Society affairs. It became possible to show AV's 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 favourite programmes. And when he had viewed my award winning production about Auschwitz-Birkenau, what was the reaction? A long pause followed by 'I'm glad I've seen it but I don't want to see it again.'



At his recent exhibition in Bath

<< An early picture of Sir George

A note from Linda and Edgar Gibbs.

"Discovering that we were both members of the Magic Lantern Society, Sir George told us that he was a founder member of the Society in 1976, but had since retired his membership. Knowing this, we arranged for him to be our guest at one of the quarterly meetings of the Society, which was being held in Bath. George's face beamed when the Chairman welcomed Sir George, referring to him as "one of the founder members of the Magic Lantern Society".

George thoroughly enjoyed the day and subsequently re-joined the Society. George's packed lunches were never complete without a bottle of wine, which he would happily share. Cheers George!"

A note from Jenny Byram.

"The idea for the Western Audio Visual Enthusiasts (WAVES) came out of discussions amongst members of the Admiralty CC AV Group. Following these discussions, a meeting was held on 30 March 1996 at which it was decided to set up WAVES. George was elected as the first Chairman.

George joined the WCPF Executive around the same time I did in 1995. He was Newsletter Editor during that time and raised the standard of print, presentation and content to a very high standard. He set up a production line for what he called "stuffing and tucking" to make sure that everyone received their Newsletter promptly. I remember many busy mornings of sticking stamps and filling envelopes with Newsletters and various enclosures!

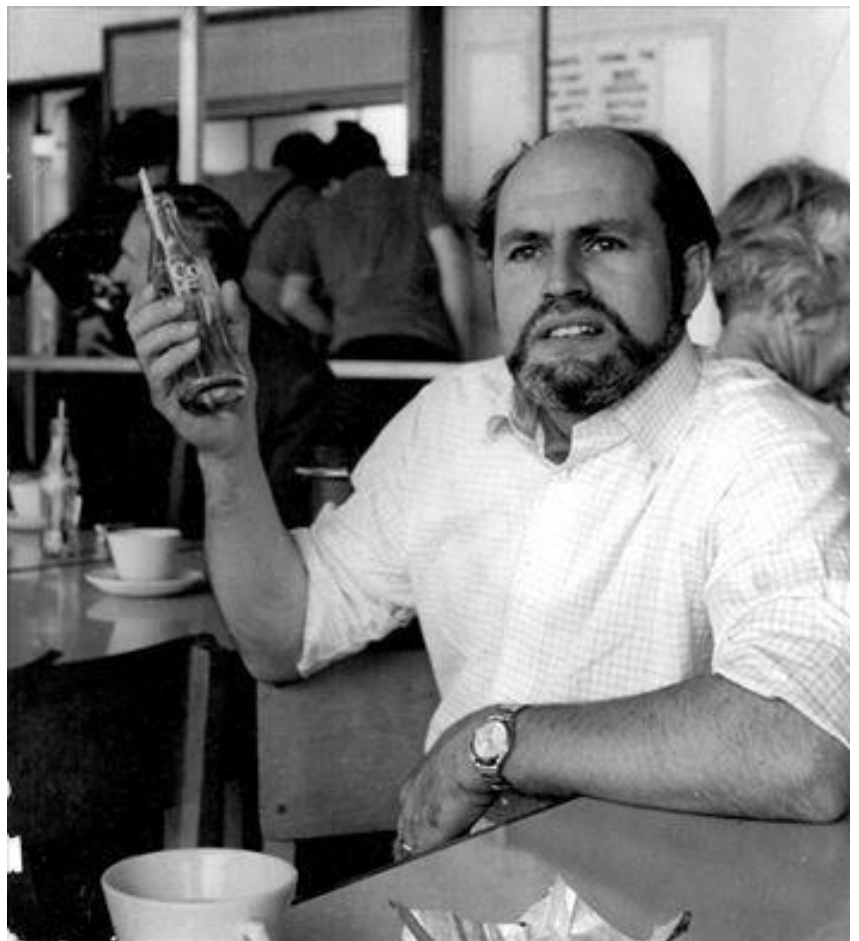
He was also responsible for the new WCPF Constitution adopted in 2000, the content of which, whilst subsequently amended (against George's advice), is still (mostly) in place.

George was a good friend and I know I shall miss him a great deal. He personified the word Gentleman just as Doreen personified the word Lady".

A LIFE WITH LIGHT

“Light is the energy that maintains life on earth, through the plants’ marvellous process of photosynthesis: no light, no plants; no plants, no animals, and no us. This is the secret of life, and I want to celebrate this life-giving energy in images of, about, and made by light, in other words in photographs.” Sir George Pollock, 2009.

George Pollock’s main artistic effort has been the study and the development of the photography of LIGHT as the subject of the image. Starting in 1960, he has explored every avenue. His 1984 retrospective “Blissful Light” in the RPS Centre of Photography in The Octagon, Bath, consisted of 115 prints, divided into early Vitrographs, fifteen small Vitrographs printed on Cibachrome by Ciba, Fribourg, in 1965, later Vitrographs, including his Spectrum series - prints showing light observed, shaped, reflected, refracted, diffracted. And also Trichromatic Dancers, a panel of 28 small prints, photographs of murals and multiples. Plus, the 2-metre “Endless image in the form of a cylinder”.



He produced three Audio-Visual sequences on Light, “Spectrum – Legend of Creation”, “Toccata Triptych – three visual interpretations of three musical versions of Bach’s Toccata in D Minor” and “Gloria” - a visual interpretation of part of a modern French Mas

A “**vitrograph**” is abstract colour photographs using controlled, coloured light shone onto, and through, rough pieces of glass.

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I thought you might like to know about the job I got last year. It was for the Physics Department of Bath University, as part of the 2015 UNESCO Year of Light.

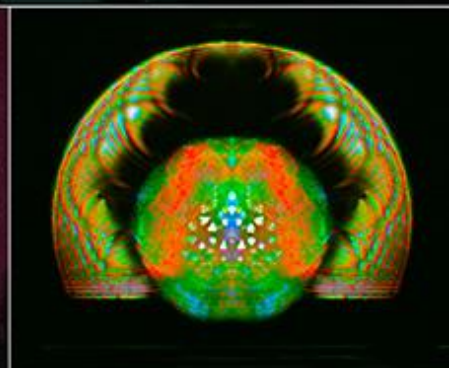
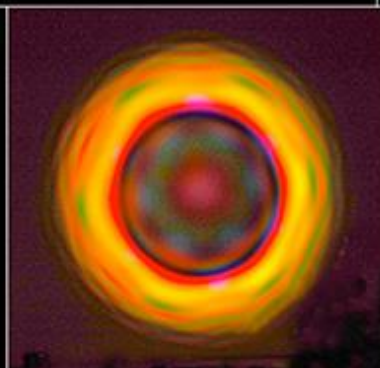
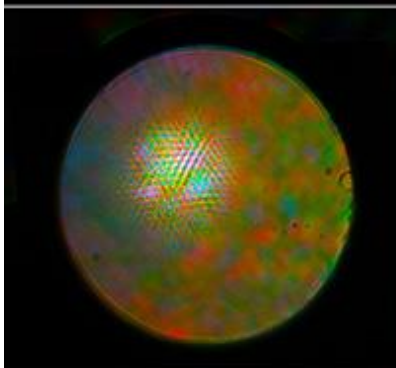
They illustrate the work done by Dr. James Stone, PhD, as part of the effort to improve endoscopes.

5 of my photographs are now hanging in the Department, together with an explanatory plaque. Not too bad for an 87 year old, eh?

“Stolen” from a Facebook post by Sir George Pollock

Research into light is often a visual treat for a scientist especially when the sudden appearance of a colour or pattern of light indicates something exciting has occurred. Unfortunately the chance to witness to these spectacular moments is usually confined to a select few. The images presented here to commemorate the UNESCO International Year of Light 2015 are an attempt to capture the moment in optical research when after careful experimentation something bright, beautiful and interesting appears in a darkened lab. All the light present in the pictures is generated using an infrared laser which is invisible to the human eye. The invisible laser light passes through a specially designed optical fibre known as a photonic crystal fibre to generate all the colours of the visible spectrum through a process known as supercontinuum generation. The visible light has either then been used as an illumination source or photographed as it emerges from the photonic crystal fibre.

Research and Images by Dr James Stone, photographed and prepared by Sir George Pollock, Hon. FRPS.



You can still see a great many of Sir George’s photographs at http://www.georgepollock.co.uk/George_Pollock/Home.html