



Dear AV Enthusiast,

Welcome to this Special Edition of the AV News e-xtra. It is 50 years since the first RPS Distinction in Slide-Sound Sequences was awarded. The first two Fellowships were awarded on the same day to John Podmore and Richard Tucker. Both applications used 35mm slides. John Podmore's submission is still in existence and Richard Tucker has digitised his which I hope to show later in the year.

The Photographic Alliance of Great Britain has, over the years given Awards for Photographic Merit in AV. On the 14th February the PAGB held its first online Adjudication for Awards for Photographic Merit in AV. The event was run by Ian Bateman using Zoom, it attracted over 200 people and it was good to see Max Robinson, Chair of the RPS Film, Video and Multimedia Panel, present. More of this very successful day in the following pages. I understand the PAGB is considering a date for the next Adjudication.

The RPS will be assessing applications for Distinctions in Film, Video and Multimedia later this year and the closing date for submissions is 30th July 2021. I am not aware of any plans for it being an online event.

In the March/April 2021 edition of the RPS Journal Max Robinson has written an article entitled "Moving Stories" about Distinctions in Film, Video and Multimedia. Here is an extract from his article describing what happens when an application is submitted to the Panel:

The applicant sends their submission in digital format to Andy Moore the Distinctions Manager via WeTransfer or using a link to a downloadable file hosted on, for example, Vimeo. The digital files are sent to the Distinctions panel members who view them and prepare feedback on each entry. The panel members then vote individually and anonymously for the first time on each entry to indicate if they assess it as meeting the criteria for the respective level of Distinction. The Chair of the Panel then convenes a meeting of its members who are invited to comment on each entry. The Panel members are then asked to privately submit their final vote having heard feedback from each of their colleagues, and the decision is made based on the majority of the votes.

I hope this encourages you to apply for a Distinction in this 50th Anniversary year. In the meantime, I'd be grateful if you would complete the questionnaire at the end of this edition and return it to me so we can assess the level of interest.

Best wishes for 2021






Regards
Edgar Gibbs FRPS MPAGB AV-AFIAP
Chair of the RPS AV Group & Director of
the RPS International Audio Visual
Festival



AWARDS FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC MERIT (APM)

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION, CONDITIONS OF ENTRY
WITH NOTES FOR GUIDANCE OF APPLICANTS
*PLUS, FREQUENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS***



The Photographic Alliance of Great Britain
APM Secretary: Daphne Hanson DPAGB APAGB. hanson16@virginmedia.com

APM INFORMATION LEAFLET ONE



2021 is a landmark year for RPS distinctions in audio visual. It's fifty years since the first meeting of the slide -sound sequences panel recommended Fellowships for John Podmore and Richard Tucker. Although the medium which we love and enjoy today is still recognisably the same, there have been many changes over those intervening years. Firstly, in technology. Back then it was all slides of course.

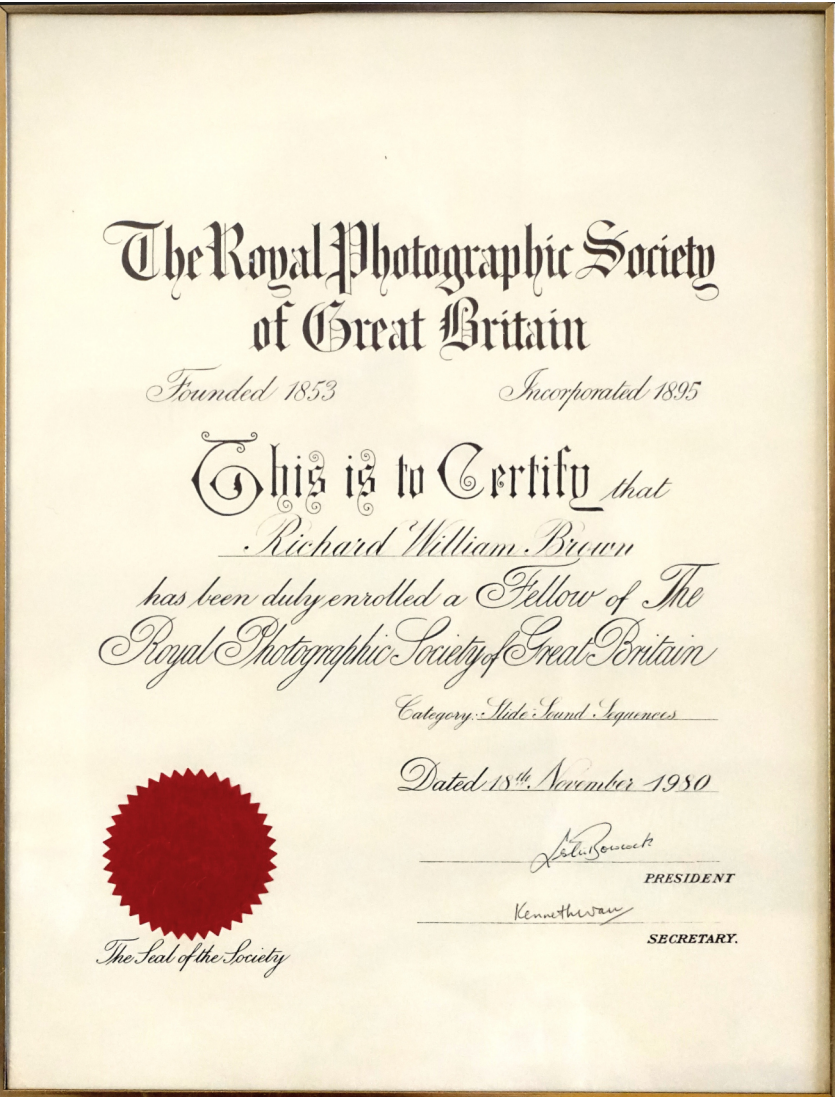
Sound editing and replay was on 1/4 inch reel to reel tape. Projection was manually controlled and often mechanical - the first commercial electronic faders were just starting to become available. Imatronic and the Royale projector were still in the future. Digital AV would have been science fiction in the days when mainframe computers still occupied whole rooms.

Those technical advances were mirrored by changes in content. In the 1970s, music was king and voice overs and sound effects were rare. Music interpretation as a genre was taken seriously in competitions and festivals. Complex, mixed soundtracks only became more common with the availability of multi-track reel to reel recorders. In the 1980s, documentaries came to prominence with the influence of workers such as Colin Balls and later Clive Atkins. Then in the 90s another shift, this time to a more personal, storytelling style. This was to a large

extent driven forward by Peter Coles, who had such a profound influence on amateur AV which is still being felt.

Through all of these developments, the RPS distinctions have adapted and new ideas and procedures brought in to meet changing times. One of the most visible shifts is in the change of name. Slide-sound sequences became Audio Visual which in turn morphed into Multimedia. In the slide days the only practical way for aspiring applicants to seek advice and to see successful work was in person. Fortunately, there was an extensive network of meetings organised by the RPS AV Group which helped greatly in this.

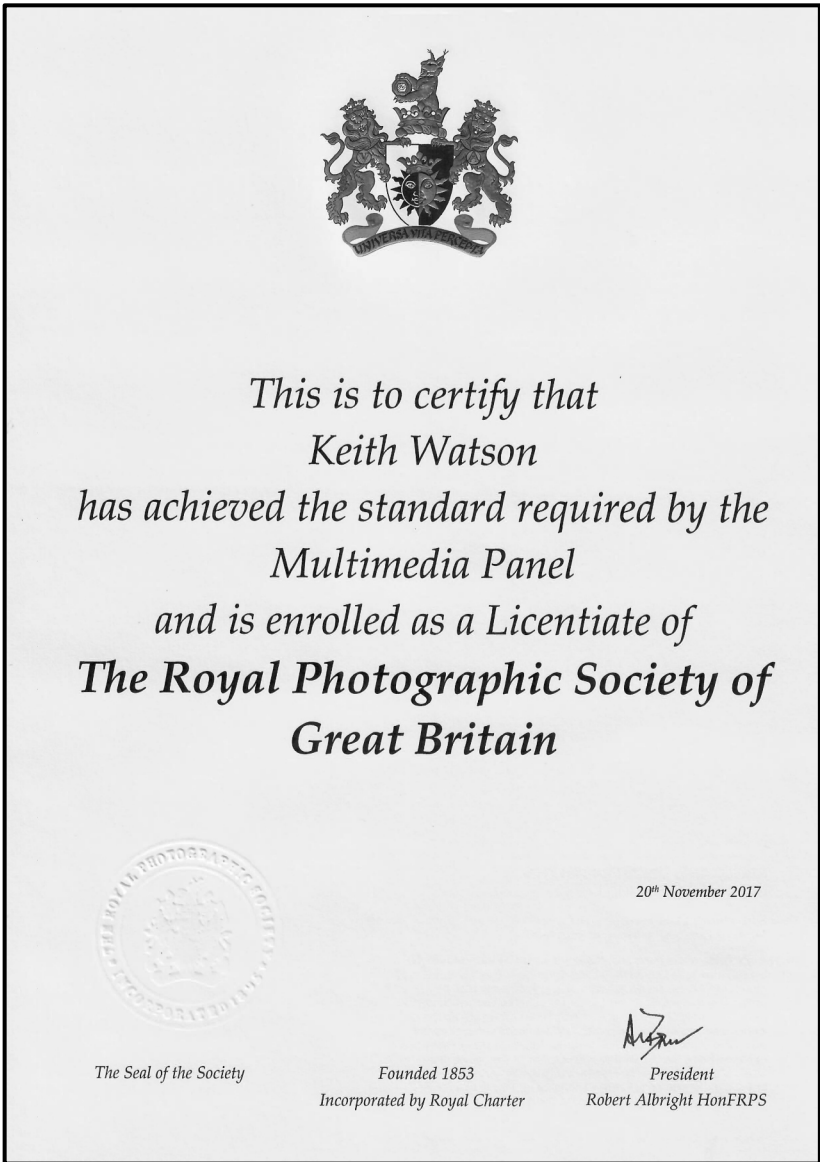
Today, with the advent of digital transfer and Zoom conferences the opportunities



are there for all of this to happen remotely. In fact, as was demonstrated by the recent, very successful PAGB Awards day, it's possible for the whole panel assessment process to happen online.

Today, the RPS distinctions route for AV workers is via the Film, Video and Multimedia panel. I'm pleased to say that Ian Bateman and I have been appointed as members of this panel, thus carrying forward many years of continuity and experience from the previous AV panels. Over all the years of change, the one thing which has never altered is the real sense of achievement which gaining an RPS distinction confers. The closing date for this year's assessment is July 31st, so there is plenty of time to get advice and ready your application. It would be a real feather in the cap to be able to be awarded one of the RPS distinctions in AV on their 50th anniversary.

Richard Brown FRPS FIPF EFIAP APAGB



The RPS Distinction Process



Applications for a Multimedia Distinction have all but dried up in recent years, which is a real shame as in the past there was always a steady throughput in the number of people applying. It was never a vast number – hardly to be expected when you compare the number of AV workers to the rest of the photographic world – but always enough to merit keeping the AV/Multimedia distinctions alive.

In the distant past, the AV Distinction Panel used to meet at different venues around the country, with the event hosted by regional AV Groups. I got my ARPS in AV back in the mid-1990's, with a slide/tape documentary about Pink Floyd. This event was held in Gloucester, with a sizeable panel. My FRPS was obtained in Wilmslow in 2003, and was the first to be awarded to a digitally projected panel. The process was the same: after viewing, the Panel retired to a meeting room, and the applicant was called in after their discussion to be told whether they would be recommended for the distinction or not.

A few years later, all assessments were held in Bath rather than around the country, either in the RPS Headquarters or in a nearby hotel, and the assessment process became more transparent with (at least for L and A levels) open panel discussions and a yes/no card vote by panel members.

Then, in 2010, the AV Distinction was wound up, and the RPS initiated a 'think tank' process to create a new Distinction, initially christened 'Multimedia and Narrative'. I was part of the working party, along with Richard Brown, and the ambition was to create something that would appeal to college and University students as a way of increasing the pool of potential applicants.

The Panel was broadened to include visual arts professionals and educators, but it has to be said that it met with limited success. There were few applicants from the hoped-for new channels, and the number of applications from 'traditional' AV workers started to decline. The 'and Narrative' was dropped from the name, but in all likelihood there was a great deal of confusion amongst the established AV community which led to a steady fall in the numbers year after year.

The RPS Distinctions Process

Eventually, the numbers declined to such an extent that it wasn't worth maintaining a Panel at all.

So, in 2020, the Multimedia distinction was moved to its new home in the Film, Video and Multimedia Panel. The Panel here largely comprises professional film-makers, with an emphasis on cinematography and other aspects of motion picture making. All are experts in their own field, but have had little exposure to the type of AV sequences that they might see in a Multimedia application. To counteract this, Richard Brown and I have been appointed as Panel members with a specific brief of advising on AV applications.

Additionally, I am compiling a 'library' of AVs on a private Vimeo channel that exemplify the type of work that would be representative of Licentiateship, Associateship and Fellowship standard. Using these as a benchmark, the Panel will be able to get a feel for the medium, and Richard and I will be able to bring an AV perspective to the process.

The deadline for the next application is 30th July 2021, and the requirements are available at <https://rps.org/qualifications/film-distinction/>

Ian Bateman FRPS MPAGB AV-AFIAP APAGB

March 2021

A Message from the PAGB President



I was online at the recent adjudication and found that the whole event and day ran extremely well and I would like to thank those who submitted sequences for adjudication. While some may have been disappointed with the result I am sure that they will take away valuable knowledge from the experience and be successful at their next application. I would also like to thank the organisers and adjudicators for their time and effort which ensured the event ran smoothly.

The PAGB and RPS have a history of cooperation in the AV field and both bodies are currently having discussions concerning future cooperation and strengthening ties between our two organisations, not just in the AV fraternity but across the whole spectrum of photography.

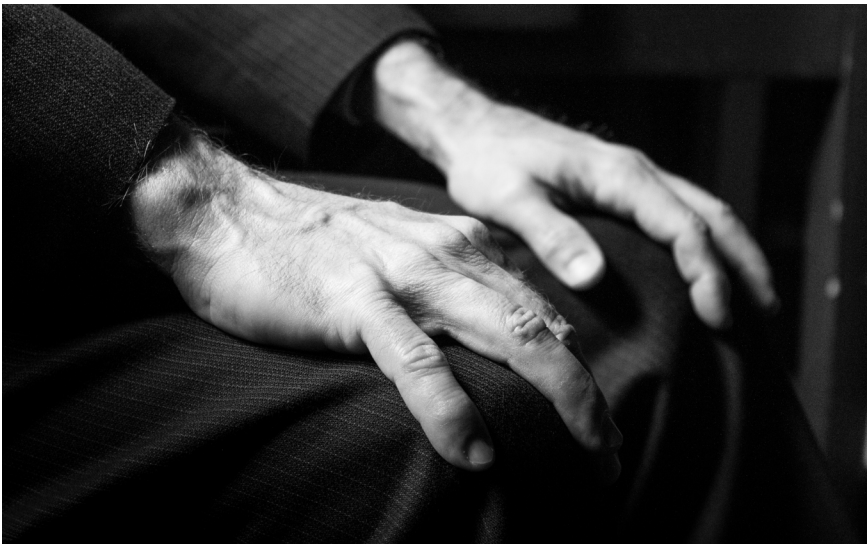
I look forward to attending future AV events organised by both the PAGB and the RPS.

Howard Tate MA ARPS AFIAP APAGB
President - PAGB





Images by Judith Kimber MPAGB from her recent successful MPAGB application.



“Why do you put yourself though it? My wife asked. “That’s a fair question” I thought.

The question was raised in advance of the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain (PAGB) Adjudication event held on 14 February 2021. An odd way of spending Valentine’s Day! Here’s hoping that the PAGB adjudicators are feeling in love with AV today ...

Introducing the event, Rod Wheelans pointed out a few of the rules and pitfalls.



This left me feeling a little nervous. He pointed out that even though we are looking at AV, photographic competence is an essential component. “An excessive proportion of third party images will make a PAGB distinction more challenging” he added. Rod pointed out that playing AVs over the Zoom platform might have a negative

impact on the quality, but the original copies had been shared with the jury in advance, giving them the opportunity to see them as the author originally planned.

Over the course of the day, there were a total of 16 authors seeking PAGB recognition. Of these, six were seeking the Credit award (CPAGB), another six, including myself, were seeking the Distinction award (DPAGB) and four looking to achieve the Master award (MPAGB).

The adjudicators comprised of Robert Albright, Howard Bagshaw, Martin Fry, Richard Speirs, Gordon Jenkins. “Hmmm” I thought. I respect those guys immensely. They are amongst the best AV worker in the land.

My own relationship with distinctions started in 2015 when I gained my Licentiateship from the Royal Photographic Society (LRPS). A couple of years later I applied and successfully gained my CPAGB at an interesting (and stressful) adjudication day hosted by the Wilmslow Guild AV Group.

The same year, flushed with success, I applied to be enrolled as an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society (ARPS). I was unsuccessful on this occasion which, when I reflect, was a fair outcome. This was down to two factors, firstly, I had submitted some of my better work for the LPRS distinction (at the time I had been told that my submission was knocking on the door of ARPS) and secondly, I had not sought any advice in advance of the assessment. I applied again for ARPS in 2018 and was successful. I had also participated in an advisory day earlier that

year. That is lesson Number 1 as far as distinctions is concerned! Whereas my RPS Distinctions are in Multi Media, the PAGB still use the term Audio Visual. My view of adjudications and assessments is founded in the concept that you are being judged against an absolute standard by your professional peers. By professionals I mean people who have gained equal distinctions and therefore are qualified to reach a judgement.

I believe that is vitally important on any assessment. You must have faith in the people reaching the judgement and it certainly helps if you have seen their work and feel confident that they appreciate the effort you have put into your submission.

If I contrast this with AV competitions and championships, the judgement there is more around the relative merits of your work compared to the rest of the



field. On some occasions, a very good entry might not get a mention if it is surrounded by work of an excellent standard whilst elsewhere, if the standard is low, a mediocre entry may excel in the competition. To that end, it is sometimes difficult to get a sense as to how your work stands up.

So, competitions are quite different from assessments and adjudications. One aspect that does worry me though is whether the standard creeps up over time. It is good that standards improve, and we should celebrate that, but it does make me wonder if it is more difficult to gain a distinction at a certain level today than it was a generation ago. But on the other hand, the concept of an adjudication panel comprising of experts who go on to discuss their judgements and can moderate these has to be good.

The PAGB Adjudication days was thoroughly enjoyable and it was good to see the Credit applications which mostly comprised of two AV productions per author with total running times of around 7 minutes (the minimum needed is six minutes). After the sequences were played, the adjudicators made their first vote (online and so the audience could not see) and then one or two of the panel were invited to comment. These comments were direct and helpful and gave a good sense of what the jury were thinking. There was then a second opportunity for the panel to vote.

The on-line approach seemed open and fair and certainly felt the same as a physical event.

As aspect of assessment for RPS (but not the PAGB) distinctions is the need to make your “intent” known. This can be hard. Capturing this intent in a single paragraph is challenging but very important. On to many occasions, I have seen AV productions where I would really love to know what was going through the



authors mind – that might make me appreciate the work even more.

In my own case, I used the same two AV productions for my DPAGB application as I did for my successful ARPS. That said, I had submitted them for some independent advice and to that end, made a few tweaks to improve the flow.

Beyond the Wall (8m:43s)

This AV uses images of a closed prison to express feelings about life “beyond the wall” and was conceived following that visit and a conversation with a retired prison officer. Following this, the author wrote the script and then collected the images. It takes the audience through the journey sharing key statistics and images before looking at the subject of public hangings. Have we learnt anything it asks suggesting the secrets are better left as secrets?

Another Day in Paradise (5m:59s)

This AV is both artistic and dramatic and seeks to lull the viewer through gentle images which show man’s love of the ocean and ozone. Escaping the winter gloom. We all do it but when tragedy strikes, we are left thinking “that could have been us”. The author was on holiday himself, enjoying another day in paradise when he was reminded of the story.

It was with some degree of trepidation that I awaited the playing of my submission. I have seen these AV productions so many times and know them inside out. You get so close to your own work and it becomes difficult to be truly objective. I know the flaws and they make me cringe when I see them. I was aware that many of the jury would have also seen them before and might have already reached a judgement based on past viewings. However, there were some jury members who would not have seen these entries so they would hopefully be looking with a “new” eye.

I awaited the jury's comments. Would I concur? Would they like my work? I did not feel at all optimistic having seen some of the other submissions and already heard the results for the CPAGB adjudication. "The bar has been set high" I thought to myself. My own view was that my photography was just not good enough. Let us see what the jury has to say.

First, they are asked to make their vote in private. (I try to work out from the tone of the voice whether the feeling is more positive or negative). One of the jury is asked to comment. He talks about Beyond the Wall first. The message is powerful, and the photography is of a good quality with good fades and dissolves. "It worked well with an interesting story line" he thought. He then talks about Another Day in Paradise



but wonders about the choice of music and whether there were too many third-party images. They are then asked to make their second vote.

So how do I feel? Not sure really. We will just have to wait and see. However, I did feel that my offering stood up well when compared to others seeking the same level of PAGB distinction.

At CPAGB, the quality was generally sound with four of the six accepted. I could see why the panel made their choice. It is disappointing of course for those who were not successful, and I hope they are spurred on to have another go on another occasion. I am sure they found the feedback helpful as I did. I think it is an aspect of adjudication that the audience get to listen to the comments and to learn from those. In many respects that is the most important aspect.

At DPAGB, the quality of AV productions was generally higher. More time is allowed (10 to 15 minutes) and most authors used the majority of this. In most cases there were two AVs of around 6 or 7 minutes. One author submitted 4 shorter sequences. In general, I thought that the photography and production was of a high standard including good quality voice overs and a wide choice of music. It was clear that the panel were taking more interest in these production values as well as the quality of photography which was, for the most part, was of a very good quality.

MPAGB was in another league altogether and for me the photography truly shone through. Here the authors have to submit a considerable length of work and in all



cases over 20 mins of work. The comments from the panel reflected that need for exceptional photography and this is in line with the focus of the PAGB which is fundamentally about great photography within the context of Audio Visual. It became evident from an early stage that to gain

MPAGB is a huge accolade and success is far from guaranteed.

Before reading out the results the panel were asked comment on the overall experience. Without exception they talked about the quality of event and how they had enjoyed the online At one point there were over 200 people watching the event which is a tremendous measure of the state of AV and the level of interest. As one said, let's hope this spurn on more camera clubs to get involved. I hope so as well.

There was general comment about the lack of an audience reaction, and I do think that make an impact. I had been watching the Six Nations Rugby the day before the adjudication and was bemused by the artificial crowd noise in the empty stadiums. I am not sure we should think about replicating that though. So how did I do?

To my absolute delight (and my surprise given the standard) I was the only DPAGB awarded out of the six submissions. That was a surprise to me as I thought some of the other submissions were excellent. I wondered what it was that made the difference and as I reflected, I thought it might be the final comments from the chair of the panel commented

"What distinguished the good from the less good was the extent to which the personality of the author shined through. The personal hand of the author, in the way which it is put together, and the personal emotion is important"

That is what I try to do in my AVs so it is good to have that feedback.

How would I have felt if I had been unsuccessful. It must be noted that of there were five out of six disappointed authors at DPAGB and three out of four at

MPAGB. Clearly, I would have been disappointed – who wouldn't? But I hope that I would have understood the reasons for my non acceptance and would have learnt something from viewing the various AV productions and listening to the comments and feedback.

Success and failure go hand in hand and to quote Rudyard Kipling
“If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two impostors just the same”.

As always, the skills is in rising above and as one who was rejected the first time I applied for my ARPS distinction as well as entering many AV competitions and being soundly beaten – without even a mention from the judges, I advise anyone to keep the faith and carry on.

My advice is to take advice! And then take that advice on board ...

Alastair Taylor ARPS DPAGB/AV



All the photographs in this article are from Alastair's successful AV sequences entered for the DPAGB.

Applying for a PAGB AV Distinction

There are usually two occasions annually when you can apply for a PAGB AV Distinction, but this has been an unprecedented year and the process has been truly extended.



On 29th February 2020, having decided to apply for a CPAGB Distinction we attended an Advisory Day in Woodbury, Devon. We were lucky that our club, Exmouth Photo Group, had organised the day and, therefore travel to the event was minimal.

Our advisors were Linda and Edgar Gibbs, Howard Tate and Ian Bateman

and it was extremely helpful seeing our AVs on the large screen. With four advisors the advice we received was varied yet thought provoking. Mo was encouraged to keep the same sequences but to look at some of the transitions and how they fitted the music. Jenny was advised to make minor adjustments to one sequence and it was thought the second one was not quite there, so she changed it for another.



Taking this advice on board, we applied for CPAGB Assessment on 15th August 2020. Then COVID-19 reared its ugly head, and everything was put on hold.

Daphne Hanson was excellent in keeping us informed and checking we wanted to wait for a new assessment date.

We both decided to go forward, and eventually 14th February 2021 was the dreaded date and a Zoom on-line assessment was the format.

Applying for a PAGB AV Distinction

The day arrived and it was with trepidation that we awaited our turn. To avoid any possible Zoom issues the assessors had seen the sequences previously. Not being able to see our sequences on a big screen was definitely a big disadvantage but at least the assessment had been able to proceed.

The judging process followed the usual format with the first vote, comments by 1 or 2 of the assessors and then the final vote. The vote was not seen by the audience of over 200 people, and the wait continued until all six applicants' sequences had been seen.



Imagine our delight when we were both confirmed as meeting the standard for a CPAGB / AV Distinction!
Our final view of the whole process:

- The whole assessment was extremely well organised and the organisers should be congratulated.
- For us, being 2 of the 4 successful applicants was amazing.
- The Zoom Process? It allowed us to apply for and receive a Distinction without a further year's wait, but on the day we missed the whole face-to-face process.
- Having the three levels showcased gave an idea of how to progress and the standard required, but it would be remiss of us not to say we found the judging puzzling.

Would we apply for the next level – watch this space?

Jenny Baker ARPS CPAGB/AV and
Mo Martin LRPS CPAGB/AV



Photographs on the page to the left are from successful AVs by Jenny Baker.

Photographs on this page are from successful AVs by Mo Martin

JUST A FEW OF THE COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE AUDIENCE AT THE PAGB'S FIRST ONLINE APM/AV ADJUDICATION

Steve

I thought that the day was organised very well and was presented as well as could be expected. There were minimal connection issues and could see and hear what was going on fine. Luckily, I was online to see the comments on my sequences which were shown before and not after lunch as I was prepared for. In future, it would be better to run to the schedule.

Bob

Very well organised and whilst it does not beat actually being there it is an exceptionally good alternative. Just a couple of observations, it was probably an hour too long and it would have been useful to have had a list beforehand of the sequences to be shown. Minor points to an otherwise great day.

Clive and Joan

Although there were a few hiccups at the start, it seemed to go smoothly from then on and, from our point of view, the sequences played well. There were a few dissolves that were not completely smooth, but it did not seriously affect the message of the sequence or our enjoyment.

We know a lot of people are sad about not being able to meet together, but we believe Zoom has so much to offer for an event like this. How else would the PAGB be able to showcase the AV Awards to 200 people in one day?

Nick

Great day today. Not sat in before on an adjudication for APM/AV. Some really good sequences and all very well run considering it was the first time online.

Howard

I did enjoy the whole day very much indeed, but regarding the entries, I was disappointed in the lack of good blending of images and the production of third images. These used to be the staple requirement, and half the fun was getting it right in the camera. It should be so much easier in digital, with cropping being so easy. Even decent pictures with music and/or script does not always add up to a good sequence, i.e. the whole is not greater than the sum of the parts.

Bob

The advent of Zoom has meant that the audience can potentially be much larger than for a physical meeting and, for me, that is one of the great advantages of having it online. I would not have travelled to Exmouth, even if that had been possible.

Another advantage of seeing the AV's on Zoom is that it gives more ability to make notes than would be possible in a physical meeting in the dark. The picture quality may be less but as the judges have been able to view the AV's on their own computers, and not via Zoom alone, then we have confidence that they have seen the true quality of the images.

I thought the whole thing was very well organised. OK there was a small hitch at the start, but that's a minor issue.

What was great was to be able to see all 37 entries and hear the Adjudicators' comments.

Sue

I tuned in just after 10am this morning and was there to the last – a great deal of variety, interesting and inspiring work on show. A most enjoyable day for me and, without Zoom, I would never have been able to attend the assessment in person, so I felt the day was a great success for those of us living away from the centres of excellence. I think it was vital that the Adjudicators saw the AVs in advance as, despite my own high quality screen and cable broadband delivery, I could see some loss of quality on occasions which I imagine was never present in the originals.

Gordon

Over 200 attending, you must be very pleased !! It all went very smoothly.

Richard

It was an enthralling day. The quality of transmission on my screen, was very good, with only one or two minor glitches. I would have liked more comments from the Adjudicators but accept that time did not allow for this.

Jack

Even though the quality on Zoom wasn't always as brilliant as it might be, it did enable me to enjoy the work from the comfort of my home without travel.

Andrew

When I got my CPAGB back in 2016, being in the hall and having the sound system and big screen did make all the difference.

So when normality returns and you're back in a hall maybe you could look into having a payable Zoom option for those that cannot get to the live event?

Cathy F

I thought my heart was going to burst through my rib cage and splatter onto my screen with fear as I sat waiting my "turn"!

Mike

Many congratulations to Ian, Rod and your Adjudicators for such an enthralling and enjoyable day.

Sharon & Tim

Thank you to the PAGB for doing this via Zoom and allowing us to watch! We have seen very little AV work and so had little idea what the standard was. The day was fascinating, and we thoroughly enjoyed it! The standard was a lot better than the slightly cheesy ones we've seen before.

Gwynneth

I thought yesterday's adjudication went very smoothly on the whole. The AVs suffered occasionally from a bit of jitter in transitions but that was to be expected. The adjudicator's comments were useful and interesting. The programme breaks were appropriate and, all in all, it was a very enjoyable day. Interesting to see how high the photographic quality had to be to meet the standards. .

Questionnaire

We would like to know how many people are interested in applying for RPS Distinctions in Film, Video and Multimedia or a PAGB Award for Photographic Merit in AV or attending an Advisory Day. We would appreciate it if you would return the completed form to AVChair@rps.org

	RPS (delete as required)	PAGB (delete as required)	Both
I am interested in a Distinction or an APM or both. Please indicate at what level	Yes/No LRPS ARPS FRPS	Yes/No CPAGB DPAGB MPAGB	
I would be interested in an Advisory Day, for either RPS, PAGB or both	Yes/No	Yes/No	
I would like to speak to or contact an Advisor/ Mentor	Yes/No	Yes/No	
I am a member of the RPS and/or belong to a camera club affiliated to the PAGB	Yes/No	Yes/No	
	Link for Application Information	Link for Application Information	