

Issue 2 - May 2020



Images from 'Bomber', by Alan Tyrer

Winner of the PAGB Gold Medal in the Smethwick National AV Festival 2020



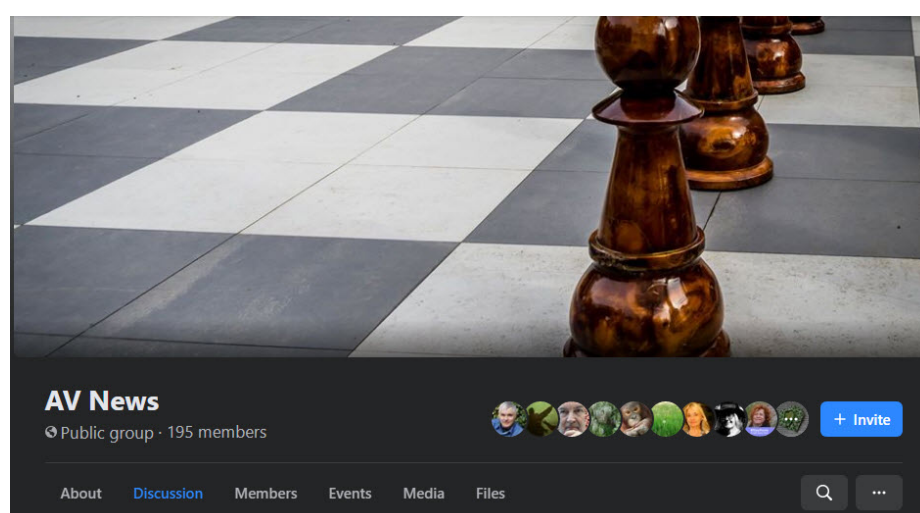
Welcome to the 2nd AV News e-xtra AV - OUR ARTFORM

As we are probably too well aware the circumstances that we find ourselves in are unprecedented.

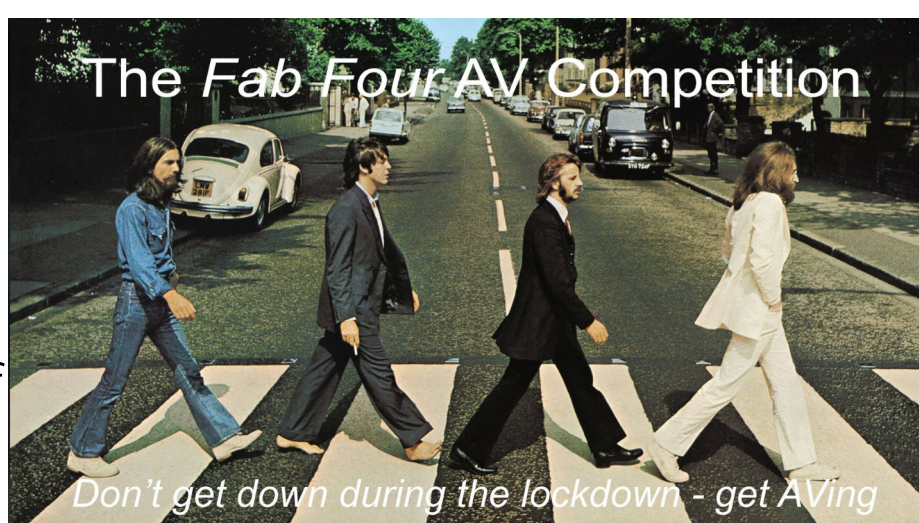
As you will have already seen, the Yorkshire AV day was cancelled and now the RPS International Audio Visual Festival has been postponed to 2021.

Click <https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/international-av-festival/> to see the full story

What has not stopped is that there has been a one minute AV challenge set out on the AV News Facebook page. This has been really successful and, thanks to Sheila Haycox, you can visit the RPS website at <https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/one-minute-av/> and click on them to watch them at your leisure.



Thanks must go to Alastair Taylor for starting this. Not content with this he, along with Malcolm Imhoff and Keith Watson have set up a Fab 4 challenge where you are invited to make an AV of no longer than 5 minutes using a Beatles song. This will be judged by former President of the RPS and past winner of the National AV Championship Robert Albright HonFRPS. So there are things to do and I hope to see some really good AVs. "Yesterday" looks like a prime song in the circumstances.



There have been interesting discussions on the AV News Facebook page about dissolves and cuts, cinematic photography, PC vs MAC so a lot of things to think about and indeed learn. Facebook was scary once but the settings and privacy controls do what they say on the tin. Help can be found from most committee members.

The RPS Distinctions we were worried about losing have been given a lifeline by incorporating AV into the Film, Digital and Multimedia genre. With the RPS House and Gallery being closed to the public, some staff being furloughed and some working from home, it is good to know that Distinctions are now being done remotely. Why not use this time to get your application prepared and have a go.



More information can be found at <https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/audio-visual-distinctions-multimedia/>

Another idea we are working on is creating a “Legacy” page where we will be putting on AVs of members that have passed away. Past Treasurer David Neal’s have been offered as have those from Tony Hill. Details will be announced when they are available. If you know of any RPS AV Group members that have passed away and their families would like their AV Legacy to be added, please let either myself or Alastair know. Also if you have any experience of setting up this type of site please contact Alastair Taylor.

The RPS AV Group Committee has decided to purchase Zoom software for our next committee meeting. For the financially aware it is cheaper than travelling expenses.

Anyway enough from me.

Take care, keep safe and keep making AVs.

Edgar Gibbs FRPS MPAGB AV-AFIAP
AV Group Chair and International AV Festival Director

The AV World Adapts to a New Way of Working

Modern day photographers and particularly AV workers are a pretty savvy bunch when it comes to digital skills so it is little wonder that there has been such good response to finding solutions to taking our hobby “on-line”.

None of this is without its challenges! Quite a few photographic societies and AV Groups (including the RPS AV Group Committee) have taken to using the video conferencing platform “Zoom”. With an on-line audience and the opportunity for the session leader to share their computer screen, the opportunities are limitless. With the ability to demonstrate sound and picture editing and AV production, combined with discussions, Q&A sessions and even competitions, there is an excellent future for this approach. Will it continue when lock down ends I wonder?

One particular challenge is the showing of actual AVs. They sound good and the images generally look Ok but the transitions and effects are limited by the band width of the users. One solution seems to be to send the AVs by WeTransfer beforehand so that they can be viewed outside of the “Zoom” platform. We have learnt to be adaptive as has been captured in some of the AV News Facebook discussions.



On 2 May, John Smith said:

“We ran the Wilmslow Guild AV meeting last night seemingly successfully from the comments received from the attendees. I used my laptop to host/control the meeting and to mute the attendees whilst the sequences were being shown. My desktop computer was also logged in as another attendee and this machine was sharing its screen and showing the sequences which were running from a PTE Desktop Menu. Jeff Mansell who was fronting the meeting did an excellent job in moderating the sessions and calling up the sequences when required. The sequences had been sent to the attendees prior to the meeting just in case they were needed although sending them via the shared screen worked acceptably well apart from some zooms

stuttering slightly. We will be using this system in two weeks' time to run our annual AV competitions when the Judge will be Keith Leedham - live from Essex!"

In another discussion, Richard Brown said:

"CEMRIAC ran their spring video festival via Zoom a couple of weeks ago. The admin., discussions and judges' comments were live on Zoom but the videos themselves had been uploaded to a streaming service beforehand. I think it was connected with Google, but it could just as well have been Vimeo or YouTube. So the entries were played directly from there separately from the Zoom conference. It seemed to work perfectly well from a technical point of view."

Ian Bateman added:

"We've tried at our club, with varying degrees of success. The critical thing is that the host MUST have a very fast broadband connection. Upload speeds are much slower than download speeds, so if the AVs are being played on the host machine this will be the weak link. Also, connect to your router with at least a Cat 5e ethernet cable - don't rely on WiFi. Even then, long dissolves and animation effects may appear jerky. We've had some shown by club members, but they re-edited them first to make them Zoom friendly. I say Zoom, but we've also tried GoToMeeting with the same result. The best result is running them from within the PTE playback window - i.e. not full-screen, as this needs much less bandwidth."

Alastair Taylor

Keeping the AV Community Entertained during the Covid 19 Lockdown

On the 18th March 2020 Alastair Taylor wrote on Facebook:

"The prospect of several weeks of isolation may well be filling you with dread, or perhaps giving you the time and space to get down to being creative with new AV productions. I hope the latter. So let's see what we can do to make something positive from this situation. Feed in your ideas and together we can keep things active. How about an online mini challenge, perhaps making a 1 minute AV?"

This resulted in well over 80 AV's being posted, a few of which were a little longer than the one minute challenge. All the AVs posted during the Covid-19 Lockdown period are listed at:

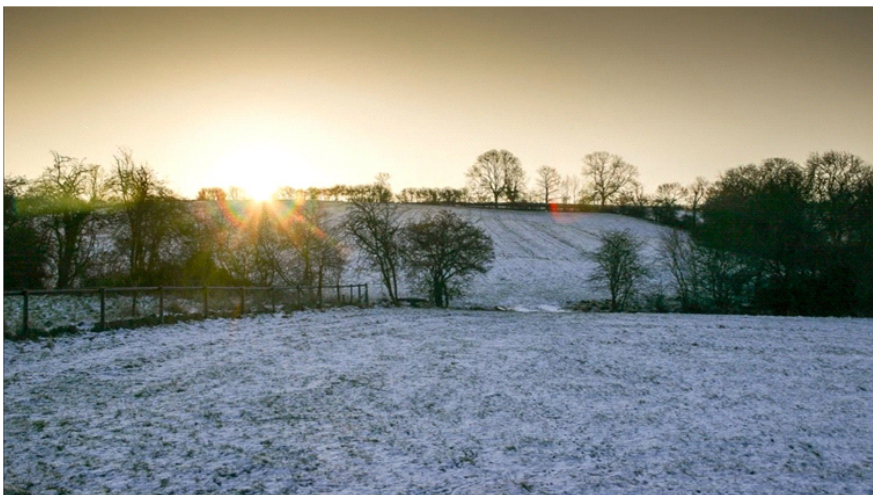
<https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/one-minute-av/>

Click on any of the links on that page to view. The majority are embedded in You Tube or Vimeo.

Here are a few sequences, click to view:



The Magic Forest
by Malcolm Imhoff



Winters' Naked Wood
by Keith Watson



For No one
by Robert Albright



Holdufolk – Hidden people in
Iceland by Mark Allen



Wild Flowers
by Martin Addison



Flower Rotation
by Barrie Glover



Helleborus
by Alastair Taylor



Evolution
by Sheila Haycox

Some longer Audio-visuals



Canyonlands
by Barry Glover



Re-Thatching
by Sheila Haycock



Almost Everyday
by Mark Allen



The Stronghold
by Martin Addison

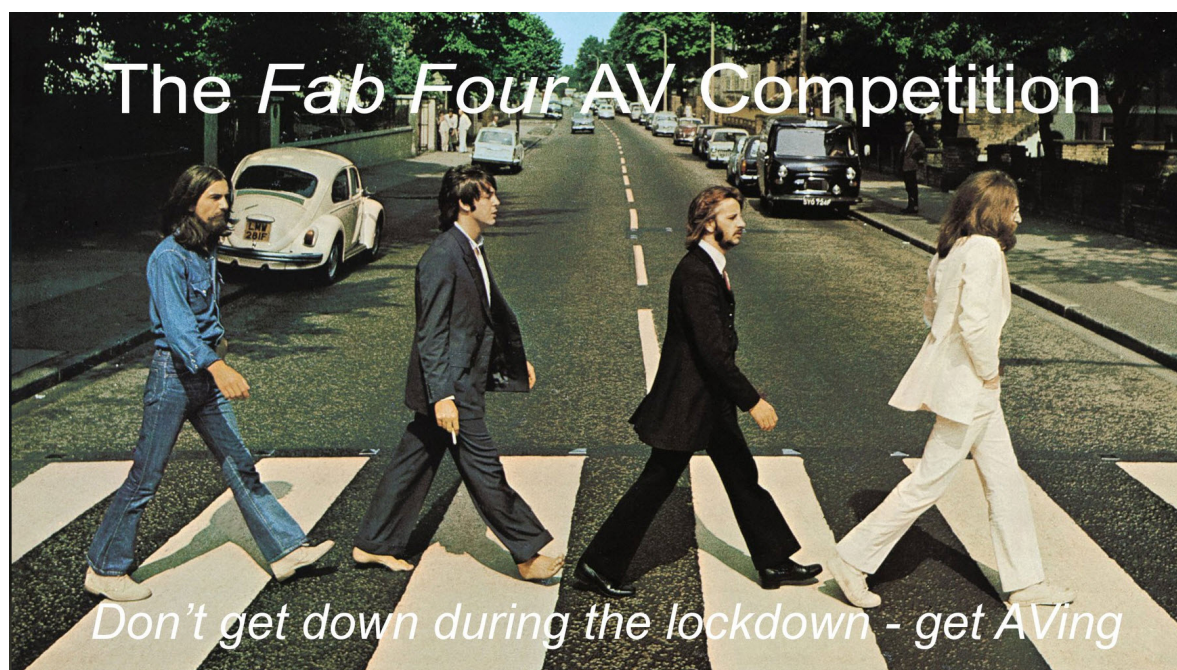
New Beatles Themed Competition

New month and new AV Challenge ...

The Fab Four, that is Alastair Taylor, Keith Watson, Malcolm Imhoff and Robert Albright have got together to launch a Beatles themed on-line AV challenge.

The Judge will be Robert Albright HonFRPS

There will be no prize other than the kudos of being selected and the personal prize that you survived lockdown and supported the AV movement during a tough time.



The rules are simple.

1. Produce an AV no longer than five minutes which uses a Beatles tune. This can include those from after the Beatles era when they went solo.
2. COPYRIGHT is a very important issue here in that anything loaded to YouTube will have the music track removed by YouTube. Any uploads to YouTube will therefore be disqualified.
3. You have from today (1 May) until midnight on Sunday 7 June to submit your entry. We will allow up to two entries per author.
4. Entries will need to be sent in via file transfer. Please FB Messenger me Alastair Taylor when you are ready. It is planned that entries will be uploaded to a secure Google Drive folder for judging.
5. Once judging is over, entries will be shared with interested parties for viewing but they will have to request access to the Google Drive via Alastair Taylor
6. Entries can be submitted in EXE or MP4 format and it is advised that if you are anxious about protecting your work, you may well want to set a self-destruction date of 10 July in order that your work cannot be accessed past that date.

So get out there and produce a new AV or dust down an old one.

Since the last e-xtra there has been some news, but first a little history.

The first AV Distinction was awarded in 1971, nearly 50 years ago.

The AV Distinctions panel continued to meet until it was disbanded in September 2000. This was done with aim of reviewing the distinction and creating a new all-encompassing Distinction which was to be called Multimedia and Narrative. This was introduced in 2002 where it later became Multimedia. The number of applications was small and the Assessment day in November 2019 was cancelled.

Recently the Distinctions for all genres have been reviewed and updated. The Multimedia Distinction was the last to be reviewed and it was decided that Multimedia was to be dropped. I have been in contact with both Andy Moore, the Distinctions Manager and Peter Hayes and it was proposed that there may be a way to incorporate AV into the Film Distinction process.

The good news is that this has been agreed and the Film Distinction has now been amended to become Film, Digital and Multimedia. The guidelines have now been published and they can be seen by clicking the RPS Audio-Visual distinctions page at <https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/audio-visual-distinctions-multimedia/>

It would be really good to see some AV applications and if they were submitted in 2021 successful submissions would be 50 years on from the original award.

Edgar Gibbs



File Formats: MP4 or Exe?

When the final tweak to your new project is done, you're ready to press the Publish Show button if you're a PTE AV Studio user and export your sequence to the waiting world. You're faced with two options – executable file or video file?

For many years it was a no-brainer – an executable file would contain the original images and audio, and an instruction set for the host computer to play them all back in the right order with a synchronised soundtrack. So long as the computer was powerful enough, the show would look exactly the same as your original creation, with no compression or rendering to spoil the effect. The only reason to ever export as a video file was if you wanted to upload the sequence to a streaming website, or to share with someone using a Mac.

A couple of years ago though, a few things changed to make the 'exe' option no longer the obvious choice. Firstly, Windows 10 had a major update that affected the performance of NVidia video card drivers. High-spec laptops tend to have dual graphics cards - a low-power Intel graphics chip on the motherboard and a high-spec GeForce card for complex graphics. For most uses, the Intel card would normally suffice and hence prolong the battery life. For AV sequences and games though, the extra power of the GeForce card would produce a much smoother result. The Windows 10 update inadvertently introduced a conflict between the two cards when playing back through a projector. Instead of simply using the faster card, the conflict caused stuttering on some sequences, or simply not play them back at all, depending on which version of PTE the sequence was created with.

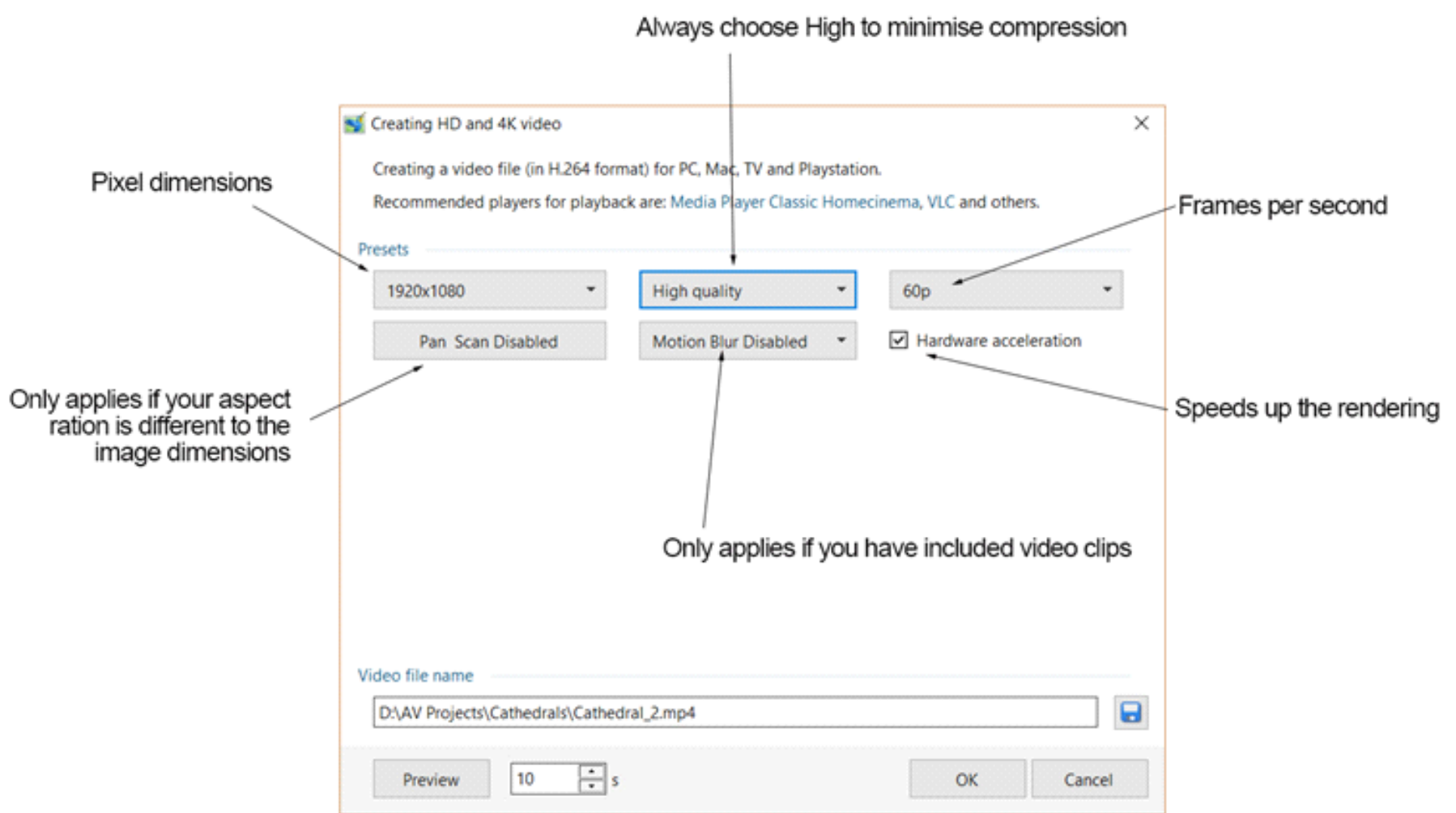
Switching off the laptop screen and only using the projector usually got around the problem, but not with every sequence. WnSoft are aware of the problem and have been in extensive dialogue with NVidia, but as yet the problem remains unresolved. If you only play back your sequences on a computer with a single graphics card and single monitor/screen, everything will look fine and you may not even know that this problem exists.

At the same time, PTE improved the quality of its video file exports, and the current MP4 files can play back every bit as smoothly as the 'exe' version but without the possible problems described above. So does this mean that MP4 files should now be the export format of choice? Sadly, it's

not as clear cut as that would imply, and video files can bring their own set of problems with them.

To get the best possible quality, choose the “HD and 4K Video” option from the Publish Show menu. This will export an MP4 file using H.264 compression (the codec), which is the current industry standard for high quality output. The frame rate of the video file needs to be set as high as possible - in v10 of PTE AV Studio, this is 60 frames per second. In real terms this means that the sequence is rendered into 60 still images for every second of the playback time. So a four minute sequence would be made up of 14,400 images at a resolution of (say) 1920 x 1080 pixels. When this plays back, the speed at which the images are shown means that even the most delicate of dissolves and slowest of zooms and pans will be very smooth.

There is of course a downside to this, of which the most obvious is that the



file size will be a lot larger than the exe equivalent. For a four minute sequence the file size will typically be 150Mb, which is about three times bigger than the exe version. The other problem is that to play back a 60 fps video file, a computer needs to have a fast processor and high-spec graphics card. Using a lower frame rate – eg 30 fps – will produce a smaller file that can be played back on older computers, but the dissolves and motion effects won't be as smooth.

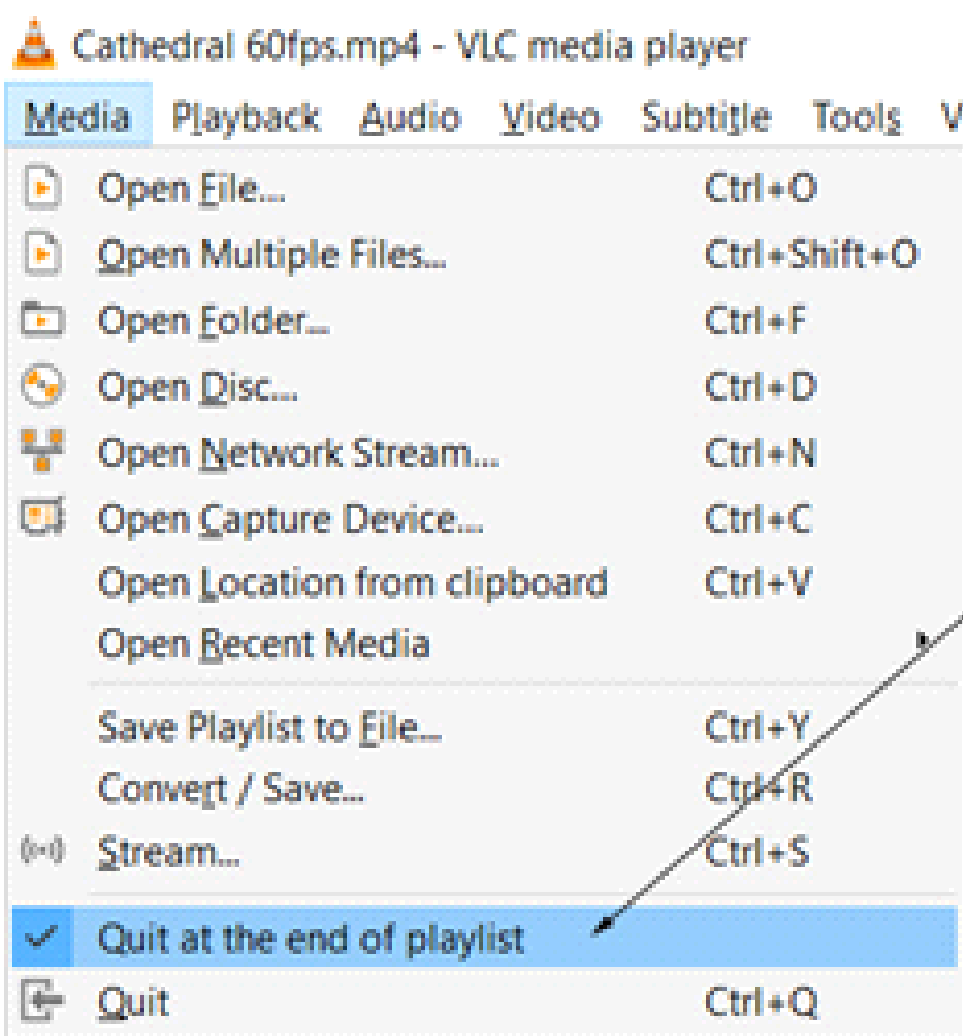
Some festivals – notably the Trophée de Paris - have decided since 2017 to request video file entries despite the massively increased file sizes. In the 2020 event, 85% of entries were in MP4 format and only 15% as 'exe' files.

Another problem is that not all video files are created equal. The ones produced by PTE are generally fine, but outside of these the video files, even all those with an “MP4” suffix, can have been made with any one of many different codec systems. I recently judged an AV competition at home, and one video file played back in such poor quality it was unwatchable. I tried it with VLC, Faststone Viewer and Windows Media Player without any success. After more experiments, I discovered that it was suffering from the “two graphics cards conflict”, which was a big surprise as I’d thought that this was purely an ‘exe’ problem. I eventually imported it into PTE and re-exported it as a new video file, after which it played back perfectly.

Whereas executable files play back with no other software required, video files need to be played within a media player. The Windows Media Player tends to be a bit clunky, so the best option is to use VLC, a free media player that seems to cope with the biggest variety of file formats. You can download it from <https://www.videolan.org>

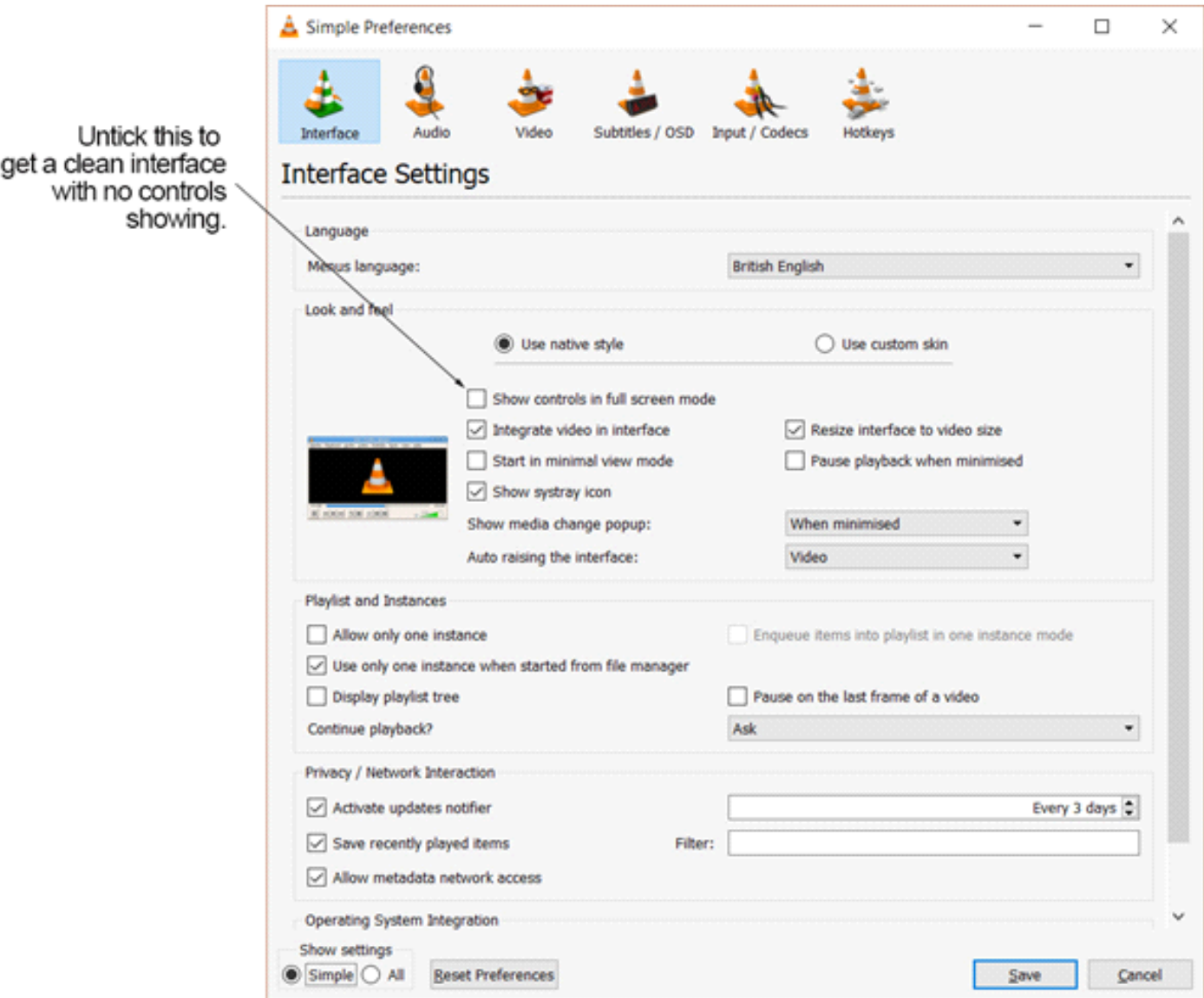
To improve the playback experience, there are a couple of settings that need to be tweaked. First, from the File menu, put a tick in the ‘Quit at End of Playlist’ option. This will avoid the need to close the player at the end of the video.

To avoid having the playback controls and logo appearing before the video starts, from the “Tools” menu, choose “Preferences” (or press ctrl-P). Untick the “Show Controls” option to enable a clean start to the video.

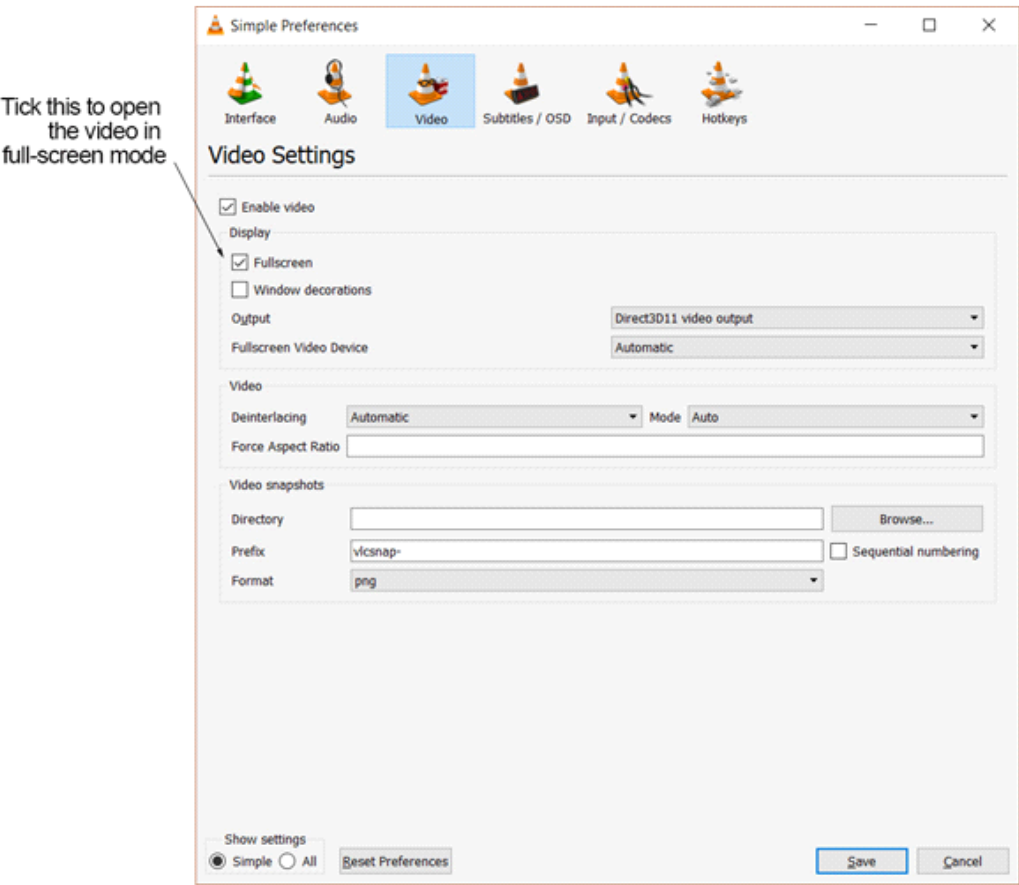


Make sure this is ticked to exit cleanly at the end of the video.

Then click the Video tab and click “Fullscreen” to enable the video to start in full screen mode.



Selecting these options will open and close the video file seamlessly, and it will play back without having to manually fill the screen and close down the program.



Facebook is now an excellent place to find and share audio-visual sequences. The Facebook page AV News, which is open to all AV enthusiasts has over 80 audio-visual sequences and more are being added every week. You can find the AV News page on Facebook [here](#).

Some concern has been raised about the safety of using Facebook and so this article sets out some information on what settings which are available to control who sees what information.

When you first create an account you have to give your name and also your date of birth. If you don't want to give your DOB, then you could always make something up, no-one is checking as far as I know! That is all the information you need to give, FB will ask you to complete your profile and you can if you wish enter where you live and lots of other personal information, but you don't have to, just leave it blank.


Once your account is set up, you can then join the AV News Group, watch the AVs and post some yourself if you wish. You can also post photographs and see other people's images.

Once you start posting you need to be aware of the many settings which are available to restrict who sees your images. The Settings tab is where you find these and on a desktop you can find this in the top right corner of the screen. On a mobile you will need to click the Menu icon at the bottom right.

Once into the Settings area there are a huge number of settings available for you to select, but most are less important and deal with things like adverts and other programs. The


Account settings

Manage information about you, your payments and your contacts, and your account in general.




Personal information

Update your name, phone numbers and email addresses.



Translation for posts

Let us know your translation preferences for posts from friends and bilingual posts.




Payments

Manage your payment settings and see your payment history.


Security

Change your password and take other actions to add more security to your account.




Security and login

Change your password and take other actions to add more security to your account.




Apps and websites

Manage the information you share with apps and websites that you've logged in to with Facebook.



Instant Games

View and remove Instant Games you've played on Facebook and Messenger.




Business integrations

View and remove the business integrations you've connected to your account to manage your ads, Pages and other business information.


Privacy

Control who sees what you do on Facebook and how data helps us personalise experiences.




Privacy settings

Control who can see your posts and content, as well as who can search for you.




Face recognition

Choose whether we recognise you in photos and videos.




Timeline and tagging

Decide who can interact with you and your posts on Facebook.




Public posts

Manage who can follow you, and who can comment on your public posts.



Blocking

Review people who you've previously blocked.




Active Status

Show when you're active.


Your Facebook information

You can view or download your information and delete your account at any time.




Access your information

View your information by category.




Activity log

View and manage your information and some settings.




Account ownership and control

Manage your data, modify your legacy contact, deactivate or delete your account and more.



Download your information

Download a copy of your information to keep or to transfer to another service.




Transfer a copy of your photos or videos

Transfer your photos or videos to another service.

Ads

Review how we use data to make the ads that you see more relevant.




Ad preferences

Control how data influences the ads that you see, and learn more about how our ads work.


Notifications

Decide how you want to communicate across Facebook and how you want us to contact you.




Notification settings

Choose which notifications you want and where you receive them.




Text messaging

Edit preferences for sending and receiving text messages.



Email

Manage your email notifications.




Notification dots

Edit preferences for showing notification dots on shortcuts.

Shortcuts

Make it easier to access the services on Facebook that you use the most.




Shortcuts bar

Set preferences for which shortcuts Facebook is allowed add to your shortcuts bar.

News Feed settings

Manage the content that you see in your News Feed.




News Feed preferences

Take control and customise your News Feed.


Media and contacts

Manage photo, video and sound controls, continuous contact syncing and clear browsing data from your phone.




Videos and photos

Manage your preferences for uploading and playback.




Sounds

Manage your preferences for in-app and video sound.



Browser

Clear your phone of the history of websites you've visited while browsing on Facebook.



Upload contacts

Continuously upload new and updated contacts.

Legal and policies

Terms of Service

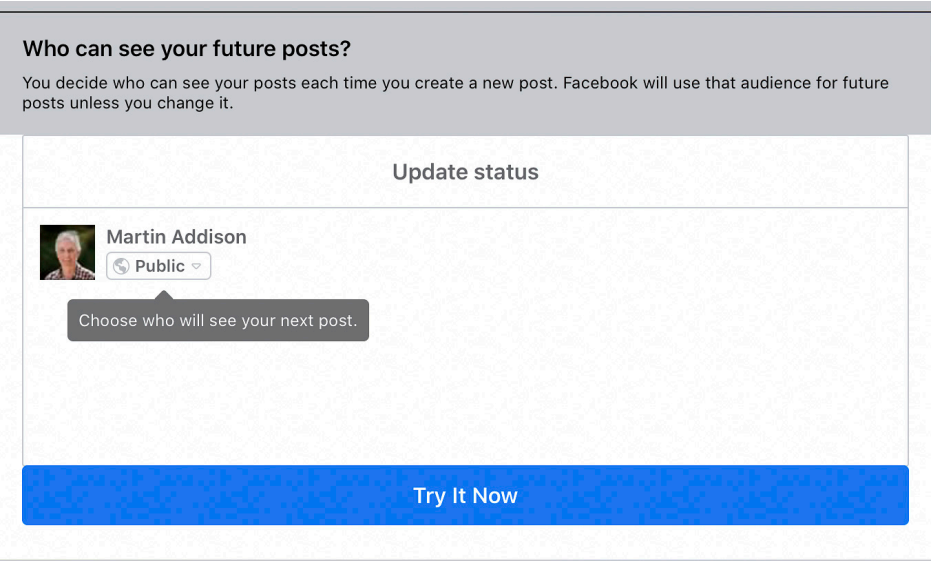
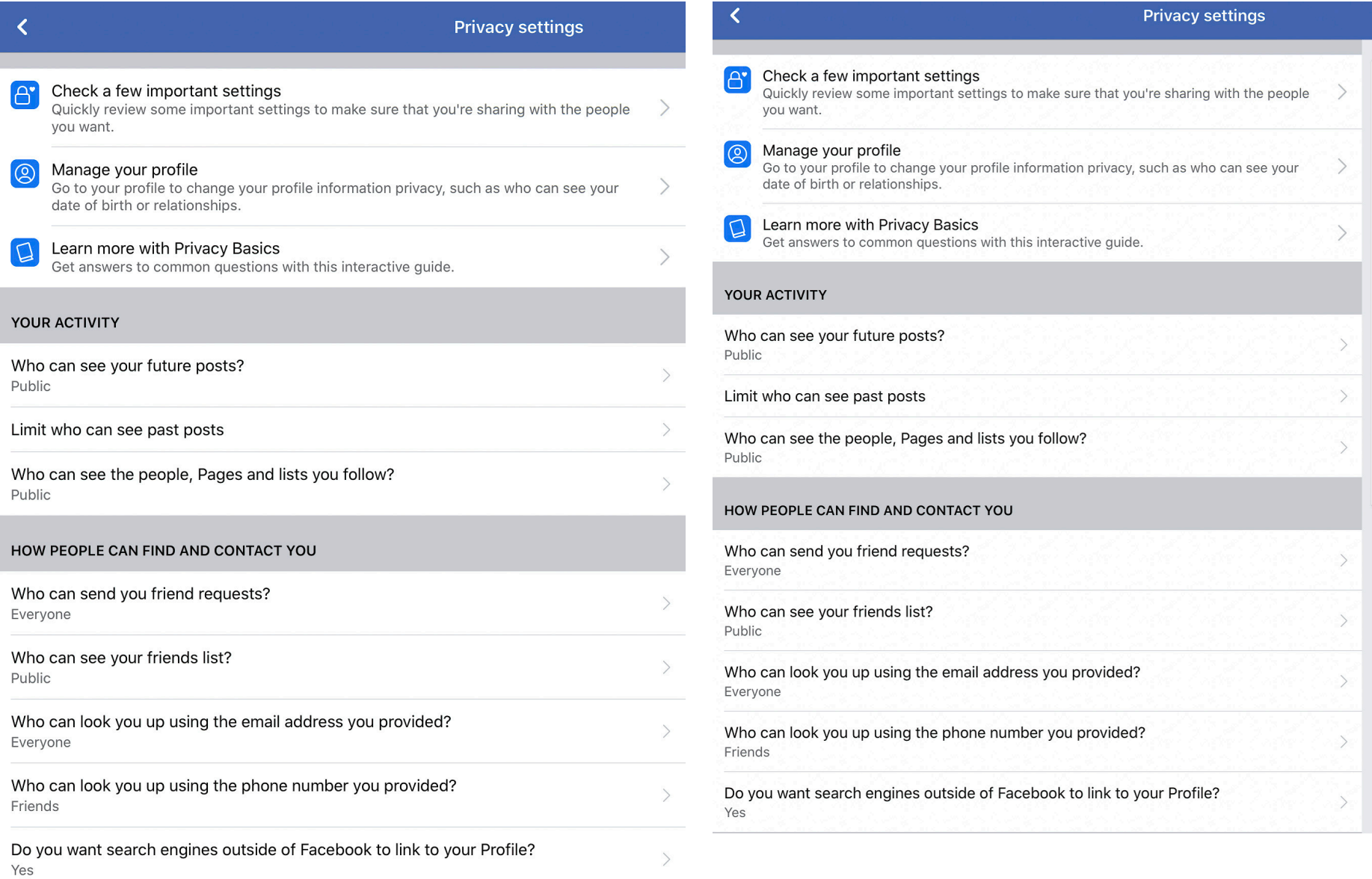
Data Policy

Cookie Policy

Community Standards

section to concentrate on is the heading marked Privacy Settings and this is the area where you set your defaults regarding who can see your posts and how you control your Facebook Friends.

The screenshots show the breadth of the choices you have, but don't be put off, the settings are well laid out and it is easy to understand what each setting refers to and you will be able to make a decision on each one very easily.



If you don't currently use Facebook, why not join up and see lots of AV sequences which might give you inspiration to make more yourself?

Martin Addison

Mapping the Community

Following a suggestion by RPS AV Group Committee member Peter Warner, the Group has got to work mapping where all the various active AV workers are. These fall into several categories:

1. Dedicated AV Groups such as the East Midlands, or Wilmslow Guild
2. Photographic Clubs with an AV sub group such as Beacon or Worcestershire
3. Photographic Clubs with a significant number of AV workers such as Sutton Coldfield

We think we know where these clubs are but there may well be others that we haven't heard about. This will be helpful for people trying to find a local group or for groups and clubs looking to develop inter club competitions and exchanges.

With all of this in mind, Sheila Haycox and Alastair Taylor are using Google Maps to show the location of these clubs.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS WORK IN PROGRESS so your help in adding to the map is much appreciated. At this stage, this works best on a PC or laptop. See below for guidance relating to mobile devices.



You can visit the map at: <https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/av-clubs-uk/>

When you click on the map, you will be taken to a separate Google Maps webpage which lists all clubs, currently under two categories as identified above. You can click on the map location to find out more information on the club.

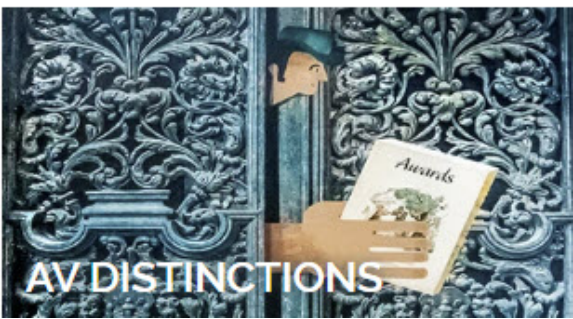
If you are using an iPad or Tablet, you do need to have downloaded the Google Maps APP and be logged on for best results. We are hoping to be able improve this. Have a look and play.

PLEASE let us know via the email shown at: <https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/av-clubs-uk/> to help us add new clubs and groups to the website. All we need at this point is a Club name, point of contact and website address.

RPS AV Group webpages

The RPS AV Group webpages can be viewed at:

<https://rps.org/groups/audio-visual/>



Updated information includes information on:

- Benefits to Join
- AV Examples
- AV news
- One Minute AVs
- International AV Festival
- National AV Competition
- Useful information
- Distinctions
- Making an AV Sequence
- Links and Resources
- Special Awards
- News Articles



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[I understand](#)

Audio Visual

The Audio Visual Group encourages their members in the making of AV sequences through education, competition and distinctions