

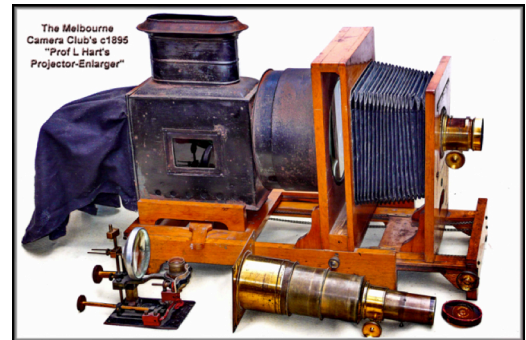
History of the AUDIO VISUAL and the AV Group at the Melbourne Camera Club

by John Spring - Audio Visual Group Coordinator May 2017 v6f

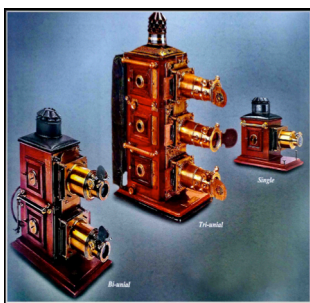
www.melbournphoto.org.au/audio-visual-group/
www.youtube.com/user/John4MCCavGroup



The history of 'Audio Visual' presentations at the Melbourne Camera Club go back to the projection of glass plate images via a gas fired Magic Lantern and being accompanied by spoken commentary and/or a piano accompanist. Hence in one form or another from the Magic Lantern to Slide Projectors and now the digital projector and computer the Melbourne Camera Club has had an active history with the Audio-Visual medium since being founded in 1891. The club's founder, Ludivico Hart's original projector-enlarger (Fig 1) which he provided to the club when he was head of the Photography at the Working Men's College (now RMIT) is still in our archives.



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Fading between images and simulated movement came about with special glass plates and multiple lanterns (Fig 2) well before movie film was demonstrated in Paris by the Lumière Brothers in 1895.

Magic Lantern shows were very popular public events (Fig 3) and the attraction continued with the invention of 35mm transparency film slides and the smaller electric slide projector. Tape recorders and slide projector synchronisation enabled the automation of the playing back AV productions.



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The first formal Audio Visual Group (AVG) was formed in 1974-5 when the club was in Carlton, 6 years ahead of APS AV Division formation. Two 35mm slide projectors were used with a mechanical fading device called a 'flip flop'. The Rosanna Photography Club in the early 1970s had first demonstrated the 'flip-flop' and in years thereafter Audio Visual equipment became increasingly available and easier for amateur club photographers to use. The first memorable slide based Audio Visual produced by the MCC AV Group was in 1977 titled 'The Yarra River'. Members over various excursions contributed photographs of the Yarra River and its infrastructure from the source above the Upper Yarra Dam down to where the Yarra enters the Bay.

Dual and multiple 35mm slide projectors were used by our members and in other camera clubs (Fig 4) with ¼ inch reel to reel 4-track tape recorders and tone synchronisation devices. Later the 'Philips Cassette' enabled physically smaller recorders, notably produced by TEAC with quality recording tape that could be used at double speed (3¾ ips) incorporating DBX or Dolby audio compression. Computers started to make an impact on AV production with initially, control programming and then full program synchronisation, best exemplified by Dataton equipment from Sweden.



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The standard for 35mm slide projectors was the Kodak Carousel SAV (Fig 5) with the rotary 80 slide capacity magazine. Although many 'AV slide' producers used the 'universal' or Leitz straight magazines that held 50 of your favourite 35mm slides.

The small equipment movement was from reel to reel ¼" magnetic tape to 'Phillips' cassette was eventually mirrored in computer equipment which was initially large desk-top cases but is now a powerful laptop portable or one of another style of ultra thin-small computers mainly running the Windows operating system.

The demise of 35mm slide transparencies, typified by Kodak Kodachrome in favour of digital image projection, occurred over the period of the late 1990s through to the mid 2000s. Early low-resolution digital projectors were VGA 640x480 pixels but their resolution gradually increased to 1024x768 and currently

1920x1080 HD is popular. However the 4K (4096x2160 pixels) standard is just around the corner and will shortly become cost effective for camera clubs and individual photographers wanting to project quality large digital images.

The Melbourne Camera Club has always invested in good projection infrastructure. Currently it has a 4-metre wide projection screen with an excellent quality LCD type large venue Epson G5750wu projector with a resolution of 1920x1200 pixels. It's current computer is a 27" Apple iMAC configured to work in both OSX and the Windows operating systems. (Fig 6)

The AV Group for a time was merged with the club's new 'digital group' until 2005 when it again became a separate specialist group. The biggest limitation in the 'slide' years with making audio visuals related to the considerable expertise required in preparing AV slide productions for 'fade' projection with accompanying music and/or narration plus the complicated interconnection of sizable equipment that was required to be venue flexible to show AV productions. Pin registering slides was a complex operation requiring specially adapted cameras and other intricate equipment. Digital projectors and specifically AV, audio, and photo editing computer software have been a blessing for all AV makers increasing quality and reducing their production time-lines.

With the advent of the digital camera, projector, music, AV making software and computer control many of the AV difficulties of former years were simplified and generally lowered equipment costs for amateur photographers and clubs to undertake AV productions. Peak organisations like VAPS, APS and RPS (UK) all provided a standardisation of AV rules and competitions environments for AV producers worldwide. The internet enabled more competitions and a wider audience to experience and participate in Audio Visuals.



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The medium we call Audio Visual means something different in schools, advertising and the camera club movement but is essentially combining both visual and audio processes to document, entertain and instruct.



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The Melbourne Camera Club's Audio Visual group continues to be involved in many promotional activities both within and outside the clubrooms.

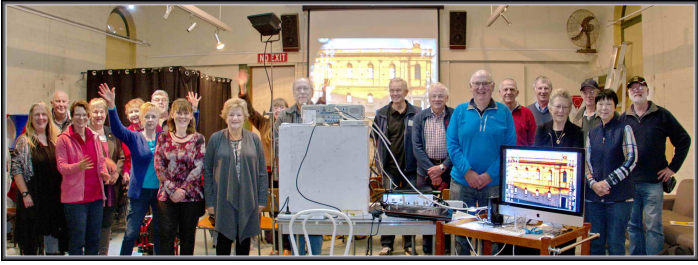
The AV Group holds general discussion, technical AV education (Fig 7) and information evenings on the third Wednesday of each month. An additional competition or 'show and tell' night is held whenever there is a 5th Monday occurring in any month.

There is an annual members End of Year club competition for 'Open' and '3:21' produced Audio Visuals with an annual trophy awarded in each section. The South Melbourne clubrooms have a magnificent gallery-hall ideal for projection of digital images on a 4m wide screen with a high-resolution large venue digital projector. (Fig 6) An advanced graphics MAC-PC computer is available along with high-fidelity audio reproduction equipment providing an excellent presentation environment. A monthly AVG eNewsletter is provided to interested members and others involved in AV production. Encouragement and mentoring assistance is provided for scripting and producing both personal and competition Audio Visuals.

Being a specialist Audio Visual Group with a wide range of expertise we provide AV presenters and judges to other clubs, organisations and for competitions. Annual AV exchanges are held with several state, national and international Audio Visual clubs. Members of our AV Group are involved in reviewing the state based AV rules, which provide the standard for Victoria's Camera club members making competition AVs.

There is an accumulated archive of Audio Visuals that provide education, entertainment, and inspiration to members at the clubrooms. The AV group's web pages provide for a wider contact with other AV makers and the public. Promotional AVs showing members digital images and exhibition in the club Gallery are made and able to be viewed via the internet on the AV group's web pages and on YouTube.

There is a wide diversity of approaches to making simple through to complex AVs using photography, narration, sound effects plus background music. It's all in the eye and ear of the producer and then it is up to the viewing audience.



The mission for the AVG is to educate, entertain and socialise so we can increasingly enjoy our photography through the medium of viewing and/or producing Audio Visuals.

Why not come along to a meeting or two of the Audio Visual Group and consider giving AVs a go.