
CONTENTS

Editorial <i>Richard Crangle</i>	82
The Route of the Overland Mail to India <i>Robert Macdonald</i>	83
An Ancestor of the Carousel <i>David Evans</i>	88
How to Read a Reading <i>Richard Crangle</i>	89
Some Further Thoughts on the Bull's-Eye Lantern <i>John Barnes</i>	94
Bits and Pieces	95
Two Reviews: <i>Dickens and the Dream of Cinema</i> and <i>Panoramas, Magic Lanterns</i> and <i>Cinemas</i> <i>Richard Crangle</i>	96

Cover picture:

An unusual hybrid lantern: the body and optics are those of a typical 'bull's-eye' lantern of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century (depending on which side of that particular controversy convinces you!). In dimensions it is close to two of those (Nos 2 and 5) described in Deac Rossell's list in our last issue. But the chimney, apparently original, is of the typical 'phantasmagoria' design with a double-bend light trap, which we tend to think of as a later development. So perhaps this is a 'missing link' stage in the evolution from the 'common' lantern design to the 'improved phantasmagoria', or perhaps it is a later manufacturer's throwback to an earlier design. Or perhaps there is some other explanation...

From the collection of Martin Gilbert.

Edited by Richard Crangle

Design and layout by Dennis Crompton assisted by Annie Bridges and Zuzanna Lipinska

Thanks for assistance with this issue go to all its contributors, everyone involved with its design, editing and production, and to Philip Banham, Martin Gilbert, Amy Sargeant and Dick Sunnucks for help with contributions.

© The Magic Lantern Society 2004

Material from this publication may not be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without the prior written permission of the Editor.

Origination and printing for the Society by Dave Morgan, London

Published by the Magic Lantern Society,
South Park, Galphay Road, Kirkby Malzeard,
Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3RX, UK

<http://www.magiclantern.org.uk>

Editorial address: Richard Crangle,
17 Dean Street, Exeter EX2 4HH, UK
e-mail: R.Crangle@ex.ac.uk

IT HAS OFTEN SEEMED TO ME that there is nothing wrong with a friendly difference of opinion. So it was an editorial pleasure to receive John Barnes's article responding to Deac Rossell's speculations on bull's-eye lanterns in our last issue: one of my hopes is that our Journal might be able to promote further debate about 'what those old lanterns and slides mean'. We don't necessarily have to reach definitive conclusions (though there's nothing wrong with those either); it is just as important that we look for imaginative answers, in the plural, to the questions we can ask ourselves, and try to find other imaginative questions to ask.

In essence this is something like the conventional thesis / antithesis / synthesis philosophy of history (with due respect to the ghost of Herr Hegel): one view is put forward, an opposing view follows, and somehow through a process of examination or debate we arrive at a third view which can be generally accepted as the truth. As far as I'm concerned this is a perfectly reasonable pursuit for us to be involved in and, particularly in an area of history where we have relatively little reliable information, it's probably the only course we can take. Let's have a few more speculative theses, and some friendly differences of opinion.

But, still on the subject of bull's-eyes, our cover picture for this issue illustrates admirably the uncertainty of our knowledge of our subject. The whole point of the thesis / antithesis / synthesis concept is that (eventually) it gives us a nice tidy finished product: a story or definition that covers all the evidence we have and wraps it all together into a logical set of knowledge. But of course, even if history can be neatly constructed to be like that, real life is rarely so orderly. It is always possible that something else – like a bull's-eye lantern with a phantasmagoria lantern's chimney – will emerge from the undergrowth to complicate what seemed to be a simple solution. And then we have to start thinking again, working this new knowledge into our thesis, or our antithesis, to see what the supposedly finished idea looks like this time. And then something else will turn up ...

Another example of just such a curiosity is provided in David Evans's description of a strange lantern which now looks as though it has genetic links (however tenuous those may be) to a much more familiar machine of our own times. This early 'carousel' raises more questions than it answers: a prototype? a rare survivor of a lost breed? a success or a failure? and so on. But it's only by making some tentative suggestions, perhaps to have them contradicted, that we can begin the process of thinking about an object, comparing it with other objects, and working out what it may really have been and why it was built in the first place.

Among other items in this issue is Robert MacDonald's account of a medium which wasn't the magic lantern but which formed a vital part of its surrounding world: the moving panorama. Sometimes the alleged connections between all the optical media that get bundled together as ancestors of the cinema can seem a bit strained – this is not the case, though, with the links between moving panoramas (as opposed to their large, static, circular cousins) and lantern shows. Both offered sequences of pictures on a vertical surface, as though presenting a window looking out onto the world, and both regularly offered that mixture of fact and fantasy that now seems slightly strange to us in our more compartmented world. Robert's account is a timely reminder that as well as looking at the technical detail of interesting equipment, we have things to learn by looking outside 'our' medium at the alternatives to lantern shows that contemporary audiences would have had available for their entertainment and edification.

Since this issue rounds off another volume of our Journal, it gives an opportunity to cast an eye back over the contents of the other issues. It is fair to say that there is really only one common thread running through the great miscellany of the articles, illustrations and paragraphs: the lantern itself. Apart from that, there is no single theme, and that shows the richness of a subject area like ours. The volume has featured work on different historical periods; on lantern 'hardware' and 'software' alike; on lanterns and slides in both their original contexts and as they are used today; on accessories and peripheral media; on professional archiving and amateur research; on historical personalities and historical unknowns. And, of course, it has also featured different opinions and views of the same thing, which brings me back to my title: it's a lucky Editor who can look forward to a new volume with the motto '*vive la différence!*'

The next issue of *NMLJ* is scheduled to appear in Winter 2004. Contributions are welcome at any time, at the editorial address at the bottom of the Contents column. The editorial deadline for Volume 10 No. 1 is **30 November 2004**.