

The Magic Lantern

A MERRY CHRISTMAS



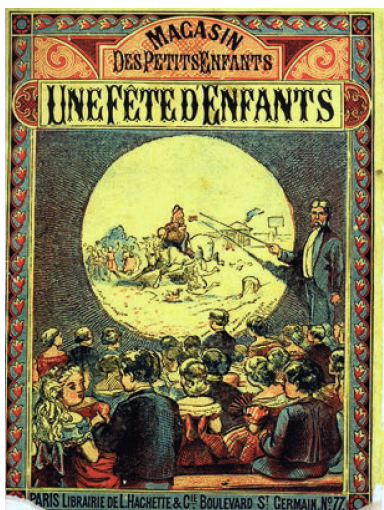
To celebrate the festive season we have again asked members to let us have their favourite Christmas-related slides, stories and magic lantern items to share with everyone. We hope you enjoy them and wish all our readers a very happy Christmas and may 2018 bring all your magic lantern dreams.

A CHRISTMAS POTPOURRI

PEACE AND PLENTY

Nick Hiley

This is my favourite Christmas slide, both for its familiar and its unexpected aspects. It is no. 34 in a motto series by an unidentified manufacturer, and shows a jolly Father Christmas wearing a crown of holly leaves and carrying a holly branch laden with berries. He doffs his hat in respect to the Christmas pudding, while behind him on the laden Christmas table are cold hams, pineapples, apples, melons, a pig's head and a wide selection of drink, from bowls of punch to a bottle labelled 'PORT'. But it isn't the Father Christmas with which we are familiar, for not only is he wearing a red coat fringed with ermine, a blue waistcoat, yellow trousers and top boots, but he is also small enough to stand on the table. He always reminds me of the poem *A Visit from St Nicholas*, first published in New York in 1823, which begins "Twas the night before Christmas, when all thro' the house / Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse." In this, St Nicholas is described as 'chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf', which seems to fit this figure quite well. Hidden under the circular paper mask is the note 'copyright / Motto slide / May 1885'.



INSIDE OUT

Wilhelm Widenmann

This Christmas contribution is somewhat 'the other way round'. On the cover of this little French booklet from around 1890 you have a magic lantern projection and on the inside you find the Christmas tree.



A SCHOOL CHRISTMAS

Lester Smith



This is another of the slides that belonged to West Downs School, Winchester – a boys' prep school that ran from 1897 to 1988 (see issue 9, December 2016). This fine and beautiful painting is by, I believe, Edmund H. Wilkie. The slides came with a maroon leather-bound book with handwritten notes penned by Kenneth Bassett Tindall in 1920 when he was headmaster. This contains all the 'Christmas Customs' plus the complete story of Gabriel Grubb by Charles Dickens and would have been read out loud while the slides were projected using a triurnal lantern, also supplied by Mr Wilkie.

The following extract seems most appropriate for this slide: 'Christmas tide of course suggests to our mind Christmas fare, turkeys, roast beef, plum pudding and mince pies. These are recognised as Christmas dishes by everybody, but in some parts of the country there are local dainties which are not so universally known. I may instance a dish that I used to have as a

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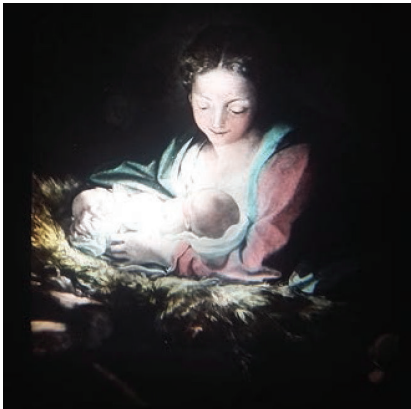
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boy in Yorkshire, which is known as "frumenty". This is composed of wheat boiled in milk with flour up to the consistency of a thick soup. It is ladled out of a tureen into soup plates and is eaten with sugar and nutmeg or cinnamon; and very good it is, in moderate quantities.'

These three slides are also favourites from my collection, one very gentleman and two reminding us of that great British institution – the pantomime! These two are from the same series, *The Christmas Pantomime*, published by W. Butcher & Sons in 1908, with permission from F. Warne & Co. The full set consists of fifteen slides. I do not know who published the Father Christmas but it really sums up the Christmas spirit.



MIX AND MATCH

Monique Wezenberg

These are my two favourite Christmas slides – I love them because, in spite of the fact that they come from different sets, they match with a wonderful effect. In fact I use five slides from four different sets but this pair shows the effect beautifully. The first one is part of a McAllister set – no. 4, *The Magi guided by the star* (Portaetis). The second one is based on the painting *The Adoration of the Child* by Correggio (1526) and is part of a Liesegang set – series 672 no. 5 *Weihnachtsgeschichte, Das Kind in der Krippe* (Christmas story, The child in the manger). The third image is a photograph of the screen when the two slides are projected together.

