

### Old Lanternist's Tip (No.9)

A few months ago one of my exhibitions was upset when a nude nonagenarian ran across the stage during 'Christie's Old Organ' shouting "How's this for old?" Luckily it was a very cold hall, so the potential effect upon the sensitive was diminished. I recommend, in similar circumstances, that you do as I did: despatch someone to apprehend the culprit and ensure he will not return. I sent the churchwarden. Yesterday I was reminded of the incident when I received a postcard from both the naked man and churchwarden who now run a successful dog-grooming parlour in Troon.

### Old Lanternist's Tip (No.14)

When travelling by steam train it is unwise to leave the lantern box unattended in the guard's van. On one occasion my biunial was inadvertently put off by the guard at an unmanned halt in the middle of Berkshire. It was only when I reached my destination, some forty miles down the line, I discovered it was missing. When my biunial was finally retrieved two days later, there was a family of sparrows living in the upper lamp-house and a retired jockey living in the box.

### Old Lanternist's Tip (No.4)

Never put an ice-cold slide into a red-hot lantern. I have met a number of lanternists officiating at a winter exhibition who have made the mistake of succumbing to an audience's wish to see a particular view and sent their

assistant to retrieve same from a slide box lying on the stone floor of an unheated hallway. As soon as the precious slide was inserted into the hot machine there was a resounding crack. So be sure and warm the slide a little first. A friend has suggested that the best way to accomplish this is to insert the slide into your trouser pocket and rub it briskly against your leg whilst you continue with other items. However I cannot recommend this practice. The last time he did this an elderly lady attacked him with an umbrella and another fainted.

### Old Lanternist's Tip (No.13)

When your spoilt young nephew offers to stage an impromptu magic lantern show this Christmas, suggest he presents a phantasmagoria. Have him pin up a sheet on the door frame and secrete the lantern behind it. As soon as he announces the grand entertainment, get ready. The instant he disappears behind the sheet, leap to your feet, slam the door and lock it.

### Old Lanternist's Tip (No.19)

Someone has asked me whether I've ever tried frying an egg on a hot lantern. The answer is no! And I've never tried sticking a pencil up my nose either. It appals me that this is the level of enquiry I now receive and I aim to close down this column. In actual fact I have decided to retire from the lantern business entirely and open a gentlemen's outfitters in Luton. They tell me that paper spats are likely to be the next big thing.

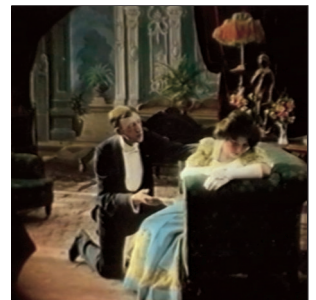
## ANOTHER MAN'S WIG

Mervyn Heard

*(To be read with a very 'posh' accent)*

'Twas the eve of the Faversham's New Year soirée at the Faversham's Bayswater House  
And while many girls danced, others just sat and talked –  
and tried to pretend they were nice

Some ate fondant creams or spoke in hushed tones but young Evelyn spoke at full tilt  
For her poor heart was fluttering in her bos(o)m, like a sparrow trapped up a man's kilt  
For she knew that at some point her affianced was due, young Roger de Moletrembler-Smythe  
That this was the night he would profer his hand and ask her to be his young bride



It was just as the talk turned to cellulite as all conversations soon do  
That said Roger arrived and led her away for that purpose of which she knew  
To the Faversham Library, by the coats, 'neath the banned works of Percy Bysshe Shelley  
Roger de Moletrembler dropped to the floor and proposed – with his knee in some jelly  
But reply came there none, least not straight away, for she fixed his bowed head with a stare  
Saying: "Oh my God Roger, pray tell me at once, what on earth has become of your hair?  
Those fine golden locks that I so much admired have changed from their corn-speckled hue  
To a colour akin to a bright tangerine. Pray tell me, what has happened old fruit?"  
"I confess, my dear Evelyn, those locks you admired, they were not mine own but a piece  
And last night, as I sat fishing down by the brook, it was nicked by two barnacle geese.  
The hairpiece you see is an alternate job which belonged to my great uncle Ted  
I found it amongst his final effects in a suitcase shoved under the bed.

But old thing, please do not mind, for I can aver 'tis a measure quite au temporaire  
For I have ordered another one just like the foregone  
from Wigs'r'Us in Leicestershire Square  
But Evelyn she uttered never a word. She just turned and looked horribly sad  
And Roger he knew that this one thoughtless act was no less than the act of a cad.  
He knew that he'd done something most non de rigueur,  
that his standing was not worth a fig.  
He had done that one thing that could not be put right –  
he'd proposed in another man's wig.

Rejected and ostracised by all his friends, young Roger returned to his flat.  
He sat in the window and said his goodbyes – to his golf clubs and trusty old bat.  
He pulled a revolver from out of the drawer, poured a whisky and took a large swig  
Then he blew out his brains so as not to dishonour, dishonour another man's wig.

