

MAGIC LANTERN SOCIETY NOTICE BOARD

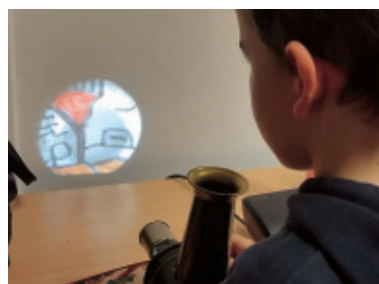
The Museum of Precinema – Minici Zotti Collection – in Padua, Italy, is delighted to be exhibiting the marvellous Mondo Novo peep box belonging to the Venetian Dolfin noble family, restored and brought back to its original splendour. An ingenious pre-cinema optical device, this precious item, originating from the second half of the 18th century, is a unique artefact that amazes for its size and refined architectural taste, for the richness of the decoration and for the particular mode of operation. The exhibition provides an opportunity to explore the fascinating visual culture of the time through the inclusion of 'optical views' and original prints that show the desire at the time for a faithful representation of reality, also using innovative technologies such as the Camera Obscura of the painter Canaletto – this year marks the 250th anniversary of his death which we are remembering. The exhibition runs until 28 February 2019 and is a part of the Italian calendar of events celebrating the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.



The next week Nicole and Frog Morris ran a slide-making workshop in London at the BFI that was thoroughly enjoyed by all ages (including some MLS members)!

ARRIVING AT BIRMINGHAM

Nicole Mollett came across this slide just after the Autumn Meeting of the Magic Lantern Society in Birmingham. It seemed so appropriate for the arrival of the (nearly) all-female cast of presenters (see p.19) that we just had to include it. The slide is in the Faversham Society Archive at the Fleur De Lis Museum in Faversham, Kent and is reproduced courtesy of the Museum.



THE RAGGED TROUSERED PHILANTHROPISTS

Mary Ann Auckland writes: Townsend Theatre Productions are currently touring a 'one-man magic show by Neil Gore based on the novel by Robert Tressell'. Neil – the actor/ musician as well as writer – uses a magic lantern on stage and tells the story of *The sweep and the whitewasher*. This is a very entertaining version of the classic political novel.



DIARY DATES

Please take these dates as a guide only and confirm before travelling

2019

26 January

Magic Lantern Society AGM
Musical Museum, Kew, London

28 February

Final day of the Mondo Novo exhibition
Museum of Precinema, Padua, Italy

6 March

Optical Toy Auction (Philip Banham Collection)
Barnes, Hampton and Littlewood, Exeter

5-8 April

Special two-day MLS meeting in Brussels, jointly with the B-Magic project

27 April

Spring meeting of the Magic Lantern Society
Swedenborg House, London

NEW MEMBERS

Richard Wiseman

Edinburgh, UK

Samantha Scott

Dewsbury, UK

Barry Nixon

Hitchin, UK

Sylvia Alting van Geusau

Amsterdam, Netherlands

Tokyo Photographic

Tokyo, Japan

Art Museum

Paris, France

Stéphanie Prévost



... AND TALKING OF WORKSHOPS

These are posters for the magic lantern and slide making workshop Mitsue Ikeda-Tanaka held on 23 November in Osaka (see also TML 16, p.8). Mitsue writes that the workshop involved a great deal of practice in advance at her home. For this event they added a short story to the Nishiki Kage-e programme – *Kouke sanninshu* (the story of three clowns).



Pat Furley has been a member since 1979 and has given probably given 500 shows during that time, mainly within Gloucestershire. He was usually helped by his wife Norma. He would like his many member friends to know that Norma sadly passed away on 7 October.

THE YOUTH'S COMPANION

Lester Smith

The Youth's Companion was an illustrated weekly newspaper first published in 1827 in Boston, USA, by the Perry Mason Company (Erle Stanley Gardner 'borrowed' the name for his fictional attorney-detective) and continued for over a hundred years until the late 1920s. By 1900 it had over half a million subscribers and was highly influential. While, as its name suggests, it started out as a publication for younger people, it evolved into a paper for all the family and so is an interesting source of social comment. Content included articles, current events, short stories, songs, poems, puzzles, projects and crafts. Contributors included Jack London, Mark Twain, Jules Verne and Emily Dickinson. It also contained wonderful adverts for toys and trinkets, dolls and fashion, mechanics and optics – and, of course, toy magic lanterns.

I have a number of copies in my collection dating from 1896 to 1907. Curiously all are published in October and are probably special editions for Christmas – they therefore contain particularly good adverts. We will reproduce a few selected pages in *The Magic Lantern* here and in future issues. The first extract shown, from 1896, is clearly a Christmas advert and the second, from 1899, is for the new 'Ideal' magic lantern sold exclusively to *Companion* readers. It is "safe, brilliant and easy to use" and "for double the price there is no lantern as good and practical as the 'Ideal'". Not only does it come with 24 views of



The Youth's Companion from 1896 (top) and 1899 (bottom)

either the US Army or Navy, but it also includes 72 admission tickets and a show bill to encourage entrepreneurial young magic lantern showpeople.

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Pat and Ray Gilbert write: "John Taylor died on 3 December, after a protracted illness. Despite being a very private man, he was a showman and enthusiastic as well as a loyal member of the Society. He gave many shows, with his wife Elaine, to clubs and organisations within striking distance of their home. We spent many holidays with them and they with us, sharing our mutual interest in National Trust properties. Our condolences go to his widow Elaine."

OPTICAL TOY AUCTION ... coming soon

On Wednesday 6 March 2019 Bearnes, Hampton and Littlewood of Exeter will auction Philip Banham's collection of optical toys and optical prints including some rare stereoscopic images and viewers, magic lantern slides and photographs. There will be a section relating to The Great Exhibition of 1851 and Crystal Place 1854.

Philip Banham writes: "In the catalogue all 231 lots will be beautifully illustrated in colour with a total of approximately 600 photographs together with many detailed footnotes and references. The catalogue cover shown here shows the front and back of Lot 26: 'A 19th century hand cut paper transformation silhouette The Astrologer & Lady, brown and white paper layered to produce the image of an empty cave by day and occupied by an astrologer and lady by moonlight, inscribed as per title to reverse, image size 31 x 22.5cm. Estimate £100-120. When back lit the astrologer appears as if by magic and the ghost of a lady in white is revealed.'

"Many of the items have been used over the last thirty years to entertain audiences attending museum study days, lectures in art galleries and other events. It is now time to pass these artefacts to other enthusiasts."



Wilhelm Widenmann has sent this Mittelstrass advert from 1876 announcing "a big selection of very effective pictures" – ie a then frequently used joke box, producing a little devil!

This is a glimpse of the spectacular panorama of painted backdrops and live actors in the Oceania exhibition, now finished at the RA in London. But it is touring the world so catch it if you can.

