

OBITUARIES

THOMAS GANZ (1920-2018)

Thomas Ganz was born in Zurich, Switzerland, into a family whose business had focused on the photographic and projected image since 1844. He started his collection, naturally, with some items that were family-built by his forebears in the Ganz Company. Under his direction the company later became known as AV (Audiovisual) Ganz and his private collection then comprised a wide range of pre-cinema items including magic lanterns, optical toys and other instruments as well as photo-historical material and associated literature. Thomas's collection, except for the books, was sold as 'The Ganz Collection' by Christie's in London in 2007.

Laura Zotti writes:

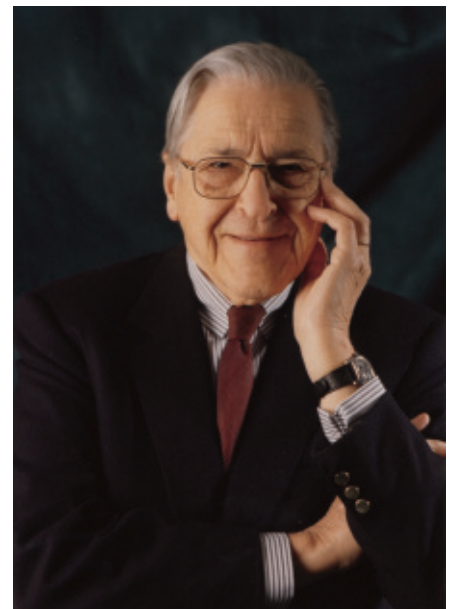
"Goodbye Thomas, friend of many 'magical' adventures! I remember well your 90th birthday and the special magic lantern show created for you, which you especially enjoyed. I have always listened to you with great interest because of your expertise in describing the world of pre-cinema. This Museum [Museo del Precinema, Padua], that you admired, always has on show the exhibits you donated and I will carefully preserve them in lasting memory of you. Your book, *Die Welt im Kasten: von der Camera Obscura zur Audiovision* (1994), continues to be a favourite with our Museum visitors – you can definitely be proud of it!

"I remember when, after the MLS meetings in London, we used to have giant soles at that restaurant in Soho. It was always a great pleasure and we talked about our different activities – yours as a 'collector' and mine as a 'lanternist'. And what about 1998 when we met at Washington Airport as you were leaving for the Niagara Falls? I could go on with the memories, but now they feel more like fairy tales."

Alberto Zotti Minici writes:

"Thomas was a dearest friend to me. Even before we shared an interest in studying pre-cinema and a passion for it – especially for optical views – we shared laughter. For us, those were 'ironic views' on life. With Catherine and Laura we had so many encounters in England, Switzerland and Italy. Thomas taught me so much. I still treasure a manuscript in which he explains to me, in the most detailed way, why the eye is round and cinema images are square – that problem kept us busy for hours in the hall of the Imperial Hotel in Russell Square. There are so many more memories. Gentle ones. As gentle as Thomas himself."

Catherine Ganz, Laura Zotti and Alberto Zotti Minici



JANET RIGBY (1939-2018)

Many Magic Lantern Society members were devastated to hear of the sudden, unexpected death of Jan Rigby on New Year's Eve. Jan was a constant source of encouragement, interest and help in every circumstance – and the 'go to' reader of scripts for presentations, even if asked at the very last minute. Her joyful presence will be sorely missed at our meetings and we can only imagine how much more so by Richard and her wonderful family. Her son James described her as: "a tiny ball of energy who was always busy – she was intelligent, strong and resourceful." That is a description we would certainly all recognise and endorse in the MLS.

James continued: "Mum's compassion for others was coupled with an incredible inner strength and resilience. This powerful combination was no doubt forged during her early years as a refugee in Australia. With her mother, she had escaped the Japanese invasion of Malaya during World War II. Her father managed to survive four years in a prisoner of war camp and the family was reunited after the War. She was an only child and, while her parents tried to rebuild a life in Malaya, she lived with her granny in Sandbach, going to boarding school in Wales from the age of 7. She considered the lonely train journey to school a far less daunting prospect than the yearly visit by her mother wearing an extravagant hat for Prize Day!"

The family eventually settled in Melling near Liverpool. Jan then attended the Methodist College, Belfast, where she excelled in speech and drama, and went on to train and qualify as a speech therapist. Her career centred on helping young children with speech difficulties and she must have improved hundreds of lives with her gentle, patient care. She met and married Richard, moving first to Surbiton and then Newmarket. They were married for 55 years and formed a magic lantern act that was always much in demand. James commented: "as one half of their magic lantern duo some might even say that her beautiful reading voice and smile stole the show."

After retiring, Jan taught English as a foreign language and more recently has worked with Newstalk reading news to local people with blindness or impaired vision. She was a key member of the local cinema group in Newmarket. In her 70s she took up Pilates, started to relearn the piano and French language, as well as learning Spanish and Italian from scratch!

Jan touched the lives of so many in different ways, always generous with her time, inspiration and sage advice. MLS members will treasure her presentation in October (*TML* 17, p.20) giving us a glimpse of life on the road with the magic lantern. So hard to believe it was the last. Our thoughts are with Richard, their children Kate, Kris and James, and the grandchildren.

Mary Ann Auckland and James Rigby