

## OBITUARY

### JOHN ALEXANDER, 1928-2019



John Alexander, a very long-standing member of the Magic Lantern Society, died at the end of September. He had been ill for several years. Many will remember him as a regular at Society meetings as well as on our overseas visits which he greatly enjoyed.

John was a man of many interests and skills. Not only was he a lanternist, he was a member of the Magic Circle and one of the UK's most prominent Punch and Judy Professors. He was the first chairman of the Punch and Judy Fellowship. John brought his show to two of our summer meetings and performed, to great acclaim, during the lunch break. For many years, he had a regular summer booking on Broadstairs beach and our Chairman's son did a spell as his bottler – that's the one who collects the money and controls the crowds.

John had a day-job as a stationer but, for a number of years in the evenings, he was Head Doorman, known as the Chief of Staff, at the Metropolitan, Edgware Road, the last of the music halls. He was there until it closed and he wrote an entertaining little book, *Tearing Tickets Twice Nightly*, about his experiences which included an encounter with Charlie Chaplin. More recently, he sometimes appeared as chairman for performances of old-time music hall.

One of John's interests was printing. He had a couple of printing presses in his shed and he ran a small publishing business, mostly booklets about Punch and Judy, magicians of the past and airships. This last was another of John's interests. When visiting the Zeppelin Museum in Frankfurt, his knowledgeable questions proved too difficult for the staff on duty and a hasty phone call summoned the museum director to show us round.

John was a man of great variety and a good companion. Our thoughts are with his wife, Julie, who was his mainstay, particularly in these last years.

*Jerry Fisher*



*John chairing the music hall at Hoxton Hall*

## THE MAGIC LANTERN UNDER THE SPANISH SUN

*Philip Banham*



Jordi Pujades designed and commissioned the construction of a special transportable black-out marquee that he is now using for his magic lantern shows in Spain. The marquee seats 35 people for each performance. These 'mini shows' form part of local Spanish festivals and have proved very popular with long queues always forming at the entrance. Jordi, a talented professional performer in his own right, projects the slides and his actor colleague performs from the carefully crafted script. They aim to give back-to-back shows throughout the day.



*The crowds outside the marquee*

Jordi says: "This year we have done magic lantern shows in six locations around the area of Barcelona and Girona – 4,000 people have seen the shows. The show is getting excellent reactions both for historical interest and pure entertainment – fun and instructive at the same time." Philip Banham comments: "Now that I am no longer presenting lantern shows I am delighted that some of my slides are being used by my son-in-law Jordi." Long-time Society members will recall Doug and Anita Lear's

narrowboat shows – also catering for small audiences in a mobile venue. Jordi is carrying on this great tradition. Last year Jordi erected his tented 'theatre' in a Girona town square at the invitation of the Mayor.



*The two performers (top) and the magic inside the marquee (above)*