

BOOK REVIEW

ANDREW GILL'S BOOKS

For those members who still prefer to have a paper copy of a catalogue Andrew Gill has published *The 1907 Wrench 'Optical and Science Lanterns' Catalogue* as a print-on-demand book via Amazon. Also available is the companion volume *The 1907 Wrench Cinematograph Catalogue*. These are reproduced from an original copy in his collection and are priced at £7.99 each.

However these two volumes are a new departure for the series of books that Andrew has published over the last six years. As members may be aware from Andrew's shows, over the last 40 years he has focussed on collecting what fascinates him most – high-quality, interesting, social history related photographic slides that show how we lived over a century ago. For the last six years he has combined images from his slides with another of his interests – Victorian travel guides. These invaluable guides for the Victorian traveller were published from the mid-19th century onwards and usually included local history, what to see, where to go and how to get there.

Altogether Andrew has now published 75 booklets of between 40 and 130 pages that combine slide images from his collection with text from these guidebooks. Titles include: *Victorian London through the Magic Lantern*, *Victorian Whitby through the Magic Lantern*, *Great Yarmouth in 1880*, *East Devon through the Magic Lantern* and *A Victorian Tour of North Wales: Conwy to Caernarfon via Anglesey*. Some of the booklets focus on historical topics, rather than areas, such as *The First World War through the Magic Lantern*, *How They Built the Forth Railway Bridge: A Victorian Magic Lantern Show* and *The CWS Crumpsall Biscuit Factory through the Magic Lantern*.

Unfortunately the print quality of these print-on-demand books is not the highest and does not do the original slides justice. Ironically the

covers show how it could be. However the books are very reasonably priced with most being £5.99 or £6.99. For anyone wanting to benefit from Andrew's excellent research and to have a record of their own part of the UK in times gone by, they represent very good value. The online reviews are generally four and five stars, reflecting this.

In some ways the quality of reproduction is not quite such a critical issue for the Wrench catalogues and, while the small print can be quite difficult to read, the images are satisfactory.

In addition Andrew has published a number of e-photo albums of images only, available electronically. Examples of these include: *Tasmania through the Magic Lantern*, *New York through the Magic Lantern*, *Ancient Palmyra through the Magic Lantern* and *Victorian Childhood through the Magic Lantern*.

All the titles are available via Amazon although Andrew is looking for a 'proper' publisher.

Mary Ann Auckland

The 1907 Wrench 'Optical and Science Lanterns' Catalogue

