

CARPENTER & WESTLEY LANTERN FROM 1850

Lester Smith

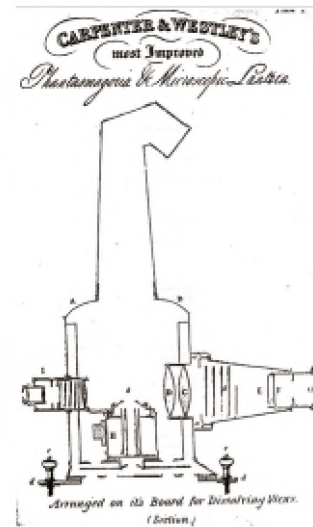
About 15 years ago I bought this Carpenter & Westley lantern at a Christie's auction. It was left unsold at the end of the auction so I purchased it after the sale was finished. The lantern is in mint condition and was sold in its original box. Unfortunately it is missing the microscope attachment (if anyone happens to have one, do get in touch) but, as far as I am aware, nothing else.

The lantern was produced in 1850 and is described by Carpenter & Westley as their "most improved Phantasmagoria and Microscopic Lantern." In their catalogue, they state: "the following improvements are the result of much time devoted to experiments for our latest Phantasmagoria lantern, or as it should more properly be called, the 'Scientific Lantern'. It now has a place in the School Room for showing Anatomical, Natural History, Astronomical, Zoological and well executed paintings on glass, being clear and sharp in every detail." They then list the features and improvements as follows:

1. The double tin body is made so as to protect the operator from the heat of the lamp.
2. There is adequate ventilation brought in from underneath to ensure the lamp can burn brightly without smoke.
3. Two double-convex lenses form the 'condenser' and a plano-convex and a meniscus lens are arranged in a brass tube for easy focusing.



Badge on front



Inside the lantern with lamp



Above: diagram of lantern "arranged on its board for Dissolving Views"

4. A very superior 'Solarized' Argand Lamp, giving nearly double the light of previous lamps. It is constructed so that the main reservoir can be held steady by means of the mahogany handle. The other small handle, connected to a brass ring connected in turn to a helix screw which supports the circular wick, makes it fully adjustable during operation.

5. The lamp should be filled with the finest Spermaceti Oil and adjusted as high as possible without it smoking.
6. A deep silver reflector is made to fit in the opening at the rear of the lantern and can be adjusted for the best illumination.

7. By removing this reflector a Lucernal Microscope may be attached in its place but pointing backwards thus requiring the whole lantern to be turned towards the screen. Insect wings, larvae, ferns and other small objects may be magnified from 2 feet and 6 feet in diameter.

8. Yet another addition may be added – a diagonal mirror so that drawings of the objects may be made on paper beneath the mirror.

Above left: The glass funnel (12 inches tall), the reflector, and a small bottle of sperm whale oil (spermaceti oil) removed from the lamp.

Left: The instructions inside the lid of the box

