

THE SOUTH WEST MEETING IN BRISTOL

17 September 2022

For the first time in three years an enthusiastic group of 30 or so members of the MLS met in Bristol for this much-loved regional meeting. Once again Keith and Jennifer Utteridge organised the event and the programme was in the hands of those attending. And what a rich variety of entertainment it proved to be. Richard Rigby (who brought the lantern) began with *The Fireman's Wedding* helped by sound effects from the audience. Next Pat Furley told the story of RMS *Titanic* accompanied by a vintage phonograph. John Finney picked up the theme with a poem about the polar bears on the iceberg – using one iceberg slide!

Gordon Casbeard moved on to a doggy theme with a family tale of George the dog with thieving habits (suitable slides wanted) followed by *Dogs Life* – a variety of drawn dog characters. David Bayley related his own version of *The Adventures of a Lady Bicyclist* – the slides had alas suffered some misadventures of their own. Alan Brindle took up the royal theme, given the timing of the meeting, with slides featuring royal events from Victoria and Albert's wedding to the proclamation of Edward VII as king – a scene entirely recognisable from the recent one for Charles III. Following views of royal residences, Alan moved on to scenes of Blackpool in the early 1950s. Next Keith showed a beautiful set of *The Jackdaw of Rheims*, with Juliette Harcourt narrating. Lester Smith had us guessing with quiz slides illustrating questions such as "Why did the sausage roll?" ("Because it saw the apple turn over").

He then showed pairs of *Catastrophe* slides, some rather unexpected. Jerry Fisher showed a lovely example of a watermark picture with a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II visible when backlit. David Soanes then told a story he had written, with a nod to Roald Dahl, about a borrowed Rolls-Royce and a pickpocket. This was recorded for 'Newstalk' – a service for blind people in the Newmarket area where he and Richard Rigby live – when news stories were scarce during lockdown. Edgar and Linda Gibbs showed three of their films: the 'Festival of Light' in Ghent (including a projection on a building), the story of Edgar's great-grandfather Thomas Lapworth (with life-changing lantern show, possibly, on his path from the workhouse to the Madras Infantry), and *A Rich Legacy* about Dylan Thomas.

Derek Adams and Dolly Whilems gave us two story sets – phrenologist Professor Feeler's undiplomatic examination of Professor Hit-Hard the pugilist (with predictable consequences) and *The Rope Trick* in which a would-be escape artist is outwitted by a jolly tar. Mary Ann Auckland then projected some digitally-produced copies of slides. Richard Crangle told us about the day in 1995 when he showed lantern slides to the late Queen at Exeter University. The Utteridges, with Juliette singing, gave us an insect fest with 'All Things Spray and Swattable' (think 'Bright and Beautiful'), that well-known gardeners' hymn. Pat Furley followed with some 9.5mm Mickey Mouse films. John Finney and Richard Rigby, with a reading recorded by the late Jan Rigby, presented *All The Winners*, the sad tale of a disastrous bet on the Derby.

Richard Rigby continued with possibly the first 'hands-free' telephone and an assortment of advertising slides. John followed this with a lantern-slide version of the dog/cat/mouse advert, well pre-dating the famous 'Real Fire' one of the 1980s. Gordon showed us a rich variety of courting couples and Lester picked up the theme with *The Amorous Swain*. He also gave us *A Tale of One, Two, Three and Four Legs* and the rather gruesome tale of *The Crocodile's Dinner Party* where all the guests ended up eaten. John featured 'Spot' the dog jumping through a paper hoop ("the high spot of the show"!) and Keith a three-slide humorous version of "Some are born great ...". After a quick tale from Lester of a cat being mistaken for a lover's 'busby' (should be 'bearskin') Keith finished the programme with some beautiful slides of Queen Victoria – one from about 1835 – Balmoral and Westminster Abbey.

As always, we finished with an excellent fish'n'chip supper accompanied by John Finney's barrel organ. Bravo the Utteridges for a feast of entertainment and thoroughly enjoyable day!



The Fireman's Wedding (left) and a character from Dogs Life (above)



One of the sights of Blackpool



King George V's coronation



From The Rope Trick



The answer to 'Why did the fly fly?'



Balmoral Castle



Keith and his fish supper!