

PAMPHENGOS PAIR

This lovely pair of Hughes lanterns was purchased only a few years ago from a fish 'n chip shop proprietor in Mickleover, near Derby.

When bought they were totally complete (including many years of accumulated grime) and came with all the accessories illustrated. The 'Pamphengos' lamps are still in wonderful condition and readers may be interested in the following article written by C Goodwin Norton in 1895.

The 'Pamphengos' lamp is claimed by the maker to give sufficient light to show coloured photographs twelve feet in diameter. This lamp has four wicks, each two inches wide, placed parallel to each other and enclosed in a circular chamber of metal which has one aperture on the

side next to the picture and another one opposite, outside of which the reflector is placed, to protect it from the great heat inseparable from oil lamps. The pieces of glass closing these apertures are annealed, and a fracture by heat rarely occurs. There is very little metal used to connect the chamber to the oil reservoir, so that an accident by overheating is improbable. The chamber itself, being circular, nearly resembles the glass chimney of an ordinary domestic lamp; this ensures perfect combustion, the light being whiter than that produced by the cheaper forms of lamps.

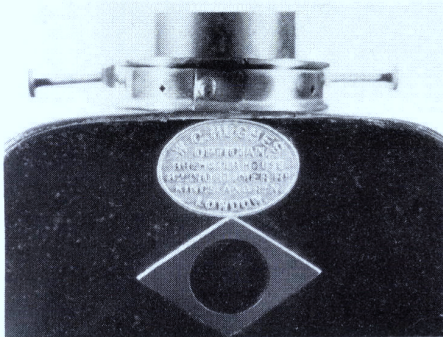
The original lacquer on these lanterns is a rich golden glow, unmarked by the passage of time and particularly so on the beautifully engineered fan.

The object of having two lanterns instead of one is to produce dissolving effects. Each side of the fan has a deeply serrated edge which gradually uncovers the front of one lantern and covers that of the other. When limelight is used the same effect is achieved by turning the lights up and down.

Whilst this type of dissolving mechanism was not particularly popular, by virtue of the fact that the cost of a limelight illuminated biennial did not greatly exceed that of two oil lanterns, it is nevertheless a splendid example of Victorian ingenuity.

Well worth a piece of cod and a bag of chips!

L M H Smith
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Photographed by P Dutertre

