
CONTENTS

Editorial	
Richard Crangle	98
Rest in peace:	
the 'cabarets illusionnistes' of Paris	
Madelon Hoedt	99
The travelling lantern of the Auvergne	
Roger Gonin	103
On the trail of the Noakesoscope	
Mike Smith	107
Court report: R. v. Theobald	
Mervyn Heard	108
Les vues d'optique or perspective views	
Bill Barnes	112
Bits and pieces	114
Review: <i>Marketing Modernity</i> and <i>Destination St Kilda</i>	
Richard Crangle	115
Review: <i>From Magic Lantern to Movies</i>	
Mark Butterworth	116

Cover picture:

This delightful cabinet photograph showing what appears to be a concert party or choir, with musical instruments (violin, zither and xylophone[?]) and triple lantern, turned up in a bookshop in Maine, USA. On the back of the card the address of the photographer, Thomas Spurzheim Hicks (born 1843) is shown as 141 Cemetery Road, Sheffield: he was based there in 1891, but elsewhere in the city in 1881 and 1893, so this photo is likely to be from the late 1880s or early 1890s. Nothing further is known of the group shown – any thoughts on their identity or the maker of the lantern would be most welcome.

Edited by Richard Crangle

Design and layout by Dennis Crompton assisted
by Annie Bridges and Zuzanna Lipinska

Thanks for assistance with this issue go to all its
contributors, everyone involved with its design,
editing and production, and to Keith Brady, Karen
Fletcher of Barnardo's and Charlotte Brunskill of
the National Portrait Gallery.

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Origination and printing for the Society
by Dave Morgan, London

Published by the Magic Lantern Society,
South Park, Galphay Road, Kirkby Malzeard,
Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3RX, UK.

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TIME, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE

Richard Crangle

IN SUMMER 2001, at a Society meeting in Henley-on-Thames, Mike Smith sidled up to me in a conspiratorial manner. 'How would you like,' he whispered while pretending to inspect a set of overpriced dissolving views on a market stall, 'to be the next Journal editor?' I thought carefully about the implications of this surprise invitation, for several hundredths of a second, and then said I'd love to – with the caveat that I didn't really know how to do it but it could be interesting to find out.

As my last issue as Editor, I hope that this final number of the *New Magic Lantern Journal* suggests that I now may be starting to get the basic idea of how to do it ... which means, paradoxically, that it's time to stop. Over these ten years and twelve issues, I've had a great deal of fun reading and editing submissions – never too many, it would have to be said, but any editor would always say that – and I've learned a lot about aspects of our subject area that I wouldn't have suspected to have existed. But it's also important to know when you've done as much as you can with something, and when it's time to hand it on or let it evolve naturally into something better, and it seems to me that it's now time to move along.

I hoped at the start of my tenure to encourage smaller and more incidental contributions from a wider range of people, as well as the larger research articles from 'the usual suspects', and I think in general that ambition has borne some fruit. It seems to me (as I've argued several times in editorials) that since we don't know the overall picture that we're trying to put together, any contribution of any size is worthwhile, even if it seems of dubious relevance at the time. As often as not, we don't know the significance of a piece of historical information until it's put next to other pieces.

As I've also said before, the magic lantern medium touched (and continues to touch) practically every aspect of human culture and activity, in every part of the world, and there must be many people with other interests who haven't yet realised that they are also interested in the magic lantern. I hope we can use the Society's future publications and research to extend the range of references and subjects that have some bearing on lantern history, and so broaden the appeal of this fascinating medium.

I'd like to think as well that I've been able to maintain the approach and standards that the previous editors set for *NMLJ*: not too academic, not too popular or chatty, not too specialist or obscure, not too obvious or predictable. Along the way, between us all and including the *Ten Year Book* that formed Volume 4, we've published well over 300 articles, reviews, reprints, illustrations and other items, running to some 600 pages, and I think that all adds up to a noticeable contribution to the development of what – for lack of a better name – I keep calling 'lantern studies'.

So, for one last time, this issue contains what I hope seems to you, as it does to me, to be another dose of our usual rich miscellany of all things optical. We have a discussion of a Parisian descendant of the Phantasmagoria; a fascinating and rare look at a travelling lanternist's lantern and slides; a further brief glimpse of a mythical beast; some legal news from a century ago; and a bit more light shed on an 'optical recreation' in the shape of the perspective view. A few of my random thoughts on internet research and reviews of some interesting recent works round things off.

I'd like to thank everybody who, in small or great ways over the last ten years, has made editing less of a 'challenge' and more of a pleasure. Individual people have been credited along the way, but I'd just like to reiterate all of the 'thanks to ...' lines that have appeared on the title pages of this and the past eleven issues, and especially repeat the regular thanks to Annie Bridges for polishing off the rough edges of my rambling prose, and to Dennis Crompton for continuously and cheerfully taking a pile of Word files and pictures in various formats and turning them into something that looks like a proper journal. My successors as editors, compilers and other perpetrators of the Society's periodicals and books have my best wishes for every success and smoothness along the way, and I'll hope to be among their contributors in the future.

I'll just leave you with the observation that only three actual magic lanterns appear illustrated in the pages of this issue: one of them has no lens of its own, and the other two have seven lenses between them. You work it out ...

Contributions, large and small, continue to be welcome, and can still be sent to the editorial address in the left column of this page to be forwarded to the next Society publications editors.