

## BOOK NEWS

# LES SAVOYARDS, MONTREURS DE LANTERNE MAGIQUE

Roger Gonin

La Société des Amis du Vieux Conflans, 2016,

pb, 104pp

www.fontaine-siloe.com, €20

Any MLS member who attended Roger Gonin's presentation on the life of a Savoyard at the Cinematek in Brussels last May will know that his book on the subject will be erudite, interesting and beautifully illustrated. They will not be disappointed. Early chapters describe Roger's own introduction to the magic lantern and a summary of its history from Christiaan Huygens in 1659 onwards. He then moves on to the focus of the book – the life, times and activities of the Savoyard peddlers from the close of the eighteenth century. Every year many people from this region left their mountain homes from the end of October to the beginning of May. Some of these, probably a relatively small proportion, travelled around Europe giving magic lantern shows – and displaying marmots – the familiar image of the 'Savoyard' with his equipment on his back in a wooden box, magic lantern chimney clearly visible. One puzzle the author explores is that historians have found these entertainers hard to trace in Savoy itself.



The Savoyard box – old and new



tracing the images where possible (see Liberté des Mers) – as well as giving highlights from his research such as the passport for a contemporary 'Savoyard' from the Auvergne. One word of warning – it is in French!

A chapter is devoted to the extraordinary 'Savoyard' box with skeleton lantern and ten long slides that was found between two beams in the thatched roof of an old house in Lanobre. The images on the slides are analysed in detail – except for one that has been damaged beyond recognition.

These include Napoleon on his campaigns, Noah's ark and a duel. The origin of 'Liberté des Mers' is shown here. Roger describes the political, social and geographical context for this period and the slides –

La Quadruple Alliance political cartoon and La Liberté des Mers slide



## LICHTSPIELE IM SCHATTEN DER ARMUT

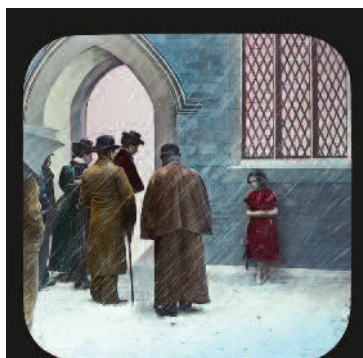
HISTORISCHE PROJEKTIONS-KUNST UND SOZIALE FRAGE

Ludwig Vogl-Bienek

Stroemfeld Verlag, 2016

pb, 318pp

www.stroemfeld.com, €38



Ludwig Vogl-Bienek

Lichtspiele im Schatten der Armut

Historische Projektionskunst und Soziale Frage



Magic lantern entertainment given to 1,450 poor and destitute children by the members of the Fulham Liberal Club and Institute



Ludwig Vogl-Bienek's latest book looks at magic lantern performances through the lens of social issues in the nineteenth century. In Victorian Britain socio-political and charity organisations hosted public magic lantern shows with the aim of making the wealthy aware of the living conditions in the slums and to influence the behaviour of poor people. The images and animated slide effects were accompanied not only by the lecturer but also live performances by actors and musicians.

This book examines both the nature and techniques of the performance and the social issues they were illuminating – a combination of media and social history. It is richly illustrated with over 120 images of lantern slides, engravings, examples from books and other material showing the art of projection in the past and its uses. The author also hopes it will inspire readers to explore this area further. Many members will already have been inspired by Ludwig and his ensemble *Illuminago* through their own live performances over the last 30 years. Another word of warning – this one is in German!