



MAGIC LANTERN SOCIETY VIRTUAL AUTUMN MEETING

17 October 2020

Despite hoping until almost the last minute that we could meet for real in some form, this proved impossible and Zoom came to the rescue. We enjoyed a wonderful virtual meeting, expertly organised and hosted by Martin Gilbert. As some are more competent with 19th-century technology than today's, we had the odd technical glitch – but then that's all part of the show! Everyone can still enjoy all the items, as they happened (minus glitches) by visiting the website 'Events' page. Well done everyone who took part and thank you Frog Morris, Nicole Mollett, Anastasia Kerameos, Richard Crangle and George Auckland for their expert contributions.

Our Chair Jeremy Brooker started proceedings – once his floating head had woken up. First he showed the short Japanese film *Passage of Dreams* made at our January AGM. Even if your Japanese is not up to scratch the familiar faces and magic lantern images speak for themselves. Then in *Influenza Testimonials* he gave some fascinating insights on the 'Plague of 1892 – the influenza fiend' which was no respecter of age, class or gender. It also resulted in 'long effects' of depression, insomnia and paranoia, among others, and a lantern slide highlighted these on some famous people of the day.



Next Monique Wezenberg took us on a wonderful virtual tour of the Toy Museum in the ancient city of Deventer in Holland. She opened doors – and curtains – on a feast of magic lanterns, optical toys and other related delights. Toy theatres, anamorphic images, shadows, zoetropes, peepshows and *feux pyriques* cabinets were just some of the highlights.

Rene and Allan Marriott, with technical assistance from grandson Harry, brought us a selection of photographic lantern slides by Ellis Kelsey. These dated from the 1890s to early 1900s and were taken around the south coast of England, several in Eastbourne. Kelsey, a pioneering amateur photographer, specialised in low light images – many at night or in adverse weather conditions, with silhouettes and shadows prominent.

A peek into Lester Smith's collection is always a treat. Assisted by Stephanie he showed us some long slides from 200 years ago and before. The earliest, dating from around 1720, set in oak and probably Dutch, were tradespeople. Others featured harlequins and masked people, monkeys and cats, characters with nose issues, devils and Chinese people riding an array of animals including an elephant, camels and what appeared to be a four-legged bird. Two slides featured 'characters' with a couplet describing them, like 'Mrs Prittle Prattle' looking for scandal.



Ellis Kelsey's photograph of Brighton Station, late 1890s (shown by the Marriotts)



Jeremy's influenza slide. The original was published in Moonshine, 30 March 1895

Next Monique Wezenberg took us on a wonderful virtual tour of the Toy Museum in the ancient city of Deventer in Holland. She opened doors – and curtains – on a feast of magic lanterns, optical toys and other related delights. Toy theatres, anamorphic images, shadows, zoetropes, peepshows and *feux pyriques* cabinets were just some of the highlights.



Frog and Nicole's Green Man

Rene and Allan Marriott, with technical assistance from grandson Harry, brought us a selection of photographic lantern slides by Ellis Kelsey. These dated from the 1890s to early 1900s and were taken around the south coast of England, several in Eastbourne. Kelsey, a pioneering amateur photographer, specialised in low light images – many at night or in adverse weather conditions, with silhouettes and shadows prominent.

A peek into Lester Smith's collection is always a treat. Assisted by Stephanie he showed us some long slides from 200 years ago and before. The earliest, dating from around 1720, set in oak and probably Dutch, were tradespeople. Others featured harlequins and masked people, monkeys and cats, characters with nose issues, devils and Chinese people riding an array of animals including an elephant, camels and what appeared to be a four-legged bird. Two slides featured 'characters' with a couplet describing them, like 'Mrs Prittle Prattle' looking for scandal.

Next Martin Gilbert showed us his amazing lockdown lantern purchase, featured on page 1. He was

followed by Bernd Scholze who conducted us around his lockdown project – his superb website berndschoelze.com. Focussing on the German magic lantern story this is full of very high quality images of slides and lanterns as well as a library of downloadable printed material that Bernd is currently working on. The slides are organised by type – hand-painted, photographic, etc. – and the entries include information such as date, maker, size as well as any stories behind them, such as Bernd's original research on the Rose family. Members are strongly advised to take a look. Peter Gillies showed us his beautiful lantern with bellows made by Archer & Sons of Liverpool

before using it to project a set of photographic slides with Delia narrating. These were a record of the White Star liner *RMS Majestic* – that started life as *SS Bismarck* in 1914 – entering a floating dock in Southampton for repairs.

Finally Nicole Mollett and Frog Morris who have, allegedly, been indexing their slides during lockdown, presented their A-Z *Encyclopaedia Phantasmagoria* with suitably alliterative and Covid-related commentary. Imagine coming across a Coronavirus chromatrope in your collection! We progressed from 'angels' to the 'zoo' – where ignoring the two-metre rule led to tragic lion-eating consequences – via the 'devil', 'education' (on Coronavirus of course), the 'Green Man', 'hermits', etc. until we were happily "zoned out Zoom zombies". Take a look at the shows.

See all the shows at www.magiclantern.org.uk/events

THE MAGIC LANTERN is edited, designed and produced by Mary Ann Auckland and Gwen Sebus, assisted by Richard Crangle and George Auckland.

Letters to the Editors can be sent by email to: editor@magiclantern.org.uk

Material from this publication may not be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without the written permission of the Editors.

Printed by Stormpress, Exeter – www.stormpress.co.uk

Published by:

The Magic Lantern Society
17 Dean Street
Exeter EX2 4HH, UK

www.magiclantern.org.uk

© 2020 The Magic Lantern Society

ISSN 2057-3723

