

THE MAGIC LANTERN WITHIN



1. The lanternist, lens 1

And now for something a little different ... Dick Moore has recommended a way of creating your own 'magic lantern show within' for biunial users. Dick suggests: "Lens 1, use a slipper slide of a lanternist (such as the one shown in Fig. 1) but do not pull the slipping glass to reveal the second part of the image. Lens 2, insert the slide carrier for a children's slide (Fig. 2). This must be registered properly so that when projected the image appears in front of the projected lantern and at roughly the correct height. The opening in the carrier of course should be round to show the projected image. It could be made a little larger than the one I have shown to accommodate whatever size of children's slides you are using.



2. Both sides of the children's slide carrier, lens 2



3. The carrier showing the story slide, lens 2

"Typically I use this as part of an opening to a show. After giving a brief history of the magic lantern and describing how it works, I illuminate and introduce the lanternist (and give him a name, e.g. Professor Clyde O'Scope) and say his show is about to begin. Then, leaving up the image of the lanternist, I project the first image of the children's slide and start telling the story – here (Fig. 3) of a man who embarked on a voyage to see the magical wonders of the world, was shipwrecked, saved and finally returned home safely. Of course at the end the professor gets a rousing round of applause and this tale leads neatly on to projected wonders, through the magic lantern, that he

might have seen on his travels, or to other magical stories.

"Lanternists could achieve the same effect using two lanterns – perhaps one a children's lantern using slides with circular images (such as the Primus set of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* in Fig. 4) without needing a carrier. This is an excellent way of telling the children's story in the slide set with added interest, particularly if the children's slides are not of particularly good quality. Overall it's a great effect."



4. Primus set of Goldilocks and the Three Bears

THE PEEPSHOWMAN

In another variation on the theme Deac Rossell has shared a favourite Christmas present with us. He writes: "The attached photograph is a response to 'The Magic Lantern Within' section in *TML*. This is not quite a magic lantern, of course, but it might be interesting to MLS members in any case. 'Der Guckkastenmann 1855' ('The Peepshowman 1855') comprises a set of modern painted flat figures, made of a pewter alloy (mainly tin), from the contemporary range Kabinett der Berliner Zinnfiguren (Cabinet of Berlin Tin Figures) produced by the Werner Scholtz company. The company was originally set up in 1934 by Werner Scholtz (1904–76) and produces around 1,000 different series of miniature figures, mostly historical.



set as well. However I don't know the print and it does not appear in Dick Balzer's book on peepshows, *The Lantern Image* (MLS), nor in other books I have on *Handlerrufe* (sellers' cries) of the time. If any MLS members recognise the figures, please get in touch.

"What makes the set really 'sing' for me is the prosthetic leg on the showman, fully accurate to the period as many of these travelling showmen were wounded war veterans, and the small toy soldier on a wheeled horse that is being dragged along by the young man approaching the peepshow. These details, even more than the period costumes, bring the pieces alive for me.

"The catalogue entry reads: 'Old Berlin. To the delight of young and old, peep show men (often war invalids) stood in squares and fairs

"My daughter Frederike winkled this out for me for Christmas this year – both a big surprise and a big hit. I have several sets of figures from Berliner Zinnfiguren-Kabinett, and most of them (possibly all) are modelled after a well-known painting, print or caricature. So I think it is safe to assume a print (of 1855) is behind this

at that time. In their boxes they showed colourful pictures with novelties and curiosities from all over the world, for a few pfennigs."

Contributions to this series are welcome (editor@magiclantern.org.uk)