

A MAGIC LANTERN MEETING IN SWITZERLAND

The Lichtspiel/Kinemathek in Bern, Switzerland, was the amazing location for a magic lantern show on Saturday afternoon, 25 March. The long-planned event by MLS members Jean-Daniel Gerber and Bernd Scholze was finally held after being delayed by the coronavirus. For a few hours the art of projection was celebrated by family, friends and lantern enthusiasts.

The Kinemathek Bern is located in the old industrial complex of the Ryff company, where Fritz Ryff set up his knitwear factory in 1890, which is today an area for media and startup companies, artists, and of course the Kinemathek, which is based at roof level of the old main building. A wonderful venue, the cinema is the centre of an open showroom with dozens of cinema projectors and other film equipment around it. On arrival the staff made us feel immediately welcome as we entered in this very special place. Our particular thanks go to Mani Morgenthaler for his professional support with the final preparations for the show.

Jean-Daniel and his wife Elisabeth prepared a welcome aperitif and local Swiss specialities for the guests. They came

from Bern and around Switzerland but also travelled from Austria, France and Germany to gather together. The cinema was filled with about 50 people when the show started at around 5pm. Bernd and Ivo Gilbert met twice over weekends to practise hard so the show ran smoothly and also to select some high quality slides. These were split into three parts: Part One presented very rarely seen slides dating from 1730 till 1830; Part Two was dedicated to Friedrich August Böttcher's beautiful slides of Switzerland; and in Part Three we showed a selection of mechanical slides. It turned out to be a good combination of art, science and magic for all in the audience, whether they had seen a lantern show before or not. Time flies, and with

the shows and many discussions it was soon 8pm and time to clear the Kinemathek. The members of the MLS and some friends enjoyed the rest of the evening together in a traditional Swiss restaurant not far from the Kinemathek.

The next morning on Sunday, Elisabeth and Jean-Daniel invited us for a brunch at their lovely home near Bern. Elisabeth served her most delicious pumpkin soup and surprised us with other homemade treats. The melange of magic lantern collectors, connoisseurs of optical toys, artists and film specialists gathered there led to many interesting conversations and exchanges about the magic lantern. The last guests finally left at 4pm to drive home! A lovely weekend with many new admirers of the art of projection – and a high risk of repetition ... possibly at a meeting of the Magic Lantern Society?



The Lichtspiel/Kinemathek in Bern



Great interest in the shows



Local delicacies



Bernd Scholze (left) and Ivo Gilbert (right)