

## THE MAGIC LANTERN AND THE PEEPSHOW

*Mike Smith*

Two recent discoveries have confirmed the close relationship between the magic lantern and the peepshow – a relationship so close that some itinerant showmen were clearly practitioners of both arts. The two discoveries are shown here.

The first figurine (right) dates from around 1730 – it is a tin-glazed earthenware figurine made in northern Germany, probably in Hannoversch-Münden. It shows a lady looking into a peepbox with a child by her side. The peepshowman has a magic lantern sitting on top of the peepbox. The modelling of this figurine is quite bold, yet the decoration rather slapdash.



The second figurine (left) is quite different. Again it shows a peepshowman with a magic lantern on top of his peepbox. Here the small child looks into the peepbox while the lady seems more interested in the showman. This biscuit porcelain figure group dates from around 1775 and was made by the Parisian firm of Locré & Russinger, but this one is a high quality figurine. There are two other known examples of figurines showing both a peepshow and a magic lantern (see Mike Smith, *Show People Sculpted: A catalogue of 18th and 19th century figurines depicting magic lantern and peepshow performers*, LMH Smith, 2017, pp. 50, 70/71).