

FROM THE CHAIR

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The lazy days of summer have gone all too quickly but we are left with great memories of our summer meeting in Lacey Green. Not having seen the legendary *Lear's Magical Lanterns* show, it was a privilege to meet their sons, and see the exhibition of the Lears' magic lantern career. Hearing their experiences of growing up in a travelling lantern show left me wondering whether other members had childhood experiences of attending, giving or living with shows. If you have some yet to be told, let us know and give a talk, or write an article for *TML*.

The workshops too were very popular, but some people would have liked a little more time in each. We will look into putting on more – are there subjects you would like us to include? I had fun with Martin Gilbert's klaxon frightening people at the end of each section, without too many heart attacks (I hope). A huge 'thank you' to all who organised and took part – particular thanks to the Lears for memories of their parents, and also to the bringers and preparers of the strawberries and cream.

Questions Answered

Who are the 'big name' lantern manufacturers, slide producers, creators and artists?

This is a very wide subject, and you are best going to the MLS website and *Lucerna* or reading back issues of MLS journals. Some well-known producers in the UK are: Carpenter & Westley, producers of high quality hand-painted wood-framed slides; York & Son and Newton & Co., who produced 3¼-inch slide sets with readings; and Woodbury, who made high-definition photographic slides (see *TML* 43).

What is the best way to clean slides without damaging the image?

Cleaning slides is possible, but can be very risky. First you need to decide whether the image is made of water-based materials or not. If in



any doubt, then only gently clean the non-image side of the glass with a cleaning cloth for eye glasses, and the image side with a soft lens brush. The outside of a bound slide can be cleaned with a moist lint-free cloth, but remember that bindings often used water-based glue so will unstick with too much moisture. For more persistent dirt on the surface, gentle use of a razor blade will often remove it.

Single-glass slides with an exposed image should be treated with extreme caution, as all types of image are very vulnerable to water damage and scratching. I would suggest only cleaning the image side with a soft lens brush. The non-image side can be carefully cleaned as described above.

Clean wooden slide mounts with sparing use of white spirit (don't be tempted to use water) and then treat them with a good quality antique wax polish, carefully avoiding the glass image. Brass is best left alone and not cleaned unless essential.

I have a damaged slide. Can I repair it?

Yes, in most cases. If a cover glass is broken, gently remove it from the image glass and replace it with a new one after gently brushing the image glass with a soft brush to remove any debris. Broken image glasses (if not badly broken) can be repaired with an intact cover glass as a 'splint'. A good quality optical adhesive can often be used to conceal cracks and breaks. However I would only advise using glues where it is absolutely necessary. I have also had some success using car windscreen crack repair kits where it was a straight, clean break.

Long slides with no wood frame can also be repaired by adding a cover glass as a splint. Painted images can usually be touched up, depending on your artistic skills, however photographic images, shrunken transfer printed, or badly water-damaged images are almost impossible to repair. If slides are beyond repair I usually save and clean undamaged glasses to use for other repairs.