

QUICK AND EASY REPAIR OF BROKEN COVER GLASSES

Lester Smith

This is another practical snippet from Lester, our handyman. Please get in touch with your tips for repairing, restoring or recreating any part of a magic lantern, magic lantern slides and related objects (editor@magiclantern.org.uk).

Here are some tips for repairing slides with broken cover glasses (ie not the picture glass) – a problem almost every member of the MLS will have encountered. The items you need are:

- A pile of unwanted 3¼ inch square lantern slides, preferably of similar age to the one(s) you want to repair (late nineteenth-century slides tend to be of thinner glass than earlier ones and have black binding)
- A razor blade, preferably with a single-edge blade (the American Line brand of these is sold in boxes of 100 but other makes are available), or else a scalpel
- Pritt solid glue (or similar glue stick) – or white glue
- And, of course, your 3¼ inch slides with broken cover glasses.

First, slice the binding strip on the unwanted slides down the middle edges, between the two glasses. Do this round all four sides (just follow the join around, the blade will not go in too far as the glasses are usually tight together). By now the two glasses should be separated enough to prise apart completely. **Important:** keep the clear glass, with its half of the binding tape intact, and discard the other glass.

Next, do the same with your good but broken slide. It will come apart a little easier as its cover glass may be broken into two or more pieces. The black paper frame or mask may come away with broken cover glass or remain on the picture glass. If it is on the cover glass, remove it, apply about a 5mm wide strip of glue around the edge and, with the picture glass flat on a solid surface, press it back into position over the picture. If it remained on the picture glass, remove it, apply glue in the same way and press back over the picture.

Finally, run round the four inside edges of the cover glass with the glue stick, applying the glue in a strip no wider than 5mm. Place it accurately on top of the picture glass and frame. Press firmly around all four edges. Except for wiping off fingerprints, it is now ready for use.

I'm sure a few people will not like this method but it is quick and, with good-quality binding tape being in short supply, gives a finished result that is almost indistinguishable from the more authentic binding methods. With a little practice, it should take no more than four minutes to restore a slide this way.

The method I have described is suitable for commercial and amateur slides that primarily use black binding tape. Transfer slides are a different matter as the integrity of the coloured binding tape is important. The following easy method works well for them and many people may already use it.

Lay the slide to be repaired down on the work surface, cover glass on top. Wet the binding tape on the edges and sides of the broken cover glass – but not the picture glass – using a small brush or cotton bud. After about three or four minutes, lift the binding strip from the top of the cover glass and gently pull away enough from the sides to free up the whole of the broken glass and remove it. I always use a penknife so that the sharp edge lifts the tape and, once lifted, the back of the blade keeps the tape clear from the glass, without damage.

As soon as this is done – and preferably while the tape is still damp – lay your clean new cover glass (with old binding removed) within the lifted upright sections of binding tape. You can either run solid glue around the edge of the top side of the cover glass or else apply a water-based white glue to the binding tape with a suitable paint brush. Then press the tape firmly down on the new cover glass all the way round.

NEW TAKE ON AN OLD ILLUSION

Gwen Sebus

It is always pleasing to discover modern versions of old optical illusions. During our recent holiday in France we visited the Château du Haut-Koenigsbourg and came across this modern two-way picture, showing the castle before and after its restoration.

Have you found new applications of old optical illusions or pre-cinema objects? Send a picture and brief description to the editors of The Magic Lantern (editor@magiclantern.org.uk).

