

Theatre Royal, Castlemaine.
THE LONDON BIOSCOPE CO.
 TWO NIGHTS ONLY.
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
 (February 8th and 9th).
 Matinee on Saturday at 3
 The Most Interesting Entertainment ever in
 Castlemaine.
 The Celebrated Commonwealth
 Pictures,
 As Shown Nightly in Melbourne.
All the Latest War Films.
Alladin and his Wonderful Lamp.
 The longest picture yet made; one mile in length.
Our Navy, illustrating life in the British Navy,
 now running at the Melbourne Athenaeum.
 50 Films Each Evening. No dressy lecture; no
 magic lantern. Edison's very latest invention—
 Concert Grand Phonograph. Admission—3s. 3s and
 1s. Children's Matinee, 6d all parts. 9

3. Theatre Royal, Castlemaine, Mount Alexander
 Mail, Victoria, 7 February 1901, p.3

into square colour slides by artists for the Junior
 Lecturer's Series.

Such immediacy continued to be an aspect
 of the Junior Lecturer's Series. For instance, in
 November 1901 the death of Queen Victoria and
 the accession of King Edward VII was marked in
 an advertisement for 'New Lithographic Slides'.⁸

Fourteen years later, with the beginning of
 the First World War, the series once more began
 to produce up-to-the-minute historical sets.
 Eventually numbering ten sets, twice as many as
 for the Boer War, the slides once again relied on
 illustrated newspapers such as *The Sphere*, now
 not on paintings by war artists, but photographs
 by press photographers (Fig. 4).

However, the set on which I now want to
 concentrate is not 'historical', but putatively
 'educational'. That set is 'Australia', the third
 'chapter' in the series *Our Colonies*, which also
 included Canada, New Zealand, India and South
 Africa. Although produced around 1906, the
 Australian set seems to reside in some atemporal
 time of empire – a time which was already
 disappearing because of Federation in 1901. To
 provide context for this anachronistic colonial
 imagery I want to look at three other British and
 American lantern slide firms who sent
 photographers to Australia during this period.

Firstly, in the late 1890s the Scottish firm
 George Washington Wilson hired an Aberdeen
 photographer, Fred Hardie, to travel by train and
 horse cart across Australia. He eventually
 produced five sets of photographic slide lectures
 with accompanying readings, one on each colony
 except Western Australia.⁹

Secondly, between 1909 and 1910 the artist
 and photographer Hugh Fisher travelled through
 Australia on an itinerary organised by the
 geographer Halford Mackinder. He was gathering
 lantern slides for the Colonial Office Visual
 Instruction Committee who were producing 42
 lectures to show the empire to British children. Of

these, the committee eventually produced eight lectures on Australasia.¹⁰ Although part of the
 Colonial Office, The Visual Instruction Committee had to enter the highly competitive business
 of lantern slide retailing as a semi-commercial body in order to manufacture and distribute
 their slides. Their slides and textbooks were made and sold by Butcher's main rival, the firm
 Newton & Co. The entire set of 489 hand coloured photographic slides from Australasia could
 be purchased from Newton's for £39 – a hefty 1s 7d per slide. For the ordinary consumer this
 price compared unfavourably to the boxes of eight Butcher's Junior Lecturer's slides which
 retailed from a mere two shillings a box, less than a sixth of the price.¹¹

Thirdly, in 1907 and 1908 the American stereograph company Underwood & Underwood
 sent their photographer James Ricalton to New Zealand and Australia.¹² The stereographs he
 shot became the 'Australia and New Zealand Tour' within the Underwood & Underwood
 'Travel System'. This system combined printed guides, maps, stereoscopes and sets of
 sequenced stereographs into boxes representing faux book bindings.

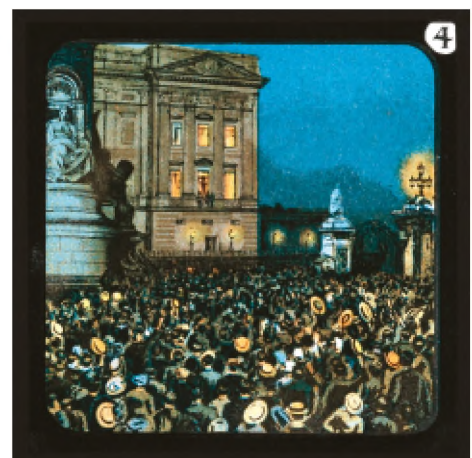
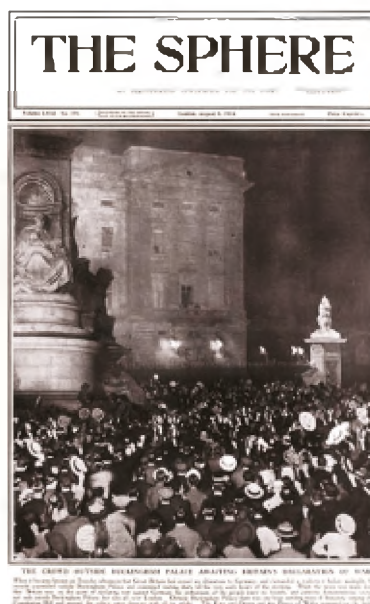
Like the other firms, Underwood & Underwood also saw value in a systematic global
 library of stereoscopic and lantern views aimed at educating children. A few of the
 stereographs Ricalton shot became a small part of their massive visual library marketed as *The
 World Visualized for the Class Room: 1000 travel studies through the stereoscope and in lantern
 slides classified and cross referenced for 25 different school subjects*. Of the 1,000 slides in the
 set, a grand total of 19, less than two per cent, came from Australasia and Oceania.¹³

However, when it comes to *Our Colonies*, unlike George Washington Wilson, the Colonial
 Office, or Underwood & Underwood, Butchers did not send a photographer to Australia. Nor
 did they contract with specific magazines such as *The Sphere* and *The Graphic* as they had for
 their historical sets. And nor, as they claimed in their publicity, were the slides prepared from
 'specially taken photographs' or 'drawings by famous artists'. Rather, the images seem to have
 been found, more or less at random, from within the vast pool of colonial imagery which had
 been produced and reproduced over the previous 30 years, and which was swirling around in
 the London printing trade.

The *Illustrated London News* was one useful source for the slides. For instance, an
 engraving from 1876 of the Prince of Wales killing a tiger did duty 40 years later as the source
 for slides in both the set *India* and the set *Wild Animals and How They Are Hunted* (Fig. 5). And
 another *Illustrated London News* engraving, the entirely fanciful 'Kangaroo Hunting in Australia'
 of 1876, also did duty 30 years later to represent Australian sport in *Our Colonies* (Fig. 7).

The opening image of the set, 'Government House Melbourne', comes from 20 years
 before 1906 – an 1886 book *Australian Pictures Drawn with Pen and Pencil* (Figs 6(a) and 9).¹⁴
 This introductory slide demonstrates the extraordinary laziness of the series as a whole. The
 text reports that the colonies had recently federated to become a commonwealth, but rather
 than showing the grand exhibition buildings in which the first parliament had been held, the
 slide shows the unprepossessing residence of the Governor of Victoria, whose powers had
 recently been diminished by Federation.

The same 1886 book is the source for the background image in the final slide of the set,
 'Australian Aborigines' (Figs 6(f) and 8). The foreground image comes from even earlier, from
 the South Australian photographer Samuel Sweet's 1880 album *Views in South Australia*. The



4. 'The Crowd at Buckingham Palace Awaiting
 Britain's Declaration of War', *The Sphere*, August
 1914 (left) and 'The Crowd Outside Buckingham
 Palace, August 4, 1914', slide 4 from 'A Call to
 Arms' ch. 1, *The World War, Primus Junior
 Lecturer's Series*, W. Butcher & Sons, 1915 (above)



5. (a) 'Shooting a Tiger', c.1905. Slide 5 from *Wild Animals and How They Are Hunted*, *Primus Junior Lecturer's Series*. (b) 'Tiger Hunting with Elephant', c.1905. Slide 32, 'India', ch.4, *Our Colonies*, *Primus Junior Lecturer's Series*, W. Butcher & Sons. (c) 'The Prince of Wales Tiger-Shooting with Sir Jung Bahadoor: The Critical Moment. From a Sketch by One of Our Special Artists', *Illustrated London News*, 25 March 1876.

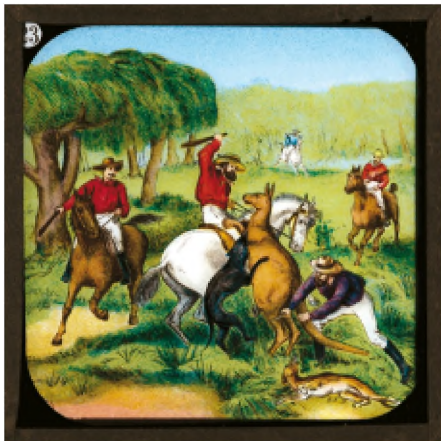
eye-watering racism of the lecture children were meant to read out as they projected this slide contrasts with the slightly more enlightened lecture produced by the geographers at the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee for their equivalent slide. For Butcher's: "The Australian 'black fellow' is a savage of a decidedly low type: he has a steady objection to work, has no ideas on the subject of crops, but is marvellously acute as a tracker, and an adept at throwing that peculiar weapon – the boomerang."¹⁵ The attitude of the Colonial Office was more nuanced: "The hostility of the native to the European colonists often arose from their interference with his natural food supply, or to their careless ignorance of his semi-religious ideas or customs, such as the tabu."¹⁶

Although most imagery in *Our Colonies* was decades old, some images were contemporary, but they were taken by photographers who were themselves retailing a retrospective, nostalgic view of Australia. The source images for the slide 'In the Bush' were the popular 'bushmen' photographs of Nicholas Caire (Figs 6(e) and 11). At this time Caire was himself also turning his stock of negatives into lantern slides and postcards for the expanding tourist trade. Caire's customers, who were day-tripping office workers catching the train from the bustling modern metropolis of Melbourne to nearby beauty spots, saw these photographs as nostalgic evocations of a disappearing past.

In conclusion, the vertically integrated W. Butcher & Sons were extraordinarily successful in appropriating images from a residual 19th-century print and photographic culture and an emerging 20th-century media culture for the cheap chromolithographic slides which they used to sell their magic lanterns into homes around the world. In this respect they, and other firms like Underwood & Underwood, are like later media conglomerates, such as



6. Chromolithographic transfer slides from 'Australia', ch.3, *Our Colonies*, c.1906, *Primus Junior Lecturer's Series*, W. Butcher & Sons. (a) 17 'Government House, Melbourne'; (b) 18 'Sydney Harbour'; (c) 19 'Gold Mining, Past and Present'; (d) 20 'Sheep Shearing'; (e) 22 'In the Bush'; (f) 24 'Australian Aboriginals'



7. 'A Kangaroo Hunt', c.1906. Slide 23 from 'Australia', ch.3, Our Colonies, Primus Junior Lecturer's Series (left)

'Kangaroo Hunting in Australia', Illustrated London News, 9 September 1876 (right)

computer games manufacturers, where technology development is integrated with content development.

But, even in the context of the period, the imagery of the Junior Lecturer's Series was egregiously reactionary, ignorant, racist and, frankly, lazy. This was because their business model was not the middle-brow visual instruction of George Washington Wilson, nor the imperial geography of the Colonial Office, nor the virtual travel of Underwood & Underwood. Although they borrowed the rhetoric of 'education', their ultimate purpose was not, in fact, educational. It was to sell apparatus into homes and 'education' was a useful way for children to activate the apparatus by enacting the new role of 'Junior Lecturer'. For decades the watchwords for 'reputable' magic lanternists had always been 'instruction AND entertainment', but Butcher's innovation was to turn those familiar watchwords into: 'instruction AS entertainment'.

This article is based on a paper read at the conference Camera Education: Photographic Histories of Visual Literacy, Schooling and the Imagination, at the Photographic History Research Centre, De Montfort University, Leicester, June 2020.

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15. Printed reading to 'Australia', c.1906, chapter 3, *Our Colonies*, Primus Junior Lecturer's Series, W. Butcher & Sons
16. Sargent, p.13



8. 'Native Encampment' in *Australian Pictures Drawn with Pen and Pencil* (above) Samuel Sweet, 'Aboriginal man, Point McLeay Mission, South Australia', c.1880. Albumen silver photograph in the album Views in South Australia (see Fig. 6(f)) (right)



9. 'Government House, Melbourne' by Skelton in *Australian Pictures Drawn with Pen and Pencil*¹⁴ (see Fig. 6(a))



10. 'Sheep Shearing' by the French artists and engravers Achille Sirouy and C.H. Brabant in *Australian Pictures Drawn with Pen and Pencil* (see Fig. 6(d))



11. Nicholas Caire, 'Big tree camp, King Parrot Creek, Victoria, Australia', hand-coloured albumen silver photograph, c.1903 (National Gallery of Victoria Collection) (see Fig. 6(e))