



## A HIGHLY PRIZED LANTERN

Mervyn Heard

A very smart-looking single lantern recently featured on eBay (8 November), which is all the more interesting because it bears a plaque. It states that this lantern was originally presented as second prize in the 'National Lantern Slide Competition' of 1892. The competition was introduced by the *Hand Camera and Lantern Review*, a fortnightly journal which was first published in October of the same year. The editor was Charles W. Hastings formerly of the *Amateur Photographer*. (For more on Hastings and this publication see Richard Crangle's article 'Mission Unaccomplished' in *Realms of Light*, MLS 2005.) A short announcement was made in another journal *Photographic Scraps* (1 November 1892), which had apparently decided to pay for two prizes, namely:

*First, a thoroughly appointed bi-unial lantern; second a ditto single lantern. The competition is open to all societies, and besides these prizes there will be gold medals to the society winning the above lanterns, and a silver and bronze medal for the best slides sent in from each society.*

The awards were presented in London on 19 December, with the *Portsmouth Evening News* of 30 December reporting that Messrs J.T.E. Williams and A. Fisher of the Gosport Photographic Society had been respectively awarded the silver and bronze medals. It's not clear whether the lantern presently for sale on eBay then became the independent property of Mr J.T.E. Williams or was given to his Society. The winner of the first prize is not stated.



The competition was held for at least two more years. In the following year the *Norwich Mercury* (2 December 1893) reported that the winners that year had been the Liverpool Amateur Association. A total of twenty-one societies had competed with an aggregate of 756 slides submitted. The prize slides (288 in number) were split into two sets and circulated among all participating societies. In 1894 the *Worcester Journal* (26 January 1895) suggests that twenty-six societies had entered with 996 slides submitted in four categories – landscape, figure, instantaneous and architecture. After this I can find no reference to any further National Lantern Slide Competitions in the British Newspaper Library Collection.



Images from Patrice Guérin's Rouen exhibition (see Issue 8)

## THE MAGIC LANTERN TODAY

Ine van Dooren

From 26 to 29 October a dedicated group of some thirty-six people gathered at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp to participate in the third workshop of the Million Pictures Project (more information at <http://a-million-pictures.wp.hum.uu.nl/>). The group comprised the usual suspects of historians, curators, artists and lanternists.



Children's workshops by Anna Carpena Torrens (Cinema Museum Girona)

The title perfectly fitted the workshop theme – the creative re-use of the magic lantern as cultural heritage. Amongst many interesting presentations I was excited by how many different ways there are not only to think and learn about lantern heritage but also how to experience it. We were shown how modern audiences are being encouraged to engage with our favourite old media through artist installations in museums, experimental composite shows, historical adaptations and creative slide and show workshops for children (more details are on the website).



Illuminago – Karin Bieneck and Ludwig Vogl-Bieneck

The undoubted star of the show was Sarah Vanagt, a film artist inspired by the Belgian Vrielynck collection, who created a fascinating exhibition and various videos playing with microscopy, science and spectacle. The seventeenth-century experimental research by Anton van Leeuwenhoek was re-enacted in these unbelievable camera obscura type views seen and experienced in a momentary perception through the eye of a dead cow. This was truly mind blowing!

Sarah Vanagt's Showfish exhibition

